

An Exclusive Magazine Serving the Residents of Landfall & Wrightsville Beach

# intracoastal

MAY 2021

## living

# Learn, Play and Thrive!

### Activities Abound for Local Kids

Front row left to right:  
Hadley Brown  
Madison Sawyer  
Hadley Cerrone  
Leo Jackson  
Row 2 left to right:  
Virginia Grey Norvell  
Sasha Young  
Ms. Cissie Brooks  
Brody Bardsley



Best Version Media

Photo by Mark Steelman Photography

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**DEAR COMMUNITY FRIENDS,**

Welcome to the **May 2021 issue of *Intracoastal Living***, an exclusive magazine serving the residents of Landfall and Wrightsville Beach. With warm weather and Memorial Day marking the official start of the summer season, there's a lot of anticipation in the air as arms are vaccinated and restrictions in public places are eased.

Had the spring and summer of 2020 gone as planned, a day in the life of an average child would have meant actual classrooms, soccer and football games, middle-school plays and theatre rehearsals, scout outings, and birthday parties. Spending time with other children, in school classrooms, team sports, and after-school activities is a crucial piece of growing up. ***Intracoastal Living's Resident Feature/Cover Story, "Learn, Play and Thrive!"*** is a celebration and shout out to kids in our community -- and especially the **teachers, parents, coaches, and counselors** who ensure they are not only surviving, but thriving – with diverse school, after-school, and community activities available to them.

Thank you to the dedicated teachers at **Wrightsville Beach Elementary School**, who invited *Intracoastal Living* to visit prior to their spring break in early April and photograph the **"Ocean Debris"** poster art produced by **4th grader's instructed by Marine Science Coordinator and School Counselor, Ms. Ann (Cissie) Brooks and fourth-grade teachers, Ms. Meaghan Thomas and Mr. Woody Whittle.** The Marine Science art project, sponsored by the **Harbor Island Garden Club**, caught the eye of town officials in the **Parks and Recreation Department** who selected eight of the children's colorful creations to post along access points at the beach, such as **Johnny Mercer's pier.** The eight "Ocean Debris" posters selected by town officials are featured on the magazine front cover and also proudly displayed by six of the student artists pictured here. Congratulations to all!

**The Landfall Foundation** is planning its' **Gala fundraiser, "Bubbles, Bourbon & BBQ"** on **September 10th**, and tickets are now available. Check out the article by **resident, Lesley Parker**, to learn how the **Landfall Foundation's Capital Grants to Nourish NC and the Brigade Boys and Girls Club** are making a difference for individuals served by these non-profit organizations.

**We encourage our readers to support the sponsors who advertise in *Intracoastal Living* and help us to bring neighbors together by providing family-relevant content, touching stories, community news, and events each month – with great story telling and feature articles.**



Sasha Young



Brody Bardsley



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PUBLISHER  
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Madison Sawyer



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**Wrightsville Beach Elementary School 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students**

PHOTO BY MARK STEELMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Row 1: front row left to right: Elena Styes, Miranda McPherson, Molly McPherson, Elle Hommes.

Row 2 left to right: Hartley Hoff, Emilio Lopez Rosales, Davis Davenport, Dylan Smeilus.

Row 3 left to right: Kaylee Thigpen, Insel VanEtten, Kalina Todorovski, Max Bell, Ryatt Agnew, Quinn Hodges.

Row 4 left to right: Leo Jackson, Spencer Debold, Patrick Kazmierczak, Juliett Rotondo, Elizabeth Everhardt, Catherine Murphey, Cameron Bridges.

Row 5 left to right: Hance Mayo, Sasha Young, Brody Bardsley, Noah Smeilus, Davis Davenport.

