

SAN JOSE • SAN MARCO • ST. NICHOLAS

Residents seek relief

Retail surrounding tiny residential area in heart of San Marco creates traffic snarls, short tempers.

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Resident COMMUNITY NEWS

Absolutely, definitely, yes

Half-cent sales tax should be implemented, says Man on the Street poll.

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'DUUUVAL' MORE THAN A CATCHY CRY

By Kandace Lankford Resident Community News

As motorists enter downtown from the Main Street Bridge, they will be greeted by a sculpture that spells out DUUUVAL – a rallying cry that resounds throughout the Jaguars stadium during football season but originates from the local hip hop scene of the '90s.

The sculpture, entitled "Changing Perspective," is the only perspectival word-based bike rack sculpture in the U.S. or elsewhere. It is comprised of 11 separate bike racks that merge together to spell DUUUVAL, and on the flip side of each rack are arrows pointing to sites of cultural and historical significance to the black

community in Jacksonville as well as a synopsis describing those sites.

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville (CCGJ) unveiled the sculpture July 12 on the east sidewalk at 15 N. Ocean St. Two of the three artists, Eric Moed and his wife, Caila Moed – a Jacksonville native – were present to describe the creative process that led to the completion of the 5-foot-6-inch high by 30-foot long sculpture.

Eric graduated from Harvard with a master's degree in design studies, and Caila, a former professional dancer, will be pursuing her MBA at Oxford this fall. The Moeds are practicing Jews, which, they say, helps them relate to the black community because both groups have long been on

the same page when it comes to civil rights. The third artist is Samuel Maddox, who holds a master's degree from Harvard's Graduate School of Design.

The trio submitted a proposal for the project, which had an \$8,000 budget, and were selected from among 144 applicants. The CCGJ runs the Art in Public Places program for the city and managed the project from beginning to end. The sculpture was sponsored by the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) as part of its Urban Arts Project, with additional support from the Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA). The sculpture was fabricated and installed by David Main of Main Made Studios.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 35



New MOCA exhibit highlights refugee crisis

Ylva Rouse, MOCA chief curator, and Jackie Cornelius, executive director for the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Foundation, enjoyed the reception for the new Project Atrium installation at MOCA.

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Celebrating 'Big 5-0' in style

Lorelei Figueroa with brother, Dale Linder, and mother, Janne Brandenburg, celebrated her birthday with close friends and family at Epping Forest Yacht & Country Club, Aug. 26. The shabby chic affair drew praise for its floral arrangements, unique takeaways at table settings, and an exquisite cake created by Epping Forest Pastry Chef Paul Collins.



Young life remembered through father's words

Author Chris Gabbard with his wife, Ilene Chazen, daughter, Clio Chasen-Gabbard and dog, Oscar, during a book launch party June 30.

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Historic San Marco church to sell land for residential development

By Marcia Hodgson Resident Community News

Dramatic change is coming to the campus of one of the oldest religious congregations in historic San Marco.

South Jacksonville Presbyterian, a San Marco church that has been an important part of Jacksonville's expansion south of the St. Johns River since the early 1900s, is downsizing. In mid-July, church trustees signed an agreement with Harbert Realty Services of Birmingham, Alabama, to sell three-quarters of their campus, which lies at 2137 Hendricks Ave., so a developer can build Park Place at San Marco, a 143-unit residential complex and adjacent parking garage.

"The property hasn't sold yet; we've just signed an agreement, but we haven't closed on the deal. The agreement is in place, but they have a due diligence time on the property. We might not close until 2020," said Jeff King of San Marco, president of the church's board of trustees.

Bill Ware, a San Marco resident and vice president of development for Harbert Realty Services, said his firm will close on the property after it receives City approval for rezoning into a new PUD and estimated that process could take between four and six months. He said Harbert Realty submitted the rezoning application at the end of July 2019.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 6



Andy Allen, Bill Ware, and George Leone, developers of Park Place at San Marco

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## Southbank 'road diet' to be completed in August

There's good news ahead for visitors to and residents on the Southbank. The Riverplace Boulevard road diet is scheduled to be completed in August, according to Downtown Investment Authority CEO Lori Boyer. "The project has been moving smoothly during the last few months," she said. "I'm sure the area residents will be happy to hear that news." Construction on the \$6.3 million project, which began last fall, reduces travel lanes for motorists from five lanes to three for traffic calming, improves accommodations for public transit, provides protected bike lanes, on-street parking, expanded landscaping with street furniture for relaxing and socializing, and installs a large pedestrian zone with improved lighting for public safety.

## Eyesore bites the dust

Demolition of a condemned structure at the corner of Hendricks Avenue and Cedar Street in San Marco took place last month when a two-story commercial/residential building at 1502 Hendricks Ave. was razed July 1. The property is owned by H.S. Turner, a commercial real estate company on Prudential Drive. Realco Recycling was given a permit for \$10,000 to demolish the 3,600-square-foot building which used to house C&C Skate Shop and The Asian Times on the ground floor, and apartments on the second floor.



The building, built in 1924, has been vacant for a number of years. Turner has no plans yet for development on the parcel. Watch residentnews.net for updates.

# Fewer property owners required to make neighborhood improvements

### New ordinance lowers utility undergrounding petitions to two-thirds in agreement

**By Kate A. Hallock**  
Resident Community News

An amendment to the ordinance code passed June 11, 2019 by the Jacksonville City Council will make it easier for neighborhoods to convert to underground utilities. Instead of requiring signatures from 75% of the property owners in a given community, now just two-thirds (66.67%) approval is required to make changes that will affect 100% of the neighborhood when undergrounding utilities. The application fees were also reduced from \$100 per lot to \$10 per lot.

The Ordinance Code Chapter 714 – Neighborhood Assessment Program, created in 2005, provides a way for interested neighborhoods to voluntarily agree to the imposition of non-ad valorem special assessments to finance the installation of infrastructure improvements to be paid back by the owners of the benefitting properties over a period of years. Part 1 of Section 714 deals with general improvement programs, Part 2 with waterway dredging programs, and Part 3 with underground power and communications programs.

The code allows neighborhoods to initiate petitions, which must contain a fact-based rough estimate of the cost of the improvements and of the amount to be levied against each property in the affected neighborhood, for improvement projects such as sidewalks or street lighting, undergrounding of overhead utility lines, canal dredging and conversion of septic tanks to sewer lines.

Since 2005, general improvement projects, such as sidewalks or street lighting, required two-thirds of affected property owners to agree to the project, while conversion of electrical and communications lines to underground facilities under the arm of the Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) required three-fourths to agree. The new ordinance brings the JEA projects into line with a two-thirds agreement requirement.

For neighborhood underground power and communication improvement projects undertaken by JEA, the City-owned utility agency funds the cost of the project and is reimbursed through the Neighborhood Assessment Program. Nancy Kilgo, JEA director of special projects, noted that

only one project has taken advantage of the option since it was added to the code in 2007.

"This has been a good option for neighborhoods that want to convert their utilities. This really gives us a mechanism for AT&T and Comcast to be paid upfront, to be willing to do the utility conversions," said Kilgo during a meeting of the Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health & Safety Committee June 3.

Ordinance 2019-321, which amends the Municipal Code, also added a new Part 4 to Chapter 714 to create a special assessment option to finance the installation of water, sewer and reclaimed water distribution/collection systems in neighborhoods. Former District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer was the proponent for Part 4. "I wanted to be sure we had a Neighborhood Assessment Program for homeowners to phase out septic tanks at their own expense, and that there was a mechanism to put it on their bill," she said at the NCSPPHS Committee meeting.

*"This has been a good option for neighborhoods that want to convert their utilities."*

— Nancy Kilgo, JEA director of special projects

The new Part 4 addresses project cost overages, giving the neighborhood the choice of paying the additional costs or withdrawing its support for the project. If the neighborhood withdraws support, the property owners who will receive a benefit from the improvements will be assessed the costs expended for the project. For example, if a septic system conversion project is determined to exceed the costs as estimated at the start of the project, and the project is at 80% completion, the properties which fall within the completed portion of the project will be subject to costs expended, including the overruns.

The bill also amends Ordinance Code Chapter 111 to create a new Neighborhood Assessment Program fee trust fund and provides for the use of certain fees associated with these special assessments to pay for the costs of implementing the programs, including advertising and mailing costs.

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# Residents balk at city requirement to pay for one-way signage

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

To combat the congested mess San Marco Place has become, several residents on that street want the City of Jacksonville to convert their tiny thoroughfare into a one-way street heading south from Hendricks Avenue to Belmont Terrace. They also feel it is “inappropriate” for the City to require property owners to pay a substantial portion of the tab for new signage.

To consider changing San Marco Place from a two-way street to one way requires that 75% of the homeowners sign a petition and that they pay 50% of the cost of the signage, according to the City Traffic and Engineering Department. Although Sandy Myers, a San Marco Place resident, forwarded a request to former District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer more than two years ago to convert the street to one way, the city has no plans to make the change at this time, said City Spokesperson Marjorie Dennis. “There are currently no plans to convert San Marco Place to a one-way street. The City performed an evaluation in 2017 at the request of a citizen. Following the evaluation, the requestor was informed about the petition required to continue the process. There was no response,” Dennis said.

It’s a matter of principle, because clearly having two-way traffic with parked cars lining the street is a safety issue, said Bruce Klimek, noting the City converted River Road to one-way between Landon Avenue and Laverne Street, and no homeowners were forced to pay. Even with parked cars lining that portion of River Road, there is more space for two-way traffic to pass than on San Marco Place where on more than one occasion drivers have nearly come to blows after meeting head-on, he said.

In the case of River Road, because Boyer made the request to convert it to one way, residents were not charged, said Dennis. “There was no petition and the City paid the cost. As the road is a popular place for fishing, the signs were placed to reduce congestion,” she said.



Aerial view of San Marco Place conversion to one-way southbound

“Essentially San Marco Place is a one-way road that people are going both ways on,” said Rick Bouchereau, noting the narrow road was established in the 1920s and is physically unable to accommodate two-way traffic if cars are parked on one or both sides of the street. “I feel like it is the City’s responsibility to make the fix. It doesn’t function as a two-way road right now. This is not really about the money. I think this is something the City really needs to address because it just doesn’t work. God forbid if a fire truck tries to get through here and a car is coming the other way. It’s just not safe.”

San Marco Place has often accommodated overflow parking from patrons of San Marco

Square, but when Bold Bean Coffee Roasters opened its doors in October 2016 the situation became much worse. “Every single parking space along the street is occupied all day long every day causing a situation where cars going on opposite directions on the street cannot pass each other, creating a roadblock,” said Klimek.

When Bold Bean first opened, there was an arrangement with Southside Baptist Church for its customers to use the church’s Hendricks Avenue parking lot across the street from the coffeehouse. However, under the advice of attorney Robert Harris of Harris Guidi Rosner, P.A., the church decided it was too much of a liability to allow Bold Bean customers to continue to park in its lot without a crosswalk nearby. “It was just too great a risk for the church to take,” said Dr. Gary Webber, senior pastor of Southside Baptist Church and a San Marco Place resident.

The Florida Department of Transportation is planning to install a mid-block crosswalk across Hendricks Avenue near the entrance of the popular coffeehouse in mid-August, said Sara Pleasants, a FDOT spokesperson.

Soon after the coffeehouse opened, Myers contacted Boyer about the possibility of creating a one-way street or a “permit-parking only” area along the street.

“Our street has become a parking lot for Bold Bean to the point where from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. we never have available area in front of our homes for a visitor to park,” she wrote to Boyer in November 2017. Boyer informed Myers she would look into the matter. Myers assumed things were a go because the City’s traffic and engineering division came out to investigate soon after, and she did not hear anything more about it. Later Myers spoke with Boyer face-to-face and was told “there will never be parking permits in San Marco because the merchants depend on having residential streets available for parking.”

Although Myers did not recall receiving his email, Christopher LeDew of the traffic engineering division, had replied to Myers in November 2017. “If the property owners along San Marco Place want parking restrictions, they will need to complete a petition of the resident’s signatures. This is similar to the ‘one-way’ request,” he wrote. “The neighborhood would be responsible for the cost of the signage. The interesting wrinkle here is regulating parking ‘By Permit Only.’ Typically, parking restrictions are by time of day, or for a specified time duration.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



A narrow roadway lined with parked cars makes head-on meetings between motorists a regular occurrence on San Marco Place.



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Limiting parking to people holding permits will require a little research on our part. Please allow me some time to answer how the details of issuing permits works." He also added that he hoped his office had supplied her with information on "one-waying" within the past three weeks as a change of personnel in his office may have caused a delay.

The Resident obtained a copy of LeDew's response from November 2017 from Boyer's office. Apparently, there was a miscommunication because Myers said she had received no petitions or information about "one-waying" or anything else at that time. She and Klimek finally received the petitions in February 2019.

When Klimek spoke to John Pappas, director of Jacksonville's Department of Public Works, at a public meeting at Preservation Hall in January 2019, it became apparent to Pappas the petitions had never been sent out. "Mr. Pappas said it's more of a safety issue than a convenience issue and that they were 100% behind making the change," Klimek recalled. "I had pictures of literally six cars backed up trying to go to the corner and six cars coming to go the other way. They were stopped, and there was nowhere for them to turn around. The driveways were occupied by residents' cars, and there were no empty spaces. Literally they had to back out one by one to a place where they could turn around so the street could be opened. This has happened numerous times."

Once the petitions finally arrived, Klimek said he and Myers were surprised to learn 11 San Marco Place property owners were responsible for \$3,414.50 of the cost. Also, the homeowners would need to work out among themselves how much each would contribute. "Needless to say, this brought the whole process to a screeching halt as far as the neighbors were concerned," Klimek said. "No way are the residents going to pay more than \$3,000 to make this a one-way street. If it's been identified as a traffic and safety issue by the director of public works, why should the residents have to pay a penny of it? It's the job of the City to protect its citizens and make the traffic as safe as possible.

"We were naïve twice. We were naïve in thinking when we communicated this to City Council that it was a done deal," he continued. "What we didn't know is that it went to the traffic department, who looked at the street, did their analysis/survey and then didn't do anything about it. So, all the interested parties, except for the traffic people, thought this was an ongoing project. I'm not blaming anybody - I don't know what happened - but fat, dumb and happy we sat here waiting for people to come out and make it into a one-way street and that never happened," Klimek continued. "We were very surprised when we bumped into Lori Boyer at that meeting (January 23) and

her exact words were, 'That's not done? I thought that was finished.'"

According to the City Traffic and Engineering Department, "it is quite rare for streets to be changed from two-way to one-way. As such, the City does not have a specific policy or procedure," wrote Dennis in an email. "Instead, we rely on engineering judgment to determine roadway functions. When it comes to charging residents for infrastructure changes, we follow existing policies that are similar. Changing San Marco Place to one-way can be considered a 'traffic calming' change. In our traffic calming policy, we charge residents for the cost of speed humps and speed limit signs. Where these traffic calming strategies are placed in a neighborhood with cut-through traffic from outside of the neighborhood, the City charges residents 50% of the cost. Upon review, we believe that San Marco Place similarly experiences cut-through traffic and should be subject to a 50% cost reduction. The cost estimate is \$3,414.50, so the revised charge to residents will be \$1,707.25."

Although Dennis advised The Resident of the cost reduction, the City did not inform Klimek or his neighbors of it. When informed of the change in cost by The Resident, Klimek, Bouchereau, and Webber said if their neighbors are willing to pay \$170 apiece, they would too, but because it's been determined as a traffic safety issue, the residents should not, on principle, be charged.

"If the City recognizes a safety issue, it seems it's incumbent upon them to address that issue because if we go to a situation where all the residents on any given street are responsible to pay to have a safety issue addressed, are we going to apply that across the entire city?" Webber asked. "I thought that was what we paid taxes for. If this is the case, and this is becoming a practice city-wide, I think it's important to have a larger conversation to see if this is a wise practice. If it's a safety issue and the residents don't pay, is the City willing to allow the safety issue to continue? What about neighborhoods where the residents can't afford to pay? Do you then leave a road unsafe? This is a real safety issue and to compound it, San Marco Place is a high pedestrian area and there's no sidewalk," he said, noting City officials have indicated they want to make Jacksonville a "pedestrian-friendly" city. "If the residents say, 'We're not going to pay for it,' is the City willing to put pedestrians at risk who do not live on this street?"

Webber added he has personally broken up fights between irate motorists who chanced a head-on collision due to their inability to negotiate around the parked cars. "I think City officials would be surprised if they saw how much traffic and how many people use this little road - and it's not just cars, it's pedestrians too. This is a major thoroughfare for pedestrians."

## Gas lines to be replaced in Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

If you live in Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods and start seeing holes pop up on the sides of the roads, have no fear. It is not a giant critter burrowing in but rather the TECO Peoples Gas Company replacing old pipes throughout the area.

Construction on TECO's Legacy Pipe Replacement Project in San Marco started in late May and will be completed by the end of 2019, said Cherie L. Jacobs, a spokesperson for TECO Energy. "The pipes were installed in the 1980s and are approaching the end of their life," she said. "We are proactively replacing them."

In total, 12 miles of pipe will be replaced throughout San Marco, from Gary Street in the north to River Oaks Park in the south and bordered on the west and east by the St. Johns River and Florida East Coast Railway tracks.

Other neighborhoods that will have their gas pipes replaced within the next

four years are St. Nicholas, Spring Park, the Southbank, Downtown, Brooklyn, St. Johns Park, Riverside, Avondale, Lakeshore, Murray Hill and Springfield.

St. Nicholas, Spring Park and the entire Southbank will be grouped together including East San Marco up to San Diego Road. Construction to replace 5.4 miles of pipe will begin in late 2019 and will be finished before the end of 2020.

The Murray Hill, Avondale and St. Johns Park project will begin and end in 2021 and will see 14 miles of pipe replaced.

The Riverside and Brooklyn project will begin and end in 2022, replacing 22 miles of pipe. Downtown, which includes the area east of the stadium and Metropolitan Park, will begin and end in 2023 and include 12 miles of pipe.

Twenty-four miles of pipe will be replaced in the Springfield area, including EverBank Field, Metropolitan Park, and Talleyrand, and will begin in late 2020 or early 2021 and be finished by the end of 2021.

## Challenge grant issued to raise funds for weekend meals

As the beginning of a new school year approaches, many community drives will focus on collecting backpacks and school supplies. What if those backpacks could be filled with food to help at-risk children have meals on the weekend? Undernourished children cannot learn as much or as fast or as well as those who get three squares a day. Lack of enough nutritious food impairs a child's ability to concentrate and perform well in school.

Thanks to a \$60,000 Challenge Grant from The Jim Moran Foundation, Hunger Fight will be able to provide 561 children with weekend meals. Hunger Fight needs your help to raise \$30,000 to support its Feed the Backpack program. The dollar for dollar match must be met by August 30, 2019. To donate, visit [idream.hungerfight.org](http://idream.hungerfight.org).



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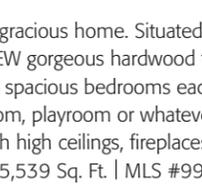
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# Church to Sell Land

FROM PAGE 1

What's planned is a four-story residential complex consisting of studios, one- and two-bedroom apartments sporting various floor plans and plenty of luxury amenities including balconies and a swimming pool. Adjacent to the residential structure will be a four-level, three-story garage, that will "exceed code as far as the number of spaces" it contains, Ware said, noting the total development will exceed \$30 million.

The L-shaped complex will cover 2.1 acres of the church's nearly 3-acre campus, including a section of Thacker Avenue between Alford Place and Mitchell Street, allowing South Jacksonville Presbyterian 0.8 of an acre so that it can keep intact its sanctuary, administrative building and Harvin Hall, which is used by the church for fellowship. The church preschool building and its playground, as well as education building, family life center, music building, and two apartment buildings, one of which is used as a pastoral counseling center, will be demolished. Matthews Restaurant, which inhabits a separately owned building at the corner of Alford Place and Hendricks Avenue, is not part of the project.

"Our location is second to none in the heart of San Marco, with its proximity to restaurants and retailers and the ability to be able to walk rather than get in your car and find parking spaces. When Publix comes in and the retail shops that will come with it, again it's going to be an enhancement to San Marco Square and our residents. Our residents will patronize all those establishments, and we are very happy to bring that to San Marco and to support the merchants and the merchants' association," Ware said.

Park Place at San Marco will front 5,000 square feet along Hendricks Avenue from the edge of the covered Educational Building entrance of the church's administration building to Matthews Restaurant, Ware

said. In the rear, the back building that houses the preschool will be split from the long welcome sign adjacent to its entrance to the playground entrance and will be demolished while the adjacent half, which includes Harvin Hall, will remain intact. "Our residential building will be 40-feet-plus away from the street so that there will be a 40-foot-plus buffer from our building to Hendricks Avenue," he said, noting the entrance will be a "resident amenity area," with perhaps benches or a bike rack. "We aren't sure exactly what we are going to do yet, but we are going to make it conducive for our residents."

The rectangular-shaped apartment building with a courtyard in the middle will stretch from Hendricks Avenue, across Thacker Avenue to Mango Place. Along Alford Place, the apartments will wrap around the Matthews restaurant building, which is owned separately and not part of the project. The units will have balconies, enjoy amenities that are more than comparable to those found in other residential complexes, and there will be a courtyard pool area, he said, adding that within the next month there are plans to meet with the San Marco Preservation Society, District 5 Councilwoman LeAnna Cumber, At-Large District 4 Councilman Matt Carlucci and other interested parties as the design of the structure is considered. "We are willing to meet with everybody. We want to maintain the charm and character of San Marco as it has been, as it is today and how it is going to be tomorrow," he said. "We will come up with a design that is appropriate and will blend in and maintain the charm and character of San Marco."

Meanwhile, the garage will lie adjacent to the apartment building across the street from the church on the southeast corner surrounded by Thacker Avenue, Mitchell Avenue and Mango Place. Parking spaces will be assigned to residents. Churchgoers will have exclusive use of the first floor of the garage and sections of the second and third levels during services and church

events. The public will also be able to use the garage during times when church is not in session. "Our commitment to the church is to make sure parking spaces are available to them as and when they need them," he said.

Both Ware and King declined to discuss the price of the property. Ideally, Ware would like to break ground in April or May 2020, with construction being completed 16 months later in the summer of 2021, he said, noting the timeline will allow for the preschool to begin school in its present location.

While Harbert Realty Services will remain managing partner, it will also utilize several San Marco firms as resources. It is partnering with Corner Lot Development Group, led by CEO Andy Allen, a San Marco resident, and George Leone, chief operating officer, for its guidance through the local political process. San Marco's EnVision + Engineering, led by Doug Skiles of San Marco, is the civil engineer and Group 4 Design led by Principals Karie Kovacocoy of Avondale, Jamie Jaxon and Leigh Gunn, is the architect.

Attorneys Paul Harden and Zach Miller have also been hired to work through entitlements and rezoning of the property to a partial land-use change and planned unit development.

Ware, who moved from Alabama to San Marco in 2016 to scout development opportunities for his company, said he learned about the church's desire to sell its property through networking in commercial real estate circles and by word of mouth.

Faced with a declining membership, the trustees of South Jacksonville Presbyterian spent several years considering how to better serve their membership through downsizing the church campus. "We are trying to utilize our resources to the best purposes available," King said.

