

Elevated Living

March 2026





What's inside

- 3 A message from Michael Mendillo, President
- 4 CAI-NJ FirstService Residential award winners
- 5-9 Home living: Green tips: Sustainable spring cleaning
Community living: Spring cleaning together
- 7-9 Healthy spring recipes
 - Chickpea chopped salad with pita
 - Sheet-pan chicken with roasted spring vegetables & lemon vinaigrette
 - Kugel muffins
- 10-12 Balanced living: The power of a quick getaway
Balanced living: Celebrating Spring holiday traditions
- 13 Spring energy saving tips
- 14-16 Community spotlights
 - Bulle Rock
 - Breckett Homeowners Association
 - Montclair Property Owners Association



A message from Michael Mendillo

President, FirstService Residential

As we welcome the arrival of spring, we enter a season that symbolizes renewal, possibility, and forward momentum. This time of year, serves as a reminder that growth is not only part of the natural world around us, but also a constant within our teams and our organization.

At FirstService, it is our privilege to support neighborhoods where residents feel connected, empowered, and proud to call home. Every season brings new opportunities to enhance your living experience — from planned improvements and refreshed amenities to community events that bring neighbors together. Spring, especially, encourages us to look ahead with energy and intention as we invest in the wellbeing of our communities and elevate the services you rely on each day.

Across our teams, we remain focused on strengthening operations, innovating to meet evolving needs, and maintaining the high standards of service you expect from us. Our commitment to you is constant: to partner with your boards, listen to your feedback, and help ensure your community continues to thrive.

In the months to come, we will continue investing in our people, enhancing our operational capabilities, and elevating the support we provide to our communities. Together, we are building a stronger, more innovative, and more connected organization — one that thrives because of the passion and professionalism each of you brings to your work.

Thank you for your continued contributions and for embodying the values that make FirstService a leader in our industry. I look forward to the growth we will achieve together this season and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Mendillo". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.



Board of Trustees, Communities of Concordia

CAI-NJ AWARDS

FirstService Residential Winners

“FirstService Residential earns Top Honors at CAI New Jersey Gala!”

FirstService Residential was honored with several awards at the New Jersey Chapter of Community Associations Institute’s (CAI) annual gala in New Jersey. Notable recognitions included The Candice Bladt Community Manager of the Year Award, The Denise M. Becker Woman of the Year Award, and the Community Association Board of the Year. We congratulate our exceptional winners.

Community Manager of the Year: Michael Camburg received the Candice Bladt Community Manager of the Year Award, bringing 25 years of experience at FirstService Residential, where he has demonstrated passion, empathy, and dedication in serving New Jersey communities.

Community Association Board of the Year Award: Under General Manager Michael Camburg, FirstService Residential has managed Concordia Communities for 4 years, earning the Community Association Board of the Year award. This recognition reflects the team’s commitment to excellence in community management. These awards highlight our dedication to integrity, transparency, and exceptional service, reinforcing our mission to enhance property value and resident lives while maintaining our leadership in property management.



Michael Camburg (right) - Community Manager

HOME LIVING

Green tips: Sustainable spring cleaning

Spring is here, and it's the perfect time to refresh your space and kick off the season feeling energized! Choosing sustainable cleaning products makes your spring spruce-up brighter for you and better for the planet. Think plant-based sprays, reusable cloths, and eco-friendly packaging — small swaps that make a big impact. Let's welcome the season with cleaner homes and a greener community!

Making your own product

Making your own products is a great way to save money and create less harmful cleaning products. Some common DIY products are laundry detergent, all-purpose cleaner, and stain remover. Most of the ingredients in these homemade products are common items that you already have in your home. Make sure when making your own products you use reusable containers like mason jars, recycled plastic spray containers, etc. You can find a plethora of mason jars or other glass containers at your local secondhand store. You can get the ingredients on many DIY websites.

Buy eco-friendly products from eco-friendly companies.

Purchasing from eco-friendly companies is another great way to support these businesses and get reliable products. If the companies are a part of initiatives that raise money for the environment like 1% for the Planet.



Recycle when you can.

If you need to buy products that come in plastic containers, make sure the container is recyclable. It is also important to check with your local recycling program to figure out how the containers should be cleaned before recycling. This is especially important when dealing with chemicals like the ones in cleaning products.

Start composting!

Spring cleaning is the perfect time of year to reset your everyday routines. Introducing composting into your routine will not only reduce your food waste, but if done correctly, it will also eliminate gross odors from rotting food in your trash can. Check out [this article](#) to learn how to get started!

We hope you'll follow some of these tips and have a clean, healthy, and happy Spring!

