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YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS TAKE THE SPOTLIGHT AT UPCOMING KIDS MARKET IN SEFFNER

By Olivia Clark



Young entrepreneurs showcase handmade products and creative businesses during a Kids Market event designed to encourage youth entrepreneurship.

Young entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to showcase their creativity and business skills at an upcoming Kids Market in Seffner, where families can shop from youth-run businesses while enjoying a community egg hunt and outdoor activities.

The event will take place at Mango Recreation Center, where families can explore booths hosted entirely by children and teens. The market opens at 9:30 a.m., and the community egg hunt will begin at 10 a.m. near the playground. Admission is free for visitors, while young entrepreneurs can register for a booth for $25 through www.kidsmarkets.com/markets/seffner.

The Kids Market program is designed to give children a hands-on introduction to entrepreneurship while creating a supportive environment for learning and growth. Participants range in age from 5-17 and are responsible for creating products, managing inventory and interacting with customers.

"In many ways, our impact is our mission," said Samantha White, communications manager at Kids Markets. "We believe entrepreneurship at any age, but specifically a young age, teaches invaluable life skills. The kids have a blast making friends and earning money, but they may not even realize they're also learning the whole time."

White said participants often develop skills such as problem-solving, budgeting, pricing and marketing while also gaining confidence through real-world experience.

The Seffner event is expected to draw a variety of young vendors and community members. While Kids Market events around the country often feature between 30-100 booths, organizers said the Tampa area market is still growing and has space available for additional participants.

White said the partnership with Hillsborough County Parks & Recreation adds another layer of community engagement by pairing the market with a family-friendly holiday event.

"I think the biggest highlight of this event is that it is a community event," said Taylor Cauley, Tampa Market representative. "The combination of the community egg hunt and the youth-run market creates a family-friendly event where visitors can enjoy the holiday activity while supporting local young entrepreneurs."

Cauley added that the event allows families to see firsthand the creativity and hard work of young people in their community while spending time together outdoors.

Families interested in registering a young entrepreneur or learning more about the event can visit:

www.kidsmarkets.com/markets/seffner.

BELL SHOALS ACADEMY INVESTS IN FUTURE WITH NEW HIGH SCHOOL

By Olivia Clark

Bell Shoals Academy marked a significant milestone on March 2 as school and church leaders, families and community members gathered to celebrate the groundbreaking of its future high school building. The ceremony represented not only the beginning of construction but also the continuation of a long-standing mission to provide Christ-centered education to students in the community.



Pastor Corey Abney and Bell Shoals Academy leaders participate in the ceremonial groundbreaking for the academy's future high school building.



Bell Shoals Academy, a ministry of Bell Shoals Church, has served families for more than 60 years. The new high school facility is part of a larger vision to expand the academy's ability to prepare students academically and spiritually for the future.

School leadership emphasized that the new building represents more than physical growth. It reflects a commitment to future generations of students who will walk through its doors.

"Today, we break ground on something more than just a building," said Pastor Corey Abney. "This new high school represents growth, opportunity and a bold commitment to preparing the next generation to live for Christ."

The project has been years in the making, supported by the dedication of church members, school leaders and families who have invested in the academy's mission over decades. Leaders noted that many individuals have prayed for and envisioned a high school campus for more than 40 years.

"This future extends far beyond the students we're serving today," said Pastor Abney. "It's about laying the foundation for generations we haven't even met yet."

The new high school is designed to support Bell Shoals Academy's continued growth while strengthening its mission of educating students academically and spiritually. Leaders shared that the goal of the school is not only to prepare students for future careers but also to encourage them to live lives of faith and purpose.

As construction begins, academy leaders remain focused on the long-term impact the new facility will have on students and families in the community.

The groundbreaking marks the first step in a project that leaders hope will serve generations of students while continuing Bell Shoals Academy's legacy of Christ-centered education through expanded opportunities, new classrooms and a dedicated learning environment for high school students.

The school is located at 2102 Bell Shoals Rd. in Brandon. For updates and more info, visit www.bellshoalsacademy.com.

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STRAWBERRY CREST HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING SETS RECORDS

By Emily Harper



Photo credit: Strawberry Crest Cheerleading

The 2025-26 Strawberry Crest Cheer displaying their awards.

The Strawberry Crest High School cheerleading team is made up of 40 student athletes and seven coaches, all committed to the success of the program. In fact, this program holds the most cheerleading titles in all of Hillsborough County.

On January 22, the Varsity Coed team won their 12th consecutive FHSAA State Championship, allowing them to hold the record over the entire state of Florida for consecutive state wins. However, the achievements for the 2025-26 team did not stop there. From February 6-8, the team competed with other top school programs in the country at the UCA National Championship in Orlando.

There, the Chargers won the Small Varsity Coed national title and world title, making this their third national win for the program over the past six years. This accomplishment was achieved through perseverance, as they had deductions in the first two rounds due to the pressure of the big stage. Yet, this setback did not discourage them, as they bounced back with the highest raw score in the division.

Additionally, the Strawberry Crest cheerleading squad claimed a National Game Day Championship in the Medium Game Day Non-Tumbling division, which was the first in the school and county's history.

The team's dedication to the sport and discipline throughout the year led them to the special moment of receiving the coveted white jacket, crowning them as the champions. This also made them the first cheer program in Hillsborough County to triple-jacket at the national championship within a single year.

When reflecting on the bond and of the team, Head Coach Loveny Savarino mentioned, after they were named champions, "The coed team gathered in a circle to pray to give gratitude, the Game Day team quietly joined around them, forming a larger circle of support. In that moment, it wasn't just about trophies — it was about unity, love and the bond that connects both teams as one program."

The passion of cheerleading will not stop at the high school level for some of these seniors. Two have already signed with universities to continue their career, including Evan Sweat with the University of South Florida and Hayden Johns with the University of Central Florida.

FAMILY RETURNS NICU TO HONOR NURSES WHO CARED FOR DAUGHTER

Staff Report



The March of Dimes has selected Andrew and Amber Vassell as this year's Ambassador Family for Tampa Bay. The Vassells, parents of three children, including two born premature, are using their story to raise awareness of the March of Dimes mission and to support other families facing the challenges of premature birth.

Their youngest daughter, Aliyah, was born on September 4 at just 26 weeks old and weighed a little more than 1 pound. She was small enough to fit in the palm of a hand and required immediate and extensive care. Her condition was so fragile that her parents were unable to hold her when she was born. After 153 days in the HCA Florida Brandon Hospital neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), Aliyah graduated and went home in February 2025.

To honor the team that cared for their daughter like family, the Vassells hosted a special appreciation dinner from Amici's Catered Cuisine owned by Phillip Lin. They treated the nurses to dinner, as well as a custom T-shirt created to mark the occasion, nearly one year after Aliyah made her journey home.

"I want the NICU nurses to know how thankful we are for how they cared for our daughter. This is just a small way we can thank you. I feel like we can never say thank you enough," said Andrew Vassell.

"Caring for babies like Aliyah is both a responsibility and a privilege. Families place enormous trust in us during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives, and we carry that trust with great respect. Seeing Aliyah thrive and having the Vassell family return to share their gratitude means more to our team than words can express," said Dr. Kiran Dwara-kanath, NICU medical director. "Their strength and dedication to helping other families remind us why we do this work every day."

As the Ambassador Family of Tampa Bay, the Vassells will share their story throughout the Tampa Bay region and across the country to help other families feel seen and supported through their own NICU experiences. Their advocacy extends beyond Florida. They recently partnered with the San Antonio Spurs for a March of Dimes event supported by Andrew Vassell's brother, Spurs guard Devin Vassell. They also have a Harlem Globetrotters March of Dimes event on the horizon.

"The Vassell family is an inspiring example of strength and hope," said Carly Johnson, manager of March of Dimes donor development. "Their desire to give back to the nurses who cared for Aliyah is a meaningful reminder of how deeply the NICU touches families. We are honored to have them as our ambassadors this year."

The Vassells hope that by telling their story, more families will feel empowered to share their own NICU journeys.

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MORE THAN A SHELTER: LOCAL ANIMAL GROUPS BUILD COMMUNITY

By Emily Harper







A Kitten Place

A Kitten Place, established in 2019, is a volunteer-based animal rescue giving overlooked cats in the area a second chance at life. This organization was founded by Alicia Pollock and Michelle Bass, who have experience in rescuing with other groups but felt as though they were called to create their own rescue to reflect their own ethics and standards of care.

"From the beginning, our priority has been to step in where the need is greatest and to provide comprehensive, compassionate care, regardless of the time, effort or resources required," said Bass.

A Kitten Place focuses its efforts on rescuing neonatal kittens in the county shelters. These kittens are euthanized on the daily at local shelters due to lack of resources for these special-needs kittens. It also saves cats that are pregnant or have freshly given birth, along with older kittens that possibly have critical medical needs.

These cats are taken into the homes of the volunteers and given the attention and support they need until they are adoptable. Some of these cats also spend their time at Sassy Cat Club Cafe in Brandon, where they become well-socialized and interact with potential forever owners.

Pollock and Bass mentioned, "As founders of a nonprofit, our favorite part of this work is how deeply rewarding it is — not only because we're saving animals but because we're also giving people purpose."

More in-depth information about the process of fostering, along with information about how to support this cause and save more kitties, can be found on A Kitten Place's website at https://akittenplace.org/.

Sassy Cat Club Cafe

Sassy Cat Club Cafe, located at 735 W. Lumsden Rd. in Brandon, is a unique place where the community can interact with cats that are available for adoption. Since opening its doors on March 1, 2023, it has welcomed cat lovers to come and enjoy the company of its fosters.

To spend time with the cats, it costs $10 for 30 minutes and $15 for an hour per person; children under 2 have free admission. The cafe invites people to study, work or just relax. It offers a variety of drinks, including coffee, tea, hot chocolate and cold beverages, but it also allows outside beverages to be brought in.

This cafe partners with A Kitten Place, where Sassy Cat Club Cafe receives its cats from. Through the cafe, cats are able to become socialized and connect with potential owners. Currently, it has 15 adoptable cats and three permanent residents.

Owner Nicole Duffey is a licensed animal nurse who spent her time working in the veterinary hospital.

Sassy Cat Club Cafe's efforts have allowed it to find forever homes for 368 cats. Duffey, as the owner, enjoys seeing the bonds that cat owners make with their feline friends.

Check out its website, https://sassycatclubcafe.com/, and social media pages for more information, as their hours fluctuate depending on the day.

Raining Cats and Dogs Shelter and Sanctuary

Founded in 2017, Raining Cats and Dogs Shelter and Sanctuary has made it a priority to rescue unwanted and homeless pets in the Hillsborough and Polk County areas. This rescue is not only a shelter but also a sanctuary, meaning if an animal is not adopted, it will have a forever home with the organization.

This shelter and sanctuary is located at 2708 SR 60 in Plant City and is 100 percent volunteer-run and donation-based. All the volunteers are passionate about their love for animals, and it shows through their impact as a program.

Laura Santo is the founder and president of this organization. Here, Santo imagined a place where cats and dogs could learn to be loved by people and not have any time limit on how long that might take.

For example, a dog named Stormy has been at the shelter since Easter of 2022. She arrived as a pregnant stray who ended up having 10 puppies a couple days later. All the puppies have since then been adopted into loving homes.

Within the rescue is a group called Dog Moms Doing Good. This group was created to help give back to the community, which has supported the rescue. The rescue-dog moms meet quarterly to assist other organizations in the community. For example, the group is focusing its next efforts on "bringing a little bit of joy to homebound senior citizens within the Plant City area by teaming up with Meals on Wheels."

All adoptions are done by appointment only, as Raining Cats and Dogs does not accept walk-in visitors. More information about this rescue and adoptable animals can be found on its website at www.rainingcatsanddogsshelter.com.

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ACHIEVE PLANT CITY HELPS INDIVIDUALS WITH LITERACY ISSUES IN THE COMMUNITY

By Libby Hopkins



Achieve Plant City is a local nonprofit dedicated to serving individuals in the community, many of whom face challenges due to limited literacy skills. These barriers can make daily life harder and often place children at risk of falling behind academically or entering school unprepared.

Achieve Plant City is committed to breaking the cycle of illiteracy and poverty, ensuring every family has access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive. Through tailored educational services, it empowers local families to build a foundation for lifelong success.

"Achieve Plant City was created to give families in our community the opportunity to thrive through literacy," said Angelica Ibarrra, director of Achieve Plant City. "The organization was founded on the belief that education is the great equalizer in life."

Ibarra's own life experiences inspired the mission of Achieve Plant City.

"I grew up in a home with two illiterate parents, became a teenage mother of two before the age of 18 and lived in extreme poverty," Ibarra said. "Education changed the course of my life, and I wanted others to have the same opportunity to transform theirs. I was able to break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty in my family, and Achieve Plant City is designed to help others do the same."

Ibarra and her team at Achieve Plant City are very proud of the work they have done in the community.

"One of my favorite stories is about a mother who came to us for support because her young daughter had been translating for her, and she felt ashamed that she could not communicate on her own," Ibarra said. "Through Achieve, she learned English, earned her GED and eventually secured a position with the school district. Her daughter, who once served as her translator, went on to earn a physician assistant degree and is now thriving in her career. Today, that mother has come full circle. She works with our organization, helping current participants pursue their own goals and dreams."

What brings Ibarra the most joy are the stories of Achieve's parent participants who gain the confidence to communicate within their communities, advocate for their children, and support their families in meaningful and empowering ways.

"Their growth is inspiring and witnessing it is one of the greatest rewards of our work," Ibarra said. "I am proud to be part of an organization that helps people succeed in life. Our participants often say they love the family environment we have created. "

Visit www.achieveplantcity.org or call 813-752-4010. Its office is located at 202 W. Reynolds St. in downtown Plant City.







BLOOM IS BACK: SPRING INTO FLOWERS AT BONNET SPRINGS PARK

Staff Report



Bonnet Springs Park will welcome the community to Bloom, a vibrant two-day flower festival celebrating nature, creativity and horticulture, on Saturday and Sunday, April 11-12, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The family-friendly event is free and open to all ages.

The park will transform into a lush wonderland filled with floral installations, botanical art displays, garden tours, a makers market, live entertainment and a variety of food and beverage vendors.

"We intentionally designed Bloom as an opportunity for families and visitors to experience the beauty of spring, discover local artists and vendors and celebrate the joy of flowers and plants," said Kirsten Hein, vice president of engagement at Bonnet Springs Park. "It's a chance for families from Tampa, Orlando and Lakeland to unplug, step outside and quite literally stop and smell the roses while connecting with nature and one another."

Throughout the weekend, guests can explore a sprawling outdoor market featuring local artists and makers, including Apothic Fox, Wild Within Flowers and Mamacita Lifestyle Co. The Bonnet Springs Park Plant Sale will also take place during the festival.

The market will be buzzing with energy all weekend long. Guests can catch live performances on the main stage while they explore, then wander over to the lounge, where a DJ will be spinning all day for both days, along with stunning aerialist performances soaring overhead. Local florists, including Montepuy, Taylormade Floral & Event Design, Blue House Florals, Lemon Drops Weddings & Events and In Bloom Florist, will create fresh and colorful installations across the festival grounds, forming a village of floral and botanical art for attendees to explore.

Free guided garden tours led by the park's horticulture staff and volunteers will be offered both days, along with pollinator and native plant education, horticulture demonstrations and interactive workshops. and food and beverage vendors.

April 11 Highlights

Bloom kicks off with a full day of live entertainment and immersive floral experiences. The main stage in the market area will feature performances by The Circus Arts Place aerialists, Sweet Harmony, a harpist, a Polk State College jazz quartet and a DJ set.

April 12 Highlights

The celebration continues on Sunday with additional performances and hands-on opportunities for guests of all ages. Entertainment on the main stage includes The Circus Arts Place aerialists, the Tom Sounds jazz trio, the Shay Butter Band, live music and a DJ set.

