



# Resident



COMMUNITY NEWS

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2023 VOL. 16, ISSUE 09

## SUMMER NIGHTS

Tracey Martinez and Megan Weinstein celebrated Summer Nights, the annual fundraiser benefiting The Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida.

READ MORE ON PAGE 25



## SOARING Support

Will and Suzanne Burke, along with Dorothy Flack, earned their wings as supporters of Angelwood's Aug. 19 Soaring Possibilities fundraiser.

READ MORE ON PAGE 24

## No Phones, No Problems

A new campaign is driving people to ditch cell phones for children under 13. Find out why, along with other tips for shaping good digital citizens.



READ MORE ON PAGE 36

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## Two New Acts for the San Marco Theatre

Restaurateur Al Mansur is bringing his Flying Iguana Concept to the old San Marco Theatre.

The interior of the San Marco Theatre is undergoing extensive renovations as it prepares for its next chapter as a restaurant and an interior design and home décor store. Two new tenants have started work on their new San Marco spaces within the historic theater's walls, though the iconic marquee will remain to greet residents and guests.

READ MORE ON PAGE 5



Residents can see progress at the Lasalle Street pump station off San Marco Boulevard as Phase 1 work is underway.

## What's Up at Lasalle?

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Progress can be seen at the Lasalle Street pump station and outfall pipe as construction of Phase 1 continues. According to the City of Jacksonville Public Affairs Office, the anticipated end date for this first phase is the end of 2024.

City officials, Haskell and A&E Engineering held a groundbreaking ceremony for the pump station back in May of this year.

At the ground-breaking ceremony, then-Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Charles Moreland said, "This Lasalle pump station will be an important tool in addressing the chronic flooding in this community and protecting these citizens and their property."

Phase 2 is currently under design and expected to commence next summer. This second phase is for the surrounding neighborhood upstream storm drainage work. It is anticipated to be completed by spring 2026.

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# Behind the Headlines

You trust the team at *The Resident News* brings you the latest on what's impacting and improving our community. But we've been working behind the headlines, too, to improve *The Resident News* experience for our readers and advertisers, with a new website, new perks and the newest edition of Circles Social Datebook & Charity Register.

## NEW WEBSITE ON THE HORIZON

*The Resident News* is excited to announce plans for a newly designed, mobile-friendly version of our website, [residentnews.net](http://residentnews.net). With our updated design, you will more easily be able to search your favorite stories and quickly keep up to date on the most important news stories for your neighborhood. Keep an eye out for the upcoming launch later this year! If you have ideas on additional features you'd love to see incorporated in our new site, let us know at [editor@residentnews.net](mailto:editor@residentnews.net).

## ATTENTION ALL NONPROFITS

Collection is underway for information for the 2024 Circles Social Datebook and Charity Register. As the only magazine dedicated to serving our local nonprofit sector in Northeast Florida, we are the go-to resource for thousands of readers, year-round, in print and online. Be sure to submit your nonprofit's updated event and contact information at [circlescharityregister.com/contact](http://circlescharityregister.com/contact) to be included and get your organization in front of Northeast Florida's fundraisers, philanthropists and difference-makers. General listings are free, and premier upgrades are still available. Deadline is Sept. 15.

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# Award Increases in Hendricks Avenue Double Homicide

BY: MICHELE LEIVAS

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) continues to investigate the Aug. 9 double shooting that took the lives of 28-year-old Paige Pringle and 53-year-old Tara Baker.

On Monday, Aug. 14, JSO shared an update on the investigation, announcing that the reward in the case had increased to \$13,000 for information leading to the arrest of the individual(s) responsible.

This increase was made possible through a donation by the Fraternal Order of the Police Foundation.

The shooting took place around 1:40 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 9, at the railroad crossing on Hendricks Avenue. Both victims had been waiting for the train to pass; Pringle in her white SUV, Baker on the nearby sidewalk.

In the release, JSO stated, "It is unknown at this time the motive for the shooting of each victim, or if they were somehow connected."

**Anyone with information is encouraged to contact JSO at (904) 630-0500 or [JSOCrimeTips@jaxsheriff.org](mailto:JSOCrimeTips@jaxsheriff.org). Those wishing to remain anonymous and be eligible for the reward of up to \$13,000 should contact First Coast Crime Stoppers at (866) 845-TIPS or text \*\*8477.**



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# Wayne's World: A Different Idea

## Repurposing JEA Headquarters into UF's Downtown Campus

BY: GUEST CONTRIBUTOR SHERRY MAGILL

Ever wonder what it takes to restore and repurpose an architectural gem in Jacksonville's historic downtown?

Wayne Wood thinks about it all the time.

A founder of Riverside Avondale Preservation, Wood has been involved in saving Jacksonville's under-appreciated architectural gems since the 1970s. His latest book, "Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage: Landmarks for the Future," documents 860 such sites.

Now that JEA has vacated its former headquarters at 21 West Church Street, Wood is concerned that the City of Jacksonville will yet again demolish an historic downtown architectural gem. And with good reason. Jacksonville has a penchant for tearing down historic downtown. Albeit all with good intention, in the spirit of building something shiny and new. Seems we're not happy with distinctive architecture and aspire to look something like south Florida.

The Landing, courthouse, and city hall; the Greyhound bus station, a city block across from the Omni Hotel, the entire LaVilla neighborhood, and the Ford Motor Assembly Plant are among a long list of downtown properties the City has demolished during my brief 30-plus years in Jacksonville. Most of the land on which these structures stood either became parking lots or stood vacant for years. Some remain so.

It's as if we embrace a bizarre ethic: "If we demolish it, they will come."

### An Opportunity: UF's Future Jacksonville Campus

In February, former mayor Lenny Curry proposed using approximately 18 acres near downtown FSCJ for a to-be-established University of Florida-Jacksonville campus, an effort whose cost is presently undetermined but enjoys a state legislative \$75 million appropriation together with a City Council \$20 million commitment.

While the actual location, according to Representative Wyman Duggan, will be up to the University of Florida, talk of a central downtown location seems to have evaporated in the wake of Jaguars owner Shad Khan's pitching his \$2 billion stadium development dream, which includes a \$5 million pledge if the University of Florida locates its campus on property he owns near the stadium.

The stadium district is located at the east end of the Northbank, a good mile on foot from city hall, with no shade to speak of from one point to the other.

Wood dislikes both locations.

Converting acreage near FSCJ's downtown campus doesn't work well, says Wood. In fact, his analysis of developing the acreage identified in Curry's slide deck presentations is too costly and will require removing 50% of college parking, a JEA water processing facility, the Mary L. Singleton Senior Center, the City's Engineer's Building, and six Waterworks Park historic structures.

And developing a new campus on Fairgrounds property, Wood argues, is too far removed from the urban core which boasts museums, small shops, walkable streets, and outdoor parks. It's where people are already concentrated.



The JEA Building, originally known as the Universal Marion. The Jacksonville Historical Society lists this 1963 mid-century modern, 19-story skyscraper among its list of locally endangered historic structures.

### Wood's Proposal: Reimagine JEA's Church Street Complex

"It's the perfect location for the University of Florida downtown campus," says Wood, referring to JEA's Church Street complex which he describes as "nationally significant."

It's big, at 360,000 square feet.

Completed in 1963 during a decade of explosive building expansion in Jacksonville's urban core, JEA's former headquarters tower is part of an architecturally significant "Downtown Center" retail complex, according to *The Jaxson's* Ennis Davis. It includes three buildings—the 19-story office tower, a 25,000 square foot ground level store, a six-story former department store—and a six-story parking garage.

Originally known as the Universal Marion, the tower has what Wood calls a "quirky yet iconic facade," and according to Davis, "may be the largest Mid-Century Modern building in Jacksonville."

After JEA announced plans to vacate the complex, Ennis and *The Jaxson* called for "City Council, Downtown Investment Authority, and JEA work together to proactively craft a plan and strategy for the adaptive reuse of the entire Downtown Center complex."

There's no evidence they have done so.

But Wayne Wood has.

He says the downtown complex "doesn't lend itself easily to corporate headquarter development," what with its size and location far from St. Johns' river views. Consequently, Wood is concerned that JEA won't be able to sell the building, resulting ultimately in the City's deciding to blow it to smithereens, creating yet again another hollowed out section of historic downtown.

### Wood's Idea Deserves a Hearing

Wood's proposal that the former JEA Church Street complex be repurposed into UF's Jacksonville downtown campus has merit and seems to be a win-win-win-win: we preserve part of Jacksonville's architectural history, increase our intellectual capital downtown, support surrounding businesses, and save precious public resources in the process.

Every deal city government "incentivizes" includes a trade-off. We ought to know the cost of converting and building near FSCJ, or constructing a brand-new campus located a good, hot, non-walkable mile from the historic urban core versus repurposing an architectural gem, which already includes ample parking and is surrounded by existing small shops, museums, restaurants, parks and walkable streets.

Wood's idea deserves a proper hearing.

You can help. Use the City Council link, [coj.net/city-council.aspx](http://coj.net/city-council.aspx), to find your City Council member.

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# New Tenants for San Marco Theatre



Restaurateur Al Mansur is bringing his Flying Iguana Concept to the old San Marco Theatre.

PHOTO ANDREA BOTTIN PHOTOGRAPHY

BY: MICHELE LEIVAS

The show will go on at the San Marco Theatre, albeit in spirit only, as the interior will soon transform into a restaurant and home décor store.

In August, a pair of new tenants announced their plans to move into the old San Marco Theatre. Restaurateur Al Mansur, known for several restaurant concepts including Al's Pizza, Mezza Luna Ristorante, the Flying Iguana and Coop 303, will transform part of the former theater into a new Flying Iguana Taqueria and Tequila Bar location while Missy Riley will convert the remaining space into a new storefront for Missy Riley Arts & Pieces.

**The Iguana lands in San Marco**

Al Mansur has tried to bring his Iguana concept to San Marco before. In 2016, The Resident News reported that plans ultimately fell through for him to move into the space where Fore Score Golf Tavern currently stands. When the opportunity to move into the old theater arose, Mansur said he knew the Flying Iguana would be "the right fit."

"After touring the space, I just fell in love with the building and the space. I just wanted to do something cool. It'll be a fun and vibrant and cool space to do a restaurant with eclectic tacos and margaritas."

With nearly 5,000 square feet to work with, Mansur said his new restaurant will

accommodate 150 seats and will include a small mezzanine area in the space that once housed the projector room on the theatre's second level.

Mansur added that the building's iconic marquee and box office will "absolutely" be preserved.

"The presence of the theatre is what I love and that's what I want to keep, the look," he said. "So, the art deco look on the outside, the marquee, everything will stay. We'll freshen it up, but it won't change."

He added he's looking forward to being part of the San Marco community alongside "great additional local restaurateurs."

Mansur expects the Flying Iguana to open in the first quarter of 2024.

**Décor next door**

The remaining space in the old San Marco Theatre will be leased to a small business owner who is already part of the San Marco community. Missy Riley, owner of Missy Riley Arts & Pieces, will be relocating from her current storefront to the former theatre just as soon as the buildout of the new space is complete.

She will remain at her current location a few doors down on San Marco Boulevard until after the holidays.

This move is a "great" opportunity for her, she said, as it will place her

business next door to Stellers Gallery, owned by her husband, Scott Riley.

"For the gallery and my store to be sandwiched in between Taverna, Oceana and Iguana, I think it just really will bring some opportunity for us to have later hours and do some open houses and gallery exhibitions, things like that," Riley said.

Riley's new storefront in the old theatre will be roughly 2,000 square feet. She added that should her new location be ready prior to the holidays, and both San Marco storefronts will be open.

Riley has another location in Avondale, located at 3566 Saint Johns Ave.

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Teamwork makes the dream work: Dreams Come True Executive Director Sheri Criswell and fellow Dreamer Makenna help Dream Team Member Tyler during the Signing Day ceremony.



TaxSlayer Gator Bowl Chairman's Club Member Kimberly Patterson chats with members of the 2023 Dream Team.

## A New 2023 TaxSlayer Gator Bowl Dream Team on the Scene

On Monday, Aug. 7, the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl and Dreams Come True came together to hold a Signing Day ceremony for the 2023 TaxSlayer Gator Bowl Dream Team.

The 13 Dreamers selected for the Dream Team will serve as TaxSlayer Gator Bowl ambassadors and representatives throughout the college football season. The Dream Team is a key program for Gator Bowl Charities and provides its members with a "unique experience" throughout the season.

The 2023 Dream Team includes: Willie B. (10), James C. (9), Jack C. (15), Savannah G. (8), Blake H. (9), Makenna J. (17), Sammy M. (16), Chase S. (10), Jaxon T. (6), Mary T. (16), Shane T. (7), Jasel W. (17) and Tyler W. (8).

During the college football season, these 13 Dreamers will be able to scout a game, participate in monthly Gator Bowl Sports membership events and distribute their own set of rookie-year player cards throughout Jacksonville, among other events. At the end of the regular season, the Dreamers will graduate from their blue Dream Team jerseys and receive TaxSlayer Gator Bowl green jackets, which will transition them to honorary Dream Team members of the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl committee.

Their Dream Team experience will include a meet and greet with participating team players and cheerleaders at EverBank Stadium in late December and conclude with being honored on-field during the 79th annual TaxSlayer Gator Bowl on December 29, 2023.

Weekly updates on the Dream Team will be provided via social media accounts for both TaxSlayer Gator Bowl and Dreams Come True.



The 13 members of the 2023 TaxSlayer Gator Bowl Dream Team took to the field at EverBank Field following their Signing Day ceremony on Monday, Aug. 7 with (left to right) Dreams Come True Board Member and Gator Bowl Sports Chairman's Club Member Donnie Smith of Miller Electric Company, Dreams Come True Board President Geoff Neilson of Graybar, Gator Bowl Sports Chairman and Dreams Come True Past-President Alan Worley of Money Pages and 3D Digital, and Gator Bowl Charities Advisory Board Chair Kevin Craig of AT&T.

# TIAA Bank is Now EverBank

TIAA Bank has been sold to private investors, prompting a name change back to EverBank, a familiar brand for the First Coast. Jacksonville will remain the headquarters and main base of operations for EverBank, which now operates under a new national bank charter. The sale, as of now, will not affect customer accounts, products or services.

The new private owners have experience in financial services and include funds managed by Stone Point Capital, Warburg Pincus, Reverence Capital Partners, Sixth Street and Bayview Asset Management. As part of the sale, TIAA will retain a minority ownership interest.

"Today is a big day for EverBank and Jacksonville, as our bank begins an exciting new chapter," said Greg Seibly, EverBank's new CEO. "We're extremely proud to call Jacksonville our home as we deepen our commitment to ensuring our clients have a financial advantage and make a positive difference in the communities where we live and work."

EverBank will continue its relationship with the Jacksonville Jaguars, and the newly rebranded EverBank Stadium signage should largely be completed by the Jaguars' regular season home game on September 17.

"We're thrilled that Jaguars fans will once again be able to 'Lock Down the Bank' as we take on the Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs in the first game at EverBank Stadium," Seibly said.

EverBank will also introduce a new community program for the Jaguars season, called Touchdowns for Tomorrow. For every touchdown scored by the Jaguars, EverBank will provide financial education for 100 Jacksonville students.

## A Round of DCPS Updates for the New School Year

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

The summer heat may be holding steady, but summer vacation has official drawn to a close, and a new school year is underway. Children are readjusting to a school day routine while parents and caregivers are reacquainting themselves with the morning and afternoon car lines. The start of a new school year always comes with a bit of an adjustment period, but the 2023-24 school year has some new features that will be impacting everyone from parents, students and teachers to people just driving through a school zone.

Here are some Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) updates for schools, families and the community:

### A Nationwide Search for a New Superintendent

This past June, Dana Kriznar became DCPS superintendent, following predecessor Diana Greene's retirement. However, she is only serving in the role for an interim period "not to exceed six months," according to a DCPS news release. A nationwide search for the new superintendent is underway. In an effort to collect community input "on the qualities our next superintendent should bring to the job," DCPS hosted a series of six community meetings in the final days of August; an online survey seeking that same feedback will remain open until Sept. 6.

An Aug. 9 DCPS new release detailed the board-approved timeline for the superintendent search. The month of October will see the school board identifying semi-finalists and reviewing those semi-finalists' responses to questions from the board. The timeline states finalists will be selected in November, with on-site interviews scheduled for Nov. 16 and 17.

Once selected, the new superintendent has a projected start date of Jan. 1, 2024.