COMMUNITY LIVING:

Spring cleaning together: A fresh start for the whole family

As spring arrives and the weather begins to warm, many of us feel inspired to refresh our homes after a long winter indoors. Spring cleaning isn't just about tidying up—it can also be a meaningful way for families to spend time together and feel like they've contributed to the care of their home. With a little planning, family members of all ages can take part in making their home feel bright and renewed for the season ahead.

When families work together, cleaning also becomes an opportunity to practice teamwork and share a sense of accomplishment. Plus, a day of organizing, wiping, or yardwork can be a fun and active way to get everyone moving. Giving children age-appropriate responsibilities helps them build confidence, independence, and important life skills.

Young children love to imitate adults, which makes spring cleaning a perfect time to involve them. Simple tasks like putting away toys or books help them begin to understand responsibility. Handing them a toy vacuum, mini mop, or small cloth lets them “clean” alongside you and feel included.

Preschool-aged children can assist with easy activities such as sorting or folding laundry, wiping surfaces, helping clean up after meals, or joining in light yardwork. Many kids this age enjoy feeling helpful while getting their hands a little dirty outdoors.



Elementary-aged children are usually ready for more consistent tasks. Making their beds, taking out the trash, feeding pets, dusting, or organizing their rooms can become part of a weekly routine that teaches structure and responsibility. Preteens and teens can take on larger tasks, including loading the dishwasher, vacuuming, mopping, and decluttering. This is a great time to talk about shared household responsibilities and help them take pride in caring for their living space...maybe even an allowance opportunity can be involved.

Spring cleaning can also be a wonderful opportunity to involve grandparents. Many enjoy spending this kind of quality time with younger family members—offering guidance, sharing stories, and teaching simple techniques they've used for years. Whether they're helping oversee a task, sorting photos and keepsakes, or simply enjoying the company of their grandkids while everyone works together, involving grandparents turns spring cleaning into a multi-generational tradition full of connection and joy.



HEALTHY RECIPES

Chickpea chopped salad with pita chips

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 small clove garlic, grated (about ¼ teaspoon)
- ⅛ teaspoon cracked black pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 (15-ounce) can no-salt-added chickpeas, rinsed
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 small Persian cucumber, seeded and finely chopped (about ½ cup)
- ½ small red bell pepper, finely chopped (about ⅓ cup)
- ½ small red onion, finely chopped (about ⅓ cup)
- ¼ cup chopped mixed fresh tender herbs (such as oregano, mint and flat-leaf parsley)
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped pitted Kalamata olives
- ½ cup crushed multigrain pita chips, plus more for serving.

Directions

Dressing:

1. Whisk 3 tablespoons lemon juice, 2 tablespoons oil, ½ teaspoon mustard, the grated garlic and ⅛ teaspoon each pepper and salt in a large bowl until combined.
2. Add rinsed chickpeas, quartered tomatoes, 1 cup feta, chopped cucumber, bell pepper and onion, ¼ cup herbs and 1 tablespoon olives; toss until evenly coated. Add ½ cup pita chips; toss to combine. Serve with additional pita chips, if desired.

Additional Ideas:

What can I use instead of chickpea? Any canned beans, like cannellini or pinto, would be a great fit. Just be sure to choose the no-salt-added variety, as canned beans can be high in sodium. Alternatively, you can swap in cooked edamame for a fun twist!

How can I make this gluten-free? You can simply leave out the pita chips or use a gluten-free chip in their place. You can add crispy chickpeas or a puffed grain like rice or quinoa instead.



HEALTHY RECIPES

Sheet-pan chicken with roasted spring vegetables & lemon vinaigrette

Ingredients

Lemon Vinaigrette

- 2 lemons
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons crumbled feta cheese
- 1 teaspoon honey

Greek Chicken with Roasted Spring Vegetables

- 4 (8 ounce) skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut in half lengthwise
- ½ cup light mayonnaise
- 12 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- 6 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- Nonstick olive oil cooking spray
- 4 cups 1-inch pieces asparagus
- 3 cups sliced fresh cremini mushrooms
- 3 cups halved grape tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Snipped fresh dill

Directions

Prepare vinaigrette:

Remove 1/2 teaspoon zest and squeeze 1 tablespoon juice from lemon. In a small bowl whisk together lemon zest and juice and the remaining ingredients. Set aside.

Prepare chicken and vegetables: Place a 15x10-inch baking pan in oven. Preheat oven to 475 degrees F.

Meanwhile, using the flat side of a meat mallet, flatten chicken between two pieces of plastic wrap until 1/2 inch thick.

