

Elevated Living

December 2025



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A message from Michael Mendillo

President, FirstService Residential

As we approach the holiday season and look ahead to a brand-new year, I'm reminded of what makes our communities so special: the people who bring them to life. This time of year naturally invites us to pause, reflect, and appreciate the connections, traditions, and moments that make our neighborhoods feel like home.

I continue to be inspired by the spirit of togetherness I see every day, from the dedicated associates who serve with heart, to the volunteers who give their time, to the residents who create vibrant, welcoming places to live. Whether it's celebrating holiday festivities, participating in year-end community events, or simply lending a helping hand to a neighbor, these small but meaningful actions strengthen the fabric of our communities.

I am especially proud of the accomplishments we've achieved together this year. From innovative lifestyle programming to major educational Summits and L.E.A.D.S. events, to national industry recognition, our communities and teams continue to set the standard for excellence.

As we welcome the new year, I am energized by what lies ahead: new opportunities to grow, new ways to elevate the resident experience, and new moments that will define the year to come. Together, we will continue to innovate, collaborate, and lead with purpose.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season filled with peace, warmth, and celebration and a bright, inspiring start to the year ahead.



L.E.A.D.S. 2025

MidAtlantic L.E.A.D.S. event recap

We are pleased to share that our first annual LEADS (Learn, Evolve, Achieve, Deliver, Succeed) event, held on September 17 at the Fredericksburg Convention Center in Fredericksburg, VA was a resounding success. Designed as a full-day experience of learning, inspiration, culture, and connection, L.E.A.D.S. brings together associates, leadership, business partners, and clients in a collaborative environment that embodies our ONE TEAM vision.

Event highlights included:

- Opening message by Michael Mendillo, president, emphasizing the importance of resilience and maintaining a positive, calm attitude in the face of challenges
- Leadership development sessions focused on collaboration, communications and driving community success
- Insights from industry experts on emerging trends, best practices, and innovation in property management
- Peer-to-peer networking that strengthened our internal community and external partnerships
- A business partner tradeshow connecting associates with the trusted professionals who support our communities every day
- A keynote address by Carey Lohrenz, the first fully qualified female F-14 Tomcat pilot in the U.S. Navy who shared her powerful journey of determination, courage, and leadership.



Thank you for your continued support in empowering our associates to grow and lead. Together, we are creating stronger communities – built on trust, excellence, and a shared commitment to service.

Holiday Harmony: your guide to a stress-free season

The holidays are meant to be a time of joy, connection, and celebration, but for many, they can also bring stress, pressure, and exhaustion. Between gift shopping, family gatherings, and endless to-do lists, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. The good news? With a little planning and a shift in mindset, you can create a holiday season that feels calm, meaningful, and enjoyable.

Before you're buried in to-do lists and tangled lights, a few small proactive steps now can make all the difference. From hanging lights safely to setting a spending plan, here's how to prep your home (and your mindset) so December feels more merry than messy.

1. Plan ahead and set boundaries

Start by making a realistic plan. Create a gift list, set a budget, and stick to it to avoid financial strain. Don't feel obligated to attend every event, choose the ones that truly matter to you. Saying "no" to unnecessary commitments is an act of self-care.

2. Simplify hosting

If you're hosting, remember that perfection isn't the goal—connection is. Share responsibilities with family or friends, and don't hesitate to use shortcuts like paper plates or simple décor. A relaxed atmosphere is far more memorable than a flawless table setting.



3. Prioritize mental health

The holidays can amplify stress, so make time for yourself. Schedule downtime, take walks, or practice meditation. Focus on what matters most—quality time, not spotless décor. Daily gratitude exercises can also boost your mood and help you stay grounded.

4. Manage food and eating habits

Enjoy holiday treats without guilt by practicing balance and mindful eating. Avoid skipping meals, which can lead to overeating later. Remember, food is part of the celebration—don't let it become a source of stress.

5. Reduce financial pressure

Overspending is a common holiday stressor. Create a spending plan before shopping and stick to it. Thoughtful homemade gifts can be just as meaningful as store-bought ones—and they're easier on your wallet.

6. Handle family dynamics gracefully

Family gatherings can sometimes bring tension. Avoid hot-button topics and focus on shared activities like games or cooking together. If conflicts arise, remind yourself that others' behavior often isn't personal—choose empathy over confrontation.

7. Take time for yourself

Between celebrations and gatherings, carve out a bit of personal time—whether it's a quiet morning, an evening walk through the neighborhood lights, or simply relaxing with a cup of cocoa. Even buy yourself a simple gift

Final thoughts

A stress-free holiday season isn't about doing everything perfectly—it's about creating space for joy, connection, and peace. By planning ahead, simplifying where you can, and prioritizing your well-being, you'll set the stage for a holiday that feels truly special.