Row 1 left to right: Madison Sawyer, Stone Turner, Robin Diederich, Stella Beausang, Jack Robinson, Nolan Smyth  
 Row 2 left to right: Oliver Oester, Capri McGary, Tennyson Oertel, Hadley Cerrone, Liam Fruh  
 Row 3 left to right: Brady Cerrone, Nash Beery, Cooper Brown, Smith Reynolds, Hadley Brown, AC Goodwin  
 Row 4 left to right: Virginia Grey Norvell, Helena Watkins, Grant Cahill, Smith Reynolds, Dodge Ray



# Learn, Play and Thrive!

## Activities Abound for Local Kids

BY TERRY LANE AND GEORGE CLARKE

PHOTOS BY MARK STEELMAN PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF LJ WOODARD, COURTESY OF GLENN BUCK AND BOY SCOUT TROOP 232, COURTESY OF THE HARBOR ISLAND GARDEN CLUB, COURTESY OF JARROD COVINGTON, COURTESY OF CEDRIC BAKER BONEY AND COURTESY OF THE WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH PARKS & RECREATION DEPT.

After a year lost to the pandemic, kids around the Cape Fear Region will have plenty of options to get back to having fun, living and learning with the variety of organized programs and group options available to them. As COVID restrictions are being lifted, youth across the Cape Fear region are experiencing the longed-for opportunity to once again meet up to socialize, learn, play and thrive!

From movie making to mock races, the pandemic forced some creative responses from children's programs across the region. Now, with more opportunity to provide recreation for kids, several programs from the Town of Wrightsville Beach, the Wrightsville Beach School and local businesses are back this year.

From socially distanced Marine Science field trips at the beach for Wrightsville Beach Elementary students, to surf and sound standup paddle board races, outdoor theatre and dance performances, scouting adventures in the great outdoors, junior lifeguard training, flag football and basketball programs, not to mention baby-sitting classes, local kids had a lot to do in 2021; and have even more activities to participate in this summer.



Miss "Cissie" Brooks instructs a 4th grade class.



**STUDENT STEWARDS OF THE SEAS**

Just before they broke for spring break in April, two classes of 4th grade students at Wrightsville Beach Elementary learned about the pollution of the sea by marine debris and crafted poster-sized art containing sea animals and environmental stewardship messages that they had studied as part of Ann "Cissie" Brooks Marine Science class.

Prior to the students creating the posters, they learned about trash - how long items take to decompose, corrode, or break down. A particular focus was the negative impact plastic has on the environment and ocean animals. They also learned the various ways debris gets into the ocean and about the importance of the 4 Rs - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Refuse. "Through various lessons, projects, productions, and many beach sweeps, students have become keenly aware of the impact of marine debris on the ocean and our coastal environment," Cissie said.

To bring this message home, and with the goal to curtail littering, each class member drew a poster with a slogan and artwork with their personal pleas for people to stop littering. With signs like "Keep WB Free of Debris," "Help us Help the Sea" and 'Let's Work Together,' nearly two dozen students in the class made colorful posters that will ultimately be mounted at access spots around Wrightsville Beach.

*Continued on page 8*

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Harbor Island Garden Club (HIGC) member, Eva Elmore, a BROKER/Realtor with Intracoastal Realty, explained the club's ongoing support for the Marine Science art projects at the school.

"As a club we are very

interested in promoting an interest and appreciation of gardening and environmental issues to the kids so they may become the next generation of stewards of the environment. We are excited to have this 4th grade class as the next group of Rooty Rascals," she exclaimed. "The signs they drew were so imaginative and make great visual reminders to all that see them!! Thank you also to the town of WB for posting them!"

The fourth-grade students -- who are now on the "Recycling Team" with responsibility for collecting recycling waste at the school -- made the posters after learning about how long plastic trash takes to decompose and the impact it has on ocean animals.

"It's my hope that when people see this artwork by children, that they don't just stop at 'Oh isn't that cute.' I hope they pause to reflect on the fact that their individual actions, large and small, have a consequential impact on the health of our community, our ocean, and our planet and most importantly, on the future generation, the little ones that made the signs," Cissie said. "If kids can care, adults can care too."

"The ocean is a very integral part of all our lifestyles and pollution and plastics are impacting the health of our oceans and beaches," said the Harbor Island Garden Club's Elmore. "We are so appreciative that we have been able to work with these wonderful kids and programs."



