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RODGERS MIDDLE TEAM WINS STATE ROBOTICS CHAMPIONSHIP

Staff Report



Rodgers Middle Magnet School: State championship: Robotics. and Second place: Solar Racer.

Students from Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) earned top honors at the 2026 Florida Technology Student Association (TSA) State Conference, showcasing excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) competitions across the state.

The annual conference drew more than 2,000 student participants statewide. Students from Middleton High School, Wharton High School, Turner/Bartels K-8 School, Rodgers Middle Magnet School and York Innovation Academy represented Hillsborough County, earning multiple first, second and third-place finishes in a wide range of events.

Middleton High School:

• State championships: Engineering Design; Drone UAV.

• Second place: Geospatial Technology; Prepared Presentation; STEM Mass Media.

• Third place: Software Development.

• Ranked seventh overall high school in Florida.

Wharton High School:

• State championships: Future Technology & Engineering Teacher; Debating Technological Issues.

• Third place: Transportation Modeling.

Turner/Bartels K-8 School:

• State championships: Inventions & Innovations; Promotional Marketing.

• Second place: Video Game Design.

• Third place: Data Science and Analytics; Forensic Technology; Technology Bowl.

• Ranked 10th overall middle school in Florida.

Rodgers Middle Magnet School:

• State championship: Robotics.

• Second place: Solar Racer.

York Innovation Academy:

• Second place: Construction Challenge.

• Third place: Fashion Design; Mechanical Engineering.

"Our students once again showed what's possible when high expectations meet strong support and hands-on learning," Superintendent Van Ayres said. "These results reflect the creativity, dedication and collaboration of our students and staff, and they highlight the strength of STEM education across Hillsborough County."

With the state conference complete, Hillsborough TSA chapters are now preparing for the 2026 National TSA Conference in Washington, D.C., where students will represent the district on the national stage this summer.

To learn more about STEM at HCPS, visit www.hillsboroughschools.org.

HCA BRANDON HOSPITAL ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF SEVEN SCHOLARSHIPS, INCLUDING TWO $20,000 AWARDS

Staff Report



Shayla Commons
Brandon High



Izabel Wiltz
Lennard High



Bradon Martis
Riverview High



Claudia Maguire
Riverview High



Emma Kasting
Newsome High



Madeline Estabrook
Bloomingdale High



Aditi Menon
Middleton High

HCA Florida Brandon Hospital recognized seven high school seniors from across Hillsborough County with college scholarships totaling $45,000. Five students received the HCA Florida Brandon Hospital Healthcare Achievement Award, worth $1,000 each, and two students received the HCA Florida Brandon Hospital and Physicians Healthcare Scholars Award, worth $20,000 each. Students from approximately 30 public and private high schools, as well as homeschooled students, were considered.

"Each of these students shared their personal 'why' behind choosing health care as a future profession," said Dr. Anthony Furiato, emergency room physician at HCA Florida Brandon Hospital. "Their dedication, hard work and diverse career goals will enrich the health care community. Some are inspired by loved ones who received life-changing care, while others are drawn to specialties such as anesthesiology, occupational therapy and cancer treatment. HCA Florida Brandon Hospital and our medical staff are proud to collaborate in recognizing this outstanding group of future health care leaders."

HCA Florida Brandon Hospital and Physicians Healthcare Scholars Award

The HCA Florida Brandon Hospital and Physicians Healthcare Scholars Award is a highly competitive $20,000 scholarship jointly funded by HCA Florida Brandon Hospital and its medical staff. Recipients must plan to attend the University of South Florida.

Recipients: Bloomingdale High School: Madeline Estabrook. Middleton High School: Aditi Menon.

Hospital leaders will present the award to Estabrook and Menon during their respective school awards ceremonies.

The HCA Florida Brandon Hospital Healthcare Achievement Award recognizes students for strong academic performance, extracurricular involvement and a demonstrated interest in pursuing a career in health care. Each recipient received a $1,000 scholarship.

Recipients: Brandon High School: Shayla Commons. Lennard High School: Izabel Wiltz. Newsome High School: Emma Kasting. Riverview High School: Claudia Maguire and Bradon Martis.

Members of the HCA Florida Brandon Hospital leadership team will present the Healthcare Achievement Awards to each student.

All scholarship recipients submitted essays describing how they hope to make a difference through a career in health care.

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COMMISSIONERS APPROVE $95M FOR FLOOD PROTECTION PROGRAM

Staff Report



Hillsborough County Commissioners on Wednesday approved spending $95 million for 10 additional projects that will help improve drainage and alleviate future flooding across the county.

The Rebuilding for Tomorrow projects include removing obstructions in a channel in Northdale to improve water flow after rains, acquiring or restoring natural lands to reduce storm surge and flooding in Gibsonton, building a low-pressure sewer system to decrease the risk of post-storm wastewater flooding in Ruskin and replacing or repairing culverts at more than 100 sites across Hillsborough.

In all, the work is estimated to directly benefit 370,000 residents.

The funding will come from $709 million of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grant funding awarded to the county from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) after Hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024.

Here is a look at some of the projects approved recently and their estimated costs:

• Ruskin low-pressure sewer system conversion ($30 million): Construction of a centralized vacuum sewer collection system, lift station and pressurized sewer pipe in a low-lying, flood-prone area. The project will decrease the risk of sanitary system overflows during and after flooding.

• Kracker Avenue Coastal Habitat ($2 million): Restores 25 acres of highly disturbed coastal wetlands and uplands adjacent to Tampa Bay to capture stormwater runoff and lessen the impact of storm surge along U.S. 41 in Gibsonton.

• Stacy R. White Nature Preserve Hydrologic Stream Restoration ($6 million): Restores 93 acres of disturbed stream habitat and wetlands within Little Bullfrog Creek headwaters to increase on-site water storage to reduce downstream flooding in Riverview and Gibsonton.

• Culvert projects ($24 million): Repair or replace 150 culverts throughout the county that are critical to maintaining the flow of stormwater.

In addition to the $95 million approved, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners approved more than $70 million of drainage projects on March 4 and another $9 million earlier this year.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage throughout Hillsborough County. Most of the damage from Hurricane Helene came from storm surge, while Hurricane Milton's strong winds and heavy rains brought flooding throughout the county.

About the Rebuilding for Tomorrow Program

Rebuilding for Tomorrow is a Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program administered by Hillsborough County and funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides funding to help communities recover from Hurricanes Helene and Milton. The program supports long-term recovery efforts, including housing rehabilitation, infrastructure restoration, economic revitalization and mitigation projects, with funding prioritized for the most impacted areas and low- and moderate-income households.

FIREHOUSE CULTURAL CENTER OFFERS 10 WEEKS OF SUMMER CAMPS

By Marie Gilmore





Firehouse Cultural Center (FCC) and FL Drama Kids Camp have partnered to create 10 full weeks of fun for campers ages 7-15. Register for individual weeks or multiple weeks with FCC (eight weeks available), and parents can contact FL Drama Kids Camp for either of the two weeks offered. Discounts are available for multi-week sessions. Themed camps each week are from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Hillsborough County and USDA will provide a school lunch daily from only Monday, June 1, through Tuesday, July 23, and FCC will offer snacks & water. For the August camps, campers are asked to pack their lunches.

There are special savings on multiple weeks, and you can become an FCC member to save even more at https://firehouseculturalcenter.org/join/.

Week One: Musical Theater: Wonka! Kids, Mon.-Fri., June 1-5

Week Two: Musical Theater: Hot Summer Broadway, Mon.-Fri., June 8-12

Week Three: Robotics, Mon.-Fri., June 15-19

Build teams and challenge other bots in the robot ring. There will be creative challenges using everyday items.

Week Four: FCC is hosting FL Drama Kids Camp, Mon.-Fri., June 22-26, Ages 8-16

This camp is offered by FL Drama kids; this is not an FCC camp. Please Call 813-489-5899 for more information. Camp runs from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and there'll be performances on June 27 and June 28.

Week Five: Animation, Mon.-Thurs., June 29-July 2

Campers will explore the world of animation and learn how their favorite cartoons, like SpongeBob SquarePants, are created and brought to life.

Week Six: Musical Theater: Juke Box Stories, Mon.-Fri., July 6-10

Week Seven: A Year With Frog and Toad Kids, Mon.-Fri., July 13-17

Does your child love to sing, dance, and perform? Then join in for an exciting Musical Theater Summer Camp, where young stars shine on stage.

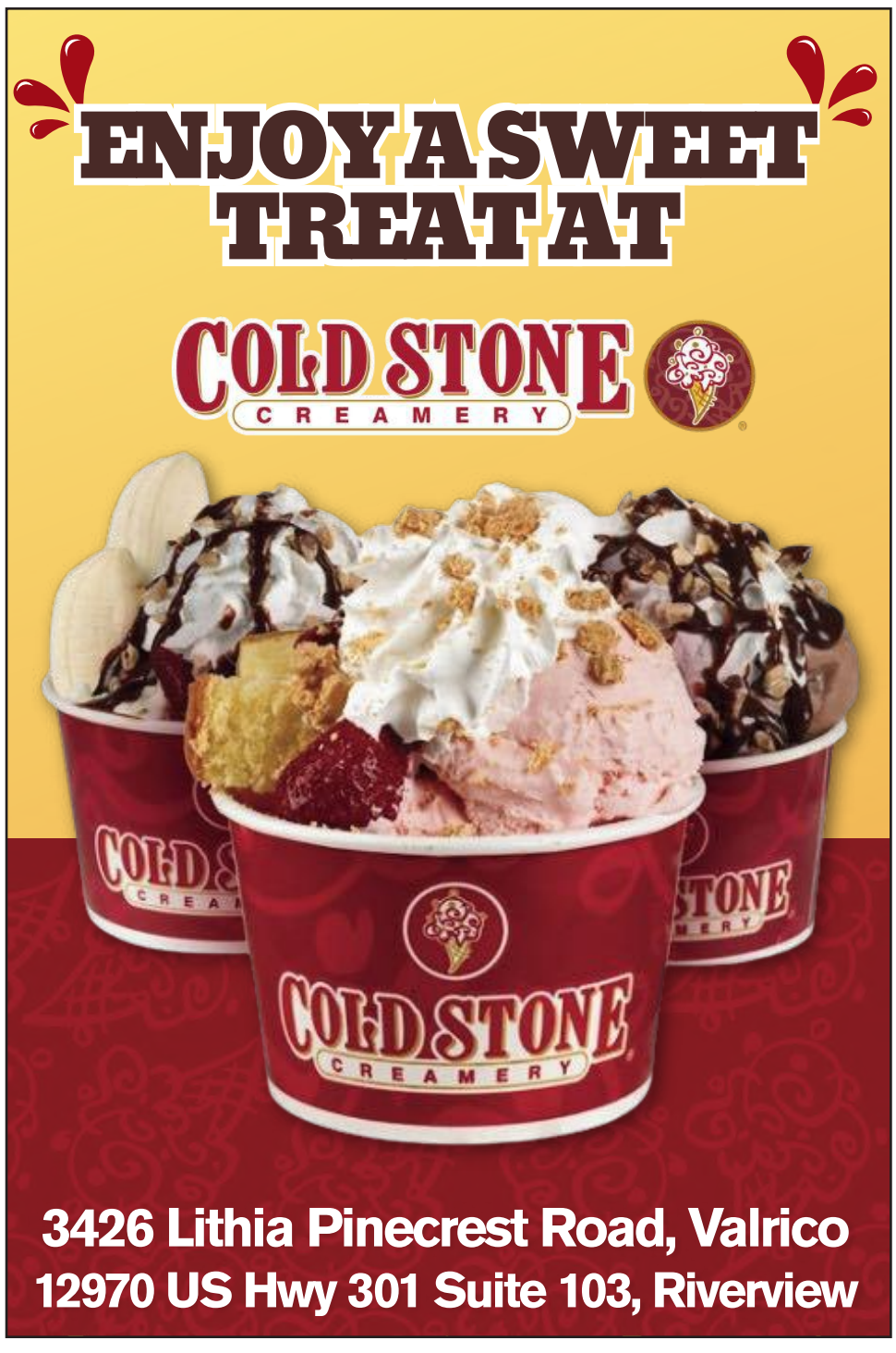
Week Eight: FCC Is Hosting FL Drama Kids Camp, Mon.-Fri., July 20-24, Ages 8-16

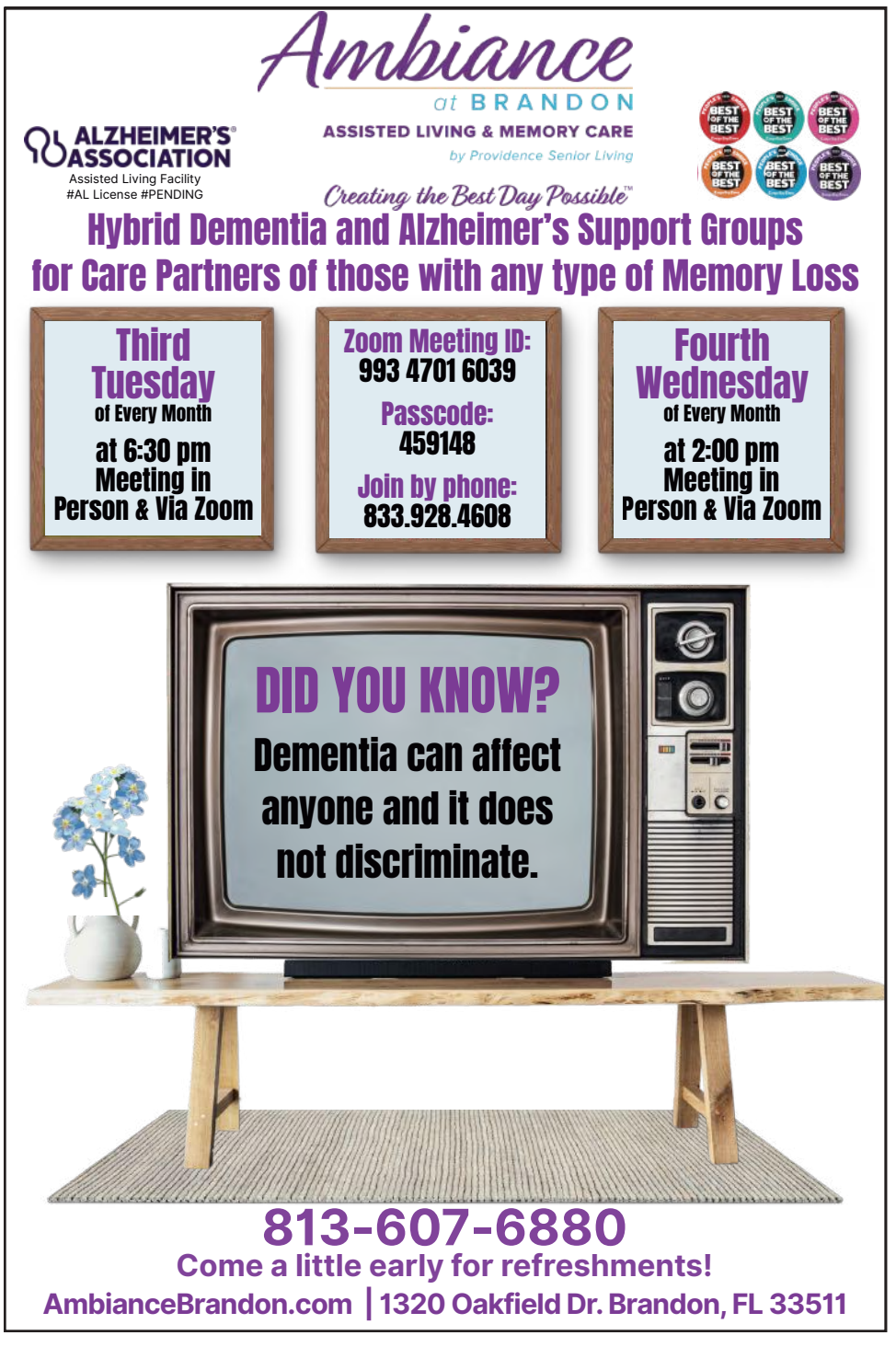
Week Nine: Robotics Mon.-Fri., July 27-31

Create and program Vex IQ and GO robots, conquer challenges, fly drones while learning digital programming to command tasks and learn basic coding (programming).

Week 10: Art Variety Camp, Mon.-Fri., August 3-7

Camps fill up fast. For more information and to register, call 813-645-7651 or visit https://firehouseculturalcenter.org/events/imagine-explore-discover-summer-camp-2026/.





ALL CHILDREN'S OUTPATIENT CARE OPENS IN APOLLO BEACH

By Libby Hopkins



This past March, Johns Hopkins All Children's Outpatient Care opened its doors to the Apollo Beach community. The grand-opening ribbon cutting had 100 people in attendance. Representatives from Hillsborough County Schools, nonprofit organizations, Tampa Sertoma, and Sounding Joy also came out to show their support.

"The paper chain ribbon used for the opening was made by speech and hearing patients," said Paula Golson, director of Audiology Services at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital. "Our COO, Justin Olsen, welcomed and shared our vision and then invited the children to cut the ribbon and start the tour/scavenger hunt of the various rooms and services."

The new facility is operated by pediatric therapists and staff that provide audiology and speech-language and feeding evaluation and therapeutic services at the new location.

"This is a speech, feeding, audiology and infant hearing service location serving birth to 21 years of age," said Therese Montanari, director of Speech-Language and Feeding Services at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital. "This new facility is designed to meet the pediatric population with bright colored walls and playful art. We have a large classroom to offer group therapy sessions, which will include a language group, group for children with hearing loss and parent education programs."

In addition to the classroom, this site has four SLP treatment rooms, hearing aid dispensing and a full diagnostic testing suite.

Hearing loss interferes with a child's brain development, can affect communication development and can also affect everything from school performance to social relationships and emotional well-being.

"Our pediatric audiologists provide evaluation and treatment for children with hearing loss and hearing disorders to help them hear and communicate to the best of their ability," Montanari said. "Your child's hearing can be tested at any age, including as a newborn. The earlier hearing loss is detected, the greater the chance for normal auditory brain development."

The Speech-Language and Feeding program at Johns Hopkins All Children's helps children develop the skills needed for successful communication, feeding and swallowing.

"Our master's-level, certified speech-language pathologists have extensive training in childhood speech, feeding and language programs," Montanari said. "As part of a comprehensive medical program based at a pediatric hospital with one of the largest neonatal intensive care units in the country, our speech-language pathologists are experienced in providing a range of speech, language and feeding therapy services to children of all ages, from infants to teens, with complex medical conditions."

Visit www.hopkinsmedicine.org/all-childrens-hospital or call 813-910-518. The facility is located at 211 Harbor Village Lane in Apollo Beach.

TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO KEYS: ADAMS HELPS BUYERS FIND HOMES

By Libby Hopkins



Research, knowledge and education are the tools one would need when purchasing a new home. Local real estate agent Christina Adams began her career as an educator.

"I loved teaching, but I wanted to spend more time with my children, so I decided to become a real estate agent for RE/MAX Alliance Group," Adams said. "I love history and research, so I do my best at researching properties for my clients."

You could say Adams was born into real estate. Her mother was a real estate agent while Adams was growing up.

"I've grown up in real estate," Adams said. "I'm the daughter of a RE/MAX broker and found my way home to real estate after an exciting career in education."

Adams' focus is finding the right home for her clients that they will love and be able to afford.

"Helping my clients achieve their real estate goals is my priority," she said. "Whether they are buying, selling or both, every situation is unique and calls for an individualized plan of action. I consider it an honor to be entrusted to protect my clients with the largest investments of their lives. It's simple; I represent my clients as I want to be represented, with honesty and integrity."

Buying a home in Florida is exciting, but without a clear roadmap it can feel overwhelming fast. Whether you're a first-time buyer or relocating to the Sunshine State, understanding each step will help you move forward with confidence and avoid costly mistakes.

"Before you fall in love with a home, talk to a lender and get preapproved," Adams said. "This shows sellers you're serious and gives you a clear price range. In competitive Florida markets, a strong preapproval can make the difference between winning and losing a deal. Florida's real estate market varies widely from city to city; coastal properties, flood zones, HOA communities, and new construction all come with unique considerations. A knowledgeable agent helps you navigate pricing, neighborhoods and negotiations."

Buying a home in Florida doesn't have to be stressful. With the right team and a clear understanding of the process, you can navigate each step with confidence and ease.

"I have an understanding the foundation of the real estate market and stay abreast with the current market trends and changes to ensure my clients investments are secure," Adams said. "If you're thinking about buying, or just want to understand your options, I'm here to help guide you every step of the way. Let's turn your homeownership goals into reality."

If you are in the market for a new home or selling your current home, give Adams a call at 813-480-2071 or visit her website at https://christinaadams.remax.com/index.php.

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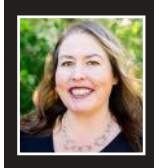
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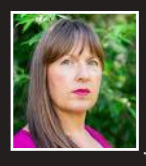
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With its sweeping roofline leading to an almost coupe-like appearance, it is arguably one of the sleekest compact all-electric luxury SUVs on the market. Sitting between the Q4 and Q8 e-trons, the 2025 Audi Q6 Sportback e-tron is quick off the mark, with plenty of punch to produce a graceful and energetic ride. Lest we forget, the renowned quattro all-wheel drive provides peace of mind in any road situation or weather condition.

A 100-kWh lithium-ion battery coupled with dual motors, front and rear, is capable of blasting off a healthy 456 horsepower. Translation? Zero to 60 is achievable in just 4.9 seconds, with a top speed of 130 mph. Getting power to the ground is a single-speed auto gearbox, which results in a quiet and smooth drivetrain. An electronically controlled, continuously adaptive air suspension at all four wheels delivers admirable poise and stability. Making the SUV effortless to place in corners is a direct and accurate rack-and-pinion electric power steering system. The potent brakes, which feature 13.8-inch ventilated discs, have a firm pedal feel. They operate inside 19-inch alloy wheels shod with 235/60 front and 255/55 rear tires. On a full charge, the cozy five-seater can cover up to 318 miles. Plug into a 240 volt and it will take about 14 hours, but a fast DC charge can juice up 80 percent in just 21 minutes. Towing and payload capacities are plentiful at 4,400 and 1,036 pounds, respectively.

Thumbs up to the exterior appearance with its generous bit of black trim, showing off a massive single-frame and familiar four-ring grille surrounded by pinwheel-design LED headlights. The interior is cozy with plenty of top-notch luxury and style. The 14.5-inch MMI infotainment interface stands tall on the dashboard with the driver facing a curved 11.9-inch digital display screen. The driver and front passenger are pampered by rich-looking eight-way power heated leather seats. Opt for the $5,800 prestige package, which fetches you a Bang & Olufsen sound system with 3D sound, animated head and taillights, seven digital DRL signatures, a top-view camera, a 10.9-inch passenger display screen, etc. Thoughtful touches include a three-spoke power tilt/telescopic steering column, a moonroof and liftgate, a wireless phone charger, a 40/20/40 fold rear bench, three-zone auto AC and an Audi drive select so dynamic, comfort, balanced, efficiency and offroad modes are available.

