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September 2026
Volume 24, Issue 9



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A QUARTER CENTURY LATER,
COUNTY REMEMBERS 9/11

Staff Report



Patriot Day
9/11 Remembrance

A quarter century has passed since the attacks of 9/11 instigated our nation's longest war and challenged conventions of global security.

Hillsborough County Fire Rescue (HCFR), Veteran Community Services and the Veterans Council of Hillsborough County will host Patriot Day 9/11: Remembering the Fallen 25 Years Later at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, September 11, at Veterans Memorial Park & Rear Admiral LeRoy Collins, Jr. Veterans Museum, located at 3602 N. U.S. 301 in Tampa.

While honoring the lives lost, Americans commemorate September 11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance. Local first responders, active-duty military, veterans and civic leaders aim to inspire a generation too young to recall the historic events of 2001. Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) and HCFR cadets will lead the annual Patriot Day ceremony featuring:

- A color guard, rifle salute and taps.
- A solemn escort of the beam: a solid 135-pound section of steel salvaged from New York's Twin Towers that resides at Veterans Memorial Park, representing the supreme sacrifices on 9/11.
- A traditional fire service ringing of the bell.

- Hillsborough County Fire Rescue Chief Jason Dougherty, Temple Terrace Fire Chief Ian Kemp and Plant City Fire Rescue Chief David Dittman.

After the ceremony, students and attendees can engage with service professionals for photos and interactive demonstrations including:

- Hillsborough County Fire Rescue.
- Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Drone Response and Underwater Recovery Teams.
- MacDill Air Force Base Military Working Dogs (MWD), 6th Security Forces Squadron.
- U.S. Coast Guard St. Petersburg Station.
- U.S. Marine Corps 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion.
- U.S. Naval Reserve Center Tampa.

The 25th Anniversary Patriot Day 9/11 event is free and open to the public at Veterans Memorial Park's outdoor amphitheater. Attendees are invited to enjoy the park's many memorials.

For more information about Veterans Memorial Park & Rear Admiral LeRoy Collins, Jr. Veterans Museum, call Veteran Community Services at (813) 635-8316 or visit <https://hcfl.gov/veterans>.

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN IS EXCITED
FOR ANOTHER SEASON OF BASEBALL

By Emily Harper

A League of Their Own Tampa is a program that allows adults with disabilities to showcase their baseball talents. The program started with a simple idea, to "give them a field where they can shine," and it has grown into a thriving nonprofit organization dedicated to providing opportunities for athletes across the Tampa Bay area.



A League of Their Own Tampa provides adults with disabilities an opportunity to shine on the baseball field, building confidence, friendships and a strong sense of belonging.

The league was co-founded in 2022 by Stephenie R. Coonrod, executive director and community outreach coordinator, after witnessing the limited opportunities for adults with disabilities. She wanted to create an environment that not only allows adults with disabilities to play baseball but also honors their abilities, personalities and joy. Alongside her, Dennis Mueller and Jess Coonrod initially helped make this dream a reality for the Tampa community.



"Our main goal is to make adults with disabilities a priority in every community we reach. We want to create safe, uplifting spaces where they can stay active, build friendships, gain confidence and play baseball their way — without fear of judgment, exclusion or financial barriers," said Stephenie.

The league has two seasonal programs: the Tampa Fall League running from November to February and the Riverview Spring League running from April to June. During the season, athletes play modified baseball tailored to their abilities. Each athlete has the opportunity to showcase their talents

and be celebrated. In addition, the league is committed to ensuring no athlete is ever turned away due to financial hardship.

"My favorite part is watching our athletes transform. You see them walk onto the field shy, nervous or unsure — and by the end of the season, they're laughing, high-fiving, leading cheers and showing pride in who they are. The joy on their faces, the friendships they build, and the confidence they gain remind me every single game why this league matters. It's not just baseball. It's a feeling of belonging," said

Stephenie.

This organization is fully operated by volunteers and the league appreciates the generosity of the community. Additionally, community sponsors can support an entire team with a \$250 contribution, which includes uniforms, equipment, field rentals and game day needs.

To learn more about the program, visit A League of Their Own Tampa's website, www.alototampa.org.

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WINTHROP SHOWCASES SEVEN RESTAURANTS DURING FIRST RESTAURANT WEEK SEPT 17-27

By Jane Owen

From upscale dining to a patio bar, Winthrop, a master-planned community located in Riverview, has over a dozen restaurants, bars, bakeries and cafes. Family-owned and operated by its founders, John and Kay Sullivan, who live in the town center, Winthrop has small-town charm and a focus on fostering community.

Winthrop is hosting Winthrop Restaurant Week to showcase its restaurants to the community. The restaurant week is from Thursday, September 17, through Sunday, September 27. Participating restaurants include Acropolis Greek Taverna, Cappy's Pizzeria, Cali Brandon, Donovan's Meastery, Himes Breakfast House, Tutto Tavola and Longshots Sports Bar.

Each restaurant will have a special restaurant week menu. Restaurant guests can order from a restaurant's regular menu, but they will have items to choose from that are unique for restaurant week. Some restaurants will have a prix fixe restaurant week menu, allowing guests to order an appetizer, a main entree and a dessert for a set price. Other restaurants will feature items on the menu that are only available during restaurant week.

Of the seven restaurants being showcased, the longest-opened restaurant is Acropolis, which has been in Winthrop for 17 years. The newest restaurant is Longshots Sports Bar, which just opened.

Restaurant week organizer Sarah Sullivan



The owners of 7 Winthrop restaurants have teamed together to form the first restaurant week in September.

Winthrop. We're particularly proud that we have so many family-run and locally run businesses and restaurants," Xiong said.

"It's been done and been very successful in larger cities, but this is definitely a first in Riverview. We're really excited to see the ground swell and see how it works out this year. It can grow. But, unless you start, you don't know," Sullivan said.

The community growth from the event is already happening because of the connections being made between the restaurants.

"The restaurants are coming together in a collaborative way. It is already building a strong sense of community amongst the business owners," Xiong said.

Tutto Tavola owner Luigi Cavallaro said he is looking forward to the event. Tutto Tavola opened in Winthrop in January.

"It's a great way to showcase Winthrop restaurants. It's going to be a great event," Cavallaro said. "I love being in Winthrop because of the community. It's like a little village of its own," he added.

Sign up for the Winthrop newsletter at <https://winthropfl.com/> and follow @WinthropFL to participate in the many giveaways happening. Visit WinthropFL.com/RestaurantWeek for more information.

Xiong said it is the perfect time to try a restaurant for the first time or visit one that you know and love.

"Restaurant week is a special occasion to highlight the amazing restaurants at

FIRST HIGH SCHOOL POWERLIFTING CLUB IS LEADING A MOVEMENT

By Marie Gilmore



Bell Creek Academy powerlifting coach and physical education teacher Taisha V. Hernández Zambrana works with student athletes as the school's new powerlifting club continues to grow.

Bell Creek Academy (BCA) in Riverview is helping put high school powerlifting on the map in Florida after launching what it says is the state's first organized high school powerlifting club.

The club was founded in January by BCA high school physical education teacher and coach Taisha V. Hernández Zambrana, who partnered with her own powerlifting coach, Leandro Muñoz, to introduce students to a sport that is well established in other states but has had limited organized presence at the high school level in Florida.

BCA, located at 13221 Boyette Rd., is currently the only Florida high school recognized as an official club under USA Powerlifting (USAPL). The club began with eight competitors who traveled to the USAPL Tampa Bay Open in April. Its roster has since more than doubled to 19 athletes, who are preparing to compete in the USAPL 813 Classic in Tampa this December.

For Hernández, powerlifting is about more than strength and competition.

"Powerlifting is about so much more than the numbers on the barbell," Hernán-

dez said. "It teaches these teenagers how to overcome self-doubt, build unshakeable confidence and find strength they never knew they had."

The club recently hosted its inaugural Lift-a-Thon to raise money for competition fees, uniforms and equipment for the 2026-27 season. With support from BCA faculty and staff, student volunteers, local vendors, powerlifting coaches and the USF Powerlifting

Club, the event raised more than \$5,000.

The fundraiser also reflected Hernández's desire to connect the club with the broader community. Fifteen percent of the proceeds was donated to Hillsborough County Adaptive Sports programs, helping support local athletes, including para powerlifters.

The club is continuing to raise funds for athletes who qualify for the 2027 high school nationals in New York and the Miami International Fitness Expo in May 2027.

Hernández is also exploring the connection between athletics and academics. As a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, she is collaborating with a University of South Florida research team on a mixed-methods study examining self-efficacy among students participating in a high school powerlifting club.

She hopes the research will lead to peer-reviewed publications and a presentation at the SHAPE America conference next year, further demonstrating the impact powerlifting can have beyond the competition floor.



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ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

With great joy, Marko Boyd and Shara Jean Jalandoni are pleased to announce their engagement on July 26, 2024.

Their relationship has been built on love, commitment, family, and shared experiences. They look forward to continuing their journey together and building a future as husband and wife.

Congratulations to the happy couple!

RIVERVIEW RESIDENTS CAN HELP
KEEP BLOOD SUPPLY STRONG

By Marie Gilmore



Riverview residents have an opportunity to make a lifesaving difference this September as OneBlood continues encouraging eligible donors to give blood regularly.

Summer proved challenging for the blood supply both locally and nationally. In July, OneBlood issued an emergency appeal for donors, and community members responded, helping stabilize the supply. However, the need for blood never stops.

With the heart of hurricane season approaching, maintaining a strong blood supply is especially important. Blood is needed before, during and after major storms, making proactive donations critical.

“OneBlood” emphasizes that donating should not be something people wait to do until a disaster occurs. A ready supply depends on donors giving regularly, before emergencies happen.

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs a blood transfusion. Blood is required for accident victims, patients undergoing surgery or cancer treatment, premature babies, organ transplant recipients and those living with conditions requiring regular transfusions.

OneBlood is a nonprofit community resource that supplies blood to more than 250 hospitals throughout Florida and parts



of Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina and North Carolina. Because blood cannot be manufactured and has a limited shelf life, a steady stream of donations is essential.

Riverview-area residents will have several convenient opportunities to donate this month. Upcoming blood drives include Wednesday, September 9, at Publix, located at 3863 U.S. 301 S., from 2-5 p.m.; Thursday, September 10, at Jersey Mike’s Subs, located at 9916 Upper Alafia Ct., from 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Tuesday, September 22, at BlueGrace Logistics, located at 2846 S. Falkenburg Rd., from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; and Wednesday, September 23, at Ring Power Corporation, located at 10421 Fernhill Dr., from 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Additional drives are scheduled at Maximus, located at 3020 U.S. 301 S., and Planet Fitness-Riverview, located at 9822 U.S. 301, on Monday, September 28, as well as nearby locations throughout the area. Most participating drives offer walk-ins, and appointments can be scheduled through OneBlood.

Eligible donors generally must be at least 16 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds and be in good health, although additional eligibility requirements apply.

A single donation can help multiple patients after the blood is separated into components. Donors can also use OneBlood’s My OneBlood Journey program to learn when their donation is on its way to a hospital.

To find a nearby blood drive or schedule an appointment, visit www.oneblood.org.

LIBRARY WELCOMES GRAPHIC
NOVELIST OF BATWING: LUKE FOX

Staff Report

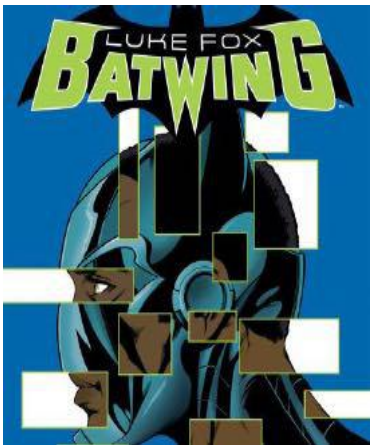
Comic book fans of all ages will have the chance to step into the worlds of superheroes, mythology and graphic novels when the Riverview Public Library hosts a special day of comic book-themed activities on Saturday, September 19.

The event will feature award-winning comic book creators Jimmy Palmiotti and Amanda Conner, who will take part in an exclusive panel sharing behind-the-scenes stories from their work with DC Comics, Marvel and other major entertainment brands. Attendees also can participate in comic book-themed activities throughout the day and receive a free book while supplies last.

The day begins at 10:30 a.m. with Heroes Quest, an interactive program recommended for children ages 6-12. Participants will use art supplies and simple writing techniques to create their own superhero and develop the character’s story.

At 11:30 a.m., adults can join the Graphic Novel Book Discussion featuring *Batwing: Luke Fox* by Palmiotti. The discussion, held in celebration of the author event, will explore *Batwing* issues #19-34 and *Batwing: Futures End* issue #1.

The graphic novel follows Luke Fox, son of Bruce Wayne’s trusted ally Lucius Fox, as he takes on the mantle of *Batwing*. Once a member of *Batman Incorporated*, *Batwing* has stepped away, leaving Luke to face



new threats in Gotham City. Written by Palmiotti and Justin Gray with art by Eduardo Pansica, the story pits the armored vigilante against villains including Lady Vic and Charlie Caligula while introducing the mysterious Darklings and Anubis clans beneath Gotham.

Teen writers can return at 3 p.m. for Hero’s Journal, which explores the hero’s journey through world-building activities. Participants will begin creating their own stories and record their adventures in a journal to take home.

At 4 p.m., adults can participate in American Pantheon, a program examining the role mythology has played in shaping society and cultural identity.

Palmiotti is a multi-award-winning comic book creator whose work spans comics, film, advertising, video games and other media. Conner has created cover art for Marvel, DC and independent publishers and is known for her work on Harley Quinn. The pair currently collaborate on Harley Quinn and other DC projects.

The Riverview Public Library is located at 9951 Balm Riverview Rd. in Riverview. For more information about the event and to register, visit <https://attend.hcplc.org/event/16804660>.

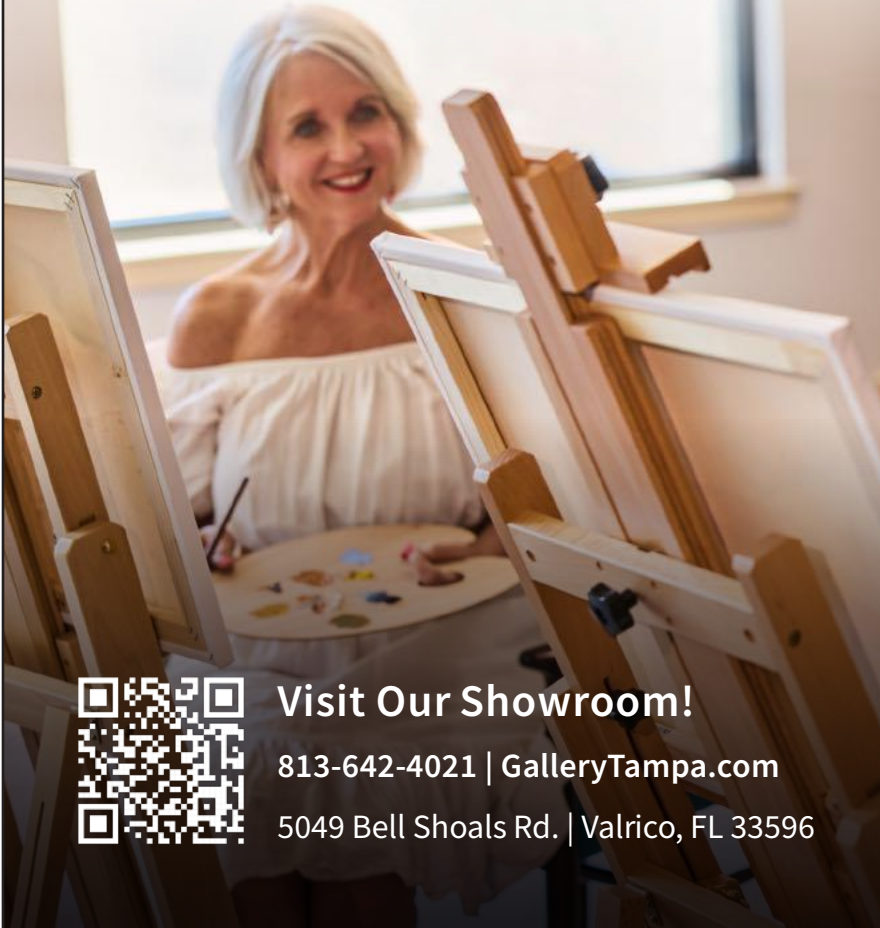
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THE TRAVEL INSURANCE CHICK™ GUIDES TRAVELERS WITH CONFIDENCE

By Kelly Wise Valdes

The Travel Insurance Chick™ was born from a gap Michelle Mosher saw repeatedly in the travel marketplace: travelers investing heavily in unforgettable experiences while treating protection as an afterthought.

"My husband and I are avid travelers, and I saw how often travel insurance was treated as an afterthought," said Mosher, president of The Travel Insurance Chick™. "People spend thousands of dollars and months planning a trip, then either skip the insurance or click a box without really knowing what they bought."

As a longtime insurance professional, Mosher recognized an opportunity to bridge the worlds of travel and insurance with clear, accessible guidance. "Travelers don't necessarily need more options," said Mosher. "They need someone who can explain the options and help them choose coverage that actually makes sense for their trip. That's really how The Travel Insurance Chick™ came about."

Mosher's approach centers on education, beginning with the particulars of each trip rather than the fine print of a policy. Mosher asks her clients questions such as, "Where are you going and what have you invested? Are you cruising or traveling internationally? What would happen if you got sick or something disrupted the trip?" Only after understanding the traveler's needs does she walk clients through what coverage includes — and what it does not.

"I don't want someone to say, 'Michelle told me I'm covered.' I want them to understand their coverage and feel confident about what they're buying."

One of the most common misconceptions she encounters is the belief that all travel insurance products are the same. Many op-

Michelle Mosher, founder of The Travel Insurance Chick®, offers clear, honest guidance to help travelers protect their journeys.

tions may provide coverage, but the question is whether it's the right coverage for your trip. She also notes frequent confusion around credit card coverage and cruise line policies.

