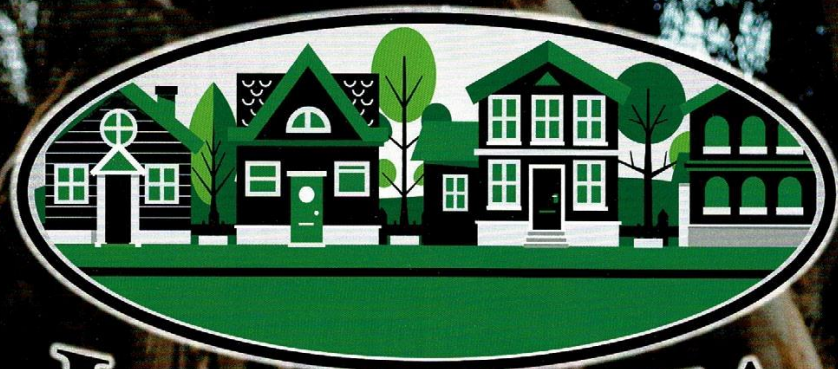


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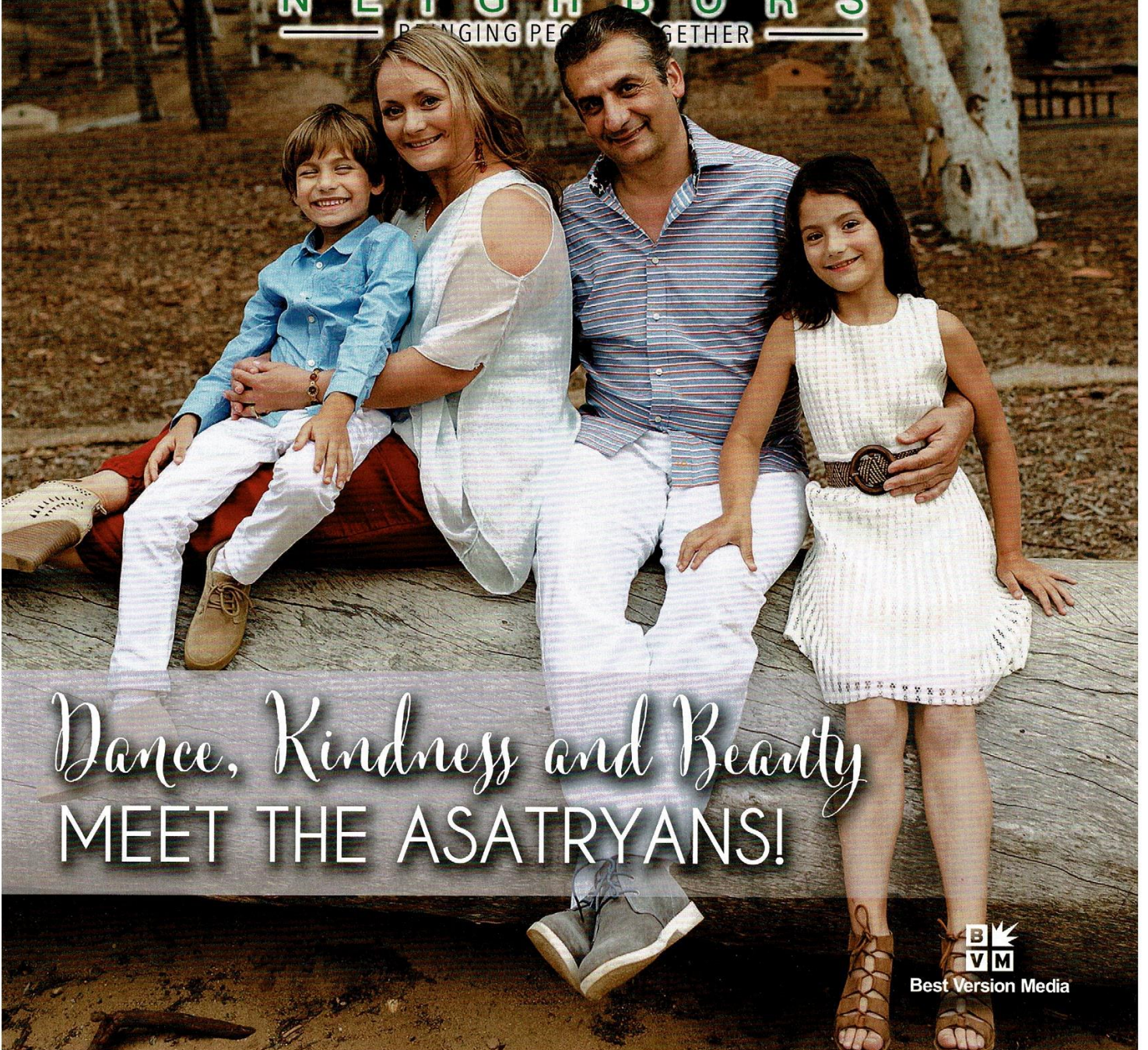
Cover Photo by  
Christine Dammann



# LA COSTA

## NEIGHBORS

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER



*Dance, Kindness and Beauty*  
**MEET THE ASATRYANS!**

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# Dance, Kindness and Beauty

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## MEET THE ASATRYANS!

