



## Girls' policy center celebrates five years of saving lives

San Marco residents Laura Lambert, The Honorable Suzanne Bass and The Honorable Virginia Norton were among nearly 100 who attended the 5th Birthday Celebration of the Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center Jan. 31. The nonprofit, located at the Jessie Ball duPont Center downtown, has made a difference in the lives of more than 1800 girls who would otherwise have languished in the juvenile detention system.



## Fleming delights concert-goers

Taking in an "Evening of Grandeur" at the Jacksonville Symphony Jan. 20 were Donna Parrish, Jennifer Glock and Wendy Davis.

[Read More, Page 12](#)



When the forecast in late December indicated snow just outside the reaches of North Florida, San Marco residents Raul and Hillary Patton had an idea. They took their children, Julia, 4, and Ayla, 7, and six-month-old Andrew, to experience snow for the first time in nearby Savannah, Georgia. In this photo, Julia and Ayla took a moment to pose with their snowman at the Brice Hotel in historic Savannah, where they also made snow angels and played until their hearts' content.

# Southbank developers still working toward property purchase

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Perhaps it was too much financial wrangling, a proposed appointment of a special City Council oversight committee, taxpayers voicing reluctance to "hold the note," or a less than enthusiastic approval by the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) that caused Elements Jacksonville to back out of their proposed plan to involve the City of Jacksonville in the mixed-use project called The District.

Regardless of the funding, plans are still underway, and have not been altered for the proposed 285,000 square feet of retail space, 200,000 square feet of office space, over 1,500 apartments/condominiums, and a hotel. Elements had announced in November 2017 that Marriott would put a 200-room AC Hotel on the site.

In a board meeting Jan. 10, DIA CEO Aundra Wallace noted the DIA has set aside more than \$5 million over the past three fiscal years toward the project. He proposed to use \$1.86 million to purchase the property – formerly the Jacksonville Energy Authority's Southside Generating Station, and nearly \$3.5 million toward public infrastructure costs.

DIA board members did approve the deal, but not without concerns voiced by three members and by two public commenters, Jimmy Hill and Billie Tucker. Hill's argument was the project should stand on its own so that the City could invest in the Northbank. Tucker, a Southbank resident, had an issue with Rummell's seat on the board of directors

[Read More, Page 6](#)



## ASSUMPTION'S 'GOT TALENT'

Winners of the Assumption Catholic School talent show include violinist Rose Ossi; Riley McDaniel, who performed modern dance; Ava Carrillo, who sang to accompaniment by Ria Saldajeno on the ukulele, and first place winners Jacob Soulby, Cooper Lewis, Kalia Smith, Alex Lewis and Charlie Lawrence – a band which played the 1981 song "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" by The Clash. Fine Arts Night was held Jan. 25 and included student artwork on display for sale.

## Miramar resident wins science fair, place at Joe Berg seminar



Katie Nicholson, Ashton Body, Julia Downes

A Miramar resident Ashton Body's interest in science has made her a two-time winner.

A sophomore at The Episcopal School of Jacksonville in the Honors Science Seminar, Body was a first place winner in the Episcopal School's Science Fair, and was selected to participate in the Jacksonville Joe Berg Seminar Series 2018-2019, which begins in February.

Body's project on the breakdown of proteins earned her the opportunity to present their projects at the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair February 4-6.



## Treasures sold support local nonprofits

Pilot Club Jacksonville's Gail Pender, Karyl DeSousa, Diana Payne, president, Sherrill Casey-Bakai, president-elect, and Georgia Reed were some of the many women who organized the 69th Annual Charities Antiques and Vintage Show and Sale, which raises funds for local nonprofits. Visit residentnews.net for more.

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# Truck route ordinance would deter neighborhood cut-throughs

By Lilla Ross  
Resident Community News

Truck drivers could soon be getting designated routes through Jacksonville to help them navigate the city while avoiding unnecessary trips down residential streets.

District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer, who represents San Marco, said designated truck routes are common in most large cities, but this will be a first for Jacksonville.

Ordinance 2017-807 would establish 52 truck routes and 10 alternate routes. Most state roads would automatically be truck routes, unless specifically excluded. The routes would show up on digital maps like Google Maps.

Truckers could still make deliveries in neighborhoods, but they could be fined \$100 for using a residential street as a cut-through.

At least one San Marco resident likes the sound of that. Brit Bradley is heading up an effort to lower the speed limit on River Oaks Road, a popular cut-through for transient drivers of cars and trucks between Philips Highway and Hendricks Avenue. River Oaks is popular with walkers, runners and cyclists, and cars are parked along the street.

Bradley, who lives on Southwood Lane, wants the speed limit lowered from 30 mph to 20 mph on the eastern section of River Oaks to mirror the speed limit on the section west of Hendricks.

She also wants additional speed humps – not bumps – installed on River Oaks. Two humps were installed in 2008 but Bradley said they are too far apart and drivers can speed up between them.

Bradley has been working with the City Traffic Engineering Department on the issue. Boyer is having a public meeting to discuss the issue but details have not yet been announced.

If 75 percent or 53 of the homeowners agree to the changes, the city will install four speed-limit signs and a speed hump, Bradley said. Homeowners on River Oaks, Fieldston Lane, Southwood Lane and Thornwood Lane would be required to pay 50 percent of the cost of the signs, which

cost \$200 each. That works out to about \$6 per homeowner.

“I’m an avid runner and I use River Oaks as part of my run. There is a lot of traffic, especially during commute times when traffic backs up at the light,” Bradley said. “Sometimes it’s difficult to make a left turn on River Oaks because the traffic is so backed up. I’m really hoping the traffic-calming measures will deter the transient drivers.”

Bradley said she likes the idea of designated truck routes but thinks they would need to be enforced by law enforcement to be effective.

The ordinance is currently under review by the Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee.

## Letter TO THE Editor

### San Marco neighborhoods win fight for reduced speed limit

After a multi-year effort, the Miramar and Colonial Manor neighborhood of San Marco will finally have their speed limit reduced to 20 mph by the City. The neighborhood came together after ongoing pedestrian safety concerns about speeding motorists cutting through their neighborhood. It took volunteers almost a year of going door-to-door to talk to residents and explain the process along with townhall meetings.

The City will reduce the speed limit on Gadsden, London, Morvenwood, Greenridge and Mapleton Roads. Approximately 85 percent of the neighborhood supported the effort.

Thanks to the generosity of many residents that felt strongly about the matter, there will be no cost to any residents as a result of this change. All fees have already been paid by numerous anonymous donors.

It’s great to see the community come together to make such a positive change for the safety of pedestrians, kids and family pets.

John Baxter  
Neighborhood Lead

**Editor’s Note:** The multi-year process began in 2013, at which time the speed limit was 30 mph. Lack of sidewalks, narrow roads used as cut-throughs led to safety concerns. After City Council enacted an ordinance in 2014 allowing neighborhoods to petition for lower residential speed limits, there were many individual, unorganized attempts in 2015 and 2016 to lower the speed limits or get speed bumps installed in these San Marco neighborhoods. Finally, in 2017, volunteers reached out to nearly 400 residents to obtain the required signatures and received 85 percent late in the year. The Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office was to begin enforcing the new speed limit late last month.

## Property owner to take developer to court over proposed Southbank high-rise

By Lilla Ross  
Resident Community News

The owner of the former Aetna building is continuing to fight the proposed development by Ventures Development on the adjacent vacant property on the Southbank.

GV-IP Jacksonville Owner LLC is asking the Circuit Court to review a decision by the Downtown Development Review Board that granted several deviations to the plan to build a 13-story apartment on a 2.9-acre wedge-shaped lot.

Both GV-IP Jacksonville and Baptist Health have objected to the project, citing density, inadequate parking and increased traffic in an already congested area next to Baptist’s emergency room, the Florida East Coast Railway tracks and the Acosta Bridge. In its petition to the court, GV-IP also said the building would block the view of the river.

Last summer DDRB approved the project with several deviations and the Downtown Investment Authority signed off on it. The deviations reduced parking spaces from 559 to 337; change the landscaping along the railroad tracks; increased the building height from 60 feet to 190 feet; and reduced setbacks along the property line and along the bulkheads.

GV-IP appealed to the City Council, which sent the matter back to DDRB, which again approved the project in December.

In the meantime, the former Aetna building at 841 Prudential Drive will be getting a new identity – One Call Care Management, the anchor tenant. One Call has been leasing 120,000 square feet of the building and is expanding to two additional floors to accommodate a workforce of about 1,200.

Aetna moved its insurance operation to Southside Boulevard.

### CORRECTION

In a story on solar energy in our January 2018 issue, we inadvertently indicated that the Jacksonville Energy Authority’s SolarSmart program was set to launch this coming April when, in fact, it had launched June 1, 2017, followed by SolarMax in November.

In the same story, we also noted the JEA’s Northside generating station would be retired in 2018, however, it is the St. Johns River Power Park which will shut down this year. We sincerely regret the errors.



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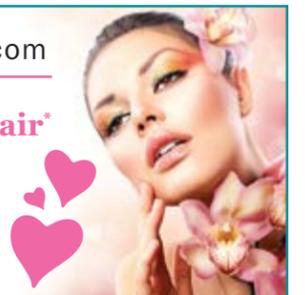
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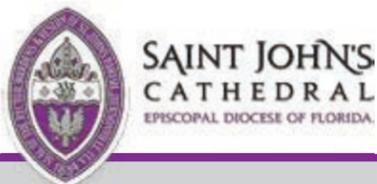
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# Chance Partners begins construction for new San Marco housing

Company also eyeing property to north of former Jackson Square

By Lilla Ross  
Resident Community News

The long-awaited construction on the former Jackson Square property – now christened San Marco Promenade – begins this month and may soon be getting a new neighbor.

San Marco Promenade will have 284 apartments in two four-story buildings fronted by a 10,000-square-foot commercial building along Philips Highway. The apartments will include one-, two- and three-bedroom units with rent starting at \$1,000 a month. Entrances to the property will be on Philips and Mitchell Place.

Construction will begin on the northern end of the property and is expected to be completed next year. A second phase is planned to the south but details have not been announced.

The 17.3 acres at 2600 Philips Highway was, for years, a Jerry Hamm Chevrolet dealership. In 2008 developer Steven Cissel had it rezoned as a planned unit

development for 900 apartments and 350,000 square feet of commercial space to be called Jackson Square, then the financing for the project fell through during the recession. The site was cleared but the project was never built. Most recently the property was used as a temporary dump site for tree debris from Hurricane Irma.

Chance Partners LLC bought the property last spring and announced plans to build a less-dense \$42 million residential community with 510 apartments and retail space.

Chance Partners' principals Judd Bobilin and Jeffrey Rosen have said they hoped San Marco Promenade would be a catalyst for the blighted area and, to that end, have recently released plans for San Marco Crossing, a quarter-mile north of the former Jackson Square property.

## New residential use for under-used property

In January, acting as Chance Olevia LLC, they entered a contract to buy 6.82 acres, owned by Southside Assembly of God. North of San Marco Promenade, the property is bounded by Kings Avenue,

the Florida East Coast Railway line, Olevia Street and Mitchell Place.

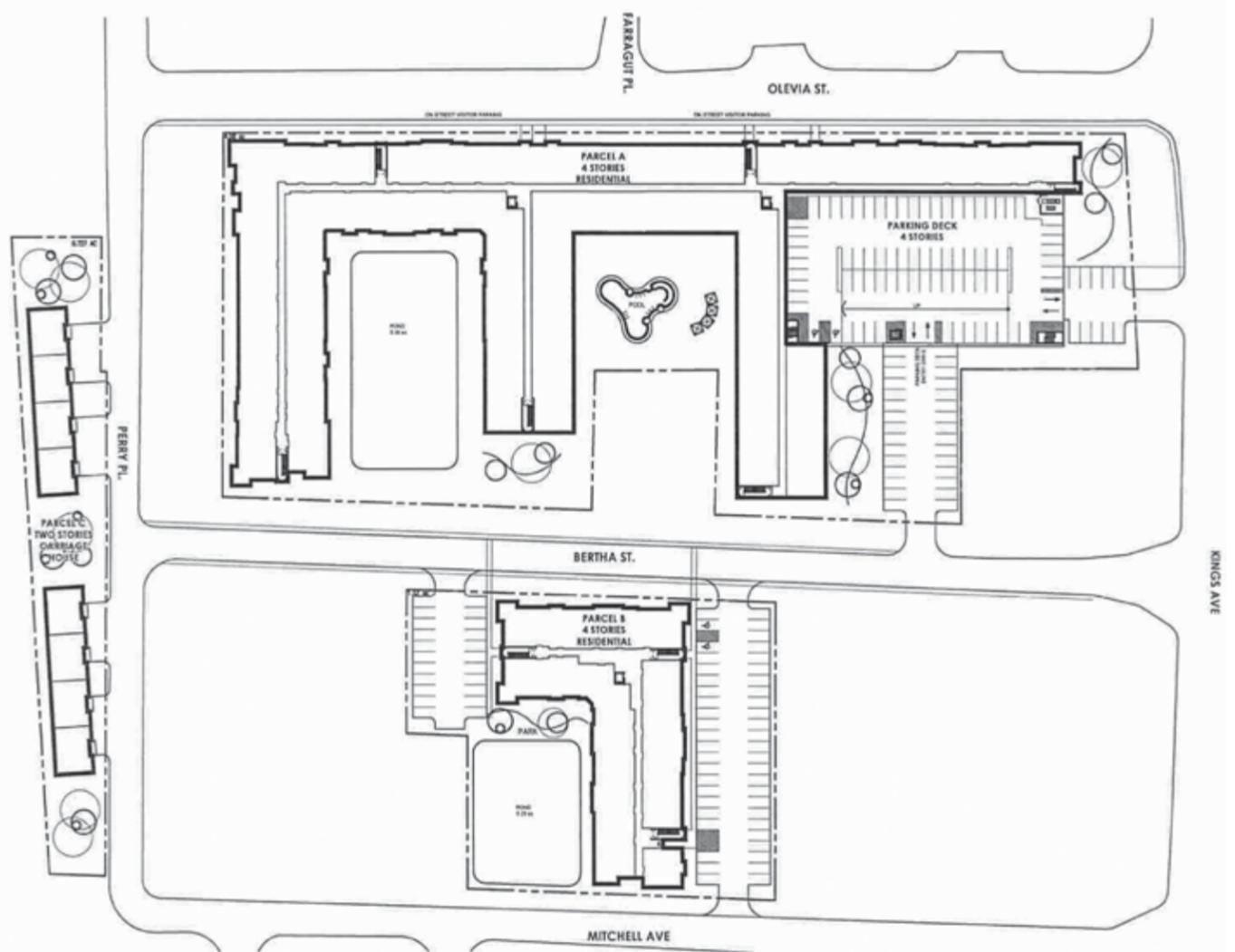
Chance Olevia plans to build San Marco Crossing, which includes 331 apartments, townhouses, a four-story parking garage and pool. Construction is expected to begin in early 2019 and be completed in 2020.

Chance Partners wants to rezone the property from Community Commercial General and Commercial Office to a Planned Unit Development. According to the application, submitted Nov. 10, 2017 to Land Use and Zoning, the project would be designed by Dynamik Design of Atlanta.

Between the two Chance Partners' properties on Kings Avenue is a Super 8 Motel and Scottish Inns.

A hearing before the Planning Commission is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 8, at 1 p.m. at City Hall. If the schedule of public hearing dates for zoning holds as planned, a public hearing would be held by City Council on Tuesday, Feb. 13, followed by a Land Use and Zoning hearing on Wednesday, Feb. 21.

Chance Partner also is redeveloping the former Commander Apartments and St. Johns Village in Avondale into the RiverVue Apartments.



Proposed site plan for a multi-family development on a nearly 7-acre parcel in East San Marco.

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# City brings in consultant to address San Marco Square parking

By Lilla Ross  
Resident Community News

San Marco merchants stress about not having enough parking spaces for their customers. Nearby residents complain about the people who park in front of their houses because they can't find spaces in San Marco Square.

And everyone is worried about the impact new development — coming in the not-so-distant future — will have on merchants and residents alike.

So, they were interested in the ideas put forth at a public meeting Jan. 25 at Preservation Hall hosted by the Downtown Investment Authority. Roamy Valera, a consultant working for consultant Timothy Haahs & Associates, is in the midst of a parking study of the core city. He has been seeking input from residents and merchants in San Marco, Riverside/Avondale and Springfield.

*“The downside is there’s going to be people parking in front of your house.”*

— David Blue, Owner, San Marco Theatre

Parking in historic districts can be both a catalyst and challenge, Valera said.

