

See Our Ad On Page 29

VALRICO
Osprey OBSERVER
Your Community Newspaper
BACK TO SCHOOL

August 2026
Volume 23, Issue 8

24 YEARS Osprey OBSERVER Your Community Newspaper POSITIVE NEWS

Ph: 813-657-2418

REPÚBLICA DE CUBA
REPUBLIC OF CUBA
BOX OF CUBANS
Home of The Authentic Cuban Sandwich
See Page 3

CELEBRATING 24 YEARS OF PUBLISHING POSITIVE COMMUNITY NEWS

HONORARY MAYOR CAMPAIGN RAISES RECORD $169,643 FOR CHARITIES

Staff Report



2026 Honorary Mayor Steve Glaros stands alongside Deputy Mayor Chris Ciulla (right) after a record-setting East Hillsborough campaign that raised $169,643.99 for local charities.

East Hillsborough's 2026 Honorary Mayor campaign demonstrated the extraordinary impact that can result when community leadership, local businesses, volunteers and charitable organizations unite around a shared purpose. This year's race raised a record-setting $169,643.99, the largest collective total in the campaign's history, while recognizing two candidates whose efforts benefited five important local charities.

Steve Glaros was named the 2026 Honorary Mayor of East Hillsborough after raising $121,746.56, the highest amount ever raised by a single candidate. An attorney who has served Tampa Bay families for more than 20 years, Glaros built his campaign around advocacy, family values, and strengthening organizations that support children, families and animals. His campaign benefited High 5 Inc., which provides after-school programs, mentorship and safe opportunities for young people; the Impact Program, which equips youth through education, prevention, and character development; and Raining Cats and Dogs Shelter and Sanctuary, which provides compassionate care for animals while encouraging responsibility and community involvement.

Chris Ciulla earned the newly established title of deputy mayor after raising $47,897.43. A former corporate executive and the owner of VooDoo Brewing in Valrico, Ciulla has become an active supporter of small businesses, nonprofit organizations and community initiatives throughout East Hillsborough. His campaign supported Forgotten Angels and ECHO. Forgotten Angels assists young adults aging out of foster care by providing housing, life skills, employment preparation, education support, credit-building opportunities and consistent guidance. ECHO, the Emergency Care Help Organization, supports families facing hardship through food, clothing, household essentials, workforce development, financial counseling and programs designed to move neighbors from crisis toward long-term stability.

The campaign also marked the conclusion of Mike Brand's term as Honorary Mayor, welcoming him into the Honorary Mayor alumni community. More importantly, the race reflected the generosity of sponsors, volunteers, donors and residents who supported both campaigns. The accomplishments of Glaros and Ciulla prove that friendly competition can create lasting benefits for organizations serving the community's most vulnerable residents.

For more information about the race, please contact the Valrico FishHawk Chamber of Commerce at https://business.valricofishhawk.org/contact.

BUDDY BREW SERVES UP COFFEE IN VALRICO SPROUTS STORE

By Brian Bokor



Walk into the Buddy Brew cafe inside Sprouts Farmers Market in Valrico and you'll find specialty coffee. Spend five minutes with co-founders Dave and Susan Ward, however, and the conversation quickly moves to the people behind it.

That perspective started in their Hyde Park garage. They installed a commercial roaster there in 2007 and opened their original Kennedy Boulevard cafe three years later, naming the company after Buddy.

Susan smiled when she talked about the name. "Buddy is our dog," she said.

That first shop had no cash register. Customers dropped $2 into an old coffee can on the honor system. Trust was not something the business earned later. It was where the business began.

Today, Buddy Brew employs more than 100 team members and continues expanding across Florida. Still, the Wards remain focused on purpose. About 75-80 percent of its coffee comes through direct, long-standing relationships with global growers.

Dave has visited many of those farming communities, where coffee cherries are picked by hand on steep terrain. The experience, he said, changes how you see each cup by revealing the people and work behind it. Buddy Brew supports Trees For Kibira's reforestation work in Burundi, East Africa, through sales of its Rainforest Roast.

That farm-level care directly shapes what ultimately reaches the customer. Specialty coffee is graded on a universal 100-point scale, with 100 representing the highest possible score.

"In order to be specialty, the average score is 80 points or higher, but we typically buy 85 points or higher," Dave explained. "Really, the definition of 'specialty' means coffee without defects."

"'Brew good. Do good' is all about our culture, our people, our communities and the farmers," Dave said.

That same focus on values brought Buddy Brew into Sprouts Farmers Market. The partnership developed gradually as the companies got to know one another.

"As we got to know Sprouts, it really became evident how closely our brands are aligned — from their values to their mission," Dave said. "They were almost identical."

Opening inside Sprouts brought Buddy Brew into Eastern Hillsborough County after years of requests from customers in Brandon, Valrico, Riverview and New Tampa.

"This was one of our ways of basically getting into the broader Tampa Bay area in coffee underserved areas," Dave said. "The response blows my mind, to be honest with you."

The companies have since developed a cafe prototype that can be incorporated into new Sprouts stores during construction, helping them grow together across Florida.

Even with all that growth, Dave and Susan's priorities haven't changed. Talk to them and you'll hear about Buddy, the farmers growing the coffee, that old honor-system coffee can and finding partners who share their values.

The Buddy Brew Coffee café located inside the Sprouts Farmers Market at 3315 Lithia Pinecrest Rd, Valrico, FL is open daily from 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

IN THIS ISSUE:

SCHOOL OF ROCK OPENS.....PG 3
BIKES FOR CHRIST.....PG 6
MEET THE INTERNS.....PG 14
EVENING OF HOPE.....PG 24
EYE ON BUSINESS.....PG 30

PRSTD STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MANASOTA, FL
PERMIT #1456

ECRWSS EDDM
Postal Customer

Osprey Observer
2109 Lithia Pinecrest Rd.
Valrico, FL 33596



Dave and Susan Ward - Co-founders of Buddy Brew Coffee now open in the Valrico Sprouts store on Lithia Pinecrest Rd.

A Sweet Start to the School Year!

Thank a teacher, surprise a principal, celebrate a coach, or brighten your child's school day with a sweet surprise!

Order in minutes — scan to shop.

656-500-6505

Edible Arrangements Valrico
3455 Lithia Pinecrest Rd
Valrico, FL 33596

Delivery now available to: Valrico, Brandon, Riverview, Plant City, Lakeland, Winter Haven & surrounding areas!

Offer valid 8/1/26 - 9/15/26. Dates subject to change. Cannot be combined with other offers. ©2026 Edible IP, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Edible, Edible Arrangements®, and the Fruit Basket Logo are registered trademarks of Edible IP, LLC.



One of the Last Local Private Practices

Doctor-owned. Locally operated. No corporate influence.

BACK TO SCHOOL

BRIDGES DENTAL

LAURA COYLE BRIDGES, D.M.D.

4316 New River Hills Parkway
Valrico, FL 33596

813-654-3399

www.bridgesdental.com



Dr. Caroline Dau | Dr. Laura Bridges

Patients With Dental Insurance

FREE Exam & X-Rays
PLUS $250 Credit Toward Treatment

Applied to crowns, bridges, implants, Invisalign, or restorative care. We will waive any out-of-pocket expense your insurance does not cover for the exam and X-rays.

*With this coupon. Not valid with other offers or prior services. Treatment credit valid on procedures $1,000+. Expires 12/31/2026

No Insurance - No Problem!

$99 New Patient Package
(Exam • X-Rays • Healthy Mouth Cleaning)
PLUS $99 Future Treatment Credit

Credit may be applied toward any future treatment.

With this coupon. Not valid with use of our wellness plan or prior services. Expires 12/31/2026

Proudly accepting the following dental insurance providers:

- Aetna
- Ameritas
- Assurant PPO
- Cigna
- Connection Dental
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- GEHA
- Delta Dental
- MetLife
- Guardian
- Principal
- Premier

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

REED & REED
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

813.438.5960

NEEDREED.COM

101 E Lumsden Road
Brandon, FL 33511

Proud Supporters of ECHO
* Board of Directors

Personal Injury Cases

FREE CONSULTATIONS

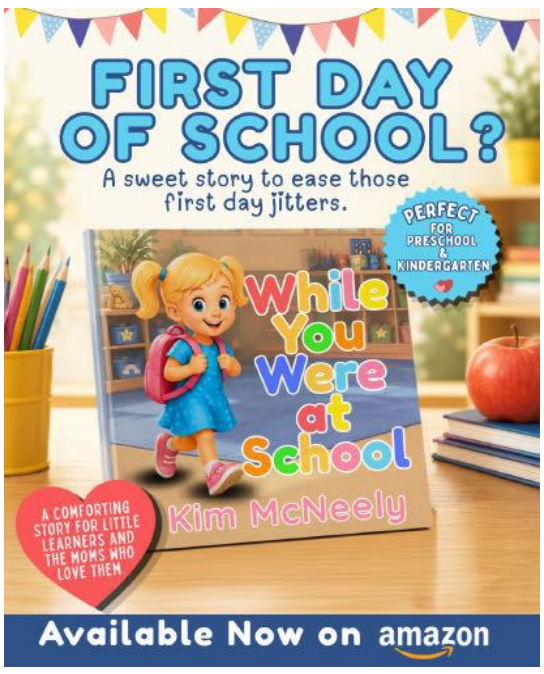
Auto Accidents • Slip and Fall
Boating Accidents • Dog Bites
Wrongful Death • Motorcycle

LIKE
Having a Lawyer in the
FAMILY



AUTHOR ENCOURAGES CONFIDENCE THROUGH NEW BACK-TO-SCHOOL BOOK

By Ella Baroni



A decade after writing the first draft, Valrico resident Kim McNeely has published her debut children's book, While You Were at School, just in time for the back-to-school season.

The idea for the book began 10 years ago on her youngest daughter's first day of school. As her daughter headed out the door, McNeely encouraged her to "learn something new today." Her daughter smiled and replied, "OK, you too."

Inspired by that exchange, McNeely spent the day writing a story and sketching illustrations while caring for her toddler at home. Although she was pleased with the finished manuscript, she set it aside because she wasn't sure how to publish it.

That changed late last year, after reading about another local author who had published a book and ultimately chose to self-publish through Amazon KDP to ensure the book would be available before the new school year.

While You Were at School is written to help children — and their parents — navigate the emotions that often accompany the first day of school. The story reminds young readers that while they are making new memories at school, the people who love them are thinking about them and looking forward to hearing about their day.

Completing the book also carried personal meaning for McNeely. As she watched her oldest daughter prepare to graduate, she realized the same encouragement she gave her children applied to herself.

"I wanted my children to see that dreams don't have an expiration date," McNeely said. "Sometimes life gets busy, sometimes a goal takes longer than you imagined and sometimes something you care about must wait. Hard doesn't mean impossible, and late doesn't mean never."

McNeely recently concluded her time as admissions director at Foundation Christian Academy, where she worked closely with families, teachers and students. That experience reinforced how meaningful — and emotional — the first days of school can be for both children and parents, something she hopes readers will recognize throughout the book.

Now beginning a new chapter, McNeely plans to continue using her experience in creativity to serve families, educators and the local community through future projects and educational resources. While You Were at School is available through Amazon today.

SCHOOL OF ROCK VALRICO SETS A NEW STAGE FOR LOCAL MUSICIANS

By Abigail Dumas



This summer, the music learning institution School of Rock opened a brand-new location in Valrico. Located at 3244 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., the grand opening took place on August 6. The event included a ribbon cutting, a tour of the school, food and drinks and live band performances by real School of Rock students.

For years, School of Rock has brought next-level music education to kids and adults around the world. With locations in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas, the company has made a name for itself globally as the "most revolutionary music education school in the world."

The program focuses on creating a supportive environment that inspires creativity and learning while keeping students comfortable and engaged. Designed for all ages and skill levels, School of Rock combines one-on-one teaching with group rehearsal to build a community among its young musicians. Students from ages 5 to adult receive weekly individual lessons on either drums, bass, keyboard, guitar or vocals. This is then paired with group lessons and, eventually, live performances at real venues.

Angela Ward, co-owner of the new Valrico location, said, "Our school focuses on collaboration and collaboration. We believe the stage is the ultimate teacher and we aim to build confidence on and off the stage."

Angela, a former elementary school teacher, and her husband, Dave Ward, an experienced salesman, own the new School of Rock as a team. Their journey to opening this location started after the couple enrolled their son into a Rock 101 program at the School of Rock Germantown. The family had an amazing experience with the program, with their son growing into a confident musician right before their eyes.

"When we saw the difference School of Rock made in our son's life, we knew we wanted to bring a school like it closer to home for kids just like him," said Angela.

The couple's goal is to give families in the area the same experience with School of Rock that they had and help more musically inclined kids grow their passion.

For those interested in browsing classes or programs at the new location, check out www.schoolofrock.com.







HIGH 5 TEAMS UP WITH I9 SPORTS TO EXPAND YOUTH SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES IN BRANDON

Staff Report



Brandon families now have even more opportunities to keep their children active, as i9 Sports has launched a variety of youth sports programs at High 5 Inc.

The new partnership brings weeknight and Saturday leagues, training sessions, clinics, camps, tournaments and other youth sports programming to High 5's longtime community facility, located at 405 Beverly Blvd. in Brandon. Children can participate in basketball, volleyball, flag football and soccer while learning new skills in a fun, supportive environment.

The programs are designed to help young athletes build confidence, improve their athletic abilities and develop teamwork and sportsmanship while staying active. High 5 officials said the addition of i9 Sports programming complements the organization's longstanding mission of providing quality recreational opportunities for local families.

High 5 Inc., formerly known as the Brandon Sports & Aquatic Center, has served the Brandon community since 1963. The nonprofit organization operates a full-day summer camp and after-school program for children ages 5-12, offering structured recreational activities in a safe, family-friendly setting.

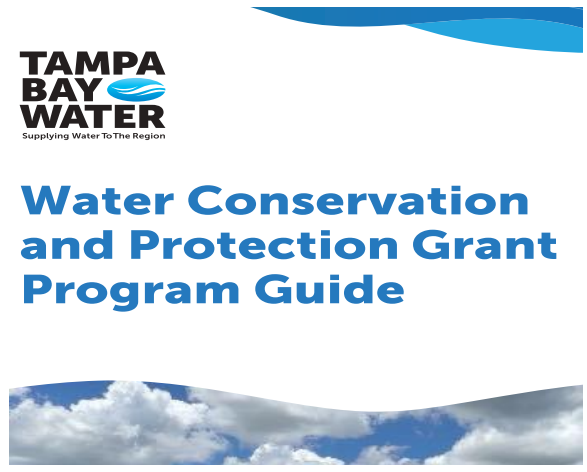
With more than 5 million registrations nationwide, i9 Sports is the country's largest multisport provider dedicated exclusively to community-based youth sports programs. The organization offers leagues, camps and clinics for children ages 3 and older, emphasizing age-appropriate instruction, fun and good sportsmanship. In addition to traditional leagues, i9 Sports also partners with Nike Kids Camps to offer multisport summer camps that introduce children ages 5-12 to a variety of sports while focusing on skill development and teamwork.

The new programs at High 5 provide Brandon-area families with convenient access to quality youth athletics in a welcoming community setting. Parents interested in learning more about available programs, schedules or registration can visit www.i9sports.com or contact the i9 Sports team directly with questions.

For more information about High 5 Inc., visit https://high5inc.org/.

TAMPA BAY WATER OPENS APPLICATIONS FOR CONSERVATION PROJECT GRANTS

Staff Report



Tampa Bay Water is accepting applications for its Water Conservation and Protection Grant Program. The program offers up to $50,000 in funding for local projects that help conserve water, protect drinking water sources and promote environmental stewardship throughout the region. Grants ranging from $2,000-$10,000 are available to community groups, nonprofits, schools and universities serving Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties.

"Big impacts often start with a simple idea," said Malique Rankin, public communications specialist. "Through this grant program, we're helping local organizations turn innovative ideas into projects that conserve water, protect our environment and strengthen our communities."

Recent grant recipients have reached thousands of residents and students across the region through innovative projects that promote water conservation and environmental stewardship. Funded initiatives include interactive water education programs, citizen science opportunities, mobile exhibits, public art campaigns, kayak-based environmental learning experiences and community-led restoration efforts. These projects demonstrate how local organizations can make a meaningful impact in protecting the rivers, groundwater and ecosystems that support the Tampa Bay region's drinking water supply.

Important Dates & Application Details:

- The application period is open now.
- The deadline to apply is Friday, November 13, by 5 p.m.
- Grant recipients will be notified in December.
- The grant period is from January through December 2027 (project implementation within that calendar year).

Why It Matters

Protecting drinking water resources requires a communitywide effort. Grant-funded projects help educate residents, restore natural habitats and encourage water-saving practices that benefit the region's rivers, wetlands, aquifer and other critical water resources. With more than 2.6 million people relying on Tampa Bay Water's regional system, local conservation and source water protection efforts play an important role in safeguarding the area's drinking water supply for future generations.

How to Learn More & Apply

Interested applicants can download the application guide and submit proposals at www.tampabaywater.org/grant. Applicants are encouraged to review the program guide, prepare budget worksheets and submit applications online or via email as directed. Organizations are welcome to reach out to the grant program team for assistance or planning support before applying.

Resort-Style Senior Living

SET ON 17 PRIVATE ACRES

5 UNIQUE RESTAURANTS SERVING LOCALLY SOURCED CUISINE

SPACES DESIGNED TO INSPIRE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

OPENING FALL 2026



THE GALLERY Tampa

AN EXPERIENCE SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

INDEPENDENT LIVING | ASSISTED LIVING | MEMORY CARE

ALF license pending.

Visit Our Leasing Showroom

813-642-4021

GalleryTampa.com

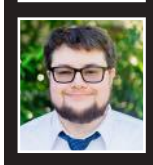
5049 Bell Shoals Rd. | Valrico, FL 33596

Osprey OBSERVER
YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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

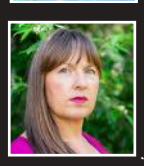

MANAGING EDITOR
Marie Gilmore
813-657-2418
editor@ospreyobserver.com


DIRECTOR OF MEDIA OPERATIONS
Doug Gilmore
813-657-2418
doug@ospreyobserver.com


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


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


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


CUSTOMER SERVICE
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
mgershkoff@ospreyobserver.com


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


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


RIVERVIEW ADVERTISING
Olivia Clark
330-416-0771
oclark@OspreyObserver.com


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

Publishing Positive News Since 2001

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

RESTORATION 1 OF TAMPA BAY CELEBRATES 10 YEARS IN COMMUNITY

By Jane Owen



No one wants an emergency to happen at their home or office. However, emergencies do happen, and when they do, it is important to have an experienced and professional team to bring your life, home, or business back to normal as quickly as possible.

Restoration 1 of Tampa Bay has been serving the Hillsborough County community for 10 years. Since 2016, they have provided water damage restoration, mold remediation, and fire damage cleanup services. Their team brings over 50 years of combined experience to the field.

