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Letters TO THE Editor

Resident readers answer call, impact those in need

I'd like to thank *The Resident Community News* for being a big champion and supporter of Clara White Mission and its services during the 26 years I've been at the mission. I especially appreciate the coverage you have given us during this time of COVID-19. It's been very hard to share the needs and challenges of the Clara White Mission during this crisis, and it is our hope that we can continue to serve our breakfasts-to-go during this time.

Thanks to the article by Marcia Hodgson that ran in the April edition of *The Resident News* and was shared with your readers throughout Jacksonville's historic communities, the Clara White Mission was able to get a

gift from the Jaguars, an abundance of food from First Watch, in addition to furniture from the Haskell Company, which it can offer its client base once we are open again. Because of the support of *Resident News* readers, we will be able to offer several more breakfasts at this time. Each day, we feed anywhere from 295 to 320 people, and those individuals count on us for a hot meal.

Also, the article talked about the front-line staff that is still serving the homeless, and through the *Resident's* coverage we were able to get some more volunteers to help at the mission. Most of the volunteers we have are usually seniors, but because of the article,

we were able to get some younger volunteers to come, and this will enable us to continue our 116-year service to the community.

I salute the *Resident News* for keeping our community in touch by printing good and challenging articles that assist organizations and nonprofits like the Clara White Mission, so that we can continue to do all the good that we can, in all the ways that we can, to all the people we can, while we can.

I also salute the *Resident News* for keeping the community abreast of the many organizations that continue to do good in our community. I just want to say that I really, really appreciate that your staff are hands

on in downtown and all around. I appreciate that you take the initiative to reach outside of your comfort zone, and I love that you are willing to cover topics that are sensitive and relatable. Not only does your paper talk about the good things and the successful things, but you also talk about the challenges with a twist, and I really appreciate that because your paper really is a game-changer in the community.

Most sincerely,
Ju'Coby Pittman
President and CEO
Clara White Mission



Thankful for recent donations, nonprofit reminds community need is still great

When community emergencies such as the current COVID-19 crisis occur, Aging True Community Senior Services is one of the first organizations called to the front line when it comes to serving some of the most vulnerable in our community – the elderly.

While weeks of social distancing and isolation have taken a toll on many in Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods, it is clear the demographic that has been most seriously impacted is our homebound seniors, many of whom rely on Aging True's programs as a lifeline and even more so during this global pandemic.

The economic fallout from Coronavirus stretches the financial resources of many businesses and nonprofit organizations. Aging True has recently benefited from the largesse of ISEL Inc., Dress a Girl Around the World South Jax Chapter, Humana, Farm Share

and ElderSource, who have stepped up generously to assist our mission during these unsettling times.

We are especially grateful to Jennifer Sandler-Steinshouer, customer development director at ISEL Inc., for supplying nearly 100 four-ounce spray bottles of hand sanitizer to help keep our staff and senior clients safe. Meanwhile, Melanie Carson of Dress a Girl Around the World has used her valuable expertise at the sewing machine to create 150 cloth masks so that every front-line staff member has their own washable facemask as they work with older members of our community.

We also must express our appreciation to Humana, Farm Share, and ElderSource for the gift of paper towels, tissues, toilet paper, toiletries – soap, deodorant and toothbrushes – and nonperishable food

items, which filled 1,000 bags that we distributed to our homebound clients in Duval County. These necessary items – particularly toilet paper – have become quite dear in recent weeks and are especially vital as the stay-at-home order continues.

Coupled with some unrestricted cash contributions from anonymous donors that have helped support our array of programs – care coordination, home health care, nutrition, mental wellness, and caregiver support – these material gifts have given our organization a boost during this challenging time.

We are so thankful that these organizations and individuals understand the gravity of the needs Aging True is fulfilling and that our staff and volunteers have always willingly stepped forward as true community servants. Still our need is great as we continue to bolster the ever-increasing numbers of seniors who

need care and assistance as they seek to remain independent and in their homes as long as possible.

For more information on how you can assist Aging True, please contact Lori McMullin, APR, at (904) 807-1320 or by email at lmcmullin@agingtrue.org. Anything you can give helps us help our senior community age gracefully and with the dignity each person deserves and is greatly appreciated.

A grateful Thank You to you and your staff at *The Resident* for being the continued source for this community and keeping us all connected during this critical time.

Teresa K. Barton,
CEO, Aging True





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Don't know where to start? Contribute to Florida's First Coast Relief Fund, which is making weekly grants to nonprofits serving those with immediate needs during the pandemic. We work with United Way of Northeast Florida, United Way of St. Johns County, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, and Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida to review applications and ensure that 100% of donations go to the agencies. www.unitedwaynefl.org/disaster-relief

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Mayor to allow gradual opening of nonessential businesses

RESTRICTIONS END ON HOTELS AND LODGING; BEACHES TO OPEN ALL DAY MAY 4

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry is eager to take the next step to get his city “gradually and cautiously” back to work.

During a ZOOM press conference April 28, Curry announced that he is amending his executive order to allow Jacksonville’s beaches to be open all day starting on Monday, May 4. He is also repealing an executive order, which closed hotels and lodging establishments to everyone except first responders and other essential personnel, and he has advised retail, lodging and restaurant owners to begin formulating plans so they can resume operations that incorporate proper social distancing and CDC sanitation guidelines in early May.

Curry was quick to say that until April 30, the city remained under Florida Governor Ron DeSantis’s stay-at-home order, but that once he learned whether DeSantis intends on allowing the order to expire, extend, or amend it, he will be able to provide a timeline and plan to get nonessential businesses back to work.

On April 29, DeSantis held a press conference where he said he is softening stay-at-home restrictions across the state but maintaining tougher limits in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Among the changes the rest of the state can enjoy are allowing restaurants to serve diners outdoors and have indoor dining at 25% capacity and permitting health care providers to begin doing elective procedures. In learning of the governor’s plan for Florida’s recovery,

Curry said in a press release April 29 that he was ready to begin creating a roadmap for a similar “phased approach that is safe, smart, and ready to guide us, step-by-step, back to the life we knew before the virus.”

During the April 28 press conference, the mayor also signed into law City Council legislation that approved Ordinance 2020-235, which allocates \$159 million in federal dollars to support COVID-19 response efforts and provide funding for individual Jacksonville citizens that have been hard hit by the Coronavirus crisis. The ordinance includes allowing the city to provide individual assistance to its residents and to expand Coronavirus testing in Duval County.

As of the morning of April 28, the Florida Department of Health reported 1,001 positive cases of COVID-19, with Duval County logging 101 hospitalizations and 20 deaths, Curry said, noting Jacksonville’s percentage of the positive test results was 4.5%, a number that has steadily declined during the past three weeks. “Because of the positive direction of these trends, I am taking the next steps to get our city gradually and cautiously back to work,” Curry said.

The executive order closing hotels and lodging establishments was enacted weeks ago when Florida was inundated with out-of-state tourists, many who were enjoying Spring break in South Florida, he said. “To keep our county’s hotel and lodging establishments from being overwhelmed by these individuals, I issued Executive Order 20-4 restricting the kind of lodgers they can accommodate. That is no longer a threat we face,” he said, adding that he will work with leadership from Visit Jacksonville and the lodging industry so that the hotels can be opened up in a “safe and sensible” way.

Meanwhile, Jacksonville’s beaches can be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day with the same restrictions on allowed activities consistent with social distancing that are already in place. Only recreational activities such as walking, biking, hiking, fishing, running, swimming, walking pets and surfing will be allowed he said. “This is not a time to gather in groups. This is for exercise. No congregating on walkways or cross overs. No sunbathing, towels, blankets, coolers or grills will be allowed. The three beaches’ mayors and I are grateful the public has responded to the restrictions in the past, and we ask them to continue to do so and not ruin this for everyone,” he said.

Curry said he is hopeful he can announce more detailed information about the opening of nonessential businesses and have a timeline ready, maybe as early as May 2. It may take more time for the city to devise safety guidelines for larger venues and nonessential businesses such as movie theaters, gymnasiums, and hair and nail salons, he said. “It is my hope and intention that certain nonessential businesses return to business next week with strict social distancing guidelines,” he said, noting his team updates the recovery resources page on the city website at [CoJ.net\recoveryresources](#). The website includes information on social services, financial relief, mental health, counseling, trauma support and disaster loans.