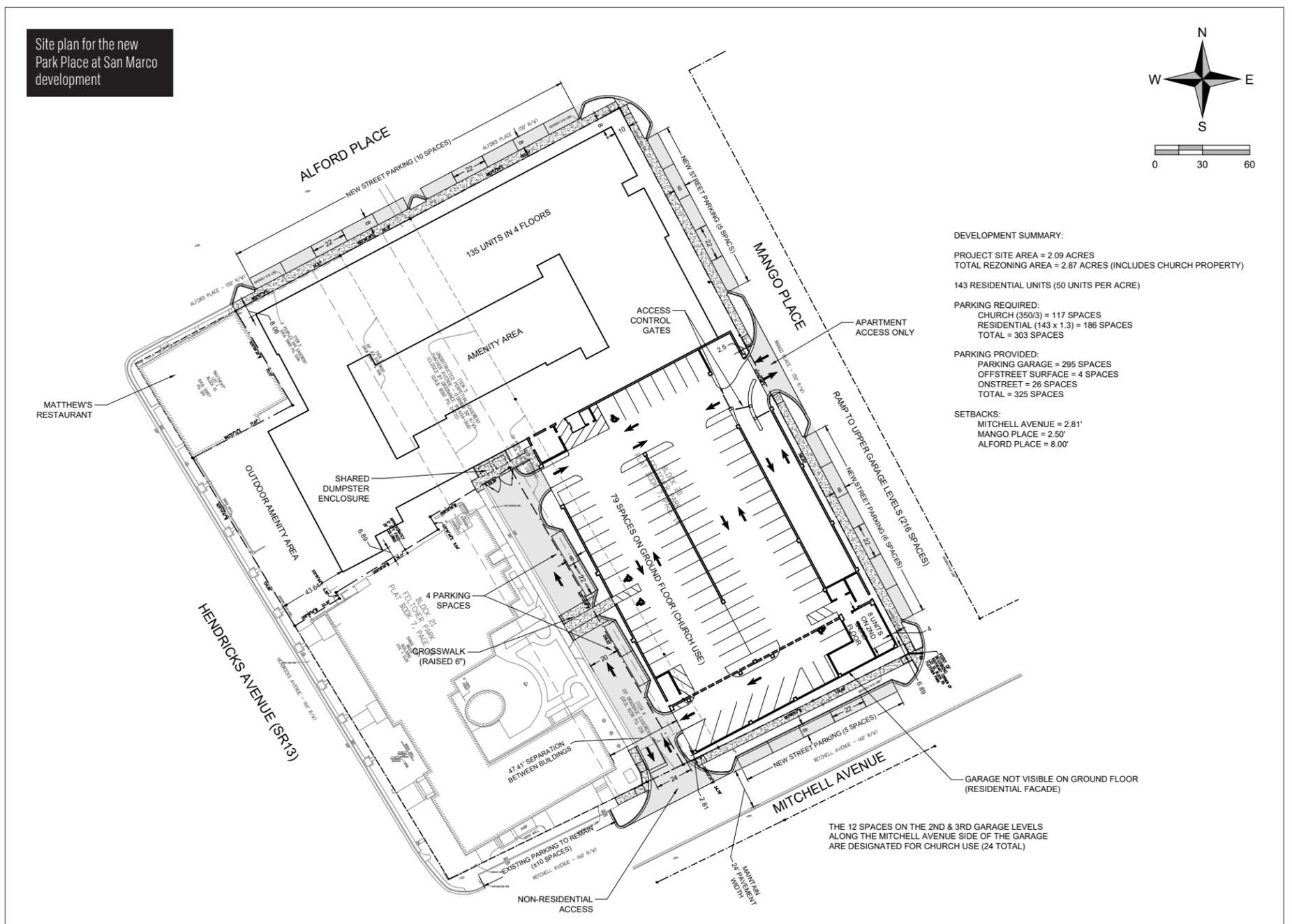
The church was named for South Jacksonville, which was a separate town on the Southbank when the church was established in 1913. The church began as

a small Sunday School, part of an outreach of First Presbyterian Church downtown, and its first church edifice was erected on the corner of LaSalle Street and Hendricks Avenue, according to the church website.

In 1937, the congregation adopted a mood of "building fever," and two years later, in 1939, the church moved to a three-story brick building at its present location. During the 1940s, church membership grew dramatically, so much so that the church had to rent a city bus to accommodate the men's Sunday School class that had to meet under the big oak tree in the yard. In 1949, the congregation of nearly 1,000 members broke ground for a new church building and sanctuary with the first services being held in 1950, and by 1956 church membership topped more than 1,600 members and 1,000 were enrolled in Sunday School, according to the church website. However, like many religious congregations nationwide, since the 1960s, South Jacksonville Presbyterian's membership began a slow decline and today the church is home to less than 250 congregants, putting a strain on the revenue needed to maintain the upkeep of its nearly 70-year-old edifice.

"Our property is more than we need, and it is well over 50 years old," King said, adding it is very expensive to bring the buildings up to code and maintain them. With the buildings it plans to keep, the church will still have the capacity to absorb new members in the future, he said.

"I know the church wanted to divest some of its property so it is good that it will not be just sitting there making it more difficult for the church to operate," said Cumber, noting she has only a general knowledge of the Park Place development. "I know the developers, and they do a great job. I have no doubt it's going to enhance the neighborhood. For the neighborhood and for the vibrancy of San Marco, it's great to have people walk and use the Beach Buggy. I will be watching closely as it goes through the process and LUZ (City Council's Land Use and Zoning Committee)," she said.





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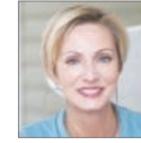
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# City study uses bacteria-based product to reduce algae blooms

## Total nitrogen reduction will improve water quality

By **Kandace Lankford**  
Resident Community News

It may seem counterintuitive but introducing bacteria into stormwater ponds could be the very thing that tips the scales toward making the waterways healthier.

The City of Jacksonville's Environmental Quality Division (EQD) will be doing just that during an 18-month study of nine stormwater ponds during which Microbe-Lift, a blend of specially formulated strains of bacteria used by landscape, irrigation and pond professionals, will be applied to the ponds to help reduce the amount of total nitrogen. Nitrogen is a food source for algae, which can harm plants, animals and people.

The study, a partnership between the City, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board (JEPB) and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) was funded with more than \$300,000 in donations, grants and in-kind contributions.

Specialists began applying the product to the ponds in June, after six months of baseline sampling. Treatments will continue through June 2020, and sampling of the treated ponds will continue for six additional months to help determine treatment maintenance needs. Nine non-treated ponds will also be sampled as a control group.

The goal is a 60% reduction in total nitrogen, more than double the amount

achieved by more traditional methods, according to Melissa Long, chief of the City's EQD. "If we can reduce total nitrogen, we are hoping to make an impact on the river and see less algae growth. That's something the City is really trying to do, and this is an innovative approach," she said. "If this is successful and we do see the reduction that we are hoping to see, we will potentially use this around the city in all of our stormwater ponds, which collectively will make a huge difference – it should actually reduce the total nitrogen going into our tributaries and then to the St. Johns River."

A 2015 pilot study conducted on three ponds – two at the Jacksonville Zoo and one at the duck pond in Riverside Park – yielded varying results with an average of 60% total nitrogen reduction as well as an 80% reduction in fecal coliform bacteria. Since then, the formula has been tweaked, according to Long, and the tweaked formula is what is being used for the study. "The DEP recommended if we wanted to use this product to remove total nitrogen, more studies needed to be done – and that is what we are doing here."

Microbe-Lift has been used worldwide in aquariums, koi ponds and aquaculture and has been proven effective in those environments. "We are changing the way that it's being used here, said Long. "It's not innovative in the fact that its being used in ponds; it's innovative in the fact that we are using it to reduce total nitrogen."

The study will contribute to meeting a statewide mandate to reduce total nitrogen levels by an additional 53 metric tons before the end of 2023. Because of Jacksonville's size and population, it must reduce more nitrogen than any other municipality in Florida. Sources of nitrogen



Ducks and fish contend with algae in their living space in Riverside Park.

in Florida's water include fertilizer, wastewater treatment facilities, septic systems, livestock waste, and polluted rain. Conventional treatments include street sweeping, septic tank phase-outs, and adding baffle boxes, where possible.

SJRWMD approved Microbe-Lift for stormwater ponds under its cost sharing program, awarding a \$53,000 grant toward construction costs. "This innovative project, once it gets to full scale and we've gone through the pilot program, has the potential to improve the water quality in the lower St. Johns River – which is what we are after," said Dale Jenkins, chief of the SJRWMD's Bureau of Project Management.

A large creator of retention ponds, FDOT contributed \$92,000 to help the project move forward. "We are not only road builders, but we are also community partners," said Hampton Ray, community outreach manager with FDOT. "Making sure that we have the opportunity to improve our environment is important to us, and this is something the department identified as a way to help mitigate some of those issues."

The JEPB, which is responsible for developing regulations necessary for administration and enforcement of the city's environmental laws, is a big supporter of the project and contributed more than \$136,000. Board Member David Wood explained that part of the board's role is to manage the trust fund and allocate it for the best possible uses.

"We try to find projects that will move the needle to improve the environmental quality in the City of Jacksonville. When the City set out the targets with regard to water quality – some of which would be difficult to attain with conventional means – and then explained the potential of this project, we were interested," he said. "What I like about this effort is all the scientific groundwork has been laid. At the end of the study, proper statistics will be used to draw scientific conclusions about the efficacy of the treatment and whether it's favorable or unfavorable. If the results are unfavorable, we can move on and look for

other innovate ways to improve water quality. If they are favorable, the City may have found a resource to help improve water quality."

According to Douglas Dent, technical director at Ecological Laboratories, the creator of Microbe-Lift, use of the product restored a tremendously polluted waterway in Cape Coral and is being used to clean rivers in China and Indonesia. He said the product causes no ill effects to the level of biology in the water. "You will actually see an increase in the water quality, meaning that it's better for the fish life and all the marine fauna and flora."

The Microbe-Lift product was evaluated through the FDEP innovative product assessment program and approved for use in stormwater treatment. While no harmful effects have been noted, the City is advising residents to avoid the following treatment sites:

- FDOT pond at the intersection of Alamo Street and Huntsford Road
- City pond at the intersection of Kona Avenue and Century Street
- FDOT pond at the southwest intersection of I-295 and Lee Road
- City pond at the intersection of Ft. Caroline Road and Spanish Oaks Drive.
- City pond just north of Ansley at Harts Road apartment complex at 11011 Harts Road
- City pond just west of 7914 Pritchard Road
- FDOT pond at 10420 General Avenue
- City pond at 2581 Commonwealth Avenue (COJ Fleet Maintenance)
- FDOT pond at the southwest intersection of Forest Street and Myrtle Avenue

For more information, visit [coj.net/MicrobeLift](http://coj.net/MicrobeLift) or contact the Environmental Quality Division at (904) 255-7100.

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# Churches work together to save historic preschool

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Thanks to the generosity of a neighboring church, a historic San Marco preschool has been saved from the wrecking ball.

South Jacksonville Presbyterian Preschool, which has served at least three generations of San Marco area children over 70 years, is moving to Southside Baptist Church. The preschool building, currently on the campus of South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church, is one of several buildings that the church has under agreement to be sold to build a 143-unit residential complex and parking garage on the property. If all goes according to plan, the buildings should be demolished sometime early next year with a groundbreaking ceremony to be held in April or May 2020.

“We’re opening a preschool and hiring their staff,” said Southside Baptist Senior Pastor Dr. Gary Webber. “We are starting a new organization legally because of the licensing requirements.”



The building that housed South Jacksonville Presbyterian Preschool for generations will be demolished as part of a new residential development. The school will be renamed The Preschool at San Marco and will relocate to Southside Baptist Church.

Up until mid-July, South Jacksonville Presbyterian Preschool Director Beth Martin had no idea whether her school would open in the fall. When Southside Baptist Church officials heard about the Presbyterian Church’s plans to develop its property, they immediately offered space in their church facility to accommodate the Presbyterian school’s staff and students for next year.

“This isn’t something we were looking for,” said Webber. “Our intention is to preserve the legacy of this great school. Our relationship with South Jacksonville Presbyterian is very strong. We’ve been minister partners within the community long before this. It made a lot of sense for us to partner with them and allow the preschool to move over.”

Presently the preschool is scheduled to hold its orientation on Monday, August 19, on the Presbyterian Church campus. The school will most likely transfer from its old location to Southside Baptist, located at

1435 Atlantic Blvd., over the Christmas holidays so the children can start the new year afresh in their new digs, said Southside Baptist Executive Pastor Scott Badgett.

“We want to make the timing of the move what best fits with South Jacksonville Presbyterian’s families and teachers,” he said.

Meanwhile, Southside Baptist has set up a new legal entity to accommodate the school, which will be named The Preschool at San Marco, Inc. Already the Baptist church has expanded its playground to three times its previous size and is working to get a Certificate of Use and a required license from the Florida Department of Children and Families. The Certificate of Use is needed because “use of the preschool area as an educational occupancy effectively changes the use of the church from a strictly assembly occupancy to a mixed-occupancy use,” said Kevin L. Jones, division chief and fire marshal for Jacksonville in a letter to Webber.

Although both churches were onboard immediately with the idea of moving the school, it was not all smooth sailing. Upon contacting an architect so that the church could apply for its Certificate of Use, the church was informed its structure did not meet up with new fire standards governing a new preschool. The major issue was that, although the classrooms Southside Baptist already has in place all have windows and doors, the windows and doors are internal, covered by an atrium, which is contrary to the requirement that doors and windows open to the outside for increased safety, said Webber.

“We were told to have an architect look at the plans and sign off on it, and the architect couldn’t sign off because it wasn’t according to code,” Webber said, noting the church consulted two architects and received the same answer. “We couldn’t get anyone to come out and look at it, and that was our big problem.

“Due to the basic design of our building, this rule created the need for us to receive some sort of variance,” he continued. “Our facilities are safe. We have sprinklers and all sorts of things, but one of the things they require is that preschool rooms be on an exterior wall with a window to the outside. That hasn’t always been a requirement. The fixes weren’t possible. We would have had to tear down our facility to open up the rooms to the outside, and that wasn’t going to happen,” Webber said. “There was no solution other than to receive some kind of special exemption.”

To try to help, Webber reached out to District 5 Councilwoman LeAnna Cumber,



The fact that the windows to the preschool classrooms at Southside Baptist Church look out to an atrium was at first problematic and thought to be contrary to the city’s fire code, nearly preventing the school from relocating into its new digs.

At-Large District 4 Councilman Matt Carlucci, who is an alum of South Jacksonville Presbyterian Preschool, and Mayor Lenny Curry to see if anything could be done. Cumber called Jacksonville’s Fire Chief, who asked Jones to quickly do an onsite visit to look over the situation. Once at the site, the situation was quickly resolved.

After conducting the site inspection and researching the Florida Fire Prevention Code, Jones noted that the church had an “approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system,” allowing it to meet code. “Since the church is fully sprinklered, the issues involving direct access to the outside or a need for a rescue window is not an issue,” Jones said in his letter.

“The fire marshal came through and he was very thorough,” said Webber. “We were really amazed at how quickly it happened, and we are very grateful to everyone in the City who helped keep this little preschool open. It’s a real testament to government working.”

Having the interdenominational Christian-based preschool move to Southside Baptist will be a great advantage to the rapidly growing San Marco community, said Webber. With so many apartments and condominiums being built, more children will most likely be moving into the area, making the availability of spaces at local preschools a premium. Southside Baptist has the capacity to seat 121 preschoolers, twice as many as the 60 that South Jacksonville Presbyterian Preschool was able to accommodate.

As part of the deal, the Presbyterian preschool’s director and eight teachers will take up business at the new location, which will offer four classes – one each for children ages one, two, three and a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) class for four-year-olds. Also, much of the preschool furniture, playground equipment will also be relocated, said Badgett. “Our rooms do have some furniture already so, between what they have

and what we have, we will take the best of everything,” he said.

South Jacksonville Presbyterian Preschool will also contribute any funds it has in its preschool coffers to support the school and its teaching staff, Badgett said. “The money they have will help us adapt the space without any delay or additional burden upon Southside Baptist to make the conversion.

“We’re not wanting to make any major changes at this point,” he continued. “We think they have been highly successful. We hope, as a church, we can enhance what they’ve already done such a good job developing.”

A couple of enhancements the Baptists have in mind is creating the ability to have parents pay tuition online, to live-stream online the children’s performances so grandparents and other relatives throughout the country may be able to tune in, and to offer scholarships to children whose parents might not be able to afford tuition, Badgett said. “It is in our heart that we want it to be missional so that we can have it available to those who cannot afford the entire amount,” he said.

Southside Baptist Church, which is celebrating 80 years in the community this year, has never had a preschool of its own. The closest it has come was a few years ago when, for three years, it held VPK classes for Burmese refugee children to help them assimilate into the community.

“We believe this is a God thing. It’s wonderful we don’t have to go through the expense of trying to develop a foundation of parents and students to get something like this going, because that can be quite expensive,” Badgett said, noting that, even with all the uncertainty and upheaval, not a single registered student has dropped out.

“That speaks of the closeness of those families and the teachers, and most of the teachers have such longevity with the school. It speaks to the quality of what families have seen in year’s past. We hope to continue that,” he said.

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# Hendricks crosswalk to increase safety and walkability near Bold Bean

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

There is happy news for patrons of Bold Bean Coffee Roasters and other neighboring businesses on Hendricks Avenue north of Atlantic Boulevard. The Florida Department of Transportation is planning to install a mid-block crosswalk near the entrance of the popular coffeehouse in mid-August.

The project will include a striped crosswalk and push-button walk signal with rectangular rapid flashing beacons, said Sara Pleasants, community outreach specialist for FDOT. The installation is expected to be completed by mid-October, weather and schedule permitting, she said, noting the estimated cost of the crosswalk is \$53,160.

When Bold Bean first opened in October 2016, its owners had an arrangement with Southside Baptist Church so that its customers could use the church's Hendricks Avenue parking lot across the street from the coffeehouse. However, under the advice of attorney Robert Harris of Harris Guidi Rosner, P.A., next door to the coffee café, the church decided it was too much of a liability to allow Bold Bean customers to continue to park in its lot without the safety of a crosswalk nearby. "It was just too great a risk for the church to take," said Dr. Gary Webber, senior pastor of Southside Baptist Church.

The crosswalk did not come about due to a request for a survey by the owners of Bold Bean, said Pleasants. "The Florida Department of Transportation routinely reviews areas for potential safety improvements," Pleasants said. "In this case, the department determined that a crosswalk at the location would improve safety."

Without the parking lot, many Bold Bean customers have been forced to park on neighboring residential streets. Once the crosswalk is installed, parking pressure in front of homes in adjacent neighborhoods may be relieved as the church is willing to revisit its parking arrangement with the coffee establishment, said Webber. "As far as we are concerned, our issue was always an issue of pedestrian safety. That was always our concern," he said. "If that issue is addressed, we would certainly be happy to talk to the folks at Bold Bean."

Zack Burnett, managing partner at Bold Bean Coffee Roasters, said news of the crosswalk was exciting. "We believe it will increase the walkability, safety and success of San Marco as a whole," he said. "The crosswalk will improve the connectivity between all of the business in our mid-block area to all of the other businesses and residential areas in the Hendricks/Landon/San Marco triangle."

"I believe creating more walkable and well-connected neighborhoods not only alleviates stress of parking, but it also leads to safer, healthier neighborhoods and an overall higher quality of life. Recently I have been very happy to see some solutions put into place such as Beach Buggies, which intend to reduce the stress of parking while increasing connectivity within the neighborhood. We look forward to seeing more creative solutions as the neighborhood continues to grow," he continued.

Burnett said it was his hope when opening the coffee shop in San Marco that his location would "bridge the gap between the business district of the Square with the district further down" north along Hendricks Avenue. "We envisioned the infill encouraging people



Area on Hendricks Avenue in San Marco where a mid-block crosswalk is scheduled to be installed by FDOT in August.

*"We look forward to seeing more creative solutions as the neighborhood continues to grow."*

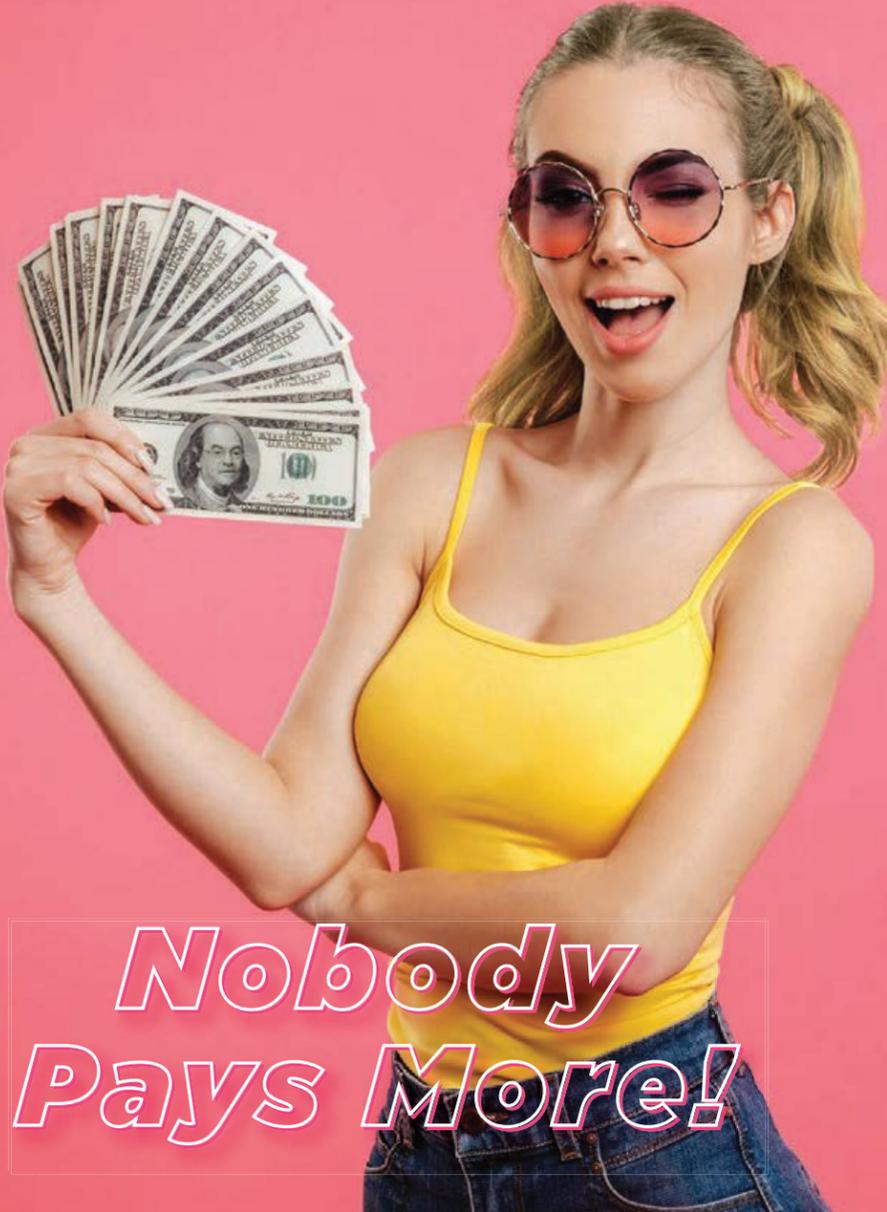
— Zack Burnett, managing partner, Bold Bean Coffee Roasters

to park in one place in the neighborhood or walk out their front door and walk between numerous well-connected businesses. I believe that this crosswalk will bring us closer to that reality. Greater walkability in the neighborhood will be a benefit to the city and our residents as a whole," he said.

"Once the safety and liability issues are eliminated, I really do hope that Dr. Webber and the church will consider discussing the possibility of opening their parking lot again to the public during non-church hours. We have been and remain open to doing whatever

we can to work with Dr. Webber and the church in addressing any issues on this, but ultimately, as it is their property any decision to open the lot will be in their hands."

Jay Burnett, Zack's father and founder of Bold Bean, also expressed his joy in hearing the crosswalk would soon be a reality. "The parking and pedestrian situation in San Marco has indeed been a challenge, not only for us, but for other businesses and their patrons in San Marco," he said. "I'm hopeful that the addition of the new crosswalk will help what is and has been an issue in the neighborhood for some time."



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# FDOT to plant native greenery along Hart Expressway

**By Kandace Lankford**  
Resident Community News

Conceptual plans for the Hart Expressway landscaping project received an overwhelmingly positive response from those who attended the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) July 18 public meeting at the Northeast Florida Safety Council.

Members of the project and design teams were on hand to answer questions and take feedback on the estimated \$1 million project, which is focused on the Atlantic Boulevard, Alternate U.S. 1 and University Boulevard interchanges.

The landscaping plans were inspired by plants and trees that are indigenous to Northeast Florida. The naturalistic approach includes native greenery such as muhly grass, saw palmettos, crape myrtles, live oaks, bald cypress, pine, and more.

"It's a palette that is native to this part of the state. It's material that's tough; it's hearty;

it's proven in a pretty hostile environment like this," said EJ Bolduc III, vice president of the land planning, urban design, and landscape architecture group at CHW Professional Consultants.

Currently in its 90% design phase, construction on the project is expected to start in summer 2020 and be completed by fall 2020. Irrigation and other incidental work relating to the overall aesthetics of the 1.6-mile Hart Expressway corridor will also take place.

The project was developed as a concept in conjunction with District Two's FDOTree program, a new initiative created to educate the public about the FDOT's Northeast Florida landscaping programs.

Michele and Chris Reichart were among the dozen meeting attendees. The couple owns a home near the Atlantic Boulevard interchange, but the project doesn't quite extend to where they live. "I'm glad they are doing it - I think this area really needs



Conceptual design for the intersection of Atlantic Boulevard and the Hart Expressway

it," said Michele Reichart. "It looks great. I just wish they would extend it a little further."

Groups like Greenscape and other neighbors told the project team they were pleased the design does not feature palm trees, as they do not grow naturally in the region. The public had a two-hour window to drop in, view the plans and talk with the teams.

"That's what these public meetings are for, so people from the community can come in and be a part of it," said Hampton Ray, community outreach manager with FDOT.

For more information about the Hart Bridge Expressway landscaping project, visit [nflroads.com/FDOTree](http://nflroads.com/FDOTree).

# Safety measures coming to Palmer Terrace park

Residents with park gate code asked to come forward

**By Marcia Hodgson**  
Resident Community News

It's no secret that mischief makers and other unsavory characters often frequent the pocket park on Palmer Terrace. To rectify the situation, board members of St. Nicholas Area Preservation (SNAP) met with city officials in June to see what safety measures could be done to allow residents to better enjoy the tiny waterfront parcel at the end of Palmer Terrace.