Dave Adams, the owner and general manager of Restoration 1 of Tampa Bay, strongly believes that restoration services should be people-focused. They treat their customers like neighbors because they truly are their neighbors.

Dave moved to Valrico in 1998 with his wife, Heidi, and his son, Zack. Heidi was pregnant with their youngest son, Sam, at the time. Both boys attended the University of Florida after graduating from Bloomingdale Senior High School. Dave has worked at both large corporations and small businesses over the years. When Sam left for college, Dave decided to fulfill his lifelong desire to own a community-based service company.

He founded Restoration 1 of Tampa Bay in July 2016. The company specializes in the remediation and restoration of residential and commercial properties damaged by water, fire, smoke, or mold. Dave's favorite part of his job is helping people who often are at a loss as to what to do.

"One of the first things people say when we arrive is 'I don't know what to do. This has never happened before'. I love helping people, guiding them through the process of mitigation and restoration", Dave said.

Restoration 1 of Tampa Bay provides free estimates and recommends getting an assessment before contacting your insurance provider about a potential claim. They work directly with insurance companies, providing the necessary documentation and photos for the carrier to process your claim smoothly.

"When an insurance claim is filed, we provide comprehensive documentation, which includes the cause of loss, so our clients can get paid for their claims without a lot of hassle," Dave explained.

Dave's passion for serving the community has also led to the creation of two sister companies: Tam Bay Construction and Tam Bay ADA Renovations. Tam Bay Construction was born out of a desire to handle rebuilds for restoration clients. Tam Bay ADA Renovations was started after a friend needed help renovating a home following an unexpected disability.

To learn more about Restoration 1 of Tampa Bay's services, visit their website: restoration1.com/tampa-bay. For more information about Tam Bay Construction or Tam Bay ADA Renovations, visit tambayconstruction.com and tambayada.com, respectively.

Planning For Your Peace Of Mind



Estate Law 2 Go, PA
An in-person, virtual, mobile & notary service law firm

Simple & Complex Estate Planning
Medicaid • Special Needs Planning
Wills • Trusts • POAs • Deeds

Serving in Two Locations:
CARROLLWOOD
14502 N. Dale Mabry Hwy, Suite 200
Tampa, Florida 33618
BRANDON
1044 East Brandon Blvd
Brandon, FL 33511

Phone: 813-961-2802 | Fax: 877-841-9630
estatelaw2go.com | patricia@estatelaw2go.com

Patricia W Bradford, Esq.
ESTATE LAW 2 GO, P.A.

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

Dine Local OSPREYOBSERVER.COM

1/2 Off
Appetizer with any dinner entree.
Friday & Saturday 6pm-Close
Dine In ONLY
Note Available For To Go
STRANDHILL PUBLIC
10288 Causeway Blvd

Voodoo Valrico FL ESTD 2024
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
J.F. Kicks Restaurant & Patio Bar
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
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
MilkShake EST FACTORY 1914
10446 Stelling Dr.
Riverview
(in the Mission BBQ plaza)

TACO DIRTY — Bowls. Tacos. Mexican Things.
One FREE order of Chips & Salsa with purchase
10460 Stelling Dr.
Riverview
(in the Mission BBQ plaza)
Must present coupon. Not valid with any other discounts. No cash value.

BIKES FOR CHRIST AWARDED $10,000 GRANT FROM THE MABEL & ELLSWORTH SIMMONS FOUNDATION

Staff Report



Bikes For Christ is proud to announce it has been awarded a $10,000 grant from The Mabel & Ellsworth Simmons Charitable Foundation Inc. The funding will help support the organization's ongoing program operations, allowing the nonprofit ministry to continue providing reliable transportation to individuals and families in need throughout the Tampa Bay region.

Founded in 2016, Bikes For Christ has become the premier provider of bicycle transportation to organizations serving those in need in parts of five counties. Working through a network of more than 200 partner organizations, schools, employers, social workers and community agencies, Bikes For Christ provides bicycles that help recipients travel to work, school, medical appointments and other essential destinations while sharing the love of Christ with every bicycle distributed.

The $10,000 grant will directly support the organization's transportation ministry by helping fund bicycle repairs and refurbishments, replacement parts, safety equipment, distribution costs, community outreach and other essential program expenses. These resources ensure that donated bicycles are safe, dependable and ready to make an immediate difference in someone's life.

"We are incredibly grateful to The Mabel & Ellsworth Simmons Charitable Foundation for believing in our mission," said Pat Simmons, founder and president of Bikes For Christ. "Reliable transportation is one of the greatest barriers many people face when trying to improve their lives. This generous investment allows us to continue removing that barrier while sharing hope, encouragement and the love of Christ throughout our community."

Since its founding, Bikes For Christ has distributed more than 3,000 bicycles to individuals in need and has partnered with over 200 organizations throughout the Tampa Bay area. The organization has earned recognition as Nonprofit of the Year from both the Plant City and Valrico FishHawk chambers of commerce, along with numerous community service awards recognizing its innovative approach to addressing transportation needs.

Every bicycle distributed represents more than transportation; it represents opportunity. Whether helping someone get to work, attend school, access health care or regain independence, each bicycle creates a pathway toward greater stability and self-sufficiency while opening the door to share the gospel message.

Bikes For Christ extends its sincere appreciation to The Mabel & Ellsworth Simmons Charitable Foundation for its generosity and commitment to strengthening communities through meaningful charitable investments. For more, visit www.bikes4christ.com.

TAMPA BAY SUN FC ANNOUNCES EXCITING 2026 FALL SCHEDULE

Staff Report

The defending champions are ready to return to the pitch as Tampa Bay Sun FC has announced its 2026 Fall Season schedule, giving local soccer fans seven opportunities to cheer on Tampa Bay's first professional women's sports team at Suncoast Credit Union Field.

The 2026 Fall Season marks a unique chapter for the Gainbridge Super League as the league transitions to a spring-to-fall calendar beginning in 2027. The condensed "sprint" season will feature just 14 regular-season matches, making every game critical in the race for the Players' Shield. The top four teams in the standings will qualify for the playoffs, with semifinal matches scheduled for December 5 and the league championship on December 12.

The Sun will begin the season with three consecutive road matches, opening against Dallas Trinity FC on Saturday, August 15, before traveling to face Sporting JAX on August 22 and Carolina Ascent FC on August 29.

Tampa Bay returns home on Saturday, September 12, for its highly anticipated home opener against Fort Lauderdale FC. The match also marks the first Florida Derby of the season, renewing an in-state rivalry that is expected to draw plenty of excitement from fans.

October brings another challenging stretch for the Sun. The team welcomes reigning Gainbridge Super League champion Lexington SC to Tampa on October 4 before hosting Carolina Ascent FC on October 10. Tampa Bay then heads back on the road for matches against Lexington SC on October 17 and Brooklyn FC on October 24.

The final month of the regular season could determine playoff positioning. The Sun host DC Power FC on November 1 before welcoming Dallas Trinity FC on November 14 and Brooklyn FC on November 21. Tampa Bay closes out the regular season at home on November 28 against Sporting Club Jacksonville in what could be a pivotal match with postseason implications.

Founded as one of the league's original eight clubs, Tampa Bay Sun FC made history as Tampa Bay's first professional women's sports franchise and captured the inaugural USL Super League championship in 2025. The league is now known as the Gainbridge Super League, with the Sun continuing to compete at the highest level of women's professional soccer in the United States.

Beyond winning championships, the club's mission is to build a locally rooted, nationally influential organization that empowers girls, elevates women and energizes the Tampa Bay community through the game of soccer.

Single-game tickets for the 2026 Fall Season, including the September 12 home opener, are now on sale. For more information and the complete schedule, visit https://www.tampabaysunfc.com/

Edward Jones > edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

Job change?

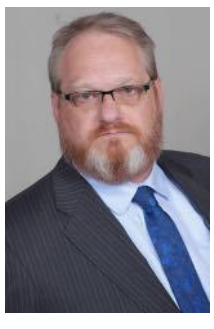
Whether retiring or changing jobs, you'll want to know your retirement account options.



There are four potential options for your 401(k) when leaving an employer:

- Leave it in your former employer's 401(k) plan, if allowed by the plan.
- Move it to your new employer's 401(k) plan, if you've changed employers and your new employer plan allows for it.
- Roll the account over to an individual retirement account (IRA).
- Cash it out, which is subject to potential tax consequences.

We can talk through your financial goals and find the option that works best for you.



Adam M benAbram
Financial Advisor

10312 W Bloomingdale Ave
Suite 105
Riverview, FL 33578
813-626-3052

www.edwardjones.com/adam-benabram

MKT-10674I-A-E-FL EXP 30 NOV 2027 © 2026 EDWARD D. JONES & CO., L.P. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. AECSPAD 29237640

CUSTOM HAIR

For the hair you've always wanted!

Since 1969

Thin Hair?

- **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



56336-1

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



SWIFTIES, PIRATES AND SYMPHONY LAUNCH ORCHESTRA'S 59TH SEASON

Staff Report



The Florida Orchestra (TFO) kicks off its 59th season with two live orchestra pop culture experiences: Steve Hackman's Taylor Swift: The Symphony Era, followed by Disney's Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl in concert live to film, at the Mahaffey Theater, 400 First St. S. in St. Petersburg.

Swifties can hear Taylor Swift songs transformed in Hackman's original experience, which spans her musical eras with songs such as "Love Story," "You Belong with Me" and "The Fate of Ophelia." Created and conducted by Hackman, the concert draws unexpected comparisons between songs and unearths new musical Easter eggs. Four vocalists and a band join the orchestra.

The following weekend, audiences will experience Disney's Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl on the big screen while The Florida Orchestra performs Klaus Badelt and Hans Zimmer's score live to film.

Oscar and Grammy Award-winning composer Zimmer and his production team have scored each Pirates of the Caribbean adventure. The Curse of the Black Pearl, based on the attraction at Disney Parks, is the first film in the series. Set in the 18th century, the adventure follows Captain Jack Sparrow as he teams with blacksmith Will Turner to rescue Elizabeth Swann from the cursed crew of the stolen Black Pearl.

Taylor Swift: The Symphony Era will be held at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, September 12, and features a chorus of The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay. Tickets start at $38 (all fees included).

Please note: Taylor Swift will not appear. This fan-sponsored event is not endorsed by or affiliated with TAS Rights Management, Taylor Swift or their affiliated entities.

Pirates of the Caribbean in concert features a chorus of The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay and will be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday, September 18, and 2 p.m. Saturday, September 19. Tickets start at $28 (all fees included). Presentation licensed by Disney Concerts. All rights reserved.

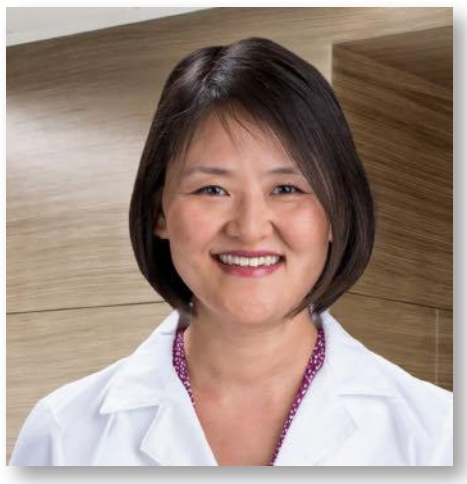
Tickets for both concerts are on sale at https://floridaorchestra.org/ or by calling 727-892-3337.

The Florida Orchestra will perform nearly 100 concerts this season throughout Tampa Bay, including classical, popular and family-friendly music. Music Director Michael Francis launches the Hough Family Foundation Masterworks series with Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture on October 2 and 4 at the Mahaffey Theater. The Raymond James Pops series opens October 9-10 with Revolution: The Music of The Beatles at the Straz Center and Mahaffey Theater. Led by resident conductor Chelsea Gallo, the Morning Matinees series kicks off October 7-8 at Ruth Eckerd Hall and the Mahaffey Theater.

For the full 2026-27 calendar, visit https://floridaorchestra.org/events/.

ORANGE BLOSSOM ORAL SURGERY WELCOMES NEW SURGEON

By Christen Malice



Orange Blossom Oral Surgery is continuing its growth with the addition of Dr. Esther Oh, DDS, M.D., who joins the practice as it builds its long-standing commitment to compassionate, patient-centered care. Following the practice's expansion to two locations in 2024, Dr. Oh will serve patients at the Brandon office, located at 1402 Oakfield Dr., while Dr. Arina Doroshenko, DDS, M.D., owner of Orange Blossom Oral Surgery, will continue seeing patients at the Gibsonton location at 13127 Kings Lake Dr., Ste. 102, which opened in 2022.

Bringing more than 20 years of experience in oral and maxillofacial surgery, Dr. Oh is known for her calm, compassionate approach and dedication to helping patients feel informed, comfortable and confident throughout every stage of treatment. She provides the full scope of oral surgery services, including wisdom teeth removal, dental implant placement, bone grafting, extractions and oral pathology.

"We're excited to welcome Dr. Oh to our team," said Dr. Doroshenko. "Every member of our team is chosen not only for their expertise but because they share the values that define Orange Blossom Oral Surgery. We believe the best outcomes begin by listening to our patients, understanding what matters most to them and helping them feel confident every step of the way. Dr. Oh embodies those values, and we're thrilled to have her on our team."

"I am honored to join a practice that has earned such a strong reputation for both clinical excellence and compassionate patient care," said Dr. Oh. "Oral surgery can feel overwhelming for many people, and I believe taking the time to listen, answer questions and help patients feel at ease is just as important as the procedure itself.."

Dr. Oh joins Dr. Arina Doroshenko, creating an all-female oral and maxillofacial surgery team. In a specialty where women make up only an estimated 10-12 percent of practicing oral and maxillofacial surgeons in the United States, the practice is proud to be part of a growing generation of female surgeons helping shape the future of the profession through exceptional clinical care, leadership and compassion.

As the practice looks ahead, it also honors the legacy of Dr. Felix Jimenez, who founded Brandon Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery and spent decades providing compassionate care to generations of patients in the Brandon community.

Today, under the leadership of Dr. Arina Doroshenko, Orange Blossom Oral Surgery continues to build on that legacy, providing the same trusted care, clinical excellence, and personalized experience patients have come to expect at both its Brandon and Gibsonton locations.

Visit www.obosbrandon.com (Brandon) and www.oboralsurgery.com (Gibsonton).



A NEW NAME. The Same Heart.

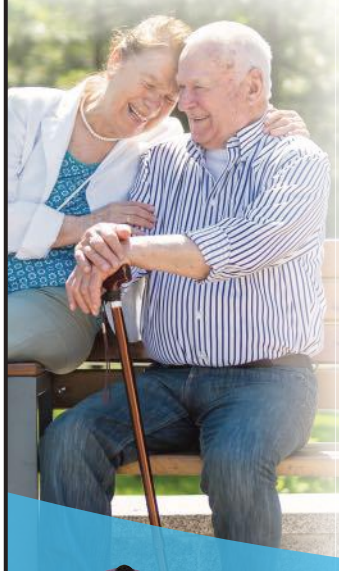
TESSERA OF BRANDON IS NOW

Ambiance at BRANDON

ASSISTED LIVING & MEMORY CARE

by Providence Senior Living

PROUDLY PART OF THE PROVIDENCE SENIOR LIVING FAMILY.



The caring team and compassionate staff residents and families know and trust remain the same, now supported by experienced local ownership dedicated to building a meaningful community and Creating the Best Day Possible for every resident—every day.

Ambiance at Brandon proudly offers Assisted Living and Memory Care enhanced by state-of-the-art technology, innovative safety features, and personalized support designed to provide comfort, connection, and peace of mind for residents and families alike.

Call Jill or Bill at 813-607-6880 today to schedule your personal tour and experience the difference at Ambiance at Brandon.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE 2025 BEST OF THE BEST Tampa Bay Times

Proudly recognized as a Tampa Bay Times Best of the Best winner for 6 consecutive years—including the most recent!

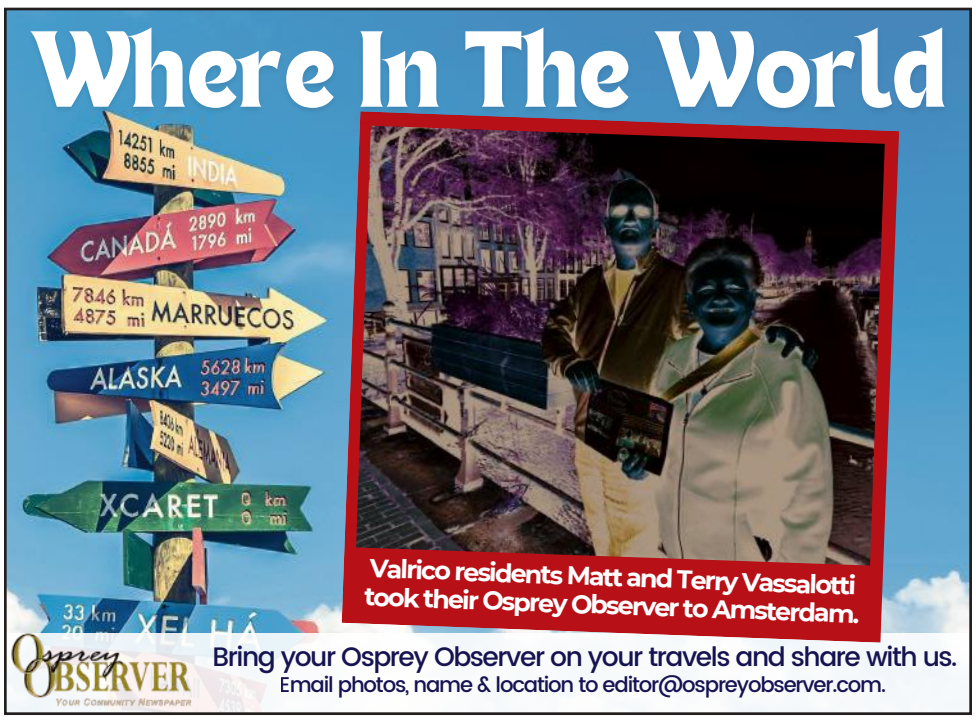
Creating the Best Day Possible™

1320 Oakfield Drive // Brandon, FL 33511

813-607-6880 // Sales@ambiancebrandon.com

AmbianceBrandon.com

Assisted Living Facility #PENDING





Black Cat 5K Fun Run, Homeschool Day & More...

Compiled by Jenny Bennett
jbennett@ospreyobserver.com

Annual Black Cat 5K Fun Run Benefitting A Kitten Place

Animal lovers are invited to lace up their sneakers and make a lifesaving difference at the sixth annual Black Cat 5K Fun Run, presented by The Fuddy Fund and benefiting A Kitten Place, a local nonprofit rescue dedicated to saving homeless cats and kittens throughout the Tampa Bay area.

The untimed 5K fun run and 1-mile walk will take place on Saturday, October 24, in the Twin Lakes neighborhood at 3002 Beaver Pond Trail in Valrico, bringing together runners, walkers, families and animal lovers for a morning of fun while raising funds for cats in need.