Eight airbags; four-wheel antilock brakes with brake assist; electronic stability/traction control; a rearview camera; blind-spot, lane departure and rear cross-traffic warnings; front/rear parking sensors and park assist plus; Audi pre-sense (detects an emergency maneuver and prepares the vehicle and its occupants); adaptive cruise control; a tire pressure monitoring system; and daytime running lights are standard.

With gas nearly $4 a gallon as summer brings an even bigger hit at the pump, the Q6 e-tron is a no-brainer. On that note, Audi will skip this year's model and reintroduce the Q6 e-tron in the second quarter of 2027 with several appealing upgrades.

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(never known to fail)

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

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THE KNOCK ON THE DOOR
WHAT A VOLUNTEER ROUTE REVEALS

By Jeff Evans



There are some things you don't fully understand until you see them up close.

For my wife, Cathy, and me, that moment came at the volunteer appreciation lunch this week for Meals On Wheels of Tampa Bay. It was our first time attending, even though we've been delivering meals for the past year and a half. What stood out wasn't the program or the recognition. It was the people.

Volunteers were called up and recognized for their years of service: five, 10, 15 and 20. Then one person was honored for 30 years. Not 30 months or even a decade but 30 years of showing up.

You can learn a great deal about an organization by watching who stays. In this case, people don't just participate; they commit.

Meals On Wheels is often understood at a surface level as a meal delivery service, but that framing misses what actually makes it work. The national movement dates back to the 1950s, with roots in postwar efforts to care for those who could not care for themselves. Over time, it expanded into a network that now serves seniors, individuals recovering from illness and others who face barriers to preparing meals on their own. The stated goal is nutrition, but the deeper purpose is independence — keeping people in their homes, in their communities and connected to the world around them.

At a practical level, the model is straightforward. Meals are prepared, routes are organized and volunteers deliver food directly to recipients, usually around midday. But the simplicity of the system hides what's actually taking place. The delivery isn't just a transaction. It's a point of contact.

Over time, the route stops feeling like a list of addresses and starts becoming a series of relationships. And with those relationships come stories — more than you expect, and often more than can be told in detail.

There's the former teacher who clearly misses the classroom and the daily rhythm of conversation, who lingers at the door not because of the meal but because someone is there to talk to. There's the woman slowly losing her sight who refuses to surrender her independence, finding ways to stay active and positive even as her world narrows. And there are the stories you hear secondhand, like the one shared at the lunch — a man facing his first Christmas without his wife, sitting alone in a quiet home, carrying the kind of loneliness and grief that doesn't announce itself but is deeply felt.

Mandy Cloninger, the new CEO, has stepped into the role with a clarity that is easy to recognize. Her background in nonprofit and community-focused leadership is evident not in what she says but in how she frames the work.

That culture is reinforced by the team on the ground. People like Jeremy Gloff, Yvette Rouse and all of the other staff don't just coordinate logistics; they build continuity. They know the volunteers, understand the routes and carry the small details that make the entire operation work. In organizations like this, those details are not minor. They are the difference between a system that functions and one that actually serves.

In the end, it's not just a meal being delivered. It's a reminder — someone still cares enough to knock. www,mowtampa.org.

END OF AN ERA — SOUTHSHORE CHAMBER DIRECTOR REFLECTS ON 21-YEAR LEGACY

By Kelly Wise Valdes



After more than 21 years leading the Greater SouthShore Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director Melanie Davis is preparing to step down in July, closing a chapter she describes as both meaningful and deeply personal.

Davis said the moments that left the strongest impression were when the chamber united around community needs.

"Anytime the chamber came together and went beyond business to truly support our community stands out the most," she said. "If our community doesn't thrive, then our businesses can't thrive either."

About 15 years ago, Davis helped guide a major transition in the chamber's mission.

"We made a conscious shift to become more involved in giving back," she said.

The decision wasn't universally popular at first.

"We were even labeled the 'dogood chamber,' and some hesitated to join," she added.

But she said the approach eventually became one of the organization's greatest strengths.

"Our members now value the opportunity to connect with likeminded businesses while also making a meaningful impact," she said.

Leading through change became a defining part of her tenure. Davis said working with a board of directors that rotates every few years required constant adaptability. But nothing compared to the challenge of COVID19.

"There was a moment when we came close to closing our doors," she said.

Instead, the chamber doubled down on helping businesses survive by connecting them with resources and keeping the community informed.

"That experience reinforced the importance of resilience and servicedriven leadership," Davis said.

In recent years, the chamber has seen significant growth in engagement. Davis credits that momentum to redefining value after the pandemic.

"We leaned into our committees, strengthened member involvement, and focused on building a true sense of community — almost like a family," she said.

Stepping away, she admits, is emotional.

"It's incredibly bittersweet," Davis said.

She began the role in her mid20s, raising three daughters while growing alongside the chamber.

"It truly feels like an extended family," Davis said. "I feel like I gained 20 extra grandparents through this journey."

What she'll miss most is working directly with business owners.

"There's almost always a way forward, and I love the creativity that comes with problemsolving," she said.

As she prepares for her next chapter, Davis said she looks forward to slowing down. And she is confident in her successor, Bonnie Peacock.

"She has experienced the chamber from every angle," Davis said. Visit www.southshorechamberofcommerce.org or visit the chamber's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/southshorechamberofcommerce.org.

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LOCALLY PRODUCED FILM TO DEBUT AT CANNES FILM FESTIVAL EVENT

By Mylena C. Ferman



Steven and Christie Demmler posing for a photo together in front of a South Side Studio's backdrop.

A film produced by a Riverview Local, Steve Demmler, will debut at the Director's Fortnight, an independent sidebar at the Cannes Film Festival, on May 15.



The Director's Fortnight is "dedicated to showcasing the most singular forms of contemporary cinema," according to its website. While it prides itself on being a non-competitive selection, many of the films are qualified for awards. One of these awards, the Caméra d'Or, is awarded to the best first feature film to encourage new directors to continue their craft.

Written and directed by Reed Van Dyke, "Atonement" is based on Dexter Filkins' 2012 New Yorker article by the same name. The film follows a Marine seeking reconciliation with an Iraqi family he shot at during his deployment.

Steven Demmler explained the film is about how very different people "can still find a way to grieve and reconcile and love and move on together."

Instead of digitally editing scenes, "Atonement" was shot entirely on film. The director's decision, Steven Demmler said, was logistically challenging but well worth it.

"Bringing Atonement to life required extensive international collaboration, including multiple trips to Jordan and countless hours of coordination across time zones." Steve Demmler's wife, Christie Demmler, said.

Steven Demmler is no stranger to the film and T.V industry, though. Born and raised in New York City, he has a father who worked as a stagehand for the first 40 seasons of "Saturday Night Live" and a mom who was a Radio City Rockette for 26 years.

"I'm a crew baby," Steven Demmler said "... which is the least useful kind of nepotism ever."

From a young age, he wanted to become a writer, but built a career in finance to fund his dreams. Now the Founder of Talon Entertainment and a creative in various ways, Steven Demmler is proud that he has not boxed himself into a single role. For aspiring creatives, he suggests they erase their fear of rejection.

"Don't be afraid to cold email anybody and ask them to coffee or zoom," he said, "...but also don't come in hot with asks."

"Atonement" has no public release date yet, but Steven is hopeful the film will be bought and distributed by the end of the year. His next film, an action-comedy named "Synergy Systems," stars Eric Andre and begins production next summer.

HILLSBOROUGH COLLEGE HONORS THE MOSAIC COMPANY WITH CHAMPION IN EDUCATION AWARD

Staff Report



Hillsborough College (HC) is proud to recognize The Mosaic Company as the recipient of HC President Dr. Ken Atwater's 2026 Champion in Education Award. This annual recognition honors an individual or organization that demonstrates outstanding initiative in supporting student success, expanding education access and strengthening community impact through support of the college.

The Mosaic Company has been a strategic partner of Hillsborough College since 2001, helping to align workforce needs with the college's academic and technical programs in support of the Tampa Bay labor market. The company has also shown a strong commitment to student success, contributing nearly $200,000 in philanthropic support to the college's foundation through first-generation scholarships, the Engineering Technology program and the Presidential Showcase.

"I am honored to present The Mosaic Company with the 2026 Champion in Education Award," Dr. Atwater said. "Mosaic has been a valued partner not only in advancing opportunities for our students but also in enriching the Tampa Bay community."

Mosaic's leadership extends to active involvement on the foundation's board of directors and participation on the President's Council at HC's Brandon and SouthShore campuses, underscoring a shared emphasis on workforce readiness and economic mobility.

"Helping the world grow the food it needs starts with strong communities and a skilled workforce," said Bruce Bodine, president and CEO of The Mosaic Company. "We are proud to partner with Hillsborough College to support students and create opportunity right here in Tampa Bay."

About Hillsborough College

Hillsborough College serves more than 46,000 students annually at its five campuses located throughout Tampa Bay. For more information, visit www.hcfl.edu.

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PRO ATHLETES LEAD TAMPA DYNAMO YOUTH SOCCER CAMP IN RIVERVIEW

By Nick Nahas



The Tampa Dynamo FC organization, along with Shrader Athletics, is hosting a soccer camp from June 22–26 at Summerfield Soccer Park in Riverview.

The camp is headlined by Indianapolis Colts kicker Spencer Shrader and women's pro soccer player for Lyon, Korbin Shrader. The Tampa Dynamo FC - Shrader Athletics Summer Soccer Camp is directed by Sophie Shrader and assisted by veteran coach Peter Gutsche, college recruiting coordinator at Tampa Dynamo FC.

The U7 – U16 camp cost $290 per camper and goes from 8:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m. daily, with an optional parent and player Q&A from 11:30 a.m.– noon.

Sophie Shrader grew up in the Tampa area and started Shrader Athletics while attending Newsome High School. At Newsome, she set the goal–scoring record as a sophomore, and again as a junior. She played college soccer at USF and University of Tampa, and trained with PSG and Manchester City. She has run these soccer camps consistently for the past three years and is the sister of Spencer Shrader.

"What inspired me to start Shrader Athletics was a simple mindset — soccer is fun. I've always believed sports should be something kids genuinely enjoy, while also being a way to teach important life lessons like teamwork, discipline and confidence," said Sophie.

Spencer Shrader played soccer at Tampa Dynamo FC and multiple sports at Newsome High School. He then played football at USF and Notre Dame, before taking his talents to the NFL with multiple teams. He is currently on the Indianapolis Colts roster and is recovering from an injury. His experience in soccer and football will give insight to campers.

"I'll get to apply what I've learned throughout my sports journey to help kids become physically and mentally tougher and have an appreciation for sports," said Spencer. "I'm also excited to speak to the parents and encourage them and acknowledge them for the sacrifices they make for their children. It will be an honor to give back and share these lessons with the students."

U.S. Women's National Soccer Team gold medalist and pro soccer player for OL Lyonnes in France, Korbin Shrader, is Spencer's wife. The couple met through Notre Dame University where they both played in college. She was a First-Team All-American at Notre Dame. She looks forward to mentoring new players.

"I'm really excited to pour into the next generation," said Korbin. "I want to share what I've learned so they can succeed not just in sports, but in life. My goal is for them to leave inspired, growing, and becoming better people both on and off the field."

For registration or more information on the camp, visit shraderathletics.com/dynamo-summer-soccer-camp-2026.

HOME SERVICE HEROES BUILDS ON FAITH, INTEGRITY AND FAST SOLUTIONS

By Kelly Wise Valde



Home Service Heroes remains a trusted presence in Tampa Bay, broadening its electrical, airconditioning and plumbing services while adopting new technology to meet rising demand.

The company, originally founded in 1999, has built its reputation on fast response times and a customercentered approach.

"Home Service Heroes, formally Electric Today, is your locally owned electrical, air-conditioning and plumbing repair company that has been in the area since 1999," said owner Jon Polizzi. "We pride ourselves on fast, same-day service and having the best guarantee in Tampa Bay."

Polizzi explained that the company's foundation rests on a set of guiding principles consisting of faith, honor, excellence and want as the pillars that drive the business.

"We founded the company on these four powerful core values and truly make every decision based on lining up with these," he said. "Faith: Follow the golden rule and treat other the way you want to be treated and be thankful for all we have and know we are all part of something bigger than ourselves. Honor: Everything we do will be done with honor and integrity. Excellence: We strive for absolute perfection, both professionally and personally. Want: We all must have that burning desire to be awesome."

For Polizzi, the company's mission is rooted in service.

"The most rewarding part of owning this business is being able to help people. Our mission is 'to serve,' and I just love hearing how we made someone's day or we saved the day due to an issue within the home. I also love the fact that the work we do creates jobs and we are able to support the families of our team," he said.

Fast response remains central to the company's identity.

"This has been our claim to fame from the beginning," said Polizzi. "No one wants to wait when the lights don't work or the AC is not cooling. We totally get that and have built this company to be able to come to you and fix the issue fast. I know that time is valuable to most people, and the work we do helps save time."

Technology has also become a key part of operations.

"We have adopted some new technology to help us be more efficient," said Polizzi. "From training to material ordering programs, like AI software, has helped us stay organized and get things done fast. I have also made it as easy as possible to schedule jobs with our book online features and pre-scheduled maintenance."

Ultimately, Polizzi said the company's promise is simple: "We show up when you need us with reliable, same-day service so you're never left waiting around." Call 813-653-4221 or www.homeserviceheroesfl.com.



VFCC AWARDS $5,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO OUTSTANDING LOCAL SENIORS

By Marie Gilmore



Five high school seniors were awarded VFCC Scholarships this year.

The Valrico FishHawk Chamber of Commerce (VFCC) recently honored five exceptional high school seniors with $1,000 scholarships each, recognizing their academic achievements, leadership and commitment to community service.

"It was a wonderful experience working in the role of scholarship chair for the VFCC this year," said Michael Brand, awards and recognition chair. "I was so impressed with the quality of candidates we had apply. The independent judges had quite a time selecting the winners. Meeting the finalists and learning about their accomplishments was extremely inspiring. It's great to know we have such talented young adults ready to become leaders in our community."

Among the recipients is Durant High School senior Bailee Knighten, an accomplished student athlete and entrepreneur. Knighten has already published three books, operates two businesses and holds school records in the 100 and 400-meter hurdles.

Also from Durant High School, Andrew O'Toole, ranked first in his class, earned recognition for both academic excellence and leadership. His honors include the West Point Society General Schwarzkopf Leadership Award and the AP Scholar with Distinction Award.

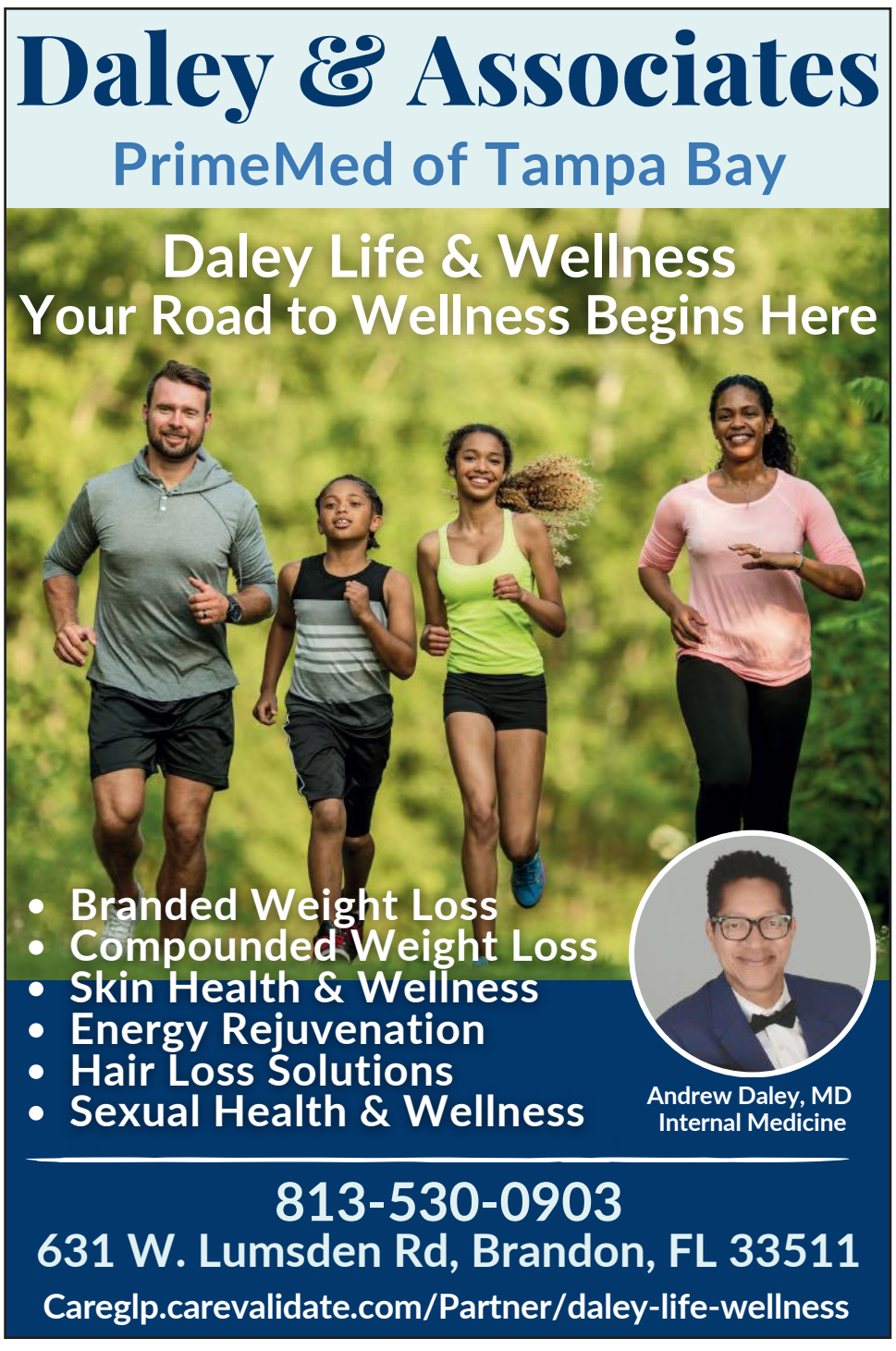
Avery Ranieri of Bell Creek Academy, ranked fifth in her class, has demonstrated a passion for civic engagement and communication. As student government president and a volunteer at Tampa General Hospital, she has advocated for organ donation legislation in Tallahassee. Ranieri, who also interned with the *Osprey Observer*, will attend the University of Georgia.

Newsome High School's Mary Grace Hyde was recognized for her exceptional leadership, having served as class president all four years of high school — a first for her school.

Durant High School senior Logan Glynn, ranked fifth in his class, plans to pursue civil and transportation engineering at the University of Florida. A lacrosse team captain and club founder, Glynn hopes to one day solve local traffic challenges that first sparked his interest as a child.

Together, these five students represent the VFCC's mission to invest in the next generation of community leaders. For more information on the chamber, visit www.valricofishhawk.org.







TEEN RESTORES CLASSIC CARS, BUILDS YOUTUBE FOLLOWING AND HEADS TO D.C. FOR ADVOCACY

By Kelly Wise Valdes



When most teenagers were learning to drive, Ashlee Jaspers was learning to rebuild an engine. Now, the Newsome High School junior is preparing for a trip to Washington, D.C., where she will meet with congressional leaders on behalf of the automotive aftermarket industry — a journey that began with a simple question she asked her dad at age 13.

Ashlee Jaspers had wanted a car of her own, but her father, Todd Jaspers, had a condition.

"I told her I'd buy her a car, but she'd have to restore it herself," he said.

He believed the challenge would teach responsibility and respect. He also insisted on a manual transmission, joking that it meant "one less hand to hold a cell phone."

That decision set Ashlee Jaspers on a path she hadn't expected.

"My favorite thing about restoring cars is learning how all of the individual parts work together," said Ashlee Jaspers. "Before I got my '85 Pontiac Fiero, I had little to no knowledge on cars."

She remembers the moment she first started up the engine that she had rebuilt.

"It was probably one of the best moments of my life hearing the engine rumble to life," she said.

Her passion grew quickly. She launched a YouTube channel, 'Gen Z Garage,' to document her restoration process and hopefully inspire other young mechanics.

"TV and film production has always called to me," she said. "That's half the reason I started my YouTube channel. The other half is that I'd love to help others with their car restoration journeys."

Ashlee Jaspers said she was inspired by shows like *All Girls Garage*.

"Faye [Hadley] was definitely a huge inspiration," she said. "I'd love to meet her one day."

"We had tons of pictures of my parents' cars in a little electronic picture frame," she said. "I saw that the cars looked cool and that helped spark interest."

Todd Jaspers said he tries to stay handsoff so she can learn through critical thinking and troubleshooting.

"I uninvolve myself as much as possible to ensure she solves the problems herself," he said. "What I do make sure is that she does things safely." He calls the experience "an additional early college education."

Ashlee Jaspers' dedication caught the attention of the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA).

"She reached out to SEMA, and they were so excited to see someone her age with her passion," Todd Jaspers said.

The organization invited her to Washington, D.C., where she will attend a congressional reception, a congressional dinner and a full day of briefings and meetings with lawmakers.

To follow Ashlee Jaspers' YouTube channel, Gen Z Garage, visit www.youtube.com/@generationzgarage.

CYPRESS CREEK CO-OP RETURNS TO ITS COMMUNITY-DRIVEN ROOTS

By McKenzie Brown



After a decade of delivering fresh, affordable produce to local families, Cypress Creek Co-Op is celebrating 10 years in business while returning to the flexible, community-driven model that started it all.

Founded by single mom Cassie Adams, the co-op began as a simple solution to a common problem. While working at a wholesale produce market, Adams often brought home more fruits and vegetables than her family could use. She reached out to neighbors, offering to share the excess, and within just a few weeks, more than 60 families had joined in.

Today, that small neighborhood effort has grown into a thriving network of more than 35,000 members across the Tampa Bay area.

Cypress Creek Co-Op continues to provide weekly produce bins filled with a mix of fresh fruits, vegetables and pantry staples, along with optional add-ons like beef, seafood and Amish goods. The bins are designed to be both affordable and convenient, with medium bins priced at $30 and large bins at $40. Specialty options, including keto and fruit-only bins, are also available.

"Our goal has always been to make fresh food more accessible," said Adams. "When you buy in-season and in bulk, families can save significantly while still eating healthy."

The co-op prioritizes local sourcing whenever possible, though Adams noted that some items must come from outside Florida due to growing conditions. Each week's bins are thoughtfully curated, typically including a balance of fruits and vegetables, such as strawberries, bananas, leafy greens, potatoes and seasonal favorites.

While Cypress Creek Co-Op previously expanded to include a physical storefront in Apollo Beach, the business is now leaning back into its original virtual roots. Customers can order online for convenient home delivery or attend weekly pickup events, including a popular Saturday pickup at the BayCare HealthHub at 2470 Bloomingdale Ave. in Valrico.