### Traffic Safety Units

Speeding continues to be an issue on the streets of Jacksonville and the Duval County School Police (DCSP) has dispatched its School Police Traffic Safety Unit to make sure drivers slow down in school zones. The seven-officer unit currently monitors vehicle traffic at five different DCPS elementary schools, including Ruth N. Upson Elementary School in Murray Hill.

"A priority is placed on monitoring schools that have received the most complaints," said a DCPS spokesperson.

The School Police Traffic Safety Unit was launched in January of this year by DCSP Chief Greg Burton. According to news release, the unit "uses education and warnings as their primary strategy with drivers," rather than tickets.

The four other schools currently monitored by the School Police Traffic Safety Unit are Holiday Hill Elementary, R. L. Brown Elementary, Westview K8 and Sadie T. Tillis Elementary.

DCPS recently announced it has joined the Amazon Future Engineer program, which has a goal of bringing computer science to 500,000 elementary students by 2025. In a joint announcement with Amazon in August, DCPS stated that through this program, Amazon will provide funding for "computer science education and teacher professional development for elementary schools in the district - impacting thousands of students from underserved communities and groups currently underrepresented in tech."

DCPS elementary schools will now join the 288 Florida schools already participating in the Amazon Future Engineer program.

"Amazon Future Engineer's groundbreaking initiative to introduce computer science to elementary school's marks an exhilarating leap forward in Duval County Public Schools," said DCPS Director of Science Yvonne Spinner. "It will simultaneously empower our children to master the language of innovation and technology, and elevate our teachers through state-of-the-art training. Equipped and inspired by BootUp's training, our educators will become catalysts of a digital revolution, while our students will learn to speak the language of tomorrow."

BootUp PD is the nonprofit professional development provider Amazon is working with in this program.

Sixteen pre-selected DCPS elementary schools will be the first to receive the program's professional development curriculum; within three years, that curriculum will be spread to all remaining elementary schools.

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# Inventory, Interest and Investment

## The state of Jacksonville's rental real estate market is **In flux**

BY JENNIFER JENSEN

The traditional saying in real estate has been, "Location. Location. Location." But recently, the three magic words seem instead to be "supply and demand."

In Jacksonville, a lack of inventory has had a direct effect on home sales, and by extension, the rental market.

"With only 2.3 months' worth of inventory, we are still seeing a strong seller's market where demand far exceeds supply," said Heather Buckman, broker and owner of Cowford Realty and Design. "Particularly in the sweet spot of \$350,000-\$650,000, we just cannot supply enough homes to meet the demand."

Couple that lack of inventory with the high mortgage rates – averaging 6.9%, up two percentage points over last year – and homeowners are even less incentivized to move.

"People are less likely to sell and upgrade if they secured a home with a very low interest rate in the past few years," said Missy Kampmeyer, owner and broker at Cady at Compass. This has created somewhat of a gridlock with sellers not selling, but buyers wanting to buy, Buckman added.

“I'm seeing either rental price reductions or more conservative initial pricing for rentals as days on the market creep up. The free market is working and the prices are stabilizing.”

- Justin Garrett  
Watson Realty Corp., Broker and Executive Vice President of Property Management Division

While the median price of homes in Riverside, Avondale and Ortega neighborhoods rose 15% from May to June this year, Buckman said for smaller areas, it's more important to look at long-term data. Year-over-year, area prices have instead settled about 3%.

"This is likely due to the bidding wars slowing down and buyers being more discerning with how high they are willing to go over list price," Buckman said. "That

being said, more than a quarter of all homes in the Riverside/Avondale/Ortega area are selling for over list price.

"In the last iteration of our market, buyers were a bit more forgiving. In this version, they are understandably wanting more of their wish list items checked off, and they are expecting for homes to be maintained and in solid condition."

These feelings are causing many homebuyers to lean toward newer construction and turnkey homes, especially in light of the lingering labor and supply chain issues.

"The demand for move-in ready homes is always strong, but we are seeing it even higher right now, where the cost to renovate and improve a home is often expensive and timely," Buckman said. "If buyers can find what they want, in the condition that they want to buy it in, they are jumping in with both feet. But the lack of inventory has been the biggest struggle."

These myriad conditions have caused many buyers to hit pause on making a purchase and look toward renting instead. Sacha Higham with Traditions Realty LLC is seeing more people who are relocating to Jacksonville lean toward the rental market due to lack of inventory and "not being able to find what they are looking for."

“With only 2.3 months' worth of inventory, we are still seeing a strong seller's market where demand far exceeds supply. Particularly in the sweet spot of \$350,000-\$650,000, we just cannot supply enough homes to meet the demand.”

- Heather Buckman  
Broker and owner of Cowford Realty and Design

While realtors believe Jacksonville rental prices are starting to stabilize, the city – much like many other areas – has experienced a huge spike in rental prices in recent years. From 2020 to 2022, tenants experienced rent increases between \$370-\$470 per month, according to a report from the JAX Rental Housing Project, a University of North Florida (UNF) research project aimed at collecting and analyzing data on the state of Jacksonville's rental market.

The study also reported a pattern of private investor consolidation, in that "rental properties are now an asset class investment for the wealthy. Private investors turned corporate landlords have, and are, buying up thousands of homes in Jacksonville and converting them into rentals as investment vehicles for their clients." UNF sociology professor David Jaffee, who compiled the report, said both private equity companies and big investors have altered the local housing market.

Justin Garrett, Watson Realty Corp. Broker and Executive Vice President of Property Management Division, said rental prices have started to calm down.

"With the dramatic shift in housing need in our area, this gap between market and actual price became undeniable and many landlords are reassessing," said Garrett. "I'm seeing either rental price reductions or more conservative initial pricing for rentals as days on the market creep up. The free market is working and the prices are stabilizing."

Currently, the average rent for an apartment in Jacksonville is \$1,522, according to RentCafe. That number can jump in certain areas, especially in historic neighborhoods like Riverside and San Marco.

"There are so many new developments popping up and the demand is still continuing to grow," said Rachael Simms, Director of Marketing and Development for GMC Properties, which manages The Hendricks at San Marco. The Hendricks at San Marco opened in June and is already at 50% capacity with only one-bedroom units left available.

Historic districts like San Marco, Riverside and Brooklyn offer something many places in Jacksonville can't — a walkability factor. Rental properties and apartment complexes in these areas allow people to live in these historic neighborhoods and be a part of the community even if they can't afford to purchase a home here.

"There is so much going on in the historic areas; they're beautiful, full of energy and extremely walkable," Higham said. "People see that and are willing to pay more to be in areas that have lots to offer."

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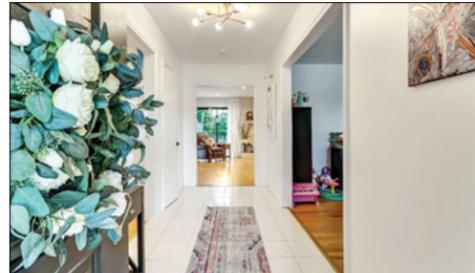
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# Mayor Deegan Hears from District 5 in Community Conversation

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Mayor Donna Deegan visited San Marco on Thursday, Aug. 10, as part of her Community Conversations tour of Jacksonville's 14 city council districts. Held at Aspire Church, the event was a chance for District 5 constituents to ask questions, share concerns or express frustrations with their new mayor and city council member, Joe Carlucci, who joined Deegan as a guest speaker.

In his opening address, Carlucci shared some district-wide news, including updates on the Friendship Foundation renovation and restoration, funding for quiet zones, infrastructural improvements in the St. Nicholas area and a new skatepark at Cuba Hunter Park to replace the park's existing amenities for skateboarders.

"Riverside's not the only one getting a skatepark," he said.

After an introduction by Carlucci, Deegan thanked the District 5 residents for making it out to this conversation.

"I think these are so important. I want us to continue to have these to where you feel like you're being heard, and I feel like I know what's going on," she said in her opening remarks.

For nearly two hours, Deegan answered questions and listened to concerns regarding an array of topics, from trash and litter to sidewalk safety and the new Jaguars stadium. One resident raised the need for "beefed-up, proactive code enforcement," saying, "too much of it in Jacksonville is complaint-driven, and complaint-driven code enforcement is inherently unequal code enforcement."

In response, Deegan said her administration is currently going through an "evaluation process" to determine each department's staffing requirements, where more employees are needed and where any cutbacks may be needed.

"But I do agree with you 100% that code enforcement is one of those areas that we've got to step it up," Deegan said.

Some residents' remarks or questions were regarding specific issues impacting them directly while others raised familiar questions about broader issues affecting the city as a whole, like infrastructure, flooding or Jacksonville's homeless population. Others, still, addressed concerns facing the San Marco community directly.

Francine Shell discussed the new concrete median, crosswalk and left-turn lane installed on Powers Avenue in front of Samuel W. Wolfson High School over the



Mayor Donna Deegan and Council Member Joe Carlucci addressed residents' questions, comments and concerns at Deegan's District 5 Community Conversation at Aspire Church on Thursday, Aug. 10.

summer. She shared concerns that these new traffic features may cause "unsafe situations" for parents, students and faculty driving to and from the school and said that Wolfson families "ask that the city of Jacksonville remove the median, crosswalk and left-turn lane and restore Powers Avenue" to its previous condition.

In response, Deegan said she was aware of the situation, had already spoken with the city's traffic engineers and agreed to revisit the issue after the first couple weeks of school "if it appears to be a problem."

Deegan shared plans that are currently underway to improve communication both interdepartmentally within the city, and between the city and its residents who attempt to contact its departments.

"I can't tell you I'm always going to have an instant answer to your problem, but I will tell you that we are working very hard to make sure that when people call 630-CITY, or when they call zoning, or when they call the police department, that we put accountability measures in place to make sure that the return on those calls is happening, that there's a timeline on those returns and a timeline on when there must be an answer," she said.

Following the meeting, in a City Council District 5 news email, Carlucci commented on the community conversation with Deegan.

"Overall, I felt the meeting was a great success in fostering better communication between the city government and the community," he wrote. "I thank the Mayor for this opportunity and will be holding my own Town Hall and community meetings starting this fall."

## 'Boo Hoo Woo Hoo' Breakfast to Benefit DLC Playground

Several San Marco community leaders hosted a "Boo Hoo Woo Hoo" breakfast fundraiser in August to celebrate neighborhood families' first day of school - and to generate support for playground improvements at The Developmental Learning Center, a nonprofit care and education nonprofit based in Riverside.

Billed as "a breakfast mixer to get you through the first day of school," the event included a mimosas and biscuit bar and featured a "mama needs a spa day raffle" to the One Ocean Spa. The breakfast was held Monday, August 14, from 8:30-10:30 a.m. at Epping Forest Yacht Club in San Jose.

The goal of the event was to raise more than \$5,000 to improve the DLC campus playground. The funding wish list includes a \$2,500 swing set, three \$500 adaptive swings, a \$500 fence privacy screen and a \$250 chalkboard wall and playhouse.

DLC is an important community resource that supports children with medical complexities and significant impairments. For 34 years, the organization has provided a year-round education and caregiving environment that allows students' parents the freedom to work or attend school while their children receive the care they need at one safe, happy location. It is the only local center that provides these services to infants and young children, according to DLC officials.

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The proposed operations and maintenance facility on Bay Street will serve the autonomous vehicles in JTA's Ultimate Urban Circulator project.

# Downtown Development Review Board Taps the Brakes for New JTA Facility for Autonomous Vehicles

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Plans for the proposed Jacksonville Transit Authority (JTA) Autonomous Vehicle Operations and Maintenance Facility on Bay Street will have to wait a bit longer to advance through the planning process after the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRDB) deferred conceptual approval at its Aug. 10 meeting.

These autonomous vehicles are part of JTA's Ultimate Urban Circulator (U2C), the "comprehensive program to modernize and expand the Skyway and introduce autonomous vehicles (AVs) into JTA's transportation system." Currently, the Skyway covers a 2.5-mile system of stops between downtown and the Southbank. U2C plans to extend that to 10 miles.

The site selected for the proposed facility covers the entire block bordered by Jefferson, Broad, Bay and Water streets in LaVilla, just south of the future site of the proposed Daily's mixed-use project. The 1.11 acres of land is currently a paved parking lot.

According to the DDRDB application, construction on the project is expected to start on Dec. 1 and end in February 2025. The design team for this project includes Vision 2 Reality, a partnership between Balfour Beatty and WGI, which will provide survey, engineering and architectural services.

A 2021 WGI press release explained that Balfour Beatty will partner with Superior Construction

Company Southeast; Beep, Inc.; Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.; and Miller Electric to deliver the project.

While the building itself wouldn't be open to the public, site plans do detail a "pocket park" for the community, though during the DDRDB meeting, Eric Luttmann, Director of Architecture for WGI, stated the park would be a "future project by JTA."

Several board members were not impressed with the designs presented for the proposed project. DDRB Chairman Matt Brockelman said, "I'm not super comfortable with the project. I think it needs work."

A staff report presented to the board recommended conceptual approval for the application, with seven conditions, including one to meet with the LaVilla community and/or the LaVilla Heritage Trail Committee in "an effort to align the design of the site and structure with the community's goals."

DDRDB Vice Chair Linzee Ott expressed support of that condition, among the six others, stating that "community input and involvement is going to be the key for me to get to final [approval]."

That being said, and with the understanding that discussions will continue on the project, she added she would be in favor of conceptual approval. Board Member Trevor Lee also voiced support for conceptual approval with board members Christian Harden and Gary Monahan in favor of deferral.

Ultimately, Brockelman deferred the project using his authority as chair. It will be revisited for conceptual approval at a future meeting.

JTA's U2C is a project several years in the making, consisting of three phases: Bay Street Innovation Corridor, Skyway Conversion and Neighborhood Extensions. The first two phases are currently active.

On Aug. 30 and 31, JTA hosted its two-day Strategic Board Retreat, during which an update presentation was given about the U2C project.

The Resident News will continue coverage of the U2C project, including any updates provided at the JTA retreat.

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# Urban Odor Study Report Released

## An update on the Jacksonville Urban Odor Study

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Months after the year-long Urban Odor Study concluded, the report and its results are now available to the public to review.

The Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board heard a presentation on the nearly 200-page report at its board meeting on Monday, Aug. 21 that discussed some highlights of the report, which included data collected by the 11 sensors and six weather monitoring instruments were installed throughout the city from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

Mike Williams, manager of the Air Quality branch for Jacksonville's Environmental Quality Division, gave the presentation.

The City hired Envirosuite to conduct the study, which cost just over \$125,000, after odor complaints rose dramatically beginning in September 2020.

Envirosuite installed 11 sensors – eNoses – each of which was equipped with three sensors to detect hydrogen sulfide, ammonia and VOCs, or volatile organic compounds. The VOCs were what the city was primarily trying to detect and track with the eNoses; the sensors for hydrogen sulfide and ammonia were included in the “standard package” from Envirosuite. Additionally, Envirosuite provided two weather monitoring instruments, which the City supplemented with instruments from its own air monitoring network to bring the total to six.

It turned out the VOC sensors were “not very reliable,” however.

“Really, the VOC data was good at the beginning of the study; about halfway through it was almost unusable,” he said. “It got to the point where I just stopped looking at it.”

He cited two possible reasons why the VOC sensors didn't work properly during the study: One, he explained, was that the sensors were “measuring at the lower end of the spectrum for VOC...We were at the lower end of the capabilities.”

Additionally, he added, the recommended monthly calibrations for the sensors were not done or provided by Envirosuite.

Despite the faulty sensors, however, the study is still considered a success because of the data Envirosuite was able to collect in terms of how “weather affects the odors and the odor complaints,” Williams explained.

In addition to aiding in the prediction of future odor events, the study was also able to help determine where and when the majority of the odor complaints were focused.

The Resident News will be doing a more in-depth look at the report findings and what the next steps will be for the City, if any, for future odor complaints, now that the Urban Odor Study is over and its report complete.



Gregory Grant, Jimmy Midyette, Randy DeFoor, Mayor Donna Deegan, Dr. Rudy Jamison, Jr., Bill Delaney, Alex Alston and Nina Sickler.

# New Appointments for Deegan Administration

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Mayor Donna Deegan made seven new appointments to City of Jacksonville positions last month that include:

- General Counsel: Randy DeFoor
- Director of Public Works: Nina Sickler
- Chief of Sports and Entertainment: Alex Alston
- Executive Director of the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission (JHRC): Dr. Rudy Jamison, Jr.
- JHRC Diversity Manager: Jimmy Midyette
- Jacksonville Small and Emerging Businesses Administrator: Gregory Grant
- Council Liaison: Bill Delaney

According to an Aug. 10 press release, the Deegan administration has taken “major steps” to “increase diversity and ensure the new administration looks like Jacksonville,” making the current mayor's office “nearly 15% more diverse than the previous administration.”