This year's event has an exciting new focus: fundraising through teams and individual participants. Organizers hope to expand the event's impact by encouraging supporters to create fundraising teams, invite friends and family to donate, and compete for fun prizes along the way. Registration is now open, and early-bird pricing is available through Sunday, August 23. For registration, fundraising information, sponsorship opportunities or more information about A Kitten Place, visit https://akittenplace.org/events/.

Gowns For Girls Pop-up Boutique

Gowns for Girls, a nonprofit which provides homecoming and prom dresses to high school girls for their high school dances, is hosting a homecoming pop-up boutique. The event will be held at King High School, located at 6815 N. 56th St. in Tampa, on Saturday, September 19 and 26 and Saturday, October 3 and 17, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. High school students from across Hillsborough County can shop for free with their ID to find that perfect dress. To find out more about Gowns for Girls visit its website at www.gownsforgirls.org.

Girl Scout And Seeds Of Hope Back-to-school Supplies Drive

Fossil Valley Girl Scout Troop 33521 is partnering with Seeds of Hope to help local children prepare for the upcoming school year through the organization's annual backpack drive.

Beginning this month, Girl Scouts are encouraging families, community members, local businesses and organizations to join them in collecting new, good-quality backpacks and essential school supplies for children in need. Donors can participate in several ways, including purchasing needed items through the Seeds of Hope Amazon and Walmart wish lists at www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/10LR41TQN5BI2/ref=hz_ls_biz_ex and www.walmart.com/lists/wishlist/e00b868c-cac9-4d6b-9d94-25619aa76525.

Seeds of Hope encourages donors to choose good-quality backpacks that can withstand the demands of the school year, helping ensure that children receive supplies that are both useful and durable.

Pioneers and Cowhunters Homeschool Day

Come to the Pioneers and Cowhunters Homeschool Day on Friday, September 18, at Cracker Country, located at the Florida State Fairgrounds at 4800 U.S. 301 N. in Tampa. Discover what life would have been like for a child growing up in a Florida farming and ranching community over 100 years ago. Educators in historic dress will welcome guests to authentic structures. Students will learn cowhunter skills, like how to read cattle brands and what to pack for a cattle drive. Visit https://floridastatefairgrounds.com/event/cracker-country-homeschool-day-pioneers-cowhunters/ for more information.

Beth Israel Sisterhood Learn About Self-care and Meditation

On Tuesday, September 1, at 1 p.m., Beth Israel's Sisterhood will present a program on selfcare and meditation in its social hall, located at 1115 E. Del Webb Blvd. in Sun City Center. The presenter, Jeanne Shanin, is an expert in holistic wellness, senior health care and chair yoga, as well as meditation. Refreshments will be served. For information on this informative and beneficial 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.

TAMPA BAY RODEO & FAMILY FESTIVAL MAKES FIRST-EVER LABOR DAY APPEARANCE

Staff Report



The yearlong celebration of America's 250th anniversary continues Labor Day Weekend as the Tampa Bay Rodeo & Family Festival makes its first-ever Labor Day Weekend appearance on Friday and Saturday, September 4 and 5, at the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds, located at 215 Sydney Washer Rd. in Dover. After July's sold-out Tampa Bay Rodeo, fans asked for another opportunity to experience Florida's Hottest Show on Dirt — and organizers listened.

The Labor Day weekend event features two action-packed nights of full rodeo competition where the region's top cowboys and cowgirls will battle it out in bull riding, bronco busting, barrel racing, calf roping and more.

Continuing its yearlong celebration of America's 250th, the Tampa Bay Rodeo is proud to work with Wounded Warrior Project to create a memorable Labor Day weekend for wounded veterans and their families. The rodeo's stirring opening ceremony will pay tribute to the brave men and women of the U.S. military with mounted cowgirls carrying American flags, a moving musical salute and special recognition of veterans in attendance.

As part of its military appreciation initiative, the Tampa Bay Rodeo is providing complimentary tickets to personnel from MacDill Air Force Base, the Florida National Guard, the United States Air Force Recruiting Center and the Veterans Art Center Tampa Bay. Representatives from the Florida National Guard and the United States Air Force Recruiting Center will also be on-site throughout the weekend to connect with guests and share information about their organizations.

"We are always looking for ways to bring our veterans together in the community. This opportunity gives families a chance to enjoy the camaraderie of being out with fellow veterans and service members," said Kevin Sosa, Wounded Warrior Project Alumni Manager.

Guests can arrive early to enjoy the Family Festival featuring live music by Noah Hunton in the Busch Light Beer Barn, delicious food, mechanical bull rides, ax throwing, giant inflatable slides, military vehicle displays and a spectacular 110-foot patriotic American flag slide.

Fans looking for the best view can upgrade to the reserved seating area, featuring premium seating closest to the bucking chutes, access to a private bar, private restrooms, complimentary snacks, added security and a designated nonsmoking area.

Gates open at 4:30 p.m., live music begins at 5:45 p.m. and the rodeo starts at 7:30 p.m. The event will take place rain or shine. For more information and tickets, visit https://tamparodeo.com/.





PROM DREAMS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH GOWNS FOR GIRLS

By Ella Baroni





What started with helping one student has grown into a nonprofit that has served hundreds of students across the Tampa Bay area. Founded in 2019, Gowns for Girls provides free formal dresses to students who may not otherwise be able to afford homecoming, prom or other special events.

Founder Stephanie Brown was inspired to start the organization after meeting a middle school student who couldn't afford to attend her eighth grade dance. After taking the student shopping, Brown realized many other girls were likely facing the same situation and wanted to make sure cost wouldn't keep students from making memories.

Since then, Gowns for Girls has given away more than 200 dresses each homecoming season and over 400 gowns during prom season. The organization also provides dresses for ROTC military balls, works with local churches during the Tim Tebow Foundation's Night to Shine events and continues to support North Port High School with more than 100 gowns each year. After Hurricane Ian, volunteers also traveled to North Port to provide over 200 dresses to families affected by the storm. This year, the homecoming boutique dates are Saturday, September 19 and 26, as well as Saturday, October 3 and 17.

"We value all of our volunteers and our community who are so very generous to continue donating to our nonprofit," said Brown. "Without the wonderful support of everyone in the Tampa Bay area, we would not be able to help as many people as we have helped through the years."

Through the support of local donors and volunteers, Gowns for Girls continues to help students feel confident and included as they celebrate some of the biggest milestones of their high school years. For more information visit www.gownsforgirls.org or email at gownsforgirls.info@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY INVITED TO HEIFER LIVING GIFT MARKET

Staff Report



Families looking for a meaningful way to give back while enjoying a fun community event are invited to attend the Heifer Living Gift Market at First Presbyterian Church of Brandon on Sunday, September 20.

The free event will take place from 10:40 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the church's Fellowship Hall, located at 121 Carver Ave. in Brandon. Worship will be held beforehand at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary, and everyone is welcome to attend.

The morning begins with a family-style brunch featuring casseroles, biscuits, jams and jelly. During the meal, guests will hear brief presentations about how Heifer International helps families around the world become self-reliant through gifts of livestock, education and training. A love offering to help offset the cost of the meal is welcome but not required.

Following brunch, visitors can browse interactive booths highlighting various giving opportunities, shop for handcrafted items created by church members, participate in live and silent auctions, bid on gift baskets and enjoy activities for children. All proceeds benefit Heifer International's worldwide programs.

Unlike traditional charitable donations, the Heifer Living Gift Market allows donors to "purchase" animals or shares of animals—including cows, goats, sheep, pigs, flocks of chicks, bees and water buffalo—that are provided to families in need. Donations also support programs such as Send a Girl to School, helping children receive an education while strengthening communities.

Each gift includes training and education so recipients can build sustainable sources of food and income. Through Heifer International's unique "Passing on the Gift" model, families share the first offspring of their animal, along with the knowledge of how to care for it, with another family in need. This creates a ripple effect that helps entire communities grow stronger and more self-sufficient.

The Living Gift Market also offers a unique alternative for holiday, birthday or special occasion giving. Donors receive a beautifully designed honor card that can be presented to a loved one, letting them know a life-changing gift was made in their name.

Whether attending for the delicious brunch, fellowship, auctions or the opportunity to make a lasting difference, organizers hope the community will come together to support families striving for a brighter future.

For more information, contact First Presbyterian Church of Brandon at 813-689-4597 or visit https://fpcbrandon.org/event/heifer-living-gift-market/. Additional information about Heifer International is available at https://www.heifer.org.



FATHER-DAUGHTER DUO CELEBRATES LEGACY CAREERS AT GTE FINANCIAL

Staff Report



At a time when long-term careers have become increasingly uncommon, GTE Financial is celebrating a story that spans generations. Assistant vice president of ATM and interactive systems Kenny Rywant recently reached an extraordinary milestone of 40 years with the credit union, while his daughter, Emily Childers, fraud analyst II, has built a career of her own with more than a decade of service. Together, they represent more than 50 years of combined commitment to GTE Financial, reflecting the organization's investment in its employees and the people it serves.

Rywant joined GTE Financial in 1986 after graduating from Florida State University and began his career in information technology. Over the past four decades, he has helped guide the credit union through significant technological advancements, including implementing shared branching capabilities that allow members to conduct transactions at participating credit unions nationwide.

"Looking back, I can't imagine working anywhere else," Rywant said. "GTE has become much more than a job. It's been my career, my community and, in many ways, my family."

Growing up watching her father's dedication to the organization, Childers saw firsthand the opportunities GTE Financial offered its employees. She joined the credit union more than 10 years ago and now serves as a fraud analyst, helping protect members and strengthen their financial security.

"I saw how happy my dad was at GTE, and I wanted to follow in his footsteps," Childers said. "His work ethic has always inspired me, and it's been incredibly special to build my own career at the same organization that's meant so much to our family."

Over the course of Rywant's career, GTE Financial has grown into one of Florida's largest credit unions, expanding its technology, products and member services while remaining committed to the people behind that success. For both Rywant and Childers, that commitment created opportunities to build meaningful careers while making a lasting difference for members and the communities they serve.

"Forty years with one organization is an incredible accomplishment, and seeing Kenny's commitment inspire Emily to build her own career here makes this story even more meaningful," said Chad Burney, senior vice president and chief information officer at GTE Financial. "Our employees are the heart of everything we do, and Kenny and Emily represent the culture we're proud to build — one where people can grow, serve their communities and create a lasting impact."

Today, GTE Financial serves more than 230,000 individuals and businesses across West Central Florida.

For more information about GTE Financial and its services, visit www.gtefinancial.org.

KIDS TAG ART PROGRAM TOPS $181,000 RAISED FOR ART EDUCATION

Staff Report



Tax Collector Nancy Millan presents the Tax Collector's Choice Award to Melina Fenton from Apollo Beach K-8.

The Hillsborough County Tax Collector's Office is proud to release its 2025-26 Kids Tag Art Summary Report, announcing that this year's program raised $38,632 for local schools — the largest single-year total in program history. A total of 66 Hillsborough County elementary schools participated this year, with each school receiving $585 to support its art programs.

Since Hillsborough County Tax Collector Nancy Millan brought the Kids Tag Art Program to Hillsborough County in 2021, it has raised more than $181,813 for art education across the county. This year's program also generated $5,043 in direct Kids Tag Art merchandise sales, with proceeds from every plate, key chain and mug sold going straight back to participating schools.

"These numbers tell the story of a community that believes in investing in its young artists," said Millan. "A total of 66 participating schools, more than $181,000 raised since we started this program and thousands of students who got to see their own artwork come to life — that's what Kids Tag Art is all about. We're proud to share this year's results and even prouder of what they mean for arts education in Hillsborough County."

The tax collector's office formally presented the year's fundraising results to the Hillsborough County School Board in May, recognizing the program's continued growth and impact districtwide.

Locally, this year, the Tax Collector's Choice Award was given to Melina Fenton from Apollo Beach K-8 School.

The top winners from all 66 participating schools were individually recognized at the program's awards ceremony this spring. A full list of this year's winning students and schools is available in the 2025-26 Kids Tag Art Summary Report.

The Kids Tag Art Program would not be possible without the generosity of this year's sponsors: Suncoast Credit Union (title sponsor), Dealer Tag Agency, Derrick Brooks Charities, Lauren's Kids, Florida West Coast Credit Union, J.P. Morgan Chase, Keith N. Fakhoury, Tampa Electric Company and The Florida Aquarium. The program is also made possible through the tax collector's office's continued partnership with Hillsborough County Public Schools and the Hillsborough Education Foundation.

Community members can continue to support Hillsborough County's young artists by purchasing a Kids Tag Art specialty license plate, key chain or mug through the tax collector's online store at www.hillstaxfl.gov/shop/. Schools interested in joining next year's program can email communityrelations@hillstaxfl.gov or call 813-635-5264.





Tony Baroni Team GIVEAWAY!

TB | kw SUBURBAN TAMPA KELLERWILLIAMS. REALTY



WIN 4 LOWER LEVEL TICKETS



TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

VS



PITTSBURGH STEELERS

SUNDAY OCTOBER 18 | 1PM
RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM

SCAN TO ENTER!

OR VISIT TonyBaroni.com/Contest

REGISTER BY AUGUST 31ST
WINNER ANNOUNCED SEPT 1ST
ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Every Entry Helps!

The Tony Baroni Team will donate $3 per entry to Newsome High School Red Cross Club

Newsome High School Red Cross Club

the PROMISE The Tony Baroni Team

The Promise means that we will deliver the best service you could ever imagine receiving. That everyone on our team will be focused and care about your needs as if you were our only client. That we will anticipate challenges and get ahead of it so we can stop any surprises. The Tony Baroni Team is focused on making this a ★★★★★ experience that exceeds all your expectations.

TB | kw Tony Baroni Team KELLERWILLIAMS.

3,500+ Homes SOLD | 2,900+ 5 Star Reviews

(866) 695 - 9747

TonyBaroni.com | @tonybaroniteam



VALRICO / FISHHAWK
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SHOP LOCAL



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

Who's Walking Your Dog Today?

Dogs * Cats * Exotic Pets * Pets With Medical Needs

JOIN OUR PAW PERKS!

Reliable Midday Visits for Your Pet

Recurring Care That Keeps Tails Wagging and Routines Intact

Trusted experienced care when you can't be there.

WALK THE WALK
PROFESSIONAL PET CARE

813-465-3082
walkthewalkppc.com
@walkthewalkppc



COASTALVERIFY

VERIFY BEFORE YOU BUY™

TAMPA BAY PROPERTY TURNOVER INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM™

✓ Property Condition Verification ✓ Risk & Hazard Identification
✓ Photo Documented Reports

Commercial & Residential Properties

Call 656-222-1706 | www.coastalverify.com



EDGE POOLS

Call us: 813.230.2838
Call Today
Visit Our Website:
www.EdgePoolsFL.com

Lic#: CPC1459497 Family Owned & Operated

SOUTHERN CONSTRUCTION

When disaster strikes, Southern Construction is ready to help you rebuild.

Expert Emergency Care Available 24/7

*Specializing In: Water * Fire * Mold * Flood*



- Florida Certified General Contractor
- IICRC Certified
- Certifications in:
  Water Restoration
  Fire & Smoke
  Mold Remediation

813-848-4213
southernconstruction.net
office@southernconstruction.net
CGC1526952
Southern Construction Industries, Inc southern.construction

As Seen On HGTV



FREE POWER WASHING
+
FREE STUCCO REPAIRS
ON EVERY EXTERIOR REPAINT

NO SHORTCUTS NO SURPRISE COSTS
JUST QUALITY WORK YOU CAN TRUST

T&J Painting
Residential • Commercial
813.723.9124

PROFESSIONAL CREWS | FAMILY OWNED | LICENSED & INSURED | 180+ 5-STAR REVIEWS

CALL OR TEXT TO GET A FREE ESTIMATE TODAY! +813 723-9124



Osprey OBSERVER
YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Let me help market YOUR business.

KERRIE HOENING
Advertising Sales Manager
Valrico & Corporate Accounts

813-625-1527
Kerrie@OspreyObserver.com
www.OspreyObserver.com

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR 45TH TAMPA BAY ACTIVE LIFE GAMES

By Emily Harper



The registration process is underway for the Tampa Bay Active Life Games. Organized by Hillsborough County Parks & Recreation, this annual event is held to promote physical and mental fitness among adults ages 50 and older in the Tampa Bay area.

"Exercise is great for the body and mind and is particularly important as we age," said Todd Pratt, media relations strategist.

Over the span of two weeks, participants will compete in 17 activities through friendly competitions, including track and field and pickleball. In addition to the games' longstanding favorites, this year's event introduces two new activities, team bowling and 3-on-3 basketball.

"I am really excited to see how the new team events run. I love the idea of promoting teamwork and unity among all age groups for a common goal. I know these team events will also be a great way to give our participants a chance to make new friends," said Jackson Cabana, an assistant recreation program supervisor.

The competition's opening ceremony will take place on September 28 at Barksdale Senior Center. The games will conclude with the closing ceremony on Friday, October 9, at Northdale Recreation Center, celebrating the efforts and achievements of the competitors. Between these dates, the individual events will take place at several locations across the Tampa Bay area.

In addition to promoting a healthy lifestyle in the Tampa Bay area, this event also serves as a regional qualifier for the Florida Senior Games. This year, the Florida Senior Games will happen from Saturday, December 5, through Sunday, December 13, in Pasco County, uniting participants from across the state.

To participate in the games, each competitor is required to pay a $35 registration fee, which allows access to multiple events. Registration is open now and will remain open until Monday, September 7, for those interested in participating.

To register and learn more about the Tampa Bay Active Life Games, visit https://hcfl.gov/residents/seniors/recreation-and-meals/tampa-bay-active-life-games.

VOICE OF BLOOMINGDALE SPORTS RECOGNIZED WITH SERVICE AWARD

By Nick Nahas



David McCullum was awarded for his years of service to multiple sporting events, including soccer, football, flag football and basketball.

David McCullum has been volunteering for more than 12 years at Bloomingdale High School as a public address announcer. He was dubbed the "Voice of Bloomingdale Athletics" by Sara Bogue, former assistant principal of athletics at the school and now Hillsborough County director of athletics for middle and high schools.

Bogue nominated McCullum for the Dorothy W. Brunson Special Service Award, which he received at the Florida Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association's (FIAAA) 48th annual Conference Awards Banquet and Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. The event was held at the Embassy Suites by Hilton in Orlando on May 3.

"I nominated Dave for his dedication and selfless service to Bloomingdale High School," said Bogue. "For more than a decade, he has volunteered countless hours supporting our band and color guard, announcing football, soccer, basketball, flag football, track meets and countless other events. He is always the first to step in when help is needed, often solving problems behind the scenes to keep events running smoothly. Dave has become much more than a volunteer — he is the Voice of Bloomingdale and an irreplaceable part of the Bloomingdale community."

McCullum was recognized for his years of service at multiple sporting events, including soccer, football, flag football and basketball.

"I enjoy announcing the senior nights for soccer, football, basketball and girls' flag football, and the kids are excited for me to read off the scripts they write out acknowledging their achievements," said McCullum.