“It is an asset we need to survive economically and to support our lifestyles,” he said.

The challenge in historic districts is that they are land-bound. The demand for parking varies depending on the type of business, he said. A dry cleaner needs fewer spaces than a restaurant, a movie theater needs three-hour parking instead of two-hour.

**Valera asked the audience what they thought was working. The response:**

- Southside Baptist Church’s willingness to share their parking lots.
- Traffic flow through the Square.
- The fact that some storefronts are vacant, reducing the demand for parking.
- An upswing in people walking, cycling or using ride-sharing services.

### What isn’t working?

- Zoning regulations that require restaurants to have a certain number of spaces based on seating capacity.
- Competition for spaces between businesses, and businesses and residents.
- The removal of on-street parking on Hendricks to accommodate bike lanes.
- Fears that the shortage of parking will drive away customers and businesses.
- Parking on residential streets, which causes traffic jams, property damage, noise and blocks access to driveways and sidewalks.

### So, what are some possible solutions?

- More shared parking like the arrangement San Marco merchants have with Southside Baptist Church.
- A centralized parking lot or garage with shuttle service to the shopping district.
- Encouraging people who live near the Square to walk or cycle.
- An app that would identify empty parking spaces.
- Designated off-site parking for employees.

Some people think that autonomous vehicles will solve the problem by eliminating the need for personal vehicles, Valera said, but he doubts people will be parting with their cars in the immediate future.

“I think it will be another 10 to 15 years before we begin to see that happen,” Valera said. “But hotels are already reporting a drop in demand for parking.”

Valera said he will be using the material gathered in the public meetings to come up with recommendations with the Downtown Investment Authority.

David Blue, owner of San Marco Theatre, said he likes the sound of Valera’s ideas, “but it all comes down to the same thing, what’s it going to cost and how is it going to be funded?”

“San Marco Square used to be run down but it’s become a vibrant destination that everyone wants to come to. The downside is there’s going to be people parking in front of your house.”

# Two bills under consideration affect parking, sidewalks

By Lilla Ross  
Resident Community News

Two proposed ordinances currently before City Council’s Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee would affect parking spaces for bikes, motorcycles and cars, and the size of sidewalks.

Under Ordinance 2017-806, on-street parking spaces for motorcycles would be required to be 7-foot long and 4-foot wide (the current rule is 5 x 10 feet).

On-street parallel parking for cars would be required to have a minimum width of 7 feet and a step-out zone of at least 2 feet along the curb.

Parking spaces angled at 60 degrees would be required to have a 2-foot overhang at the curb and a 2-foot step-out zone.

The ordinance also changes the rules for bicyclists, who would be allowed to “stop,

stand or park a bicycle on a sidewalk” as long as it doesn’t impede pedestrians or other traffic.

Bicycle racks would be required to support the frame in two places and allow space for locking wheels and frame.

Bike racks also would be required to be conveniently located near buildings, in well-lighted areas but not interfere with pedestrian traffic, or block entrances or disabled parking spaces. Five feet of clearance would be required between a rack and a driveway or curb cut.

Ordinance 2017-805 addresses sidewalks, increasing the width of new or reconstructed sidewalks to 6 feet in most areas and to 8 feet downtown.

The ordinance also would require new or reconstructed streets to accommodate bicyclists in keeping with city’s 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

You can view the ordinances here: <http://cityclts.coj.net/coj/cojBillSearchNew.asp?type=PL>

# Gardening seminar offered at Duval County Extension

To kick off the spring gardening season, UF/IFAS Extension Duval County will host “A Day of Gardening” Saturday, Feb. 24, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., at 1010 N. McDuff Ave. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. for a day of gardening topics and shopping with local vendors to get ready for the growing season.

General session topics include Putting Out the Welcome Mat for Pollinators, and Foraging for Edible & Medicinal Plants. For Breakout Session One, choose one topic: Managing Tough Weeds, Top

Tomato Picks, Ideas for Themed Gardens. Breakout Session Two topic choices are: Mythbusters: Food Labels, Tool Time: Sharpening & Maintenance Tips, Storm Hardy Trees.

The \$20 fee includes a light lunch, snacks and handouts. The deadline to register is Friday, Feb. 16. To register with a credit card go to: [www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-a-day-of-gardening-tickets-41524974316](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-a-day-of-gardening-tickets-41524974316) or contact Sarah Freeman at [sfreeman@coj.net](mailto:sfreeman@coj.net) or (904) 255-7450.

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## Ongoing street flooding prevents homeowner from hurricane repairs

By Lilla Ross  
Resident Community News

Alicia McLaren thought the coast was clear when the flood waters from Hurricane Irma receded, but her property on Moro Avenue in San Marco has flooded two more times since and she wants answers.

“We had no rain, but the ditches were still filled with water,” McLaren said. “I don’t know where the water is coming from. I feel like we’re sitting on a bog.”

The flooding is delaying repairs to her house that was swamped by Irma. “We had to rip out the floors,” she said. “We’ve installed a sump pump and it keeps pumping water. We’ve been there 20 years; something has changed but we don’t know what.”

Several forces are at play, says District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer.

You might think Irma is now in the history books, but storm water from the mega storm that slammed Florida in September is still draining from the 5,000-square-mile basin of the St. Johns River, so the water levels continue to be unusually high, and higher still during full moons.

When river levels are that high, Boyer said, there is backflow onto land. The city has installed pumps at Landon Street and



A San Marco resident shot this photo from her front steps on Moro Street after rain in early January.

Nira at Children’s Way. Backflow valves were installed last year but they have gotten clogged and haven’t been working since Irma, Boyer said. The valves are located underground and are not easy to access for repairs.

The Public Works Department said it is working with the valve manufacturer and contractor to come up with a fix for the problem, according to city spokesperson Tia Ford.

Meanwhile, Public Works cleaned out drainage lines, which drained the flood water on Moro Street.

## The Community Foundation opens applications for grants in three areas

Applications are now open for nonprofit organizations serving aging adults in Northeast Florida and young children in Duval County, and for organizations promoting visual art and art education in St. Augustine.

All grantmaking is through The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. Applications can be found at [www.jaxcf.org/receive](http://www.jaxcf.org/receive) and are limited to these areas at this time:

### Aging Adults

Preliminary applications for competitive grants of \$20,000 are now available to nonprofit organizations serving older adults and their caregivers in Northeast Florida. These applications should focus on work to improve the quality of life for older adults by assisting under-served and under-resourced seniors in Duval, Clay, Baker, St. Johns and Nassau counties. Preliminary applications are due by March 1, 2018 for grants that will begin on September 1, 2018.

### Early Childhood – Programmatic

Preliminary applications for competitive Programmatic grants up to \$15,000 are now available for nonprofit organizations who serve at-risk children in Duval County from birth through pre-Kindergarten by working with parents and/or caregivers. Proposals should help build the capacity of providers and childcare workers, bring innovative strategies to the community, and provide parent and caregiver education. Applications are due by March 8, 2018 for grants that will begin on September 1, 2018.

### Visual Art in St. Augustine

Preliminary applications are now available for nonprofit organizations that promote visual art appreciation or education in St. Augustine. Grant proposals of \$2,500 to \$5,000 will be accepted. Proposals for \$2,500 or less are called Sponsorships and require only a Preliminary Application. Sponsorship applications are accepted at any time throughout the year, while funds are still available. Preliminary applications are due by April 5, 2018 for grants that begin on September 1, 2018.

## Southbank Developers From Page 1

at Haskell, which provided the cost estimate for public infrastructure development.

Although the developers of The District are again back to seeking investors for the purchase of Southbank property, Peter Rummell and Michael Munz said they have made progress on other aspects of the \$433 million project, which they describe as a “new market” for downtown Jacksonville.

“While we have been working diligently on the regulatory and approval processes, we have also been working with and negotiating with investors, developers and advisors to create this new market,” said Munz in an email last December to Downtown Investment Authority board

members, attempting to justify a financial deal structure with the DIA and the City of Jacksonville.

In that email to the DIA board Munz also included an “alphabet soup” list of items the firm has been working on since 2014, when the Jacksonville Energy Authority accepted its \$18.6 million bid to purchase 30 acres of Southbank property adjacent to Duval County Public Schools property.

Elements’ to-do list includes master planning and market studies; amending the DRI (Development of Regional Impact) process to include an NOPC (Notice of Proposed Change); obtaining approval for a marina; pad solicitations,

design and planning; PSA (Purchase and Sale Agreement) and LOI (Letter of Intent) negotiations; horizontal site work planning, including budgets and timelines; BRSA (Brownfields Site Rehabilitation Agreement) and work with the Federal Department of Environmental Protection on closure of areas of concern and obtaining certifications; master developer negotiations, and City of Jacksonville Redevelopment Agreement negotiations.

According to Munz, that list of work has cost Elements at least \$2 million, not including a \$250,000 deposit paid to JEA to be used toward the purchase of the property, which has a July 16, 2018 closing date.

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# FEMA buy-out a gift for South Shores woman who lost everything

By Lilla Ross  
Resident Community News

Bonnie Arnold said she never expected to get such a wonderful gift in such a disagreeable way.

Last September Hurricane Irma destroyed her South Shores home and her business, Bonnie's Floral Designs.

"The water was up to the windowsills," she said. The river water, infused with sewage from a failed JEA sewage treatment plant, ebbed and flowed through the house for five days. A separate building that she used for her business was destroyed, too.

Arnold had evacuated with her mini-camper to Atlanta. When the flood waters receded, her son was able to get to the house and kick in the door.

"He called me and said, 'Mom, you've got to move on. Everything is gone.'"

She was able to salvage a few things – a beloved grandmother clock, her diploma and family birth certificates. But her clothes, furniture, family antiques and everything else was soaking wet and covered in mold. She had to wear a hazardous material suit while dragging everything to the curb.

Losing everything she owned at age 76 was overwhelming at first. "You learn the cost of things and the value of things that are priceless," she said. "You learn to let things go."

She shared her grief on Facebook and help came pouring in, everything from a coffee maker to Thomasville furniture, including a four-poster bed. Everything she needed to set up housekeeping in her new place at Alexandria Condominiums a couple of miles away.

"I've been tested but I know I can survive," Arnold said. "I have more confidence and



One of 43 residents to accept a FEMA buy-out, Bonnie Arnold had to wear a HAZMAT suit when going through her flooded South Shores home last September.

more peacefulness. I'm happier than I've been in many years."

But she still has a mold-invested house, built in 1922 on a flood plain. She bought it in 2004 and especially loved the wooded lot, but it routinely flooded during storms or unusual high tides.

Then another gift arrived in the form of a buy-out offer from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In the wake of Irma, federal money was available to buy and demolish as many as 73 homes in South Shores. The program was voluntary; no one could be forced out.

Forty-three people, almost 60 percent of the neighborhood, applied for the buy-outs at pre-Irma appraised values. The process can take up to two years to complete and people can back out at any time.

District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer said the city has received complaints for years about nuisance flooding in South Shores, which often inundated streets and yards,

making it difficult for people and emergency vehicles to get to the homes.

Boyer said several options had been considered over the years, including installing pumps or drainage ponds and raising the roads. But pumps and ponds are not realistic in such a low-lying area and raising the roads would only have forced more water onto private property.

The FEMA buy-outs offered a way for homeowners to get the money out of their property and start over somewhere else, Boyer said.

Once the houses are demolished, the land will be returned to a natural state. And that appeals to Arnold, the florist.

"Mother Nature wants it back and I like that. I think it's the right thing to do," Arnold said. "What a beautiful way to take this disaster and turn it into something precious. I don't want to be there when they bulldoze the house, but I want to see it become wetlands again."

*"I've been tested but I know I can survive. I have more confidence and more peacefulness. I'm happier than I've been in many years."*

— Bonnie Arnold

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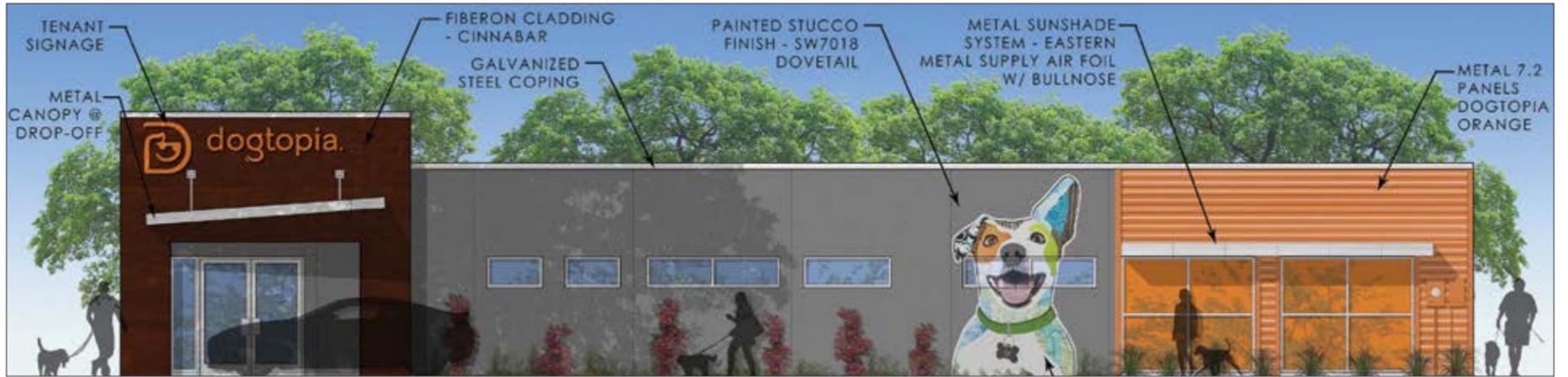
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# New doggy daycare to open before summers 'dog days' arrive



Rendering of the west elevation for Dogtopia, to be located at 1075 Hendricks Ave.

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Registered 12 years ago as a professional daycare center called Happy Family, the one-story concrete building at 1075 Hendricks Ave. was proposed to be razed in 2009.

In its place was planned a three-story, mixed-use development consisting of a 10,000 square foot restaurant on the first floor and 18,000 square feet of leasable office space on the second and third floors.

Instead, for the next nine years the building languished. Now it will see new life as a daycare center for “fur babies.”

Southbank resident Addie Kasraeian plans to open Dogtopia, a franchised open-play dog day care center mid-2018. A corporate sales director for Bailey’s Health and Fitness, it’s not a stretch for Kasraeian to want pampered pups in the San Marco area to also have a play to run and exercise.

Nearly 4,000 square feet of space will include three rooms for different sizes of dogs, and an outdoor play area. Dogtopia’s corporate

focus is all-day, open-play every day, with dogs separated by size and temperament.

The 15-year-old company’s website indicates it offers live webcams for owners to watch their pets; a professionally designed spa; supervised playrooms with floors made from compressed rubber to reduce the impact on the dogs’ joints and feet; meals prepared by the owners’ direction; sound-proofing; and enclosed boarding suites for owners who want more privacy for their pets during rest times. Some facilities offer overnight stays.

The Hendricks Avenue property, next to Reddi-Arts, is owned by Insetta Family Properties.

## Review board recommendations

The proposed project was up for review at the Downtown Development Review Board’s (DDRB) Jan. 18 meeting, which gave conceptual approval to move forward with architectural designs. The project summary did note six deviations from the

Downtown Overlay Zone and Downtown District Regulations will be required, including setback lines, entrances, parking, and streetscape designs, among others.

The proposed refurbishment of the building maintains the existing setback and the project will require the deviation to comply with the guideline to provide continuous frontage along sidewalks, creating a pedestrian-oriented and pedestrian-scaled environment.

Existing parking behind the building will be demolished with the intent to use that space for outdoor exercise.

The staff report also noted lack of an entrance from the Louisa Street frontage does not meet the guidelines and will require another request for deviation. The application notes an entrance from Louisa Street will create issues in security and internal circulation, presenting a potential escape hazard.

The report also indicated additional deviations will be needed for reductions in required parking and transparency, location of trash and loading areas, and streetscape design.

In the architect’s letter to the DDRB, Thomas Duke noted parking would be met with eight spaces for short-term parking for drop-offs and pick-ups on the Hendricks Avenue side, 10 on-street spaces on Louisa Street, surface parking under the nearby Overland Bridge and at the Kings Avenue Skyway station.

To address a requirement for transparency on street façades – that is, more glass, less solid construction – the applicant is planning to add large storefront windows and a large glass storefront entrance, as well as graphics and landscaping to make the existing blank wall more pedestrian friendly.

As far as landscaping, the architect is requesting permission to plant two Sabal palmettos instead of Washingtonia palms along the Hendricks Avenue frontage. Additional landscaping closer to the building is proposed to include crape myrtle, Asiatic jasmine, viburnum, and other plants and grasses.