Place chicken in a medium bowl. Add mayonnaise and 2 of the garlic cloves; stir to coat. In a shallow dish stir together breadcrumbs, cheese, 1/4 teaspoon of the salt, and 1/4 teaspoon of the pepper. Dip chicken into crumb mixture, turning to coat. Lightly coat tops of chicken with cooking spray.

In a large bowl combine asparagus, mushrooms, tomatoes, oil and the remaining 4 cloves garlic and 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper.

Carefully place chicken in one end of hot pan and place asparagus mixture in other end of pan. Roast 18 to 20 minutes or until chicken is done (165 degrees F) and vegetables are tender.

Drizzle chicken and vegetables with vinaigrette and sprinkle with dill.

HEALTHY RECIPES

Kugel muffins

Classic Jewish comfort food takes a fun-sized turn in this creative recipe for kugel. As these sweet-and-savory noodle casseroles bake in their individual cups, the flavors meld together. Orange marmalade brightens the richness, providing tangy sour notes to complement the sweetness, while dried currants add texture and depth.



Ingredients

- 8 ounces broad egg noodles, such as Pennsylvania Dutch
- Kosher salt
- 1 cup small-curd cottage cheese or farmer cheese
- 1 ¼ cups sour cream
- ⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest, plus 1 tablespoon fresh juice
- 3 large eggs
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ cup dried currants
- ¼ cup orange marmalade, plus more for serving (optional)

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a standard muffin tin with tulip-shaped baking cups (or standard cups). Cook noodles in a large pot of salted boiling water 6 minutes, drain. Let cool 10 minutes.

Whisk together cheese, sour cream, 1/3 cup sugar, zest and juice, and 1/4 teaspoon salt.

Whisk in eggs and 3 tablespoons butter. Stir in noodles and currants. Divide mixture among muffin cups. Drizzle with remaining butter; sprinkle with remaining sugar. Dollop a little marmalade over each cup.

Bake until kugel is set and tops are golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let cool 30 minutes before serving with more marmalade on the side.

Cook's Notes

You can find tulip-shaped baking cups on Amazon

BALANCED LIVING:

Celebrating Spring holiday traditions

Spring holidays like Easter and Passover offer families a wonderful opportunity to come together and celebrate shared values of renewal, hope, and family connection. While the traditions come from different backgrounds, both highlight themes of freedom, rebirth, and gratitude—making it easy to blend them into meaningful family traditions.

Because Easter and Passover often overlap, many families choose to honor both by hosting a Passover Seder on Friday and enjoying Easter brunch or an egg hunt on Sunday. Combining favorite foods from each holiday or creating new rituals helps everyone feel included. These celebrations also give children the chance to learn about both traditions, deepening their appreciation for their family's diverse heritage. Interfaith spring celebrations often bring generations together as well—grandparents sharing stories at the Seder table or helping hide Easter eggs for the little ones. By focusing on shared values and honoring each tradition with care, families can create a warm, inclusive spring season filled with connection, learning, and lasting memories.

Holiday celebrations also bring generations together. By focusing on shared values and honoring each tradition with care, families can create a warm, inclusive, and memorable spring season



Fun ways to bring the holidays together: Create a spring celebration

Table: Decorate with flowers, candles, eggs, and symbolic Passover items to reflect both holidays' themes of renewal.

Blend culinary traditions: Try matzah-brei for Easter breakfast or add spring-themed treats to your Passover dessert menu.

Hide “Afikomen Eggs”: Combine the Easter egg hunt with the search for the afikomen by hiding decorated eggs with small treats or messages inside.

Share stories from both traditions: Read a simplified version of the Exodus story and talk about the themes of hope and renewal celebrated at Easter.

Make family crafts: Create spring-themed wreaths, painted eggs, or handmade Seder plate decorations together.

Cook together: Let kids help prepare symbolic foods from each holiday—charoset and hot cross buns, for example.

Take a Spring nature walk: Celebrate the season itself—new life, blossoms, and fresh starts—which both holidays honor.

These blended activities allow children and adults to experience both traditions in joyful, accessible ways.

BALANCED LIVING:

The power of a quick weekend getaway: A boost for connection & well-being



Quick weekend getaways aren't just fun—they're scientifically proven to benefit your physical and emotional health. Studies show that even a short 48–72-hour escape can lower cortisol levels, reduce the risk of heart disease, improve mood, and significantly decrease burnout. But beyond the measurable health advantages, these mini-vacations are incredibly valuable for family bonding and overall well-being.

