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CHATEAU PROVENCE WOODCLIFF LAKE, NJ
Exquisitely renovated estate, *masterfully designed and built by premier luxury builder James Nigro*. Set on 2.8 manicured acres, featuring a resort style pool with waterfall, gourmet outdoor kitchen, multi-level stone patios, lush landscaping. Custom architectural details and a 3-car garage. A true masterpiece of design and comfort, this estate defines sophisticated living at its finest. **\$3,596,000**



ENCHANTING CHATEAU SADDLE RIVER, NJ
A *very special* hidden gem, designed & built by the original architect/owner. This 2010's built home exudes the charm of a French Normandy Chateau with numerous state-of-the-art features! Well-designed floorplan, 4 fireplaces, 3-story elevator and a 3-car garage! A hilltop setting creates privacy and tranquility on this winding lane ending in a cul de sac. **\$2,950,000**



CUSTOM COUNTRY COLONIAL SADDLE RIVER, NJ
Built in 2007 and beautifully updated in 2022. 2-story entry, open concept kitchen/great room, high ceilings, elegant millwork, ideal remote work space, luxe primary suite, 3 additional ensuite bedrooms, boutique closet. Refinished lower level, 3-car garage, heated Gunite pool, gated fencing, lush landscaping, circular driveway, 4-cul-de-sac area. **\$3,950,000**



PENDING!

6.3 ACRE EUROPEAN ESTATE SADDLE RIVER, NJ
9,000+ square foot *European-inspired home on 6.3 acres with scenic walking paths*. Built in 2010: soaring ceilings, gourmet kitchen, spacious primary suite and a finished lower level with a wine cellar, theater and indoor lap pool. 4-car garage, generator, radiant heat, outdoor pool and full-service cabana. **\$5,795,000**



ELEGANT TUDOR MANOR UPPER SADDLE RIVER, NJ
Situated on 1.6 acres, featuring a gourmet kitchen, climate-controlled wine cellar and tasting room, large family room with fireplace, vaulted great room with access to a multi-level patio/outdoor fireplace. Sauna, music room, office/library, upper level bedroom suite. Beautifully landscaped grounds. **\$1,995,000**



MODERN MASTERPIECE UPPER SADDLE RIVER, NJ
Designed by renowned architect Eleanore Pettersen, inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright, this chic & stunning masterpiece is situated on 1.86 acres along the picturesque Saddle River. The 5 bedroom, 3.5 bath home offers approx. 5100sf of unique living space and has an open floorplan. Exterior amenities include a large deck for entertaining, 250' stone wall & tennis court. **\$1,595,000**

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AVAILABLE
Saddle River
Chestnut Ridge Cul-de-sac

Experience exceptional craftsmanship in this all-brick Chestnut Ridge cul-de-sac estate with solid concrete and steel construction. Entertain in the custom Clive Christian kitchen with Viking and Sub-Zero appliances, or enjoy the temperature-controlled wine cellar and tasting room. Featuring soaring ceilings, nine fireplaces, a private theater, second kitchen, and seamless access to bluestone patios for indoor-outdoor living.



AVAILABLE
Saddle River
Chestnut Ridge

Rare opportunity in prestigious Saddle River: nearly one acre with exceptionally low \$8,001 annual taxes. This approximately 3,500 sf Dutch Colonial Cottage features extensive updates, including newer mechanicals, municipal water, and a brand-new five-bedroom septic system (2024). Highlights include a treated cedar shake roof with new copper gutters, newer Italian windows, a glass solarium, custom patios, hardwood floors, an updated family room, a spacious living room with a fireplace, and a newly finished walk-out basement. Architectural and landscape plans are included, with optional seller build-out. Also listed as land.

Some Successful 2025 Sales!