In a recent SNAP newsletter, members were informed that auto burglaries had increased in the neighborhood by 23%, so residents were cautioned to remove their valuables and lock vehicles near their homes. This statistic came by way of SNAP Board Member Walter Bryant, who attends Citizen Planning Advisory Committee meetings (CPAC) on behalf of the society.

"It's kind of a misnomer," said SNAP President Jay Harrington, speaking of the frightful statistic. "Kids are out of school now, and they have nowhere to be, so they open a few car doors. It's cyclical."

Palmer Terrace Park, a city spillway that serves as a small piece of riverside green-space for residents to enjoy for picnicking, fishing or watching the sun set, has been fraught with vandalism, drug use and other offensive conduct by park visitors outside of the neighborhood over the years. Most recently, SNAP officials contacted officers from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office to assist a fisherman who backed his truck through the park's narrow gate only to get it stuck in the mud down near the river's bulkhead, said Harrington.

Harrington and Bubba Miller, vice president of SNAP, contacted Keith Meyerl, with City of Jacksonville Parks, Recreation and Community Services, to talk about how the residents and city can work together to better maintain the park and improve its safety.

"He was very responsive to our concerns, and it is our understanding that we can expect some big developments," said Harrington.

Meyerl promised by July 21 the City would do a deep clean-up of the park, trim the weeds to make it less "covered," and install a larger, more visible sign at the entrance emphasizing that the park hours are from dawn to dusk, Harrington said.

Once the new fiscal year begins in September, the City plans to budget for an autolocking gate so that the park can be shut down after dusk, Harrington said. "It might take a little time because they need to send RFPs (Request for Proposals) out to get power to the gate," said Miller. "He said it will be in next year's park budget. That's when we can expect a more concrete update."

"Kids want to smoke pot somewhere and hopefully the sign, the gate and the light will help us curb that," said Harrington.

"We're doing what we can. We're a new administration. We haven't been here long, but we are very happy with the response we got from the City," he continued. "They seemed very responsive to our concerns."

Harrington also requested that residents who might know the code to the existing gate at Palmer Terrace Park call a SNAP board member. "I encourage any of your readers to come forward if they know the code to the gate at Palmer Terrace Park," he said. "It's ancient knowledge that has been lost, but there is a keypad on the pedestrian gate, and we would like to know what the code is."

The City is impressed with the care St. Nicholas residents give to Palmer Terrace Park, said Miller. "The neighbors are



The gate on Palmer Terrace park is slated to get an automatic locking system so that the pocket park can be closed between dusk and dawn.

showing an appreciation for the park, and Keith literally thanked us as a neighborhood for showing an interest," he said, noting that setting up a "Friends of the Park" organization is another opportunity for the City and the neighborhood to work together to beautify the park.

"They regard it as a spillway, but at the end of the day, they understand that for us in St. Nicholas, it's a really good opportunity for people to walk down and enjoy the river with their families," said Miller. "We're just trying to figure out how we can beautify it, to make it into a neighborhood park that people can enjoy while it still serves the municipality for drainage."



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# Residents share thoughts on tax to fund public schools

Do you think a half-cent sales tax should be implemented to pay for our schools and related infrastructure in need of repairs?

By Marcia Hodgson, Resident Community News



Absolutely. We need to invest in our children and have a safe environment where they can learn. There is absolutely a need. Our old schools are crumbling. It's time to pony up and make them right.

- Susan Martinez, Miramar



Definitely. I've lived all over the United States and I know if the schools are good, property values are good, and it helps maintain that. I have no children, but if the schools are good then the property values in the neighborhood are better.

- Steve Waugh, Southbank



Yes, absolutely. It's just such a small amount per person paying the taxes but will make such a huge difference to the schools in our community.

- Michelle Branly, San Marco



Yes, because I think education is important and we need to do what it takes to prioritize it. The schools' conditions are not great. They could be a lot better. I'm a new resident here and really enjoying the area and I want to make sure they have good schools.

- Eric Dawkins, San Marco



Yes. I think our children are very important, and I would definitely support an increase as long as it is reasonable. Across the board I would say the schools are in tough shape. I am lucky to be in a school - Hendricks Avenue Elementary - that is fabulous in Duval and I love, but I can't say every other school in Duval County has the same blessings.

- Lauren Pratchard, Miramar



Yes, I support a half-cent sales tax. I am grateful my children went to a terrific school, Hendricks Avenue Elementary, and on to Stanton, Douglas Anderson and LaVilla, but at the same time schools across the system aren't in the same shape. I'd love it if some of the money could be directed at the teachers if the state couldn't come up with a different solution.

- Carolyn Dodge, Miramar



Yes, I do, because it is necessary for the infrastructure to be in good shape going forward. I haven't looked at all the schools, but I was part of the Hendricks Avenue Elementary Advisory Committee, and I could tell it would be very helpful to all the schools if they were able to improve their infrastructure. Obviously, education is the most important thing we have for the children. For them to be able to learn, we need an environment that is modern and up to date and is safe.

- Erik Berger, San Marco



Yes, I think the question answers itself because we need the repairs and the money needs to come from somewhere. We need to support our infrastructure and our students because without a society of educated people we are not a great society. Teachers need to be compensated adequately and most teachers supplement their careers with part-time jobs, substitute teaching and work over the summer. My children attend public school at Hendricks Avenue Elementary and the facilities need an update. I think the last time those portables were put in was 20 years ago and there are still not enough classrooms and it's an A-rated school. You can teach and do great things anywhere, but I do think people would be surprised to find out the infrastructure needs improvement with the times. Kids are sharing computers at times and the teachers are using their own resources and they don't get paid that much to put it back. We have plenty of people who send their children to private school, and for this type of community they should probably continue to pay more taxes.

- Carmen Bahr, San Marco

## ASK THE EXPERT

### PIVOTAL MOMENT IN THE TRADE WAR

"In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it." This Oscar Wilde quote may very well be what sums up President Trump's ban on the Chinese telecommunications company, Huawei. The "Defending America's 5G Future" Act could be the pivotal moment in the trade war because it effectively removes Huawei's ban from the trade war negotiating table.

Mega-giant Huawei now sells more phones in China than Apple does. While it may be a poorer product, Huawei's featherweight price tag is easier to stomach. In Huawei's other business, telecom equipment, the company often has the best technology at half the price making it a powerhouse in the coming 5G revolution. Much like the 1970's oil embargoes pushed the US toward self-sufficiency in energy, on and off US export restrictions to Chinese tech firms have deepened China's resolve to be self-reliant in semiconductors and technology. In short, Huawei is really important to China.

Though some claim it was a negotiating tactic, Trump successfully sold Huawei as a national security threat. A move reinforced by the FBI and other European nations who claim to have strong evidence that the Chinese government not only subsidizes Huawei but also uses the equipment to spy on other nations. Because the majority of Huawei's suppliers fall under some form of US jurisdiction, the bipartisan ban is brutally effective. The ban has such strong support because of its original justification, national security. From Congress's point of view, waiving national security in exchange for a trade deal seems questionable at best. The Huawei ban is either a national security issue, or a negotiating tactic, but it cannot be both. Congress's "Defending America's 5G Future" Act would solidly place it in the security threat column and make it very difficult for Trump to lift any ban.

Huawei's importance to China makes it difficult to see a trade deal being reached while any ban exists. The national security risks make it equally difficult for Congress to allow the ban to be lifted. Trump got what he wanted in his ban on Huawei, but, due to the national security label, he may not get the China trade deal he seeks.

Caleb Cronin is a financial advisor with Raymond James & Associates, Inc. Opinions expressed in the attached article are those of the author and are not necessarily those of Raymond James. The information has been obtained from sources considered to be reliable, but we do not guarantee that the foregoing material is accurate or complete.



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# St. Nicholas resident wants city to move historic marker

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

More than 200 years ago, when the Spanish occupied what is now known as Jacksonville, a small Spanish garrison once stood just west of the athletic fields of present-day Bishop Kenny High School in St. Nicholas. In the median of Atlantic Boulevard between Assumption School's soccer field on the north and 50 feet north of the White



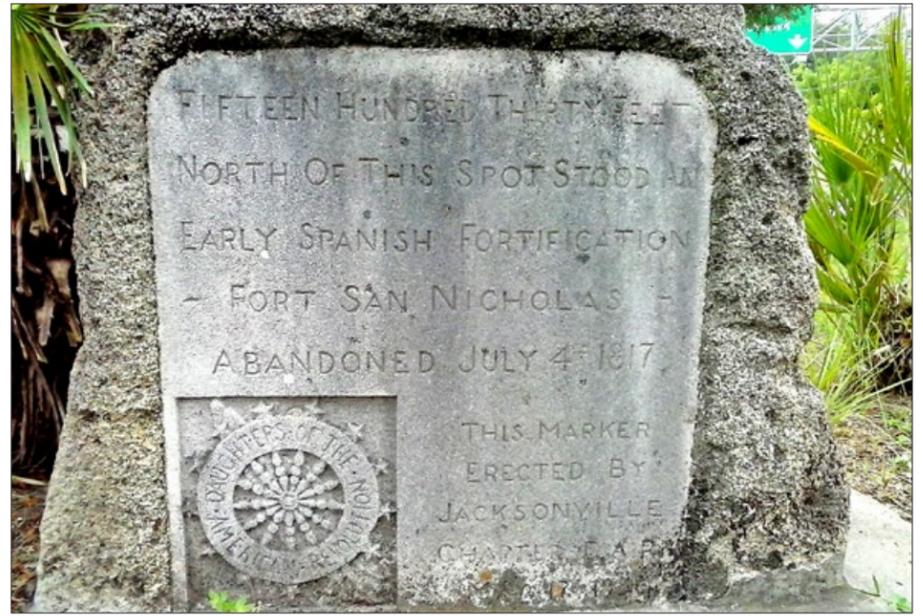
Blocked footpath in the median of Atlantic Boulevard where the historic marker indicating where Fort San Nicholas once stood in the 1700s.

Avenue-Atlantic Boulevard intersection on the south, lies a historic marker indicating the exact location of Fort San Nicholas. Erected by the Jacksonville Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on May 17, 1930, the marker indicates that the fort, which was first built sometime around 1740, existed 1,530 feet north of the marker.

E.J. Helow, a St. Nicholas resident, wants to have the marker moved. In early July, Helow wrote a letter to the St. Nicholas Area Preservation (SNAP) Board requesting that it discuss the possibility of moving the marker to St. Nicholas Train Station Park, so that residents and visitors might be able to enjoy it.

"Several months back FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation) installed a barricade/guardrail on the north side of the Atlantic Boulevard median. It appears the reason for that was to protect the digital signs and periodic visits by technical personnel from the voluminous amount of traffic westbound on Atlantic Boulevard," Helow said, noting that the marker, which has a small paved footpath leading up to it, is now hidden and partially inaccessible. "The current location is not convenient to get to and potentially dangerous with all the traffic east and westbound," he said.

The colonial fort served as a Spanish stronghold to defend Cowford Crossing across the St. Johns River; to protect settlers and missionaries from Indians; to help preserve Spanish interests in Florida against the British and the Americans; and to prevent smugglers from using the St. Johns River,



Historic marker located in the median on Atlantic Boulevard indicating the exact location of where Fort San Nicholas stood in the 1700s.

*"The current location is not convenient to get to and potentially dangerous with all the traffic."*

— E.J. Helow

according to an article written by Glenn Emery on [jaxhistory.org](http://jaxhistory.org).

Built in 1740 by Governor Manuel de Montiano in anticipation of an English attack by General James Oglethorpe, the fort was located at a strategic crossing of the St. Johns River and remained in use until the British occupied Florida in 1763. It is unclear whether the British used the fort during their 20-year occupation, but when the Spanish returned, they refurbished the blockhouse and added a 100-foot square moat around it. In 1796, John H. McIntosh captured and destroyed the fort as revenge for the Spanish having appropriated some of his property. The Spanish again rebuilt the fort only to see it destroyed again during the Patriots War. It was rebuilt again. After the Spanish ceded Florida to the United States in 1821, the fort was used by the Americans as a customs house and to prevent smuggling, according to [fortwiki.com](http://fortwiki.com).

The fort was abandoned on July 4, 1817, according to the marker.

SNAP President Jay Harrington and Vice President Bubba Miller said Helow's suggestion will be discussed at the board's August meeting, Monday, Aug. 5. Miller expressed some concern about moving the marker due to the fact it was specifically placed to indicate the exact location of the fort.

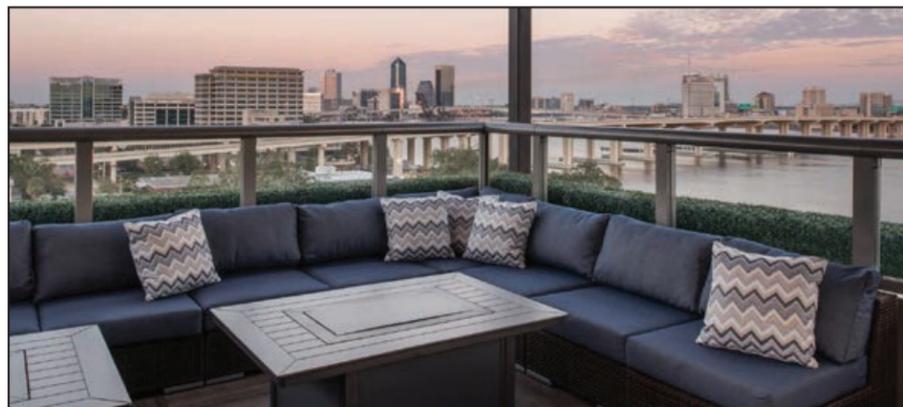
"I see that FDOT created a barrier that blocks the sidewalk made to get to the marker," said Miller. "But you can't really

move the marker because it tells exactly where the fort was located from that particular place. It's cool, and it's overgrown with palmettos, but the problem in my mind is moving it when it says the fort was located 1,530 feet north of this spot. However, I can see that it is frightening to cross three lanes of Atlantic Boulevard to go see it."

In a discussion about the marker during SNAP's recent happy hour event at Mudville Grille, one suggestion was to place the historic marker in St. Nicholas Train Station Park and have the city embed a plaque in the ground at the present location so that information would not be lost.

Helow, who has lived in the San Marco area since he attended Assumption School in first grade more than 60 years ago, said he feels something should be done about the marker because it is a visible reminder of St. Nicholas's rich history. He first went to SNAP hoping they would be able to better appeal to the city to have the marker moved. "When the barricade was put up by FDOT, I said, 'this isn't right. Why don't I bring it up to SNAP? It was the perfect opportunity to get the wheels rolling,'" said Helow.

"I don't see how anybody could object to this," he continued. "I feel certain those of us residing in the St. Nicholas neighborhood and the businesses within could encourage the Jacksonville Historical Society and others to make this existing monument area something more than it is now," he said.

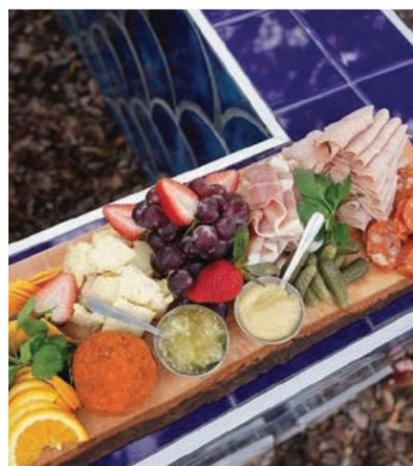


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# Men's career closet opens at Sulzbacher

JTA Care teams up to give men a boost in turning their lives around

**By Kandace Lankford**  
Resident Community News

A ribbon-cutting ceremony held July 2 at Sulzbacher, 611 E. Adams St., marked the opening of the men's career closet, a free clothing store for Sulzbacher clients seeking employment.

JTA Cares, an employee-driven, community-focused program of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), teamed up with Sulzbacher to open the free boutique, which is a companion program to the Goodwill Job Junction that operates out of Sulzbacher's campus.

The neatly arranged closet is filled with suits, jackets, slacks, shoes and ties that are available to men living at Sulzbacher or utilizing the Urban Rest Stop – a place for street people to go during the day to get connected to services, take a shower, have access to laundry and more – allowing them to “shop” for something to wear to job interviews.

“The way that complex issues get solved is through partnerships. Cross center partnerships, interagency partnerships, but no one sector or one agency or one organization can solve problems, big problems, by themselves,” said Cindy Funkhauser, CEO of Sulzbacher.

As the area's largest provider of services to homeless people in the area, Sulzbacher houses 360 members of the community – most of whom are women and children. Their services include street outreach, daily meals, safe shelter, case management, veteran's services, job training and placement, comprehensive medical care and permanent housing.

The East Adams Street location is for men only, with women and families being housed at Sulzbacher Village, a complex opened in 2018 on the Northside, that has 70 subsidized, permanent housing units for women and families. Additionally, there



Scott Cairns, Chris Austin, Kevin Holzendorf, Nathaniel Ford and Cindy Funkhauser

*“It's about making our community a better place, and that starts with making sure people have the tools they need to pursue their dreams.”*

— **Kevin Holzendorf**,  
JTA board chairman



A mini-fashion show highlighted the professional attire found in the men's clothes closet.

are about 30 units to accommodate women and families needing medical respite and short-term emergency housing. Sulzbacher Village also has an early learning center, and a pediatric health center that serves its residents as well as children in the surrounding community.

Kevin Holzendorf, JTA board chairman, said the JTA's role in Jacksonville goes well beyond just providing transit or building roads and sidewalks. “It's about making our community a better place, and that starts with making sure people have the tools they need to pursue their dreams.”

The JTA Cares team has taken on the task of making sure that people who are homeless have those tools by way of stocking and maintaining the clothes closet with donations from JTA employees. They also stock and maintain a free clothing boutique for women at Sulzbacher Village.

Nathaniel Ford, CEO of JTA and a board member of Goodwill Industries of North

Florida, said that together, the agencies and organizations that brought forth the men's clothes closet have been able to do some great things. “I think Jacksonville's future is very bright because of our culture of pulling together to help people.”

For more information about Sulzbacher, visit [sulzbacherjax.org](http://sulzbacherjax.org). For more information about JTA Cares, visit [jtafla.com/jta-cares](http://jtafla.com/jta-cares).

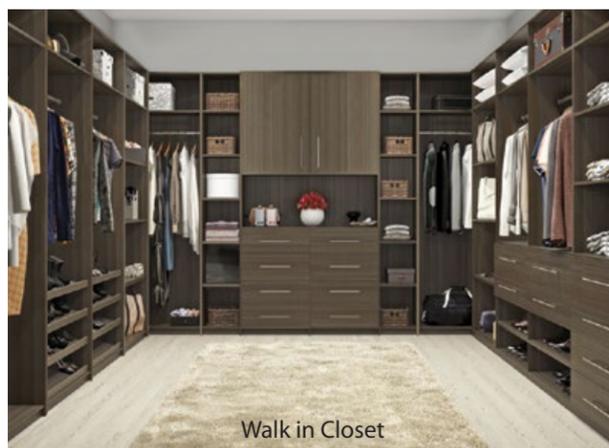


A new men's picnic area, adjacent to the Goodwill Job Junction, is the former site of the children's playground.

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# Corporations, community rallies around downtown mission

By **Kate A. Hallock**  
Resident Community News

On any given morning, the Clara White Mission at 613 W. Ashley St. is buzzing with activity. Serving breakfast to the homeless and holding job training classes are just two of the programs and services offered at the 115-year-old downtown mission, but a recent cut in federal funding may change the level of activity.

On July 2, Ju’Coby Pittman, president/CEO for Clara White Mission, announced that the 45% reduction in funding would severely affect the mission, reducing program services and cutting back breakfast to three days a week. Even before the mission lost almost half a million dollars in expected federal funds it had cut breakfast service from seven to five days a week.

“When we got a big cut a few years ago, the Clara White Mission decided we would do breakfast, the Sulzbacher would do lunch and dinner, also City Rescue Mission and Salvation Army, so we wanted to make sure that even though these cuts were occurring the homeless and underserved would continue to be served,” Pittman said.

Clara White had planned to serve about 125,000 meals in its 2019-2020 fiscal year, but after the announced cuts in funding said it had only enough to pay for little over 50%.

The mission launched a Call-to-Action Donation Challenge July 2 with the goal of replacing that money by Aug. 30. Less than a week later, nearly half of the \$425,000 goal was raised through donations from the Jaguars Foundation, the Law Firm of Pajcic & Pajcic and Steve and Anne Pajcic, bestbet, Sysco, Chartwells Food Service and anonymous donors.

“Last week this time we didn’t have any money toward our goal,” said Pittman at a press conference July 9. “Today I want to announce that with the lead gift from the Jaguars and now the Pajcics, several individuals, bestbet and the Weavers, as well as a lot of donations through social media, we have raised \$250,000.”

Clara White mission board member and treasurer Joe Whitaker spoke about the mission’s goals.

“We do three things we’re known for. We feed the hungry. We train the untrained. And we support veterans as they transition from homelessness, through transitional housing programs we offer, to permanent housing. Those services are desperately needed in this community and we want to continue to provide them. We want to make sure we can feed the hungry,” he said.

At that conference, two local groups presented checks for \$75,000 each. The Jaguars Foundation’s lead gift was matched by the Law Firm of Pajcic & Pajcic and Steve and Anne Pajcic.

“On behalf of Shad Khan and the Jaguars Foundation, we are so proud to be able to support Clara White and the great work they have done for over 100 years as a beacon in downtown Jacksonville,” said Chris Sutton, Jaguars Foundation director of community partnerships. “This is an important staple to the Jacksonville community, and we invite other businesses and individuals to join us in helping them reach the threshold so they can continue to do great service at Clara White Mission.”

Attorney Michael Pajcic also presented a check to Pittman on behalf of the family law firm. “We think the Clara White Mission is a vital part of our community and hope that our matching of the Jaguars



Flanked by members of the Jaguars ROAR are Chris Sutton, Joe Whitaker, Ju’Coby Pittman and Michael Pajcic. In back: Thomas Waters, Diana Mason, and Dee Paez, board members.

donation will have a snowball effect and other people in the community will join in and help support this wonderful mission,” he said.

It’s not just the nonprofit’s programs and services that are in jeopardy.

“Our building is almost a hundred years old and we can’t keep up with the repairs,” said Pittman. “We’ve done internal audits, we’ve done everything humanely possible [to cut costs] and our board has stepped up with contributions, but we weren’t able to raise enough funds in such a short period of time,” Pittman said, noting she will be taking a 20% cut in her salary. “We’ve even cut some staff but couldn’t cut too much without cutting the quality of the programs and services we provide.”

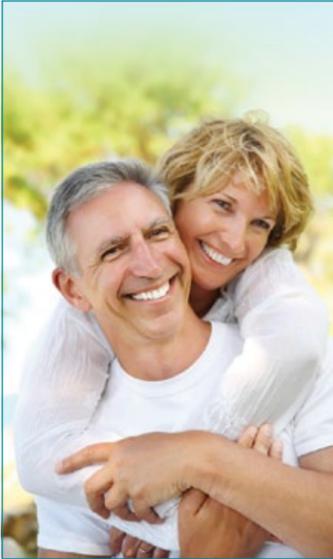
Pittman said their reserves had pretty much been depleted and is looking forward to getting some help from the community. “It’s very important that the community see we have corporations who not only contribute to economic development, but they’re interested in the social issues in our community. That’s a real big feather in the caps of those organizations who

give, as well as to our board members who pledged to give to this challenge.”

As if loss of funding wasn’t hard enough, Culinary Instructor and Chef Victoria Cannizzo said it was a critical time for the breakfast service – the freezer died the day before – and was grateful that others in the community, such as Feeding Northeast Florida, Sysco, and other food services, had come together to provide fresh food for the mission’s breakfasts.

August 30 is important, said Pittman, because they had just started their new fiscal year July 1 and had not heard about other grant requests in the pipeline. “It would be important to start strong in the first quarter and it buys us some time,” said Pittman. “We’ve got some fundraisers planned, we’ve cut staff as much as we can without cutting the quality. We realize cuts may come every year but it’s hard to prepare for deep cuts, especially over several years.”

Clara White Mission’s annual budget is \$2.1 million, so the loss of the federal funds was a huge blow to what Pittman said was the heart and soul of the mission – feeding the hungry and homeless for 115 years.



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# Even in retirement, work never ends for Mike Hightower

By Marcia Hodgson

Resident Community News

Mike Hightower, one of the most well-known and politically connected lobbyists and political fundraisers in Jacksonville, has officially retired – for the second time.

As one of the last items of business before former District 6 Councilman Matt Schellenberg's term on City Council ended June 30, he introduced resolution 2019-480, "Honoring & Commending the Life and Many Accomplishments of Mike Hightower Upon the Occasion of His Latest Retirement."

The resolution was co-sponsored by At-Large District 5 Councilman Samuel Newby and passed by the new City Council during its first meeting July 16. The Council officially honored Hightower with a presentation during its meeting July 23.