“When we roll it out, it will be locked down and solid with guidelines,” Curry explained. “We need to give people time to prepare. If we learn something (from the governor) today, it will be earlier next week. If we don’t learn something until Thursday (April 30), it will be later next week, but the goal is to get a significant number of nonessential businesses back to work next week,” he said.

Coronavirus testing

Ordinance 2020-235 is going to allow Jacksonville to “lead the way” on testing, Curry said. “We will be able to significantly expand our testing operations for the next six months, which will provide the critical data we need moving forward in the days and weeks ahead,” he said.

As for the individual assistance, Curry said city employees are in training so that the process to review the applications and distribute the payment cards to citizens will proceed smoothly. He said he would have more information about how citizens can apply for the money by May 1.

Bass Tournament canceled, but fishermen can still win Bullet boat

The Wolfson Children’s Hospital Bass Tournament, a popular event that raises funds for the hospital, has been canceled, but officials there are finding a way to keep some of the fun. On May 16, they’ll hold a virtual drawing via a Facebook raffle for a fully-rigged, 2020 Bullet bass boat with a Mercury XR engine. Bullet Boats and Mercury Marine donated the boat, which is valued at almost \$60,000. The raffle funds will go to help Wolfson patients who have congenital heart disease. Anyone can join the raffle. The raffle will be live, and the suggested donation amount is \$10. To register, visit [wolfsonbasstournament.com](#)



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Marcia Hodgson, Managing editor, Resident Community News

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Half-cent sales tax to improve public schools on ballot in November

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Lovingly referring to it as “the half-cent investment referendum,” At-Large Group 4 City Councilman Matt Carlucci said he is “very pleased,” the Jacksonville City Council and Mayor Lenny Curry are behind having it placed before voters on the November 3, 2020 ballot.

“The bottom line is great cities have great schools,” said Carlucci. “We are a great city, but we need some help with our schools. We are on the verge of being an A school district despite some of the crumbling schools our kids are attending. I think this says a lot about our school district.”

On April 14, the City Council voted, 18-1, in favor of Ordinance 2020-0161, which, if passed, allows a half-cent sales tax to be implemented over 15 years to repair and replace aging school buildings in Duval County. District 13 Councilman Rory Diamond was the only dissenting vote. Mayor Lenny Curry signed the ordinance into law April 16 during a news conference over ZOOM, which included Dr. Diana Greene, superintendent of Duval County Public Schools, Warren Jones, chairman of the Duval County School Board, Carlucci, At-Large Group 3 Councilman Tommy Hazouri and District 10 Councilwoman Brenda Priestly-Jackson among others.

Following the City Council’s vote, Jones named Carlucci to join him as co-chair of Duval Citizens for Better Schools, a political committee formed to support passage of the half-cent sales tax for school safety and building construction. “Matt and I have worked together on important issues for many years,” said Jones. “I welcome his leadership as we prepare to ask voters to provide additional funding for our schools.”

Michael Ward of San Marco, a well-known philanthropist, will serve as fundraising chair of the committee. “Michael Ward’s position as fundraising chair gives us a solid leg up on the committee’s ability to raise enough money to inform voters on the importance of voting for the half-penny,” Jones said.

The legislation represents an about face for Mayor Curry and some others on the City Council who initially had concerns about the plan and blocked school board’s ability to hold a referendum last year. The contentious battle with City Hall led to a lawsuit filed by the School Board. Approval of the ordinance signals an end to the lawsuit.

The half-penny sales tax will be in place for 15 years and is predicted by the school board to generate \$80 million a year. The school board plans to use the expected \$1.9 billion in funds over the years to fund building improvements and technology upgrades to the county’s crumbling schools, many of which are over 100 years old and located in Jacksonville’s historic neighborhoods.

According to the Jacksonville Public Education Fund (JPEF), which supports the referendum, more than 78% of Duval County residents support a small tax for public school buildings, according to JPEF’s 2019 Public Education Perceptions Poll.

Earlier this year, the state legislature passed a law requiring that the school district divvy up the money based on individual public-school students, allowing the funds to be proportionately divided between traditional public schools and charter schools.

District 5 Councilwoman LeAnna Cumber said she voted in favor of the referendum but would not necessarily support it as a voter. “Voting for it stopped the lawsuit

from the school board. It thought it was important that we not spend any more money on that. Now the voters will make their decision in November. I have some concerns about it as a voter, and they are the same concerns that I expressed back in August. Those haven’t really been addressed.”

Cumber added that she is especially concerned about how and where the money is going to be spent, although she is somewhat relieved that the state has mandated it also go to charter schools. “I think it’s the right thing to do to have it follow the child, but the budget that was presented from the school board with the schools that will be fixed was based on the traditional schools getting all the money, so I think it’s important for me as a voter to understand what’s changed now,” she said.

Other concerns on Cumber’s list are the time frame of when the maintenance will occur at each school, the order of the schools being done, and, if twice as much money is raised from the tax, how, exactly, the additional funds will be allocated.

“It is a 15-year tax. It’s important to know, if your child is in school right now whether the issues at their school are going to be addressed now or 15 years from now,” she said. “I also think it’s important to realize we’ve been in a very different world within the last month. Will any of these upgrades address the need for home schooling if it happens again?”

District 14 Councilwoman Randy DeFoor also voted in favor of the sales tax but added the caveat that “we need to make sure the school board uses these funds in an appropriate manner.”

DeFoor said she approved of the state mandate to divvy the money out on a per-student basis. “I think that is exceptionally

important because we don’t know what our school choice is going to be for the next two to five to 10 years.

“It’s important that we properly fund our schools whether they are public or charter, because the kids’ future is our future. I’m a business person at heart, and if our schools are good that drives everything including our real estate values and our tax values. If this is properly done and invested appropriately, the return on investment will be huge, not only from a human being standpoint, but also from an economic standpoint, long-term,” she continued, noting investment in the city’s infrastructure is important.

DeFoor said she hopes the school district would build a “strong” middle school in her district – perhaps on property where Venetia Elementary School is located. Better schools in Duval County – especially up-to-date, well-maintained, A-rated schools – will draw residents back to Duval from St. Johns or Nassau Counties, she said.

Meanwhile, Carlucci agreed with DeFoor that the referendum would increase property values, be a great boost to the city’s economy and generate much-needed jobs. He also said it would bring school safety to the thousands of children in Duval County. However, he noted that most charter schools are newer than many of Duval’s elderly educational structures and may not need to be updated or need as much money to repair them. “All students should have equal funding, and that was where the legislature landed, but it was not exactly what I would have preferred,” he said. “There are so many schools that are so much older than the charters. But I don’t want to quibble over it. I just want to move forward,” he said.



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Workmen from Liberty Landscape plant trees near St. John’s Cathedral April 9.

Tree planting brings renewal to Cathedral District

While the world seems to be on pause, the City of Jacksonville’s plan to plant more than 60 trees in right of ways within the City’s Cathedral District brought a sense of renewal at Easter time.

The plan comes free of charge to the Cathedral District as part of a larger plan by the City to plant trees county wide.

“This partnership with the City is so much appreciated. It’s one of the components of our overall Master Development Plan to distinguish the District as a leafy, green neighborhood and will complement the already mature trees,” said Ginny Myrick, CEO and president of Cathedral District-Jax. “Working with Kathleen McGovern, arborist for the City, and Ricky Leon, the City’s Urban Forester was easy and very professional. And what perfect timing, with Easter representing a time for renewal and rebirth.”



Planting trees near the St. John’s Cathedral Bookstore

Liberty Landscape began the planting April 9 in the northeast quadrant of the Cathedral District. Each tree is guaranteed for one year and each approved location can be easily seen on the City’s website: <https://pg-cloud.com/JacksonvilleFL/#home>

Ascension to open vascular center, expects fewer COVID-19 cases



Ascension St. Vincent’s Riverside has completed a multi-million-dollar center for treating patients with heart problems.

By Jennifer Edwards
Resident Community News

Ascension St. Vincent’s Riverside had two great pieces of news to share in mid-April: The completion and upcoming opening of a brand-new, \$55 million center for heart patients, and what hospital officials believe to be a falling off of new Coronavirus infections.

