



SEE OUR AD ON PAGE 25

SouthShore

Apollo Beach/Ruskin/Wimauma



Osprey
OBSERVER

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

February 2026

Volume 01, Issue 2



Ph: 813-657-2418




NOW OPEN IN
SOUTHSHORE

SEE OUR AD ON PAGE 4

CELEBRATING 24 YEARS OF PUBLISHING POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

HONORING SIX DECADES OF DEDICATION, AMERICAN LEGION POST 246 LOOKS AHEAD



The Sun City Center American Legion Post 246 has been a part of the community for 60 years.

In the early days of development of the Sun City Center retirement community, a group of retired veterans got together and formed a new American Legion Post aimed to service those newly arrived relocated veterans.

"Subsequently, a temporary charter was applied for, and was received, on October 18, 1966, followed by the granting of a permanent charter received on January 26, 1967," said Paul Wheat, commander of Sun City Center American Legion Post 246. "Through the years, Post 246 has continued to evolve. On June 20, 2012, articles of incorporation were filed with the Division of Corporations, Florida State Department, under the entity name of 'The American Legion, Sun City Center Post No. 246 Inc.' A supplemental charter as an incorporated post was received January 3, 2014, and Post 246 remains current to this day."

Wheat joined the Army after high school at age 17. "After more than nine years enlisted service, as a result of much technical training and experience, I received a direct commission as a second lieutenant and went on to serve a total of more than 29 years active duty, retiring as a lieutenant colonel," Wheat said. "I have been involved in the Sun City Center American Legion Post 246 going on 33 years, right after moving into Sun City Center. I was post adjutant and then



commander for a couple of years. My main objective is to revitalize the post, and I believe I am succeeding."

Post 246, being in a designated retirement community, does not normally attract those who are active military duty personnel or younger veterans under the age of 55 who are still involved in second careers.

"However, there are more people relocating to our area that still commute, or continue to work as consultants, or want to continue to be involved in younger and even youth activities," Wheat said. "The leadership of Post 246 has been taking note

of these changes over the years. Post 246 is continually seeking out new veteran residents in our community and promoting membership by the transfer of membership from a previous post, or initiating new membership into the American Legion."

If a person has served at least one day of active military duty since December 7, 1941, and was honorably discharged, or is still serving active military duty honorably, he/she is eligible for membership with the American Legion.

"A current American Legion membership card duly issued by any American Legion Post is recognized by any other American Legion Post in the world," Wheat said. "Currently, Post 246 annual dues are \$50 per year. Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) membership is also available."

If you would like to learn more about Sun City Center American Legion Post 246, you can visit its website at <https://centennial.legion.org/florida/post246> or contact Wheat at pawheatjr@aol.com. Post 246 meets on the third Friday of each month throughout the year. Meetings are being held at 9:30 a.m. at 1910 S. Pebble Beach Blvd. in Sun City Center.

SCCUMC HOSTS STAR-STUDED LINEUP FOR CONCERT CELEBRATION MONTH



Melissa and Jim Brady

The United Methodist Church of Sun City Center (SCCUMC) is hosting several concerts throughout March at its beautiful sanctuary.

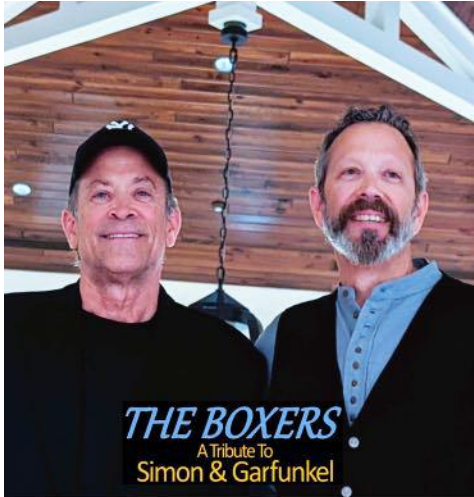
On Friday, March 6, at 7 p.m., Keith Allyn (Branson's Neil Diamond) and Diana Lynn (Branson's Karen Carpenter), husband-and-wife superstars of Branson, Missouri, will be performing DUET.

Branson's King and Queen of Diamonds will perform famous duets ranging from the '50s to today, including Donnie and Marie, Neil Diamond and Barbara Streisand, Sonny & Cher, the Everly Brothers and more. In this 90-minute musical, energetic production you will even see a duet done solo. This one-of-a-kind production will feature guest appearances from Roy Orbison, Elvis and Debi Diamond, Branson's only comedienne.

Following up the duo is a trio of performers, Jim and Melissa Brady and Michael Booth, on Friday, March 13, at 7 p.m.

Award-winning artists and songwriters Jim and Melissa Brady possess a rich musical heritage that started in family ministry and transitioned to some of the greatest gospel music stages of our day. Whether writing a new song, singing in concert, or simply in conversation with a friend, the story of their lives is to share the love and hope of Jesus.

A masterful communicator and a seasoned musician, Michael Booth was entrusted with the God-given ability to weave music and testimony, complex truths and humor together into a presentation that can touch audiences from every walk of life. As part of the Booth Brothers, he has been honored to



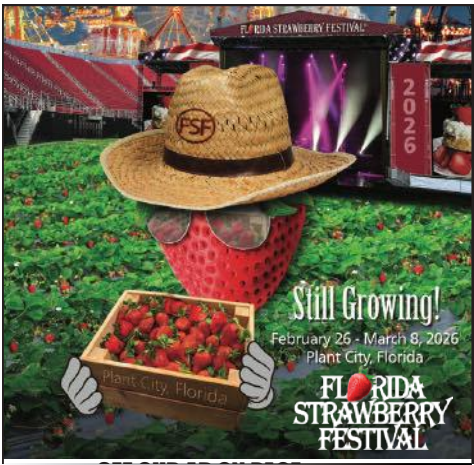
Simon and Garfunkel tribute

grace the stages of venues around the world and privileged to receive an abundance of honors. In addition to his work with the Booth Brothers, he has stepped into a solo career, having released several solo projects over the years.

Next up to perform at SCCUMC, on Sunday, March 15, at 3 p.m., will be Invoke.

Described as "not anything but everything: Classical, Folk, Bluegrass, Americana and a sound yet to be termed seamlessly merged into a perfect one," (David Srebnik, SiriusXM classical producer), Invoke strives to successfully dodge even the most valiant

Continued on Page 23



IN THIS ISSUE:

IRON ROCK INS.....	PG 3
DAV CHAPTER 110.....	PG 5
HC EXPANSION.....	PG 9
SCAMMER SAFETY EVENT.....	PG 17
EYE ON BUSINESS.....	PG 26

PRSTD STD

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

TAMPA, FL

PERMIT #2118

ECRWSS EDDM

Postal Customer

Osprey Observer

2109 Lithia Pinecrest Rd.

Valrico, FL 33596



SmileLYNN Pediatric Dentistry has been a part of the SouthShore community since 2018. Over the last eight years, Dr. Casey Lynn's practice has grown by adding new staff at his location. See the full story on Page 4.



PAYANT

Wealth Management Group

osaic Advisors

SERVING THE SOUTH SHORE COMMUNITY FOR 40 YEARS

Professionals For Every Financial Need In Your Life.

CALL TODAY! 813-633-7333 | suncitycenter.osaicadvisors.com

1653 Sun City Center Plaza, Sun City Center, Florida 33573

Securities and Investment Advisory Services offered through Osaic Wealth, Inc. (Osaic Wealth), Member FINRA/SIPC doing business as Osaic Advisors. Any other entities, products, or services referenced here are independent of Osaic Wealth, subsidiary of Osaic Holdings, Inc.



Live stronger with
a healthy heart.

Tampa Bay's Heart Experts

From fatigue to chest pain or palpitations, every symptom could be a sign that you need to see your doctor. In those moments when your heart is at risk, turn to AdventHealth Riverview.

We are leading the way in cardiovascular treatments and whole-person care. Our specialists work together to deliver truly comprehensive heart care — from prevention and heart disease diagnosis to the latest advancements in surgical methods.

We know your heart. We know that each one is unique, and our experts are here to care for each one.

Take your heart risk assessment today.
FloridaHeartExperts.com



Happy Valentine's Day!

REED & REED
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

813.438.5960
NEEDREED.COM
101 E. Lumsden Road
Brandon, FL 33511

Personal Injury Cases
FREE CONSULTATIONS
Auto Accidents * Slip and Fall
Boating Accidents * Dog Bites
Wrongful Death * Motorcycles

LIKE

Having a Lawyer in the

FAMILY



**Proud Supporters
of ECHO
*Board of Directors**



IRON ROCK HELPS HOMEOWNERS SECURE BETTER COVERAGE, BETTER VALUE



Photo Credit Kimberly Smith Faithful of Joy Photos
Founded in 2020 and located in Apollo Beach, Iron Rock Insurance specializes in personal lines insurance, offering policies for home, auto, flood, boat, RV, travel trailer, golf cart, motorcycle and pet health insurance.

Founded in 2020 and located in Apollo Beach, Iron Rock Insurance specializes in personal lines insurance, offering policies for home, auto, flood, boat, RV, travel trailer, golf cart, motorcycle and pet health insurance.

"As a lifelong insurance professional and managing partner of Iron Rock Insurance here in Apollo Beach, I know firsthand how challenging the homeowners insurance market has been over the last few years," said Lisa Hast, managing partner and insurance agent. "Rising premiums, fewer carrier options and confusing coverage changes left many homeowners feeling frustrated and uncertain."

Hast is excited to share some good news about insurance with the community.

"Homeowners insurance pricing has come down substantially, and we are once again seeing strong, comprehensive coverage options available for Florida homeowners," Hast said. "At Iron Rock Insurance, we are a family-owned and operated agency proudly serving our community with a dedicated team of six experienced sales agents. Because we are an independent agency, we

By Libby Hopkins

work for you, not the insurance companies. Our job is to shop the market, explain your options clearly and make sure your coverage truly protects what matters most. Strong coverage that actually protects your home."

Today's policies are offering coverage improvements that many homeowners may not realize are available again, including replacement cost coverage on

the building and roof.

"This ensures your home is rebuilt based on today's construction costs, not depreciated values, after a covered loss," Hast said.

On building ordinance or law coverage, Hast said, "If your home must be rebuilt to meet current building codes, this coverage helps pay for those additional costs that standard policies often don't cover."

"We take the time to educate our clients, review policies annually and make sure coverage keeps pace with changes to your home and the market," Hast said. "Insurance isn't just about price; it's about value, protection and peace of mind. And right now, homeowners have an opportunity to secure better coverage at more reasonable rates than we've seen in years."

If you haven't reviewed your homeowners insurance recently, now is the time.

"Our team at Iron Rock Insurance would be honored to help you protect your home, your investment and your family," Hast said.

Visit www.ironrockins.com or call 813-213-9600. Its office is located at 400 Frandorson Circle, Ste. 103, in Apollo Beach.

NEW LEADERSHIP, RENEWED MISSION FOR SUN CITY MOAA CHAPTER

By Denise Sansosti

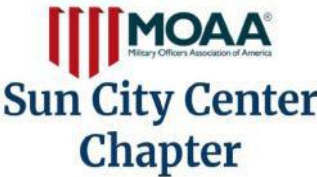
"Never stop serving" isn't just a motto for the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); it's a way of life for the veterans who continue serving their communities after retirement. The newly appointed Sun City Center chapter president, retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Daniel Melton, lives by that motto.

MOAA is the nation's largest organization dedicated to protecting the rights and benefits of America's uniformed service members and their families. Independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan, MOAA represents more than 350,000 active-duty, retired, former, National Guard and Reserve officers from every branch of the military, as well as officers from the Public Health Service and NOAA and surviving spouses.

At the national level, MOAA works directly with Congress, the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to safeguard earned benefits and improve quality of life for those who serve and have served. The organization is the ears and voice for veterans and military families. With more than 96,000 veterans living in Hillsborough County, Melton believes staying connected and communicating with elected officials is essential to protecting benefits for all military families. Learn more about top legislative priorities and how you can support MOAA's work at <https://moaa.org>.



Retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Daniel Melton, president of Sun City Center MOAA chapter.



quorum.us/.

Closer to home, the Sun City Center chapter brings that mission to life through fellowship, guest speakers and opportunities for members to stay informed and involved.

"We've got a good team. We need to concentrate on increasing membership,

gain new volunteers and I am looking for faith-based organizations to be involved as well," Melton said.

He is also pursuing a doctorate in ministry leadership to better serve veterans and

their families.

"There's a spiritual aspect to recovery and healing that shouldn't be overlooked," he said.

Melton proudly served the Marines for 31 years and retired five years ago. He knows firsthand the importance of being involved in military organizations.

"If it wasn't for the DAV, I wouldn't have known the process when I was preparing to retire," Melton said. "They helped guide me and answer questions I didn't know to ask."

"Nobody succeeds alone," he said. "It's always a team effort."

The Sun City Center MOAA chapter meets the first Wednesday of each month (excluding July and August) at 11:15 a.m. at the Atrium Building's Florida Room, located at 945 N. Course Lane in Sun City Center. Learn more at <https://scc.flmoaa.org/> or by emailing president@scc.moaa.org.

OUR DESIGNERS WILL MAKE YOUR DREAM A REALITY
FROM INSPIRATION TO INSTALLATION.



Your One Stop Shop
Blinds | Cabinets | Tile | Flooring

813-645-8660 | www.doveinteriorscarpetone.com
2305 E. College Ave, Ruskin (1 mile west of 1-75 Exit 240 B)

DOVE

FLOORS-BLINDS KITCHEN & BATH

- WINDOW TREATMENTS
- AUTOMATED SHADES
- TILE - VINYL - HARDWOOD
- KITCHEN & BATH CABINETS

Your Home Interior Experts
Over 34 Years Strong
Family Owned & Operated



Visit
Our
Showroom
& See
What's
New!

BRIDGEWATER LANDING OPENS LEASING FOR NEWEST 55-PLUS APARTMENT HOMES

By Marie Gilmore



Bridgewater Landing Apartments is now leasing in Riverview, welcoming residents to the area's newest 55-plus active adult apartment community thoughtfully designed for comfort, connection and carefree living.

Designed exclusively for independent adults 55 and better, Bridgewater Landing features one- and two-bedroom residences ranging from approximately 703 to 1,170 square feet. Rental rates currently begin at \$1,700 per month for one-bedroom, one-bath apartments and range up to \$2,435 per month for spacious two-bedroom, two-bath homes, depending on the floor-plan size and location within the building. Residents may choose from 10 unique floor plans to suit a variety of lifestyles and space needs.

Each apartment is designed with everyday ease and refined living in mind. Homes include private, modern kitchens with quartz countertops; high-end LG appliances; luxury vinyl flooring; soaring 9-foot, 6-inch ceilings; and full-size, in-unit washers and dryers. Many residences also feature private patios or balconies overlooking landscaped courtyards or a lake — a rare amenity in Riverview — allowing residents to enjoy Florida's sunshine and fresh air from the comfort of home. Water, Wi-Fi with 60 cable channels and in-unit laundry are included.

Bridgewater Landing offers a truly main-

tenance-free lifestyle, complemented by an array of amenities that encourage active, social living. Residents can enjoy access to the Sweet Water Club, an exclusive, on-property clubhouse offering wellness-focused fitness classes, creative experiences, social

events and group outings. Additional amenities of the Sweet Water Club include a fitness center and resort-style pool.

The fully accessible buildings include elevator access and wheelchair-friendly apartments. Bridgewater Landing Apartments is also pet-friendly. A dedicated pet park is underway, providing space for residents and their four-legged companions to enjoy. The community also boasts a walking trail, outdoor gathering spaces, barbecue and on-site management and maintenance.

The property is located at 5790 Stockport St. in Riverview — on Bloomingdale Avenue, directly across from the Winthrop Town Centre.

Now open in its first building, Bridgewater Landing Apartments will ultimately include 168 units and complete the larger Bridgewater Landing active adult community of single-family homes and duplexes. The apartments are owned by Bridges Land and Development and were built by local homebuilder Sunrise Homes, which has been developing communities exclusively in Hillsborough County since 1983.

