



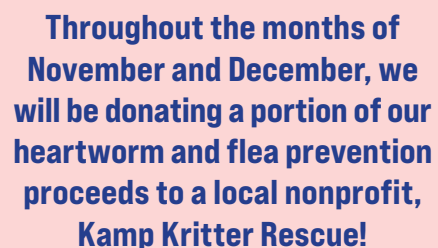
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Memorandum of Understanding Brings JTA into Emerald Trail Partnership

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), executed between the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) and Groundwork Jacksonville is bringing the Emerald Trail one step closer to completion.

The MOU was announced at a press conference in front of The Cummer Museum of Arts and Gardens on Thursday, Oct. 26. In attendance were Mayor Donna Deegan, District 7 City Councilmember Jimmy Peluso, JTA CEO Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr. and Groundwork Jacksonville CEO Kay Ehas.

“We as a city need to make sure we are remaining competitive with other peer cities,” said Peluso. “We need to make sure we are doing things different than other places while also making sure we are doing things in the best interests of our residents. The Emerald Trail is that project.”

The MOU details a collaboration between Groundwork Jacksonville and the JTA for the Emerald Trail’s five remaining segments: Segment 3 (the southwest connector), Segment 4 (the S-line connector), Segment 6 (the westside connector), Segment 7 (the northwest connector) and Segment 8 (the eastside connector). While Groundwork Jacksonville will oversee community engagement, planning and design of these segments, the JTA will be responsible for approving the final design and then overseeing the construction side of things.

“We at JTA take pride in providing holistic transportation solutions and, you may have heard me say, the better our community moves, the greater it will become,” said Ford. “So this pedestrian, bicycle-friendly trail will help us with that connectivity. It’s not just about the concrete, the asphalt of the project. It’s about moving people and creating a greater quality of life.”

These five segments will be funded, in part, by \$132 million from the local option gas tax.

Currently, 40% of the Emerald Trail is either in design or under construction with its first link – the LaVilla Link, connecting Brooklyn to LaVilla and the S-Line Rail Link – expected to open this January.

Once completed, the 30-mile trail will connect 21 parks, 16 schools, 14 urban neighborhoods, three hospitals, two colleges and the JTA Regional Transportation Center.

Ehas said some of the most important voices to be heard in “planning, designing, activating and maintaining this trail and the park system” are those of the residents



JTA Immediate Past Chair Ari Jolly, JTA CEO Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr., Groundwork Jacksonville CEO Kay Ehas, Mayor Donna Deegan, District 7 City Councilmember Jimmy Peluso.

who live in the neighborhoods the trail will connect.

“Historically, they have had no say in what happens to their neighborhoods,” she said. “That’s not right. Groundwork Jacksonville believes neighborhood organizations and residents should lead neighborhood revitalization efforts and we are committed to working with them to build their capacity to do so.”

In her address, Deegan expanded on the impact a completed Emerald Trail will have on the newly linked communities and Jacksonville as a whole.

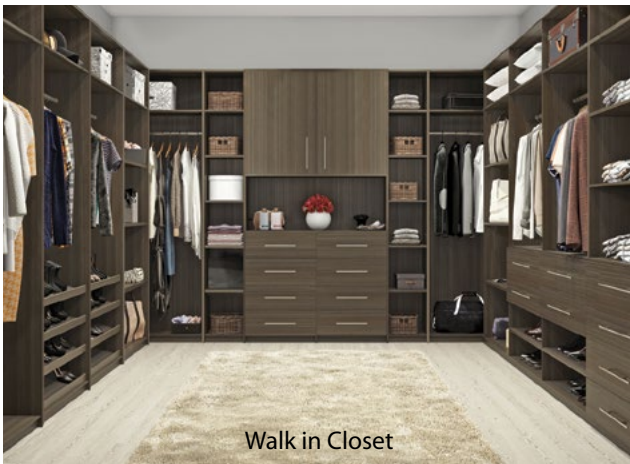
“The Emerald Trail will be an incredible catalyst for social and economic opportunity in Jacksonville,” she said. “From encouraging healthy lifestyles, as I said, and promoting public safety, to spurring neighborhood revitalization and economic development.”

The Emerald Trail Master Plan was first announced in 2019. Stakeholders broke ground on the first link in LaVilla in 2021.

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Southeast-view rendering of the RD River City Brewery development. Northwest-view rendering of the RD River City Brewery development.

Designs Approved for RD River City Brewery

Final designs for the RD River City Brewery mixed-use project were approved by the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) on Oct. 12. The \$92 million project spans 3.4 acres along the Southbank and includes 410 residential units, a riverfront restaurant and boat ramp. The residential space will be comprised of an eight-story residential block and a 24-story tower with a ground-level swimming pool and courtyard. More than 500 spaces of attached, covered parking accompany the design.

The designs were created by MSA Architects and Carlos Ott Architect, while engineering and landscape architecture was provided by GAI Consultants.

Jacksonville Squashes Predatory Lending

In October, the Jacksonville City Council voted unanimously to declare that Florida PACE Funding Agency’s continued operation in Jacksonville without authorization from the City of Jacksonville is a public health, safety and welfare emergency. The legislation, which was introduced by City Council President Ron Salem and co-sponsored by 14 council members, also authorizes the Office of General Counsel to initiate litigation, as appropriate, to stop Florida PACE Funding Agency from operating in the city.

“Florida PACE operates a business preying on our residents,” said Salem. “Their financing options will end with homeowners paying grossly inflated property tax bills which could end in a tax deed sale should the property owner not be able to pay their property taxes. We cannot put our constituents in these types of situations and must protect them from these predatory practices.”

The long-term loans have high interest rates and are attached to a property’s tax bill, meaning that if the bill goes unpaid, a super lien – which gives the loan priority over other loans such as a mortgage – can be placed on the property. In Duval County, the loan program is being used primarily by homeowners, with the biggest concentration based in parts of the Northside and Northwest Jacksonville.

“I want to thank Council President Salem and the entire City Council for swiftly and unanimously passing this important legislation that will save citizens from financial ruin,” said Mayor Donna Deegan. “I urge everyone in Jacksonville to tell their neighbors about these predatory loans so that another family isn’t hurt by this damaging practice.”

A New Grant for Residential Development

Cathedral District-Jax (CDJ), Inc. has been awarded a \$30,000 grant by the Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation to support efforts to revitalize the 36-block, historic Cathedral District in downtown Jacksonville. This grant award will provide funds to acquire residential land for new housing development. The nonprofit prioritizes mixed-income housing for residents earning at or just below area median income.

Ginny Myrick, president and CEO of CDJ, said the Jaguars Foundation has annually been supportive of CDJ’s mission due to the neighborhood’s proximity to the sports complex now in development and the hundreds of future employees that will be drawn to work in the area.

“[The] donation of \$30,000 is unrestricted and will be used for general revenue to sustain our ongoing

mission to facilitate 2,500 new residential units to be built in the district to add to its existing 1,500 residents,” she said. “In our six years of formation, we have successfully advocated and partnered for the construction of over 650 residential units in the district, which are either in financing, under construction or opened.”

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Construction along Edgewood Avenue began earlier this summer by Superior Construction.

Improvements Ahead for Edgewood Avenue South

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Phase one construction has begun for the Edgewood Avenue South from Roosevelt Boulevard to Cassat Avenue Roadway Improvements project.

The project began earlier this summer and is expected to wrap summer 2024 at an estimated cost of \$7.66 million with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The contractor for this project is Superior Construction.

Currently underway in this first phase is construction on sidewalks, driveways and decorative lighting at the Roosevelt overpass.

“Phase 2 will include new raised median construction, new median parking and pedestrian crosswalk island construction,” said FDOT Community Outreach Specialist Nathan Pick.

The Project Details page for this project (available at nflroads.com) outlines additional improvements and enhancements for this project, including:

- Milling and resurfacing of Edgewood Avenue from U.S. 17 to Lenox Avenue and Lenox Avenue from Edgewood Avenue to Cassat Avenue;
- Construction of a roundabout-style traffic configuration at the intersection of Edgewood Avenue and Plymouth Street for improved traffic flow;
- Installation of bike lanes, shared use lane markings, mid-block crossings and traffic signal, sidewalk and signage upgrades;
- Lighting upgrades including new luminaires for streetlights and under-deck lighting at the U.S. 17 overpass.

Drivers saw “continuous lane closures” along Edgewood Avenue from College Street to Lenox Avenue during the first week of October to allow for construction work. According to FDOT, no lane closures will be permitted from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. along Edgewood Avenue between Roosevelt Boulevard to Mayflower Street. One lane in each direction will remain open on Edgewood from Mayflower Street to Cassat Avenue for the duration of this project.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

The views and opinions expressed in the Letters to the Editor belong solely to the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of this publication or its editorial team.

Neighborhood associations have spent hours negotiating and lobbying for and against rezoning attempts throughout the years. There will always be a push and pull between developers and neighbors, one trying to expand and change the landscape, the other often trying to preserve why they moved there in the first place. The backdrop to these rezoning negotiations is the enduring question of what the city should look like long into the future. Urban planning is critical to addressing the needs of residents as well as developers. A clear understanding of the rules, consistency in applying those rules, and predictability are worth their weight in gold for all. A multi-decade plan supported by stakeholders that demonstrates compromise and a clear vision is critical, because without this, development within the city will be haphazard, incongruous and unsupported by residents. In the meantime, however, some degree of flexibility in the zoning code is necessary as there will be times when a proposed project might not fit neatly within zoning rules but will have an overall positive impact on the city, this is when the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process is helpful.

The PUD process, in practicality, essentially allows a developer to start with a fresh slate and write their own zoning rules within certain state and local legal parameters. But the reality is the process affords a developer broad leeway. The PUD process offers a public benefit in that it allows for negotiation and compromise, unlike rezonings in which there is no availability for compromise. With a PUD, the community has input into the specifics of a project such as setbacks, architecture, landscaping, etc. These issues are often negotiated for months, and compromises are made with the result almost always being approval of the development, with one recent exception: the storage unit proposal in San Marco. This proposal was so outside of what the community, neighbors and city wanted that it failed to reach any consensus. Here, the process worked.

What is critical to the PUD process is that neighbors and community organizations representing neighborhood integrity understand clearly what the rules are and how to leverage them. This means plainly understanding whether the compromises reached and reflected in the PUD document are legally enforceable. For example, if SMPS or RAP provides support for a development after gaining concessions on, for example, landscaping enhancements or architectural features it is critical that they understand whether these concessions are legally enforceable. If it is the case that even after negotiations and compromise neighbors are still reliant on the goodwill of the developer rather than a legally binding document, residents need to know this. I believe it is incumbent on the Deegan Administration to work hard to effectively educate neighborhood groups and citizens on the PUD process and what exactly in the document is legally enforceable, what is ultimately dependent on the goodwill of the developer, and what can be changed unilaterally by the Administration during the final review of the project. Let’s be honest, neighbors and neighborhood organizations simply do not have the resources in time and money to hire lobbyists to negotiate every development that is introduced, nor should they have to. Mayor Deegan and the city should offer clear assistance to neighborhood organizations like SMPS and RAP to negotiate with developers fairly and effectively. And frankly, above-board developers should welcome this. Fair is fair. At the end of the day, I believe progress is good, but projects should not be negotiated without both sides of the table having full knowledge of the law and understanding any unintended consequences of agreements made.

-LeAnna Cumber



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Peluso Pleased with Budget Progress, Projects Ahead

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

After hours of debate and discussion at its meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 26, the Jacksonville City Council approved the \$1.75 billion budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 – a 14% increase from last year’s.

This new budget went into effect on Oct. 1. Along with the new budget came a new Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) with funding for citywide projects spread across a multi-year plan. These are both new projects and those that have carried over from previous years that are still underway. Included in the CIP is funding for extensive infrastructural work, including sidewalk, drainage and road installations and improvements, as well as traffic calming features, structural improvements, renovations to several public library branches, and new and continued construction on city parks, and more.

District 7 City Councilmember Jimmy Peluso said he was able to advance the \$250,000 funding for the Riverside Avenue Drainage Study to this new fiscal year, which he said had previously been scheduled for two years from now. While specific dates for the study haven’t been determined, Peluso said the study will now be completed this year; it will focus on Riverside Avenue from “King [Street] to over by the Publix.”

“We’re trying to figure out why drainage is so poor there,” he said. Peluso said one of his “biggest issues” in the CIP was incomplete projects from prior years that weren’t scheduled to receive additional funding to see them through to completion. One of these projects was the Hogan Street Connector for the Emerald Trail, which now has \$2.5 million scheduled for this new fiscal year and the one following.

“The Emerald Trail’s incredibly important to me; it’s incredibly important to a lot of folks in the city. This project was funded last year and just was not in the budget this year,” he said. “Things like that need to get cleaned up, and need to be cleaned up quickly, in order to get things moving.”

Substantial excitement continues to build around the city’s plans for new riverfront parks, especially the Riverfront Plaza and Shipyards West. Peluso introduced a pair of floor amendments for \$20 million and \$40 million in funding for successive years for both parks, respectively, to ensure these “world-class parks” are seen through to fruition.

Ultimately, Peluso withdrew both amendments. “I didn’t get them in the budget on paper, but I was told by enough folks that, ‘Hey, don’t worry, we’ll settle this.’ So, I consider that a victory, right? Because I want to make sure that we have these world-class parks that we’ve been telling everyone we’re going to build actually get built.”

The CIP has budgeted \$10 million for the current fiscal year for Shipyards West Park.



A rendering of the future Hub Brooklyn.

Hub Brooklyn Tenants Receive Retail Grants

Two businesses planned for the Hub Brooklyn, at Riverside Avenue and Forest Street, were approved for over \$150,000 in grants from the Downtown Investment Authority’s Basic Retail Enhancement Program in October. Alder & Oak restaurant and Southern Grounds coffee shop each received grants for tenant improvements, along with minimum investment requirements.

Alder & Oak received a grant for \$84,200 for tenant improvements to its planned 2,600-square-foot interior dining and 3,200-square-foot courtyard spaces. Its minimum capital contribution requirement is \$532,026.

Southern Grounds Coffee Brooklyn LLC was approved for a \$66,150 grant for tenant improvements for its 3,415-square-foot coffee shop, eatery and 800-square-foot rooftop bar. Southern Grounds must invest a minimum of \$413,000 in improvements or build-out costs to meet the grant requirements.

Both forgivable, no-interest grants require Alder & Oak and Southern Grounds to remain open for three years at the Hub Brooklyn location.

The location’s three-building construction will cost roughly \$2.46 million and will accommodate the two grantees, along with additional retail space and a CD+urban studio loft.



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First Projects of Pearl Street District Advance Through Conceptual Approval

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Jacksonville's Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) met on Thursday, Oct. 12. The board reviewed and granted conceptual and final approvals for several projects including the five-block Pearl Street District multi-phase plan included in the proposed Gateway Jax development which was first announced in September.

Ultimately, plans for this expansive development could include up to 22 acres in the North Core area of downtown in a reported \$500 million development.

The Pearl Street District is the first project of this development and includes five buildings along Pearl Street bordered by Union, Church, Clay and Julia streets.

The Pearl Street District returned to the DDRB for final approval last month, which it achieved with a unanimous vote (with board members William Schilling, Jr. and Christian Harden recusing themselves because of voting conflicts).

Following the final approval for the overall Pearl Street District development, board members considered three of the five projects within the Pearl Street District for conceptual approval. These projects are:

Pearl Street N-11

This seven-story mixed-use project consists of approximately 21,000 square feet of ground floor retail space and 205 residential units. This development pad, bordered by Ashley, Church, Clay and Julia streets, currently contains a surface parking lot and the historic Porter House Mansion. Proposed plans for this block introduce two new green spaces for public access on either side of Porter House, intended, according to attorney Cyndy Trimmer, representing the applicant for Pearl Street District project, "to draw the attention and the activity from the city center into this public space."

The southern Porter House Mansion park will be a "serene, intimate gathering place" with a water feature at its center while the northern park will contain an open, "activated lawn."

"This parcel is placemaking. This is what placemaking is," said DDRB Vice Chair Linzee Ott.

The team for this project includes developer Gateway Jax, SK+I Architecture, Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects and England-Thims & Miller, Inc. (ETM).