A former Avondale resident for more than 48 years, Hightower moved with his wife, Sue, to Mandarin over a year ago to live closer to his granddaughter. He is well-known in Jacksonville leadership circles and in the nonprofit community, where he's received dozens of awards and commendations and has served on and chaired countless civic and charitable organizations including the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, the Jacksonville Library Foundation, the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Naval Academy, the Ritz Theater and the LaVilla Museum Board. Even in retirement, he will continue to be active in the JaxChamber Hightower Emerging Leaders Fellowship program, which is named for him.

At age 74, he has retired twice – first in 2014 after 30 years at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida where he served as director and later as vice president of Governmental and Legislative Relations, working closely with key political leaders in the federal, state and local government. After retiring from Florida Blue, he then worked for a year as Senior Policy Advisor at Holland & Knight International Law Firm before being appointed to JEA's Senior Leadership Team, which he joined in 2015 after being appointed Chief Public and Stakeholder Affairs Officer. His second retirement is from the utility, and was his second tenure serving JEA. For 16 years he sat on the utility's board of directors, serving two terms as JEA chair.

A native of Chicago, where he attended his first political meeting with his father when he was 5 years old, Hightower moved to the Westside with his family at age 12 where he attended Jefferson Davis Middle School and graduated from Nathan Bedford Forrest High School before it was renamed Westside High.



His first job was as shift supervisor for the Hudson Pulp Paper Corporation in Palatka before serving four years in the United States Air Force. He attended Jacksonville University in 1970 after his military hitch was over and quickly signed on to work on his first political campaign for Jacksonville Mayor Hans Tanzler's re-election. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree, he worked as a civics and American History teacher at Northwestern Middle School and for the Duval County School Board.

Hightower may be the only man in Jacksonville to ever lead both the Democratic and Republican parties. Registered first as a Democrat, he got his start as president of the Young Democrats before being named as secretary of the local Democratic Party, where he caught the eye of presidential candidate Jimmy Carter who appointed him to run his campaign in Jacksonville. Once Carter was elected, he appointed Hightower as state director of the Department of Agriculture's Farmer's Home Administration. "I was appointed at age 31 and confirmed at age 32," Hightower said. "I went from being a schoolteacher to running a \$300 million organization."

Carter's loss to Ronald Reagan in 1980 ended his career in the federal government. He returned to Jacksonville to work for Florida Blue in 1981, where he got a taste of working for the private sector. "In 1981 and '82 I was still smarting because Reagan won, but my political ideas began to evolve. In 1983, I began listening to what Reagan was saying," he said, noting at that time,

*"People in service have a responsibility to be role models. Relationships are the key to everything. Civility goes hand-in-hand with integrity and credibility. I think you can have all three and still be competitive."*

— Mike Hightower

Jacksonville was becoming more conservative, and he was becoming more comfortable with the philosophy of smaller government and less regulation.

At this time in serving as a Florida Blue lobbyist in Tallahassee, Hightower was invited to help with political strategy by both Democrats and Republicans. "In 1985, I was invited at the state level to sit in strategy meetings with the leadership of both parties," he recalled. "I realized a good lobbyist knows how to keep a secret, but I found myself realizing that this was not sustainable. They were planning strategy to run against each other, and I couldn't have a foot in both camps and still have any sense of integrity. When you are talking strategy, your word is your bond. It was about accountability and integrity, so I found myself going with the Republicans. Florida Blue supported me. I got more involved with the Republican Party and officially switched over."

Throughout the years Hightower has worked more than 400 political campaigns – including those for Jeb Bush and George W. Bush – by serving in key management and fundraising capacities. It is a conservative estimate that he has raised over \$100 million for political candidates, parties and charitable institutions over the past 50 years.

Still active in Republican politics, Hightower said the GOP today "is not the same party I knew."

"One of the joys of being almost 75 is that I can remember when good manners and civility were important," Hightower said. "If you weren't civil, you didn't get ahead. You can disagree, but don't be disagreeable. Today it's not so much about winning as it is annihilating your opponent. Successful politics is the art of addition not subtraction. Today's opponent could be tomorrow's ally."

Hightower taught "Principles of Lobbying" at the University of Florida for three years during the 2000s. In his classes he stressed, "you can be competitive and combative but not corrosive. There are people who believe that is old school, but I learned a long time

ago that you'd better be real nice to those people as you go up the ladder, because you are going to see them coming down. Let me tell you, part of life's journey is not in what people say about you to your face, it's what they say about you when you're not around. When you have such animosity and such partisanship, the mission and the vision and the objective are lost in the noise.

"I'm from the old school," he continued. "People in service have a responsibility to be role models. Relationships are the key to everything. Civility goes hand-in-hand with integrity and credibility. I think you can have all three and still be competitive."

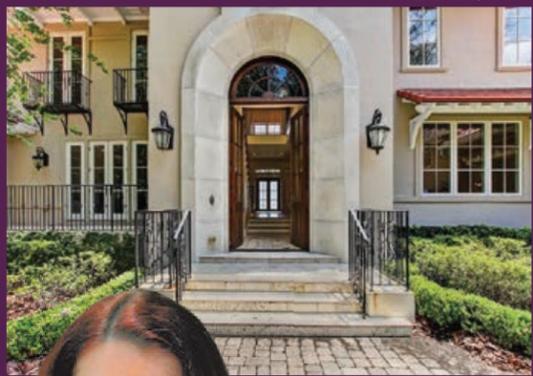
Although he has officially retired, Hightower will not stay idle for long. This summer he is headed to his cabin in Highlands, North Carolina, where he will assist an educational foundation in raising nearly \$3 million to support one of the few K-12 schools in the country. The foundation seeks to purchase laptops and smart boards for each classroom, convert its library into a learning center for STEM, and set up a \$1 million endowment to continue to maintain the school.

He also plans to continue his involvement with 5 Star Veterans Center, which assists homeless veterans in Jacksonville; Ounce of Prevention, which helps children at risk in Tallahassee; Florida House in Washington, D.C.; and sit on the board of Children's Resources in Miami, a school for children with autism. He has served the south Florida school since his Jimmy Carter days and it is especially dear to both he and his wife, Sue, who has worked as a special education teacher at Pinedale Elementary School for 51 years.

Hightower said he will also continue with political campaigning and is considering invitations to assist in fundraising from two candidates outside of Duval County.

But most importantly in retirement, he plans make a high priority of being a "part-time/full-time PopPop to his 5-year-old granddaughter, Gracie.

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# Toastmasters elects new president at Top o' The Rock

Submitted by William Mills  
 Toastmasters Club

Elly Liao drove an hour to attend a Toastmasters meeting, but she remained in her car, too worried and nervous to go in. The next week she did the same thing. And even on a third week, she did the same thing. Finally, on her fourth visit, she got up the courage to walk into the meeting. She was so encouraged and energized by what she found she has been a member of Toastmasters ever since.

Liao originally joined Toastmasters to develop her public speaking skills, but she found that Toastmasters offered her opportunities to build her confidence and develop leadership skills as well, skills that paid off. On July 1, Liao became President of the Top o' The Rock Toastmasters Club in San Marco.

Liao knew she needed to improve her public speaking. "I had night sweats before conference calls at work, and on those calls my throat would close up. I knew my lack of confidence was going to affect my career advancement," she said.

Liao has now been in Toastmasters for three years, and she has advanced into

professional positions she had not even considered open to her. She has become a better listener with friends and family. She has even developed a new personal goal: to become a professional speaker. "I have acquired the leadership skills to not only speak in public, but also to assume leadership positions. That's quite a change from sitting in the parking lot being too afraid to walk into a meeting!" said Liao. "As a member and president of my Toastmasters club, my goal is to provide a safe, welcoming, and fun place for those who want to improve their speaking, leadership, and listening skills. Life is all about becoming the best version of ourselves and Toastmasters has been a wonderful way to help me in my journey."

While Toastmasters is about public speaking, it is much more. According to former club president Sue Mills, "Yes, we become better speakers. But we also improve our listening skills, and we learn to provide constructive feedback to others. Toastmasters is also about cultivating leadership skills, and all of this results in personal growth. It's all done among friends who are members of our club, and we have fun doing it! The experiences we have, and the skills we



Elly Liao

develop in Toastmasters, help us professionally and personally."

Toastmasters is a worldwide organization dedicated to helping individuals improve their public speaking and leadership skills. The local group, Top O' The Rock Toastmasters, meets in San Marco every Wednesday from noon to 1:15 p.m. at Beaver Chevrolet, 3494 Philips Hwy. It is open to the public and serves all surrounding areas. More information can be found at [www.toporock.com](http://www.toporock.com).

## Bosom Buddies to provide free breast cancer care training

One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime, with 250,000 new cases reported annually in the United States, according to WorldwideBreastCancer.org.



Dr. Gary Bowers

With so many women of all ages receiving diagnoses of breast cancer, the Women's Center of Jacksonville's Bosom Buddies program requested funding to provide training to recently diagnosed patients, their caregivers and family members. The Florida Breast Cancer Foundation awarded funding in 2018 and again this year. Both annual grants of \$10,000 provide funding for training in Baker, Nassau and Duval counties in the first year and expanded to include St. Johns, Clay and Putnam counties in the second year.

"We look forward to the expansion of the training program on breast cancer," said Teresa Miles, Women's Center executive director. "With so many women facing difficult decisions, once diagnosed, and family and friends seeking additional information, we found training for the public as well as staff and affiliated professionals, was key."

The monthly hour-and-a-half trainings are free. Dr. Gary Bowers, retired surgical oncologist, is the trainer. Bowers' practice was primarily devoted to surgical oncology with a major interest in melanoma and breast diseases. He has served as Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Florida Jacksonville, then as Associate Director of the University of Florida Cancer Center. In 2002, he joined North Florida Surgeons practicing at Baptist Medical Center, Jacksonville, and retired in 2013.

If you are interested in attending a training, or would like your professional staff trained, contact Eileen Rodden, [erodden@womenscenterofjax.org](mailto:erodden@womenscenterofjax.org) or call (904) 722-3000, ext. 213.

## Santa visits children at Wolfson Children's Hospital

Though Santa was basking in the sun rather than dashing through the snow, the giving spirit was strong at the 8th annual Wolfson Children's Hospital Christmas in July toy and donation drive. The July 25 celebration netted donations of more than 4,600 new toys for hospital patients, with an estimated total value of more than \$48,000.

Jersey Mike's Subs, the presenting sponsor of the event for the past three years, showed up with a truckload of toys as well as a \$45,472 check for the Wolfson Children's Hospital Child Life Endowment. The Roosevelt Boulevard Jersey Mike's location raised an additional \$6,000 for Christmas in July.

"It's really cool - we do what is called the month of giving in March. Every Jersey Mike's across the country donates money and raises profits for local charities, and we chose Wolfson Children's Hospital three years ago. It's something that is very close to our hearts," said Andrew Maider, Jersey Mike's franchise owner.

Wolfson Children's relies on donations to purchase toys for patients. While donations are plentiful during the holiday season,



Andrew Maider, Jersey Mike's Subs franchise owner (left), and others from the Jersey Mike's crew, brought a truckload of toys and a financial donation to the Christmas in July event.

they dwindle during the summer months. The need, however, is constant year-round.

The community-supported Christmas in July is an important event that helps the patients at Wolfson Children's Hospital by bringing the important childhood element of play into a stressful situation, reducing their stress and making them smile.



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## Mother, son share favorite restaurants

“Good Eats Jax – with Mom!,” a book co-written by Andrew P. Williams, Ph.D., and his mother, Virginia Williams, features over 250 local eateries in Northeast Florida, including Fernandina Beach, Amelia Island and St. Augustine.

Williams said in his book’s introduction that he started the book several years ago and, after his mother needed an emotional pick-me-up after a fall, he began taking her with him to restaurants. “I noticed how getting out more, the delicious food, and meeting so many nice people was good for her. So, she became an indispensable part of this project, and I added the Mom Says section for each entry,” he said.

“It is my goal to promote, enjoy, and support local restaurants, and I hope this book is a good resource for visitors, people new to the area, and locals who want to branch out and explore more,” he said.

Williams, who has a doctorate in Mass Communication from the University of Florida, has written about food professionally since the early 1990s and is an enthusiastic supporter and promoter of the local food scene in his hometown. He works for the law firm of Grady H. Williams, Jr., as manager of public relations and social media. He is also chair of the public relations committee and social media committee for the Rotary Club of West Jacksonville.



Andrew Williams and his mother, Virginia Williams

Virginia Strickland Williams is a graduate of the Georgia College for Women and a retired elementary school teacher who also taught high school chemistry and home economics classes in her early career. Originally from Bryan County, Georgia (near Savannah), she has lived in the Jacksonville area for many decades and enjoys frequenting local restaurants. “I enjoy being a part of this work, and in addition to all the good eats, it’s a lot of fun meeting so many nice people and exploring our area,” she said.

During their restaurant journeys, Williams and his mother recalled fond memories about the times his father, the late Rev. Grady H. Williams, Sr., would take the family to a shrimp camp and wait in a parking lot for more than an hour for a good shrimp dinner.

“Good Eats Jax – with Mom!” is available locally at the Avondale Gift Boutique and The Ward Room in San Marco, as well as through Amazon.

## New leaders at Community Hospice & Palliative Care Foundation



Amy Davis



Janet Reagor

The Community Hospice & Palliative Care Foundation, established in 2017, has new leadership this year.

In April, Amy Davis was named vice president and executive director of philanthropy for the Foundation, following four years as director of development. Davis has spent her career in the fundraising field, beginning in 2000 with Children’s Miracle Network before joining Community Hospice Foundation in 2007. She is a sustaining member of the Jacksonville Junior League, is active with her church and enjoys working in her garden and traveling with friends and family.

Janet Reagor recently joined the Foundation as the Assistant Executive Director. Previously she served as Associate Director at the Sanctuary on 8th Street, and prior to that as chief operating officer for Dignity U Wear. She is a member of The Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital, the Junior League of Jacksonville and the Rotary Club of San Marco. Reagor, a lifelong resident of Jacksonville, lives in San Marco.

## Counseling nonprofit changes name

After almost 50 years serving the North Florida community, Pastoral Counseling Services, Inc. (PCS) a San Marco-based not-for-profit, has changed its name to Life Renewed Counseling. Since 1971, PCS has provided exceptional mental health counseling by licensed therapists while offering affordable and reduced fees.

The new name includes a redesign of the company’s website and logo but not the mission or its leadership. As has been the case since its formation, Life Renewed Counseling will continue to offer affordable, faith-honoring mental health therapy to those in need and to the underserved as a 501(c)(3) entity.

Asked about the name change, Cliff Thomas, CEO of Life Renewed Counseling, shared that this rebranding “enables us to reach more people from different faith backgrounds, cultures, races and sexual orientations. All deserve to have an opportunity to access quality affordable therapy where one’s faith can be included and honored if one so chooses.”

The organization also has a location in Atlantic Beach.

## Leadership Jacksonville announces new officers, board members



Rosa Beckett



Bruce Fafard



Kathy Miller

Leadership Jacksonville, a nonprofit that educates, connects and inspires diverse leaders to build and strengthen their communities, announced its 2019-2020 Board of Directors will be led by President Rosa Beckett, chief administrative officer with the Jacksonville Aviation Authority. She succeeds Immediate Past President Clark Robertson, who moved to Texas where he serves the Port of Corpus Christi as chief operating officer.

In addition to the election of Beckett as board president, the organization announced the election of two other officers to the board. Bruce Fafard, chief executive officer, 121 Financial Credit Union and a Riverside resident, was elected

president-elect and Kathy Miller, senior vice president, Financial Services and Tax, Regency Centers Corporation and a San Jose resident was named secretary/treasurer.

New members of the Leadership Jacksonville board are Mark Bennett, market executive/senior vice president, Bank of America Merrill Lynch; Linda Lindenmoyer, vice president, Relocation, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty; Ron Pellum, president, Ennis, Pellum & Associates, CPAs; Maria Ruiz, bridge engineering associate, RS&H; Ryan Wannemacher, chief financial officer, JEA, and Andrea Williams, director of community relations, Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp.

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## New Assumption priest returns home

A priest who is very much at home in Jacksonville's historic districts has taken over as the head of Assumption Catholic Church in St. Nicholas.

Rev. Jason Trull, known to his parishioners as Father Jason, took over for Assumption's longtime pastor, Rev. Frederick Parke, on July 1.

Raised in Jacksonville, Trull was born at St. Vincent's Hospital in Riverside in September 1973 and baptized at Assumption Catholic Church. He attended Assumption School and Bishop Kenny, graduating in 1992. After working at Wolfson Children's Hospital and attending night school at Florida Community College Jacksonville (FCCJ) for a year, he entered St. Meinrad College Seminary in Indiana, studying for the Diocese of St. Augustine and graduated in 1997. Trull later entered St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, graduating in 2002 before being ordained to the priesthood on May 18 that same year at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine.

"I grew up off of Art Museum Drive and spent much of my time around St. Nicholas and San Marco as a number of my friends lived in that part of town," Trull said. "I used to frequent the San Marco Theatre with friends, and my cousin used to own a sandwich shop in San Marco called Out to Lunch."

Prior to the Assumption Catholic Church assignment, Trull has worked at several



Fr. Jason Trull

Jacksonville parishes including three years as an associate at Blessed Trinity, and as pastor at St. Pius V, Holy Rosary, Crucifixion and Resurrection parishes. He has also served for three years as vocations director for the Diocese of St. Augustine. His most recent posting was at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Palm Coast, where he spent seven years from 2012.

"My primary goal is rediscovering a community that I have been absent from for many years and to learn," Trull said. "If I can state a primary goal it would be to help our community grow in love of God and service to our neighbor. I am looking forward to returning home and serving the community that formed me. It is a rare blessing for a priest to return to his home parish, and I am grateful to God for giving me the opportunity to give back to the community that has given so much to me. Having my family still in the parish is also a great blessing as I have been distanced from them for seven years."

## 'Feminine Soul Project' receives Art Ventures grant

San Marco resident Tiffany Manning was one of 11 artists to receive a grant from The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida's 1029 Art Ventures initiative. Manning's photo exhibit, "The Feminine Soul Project," features close-up portraits of 100 Jacksonville women accompanied by short, personal narratives. The portrait exhibit will have a backdrop of an audio loop of the women sharing stories or experiences which they usually choose not to talk about.



Tiffany Manning

Each of the artists received a \$3,500 grant from the Art Ventures initiative, which is funded through the Art Ventures Endowment, the J. Shepard, Jr. & Mary Ann Bryan Arts Endowment, the Anne and Sallyn Pajcic Art Ventures Endowment, the Independent Life Minority Arts Fund, and the Alynne Sharp Art Fund. An additional contribution from the Baker Family Fund allowed The Community

Foundation to award two additional grants in 2019, for a total of 11.

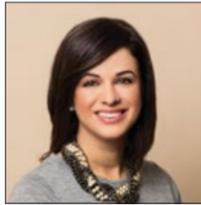
The other 10 artists included Cindy Bear, singer/songwriter; Shawana Brooks, writer/curator; Katie Evans, visual artist; Daniel Fulmer, composer; Jenny Hager, sculptor; Nicole Holderbaum, visual artist; Marsha Hatcher, visual artist; Traci Mims, visual artist; Justin Murphy, filmmaker, and Toni Smailagic, photographer.

## Cummer adds new director

Joanna Blinn has been hired as director of strategic communications and engagement at The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, beginning July 1 with the Riverside-based nonprofit.

In this role, Blinn will initiate, direct, and implement a comprehensive range of communications and marketing activities that advance the Museum and its key messages.

Blinn has held positions in the nonprofit sector for close to 20 years in the areas of marketing, communications, fundraising and execution of large-scale events. Most recently, Blinn was at Baptist Health Foundation for six years, leading many philanthropic initiatives and communication efforts. Prior to joining Baptist Health Foundation, Blinn worked at the FSCJ Foundation and then at Dreams Come True, a local nonprofit that grants dreams for local children battling life-threatening illnesses.



Joanna Blinn

## Junior Achievement receives challenge grant

Junior Achievement of North Florida received a challenge grant of \$35,000 from the Delores Barr Weaver Fund. Weaver has offered the 1:1 challenge grant to celebrate the organization's 100th anniversary and the local chapter's 56 years of service. JA of North Florida must raise \$35,000 and the Delores Barr Weaver Fund will then meet the challenge for a total of \$70,000 to help fund the programs which help young people learn financial literacy, workplace readiness and entrepreneurship.

"The students we educate tell us they are learning a lot from our programs and what we are teaching them has made staying in school very important, said Steve St. Amand, president of JA of North Florida. "Now we are asking the community, local businesses and our corporate friends to help us meet this challenge so we can continue helping our young people learn and grow."

The funds raised through this challenge grant will help support the JA Financial Literacy Center in New Town, where third grade students throughout Duval County participate in the JA's Our Community program and the JA Eating Healthy on a Budget program. Earlier in June, JA of North Florida received a \$5,000 grant from State Farm insurance to support the financial literacy program.

In addition to this challenge grant, Weaver has also given a \$90,000 grant to help fund a program manager position and JA of North Florida also receives an annual grant of \$10,000 into perpetuity from the Delores Barr Weaver Forever Event Fund.

Those who would like to donate to help reach the challenge grant goal by Dec. 31, 2019 can visit [janfl.org](http://janfl.org), click on get involved and then donate. Donors can direct their donation to the Weaver Match. Donations can also be received by mail at 4049 Woodcock Dr., Ste. 200, Jacksonville FL 32207.

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### San Marco playwright creates new religious musical

Anne Coyle, perhaps San Marco's most prolific religious playwright, has written a new religious musical, "Acts of the Apostles." Ellen Milligan directed the play, which was performed in Taliaferro Hall at St. John's Cathedral July 27 and 28. There will also be two more performances planned at the Cathedral on Saturday, Sept. 14 at 2 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 15 at 3 p.m. as part of the music programs of St. John's Cathedral Series.



Anne Coyle

Coyle, 90, has authored and composed a number of biblical musicals including "Thru Mary's Eyes," a musical she performs with her family each Christmas about the mother of Jesus as an older woman retelling the story of Jesus's life through word and song in the way Mary herself might have told early Christians about the early life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord.

"Acts of the Apostles" was written "to inspire many people to go back to the roots of Christianity," said Coyle. "Everything I have been blessed to write has come only from and through God," she said, adding that in the last 10 years she has written music to 150 Psalms and recorded and sung one a day on Catholic Radio WQOP 1460 AM every day around 2 p.m.

It is my heart's desire to see the "Acts" performed in all the churches by their own members," said Coyle. "It is easy to do. The songs are all very simple and sing-able - in fact in the Cathedral programs all the words will be printed for all to join in. Bob Moore, a nationally known and renowned composer has arranged all the music for piano and at this time is making orchestra arrangements for various instruments in the symphony."

Coyle, a former concert pianist who has studied piano since she was seven and attended Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland, has written hundreds of songs and musical plays since 1979. She is a member of San Jose Catholic Church.

## South Jacksonville Presbyterian hires new pastor

South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church has hired one of its own to take the place of Rev. Bruce Hedgepeth, who left his position in the church in October 2018.

Carl James "CJ" Dates, a former San Marco resident and member of South Jacksonville Presbyterian, has been hired as its pastor. His first sermon as the church's new pastor will be Aug. 18.

A native of New York, Dates grew up crawling beneath the pews of Red Bank-Westbury United Methodist Church in Red Creek, New York. His parents were always involved in lay-leadership and frequently served on committees, as ushers and liturgists. In associating with the friends of his youth he was also exposed to non-denominational, Baptist, Nazarene and Pentecostal theologies and worship styles and polity structures.

He attended Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, New York, where he majored in Human Communication and Rhetoric with a focus on how people speak about faith. In pursuing his degree, Dates studied Arabic and Islam while living in Egypt where he honed a thesis about linguistic challenges of interfaith dialogue in shared languages. He later traveled with his wife, Michel, to Kenya before settling in San Marco, where, in resolving to find a church within walking distance, the couple discovered South Jacksonville

Presbyterian Church and made it their new church family.

After becoming acquainted with the youth leadership at South Jacksonville, Dates was introduced to church colleagues at Palms Presbyterian and became first its Director of Children's Ministries and later Director of Connection at the Jacksonville Beach church.

Interested in attending seminary, Dates moved with his family to Atlanta where he earned a Master of Divinity degree at Columbia Theological Seminary and brought his deep love for Hebrew and Greek into his theological training. During that time, he was awarded the American Academy for Advancement of Science Sermon Award, the Presbytery of St. Andrews Preaching Award, the Emma Galliard Boyce Memorial Award for creative use of music in worship, the Ludwig Richard Max Dewitz Award for Hebrew Bible studies and the Fannie Jordan Bryan Fellowship for theological studies. He completed his supervised ministry at The Ormewood Church near Atlanta and has been curating music and collaborative art in its worship services for the past two years. He has also completed Level 1 of Clinical Pastoral Education at Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center Downtown Trauma Hospital.