“I am incredibly proud to welcome this diverse set of collaborators, innovators, problem solvers and civic leaders,” said Deegan. “Each of these individuals bring with them immense experience and a unique perspective to make this a new day in Jacksonville.”

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# Special Committee Begins Hard Look at Improvements for JSO Facilities

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

In August, the City of Jacksonville kicked off a series of special committee meetings that will take a hard look at how best to address the critical issues facing Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) facilities on a day-to-day basis.

The Special Committee of the Council to Review JSO Primary Facilities met on Wednesday, Aug. 16, for an organizational meeting to discuss how it will move forward in coming months, and to hear a presentation from JSO regarding the John E. Goode Pre-trial Detention Facility and the JSO headquarters at the Police Memorial Building on Bay Street.

The committee is comprised of Committee Chair Michael Boylan, Vice Chair Randy White and Council Members Jimmy Peluso, Chris Miller and Rahman Johnson. City Council President Ron Salem also attended the Aug. 16 meeting.

"We have a jail that's 30-plus years old and needs to be replaced. It's not a sexy issue, I get that," Salem said in an opening address. "I think it's a critical need for this community."

Committee members mentioned recent tours they'd taken of the detention facility, noting "incredibly disturbing" and "abhorrent" concerns and conditions there.

## Division of Labor

The committee will break into five working groups, each focused on a specific category of issues. The

chairs of these working groups will be responsible for recruiting relevant stakeholders and experts to provide insight in their respective topic. In turn, each working group will then craft draft recommendations for stakeholders to review and consider before presenting draft recommendations to the committee as a whole.

"I'm looking for the co-chairs to identify one or multiple subject matter experts to each of these working groups," Boylan said.

The question of whether potential new locations for the facility should be included in these committee meetings was raised by multiple committee members, including President Salem, however Boylan respectfully rejected the notion.

"I really want to try and keep location out of this conversation right now," he said. "Clearly, location is going to be part of the conversation, but I think that's going to be at the end of the day, when we have the consolidated recommendations of the working groups to say, 'This is the kind of ways we can serve these processes.' And if that's a campus facility centrally located or something other than that, I think that's a determination we will need to make at the time at which the recommendations are finalized."

"Our focus is not on the external pressures to get it out of downtown or the external pressures to keep it downtown," he said. "I want to get us

focused right now on what are the best resources we need."

These working groups and their chairs are:

- Intake, Adjudication and Recidivism: Jimmy Peluso
- Extended Diverse Detention (including housing for female and juvenile inmates): Chris Miller
- Behavioral and Mental Health Services: Rahman Johnson
- Improvements to Existing Facility: Randy White
- Administrative Offices: Michael Boylan

## A look at John B. Goode Pre-Trial Detention Facility

Chief of Prisons Division Joshua Benoit provided an overview of the current state of JSO's pre-trial detention facility, painting a grim picture of overcrowding, costly and recurring maintenance issues and understaffing.

Opened in 1991, the jail consists of 629,000 square feet of air-conditioned space and houses approximately 2,600 inmates. The facility was initially designed to hold just under 2,200 inmates. Benoit explained that "temporary third bunks" were installed in the early 2000s, increasing the capacity to 3,137.

"But again, that's three people per cell, every cell," he said. "So, we have dorms that were designed to hold 50 people that are currently holding 75 and when it gets really tight, up to 85."

Staffing is another major concern for the Department of Corrections, Benoit said. It is "currently 200 personnel short" with "the brunt of that" at the pre-trial detention facility.

Additionally, plumbing and HVAC issues continuously plague the facility at steep prices. Benoit cited the replacement last year of a chiller that cost approximately \$325,000 and recurring problems with mold any time the air conditioning fails. Additionally, a recurring plumbing leak over the summer cost "thousands and thousands of dollars in damage in just a three-week span."

Overall, Benoit said, last year's repairs budget was roughly \$3 million.

## On the Police Memorial Building

In another presentation, JSO Assistant Chief Scott Dingee outlined issues the Police Memorial Building faces, including flooding problems, a severe lack of

parking for the building's 739 employees - whose parking facility only provides 215 spaces - and a dearth of office space to house all JSO divisions in the same building.

"All of our investigations and homeland security divisions are off-site," Dingee said. "And that's what would be housed in the Florida Blue building if we're able to get that done, but of course, that's additional millions of dollars of renovations and lease money that the city would have to spend just to do that."

Ordinance 2023-494, filed last month, requests authorization for the City to lease roughly 59,000 square feet at the Florida Blue building at 532 Riverside Avenue.

According to the bill summary, the city would lease three floors for an initial 149-month lease with two five-year renewal options.

The bill summary read, in part, "The landlord will provide a Tenant Improvement Allowance of \$3,447,950 and the JSO is required to contribute \$1 million toward Tenant Improvements. The landlord will oversee and manage the build-out of all leased areas at a 'not-to-exceed' cost of \$5,447,950."

The Police Memorial Building is not without its electrical, structural and mechanical issues, Dingee added. While the roof was recently replaced, Dingee noted leaking skylights, requiring repairs at a cost of \$120,000 and an estimated \$400,000 in repairs to a rooftop helipad "to make it safe."

The building's two elevators, both situated at one end of the building, present public access issues and are "constantly breaking," Dingee added.

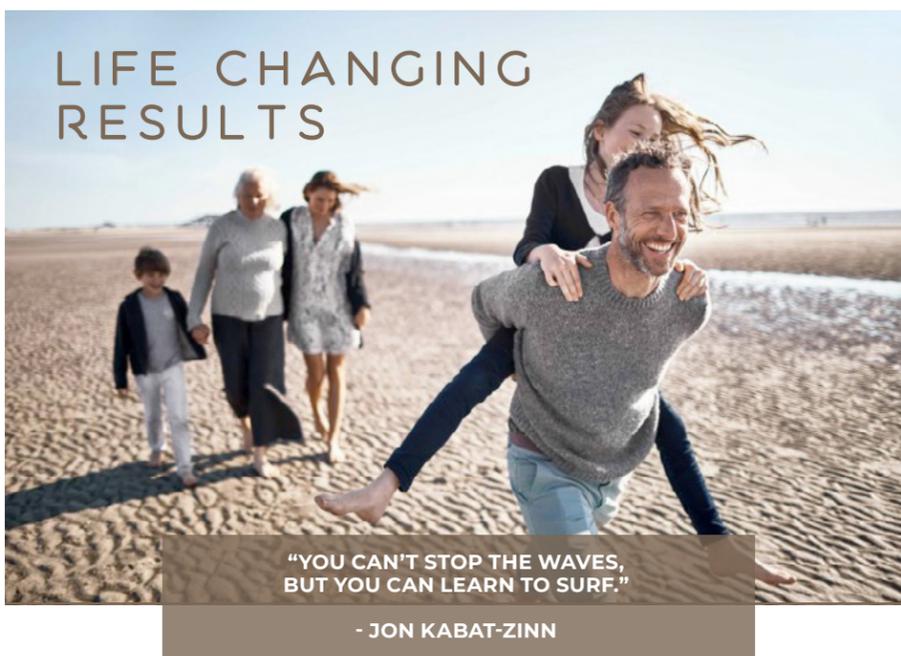
While not strictly in a flood zone, Dingee said the parking garage faces flooding issues, creating problems beyond JSO.

"On our base floor, on our lowest floor where the parking garage is, there are some servers at that level that if they flooded, could potentially affect the Main Street Bridge and other lighting and facilities nearby," he said.

Moving forward, there will be standing weekly meetings for the special committee's working groups, as well as periodic meetings for the committee as a whole to discuss each working group's findings and progress.

These weekly meetings will begin Sept. 14.

READ THE FULL STORY AT [WWW.RESIDENTNEWS.NET](http://WWW.RESIDENTNEWS.NET)



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Terrie Andrews and Jill Garrett gave a media tour of the new space in the Baptist Healthy Living Center at the Winston Family YMCA on Wednesday, Aug. 23.

# A Safe Space for Maternal Health

## Baptist Health launches The Motherhood Space Day Program

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Last month, Baptist Health Jacksonville officially opened the doors to The Motherhood Space Day Program, which will provide support for anyone battling perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs).

PMADs is commonly referred to as postpartum depression.

The Motherhood Space Day Program is a continuation of Baptist Health's "commitment to supporting the behavioral health needs" of its community, according to a Baptist Health press release announcing the new program. Eligible patients can participate in the program for up to three weeks on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon. The program is located at the Winston Family YMCA, in the Baptist Healthy Living Center, and it is led by a team of psychologists specializing in perinatal mental health.

The Motherhood Space Day Program is an extension of Baptist Health's Maternal Mental Health Service Line, said Jill Garrett, licensed psychologist and director of The Motherhood Space Day Program.

"After I had my own daughter, about eight years ago, I kind of recognized that we didn't really have as much emotional support that could be necessary for helping moms and family," she said.

Garret said they worked to address and eliminate any barriers that might prevent someone from participating in the program. This includes offering complimentary childcare through the YMCA's KidZone, providing free transportation through JTA and scholarship money for those on Medicaid.

The program accepts most insurance plans.

Baptist Behavioral Health Vice President Dr. Terrie Andrews said child and maternal health consistently rank in the top three for Baptist Health's regular community health needs assessments.

"What we realized is that there is not a lot of resources

in the community to provide support to expecting and postpartum moms within the first year," Andrews said. "There's not a lot of psychologists in the area who have dedicated training and certification to be able to work with these moms."

The Motherhood Space Day Program provides a holistic approach for participants, including a wellness component for each session like yoga or walking therapy.

An outpatient program like The Motherhood Space helps "break down the stigma of seeking help," Andrews said.

"Parents and moms, in particular, need to take care of themselves in order to take care of their families, so it's not a luxury, it's a requirement," Garrett said. "And we also know the numbers are there: As many as one in five moms, and as many as one in three moms of color, will experience what are called [PMADs]: That's any emotional challenge - depression, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar - that occur during pregnancy and postpartum."

Baptist Health Jacksonville has also posted 40 educational videos The Motherhood Space YouTube channel that addresses a series of topic from "strategies for support", "PMADs 101," "baby blues" and "self-screening tips." These videos are the second in a three-tiered approach Baptist Health has taken to addressing maternal mental health.

Tier 1 provides education and resources to the providers throughout the community, Andrews explained. Since January, Garrett has trained "well over 300 providers" on what PMADs are, signs to look out for and how to refer patients into the program.

Tier 3 is the day program itself.

The Winston Family YMCA is located at 221 Riverside Avenue. More information about The Motherhood Space Day Program can be found at [baptistjax.com/motherhoodspace](http://baptistjax.com/motherhoodspace).



The Motherhood Space Day Program offers several amenities for its participants, from no-cost childcare to relaxation spaces with massage chairs and private lactation rooms.



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# MOVERS & SHAKERS



Chase Perna and Madison Taylor prep a tray at the opening of a delicious day at Good Dough



Milkster owners, Kristy and Dominick Iuliano with their daughters, Gabi and Chloe, and pup Louie.

## Good Dough- Nuts and Fresh Coffee

### Murray Hill coffee roasters purchase San Marco's Good Dough

Donut lovers can now pair their morning (or anytime) donuts with a cup of locally roasted Catbird Coffee at Good Dough in San Marco.

Jack and James Robison, along with their sister Anna Michal and business partner Sarah Payne, purchased Good Dough in May of this year. The same group also owns Catbird Coffee Roasters in Murray Hill and, in Good Dough, have created their first café at which to showcase their craft coffee.

Across the river from Good Dough, in Riverside, is Grassroots Natural Market, which the Robison brothers own and run with Michal.

Purchasing Good Dough seemed like a "very synergistic fit and a natural way for us to grow," Jack Robison said. "There's a lot going on in San Marco and it's nice to be a part of that."

He said providing people an opportunity to try freshly brewed Catbird Coffee at Good Dough has been a positive experience.

"It's a great way for us to showcase our coffee that we roast locally, because when you're just a coffee roastery without a café or storefront, it's hard to showcase the product and have people try the product," he said.

Robison added that shop hours are "likely to extend" and the menu will soon feature additional items.

Overall, he said, he's excited to be part of the "thriving" San Marco community.

"We're excited to be involved in the San Marco neighborhood and look forward to being good neighbors and business partners," he said.

Good Dough is located at 1636 Hendricks Avenue. Current store hours are Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. It is closed on Mondays.

## Beat the Heat at Milkster Nitrogen Creamery

A cold blast is sweeping through Miramar and nearby San Marco this fall to help cool down residents from the seemingly never-ending heat Jacksonville has been experiencing.

Milkster Nitrogen Creamery opened its first Jacksonville location at the newly renovated Miramar Plaza on Hendricks Avenue on Tuesday, Aug. 22. A weeklong celebration followed the grand opening.

Kristy Iuliano, the franchise owner, said her family has always loved ice cream. Once her daughters moved away for college, she said it was the perfect time to start something new. Her franchise is collaborating with local coffee roaster Condaxis Coffee & Tea for its coffee and Iuliano said she is "all about local."

"We love to support local businesses," she said. "Whenever we can get fresh fruits from local producers, we do so to put in our products. I think it means a lot for us to support our community as they, I know, will support us because we support each other."

Milkster Nitrogen Creamery is known for its custom use of liquid nitrogen to make its "nicecream," creating a super-smooth texture while eliminating the need for extra preservatives and emulsifiers.

"It's a very clean product, and we have vegan options as well," she said.

This is the second Milkster location in Florida, with a third one expected to open in Clearwater this year, Iuliano said.

Milkster Nitrogen Creamery Jacksonville is located at 3853 Hendricks Avenue.

## Tindol Williams Group Joins Berkshire Hathaway

The Tindol Williams Group, comprised of Tony Tindol and Kyle Williams, has joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty. The Tindol Williams Group has a mission to provide top-tier solutions to clients' real estate needs and has established a reputation for delivering outstanding results in the industry.

Beyond their professional achievements, Tindol and Williams are actively involved in the community. Tindol participates and volunteers with Stonewall

Sports Jax; Williams volunteers for Riverside Avondale Preservation and the annual Tour of Homes.

"I'm thrilled that the Tindol Williams group has joined us and look forward to celebrating their success here with us," said Josh Cohen, Broker/Manager of the Metropolitan office of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty with locations in Avondale and San Marco.

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## 5K to Benefit Groundwork Jacksonville

The 4th Annual VyStar Emerald 5K/10K presented by JTC Running and 1st Place Sports is headed to downtown's riverfront on Sept. 30, 2023. The 5K and 10K Run/Walk begin at 7:30 a.m. and the 5K/10K ride follows at 9 a.m. JTC running covers all race costs so that 100% of proceeds benefit Groundwork Jacksonville, the city's nonprofit partner in building the Emerald Trail and restoring McCoys Creek and Hogans Creek.

The route begins at the Duval County Courthouse and visits Northbank Riverwalk and Riverside Arts Market; 10K participants will continue over the new Shared Use Path (SuP) to San Marco.

Registration for the event is underway at [1stplacesports.com/races/emeraldtrail/](https://1stplacesports.com/races/emeraldtrail/). Members of Groundwork Jacksonville, VyStar Credit Union, JTC Running and North Florida Bicycle Club receive \$5 off.



Ashley Helmick

## New Director for Women's Board

Ashley Helmick has been named the new director of The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital. The Jacksonville native and Episcopal School of Jacksonville alumna will start her new role Aug. 28. As director, Helmick will help lead the all-volunteer organization, whose mission is to further community awareness and raise funds for the children who come through Wolfson Children's Hospital.

"As a Women's Board member and volunteer, Ashley brings a heartfelt enthusiasm for our mission with a direct understanding of our organization. She is a collaborative leader committed to our community. Ashley's knowledge and experience in volunteer and event management, donor relations and community engagement align strongly with our strategic goals as we move forward," said Kendra McCrary, president of The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital.

A frontline fundraiser with a focus on community, service and partnership opportunities, Helmick has served on the Episcopal School of Jacksonville Alumni Board since 2016. She has previously served on the board of the Ronald McDonald House Charities Red Shoe Crew and was a member of The Women's Board for eight years.