It's all smiles upon arrival to the South End of Wrightsville Beach for the filming of *Moana Jr.*

### LIGHTS. CAMERA. SUNRISE.

Since the aptly named Performance Club produces performances to be staged before a live audience, its activities in 2020 were extremely disrupted by COVID-19. But as the old adage goes, the show must go on, and the director of this Wrightsville Beach children's live performance clinic found a way to make that happen.

"The club was looking forward to producing another summer stock of shows for 2020 but just days later, North Carolina went into lockdown and anything associated with live theater was cancelled," said Performance Club's Director LJ Woodard. "It was so sad, because we were just celebrating the joy of theater and what it provides for our community especially to the youth involved...it didn't seem real."

Performance Club Kids, which is offered by the Wrightsville Beach Parks and Recreation Department, is Wilmington's only studio theater for young actors, offering after-school programs, workshops, and summer camps for ages 5-17 where kids learn by playing and play by acting.

Named one of the 12 Greatest Children's Theaters Across the U.S. by BACKSTAGE, they are also known for a summer stock program for young performers. In 2019, The Performance Club put all their energy into just one production and that was *Frozen Jr* which paid off because it was later honored as the recipient of BEST CHILDREN'S THEATER PRODUCTION for 2019 by the Star News at the Wilmington Theater Awards on March 11th, 2020.

Performance Club's Summer Stock is a series of theatrical productions over the summer months (by audition only) where participants can experience semiprofessional theater within a 2-3-week time frame at the historic Thalian Hall.

"We literally move into the space and create lasting memories all while performing a fantastic show," LJ said.

LJ had already purchased the theatrical rights and scripts to *Moana, Jr.* which was to be their June 2020 summer stock production. In the spirit of positive thinking and moving forward in the hopes that the state of the COVID-19 pandemic would be better by summer, she began casting the show through video submissions.

"I wanted to be ready when things would re-open. These kids were going to need an outlet," Woodard said.



Left: LJ Woodard, Director of the Performance Club's adaptation of *Moana Jr.* from stage to screen, shoots on the South End of Wrightsville Beach.

Below: The cast of Ocean dancers featured with *Moana* at the South End of the beach.



The video submissions came flooding in and the show was cast in no time. While waiting for the governor's next executive order; scripts were distributed, measurements for costumes were taken and rehearsal schedules were plotted in preparation for when things would get back to normal.

"That was the biggest challenge. How do you produce a show under the guidelines of the COVID-19 pandemic? Thalian Hall was offering spaced out seating, but what about the cast? How do we keep them distanced, especially kids?" she asked.

Woodard divided the cast into small groups to rehearse at her favorite space, Evolution Healing Arts, a studio that promotes wellness and training for performers. However, as the weeks went by, the state of pandemic was not getting any better, she said, and it was obvious that a live production at Thalian Hall wasn't going to be possible.

Determined to not disappoint the kids and to simply do something rather than nothing; Woodard, with the help of her stage manager Tre Richneck, devised an alternative plan for *Moana, Jr.* Since the show's plot took place on an island, they took their production outside, on location to be filmed for an online release instead of performing on stage.

With early 6 a.m. call times before the crowds arrived, the beaches became their set, from the South End to the Wrightsville Beach Park. They also utilized green screens for scenes with fewer performers.

The costumes were designed by Jen Lapalco of Sartor Designs while junior assistant PJ Ebby choreographed the ocean sequences.

*Continued on page 10*

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**RESIDENT FEATURE**, *continued*

“They really gave life to the production and color,” LJ said. “Her only instruction was not to use the color green because of the scenes filmed in front of the green screen. Except for the Heart of Te Fiti character, of course. She had to be green.”

LJ said she most remembered one Instagram post from a parent who appreciated the chance to see their child perform and feel normal again. “For a brief moment, we forgot there was a pandemic,” LJ said describing the post. “We got to escape from the reality that was at that time.”