Ascension completed construction of its new, \$55-million Delores Barr Weaver Heart and Vascular Pavilion at its hospital campus in Riverside in April and was ready to receive Coronavirus patients in the facility even as minor exterior work was ongoing, however, officials soon realized the space might not be needed due to a drop in the number of new Coronavirus patients in mid-April. The pavilion, located at 1 Shircliff Way, is directly connected to the hospital. A celebration of its opening is planned for the first week in May.

While Ascension had originally made contingency plans to use the pavilion’s 60 new beds – 30 earmarked for intensive care unit (ICU) patients and 30 for medical and surgical patients – for those inflicted with Coronavirus if needed, they no longer think that will be necessary.

“If it were needed, it could be flexed up to 60 ICU beds,” said Tom VanOsdol, president and CEO of Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast, and an Avondale resident. “But, based on the volume we’re seeing today, it’s not going to be needed for Coronavirus patients. We are going to be able to maintain our Coronavirus patients (in current hospital settings). The statistical model was updated on April 17, and it indicates we may already have seen the surge. We believe we are going to be able to manage through this safely.”

VanOsdol said that Ascension was caring for Coronavirus patients in its main tower and was reporting infections to the state Department of Health (DOH) twice a day.



Ascension St. Vincent’s Riverside’s Delores Barr Weaver Heart and Vascular Pavilion is expected to open the first week in May.

At press time, the DOH website reported about 900 cases in Duval County as a whole, with around 80 hospitalizations. The median age for patients was 49. The department continues to update data on its website, <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/#latest-stats>.

The construction of the center was made possible through the generosity of many donors, including its namesake, as well as St. Vincent’s employees. Much of St. Vincent’s operating budget also paid for construction.

“Delores Barr Weaver was very generous in supporting our philanthropic efforts,” VanOsdol said. “We really want to thank her and all of our generous donors who supported the campaign. There were many, many, and my wife and I did as well. At the end of the day, the majority came from our operations and our Ascension national ministry. We had a very successful employee giving campaign.”

Susan Cornejo, chief operating officer of Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast, said in a released statement that the facility’s long-term use is centered on Northeast Florida residents’ heart and vascular needs. However, the facility will not be used for its intended purpose – nursing patients who have undergone open-heart surgery or other cardiovascular procedures – until a government imposed moratorium on elective and non-urgent procedures is lifted.

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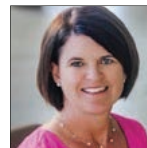
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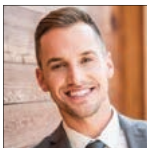
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4470 WORTH DR. W.
\$5,900,000
7 BD 7 BA 2 HBA 11,625 SF



945 MAPLETON TER.
\$590,000
4 BD 3 BA 1 HBA 4,024 SF



1214 CEDAR ST.
\$295,000
3 BD 2 BA 1 HBA 1,457 SF



7889 LITTLE FOX LN.
\$490,000
4 BD 2 BA 1 HBA 2,692 SF



2330 HENDRICKS AVE.
\$600,000
4 BD 4 BA 3,317 SF



1311 HERITAGE MANOR DR., #203
\$890,000
3 BD 3 BA 2,480 SF



1946 RIVER RD.
\$2,250,000
5 BD 4 BA 1 HBA 5,081 SF



1850 COLWOOD CT.
\$675,000
3 BD 2 BA 1 HBA 2,316 SF



6740 EPPING FOREST WAY N., #112
\$675,000
3 BD 3 BA 2,495 SF



1621 BELMONTE AVE.
\$419,900
3 BD 1 BA 1 HBA 1,370 SF



1050 HENDRICKS AVE., #203
\$215,000
1 BD 1 BA 888 SF



7740 SOUTHSIDE BLVD., #906
\$84,000
2 BD 2 BA 1,505 SF



3022 BRIDLEWOOD LN.
\$475,000
4 BD 3 BA 2,954 SF



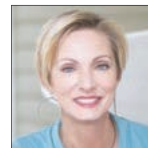
1524 KINGSWOOD RD.
\$375,000
3 BD 2 BA 1,860 SF



2579 PINERIDGE RD.
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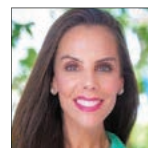
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Ventures Development Group closes on Southbank property

By Jennifer Edwards
Resident Community News

The developer of a long-expected and hard-won project for a multi-family complex on the Southbank has closed on a 2.9-acre property near Baptist Health and Wolfson Children's Hospital and will likely get the go ahead this month from City permitting to begin the project.

Ventures Southbank Apartments is to be located at Prudential Drive, near the Acosta Bridge. According to the plans, it is slated to be eight stories tall, a maximum of 85 feet, and have 185 units.

Downtown Investment Authority CEO Lori Boyer said the developer, Louisiana-based Ventures Development Group, closed in March. Boyer said city officials have been shepherding the project through the process, and it has benefits for the city and the people who will eventually live there.

“You have to get a certain critical mass downtown to support a grocery store, to support a pharmacy, to support the types of retail that create a quality environment downtown. This is a high priority.”

— Lori Boyer,
Downtown Investment Authority CEO

“We are excited to see this finally break ground,” Boyer said. “We have long been striving for this goal of increased residential density downtown. You have to get a certain critical mass downtown to support a grocery store, to support a pharmacy, to support the types of retail that create a quality environment downtown. This is a high priority.”

It has been a long process to get here, though.

Ventures Development Group had originally proposed constructing the project with up to 300 units. That brought concerns about increased traffic flow in an already-busy area from neighbor GV-IP Jacksonville Owner LLC, which owns Eight Forty One, the former Aetna Building located at 841 Prudential Drive. The lawsuit was settled with a scaled-back project with nearly half of the original units.

“(Founder) Sean Siebert and Ventures Development have to be the most tenacious local developers in recent memory,” said Steven Diebenow, the attorney representing the company. “I know that Ventures is going to deliver an outstanding riverfront project that will enhance Baptist Health’s campus and downtown’s growing Southbank.”

Boyer also appreciated the developer’s perseverance.

“It has been a really tough, long process for them,” she explained. “I feel like the permitting process isn’t entirely to blame, they did that, they went through a lawsuit. I applaud them for sticking with it and making the modifications they had to.”

She also said people who work in the area are likely to find living right near their workplaces very convenient.



After a lawsuit and three years of waiting and working, Ventures Development Group has closed on almost three acres and will get permits soon to build its Ventures Southbank Apartments, next to Baptist Health and near Wolfson Children's Hospital.



Part of the Southbank Apartment by Ventures project is improving access to the St. Johns River and enhancing the outdoor space fronting it.

JTA to add a Brooklyn stop, automated vehicles to Skyway

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) has announced plans to add a Brooklyn stop to its free-to-ride Skyway system, which currently includes eight stations on both sides of the St. Johns River. The Brooklyn area is experiencing a boom in residential development, but the stop is a smaller part of a larger federally-funded plan to eventually convert and extend the current Skyway into an autonomous vehicle network.

The Skyway is elevated above downtown streets and across the river and is currently automated, but JTA wants to take it from an automated people mover into an autonomous vehicle network. Officials want to extend the Skyway’s reach, which they are rebranding The Ultimate Urban Circulator (U2C), into the urban core through the Bay Street corridor and beyond in bordering neighborhoods.



A current Skyway shuttle is shown making its way across the elevated tracks that can be seen crossing the river and facing the North and South banks. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority plans to add more stops and reinvent the network.

“U2C supports the vision of a vibrant, revitalized and better-connected Downtown Jacksonville,” according to a JTA statement. The project is in the first phase, the design of the Bay Street section.



Plans on the board to extend the current 2.5 miles of the Skyway into several more neighborhoods. Design is ongoing.

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Hart Bridge demo impact lessened by closures

By Jennifer Edwards
Resident Community News

Demolition of the Hart Bridge ramps is progressing steadily Downtown near the sports and entertainment district that includes TIAA Bank Field. It's bringing with it all the attendant ramp closures and traffic rerouting, but people who report to work in the area every day said the recent state and local closures have helped to lessen impact on nearby businesses – for now.

City workers are removing the current ramps from the Hart Bridge, which was constructed in 1967 and named after City founder Isaiah D. Hart. They're also constructing new roads that reroute traffic to an area that includes multiple sports and entertainment venues including the VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena, Daily's Place amphitheater and 121 Financial Ballpark, the baseball grounds that are home to the Jumbo Shrimp. The construction project will take two years and \$39 million to complete, according to state and city records. At the same time, officials hope the new road connections being crafted will bring more growth to the area.