"It is an incredible honor to serve as the next director of The Women's Board and I look forward to continuing the amazing work done through this organization for the children of our community. I am thankful for the leadership in the hospital and volunteers that will allow us to work together to further our mission," said Helmick.



Carl Hiaasen

## Hiaasen to Keynote Equal Justice Awards

Bestselling novelist and former Miami Herald columnist Carl Hiaasen will deliver the keynote address at Jacksonville Area Legal Aid's (JALA) 21st Equal Justice Awards Sept. 20 at the Marriott Jacksonville Downtown. The Florida native is known for his irreverent humor, colorful characters and fiercely pointed tales about Florida, environmental issues, modern culture and corruption.

The event features the presentation of the Robert J. Beckham Equal Justice Award, which is bestowed on a person or organization who has notably promoted the cause of equal justice for low-income residents of Northeast Florida. The 2023 honorees are Gunster Shareholder Mike Freed and former Florida Times-Union Executive Editor Mary Kelli Palka, who now serves as strategic communications director at the University of North Florida.

"We are thrilled to be able to bring the Equal Justice Awards back so that we can honor these two individuals who have done so much for the Northeast Florida community," said JALA CEO Jim Kowalski.



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## Case Named Cybersecurity Leader

“Becker’s Hospital Review” has included James Case, vice president and chief information security officer (CISO) at Baptist Health, in its 60-strong list of “Hospital and health system CISOs and CPOs to know” for 2023. The list is comprised of individuals who have leveraged years of experience in IT cybersecurity to safeguard information, launch new initiatives, establish novel technologies and build talented IT teams.

“Cyber threats are a very real concern for many industries, and health care is no exception,” said Aaron Miri, senior vice president and chief digital and information officer at Baptist Health.

Case has worked in IT within the health care industry for nearly 30 years. His tenure at Baptist Health began in 2005 when he served as a senior product manager for two years. In 2021, he assumed his current senior leadership position, where his responsibilities include vulnerability management and the protection of patients’ confidential data.

# CEO Fafard to Retire from MOSH

Bruce Fafard, CEO for The Museum of Science & History (MOSH), announced his retirement from the position, effective February 2024.

“I first approached the museum to volunteer my services at the start of the pandemic. It was clear to me then — and remains clear to me now — that this museum is an essential cultural institution of this community. It has been a true honor to dedicate my full attention to MOSH’s mission over the past several years,” said Fafard.

After his volunteer consultant position, Fafard’s roles with MOSH progressed to COO and interim CEO before he was appointed CEO in October 2020.

“Bruce has been an exceptional leader for MOSH. With every decision, he has prioritized the museum’s best interests – which is evidenced by his thoughtfulness in working with us to plan his well-deserved retirement. As a result of his leadership, MOSH is in a prime position to build upon its 80-plus years of service to this community,” said William Magevney, chair of the MOSH board of trustees.

Planning for Fafard’s replacement began in early 2023, and the board of trustees retained Kittleman to start a national search in summer 2023.



Bruce Fafard spoke with a high school class at The Bolles School about Museum operations.



Bruce Fafard welcomed MOSH Discovery Camp participants as part of an experience called “If I Ran the MOSH.”



Bruce and Gina Fafard dancing together at the GALAXY fundraiser in April 2022.

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Rooftop "backyards" take in beautiful views of downtown Jacksonville at Terraces at San Marco.



Toll Brothers includes tens of thousands of dollars in customizable option upgrades from their Design Studio.

# Urban Luxe

## New Toll Brothers development marries urban and outdoor living

Location, location, location has met its match.

It is an undeniable truth in the real estate market that location is everything, and it's a familiar checklist item that drives many Jacksonville home buyers to the convenience of the San Marco area. But one of the challenges of urban dwelling is that homeowners must often sacrifice those other wish list items like outdoor spaces, new construction and open floorplans. Toll Brothers has eliminated that sacrifice, artfully blending a masterful balance of urban charm, spacious plans and outdoor living in its new luxurious townhome community, Terraces at San Marco.

The Terraces at San Marco, located on Atlantic Boulevard, halfway between I-95 and San Marco Boulevard, is home to 27 spacious townhomes nestled deep in the heart of San Marco. These contemporary, low-maintenance homes are just a five-minute walk from San Marco Square, with gorgeous rooftop-terrace "backyards" that boast a five-star view of downtown Jacksonville. The airy greenspaces of Fletcher Park are right across the street, and residents' banking, grocery and pharmacy needs are within a one-minute walk.

Garry Adams, Sales Consultant for



Fletcher Park is directly across the street, just steps away from Terraces at San Marco.

Terraces at San Marco said it is indeed all about the location, estimating that there are probably 20 restaurants, including Taverna, Bar Molino and Good Dough, within walking distance of the property.

"With the amount of new restaurants coming in, and the existing ones, it's gourmet paradise. It's just the best we have in urban living," he said.

The Terraces at San Marco are priced from the mid-\$700s to just over \$1 million. Interior homes average 1,844 square feet, with approximately 396-square-foot rooftop terraces, and there is limited availability for corner homes, which average 2,085 square feet with approximately 469 square feet of

rooftop terrace space. The true luxury of these homes comes in the tastefully appointed details like waterfall-edge quartz countertops, all-weather decking on the rooftops and Shark-brand coating on the floors of the attached 2-car garages. Each home also comes with \$80,000-\$120,000 in customizable Design Studio upgrades. Additional designer-appointed features include gas cooktops, tankless gas water heaters and gas piping on the rooftop terraces to allow for a fully integrated outdoor kitchen or grill.

Terraces at San Marco has defied traditional urban standards by working with the San Marco Preservation Society to enhance the exterior architecture, and designing the open-concept floorplans with large, 8-foot doors and 9- to 10-foot ceilings on each floor.

"There's almost no hallways to speak of in here, so you really benefit from the openness," said Adams.

Almost a quarter of the community is already sold out since Terraces at San Marco began selling earlier this summer. They have three move-in-ready homes and five more that will be ready within 90 days.

Toll Brothers, a Fortune 500 company with 52 years' experience

building luxury homes, is offering a promotional rate of 5.49% on select units while funds are still available from TBI Mortgage Company, but Adams explained that Toll Brothers does all it can to help homebuyers get into the home of their dreams. Despite the current interest rates, he said there are better ways to approach the interest rate market that would be better in the long term.

"The idea is to get the biggest bang for your buck. Everyone would have the option of buying the interest rate down and that's the smartest way to go in this environment because it lasts for your 30-year mortgage."

More importantly, he stressed, is the ability to own your own space in the urban landscape. Terraces at San Marco are fee-simple ownership, not a condominium, so the buyer owns both the land and the unit. The nominal monthly HOA takes care of irrigation, landscape, lawn care and trash pickup.

"To live in a downtown, walking distance from restaurants, there's just so few opportunities. There are almost no resales in San Marco either, so the opportunity to have something new like this in this location is what's driving the people here," said Adams.

The Terraces at San Marco are located at 1609 Bridgeton Dr. For more information, visit [tollbrothers.com/SanMarco](http://tollbrothers.com/SanMarco)

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The Harden family

## Harden Legacy Lives On in \$1M Donation to MOSH

The Museum of Science & History (MOSH) announced the Harden Family Foundation has donated \$1 million to the MOSH Genesis capital campaign. The gift will be honored through the naming of the River Patio at the museum's new facility on the Northbank of the St. Johns River in downtown Jacksonville.

Prior to his recent passing, the Harden Family Foundation was led by M.C. "Cere" Harden III, an accomplished Jacksonville business leader known for his impact in both the local business community and Northeast Florida's philanthropic sector. He led Harden and Associates Inc. as CEO for over 40 years and served in community leadership roles that included the Chamber of Commerce's economic development division.

"During my time on the economic development committee, we recommended locating a cultural facility within the sports and entertainment district that could support year-round activity. That was several decades ago. Finally, we are close to seeing that recommendation become a reality through MOSH's exciting vision for the future. Together with my family, I am proud to contribute to this worthy endeavor," Harden had previously said about the endeavor.

The MOSH Genesis capital campaign supports plans for MOSH to relocate to a 2.5-acre plot of city-owned land at the Shipyards property, commonly known as Lot X, including designs for a new museum and surrounding park spaces. Plans for the museum comprise approximately 100,000 square feet across three floors – an increase from the old 77,000-square-foot facility on the Southbank – with the option to build a future expansion of an additional 30,000 square feet.

"Every parent hopes their children's generation will have better opportunities than the ones they knew. This generous contribution from the Harden family will support MOSH's goal of inspiring the joy of lifelong learning for several generations to come," said Maureen Mercho, MOSH's Chief Development Officer.



Janet Reagor



Joni Turner



Julia Ramer



Nancy Schneider

## Groundwork Jacksonville Welcomes New Staff

Groundwork Jacksonville, Inc., the City's nonprofit partner in building the Emerald Trail and restoring Hogans and McCoys creeks, has added new staff to increase capacity for the growing organization.

Janet Reagor was appointed COO, directing day-to-day operations including human resources, facilities and operational policies and procedures that support the growth of Groundwork Jacksonville. Janet is also responsible for the effective development and execution of programs that reflect Groundwork's mission, values and commitment to the community. She has held leadership positions with LSF Health Systems, Community Hospice & Palliative Care, Sanctuary on 8th Street and Dignity U Wear.

Nancy Schneider, a Jacksonville native, is Groundwork Jacksonville's new Director of Development & Partnerships. Nancy is responsible for leading and implementing development strategies, donor cultivation and stewardship, and establishing strategic partnerships with businesses and key stakeholders. Her career spans more than 25 years and includes implementation of a program for an Indianapolis private school that was recognized, both locally and nationally, as a model of diversity, community renewal, and academic success for grades Pre-K through 8.

Julia Ramer has joined as a Development & Communications Coordinator, supporting Schneider. She is a University of North Florida (UNF) graduate with more than five years of experience in Jacksonville's nonprofit sector. Prior to joining Groundwork, she was Community Relations and Volunteer Coordinator for Girls Inc.

Joni Turner, also a UNF graduate, is Groundwork's new Community Engagement Coordinator, responsible for establishing and maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders of Jacksonville's urban core neighborhoods. She works to ensure residents and business owners stay informed about — and have a voice in — Groundwork initiatives including the Emerald Trail and creek restoration projects.



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Florida Secretary of State Cord Byrd is flanked by recipients of the 2023 Florida Trust for Historic Preservation Book of the Year, author Dr. Wayne W. Wood and photographer Mark Krancer.

## Local Book Wins Award for Historic Preservation

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation honored author Dr. Wayne W. Wood, photographer Mark Krancer and the Jacksonville Historical Society (JHS) with a 2023 Florida Preservation Award for Book of the Year at a July 19 ceremony in Ocala. It recognized the Bicentennial Edition of "Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage: Landmarks for the Future" for its help in protecting Florida's history and heritage.

In its application for the award, the Jacksonville Historical Society noted that its goal for the book is to inspire citizens to acquire an appreciation for Jacksonville's dwindling inventory of historic buildings, educate its citizens about the ethnic diversity of the city's architecture and instill a passion to ensure these structures' longevity through restoration, renovation and adaptive re-use.

First released in 1989, the new edition of Wood's comprehensive look at Jacksonville architecture took nearly two years to complete and was released in December 2022. Wood estimates that he put more than 10,000 hours into the project, and Krancer donated his efforts to shoot approximately 500 sites, of which nearly 400 were new to the book. Newly discovered architectural gems, culturally significant buildings, and an entire section of little-known and highly unusual sites added a new perspective to revised edition.



Korean Association of North Florida Armistice Luncheon attendees

## Korean War Veterans Honored at 70th Armistice Anniversary



Korean War veteran Commander Dr. Henry Moreland spoke at the luncheon about defending Korea in the war.

The Korean Association of North Florida hosted its annual appreciation luncheon at the Fleet Reserve Branch 126 in July, marking the 70th Anniversary of the Korean War Armistice. The luncheon honored Korean War veterans and included appreciation speeches by association President Ohhan Kim and Liaison Jea Y. Lee. Members performed traditional Korean music, songs and dances, and the association presented guests with U.S. and South Korean flags.

The Jacksonville Naval Museum, the Korean War Veterans Chapter 200 and the We Can Be Heroes Foundation had hosted the Armistice Remembrance earlier in the week at Jacksonville's USS-Orleck DD-886, which had engagements during the Korean War.

Honorary tributes to Korean War veterans included a flag line presented by the American Legion Riders 5th District, escorts by the Mayport Sea Scouts and performances of "Taps" by bugler Jim Steele and the National Anthem by Karim Zabaneh. Colors were presented by Bishop Kenny High School's Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Color Guard.



Korean War veterans Bill Speer, Ted Barber and Gerald Maloney

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# Angelwood Soaring Possibilities

Angelwood held its annual celebration, Soaring Possibilities, on Saturday, Aug. 19, at 6 p.m. at the Sawgrass Marriott. Now in its 30th year, Angelwood announced at the event the opening of the new Angelwood Thrift Store, slated for early November 2023. The event raised more than \$500,000 in support for children, adults and families living with intellectual and developmental differences.

Alex Limbaugh and Margaret Limbaugh with Kim Wheeler

The event was chaired by Kelly and Scott Gramling and Rachel and Kevin Padgett. Robin and Dan Wahby served as honorary chairs.

Don and Robin Wahby with Rachel and Kevin Padgett

Mike Freed and Alison Vukich with Odette Struys and William Adams



Lynn and Bill Gru

Samantha and Elliot Sumner

Josh and Lynette Juega

# Rethreaded Goes Elemental for 12th Birthday

Jacksonville-based Rethreaded celebrated 12 years of empowering survivors of human trafficking at a birthday celebration on Saturday, July 29, at its Delores Barr Weaver Campus of Hope. The event featured games, raffles and refreshments, but the highlight of the celebration was the launch of its new survivor-created product line, Elemental.

"We are so proud of our survivors, and the donors, volunteers, community partners and service providers who have helped them to regain the power of intentional, forward-looking choices that will guide the rest of their lives. This event is our way to say thank you and to get our community excited for what's next for us and for our survivors. We are especially grateful to Riverside Homes for four years of partnership and for providing the matching challenge that helped rally so much additional support," said Kristin Keen, Founder and CEO of Rethreaded.

Riverside Homes pledged a \$40,000 match toward all day-of product purchases, donations and raffle-ticket sales.

"As long as the human trafficking industry persists, we will continue to empower survivors and educate our community on how every one of us has a part to play in restoring more lives," said Keen.

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Matt Roberts, Nancy Hammond, Jason Jones and Carole Bayer exchanging a contribution to Rethreaded from Coldwell Banker Cares toward the \$40,000-match challenge, sponsored by Riverside Homes.



Guests were all smiles at Rethreaded's 12th Annual Birthday Party celebration.



Rethreaded's Hallie Dufresne, center, poses with a group of women showcasing Rethreaded's new product line, Elemental, on the day of its release.

# Sizzling Summer Nights

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida held its annual fundraiser, Summer Nights presented by 121 Financial Credit Union, on Saturday, Aug. 26, at the Glass Factory. Guests enjoyed an evening of premium craft cocktails, a bourbon bar and speakeasy lounge, dancing and live music from The Bold City Classics, auctions and a collection of artwork created by the youth at The Boys & Girls Clubs.

Local fare for the evening included signature dishes from Bono's Pit Bar-B-Q, Ida Clare, Pastiche, and The Boys & Girls Clubs own culinary program.

"Thank you to the attendees, sponsors, restaurants, entertainment, auction bidders and donors who supported our mission to create great futures through Summer Nights presented by 121 Financial Credit Union. Because of you, we can continue helping more than 5,000 local young people reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens," said Paul Martinez, President and CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida.



Tavianna Sanders with Regina Hodges, Lashaun Parker and Tamera Rhymes



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# Christmas in July

## Wolfson Children's annual toy drive yields \$14,000

From sugarplums to silly putty, holiday cheer spread through the halls Wolfson Children's Hospital on July 25 when Santa Claus made a special mid-year stop to distribute toys for Christmas in July. The 12th annual toy and donation drive, presented by Subaru of Jacksonville, lasted the entire month of July with community members donating nearly 1,000 toys. Donors gave an additional \$13,960 in financial gifts to be used to purchase toys for Wolfson Children's patients.

Subaru of Jacksonville collected toys at their showroom on Atlantic Boulevard throughout the month and delivered those with Santa. In addition to bringing thousands of dollars' worth of toys, the dealership contributed \$25,000 to support the Child Life department.