The contractor will be Sweetwater Restoration, with landscaping by Donnell Landscape Design, and engineering by Mechling Engineering & Consulting.

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# Residents threaten lawsuit unless drainage issue fixed

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

After suffering standing water and soggy grass in their backyards for nearly a year, two Madrid Avenue residents are taking legal action against the developer of San Jose Estates.

On January 26, David and Lynne Robison joined their next-door neighbor Kevin Conner in hiring a lawyer to notify San Jose Estates LLC, the developer of the small housing development adjacent to their properties, that they intend to take legal action unless he immediately fixes the drainage system on the site of his upcoming development.

For nearly a year, six Madrid Avenue homeowners have been unable to use their backyards due to standing water incurred after the swampy, old-growth forest was cleared from land that abuts their property. David Robison, who holds degrees in civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering, claims San Jose Estate's drainage system was incorrectly designed and accommodates surface water only.

Robison said the reason his backyard has standing water and spongy grass is because Edwards Engineering and Everett M. Frye, supervising professional engineer for the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), have failed to take into consideration groundwater bubbling up from artesian springs beneath the site. Edwards Engineering is the firm hired by San Jose Estates LLC to design the drainage system. SJRWMD issued the permit to clear and fill the site.

"They just blew it," said Robison. "The folks at the St. Johns River Water Management District and the engineer completely missed it. Their whole design is based on surface water, and that's why their plan has failed. I kept telling them there are artesian springs below the property," he said.

"What they did was fill in the whole area with soil that is basically impermeable," Robison continued. "They put a giant plug in the middle of all that ground water, which used to go underneath all our houses and settled two-and-a-half feet lower than our property lines. Before they started



Kevin Conner points to the flooding behind his house due to the development of San Jose Estates.

building this, we never had soggy property. Even during Hurricane Matthew, we had no standing water. It wasn't until they filled the land that we had problems. It's because of hydraulic pressure from Christopher Creek's high-water table, the springs, and rainwater coming down the hill. When it hits the impervious soil they put in, it causes the water to go into our yards keeping them wet. There is so much hydraulic pressure the water is physically bubbling out of the ground."

Robison also contends he has seen "tidal movement" in the existing nine-inch drainage pipes placed on the easement behind his house. After recently having his land surveyed, he said he discovered San Jose Estates LLC had encroached on at least two feet of his property while putting in the drainage system.

"We feel we need to notify these people as part of the legal process as soon as possible," Robison said. "That will put pressure on the St. Johns River Water Management District and on the city. The City of Jacksonville probably won't issue a building permit if it's all in litigation. We need to get the legal process started before they pour concrete, because once they do that, in the State of Florida, your chances of success dry up rapidly."

Robison said he believes the underground retention pond installed in the middle of the San Jose Estates' site, which is called for in the design plan, has been installed two and a half feet higher than the drain pipe used to drive the local water table. He also said the drains in the easement between his property and San Jose Estates lie a foot and a half too high for his property to drain properly.

Other issues he has with the developer include the fact no environmental barriers have been installed between his property and the new development, allowing pollution – oil and gasoline – to sit in the standing water, killing his grass and poisoning his dogs. One dog came down with giardia after accidentally drinking some of the water, said Lynne Robison.

When San Jose Estates raised the level of its property at least four feet higher than the abutters, the Madrid Avenue properties became the lowest points in the area. The lakes that have formed have become breeding grounds for mosquitoes, Robison said.

Robison did not appeal the permit with SJRWMD because he believed the city was issuing the permit. By the time he was informed of this by someone at City Hall, the 20-day window for complaints had

passed and the damage was done, he said. Fortunately, he learned about SJRWMD's role in the process in time to appeal San Jose Estate's request to amend the design of the drainage system, what he calls a "bait and switch." His complaint caused the developer to decide to stick with the original plan, he said. "The water district never notified any of the abutters of the change in land use," said Robison. "They advertised it only in a local newspaper in Palatka."

Conner said he is upset that heavy mud and standing water have soaked more than half of his backyard over several months. He is also unhappy his fence was removed by the San Jose Estates' contractor when he was not home and not restored on his property line as promised. Without the fence, his dog can no longer run free in his backyard safely, he said. Conner also added that the developer has never contacted him directly, and the site contractor was forced by San Jose Estates LLC to renege on the promise to restore the fence.

Meanwhile, threatening to have the permits pulled, which it usually doesn't do, the City forced San Jose Estates to install a temporary pump while it built the permanent drainage system, said District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer.

By having a faulty drainage system, Robison estimates San Jose Estates LLC has devalued his home by \$50,000 to \$60,000. There will always be a flooding issue, he said, and if it is not fixed properly, there will be friction between his Madrid Avenue neighbors and the folks who eventually live in San Jose Estates. "They will leave us with a bunch of lawsuits, and it will be neighbor vs. neighbor," Robison said.

One solution to the problem is for the developer to raise the backyards of the abutters to the same level as the six much higher San Jose Estates home sites, Robison said. "They need to raise the elevation of all the properties around here and redo the fences," he said, estimating it might cost between \$35,000 and \$40,000 per abutting property to fix the situation. "If my property is going to flood, theirs needs to flood as well."

*Continued on page 11*

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Three survey markers in David and Lynne Robison's backyard show the end of their property line on their side of the easement is in standing water.



The new drainage system installed by San Jose Estates developer Feras Mouded didn't seem to be doing the job in mid-January.

Robison's neighbor, James Black, a Madrid Avenue resident for 30 years, said his yard was always dry, even during heavy storms, until the forest was removed. When a previous owner wanted to fill the land 20 years ago, Black said his wife, Sheila, complained to the Army Corps of Engineers, and the project was halted. In the case of San Jose Estates, the trees came down too quickly after he and his wife first spotted the San Jose Estates sign, he said.

"If they do everything legally, I don't have an argument, even though I hate the fact the trees have been torn down," he said, noting he is not yet ready to take legal action. "I want to see what their next step is. As far as I'm concerned, the damage is done. If they can put in the drainage system properly and my yard is not wet, then I don't have an issue."

**Wet history**

It was nearly a year ago that San Jose Estates LLC began clearing the six parcels in the Christiana Forest subdivision bordering San Jose Boulevard near Christopher Creek and Nathan Krestul Park.

In April 2016, San Jose Estates LLC owner Feras Mouded, a Fort Caroline realtor, purchased the property, which has been zoned RD-90, low-density residential with

90-foot setbacks for more than 30 years, and was previously considered unbuildable. Tagged by the Jacksonville property appraiser as "jurisdictional wetland," Mouded purchased the land from Christiana Forest SJ LLC, a limited liability company registered to John R. Reynolds, for \$165,000. The property has changed hands four times since 2002 and Reynold's purchased the property in 2013 for \$48,000, according to the Jacksonville property appraiser's website.

It is Mouded's intention to build six custom-built, "villa" homes ranging in price from \$435,000 to \$840,000, according to the San Jose Estates website. The website states, "the lifestyle at San Jose Estates revolves around the world-class amenities at the Epping Forest Yacht & Country Club," and notes a club membership will be included with the sale of each parcel. Epping Forest Yacht & Country Club lies a short distance north of the development across San Jose Boulevard.

It was SJRWMD and not the City of Jacksonville that gave the go-ahead and permit to develop the site, said Boyer. "The challenge for this property is that it was subdivided into a plat 30 to 50 years ago and the six lots have been zoned residential for a very long time. No one needed to come before the City to get permission for rezoning. This project didn't go through

the planning commission or the city council because it was zoned properly to be used," she said, adding the City does not get involved in boundary line disputes between individual homeowners.

Because the site was a wetland, SJRWMD issued a permit to fill the site, said Boyer. "They regulate from a water-quality standpoint and are mainly concerned with how filling in the wetland will ultimately impact the water quality. They are not focused on flooding," she said, noting SJRWMD allowed San Jose Estates LLC to purchase mitigation credits so trees can be planted, or swampland put under conservation in another area of the St. Johns River watershed.

"The City doesn't pre-empt the water management district. Even though the City regulates road drainage when it comes to flooding, it has always taken the position, historically, that the St. Johns River Water Management District's permit to fill pre-empts our ability to regulate. So, if they gave them a permit to fill, we couldn't say no to it," Boyer explained.

"What the City does is fact check. The engineer of record designs the system, tells the City what the amount of water is that flows from the adjacent properties. He designs a system to accept that and take the water away. The City only verifies

his calculations but doesn't have anyone go out in the field," Boyer continued. "Ultimately the engineer who turns in the plans to the City is signing off on his professional license that he has reviewed the topography of the area. He is saying that he has done the calculations and has designed a system that will take all the drainage that was previously coming onto the site. The City relies on that engineer's professional license."

Developers who fill in wetlands have a responsibility to continue to accept the drainage flow from their property to the extent it flowed prior to pre-construction, Boyer explained. "The developer has an obligation to make this right. You can't dam up your property and cause flooding on your neighbor's property that wasn't there before."

Prior to construction, Site Engineer Gray Edwards and Jim O'Nan, a "coordinator of the entitlements of the project," for San Jose Estates, met with nearby residents in Nathan Krestul Park, spreading out their site plans on a picnic table, said Lynne Robison. "They assured us our property was going to be 'bone dry' with this plan," she said.

"It broke my heart to see all the trees come down," Lynne Robison continued. "But we

*Continued on page 12*

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*Continued from page 11*

figured if they were to build here, and it wasn't wetlands, and everything was fine, well, it's a little disappointing to lose the woods, but that's the way things go. If they were going to put nice homes here, that would be fine, but this has been a disaster, and we knew it would be from the beginning."

**Engineer admits groundwater problem**

In an January 16 email to *The Resident*, Frye said "the district has no reason to believe that the permittee does not intend to construct the project as authorized by the district permit." The district has "numerous legal options" and the "statutory authority" to enforce the permit, he added. "We are committed to resolving any compliance issues related to the district permit."

Frye also insisted the drainage system design approved in the permit would take care of all future drainage issues.

In response to Robison's complaints, Frye made a site visit January 18 to investigate the "standing water matter." In a January 19 email to Robison he wrote that he "empathized" with Robison's feelings about the "extended length, messy condition, and impact" on his backyard and said he was going to do his "level best to keep the engineer on task and stress to him that the District wants the project to finish and finish soon."

Frye also wrote that he had met with Edwards at the site and agreed that switching from ADS (plastic-based) pipe to RCP (reinforced concrete) pipe between the bypass inlets might do the trick and that the drainage system should be fixed in several weeks.

"I observed that one section of ADS pipe between two inlets 'floated' above ground

and severed the connection from the inlet in your backyard area to the outfall pipe, thus causing the standing ankle-deep pool in the area. Once the new RCP pipe is installed and a continuous connection between all the inlets is in place and the area sodded and stabilized, I believe things in your backyard area will improve dramatically. I appreciate the patience you've shown thus far and contend that the finish line is in sight," Frye wrote.

However, in an email to Robison six days later, Frye went further and seemed to agree with Robison's assessment that groundwater is the trouble. He wrote that he had discussed the matter further with Edwards and decided to install perforated pipe to absorb groundwater into the by-pass collection system. "This is pretty much what you suggested in your email. I'm doing my best to press the engineer to press his client to finish the job," Frye wrote, noting he had asked the engineer for a "completion timeline."

Robison said he was happy with Frye's admission that the groundwater was the problem. "It's the first time he's acknowledged the groundwater. I'm glad Everett and the engineer have agreed to address it. We will have to wait and see how it goes," Robison said.

In a brief telephone interview, Mouded said he "definitely" intends to follow the civil engineer's guidelines. "It's no problem. We will do what we have to do for our side in the civil engineering to comply with the permit," he said, noting he has no firm timeline for when the homes will be built and is "taking it day by day."

Meanwhile, in an email dated January 24, O'Nan said Mouded had selected the property for development due to its "good" location. He also estimated the drainage problems would be fixed "within a week to 10 days."



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**World-renown soprano leaves symphony guests glowing with praise**

The Jacksonville Symphony's "Evening of Grandeur" began with a VIP reception before a performance of classical and contemporary works starring guest artist Renée Fleming, and conducted by Music Director Courtney Lewis. The GRAMMY-winning soprano wowed the audience with selections from Strauss, Puccini, Dvořák, Lerner & Loewe's "My Fair Lady," and George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess."

Following the Jan. 20 concert at Jacoby Symphony Hall, guests enjoyed a VIP dinner with Lewis and Fleming, who has also received the National Medal of Arts, then finished the gala with an after-glow party.



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# A dry crawlspace is vital for your home's health and for yours

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Dehumidify. Dehumidify. Dehumidify.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, Chris Turner of Turners Underseal said there's no better way to restore your home to good health and keep it that way than to dehumidify it.

Crawlspaces, in particular, are breeding grounds for mold and mildew, and can make you sick, especially if you have allergies or asthma. But, whether or not you're prone to allergies, contaminants from crawlspaces can still irritate your eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs.

"Just about the only way to maintain a dry crawlspace year-round is to use a permanently installed, commercial-quality dehumidifier, like Turners Underseal compact unit," said Turner, who is passionate about health – yours and your home's.

In Florida, there's no getting around humidity and, according to Greg Weatherman, a top indoor air professional, "Soil is always wet, even when it appears to be dry. Water from ground sources continuously moves through the particles of the soil."

Fortunately, Turner has the solution to keeping a crawlspace nice and dry.

"We install a 6-by-6-foot liner with a mounting pad under the commercial dehumidifier with an automatic pump, partial vent closings and drainage to the outside



*"If you keep your crawlspace dry year round, that means you are pumping dry air into your home all the time. In Florida, our dehumidification system is the only way to keep it dry!"*

— Chris Turner, owner, Turners Underseal

for trouble-free operation," said Turner, who added that since Hurricane Irma, getting your crawlspace dry and keeping it that way will prevent bad indoor air quality.

With over 30 years' experience as a certified indoor air quality professional, Turner knows his stuff when it comes to healthy, dry crawlspaces.

"After creating healthy, dry crawlspaces for years, we've found that our dehumidifier systems have resulted in tremendous improvements in our clients' homes," said Turner.

In addition to affecting your and your family's health, damp air in your crawlspace may damage the structure of the home,

its flooring, your furniture, and items stored in a crawlspace. That's why it's so important to control the relative humidity in these areas with a Turners Underseal dehumidifier system.

Earlier this year, Katie Penkala of Avondale brought Turner in to address extreme humidity in her 90-year-old home.

"I called many different companies asking for their assistance in fixing the problem," she said. "Every company told me that they could not fix the problem and that I needed to call someone else."

That "someone else" was Turner, who came to Penkala's home, and diagnosed

the problem was the crawlspace. After thoroughly explaining the process, the job was completed within a week.

"After the first day of having my dehumidifier installed, I already have a noticeable difference in the humidity level," said Penkala. "It has made my drywall stop cracking, my carpet is no longer damp, and there are no musty odors in my house."

Penkala went on to say "I am so thankful Turners Underseal was able to quickly and efficiently fix a problem that many others just passed off. I would definitely recommend Turners Underseal to anyone who wants a healthier crawlspace and a less humid house."

In addition to the dehumidification system, Turners Underseal also does crawlspace wood sealing and crawlspace liners. For your free crawlspace inspection, contact Chris Turner at (904) 903-9569, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. or check out Turners Underseal at [turnersunderseal.com/](http://turnersunderseal.com/)



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John Peyton

## Former mayor to serve as Chamber of Commerce Board Chair

Former Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton, of Miramar, will serve as 2018 JAX Chamber chair. Peyton is president of the family-founded GATE Petroleum Co., an almost 60-year-old private diversified company.

Peyton was elected by the JAX Chamber Board of Directors on October 14, 2016 to serve as 2018 Chamber chair. Debbie Buckland, market president of BB&T personal and business banking and mortgage company, is chair-elect this year and will serve as chair of the Chamber Board in 2019. The Chamber traditionally selects its chair more than a year in advance.

In 2017 Peyton led the 2017 Leadership Trip and the Chamber's Board of Governors, a larger group of business leaders that helps to implement policy and priorities set by the Board of Directors.

Peyton rejoined GATE Petroleum after leaving City Hall in 2011 and was named its president in 2012. Among other community activities, Peyton is a former chair of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority and the Jacksonville Symphony. He is a graduate of Mercer University and the Harvard Business School Executive Education Program.

## Schwartz to lead The Community Foundation board

Ryan A. Schwartz, chief operating officer of US Assure and a resident of Miramar, has begun a two-year term as chairman of the Board of Trustees of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida.