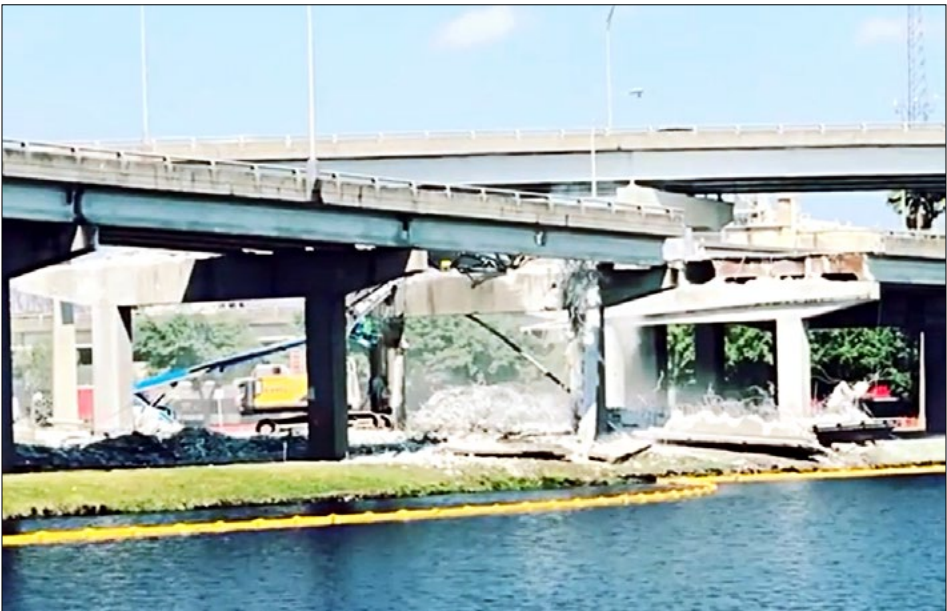
"The Overhead Expressway no longer serves the purpose of bridging over a very industrial area of Jacksonville," City of Jacksonville spokeswoman Marjorie Dennis explained. "The improvements will better support development in the area and create a better connection to the St. Johns River – Jacksonville's greatest asset," Dennis said, noting the Bridge project was paid for with

a mix of federal, state, and local funding. The City will pay the largest portion, \$14 million, while the state is chipping in \$12.5 million and the federal government is contributing \$12.46 million.

In the meantime, traffic from the Hart Bridge heading west is being directed to Duval Street, then to Gator Bowl Boulevard, and onto Bay Street. Traffic from the opposite direction, heading east from Bay Street, is being directed to Gator Bowl Boulevard, then to Duval Street and then up the Hart Bridge ramp. Preparation for demolition began in late February and early March and construction was well underway in April while the city was offering drive-through Coronavirus testing at Lot J, adjacent to the complex. The virus' impact was a mixed bag in terms of traffic in the area.

Sky Lebron, a reporter working from the WJCT offices facing the St. Johns River and on the southside of TIAA Bank Field, said in April that drive-through Coronavirus testing at Lot J has contributed to traffic on service roads around the station. However, as a whole, he said the lessening of traffic due to state and local closures has likely decreased the amount of traffic delays in the area ... for now. He wonders what traffic will look like in a month or two, because the state just got the go-ahead to administer up to 400 tests a day at Lot J, up from 250, and workers will eventually return to their jobs downtown.

"There is a lot going on right out front of our doorstep, but it hasn't gotten overwhelming," he said. "I usually get in around 8:50



In April, workers demolished off-ramps from the Hart Bridge in preparation for construction that will make it easier to access Downtown. Photo courtesy of Melissa Ross, WJCT

"The Overhead Expressway no longer serves the purpose of bridging over a very industrial area of Jacksonville."

— Marjorie Dennis, City of Jacksonville spokeswoman

or 8:55 in the morning, and there's already a line of people because the testing site opens up at 9 a.m. That could cause some more strain where that construction is taking place, with people coming in to get tested and having to deal with construction to the left of them that has blocked off a lane."

Officials hope the new routes from the Hart Bridge will create development down the road for Lot J. Right now, the area consists of a parking lot at the southwest corner of TIAA Bank Field and is the site of virus testing. However, Iguana Investments, which is owned by Jaguars' owner Shad Khan, has partnered with Baltimore-based Cordish Companies to develop a project there that is now projected to cost \$2.5 billion. The most current plans include a Live! Arena entertainment district, a 200-room boutique hotel, a 300-unit residential tower and an office building between Bay and East Adams streets.

Construction has not yet begun on the Lot J project although soil testing has been conducted at the site. In the meantime, Lot "E," where RV-City is located, will be closed, said Dennis. Once construction has been completed, a portion of the lot will be used for parking. She also said the improvements would eventually support access to WJCT and other neighborhoods in the area.

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COVID-19 and antibody screenings available at multiple testing sites

There are many places residents can get a test for COVID-19, but to qualify for a test or to find out if you may have had an undiagnosed case of Coronavirus by screening for antibodies, you will need an order from a physician.

For Coronavirus testing, residents may visit one of many outpatient or drive-through locations including at the Prime Osborn Convention Center, TIAA Bank Stadium, or at CareSpot, where nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal swabs are used. Tests are also available at the nearest Emergency Center if severe or life-threatening symptoms are present, said Carolyn Tillo of Baptist Health.

At the Prime Osborn, testing orders come from Telescope Health, <http://telescope-health.com/>, and patients must do a one-time registration that takes between three and five minutes. There is no charge for Duval County residents (HERE4YOU Code) or Baptist Health team members, and a \$49 charge is levied to residents living outside of Duval County. For additional information go to <https://www.baptistjax.com/about-us/newsroom/news-releases/city-of-jacksonville-adds-covid-19-drive-thru-testing-site-in-collaboration-with-baptist-health-and-telescope-health>.

A federal testing site, Lot J near TIAA Bank Stadium offers screenings done on site at no cost seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For additional information go to <https://www.coj.net/departments/fire-and-rescue/emergency-preparedness/preparedness/covid-19-information>.

Meanwhile, at CareSpot, screenings are done virtually or onsite by one of its providers, but to get a test done, the patient has to have Coronavirus symptoms. For additional information, go to <https://www.carespot.com/our-response-to-covid-19/>.

UF Health Primary Care located at 3465 Village Center Drive in Brentwood offers walk-up testing Mondays from noon to 5 p.m., Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Wednesdays from 1 to 4 p.m. or patients can schedule an appointment at 904-244-4420.

Ascension St. Vincent's Primary Care Centers do not offer COVID-19 testing and refer patients to TIAA Bank Stadium, while Mayo Clinic Primary Care Centers also do not offer testing in their offices but refer patients to a drive-through location on Mayo's Southside main campus.

Antibody testing of the blood can be done with a physician's order at some Baptist physician's offices or in an outpatient lab, said Tillo. Patients should call their physician's office or reference lab for details. There is some controversy regarding the interpretation of antibody test results. Potential implications of every test, whether positive or negative, should be discussed with the ordering physician, she said.

CareSpot, Mayo Clinic Primary Care, UF Health Primary Care, and Ascension St. Vincent's Primary Care, do not test for antibodies.

The City of Jacksonville is in the process of setting up additional testing sites and will have more information in early May. In addition to Lot J at TIAA Bank Field, there is a walk-up testing site at Kooker Park, 1400 E. 20th St., which is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., said Nikki Kimbleton, a spokesperson for the City of Jacksonville. "As for antibody testing, we are waiting to find out when those tests will be available," she said. "We don't have access to those just yet, though private facilities have them."

Easter holiday made bright at Sanctuary on 8th

Thanks to the Adams and McQuaig families of San Marco, the Easter holiday was made a little brighter for some Springfield families trying to cope with concerns about the coronavirus, loss of employment, and the pressures of keeping children focused on school and entertained with limited resources.

The Adams and McQuaig families of San Marco joined Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church and others by blessing the families of students at the Sanctuary on 8th Street after-school program with Easter baskets, cartons of dyed eggs, toilet paper, and paper towels.