Pearl Street N-8

Bordered by Beaver, Ashley, Clay and Pearl streets, this lot consists of surface parking and vacant lots. Plans presented to DDRB for this development pad propose a 22-story mixed-use building with 62,000 square feet of ground- and second-floor retail space, 530 residential units and two levels of parking.

This development pad will give the appearance of three buildings of different



A rendering of Pearl Street District's N-8 block.

orientations and heights. The residential units begin on the fourth floor of the structure. Included in those residential units are 23 furnished units all situated on the fourth floor.

"We tried to offer these both to cater to the hospitality audience - we're next to that medical district, we're going to have that UF campus - but we also think Jacksonville is going to be a destination where people will want to come and stay for a period of time and not necessarily haul everything with them. So, it's dual-purpose to cater to all of those audiences," said Trimmer of the furnished units.

Plans for this N8 development pad also pay homage to a significant historical structure that once stood within that block - the Ebenezer Methodist Church. Ian Mills, executive director of the New Orleans office of Morris Adjmi Architects - the architectural firm for the N8 development pad - highlighted an homage included in the designs of this pad to the church in the form of an arched window reminiscent of the one within the church's nave, "very close" to where the original window once was at the church's location there when it stood on the southwest corner of the development pad.

The team for this project includes developer Gateway Jax, Morris Adjmi Architects, Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects and England-Thims & Miller, Inc. (ETM).

Pearl Street N-4

The final development pad presented to the DDRB at its October meeting was the N4 development pad for the Pearl Street District project. Currently vacant - except for an existing development at 716 North Pearl Street, which will not be part of the Pearl Street District - this is the proposed site for a seven-story mixed-use building with 16,000 square feet of ground floor retail space, 270 residential units and two "partial" parking levels.


The team for this project includes developer Gateway Jax, Boston-based Elkus Manfredi Architects, Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects and England-Thims & Miller, Inc. (ETM).


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You Asked for It

Why haven't more stores filled the Ortega Park shopping center?
BY JENNIFER JENSEN

This is a question many have asked. And it seems no one can fully answer it.

The Ortega Park shopping center has 33 empty spaces. When Stein Mart filed for bankruptcy and closed its doors in October 2021, the shopping center lost one of its main anchors and it has remained vacant since. The shopping center's latest tenant was the Peach Cobbler Factory, which opened in July 2022. Growth seems to be stagnant, and citizens are becoming frustrated with seeing all the empty spaces.

One concerned resident, Carolyn Snowden, took to a local moms' group on Facebook to ask users what stores they would like to see in the shopping center. Prior to posting on Facebook, Snowden said she reached out to the leasing company and expressed her frustration but never heard back. She plans to reach back out to the company to offer a glimpse into the responses she received from other moms in the area.

"I'm just a concerned citizen and want to know what's going on," Snowden said. "True or not, the perception is you don't care. You're not moving on this."

John Dewberry – whose company, Dewberry Capital, owns Ortega Park – acquired what was then the Roosevelt Mall in 1997, and has had it thrice renovated. Ortega Park currently sits as a 300,000-square-foot, open-air retail center, but the company plans to grow the center to 750,000 square feet with shopping, dining and multifamily units. In February, Dewberry chose Franklin Street as the retail leasing adviser.

While a representative with Franklin Street said some "exciting announcements" regarding new tenants would be made soon, they did not have the authorization to name them publicly.

"I can assure you that there is a lot in the works that is not public knowledge just yet," said Franklin Street Regional Managing Director Ricky Ostrofsky.

Franklin Street's retail landlord services team includes Ostrofsky, Carrie Smith and Kaelyn Sreenan.

"The three of us are residents of Avondale, Fairfax and Ortega and have vested interest in the tenancy of the center shaping up nicely," Ostrofsky said.

According to Franklin Street, one of its primary objectives is leasing Ortega Alley, a pedestrian-only area "designed to attract and encourage the increasingly active culture surrounding the property."

There has been speculation that perhaps the new layout, including Ortega Alley, isn't desirable to businesses. Ortega Alley also only has a few storefronts that are visible from the road, which might be a hard sell for some businesses.

Some have also speculated that the rates are just too high – currently at \$50 per square foot or more, according to a leasing package brochure by Franklin Street.

The Resident News attempted to reach someone at Dewberry Capital. However, a search for the company led to a one-page website that simply listed the company's address in Atlanta and its phone number. After calling the number, it does not ring, but goes to a recording that gives you the option to leave a voicemail. No one at Dewberry Capital has returned those messages.

While the idea of "exciting announcements" is exciting, the lack of concrete information leaves residents with more questions than answers.

Word on the Street

BY JENNIFER JENSEN

What business or businesses would you like to see move into the Ortega Park shopping center?



Heather Hanson

- Heather Hanson

"I think an indoor play place for children – similar to Sprouts in Fleming Island, where moms could meet up – would be wonderful. Maybe the play place could have a café with snacks and coffee drinks for the parents and kids to enjoy as well. My kids love being creative so another idea would be a painting, pottery or cooking studio that could host classes for children and adults. They could even offer birthday party packages."

"The Ortega Shopping Plaza is already a fairly crowded area with limited parking available for the existing stores. I can't imagine what it would look like with something like a TJ Maxx or Home Goods. I've lived in the Avondale/Ortega area my whole life and I've seen the effects of new retail developments over the decades, and it's concerning to see large stores exploiting our neighborhood to gain a profit while they also disrupt the flow and environment of the surrounding residential community. I can only hope that the developers have some strict guidelines that are respectful of our neighborhood and they heavily consider what businesses they allow to lease space in the shopping plaza. As a lifelong resident, I know how much of an impact new businesses can have on every aspect of our neighborhood, from noise level and traffic concerns to trash, litter and safety concerns."



Jennifer Taylor Crites

- Jennifer Taylor Crites



Rachel Smith

"I think Ortega Park is a great opportunity for businesses. One thing I think would be popular with local families are any indoor activity spaces, like pottery making, candle making, escape room, bounce place, etc. A craft store would also be great. And some other casual dining options (counter service) would be nice."

- Rachel Smith

"I would love to see that area really take off with great options. A Nordstrom Rack would be amazing. Home Goods would also be a great addition. I'd love to see a wine and tapas place with outdoor seating or a local Italian restaurant. A small crafts store (not Hobby Lobby size) with a studio where you could do classes or projects with kids, I think would be welcome in our area too."



Angela Phillips

- Angela Phillips

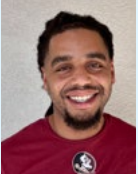


Carolyn Snowden

"I was thinking, in the old Stein Mart, since it's so big, it could be indoor pickle ball. It doesn't have to be pickle ball, maybe it's racquetball or just something that people can do. A cute thrift store would also be fun. I'm also just interested in convenience. So, give me somewhere like a Stein Mart or Marshalls or a TJ Maxx where I can go to get what I need when I need it, and not have to go very far. Just fill it. It's depressing when you pass by it every single day, there's nothing new."

- Carolyn Snowden

"I would like to see more restaurants, there's only a few in the area. Also, more kid-related businesses. A jump place would be cool. The closest one is in Orange Park. There's nothing like that over here for the kids. I'd like to see something like that."



Terance Austin

- Terance Austin



Randy Lopez

"I'd like to see ma-and-pa specialty restaurants, like an Italian restaurant, a Spanish restaurant or a southwestern restaurant. A little bit of diversity would be nice. And some options for those who are Gluten-free. It's hard to find Gluten-free restaurants on the Westside. Also, something for the kids. In Mandarin, you have things for the kids to do. It would be nice to see a trampoline park or a bowling alley. Specialty stuff for the kids would be a welcomed addition to the community."

- Randy Lopez

"I'd like more restaurants to have a variety of choices. Maybe a good Mexican restaurant. That would be a nice addition."

- Tyler Bussineau



Tyler Bussineau

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Peace Park Labyrinth Project on Track for 2024 Installation

BY LAURA PHELPS

A project to build an 11-circuit stone labyrinth in Riverside’s Peace Memorial Rose Garden Park is on track for construction to begin in 2024.

Friends of the Labyrinth committee members say they are halfway to reaching their goal thanks to support from several sustaining sponsors and three successful fundraising events this fall.

Riverside residents Hazel Cleary and Ruth Thompson came up with the idea for the labyrinth while walking through the park in 2021. Since then, they’ve established the Friends of the Labyrinth committee, partnered with Riverside Avondale Preservation to help fundraise, and engaged local landscaping expert Ladd Roberts to design the site plan.

“It just took off. It’s almost like kismet,” Thompson said. “It’s almost like it called us to create this labyrinth in the park.”

Located on Park Street across from the Willow Branch Library, the Peace Memorial Rose Garden Park was established in the 1950s to honor Americans who lost their lives in World War II. Through seasons and storms, the garden diminished over time, becoming an overlooked, underutilized green space. Riverside Avondale Preservation

Executive Director Shannon Blankinship said people in the neighborhood are excited to see the park revitalized.

“It’s the desire to do something with what has been an underutilized, very prominent, visible space on a thoroughfare in the neighborhood that has people the most excited,” Blankinship said.

The proposed labyrinth is a replica of the world-famous Chartres, France, labyrinth built in the 13th century. With a 40-foot circumference, the Peace Park version will be virtually the same size and pattern with a rosette in the center to honor the park’s history.

Labyrinth enthusiasts say these historic walking paths are often used as tools to promote overall well-being. Visitors can pray, meditate, engage in deep thought or not think at all.

Blankinship looks to the Riverside Avondale Community Garden across the street as a model for success. “It was a

space that previously was a grass lawn and today is a really active community space where we have dozens of gardeners each day,” she said. “People come to that garden and seek that refuge for a variety of reasons, and we’ve seen continued demand for it. I want to see the same thing at the labyrinth: people utilizing the space



PHOTO COURTESY OF @FOLPEACEPARK INSTAGRAM

in whatever way meets their need.”

Macquarie Group, JM Family Enterprises, Southeast Toyota Distributors and the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund gave generously to the project, helping to build and sustain momentum, organizers say.

“We need about \$170,000 to put the labyrinth in the ground. We’ve raised about half of that and expect to raise a great deal more before the end of the year,” Cleary said.

The final phase of fundraising will focus almost entirely on grassroots support through the purchase of engraved bricks for the surrounding walkways, ranging from \$100 to \$400 each.

Cleary says many donors and volunteers supporting the project have

a personal connection to labyrinths – like Friends of the Labyrinth committee member Sharon Qualls.

Qualls first learned about labyrinths years ago from close friend Donna Christiansen, who passed away about five years ago. Christiansen traveled with a canvas labyrinth replica and taught others how to engage in mindfulness practices while walking the winding path.

“For years, our group of friends would assist her in taking this labyrinth to yoga studios and churches and other places so people could walk the labyrinth,” Qualls said. “She took it on sort of as her gift or mission to contribute to the world and to give back to others.”

In honor of her friend, Qualls made a donation to the project and looks forward to sharing her love of labyrinths with her grandkids when its complete.

Construction is expected to begin as early as next spring. Once the labyrinth is installed, the Friends of the Labyrinth will fundraise for the landscaping and public art installations in the park. The group will donate the labyrinth to the City of Jacksonville upon completion.

Learn more about the project or make a donation at folpeacepark.com. Donations to Friends Of The Labyrinth are 100% tax deductible and go directly toward the construction of the Labyrinth and future programming.



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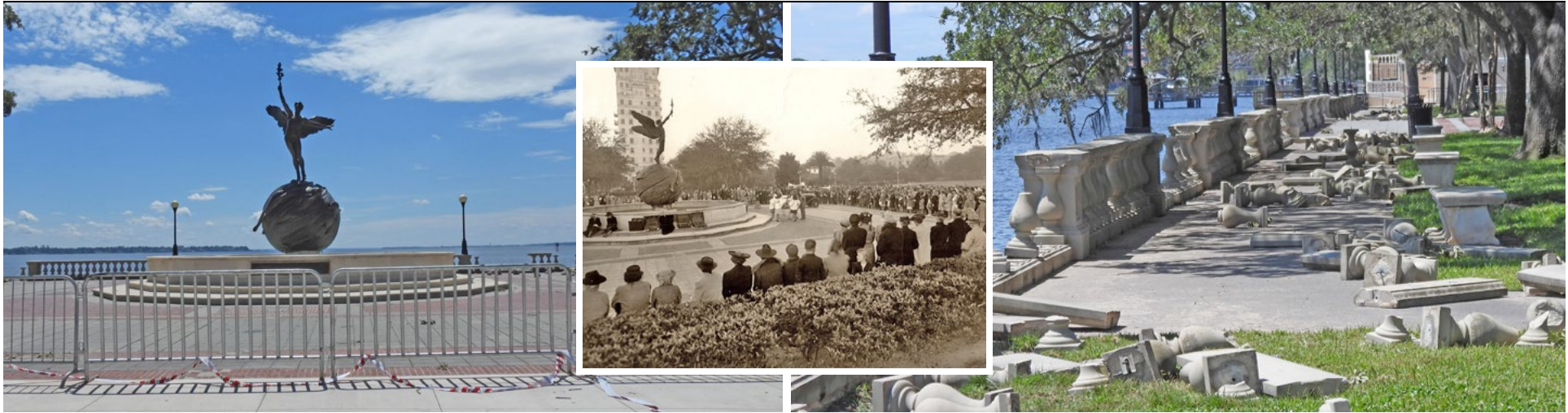


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The balustrade at Memorial Park suffered extensive damage during Hurricane Idalia, which swept through Jacksonville in late August.

Devastation Déjà Vu

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

It wasn't that long ago that Memorial Park's austere eagles, iconic sculpture and balustrades were blocked off by temporary fencing while the esplanade underwent restoration and refurbishment as part of Memorial Park Association's (MPA) "Master Plan" improvements through its Spirit of Victory campaign.

The campaign's goal was to restore Memorial Park to its original grandeur ahead of its centennial anniversary in 2024.

After Hurricane Idalia swept through Jacksonville at the end of August, residents were horrified to see large swathes of the park's riverfront balustrade destroyed – and the fences returned.

Tim Trigg said he was at the apartment building facing Memorial Park during the storm and watched the waves crash over the balustrade. At times, he said, the waves were "as tall as the light posts," crashing with "unbelievable force."

"I was just heartsick, I just thought, 'I can't believe it's happening again,'" he said.

In the days following Idalia, MPA President Patrick Emmet issued a letter to donors regarding that damage. In it, he stated the MPA board, the City of Jacksonville's Director of Parks, Risk Management Team, Disaster Recovery Team, Construction Management Team and Design Team met to assess the damage and determine next steps.

As with the repairs to Memorial Park following Hurricane Irma in 2017, he wrote the City of Jacksonville would "again accept responsibility for the most recent damages that occurred during Idalia."

In a later interview, Emmet reemphasized that none of the monies collected through MPA's fundraising efforts had gone or will go toward any reconstruction or refurbishments to the balustrade.

"It's really important for us to make sure that the donors – people that do give

money to the park – know that their money did not get spent on the balustrade and the bulkhead. That was 100% the city," he said. "I don't want the donors to think we wasted their money, or we didn't do our homework."

The work MPA did at the park – the esplanade area and where the eagles stand – "did fantastic."

Memorial Park is a city park and, therefore, its maintenance is overseen by both the City and MPA. MPA, Emmet added, is not involved in maintaining the balustrade or the bulkhead.

In an e-mail, City of Jacksonville Director of Public Works Nina Sickler wrote the city is still determining what the total cost for repairs will be. The repairs following Irma, completed in 2021, cost approximately \$450,000.

"The City will pay for the repairs, and then seek reimbursement from FEMA," she wrote.

Evaluations of the bulkhead and balustrade are still underway to determine why such extensive damage was sustained.

"Until we know the full extent, it is too early to know," Sickler wrote.

While a construction timeline won't be determined until a contractor has been acquired, Sickler anticipates it will be roughly 12 months before construction begins.

"We are advertising for a Disaster Response Design Builder to design and rebuild the balustrade. Procurement and design will take about six months each. Based on previous balustrade construction of 180 days, we estimate around 270 days for removal of bottom rail, any bulkhead cap repair required, and construction of the new balustrade," she wrote.

Memorial Park's 100-year anniversary will be on Dec. 25, 2024.