HEALTHY RECIPES

Lemon chicken and cinnamon glazed root vegetables

Ingredients

For the cinnamon glazed root vegetables:

- 1 small raw sweet potato (cut into 1-inch cubes, peeled if desired)
- 1/2 cup baby carrots (cut into 1-inch pieces) 1 small turnip (cut into 1-inch cubes)
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. light tub margarine
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. brown sugar

For the lemon chicken:

- non-stick Cooking spray
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (all visible fat discarded)
- 1 lemon
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. dried parsley
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano

Directions

1. For the cinnamon glazed root vegetables:
2. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
3. Combine vegetables in a medium mixing bowl and toss with olive oil to coat.
4. Spread vegetables on a baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes.
5. Stir vegetables and bake an additional 20 minutes until vegetables are tender (pierce easily with a fork) and are lightly browned. Return vegetables to mixing bowl and add margarine, cinnamon and brown sugar.
6. Toss until margarine is melted and vegetables are coated with cinnamon and sugar.

For the lemon chicken:

1. Pound chicken to even thinness (about 1 inch). Spray a large skillet with non-stick cooking spray, place over medium heat.
2. Add chicken to skillet and squeeze juice of 1/2 the lemon over the chicken.
3. Sprinkle pepper, parsley and oregano over the chicken.
4. Cook for 5-10 minutes on each side



HEALTHY RECIPES

Apple walnut cake

Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- 2 cups unsweetened applesauce
- 1/2 cup trans-fat-free tub margarine
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon stevia sweetener
OR 8 stevia sweetener packets
- 3 large eggs
- 3 cups whole-grain flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups chopped apples, such as Granny Smith or Honeycrisp
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup unsweetened, dried cranberries
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened shredded coconut flakes, optional

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly spray a 10-inch Bundt pan with cooking spray and lightly dust it with flour.
2. Using an electric mixer on medium speed, in a medium bowl, beat the applesauce, margarine, and stevia sweetener until well blended. Add the eggs, beating after each one.
3. In a large bowl, sift the flour, cinnamon, salt, baking soda, and nutmeg. Add the flour mixture to the applesauce mixture, beating on medium speed just until no flour is visible. Stir in the vanilla. Gently fold in the apples, walnuts, and cranberries. Pour the batter into the pan.
4. Bake for 1 hour, or until a wooden toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Transfer to a cooling rack. Let the cake cool completely. To help remove the cake from the pan, slide a butter knife along the outer edges of the pan and along the inner tube to release the cake. Invert the cake. Transfer to a serving plate. Sprinkle with the coconut flakes.

HOME LIVING

Giving back during the holidays

Regardless of how you celebrate, there are many ways to add more giving to your family traditions. This year, among the decorating, present-wrapping, and holiday magic, here are some ideas to consider.

Swap a present for a donation

In place of one or two gifts, offer a similar value to be donated. Talk together about what matters to your family. This can include discussing people experiencing homelessness, animal welfare, food insecurity, children's hospitals, and many others. You can also touch on specific organizations and their missions. Each family member can choose a separate recipient, or you can decide on one as a family.

Donate groceries or time at a food pantry

As kitchens fill with the sights and aromas of our favorite seasonal foods, the holidays are a perfect time to teach that not every family has enough to eat. Choose items together during a grocery run to bring a bag of food to your local pantry or plan a "giving day" to volunteer there.

Clean out the closets

With new toys and clothes headed their way, ask family to find gently used items that could be better appreciated by another adult or child. In cooler climates, winter coats and accessories are much needed as the weather chills. This is also some good motivation to clean out your own coat closet as well.

Start a collection or fundraiser

Feeling really inspired by the giving spirit? Start a drive or fundraiser of your own, which can help teach kids not only how to give themselves, but also how to motivate others to join in. They can share their project with friends and family to see the impact of their efforts grow.

Where to give back as a family

While many of us have organizations we already feel connected to, when approaching a less familiar cause it can be hard to know where to start. Here are some ways to find a meaningful recipient. Websites such as Charity Navigator offer tools to search by cause and location, as well as provide unbiased ratings. Feeding America is another helpful resource, where you can search by ZIP code to find a food bank near you. Many food banks also accept clothes and other necessary items, but it's worth a call ahead to ask.

No matter how you do it, making a positive impact is something to celebrate!