In his free time, Dates enjoys painting iconography, reading nonfiction, and



CJ, Michel, Jayden and Joy Dates

fishing. His wife, Michel, worked as a certified yoga health coach in Atlanta, where she had her own health coaching community, Fruitful Living, and published guides using stories and yoga together for children called "Story and Stretch: Narrative Yoga for Kids."

The couple has two children, Jayden and Joy.



Pete Helow

## Rotary Club of San Marco elects officers

Pete Helow, owner of Roosters Men's Grooming Center, has been elected president of the Rotary Club of San Marco for the 2019-2020 year. He is a charter member of the club.

Other officers include Doris Leach, president-elect; Janet Reagor, treasurer; Meg Folds, service projects chair; Tad Delegal, sergeant-at-arms; Dr. Kyle Reese, membership chair; Ruth Ann Hepler, foundation chair; Tony Potochick, public relations chair, and Howard Dyal, past president.

During an installation ceremony at the DoubleTree Riverfront Hotel, Helow said

his main goals for the coming year are to focus on membership growth, foundation giving and supporting local and international charities with both financial and hands-on resources of the club.

The Rotary Club of San Marco was chartered in 2008 and has 29 members. Breakfast meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 a.m. and the third Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. at the DoubleTree Riverfront Hotel. The club is one of 21 clubs in Northeast Florida and 62 clubs in the North Florida District.

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# San Marco residents toast SMPS during happy hour

At least one new member joined the San Marco Preservation Society during its happy hour celebration July 9 at Rue St. Marc.

Marie-Claire Rowlinson arrived early to join the organization that supports all things San Marco.

“This time we coincided with Tuesday,” said SMPS President Linzee Ott, referring to a regular meeting of historic neighborhood residents from both sides of the St. Johns River that routinely gather on Tuesdays to socialize at the popular San Marco eatery. During the happy hour celebration, at least three Tuesday regulars were part of a gathering of 40 local residents that enjoyed hors d’oeuvres and libations of their choice.

SMPS happy hour events are open to anyone in the community and are a great way to visit with your neighbors or come and meet people, Ott said. Or as one Tuesday attendee describes it: “It’s all about good wine and good conversation.”



New member Marie-Claire Rowlinson with SMPS President Linzee Ott



Pete Helow, Karen Carlucci and SMPS President Linzee Ott



Ed and Bridget Booth



Debra and Hannah Pataky



Joyce and Keith Kimball with William Cesery and Jon Singleton



Tom Bachman with Elise and Greg Nowikowski and Melody Bachman



Matt Carlucci with Joy Dorst and Robert Dahlstrom



Suzanne Perritt with Camille Ott



Don Meyer with Andrew and Jessica Gustafson



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Art of Freedom Director Liz McConnell, Andy Carroll, Lisa Page and Katie Borello with Shelley Thibodeau, Marsha Oliver and George Baccash



PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan with Michelle Tesori and Susan Monahan



PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan and Artist Valentino Dixon with PGA Tour Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President Ron Price



Lynn Stoner, Anne Nimnicht, Theresa Hazel, Houston Bowles, Troy Smith and Andy Carroll with Matt and Susan Welch



Emily Jones with Shelley Thibodeau and Dave Brecher



Golf Digest Editorial Director Max Adler with Artist Valentino Dixon, Georgetown Professor Marc Howard and MaliVai "Mal" Washington



Ryan Ali with Elli Zimmerman



Gabrielle Dean-Rector, Jeanine Watters, Mary McBride with Amber Sesnick

### Golf community applauds founding of Art of Freedom Foundation

Nearly 100 golf aficionados celebrated the launching of Valentino Dixon's Art of Freedom Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to shining a light on injustice by working with local, state, and federal lawmakers to achieve prison and sentencing reform and to champion the voices of the wrongly convicted during a special reception July 8 at TPC Sawgrass. The audience participated in a question and answer session with Dixon and watched a short documentary on his experience in prison and the creation of his many famous golf course drawings. On hand at the event were Max Adler, editorial director for Golf Digest, and Marc Howard, Georgetown University law professor and director of the Prisons and Justice Initiative, both of whom helped gain Dixon's exoneration and release, as well as Commissioner Jay Monahan and Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President Ron Price of the PGA Tour.

### MOCA patrons preview new

Patrons of the Museum of Contemporary Art—Jacksonville (MOCA) turned out to preview a new exhibit by celebrated international artist Khalid Albaih. The exhibit, on display through August, features a series of life-sized passport tents from an encampment—temporary, clustered and made of cardboard—on the side of a road. The tents are a point of entry into the United States for individuals with approved status as asylees, entrants and displaced people. The exhibit also features birds flocking and flying freely.

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Vickie Corder and Jennifer Trent



Carol Grimes with Ward Lariscy



Vic Micolucci, Jenna Peace and DeShawn Ruffin, event and operations assistant for Airstream High School 9:12 and Becky Lowry, CSI Gives Back executive director



Sharon Serkin, Crystal Baldwin, Laura Chiarello, supervisor Duval County Public Schools social work, Marilee McCullough with Susan Merrett, manager of Duval County Public Schools Clothing Closet and Melissa Wiley

Project Atrium installation

out July 18 to preview the latest Project Atrium installation, "Camp/Wall/Flock" through October 27, highlights the refugee and asylee community in Northeast States. Albaih created a wall dividing the MOCA Atrium Gallery in half. On one side containing, representing the countries with the most arrivals to Jacksonville. On the other side of the wall, American passports are inverted, becoming

Garden Under the Stars gala benefits two worthy causes

Ladies attired in floral prints and gents in snappy sports coats added to the blooming ambiance of CSI Gives Back's inaugural gala, A Garden Under the Stars, at Casa Marina Hotel in Jacksonville Beach June 29. As the Who Rescued Who band serenaded guests in the hotel courtyard, a silent auction and a raffle helped raise money for two worthy organizations, Airstream Venture's High School 9:12 and Duval County Public Schools Clothing Closet. "CSI Gives Back is an initiative by the CSI Companies to give back to the community," said CSI Gives Back Executive Director Becky Lowry. Representing High School 9:12 were DeShawn Ruffin and Alan Verlander, CEO of Airstream Ventures. Laura Chiarello, supervisor of DCPS social work, and Susan Merrett, manager, DCPS Clothing Closet, also supported the event.



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Congratulations to our own Curry Pajcic for being named "Trial Lawyer of the Year" for the entire state of Florida. The American Board of Trial Advocates announced the award in July. Curry called it the greatest honor of his legal career. "It is truly humbling to be recognized by your peers in this way." Steve Pajcic thought

of his late brother Gary and how delighted he would be to see his son get this recognition.

*"Gary would be so proud. This award shows the respect of the defense attorneys and judges, as well as fellow plaintiff attorneys."*



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# St. Nicholas residents enjoy SNAP happy hour event

A good time was had by all as friends and neighbors affiliated with the St. Nicholas Area Preservation Society gathered for drinks and dinner at Mudville Grille July 9.

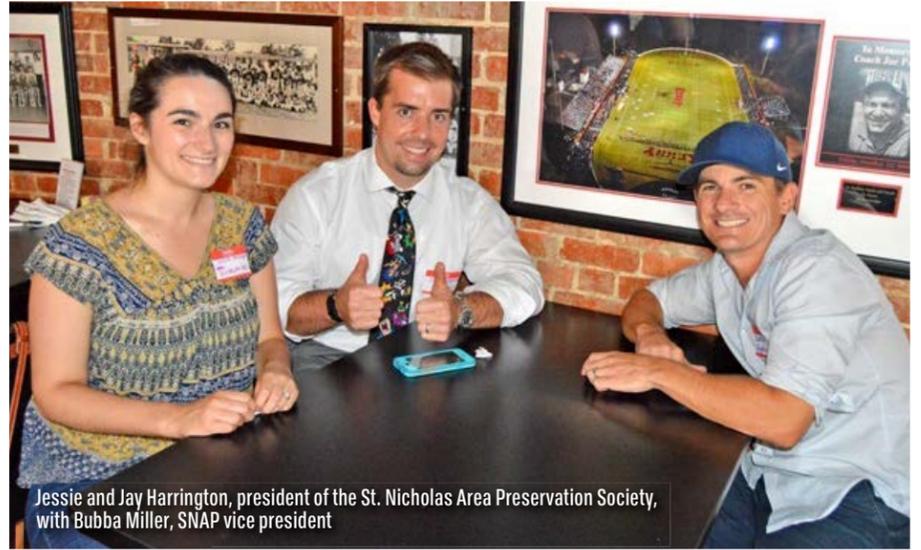
Approximately 25 to 30 St. Nicholas residents gathered in the popular local watering hole to share stories, visit, and discuss issues pertinent to the neighborhood.

Included among those enjoying the evening were SNAP president Jay Harrington and his wife, Jessie; Bubba Miller, SNAP vice

president, and Erik Kaldor, former SNAP president and neighborhood historian.

All residents in the St. Nicholas area are invited to enjoy the fun of SNAP's monthly happy hour get-togethers. The purpose of the organization is to build community and preserve the beautiful historic St. Nicholas neighborhood.

View more photos at [photos.residentnews.net](http://photos.residentnews.net)



Jessie and Jay Harrington, president of the St. Nicholas Area Preservation Society, with Bubba Miller, SNAP vice president



E.J. Helow, Erik Kaldor with Kathleen and Ron Elliott and Bonnie Mason Burton



Nick Hansen and Kimmy Gross



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# Interplay of light, water draws eye at new exhibit

The opening reception of *By the Water* by Alma Ramírez was held July 18 in the Heather Moore Community Gallery at Cathedral Arts Project, and included a Q&A session facilitated by local artist and professor Mark Creegan. A portion of the proceeds from sales will be donated to CAP.

Born in Mexico, Ramírez is a contemporary abstract artist whose artistic process is based on the contemplation of nature and her surroundings, and the interplay of color and composition. Her current exhibit features boats in acrylics on canvas and mixed media.

Ramírez earned a B.A. in Fine Arts from the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Chihuahua, Mexico. She is represented by local and regional galleries and her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in Mexico and the United States.

The exhibition runs through October 25. The Heather Moore Community Gallery is free and open to the public Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

View more photos at [photos.residentnews.net](http://photos.residentnews.net)



Susan Woodburn and Alma Ramirez



Juliette and Edward Vaughn



James Greene and Amanda Mahan



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Mark and Karen Willett with KK Cherney and Dr. Alan Rolfe

# Riding the waves for cystic fibrosis

The surf was up at the Hotel Palms in Atlantic Beach July 20 when the Maui Ola Foundation held its May the Wave Heal Us All benefit to grant children with cystic fibrosis the opportunity to learn how to ride the waves.

At least 50 guests clad in Hawaiian shirts and flip flops turned out for the laid-back event which offered tunes from The Mother Gooses, a Jacksonville-based Garage Surf trio, and the chance to sip beer and relax in the courtyard of the Hotel Palms.

In attendance were several professional surfers including 15-year-old Bree Labiak of Conway, South Carolina, the youngest female professional surfer on the circuit. A sufferer of cystic fibrosis, Labiak learned to surf under the auspices of the Maui Ola Foundation. She has gone on to win several prestigious East Coast surfing titles.



Co-owner Hotel Palms Stevan Brown and Ashley Mederos

Prior to the sun-down event, the foundation held a surfing clinic in Atlantic Beach, where it paired experienced surfers like Labiak with fledgling surfers who also suffer from the disease.

View more photos at [photos.residentnews.net](http://photos.residentnews.net)



Buckley Baranick and Melissa Tilley



Professional surfer Bree Labiak with her mom, Lynn Grayden-Labiak

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# Unbroken Horizons assists students in academic journey

Approximately 150 guests enjoyed a sumptuous feast at the Casa Marina Hotel in Jacksonville Beach to celebrate Unbroken Horizons Scholarship Foundation's inaugural banquet to celebrate its first group of scholarship recipients. Television personality Kalen Allen was the featured speaker, and Unbroken Horizon's founder Seth Owen, an undergraduate student at Georgetown University, was on hand to honor five outstanding LGBTQ+ youth scholars and assist them on their academic journeys. Receiving \$2,500 scholarships were Adrian Polk of Detroit, Michigan; Cesar Osvaldo Mendez Portillo of St. Paul, Minnesota; Jean Luis San Santana from the Dominican Republic; Lydia Carpenter from South Riding, Virginia, and Riley Yau of South Carolina.

View more photos at [photos.residentnews.net](https://photos.residentnews.net)



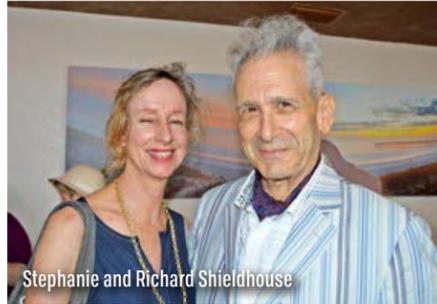
Carrington Madison Mead, Zenja Stallworth, Jean Luis Sano Santana, Lydia Carpenter, Seth Owen, Cesar Osvaldo Mendez Portillo, Riley Yau and Nicole White



Calli Marie with Jalyn Cross



Peggy De Villiers and Kirsten Schmidt



Stephanie and Richard Shieldhouse



Trinity Cotten, Alexandra Cotten with Laura Cotten



Alex Leuthold, Sam Parton, Nicholas Patterson and Mike Khalil



Emily and Justin Ward with Mark Robbins and Claire Nackashi



Kelly Mannel, Ron Mackoul, Alejandra Cardozo with Jonathan Mackoul and Robert Lutz

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## Rockhounds celebrate 60 years of gems and minerals hunting

In 1959, Craig Hamilton, then 16 years old, became the first junior charter member of the Jacksonville Gem & Mineral Society. On July 18, the club of more than 400 members celebrated its 60th anniversary with a small display, a large cake and a few presentations at the San Marco Library.

Twice serving as the society's president, Hamilton recalled that the group of about 25 members first met in the old San Marco Library before moving their meetings to a savings and loan on Beach Boulevard, then to Riverside Avenue Christian Church, and then for a time in a storage facility on Powers Avenue before purchasing a building at



Anne Lanier and Pat and Spencer Herring pause to look at the Gem & Mineral Society's display at the San Marco Library July 20.

3733 Crown Point Rd. The 5,500-square-foot building includes a meeting space that seats 100, and a 900-square-foot museum, stocked with items on loan from members.

Since 2007, Hamilton has also led a community outreach program for junior rockhounds, visiting schools and offering activities such as family-friendly field trips, workshops and hands-on activities.

The society offers a wide range of courses, from acrylics to wire wrapping and everything in between that includes gems, minerals and other materials. The group meets monthly at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday. The nonprofit's annual fundraiser, the 31st Annual Gem & Mineral Show & Sale, will be held Sept. 27-29 at the Morocco Shrine Auditorium. For more information, visit [jaxgemandmineral.org](http://jaxgemandmineral.org).



Members of the Jacksonville Gem & Mineral Society loan specimens for an exhibit at the San Marco Library.



Pat Herring, Debbie Lowe, Bill Holly, Craig Hamilton, Diana Dailey, Anne Lanier, Spencer Herring and Bill Poland

## Neighbors turn out to toast San Marco author

Although August Gabbard has been gone for six years, he most definitely has not been forgotten.

Approximately 40 neighbors and friends of his parents showed up at the Colonial Manor home of Suzanne and Joe Honeycutt June 30 to celebrate the publication of his father's memoir, which recounts the joys and challenges of August's short time on earth, and to once again share remembrances of his life.

In June, Dr. Chris Gabbard, a Colonial Manor resident and associate professor of English at the University of North Florida, published "A Life Beyond Reason: A Father's Memoir," which relates the joys and challenges he and his family – wife Ilene Chazen and daughter, Clio Chazen-Gabbard – encountered while caring for August, who became blind, cognitively impaired, and physically disabled due to a botched birth. August survived due to the loving care he received by his family, only to pass away in 2013 at the age of 14.

During the evening, the Honeycutt's guests drank wine and enjoyed a lavish table filled with charcuterie as Gabbard read selections from his memoir. Also speaking during the event was Amy Buggle, of Riverside, executive director of DLC Nurse & Learn, a nonprofit that provides year-round education, nursing care and therapies to children of all abilities. When he was very young, August was a student at DLC Nurse & Learn, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.



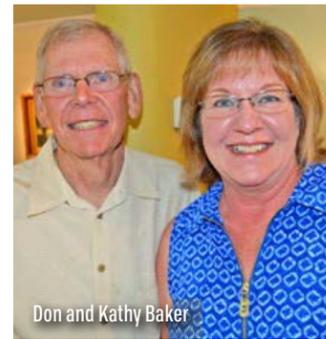
Betsy Cox with Leah and Scott Kennelly



Ollie and Amy Buggle, executive director of DLC Nurse & Learn with hostess Suzanne Honeycutt



Mike and Susie Miller



Don and Kathy Baker



Michele and George Foote with Jim and Rachel Shrader



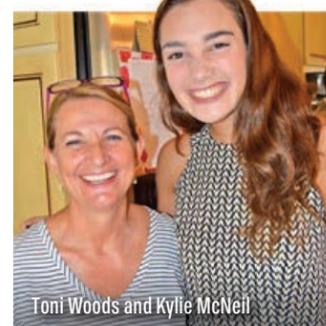
Rachel Cull, Adrian and Patricia Jones with Bonnie and James Globber



Renee Farhat with Dr. Sharon Leonard and Tom Rossi



Mark Woods and Sean McNeil



Toni Woods and Kylie McNeil



Shannon Goossen with Sonia DeVille and Kit Rossi



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# Luxury home market requires extraordinary, creative efforts for success

## Top producing Watson Realty agent has what it takes

When it comes to marketing luxury homes in Jacksonville's historic districts, San Marco resident Jon Singleton has done more than put a ripple in the luxury real estate pool – he's made quite a splash.

Singleton, named Top Producing Agent in Watson Realty Corp.'s San Marco office, was recently acknowledged by the Institute for Luxury Home Marketing with the Million Dollar GUILD™ award for experience, knowledge, and expertise in marketing million-dollar-plus residential properties. The award caps his previous designation as a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist™ (CLHMS).



Jon Singleton

The Institute for Luxury Home Marketing is the premier independent authority in training and designation for real estate agents working in the luxury residential market. Singleton joins an exclusive group of real estate professionals who have completed The Institute's training and have a proven performance in the upper-tier market. "There are only about 10 – mostly in Ponte Vedra – out of 10,000 realtors in this area who have achieved that status," said Singleton.

To earn the coveted award in April, Singleton orchestrated a number of events at his luxury listings earlier this year, feting hundreds of visitors, and reaching tens of thousands of potential buyers through social media. His efforts paid off with contracts on three of these million-dollar listings, and a recent closing on River Road in San Marco.

"While traveling in New York City and San Francisco this year, I participated in specialized training in understanding the needs and tastes of wealthy and ultra-wealthy clients and learned how to reach them. I then leveraged Watson's affiliations to advertise internationally through The DuPont Registry, The Robb Report, Mansion Global, the WSJ, juwai, Unique Homes Magazine, and other forums to reach buyers across the globe," said Singleton. "It's been a lot of fun and has been a boon to my customers! Stay tuned for more events."

Singleton's experience, combined with enhanced marketing from Watson Realty's Luxury Program, and the brokerage affiliation with Luxury Portfolio International, has helped guarantee success for his clients. His track record of helping hundreds of families buy and sell homes continues in all price ranges.



The pool was the site of a real estate soiree, with live music and made-to-order street tacos, hosted by Jon Singleton.

"Jon has such a great knowledge in our unique luxury market, whether it be waterfront or historic homes, and knows how to showcase those properties to attract the right buyers. His expertise is a tremendous asset to our office and to his customers!" said Missi Howell, Vice President/Managing Broker, Watson Realty Corp. San Marco/San Jose Office.

A retired Naval Aviator, Singleton has been a Realtor with Watson Realty Corp. for 17 years, specializing in marketing properties in Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods. He's a 10-year 5-star agent and was named the Nextdoor Favorite Realtor for 2018 for his neighborhood. If you would like to work with Jon, or learn more about luxury marketing, you can reach him at (904) 226-3480 or jon@jonsingleton.com.



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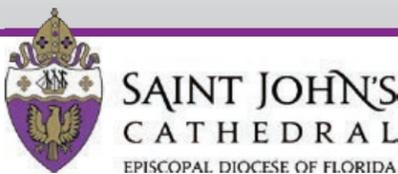
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# Jacksonville hosts U.S. Nelson Mandela International Day

By Susan D. Brandenburg  
Resident Community News

The Nelson Mandela International Day observation held July 18-19 in Jacksonville actually began more than 30 years ago when prison inmate Khalil Osiris became pen pals with Dr. Makaziwe Mandela, daughter of the late South African President Nelson Mandela. Osiris wrote to Dr. Mandela telling her that, inspired by her father, he was spending his time in prison earning his bachelor's and master's degrees from Boston University. He promised her that when he was released, he would travel to South Africa and work in prisons and schools to honor the heroic courage of her father, President Mandela. In 2011, he fulfilled that promise.

As a result of the lasting bond formed between Khalil Osiris of San Marco and Dr. Makaziwe Mandela of South Africa, Jacksonville became the site of the 2019 Nelson Mandela International Day observance. Further cementing that bond, Kevin Gay, founder and CEO of Operation New Hope, traveled to South Africa with Osiris in May 2019 to meet with Dr. Mandela and introduce her to the organization's prisoner reentry program called Ready4Work, which has gained national attention because of its impact in reducing recidivism.



Betty Flinchum and Khalil Osiris

After learning of the cooperation between Osiris's company, Reflecting Freedom, LLC (sponsored by Pam and Michael Oates of Ortega) and Gay's Operation New Hope, Dr. Mandela eagerly accepted their joint invitation to come to Jacksonville. In fact, at the Kickoff to Freedom gala July 17, Dr. Mandela quipped that coming to Jacksonville was a "no brainer," adding that her father would have been so proud of the good work of social justice being done by Operation New Hope.

Held in the U.S. Assure Club East of TIAA Bank Field, the gala was attended by nearly 500 guests. Hosted by First Coast News Anchor Jessica Clark, the evening featured

an opening prayer by The Temple's Rabbi Elizabeth Bahar, a spoken word presentation, "Rise Up Like Mandela," by Roderick Borisade, an address by Osiris, and a South-African themed dinner with entertainment by Ramona the Band. Following dinner, honored guests, Dr. Mandela and her daughter, Tukwini, inspired the audience with their positive message of international unity and entertained with their personal and intimate memories of Nelson Mandela.

The first-ever House of Mandela Reflecting Freedom Awards were then announced, each of the four honorees receiving a unique four-paneled piece of Nelson Mandela's artwork featuring his handprint in four different shades of color, symbolizing how the work of many different hands can change the world.

Receiving the House of Mandela Reflecting Freedom Award were Kevin Gay, CEO/Founder of Operation New Hope (Community Impact); Dr. Jennifer Brown, Executive Director of KIPP Schools Jacksonville (Education); State Attorney Melissa Nelson (Public Service); and Darnell Smith, Florida Blue's market president for the North Florida Region (Corporate Impact).

In honor of Nelson Mandela's 101st birthday coming up on the following day, July 18, the gala ended with birthday cake presented by Peter Racine of the Jaguars Foundation, and a closing prayer by Dr. Nicholas Louh, of St. John the Divine Greek Orthodox Church. All proceeds of the gala evening went to Operation New Hope.

Nelson Mandela International Day continued on July 18 at Jacksonville University with President Tim Cost's presentation to Dr. Mandela of the Presidential Global Citizen Award. She gave a rousing speech to those assembled in JU's Terry Theatre. Freedom, Forgiveness, Unity, Compassion, Education and Kindness were her mantras, and she emphasized her deep concern, as a global citizen, for a "fractured world, where differences are actually enhanced." Noting that it is the differences and diversity that enrich the world, she challenged all to follow Nelson Mandela's lead in harnessing the good in each person and working together to build a better society. She encouraged "little acts of kindness" and a renewed media focus on "good stories." She spoke of her father's strong belief that no one is born hating another person and that if we can be taught to hate, we can be taught to love.

Wrapping up the three days of international events, Dr. Mandela and her daughter, Tukwini, traveled to St. Augustine on July 19 with Osiris and Gay to help launch Operation New Hope's Ready4Work reentry program in St. Johns County. Mistress of Ceremonies Caren Goldman, executive director and founder of Compassionate



Tukwini Mandela, Khalil Osiris, Melissa Nelson and Makaziwe Mandela



Dr. Makaziwe Mandela with Curtis Hazel and Kevin Gay



Tom and Hazel Donahoo



Kevin Gay and Shorty Robbins with Rep. Cindi Stevenson and Nancy Sikes-Kline

St. Augustine, introduced Mama Blue, who sang both the U.S. National Anthem and the South African National Anthem. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, St. Augustine City Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline presented a proclamation and letter from the mayor, Pastor Ron Rawls gave a prayer and Gay welcomed the large gathering at 83 Washington Street in St. Augustine's Lincolntonville area, where the new program will be located. Dr. Mandela and Osiris spoke to the gathering as well, he speaking of his 20 years of incarceration and his realization of self-empowerment, and she repeating her inspirational message of unity and kindness. Mama Blue ended the ceremony with a rousing rendition of "Lift Every Voice & Sing." A private reception followed at the Lightner Museum,

with remarks by Goldman, Osiris, Mandela, Gay and Smith.