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A (Nearly) 50-year RAP-up

Wayne Wood holds lecture on the history of Riverside Avondale Preservation

BY MICHELE LEIVAS



“The Story of RAP: How We Almost Lost the Neighborhood” was held at St. Paul’s Catholic Church on Tuesday, Sept. 26.

Riverside Avondale Preservation concluded its eight-session Historic Homeowner Workshop series with a talk from RAP founder and Jacksonville historian Dr. Wayne Wood about the creation and evolution of the neighborhood organization.

The lecture, “The Story of RAP: How We Almost Lost the Neighborhood,” was held on Tuesday, Sept. 26 at St. Paul’s Catholic Church and told the story of how RAP came to be and its major accomplishments in its nearly 50 years.

RAP began in 1974 as the Riverside Area Preservation with \$43 in its initial treasury. Since then, not only has it expanded to include and preserve Avondale – its sister community – it has worked to establish the Riverside Avondale community not only as a gem of the City of Jacksonville, but as a historic community. In 2010, it was named one of the nation’s 10 Great Neighborhoods in the American Planning Association’s Great Places in America program. That year, Wood said, it shared the prestigious recognition with the Frank Lloyd Wright Historic District in Illinois.

“That was pretty significant to me because that

is truly probably the greatest, most famous neighborhood in America and to be placed alongside that....” he said.

While Wood shared stories of RAP’s past, he also emphasized the importance of engaging the next generation to carry RAP into the future.

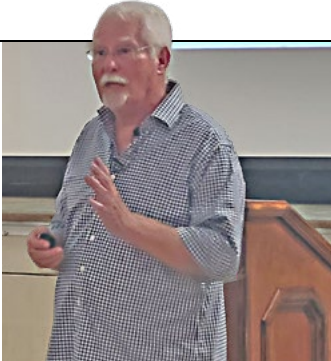
“The lecture I gave was kind of a sermon for the future. This is what happened and let’s don’t let what we worked so hard for become undone. The newer generations have much different interests and way of doing things, different concerns. But I want them to have concern over this, the heritage of the place they live,” he added.

One of the ways RAP is doing that, Wood said, is the creation of the Riverside Avondale Cultural Trail, created by RAP’s Creative Placemaking Committee. The Resident News reported on preliminary plans for Phase 1 of the trail – a 1.6-mile self-guided trail connecting the three points of the Five Points Historic Triangle: the Riverside Arts Market, Memorial Park and Five Points and Riverside Park. The Cultural Trail plans to implement geolocation, QR codes and even augmented reality technologies to enhance the experience for people as they follow the various points along the trail.

Wood said work on this first phase continues as RAP proceeds to navigate the various elements that the trail will be interacting with throughout the neighborhood.

“We’ve been working on it for a year, and we hope within the next year it will become a reality,” he said.

“We are grateful to have Wayne’s unparalleled perspective on the moments in our history that have created and shaped this neighborhood and Riverside Avondale Preservation. Each person in the audience learned at least one new thing during his talk. As we approach our 50-year anniversary in 2024, it is a great time to reflect on what has shaped us in order to look towards what is next,” said RAP Executive Director Shannon Blankinship.



Dr. Wayne Wood, founder of Riverside Avondale Preservation, hosted a lecture about the organization’s history as part of RAP’s Historic Homeowner Workshop series.

Vehicles Still Trapped After Parking Garage Collapse

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Retrieval efforts continue for the removal of the remaining vehicles trapped in the Ascension St. Vincent’s Riverside Hospital parking structure after a partial collapse in September.

An Oct. 26 statement provided to The Resident News by Ascension St. Vincent’s read, in part, “Our number one priority continues to be the safety of our associates, contractors and anyone working near the garage.”

A previous statement from earlier in the month detailed that vehicles from the ground floor of the parking garage have been successfully removed using a robotic-assisted tow truck to preclude anyone from having to enter the structure. A crane was utilized to safely retrieve vehicles from the third floor.

“In addition, teams have been removing debris from the damaged area of the garage, allowing us to enter the final phase of vehicle retrieval. We will contact vehicle owners directly when their vehicle has been removed and picked up,” the Oct. 26 statement continued.

The emergency department remains open and operational. The investigation into the cause for this partial collapse is ongoing.

Patients are being notified of temporary relocations of Ascension Medical Group clinics located at 1824 King Street.

The Riverside parking structure suffered a partial collapse of its third level just after noon on Thursday, Sept. 12, with no injuries or fatalities reported.

The Resident News will continue to report updates as they become available.



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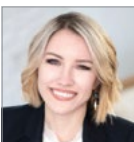


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MOVERS & SHAKERS



Judy Ashouri



Kaushal Dosani



Umakumaran Ponniah

A Trio of Heart Specialists for Wolfson Children's

Three physicians have joined the C. Herman and Mary Virginia Terry Heart Institute at Wolfson Children's Hospital. Pediatric electrophysiologist Judy Ashouri, pediatric cardiac intensivist Kaushal Dosani, and pediatric cardiologist and cardiac imaging specialist Umakumaran Ponniah will provide Wolfson Children's heart services to patients across Northeast Florida and the region.

Dr. Ashouri received her medical degree from the University of Florida College of Medicine in Gainesville, Florida, and completed her pediatrics residency at Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Dosani received his medical degree from Dr. D. Y. Patil Medical College and Research Center in Mumbai, India, and completed his pediatrics residency at the University of Nevada Las Vegas School of Medicine.

Dr. Ponniah received his medical degree from Karnataka Medical College in Hubballi, India, and completed pediatric residencies at Mysore Medical College in Mysore, India, and at Milton Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Dr. Ponniah also serves as the director of non-invasive imaging at Wolfson Children's Hospital.

Wolfson Children's Hospital and the Terry Heart Institute are the only providers in Jacksonville that treat a full range of congenital cardiac conditions in children and adults. Physicians providing care at Wolfson Children's Hospital are not employees nor agents of the hospital, but are employed by Nemours Children's Health, University of Florida College of Medicine, Baptists Specialty Physicians and Emergency Resources Group.

Srinath, Dinh and Junco Join JTA

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) announced the hiring of three executives to fill key positions: Raj Srinath, as Senior Vice President/Chief Financial Officer; Kiet Dinh as Vice President/Automation and Innovation; and Anthony Junco as Public Information Officer.

Srinath will be responsible for directing the financial planning and analysis, budgeting, revenue and fixed assets programs functions and personnel for the JTA. He has nearly 30 years of financial management experience, including at transit agencies.

Dinh will manage the JTA's planning, design, procurement, manufacture, installation and construction for the Ultimate Urban Circulator (U2C) program and oversee the JTA Skyway and its maintenance. He previously served as the Project Delivery Manager at the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, and he comes to the JTA with experience in leading the commercialization of an autonomous vehicle urban circulator service.

Junco will provide strategic communication direction and execute the JTA's internal and external corporate communication activities. He will also serve as JTA's spokesperson and manage CEO communication opportunities. He previously served as the Public Affairs Officer at Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 2 in Jacksonville.



Anthony Junco



Kiet Dinh



Raj Srinath

"I am thrilled to have Raj, Kiet and Anthony join the JTA team," said JTA CEO Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr. "All three of these individuals have proven experience in their fields and will be an invaluable addition to the Authority in each of their departments. I look forward to welcoming them to help us further advance the JTA as both a mobility provider for Northeast Florida, and as one of the top employers in our region."

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Art Walk Turns 20

Downtown Vision (DVI), the Business Improvement District for downtown Jacksonville, celebrated the 20th anniversary of the First Wednesday Art Walk on Oct. 4, 2023. Downtown Vision launched Art Walk to bring more people downtown and to support local businesses. It has grown into a signature monthly event for downtown Jacksonville where artists and art lovers come together in support of live music and the arts: visual, dance, performing, interactive, fashion and culinary.

“We’re grateful to produce this monthly event for and by Jacksonville and have had so much fun with it over the years,” said Katherine Hardwick, Vice President of Marketing and Research. “What makes it so special and what gives it its staying power is that Art Walk is ever-evolving and always inclusive. There is always something new. There is always something for everyone. And it’s always a great place to see and be seen.”

Over the past two decades, Art Walk has embraced a variety of holidays and themes, playing host to everything from haunted houses and annual Christmas Tree lightings to pop-up ball pits, beer release parties, silent discos, live sketch shows, and even marriage proposals and a wedding. It has attracted more than half a million visitors to the cultural venues, shops, restaurants and parks, drawing an average of 5,000 people every first Wednesday.

“First Wednesday Art Walk is a cornerstone of the Downtown Jacksonville experience and we’re excited to celebrate the 20th year of this beloved Jacksonville institution,” said Jake Gordon, CEO of Downtown Vision. “At DVI, our non-profit mission is to help make Downtown Jacksonville a more exciting place to live, work, visit and invest, and for two decades now, Art Walk is one of the key ways we deliver on our mission. We look forward to celebrating our downtown and this great milestone with you.”

To learn more about First Wednesday Art Walk and participating locations, visit [DTJax.com/artwalk](https://www.dvjax.com/artwalk).

Clements, Whittier Join Berkshire Hathaway

Derrick Whittier and Caroline Clements have joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty.

Whittier is a seasoned broker associate with a deep-rooted connection to Northeast Florida, along with a passion for the region and a track record of success. He earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of North Florida. Having spent his entire life in Northeast Florida, Whittier uses his area knowledge to provide insight and guidance to clients.

“We are so glad to have Derrick join our team and we know that he will be a great addition to our group here at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices,” said Josh Cohen, Broker/Manager of the Metropolitan office with locations in Avondale and San Marco.

Clements is a Northeast Florida native with a previous career in fashion. As a realtor, she has a deep appreciation for the local community and its quiet lifestyle.

“Her local knowledge, combined with her background in fashion and her commitment to fostering lasting connections, make her a valuable addition to our team,” said Cohen.



Caroline Clements



Derrick Whittier

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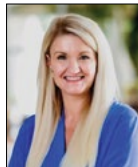
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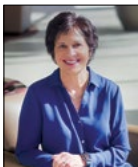
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Whatever Floats Your BOTE

BOTE Jacksonville opens in Riverside

Watersports fans have a new reason to visit Riverside: BOTE. The Destin-based watersports and leisure chain has opened a new shop at the corner of Park and King streets.

This is the sixth Florida location for BOTE – with its seventh location in Texas – and is a flagship store, explained General Manager Drew Campbell. As such, it sells exclusively BOTE products for novice to experienced paddleboarders.

For those ready to relax on the water, BOTE Jacksonville also offers a wide variety of floating leisure products.

“That’s a big niche of our business as well,” Campbell said. “People hear ‘BOTE’ and they think just paddle boards, but we’re really so much more than just a paddleboard company. We do a lot with water recreation. The kind of cool thing is expanding people’s horizon on BOTE.”

The store opened on Sept. 20 and offers an “immersive, community-driven” experience through the special events it hosts both on-site and out at various locations throughout the community. At the Park Street location, BOTE also has a bar that it activates for special events, as well as spaces for live music.

He encourages people to follow their social media pages to stay up to date on its new and upcoming events.

BOTE Jacksonville is located at 2655 Park Street. It is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Mike Krzyzewski

Krzyzewski Comes to Florida Forum

The Florida Forum Speaker Series, presented by The Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital, will welcome Duke University’s Coach K – Mike Krzyzewski – on Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023. The program begins at 7 p.m. at the Center for the Performing Arts in Jacksonville.

The passionate, dynamic and inspiring coach of Duke’s men’s basketball team, Krzyzewski is the NCAA Division 1 men’s all-time leader for wins with 1,200 games in the win column. His success includes 35 NCAA tournament appearances, 13 Final Fours and five National Championships over 46 seasons as a head coach. He also coached the U.S. men’s national basketball team from 2005 to 2016, leading Team USA to three Olympic gold medals in 2008, 2012 and 2016.

“**Krzyzewski is the NCAA Division 1 men’s all-time leader for wins with 1,200 games in the win column.**”

The Naismith Hall of Fame coach is the author of two New York Times bestsellers, a 12-time National Coach of the Year, the Sports Illustrated 2011 Sportsman of the Year, and has been honored by USA Basketball as the recipient or co-recipient of the USA Basketball National Coach of the Year Award.

Funds raised by the Florida Forum support the Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital’s commitment to raise \$1.5 million for two new Kids Kare Mobile Intensive Care Units for Wolfson Children’s Hospital’s Neonatal and Pediatric Critical Care Transport fleet. Kids Kare vehicles and helicopters transport more than 2,250 infants and children a year to Wolfson Children’s Hospital for emergency critical care, trauma and specialty care.

Future Florida Forum Speaker Series programs include entrepreneur Steve Wozniak on Jan. 17, 2024, U.S. Navy Adm. James Stavridis (Ret.) on Feb. 26, 2024, and are made possible by sponsors Wells Fargo, Landstar and Florida Blue. For more information, visit thefloridaforum.com, call (904) 202-2886, or email womensboard@bmcjax.com.

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Enjoy Fall In Style

New Toll Brothers community welcomes its first residents

Late fall in northeast Florida is indeed the most wonderful time of the year. As the weather cools, Jacksonville residents spend more and more time outdoors.

That’s especially true for the very first residents of the Terraces at San Marco, a luxurious Toll Brothers townhome community located in the heart of San Marco that features spacious rooftop entertaining spaces.

“It doesn’t get any better than November and December to sit on your rooftop with something delicious cooking on the gas grill, a bottle of champagne and a group of friends,” said Garry Adams, Sales Consultant for the Terraces at San Marco.

Located on Atlantic Boulevard, west of I-95 and next to Fletcher Park, the



Terraces at San Marco consists of 27 spacious, newly constructed townhomes that are ideal for buyers who want the convenience of urban living without having to sacrifice space or quality design. The townhomes feature contemporary, open floor plans and rooftop terraces with all-weather decking and stunning views of downtown Jacksonville.

With San Marco Square just steps from

their front doors, residents of the Terraces at San Marco enjoy easy access to their favorite neighborhood spots. Groceries, banks, pharmacies and boutique shops are within a short walk, as are more than a dozen restaurants, including Taverna, Rue Saint-Marc and Bar Molino.

“You just can’t beat this location. Everything you need is within walking distance,” Adams said. “It’s rare to find brand new, high-end homes with plenty of space and luxury features in the heart of a thriving historic neighborhood, and that’s what is really attracting buyers right now.”

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 that are perfect for entertaining. There is limited availability for corner homes, which average 2,085 square feet with approximately 469 square feet of rooftop terrace space.

With more than 50 years of experience building residential homes in sought-

countertops, soft-close cabinets and drawers, stainless steel appliances and optional gas cooktops, 8-foot doors, tankless water heaters and Shark-brand coating on the floors of the attached 2-car garages. Buyers can also create their own customized outdoor kitchen on their rooftop terrace.

Adams said about a third of the home sites have been sold and others are selling quickly.

“We have a number of move-in ready home sites available for buyers who are looking to close and move in before the end of the year,” Adams said. “Those quick-occupancy townhomes include stylish, tasteful features and finishings curated by our top-notch designers. We also have several home sites available for buyers who are looking to customize the finishings according to their own preferences.”

Those homes come with \$80,000-\$120,000 in customizable Design Studio upgrades, according to Adams. The 4,800-square-foot Toll Brothers Design Studio on Phillips Highway offers hundreds of options to fit every taste and style. They also offer the support of their professional design consultants to help buyers personalize their new home.

It’s one example of how Toll Brothers does all it can to help homebuyers get into the home of their dreams. Through Toll Brothers Mortgage Company, they also offer special opportunities and varying builder incentives for qualified buyers.

Terraces at San Marco are fee-simple ownership, so the buyer owns both the land and the townhome. A monthly Homeowners Association fee takes care of irrigation, landscape, lawn care and trash pickup.

“It’s luxurious, low-maintenance living at its finest,” Adams said.

The Terraces at San Marco are located at 1609 Bridgeton Dr. For more information, visit tollbrothers.com

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David and Monique Miller with Dr. Floyd Willis, Rob Kelly and Melanie Lawson.

Peace in the Pages

READ USA hosted its fifth annual Peace in the Pages event on Sept. 28, celebrating the connection between literacy and the values of empathy, peace, education, freedom, leadership and success. Presented by David and Monique Miller, the event recognized seven local leaders for their commitment to literacy and closing the literacy gap in Duval County.