Delivery is available throughout Brandon, Valrico, Lithia, Riverview, Ruskin, Gibsonton and Sun City Center, with evening time slots and low delivery fees. Orders placed by 4 p.m. are eligible for same-day delivery.

Beyond providing fresh food, the co-op remains deeply connected to the community, offering volunteer opportunities and supporting local families and first responders throughout the year.

As Cypress Creek Co-Op enters its second decade, Adams said the mission remains the same: helping families eat well, save money and stay connected.

If you have any additional questions or inquiries, you can email Cypress Creek Co-Op at cypresscreekcoop@gmail.com. Its Facebook group is available for updates and questions.



HC SOUTHSHORE CAMPUS HONORS STUDENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Staff Report



Barb Caleca (right), Dr. Jennifer China (center) and Nicholas Caleca (left).

Hillsborough College SouthShore Campus celebrated student achievement, leadership, and academic excellence at its 53rd Annual Student Excellence Awards Ceremony on April 10 at the Kings Point Veterans Theater, located at 1900 Clubhouse Dr. in Sun City Center.

The event recognized outstanding students, faculty and staff while bringing together community supporters committed to student success. A highlight of the evening included a $10,000 scholarship donation from the Interfaith Social Action Council, led by Barb and Nicholas Caleca, along with an additional $5,000 contribution to the campus' new workforce training facility.

The ceremony showcased the Harvesting the Future campaign, led by campus President Dr. Jennifer Wells China in partnership with philanthropist Danita Dickman, aimed at expanding educational opportunities through a new workforce training building.

The event underscored the college's continued commitment to empowering students and strengthening the future workforce through education and community investment.

Founded in 1968, Hillsborough College (HC) is currently the fifth largest community college in Florida's State College System, serving more than 46,000 students each year at its five campuses, three satellite locations and online platform. HC offers more than 200 academic pathways - including a Bachelor of Science in nursing, associate in art and associate in science degrees, college credit certificates, postsecondary adult vocational certificates, advanced technical diplomas and certificates, as well as continuing education and lifelong learning courses - designed to equip students with essential skills for immediate employment, career advancement and long-term success.



Dr. Jennifer China (right) with philanthropist Mrs. Danita Dickman (left) at the Student Excellence Awards.

The College plays a pivotal role in strengthening the educational, economic and social fabric of the Tampa Bay region. With an annual budget of over $161 million and more than 2,100 employees, the College is a major economic driver and community anchor. Over 84 percent of graduates stay in the local community, and together, HC and its alumni contribute more than $1.3 billion in added income and economic impact to Hillsborough County.

COUNTY PRESENTS DRAFT GOALS, CONCEPT MAP FOR RIVERVIEW PLAN

Staff Report



The Riverview Community Plan, originally adopted in 2005, comprises 13 goals and strategies to inform community development. The board of county commissioners requested that the plan be updated in conjunction with the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority U.S. Highway 301 Study.

The update process has included a series of community meetings. The feedback and input collected from residents during these previous meetings were incorporated to prepare the draft vision, goals and concept map for the Riverview Community Plan.

In the next round of community meetings scheduled for early May, the project team will present the draft vision, goals and concept map to the community. Residents will be able to review the draft contents and offer further input, which will be used to finalize the community vision and goals, refine the concept map and create strategies for each of the plan's goals.

Meeting dates and locations:

• Saturday, May 2, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at Collins PK-8 School, located at 12424 Summerfield Blvd. in Riverview.

• Tuesday, May 5, 6-7 p.m., via a virtual meeting. Register using the QR code or go to the project website.

• Wednesday, May 6, 6-8 p.m., at Riverview High School, located at 11311 Boyette Rd. in Riverview.

For more information on the Riverview Community Plan update, please visit the project website: https://planhillsborough.org/planriverview/.

Thank you to the Riverview community for your continued participation and support throughout this planning process.

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BILINGUAL LEGAL TEAM AT RJS LAW GROUP SERVES TAMPA AND BEYOND

By Mylena C. Ferman



RJS Law Group (RJS) has served Ruskin and Tampa's English and Spanish-speaking clients with legal representation since 2002.

The law group consists of three main lawyers: Brandon Kolb, who primarily handles traffic defense; Ana Salinas, who oversees personal injury cases, probate cases, trust-related cases and wills; and Rolando Santiago, founder and managing partner of RJS, who works on real estate, business law and personal injury cases. All RJS employees are natively fluent in both English and Spanish.

"We have a large client base of people who are first-generation immigrants and so their English is extremely limited. To discuss technical issues can be challenging. It is not challenging for us," Santiago said.

Their expertise in taking on cases for Spanish speakers has earned them a reputation locally and internationally. RJS has taken on numerous personal injury litigation cases, including in Argentina, Honduras, El Salvador and Japan.

"It's fun, you know?" Santiago said about the international cases. "It's fun to be able to help folks, to have the knowledge to be able to help when they thought there was no justice available to them."

In addition to her local work, Salinas helps coordinate RJS' international cases and is a licensed attorney in Honduras.

"We focus on the person-to-person," Santiago explained, "...We are a firm where clients can get ahold of the attorney, can get ahold of the paralegal."

Humanity is at the core of RJS' business practices.

"We get results for the clients because of the staff. Everybody here is knowledgeable," Santiago said.

According to its website, RJS also takes general civil litigation, workers' compensation and immigration law cases. The cost of the services varies. Most services charge an hourly rate that typically ranges from $400-$800. Other services have a base or flat fee. For example, will kits have a flat fee of $750, basic trusts have a base fee of $3,500 and traffic defense is approximately $300 per infraction.

To learn more about RJS Law Group, visit its website at https://rjslawgroup.com/, email at info@rjslawgroup.com or call 813-641-0010. RJS Law Group is open from Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m., and by appointment on weekends. It is located at 306 N. U.S. 41 in Ruskin.

HILLSBOROUGH COLLEGE TO HOST FUTURE HAWK REGISTRATION DAY EVENTS

Staff Report

Hillsborough College (HC) will host a series of Future Hawk Registration Days during May and June. Students admitted for the fall semester will have the opportunity to prepare for classes by connecting with HC staff, attending orientation and selecting courses to complete fall 2026 registration.

Future Hawk Registration Days are free to attend, but space is limited. Students must RSVP to secure a seat at https://events.hccfl.edu/en/5e2GUzf7/g/XMf3r-6r5Jy.

Saturday, May 2, 10 a.m. — SouthShore Campus:
- SMPF 201/202 at 551 24th St. NE in Ruskin.
- Contact: Ryan Brown, rbrown62@hccfl.edu.

Tuesday, June 16, 4:30 p.m. — Ybor City Campus:
- Student Services Building at 1310 E. Palm Ave. in Tampa.
- Contact: Charlene Campbell, ccampbell36@hccfl.edu.

Wednesday, June 17, 5 p.m. — SouthShore Campus:
- SMPF 201/202 at 551 24th St. NE in Ruskin.
- Contact: Ryan Brown, rbrown62@hccfl.edu.

Tuesday, June 23, 5 p.m. — Plant City Campus:
- PTEC 116 and 118 at 1206 N. Park Rd. in Plant City.
- Contact: Sharlotte Henderson, pcenrollment@hccfl.edu.

Tuesday, June 30, 5 p.m. — Brandon Campus:
- BSSB Auditorium at 10451 Nancy Watkins Dr. in Tampa.
- Contact: Shamill Washington, swashington31@hccfl.edu.

Hillsborough College serves more than 46,000 students annually at its five campuses located throughout Tampa Bay. For more information, visit www.hcfl.edu.

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Visit www.hcfl.edu/accreditation for more information.

For a complete listing of Hillsborough College press releases, visit https://news.hccfl.edu/press-releases/default.aspx.





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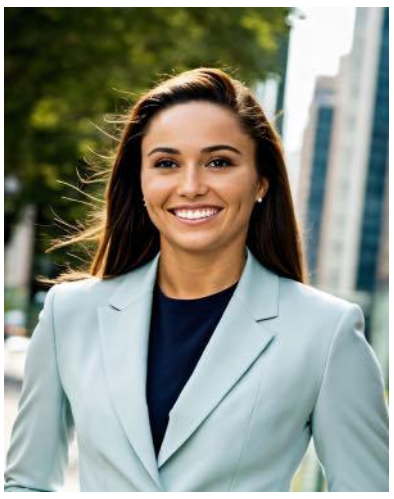


HIGH 5 INC. TEAM MEMBERS SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION

By Emily Harper



High 5 Inc. chief operating officer Patrick Skidmore.



High 5 Inc. chief communications officer Jada Spano.

High 5 Inc. is a multipurpose facility in Brandon where the community can come together. Recently, two individuals were recognized for their dedication to the organization by earning promotions: Patrick Skidmore and Jada Spano.

Skidmore was initially the director of development and has since been promoted to chief operating officer. In this new role, his main priority is "supporting our team to allow them to perform at a high level and provide superior programming to all participants in any of our programs."

Skidmore is a third-generation Tampa native who grew up going to the formerly known Brandon Swim and Tennis, now High 5 Inc. There, he attended his first swimming lesson. Prior to his career at High 5, he worked as a paramedic at Brandon Regional Hospital and is a second-generation president of the Rotary Club of Brandon, fostering his leadership skills.

On the other hand, Spano's previous title was the vice president of operations. She has now transitioned into her new role as chief communications officer. Spano's main focus is on "building a strong, consistent and recognizable brand that drives engagement and growth."

Growing up in the Brandon area, Spano has many early memories at this organization. She also learned to swim there and spent time playing tennis at the facilities. She now uses her childhood experiences and professional background to succeed in her role at High 5.

"That's what makes this role so meaningful to me, as it's truly a full-circle moment. I've gone from being a participant in these programs to now helping tell the story and bring awareness to the impact High 5 has on so many families in this amazing community," said Spano.

Both Skidmore and Spano are excited for the future of High 5 as they continue to grow and positively impact the community. "High 5 is more than just a place people come to participate but as a cornerstone organization that shapes lives and brings people together," said Spano.

For more, visit www.high5inc.org.

MOCK TRIAL CAMP OFFERS HANDS-ON LEGAL EXPERIENCE

By McKenzie Brown



Bell Creek Academy is one of the few schools in Hillsborough County that offers a law academy program, and it has been thriving for nine years. At Bell Creek, the law academy features a variety of courses designed to help students interested in law prepare for their futures. These classes include Constitutional Law, Cambridge Law, Legal Systems and Analysis, Criminal Law and Procedure and Comprehensive Law.

One unique feature of the program is its classroom, which is designed to resemble a real courtroom, complete with space for a judge, a jury, a witness stand and attorneys. Another major benefit of the program is that seniors have the opportunity to participate in internships with local law firms and attorneys.

Bell Creek also provides several opportunities for students to practice their legal skills, including mock trials and moot courts. A mock trial is a competition in which students simulate a real trial, while a moot court focuses on arguing cases in an appellate setting. The Bell Creek mock trial team has been highly successful, winning the 13th Judicial Circuit competition for the past three years and advancing to Orlando to compete at the state level. Similarly, the moot court team has advanced to Tallahassee for the past three years, where the competition is sponsored by The Florida Bar.

The middle school mock trial team has also seen impressive success, advancing to the state semifinals and earning a spot among the top eight teams in Florida. They will compete for the state championship on Saturday, May 2. Bell Creek Academy is also a member of the Florida Law Honor Society of Secondary Schools. The middle and high school moot court teams are sponsored by the Justia Teacher's Center, and this past year the high school team received the Legal Professionalism Award. In addition, the moot court team had the honor of arguing in front of the Florida Supreme Court in each of the past two years.

Charles Leadingham, law director at Bell Creek Academy, said, "Students that go through the law academy will have as much or more knowledge and understanding of legal systems than a lot of prelaw college students."

For the third year in a row, organizers Circuit Judge Christopher Nash, attorney Justin Fahringer, and Leadingham are proud to present the Judge Robert J. Simms 2026 Mock Trial Camp. The camp will take place from Monday through Friday, June 15-19, and is open to all high school students in the Tampa Bay area and surrounding counties.

The camp will be held at the Hillsborough County Courthouse, located at 800 E. Twiggs St. in Tampa. Sessions will run daily from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Due to limited space, registration is capped. Registration is currently open and will close when the camp is full or by Sunday, May 31. More information and registration can be found at www.tinyurl.com/mocktrialcamp2026.



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BRACELETS BRING HOPE AND SECOND CHANCES TO MENTAL HEALTH COURT

By State Attorney Suzy Lopez



A stack of colorful, handmade friendship bracelets sits inside courtroom 52A in Hillsborough County, where Assistant State Attorneys Skyler Jackle and April Pent use the small tokens to encourage participants in mental health court—offering symbols of hope, progress and second chances along the path to stability.

When you see colorful beaded jewelry on someone's wrist, you might think of Taylor Swift's Eras Tour and the friendship bracelets that became a cultural moment. But inside courtroom 52A in Hillsborough County, the friendship bracelets you'll find inside tell a much deeper story.

They tell a story of second chances, and two Hillsborough prosecutors who decided to do something small that's making a big impact.

Assistant state attorneys Skyler Jackle and April Pent wanted to find a simple way to bring encouragement to the people who are entering mental health court. They create their own handmade friendship bracelets that participants receive as incentives which symbolize progress and hope.

Housed in courtroom 52A, our county's mental health treatment court is designed to help individuals living with mental illness move away from the traditional cycle of incarceration toward treatment and stability. It's a path that often carries setbacks. Pent and Jackle know that consistent positive reinforcement is a critical part of the journey.

Prosecutors are not traditionally seen offering encouragement to defendants in the courtroom. But attorneys like Jackle and Pent in our office's problem-solving courts reflect a broader role that supports rehabilitation and long-term public safety.

Jackle began making friendship bracelets to relieve stress while taking the bar exam. Now, the handmade tokens offer mental health court participants something tangible to hold onto as a reminder that they are not alone in what can be a difficult process.

These two attorneys set out to simply show a small gesture of encouragement. But these symbols of hope will be something these participants carry with them long after they leave the courtroom. Because sometimes the difference between giving up and moving forward is knowing someone believes in you.

The State Attorney's Office of the 13th Judicial circuit encompasses all of Hillsborough County, including the cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace and Plant City. The office staff consists of approximately 320 dedicated public servants including 130 prosecutors, as well as investigators, victim advocates and support staff. The office handles approximately 50,000 cases every year. To learn more about the organization or apply to become part of the team, visit www.sao13th.com.

BRCC ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS 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

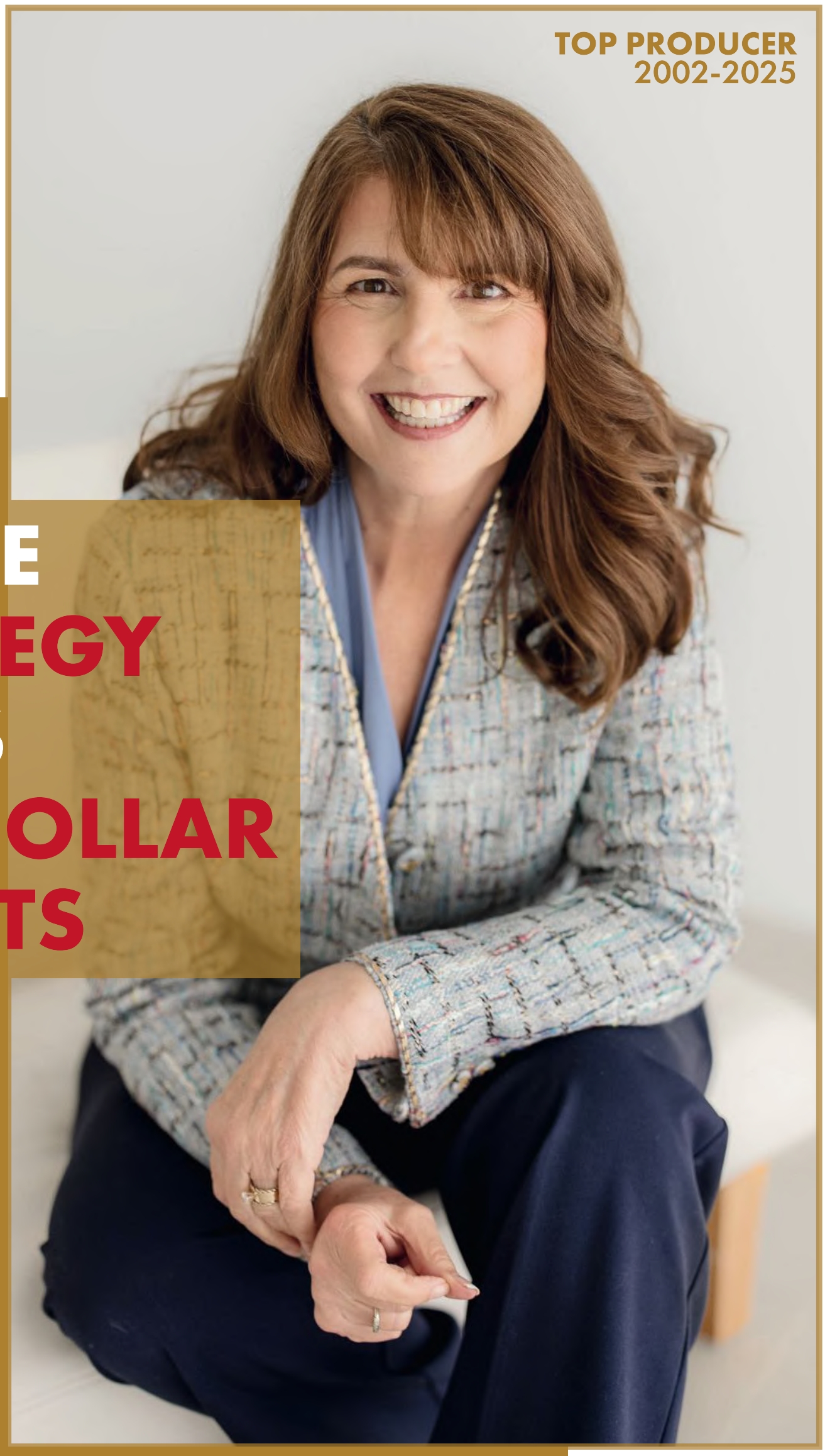
The Brandon Riverview Chamber of Commerce empowers businesses through opportunities for brand exposure, education and advocacy while fostering meaningful connections that strengthen the community and promote collaboration and growth.







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TAX COLLECTOR NANCY MILLAN HOSTS ANNUAL KIDS TAG ART CEREMONY

Staff Report

The Hillsborough County Tax Collector's Office rang in the spring season with a night of celebration, art and community, hosting the Kids Tag Art Awards Ceremony on April 15 at the Brandon Tax Collector's Office. Students, families, teachers and community supporters gathered to honor the young Hillsborough County artists whose original designs were selected as the award-winning artwork of this year's program.



Melina Fenton, a student at Apollo Beach K-8 received the Tax Collector's Choice Award for her license plate design.



Anabelle Webster is presented with a Sponsor's Choice Award for the Kids Tag Art program.

The ceremony marked a milestone moment for the program celebrating its fifth year. This program was brought to Hillsborough County by the Tax Collector Nancy Millan and her innovative partnership with Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) and the Hillsborough Education Foundation. At the ceremony, each student winner was recognized individually, receiving applause from a room filled with proud families, supportive educators, and community members who came to witness the next generation of Florida artists take their well-deserved spotlight.

"What makes Kids Tag Art so special is that it gives young artists something most programs can't — the chance to see their work live beyond a classroom wall," said Millan. "When someone chooses to put a student's design on a license plate, a mug or a keychain they carry every day, that's a powerful message to a young person about the value of their creativity. We want our students to know that Hillsborough County doesn't just celebrate the arts, we invest in the artists."

The Kids Tag Art program is also a meaningful community fundraiser. Proceeds from the sale of Kids Tag Art vanity license plates benefit arts education in Hillsborough County. Since its inception in 2021, the program has raised over $143,000 for local students. A final fundraising total for the program this year will be formally presented to the community and the Hillsborough County School Board in the coming weeks.

Community members who want to show their support for Hillsborough County's young artists can still purchase a Kids Tag Art specialty license plate through the tax collector's online store at www.hillstaxfl.gov/shop/. Every purchase directly supports arts education in our schools and puts a student's creative vision on display across Florida.

FRESH FINDS: RUSKIN FRESH MARKET HOSTS TWO-DAY ANNIVERSARY EVENT

By Emma Snider



The Osprey Observer team picked up fresh fruits, vegetables and had a tour of Ruskin Fresh Market.

Ruskin Fresh Market is honoring its beginnings as a small family-run business through celebrating with the community to thank them for all of their support.

Since their opening in 2024, Ruskin Fresh Market has been a community staple for fresh fruits and vegetables from Ruskin, other parts of Florida and across the United States. To celebrate its upcoming monumental occasion of two years in business,

"We are so grateful to the community for supporting us these past two years and hopefully many years to come," said Nicole Ferrera, a founder and CEO of Ruskin Fresh Market. "We are excited to continue expanding and always becoming better."

Ruskin Fresh Market started as an idea for a local community produce store by Nicloe and David Ferrera's father, David. With the need for a local produce store for the Ruskin community, the Ferrera family decided to open the Ruskin Fresh Market on April 26, 2024.

Aside from its anniversary, Ruskin Fresh Market held another event in April called Foodie Friday.

Ruskin Fresh Market continues to serve the community as a hub for all things fresh. From its delicious fruits and vegetables to its assortments of Amish jams, pretzels and chips, local Ruskin honey, milk and cheese and the new addition of local grassfed beef, Ruskin Fresh market is the perfect one-stop shop for all of you grocery needs.



Ruskin Fresh Market celebrates its two-year anniversary with a community weekend market featuring food trucks, local vendors and artisan goods April 25-26 at its Ruskin location.

For more information regarding Ruskin Fresh Market,, you can visit it on Facebook at www.facebook.com/p/Ruskin-Fresh-Market-61557238503209/ or at its storefront, located at 2619 14th Ave. SE in Ruskin.

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MEALS ON WHEELS EXPANDS TO APOLLO BEACH, CALLS FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Staff Report



Meals on Wheels of Tampa is expanding its reach into the Apollo Beach area, bringing critical meal delivery and companionship services to more homebound seniors and individuals in need. With the expansion comes an urgent call for additional volunteers, drivers, donors and recipients to help sustain and grow the program.

Each day, the organization prepares and delivers approximately 1,000 meals across Hillsborough County. For many recipients, the service provides far more than food.

"We nourish the body and our mission is delivered in the last mile by 1,400 volunteers," said CEO Mandy Cloninger. "The knock on the door is more than a meal; it's a daily check-in."

Its meals are designed to meet a variety of dietary needs, including heart-healthy, renal and diabetic options. Each recipient receives a daily hot meal along with a side dish, ensuring both nutrition and consistency. Currently, the organization operates 113 delivery routes and 18 distribution points throughout the county, including a pickup location at First Baptist Church of Riverview.