The PA announcer started volunteering in August 2014 with the girls' soccer team and began announcing boys' soccer at the same time, a role he continues to this day.

He has also announced varsity football since August 2019, girls' flag football since March 2015, junior varsity football since September 2015 and boys' and girls' basketball since November 2022.

McCullum also announced a baseball game as a substitute for the regular announcer in 2024 when asked by the head coach.

"I have no favorite sport to announce," said McCullum. "I do it for the student-athletes, to make a memorable game-day experience for all who play and attend athletic events at Bloomingdale Senior High School."



MEET THE 2026 TEAM OF *OSPREY OBSERVER* INTERNS

By Jamie Lu

Each summer, the Osprey Observer hosts an internship program for high school and college students interested in supporting the local community through journalism. Read on to learn more about this year's interns.















Ella Baroni

Ella Baroni is a high school senior planning to study communications and public relations. She applied to better understand reporting, journalism and what her future career may look like. Her goal was to write stories about people who do good and may go unnoticed.

"My favorite part has been learning about all these organizations through my assignments, taking initiative to better the community," Baroni said. "It's very empowering."

Baroni has played soccer her entire life and has traveled across the U.S. and to Barcelona, Spain, to compete.

Chloe Wagner

Chloe Wagner is a recent University of Central Florida graduate who majored in print and digital journalism with a minor in political science.

Wagner applied because she wanted to start her career with an outlet close to home. She grew up reading the Observer and was eager to join the team, build her portfolio and pursue jobs in the area.

"I've loved covering a variety of stories throughout the community," Wagner said. "I've always admired and championed the importance of community news. I think it's vital that community outlets such as the Observer exist because people often trust them more than larger, more commercialized outlets. It's always so heartwarming to see communities hold events and celebrate each other's successes!"

Wagner is a fourth-generation Tampeño and a huge fan of Tampa Bay sports, especially the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Abigail Dumas

Abigail Dumas is a junior at Newsome High School. She applied because she wants to pursue journalism and gain experience in the field. Her goal was to learn more about journalistic writing and the profession.

"My favorite part of the internship has been receiving the Osprey Observer newspapers and seeing my own articles in them," Dumas said.

She writes for both Newsome's yearbook and school paper.

Jamie Lu

Jamie Lu is a sophomore at the University of Missouri, double-majoring in journalism and constitutional democracy, with minors in creative writing, linguistics, history and political science.

Lu applied to support her hometown through reporting while studying abroad in the Philippines this summer. She is a proponent of local journalism and hopes to practice investigative journalism in the future.

Lu is also a competitive fencer for the University of Missouri.

Srishti Tripathi

Srishti Tripathi is a senior at Newsome High School who plans to major in business or finance on a prelaw track.

Her goals were to hone her feature writing and interviewing skills, learn how to capture local perspectives and gain a stronger understanding of community-driven publishing.

"My favorite part has been having the creative freedom to research and write local feature stories that highlight the people and events making a difference in our area. It's been incredible to take a story from an initial idea, interview community members and see the final piece come to life for readers," Tripathi said.

Tripathi performs color guard, manages social media for her school band and does sports and portrait photography.

Zofia Osterman

Zofia Osterman is a Newsome High School graduate and current sophomore at the University of Central Florida studying communications. She applied to experience working at a newspaper as a journalist.

"My favorite part of this internship has been meeting people from my community, interviewing them, and sharing their stories through my writing," Osterman said. "I have also enjoyed connecting with people from all different walks of life and learning about their unique experiences."

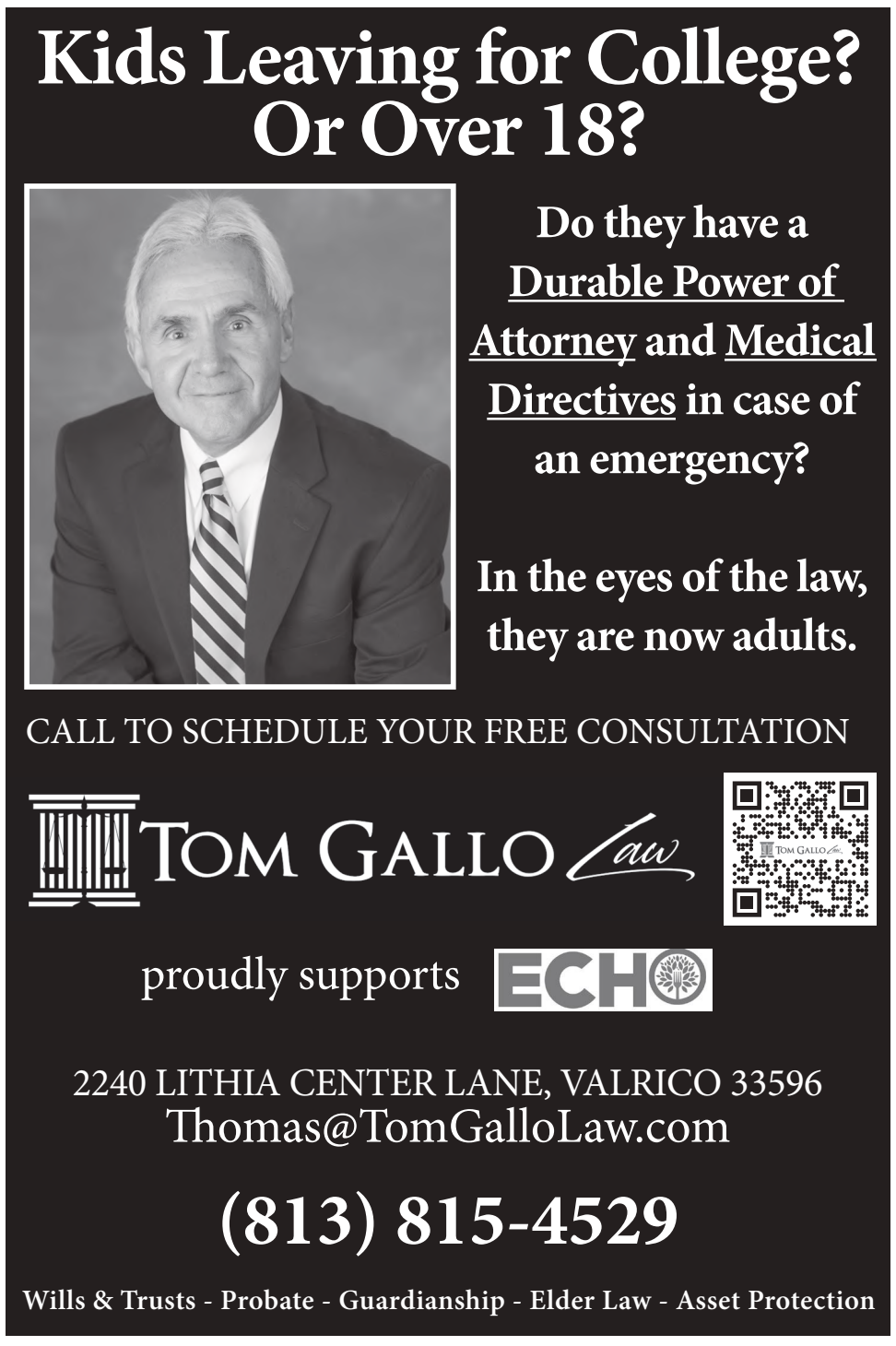
Osterman is a military child who has moved six times. She has also attended three elementary schools and two middle schools.

Brooke Wilson

A 2024 graduate of Durant High School, Brooke Wilson is spending the summer as an intern with Osprey Observer Communications. She is now a student in the Honors College at Florida Gulf Coast University, with an expected graduation date of May 2028.

Wilson is gaining hands-on experience in community journalism, marketing and communications while contributing to the newspaper's mission of highlighting positive local stories. At Durant, she was a member of the National Honor Society and earned several honors on the lacrosse field, including the Lacrosse Scholar-Athlete Award, Most Valuable Player Award and Cougar Award for Outstanding Spirit.





AWARD-WINNING STRANDHILL PUBLIC INTRODUCES NEW BRUNCH MENU

By Emily Harper

Strandhill Public is a locally owned restaurant that pays tribute to traditional Irish cuisine and the charm of an Irish pub. At this restaurant, you can expect great food, excellent cocktails and warm hospitality while being surrounded by Irish culture.



Strandhill Public owner Rory Martin .



Owner Rory Martin is originally from a small coastal village in northwest Ireland called Strandhill. During his childhood, he spent his time surfing and learning the ropes of running a pub from his parents. In Strandhill, Martin lived above the family pub, owned by his parents.

He said, "The pub was truly an extension of our home."

When first moving to the United States, Martin worked at some of the busiest bars in New York City, New York. Over time, he decided to relocate and open a modern-day Irish pub in Tampa. Today, Martin's restaurant, Strandhill Public, honors his Irish roots and his hometown Strandhill.

"I am very proud of what Strandhill Public has become. I won the best burger, which is the Irish whiskey burger. I use Creekstone Farm, grass-fed beef, Dubliner cheddar, caramelized onions, bacon and an Irish whiskey BBQ sauce. I use two different styles of Irish whiskey to make the sauce: Paddy's Triple Distilled and Connemara Peated Irish Whiskey," said Martin, speaking about winning Tampa Bay's No. 1 Burger award.

In June, Strandhill Public introduced its new brunch menu, offered on Saturdays and Sundays. This brunch menu features dishes such as the Traditional Irish Breakfast, Smash That Breakfast Burger and Pistachio Chocolate Torte, along with a variety of spritz cocktails.

In addition to the restaurant's outstanding food, Strandhill Public has the largest selection of Irish whiskey in the state of Florida. Also, on Wednesdays guests can enjoy half-price bottles of wine.

Strandhill Public has two locations, one in Brandon, located at 10288 Causeway Blvd. in Tampa, and the other in Tampa Heights, located at 309 W. Palm Ave. in Tampa. To learn more about the restaurant and view its extensive menu, visit its website, https://strandhillpublic.com/.

ENSURING A STRONG START TO THE 2026–27 SCHOOL YEAR

By Superintendent Van Ayres



A Letter From The SUPERINTENDENT of Hillsborough County Public Schools
Van Ayres

As we prepare to welcome students back to school on Monday, August 10, we encourage every family to remember one important message: attendance matters from the very first day.

The start of a new school year brings excitement, opportunity and a fresh beginning. It is also a critical time when students establish routines, build relationships with teachers and classmates and begin the learning that will carry them throughout the year.

The first days of school are about much more than introductions. Teachers set expectations, create positive classroom cultures, review important procedures and begin meaningful instruction. Students who are present from day one are better positioned to feel connected, confident and ready to succeed.

Regular attendance is one of the strongest predictors of academic success. Research consistently shows that students who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve at higher levels, graduate on time and be better prepared for college, careers, and life beyond the classroom.

Families play a vital role in helping students establish strong attendance habits. Simple steps, such as setting consistent bedtimes, preparing school materials the night before and planning for on-time arrival, can help students begin each day ready to learn. Building these habits early not only supports academic success today but also helps students develop the responsibility, consistency and routines that contribute to long-term success in school and beyond.

This year, we challenge every student and family to make attendance a priority. Whether your child is starting prekindergarten, transitioning to middle or high school or returning for another year, showing up every day sends a powerful message about the importance of education and the value of every learning opportunity.

Together, we can make the 2026-27 school year a successful one. When students are present, engaged and ready to learn, they are better equipped to reach their full potential.

We look forward to welcoming students back on August 10, ready to learn, connect and thrive.





GET THE DIRT:
GRASSES AS GIFT IDEAS FOR GARDENERS

BY LYNN BARBER, URBAN HORTICULTURE AGENT



As you well know, gardeners love receiving and gifting plants. There are several grasses you may want to consider. These include cordgrass, muhly grass, lovegrass, sea oats and wiregrass.

There are five native species of cordgrass (Spartina spp.) in Florida. Sand cordgrass is typical for landscapes. This plant should be installed in a large space where it can create a screen or hedge. It can be used at the back of a landscape bed with shorter plants in front. The flowering stalks are very attractive. Cordgrass can be difficult to maintain if used in a small area. Seed heads blow in the breeze and reseed.

Muhly grasses (Muhlenbergia spp.) are mostly used to accent home and commercial landscapes in addition to roadway median strips. Hairawn muhly grass (Muhlenbergia capillaris) is adaptable to nearly any landscape, is salt tolerant and flowers more when planted in a good amount of sunshine. This should be planted at the back of the landscape bed.

Lovegrass (Eragrostis spp.) consists of 11 species and is considered native to Florida. This genus includes annuals and perennials. Both produce significant numbers of seeds from spring through fall. This plant generally exists in open sunny areas. Prune after flowering is over, and save or gift the seeds to others.

Sea oats (Uniola paniculata). This is a salt-tolerant grass throughout our state. The plant stabilizes beach dunes using roots and runners and is federally protected. It cannot be disturbed or seeds collected without a permit. Sea oats can reach a height of 6 feet.

Wiregrasses (Aristida spp.) There are 18 different species of wiregrasses in Florida. Some are distinctive, but many are not. They are everywhere in Florida because it is adaptable to growing conditions and is generally available at native nurseries.

Contact labarber@ufl.edu.

CRAIG BECKINGER RAISES $180K TO BECOME VISIONARY OF THE YEAR

By Kelly Wise Valdes



Craig Beckinger, founder and CEO of An ABC Event Inc., has been named the 2026 Blood Cancer United All Star Visionary of the Year after leading a 10-week campaign that raised more than $180,000 for blood cancer research and patient support. For Beckinger, a blood cancer survivor, the achievement carries deep personal meaning.

"Raising more than $180,000 means far more to me than reaching a fundraising goal," he said. "As a blood cancer survivor, every dollar represents hope for someone hearing the words, 'You have cancer.'"

Beckinger dedicated the campaign to the memory of Jill Jofko, his manager during his 2023 Visionary campaign. "Because of our community's generosity, we have the opportunity to link a Blood Cancer United-funded research portfolio in her memory," he said. "Knowing her legacy will continue helping future patients is one of the greatest gifts this campaign could have given."

His path to becoming a Visionary began years earlier. Beckinger said it started at a South Tampa Chamber of Commerce luncheon where he first heard about the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's work and knew immediately that he wanted to be involved.

In 2023, with an incredible team, Beckinger raised more than $157,000. Being invited back as an All Star in 2026 gave him another opportunity to serve, and together with the community he raised more than $180,000. In total, Beckinger raised an amazing $337,000 across two campaigns.

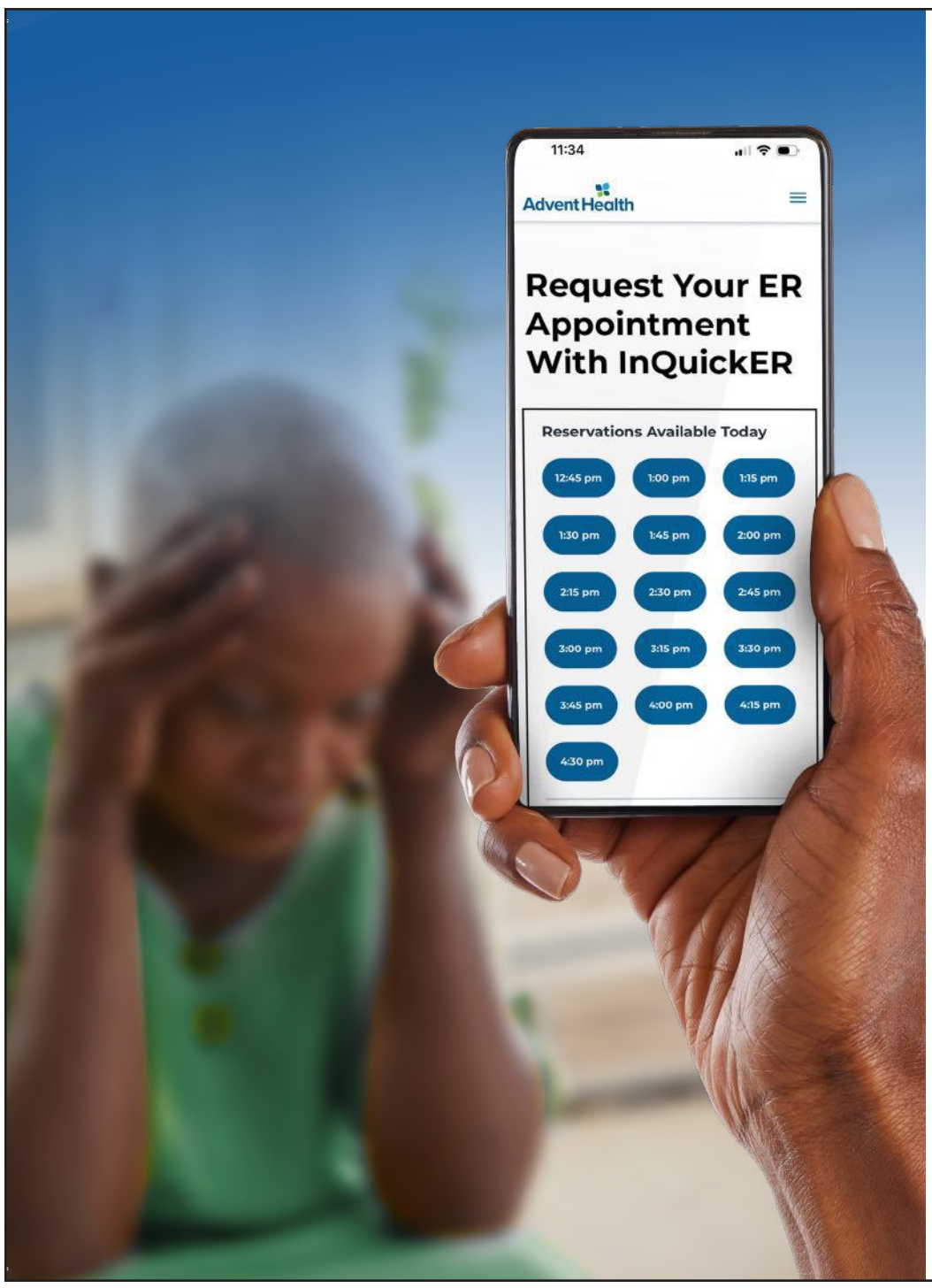
"If there's one thing I'm most proud of, it's not the amount we raised — it's the hope we created together," said Beckinger.

Beckinger's 2026 campaign featured a series of community events, from fashion shows and bingo fundraisers to raffles and popups. "Every event reached a different audience and brought new people into the mission," he said. The Grand Finale drew more than 300 attendees. "Looking around the room, I was overwhelmed with gratitude. Together, we didn't just raise money — we raised hope."

The campaign's intensity was one of its biggest challenges. "There simply weren't enough hours in the day," he said. Still, he learned that "people genuinely want to help when they're given the opportunity."

Beckinger credits innovation and partnerships for the campaign's success. "We focused on creating experiences that inspired participation," he said. "Innovation isn't just about finding new ways to raise money — it's about finding new ways to inspire people to care."

He said he measures success by impact, not titles. "You don't have to change the whole world — you just have to change someone's world," said Beckinger. "That's how I want to live my life — making a difference, one person at a time."