Schwartz has been a Foundation trustee since 2011 and served as chair of the Finance Committee from 2013 through 2016. Schwartz has also chaired the boards of the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, Ronald McDonald House Charities Jacksonville and the Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida.

Also, two long-time community leaders have joined the board for 2018-2020: Michael R. Meyers and Julia W. Taylor, replacing Trustees Tracey Westbrook and Jim Winston, who rotated off the board at the end of 2017. Westbrook served for 11 years and Winston served for five years.

Meyers, trained as a lawyer, is an active board member for and trusted advisor to many for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. In 2016, Meyers retired after



Ryan Schwartz



Julia Taylor



Michael Meyers

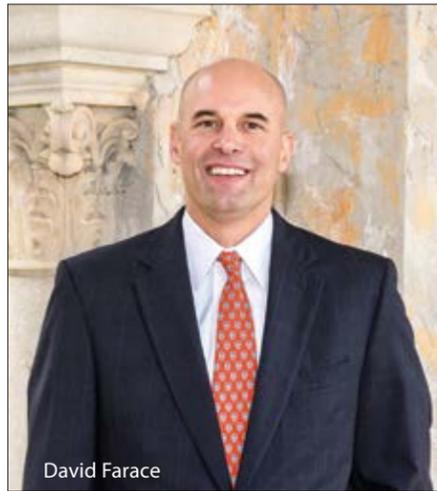
23 years at Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, an international law firm where he practiced corporate and finance law, mostly in the energy sector. He currently serves as the president of the LGBT Community Fund for Northeast Florida (an initiative of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida) and as a board member of the ACLU of Florida, and the Peter Michael Foundation (a 501(c)(3) focused on prostate cancer research and treatment).

Taylor has had an active career in both the private and nonprofit sectors, including Director of Community Affairs, UNF College

of Business and Assistant Vice President for Institutional Advancement at UNF; State Director of Development, PACE Center for Girls, Inc.; and Director, Boutique and Agenda, Stein Mart, Inc.

She currently chairs Barnabas Center, Inc.'s Endowment Campaign; and is a member of the Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center Leadership Council and the Board of Directors of the Children's Campaign, a statewide advocacy organization. Previously, she served as president of the Women's Giving Alliance (also an initiative of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida) and the Junior League of Jacksonville, Inc.

Meyers and Taylor join Martha Baker, Dr. Solomon Brotman, Peggy Bryan, the Honorable Brian J. Davis, Michael DuBow, Deborah Pass Durham, Barbara Harrell, Robert Hill, Jr., Paul Perez, Madeline Scales-Taylor, Ryan Schwartz, Richard Sisisky and Dori Walton as trustees of The Community Foundation.



David Farace

## Bolles School Head accepts position in Maryland

Bolles President and Head of School Dave Farace announced last month he will leave Bolles' top administrative post to accept the Head of School position at his alma mater, Baltimore-based McDonogh School. Farace plans to remain in his role at Bolles through at least the end of the 2017-18 school year.

"I love everything about Bolles, particularly the people – the Board of Trustees is vision and mission-driven, the faculty and staff serve children with an abundance of love and compassion, our parents and alumni are proud ambassadors of the school and the students are a tremendous source of joy for

me," Farace said in a letter to the Bolles community on January 11. "I have a deeply rooted personal connection to McDonogh and the city of Baltimore – McDonogh is, simply put, home."

The Bolles School Board of Trustees named Farace the school's eighth Head of School in October 2014. Chairman of the Bolles Board of Trustees Daniel Rice said the board has not yet determined Farace's last day at Bolles, but said he expects Farace to remain in his role through the end of this school year. Rice said the board will begin the process to select a new Head of School in the coming weeks.

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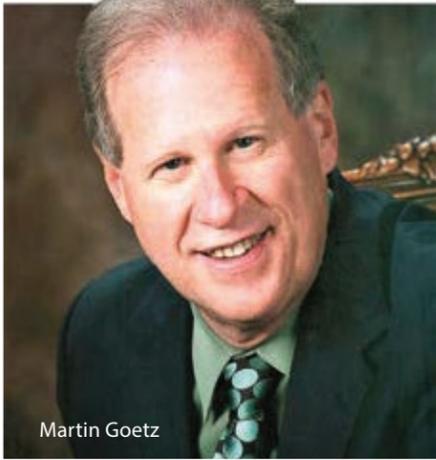
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Martin Goetz

# River Garden a 'career home' for CEO

Martin A. Goetz, River Garden CEO, is celebrating a career milestone in 2018 – his 40th anniversary with the Mandarin-area nonprofit. Hired in 1978 as the Associate Administrator, Goetz became Chief Executive Officer in 2004.

Goetz is a past member of the Board and Executive Committee of the Florida Association of Homes & Services for the Aging (FAHSA) and served as its treasurer. In 2001, he received FAHSA's Public Policy Award for advocacy on nursing home litigation reform and in 2003 he was the recipient of FAHSA's Distinguished Service Award, the highest award given by the association. In 2007, Goetz was presented with the Chairman's Award by FAHSA in recognition of his years of service to the board and its members,

and in 2008 was elected by FAHSA membership to a three-year term in the AAHSA (now LeadingAge) House of Delegates.

In 1994, Goetz was the recipient of the Dr. Herb Shore Young Administrator of the Year Award by the Association of Jewish Aging Services (AJAS) in Washington, D.C. In 2005, he was elected to the AJAS Board of Directors and served as its Board Chair from 2011-2013. In 2016, he was presented with the Dr. Herbert Shore Award of Honor.

Goetz served as a member of the Community Advisory Board for Av-Med Health Systems (2002 – 2006), a statewide managed healthcare organization with a central office in Gainesville, Florida. He has also served as a member of the Dean's Advisory Council at the University of North Florida College Of Health in Jacksonville.

## Local realty firm adds three to local offices



Tere Mari Vanessa Deap Nicole Bishop

The San Marco and Avondale offices of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty welcomed three new associates at the beginning of the year.

Joining the Avondale office as a Realtor is Vanessa Deap, who joins the brokerage with a year of experience and fluency in speaking the Khmer language.

Nicole Bishop and Tere Mari have joined the San Marco office as Realtors. Before becoming a Realtor, Bishop was a local business owner – owning and operating a cosmetic and beauty store for eight years. Mari has a bachelor's in creative writing from Jacksonville University, a Master's of Business Administration from Davenport University, and speaks Spanish fluently.

## Baptist Health Foundation announces personnel changes

Kerrie Slattery, formerly executive director of development for Wolfson Children's Hospital and Baptist Neurological Institute, was promoted to vice president and chief development officer for Baptist Health Foundation, effective Jan. 1, 2018.

In her new role, Slattery will assume executive leadership of the fundraising arm of Baptist Health, a locally governed, not-for-profit health system, which supports and enhances essential programs and services at its five hospitals along with Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center.

"I'm excited to build on the success of the Baptist Health Foundation, which was created 32 years ago to advance charitable giving for the health system's mission to serve patients, their families and the community's health care needs," Slattery said. "My goal is to bring continued growth and purpose to our work in the years ahead."

Slattery succeeds Pierre Allaire, who retired as vice president and chief development officer for Baptist Health Foundation

at the end of 2017 but is maintaining a transitional role through March 2018.

Ryan Ali joins the Baptist Health Foundation as Director of Development for Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center. He will oversee all fundraising efforts for Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center's new expansion, as well as its newly created Art in Healing Endowment.

"MD Anderson Cancer Center is one of the leading cancer care provider in the country, and to have an opportunity to work with the Baptist Health team to replicate the MD Anderson model for our community is the ultimate reward," Ali said. "Baptist MD Anderson is truly a gift to the community and unlike anything we have seen before."

Prior to his new role at the Baptist Health Foundation, Ali was the Director of Development for the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, leading the organization's fundraising and community outreach initiatives.

After five years with Baptist Health Foundation supporting Wolfson Children's Hospital, Joanna Blinn transitioned to a



Kerrie Slattery Joanna Blinn Ryan Ali

recently created position of director of operations for the Foundation.

In this new role, Blinn hopes to bring together all the philanthropic efforts for Baptist Health's four adult hospitals, Wolfson Children's and Baptist MD Anderson.

Prior to joining Baptist Health Foundation, Blinn worked as the FSCJ Foundation and then at Dreams Come True, a local nonprofit that grants dreams for local children battling a life-threatening illness.

"Across the system, we hope to convey impact and show how donations make a significant difference," Blinn said. "Our donors support underfunded programs. They enable us to maintain a high level of quality of care. They help us fill the void left by funding cuts. Philanthropy is more critical now than ever before."

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1607 Geraldine Drive – This adorable brick home in a welcoming, family-friendly neighborhood features three bedrooms; two baths; over 1,800 square feet; hardwood and tile floors throughout; plus living, dining and family rooms. The two-car garage has many shelves and a utility sink - it was a first class work shop for the previous owner! The two-car carport adds protected off-street parking for all the family. \$285,000

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# Abilities in Art

## Raising awareness for disabled residents

Abilities in Art began in 2014 to help raise disability awareness and provide an opportunity for the community to come together to create art using wheelchairs. The 5th Annual Abilities in Art was held Jan. 20 at Riverside Arts Market, where visitors were invited to hop on a wheelchair and zip down a canvas, leaving paint tracks in a pattern. Placing the canvas on a slight incline also showed participants how difficult it can be for a disabled person to move a wheelchair up a ramp.

“We use this forum to sign up new volunteers and introduce the general public to the programs and services provided at the ILRC [Independent Living Resource Center],” said Beth Meyer, Director of Development. “We also use this forum to create interest in the Mystery Trip Suitcase Party, which is on March 3rd and where we will sell the artwork created at Abilities in Art.



Left, Terry Duke, The ILRC operations assistant, and Director of Development Beth Meyer, right, paint wheels before Mackenzie Padgett takes her turn at creating wheelchair art at Abilities in Art, Jan. 20 at Riverside Arts Market.



The ILRC's interpreter, Johanna Neely, with her daughter, Lexi, sign “I love you,” before heading down the canvas at Abilities in Art.



Grayson Neely, a third-grade student at River City Science Academy



Margarita Maldonado, director of programs and services at The ILRC, helps Bella Dorthalina create wheelchair art on a canvas at Riverside Arts Market.



Fabian Solano supports The ILRC at Abilities in Art, Jan. 20 at Riverside Arts Market.

# Annual gala benefits Youth Ultimate

Frisbee flinging isn't just for Fido nor is it a sport for the fearful. As strenuous as soccer, Ultimate (as it is officially known) uses hands instead of knees or feet to advance the ball, but there's just as many opportunities to hit the ground.

Jacksonville Ultimate League has been around since at least 2004, although it officially organized as a nonprofit in 2012 and over the years has accumulated as many as 800 unique players, according to Matt Bishop, league president.

For the past several years, the league has hosted a gala to raise funds to put high school leagues into Duval County private, public and charter schools. This year the 3rd Annual Gala to Benefit

Youth Ultimate in Jacksonville was held Jan. 27 at Intuition Ale Works, with all proceeds going to subsidize an upcoming high school league and other youth clinics/events.

“We run the youth league so it's as affordable as possible for the youth and, by extension, their families,” said Bishop. “The revenue brought in from the gala helps defer costs we have for insurance, fields, supplies, and more. A typical league season costs several thousand dollars to run. Teams are still forming but we hope to have between six and eight this spring.”

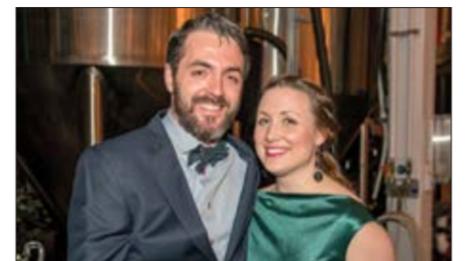
The gala included a Best Bow Tie competition, giant Jenga and cornhole games, photo booth, and trophy presentation.



Ultimate League President Matt Bishop with William Kilgannon



Michael Raulerson and Mandy Rypkema



Joe Rawlinson and Megan Johnson

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Patricia Ross, Beth Langley and Kendra McCrary



Dominic Gonzalez, Kia Nord and Kenny Ortiz

**'Continental' dinner series benefits Cummer Gardens reconstruction**

The first of three unique dinner parties to benefit reconstruction of the Cummer Gardens, heavily damaged in September 2017 by Hurricane Irma, was held Jan. 11 to a sold-out crowd of 180 diners.

La Dolce Vita – The Sweet Life – began with a VIP tour of art selected to complement the seated, family-style Italian dining experience. Chicken caprese and a porcini mushroom and veal ragu were the offered entrée choices.

Sponsors included Jim and Joan Van Vleck, Inspired Palates Dinner Series Presenting Sponsor; Lory Doolittle, Helen Lane, Joannie

and Russell Newton, Italian Dinner Partners; Carolyn M. Lindsay, Mary Pietan, Tom and Stephanie Welchans, Italian Dinner Underwriters.

"The Dinner Party series is a wonderful way to gather the Cummer family to support the museum and help the reconstruction of our beloved historic gardens," said Joannie Newton. "It was lovely to see long-time and new supporters at this new event!"

This first benefit, in honor of the Cummer's Italian Garden, will be followed by "British Invasion," an English dinner party, Thursday, Feb. 15, and "South Hampton," a New York dinner party on Thursday, Mar. 15.

**Baseball executive draws large crowd at Florida Forum**

Baseball executive Theo Epstein, president of baseball operations for the Chicago Cubs, was the Florida Forum's second keynote speaker in its 2017-2018 series, held Jan. 16 at the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts.

Epstein, who led the Cubs in 2016 to their first World Series title in 108 years, drew 1,300 to the lecture, which was moderated by Tim Cost, president of Jacksonville University; an estimated 350 attended the reception following.

Epstein and his twin brother, Paul, started a foundation, called Foundation To Be Named Later, which has raised \$7.3 million to help

disadvantaged youth in Chicago, and in Boston, where Epstein was the General Manager for the Boston Red Sox, the youngest GM in the history of the MLB. He also led the Red Sox to World Series victories in 2004, their first in 86 years, and again in 2007.

The Florida Forum Speaker Series concludes on March 5 with Ambassador Caroline Kennedy. For more information, visit The Women's Board website at [womensboard-wolfsonchildrenshospital.com](http://womensboard-wolfsonchildrenshospital.com). For more information and to purchase tickets, visit The Women's Board website at [womensboard-wolfsonchildrenshospital.com](http://womensboard-wolfsonchildrenshospital.com).



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Emily Abood and Melody Pendlebury



Monica Jacoby and Laurie Dubow, with Marilyn Carpenter



Ab Deshmukh, Jena Cawley, Kristen and Tom Majdanics

Culinary delights, original art showcase students' abilities

Spirits couldn't be dampened by the weather as over 300 students, families and supporters of North Florida School of Special Education gathered under tents on the campus for the annual Dinner on the Farm fundraiser Jan. 28.

The school's transition and post-grad students prepared and served a delightful dinner, and guests browsed artwork created by students. Live music and a raffle topped the evening which benefited Berry Good Farms, a self-sustaining microenterprise. Event sponsors included Live Oak Contracting, EverBank, City of Jacksonville's Disabled Services Division, Rayonier Advanced Materials, VyStar Credit Union, Summit Construction Group and J.E. Abercrombie, Inc.

Delicious Destinations delivers funds for community outreach

After a four-month postponement, the 16th Annual Delicious Destinations was held Jan. 6, at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, a founding partner, along with Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits in partnership with Miller Electric, W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractor, Wells Fargo, Bank of America and Merrill Lynch.

Event chairs for the program themed "Come Sail Away" were Sala and Ash Pradhan, M.D., Mollie and W.E. "Billy" Sumner III, M.D., and Amy and Steven Wacaster.

The celebration of inspired food and notable wines benefited St. Vincent's

HealthCare's community outreach programs, which provide free medical care for underprivileged children and adults throughout the area.

An exclusive VIP reception recognized the sponsors who support the critical mission of St. Vincent's, and was followed by the premier food and wine event, live auction, and recognition of the chefs. Wine educator Julie Pepi was on hand during a special wine tasting to discuss wines donated by Southern Glazer's. More than 180 wines were provided to accompany a stellar array of dishes prepared by 13 celebrity chefs.