Despite the scale of the program, affordability remains a priority. Eighty percent of recipients pay less than $2.50 per meal, made possible through community donations and volunteer support. Meals on Wheels of Tampa is privately funded and does not accept direct government funding, relying instead on the generosity of local residents and organizations.

Beyond nourishment, the program addresses a deeper need — human connection. For many homebound individuals, a volunteer's visit may be the only interaction they have all day. These brief but meaningful encounters help reduce isolation, improve mental well-being and provide a vital safety check.

Founded in 1975 by Tampa resident Gloria Fuentes, the organization began by delivering just 14 meals. Today, it has grown into a cornerstone nonprofit, serving thousands while staying true to its mission of helping seniors maintain independence in their own homes.

As the Apollo Beach expansion begins, community involvement will be key to continuing that mission. Those interested in volunteering, donating or receiving services can learn more at the website at www.mowtampa.org.

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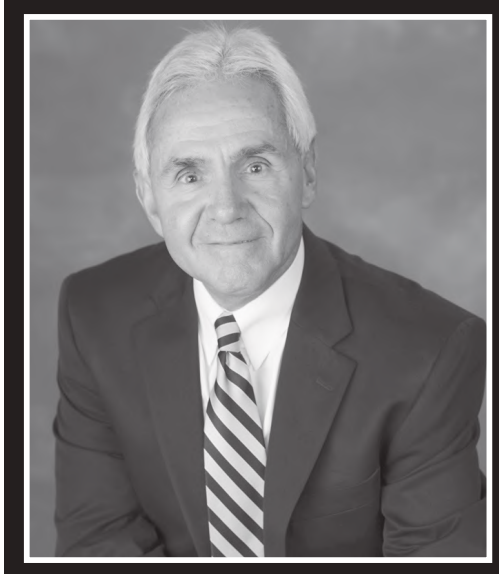
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CARDINAL ROOFING CO-OWNER BECOMES AN INDUSTRY PIONEER

By Madeline Gardner

For Bridget Jenkins, roofing is more than an occupation. Roofing is in her blood.



Bridget Jenkins (center) gathers with fellow members of National Women in Roofing, an organization which she co-chairs.

Cardinal Roofing, founded by her father, Roger Jenkins, in 1995, quickly became a major part of her early adult life. And when Bridget Jenkins sought a career-pivot, she became more involved with Cardinal Roofing, taking on every job within the company before obtaining her roofing license over 25 years ago. She has since earned her general contractor license and is now a co-owner of Cardinal Roofing, alongside her father and their partner, Chad Curchin.

Bridget Jenkins also serves as the first female president of the West Coast Roofing Contractors Association (WCRCA). The WCRCA is a local organization fostering collaboration between licensed roofing professionals. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the WCRCA, a moment she plans to highlight with a series of special events, including a fishing tournament in October.

She has also become a national influencer with the RoofersCoffeeShop (RCS), which serves as a hub for roofing professionals. The platform provides professionals with access to formal job postings and networking opportunities, as well as its RCS Influencer program, which Bridget Jenkins was invited to participate in.

"Of course, I said yes because I'm always up for a good conversation with people about, you know, my favorite topic, which is roofing and construction, because I'm a total construction geek," she said. "So, they started this program, and I, of course, jumped on board, and at the last convention they gave us little pins that said, 'RoofersCoffeeShop Influencer,' so I'm feeling pretty fancy. I've got an official pin for my lapel."

Reflecting upon her accomplishments, Bridget Jenkins cited the importance of pursuing your career passions.

"Jobs are great, but if you actually geek out about whatever your job is, it makes it so much easier. Construction is one of those jobs [where] nothing is ever the same. It's always different every single day, hour-to-hour, ... and I just love roofing," she said. "I just think it's fascinating. ... Just making sure that people feel safe in their homes. It's just one of those things that I was born into; it's in my blood, I was meant to be this person, so I'm just going to take it and run with it."

For more information on Cardinal Roofing, please visit www.cardinalroofingfl.com or call 813-689-7663. Cardinal Roofing is located at 1312 Orangewalk Dr. in Brandon.

HONORARY MAYOR CANDIDATES READY MONTH OF FUN EVENTS

Staff Report

In East Hillsborough, something special is about to begin. The Valrico Fish-Hawk Chamber of Commerce is getting ready for the 2026 Honorary Mayor's Race, a community-driven initiative designed to bring people together while raising funds for impactful local nonprofits.



Voodoo Brewing owner Chris Ciulla is working hard to support ECHO and Forgotten Angels.



Attorney Steve Glaros is supporting High 5 Inc., Raining Cats and Dogs Shelter and Sanctuary and Impact Program Inc.

The race will officially kick off on Monday, June 1, at 6 p.m., at Lake Michigan Credit Union (LMCU), located at 3467 Lithia Pinecrest Rd. in Valrico. People from across the area are invited to come, meet the 'candidates' and learn how they can take part. The event will mark the start of a month filled with fun activities, all created to raise money for good causes.

The race concludes on Tuesday, June 30, with one final event scheduled for Monday, July 13, at 6 p.m., at The Boulevard at FishHawk, located at 15260 FishHawk Blvd. in Lithia, where the community will gather again to celebrate a month of creative fundraising and community engagement and announce the 2026 Honorary Mayor of East Hillsborough County.

Two participants are leading the way this year, and both are focused on helping others.

Steve Glaros is supporting High 5 Inc., Raining Cats and Dogs Shelter and Sanctuary and Impact Program Inc. His events include a Mayor's Summer Splash Bash, Music Bingo, a Chef Soiree and Online Auction and even an 'Amazing Race.' Each event is meant to bring people together while helping youth, families and animals in need. Glaros said he joined the race to "strengthen the community and make a difference."

Chris Ciulla is also working hard to support important groups. He is raising money for ECHO and Forgotten Angels, both of which serve vulnerable individuals and families in the community. His campaign includes Boot Scootin' Bingo, a 'Sit, Stay & Sip' pet-friendly event, a Mayoral Royal Casino Night and a Chris Rocks the Vote Music Festival. Ciulla wants everyone to join in, saying, "There is something for all ages to enjoy while helping others."

This race shows what can happen when people work together. Every dollar raised goes straight to local charities. That means real help for families, children, and others who need support.

For more information, you can visit the candidates' Facebook pages @GlarosForMayor and @ChrisforMayor2026.







EXPRESS OIL CHANGE & TIRE ENGINEERS OPENS NEW LOCATION

By Olivia Clark

A new automotive service option has arrived in Riverview with the opening of Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers. The new location is designed to provide convenience, efficiency and comprehensive vehicle care for local residents, eliminating the need to navigate heavy traffic along Big Bend Road for routine maintenance and repairs.





Express Oil Change owner Jeremy Persinger.

Owner Jeremy Persinger said the decision to open in Riverview was driven by a clear need in the community.

"We wanted to give customers a more convenient location to service their vehicles and avoid the congestion on Big Bend Road," said Persinger.

The facility offers a wide range of services, combining speed with full-service automotive care. Customers can remain in their vehicles for oil changes completed in less than 15 minutes while also having access to more extensive services, including tires, brakes, alignments, diagnostics, electrical work and major engine and transmission repairs.

What sets the business apart is its ability to deliver both quick oil changes and comprehensive automotive services under one roof. According to Persinger, this dual capability is unique within the market and designed to meet the varying needs of busy customers.

The opening also represents a broader impact beyond automotive services. Persinger emphasized that the new location brings job opportunities to the area while contributing positively to the local economy.

Community involvement is already a priority. The business is sponsoring Sumner High School, located nearby, and continues to support pediatric cancer initiatives through 'Round Up' programs. Persinger has also served as a board member with the National Pediatric Cancer Foundation for nearly 20 years, supporting clinical trials for children across the United States.

To celebrate the grand opening, customers can take advantage of promotional offers, including 50 percent off any oil change when using an Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers card and 25 percent off future oil changes with the card.

Additional conveniences include no appointment requirements for oil changes, same-day service on most repairs and Saturday hours for those unable to visit during the workweek. The location also stocks more than 1,000 tires to meet a wide range of vehicle needs.

Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers is located at 13131 U.S. 301 S. in Riverview. For more information, call 813-677-4000 or visit www.expressoil.com.

BREASTFEEDING SUPPORTS BOTH MOM AND BABY

Staff Report



Lactation consultant Janna Aaron of AdventHealth Riverview supports a new mother during a breastfeeding session, highlighting the health benefits and resources available to help moms and babies establish a successful feeding routine.

As a new or experienced mom, you've likely heard that 'breast is best' when feeding your child. If you can, only breastfeeding your baby for the first six months is considered the best option. And it's even better if you can keep offering breast milk at least until their second birthday.

Although breastfeeding can be difficult at first, it offers several benefits for your baby and you. Talking with a lactation consultant can make the process easier so you can enjoy the advantages breastfeeding offers.

"When you choose to breastfeed your baby, you put them on a path for a healthier life. It's also a choice that boosts your health and well-being," said Janna Aaron, lactation consultant with AdventHealth Riverview. "Our lactation consultants are here to answer your questions and help you and your baby settle into a relaxed breastfeeding routine."

Your breast milk is your baby's superfood — it meets all their nutritional needs. It also has antibodies that boost their immune system and lower their risk of many health conditions, like ear infections, diabetes, lung problems, allergies and childhood cancer. When you breastfeed, you get some of the same benefits. Your risk of breast, ovarian, uterine and endometrial cancer drops, and you're less likely to develop diabetes, high blood pressure or osteoporosis.

"The benefits of breastfeeding go beyond health improvements, though," Aaron said. "It's a free, convenient way to feed your baby. It's always the right temperature, and it's always available. You never have to pack supplies, so it's easy to satisfy a hungry baby when you're on the go."

With AdventHealth, you have four convenient ways to get the breastfeeding guidance you need. You can register for one of its breastfeeding classes, join a weekly Baby Bunch class for moms with babies under 12 months old, schedule a one-on-one consultation at any of its locations or call its breastfeeding support warmline for in-the-moment advice.

Call 656-233-5404 to learn more about our classes or to schedule a consultation with one or AdventHealth's lactation consultants.



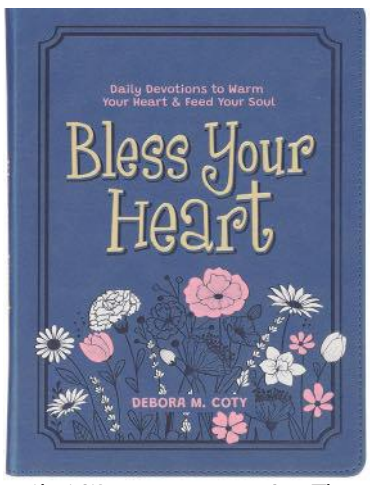
TOO BLESSED TO BE STRESSED AUTHOR LAUNCHES NEW DEVOTIONAL SERIES

By Olivia Clark

Debora Coty has spent two decades helping women trade burnout for peace through a blend of biblical truth, practical strategy and humor. The Central Florida author and inspirational speaker is best known for the *Too Blessed To Be Stressed* brand, a collection of more than 35 products that includes books, devotionals, journals, planners, a cookbook and calendars. Coty stated that the series has sold over 2 million copies.



Debora Coty is a Central Florida author and speaker known for the Too Blessed To Be Stressed series and her new devotional, Bless Your Heart: Daily Devotions to Warm Your Heart & Feed Your Soul.



"Many women sprint along on the just-get-it-done treadmill with no inkling how to get off," said Coty. "That's the goal of all my Too Blessed To Be Stressed books, ... to offer practical tools and strategies for dealing with stress so that it's manageable, not crushing."

Coty's perspective is shaped by a long career as an occupational therapist specializing in orthopedics. She said physicians referred patients to her for help with managing injuries and pain tied to constant stress. Coty pairs work simplification techniques and therapeutic suggestions with Scripture and what she calls "lots of giggles" to address stress physically, spiritually and emotionally.

"I love it that my books have been called 'biblical truth gift-wrapped in humor,'" Coty said. "I believe that laughter is a catalyst for releasing the joy of the Lord in our spirits."

That approach carries into her newest release, *Bless Your Heart: Daily Devotions to Warm Your Heart & Feed Your Soul*, a 365-day devotional that marks the start of a new series. Coty said she stepped away from steady writing after 2019 amid years of family loss and health challenges.

"The gal who encouraged others to look for the funny couldn't see any funny anywhere," she said.

Coty said a publisher later approached her about writing another yearlong devotional, a project she initially declined. After revisiting a Corrie ten Boom quote about attempting something so big it would fail without God's help, Coty began writing again. The manuscript took 18 months, she said, and ultimately drew interest from multiple publishers.

Coty hopes the devotional reaches "the woman who feels like she's alone, frightened, confused, miserable and exhausted," she said, adding that men have also told her they read her short entries in the bathroom.

Coty continues her long-running Grace Notes column, with pieces scheduled for February, March and April.

THE NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES ARE COMING TO TAMPA AND ARE WELCOMING VOLUNTEERS

By Emily Harper

This year's National Veterans Golden Age Games will be held in Tampa from Saturday, June 27, to Thursday, July 2. This is the first time the games have been brought to Tampa, and they will bring over 1,400 veterans along with their families to the city.



Photo credit: The US Department of Veterans Affairs. Photos from the 2025 National Veterans Golden Age Games.



The Golden Age Games began in 1985 to support veterans ages 55 and older to stay active through sports. Now going into their 40th year, the games have grown into one of the Department of Veterans Affairs' premier adaptive sports programs, focused on healthy aging and rehabilitation.

These games highlight the importance of health, wellness and honoring those who served. Veterans will have the opportunity to choose from 21 different sports, including swimming, golf, pickleball and track and field, to compete in over the span of the week.

In preparation, veterans are able to benefit from year-round rehabilitation and fitness programs at their local Department of Veterans Affairs facilities. This allows them to engage in physical activity while gaining confidence in their abilities.

"What makes the Golden Age Games special is that it's not just about competition. At its core, it is about connection, community, recovery and showing veterans that it's never too late to stay active and rediscover purpose," stated Brittany Hook, director of the games.

Volunteers contribute significantly to the success of this event. They assist with operations, help guide participants, support competitions, manage check-in and ensure that the veterans have a safe and positive experience for the duration of the games.

The games invite anyone who wants to support their veterans to volunteer. For students who volunteer, the organization supports the verification of their time for their extracurricular requirements. However, the games encourage students to check with their school or organization for confirmation in the activity.

To sign up, individuals can go to their website, https://40goldenagegames.mytrs.com/ and complete the volunteer registration form.

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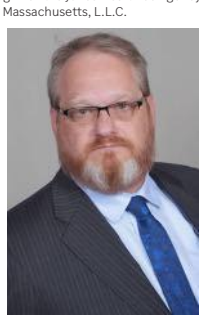
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PERSONAL CARE AT THE HEART OF SUN CITY CENTER FUNERAL HOME

By Olivia Clark



Staff members at Sun City Center Funeral Home provide compassionate, personalized care to families in the community.

Sun City Center Funeral Home has built its reputation on providing compassionate care and personalized services for families during some of life's most difficult moments. Since becoming part of Foundation Partners Group in January 2017, the funeral home has maintained its family-oriented atmosphere while continuing to serve the community with dignity and respect.

Established with a mission centered on honoring each life, Sun City Center Funeral Home focuses on guiding families through the grieving process with understanding and support. Nicole Sharp, funeral director, emphasized the organization's commitment to thoughtful service.

"Our mission has always been to honor each life with dignity, respect and meaningful tribute while supporting families with guidance and understanding every step of the way," said Sharp.

What distinguishes the funeral home is its deep connection to the local community. Its staff actively participates in organizations such as the Sun City Center Rotary, the Southshore Chamber of Commerce and the Daughters of the American Revolution, while also supporting causes including the Walk to End Alzheimer's and the Out of the Darkness Walk.

"We take the time to listen and understand each family's wishes, ensuring every service reflects the unique life being honored," said Sharp.

Sun City Center Funeral Home offers a full range of services, including traditional funerals, memorial services, cremation options and celebration of life gatherings. Personalization plays a central role, allowing families to incorporate meaningful elements such as music, hobbies, cultural traditions and special tributes.

In addition to its general services, the funeral home takes pride in honoring veterans. With a former member of the military on staff, it assists families in securing military honors, coordinating with national cemeteries and incorporating patriotic elements into services.

"It is a true honor to serve veterans and their families," said Sharp.

Beyond services, the team remains committed to supporting families long after arrangements are complete, offering guidance, resources and a compassionate presence.

"We want residents to know that we are here not only in times of loss, but also for pre-planning and guidance or simply for a cup of coffee and a chat," said Sharp.

For the staff, the most meaningful aspect of their work is helping families find comfort during difficult times.

Sun City Center Funeral Home is located at 1851 Rickenbacker Dr., Sun City Center, FL 33573. For more information, call 813-279-8330.

NOTICE OF ACTION FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

CASE NO: 26-DR-002049
DIVISION B-P
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

To: Jean Max Antoine

YOUR ARE NOTIFED that an action of dissolution of marriage has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Gerana Thegenis, whose address is 13130 Garnet Raspberry Ave., Wimauma, FL 33598 on or before May 12, 2026 and file the original with the Clerk of this Court at 800 East Twiggs Street, Tampa, FL 33602, Room 101 before service on Petitioner or immediately thereafter. If you fail to do so, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition.

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ABSOLUTE SURGICAL HOSTS FREE ADVANCED WELLNESS SEMINAR MAY 12

Staff Report

Residents of Sun City Center and the surrounding Southshore communities are invited to an upcoming wellness seminar designed to showcase new, non-surgical options for improving strength, mobility and overall quality of life.

Absolute Surgical Specialists will host a VIP Wellness Event on Tuesday, May 12, from 3 to 6 p.m. at its Cypress Village Boulevard location. The seminar will feature live demonstrations, educational discussions and hands-on opportunities to learn about emerging medical technologies now available locally.



The event will be led by Dr. Craig E. Amshel, who founded Absolute Surgical Specialists in August 2005 after completing general surgical training in Phoenix, serving as an Army surgeon during Desert Shield and finishing a fellowship in colon and rectal surgery in Miami. Since opening his practice in Sun City Center, Amshel has remained dedicated to serving the Southshore community with fast, high-quality gastrointestinal surgical care.

A hallmark of his practice is efficiency and accessibility, guided by his philosophy: "Your time is just as important as my time." Patients are typically able to schedule appointments within a week and are seen promptly upon arrival, reflecting a patient-centered approach that has defined the practice for more than 20 years.

During the seminar, attendees will learn about Emsculpt Neo, a non-invasive treatment that simultaneously builds muscle and reduces fat while improving circulation, strength and range of motion. The technology is also FDA-approved to help address joint and back pain by enhancing muscle performance and reducing atrophy.

The event will also highlight Emsella, a breakthrough pelvic floor treatment that uses high-intensity electromagnetic energy to strengthen muscles affected by incontinence and other conditions.

Dr. Amshel's practice continues to expand with the growing community, including the addition of an in-house surgical suite in 2017 at 1046 Cypress Village Blvd. This allows procedures such as colonoscopies, endoscopies and select surgeries to be performed more efficiently and cost-effectively than traditional hospital settings.

Adding to the community-focused atmosphere, Local Brew Company will offer complimentary tastings during the event. The neighboring business, known for its craft beverages and welcoming environment, reflects the seminar's emphasis on connection, education and local partnership.

Attendees will also have access to live demos, consultations, event-only pricing and free swag. Reservations can be made by calling 813-633-0081 or visiting www.Absolutesurg.com.

TRAX FEDERAL CREDIT UNION EXPANDS SCHOLARSHIPS, LOANS & TOOLS

By Emma Snider



Trax Federal Credit Union has been a proud member of Central Florida for decades. From Scholarships and loans to credit services and financial education courses, Trax is a one-stop shop for your financial needs.

Trax Federal Credit Union offers many services for a variety of financial needs. To begin, Trax offers three different scholarships for their customers. Any Trax member, from high school seniors to college and trade school students, is eligible to apply for one of its three scholarships. The Trade/Vocational Scholarship offered by Trax aims to provide its recipients with $500 to further their education. The Trax Academic Scholarship provides a sum of $1,000 to incoming and collegiate-level recipients. Finally, the Giorgianni Legacy Scholarship, named after Trax Federal Credit Union's former CEO, Pete Giorgianni, for his contributions that shaped the current youth program, awards one outstanding recipient with $2,500. Trax aims to support its members in their professional developments through financial aid.

"We're proud to serve our members not just as a financial institution, but as a trusted partner on their financial journey" said Chelsea Smith, marketing manager at Trax Federal Credit Union. "Our focus is on giving members the tools and flexibility they need to move forward at every stage of life, with products designed around their needs."

In addition to Trax Federal Credit Union scholarships, Trax offers a wide range of loans to its members, including student loans, credit builders, auto loans, mortgages and HELOCs. With Trax's current HELOC campaign, lasting until Tuesday, June 30, members who get a HELOC will be eligible to receive rates as low as 3.99 percent APR for the first six months of their loan term. Also, with one of Trax Credit Union's unique credit cards, members can experience competitive rates and no annual fees.

With Trax Federal Credit Union's introduction of its SavvyMoney credit service, members can monitor their credit report daily, set goals, track progress towards credit goals and receive personalized loan offers based on their credit score right from the mobile app. Additionally, Trax members have access to the free digital financial education courses, which cover topics such as saving for a big purchase, budgeting and retirement planning.

To learn more about Trax Federal Credit Union scholarships and services, visit www.traxcu.com.







PROJECT I CAN RECEIVES $575,000 GRANT FROM US REP. KATHY CASTOR

Staff Report





U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor and dignitaries presented a $575,000 ceremonial check to Adonai's Second Chances, Inc. supporting the expansion of the Project I Can youth program.

Adonai's Second Chances, Inc. (ASCI), Hillsborough College, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, the Tampa Police Department, Mt. Zion AME Church of Riverview and youth advocates gathered on Sunday, April 12, to celebrate the award of a $575,000 grant from the Justice Department for Project I Can (PIC).

The Honorable Kathy Castor, a member of the United States House of Representatives, presented the ceremonial check to ASCI. Castor had continued to advocate for her district and the residents of Hillsborough County by securing resources to support local communities. A longtime supporter of youth initiatives, she noted that the grant would provide expanded opportunities in partnership with Hillsborough College, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, the Tampa Police Department and Hillsborough County.

Project I Can (PIC), a mentoring and leadership program offered by Adonai's Second Chances, a program of Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church in Riverview, designed to help youth ages 12 to 20 make positive choices and decisions in their daily lives. The program focused on education, leadership, self-confidence, guidance and the exploration of life choices, all aimed at developing the next generation of leaders.