Leasing offices are open Mon-Fri from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Call 813-934-2204. or email directly at leasing@bridgewaterlandings.com.

SMILELYNN PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY ADDS SPACE AND PROVIDER IN APOLLO BEACH

By Libby Hopkins



SmileLYNN Pediatric Dentistry has been a part of the SouthShore community since 2018. Over the last eight years, Dr. Casey Lynn's practice has grown by adding new staff at his location.

SmileLYNN Pediatric Dentistry has been a part of the SouthShore community since 2018. From the beginning of his business, Dr. Casey Lynn's goal was to "do pediatric dentistry, differently," he said, with a focus on patient and parent experience.

"I had been working at a number of other offices as an associate while I built the office after residency and saw how many offices worked to see as many patients as they could daily, with a focus on numbers vs. building quality, long-term relationships," Dr. Lynn said. "I knew I wanted to slow down patient flow, focus on prevention vs. drill-and-fill dentistry and make sure patients grew up healthy and actually enjoyed coming to our office."

To do this, Dr. Lynn made sure to not overbook his days, to have longer appointment times and to make the office a safe and relaxing place for both kids and parents.

"Our office provides a calming beach theme with toys, iPads, books and big-screen TVs above every chair. Each child has the ability to watch their favorite show while getting their cleaning done," Dr. Lynn said.



"We are ultimately focused on the overall experience."

With the growth in the SouthShore area, Dr. Lynn's existing office space came to capacity both space and doctor wise.

"I love the Apollo Beach community and knew I wanted to focus all of my energy and career in the area, as opposed

to opening new locations in other areas," Dr. Lynn said. "I envisioned one large office that could continue to grow to take care of our community and was lucky enough to have the space next door

come available. We were lucky enough to recruit Dr. Stewart into the office to help even more children in the area, and he joined us in March of 2025 as our second board-certified pediatric dentist."

The new space was finished in August 2025 and now both doctors can work together most days to see even more patients, while still focusing on spending plenty of time with each patient and parent.

"On top of the additional dental chairs, we expanded the Tampa Tongue Tie Center side by adding more/larger consult rooms and a dedicated laser room for procedure needs," Dr. Lynn said. "So, now we can also continue to help more patients eat, speak and sleep better."

Visit www.smilelynndental.com or call 813-591-3052. Its office is located at 122 Harbor Village Lane in Apollo Beach.

Guided Kayak Tours ~ Eco Tours Sunset Dinner Cruises



Reserve Your Five Star Tour

Latitudes Tours

latitudestours.com or 813-641-1311



TIME FOR ANOTHER

SUPER FAST OIL CHANGE



10-MINUTE FULL SERVICE OIL CHANGE



**Lowest Pricing on
TIRES, MAINTENANCE & AUTOMOTIVE REPAIRS**
10524 CR 672 | 813-499-0884 | **NOW OPEN!**
11690 Boyette Rd, Riverview | 813-499-9606
M-F: 8am - 6pm, Sat: 8am - 5pm, Sun: Closed

25% OFF

Valid for conventional and full synthetic oil changes.
Not to be combined with any other offer.
Only valid at Riverview FL - Boyette & CR 672 locations. Exp: 3/31/2026

\$40 OFF BRAKES

Includes Free Brake Inspection

Not to be combined with any other offer.
Only valid at Riverview FL - Boyette & CR 672 locations. Exp: 3/31/2026

EXPERIENCE
FINANCIAL ADVICE
*delivered with
concierge care*



Mike McCormick
Founder | Wealth Manager

Dena Diab
Branch Operations Manager

www.southshorewlth.com
1601 Rickenbacker Dr, Suite #1
Sun City Center, FL 33573



SOUTHSHORE
WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Everyone has different financial goals and priorities, and they change and grow as you do. That's why it's important for me to get to know you and understand what you're working toward. Together, we can create a personalized financial plan that fits your needs today and helps you build the tomorrow you deserve.

Schedule a consultation with us about your financial situation and how we can help you plan for your future.

CONTACT US TODAY (813) 499-9247

Securities offered through Cetera Advisor Networks LLC (doing insurance business in CA as CFGAN Insurance Agency LLC), member FINRA/SIPC. Advisory Services offered through Cetera Investment Advisers LLC, a registered investment adviser. Cetera is under separate ownership from any other named entity.



Osprey OBSERVER

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

PUBLISHING POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS THROUGHOUT:
Bloomington/FishHawk • Riverview • Brandon/Winthrop • Valrico and NEW SouthShore (Apollo Beach/Ruskin/Wimauma)



MANAGING EDITOR
Marie Gilmore
813-657-2418
editor@ospreyobserver.com



NEWS REPORTER
Taylor Wells
813-657-2418
twells@ospreyobserver.com



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
Libby Hopkins
813-657-2418
libby@ospreyobserver.com



BILLING MANAGER
Terry Vassalotti
813-657-2418
terry@ospreyobserver.com



DELIVERY MANAGER
Bill Andrew
813-657-2418
bandrew@ospreyobserver.com



BUSINESS EDITOR
Jenny Bennett
813-657-2418
jbennett@ospreyobserver.com

GRAPHICS MANAGER - Kathi Hayes - khayes@ospreyobserver.com

www.OspreyObserver.com

FOLLOW US:     

ADVERTISING SALES TEAM



FISHHAWK ADVERTISING
Melody Gershkoff
813-300-5152
mgershkovff@ospreyobserver.com



BRANDON ADVERTISING
Jane Owen
541-405-5574
jowen@ospreyobserver.com



SOUTHSHORE ADVERTISING
Melissa Hartmann
813-833-7470
mhartmann@ospreyobserver.com



HOUSE ACCOUNTS & VALRICO ADVERTISING
Kerrie Hoening
813-625-1527
kerrie@ospreyobserver.com



RIVERVIEW ADVERTISING
Denise Sansosti
412-638-5658
dsansosti@OspreyObserver.com

Publishing Positive News Since 2001

2109 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., Valrico 33596 • (office) 813-657-2418



2 Chr 29:3
MASTER GARAGE DOOR CO.
DOORS • OPENERS • SPRINGS
(813) 684-7744
steve@mastergaragedoor.com
mastergaragedoor.com

28 years serving the community with only the highest quality parts and service.

Garage Door Service, Repair & Installation

- Residential Garage Doors
- Garage Door Openers
- Broken Springs
- Cables
- Rollers
- Doors off Track

FREE Estimates on New Garage Door Installs

Celebrating 28 Years of Serving Our Community



Health Disability. Long/Short Term Care. Supplemental Life. Medicare. Dental. Vision. Small/Large Group Insurance.

INSURED

AMERICAN & FAMILY

Proud partner with Healthcare Solutions Team! (813) 919-8536 C.Gruenbaum@insuredaf.com

"If you need insurance Craig is your guy! He is great and gives you exactly what you want and always finds the budget you want to stay in. If you're not satisfied with what you have he's always happy to help so that you're happy!" - S. Farquhar

DAV CHAPTER 110 WORKS TO SUPPORT LOCAL VETERANS

By Taylor Wells

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) is an organization with over 1,200 chapters across the U.S. that helps veterans make positive life changes and offers a support network and a community of fellow veterans. One such chapter is DAV Chapter 110 in Sun City Center.

James Taylor, commander of DAV Chapter 110 and a member since 2017, stated, "Our mission is to ensure that veterans and their families receive all the benefits that they're entitled to from the veterans administration and other government agencies, including state."

DAV Chapter 110 is pretty active, he said, having around 25 members attending each meeting. The chapter has seven veterans service officers, but it's always looking for more.

"We tend to let the veterans that are there know about all the activities that are happening, especially in Hillsborough County or the local area. We have a couple of members that are very active in other organizations, like the Hillsborough County Veterans Council. ... We tend to let members know about new initiatives, like from the VA, whether it's the benefits side or the health care side," said Taylor, "And if people have questions about certain activities, we hopefully have somebody that can assist them in getting the help they need."

Taylor said there are numerous beneficial programs out there for disabled veterans. One that's been really helpful, he noted, is Uber Health, which allows veterans who are more than 30 percent disabled to take an Uber to appointments, and the VA picks up the tab. Another program helped him receive back surgery procedures, with the VA covering the charges. However, many veterans often aren't aware of such benefits, so DAV Chapter 110 is dedicated to spreading the word.

DAV life membership applications can be done at www.dav.org, or you can ask for an application form at a chapter meeting. Life membership costs \$325, but there are payment plans available, and veterans ages 80 and older can join for free.

DAV Chapter 110 meetings are held from February through June and August through December on the second Tuesday of the month at 12 Noon, with pizza and soft drinks at 11:30 a.m.

Its meetings take place at the Sun City Center Community Hall, located at 1910 S. Pebble Beach Blvd. in Sun City Center.

For more information, call 813-331-3871 or email dav110cso@gmail.com.



KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO AMERICA'S VETERANS

CUSTOM HAIR

For the hair you've always wanted!

Thin Hair?

Since 1969

- FREE CONSULTATION!
- EUROPEAN HUMAN HAIR TOPPERS, WIGS & BLENDS
- NON-SURGICAL BONDING options for active men & women
- Chemotherapy and Alopecia Specialists
- Largest In-Stock Selection in Tampa Bay
- Non-Surgical Hair Replacement for Men

THE LOOK YOU WANT, WITHOUT THE SOUTH TAMPA PRICE!

CLEARWATER MALL
727-725-1052

BRANDON
813-651-9484

TAMPA
813-932-5327

customhairtampabay.com • APPOINTMENT ONLY PLEASE



563361



Captain Brandeân McCorkle

Fishing Charters • Sunset Cruises and ECO Tours

Ask about group, military, law enforcement, fire fighter, and corporate discounts!

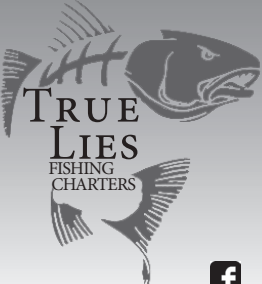
Gift Certificates Available.

EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME..

Book Your Charter Today!

(813) 480-5111

www.trueliesfishingcompany.com



TRUE LIES FISHING CHARTERS



HILLSBOROUGH AGENCIES HELP RESIDENTS FIGHT FRAUD

By Brad Stager



Hillsborough County is a fast-rising slice of the American pie, but beneath the prosperity a shadow economy of con artists exists, preying on residents' personal data and financial holdings. Against this threat, awareness and preparation can serve as defenses.

The jury duty scam targets the citizen's fear of the law, involving a phone call or text that lies about missing jury duty. There's a demand for immediate payment, often in the form of a gift card or wire transfer. According to Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister, that's a red flag for fraud.

"Legitimate courts will never ask for sensitive information or payment over the phone," he said in an official Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office YouTube video. "If you receive a call or a message about jury duty, take a moment to verify its authenticity."

You can verify the matter by calling the Hillsborough County Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office at 813-276-8100, never using the number provided by the caller.

The hot real estate market means property is as good as gold, and criminals steal it by filing false documents that transfer a home to them. To be vigilant, a property owner should enroll in the fraud

alert system offered by the Hillsborough County Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office. This notification system provides an instant warning of office-related activity regarding their property. You can learn more about the property fraud alert service and register online at <https://hillsclerk.com/>.

Scams targeting human emotion are where the fraudster poses as a desperate grandchild, a lawyer or a cop and calls with a catastrophic tale of a fabricated crisis. They demand immediate, secret cash to resolve a disaster. It is an exploitation of the powerful obligation to family for quick, easy money. If a family member calls with an emergency, ask them a question only they would know the answer to, or simply call them back on a number you know is theirs.

Similarly, the romance scam involves a virtual life of faked intimacy, with the scammer inventing a financial emergency and begging the victim for money, promising a reunion that hinges on a timely bank transfer.

The essential rule for navigating the danger of fraud is virtually written in stone: Verify, don't trust. Never send money, gift cards or personal information based on a voice that called you, or a contact that appears randomly on a screen.

NEW TACO DIRTY SERVES FRESH, CUSTOMIZABLE FLAVOR

By Olivia Clark



The Taco Dirty Riverview location at 10460 Stelling Dr. offers fast-casual Mexican dining with a focus on quality and flavor.

Taco Dirty is bringing a fresh take on fast-casual Mexican dining to Riverview with a menu built around quality ingredients, bold flavors and complete customization. Located at 10460 Stelling Dr., the restaurant gives guests the freedom to create tacos, bowls, burritos and nachos tailored to their tastes.

The Taco Dirty concept focuses on fresh, thoughtfully sourced ingredients and a build-your-own format that appeals to a wide range of dietary preferences. Guests can choose from multiple bowl bases, add fresh vegetables, select from flavorful proteins and finish their meal with a variety of house-made sauces. The menu includes gluten-friendly, dairy-free, vegan and vegetarian options, while also offering antibiotic-free chicken and steak.

Popular menu items include signature bowls, such as the pineapple chicken, featuring brown rice, black beans, grilled ancho chicken, pineapple salsa and guac sauce, and the Ybor bowl, made with avocado citrus rice, black beans, lime and sour



orange chicken, lime-jalapeño corn salad and buffalo avocado sauce. Taco Dirty also offers desserts, including its well-known chocolate chip churro cookies, which are vegan and gluten-free.

Taco Dirty is owned by Tampa-based Ciccio Restaurant Group, a hospitality company known for developing neighborhood-focused restaurants. The group's philosophy emphasizes partnership, team collaboration and community connection, allowing each restaurant to maintain its own identity while delivering consistent quality. That approach is reflected at Taco Dirty, where attention to fresh ingredients, efficient service and a welcoming atmosphere remains a priority.

In addition to its food offerings, Taco Dirty features happy hour daily from 2-6 p.m., making it a convenient option for both lunch and dinner. The Riverview restaurant represents an expansion of the Taco Dirty brand, which also operates a Tampa location at 2221 W. Platt St.

With its customizable menu, fresh ingredients and community-driven approach, Taco Dirty continues to establish itself as a go-to destination for fast-casual Mexican dining in the Tampa Bay area. More information is available at www.tacodirty.com

✂

Eye Exam

\$35

with rebate

Must bring in coupon at time of service. Expires 3-31-2026

\$100 OFF

a Complete Pair of Eyeglasses

Some restrictions apply. Most Prescriptions. Not valid with any other offers. Expires 3-31-2026

Contacts

7 month supply starter kit with exam

\$149

Some restrictions apply. Not valid with any other offers. Expires 3-31-2026

Progressive No-Line Bifocals

\$99

Some restrictions apply. Clear. Not valid with any other offers. Expires 3-31-2026

SUN HILL OPTICAL

VALRICO

(813) 653-2244

RIVERVIEW

(813) 672-8100

SUN CITY CENTER

(813) 634-6344

New Location

LA FITNESS

SUN HILL OPTICAL

DOLLAR GENERAL

Valrico Rd

CRACKER BARREL

HWY 60

McMullen Rd

PEP BOYS

PUBLIX

SUN HILL OPTICAL

Boyette Rd

POST OFFICE

SCC Plaza

EMERGENCY SQUAD

SAV-A-LOT

SUN HILL OPTICAL

Rickenbacker Dr

Our office accepts many Insurance Plans so we ask that you contact our staff who will research and verify your insurance coverage.

Se habla español

The patient, and any other person responsible for payment has a right to refuse to pay, cancel payment or be reimbursed for payment for any other service, examination or treatment which is performed as a result within 72 hours of responding to the ad for the free, discounted fee, or reduced fee, exam or treatment.

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB STRIVES TO INCREASE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

By Kelly Wise Valdes

As election season draws closer, the Democratic Women's Club of South-east Hillsborough County is renewing its emphasis on community service, voter education and grassroots organizing — a continuation of what leaders describe as a mission grounded in civic duty and strong neighborhood ties.

Founded in 2016, the club operates under the umbrella of the Democratic Women's Club of Florida and works to promote and support Democratic candidates at both the local and state levels. As one of more than 60 Democratic women's clubs across Florida, the Southeast Hillsborough chapter has become a visible force in regional politics, bringing together women committed to advancing the priorities of Hillsborough County Democrats as well as statewide and national Democratic efforts.