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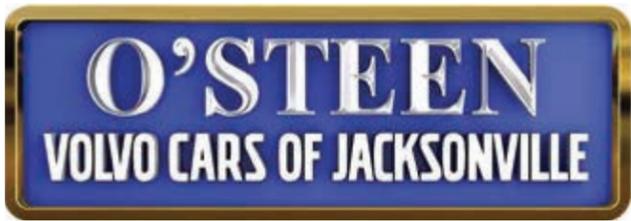
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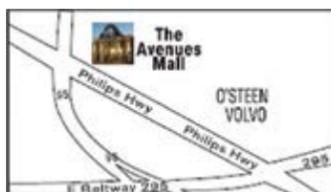


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# City honors legacy of King at inspirational annual events

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s only visit to Jacksonville, Florida was not planned, nor was it a positive experience 54 years ago.

Arrested for stopping to eat at a "whites-only" restaurant in St. Augustine on June 11, 1964, King was transferred to the Duval County Jail after spending a night in jail in St. Johns County. His hearing was held before a Grand Jury at the Federal courthouse in Jacksonville.

In St. Augustine during its 400th anniversary, King and others were there to gain support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964. On June 18, after being arrested for protesting segregation at a motor lodge, the Grand Jury asked them to leave St. Augustine for one month to diffuse the racially tense situation, but they remained there until July 1.

The Civil Rights Act was signed July 2, 1964, with Dr. King attending. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on Dec. 10, 1964.

Fifty years after his death (April 4, 1968), Jacksonville commemorated King's birth (Jan. 15, 1929) beginning with the 31st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast, Jan. 12 at the Prime Osborn Convention Center.

Three young people were recognized as Tomorrow's Leaders, selected on the basis of an essay. Jerome Singleton, a fifth-grader at R.V. Daniels Elementary School, Kaila Skeen, an eighth-grader at Kirby Smith Middle School, and Kehinde



Rev. Bruce Jones, Southside United Methodist Church, with Denise Lee, City of Jacksonville Fight Blight Director, at the MLK Breakfast Jan. 12.

Daniel Sogbesan, a 10th-grader at The Bolles School, were honored for exemplifying the ideals and principles of Dr. King.

In her remarks about the breakfast's theme "Lifting the Legacy," keynote speaker Vernice "FlyGirl" Armour said "Before we lift up the legacy, we have to stand up!" and "We have so much power and possibility, but the question is 'what are we going to do with it beyond today?' It's not just about one day, it's about every day."

On Jan. 15, after a wreath-laying ceremony, the 37th annual parade was held Downtown, followed by a celebration in Hemming Park. Also on Jan. 15, hundreds volunteered across Jacksonville to spruce up schools and neighborhoods as part of the 2018 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.



Decorated Montford Point Marines George Gillis, retired Marine Master Sergeant, Jordan McIvory, WW II veteran, Alpha P. Gainous, WW II Staff Sergeant, and Ronald Jackson.



Anne-Marie Knight, Mayo Clinic community relations administrator, with Nicole Thomas, president of Baptist Health South, at the MLK Breakfast Jan. 12.



Taylor McDonald, Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center, with Bishop Rudolph McKissick Sr. and Kristin Murray at the MLK Breakfast Jan. 12.

## Neighborhoods enhanced through Day of Service

Approximately 800 volunteers and several community partners joined United Way of Northeast Florida and Wells Fargo for the Fourth Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Jan. 15. Sponsored by Wells Fargo, the event featured 27 service projects across Northeast Florida in Springfield, New Town, Arlington, East and Northwest Jacksonville, and St. Johns County. Projects included enhancing neighborhoods, building educational trails, improving school facilities and informing neighbors about how to strengthen their financial stability. (Photos by Jeremy Paterno)



Groundwork Jacksonville kicked off its year-long project to create a community-inspired mosaic in the Sugar Hill neighborhood with the help of volunteers during United Way of Northeast Florida's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Jan. 15.



Colorful images were painted on playground sidewalks by volunteers during United Way of Northeast Florida's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Jan. 15.



An image of the United States was refreshed by volunteers at St. Clair Evans Elementary during United Way of Northeast Florida's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Jan. 15.



Volunteers of all ages participated in family-friendly projects during United Way of Northeast Florida's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Jan. 15.



Hundreds of Wells Fargo employees volunteered during United Way of Northeast Florida's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Jan. 15. Wells Fargo is the lead sponsor of this Day of Service event.



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Keith and Claudia Portell with Dorothy and Bob Waggoner



Karen Allen, Chris Allen



Carol Grimes, Jane Condon and Jeanne Chambliss



Marme Kopp, Sandra and Joseph Coyle

## Lowkey networking over official business at JAX Chamber ‘meeting’

Perhaps not a lot of official business occurs at the JAX Chamber’s annual meeting, but a tremendous amount of networking among the region’s business leaders took place at the 133rd annual meeting held Jan. 25 at the Doro District. “After 133 years, we still call it a meeting – but let’s be honest, it’s really a party,” said the invitation.

With both indoor and outdoor venues, Chamber members and guests mingled to live music from The Firewater Tent Revival as they enjoyed signature cocktails from Manifest Distilling and craft beer from Intuition Ale Works, and food from local restaurants.

Sponsors of the meeting, er...party, were Girl Scouts of Gateway Council, Gresham, Smith and Partners, JAXPORT, and PRI Productions.



Event sponsor Girl Scouts of Gateway Council's Bridgette Jones, Girl Scout Troop Support Coordinator with Courtney Horton and Heather Persampieri, both with Girl Scout Community Engagement



Rebekah Hagan, CenterState Bank's Wally Barrs with Paul Woods of the Monique Burr Foundation, and Rebecca Davis



Chuck Shealy, LISC Lending Program Officer with Downtown Vision's CEO, Jake Gordon



JAX Chamber Chair-elect Debbie Buckland with Kelly Pourciau, Chamber COO



Valerie Beaubrun, manager of St. Johns Town Center, with Lyndsay Rossman, Manisha Joshi and Julie Ryan

## ‘Refined’ low-country boil draws rowing club supporters

There couldn't be anything more appropriate for the First Coast Rowing Club's gala than dancing to bluegrass tunes from Cain't Never Could at “A Night on the Riverbank – A refined low-country boil,” held Jan. 27 at the Ortega River Club.

Originally planned for last September, Hurricane Irma had other plans for the former Stanton River Bank Rowing organization. With a new club name and a new date, the annual fundraiser drew guests from all over Northeast Florida in support of the medal-winning rowing club.

Founded in 1990 to help children establish strong character, learn life skills and develop physically and emotionally through the sport of rowing, the nonprofit has won numerous local, state, regional and national championships.

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# Second annual cancer fundraiser improves on first-year success



Bonnie Davis, Gracie Register, American Cancer Society Community Manager Alexandra Davis, Event Lead Heather Riley, Sarah Skinner and Emily Dostie

The 2nd Annual Taste of San Marco to benefit the American Cancer Society was a huge success, according to Alexandra Davis, ACS community manager. Held Jan. 20 at The Bolles School, about 140 guests helped raise over \$8,300, almost \$3,000 more than the first year, said Davis.

"I am so grateful for all of the support for our 2nd Annual Taste of San Marco! With help from our sponsors, food and beverage partners, and guests we were able to surpass last year's total to raise funds for the American Cancer Society," said Davis. "It was such a wonderful night, with some incredible food and drinks! As someone who grew up in San Marco and went to The Bolles School, it warms my heart to see such an amazing community come together to support the American Cancer Society as we attack cancer from every angle."

During the evening, Dr. Steven Soud, director of college counseling at Bolles, told the story of how cancer has impacted his life.

The food and beverage pairing event brought together many local businesses, such as Taverna with Intuition Ale Works; Matthew's with Carve Vodka; Rue Saint-Marc and Manifest Distilling; Town Hall and Grape & Grain Exchange; Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club with The Volstead; Bearded Pig BBQ and Bold City Brewery, and for dessert, Good Dough with Wicked Barley and The Hyppo with Wine Decadence.



Jason Smith with Kellie Ann Kelleher, American Cancer Society Major Gifts Director



Heather Jones and Larry Shears



Will Robertson with Tyler Ruppel, Annie Lee and Luke O'Steen



Bonnie Davis with The Honorable Eleni Derke



Brittaney Brown, Michael Thomas and Scott Riley



Scott Olson with his wife, Jan Olson, Bolles School Director of Communications

# Cummer Gardens to benefit from juried art exhibition

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, along with the Berdy Dental Group, are partnering to present a community-focused juried art exhibition featuring works by members of the Jacksonville Artists Guild.

The exhibition, titled Azaleas to Zinnias, will be presented, beginning June 6 through December 16, 2018, in support of the Cummer's Garden Reconstruction Fund.

The Museum will exhibit the works of 10 artists in its Bank of America Concourse Gallery, among which will be a "Best in Show" and "Judges Recognition."

Additional space for selected participants to exhibit their works will be provided in the Berdy Dental Group gallery/office at 1511 Stockton St. Berdy will award a \$150 cash prize for one work voted a "Fan Favorite."

A joint reception will be held on Wednesday, June 6, 2018, beginning with a wine and cheese reception at The Museum from 5:30 to 7 p.m., and a dessert reception at Berdy Dental Group from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Members of the Jacksonville Artist Guild should contact Ron Episcopo at [episcopor@gmail.com](mailto:episcopor@gmail.com) for additional information or to acknowledge their intention to participate. You must be a member of JAG in order to participate. Visit [jacksonvilleartistsguild.org](http://jacksonvilleartistsguild.org) for a membership application.

# Episcopal Children's Services to honor 'local heroes'

Episcopal Children's Services will recognize the Hon. John A. Delaney, Dr. Nathaniel Glover, Richard G. Skinner, Jr., M.D. and Florida Blue at the 13th annual Children's Champion Awards Gala, Thursday, Feb. 22, at the Omni Jacksonville.

"These honorees are local heroes – change-makers whose efforts have made a positive difference for our youngest and most vulnerable citizens," said Connie Stophel, Episcopal Children's Services CEO. "We are grateful for their dedication to children and delighted to celebrate their accomplishments."

Since 2006, ECS has presented Children's Champion Awards to individuals and organizations, such as this year's corporate honoree Florida Blue, that make children's well-being a top priority for the community. For information about the award recipients, visit [ecs4kids.org/childrens-champion-awards-gala](http://ecs4kids.org/childrens-champion-awards-gala).

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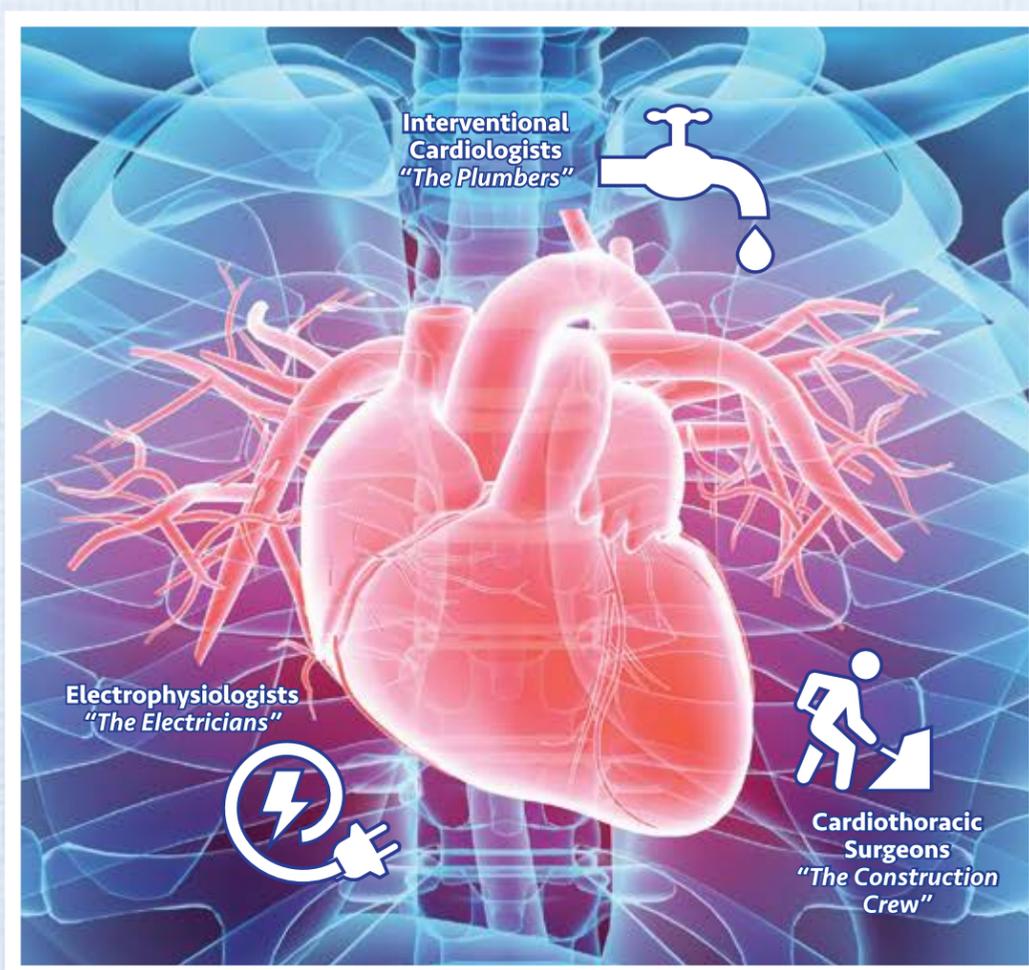
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# Two-time open-heart survivor has mission to support AHA research

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

After surviving two open-heart operations, Hunt Hawkins is a true believer in the mission of the American Heart Association (AHA).

Born with a congenital heart defect – a bicuspid aortic valve – but not discovered until he was 20 years old, the San Jose resident and self-described health nut underwent his first major surgery at the Cleveland Clinic at age 50. Several years later, after undergoing dental work in 2013, he incurred a staph infection that forced him to return to the operating table.

“I had the dental work done in September, and had traveled back and forth from the West Coast to the East Coast over four weeks,” said Hawkins, a 24-year veteran at Stein Mart’s Southbank headquarters, serving as Senior Vice President of Human Resources, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chief Operating Officer before becoming Chief Executive Officer more than a year ago.

“Almost exactly four weeks from seeing the dentist, I ran six miles on a Saturday morning while my wife was out shopping. When I finished running I felt like I was getting the flu. The dental work I had ended up infecting my replacement heart valve with a staph infection. I went septic overnight. I had full-blown septic shock and DIC (disseminated intravascular coagulation) from Sunday morning until Tuesday when I was able to wake up,” he recalled, adding he had emergency surgery at Baptist Heart Hospital to replace the faulty valve a second time.



Hunt Hawkins

It was last year that Stein Mart got serious, quadrupling its annual donation to \$210,000 by getting customers in its stores involved nationwide during Heart Month in February.

“We talked to our customers and said, ‘How would you like to give to the American Heart Association? Heart disease is the No. 1 killer and stroke is the No. 5 killer.’ We want to educate our customers with posters and messages in the stores and give them a chance to support heart research. So many of our associates and their families have been impacted by heart disease, as have our customers,” he said.

Stein Mart also encouraged its employees to participate in free CPR classes taught by AHA representatives at its corporate headquarters. At its corporate office, employees were asked to form teams that were challenged to take the stairs, walk the Riverwalk, and join company walking and running clubs,” said Hawkins, who served several years on the AHA’s executive Heart Walk team before joining AHA’s Jacksonville board this year.

“I’m one of those individuals that keeps an eye on employee health because healthy individuals are better and more productive employees. Health insurance is a major cost to the company, and it’s a major concern for the country. As a company we encourage our people to get into exercise and make sure they take care of themselves,” Hawkins explained.

This February, Stein Mart stores will continue their campaign as part of the American Heart Association’s annual “Life is Why We Give” fundraiser. “Its goal is to raise \$300,000,” Hawkins said. “Heart disease goes on in my mother’s side of the family pretty far back, so I’ve been conscious of it for a long time. Even when I gave to the United Way – which I still do – I designate those funds to the American Heart Association to support its research. There is no question, it’s important to get heart disease and stroke off the list as the country’s No. 1 and No. 5 killers.”