"I'd much rather explain those differences before someone travels than have them find out when something has already gone wrong."

Staying informed is essential in an evolving travel landscape.

"Travel changes constantly, so this isn't insurance you can learn once and put on a shelf,"

Mosher said.

She maintains close communication with carriers, monitors industry updates and draws on her own experiences.

"I'm also a traveler myself, so when there's a major storm, airline issue or something happening overseas, I'm looking at it from both sides."

A recent group trip to Ireland reinforced the importance of comprehensive protection. When two travelers arrived days late due to flight cancellations, multiple parts of their policy came into play.

"One canceled flight created a domino effect," Mosher said. "Having the right coverage helped keep a bad travel experience from becoming an even bigger financial loss. That's exactly why I believe understanding what you're buying matters."

The Travel Insurance Chick™'s office is located at 11216 Winthrop Main St. in Riverview. For more information, visit www.travelinsurancechick.com or call 813-448-7580.

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NEW HORIZONS PREPARES FOR ANNUAL BBQ AND SILENT AUCTION

Staff Report

New Horizons Group Homes will bring together residents, families, friends and community supporters on Saturday, November 7, for its annual BBQ and Silent Auction, the organization's largest fundraiser of the year.

The event will take place from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Central Baptist Christian School's gymnasium, located at 402 E. Windhorst Rd. in Brandon. Tickets are \$20 and include a pulled-pork sandwich, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, cake, iced tea and water. BubbaQue's will cater the meal, while D.J. Henry Kirk will provide entertainment.

The event also will feature a silent auction with a variety of items designed to fit a range of budgets, along with a drawing for one or two additional prizes. Drawing tickets will be \$5 each or five for \$20.

Organizers encourage attendees to purchase or reserve tickets by Sunday, November 1, to help provide an accurate count for the catered meal. Tickets are available through New Horizons board members, Wayne Rees or the New Horizons office, located at 109 E. Clay Ave. in Brandon. Walk-ins also are welcome. Those who would like to pick up tickets at the door can call New Horizons at 813-571-2690.

Community members and businesses also are encouraged to become sponsors of the event by sending a check to the New Horizons office and indicating that it is for the barbecue.

New Horizons Group Homes was founded in 1992 after parents, teachers and friends



connected with the Special Ministries Department at First Baptist Church Brandon identified a need for long-term residential opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities.

The organization opened its first home, the Mary Lou Creamer Home, in 1999 with six female residents. A second home, the Alice Storms Home, opened in 2002 for men, followed by the Peter and Brenda Watkins Home in 2017.

Today, New Horizons provides a family-oriented, Christian living environment for adults with special abilities. Its person-centered program supports residents in pursuing individual goals based on their personal choices and needs while encouraging independence, dignity and participation in the community.

Residents remain active through employment and day programs, bowling, church and other activities. The organization's homes are licensed as assisted living facilities, and funding comes from resident payments, Medicaid Waiver services for qualified residents, donations and fundraising.

The annual BBQ and Silent Auction helps provide important financial support for New Horizons while giving the community an opportunity to gather and celebrate the organization's residents and mission.

For more information or to reserve tickets, call New Horizons at 813-571-2690. To learn more about New Horizons, visit www.newhorizonshomes.org.

SUNCOAST HEALTH CENTERS EXPANDS CARE IN GROWING RIVERVIEW

By Marie Gilmore

As Riverview and Southeastern Hillsborough County continue to grow, access to convenient and affordable health care is becoming increasingly important. Suncoast Community Health Centers (SCHC) is responding with a new Riverview location that opened in April.

Located at 10334 White Viburnum Way in Riverview, the new center provides adult and family medical care, with walk-in appointments available as space allows. The location was established to give residents in Riverview, Gibsonton and surrounding communities a nearby option for routine and ongoing health care.

The new location was highlighted as part of National Health Center Week, August 2-8, which recognizes the role community health centers play in providing care to residents regardless of their ability to pay.

SCHC accepts most insurance plans, including Medicaid, Medicare and the Hillsborough County Health Care Plan. For patients without insurance, the organization offers a sliding-fee scale based on household income and family size. The goal is to ensure that cost or lack of insurance does not prevent residents from receiving care.

"As Southeastern Hillsborough County continues to grow, we knew families here needed a local option they could count on, whether they have insurance, are on Medicaid or don't have coverage at all," said Brad-



Suncoast Community Health Centers recently opened its new Riverview location at 10334 White Viburnum Way, expanding access to affordable adult and family medical care for residents.

ley Herremans, CEO of Suncoast Community Health Centers. "Riverview is not just a new location, it's a continuation of nearly 50 years of showing up for this community, and we want people to know the door is open."

SCHC has served Hillsborough County as a not-for-profit Federally Qualified Health Center since 1977. Across its network, the organization serves more than 72,000 unique patients through more than 250,000 visits each year.

The organization's approach extends beyond traditional medical care. Depending on location and patient needs, SCHC connects residents with behavioral health support, financial counseling, social services, insurance enrollment assistance and other resources designed to address factors that can affect a family's overall health and stability.

The Riverview center is part of SCHC's continued expansion as the population of Southeastern Hillsborough County increases.

Residents seeking care at the Riverview location can call 813-653-6100 to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins are welcome as space allows.

For more information about Suncoast Community Health Centers, available services and additional locations, visit <https://suncoast-chc.org/>.



WINTHROP RESTAURANT WEEK

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PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS



PULTEGROUP HOSTS NOTES OF LOVE CEREMONY FOR TWO VETERANS RECEIVING MORTGAGE-FREE HOMES

Staff Report



PulteGroup's West Florida Division opened the doors of two future veteran homes to the Riverview community on August 27, inviting employees, trade partners, family members and neighbors to leave permanent messages of love and gratitude inside the walls before they were finished.

The Notes of Love event is part of the division's Built to Honor program, a collaboration with the nonprofit Building Homes for Heroes, which builds, modifies and gifts mortgage-free homes veterans and Gold Star families. Army Spc. Ryan Heard and Army Sgt. Carson Shaw received the two gifted homes in Pulte Homes' Spencer Glen community, located at 13716 Sunlight Meadow Dr. in Riverview.

Visitors were welcome to stop by at any time to write handwritten notes directly on the studs, slab and walls throughout both homes. The messages, typically expressions of encouragement, thanks and support for the veterans and their families, will remain sealed behind

the finished walls and flooring for the life of the homes.

Heard arrived at the community at 2:30 p.m. and walked through his future home to see and read the notes left by the community. Following his walkthrough, his family was given time alone in the home to review the messages privately. Shaw arrived at 3:30 p.m. for the same experience in his home next door.

"There is something incredibly powerful about walking a veteran through a home filled with handwritten notes from people they've never met, all of them thanking him or her for their sacrifice," said Tony Campano, vice president of procurement for PulteGroup's West Florida Division. "I cry every single time I walk through with these veterans. Seeing Ryan and Carson read those messages, knowing they'll be part of their home forever, is one of the most meaningful things we get to do all year."

"Notes of Love is a beautiful reminder that when we build a home, we're also building a community around one of our

nation's heroes," said Andy Pujol, founder and CEO of Building Homes for Heroes. "We're so proud to stand with our incredible partners at Pulte's Built to Honor program and encourage the community to come together, welcome these deserving heroes and show them just how grateful we are for their service and sacrifice."

"Seeing all these people coming together, giving their time and their donations to build this home for me and my family, it's overwhelming and unbelievable," said Heard. "Trust the process. Thank you to everybody, to the builders and volunteers who are going to build this home for us."

"This is one of the most special days of our lives," said Shaw. "To everybody who showed up and gave their time — thank you."

The Notes of Love ceremony precedes the completion of the mortgage-free homes, which will be move-in ready for both families by Thanksgiving. The dual gift marks the seventh and eighth mortgage-free homes PulteGroup's West Florida Division has built for veterans in the

Tampa Bay area through Built to Honor, and the first time the division has honored two recipients at once.

Across the country, PulteGroup has donated over 100 Built to Honor mortgage-free homes to wounded veterans since founding the program in 2013.

For more information, visit www.pulte.com/homes/florida/tampa/riverview/spencer-glen-211225.

For over a decade, PulteGroup's Built to Honor program has recognized and thanked returning military personnel who have been injured during their term of service by providing mortgage-free homes to veterans and their families. Launched in 2013, the program has built and donated over 100 homes, gifting more than \$40 million in value, across the country. Built to Honor works in partnership with nonprofit organizations to identify veteran candidates. For more information about Built to Honor, go to <http://builttohonor.org/>. Follow Built to Honor on X @BuiltToHonor and www.facebook.com/people/built-to-honor/61574264735162/.



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VENDORS INVITED TO JOIN BRCC HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR

Staff Report

Local health and wellness businesses have an opportunity to put their services in front of families and community members at the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce's Community Health & Wellness Fair on Sunday, November 1.

Sponsored by AdventHealth, the family-friendly event will be held from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Oh So Rustic, located at 788 W. Lumsden Rd. in Brandon. The fair is designed to connect residents with local health providers,

wellness businesses and community organizations while providing an engaging day of activities, education and resources.

The chamber is encouraging businesses and organizations in the health and wellness industry to participate as vendors and take advantage of the opportunity to build relationships with potential customers.

The event will feature interactive activities, on-site health screenings, sports demonstrations, live entertainment and food trucks. With a variety of activities planned, organizers expect the fair to attract families, individuals and community members interested in learning more about ways to improve their health and well-being.

For vendors, the event offers a chance to showcase products and services, answer questions, share expertise and build brand awareness in a face-to-face setting.

Businesses specializing in health care, fitness, nutrition, preventive care, mental well-

ness and holistic services are encouraged to participate. Community organizations and other businesses that support healthy lifestyles are also invited to join the event.

"Whether you specialize in health care, fitness, nutrition, mental wellness, preventative care or holistic services, your participation helps strengthen a healthier Brandon-Riverview community," the

chamber noted.

Vendor space is \$50 for Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce members and \$75 for nonmembers. Businesses interested in taking their involvement further can also choose from several sponsorship opportunities.

The Physically Fit Sponsor level is \$250, the Total Wellness Sponsor level is \$500 and the Better Health Sponsor level is \$1,000. Sponsorship opportunities provide businesses with an additional way to gain visibility while supporting an event focused on community health.

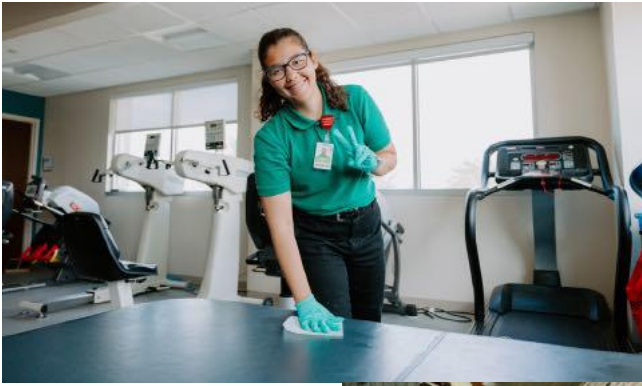
Vendor and sponsorship registration is open through Friday, October 30.

The Community Health & Wellness Fair is an opportunity for local businesses to do more than promote their services. It provides a chance to become part of a community-wide effort to educate, inspire and connect residents with resources that can help them live healthier lives.



QUEST CONNECTS BUSINESSES WITH JOB SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES

Staff Report



journey to independence," said John R. Gill, president and CEO at Quest. "Every new business partner opens a door to financial stability and personal fulfillment for people with developmental disabilities — helping them live a full life."

Employment Services

Nonprofit Quest Inc. is accepting applications for Employment Services, which assists companies facing staffing shortages in the Tampa area by connecting them to job seekers with developmental disabilities.

Through the program, Quest introduces businesses to prescreened individuals who can fill workforce gaps for up to eight weeks, during which the nonprofit covers payroll costs, liability and workers' compensation. Businesses are provided with a career coach and employment specialist for additional support and have the option to permanently hire participants after the program cycle.

Since Employment Services launched in the Tampa region in January, Quest has worked with multiple organizations — including retirement community Colliers at St. Pete and retailers PGA Superstore and Burlington — to provide meaningful job opportunities to more than 40 people. The assistance meets a major need, with 81 percent of those with developmental disabilities being unemployed.

"At Quest, we know that professional development is a foundational step in the



supports companies of any size and across all industries. For more information about how to apply, visit the website <https://questinc.org/employment-services-for-business-partners/>.

About Quest Inc.

For over 60 years, Quest Inc. has transformed the lives of thousands of adults and children with developmental disabilities through a range of services proven to increase capabilities and quality of life. From the humble beginnings of a single location serving eight individuals to currently over 20 locations, serving over 800 individuals each day in Orlando and Tampa, Quest continues to help those with developmental disabilities experience a full life.

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GIBSONTON DESALINATION PROJECT
EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Staff Report

A major water infrastructure project in Gibsonton is receiving national recognition for strengthening the region's water supply while addressing the environmental and operational challenges of working along Tampa Bay.

The Tampa Bay Water Desalination Intake Pump Station – Phase II has been named a 2026 National Design-Build Project/Team Award Merit winner by the Design-Build Institute of America (DBIA). The project was one of 32 projects recognized nationwide across 10 categories.

Located at one of Tampa Bay's only desalination facilities, the project was designed to help meet rising water demand and improve the facility's ability to withstand coastal flooding and extreme weather.

The new intake pump station can supply up to 50 million gallons of seawater per day to the existing desalination facility. Critical electrical systems were also elevated above the floodplain to provide additional protection against sea level rise and severe weather.

The project presented significant challenges because construction took place inside an active Tampa Electric Company power plant that was undergoing its own construction work. The team also had to work around existing utilities and remain mindful of a nearby public manatee viewing area and the surrounding marine environment.

Early collaboration was key to completing the project successfully. Tampa Bay Water, the design-build team, TECO operations staff



and TECO's contractor worked together through frequent coordination meetings and real-time communication. The approach allowed the teams to address issues quickly, including previously unknown utilities discovered during construction.

The project was completed in just 18 months, remained on budget and recorded zero safety incidents.

Environmental protection was also an important component. Construction included strict controls and monitoring designed to protect the surrounding marine habitat. The project team also partnered with Clams for Clean Water, a nonprofit organization, to design and construct clam habitats intended to further improve water quality.

The \$21.05 million project was led by Tampa Bay Water, with Black & Veatch Corp. serving as owner advisor and Archer Western Construction LLC serving as design-builder and general contractor. Wade Trim Inc. provided engineering services.

DBIA Executive Director and CEO Lisa Washington said the national award winners demonstrate what can be accomplished when expertise, innovation and a shared commitment to excellence come together.

The Merit Award winners will be recognized at DBIA's 2026 Design-Build Conference & Expo in Cleveland on Thursday, November 5, where additional national honors will be announced.

TAMPA BAY LAW ENFORCEMENT
HEROES HONORED AT ANNUAL GALA

Staff Report

Stories of courage, service and sacrifice took center stage as the Tampa Bay Area Chiefs of Police Foundation hosted its 11th annual gala recently at Opal Sol Resort in Clearwater.

Presented by the Pepin Family Foundation, the event was open to the public for the first time, bringing together law enforcement officials, business leaders, families and community supporters to recognize individuals making a difference across the Tampa Bay area.

The evening's highest honor, the Lifetime Achievement Award, was presented to U.S. Senator Ashley Moody for her decades of advocacy on behalf of law enforcement and public safety.

"As a former prosecutor and the wife of a law enforcement officer, I have seen firsthand the sacrifices these men and women, and their families, make each and every day for our communities," Moody said.

Moody's career includes serving as a federal prosecutor, circuit court judge and Florida attorney general before being elected to the U.S. Senate. Her husband, Justin Moody, is an assistant chief with the Plant City Police Department.

Five law enforcement honorees also were recognized for exceptional service.

Detective Aaron Smith of the Pasco County Sheriff's Office Digital Forensics Unit was named Deputy of the Year for his work assisting complex criminal investigations and identifying victims of child exploitation.

Clearwater Police Officer Andrew Billups received Officer of the Year honors after two separate rescues. He helped save a missing 8-year-old autistic girl who was in danger



near the Gulf and later helped bring a woman in crisis to safety from the Memorial Causeway Bridge.

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Agent Aby George was named Agent of the Year for leading an investigation into an international child exploitation operation that resulted in arrests

and the identification of approximately 50 child victims.

Master Patrol Officer Chrisie Lopez of the St. Petersburg Police Department received the Unsung Hero Award for more than a decade of crisis negotiation work, helping safely resolve high-risk situations.

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Strategic Gun Intelligence Unit was named Task Force of the Year for its efforts to combat gun violence. Since launching in 2025, the unit has arrested more than 100 violent offenders and seized 132 illegal firearms.

Business leader Fotini Allteni Kokeri was recognized as Business Partner of the Year for her longtime support of law enforcement training, officer development and specialized equipment.

Since 2020, the foundation has invested more than \$750,000 in professional development and educational and police academy scholarships. The Pepin Family Foundation also donated \$250,000 this year.

"This gala is about more than awards — it's about telling the stories of the people behind the badge," said Greg Mertz, foundation president.

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BUCCANEERS AND MOSAIC EXTEND TACKLING HUNGER PARTNERSHIP

Staff Report



The extension will also support the continuation of the game day Tackling Hunger fueled by Mosaic program, helping address food insecurity throughout the Buccaneers regular season. Additional fund-

ing will allow participating pantries to expand their reach through cooking classes and nutrition education programs.

Since 2021, the program has raised over \$500,000 to address food insecurity in the community. A recent event featured a \$50,000 check presentation to the Hillsborough Education Foundation, with funds designated for school pantry locations opened through the organizations' partnership. The foundation will distribute \$10,000 to each school food pantry at Robinson, Lamb, Broward and Pinecrest elementary schools, with Robinson also supporting students and families at Turkey Creek Middle School. The remaining \$10,000 will support the foundation's mission of providing high-quality educational opportunities for students across Hillsborough County.