For a full schedule and additional details, visit www.bonnetspringspark.com/.

BRANDON COIN CLUB CELEBRATES 20 YEARS WITH SPRING COIN SHOW

By Brian Bokor



The Brandon Coin Club will host its Spring Coin Show on Saturday, April 11, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, 3315 S. Bryan Rd. in Brandon. Admission and parking are free.

The club has hosted regular coin shows in the Brandon area for years, helping keep the local collecting community active and engaged in the hobby.



"The Brandon Coin Club has been hosting regular coin shows for almost 20 years, with a brief two-year break during COVID," said Derek Spalding, bourse chairman of the Brandon Coin Club.

"We are grateful for the hospitality of St Andrew's United Methodist Church letting us use their facilities two years in a row for our shows," Spalding said.

The event will feature more than 40 dealer tables offering coins and collectibles for collectors of all experience levels. Professional coin grader ICG will be in attendance, and attendees can participate in free door prizes.

A highlight of the show is the raffle of a GSA Carson City Morgan silver dollar, a highly sought-after 19th-century coin prized by collectors.

"The Morgan being raffled has a special place in our hearts," Spalding said. "Its significance comes from the remarkable condition of the coins and the coveted Carson City mint mark, which together make it one of the most desirable and story-rich Morgan dollars a collector can own."

Beyond the raffle, Spalding said the hobby itself is seeing renewed growth, particularly among younger collectors.

"We are seeing growth in coin collecting as a whole primarily driven by digital mediums," he said, noting that private marketplace apps are drawing younger collectors and families into the hobby.

For those who have inherited coins, he recommends organizing them by denomination and year before bringing them to the show.

"Organize the collection if it's not already. By denomination and years are a good start," he said, adding that while valuable coins do surface, many inherited pieces are common and worth modest amounts.

As discussions occasionally surface about eliminating the penny, Spalding said such headlines can temporarily influence the market.

"At some point, that will die down, and the cents that have always been collected will continue to shine, such as the 1909-S VDB Lincoln cent," he said, noting that billions of pennies remain in circulation and will continue to do so for decades.

"It's really a fun day to meet new people and see some interesting coins," he said.

The doors open at 9 a.m., and the event runs until 3 p.m. Contact Spalding at dspalding2015@gmail.com.

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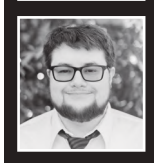
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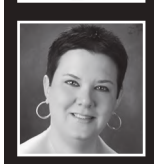
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PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(never known to fail)

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T.O.C.M.B.

SYLVIA THOMAS OFFERS SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER FAMILIES

By Emily Harper



Sylvia Thomas Center
For Adoptive and Foster Families
25 Years

For the past 25 years, the Sylvia Thomas Center has kept the 'forever' in 'forever families' by supporting adoptive and foster families in Hillsborough County. Over the years, the center has impacted the lives of over 6,000 families in our area, and each year it actively touches 500-600 families.

The Sylvia Thomas Center provides assistance through case management, support groups, training, respite activities and advocacy. This ensures families in the area are supported with their needs.

There are support groups for both parents and children. For parents, Sylvia Thomas offers a group called Parents Empowering Parents Talk. There, virtually, on the third Thursday of each month, adoptive or foster parents chat with one another about their experiences, providing fellowship and guidance.

On February 23, the organization started a book club for parents. In the months of March and April, parents will dissect a book, The Simple Guide To Understanding Shame in Children, as another way of connecting adoptive parents. Following the conclusion, parents will have the opportunity to join the next book club in June.

"We find that the best thing that we can do is connect adoptive parents with other adoptive parents," said the CEO, Mary Ann Kershaw.

As for the children, they meet on the third or fourth Thursday of each month to converse with others their age who share similar journeys. There they are served pizza while making crafts and doing other interactive activities. Those ages 5-10 have a group named Forever Friends Kids Club, ages 11-15 have Tween Squad and ages 16-17 have Teen Scene.

In addition, coming up on Monday, March 16, the Sylvia Thomas Center is having a 'Community Service Day' for those ages 14-17. On this day, teens who are in need of community service hours are invited to come do volunteer work.

The Sylvia Thomas Center is always accepting any donations to support the families and the lives of their children. Its office is located at 500 Lithia Pinecrest Rd. in Brandon, and its website is https://sylviathomascenter.org/, where any additional information about its programs can be found.

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Impact's Got Talent, Easter Egg Drop, Music Bingo & More...

Compiled by Jenny Bennett
jbennett@ospreyobserver.com

Your Next Career Opportunity Awaits

Job seekers in the area have a reason to celebrate. ECHO, in partnership with New Hope Church and Better Together, is hosting a community job fair designed to connect talent with opportunity on Tuesday, March 31, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. This event promises a unique experience that goes beyond the typical job fair. Attendees will have the chance for face-to-face interviews with hiring managers from reputable companies while also accessing valuable resources to advance their careers. Whether you're searching for your first job, looking to make a career change or seeking new opportunities, this event is tailored for you. Employers are also encouraged to register and showcase their companies to a motivated pool of candidates.

For more details and to register as a job seeker or employer, visit https://bettertogetherus.org/events/brandon-fl-job-fair-hosted-by-new-hope-church/. New Hope Church is located at 121 N. Knights Ave. in Brandon.

Impact's Got Talent

The Impact Program is now seeking talented students to audition for its annual Impact"s Got Talent event, scheduled for Friday, April 24, at 6:30 p.m. at Fellowship Baptist Church, with the grand-prize winner receiving $250. Auditions are open for grades K-12, including vocalists, actors, dancers (solo, duets and groups), musicians and anything else that sounds fun and entertaining. All acts must be under three minutes. Auditions will be held on Sunday, March 29, from 1-5 p.m., at Dance Quest International, located at 853 Lithia Pinecrest Rd. in Brandon. To schedule your audition, contact Jennifer Crum at crummiej2@gmail.com or 863-661-3236.

All ticket sales benefit the Impact Program, which promotes healthy lifestyles and relationships to teens, parents, teachers and other youth leaders through classroom education.

Fellowship Baptist Church is located at 13515 U.S. 301 in Thonotosassa. For more information, visit www.whatisimpact.com.

Experienced Autism Alliance Fundraiser At Voodoo Brewing Co.

Experienced Autism Alliance is hosting a music bingo fundraiser on Thursday, April 16, at Voodoo Brewing Co., located at 3432 SR 60 in Valrico. Sing, laugh and win prizes, all while supporting Autism Alliance. Proceeds from the event will help provide door alarms, locks and safety tools for families in our community. The doors open at 6 p.m., and bingo starts at 7 p.m. Tickets cost $25 for five games of bingo; there will also be a raffle and prizes. Food and drink will also be available to purchase from Voodoo Brewing Co. Visit www.autismalliancefl.org for more information.

Ian Cribbs Named Finalist In National Merit Scholarship Program



Ian Cribbs, a senior at Foundation Christian Academy, has been named a finalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program, one of the nation's most prestigious academic competitions. Finalists are selected based on exceptional PSAT scores, outstanding academic records, leadership, extracurricular involvement and a rigorous application process that includes an essay and a school recommendation.

Foundation Christian Academy President Jonathan Smith said, "Ian exemplifies the academic excellence, Christian character and dedication we strive to cultivate at Foundation Christian Academy."

Easter Egg Drop And Family Fun Day

Hope for the Community, the outreach ministry of Living in Victory Christian Church, will host a free community Easter egg drop on Saturday, April 4, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the church, located at 1603 Bloomingdale Ave. in Valrico. The event will include a helicopter egg drop for children, carnival rides, games, giveaways, food, community vendors and more for the entire family. This event is free and open to the community.

Shred-a-thon

Bring your confidential documents for shredding in a safe and secure manor to Bloomingdale Golfers Club, located at 4113 Great Golfers Place in Valrico. The free community Shred-a-thon will take place on Saturday, March 28, from 9-11 a.m. and is sponsored by realtor Mary West; contact her at mary.west@kw.com or call 813-763-9378. Please do not try shredding metal, lighters, trash or heavy plastics.

SUN COAST SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION TO HOST GOLF TOURNAMENT BENEFITING LOCAL NONPROFIT FORGOTTEN ANGELS

By Libby Hopkins



The Sun Coast Scholarship Foundation, a new nonprofit, is committed to enhancing access to quality education for students facing financial challenges. Through its scholarship programs, it aims to empower students by providing them with financial resources to pursue higher education, thus enabling them to achieve their academic aspirations and contribute positively to their communities.

The Sun Coast Scholarship Foundation was born from a shared dream between Dr. Sterling and Rosa Jasper, two first-generation college graduates who experienced firsthand the transformative power of education, mentorship and opportunity.

"With every degree earned, career milestone reached, and door opened, we knew our success was never meant to end with us, it was meant to begin with others," said Dr. Sterling Jasper.

Recently relocated to the Tampa area, the Jaspers bring with them decades of experience as a business owner and social worker respectfully. Their years of public service has allowed them to witness firsthand the challenges faced by at-risk teens striving to build a brighter future.

"Motivated by these experiences, we have launched our new nonprofit organization, dedicated to helping youth transition successfully into college, careers and adulthood," Dr. Sterling Jasper said.

To kick off its mission, the organization will host a celebrity golf tournament on Friday, June 19, at River Hills Country Club, located at 3943 New River Hills Parkway in Valrico.

"All proceeds will benefit Forgotten Angels of Florida, an organization whose mission closely aligns with ours," Dr. Sterling Jasper said, "mentoring and guiding teens who often feel overlooked as they enter adulthood."

Forgotten Angels is a nonprofit which operates more as a family to benefit children aging out of the foster care system, young adults who have aged out, at-risk teens and recently released incarcerated youths.

The Jaspers hope to bring awareness to their nonprofit and the work they are doing.

"Our vision is to create a legacy of opportunity, one that doesn't stop at scholarship awards but stretches into careers, leadership and lives filled with purpose," Jasper said. "Through education, mentorship and selfless service, we are committed to uplifting the next generation so they, too, can rise and reach back."

Visit www.thesuncoastscholarshipfoundation.org. The foundation is located at 867 W. Bloomingdale Ave., #6104, in Brandon.





CHAMBER BRINGS HEALTH, FITNESS AND FUN TOGETHER AT MAY 16 FAIR

Staff Report



The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce its Community Health & Wellness Fair, taking place Saturday, May 16, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Gardenville Park & Recreation Center, located at 6219 Symmes Rd. in Gibsonton.

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

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

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

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

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

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

About the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce: The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce empowers businesses through opportunities for brand exposure, education and advocacy while fostering meaningful connections that strengthen the community and promote collaboration and growth.





MARCHING EAGLES TAKE THE SPOTLIGHT AT SOLD-OUT DAYTONA 500

By Jane Owen







Brandon High School's Marching Eagles band performed ahead of the 68th annual Daytona 500 in February. The band played in the infield grass near the finish line at the Daytona International Speedway.

The 2026 Daytona 500 was sold out for the 11th year in a row with an attendance of approximately 150,000 people. The Marching Eagles kicked off the prerace ceremony, thrilling fans waiting for the Great American Race with popular rock-oriented songs.

Peyton Jones, NASCAR group sales manager, said Brandon's band brought energy and excitement to the prerace festivities.

"As one of the few bands selected for the opportunity to perform before the race, they truly made the moment special. Not only was it a tremendous performance by the students, but it was also a great way to begin the day and welcome fans from around the world to the World Center of Racing," Jones said.

Brandon's director of bands, Veronica Jacob, said playing at the Daytona 500 was a tremendous opportunity for the



students to shine in front of the largest audience they have ever played for. Previous large events include football games and marching band music performance assessments, both of which may have a couple of thousand people in attendance. From the moment the band arrived and drove under the track to the infield, the students were taken aback by how many people were there. Jacob said it was bigger than she expected as well.

"I am proud of them. This was the largest audience these kids have ever played for by a landslide," Jacob said.

The band played a 15-minute set of stand tunes, including "Fly Like an Eagle," "Life is a Highway," "Disco Inferno," "Big Ballin'," "Power," "Pon de Replay" and "Swag Surfin'."

Senior drum major Keylan Greene said what he enjoyed most was playing in front of such a large crowd.

"I enjoyed showing off the band's efforts of how hard we've worked in front of thousands of people," Greene said.

Country music star and three-time Grammy Award winner Miranda Lambert was the headline performer for the prerace concert. Comedian Nate Bargatze served as grand marshal and actor Kurt Russell was an honorary pace driver.

To learn more about the Brandon High School Marching Eagles band, visit www.brandonhsbands.com or email directly to Veronica Jacob at veronica.jacob@hcps.net.

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MINDFUL CHIROPRACTIC OPENS DOORS FOR NEW WELLNESS CLINIC

By Olivia Clark



Community members and local leaders gathered on February 18 to celebrate the grand opening of Mindful Chiropractic during a ribbon-cutting ceremony hosted by the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce. The event welcomed the practice as one of the chamber's newest members while highlighting its commitment to improving health and wellness in the community.

The celebration brought together chamber ambassadors, local professionals and supporters who came to congratulate licensed chiropractor Dr. Maria Medina on the opening of her practice in Brandon. Located at 920 W. Lumsden Rd., the new office focuses on whole-body care and nervous system health through modern, evidence-based chiropractic techniques.

Mindful Chiropractic was founded on the belief that feeling good in one's body should be a normal part of life. The practice emphasizes neurological chiropractic care and personalized treatment plans designed to help patients move better, reduce stress and restore balance in the body. Patients are welcomed into a calm and supportive environment where appointments focus on individualized care and meaningful patient connection.

Dr. Medina's path into chiropractic care began with a personal experience that ultimately shaped her career and philosophy of healing. A graduate of Life University, she discovered chiropractic after recovering from a serious injury and witnessing the body's ability to heal when the nervous system is properly supported.

"Through chiropractic care, I saw how the body can restore balance and reconnect with its natural ability to heal," said Dr. Medina. "That experience changed the way I understood health and inspired me to create a space where people feel heard, supported and cared for."

During the ceremony, Melissa Canfield, ambassador for the Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce, presented a proclamation recognizing the milestone and officially declaring February 18 as Mindful Chiropractic Day.

Dr. Medina also expressed gratitude to the family members, friends and community supporters who helped bring the practice to life.

"This is a space that has taken quite a bit to build from the ground up," said Dr. Medina. "Let this be a place for healing, love and support for the community."

Mindful Chiropractic serves individuals and families throughout the Brandon area with a focus on compassionate, mindful care that supports long-term wellness. More information about the practice can be found at www.mindfulchirofl.com.







HILLSBOROUGH UNVEILS NEW ONLINE SYSTEM TO RESERVE CAMPING SPOTS

Staff Report





Want to get away somewhere close to nature, with plenty of room to relax and just feet away from a wide array of recreational opportunities? Booking a spot at one of Hillsborough County's almost 200 campsites in three of its most popular conservation parks just got a lot easier.

The county has unveiled a new online reservation system, which means that prospective campers no longer need to arrive early and in person to reserve a spot at Edward Medard, E.G. Simmons, or Lithia Springs Conservation Parks. The online system allows campers to see when and where vacant campsites are available and to reserve and pay for the specific site(s) up to six months in advance. Additionally, campers can search for sites with the amenities they desire, including electricity, water, picnic tables, grills and campfire rings.

Camping fees remain the same: $24 per site per night, $18 for those ages 55-64 and $12 for Hillsborough County residents ages 65 and older. All three conservation parks allow for both RV and tent camping.