**“There is no question, it’s important to get heart disease and stroke off the list as the country’s No. 1 and No. 5 killers.”**

— Hunt Hawkins

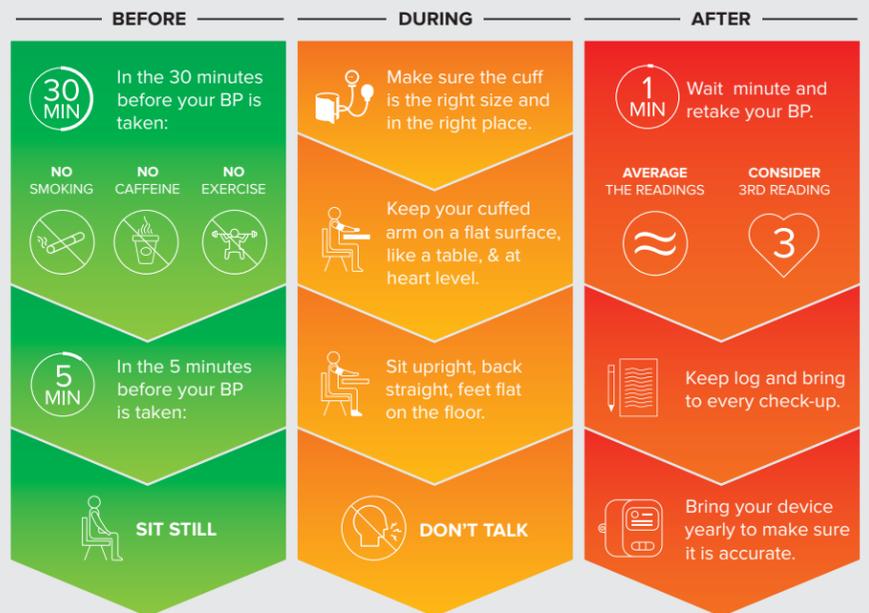
“I’m a double 10-percenter for surviving the DIC and septic shock, and I’m on my second heart valve, so the American Heart Association is very important to me,” he said. “It’s a big deal to have two open hearts, and I’ve had them. It’s like the American Heart Association says, you need to eat right, you need to exercise, and you need not to smoke. I’ve never been a smoker, but my parents were. My mother died of a massive heart attack and my father died of lung cancer,” he added.

As a top administrator for Stein Mart, Hawkins made sure his company became involved with the American Heart Association when it was asked to take part in the non-profit’s annual Heart Walk. “We raised a little bit of money then, and the next year we raised \$45,000 in corporate,” he said.

## How To Get Your Blood Pressure Checked

By American Heart Association News

The First step in controlling your blood pressure is knowing your numbers, and that requires an accurate BP reading. Here’s how to do it right, whether you’re at a clinic or at home.



Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm Hg upper number	and	Diastolic mm Hg lower number
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	and	Less than 80
High Blood Pressure Hypertension - Stage 1	130-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure Hypertension - Stage 2	140 or Higher	or	90 or higher
Hypertension Crisis Consult your doctor immediately	Higher than 180	and/or	Higher than 120

## Free program helps residents maintain healthy blood pressure

The guidelines for high blood pressure have changed, and a free community-based program is making a difference to help participants battling the health threat, which is the second leading cause of death in the United States, according to the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association.

Sponsored locally by Florida Blue, the free online program, *Check. Change. Control.*, helps residents track and manage their blood pressure. So far, participants in the science-based program have seen an average drop in systolic blood pressure of 11 mmHG, according to Lisa Craig, a spokesperson for the Heart/Stroke nonprofit. Those wishing to take part in the program can sign up at [www.ccctracker.com/aha/floridablue](http://www.ccctracker.com/aha/floridablue). The Jacksonville community campaign code is FBY17.

“Only cigarettes kill more people than high blood pressure,” said Florida Blue Chief Medical Officer Elana Schrader. “You can’t see or feel high blood pressure, so regularly check your numbers and be accountable in a program like *Check. Change. Control.* This program can help motivate people to make life-saving changes. And we encourage the community to participate in this free program.”

According to the American Heart/Stroke Association, such programs need more extensive use because more than 100 million American adults fall into the first stage of high blood pressure

(hypertension) as defined by the new perimeter reading of 130/80 or higher, down from the former old standard of 140/90. A reading below 120/80 is considered normal. High blood pressure increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, and heart failure, and also can contribute to vision loss and kidney disease.

African Americans are more likely to have high blood pressure at a younger age, and blacks along with Hispanic Americans are less likely to have their blood pressure under control, according to recent research by the heart/stroke association.

Florida ranks 33rd in the United States in high blood pressure rates, according to the Center for Disease Control. Nationwide, more than 65,000 people have enrolled in *Check. Change. Control.*, which offers a way to keep blood pressure in check with monitoring, group activities, and mentoring.

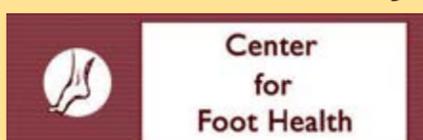
Informational events about the program will be held simultaneously at Florida Blue Retail Centers and the Winston Family YMCA, located at 221 Riverside Avenue, on Monday, Feb. 5, Monday, April 2, and Monday, May 7, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Florida Blue is located at 4855 Town Center Parkway and 13141 City Station Drive.

For more information about *Check. Change. Control.* in Jacksonville, contact Ashley Plotts at (904) 903-5212 or email [Ashley.Plotts@heart.org](mailto:Ashley.Plotts@heart.org).



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# Stein family sees loved one's memory live on at Jewish agency

By Karen J. Rieley  
Resident Community News

Capping off its year-long celebration of 100 years "helping people help themselves," Jewish Family & Community Services (JFCS) held a grand reopening Jan. 21 for its renovated and renamed Allison Stein Robbins Building.

Previously known as the Dupont Building, the Allison Stein Robbins Building, at 6261 Dupont Station Court E in San Jose, is named for one of David Stein's daughters. During the Sunday dedication, Stein told the story of his daughter's decision to make a gift to the food pantry. He and Allison were having breakfast together one day in April 2013, and she told him she wanted to make a donation to a worthy charity.

Right after they finished breakfast, Stein took Allison to JFCS to introduce her to Colleen Rodriguez, executive director, who told them how many families were hungry in Jacksonville and how the food pantry helped them. Allison wrote a check on the

spot for \$10,000 as a match to the Block family's \$10,000 Challenge Match to benefit the Max Block Food Pantry.

Allison was a long-time San Marco resident until she passed away in September 2013, not long after the donation, at the age of 53. The family remembers that she loved to tell people that she would be spending eternity in her 32207 ZIP Code where she and two generations before her grew up and lived.

Allison was known for her generosity. She helped build school playgrounds and filled backpacks of food so that children would not go hungry. She loved giving most when it was spontaneous. She paid off a purple church hat that had been on layaway for years for an unknown elderly woman she just met. Her legacy not only lives on in her son and granddaughter, but in the JFCS building that now bears her name.

The ceremony included dedication of the building's expanded Max Block Food Pantry and new Fanny Landwirth Clothes Closet.

The food pantry was expanded from a single room with a pass-through service window where staff and volunteers handed people a pre-packed bag of food to a 900-square-foot area that offers food-insecure families the ability to shop for what they need and like, based on healthy nutrition guidelines. The pantry provides over 70,000 meals annually to local food-insecure families of all races, religions and backgrounds. The clothes closet provides much-needed clothes to the families who come to JFCS for help, as well as the many foster children the agency serves.

"We're excited that our capital campaign is nearly complete, which will make both the Allison Stein Robbins Building and the Alan J. Taffet Building mortgage-free," said Rodriguez. "That means future donations



Looking on as Katie Robbins cuts the ribbon are (front) Bill, Lauren, Jeffrey and Alex Block; Dave Robbins, David and Linda Stein; back: Melinda Sebasovich, Colleen Rodriguez, Cole and Tracy Westbrook and Jodie Leach

*"Future donations that people make to the agency will go directly to provide services to people in need."*

— Colleen Rodriguez, Executive Director, Jewish Family & Community Services



Suzanne Zimmerman, JFCS financial assistance specialist and food pantry manager, with Marsha Pollock, president of River Garden Hebrew Home

that people make to the agency will go directly to provide services to people in need."

The dedication also celebrated the sixth anniversary of the Jacksonville chapter of PJ Library®, which partners with communities around the world to provide families raising Jewish children with the gift of free, high-quality children's books, music and resources that foster deeper engagement with Jewish life. This initiative was envisioned and financially supported by Harold Grinspoon, a successful real estate mogul and founder of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

In 2011, Laurie and Linda Dubow and their family and Sheryl Greenwald from

the Sam Berman Charitable foundation saw the value in bringing PJ Library to Jacksonville and on December 1 of that year, PJ Library Jacksonville participants received their first shipment of books direct to their homes. Since that time, 633 PJ Library recipients from Nassau County to St. Augustine and everywhere in between have received 23,699 books.

The dedication was concluded with a PJ Library Family Concert by Rick Recht, who has been recognized as a pioneer of the Jewish rock music genre, putting it to use to develop Jewish pride and identity.

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# Free concert features local improvisational organist

Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church will host a free organ concert Sunday, February 25 at 4 p.m. Locally renowned organist Andrew Clarke will play the Schlueter pipe organ with its antiphonal organ and Trompette en Chamade, performing many beloved and familiar classics, such as choices from Handel's "Water Music" and the "Toccatina" from Widor's "Organ Symphony," favorite Broadway tunes, much-loved American hymn classics, traditional "Southern Harmony" melodies, and some of the wonderful improvisations for which Clarke is known.



Andrew Clarke

Jacksonville University and Florida State College in Jacksonville.

Since 2013, Clarke has been the organist at Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church 4001 Hendricks Ave., and prior was the organist and music director at Riverside Presbyterian Church for 35 years. Throughout his career, Clarke has been a choral director, organ recitalist, piano accompanist, teacher, and composer; he still occasionally composes.

For more information about the concert, call (904) 396-7745.

Clarke holds a master's degree in improvisation from Yale University and an undergraduate degree in music from the New England Conservatory of Music. He pursued advanced organ study in Europe, has taught organ improvisation at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale and at Williams College, and has been on the faculties of

## Giving thanks, staying active helps resident reach 100

Every day, Lucille Nagy said she gives thanks to the Lord for the new day. It's her secret, she said, to reaching the age of 100.

More than 60 residents, friends and families gathered at the Towers of Jacksonville on Jan. 19 to celebrate Nagy's centennial birthday that day.

Before moving to the Towers 28 years ago, Nagy had lived on Cortez Road in Southside Estates, where she raised three children, worked as a cashier at Winn-Dixie and before that, as a bookkeeper for a jeweler.

Not one to keep still, when she moved to the Towers, she worked at the desk until she broke her arm seven years ago. "I still volunteer," she said.

Nagy is in good health and still cooks – for herself and for her across-the-hall neighbor, Frances Crews. "Keep yourself active and, as long as you do, you're going



Lucille Nagy

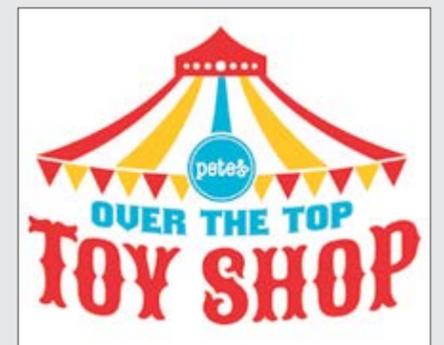
to keep going," said Nagy, imparting another Fountain of Youth secret.

"She cooks and feeds me, and she cleans her kitchen floor; it looks like it's wet it's so clean and shiny. Everybody loves her," said Crews.



# There's more to love about Sweet Pete's

Jacksonville's sweetest destination adds ice cream parlour and toy shop



There's always something new at Sweet Pete's! From top to bottom of the three-story candy factory and emporium, you'll always find handcrafted quality chocolate and more than a thousand different types of candies – but now there's even more to explore!

Check out the new Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour on the second floor, where you'll find good, old-fashioned ice cream and other treats for dessert. Plus, it's a great place to host a birthday party for any age. As servers bring out special creations, like the 30-scoop "Zoo" on a stretcher, they'll serenade the birthday child – or adult – because everyone loves ice cream!

If you want to melt your young ones' hearts even more, don't skip Pete's Over the Top Toy Shop on the third floor. The new, circus-themed toy store – under a red-and-white-striped tent – offers nearly

a thousand items, from classic books and plush characters to match, to educational toys, and playsets. For make-believe play beyond your child's wildest imagination, visit the Princess Room, full of dress up, unicorns, baby dolls and all things pink! Under the main tent you'll find magic show items and puppets of all shapes and sizes.

From one floor to another, you'll find no excuse for being empty-handed on Valentine's Day – or any day. Drop in at Sweet Pete's, Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour, and Pete's Over the Top Toy Shop at 400 Hogan St. downtown. Visit [sweetpetescandy.com](http://sweetpetescandy.com) for hours and more information.

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# THE WAY WE WERE : BOB & BARBARA SWINDELL

By Susan D. Brandenburg  
Resident Community News

Bob Swindell says that his and Barbara's love story is the "greatest one ever told." "We've been married 57 years, 5 months, 26 days and 2½ hours," he announced, glancing at his watch during an interview at 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 13, 2018.

With a steel-trap memory, tempered and honed by deep affection for his wife, Bob Swindell explained exactly why he considers their love story to be the greatest ever told.

He was about 13 years old when he found a wallet in the San Marco Theater. It had no money in it, but there was an I.D. that said it belonged to a Barbara Wilson with an address on Sorrento Road. Being an honest boy, he took the wallet to that address. When he knocked on the door, a lovely lady with beautiful eyes answered it. She was so grateful that she gave him 50 cents.

Fast forward to Landon High School, where Bob was a junior and Barbara was a sophomore. "We didn't know each other back then," recalls Bob. "I was dating a girl and thought she might be at a party on Ridgeland Road, so I knocked on the door looking for her." The door was opened by that same lovely lady with the beautiful

eyes! She had moved, but she recognized that boy who returned the wallet. When he discovered the girl wasn't there, she invited him into the kitchen and gave him a bowl of ice cream.

In the meantime, Barbara remembers asking her neighbor, Bob Harris, who was that boy who always wore a cowboy hat. That was, of course, Bob Harris' best friend, Bob Swindell.

Their parallel lives were again reinforced when Bob's parents took him at about age 13 to Southside Christian Church in San Marco to be baptized, because their church in St. Nicholas didn't have a baptismal font. Barbara's family attended Southside Christian Church.

Then there was the day at the beach, shortly after Bob graduated from Landon, when he was playing with his new puppy, a Boxer named Satan, and a group of girls came up to him. "What's wrong with his ears?" one girl asked. Patiently, but with an irritated sigh, Bob explained that Satan's ears had been clipped and nothing whatsoever was wrong. Barbara, the girl with the question, was destined to meet Satan again.

Fast forward, Bob was in his sophomore year at The Citadel and was home on Christmas break. He and his buddy, George Truitt, were hanging out at the Crystal Drive-in (across the street from Bishop Kenny High School).

They ran into a couple of cute girls and jumped in the back of their car. The girl driving the car was quite attractive. Her name was Barbara Wilson. Bob asked her for a date and when he knocked on her door, the Ridgeland Road address seemed familiar. Sure enough, the lovely lady with the beautiful eyes opened the door. Barbara was stunned to see her mother laughing and talking with this young man as if she knew him. Ruth Wilson explained to her daughter, "I knew him long before you did!"

"We had all these crazy connections that went back years!" exclaimed Bob. "We were truly meant for each other."

In addition to the fact that he already knew her mother, Bob connected with Barbara on the dance floor as well. She loved to dance and, wow, that boy could dance! "My parents used to push the furniture back



Barbara and Bob Swindell, 2009

*"Barbara always says the reason she married me was because I could dance!"*

— Bob Swindell

in our living room on Friday nights and dance," recalled Bob. "They taught us well. Barbara always says the reason she married me was because I could dance!"

The daughter of Royal and Ruth Wilson of San Marco and the son of Robert and Gladys Swindell of Arlington, Barbara and Bob were secretly married on July 18, 1959 at the First Methodist Church in Folkston, Georgia.

Barbara, having attended Jacksonville University for a short time, was a student at the University of South Carolina and Bob was still a cadet at The Citadel. A member of the elite Summerall Guards, Bob wasn't due to graduate until 1960. Cadets were not allowed to be married and he would have been kicked out of school, so he and Barbara told no one that they had tied the knot.

"When I look back, we were foolish," said Barbara. "There was no reason for us to get married except that we didn't want to wait any longer...back then, six or eight months was a lifetime."

By November 1959, however, Barbara's mother had started making wedding plans for her daughter, so they had to tell their parents. Luckily for them, both sets of parents already had accepted that this young couple would be together forever.

After Bob graduated from The Citadel, the Swindells moved to Savannah, Georgia for a short time until Bob heard from his best friend, Bob Harris, that a better opportunity awaited them in their hometown. Bob and Barbara were thrilled to return to

*Continued on page 35*



Barbara and Bob Swindell in Charleston, April 1959



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Jacksonville, where he began a long career in the print industry, working for the Jacksonville Paper Company, International Utilities, Palmer Paper Company and the International Paper Company, eventually retiring after 38 years.