"Through our partnership with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Feeding Tampa Bay, we've helped expand access to nutritious food for thousands of local families. Providing reliable access to healthy meals is something we care deeply about because it aligns closely to our mission — to help the world grow the food it needs," said Bruce Bodine, president and CEO of the Mosaic Company. "We're proud of what we've accomplished together over the past five years, and we're excited to extend this partnership in the fight against hunger across Tampa Bay."

"Mosaic has been an outstanding partner for the past five years, helping us turn a shared commitment into real impact across the Tampa Bay community," said Tampa Bay Buccaneers chief commercial officer Atul Khosla. "Through Tackling Hunger fueled by Mosaic, we have surpassed expectations, delivered meaningful support to families in need and built powerful momentum in the fight against food insecurity. We are excited to keep pushing that work forward together."

Since joining forces in 2021, the Buccaneers and The Mosaic Company have provided more than 780,000 meals and supported over 5,500 families through donations and access to food pantries. Through the partnership, both organizations will continue to combat food insecurity in Tampa Bay, supporting school pantry locations at Robinson, Lamb, Broward and Pinecrest elementary schools.

CIRQUE DREAMS HOLIDAZE RETURNS TO RP FUNDING FOR ONE NIGHT

Staff Report



Cirque Dreams Holidaze will captivate audiences in Lakeland this holiday season with a brilliantly breathtaking holiday spectacular for the entire family. As the original cirque holiday theatrical event, this nationally acclaimed annual tradition wraps a Broadway-style production around awe-inspiring contemporary circus arts.

On Christmas Eve, young Clara returns home only to learn that a snowstorm may keep her family from joining her. Just as loneliness begins to settle in, two whimsical singers appear and whisk her away into Holidaze, a fantastical world full of color, wonder and breathtaking circus acts. As she journeys through this magical realm, Clara becomes part of the adventure, forming unexpected friendships and discovering her own courage.

Reimagined for 2026, Cirque Dreams Holidaze features a world-renowned cast of performers. The ensemble includes aerial circus acts, sleight-of-hand jugglers, fun-loving skippers, eye-popping acrobatics and much more. With new music including beloved holiday favorites sung live, new sets, sparkling scenery and stunning costumes, guests from children to seniors will be on the edge of their seats as holiday characters come to life on the most magical of nights.

Both critics and audiences alike agree that Cirque Dreams Holidaze is a show for all ages to enjoy where families can make unforgettable memories together.

Cirque Dreams Holidaze will perform one show at RP Funding Center, located at 701 W. Lime St. in Lakeland, on Thursday, November 19, at 7 p.m. Tickets are available at the RP Funding Center Box Office or by calling 863-834-8111. Groups of 10 or more may reserve tickets by contacting group.sales@vstarentertainment.com. For more information, visit www.cirquedreams.com.

Follow @CirqueDreams and #cirquedreamsholidaze on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.

About Cirque Dreams

The Cirque Dreams franchise is a globally recognized entertainment brand that has produced a wide array of live stage performances for Broadway, casinos, theme parks, resorts, cruise lines and theatrical venues worldwide. Since 1993, millions of people have experienced Cirque Dreams productions across the globe. Combining the world's finest contemporary circus artists with dynamic choreography and whimsical storytelling, Cirque Dreams productions have captured the hearts and imaginations of both audiences and critics alike. The Cirque Dreams franchise is produced by VStar Entertainment Group, a leading entertainment company acquired in 2018 by Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group. VStar has entertained millions of families with more than 40,000 live performances across 50-plus countries.

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TRICK OR TREAT STREET RETURNS FOR FAMILY HALLOWEEN FUN

Staff Report

Halloween will take over Riverview High School on Saturday, October 24, when the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce hosts its annual Trick or Treat Street, bringing local businesses and thousands of area families together for an evening of festive fun.

The free community event will take place from 5-8 p.m. at Riverview High School, located at 11311 Boyette Rd. in Riverview. Families are invited to come dressed in their Halloween best and enjoy trick-or-treating, food, games and activities designed for children of all ages.

One of the highlights of Trick or Treat Street is the opportunity for children to visit decorated booths hosted by local businesses and collect candy along the way. Participating businesses are encouraged to get creative with their displays, wear costumes and create memorable experiences for families.

In addition to trick-or-treating, the event will feature food trucks, a foam party and bounce houses, giving families plenty of ways to enjoy the evening beyond collecting candy.

For Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce members, the event also provides an opportunity to connect directly with local residents and introduce their businesses to potential customers in a fun, relaxed setting.

"Don't just advertise to the communi-



ty — be part of the community" is the message behind the chamber's invitation to businesses to participate.

Businesses can reserve a vendor booth and decorate their space for Halloween while handing out candy to visiting children. Booth participation is \$65 for chamber members and \$100 for nonmembers. Craft vendor spaces are \$75 for members and \$100 for nonmembers, while food vendor spaces are \$75 for members and \$100 for nonmembers.

The event is sponsored by A League of Their Own Riverview.

Whether families come for the costumes, candy, bounce houses, foam party or simply the chance to enjoy an evening together, Trick or Treat Street offers a festive way to celebrate Halloween while supporting and connecting with local businesses.

Admission to Trick or Treat Street is free for the community.

For businesses, the chamber encourages early registration to secure a booth and join one of its largest community events of the year.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR HELPS PEOPLE RECONNECT, REDUCE STRESS AND FIND PEACE

By Mylena C. Ferman

Jaclyn Peterson, owner of Ascend with Jaclyn, aims to help people reduce stress and burnout through yoga. Peterson leads trauma-sensitive yoga classes throughout the Greater Tampa Bay area and works with local businesses.

Her goal is to teach employees how yoga practices can provide an outlet to trauma and better work-life practices.

"Yoga is for everybody, you know?" Peterson said. "No matter your physical state, ... there is some type of yoga you can do."

Many people have anecdotally claimed yoga to be a great stress reducer.

However, a study done in India earlier this year found that stock market investors who participated in a 30-day yoga intervention reported a reduction in perceived stress. Another yoga study, conducted in 2024, found that the yoga participants showed improved executive function, working memory and processing speed.

Peterson would likely agree with such findings. She claimed those who participated in her yoga classes reported similar benefits, including better sleep, feelings of calm, raised focus levels and less chronic pain. Trauma sensitive yoga can also have an additional benefit of allowing people to feel in control of their own body again.

"When people have experienced trauma,



... they walk away with a diminished sense of self and a lot of times they may not even be aware that they don't trust themselves to

make decisions," she said.

Peterson practiced yoga after surviving an abusive marriage and moving out of state.

"The practice helped me reconnect with myself and slowly begin to rebuild my identity and rebuild my self-worth," Peterson said.

Currently, Peterson hosts a weekly chair yoga

class at the Florida Blue Center in Sarasota. She aims to do more business-to-business work with employee wellness programs and give back to the community with Community Wellness Programs.

"It helps bring a balance and a sense of peace that they need in their lives, as well," Peterson said. "That's really my goal, to help people find that peace and to activate that parasympathetic nervous system."

For more information about Ascend with Jaclyn, please visit <https://ascendwithjaclyn.com/>, follow its Instagram (@ascendwithjaclyn) or follow its Ascend with Jaclyn Facebook page. Those interested in having Peterson host a class may contact her through the contact page on her website or via email at ascendwithjaclyn@gmail.com.

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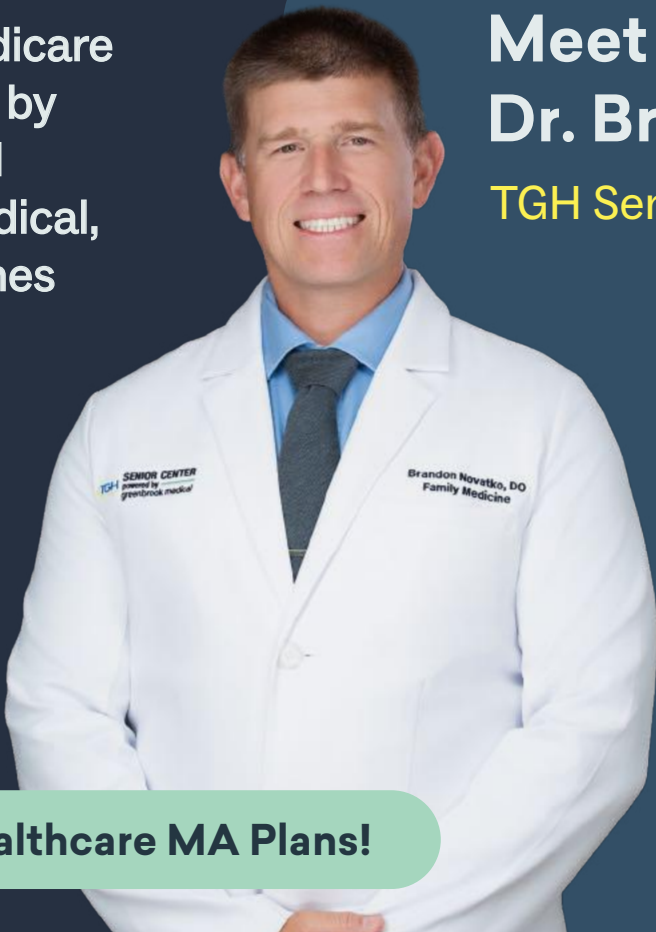
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FIRE STATION AT CENTER OF NEW DRONE BLOOD DELIVERY PROGRAM

By Marie Gilmore



carrying whole blood can be deployed simultaneously. Once the blood arrives, trained first responders can begin a transfusion at the scene when medically necessary, potentially providing critical treatment before the patient reaches a trauma center.

The two stations were selected because they serve areas of Hillsborough County with high volumes of penetrating trauma and hemorrhagic injuries.

A Riverview fire station will soon play a key role in a new emergency medical program designed to deliver lifesaving whole blood by drone directly to trauma scenes.

Hillsborough County Fire Rescue Station 37 in Riverview is one of two stations selected to serve as a launch site for Tampa General Hospital's new emergency drone delivery program. The initiative is designed to get blood to patients experiencing severe blood loss before they reach a hospital, when every minute can make a difference.

The program, developed in partnership with Tampa General Hospital, Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, the University of South Florida Health Morsani College of Medicine, the Florida Center for Emergency Medical Services, OneBlood and Archer First Response Systems, is being billed as the nation's first EMS-driven drone delivery program for prehospital whole blood.

Station 37, along with Station 9 in the Falkenburg/Sabal Park area, will serve as the initial operating locations. Together, the two drone systems are expected to cover a 70-square-mile area and deliver whole blood in less than three minutes on average.

When a 911 call indicates a potentially life-threatening hemorrhage, emergency responders will be dispatched while a drone

"The golden hour of trauma care has always started at the hospital door until now," said Michele Moran, senior vice president for emergency services at Tampa General. "This program puts whole blood directly into the hands of first responders before a patient ever reaches us."

Hillsborough County Fire Rescue officials said the program will give first responders another tool for treating patients with severe injuries.

"Our crews are often first at the scene of an accident," said Todd Carnell, rescue division chief. "This program puts an essential, lifesaving resource directly in our hands at the scene."

The technology is expected to come online in October, pending approval by the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners. The commission convened on the matter September 2.

The pilot program is intended to generate data that could help expand the coverage area and capacity over time. Tampa General officials also hope the initiative can serve as a model for using drone technology to improve emergency medical response in other communities.

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER OFFERS FREE KIDS' ADMISSION THIS MONTH

Staff Report

Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex is offering free, one-day admission to kids ages 3-11 throughout the month as part of Future Voyagers Month. With the purchase of at least one adult admission, guests can receive up to three complimentary children's tickets.

Guests will also have another way to save this fall with the extension of the Celebrating USA 250 offer through Sunday, October 4. In honor of America's 250th anniversary, guests can save \$17.76 on one-day admission tickets. The Celebrating USA 250 offer cannot be combined with the Future Voyagers Month offer and cannot be applied to an annual pass.

Recognized as one of Tripadvisor's top three U.S. attractions for two consecutive years, Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex allows Future Voyagers to "Discover Something Real" through flight flown artifacts, engaging exhibits, displays featuring space suits covered in moon dust, interactive experiences designed to replicate space flight and more. The youngest guests will also enjoy Planet Play, an immersive indoor play area where guests can walk on Saturn's rings and slide through an asteroid field.

Young space explorers can also enjoy new additions to the visitor complex experience, including the all-new Fraggles Rock: A Space-y Adventure, an exciting live stage show that brings Jim Henson's Emmy



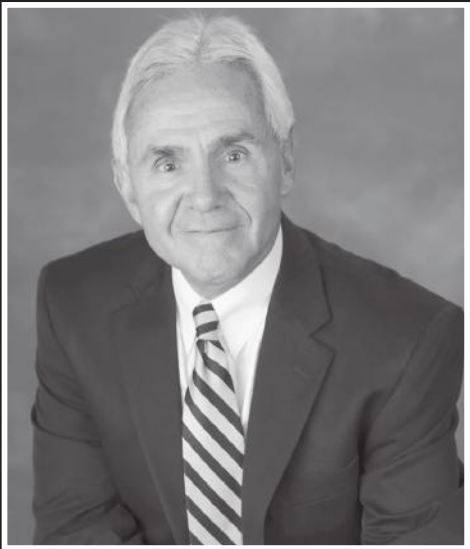
Award-winning Fraggles face-to-face with NASA's real-life space explorers. Also a favorite, The Gantry at LC-39 tells the story of NASA's symbiotic relationship between nature and technology and its mission to protect Earth through space exploration.

Admission is available for advance purchase online at www.kennedyspacecenter.com/info/tickets, by calling reservations at 855-433-4210 or by visiting will call. Blackout dates may apply, including launch viewing and special events.

Go beyond imagination and into something real at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex. Named the No. 1 U.S. Attraction by TripAdvisor's 2025 Travelers' Choice Awards, Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex gets visitors up close to real flight flown artifacts, meet a veteran NASA astronaut, feel the rumble of a rocket launch, and so much more. Just 45 minutes from Orlando, Fla., Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex opens daily at 9 a.m. with closing times varying by season.

The popular two-day ticket, which can be used for up to six months from purchase and averages a cost of \$45 per day, is now available for \$91 per adult and \$81 per child. Single-day admission is \$77 per adult; \$67 per child. For more information, call 877-313-2610 or visit www.KennedySpaceCenter.com.

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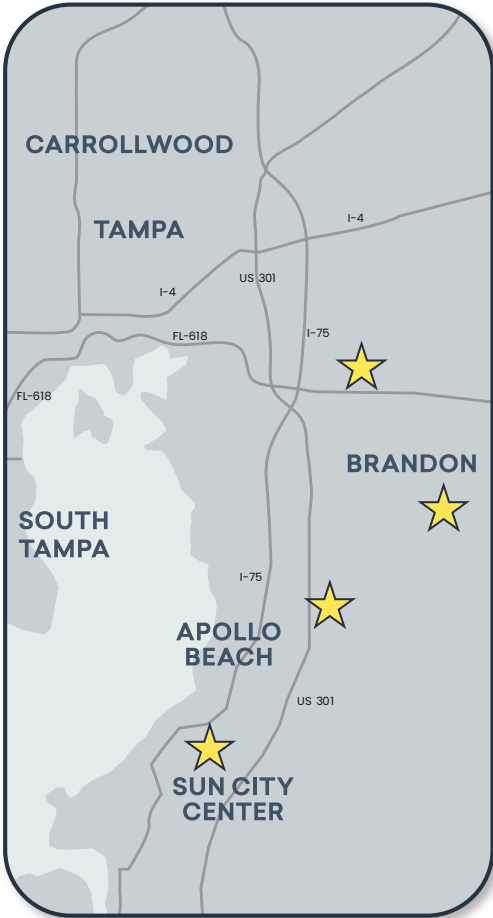


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DRURY PLAZA HOTEL BRANDON CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING

The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce (BRCC) joined community leaders, Chamber members, guests and representatives of Drury Plaza Hotel Tampa Brandon to celebrate the hotel's grand opening with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony. The celebration offered attendees an opportunity to tour the new property, enjoy a light lunch, network with members of the local business community and learn more about the hotel and the amenities it brings to the Tampa Bay area.

BRCC President Amber Aaron welcomed those in attendance and thanked the community for coming together to support one of the chamber's newest members. Aaron then introduced Drury Plaza Hotel Tampa Brandon general manager Ian Gallagher, who shared remarks about Drury Hotels and the company's newest Florida location.

Opened on May 28, Drury Plaza Hotel Tampa Brandon marks an important milestone for the company as the first Drury Plaza Hotel in the Tampa Bay area and Drury's seventh hotel in Florida. Conveniently located off I-75, the hotel provides easy access to downtown Tampa, Tampa International Airport, Port Tampa Bay, Brandon Exchange and many of the region's popular attractions



Staff Report

and destinations, including Busch Gardens, the Tampa Riverwalk, Raymond James Stadium and the Tampa Convention Center.

The new hotel features 210 guest rooms and suites and a variety of amenities for business and leisure travelers. Guests can enjoy complimentary hot breakfast, Drury's signature 5:30 Kickback, free Wi-Fi and parking, an outdoor pool and spa, fitness and business centers and on-site dining at The Kitchen + Bar.

Following the official cutting of the ribbon, Aaron presented a special proclamation on behalf of the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce, officially declaring August 20, 2026, 'Drury Plaza Hotel Tampa Brandon Day' in recognition of the hotel's grand opening and investment in the local community.

The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce congratulates Gallagher and the entire Drury Plaza Hotel Tampa Brandon team on this exciting milestone and welcomes them to the Brandon Riverview business community.

P.F. CHANG'S BRING COMFORT TO HOSPITALIZED CHILDREN IN SEPT

Staff Report

Families dining at P.F. Chang's in Brandon have an opportunity this month to help bring comfort and happiness to children facing hospital stays.

P.F. Chang's has launched its inaugural Spirit of the Zodiac giving initiative, inspired by the Chinese zodiac. The first campaign, Year of the Fire Horse: Spirit of Strength, will benefit Starlight Children's Foundation, a national nonprofit that provides programs and experiences for children during medical care.

The Brandon P.F. Chang's is located at 827 Brandon Town Center Dr. and is participating in the monthlong campaign, which runs through Wednesday, September 30, while supplies last.