Taking a break from your daily routine allows families to reconnect without the usual pressures of work, school, and household responsibilities. A simple change of scenery—even if it's just an hour or two from home—creates opportunities for quality time, shared experiences, and new memories. Families often find that with fewer distractions; conversations flow more naturally and moments of laughter come more easily.

Short trips also encourage everyone to disconnect from technology. Whether you're exploring a nearby park, visiting a new town, or staying at a cozy local resort, being in a fresh environment helps reduce screen time and re-engage with the world around you. This digital break is particularly beneficial for children, helping them reset, move their bodies, and feel more energized.

Physically, weekend getaways promote movement—walking trails, swimming, sightseeing, or simply being more active than you might be at home. Even a low-key trip can help lower blood pressure, improve sleep, and spark a mood boost that continues long after you return. Many people report that a brief getaway leaves them feeling refreshed for weeks, increasing productivity and improving overall life satisfaction.

For families, these short escapes don't need to be elaborate. Exploring a nearby beach, going on a hiking adventure, visiting grandparents, renting a cabin, or staying at a local hotel with a pool can be just as rejuvenating as a big vacation. The key is stepping away from routine to enjoy uninterrupted time together.

By prioritizing quick, manageable weekend getaways, families can support their mental health, strengthen relationships, and enjoy the restorative benefits of time spent together. A few days away may be short—but the positive impact on your well-being can last far beyond the weekend.

Quick weekend trips are also great for grandparents and grandchildren to bond, explore, and create cherished memories together. These special getaways allow grandparents to share traditions, stories, and experiences while giving parents a little break at home.

Whether it's a simple overnight stay nearby or a two-day adventure close to home, these mini-vacations strengthen family connections in meaningful ways. Grandparents often bring a sense of nostalgia, patience, and warmth, while kids bring energy, curiosity, and fun—creating the perfect blend for a memorable trip. Low-stress destinations offer easy walking, plenty of rest spots, and activities that appeal to all ages.

Whether it's parents and kids, grandparents and grandchildren, or the whole family together, a simple change of scenery can spark joy, restore energy, and leave everyone feeling more balanced and uplifted.

In the end, it's not the length of the trip that matters but the memories made and the renewed sense of calm and connection you bring back home.



Tips to make the most of a 2–3-day escape.

Choose a destination within 1–3 hours

Keeping travel short maximizes your time to relax. Pick a nearby beach town, mountain spot, or small city that's easy to reach.

Book accommodations early

Weekend stays fill quickly. Reserve ahead—especially in popular spots like Cape May, the Poconos, or Mystic.

Keep the itinerary light

Don't overschedule. Plan one or two activities per day to leave room for spontaneity, rest, and family fun.

Pack only the essentials

For a two-night trip, travel light. Bring versatile outfits, comfortable shoes, snacks, and any must-have items for kids.

Look for family-friendly deals

Many hotels and attractions offer weekend packages or seasonal specials. Check online for promo codes or bundled discounts.

Embrace the outdoors

Choose destinations with natural activities—hiking, beaches, lakes, or parks—so everyone can unplug and recharge.

Prep the house before you leave

A quick tidy-up or prepped meal makes returning home much smoother and less stressful.

Set technology boundaries

Decide ahead of time how much screen time is allowed. Encourage family moments by unplugging when possible.

Bring simple entertainment

Card games, coloring books, audiobooks, or a camera for kids can help fill downtime without relying on screens.

Stay flexible

Weather changes or delays happen. Keeping an open mindset helps the whole family stay relaxed and enjoy the adventure.

FIRSTSERVICE ENERGY:

Spring energy saving tips

As the days grow longer and the temperatures begin to rise, spring offers the perfect opportunity to refresh not only your home but your energy habits as well. With a few simple adjustments, you can take advantage of the milder weather, reduce energy consumption, and lower monthly utility costs—all while keeping your living spaces comfortable and bright. Embracing a few smart, seasonal strategies now can set the tone for a more efficient and eco-friendly year ahead.

Cut your spring costs in half while still maintaining comfort! Consider getting a smart thermostat!

You don't need to choose between comfort and savings this spring. An ENERGY STAR-certified smart thermostat automatically adjusts your heating and cooling to maximize efficiency and comfort. You can even control it from your smartphone, adjusting the settings while away from home.

Change or clean your HVAC filter regularly

A clean filter can help your air conditioner use 5 to 15 percent less energy than when dirty. It's a good idea to check your filter every one to two months. Some filters can be rinsed under the faucet to remove dust, while others may need to be replaced.



Utilize window coverings

According to the US Department of Energy, 75 percent of residential window coverings remain untouched throughout the day, even though closing them can reduce heat gain by 33 percent. So, be sure to use them! The Attachments Energy Rating Council certifies window coverings for energy-efficient performance. Use the certified product search to find the right fit for your home and maximize your energy savings.