In the meantime, Barbara gave birth to their two children, Chris and Carrie, and when she wasn't carpooling them to school at Bolles and making sure that her husband and children were well-fed, clothed and happy in their San Marco neighborhood, she developed a great interest in antiques.

"My passion for antiques went from being a hobby to becoming a career, first as an antique store owner of a small shop called 76 Antiques and then, in real estate," she said, noting that she began attending estate sales with her friend, Beverly Brandenburger, earned her real estate license in 1978 and became a real estate broker in 1983.

And it was in 1983 that another parallel happenstance occurred. Barbara, who grew up in San Marco and has always loved Brookwood Road, was a realtor now and learned about a home for sale on Brookwood. When she saw the home, she immediately called Bob and told him he needed to come right away because she had found the house she wanted to live in. Bob pulled

*"There was no reason for us to get married except that we didn't want to wait any longer... back then, six or eight months was a lifetime."*

— Barbara Swindell



Winners of a San Jose Country Club costume party, 1974

up and walked in and immediately said, "Let's buy it." She looked at him inquisitively and said, "You haven't even gone upstairs." Bob smiled. "I've been in this house before," he said. "My friend, Don Smith, lived here."

They still live in their beautiful brick home on Brookwood Road and, after graduating from Bolles and the University of Florida, both of their children, Chris Swindell and Carrie Atkins, returned to their home turf, raised their children in San Marco, and live nearby. "We all love San Marco," said Barbara. "Our fondest memories are right here."

Barbara remembers learning to drive within the confines of Hendricks Avenue over to the River, which included the famous "Thrill Bridge." "It was high and steep back then," she recalls, "but they eventually took the thrill out of it, for safety reasons."

Back in the 1950s, it seemed that everyone knew everyone in Jacksonville. Landon High School students frequented the San Marco Theater, Blane Rexall Drugstore, the bowling alley and Abe Lavert's Record Shop. Kids could listen to a record and if they liked it, they could buy it. One day, a man came into Abe Lavert's Record Shop and approached a group of teens, asking to take a photo of them because he was doing "a thing on Elvis Presley." Barbara was among those teenagers and that photograph eventually ran in Life Magazine. She still remembers the kids in that photo and, in fact, still sees some of them to this day.

"We have a Landon reunion every five years," said Barbara. "Bob and I have never missed one."

Today, Barbara's Riverpoint Real Estate Office is located nearly within walking distance of their home. Bob maintains their home and Barbara's office building, which they own, and spends time with his grandchildren, Zach, Lauren, Shannon and Robby. He visits with his father, Robert Swindell, now 101 years old, plays golf at San Jose Country Club, visits with his best friend, Bob Harris, in Orlando, and substitute teaches at Hendricks Avenue Elementary, Mandarin Oaks, and Stanton High School.

"We have a great life!" said Bob. "We've traveled the world and introduced our grandchildren to a love of travel, but there's no place like home. Every day, Barbara and I pass by a memory. It's great to live where you grew up."



Swindell Family 1967: Bob and Barbara with daughter Carrie and son Chris

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# Morning Star School classroom named after former student

By Susan D. Brandenburg  
Resident Community News

Thanks to its warmth and concern, the Cascone family has never forgotten the great start Morning Star School gave Sharon, one of the school's first students when it was founded in 1956 to serve children with learning disabilities.

"The Cascone family approached us about helping to fund our new Life Skills Center – that in itself is a gift from God," said Morning Star School Principal Jean Barnes.

The fourth child of Michael and Dorothy Cascone of Jacksonville, Sharon Cascone Ray was born with a hearing disability which led to speech impairment. Sharon and her family attribute much of her success in life to her foundational learning experience at Morning Star School, and for this reason, The Michael, Jr. and Elizabeth Belyea Cascone Family Foundation has made a naming donation in her honor to the school's new Life Skills Classroom.

On December 18, 2017, Sharon, her son, Charles Ray, and her brother, Michael Cascone, Jr., visited Morning Star School. They were there to take a tour of the school (specifically the new high school wing and the Life Skills classroom) hosted by Principal Jean Barnes, Sister Elise Kennedy (former principal of St. Pius and now on staff at Morning Star), and Deacon Scott Conway (Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Diocese of St. Augustine).

Also on hand to greet Sharon Cascone Ray for the first time in 60 years was Sister Elizabeth Marie Stoup, SSJ (principal of Morning Star School when Sharon was attending in the late 1950s).

For the Cascone family, the dramatic reunion of former student and teacher took precedence even over the tour of the school's beautiful new high school wing and planned Life Skills classroom.

"This is my teacher!" declared Sharon, enthusiastically introducing Sister Elizabeth Marie to her brother and son. "We haven't seen each other for 60 years!"

Embracing her former student, it was obvious that Sister Elizabeth Marie remembered Sharon fondly. "Sharon was a stand-out student to begin with," she said. "There were only a few students at the beginning and all of us on the staff were responsible for the whole shooting match, so I got to know Sharon well. First, she was one of the most helpful students I ever taught. There were different levels of learning and different ages of children in the classroom and Sharon wanted to assist me in teaching them all."

Sister Elizabeth Marie grinned, recalling that "Sit down, Sharon!" was a phrase she used frequently.



Sharon Cascone Ray and Sister Elizabeth Marie Stoup, SSJ



Sharon Cascone (in plaid dress)

"Sharon was smart and knew exactly what she wanted," continued her former teacher, "but sometimes it was hard for her to express her needs and she would get impatient. That's where I came in. I've been told I'm a very patient person...and it helped that I could understand what she was saying."

The positive support she received at Morning Star School from second grade on helped Sharon to grow and flourish, preparing her for the challenges she would face as a sixth grader in public school.

"I was so proud of her when she went into the public school," recalled Sister Elizabeth Marie. "It was before the law was passed giving special needs children the right to education and she went into a situation that took real courage."

Sister Elizabeth Marie shared an old black and white photo of Sharon's class at Morning Star "back in the day," and the two laughed as they pointed out the young girl in a plaid dress standing directly in the middle of the photo. "That's Sharon," said Sister. "Right in the middle of everything!"

Friendly, fearless, and outgoing, with high self-esteem instilled in her at home and at school, Sharon was an all-around athlete and a good student. She made many friends among her classmates at public school, but not all of them were understanding about her deafness. At a Paxon High School reunion in 2010, she marched up to a fellow alumni and declared, "I know you! You were a bully!" Embarrassed, the man apologized profusely and gave her a big hug.

After graduating from Paxon High School in 1970, Sharon worked for the Civil Service in the Handicapped Program, teaching life skills to persons with disabilities.

On June 26, 1971, she married Air Force Airman Charles Edward Ray II and thus began her wanderlust as the young couple were stationed at Air Force Bases in California, Florida, Germany, Washington State and Alabama. During those years in the Air Force, their daughter, Yvette, and son, Charles, were born.

Today, Sharon, who lives in the Ortega Farms area, is the doting grandmother of Yvette's daughter, Maya Pinfield, a talented performing arts student at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. In addition to carpooling her granddaughter after school and providing caregiving to her elderly parents, Sharon continues to enjoy traveling the world. She has traveled to Costa Rica, South Africa, Europe and Amsterdam, where her son, Charles, currently resides.

A woman of substance, humor and determination who has lived her life her way and enjoyed it to the fullest, Sharon Cascone Ray is an inspiring example for others who were born with a disability.

Neither Sharon nor her family have ever forgotten the integral role played by Morning Star School in readying her for future challenges.

"We've always been impressed with what the Sisters of St. Joseph have done for those of us in need," said Michael Cascone, Jr. "Growing up with a sister who was deaf, we understand the importance of developing life skills as the students transition from school age to adulthood. As we looked at the opportunities to support Morning Star, that program stood out as one we had personally experienced, so we're gratified to be able to honor Sharon by donating to the Life Skills Classroom."



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# Teen singers perform for Pope at Vatican

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Teenagers from Jacksonville helped Pope Francis ring in the new year when members of the Jacksonville Children's Chorus Touring Choir (JCC) joined with the Upper School Chorale and Honors Chorale from the Episcopal School of Jacksonville to perform during the Papal Mass at the Vatican Jan. 1.

Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods were well-represented in both choral organizations during the week-long festival.

The JCC Touring Choir, under the director of JCC President and Artistic Director Darren Dailey, included Trinity Webster-Bass of Ortega, Ross Johnson of San Marco, and Katharine Conklin of Murray Hill, an Episcopal senior, who also sings with the JCC.

Singing for Episcopal were Klare Byran and Katherine Fackler of Ortega, Jake Moorehead of Avondale, Anna Combs of St. Nicholas, and Parker Joyce, Anna Mayo, and Michael Mumford of San Marco.

The choirs took part in the 3rd Annual Youth and Young Adult Choir Festival in Rome and at the Vatican. They had the opportunity to view Pope Francis up close when they sang "Let There Be Peace on Earth," in St. Peter's Square New Year's Day.

The Papal Mass celebrated the Holy Day, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, and was performed in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. The students sat 10 rows from the Papal altar and alongside the Sistine Chapel Choir, one of the most elite choirs in the

world. The singers had all the chants of the Mass memorized and sang along in perfect unison, said Carolyn Tuttle, director of choral music at Episcopal.

There was a collective gasp when the Pope came into view the first time, she said. "I heard many students say their hard work had finally paid off from the hours of rehearsal we spent learning the Mass music prior to arrival. It was truly a trip of a lifetime for these students, and I am so extremely proud of the way they sang, the way they represented themselves, and the way they looked after one another," Tuttle said.

The JCC singers, which numbered 23 teens between the ages of 12 and 18, and the Episcopal vocalists, which included 20 students, also performed several times at the festival and at several local Italian churches, including during Mass at St. Francis Basilica in Assisi, a full concert in St. Ignatius Basilica, and impromptu performances at the Blessing of the Creche in St. Peter in Chains, San Sebastian Basilica and St. Paul's Outside the Walls.

In addition to singing in the festival, the singers toured the Ancient City of Rome and the Sistine Chapel.

"The cultural significance of this tour for Northeast Florida is quite high," said Dailey. "The JCC was invited to participate, which is an incredible honor. As we prepared to export our artistic excellence in music to one of the world's most important choral hubs, we were grateful to our local community. Without its help, none of this would be possible," he said.



Members of both the Jacksonville Children's Chorus and the Episcopal Choir joined together to sing at a Papal Mass in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican on New Year's Day.



Ross Johnson



Jacksonville Children's Chorus President Darren Dailey directs his singers in a rendition of "Let There Be Peace on Earth," as Pope Francis and his security pass through St. Peter's Square in Rome.

# Bolles middle schoolers compete against high school students

The Bolles Bots robotics team finished its FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) season as one of the top 10 teams in the northeast region. The second-year middle school team competed against 33 area high school teams during the January 13 event at Paxon School For Advanced Studies.

The season-ender is the culmination of many months of hard work. The team, which includes Ava Sickler, Aman Shaik, Max Zhalilio, Devin Velez, Noah MacGregor, Will Chamberlain, Cameron Gratz, Sean Breuer and Michael Burgstiner, began designing, building and programming their robot in August and competed in five meets across the state. The Bartram campus also hosted an FTC tournament in December.

"These student are the future and they showed it the entire season," said coach Mark Meyers. "Their dedication and teamwork to this robotics program by working dozens of hours outside of school proves they are amazing young people and I am so very proud of them all."

While the FTC team completes its season, the Bolles Bartram FIRST Lego League (FLL) team will compete at the Northeast Florida FLL Regional Championship on Saturday, February 3, at the Prime Osborn Convention Center. The FLL team earned the Robot Design Award at the qualifying tournament and will be among 48 teams competing for bids to state and national tournaments.



The Bolles Bots robotics team during a competition



## San Marco students visit Big Apple

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Eleven students from the San Marco area were among 53 from the Episcopal School of Jacksonville to visit New York City on a four-day performing and visual arts tour in mid-January.

Among the teens who enjoyed the “Big Apple” experience were Caroline Dent, Parker Joyce, Olin Moseley, Gracie Phillips, Lauren Press, and Daniella Teixeira of San Marco, Anna Combs of St. Nicholas, Averie Perce of Empire Point, and Lizzi Duvall, Madelene Garcia, Margaux Halloran of San Jose.

All the students attended three Broadway shows and a dance performance at the Joyce Theatre. Also on the itinerary were tours of the 9/11 Memorial, the Met, and Museum of Modern Art, as well as a Sunday morning church service at Trinity Church

Students from the Episcopal School of Jacksonville pose in Times Square during a four-day visit to New York City.

on Wall Street, where the teens heard the well-known church choir. While lunching at the famous Stage Door Deli, the group was able to root for the Jaguars as they defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers in the NFL Playoffs January 14.

Visual art students enjoyed a gallery walk through New York’s Chelsea neighborhood while the performing arts students participated in a workshop hosted by Broadway musical director and friend of the school, Ed Linderman, as well as a Broadway choreographer.

One highlight of the visit was a “talkback” with cast members from “SpongeBob SquarePants the Musical” following the performance. Actor and lead of the show, Wesley Taylor, a former student of ESJ Interim Director of Fine Arts and Episcopal alumnae Katie Labhar Black, shared his experiences as a working actor in New York and later met with the group for lunch and more conversation.



Avery Perce, Yama Pouye, Robert Pritchard, Julian Rubiano, Libby Donahoo and Jessica Lynch at a Volunteering Festival Jan. 6. (Photo by Laura Evans Photography)

## Volunteering festival fun way to support nonprofits

The Community Service Council, the National Art Honor Society and 21 service clubs at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville hosted a Volunteering Festival Jan. 6 in Jangro Stadium. The event supported Angels for Allison and also Creative Canvas for Kids, a nonprofit recently started by Courtney Crawford, a senior at Episcopal.

Students painted angels for Angels for Allison, played flag football with Wounded

Warriors, designed T-shirts for Help4Jax, braided twine to make gates for Heart, Hands and Hooves Too, made bracelets with the Dominican Republic Club to benefit the La Suiza orphanage, made dog toys for ESJ for Animals, cut magazine pictures to help Hope of Hand and designed motivational posters for the Daniel Foundation. Students also recycled holiday cards to use for holiday projects next year for different organizations.



Students at Central Riverside Elementary with their personalize gift boxes of art supplies, donated by Courtney Crawford (far right).

## Episcopal student creates nonprofit to support arts education

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

The inspiration to help others often comes from the unlikeliest of sources.

A documentary about poverty in Africa shown during Global Community Day at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville prompted Courtney Crawford, a senior, to start her own nonprofit to support arts education.

“Watching the documentary, I got a glimpse into the life of a little girl living in poverty in Liberia. Her story was the defining moment for the formulation of Creative Canvas for Kids,” said Crawford. “I remember the rain and the tears and the dirt and the chalk and the drawings that filled the notebook of this little girl. She was kicked out of school for filling up her one small notebook with drawings instead of taking notes.”

Sensing there are children in Jacksonville who may be deprived of artistic expression because their families cannot afford art supplies, Crawford put money from

birthday gifts into a bank account and started a GoFundMe to solicit funds for art supplies.

To formulate a plan for her target audience, Crawford met with Anthony Sznakowski, Duval County Public Schools Elementary Arts Specialist, and Jeffrey Smith, Arts Program Director. They then put her in contact with Teresa Woodlief, art teacher at Central Riverside Elementary School.

To assess what art supplies are most applicable for budding artists at Central Riverside Elementary, Crawford asked the students to write about their passion for the arts and then rank a list of supplies they would like to have. She delivered personalized boxes of supplies to Woodlief’s students at Central Riverside before the holiday break.

Crawford also volunteers at Daniel and is co-president of the Daniel Club at Episcopal. She plans to provide applications for art supplies to children at Daniel Home.

“My hope is that each and every student that has the desire or the need to express themselves through art will have the personal supplies that they need to do so,” Crawford said.

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Spelling Bee winner James Bishop with runner-up Ian Kirsch

### Assumption students display geographic prowess in competition

Assumption Catholic School students participated locally in the National Geographic Bee, an annual competition organized by the National Geographic Society, designed to inspire and reward students' curiosity about the world.

The sixth- to eighth-grade students began grade-level competitions before the semester break, then narrowed down the field Jan. 17 to seventh-graders James Bishop, winner, and Ian Kirsch, runner-up.

Students in grades four through eight from 10,000 schools across the United States compete for a chance to win college scholarships and the glory of being the National Geographic Bee Champion.

