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Sprout Your Kids' Imagination With 3 Fun Earth Day Projects

With spring officially underway, April showers starting to bring May flowers, and Earth Day on April 22, now is a great time for outdoor family activities.

One for the Birds

Making a pine cone bird feeder is a fun and inexpensive project. In addition to creating and hanging your bird feeder, you'll get hours of extra entertainment from watching the birds it will attract to your yard. If your kids are older, take photos of the birds or note their colors and features and look them up in a field guide or online.

This craft just requires a pine cone (the bigger the better), peanut butter, and some twine or string. Top the peanut butter with "sprinkles" of mixed birdseed or small pieces of nuts and fruit to appeal to even more birds. For full instructions, visit TheSpruce.com and search "pine cone bird feeder."

An Egg-cellent Planter

Save those eggshells from breakfast (and the paper carton, too!) and use them to start a garden! Your little ones will enjoy planting some seeds, watering them, and watching them sprout and grow into something new. When the sprouts are big enough and it's warm enough outside, you can plant the shell and carton directly into the ground!

This easy project just requires rinsed eggshell halves, some lightly moistened potting soil, and seeds of your choosing. Note that smaller seeds, like those for herbs, lettuces, peppers, or tomatoes, work best for this project. For full instructions, visit GardenBetty.com and search "starting seeds in eggshells."

Stick With Magic

Nature is a magical place. Many kids know this instinctively and often point out things



adults take for granted or overlook, like bright-colored leaves, fun-shaped rocks, and acorn "hats." Making a nature wand is a great way to let your kids explore their environment, whether that's in your backyard, on a neighborhood walk, or in your favorite park. Let their imaginations run wild with what their magic wand can do!

This simple project starts with a stick and masking tape. Your kids add all the extra flair by hunting for natural treasures and sticking them onto their wand. Complete instructions can be found at LaughingKidsLearn.com/nature-wands-outdoor-play.

APRIL 2021



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Fighting for Your Future

A Statewide Law Firm
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Many of our clients never come into the office. We use technology to handle their cases virtually all across Florida.

Raise a Glass to Our New Attorney!

MEET MARK MARTELLA, ESTATE PLANNING AND BANKRUPTCY LAWYER EXTRAORDINAIRE

It's Carmen here, but I'm just popping in for a second because I have some big news. We hired a new attorney, and he'll be spearheading a brand-new practice area for our firm. That's right: We're going into estate planning, baby!

I'm thrilled to welcome Mark Martella and his paralegals, Tara and Kim to our team to lead the way in this area. As you'll read in a second when he pops into this newsletter, Mark is an amazing attorney in his field with more than three decades of experience. He's also an Italian-American guy from Jersey, just like me. During his interview, we even found out that we attended the same prep school at the same time without ever crossing paths. Crazy, right?

Okay, I've talked enough – take it away Mark!

-Carmen Dellutri

Thanks for the introduction, Carmen! As you read, my name is Mark Martella, and I'm the newest lawyer at Dellutri Law Group. I officially started here on April 1st after five years with Icard Merrill Attorneys & Counselors.

Before that, my background ran the legal gamut. My career started in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where I came up in the world of casino law and commercial transactions. Eventually, in 2004 I moved to Florida for the beautiful weather, only to be greeted by Hurricane Charley (luckily my house survived). Since I began practicing law, I've always focused on business law, real

estate, bankruptcy, foreclosure, and estate planning. But ultimately, estate planning and bankruptcy law became my favorite practice areas.

I gravitated to those niches because when I'm working with my clients I really feel like I'm helping people with the things that matter in their lives. Commercial real estate and casino law are all about the money, but when you sit down with someone and lay out a plan to save their house or make sure their kids are provided for if they pass, you're dealing with something that really matters. I can't count the number of hugs I've gotten from clients after initial consultations. Nothing feels better than taking away someone's fear like that and helping them move forward.

I'm lucky that not only are my paralegals, moving with me to Dellutri Law Group but they are also just as passionate about our clients as I am. To give you just one example of my team taking personal service to the next level, here is a story from a few years back. We had the opportunity to help a client (I'll call "Judy") with a bankruptcy and with her estate planning. Judy was a retired nurse who was a bit ornery and quirky. She didn't get along well with most of her family, but in her time working with us, she and Tara became close friends. When Judy moved into a nursing home, she named Tara her power of attorney and the executor of her estate.

Their friendship lasted years. We talked on the phone with Judy every week and Tara

visited her once a month. When Judy eventually passed, Tara even ended up adopting her miniature pinscher, Tini (short for Valentine). During her time in the nursing home, Judy reconnected with her daughter, and one of the most memorable moments of my career was meeting with her and Tara to spread Judy's ashes. Afterward, the three of us had a nice dinner to celebrate Judy's life.

Kim has had her own fair share of amazing stories too and one day I promise to tell some of hers but my space is limited here today.

Estate planning is one of the rare areas of law that makes relationships like that possible. When my own mother passed last year, having her power of attorney, healthcare surrogate, and other things like that in order really eased the process. Here at Dellutri Law Group, I'm looking forward to helping more people get their affairs in order and make sure their kids and pets are provided for.

When I'm not practicing law, you can probably find me in the kitchen, where I love making multicourse Italian meals, or serving on the board of the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition. Whether on Zoom or in person, I hope to see you soon!

