

# *Life* AT THE WOODS

DECEMBER 2019

A SOCIAL PUBLICATION EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE MCCORMICK WOODS COMMUNITY



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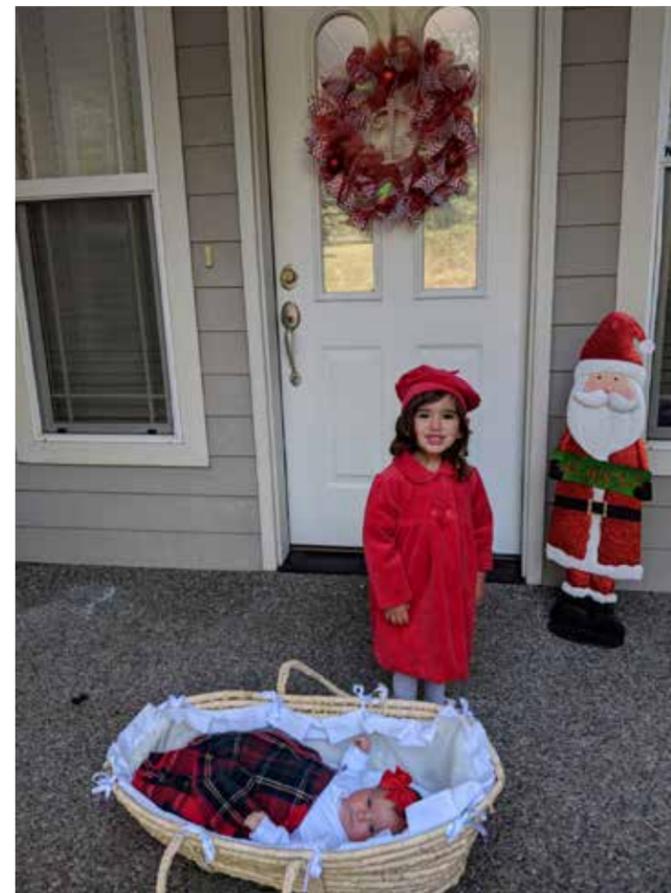
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## family spotlight

by Miranda Long  
Photos by Little Fish Photo



Merry Christmas from Amelia and Scarlett!

# meet the Biscotti FAMILY!

When you meet the Biscotti family you immediately know Ali (Mom) and Matt (Dad) adore their two-year-old daughter, Amelia and dog, Arlie. Their family began in Arlington, VA where the couple first met. Ali was a teacher and was introduced to Matt by his roommate who she taught with. Matt had already begun his career in the U.S. Navy as a doctor (cool fact: Matt's dad is a doctor and his brother also happens to be a doctor in the Navy!). Together Matt and Ali moved to Sneads Ferry, NC before landing in WA state. When receiving orders to WA, they immediately started their home search for the perfect house and neighborhood. The friendly neighbors and atmosphere, parks for Amelia to play, beautiful scenery, and abundant wildlife convinced the Biscotti family McCormick Woods is where they should call home next. They never tire of seeing deer in their backyard!

This is the first time either Ali or Matt had been to the west coast. Matt was born and raised a Penn State fan in northeastern Pennsylvania. He graduated from Penn State University and Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia. Ali was born and raised in Connecticut, but she graduated from Stetson University in sunny Florida. Since living in WA, they have been taking advantage of their new location with trips to Hawaii, Disneyland, and road trips to Oregon, Semiahmoo, Skamania, San Juan Island and Great Wolf Lodge. They hope to make Alaska and Vancouver their next trips.

With Ali's ties to Florida, it's no surprise the Biscotti family loves the beach. Despite the lack of warm sandy beaches in WA, Ali's mom lives in Sarasota, Florida where they are lucky to enjoy the Gulf Coast beaches whenever they visit her.