Saddle River

Saddle River

Saddle River Grand



Saddle River

Upper Saddle River

Upper Saddle River



Upper Saddle River

Bear's Cove - Off Market

Upper Saddle River

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Upper Saddle River



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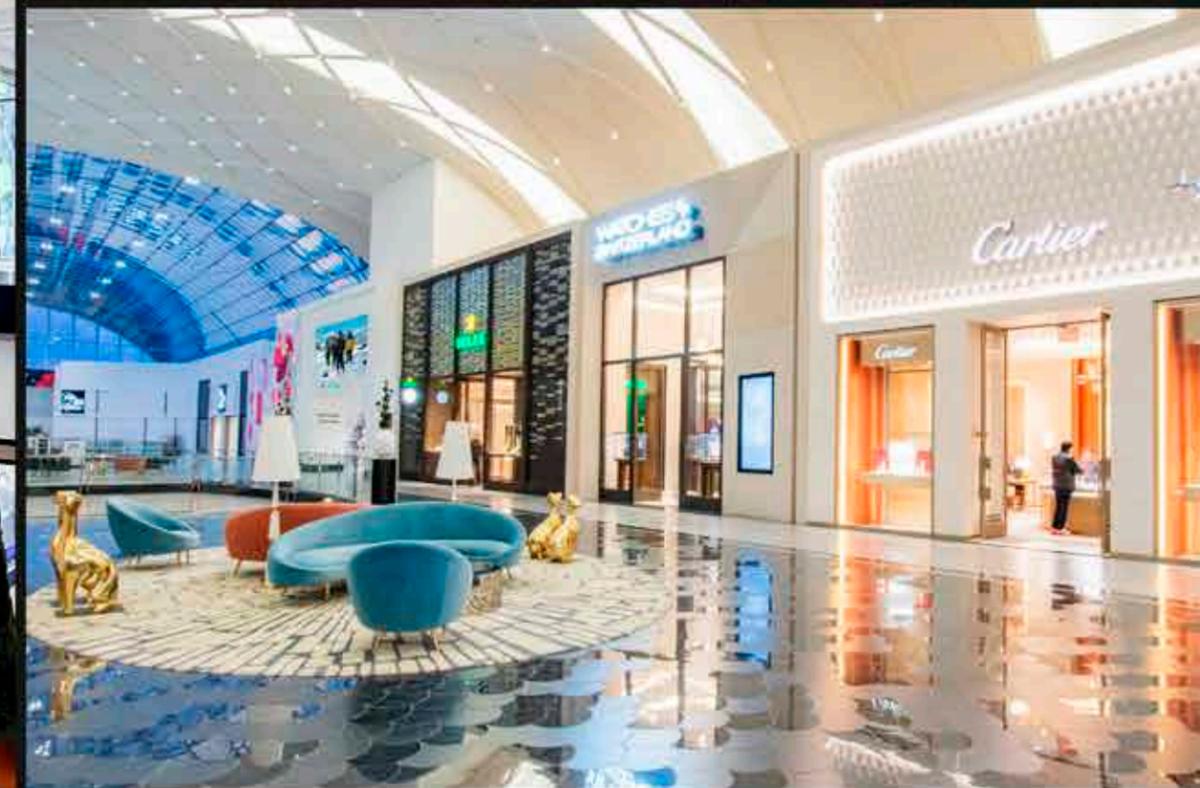


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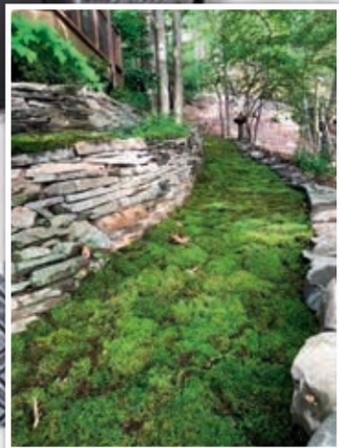
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PHOTOS COURTESY OF LARISA GOLASZEWSKI, A MEMBER.



Left to right: Joann Tashji, mischievous nun, Helena Lobo, Christmas gift



Left to right: Yi Lu, dazzling flapper, and Donna Bradshaw, regal princess



Left to right: Yi Lu, dazzling flapper, and Helena Lobo, walking Christmas gift.



Left to right: Lana Korolova, Halloween Oscar winner, Helena Lobo, Christmas gift.



Left to right: Maria Frankel, happy skeleton, Helen Lobo, Christmas gift, and Olesya Dane, Cat Lady



Left to right: Sasha Petrushin, The Black Swan, and Anna Kelly, Poison Ivy.



Left to right: Olesya Dane, mysterious Cat Lady, and Anna Kelly, Poison Ivy

The Ladies gathered under a haunting moonlight for their annual Halloween soiree, hosted by the ever-enchanting Chair, Anna Kelly. The night shimmered with magic and mischief as Poison Ivy, the Black Swan, the mysterious Cat Lady, a mischievous nun, a dazzling flapper, a regal princess, a walking Christmas gift, and even a garden club witch graced the halls. Among them prowled the notorious warlock cat, Sir Jame the Kingslayer, keeper of dark secrets and stolen treats. The ladies feasted upon wickedly delightful bites, sipped enchanted cocktails, cackled with laughter, and twirled through the shadows until the witching hour. As the final spell of the evening was cast, Helena Lobo, the President bestowed the coveted Halloween Oscar upon Lana Korolova — the bewitching flapper who shimmered straight out of the Roaring Twenties and into legend.