- Mark Martella

If you know someone who would like a copy of this newsletter, please visit this link to add them to our mailing list: DellutriLawGroup.com/resources/newsletters

The Five *Must-Have* Tools To Protect Your Family

Most people, including lawyers, think of estate planning as something that they can do “later.” Unfortunately for many, “later” often becomes “too late.” They may have thought, “I’m going to live for a long time, and I’ll get around to it next year,” or, “I’d rather spend my money right now on something else,” or, “I can wait to do estate planning at another time.” But sometimes things happen, and it’s just too late.

Below are the five must-have documents you need in place to protect your family.

1. Designation of Healthcare Surrogate

This is probably the most important and useful document in your Family Protection Plan. This is like a power of attorney specifically for making healthcare decisions. If you or your loved one are unconscious, who will make the medical decisions such as consent to surgery, blood transfusions, and medications?

2. Power of Attorney

Assuming you’ve gotten past the immediate medical emergency, there may be other items that you have to take care of on behalf of your loved one while they are in the hospital. Some of those things may be as simple as making a mortgage payment, car payment, transferring funds to allow them to pay doctor bills, or arranging for home health aid or special medical equipment. Without a document authorizing you to act on the behalf of your family member, a bank

or a company that you need services from may not be willing to assist you.

3. Living Will

If, on the other hand, things don’t go well during the sudden emergency and a decision has to be made regarding what life-sustaining measures should or may be used, why would you want to put that burden on your loved ones? The decision to provide — or not provide — either life-sustaining mechanical means or food and hydration is an enormous decision for someone to make. However, you can ease the burden somewhat by stating under which circumstances you do or do not want life-sustaining measures taken to prolong your life. Also, an issue that comes up is whether or not you want food and hydration that are merely used to prolong your life even if you are in a vegetative state.

4. Last Will and Testament

A last will and testament does not take effect until you are deceased. The most powerful and useful one is to avoid having government officials deciding how your estate will be distributed and, more importantly, **deciding who will take care of your minor children.** Again, while most people think of estate planning as something you do when you are retired, I suggest that anyone who has a child **must have** a Family Protection Plan in place — and, if they do not, they are actually being negligent in the care of their children.



5. A Revocable Trust

A trust is a document that you create that acts as a separate mechanism for holding your assets. The primary reason that most people create a trust and transfer assets into it is to avoid probate. By avoiding probate, you can expedite the transfer of assets to your beneficiaries and avoid expenses such as attorney fees and personal representative fees, which can run 3–6% of the value of your entire estate. If you have an estate valued at \$500,000, you can save over \$30,000 in costs and fees if your assets are transferred to a trust before your death. That means \$30,000 more goes to your beneficiaries that could be better used to pay off a student loan or as a down payment on a home. Again, the savings go directly to your beneficiaries instead of into the pocket of a law firm.

Last month we had:

- 59 referrals from friends, family, or previous clients
- 16 returning clients for a new matter
- 16 referrals from other attorneys
- 4 referrals from other professionals in town
- **We sent out 94 referrals**

THANK YOU!

A Huge Thank-You to Our Referral Partners!

EVENT SPOTLIGHT



Dellutri Law Group Sponsors The Guinness Book of World Records Poker Run

We are proud to announce that Dellutri Law Group, also known as the Sunshine State Biker Lawyer, is the title sponsor for the Guinness Book of World Records Poker Run! We are so excited to be a part of something so cool! Registration to join is open until May 31! Check out www.WorldRecordPokerRun.com for more details.

Come be a part of history with us! If you register, be sure to shoot an email to CarmenDellutri@DellutriLawGroup.com, and let us know to be on the lookout for you!

What’s the Good News?

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

1 Corinthians 15:58

“Testimonial

RECOGNITION FOR OUR GUEST SERVICES TEAM

Usually our attorneys, paralegals, and legal assistants get all of the love here, so today we want to switch it up a bit. Our guest services team deserves some recognition for their efforts to go above and beyond! Recently, one of them received this in their email the same day the potential client had their complimentary strategy session with one of our attorneys. She recently had consultations with another well-known firm in town.

“Hello *****, I was very impressed with you and the lawyer that I spoke to today. You both made me feel more at ease and comfortable than the other firm did. I do want to retain you guys for my service.”

–A. (email submitted)

Spring Vegetable and Chicken Pasta Bake

Inspired by TheSeasonedMom.com

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup cooked chicken, diced
- 1 14-oz can artichokes, drained and quartered
- 1 cup fresh asparagus pieces
- 1/2 cup carrots, grated
- 1 1/2 cups uncooked penne pasta
- 1 3/4 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 cup fresh chives, chopped and divided
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped and divided
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 F and grease an 8-inch square baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In the prepared dish, stir together cooked chicken, artichokes, asparagus, carrots, uncooked pasta, chicken broth, half the chives, half the parsley, garlic, salt, and 2 tbsp Parmesan.
3. Cover the dish tightly with foil and bake for 35 minutes.
4. Uncover and stir. At this point, check the pasta to make sure it is al dente. If it’s undercooked, cover the dish and return to the oven until pasta is tender.
5. Remove from oven and garnish with remaining Parmesan, chives, and parsley.