COMMUNITY LIVING

Fun holiday activities for festive family bonding

The holiday season is a wonderful chance to slow down, reconnect with loved ones, and enjoy meaningful traditions. Whether you're spending the holidays at home or traveling, engaging in festive activities can help strengthen bonds and create memories that last long after the season ends. Here are six fun holiday activities guaranteed to bring your family closer this year.

1. Holiday scavenger hunt

- Turn your celebration into an adventure with a festive scavenger hunt. This activity works well in any setting—your home, a relative's house, or wherever you may be spending the holidays. Hide holiday-themed items such as ornaments, candy canes, or small gifts and enjoy watching everyone work together (or compete!) to find them.

How to set it up:

- Choose a mix of easy and challenging hiding spots.
- Write creative riddles or clues for each item.
- Offer a fun prize, like a movie night or special treat.
- This simple activity adds excitement and friendly teamwork to your celebration.

2. DIY ornament decorating

- Get creative as a family with ornament decorating. This hands-on activity is great for all ages and lets everyone design their own keepsake. It's a wonderful way to personalize your holiday décor while enjoying relaxed family time.

How to get started:

- Gather clear ornaments and craft supplies—paint, glitter, ribbons, stickers, etc.
- Add names, dates, or meaningful messages to personalize each ornament.
- Display them on the tree or give them as thoughtful gifts.

3. Holiday movie marathon

- There's nothing quite like curling up together to watch holiday favorites. A movie marathon is a cozy way to unwind, especially after a busy day.



Tips for a great movie night:

- Let each family member choose a holiday film.
- Create a snack bar with popcorn, candy, and hot cocoa.
- Add pillows and blankets to make the space extra comfortable.

4. Cookie baking and decorating

- Holiday baking is a timeless tradition that fills your home with warmth and delicious aromas. Whether you make gingerbread cookies or classic sugar cookies, baking brings everyone into the kitchen to share laughs and creativity.

How to make it fun:

- Prep cookie dough ahead of time so everyone can focus on decorating.
- Set up a decorating station with frosting, sprinkles, candies, and edible glitter.
- Enjoy the finished cookies together or package them as gifts.
- Baking as a group creates memories as sweet as the treats themselves.

5. Volunteer together

- The holidays are a season of giving, and volunteering as a family or group is one of the most meaningful activities you can do. Look for ways to serve your community and brighten someone's day.

Ideas for volunteering:

- Participate in a toy, food, or coat drive.
- Help at a local shelter or community meal service.

- Organize a small neighborhood project, like gift wrapping or assembling care kits.
- Helping others strengthens your bond and reminds everyone of the true spirit of the holidays—gratitude, kindness, and compassion.

6. Family game night

- Game night is a simple but fun way to spark laughter and strengthen connections. It's perfect for chilly evenings when everyone wants to stay in and relax.

Ways to make it special:

- Choose games that everyone can enjoy, such as board games, trivia, or card games.
- Add festive snacks and background music to set the holiday mood.
- Keep things light by offering small prizes for winners.
- Game nights often become the conversations—and inside jokes—that families remember most.

The holidays are about creating meaningful moments with the people who matter most. Whether you're staying home or traveling, these activities can bring warmth, joy, and a deeper sense of connection to your celebrations. Wishing you and your loved ones a season full of fun, togetherness, and unforgettable memories.

BALANCED LIVING

Small shifts that make a big impact in the New Year

As the year winds down, many of us begin to think about how we want to feel moving into a fresh start. Instead of drastic resolutions or sweeping lifestyle overhauls, the most meaningful changes often come from small, consistent habits that create long-term balance.

Here are simple ways to embrace a healthier, steadier rhythm as you head into the new year.

1. Anchor your day with a mindful morning

Before checking emails or rushing into routines, take 5–10 minutes to stretch, breathe, journal, or simply sit with a warm cup of tea. This small pause lowers stress levels and helps set a grounded tone for your day.

2. Adopt the “50% Plate” concept

A balanced diet doesn't require a complicated plan. When preparing meals, aim to fill half of your plate with colorful vegetables or fruits. This boosts nutrients, supports digestion, and naturally helps regulate energy levels.

3. Move in ways you actually enjoy

Sustainable fitness comes from enjoyment, not obligation. Whether it's walking, swimming, dancing, yoga, or pickleball, choose activities that make you feel good. Even 20–30 minutes a day can significantly improve mobility, mood, and cardiovascular health.



4. Protect your sleep routine

Quality sleep is the foundation of balanced living. Try to keep a consistent sleep schedule and limit screens 30 minutes before bed. Even small improvements in sleep can support cognitive function, immune strength, and overall well-being.