Being a young family and already moving to three different places has meant they are continually creating new traditions and memories. They cut down their first Christmas tree last year and went on the

Polar Express at Mt. Rainier Railroad. They have fun celebrating milestones and achievements and always try to find a fun theme. Long-standing traditions are Penn State Game Days. Matt would never miss a game! He already thinks about Amelia attending Penn State, but Ali thinks she has a few years to decide where she'd like to go since she's only 2! Visiting Connecticut to go to the Durham Fair is also a treasured tradition. Amelia went with her cousin, Jack, last September joining the tradition of attending that began when Ali was in kindergarten.

The couple enjoys kayaking and biking to parks. Ali and Amelia enjoy craft projects at home, finger painting, baking, and PLAY-DOH! Amelia enjoys her ballet and gymnastic classes, as well as, storytime at the local library. Amelia loves Disney Princesses, so there is often Disney music playing at their house and multiple costume changes every day. Even the fish in their aquarium are named Moana, Anna, Elsa, and Ariel. After welcoming a beautiful baby girl named Scarlett in August, the Biscottis are looking forward to a cheerful holiday season as a family of 4.



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# PIPER'S MOM'S recipe FOR Pumpkin cookies



## resident recipe

Submitted by Piper's Mom

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup quick or old-fashioned oats, uncooked
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup Libby's Solid Pack Pumpkin
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- Assorted icings or peanut butter
- Assorted candies, raisins or nuts

### Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350°
- Combine flour, oats, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt.
- Cream butter; gradually add sugars, beating until light and fluffy.
- Add egg and vanilla; mix well.
- Alternate additions of dry ingredients and pumpkin, mixing well after each addition.
- Stir in morsels.
- For each cookie, drop 1/4 cup dough onto lightly greased cookie sheet; spread into pumpkin shape, using a thin metal spatula.
- Add a bit more dough to form stem.
- Bake 20 to 25 minutes, until cookies are firm and lightly browned.
- Remove from cookie sheets; cool on racks.

*Yields 19 to 20 cookies.*

*Variation: Substitute 1 cup raisins for morsels.*

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## precious pets

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**Male or female:** Female  
**Pet's age:** 3

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**What do you like best about your pet?**  
How silly she is.

**How spoiled is your pet?**  
Very, her toy basket is overflowing.



# CHARLES WRIGHT ACADEMY

## sponsor spotlight

As students enter their classrooms each morning, the energy is palpable. Preschool students are exploring our forest, Middle School students are creating prototypes in the Innovation Lab, and Upper School students prepare for upcoming national debate competitions. Preschool through 12th grade students can expect time and attention in classes, challenges and support, and trust with their teachers, in preparation for college and life.

Academic challenge begins in the Lower School with math, reading, writing, history, and research. Students investigate ideas and the physical world around them with access to experts in arts, science, music, Spanish, and technology.

Charles Wright's award-winning Middle School builds on the foundation established in Lower School—preparing students in every discipline for the exciting opportunities and challenges in the Upper School. For example, Middle School math provides a balanced approach to both skill and reasoning, and advanced Middle School students are able to take Upper School math.

Upper School students have the opportunity to develop their intellectual potential. In addition to 14 Advanced Placement classes and nearly two dozen classes in the arts, Upper School students can challenge themselves with electives that are taught by expert teachers.

The intellectually stimulating environment, applied learning, and outdoor experiences throughout their time at Charles Wright has demonstrable benefits: students earn SAT scores that match or beat—in most cases by a significant margin—the average scores for public, parochial, and



independent schools in the nation, and virtually 100% of seniors attend four year colleges. In 2019, 73% of the class earned GPAs in the top 10% of all WA state graduates.

Charles Wright prepares students to confidently navigate the future with 21st-century skills by emphasizing experiential learning throughout the entire school. For example, the school provides a state-of-the-art Innovation Lab, complete with 3D printers, laser cutters, and tools of all kinds that enable students to create prototypes and test ideas—this is hands-on, kinesthetic learning that will endure.

This approach begins in preschool, when the youngest learners stimulate their natural curiosity about the world by exploring the 107-acre forested campus. Third grade students spend a year studying the Nisqually Watershed through field trips that follow its origin at Mount Rainier down to the Nisqually Delta. Through experiences like these, students learn how to collaborate, investigate, and think creatively.