The Adams family made 45 Easter baskets filled with sidewalk chalk, bubbles, Frisbees,



Sanctuary on 8th Street Executive Director Rick Cartlidge with Cam Melangton, general manager at the Marina at Ortega Landing.

candy, pencil sharpeners and other items, while the McQuaig family boiled and dyed nearly 100 eggs.

"We have 50 children, from about 32 families, on our student roster, and we are concerned about them," said Jamie Stater, associate director at the Sanctuary. "Food donations are supplemented with groceries bought from monetary donations, but this week we had also something special to share."

City offers break on Building Inspection Division fees

Building developers will find there is a silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of the recent legislation to support continued COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, a temporary moratorium of certain Building Inspection Division fees will be in effect starting April 29 and will continue for up to six-months, said Joshua Gideon, CBO, chief, of Jacksonville's Building Inspection Division. However, some fees and surcharges collected for other agencies such as JEA, the State of Florida, and tree mitigation, etc., are not part of this fee waiver, he said.

In addition to Building Inspection Division fees, other Planning and Development division fees are included in this legislation, such as application and recording fees for plat review and civil site plan review (10-Set), both subdivision and non-subdivision; application fees for construction in the public right-of-way; Zoning – certificate of use application fees, administrative deviations, conventional zoning, PUD rezoning, zoning exceptions, zoning variances, zoning waivers, and Requests for Written Interpretation of the Director; and mobility fees.

Developers should contact each city division directly for more information regarding their fees. For guidance on mobility fees, please view the mobility fee waiver request form offered by the city.

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Caven named board president of Scenic Jacksonville

Susan Caven has been named board president for Scenic Jacksonville for the 2020-21 term.

Caven, a longstanding civic advocate, has been a driving force in many non-profit organizations. She is a three-time



Susan Caven

Eve Award finalist and served Scenic Jacksonville in many roles including as prior board president. In addition, Caven is the first vice president of the Garden Club of Jacksonville. She will take over the position at Scenic Jacksonville from Alicia Grant. Grant had served as president since 2016.

Caven lives in San Marco with her husband, John.

Other 2020-21 board officers that will serve Scenic Jacksonville include Michael Kirwan, vice president; Ted Pappas, vice president; Doug Coleman, vice president; Laura D'Alisera, secretary; and Alicia Grant, treasurer.

"I am excited to lead Scenic Jacksonville during this pivotal year," Caven said. "We just hired our first executive director, Nancy Powell, and I look forward to working with her and our new officer group to advocate for the importance of beauty in Jacksonville, both in our lovely natural landscape and unique historic properties. Beauty is an essential component for a successful city, making it appealing and enticing to both citizens and visitors, and enhancing everyday experiences. Scenic Jacksonville takes seriously that fact we that hold our city in trust for future generations."



Nemours opens orthopedic clinic to protect kids from COVID-19

While families stay home to ride out the dangers of the spread of the Coronavirus, accidents can still happen to their children as they are playing at home, riding bikes, or even just helping around the house. In a proactive move, Nemours Children's Specialty Care has opened a separate clinic just for orthopedic injuries so that parents and kids do not have to go to the hospitals and emergency rooms where they are at greater risk to encounter COVID-19.

Nemours also understands the concern that children may be silently spreading the virus without their knowledge. After all, it is difficult to make sure little ones keep their hands clean and away from their faces and mouths. To help, Nemours has developed an educational platform that parents can use to help educate their kids without scaring them. Parents can also learn extra tips on how to ensure they are also taking the best precautions for their children.

For the most up-to-date information about how Nemours is preparing for COVID-19, visit Nemours.org/coronavirus. You can also find facts and helpful information at [Nemours KidsHealth.org](https://NemoursKidsHealth.org).

News anchor receives literacy award

Tenikka Hughes has been awarded *The Mary J. Brogan Award* from the Florida Literacy Coalition. The award recognizes a Florida resident whose support of literacy exhibits the highest standards of excellence, dedication, leadership, creativity, and accomplishment.

Hughes was nominated by Literacy Pros President Janice Gendreau, who recognized Hughes' efforts to support the mission of Literacy Pros and her advocacy for youth literacy. "Tenikka is a tireless volunteer, promoting literacy and creating literacy initiatives. She inspires children to improve their reading skills and, by extension, discover their own love for books," said Gendreau.

Over the years, Hughes has spent countless hours in local schools, classrooms, churches and community centers connecting with

children —promoting the importance of literacy and education. In 2018, Hughes partnered with the Jacksonville Public Library to launch Tenikka's Books for Kids, an annual book collection drive. Hughes is the power behind the effort that has put thousands of free books in the hands of local children during the summer months, when keeping their minds and reading skills strong is essential.

Hughes chairs the Public Relations Committee for Literacy Pros Jacksonville, a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization dedicated to eradicating illiteracy in Jacksonville. She was the recipient of the first-ever Literacy Pro Award in 2018. She is also an Emmy award-winning evening news anchor for CBS47 and FOX30 Action News Jax.



Tenikka Hughes

For more information, about Literacy Pros of Jacksonville, Inc. and the free literacy lessons and tutor training it performs, contact literacyprosjaxsonville@gmail.com or call (904) 210-6677.

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Pearson named Duval County top volunteer

San Marco’s Cindy Howell Pearson, a familiar parent at Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies, was named Duval County Volunteer of the Year by the Florida Department of Education April 24.

A mother of three, Pearson’s son, Andrew, is a Wolfson sophomore, her daughter, Paige is a Wolfson freshman, and her daughter, Lucy, is a sixth grader at Julia Landon College Preparatory School. Pearson graduated from Wolfson High School in 1988.

“Ms. Pearson has been an integral part in converting Wolfson High School into the amazing School for Advanced Studies that it is becoming,” said Wolfson Principal Christopher E. Begley. “As a Wolfson alum, she has worked hours and hours to bring back traditions from when she graduated and to develop new traditions for the current Wolfpack. Her parent partnership and passion for Wolfson is unprecedented.”

Involved as a volunteer at Wolfson for the past five years as it has made its transition from a C-rated neighborhood school to an A-rated dedicated magnet school that only offers IB, AP and Honors courses, Pearson has focused her volunteer efforts into fundraising, campus improvement, community outreach, and student leadership development. She has pulled weeds, spread mulch, made homecoming balloon arches

“As a Wolfson alum, she has worked hours and hours to bring back traditions from when she graduated and to develop new traditions for the current Wolfpack. Her parent partnership and passion for Wolfson is unprecedented.”

— Christopher E. Begley,
Wolfson Principal



and helped create student leadership programs, including the Wolfson Accelerated Leadership Program. She has also helped raise \$16,000 for Wolfson by organizing academic fundraisers for the Friends of Wolfson, a parent support group of which she is a founder, according to the nomination form submitted by the school.

During the past five years she has averaged at least 15 volunteer hours per week and her work has directly impacted all students at Wolfson. Additional examples of her volunteer work include participating in the District’s community working group

City Council approves new JEA Board members

Seven new members of the Jacksonville Electric Authority’s Board of Directors received the approval of the Jacksonville City Council during its meeting April 14.

Appointed to the board were John D. Baker II, chief executive officer for FRP Holdings, Inc.; Lt. Gen. Joseph DiSalvo, a retired Army general and principal for two Washington D.C. consulting firms; A. Zachary Faison, president and chief executive officer for Edward Waters College; Robert Stein, president of Regency Group, Leon Haley, chief executive officer of UF Health Jacksonville; Tom VanOsdol, president and CEO for Ascension Florida Jacksonville; and Marty Lanahan, executive vice president and regional president for Iberia Bank. Lanahan served previously as a JEA board member from 2001 -2005 and was the JEA board chair in 2004.

The new board members will encounter several challenges as they come on board including having to lead JEA through an ongoing federal and city investigation into a controversial attempt to sell the utility as well as a lucrative bonus plan, which had been approved by the previous board, that might have paid employees hundreds of millions of dollars if JEA was sold.

Bechtel joins Cathedral Arts Project board



Rachel Bechtel

The Cathedral Arts Project (CAP) has welcomed Rachel Bechtel, vice president of Product Solutions at Florida Blue, to its board of directors.

Bechtel joined Florida Blue in 2000 and has held several leadership positions, most recently serving as senior director of Product Solutions, where she was responsible for leading product strategy and development for employer markets and ancillary.

