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Saddle River



»
*Year in
Review*
2025
«



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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**



RESORT-STYLE ON 2.67 ACRES SADDLE RIVER, NJ
Large brick ranch with 2 bedrooms on the 2nd floor offers expansive one floor living area on an oversized 2.67-acre setting. Massive indoor pool off the 1st floor and lower level, outdoor tennis/basketball court and the lower level offers ideal recreation/gym areas. 2 kitchens, 2 fireplaces, 6 bedrooms, 6.1 baths & movie theater. Main kitchen with large breakfast area & solarium overlooks the resort setting. **\$3,788,000**



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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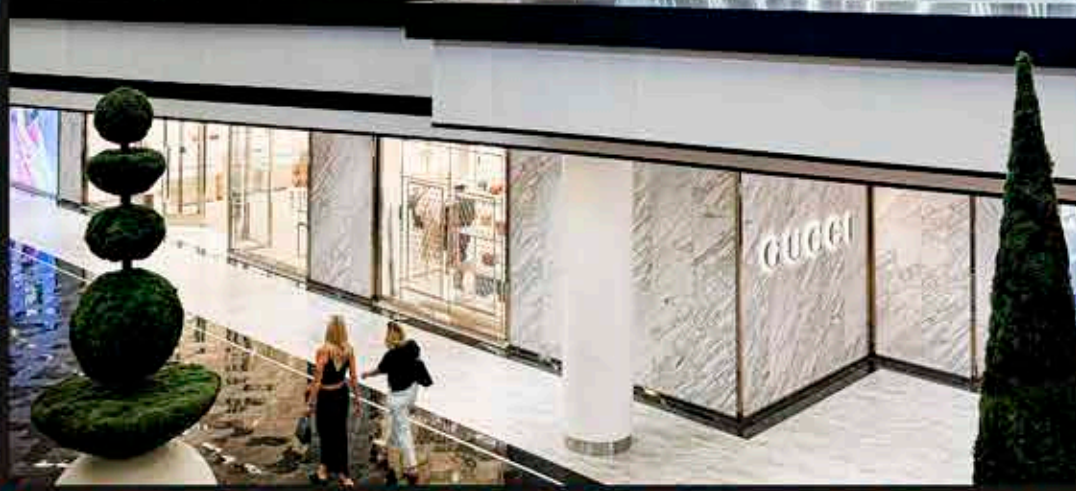


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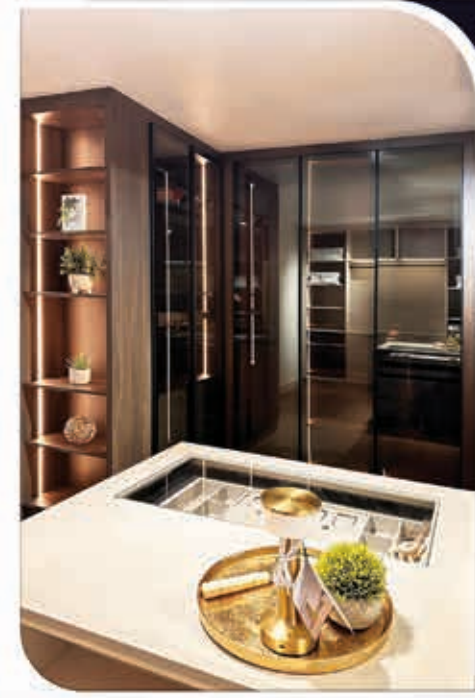
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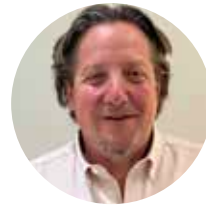
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If you or someone you know receives *Stroll Saddle River* and would make a great addition to the writers listed here, please reach out to StrollSaddleRiver@gmail.com. There are so many creative ways to be a part of *Stroll Saddle River*.

TERRIE O'CONNOR
REALTORS

Happy New Year!
Wishing you a 2026 filled with new opportunities,
prosperity, and the happiness of home.



2 ALFORD DRIVE, SADDLE RIVER
6BD, 7F 1H BA | \$4,700,000 | 201.934.4900 (0)
ACTIVE



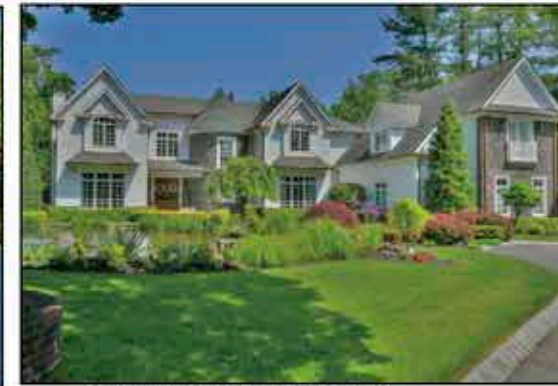
19 MEADOWBROOK ROAD, UPPER SADDLE RIVER
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STROLL'S RETROSPECTIVE 2025 THE STORIES YOU TOLD

In this special retrospective, we retrace the footsteps of 2025 through the articles and features that graced the pages of *Stroll Saddle River*.

FEBRUARY



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3



4



5

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1. Cover Story: Saddle River Valley Residents Club Annual Holiday Gala

A Magical Evening at Macaluso's, the Gala is an annual event for the Club since its formation in 1970, the Holiday Gala was a black tie event, with guests in their best holiday attire.

2. Home of the Month: Architectural Distinction Crafts a Masterpiece

Nestled in the heart of Saddle River, this extraordinary residence is a true testament to timeless architecture and uncompromising quality.