In addition to camping, these conservation parks offer many other distinct amenities. Edward Medard Conservation Park, located at 6140 Turkey Creek Rd. in Plant City, is home to a 700-acre reservoir, observation tower, hiking trails, a disc golf course, picnic shelters and a large playground area. Lithia Springs Conservation Park, located at 3932 Lithia Springs Rd. in Lithia, includes picnic shelters, hiking trails, canoe rentals, an ADA-accessible playground and picturesque views of the Alafia River. The centerpiece of the park is a large freshwater spring that is popular with swimmers year-round. E.G. Simmons Conservation Park, located at 2401 19th Ave. NW in Ruskin, borders Tampa Bay and offers a large boat ramp facility, canoe/kayak rentals, a beach and swimming area, picnic shelters, fishing areas, two playgrounds and 200 acres of mangroves reserved for a bird and wildlife sanctuary.

The following number of campsites are available:

- E.G. Simmons Park, 103 sites.
- Lithia Springs Park, 45 sites.
- Edward Medard Park, 43 sites.

RV campers are limited to stays of 30 consecutive days per park; tent campers can stay up to 14 days within a 30-day period. A maximum of two dogs or cats is allowed. Also, the individual who reserved the campsite must be physically present at check-in.

For more information regarding camping options at Hillsborough County's conservation parks, please visit www.hcfl.gov/camping.

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Who are your beneficiaries?

Don't leave it to chance. If you want to make sure your assets are distributed according to your wishes when you pass away, it's important to review your beneficiary designations regularly.

Major changes to tax laws or major life events such as marriage, divorce, birth, adoption or a death in the family could mean a change is needed.

Why is it important to designate beneficiaries?

Designating beneficiaries is one of the easiest and most direct ways for you to pass along your assets to the people and/or organizations that mean the most to you. Beneficiary designations may also help avoid probating your assets upon your death.

We can work with you and your estate-planning team to ensure your account registrations and beneficiary designations support your wishes.

Questions you should consider before making or updating your beneficiary designations include:

- Who are my current primary and contingent beneficiaries?
- Do my current beneficiary designations reflect my wishes?
- Do I have any accounts without beneficiary designations that I want to update?
- Have I discussed any beneficiary special needs and the legal and tax consequences of my beneficiary designations with my estate-planning team?
- Are there any default beneficiary designations I need to be aware of contained in my retirement account's custodial agreement, insurance policy or annuity contract, or 529 plan prospectus?

I would be happy to sit down with you to discuss your current beneficiaries and potential next steps.

Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors are not estate planners and cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your estate-planning attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.

Please call or stop by today to schedule an appointment.



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ROTARY TAMPA GOLF TOURNAMENT TO BENEFIT CAMP FLORIDA

Staff Report



The Rotary Club of Tampa will host its second annual Legacy Golf Tournament on Monday, April 20, at Carrollwood Country Club, bringing together golfers, businesses and community supporters to benefit Rotary's Camp Florida.

The event celebrates the lasting impact of the J. Arthur Turner family within the Rotary club and the broader community while raising funds for critical improvements at the camp. Organizers said this year's tournament will focus on helping build a new infirmary at Camp Florida, an ADA-compliant camp that serves children and adults with health and developmental challenges.

"Together, we will ensure the camp's impact for decades to come as we continue to honor the Turner family legacy," organizers said in tournament materials.

The fundraiser builds on the success of last year's inaugural event, which raised nearly $48,000 for Camp Florida. Those funds helped repair or replace six HVAC units, install new AED units and address multiple roof leaks across the property.

The camp, located in the Brandon area, hosts numerous nonprofit organizations that serve children and adults with medical needs and disabilities. Groups such as the 1Voice Foundation and Faces of Courage Foundation regularly use the camp for retreats, camps and therapeutic programs.

A recently compiled list of needs from camp user groups highlights the importance of continued improvements across the property. Priorities include upgrades to the infirmary, safer windows in the children's cabins, accessibility improvements to recreation areas and updates to the kitchen and dining facilities.

Plans for the new infirmary would help address many current needs while placing medical services closer to the center of camp activities, where most injuries or health concerns occur.

Community support will play a key role in making those improvements possible. Sponsorship opportunities range from the $10,000 Legacy Sponsor level to several $1,000 options, including hole sponsors, beverage cart sponsors, contest sponsors and driving range sponsors. Additional opportunities include breakfast, lunch and auction sponsorships.

Businesses and individuals may also participate by registering a foursome for $600 or signing up as an individual golfer for $150.

Proceeds from the tournament will go directly toward improvements that will allow Camp Florida to continue providing accessible outdoor experiences for generations of campers to come.

The club will also host a lunch and learn to educate the community about the camp on Tuesday, April 28, from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Rotary's Camp Florida, located at 1915 Camp Rd. in Brandon, with lunch from Beef 'O' Brady's on Kings Avenue and sponsored by ABC Events.

For more information, visit www.rotarycluboftampa.org.

LAND USE, ENERGY AFFORDABILITY AND WASTE REDUCTION AMONG KEY TOPICS FOR LOCAL SIERRA CLUB MEMBERS

By Olivia Clark

Members of the Tampa Bay Group of the Sierra Club recently gathered for a virtual Conservation Committee meeting to discuss several environmental issues affecting Hillsborough County and the Greater Tampa Bay region. The discussion focused on topics ranging from land development and energy affordability to waste management and state legislation that could influence local environmental protections.

One of the issues on the agenda was the proposed Skyway Cruise Port. Environmental advocates continue to monitor large-scale infrastructure proposals along Tampa Bay's waterfront due to potential impacts on coastal ecosystems, water quality and marine habitats. Projects of this scale often require extensive review to ensure they align with conservation goals and regional planning efforts.

Land-use planning and rezoning in Hillsborough County was also part of the discussion. Rapid growth throughout the county has increased pressure on natural areas, wetlands and wildlife habitats. Sierra Club members frequently review rezoning proposals and development projects to determine whether they may affect environmentally sensitive lands or nearby conservation areas.

Energy affordability and access were another focus. The Hillsborough Affordable Energy Coalition, a community-based initiative referenced in the group's newsletter, works to ensure residents have access to reliable and reasonably priced energy. The coalition encourages community engagement and advocacy aimed at promoting energy policies that benefit both residents and the environment.

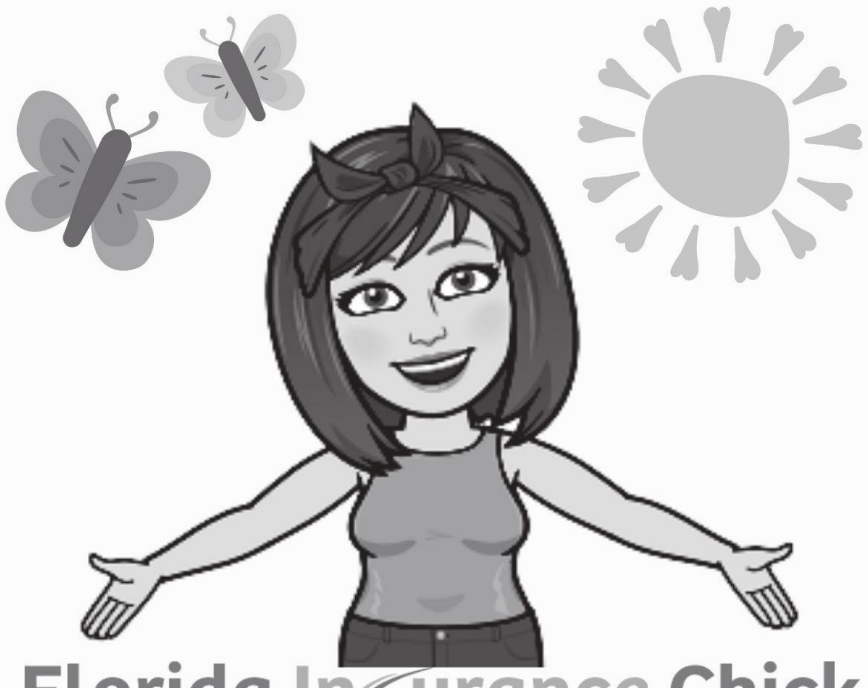
Waste reduction and incineration initiatives were also listed among the topics. Environmental groups across Florida continue to evaluate alternatives to traditional waste disposal methods, including incineration, which can raise concerns about emissions and long-term environmental impacts. Sierra Club members often advocate for expanded recycling, waste reduction strategies and sustainable materials management.

In addition to local issues, the meeting highlighted several pieces of state legislation that could affect conservation efforts. Proposed bills related to water regulation, conservation land transparency and environmental oversight remain important areas of attention for environmental advocates. Members regularly monitor such legislation to understand how it may influence local decision-making and environmental protections in the Tampa Bay area.

Through meetings, educational outreach and community engagement, the Sierra Club Tampa Bay Group continues to encourage residents to stay informed and involved in environmental issues that affect the region's natural resources and quality of life.

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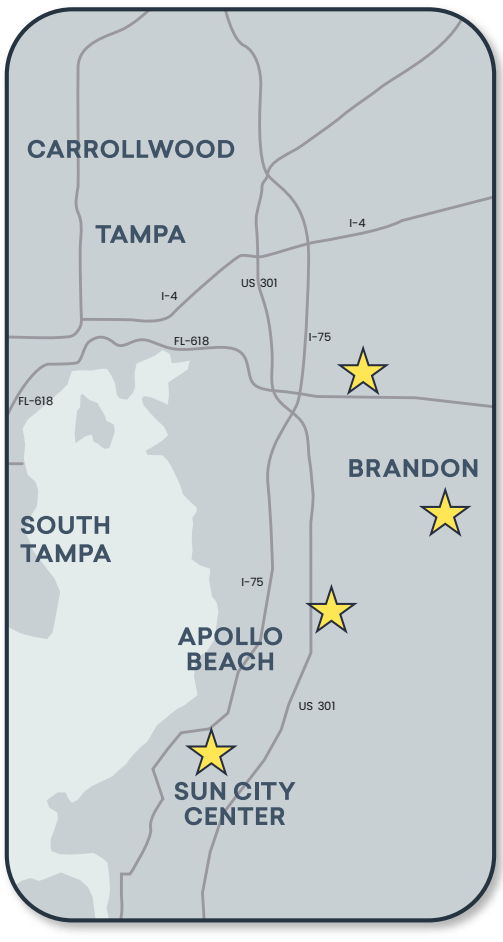
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TAMPA BAY RODEO & FAMILY FESTIVAL GALLOPS INTO HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS APRIL 10 & 11

Staff Report

Celebrate America's 250th birthday at the Tampa Bay Rodeo & Family Festival, presented by Bartow Ford, on Friday and Saturday, April 10-11, at the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds. Tampa's thrill-packed spring tradition delivers two action-packed nights of full rodeo competition, featuring bull riding, bronco busting, barrel racing, calf roping and more. The event also honors the brave men and women in law enforcement, fire and rescue who serve and safeguard our communities.

In honor of local police officers, firefighters and rescue personnel, a charitable donation will be made to Off-Road United, a nonprofit foundation dedicated to supporting the well-being of first responders in the Tampa Bay area. Complimentary tickets have also been distributed through local first responder organizations, which will also participate on-site with vendor booths. Blue-line and red-line flags will fly high above the entrance in tribute to those who serve this community.

This year's Family Festival expands its animal experience with more than 100 animals and an exciting new attraction. Camels, goats — including more than 20 babies — pigs, a monkey and an elephant join lions and tigers as part of the festival's growing animal lineup. New this year, the Tiger Encounter offers a live viewing and feeding experience where guests can learn about tiger behavior and conservation from trained handlers. Together, the animals create a lively attraction that gives families a chance to get up close to majestic creatures from around the world.

Guests can arrive early for the Family Festival to enjoy delicious food and interactive fun. Festival favorites include corn dogs, barbecue, tacos, funnel cake and hot-pressed Cuban sandwiches paired with refreshing beverages or ice-cold beer. Visitors can test their skills on the mechanical bull, try ax throwing, soar on the bungee trampoline, race down the giant slide and challenge friends to cornhole and giant Jenga. Guests can also climb aboard a monster truck or even take a ride on a camel.

When the sun goes down, the spotlight shifts to the rodeo arena, where superfans can upgrade their tickets to the new VIP Rodeo Section. VIP tickets include admission and premium reserved bleacher seating near the bucking chutes, along with exclusive access to a private bar, a Luxe restroom trailer, complimentary snacks and sponsor giveaways (while supplies last), additional security and a designated non-smoking area. Gates open at 4:30 p.m., and the rodeo competition begins at 7 p.m.

The Tampa Bay Rodeo & Family Festival, presented by Bartow Ford, is a community event featuring local vendors and area sponsors.

For more information and tickets, please visit www.tamparodeo.com/.

VINTAGE MARKET DAYS RETURNS TO PLANT CITY FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Staff Report

Get ready to 'Let the Good Times Roll' while you refresh your home and personal style for spring at the region's most popular shopping event, Vintage Market Days of Greater Tampa, happening from Friday to Sunday, April 10-12, at the Florida Strawberry Festival Fairgrounds.



Photo credit: Vintage Market Days®



For three days, the fairgrounds transform into a vintage shopping party — now with more vintage clothing and more vintage home decor and furniture. Plus, it is packed with original art, repurposed treasures, handcrafted jewelry, furniture, food trucks and live music. Shoppers will find more than 100 vendors with all new sourced goods ready for you to discover.

Vintage Market Days doesn't just bring families and friends together for a weekend of fun experiences. This spring, it supports the Plant City First United Methodist Youth Ministry.

Bring your besties, shop local and discover unique finds you won't see anywhere else.

The event will be held at the Florida Strawberry Festival Fairgrounds in the Grimes Building and Astin Pavilion, located at 2508 W. Oak Ave. in Plant City. It will be open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sunday.

Ticket prices start at $5, with VIP and group passes available. Kids 12 and under are free. Tickets are available online and at the gate. For tickets and more information, visit www.vintagemarketdays.com/market/metro-tampa/.

About Vintage Market Days

Vintage Market Days is an upscale vintage and vintage-inspired indoor/outdoor market featuring original art, antiques, clothing, jewelry, handmade treasures, home decor, outdoor furnishings, consumable yummies, seasonal plantings and a little more.

The market is a three-day event held two times a year in various communities throughout the United States. Each Vintage Market Days event is a unique opportunity for vendors to display their talents and passions in different venues throughout the country.



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EFFORT UNDERWAY TO HONOR WOMEN VETERANS WITH MONUMENT

By Brad Stager



Honoring the service and sacrifices of women who have worn uniforms of the United States military is the profound goal of a dedicated group of veterans who seek to establish such a monument at Hillsborough County's Veterans Memorial Park.

Gathering together in person at special events and online under the Facebook banner of Women Veterans Monument - Hillsborough County, this group is beginning the process of bringing to fruition a tribute honoring their sisters-in-arms, from the Revolutionary War to the ongoing missions of today, with a physical presence at Veterans Memorial Park.

A statement released by the group reads: "The most important thing about our project is that Women have served in this nation's military for 250 years from battlefield followers and nurses in the Revolutionary War to fully integrated members of every branch of military service. Women veterans often believe that their service was 'just a job' or unremarkable unless they were the 'first' to accomplish a specific feat. This project highlights that every woman who served proudly, whether in a combat role, supporting the war effort or providing medical care, is deserving of recognition. Women veterans remain underrepresented in public commemoration. To help rectify this, Hillsborough County seeks to honor all women who served, regardless of whether their role was glamorous or 'first,' ensuring their service, stories and sacrifices are recognized and remembered."

A monument of gratitude and respect for women veterans in Hillsborough County would be among others throughout the country and state, such as the national Military Women's Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the Women Veterans Monuments at Veterans' Park in Okaloosa County that memorialize eight notable women veterans from throughout America's history.

Information about the effort to establish a monument to women veterans can be found at the Women Veterans Monument - Hillsborough County Facebook page, which is also a source of information for other events, such as fundraisers, teas and luncheons, as well as topics of interest to women veterans.

The Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park and Rear Admiral LeRoy Collins, Jr., Veterans Museum is located at 3602 N. U.S. 301 in Tampa. The park is open daily from 7 a.m.-5 p.m., and the museum is open from Monday to Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

COMMUNITY TENNIS LEAGUE BLENDS EXERCISE, PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP FOR BRANDON WOMEN

By Olivia Clark



The First Baptist Brandon Ladies Tennis League, founded in 1977, brings together women of various ages and skill levels for friendly competition and community connection.

For five decades, the First Baptist Brandon Ladies Tennis League has provided women in the community the opportunity to stay active and grounded in faith.

Founded in 1977 by church member Jane Carter, the league began after Carter noticed that the church had a tennis court on its property that was rarely used. She placed a notice on the church bulletin offering to teach any women interested in learning the game. After helping several beginners develop their skills, Carter realized they needed a reason to keep playing, which led to the creation of the tennis league.

The league initially played at a private tennis club and quickly grew in popularity. As membership expanded, additional courts were needed, and the group began using facilities such as Bloomingdale East and Bloomingdale West. Over the years, matches have also been held at Brandon Swim and Tennis Club, Maharaj Tennis Club on Valrico Road and Hidden Palms Tennis Club.

Today, the league plays on Tuesdays at Buckhorn Springs Racquet Club and has 36 members ranging in age from their 40s to their 80s. The group is organized into three teams of 12 players, each led by a captain, with additional women on a waiting list who hope to join when openings become available.

One tradition that sets the league apart is its focus on faith and fellowship.

"We always pray before we play," said Dee Grantham, who oversees the league. "This is an opportunity to pray for our members and their family needs. We have very good competition, but winning is secondary to supporting and caring for one another."

Unlike many leagues, members do not travel to compete at other clubs. The league also welcomes players with a wide range of skill levels.

"This league creates a circle of friendship that adds fun, a sense of belonging and great exercise," said one member. "Spiritually, the league provides a time for us to pray with and for teammates and encourage each other in our faith."

Another participant said the league came at the perfect time in her life.

"Being on this tennis league reminds me of God's gifts, giving us a few hours to exercise our bodies, enjoy each other's company and lift each other up in prayer," she said.

Women interested in joining the First Baptist Brandon Ladies Tennis League can contact Grantham at 813-760-9557.

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52ND SUN 'N FUN AEROSPACE EXPO PROMISES HIGH-FLYING FUN AND FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

Staff Report



Aviation enthusiasts and families alike are gearing up for the 52nd SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo, set for Tuesday through Sunday, April 14-19, at Lakeland Linder International Airport. Recognized as one of the world's largest aviation events, the weeklong expo promises high-flying excitement with daily and nightly airshows, educational forums, on-site camping and live entertainment.

This year's event features a special extended Night Airshow on Wednesday, April 15, and a milestone 50th anniversary celebration of the Red, White & Blue aerobatic team. Attendees can also take part in camping options, including early arrival sites starting on Saturday, April 11. Registration for camping opens on Tuesday, April 7.

Adding a special touch to the opening night festivities, eight honorable World War II veterans will be honored during the opening night concert on Tuesday, April 14, at the Warbird Ramp. The evening kicks off at 5 p.m. with performances by Angie K, Thomas Mac and headliner Cooper Alan. This patriotic tribute is included with daily admission, ensuring every visitor can join the salute to America's heroes.

The expo continues the Franklin family's legacy of showmanship, led today by Kyle Franklin, a third-generation pilot and professional wing walker. Kyle Franklin's career spans more than 25 years and includes jaw-dropping acts like comedy flying, motorcycle-to-airplane transfers and thematic performances, such as Pirated Skies and Dracula. Together with his wife, Liz, Kyle Franklin continues to push the boundaries of airshow entertainment while honoring his family's decades-long tradition.

Early-bird tickets are $45 for daily general admission and $170 for weekly, rising to $50 and $180 respectively at the gate. Youth tickets (ages 13-17) are $20 daily/$70 weekly, while children 12 and under are free.

Parking is $20 on-site and available online in advance for $10. For more information on schedules, performers and ticketing, visit the official SUN 'n FUN website at www.flysnf.org/.

YOUTH TAKE LEAD AT HILLSBOROUGH SUMMER FIRE ACADEMY

Staff Report







Many teenagers have imagined working as a first responder fighting fires, saving lives and being recognized as a community hero. And parents have dreamed of seeing their son or daughter in uniform, working in a noble profession.

Those dreams can come true through the Hillsborough County Fire Rescue Foundation's 2026 Alan D. Anderson Summer Youth Fire Academy, where students will learn all about the role of being a firefighter.

Hillsborough County students ages 14-18 have until Friday, March 27, to apply for the two-week summer program.

Hillsborough County Fire Rescue instructors will teach students hands-on lessons and detail the multiple roles that firefighters have in their jobs.

The program curriculum includes fire ground operations, use of firefighting bunker gear, aerial ladder climbs, search and rescue, forcible entry, rappelling and knots, water safety, CPR, first aid and the history of the fire service.

Applicants must be high school students or graduating seniors between the ages of 14 and 18. A panel will review applications and make final selections based on class size.

The 2026 academy will be available from Monday, June 8, -Friday, June 19. A mandatory orientation will be held on Saturday, May 23.

The academy is a free program, courtesy of the Hillsborough County Fire Rescue Foundation. Lunch, snacks, water and sports drinks are provided each day, in addition to uniform shirts, pants, boots, a belt and a hat. Transportation not provided.

Applicants must submit their applications by 5 p.m. on March 27. Along with the application, students must submit a personal essay and include two letters of recommendation. Only virtual applications are accepted.

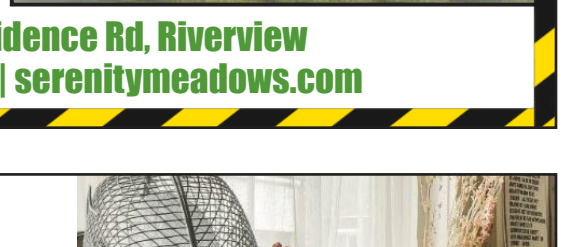
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BRANDON ROTARY OPENS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL SENIORS, AWARDS NEARLY $25,000

Staff Report



Photo Credit Linda Chion

Rotary Club members recognize 2025 scholarship recipients.

High school seniors across the Greater Brandon area are encouraged to apply for the Brandon Rotary Club Charity Fund Annual Scholarship, with applications due by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 10.

The scholarship program, established by the Rotary Club of Brandon, supports students who live in Brandon or attend high school within the Brandon area. In 2025, the charity fund awarded approximately $25,000 in scholarships to graduating seniors, continuing a long-standing commitment to education, leadership and community service.

Multiple scholarships are available to students who meet eligibility requirements, including residency within the defined Brandon-area boundaries, graduation as a current high school senior, a minimum 3.0 unweighted GPA, documented community service hours and acceptance into an accredited two or four-year college or university.

True to Rotary's mission, service is at the heart of the selection process. Applications are scored primarily on service to school and community, along with a student statement, a recommendation from a community service organization and academic achievement. An optional section allows applicants to be considered for the Sharon S. Sellers Memorial Scholarship, which emphasizes giving back to both community and country.

"All of our scholarship recipients demonstrate a strong commitment to service and leadership," said Chuck Burgess, CEO of High 5 Inc. "These students are already making a difference locally, and we're proud to help support their next steps."

Applications are reviewed by a committee of at least five individuals, which may include Rotarians, educators and charity fund board members. Final selections are made by the committee, and scholarship recipients will be notified directly.

Applicants must submit a single PDF document that includes the completed application, a verified community service time sheet, an official transcript and discipline record, proof of college acceptance and a letter of recommendation from a community service organization. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Paper submissions are not accepted.

All applications must be emailed to brccf.scholarship@gmail.com by the deadline.

Scholarship awards will be presented at a future ceremony at the Rivard-Simmons Rotary Event Center, with funds paid directly to recipients' college or university financial aid departments.

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KIWANIS CLUB OF BRANDON TEES UP IN SUPPORT LOCAL YOUTH

By Kelly Wise Valdes



The Kiwanis Club of Brandon is gearing up for a high-energy day on the greens as it hosts its annual Terrific Kids Golf Tournament on Thursday, April 16, beginning at 11 a.m. at Buckhorn Springs Golf and Country Club, located at 2721 S. Miller Rd. in Valrico. The much-anticipated event is the club's largest and most essential fundraiser of the year, fueling the youth-focused programs that define its mission. Proceeds from the tournament power initiatives across Eastern Hillsborough County, including Terrific Kids, K-Kids, Builders Clubs and Key Clubs — programs designed to inspire leadership, character and community service among local students.

Club President Dustie Amatangelo said the fundraiser is essential to maintaining the group's long tradition of community service.

"Our Kiwanis Club is a unique organization in that 99 percent of funds raised is reinvested back into the community," said Amatangelo. "We are run by volunteers who give the hearts and working hands to make us strong."

The tournament, described by organizers as the backbone of the club's charitable work, is the only major fundraising event the club holds each year.

The club hopes the community will rally behind this year's event by fielding teams, sponsoring holes or donating goods for raffle baskets. There are many ways the community can support this effort.

"Come out and bring a sponsorship and a team, make a donation, create a beautiful basket that represents your business and donate it. And lastly, become a Kiwanian. We are always looking for good people to join us," said Amatangelo.

This year, the club has set a goal for the golf tournament to support its growing initiatives.

"Our goal this year is to net $20,000 dollars," said Amatangelo. "We had a huge increase for our Project Smile program at Gibsonton Elementary and we will need to cover that cost."

"Our Brandon Kiwanis Club [is a] great organization of wonderful people who share a heart for our children in our local community," said Amatangelo. "Our Terrific Kids Golf Tournament raises the funds we need to help our community build better leaders."

Amatangelo encourages anyone interested to support the cause in any way they can.

"If I had a big ask, it would be twofold: Come help us reach our goal — but even more important, consider becoming a member of our extended family. There is a ton of love to share."

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Brandon, Florida, was established in May 1960 and continues to serve the community, especially its children. The club has served over 100,000 residents and provided more than $2 million to support local charities through its many programs and volunteer efforts.

Register for the tournament and get more info at www.brandonkiwanis.org/events/.

COUPLE HELP PLAN TAILORED TRAVEL EXPERIENCES WITH CRUISE PLANNERS

By Olivia Clark



For Matthew Gordon and Marji Beam, travel has always been more than a hobby. It's a passion that inspired the couple to turn their love of exploring the world into a full-service travel planning business.

As independent franchise owners with Cruise Planners, Gordon and Beam help clients plan customized vacations ranging from cruises and destination weddings to group trips and luxury, land-based travel experiences. The couple launched their business in June 2024 and now work with travelers seeking a more personalized approach to vacation planning.

Before entering the travel industry, both brought extensive professional experience from other fields. Beam previously owned an independent property and casualty brokerage, while Gordon spent years working in executive management within the corporate sector. Together, the pair combine business experience with firsthand travel knowledge to guide clients through the planning process.

The business operates as a full-service travel agency helping clients coordinate cruises, resort stays, excursions, travel insurance and more. Gordon primarily focuses on cruise itineraries, while Beam often leads planning for land-based vacations, although both collaborate on all aspects of the business.

"As Cruise Planners, we have the most buying power in the world," said Gordon. "You don't come to us because you're getting the best price. You come to us because you're getting us, along with the best prices and incentives."

Because of the company's network of more than 800 preferred travel partners, it can often provide special promotions, incentives and bundled packages that travelers may not find when booking on their own.

Group travel is a growing segment of the business. Gordon and Beam frequently help organize trips for families, friend groups and special-interest gatherings. One of the largest group trips they planned included approximately 350 travelers.

Destination weddings also remain a popular option for couples looking for a unique experience. Many ceremonies take place at all-inclusive resorts in destinations such as Mexico, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

"We're not looking for people to just book a trip," said Gordon. "We're looking for clients for a lifetime."

Through their growing team and hands-on service approach, the couple hopes to continue building lasting relationships with travelers while helping them plan vacations around the world.

For more information, visit the website at www.ventureoutvacation.com.



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FROM HOME SALES TO SCAVENGER HUNTS, CLARKIN CREATES FUN

By Makenzie Atkins Noel





In a community that continues to grow and evolve, Kerin Clarkin has made it his mission to ensure Riverview grows with heart, connection and a whole lot of fun.

Clarkin is a local realtor serving Riverview and surrounding areas including Tampa, Seminole Heights and St. Petersburg. Since entering the Tampa Bay real estate market in 2015, he has built his business on a simple philosophy: Put clients first and focus on relationships. His team does not charge cancellation fees or other hidden fees, keeping the process transparent for clients. This approach reflects his commitment to transparency and long-term trust.

Originally from Long Island, New York, Clarkin moved to the Tampa area in 2009 to work in apparel design and marketing. What began as a short-term move quickly turned into something permanent as he became immersed in the community and saw the area's growth and potential. When he stepped back into real estate, he did so with a desire to serve the place he now calls home.

Clarkin describes his style as hands-on and highly personal. He prides himself on being known for trust, respect, honesty and strong customer service.

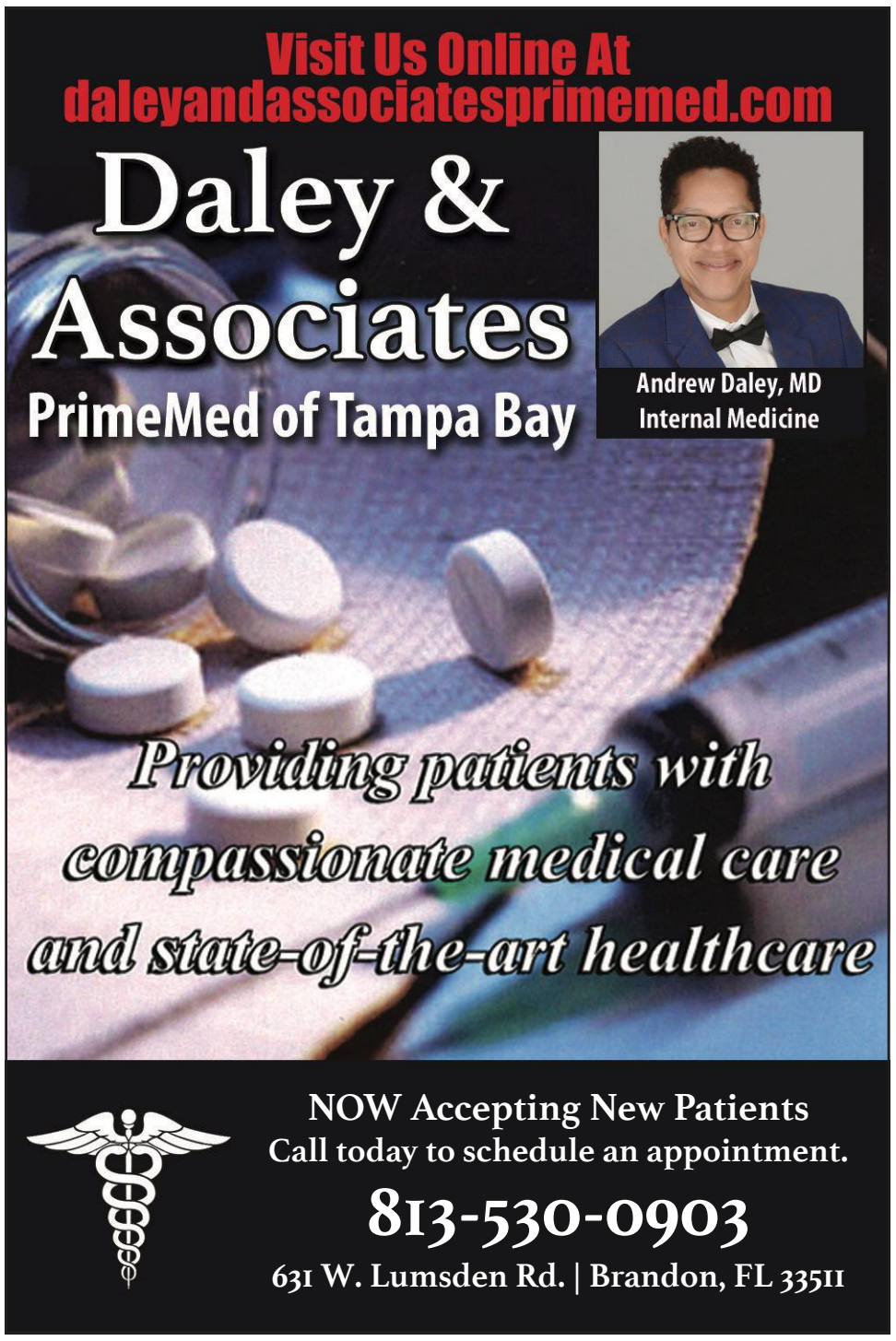
"Our clients come first, always," Clarkin said. "By the end of the process, they're not just clients anymore. They're friends."