By Chiwah Slater | Photos by Christine Dammann Photography

**DO YOU KNOW** who your neighbors are? La Costa is home to some fascinating people.

Meet the Asatryans, Sayat and Olga and their two children, nine-year-old Ariel and six-year-old Allen—a remarkable La Costa family.

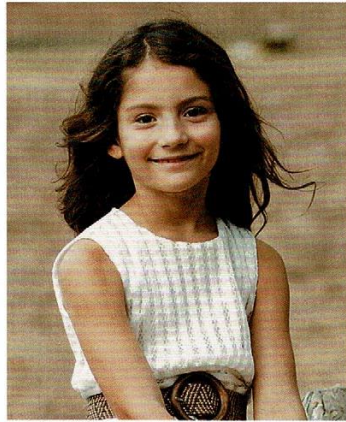
Sayat Asatryan and Olga Tchekachova are extraordinary ballet dancers of Armenian and Russian heritage, respectively, who each came to the US in 1998 by special invitation to work with professional American ballet companies. They are also warm and caring people, dedicated to

providing opportunities for adults and children to explore the beauty of the arts.

The couple met while auditioning for State Street Ballet of Santa Barbara in 1999. After a six-year engagement, they were married in 2006 on Saint Simons Island (the largest barrier islands in the state of Georgia) in a wedding complete with horses, carriage and red carpet. They relocated to their home near Omni La Costa Resort 10 years ago because “the community felt friendly and safe, and enthusiastically embraced children and education—the key to an amazing life.”



Their two children, nine-year-old Ariel and six-year-old Allen, both attend La Costa Heights Elementary School and often travel to Los Angeles to take part in dance auditions for film and television. But they have other interests, too. Ariel is an avid reader of Harry Potter, and she enjoys digital media, playing the piano and ukulele and cooking—and ballet, of course. Allen dances and plays piano, and likes karate and fitness training.



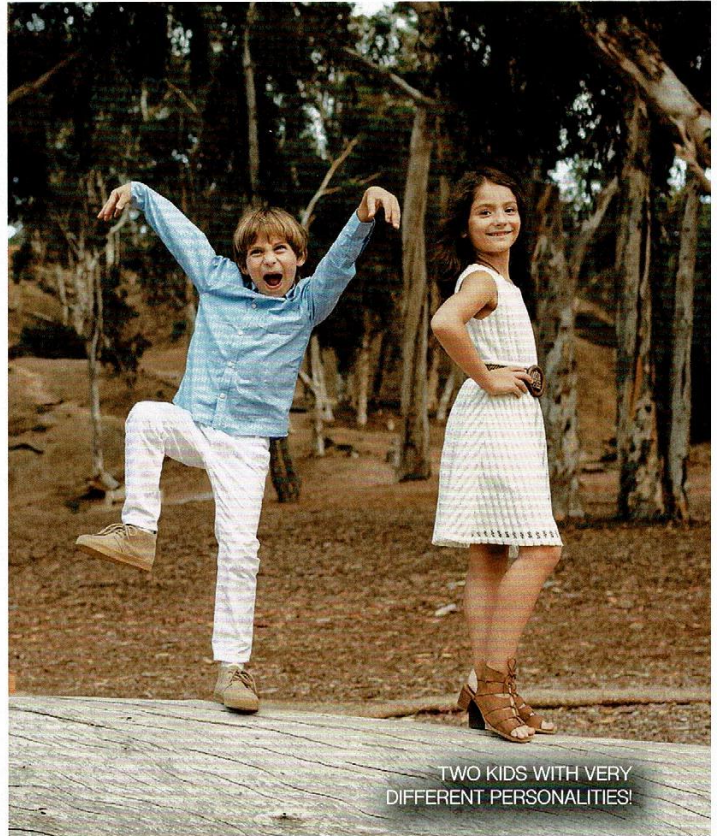
Two cats and a 12-year-old dog named Kitri are dear to the Asatryans and provide their share of stories. “A couple months ago Basil, one of our cats, fell off of our third-storey balcony,” Sayat relates. “We didn’t know this until we heard Nicko, our other cat, meowing more than ever before. We searched all over the house and looked for Basil outside, but we couldn’t find him. We informed our neighbors, and they led me to the cat. We were so relieved! Our neighbors really care about each other and try to be helpful when bad things happen. Isn’t that one of the keys to life—to be caring and have love in the heart?”



The Asatryans are committed to arts education. “Education is the key to human development,” they explain, “and the arts are the key to kindness and beauty.” They share their love of the arts not only with their own children, but with people of all ages who love dance. Their Encinitas Ballet Company (EBA) serves nearly a hundred students, both adults and children. Founded on the belief that all children and families should have exposure to the performing arts, the academy integrates the finest of performing arts into our diverse communities, providing the highest standards of dance, production and education.



In August, 2008, the couple’s commitment to arts education led them to establish the Encinitas Ballet Academy (EBA), now located at the strikingly beautiful California Institute for Human Science Campus in Encinitas.