With Operation New Hope now building a stronger community in St. Augustine as well as in Jacksonville, and both Osiris and Gay having become international board members of the House of Mandela Family Foundation, the stage is set for limitless global growth and emulation of Nelson Mandela's example around the world. Noting that Dr. Mandela earned her Ph.D. in Anthropology, Osiris ended his remarks each time with the words of another famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead, who said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

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# Pen Women merge art and words in JCA show

Visitors to the art show, Visions and Verses, produced by members of the Jacksonville branch of the National League of American Pen Women had the perfect opportunity to see words and artistic vision merge together.

In the June 30 show, which took place in the lobby of the Jewish Community Alliance, members either created a form of art to go with a selection of writing, or writers created a selection of prose or poetry or music to match up with a work of art, said Jacksonville Pen Women President Pat Setser of Empire Point. "I heard about the idea in Atlanta," said Setser, who viewed a similar exhibit in Pensacola. "I knew it was something we really should do to utilize the talent of our members."

Dr. Susanne Schuenke, an artist who had two works, "Give Me Wings!" and "America" in the show, served as curator. "The idea is to bring word and vision together," she said. "Normally you go to an art show and scan it and say, 'I see everything,' but no,

you don't. The text can hook you up suddenly, and you discover how much imagination is in the word and that helps you to connect with the painting and you give it a second look. This way you have a much richer experience."

Thirty artists and writers participated in the show, including Mimi Sherman Pearce of San Marco, Duncan Sawyer of Ortega, Debra Webb Rogers of San Marco, Jan Atchley Bevan of Murray Hill, Jean Caldwell Carrison Dodd of Avondale, Joanelle Mulrain of Avondale, Laura Jo Brunson of San Jose, Susan D. Brandenburg of San Jose, and Rosalie Atkins of Mandarin. Atkin's painting, "Far East Waterfront," formerly hung for several years in the Embassy of Upper Volta in Africa during the Kennedy Administration.

During the show, Jeanne Majors of Ortega and her student, Kelly Arnold of Middleburg, performed chamber music on the violin.

View more photos at [photos.residentnews.net](http://photos.residentnews.net)



Maggie FitzRoy with Laura Jo Brunson, Jessica Last and Charles Eichhorn



Pat Setser, president of the Jacksonville Branch of the National League of American Pen Women, stands by her painting and accompanying verse entitled, "Summer Evening."



Rosalie Atkins with her painting, "Far East Waterfront," which was accompanied with a verse by Joanelle Mulrain.



Artist Dr. Susanne Schuenke with her painting, "Give Me Wings!" that inspired the poem by writer Susan D. Brandenburg, "Seven Soaring Spirits."



Joanelle Mulrain and Anne Coyle



Mary McAllister, Jo Oetjen and Annie Plumb with Mimi Sherman Pearce and her painting, "Flower Fields"



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# Door Openers share old times at annual luncheon

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

It was a happy/sad occasion when the Bishop Kenny Door Openers met for one of their traditional luncheons at the Athens Café in San Jose July 11. Happy because, as always, members of Jacksonville's only Catholic high school's first four graduating classes – 1953-1956 – were gathering to greet each other and talk over old times, but sad because it was the first time Door Openers Founder J.P. "Pat" Thornton would not be among their ranks.

Led by Buddy Lawrence, Class of 1956, the group said a prayer for Thornton, who passed away March 15, 2019, and others within the group who requested spiritual thoughts be sent their way. Thornton, who was a member of Bishop Kenny's first graduating class, started the group with the help of Lawrence, a San Jose resident, Tracy Danese of Arlington and the late Bill Betros.

Eighteen alums enjoyed the luncheon with most hailing from the Class of 1956. Several made their way from regions beyond the First Coast with perhaps the farthest participants traveling from Tennessee and Pennsylvania. Also, in attendance were Bishop Kenny Principal Todd Orlando of Empire Point, and Sheila Marovich of

St. Nicholas, director of advancement, Samantha Farmand of Lakewood, alumni and communications coordinator, and Mary Harms, advancement associate.

Lawrence also announced that a special plaque would be placed at Bishop Kenny honoring the Door Openers group and their class years.

Listening to the alums as they conversed it was clear that Bishop Kenny has changed a lot since the Door Openers group went to school. "I recall it was very regimented. It was almost like a military school," said Donald Marx '56. "We couldn't talk in the hallway in between classes and we had what we would call 'hall monitors.' You were appointed as a hall monitor and if you caught someone talking as they changed classes you would write them a ticket and they had to stay after school. I was a hall monitor, and I loved writing tickets. Then after I graduated, I became a policeman. I guess that's where I got my start."

Marx also recalled that the girls and boys were segregated in their home rooms and all the boys were required to wear neckties to school. "We resented it. We were 17 years old and our parents had to go out and buy us ties. One of the guys made a big bow tie, one that was humongous. We would wear the ugliest tie we could find just to rebel.



Front: Anna Riedel '56, Catherine Brown Monahan '56, Nancy Jo Dorsey Vining '56, Diana Romey '57, and Ralph Mosley '56; middle: Tracy Danese '54, Jean Blattner Horner '56, Charlie Flynn '56, and Robert Spangler '56; back: Jay Robinson '55, James McGinley '56, Don Marx '56, Charles Alvarez '56, George "Buddy" Lawrence '56, Loys Charbonnet '56, James McDonald '56, John Rahaim '53, and Ted Mahew '56.

We'd say, 'I've got a tie on,' and we would loosen it rather than have it up tight around our neck," he remembered.

Dr. John Raheim of San Marco, member of the Class of '53, recalled there were approximately 60 kids in his class. As the first class to graduate, he spent his senior year at what was first Central Catholic High School until the Diocese changed the name to Bishop Kenny in the spring. Prior to attending Kenny, Raheim, who grew up in Riverside, said he was schooled at St. Paul's. "My cousin and I went to Kenny. We were co-chairmen of the student body, which I really enjoyed."

Before Bishop Kenny opened, high school students attended St. Paul's School in Riverside, St. Joseph's School in Mandarin or Immaculate Conception School Downtown, but their high school programs closed after Central Catholic High School opened as the only

Catholic high school in Jacksonville, said Danese. "The fall sports teams were known as Central Catholic and in the spring the teams were Bishop Kenny, so there was a lot of confusion on the team shirts and jerseys."

Danese, a member of the Class of 1954, recalled that the school was not fully built when he attended. "There was no gym, no football field and no parking lot," he said. "Myself and three other guys worked as brick mason laborers. We worked that summer and the following summer building the school. We were paid 90 cents an hour and \$1.35 for overtime.

"I especially enjoyed playing football and the camaraderie," Danese continued. "This group is an extension of what we had in high school – that's exactly why it started."

View more photos at [photos.residentnews.net](https://photos.residentnews.net)

## Young baker bests her elders in Bubbe's Bake-off

Age and experience made no difference in the Congregation Ahavath Chesed's Bubbe's Bake-off competition this year. Among the 16 luscious desserts put forth by 14 capable bakers, it was 11-year-old Evelyn Martin of Miramar who took home the top prize.

Martin's Lemon Blueberry Bundt Cake may not have been the flashiest dessert on the table, but it was judged the best in taste, appearance, originality and texture by an experienced jury of baking

connoisseurs. "I went to Jacksonville Cooking Studio's Kids Camp this summer and used one of their recipes," Martin said, noting she also submitted "kitchen sink cookies" as a second entry.

Placing second was Sarah Fraden's Chocolate Cake and in third place was Joyce Braun's Raspberry Chocolate Cake, and two youngsters, 8-year-old Eli Barry and 14-year-old Jacob Schreiber of Miramar, took home honorable mentions for their sweet confections. Barry made cookies while Schreiber went to the internet for his "Grandma's Carrot Cake" recipe. "This is the first year I've heard of this competition. I got the recipe off the internet and I haven't even tasted it yet," said Schreiber.

For the first time, the Bubbe's Bake-off contest was not held as part of The Temple's yearly Food Festival. Instead it was the highlight of a new event, Deli Nite, where diners were able to enjoy Jewish deli food put out by the Temple Brotherhood. Chairing the event was Mindy Grinnan.



Bubbe's Bake-off honorable mentions went to Eli Barry for his cookies and Jacob Schreiber for his "Grandma's Carrot Cake."



Bubbe's Bake-off winners, third place Joyce Braun, second place Sarah Fraden and first place Evelyn Martin



Toby Ringel with Naomi and Andrea Porter



Temple Canter Carrie Barry with Rabbi Elizabeth Bahar

View more photos at [photos.residentnews.net](https://photos.residentnews.net)

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# Downtown Sculpture

FROM PAGE 1

The three artists were inspired to shift their work on the project toward visual storytelling when leaders of the black community expressed concern over the lack of representation of black history in Jacksonville's public spaces at a town hall meeting held last July at the downtown public library to discuss the recent phase of new public art projects downtown.

"What we've done here is both reclaim the term 'Duuuval' as something that came out of the black community in Jacksonville and was spread by local DJs, and we've also reclaimed the history of this area. It's a historically black neighborhood and that is Jacksonville's history and that is America's history – it's not just black history," said Caila.

Christopher White, a Jacksonville-based musician, was one of the attendees at the meeting last July. The suggestions and important information he shared with the artists at the meeting greatly contributed to the plans for the final product, according to Caila.

Carlton Maddox, who lives and works in Springfield, was the first person to hitch his bicycle to the new rack. A former high school classmate of Caila Moed, Carlton hosted the couple while they worked on the project. He is familiar with the greatly untold stories and the sites related to African American history and was happy with the outcome of the sculpture. "Ocean Street is a heavily traveled thoroughfare, and this gives a very visible cue to the cultural contribution of black people in Jacksonville."



Based on input from the community, the artists identified 11 sites of cultural and historical significance to the African American culture in Jacksonville and incorporated them into the art.

Eric Moed highlighted the importance of hearing what the people in the community had to say as the first step in the creative and design process. "Before we put pen to paper for the design, we wanted to make sure it was something context-specific and sensitive to what the public in Jacksonville actually wanted. We take the idea of public art being 'public' very seriously," he said. "At the town hall meeting, many people spoke up and said we are struggling to find an identity for the city of Jacksonville, and some other people in the crowd – members of the black community – stated they wanted to start a dialogue about the rich African American history and culture in Jacksonville because it's ever-present but not represented in public."

"We worked with the community to come up with the concept – it's a hybrid of a bike rack, a sculpture and a monument – and we identified 11 sites of cultural and historical significance to the black community in Jacksonville," Moed continued. "We united them under the banner of DUUUVAL, which can be viewed from certain perspectives around the intersection here. It's really great that everyone says 'DUUUVAL' – it's nice that it unifies everyone, but we should also recognize the origin."

# Chamber music concert tour a hit among German audiences



Members of the San Marco Chamber Music Society pose with a poster advertising their concert in Germany. From left, Nick Curry, Aurica Duca, Clinton Dewing, Ellen and Eric Olson; not pictured: Les Roettges

The San Marco Chamber Music Society (SMCMS) toured Germany June 12-23, performing at six different venues in Berlin, Jühnsdorf, Jüterbog, and Hamburg and connected with former Northeast Florida residents. In Hamburg, at the Blankeneser Kirche am Markt (church at the market in Blankenese), the group was welcomed by Götz and Gudrun Neubauer, former residents of Orange Park, Florida. Götz Neubauer was also a former president of Friday Musicale in Riverside.

The group played selections by nine different composers, including a new composition called "San Marco Suite," which SMCMS commissioned with Jacksonville composer Piotr Szewczyk for the tour. Szewczyk's composition was a favorite of the audiences. All concerts were well received by the German public, said Ellen Olson, co-founder of SMCMS.

"One audience member in Jühnsdorf said, 'It is the best concert I have heard in over 20 years,'" she said. The performances in Jüterbog and Jühnsdorf had special meaning to both the audiences and musicians because a generation ago these two communities were part of East Germany.

The musicians on the tour were flutist Les Roettges, oboist Eric Olson, violinists Aurica Duca and Clinton Dewing, violist Ellen Olson, and cellist Nick Curry, and they traveled with nine other adults and two children, who besides seeing the sights of Berlin and Hamburg also attended the concerts.

SMCMS's 2019-20 season opens on Sunday, Sept. 15 at 7 p.m. with their annual concert to benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. To date, the nonprofit chamber music group has raised over \$25,000 to help cure Type 1 diabetes. For more information, visit [www.sanmarcochambermusic.org](http://www.sanmarcochambermusic.org), or like them on Facebook.



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# THE WAY WE WERE: BILL AND JULIE MASON

SUSAN D. BRANDENBURG  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Juliette “Julie” Baldwin Mason is a seventh-generation native Floridian from a pioneering American family whose ancestors arrived at Plymouth Colony in 1621 on the Fortune, which landed two weeks following the Mayflower. Members of her family fought in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, as well as World War I and II.

One of three children born to Richard and Catharine Baldwin of Winter Park, Florida, Julie notes that her father was a World War II hero who fought in the Battle of the Bulge and was one of the liberators of the Nazi Concentration Camp, Dachau. As a child who grew up hearing about her proud heritage, Julie has followed in the footsteps of her illustrious ancestors by making her own history in Jacksonville as a prolific nonprofit fundraiser, an advocate for children, a volunteer for Community Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeast Florida and as Chief Operating Officer of the Baptist Health Foundation.



Julie and Bill Mason, center, with Baptist Neurosurgeons Eric Sauvageau and Ricardo Hanel

While conducting a capital campaign to build the new Wolfson Children’s Hospital in the early 1990s, Julie worked closely with Dr. William C. “Bill” Mason, the Chief Executive Officer of Baptist Health. The extremely successful campaign raised more than \$25 million to build the new children’s hospital.

Bill and Julie later were married at First Congregational Church of Winter Park on April 17, 1993. A second marriage for both, Julie and Bill Mason have since enjoyed 26 marvelous years together, sharing children and grandchildren in their beautiful San Marco home as well as their mutually passionate interests in philanthropy, humanity, travel, history, entertaining, gardening, church, and, most particularly, the continuing welfare of the citizens of Jacksonville.

Bill Mason was born in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1938, and grew up in the coastal city of Fairhope, Alabama. He recalls that being a child in the shadow of the encroaching World War II greatly influenced his boyhood. “My father was involved in the war effort and I spent much of my time in the company of both my maternal and paternal grandparents,” he remembers. “My maternal grandfather, The Rev. Dr. William H. Evans,

was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Fairhope, and my mother was one of his 10 children. My paternal grandfather, Dr. William C. Mason, was the town dentist and pharmacist, and raised seven boys. Both grandfathers were extremely influential in our town and the surrounding countryside, and they taught me many life lessons. As a result of their guidance, I naturally gravitated toward a career in hospital administration (ad ministrare ‘to serve’), a unique combination of their two vocations.”

Having earned degrees from the University of Louisiana, Lafayette and Trinity University in San Antonio (and later earning a doctorate degree from the University of North Florida in Health and Education Leadership), Dr. Mason began his career in health administration as a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development, a division of the U.S. State Department. He served as Health Administration Advisor while posted to the American Embassy in Manila, Philippines and in Saigon, South Vietnam in the 1960s. He was then appointed chief executive officer of the Baptist Hospitals in East Africa, serving in Kenya and in Tanzania. During that time, he also consulted on construction of Baptist Hospitals in Djibla, Yemen, Asuncion, Paraguay and Sanyati, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Just prior to coming to Baptist Medical Center, Jacksonville, Bill built a new Baptist Medical Center in Bangalore, India and was its first CEO from 1974 to 1978.

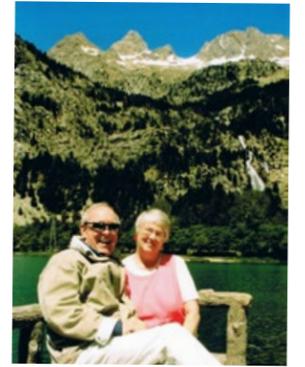
Like his grandfathers, Bill Mason became an efficient, highly respected multi-tasker. While serving as Baptist Health System’s CEO for a quarter of a century, he served his community in several capacities. He was chairman of the Florida Hospital Association, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, Jacksonville Port Authority, Jacksonville Children’s Commission, Jacksonville Community Council (JCCI) and president of the downtown Rotary Club of Jacksonville. After retiring, he served as interim director of the graduate program in Health Administration at the University of North Florida and also taught graduate level classes as a professor in that program for five years.



Julie Mason with First Lady Barbara Bush, Bill’s mother, Sibyl Mason, and Bill in 1993 for the opening of Wolfson Children’s Hospital.



Julie and Bill Mason in Cuba in 2015 posing next to a 1956 Ford.



Bill and Julie Mason against the background of the Pyrenees in Spain.

While her husband was at the helm of several community organizations, Julie Mason, a member of Mensa who earned her B.A. degree in English from Florida State University, forged her own path as a woman of influence at the forefront of several worthwhile organizations, chairing the boards of Community Hospice, the JCCI, Planned Parenthood, and serving on a governor-appointed special committee of the State University System of Florida. An alumna of Leadership Jacksonville, Leadership Florida and Leadership America and a recent EVE finalist, Julie is currently helping to direct Community Hospice’s capital campaign for a new hospice unit within Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville. It is to be called the Alice and T. O’Neal Douglas Center for Caring, and will open for patients in early November 2019, when the fine art created by several local artists and curated by Julie Mason will enhance the experience of all who enter.

Julie and Bill Mason have traveled to more than 75 countries and all seven continents during their years together, and their beautiful home in San Marco reflects many of their adventures in foreign lands. Some of Bill’s most remarkable adventures occurred long before he came to Jacksonville, and these he has compiled into a book of stories and photographs for his family. Just one example is his claim that he may be the only man in Jacksonville who spent the night in a jail in Yemen. Suffice it to say that he was not guilty of a crime other than flying into the Yemeni Airport very late at night in a country that was extremely suspicious of foreigners and concerned for his safety. “Several missionary doctors at our remote Baptist Hospital in Djibla had just been assassinated,” recalls Bill, adding that a night in jail paled in significance.

Closer to home, the Masons are quite active at Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church, where Julie chairs the board of the Little Friends Daycare Center and sings in the choir, as well as serving as a Deacon. They were instrumental in restoring the church after the devastating fire destroyed it in



Julie and Bill Mason were instrumental in helping rebuild Hendricks Avenue Baptist after a devastating fire in 2007.

2007. Bill chaired the pipe organ selection committee and commissioned the building of the new organ.

Both adventurers and lifelong learners, Julie and Bill continue to be a power couple who are on a constant quest for more of what life has to offer. In 2006, for instance, Bill earned his private pilot’s license at the Jacksonville Center for Aviation Excellence and has flown his airplane on many cross-country trips to places of historic significance, such as Little Big Horn, Yellowstone, and the entire length of the Lewis and Clark Trail to the Pacific Ocean. Julie, who has been an avid reader of books since childhood, and has written commentary for National Public Radio, magazines and professional journals, once winning the Florida Freelance Writer’s Competition, explains her love of the written word by quoting the 15th century scholar, Erasmus, “If I have any money, I buy books. If I have any left over, I buy food and clothes.”

A couple who love to travel, the Masons insist that coming home to San Marco is the ultimate joy. There, they raise butterflies, in particular monarch and several kinds of swallowtails, having turned their backyard into a Certified Wildlife Refuge.

“We love our neighborhood and our wonderful neighbors, and the beautiful St. Johns River at the end of our street,” declares Julie. “Our back deck provides pleasant hours for all sorts of occasions, from parties with friends to quiet glasses of wine together at the end of the day. We are blessed to live in such a pleasant place.”

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STARLING AT SAN JOSE

## In Memoriam

# Stephen C. Thomas

Sept. 3, 1940 to June 2, 2019

The man who solved problems in the world with the good ole boys from his seat behind the gun counter at Curry-Thomas Hardware in St. Nicholas is gone.

Steve “Coon-Dog” Thomas, a Miramar resident, passed away June 2. He was 78, and the third of four brothers who worked in the longtime, one-of-a-kind family business to die within the past four years. Terry Thomas, the oldest, died of cancer four years ago, followed by his brother, Matthew, who passed away of the same disease last year.

“The Thomas family is a special family, and it’s been tragedy after tragedy after tragedy with three of the four brothers having passed away in just a few years. Steve was a good man and a good friend,” said Tyree Boyer of San Marco, a patron of the gun counter at Thomas’s St. Nicholas store, one of two unique hardware stores owned by the family. “He could talk to anybody, and he was good at sales – never high pressure. Just a solid man and a good hunter. He knew what he was talking about and it wasn’t just selling guns. It was everything, what’s going on in the world – he kept up with that – to hunting, guns, knives and all that stuff. He was just a good man, and so were his brothers.”

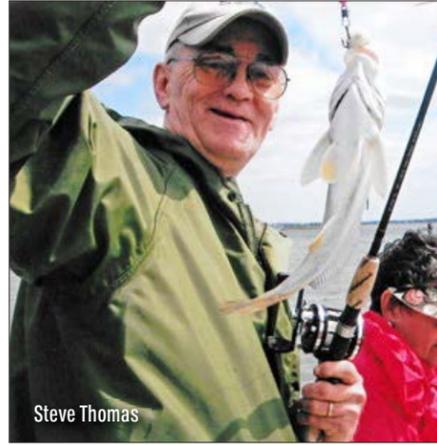
Thomas was the son of Edith Naughton and Curry-Thomas Hardware Store founder August Thomas, both deceased. He grew up on the Northside near the Trout River

and joined his brothers, Terry, Matthew, and Tim, hunting, fishing and spending summers at the family cabin on Crystal Lake. His love of the outdoors continued throughout his life, and he often traveled with his brothers out west or to Alaska to hunt and fish. Several of the animal trophies that line the walls of the St. Nicholas store belonged to Steve, said his brother, Tim.

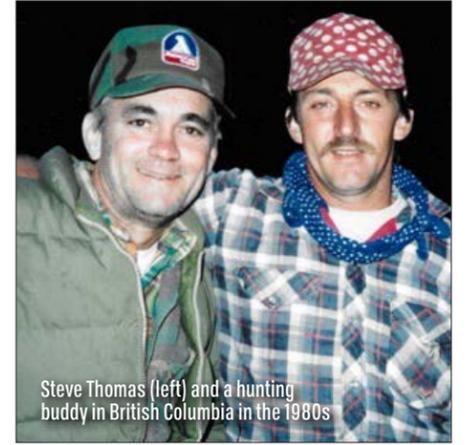
Thomas was a 1958 graduate of Andrew Jackson High School and the University of Florida School of Forestry in Lake City. After a stint in the Air National Guard he spent a few years working for Independent Life in Jacksonville before joining the family hardware business and becoming a fixture behind the gun counter in the St. Nicholas store for decades. As a knowledgeable gunsmith, he was well known by hunting enthusiasts and law enforcement.

“Whenever I was in the area, I would stop by the store to visit with Steve and talk about guns and politics,” wrote Robert Y.H. Thomas IV, in ‘Thomas’ online obituary guestbook. “I bought my first gun from Steve in 1971 and still have it. I bought a beautiful grade V Browning 410-gauge pump in May. Over the years some of my most collectible guns were bought from Steve. Steve and I agreed on almost everything,” he wrote.

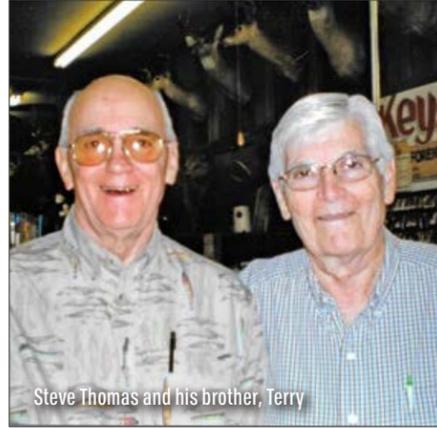
“Steve really enjoyed working in the store. I think he’d rather do that than almost anything. In his later years his friends would come in to talk and jabber,” recalled his



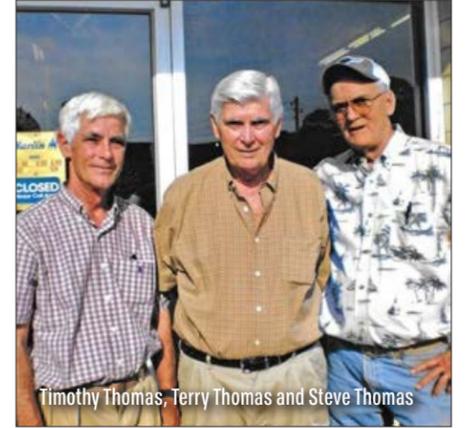
Steve Thomas



Steve Thomas (left) and a hunting buddy in British Columbia in the 1980s



Steve Thomas and his brother, Terry



Timothy Thomas, Terry Thomas and Steve Thomas

surviving younger brother, Tim. “He was a fine man, and everybody liked him, and he’d been that way all his life. He was one of those fellas everybody liked. When he met you, you were his friend almost immediately. Everybody liked him and that was his big accomplishment in life. He was so easy-going that I don’t think he ever had an enemy.”