At the center of the campaign is Bao, a limited-edition horse plushie inspired by the strength, courage and resilience associated with the Fire Horse. Guests can purchase Bao for \$10 during a dine-in visit at participating P.F. Chang's restaurants.

For every Bao purchased, P.F. Chang's will donate an identical plushie to Starlight Children's Foundation for distribution to children through its network of more than 800 children's hospitals nationwide. The company will donate up to 20,000 plushies through the campaign.

Guests also can support the effort by rounding up their restaurant checks or making an in-restaurant donation of \$10 or more to Starlight. The campaign has a goal of raising



\$500,000 to support Starlight's work with children and families.

Those who purchase Bao or make an eligible \$10 or more donation will

receive an offer for a complimentary eligible appetizer with the purchase of an entrée during a future dine-in visit. The offer is valid through Saturday, October 31.

The campaign will extend beyond September. In October, P.F. Chang's and Starlight representatives will visit hospitals for in-hospital catering and plush deliveries, bringing the Spirit of Strength directly to children and families.

The Bao story also will continue outside the restaurant through a new children's book written by author Jenny Liao and illustrated by Adriane Tsai. Expected to be published later this month, the digital story follows Bao through themes of courage, kindness, comfort and hope.

Starlight Children's Foundation provides programs including toy deliveries, hospital gowns, gaming stations and other activities designed to help children feel more comfortable, engaged and connected during medical care.

P.F. Chang's encourages Brandon-area residents to participate by visiting the local restaurant throughout September and helping Bao deliver a little extra comfort to children during challenging hospital stays.

For more information or to find a P.F. Chang's location near you, visit www.pf-changs.com/offers/spirit-of-the-zodiac.

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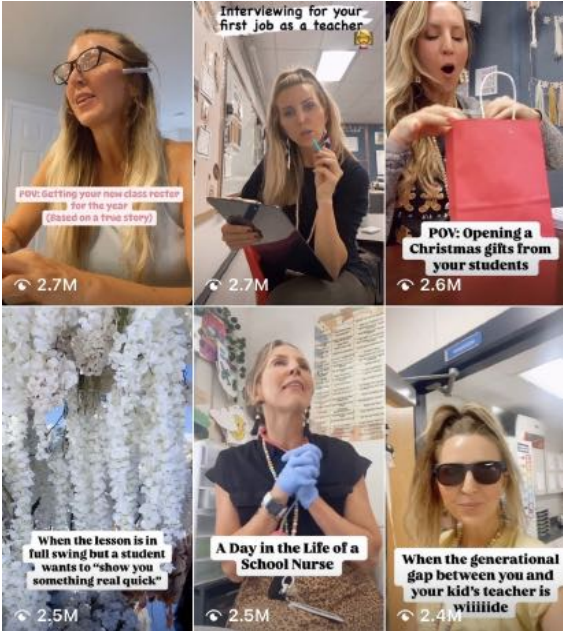
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LOCAL MOM, MATH TEACHER AND SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER

By Libby Hopkins

Wearing many hats comes easily to Brandon resident Rebecca McDonagh. She is a mom with two teenagers and a rescue dog, Foxy. She has been teaching for 18 years with Hillsborough County Schools and loves to travel, but it's what she does in her off time that has made her a social media influencer. On Instagram, she is @mathwithmissmcd, and her reels are hysterical.



Rebecca McDonagh is a local mom, teacher and social media influencer. Her funny reels and videos she posts on her Instagram account, @mathwithmissmcd are inspired by her life.

"I actually started making content hoping to create a little side hustle; you may have heard teachers aren't exactly the highest-paid profession," McDonagh said. "It sort of slowly evolved into making silly videos instead of a serious business, which is great because this is way more fun." The inspiration for her reels and videos comes from her real life. "Luckily, real life gives me all the inspiration I need," she said. "My own interactions with my students, my kids and other people's stories give me plenty of material. My Teacher Hotline videos are what initially took off, and people still send me names to use all the time. I love how there's a part of so many people's experiences in my videos." Making her videos and reel is cathartic to McDonagh. "It's honestly just really fun and kind of takes the edge off what can sometimes be a

stressful profession," she said. "I love hearing from my fellow teachers and moms about how something made them laugh or eased the chaos of the day," Being called a social media influencer is something that McDonagh takes in stride. "I have a feeling that is a huge overstatement," McDonagh said with a laugh. "I'm not really an influencer (unless it's influencing people to drink Diet Coke, and then I absolutely am) or a celebrity, but it is the best when people come up and introduce themselves and say they like something on my channel. I've met people in different states and even different countries who've seen one of the videos, and it's a blast chatting and hearing about their own experiences." McDonagh loves her followers and loves how the community supports her as both a teacher and a social media personality. "I'm so proud of how our community rallies around teachers," she said. "I've always felt so supported here working in our local schools and I'm proud to call this home. I recently published two math workbooks for fourth and fifth graders called Math to the Music, and it's been amazing hearing such great feedback from everyone."

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100 WOMEN WHO CARE RIVERVIEW/ FISHHAWK SEEKS MEMBERS

By Marie Gilmore

A group of local women has already donated more than \$115,000 to charities serving the community, and now 100 Women Who Care Riverview/ FishHawk is inviting more women to join them and help make an even greater difference.



Members of 100 Women Who Care Riverview/FishHawk gather to support local nonprofits. The group has donated more than \$115,000 to charities since its founding and is seeking new members to help reach its goal of providing \$10,000 to a deserving local organization each quarter.

tions making a difference throughout the community. "A Kid's Place was selected as our second-quarter charity," said chapter organizer Carole R. Gill. "We look forward to presenting the organization with its check at our September

The organization will hold its third-quarter meeting on Monday, September 14, at 6 p.m. at Donovan's Meatery, located at 11206 Sullivan St. in Riverview.

100 Women Who Care is built around a simple but powerful idea. Members meet four times a year, with each woman committing to donate \$100 per quarter. At each meeting, three local charities are nominated, and one is selected to receive the group's collective donation.

The chapter's goal is to reach and maintain 100 members, which would allow the group to donate \$10,000 to a deserving local charity every quarter.

Since its founding, the Riverview/FishHawk chapter has demonstrated the impact that can be made when individuals pool their resources. In December 2024, the organization celebrated surpassing \$100,000 in total donations to local charities. Since then, the group's giving has continued to grow, with more than \$115,000 now contributed to organiza-

14 meeting." The group has currently collected \$2,500 for A Kid's Place.

Members in good standing may also nominate a local charity to be considered for the September meeting. The deadline for charity nominations is Wednesday, September 2, at 5 p.m.

The quarterly gatherings offer women an opportunity not only to support worthwhile organizations but also to learn about the many nonprofits working to improve the lives of local residents.

The chapter is encouraging current members to invite friends, colleagues and other women who are interested in giving back to the community. Every new member brings the group closer to its goal of 100 women — and to the ability to provide a \$10,000 donation to a local charity each quarter.

For more information about joining 100 Women Who Care Riverview/FishHawk, visit its Facebook page.

MOONLIT PADDLE AND FRIGHT FEST OFFER ADVENTURE AT CAMP BAYOU

Staff Report

A special Observe the Moon Night Paddle will be offered on Saturday, September 19, starting at 7:30 p.m. To learn more about this international moon viewing event, visit <https://science.nasa.gov/moon/observe-the-moon-night>.



Camp Bayou Outdoor Learning Center invites the community to experience nature after dark with a special Observe the Moon Night Paddle on Saturday, September 19, followed by its annual Fall Fright Fest on Saturday, October 3. The Camp Bayou paddle tour is \$25 if you need to use one of its canoes or kayaks but \$5 if you bring your own. Registration is required; email campbayou@gmail.com.

Save the date: Camp Bayou's Fall Fright Fest will be held on Saturday, October 3, from 5-9 p.m. First walks will be for the young ones, beginning at 6 p.m., learning about our native nocturnal wildlife. The 7 p.m. and later walks will have stories about past misadventures at Camp Bayou and the spirits who can't rest. Then, join in by the campfire for s'mores. A donation of \$5 per person is requested to help cover the cost of supplies. Registration will be open in September.

For those who are interested in helping with registered groups, Camp Bayou is looking for enthusiastic volunteers who love the outdoors and want to pass along that passion to others through hands-on activities, walks and canoe tours, as well as help with maintenance and exhibits. Contact Becki at 813-641-8545 or fill out the form at www.campbayou.org. Camp Bay-

ou is mainly looking for folks to help teach school groups K-6, but there are other opportunities as well. It is also looking to fill a director position on its board. If you'd like to help guide Camp Bayou's future, consider joining. Email Dolly for more information at campbayou@gmail.com.

Camp Bayou Outdoor Learning Center is neither a campground nor a summer camp. It was an RV park before the county's ELAP program purchased the land, but it is now open for day use only to the general public. Through volunteers, donations, supporters and grants, the managing nonprofit — Bayou Outdoor Learning and Discovery Inc. (B.O.L.D.) — offers preregistered programs to schools, youth groups, adult groups and families. The center is open from Thursday through Sunday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., for passive recreational pursuits, such as wildlife watching, nature photography and trail walks. General admission is still free.

The Camp Bayou Outdoor Learning Center is a public-private partnership between B.O.L.D. and Hillsborough County Conservation & Environmental Lands Management. Camp Bayou is located 3 miles south of State Road 674 at the end of 24th St. SE in Ruskin. For more information, visit www.campbayou.org, call 813-641-8545, or check out the Camp Bayou Facebook page.



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OSPREY OBSERVER ENTERS 25TH YEAR
WITH NEW HOME OFFICE LOCATION

Staff Report



The *Osprey Observer* is preparing to celebrate 25 years of publishing positive, hometown news while entering a new chapter with a move to a more flexible office.

The family-owned publication began printing in January 2002 as a single edition serving FishHawk. Today, the *Osprey Observer* publishes more than 70,000 direct-mailed newspapers each month across five editions: Bloomingdale/FishHawk, Riverview, Valrico, Brandon/Winthrop and its newest edition, SouthShore.

In September, the newspaper sold its longtime office on Lithia Pinecrest Road and opened a satellite office on Bloomingdale Avenue near John Moore Rd.

The move reflects how the newspaper's staff and operations have evolved, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"After the pandemic, most of our team took their positions home," said Editor and Publisher Marie Gilmore. "So now, with Zoom staff meetings and staff working anywhere in the state and beyond, we are able to work remotely."

While much of the *Osprey Observer's* staff now works remotely, the publication will maintain a physical office where readers, advertisers and community members can continue to connect with the newspaper.

The new office, located at 116 E. Bloomingdale Ave. in Brandon, will be open

Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

"We still want to be a hub where members of the community can drop off press releases, pick up papers and prizes and still feel connected," Gilmore said.

The new location provides the newspaper with a central place to maintain that personal connection while allowing the company to continue embracing the flexibility of a remote workforce.

For Gilmore, who founded the *Osprey Observer* in January 2002 along with husband Doug and a small team of dedicated staff, the changes represent both growth and a return to the publication's roots.

Over the past 25 years, the newspaper has grown from one community edition into a five-edition publication reaching tens of thousands of local households. Throughout that growth, its mission has remained focused on telling the stories of the people, organizations, businesses and events that make the community special.

As the *Osprey Observer* looks toward its next 25 years, its new office will serve as a reminder that while the way newspapers work continues to change, the importance of staying connected to the communities it serves has not.

For more, visit the website www.ospreyobserver.com, email editor@ospreyobserver.com or call 813-657-2418.

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ONE DAY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE: CEOs INVITED INTO CLASSROOMS

By Marie Gilmore

Tampa Bay business leaders are being invited to trade their offices for classrooms and experience firsthand the impact they can make on the future workforce through the 2026 CEOs in Schools: 1 Day of Change program.

The countywide volunteer initiative, presented by Vistra Communications and the Hillsborough Education Foundation in partnership with Hillsborough County Public Schools, encourages CEOs and other business leaders to spend a day immersed in the daily life of a local elementary school. This year's official volunteer day is Friday, November 6, though participants and their assigned principals may coordinate another date if needed.

The program was inspired by Vistra Communications CEO Brian Butler's longtime relationship with Mort Elementary School. Butler once spent an entire day shadowing former Principal Woodland Johnson, taking on a variety of responsibilities that included teaching, planning, serving lunch and more.

That firsthand experience gave Butler a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing public schools and inspired him to challenge other business leaders to do the same.

Since then, Vistra's relationship with Mort Elementary has continued to grow through employee volunteerism, student visits to the company's headquarters, teacher appreciation events and other school initiatives. The idea expanded into CEOs in Schools in



Tampa Bay business leaders will step into local classrooms on Nov. 6 as part of the 2026 CEOs in Schools.

2019, and Vistra partnered with the Hillsborough Education Foundation the following year to continue growing the initiative.

Today, nearly 150 Tampa Bay-area CEOs partici-

pate each year, gaining a unique perspective on the work of educators and the experiences of students while building relationships with the schools helping prepare tomorrow's workforce.

"Our schools are shaping tomorrow's community members, future workforce and leaders," said Hillsborough Education Foundation CEO Anna Corman. "We have a vested interest in their success."

Participants may greet students, read in classrooms, share their career experiences, attend leadership or planning meetings, tour school operations, have lunch with students or teachers and observe classrooms in action. Each visit is designed in collaboration with the school principal, giving participants an authentic 'day in the life' experience.

Superintendent Van Ayres praised the impact of the program, noting that even the smallest moments can make a meaningful difference in schools.

Business leaders interested in participating can reserve an available school online. Schools are matched with CEOs, who then work directly with the schools' principals to plan their visits.

For more information or to reserve a school, visit www.1dayofchange.com/ceos-inschools/.

EASTERN HILLS COMMUNITY BAND BRINGS SUPERHEROES TO THE STAGE

Staff Report

Heroes come in all shapes and sizes — and this fall, the heroes are musicians.

The Eastern Hillsborough Community Band will bring an evening of music, adventure and some of the world's most iconic heroes to Brandon with its Superhero-Themed Fall



The Eastern Hillsborough Community Band, now with more than 100 members, will present its Superhero-Themed Fall Concert with performances in Brandon on October 8 and 9.

Concert, featuring two performances in October.

Audiences can expect an entertaining program filled with music inspired by legendary heroes, beloved films and epic adventures. Featured selections include Superman, Spider-Man, Captain America, The Incredibles, The Lord of the Rings and The Sorcerer's Apprentice.

For Kayla Vincent, an alto saxophone player in her second season with the Eastern Hillsborough Community Band, the concert is especially meaningful.

"This is my second season with the band, and it has been a dream to play music featured in two of Disney's most iconic films, Fantasia and The Incredibles," Vincent said.

The fall concert follows an extraordinary summer for the band. Members recently traveled to Normandy, France, after being selected to perform during D-Day commemorations, an opportunity that marked a significant milestone and tremendous honor for the ensemble.

Founded in the spring of 2009 by Plant City resident Kim McKamey, who still performs with the group as a trumpet player, the Eastern Hillsborough Community Band

began rehearsing in a small church with approximately 10 members. Within a year, the growing ensemble moved to a larger facility in the Lithia area, with membership reaching nearly 50 musicians. The band also became a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation.

Today, the band rehearses weekly in Brandon and has 101 members, ranging from amateur musicians to seasoned professionals, all united by a shared love of music. It was also recently nominated for Creative Loafing's Best of the Bay 2026 for Best Jazz Band, recognizing its contribution to the Tampa Bay music community.

The Eastern Hillsborough Community Band is dedicated to fostering a love of music, improving musicianship and enlightening, entertaining and inspiring audiences throughout the region. It also gives musicians opportunities to build friendships and camaraderie through their shared passion for performing.

From comic-book legends and Disney classics to epic fantasy, the Superhero-Themed Fall Concert promises an evening of music and adventure for all ages.

The band will perform on Thursday, October 8, at 7 p.m. at Generations Church, located at 2602 S. Kings Ave. in Brandon, and Friday, October 9, at 7 p.m. at Bay Life Church, located at 1017 Kingsway Rd. in Brandon.

For more on upcoming concerts and membership, visit www.ehcb.org.

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CHICK-FIL-A BALM ROAD CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING

Staff Report



Chick-fil-A Balm Road operator Lorena Kurtjian Hernandez hosted the Jule F. Sumner High School Stingray Battalion Honor Guard, Orchestra and JROTC and a special Feeding America check presentation during the grand opening.

The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce (BRCC) joined community leaders, local organizations, students and guests to celebrate the grand opening of Chick-fil-A Balm Road with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 19. The celebration marked the opening of the new restaurant and provided an opportunity to welcome Chick-fil-A Balm Road and its team to the Brandon-Riverview business community.

The ceremony began with a patriotic flag-raising ceremony and national anthem, with participation from the Jule F. Sumner High School Stingray Battalion Honor Guard, Orchestra and JROTC. Guests were welcomed by Joseph Martinez, who shared information about Chick-fil-A's history and mission before introducing operator Lorena Kurtjian Hernandez. Hernandez spoke about her vision for the new Balm Road restaurant and its commitment to serving and becoming an active part of the surrounding community.

The program also included a special Feeding America check presentation, reinforcing Chick-fil-A's commitment to supporting communities and helping address hunger.

BRCC President Amber Aaron welcomed Chick-fil-A Balm Road to the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce and the local business community. Aaron congratulated Hernandez and her team on the opening and wished them continued growth and success as they begin serving the Balm Road area. Adding to the celebration, BRCC Ambassador and Honorary Mayor Abraham 'Abe' Agosto presented a special proclamation officially declaring August 19, 2026, as Chick-fil-A Balm Road Day.

The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce congratulates Chick-fil-A Balm Road, Hernandez and the entire Chick-fil-A team on this exciting milestone and looks forward to their continued involvement and positive impact throughout the community.

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YMCA SELECTED IN ANNUAL 1905 COMMUNITY HARVEST PROGRAM

Staff Report

The Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA is inviting the community to support its mission with every meal at some local favorites this September. The Tampa Y has been selected for Community Harvest, a yearly initiative developed by the 1905 Family of Restaurants to support local nonprofit organizations.