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EBA serves nearly a hundred students, both adults and children. Their students have performed at many community events, including OctoberFest, the Encinitas Street Fair, the Encinitas Holiday Parade, and Carlsbad's US Army and Navy Academy. Earlier this month, they performed *The Nutcracker* at Vista's Moonlight Theatre (directed and choreographed by Sayat Asatryan and Olga Tchekachova).



SAYAT (IN BLACK) HOLDING "PRINCESS NADIA"

A nonprofit organization and member of the Carlsbad, Vista and Encinitas Chambers of Commerce, EBA is committed to offering professional programs while empowering dancers and artists to cultivate self-confidence, style and artistic expression. Their youngest student, the two-year-old daughter of a La Costa couple, has already performed the ballet *Coppelia*.

"We usually don't take such young students," the Asatryans say, "but she is our Princess Nadia."

But what brought the Asatryans here in the first place? Their native talent and Russian training. Sayat earned his Master of Dance and Arts degree in Russia, at St. Petersburg Ballet Academy and Voronezh Ballet Academy. Recently, he received his Master of Ballet Pedagogy and Choreography degree



from the famed Bolshoi Ballet Academy in Moscow, and completed the University of New Orleans' Certified Performing Arts Executive program. He has danced professionally throughout the world for more than 23 years, and has choreographed and taught ballet technique for the past 18 years. As a principal dancer with the Moscow Kremlin Ballet and Guest Artist with Bolshoi Ballet, he toured South America, Europe, Japan, Egypt, China, Mexico and the USA. In

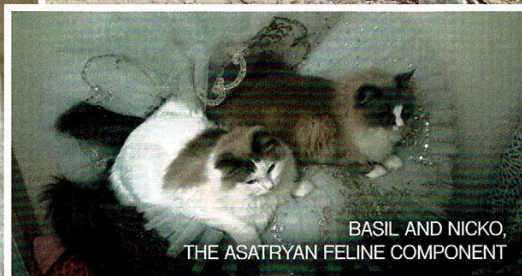
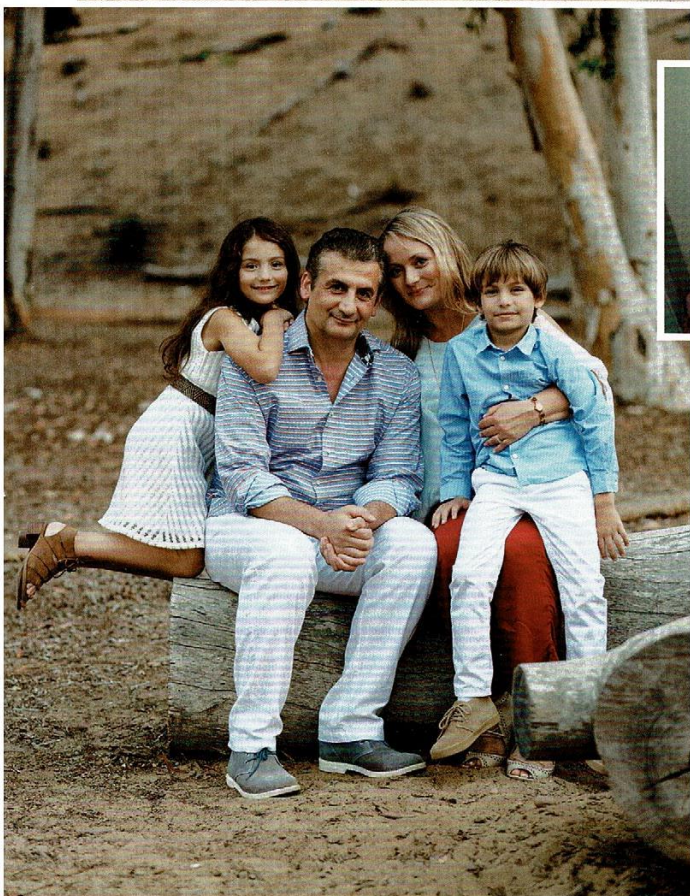
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2005-2006, he produced the First Russian Festival in the state of Georgia.

Olga graduated from Russia's Perm Ballet

Academy. She has starred with Russia's Kirov-Mariinsky Ballet, St. Petersburg Classical Ballet and England's Bristol Ballet. Performing in ten countries, she has danced the lead in *Don Quixote*, *Giselle*, *Coppelia*, *Nutcracker*, *La Sylphida*, *La Bayadere*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Shopeniana*, *Corsaire*, and numerous contemporary pieces, including George Balanchine's *Who Cares*. She was a finalist in the 6th New York International Ballet Competition and has performed as a guest artist with some 15 American companies, been Assistant Choreographer for the *Don Quixote* Ballet throughout Southern California, and served as guest faculty with five ballet companies.

Together the Asatryans have traveled the long road to American citizenship. In keeping with their commitment to arts education, Olga volunteers at La Costa Heights Elementary School teaching art and helping in classroom, and Sayat volunteers with Encinitas Friends of Arts.

"Caring and love in the heart"—as Sayat says, "Life is a storybook in which each family plays a part, and every day is a story. Let the book be full of happiness and great adventures, not only for today, but as an example for future generations."