Liz Congero, president of the organization, said the club was founded to support Democratic values and expand civic participation, blending political advocacy with hands-on service projects throughout the region.

"Our club is dedicated to Democratic values and working to elect those candidates that support those values," said Congero. "We offer a community service scholarship as well as creating volunteer



Democratic Women's Club volunteers staff a voter-registration table during a community outreach events.

opportunities in our community, such as collecting monthly donations and working with local nonprofit organizations to support those in need in our community. We volunteer with ECHO, Nativty Church Food Bank and PB&J Ministries and have participated in Wreaths Across America this past Christmas, honoring our fallen soldiers, just to name a few."

Alongside its service work, the club places strong emphasis on voter outreach. Members regularly host registration drives, encourage residents to sign up for vote-by-mail and provide information about upcoming elections.

"We actively promote voter registration and advocate for vote-by-mail," said Congero. "We have monthly guest speakers and candidate forums. During our meetings, we educate our members on legislation that is being introduced in Tallahassee. We take that information to the voters to ensure they are receiving accurate and factual information so that they can vote accordingly."

The club's calendar includes monthly meetings, community partnerships and ongoing legislative updates for members.

More information about the club's initiatives, events and membership opportunities is available at <https://sehillshdwc.org/>.

INSURANCE WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH: CELEBRATING 26 YEARS IN BUSINESS

By Denise Sansosti

Navigating insurance in Florida can be stressful, but it doesn't have to be. According to Tanya Johnson, owner of Reliable Insurance The Johnson Agency, the key is education.

"Insurance is not fun," she said. "I try to make it simple and let people know they have choices. They control more than they think. My job is to ask the right questions and help them understand their options."

Johnson is a licensed insurance broker, meaning she is an independent agent who works with over 40 carriers to find the best coverage at competitive prices.

"With so many options, I work on behalf of the client, not the company," she explained.

Johnson offers home, life, commercial, mobile, auto and recreational vehicle insurance, and she personally provides guidance while assisting clients through the claims process.

A Tampa Bay resident for more than 40 years, Johnson has earned a bachelor's degree from the University of South Florida, an MBA from Saint Leo University and the prestigious Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter designation. She began her career in health insurance before transitioning into property and casualty. A defining moment came after Hurricane Andrew, when she traveled to Miami to deliver



Tanya Johnson, Independent Insurance Broker

supplies to family members.

"I was shocked by how many people didn't have insurance," she recalled. "Hearing their stories and seeing the devastation left a lasting impression on me."

She also speaks regularly at Tampa Bay Neighborhood Housing Services and Real Estate and R.E.A.C.H., where educating new homeowners is a priority.

"Buying a home in America is a big deal," she noted. "Once you are in your home, your insurance provider will still be there for you after the transaction."

Having a trusted insurance agent on your side can make the difference between staying in your home or having to sell, which is exactly what happened to one of her neighbors. Johnson stepped in and saved the single mother over \$500 a month on homeowners insurance after the original carrier dropped coverage and the mortgage company assigned a new, expensive policy.

Top tips: Call your agent before filing a claim. Photograph receipts for major purchases and email them to a designated household account. Consider an umbrella policy. Don't underestimate risks associated with pets or pools. Water damage can happen anywhere.

You can reach Johnson at 941-313-4932, tjohnson@myreliableagent.com or <https://tanyainsures.com/>.



Hybrid Dementia and Alzheimer's Support Groups for Care Partners of those with any type of Memory Loss

Third Tuesday
of Every Month
at 6:30 pm
Meeting in
Person & Via Zoom

Zoom Meeting ID:
993 4701 6039
Passcode:
459148
Join by phone:
833.928.4608

Fourth Wednesday
of Every Month
at 2:00 pm
Meeting in
Person & Via Zoom



813-607-6880
Come a little early for refreshments!
TesseraBrandon.com | 1320 Oakfield Dr. Brandon, FL 33511

NEVER
BUY SALT
AGAIN

- NON-ELECTRIC
- HEALTHIER
- ALTERNATIVE
- NOSALT

AMERICAN WATER

PURIFIER ANTI-SCALE WHOLE HOUSE WATER TREATMENT (WATER HEATER NOT INCLUDED)

CALL TODAY FOR A FREE WATER SOFTENER CHECKUP!
(813)684-7873(PURE)

GARY BANCROFT
OWNER

PROUDLY SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR 33 YEARS!

Google 5.0 ★★★★★
BBB A+

SERENITY MEADOWS

MEMORIAL PARK

Pardon Our Dust

Project developments are moving forward quickly!

Secure your spot soon to take advantage of **Pre-Construction DEALS!** (expires March 2026)

6919 Providence Rd, Riverview
813-677-9494 | serenitymeadows.com

BRANDON RIVERVIEW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR

The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce its Community Health & Wellness Fair, taking place Saturday, March 7, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Gardenville Park & Recreation Center, located at 6219 Symmes Rd. in Gibsonton.

This free, family-friendly event is designed to connect residents with valuable health, wellness and medical resources while creating a fun and engaging experience for all ages. The fair will feature local health and wellness businesses, medical providers and community organizations, along with interactive activities, on-site health screenings, food trucks, sports demonstrations and live entertainment.

"Our Community Health & Wellness Fair is all about bringing people together and empowering our community with access to resources that support healthier, happier lives," said the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce President Amber Aaron. "From preventative care and fitness to nutrition and mental wellness,



Saturday - March 7, 2026
10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Community Health & Wellness Fair

Presented by
Advent Health

✓ Interactive Activities

✓ On-site Health Screenings

✓ Food Trucks

✓ Sports Demonstrations

✓ Live Entertainment



Sponsorships Available Sign up your business today!

Showcase your health & wellness business to the community!



Gardenville Park & Recreation Center
6219 Symmes Road, Gibsonton, FL 33534

form meaningful connections while supporting community well-being.

Businesses specializing in healthcare, fitness, nutrition, mental wellness, preventative care and holistic services are encouraged to participate.

Community members are invited to attend at no cost, and businesses interested in showcasing their services can register online at <https://web.centralhillsboroughchamber.com/events/Community-Health-Wellness-Fair-63706/details>.

Join the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce for a high-energy, impactful event that educates, inspires and strengthens a healthier community.

Staff Report

this event offers something for everyone."

The fair also provides an excellent opportunity for health and wellness businesses to showcase their services directly to families, individuals and decision-makers in the Brandon-Riverview area. Participating businesses can build brand awareness, share expertise and

MORGAN ADULT AND COMMUNITY SCHOOL: SECOND CHANCE FOR ADULT LEARNERS

By Brad Stager

Morgan High School in Wimauma is a place where adult learners can pursue their academic goals through the Morgan Adult and Community School.

Educators say it's never too late to learn, and Hillsborough County Public Schools is promoting that effort by operating a new adult learning facility in the SouthShore area.

Located at 1712 W. Lake Dr. in Wimauma, Morgan Adult and Community School at Region 2 (on the Morgan High School campus) is dedicated to providing adult learners with a crucial fresh start. Recognizing that educational journeys don't always follow a traditional, straight path, the school offers a supportive, straightforward and focused environment designed to help every learner move forward toward their personal and professional goals.

Morgan Adult and Community School is specifically tailored to meet the diverse needs of the adult population. A core offering is Adult Basic Education (ABE), which provides foundational skills necessary for academic success. For those aiming to complete their secondary education, the General Equivalency Development (GED) program prepares students for the high school equivalency exam, opening doors to higher education and better employment opportunities.

Beyond basic and equivalency programs,

the school also offers Academic Skills Building (ASB) to sharpen essential academic competencies. In an increasingly global community, the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program is vital, helping nonnative speakers master the English language fluency necessary for daily life and career

advancement. Finally, for younger students who need to complete their high school diploma requirements, the school provides credit recovery for graduation.

The school maintains simple and accessible requirements for admission. Prospective students must be 16 years of age or older. Mandatory attendance is a key component of the programs, emphasizing the commitment required for success. One of the greatest perks is the low cost of enrolling. The admission fee is just \$45 per semester, and there is a nominal testing fee of \$10 per year. The admission and testing fees apply specifically to the GED, ESOL and ABE programs, making these life-changing educational opportunities highly affordable.

The school's principal, Edward Cristiano, said his staff has the expertise to match an adult learner's ambition.

"Students work at their own pace, and we offer flexible hours to set them up for success. The most difficult part is just showing up to get started, but we will help them through the rest," he wrote in an email.

To learn more, visit www.hillsboroughschools.org.



Angel FOUNDATION FL

Angel Hearts Lifting Up Families in Crisis

2 EXCITING EVENTS COMING:

4TH Annual Sporting Clays Classic | February 21st

Ladies Spring Tea | April 23rd

Register at: AngelFoundationFL.com

VISIT THE ANGEL GIFT SHOP FOR VALENTINE GIFT GIVING NEEDS!



LOCATED INSIDE TOWER C @ HCA FLORIDA BRANDON HOSPITAL

PROCEEDS BENEFIT FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCING CANCER OR OTHER CATASTROPHIC EVENTS





RELIABLE INSURANCE

HONESTY INTEGRITY RELIABILITY

THE JOHNSON AGENCY

STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT
BACKED BY EXPERTISE YOU CAN TRUST

✓ AUTO

✓ HOME

✓ LIFE

✓ COMMERCIAL

✓ RENTERS

✓ FLOOD

✓ MANUFACTURED/MOBILE HOME

✓ BOAT/RV

✓ MOTORCYCLE

✓ PET INSURANCE

✓ HOME WARRANTY

✓ UMBRELLA

✓ CONDO

855-482-6925
TANYAINSURES.COM



TANYA N. JOHNSON
MBA, CPCU, CLCS
INDEPENDENT BROKER

Dine Local



OSPREYOBSERVER.COM

1/2 Off

Appetizer with any dinner entree.
Friday & Saturday 6pm-Close

Dine In ONLY
Note Available For To Go



10288 Causeway Blvd



Teacher's Happy Hour

Every Friday, 3-6 p.m.
All Teachers Receive the Founder's Family Discount

10% OFF

ENTIRE Purchase

10% OFF

ENTIRE Purchase



813-643-7777

Only valid with regular menu.
With this coupon. Must present before submitting payment. Before tax. One coupon per visit. Not valid with other offers.

LUNCH SPECIALS EVERY DAY

FAMILY MEAL SPECIALS

\$49.95

Take Out & Delivery



La Septima Cafe

702 W Lumsden Rd. Brandon
Not Valid with any other discounts, promotions or coupons. No Cash Value.

10% OFF

ENTIRE Purchase



Sunflower Cafe
813-65-SUSHI

Only valid with regular menu.
With this coupon. Must present before submitting payment. Before tax. One coupon per visit. Not valid with other offers.

Happy Hour

Thursdays 4 - 6 pm

\$5 Classic Shakes



10446 Stelling Dr.
Riverview
(in the Mission BBQ plaza)

TACO DIRTY

— Bowls, Tacos, Mexican Things —

FREE TACO

with any purchase

10460 Stelling Dr.
Riverview
(in the Mission BBQ plaza)

Must present coupon. Not valid with any other discounts. No cash value.

DISCOVER LATITUDES TOURS: A FAMILY-RUN BOATING EXPERIENCE IN RUSKIN

By McKenzie Brown

Just 30 minutes from the buzz of Tampa, Latitudes Tours offers something many locals don't even realize is available so close to home. Based in Ruskin, this locally owned, family-run business provides relaxed boat tours along the beautiful waterways of Tampa Bay.

What sets Latitudes Tours apart is the personal touch. Because it's family-operated, guests aren't treated like part of a large crowd. The team focuses on creating a comfortable, welcoming experience where people can truly enjoy their time on the water. It's not rushed or overly commercial. It feels like home.

Guests can expect scenic cruises that highlight the beauty of the SouthShore area. Dolphins are frequently spotted, manatees often make appearances and a variety of coastal birds add to the experience. Sunset cruises are especially popular, offering wide-open views and a calm atmosphere. Optional meals are available for those who want to turn their outing into a dining experience on the water.

Latitudes Tours is also a great option for group events and special occasions. Birthday celebrations, neighborhood outings, employee appreciation events, wedding guest activities, ash-scattering memorials and private charters are all welcome.



Latitude Tours shows off the unique beauty Tampa has to offer.

The setting provides a meaningful and memorable backdrop without requiring extensive travel or planning.

One of the biggest surprises for many residents is how accessible this experience is. You don't need a long vacation or a complicated itinerary. It's a simple way to enjoy a few hours that feel like a getaway, right in your own community.

The company's mission centers on sharing the natural beauty and history of the SouthShore region while creating lasting memories for both residents and visitors. It's dedicated to helping people slow down, connect and see their local waterways in a new way.

With early spring approaching, now is the perfect time to plan a trip. March brings ideal weather and active wildlife, making it especially fun for families and homeschool groups looking for an educational and enjoyable outdoor experience. Booking early ensures you can secure your preferred date and make the most of the season.

Visit www.latitudetours.com for booking and tour information.

HCC CAMPAIGN TARGETS EXPANSION OF HIGH-DEMAND CAREER PROGRAMS

Staff Report



By aligning education with current and emerging industry needs, the project is expected to contribute to the long-term economic vitality of the SouthShore area and beyond.

The Hillsborough College SouthShore campus officially launched its Harvesting the Future capital fundraising campaign on January 27, marking a major step forward in expanding workforce education in Southern Hillsborough County. Led by Dr. Jennifer China, campus president, the campaign seeks to raise \$5 million to support construction of the Glenn and Pop Dickman Workforce Center, a transformative new facility designed to prepare students for in-demand careers.

Planned as a 51,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art learning center, the Glenn and Pop Dickman Workforce Center will significantly expand instructional space and technology for automotive collision repair, nursing and welding technology programs. The facility will feature advanced simulators, hands-on labs and cutting-edge computerized training tools that mirror real-world work environments.

College leaders said the investment is about more than bricks and mortar. The new workforce center is intended to strengthen workforce readiness, address critical regional labor shortages and ensure students graduate with the practical skills employers are actively seeking.

"The Harvesting the Future campaign represents our commitment to students, employers and the broader community," campus officials noted at the kickoff meeting. "This facility will help bridge the gap between education and employment while creating meaningful opportunities for career advancement."

Located at 551 24th St. NE in Ruskin, the SouthShore campus serves as an educational hub for the growing region. The Glenn and Pop Dickman Workforce Center will further enhance the campus' role as a pipeline for skilled talent in high-growth industries that are essential to the local economy.

Community members, business leaders and partners are invited to learn more about the campaign and its impact. Additional information is available by calling 813-259-6021, ext. 6021; emailing mabrams6@hccfl.edu; or visiting www.hccfl.edu.

The Harvesting the Future campaign underscores Hillsborough College's continued dedication to innovation, workforce development and community partnership — planting the seeds today for a stronger workforce tomorrow.

THE RIGHT PLUMBING SOLUTION. THE FIRST TIME!

Call today for a **FREE ESTIMATE!**
(813) 436-3994
bluefrogplumbing.com/brandon

LOVE COUPON

\$55 OFF ANY PLUMBING SERVICE

\$199 OFF NEW INSTALLATION OF WATER HEATER OR SOFTENER SYSTEM

FREE WATER HARDNESS TEST INCLUDED SAVE \$200!

CALL NOW — LIMITED TIME OFFER!
Restrictions apply. One system per home.