The following honorees were recognized:

- READ to Lead Award - Betty Seabrook Burney, I'm a Star Foundation
- READ to Succeed Award - Tim Cost, Jacksonville University
- READ to be Free Award - Kevin Gay, Operation New Hope
- READ to Heal Award - Nicole B. Thomas, Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville
- READ to Remember Award - Dr. Floyd Willis, Mayo Clinic
- Marjorie Broward Memorial Scholarship Award - Paula Findlay, Arlington Elementary School
- Mark Landen Memorial Award for Democracy through Journalism - Mark Woods, Florida Times-Union

The event was emceed by Melanie Lawson, and Shelley Read served as keynote speaker.



Cindy Watson

Watson Retires from JASMYN

Cindy Watson, founding board member and inaugural CEO of JASMYN, Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network, announced her retirement effective Dec. 31, 2023. Over the past 30 years, she grew the organization from 1994's small group at Willow Branch Library to today's multi-million-dollar advocacy group with a three-building campus serving nearly 1,000 youth annually.

"One does not look at JASMYN and not see Cindy Watson's fingerprints on every aspect of this dynamic, life-saving organization," said Board Chair Blake Osner.

"Leading JASMYN to its nationally recognized role in empowering LGBTQ+ youth in Northeast Florida has been a joyful journey with many battles and even more accomplishments many did not think possible," said Watson. "We have been innovators in this space from day one. From starting as a peer group for LGBTQ youth, to becoming a resource for all youth in fighting the spread of HIV and combatting homelessness. It's been an honor to serve the Jacksonville community and the future leaders of Northeast Florida, where our mission has always been to empower and affirm the lives of all our youth. I know JASMYN and this incredible community have much greater things to achieve together as I step aside and begin my next chapter."

A national search will begin for Watson's replacement, with the goal to be completed by mid-2024.

Weinstein Joins Ronald McDonald House Charities

Megan Weinstein has been appointed new Chief Development Officer of Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Jacksonville. She comes to RMHC after more than 20 years of experience overseeing major gifts, community and corporate partnerships, and communications for national nonprofit organizations, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida.

Weinstein will lead strategic fundraising, impact and delivery of the mission of RMHC of Jacksonville, which is to support the health and well-being of children by providing lodging and other services for critically ill, chronically ill and seriously injured children and their families. Supporting five local hospitals, RMHC of Jacksonville serves more than 1,100 families a year.



Megan Weinstein

Joint Donation Clears Child Hunger Waitlist

Nemours Children's Health, Jacksonville and the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation have partnered to make a donation that clears a years-long waiting list at existing Blessings in a Backpack schools with a critical need. The expanded support will provide healthy weekend food for 880 children in Northeast Florida during the 2023-24 school year, bringing Blessings in a Backpack First Coast Chapter's total to 5,300 students.

"Kids can't be kids when they're hungry. The consequences of childhood hunger are much more than a growling stomach: fatigue, the inability to concentrate, mood swings and depression," said Erin Kerr, CEO of Blessings in a Backpack.

"We know that food insecurity has serious implications for childhood development including physical and mental health, cognitive and social development and academic

achievement," said Nemours Children's Health President and CEO R. Lawrence Moss.

The children added to the Blessings program encompass two counties and seven schools: Andrew Robinson Elementary School, Annie R. Morgan Elementary School, Hyde Grove Elementary School, Mayport Middle School, and San Jose Elementary School in Duval County; and James E. Webster Elementary School and John A. Crookshank Elementary School in St. Johns County.

"Blessings in a Backpack has always been near and dear to our hearts. Having the opportunity to partner with Nemours Children's Health to add these additional children so that hundreds of kids have hunger-free weekends has been so impactful," said Jim Furyk.



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New COO for duPont Fund



Sujata Narayan

Sujata Narayan has been named COO of The Jessie Ball duPont Fund and will oversee talent development, business systems, resource management and grants management and evaluation. With deep family roots in Jacksonville for more than four decades, Narayan has more than 25 years of experience in strategic planning and execution, talent management, program management, grantmaking and foundation operations.

“It’s a privilege to join an organization that is actively shaping, in so many positive ways, this community that shaped me as a young person,” said Narayan. “The duPont Fund team is passionate, energetic and committed to using their influence to create spaces where more people truly feel they belong.”

Prior to joining the duPont Fund, Narayan served for more than 13 years with Equinix, where oversaw corporate giving and employee volunteering, which generated more than \$12 million for more than 2500 global organizations and contributed more than 100,000 service hours. She oversaw the team that established and operationalized the Equinix Foundation as a private grantmaking entity.

“Sujata is an experienced foundation administrator, and a social impact, philanthropy, and community development practitioner with strong roots in urban planning. She is passionate about collaboration, inclusion, and equity and we’re excited to have her helping us further instill a culture of high impact and purpose,” said Mari Kuraishi, president of the duPont Fund.

Narayan is one of two recent hires at the duPont Fund. In June 2023, Sarah Reardon joined as Program Officer, stewarding relationships with grantees in Port St. Joe, Florida and the Commonwealth of Virginia as well as throughout the country. Prior to joining the duPont Fund, Reardon held the role of Director, Academic and Student Achievement for Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ). She led the U.S. Department of Education-funded \$2.2 million grant program that expanded FSCJ support of limited-income students. Reardon also worked as a grant writer for FSCJ, successfully generating more than \$15 million in federal, state and local grants for the institution.



Monique Worthen

Worthen Named Principal of the Year

Venetia Elementary School Principal Monique Worthen was recently named Principal of the Year for Region 2 for Duval County Public Schools.

“It was so surprising,” Worthen said. “I was in shock.”

Worthen has been a principal at Venetia Elementary in Ortega for seven years, previously serving as the school’s assistant principal and reading coach. She has also taught first, second and fourth grades and has worked in education for 19 years after graduating from Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University.

The day Worthen found out about the award, her boss, Regional Superintendent Randall “Jud” Strickland, came to her school for what she thought was a routine meeting, one that seemed to last longer than necessary. Strickland told her the district received a complaint about the cafeteria and they needed to go there to investigate. When she entered the cafeteria, she was greeted with students, teachers, faculty, school board staff and administration, and even her own mother clapping and cheering. She was then surprised with the Principal of the Year Award.

To be chosen, a principal must receive a nomination from a member of their region, which is then submitted to the regional superintendent. Region 2 includes about 45 schools.

“It’s an honor to be nominated by your colleagues,” Worthen said.

She will now compete against four other principals to earn the title of Principal of the Year for the entire county.

“This job is not easy, but I love it,” Worthen said. “It’s my passion.”

“This job is not easy, but I love it. It’s my passion.”

– Monique Worthen
Principal of Venetia Elementary School



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Frederick Newbill Kristin Green Moore

A Dynamic Duo Returns to The Windsor at Ortega

The Windsor at Ortega has welcomed back Kristin Green Moore and Frederick Newbill as its sales director and sales representative, respectively – a duo nicknamed the “forever” sales team. The pair were the original sales team when The Windsor at Ortega first opened in 2014, when they quickly filled the assisted living and memory care facility.

Moore returns after a stint as a stay-at-home-mom and said she considers it an honor to be coming back to the organization.

“I am passionate about connecting with seniors and their families and assisting them in the transition to senior living. I cannot wait to get reconnected with the local senior community,” she said.

Newbill, who was born and raised in Jacksonville, comes home after living in Northern California for the past five years. That professional journey encompassed experience in both the public and private sectors, including roles in administration, sales and marketing, and education across three senior living and advising firms.



A Full House for Veterans

It will be a “full house” of watersport aficionados and military supporters at the PORT 32 Jacksonville marina as it hosts its 2nd Annual Tiny Vessel Poker Run on Veteran’s Day, Saturday, Nov. 11. Dinghies, kayaks, canoes and paddleboards alike navigate a two-mile loop on the Ortega River, collecting cards for the best poker hand. The event includes a meal and refreshments, as well as prizes for vessel creativity. All proceeds from the event go to support the nonprofit organization Warrior Sailing.

Warrior Sailing provides maritime education and outreach for wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans with the goal of improving their mental and physical health and reconnecting them to the camaraderie and teamwork previously found in military service.

Contact Celina Heindl at celina@port32jacksonville.com for more information.

Belet’s New RAP Sheet

The Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) has a new development manager, Austin Belet. Belet joined the RAP staff to provide a focus on community outreach, membership relations and the Riverside Arts Market.

A University of North Florida graduate and Jacksonville native, Belet brings an intimate knowledge of the neighborhood after serving as the campaign manager for District 7 Councilmember Jimmy Peluso. He has worked on numerous campaigns across the state of Florida where he focused on embracing local identity and understanding communities.

Belet also serves in the U.S. Navy Reserves and has extensive experience in operational planning and execution. His role as a Leadership Jacksonville NextGen 2023 grad cemented his position as the perfect fit for RAP’s emphasis on community support and caused-based programming.

“This neighborhood is a standard bearer for what community feels and looks like. I am excited to bring the skills I have built in years of grassroots campaigning to RAP to help advance our goals of preserving and celebrating Riverside and Avondale,” he said.



Austin Belet

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Historical Society Breaks Ground on Jacksonville History Center

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

The Jacksonville Historical Society (JHS) held a groundbreaking ceremony last month to celebrate the first phase of work on The Jacksonville History Center – the city’s first museum dedicated to showcasing Jacksonville’s rich history.

JHS board members and city officials participated in the event, held in front of the historic Florida Casket Company building on Oct. 5. The 103-year-old building will be transformed to become the home of this interactive and educational historical center.

“The Jacksonville History Center is a long-overdue opportunity for this community to get to know one another,” said JHS Board Chair David Auchter at the ceremony. “We need to get to know each other, we need to get to respect each other as a result, and maybe even be kinder to one another – and it’s going to happen right here in this building.”

“Public history is where the evidence of the past meets the appetite of citizens in the present for authoritative research and understanding about their place and the people and events that preceded them,” said Jacksonville Historical Society and History Center CEO Dr. Alan Bliss, in part, in his introductory remarks.

The ground floor of the three-story building will be a dedicated space for historical displays and exhibits; the second floor will be developed as a venue for performances and events. The third floor will be transformed into a “desperately necessary” expanded archives and research space for the extensive archival collection JHS possesses, much of which is currently stored at off-site warehouses, Bliss said.

During the ceremony, Bliss thanked current and former JHS board members and Jacksonville city councilmembers



Ron Salem, Brittany Norris, Matt Carlucci, Mike Crabtree, David Auchter, Chris Miller and Alan Bliss gathered for the groundbreaking moment.

in attendance, including former City Councilmember Randy DeFoor, whom Bliss credited for the initial idea behind what has evolved into the Jacksonville History Center as it’s designed today. Additionally, he thanked DeFoor for her role in directing “a significant appropriation of American Recovery Plan resources to the historical society.”

“During the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, she is one of a number of city council members and others here present who have been so pivotal to sustaining and elevating this organization’s resources at key moments,” he said.

Several current city officials attended the ceremony as well, including City Council President Ron Salem and councilmembers Chris Miller and Matt Carlucci.

“The renovation of this building will enable an expansion of the society’s capability to perform its work and to be an even more valuable partner in preserving and sharing Jacksonville’s past, serving its people in the present and in the future,” Salem said. “Those stories matter, so we appreciate the opportunity to help advance that work here at the Jacksonville History Center.”

In a later interview, Bliss said the Jacksonville History Center will hold rotating exhibits on a dearth of subjects, including music, baseball, insurance, banking, U.S. Navy, civil rights history, medicine and technology and natural history.

“This town is rotten with stories,” he said.

Bliss added Phase 1 will focus primarily on renovating the exterior of the 13,500-square-foot building, including “electrical, plumbing, concrete [building units], then the roof, and then preliminary interior work, which basically means sealing the exterior brick walls from the inside to prevent the permeation of water, moisture, humidity from the outside atmosphere coming into the air-conditioned building.” The estimated cost for Phase 1 is \$1.2 million.

Bliss said JHS will require another estimated \$1.7 million to complete Phase 2, which will involve interior work, HVAC, completing the interior utilities, refinishing the floors and replacing all the windows.

Also in a later interview, Councilmember Matt Carlucci discussed a bill he plans to introduce to the City Council for that remaining \$1.7 million.

“This is simply \$1.7 million to finish up the building improvements for the Casket Factory so we can have the [Jacksonville History Center],” he said. “I’d just like to get it done. I think it’d be the right thing but it’s a bit of a big ask – I get that – but again, we can keep doing this with small increments of help and drag it on for years or we can have something really nice in an important part of town for this type of facility to help continue bringing up the Eastside.”

Carlucci said he plans to hold meetings with his colleagues on the council to discuss the bill and hopes to get “as many co-introducers or co-sponsors as possible.”

Bliss said JHS hopes to complete this first phase of work by the end of March or beginning of April 2024.

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Red Shield Revelry

The Salvation Army of Northeast Florida's 10th Annual Red Shield Ball celebrated Love Beyond the Next Generation. Held at San Jose Country Club on Saturday, Oct. 21, the Red Shield Ball included dinner, live music, dancing and live and silent auctions in support of the life-changing work that takes place for women and families at the Salvation Army's Red Shield Lodge shelter. For every dollar donated to The Salvation Army, 82 cents stays right here in the Northeast Florida community.



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Sulzbacher



Robert Harris with Vanessa Gross and Martha Barrett

Transformations, Sulzbacher’s largest annual fundraising event, was held Thursday, Oct. 19 at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Donna Deegan addressed the crowd, which also heard success stories from Sulzbacher clients. Funds raised contribute crucial operating dollars that support the agency’s comprehensive programs and services for homeless men, women and families, like case management, job training and placement, and healthcare.

Paola Parra Harris and Matt Laurie served as co-chairs of this year’s host committee, and co-presenting sponsors included The Jacksonville Transportation Authority and Florida Blue. Keitha Nelson, anchor of Good Morning Jacksonville, emceed the event.



Damien and Ruth McDonald with David Hoffman



Andrea Grappie with Laila Pullens

Sanctuary on 8th Street threw its annual fundraising event, Shindig, on Oct. 5 from 6-9 p.m. at the Brick and Beam in historic Springfield. The event supports the maintenance and growth of Sanctuary’s youth programs and featured. Made possible by the Delores Barr Weaver Forever Event Fund, Shindig featured food and drink, a silent auction and live music in a casual atmosphere.



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A painter painstakingly restores ceiling carvings to their original glory atop scaffolding erected inside the Florida Theatre.



Numa Saisselin, PC. Bryant and Nathan Marty look on as Mayor Donna Deegan cuts the ceremonial ribbon for the official reopening of the Florida Theatre.



Elements of the theater have been repainted to reflect its 1927 color palette.

Refreshed and Reopened

The Florida Theatre’s renovations uncover new links to its past

After being closed since mid-July 2023, the newly renovated Florida Theatre in downtown Jacksonville is ready for the show to go on. The 96-year-old facility officially reopened on Friday, Oct. 27 in a ribbon-cutting ceremony with Mayor Donna Deegan and other dignitaries, just in time for its Rocky Horror Picture Show the following day.

Renovations to the historic theatre include repairing the decorative plaster and painting it with fidelity to the 1927 color palette. The entire heating, ventilation and air conditioning system has been replaced, and the building’s electrical vault has been moved from the first to the third floor to remove any flood risk. All public restrooms have also been updated. The reopening coincides with the 40th anniversary of the last major renovation that took place in 1983. These improvements follow recent work to replace the theatre’s seats, upgrade audio and lighting, and create the Remedy Lounge expansion.

“The Florida Theatre is one of downtown Jacksonville’s gems. With its 100th birthday approaching, this is an exciting time to restore the Theatre to its full splendor,” said Mayor Donna Deegan.

Funding for the project has come from private Centennial Campaign donations, which were matched by the City of Jacksonville, as well as every Northeast Florida

patron who has paid the per-ticket \$4.50 restoration fee. Contractors included Auld & White Constructors, Sauer Mechanical, EverGreene Architectural Arts and Beacon Electric.

According to Jeff Greene, Executive Chairman & Founder of EverGreene Architectural Arts, The Florida Theatre project had some “unique” discoveries.