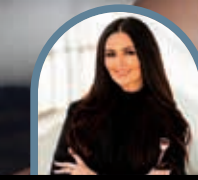
3. Around Town: Saddle River Valley Club Holiday Gala

This year, the Saddle River Valley Club had a spectacular turn out for its festive and elegant holiday gala at RP Prime in Ramsey, NJ.

4. Talking With My Mouth Full: Stories From Our Family Kitchen: Chicken Soup for the Winter Soul

Among these comforting dishes, nothing quite compares to a bowl of homemade chicken soup, pressure cooked or simmered slowly to perfection.

5. Wandell School News: February Update



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MARCH



1. Cover Story: 14th Annual Susan Zabransky Hughes Memorial 5K

Money raised through the Susan Zabransky Hughes Memorial 5K has underwritten groundbreaking research and quality cancer-support programs locally.

2. Talking With My Mouth Full: Stories From Our Family Kitchen: March Madness

Too cold to grill, we circle back to the stove around a simmering pot or at least the ease of the Instant pot. With all the madness going on, a nice hearty soup is good for calming the soul and warming the heart. Caldo Verde

3. Home of the Month: Newly Constructed Luxury Estate

Nestled on a 2.06-acre corner lot, this magnificent new construction estate offers unparalleled elegance and craftsmanship.

4. Education Matters- SRDS: Maximize Summer Learning at SRDS Summer Academy

At SRDS Summer Academy, students can maximize their learning and optimize their time with full-credit, semester-credit, and elective courses at both Honors and College Preparatory levels.

5. Saddle River Valley Residents Club: Fall Events

Among the fall events, on a blustery Saturday evening late November, members of the SRVRC were hosted to another Sociable Supper, this time at the saddle River home of Zahra Aminlari.

6. Wandell School News March Update

The Wandell School Education Foundation and PAWS, or the Parent Association of Wandell School help make Wandell School a magical place for our Saddle River children to attend.

APRIL



3. Home of the Month: 2 Alford Drive, Saddle River
Commanding a distinguished presence on Saddle River's most coveted address, this magnificent brick manor colonial epitomizes timeless elegance and refined luxury

4. Talking With My Mouth Full: Stories From Our Family Kitchen: Gardening & Outdoor Living

I am going to share one of my favorites that bridges the gaps from indoor cooking to grilling with my Chicken Thigh Icebergs (they float halfway in liquid with their crispy skins floating on top

5. Around Town: Among the events celebrated included The Ramadan Event!

Over 100 People Of All Religions Attended The Event, And They Made It So Special And Festive!

6. Wandell School News

Wandell School is in the first year of implementing our new PreK-5 Social Emotional Learning program called Silas.

Silas is a New Jersey based company that is able to use themes that help our young learners become thoughtful citizens for tomorrow.

1. Cover Story: Saddle River Day School Breaks Ground on The New Dr. Kristen Walsh Hall of Science and Entrepreneurship

Saddle River Day School proudly announces the groundbreaking of the Dr. Kristen Walsh Hall of Science and Entrepreneurship, a 33,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility providing 21st-century spaces and learning tools to support innovative new programming and an expanding curriculum.

2. Precious Pets: Meet Lucy, Ruby, Tucker and Cooper, owned and loved by the Alecci Family

We have four dogs, two male clumber spaniels (Tucker, 10 and Cooper, 9), and two female field spaniels (Lucy, 15 and Ruby, 12).

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MAY

1. Cover Story: Saddle River Valley Auxiliary: A Legacy of Support for Valley Hospital

Pooja Kumar a Saddle River resident was recently appointed as Chair for Valley Hospital Saddle River Auxiliary Branch. Pooja is involved in several non-profits, where she helps strategize community outreach initiatives, donation drives and fundraising efforts.

2. Home of the Month: Majestic Colonial

Nestled on a sprawling 2 acres with breathtaking panoramic views of the picturesque Ramapo Mountains, this majestic all-brick Colonial offers soaring ceilings and masterful woodwork on every level.

3. Talking With My Mouth Full: Stories From Our Family Kitchen: Ready, Set, Summer!

Summer food has its own unique smell. The smell of the gas, propane, or charcoal lets the neighborhood know that you are about to celebrate the start of summer with some flame grilled food.

4. Education Matters SRDS Shaping Tomorrow:

Saddle River Day Launches Middle School National STEM Honors Society Chapter

5. Wandell School News: May Happenings



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JUNE

1. Cover Story: Wandell School 4th Annual Family SEL Night

This year Wandell School celebrated its 4th Annual Social Emotional Learning Family Night event on April 10th which was well attended by families, students, school staff and Saddle River community members.

2. The Style File: Fashionable Fathers

During the Father's Day season, it's time to celebrate the incredible dads in our lives with gifts that go beyond the ordinary.

3. Education Matters: From Uncertainty to Success: How Saddle River Day School Guides Students on the Road to College Success

To provide even more comprehensive support, Saddle River Day School expanded its College Counseling Office last fall to include two full-time college counselors. Director of College Counseling Karen Ferretti was joined by Ms. Jackie Williams, a seasoned professional with experience on both sides of the admissions process.

4. Precious Pets: Meet Joshua

In the Bass household, love comes in a curly-haired, tail-wagging form named Joshua. At 3.5 years old, this male standard poodle has already become an irreplaceable part of the family—and not just because of his luxurious coat or soulful eyes.

5. Home of the Month: 11 Chestnut Ridge Road

A Charming Dutch Colonial with the HIGHEST QUALITY Updates! Set back in a peaceful & desirable area of town, on nearly one Eastern-Facing acre.

6. Talking with My Mouth Full: Stories from Our Family Kitchen

Happy Father's Day to all the dads out there! Whether you are celebrating Dad by the beach, on the links, or overseas, cheers to the man in our lives that we call Dad. Truffle Honey Herb Drizzle Recipe.