CARDINAL ROOFING

813-689-ROOF
License# CCC1325939

New Roof • Repair/Maintenance • Roof Inspections
Owens Corning Atticat Blown-In Insulation
Ventilation • Solar Attic Fans • Tubular Skylights

CardinalRoofingFL.com

Free

- ✓ **FREE to attend**
- ✓ **Virtual & in-person options available**
- ✓ **Led by trusted healthcare professionals**

Scan the QR code to learn more & register

MOM & BABY CLASSES FOR GROWING FAMILIES

UPCOMING CLASSES

Breastfeeding 101
Monday, March 2

Childbirth Preparation
Saturday, February 28 | Saturday, March 14

Infant Massage
Classes TBD

Prenatal Yoga
Thursday, March 19

Maternity Tour
Sunday, March 11 | Tuesday, March 10
Sunday, March 15 | Monday, March 23

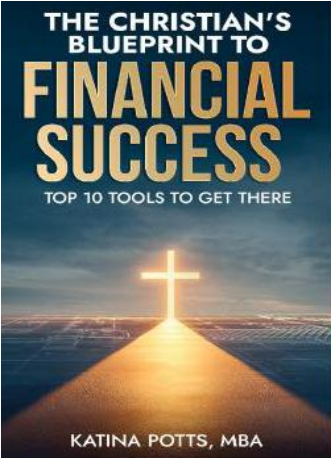
We offer many other free classes and seminars designed to support your overall health and wellness.
844.630.5295

HCA Florida Brandon Hospital

119 Oakfield Drive, Brandon, FL 33511

POTTS RELEASES NEW FAITH-BASED GUIDE TO FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Staff Report



March 6. There will be live music from 6-8 p.m. She would love the community to come out in support and also have a good time mingling and eating. Additionally, Potts is available to do financial literacy classes for those ages 9-13. She also wrote another

Author, preacher, entrepreneur and Apollo Beach resident Katina Potts has released her powerful and practical new book/workbook, The Christian's Blueprint to Financial Success: Top 10 Tools to Get There.

This transformative guide blends biblical principles with real-world financial strategies and is designed to empower individuals and families to achieve financial stability and live out their God-given purpose.

"This isn't just about money — it's about stewardship, faith and financial freedom through God's Word," said Potts. "I want to empower individuals and families to break cycles and build legacies."

Readers can order autographed copies by visiting <https://katinapotts.com/> or purchase the book at www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com.

Potts will be holding an autograph session at Apollo Pizza, located at 1312 Apollo Beach Blvd. in Apollo Beach, during happy hour, 5-8 p.m., on Friday,

book, Jr. Money Managers, which will be released this spring.

About the Author

Potts graduated with honors from Louisiana Tech University with a B.S. in finance. She continued her education at Dallas Baptist University, earning an MBA with dual concentrations in management and marketing.

In addition to being an author, Potts is a mother, wife, preacher, teacher, speaker and serial entrepreneur. She is currently a mobile notary in the southwest suburban areas. Potts has lived in the Tampa area for six years and the Dallas area for the 25 years prior. She has been a personal financial advisor or in finance most of her life. She has also been an entrepreneur for more than half of her life and is passionate about helping others achieve financial freedom and live purposeful lives through faith and wise stewardship.

For interviews or media inquiries, contact katinapotts@gmail.com.

COOKIE SEASON BRINGS SWEET SUCCESS FOR AREA GIRL SCOUTS

By Kelly Wise Valdes

Troop 33521 of the Girl Scouts of West Central Florida is heading into cookie season with fresh inventory, ambitious goals and a deep sense of community purpose. The Cadette-level troop, part of the Fossil Valley Service Unit serving the Lithia and Fish-Hawk areas, is led by Melissa Sharma and Sarah Miller, with support from parent volunteer Erica Taylor.

The troop is selling cookies through a mix of traditional and digital methods.

"There are several ways to purchase cookies, and each girl chooses what works best for her schedule and goals," Sharma said.

Options include paper order forms, personalized Digital Cookie websites and in-person booths at local businesses. With pre-orders now closed, the troop is delivering early sales and preparing for booth season at locations including Publix, Outback, Walgreens, EggTown and Danny's Deli.

As the girls begin their busiest weeks, each Scout is working toward her own target. "Each girl sets her own personal goal," said Sharma. "As a troop, we are planning to average approximately 300 boxes per girl, combining personal and booth sales."

Her daughter, Olivia, has already sold 131 boxes online.

The girls involved with Troop 33521 are 13-14 years old and attend several middle schools, including Progress Village Middle Magnet School of the Arts, Randall, Barrington and Bell Creek Academy.



Girl Scouts from Troop 33521 greet customers with smiles and stacks of cookies as they kick off booth season in Lithia.



Girl Scout cookie season fuels more than treats.

"Our community support means everything to us — we truly could not reach our goals without it," Sharma said. "When you purchase a box, the money stays right here in your neighborhood, supporting local girls and the organizations they serve."

This year, the Cadettes are pursuing two Silver Award projects focused on marine conservation: Oyster Oasis and A Hermit Crab's Healthy Habitat. Sharma said cookie proceeds will help fund education and hands-on environmental work.

"Cookie sales have helped our girls earn their

Bronze Award; travel to Savannah, the birthplace of Girl Scouts; and host multiple Me & My Guy (Daddy-Daughter) dances," Sharma said, noting that their volunteer efforts span animal rescues, food drives, beach cleanups and support for children in need.

Sharma said watching the girls grow into confident leaders is the greatest reward.

"When we started, these girls were learning how to tie their shoes. Now they can market, manage inventory, handle money, troubleshoot booth locations, and confidently talk to customers."

Cookie flavors this year include Adventurefuls, Lemon-Ups, Trefoils, Do-si-dos, Samoas, Tagalongs, Thin Mints, Exploremores (new) and Toffee-tastic (gluten-free). Customers can find local booths at www.gswcf.org or order directly to buy your cookies at www.gswcf.org/en/cookies.html.

Where In The World

The Gilmore family took their hometown paper to the World's Largest Axe in the town of Nackawic, New Brunswick, Canada.

Bring your Osprey Observer on your travels and share with us. Email photos, name & location to editor@ospreyobserver.com.

ESTATE SALES
March 6 & 7
Visit our website for more details!

Gentle Touch
Estate Sales LLC

Debbie Berg
813-812-0780

debbie@gentletouchestatesales.com
www.gentletouchestatesales.com

FOREVER GREEN
Lawn & Pest Control, LLC

Commercial & Residential - Fungicide - Fertilizing
Insecticide - Weed Control Tree & Shrub Treatment

With a Healthy lawn less water is required!
FREE ESTIMATES!

\$10 OFF
ANY TREATMENT
DRY OR LIQUID
For Pre Pay Customers Only

Free
WEED & CRAB
GRASS CONTROL
New Customers Only

Up to 5000 sq ft \$57 per month

Now \$57 per month
You Get Protection
Ticks, Fleas, Fire Ants, Chinch Bugs, Mole Crickets, Sod
Weed Worms, Grubs and much more.
Plus Fungus & Weeds and Premium Fertilizer

813-324-1004 • www.FGLAWN.com

Family Owned & Operated State Certified Licensed & Insured

LIVE WITH PEACE OF MIND

For our brave veterans and every senior who deserves the very best! At Freedom Plaza, located on 140 acres in the heart of beautiful Sun City Center, Florida; we believe in more than just retirement – we believe in living worry-free!



STAY INDEPENDENT. STAY ACTIVE. STAY FREE.

- Maintenance-Free Living
- A Full Continuum of Healthcare
- A Strong Community of Patriots
- Top-Rated in Sun City Center, Florida



READY TO EXPERIENCE THE FREEDOM YOU DESERVE?

A community of seniors who are living their best lives. Visit us today at Freedom Plaza – where your future is secure and your lifestyle is full of possibilities!

Peace of mind starts here!



**SCHEDULE A TOUR & LEARN
MORE ABOUT LIFE CARE
(813) 634-1824**



1010 American Eagle Blvd,
Sun City Center, FL 33573



FreedomPlazaFL.com



Freedom Plaza

MACDONALD TRAINING CENTER OPENS TO EXPAND SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

By Olivia Clark

MacDonald Training Center (MTC) marked a significant milestone on February 12 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of its new Tampa facility. Community leaders, staff members, board members, families and program participants gathered to commemorate what leaders described as a three-year journey to expand services for individuals with disabilities.

Founded in 1953 by J. Clifford MacDonald and a group of parents, MTC was created at a time when options for individuals with disabilities were extremely limited. Today, it continues its mission to provide innovative educational, residential and employment services throughout the Tampa Bay area.

"We have been working to meet the needs of the community, and that is why we are here in this beautiful space today," said Karenne Levy, president and chief executive officer of MacDonald Training Center. "This is a day of love, perseverance and commitment. We will be able to provide bright, open spaces where learning is fun."

MTC serves individuals of all ages, from youth preparing for their first job to seniors seeking to age in place with dignity. Its programs include adult day training, employment services, community living support and career camps for youth ages 14-21 referred by Vocational Rehabilitation.

A key focus of the organization is employ-



Karenne Levy, president and chief executive officer of MacDonald Training Center, cuts a ribbon with students.

ment. MTC has a decades-long history of placing individuals with disabilities into competitive employment, dating back to 1971. Its Innovation Vocational Training and Internship program provides comprehensive support for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, collaborating with Tampa Bay employers to create job opportunities. MTC also partners with ZooTampa at Lowry Park through Project SEARCH, a nine-month immersive internship model that combines classroom instruction with hands-on workplace training.

During the ceremony, Andy Taylor of Tampa Electric, representing the Brandon River-view Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, formally recognized MTC's impact.

"MacDonald Training Center transforms the lives of people with all disabilities through innovative vocational training, employment services, residential support and life enrichment opportunities," said Taylor, who proclaimed February 12 as MacDonald Training Center Day.

The updated space reflects MTC's long-standing belief in real homes and real work environments, empowering individuals with disabilities to be productive, contributing and valued members of the community.

For more information, visit the website at <https://macdonaldcenter.org/>.

FROM HCA NICU NURSE TO NEW MOM STORY SPANS TWO GENERATIONS

Staff Report

HCA Florida Brandon Hospital celebrates a powerful full-circle moment as one of its NICU nurses welcomed her own baby at the same hospital where she was born more than two decades ago.

Gabriella 'Gabby' Chandler was born at Brandon Hospital on May 29, 2000. Today, she serves as a nurse in the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, caring for premature and critically ill newborns and forming lifelong bonds with the families she serves.

Chandler's journey into nursing was inspired by her upbringing in a caregiving household and a desire to be present for patients and families during their most vulnerable moments. She discovered her passion for neonatal care after attending a job fair and accepting a position in the NICU, where she found her calling.

"We fall in love with the babies. We fall in love with the families," Chandler said. "That connection is what makes this work so meaningful."

One of those connections became especially significant when Chandler cared for a premature infant named Rhett Smith nearly three years ago. During his long NICU stay, she developed a close bond with Smith and his family that continued well beyond his discharge from the hospital. Two years later, Smith served as the ring bearer in Chandler's wedding, symbolizing the deep relationships formed through neonatal care.



The Chandler family welcomes Samuel Jr.

On January 21, Chandler and her husband welcomed their son, Samuel Jr., at Brandon Hospital. A photo taken in front of the hospital's Welcome Baby wall marks the moment with the same type of birth announcement display that once recorded Chandler's own arrival into the world.

Coworkers from across the hospital and families whose babies Chandler previously cared for followed her pregnancy journey and eagerly awaited the arrival of baby Samuel. His birth has become a shared celebration among staff and community members who have witnessed Chandler's story come full circle.

"Not everyone has the opportunity to care for babies in the same place where their own life began," Chandler said. "It is incredibly meaningful to return here as both a nurse and now a mother."

HCA Florida Brandon Hospital has served families in the Brandon community for nearly 50 years and continues to celebrate generations of care through its Women's Services and NICU programs.

This moment represents more than a personal milestone for one nurse. It reflects the enduring relationships formed within the hospital walls and the impact caregivers have on families long after they leave the NICU.

For more about HCA Florida Brandon Hospital's Women's Services and NICU, visit www.hcafloridabrandonhospital.com.

Looking For a Local Insurance Agent? Look no further than IRON ROCK INSURANCE!

IRON ROCK INSURANCE is a team of LOCAL AGENTS specializing in providing quality protection for you and yours. We insure homes, autos, boats and much more!



Katie, Licensed Agent



Lisa Hast
Managing Partner



Torie, Licensed Agent



Kate, Licensed Agent



Scan code Now
for a quote!



Amanda, Licensed Agent

IRON ROCK
INSURANCE
813-213-9600

400 Frandorson Circle, Apollo Beach
813-213-9600 | IronRockIns.com

Produced by Feld Entertainment

Disney ON ICE

MICKEY'S SEARCH PARTY

Save up to 20% on Tickets!

Restrictions, exclusions and additional charges may apply. Subject to availability.

Unlock with code NSNT20 prior to seat selection.
Valid on Thursday 7pm, Friday 3pm and 7pm performances. Valid on select price levels. Offer valid on Ticketmaster.com only.

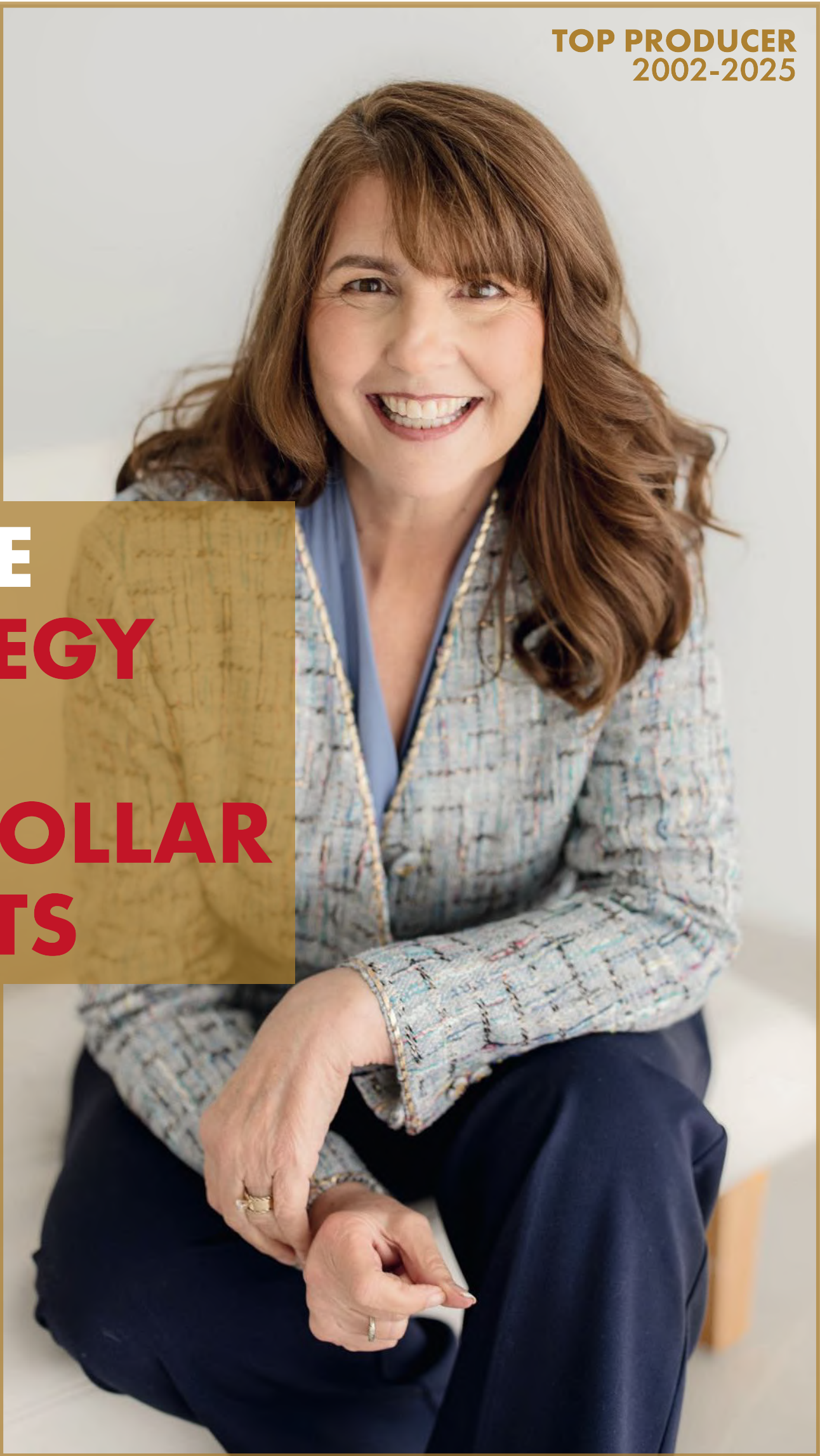
BENCHMARK INTERNATIONAL ARENA

MAR 5 – 8

DisneyOnIce.com



TOP PRODUCER
2002-2025



**WHERE
STRATEGY
MEETS
TOP-DOLLAR
RESULTS**

SCAN



TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT US

THE #1 REAL ESTATE TEAM
IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

BrendaWade.com • Direct: 813-924-8677

SPRING INTO SOMETHING NEW!