If you would like information on the Club go to <https://www.srvrc.org/new-members>. Website: srvrc.org

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YEAR-END HEARING CHECK Why Timing Matters

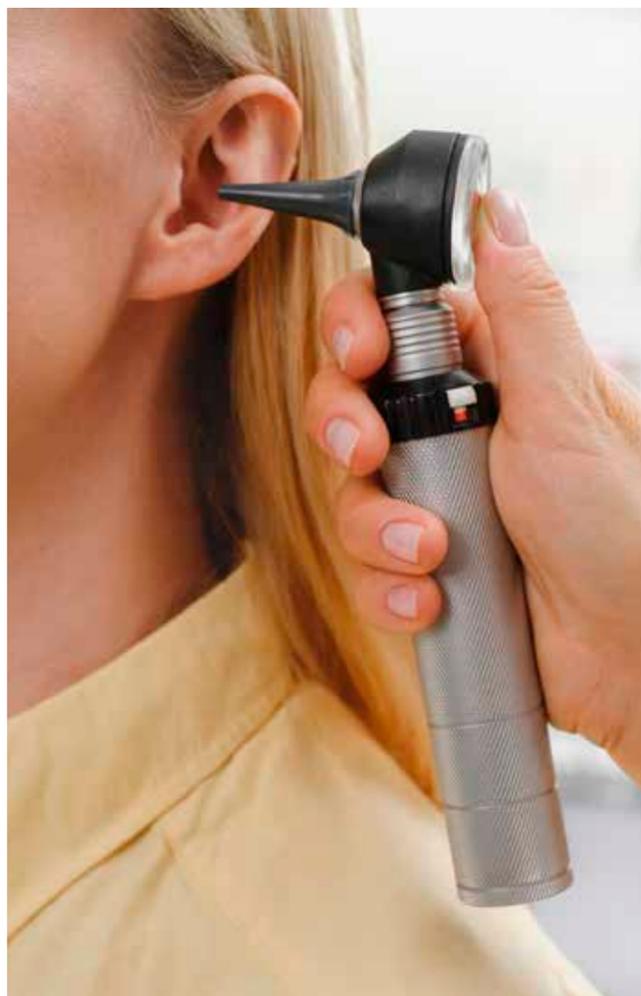
BY DR. ANN MARIE OLSON

AS THE YEAR WINDS DOWN, many of us focus on wrapping up projects, finishing holiday shopping, and setting new goals for the year ahead. But there's one important item that often gets overlooked — your hearing health.

If you've noticed that conversations in restaurants feel harder to follow or that family gatherings seem a bit muffled, now is the perfect time to schedule a hearing check. Regular evaluations are just as essential as annual eye exams or dental visits, and catching even mild hearing loss early can make a meaningful difference in your quality of life.

December is also a smart time to take advantage of unused insurance or flexible spending benefits before they reset in January. Many plans include coverage for hearing evaluations and hearing aids, but those funds typically don't carry over. A quick year-end appointment can help you make the most of your benefits while setting yourself up for a healthier, more connected start to the new year.

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connect to phones, TVs, and music. Whether you already wear hearing aids or are just starting to notice changes, a professional assessment can ensure you're hearing at your best in every setting — from quiet nights at home to lively holiday gatherings.

Before the year slips away, take a moment to prioritize your hearing. Clearer communication, stronger relationships, and more enjoyable moments are all within reach when you can fully hear the world around you.

To learn more or schedule a hearing evaluation, contact **Sophisticated Hearing in Ridgewood** or visit sophisticatedhearing.com.

Dr. Ann Marie Olson
Sophisticated Hearing



Owner and audiologist at Sophisticated Hearing – Ridgewood, NJ, and Saddle River Resident
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Luxury Living in Saddle River



This stunning 4.4-acre estate, backed by the non-flood Saddle River, offers premier equestrian living with a four stall stable, bonus space, and approximately 35,000 sq. ft. of fenced grass pasture. Designed by renowned architect, James Pagano. The resort-style grounds include an inground pool with terrace, jacuzzi, gardens, playground, and an entertainment pavilion. Both upper levels feature terraced open and covered patio spaces, along with 10,000 sq. ft. of lawn. Additional exterior features include a 4-car garage and single-vehicle porte-cochere.

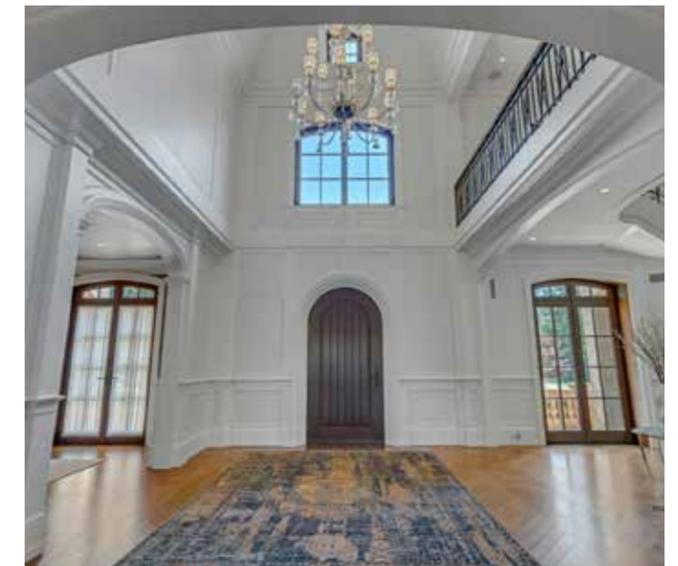
Inside, the estate offers approximately 12,000 sq. ft. across three levels with elevator access throughout. The grand foyer boasts a sweeping staircase and meticulous detailing. The residence includes 25 total rooms, six ensuite bedrooms, seven full baths, and two guest bathrooms. Primary





suites offer private entries, fireplaces, patios, and dressing rooms. Formal living and dining rooms complement a mahogany office and family room. The lower level includes a fitness room, massage room, entertainment spaces, lounge with billiard area and wine cellar, and partial kitchen opening to the pool patio.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A REAL ESTATE AGENT