His involvement in the community naturally expanded beyond real estate. Through his Riverview Fun and Events Facebook group, Clarkin began organizing giveaways, scavenger hunts and free events designed to support local businesses and bring neighbors together. His Riverview-only scavenger hunts have become especially popular. In an effort to support small businesses in the community, he purchases gift cards from local businesses and hides them throughout Riverview, posting clues for residents to follow.

Over the years, he has given away more than $3,000 in gift cards and cash, hosted a 350-person bingo event with $1,000 in winnings and even gave away a car during a sports watch party. He regularly supports local schools and celebrations, helping make events more memorable and giving back to the students and families who call Riverview home.

Most recently, Clarkin expanded into the entertainment space with Cory Casino, a party casino business featuring professional dealers and travel-ready casino games. His goal is twofold. He wants to host free community events that bring people together in a new way, and he also offers the casino experience for businesses and organizations looking to elevate their own events.

Visit www.thekerin.com/ or find Clarkin on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/riverviewevents/.









SUMMER CAMPS 2026





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SUMMER 2026: DISCOVER THE BEST LOCAL CAMPS FOR LEARNING, ADVENTURE AND FUN



Spring is almost here, and summer is just around the corner — which means now is the perfect time to start planning a season full of discovery, creativity and fun. To help families get a head start, the Osprey Observer team has once again rounded up the best local programs for our annual Summer Camp Guide, a special pullout section designed to connect students with unforgettable summer opportunities across the community.

From performing arts and STEM to sports, outdoor adventures and enrichment programs, this year's guide highlights camps for nearly every interest and age group. Budding performers can take center stage at Music Showcase and the Florida Academy of Performing Arts, where children immerse themselves in acting, singing and dance through themed musical theater camps. Young artists can also explore dance, theater and music through the Patel Conservatory, which offers more than 100 camps and classes taught by working professionals. Music lovers won't want to miss School of Rock, featuring genre-themed camps for ages 7–18, or Center For Dance Arts, known for its wide range of dance instruction and award-winning competition teams.

For hands-on creativity, AR Workshop provides engaging DIY camps that build confidence and imagination, while Camp Mirage keeps kids moving with action-packed mornings full of creativity and play.

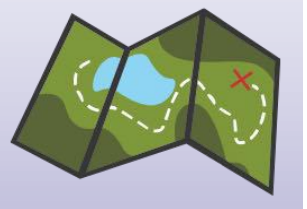
Families looking for outdoor or traditional camp experiences will find plenty of options, including Cedarkirk Camp & Conference Center, Circle F Dude Ranch and Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, which blends thrilling rides with animal encounters and education. Horse lovers can saddle up at TLC's Gypsy Haven, while sports-minded campers can stay active through Fellowship Church sports camps or daily adventures at High 5 Inc..

Academic and STEM-focused families will appreciate enrichment options from Mathnasium, Skill Samurai and Code Wiz, while Kids 'R' Kids Circa FishHawk delivers themed camps that blend learning with fun. With more than 25 locations, YMCA of Tampa Bay also offers something for every camper, from arts and gymnastics to zip-lining and pool time.

Be sure to explore the full Summer Camp Guide for dates, pricing and registration details — and don't forget to enter our Summer Camp Sweepstakes, where one lucky family will win a free week of camp. With so many outstanding options, Summer 2026 is shaping up to be one to remember.

Families are encouraged to register early, as many camps fill quickly and offer early-bird discounts, scholarships or flexible scheduling options. Summer camps provide more than entertainment — they help children build confidence, friendships and lifelong skills while giving parents peace of mind. Whether your child wants to explore a new passion or deepen an existing one, this guide is your go-to resource for planning a summer filled with growth, joy and memorable experiences close to home.









SUMMER CAMPS 2026





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DANCE, THEATER AND MUSIC PROGRAMS OFFERED AT STRAZ CENTER THIS SUMMER

By Olivia Clark



Registration for the 2026 Summer Camps and Classes is now open at the Patel Conservatory, the accredited performing arts school at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Tampa. The Summer session runs Monday, June 1 through Friday, July 31, and the programs in dance, theater and music are carried out for students aged 3 through adult.

Each summer, the conservatory opens its doors to those who want a first experience in the arts and to those who desire more advanced, preprofessional training. Families from across the Tampa Bay area enroll in the programs, which offer both creative enrichment and more formalized skill development during the summer months. Classes are conducted by working artists and experienced instructors in a professional performing arts environment.

They can take dance courses in the Next Generation Ballet Summer Intensive, which has five, three-, and two-week sessions for ages 11 through college, and dorm housing is provided for older students. Younger dancers can join the Junior Intensive and other camps appropriate for their age, designed to enhance their technique, strength, and performance quality.

These students will get the chance to rehearse and perform in fully staged productions like Seussical, Jr. and Aladdin KIDS in which they will get acting, singing and stage movement experience. There are other specialty camps for fundamental acting skills and Shakespeare, and older students have the chance to audition for the Broadway Intensive production of Catch Me If You Can.

Music offerings include jazz, choral and chamber intensives, a singer-songwriter camp, and a number of workshops focusing on particular instruments. Younger students also learn about composition, rhythm and collaboration through weekly camps like The Science of Music and World Drumming and Storytelling.

Tuition rates differ for each program, with most week-long camps costing $475 and multiweek intensive programs charged at higher rates depending on the length of the program. There are scholarships with the financial aid priority deadline being Friday, February 28. Auditions or placements are required for some programs before registration, and early enrollment is recommended since enrollment is limited.

For a complete schedule or to register, go to www.patelconservatory.asapconnected.com or www.patelconservatory.org. For more information, call 222-1040 or email admissions@strazcenter.org.

CEDARKIRK BLENDS FAITH, ADVENTURE AND LEADERSHIP FOR SUMMER 2026

By Olivia Clark



Tucked away on 170 wooded acres along the Alafia River, Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center continues its longstanding tradition of offering a place apart for children and teens to grow in faith and community. Owned by the Presbyteries of Tampa Bay and Peace River, Cedarkirk has served the region since 1971 and welcomes more than 1,000 campers each summer.

While its residential camps remain a cornerstone of the ministry, Cedarkirk is placing added emphasis on its growing day camp program. Mandy Goff, Program Director, said the camp launched day camp two years ago and saw participation more than double in its second year. In response to family needs, Cedarkirk has added early drop-off from 8-8:30 a.m. and late pick-up from 5-5:30 p.m. for an additional fee.

"We are really trying to focus on our day camp program and make it affordable for families in this area," said Goff.

Day camp serves students who have completed kindergarten through fifth grade. Cedarkirk is also piloting a small middle school day camp during the final week of summer, Monday, July 27 to Friday, July 31, with limited space available. Residential camps continue to run Sunday to Friday for students who have completed third through 12th grade, while Explorer Camp provides a two-night introduction to overnight camp for children who have completed first through third grade.

Goff explained that a typical day camp day begins at 9 a.m., with drop-off beginning at 8:30 a.m. Campers join residential campers for morning songs before rotating through scheduled activity blocks that include zip lining, canoeing on the river, climbing the rock wall, arts and crafts and hiking. Campers swim daily, weather permitting, and share family-style lunches together. Each afternoon concludes with Bible study, worship and snack before pickup from 4:30-5 p.m.

Goff said creating community is central to the experience. Technology is not permitted, encouraging campers to build friendships, engage with nature and participate in shared traditions such as group songs and family-style meals. With approximately 30 summer staff members and small day camp groups of 12-14 campers per session, Cedarkirk continues to prioritize connection, outdoor adventure and spiritual growth.

Llearn more or register at www.cedarkirk.campbrainregistration.com.

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faopa.org
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Past Summer Shows



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A LOOK INTO HIGH 5'S SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM FOR AGES 5-12

By Emily Harper





High 5 Inc. is a multi-purpose facility committed to positively impacting the community. Located in Brandon, High 5's programs are divided into five pillars: learn to swim, special needs education, after-school care, sports and recreation and community partnerships.

From Monday, June 1, through Friday, August 7, High 5 offers summer camp for ages 5-12. This weekly program is Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m., for the main campus, and Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m., for the off-site campus at Bevis Elementary School.

A typical day at the main summer camp consists of a wide variety of engaging activities. During the day, campers rotate through swimming, outdoor sports, gym games, playground time, arts and crafts, hands-on STEM experiences and Gamers Grotto (a supervised and age-appropriate video game room). The off-site location's camp is similar in structure, minus the pool. However, it does offer water activities on some days of the camp.

"What truly sets our camp apart is the experience we're able to provide on our beautiful, expansive campus and the wide range of activities we offer. Our programming is thoughtfully designed to balance fun with learning, physical activity with creativity and structure with exploration," said Jada Spano, vice president of operations.

Families can expect a safe and fun environment where children play and learn while making lifelong summer memories. High 5's experienced staff creates a welcoming atmosphere, keeping safety as their top priority.

"We focus on creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where every child feels valued and encouraged," said Spano.

One of the most anticipated moments of camp is the 'World's Largest Swim Lesson'. Happening on Thursday, June 25, this global event promotes water safety and drowning prevention.

Spano stated, "Our campers love being part of something so meaningful and memorable, and families appreciate the important life-saving skills it reinforces."

Registration for the summer camp is now open on the website at www.high5inc.org/camp. The main campus camp costs $175 per week, with a one-time $40 registration fee for the summer, while the off-site camp is $90 per week.

MATHNASIUM BRANDON CAMPS KEEP SKILLS SHARP DURING SUMMER BREAK

By Libby Hopkins



Summer is a season full of possibilities, longer days, new experiences and the perfect opportunity for kids to grow in confidence. It's also a powerful time to strengthen math skills in a way that feels positive, engaging and stress-free. At Mathnasium, summer learning doesn't pause; it accelerates, giving students the chance to build skills, explore new ideas and feel proud of their progress.

"Summer is one of the most powerful times for growth," said Mathnasium owner Becky McDaniels. "Without the pressure of school, kids have the space to truly understand math, and that's where Mathnasium shines. It's all about momentum and meeting students exactly where they are, strengthening skills and building confidence so they return to school prepared and proud of themselves."

While some students use summer to reinforce essential skills, others are ready to push ahead, and younger learners are just beginning to form the foundations that will support future success. Mathnasium supports students at every stage of learning, from building foundations to tackling advanced challenges.

At Mathnasium, summer learning is never one-size-fits-all. Every student begins with a personalized assessment that identifies strengths, gaps and learning styles. From there, McDaniels and her team create an individualized learning plan tailored specifically to each child. Students who need extra support receive targeted instruction to rebuild confidence and close learning gaps. Students who are on track keep their skills sharp and steady. Advanced learners are challenged with deeper concepts that keep them engaged and motivated. And its youngest 'Great Foundations' students develop number sense, problem-solving skills and a love of math that sets them up for long-term success.

Summer is also the ideal time to get ahead without pressure. Mathnasium sessions are engaging, encouraging and flexible, making it easy to balance learning with vacations, camps and family time.

"We're proud to be a Step Up for Students provider, making personalized math learning accessible for more families," added McDaniels. Learn more about Summer Camps at www.mathnasium.com/math-centers/brandon or call 813-655-6284. Mathnasium is located at 1048 E. Bloomingdale Ave. in Valrico. You can also contact Mathnasium of Riverview, located at 13388 South US Highway 301, by calling 813-565-1102 or visiting its website at www.mathnasium.com/riverview.





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FLORIDA ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS OFFERS FUN MUSICAL SUMMER CAMPS

By Libby Hopkins

The Florida Academy of Performing Arts (FAOPA) is a local nonprofit organization that was established to support the performing arts through programs at the academy and in the Brandon community.



FAOPA is committed to providing extraordinary theater experiences that educate, challenge and inspire students and their surrounding communities. FAOPA fosters self-discovery, creativity, confidence, group responsibility and pride in accomplishment.

"FAOPA celebrates the professional artistic disciplines of music, dance and the visual arts," said Danielle Sanchez, academy director of FAOPA. "We strive to be a model of excellence in theatre for all our audiences."

FAOPA and Music Showcase have offered summer camps, day camps and musical theater camps for many years.

"The day camps consist of singing, dancing, arts and crafts, intro into theater through improv," Sanchez said. "Our musical theater camps are for all ages and skill levels. We offer a variety of shows throughout the summer. Students work on choreography, blocking, stage direction and character development. Throughout the process, we watch students grow in confidence and self-esteem as they become blooming actors on the stage."

FAOPA is currently working on the camps they will be offering this summer to the community.

"We will offer musical theater camps and day camps," Sanchez said. "Our musical theater camps are two weeks long. Day camps are one week long. We have our middle school/high school groups that meet in the afternoon/evening."

The cost for musical theater camp is $295 plus a service fee. Day camps are from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. for half day and from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. for whole day. Day camp is for kindergartners through age 10, and the cost is $230 plus service fee.

"Parents love our musical theater camps," Sanchez said. "They love watching where their student starts and end up as well as seeing the difference. They love to watch their children grow in self-esteem and find the confidence to stand on the stage with their peers in the show. ."

If you would like to learn more about FAOPA and the camps it will be offering this summer, you can visit its website at www.faopa.org/ or call 813-490-ARTS (2787). FAOPA is located at 402 Oakfield Dr. in Brandon.

TEN WEEKS OF FUN AWAIT FAMILIES AT TAMPA YMCA SUMMER CAMPS

By Olivia Clark



Summer will arrive soon, and the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA is getting ready for another season of adventure, learning, and friendship. Registration is now open for Summer Camp at Campo Family YMCA, Spurlino Family YMCA, and North Brandon Family YMCA. Campers ages 6-15 can enjoy 10 weeks of fun activities in a safe and organized setting.

Each location offers a unique mix of Signature Camp and specialty options. Signature Camp allows kids to rotate through activities such as swimming, STEM projects, arts and crafts, outdoor education, and team-building games. Counselors support campers throughout daily activities designed to build confidence, promote friendships, and keep campers active during the summer.

Campo Family YMCA in Valrico features specialty camps that include sports, creative arts, and teen leadership programs. Spurlino Family YMCA in Riverview offers many athletic and enrichment camps, along with popular options for teens. North Brandon Family YMCA in Seffner provides sports, drama, gymnastics, and adaptive camps, ensuring families can find a program that fits their child's interests and abilities.

Teens have new opportunities this year, with three unique experiences tailored for ages 13-15. Programs focused on leadership, such as Junior Lifeguard Camp and Counselor in Training, help participants build responsibility, communication skills, and hands-on experience that lasts beyond summer. The Junior Teen Camp program introduces participants to outdoor exploration, basic archery, scenic trails, and lake adventures while fostering confidence and creativity.

Families can enhance the regular 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. camp day with optional add-ons, which vary by location. These may include swim lessons, open swim, sports, high ropes, horseback riding, and gymnastics. During registration, families can choose available add-ons specific to their YMCA. A nonrefundable deposit of $10 per week, per camper is due at registration, with separate deposits for specific teen leadership programs.