In the end, the Performance Club was able to produce an alternative approach in presenting children’s theater during the pandemic.

Woodard admits that the challenges of the virus did make it difficult to film and gave her some “low-key anxiety” from time to time but is happy to report that the cast and creative team all remained healthy because they washed hands, kept a distance, self-quarantined and wore masks, until the moments of filming and recording tracks.

“No one can deny that being outside is the healthiest thing for our kids during this time and to be able to provide that in a theatrical atmosphere was very rewarding,” said Woodard.

Wrightsville Beach resident, Gavin Munn is a young, up and coming actor who began his career the age of 4 as a Munchkin in Performance Club’s *Wizard of Oz* on the Wrightsville Beach Park stage! He’s gone on to land roles in television and film with co-stars such as Zac Efron, Robert De Niro and Aden Young, according to PC Director, LJ Woodard.



Moana Jr. adaptation from stage to screen.



Landfall resident, LJ Woodard, with *Jungle Book* actor, Gavin Munn of WB.



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“His strong attributes are improvisation, and he continues his professional acting training with classes, workshops and even local community programs like Performance Club’s Children’s Theater in the Park programs where he played Mowgli in *Jungle Book*,” she said.

The Performance Club is set to bring back live outdoor performances to Wrightsville Beach Park from April 14 through May 20 featuring *Finding Nemo*. Set for 5:30 p.m., the performance will be accompanied by a food truck and a youth band to entertain afterwards. Performance Club’s online theatrical adaptation of *Moana Jr.* can be viewed on their website: [www.PerformanceClubKids.com](http://www.PerformanceClubKids.com).

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## ELITE RACERS, ELITE RESULTS

With steady balance and dogged pursuit, Wrightsville Beach's team of kid standup paddleboard (SUP) racers had a golden 2020 and is ready for more success in 2021. The date change of the big local race, the Carolina Cup at the Blockade Runner Beach Resort, to November gives the racers of the Wrightsville Beach "Junior Elite Team", known as the "JETs" added practice time on local waters.

Trained by Wrightsville SUP owner Jarrod Covington from his sound side 96 West Salisbury St. facility, membership in the JETs ranges from 9 to 18, as this competitive and fun club has helped train young athletes for competitive races across the region since it was launched in 2016.

Covington said a couple of members of the JETs plan to compete in the 13.5 mile ocean paddle, known as the "The Graveyard." "It's a grueling race," Covington said. Some of his JETs are now training to be some of the youngest ever to attempt it.

One of the competitors will be Campbell Carter, who will turn 16 in May, and brings a winning streak into summer 2021. He won gold medals in both sprints and distance at the AAU Jr. Olympics competitions in Palm Bay, Fla. in July 2020. And last month, he finished in fifth place in the Treasure Coast Paddle Battle, a 10-kilometer ocean race in Ft. Pierce, Fla.

Erin Fitzpatrick, 15, a South Harbor Island resident, Jenna Blackburn and Elle Newkirk are also among the local SUP racers that will be competing this summer.

Standup paddle boarding offers some insulation from the dangers of COVID. After all, it's fairly easy to maintain six feet of spacing when you're on a 12-foot board. But even though they could practice, the kids of the Wrightsville Beach JETs paddleboard racing team still lost a major part of their summer last year as competitions across the country were cancelled. And since there were no races in 2020, the JETs simply staged their own, conducting several mock races on Banks Channel and other surrounding waters.

"It helped them to continue to push themselves," said Covington. "We got together and set personal goals and paddle goals...emphasizing that the training also had a vision of how each team member can make an impact as a member of society," he said.

*Continued on page 12*



Membership of the Wrightsville Beach Junior Elite Team, also known as the JETs, ranges from ages 9 to 18.



Wrightsville Beach locals and JETs members Erin Fitzpatrick and Elle Newkirk train on Banks Channel.



JETs paddler Campbell Carter won gold medals in both sprints and distance at the AAU Jr. Olympics competitions in Palm Bay, Fla. in July 2020.