"We look forward to Christmas in July every year. The dealership, our team members, customers, and even vendors all make it a goal to fill every bin we have to the top. We are grateful to have a small part in bringing a smile to children's faces that are at Wolfson Children's Hospital," said Phil Porter, Jr., executive management with Subaru of Jacksonville.



The toys are used to by Wolfson Children's Child Life specialists and music therapists to help ease stress and anxiety in children who are in the hospital. The drive allows them to restock their toy shelves and purchase more of their most-needed items.

"Being in the hospital can be frightening for children, but these donations allow us to soothe and entertain patients while positively contributing to their recovery and healing process," said Susan Kinnebrew, director of Family Support Services at Wolfson Children's. "Our talented team members use these toys to help children develop cognitively and physically during their hospital stay and to understand what is happening to and around them in an unfamiliar environment. Our whole team is incredibly grateful to the community for continuing to support our patients and our caregiving efforts."

The hospital maintains an Amazon wish list for those who wish to donate toys year-round.



Military veteran and KIPP Jacksonville Executive Director Jennifer Brown was the keynote speaker for Jacksonville's Purple Heart Day in August.

# Jacksonville Honors Purple Heart Recipients

On Monday, Aug. 7, the City of Jacksonville's Military Affairs and Veterans Department and the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 524 hosted a ceremony for Purple Heart Recognition Day at the Veterans Memorial Wall and Purple Heart Trail.

"The Purple Heart is more than just a medal," said Past National Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and Purple Heart Recipient Christopher Vedvick during the ceremony. "It is a symbol of valor, courage and love of country that binds all who have served."

The ceremony's speakers also included Mayor Donna Deegan and keynote Jennifer Brown, who is a veteran and executive director of KIPP Jacksonville. Brown is the first female veteran to serve as the event's keynote speaker for this annual day of remembrance for our military city.

"To the distinguished Purple Heart recipients, I come with the utmost admiration and gratitude for your unwavering commitment to honor, duty and valor," Brown said. "Your sacrifices in the line of duty, your unwavering bravery in the face of adversity and your unyielding spirit in the pursuit of justice exemplify the very essence of what it means to be a hero."

To date, nearly two million servicemembers have been awarded the Purple Heart.

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# New San Marco Mural Invites People to “Be the Focus”

## Hearts 4 Minds unveils 11th mural in Murals with Meaning program

BY MICHELE LEIVAS



Hearts 4 Minds Co-founder Sheryl Johnson and David Nackashi cut the ribbon for the new mural located at 2011 San Marco Blvd.

August 19 was a special day for Sheryl Johnson.

Not only was it the unveiling of the 11th mural in the Hearts 4 Minds’ Murals with Meaning program; it was also her son Alex’s birthday. Alex is the inspiration and driving force behind the creation of Hearts 4 Minds, the nonprofit organization Johnson co-founded with her husband, Todd, dedicated to leading the charge to break down the stigma of mental illness and alter how we look at mental health.

“It allows us to create a legacy for Alex that he wasn’t able to do.”

– Sheryl Johnson  
Co-founder of Hearts 4 Minds

Alex took his life in 2017 after struggling with anxiety and depression.

He would have been 29 years old on the Saturday Johnson unveiled Hearts 4 Minds’ “Be the Focus” mural, created by artist David Nackashi, on the Bank of America wall facing Balis Park in San Marco Square.

A pair of delicate, white dragonfly wings adorn the wall, inviting people to stand at its center to be the dragonfly in photos. The wings stand out against a backdrop of blurry circles of light.

The mural’s installation took just 15 hours, according to Nackashi. He has done several other murals in the Hearts 4 Minds and said the organization is “a good nonprofit for [him] to feel good about making something for.”

“Mental health, and art, and hardships, and loss kind of go hand-in-hand,” he said. “Some of the best art’s made or inspired by hardship, so this just kind of falls in line with what I think should dominate the big walls of Jacksonville.”

Each mural in the Murals with Meaning program has two fixed elements, Johnson explained in a pre-unveiling interview: One is a QR code that brings viewers to an informational website regarding mental health that also provides all available resources in Jacksonville for those seeking help; the second is the inclusion of a dragonfly, the symbol the organization uses to promote and raise awareness for the importance of mental health.

The Murals with Meanings program has installed murals throughout Jacksonville. Last December, The Resident News covered the unveiling of another mural in Avondale at Talbot and St. Johns avenues. Johnson said public art is a “softer way” to start a conversation surrounding mental illness and invite people to educate themselves further.

“It allows us to create a legacy for Alex that he wasn’t able to do,” she said. “We know if just one single person gets help from knowing that that QR code can take them to an information page, then we’ve done our job.”

While it was not involved in the mural’s creation, the San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS) was “really excited to support” Hearts 4 Minds and its new San Marco mural and was present for the unveiling.

“We have been a proponent and supporter of public art in San Marco for many decades,” said Linzee Ott, a member of the SMPS board of directors. “We’re really excited to see this previously blank wall activated with such a beautiful piece of art.”

Later in the month, on Aug. 25, Hearts 4 Minds unveiled another San Marco mural, created by Heartspace Art, at Kava & Company.



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Davis and Meyer

## BORROWING FROM THE PAST, CREATING A FARM-TOPIA IN THE PRESENT

Lifestyle satiates appetite for connectivity, community

There's a place that exists in the world where life slows down, time stands still and a unique community has blossomed into existence. About an hour from town, up in Folkston, Georgia, outside of the bustle of our modern cityscapes, a community is transforming from timber lands into a dreamscape of intentional, abundant living.

A utopian village of limited, low-impact, phased development has been propagated within the landscape, where distractions melt away and life as we know it takes on a different tempo...and that's the point. This place has been coined as The Farm at Okefenokee, and its founding and subsequent metamorphosis is drawing quite a bit of attention from those seeking a break from the ordinary, where the term "cookie-cutter" is akin to a dirty, unthinkable phrase.

"The Farm", as it is often referred to by its founders, is located on 700-plus acres of land adjacent to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The transformed lands of today are every bit as mystical as they are spellbinding with an abundance of wildlife intermingled with man-made gardens of both wild and native flowers, catfish ponds, roaming cattle, hogs, and hybrid draft mules alongside vegetation. From fruit trees to olive groves, sugar cane, turmeric root and a greenhouse full of micro greens, the place is teeming with life.

### Regeneration of the spirit, living in abundance

The pinnacle of the project is the premise of regenerative farming, where all things thrive on the goal to return the soil to a state of healthy, biodiverse elements that provide energy, nutrition and abundant crop growth. Void of herbicides and pesticides, the cultivation of crops for the community to thrive upon are the backbone of the farm, not to mention, things simply taste better and offer more nutrient value than anything you'll find in a grocery store.

The Farm's incorporation of a breeding program will also celebrate heritage species of hogs, sheep, cattle, turkeys, catfish and other non-GMO animals and aquatic species. Many of those chosen for the project thrive in Southern climates and are intentionally selected to protect the future genetic stock of forgotten breeds that were originally brought to the new world by French and Spanish explorers.

### Getting there, head to the headwaters of the Suwanee and St. Mary's

The entrance to the property sits just off the main artery, Doc Rider Road, of the 400,000-plus acres of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, where coincidentally, 400,000 annual visitors from around the world flock to visit one of the nation's largest wetland preserves. Decades in



Continued on page 31

2023-2024

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the making, the refuge has been proposed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and is a year away from the moniker. The Okefenokee or “Land of the Trembling Earth” was given the name by the Swift Creek and Weeden Island tribes, due to its shifting peat and silted wetland “prairies”, cypress forests, scrub-shrub vegetation, upland islands and open lakes.

future development due to his level of expertise in the field and knowledge of the dynamics of water, landscapes and resiliency. “My dream is to implement the best practices of development, while procuring a lifestyle second to none. As far as we know, this has never been done before and we’re enjoying the ride.”

“The goal all along was to find folks that enjoy the idea of farming, without the



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**Good things come to those who wait**

This rare community has been developing over the course of the last several years and is quickly taking shape. Visionaries and partners in the venture, Jeff Meyer and Doug Davis, have been pouring their lives into this dream; one that has been consciously master-planned and executed by a unique team of talented gardeners, farmers, illustrators, photographers, carpenters, and builders of men alike.

Ahead of their time, Meyer and Davis are entrenched in the belief that a return to nature and simplicity will energize lessons as old as creation. The Native American proverb teaches: *Tell me and I’ll forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I’ll understand.*

“I’ve been developing low-impact, sustainable communities for many years, it’s my passion,” said Davis. Davis has testified before Congress about sustainable,

hassle of owning and working a farm,” said Meyer. “We [the Farm] offer a product that affords a lifestyle that you can’t find anywhere in the country, better yet, in the world,” he said with a smile. Meyer believes that by creating a place where healthy food is abundant, heritage animals roam and the nectar of life is provided by the experience – not simply by flowers and honeybees – the community will thrive.

With the spirit of the outdoors running wild and a twist of elegance in its offerings, its amenities cater to a life well lived. The founding pair, both of whom are rugged individualists, would rather be likened to inventors, family men and thought leaders who are simply harnessing the power of regeneration, rebirth and hearkening back to the ancient practices that call to us from our ancestors. ●●●



For more information, visit [Okefarm.com](http://Okefarm.com) or scan the QR Code to gain a bird’s eye view of the project.  [the\\_farm\\_at\\_okefenokee](https://www.instagram.com/the_farm_at_okefenokee)



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# RESIDENTS

Junior



Mrs. Whitcomb's 4th grade class on the first day at Assumption Catholic School.



Baton Webb gears up for fourth grade at Fishweir Elementary.

## PUPIL PAPARAZZI:

# The Back-to-School Edition

Our vibrant community comes together in this heartwarming collection of photos celebrating the excitement of the 2023-24 school year. From the eager faces of our backpacked babies to the bittersweet smiles of their parents seeing them off to school, these snapshots embody the spirit of growth and learning. Let us remember that with each passing year, we work together as a community educate those who will lead us in the future and celebrate those who encourage and shape the next generation.



Madeline Webb's first day of kindergarten was even more exciting since she got to join her oldest brother at Fishweir Elementary.



The start of Assumption Catholic School's school year was a "blast" thanks to 7th and 8th grade science teacher, Mr. Hawthorn. Hawthorn, along with the help of student Anthony Davis, demonstrated the scientific reaction caused by extreme temperatures. Hawthorn first filled a container with liquid nitrogen. Then, as warm water was added to the container, the resulting rapid condensation caused a billowing, fog-like vapor that created a stunning visual effect to get students excited for the upcoming school year. (Editor's note: This was a safe, supervised experiment, and no students were harmed.)



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STEAM teacher Maggie Young jumps right into creating with her Pre-K-3 students on the first day at Riverside Presbyterian Day School.



Heidi got a little help from her furry friend, Finn, on her first day of school.

A multi-generational first-day family picture in Assumption Catholic School's courtyard, including alumni grandmother and mothers, as well as four attending cousins, spanning Class of 1970 to Class of 2034.



The Kruegers marked their seasoned return to the first day of school at Episcopal School of Jacksonville: Eighth grade for Stella, 10th grade for Reed, and 24 years of teaching for Michelle.



## Bolles Summer Cheer Program Anything But Routine

The Bolles varsity cheerleading team launched a new summer program for lower school students called Cheerleader for a Day. This week-long camp, held Aug. 7-11, invited students from both Bolles and the outside community to work with the upper school cheerleaders.



Captains Eva Lantzy and Emily Suvoski led the charge in conceptualizing the program and coaching the campers who learned cheers, performed dance routines and practiced tumbling with captain Kayla Sterling and teammates Addison Trovato, Evelyn Martin, Taylor Grace Clark and Kyla Bullock.

"It's important for us to serve as role models for these younger students and inspire confidence, school spirit and teamwork," Lantzy said.



The campers cheered alongside their upper school mentors during the first quarter of the first home varsity football game against St. Augustine High School on Aug. 25.

"All the coaches and I are so proud of the planning and hard work the varsity squad invested in making this camp a reality this summer," Bolles varsity cheer assistant coach Julia Kalinski said. "We also could not have done it without support from our awesome parent volunteers."

All camp staff were volunteers, and the proceeds from the camp will go toward enhancing the Bolles cheer program.



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The leaders and participants of the 5th annual Wolf Pup Cheer Camp

# Wolf Pups Howl for Varsity Cheer Camp

Wolfson varsity cheerleaders hosted their 5th annual WolfPup Camp with a maxed-out capacity. Girls from kindergarten to eighth grade attended the camp from the San Marco and surrounding communities. The girls spent the week with the Wolfpack Varsity Cheer Team learning to stunt, tumble, jump, cheer, and dance.

The week culminated in a performance for parents of a fully choreographed routine with a pyramid. The girls were split into four groups led by Sarah Davisson, Scarlett Humphreys, Elle Charboneau and Emily Rogers. Post-camp the campers returned to cheer with the team at Wolfson's first home game on Aug. 18.

Bringing it full circle, the Wolfson cheer team has had three campers go on to become members of the varsity team.



# Parent Reception Kicks Off New School Year

The campus of San Jose Episcopal Day School (SJEDS) greeted the first day of the 2023-24 school year with a new, warm welcome. Prior to the official commencement of the academic year, the SJEDS Office of Admissions organized a special New Parent Reception for all the new families who have joined the SJEDS community. The event provided an opportunity for the newcomers to familiarize themselves with the school's ethos and values, as well as to connect with fellow parents and key faculty members.

"It was a busy admissions season for our beloved school, but it is always a pleasure to welcome new families into our close-knit community. We take pride in creating an environment where every child's journey is embraced, and each family becomes an integral part of the SJEDS family," said Vivian Bradford, SJEDS Director of Enrollment and Growth.



Brian Harbin and Christian Cospier with Kevin Butler, Colby Harris and Jennifer Harbin.

# San Marco College Students Show Their Grit

San Marco residents Christian Cospier and Kevin Butler recently completed a 10-week summer internship program called Grit University that resulted in a positive impact for the Jacksonville community.

Grit University is designed to teach time-tested life and success principles to college-age students through running a business and developing entrepreneurial, leadership and communication skills.

Butler is a rising senior at Stetson University and Cospier is a rising junior at Florida State University. The pair administered a combined 4,560 events and raised more than \$27,000 in scholarship funds from 41 different individuals and businesses. They led 35 counselors and 457 campers at Grit Camp, which generated over \$110,000 in revenue and yielded \$30,000 for Jacksonville University. Under the leadership of a personal entrepreneurial mentor, they also established a new company, which earned them thousands of dollars in weekly salary and profit sharing.

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On the first day of school, the Bolles Class of 2024 gathered on the Upper School San Jose Campus to enjoy the annual senior breakfast and take their first senior group photo of the school year. Per tradition, the students wore black dresses, tiaras and all-black shirts, ties and pants. The seniors were treated to Chick-fil-A, fruit-and-yogurt cups and custom cookies to kick off their milestone year.



Members of St. Mark's Episcopal Youth for Christ group helped green up Columbus Park in July.

## Youth and Greenscape Team Up for Columbus Park

In July, Greenscape hosted a service project for St. Mark's Episcopal Youth for Christ youth group. Rising 5th and 6th graders braved the summer's heat to provide care and maintenance for trees in Columbus Park, a pocket park on Iroquois Avenue in Ortega.

The park has been stewarded by Ortega Forest resident Harrison Conyers and was created to honor his grandparents, George and Hazel Ulsey. In recent years, Greenscape has donated 28 trees to provide the next-generation canopy as the current trees begin to age out. The youth group provided water, fertilizer, weeding, mulch and trash pick-up.

Greenscape's new program manager, Shanell Davis-Bryant, also gave a talk on the importance of the urban forest, the contribution trees make to the environmental health of an area and to the well-being of a community.

"We sure didn't need to sell the importance of shade that July day," said Executive Director Lisa Grubba. "If it weren't for the shade, we would've had to cancel the project. It was that hot. But the kids were great sports, and we appreciated their help. As they grow up, we hope they'll keep an eye on the trees they cared for and feel a sense of pride from contributing to their community in such a tangible way."

To help Greenscape plant and maintain trees, send an email to [info@greenscapeofjax.org](mailto:info@greenscapeofjax.org).



Ramzy Bakkar, Soren Bakkar, Alex Haddad, Michael Haddad, Elizabeth Haddad, Cristina Haddad, Andrew Haddad, Drew Sutter, Collen Sutter, Jack Sutter, Caroline Sutter and Todd Orlando gathered for Freshman Mass.

