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LIVE WELL & THRIVE

JUL 2026

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PROTECT & GUARD

Aces for Life

BY GUILLERMO URDANETA



Some children teach us how to be ourselves long before they understand what that means.

Cecelia taught people with a lemon.

Since July is a month for fireworks, freedom, and bold declarations, Cecelia's independence arrived early, perched in a backyard high chair with a lemon wedge in her fist. She loved lemons. Not lemonade. Not lemon cookies. Not the sugared, smiling version of the fruit.

"She eats lemons," her parents would say anywhere a lemon could be located and an audience assembled. "Straight lemons. By itself."

At first, Cecelia adored this. She understood applause before she understood acidity. She would bite, blink hard, shake her head, and grin as if the sourness had challenged her and lost.

Zesty Life Lesson #1: Notice what makes you different before the world teaches you to hide it.

At family gatherings, someone would say, "Cecelia, show them what you can do." Some days, she obliged. Other days she announced, "I don't do lemon shows on Saturdays."

Of course, she still loved lemons. She just stopped eating them on command.

Zesty Life Lesson #2: Even your gifts deserve boundaries.

By the time Cecelia chose her own clothes, she had a style people noticed before they knew what to call it: yellow rain boots, dramatic sunglasses, and a royal-blue blouse with a lemon print she "found" in her grandmother's closet.

Lemons had stopped being something she proved and started being something she owned.

She asked why lemon trees had thorns, who first decided sour fruit could become pie, and why people said, "When life gives you lemons," as if lemons were a punishment. If liking lemons was uncool, then uncool had excellent taste.

One day, someone teased her for bringing lemon slices in her lunch. Cecelia looked at the lemon wedge, then at them, then took a bite.

It was not defiance exactly. It was ownership.

Zesty Life Lesson #3: Being uncool is only embarrassing when someone else gets to define cool.

On **July 23, National Lemon Day**, Cecelia's father bought her a small lemon tree in a blue ceramic pot: delicate, stubborn, and full of fruit still seasons away.

And that tree taught her something new. Anything worth growing also needs protecting.

A lemon tree may look cheerful, but it still needs the right soil, the right light, and protection from the occasional person who thinks "watering" means drowning the poor thing.

We all have something we are trying to grow: a family, a home, a small business, a reputation, a future still tender in our hands. The loving thing is to protect it before life tests it.

Zesty Life Lesson #4: Protect what you are growing.

That is where a trusted agent comes in, not to take over the dream, but to help keep it safe.

Years later, when people asked Cecelia why she still loved lemons, she smiled like the answer was obvious.

"Because they tell the truth," she said. "They never pretend to be sweet."

Maybe that is what July is really about beneath the fireworks and flags: the freedom to become yourself and the wisdom to protect what matters once you do.

Cecelia never outgrew lemons. She grew into them.

And when life gave her lemons, she did not flinch or sweeten herself for approval.

She ate it up.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH CARE

BY David Williams

At Williams Insurance Advisors, we believe strong communities are built when people come together to care for one another. That's why we're proud to support the The Care Cabinet, a Christ-centered nonprofit dedicated to meeting the everyday needs of students and families in local schools.

The Care Cabinet partners with schools to create accessible spaces filled with essential items students may need throughout the school day. From hygiene products and socks to snacks, backpacks, and school supplies, these resources help ensure children can focus on learning with confidence and dignity.

While the items may seem simple, the impact is powerful.

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A child who feels cared for and supported is better equipped to thrive both in and outside the classroom. The Care Cabinet continues to make a meaningful difference by reminding students and families that they are seen, valued, and never alone.

This month, for every referral we receive for a no-obligation insurance quote, Williams Insurance Advisors will donate \$15 to The Care Cabinet to help provide essential supplies for local students.

Together, we can bring hope, encouragement, and practical support to children in our community one act of kindness at a time.



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GET REWARDED!

+ For each **QUOTED FRIEND** you send our way, get...

+ A **\$15 DONATION** to a worthy cause!

+ **1 entry** for our **LUXURY PRIZE** Quarterly drawing!

+ **AND 1 entry** for our **LUXURY PRIZE** yearly drawing!!!



THANKS FOR SHARING FRIENDS!

To recommend someone now, visit us at:
dlwins.com/rewards

LAST MONTH'S LETTER LOCK ANSWER IS: SPLASH

Solve each clue, then take the numbered letter from your answer.

1. The colorful sky as daylight fades — 6 letters [1]
2. A meal eaten outdoors on a blanket — 6 letters [1]
3. A tart yellow drink poured over ice — 8 letters [1]
4. A break from work or school — 8 letters [2]
5. Open-toed warm-weather shoes — 7 letters [1]
6. A cool spot under a tree — 5 letters [2]

Put the letters together: -----

WHAT WORD DID YOU UNLOCK?

Winner will be announced on our Facebook page by **mid-July**. Stay tuned!

This Watermelon Avocado Salad... is Mint to Be Spicy!

BY MAYRA ZAMBRANO



July 31 is **National Avocado Day**, which means it is time to let avocado step out of the guacamole bowl and into something a little cooler.

This salad is crunchy, juicy, and just spicy enough to make things interesting. Start fresh with summer's best produce:

Ingredients

- **4 cups** seedless watermelon, cubed
- **1 large** cucumber, thinly sliced or cut into half-moons
- **1 large** ripe avocado, cubed
- **1/2** small red onion, very thinly sliced
- **1/2** small jalapeño, very thinly

sliced, seeds removed for less heat

- **1/4 cup** fresh mint leaves, torn
- **2 tablespoons** extra-virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1/2 lemon, plus more to taste
- Flaky sea salt, to taste
- Freshly cracked black pepper, to taste



Instructions

1. Place the sliced red onion in a small bowl of cold water for 5 to 10 minutes to soften the sharp bite.
2. Add the watermelon, cucumber, red onion, and jalapeño to a large serving bowl.
3. Drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice. Season with flaky salt and black pepper, then gently toss.
4. Add the avocado and mint last. Fold everything together carefully so the avocado stays mostly intact.
5. Taste and adjust with more lemon, salt, pepper, or jalapeño as needed.
6. Serve right away, while everything is cold, crisp, and refreshing.

Consider it a hot take on keeping cool.





ON JULY 20,
INTERNATIONAL
MOON DAY HONORS
ONE OF HUMANITY'S
GREATEST LEAPS
AND THE COURAGE
TO GO FARTHER.

GREAT MISSIONS BEGIN WITH GREAT COVERAGE

This Independence Month, take one well-planned step toward freedom. With the right protection, even gravity feels optional, and life's biggest leaps feel a little lighter.

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