5. Declutter your digital and physical spaces

A calm environment supports a calm mind. Spend a few minutes each week clearing inboxes, tidying a drawer, or organizing a small area of your home. Tiny resets lead to major clarity.

Balanced living isn't about perfection — it's about intentionality. With small, mindful adjustments, you can enter the new year feeling energized, centered, and ready for whatever comes next.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHTS

Amblebrook

Joyful living across generations

Amblebrook is a vibrant 55-and-better community in scenic Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, thoughtfully designed to inspire wellness, connection, and joyful living. With state-of-the-art amenities, resort-style gathering spaces, creative studios, and miles of trails, every day here invites residents to move, explore, and celebrate life together. A robust calendar of classes, clubs, and social events continues to foster friendships and meaningful engagement throughout the year.

This spirit of connection was on full display during AmbleKids, a two-day multigenerational celebration created especially for the youngest visitors, grandchildren, relatives, and special young friends of the Amblebrook community. This year's theme, PA Farm Life, brought learning and imagination to life through hands-on crafts, cooking demonstrations, a community-wide scavenger hunt, and interactive science activities. Kids spent the weekend exploring, creating, and discovering alongside their families—building memories that residents will cherish for years to come.

The event was an overwhelming success and a powerful reminder of the joy that comes from bringing generations together. Amblebrook looks forward to expanding its multigenerational programming and continuing to offer meaningful experiences that strengthen community bonds.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

88 Morgan

The summer was nothing short of amazing for 88 Morgan located in Jersey City, New Jersey! The community kicked off the season with our **Summer Soirée**, which turned out to be a huge success. Over 200 residents joined in for an evening filled with great music, delicious food, and lively conversation. A live DJ kept the energy high, while professional bartenders served refreshing drinks. Residents enjoyed passed hors d'oeuvres and a full outdoor food spread, complete with chefs grilling fresh burgers and hot dogs. The atmosphere was electric, and the feedback from residents was overwhelmingly positive.

To wrap up the season in style, residents gathered for an End-of-Summer Ice Cream Truck Social that brought smiles all around. Partnering with a local vendor, the team served more than 150 complimentary ice creams during the two-hour celebration. Laughter filled the air as neighbors mingled, kids enjoyed their favorite flavors, and everyone savored a sweet way to say goodbye to summer.

The fun didn't end there! Every week through September, the rooftop deck transformed into an open-air theater for our Movie Under the Stars series. Residents cozied up under the night sky to enjoy a lineup of family-friendly favorites, complete with fresh popcorn and a relaxed atmosphere. This event quickly became a cherished tradition, creating a warm and welcoming space for residents to unwind, connect, and make lasting memories.

From ice cream socials to starlit movie nights, these gatherings remind us that community is built through shared experiences. Morgan 88 continues to set the standard for outstanding engagement, bringing neighbors together, creating lasting memories, and making our community truly special. We can't wait to deliver even more moments like these in the seasons ahead!



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Veteran's Day in FirstService Residential

In every community we serve, honoring our veterans is a priority and a privilege. These brave individuals have dedicated their lives to protecting our freedoms, and it's our responsibility to ensure they feel valued and respected. By acknowledging their sacrifices and contributions, we not only celebrate their service but also strengthen the sense of unity and pride within our communities.

Traditions of America Silver Springs

Mechanicsburg, PA

The Social Committee at Traditions of America Silver Spring expresses its gratitude each year to the community's veterans. The celebration includes a color guard performance and a resident pianist who plays during breakfast, featuring TAPS and the official songs of each military branch. In addition, the committee proudly displays photos of all community veterans in the lobby, honoring their service and sacrifice.



Communities of Concordia Monroe Township, NJ

The Concordia Veterans Group welcomed about 30 members for a fully catered breakfast. The event featured a performance of the National Anthem by a singer, and the Vice President of the board delivered remarks on behalf of the board. While enjoying breakfast, patriotic music filled the room, creating a warm and respectful atmosphere for our veterans. All of the attendees expressed their appreciation, sharing how much they enjoyed the event and thanking the FirstService associates for making it possible.

Regency at Monroe Monroe Township, NJ

The Regency at Monroe HOA Board proudly hosts an annual Veterans Day breakfast to honor all who served. This year's event featured a special visit from the Mayor of Monroe Township, who joined in expressing gratitude to the community's veterans. Several attendees were recognized with the Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin, commemorating those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between 1955 and 1975. The celebration concluded with a beautiful performance by The Belle Tones, serenading the veterans in appreciation of their service.