Let's be REMARKABLE together!



FEATURED
HOME

COMING
SOON

6201 Marbella Blvd
Apollo Beach, FL 33572

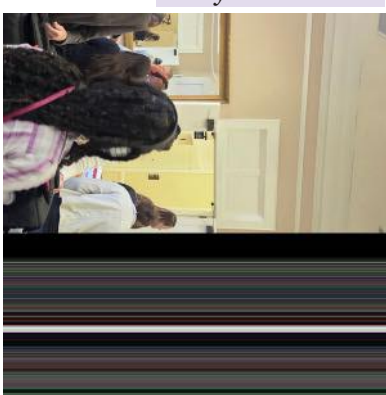
EXPERIENCE
YOU CAN TRUST.
RESULTS
YOU CAN SEE.



Office: 813-655-5333 • Brenda@BrendaWade.com

EAST HILLSBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS STEP INTO THE WORKING WORLD THROUGH INDUSTRY TOUR EXPERIENCE

By Brian Bokor



For the 450 East Hillsborough County high school seniors who chose to participate in the Future Career Academy (FCA) Business Tour field trips, the January 28 tour, one of eight immersive days throughout Hillsborough County, was not a break from class or a one-day field trip. It was a planned component of a yearlong program designed to prepare students for life after graduation.

Throughout this yearlong journey, students are also supported through a weekly workforce and professional development curriculum, along with additional experiences, all intentionally designed to prepare them for career pathways and connect them to employers, training partners and real-world opportunities.

As part of that program, participating seniors traveled on nine buses, and each rotated through three different workplace sectors across the region, gaining direct exposure to real-world settings that allowed them to compare career options side by side and begin making informed decisions about their future.

Throughout the day, students moved in groups from site to site, seeing what different lines of work look like day to day. Some stops placed them inside training classrooms and labs, while others brought them onto jobsites or into active facilities. The contrast

pushed students to think beyond job titles and consider work environments, training paths and long-term goals.

"I was expecting a bunch of learning opportunities," said Kayle Garris, a senior at Brandon High School. "I knew we were going to do business field trips and go to different areas to connect with different departments, like TECO. Today, we went to TECO and a nursing home, and we learned about all of that. I work at the Columbia Restaurant in Ybor City, and I've been looking at different options, including the Army and Hillsborough Community College. My plan is to go to HCC and then transfer to USF. I have a scholarship from USF — Richard Gonzmart from the Columbia gave me a Latino scholarship."

Like many students on the tour, Garris is balancing work, education, and long-term planning, using the day to explore multiple career options rather than committing to a single path.

It wasn't just the students who found value; local employers noted a level of engagement that shifted the day from a tour to a talent search.

From Blackrock Milling and Asphalt, recruiter Chris Hill said his first experience with FCA offered more than a chance to collect resumes.

"We at Blackrock are looking for more

than just a diploma or a degree; we are looking for employees that will make an immediate positive impact on our company," Hill said. "These young adults asked questions and were willing to learn about a trade they may have never thought about before. We look forward to interviewing and developing the next generation of leaders."

The mix of first-time recruiters and long-standing partners underscored the program's ability to serve both emerging workforce needs and established professional pipelines.

Returning partners, such as the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), focused on showing students how preparation connects directly to responsibility in the field.

During the event, FDOT representatives demonstrated a \$25,000 mobile excavation simulator used to train equipment operators before they ever step onto a job site. The simulator mirrors the controls found on heavy machinery — equipment that can start at \$150,000 and go far beyond that.

Ron Gibbons, an FDOT maintenance program manager, explained how the simulator builds muscle memory and confidence before trainees move into real equipment.

"Your hands feel the same thing, your feet feel the same thing as what you're experi-

encing here; ... it's muscle memory, ... do it while it's fresh," Gibbons said.

"We do this in the classroom, then take them right out into the field within two minutes; ... OK, get in this machine and show me the basics of what you just did. ... It builds confidence," he said.

Midway through the day, all students gathered at The Regent in Riverview for a working lunch presentation with recruiters and training organizations, creating a shared moment to reflect on what they had already seen and how it connected to broader professional trajectories.

Yvonne Fry, founder and CEO of both Future Career Academy and Workforce Development Partners, said the tours are designed to be the moment when preparation finally connects to purpose.

"This is the day the light bulb finally goes on," Fry said, explaining how the experience reshapes students' views of education.

Lynn Gray, a member of the Hillsborough County School Board, added, "The work that Workforce Development Partners does for our students is unmatched! This student-centered workforce development offers career opportunities from every trade in our Tampa Bay Region."

To learn more, visit the website at www.workforcedevelopmentpartners.com.



MARCH CENTER STAGE EVENTS





MARCH 6 FIRST FRIDAY
7:30 - 9:30

Road Comics Adventures is a high-energy, no-script comedy experience featuring René' Bray and Flip Orley, two seasoned headliners with over 70 years of combined stage experience.



MARCH 14 LIVE MUSIC
7:30 - 9:30

Tom "TBone" Hamilton is a renowned bassist, vocalist, and producer. He has left a mark on the blues, jazz, and Americana music scenes in the Tampa Bay area. For over three decades, Hamilton has established himself as a versatile and passionate musician.



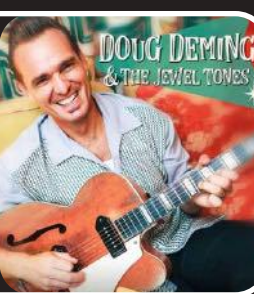


MARCH 21 A NIGHT IN THE BIG EASY
6 - 9:30

New Orleans style cuisine with raw bar oysters and shrimp. Libations and N'awlins jazz featuring the 'Jazz Phools' playing Dixieland and Zydeco music. Join us for our annual fundraiser benefiting the Firehouse Cultural Center scholarship program.

MARCH 28 LIVE MUSIC
7:30 - 9:30

Doug Deming & the Jewel Tones play traditional blues, West Coast and Texas swing, and early 50's roots rock. This is real deal rockin' rhythm & blues!



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR TICKETS AND FULL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
firehouseculturalcenter.org / Info@FireHouseCulturalCenter.org
813.645.7651 101 1st Ave. NE, Ruskin

Serving Tampa Bay With Results-Driven Advocacy





**THE LAW OFFICES OF
TIFFANI K. THORNTON**



Office@TKTLAW.ORG

PRACTICE AREAS:
REAL ESTATE & PROPERTY
BUSINESS LAW
FAMILY ESTATES
813-337-7349
653 W. LUMSDEN RD. BRANDON



TANYA HINES
EXPERIENCED AUTISM ALLIANCE
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



UNDERSTAND, ACCEPT, LOVE.

FINDING JOY IN THE SMALL WINS: AN AUTISM ENCOURAGEMENT STORY

When a mother recently shared that her teenage son with autism had ordered his own meal at a restaurant for the first time, her voice cracked with emotion. To others, it might have seemed like a small moment. To her, it was a milestone years in the making built on patience, practice, encouragement and belief in her child's abilities.

Autism is filled with moments like this. Progress doesn't always look like giant leaps forward. Often, it shows up quietly: a new word spoken, a calmer transition, a brave attempt at something unfamiliar, a smile after a tough day. These small wins matter. They are signs of growth, resilience and hope.

For families walking the autism journey, here are a few gentle reminders and tips:

- Celebrate every step forward. Progress may be slow and uneven, but each victory, no matter how small, deserves recognition.
- Lean into strengths and interests. Passions can become bridges to learning, confidence and connection.
- Create routines that support success. Predictable schedules and clear expectations help reduce anxiety and build a sense of security.
- Ask for help and accept support. You



are not meant to do this alone. Other parents, professionals and community organizations can offer guidance and encouragement.

- Practice patience and compassion. For parents and community members alike, kindness and flexibility create more inclusive, welcoming spaces.

Families don't need perfection; they need understanding, resources and hope. Organizations like Experienced Autism Alliance (EAA) exist to support families through every stage of life. EAA is a nonprofit dedicated to assisting, supporting and empowering individuals with autism and their families through resource connections, safety initiatives, social programs and vocational opportunities. From parent workshops and social outings to job training programs like SpectrumSqueeze, EAA helps families feel informed, supported and connected.

This column will continue to share real stories, practical tips and community resources designed to uplift families and build understanding. Autism awareness isn't just a moment; it's a lifelong commitment to inclusion, compassion and growth. For more information, visit www.autismalliancefl.org.



**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Deputy Jeff Merry

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES FROM SCAMMERS — ATTEND THIS EVENT

Scammers are targeting senior citizens now more than ever — and no one is immune. Our neighbors, friends and loved ones are being specifically preyed upon because of their retirement savings and hard-earned wealth. These bad actors are relentless, and those over 60 are the most at risk. And usage of AI software by bad actors is just beginning.

But you can fight back — with knowledge.

Join in for a powerful and informative event designed to arm you with the tools to protect yourself from financial fraud. The event will be held on Thursday, March 5, from 10-11:30 a.m. at Sun City Center Community Hall, located at 1910 S. Pebble Beach Blvd. in Sun City Center

This is more than just a seminar — it's your chance to hear directly from trusted experts, including the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Florida Securities Dealers & Advisors, Robinhood, AARP, Better Business Bureau and FINRA. They'll share real, proven techniques to stop scammers in their tracks and help you safeguard your finances.

At the event, you can meet trusted ex-



hibitors from consumer protection agencies. There will also be free refreshments provided by FSDA.

Educating yourself about financial scams is one of the most effective ways to protect your

money, identity and peace of mind. Scammers constantly evolve their tactics, using fear, urgency and trust to pressure victims into making costly decisions. By staying informed, you learn how to recognize red flags, verify information and pause before acting. Education empowers individuals to ask the right questions, avoid emotional manipulation and confidently say no. It also helps protect family members, friends and vulnerable loved ones by spreading awareness. Knowledge is a powerful defense, turning potential victims into informed, alert and resilient members of the community.

This event is open to everyone — bring your spouse, a friend or a neighbor. Stand together as a community and make sure no more seniors fall victim to these financial predators.

Don't wait until it's too late. Mark your calendar and be there. Your financial security could depend on it.



THE
Yes to New
Adventures
PLACE
No Place Like *This Place*™





CAMP WITH US
With over 25 different camp options throughout the Tampa YMCA area, there's something for every camper to enjoy! From art and gymnastics to ziplining and splashing in our pools the Y is the ultimate summer destination.
OPEN HOUSE at YMCA Camp Cristina:
Feb. 21, March 21 and April 18 | 11am-1pm
Join us for Camp Tours & S'mores at YMCA Camp Cristina to explore and experience everything we have to offer! With 65 acres of beautiful fields, nature trails, horses, ropes adventure and MORE, it's a great way for families to have fun and get outside.

CAMPO FAMILY YMCA
813.684.1371

NORTH BRANDON
FAMILY YMCA
813.685.5402

SPURLINO FAMILY YMCA
AT BIG BEND ROAD
813.228.9622

YMCA CAMP CRISTINA
813.677.8400

REGISTER ONLINE
tampaymca.org/LETSCAMP





SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY





SERVICES

- Facials, 60-90 Minutes
- Waxing, Lash Lifts, Lash and Brow Tinting
- Bridal & Special Event Makeup
- Luxury-style Services at Affordable Prices
- Japanese Head Spa



Felicia A. Stone RN
Licensed Esthetician
Owner and Operator

CONTACT US
574-807-5311
DollfacebyFelicia.com
3105 King Fern Dr. Wimauma, FL 33598

Dollface

Not ready for assisted living? Perfect.

We're not like everyone else. Come see the difference.





Cypress Creek

Assisted Living & Memory Care

813.633.7777 | www.cypresscreekalf.com
970 Cypress Village Blvd. Sun City Center, FL 33573



- Family Owned
- Homelike Peer Neighborhoods
- Progressive Care For Peace Of Mind As Needs Change
- Three Separate Memory Care Neighborhoods Because Not One Size Fits All
- Convenient Location
- Easy Parking
- Pet Friendly
- Golf Cart Accessible

ALF LICENSE #9553



CRUISE PLANNERS®

YOUR LAND AND CRUISE EXPERTS

Tailored Travel, Where Every Trip Is A Treasure!

LET US PLAN YOURS TODAY!





Matthew Gordon & Marji Beam
Cruise Planners® Independent Franchise Owners

717-856-2646 | ventureoutvacation.com



SHOP LOCAL

SouthShore Chamber Business Expo

Friday, February 27, 9:00 AM – Noon
FREE EVENT, PRIZES and FUN!
Sun City Center United Methodist Church
1971 Haverford Ave, Sun City Center



SOUTHSHORE

Chamber of Commerce

southshorechamberofcommerce.org



CROFTON'S PLUMBING

& Drain Solutions, Inc.

Generations of Quality Plumbing

Full line of plumbing services including...

- Repipes
- Sewer Line Repair & Replacements
- Water Heaters
- Toilet Repair & Replacements
- Drain Cleaning & Hydro Jetting
- Camera Inspections
- Fixture Upgrades & More!

Call Today
813-633-8923

COUPON
Mention this ad & receive
10% off a service call
(Cannot be combined with other discounts.)

Formerly...

CFC1429356
Licensed, Insured, & Bonded



Make the journey count.



6106 Delancey Station Street
Riverview, FL 33578

619 30th Street NE
Ruskin, FL 33570



ASP AMERICA'S SWIMMING POOL CO.

- ✓ Specialized in Remodeling, Repairs, & Resurfacing
- ✓ Real Estate Pool Inspection

Call 813-641-4968
or visit ASPSouthShoreFL.com

© 2026 ASP Franchising SPE LLC. All rights reserved. Each location independently owned & operated. License CPC1460605



Remodeling



Cleaning

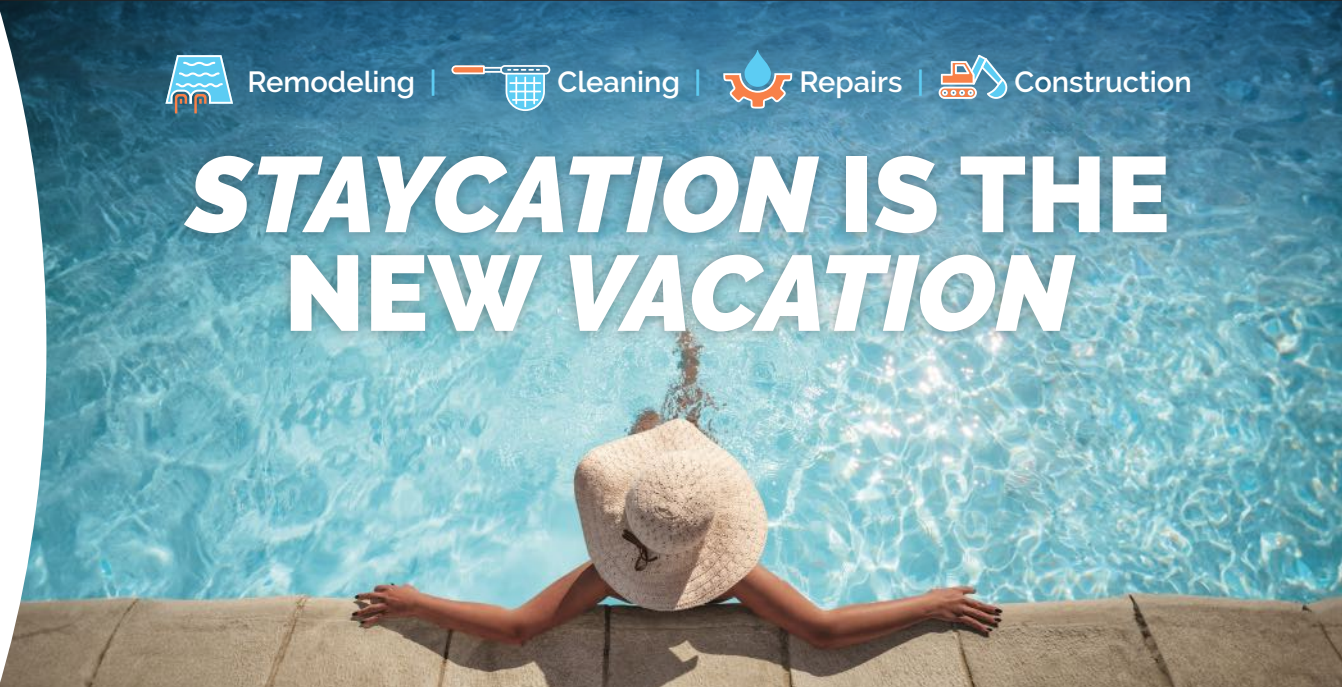


Repairs



Construction

STAYCATION IS THE NEW VACATION





SHOP LOCAL





OPEN ENROLLMENT

Is Now Available!