TERRIE O'CONNOR

WE ARE OFTEN ASKED exactly what we do and, though we love what we do, there is no such thing as a typical day in this profession! Truly, no two days are exactly alike, no two transactions are ever the same and no two clients are ever in need of the same thing!

With that said, let's try to break down a typical day:

Morning is often the time for planning, follow-up and prospecting. This can include many things but most importantly:

- Check new listings and changes in the MLS and notify any clients that may be effected
- Review emails, texts and voicemails - while we may still be at home with our coffee, most of the time we are busy answering questions and addressing concerns before breakfast!
- Follow up with any leads from open houses, referrals, and online inquiries
- Call or email potential clients that may not be ready to move forward with their real estate needs just yet but want to be kept abreast of the market
- Update social media and send out market updates

Midday is the time when the rest of the world is ready to get out and conduct business. It is a time for showings, listing appointments and negotiations. We are ready for just about anything:

- Meet buyers to tour properties, travelling to multiple towns and counties to provide a wide range of market understanding
- Attend and present at listing presentations that include a lot of preparation! Previewing properties, preparing CMAs, developing and explaining marketing strategies and discussing pricing
- Host open houses for potential buyers and other agents



- Attend inspections for buyers under contract and coordinate with inspectors, attorneys and mortgage brokers
- Negotiate offers that can involve multiple back-and-forth calls, texts and emails
- Check in with title companies, lenders and appraisers to keep transactions moving smoothly

Afternoon (are you getting tired yet...we are just getting started!) can be a time for marketing and administrative work:

- Prepare comparative market analyses (CMAs) for potential new listings
- Write property descriptions, schedule professional photography and create brochures
- Pull together all the listing paperwork to review with sellers
- Upload new listings to multiple MLSs and syndicate them to real estate sites
- Work on advertising campaigns - both online (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and offline (postcards, flyers, etc.)



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Established in 1991, Terrie O'Connor Realtors is a leading independent real estate brokerage committed to providing hallmark service, anticipating changing market conditions and setting the standard for excellence in the real estate industry. With seven branch offices and more than 475 licensed real estate professionals, Terrie O'Connor Realtors provides exceptional real estate services throughout northern New Jersey and southern New York states.

Evening is not a time to relax in the real estate world...many buyers and sellers are only available after work hours, so evenings can be the prime time for:

- Showings
- Open houses
- Strategy sessions with sellers or buyers
- Responding to offers and counteroffers

Think we are done? Not really! There are many "behind the scenes" tasks that must fit into our daily schedule but are not visible to clients. Things like:

- Tracking market trends and learning new territories
- Continuing education to keep licenses current and constantly be on the cutting edge of new technologies and legal issues
- Networking with other agents to hear about and promote new inventories
- Troubleshooting problems before they hit the client's radar

A residential real estate agent's day is a mix of sales, marketing, negotiation and customer service (just to name a few). The schedule is rarely 9 to 5; it's often dictated by client availability and the fast moving nature of the housing market. On the outside, the public sees "salesperson" but in reality it's part salesperson, part marketer, part negotiator and part problem-solver. A "day off" is rare when deals are in motion and we often work nights and weekends when most clients can meet. It is not for everyone, but it is exciting...always challenging...and very rewarding! That is why we love what we do! If you are looking for an exhilarating career, come join us!

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Client: Nebar Solutions LLC
Size: 1/4
Location: Standard

Curiosity in Action: Hands-On Science at Saddle River Day School



project is a trip to the Thomas Edison museum where each student presents their flashlight, along with their vision and rationale, to the museum staff.

By the 4th grade, when students learn about food chemistry and digestion, they are performing experiments in which they are challenged to use their acquired knowledge to identify nutrients in mystery foods. 4th grade students can also write their own lab reports, identify scientific questions that interest them, then set up their own experiments, and participate in design challenges to try and answer these questions. Along the way, they learn about structuring their research and how claims are made and supported, the proper use of lab tools, how to meticulously document their data, then sort through that data for proof, and finally, how to concisely articulate their results. Sometimes they arrive at an answer, but more often than not, their initial question leads to others, which in and of itself is an authentic scientific experience.