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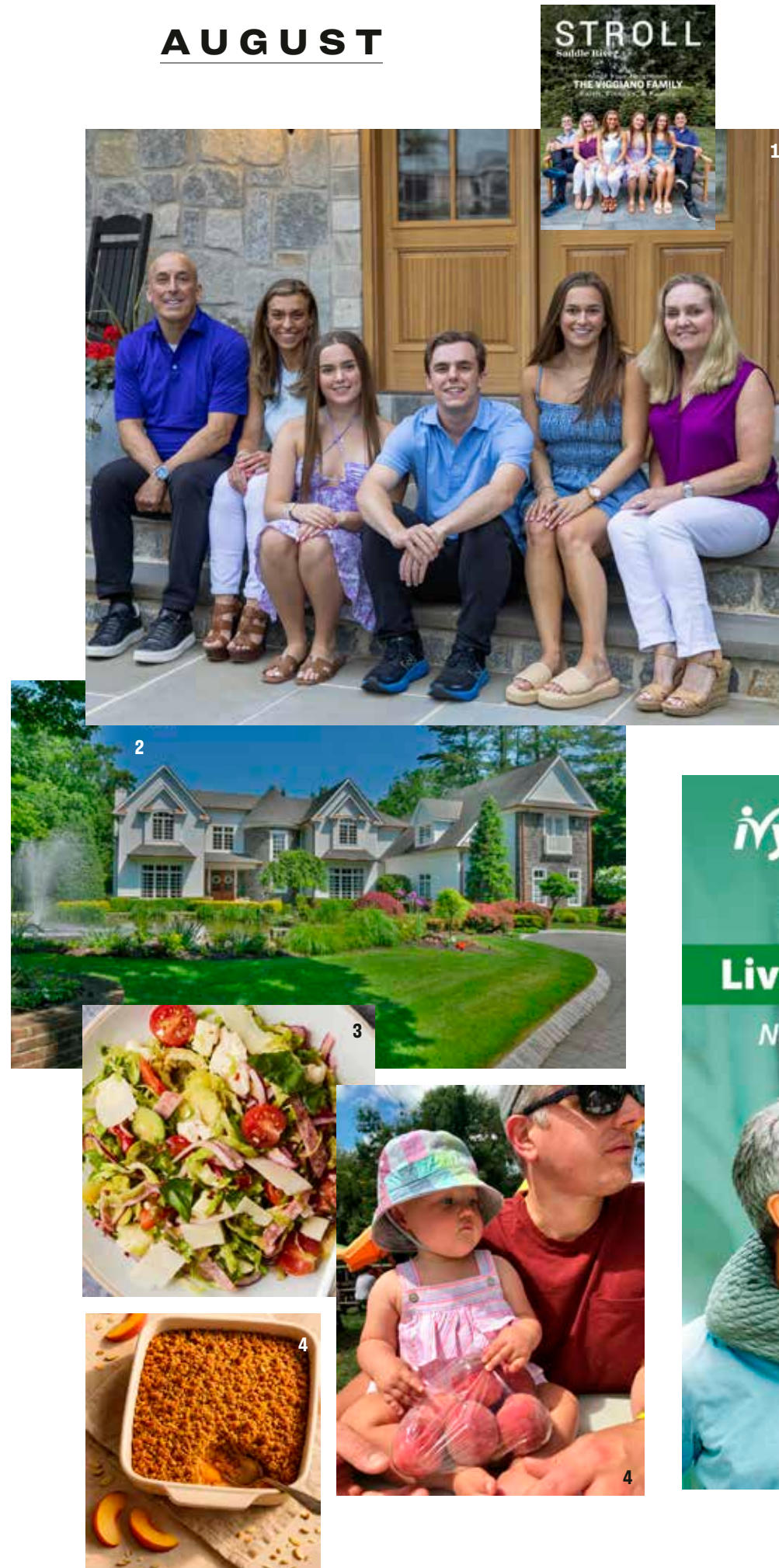
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AUGUST



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1. Cover Story: Wandell School Education Foundation Annual Gala at The Saddle River Inn

On May 15, 2025, the Wandell School Education Foundation of Saddle River held its highly anticipated annual gala at the iconic Saddle River Inn, featuring a gourmet dinner, a lively live auction, and an extensive silent auction—all thoughtfully curated to benefit the Foundation's mission of enriching the educational experience of every student at Wandell School.

2. Around Town: Saddle River Valley Club Spring Soiree

The SRVC held their Spring event on May 29th at The Tuxedo Club in Tuxedo Park, NY.

3. Home of the Month: 45 Ackerman Road, Saddle River

Privately nestled on 2.3 acres of flawlessly manicured grounds at the end of a prestigious cul-de-sac, this extraordinary colonial estate is a masterclass in timeless elegance and architectural excellence.

4. Talking with My Mouth Full: Stories from Our Family Kitchen Lemon Squeezy, Summer Easy

The summer heat is on and that means: days at camp, lounging by the pool, trips to the beach, and quick yet nutritious meals.

5. The Style File: Summer Fashion Trends

From the rustic allure of farm-to-table aesthetics to the refined charm of Riviera-inspired outfits, this season's trends are set to redefine elegance with a fresh, vibrant twist.

6. Recipe of the Month: Chorizo-Stuffed Zucchini

1. Meet Your Neighbors: The Viggiano Family: Faith, Fitness, and Family

Angela and Robert Viggiano, along with their four children Sarah (26), Michael (25), Emma (22), and Natalie (15), have built a life filled with purpose, love, and activity—anchored in strong family values and a deep commitment to both personal wellness and community service.

2. Home of the Month: 118 East Saddle River Road, Saddle River

A true masterpiece of design and craftsmanship, this one-of-a-kind residence blends timeless elegance with modern luxury.