The championship round winning questions at Assumption were:

**1.** Iowa and Missouri both share long boundaries with what other state on the Mississippi River? Illinois

**2.** Amelia Earhart went missing in 1937 while attempting to fly around the world with her navigator, Fred Noonan. National Geographic is sponsoring an expedition to search for the crash site at Nikumaroro Island. Nikumaroro Island is a part of the Kiribati, located in what ocean? Pacific Ocean

## 'Alexander Hamilton' performs for fifth-grade students

Nearly 1,600 fifth-grade students were treated to performances Jan. 16-17 by a professional historic actor representing Alexander Hamilton. The annual event was hosted and sponsored by The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Florida (NSCDA-FL) and organized by Philip Little of Duval County Public Schools.

At the Jacksonville Public Library downtown, students from Duval County public and private schools watched as Eben Kuhn represented Hamilton during three stages of the character's life, including the early years and education, during wartime and establishing America's independence, and



Riverside Presbyterian Day School student Mac Verlander with Alexander Hamilton



Phil Little, Winfield Duss, essay winners Amanda Tun and Ryonelle Mijeres with Alexander Hamilton

Hamilton's work in Congress for the Constitution and establishment of the National Bank.

The NSCDA-FL brings more than 13 years of historic character performances to students throughout Northeast Florida. The award-winning performances are recognized by the NSCDA-FL's historical actor program and has received Lamar Award for Excellence in the Historical Activities category.

The presenters are well versed in the portrayal of their characters including personalities, cultural nuances, and history with a 45-minute interactive presentation and question and answers from the students. The school programs are coordinated by the Dames, school teachers, and school district department supervisors, along with

a curriculum and essay contest. The programs are designed to share a much deeper understanding of the people and issues that shaped the United States and inspire enthusiasm about history.

Winners of the essay contest included Bolles School student Amanda Tun, Ryonelle Mijeres from Hendricks Avenue Elementary, St. Mark's Episcopal Day School student Hannah Miller, Charlie Morgan from St. Johns Country Day School, William Zang and Akhil Gayakavada, both from Jacksonville Beach Elementary, and from J. Allen Axson Elementary, Kingston Hernandez and Annie Heiry. They all received a certificate and a crisp, new \$10 bill.

The yearly performances are underwritten by the Roger L. and Rochelle S. Main Charitable Trust.

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## City Year builds student leaders through positive role models

By Susan D. Brandenburg  
Resident Community News

Now celebrating its fifth year in Duval County, City Year Jacksonville began in 2012 with an intervention and support model called “Whole School, Whole Child.”

The approach used two diverse teams of well-trained young adult AmeriCorps members who served full-time at Matthew W. Gilbert Middle School and Andrew Jackson High School.

Today, Quintin Griffin, 25, is one of 120 City Year AmeriCorps members who work with students at 12 Duval County Public Schools. As a team leader, Griffin is making a powerful impact on students at Edward White High School.

Nationally, City Year is celebrating 30 years of partnering with school districts in 28 cities. The AmeriCorps organization places corps members in the schools that are the most challenged and provide students with one-on-one support.

In addition to working daily with individual students who are at risk of dropping out, City Year also provides support to help transform whole schools – leading school-wide events and activities, after-school programming and in-class support for teachers.

In 2010, when Griffin graduated from Ed White High School, statistics showed that one in three Duval County students didn't make it graduation. Quintin remembers that the atmosphere at the high school was tough, providing many opportunities to drop out, but he was lucky.

“I loved math and got great support from my mother,” he said. Griffin's mother, Faithelle Kay, a Radiologist at Shands Hospital, was his mentor. “She's amazing,” he said. “I could tell her anything.”

In addition to strong family support, Griffin had two other reasons to stay in school and make good grades: 1) He was a role model for his younger brother, Robert Kay, II (now at Stillwell Middle School), and 2) he had a close-knit group of friends who also considered learning important.

In 2016, Griffin was encouraged by his girlfriend, Amelea Gray, to apply for City Year. “Amelea is with Teach For America, another AmeriCorps program, and she thought City Year might be for me,” he explained.

To clarify, Teach For America recruits, trains and places teachers at the front classrooms, whereas City Year embeds mentors and tutors into the classroom, lunchroom, and after school settings to support students and teachers.

“At first, I didn't know what to expect,” Griffin said. “I've always been a reserved person and going into the classroom was a challenge, but I fell in love with what we do



Quintin Griffin and Brandie Harris

*“It will never be easy, but the challenges can be overcome – and the rewards are worth it.”*

— Quintin Griffin

and now I'm a team leader at the Edward H. White Military Academy of Leadership.”

Griffin's current challenge is helping his team learn to interact with the students and get comfortable enough to impact their lives. “Time made the difference for me, and that's what I tell my team,” he said. “It's like math – it will never be easy, but the challenges can be overcome – and the rewards are worth it.”

Griffin credits the City Year training for strengthening his leadership skills. City Year AmeriCorps members commit to working full-time for 11 months, going into classrooms for two periods each day and striving to make a lasting impact on students' lives by providing extra academic, emotional and social support.

City Year training involves several formats including BTA (Basic Training Academy), LDDs (Learning and Development Days), and ATA (Advanced Training Academy), as well as Leadership and Reflecting.

City Year's basic ABCs come from Johns Hopkins University Research indicating that students at risk of dropping out can be identified as early as elementary school using three early warning signs: poor Attendance, disruptive Behavior and Course failure in English and math. A child exhibiting even one of these indicators by sixth grade has a 75 percent chance of dropping out.

Today, in addition to leading his team at Ed White, Griffin provides positive role-modeling to the students he sees on a daily basis. He has become close to several of his students during the school year and receives great satisfaction from the impact he is making.

For instance, he talks of a 10th grader named Titus who has improved his math skills and now calls him his mentor. “Titus

loves basketball,” noted Griffin. “We played basketball at the park last summer with his mom's permission.”

“Quintin has a passion for serving his community, and we're glad to have leaders of his caliber working with students throughout Jacksonville,” said Brandie Z. Harris, a former City Year AmeriCorps team member, and now manager of Institutional Giving and Communications at City Year Jacksonville.

Proudly wearing their distinctive City Year Red Coats, Griffin and Harris posed for a photograph in the Jacksonville headquarters, where each wall holds an inspirational message. “We Know Every Child Can Succeed,” is the message on the wall and on the confident, smiling faces of Griffin and Harris.

Inspired to become a leader at City Year and working with students at his own alma mater, Quintin Griffin may also have found his calling for the future.

“I'd like to develop my own mentoring space on Jacksonville's Eastside someday,” said the young leader. “There's a void in the Eastside that needs filling with offerings like African-American studies and diversity classes. I may be able to help fill that void.”

Avondale resident Tom Caron, managing director of external affairs at City Year, notes that many City Year alumni return to schools as teachers, counselors or other support staff. Others pursue various career options outside of education, but remain engaged in their communities as mentors and advocates for students.

“We are beyond grateful for Quintin and for the hundreds of young idealists that have served with City Year Jax these past five years,” said Caron. “They are, in fact, Leaders for Life, as our alumni motto states.”

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## Thrivent sponsors Wolfson Children's Challenge

Helping out as volunteers at the Wolfson Children's Challenge were Jessica Richards, Tara Wolff, Christina Kelly (front), Christy Falco, Sierra Wilhelm and Yamirely Rivera. Each year, the Wolfson Children's Challenge honors 55 children, each representing the tens of thousands of children who are cared for by Wolfson Children's Hospital each year. Presenting sponsor for the annual 55K Ultra held Jan. 27 at the Jacksonville Baseball Grounds was Thrivent, who also sponsored the race last year.

## Joe Berg Society welcomes 12 from Bolles



Annie Ruperto



Anya Raheja



Dennis Rao

Annie Ruperto, of San Marco, and Anya Raheja and Dennis Rao from the San Jose area are three of 12 Bolles School students who will participate in the Jacksonville Joe Berg Society seminar series, beginning in February at the Museum of Science and History.

Ruperto, Raheja and Rao, along with classmates Elise Anderson, Katherine Beltz, Charu Chaturvedi, Leah de George, Yash Gulani, Samantha Josephson, Rishi Misra, Justin Oleary and Grant Szymanski, made a two-year commitment to attend the seminars led by local experts in the fields of science and the humanities or by civic and community leaders.

# Initial project snafu teaches Eagle Scout big lesson

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Although an unexpected hitch derailed his first final project, San Marco's Parker Joyce was able to begin again, learning valuable business lessons on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout.

Prior to his 18th birthday, Joyce, a senior at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville, earned the Boy Scouts' coveted Eagle Scout rank and admission into the Order of the Arrow, the Boy Scouts of America National Honor Society.

Joyce had gotten his start in Scouting as a first grader with Pack 477 at San Jose Episcopal Day School. In 2011, he crossed over to Troop 136 at All Saints Episcopal Church, where he advanced through seven ranks of Scouting, earning 31 merit badges while holding leadership positions each year.

Boy Scouts seeking to earn Eagle rank must develop and lead a project that benefits the community before their 18th birthday. Joyce's first effort was to design and build a meditation labyrinth for the students of the North Florida School of Special Education.

"Early on, I met with a local stone company and received a generous donation of stones to build the labyrinth," he explained, noting it was his intention to install the stones four months later after raising money for other project costs and rowing during the busy regatta season for the Episcopal team.

"When the season was over, I was ready to install my project, however, a few



Parker Joyce

difficulties arose giving me the opportunity to learn many important business lessons," he said. "The school wanted me to move my project to a different parcel of land and install it following my 18th birthday, which would not work. Also, the stones had been sold," he explained.

Husting to find another project he could complete under the wire, Joyce met with North Florida School of Special Education Executive Director Sally Hazelip.

"We looked at several projects on her wish list, and I told her I would complete her most pressing project," he said. "Turns out, the school's urban organic farm, Berry Good Farms, needed mint gardens to contain and grow the mint used in the school's teaching kitchen and food truck. I built two four-tier mint gardens adjacent to the farm's greenhouse."

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# Do Something

From pen to pedal, you can stroke a check or pump your legs... all efforts are appreciated when it comes to local benefit races.

BY MARIAN JOHNS, RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Jacksonville's Mt. Acosta Classic not only brings together serious, hard core endurance athletes for a unique event, but also helps to honor the memory of fellow athlete and ironman Jared Bynum. Monies raised from the race go towards funding the Jared Bynum Scholarship Foundation, which helps send underprivileged Landon Middle School students to college.

## PARTICIPATE

The 6th Annual Mt. Acosta Classic will be held Saturday, Feb. 17, at 2 p.m., starting from the Haskell Building at 111 Riverside Ave. The Acosta Bridge is closed for three hours for participants to bike, run or walk the 2.2-mile loop. Participants can choose a one-hour event or try to see how well they can climb "Mt. Acosta" for the full three hours.

## VOLUNTEER

Volunteer to work the various water stations at the event. If you are walking the great "Mt. Acosta," you can help with set-up prior to the race or be a part of the cleanup crew. To volunteer, contact Gena Star at [starg87@gmail.com](mailto:starg87@gmail.com) or visit [signup.com/go/pAguDJB](http://signup.com/go/pAguDJB). For more information about the race, visit [mtacostaclassic.com/index.html](http://mtacostaclassic.com/index.html)



Marie McMaster

## Marie McMaster Did Something

It is not hard to see that most people involved with the Mt. Acosta Classic event have a love of athletic competition. However, it is much more than the competition aspect that motivates race director Marie Vogler McMaster to be a part of this community event each year. For McMaster, who has been involved with the Mt. Acosta Classic since the very first race in 2013, the event is also a chance to help make a child's life better.

"Giving back to the Jacksonville community in a way that benefits our future leaders is very rewarding," McMaster said. "It is great to be able to tie in my love for competition with the Jacksonville community."

As the race director, McMaster oversees everything from gathering sponsors to

coordinating the temporary shut-down of the Acosta Bridge to getting the word out to potential race participants about the event.

McMaster, who was a close friend and co-worker of Jared Bynum, whom the event is designed to honor, said learning about the local children which the race benefits makes it all worthwhile.

"The best part about being involved with the Mt. Acosta Classic is getting updates on the students who have benefitted from the Jared Bynum Scholarship Foundation," McMaster explained. "Knowing that this event has such a large effect on even one child's life, makes the event successful."

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Sunday, February 25, 2018, 4pm  
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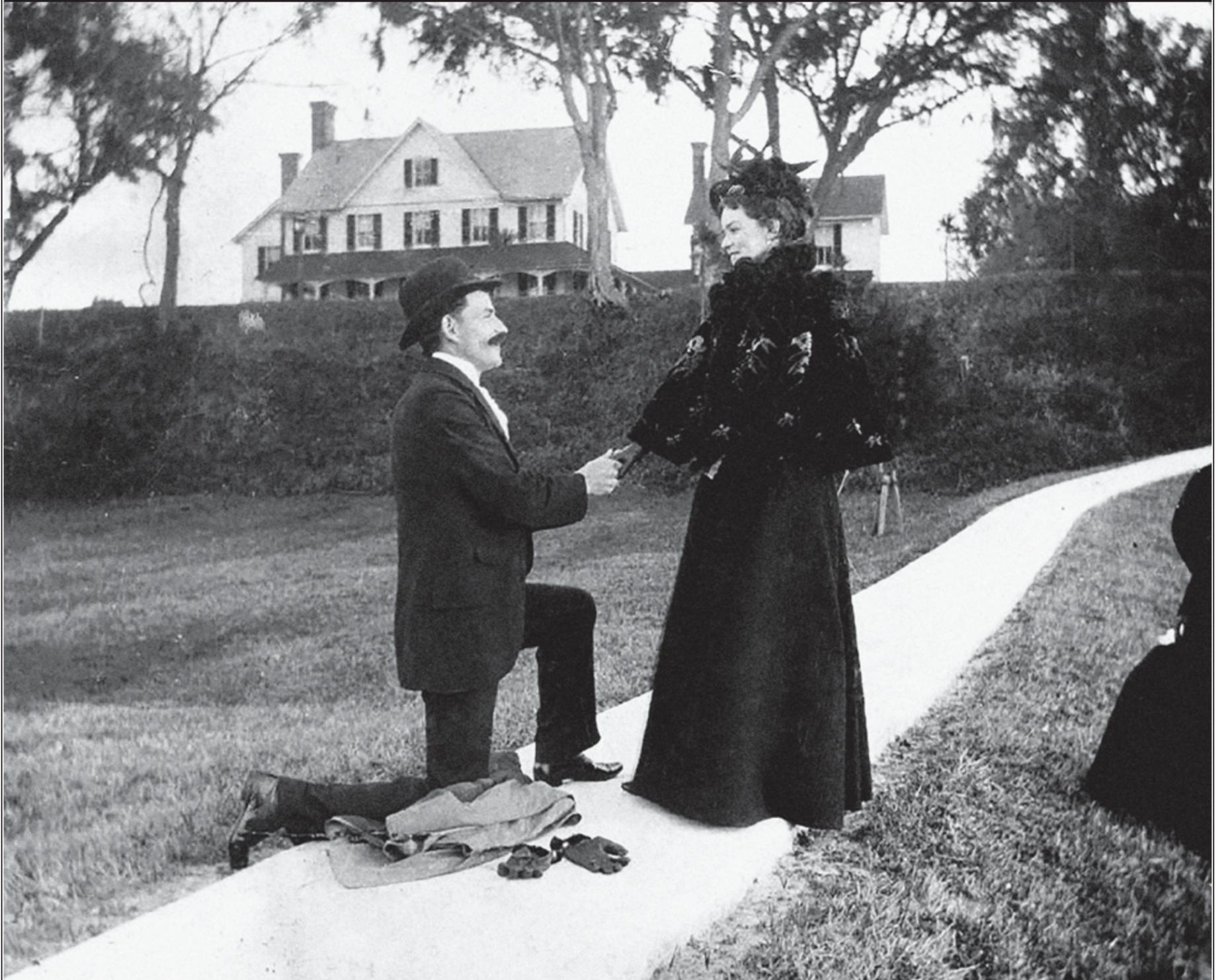
Andy holds degrees from Yale and New England Conservatory of Music. He studied organ in Europe and taught organ improvisation at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale and at Williams College. He has been on the faculties of Jacksonville University and Florida State College of Jacksonville.

Free Parking | 4001 Hendricks Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32207 | Call (904) 396-7745

# Flashbacks

Panama Park, a community north of Jacksonville located on the Trout River, was owned and heavily promoted by developer George W. Clark, Sr. The idyllic pose of romance, in reality, featured Clark's youthful wife and Clark's son, George Clark, Jr., and was intended for a promotional brochure extolling the virtues of his pastoral patch of real estate.

Photo courtesy of the Jacksonville Historical Society, from its archives. To learn more, visit [jaxhistory.org](http://jaxhistory.org) or call (904) 665-0064.





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# The new Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center



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