The science teachers in the Lower School at SRDS also take ubiquitous – but also wondrous – experiments like hatching butterflies and add an extra learning component to it. Which is why at SRDS, monarch butterflies are tagged with an identifying sticker after they’ve hatched so researchers around the world will know more about the migration patterns of these beautiful creatures. Participating in this Monarch Watch program instills the values of being a citizen scientist into our

In most elementary schools, the science curriculum is limited to instruction and experiments that can be performed in the students’ primary classroom. The Lower School at Saddle River Day School is not like most elementary schools.

One of the great features of the Lower School at Saddle River Day School is a dedicated science classroom and lab, one in which the science teachers have the space and the freedom to devise instructional units and experiments that include scientific exploration and inquiry, and teach students how to think like a scientist by using the scientific method to test their hypotheses and document their results.

Commonly referred to as “Hands On Science” at Saddle River Day School, the Lower School science program prepares students for the rigorous science curriculum students will encounter in the SRDS Middle and Upper Schools and lays the groundwork for them to pursue STEM studies even into college and beyond. In a typical year at SRDS, students will engage in units covering Earth Science, Physics, Chemistry, and Life Science.

The youngest learners are encouraged to try simple experiments and describe their observations, building a strong foundation for scholarship. Kindergartners engage in a unit on floating and sinking, after which they construct their own boat that is intended to stay afloat, move through the water, and carry a load. First graders study the weather, creating weather kits, recording the weather and then building model dog houses with materials that will withstand temperature and weather fluctuations.

According to Lower School Science teacher, Wendy Rhoads, giving students the opportunity to design and build their own flashlights is one of the highlights of the 3rd grade science curriculum. Students learn about electrical circuits, then are given the opportunity to specify the features they would like their flashlight to have, and then pick the items they want to use in its construction. The culmination of this



Lower School science



Lower School science



students, fulfilling the SRDS mission to be “caring and ethical contributors to society.”

To this end, Ms. Rhoads also runs a program called the Super Science Team in which 3rd and 4th graders who have been selected on the basis of an essay they wrote, spend six weeks, one day a week after school, building science kits that are then provided to children who are receiving in-patient treatment at Sloan-Kettering. Thus far, the Super Science Team has donated about 150 self-contained kits with six different themes to the hospital. These kits include an instructional video, demonstrated by team members, and recorded by Upper School volunteers. These kits are flexible enough to be used in a child’s room with the assistance of a nurse or parent, but can also be used in a group setting for patients whose health is less fragile.

Wendy Rhoads and her colleagues in the science department at Saddle River Day School know that everyone – child and adult alike – learns better by doing. They also know that if we want our kids to have a passion for understanding and learning about science, we need to make sure they are interested, enthusiastic, and eager. They know that when students can apply their classroom learning to real life, they’re more likely to want to know more. The SRDS Lower School Hands On philosophy achieves these objectives, nurturing curiosity, creativity, and discovery in every student, every day.



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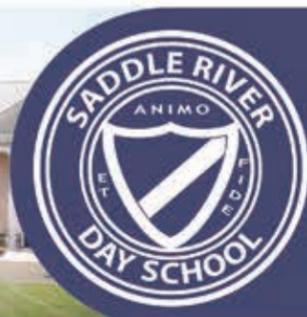


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Alloy Personal Training

Building a community of stronger, healthier lives in Saddle River

When Anthony Vigilante opened Alloy Personal Training in Saddle River in May 2025, he was not just launching another fitness studio—he was creating a space where health, connection, and personal growth intersect. “Our main goal is to connect with our members and help them live their best lives,” says Anthony. “We’re interested in supporting them in all areas of their lives, from here inside of our gym to out in the real world.”

A Passion Turned Purpose

Anthony’s journey to entrepreneurship is as inspiring as the results his members achieve. A lifelong fitness enthusiast, he spent over two decades working in the financial industry in Manhattan before taking the leap to follow his true passion. “Throughout my entire life, health and fitness were always two of my passions,” he

explains. “My career has enabled me to finally pursue that passion, which has fortunately turned out to be an incredibly fulfilling endeavor.”

Alloy Personal Training is built on the foundation of small group personal training, offering members individualized attention within a supportive group environment. The focus is on functional, movement-based strength training—helping clients not only look better but move and feel better in their everyday lives.

The Saddle River studio’s close-knit team includes Head Coach Carli, Director Kelly, Coach Corey, and Anthony himself, who remains deeply involved in day-to-day operations. “At Alloy in Saddle River, we genuinely care about our members and improving their lives,” Anthony says. “This value lives within our entire team—from myself as the Owner to our Director and coaches.”

The Alloy Difference

What sets Alloy apart from other gyms is its emphasis on community. It’s not just about sets and reps; it’s about relationships. “We want our members to come and feel they are part of a true community and know we’re here for them,” says Anthony. “Not only does this feel like a unique quality of our gym, but of any business.”