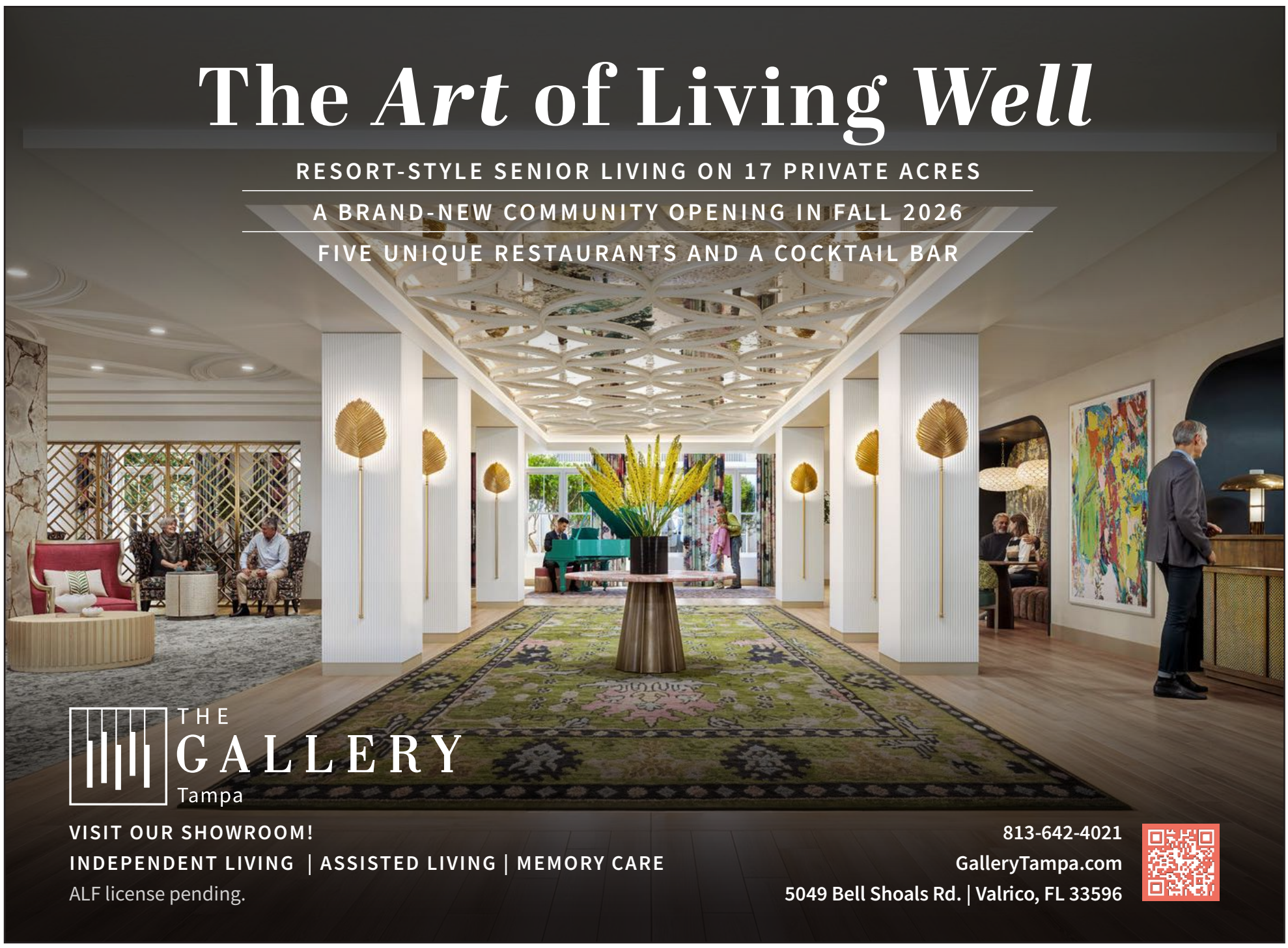
The award allowed for the expansion of the program to serve additional youth in the community. ASCI officials said announcements would be made when the application process opened.

The ceremonial check presentation took place at 3 p.m. at Mt. Zion AME Church, located at 5920 Robert Tolle Drive in Riverview.

Adonai's Second Chances, Inc., incorporated in 2018, had served children and families throughout the Tampa Bay area. The organization's mission focused on providing comprehensive solutions to the economic, educational, social and housing needs of youth and families, while ensuring each participant recognized their value and their right to second chances and opportunities in life. Visit www.ascbuildingfutures.com.







HCA URGENT ER BREAKS GROUND ON BOYETTE ROAD IN RIVERVIEW

By Brian Bokor





HCA Florida Brandon Hospital has broken ground on a new freestanding emergency department at 12910 Boyette Rd. in Riverview, expanding emergency care in one of the fastest-growing areas of southeastern Hillsborough County.

The site, formerly home to the Ace Golf driving range, sits along the busy Boyette Road corridor connecting Riverview to Lithia and FishHawk, an area experiencing steady residential growth.

Hospital leaders, first responders and community members gathered for the April 1 ceremony, underscoring the increasing demand for emergency services across South County.

"This is more than just a 13,000-square-foot building. It's more than a $19 million investment. It represents the commitment to meeting the needs of the community," said Tripp Owings, CEO of HCA Florida Brandon Hospital.

The project builds on the hospital's legacy of serving the community since 1977 and is part of HCA Florida Healthcare's broader statewide network.

When complete, the 13,000-square-foot facility will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with 11 treatment rooms and full-service emergency care, including on-site laboratory services, X-ray and CT imaging.

Rescue Chief Todd Carnell of Hillsborough County Fire Rescue said the new location will improve emergency response.

"They have everything you need in the first few minutes or hours of your emergency. Then they have the ability to transfer you to the hospital by their own ambulance, leaving us available once again," Carnell said. "They bring community medicine back into the community."

Manager of Emergency Services Anna Hendrix, a U.S. Navy veteran and former emergency room nurse, said the project also carries personal significance.

"I live just minutes from here. As a mother, knowing there will be a trusted emergency department nearby gives me peace of mind — the kind every parent hopes for when their child needs help quickly," Hendrix said.

Vice President of Emergency Services Nealy Kinnison emphasized the broader impact.

"These expanded emergency services will save lives in the community by being closer to home for the tens of thousands of residents," Kinnison said.

Freestanding emergency departments provide full-service care, allowing patients to be evaluated and stabilized locally before transfer to a hospital if additional treatment is required.

During the ceremony, Lt. Levic Allen was recognized on his retirement after 34 years with Hillsborough County Fire Rescue.

The new ER adds needed capacity in a rapidly growing area where demand for emergency services continues to rise.

HCA Florida Healthcare operates more than 650 affiliated sites of care statewide, including hospital campuses, freestanding emergency rooms, urgent care centers and physician practices.

COUNTY HOSTS MEETINGS TO HELP SOUTH COUNTY HOMEOWNERS APPLY FOR REPAIR ASSISTANCE

Staff Report

Hillsborough County is holding a series of community meetings throughout the county over the next few weeks to help residents apply for assistance to repair their homes under Affordable Housing Services' Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program.



The first five of the eight community meetings were held in April, and the remaining three will be held in May. Hillsborough County Affordable Housing Services staff will be at each of the meetings to help residents complete and submit their application.

The Hillsborough County Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program is designed to ensure low, very low and moderate-income Hillsborough County families have the opportunity to live in safe, decent and sanitary homes. This is not a home remodeling program but rather a program aimed at assisting the community with immediate needs for rehabilitation due to the condition of the home. The countywide initiative utilizes the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) program to rehabilitate the homes of residents who live in unincorporated Hillsborough County, Plant City and Temple Terrace. The City of Tampa has its own rehabilitation program.

The program provides financial assistance to homeowners who cannot afford to bring their homes into compliance with the Florida Building Code or make other necessary repairs affecting life, health, safety and accessibility. There are income restrictions, and the program focuses on single-family homes that have been homesteaded as a primary residence for at least two years.

Application forms will be available at all the meetings and are also available online at https://hcfl.gov/oor. Residents who cannot attend the meetings and do not have access to a computer can call 813-635-1610 to have an application mailed to them. The meetings will be held on the following dates and times:

- Friday, May 1, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Town 'N Country Library Community Room, located at 7606 Paula Dr. in Tampa.
- Thursday, May 14, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Gardenville Recreation Center, located at 6219 Symmes Rd. in Gibsonton.
- Wednesday, May 20: 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Balm Park and Community Center, located at 14747 Balm Wimauma Rd. in Wimauma.

Eligible funding may be used for:

- Roof repair or replacement.
- Failure of electrical, plumbing or HVAC systems.
- Failure of structural systems, such as floors and structural walls.
- Exterior/interior deterioration (walls, foundation, porches, siding, etc.).
- Water heater replacement.
- Accessibility improvement (ramp, widening doorways, countertops, bathroom and kitchen modifications, etc.).
- Lead-based paint remediation or other environmental issues.
- Weatherization activities (doors, windows, air conditioning, roofs, insulation and energy-efficient appliances).

Demolition-reconstruction may be offered for homes whose repairs exceed 50 percent of the appraised value according to the property appraiser valuation.

For more, email affordablehousingservices@hcfl.gov or call 813-635-1610.

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 **Design-Forward Landscapes** located at **5118 Tari Stream Way,** in **Hillsborough County,** in the city of **Brandon, FL, 33511. Kay Giordano** intends to register said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida

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SURVIVOR LEADS LOCAL EFFORT FOR BLOOD CANCER UNITED

Staff Report

For Riverview resident Craig Beckinger, life is measured in two chapters: before cancer and after. Now a survivor, Beckinger is turning his personal journey into purpose as he campaigns for Blood Cancer United's 2026 Visionary of the Year, raising critical funds to support local families battling blood cancers.



Beckinger is the founder and CEO of ABC Event Planning.

Beckinger, representing Tampa Bay and North Florida as an All-Star Visionary candidate, said his diagnosis reshaped everything.

"Priorities became clear. Time felt fragile. And survival became deeply personal," he shared. "Surviving didn't just give me a second chance — it gave me a responsibility to help others facing the same fight."

His campaign carries an added layer of meaning this year. Beckinger is dedicating his efforts to the memory of Jill Jofko, his 2023 campaign manager, who passed away from cancer on February 3. He described her as selfless and deeply committed to helping others, saying her legacy continues to inspire the work.

Through Blood Cancer United, funds raised stay within the local community, providing treatment assistance, transportation to chemotherapy, emergency financial support, support groups and patient resources, as well as funding for lifesaving research and advocacy.

In 2023, Beckinger's campaign raised more than $150,000 — a milestone he hopes to build upon this year with the help of community support and a series of upcoming fundraising events.

One of the highlights is the fifth annual 'Runway for a Cause' fashion show, scheduled for Saturday, April 25, from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at Aloft Midtown, located at 3650 Midtown Dr. in Tampa. The event will feature spring and summer fashions provided by Dillard's, along with appearances by local personalities, including Babs and Meredith from Wild 94.1, Miss Tampa Halle Burton and Mrs. Universe USA Ambassador Amber Uhler. The brunch and silent auction fundraiser is expected to draw strong community participation.

Additional fundraising efforts include raffle opportunities, such as a $1,000 lottery board featuring scratch-off tickets and a Powerball drawing, as well as a premium 4.5-liter bottle of Jameson Irish whiskey imported from Dublin, Ireland. Winners will be announced during a Facebook Live drawing in mid-May.

The campaign will culminate with a grand finale event at the Motor Enclave, located at 6500 Motor Enclave Way in Tampa, on Friday, May 15, at 7 p.m.

"Every dollar represents hope for a family walking through one of the hardest seasons of their lives," he said.

Beckinger is the founder and CEO of ABC Event Planning. Contact him at 561-876-6845 or email cab92807@gmail.com.

TESSERA SENIOR COMMUNITY REIMAGINED AS AMBIANCE AT BRANDON

By Marie Gilmore

A familiar senior living community in Brandon is entering a new chapter under new ownership, bringing a refreshed vision while maintaining its longstanding commitment to care.

Now known as Ambiance at Brandon, the community formerly operated as Tessera of Brandon continues to offer assisted living and memory care services for seniors, including those living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Providence Senior Living is a private company, backed by senior housing developers, that functions as an owner/operator of senior living communities exclusively in Florida. Thanks to the new ownership, Ambiance at Brandon is now locally owned and managed. It believes senior care is meant to be hands-on and that every life it touches is a member of its family.

That's why it carefully chose its team members for its passion and senior living backgrounds. Its team has more than 75 years of assisted living and memory care management experience combined, residents are known from the top down and its executives are integrated into daily operations. It is committed to serving residents in a manner that aligns with its Providence Senior Living pillars: love, empowerment, excellence and purpose. With new leadership in place, the goal is to blend enhanced amenities and updated programming with a resident-centered approach that prioritizes individual preferences and daily routines.

The transition reflects a broader investment in elevating both the environment and experience for residents and their families. Community leaders said the focus remains on creating a supportive, engaging atmosphere where residents can maintain independence while receiving personalized assistance when needed.

Residents at Ambiance at Brandon have access to a range of services designed to simplify daily life and promote well-being. These include restaurant-style dining across multiple venues, weekly housekeeping and laundry, scheduled transportation and help with activities of daily living. On-site therapies and a fitness center featuring specialized HUR equipment are also available to support physical health.

Beyond essential services, the community emphasizes lifestyle and connection. Residents can spend time outdoors on landscaped patios, relax under a gazebo, stroll through garden paths and take part in recreational activities such as bocce ball, pool and putt-putt golf. Social opportunities and structured activities are designed to encourage engagement while respecting each resident's pace and interests.

Jill Andrew, marketing director, said the transition represents "new owners, same heart," emphasizing continuity in care alongside thoughtful improvements.

Located at 1320 Oakfield Dr., the Brandon community invites prospective residents and families to visit, meet staff, and explore whether the updated Ambiance lifestyle is the right fit.

Ambiance at Brandon is located at 1320 Oakfield Dr. Brandon. For more information, visit www.ambiancebrandon.com.

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Compiled by Jenny Bennett
jbennett@ospreyobserver.com

South Bay Genealogical Society Meeting

The South Bay Genealogical Society meeting on Tuesday, May 19, will be held at the South Hillsborough Elks Lodge No. 2672, located at 1630 S. U.S. 41 in Ruskin. An optional roundtable discussion begins at 10:30 a.m., followed by a sit-down luncheon at 12 Noon. At 1 p.m., its guest speaker, Debbie Smyth, will present 'Probate Records: Looking Beyond the Will.' The cost is $18 per person, which includes the meal and presentation. For reservations and meal selection, call Vicki at 360-608-1647.

Safe Families For Children Music Bingo

Join Safe Families for Children on Friday, May 15, for its music bingo fundraiser. The event will take place at Wellspring Church, located at 705 Ninth St. SE in Ruskin, with doors opening at 6 p.m. and bingo starting at 6:30 p.m. Come early to get your table. Bingo is $25. Southern BBQ LLC will be serving meals, with all proceeds benefiting Safe Families for Children. Along with music bingo, there will be raffles and other prizes. This event is sure to be fun for anyone.

Beth Israel Honors New Members At Special Sabbath Service

Beth Israel will honor its new members at its Sabbath service on Friday, May 22, at 7:30 p.m. in Beth Israel's sanctuary, located at 1115 E. Del Webb Blvd. in Sun City Center. New members have been assigned parts in the service, and each will be given a gift from the membership committee. The public is welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served. For information on attending this special service or to become a member of Beth Israel, contact Pam at membership@jcscc.org.

Apollo Beach Woman's Club Celebrates Spring Fashion

The Apollo Beach Woman's Club (ABWC) brought color, style and camaraderie to its April 8 luncheon with a Spring Fashion Show held at the Ruskin Moose Lodge 813, located at 1212 Shell Point Rd. in Ruskin. The special event featured nine club members modeling spring fashions from the Teal Turtle Boutique, a popular shop located in Apollo Beach. Each model selected her own outfit, with the opportunity to purchase it at a discounted price. The showcase proved to be a hit, with several attendees leaving the boutique with additional purchases. The fashion show added an energetic and festive element to the luncheon, drawing enthusiastic applause from the audience.

School Board Member Honored With Distinguished Leader Award



Hillsborough County School Board Member Patti Rendon has received the Distinguished Leader Award from the Florida School Boards Association (FSBA), recognizing outstanding leadership and a commitment to effective school board governance that supports student success.

The Distinguished Leader Award recognizes board members who demonstrate dedication to professional learning, leadership development and governance excellence. Recipients must first earn both the Certified Board Member (CBM) and Advanced Certified Board Member (ACBM) designations through FSBA.

"School board members who earn this award go above and beyond in their commitment to effective governance and public service," said Tina Pinkoson, director of leadership services for the Florida School Boards Association. "By earning the Distinguished Leader Award, member Rendon demonstrates outstanding leadership, a commitment to continuous learning and a lasting positive impact on students, schools and their community."

The Florida School Boards Association is the statewide professional association representing Florida's 67 elected school boards.

A Bunch Of Little Things

Are you prepared? Join Jean Ryan, in conjunction with the OSHER Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of South Florida, and learn how to organize important information your loved ones will need in case of an emergency. The presentation covers organizing essential personal information, medical and emergency contacts as well as financial and legal documents to create a simple system that your family can access, which in turn provides you with peace of mind. The presentation is free and will take place at Bloomingdale Regional Public Library, located at 1906 Bloomingdale Ave. in Valrico, on Saturday, May 16, from 10-11:30 a.m. Email jean@abolt.rip to reserve your seat.

Catsino Night Fundraiser For A Kitten Place

Join A Kitten Place for its inaugural Catsino Night on Friday, June 5, at Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association in Brandon. The event is presented by the Fuddy Fund and will be an unforgettable evening supporting A Kitten Place and all the lifesaving work it does for kittens and cats in need. Tickets are $75 and include casino-style gaming, food, beverages and a fun, high-energy night with fellow animal lovers. Tickets are available at https://akittenplace.org/events/.

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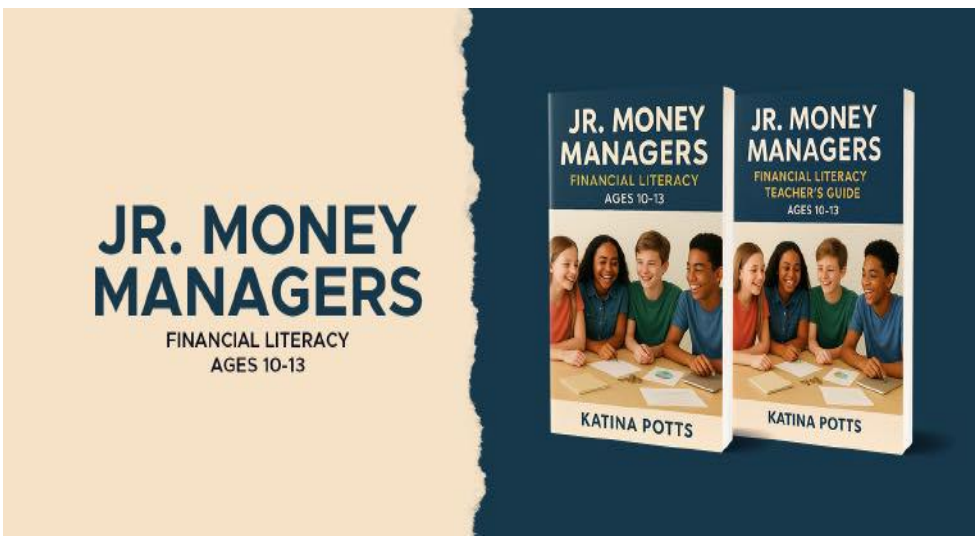


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JR. MONEY MANAGERS LAUNCHES TWO-DAY SUMMER FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKSHOP FOR YOUTH

Staff Report



Parents and youth leaders looking for a meaningful, skill-building summer experience now have a powerful new option. Jr. Money Managers, a dynamic financial literacy program, is offering a two-day summer workshop designed for children ages 9-13, equipping them with real-world money skills in a fun, engaging environment.

Led by Katina Potts, a former personal financial advisor and former financial analyst, this workshop goes beyond theory to teach practical financial habits that children can apply immediately. With a strong background in finance and a passion for education, Potts brings both expertise and relatability to every session.

What sets Jr. Money Managers apart from traditional summer camps is that the workshop comes directly to homeschool groups, churches and youth organizations, creating a convenient and personalized learning experience in a familiar environment.

Participants will engage in interactive lessons covering:

- Budgeting and money management.
- Saving and goal setting.
- Smart spending habits.
- Real-life financial decision-making.

The program requires a minimum of six students and delivers nine to 10 hours of instruction over two days, ensuring both depth and engagement.

The cost is $75 per student, which includes the cost of the books. For nonprofits with 10 students or more, it is $50 per student.

This workshop is designed to give young learners a strong financial foundation early in life, helping them build confidence, responsibility and lifelong money management skills. The workbooks are also a companion set (teacher and student editions) available for purchase on Amazon.

To schedule a workshop or learn more, contact Potts at 813-863-1047 or katinapotts@gmail.com.

HILLSBOROUGH COLLEGE UNVEILS NEW BRAND IDENTITY AND LOGO

Staff Report

Hillsborough College has unveiled a refreshed brand identity featuring a new logo, updated visual system and an enhanced college seal. The new brand reflects a thoughtful modernization of the college's image, designed to better represent the institution's growth, purpose and long-standing connection to the community.

"Hillsborough College's new branding captures the spirit of the college today: student-centered and deeply connected to the community," said Dr. Kenneth Atwater, Hillsborough College president. "The design honors our past while offering a more modern look at who we are, what we offer and where we're going. It underscores our commitment to expanding opportunity, advancing academic excellence and staying responsive to the evolving needs of our community."

The new brand identity was developed in partnership with Sensory 5 and Trickey Jennus, which incorporated feedback from college leadership, faculty, staff and students to create a refreshed look that reflects the college's mission and values. The updated system blends modern design elements that bring the brand forward with intentional references to the college's legacy visuals, resulting in a more cohesive and contemporary identity that honors the institution's foundation.

"Our visual identity is often the first way people experience the college, and this refreshed brand helps us tell our story with greater clarity and confidence," said Angela Walters Eveillard, executive director of marketing and public relations at Hillsborough College. "It introduces a more modern look while still echoing familiar elements that connect back to our history. Together, those qualities create an identity that feels current, authentic and true to who we are today and moving forward."

Hillsborough College offers more than 200 academic options, including a Bachelor of Science in nursing, associate in arts and associate in science degrees, college credit certificates, postsecondary adult vocational certificates, advanced technical diplomas and certificates as well as continuing education and lifelong learning courses.

The new brand aims to unify how these opportunities are presented across print, digital and physical spaces, providing a consistent experience for students, faculty, staff and community partners.

The rollout includes updated signage across campuses, new digital assets, refreshed print materials and a cohesive visual system that will be incorporated into student communications, outreach materials and community engagement initiatives.

Hillsborough College serves more than 46,000 students annually at its five campuses located throughout Tampa Bay. For more information, visit www.hcfl.edu.