Left to right, Lawson McInnis, Georgia Bloomer and Dylan Schmidt from the Wrightsville Beach JETs take the podium at the 2019 Surf to Sound challenge at the Blockade Runner.

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## SCOUTING ADVENTURES ON WB

Climbing to the top of a 54-foot tower? Camping in below-freezing weather in shelter you yourself built? That's the kind of adventure Wrightsville Beach's Boy Scout Troop found last year. Now, a few of their members have their sights set on the Great Northwoods this summer.

Since the Fall of 2020, Boy Scout Troop 232, which meets regularly at Little Chapel on the Boardwalk at 2 W. Fayetteville St. has advanced eight of its troops to the rank of Eagle Scouts. Wrightsville Beach's Gavin Cazeault and Landfall's Brooks Isear earned Eagle Scout rank this year, joining Tab Taylor and Anders Jensen as Landfall and WB residents who have also earned the Boy Scouts highest honor.

More merit badges are coming in. Two of the scouts took a step closer to their Wilderness Survival Badge last winter by building their own shelters while camping in Carolina State Park on a 29-degree night. And a group of the scouts recently went on an adventure at the Coastal Horizon outdoor center in Castle Hayne, which features a climbing tower with an array of ropes, swings and climbing holds.

"Everyone made it to the top. We climbed in the afternoon and camped in the woods at night," said Glenn Buck, leader of Troop 232.

Troop 232 has nearly 30 members, with a core group of about 20 members who remained "pretty active" throughout the pandemic. The scout's members include a dozen residents of Wrightsville Beach and Landfall.



Left to right, Wrightsville Beach Boy Scout Troop 232 members William Shakar, Sean Hession, Nathan Buck, Luke Richardson, Conner Walker, Wesley Walker, William Glockner, Cutter Morgan and Kyle Buck. (Photos courtesy of Glenn Buck.)



An Eagle Scout project at Harbor Way Gardens.



Camping and cleanup on Masonboro Island is part of the adventure for the Boy Scouts of Troop 232.

"We did a lot of local stuff so we didn't have to carpool and could keep separated," Buck said. "We had camping trips to Masonboro and Carolina Beach State Park."

Glenn took over as troop leader in Fall 2020 after former Scout Master, Steve Boehling, left the role once his son aged out and left for college. Glenn has two sons in the troop, Nathan, 16, and Kyle, 13.

Despite the pandemic, Glenn said several scouts were very close to earning Eagle Scout, having mostly completed the projects and skills tests needed to earn the prestigious ranking.

"We just needed to nudge them over the finish line," Buck said.

The local scout troop is still feeling the collateral impacts of the pandemic, as a planned trip to Canada this summer was called off due to issues with border crossings. Many of the local members of Troop 232 will now be headed to Camp Raven Knob, a Boy Scout camp in Mt. Airy, N.C.

*Continued on page 14*

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Back row, left to right: Cedric Boney, Luke Dorosko, Sam Artemenko, Coach Charlie Thomas. Front row, left to right: Chase Bendjy, Smith Reynolds, and Henry Holinsworth.



Hunter Barden shows off the team's title belt, with Taylor Blackwell, Hampton Tillery, Dodge Ray, Ronan Hoff and Ralf Henry.

### BETTER THAN EVER

Another program offered by Wrightsville Beach Parks & Recreation Department is returning this year after being forced to call off its 2020 programs due coronavirus restrictions. Led by fitness and athletic trainer, Cedric Baker Boney, the town's flag football and basketball programs had been going strong before the pandemic.

Cedric said there was an enthusiastic response from the community and when the leagues came back this spring, they came back strong. "We're better than ever," Cedric said of Wrightsville Beach's Youth Basketball Instructional League and Foundation Flag Football for Youth league, which run in the spring and conclude with championships scheduled for early May. The programs have about 170 kids enrolled, he said, and is split into age divisions for kids 6-12 years old.

The Town of Wrightsville Beach first launched the football and basketball programs under Coach Cedric in 2016 as "clinics," not leagues. After two years as a clinic, their popularity grew, and soon there were enough kids enrolled to have players form teams, wear jerseys and compete in a league.