Middle School and Upper School students continue to explore the breadth of opportunities. Throughout their time at Charles Wright, students might learn glassblowing, volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club, tour Civil War battlefields, travel to Latin America, learn to fly-fish, or hike in the Southwest. All of these experiences promote curiosity, observation, and understanding of the world around them.

At every stage, students are offered academic challenges, and apply classroom learning to the outside world. The entire Charles Wright community is devoted to the school's mission *To inspire active, joyful learning while nurturing and challenging our students to develop the character, creativity, and skills to successfully navigate the future with confidence.*

Learn more about what active, joyful, learning looks like by visiting [www.charleswright.org](http://www.charleswright.org).

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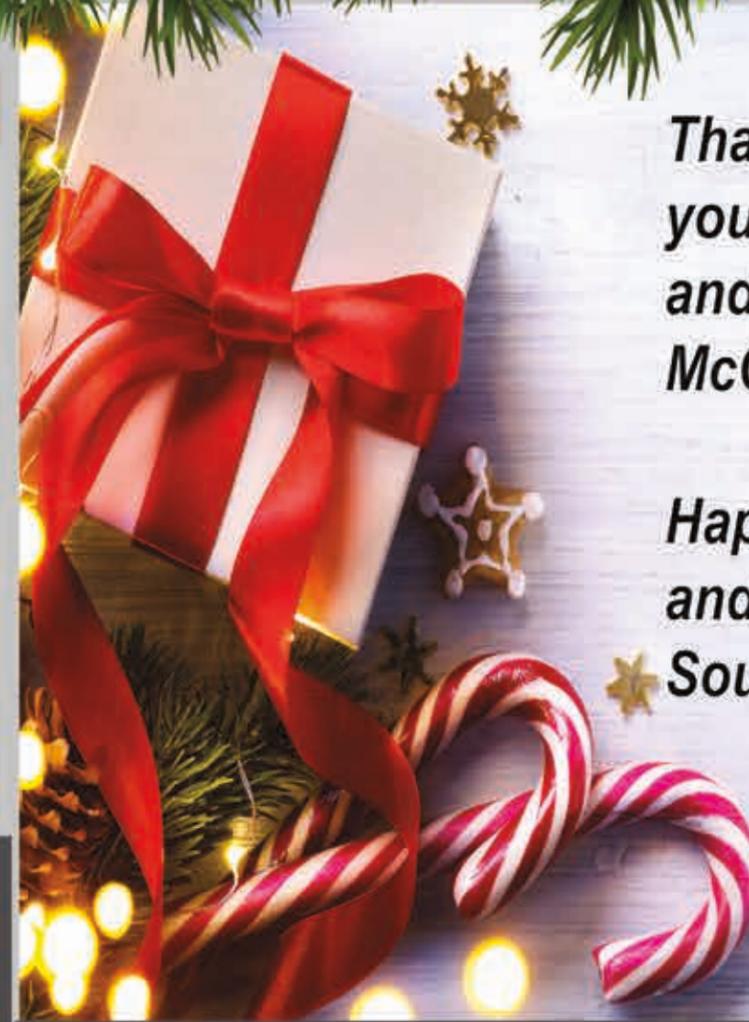


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# Edward Jones



Matt Flores

## sponsor spotlight

Written by **Matt Haver**  
Photos by **Matt Haver / Courtesy of Matt Flores**

# Matt Flores

If you've lived in Gig Harbor long, there's a good chance you've already met Edward Jones Financial Advisor Matt Flores. Since he opened his practice in Port Orchard in March 2014, Flores has become a household name at community events all over the Kitsap Peninsula.

Flores' passion for investing and serving his community began early in life. Born in Sacramento, he and his family moved nine times by his ninth birthday, settling in Tacoma that same year.

"I come from humble beginnings. I didn't know what money was," Flores shared. "My interest in finance began when I got my first paycheck at age 16. I looked at it, wondering, what do I do with this?"