This philosophy has created an environment where members feel supported beyond their workouts. Whether it’s encouragement from the coaching staff or camaraderie among fellow members, every session at Alloy fosters both physical and emotional well-being. “We’re all on a journey together toward making our lives better, one day at a time,” Anthony adds.



From Bloomfield to Bergen County

Anthony’s deep roots in New Jersey give him a special appreciation for the community he now serves. Born and raised in Bloomfield, he has called Montvale home for the past 20 years. “I love the area and living in this part of Bergen County,” he says. “It feels like the people here are overall friendly and look out for one another.”

He and his wife have raised two high school-aged children in the area, embracing the small-town warmth that characterizes northern Bergen County. Opening Alloy in nearby Saddle River felt like a natural extension of his personal and professional life—a way to give back to a community he loves.

Life Beyond the Gym

When he’s not at the studio, Anthony enjoys staying active outdoors. “I love to work out in my free time and spend time with my family and friends,” he says. “I also love being outdoors, going to the beach, hiking, and traveling.” One of his new favorite local spots is the Celery Farm, a serene nature preserve perfect for family walks. “There’s great hiking there with a beautiful lake. I’m really enjoying taking walks with my family,” he adds.

Anthony also appreciates Saddle River’s vibrant dining scene. “There are some incredible restaurants in the area,” he notes. “We’re lucky to live somewhere with all types of different food!”

A Simple Philosophy for Life and Work

Anthony’s advice to others reflects the same spirit that guides Alloy’s mission: “As the saying goes, make sure you do what you love and love what you do,”



he says. “Regardless if it’s your career, hobbies, or however you spend your time, just make sure you’re doing things you’re passionate about in ways that further connect you with your life.”

It’s a philosophy that has not only transformed his own life but continues to inspire those who walk through Alloy’s doors. For Anthony and his team, success is not measured solely by physical progress—it’s about helping people live more confident, balanced, and joyful lives.

Looking Ahead

As Alloy Personal Training Saddle River continues to grow, Anthony remains grounded in gratitude. “I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of this community, to have such an amazing team, and to be surrounded by our members,” he reflects. “We are all on a journey together toward making our lives better, one day at a time.”

For anyone seeking more than just a gym, a place where personal connection and purpose meet professional expertise, Alloy Personal Training offers a powerful model for what fitness can truly be: a community that lifts together, grows together, and thrives together.

ALLOY PERSONAL TRAINING

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS



Diwali

CELEBRATION LIGHTS UP SADDLE RIVER!

Over 200 residents and guests came together in Saddle River to celebrate Diwali — the Festival of Lights — and what a joyous afternoon it was!

The celebration sparked with dazzling dances, vibrant music, and infectious Bollywood beats. The highlight of the day came when Wandell School students led Mayor **Al Kurpis** and members of the Borough Council in

lighting the ceremonial Diwali lamp — a moment that beautifully symbolized unity, friendship, and togetherness.

Our performers were truly exceptional. Saddle River's **Poonam Khubani** and **Shruti Rawoot**, along with Shruti's talented team of dancers, delivered Broadway-worthy performances. A beautiful **Guru-Student** duet showcasing the grace

of **North Indian classical dance** captivated the audience, while the elegant **South Indian** and **Bollywood** routines by **BCA students** added vibrant flair. The evening reached its crescendo with an energetic **North Indian Bhangra** performance that had everyone on their feet!

What made the afternoon truly unforgettable was the heartfelt





This success belongs to the “Magnificent Seven” volunteers, led by Priya K., who spent countless hours planning and coordinating alongside me.



energy behind it all. Every performer participated purely out of love and community spirit — giving their time, talent, and joy selflessly. Their passion illuminated the stage as brightly as the Diwali lights themselves.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Mayor **Al Kurpis**, fellow Council members, Wandell Superintendent **Jennifer Maccone**, Board of Education President **Emily Kaufman**, and Board Members **Liz Salazer** and **Yasmin Elshami** all praised the event’s warmth, inclusivity, and authenticity — with Mayor Kurpis describing it as “*purely spectacular.*” Superintendent Maccone expressed her appreciation for how the Wandell and Saddle River communities came together in the true spirit of friendship and unity, celebrating the joy of learning about different cultures.

This success belongs to the “Magnificent Seven” volunteers, led by **Priya K.**, who spent countless hours planning and coordinating alongside me — with tremendous support from **Puja Gupta, Anshu Kapur, Hasna Ravi, Dolly Singh, Sunaina Singh, Yasmin Sultana, and Sailaja Valiveti.** In just a

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matter of days, these dedicated women transformed an idea into a vibrant celebration that brought our entire community together.

A special note of appreciation goes to **Sangita Naik**, who organized and coached the Wandell students, inspiring them to deliver their very best performances with enthusiasm and confidence.

Heartfelt thanks also to **Neil Bhatia**, a talented Old Tappan High School sophomore, who served as our DJ and kept the energy high throughout the event, and to **Sukhvir Singh** and the **Rangla Dance Academy** for their electrifying Bhangra performance that brought the celebration to its peak!