Learn about our school and how to be a part of our Southshore family!

INFO SESSIONS

March 11 @ 6:00pm
March 24 @ 9:00am
April 7 @ 6:00pm
April 22 @ 9:00am

CHARTER ACADEMY

11667 Big Bend Road
Riverview, FL 33579
(813) 769-1209



A Cornerstone of Support in Our Community

Sun City Center Funeral Home cares for Hillsborough County.

From the Bay to historic Ybor City, Hillsborough County is a place Sun City Center Funeral Home proudly calls home. Our experienced preplanning advisors work seamlessly with local cemeteries and houses of worship, offering full-service support and special recognition for Veterans.



Sun City Center Funeral Home

Call or stop by today.
(813) 634-9900
1851 Rickenbacker Drive
Sun City Center, FL 33573
suncitycenterfuneralhome.com



BOOK YOUR FIRST FREE STRETCH

Unlock your body's flexibility with **STRETCH ZONE**

Learn more at stretchzone.com/locations/sun-city-fl

3830 Sun City Center Blvd #103, Sun City Center
Main: (813) 634-6399





Ruskin Fresh Market

QUALITY PRODUCE AND MORE AT A PRICE YOU WILL LOVE!

(813) 751-7757
2619 14th Ave SE, Ruskin, FL 33570
(Big grey & red warehouse located two doors down from weather station)

Monday: Closed
Tuesday, Wednesday & Saturday: 9:00am-5:00pm
Thursday & Friday: 9:00am-6:30pm
Sunday 11:00am - 6:00pm



smileLYNN

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY
CASEY LYNN, DMD. MS.

Home of the 

Maximize Your Yearly Benefits By Scheduling Today!

2026 In Network Plans!

Anthem | GEHA | UMR
United Healthcare
Humana | Ameritas
Guardian | UNUM

smileLYNNdental.com



Dr. Stewart, DMD
(813) 591-3052 | 122 Harbor Village Lane, Apollo Beach



Dr. Lynn, DMD, MS

Let's Go Thrifting!

From stylish finds to unique treasures, your purchases directly support the programs that empower women and families in need.

Shop. Donate. *Change Lives.*



Fashion + Housewares + Vintage + Furniture
Toys + Appliances + Glassware + More!

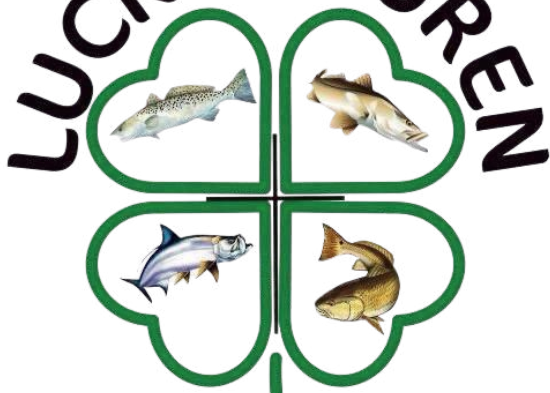
www.MaryMarthaHouse.org

Store Hours:
Tues.-Fri.: 9am - 4pm
Sat. 9am - 1pm

Donation drop off:
Tues.-Fri.: 9am - 1pm
Sat. 9am - 12pm

Location:
312 U.S. Hwy., 41 S.
Ste. B,
Ruskin, FL 33570
813.645.7874

LUCKY LAUREN



CHARTERS

813-924-9250

As yesterday's defenders of freedom, we want to welcome today's military service members into our ranks to become part of our elite group.

Join Today!



POST 6287



Now Smoke Free!

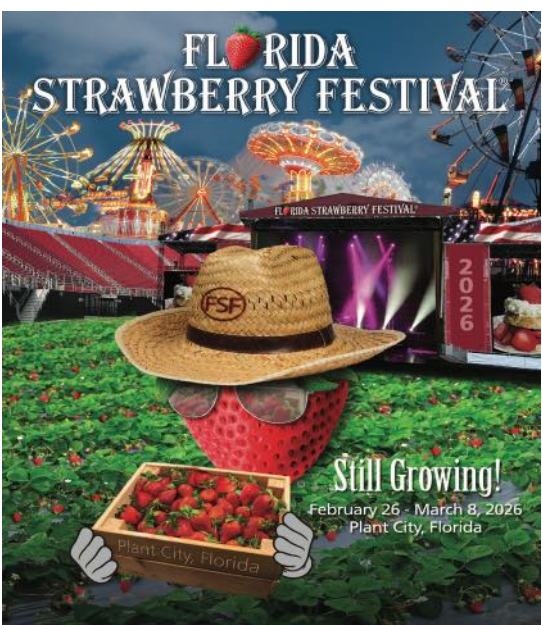
(813) 645-2935 | vfw6287.org
5120 N US Highway 41, Apollo Beach

QUEEN AND COURT SELECTED FOR 91ST FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

Staff Report



Layla Rothman was crowned queen of the 91st Annual Florida Strawberry Festival Queen's Scholarship Pageant. She is joined by First Maid Marley Mueller and court members Cadence Cape, Addison Griffin, and Addison Pope.



Layla Rothman was crowned queen of the 91st annual Florida Strawberry Festival Queen's Scholarship Pageant, held on the evening of January 17 on the festival grounds. Layla Rothman was selected from a competitive field of 32 contestants. Marley Mueller was named first maid, with court members Cadence Cape, Addison Griffin, and Addison Pope rounding out the royal court.

Brooke Browning was named Miss Congeniality, an honor voted on by fellow contestants and awarded to the participant who best exemplifies kindness, sportsmanship and camaraderie throughout the competition. Browning is a junior at Strawberry Crest High School.

"Words cannot describe how incredibly blessed I am to have this opportunity to serve a community that has been nothing but gracious to me my entire life," said Layla Rothman. "I have dreamed of being able to represent the Florida Strawberry Festival and make every single person who walks into those festival gates feel seen and

cared for. God has been with me throughout this entire journey, and I pray He will continue to shine through me. Thank you so much, everyone, for the unwavering support — I couldn't be more excited for BerryFest26!"

Layla Rothman is the daughter of Mark and Rebecca Rothman and a senior at Plant City High School. Among her awards and accolades, she is dual enrolled at Hillsborough Community College, ranked in the top 7 percent of her class and is a member of the National Honor Society.

The Florida Strawberry Festival Queen's Scholarship Pageant is sponsored by the Plant City Lions Club. The competition includes five components: a personal interview, on-stage speaking, casual wear, evening wear and an impromptu question.

"The Queen's Pageant remains one of the most meaningful traditions of the Florida Strawberry Festival, and this year's contestants set a remarkable standard," said Florida Strawberry Festival President Kyle Robinson. "Each young lady displayed im-

pressive talent, confidence and poise, making the selection process especially difficult. We are honored to welcome our new queen and court and are confident these five young ladies will represent the festival with pride and professionalism throughout their year of service."

Throughout the year, the queen and her court will make more than 80 appearances, representing the Florida Strawberry Festival and the Plant City community at various local and regional events. The festival serves as their home base, where they will meet visitors and participate in a variety of activities during the 11-day celebration.

The 91st annual Florida Strawberry Festival will take place from Thursday, February 26, through Sunday, March 8, in Plant City. Festival hours are 10 a.m.-11 p.m. daily and will feature a wide variety of entertainment, exhibits, food, livestock shows, rides, games and competitions. Headline entertainment on the Wish Farms Soundstage includes Alabama, Jo Dee Messina, Jamey Johnson, Lonestar, Ty Myers, Riley

Green featuring Hannah McFarland, The Oak Ridge Boys, Legends of Love, Sandi Patty, Lauren Daigle, Forrest Frank, The Offspring, Joan Jett & The Blackhearts and more.

"We are also incredibly grateful to the Plant City Lions Club for their hard work and dedication," Robinson added. "Their organization plays a vital role in creating an event that is exceptional year after year, and their commitment to this tradition does not go unnoticed."

About the Florida Strawberry Festival
The Florida Strawberry Festival is a time-honored tradition in Eastern Hillsborough County celebrating the strawberry harvest with agricultural showcases, live entertainment, and community festivities. Each year, the festival attracts more than 650,000 visitors to Plant City for 11 days of fun, food and entertainment.

For more information, visit <https://fl-strawberryfestival.com/> and follow the Festival on Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok and YouTube (#BerryFest26).

Opens
Thurs. 2/26

Save \$5.00 on Adult & \$1.00 on Youth General Admission Tickets at Publix.

FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL®

Artists Appearing on the *Wish Farms* Soundstage:
GENERATIONS OF SWEETNESS®

Still Growing!

Feb. 26 - Mar. 8, 2026
Plant City, FL

 Jimmy Sturr & His Orchestra Thu. Feb. 26, 10:30 FREE	 The Oak Ridge Boys Thu. Feb. 26, 3:30 \$40-\$45	 Alabama Thu. Feb. 26, 7:30 \$65-\$70-\$85	 Jo Dee Messina Fri. Feb. 27, 3:30 \$40-\$50	 Jamey Johnson Fri. Feb. 27, 7:30 \$45-\$55-\$75	 Lonestar Sat. Feb. 28, 3:30 \$35-\$45	 Ty Myers Sat. Feb. 28, 7:30 \$50-\$60-\$75
 Riley Green featuring Hannah McFarland Sun. Mar. 1, 6:30 \$110-\$120-\$135	 Gene Watson Mon. Mar. 2, 3:30 \$30	 Legends Of Love Mon. Mar. 2, 7:30 \$40-\$45-\$80	 Sandi Patty Tue. Mar. 3, 3:30 \$30	 Lauren Daigle Tue. Mar. 3, 7:30 \$70-\$75-\$85	 John Foster Wed. Mar. 4, 3:30 \$25-\$35	 Brantley Gilbert Wed. Mar. 4, 7:30 \$50-\$85
 Dierks Bentley Thu. Mar. 5, 7:30 \$70-\$80-\$90	 The Marshall Tucker Band Fri. Mar. 6, 3:30 \$35-\$40	 Forrest Frank Fri. Mar. 6, 7:30 \$70-\$80-\$90	 Pitbull Toddler Sat. Mar. 7, 3:30 FREE	 The Offspring Sat. Mar. 7, 7:30 \$70-\$80-\$90	 Joan Jett & The Blackhearts Sun. Mar. 8, 7:30 \$45-\$55-\$75	

Visit FLstrawberryfestival.com or call 813-754-1996 and get your tickets for the best seats available!

Check out the Free Entertainment, Special Days & Discounts and full Schedule of Festival Events.

Suncoast Credit Union • Alessi Concessions • True Frequency Products • Images Everywhere! • AMSCOT • Astin Farms • Tampa Bay Times
Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association • Uncommon USA • ALLEGIANCE Crane & Equipment • Crazy Kup • DIRECTV • The Bank of Tampa • ICEE
Good Health Saunas • Master Spas • Netterfield's Concessions • Daiwa Massage Chairs • Florida Blue • AT&T • Stingray Chevrolet • Candyland Warehouse
Father Time Clocks • Citizens Bank & Trust • T-Mobile • TRUFFOIRE • Grove Equipment Service • Solution Source Construction & Development • Berry Amaz'n
Entenmann's • BayCare Kids • Premier Portable Buildings • Burger 21 • Advantage Restoration & Recovery • Local Ford Dealers • Everglades Equipment Group
SUN 'n FUN • General RV Center • Spectrum • Blackshades Sunglasses & Eyewear • Lazydays RV (powered by Campers Inn RV) • Home Depot • Hungry Howie's

DAVE'S HOT CHICKEN OPENS NEW LOCATION WITH RIBBON CUTTING

By Logan Walz



Photos by Amber Aaron, BRCC President

tance of supporting new businesses in the community. The event continued with the ceremonial ribbon cutting, officially marking Dave's Hot Chicken's opening. A special highlight followed as Allie Savvides, chamber ambassador, read a proclamation declaring January 29 as 'Dave's Hot Chicken Day,' recognizing the restaurant's arrival and impact on the local dining scene.

Ian Lieberman, co-owner of Dave's Hot Chicken, addressed the crowd and expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and strong community support shown during the celebration.

The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce proudly hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony on January 29 to celebrate the grand opening of Dave's Hot Chicken's new Riverview location, marking an exciting addition to the local business community. The event took place at 11 a.m. at 10787 Big Bend Rd. in Riverview, welcoming chamber members, community leaders and residents to officially welcome the popular restaurant to Riverview.

Founded in Los Angeles, California, Dave's Hot Chicken has rapidly grown into a fan favorite, celebrated for its crave-worthy Nashville-style hot chicken, bold flavors and customizable heat levels ranging from 'no spice' to the legendary 'reaper.' With its fun, high-energy atmosphere and menu featuring tenders, sliders, sides and shakes, Dave's Hot Chicken brings a fresh and fiery dining experience to the Riverview area.

The ceremony began with remarks from chamber President Amber Aaron, who welcomed attendees and spoke to the impor-



and expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and strong community support shown during the celebration.

The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce is excited to welcome Dave's Hot Chicken to its growing business family and encourages the community to visit the new location and support this dynamic new member.

About the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce

The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to promoting business growth, community engagement and economic development throughout the Brandon and Riverview areas by connecting businesses, leaders and residents.

For more information about the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce, visit www.brandonchamber.com.

AMERICA'S SWIMMING POOL ELEVATES POOL CARE STANDARDS

By Kelly Wise Valdes

When Travis Larson launched America's Swimming Pool Company (ASP) South Shore in October 2023, he set out to raise the standards of an industry he believed had grown too comfortable with mediocrity. Two years later, the business expanded with the opening of ASP of



America's Swimming Pool Company hires trained and professional pool technicians to support its customers across SouthShore and South Tampa.

South Tampa in August 2025, allowing the company to serve a wider portion of the Tampa Bay region while maintaining the same structured, professional approach that has defined its growth.

"I started this company because the pool industry has too many fractured solutions, which forces homeowners to accept far too much 'good enough,'" said Larson, owner of ASP South Shore and ASP South Tampa.

He said his goal from the beginning was to create a service homeowners could trust at the same level as other licensed trades.

"They should have one trusted partner who can handle weekly maintenance, licensed repairs and renovations, and be the first call when it's time to build a new pool," he said.

Larson said accountability is at the heart of his business philosophy.

"At the core, I believe pool ownership should be worry-free, transparent and done right — even when no one is watching," he said. That belief, he added, drives everything from technician training to water chemistry logs, service photos and

proper permitting. When asked what sets ASP apart, Larson pointed to the team.