Tampa YMCA camps are ACA-accredited, which means they have gone through a thorough review by the American Camp Association focusing on health, safety, and program quality standards. This distinction places Tampa YMCA camps among a select group of accredited day camps in Florida.

Registration is available online at the website www.tampaymca.org, where families can view session weeks and age group details. Sessions fill up quickly.

Make Mathnasium Part of Your Summer Plans



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- Faster progress is possible without the distraction of other academic commitments
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- Kids can start the new school year with confidence

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mathnasium.com/riverview
13388 S US Highway 301
Riverview

MATHNASIUM
The Math Learning Center



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CIRCLE F DUDE RANCH CELEBRATES 75 YEARS OF ADVENTURE AND TRADITION

By Kelly Wise Valdes



Circle F Dude Ranch Camp is excited to celebrate its 75th year, marking a milestone for the Lake Wales camp that has welcomed generations of young people. Camp Director Benjamin Moss said the camp's longevity comes from staying true to its mission while adapting to the needs of each new generation.

"Circle F has remained special because it has always stayed true to its purpose — helping young people grow in confidence, character, and independence — while thoughtfully evolving with each generation," Moss said. "Since 1952, families have trusted us to provide a place where kids can unplug, build real friendships and discover who they are beyond screens and schedules."

During the summer, Circle F welcomes about 200 campers per session, evenly split between boys and girls. Campers spend their days immersed in activities such as horseback riding, waterfront programs, arts, team and individual sports, ax throwing, paintball, boating and climbing towers.

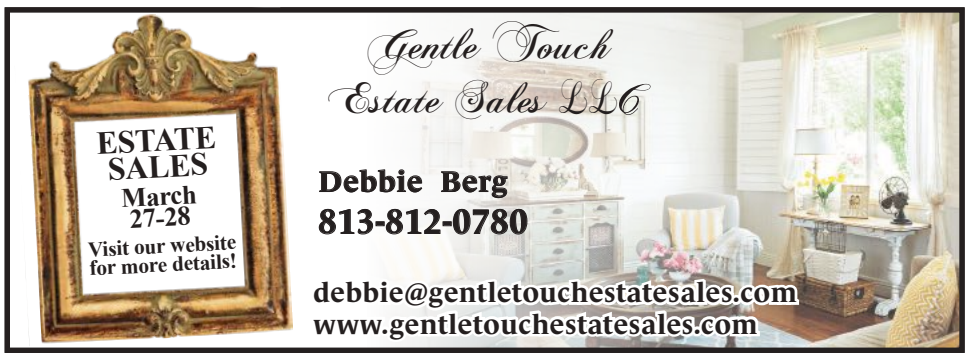
The camp sits on 500 acres of southern live oak forest surrounding a spring-fed private lake, creating a scenic backdrop for exploration and adventure.

Many of Circle F's traditions have remained unchanged, Moss said, including opening and closing campfires, cabin living, horseback riding and more. "Those moments connect today's campers with generations who sat around the same fire before them," he said.

Moss said climbing, adventure sports, leadership pathways and more intentional skill development have helped shape the modern Circle F. "The balance between tradition and innovation is what defines modern Circle F, honoring our roots while preparing campers for the world ahead," he said.

Circle F will host an open house in May to give families a firsthand look at camp life. Moss said visitors can expect tours, staff introductions and opportunities to explore activity areas. "Visitors will tour cabins and activity areas, meet our leadership team and staff, see programs in action, and get a real sense of daily life at Circle F."

For more information, visit the website at www.CircleFDudeRanchCamp.com or call 863-676-4113.







HIGH 5 MAIN CAMPUS | 7AM - 6PM
405 Beverly Blvd, Brandon, FL, 33511
- 1-TIME REGISTRATION FEE - **$40**
- **$175/WEEK** | MONDAY - FRIDAY

**Limited capacity, a waitlist is expected!*

In order to continue to make our programs affordable and accessible for families, High 5 proudly accepts school readiness!

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CAMP CRISTINA OFFERS ADVENTURE & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ALL SUMMER

By Olivia Clark





At Camp Cristina in Riverview, the summer is set for exploration, skill enhancement and outdoor fun. Registrations are now open for the camp's 10-week summer program designed to offer hands-on and natural confidence-inspiring experience.

Signature Camp at Camp Cristina features a rotating line-up of activities for children that take place all day long and include swimming, STEM projects, arts and crafts, outdoor education and team-building games. Campers are closely monitored and grouped according to age, with counselors providing guidance in a structured environment where children can remain physically active and mentally stimulated.

Camp Cristina has a variety of specialty camps for older campers with particular interests. In Horse Camp, participants learn the basics of grooming, go on trail rides, and gain confidence working with horses. Swim Camp focuses on water safety and swim instruction with certified staff to help campers build skills in and around the water. Lifeguard Camp offers aquatics leadership skills, teamwork, and hands-on training that generates responsibility and prepares young adults for future certification opportunities.

Campers can also take part in Adventure Camp, which includes activities like archery, exploring the lake, and team challenges that promote cooperation and problem-solving. The Counselors in Training and Junior Lifeguards programs offer leadership skills, communication skills, and hands-on training in a nurturing environment focusing on growth and responsibility.

Thus, families can add on to the traditional camp day, which runs from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with weekly add-ons such as swim lessons, gymnastics and extended care. Add-ons vary according to the age group and availability and can be chosen during registration. There is a nonrefundable deposit at registration and a separate deposit for select teen leadership programs.

Camp Cristina is one of the Tampa YMCA's ACA-accredited camps, which is reflected in the national standards for safety, staff training, and program quality. This places the camp among the few day camps in Florida, meeting the standards set by the American Camp Association.

For further information or to register, go online to https://www.tampaymca.org/letscamp or the Tampa YMCA registration portal. Families are advised to register their children at the earliest opportunity to avoid missing out on available sessions.

ULTIMATE SUMMER WITH BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA BAY CAMPS

Staff Report



Your search for summer plans is over. Families looking ahead to summer camp 2026 will find a wide range of engaging, educational and adventure-filled options at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, where camps are designed for animal lovers, thrill seekers and curious minds of all ages.

Busch Gardens summer camps offer children and teens the chance to unplug and connect with animals, nature and one another in a dynamic, hands-on environment. Campers explore wildlife, learn about conservation and animal care, enjoy thrilling rides and shows, and build friendships that often last long after summer ends. These experiences are not only fun, but also meaningful, helping campers grow in confidence, curiosity and teamwork.

Busch Gardens' summer programs are led by carefully selected, highly trained professionals who know how to balance education with excitement. The park offers a variety of educational summer day camps for students from kindergarten through 12th grade, with sessions tailored to different age groups and interests. Campers enjoy close-up animal encounters, behind-the-scenes experiences, themed games and crafts, age-appropriate rides, live shows, and interactive learning activities. Each camper also receives souvenir keepsakes, including a camp T-shirt and water bottle, along with opportunities to return to the park after camp hours.

For older students seeking a deeper adventure, overnight resident camps provide a one-of-a-kind sleepaway experience. Based in a secure on-site lodge, these all-inclusive camps immerse rising seventh through 12th graders in a blend of wildlife education and adrenaline-pumping attractions. Campers gain exclusive access to animal care areas, interact with park professionals, and experience the park in ways not available to regular guests.

Busch Gardens camps are accredited by the American Camping Association, offering parents added confidence in program quality, safety and staff training. Priority access to attractions, enriching educational content and unforgettable behind-the-scenes moments consistently place these camps among the top summer programs in the region.

With options ranging from early elementary students to teens—and even specialized programs for those exploring future careers—Busch Gardens Tampa Bay continues to be a standout destination for summer camp 2026 registration opportunities. Register at www. buschgardens.com.







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IMPACT TEEN SUMMER STAFF PROGRAM INSPIRES HEALTHY CHOICES

Staff Report



This summer, teens across Hillsborough County will have the chance to make a real difference through Teen Impact Summer Staff.

Teen Impact Summer Staff is made up of 20–35 students who travel to middle and high school youth-based organizations to perform a powerful, skit-based presentation. Their message focuses on avoiding high-risk behaviors and choosing a healthy lifestyle. What makes this program unique is that it is student-led. Teens speak to other teens in a way that feels honest and relatable. When students see people their own age choosing positive paths, it helps them understand that risk avoidance is possible. The goal is to inspire young people to build healthy relationships and make smart choices that lead to a strong and positive future.

Angie Kagey, Executive Director of IMPACT, explained, "We are the prevention arm, encouraging teens to make healthy choices, before other intervention may be required." Since 1998, the organization has served the Hillsborough County community with the mission to educate, equip, empower and support students, parents and teachers in the area of sexual risk avoidance and healthy relationships. Over the years, IMPACT has reached thousands of families through school programs, summer staff presentations and community events.

Teen Impact Summer Staff is also a great opportunity for students who need community service hours for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. Students entering ninth grade in the fall or older are invited to apply. During the eight-week summer program, each participant earns approximately 100 community service hours while building leadership skills, confidence and public speaking experience.

The program begins June 1 and runs through July 24. The first week students train to prepare them to present the skits and speak in front of audiences. After training, presentation days are Monday through Thursday, with every other Friday offering an optional fun activity. The application deadline is Friday, March 27. Applications can be found at www.whatisimpact.com/students. Completed applications should be emailed to Joy Miller at jmiller@whatisimpact.com.

CENTER FOR DANCE ARTS PLANS TO STEAL THE SPOTLIGHT THIS SEASON

By Mylena C. Ferman



This March, the Center For Dance Arts' VIP Team gets to showcase their skills at the first mandatory competition of the season! Located in Brandon, the dance studio provides students with a safe place to grow as both dancers and people.

"I think it's important that we teach them not just the importance of dance," Christi Furgason, assistant director and studio manager of the Center For Dance Arts, said, "but how dance can shape you as a person in the outside world."

The VIP Team is the Center For Dance Arts' competitive dance team. Each season, the VIP Team learns new routines to compete against other studios. There are four regional competitions and a national competition, with various optional competitions that the dancers are not required to attend.

"We want to go for first [place], but it's also about the experience," Furgason said, "and making sure they grow not just in dance but also in life."

Once a week, the VIP Team has a class focused on team building and social skills. Activities can include team scavenger hunts, where everyone must be included or risk losing all earned clues and restarting, or obstacle courses guided by a peer on the sidelines.

"Afterwards, we come together, and we're like, 'OK, so what worked and what didn't?'" Furgason said.

Those who want a taste of the spotlight can join the Center For Dance Arts on Thursday, March 12, for a bingo night at Bullfrog Creek Brewing Co. The fundraiser is open to anyone looking to support the dancers. The doors open at 6:30 p.m., with bingo beginning at 7 p.m.

This season, the VIP Team boasts about 15 dancers, primarily between ages 9-14 years old.

While auditions for this season's competition team have passed, auditions for next season's VIP competition team are currently set for Friday, May 15. The audition schedule for ages 4-11 is 5:30-7 p.m., and those ages 12-18 audition from 7-8:30 p.m.

For more information about the Center for Dance Arts, please visit www.mycfda.com, call 813-657-1500, follow its social media pages on Instagram @cfdaofficial or Facebook at www.facebook.com/center-4dancearts/.



At Circle F Dude Ranch Camp, we foster grit, growth, and a love for the outdoors. With the perfect blend of Western flair and classic camp fun, we give kids the kind of summer they'll never forget. Located in Lake Wales, campers 6 to 16 enjoy our overnight experiences for one, two and three-weeks sessions.

DATES & RATES

JOIN US FOR AN OPEN HOUSE

May 9th, 2026 – 10:00AM to 4:00PM

Meet our leadership team, try our activities, take a tour, and learn more about summers on the ranch.

RSVP REQUIRED

www.circlefduderanchcamp.com 863-676-4113 info@circlefduderanch.com



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CEDARKIRK, CIRCLE F DUDE, PATEL, MATHNASIUM AND MORE....

Compiled By Jenny Bennett

Cedarkirk Camp & Conference Center

Cedarkirk Camp & Conference Center, located on 170 acres of woodlands, wetlands and uplands near the Alafia River, will have summer overnight and day camps starting on Sunday, June 7, and finishing on Friday, July 31. Campers can sign up for a week or the whole summer. Day camp is available for campers who have completed kindergarten up to those who have completed fifth grade and is priced at $230 per week. Day campers must bring their own lunch. Overnight camp is available for campers who have completed first through 12th grade and starts at $555. Cedarkirk is located at 1920 Streetman Dr. in Lithia and can be reached at 813-685-4224. For more information and to register, visit www.cedarkirk.org.

Circle F Dude Ranch

Circle F Dude Ranch, located in Lake Wales, welcomes boys and girls from all over the United States and the world for one to three-week sleepaway camp sessions. Kids range in age from 6-16. Circle F fosters grit, growth and a love for the outdoors. With the perfect blend of Western flair and classic camp fun, it gives kids the kind of summer they'll never forget. Visit Circle F Dude Ranch for an open house on May 9, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. meet the leadership team, try activities and learn about summers on the ranch, RSVP at admin.gazeboevents.com. For more and to sign up, visit www.circlefduderanchcamp.com.

Mathnasium

Summer is the perfect time for kids to grow in confidence and strengthen math skills without pressure. At Mathnasium, summer learning accelerates with personalized plans designed for every stage — from building foundations to tackling advanced challenges. Students receive targeted support, stay sharp or move ahead while enjoying engaging, flexible sessions that fit busy summer schedules. Parents often see gains not just in skills but also in confidence and attitude. This summer, help your child return to school prepared, motivated and excited about math. To find a location near you, please visit www.mathnasium.com.

The Patel Conservatory

The Straz Center's Patel Conservatory offers arts education courses and programs in dance, theater and music, with 100-plus camps and classes available. Students are instructed by passionate, working artists with a taste array of professional performance experience and exemplary curriculum vitae. Running from Monday, June 1, to Friday, July 31, full and half-day camps are available weekly for ages 4-18. The cost varies depending on the camp; financial aid and scholarships are available. Visit the website at www.patelconservatory.org or call 813-222-1040. Open Houses are scheduled for Sat., March 7, from 9-10 a.m. and Thurs,, May 14, from 5-6 p.m.