“Like the mysterious connection to John Eberson, one of America’s most prominent architects known for movie palace designs in the atmospheric theatre style – the outdoor feel, inside,” said Greene. “The original four faux tapestries that hang in the Florida Theatre were painted. Since they are the same size and have the same imagery as the ones in the Tampa Theatre – which Eberson did – we were able to replicate them. When we did our forensic research and put all the Theatre finishes under the microscope, we realized they were painted with the same paint and style that Eberson used. His signature, per se. It was fascinating to see what his influence did.”

“A big part of what we do at EverGreene is connect back to history. We wanted to return the Florida Theatre to its original, authentic self. When the building was renovated in the 1970s, they moved away from that a bit. We wanted to return as accurately as possible to what it looked like in 1927. The challenge was the short time

frame we had. The surprise or mystery was the Eberson connection. But we did our research, added some interpretation, and found the harmony and balance we were striving for.”

Over the past four years, the Florida Theatre has raised and spent \$15 million on building improvements. Theatre President Numa Saisselin said about \$8 million worth of work remains to get the rest of the building



A historical photo shows the vertical blade sign that used to adorn the Florida Theatre, an element hoped to return in future improvements.

“where it needs to be,” which includes Saisselin’s goal of bringing back the original vertical blade sign that used to adorn the Theatre.

“This is one of the last remaining theatres of its kind in our country. And we have to take care of it, nurture it and support it so we can continue to laugh, cry, dance, sing and do all that we do in our beloved Florida Theatre,” said Leslie Gordon, chairperson of the Theatre’s board of directors.

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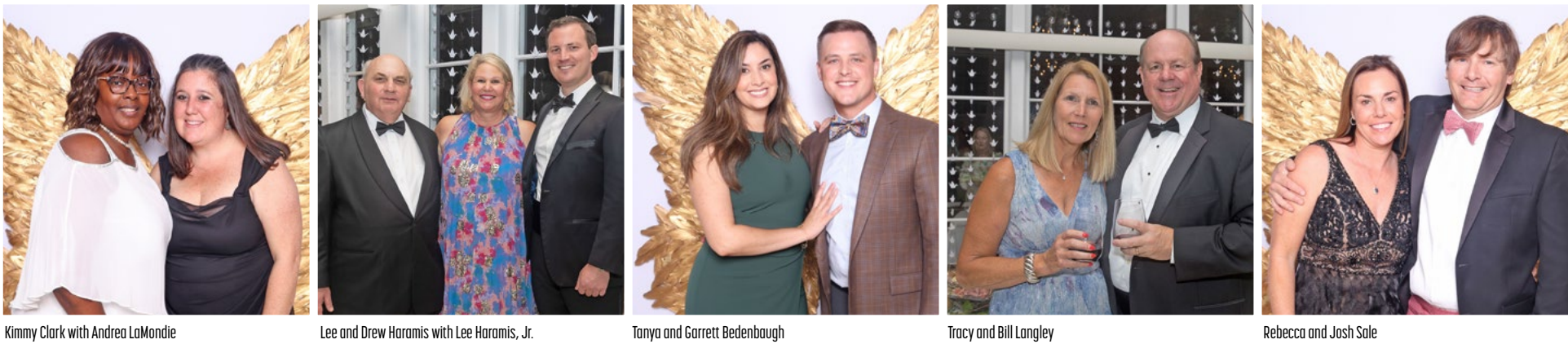
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Taking Flight

The 3rd Annual Flight of Fancy gala raised over \$148,000 for The Allison Brundick Haramis Foundation, Angels for Allison, a Jacksonville based non-profit dedicated to assisting with funeral costs associated with the loss of a child. The event was held on Friday, Oct. 6 at the Garden Club of Jacksonville with more than 200 guests in attendance.

Flight of Fancy raised funds through ticket sales, over 50 corporate and individual sponsorships, and a live and silent auction. The Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund

agreed to match up to \$25,000 raised, bringing the total for the event more than \$148,000.

At the end of this year, Angels for Allison, established in 2010 by Drew and Lee Haramis in memory of their late daughter, will likely reach the milestone of funding \$1 million in grants to Angel families. For almost thirteen years, the Allison Brundick Haramis Foundation has lifted the burden of funeral costs from more than 960 families who were suffering the loss of a child and without means to pay for their child's funeral.



Empty Bowls, Full Philanthropy

Empty bowls translated into an event full of philanthropy at Feeding Northeast Florida's signature fundraising event, Empty Bowls presented by Morgan & Morgan, held Tuesday, Oct. 3 at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront. Roughly 300 members of the community experienced a simple lunch of soup and bread to bring attention to the issue of hunger in our region and carry that reminder beyond – through a souvenir clay bowl, handcrafted by local students and artisans.

Feeding Northeast Florida is the largest food bank in the area, serving eight counties. It provides more than 85,000 meals per day, serving more than 264,000 individuals annually.



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McClary Magic

Two Avondale residents, Glen and Marisol McClary, have turned their Pine Street home into what they dubbed the “Encanto Magical Casita of Avondale,” complete with bright colors, lighted flowers, and scenes from the Disney animated movie, “Encanto,” which, according to the movie’s website, features the Madrigal family, “who live hidden in the mountains of Columbia, in a magical house, in a vibrant town, in a wondrous, charmed place called an Encanto.”

The spectacle serves as a venue for the homeowners to raise money for Beyond 90. Beyond 90 is a Jacksonville nonprofit that bridges the gap to self-sufficiency by providing support services, including mental health, skills-building classes and housing to refugees as they work to build new lives in Northeast Florida. It is based on the premise that newly arriving refugees are only given assistance for the first 90 days but may still need help to be fully self-sufficient.

The display features a QR code for passersby to donate to the organization.

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Amber Amerson with Gary McCalla, Erin Skinner and Marilyn Gilman

College Showcase Yields On-the-spot Offers for Arts Students

Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA) hosted its first College Showcase in October to over 135 college representatives from 60 colleges. During the three-day showcase, representatives interviewed students, observed performances, conducted master classes, critiqued portfolios and took part in a traditional college fair. Some even conducted on-the-spot auditions, and multiple students received offers for admittance and scholarships.

College representatives from across the nation included Carnegie Melon, Peabody Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory, George Mason University, University of Southern California, University of the Arts, Point Park, Maryland Institute College of Art, Columbia, Vanderbilt and Juilliard. Florida colleges were also well represented by Jacksonville University, University of North Florida, University of Florida, Florida State University, University of Miami and over 17 other state universities and colleges.

Sponsored by The Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Foundation, the event’s goal was to provide cost-effective ways for the students to be exposed to college programs across the country. It was modeled after a similar program started at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas, Texas, and included student resume books for the representatives.

“Their process was easily replicated, and, in several areas, we were able to take it up a notch,” said DA Arts Director Natalie Hyder.

The College Showcase kicked off with an opening reception at the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, sponsored by Gary McCalla.

“The arts director, arts faculty, PTSA and committee’s hard work was evident in the event’s success,” said Foundation Executive Director Jackie Cornelius.

Sharla Cowden with Bonnie Harrison

Timothy Simmons with Tina Wilson, Jeremy Franklin and Tonya Rowan

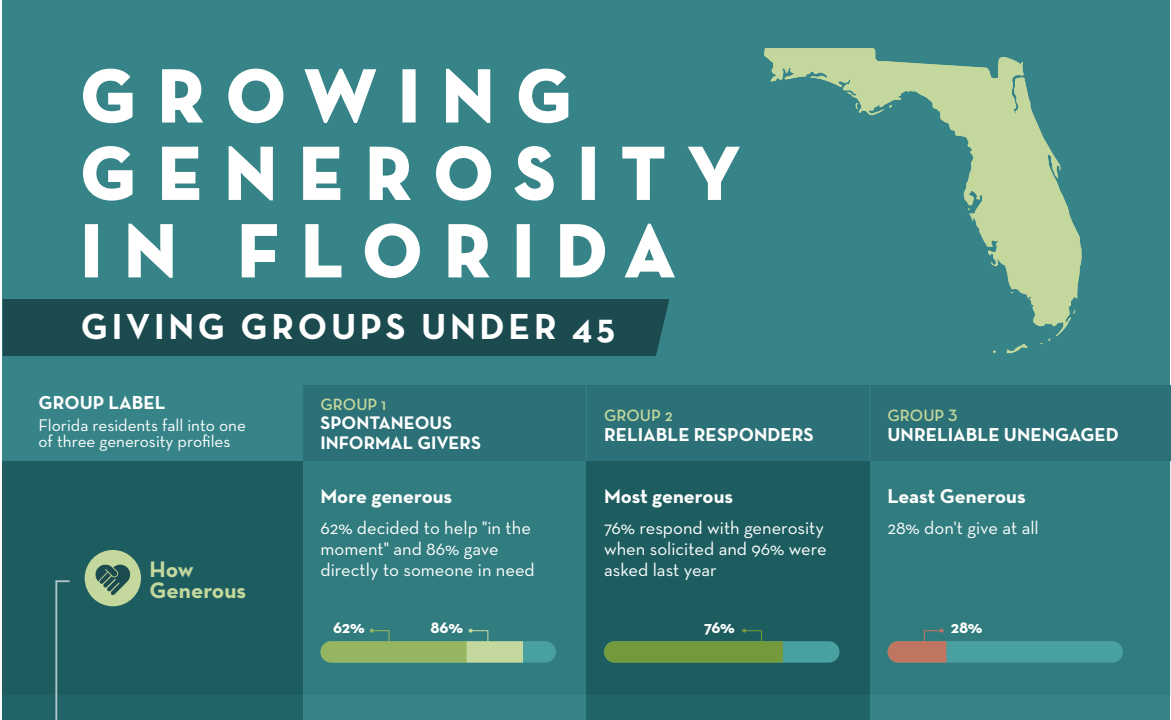
Ariela Pineda with Milia Ayache, Stephanie Mayer-Staley and Robin Walsh

Randy DeFoor with Charlotte Joyce and Allison DeFoor

John Citrone with Aaron DeCicco and Natalie Hyder

Kevin Covert with Liz McCoy, Kimberly Beasley, Joe Kemper, Regina Torres and Mike Beaman

Allison DeFoor with Nancy Chartrand, Cindy Pearson, Gary Chartrand and Jackie Cornelius



To view the full infographic on Growing Generosity in Florida, visit residentnews.net.

Growing Generosity

Study finds majority of young Floridians are charitable

New research by global generosity movement GivingTuesday shows that the rising generation of philanthropists in Florida are generous and that generosity is spread among causes and modes of contribution. The research shows that 87% of young Floridians – those age 18-45 – give to charity, primarily through the giving of items, though donating and volunteering are also common.

The study, presented at the Florida Nonprofit Alliance annual conference, looked at both donors and non-donors to better understand their reasons for and patterns of giving, their perceptions of nonprofit efficacy, and how they compare to their national peers. This research looked at a variety of types of generosity – including monetary, donations of items and time – and contributions to organizations, individuals, informal groups, and more. This study is a partnership between GivingTuesday, through the GivingTuesday Data Commons, and Florida Nonprofit Alliance (FNA). It was funded by the Jacksonville-based private foundation the Jessie Ball duPont Fund (duPont Fund).

“Florida’s nonprofit sector is growing, but we still rank near the bottom in terms of revenue per capita, so this research is critical to helping us understand the patterns

of generosity among under-40 Floridians, and how best to reach them,” said Sabeen Perwaiz Syed, president and CEO of the Florida Nonprofit Alliance. “Our nonprofits serve critical needs in communities across the state, especially as we have one of the fastest-growing populations in the country. The sector is planning for the future thanks to research like this.”

- Key findings from the study include:**
- Younger Floridians are slightly more generous and have a minor preference towards donating money compared to the national profile.
 - Younger Floridians give in many ways: Two-thirds (67%) of those surveyed contribute financially to charities, informal groups or individuals. Similarly, three-quarters (74%) give items and half volunteer or advocate for a cause.
 - Younger Floridians distribute their generosity through giving time, items, and money in near equal measure: financial contributions from younger Floridians encompass one-third of the total value of their generosity while two-thirds of all giving occurs through volunteering and donating items.
 - Generosity is concentrated in a small portion of the population surveyed: just 2.3% of the population surveyed gave half of all reported dollars donated. Similarly, half the value of all donated items came from 5.5% of surveyed donors and half of all reported volunteering hours came from 8.7% of givers.

“It’s heartening to see that the rising generation of Florida’s philanthropists is already quite generous,” said Mari Kuraishi, president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. “This new research provides actionable insight so that our state’s nonprofits can further encourage and expand the reach of that generosity.”

This research differs from past surveys in that it captured information about the perspectives, attitudes, and values of survey respondents to generate psychographic giving profiles. These profiles define unique groups that vary in their patterns of giving and in what engagement style and messages resonate with them. Analyzing generosity through the lens of distinct giving groups allows nonprofits to rethink and reorient messaging to their audiences to attract new donors or reach previous donors in new ways.

This whole-person approach reflects that Millennials and Gen Zers expect to engage holistically with the causes they support and fills in gaps in the sector’s approach to engaging whole populations.

“Our data shows that younger Floridians are committed to supporting local causes, charities and communities,” says Woodrow Rosenbaum, Chief Data Officer at GivingTuesday. “But not all Floridians give in the same way, and nonprofits should embrace these differences to increase their reach and impact. Spontaneous givers need to be compelled through storytelling while frequent givers value efficiency and convenience when they give. To reach the largest group of givers—those who give rarely—charities need to experiment with radically different ways of framing, demonstrating and connecting on an emotional level.”

To read the full report, visit flnonprofits.org/page/GrowingGenerosity.

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~ Janie



Event Co-Chairs for the Young Collectors Party are Kati Buschini Sager, Patton Weber and Marjorie Davis



Catherine Wellington with Christina Kolke and Lauren Rogers



Jessica Wynne with Keely Kopp

Young Collectors Raise \$10K



Mollie Peterson with Karis Lockhart

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital held a kick-off event for its First Coast Design Show, the Young Collector's Party, on Oct. 5. This happy-hour styled event for young professionals and younger mothers celebrated "The Art Of Gathering" with mingling at Michael's Rug Studio, delicious food, live music by Barrett Thomas, a silent auction and cocktails. Women's Board President Kendra McCrary and First Coast Design Show Co-chair Emily Magevney also spoke at the event.

The Young Collectors Party encourages a younger generation to get involved and give back to the community, and it raised over \$10,000 toward the Women's Board's strategic fundraising target of the Kids Kare Mobile ICU, a neonatal and pediatric critical care transport vehicle.

"Our mission is to raise funds and awareness for this very special hospital, where no child is ever denied the very best of care, regardless of ability to pay. Our hospital provides almost \$40 million annually in charity and uncompensated care for our ever-increasing geographic area," said Kate Sager.

Along with Sager, the event committee included Marjorie Davis, Patton Weber, Brittany Portigliatti, Elizabeth Roth and Catherine Wellington.



Beth Langley with Kendra McCrary



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The Game Day Girls: Pat Sellor McQuigg, JoAnn Rhyme Moss, Mary McCrea Lasseter, Susan Bernard Oehler, Marjorie Corell Marvin and Betty Jean Bosworth Bailey

Game Day Girls

A group of graduates from Robert E. Lee High School’s (now Riverside High School) Class of 1950 seem to have shown that, when it comes to friendship, some things actually don’t ever change. The group, now all in their 90s, have remained friends since their early grade school days and still meet on the third Tuesday of every month to spend the day together, have lunch and play board games like dominoes or Rummikub.

“We play ferociously and competitively, but we don’t keep scores.” – Pat McQuigg

“We play ferociously and competitively, but we don’t keep scores,” said Pat McQuigg, one of the members of the self-dubbed Game Day Girls. “We just have a lot of fun.”

The Game Day Girls started around 20 years ago with around 13 ladies, and while the numbers have dwindled over the years, McQuigg said the gathering is still a “sacred day” where nobody makes conflicting doctor appointments or anything else.

“It’s been such a web of friendship for so many years. Any of them I can call on, or any of them can call on me; we all know. We’re there for each other and have been,” said McQuigg. “Wasn’t I fortunate and brighter than I thought I was [in my youth]; I picked out such good friends at school.”



Twenty-five-year board member Jay Southerland, right, with his Friends of the Board attendees



Joe and Alicia Longo with Ted Nelson

Cooking with a Conscience

Children’s Home Society of Florida (CHS) hosted its 39th Annual Caring Chefs on Sunday, Oct. 8 from 6-9 p.m. at The Glass Factory. More than 500 guests sampled fine cuisines and beverages from Jacksonville-area chefs, sommeliers and brewers while listening to smooth sounds from The Band Be Easy.