Throughout September, guests dining at Columbia, Ulele, Casa Santo Stefano and Cha Cha Coconuts will receive a ballot at lunch and dinner listing participating nonprofits. Guests may select the nonprofit of their choice, and 5 percent of the bill (excluding tax and gratuity) will be donated to that organization.

Since its inception in 1998, the Community Harvest has donated more than \$4.8 million to nonprofit organizations throughout Florida.

As a participating nonprofit, the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA will be included on ballots distributed during lunch and dinner at any establishment in the 1905 Family of Restaurants – Columbia, Ulele and Casa Santo Stefano in Tampa and Cha Cha Coconuts of Sarasota. Donations are provided by the Gonzmart Family Foundation, at no additional cost to diners.

"Here at the Tampa YMCA, we are truly grateful to the 1905 Family of Restau-



Eat Well. Do Good.

said Senior Vice President of Mission Advancement Jody Thorson. "This partnership provides valuable resources that help offset costs for events and donor engagement, allowing us to direct more of our funds toward the programs and initiatives that make a meaningful impact in our community."

Across 16 centers throughout the Tampa area, the Y serves more than 27,000 children through early learning, after-school programs, child care and summer camp. The Tampa Y also reaches 13,810 children through water safety and drowning prevention initiatives and has provided 262,350 meals to families living in food deserts through the Veggie Van mobile marketplace.

Community members can support the Tampa Y by dining at participating 1905 Family of Restaurants locations and selecting the YMCA on their Community Harvest ballot. The fundraiser runs through Wednesday, September 30.

For more information about the Tampa Y's mission, please visit the website at www.tampaymca.org.

rants for including us in this year's Community Harvest. Every vote cast for the YMCA helps support our mission in more ways than one,"

LOCAL SCHOOL NUTRITION LEADER HONORED AS A HUNGER HERO

Staff Report

Hillsborough County Public Schools Regional Supervisor James Lykins has been recognized as one of only five 2026 Summer Hunger Heroes selected statewide by No Kid Hungry Florida for his dedication to ensuring children have access to healthy meals during the summer.

Lykins, a regional supervisor for Student Nutrition Services with Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS), was honored alongside Bonnie Ross of the School District of Lee County, Constance Manning of Beth Page Missionary Baptist Church, Gary Rudd of Union County School Board and Victoria Pipitone of SKY Academy Englewood.

The recognition celebrates school nutrition professionals, community partners and volunteers who go above and beyond to help ensure children and families have access to nutritious meals when school is not in session.

"Summer meal programs are no easy lift, but they make a significant impact in the lives of so many children across our state," said Sky Beard, director of No Kid Hungry Florida. "We are entirely grateful for individuals like our Summer Hunger Heroes who are committed to ensuring no child goes to bed hungry."

Through HCPS' Summer Feeding Program, more than 650,000 free meals were distributed during the summer of 2026 at over 150 sites across Hillsborough County.

Lykins was specifically recognized for helping transform an ambitious idea into



James Lykins, regional supervisor for Student Nutrition Services at Hillsborough County Public Schools, has been named a 2026 Summer Hunger Hero by No Kid Hungry Florida.

a resource for local families. He championed the creation of HCPS' first grab-and-go meal site and led its implementation, including site selection, operational planning, staffing coordination and collaboration across departments.

According to Shani Hall, general manager of Student Nutrition Services

for HCPS, Lykins' leadership resulted in more than 14,000 meals being distributed each week from a single location.

"James consistently goes above and beyond to remove barriers for families and ensure children have access to nutritious meals when they need them most," Hall said. "This recognition is a well-deserved reflection of his extraordinary commitment to students and the community."

For many families who rely on school meals, summer can be one of the most challenging times of the year. Programs like HCPS' Summer Feeding Program help bridge the gap by continuing to provide healthy meals while school cafeterias are closed.

"Every day, James demonstrates what it means to put students first," said Superintendent Van Ayres. "Whether school is in session or students are enjoying summer break, he works to ensure children have access to the nutritious meals they need to learn, grow and succeed."

For more about Student Nutrition Services, visit www.hillsboroughschools.org/page/student-nutrition-services.

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FROM SPELLS TO SCARE ZONES: GUIDE TO FUN AREA EVENTS FOR ALL

By Jenny Bennett



Mick-ey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party

Get your favorite costume ready and come and collect candies and treats while Magic Kingdom park thrills and chills you with eerie entertainment, delightful attractions and some beloved Disney characters in Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party. Watch three sinister sisters bewitch and bedazzle in the Hocus Pocus Villain Spelltacular, boogie down with friends from Disney Junior shows at Disney Moonlight Melodies and finish the evening watching Disney's Not-So-Spooky-Spectacular, a wickedly wild fireworks display hosted by Jack Skellington. This frightfully fun experience runs on select nights through Saturday, October 31. Tickets can be purchased at <https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/>; please review the dress code and costume guidelines before attending.

Howl-O-Scream At Busch Gardens

Busch Gardens' Howl-O-Scream returns in full force, taking over the entire park with haunted houses, scare zones, sinister shows and more. Unspeakable horror lives in every dark corner, including on Busch Gardens' pulse-pounding thrill rides. Howl-O-Scream is bringing fear to the next level, and once you're in there's nothing you can do about it. This event is intended for mature audiences and contains adult content; costumes are not



allowed. Tickets can be purchased at <https://buschgardentampa.com/>. The event runs on select nights until Saturday, October 31.

Friends Of The Tampa Riverwalk Trick Or Treat

The free Riverwalk Trick or Treat event returns on Saturday, October 24, from 4-9 p.m. Dress up in a costume and then trick-or-treat along the Tampa Riverwalk and enjoy the family-friendly fun activities. There will be over 50 stations to enjoy throughout the route with trick-or-treat bags available from Catanchobee Park, located at 601 Old Water St. in Tampa, while supplies last. There will also be a costume contest at Catanchobee Park at 5 p.m. and a movie on the lawn starting at 7:15 p.m.

Creatures Of The Night At ZooTampa

Join Tampa Bay's number one family Halloween event, Creatures of the Night, at ZooTampa for a night of eerie family frights. Ghouls and goblins of all ages can enjoy howling outdoor experiences, spooky characters, creepy culinary treats and much more. This year's event features a colossal adventure, Mesozoic Mayhem, Tickets are available at <https://zootampa.org/>.



Haunted Woods Events At Hillsborough River State Park

Are you ready to face your worst nightmare? Haunted Woods at Hillsborough River State Park is where your nightmares become alive. As night falls, the woods come to life and turn into pure terror. Brave the Scare Trail — Beyond the Grave — where the undead are clocking in. This is recommended for children over 12 years of age and will take place from 7-10 p.m. at Hillsborough River State Park, located at 15402 U.S. 301 in Thonotosassa, on Friday and Saturday, October 16-17. For a more family-friendly event, bring younger children to the Beyond the Grave Kids Trail event, which runs from 3-6 p.m. only. This is a cash-only event.

Tall Tales Of Old Florida

Explore Tampa's 19th-century living history museum, Cracker Country, by lantern at night in its Tall Tales of Old Florida event. Along the way, storytellers will spin wild yarns about Florida's unexplained oddities, including skunk apes, misbehaving trains, cow-hunting giants and more. A little bit scary, a little bit funny and always family-friendly. After your tour, enjoy a festive snack and drink, which are included in your admission. Tall Tales of Old Florida will be held at Cracker Country on the Florida State Fairgrounds, located at 4800 U.S. 301 in Tampa, on Saturday, October 24, from 7-10:30 p.m. Visit www.crackercountry.org to purchase your tickets (advance purchase is required) and select the start time of your tour, which will last about an hour. This event is not recommended for children under 6 years of age.



Boo Bash Bingo

Boo Bash Bingo returns to New Hope Church on Thursday, October 29, starting with light bites at 6 p.m., followed by bingo at 6:45 p.m. Dress up in your favorite Halloween costume (if you want to) and join Brandon Juniors for a fun night of 10 rounds of bingo, in which you can win your choice from a selection of designer handbags, including Kate Spade, Michael Kors, Coach and more. Along with bingo, there will be raffle baskets, silent auction items and a 50/50 drawing. Contact treasurebjwc3509@gmail.com.

Annual Black Cat 5K Fun Run Benefiting 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. Registration is now open. For more information visit <https://akittenplace.org/events/>.

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THE MORELAND WAY FAMILY HEALTH: HEALTH CARE WITH HEART

Staff Report



The Moreland Way Family Health team brings together expertise in advanced nursing practice, lactation counseling, pharmacy, social work and health care administration to provide compassionate, personalized care for the whole family.

respectful, and whole-hearted. The practice believes strong relationships are the foundation of better health. By combining clinical expertise with compassion and personalized attention, it strives to create an environment where patients feel valued, supported and empowered in their health care journey. Currently, it is welcoming new pediatric patients and looks forward



The Moreland Way Family Health was built on a simple belief: Health care should be personal, compassionate and centered on the whole patient. Its practice is uniquely comprised of a family with backgrounds in advanced nursing practice (APRN), lactation counseling, registered nursing, pharmacy, case management through social work, and health care administration. Together, they bring a comprehensive perspective to patient care that has been shaped not only by their professional experience but also by their personal experiences as patients and caregivers. The Moreland Way Family Health understands that health care is about more than treating symptoms. Every patient has a story, and every concern deserves to be heard. It takes the time to listen, understand everyone's needs and work alongside patients and families to address both physical and mental health concerns. Whether it's managing a chronic condition, navigating life's challenges or supporting preventive wellness, the Moreland Way's goal is to provide care that is thoughtful,

to expanding services to include adult primary care this November and mental health therapy in January 2027. It invites you and your family to experience a different approach to health care, one where you're treated as more than a patient; you're treated like family. To learn more or schedule an appointment, contact The Moreland Way Family Health today. Your family's health and well-being are its priority. The Moreland Way Family Health is located at 10315 Black Mangrove Lane in Riverview. For more information, contact 813-320-6370 or visit the website directly at www.tmwfamilyhealth.com.

PREPARING FOR MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT WITH MB INSURANCE

By Makenzie Atkins Noel

Choosing the right insurance plan is about more than finding a familiar name. Doctors, prescriptions, costs and coverage can all change from year to year, making an annual review an important part of protecting both health and finances. With Medicare's annual enrollment period (AEP) approaching, MB Insurance Solutions is helping local clients prepare for the changes ahead.



Michele Bartock, owner of MB Insurance Solutions, helps clients navigate Medicare coverage and understand their options during Annual Enrollment Period.

Owned by Michele Bartock, MB Insurance Solutions is an independent health and life insurance agency serving Florida. Bartock, who has lived in the community for over 20 years, specializes in supplements, Medicare Advantage, prescription plans and life insurance. As an independent agent, she has access to 12 organizations and more than 80 Medicare plans, allowing her to compare options rather than limiting clients to one plan. Bartock also helps clients with under-65 health insurance, off-market plans and group health insurance for small businesses. Additional coverage options include dental, vision, hearing, life, accident, indemnity, cancer and heart/stroke plans, as well as long-term care and annuities. With Medicare's AEP approaching, now is the time for beneficiaries to start reviewing their coverage for 2027. AEP runs from October 15 through December 7, giving Medicare beneficiaries a limited window to make changes to their plans. That review is especially important because Medicare plans can change from year to year. Prescription drug plans may

change their formularies, deductibles and co-insurance, while out-of-pocket maximums can also increase. Bartock's goal is to compare the available options based on each client's doctors, medications and priorities so they can make an informed decision before the deadline. "Every client has different needs, and I want them to understand their options rather than simply telling them what plan they should choose," said Bartock.

"When clients know they can call with questions throughout the year and have someone who knows their situation, that is what makes the difference." As the end of the year approaches, Bartock wants Medicare beneficiaries to keep a few important things in mind. Some Medicare Advantage plans offer a Part B premium 'Give Back,' while individuals may also qualify for Medicaid or the Low-Income Subsidy based on their income and assets. She also cautions beneficiaries about unsolicited calls promising gift cards or food cards, noting that these benefits are only available to those who meet certain qualifications. For those who miss the annual enrollment period or are unhappy with a new Medicare Advantage plan, there may be another opportunity to make a change between January and March. Outside of Medicare and Affordable Care Act plans, Bartok can also help clients with ancillary and small group plans. Visit online at www.medicareofflorida.com; call 813-553-3822, ext. 2; or mlbartock@gmail.com.

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T&J PAINTING GROWS WHILE KEEPING ITS FAMILY-OWNED TOUCH

By Libby Hopkins

T&J Painting, founded by Tony and Jen Friedrichsen, started with a simple mission: to help people feel good in the spaces where they live and work. As a family-owned painting company based in Brandon, it has been serving the community for more than a decade.



T&J Painting started with a simple mission, to help people feel good in the spaces where they live and work.

tense sun and humidity to the heavy rains that can wear down exterior surfaces over time. That local knowledge helps them recommend the right products, preparation methods and finishes for each home or business, so the final result looks great and lasts. T&J uses premium products and proven techniques to make sure their clients' finishes hold up season after season.

"Probably the biggest win at T&J Painting is that we have consistently seen growth our company by 60-70 percent year after year, with 2026 projecting to be the same, which is something Tony and I are incredibly proud of," said Jen, T&J's regional director of sales and marketing. "We have been able to bring in more leadership positions within the company, including an office manager, project coordinator and project manager. This allows us to provide the best customer service possible as we continue to navigate our tremendous growth."

Despite its growth, T&J Painting has kept its personal, family-owned approach. "We never want to become so big that our customers feel like just another number," Jen said. "Tony and I are still involved every day, and maintaining those customer relationships will always be important to us. Growth is exciting, but growing the right way matters most."

Jen, Tony and their team at T&J understand how Florida's climate can affect paint quality and longevity, from the in-

"Every job is planned with care and customized to meet your needs," Jen said. "Our goal is to deliver a clean, polished result that brings out the best in your property."

What sets T&J Painting apart is that it is not a franchise but rather a company built from the ground up by Tony and Jen.

"Tony is not someone who simply bought into a painting company and was handed a system and a name," Jen said. "My husband, business partner and best friend has been a painter for more than 30 years, and I have been around the painting industry for about 23 years. Our team is also incredibly important to us."

For the Friedrichsens, T&J Painting's success is closely tied to the community that has supported them along the way.

"Giving back to our community is something Tony and I are extremely passionate about," Jen said.

Visit www.tandjpaintingfl.com or call 813-723-9124. The company office is located at 330 Pauls Dr., Ste. 111, in Brandon.

SOUTHSHORE CHARTER WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBERS

By Libby Hopkins

Southshore Charter Academy is a school deeply committed to student success and character development. What sets the school apart is its focus on educating the whole child through strong academics, meaningful relationships and a culture that emphasizes leadership, responsibility and personal growth.



Jarod Anda is the new principal of Southshore Charter Academy.

"Our dedicated teachers and staff consistently go above and beyond to provide engaging learning experiences and individualized support for students, said newly appointed assistant principal Bridget Burns. "We also value strong family partnerships and community involvement, which helps create a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone on campus. Our commitment to high expectations and student-centered learning gives our students an advantage both inside and outside the classroom."

In her role, she supports both the academic and operational success of the school by working closely with teachers, students and families.

"My responsibilities include supporting instructional excellence, helping maintain a positive school culture, overseeing student discipline and attendance initiatives, coordinating school programs and events and ensuring that every student has the support they need to succeed both academi-

cally and personally," Burns said.

In addition to Burns, the school has welcomed Jarod Anda as the new principal of Southshore Charter Academy and Shyrelle Felmine as the dean of curriculum.

"I am passionate about building strong school cultures where students, staff and families feel valued, supported and connected," Anda said.

"As principal, my goal is to ensure we provide an exceptional educational experience while creating an environment where every student and staff member has the opportunity to reach their highest potential. My biggest priority is building a strong culture and sense of belonging. I want every student who walks through our doors to know they are valued, supported, challenged and capable of achieving great things."

Like Anda and Burns, Felmine wants to make an impact on all the students who attend Southshore Charter Academy.

"I love working with our students, families and staff and seeing how everyone comes together as a team to ensure our students are successful and achieving their goals," Felmine said.

If you would like to learn more about Southshore Charter Academy, you can visit the school website's at www.southshorecharter.org. The school is located at 11667 Big Bend Rd. in Riverview.

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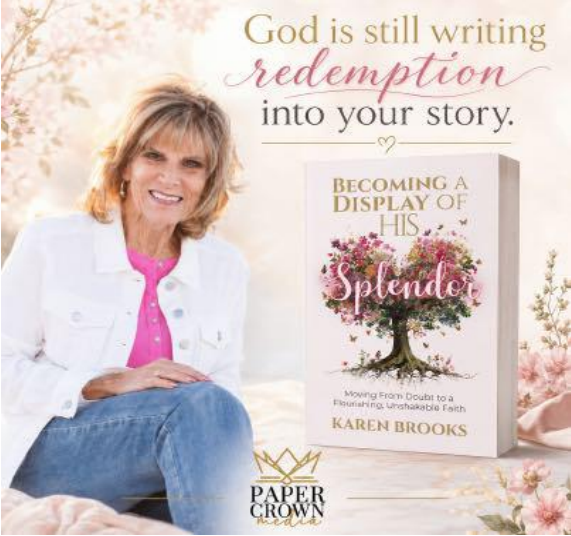
KAREN BROOKS SHARES JOURNEY OF FAITH AND REDEMPTION

Karen Brooks' dream to write and publish *Becoming a Display of HIS Splendor* was born out of much disappointment, defeat and discouragement. She discovered that delayed or denied dreams are not dead; they are sometimes redirected and rebirthed for God's greater victory and glory. She truly believes in her heart that God has a redeeming purpose for every disappointment and loss we face if we will surrender our pain to Him.

Brooks invites you to join her on this eight-week spiritual and emotional growth journey as she vulnerably shares parts of her painful past that led her to encounter God's perfect love, trust her Father's heart and stand firm with an unshakeable faith. Her hope and prayer are that her redemption story and the truths from God's word will inspire and ignite your faith to flourish and remain strong as "an oak of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor," (Isaiah 61:3).

As you experience this spiritual journey, you will:

- Be securely planted with your roots growing deeper in God's love and truth.