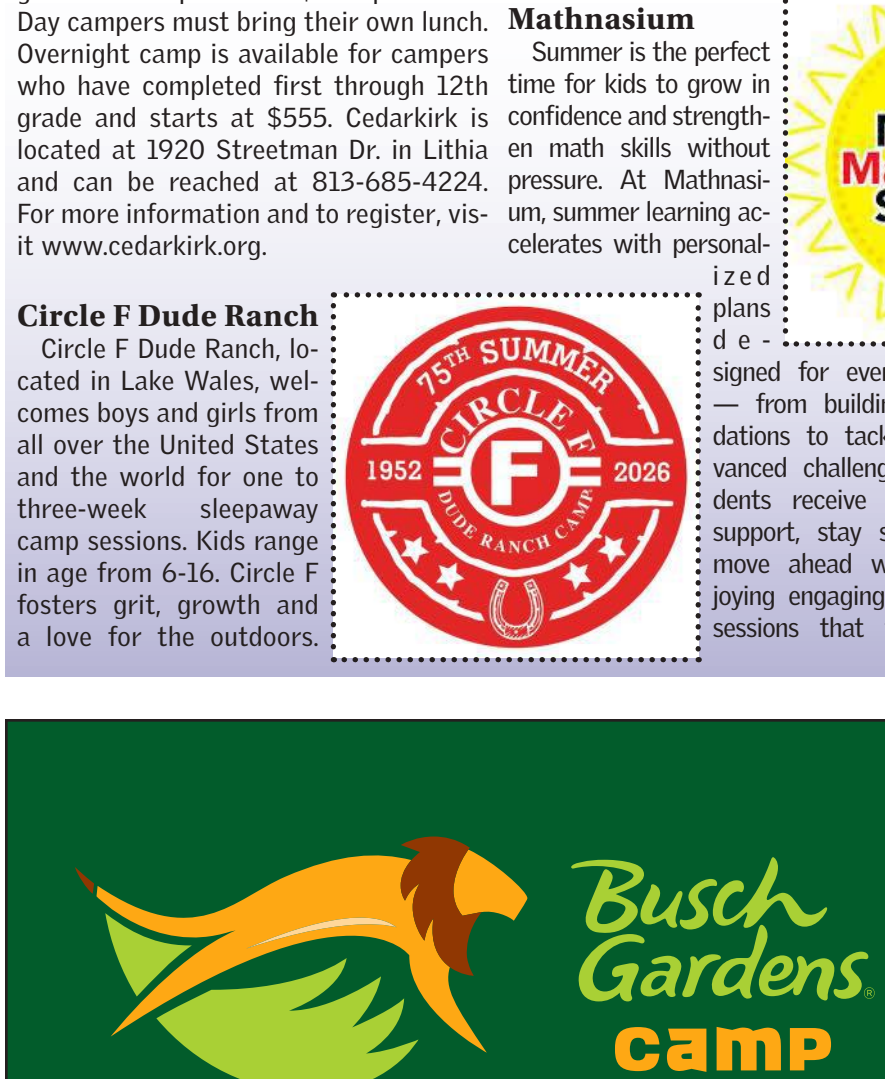
Busch Gardens

For more than 25 years, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay has provided children with inspiring, exciting and educational experiences through some of the best Tampa summer camp options. There are a wide variety of summer day camp options to fit your child's grade level and interests. One of the reasons to choose Busch Gardens as your summer camp include it being accredited by the American Camping Association, meaning parents can trust that the camp meets high standards for safety, staff training and program quality. Also, campers get to enjoy the adrenaline rush of rides as well as the unique opportunity to meet animals up close. Beyond the fun, campers experience activities that are both enriching and educational, providing a well-rounded experience.

For schedules, details and registration information, visit the park website at www.buschgardens.com.

Busch Gardens camp

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& ACTIVITY GUIDE



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ROCK SCHOOL, HORSE CAMP, BUSCH GARDENS, SKILLS & MORE...

Compiled By Jenny Bennett

Camp Mirage

Camp Mirage is an activity-based summer camp built around movement, creativity and hands-on fun. Its promise is simple — campers will go home tired, a little dirty, smiling and excited to come back the next day. It offers half-day camps for grades K and up, running from 9 a.m.-12 Noon, with before and after-care available from 7:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. Weekly tuition ranges from $125-$185 depending on age group, a membership discount program is available which provides 10 percent off tuition and a reduced rate for before and after care. Camp Mirage is located at 2913 John Moore Rd. in Brandon. Visit www.campmiragebrandon.com or call 813-825-2234.

Fellowship Church

Fellowship Church, located at 15326 FishHawk Blvd., in Lithia will be holding a weekly sports summer camp from Monday, June 1, through Thursday, July 23. Camp will be Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and will cost $150, with a sibling discount available. Campers must bring drinks and a snack, as well as wear sports attire; a camp shirt will be provided. Visit its website at www.fellowship.church or call 813-655-7431.

Music Showcase And The Florida Academy Of Performing Arts

Music Showcase and the Florida Academy of Performing Arts (FAOPA) will host their annual summer camp this summer starting on Monday, June 1. Campers will be immersed in acting, singing, dancing and more throughout the summer. In Musical Theater Camp, campers will learn about working collaboratively, the art of stage character, voice projection, props and working with a set, with productions for all ages and skill levels. FAOPA's day camp will include activities to explore instruments, acting, singing and art, with themed weeks like Harry Potter, Wicked, superheroes and more. Free early drop-off, free late pickup, scholarships and sibling discounts. Music Showcase is located at 402 Oakfield Dr. in Brandon. Visit www.faopa.org.

Skill Samurai

Skill Samurai's STEM Camps give students hands-on experience with today's most exciting technologies. Campers explore Minecraft and Roblox through creative game design, learn responsible content creation in YouTube Studio and discover the fundamentals of artificial intelligence. Designed for curious minds, these camps build problem-solving, creativity and confidence in a fun, supportive environment. Perfect for beginners and experienced students alike, Skill Samurai helps children turn interest in technology into real-world skills that last a lifetime locally. Visit www.skillsamurai.com/fl-brandon/camps or call 813-761-2832

TLC's Gypsy Haven Riding Camps

Come and learn about horse riding and grooming at TLC's Gypsy Haven's summer camp, which offers hands-on experience and education. Camps run from Tuesday-Thursday from 9a.m. - 2p.m. from Tuesday, June 2, through Thursday, June 25, and Tuesday, July 7, through Thursday, July 30. Group lessons are also available on Fridays and Saturdays. Visit the website at www.tlcsfarms.com or call Tammi on 813-842-4236 for information. TLC's Gypsy Haven is located at 4325 Keysville Rd. in Lithia.

School of Rock Valrico

Let your budding musicians join School of Rock this summer for a variety of music-themed camps, including Taylor Swift and Classic Rock Rewind. There are different themes for different age groups, with camps suitable for ages 7-18. Camps are available for full or half days, with the earliest available drop-off being at 8:45 a.m.

School of Rock is located at 3244 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., #104, in Valrico. Visit www.schoolofrock.com/locations/valrico or call 813-397-8828.









SUMMER CAMPS 2026







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YMCA, CODE WIZ, AR WORKSHOP, VIBE CAMP, HIGH 5 INC. & MORE

Compiled By Jenny Bennett

High 5 Inc.

Brandon's High 5 Inc. is inviting students to embark on an exciting and adventurous journey where your child will experience the thrill of summer camp. Daily activities will include pool time, outdoor play, field games, arts and crafts and more, including field trips.

Camp is offered Monday through Friday from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. at High 5 Inc., located at 405 Beverly Blvd. in Brandon. Campers can sign up for individual weeks or throughout the entire summer. Visit www.high5inc.org or call 813-689-0908.

YMCA Summer Camp

With over 25 different summer camp options throughout the Tampa YMCA area, there's something for every camper to enjoy. From art and gymnastics to zip-lining and splashing in its pools, the Y is the ultimate summer destination with friends, fun and adventure. Summer camps start on Monday, June 2, and run all summer. Register at www.tampaymca.org/letscamp.

Code Wiz

Code Wiz, located at 16132 Churchview Dr., Ste. 105, in Lithia, teaches coding and robotics to children, its camps are hands-on, student-driven and designed to foster curiosity and independence. Campers are encouraged to explore, problem-solve and create at their own pace, with guidance from coaches to support their individual learning journeys. Camps will run throughout the summer and are available for mornings, afternoons or full days. Visit online at www. codewiz.com/fishhawk-fl.

Kids 'R' Kids

Looking for a summer camp that combines fun, education, and adventure? Look no further! Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies has created the perfect summer escape for kids to learn, grow and explore in a safe and exciting environment. Camp VIBE involves a new theme designed to empower campers through amusing activities, fascinating field trips, timely lessons in teamwork and so much more. Campers will have their eyes opened to limitless possibilities and their minds focused to ignite their passions. Let them catch the VIBE of summer! Kids 'R' Kids is located at 5815 Kids Crossing Dr. in Lithia.

AR Workshop

AR Workshop is a craft studio offering hands-on classes for campers ages 5-17. The hands-on classes are designed to inspire creativity, confidence and fun in a supportive studio environment. Both full and half-day camps are available at its location in Valrico at 1046 Bloomingdale Ave. Visit its website at www.arworkshop.com/brandon for more information and to register.

Center For Dance Arts

The Center For Dance Arts offers dance instruction in various genres, from beginner to advanced levels, for students ages 2-18. It is also the home of an award-winning competition team. It will be offering summer camp; visit its website at www.mycfda.com or call 813-657-1500 for more information and to register.

For more information, visit its website at www.kidsrkids.com/circa-fishhawk/programs/summer-camp.

Easterseals School For Limitless Learning — Inclusive Summer Camp For Neurodiverse Learners

Get ready for an exciting and inclusive adventure designed specifically for neurodiverse young learners and those with other disabilities in kindergarten through second grade. Packed with hands-on and interactive STEAM activities, it's a supportive space where every child can explore, grow and thrive. The Easterseals School for Limitless Learning is located at 2460 Bloomingdale Ave., Ste. 170, in Valrico, and the summer camp is available for six weeks from Monday, June 15, to Friday, July 24, with morning, afternoon and all-day sessions available. Visit its website at https://florida.easterseals.com/get-support/areas-of-support/early-childhood-care/easterseals-school-for-limitless-learning.







& ACTIVITY GUIDE



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GALACTICOASTER BLASTS OFF AT LEGOLAND FLORIDA WITH FIRST-EVER INDOOR FAMILY COASTER

Staff Report



Guests design their own LEGO spacecraft before blasting off on Galacticoaster, the first indoor family coaster at LEGOLAND Florida Theme Park,

Families are invited to suit up and blast off as Galacticoaster launches at LEGOLAND Florida Resort, marking the debut of the park's newest space-themed land and its first indoor roller coaster since opening in 2011.

Billed as the Ultimate Indoor Family Coaster, Galacticoaster combines storytelling, interactivity and cutting-edge ride technology to deliver a one-of-a-kind LEGO space adventure designed for guests of all ages. The attraction officially opened in February.

As part of the celebration, guests were able to collect a free, exclusive Galacticoaster Grand Opening First Flight Pop Badge while supplies lasted.

The adventure begins well before launch. Upon entering the queue, guests are immersed in a cinematic LEGO space mission, reporting to the Briefing Room, where Chief Engineer Biff Dipper — a larger-than-life robotic minifigure — delivers mission instructions filled with humor and classic LEGO personality. The preshow experience welcomes recruits to Galaxy Command and builds anticipation as launch approaches.

Before blast-off, riders design their own spacecraft using interactive touchscreens, choosing from nose, tail, wing and special-feature options to create one of more than 625 possible combinations. Each custom creation is stored on an RFID wristband and appears throughout the ride, allowing guests to soar through the LEGO Galaxy in the very ship they designed.

Once airborne, Galacticoaster reaches speeds of up to 40 mph as it rockets through an intergalactic LEGO solar system filled with synchronized lighting, special effects and surprise appearances from classic LEGO Space characters, including the attraction's first-ever animatronic minifigure.

LEGOLAND Florida Theme Park is part of LEGOLAND Florida Resort, which also includes Peppa Pig Theme Park Florida, SEA LIFE Florida and LEGOLAND Water Park, Designed for children ages 2-12. For tickets and times, visit www.legoland.com.

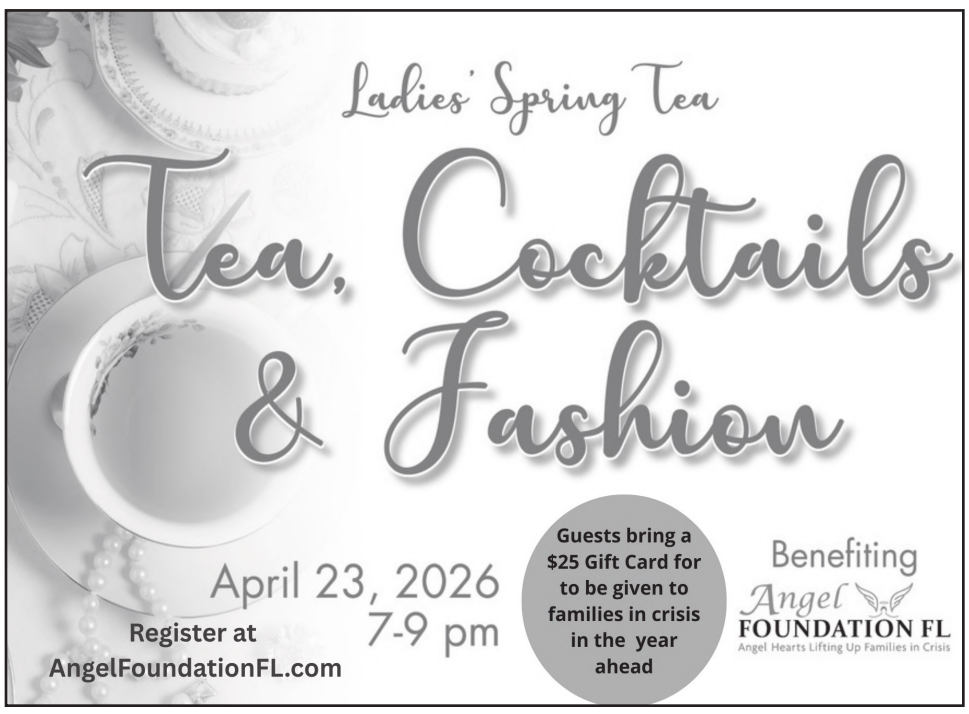


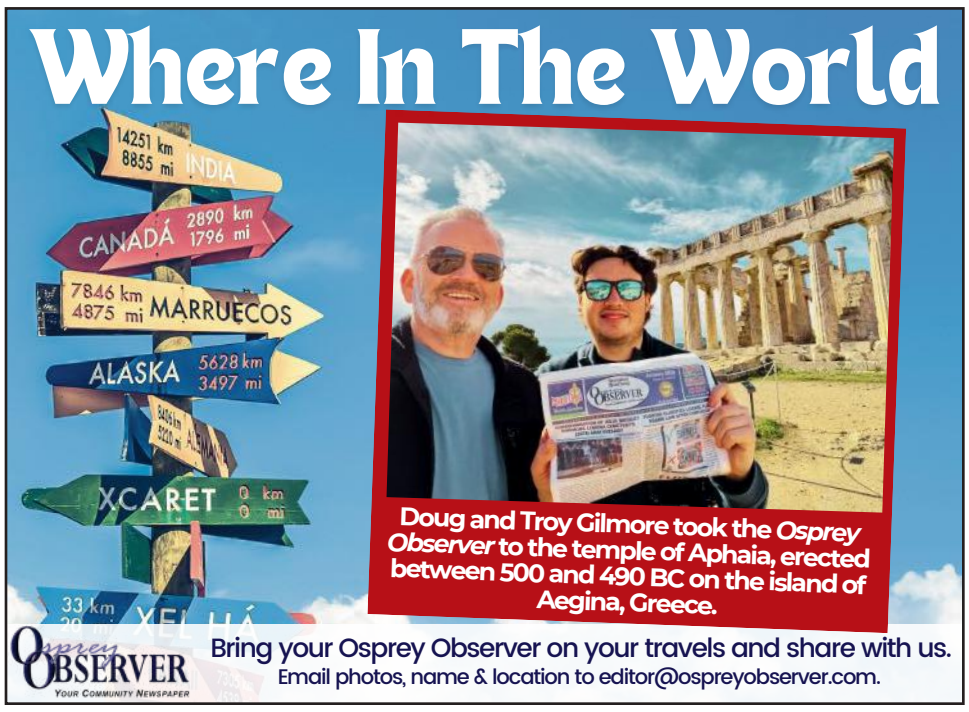
Notice Under Fictitious Name Law Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of **Suncoast Neighborhood Health Clinic,** located at **3624 Causeway Blvd,** in **Hillsborough County,** in the city of **Tampa, Florida 33619** intends to register said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida

Dated at Valrico, Florida this 20th day of February 2026







TEA WITH A TWIST: FAMILY PROMISE LAUNCHES EVENT TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

Staff Report



Family Promise of Hillsborough County will host its first-ever fundraising gala, Tea With a Twist, on Saturday, March 28, from 2-5 p.m. at New Hope Church. Designed as a stylish yet meaningful afternoon, the event blends tea, fashion and community connection while raising critical funds for families experiencing homelessness in Hillsborough County.