"What truly sets us apart is our people and the experience we deliver to our customers," he said. "Our technicians know exactly what 'right' looks

like, how to document their work and how to communicate clearly and professionally with customers."

As customer trust grew, so did demand for more services.

"We now install traditional gunite pools, fiberglass pools, and modern precast plunge pools," Larson said.

The company also handles renovations and full backyard transformations.

Larson said his favorite part of the job is simple: "My favorite part is solving problems and seeing the relief when a homeowner realizes they're in good hands."

ASP is currently offering the first month of weekly pool maintenance free for customers who mention the Osprey Observer, along with \$200 off a new pool heater installation.

Larson said he is proud to be both locally owned and veteran-owned.

"We're not just maintaining pools — we're helping homeowners fall back in love with their backyards," he said.

More information is available at www.aspsouthshorefl.com or by calling 813-322-5270.



2026 Bay Area Renaissance Festival

YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS HERE!

Open Weekends Feb. 14 - Mar. 29

BayAreaRenFest.com

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(never known to fail)

O Most beautiful flowers of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. O Star of the Sea, help me and show me here you are my mother. O Holy Mary Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart, to succeed me in my necessity (make request). There are none that can withstand your power. O Mary conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Holy Mary I place this cause in your hands (three times).

Say this prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish and it will be granted to you.

T.O.C.M.B.



2 Chr 29:3
MASTER
GARAGE DOOR CO.
DOORS • OPENERS • SPRINGS
(813) 684-7744
steve@mastergaragedoor.com
mastergaragedoor.com

28 years serving the community
with only the highest quality
parts and service.

Garage Door Service, Repair & Installation

- Residential Garage Doors
- Garage Door Openers
- Broken Springs
- Cables
- Rollers
- Doors off Track

FREE
Estimates
on New
Garage Door
Installs

Celebrating 28 Years of Serving Our Community

NOTICE OF ACTION FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

CASE NO: 26-02049
DIVISION B-P
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

To: Jean Max Antoine

YOUR ARE NOTIFED that an action of dissolution of marriage has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Gerana Thegenis, whose address is 13130 Garnet Raspberry Ave., Wimauma, FL 33598 on or before March 25, 2026 and file the original with the Clerk of this Court at 800 East Twiggs Street. Tampa Fl. 33602 before service on Petitioner or immediately thereafter. If you fail to do so, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition.

MILKSHAKE FACTORY BRINGS FLAVOR AND BIGGER SMILES TO CUSTOMERS

By Kelly Wise Valdes

When Jodi Panepinto and Michael Longman opened the MilkShake Factory SouthShore location in April 2025, they brought a nationally recognized desert franchise and a century-old chocolate-making legacy to Hillsborough County.

"I wanted to bring a new concept to our area and get more involved in the community," said Panepinto.

The bright and upbeat shop serves hand-spun milkshakes made with homemade ice cream alongside the brand's signature gourmet chocolates. MilkShake Factory traces its roots to a family of chocolatiers dating back to the early 1900s in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. That same family still operates stores in their hometown, and Panepinto said she is proud to share those recipes with local customers.

"A guest's experience is more than them just enjoying their milkshake or chocolate. We aim to provide exceptional customer service from start to finish," said Panepinto. "Going out for a milkshake should be a fun, easygoing experience regardless of what the rest of your day has been like. We hope Milkshake Factory brings smiles to all our guests."

Community involvement has quickly become part of the shop's identity.

"We love hosting school spirit nights," Panepinto said. "And we participated in the Ruskin Seafood Festival for the first time this year."

The menu features year-round favorites



along with rotating seasonal creations. "We always have a limited-time-only shake," said Panepinto. "Our next one up will be the strawberry matcha milkshake. We also have chocolate-dipped strawberries, perfect for Valentine's Day, made

daily in our store. Or you can get our signature, homemade bark in milk or white chocolate hearts for the holiday. We are very excited for our carrot cake milkshake, coming soon."

Panepinto said the team behind the counter is a major part of what makes the shop special.

"Our team members make this such a fun experience watching them go above and beyond for our guests. That's really made this endeavor so rewarding. And networking with other local small business, getting to know our regular customers," she said.

With a focus on quality, tradition and community, Panepinto said the shop offers something for everyone.

"A lot of thought goes into all of our flavors, both shakes and chocolates. There's a flavor for everyone," Panepinto said.

For more, visit www.milkshakefactory.com/locations/southshore or call 813-722-1878. The shop is located at 10446 Stelling Dr. in the Mission BBQ plaza.

GIVE YOUR BUSINESS A BOOST WITH WE GOT THIS BOOKKEEPING

By Mylena C. Ferman

We Got This Bookkeeping (WGTB) offers small and medium-sized businesses affordable ways to manage their financial books.

Many businesses may start with a friend or family member keeping their books, but Grace Givens, owner of WGTB, suggests a bookkeeper is an investment a business should make sooner rather than later.

"It is easier to put your books together than it is to clean them up if you've been trying to do them yourself," she explained.

Virtual bookkeepers like Givens help businesses compile necessary paperwork, produce financial statements and analyze trends. This work ensures businesses make informed decisions about how they grow.

"They say that 50 percent of small businesses fail," Givens said, "A lot of that is because the businesses don't know how they're doing [financially]."

Givens began WGTB seven years ago while working as an accountant; she quickly learned that, despite her love for numbers, she preferred the bookkeeping side of business. Last year, she moved to work at WGTB full-time alongside her cat, Chief Cuteness Officer Maggie. She has no plans to hire more bookkeepers, however.

"I want to remain the only bookkeeper because I want to be the one hands-on



Grace Givens, owner of We Got This Bookkeeping.



WE GOT THIS BOOKKEEPING

helping them grow because it's the small businesses that make our economy great," Givens said.

As part of Givens' drive to help small businesses, WGTB offers businesses a free guide on its website titled "5 Business Expenses That Could Save You Big Money." The guide covers primary expenses that businesses may not realize they could write off.

"It really is small businesses that make communities feel like home and...grow. I want to be as supportive as I can with that," Givens said.

For more information about We Got This Bookkeeping, please visit its website <https://wegotthisbookkeeping.com/> or the We Got This Bookkeeping Facebook page.

doing work," she said.

Basic monthly services, ideal for businesses in their first two years with only one employee, start at \$350. This package includes account setup, monthly financial reports, unlimited email support and more.

As a business grows, its needs will change. Givens said most of her clients pay around \$800-\$1,200 a month.

"I like working with small businesses and



There's never been a better time to quit with Group Quit

Tobacco Free Florida's Group Quit Sessions (in-person or virtual) now offer participants \$25 - \$125 in gift cards for their attendance.*

Group Quit offers free, expert-led in-person or virtual sessions for all Florida residents regardless of insurance status. Upon class completion, participants are eligible for nicotine replacement therapy such as patches, gum, or lozenges.**

Pre-registration required

Call USF AHEC Program today at:
813-974-7889

**while supplies last*

***if medically appropriate for those 18 years of age or older*

Learn more about all of Tobacco Free Florida's tools and services at TobaccoFreeFlorida.com/QuitYourWay.



THE SALTY SHAMROCK CELEBRATES ST. PATRICK'S DAY ALL MONTH LONG

The Salty Shamrock Irish Pub is turning March into a monthlong celebration of Irish culture, music and community as it marks ten years in business. Located at 6186 U.S. Hwy. 41 N. in Apollo Beach, the neighborhood gathering place will host a series of themed events leading up to and including St. Patrick's Day.



The Salty Shamrock Irish Pub hosts monthlong St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Apollo Beach.



"Salty Shamrock is much more than an Irish pub — it is a true neighborhood gathering place where everyone feels welcome," said Terri Sherman, director of operations and creative services at Salty Shamrock. "For the past 10 years, we have focused on creating an environment where people come together not just for food and drinks, but for connection and community."

Festivities begin on Sunday, March 8, with the ninth annual Saint Puppies Day, a family-friendly event inviting guests to celebrate alongside their four-legged companions. The annual tradition supports local animals and sets a lighthearted tone for the St. Patrick's season.

The celebration continues from Friday through Tuesday, March 13-17, with the pub's Decade of Craic, a five-day festival honoring its 10-year milestone. What be-

By Olivia Clark

gan years ago as a single-day celebration has steadily grown alongside the community.

"Expanding the celebration to five days represents a major milestone for both Salty Shamrock and the Apollo Beach community," Sherman said.

Throughout the five days, guests can expect live entertainment on the pub's outdoor stage, Irish food specials

and festive drink offerings. March 15 features the Not Quite Paddy's Party from 11 a.m.-9 p.m., designed for those unable to attend on St. Patrick's Day itself.

The celebration continues on March 16, with the Paddy's Eve Party from 5-10 p.m., leading into the main event on March 17 from 11 a.m.-11 p.m. St. Patrick's Day will include live music, outdoor tents, traditional fare and green beer as the community gathers for one of the area's largest Irish celebrations.

"This anniversary celebration is not just about marking a milestone but about honoring the people, families and friends who have supported Salty Shamrock since day one," Sherman said.

For more information, visit the website at www.saltyshamrock.net/ or call 813-938-5282.

SCCUMC CONCERT CELEBRATION MONTH CON'T...FROM PAGE 1

Compiled By Taylor Wells



playing and singing timeless tunes together since they were kids growing up in the '60s and '70s. For years they've traveled the country sharing the Simon & Garfunkel concert experience with thrilled audiences nationwide.

The Boxers also pay

attempts at genre classification by encompassing traditions from across America, including bluegrass, Appalachian fiddle tunes, jazz and minimalism.

Fueled by their passion for storytelling, Invoke weaves all of these styles together to form a unique contemporary repertoire, featuring original works composed by and for the group.

Then, on Friday, March 20, at 7 p.m. will be the Flashback Four.

The Flashback Four are four dynamic lead singers who have wowed audiences at Las Vegas, Nevada; Walt Disney World; New York City, New York; and countless cruise ships and special events all across the world. Their shows are an exciting mix of world class vocals and interactive comedy — featuring the rock 'n' roll harmonies through the '60s, '70s and '80s decades. They will be singing the hits of Frankie Valli, The Beach Boys, Bee Gees, Billy Joel and more.

The group has performed with many greats, including Jay Leno, Huey Lewis, Pattie Labelle and the Temptations.

And rounding off this series of shows are The Boxers on Friday, March 27, at 7 p.m.

Brothers Todd and Greg Pitts have been



tribute to the solo career of Paul Simon and deliver a mini set of hits by the Everly Brothers, the duo who inspired the young Simon & Garfunkel and even shared the stage with them in concert.

Tickets for most of these shows are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door; Invoke tickets are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. Tickets are available at the Pages of Life Book Store on Sunday, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., and from Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; at the church office from Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; and at www.lovethehighlight.org/events.

For more, contact Larry Hirschak, concert series coordinator, at 646-831-4008. To learn more about SCCUMC, visit the website at www.lovethehighlight.org.



TESSERA

BRANDON

Assisted Living Facility #AL13150



Independent Living

With Complimentary Services

Assisted Living

Memory Care

"Tessera Brandon...living your lifestyle."

Memory Care

"Living the present...cherishing the past."

feels like

Home

to me



Call for details and pricing!

813-607-6880

TesseraBrandon.com | 1320 Oakfield Dr. Brandon, FL 33511

NEW!

Seafood

SPECIALS



CRISPY COD SANDWICH



HONEY BUTTER SHRIMP & GRITS



LEMON BUTTER TILAPIA

Plus!

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT FISH & CHIPS

Available Fridays Only Noon-9pm.

Starts February 18th

VISIT US AT 10293 BIG BEND RD, RIVERVIEW, FL 33579

VILLAGE INN

**Women's History,
Opera Tampa,
Women of God 5K
and more...**

*Compiled by Jenny Bennett
jbennett@ospreyobserver.com*

Beth Israel Sisterhood Will Celebrate The Suffragists For Women's History Month

Suffragists advocated for women's right to vote using peaceful lobbying and constitutional methods, unlike their counterparts in Great Britain, the suffragettes. Beth Israel Sisterhood will explore their fascinating history and their ultimate success on Tuesday, March 10, at 1 p.m. in Beth Israel's social hall, located at 1115 E. Del Webb Blvd. in Sun City Center. Historian, Zillah Green will tell stories of life for a woman in 19th-century America and what really happened during the 76-year journey to the vote. Refreshments will be served. For information on this inspiring event or to join Sisterhood, contact Donna at sisterhood@jcscc.org. Joining Sisterhood is a great way to meet other women and share fun times while watching and participating in interesting programs.



BETH ISRAEL
THE JEWISH CONGREGATION OF
SUN CITY CENTER

Opera Tampa Is Coming To Beth Israel In Sun City Center

Calling all music lovers! Opera Tampa will be performing several arias and songs in a 90-minute concert on Sunday, March 8, at 2 p.m. in Beth Israel's sanctuary, located at 1115 E. Del Webb Blvd. in Sun City Center. This performance is not to be missed. Tickets

are currently on sale and may be purchased for \$25 each. Checks are payable to Beth Israel and should be mailed to Jo-Ellen Bromberg at 2005 Sifield Greens Way; Sun City Center, FL 33573. The deadline to purchase tickets is Sunday, March 1, and no tickets will be sold at the door. For additional information, contact Bromberg at moneypenny324@aol.com

The Firehouse Cultural Center Offers Spring Break Camp

The Firehouse Cultural Center invites young performers ages 7-14 to its Spring Break Musical Theatre Camp, held from Monday through Friday, March 16-20, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Day campers will explore music, costumes and set design while rehearsing for a live stage performance on the final day. Featuring songs from Broadway favor-



**firehouse
cultural
center**

South Bay Genealogical Society Meeting

A South Bay Genealogical Society meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 17, at the South Hillsborough Elks Lodge No. 2672, located at 1630 S. U.S. 41 in Ruskin. Beginning at 10:30 a.m., there will be an optional roundtable discussion, followed by a sit-down luncheon at 12 Noon. Following the luncheon at 1 p.m., its guest speaker will be April Min. Min's presentation will be 'Forensic Genealogy.' The cost to attend is \$18 per person, which includes the meal and presentation. For reservations and meal choice, call Vicki at 360-608-1647.

Calling All Veterans Of Ruskin And The Surrounding Areas

American Legion Post 389 is holding a special meeting for elections of new officers on Tuesday, March 3, at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Moose Lodge located at 1212 E. Shell Point Rd. in Ruskin. This meeting is being held for current members —



ites, including The Lion King, Shrek, Mamma Mia and more. The cost is \$199 for the week. Space is limited, so early registration is encouraged; you can register at <https://firehouseculturalcenter.org/>. The Firehouse Cultural Center is located at 101 1st Ave. NE in Ruskin.

Blessing Bags Now Available From Local Knights Of Columbus

Are you familiar with Blessing Bags? These bags hold a large variety of items to help the homeless. They are compact enough to carry on the floor of your car or golf cart and then hand out when you see a homeless person. They are available to the public at no cost.

Each bag holds warm-weather gear for the winter, a thick ski hat, a warming blanket, hot hand warmers and socks, along with three meals, four snacks and 12 personal and hygiene items. You can pick up a no-cost Blessing Bag from the Knights of Columbus at the organization's monthly pancake breakfast from 8-11 a.m. on Sunday, March 15 and April 19. It is located in the Conesa Center of Prince of Peace Catholic at 702 Valley Forge Blvd. in Sun City Center.

Women Of God Tampa Bay 5K Run To Benefit Local Charities

Women of God, a local nonprofit women's ministry, is a community of Christ-centered women living out their faith through fellowship, action and a life rooted in Christ. It recognizes the growing mental health crises and is hosting the Stephanie & Iris Allen 5K Memorial Walk/Run to bring awareness, hope and healing to the community through faith. The event will take place at John Chesnut Sr. Park, located at 2200 E. Lake Rd. S. in Palm Harbor on Saturday, May 2. The benefiting charities include Women of God Tampa Bay, Hope for Her and One Another Counseling. To register for the event, visit <https://womenofgodtampabay.org/5k-memorial/>.



Raptor Center
of Tampa Bay, Inc.