In addition to his brother, Tim, Thomas is survived by this wife, Linda, of Miramar; his sisters-in-law Vera and Gloria; daughters Shan Cieslik (Dwayne) of Miramar, Stasia Holzbaur (John) of Avondale, stepdaughters Dustin Van Antwerp (Don), Barron Romans and stepson Alex Romans, six grandchildren and numerous nephews, nieces, cousins and friends.

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# Colonial Manor resident goes from fitness zero to hero

## Life-changing epiphany leads to competition in Canary Island triathlon

By Marcia Hodgson

Resident Community News

It was never on Rachel Shrader's bucket list to compete in a triathlon.

The 59-year-old Colonial Manor resident was not a jogger or a cyclist and as a native Floridian, the only swimming she had ever done was to take a dip in the ocean or splash around in a pool. However, on January 6, 2019, as she eyed her approaching 60th birthday, she had what would become a life-changing epiphany.

"I realized life is short. Life is amazing. Why not make it the best possible experience while we are on this earth?" she said. "For me that meant feeling better, feeling stronger, and feeling healthier, so that I can be around for my children as long as I possibly can."

At the beginning of this year, she had made a resolution to work out with her neighbors, run 5K and 15K races, and observe "dry" alcohol-free January, when, as fate would have it, an email came to her at work saying it was time to apply to be an ambassador in her company's Win4Youth program.

In 2010, Shrader's employer, The Adecco Group, started its Win4Youth program to raise money for youth charities through inviting employees, associates and clients to clock up kilometers and minutes exercising to raise money for its global charity partner, Plan International. Over the past decade, the program has raised nearly \$2.8 million.

Each year for the past decade, the company has selected a group of employees and associates to become Win4Youth ambassadors and live a life-changing experience by assisting



Rachel Shrader rides her bike during boot-camp training in Gent, Belgium.

them through coaching and training to take part in a major sporting event. In the past the ambassadors have competed in the New York Marathon, the Garmin Barcelona Triathlon, the Athens Classic Marathon, the Col du Tourmalet Cycle Climb and the Gavá Triathlon in Spain among others. This year, the event will be the Win4Youth Triathlon, powered by Ocean Lava, on Saturday, October 26 in Lanzarote, Spanish Canary Islands.

As a director of corporate real estate for Adecco North America, Shrader, who has worked for Adecco nine years, had received notice of the program each year and never considered it, but this year was different. "It was the age-old question, 'Why not now? Why not me?'" she said. "I didn't have any pressing (medical) issues, but I had let myself go, and I certainly didn't feel healthy and wasn't happy where I was. Doing it would be the motivation to see what I could accomplish. It was a beautiful, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Once I was selected, I was just over the moon."

To be part of the program, Shrader submitted her application in March, which was evaluated on the basis of team spirit, entrepreneurship through organizing an event, responsibility through fundraising for a cause, motivation and passion, and customer centricity, putting the people you support first. This year 76 ambassadors were selected from Adecco's 5,000 world-wide branches with three, including Shrader, coming from its corporate office in Jacksonville.

"They look for people for whom this will be a life-changing event. That certainly

was my situation because not only have I never done a triathlon, I'd never run before, never ridden a bike competitively or even just for exercise, and I'd definitely never swam before – not in high school or in college. It was just a whole new thing for me to try to do."

Shrader raised \$1,050 by raffling off a sit/stand desk to her work colleagues as her fundraiser and planned a Win4Youth walk for her office mates, so they could rack up kilometers by walking a half-mile loop around the office complex. Globally all Adecco employees have a goal of logging 10 million kilometers collectively through swimming, biking, running and walking this year. In reaching the goal, the company plans to donate at least 500,000 Euros (\$557,389) to Plan International to support its youth employment and youth economic empowerment project, Fit for the Future.

In May, Shrader joined the other ambassadors at a week-long boot camp in Belgium, where they trained eight hours a day, while being coached in swimming, cycling and running techniques, nutrition and diet tips. Each received a customized training program derived from a bicycle stress test to determine maximum heart rate and a body scan. They also took part in a mini-triathlon – 87% of the 76 participants had never competed in one – and a 10K road race before going home.

"It was intense, but everybody made it through with flying colors," Shrader said, noting that although she is the oldest participant in the program, she was not dead last in either event. "They have an incredible program that will get us in the best possible shape for Oct. 26 as long as we follow it."

When Shrader started working out in January, prior to being accepted into the program, she had difficulty finishing the Donna 5K run in February and the 15K Gate River Run in March. She found the only way she was able to cross the finish line in each race was to run a minute and then walk a minute repeatedly. "During the race, it was the recovery period I was looking forward to. I had never run before, and I was really bad at it," she said, noting that prior to the Belgium bootcamp, she'd invested six weeks in a "Tri with Skye" triathlon program to prepare.

In mid-July, with 15 weeks left to train, she can easily run 45 minutes without a break and her swimming endurance has increased from 25 meters (one length of the pool) to 500 meters without stopping. "It just blows me away," she said. "I never, in a million years, would have imagined I could do it. I'm like a walking science experiment. What you put into it, if you understand the training process, really works."

Each week her coach emails her a six-day training schedule and advice. She is responsible to follow it to the letter and log her mileage online.

For training, she routinely does three to four mile runs back and forth along Old San Jose Boulevard near her home, swims laps at the YMCA in Riverside, and does long-distance bike treks along the Baldwin Trail. So far, she has lost 20 pounds and toned her muscles beyond recognition. "I have muscles where I never had muscles before," she said. "I feel great. I've never felt this good in my life. I feel strong, fit and healthy. I feel amazing. It works!"



Rachel Shrader practices the swim portion of her triathlon training at Jacksonville Beach.

Once she reaches the Canary Islands, her goal is to finish the Olympic distance triathlon course by swimming 1.6 kilometers (approximately 1 mile) in an hour, cycling 40 kilometers (approximately 25 miles) in just over two hours and running 10 kilometers (approximately 6 miles) in an hour and a half. Swimming is the toughest of the three segments for her, she said, but she also expects the biking portion to be difficult because Lanzarote is a volcanic island and much of the bike course will be uphill.

Another benefit of the Win4Youth program is the camaraderie she has developed with other ambassadors and her coaches through a shared Facebook group, monthly webinars, and communication through WhatsApp.

"It's amazing how many people have come up to me saying I've inspired them to get on a workout program," she said. "This has been such a positive lifestyle change. My kids and husband have been inspired. My friends and work colleagues also can see how it has changed my life and my health," she said, noting once it's over she plans to continue a rigorous training schedule. "I won't give up after this is over," she said. "Why would I go back to doing anything else?"



Rachel Shrader, left, and another ambassador give the thumbs up after finishing the Fintro 10-kilometer City of Gent race.

## Salvation Army musicians serenade San Marco

Musicians from the Salvation Army's senior delegation of its Longino Music Conservatory, a music camp held at the Army's Camp Keystone in Starke each summer, serenaded residents and shoppers in San Marco Square July 7.

The Longino Music Conservatory, which teaches music to more than 90 young people from throughout the state each year, celebrated its 30th anniversary this summer. Students ages 14-18 attend the three-week Senior Music Conservatory, while budding musicians ages six to 13 attend the Junior Music Conservatory, a one-week experience. The youngsters receive advanced music lessons in brass, piano, percussion or creative arts from Salvation Army employees from the music department at the Army's headquarters in Tampa.

"The purpose of the music conservatory is to equip our young people by helping them to excel in their musical talents and

skills by teaching them that they can do whatever they put their minds and hearts into through their hard work and dedication," said Lieutenant Dominic Blanford, Corps Officer/Pastor of the Salvation Army Jacksonville Citadel Corps. "Typically these children come from different cities and towns in Florida where they attend their local Salvation Army churches to take part in beginner band and music lessons. Each Salvation Army Corps/Unit covers the costs to send these young people to music camps. We cannot do it without the support of our donors and communities, so we are grateful for the investment that is made," he said, adding that many of the campers major in music in college and make music a career by becoming praise and worship leaders in churches, music teachers in public schools, or serving in the Salvation Army or as a musician in the military.



The Longino Music Conservatory, which was hosted by the Jacksonville Citadel Corps, Jacksonville's Salvation Army church, provided a free concert during lunchtime in San Marco's Balis Park July 7. (Photo courtesy of Angela Lopez)

"During the Senior Conservatory's time at camp the students do two Salvation Army Corps visits where they will visit a city or town not too far from camp and will take part in a worship service at the respective Salvation Army Corps and do an outdoor concert for the community. They did an excellent job here in Jacksonville," he continued.

Originally the young musicians anticipated performing at The Landing, but since the site is currently closed, they were forced to change venues at the last minute making their way to Balis Park, said Angela Lopez, of Miramar, who attended the concert. The campers also performed African dances for their San Marco audience.

# LaVilla launches 20th anniversary celebration with beautification project



Jason Tetlak was less than halfway through a 3,000-square-foot mural project at LaVilla School of the Arts on July 18 with plans to complete it before the end of July.



Jacob Thurlow points to a landscaping idea that summer interns considered for the landscaping project at LaVilla School of the Arts.

By **Kate A. Hallock**

Resident Community News

A collaboration between a local artist, a global company and a public middle school will result in a beautification project just in time to celebrate LaVilla School of the Arts' 20th anniversary during the 2019-2020 school year.

When Murray Hill resident Jason Tetlak's daughter, Logan entered LaVilla in fall 2018, he offered his services as a mural artist to create a 3,000-square-foot mural for the side of the 18-foot high by 190-foot long wing that houses the theater and classrooms for band, orchestra and piano. Tetlak also proposed painting the same colorful, geometrical design on the roof of the portico and other designs on some of the interior walls.

While school leaders were mulling over Tetlak's proposal, the Haskell Company

selected the downtown-based middle school for its annual Green Apple Day of Service project. After LaVilla Principal Lianna Knight shared the idea of the mural with Jacob Thurlow, Haskell director of project development, the company decided to fund the mural project, too.

"Half of the project is beautification and aesthetics, and the other half is education, and putting back landscaping that is native to the area that doesn't require pesticides and a lot of water, also installing landscaping to serve as pollinators for bees and butterflies. We'll have a rain garden component, too," said Thurlow. "It doesn't just look nice, it also serves a purpose and contributes to a sustainable environment."

Over the summer, interns at the Riverside-based planning, design and construction company designed the landscape project for the front of the school.

"We were tasked to work on the Green Apple Day service project and divided the roles into project managers, architects and an engineer," said Jacob Brown, a student at Bartram Trail High School. "The goal is to educate the students and have a sustainable feature in there, so everyone benefits from it."

Haskell has participated in Green Apple Day of Service since 2012, beginning at Andrew Jackson High School. Most of the projects have been exterior projects, creating or repairing courtyards, installing landscaping, putting in compost beds and raised gardens, but in 2016, the project was repainting the interior of the newly renovated Robert E. Lee High School.

Each year the project is determined "organically," said Thurlow, usually through a connection someone at Haskell has with one of the public schools. "This year we have a gentleman here at Haskell, Allan



Jacob Brown, a Haskell summer intern, worked with Jacob Thurlow on the beautification project for LaVilla School of the Arts.

Iosue, who is a neighbor of Lianna Knight, and my sister used to work for Lianna at LaVilla for many years," he said.

On Saturday, Sept. 7, this year's project will be led by the Green Apple Day of Service interns, Haskell employees, and LaVilla's National Junior Honor Society Sponsors and students.



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# Knights of Columbus lend facility so autistic kids can play drums

By Marcia Hodgson

Resident Community News

Thanks to the generosity of the Knights of Columbus Bishop Kenny Council 1951 and an extra-special Knight, who wishes to remain anonymous, a group of autistic teens are taking free drumline lessons in air-conditioned comfort this year.

Under the auspices of Affordable Percussion Instruction (API), a soon-to-be nonprofit led by Jay Brown, a music teacher for The Broach School, the group of 10 to 12 teenagers meets Tuesday afternoons in the Columbus Social Club on Hendricks Avenue.

For the past three years Brown used facilities at the University of North Florida to offer free lessons to autistic students and others interested in playing drums. Two months ago, the room he was using at the university became unavailable forcing him battle rain and heat when he attempted to teach his lessons outdoors at San Marco's Southside Park.

"The aunt of one of his students called me and told me of the situation," said Ann O'Keeffe-Rodgers, a San Marco resident who serves as reservations coordinator for the Columbus Social Club. "Jay Brown has been teaching students with autism for over three years, out of the goodness of his heart, for free. I have a son with autism, so I know how important it is to have resources available," she said, noting playing drums is "therapeutic" for kids with autism because many have narrow vestibular issues.

O'Keeffe-Rodgers brought a written request before the Bishop Kenny Council to see if it could cover the insurance costs of allowing the group to use the facility for a year – a donation that totaled several hundred dollars. The Knights agreed to give a grant covering 80% of the insurance costs,

with another individual Knight stepping in anonymously to cover the remaining 20%, O'Keeffe-Rodgers said.

"It's really amazing what the kids are doing," she said. "Mr. Jay' is what they call him. They love it, and they have so few resources available to them. The kids are between ages 15 and 25. For them to have this brightly lit, air-conditioned hall available to them – we just renovated it with new lighting and new ceiling tiles and fresh paint – well, they love it. They are so happy. Otherwise they wouldn't be able to practice if it hadn't been for the Knights of Columbus. I tear up just talking about it."

Brown, a Northside resident, said using the club is a lifesaver. "The best thing is, rain or shine, we can still meet. It's great for the parents because we are no longer meeting out in the elements," he said.

Most of Brown's students have been associated with UF Health Center for Autism Related Diseases in San Jose, he said, noting that although most of the group are autistic students, anyone in the community interested in learning to play drums is welcome at the Tuesday afternoon sessions, where they tackle bass, snare, tom or tenor drums or the cymbals. He also gives free keyboard lessons to a couple of students a half hour before the drum lessons begin.

In addition to the community drumline lessons, API also sponsors Noteworthy, a live band that does free jazz workshops for the Duval County Library in the summer, as well as in Clay and Alachua counties. "They are open to the public. We cover jazz history, jazz form and styles and the students can come along and play with us," Brown said, adding that his Tuesday drummers will show off their talents during a couple of performances this fall and during a couple



Jay Brown and his drumline class at the Knights of Columbus Social Hall in San Marco.

of half-time performances at Bartram Trail High School basketball games.

He also offers free drumline lessons for autistic students on Fridays at Henderson Haven in Orange Park.

A member of the marching band when he attended Robert E. Lee High School in Riverside, Brown also studied music at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee. His repertoire includes singing, piano, composing songs on bass guitar and drums.

"The main thing is I love music, and this is an opportunity for me to share it with some students," Brown said. "I'm serving young people who are looking for their niche or have already found it and want some guidance or direction. One of the coolest things with my students is finding the ones who come to me and didn't know they love music and then they discover

they love music. I have some in honors band or high school band who have gone on to do more with it, which is always gratifying," he said.

Teaching students with autism is especially rewarding because the kids gain increased focus through the lessons, he continued. "It's as if they needed some structure and guidance to keep it steady and consistent. It also has a social aspect. Through the groups they make friends, and I've had some that weren't social in the beginning but discover they have friends and get together for birthday parties and such. It's gratifying to watch the kids grow and gain skills. Sometimes they take the music and grow with it and sometimes they don't. But one thing I've learned from music – you work the same cognitive functions that you use in reading and math as well."



Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies' mascot, Wolfie, celebrates its first-ever A rating.

## Magnet status, limited class sizes helps earn Wolfson an A

When the State of Florida announced school grades in July, Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies was named an "A" school. In just three years, Wolfson has climbed from a state grade of C to this year earning the first ever state grade of A.

The academic achievements are just part of the transition happening at Wolfson. The athletic and fine arts programs have soared. Teams are growing, adding back junior varsity programs and seeing success on the field, court and pool. Students, parents, faculty and alumni are working together to renovate the facilities.

The band – with just 30 students three years ago – now has more than 80 marching members. The chorus program now showcases three competition choruses. For the first time in years, Wolfson has a drama department putting on regular performances for the community to enjoy.

To create an intimate culture, the school administration has purposefully limited the enrollment. Wolfson once housed around 2,600 students and now has an enrollment of 825. This plan allows the teachers and administration to know each of the students and provides for a more family-like atmosphere.

Several San Marco families have embraced the transition at Wolfson. Cindy Pearson will have a sophomore and a freshman there this year. "Having another 'A' high school is good for Jacksonville," she said. "As a dedicated magnet, Wolfson draws students from all over the county. However, this is a great opportunity for San Marco families. For the first time in a long time, they have a clear pathway to attend A-rated public K-12 schools in the neighborhood."

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## Summer camps keep kids engaged

Campers at Coach Polster's Camps, at Assumption Catholic School, enjoyed numerous activities this summer, from sports and physical education games to cookie decorating and art projects. With a full makerspace lab, about 75 day campers had the freedom to create, learn, and build.



Mary Payton Schmidt and Allie Brannen decorate cookies during a creative session at Coach Polster's Camps.



Jack Dearing and Hunter Johanson in a cookie-decorating session at Coach Polster's Camps.



Sawyer Moreland, right, tries to block J.R. Garza's ball at basketball camp.

## Southside Baptist kids gets wild

Southside Baptist Church took 162 pre-kindergarten through eighth grade children plus 91 volunteers "In the Wild," this year's Vacation Bible School theme, as they explored Scripture, had fun, and raised more than \$600 to help build a new playground at the Florida Baptist Children's Homes. The week-long program in late June was led by Meaghan Weir, Vickie Harrelson and Darren Sides.



Jessica Martinez makes a point with the help of Slick, a puppet, at Vacation Bible School.



Fourth and fifth graders participate in a Bible study during Vacation Bible School June 24-28.



Ingrid Skiles and Daniella Fraser have fun with animal masks.



Middle school students gather for a group photo during Vacation Bible School at Southside Baptist Church.

## School clubs offer summer day camps

From mid-June through early August, students from pre-kindergarten through sixth grade enjoyed a variety of day camps sponsored by San Jose Catholic School. The activities included maker spaces in STEM Club for grades 3-6; baking cookies, muffins and cupcakes during Cooking Club for pre-K to second graders; learning art appreciation through historical findings for grades 1-5 in Art Club; playing basketball with middle school camp leaders during PE Club, and attending a volleyball clinic with coaches from San Jose, Sacred Heart, and San Juan Del Rio Catholic Schools.

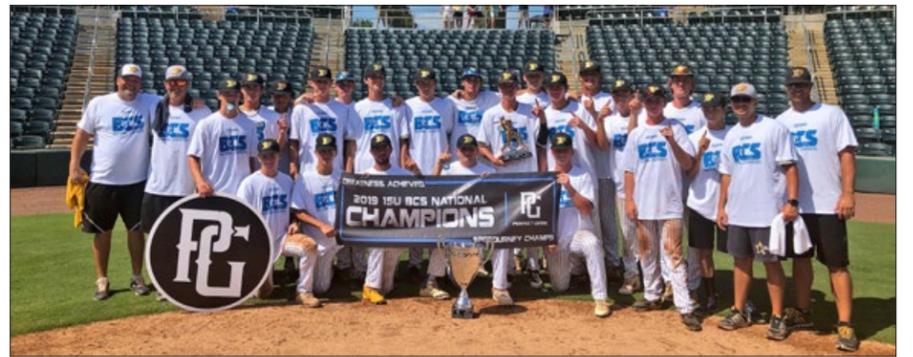


Sixth grade student Skylar Oetjen at STEM Club camp



Richie Miller and Rawls Barnett, in fourth grade this fall, conducted experiments during STEM Club camp.

# Travel baseball team earns championship trophy



2019 15U BCS National Tournament Champs

Five local boys who play travel baseball with a 5 Star National team have gone back to back winning the Perfect Game 2018 14U BCS National Tournament and 2019 15U BCS National Tournament.

"We have had some exciting summer baseball!" said Sara Brackin, whose son, Sullivan, is a member of the team. "[Winning back to back] doesn't happen very often so we are very excited and would love a shout out! Their positive chemistry is so refreshing when so many of these teams are cut-throat."

At the 15u level, the BCS National Championship could be viewed as the first leg in Perfect Game's national championship triple crown. After winning that trophy, the 5 Star National 15u team took part in the Perfect Game 15u WWBA National Championship July 12-19 in Atlanta, where they finished as runner-up to champions Canes National 15U.

Sullivan Brackin, who has committed to the University of Florida, is a student at The Bolles School, along with Patrik Menk and Tanner Zellem. Also on the team are Hunter Russell, a student at The Episcopal School of Jacksonville, who has committed to the University of Miami, and Nick Wrubluski, a student at Bishop Snyder High School.

Russell, Wrubluski and Zellem were named to the all-tournament team at the conclusion of the event, and Wrubluski was named the Most Valuable Player.

The 5 Star National 15u Dobbs team, managed by Britt Dobbs, has played together for several years and the intent is to keep the core group together through their high school careers. Two more championships, the 16u and the 17u levels, are up for the taking for this team before they move on to college or professional baseball.

## Youth learn community leadership, commit to school Rotary club

At its June 18 meeting, the San Jose Rotary Club honored three students with the Rotary Youth Leadership Award, in recognition of completion of a four-day program on leadership in the community. Brody Grasher and Luke Selmont, students at The Bolles School, and Julia Jones, a student at St. Johns County Day School, shared their program experiences during the meeting.

Grasher and Selmont also committed to start an Interact Club at Bolles, with San Jose Rotary as their sponsor. Doug Brown, Rotary District co-chair for Interact and longtime sponsor of the Fletcher Interact Club, gave the students tips on forming Interact at their school to help with community and international service projects.

"I learned a lot about leadership and community through the program. I also had the privilege of meeting with a lot of high school and college students from different areas. The experience was one I will never forget, and I think the



Doug Brown, Luke Selmont, Julia Jones and Brody Grasher

friendships I made will last," said Selmont, while Grasher noted, "It's pretty crazy how much I learned about myself and the community in such a short time. Anyways, I learned a lot about the International Rotary program as well as tips to kick-start a school club, which should be exhilarating in the coming school year."

Bolles School alumnus Byron Peacock is the current president of the San Jose Rotary Club, which meets every Tuesday, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at The Bolles School in The Boathouse. The meeting includes dinner and a speaker and guests are welcome.

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## CISV provides cultural connectivity for youth from 18 countries

Story and photos by Julia Nichols

Long-lasting friendships and memories, global experiences and cultural awareness were among the benefits highlighted during the CISV (Children's International Summer Villages) Open Day July 12 at Lakeshore Middle School. The event brought together 75 children from 18 countries to celebrate the Kingdom of Fairytales Village. At Open Day, each country's delegation hosted a display of foods, toys and other items from their country and later performed a dance or a skit

Michael Magevney, of Ortega, is the CISV Jacksonville chapter president, and a CISV alumni. All four of his children have participated in CISV, and his son, Xander, is on staff this summer working with the youth in the Village, which brings kids together for a month of sharing cultures, learning to live together cooperatively and building global friendships.

Xander Magevney has participated in CISV for the past seven years, and when he was an 11-year-old in Village, Kelsey Jimenez was his leader. Now Jimenez is the camp director in Jacksonville this summer, which goes to show that CISV truly forms long-lasting bonds and connects people around the world. "It just keeps getting better every year," said Xander about the bonds that have been built since the Jacksonville chapter began 43 years ago.

Jimenez spoke about CISV's mission "to educate and inspire action for a more just and peaceful world." She described the ways the mission statement is supported



Xander Magevney, center, with Tyler, Lynne and Connor Murphy, who came to CISV Open Day to learn more about the program.

in the Village, including recognizing and appreciating diversity, advocating human rights, encouraging the peaceful resolution of conflicts and supporting sustainable development. CISV's theme this summer is conflict and resolution. The goal of peace education for the 11-year-olds is that they will become agents of change and global citizens.

As camp director, Jimenez shared some of the engaging, yet educational games the delegates participate in, such as "Telephone," which is used as a discussion point on communication and the ways things can get lost in translation.

Jimenez also described the impact CISV has had on her life, saying, "Through CISV I have gained confidence, leadership skills, true friends around the world, and a clear vision of how just because everyone does something, that doesn't make it right."

Another world changer who spoke was Kristin Taylor of Avondale. In addition to balancing life as a rising senior at Episcopal School of Jacksonville, Taylor is also the CISV junior branch president. Taylor also has been a member of CISV for seven years and said the most valuable thing she has taken away are people skills. She explained that CISV has given her exposure to so many people she otherwise would not have met. She also spoke about some of the opportunities available year-round, including a mini camp for kids ages 10 and older over Labor Day weekend.