Participants in the 2023 Caring Chefs included Anthony’s Gourmet Catering, Bellwether, Copelands New Orleans, Khloe’s Kitchen, Maggiano’s Little Italy, Mojo Kitchen, Nineteen at Sawgrass, Routes Culinary Travels, River & Post, Seasons 52, Terra Gaucha Brazilian Steakhouse, Vernon’s at TPC, Villagio Bar & Grill, ABC Fine Wine & Spirits, DuBlase Whiskey, Peterbrooke Chocolatier, Small Cakes Cupcakery, Sunshine Cellars Moonshine, Sweet Pete’s, Athen’s Café, Pink Salt Restaurant & Wine Bar, and Chef Amadeus Culinary Concepts.

The goal of Caring Chefs is to raise awareness and funds for its Northeast Florida program that provide services to children and families in the community. CHS is the oldest and largest statewide organization devoted to helping children and families, serving more than 60,000 children and family members throughout the state each year. Programs include early childhood, teen parenting, counseling and mental health services.

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Women’s Giving Alliance Hosts Annual Meeting

BY SUSAN BRANDENBURG

The annual meeting of the Women's Giving Alliance (WGA) was held on Oct. 18, 2023, at the Adam W. Herbert University Center at University of North Florida. Collective Giving was the key focus of the day as WGA President Sheila Collier welcomed 220 women from its membership, which recently saw a 39% growth to 470.

“WGA is not only about pooling our dollars to have a strategic influence on our community, it’s also about pooling our ideas, relationships, and other resources from our diverse members to magnify our impact,” said Collier. “Our membership continues to grow every year – and we are nearly 500 strong now – because women who want to make a difference in our community recognize and embrace the power of strategic, collective giving.”

Collier also introduced Isaiah M. Oliver, the third president of the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, who spoke about the power of collective giving and, as to the WGA, he referenced the major impact that women – his mother, wife, and three daughters – have had on his life. Oliver pledged to work collaboratively and collectively with the WGA and the entire community of Northeast Florida toward a just, equitable future for all.

“Strategic philanthropy is all about how we leverage our time, treasure, talent, testimony and ties to make our community a better place,” he said.

Following Collier's description of the WGA's key areas of focus, she introduced guest speakers, former

WGA president Ellen Wiss and Lift Jax CEO David Garfunkel.

Wiss attributed the founding of Lift Jax seven years ago to WGA's focus on eradicating poverty for women and her recognition of the need to expand that goal to the entire community. Under the leadership of David Garfunkel, who came aboard in 2020, the goals of the organization crystallized and, since then, through collective giving and community partnerships, great strides toward alleviating poverty on Jacksonville's East side have been made. Both Wiss and Garfunkel thanked the WGA for being a catalyst for change.

“This organization stands as a remarkable example of an all-sector collective impact effort,” said Collier. “By conducting the necessary research and deeply evaluating what it revealed, Lift Jax was able to identify specific needs in our community and initiate a movement of support. To see the impact this organization and others are having over time is a testament to the power of strategic, collective giving.”

Videos were shown of several WGA 2023 grant recipients, and Collier closed the meeting by encouraging membership to continue on the path of collective giving, expanding and reaching out to others during the upcoming grant cycle of 2024-25, which will focus on serving the fundamental needs of women and girls in Northeast Florida. In December, local nonprofit organizations serving women and girls will be able to apply for one-year grants for up to \$50,000 to meet the basic needs, such as food, shelter, childcare, health and safety, of women in girls living in the six-county area of Northeast Florida.



Sheila Collier

“WGA is not only about pooling our dollars to have a strategic influence on our community, it’s also about pooling our ideas, relationships, and other resources from our diverse members to magnify our impact.”

– Sheila Collier, WGA President

Since 2002, WGA has awarded more than \$8.9 million through 180 grants to more than 70 organizations in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties.



Isaiah M. Oliver and Sheila Collier with Ellen Wiss and David Garfunkel

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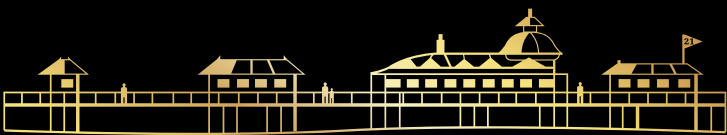
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RESIDENTS

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Betty Burney, left, stands with STAR students on Oct. 9 as the I'm A Star Foundation donated proceeds from its JaxHELPS Celebrity Basketball Game to Duval County schools.

Shooting STARS

I'm A Star Foundation teen servant leaders raised \$62,427 to end student homelessness and donated it to Duval County Public Schools on Oct. 9. The STAR Students presented the check at the October school board meeting to benefit the 3,203 unhoused children in the school system. According to Duval Schools, this classification means students live in shelters, hotels, with relatives or on the streets. The proceeds will go toward rental deposits, doctor and dental fees, school uniforms, toiletries, food vouchers, bedding, sports equipment and school supplies, as well as graduation, SAT, ACT and college application fees. The total represents an all-time record in the history of its JaxHELPS initiative. The funds were raised through the organization's annual JaxHELPS Celebrity Basketball Game at Paxon School for Advanced Studies in July.



Keeping Students on Track

Bolles Lower School Whitehurst Campus unveiled its new and improved Bulldog Express on Oct. 9 to a crowd that included the entire student body, teachers, administrators and The Bolles mascot, Champ. Due to the generosity of the Powell family, the brand-new train is now taking passengers on several routes on the Whitehurst Campus, including to and from lunch at Verlander Hall every day. Students, decked out with conductor hats and train whistles, watched President and Head of School Tyler Hodges drive the train up the hill to deliver the orange-and-blue locomotive. Billy Powell and Ben Powell were recognized for their gift at the unveiling, which also honored Hugh Powell, making this addition to the Whitehurst Campus a reflection of the family's four generations at Bolles. The train's maiden voyage was taken by the youngest Powell and her Bolles classmates, but all students had the opportunity to ride the Bulldog Express throughout the day.



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Hailey Christy with her 3D model.

Center for Innovation Comes to Life

Bolles senior Hailey Christy worked with instructional technology specialist Gloria Wood to design a 3D model of the Center for Innovation, currently under construction on the Upper School San Jose Campus. She used Fusion 360 to design the 3D model from scratch, based solely on the 2D renderings of the 47,000-square-foot, three-story building.

“Hailey is a curious, responsible, exceptionally helpful young lady,” Wood said. “She spent countless hours learning how to use the Fusion 360 program in her free time and on the weekends. We are immensely grateful to her for sharing her talents with the School community.”

The school administration uses Christy’s scaled-down model to communicate the building design and its impact. Construction on the Center for Innovation is projected to finish in Spring 2024.

Douglas Anderson Celebrates Historic Achievement

Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA) celebrated a historic achievement as both the Jazz Ensemble 1 and Wind Symphony were both invited to perform at the prestigious 2023 Western International Band Clinic in Seattle, Washington, in November. This is the first time in the clinic’s history that one school has been accepted for both. The Wind Symphony is under the direction of Ben Gerrard and Jazz Ensemble 1 under the direction of Don Zentz.

For the seventh year in a row, “DownBeat Magazine” – America’s longest-running publication featuring jazz and blues artists – recognized DA’s jazz band as the best high school jazz band in the nation. DA has won more awards than any other school in the 39-year history of the magazine.

Building on 40 years of accolades, students in 2023, under the direction of Ted Shistle, also traveled to Carnegie Hall for the New York Wind Band Festival.

“We performed the world premiere of a work written for our ensemble, and the comments from the adjudicators were exemplary. The students were told that their performance was the best that had been seen in 25 years of this festival,” said Shistle.



Blue Chip Students

Junior Achievement of North Florida (JA) is hosting the JA Stock Market Challenge for the second time on Wednesday, Nov. 8. Starting at 10 a.m., 40 teams made up of approximately 160 high school students from 10 local schools will gather at the Gallagher Club East at EverBank Stadium for the JA Stock Market Challenge, part of the JA Take Stock in Your Future program.

The students will participate in mock trading on the simulated stock market floor, buying and selling a pseudo-\$1 million in stocks to create a stock portfolio with the highest value. The live competition will be the finale of the JA Take Stock in Your Future program, designed to stimulate young people’s interest in personal finance and money management.

More than 700 students are participating in JA’s in-classroom programs at Paxon School for Advanced Studies, Stanton College Preparatory School, and Bartram Trail, Duncan U. Fletcher, Englewood, Jean Ribault, KIPP Bold City, Samuel W. Wolfson, Mandarin and Baldwin Senior high schools.



Bette Loyd with her SJEDS granddaughter

A Grand, Special Affair

San Jose Episcopal Day School’s (SJEDS) annual Grandparents and Special Friends Day welcomed more than 200 guests to campus for student performances, guided campus tours and a photo booth. Grandparents and special friends had the opportunity to explore the campus and visit the student art gallery with the children.

“Grandparents Day holds a special place in my heart, and I eagerly look forward to it every

year. I wouldn’t miss this day with my grandchild for anything,” said Bette Loyd, grandparent and SJEDS alumna.

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Diggin' Dinosaurs

Bolles Lower School Whitehurst Campus Kindergartners roared during KCOVE Oct. 3, wearing dinosaur masks and hats, and sporting hand-crafted paleontologist vests as they rotated through interactive stations ranging from excavating dinosaur figurines in the sand pit to chiseling “fossils” out of hardened clay.

KCOVE stands for Kindergarten Creating Outdoor adVentures through Exploration. It is located outside behind the two Kindergarten classrooms and includes a water table, a sunken boat in a sand digging area, several outdoor tables and learning tools. Kindergarteners participate in KCOVE twice per month from September through May, with each KCOVE having a specific theme that the teachers incorporate into their curriculum.



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Nolan Karch

Musical and Merited

Nolan Karch, a classical piano major at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, has been named a 2024 National Merit Semifinalist, one of only 7,000 nationally. Karch has composed 10 electronic music pieces, won several state Federation solos and duets, and tutors his fellow peers in Calculus in his spare time.

Since 1955 the National Merit Scholarship Program has awarded an average of 20 million in scholarships each year to this country's top high school scholars who perform well on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.



Riverside Presbyterian Breaks Ground

Riverside Presbyterian Church and Day School held its official groundbreaking ceremony for the Riverside Cornerstone Campaign on Wednesday, Oct. 18. Leaders of the Riverside Cornerstone Campaign used golden shovels to break ground together amid a crowd of supporters that included its Day School students wearing special, commemorative construction hats. The groundbreaking marks the start of construction for Riverside Presbyterian's centerpiece Mary Lou Davis Family Life Center, which will house church, school and community activities, the redesigned Rice Sports Zone, and a new youth center in a renovated space in the church education building.



Belkis Plata and Shannon Schott, with her son, Henry, pose with members of the Mariachi Primera Costa band.

Honoring Hispanic Heritage

San Jose Episcopal Day School (SJEDS) celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15 through Oct. 15, with a special visit from the Mariachi Primera Costa band, courtesy of Belkis Plata and SJEDS parent Shannon Schott of Plata Schott Law. The band played for students during morning drop-off, followed by a performance. Spanish teacher Liv Van Brunt spearheaded the Hispanic Heritage Month festivities which, in addition to the mariachi band, included immersive exploration of Hispanic culture and a sampling of Hispanic cuisine.

"By exposing our students to Latin American customs, we enable them to develop an appreciation for a culture distinct from their own. For many of them, savoring churros and experiencing a live mariachi band were entirely new experiences," said Van Brunt. "We hope that our celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month sparks a curiosity among our students, encouraging them to delve deeper into learning about other countries and understanding how diverse cultures enrich the fabric of America."



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Autumn and Paul Combs with Denise Reagan and Nancy Powell

Scenic Jacksonville Executive Director Nancy Powell welcomes guests to the Great Cities Symposium 2023.



Amy Mathews with Demetrio Livingston



Steve Williams with Samiha Nazrul



Ted and Mary Lee Pappas with Lad and Mindy Hawkins



Phillip and Kasey Heilman



Gregory Williams with DeVaughn Murphy, J. Nicole Clark, Rebecca Williams and Errol White



Gardner Davis with Tom Davis



Rick Foster with John Alters, Nicole Renner and David Paulk



Mindy Hawkins with Beth Leavitt

Great Cities Symposium 2023 Welcomed AG Lafley

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Scenic Jacksonville hosted its Great Cities Symposium 2023 at the Garden Club Jacksonville on Wednesday, Oct. 4, with guest speaker AG Lafley.

The former CEO of Proctor & Gamble, Lafley shared his insight and experience as a civic and nonprofit leader with more than 350 engaged Jacksonville community members and city leaders in attendance, including Mayor Donna Deegan, City Council President Ron Salem, Councilmembers Joe Carlucci and Nick Howland and Downtown Investment Authority CEO Lori Boyer.

Ahead of Lafley’s presentation, Scenic Jacksonville Executive Director Nancy Powell said this annual event is a “conversation” with the community.

“It’s a continuing conversation about how we can make Jacksonville better and what are the lessons we can learn from other cities,” she said. “Nothing is cookie-cutter, every city is different, but we’ve been able to watch what other cities have done and to bring the speakers here to talk about their experiences. To let the community ask questions has just been really a wonderful growing event we’re able to host.”

Powell said Scenic Jacksonville focuses on inviting speakers from mid-size cities whose scale is comparable to that of Jacksonville to learn about both their successes and their challenges.

Lafley shared his experiences as founder and board chair of Cincinnati Center Development (3CDC) and his role in transforming downtown Cincinnati into a destination both residents and tourists now enjoy throughout the year as well as his work as The Bay Park Conservancy’s founding CEO in Sarasota, where he helped create a “50-plus acre, beautifully designed and delightfully programmed signature bayfront public park.”

His remarks provided timely insight for Jacksonville as it continues to work towards creating its own riverfront destination parks and public spaces in downtown for its residents and visitors to enjoy. Lafley shared powerful before-and-after photos from his time in Cincinnati and Sarasota to underscore what his teams and their city partners started working with and what they were able to achieve together.

“I think this all begins with commitment, real commitment to your community, real commitment to your city,” he said in his introductory remarks.

In an e-mail following the presentation, Powell wrote, in part, “AG Lafley brought unique insights from a business and civic perspective that complemented prior speakers, who had served as mayors. Showing how it has been done successfully is inspirational and motivating. I personally resonated with his message that Jacksonville already has the people and the resources to transform our downtown and riverfront. We need to continue the commitment and focus and not get distracted.”

This is the fourth annual Great Cities Symposium Scenic Jacksonville has hosted. Its previous speakers have included Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn, Chattanooga Mayor Ron Littlefield and Mayor Joe Riley of Charleston.



Great Cities Symposium 2023 Guest Speaker AG Lafley



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Joseph Provenza at Touché Gallery



Pat Setser

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS

All That Jazz

There were no prohibitions on fun at the Jacksonville Artists’ Guild’s season opening event, “All That Jazz” at the Ortega River Club. With music by Swing Bone, “Summertime” performed by Walden, New Orleans style cuisine by Chef Fernando, a costume contest, and Charleston dance lessons, the flappers and gangsters kicked up their heels to raise funds for Feeding Northeast Florida with a silent auction of paintings provided by members of the group.

Jacksonville Artists’ Guild (JAG) makes their presence known throughout the community through citywide events, partnerships with schools to produce murals and numerous exhibits. Some notable ones include the Jacksonville International Airport, the Jewish Community Alliance Vandroff Gallery, the Downtown Jacksonville Public Library, Green Cove Springs Courthouse, North Point Dental, and TAC Gallery on 320 E. Adams Street.

JAG is dedicated to “elevating artistic awareness and participation by artists through dynamic programs and exhibitions that enhance, encourage and promote the arts.” Monthly meetings at Lakeshore Woman’s Club allow members to socialize and learn from well-known speakers including artist Sarah Crooks, who is presenting on Nov. 13. For membership information or to view the online gallery, visit Jacksonville Artists Guild on Facebook, or go to jacksonvilleartistsguild.org.

The Nest Coworking

According to author Roger Scruton, “Art and music shine a light of meaning on an ordinary life.”