Deep gratitude to all the performers, dignitaries, volunteers, contributors, and attendees who made this Diwali so special. The event was entirely community-funded by generous members of the Indian American community — an



“Together, we created something truly magical. Thank you, everyone — we did it!”





open-hearted gesture to share the joy of Diwali and strengthen friendships across Saddle River. Special appreciation also goes to the **Wandell students**, whose performances and enthusiasm united everyone in celebration.

Thanks you to all who attended and made it special!

Together, we created something truly magical. Thank you, everyone — we did it!



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Holiday Kids Recipes



December is packed with sparkle, anticipation, energy, and memory making. Stroll families love including kids in the kitchen—and this year, we’re making it EASY. These simple Christmas and Hanukkah recipes are perfect for ages 6-10, low mess, and confidence building. No perfection pressure—just joy, laughing, and delicious results.

Christmas Recipe CHRISTMAS TREE PITA PIZZAS

Kid Level: 6+

INGREDIENTS

- Mini pitas
- Pizza sauce
- Mozzarella
- Mini pepperoni
- Sliced peppers (green, red + yellow) (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Spread pizza sauce over pita.
2. Sprinkle mozzarella to cover.
3. Arrange pepperoni in triangle tree shape.
4. Use yellow peppers to make star topper.
5. Bake or air fry until warm + melty.

Kid Pro Tip: Let kids add toppings freely — no two trees need to match!

Why Kids Love It: they get to decorate these like craft art.

Hanukkah Recipe

CINNAMON SUGAR DREIDEL DONUT HOLES

Kid Level: 5+

INGREDIENTS

- Store bought donut holes
- Cinnamon
- Sugar
- Icing or cake decorating gel in blue

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Roll donut holes in cinnamon sugar mix.
2. Add small spun “handle” on top with icing.
3. Draw Hebrew letters Nun Gimel Hay Shin.

Kid Pro Tip: Talk through each letter’s meaning as you decorate — hands-on learning sticks!

Holiday Safety Kid Kitchen Tips (quick box)

- Always ask before touching anything hot
- Keep long sleeves + hair pulled back
- Knives + sharp tools = adult hands only
- Clean as you go — sticky sugar gets slippery fast

Parent Script to Build Confidence (use while cooking)

“You don’t need to make it perfect... you just need to make it YOURS. Holidays are about trying, experimenting, and having fun together. The magic is in doing it — not in making it perfect.”



Snackable Add-On Ideas

- Hot cocoa board (mini marshmallows, sprinkles, candy cane stir sticks)
- Latke French fries (thin cut hash browns in air fryer w/ applesauce or sour cream dipping)
- Sugar cookie dip (cream cheese + powdered sugar + sprinkles)

Conversation Starters While Cooking

- What is ONE tradition we should create this year that we keep forever?
- What food screams holiday to you + why?
- What is one thing you want to MAKE this holiday, not GET?

CLOSING NOTE

Food becomes core memory because it uses every sense. When kids help prepare holiday food—even simple things—they feel ownership, they feel capable, and they connect the season to joy, belonging, and participation.

Stories from Our Family Kitchen

The gift of gathering

BY PAULIE VALETUTTI

Amongst the business of the holidays, there's a certain kind of quiet that settles over Bergen County in December. The kind that smells like cinnamon, pine, and something baking in the oven. The air is crisp, the houses are glowing, and every invitation seems to start with "come hungry."

I've always loved this time of year, not because of the gifts, but because of the gathering. My earliest memories of the holidays are of my grandmother's kitchen: bustling, food as far as eyes could see and the nose could smell, filled with cousins underfoot and someone always reaching for the cookie tin before dinner. She was a master of organized chaos. Somehow, amid the chatter and clatter, everything came together perfectly.



Saddle River Resident, Husband, Dad, Chef Paul "Paulie" Valetutti is a girl dad, husband, chef and Saddle River Resident. A Bosco and Rutgers Alumnus, he grew up in Mahwah and has cooked professionally in Arizona, New York, France, and Italy. He and his family love to travel, ski, and of course, eat! He is very passionate about the experiences available in life.



Winter Citrus & Pomegranate Salad with Honey-Lime Dressing

Serves: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 2 oranges, peeled and sliced into rounds
- 1 grapefruit, peeled and sliced into rounds
- 1 small fennel bulb, thinly shaved
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds
- ¼ cup toasted pistachios (or almonds)
- 2 tbsp fresh mint leaves, roughly torn

DRESSING

- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp honey
- Juice of 1 lime
- Pinch of sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Arrange citrus slices and fennel on a platter.
2. Sprinkle pomegranate seeds, pistachios, and mint over the top.
3. Whisk dressing ingredients and drizzle over salad just before serving.

Tip: If making ahead, prep the fruit earlier in the day but add the dressing right before serving so everything stays vibrant and crisp.