## A Blessing for Freshmen

Bishop Kenny High School held its annual Freshman Mass, this time for the Class of 2027, on Aug. 12, 2023, at Assumption Catholic Church. The Mass was led by Father Clay Ludwig as the celebrant, Father Jason Trull as the concelebrant and Scott Conway, Superintendent of Schools, who participated as the Deacon. Alumni engagement added to the sense of tradition with alumni Ramzy Bakkar reading the Liturgy of the Word and Cristina Mussallem Haddad delivering words of wisdom and encouragement. Two members of the Class of 2027, Joseph Farhat and Jenna Driver, presented the gifts for the Mass.



Fiona Bailey, Ella Parcell, Savannah Whorton and Kiera Hood greet students on the first day at Wolfson.

## Last of the Firsts

Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies' Class of 2024 celebrated their "last first day" in style with a senior breakfast on the first day of school. For Wolfson seniors, it has become a tradition to celebrate the last first day of school with a tailgate-style breakfast, assisted this year by the Wolfson PTSA, before taking over the car line in front of the school.

The seniors were led by members of the Pep Club, including section leaders George Setzer, Ryn Rossi and Paul Hibel, as well as members of Student Government, Senior Network, and other members of the senior class. The seniors greeted underclassmen from their cars, helping to open the doors and escorting them into the school with large signs, loud music and a lot of cheering.



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Students at Jacksonville Country Day School

# New School Year Presents Opportunity for Good Digital Habits

BY WINDY TAYLOR

Each year, as summer draws to a close, families regroup and begin the transition to a school-year schedule. This transition usually involves re-commitment to, or establishment of, healthy family habits.

A quick perusal of the internet reveals dozens of lists of back-to-school tips that promise to make your household efficient, stress-free and harmonious. While there is no magic formula for school-year success, there is a lot of overlap in these suggestions.

The American Academy of Pediatrics released a list of 12 back-to-school pointers for 2023. In addition to the usual suspects - plenty of sleep, eating a nutritious breakfast and minimizing TV time - there is also guidance on healthy habits regarding technology and social media.

According to the list, "Starting school again is a good time to engage in conversations with your child about if and how they use social media, which can be beneficial but also problematic for some. We are still learning about the ways social media can affect human health, especially among children and teens."

Schools, parents and other organizations that serve Jacksonville's student population are working hard to integrate emerging data into their policies, as well as into the advice they give to parents. At Jacksonville Country Day School (JCDS), which serves students in pre-K through sixth grade, they refer to this process as "shaping good digital citizens." JCDS does not allow cell phones or internet-connected devices on campus, and each student is provided an iPad that is monitored by school personnel.

"As kids become more reliant on technology, our goal is that they learn how to find a good balance and how to use it as a tool and not a crutch," said Cristina Knodel,

Computer Science & Technology Integration Specialist at JCDS. "We talk about focusing on your friendships, going outside, picking up a hobby, doing something creative, having dinner without any phones, not using screens right before bed."

Making sure that children and youth are not being harmed by their social media and technology use is a group project. In addition to school personnel, parents and other adult leaders play a role in the conversation.

"I'm planning a sabbath vocational discernment and mental health retreat for juniors and seniors," said Lauren Scott, Associate Pastor for Youth and Families at Riverside Presbyterian Church. "When I was talking to them about what I was planning, I said there will be parts of the trip where there will be no phones, and they were actually very excited about that, as high schoolers."

By working with both youth and their families, Scott sees the issue from both sides.

"I think we all recognize how difficult life would be without phones, especially in safety aspects. I appreciate that I can immediately get in contact with youth (when on trips)," Scott said. "I'm hopeful that by giving them a little bit of a break, they, and myself too, might recognize the importance of it and be able to establish healthier technology patterns on their own time. I think there's a longing for that."

Because digital childhoods are a new phenomenon, comprehensive studies on the impacts of technology and social media are few and far between. The Centers for Disease Control released its Youth Risk Behavior Survey data in February 2023. This massive study covers trends in various behaviors between 2011 and 2021, and the findings were sobering.

"The data tell a distressing story about the health and wellbeing of our nation's young people," wrote Dr. Kathleen Ethier, lead researcher. Almost every category of youth, all races and genders, experienced an increase in anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation. Commentators from across the cultural and political spectrum immediately pointed to social media use, especially among teenage girls, as being strongly correlated to the rise in mental health problems.

Correlation is not causation, but some parents would rather be safe than sorry. Several grassroots organizations have sprung up over the last few years to encourage parents to keep smartphones out of kids' hands for as long as possible.

Wait Until 8th (waituntil8th.org) is an advocacy group out of Texas that offers parents a pledge to keep smartphones away from their children until eighth grade. HGTV stars Erin and Ben Napier recently launched Osprey (ospreykids.com), which goes a step further, creating a network of parents who will keep their kids smartphone-free until high school graduation.

Scott noted that, for families with engaged and attentive parents, pledges like this may work well but no one solution will work across the variety of situations faced by youth today, especially those in unsafe or unstable homes.

Ultimately, the most persuasive argument for limiting social media does not come from the American Academy of Pediatrics, but from observed behavior.

"My advice to parents is to just be present with their youth," Scott said. "Practice what you want your youth to do and show them how to live out their lives. If they see you not always on social media and doomscrolling and being fully present in what's happening in the home, at the game, at the show, at the gallery, they'll recognize that they can do that too. We model so much more to children and youth than we will ever be able to comprehend."

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that connected the social lives and activity groups at some of Florida's top lifestyle communities. Residents and community managers were intrigued by the prospect of having simplified, collective management of their own closed network; they were ready to ditch the rest. The leaders stopped, looked and listened, at the same time, more influential change agents joined the board of PeerLyfe.

**Tell me something good**

After several meetings with The Villages, On Top of the World and other 55-plus communities, one thing became clear. These communities needed and wanted this service, but they also needed other metrics to help their residents find the amenities that made life comfortable and desirable both before, and after they arrived.

and parks; shopping malls; climate preferences; transportation options; and crime statistics, the score helped narrow down home-buyer preferences. PeerLyfe pivoted to becoming a power player in the field of data, delivering calculations of their findings to the behemoths of the real estate, mortgage and home building industries. A new name was created for the evolving venture: CommUnify, along with a new demand for additional 'angel' investors.

**Data to drive real estate purchases**

CommUnify realized the value of this system to the real estate industry; real estate services want to know how to market to consumers with greater accuracy. It is now helping score towns, cities and communities to reduce destination ambiguity and provide a more

As the venture took off, it was decided that they would add a feature to the product that would share pertinent community based information to interested home buyers. There were millions of data points being harvested in these community spaces, yet those tabulations and details were underutilized by those collecting them.

**Details matter: capitalizing on metrics, quality of life**

As people settled into their 55-plus communities, they began to reveal metrics and resulting data by following the information about hobbies, group and club formations, as well as events and other volunteer activities that people were participating in. They had the data, but the missing part was blending that data with the larger-scale information scraped [gathered by search and scans of internet traffic] from servers, search engines and landing pages throughout the web. This is where the big breakthrough occurred.

**A swift pivot: PeerLyfe becomes CommUnify**

By creating a sliding scale of important lifestyle factors such as: distance to hospital and health care facilities; recreation from golf courses, beaches

accurate framework of needs and wants. Every borough delivers a different quality of life and a unique blend of demands, wants and desires to be fulfilled. CommUnify eliminated the guesswork, helping prevent misguided decisions when things matter most.

CommUnify's plan now is to deliver and formulate partnerships, or to be purchased outright by a major player like Zillow, Realtor.com, Redfin or other firms in the tech/real estate space.

*Now is the time to become an investor or business partner; reach out to Lyman Starmer to talk about the prospectus at (904) 610-0929, or email [lyman@communify.dev](mailto:lyman@communify.dev).*

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**Life** has become quite interesting for one local tech entrepreneur as he works to disrupt traditional business models. As a teenager, Lyman Starmer was developing software in high school, now, he has an investment idea that might lead to a billion-dollar payday via the residential real estate industry.

Originally setting his sights on a new social media platform for 55-plus communities, Starmer and a team of developers went forward with a venture dubbed PeerLyfe, kicking off the startup 18 months ago. The idea took off and led to the build out of a networking app

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# ANIMAL HOUSE



Julie Kerns Garmendia and Sammy.

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA

The first time I saved Sammy was in June 2017. She came to me as a foster.

Sammy had made news among rescuers in Jacksonville that summer when she was frantically dashing back and forth across Beach Boulevard, terrified during thunderstorms. She had been surviving in thick woods next to Sam's Club. Mistakenly thought to be a large male, the stunning black and red German Shepherd was initially dubbed "Sam" by countless people trying to help.

Unfortunately, there were also the usual miserable humans throwing things and revving their vehicles at Sammy as she tried to eat food left for her in the parking lot. These incidents made her fear people and retreat into the woods if approached.



Dr. Katie Stender and her cat, Skippy.

The Friends of Jacksonville Animals (FOJA) purchased a safe-trap large enough for Sammy. FOJA volunteers Carolyn Edwards, Jill Mero and Dawn Anderson placed it in the woods and monitored it around-the-clock. Finally, she could no longer resist the chicken bait, and Sammy walked inside to safety and her new life.

Sammy had several potential adopters eager to meet her the minute she was rescued. She, however, had other plans. After apparently deciding that she was

adopting me, Sammy proceeded to behave horribly for every meet and greet; she was an Oscar-winning actress. It was too late, anyway. We had fallen in love

### Saving Sammy: The Second Time

Sammy, now somewhere around 14 to 15 years old, tried to hide her body's progressive weakening from me. She stopped running for the sheer joy of movement and retired from the daily, dead-serious policing of menacing squirrels. She was restless, unable to find a comfortable position. Her stiffness worsened; her movement slowed. Raising her large body up, lying down or negotiating steps required effort and sapped her energy. While her annual veterinarian exam resulted in no medications or specific diagnosis - other than advanced age - I knew our days were numbered. I considered each one a gift.

Traditionally awake, alert and watching everything, Sammy began to nap longer and more frequently. Food, once pure enjoyment, became an option often untouched despite my wracking my brain to provide a wildly tempting, creative menu. Her polite, small bites were for my benefit only.

My constant companion, whose preferred place in the world was beside me regardless of the activity, was simply tired. Often physically uncomfortable, she could no longer fake her daily routine. Yet she did it, heroically, for a while.

The one who had always been eager to see where we were going or scout for danger from intruders, began to do no more than lay in positions that allowed her to watch my every move - instead of accompanying me. I believe she sensed something was happening to her that she could not communicate. She would drape half of her body across my lap, her heavy,

gorgeous head pushed against my hip within easy reach of my hand's touch. It felt like she could not get close enough to me. We both hoped for more time that did not come.

Sammy suffered a stroke earlier this year that left her barely able to stand or walk. She remained alert, but confused and frightened.

I could tell the pain and suffering was too much for my girl and I couldn't let it continue. I called my veterinarian, Dr. Howard Acree, and his team at Cedar Hills Animal Hospital. They agreed, that based on Sammy's condition, I should contact Dr. Katie Stender.

So, in 2023, I made the agonizing decision to save Sammy for a second time.

### Meeting Dr. Katie Stender

Dr. Katie Stender, referred to as Dr. Katie, is a Florida native who completed her undergraduate and PhD in Veterinary Medical Sciences at University of Florida. Originally uncertain of her career choice, she became a veterinarian at a friend's behest because of her love for animals. That insight put her on the path she considers her life's calling: a hospice veterinarian. She provides in-home services for dogs, cats, and some small pets, including evaluation, consultation for hospice care, or if necessary, euthanasia services.

"From the first in-home hospice visits I did, I knew this was what I was meant to do. Life and death are sacred. I feel privileged to spend time with a family, helping them and their pet through this transition in the comfort of home," Dr. Katie said.

Talking to Dr. Katie's assistant, I was rocked by unbearable waves of heartache, emotion and memories. I do not know how I even spoke or how the assistant understood my tear-choked, whispered explanation of Sammy's condition and Dr. Acree's recommendations, but she did. Her empathetic help and advice got me through scheduling the home appointment, including the calm explanation of immediate care I could provide for Sammy until then. She had to patiently repeat herself several times while comforting me during the long silences when I was unable to speak at all. Despite extremely short notice, she found an opening for us.

### Crossing the Rainbow Bridge

I stayed with Sammy, pouring my love onto her and talking to her about our seven years together. When Dr. Katie arrived, Sammy was in a favorite spot on the porch, surveying her huge backyard, where she was happiest. For the first time ever, she showed no reaction to a stranger, but stretched out beside me as if she were exhausted from a long run. She then let out such a long, deep breath like I had never heard from her. I thought she had passed. Although she did not lift her head, her eyes were open looking up at me with complete trust and such love.

As it was so many times in her life, I felt overwhelmed by Sammy's extraordinary intelligence, sensitivity and awareness.

I believe that she knew that this stranger softly and gently talking to her - Dr. Katie - was somehow bringing relief.

The atmosphere was calm and peaceful. Sammy allowed Dr. Katie to examine her without moving. As I petted my beautiful girl, I could only be thankful beyond words for in-home euthanasia services from someone like Dr. Katie, who made it possible for Sammy's passing to be as gentle as drifting to sleep in my arms. It is also impossible to describe how compassionately she cared for Sammy. She quietly informed me about the process each step of the way and comforted me before, during and after.

"It's not just the pet affected, but the entire family. I know the spectrum of emotions we go through when this time comes for a pet we love. It's one of the hardest goodbyes," said Dr. Katie.

### Forever Saving Sammy

Dr. Katie asked if I would like a lock of Sammy's hair to keep in a special memory pouch and a permanent print of her paw. Those suggestions were surprises for which I remain deeply grateful. Both are cherished keepsakes, placed with Sammy's photo.

As days go by, I catch myself still looking for Sammy or reaching down to pet her head and grab an ear. I deeply miss walking out of my bedroom in the morning to find her waiting and watching for me. I miss her companionship and the urgent way she searched for me if I moved out of her sight, until she knew that I was safely back in view.

Sammy preferred her bed or igloo on the porch outdoors, but sleeping on my clothing inside was the next-best thing. If nothing was within her reach, she would go straight into my closet and pull down whatever she wanted to curl up on. That is how I would find her, upon my clothes - washable or otherwise - happily snoring. I even miss that extra laundry and dry cleaning.

Although she is gone, I will always be thankful for the biggest foster-fail ever, the years we shared, and the joy Sammy brought me. Those are the memories I will forever save of Sammy.



Dr. Katie Stender making a print of Sammy's paw



### RESOURCES:

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# LOCAL FOLKS

Dust and Grizzley: George "Dust" Lugeanbeal and John "Grizzley" Volt

## Hiking the Florida Trail with

# GEORGE LUGEANBEAL

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS

If a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, how about stepping out for a 1,110-mile hike on the Florida Trail from Big Cypress National Preserve to Fort Pickens State Park in Pensacola Beach? Ortega resident George Lugeanbeal averaged 16 miles per day hiking the Trail, a journey of 70 days with a small interlude when his wife, Tami, "forced him to hike Disney World" to celebrate his daughter's birthday.

Lugeanbeal's previous hiking experience, aside from his daily jaunts around Ortega, include hikes on the Appalachian Trail and walking the woods of Northern Minnesota in his youth. After retirement, he was wooed by the Florida Trail after seeing a National Geographic National Trails map and realizing that the Florida Trail was interesting and close by. He described his "shakedown hike" – a 108-mile trial run from Key West to Key Largo with his wife, a credit card, water, snacks and stops at motels – as great fun, but hardly adequate preparation, for the first 100 miles of his "real" hiking experience, which included 42 miles through the Everglades.

"I thought, 'If every day is gonna be like this, I'm in for a rough time.' After slogging through waist deep water, our group of hikers made it to a high ground camping spot. I asked a veteran hiker who had hiked over 9,000 miles on numerous trails what she thought of the past 10 miles and her answer shocked me. She said it was the second hardest of her life. That encouraged me, since I felt I had faced great adversity and persevered. Of course, the Bradwell Bay section of Apalachicola National Forest is equally daunting," said George Lugeanbeal.

"Trail Angel" Tami prefers camping in the comfort of a motel with showers, meals and clean clothes and wouldn't think of stepping out anywhere without her make-up on and her hair arranged. But this dutiful, helpmate's contributions to her husband and his trail pals' success involved meet-ups to take hikers to the nearest town for food, supplies and laundromats. She made reservations for them at state parks – cell phone service was inconsistent – and offered her husband a chance for a shower and a meal at her motel campsite.