Imagine a workplace in which you are surrounded by interesting and beautiful artwork which changes monthly and enhances your workplace by shining that light on everyday experiences. That place is The Nest Coworking at 476 Riverside Avenue.

The Nest Coworking is the brainchild of Christie Radney and Patricia Orange, who established the offices, then collaborated with Kim Miller of FemArt to establish the organization’s first permanent gallery space. At their recent one-year anniversary celebration, over 100 people enjoyed food and libations to support funding for JilesJewels and promote breast cancer awareness. “The Garden” exhibition opens next on Nov. 4.



Patricia Orange and Christie Radney at The Nest anniversary party

More Beats

October’s Amplified Avondale had 15 participating artists, eight bands and DJ’s and The Lounge Series at Josephine. The next event is Nov. 24 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. with art, music, food and fun for all, with ample stimulation to transcend the ordinary.

For a totally unexpected experience, visit Touché Contemporary Gallery on Herschel Street. A recent opening of Joseph Provenza’s colorful, thought-provoking paintings was well attended. Check out the upcoming Dimelza Broche exhibit opening on Nov. 6, and get more information at touchegallery.com.

Don’t miss Open Studios at CoRK Arts District Nov. 18-19 from noon-6 p.m. Visit with over 70 artists in their creative spaces.

Keep your traveling pants on and beat it over to San Marco Nov. 24-25 to meet and greet Indie authors at San Marco Books and More and enjoy the San Marco Arts Festival Nov. 25-26. Sponsored by The Vault at 1930, the festival hosts painters, sculptors and other visual artists in Balis Park. More at sanmarcoartfestival.com.

While in San Marco, check out two new murals: Kava and Company by Heart Space Art (Ian Brody Cleary and Danielle Cleary) and Vestcor Companies created by Bridge Muralists (Keith Doles and team.)

Lots to see, lots to do and it’s only an Artbeat away.

Jacksonville Artists’ Guild’s All That Jazz



The Beat Goes On: Upcoming Events

NOV 3-9	<i>Just Desserts – A Musical Bake Off</i> at Theatre Jax	NOV 12	<i>The Journey</i> from Odd Rod at 7:30 p.m. at Theatre Jax	DEC 6	Artwalk, 5-9 p.m., Downtown Jacksonville
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Erica Lovelace

BY MARY WANSE

Jacksonville native Erica Lovelace is a chef extraordinaire and a culinary influencer who is simmering on the edge of success in Avondale.

Born and raised in Mandarin, Lovelace had left for Tallahassee to study marketing and design at Florida State University, where she met Joshua Pekera. Together, they headed west and spent a decade in San Francisco, California. There, intent on becoming a cookbook writer and a culinary educator, Lovelace had the privilege of attending the renowned San Francisco Cooking School during its last year in operation.

“It’s something I always knew I wanted to do. It was meant to be,” she said, as both sides of her family have been very food-centric.

“Born in Jacksonville, seasoned in San Francisco, and simmering in Avondale.”

In late 2022, Lovelace returned to Jacksonville with Pekera by her side, a wedding ring on her finger and a cookbook draft under her arm.

“The book is about my upbringing as a biracial person,” Lovelace said.

Her dad is a native Jaxson, and her mom immigrated to the United States in the 1970s from Hong Kong.

Full time, Lovelace is a freelance marketing consultant. Both advertising professionals, Lovelace and Pekera

transitioned into the tech world. He has landed positions with Apple and Airbnb. She has done marketing for food technology companies like Impossible Foods and Meati.

Part time, Lovelace works on her book, which contains both southern-influenced and traditional Chinese recipes. Some of them contain custom meat she purchases from her favorite Jacksonville butcher shop, Cline’s. She also maintains a blog, where she posts her original recipes, and two social media accounts, where she uploads videos that have an extraordinary following: nearly 73,000 on Instagram and 37,500 on TikTok. She has appeared several times on the lifestyle show “River City Live” on News4JAX.

One of the reasons Lovelace returned to Jacksonville after culinary school was, she said, “We wanted to purchase a historic home, which we have.”

The 1929 build that Lovelace and Pekera found in Avondale is in superior condition. The most important renovation they had to make was the installation of special shelving to hold her collection of nearly 500 cookbooks.

Settling in her city of origin after she married, and particularly in the Avondale area, made sense for Lovelace because it was a return to her familial roots. This is



Erica Lovelace

Erica Lovelace with her cookbook collection.

Erica Lovelace in her favorite environment, the kitchen.

the neighborhood where Lovelace’s dad would visit his grandparents. His grandmother, Lovelace’s great-grandmother, grew orchids here as a hobby and was a lifelong member of Jacksonville’s Garden Club, which Lovelace recently joined.

Lovelace’s paternal grandmother, Mary Treisback Argalas, grew up here and graduated from Riverside High School (formerly Robert E. Lee). She used to sew costumes for a local dance company to make extra money as a single mom after Lovelace’s grandfather had passed away unexpectedly at a young age.

“Because she was a product of WWII, she was a fantastic baker, gardener and canner. I learned how to make traditional jams and jellies from her,” Lovelace said of her grandma.

“Food has been a huge part of my family since I can remember. Cooking is in my DNA. I grew up in the restaurant world,” she said.

When her maternal grandparents had immigrated to the United States, first to

New York before making their way down to Jacksonville, they owned and operated several Chinese restaurants for decades, including Tam’s on Edgewood Avenue. That was the gathering point for the family. It was where Christmas and Chinese New Year were celebrated. The family sold that business in 2008, but the building still stands, now Sunrise Caribbean Gourmet.

Ever the foodie, even when Lovelace is not cooking, “I love going to other people’s restaurants,” she said.


Naming a favorite would be tough because it depends upon what she’s in the mood for. Josephine on St. Johns Avenue for dinner is near the top of her list, though.

She and her husband also love the outdoors and are often found either cycling around town or walking with their two golden retrievers, Canon and Cooper, through Willowbranch Park.

The couple loves to travel, too. Hence, their November trip to “eat our way through the northern coast of Spain,” as Lovelace put it.


“We’re excited!” she said of her trip, just as Jacksonville residents are excited for the future publication of Lovelace’s cookbook.

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Wings of Rescue volunteer pilots Kale and Anji Garcia in the cockpit with a puppy on a rescue flight out of Jacksonville.



Puppies getting ready to board the plane.

SHELTER FROM THE STORM

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA

On Friday and Saturday, Sept. 1-2, Jacksonville supported a Hurricane Idalia Pet Flight Mission and Vehicle Transport Caravan that moved animals out of shelters in Florida to make room for pets affected by the storm. The flight was organized after Idalia, a Category 3 hurricane, made landfall Aug. 30 at Keaton Beach, Florida, in the panhandle's Big Bend area.

Idalia's eye tore across Taylor, Suwanee, Columbia and Baker counties, skirting Jacksonville before reaching Georgia. Its storm surge, wind and rain caused destruction and at least three confirmed deaths. In addition to the disastrous impact on residents and structures, it also brought flooding, damage and power outages to animal shelters and outdoor kennels in the hardest-hit areas.

A natural disaster pet flight mission aimed to alleviate the burden on Florida animal shelters was

quickly organized. According to Denise Deisler, CEO of Jacksonville Humane Society (JHS), the flight was made possible through cooperation between national and local animal welfare organizations: Petco Love, Bobs from Skechers, Wings of Rescue Disaster Response Flights and Jacksonville Humane Society's Florida Leaders in Lifesaving. The coalition arranged for a Wings of Rescue plane to pick up shelter pets in Tampa, coordinated by the Humane Society of Tampa Bay and the Pet Resource Center at Hillsborough County Animal Shelter. The plane then flew to Jacksonville's Cecil Airport to pick up more shelter pets before delivering them north to waiting shelters.

There were multiple vans carrying cats and dogs waiting on the Cecil Airport tarmac. They came from the Lake City Humane Society, North Florida Animal Rescue in Wellborn, Florida, and JHS. Transferring animals to

other rescue organizations opened kennel space for shelters in the storm's path, allowing those impacted shelters to respond to community needs and provide desperately needed help for pets that went missing, became homeless or were injured by the hurricane. Doing so also allowed any storm-damaged shelters to close for repairs or await restoration of electricity and utilities. The Lake City and North Florida shelters both lost power and sustained extensive damage to their outdoor kennels.

"We are a small shelter and have been without power," said Lake City Humane Society Shelter's Operations Director Ashley Gerondale. "We are overwhelmed with gratitude and can't put into words how grateful we are for this help."

Before the flight, volunteers checked on the pets, provided water, comfort and cleaned up when necessary.

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Jacksonville Humane Society and Wings of Rescue volunteers load pets onto plane.

Some of the dogs and cats of various ages and sizes even wiggled, wagged their tails and pushed excited noses and faces forward for attention from nearby people.

Each animal was fully vaccinated and medically cleared for travel by a licensed veterinarian. All pets traveled in an individual crate with water and were monitored by volunteers. The pets fly in pressurized, temperature-controlled cabins, breathing the same air as the pilots, according to Ric Browde, Wings of Rescue president and CEO.

Wings of Rescue volunteer pilot Kale Garcia, who has 15 years of experience, evaluated every crate's size and weight for efficient loading onto the Swiss Pilatus PC-12 single-engine aircraft. His goal was to load every animal on board. As the crates of all sizes were unloaded and lined up on the tarmac at his direction, he coordinated placement onto the plane with Maggie McGuane, Wings of Rescue Disaster Response Coordinator.

"There were so many animals that needed transport. I decided to rent a car and drive [from Tampa] to leave extra space free for more crates," she said.

McGuane, from Montana, travels wherever she is

needed, at a moment's notice to assist with animal disaster response and transport. Because she has family in Florida, she was well aware of the severity of the storms that hit the state.

The airlifted pets were flown to the Brandywine Valley SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). The organization is the area's largest animal welfare organization with multiple shelter locations in Pennsylvania and Delaware. They agreed to accept the 65 Florida cats and dogs and find them adoptive homes. No local shelter pets, however, are ever displaced by animals flown in from elsewhere.

Garcia's wife and co-pilot, Anji, assisted with the airlift. The couple are volunteer pilots for animal welfare missions and have volunteered for Wings of Rescue since the organization formed in 2012. These passionate animal advocates have flown thousands of animals to safety, usually flying four to five trips monthly. They formed a nonprofit charity, FETCH, to raise funds for emergency animal welfare flights not covered by other organizations.

Their story started 15 years ago during a Christmas Eve storm when the Garcias saw a man unloading a pet crate out of his plane.

"I said, 'Kale, look! He brought his dog with him,'" Anji Garcia said. "But then he unloaded another crate and put it his vehicle. Then another and another. That's when I had to go over and ask him what was going on. He told me he found out that they were going to be euthanized the next day and he had to save them. He had contacted a local rescue that was willing to accept every one, so he rescued those dogs. We never knew this kind of mission existed, but here we were, just the two of us in our almost-empty plane. Our children had left the nest; the seats in back were empty. All we could talk about was what we might be able to do if we removed those seats!"

Both say that they are just one piece of the puzzle that makes rescue flights of homeless and at-risk pets from overcrowded shelters or disaster areas possible. It takes an entire team to coordinate the logistics on the ground with the animals, airports and organizations. The in-bound flights to the affected areas often also deliver humanitarian and veterinarian aid.

The second part of Jacksonville's efforts to help animals and shelters affected by Idalia began at dawn the next day, Sept. 2, at JHS on Beach Boulevard.

“We are overwhelmed with gratitude and can’t put into words how grateful we are for this help.”

– Ashley Gerondale
Lake City Humane Society Shelter's
Operations Director

A second transport of animals was loaded into vehicles for transfer out of Florida. Approximately 100 cats and dogs from Halifax Humane Society, Sarasota Humane Society and JHS were driven to shelters in Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia.

"Connections and cooperation means we can maximize life saving, particularly during natural disasters statewide and beyond," Deisler said. "JHS gives thanks for our community and everyone who took pets into their homes to foster prior to the hurricane."



Volunteers loading pet crates onto the rescue flight.

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THE WAY WE WERE



The Parrishes in their boat.



John and Davy Parrish with Phyllis and H.L. Geiger in Hope Town.

John and Davalu “Davy” Parrish

Dr. John Parrish, who is now retired after more than five decades as one of the most popular dentists in San Marco, still retains the friendly demeanor and sense of humor that always attracted patients to his chair. John’s wife, Davy, recalls a close family friend, Jeff, commenting on John’s popularity, especially with the ladies.

“What does John have that I don’t have?” he’d asked.

Davy had the answer. “John makes them laugh.”

While going to the dentist is not a favorite pastime for most, John always managed to make a visit to his office as pleasant as possible. Born in Pensacola, Florida, in 1934, John grew up fishing, duck hunting and swimming in Lake Album and Lake Oglethorpe, often

pursuing those outdoor activities before he and his boyhood friends got to school. He has retained many of those friendships his entire life.

A football player and honor student in high school, John received dental treatment and decided on his future career as a dentist. A few of his most endearing traits, developed early on, have been his reluctance to accept praise for accomplishments and his somewhat rebellious nature. For instance, when chosen for the honor society, he refused to sit in the front row as designated, choosing to sit in the back row instead.

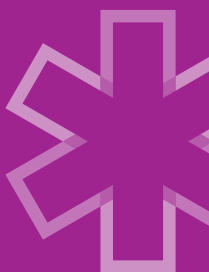
John Parrish attended Auburn University and then graduated from the University of Alabama School of Dentistry at Birmingham. He was elected president

of the dental school by his fellow students. After graduating, he joined the Navy and was sent to the Honolulu Navy Dental Clinic in Oahu, Hawaii, where he learned to sail and developed a love for the ocean, which has stayed with him. After leaving the Navy, he brought his family to Jacksonville and set up his practice in San Marco, where he made many good friends. He spent much of his time off fishing the waters of St. Augustine in his boat, Fugahwe, named after a little-known Indian tribe.

In 1986, Dr. John Parrish, a then-divorced father of two, met a beautiful widow, Davy Mudd, the lady he calls “the love of my life.”

“I was nailed,” he said, grinning. **READ MORE ON PAGE 47**

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The couple, who were married on Dec. 5, 1987, in the chapel of Southside Methodist Church, have lived in their home in Lakewood for 36 years and nurtured a blended family of five: John's sons, David and Robert, and Davy's daughters, Renee and Shawna, and son, Shannon.

Davy was born in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, graduated from Oklahoma City University and earned her master's and doctorate degrees from Nova University. One of the founders of The Bridge of Northeast Florida in 1982, her leadership as president and CEO of The Bridge over the next 32 years became legendary. During her tenure, Davy and her staff served more than 3,000 young people from the inner city annually with comprehensive education, social and health programs.

Davy retired as president/CEO of The Bridge on February 15, 2013, after accruing myriad national, state and local honors. Just a few of these include the 1997 Governor Lawton Chiles Heartland Award, 1999 Humanitarian of the Year by OneJax, 2001 Women's Giving Alliance Founding Member, 2008 Women of Color Education Award, 2009 Florida Times-Union EVE Award, and the 2013 Jacksonville City Council Proclamation for Outstanding Service to Children.

Then-mayor Alvin Brown even declared April 4, 2013, as "Davy Parrish Day." While The Bridge merged with the Northeast Florida Boys and Girls Club in 2017, Davy has remained actively involved with The Bridge Legacy Scholarship Program

"Over the years, John and I have worked hard and played hard. We've enjoyed our friends and family as much as our time in the community," said Davy.

She reminisced on the fishing trips and vacations they took with their friends H.L. and Phyllis Geiger. H.L. prior to his passing, was an orthodontist who regularly worked with John in his dental practice. The Parrishes would often join the



John holding "Granddaddy Red Bass."

Geigers at their place in Hope Town, Abaco, Bahamas.

"We always had plenty of Phyllis's delicious original Peterbrooke chocolates while on the plane, and, once in the boat, the guys caught enough fish to share with



John, in his fishing boat, Fugahwe.

for the foyer of their home in Lakewood.

"It was a labor of love," said Davy. "And it includes a special graduate of The Bridge, Nemiah Rutledge, who came to us as a young boy and – full circle – is now a member of our family and one of the top fitness trainers in Jacksonville, helping John and me stay healthy and in shape."