Flores immediately sought answers. He became a self-described "student of the industry" during high school, researching the economy, finance, stock markets, and investing and, after graduating, took a teller position with Key Bank to gain real-world experience.

"All of this financial stuff started making sense and I'd always had the heart of an educator," Flores said. "I asked myself, 'What's a job that would allow me to teach people the best way to handle their money?'"

Long hours researching, coupled with his passion for helping others, set in motion a chain of events that took Flores around the world. He joined the US Air Force at 19 and was stationed at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama. The first 13 months of Flores' military career were spent as a professional vocalist, one of 36 elite singers chosen from a field of 3,000 to tour the globe entertaining the troops.

"We traveled to 26 countries, 48 states, Iraq, Afghanistan, and almost every Air Force base in the world," Flores said. "We were asked to sing America the Beautiful alongside Lea Michele at Super Bowl 45. What an honor."

When he wasn't busy entertaining the troops and opening major NFL events, Flores absorbed everything he could about military finance. He became intimately familiar with the Thrift Saving Plan (TSP) and attained a "7/Craftsman" Skill Level Designation, the second-highest career skill level attainable. He then began managing the Relocation and Travel Payment Division for the stream of officers cycling through Maxwell.

"Officers don't like *not* getting paid," Flores quipped. "I saw to it that they did and learned a lot about people and service in the process."

Flores currently holds a Series 7 and 66 License and in May of 2018 attained his Chartered Retirement Planning Counsellor® (CRPC) Designation through the College for Financial Planning.

After being deployed three times in four years, Flores decided to transition back to civilian life and start a family, settling in Manchester in 2013. He and his wife Danielle, who recently graduated from Grand Canyon University with a Masters in special education, are the proud parents of Lyla, age 3, and 20-month-old Violet, and adopted parents to seventeen-year-old nephew Austin. Blue heeler Winston and rescue pup Oreo complete the family.

Flores continually seeks ways to strengthen his connection with the community by serving on the board of the Port Orchard Chamber of Commerce and involvement in Gig Harbor Young Professionals. His love for the community and passion for helping local businesses succeed go hand in hand with the Edward



Matt Flores displays a piece of artwork custom made for him by a client. "The artist told me I helped her 'put all the financial pieces in place,'" Flores said.

Jones philosophy. Flores lives and works in the community he loves; offering the expertise and resources of one of the largest financial services firms in the US.

"Because of my military service and familiarity with the TSP, I work with a lot of service members, military veterans, and shipyard employees," Flores said. "But I think the niche we serve best is women seeking financial independence – women who want a voice in their finances and investing, especially widows, divorcees, and others navigating major life events."

Flores is sensitive to the level of care and trust required when offering guidance and finds that many people at financial crossroads are afraid to seek help when they have questions. But with Edward Jones' extensive resources at his disposal, Flores is prepared to advise on a full spectrum of financial scenarios: high-level financial strategies for high net worth individuals, pre and post-retirement planning, estate and tax planning, social security questions, and, thanks to his new branch office administrator Kim Ricklefts-Barrett, the Medicare system.

"A lot of people think they need to have gobs of money to sit down with someone like me," Flores



said. "People don't think they have enough money and have lots of questions. A lot of people don't know if they're doing enough or what "enough" is for their situation."

Flores enjoys face-to-face meetings where he can connect with clients personally and ensure he understands their specific needs.

"Make sure that whoever you decide to partner with understands what's important to you. That they have an established process to help you reach your goals," Flores recommends. "It's not all about performance and beating the market. It's about ensuring you can continue to lead the life you're accustomed to without running out of money!"

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Flores' office is filled with artwork collected during his years as a touring vocalist for the US Air Force. This piece commemorates a 2012 tour of Afghanistan and is constructed from stone specific to each Afghani province.