"I wouldn't even kiss him until he shaved," Tami Lugeanbeal said.

George Lugeanbeal agreed that after hiking and carrying a heavy backpack, slogging through creeks and underbrush for days at a time and not getting a haircut for 70 days, he "reeked."

"Tami and the other trail angels were givers and encouragers; it was great having someone go out of their way to be kind," he said.

George Lugeanbeal said meeting up with other hikers, especially an experienced hiker and outdoorsman from Utah, John "Grizzley" Volt, was "an answer to prayer." The hikers all had trail names and newcomer Lugeanbeal became "Dust," a nod to his age, 60, and a reference from the movie Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure.

Dust and Grizzley, random strangers arriving at the same place on the planet at the same time, meshed. They were compatible in age, pace and objectives: to answer the challenge, enjoy new encounters, meet new people, gain a sense of serenity and embrace the unknowns of the journey.

"Grizz kept me safe, mentored me; he is wise, experienced, and witty. When hiking, you are somewhat in your own orbit. You have to HYOH (hike your own hike), but he saved my fat, and I saved his a few times," said Lugeanbeal. "The hikers are fantastic, interesting, and I never expected to meet so many kind and encouraging people. My Trail Family or 'Tramily' was exceptional. I learned so much from them and cherish every one of them."

Tami described a situation when she had taken the group into the small town of Crawfordville to do laundry. She and George were chatting with the owner of the laundromat and hardware store. Grizzley had stepped across the street to the drugstore. By the time he returned, Tami and George's new laundromat friend had invited the hikers to camp at his "Man Cave" – a barn with air conditioning, a large-screen TV and other amenities. It just so happened that the Trail ran through part of his property.

George and Tami Lugeanbeal on the last steps, Day 70, of George's journey, at Fort Pickens State Park in Pensacola, Florida.

The "Tramily," resting at the Lugeanbeal's house before the Jacksonville-to-Pensacola leg, were known by nicknames on the trail: Daz, Honey Locust, Nin-Lives, Socrates, Grizzley, Jangles and Dust.

Lugeanbeal, who admits he can be "a bit longwinded," joked that all that talking he does paid off in this instance.

Getting adequate nutrition, visits, advice from his trail family on dealing with fatigue and injuries, and messages from family and friends from across the country were encouraging and helped Lugeanbeal on his journey. While his backpack was loaded with a tent, camp stove, food, medicine, toiletries, rain gear, phone charger and more, Lugeanbeal also showed appreciation for another essential item, sandals to wear in camp while his hiking shoes dried out. Wearing good shoes – a new pair around every 400 miles – and using blister tape was a must, but by mile 1,000 his feet had grown from a size 12EE to a size 13 EEEE. Lugeanbeal was thankful for the volunteers who maintain the trails, the Florida State Park staff who assist the hikers and people in the trail communities who welcome the hikers into their towns to camp, eat and resupply.

A shared joke with Grizzley –

"Knock, knock."

"Who's there?"

"Hike."

"Hike who?"

– inspired Lugeanbeal to write a book of haikus for his trail family and illustrate it with beautiful photographs from his Florida Trail adventure. It is a true reflection of the sense of wonder, the challenges, beauty and the incredible, postcard-like scenery of his personal experiences.

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# JOURNEYS IN AN RV

## Retirement on the Road Part 3 of 3: Have Food? Will Travel.

BY FAITH JONES

If you missed Parts 1 and 2, you can read them at [www.residentnews.net](http://www.residentnews.net)

Traveling can be even more fun when you get to discover something new along the way, especially if it's tasty.

Before starting our exploration trip of the Western United States, my brother-in-law, Paul, sent us a list of Food and Wine Magazine's 2021 Best Sandwiches in every state. We thought it would be fun to try the recommended sandwiches if we were passing through the proprietor's location.

It happened that we cruised through Boise during lunch time and located Idaho's entry, Cobby's Sandwich Shops, in a little strip mall in the 'burbs with plenty of parking for our RV.

The store's dark-wood-paneled walls were graced with numerous plaques commemorating the public's vote for Cobby's as the No. 1 sandwich shop through the years. The build-your-own sandwich menu was loaded with your choice of Italian meats, various cheeses and toppings. Stepping up to the five-foot-tall counter gave me just two inches to peek over the top and shout my order to the sandwich artisans on the other side of the barrier. The sandwiches were stuffed with flavorful meats and the right proportion of toppings. The bread was soft, chewy, and we could taste why they were popular.

Kansas took us to a two-story grouping of repurposed freight containers in search of Bierock, the sandwich. Prost Biergarten in Wichita is known for the best buns in the state. Inside, one of its walls was lined with German beer steins in locked cases. Patrons can buy a stein for a year. Then, every time you come to the restaurant you can fill it for a discount and enjoy it with brats and Bierock, a heavenly yeast roll filled with meat, cabbage, onions and spices. Delicious. The owner immigrated from Germany years ago and brought the flagship German cuisine with her.



The Crown Burger from Salt Lake City, Utah, boasts a cheeseburger with pastrami and a special sauce for french fries.



Spongy, fresh-baked bread steals the show at the family-owned Cobby's Sandwich Shops, with two restaurants in Boise, Idaho.

The most unique sandwich was at Crown Burger in Salt Lake City, Utah. This family-owned restaurant serves up the biggest double-patty cheeseburger topped with expertly-seasoned pastrami, all bursting out of the paper wrapping. If the mega-burger is not enough to awaken your taste buds, the french fry condiment will have you licking your fingers clean. Come hungry, as you will leave not wanting to eat for a day or two.

We scouted out Pike's Place Market in Seattle, Washington, and the legendary Market Grill for their Blackened Salmon Sandwich, served on a baguette with herbed aioli and grilled veggies. We sat outside under an umbrella table while a light drizzle fell on the Saturday shoppers and enjoyed the crunchy baguette with the pillow-soft inside containing a large piece of perfectly-cooked salmon topped with lettuce.

Leave it to the locals to steer you toward great food. We struck up a conversation with a guy in Arkansas while at a AAA baseball game. He travels the world for his job and mentioned that we needed to try an onion burger, as it was the best burger he had ever eaten. So, while in Tulsa, Oklahoma, we did just that. We located Society Restaurant



The Market Grill, near the shore of Elliott Bay in Seattle, offers the "World Famous Blackened Salmon Sandwich."



The classic Onion Burger at Society Restaurant in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

and tried their famous Onion Burger. Strings of grilled onions were worked into the patty before grilling the meat, similar to a smash burger with onions. It may not have made Food and Wine's Best Sandwiches list, but we felt it worthy of an Honorable Mention.



## Jacksonville Fall RV Show Oct. 5-8

The Jacksonville Fall RV Show returns to Northeast Florida Oct. 5-8 at the Jacksonville Equestrian Center, located at 13611 Normandy Blvd. Show hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. Regular admission is \$10 for adults. Children 12 and under are free. On Oct. 5, seniors will receive half-price admission. All active and retired military and first responders will receive half off the regular admission price throughout the show. Tickets are sold at the gate.

More than 300 RVs will be on display from dealers like Campers Inn of Jacksonville, Dana Drake's Countryside RV, D&H Truck Emporium, General RV Center and Blue Compass RV. In addition to booths from RV suppliers, campground owners and other vendors, the show offers a family-friendly atmosphere with music, concessions and giveaways. Leashed pets are allowed. For more information, visit [nefrvdealers.com/fall-rv-show](http://nefrvdealers.com/fall-rv-show).

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# THE WAY WE WERE

## Marsha and Ronnie Pollock

BY MARY WANSEER

Marsha Leibo Pollock is a second-generation Jacksonville native, born at St. Vincent's in Riverside to a retail family. She spent her toddler years in St. Nicholas, where her father had built one of the first houses in a subdivision off Beach Boulevard. When she was 4, Marsha's family moved from there to Holly Lane in the Colonial Manor section of San Marco. That was her home for many years.

Marsha attended Southside Grammar School Number 7 before Landon High School.

"Everybody went to the neighborhood school then. It's different now. The same kids I went to elementary school with, I went to high school with. It's just the way Jacksonville was then," she said.

Marsha grew up with one sibling, a younger brother named Meyer. They spent quite a bit of time together in their backyard pool.

"We had a lot of parties. Everybody was always over at our house," she said.

Every weekend found Marsha at the San Marco Theater via the Colonial Manor bus. Birthdays were spent at The George Washington Hotel, with its music and dancing. Cruising to Lou Bono's on Beach Boulevard was quite the fad.

"We used to play our football games at the Gator Bowl. It wasn't like it is now," she said.

No matter the event, a group would often be found hanging out at Marsha's house afterwards.

Upon her 1960 graduation from Landon, Marsha went off to the University of Georgia (UGA).

"I didn't want to stay home. I wanted to go away,"



Leibo's on West Bay St., downtown Jacksonville.

Mr. and Mrs. Pollock, August 19, 1962.

she said.

Fate must have been calling her, because that's where she met Ronnie Pollock, who would become her husband.

"It was a blind date," he said, that brought them together.

They wed in August 1962 at the Jacksonville Jewish Center, where Marsha had been bat mitvahed. The couple lived in Atlanta for 10 years before Ronnie received a job offer that would bring the family close to where the company's main office was located, Jacksonville. That's what brought Marsha back home in 1972, now with three children in tow: Joy, Stacy, and Lee. The children would be raised in San Jose Forest, and Marsha liked that they had their maternal grandparents close by.

"It was home for me, but I'd never lived here married. I had to make a new life here as a couple, so I got involved in my synagogue," Marsha said.

For nearly a decade, Marsha worked as a preschool teacher at Solomon Schechter Day School, housed at the Jacksonville Jewish Center, while her children were students there, before they attended Wolfson and graduated from UGA, their parents' alma mater.

After leaving the school, Marsha filled a variety of positions at Leibo's, a men's shop that her father had owned for 55 years. She was an officer, bookkeeper and cashier from 1984 until 1993. Leibo's occupied various locations throughout the city, beginning at 105 West Bay Street downtown, then moving to Adams Street before ending up on Beach Boulevard.

Over the years, Marsha has volunteered, too. A lot.



Pollock family celebration, 2022.

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The Pollocks' 42-year family home in San Jose Forest.



Pollock family trip to South Carolina.

Within two years of beginning teaching, she had become president of the Sisterhood at the Center. By 2014, she was board president of River Garden Hebrew Home in the Mandarin area. In 2016, she was dubbed the first female president of the synagogue. The River Garden Auxiliary referred to her as a "volunteer extraordinaire." That title is apt, considering that she has sat in the president's seat of nine different boards.

Ronnie, a chemist, made a career in printing-ink sales and supplies for a company called CPNW Printing. His projects included Lay's potato chip bags, several coffee companies' containers, and some supermarket chains' grocery bags.

"We made ink for packaging, not for ballpoint pens," Ronnie said. "My job when I moved from Atlanta, Georgia, to Jacksonville, Florida, was to begin a research lab."

The lab was located at University Boulevard and St. Augustine Road. He traveled around the country during the week, doing research, visiting clients and giving speeches. When he wasn't traveling, Ronnie always managed to remain active.

"He's a huge, huge tennis player. And he's done River Runs," Marsha said of her husband.

Ronnie would play matches at a few different racquet clubs. There was Baymeadows, where top players from around the country were brought in on center court, and Bigtree, which is now the Williams Family YMCA on San Jose Boulevard.

"I played for 48 years. Ninety percent of those 48 years, I played singles," Ronnie said.

When he did play doubles, Ronnie would play with Wayne Sanderson as his partner. Together, they won a championship match at Bigtree. Ronnie then moved on to Hendricks, where he and his buddy played singles on the soft court, which he called the "best in Jacksonville." He had still been on the court up until three years ago when a fall led to knee replacement surgery.

Since Ronnie's business retirement in 2021, he's been up to "a number of things." For one, he flies recreational airplanes out of The Radio Control Club of Jacksonville. He likes cars, too. He has a 1959 classic Corvette convertible, red with a white cove, which he's used to chauffeur children for Dreams Come True's annual Dreamer parade and for special events at Beauclerc Elementary School. He attends weekly men's luncheons. And once in a while, he still likes to hit a tennis ball against a wall simply because he misses it so badly.

Marsha, too, is still up to a number of things of her own and is an active volunteer within the Jewish community.

"I never have a minute," she said.

For 42 years, the Pollocks called the same house in San Jose Forest "home." But with the kids grown and gone, Ronnie and Marsha moved to The Palazzo at St. Johns on Goodby's Creek, only two miles away. They had been one of the first two couples to move into the Tuscan-inspired condominium community. They enjoy walking the neighborhood together daily.

They frequent local eateries, too, but Marsha still misses what was.

"All the things I grew up on are gone," she said.

Patti's Restaurant had been her favorite, where she ate for every special occasion.

Biser's and Sandy's Steer Room were two others. Ronnie holds fond memories of

Sundays at the in-laws' house. Marsha's father would buy several pounds of corned beef and dozens of rolls from the local delicatessen.

The extended Leibo family and many friends would gather near the pool in the backyard and eat sandwiches.

"On weekends, it was all about our family," Marsha said.

The Pollocks' own family has now grown to include five grandchildren. August 19 marked the Pollocks' 61st wedding anniversary.



On a family cruise for the Pollocks' 50th wedding anniversary.



Ronnie Pollock driving for Dreams Come True children.

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# Thank You Notes



## From My Empty Nest Perch

BY SUSANNA BARTON

I am grateful for all the friends I've made over the years in this neighborhood. If there's one thing I've learned in my nearly 30 years here, it's that our "people" – our besties, our go-to ride-or-dies, the people on our life dream team – are the ones who live nearby and complement our family dynamics, careers, schedules and activities. The formula is that simple..

It took me a long, tearful time to figure this out. I did not understand how friends who lived across town enjoyed lives and friendships so out of step with mine. What was I doing wrong? Why weren't we tracking better? Do I smell funny?

What a waste of time and productive brain cells! I soon realized I was doing the exact same thing as my friends in other neighborhoods. My steps, pace and path were wonderful and unique to my experience. Like everyone else, I was just doing life with the people closest to me and my progeny. No harm, no foul; no

preference, no exclusion; it was just that simple formula being put to practice.

I'll always treasure the neighborhood friendships that now define me. Let me share some of the highlights of this 25-year stroll.

My earliest interactions with neighborhood peeps were born in a Southbank office building – the old Stein Mart building, to be exact. In this glorious pre-kids era of life, I was a staff writer with the Jacksonville Business Journal and made fast friends and new community with my co-workers. This illustrious list of folks included people who are still doing big things for Jacksonville, including Riverkeeper's Lisa Rowe Rinaman, neighborhood Realtor Kimberly Waterhouse, agency leaders and marketing strategists Renay and John Daigle and Haskell Director of Corporate Marketing Kristilee LaFalce Adler, as well as an array of dedicated journalists, public relations friends and industry executives who were part of the local media landscape. We worked and socialized together with enthusiasm, enjoying lunches at High Tide and European Street, and happy hour escapades at nearby hotspots like Partners, Crowdaddy's, The Chart House and yes, even Sherwood's.

The arrival of children changed my socializing parameters real quick. Though I continued to work, it was no longer exhilarating to go out after work, drink beer and eat Partners' crockpot meatballs like I had in the past. I realized, with great

sadness at the time, that it was time to put myself out there and meet some new friends, some MOM friends. How bleak, I grumbled. Luckily, we lived at the Main-and-Main of all things mommy and stroller-y. Our home on Granada Park and its easy connection to packed stroller sidewalks, was pole position for this new chapter of friend-making. It was there, on one of those packed stroller sidewalks, that my baby boy Ben and I literally bumped strollers with Lindsey Lastinger Riggs and her son, Turner. The Riggs family soon became our closest friends and confidants. They have been such a life gift; thank you, packed stroller sidewalks!

Granada Park, of course, also was ground zero for new mommy relationships. I met many moms there by the big metal slide and I still call them friends today: people like Laura Jane Pittman, Andy Newman, Patti Joyce, Mary Bream Chupp, Jana Soefker and so many others. I soon discovered having children was my passport to a beautiful new world of would-be playmates – for my children AND my negative old crockpot-meatball-loving self. Far from dull, meeting mommy friends was fulfilling in every way. I am grateful for Granada Park and the sweet setting it provided for the development of new friendships.

It was about this time that I started saying YES to social invitations, ones that led to even richer, more meaningful neighborhood relationships. I said YES to playgroup gatherings, supper clubs, mom drinking groups, church Bible studies, church fellowship, poolside playtime at Epping Forest Yacht Club, community volunteer efforts and other social events that sounded like fun. Saying YES expanded my social horizons in the most positive ways.