Get InQuickER to feel better faster.

When unexpected illness or injury strikes, InQuickER helps you take control. Request your ER treatment time online, wait from the comfort of home and get care that fits your schedule — day or night.

Request your ER arrival time.
GetInQuickER.com

In a life-threatening medical emergency, call 911, do not use InQuickER.

4425974694

AdventHealth Riverview

ECHO WELCOMES IRIS S. THURMAN AS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Staff Report



Iris S. Thurman

ECHO (Emergency Care Help Organization) is proud to announce Iris S. Thurman as its new CEO, marking an exciting new chapter for the organization while reaffirming its unwavering commitment to serving neighbors in crisis throughout Eastern Hillsborough County.

As ECHO continues navigating change and continuing support, the organization's mission remains unchanged. For nearly four decades, ECHO has provided emergency food, clothing and life-stabilizing resources while helping individuals and families Bridge the Gap Between Crisis and Stability. Under Thurman's leadership, ECHO will continue building on this strong foundation by expanding community partnerships, strengthening programs and increasing its impact for the thousands of neighbors who rely on its services each year.

"ECHO's mission has always been about people," said Thurman. "I am honored to lead an organization that has served our community for nearly 40 years. Together with our dedicated staff, volunteers, donors and community partners, we will continue empowering neighbors in crisis by providing hope, resources and pathways to long-term stability."

An accomplished nonprofit executive, author, certified professional life coach, motivational speaker and founder, Thurman is dedicated to transforming lives through strategic leadership, emotional wellness and community impact.

A native of Miami, Thurman relocated to Tampa at the age of 10 with her mother and three siblings. As a divorced mother of four adult sons, she earned both a Bachelor of Arts in business management and a Master of Business Administration in health care management from the University of Phoenix, demonstrating the resilience and determination that continue to define her leadership.

As chief executive officer of ECHO, Thurman leads the organization's mission of empowering neighbors in crisis by providing emergency assistance and pathways to long-term stability for families throughout Hillsborough County. Her leadership focuses on strategic growth, community partnerships, organizational excellence and expanding ECHO's impact across the region.

In addition to her role at ECHO, Thurman is the founder of Urlinked Enterprises, LLC, doing business as IS Transformation Coaching, and Urlinked Charities Inc., home of the I AM ME Movement. Through these organizations, she equips individuals with the tools, resources and mindset needed to heal, grow and thrive. Her work spans emotional wellness, leadership development, youth empowerment, community engagement and transformational coaching.

While ECHO enters a new season of leadership, its promise to the community remains steadfast. Yesterday, today and tomorrow, ECHO will continue to provide compassionate support, essential resources and opportunities that help families move from crisis toward long-term stability.

For more information, visit the website at www.echofl.org.

TAMPA-FOUNDED MOVING COMPANY KEEPS TRAINING LOCAL

By Jenna Soules



2 College Brothers Moving and Storage CEO Wade Swilkle.

As thousands of new residents continue to relocate to the Tampa Bay region each year, demand for professional moving services is growing alongside the area's population. With nearly 124,000 additional residents projected to move to the region by 2026, according to the Tampa Bay Economic Development Council, 2 College Brothers Moving and Storage is investing in a new training facility and expanded office space at its Clearwater headquarters to help meet the area's growing workforce and moving needs.

Slated for completion in late July, with a grand opening in the fall, the new facility will feature a fully furnished, one-bedroom model home inside the company's office. Rather than learning solely in customers' homes, new movers will be able to practice real-world moving techniques in a controlled environment before handling a family's belongings.

"Our philosophy is simple," said 2 College Brothers Moving and Storage CEO Wade Swikle. "The first time a new employee experiences a home move should never be the first time they handle someone's heirloom furniture or baby grand piano. Customers deserve a team that has already developed those skills before they arrive."

Swikle went on to say the concept addresses one of the moving industry's biggest areas of growth, which is that right now new employees at moving companies nationwide gain their first hands-on experience while moving customers' most valuable possessions. However, now, inside the new interactive training apartment, employees will learn how to properly protect furniture, navigate tight spaces, safeguard floors and walls and work together as a professional moving team before entering a customer's home. The realistic setting allows trainers to coach employees through common moving scenarios without the pressure or risk of working inside a customer's residence.

In addition to the hands-on training facility, Swikle co-founded Titan Up Training, an online education platform that includes '2 College Brothers University.' It's designed to help moving companies develop more skilled, consistent teams while enhancing their branding and procedures. In addition, it teaches other companies nationwide professional moving techniques to avoid injuries or damaging customer items, as well as courses on employee conduct, professionalism, moving terms, safety and procedures. Structured training helps ensure movers arrive with experience, confidence and a consistent approach to customer service.

"We're growing because Tampa Bay is growing," said Swikle. "As more families choose to make this area home, it's our responsibility to make sure we have well-trained professionals ready to serve them."

To learn more about the program, go to https://2collegebrothers.com/.

VALRICO / FISHHAWK
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Est. 2012

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST CHAMBER MEMBERS!

Abundant Air HVAC Services
Women In Trades & Skills (WITS)
Rotary's Camp Florida
Musick Roofing

JOIN US!
- Weekly Networking
- Business Growth
- Open Seating
- Community Involvement
- Presentation & Member Level Opportunities

General Assembly Meeting
2nd Tuesday of each month.
NEXT MEETING:
Tuesday, September 8
at 9:00 a.m.
Voodoo Brewing Co.
3432 FL-60, Valrico

NEW MEETING LOCATIONS!

midday POWER HOUR+
Midday Power Hour *Plus*
Every Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.
Beef 'O' Brady's Bloomingdale
889 East Bloomingdale Avenue, Brandon

Visit www.ValricoFishHawk.org
813-324-7902

COGGINS PLUMBING
CFC037149
813-643-7173
Licensed • Bonded • Insured
(813) 643-7173

- Plumbing Repairs
- Re-pipes
- Drain stoppages
- Home Additions
- Remodels
- Fixtures & Accessories
- Backflow Device Testing
- Water Softener Installation
- Water Heater Installation
- New Construction (Residential)
- New Construction (Commercial)

Find out more at our website:
WWW.COGGINSPLUMBING.COM
Proudly serving the Tampa Bay area for over 30 years.

15% OFF
YOUR NEXT SERVICE CALL
Coupon Must Be Presented Prior to Service.
Expires 9/15/26

$75 OFF
NEW WATER HEATER PURCHASE & INSTALLATION
Coupon Must Be Presented Prior to Service.
Expires 9/15/26

$350 OFF
RESIDENTIAL REPIPES
Coupon Must Be Presented Prior to Service.
Expires 9/15/26

VALRICO HEALTHY KIDS RUNNING SERIES IS AROUND THE CORNER

By Emily Harper



Healthy Kids Running Series was founded in 2009 and designed to motivate kids to be active while providing a fun environment. Through physical activity and creating a sense of community, this event helps foster healthier, empowered youth and promotes community among local families.

"This event is important to our community because it encourages children to develop healthy, active lifestyles while building confidence in a fun and supportive environment. Our program inspires kids to 'get up and go' by showing them that they are capable of achieving their goals, even if they are hesitant to run at first," said Meg Moore, community coordinator.

The Valrico program will be held at the Brandon Recreation Center, located off Sadie St. The races are scheduled for five consecutive Sundays on October 4, 11, 18, 25 and November 1. However, families can choose to either register their children for the full series or for a single day. When registering for the full series, each child will receive a T-shirt, a race bib for each week and a finisher medal.

At the races, kids ages 2-14 will run in age-appropriate distances. In addition, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Hillsborough County Fire Rescue and HCA Florida Brandon Hospital in past years have brought their vehicles for kids to explore and discover new interests.

"The best part of this event is seeing the kids cross the finish line with big smiles on their faces and realizing what they just accomplished. I love seeing all of the kids feel that huge sense of pride," said Moore.

Healthy Kids Running Series is a nonprofit organization, meaning sponsorships are important for covering the overall expenses of the event. The funds help cover costs of facility rentals, race supplies and other resources needed to provide a fun and safe experience for the young runners. The organization is always looking for businesses within the community that would like to support the local youth. In appreciation of the generosity of these businesses, the event offers a variety of promotional opportunities based on the type of sponsorship, allowing companies to be recognized throughout the series.

For more information on registration and sponsorships, visit its website, https://healthykidsrunningseries.org/race-locations/valrico-fl/.

MONDAY NIGHT MAGIC BRINGS ILLUSION AND COMEDY TO BRANDON

Staff Report

Get ready to experience a night of magic, comedy and illusion with the seemingly impossible tricks of Vic Vega.

On select Monday nights, Vega will bring Monday Night Magic to Brandon Performing Arts Center, offering audiences an entertainment experience filled with music, misdirection, audience participation and jaw-dropping illusions.

The family-friendly performances are designed to entertain audiences of all ages while showcasing the excitement and mystery of live magic in an intimate theater setting.





Experience the impossible happening right in front of you with Vic Vega and his guest magicians.

Vega said, "Our goal is simple: create the best Monday night in Brandon. Every month, audiences will experience a different headline magician, incredible illusions, comedy and surprises in an intimate theater where everyone feels like part of the show. There's something special about live magic — you can watch on television, but nothing compares to sitting just a few feet away and witnessing the impossible happen right in front of you. That's the experience we're creating with Monday Night Magic at Brandon Performing Arts."

Upcoming performances are scheduled for September 7, October 5 and November 2. The lineup will feature special guest performers, along with Vega's magic, comedy and audience interaction.

Sales are limited, and advance ticket purchase is strongly recommended for those who want to experience the show.

Camille Hashem, co-founder of Brandon Performing Arts, said, "We're looking forward to making Monday Night Magic a tradition in Brandon and continuing to bring world-class performers to our stage every first Monday of the month."

The Brandon Performing Arts Center, home of the MacBeth & Cheese Playhouse, is located at 225 E. Brandon Blvd. in Brandon. The intimate 99-seat theater offers audiences the opportunity to experience theater, comedy, magic and specialty performances in a close-up setting.

For tickets and additional information, visit macbethandcheese.com.



Family Owned & Operated
The Rutledge Family
Proudly Serving Our Community for 18 Years

- Custom Material Selection
- Outdoor Kitchen Design & Fire Pits
- Artificial Turf
- Landscape & Patio Lighting

813-655-3700
16715 FishHawk Blvd
Across from Newsome High School
Lithia/FishHawk
store191@pinchapenny.com



ROTARY CLUB OF BRANDON WELCOMES NEW PRESIDENT RYAN REED

By Libby Hopkins

This past June, the 2025-26 president of the Rotary Club of Brandon, Liz Brewer, installed the club's new incoming 2026-27 president, Ryan Reed, during a special gathering surrounded by the dedicated members who make up the heart of the Rotary Club of Brandon. The installation marked an important moment of transition for the club, honoring Brewer's year of service while welcoming Reed into a leadership role that will help guide the organization's continued commitment to service, fellowship and community impact.



Newly installed Rotary Club of Brandon president Ryan Reed stands with Hillsborough County Tax Collector Nancy Millan.

"My year as president, the second woman in the 64-year history of the club, I might add, was amazing," Liz Brewer said. "I was so proud of how our members came together as a solid team and created fun opportunities for our members to fellowship, volunteered time and talents to raise over $160,000; and also, I worked closely with our treasurer and secretary to create systems to streamline the work of those we are leading as we are all 100 percent volunteers."

When looking for someone to lead the club in the future, the club begins its search for its next president two years out.

"Ryan became our incoming president to learn under the current president, as well as attended necessary trainings to prepare for this incredible responsibility and step into their role more knowledgeable about Rotary systems and processes, so everything is consistent from one club to another," Brewer said. "Ryan was a great choice, as he jumped in from the day he joined our club back in May of 2023 and became engaged in the work of the organization."

Reed is a community leader and philanthropist in his own right, and the club knew that he would be a great leader for them because he understands the needs of the community.

"My hope for this year ahead is simple," Reed said. "I want to keep doing the work that matters, to welcome new faces who'll carry this club forward long after I'm done, and to enjoy each other's company while we're at it. The friendships in the club are the quiet engine behind everything we accomplish. I am honored, excited and ready to get to work alongside our club members."

"Ryan will commit the time needed to be successful in this area, and, as immediate past president, it is my responsibility to assist Ryan in the year ahead," Brewer said.

To learn more about the Rotary Club of Brandon, visit its website online at www.brandonrotary.org/index.php.

VETERANS FIND WEEKLY SUPPORT AND CAMARADERIE AT BRANDON BOB EVANS' BOB'S VETS

By Brad Stager



The crowd gathers at 7 a.m., just as the sun begins to heat the Brandon landscape surrounding the Bob Evans restaurant at 10119 Horace Ave. in Tampa, just west of the Interstate 75 and State Road 60 interchange.

What distinguishes this group of early-rising diners is their shared connection to the U.S. military. Active-duty members, veterans, retirees, family members and community supporters gather to share stories and build connections in a welcoming environment.

There is no formal membership or dues, and the nonpartisan group avoids political ideology in favor of strengthening relationships. The breakfasts also provide information from guest speakers representing relevant agencies and organizations, elected officials and political candidates seeking to connect with the area's large veteran community.

Everyone with a military connection is welcome, according to KeishaMarie Douglas, one of the Brandon Bob's Vets facilitators.

"Whether someone served for four years or thirty, whether they're newly transitioned or have been out for decades, everyone is welcome. Our goal is simple. No one should have to navigate civilian life alone," she wrote in an email. She added, "People can simply show up, enjoy breakfast, meet great people and become part of a community that truly cares about one another."

More information about Brandon Bob's Vets meetups is available on Facebook at Bobsvetsbrandonfl.

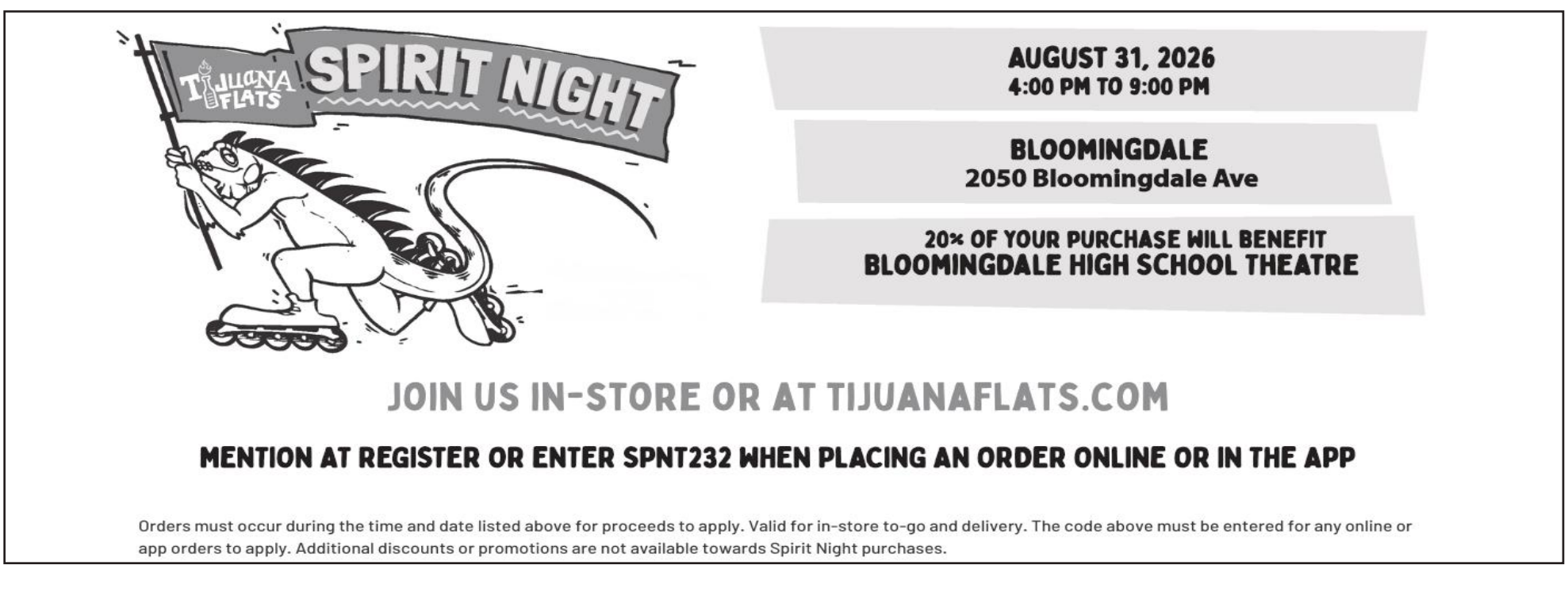
Douglas, an Air Force veteran, is also establishing a nonprofit organization focused on women veterans.

"Veteran WingWomen Organization was created to address the unique experiences and challenges many women veterans face. Together, I hope both organizations continue strengthening the veteran community by ensuring no veteran feels isolated or forgotten."

Hosting Bob's Vets groups is one way Bob Evans restaurants support veterans. The company also offers complimentary menu items to veterans on Veterans Day and partners with organizations such as the USO. The restaurant chain's namesake founder served in the Army during World War II.







KIDS 'R' KIDS FISHHAWK EARNS TWO TOP NATIONAL HONORS FOR EXCELLENCE

By Ella Baroni



Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academy of Circa FishHawk is celebrating a remarkable achievement after receiving two of the organization's highest honors during the Kids 'R' Kids annual conference.

The academy earned both the June Vinson Award and the Platinum Award, recognizing outstanding leadership, educational quality and operational excellence. Receiving both honors in the same year is a rare accomplishment and reflects the dedication of the academy's leadership and staff to serving local families.

The June Vinson Award recognizes owners who demonstrate exceptional leadership while leading with a servant's heart. The award honors June Vinson, the mother of Kids 'R' Kids founder Pat Vinson, who helped establish the company when she and her son opened an in-home day care in 1961.

According to the organization, "June had this wonderful, compassionate spirit, and she is truly the pioneering force behind everything we have built here. June's profound impact on our company's foundations is immeasurable, as she selflessly poured her heart into nurturing both the staff and children under her care."

The award recognizes leaders who embody Vinson's values of humility, empathy and dedication through their daily commitment to supporting both their team and the community.

The Platinum Award is the highest internal quality recognition a Kids 'R' Kids academy can receive. Presented by the corporate franchise team, it is awarded only to schools that exceed rigorous standards in safety, curriculum, facility management and overall operational excellence.

"Keith Balot and myself are truly honored to acknowledge receipt of the June Vinson Award and the Platinum Award for outstanding business practices," said co-owner Ben Fernandes. "We sincerely appreciate the honor and remain committed to maintaining high standards of quality, safety, professionalism and excellence in the childcare industry. This achievement reflects the hard work, dedication and commitment of managers Telena Overstreet and Samantha Pratt, along with our entire staff, whose daily efforts make a positive difference in the lives of the children and families we serve."

Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academy of Circa FishHawk serves children from 6 weeks to 12 years old. The academy has built a reputation for providing a safe, engaging learning environment where children develop academically, socially and emotionally while building a strong foundation for lifelong success.

Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academy of Circa FishHawk is located at 5815 Kids Crossing Dr. in Lithia. For more information, call 813-654-7000 or visit the academy website at www.kidsrkids.com/circa-fishhawk.

HISTORY AND SERVICE HONORED AT VIETNAM VETERANS ORGANIZATION

By Brad Stager



A Bell AH-1F Cobra helicopter on static display serves as gate guardian at the Veterans Memorial Park and Museum in Tampa, Florida.

The call to service they once heard in the hot, muggy landscape of Southeast Asia now echoes through Hillsborough County's densely humid air and has been answered by members of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 787 at its Veterans Memorial Park command and control center.

In the more than half-century since the official end of the Vietnam War in 1975, many who served in that conflict have organized into a national organization that advocates for all of those who defend the nation and to serve the communities in which they live.

VVA Chapter 787 is one of 29 chapters in Florida and has been active in local community engagement since its founding in 1988. While 'Vietnam' in the group's name indicates an era of military service to distinguish it from other veteran organizations, VVA members actively support the general veteran community in Hillsborough County as well as aspiring warriors in local high schools by mentoring local JROTC cadets and relating firsthand their historical experiences to students.

Tom Leavitt, the chapter's president, wrote in an email, "Participation in the JROTC award programs in all 29 schools within the county is a special time each year of supporting our wonderful cadets."

Leavitt, who was an Army medic in Vietnam, expressed respect for the young people he and his comrades have encountered in their outreach efforts.

"We have found them to be what our young people are really all about and we see their leadership skills as our future," he said.

Business meetings are held every fourth Thursday of each month at Veterans Memorial Park and the organization's calendar is full of activities that support the local veteran community. Chapter 787 is a presence at many local patriotic events, such as Patriot's Day observances and Veterans Day parades at James A. Haley VA Hospital, where it also hosts a pizza dinner every other month for families staying at the adjacent Fisher House. Conducting an annual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event is a significant occasion for the chapter that corrects the abandonment Vietnam veterans once endured when they came home from the war decades ago. It is held on or around National Vietnam War Veterans Day which is observed each March 29.

One invaluable resource for veterans and their families is Chapter 787's website at https://vva787.org/, where extensive information about programs and services can be found as well as details about the VVA.



FAMILY FUN, BBQ AND HISTORY BENEFIT FOR BRANDON LANDMARK

Staff Report



The community is invited to celebrate Brandon's rich history while helping preserve one of its most treasured landmarks during the 2nd Annual Brandon's Legacy Labor Day Family Picnic, taking place on Monday, September 7, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Winthrop Barn Theatre.

Hosted by the Timberly Trust, the fundraiser supports the ongoing preservation of the historic Moseley Homestead, a 14-acre property located along State Road 60 in Brandon. Built in 1886 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the homestead is one of the area's oldest surviving historic sites and offers a glimpse into Brandon's early history.

The preservation effort honors the vision of longtime steward Julia Winifred Moseley, who passed away in 2020 at the age of 101. Following her wishes, the Timberly Trust and its volunteer trustees continue working to protect, manage and preserve the property for future generations.

The Labor Day celebration will feature something for the entire family, including a BubbaQue's barbecue lunch, strawberry shortcakes provided by the Florida Strawberry Growers Association, live music, children's crafts and games, raffles, a silent auction and a special presentation about the history and significance of the Moseley Homestead.

Admission is $20 in advance ($25 at the door) for adults, $10 for youth ages 6-16 and free for children age 5 and younger.

The event's presenting sponsors are Odiorne Insurance Agency and Auto-Owners Insurance.

In addition to welcoming attendees, the Timberly Trust is seeking event sponsors and donations for its silent auction and raffle. Sponsorship opportunities offer businesses community recognition, brand visibility and an opportunity to support the preservation of one of Brandon's most significant historic landmarks. All donations are tax-deductible and directly benefit the continued restoration and maintenance of the Moseley Homestead.

"The Labor Day picnic is a wonderful opportunity for families to enjoy great food, entertainment and community fellowship while helping preserve an irreplaceable piece of Brandon's history," organizers said. "Every ticket purchased, sponsorship secured and auction donation helps ensure the Moseley Homestead will continue to educate and inspire future generations."

For those looking for a meaningful way to celebrate Labor Day, the Brandon's Legacy Labor Day Family Picnic offers an opportunity to enjoy a day of family fun while supporting the preservation of a local treasure that has stood for nearly 140 years. For tickets, email timberlytrust@gmail.com or call 813-230-4680.

LEADERSHIP BRANDON COMPLETES PROJECT BENEFITING A KID'S PLACE

Staff Report



The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the completion of the Leadership Brandon Riverview Class of 2026 Legacy Project benefiting A Kid's Place, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a safe, stable and nurturing home for children in foster care.

Each year, participants in the Leadership Brandon Riverview program select a community Legacy Project designed to make a lasting impact on a local nonprofit organization. As part of the program, class members spend time visiting and learning about several nonprofits throughout the community, hearing directly from organization leaders about the populations they serve, the challenges they face and the needs they hope to address.

After hearing the heartfelt mission and needs presented by A Kid's Place, the Leadership Class selected the organization as the recipient of this year's project. A Kid's Place provides a unique, homelike foster care environment where sibling groups can remain together while receiving the care, support and stability they need during difficult times in their lives.

One of the needs identified by the organization was the replacement of aging benches in the children's outdoor play area. The Leadership Brandon Riverview Class of 2026 immediately embraced the opportunity to help create a more welcoming and functional outdoor space for the children and families served by A Kid's Place.

To fund the project, the Leadership Class partnered with the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce to host the Leadership Brandon Riverview Cornhole Tournament. The tournament was a tremendous success thanks to the incredible support of sponsors, vendors, volunteers, participants and donors throughout the community. Event sponsors included Tampa Electric, Raulerson Castillo & Company – CPAs and Consultants, Sellers and Associates, Tampa Bay Harley-Davidson, SouthState Bank, Hungry Howie's, Suncoast Credit Union and RSA Consulting.

Additional excitement was provided by event vendors including LeAnne's Old Fashioned Cookies, Funnel & Funk, Champion Wellness Centers, Photo Booth Rental and More and Socially Funded.

"The Legacy Project is one of the most meaningful parts of the Leadership Brandon Riverview program because it allows participants to make a direct and lasting impact in our community," said Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce President Amber Aaron. "The Class of 2026 demonstrated tremendous heart, teamwork and dedication throughout this entire process, and we are incredibly proud of what they accomplished for A Kid's Place."

To learn more about A Kid's Place, visit https://akidsplacetb.org/.

For more information about Leadership Brandon Riverview and the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce, visit www.centralhillsboroughchamber.com.







PUTT PUTT WITH PREHISTORIC GIANTS AT MOSI'S NEW COURSE

Staff Report



Something prehistoric is happening at MOSI, Tampa's Museum of Science & Innovation, and it's only the beginning.

Dinosaurs now roam at MOSI with the debut of the newly transformed SciLinx Cretaceous Course, bringing a prehistoric twist to the museum's outdoor mini golf experience. (Science facts: 'Cretaceous' rhymes with 'audacious.' It's the period of Earth's past right after the famous 'Jurassic.')

Featuring five massive dinosaurs, the updated course invites you to putt your way through a landscape millions of years in the making. From towering creatures to new photo-worthy moments, the Cretaceous Course combines discovery, adventure and a little friendly competition for an unforgettable experience.

Dino Transformation Underway

The debut of the Cretaceous Course marks the first step in a larger dinosaur transformation taking place across the museum as MOSI prepares for the arrival of SUE: The T. rex Experience in January 2027.

Centered around an exact replica of SUE, the largest, most complete and best-preserved Tyrannosaurus rex ever discovered, this internationally recognized exhibition will bring the wonder of one of the world's most famous dinosaurs to Tampa Bay.

Engage all your senses as you step into the Cretaceous Period through touchable replicas, the sounds and sensations of a prehistoric world and the scents of the ancient environments where these creatures once roamed.

"We're just getting started with our prehistoric takeover," said MOSI CEO John Graydon Smith. "There's something timeless about dinosaurs. They capture our imagination and remind us how much there is still to discover. This is the first step in bringing more dinosaur experiences to MOSI as we prepare to share one of the most iconic dinosaur exhibitions ever with our community."

These activations add to MOSI's growing collection of prehistoric experiences already available throughout the museum.

• Uncover fossils and explore the science of paleontology in Dinovations Lab.

• Dig for dinosaur in Dinovations Dig.

• Come face-to-face with one of the world's most famous predators in the ULTIMATE T. REX VR Experience.

Dinovations activations are included with admission, while the Cretaceous Course and ULTIMATE T. REX VR Experience are available as add-on experiences.

For more information and to plan your visit, visit https://mosi.org/.

ROTARY CLUB OF BRANDON GIVES $25,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

By Libby Hopkins



Established in 1961, the Rotary Club of Brandon is part of a worldwide organization of business and community leaders who are dedicated to service, fellowship and making a positive difference close to home. For more than six decades, the club has brought together local professionals with a shared commitment to supporting Brandon and the surrounding area through charitable projects, community partnerships and programs that invest in the next generation.

The Rotary Club of Brandon was proud to award $25,000 in scholarships to 11 high school students from the Brandon community on June 2, including recipients of the Jacob E. Campoamor Memorial Scholarship and Sharon Sellers Memorial Scholarship.

"The Rotary Club of Brandon has presented scholarships to deserving high school seniors for as long as I can remember through the funds our club raises each year during our annual golf tournament and Wild Game Dinner," said Liz Brewer, club member and recent club president. "The students who were awarded the scholarships were from Bloomingdale, Durant, Armwood, Newsome, Strawberry Crest, Riverview and Christo Rey Tampa high schools."

The Brandon Rotary Charity Club Fund Board is made up of active Rotarians and the club's president-elect. Each year, the board carefully reviews the scholarship applications submitted by local students and determines award amounts, which can range from $1,000-$2,500 for individual recipients. The decisions are based on merit and take into consideration each student's grade-point average, involvement in community service, leadership, school activities and overall commitment to excellence in their studies. Through this process, the club looks beyond academics alone and recognizes students who have demonstrated character, perseverance and a desire to make a positive impact in their schools and communities.

The universities that the scholarship recipients will be attending in the fall include the University of South Florida, the University of Florida, Princeton University, Auburn University, Alabama State University and Florida State University. These schools represent a wide range of academic opportunities, from major public universities in Florida to respected institutions outside the state, giving the students the chance to pursue their chosen fields of study while continuing to grow as leaders.

For the Rotary Club of Brandon, helping students take this next step is an investment not only in their education but also in the future of the community they represent.

"Our hope for these students is that these scholarships will help them as they begin their college journey to offset initial expenses they will incur and start them off on the right foot," Brewer said.

To learn more about the Rotary Club of Brandon, you can visit its website at https://brandonrotary.org/index.php.



CARDINAL ROOFING
813-689-ROOF
License# CCC1325939

CARDINAL BUILDING AND RESTORATION
CGC1537220 / IICRC #70229671

Roof Repairs, Replacement & Maintenance
Shingle, Flat, Tile & Metal
Blown-In Insulation • Solar Attic Fans

Fire, Smoke, Water & Mold Remediation
24/7 Emergency Water Extraction
Structural Drying, Tarp & Board-Up

(813) 689-ROOF



Liz Brewer
REALTOR
PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Over 39 years of residential sales and lending experience in the Greater Brandon community. Let my experience work for you!

813.299.6745
Liz@LizBrewer.net
LizBrewerConnections.com

COLDWELL BANKER

Proud Supporter of Angel FOUNDATION FL

PARADE OF LIGHTS PARTICIPANTS WILL BENEFIT TWO LOCAL NONPROFITS

Staff Report



The Brandon Parade of Lights is set to return on Saturday, December 12, inviting families, businesses, schools, nonprofits, churches and community organizations to come together for an evening of holiday tradition with a purpose. Stepping off at 5:30 p.m., the illuminated parade will travel approximately 1.3 miles, beginning at Lakewood Drive and Oakfield Drive and continuing along Oakfield Drive before concluding at Vonderburg Drive. The parade typically lasts about two hours and attracts thousands of spectators from all over the Tampa Bay area.

This year also marks a special milestone as Reed & Reed, a Brandon-based law firm, returns as the title sponsor for the third consecutive year, continuing its commitment to helping make the Brandon Parade of Lights one of the area's premier holiday events.

While the parade is known for its festive floats, marching bands, performers and holiday spirit, it is also recognized for something that sets it apart from many other holiday parades throughout the year, its commitment to giving back. Each year, the Brandon Parade of Lights asks its local chambers, the Brandon Riverview and Valrico FishHawk chambers of commerce, to each select one nonprofit who will then benefit from parade proceeds. The 2026 Community Impact Partners are MacDonald Training Center (https://macdonaldcenter.org/) and Easterseals Florida (https://florida.easterseals.com/), two organizations dedicated to improving lives through education, employment, independence and supportive services.

"From the very beginning, our vision has been to create more than a holiday parade," said the Brandon Parade of Lights Committee. "We wanted to build a community tradition that celebrates the season while also shining a light on organizations making a meaningful difference in people's lives. Every sponsor, participant, volunteer and spectator becomes part of that mission. We are excited to be able to support our local nonprofits as much as possible."

The committee is currently seeking additional parade participants to help make this year's event the biggest yet. Businesses, schools, civic organizations, nonprofits, churches, youth groups, clubs, performance teams and marching bands are encouraged to participate in this year's parade.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available for businesses looking to increase their community visibility while supporting an event that benefits local nonprofits. The deadline for both parade registrations and sponsorships is Saturday, October 31. With a limited number of parade entries available, early registration is encouraged.

For parade registration, sponsorship opportunities, merchandise, and event information, visit https://brandonparadeoflights.com/ and be sure to follow the Brandon Parade of Lights on Facebook and Instagram.

RETIRED ARMY PILOT HELPS FAMILIES TAKE FLIGHT INTO HOMEOWNERSHIP

By Zofia Osterman



After nearly three decades of service in the U.S. Army, retired Col. Bradley Osterman has traded flying helicopters for helping families achieve the dream of homeownership. As a loan officer with Cornerstone First Mortgage, Osterman brings the same dedication, precision and commitment that defined his military career to every client he serves.

During his 28-year Army career, Osterman flew helicopters with the elite 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, better known as the Night Stalkers. Reflecting on his years of service, he credits the military with shaping both his character and his approach to business.

"My military service taught me discipline, commitment and attention to detail," Osterman said. "In aviation, numbers matter, and the same is true in mortgage lending. It also taught me to look beyond the easy solution, solve difficult problems and keep working until the mission is accomplished."

His transition into the mortgage industry came thanks to another military veteran who recognized his strengths and encouraged him to pursue a new mission: helping families buy homes. After gaining valuable experience in the industry, Osterman joined Cornerstone First Mortgage because of its competitive lending products and flexibility to serve a wide range of borrowers.

For military families, Osterman offers more than mortgage expertise — he offers firsthand experience. Having completed more than 18 permanent changes of station during his Army career, he understands the unique challenges military families face when relocating, retiring or purchasing a home.

"My Family and I have lived that life," he said. "We know what military families are going through because we've been there ourselves."

Cornerstone FIRST MORTGAGE

A FishHawk resident for more than 15 years, Osterman is passionate about serving the community he proudly calls home. Whether assisting first-time homebuyers, military families, investors or those purchasing vacation homes, he provides personalized guidance and lending solutions tailored to each client's needs. Through Cornerstone First Mortgage, he is also licensed to lend in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., making him a valuable resource for military members relocating across the country.

Working primarily from his home office, Osterman meets clients wherever it is most convenient and offers a secure online mortgage portal for a smooth lending experience. Known on social media as 'The Mortgage Colonel,' he is committed to educating and connecting with the community both online and in person.

Contact Osterman at 813-582-7884, email bosterman@cfmtg.com or visit https://cfmtg.com/bosterman/.

One less thing on your back-to-school list

Order Chick-fil-A® Catering today!

Chick-fil-A® Brandon South
2010 Bloomingdale Ave
813-571-0569



Chick-fil-A® Lake Brandon Village
11325 Causeway Blvd
813-655-1237

Chick-fil-A BRANDON SOUTH LAKE BRANDON VILLAGE

© 2026 CFA Properties, Inc. All trademarks shown are the property of CFA Properties, Inc.

PAGE TO STAGE PROJECT GIVES NEW PLAYWRIGHTS A CHANCE TO SHINE

Staff Report

Aspiring playwrights with a story to tell have an opportunity to see their work come to life through Brandon Performing Arts' year-round Page to Stage Project, a program dedicated to discovering, developing and producing original theatrical works.

The volunteer-based community theater company, also known as MacBeth & Cheese, is accepting submissions from playwrights of all experience levels, from first-time writers and students to seasoned professionals. Organizers are encouraging anyone with an original script to apply for the chance to have their work developed and potentially produced as part of the company's mainstage season.

The Page to Stage Project is designed to help new plays evolve from the written page to a live audience. Each season, Brandon Performing Arts selects up to two original works for full-scale productions, giving audiences the opportunity to experience brand-new theater before it is staged anywhere else.

Playwrights selected for the program receive professional script feedback and development, table reads, staged readings, audience talkback sessions and collaboration with directors and theater professionals. Participants also gain valuable networking opportunities within the theater community while refining their work.

Although there is no cash prize, selected playwrights may have their scripts chosen for a fully produced Brandon Performing Arts/MacBeth & Cheese mainstage production valued at more than $20,000.

The company accepts original, unproduced full-length and one-act plays in virtually every genre, including drama, comedy, dramedy, musicals, historical works and family or youth theater. Adaptations are also welcome, provided they are original enough to be considered new works.

There are no age or experience requirements for submission. Organizers say the goal is simple: to provide a platform for compelling stories and fresh voices while strengthening the local and regional theater community.

Review timelines vary throughout the year, but playwrights can generally expect an initial response within four to six weeks.

Scripts selected for development may continue through several months of readings and revisions before a final production decision is made.

Based in Brandon, Brandon Performing Arts/MacBeth & Cheese is a volunteer-driven community theater serving audiences throughout the Tampa Bay area. The company is known for producing immersive performances that range from psychological thrillers to classic adaptations while making live theater accessible to the community.

For more information about the Page to Stage Project or submission guidelines, visit macbethandcheese.com.

ANGEL FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 20TH EVENING OF HOPE GALA

Staff Report



Angel Foundation FL is proud to announce its 20th annual Evening of Hope Gala, taking place on Friday, October 9, at The Regent, located at 6437 Watson Rd. in Riverview. This milestone event celebrates two decades of compassion, hope and community support while raising critical funds to assist local families facing life-threatening illnesses such as cancer and other catastrophic events that create unexpected financial hardship.

For the past 20 years, Angel Foundation FL has been a beacon of hope for families throughout Eastern Hillsborough County and the Greater Tampa Bay area. Through the generosity of donors, sponsors, volunteers and community partners, the foundation has provided financial assistance and compassionate support to families during some of life's most difficult moments, ensuring they can focus on healing instead of financial stress.