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Kadin Backlund

young achiever

Submitted by Kadin Backlund



# MEET Kadin BACKLUND

**Name:** Kadin Backlund

**How long have you lived in the neighborhood?** Since the day I was born, so for 17 years

**Who is in your family?** Mom and Dad (Kim and Geoff Backlund)

**What school do you attend?** South Kitsap High School

**What are your plans after high school?** Attend a 4-year University and major in Finance and later get my MBA. With an ultimate goal of becoming a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Financial Advisor

**What sports and extracurricular activities do you participate in?** Piano - 12 years  
Crew for SKHS - 4 years  
Also enjoy Basketball and Golf

**How did you get started with your sport/activity?** I started Crew in the fall of my freshman year, which was also the inaugural year of the South Kitsap High School Crew team to get in better shape for Basketball. However, by the end of the fall season I had fell in love with the sport and decided to participate in offseason conditioning for Crew in the winter instead

**What do you enjoy about your sport/activity?** What I enjoy most

about Crew is the comradery amongst everyone on the team and close everyone on the team is and how much we support each other. I also enjoy the physical challenge which has helped build my mental toughness and grants a sense of success after a hard workout or challenging day on the water

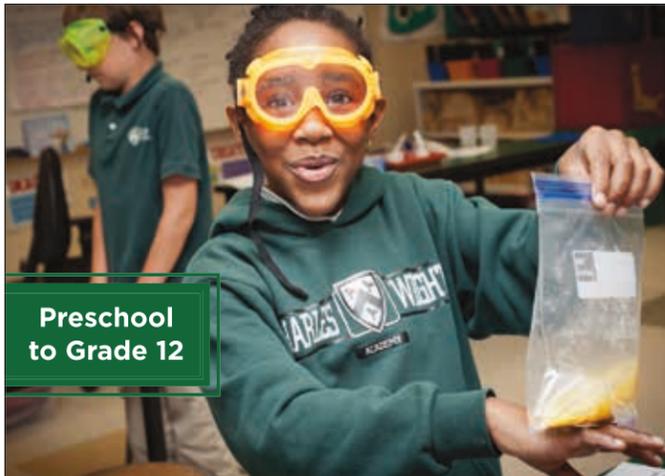
**Tell us something you achieved or some highlights of your experience so far in your sport/activity?** The highlight of my experience on the South Kitsap High School Crew team thus far was placing first and winning gold at the 2018 American Lake Fall Classic Regatta in the Men's V4. This a significant win and helped show us all of our hard work and early mornings paid off. Plus, it was even better winning in a boat with three of my best friends when have all rowed together for several years. I was Co-Captain my Sophomore year and Captain my Junior year which are some of my biggest achievements. Another highlight of my rowing career was attending a Stanford rowing camp with my friend Nolan (who is part of the Men's V4) in the summer of 2018 and attending a rowing camp at the University of Pennsylvania this last summer.

**Is there something that makes you unique in this activity (a specific strength or quality you bring)?** Well, being 6'2" definitely helps with rowing so that is probably my most unique quality which helps because it allows me to have a longer stroke which results in more power

**How do you keep a balance between sports, school, and other activities in your life?** The best way I maintain balance is just making the most of every minute I have. I'm in the IB (International Baccalaureate) Diploma program which consists of rigors course load and lots of homework, so this makes it challenging to keep up in school, Crew and

piano. However, by maximizing my time and doing all that I can during the school day and the few hours I have a few I come home from Crew practice it helps me stay on top of things. Weekends are also a very valuable time to get caught up on sleep and schoolwork!

**Name someone you admire. What makes them special and how have they motivated you?** Someone I admire is Jake Brisson, who was my coach for my first 3 years of rowing. He came to South Kitsap fresh out of college and still young and took up being the head coach of our brand-new program. He took upon so many challenges and was able to build the foundations of our team. He inspired me and my fellow teammates to do things we didn't think we could do. Crew has been and continues to be one of the most influential aspects in my life. Coach Jake helped push me past hard workouts and taught all of us how to overcome challenges and embrace the hard times as opportunities to become stronger and faster. This is something I have been able to carry with me to many other aspects of my life and has greatly helped shape the person I am today.