Granada Park and a YES answer were the perfect pairing for another life friendship milestone, the creation of a music ensemble that still flourishes today. During a visit to the park nearly 20 years ago, I met violin (and everything!) extraordinaire Kathryn Pearson Peyton who had designs on creating a string trio with another new friend, Avondale violaist/violinist Margaret Dees. What began with a park YES grew into a monthly musical gathering and melodious friendship that continues to this day.

Over time, our children's schools became the new fertile ground for finding new friendships. From Southside United Methodist Preschool to Riverside Presbyterian Day School and The Bolles School, the kids made some wonderful buddies with exceptionally nice parents who eventually became our lifelong friends and carpool partners: the Beavers, the Putnals, the Barakats, the Trednicks and so many more lovely, wonderful humans. For anyone currently in that bullet-sweating, OMG-I-have-to-meet-new-friends-boo stage, please know your children's schools are a close second (if not a first-place tie with) neighborhood parks for meeting new parent people and other families. Oh, and DUH – please add CHURCH or worship community to this first place scramble, it's definitely a three-way tie with parks and schools. Neighborhood prayer palaces offer the same opportunities for success in new friend-making as parks and schools. By nature, churches are welcoming places that promote relationships of all kinds, whether it's with God, or nature or an angel neighbor down the street! In our case, All Saints Episcopal Church helped

bring countless friends to our lives. So, if you're concerned about this new chapter of life socializing, be assured a park, school or church near you is teeming with opportunities for new connections and YESes.

As I flash forward to the present state of my local relationship-building, I realize a comfortable lull has settled in. Especially after the kids left the house for college and life beyond. Especially when I retired from full-time work. There were no longer have-tos on the friend-making front. I felt momentary relief, then fear. I began my reckoning with a new kind of social chapter, the one called "I'm in it for Myself and my Spouse." Like the "All Things Mommy and Stroller-y" chapter, this period was a little daunting at first. My first thoughts were these: I don't need or want any more friends; I'm too tired to make new friends; I don't want to get to know anyone else, it's way too complicated and heavy – and irritating; and best, I have enough friends. Period.

I'm here to tell you that lull is an error in thinking. Our neighborhoods are too closely-knit and radiant to be stagnant in this area of life. You just can't escape the flow.

Not long after I had sworn off new friends, I got a letter from one of those back-in-the-day, mommy, park friends. She was starting a monthly gathering of moms in our stage of life and asked if I might be inclined to join them. Experience has taught me YES is always the best answer. A few months later, a writer friend I adore – but rarely see – texted with a happy hour invitation to meet up with two neighbor moms. My YES response resulted in more fun gatherings than I can count. A YES to trying pickleball has created court camaraderie I never dreamed of enjoying. I was so wrong; the blessing of neighborhood friends has no limit and always adds new dimension to life.

I bet if you take account of the go-to peeps in your life, you'll have the same revelation: the most dependable, relatable, unchanging friends are the ones who live closest to you or are ingrained in some aspect, history or experience of your family's life. I'm so grateful this has been the case for my tribe, even though I wasn't initially sure of it, even when I didn't realize proximity and saying YES is the key to forever friendships in our Resident Community.

Susanna Barton loves spending time with friends but also is perfectly content to be alone – for days, weeks even. She raised her family in Granada and has written professionally for The Jacksonville Business Journal, The Resident, Jacksonville University and The Bolles School. She currently manages an online community called Grand Plans, which addresses geridrama and all things elderly on [www.mygrandplans.com](http://www.mygrandplans.com). Each month, she will share reflections on neighborhood qualities for which she is grateful.



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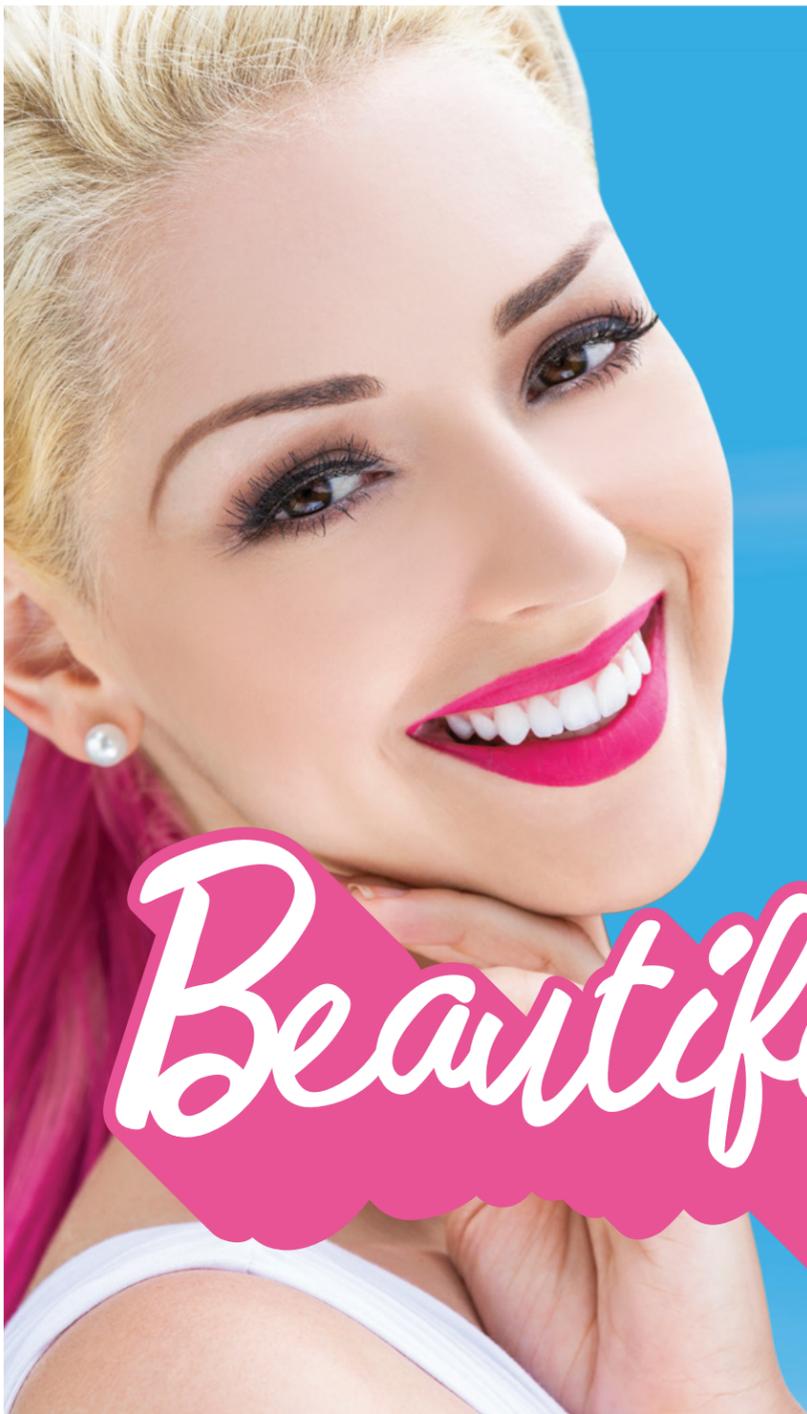
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I N M E M O R I A M

# Marvin "Ceree" Cecil Harden III

May 4, 1953 - August 14, 2023

one of the fastest-growing sub-markets in Jacksonville.

Ceree was proud of his Jacksonville roots, and in the spirit of a true servant leader, he dedicated much of his time and expertise to organizations that support critical needs of the community. His father, a founding board member of Baptist Medical Center, passed along his passion for quality healthcare in our community. During his 20 years of service on the Baptist board, he served as a board chair for Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville as well as secretary and treasurer on the Baptist Health System Board.

When Jacksonville needed a strategic leader to guide its growth and development efforts, they tapped Ceree to chair the Jacksonville Economic Development Commission, where he conducted a reorganization that improved effectiveness and accountability, as well as developing a project evaluation matrix that is still used to evaluate projects seeking incentives today. A member of the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce throughout his career, he served as Chamber chair in 1999 and chaired numerous committees, including Cornerstone, the economic development arm of the Chamber.

Ceree also chaired the Jacksonville Community Council's Quality of Life Committee, served as the director and president of the Independent Insurance Agents of Greater Jacksonville, and served as the director and finance chair of the Florida Association of Insurance Agents. His dedication extended to his service on the boards of Jacksonville Port Authority, FPIC Insurance Group, Riverside Presbyterian Day School, Episcopal School of Jacksonville and The River Club.

Ceree's remarkable journey earned him a place in the First Coast Business Hall of Fame, recognition as a Jacksonville Business Journal Ultimate CEO Award recipient, and leadership honors from the University of North Florida's Coggin School of Business. He stood as an honorary member of Leadership Jacksonville and was bestowed the prestigious Hope Award, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's highest tribute for exceptional civic and community service.

By anyone's measure, Ceree's life was one of success and achievement few can match. But for him, family was his ultimate joy and motivation. He was especially proud of his children and would often share with others their successes and express admiration for the people they have become. He doted on his grandchildren and enjoyed his role of "Papa," especially the hugs and special moments that came along with it. He strived to instill the same values and faith that shaped his childhood in his own children. That ever-present faith was always

a guiding force in his life. In his last couple of years, he found a particularly deep solace beginning each day with scriptures and prayer alongside his wife, companion and caretaker, Shannon.

Ceree's was a life well lived, just shorter than we wanted. His natural enthusiasm for people was the foundation for the success he found in life. If you had good news, he was the first to celebrate you; if there was a problem, he helped you find a solution; if you knew him well, he was likely to include you on a quail hunt or fishing trip, a Gator or Jaguars game (if you were especially lucky, a FL/GA game), a trip to the Masters or Kentucky Derby or a night of delicious food and exceptional wine in his home. He shared his joy of traveling with his big family - with especially memorable trips to Vancouver, Canada, the Tuscan countryside, and Sea Island, where he and Shannon were married. Fortunately or unfortunately, he also passed along his ability to just barely catch a flight. Although his travels took him far and wide, his treasured home away from home was his condo in Amelia Island where he experienced respite with a cup of coffee watching the sunrise or reading a novel. Ever an early riser, he eagerly greeted the day with a workout, a nourishing shake, a full 32 oz. Nalgene of water and a plan for the day. Hardly, if ever, was there a time when Ceree didn't have a well-crafted plan.

Ceree's legacy lives on in the hearts of his family, friends, and the city he so profoundly impacted. He worked to ensure that this city would be an even better place for those he loved to call home; he knew that they, in turn, would continue the family tradition of community stewardship. His legacy is in good hands.

Ceree was preceded in death by his parents, M.C. Harden Jr and Edith Harden Kerlin. He is survived by his wife, Shannon Stoddard Harden; his children, Christian Harden (Stephanie), Ansley Busch (Lawson), Blake Harden, Brooke Michaelis (William) and Maxwell Harden; his stepdaughters Kameron Anderson (Cody) and Jordyn Stoddard; his grandchildren, Miles Harden, Mackenzie Harden, Zoey Harden, Arlen Busch, Barrett Busch, Huntley Michaelis and Wells Michaelis; his step-grandchildren, Haven Anderson and Avery Anderson; his siblings, Paul Harden, Steve Harden and Donna Harden; his nephews Brandon Harden and Alexander Harden; and former spouse Kathy Plath.

*In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the ALS Association in memory of Ceree. You can also honor him by following in his footsteps - where you see a need, get involved. Where you see a problem, be part of the solution. Be an example of servant leadership that he would be proud of.*

Marvin Cecil "Ceree" Harden III passed away peacefully on Monday, August 14, 2023, surrounded by his family, after a private battle with ALS.

Ceree was a deeply beloved father, husband, brother, grandfather, uncle and friend. Not only an immense loss for his family and lifelong friends, Jacksonville lost a prominent business and civic leader and tireless community servant who made an indelible impact on the city he loved.

A native of Jacksonville, Ceree was born on May 4, 1953, to M.C. and Edith Harden. He and his three siblings grew up in the Northside and Arlington neighborhoods of Jacksonville. Born just 17 months apart and spending the majority of their lives living just a few miles from each other, he and his elder brother Paul nurtured a rare and enduring bond. Marv, as he was known in his formative years, graduated from Terry Parker High School where he forged lifelong best friends with whom he walked through all phases and seasons of life. He then made his way to the University of Florida, graduating with a bachelor's degree in business administration with high honors.

Following his father's sudden death, Ceree stepped in at 26 and took over Harden Insurance Services, the business founded by his father in 1953. Ceree expanded the company, later known as Harden, from a three-employee personal lines insurance agency to one of the Southeast's most prominent independent insurance brokerage and consulting firms. Ceree's guidance and mentorship paved the way for the growth and development of innumerable employees, fostering a deep sense of loyalty that led many to dedicate their entire careers to the firm, transforming Harden into not just a workplace but a second family for many.

A stalwart industry leader for four decades, Ceree recognized the changing tides of globalization and, with a focus on the well-being of his employees and clients, orchestrated the sale of Harden to A.J. Gallagher & Co. in 2020, a pivotal move that marked a new chapter in the firm's journey. Today, Gallagher's name remains at the top of a 13-story mixed-use tower that Ceree led efforts to develop in 2007, a testament to his visionary leadership in recognizing potential in the Brooklyn neighborhood adjacent to downtown, now

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# Understanding Grief and Mourning

by Elainah Ehrlichman

Losing someone you love is always a painful experience. Whether their death was sudden or had been expected for some time, the finality of death is never something you can truly prepare yourself for. When you lose a loved one, we want you to know that every one of your feelings are valid, and we are here to help support and guide you through the grieving and mourning processes.

Many times, the terms “grieving” and “mourning” are used interchangeably. While this is okay, it is still important to understand the differences between the two. According to official Dignity Memorial literature written by Therese A. Rando, grieving is understood as the process of experiencing your reactions to the loved one you have lost, while mourning is understood as the steps you take to cope with that loss. Essentially, grieving is internal, and mourning is the physical expression of that grief. Both grieving and mourning are as unique as the individual themselves, and because of that, no two people will ever experience grief or mourning the exact same way.

You may have heard of the five stages of grieving. Generally, these are known as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. These stages certainly have their place in helping individuals understand their emotions, but since the grieving process and the experiences that come with it are so complex and unique to each individual, it's hard to categorize it down into a simple number of stages. Beyond anger, sadness, and the other emotions mentioned, you might also experience numbness, confusion, guilt, or notice physical symptoms of your grief. Fortunately, as unpleasant as it may be to experience these things, they are all normal and expected grief responses.

Mourning looks different for everyone too, much like how grieving looks different for everyone. For some, mourning may mean spending more time alone or going through old photographs, while for others, it may mean throwing oneself deeply into work or another hobby as a coping tactic. The combinations of ways people grieve and mourn are endless, and beyond that, they are not linear. These

processes can be compared to weather patterns, as they shift, change, and move. One day it will be sunny, and the next it will be dismal and stormy. These ups and downs are normal parts of the grieving and mourning processes, and going back and forth between these ups and downs does not mean you aren't healing; in fact, it's a sign that you are.

Sometimes, understanding that your grieving process is completely normal is not enough to bring about solace. We'd like to remind you that Hardage-Giddens is here to help you whenever you need it, and if you ever need to reach out for some extra support, we encourage and applaud you for doing so. Asking for help is a difficult feat for many, and we understand that taking this step can be scary and uncomfortable. However, we are here for exactly that reason; to walk alongside you during your grieving and mourning processes. Please reach out to any of our Hardage-Giddens locations for information regarding our incredible grief resources, and remember, you will get through this. Sunny days are always ahead.

**Hardage-Giddens is hosting a charity walk to raise funds for the Dylan's Dream Foundation!  
The walk will take place this October 7th at 9 AM at our Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn Cemetery location.**

The Dylan's Dream Foundation is a non-profit organization based out of Jacksonville, FL that supports students with cystic fibrosis (CF) who want to attend college. After losing his son Dylan to CF, founder Bert Ashley Williams Jr. established the Dylan's Dream Foundation to commemorate his son and bring awareness to the disease. Visit the Dylan's Dream website at [www.dylansdream.org](http://www.dylansdream.org) to learn more about their mission and the groundbreaking work they've accomplished.

**We look forward to seeing you on October 7th, and be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes!**

## Join us for a charity walk supporting Dylan's Dream Foundation.

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