Karen Brooks recently celebrated the publication of her new eight-week spiritual and emotional growth workbook, *Becoming a Display of HIS Splendor*, with a book signing at Foxtail Coffee Riverview South.



warfare against the attacks of the evil one.

- Display His splendor as you build and leave a legacy of faith, bearing eternal fruit to His glory.

Brooks recently hosted a book signing event at Foxtail Coffee Riverview South. She is truly grateful and feels blessed for all those who came to celebrate and rejoice with her. She especially wishes to thank Shanna Tvenstrup, franchisee, and her wonderful staff for hosting such a successful event.

Brooks looks forward to walking you through this spiritual workbook because you were created for the display of HIS splendor.

Her book can be purchased on Amazon at www.amazon.com/dp/1919386726.

Staff Report

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RUBY DANCE CENTER DANCERS TO REPRESENT U.S. ON STAGE IN BOLIVIA

By Emily Harper



have been dedicated to learning new choreography. RDC will also bring two guest dancers to Bolivia: Jared Brunson, a dancer with the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, New York, and Elisa Ruby, who trained with the National Ballet of Cuba.

This November, 12 local dancers ages 13-18 from Ruby Dance Center (RDC) in Riverview will travel to La Paz, Bolivia, for an international cultural exchange through dance. In Bolivia, the dancers will serve as dance ambassadors representing the United States, performing at the oldest theater in South America, Teatro Municipal Alberto Saavedra Pérez. There, they will dance in partnership with Bolivian dancers from Centro Artístico Pereyra (CAP).

"I am most excited about getting to travel to a different country and share something I am so passionate about. I can't wait to dance in Bolivia, meet new people, and experience a different culture," said the youngest dancer of the group, Lacie Sharp.

Ruby Dance Center was founded by Executive Director Claudia Ruby. This dance organization has provided opportunities for young dancers to train and showcase their talents both nationally and internationally.

The Bolivia production will be brought to life by Dr. Melanie Anastacia Van Allen. Her vision is to "unite American and Bolivian dancers on one stage while celebrating the distinct cultures, traditions, and experiences they bring with them," she said.

The dancers first began their training for the showcase in June. Since then, they

"For the 12 Ruby Dance Center dancers, the journey will provide an opportunity to share a piece of American culture with audiences more than 3,000 miles from home. Their performances will include works inspired by New York City-specific artists, Motown and American music and dance, offering Bolivian audiences a glimpse into different aspects of American life and culture. At the same time, the dancers will share the stage with young Bolivian performers, learning from one another and bringing elements of both cultures together in a collaborative production," said Dr. Van Allen.

Additionally, the dancers will participate in community outreach between CAP and Fundación ALALAY. ALALAY is a Bolivian nonprofit dedicated to protecting and supporting children living in situations of social vulnerability. By connecting with this organization, the RDC dancers will have an opportunity to use dance to support a greater cause.

RDC has a GoFundMe campaign at <https://gofund.me/2650de09b> to help support this unique experience for its dancers. The donations will help pay for costs such as airfare, costumes, lodging, transportation, production, and other travel expenses.

WOMAN'S CLUB WELCOMES NEW PRESIDENT, PLANS YEAR OF FUN

Staff Report



The newly installed Riverview Woman's Club board, led by President Michelle Mosher, recently gathered for a leadership retreat to set goals, share ideas and plan for the club's 2026-27 year.

The Riverview Woman's Club (RWC) is beginning its 2026-27 year with new leadership, fresh ideas and a calendar filled with opportunities for members to connect, serve and have fun.

Michelle Mosher, owner of SouthShore Insurance, has been named the club's president for the third time. Mosher and the newly installed board recently gathered for a leadership retreat to share ideas, set goals and plan for an exciting year ahead "to empower the next leadership team and forge a path forward to continue this club's momentum."

"Our club is strongest when everyone gets involved," the organization shared.

Whether members attend a luncheon, participate in a social event, volunteer on a community project, serve on a committee or invite a friend to a meeting, each person plays an important role in the club's success.

Serving alongside Mosher are First Vice President Lisa Tackus, Second Vice President Kimberly Payne, secretary Mary Lee Walker, treasurer Jennifer King and parliamentarian Kitty Cunningham.

Board directors include Bill Andrew,

Melissa Canfield, Aubrey Eikenberry, Ashley Falvey, Alison Farnan, Patti LeCompte, Heather Mershon and Faith Moeller. Kitty Cunningham, Jeanne Burkeson and Donna Fore will also serve in emeritus roles.

The club is already putting its commitment to community service into action. A group

of RWC members recently volunteered at the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce Business and Education Event, representing the organization and lending their time to support an important community initiative.

Looking ahead, RWC members and prospective members have several upcoming opportunities to get involved. The RWC Monthly Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, September 9, from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; the RWC After Hours event will be on Tuesday, September 22; and RWC Music Bingo will be on Tuesday, September 29, at Bullfrog Creek Brewing Co., located at 3632 Lithia Pinecrest Rd. in Valrico. Doors open at 6 p.m., with games beginning at 7 p.m.

Tickets for the September luncheon are \$20 when reserved by Sunday, September 6, and \$30 at the door. Reservations can be made through the club's event page.

For more information about the Riverview Woman's Club and upcoming events, visit <https://riverviewwomensclub.org/>.

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MARY & MARTHA PLANS TWO FALL EVENTS TO SUPPORT MISSION

By Kelly Wise Valdes

Mary & Martha House, a South Hillborough nonprofit providing shelter and comprehensive support for women and families fleeing domestic violence, is preparing for two major fall fundraisers to strengthen services for residents.

The first event, Musical Bingo Night, is set for Thursday, September 24, at 7 p.m. at Bullfrog Creek Brewing Co., located at 3632 Lithia Pinecrest Rd. in Valrico. Unlike traditional bingo, players match songs instead of numbers. Bill Chini, executive director for Mary & Martha House, described the fundraiser as "bingo meets Shazam."

"Instead of calling out letters and numbers, the host plays a song. Once you recognize the song, you look to see if you have that song on your bingo card, then boop, mark it down," said Chini. "If you don't recognize the song, you can use the Shazam app on your phone. Winners get gift cards to local restaurants."

Registration is not required, but Chini encourages attendees to arrive early.

"You do not need to register for this event, but be sure to get there early so you can secure a seat and have enough time to look at which of the awesome raffle prizes you want to bid on," said Chini.

The organization hopes to raise \$3,000. "These funds are crucial to allow us to continue serving our community and help our shelter residents break the cycle of

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abuse," said Chini. The second fundraiser, Get Tee'd Off at Domestic Violence, will take place Thursday, October 15, from 5-7 p.m. at Topgolf, located at 10690 Palm River Rd. in Tampa. The event includes dinner, door prizes and raffles. A full bay is \$499 and individual tickets are available. "Each bay allows for six golfers. Each golfer gets delicious meal," said Chini.

"We are hoping to see around 120 attendees. We have been very successful in the past and tickets sell fast for this event. Everyone has a great time!"

Sponsors include Anticus Engineering, Ryan Companies, Hillsborough College HCC Southshore, Chadwell Supply, Seacoast Bank and A&A Mortgage.

"We are always looking for other sponsors, and also raffle prize sponsors," he said.

Chini said the fundraisers help support the organization's growing programs.

"These events are so important to ensure we have the funds to support our shelter residents," said Chini. "Without the help and support of our community, we wouldn't be able to provide the services we currently provide. Over the past five years we have expanded our support services, most notably our program, Break The Cycle, which gives our shelter residents the tools and knowledge to achieve complete independence and thrive in our community."

More information is available at marymarthahouse.org or 813-560-1874.

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ALL ABOARD: NORTH POLE EXPRESS BRINGS HOLIDAY MAGIC TO PARRISH

Staff Report



All aboard for a holiday journey filled with Christmas magic, festive activities and a visit with Santa Claus as the Florida Railroad Museum's North Pole Express returns for the 2026 holiday season.

The popular family tradition will operate on select evenings from Friday, November 27, through Tuesday, December 22. Departures are scheduled for 5:15 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. from the Florida Railroad Museum's Parrish station, with the complete experience lasting approximately three and three-quarter hours.

The adventure begins when families board a historic train for an approximately 45-minute journey through the Florida countryside to the North Pole. Once there, passengers will have about two and a half hours to explore a magical holiday destination filled with activities, entertainment and seasonal treats.

Every child will have an opportunity to visit Santa in his private office and receive a special gift to remember the journey. Tickets also include unlimited cookies and hot chocolate, storytelling, model train displays, campfires, reindeer-food making, access to the toy tent and other holiday activities. Bounce houses and additional festive entertainment add to the experience.

Additional food, beverages and s'mores

kits will be available for purchase at the North Pole.

Families can choose from several classes of service. Coach Class offers an economical, open-air railroad experience, while Excursion Class provides assigned seating and additional comfort. First Class features fully enclosed, climate-controlled passenger cars and includes complimentary snacks and beverages during the ride to the North Pole.

Groups and extended families can also reserve a private historic caboose for up to 16 guests. Each caboose includes tables, flexible seating, a restroom and space for personal belongings, with a museum host accompanying the group.

Regardless of the class selected, every ticket includes the complete North Pole experience, including round-trip train transportation, a Santa visit, a child's gift, cookies, hot chocolate and holiday activities.

Guests are encouraged to arrive 45-60 minutes before departure to allow time for parking, ticket pickup and boarding. Boarding generally begins approximately 20-30 minutes before departure, and the train must leave on schedule.

Tickets are now on sale, and popular departures are expected to sell out quickly. Prices vary according to the event date, departure time and class of service selected.

The North Pole Express operates November 27-29 and December 2-6, 9-13 and 16-22.

The Florida Railroad Museum is located at 12210 83rd St. E. in Parrish. For tickets and additional information, visit its website at www.frrm.org.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CARES OPENS A NEW HOME FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

Staff Report



Community leaders and about 100 guests gathered today for the ribbon cutting of the Hillsborough CARE Center, a newly renovated campus serving veterans experiencing homelessness in Hillsborough County. Attendees included U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor and Hillsborough County Commissioners Gwen Myers, Harry Cohen and Chris Boles. St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) CARES CEO Michael Raposa emceed the event.

"It's wonderful to see so many here today, but it really speaks to this community on everything that each and every one of you all do to make sure that veterans will see the care and dignity that they have earned," Castor said. "You have a remarkable team in St. Vincent de Paul CARES. You've come into our community and lifted up how we treat veterans, meeting the expectation that this community has for the men and women who have served us so well, to make sure that they receive the benefits they have earned, and that they live their lives in dignity."

The campus, operated by St. Vincent de Paul CARES, located at 384 15th St. N. in St. Petersburg, took more than a year to renovate, with crews rebuilding roofs, electrical, plumbing and water and sewer connections across all seven buildings. Hillsborough County invested approximately \$4.4 million in the property, and St. Vincent de Paul CARES has committed to operating it for the next 30 years.

"It has really preserved the character of this neighborhood," Raposa said. "When you drive up to this place, you don't even know that this is what it is, and I think that's crit-

ical for the citizens of Tampa that live in this area."

The campus includes seven housing units for veterans, including one building for females, and a mess hall with a new kitchen, offering space for more than 60 veterans. The VA is providing funding tied to those beds. Residents receive three meals a day, computer lab access and laundry services and work with case managers and housing specialists toward permanent housing.

"The goal is in and out in 40 to 45 days," Raposa said. "We get them in, do an assessment, figure out their critical needs and address the housing concern right away. This is really meant to be a shelter — helping them get the services along the way to permanent housing."

Shelter manager Nicole Maher and the SVdP team have worked to make the facility feel like home for its veteran residents.

"It's not an institution, it's not a shelter-like atmosphere," she said. "They're eating dinner in the living room, watching TV. They want to help, they want to give back and they're excited to look forward to getting their own place."

The number for veterans wishing to learn more about residency at the Hillsborough CARE Center is 813-395-4844.

Community members can support the CARE Center's residents by visiting www.svdpcare.org or calling 727-823-2516 and asking for the development department. Needed items include men's clothing, toiletries, towels, shoes, underwear and socks.

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DANCING FOR JOY CELEBRATES FAITH, COMMUNITY AND THE ART OF DANCE



A seasoned dancer with true joy for the art, April Joy McLane enjoys sharing her love for the art of dance. McLane has been dancing for the last four and one-half decades, and she never tires of sharing the enrichment that comes from dance.

McLane, with her daughter, Kate, opened Dancing for Joy in 2010.

"I opened a dance studio because I care tremendously about people and I want people to be part of the community as well as my love for dance," McLane explained.

The seasoned dance studio owner has been teaching for 28 years.

Dance, McLane explained, has helped her through many circumstances that she has met in her life.

"It built confidence, resilience, courage as well as teamwork," she continued.

McLane is a Christian and believes in prayer. She offers devotions and lessons in character to the students to build confidence, resilience, courage and teamwork. You can find this Scripture on her website: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden," (Matthew 5:14).

Dancing for Joy is a studio where stu-



dents can explore their wonderment and expand their knowledge for active art. Per its mission statement, Dancing for Joy's dance instructors "strive to ignite their light through dance."

McLane has approximately 20 teachers. They start and/or end classes with prayer. Following God's word is important to her. She said, with emphasis, "God is the boss!" She gave a reminder that "God covers us and calls us to grow, to shine, to serve, to dance with purpose."

In addition to dancing classes, McLane offers help with homework, devotions, snacks games and more for students at the school. Recently offered is transportation through Not Your Mother's Taxi. Also, every month, a new challenge is offered.

Dancing for Joy is considered a counter-culture dance school. Forms of dance taught at the studio are praise, ballet, jazz, tap, acro, the Christian version of hip-hop and, yes, trapeze.

McLane offers classes at schools, day cares and churches.

Dancing for Joy is located at 11691 Boyette Rd. in Riverview in the Goolsby Pointe Shopping Center. Registration is now open for the 2026-27 season, which is starting soon. For more information or to register, visit www.dancingforjoy1.com.

By Dale Bliss

ACEING AUTISM BRINGS INCLUSIVE TENNIS CLINICS TO APOLLO BEACH

Staff Report

Families in the Apollo Beach area will soon have a new opportunity to connect, build skills and enjoy the sport of tennis through an inclusive program designed for children and teens with autism.

Experienced Autism Alliance (EAA) is partnering with ACEing Autism to bring weekly tennis clinics to Apollo Beach Racquet Club this fall. The six-week program will take place on Saturdays from Saturday, October 10, through Saturday, November 14, and is designed to provide participants with a welcoming environment where they can learn tennis skills, participate in games and build confidence.

Clinics will be divided by age. Children ages 5-13 will participate from 11 a.m.-12 p.m., while participants ages 14 and older will have a clinic from 12 Noon-1 p.m. The program will be held at Apollo Beach Racquet Club, located at 6520 Richies Way in Apollo Beach.

The program costs \$120, with an early-bird discount available for families who register by Thursday, September 10. The code, Early30, provides \$30 off the registration fee.

ACEing Autism also offers scholarship opportunities to help make its programs accessible to families regardless of financial circumstances. Funding



options include Self-Determination Funding or Scholarship Accounts and the ACEing Autism Scholarship.

Founded in 2008 in Boston, ACEing Autism has grown into a nationwide program serving more than 6,000 children with autism at approximately 200 locations.

Its programs are tailored to the individual needs of each participant and use tennis as a way to promote connection, confidence and community.

The Apollo Beach program will also provide opportunities for community members to volunteer. Volunteers will help teach tennis skills, lead games and encourage participants. No previous tennis or autism experience is required, and training will be provided.

Volunteers can participate alongside friends, gain leadership and teamwork experience and make a difference in the lives of local children and teens.

Families interested in registering for the Apollo Beach program can learn more about ACEing Autism and available scholarship opportunities at <https://aceingautism.org/>.

Questions about the Apollo Beach program can also be directed to apollobeach@aceingautism.org.

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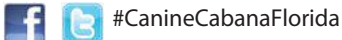


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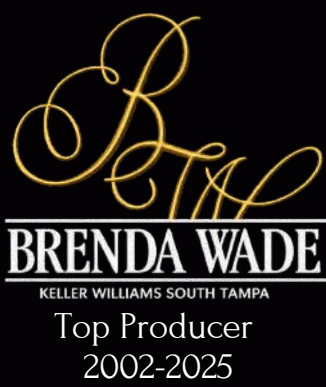


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YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

BY SPORTS EDITOR Nick Nahas

HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY
PREVIEW

FOOTBALL

FOUR LOCAL TEAMS, ONE BIG SEASON OF VARSITY FOOTBALL



Friday nights are back, and four local high school football programs are entering the 2026 season with plenty to prove.

From a program looking to return to its winning tradition to teams with district-title and deep-playoff aspirations, East Bay, Lennard, Riverview and Sumner are bringing experience, talent and high expectations into another season of high school football.

At East Bay, second-year Head Coach DeAndrea Simmons is focused on restoring the Indians to the level of consistency the program has traditionally enjoyed. East Bay returns its entire defense and six offensive starters, giving Simmons an experienced group to build around. Senior linebacker Dorian Edwards headlines a defense that could be the team's biggest strength, while the quarterback battle between juniors Jeremiah Argo and Cannon Farragut will be one of the storylines to watch early in the season.



The Indians open against crosstown rival Riverview with the Cherry Cup on the line.

Lennard enters the season with perhaps its highest expectations yet. The Longhorns won their first seven games last season by double digits, reached the playoffs and return six starters on both sides of the ball. Senior quarterback Antonio Balaguer, a three-year starter at Sumner, takes over an offense that also features several Division I-caliber athletes. With a veteran defense and a roster loaded with college talent, Head Coach K.B. Belton has his sights set beyond simply reaching the playoffs.

Across town, Riverview is looking to build on a 6-4 regular season and playoff appearance.



And then there is Sumner, coming off the best season in school history. The Stingrays went 10-3 in 2025, won two playoff games and reached the regional final for the second time in three years. With six returning offensive starters and five on defense, Sumner has the experience and talent to make another deep postseason run. Junior quarterback Makai Frederick takes over for Balaguer, while a powerful offensive line and a collection of elite athletes give Head Coach George Selvie plenty of weapons.