The inaugural gala marks a milestone for Family Promise of Hillsborough County, an organization dedicated to empowering homeless and low-income families with children to achieve lasting independence. Unlike a traditional evening gala, Tea With a Twist offers a relaxed daytime setting featuring tea and refreshments, raffles and the event's standout attraction — a men's fashion show that promises a fun and unexpected spin on the classic tea party.

Organizers said the event is about more than elegance and entertainment. As the organization's first official fundraiser, the gala serves as a call to action for the community to rally around families in need.

"We believe that no child should have to sleep in a car or on the street," said Edwina Reddick, executive director of Family Promise Hillsborough. "This event is about raising awareness, building community and inspiring generosity."

All proceeds from the gala will directly support Family Promise's programs, which provide shelter, case management and supportive services to help families regain stability and move toward permanent housing. Funds raised will assist families across Hillsborough County as they work to overcome financial crises and housing instability.

The event is open to the public, and both individual tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available. Those unable to attend can still support the mission through online donations, which are tax-deductible. Family Promise of Hillsborough County Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Community members are encouraged to attend, sponsor or donate and to help spread the word by following Family Promise on social media. Updates and additional information can be found on Instagram @familypromiseofhi, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/familypromisefl and on Twitter @FamilyPromise1.

Tickets, sponsorship details and donation options are available at the website www.familypromisefl.org/.

SARA BOGUE NAMED FIRST FEMALE DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY'S HISTORY

By Nick Nahas



Photo Courtesy Of Hillsborough County
Sara Bogue

On February 26, Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) announced that Sara Bogue was named director of athletics, making her the first woman to serve in that role in district history.

"It is an extraordinary honor and responsibility," said Bogue. "I am proud to represent women in athletic leadership and hopeful that this milestone reflects the continued progress and opportunities available to women in sports. As the mother of a 10-year-old daughter, this role carries even greater meaning. If she — and other young girls across our district — grow up knowing they belong in any space they choose to pursue, including athletics, that's something I'm proud of."

Bogue, who has served in Hillsborough County for the past 20 years as a teacher, coach and assistant principal, replaces Lanness Robinson, who was named executive director of the Tampa Bay Sports Commission in December 2025.

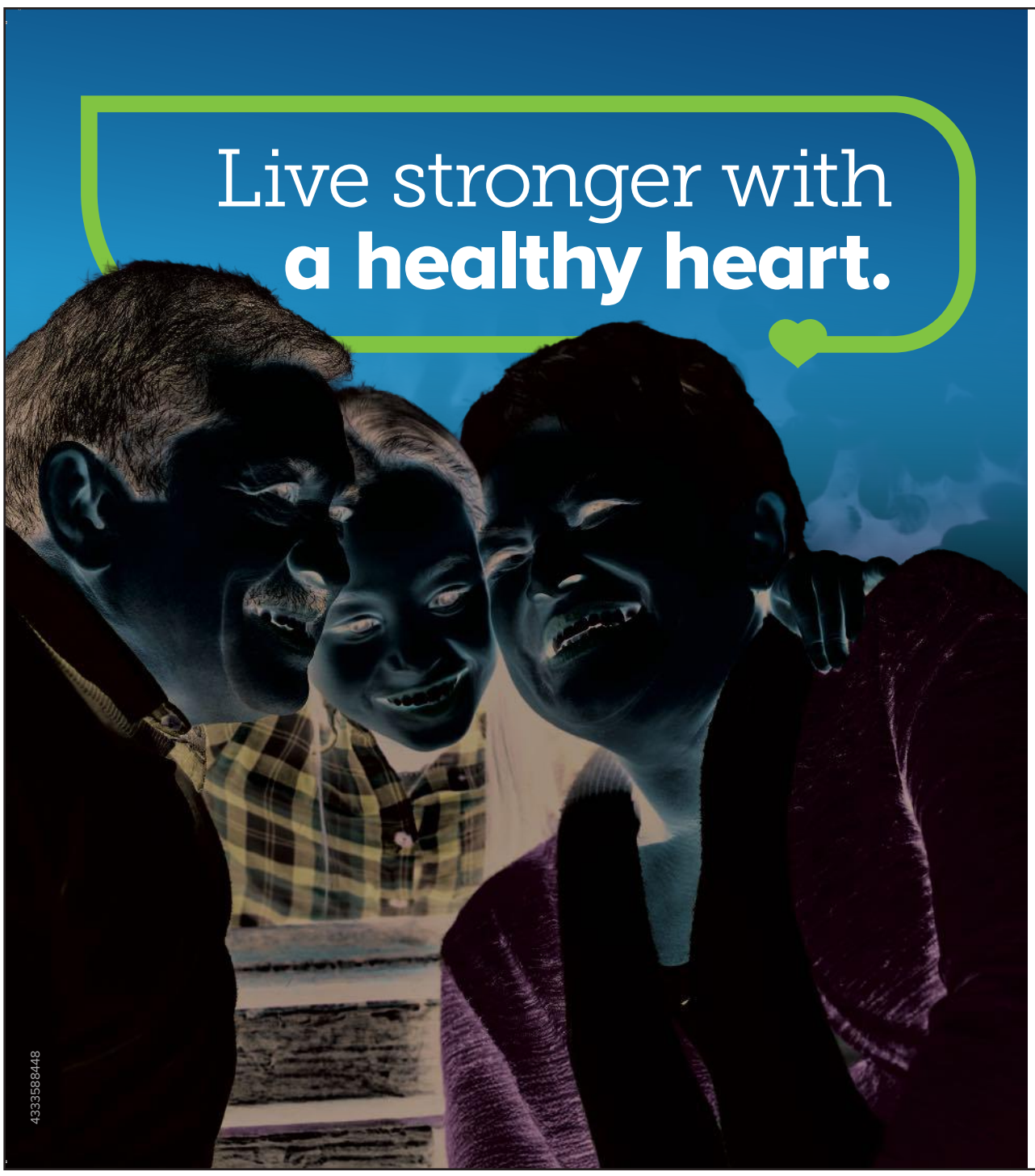
She began her career with the district as a P.E. teacher at Newsome High School, where she was also the varsity girls basketball coach and was named Western Conference Coach of the Year. She later became an assistant principal for student affairs at Lennard High School and Bloomingdale High School. She will oversee athletics at both the high school and middle school levels for the county.

"I am incredibly excited to expand my impact and serve more students, coaches and schools across the district," said Bogue. "Athletics has the power to shape character, build leadership and open doors of opportunity for young people. Being in a position to help strengthen and elevate athletic programs on a broader scale is both energizing and meaningful. I look forward to collaborating with school leaders and coaches to continue creating positive, life-changing experiences for our student athletes."

Most recently, she served as assistant principal for administration at Bloomingdale High School, overseeing athletic programs, facility operations and campus safety and security. She led Bloomingdale to its first-ever Vernon Korhn Athletic Program of the Year award.

"Bloomingdale has always been more than a workplace — it is truly a family," said Bogue. "The culture of support, unity and shared purpose is something I will always treasure. I will deeply miss our coaching staff. They lead with heart and selflessness every single day. Most of all, I will miss the students. Their energy and spirit have been a daily reminder of why this work matters."

"I am deeply thankful to everyone who has supported, mentored and encouraged me throughout my 20 years with HCPS," said Bogue. "This journey has been built on relationships, teamwork and shared commitment to students. I look forward to honoring that foundation as we continue moving athletics forward together."



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FIND RELIEF FROM ENDOMETRIOSIS WITH ADVENTHEALTH

By Staff Report



Endometriosis develops when tissue that's similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus — in places it shouldn't be. Endometriosis affects about 10 percent of women of reproductive age in the United States alone.

The most common symptom of endometriosis is pain during your period, and some women endure this pain for years before they finally receive a diagnosis. Other symptoms can include pain with sexual activity, pain during bowel movements, heavy periods, spotting or bleeding between your menstrual cycle and infertility.

Researchers don't know exactly what causes endometriosis, but some of the main risk factors for the condition include starting your period at an early age, having higher levels of estrogen in your body, or having shorter or longer than normal menstrual periods.

Whether a woman wants to become pregnant or is experiencing debilitating period pain, treatment can be a big game changer. Sometimes, treatment can be as simple as taking over-the-counter medications to treat the pain or taking hormonal contraceptives. However, for women who experience advanced endometriosis — and whose quality of life has been impacted — surgery may be the best option.

In the past, surgeons have treated endometriosis by using heat to destroy the damaging tissue. But now, minimally invasive excision surgery is considered the best way to remove the endometrial growths, along with any scar tissue that's formed. While the procedure is not a cure for endometriosis, it can improve quality of life significantly.

AdventHealth Tampa's caring doctors understand the pain you're experiencing and will take every possible step to help you find relief.

To learn more or to schedule an appointment, visit the website directly at www.womenssurgerytampa.com.

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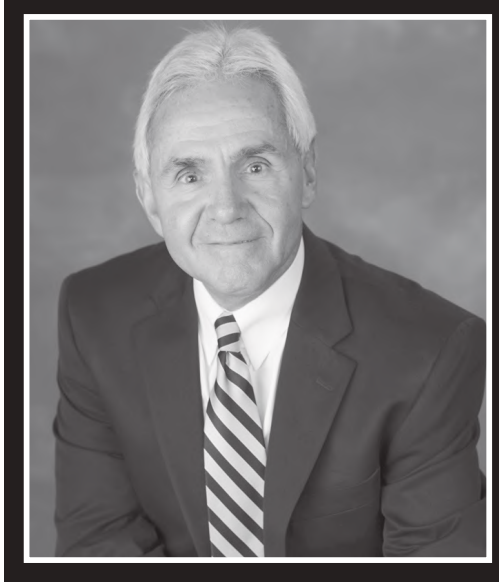
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OSPREY OBSERVER BRANDON EDITION MARCH 2026 Vol. 21, Iss. 3

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Edited by: Jenny Bennett

EYE ON BUSINESS

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

Bridgewater Landing Apartments Ribbon Cutting



The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce proudly hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 10 to celebrate the grand opening of Sunrise Homes – Bridgewater Landing Apartments, a new 55-plus active adult living community in Riverview. Leasing has officially opened for this community, which offers thoughtfully designed one and two-bedroom residences with modern finishes, in-unit laundry and private patios or balconies.

Residents also enjoy a variety of amenities, including access to the Sweet Water Club community clubhouse, walking trails, outdoor gathering spaces and convenient proximity to shopping and dining at Winthrop Town Centre.

The apartments are part of the larger Bridgewater Landing community, designed to support residents' ability to age in place. The campus includes villas and duplexes, independent living apartments and The Bridges Assisted Living Facility, creating a continuum of care and living options that allow residents to remain within the community as their needs evolve.

Visit its website at https://bridgewaterlandings.com/ for additional information and to schedule a tour.

Blooming Communications

Blooming Communications is a public relations consultancy founded by FishHawk resident Caitlin Gardner. Built on the belief that leaders should show up with clarity and calm confidence when the stakes are high, Blooming Communications partners with entrepreneurs, executives and organizations to strengthen their visibility, protect their reputations and tell their stories with confidence.

Blooming Communications proudly supports local businesses while serving clients nationally. The firm was recently recognized as a finalist as Emerging Business of the Year by the Valrico FishHawk Chamber of Commerce and is committed to helping leaders bloom under pressure — onstage, in the media and in everyday leadership moments.

Visit www.bloomingcomm.com for more information.

Apex Sight Solutions

Apex Sight Solutions is a premier property insight firm that delivers top-tier residential inspection services, enhanced by advanced aerial technology. Its inspection services are for homeowners that are buying, selling, building, maintaining or even refinancing their home. Grounded in Christian principles of truth, integrity and service, it offers unmatched precision and clarity — ensuring that every property, from the foundation to the rooftop, is seen with excellence and purpose.

It recently added 203k consulting to its services for the community. 203k loans are back by HUD and are for those who are purchasing a home that needs renovations or are looking to do improvements on their home and choose to refinance and incorporate the renovation costs into their loan. Apex Sight Solutions is approved by the HUD 203k consultant program and is available to serve all of Florida.

Apex Sight Solutions is located at 11232 Boyette Rd., Unit 2088, in Riverview. Visit https://apexsightsolutions.com/ to find out more.



Brandon BBQ On Demand

David, the owner of Brandon BBQ on Demand, has been barbecuing for over 25 years and has perfected his techniques, created his own BBQ rub and everything, including all sides, are homemade, secret recipes. He offers the usual BBQ staples, such as brisket, pulled pork and ribs, but also less common items, like smoked chicken wings, smoked steaks, smoked salmon and even smoked prime rib. Right now, Brandon BBQ on Demand is focused on catering for small events, such as parties and office functions, and it is able to accommodate anywhere from 10-100 people. There is no storefront, only online and phone ordering, with delivery or pickup available. A 72-hour notice is required, and all orders are custom-made. View the menu on its website at www.brandonbbqondemand.com or call 813-693-1819.

HCA Brandon Hospital Achieves Top Honor For Patient Safety

HCA Florida Brandon Hospital announced recently that it has achieved the 2026 Patient Safety Excellence Award from Healthgrades, the No. 1 site Americans use to find a doctor or hospital. This award reflects Brandon Hospital's commitment to safe, patient-centered care and puts the organization in the top 10 percent of hospitals nationwide for patient safety four years in a row. Brandon Hospital's achievement is based solely on what matters most: patient outcomes. To determine the national leaders in patient safety, Healthgrades evaluated risk-adjusted complication and mortality rates from approximately 4,500 hospitals nationwide.

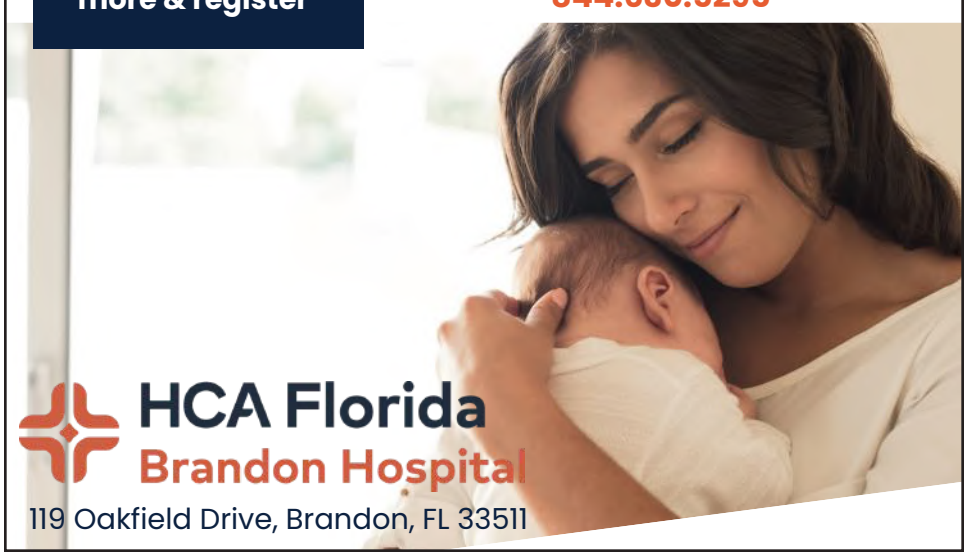
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$420,000



1018 TRACEY ANN LOOP
5BR/4BA/3CAR + BONUS + POOL + OUTDOOR KITCHEN
$650,000



16349 SPRING VALLEY RD
3BR/2BA + DETACHED 2 CAR GARAGE + BONUS + POOL + HOT TUB
$575,000



1111 DURANT RD
3BR/2BA/2CAR + OFFICE + BONUS + POOL + STORAGE GARAGE
$540,000



602 FIELDCREST DR
2BR/2.5BA/2CAR + ASSIGNED PARKING
$225,000

DELIVERING RESULTS YEAR AFTER YEAR

BRENDA WADE
Signature Realty Associates
Top Producer
2002-2025

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