Today, John and Davy Parrish fondly look back at the life they've built together, their five children and five grandchildren, and the many people they have touched – John literally bringing smiles to the faces of his patients and Davy helping to develop productive future citizens. While both are retired, the Parrishes continue to be avidly interested and supportive of all things Jacksonville: the Jacksonville Jaguars football team, new Mayor Donna Deegan, and a number of nonprofit organizations that still seek support, guidance and advice from these two outstanding citizens of our city.

“Over the years, John and I have worked hard and played hard. We’ve enjoyed our friends and family as much as our time in the community.” – Davy Parrish



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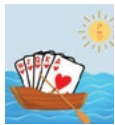
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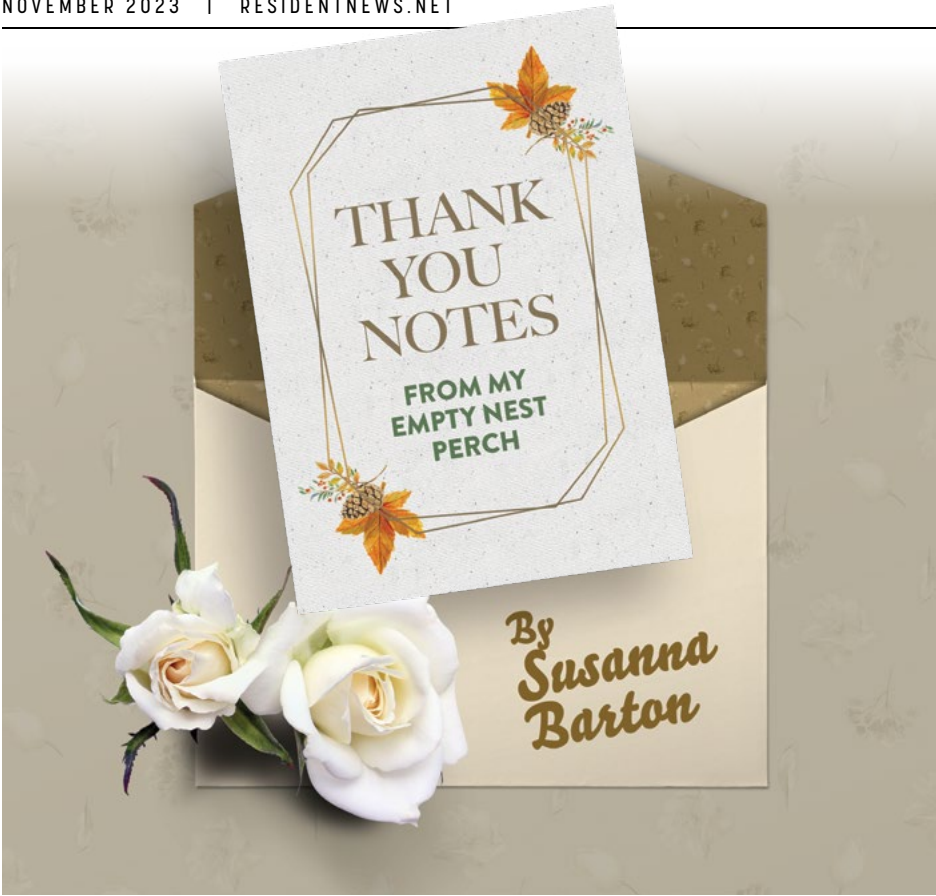
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It's November, the month of all things thankful and the season for reflecting on our collective gratitude for the lives we lead, the people, places and moments that define these experiences, and the Resident Community that unites us.

Said another way, we are lucky to be alive in this moment, with all the people we love, and in historic neighborhoods that have been bringing it for generations. Lucky as all get out!

- Here are a few reasons I'm grateful to be right here, right now, right in this space we call home. Hopefully, my ramblings will inspire a similar list in your mind – just in time to prepare for that Thanksgiving blessing you may be called to offer come month's end:
- Growing up in San Antonio, Texas, I went to the same public school as my mother, uncle and grandfather, and all their relatives and friends – the same public school my nieces and my friends' and cousins' children attend today. It was an awesome educational heritage, one I'm proud to claim! When Jacksonville became my home, it felt super nostalgic to live in a neighborhood with the same school pride vibe. There are so many families in our Resident Community who have attended the same school generation after generation – public and private. I'm grateful for that legacy and dedication to the educational experience.
 - I'm also real, real grateful our hastily cobbled, 7 a.m. search party found Baby William pajama-ed and content in the front yard of a neighbor's house next to his dutiful charge, Barkley, when he toddled away from his house to explore the wilds of our neighborhood 15 years ago. That's one way to start the day! I'm also grateful for neighbors who returned the favor when Marley and her friend played "let's hide from your mom and not answer or reveal our location when she screams our names bloody murder-style over and over and over again like some nutball and calls the police." I'm beyond thankful to have graduated from this kind of parenting drama – like, so much, I get the shakes thinking about it. Moving along.
 - I'm grateful for the U.S. Postal Service employees who bring me hope of real letters and handwritten notes on the daily, rain or shine. I forgive them for cramming bills, catalogs I don't want, and advertising BS in my mailbox instead. I'm also thankful for the Amazon folks who deliver a dopamine hit every time they make one of their anticipated porch deposits. How could it be so wrong if it feels so good?
 - I remain ever so grateful for the waste collectors who pull up to my

overflowing garbage bins in their miracle machines each Wednesday and make my embarrassing mounds of trash disappear. They are earth angels. All of them.

- I am grateful for the neighbors who plan and execute all the fun neighborhood stuff I should apply more effort toward – Oktoberfest, Granadafest and the like. I am also

“ I could write for a very long time on how thankful I am for all the good in our home, our neighborhood and our Resident Community. It really is a long list. Most of all, I am grateful for the opportunity... to express my gratitude month after month via this Thank You Notes Column. ”

- thankful for the neighbors who go big at Halloween with cool candy and costume parties and super amazing decorations because it makes our neighborhood a real event for people, our family included.
- I'm grateful that when the lawn guy leaves the back gate open and our geridog, Dot, gets out and starts running frothy, blind-as-a-bat loops around the neighborhood, someone always notices and gives us a courtesy call or brings her ole skin 'n bones back to the yard – and closes the gate. Now that's neighborly.
 - I'm grateful that when we are down for some epicurean delight, or fancy feasting, or fried calorie explosion, we only must drive about two miles to get some of that. We can walk to some destinations. Plus, many of these restaurants are owned or managed by neighbors, which makes the culinary experience that much more hometown, special and satisfying.
 - I am grateful that no one got seriously injured in our backyard over the years, don't tell State Farm. LOL. We had it all – a trampoline, a mis-installed zipline, an uncle-built treehouse, blow-up castles and slip-n-slides on rooty, stick-y, dirt-cloddy grass. I am grateful little Morgan did not lose her entire jaw when she disembarked from our zipline with our home-job-zipline-handle-retrieval-system (an old dog leash) still clenched between her teeth, thus causing a cringy ejection

- of two perfectly non-ready front teeth into our dog-poop grass. And, whew! No visiting Afghan children or afternoon playdate friends ever busted through the flimsy trampoline netting doing double flips or playing "Wake Up Daddy." Shivers.
- I'm grateful for the Winn-Dixie in Lakewood and am not sure how I feel about an Aldi takeover because I'm not a big Aldi person, which is weird because I have a very high tolerance for thrifting, and off-price shopping, and bargains and such. I am grateful the Winn-Dixie was always a quick pull-in off San Jose Boulevard on my way home from work at The Bolles School all those years.
 - I'm grateful that ever since COVID, my husband, David, has been doing the store runs and cooking for us and our family and guests and on most occasions, even doing the dishes afterward. I am forever spoiled and grateful for this. I am also glad no neighbor has complained (yet!) about his small-time deer meat and game processing operations in the garage. And please, nobody complain, because this is how I get to enjoy all this non-food-sourcing, free-range/full organic meal-planning and cooking. David is a hunter-gatherer and preparer, and it really works out well for me, so thanks in advance. I am grateful to you for just looking the other way if you see something scary back there. Just. Look. Away.

way it was when we moved in with a 1-year-old and big life plans all those many years ago.

I could write for a very long time on how thankful I am for all the good in our home, our neighborhood and our Resident Community. It really is a long list. Most of all, I am grateful for the opportunity Pam, Seth, Debra and Lindsey and all the fine folks at The Resident Community News Group give me month after month via this Thank You Notes Column. It is very generous of them, and I am blessed by the inch-count they make available to me for my monthly prattling. Happy Thanksgiving!

Susanna Barton loves writing thank you notes and receiving them in any form, but she is NOT a big fan of the text response "thx" or "ty" – gratitude is much too important to shorten. She raised her family in Granada and has written professionally for The Jacksonville Business Journal, *The Resident News*, Jacksonville University and The Bolles School. She currently manages an online community called Grand Plans, which addresses geri-drama and all things elderly on www.mygrandplans.com. Each month, she will share reflections on neighborhood qualities for which she is grateful.



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100 Years Young

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS

Geary Irwin was born on Oct. 12, 1923, in San Francisco, where there is a street named after her great-grandfather John W. Geary, who was the first mayor of San Francisco, a governor of the Kansas Territory and the 16th governor of Pennsylvania. Irwin attended Berkeley where she met her soon-to-be husband, William. She took a train from San Francisco to St. Petersburg, Florida – where he was stationed – to get married right before he got shipped off to the Pacific with the Marines. With this amazing beginning, Irwin and her family lived in Memphis, Tennessee, until she made her way to Jacksonville in 2010.

Geary began her weeklong 100th-birthday celebration with a speech during church service of her love and appreciation for her fellow congregants before she was honored with a cake-and-punch reception in the courtyard of Ortega Church. The big day was highlighted with a family dinner at her daughter's home and a bar-b-que at her granddaughter's home the following day.

"It was a sweet, sweet time. It was really special to all be together – 19 people at every meal! And we had so much fun and laughed so hard!" said Irwin's daughter, GaiGai Quarterman.

Quarterman described her mother as very practical and down to earth. In her long life, Irwin has been a preschool teacher, a juvenile probation officer and has cared for her disabled son. She is dedicated to her church, has been a faithful member of bible study and has always had a passion for books and reading.

"There seems no limit to the affirming adjectives one could use to describe how Geary continues to engage life as she celebrates her 100 years of life with her infectious smile, gracious words and enlivening spirit," said Pastor Art McClellan.



UF Health doctors and panel speakers at the 2023 UF Health Breast Cancer public forum. Front row: Julie Bradley, John Murray, Smita Sharma; back row: Shahla Masood, Leigh Neumayer, Linda Edwards, Joseph Mignone and Rachel Carpenter.

Breast Cancer: The One Thing Top Docs want You to Know

As October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month wrapped, one local expert is encouraging the community to continue its efforts to increase what she calls "breast awareness." The concept gives women the tools to become self-aware of any dangers.



Dr. Shahla Masood

"Breast awareness is the most important thing. They need to really get to know their breasts and if there are any changes that occur, they need to refer to either their primary care or OB-GYN and try to make sure they are not dealing with anything serious," said Dr. Shahla Masood, Chair, Department of Pathology and Medical Director of UF Health Breast Center. "This self-awareness is important, and screening mammography has helped significantly for us to find small cancers that are manageable and really treated very effectively."


Masood has run UF Health's annual October breast cancer dinner and forum for nearly 30 years with no cost – or strings attached – to the public. The goal of the event, and the UF Health Breast Center, is to provide patients a resource that has significant interest and knowledge about breast cancer across an entire team. According to Masood, the gathering and collective opinion of all the physicians engaged in breast cancer therapies – radiologists, pathologists, surgeons, oncologists, plastic surgeons, social workers – aids in a more cohesive treatment plan and follow-up for patients with breast cancer.

Because of advances in technology and science, there has been an improvement in the mortality rate from breast cancer. While many still think of breast cancer as a fatal disease, Masood stressed the importance of understanding that is no longer always the case and encourages people to remove the fear and move toward education to understand their best treatment options.

"First of all, breast cancer is not a single disease, it's multiple diseases. And these breast cancer subtypes – every one of them – is really different from the other one. And we at the Department of Pathology have the capability of identifying which one of these breast cancers are low-grade, and which ones are high-grade that require a different kind of therapy and attention," said Masood. "The majority of these small, image-detected cancers that we see these days as a result of screened mammography are small tumors that are very manageable, and patients live long – 20, 30, 40 years - after."

This year's public forum included a 7-physician panel of experts from the University of Florida College of Medicine and had more than 150 attendees. In addition to the forum, Masood hosts an international symposium every February for breast cancer physicians, where they educate and share the most recent advancements with the scientific community.

"We are just taking the responsibility to increase breast health literacy within our community," said Masood. "We have had significant success in attracting people to come to this meeting, and then to see patients follow...what we tell them, and they often go and seek a physician referral. It definitely has an impact. This is a service to the community with no expectation of any return."



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Celebration of Life

by Elainah Ehrlichman

Imagine walking into a bright, spacious room. You're surrounded by colorful round seating tables with beautiful personalized centerpieces, and at the front of the room is a dazzling display. This display is what we call a Life Story, and it exhibits all aspects of your loved one's life in a cohesive and stunning vignette-style fashion. From sports enthusiasts to gardeners to film fanatics and more, our design team has an abundance of décor at their disposal to ensure your loved one's Life Story encapsulates all of their favorite memories and important life moments.

Something that sets Hardage-Giddens apart from other funeral homes is our Celebration of Life approach to funeral services. This approach leans away from a traditional funeral as the emphasis is centered around your loved one's achievements, experiences, and their impact in life rather than focusing solely on their passing. We've designed our locations to have an open layout and natural lighting to encourage family and friends of the decedent to consider an alternative approach to their loss. We understand that losing someone is never going to be painless, and because of that, we try to think of the funeral service itself as a celebration of the deceased's life. Furthermore, we do our best to help the family and friends of the decedent draw strength from their loved one's life experiences and memories. While this approach might seem like a new concept, it's actually been practiced by various cultures for centuries!

The Life Story display is a heartwarming addition to the Celebration of Life perspective, as these table vignettes incorporate all the unique, essential elements

of your loved one's life. If your father loved to play golf and then relax on the beach, theme-specific décor will be presented in his Life Story and as centerpieces on the tables so that family and friends may visually take in his memories and life experiences. We've found that at services with Life Stories, there is a palpable lightness in the air. Families have expressed to us that having such a personal touch at their loved one's service made the day easier to get through, as it reminded them of the beautiful times their loved one had throughout their life. Having a physical representation of someone's life surrounding them at their own service brings an unmatched level of peace and calm to the room. Additionally, we encourage families to bring in their personal items to incorporate into the Life Story. This adds even more of a personalized touch because your loved one's most treasured possessions are proudly on display! Each Life Story varies from one to the next: some are full of our own décor, some have the family's items sprinkled throughout, and some consist only of the family's personal belongings. There's no limit to what we can create for you.

We have a designated department of individuals who create these displays; they are team members of what is called our Life Story Department. We understand that not knowing who is setting up a Life Story can stir up emotions due to the intimate nature of creating such a display, so let us reassure you that our Life Story Department consists of a small and dedicated group who all share the same passion for ensuring each arrangement turns out beautifully and exactly the way the family envisions it. The department's goal when

creating a Life Story is that when family and friends walk into the room, they are floored by the level of detail, personalization, and effort that goes into creating a table that honors the decedent. There has never been, and never will be, a display that our Life Story Department puts less than 1000% into. This is an extremely special and personal way to commemorate someone who has died, and Hardage-Giddens does not take this feat lightly. The gravity and immense importance surrounding the creation of these displays are constantly at the forefront of our staff's minds.

Many times, families have their own idea of what a Life Story should look like, and that's why we offer different packages to make sure we find the perfect match for what you have in mind. Additionally, we often set up in religious settings, community clubhouses, and sometimes the family's own home. We are always eager to do whatever it is that is going to create the best outcome for those involved, and we are happy to make as many adjustments as it takes to create the ideal Life Story table for your loved one.

We've included an example Life Story below so you can see for yourself how incredible they are! If you're interested in learning more about our Life Stories, please contact any of our locations. We are committed to answering all questions and inquiries about this meaningful add-on feature to funeral services. Please allow us to help make a difficult day a little bit brighter for you.



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