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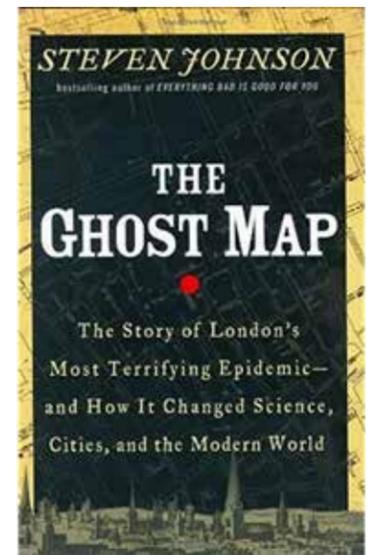
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# THE GHOST MAP

BY STEVEN JOHNSON

resident book review

Review written by Helen Panches



In 1854, London was emerging as one of the first modern cities in the world. Science was blossoming, new technologies were being developed, and populations were rushing from the old feudal estates to new jobs in the city. As is always true, it seems, infrastructure was lagging far behind the needs of the new urban society. The air was foul with wood and coal smoke, the streets were choked with garbage and horse manure, urban diseases were flourishing, and public sanitation was not even a glimmer on the horizon. The rich lived reasonably well in spite of all that, but the poor lived in conditions that would send most of us running for a pup tent in the woods. Their diets were awful, their prospects were dim, and they lived surrounded by their own waste. They carried it to nearby cesspools, dumped it out of windows into the street, and some enterprising souls simply threw it into the cellar – until the cellar filled up. And, by the way, most of them got their water from a neighborhood pump. (You can see where this is going.)

Cholera was always present. A terrible disease, cholera can kill within hours of first onset. But, like measles and smallpox, it was considered one of the prices to be paid for living in a city. However, in 1854, in the middle of a worldwide cholera pandemic, a severe outbreak occurred in the Soho district of London, in which 616 people ultimately died. The rest of London was not particularly affected. Puzzling.

Dr. John Snow, a young obstetrician noted for his advocacy of anesthetic for childbirth and surgeries, was not a believer in the widely held theory that cholera, like most diseases, was caused by a “miasma” of foul air. Through his personal research, he had come to believe that it was connected to a lack of sanitation – specifically, to contaminated water. When the outbreak of 1854 occurred, he jumped on this opportunity for a true, double-blind scientific experiment. He began making a map of the fatalities.

He hiked around Soho, interviewing people about where they got their drinking water and where they put their waste. He talked to people who had lost family members as well as people in the same area who were not affected at all and, as he did, he became even more convinced that his theory was right. And he began narrowing the field of possible infection sites until he found his target.

Although Dr. Snow did gain an influential ally who first opposed and then supported his theory, his insight was not rewarded. We all know the power of the phrases, “Everybody knows...” and “We’ve always done it this way.” The public health establishment apparently lived by those words. In spite of the evidence presented to them, the officials continued to insist that there was no need to make any changes to water supplies or waste disposal. Sickness comes from bad air. Everybody knows that.

In this book, Steven Johnson gives us a raw look at urban life in Victorian England, as well as lessons in epidemiology, scientific methodology, the fallacy of ascribing disease to poverty and lack of moral character and the critical importance of adequate infrastructure to the success of urban environments. And although Dr. Snow was fighting a decidedly uphill battle with his contemporaries, his work has greatly influenced modern urban planning, public health administration and city government. So think about this: every time you turn on a tap and receive clean, treated water, every time you flush or grind stuff on its way to the sewer treatment plant, every time the guys come by in their big green trucks to relieve you of your garbage; every time you eat food that’s been handled by strangers with clean hands or latex gloves, give a nod to John Snow. And you might occasionally shake your head over the fact that, in spite of the science and the technology, there are still millions of people in this world who don’t have that security. Progress is so uneven.