3. Recipe of the Month: Italian Chopped Brussel Sprouts Salad

4. Talking with My Mouth Full: Stories from Our Family Kitchen "Peach Season and Sticky Fingers" (Peach Almond Crisp (Gluten-Free))

August always tastes like peaches to me. Not the kind that arrive hard and bland in winter clamshells, but the real deal — golden, juicy, fragrant, and so ripe they drip down your wrist if you don't lean over the sink.

SEPTEMBER



1. Cover Story: Step Up to the Plate with the HoHoKus-Saddle River Men's Softball League

Celebrating Over 50 Years of Tradition, Competition, and Community

If you're looking for camaraderie, competition, and good old-fashioned fun on Sunday mornings, look no further than the HoHoKus-Saddle River Men's Softball League. Founded in 1974 by Les Shenkler, this long-standing league is unlike any other in Bergen County — and perhaps the entire region.

2. Home of the Month: 134 Cortland Drive at The Saddle River Grand

Breathtaking and newly updated townhome is set in a prime location! Elevator to three floors!

3. Business 2 Business: A Gathering at a Historic Aquatic Haven

Dozens of local business owners recently gathered for this month's Business-2-Business networking event, hosted by Stroll magazine and BeLocal Bergen at Fitz's Fish Ponds in Saddle River.

4. Wandell School News: A Warm Welcome to the 2025-2026 School Year

I am thrilled to share with you that the Wandell playground was completely transformed into a vibrant, fun-filled space with brand new equipment for children of all ages.

5. Education Matters-SRDS: Gateway Diplomas at Saddle River Day School: A Bold Pathway to College and Career Success

Launched in 2021, the Gateway Diplomas give Upper School students the chance to specialize in an area of interest through advanced coursework, research, and real-world experiences.

6. Out & About: Saddle River Residents are seen around town and out of town this summer.

7. Around Town: Saddle River Solemnly Commemorates Memorial Day And Remembers The Fallen Heroes!

Thank you to all the speakers, guests, police and firemen who attended and the staff who worked so hard to make it happen.

8. Talking with My Mouth Full: Stories from Our Family Kitchen The Sweet Spot Between Summer and Fall

September is a funny month in Bergen County. The days are still warm enough for shorts and flip-flops, but the nights whisper that sweater weather is coming. Our farmer's markets are caught in the same tug-of-war, think baskets of late-summer tomatoes and sweet corn sitting next to early apples and butternut squash.

Recipe: Sweet Corn & Apple Salad with Maple-Lime Dressing


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OCTOBER



1. Cover Story: From Saddle River to Hong Kong: The Global Journey of Art Entrepreneur Katie Guo

For Katie Guo, life has been a continuous pursuit of passion, culture, and connection. A former Saddle River resident now living in Hong Kong, Katie has built an impressive career in the international art world while balancing family life, global travel, and a vibrant social presence. Though she has called Hong Kong home for the past twelve years, Katie's roots remain firmly planted in Saddle River, where her mother still lives.

2. Home of the Month: A Home Like No Other: 125 Chestnut Ridge Rd

Nestled on nearly 8 acres of beautifully landscaped and wooded property, 125 Chestnut Ridge Road is truly a one-of-a-kind estate. From the moment you arrive, this residence makes a statement of elegance, grandeur, and impeccable design.

3. Talking with My Mouth Full: Stories from Our Family Kitchen; The Warmth of October

October always feels like the real start of fall in Bergen County. The air smells like woodsmoke, porches sprout pumpkins overnight, mums and gourds galore, and every weekend someone is heading off to Warwick or Demarest for apple picking. Recipe: Cinnamon Baked Apples with Walnut Oat Crumble.

4. Wandell School News: Happy First Day, Wolverines!

What an incredible start to the 2025–2026 school year! The first day at Wandell School was nothing short of inspiring.

5. Education Matters-SRDS: Where Opportunity and Growth Meet: Exploring the Middle School at Saddle River Day

The Middle School years are a time of remarkable transformation—academically, socially, and personally. Students begin to see the world with greater complexity, develop deeper interests, and face rising expectations both in and out of the classroom.

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NOVEMBER



6. Education Matters- SRDS: Where Curiosity Meets Purpose: The Middle School Capstone at SRDS

As a college preparatory school whose students expect to attend the most selective colleges and universities, it is critical that Saddle River Day School gives its students the knowledge and expertise that will prepare them to successfully research, write, and present academic papers in the Upper School, the SRDS Gateway Diploma program, and beyond.

1. Cover Story: Saddle River Valley Residents Club 2025
On September 14th, the Saddle River Valley Residents Club kicked off the new season with our 2025 Welcoming Party, hosted at the beautiful home of Stephanie and Jake Tripp.

2. Home of the Month: Le Palais of Saddle River: A Masterpiece of Luxury Living
Nestled in one of New Jersey's most prestigious communities, Le Palais of Saddle River is more than a home — it is a statement of elegance, craftsmanship, and lifestyle.

3. Around Town: Saddle River's 4th Rock n' Roll Car Show
On a beautiful September Saturday, Saddle River held its 4th Rock n Roll Car show. The cars were displayed at Rindlaub Park for all to enjoy.

4. Talking with My Mouth Full: Stories from Our Family Kitchen; A Taste of Gratitude
November sneaks up quietly in Bergen County. One day you're visiting the orchard picking apples, and next you're pulling sweaters out of storage and planning what to bring to Thanksgiving dinner. Recipe: Harvest Lentil Soup with Roasted Vegetables

5. Wandell School News: Wandell School Remembers September 11th
At Wandell School, and throughout the Saddle River community, we are fortunate to be part of a place where students, parents, teachers, and neighbors support one another in extraordinary ways. This spirit of connection is present every day, but it shines especially bright on September 11th, a day of remembrance, honor, and gratitude.