Apollo Beach Woman's Club Fund-raiser & Scholarship Application

Save the date! The next big Apollo Beach Woman's Club (ABWC) event, Music of the Motown Era, will groove into Southshore Falls Clubhouse on Saturday, March 28, from 4-7 p.m. Proceeds will once again benefit scholarships. Scholarship Applications for 2026 are now open. Applicants must meet ABWC's criteria, attend East Bay or Lennard High School, be accepted at a Florida college or university and demonstrate financial need. Visit its website at www.apollobeachwomensclub.com.

Dinosaurs In Your Backyard!

Wait, what? A T. rex in your yard? Sort of! Birds are the only living descendants of dinosaurs. Join the Eagle Audubon Society in March as Dr. Julie Stocksdale explains how dinosaurs evolved into today's birds, why feathers and flight developed and what happened to the rest of the dinos (hint: BOOM!). The Eagle Audubon Society, the South Hillsborough chapter of the National Audubon Society, meets at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, located at 1239 W. Del Webb Blvd. in Sun City Center on Monday, March 16. There will be coffee at 1 p.m., with the program starting at 1:30 p.m. The event is free and open to all. Visit <https://eagleaudubonflorida.org/> for more information.

Raptor Center Of Tampa Bay Fundraiser

Join Raptor Center of Tampa Bay for its annual fundraiser at Three Bulls Tavern & Brewery on Saturday, March 14, from 1-4 p.m. You will get to meet the people of the raptor center, animal ambassadors and learn about the ways it is trying to save the environment. Three Bulls is donating 15 percent of sales to the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay and will match the donation, so please come out and enjoy great food and drinks and learn about the rehabilitation center in your area and how you can help. To learn more, visit www.raptorcentertoftampabay.org. Three Bulls Tavern & Brewery is located at 4330 Bell Shoals Rd. in Valrico.

Men Of Valor Conference

New Hope Church is inviting churches and men from across the region to gather for the Men of Valor T3 Conference, a one-day men's event focused on spiritual growth, brotherhood and bold faith, on Saturday, March 7, from 8:30 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Check-in begins at 8 a.m. The theme for 2026, T3 — 'Test. Transform. Triumph.' — draws from the powerful biblical significance of '40,' seasons throughout Scripture where God tests faith, brings transformation and prepares His people for victory. New Hope Church is located at 213 N. Knights Ave. in Brandon. For tickets and more information, visit <https://menofvalor2026.rsvpify.com/>.

03.07

40

T3

TEST
TRANSFORM
TRIUMPH

**BUSINESS
DIRECTORY**

**Osprey
OBSERVER**
YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

ASPHALT SEALCOATING
Residential & Commercial
Sealer Hand-Applied
Cracks and Pot Holes Filled
Veterans' Discounts
Free Quotes
(813) 394-0915
SULLIVAN ASPHALT SEALERS
30 years of serving customers!

**PRESSURE WASHING
AND SCREEN REPAIR**
10% OFF *all work over \$100*
COOPER
• Houses
• Pool Cages
• Decks
• Driveways
• Sidewalks
• Gutter Cleaning
• & More
FREE ESTIMATES
813-892-5283

BOOKKEEPING
We Got This Bookkeeping
So you can work your business,
not your books!
• Monthly Bookkeeping
• QuickBooks Online
Setup & Support
• Catch-Up &
Cleanup Projects
• Financial Reporting
• QuickBooks ProAdvisor
(813)981-9008
grace@wegotthisbookkeeping.com
wegotthisbookkeeping.com

PEST CONTROL

termite & pest control
Residential and Commercial
(813) 468-8574
TNTtermiteandpestcontrol.com
LOCAL & FAMILY OWNED
"DYNAMITE CUSTOMER SERVICE"

Advertise in this directory for just \$50 per ad,
or as low as \$200 per month ... (INCLUDES ALL 5 EDITIONS)
Call Us Today! (813) 657-2418 or Visit OspreyObserver.com

FOREVER GREEN LAWN AND PEST CONTROL GROWS ON FOUR DECADES OF CUSTOMIZED, QUALITY CARE

By Makenzie Atkins Noel

Forever Green Lawn and Pest Control is a family-owned lawn care company built on experience, consistency, and a refusal to cut corners.

Operating for more than 40 years as a family-run business, Forever Green Lawn and Pest Control was founded with a straightforward philosophy: do the job the right way, or don't do it at all. That



Forever Green Lawn and Pest Control combines decades of knowledge to provide a service that is focused on delivering reliable results customers can trust.

Forever Green Lawn and Pest Control to avoid generic, one-size-fits-all treatments. The result is a more customized approach focused on producing noticeable and sustainable results for each customer.

"I started this company because I saw too many jobs being done halfway," said Mike Compton, owner of Forever Green Lawn and Pest Control. "We do it the right way or we don't do it at all, which is why I've spent 45 years perfecting our fertilizer blends based on what actually works for each customer."

Forever Green Lawn and Pest Control serves customers throughout Manatee, Pinellas, and Hillsborough counties, with offices located across the region to better support the communities it serves. The company offers comprehensive care, including lawn treatments, tree and shrub care and pest control.

Experience-driven care is a defining part of Forever Green Lawn and Pest Control's process. With more than four decades of industry knowledge behind the business, the company relies on customized fertilizer blends developed through firsthand experience. These blends are based on an understanding of what works, allowing

Supporting that philosophy is a team of licensed and knowledgeable technicians who bring professionalism and consistency to every property they service. Forever Green Lawn and Pest Control places a strong emphasis on proper training, attention to detail and following established processes to ensure lawns, trees, and shrubs receive the care they need to thrive over time.

Founded on higher expectations and long-term results, Forever Green Lawn and Pest Control has grown steadily while remaining true to its family-owned roots.

For more information or to inquire about service, please visit www.fglawn.com.

LICENSED ACUPUNCTURE PHYSICIAN OFFERS NATURAL RELIEF BEYOND PAIN

By Denise Sansosti

After six years of practicing acupuncture in Sarasota, Dr. Ashley Carlson has expanded her practice with the opening of a new office in Brandon, bringing her work closer to home.

A licensed acupuncture physician and doctor of oriental medicine in the state of Florida, Dr. Carlson is also certified by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. Her path to medicine began at the University of South Florida, where she earned a bachelor's degree in biomedical science. While originally planning a career in pharmacy, her own health challenges shifted her direction.

"I was getting five to 10 migraines a month," Dr. Carlson shared. "I tried pharmaceuticals and injections, but I experienced strange side effects, and nothing really worked."

Seeking a more natural approach, acupuncture relieved her migraines and gave her a new calling. Dr. Carlson attended East West College of Natural Medicine, earning a bachelor's degree in health science and a master's degree in oriental medicine. She is currently completing her doctoral program with a focus on reproductive health, orthopedics and cancer care.

While pain relief is the most common reason patients seek acupuncture, Dr. Carl-



Dr. Ashley Carlson now offers private one-to-one treatment and consultations in her Brandon office.



son emphasizes that its benefits extend far beyond that.

"Most people don't think about acupuncture for chronic conditions like insomnia, anxiety or digestive issues," she explained. "Many people are in so much pain they can't sleep, or their minds just won't shut off. Acupuncture helps balance the system so the body can rest and reset."

Becoming licensed in Florida requires four board certifications and extensive training. "We have to complete Western medicine boards, and we also have the Chinese herbal board," Dr. Carlson noted. "We still go through all of the anatomy and physiology classes re-

quired in Western medicine, plus we study Western and Eastern nutrition."

What she values most is seeing real change in her patients.

"Helping people regain quality of life is the most rewarding part," she said. "Watching someone recover mobility after a stroke or improve their speech through acupuncture is incredible. This medicine is minimally invasive and has virtually no side effects."

If you have a fear of needles, she also provides other traditional Chinese medicines, such as acupressure, cupping, moxibustion, tui na and Chinese herbs. To schedule an appointment, visit <https://floatingspring-sacu.com/> or call 813-535-0693.



EAT.
DRINK.
DANCE.

SELECT DATES
JAN. 24 - MAR. 1

Taxes, blackout dates, service fees, and other restrictions may apply. ©United Parks & Resorts, Inc.



Get Limited-Time Deals
at BuschGardens.com



EYE ON BUSINESS

To Submit Business News & Press Releases Mail Attn: Business Editor, 2109 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., Valrico, FL 33596 Fax 657-4469 | Email: jbennett@ospreyobserver.com Deadline: 15th of each month.

Hope And Harvest Continues To Expand

Stefanie Emrith is a FishHawk local and the founder of Hope & Harvest, a charcuterie and experiential events business proudly serving FishHawk and the surrounding communities. Over the past year, Hope & Harvest has successfully served the community through workshops, private celebrations, corporate gatherings and community pop-ups. As a locally owned and community-rooted business, it is continuing to expand its offerings in 2026 through new partnerships, themed events and local venue collaborations. Visit its website at www.hopeandharvestevents.com to find out more.

DML Property Solutions Offers Residential And Commercial Lawn Care And Landscaping Services

DML Property Solutions offers residential and commercial lawn care and landscaping services, helping homeowners, business owners and HOAs keep their properties clean, beautiful and well maintained. Along with routine services, it offers additional services, including sod removal and installation, irrigation inspections and weed control mulching. Find out more www.dmlproperty.com.



Say YES To You And Your Business Summit

The Say YES to You and Your Business Summit is a one-day immersive experience created for entrepreneurs and high-achieving professional women who are ready to release burnout, reclaim clarity and create harmony between their ambition and their well-being. Founded by Say YES to Your Life Coach Pearl Chiarenza, the summit focuses on helping women bridge the gap between professional achievement and personal fulfillment through mindset coaching, mental fitness tools and real-life strategies they can apply immediately. The event will take place at The Regent, located at 6437 Watson Rd. in Riverview, on Thursday, May 14. For more information, tickets and to see available sponsorship opportunities, visit <https://sayyestoyousummit.com/>.

Cultivated Home Design Uses Holistic Approach To Transforming Homes

Cyndi Myers, owner of Cultivated Home Designs and a new FishHawk resident, is an interior designer and energy healer who brings the two modalities together to help people

harness the energy of their home and its surrounding environment to improve their overall well-being. A lifelong aficionado of interior design, Myers discovered during her two-and-a-half-year journey with leukemia the magic of energy healing and how the combination of the two altered her mindset and ultimately led to her remission from the disease. Contact Myers to begin your life-changing journey to boost your mind, body and spirit. You can reach her at 518-275-8536 or at cmyers768@gmail.com.

Professional Pets Florida

Professional Pets Florida, based in Valrico, is the premier provider of in-home pet-sitting and dog-walking care in the Hillsborough County area. Owned by Lauri Partanio, a former certified animal control officer and veterinary technician, Professional Pets Florida is focused heavily on bringing veterinary medicine and animal welfare to pet sitting and dog walking locally. With the pet industry focusing heavily on 'healthspan' over just lifespan, owners of senior dogs and cats are recognizing that the high-stress environment of a kennel can be detrimental to an aging animal's immune system and cognitive health.

"The 2026 pet parent is more educated than ever. They don't just want a pet sitter; they want a professional that treats their pet like their own," Partanio said.

For additional information, visit its website at <https://professionalpets.net/>.



Navigator Academy Of Valrico Hosts Leadership Day

Navigator Academy of Leadership Valrico, located at 1101 Bloomingdale Ave. in Valrico, is excited to invite you to our upcoming Leadership Day on Monday, March 9.

This special event is an opportunity for local business and community leaders to visit our campus, meet our student leaders, and see how the Leader in Me program shapes the culture, confidence and leadership skills of our students.

Guests will have the chance to tour the campus, hear from student leaders, see the classroom in action and learn more about how community partnerships support the school. Navigator Academy would love for you to experience the positive impact happening there. For more, visit the website, www.navigatoracademyvalrico.com.



ATTORNEY

SANTIAGO EL ABOGADO
RJS
Law Group

813-641-0010

OUR SERVICES

- ✦ AUTO ACCIDENT/PERSONAL INJURY
- ✦ WRONGFUL DEATH
- ✦ WILLS & TRUSTS
- ✦ PROBATE SERVICES
- ✦ BUSINESS INCORPORATION
- ✦ CIVIL LITIGATION
- ✦ REAL ESTATE & TITLE

NUESTROS SERVICIOS

- ✦ ACCIDENTES DE AUTO
- ✦ MUERTE POR NEGLIGENCIA
- ✦ TESTAMENTOS Y PODERES
- ✦ GESTION SUCESORIA
- ✦ CONSTITUCION DE EMPRESAS
- ✦ LITIGIO CIVIL
- ✦ BIENES RAICES Y TITULOS



306 N U.S. HWY 41, RUSKIN, FL 33570



FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION
WWW.RJSLAWGROUP.COM





NOW LEASING BRAND NEW

**PREMIUM RESIDENCES!
IN AN ACTIVE 55+ COMMUNITY**



813-934-2204 | leasing@bridgewaterlandings.com

ELEVATE LIVING, SIMPLIFY LIFE.

It's your time to enjoy more. Downsize without compromise in a thoughtfully designed community of high-end, easy-to-maintain apartments-where comfort, convenience, and an active lifestyle come together for adults 55 and better.

APARTMENT FEATURES

- ✓ 1 Bedroom or 2 Bedrooms
- ✓ Quartz countertops
- ✓ Full-size in-home washer and dryer
- ✓ Spacious kitchens
- ✓ Includes water and Wifi + 60 channels

STARTING AT \$1855



**5790 STOCKPORT ST, RIVERVIEW, FL 33578
ON BLOOMINGDALE AVENUE. ACROSS FROM
THE WINTHROP TOWNE CENTRE.**



**COMPLIMENTARY 1-YEAR• MEMBERSHIP TO
THE SWEET WATER CLUB CLUBHOUSE
FOR OUR FIRST BUILDING OF RESIDENTS!**
**Discover More About The
Clubhouse Amenities & Events**
Pool & Fitness Center
Curated Activities
Happy Hours & Themed Events

Thinking of selling or buying? Work with the **#1** Brokerage in the area!
At 27North Realty, we don't just sell homes - we guide you home.



Get a free, no-pressure home value and strategy review. | **Agent Spotlight**
Talk directly with a neighborhood expert **Linda Santa**



813.645.4663
Scan for your
home value

As the leader of the Santa Signature Team at 27North Realty, Linda Santa REALTOR® blends deep local knowledge with a client-first approach. She is known for guiding buyers and sellers through important real estate decisions with clarity, honesty, and a calm steady presence.



Navigate Home with **27NorthRealty.com** | 813.645.4663 | 6138 N US HWY 41, Apollo Beach 33572

6526 SIMONE SHORES CIR
APOLLO BEACH
\$1,449,000

5 Bed | 4 Bath | 3196 sq ft
Waterfront Pool Home,
10K Boat Lift



6530 SIMONE SHORES CIR
APOLLO BEACH
\$1,549,000

7 Bed | 4.5 Bath | 3823 sq ft
Saltwater Pool, Spa,
10K Boat Lift



1728 FRED IVES ST
RUSKIN
\$358,000

4 Bed | 2 Bath | 1935 sq ft
Conservation View,
No Rear Neighbors



6418 BRIGHT BAY CT
APOLLO BEACH
\$2,599,000

5 Bed | 3-1 Bath | 4176 sq ft
Infinity Pool With Panoramic
View Of Tampa Bay



991 SIGNET DR
APOLLO BEACH
\$650,000

4 Bed | 3 Bath | 2368 sq ft
Pool Home



12908 HAWKSTONE TRAIL BLVD
LITHIA
\$415,000

4 Bed | 2-1 Bath | 2299 sq ft
Large Corner Lot



829 CALLISTA CAY LOOP
TARPON SPRINGS
\$520,000

3 Bed | 2-1 Bath | 1802 sq ft
Deeded Boat Slip,
12K Boat Lift



4639 BIRDSONG BLVD #2
LUTZ
RENTAL: \$1,850

2 Bed | 1 Bath | 1322 sq ft
North Tampa Aeropark
Community