All four teams face challenging schedules, but each enters the season believing it can make noise when the games matter most. The 2026 season starts now.

Turn to our high school football preview for team-by-team breakdowns, complete rosters, schedules, key players and a closer look at what fans can expect from East Bay, Lennard, Riverview and Sumner this fall.



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SOUTH HILLSBOROUGH PIPELINE MAKES SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

By Maribel Medina

Tampa Bay Water’s contractor is making significant progress on the construction of the new South Hillsborough Pipeline that will deliver high-quality drinking water to Hillsborough County. The county needs additional drinking water by the end of 2028 so that communities from Brandon to south of Balm can flourish.

You can see the progress we’re making. Several major tunneling crossings are already complete, and additional work is underway at locations including State Road 60 and the Alafia River. Open-cut pipe installation — covering most of



reported to navigation applications, like Waze and Google Maps, to help you plan your commute.

When the pipeline is in service in late 2028, it will supply drinking water that is vital to the public’s health and Hillsborough County’s economy. Hospitals, doctors’ offices, schools, fire and rescue, recreation centers, businesses and homes all require clean drinking water, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing this essential



the route — has been completed along portions of South Kings Avenue and continues in other areas. Support for construction activities, such as traffic control, tree trimming and erosion prevention, is also taking place to prepare work zones and maintain safety.

We recognize that construction of 26-mile-long, 5-foot-diameter transmission main is disruptive, and we continue to work as a team to minimize the impact of this project on businesses, neighborhoods, homeowners and commuters. In fact, the pipeline design includes 17 tunnel locations to minimize impacts to roadways and waterways. Our team is working closely with Hillsborough County on all maintenance of traffic plans, and all detours and road closures are

service to the community.

Stay Informed; Support Local Businesses

Stay up to date on detours and road closures by signing up for email alerts at <https://southhillsboroughpipeline.com/contact/>.

Use your navigation app to help plan your commute.

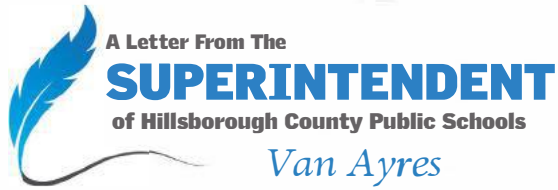
Support local businesses — all businesses along the route are open and accessible. Please continue to support your favorite businesses along the route as they cope with different traffic patterns.

Maribel Medina is planning and projects director for Tampa Bay Water, which supplies wholesale drinking water to Hillsborough County, Pasco County, Pinellas County, New Port Richey, St. Petersburg and Tampa.

ELIMINATING SCREEN TIME FOR OUR YOUNGEST STUDENTS

By Superintendent Van Ayres

Something remarkable happens when a young child sounds out a word on a page for the very first time. In that moment, letters become language, and language becomes understanding. It’s one of the most important milestones in a child’s education, and it’s why we’re taking a different approach in our kindergarten through second grade classrooms.



in face-to-face phonics instruction, participate in small-group instruction and build foundational literacy skills through meaningful practice. When technology adds value, we’ll use it. When it doesn’t, we’ll prioritize what works best

This year, we’re leading the way in reducing screen time in our kindergarten through second grade classrooms, and we’re doing it for one clear reason: to help our youngest learners become stronger, faster, more confident readers.

We know that learning to read happens best through human connection. It happens when a teacher sits beside a student and helps them work through a challenging word. It happens during a read-aloud, a small-group lesson or a conversation about a story. Technology can be a useful tool, but it can’t replace the value of a great teacher who recognizes exactly where a student needs support and provides it at that moment.

That’s why our approach is so intentional. We’re not eliminating technology. We’re making sure it serves a purpose. We’re creating more opportunities for students to learn with books in their hands, engage

for children.

We’re already seeing encouraging results. Teachers tell us students are more engaged, focused, and productive during reading instruction. Those early literacy skills matter because they build on one another year after year. When students become strong readers in the early grades, they’re better prepared for success across every subject and throughout their educational journey.

As the nation’s seventh-largest school district, we’re proud to lead in a way that puts children’s development first. Every decision we make begins with a simple question: What is best for students? In this case, the answer is clear.

And to our families, thank you for being our partners in this work. Tonight, take a few minutes to read with your child. Talk about the story. Ask questions. Celebrate each new word and every bit of progress. Those moments matter more than you may realize.

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Greater SouthShore Chamber Of Commerce Launches New Headquarters

The Greater SouthShore Chamber of Commerce officially launched its brand-new headquarters, the SS SouthShore, with a festive rope-cutting ceremony that drew a packed crowd of members, community leaders and supporters.

Guests toured every 'deck,' took part in a sea-shanty scavenger hunt and enjoyed food and fellowship as the celebration ran from bow to stern. Demand was so strong that overflow parking was needed.

"What a day! We officially set sail with a huge rope-cutting for the brand-new SS SouthShore," the chamber shared. "Thank you to everyone who came aboard and helped us make waves. Here's to fair winds and following seas for the Greater SouthShore Chamber!"

The new space marks an exciting chapter for the organization as it continues serving businesses across SouthShore and South Hillsborough County.

The Greater SouthShore Chamber of Commerce is located at 226 W. College Ave. in Ruskin. To contact the chamber, call 813-645-1366. For additional information, visit www.southshorechamberofcommerce.org.

ECHO Named Gold Winner For Non-Profit Organization

ECHO (Emergency Care Help Organization) is proud to announce that it has been named a Gold Winner for Non-Profit Organization in the 2026 Tampa Bay Times Best of the Best awards.



This recognition celebrates organizations throughout the Tampa Bay area that stand out for their service, impact and commitment to the communities they serve. Being selected as a Gold Winner is a tremendous honor for ECHO and reflects the dedication of its staff, volunteers, donors and community partners.

"This recognition is a reflection of our entire ECHO family," said Iris S. Thurman, CEO of ECHO. "Our staff, volunteers, donors and community partners make it possible for us to continue showing up for our neighbors. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who supports our mission and helped make this recognition possible."

Retire With Confidence

Learn how to maximize your retirement with tax-efficient strategies at the Payant Wealth weekly seminar. The seminar is held every Tuesday at 10 a.m. and covers a variety of strategies, including how Roth conversions and tax-efficient investing may help re-

duce taxes over time, creating a sustainable retirement cash flow plan and what the number one threat to retirement security is and an approach to help address it. The seminar is held at the Payant Financial Center, located at 1653 Sun City Center Plaza in Sun City Center. Please call 813-633-7333 to reserve your spot, as seating is limited.

Fitness Forge Celebrates With Ribbon Cutting

Fitness Forge is a local gym which offers semiprivate personal training that conducts customized workouts for each individual's goals and expectations.

Local owners Brett Daven and Taylor Green have created a fun yet productive community that strives for success both externally and internally. Fitness Forge celebrated joining the Valrico/FishHawk



Chamber of Commerce with a ribbon cutting at the gym, which is located at 13456 Boyette Rd. in Riverview. Visit its website at www.fitnessforge2025.com or call 813-654-1313 for more information.

Council Growers Farmers Market

Join Council Growers on Saturday, October 10, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at its garden center for a market focused on what farmers markets are all about.

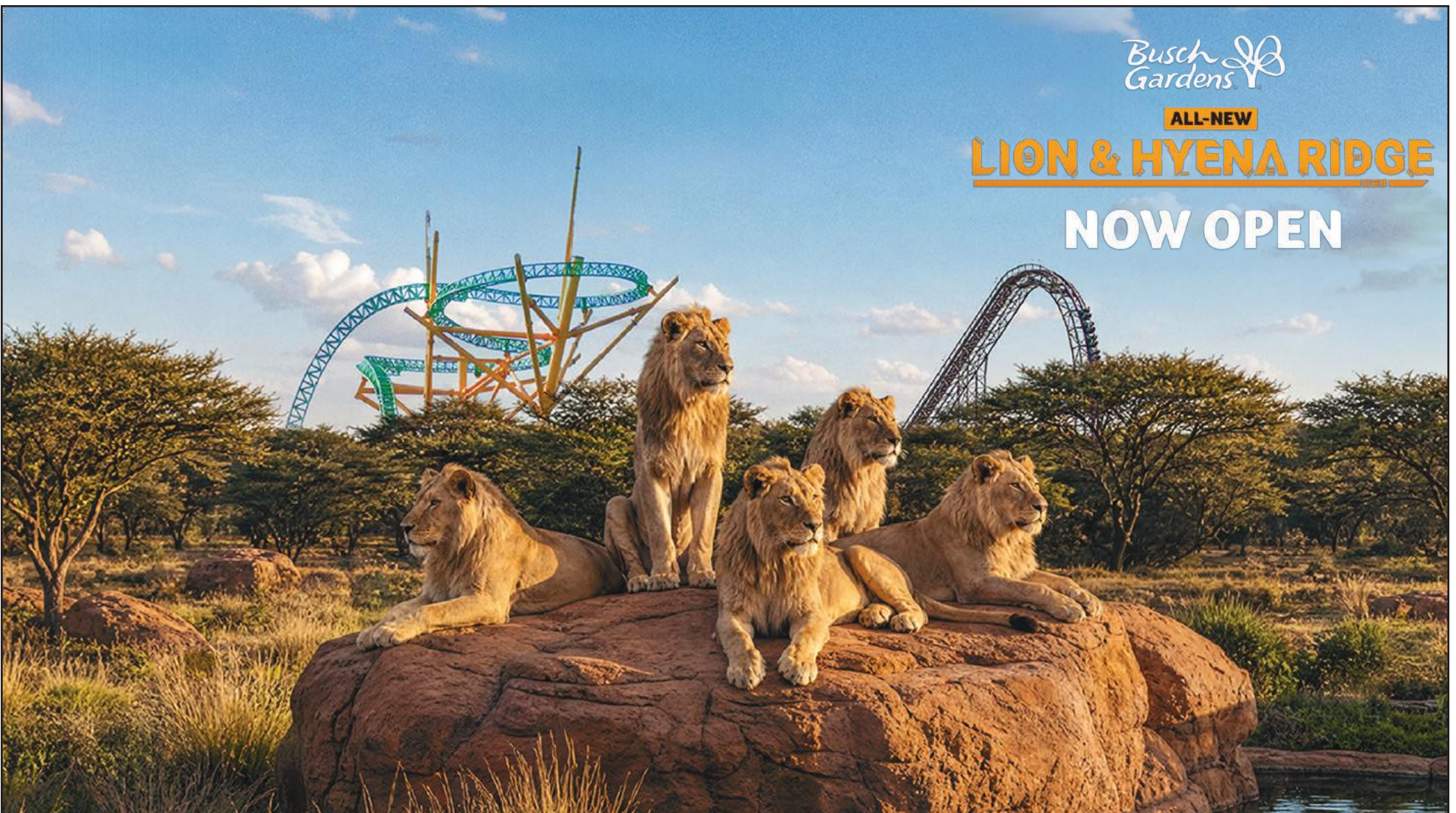
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HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY
PREVIEW

FOOTBALL

BY SPORTS EDITOR Nick Nahas

EAST BAY HAS TALENT THAT CAN COMPETE WITH THE BEST



The Indians are poised to take the next steps under second-year Head Coach DeAndra’ Simmons. Simmons said that his team focused on its discipline and also built a lot of camaraderie in the offseason, attending a seven-on-seven camp at Florida State University. They beat Robinson 20-12 in their Kickoff Classic. Simmons was impressed with his team’s resilience in the second half. They trailed 12-0 at halftime and shut their opponent out in the second half.

The former University of Memphis offensive guard wants his offense to continue improving in the consistency of the passing game, especially with all of the great athletes they have. They showed glimpses of it in the game against Robinson. Simmons installed a new up-tempo offense and introduced new and more diverse blocking schematics to his offensive line last season. The offense went through some growing pains, especially in the passing game. In the past, they ran a wing-T, run-heavy offense. They moved to a more traditional spread offense with read-option principles in 2025.

Longtime Head Coach Mike Gottman returned to the coaching staff as the offensive line coach after retiring recently. Simmons said that Gottman has been a great mentor to him, and he feels like he can go to him for advice whenever he wants. Simmons, a Memphis, Tennessee, native, is still fairly new to the SouthShore area and Hillsborough County football in general, so Gottman has been a huge help in showing him the ropes.

East Bay missed the playoffs for the first time in four years last year. Simmons said that his players have a lot of pride in the program and want to get back to the success they’ve always had.

“East Bay has always been consistently competitive at football,” said Simmons. “We have always had great athletes. I just want to build on

that and let the players know that we have what we need in order to be successful. We want to build a brotherhood.”

Simmons, being a former offensive lineman, knows the importance of establishing the run and playing good defense, which has been the model for the program in the past. East Bay has an experienced starting corps. They return their whole defense and six starters on offense. The defense will be the team’s major strength, headlined by highly recruited senior linebacker Dorian Edwards. Seniors Michael Walker, Shawn Daniels and Marquis Thornton will lead the defensive backfield. Senior defensive end, transfer Cole Sharpless will add to the depth on the D-line.

Junior quarterback Jeremiah Argo is the starter as of now, but junior Cannon Farragut is battling for the starting spot. Simmons said that Farragut is very talented and has the body type of Cam Newton with true SEC size at the QB position. He’s new and still learning the offense. Both are very athletic and can run the zone read. Argo has the bigger arm and has been in the program longer and knows the offense well. They look to name an official starter within the first two weeks of the season.

“I’ve laid my hat on the ‘East Bay Way,’ just a blue-collar approach,” said Simmons. “We are going to hit you in the mouth on defense, and on offense we are going to establish the run, then from there we are going to spread you out and show our athletes.”

The Indians have a manageable schedule but will have to beat an elite Jesuit team to win the district. Expect them to win close to eight games and make the playoffs.

Simmons expects his team to go deep in the playoffs. He wants his team to take it week-by-week and ‘live in the moment.’

SCHEDULE

9/4 @ Gibbs	10/2 @ Strawberry Crest
9/10 @ Hillsborough	10/9 @ Jesuit
9/18 vs. Lennard	10/16 @ Blake
9/25 vs. Freedom	10/23 vs. Middleton

ROSTER

#	NAME	POS	GR	#	NAME	POS	GR
0	Cole Sharpless	DE, TE	Sr.	25	Justice Miller	DL	Jr.
1	Marquis Thornton	DB, WR	Sr.	27	Caleb Encarnacion	RB	So.
2	Aric Person	RB	Sr.	28	Jaxon Cole	DB	Sr.
3	Justin Dominguez	ATH	So.	30	Jaydem McKay	DB	Fr.
4	Preston Cooper	RB	Jr.	31	Zachary Blankenberg	DB	Jr.
5	Lhoialty Taylor	DB, WR	Sr.	32	Asher Devore	DL	So.
6	Richard McClary	ATH, SS	Sr.	33	Ayden Devore	DL	So.
7	Dorian Edwards	OLB, TE	Sr.	42	Anderson Murphy	K	Jr.
8	Shawn Daniels	DB, WR	Sr.	44	Gaven Milton	LB, DE	Jr.
9	Carse Biggerstaff	WR	Sr.	48	Josiah Pino	TE	Sr.
11	Mario Davis	TE, DE	Jr.	52	Russell Goodwine	OL, DL	Sr.
12	Anthony Gino Boyd	OLB	Sr.	54	Demarcus Reed	DL	Fr.
13	Jeremiah Argo	QB	Jr.	57	Aaron Venegas	DL	Jr.
14	Gabriel Barrera	SS, FS	Jr.	58	Jeremy James	DL	Jr.
15	Markus McCaleb	LB, TE	Sr.	63	Andriano Betty	OL, DE	Sr.
16	Mark Powell	TE, WR	Jr.	64	Esquire Owens	OL	Sr.
17	Emry Carr	ATH	So.	65	Elijah Siri	OL	Sr.
18	Kameron Simms	WR, CB	Sr.	66	Yohan Patlan	OL	So.
19	Cannon Farragut	QB	Jr.	72	Benjamin Murphy	OL	Jr.
21	Steve Desrosiers	WR	Sr.	73	Parker Sorbo	OL	Fr.
22	Michael Walker	DB, SS	Sr.	75	Marcus Longworth	OL	Jr.
23	Justin Miller	DL, OLB	Jr.	78	Adriano Baptista	OL	Jr.
24	Jeremiah Padgett	CB, FS	Sr.				

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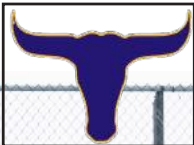
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High School Varsity
Preview

FOOTBALL

BY SPORTS EDITOR Nick Nahas

LENNARD LONGHORNS ROSTER SEEMS POISED FOR PLAYOFF RUN



Lennard has become one of the elite programs in Hillsborough County under fourth-year Head Coach K.B. Belton. The Longhorns had an outstanding season in 2025, winning their first seven games by at least double digits and making the playoffs. The roster is chock-full of talent this season, and the team is poised to win its district and make a deep playoff run.

Belton is happy with his team's progress in the offseason. They attended seven-on-seven camps at Florida State University and the University of Florida. He wants his team to continue the upward trend that they have shown in his tenure. His team has improved on their win total every season since he has taken over. This is his first senior class that he's had for four seasons. They have seen the big turnaround that has taken place in the program, and they are hungry to continue the success.

"Now we want to go deeper in the playoffs," said Belton. "They know how to win football games. Now it's, 'Can we continue to win and win playoff games?' I think that's been the motivator."

The head coach thinks that the tough schedule early on will pay dividends in regard to becoming battle-tested for the big games later in the season and knowing what they have to improve on. They opted to add St. Petersburg Catholic to the schedule instead of having a spring game. There is an option in Hillsborough County to forego the spring game in order to add an out-of-county opponent to the regular season schedule. The Longhorns open the regular season facing a very tough Armwood opponent.