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DECEMBER



1. 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!

2. Around Town: The Ladies Club GG Chapter of the Saddle River Valley Residents Club held its Naughty or Nice Halloween event.

The Ladies gathered under a haunting moonlight for their annual Halloween soiree, hosted by the ever-enchancing Chair, Anna Kelly.

3. Education Matters-SRDS: Curiosity in Action: Hands-On Science at Saddle River Day School

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.

4. Home of the Month: Estate Highlights

This stunning 4.4-acre estate, backed by the non-flood Saddle River, offers premier equestrian living with a tri-stall stable, bonus space, and approximately 35,000 sq. ft. of fenced grass pasture. Designed by renowned architect, James Pagano.

5. School News: Ramsey's Blueprint for Success: Opportunity, Attention, and Innovation

With approximately 700 students, Ramsey has found the ideal balance. We're large enough to offer diverse advanced courses and championship athletics, yet small enough for every student to receive personalized attention. This scale ensures no one falls through the cracks—the essence of the "Ramsey Experience."

6. Talking with My Mouth Full: Stories from Our Family Kitchen; The Gift of Gathering

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. Recipe: Winter Citrus & Pomegranate Salad with Honey-Lime Dressing

7. Sponsor Spotlight: Alloy Personal Training: Building a Community of Stronger, Healthier Lives in Saddle River

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WHY REAL ESTATE INVESTING THIS WINTER MAKES SENSE

TERRIE O'CONNOR



Between shifting market conditions, motivated sellers and evolving lifestyle trends, this season offers unique opportunities that can translate into long term gains.

Winter has always been a slower real estate season. With fewer listings and even fewer buyers, investors gain something rare: leverage. Sellers listing in December through February are often highly motivated, whether due to relocation, financial timing or life changes. In addition, sellers with properties held over from the fall market are compelled to move their properties before the competition of the spring market. This catalyst opens doors for investors to:

- Negotiate better purchase prices
- Ask for seller concessions, repairs or credits
- Avoid bidding wars that are common in spring

In winter 2026, while mortgage rates are down slightly, they remain elevated from the lows of a few years ago. Therefore, this negotiation power could make the difference between a marginal deal and a great one.

Combine this with the fact that home affordability remains one of the biggest challenges for buyers pushing the demand for rentals to continue to climb and you have the perfect scenario for would be investors. Investing in a rental property this winter positions investors to take advantage of:

- Tight housing inventory - fewer homes for sale means more renters.
- Seasonal demand - families looking for housing before the school year and relocating workers who need quick rentals are out in force in the spring...right when you would be closing on your investment property.
- Potential rental growth - forecasts for 2026 call for moderate, steady rent increases across our area.

The rental market isn't slowing down and properties purchased in the winter can begin earning passive income almost immediately upon settlement.

Historically, spring brings a surge of new buyers, listings and competition. By purchasing in winter, investors can get ahead of the seasonal rush and capture appreciation once activity picks up.



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With winter upon us, many industries slow down—including real estate. This seasonal cooling of activity can provide savvy investors with unique opportunities. Rather than taking a back seat, this season may be a prime time to invest.

Why? The winter months traditionally see a decline in buyers and investors in the real estate market, leading to less competition. But for informed investors, winter 2026 may actually be one of the best times to invest in residential property.

In the Garden

SUBMITTED BY HELENA LOBO-ZAGORSKI, SADDLE RIVER RESIDENT

Thanksgiving Floral Arrangements

A couple of days before Thanksgiving, the Saddle River Garden Club created plated and birch container floral arrangements for the holiday at the Bishop House. The members were guided by a professional florist and the co-president of the club, Vin Blehl. This is an annual activity for the club. Each member made unique, creative, and beautiful Thanksgiving floral arrangements.



Left to right, back row: Helena Lobo-Zagorski, Jackie Menechino, Liz Salazer, Darcy Linares, Vin Blehl, Helene Richin, Jacqui Hill, Judy Gittleman, Joan Murphy, and Barbara Gross. Left to right, front row: Lynn Catti, Marcy Valetutti, and Amy Hess.

Saddle River Garden Club Decorates in Van Saun Park

A group of Saddle River Garden Club members met at the Van Saun Park to decorate Saddle River's tree for the park's Winter Wonderland festival. This year's theme is nature. The tree is decorated with fresh string popcorn, bird seed ornaments, and various woodland creatures. Each of the 70 municipalities in Bergen County decorates a tree for the event, and these trees are later donated to their respective communities. It's a festive outing to take a walk by the Winter Wonderland and view all the creative trees each town designed.





Left and clockwise: Rosemarie Habicht, Helene Richin, Susan Homann, Helena Lobo, Yi Lu, Beatrice Nuwayhid, Chapter Chair, and Jacqui Hill.

SRVRC INTERNATIONAL LUNCH CHAPTER

SUBMITTED BY HELENA LOBO – ZAGORSKI, SADDLE RIVER RESIDENT

As part of our International Lunch chapter, we held a luncheon at Rumba Cubana and had a truly enjoyable experience. The food was delicious and authentically prepared, and the lively atmosphere added to the charm of the afternoon. Our group of eight ladies shared wonderful conversation, laughter, and an appreciation for the vibrant flavors of Cuban cuisine. It was a delightful and memorable gathering for all.

SRVRC Enjoys a Night Out at DiPalma's

SUBMITTED BY HELENA LOBO – ZAGORSKI, SADDLE RIVER RESIDENT



Left to right: Dr. Barry & Helene Kraushaar and John & Margaret Bello.