Guests will enjoy an elegant evening featuring a gourmet dinner, live entertainment, inspiring stories of hope, exciting live and silent auctions and special recognition of the individuals, businesses and community partners whose generosity has helped the foundation impact countless lives over the past two decades.

"This 20th anniversary is more than a celebration of our history — it's a celebration of every family we've had the privilege to serve and every supporter who has made our mission possible," said Liz Brewer, CEO of Angel Foundation FL and founder of the Foundation Angel Program. "Together, we continue to bring hope, healing and financial relief to families when they need it most. Every ticket purchased, every sponsorship secured and every donation made helps us continue lifting up families in crisis throughout our community."

Angel Foundation FL extends its sincere gratitude to its presenting sponsor, HCA Florida Brandon Hospital, for its continued support of the 20th annual Evening of Hope Gala.

Proceeds from the Evening of Hope Gala directly benefit Angel Foundation FL's programs, allowing the organization to continue providing emergency financial assistance and compassionate support to families facing life-threatening illnesses such as cancer and other catastrophic events that place an overwhelming financial burden on their households.

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are now available. Community members, businesses, and organizations are invited to join this unforgettable evening of inspiration, celebration and generosity while helping ensure Angel Foundation FL can continue serving local families for generations to come.

For more information about Angel Foundation FL, visit https://angelfoundationfl.com/.

easterseals
School for Limitless Learning
NOW ENROLLING!

TAMPA BAY AREA PRIVATE SCHOOL

Specializing in neurodiverse children from 6 weeks to 2nd grade

Our goal is to provide an inclusive and supportive learning environment for children of all abilities, offering two exceptional programs that are designed to help our students reach their developmental milestones through hands-on activities.



Early Learning Program: 6 weeks - Pre-K

- A year-round program for children with or without diagnosed disabilities
- Teachers trained in the DIR Floortime® Model
- Frog Street Curriculum designed to foster cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development
- Child screenings and assessments

Lower Elementary Program: K - 2nd Grade

- 10-month school year, serving children who are neurodiverse or have other related disabilities
- State-certified teachers trained in the DIR Floortime® Model
- A connection, play-based model using the DIR Floortime® Model
- Small class sizes for individualized learning

Schedule a Tour

Visit our Website

CONTACT US:
2460 Bloomingdale Ave., Suite 170, Valrico, FL 33596
813-236-5589
LimitlessLearning@esfl.org

We accept Step Up & School Readiness

easterseals Florida

LOCAL SWISHER3X'S WALMART DANCE VIDEOS TURN LOCAL MOMENTS INTO A 1.4 MILLION-FOLLOWER MOVEMENT

By Libby Hopkins






Most people head to Walmart with a shopping list. Swisher3x walks in with a mission.

The Tampa-based content creator, musician and dancer has become a viral sensation by transforming ordinary shopping trips into unforgettable moments of joy. Known for his energetic dance videos filmed in Walmart stores across the Tampa Bay area, Swisher3x invites shoppers and employees alike to join him in spontaneous dance routines that celebrate positivity, connection and community.

Born Paa-Gyesi Ansah, Swisher3x comes from a proud Ghanaian family and credits his heritage with helping shape his love of music, dance and bringing people together. While his family is from Ghana, he has made the Tampa Bay area his home, where he continues to grow both his music career and his online following.

His signature 'Vibe Movement' began in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time when isolation and uncertainty had become part of everyday life, Swisher3x started dancing in New York City's Times Square with one goal in mind — reminding people that joy is contagious.

"My inspiration for music and dance is wanting to see the world in complete unity because division is taking over," he said.

That vision has remained at the heart of everything he creates.

Millions have now viewed his 'Walmart Vibes' videos, which capture authentic reactions from strangers who often go from surprised observers to enthusiastic dance partners. The videos have become a refreshing reminder that happiness can be found in the most unexpected places.

"What's special about dancing in the Walmarts is just the aspect of being able to see people from all walks of life meet up at one place to enjoy unity, enjoy positivity, enjoy love and feel like they're together," Swisher3x said. "Walmart was the perfect place to bring a lot of loving energy to. I hope to accomplish world peace globally."

Whether he's dancing down store aisles, greeting customers in parking lots or creating content at local events, Swisher3x encourages people to put away their worries, even if only for a few moments, and simply enjoy life.

His influence extends well beyond social media. An independent artist, Swisher3x blends Afrocentric, Caribbean pop, R&B, soul, hip-hop and rap into his music. He has released more than a dozen songs, including "Control Yourself" and "Lush and Lavish," and recently introduced his latest album, Swisher Note. He has also shared plans to continue developing his musical talents through education at Full Sail University in Orlando.

His growing career includes performing as a dancer during the Super Bowl LV halftime show, appearances on FOX 13 Tampa Bay and performances at community events and college campuses, such as Jacksonville State University.

Outside of music and content creation, Swisher3x is also a barber and producer, wearing many creative hats while remaining focused on his larger purpose.

He said his platform isn't just about creating viral videos; it's about changing lives through kindness, confidence and human connection.

In a world that often feels divided, Swisher3x hopes every dance, every smile and every shared moment can inspire people to see one another with a little more compassion.

Swisher3x has amassed an online audience of more than 1.8 million followers and subscribers across his social media platforms, with more than 1.4 million followers on TikTok alone and nearly 460,000 subscribers on YouTube.

To learn more about Swisher3x and follow his latest videos and music, visit his Facebook page at www.facebook.com/offthaboat.

DIRECTORY OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

LAWN & PEST CONTROL

MIKE'S HOME SERVICE
• Mowing
• Trimming
• Edging
• Pest Control
MIKE'S HOME SERVICE
LAWN CARE & HOME PEST CONTROL
813-362-2149

LAWN CARE

DML PROPERTY SOLUTIONS LLC LAWN CARE SERVICE
Full-Service Lawn Care & Property Maintenance
Irrigation Repair & System Maintenance
Landscape Design & Install
Property Cleanouts, Junk Removal & Equipment Hauling
DML Property Solutions, LLC
@dml_property_solutions_fl
863-602-5217 | www.dmlproperty.com

HEAT & AC

BROWN COMFORT SYSTEMS
HEATING & AIRCONDITIONING
SERVICE YOU CAN TRUST
Residential & Commercial
Installation & Repair
Commercial Refrigeration
(813) 671-2555

NOTARY

Mobile & Online Notarization
Wills & Trust Notarization
Power of Attorney
Real Estate Closing
Apostille Services
DMV & Vehicle Titles
Minor Travel Consent Forms
Passport
Marriage License
Estate Planning
Loan Signing Services
Angie Anderson
813-212-2268
angie@stellarnotaryservices.net
www.stellarnotaryservices.net

PEST CONTROL

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

To Advertise in the Business Directory, Call Today! 813-657-2418

Osprey Observer — Your Community Newspaper

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

EXPLORE GIRL SCOUT OPPORTUNITIES AT CAMP DOROTHY THOMAS EVENT

Staff Report



Girl Scouts of Fossil Valley is inviting local girls and their families to learn more about the opportunities available through Girl Scouts during a free Discover What's Within Information Event on Sunday, August 23, from 1-3 p.m. at Camp Dorothy Thomas, located at 16119 Boyette Rd. in Riverview.

The open house is designed for families interested in learning about Girl Scouts and the experiences, friendships and leadership opportunities available throughout the year. Attendees will have the chance to meet local troop leaders, ask questions about membership and explore how girls can become involved during the upcoming Girl Scout year.

"Girl Scouts is so much more than cookies and badges," said Jennifer Strom, Fossil Valley service unit recruiter and troop leader. "It's a place where girls can try something completely new, build confidence, make friendships, develop real-world skills and discover what they're capable of. We want local families to come see what Girl Scouts can look like for their girl."

Girl Scouts offers girls opportunities to build lasting friendships, participate in outdoor adventures, STEM activities, creative projects and community service, while developing leadership, confidence and problem-solving skills through hands-on experiences.

"Every girl has something special within her," Strom said. "Girl Scouts gives her the space, encouragement and opportunities to explore it."

Families attending the event can learn about local troops, membership options and the wide variety of programs available through Girl Scouts of Fossil Valley, which serves the community as part of Girl Scouts of West Central Florida.

The event is free and open to families interested in joining Girl Scouts. The annual Girl Scout membership year runs from October 1 through September 30.

To RSVP for the Discover What's Within Information Event, visit Girl Scouts offers Girl Scouts offers Girl Scouts offers. For more information about Girl Scouts, visit www.gswcf.org or search for Fossil Valley Girl Scouts on Facebook.

TRUE HEROES CPR EQUIPS COMMUNITY WITH LIFESAVING SKILLS

By Jane Owen



Worldwide there are more than 135 million cardiovascular deaths each year, and the prevalence of coronary heart disease is increasing. According to the American Heart Association, only around 40 percent of people who experience an out of hospital cardiac arrest get the immediate help that they need before professional help arrives. Immediate CPR, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation, doubles and sometimes triples chances of survival after cardiac arrest.

True Heroes CPR, a Lithia-based company, is dedicated to empowering individuals with the knowledge and expertise needed to respond effectively in critical situations. True Heroes specializes in CPR training and offers basic life support (BLS), automated external defibrillator (AED), first aid and choking intervention training. Classes can be provided on-site at a workplace, at a home or at local venue that True Heroes coordinates.

True Heroes was founded by Jaime Heaverin with a mission to prepare others to help in emergency situations with their families, friends and community members. Heaverin's passion stems from a desire to protect her family. Her family of four includes her husband, Chris; daughter, Kassidy; and son, Aedan.

Kassidy was born in 2015, 24 weeks premature, with extensive medical conditions. Heaverin and Chris learned everything possible to support Kassidy thrive, including BLS measures and understanding how to clear choking hazards. In 2021, complications from COVID-19 required Chris to be on oxygen and medically retire from his job. Heaverin recognized that the more people trained to be ready to help her family, the better. But, also, the more people trained in life saving measures could have a significant impact on the community. She founded True Heroes CPR in 2024. Heaverin became a Red Cross faculty instructor in April. She is also an American Heart Association faculty instructor.

True Heroes CPR classes include instruction and certification at a fraction of the price of other companies. Heaverin's passion is for individuals to have the knowledge to assist in emergency situations.

"I want everyone to know these skills. One of my biggest fears is if something were to happen to myself — I want the people around me to know how to feel as skilled and confident as I am," Heaverin said.

Heaverin's desire to protect her family is saving lives in our community. With a smile, she will tell you about life saving moments from people who were certified through True Heroes CPR.

Kassidy and Chris are doing well. Chris is a True Heroes instructor. Kassidy and Aedan are often at classes.

For more information about True Heroes CPR, visit www.true-heroescpr.com, email trueheroescpr@gmail.com or call 813-702-2890.







SOMEBODY CARES GALA AND CAREFEST HONOR 29 YEARS OF SERVICE

Staff Report



For nearly three decades, Somebody Cares Tampa Bay (SCTB) has united churches, businesses, volunteers and community organizations to meet practical needs throughout the region. This September, the Clearwater-based nonprofit will celebrate its 29th anniversary with its Annual Fundraising Gala while preparing for one of its largest volunteer outreach efforts of the year, CareFest.

The Annual Fundraising Gala will take place on Saturday, September 19, at Banquet Masters in Clearwater. The evening will raise funds to support SCTB's year-round outreach programs, including its back-to-school backpack distribution, disaster relief efforts and CareFest home repair projects. The event will also feature a live auction with donated items such as vacation packages, sports memorabilia, gift certificates and other experiences, with proceeds benefiting the organization's ongoing community work.

Founded by Daniel Bernard, Somebody Cares Tampa Bay is a faith-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves residents throughout Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties. The organization partners with local ministries, businesses and volunteers to provide essential resources and coordinate community service projects for individuals and families facing financial hardship.

One of SCTB's signature initiatives is CareFest, an annual day of service scheduled this year for Saturday, September 27. On that day, thousands of volunteers from churches, civic organizations, businesses and community groups will spread across neighborhoods in Pinellas, Hillsborough and Pasco counties to complete hundreds of projects for homeowners who are elderly, disabled, veterans, widowed or single parents.

Projects typically include exterior painting, minor home repairs, pressure washing, yard cleanup, landscaping and wheelchair ramp installations. By organizing volunteers into teams, many projects that would otherwise take weeks to complete can often be finished in just four to six hours.

Although CareFest highlights one designated day each year, the program operates year-round, allowing churches, businesses and volunteer groups to adopt projects whenever their schedules allow. Residents and organizations can also support the initiative by donating funds, building supplies, recruiting volunteers or sponsoring projects.

Daniel Bernard, founder and president of Somebody Cares Tampa Bay, says the organization's mission is rooted in bringing people together to serve others through practical acts of kindness.

Those interested in attending the gala, donating auction items, volunteering for CareFest or submitting a homeowner project can learn more by visiting www.sctb.org or contacting Somebody Cares Tampa Bay. Through its collaborative approach, the organization continues to demonstrate that lasting community impact is achieved when people work together to meet the needs of their neighbors.

CAMPAIGN TAKES SHAPE FOR COUNTY WOMEN VETERANS MONUMENT

By Brad Stager



A new Women Veterans Monument is slated to be included in the planned renovations of Hillsborough County's Veterans Memorial Park.

The goal of recognizing the contributions of women veterans at Hillsborough County's Veterans Memorial Park and Museum with a monument is within sight as a design has been selected and fundraising efforts continue.

In what has been a grassroots campaign of more than five years, the monument has gone from an idea to set the record straight about an aspect of America's military history that has often been ignored or diminished to an allotted space in the park and an approved design to create from. It is slated to be included in the park's planned renovations.

The selected design depicts a woman in a generic military uniform standing upon a black granite tri-base, flanked by a woman pilot and infantry soldier, with a figure of a young girl in the foreground.

For the organizers and the veterans they represent, it is more than a statue as it provides recognition for the women who served their country. They are joined in their effort by AMVETS Post 44 in Plant City, a kindred band of veterans who understand the cost of service. Post 44 hosts special fundraising events on behalf of the monument, such as a community yard sale on Saturday, August 8, from 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

Irene Rapoza, who is chair of the monument initiative said there has been a lot of progress with deciding on a design and procuring a place in the park, but there is still plenty of work to do and, with a projected cost of $100,000, funds to raise.

"We've come a long way from our original design of our monument," she wrote in an email. "We are still in our fundraising mode, but with AMVETS Post 44 partnership, we are about one-third of the way to our goal with many fundraisers on the horizon."

Rapoza also credited other local veterans groups and businesses for their assistance as well as County Commissioner Donna Cameron Cepeda, an Army veteran, for her political support. She encourages others to join their ranks as donors or community supporters as the project makes its way through bureaucratic and construction developments.

You can keep up with the group's fundraising and networking efforts via its Facebook page, Women Veterans Monument - Hillsborough County.







AUTHOR TINA BLOUNT OPENS COACHING & COUNSELING PRACTICE

By Libby Hopkins



Tina Blount brings her new business, Be Blount Coaching & Counseling, to the Brandon community.

Tina Blount of Brandon wears many hats. She is a local pastor, author, podcaster, life coach, friend and icon to many in the community. She is currently wearing a new hat as a business owner. What started out as a podcast, called Be Blount, has now turned into Be Blount Coaching & Counseling.

"The Be Blount podcast actually started because of the people around me," she said. "As I spent time serving both the faith community and the business community, people would jokingly tell me, 'You are blunt in the best possible way.' What they meant was that I wasn't afraid to say the hard thing, but that I did it in a way that made people feel inspired and encouraged. After hearing that enough times, friends suggested that should start a podcast. They believed that I had something to say. Even though I communicate regularly as one of the pastors at ARISE Church, I resisted the idea for a while, but eventually I gave in."

Her weekly 10-minute podcast, Be Blount, which she originally planned to run for just three months, is now in its 11th season, with episodes running 20-30 minutes.

Be Blount was shaping up to be more than just a podcast.

"There was a broader need, and I felt called to meet it," she said. "Today, Be Blount is a people development company that helps individuals, leaders, teams and organizations grow in work, life and faith. I often say I show up for the growth and the gaps because I love helping people see what they're capable of before they see it themselves. At the heart of everything I do is a simple belief: When people discover who they are, they can step more confidently into what they were created to do. Our motto is 'be, then do.'"

Be Blount Coaching & Counseling has given Blount the opportunity to take a step back from ARISE Church and focus on her new business.

"I'm excited, and yet, it's bittersweet," she said. "I believe that God has a plan for each of us, and this is His plan for me in this season."

Blount loves what she is doing with Be Blount Coaching & Counseling and hopes her new endeavor gives them what they need to be successful.

"My hope for Be Blount is that it becomes a trusted resource for people who want to grow, whether they're leading a business, serving in a nonprofit, pastoring a church, launching a new venture, discovering their calling, a new job or simply trying to figure out what's next," she said. "One of the things I'm most passionate about is helping people see that there doesn't have to be a divide between ministry and the marketplace. I believe purpose and faith belongs in every boardroom, classroom, office, coffee shop and church."

To learn more about Be Blount Coaching & Counseling, visit www.tinablount.com or call 813-335-6828.

IN AN EMERGENCY, CLOSE CARE MATTERS

Staff Report



AdventHealth Riverview EMT Jared provides compassionate emergency care to patients when every second counts. His professionalism and reassuring presence reflect the hospital's commitment to delivering fast, high-quality care close to home for those facing urgent medical needs.

Emergency care and timely treatment matter when you have an illness or injury that needs immediate medical attention.

For three years, Kayla McDonald had episodes where her heart rate spiked to roughly 200 beats per minute. But every time she went to the emergency room, physicians said her heart wasn't the problem.

"The first time it happened in Panama City, they said I was too young for a heart condition. Without doing an EKG or anything, they just told me I was having a panic attack," said the 25-year-old. "The second time, they didn't take me seriously either. And after that, I felt bad even calling 911 or calling to ask for help."

That changed once McDonald moved to the Tampa Bay area. During another event in November 2025, emergency room physicians diagnosed her with supraventricular tachycardia (SVT), a common condition that causes fast, irregular heartbeats; chest pain; and lightheadedness.

The next time McDonald's SVT hit, she went to the emergency room at nearby AdventHealth Riverview and knew immediately that she'd found a health care home.

And that's where she went three times a week until she had a cardiac ablation to cure her SVT in May.

"They did everything they could for me very quickly and went the extra mile to fix my heart rhythm. They did their best to get me in and out immediately," she said. "It meant so much that they knew me. I got anxious with every episode, but they were very calming and caring. They never made me feel bad about coming in for help."

With AdventHealth, there are three ways to find complete care when you have a non-life-threatening illness or injury that still needs care fast. You can schedule a treatment time in the emergency room through InQuickER, request a virtual care visit with a physician or nurse practitioner or visit one of the AdventHealth Primary Care+ clinics located throughout the Tampa Bay area.

When you have an urgent illness or injury, AdventHealth Riverview, located at 9330 U.S. 301 in Riverview, is nearby with convenient emergency care. Find out more about its advanced emergency services at the website located at www.adventhealthriverview.com.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.