The veteran ball club returns six starters on offense and six on defense. Belton thinks that his team's major strength will be their defense, led by senior defensive back Mekhi Williams, senior defensive back Robert Gibbons and senior defen-

sive back Bryce Herald. The team will have to replace three-year starting quarterback Jacob Mobley, who graduated. Mobley could be considered the best quarterback to have played at Lennard. Senior Summer transfer Antonio Balaguer is talented, battle-tested and up to the task. He started three years at Sumner, competing at a high level against tough competition and playing in big playoff games. Belton said that Balaguer already has command of the offense despite only joining the program in June. He will have the full reigns of this offense and is a complete quarterback. Belton said that he is a leader and he knows how to move the chains, line everybody up and run the RPOs. His experience will help negate some of the mistakes of the offense.

Lennard has several Division I commits, including junior wide receiver/defensive back Chayse Brown (Florida State), senior running back Preston Beckham (Cincinnati), senior defensive back Robert Gibbons (FIU) and junior safety Mekhi Williams (Wisconsin), while junior wide receiver Terrence O'Neal-Leather has multiple D-I offers.

Belton always expects to win every game. He welcomes the tough competition and thinks it will only make his program better. They have a hard schedule in a very good district. They have to face Armwood, Tampa Bay Tech, Durant, Plant City, St. Petersburg Catholic and East Bay, to name a few. Expect them to win their district and go to the playoffs for second straight season.

"For me, every year is just about having fun with our guys," said Belton. "Only one team can win a state championship. I love football, I love winning, but the biggest thing for me is just seeing these kids happy, smiling, jumping around. Even when they go through their low points, I like to be there for them to show them that it's not just about football for us, we are a true family."

SCHEDULE

9/4 @ St. Petersburg Catholic	10/2 vs. Tampa Bay Tech
9/10 vs. Newsome	10/9 vs. Durant
9/18 @ East Bay	10/16 @ Riverview
9/25 @ Plant City	10/30 vs. Strawberry Crest

ROSTER

#	NAME	POS	GR			
0	Robert Gibbons	DB	Sr.	27	Brendon Walker	CB Jr.
1	Mekhi Williams	DB, WR	Sr.	28	Marcus Dixon	HB Jr.
2	Preston Beckham	HB	Sr.	34	Bruce Hills	CB Sr.
3	Al'quan Smith	WR	Sr.	35	Roventz Nelson	DT Sr.
4	Chayse Brown	WR, DB	Jr.	42	Thatcher Wilkerson	LS, TE Sr.
5	Antonio Balaguer	QB	Sr.	44	Khai Walker	FS So.
6	Sta'shaun Gage	HB, MLB	Sr.	48	Carmello Maldonado	DE Sr.
7	KJ Roos	QB	Jr.	50	Brandon Vibbert	C Jr.
8	Terrence O'Neal-Leather	WR	Jr.	51	Chris St. Juilan	G, DT Jr.
9	Bryce Herald	DB	Sr.	55	Parker Owens	DT Jr.
10	Aiden Ivory	WR	Sr.	56	Remarion Mayes-White	OL, DLSr.
11	Zyion Hall	DE	Sr.	57	Mike Hoffman	LB Sr.
12	Demirius Feet	WR	Sr.	58	Ethan McConnell	T So.
13	Zain Lateef	K	Sr.	66	Drew Curling	C So.
14	Trey Duque	SS	Sr.	70	Emmanuel Garcia	G Sr.
15	Ian Malone	DL	Sr.	71	Kordae Oleskewicz	OG Sr.
16	Caiden Flounory	WR	Fr.	72	Beck Funderburk	T So.
17	Jaxon Earl	DE	Sr.	74	Colby Duque	G So.
20	Ashton Boldin	S	Jr.	75	Adrien Allison	OG Sr.
21	Malik Boyd	LB	Sr.	77	Chris Payton	DT Sr.
22	Reshard Johnson	CB	So.	78	Sire Toussaint	DT Jr.
23	Cory Dupree	LB	Sr.	84	Jordan Hills	WR Sr.
24	Messiah Rushing	LB	Jr.	88	Malachi Scruggs	WR Fr.
25	Nathan Wright	LB, TE	Sr.	90	Sean Carter	DT Sr.
				99	Trey Knight	DT Jr.



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High School Varsity
Preview

Football

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YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

BY SPORTS EDITOR Nick Nahas

RIVERVIEW SHARKS LOOK TO MAKE NOISE IN NEW DISTRICT



The Sharks are off to a great start in their 2026 campaign, beating Spoto 20-19 in their Kickoff Classic.

Senior safety Dominic Persaud was the deciding factor in the game, returning his forced fumble for a go-ahead touchdown late in the game. He recorded eight tackles and had an interception that sealed the game.

Riverview has another young roster this year. Head Coach Tony Rodriguez has done a great job developing talent within the program in his five years at the helm. Senior kicker Jack Camsey recorded three touchdowns and converted on all of his extra point attempts.

Rodriguez wants to build off of last year's success. The team went 6-4 in the regular season and went to the playoffs, despite having a difficult schedule. He and his team have goals of winning a district title in 2026. Last year, they came up a little bit short in a key game against Durant that would have clinched the title. They fumbled late in the game with a lead, and it cost them the contest. That has been a motivating factor for Rodriguez and his players in the offseason. He wants to work on clock management so they aren't put in that position again. He believes that his team is battle-tested from last year, and they weren't far off from their goals.

The team returns six starters on offense and two on defense. Junior quarterback Carter Peternell claimed the job halfway through last season and is ready to take the next step with the offense this season. Rodriguez said that Peternell is a confident competitor and doesn't mind taking chances,

throwing a 50-50 ball up to his receivers. The dual-threat has been with the program for three years, so he knows the system very well. Aidan Airgood, who played quarterback last season, has switched to tight end. Rodriguez said that it's a tactical advantage to have two quarterbacks in the huddle, reading defenses. Senior Jason Greenwell returns at running back for the Sharks. Senior receiver J.P. Rinaldi has been a surprise standout and will catch passes in the slot. Seniors Dominic Bowser and Christopher Alvarado will anchor the offensive line.

Rodriguez thinks that his squad's strength will be its secondary. He wants his team to work on clock management, tackling, knowing their assignment and shedding their blocks.

The Sharks open this season with a pivotal matchup on the road against crosstown rival East Bay. That game may set the tone for the rest of the regular season. It will be a great start to the season for Riverview if they can claim The Cherry Cup that is awarded to the winner. Riverview won it last year and wants to keep it badly. Rodriguez also believes that they will have to go through Durant to win the district. If they win more games than they lose, they will make the playoffs.

"I look forward to just spending this season with my guys," said Rodriguez. "Football is time that you have to share with these kids that you've coached, and it's so short. I've been a part of their high school journey from freshman all the way up to senior year."

Rodriguez and his program are in need of volunteer coaches. If you are interested in helping, contact him at 813-952-3132.

SCHEDULE

9/4 @ Alonso	10/2 @ Steinbrenner
9/10 vs. Plant City	10/9 vs. Gaither
9/18 vs. Morgan	10/16 vs. Lennard
9/25 @ Durant	10/23 @ Newsome

ROSTER

#	NAME	POS	GR		
0	Kayvion Lydian	RB	Sr.	23	Maximus Regula — Sr.
0	Edgar Luna	—	Sr.	24	Dornell Walters — Jr.
1	Doniven Persaud	WR	Jr.	25	Jayden Fermin — So.
2	J.P. Rinaldi	WR	Sr.	26	Kellen Reed — Jr.
3	Aidan Airgood	TE	Sr.	27	Donley Victor — Jr.
4	Anthony Bruzas	—	Sr.	28	Aayden Alvarez — So.
5	William Felix	—	Sr.	30	Zailen Williamson — So.
6	Jason Greenwell	RB	Sr.	33	Jeremiah Alvarez — Jr.
7	Jack Camsey	K	Sr.	34	Xavier Davis — So.
8	Dominic Persaud	S	Sr.	35	Joey Ashline — Jr.
9	Engozi (E.J.) Burrows	WR	Sr.	40	Kellen Patsalos — Jr.
10	Jeremiah Wilson	—	Jr.	44	Eric Weber — Sr.
11	Kobi Souverain	—	Sr.	50	Aiden Cleversey — So.
12	Carter Peternell	QB	Jr.	54	Brock Larsen — Jr.
13	Skyler Larsen	—	Sr.	55	Ameer Burrows — So.
14	Tevin Ponder	—	Jr.	57	Landon Frogge — Jr.
15	Enoch Jones	—	Jr.	58	Dominic Bowser — Sr.
16	Emmanuel Francois	—	Jr.	65	Jacob Rivera — Jr.
17	Gavin Washington	—	So.	67	Ryan Read — So.
18	Jamari Lawrence	—	So.	68	Christian Gonzalez — Sr.
19	Carter Airgood	—	So.	72	Nathaniel Reyna — So.
20	Dyson Douglas	—	So.	73	Christopher Alvarado — Sr.
21	Karson Baird	—	So.	76	Jackson Kirner — So.
22	Jonathan Marques	—	So.	78	Victor Viera — Jr.
				99	Tyler Jerominek — So.

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High School Varsity
Preview

Football

BY SPORTS EDITOR Nick Nahas

SUMNER STINGRAYS AIM FOR STATE CHAMPIONSHIP



Sumner had their best season in school history in 2025. They finished with an overall record of 10-3 and won two play-off games, reaching the regional final. The team has made it to the regional final two out of the last three years. The Stingrays have the coaching and talent to make it even further in 2026.

The Stingrays have made the playoffs for five straight seasons and have had winning seasons every year since the program's inception in 2020. Head Coach George Selvie took over as the head man in July 2024 after being an assistant with the program for the four years prior.

Sumner had a dominant showing in week one, defeating Strawberry Crest 55-0. Selvie wants to establish his team's identity on physicality, tackling and speed. He was happy with their effort and discipline in the opener. Selvie said they hit the weight room in the offseason and worked on their technique, using the loss in the regional final as motivation. "Swarm and punish" is the team motto.

The Stingrays have a lot of talent and experience coming back with six returning starters on offense and five on defense. They have a really stout offensive line that they will establish the run behind. Four-star offensive tackle George Selvie III, junior guard Zaiden Tolmoff and senior tackle Nathan Smith will anchor the offensive line. They also have many elite athletes on the perimeter that they want to get the ball to in space. Selvie wants his defense to attack and swam to the ball. Senior linebacker Michael Joshua, senior defensive end/line-

backer Myerick Stewart, senior defensive end Trey Brown, junior cornerback Antrell Johnson and senior defensive back and Bowling Green commit Robert Garcia will lead the defense.

Junior Makai Frederick will take the reins at QB-1, replacing three-year starter Antonio Balaguer, who transferred to Lennard in the offseason. Selvie said that Frederick is doing a great job at controlling the offense and making the plays that he's supposed to make. He's tall, athletic, mobile and poised in the pocket with a strong arm. He had minimal playing time as the backup last year but will quickly be thrown into the fire against tough competition.

Three-star senior wide receiver/defensive back and Bowling Green commit Tyler Lynch will be a nice target for Frederick. Three-star running back and FAU commit Tommy Scott is coming back from an injury to add a boost in the running game, along with senior running back Cedric Johnson.

Sumner is in a tough district and has one of the toughest schedules in Hillsborough County, facing elite competition such as Armwood, Gaither, Tampa Bay Tech, Plant and Jefferson. Sumner will make the playoffs for a sixth straight season, and they have eyes on a state title. The brutal schedule will make them battle-tested come playoff time.

"Getting the opportunity to go out and compete against those teams is a great opportunity for our team that's so young," said Selvie. "Our goal is always to win states. We expect to go out there and compete every game."

SCHEDULE

9/4 vs. Gaither	10/2 @ Jefferson
9/10 vs. Durant	10/9 vs. Parrish Community
9/18 @ Armwood	10/23 @ Palmetto
9/25 vs. Manatee	10/30 @ Plant

ROSTER

#	NAME	POS	GR			
1	Makai Frederick	QB	Jr.	40	Leon Gillespie	DE
2	Tyler Lynch	WR, CB	Sr.	41	Kaleb Williams	FB
3	Gavin Altman	RB	Jr.	44	Cameron Sterling	LB, FB
4	Robert Garcia	DB, RB	Sr.	49	Michael Knox	LB, SS
5	Cedric Johnson	RB, DB	Sr.	50	Radley Bernard	DE, DT
6	Kanye Faison	WR	Sr.	51	Hakeem Gbadegesin	DE
7	Tommy Scott	RB	Sr.	52	Rodrick Mallory	DT
8	Zakhyri (ZK) Hill	FS	Sr.	53	Michael Ciceron	LB
9	Caden Daniels	WR	Jr.	54	Enrique Cabrera	DT
10	Myerick Stewart	DE, OLB	Sr.	55	Ikenna Ujagbor	DT
11	Trey Brown	TE, DE	Sr.	56	Nathan Smith	OT, DT
12	Tyler Stroud	CB	Sr.	58	Elijah Hall	DT
13	Jayden Porter	LB, DE	Sr.	60	Logan Ryan T,	NG
14	Antrell Johnson	CB	Jr.	62	Jeremiah White	
15	Semaj Morris	QB	So.	63	Trenton Paul	
16	Josiah Washington	K	Jr.	67	Jayden Reid	G
17	Santana-Cruz	Griffin	QB, RB	71	Kiptyn Holt	C
18	Cameron Sikes	WR, CB	So.	72	George Selvie III	OT, DT
19	Michael Joshua	LB	Sr.	75	Zaiden Tolmoff	OT
20	Brandon Jerrido II	RB	So.	80	Jaesean Anderson	WR
21	Jayden Howard	CB	Jr.	81	Sergio Martinez	WR
22	Taylen Wilson	blue	SS, CB	82	Aiden Ledet	WR
24	James Smith II	WR	Sr.	83	Larry Green	WR
27	Christian Clemons	RB	So.	85	Kai Johnson	WR
32	Bryson Nesbitt	CB	So.	88	Jayden Jerrido	FB
33	DeCarlo Smith	DB	Sr.	90	Jordan Saintval	DE, TE
34	Ethan Donatien	DT	Sr.	91	Tyson Sterling	DT
38	Traelyn McCants	RB, LB	Jr.	92	Jaiden McFadden	DT
				N/A	Blake Jacobs	MLB

Dine Local



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1/2 Off

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

Dine In ONLY

Note Available For To Go



10288 Causeway Blvd



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

10% OFF

ENTIRE Purchase



813-643-7777

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

LUNCH SPECIALS EVERY DAY

FAMILY MEAL SPECIALS \$49.95

Take Out & Delivery



La Septima Cafe

702 W Lumsden Rd. Brandon

Not Valid with any other discounts, promotions or coupons. No Cash Value.

10% OFF

ENTIRE Purchase



Sunflower Cafe

813-65-SUSHI

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

Happy Hour

Thursdays 4 - 6 pm

\$5 Classic

Shakes



10446 Stelling Dr. Riverview

(in the Mission BBQ plaza)

TACO DIRTY

Bouls, 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.



Buy One Get One FREE Smoothies

BETTER BLEND

955 E Brandon Blvd

(Next to BubbaQue's)

Valid at Better Blend - Brandon only. Must present coupon. Equal or lesser value. Limit one coupon per visit. Cannot be combined with other offers. No cash value. Excludes third-party delivery.

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Could Your Future Be Greater Tomorrow?

FIND YOUR FLORIDA TREASURE in the Lost River Preserve! This uniquely designed, thoughtfully constructed estate delivers advanced amenities inside & out on 2.6 acres of natural, waterside privacy still convenient to the highlights of life around Tampa Bay. Custom-built 6 years ago, it's packed with extras such as rooftop solar, 20kWh home battery, tankless water heater, EV charger, RV parking pad with electric hookup, & a beautiful courtyard pool surrounded by a travertine deck. The main residence provides 3,170 SF of single-story living with 4 bedrooms & 3.5 baths, but there's another 700 SF in a climate-controlled fitness room & a front-entry studio apartment. Offered for sale at \$1,499,000.



YOUR OWN 1/4 ACRE with pool, spa, patio, & fire pit privacy-fenced in back make this home worth discovering in the security-gated section of Riverglen! Spread out in 2,700 SF with the Windward Homes St. George design, which offers spacious formal & casual living & dining rooms flanked by 4 bedrooms & 3 baths, then adds bay-windowed extensions to both the owner suite & another bedroom. The big pool lanai, with screened & roof-sheltered portions for all-weather enjoyment, is accessible from the suite on one end, a back bathroom on the other, & through sliders from the central family room beside the kitchen. No carpet, only tile or wood & luxury vinyl plank floors. \$539,900



IT'S A 3-CAR GARAGE despite a 2-car appearance! It's tandem style, & you'll find it on a long list of advantages at this 3-bed, 2-bath, 2,040-SF pool home in Riverglen: 3-year-new solar panels fully paid off, a 900-watt home generator, 50-amp EV charger, new pool heater & pump, etc. \$475,000



GET 2,700 SF on a gated & fenced 1/4 acre with no rear neighbor or HOA fees! In Boyette Springs, this original-owner home is available for the first time in a generation, still overlooking county conservation land from a big, paved patio. An upstairs bonus room adds to 4 beds, 3 baths & lots more. \$469,900



A BACKYARD BONUS you'll love: an extended, screened, roof-covered lanai & attached patio overlooking a tree-lined pond with lighted fountain! It's the all-day-or-night, all-weather highlight of this 2,200-SF gem in The Reserve at Pradera. Also, 2 suites among the 4 total beds & 3 full baths! \$425,000

FOR SALE OR RENT in Triple Creek! 1,900-SF 4/3/2 gives you a pond view instead of a close back neighbor. Resort-style community amenities include pools, playground parks, clubhouse & fitness centers, tennis, basketball courts & Triple Creek Nature Preserve. \$350,000 or \$2,575 per month



IF A GREAT BACKYARD is a good part of your home search, you'll love this beautifully fenced, multi-gated property with a screened lanai & paved patio overlooking a lily-padded pond to woods beyond! It's a 3/2/2 with updates on a non-through circle street near the Summerfield Golf Club. \$309,900



NEARLY EVERYTHING is new & improved at this maintenance-free villa with a backyard pond in Rivercrest! AC & water heater, LVP & tile floors, LED lights & ceiling fans, garage door opener & epoxy floor, hurricane shutters & more. It's a 3/2/2 with a screened lanai overlooking that pond. \$299,900



Ann Marie
Vaughan,
Realtor



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