Maintain your refrigerator and freezer

Blocked vents can disrupt airflow, which is essential to a refrigerator's operating efficiency. Find the vent inside and make sure it isn't blocked, which often happens when the refrigerator is too full. If you see ice buildup blocking the vent, you will need to call a professional for help. Cleaning the condenser coils can also lighten the energy load. The cleaning process varies by refrigerator model, but it typically involves sweeping underneath the refrigerator to remove dust and debris. This can extend your refrigerator's lifespan and reduce its energy consumption.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHTS

Bulle Rock

At Bulle Rock, our approach to Lifestyle programming is rooted in connection, both within our community and beyond it. This year, we have focused on strengthening relationships with the City of Havre de Grace, a charming coastal town known for its vibrant arts scene, rich history, and strong sense of community.

That connection was recently highlighted by our General Manager, Chris Petrik, who authored an article celebrating Havre de Grace for the upcoming quarterly Chesapeake Chapter CAI publication. In January, we partnered with Harmers Town Art Center, a local nonprofit dedicated to accessible arts education and cultural enrichment. Residents enjoyed an informative session highlighting upcoming exhibitions and programs, followed by a hands-on art experience where they painted their own ceramic mugs, creating a memorable blend of learning, creativity, and connection.



The spirit of collaboration continues throughout the year. In February, residents will tour the Havre de Grace Colored School in honor of Black History Month. The preserved one-room schoolhouse that tells the story of African American education in Harford County during segregation. In April, we are hosting a private bus tour of a local quarry, offering residents a behind-the-scenes look at an important regional operation. In May, residents will tour community gardens throughout Havre de Grace, in partnership with local leaders, to celebrate sustainability and shared stewardship. We also draw inspiration from the City's popular First Fridays, which sparked our own Food and Fun Fridays series held from May through August. This program is one of our most highly attended events, with more than 300 residents at last year's kickoff alone. By looking beyond our gates and embracing partnerships with local organizations, we create meaningful experiences that foster civic pride, encourage engagement, and truly reflect Elevated Living in action.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Beckett Homeowners Association



The Beckett Homeowners Association, home to 1,380 single-family residences in Logan Township, NJ, has created a beloved tradition with its annual Holiday Festival. What began in 2019 as a simple festive train ride along the community's two-mile bike path has grown into a full-scale winter celebration, all on a modest budget of just under \$5,000. Each year, the bike path is beautifully lit and decorated with the help of the association's landscape contractor, while a festive train carries children of all ages through the glowing route. A food truck on site serves complimentary desserts and hot chocolate to children, with additional treats available for purchase by adults, adding to the cheerful atmosphere.

The celebration transforms a community parking lot into a magical winter wonderland, complete with illuminated Christmas trees, oversized holiday décor, and even live reindeer. While waiting for their train ride, children enjoy visits and photo opportunities with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and eagerly drop letters into a giant mailbox addressed to Santa. Adding a personal touch, Maggie Craig, the portfolio manager for the community, responds to each child's letter with a personally written, mailed reply on Santa's behalf. The festival has become so popular that it now draws special guests, including the Mayor of Logan Township, who joins residents each year to share in the festive fun and community spirit.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Montclair Property Owners Association

This year, Montclair's Trunk or Treat was truly spellbinding as the wizarding world of Harry Potter swept through the community. What began as a simple candy stop transformed into a magical journey, lovingly conjured by Lifestyle Director Kim Monell and Lifestyle Assistant Izzy Hansen. Each guest received a Hogwarts invitation sealed in crimson wax, which cleverly doubled as a voting ballot for the evening's contests. From there, residents stepped through Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, and found themselves at Ollivanders Wand Shop, where more than 600 one-of-a-kind wands—each handcrafted and hand-painted by Kim and her family—waited to choose their wizard. With wand in hand, guests continued on to Hogwarts, where the Sorting Hat determined their house with great ceremony.

The magic didn't end there. After parading through Hogwarts Hall and along the trunk-or-treat path for sweets, guests cast their votes before embarking on the Sorcerer's Key Quest, a whimsical scavenger hunt for flying keys hidden throughout the seasonal market. Young witches and wizards also brewed color-changing concoctions in Snape's Potion Lab, taking home potions of their very own. Cloaked in robes and scarves, dozens of children arrived in full Harry Potter fashion, filling the evening with laughter and wonder. Though months of planning went into creating the magic, the joy, imagination, and community spirit shared that night will linger long after the last spell was cast.