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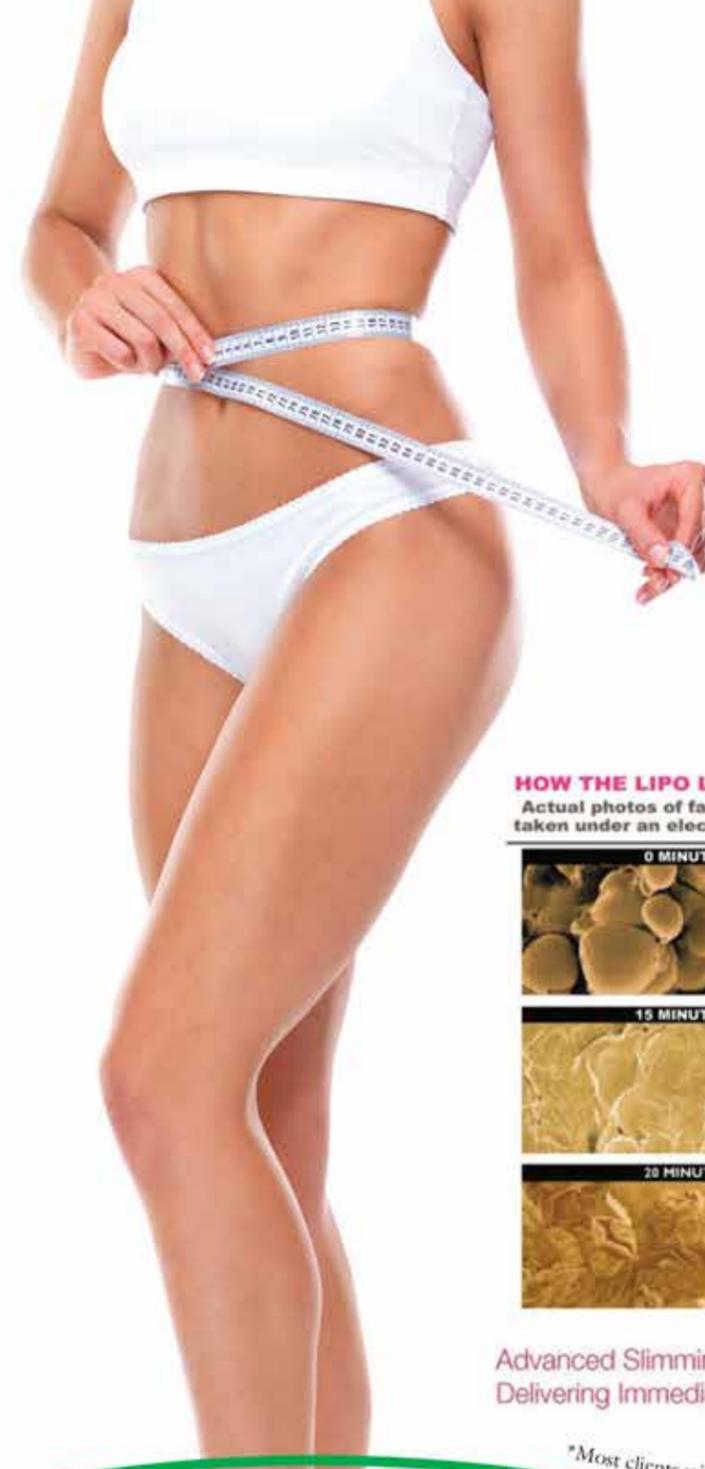
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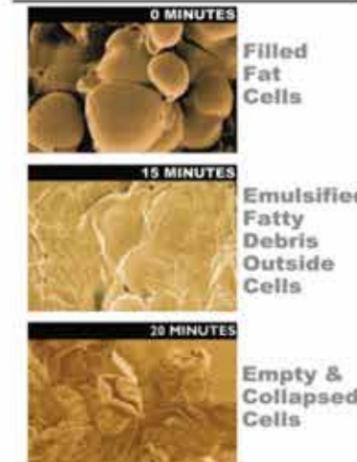
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