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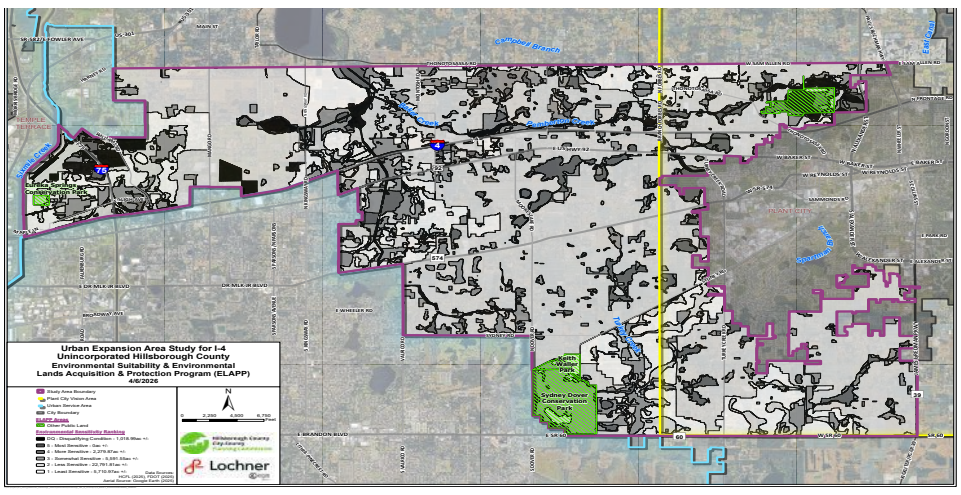
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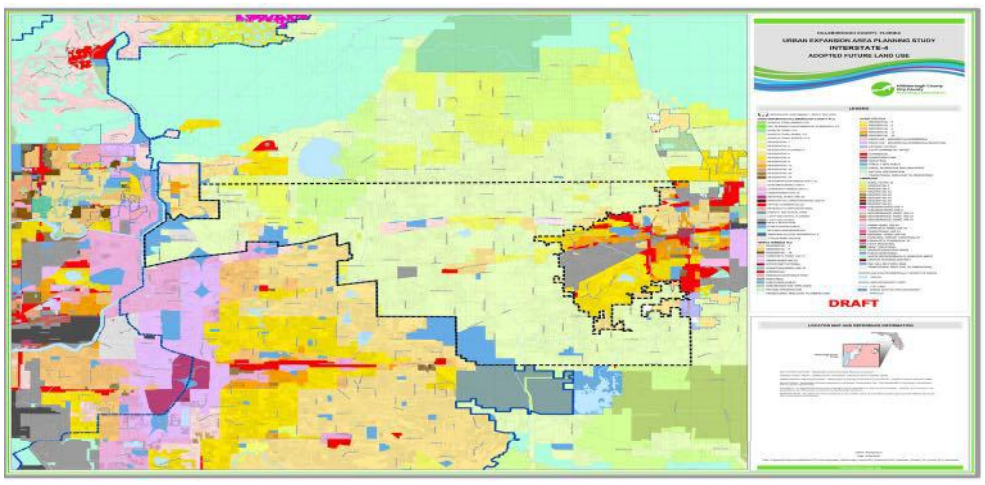
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COUNTY'S PLANNERS MAP POTENTIAL 800 PERCENT GROWTH ALONG I-4

By Brian Bokor





As Hillsborough County's Urban Service Area (USA) begins to reach its long-term capacity, the Planning Commission has initiated a high-stakes study that could redefine the rural landscape stretching from Thonotosassa to the Plant City line.

The I-4 Corridor Urban Expansion Area Study covers 35,000 acres of what is currently rural land consisting of strawberry fields, cattle ranches and two-lane roads. During a recent virtual meeting, planners made the case that this area, long protected from high-density building, is now the county's primary solution for handling its projected growth.

The core driver of this study is a policy mandate established in 1993. By law, the county must maintain enough land within the Urban Service Area to handle 80 percent of all new growth. The USA is essentially a utility boundary that dictates where the county provides city-style infrastructure, such as central water, sewer and high-density transportation.

However, as available land within those boundaries shrinks, current projections show that the county could fall below the required growth threshold by 2040. To get ahead of the curve, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) directed staff to evaluate expansion zones in South Little Manatee and the I-4 Corridor.

The I-4 Corridor forecasts are striking. While the area currently adds 71 households per year, the County calls for 576 annually by 2050. That is an 800 percent acceleration — an eight-fold jump that creates a massive disconnect between these projections and the reality of our two-lane rural roads and existing services.

This pressure is complicated by shifting markets. Demand for office space has tanked with up to 20 percent vacancy, but industrial and logistics demand remains very strong. With prime I-4/I-75 access, developers are eyeing our Residential-1 agricultural land for large-scale warehouses and distribution centers, even though most residents still rely on private wells and septic systems.

To manage this transition, planners are proposing a nodal development strategy. Under this philosophy, higher-intensity growth would be concentrated in specific nodes, primarily located near existing highway interchanges like Mango Road, McIntosh Road and Branch Forbes Road. The goal is to cluster commercial and industrial uses in these hubs, theoretically allowing the county to preserve the rural character and environmental sensitivity of the land in between.

A central part of the early findings is a new environmental scoring system used to determine the feasibility of this expansion. Planners are aggregating data on floodplains, wildlife habitats and water resource sensitivity to determine which land is most sensitive for development.

Using a color-coded scale, floodways and highly sensitive habitats are marked for protection, while white and light-colored areas are seen as the most feasible for expansion. This data will be critical as the county moves into Stage 2 Land Use Workshops this summer, where the actual lines on the map will begin to be drawn.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the expansion remains the infrastructure and the associated costs. The study area is currently a utility desert by urban standards, and bringing central water and wastewater to 35,000 acres is a massive, multimillion-dollar endeavor.

Furthermore, the transportation network is comprised mostly of narrow rural roads that are already feeling the pinch of traffic. While road-widening projects are slated for major arteries like State Road 60 and I-4, the internal collector roads remain a major point of contention.

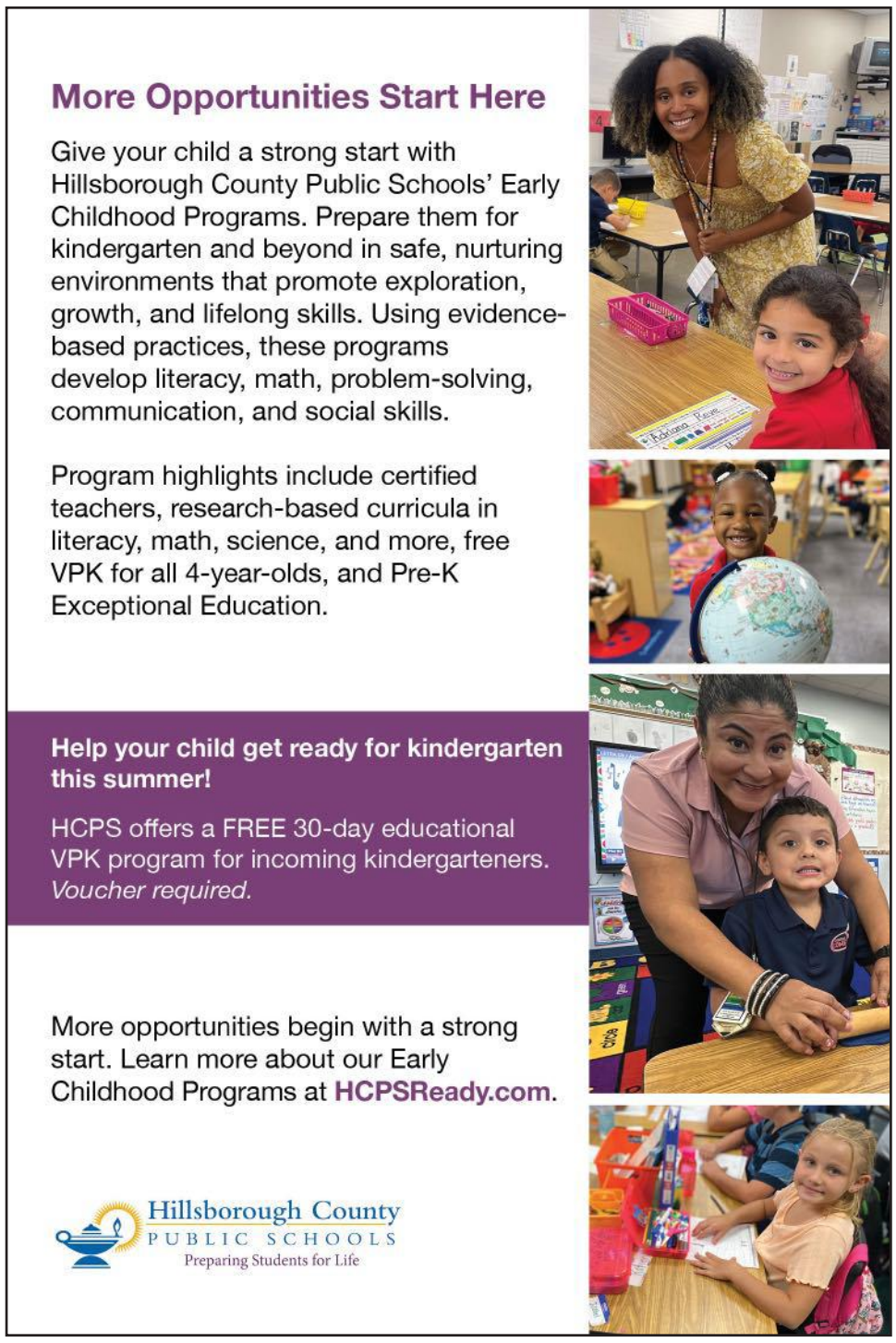
A focus of the study's scope involves reviewing fees and funding sources, leaving residents to wonder if new development will pay its own way through impact fees or if the financial burden will fall on the broader taxpayer base.

This study is only in the first of a four-stage process, and planners are emphasizing that no final decisions have been made. The Planning Commission is utilizing a community asset mapping tool that allows residents to go online and identify what they value most, from historic sites to scenic views, which they believe should be off-limits to developers.

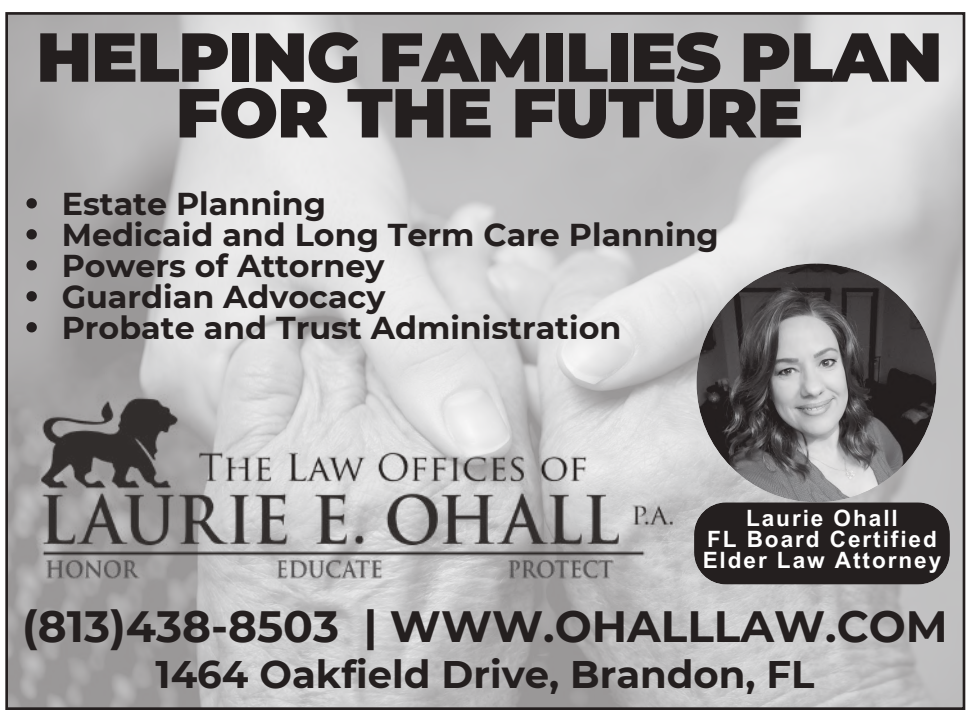
"We want to understand what the community wants before we go about recommending expansions," the project team stated during the presentation.

The study is scheduled to conclude in the fall of 2026, when final recommendations will be sent to the Board of County Commissioners. For more information and to take the stage-one survey, residents can visit the website directly at https://planhillsborough.org/.

Detailed data slides and a full recording of the virtual meeting can be found via the project's YouTube channel or by visiting the I-4 Corridor section at the website www.planhillsborough.org/.









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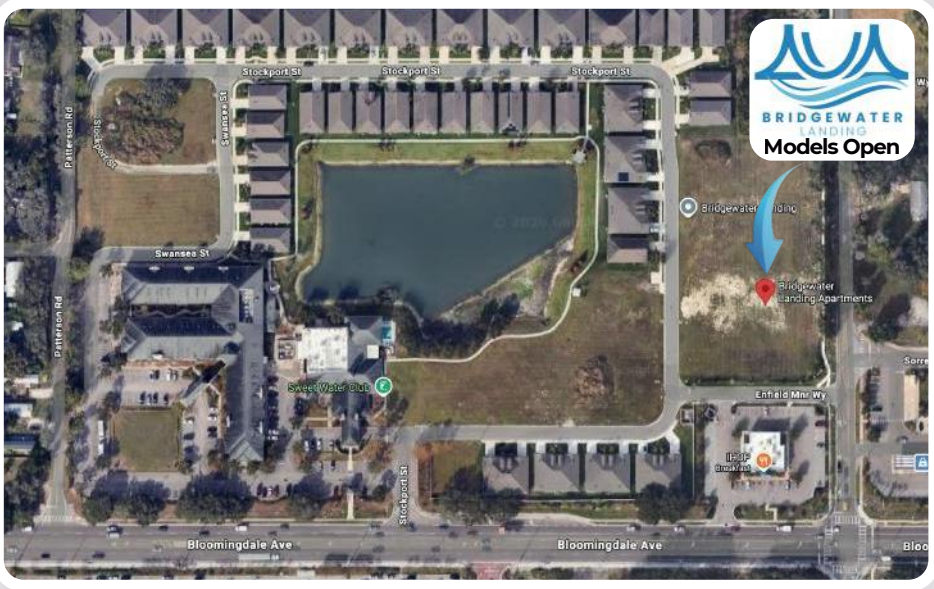
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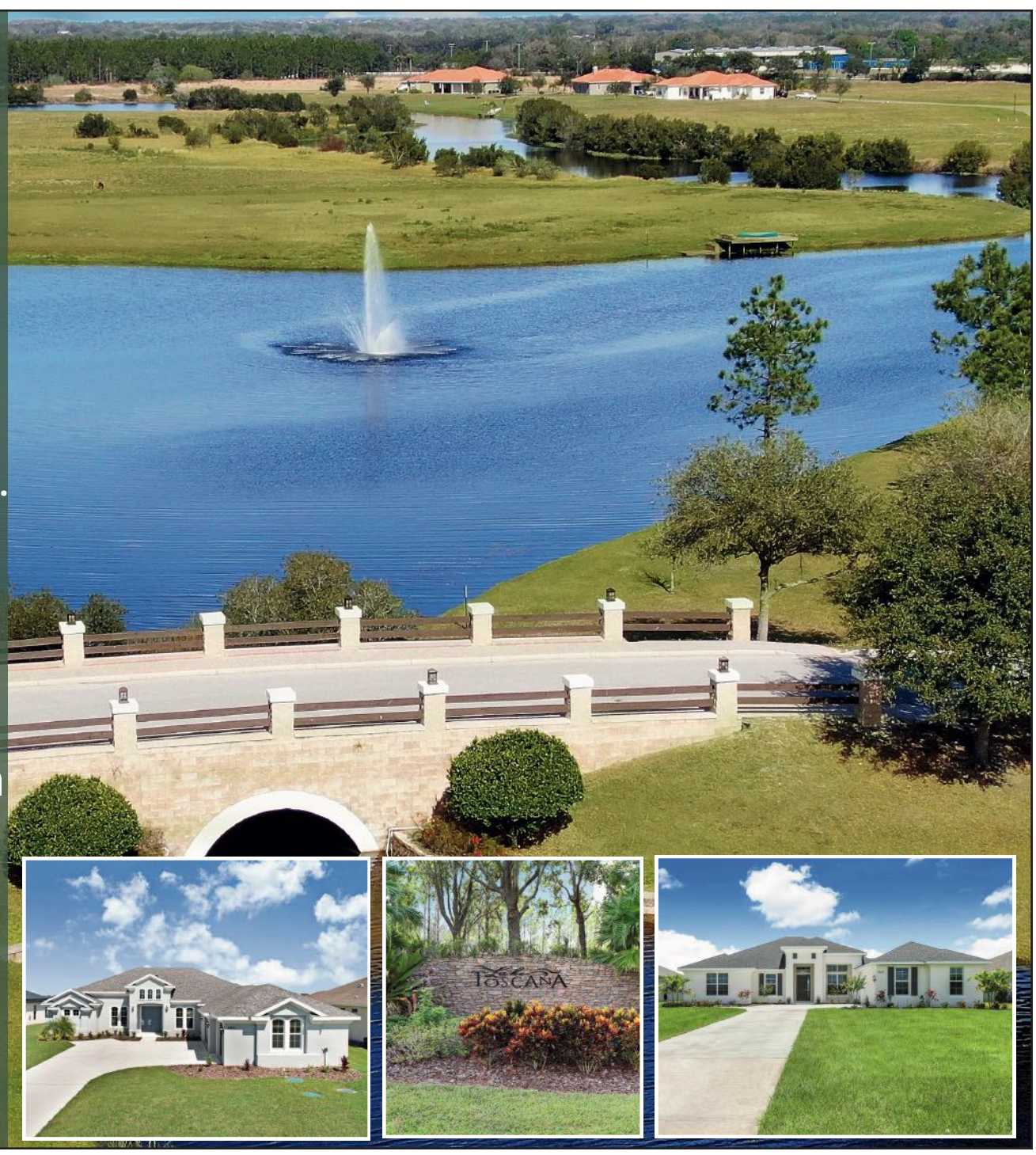
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76 Fence Continues Expansion



76 Fence has announced its largest multiterritory commitment in Florida to date: seven territories awarded to Tom and Kate Donnelly. Tom Donnelly brings leadership and operations management experience, while Kate Donnelly contributes expertise in business administration and client relations. Together, they are building a family-operated fencing business designed to scale across multiple territories.

76 Fence provides top-quality gates and fences for home and business owners in the local community. With years of experience in the fencing industry, it has established a reputation for delivering high-quality personalized fencing solutions.

For more information, visit https://76fence.com/tampa.

Shadetree Apartments Is More Than A Place To Live — It's A Place To Belong

SHADETREE

From the moment you arrive, you'll feel the sense of community that sets Shadetree Apartments in Ruskin apart. Residents enjoy fun and engaging events, on-site food trucks, and thoughtful experiences that make Shadetree a place people are proud to call home for the long term. At Shadetree, you'll find a perfect balance of peace, comfort and connection. Every space is designed to help you slow down, recharge and truly feel at home. It's proudly pet-friendly; with two spacious dog parks, dog water fountains, outdoor pet washing stations and plenty of room to run and play, your four-legged family members are just as welcome here as you are. Whether your lifestyle is active, laid-back, social or somewhere in between, Shadetree Apartments fits your rhythm. Schedule a tour at www.shadetree.apartments, meet its friendly team and experience firsthand why life at Shadetree isn't just lived — it's enjoyed.

Summer Athlete Training Program At Fitness Forge



This summer, Fitness Forge, located at 13456 Boyette Rd. in Riverview, is offering a discounted program for local student athletes ready to level up. Its training is built around real results — strength, size, speed and durability. Athletes will follow a structured strength program using proven lifts like squats, bench press and Romanian deadlifts to increase power and performance. For muscle growth, it tracks progress using Styku 3D body scans, giving athletes real data on their body composition throughout the summer.

Injury prevention is a priority. It incorporates mobility, flexibility and stability training to keep athletes healthy and performing at a high level. On the indoor turf, athletes will train speed, agility and explosiveness with drills that directly translate to sport.

Proper nutrition is also coached — what to eat before, during and after competition.

The goal is simple: to leave stronger, faster and more prepared than ever.

Visit its website at www.fitnessforge2025.com for more information.

BODYBAR Pilates

BODYBAR PILATES

BODYBAR Pilates offers contemporary, high-intensity, low-impact reformer Pilates classes designed to strengthen, tone and improve flexibility for all fitness levels. Its classes focus on endurance and core strength, and it offers 14 reformers per studio with various class types. BODYBAR's goal is to offer supportive community environment where you can get an energizing and fun workout.

BODYBAR Pilates is located at 10437 Gibsonton Dr. in Riverview. Visit its website at https://bodybarpilates.com/studios/riverview for more information on the classes offered.

Sunset Estate Liquidations

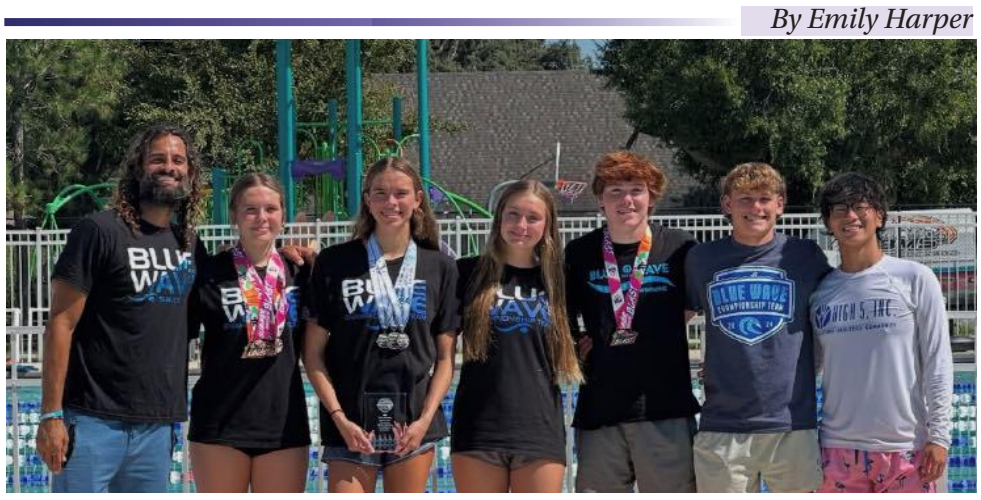
Founded in 2026, Sunset Estate Liquidations was created to support seniors and their families during important life changes, particularly during estate transitions. Recognizing a need for trustworthy, streamlined services for estate sales, it built the company to provide guidance every step of the way. Sunset Estate Liquidations takes a personalized approach to every project, tailoring its services to meet the unique needs of each client during their estate transition, whether it involves conducting an estate sale or managing a professional estate liquidation.