Now, I find myself in her shoes, apron dusted with flour, oven timers beeping, and my 7-year-old daughter perched on a stool at my side, taste testing every ingredient. She measures cinnamon with enthusiastic imprecision and insists that holiday music must play at full volume for cookies to turn out right. She might be onto something.

Hosting, I've learned, isn't about perfection. It's about presence. The warmth of people in your kitchen, the scent of something comforting in the oven, the way stories flow more easily when there's food on the table. You can burn the rolls and forget the napkins, and no one will care as long as their fed and feel welcome.

To keep myself sane, I've embraced recipes that feel festive but forgiving, the ones that can be made ahead, served family-style, and still impress. My go-to this season is **Winter Citrus and Pomegranate Salad with Honey-Lime Dressing**. It's bright, beautiful, and a refreshing counterpoint to all the rich holiday fare. It's the kind of dish that earns a spot next to roast meats, looks gorgeous on the table, and just feels like joy in a bowl.

As I write this, there's powdered sugar on my countertop and laughter in the next room. Hosting can be messy, noisy, and full of surprises but so is family. And maybe that's exactly how it's meant to be.

So here's to gatherings big and small, to mismatched plates and second helpings, and to the joy of feeding the people we love. From our kitchen to yours, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.



RAIN ON MY PARADE

BY SIRAHN TOUFAYAN



Engulf me in your embrace
As I step out into the grey,
Mix and mask the tears on my face,
Cleanse me and cloak me from the light of day.

Your weight will ground me,
Push me down by my shoulders,
And remind me kindly
The realities of getting older.

Wash away my minds ramblings,
Drip down my brow with care,
Hurt and heal my confused feelings
As you soak the ringlets of my hair.

I feel your pain, hear you weep;
The song of your sorrows break my solitude,
The echoes of your cries resonate deep
Within my heart, my soul: it intrudes.

Fall onto me, I will catch you in open arms,
Every drop, every strike of your hands,
I know is not meant to harm,
No matter your struggles, my love always stands.

The door to salvation before me lies,
Yet I make no move to advance,
Instead I stare up into your grey skies,
And show you that yes, I understand.

Rain down, let it all out,
Pelt me with your pain,
I can help you hold it, no need to be proud,
Together we will scrub out life's stains.

Saddle River Resident,
and a freshman at
Northeastern University



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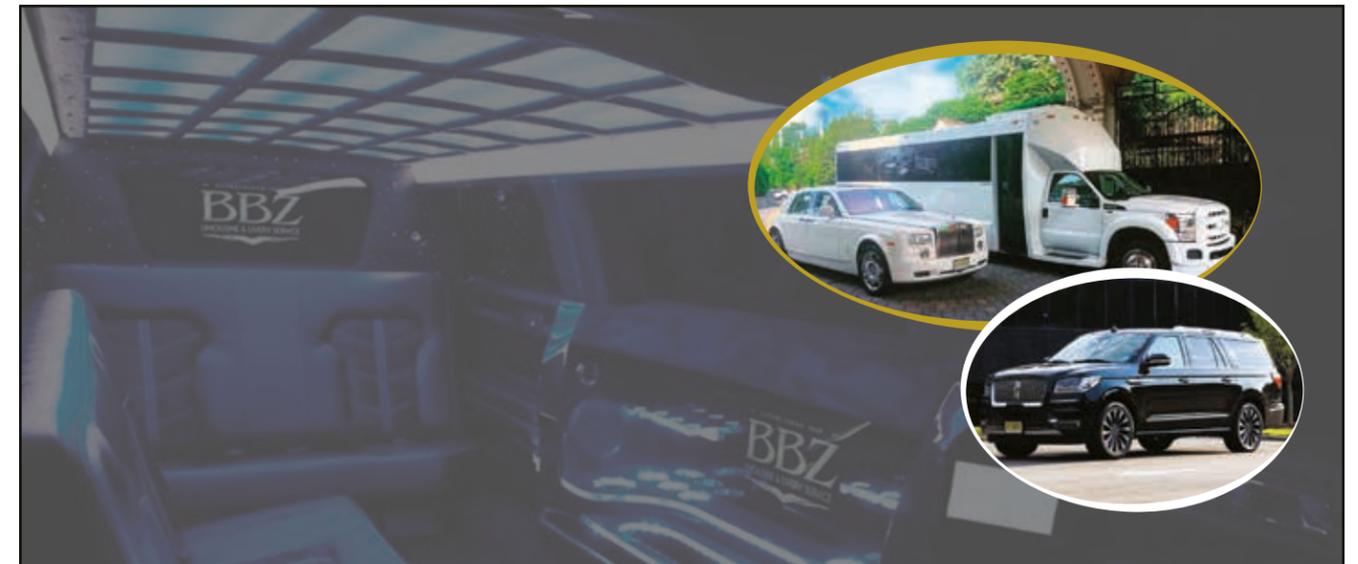
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Holidays*

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