Bechtel’s other leadership positions include service manager and operations

manager in the service organization, where she managed a team of service advocates and was instrumental in implementing a customer service platform. She also founded Moms Offering Moms Support, or MOMS Club, which helps women who choose to stay at home to raise their children. There are now about 10 chapters in Northeast Florida.

“Florida Blue is a longstanding and vital partner in our work to make sure every child has access to an arts-rich education, and I am thrilled to welcome another one of its leaders to our board,” said CAP President and CEO Kimberly Hyatt. “Rachel brings a strategic mindset around how CAP’s work

is helping to enrich the quality of life in Northeast Florida coupled with a deep appreciation for and engagement in the arts.”

Throughout her career, Bechtel has been active in community and professional organizations such as United Way, Community Connections and the Boys and Girls Club of Northeast Florida. She recently served as the sponsorship chair for Northeast Florida’s Making Strides Against Breast Cancer. Bechtel was selected to participate in the first GuideWell Leadership Academy and was nominated and selected to be part of the Leadership Jacksonville class of 2015.

Serving on the CAP Board seems like a natural fit for Bechtel, who says music has

been a presence in her life as long as she can remember. “As a child, my family had the good fortune to own a piano,” Bechtel said. “Having the freedom and the means to play a musical instrument had a multi-layered effect on my life. Our piano room was a place where I could retreat, express my feelings, nurture creativity and build confidence as I learned to play.”

Bechtel said she believes strongly in CAP’s mission and feels that arts education should not be limited only to those students who are fortunate enough to have the means to pursue it but should be made available to any student who aspires to create or appreciate the arts.

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New officer walks San Marco beat

There is a new police officer walking the beat in San Marco Square.

Officer Jonathan “Bubba” Tyrrell, a policeman with 20 years of experience with the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, has been assigned to patrol San Marco Square and its adjacent neighborhoods.

Tyrrell shares his duties with Officer Michelle Davis and covers Zone 3. He has many longtime friendships with members of the San Marco Merchants Association and is the nephew of Beach Diner owner Barry Adeeb.

“I love my job. The best part is walking around the community and putting people at ease,” said Tyrrell. “I look after the merchants and do special projects in the zone and look out for the neighborhood. I want to make sure everyone is okay, and I make sure the business owners have my number so they can call me directly instead of calling the Sheriff’s Office.”



Officer Jonathan “Bubba” Tyrrell

Tyrrell is a second-generation member of the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office. His father, Sgt. Buddy Tyrrell worked for the Jacksonville police force for 35 years, mainly as a supervising officer on the Southside and in the San Marco area.

Tyrrell, who has spent two decades as a police officer, is a graduate of Mandarin High School and Florida State College – Jacksonville, where he studied law enforcement. He also attended the Police Academy. “All I’ve ever wanted to do was to be a police officer,” he said, noting it was important to him to follow in his father’s footsteps.

Duce named Gator Bowl Chairman

A San Marco resident has been named 2020 Chairman of Gator Bowls Sports.

John Duce, a Wells Fargo executive, will preside over all Gator Bowl Sports entities including the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl football game and game week events as well as Gator Bowl Charities’ youth initiatives.



John Duce

Duce, who joined the Wells Fargo team through its predecessor banks immediately following his graduation from college, came to Jacksonville in 1993 and is celebrating his 32nd year with Wells Fargo. In his current role, he is senior vice president of middle market banking.

Over the years, Duce has made it a priority to give back to the community and currently serves on the Ronald McDonald House board. He also has

served over 15 years with Gator Bowl Sports, and his strong influence was instrumental in the formalization of the Gator Bowl Charities as a separate 501 (c)3 organization within Gator Bowl Sports.

“Gator Bowl Sports has been a long-time staple in our community and serving as chairman is an honor and a privilege,”

Duce said. “Last year’s 75th celebration produced incredible results for our community, and I look forward to continuing the long history of successes through our economic impact, charitable programming, and community engagement initiatives.”

John and his wife, Merry-Carol, live in San Marco and have two sons, Trotter, 22, and Pierson, 20, both of whom attend college.

First Coast Home Pros makes and donates face shields to UF



Staff from First Coast Home Pros and Jax Furniture Refinishing & Upholstering busy building face shields and cloth masks in their Arlington headquarters.

First Coast Home Pros, a full-service specialized home services company, has put its employees to work making hundreds of cotton masks for their customers, employees and others in need. It’s a way the company can support its community and also put its employees to work during a time the call for its services is lowered by closures due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

First Cost Home Pros employees made and donated more than 1,000 washable fabric masks before also adding face shields in April, to address shortages among local health care workers. In April, they delivered 660 face shields to UF Health Jacksonville, and they will continue to make the shields during the crisis. They have also posted YouTube videos showing how others can make cotton masks and face shields at home. The response has been so strong that the company is waiting on supplies to continue providing both.

“Right now, we are waiting for some additional materials to arrive so we can continue making them,” explained President

Josh Kennedy, company founder. He said that face shields offer a higher level of protection for health workers because they are made of plastic and extend from forehead to chin.

“We started making cotton masks for our customers, employees and others in need earlier in the crisis and shifted to face shields as soon as we heard health care workers were low on supply.” First Coast Home Pros started in 2008 as a window cleaning company. Since then, it has added a full suite of services including housekeeping, carpet cleaning, pressure washing, handyman services, painting and other home care services.

“This generous donation is another example of how our community is coming together in this time of uncertainty,” said Dr. Leon L. Haley Jr., CEO of UF Health Jacksonville and dean of the UF College of Medicine – Jacksonville. “Finding as many resources as possible in this fight against COVID-19 is challenging, so we are incredibly grateful to Josh Kennedy and his team.”

Hindsley hired as Hyatt Regency general manager



Joe Hindsley

Joe Hindsley has been hired as general manager of the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront hotel, overseeing and managing all operations, staffing and guest satisfaction aspects of the downtown property. Hindsley, who started his new job March 11, replaces Luis Aloma, who recently began his retirement after working with Hyatt Corporation for three decades.

Hindsley has worked with Hyatt Corporation for 37 years, beginning as a corporate management trainee at

Hyatt Regency Minneapolis. He served as Food and Beverage Director for Hyatt locations throughout the country and has served as General Manager at five locations including Hyatt Regency Lisle, Hyatt Regency St. Louis at Union Station, Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch, and most recently, Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort and Spa.

Throughout his career, Hindsley has received several awards and accolades. In 2012, he was named the Hyatt Hotels General Manager of the Year. He was also recognized as the Missouri Hotel and Lodging Association General Manager of the Year in 2002, and was the Georgia Hotel and Lodging Association General Manager of the Year in 2006.

In 2007, Hindsley received the Atlanta Business League Pathfinder Award and was recognized as an Outstanding Citizen by Secretary of State of Georgia Karen Handel.

“I am honored to join the exceptional team here at Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, creating engaging guest experiences on the banks of the St. Johns River,” said Hindsley. “I am privileged to serve as a steward of those memories and look forward to integrating myself into the esteemed Jacksonville community.”

Hindsley is a graduate of Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Food Service and Housing Administration. He has moved to Jacksonville with his wife, Lisa.

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Dentists provide emergency care while waiting to open in May

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Avondale dentist Dr. James Schumacher used to joke that he would love to have a “drive-through” dental service in order to make things easier for his patients. Little did he know his light-hearted levity would one day come close to reality.

Schumacher, along with several other dentists in Jacksonville’s historic districts, has closed his office since early March when Florida Governor Ron DeSantis declared a public health emergency due to the Coronavirus and issued an executive order limiting dental care to emergency care only until Friday, May 8. The official declaration was filed on March 9 and expires within 60 days. The state mandate prohibits any medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedures or surgery.

However, dental patients who have excessive tooth pain, broken teeth or other emergencies should call their dentists instead of heading to overwhelmed hospital

emergency rooms or urgent care centers, said Schumacher. “We’re still seeing patients. We have an emergency line that sends me a message, and I get back to the people right away,” he said. “But you have to define what an emergency is. Most of the people who have been calling me really don’t want to come in,” he said adding that in one case he checked in on a concerned patient in his parking lot. “She had a spot on her tongue or on her cheek, so I went out with my loops and my head lamp and checked it out. She was fine,” he said, noting mostly what he was doing was putting her mind at ease.