Sunset Estate Liquidations is located at 4057 Forecast Dr. in Brandon. Call 813-460-1647 or visit its website at https://sunsetestateliquidations.com/ for additional information.



MEET PETERKIN: HIGH 5, INC AQUATIC DIRECTOR AND FORMER OLYMPIAN

By Emily Harper



Jamie Peterkin is the aquatics director and head coach of Blue Wave Swimming at High 5 Inc. He started with the organization almost five years ago as the head age group coach. Since then, he has worked his way up to the roles he holds today.

Peterkin was born in Barbados and raised in Saint Lucia. Growing up in the Caribbean, he has many memories of going to the beach, being outside and playing different sports. At age 16, he was awarded an Olympic Solidarity scholarship for swimming at Pine Crest High School in Fort Lauderdale and was coached by Jay Fitzgerald.

Two years later, at age 18, Peterkin was selected to represent Saint Lucia in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. There, he and his teammate, Sherri Scobbie Henry, became the first male and female swimmers to represent Saint Lucia at the Olympics.

"This opportunity sparked my desire to give back to my country, and it guided me to become a swim coach, as well as being raised by a swim coach, my dad, David," said Peterkin.

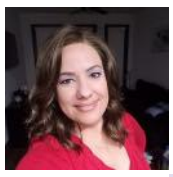
He started to coach in 2007, which opened up many more opportunities for him to represent his country. He became Saint Lucia's national team coach and eventually returned to the Olympic stage as a coach.

Because of his reputation in the swimming world, he was invited to provide live broadcast commentary for the swimming events of the 2008 and 2010 Olympics for the Caribbean. Additionally, Peterkin hosted several sports radio shows in Saint Lucia, along with a weekly show with his father called AquaScope, to promote aquatic sports and safety. Now, he co-hosts a podcast called Cinco Squad with his close friends, which he has been doing for the past four years.

Peterkin uses his past experiences in the sports world, specifically swimming, to succeed in his role with High 5 Inc. He strives to not only be a caring coach but also to build camaraderie within his program, creating a second family for his athletes.

"Coaching isn't for the faint of heart, but getting to really know these families and kids and becoming part of their life beyond the pool is awesome," said Peterkin.

For more info on swim and aquatic programs, visit www.high5inc.org/



CAN YOU REMOVE SOMEONE FROM YOUR WILL?

By Laurie E. Ohall, Florida Board-certified Elder Law Attorney



It's a question that comes up more often than you might think. Relationships change. Families experience conflict, estrangement or circumstances that make you reconsider who should inherit from your estate. If you're wondering whether you can remove someone from your will, the short answer is yes, but how you do it matters enormously.

You Have the Right To Change Your Mind

In Florida, you have the legal right to revise your will at any time while you are alive and mentally competent. That includes removing a beneficiary entirely, reducing what someone receives, or restructuring your estate plan to reflect your current wishes.

What you cannot do is simply cross out a name or write changes in the margins and call it done. Informal alterations like that are not legally valid and can create serious problems for your family down the road.

The Right Way To Remove Someone

The proper way to update your will is to execute a new will or a codicil, which is a formal amendment to an existing will. Your new document should clearly revoke prior versions to avoid any confusion about which version controls.

You may be surprised to learn that simply not mentioning someone in a new will isn't always enough — particularly when it comes to children. Florida law has specific protections for overlooked or 'pretermitted' heirs, meaning a child who isn't mentioned may still have a legal claim to a portion of your estate. Intentional exclusions need to be handled carefully and explicitly.

What About Spouses?

Removing a spouse is more complicated. Florida's elective share law gives a surviving spouse the right to claim a portion of your estate regardless of what your will says. And if you have a house in Florida, there are specific rules about who you can leave it to if you are married.

Don't Forget the Rest of Your Plan

A will is only one piece of your estate plan. If you've named someone as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy, retirement account or transfer-on-death account, those designations pass outside of your will entirely. Updating your will without reviewing your beneficiary designations can leave assets to someone you intended to exclude.

If your relationships or circumstances have changed, your estate plan should reflect that.

Laurie Ohall is a Florida board-certified elder law attorney practicing in Brandon, Florida. She has been practicing law for 30 years and her practice is focused on estate planning, elder law planning and probate. Ohall is licensed to practice law in Florida and Ohio.



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SAFETY AND BOATING TIPS HIGHLIGHT SAFE BOATING WEEK IN RIVERVIEW

Staff Report



National Safe Boating Week returns from Saturday through Friday, May 16-22, marking the annual kickoff of the Safe Boating Campaign, a global effort encouraging boaters to enjoy the water responsibly. This week serves as a reminder for all boaters to refresh their safety skills and prepare for the upcoming season.

Flotilla 74, Brandon, will support the campaign with two local events at Williams Park, located at 9425 U.S. 41 S. in Riverview:

• Free Vessel Safety Checks on Sunday, May 17.

• Hillsborough County Marine Safety Event on Friday, May 22, 9 a.m.-12 Noon.

According to U.S. Coast Guard statistics, drowning accounts for three out of four recreational boating fatalities, and 87 percent of those who drowned were not wearing life jackets. Choosing the right life jacket — U.S. Coast Guard approved, activity-appropriate and properly fitted — is one of the simplest ways to stay safe on the water.

Top safety tips from the National Safe Boating Council:

• Take a boating safety course. Training options are available for all experience levels.

• Check your equipment. Schedule a free vessel safety check to ensure required gear is present and working.

• File a float plan. Share your itinerary, passenger list, vessel details and communication equipment with someone on shore.

• Wear a life jacket — every time. A stowed life jacket cannot save a life.

• Use an engine cut-off switch. It's the law and prevents runaway vessels if the operator falls overboard.

• Monitor the weather. Check forecasts before and during your trip.

• Stay aware. Know your surroundings, speed zones and navigation hazards.

• Never boat under the influence. Designate a sober skipper.

• Keep communication devices on hand. Carry more than one option that works when wet.

The Safe Boating Campaign is funded through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund and administered by the U.S. Coast Guard. Free and paid educational resources are available at https://safeboatingcampaign.com/.

The National Safe Boating Council, established in 1958, continues to lead national efforts in boating safety education and professional development. Learn more at www.safeboatingcouncil.org.

GASWORX DISTRICT PLANS LIVE NATION MUSIC VENUE WITH SEATING FOR 4,300

Staff Report



KETTLER, a nationally recognized real estate investor, developer and property management company, recently announced plans to deliver a 4,300-capacity music venue within the Gasworx district. The venue will be operated by Live Nation and is designed to complement Tampa's growing live music ecosystem while honoring the unique culture, energy and historic character of Ybor City.

The planned midsize venue is slated to open in late 2028 and will provide an intimate setting capable of hosting a wide range of artists and performances, filling a gap in Tampa's live entertainment landscape. The venue will attract touring artists and strengthen the broader music scene across the Tampa Bay region. Located on North 15th Street near the future marketplace, the site is steps from the Seventh Avenue entertainment corridor, the Centro Ybor parking garage and a future TECO Streetcar stop along Channelside Drive.

"Ybor City has a distinct character and a long tradition of nightlife and live music," said James Nozar, president of development at KETTLER. "Our goal is to create a venue that carries that legacy forward by adding a new destination for residents, visitors and artists. It will bring a distinct atmosphere to the neighborhood and give people another reason to experience Ybor and stay longer."

"We're proud to partner with KETTLER to bring this venue to life," said Brittany Flores, Live Nation's Florida market president. "This project is a meaningful investment in Tampa and in the future of its music scene, growing the market and giving fans more of the shows they want close to home. We're building something that reflects the energy and history of Ybor City and helps grow Tampa as a destination for live music."

As a long-term investment in the community, the venue is designed to strengthen the local economy and support continued growth. The venue is projected to generate $80 million in annual economic impact while drawing visitors who will support nearby restaurants, hotels and local businesses. It will also support approximately 440 jobs and is expected to contribute roughly $6 million each year in state and local tax revenue. The venue will also be available for private and corporate events.

"This investment reflects the strong momentum and confidence behind Tampa Bay's economy," said Craig J. Richard, president and CEO of the Tampa Bay Economic Development Council.

Upon completion, Gasworx will deliver approximately 5,000 new residences, over 500,000 square feet of new trophy office space and 120,000 square feet of ground-floor retail, including a 28,000-square-foot marketplace opening in 2027 that will feature restaurants, market-style offerings and unique retail, along with a new 1-acre park as a central gathering space for residents and visitors.

Gasworx is a joint venture between KETTLER, local developer Darryl Shaw and international property company PPF Real Estate.

For more information on Gasworx and leasing, visit https://gasworx.com/.





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EIGHT LENNARD SENIORS CONTINUE FOOTBALL CAREERS AT COLLEGE LEVEL

Photos & Story By Shanise "Nisey" Spruill



Ronnie Willson
Culver Stockton College





Malik Hope
FAMU



London Green
Valdosta State University



Jaxon Shuman
Mass. Maritime Academy



Jaiden Jones
Missouri Southern State



Dorian Burns
William Penn University



Calvin Mobley
Bryant University



Charles Mcdaniel
St. Thomas University

The Lennard High School football program is celebrating a milestone moment as eight members of its Class of 2026 senior team have officially committed to continue their academic and athletic careers at the collegiate level.

The group represents a cornerstone class for head coach Karingus Benton and his staff, who began building the program three years ago. From the coach's perspective, this senior class holds special significance—not only for what they accomplished on the field, but for how they helped shape the culture of the program from its early stages of development.

Coach Benton said this group played a major role in elevating Lennard football, helping establish expectations and demonstrating that student-athletes from the program can successfully transition to the next level.

"This senior class has been meaningful in a way that stands out," Benton shared, noting their growth both on and off the field. He emphasized that their leadership helped set the tone for younger players and contributed to building a stronger, more unified team identity.

Among the signees, London Green will continue his career at Valdosta State University after setting a school record for career touchdown receptions, leaving a lasting mark in Lennard's record books.

Calvin Mobley earned a full athletic scholarship to Bryant University, a Division I program, recognized for his standout performance and dedication.

Jaxon Shuman will attend Massachusetts Maritime Academy, where his relentless work ethic and drive were described by coaches as a model for others in the program.

Jaiden Jones, who will play at Missouri Southern State University, was highlighted as the emotional leader of the team—often described as the "heart and soul" who helped hold the group together over multiple seasons.

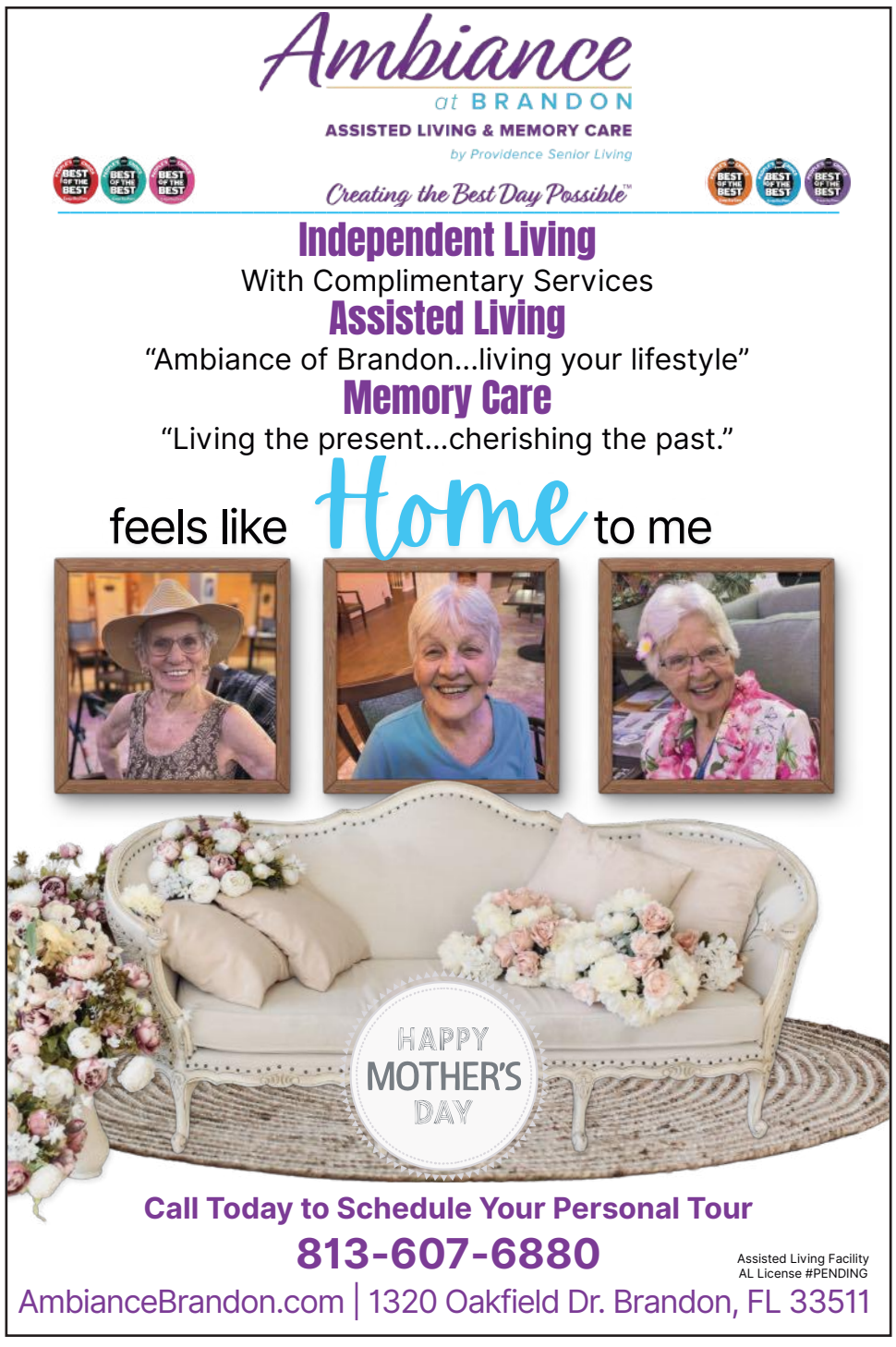
Charles McDaniel, who transferred to Lennard during his junior year, will continue his career at St. Thomas University and was credited with strengthening team bonding and leadership.

Malik Hope, headed to Florida A&M University, joined the program during his junior year and quickly became a strong teammate and mentor to younger players.

Ronnie Willson, who will attend Culver-Stockton College, transferred in during the spring of his junior year and earned respect for his consistent work ethic and leadership on the field.

Dorian Burns, bound for William Penn University, was part of the program's earliest group under the current coaching staff and helped lay the foundation for what the team has become today.

Together, the eight athletes represent both the history and the future of Lennard football—proof of a program that has grown through persistence, development, and a shared commitment to excellence.







TIPS FOR STRESS-FREE TRIPS WITH AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND ADULTS



As we head into the warmer months, many families start thinking about vacations, staycations and simply getting out to enjoy life a little more. For families like ours, traveling with an autistic loved one can feel overwhelming at times. But I want to encourage you to travel, make memories and truly enjoy the experience.

The key is preparation ... and a little flexibility.

Start with what you know works best for your loved one. Familiar items can make a big difference. Pack their favorite snacks, comfort items like blankets or toys and anything that helps regulate or calm them. If your child or adult thrives on routine, try to keep parts of that routine consistent, even while away.

Think ahead about your environment. If you're staying in a hotel, request a quieter room. If you're going somewhere new, look at photos online or talk through the experience ahead of time so it feels more predictable.

Plan your days, but don't overplan them.

Build in breaks. Allow time to rest. Know that not everything will go exactly as planned, and that's OK. Some of our best memories have come from the moments we didn't expect.

One thing that has helped our family is having a 'backup plan.' If something becomes overwhelming, we pivot. Maybe that means stepping outside, taking a car break or even calling it a day early. Success doesn't mean doing everything; it means everyone feeling safe and supported.

And let's be honest, there may be moments. Loud moments. Uncomfortable moments. Moments where you feel like all eyes are on you. I've been there. Take a breath. Give yourself grace. You are doing your best, and that is more than enough.

Most importantly, don't let fear stop you from living life.

Our families deserve joy. Our loved ones deserve experiences. And we, as parents and caregivers, deserve to make memories alongside them.

If you're looking for support, resources or community connection along the way, there are organizations like Experienced Autism Alliance here to help families navigate the journey. Learn more at https://autismalliancefl.org/.

So, whether it's a big trip, a weekend getaway or just a day out in your own community, go for it. Prepare, stay flexible and embrace the journey.



HURRICANE AWARENESS: PREPARE AND STAY SAFE



Hurricanes are powerful and destructive natural disasters that can cause significant damage to communities, infrastructure and the environment. Understanding hurricanes, how they form, their potential impacts and the importance of preparedness can help reduce the risks they pose to individuals and communities.

The Dangers of Hurricanes

While hurricanes are known for their strong winds, they can cause a variety of dangerous effects:

1. Strong Winds: Winds can cause buildings to collapse, trees to fall and power lines to snap, as well as flying debris.

2. Flooding: Heavy rainfall can lead to flash flooding and river flooding, submerging roads, homes and infrastructure.

3. Storm Surges: A storm surge occurs when strong winds push seawater onto the land, causing coastal flooding and damage, often the most deadly aspect.

4. Tornadoes: Hurricanes can spawn tornadoes, which can further increase damage and risk.

5. Power Outages: Power can be out for up to seven days.

6. Food Shortages: With the lack of power, stores are closed, refrigerators no longer work and transportation of food becomes difficult.

Preparing for a Hurricane

Proper preparation can save lives and reduce property damage. The SouthShore Disaster Council is hosting two hurricane preparedness symposiums, one on Saturday, May 30, at 10:30 a.m. at Calvery Church, located at 1250 E. College Ave. in Ruskin, and the other on Thursday, June 11, at 10:30 a.m. at Sun City Center United Methodist Church, located at 1971 Haverford Ave. in Sun City Center.

Please attend one of these informative presentations, which will include HCFR, HCSO, local utilities and other catastrophe and disaster preparation and recovery resources. Learn your evaluation zone, how to prepare your home, how to deal with evacuations and how to shelter in place.

Conclusion

Hurricanes are among the most powerful and destructive natural disasters, but with proper awareness, preparation, and action, the risk they pose can be minimized. Educate yourself and make a plan.





Christian Voice



Grace Notes

Rooting for the Underdog
By Debora Coty

"Behold, the winter is past... The flowers have already appeared in the land... and the vines in blossom have given forth their fragrance" (Song of Solomon 2:11-13 NASB).

Interest in flowers peaks in the springtime, when in most regions of our fair country, flowers pop up and burst forth with fragrant blooms that tickle our various fancies.

Here in Florida, though, the state named for its incredible flora and fauna, spring sprang back in February, and the blossoms are now struggling to keep from shriveling up to beef jerky status in the daily 90-degree heat.

Despite sprouting in a blast furnace, the amazing, wee crocus has recently captured my attention. No, not despite it, because of it.

These lovely delicate-appearing but stalwart-in-constitution little underdogs are not to be denied – they pop up everywhere. Like a surprise blessing from the Master Creator. A relative of the iris and the source of saffron (the priciest spice in the world), many survive in blazing sun-drenched places where wind or rain has blown their sturdy little seeds to reach out in propagation glory.

The determined crocus puts up with everything nature and mankind bombards upon it and keeps smiling.

Reminds me of another underdog who happens to be a real dog. My rescue pup Laz the Resurrection Dog, so named because his heart stopped beating for several minutes until he was miraculously resuscitated. Laz has tolerated a lot of blast furnace stuff during his lifetime, including abuse, abandonmen and yes, even death.

Yet Laz puts up with everything that comes at him and keeps smiling.

I want to be more like that. When a blast of life's heat hits me, I want to grow, not grouse. To weather it, not wither. To smile, not grimace. I want to keep striving, not roll over and play dead.

We all root for zealous underdogs and persevering crocuses, don't we? Rocky Balboa; Cinderella; the tortoise racing the hare; Ru-dy, Ru-dy! So, I'm thinking that Papa God has a special place in His heart for underdogs who keep pressing on despite the oppressive heat blasting their way. Would that be you, my friend? What heat blasts have you endured lately?

Debora M. Coty is an inspirational speaker and award-winning author of over 40 books, including the bestselling Too Blessed to be Stressed series. Visit with Debora anytime at www.DeboraCoty.com.

ENTERING MY 70S ON TWO WHEELS!



"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint," (Isaiah 40:31).

We are now almost one month into both my new decade (the 70s) and my 'shall I — shan't I?' dance with riding a bicycle. The 70s, of course, are inevitable; the biking is something I still have to decide.

Little by little I have been breaking myself in. This week, I skipped one day and then, Wednesday and Thursday, did my first 8-mile effort. I pushed it pretty hard but finished the ride convinced I have been making progress.

Friday morning, I agreed to an outing with 'the biker gang' and they showed up at Maul-Hall at 8:15 with the intention of getting me all the way to the village of Speed and back, 16 miles total.

What a beautiful morning. We set out at around 65 degrees, and it was 76 when we got back. Not just to speed but at speed, no less.

I was pleased with how well I maintained pace, and it proved to be a really enjoyable ride. We put in a slight scenic detour on the way home, and by the time we made it back to Saint Patrick Street we had logged in over 19 miles.

I believe what made this more doable was the encouragement from the guys who rode with me. Not just 'doable' but more like eagles' wings, running — riding — and not growing weary.

This point — this principle — has been a foundational pillar of my approach to teaching and encouraging men over the past several decades. The American 'manly men go it alone' ethos is not only impractical; it is counter to God's fundamental design and intention. We were created for community, for communion both with God and with one another.

I do not know if I will be a regular participant in some of these insanely demanding bicycle rides — but I do understand that the men I am getting to know and genuinely love here in Tarboro (at church, and in the community) help me to ride on eagles' wings in many ways.

"You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself," (Exodus 19:4). Tired ... and grateful. — DEREK



Derek Maul has written for many news outlets, including the Tampa Tribune, The United Methodist News Service, All Pro Dad, FOCUS Magazine, Newsweek, USA Today, The Christian Science Monitor, Presbyterians Today, Guideposts, Chicken Soup for the Soul and many other publications. Read Derek Maul's daily blog posts at www.derekmaul.wordpress.com.

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PRESERVING BRANDON: GRASSROOTS EFFORT KEEPS HISTORY ALIVE

Staff Report

There is something special about a community that chooses to remember where it came from.

In a place like Brandon, a community that has grown rapidly, it can sometimes feel like history is being replaced faster than it can be preserved. What was once a small town founded in the 1800s has transformed into a vibrant area filled with neighborhoods, businesses and families.

But even as Brandon continues to grow, its story still lives all around us in the names of our streets, in historic homes and in the memories of longtime residents.

That is where Preserving Brandon began.

Nearly two years ago, what started as a simple observation turned into something much more meaningful. There was no central place for people to come together to share stories, learn about local history or support preservation efforts in our community. Rather than waiting for something to exist, a group of passionate residents came together to create it.

Preserving Brandon was born from that shared desire to connect, educate and celebrate the rich heritage of our community.