More information on that, as well as on ways to experience the CISV spirit without leaving home, can be found on the CISV website, [jacksonville.cisvusa.org](http://jacksonville.cisvusa.org).

Everyone who has participated in CISV will tell you is that it is unique, and Taylor summarized the program well by saying, "It's not just a tourism program; it's really getting to know each other and having everyone in the same mindset."



Elizabeth Lawrence tried a couple of sweet treats from various countries, and the Canadian cookie got her approval.

## Bolles runs largest summer program in history



Bolles Marine Science Camp with Rad Murphy, Bolles Marine Science instructor

This season, summer camp leaders at The Bolles School ran the largest and most robust program in School history.

Bolles hosted 130 specialty camps, six weeks of day camp, six weeks of swim camp and eight weeks of crew camp on all four Bolles campuses in addition to serving as the host site for the Southeast Regional U17/U18 Olympic Development Crew Camp and the annual AP Summer Institute, which attracts Advanced Placement faculty from all over the Southeast. Also big in the summer lineup was Football Camp, featuring instruction from new Bolles Head Football Coach Matt Toblin, and Swim Camp with Coach Peter Verhoef.

Aside from sports, which included tennis, soccer and basketball, students enjoyed everything from "Minecraft Masters STEAM Mania" to "Bolles/Mayo Clinic Medicine and Science Camp" and "How to Write the Right Way." The Bolles Upper School San Jose Campus hosted many programs and classes for incoming international boarding students as well as summer classes like Life Management, Geometry and other academic programming.

Bolles Day and Teen Camp have been ongoing for generations, inspiring memorable summer camp experiences for children of all ages year after year. This summer marks the 10th anniversary of leadership for Bolles Day Camp Directors Teresa and Joey Hudson.



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## Boy Scout selects The Temple for Eagle Scout project

Jack Blasbalg, a young member of Congregation Ahavath Chesed - The Temple, has chosen the San Jose-based synagogue as the recipient of his Eagle Scout project, with plans to restore its Bloom Garden.

“The once beautiful garden has become somewhat of an eyesore. For my Eagle project I will be cleaning the area by removing the existing landscaping and power washing the brick and windows. I will then be laying additional soil and river rock, planting approximately 35 succulents and 20 other sturdy plants, a yucca tree, and trying to place large rocks strategically to make the garden more aesthetically pleasing,” said Blasbalg. “Upon request of Sandy Archer, the co-head of the Beautification Committee, who helped me design the layout of the Bloom Garden, I just built two large planters to go in the garden. One is seven feet long and the other four.



Boy Scout Troop 277 Scoutmasters Martin Hamm, left, and John Furness, with Jack Blasbalg during a merit badge and rank advancement court of honor.

Currently I am in the process of fundraising for my project, hoping to raise enough funds to complete this project by the High Holidays.”

Blasbalg is a Life Scout in Troop 277, located in Ponte Vedra Beach. He celebrated his bar mitzvah at the Temple May 11.

“This kind young man has opted to benefit his Temple home through his Eagle Scout project by refurbishing one of the family gardens,” said Mary Ellen Hathaway, clergy assistant at The Temple. “It is a huge undertaking that requires a lot of hard work both fundraising and then physical.”

## Fund enables athletic staff to attend conference

Thanks to the Elizabeth Simpson Walton '71 Fund for Coaches' Professional Development, members of the Episcopal School of Jacksonville Athletic Department participated in the Florida High School Athletic Association's annual conference July 23 in Lakeland, Florida. In preparation for the new year, Episcopal staff attended sessions on heat illness, compliance and eligibility, student mental health, competition contracts, and sportsmanship.



Chip Stroud, Kasse Eppley, Andy Kidd and Mary Krombach

## Scout earns Eagle rank, also coveted Triple Crown award

San Marco resident Brandon Singleton was awarded the rank of Eagle Scout by Boy Scout Troop 35 May 19 in a packed ceremony at Southside United Methodist Church. This award culminated a series of adventures Singleton's enjoyed over the last 12 years, progressing through every rank, spending well over 100 nights in the woods, and engaging in high-adventure activities off the grid.

For his Eagle project, Singleton worked with John Homa in the Bishop Kenny High School Facilities Department to install a sprinkler system at the school's Softball Field Visitors Area. This was the first Eagle project in recent memory for the school and involved 316 feet of pipe and 18 sprinkler heads.

Singleton also earned the coveted Triple Crown Award, for successfully completing all three of the BSA's High Adventure programs, which included backpacking for 12 days through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains at Philmont in New Mexico; paddling 100 miles through Ontario, Canada for Northern Tier, and sailing the Abacos



Brandon Singleton takes a break from digging irrigation ditches at Bishop Kenny High School Oct. 26, 2018.

as part of Sea Base Bahamas. Singleton definitely enjoyed all the best experiences Scouting has to offer and was able to witness God's glory in the wilderness. He's now heading for new adventures as a member of Auburn University's Class of 2023.



Brandon and Jon Singleton in a pool at Agnes Falls in the Quetico Provincial Park June 2015.



Jon, Emily, Candace and Brandon Singleton at Brandon's Eagle Scout ceremony May 19, 2019.



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# Students, parents can look forward to no major changes in school personnel

The Duval County School Board has an annual habit of reassigning principals and assistant principals to address specific leadership needs in its more than 160 schools throughout the county. This year, just one school in the San Marco area will see a change. Julia Landon College Preparatory School's assistant principal, Katrina Blakely, was moved into the head slot when former principal, Timothy Feagins, was transferred to lead the team at Robert E. Lee High School.

Following is a look at the familiar faces who will greet students as they head back to school in mid-August.

## PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



**Mindy McLendon** - Principal  
Hendricks Avenue Elementary

Entering her third year as principal of Hendricks Avenue Elementary and her 17th year in education, McLendon's vision for the San Marco neighborhood school is to continue to build a culture of student leadership where all children realize their potential and are inspired to serve and lead in their community. The 2019-2020 theme is HAE: Where leaders rise up. Expected enrollment is between 640 and 680 at the neighborhood school.



**Paula Smith** - Principal  
San Jose Elementary

Returning for the sixth year as principal at San Jose Elementary, Smith may be the best kept secret in Duval County Public Schools. With 25 years of experience in various elementary and middle schools throughout the city, Smith is determined to make San Jose an 'A' school with a deep drive for language acquisition. With 775 students, almost 50% of the enrollment are ELL students (English Language Learners) from over 23 countries around the world. The school's goal is to build a solid foundation that will build little readers into future leaders.

## PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOLS



**Marilyn Barnwell** - Principal  
Alfred duPont Middle School

Barnwell begins her eighth year as principal of duPont Middle School and 19th year in Duval County "Blazing New Trails Through Community, Collaboration, & Caring" - the theme for 2019-2020. "Our goal this year is to focus on creating culturally responsive standards-based classrooms that will foster our students' engagement in their own learning," said Barnwell. "We will continue to offer students the opportunity to earn high school and college credits through our Biology I, Algebra I, Geometry and Pre-Early College courses."



**Katrina Blakely** - Principal  
Julia Landon College Preparatory School

Honored as a Duval County Public Schools Teacher of the Year in 2010, Blakely has served in public education for 14 years, including serving as a graduation coach, English teacher and AVID College Prep teacher at Terry Parker High School. She also served as an assistant principal at Terry Parker High School, Fort Caroline Middle School and Julia Landon. Blakely's ultimate goal is to ensure that all stakeholders feel supported and enjoy their daily experience on campus.



**Lianna Knight** - Principal  
LaVilla Middle School

Knight begins her 14th year employed by Duval County Public Schools and her sixth at LaVilla, following eight years as assistant principal at Douglas Anderson. The school theme is 20 Years of Art and Academic Excellence. For LaVilla's 20th anniversary, the school plans to host an Artist Series, bringing in a prominent artist to work with students in a master class, with a performance that evening. The big finale will be the annual Showcase, Friday, April 17, at Florida Theatre.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45

## Starting here creates confidence there.



**Hannah Mendelson**  
Bolles Class of 2018  
NC State Sophomore  
Major: Mechanical Engineering



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**PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS**



**Chris Begley - Principal**  
Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies

Begley has been in education for 35 years as a teacher, academic coach/trainer, curriculum specialist, assistant principal and principal. Tasked with converting Wolfson into a dedicated magnet, Begley is proud to tout the school's recent 'A' grade from a state rating of 'C'. He has also transformed the campus to one of which all alumni can be proud, and invites all residents to visit sporting events, fine arts productions, and even campus tours to witness firsthand the amazing 'A' school of which Wolfson has become.



**Melanie Hammer - Principal**  
Douglas Anderson School of the Arts

Hammer enters her 15th year in education at Douglas Anderson, and her third as principal. "DA's theme this year is 20/20 a school with a vision," said Hammer. "We are excited to share that we are an 'A' school again with an 11-point increase in our grade from the previous year. DA truly exemplifies our motto 'where arts and academics meet in excellence.'"

**PRIVATE SCHOOLS**



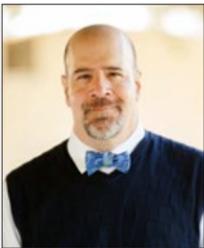
**Maryann Jimenez - Principal**  
Assumption Catholic School

A product of Assumption Catholic, San Jose Catholic, and Bishop Kenny, Jimenez began her teaching career in Duval County Public Schools, where she worked for three years at Richard L. Brown Elementary, before teaching third grade at Assumption in 2010. While completing a master's degree in Educational Leadership through Saint Leo University, Jimenez began serving as one of Assumption's assistant principals in 2013 and became principal of Assumption School in 2015.



**Jenny Studer - Principal**  
San Jose Catholic School

Studer begins her second year as principal with a goal to build community with local businesses. "Our community-building activities this year will be ones you don't want to miss. The San Jose Knights of Columbus are partnering with our Home and School Association in hosting our 29th Annual San Jose Golf Tournament," Studer said. "We will also be piloting an Art Appreciation class that will focus on religious pieces to enhance the children's connection between art and religion."



**Deacon David Yazdiya - Principal**  
Bishop John Snyder High School

A native of Jacksonville in his 35th year of Catholic education in the Diocese of St. Augustine, Yazdiya began his teaching career in 1985 on the high school level. After teaching for 10 years, he became principal of St. Matthew's Catholic School. In 2002, Yazdiya was named principal of the newest Catholic high school in the diocese, Bishop John J. Snyder High School, where he still serves as the school's principal, now boasting an enrollment of 450 students in grades 9-12. "Competence...Conscience...Compassion" are at the core of what they believe, live and teach.



**Lori Menger - Head of School**  
San Jose Episcopal Day School

In her 19th year at San Jose Episcopal, Menger became Head of School in 2010 after teaching fifth and sixth grades. Menger said she is looking forward to unveiling the recently renovated library space this upcoming school year. "I love the independent school atmosphere because teachers have the latitude to be creative and to provide hands-on authentic learning experiences for their students," she said.



**Todd Orlando - Head of School**  
Bishop Kenny High School

Named Principal in 2002 and sole Head of School in 2015, in his 31st year at Bishop Kenny, Orlando has three words in mind - healthy, focused, and faith - words that sum up Orlando's vision for the 2019-2020 school year. His goals include continuing professional education and awareness on mental and physical health for everyone, staying focused on one another and aware of one's surroundings on campus, especially in regard to students, and modeling one's faith well on campus and in the community.



**Ed Costello - Interim Head of School**  
St. Mark's Episcopal Day School

"Celebrating 50 Years" is the theme for the Ortega-based day school, where enrollment will be 270 students whose first day is August 13. Back in January, the Board of Trustees of St. Mark's Episcopal Day School named Edward Costello as Interim Head of School while the search committee seeks to fill the position. Working in independent schools for over 40 years, Costello holds an A.B. in American Studies from Syracuse University, where he graduated Magna Cum Laude, and a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Wesleyan University.



**The Rev. Adam S. Greene - Head of School**  
Episcopal School of Jacksonville

Serving Episcopal School of Jacksonville since 2016, Greene is a passionate community builder whose focus on Episcopal's Four Pillars (Academics, Fine Arts, Athletics, and Spiritual Life) has helped the school solidify its position as a leader in learner-centered teaching and overall excellence in its academic, athletic, arts, and spiritual life programs. Prior to earning a Master of Divinity from Yale, Greene spent more than 20 years in global investment banking and corporate finance where he led teams at firms all over the world, including Citicorp, ABN Amro, and Wachovia.



**Kim Repper - Principal**  
St. Paul's Catholic School

"Growth Mindset" is the 2019-2020 theme at Riverside-based St. Paul's Catholic. "We will spend the year developing Growth Mindset, the power of YET, and monthly mantras, such as Everyone can learn; My brain is a muscle that grows; I am a valued member of this learning community; Mistakes are opportunities for learning; I got this! and a few more," said Repper, who begins her 10th year there as principal. "We are all born with a growth mind set but we fail to nourish it as we grow and experience struggles."



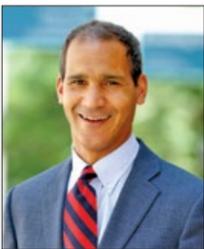
**Pat Walker - Head of School**  
Jacksonville Country Day School

Named Head of School in 2014, Walker has 35 years of experience as an educator. "As we look to the future, we are most excited about how the new Center for Learning, Innovation, and Collaboration will help to prepare students for success in the 21st century," said Walker. "Our school focus remains on creating transformative learning experiences for our students. We will be rolling out several new initiatives in the coming school year to enhance the academic program and continue to challenge our students."



**Tyler Hodges - President and Head of School**  
The Bolles School

"Leading Bolles easily ranks as both one of the hardest things I've ever done and one of the most memorable and fun," said Hodges, who begins his second year as the ninth Head of School. "My goal is to continue to be seen as fair, empathetic, collaborative and, when necessary, singularly decisive." With more than 20 years in education, Hodges can say with assurance, "No person or institution will ever attain perfection. Now more than ever, constant self-analysis and planning are required for institutions to remain relevant for the long run. Just as endowments can provide savings accounts for long term financial sustainability, the best institutions are constantly reflecting on what they do as well as how and why they do it."



**Ben Ketchum - Head of School**  
Riverside Presbyterian Day School

After beginning his teaching career 22 years ago at Holy Rosary School in Jacksonville, Ketchum spent more than a decade at schools in Washington, D.C., before returning to the River City as RPDS's Head of School in 2017. The Avondale resident is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame where he earned his B.A. in Economics, as well as his M.A. in Educational Administration, holds an M.A. in Teaching from the University of Portland, and is currently enrolled in the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Fellowship for Aspiring Heads of School.

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# Campers 'light' up stage in showcase performance

Episcopal School of Jacksonville's two-week Eagle Arts Camp concluded with an hour-long showcase performance June 21, as 60 campers showed their skills in dance, theatre, music, Orff, and tech during a show in Deming Theatre for family and friends. The theme this year was "Reignite," and songs included "The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow," "I See the Light," and a short play titled "A Firefly Named Torchy."

"It was a delight to be a part of this fabulous camp. The joy in the faces of the campers each day energized all of those who shepherded and taught. They truly brought heart to the work and reignited my passion for what I do each day," said Katie Lebhar Black, Class of '95, and Episcopal's director of fine arts.



## Teen plans to use title to raise awareness for kidney disease

Noel Garvie, a senior at Mandarin High School, is on a mission to help raise awareness, advance research, and increase government funding of polycystic kidney disease, or PKD, and she's using her crown to help.

Garvie was crowned the Miss Florida National American Teen at the Miss Florida National American Teen & Collegiate pageant June 26 at Jacksonville's Main Library, at the culmination of a three-day event.

Contestants and judges were impressed by the teen's kindness, sincerity, and genuine passion for her platform. The maturity and self-confidence she exhibited in the personal interview gained the attention of the judges, said her mother, Nichole Garvie. "Her onstage presence the following day convinced the panel that she deserved the honor of representing the organization and serving as a role model in her community and state. In addition, her 4.25 grade point average earned her the title of overall Top Scholar."

Garvie and her sister, Brooks, both were diagnosed with PKD in early adolescence. PKD is a chronic, genetic disease which causes uncontrolled growth of cysts in the kidney, often leading to kidney failure.

"When you think you can do anything and that you have your whole life in front of you, and then you learn you have an untreatable, incurable, life-long disease, it's overwhelming," said Garvie.

After being diagnosed with PKD, the sisters took time off from their passion, dance, in midseason to learn more about their disease, how to manage their pain, and to let their bodies heal. Gradually, the Garvie girls began re-engaging in their activities, but learning their limitations was often painful and frustrating. Despite disappointments and setbacks, they learned



Noel Garvie  
(Photo by  
Abiding Light  
Photography)

to celebrate their victories and persevere. Both girls had successful auditions and danced on the Jacksonville Giant's junior dance team for the last two years. They are also both honor roll students, despite often missing school to deal with flares and medical appointments.

Garvie said although she entered the state pageant to help develop her self-confidence and ability to speak in front of others, she now embraces the responsibility of being an example for others who may struggle with being true to themselves, and to using her voice to make a difference in lives of other families, like hers, that suffer with chronic genetic illnesses.

"In a society where teens are flooded with images and messages about how we should look and act, so many of us struggle to be proud of who we are and stay true to ourselves. It's liberating to know I can just be me, and that would be okay!" said Garvie.

The teen is beginning to outline plans for her year of reign, and said she looks forward to speaking to groups of girls about being authentic and to pursuing her initial ambition of hosting a PKD Walk in north Florida. In August, Garvie will compete for the national title, which will also include a personal interview, onstage question, fitness segment, fun fashion and evening wear competitions.

## Bishop Kenny student receives science, engineering award

San Jose resident and Bishop Kenny Class of '20 student MaryAlice Young was a top contender at the 2019 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) held in Phoenix, Arizona in May. Young's project was entitled "Using a Computer Program Applied to an Electromagnetic Walking Apparatus to Simulate Earth's Gravity in Space."

Each year approximately 1,800 high school students from more than 75 countries, regions, and territories are awarded the opportunity to showcase their independent research and compete for an average \$5 million in prizes at Intel ISEF. The competition focuses on identifying, inspiring, and engaging the world's next STEM generation.

"One of my favorite events of the weekend was the pin exchange. Having the chance to



MaryAlice Young

meet so many different kids from around the world who are interested in science and getting to exchange pins with them was really cool," said Young. Other events Young enjoyed included the opening ceremony and a presentation by the founder of CRISPER technology.

Young placed fourth in her category of Robotics and Intelligent Machines, winning \$500. She also won a full tuition Presidential Scholarship to Florida Institute of Technology valued at \$169,880. If that were not enough, Young was also given the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics "Look Up!" First Award valued at \$2,000.

## San Marco 'super-nova' leads team to third place in volleyball nationals



Grace Albaugh, fifth from the left, joins the All-Tournament team on the podium at the 2019 USA Volleyball Girls' Junior National Championships in Indianapolis.

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Fourteen-year-old Grace Albaugh of San Marco led her club team to a third-place finish and was the only freshman amidst a group of sophomores named to the All-Tournament 15 and Under team at the 2019 USA Volleyball Girls' Junior National Championships in Indianapolis in June.

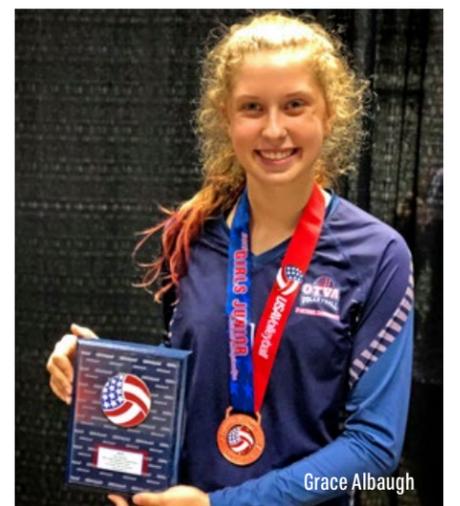
Albaugh and her OTVA Jax 15 teammates (Orlando Tampa Volleyball Association Jacksonville) arrived in Indianapolis as the 14th seed overall in the 15U USA Division. After the first day, Albaugh was recognized by PrepVolleyball.com, a leader in volleyball-related news nationwide, as one of only 20 "Shining Stars" in her division for her individual play, but it wasn't enough to power her team, which lost its first three matches the first day. OTVA Jax stayed in contention with two victories on the second day and posted a 2-1 record on the third, defeating Premier Nebraska, the third overall seed to secure a spot in the championship bracket the final day. The girls defeated 305 Volleyball Club from Miami to get to the semifinals where they lost to Sky High Arizona to take home the bronze medal.

Albaugh, who started on the Bolles High School varsity squad last year as an eighth grader, was joined on the team by incoming freshman Allison Cavanaugh of Bishop Kenny, Sydney Lewis of Bartram Trail High School, and Jessica Shattles and Zeta Washington of Ponte Vedra High School.

To gain a spot in the national tournament, Albaugh and her team traveled to Orlando, Atlanta and Philadelphia to compete in National Qualifier Tournaments. Her team posted a 7-2 record over three days to place fifth out of 58 teams at the Florida Regional National Qualifier, earning one of only 36 bids awarded nationwide in the more competitive USA Division.

It was not Albaugh's first visit to the national tournament. Last year, she led her club team, OTVA Jax 13U, to a fifth-place finish among 64 teams in the national tournament's American Division in Detroit. "I am proud of how hard we fought in this tournament," said Albaugh. "Last year we got fifth, this year it was third, and my hope is next year we will be first."

Albaugh was named as one of five "Supernovas," for her outstanding play on



Grace Albaugh

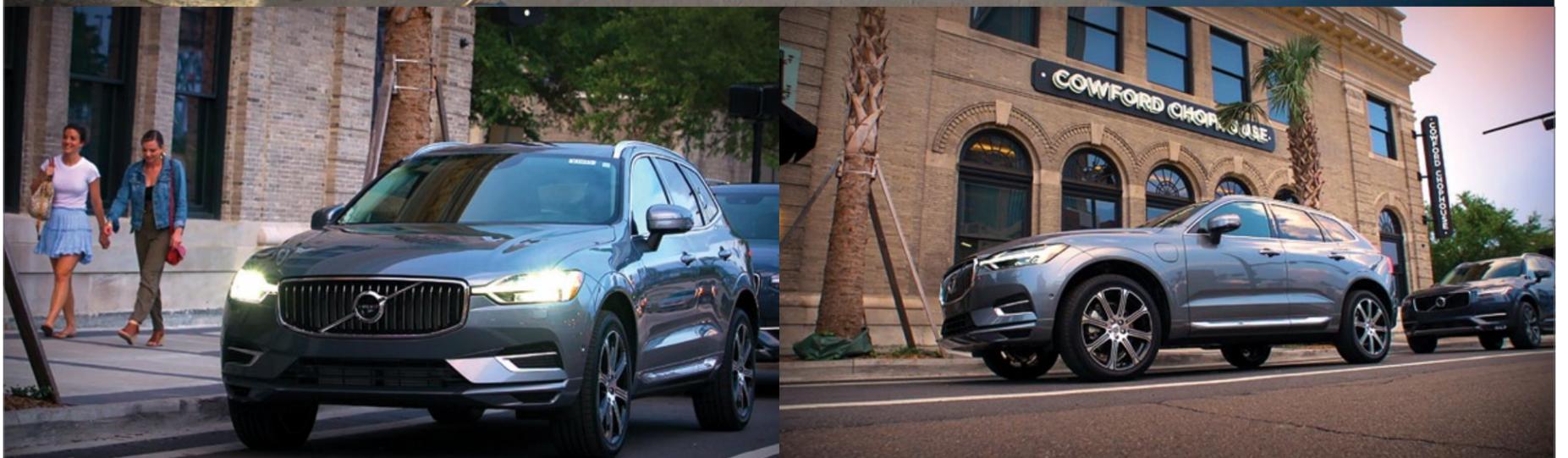
the final day of the tournament by PrepVolleyball.com. Although she is only 14, Albaugh's overall performance during the tournament led to her selection by opposing coaches to the 2019 USA Volleyball Girls' Junior National Tournament 15U USA Division All Tournament Team, the highest honor an individual player can earn. "Grace's selection for that team is a testament to the hard work and dedication she has put in at the gym over the past season, as well as her all-around sportsmanship," said her coach, Will Berdecia, OTVA Jacksonville Club co-director. "Compound that with the fact that she is only 14 and it's even more of a remarkable achievement. Grace has a bright future ahead of her, and I look forward to seeing what she and our team will accomplish in the future."

Albaugh started playing volleyball three years ago, both for her club and the Bolles Middle School team. Playing on varsity last season, she started every game and was named "Player of the Match" three times during the season, twice during the playoffs. During the season she logged 152 kills – third most on her team – and achieved the Bulldogs' second highest hitting percentage.

"We are a young team, and I think the experience we gained last year will serve us well this season," Albaugh said. "The energy you get from playing in front of your friends and for school pride is different than playing club. Coming off the success at Nationals with my club team, I'm excited to see what we can accomplish during the Bolles season."



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