Dr. Jila Mahajan, a pediatric dentist who owns Kids First Dentistry in Ortega, Dr. Vaughn Holland, founder of Ortega Orthodontics, and Dr. Rachel Harris Monteiro, founder of River Oaks Dental in Lakewood join Schumacher in confirming the necessity of staying away from the emergency room when vital dental work is needed during the crisis.

“Any child who suffers an emergency is going to be seen by their dentist,” Mahajan said. But one reason for keeping dental offices closed during this public health emergency is that the personal protective equipment (PPE) such as N-95 masks and protective workwear, which dentists use during routine dental procedures and cleanings, may be diverted to emergency medical personnel at local hospitals. Mahajan joined Holland in saying she donated extra masks and PPE equipment to Ascension St. Vincent’s hospital in Riverside as well as to other local pediatricians.



Dr. James Schumacher takes a peek at a patient’s teeth during a drive-through appointment in his parking lot in April.

All four dentists said to keep teeth healthy during this period of sheltering in place, it is important to brush your teeth.

Holland was so concerned about COVID-19, that he closed his office two days prior to the governor’s mandate. With his staff abiding by the stay-at-home order, these days he is manning his office by himself with the help of a cell phone and answering machine. He is not scheduling any regular adjustments, although he will continue to see patients for emergencies, such as clipping wires that might dig into child’s cheek. But a lost retainer is not an emergency, he said.

“It’s frustrating,” he said, noting that some kids have worn braces for as long as two years and he still is required to tell them he can’t fit them for a new retainer if it is lost.

Holland recommends his patients brush their teeth multiple times a day and stay away from carbohydrates such as Cheetos, potato chips and Cheez-Its. “Carbs stick in the grooves of your teeth and that’s bad,” he said.



Dr. Rachel Monteiro

Monteiro agreed. “The most important thing right now is to maintain your home care routine,” she said. “Make sure you’re brushing twice a day, preferably with an electric toothbrush, and flossing daily. Also make sure you aren’t snacking on sugary or starchy foods all day now that you are home from school or work. If you are in the middle of treatment and have a temporary crown or bridge, avoid all sticky foods. It may also be a good idea to avoid eating popcorn as the kernels can easily become lodged in the gums and can cause painful swelling.

“Like most dentists, my office is closed but I am still available for my patients should a dental emergency arise,” she continued. “If you have a dental emergency, especially with pain or swelling, call your dentist! The last place we want you to end up is at the emergency room with a preventable dental emergency during a pandemic.”

For children, it is important to keep them on a schedule, insisting they brush for two minutes in both the morning and evening, said Mahajan. “Make sure they don’t graze all day on sugary snacks,” she said. “Limit it to once a day in the afternoon and make sure they brush afterwards.” Mahajan also said she is keeping in touch with her young patients and their parents by email. “We try to keep track of our patients and remind them to do good dental hygiene, even if they are at home. We want them to know that we are there for them if they have any questions.”



Dr. Vaughn Holland

Schumacher recommends that you brush and floss daily and if you want extra protection, use a rinse made from 50% water and 50% hydrogen peroxide. “I’ve read that hydrogen peroxide kills the Coronavirus, along with alcohol, Clorox and hand soap,” he said, noting he is a germaphobe who washes his hands at least 100 times a day when he is working. “Make sure you wash your hands before you stick them into your mouth to brush and floss.”



Dr. Jila Mahajan

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These little piggies stayed home

BABY FOSTER PIGLETS PROVIDE DISTRACTION FOR SAN MARCO FAMILIES DURING COVID-19

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Thanks to Angie Cosper, neighboring residents may soon be changing the final verse of the old “This Little Piggy” nursery rhyme to read: This little piggy went wee, wee, wee all the way to San Marco.

In mid-April, Cosper noticed on Facebook that a good friend was offering baby pigs to foster homes. Deciding it might be a good project for her three children as they shelter-in-place, she decided to foster some. Little did she know the idea would catch on, and now as many as six or more foster pigs are sheltering in place among Cosper’s friends and neighbors in San Marco, with a waiting list besides.

“We have a friend, Payton Rogers, who has an animal rescue far out on Middleburg Road, where he fences in the people and lets the animals roam. He has peacocks, turkeys, geese, donkeys and pigs,” she said. Rogers initially thought he only had one pregnant pig, but when it turned out three of his sows were with children, he soon discovered 21 small porkers running around was too much to handle. “Payton thought it would be a fun way for families to have a little distraction while helping him socialize his pigs,” Cosper explained, noting the pigs are on loan and only in San Marco for a short visit.

“We went out to his farm and social distanced while chasing the pigs. It was great



Isabella Wright feeds her foster pig at her home in St. Nicholas.

for my kids, and we came home with a few that we’ve passed out to friends.”

While the pigs are at home, they are the sole responsibility of Cosper’s three children, Kendall, Christian and Henry, who are feeding them, house-training them, and playing with the daily. “Watching my son, Henry catch a squealing pig will make you laugh like nothing else. Pigs seem to be the best quarantine therapy. It is a good distraction and something different. Our dogs love it, and our fish doesn’t seem to mind,” she said, noting the two piglets, Coco and Kodak, spend most of their time running around the house and haven’t had a single “accident” since they arrived.

“All of a sudden everyone was saying that they wanted one,” said Suzanne Honeycutt, Cosper’s good friend. “It is definitely the cool thing to have a pig. It seems that if you don’t have one now, you’re nobody.”



A pig makes its home in San Marco.



Bridget Curry cuddles two piglets as she sleeps.



Hailey Blas sleeps with her piglet.



Kendall Cosper feeds her piglet from a bottle.



Kendall Cosper and her brother, Henry, transport five piglets back to San Marco.



The Wright family stands with their piglet in front of their home in St. Nicholas.



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baguette, pickled slaw, country style pate, trois foie mousse smear, house made chips
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Certified Angus beef, roasted tomato, sliced raw red onion, dill pickles, house-made bun, house made chips

ENTREES

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Butternut squash, parsnips, haricot verts, roasted grape tomatoes, pearl onions, mushrooms, mashed potato crust, white truffle oil
- Add slow braised pork for - \$8
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Braised cabbage, roasted fingerling potatoes, Pommery mustard cream
- BEEF STROGANOFF - \$22**
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- Add slow braised pork for \$20
- BLEU CHEESE MEATLOAF - \$80**
Certified Angus beef, blue cheese, truffled mashed potatoes, roasted brussels sprouts
- CASSOULET - \$80**
Duck leg confit, fresh field peas, great northern beans, caramelized pearl onions, roasted grape tomatoes, English peas, boudin blanc, fresh lamb bacon, sherry vinaigrette, fried sage
- PAN ROASTED CHICKEN - \$80**
Seared breast, braised thigh & leg, fingerling potatoes, roasted shallot, heirloom carrot, roasted mushrooms, bacon, red wine-poultry jus
- BEEF STROGANOFF - \$80**
Red wine braised beef short ribs, crème fraiche, leeks, roasted mushrooms, pappardelle

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ON MOTHER'S DAY, THE RESIDENT CELEBRATES

SUPER MOMS

By Jennifer Edwards, Resident Community News

Since COVID-19 forced families to shelter in place in their homes, mothers throughout Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods have been juggling home schooling alongside of their professional and family responsibilities. In the sampling of "Super Moms," that follows, the mothers share valuable insights about raising a family while confined to their homes.

None of the women interviewed were shy about discussing the challenges of raising children when most normal activities are on hold and all the places they might frequent – school, museums, the beach, dance classes, and sports, among others – are no longer an option. Most of the moms have learned to be resilient, adjust their expectations each day, and take it easier on themselves. Many stressed the importance of exercise and expressed gratitude for having a wealth of time with their families.

ANGIE COSPER

For Angie Cosper of San Marco, a mother of three, living through 9/11 impacted the way she feels about staying at home during the Coronavirus pandemic. Her 18-year-old daughter, Kendall, a senior at Samuel Wolfson School of Advanced Studies and Leadership, was born on September 11, 2001, and Cosper said this profoundly changed her perspective on life.

"For me, I have a very vivid recollection before 9/11 and life after," she said. "I quickly realized that this wasn't temporary, and I was bringing a child into a world very different than the world I thought I was bringing her into. It was scary and hopeful all at the same time. Our kids don't have an understanding that life changed so much, but now they do."