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Left to right: Mark & Helena Zagorski, Donna Bradshaw and Joanna Mastropaolo.



Left to right: Joanna, Joe & Dorothy Mastropaolo



From left clockwise: Rosemarie Habicht, Mark & Helena Zagorski, Andrea Guerreri, Donna Bradshaw, Joanna, Joe & Dorothy Mastropaolo, Dr. Barry & Helene Kraushaar, Jojm Bello, Susan Katz, Mellanice Miller, and Yi Lu.

On November 16th, members of the SRVRC gathered for a truly memorable evening at DiPalma's, enjoying a sumptuous Italian feast served family style—ensuring no one went home hungry! Adding to the fun, we got an early start on our holiday shopping by browsing the restaurant's charming selection of vintage clothing, handbags, antiques, furniture, and more. With beautiful pieces at modest prices, there were plenty of irresistible finds.

It was a delightful and unique experience—one we look forward to repeating in the future.



Left to right: Marc & Helene Richin, Helena Lobo, Donna Bradshaw, and performing member, Jacob Tripp.

SRVRC ENJOYS CONCERT BY THE PRO ARTE CHORALE

SUBMITTED BY HELENA LOBO – ZAGORSKI, SADDLE RIVER RESIDENT

The Pro Arte Chorale, featuring member Jake Tripp, performed their first concert of the 2025-26 season "Paths of Destiny" on November 22nd. It was a thrilling collaboration with the Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra featuring Parry's "I Was Glad", Verdi's Overture to "La Forza del Destino", Brahms' "Schicksalslied" (Song of Destiny) and Saint-Saens's "Messe de Requiem".





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All information deemed reliable but subject to change, errors & omissions.




SRVRC BOOK CLUB

SUBMITTED BY HELENA LOBO –
ZAGORSKI, SADDLE RIVER RESIDENT

We had a wonderful turnout for our very first Book Club meeting! Thank you to everyone who joined us for a night filled with great conversation, delicious food and lots of laughter. It was a fantastic kickoff, and we're excited to keep the momentum going!



Left clockwise: Jodi Bass, Joann Tashji, Margaret Pangert, Anna Kelly, Donna Bradshaw, Susan Katz, Helena Lobo, Joan Clifford, Elaine Filliter, Christina McManus, and Lisa Singer.



Left clockwise: Joann Tashji, Joan Clifford, Margaret Pangert, Donna Bradshaw, Elaine Filliter, Susan Katz, Lisa Singer, Helena Lobo, Christina McManus, Anna Kelly, Jodi Bass, and Tamara Doyle.



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Stories from Our Family Kitchen

The gentle art of starting again

BY PAULIE VALETUTTI

JANUARY ALWAYS SNEAKS UP on me. One minute we are drowning in wrapping paper, pine needles, and leftover cheese plates, and next, the calendar insists we begin again. The new year arrives whether we're ready or not; bright, crisp, and full of possibility.

In my house, the place where new beginnings actually *stick* isn't in the gym or a vision board, it's in the kitchen. The kitchen is where we set our rhythm for the year ahead, whether we realize it or not. How we feed ourselves becomes how we take care of ourselves. And every year, right around now, I find myself wanting to shift things, even just slightly, toward better habits.

After the holidays, we are always left with half used ingredients from the season's gathering and parties. When my daughter opens the cabinet doors looking for "potion ingredients" she finds things such as: four half-used bags of lentils, six varieties of vinegar, and countless spice blends. She asks why we have so many, but I never have a good answer. But her curiosity always nudges me to take that deep breath, roll up my sleeves, and make a little space...on the counter, in the pantry, and in my own routines.

This year, instead of resolutions, I'm setting intentions. They're gentler, more realistic, and a lot more forgiving. Here are the ones taped to the inside of my pantry door:

1. Cook more from what I already have.

Those lentils aren't going to cook themselves. Neither will the orphaned can of coconut milk or the barley I swore I would try last year. January is the perfect month for soups, grain bowls, and creative "use what's here" dinners.

2. Make the kitchen a place I want to be.

Good lighting, a clean counter, a playlist, and a candle. These tiny changes that turn cooking from a chore into a ritual.

3. Involve my daughter and wife more.

She stirs, she chops, she tastes with impressive commentary. Cooking with them slows me down in the best way.

4. Eat for energy, not punishment.

Food is fuel, joy, comfort, memory...not a January atonement. More color, more vegetables, more meals built from real ingredients, less guilt.

If you're setting your own kitchen intentions this year, start simple. One shelf cleaned out. One new recipe. One meal made with care. One habit that makes your evenings smoother. Change happens in teaspoons, not tidal waves.

And since we all need something bright and fresh in the middle of winter, here's a dish to welcome the new year the way I like to greet it...colorful, hopeful, and easy.



Recipe:

CITRUS + FENNEL NEW YEAR SALAD

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 oranges, peeled and sliced
- 1 large grapefruit, peeled and sliced
- 1 fennel bulb, thinly shaved (save some fronds)
- ½ small red onion, sliced paper-thin
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds
- ¼ cup toasted pistachios or almonds
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar or lemon juice
- 1 tsp honey
- Salt + pepper

Instructions

1. Whisk together the olive oil, vinegar/lemon juice, honey, salt, and pepper.
2. Layer citrus slices on a platter.
3. Scatter the shaved fennel, red onion, pomegranate seeds, and nuts over the top.
4. Drizzle with dressing and garnish with fennel fronds.
5. Serve immediately, preferably with something cozy simmering on the stove.

It's light, bright, and exactly the kind of food that reminds us fresh starts can taste good.

Here's to a year of small shifts, meaningful habits, and kitchens that feel like home. Happy New Year, and happy cooking.