Since then, what began as a grassroots effort has grown into a vibrant movement. Today, we are proud to be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization bringing together neighbors, historians and community partners who share a common goal: ensuring that Brandon's history is not lost but honored and preserved for future generations.

Through community meetings, partnerships and events, we have created a space where stories are shared, connections are built and history comes to life. Whether it's highlighting historic landmarks, supporting local preservation initiatives or simply gathering to learn from one another, every effort helps strengthen our community.

This May marks our two-year anniversary, a milestone that belongs not just to our organization but also to the entire community that has supported and believed in this mission.

Preserving Brandon is, at its heart, about people. It is about honoring those who came before us, celebrating who we are today and ensuring that future generations will always have a place to look back and say, "This is where we came from."

And we are just getting started.

Everyone in the community can play a part. Please get in touch with us at preservingbrandon@gmail.com.

COUNTY INVITES COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO HELP SHAPE LOCAL DECISIONS ON ADVISORY BOARDS, COMMITTEES

Staff Report

Hillsborough County residents have an opportunity to play a more active role in local government as county commissioners seek volunteers to serve on a wide range of citizen advisory boards and committees.

The call for applicants invites registered voters who live in Hillsborough County to apply for unpaid positions that help shape decisions on issues ranging from housing and zoning to historic preservation and public health. While applicants may apply to multiple boards, individuals may only serve on one at a time unless specifically approved by the board of county commissioners.

To be considered, residents must submit a completed application/questionnaire along with a signed standards of conduct form at https://hcfl.gov/government/boards-and-committees/announcements-and-forms. Applications must be fully completed to be eligible, and any required background checks must be completed within 72 hours of notification. The deadline to apply is close of business Thursday, May 14, with appointments expected to be made in May or June.

Openings are available across numerous boards, offering opportunities for residents with a variety of professional backgrounds and interests. Among them, the Building Board of Adjustment, Appeals and Examiners is seeking an alternate member with expertise in technical building codes, while the Code Enforcement Board has vacancies for members and alternates representing professions such as architecture, engineering, construction and real estate.

The county is also looking to fill a position for a code enforcement special magistrate, who would hear cases involving violations of local ordinances, including zoning, housing standards and environmental regulations.

Financial expertise is in demand as well, with two openings on the County Internal Audit Committee for a certified public accountant and an individual with at least five years of auditing experience. The committee plays a key advisory role in monitoring county audit activities and promoting transparency.

Other vacancies include positions on the Health Care Advisory Board, which focuses on improving access to care for low-income residents; the Historic Resources Review Board, which helps protect archaeological and historical sites; and the Human Relations Board, which reviews discrimination cases and enforces the county's Human Rights Ordinance.

Additional opportunities exist on boards overseeing land-use appeals, mechanical systems, plumbing and gas standards and property tax disputes through the Value Adjustment Board.

Most boards require regular meeting attendance and some require members to live in unincorporated areas of the county or file annual financial disclosures.

Residents can submit applications online, by email, by mail or in person. Detailed information about each board and application materials are available on the county's Boards, Committees and Councils webpage at https://hcfl.gov/councils.

SUPPORT CHRIS CIULLA FOR HONORARY MAYOR OF EAST HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Meet Chris Ciulla, the former executive who swapped his corporate cape for a chef's apron and is now a culinary crusader in East Hillsborough County!

Since planting his roots in the local scene, Chris has been a whirlwind of community spirit; championing small businesses, rallying for nonprofits, and throwing himself into initiatives like a party planner on a mission. Whether he's hosting shindigs, volunteering his time, or crafting alliances, Chris is the local hero with a heart of gold!

Chris for Honorary Mayor





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FORGOTTENANGELS

FUNDRAISING EVENTS:

- 1 — Monday, June 1 KICK OFF EVENT
- 9 — Tuesday, June 9 Boot Scootin' Bingo - BINGO + Line Dancing
- 13 — Saturday, June 13 Sit, Stay & Sip - All Day Dog Party
- 19 — Friday, June 19 Mayoral Royale Casino NIght & Chef Soiree at The Regent
- 27 — Saturday, June 27 Chris Rocks The Vote - Music Festival

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June 11th
Music Bingo 6:00 pm
@ Tiki Docks River Bar & Grill

June 19th
Chef Soirée
Doors Open 6:30 pm
@ The Regent

June 26th
The Amazing Race 6:00 pm
@Presbyterian Church of Bloomingdale
To Register, email
Glaros4mayor@gmail.com

I'm running for the 2026 Honorary Mayor of East Hillsborough with a simple mission: to support and amplify the organizations already doing meaningful work in our community.

For more than 20 Years, I've served Tampa Bay families as an attorney, focusing on family law and personal injury. I've helped people through some of life's most difficult moments, which has shown me how important strong support systems truly are. Before opening my firm, I served as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Florida, reinforcing my commitment to advocacy and standing up for others.

Outside of work, I'm a proud father of two. Like many families here, we're focused on raising our children with strong values, responsibility, and a commitment to showing up for others.

That perspective is what led me to support the organizations behind this campaign.

High 5 Inc provides after-school programs, mentorship, and opportunities that give kids a safe place to grow and succeed. The Impact Program equips young people with the tools to make informed decisions through education, prevention, and character development. Raining Cats and Dogs Shelter and Sanctuary cares for animals while promoting compassion, responsibility, and community values.

This campaign is an opportunity to make a real impact. You can get involved by attending events, sponsoring, donating, or helping spread awareness.

At the end of the day, what we do here matters.The way we show up for our community matters. The opportunity to make a difference is right in front of us.

Online Auction June 25th - 28th

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FRESH COAT PAINTERS TRANSFORMS FUTURE HOUSE FOR AT-RISK WOMEN

By Jane Owen





Fresh Coat Painter owner Maninder Mundh, Forgotten Angels David Tyler and Cindy Tilley at the Adderly House.

Forgotten Angels, a Valrico nonprofit that helps teenagers who have aged out of foster care and at-risk young adults, is working to open its first transitional home dedicated to young women. Forgotten Angels operates a Valrico on-site housing program for men and already helps at-risk women find housing.

In February, Fresh Coat Painters of Brandon and Valrico painted the exterior of the 3,700-square-foot house at no cost.

Fresh Coat Painters owner Maninder Mundh believes they played a small role in something meaningful.

"Every brushstroke was done with intention — not just to refresh the building but to reflect the strength, courage and new beginnings happening inside. A home should feel welcoming. It should feel like a fresh start. And that's exactly what these young ladies deserve," Mundh said.

Cindy Tilley founded Forgotten Angels, knowing firsthand how hard it is to age out of the foster program. She and her husband, David Tyler, painted the interior of the house. Tilley is grateful for Fresh Coat Painters painting the exterior.

"They were amazing to come along side of us to help. We appreciate them giving their time and resources for us," Tilley said.

The new transitional home will be named the Adderly House to honor Keria Adderly, a young woman who was murdered in 2020. Tilley said Adderly was the kind of person who would help anyone. The Adderly House will be a huge help to at-risk women. It will be more than a house; it will be a home. It will provide a safe, secure home with the added benefits of on-site mentorship, counseling services, job placement assistance and legal assistance.

There is work to be done inside and outside of the house before the Adderly House can open.

"Community support is beautiful. The biggest thing for us is to make sure that financially we can do everything we need to help the kids," Tilley said.

Forgotten Angels changes lives by giving life skills and love to everyone who comes through the program. Tilley and Tyler provide forever support; everyone they assist through Forgotten Angels is family.

To learn more about Forgotten Angels and how to support it, visit www.forgottenangelsflorida.org.



GET THE DIRT:
AFRICAN VIOLETS: ONE OF MY FAVORITE PLANTS

BY LYNN BARBER, URBAN HORTICULTURE AGENT



My mother grew African violets on a TV tray in her room. She was very successful.

The tips below can increase your success in growing this adorable plant. Direct sunlight is damaging, but it thrives in bright light within 3 feet of a southeast or southwest-facing window. If the light level is too low, you will see thin, deep green leaves and the plant stretching for light. If the leaves are pale or greenish yellow, there is too much light, which slows growth and decreases flowering. African violets need eight to 12 hours of light and eight hours of darkness daily. Fluorescent and other artificial lights are options.

You can purchase African violet soil mixtures, which contain peat moss, vermiculite and perlite. Drainage holes in plant containers are a must. Water should be at room temperature. You can water from the top of the container or the bottom/saucer. Don't leave water in the saucer. Note that overwatering is a significant issue.

Water-soluble African violet fertilizer is available in nurseries and big-box stores. Follow the recommended application rate. If you overfertilize this plant, you will see a rusty appearance on the leaves.

This plant is easy to propagate. Select a firm leaf, then leave the leaf stem intact. Trim the stem to 1-1 1/2 inches. Use a pencil to make a hole in the soil mixture, then insert the stem in the hole. It generally takes three to four weeks for the roots to form. New plant leaves take three to four weeks to appear after rooting occurs. You can anticipate flowers in six to nine months thereafter.

To minimize pest management, remove faded flowers and unhealthy leaves. Provide adequate spacing so pests, like mealybugs and cyclamen mites, are not able to infest the other African violets nearby. Purchasing and using sterilized soil is also important.

Let's grow some lovely African violets inside or outside under lanai cover.

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UNITED WAY SUNCOAST NAMES BUCS EXECUTIVE KOURTNEY SANCHEZ AS CEO

Staff Report



The United Way Suncoast Board of Directors has selected Tampa Bay Buccaneers executive Kourtney Sanchez as its next CEO, effective Monday, June 1.

Sanchez brings a wealth of experience to United Way Suncoast, having most recently served as the Bucs' chief impact officer. In that role, she helmed the NFL franchise's community team, overseeing all philanthropic strategies, growth and implementation for local and national programs and partnerships. Additionally, she served as the executive director of the Glazer Family Foundation and the Glazer Vision Foundation, partnering with the family on all of their personal philanthropic initiatives.

"Kourtney brings an exceptional amount of leadership experience and development acumen to United Way Suncoast," United Way Suncoast Board Chair Sara Nichols said. "Her work across several organizations helped her rise from a pool of nearly 300 applicants compiled by the Winner Partners search firm during our four-month national recruitment process."

"Kourtney matched her record of accomplishment with an energetic approach and innovative ideas needed to continue leading United Way Suncoast into its second century of service," said Nichols. "It's her experience and insight that won the board over."

A third-generation Tampa Bay native, Sanchez has combined more than a decade's worth of experience in the nonprofit sector with an educational background that includes degrees from the University of Florida and Duke University and a certificate in leadership from Harvard University.

"I'm excited about joining the United Way Suncoast team and helping this talented group build on its 102 years of success," Sanchez said. "I am passionate about uplifting our community. Through my previous nonprofit work, I've witnessed the power individuals and organizations have in curating positive social change.

"Inspired by that experience, I'm confident I can blend what I've learned about philanthropic and for-profit strategies to support our mission work."

In addition to her work with the Bucs, Sanchez has also proven herself by successfully handling roles in community engagement, strategic planning, communications and fundraising.

She previously worked in development roles for AdventHealth, the Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation, the American Heart Association and the Pediatric Cancer Foundation.

"I know what it's like to approach funders and donors as a fundraiser," Sanchez said. "And I know from working with the Bucs how funders like to be approached. I don't look at fundraising as transactional. It's about building and maintaining relationships."

Sanchez replaces former United Way Suncoast CEO Jessica Muroff, who left in January to lead the Community Foundation of Sarasota County as its CEO.

For more, visit the website directly at www./unitedwaysuncoast.org/

TAX COLLECTOR LAUNCHES BUS BRINGING SERVICES TO RESIDENTS

Staff Report



Hillsborough County Tax Collector Nancy Millan announced the launch of MILES (Mobile IDs, Licenses and Essential Services), a mobile service center bringing key tax collector services directly into neighborhoods.

Services offered include: Driver licenses, IDs, Property tax payments, Vehicle registration renewals, Handicap placards and Vehicle titles.

"MILES is about accessibility and convenience. Not everyone can get to an office, so we're bringing the office to them," said Millan. "Whether you're a senior, a small business owner or a family juggling a busy schedule, MILES makes it easier to stay up to date on registrations, renewals and essential services. We're committed to ensuring no community is left behind."

Accessibility features include: An ADA-compliant ramp, Widened entry and maneuverable interior space, ower counters and bilingual signage and Staff trained for disability and seniors.

"MILES will make a meaningful difference for seniors and underserved communities," added Hillsborough County Commissioner Gwen Myers. "For many families, something as simple as renewing a registration or updating paperwork can become a real hardship. This mobile resource helps lift that burden and ensures our most vulnerable residents aren't left behind."

MILES will begin a scheduled rotation of senior centers, rural communities, libraries and major neighborhood events. Residents can learn more about MILES at www.milesbushctc.com.

MILES is a first-of-its-kind commitment to proactive public service – one that moves beyond traditional office walls to bring real, in-person Tax Collector services directly into the neighborhoods, senior centers, business districts, and community spaces that make up Hillsborough County.

This initiative is part of Tax Collector Nancy Millan's ongoing commitment to accessible government services. MILES is a fully equipped mobile service unit that travels directly into Hillsborough County communities, bringing IDs, driver licenses, registration renewals, and other essential Tax Collector services to residents where they live, work, and gather.

If you are interested in requesting a MILES appearance, visit www.hillstaxfl.gov/miles-bus/.

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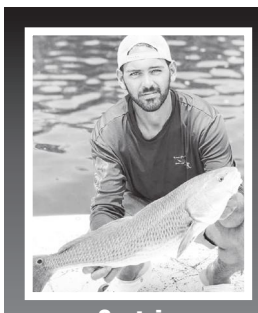
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A KID'S PLACE OF TAMPA BAY CELEBRATES LIVES CHANGED DURING FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH

Staff Report



May is National Foster Care Awareness Month. This is a time to help shine a light on more than 4,000 children in foster care across the Tampa Bay area. At A Kid's Place of Tampa Bay, this month reminds us of our mission: To provide a safe, loving and nurturing home for children in foster care. Since opening our doors in 2009, we have helped more than 1,700 children and over 750 families. We are able to care for children from newborns to 18 years old on our main campus, and we are also proud to have expanded our services through our Extended Foster Care program, supporting young adults ages 18-23 as they transition into adulthood.

Every day at A Kid's Place is centered around creating stability, comfort and normalcy for the children who call our campus home. From school support and counseling to fun activities and shared meals, our goal is to make sure each child feels safe, valued and supported while they are with us. To help our community better understand the heart of our mission, we want to introduce you to some of the incredible young people who live at A Kid's Place. While every child has their own unique story, they all share the same hopes: to be heard, to be supported and to be treated just like any other kid.

We sat down with four of our teens and tweens for a very special 'Take 5' conversation to learn more about them beyond their circumstances. We talked about their favorite foods, hidden talents, funniest moments, dream vacations and the activities they are most excited to try this summer. Their answers were full of personality, creativity and resilience. This small glimpse into their lives reminds us that foster care is not just about placement; it is about childhood, growth and possibility. These kids are more than their circumstances; they are athletes, friends and dreamers.

When siblings Emma (8) and Lucas (7) arrived at our home, they carried visible trauma. Both struggled academically, had difficulty regulating emotions and were physically withdrawn. Most of all, they were terrified of being separated — something they had already endured once before. Today, Emma is reading above grade level and leads her class with confidence. Lucas, once silent, is now joyful, engaged and thriving socially. Their health has improved; their laughter has returned, and — most importantly — their trust has been restored. We are proud to share that Emma and Lucas are currently in the process of being fostered-to-adopt by a loving young couple, ready to provide them with a permanent home — together.

We invite you to take a moment this month to learn more, show support and help us continue building a place where children feel safe, seen and loved.

Visit our website, https://akidsplacetb.org/, or call 813-381-3839 to learn more.

DAVID WEEKLEY HOMES MARKS 30 YEARS OF BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Staff Report



David Weekley Homes, one of the largest privately held national home builders, is celebrating 30 years of home building in the Tampa area this year. The company was founded in Houston, Texas, in 1976, and expanded to Tampa in 1996. Today, the company builds in more than 35 communities.

"Celebrating 30 years in the Tampa market is a milestone we're truly grateful for," said Kristina Lloyd, division president of David Weekley Homes in Tampa. "We're proud of the communities we've built, the people behind them and enhancing the lives of our customers and those in the communities where we work and live through our volunteer efforts. This journey has been incredibly rewarding, and we look forward to continuing that momentum in the years ahead."

Over the company's 30 years in Tampa and surrounding areas, the builder has enjoyed several notable milestones. Since opening in 1996, the company has closed more than 6,900 homes in the Tampa area. The company has built in many communities throughout Tampa, including Encore at FishHawk Ranch, Waterset, Barrington Preserve, Hidden Lakes and Magnolia Creek. David Weekley Homes has earned more than 150 Tampa-area awards, including more than 120 for product design.

In addition to a commitment to excellence in home building and customer satisfaction, David Weekley Homes prides itself on enhancing lives by giving back to the community. The company's outreach program, CARE, is a charitable and volunteer program that joins team members with homeowners, homebuyers, community partners and local nonprofit organizations to live out the company's purpose of 'building dreams, enhancing lives.' This is accomplished by team members volunteering countless hours to different organizations in their communities and Dovetail Impact Foundation donating more than $340 million in the past 35 years.

Locally in Tampa, David Weekley Homes partners with many organizations, including BridgePoint Church – Building Beds, Feeding Tampa Bay, United Way Suncoast, Gigi's Playhouse Tampa, 9/11 Day of Service, Ronald McDonald House Charities Tampa Bay, ShowerUp Tampa Bay and OneBlood. The division also participates in companywide events, such as Build Month, the School Supplies Drive and the Giving Thanks, Giving Back Thanksgiving Drive.

For more information about David Weekley Homes in Tampa, contact 813-774-4155.

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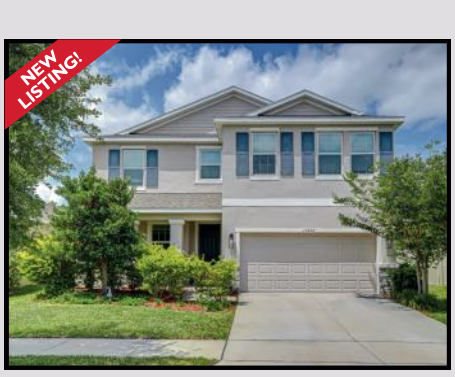
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13706 OSPREY FERN LN
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$845,000



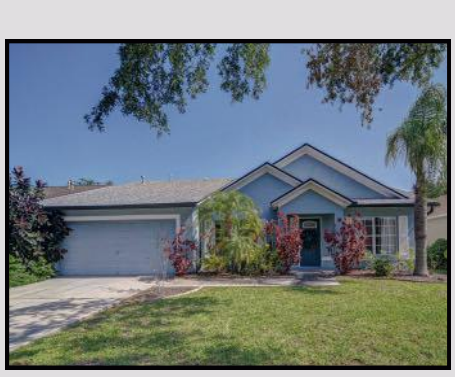
14257 SWISS BRIDGE DR
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16607 GOOSE RIBBON PL
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4736 WOODS LANDING LN
4BR/2.5BA/2CAR + LOFT + FENCED YARD
$499,000



7107 COLONIAL LAKE DR
3BR/3BA/2CAR + SCREENED PATIO
$439,000



984 PEMBROKE POINT WAY
2BR/2BA/2CAR + DEN + FLORIDA ROOM
$385,000



6416 LAKE SUNRISE DR
3BR/2BA/2CAR + WATERFRONT + DOCK
$575,000



219 MANGROVE SHADE CIR
3BR/2.5BA/1CAR
$295,000



11474 CAPTIVA KAY DR
2BR/2BA/2CAR + POND VIEWS
$245,000



10983 WINTER CREST DR
3BR/2.5BA + 1 PARKING SPACE
$245,000



14112 CREEK RUN DR
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$689,000



16158 AMETHYST KEY DR
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Could A New Home Be Your New Adventure?



EXCELLENCE & ELEGANCE surround you at this magnificent, custom-built, 5,000-SF home in FishHawk's Kestrel Ridge! On a cul-de-sac half-acre in the security-gated enclave, the property features an impressive pool & spa lanai with a panoramic view of conservation woods & water. An outdoor kitchen & gas fireplace flank the heated pool on a travertine-tiled deck; triple pocket sliders open it all for great entertaining. Details are just as dazzling inside, of course: coffered ceilings, crown molding, columns & arches, gorgeous granite, diagonal-tile floors & backsplashes, decorative listello, raised-panel wood cabinets, walk-in wine closet & so much more. Offered for sale at $1,350,000.



THE SPARKLING STAR of this FishHawk home is the privacy-fenced pool, heated & newly resurfaced, welcoming you to a screened & super-sized lanai! For entertaining or simply relaxing, this backyard bonus is a big reason to buy. But beyond that obvious attraction are other advantages that make this 4-bed, 2-bath, 2020-SF Inland Vinoy design stand out from its neighbors: 2025 AC, 2023 roof, 2022 pool filter, replacement faucets & other fixtures, custom office furnishings built into the 4th bedroom, even an air-conditioned garage & a new storage shed at the end of an artificial-turf dog run. It's in the Tanager Ridge neighborhood, near Bevis Elementary, the Osprey Club & more! $525,000










Beyond that big front yard is a Florida pool home with more than you might think! Nearly 1 acre, privacy-fenced in back, pavered pool deck, 2 master suites among 4 bedrooms, 3 full baths, 2022 roof, money-saving well & septic, updated appliances, all in low-fee Shadow Run. $650,000



If you want & recognize quality upgrades beyond most in an upscale neighborhood, HERE is the home for you within wonderful Waterset! Inside & outside this Sandpiper by West Bay, you'll find improvements from a 400-SF screened lanai to $65,000 in casement hurricane-impact windows. $485,000



Better than when it was built! From new tile, LVP & epoxy floors to updated fans, fixtures, & other finishes, this thoroughly renovated townhome towers 4 stories above the Apollo Beach waterfront in the upscale boating colony of Sunset Bay. Get nearly 3,100 SF plus a tandem garage over 700 SF. $479,000

Pending sale in Boyette Springs! Overlooking a woodsy pond on 2/3 acre, a sports-style, saltwater pool awaits in a stone-pavered, screened & roof- sheltered pool deck. Updated kitchen, baths & other improvements in this 2,210-SF 5/3/3 a with pavered driveway & a screened garage door. $525,000



Pending sale in Triple Creek! Great price for a 1,900-SF 4/3/2 with a screened lanai, stone patio, & privacy-fenced view of woods. Resort-style community amenities include pools, playground parks, clubhouse & fitness centers, tennis & basketball courts, the Triple Creek Nature Preserve, etc. $350,000



Pending sale in Bloomingdale! With AC & roof new since 2023, plus other improvements from water heater & softener to stainless appliances & faux wood shutters, this 1,600-SF 3/2/2 is in Preston Woods, a non-through enclave close to the parks, golf course, schools, shops & so much more. $335,000





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