Join us for our
Alzheimer's Support Group for Caregivers

At Ambiance at Brandon, we understand the journey of caring for a loved one with memory loss—and the importance of having support along the way.

We offer Dementia & Alzheimer's Support Groups for care partners and families in our community, providing connection, encouragement, education, and understanding in a compassionate environment focused on Creating the Best Day Possible.

Available both in person and virtually.

AMBIANCE AT BRANDON
1320 Oakfield Drive // Brandon, FL 33511

THIRD TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 6:30 PM

FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 2:00 PM

Questions?
Please call Jill at 813-607-6880.

alzheimer's association

Scan the QR code to visit our Events Page to learn more about upcoming support groups and community events.

Ambiance at BRANDON
ASSISTED LIVING & MEMORY CARE
by Providence Senior Living

Creating the Best Day Possible™
1320 Oakfield Drive // Brandon, FL 33511
813-607-6880 // Sales@ambiancebrandon.com
AmbianceBrandon.com
Assisted Living Facility #PENDING

Angel FOUNDATION FL
Angel Hearts Lifting Up Families in Crisis

Save the Date!

Evening of Hope

Celebrating 20 Years

Honoring the Past...Carrying it Forward

October 9, 2026 The Regent

AngelFoundationFL.com



LASER HAIR REMOVAL
3 AREAS FOR A YEAR
$599



Call or text 813-344-5511

TAMPA MUSEUM OF ART OPENS FIRST ANCIENT EGYPTIAN EXHIBITION

Staff Report

The Tampa Museum of Art opened Mysteries of the Nile: Ancient Egypt, a landmark exhibition which debuted with an exclusive member preview on June 24, followed by public admission beginning on June 25. Presented by Fifth Third Bank and organized in partnership with the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada, the exhibition marks the first time an exhibition dedicated to the art and artifacts of ancient Egypt has been presented in the city of Tampa.



Bust of Nefertiti Plaster sculpture, replica; Egypt; Modern, 1933. Loaned to the Tampa Museum of Art from the Royal Ontario Museum, Gift of the Egypt Exploration Society (933.64.10).

The exhibition brings together an exceptional selection of artifacts drawn from the Royal Ontario Museum's world-renowned Egyptian holdings alongside select pieces from the Tampa Museum of Art's own permanent collection and private collectors. Together, the works explore the Nile, pharaohs, gods, daily life, the afterlife and thousands of years of ancient Egyptian history, immersing visitors in a single, extraordinary experience.

"Making world-class collections accessible to everyone is at the heart of what we do at the Tampa Museum of Art, and this partnership is one of the finest expressions of that mission," said Tom Hochhausler, the Penny and Jeff Vinik interim executive director of the Tampa Museum of Art. "Our recently renovated galleries now allow us to present these extraordinary artifacts alongside treasures from our own permanent collection in a way that simply wasn't possible before. We are grateful to the ROM for their generosity, vision and trust in us as a collaborator."

More than a third of the 117 objects featured in the exhibition will be on loan from the partner museum, offering a rich selection of artifacts that illuminate the lives and legacy of the ancient culture that thrived for over 3,500 years. The carefully curated exhibition will highlight the sculptures, decorative arts and material culture that illuminate the importance of Egyptian artistic traditions and their enduring influence on modern art.

While other museums in the region have previously presented ancient Egyptian material, Mysteries of the Nile: Ancient Egypt marks the first exhibition of its kind in the city of Tampa, offering a truly unique cultural milestone for the community. The Tampa Museum of Art will be home to this exhibition for the next two years, giving visitors, students, families and scholars the opportunity to connect deeply with the history and meaning of these remarkable artifacts.

This exhibition has been made possible in part by the Tampa Museum of Art's recent renovations supported by generous donors.

For tickets and information, visit online at www.tampamuseum.org or call 813-274-8130. The museum is located at 120 W. Gasparilla Plaza in Tampa.

GOOD NEWS: TECO TO LOWER RATES 12 PERCENT ON AUGUST 1 — ONE MONTH EARLIER THAN EXPECTED

Staff Report

Tampa Electric will lower rates this summer — a month ahead of schedule — as it removes the storm surcharge from bills earlier than originally planned.

In August, residential and small business customers can expect to see a reduction of about $20 per 1,000 kilowatt-hours of use, which is an 11 percent to 12 percent drop.

"This relief reflects Tampa Electric's ongoing commitment to help our customers on their payments whenever we can," said Archie Collins, president and chief executive officer of Tampa Electric. "We understand everyone is feeling the pressure of higher prices, from the grocery store to the gas pump, and we heard you. It's important to us that you receive this benefit as soon as possible."

The Florida Public Service Commission approved a storm surcharge in March 2025 to recover more than $400 million in costs to restore power after the record-breaking 2024 hurricane season. The fee was spread over 18 months to reduce the impact on customers. The surcharge was originally expected to drop off bills in September 2025.

The costs will be fully covered sooner than expected, so the fee will end a month early, dropping off bills on Saturday, August 1.

Because the Budget Billing program is designed to keep bills stable and predictable, customers who participate in that program will see a more gradual change.

The 2024 hurricane season was one of the most destructive in more than a century. Hurricane Helene brought unprecedented flooding to West Central Florida, and several days later Hurricane Milton caused significant devastation from downed trees.

Over the course of the two hurricanes, the company brought in 9,500 workers from out-of-state utilities, which allowed speedy restoration.

For customers having difficulty paying their bills, please contact Tampa Electric. The company can help with flexible payment arrangements and can connect qualifying customers with financial support. Learn more about the support options available by visiting www.tampaelectric.com/payassist.

Tampa Electric, one of Florida's largest investor-owned electric utilities, serves about 870,000 customers in West Central Florida. Tampa Electric is a subsidiary of Emera Inc. (NYSE: EMA).

Sponsored by: Osprey Observer — Your Community Newspaper

Valrico Edition August 2026 Vol. 23, Iss.8



Edited by: Jenny Bennett

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.

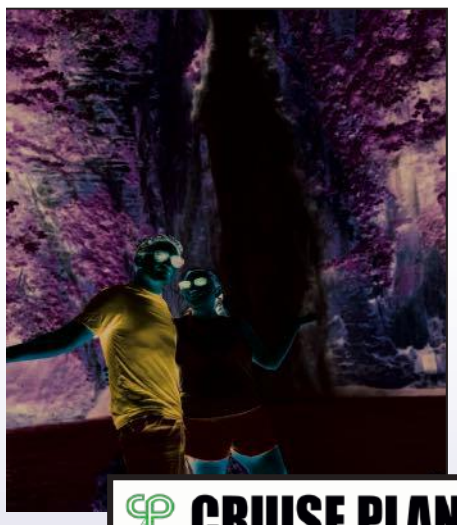
Align Right Realty Rebrands To Elevated Realty – Raising The Standard

Effective immediately, Align Right Realty brokerage proudly announces its rebrand to Elevated Realty – Raising the Standard. While its name is changing, the foundation of the company remains the same. Elevated Realty continues under the ownership and leadership of broker/owner Lisa Tackus, with the same trusted leadership and committed agents, unwavering commitment to excellence and dedication to serving customers and the Tampa Bay community. The rebrand reflects the company's continued growth and long-term vision while honoring the relationships built over the past seven years as a brokerage and more than 21 years of real estate experience. For more information, visit www.elevatedrealtyfl.com or contact Elevated Realty at 813-563-5995.

JF Kicks Hosts Chamber Of Commerce Networking Group

Every Friday at noon, JF Kicks brings Brandon and Riverview Chamber of commerce members together for meaningful networking, lead-generating activities, engaging conversations, and plenty of opportunities to grow your business in a fun, supportive environment. Whether you're a brand-new member or you've been with the Chamber for years, there's always room for another connection—and that connection could be the one that opens your next door.

Bring your business cards, your smile, and a willingness to connect. We can't wait to meet you, learn about your business, and help you make valuable Chamber connections.



JF Kicks is located at 3345 Lithia Pinecrest Rd. in Valrico. Visit its website at https://jfkicksrestaurant.com/ for more information.

Meetup Group Cruise

Whether you're single, traveling solo, a couple, or coming with friends, this is a fantastic opportunity to enjoy an incredible Caribbean vacation while meeting great people along the way. Travel advisor Matthew Gordon of Cruise Planners - Venture Out Vacation has secured special group pricing and blocked staterooms just for Meetup members. This is a seven-night roundtrip Western Caribbean cruise from Saturday, October 17, through Saturday, October 24, starting from Tampa. Ports of call include Key West; Roatán, Honduras; Belize City, Belize; and Cozumel, Mexico. Plus, there are two relaxing days at sea to enjoy everything the spectacular Margaritaville at Sea Islander has to offer.

For more information or to book this cruise, please visit www.ventureoutvacation.com or call 717-856-2646.

22 Moons Tea Room Participates In Global Hospitality Day

22 Moons Tea Room is honored and humbled to be able to be a part of the one-day Global Day of Hospitality on Wednesday, August 26. Guests can eat what they want and pay what they can afford. This allows 22 Moons Tea Room to ensure everyone within the community has an opportunity to be pampered with its full afternoon tea experience. As always, reservations are required; please call 813-278-5213. Everyone deserves teatime!

22 Moons Tea Room is located at 3102 Lithia Pinecrest Rd. in Valrico. Visit its website at www.22moonstearoom.com for more information.

Christmas Tree & Wreath Pre-Sale

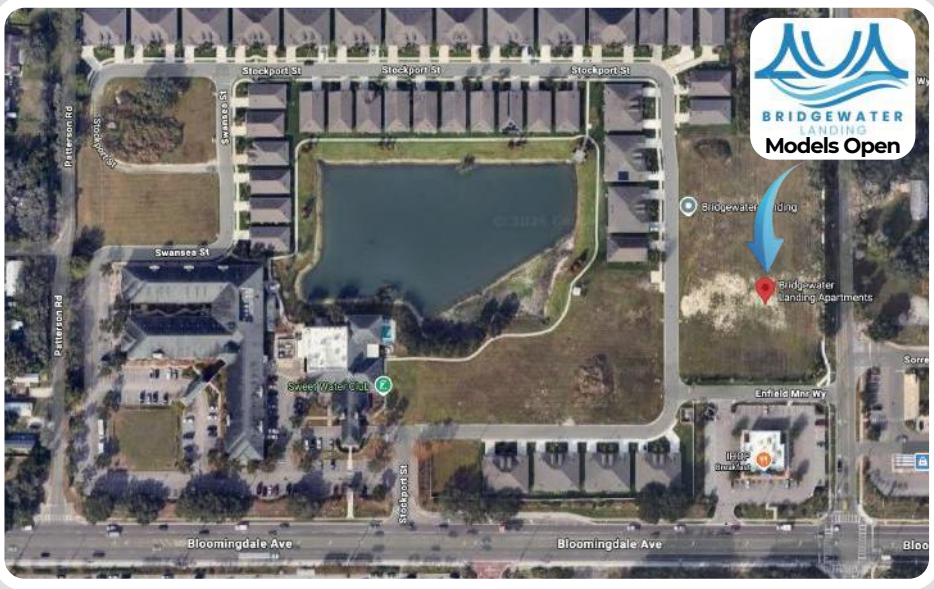
Nativity Youth Ministry and Mother Seton Council 6724 of the Knights of Columbus have launched their second annual Christmas Tree & Wreath Pre-Sale Fundraiser, with proceeds benefiting local charities and youth programs.

Advance orders are now being accepted for the better-quality Fraser fir Christmas trees and 28-inch decorated wreaths that were popular last year. Pickup begins on Black Friday, November 27, at Nativity Catholic Church's Novemberfest field, located at 705 E. Brandon Blvd. in Brandon.

This year's supply is limited to 205 trees and 100 wreaths. Orders can be placed at www.nativitychristmasstore.com; customers who order by Monday, August 31, will save $7 on a 6 to 7-foot tree, $8 on a 7 to 8-foot tree and $10 on an 8 to 9-foot tree.







NOW LEASING

BRIDGEWATER LANDING

Discover carefree living in our welcoming 55+ apartment community. Enjoy spacious homes, modern conveniences, and a friendly atmosphere where neighbors become friends. With beautifully maintained grounds and a location close to shopping and dining, you'll find the perfect blend of comfort, independence, and connection.

1&2 Bedroom **Water Included** **In Unit Washer/Dryer**

813-934-2204 | leasing@bridgewaterlandings.com

SH

SUNRISE HOMES

building a brighter tomorrow

<u>Final</u> Opportunity in Lake Toscana

Now **ONLY 4** left.

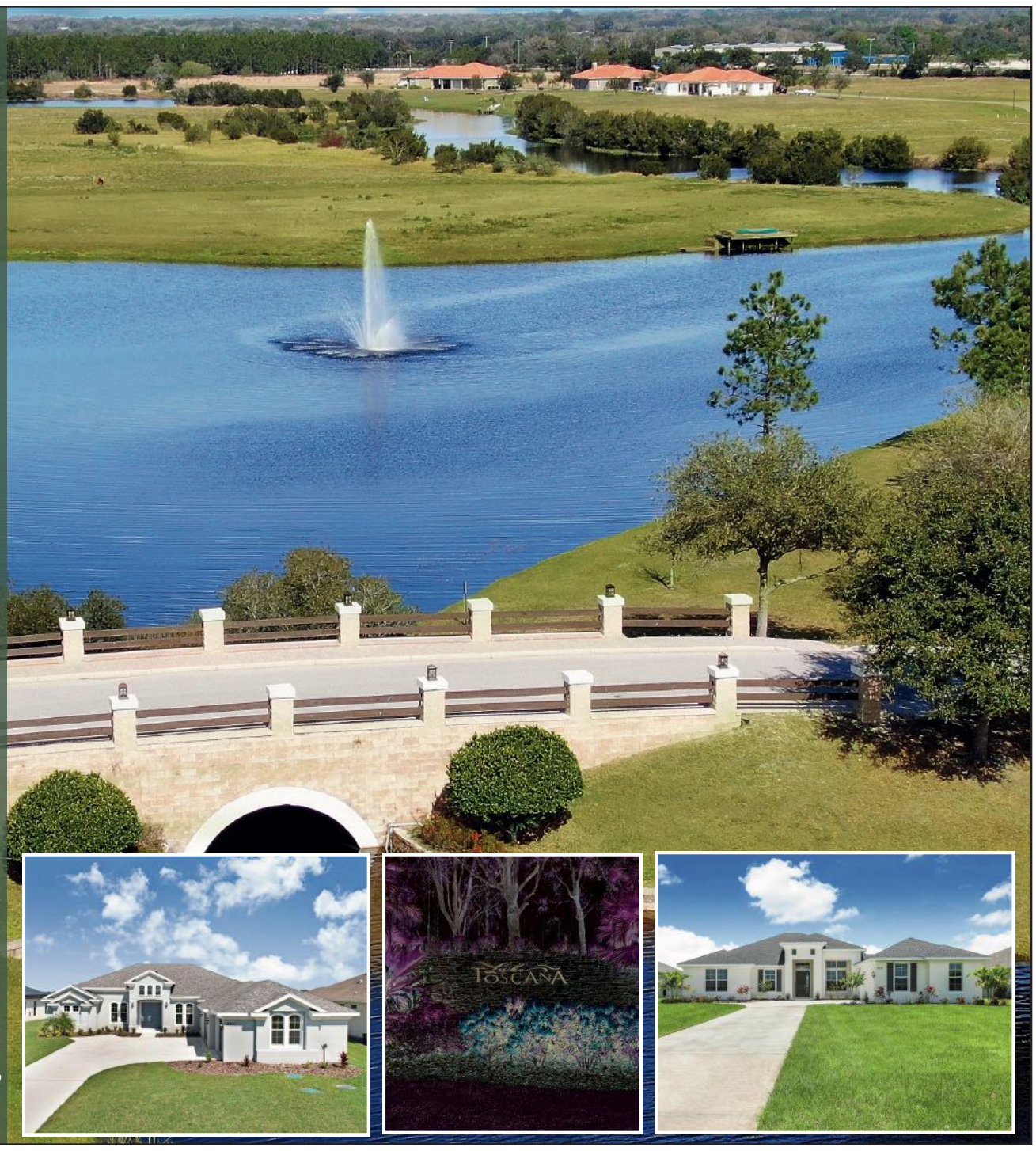
$50,000 off your design selections*

1/2 acre lots, semi-custom homes, lake or conservation views on every lot

813-934-2206

Visit Our Model Home

5333 Lake Venice Dr Wimauma, FL 33598



TURNING SUMMER GOALS INTO SOLD SIGNS

The Experience you Need. The Results you Deserve.

THE #1 RESIDENTIAL RESALE AGENT IN VALRICO & HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY



2900 W BAY TO BAY BLVD #1401
3BR/3.5BA/2CAR + PREMIER BAY VIEWS
$2,900,000



2413 BAYSHORE BLVD #1903
2BR/2BA + 2 ASSIGNED SPOTS + BAYSHORE VIEWS
$675,000



16605 E COURSE DR
4BR/2BA/2CAR + POOL + GOLF COURSE VIEWS
$615,000



1009 EMERALD CREEK DR
4BR/3BA/3CAR + OFFICE + FLORIDA SUNROOM + POOL/SPA
$850,000



426 SUMMERLYN DR
4BR/2BA/2CAR + SCREENED PATIO
$375,000



2202 LONGMORE CIR
5BR/4BA/3CAR + POOL
$615,000



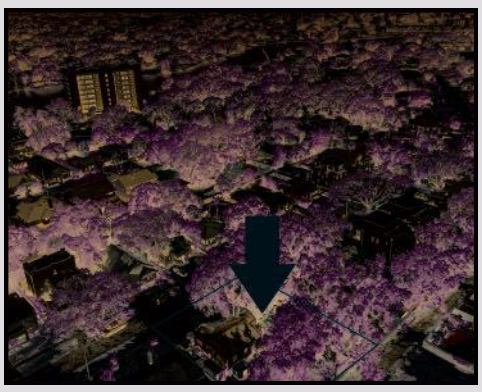
4822 PORTOBELLO CIR
5BR/3BA/2CAR + POOL
$514,900



1706 W LOUISIANA AVE
4BR/2BA/2CAR + OUTDOOR OASIS + SPA
$775,000



19914 BLUFF OAK BLVD
5BR/3BA/3CAR + BONUS + POOL
$650,000



1009 W CORAL ST
2BR/1.5BA + .26 ACRE
$550,000



1216 BRANDON LAKES AVE
3BR/2BA/2CAR + LAKEFRONT + DOCK
$525,000



914 S MILLER RD
3BR/3.5BA/3CAR +OFFICE + IN-LAW SUITE + POOL + 1.83 ACRES
$665,000

DELIVERING RESULTS YEAR AFTER YEAR

BRENDA WADE
KELLER WILLIAMS SOUTH TAMPA
Top Producer
2002-2025

Direct: 813-924-8677
Office: 813-655-5333
Brenda@BrendaWade.com
www.BrendaWade.com
1709 Bloomingdale Ave, Valrico, FL 33596