One local mother who has seen the growth of the program said the enthusiasm brought by Cedric and his staff of coaches make it a program her kids are excited to attend.

"Cedric is so committed to making every single week the best time you will have had all week," said Kate Woodbury, a Wrightsville Beach mother with two of her sons in the program. "He loves his work, it's written on his face, his joy is just contagious. From the most talented to the least, everyone is having a good time and learning about sportsmanship."

Kate's eldest son West, 9, has been in both the basketball and flag football program for three years and her second eldest, Louie, has played in the programs for two years. Kate, whose family owns a home on South Lumina Drive, said the coaches, along with a set of reliable sponsors, help make the program memorable for the kids. Cedric said he seeks to create an environment that makes the competition fun for the kids. He awards title-fight style belts after some practices. He also brings out a DJ for basketball games.

"They love it, they can't wait for Wednesday and Thursday," she said. "The parents love coming as much as the kids love playing."

One of the factors behind the growth of this Wrightsville Beach program is the local sponsors, Kate said.

"It's incredibly well organized," she said. "It has great, solid, reliable sponsorship from some of the enterprising families around here."

The program is also serving as a training exercise for emerging local athletes, many who have gone on to see success at higher levels. Some of the coaches that help Boney with the league include former professional and college athletes, he said.

"We've seen kids doing well for their high school teams and see the youth league as a springboard for that," Cedric said. "It's about building memories for these kids."



Front row left to right: Grayson James, Davis Woodbury, Wayland Beam, Samuel Cox. Back row left to right: Basketball Coach Josh Humphrey and Cedric Baker Boney.





## WB SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS

The Wrightsville Beach Parks and Recreation Department offers several other options for kids in addition to the theater, football and basketball programs this summer.

With Kids Run the Nation, kids from age 4 to 14 can learn to run with better form and run more confidently. Children who are eager to play soccer can get started with Soccer Shots, offering 5-to-10-year old's an opportunity to learn soccer skills through a program that focuses on character development. Kids who complete the Soccer Shots program can move on to the Soccer Shots Academy. The town's Parks and Recreation Department also offer tennis lessons for youth aged 6-12.

It's not all athletics, however.

For teens 11-14, the town offers the Safe Sitter Babysitter Training Course, which includes guidance on how to handle emergencies, severe weather, and other important skills. The class includes role-playing scenarios to help train the kids. With Meyer's Modern Manners, kids can participate in a cotillion program that include ballroom and popular dance, along with etiquette and social skills training. Learn more about the children's programs offered by the Town of Wrightsville Beach by calling 910-256-7925.

Another Wrightsville Beach institution also offers an opportunity for summer fun for local youth. The Wrightsville Beach Museum of History sponsors Camp Chris Stone, where kids can learn about fishing, marshland creatures and important ecological details in our area. The camp is named for longtime Wrightsville Beach resident, museum supporter and prolific naturalist, Chris Stone. The camp is featured through a variety of dates in July. Call the museum at (910) 256-2569 for more information about the camp. Activities will comply with the North Carolina COVID-19 Executive Orders that are in place during the time of the program

After a summer in 2020 that was essentially lost to the pandemic, without organized team sports and other activities for local kids, the Landfall and Wrightsville Beach communities will have plenty of options for their children to get back to living, learning, and thriving with a variety of safely monitored outdoor programs available this year. ~



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## Register Now for Summer Camps!

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 Performance Club ~ Lacrosse  
 CB Strength Training & Conditioning  
 Meyer's Modern Manners  
 Basketball ~ Flag Football ~ Tennis

## Coming Soon!

**Wrightsville Beach Farmers' Market**  
**Mondays**  
 8:00 am - 1:00 pm  
 May 17<sup>th</sup> - December 13<sup>th</sup>

Buy fresh locally grown produce, baked goods, seafood, unique craft items & more! The Farmers' Market is located on Seawater Lane adjacent to Wrightsville Beach Town Hall.



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