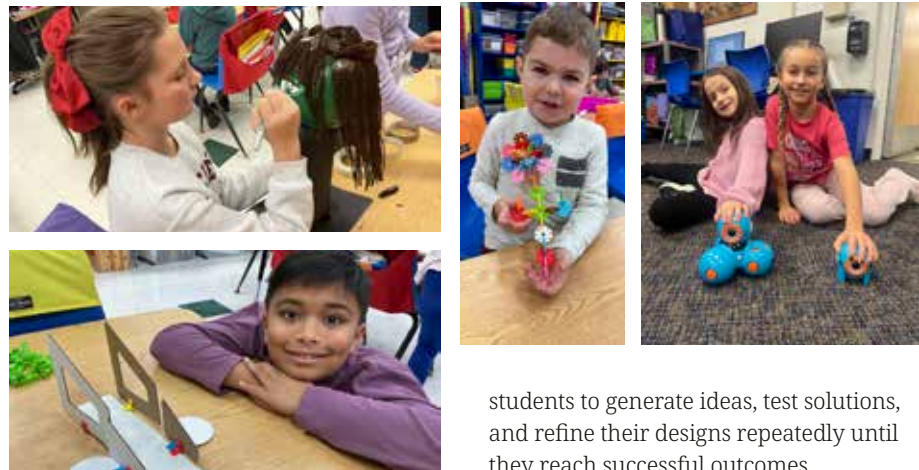


Saddle River Resident, Husband, Dad, Chef Paul "Paulie" Valetutti is a girl dad, husband, chef and Saddle River Resident. A Bosco and Rutgers Alumnus, he grew up in Mahwah and has cooked professionally in Arizona, New York, France, and Italy.

He and his family love to travel, ski, and of course, eat! He is very passionate about the experiences available in life.

Wandell School News INNOVATE, BUILD, REPEAT

How Wandell Elementary School students are mastering the engineering design process the iSTEAM curriculum that turns kids into collaborative creators



students to generate ideas, test solutions, and refine their designs repeatedly until they reach successful outcomes.

Innovation is starting early at Wandell Elementary School, where students in pre-K through fifth grade are not just learning about science, technology, engineering, art, and math. They are actively becoming engineers and designers through an immersive curriculum centered around Design Thinking and the Engineering Design Process. Wandell students are gaining the skills to independently design, code, build, and create a variety of innovative projects and prototypes.

The curriculum's rigorous approach ensures that learning is directly applied to solving real-world challenges using both digital platforms and hands-on maker materials. Students are taught that engineering can also be used to protect the Earth's resources and environment, reinforcing the idea that creativity and responsibility go hand in hand.

The Systematic Power of the Engineering Design Process (EDP)

At the heart of student achievement in the program is mastery of the Engineering Design Process (EDP). Wandell's iSTEAM curriculum emphasizes that engineering design is a systematic and creative process used to meet human needs or wants. The process is iterative and encourages

Achievement in Defining a Problem

The engineering journey for Wandell's youngest learners begins with thinking, not building. Students learn early that the first step in solving any problem is clearly defining the challenge. They are taught to evaluate a situation in a new way and articulate the need or want they are addressing.

Alongside this, they are introduced to the concept of constraints. These include real-world parameters such as limited materials, tight timelines, or cost considerations. By understanding and working within these constraints, students begin to think like real engineers. By the upper elementary grades, they are expected to define complex problems that incorporate detailed criteria and constraints, mirroring professional expectations.

The Creative Spark: Generating Solutions

With the problem defined, students move into the creative development phase. They quickly discover that there is rarely one perfect solution. Instead, multiple design possibilities often exist.

Solutions. They evaluate each idea based on how well it aligns with the original criteria and fits within the limitations of time, materials, and cost. To guide their

decision making, they sometimes use analytical tools such as decision matrices before selecting a direction for prototyping.

This process strengthens their abilities in collaboration, communication, and self reflection, all essential skills for effective engineering practice.

Student Spotlight: Hands-On Triumphs Across Grade Levels

From the earliest grades, students participate in active, hands-on learning. They build prototypes of vehicles, houses, and other functional designs using tailored tools and materials. As they advance, they explore digital design principles through platforms such as Tinkercad and work with a range of robotic systems.

In robotics and coding units, students design and program simple robots or circuits, test their solutions, and revise them to overcome specific challenges. The iSTEAM program allows every learner to transform a concept into a tangible solution, choosing digital or physical tools to address real needs within their school or community.

Students also learn to document and share their process, preparing them with the creativity, collaboration, and problem solving skills essential for their future academic and professional lives.



WANDELL SCHOOL REGISTRATION REMINDER

Families are kindly reminded that pre-K and kindergarten registration for Wandell School opens on January 15th at www.wandellschool.org. Early pre-K registration on January 15th is reserved for Saddle River residents only. The registration portal for pre-k families who reside outside of Saddle River will open on February 1st. Please visit the website regularly for updates, instructions, and all required registration information.

"When young learners realize they can question, explore, and build things themselves, you can actually see their confidence grow. The Wandell iSTEAM program gives them tools to understand the world and the belief that they can shape it because their curiosity is boundless. There's nothing more rewarding than witnessing those 'aha' moments that spark a lifelong love of learning."
—MRS. KILGALLEN, ISTEAM TEACHER AT WANDELL SCHOOL

"I enjoy iSTEAM because I'm passionate about space and exploration. Learning engineering fits perfectly with that and helps me understand how things are designed and built."
—LUCAS G., GRADE 5, WANDELL SCHOOL

"I like iSTEAM because it's good for your brain and helps you learn new things."
—JAKE S., GRADE 1, WANDELL SCHOOL

"I love iSTEAM because I get to create and make art in so many different ways. I especially enjoyed re-engineering a balloon for our Thanksgiving project — it was so much fun."
—ARNA N., GRADE 5, WANDELL SCHOOL



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The Power of Possibility: Technology and Innovation Thrive at Saddle River Day School

At Saddle River Day School, innovation begins in the Lower School's **IDEAS Lab**—a vibrant space where curiosity and creativity come together to inspire young minds. Through hands-on experiences in coding, robotics, and digital design, students are encouraged to *Imagine, Design, Explore, Apply, and Succeed (IDEAS)*. Guided by dedicated educators, they learn not only how technology works, but how to use it as a tool for



problem-solving, collaboration, and self-expression. The IDEAS Lab serves as a launchpad for discovery and innovation, setting the stage for signature programs like Code à la Mode and other project-based learning experiences that bring imagination to life.

INNOVATION BEGINS EARLY

Technology exploration starts as early as **Kindergarten**, where students earn a playful “driver’s license” before navigating simple robots through a custom obstacle course. As they move through the Lower School, students use their personal iPads to engage with increasingly complex tools and concepts—programming robots to become drones, capturing aerial video footage, exploring digital video creation, working in the Makery, and experimenting with 3D printing.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN ACTION

One of the signature PBL experiences in the Lower School is the **First Grade Restaurant**. Students conceive, design, plan, and ultimately run their own “restaurant,” integrating learning across every subject area. They study the plant growth cycle in science, practice pricing and money skills in math, and use basic graphic design techniques in art. Throughout this project—and many others—the IDEAS Lab enhances learning through apps and digital tools, including the Daniel Tiger Nature Walk app, which guides students on interactive outdoor explorations of the environment.

CODE À LA MODE: LEADERSHIP, LEARNING, & ICE CREAM

Each February, the Lower School community comes together for **Code à la Mode**, an interactive day of coding and robotics hosted by the SRDS chapter of **Girls Who Code**. Open to Lower School students and their families, the event features hands-on activities with Scratch and Osmo, demonstrations by the robotics teams, and—always a highlight—ice cream sundaes served by Lower School teachers and staff.

For Girls Who Code members, the event is more than a showcase. It is an opportunity to develop leadership and teamwork skills, present projects on topics such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, coding, and robotics, and collaborate on tasks like t-shirt design and exhibit creation. While Girls Who Code provides a rich computer science experience, it represents just one of the many pathways through which Lower School students engage with emerging technology at SRDS.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

Anchored by SRDS’s commitment to preparing students for success both in school and beyond, the Lower School IDEAS Lab provides access to state-of-the-art technology and instruction from highly qualified educators. These teachers focus not only on foundational skills but also on helping students integrate, apply, and expand their learning in meaningful ways. The curriculum remains intentionally fluid, evolving to meet the needs of students and the rapidly changing world around them.

The result is a learning environment where students don’t just imagine the future—they build it. At Saddle River Day School, the IDEAS Lab is helping students become creators, innovators, and problem-solvers who are ready to shape the world ahead.



Start the New Year with Better Hearing Health

BY DR. ANN MARIE OLSON



AS WE WELCOME 2026, many of us set goals to feel better, live healthier, and focus on habits that support long-term wellness. One area that’s often overlooked—but essential to overall health—is **hearing**. While permanent hearing loss can’t be reversed, there are many simple steps you can take this year to protect your ears and keep your auditory system functioning at its best.

Support Your Cardiovascular Health

Healthy hearing begins with good circulation. The inner ear relies on a rich blood supply, and conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes can affect that delicate system. Even gentle daily exercise - such as walking, swimming, or a light indoor workout—can support healthy blood flow. Just **20–30 minutes a day** can make a meaningful difference.

Fuel Your Body with Hearing-Healthy Foods

Your diet influences more than your energy level - it plays a role in hearing wellness, too. Foods rich in **antioxidants, omega-3s, leafy greens, whole grains, and lean proteins** help support vascular health, which benefits the auditory system. Nutrients like folate, magnesium, and vitamins A, C, and E may offer additional protection. Limiting salt, sugar, and processed foods also supports healthy blood pressure.

Protect Your Ears—Especially in Winter

Noise-induced hearing loss is completely preventable, and winter adds its own challenges. Cold temperatures can reduce blood flow to the ears, making them more vulnerable to damage and worsening ear discomfort or tinnitus.

THIS SEASON, BE MINDFUL OF:

- Wearing warm hats or ear coverings outdoors
- Using earplugs at loud events or when snowblowers are in use
- Keeping earbud volume below **60%**
- Taking listening breaks during long sessions

Protecting your ears from both noise and cold helps preserve long-term hearing health.

Use Hearing Aids Consistently

If you’ve been diagnosed with hearing loss, wearing your hearing aids daily is one of the most effective steps you can take for your cognitive and social well-being. Treatment reduces listening strain, improves communication, and supports brain health. If you suspect a change in hearing, January is a great time for a professional evaluation.

Schedule Your Annual Hearing Checkup

Just like vision and dental care, a yearly hearing exam is an essential part of preventive health. Early detection leads to better outcomes—and a more vibrant, connected year ahead.

Start 2026 with healthier habits for your ears and your overall well-being. **Sophisticated Hearing in Ridgewood is here to help you every step of the way.**

Dr. Ann Marie Olson
Sophisticated Hearing



Owner and audiologist at Sophisticated Hearing – Ridgewood, NJ, and Saddle River Resident
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- Focus Recharge
- Dream Positive
- Start Improve
- Smile Confidence
- Move Strength
- Grow Progress
- Hope Refresh
- Learn Encourage
- Try Energy
- Happy Motivate

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HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

A brand-new year means a brand-new challenge! Look carefully at the photo and see if you can find all 11 differences.



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Thank you to all our friends and clients for another stellar year for the #1 team!

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