In addition to Kendall, Cosper also has two sons: Christian, a junior at Wolfson,

and Henry, a seventh grader at Julia Landon College Preparatory School.

How parents react has a big impact on how their children experience changes, and so does faith, said Cosper, pastor of the children's ministry at Southside United Methodist Church. She makes sure her children are practicing their faith and their kindness, by doing good deeds like leaving groceries on the back porch for elderly neighbors who are more at risk. She said kids understand the pandemic is not a long spring break, and they follow the leads of the adults around them.

"Kids look to their parents. How are they reacting – are they stressed out, are they worried, are they confused? Talk to kids, give them emotional language," she advised.



LESLIE BISHOP

Leslie Bishop with Benjamin, Boone and Beau

For Leslie Bishop, working at home, overseeing three boys and her husband, who is also now working remotely, has been a wonderful opportunity to learn a new sense of balance that she calls "feeding the peace and minimizing the anxiety."

A Granada resident, Bishop develops podcasts for a large medical device company, Boston Scientific, and runs a business with Rodan + Fields. Her husband, Todd, doesn't normally work from home, but she said it's good to have him there to help because he can go to the grocery store and loves to cook.

Her son Benjamin, 10, is a fourth grader at Hendricks Avenue Elementary, while his two younger brothers Boone, 8, and Beau, 4, attend Academie de Montessori on Lasalle Street. Bishop said the stay-at-home order was hard to comprehend at first but over time, it has brought wonderful gifts.

"I would feel so anxious the first couple of weeks, I cried myself to sleep, I had a panic attack for the first time," she said. But over time, she has learned a new balance she calls "feeding the peace and minimizing the anxiety." A Montessori lesson had her family going on an Earth Day scavenger hunt, looking for different flowers and creatures. "I was like: Man, we should be paying more attention to the sound of the

breeze. Nature is very calming. Being home on our screens is not."

One of the most calming projects Bishop said she's done brought her family peace and joy and showed them the values of teamwork and caring. It started with a box that had never been open, a present from her employers on a work anniversary. Inside was a sewing machine, and the reason it was collecting dust was because Bishop did not consider herself "domestically inclined." But when she realized that health care workers and neighbors needed face masks, she and her family opened it up, figured out how to thread it, and the machine's magical, calming hum began. Together, they watched YouTube to learn how to make masks. So far, the family has made 150 for UF Health Shands Hospital and 50 for anyone else who needed one.

"We all worked together; we had an assembly line going. I really am concerned in general about people's mental health and emotional health. Alcohol sales have gone up, people are at home, they are depressed. When I got the sewing machine out and it started working, it was the happiest I've been in a long time. My boys were totally into it. It was a really fun project. We'll keep making them if they need them."



Angie Cosper with Christian, Henry and Kendall

TRACY MORGAN

A Colonial Manor resident, Tracy Morgan has three children – all girls – and, with pride, she describes them as self-sufficient. Ninth-graders Shelby and Gretchen go to Providence School, and Whitney attends Hendricks Avenue Elementary. Morgan's mother, who lives in Colorado, is recovering from COVID-19 in the hospital. Hospitals across the country have imposed strict no-contact rules for visitors of patients with the virus, and airlines have ceased most flights.

"Not being able to be there for my family was super hard," she said. "But one of my 15-year-old teenagers said, 'I'm really glad I've had this time

with you.' The extra time at home with our families is a gift."

Morgan has been a stay-at-home-mom for 15 years, and her husband works from home. All three children are doing online school, and for her, life hasn't changed as drastically as for others. "The schools have just done an excellent job," she said. "I've just been blessed to say I've been able to stay at home. I worked prior to having them in a different life. My situation hasn't changed a whole lot." Her girls do a lot of running and bike riding, and Morgan said she is going to think a lot harder about what goes into the family schedule after the stay-at-home order is over.



Tracy Morgan and her family

Continued on Page 18 >>>

JENNIFER WARE

With a husband now working from home and three kids under age 4, Jennifer Ware has been spending a lot of time outside in her Granada neighborhood. Her husband, Chris, works for the Haskell Company, and needs the house quiet, so she and her children, Anna, 3, Libby, 2 and Fischer, 5 months, spend time playing in the yard and trying to keep a connection with her children's teachers. The family are members of Southside United Methodist Church.

"I have been living outside from morning until lunchtime, and we are doing lots of things," Ware said. "We live outside in our front yard, as everybody does in our neighborhood. We walk to the teachers' homes, and we draw on their sidewalk. We have our San Marco page on Facebook, and we post on Facebook to keep everybody updated." The children also created a rainbow drawing for the neighborhood's kids to find, part of a community-wide effort to create fun for kids in the neighborhood.



Jennifer Ware with husband Chris and children Fischer, Anna and Libby



Kiley Efron with Brody and Dillon

CINDY PEARSON

Before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, Cindy Pearson was busy. In addition to working part-time with Cru, a Jacksonville ministry, and becoming a candidate for the Duval County School Board, she averaged 15 hours a week as a volunteer at Samuel W. Wolfson School for Advanced Studies, her alma mater and the school where her son Andrew is a sophomore and daughter, Paige, is a freshman. Pearson also has a sixth-grader, Lucy, at Julia Landon College Preparatory School.

But when the stay-at-home order was issued, life as Pearson knew it came to a screeching halt. At first her family grieved

over the loss of the spring sports season, being with friends and how her son's school year was going to be different. As a member of Landon's undefeated swim team, Lucy mourned not being able to compete in the Fletchler Middle School Florida Championship. Meanwhile, Paige, a swimmer, had to forgo helping the team. Andrew, a former Landon swim team member who had stayed in town over the summer to practice and play baseball, missed the loss of the season.

Pearson had to adjust to a new normal in work life as well. "Normally



During this time of uncertainty, it's crucial to remember that, while following the CDC's recommended safety steps, there are many ways we can support those in our communities most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sotheby's International Realty agents are proudly invested in their local communities and, together, we wanted to share this resource for those able to make a positive impact during this trying time. For the complete descriptions and further details, check out the Extraordinary Living blog at www.sothebysrealty.com/extraordinary-living-blog

5 Ways You Can Have a Positive Impact on Your Community in a Trying Time

- Support Small Businesses
- Give Blood
- Check in on Friends, Neighbors, and Family
- Donate to a Food Bank
- Feeling Lost? Help the CDP (Center for Disaster Philanthropy)

Most importantly, continue to practice safe social distancing. We are all in this together, from our individual communities to the larger global society, and we hope you stay healthy and safe during this trying time.

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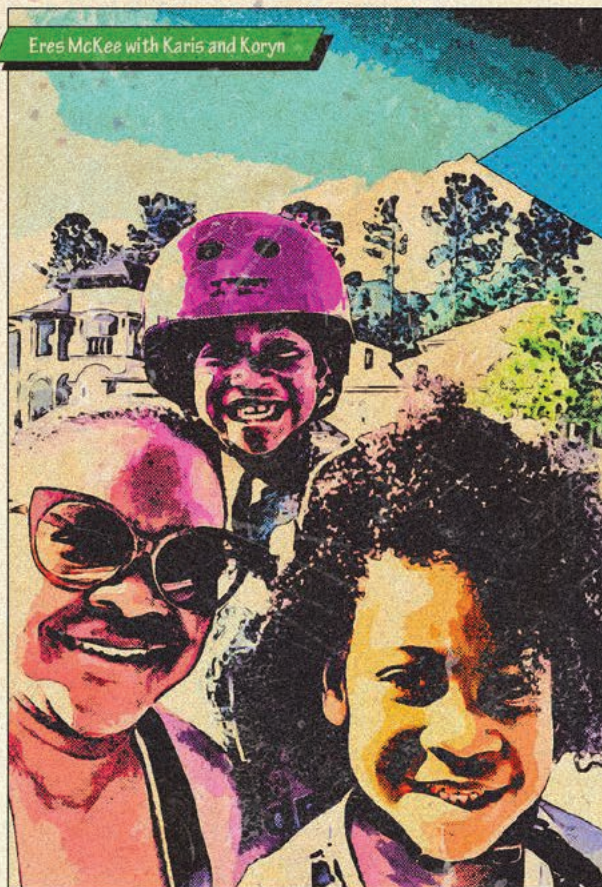
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KILEY EFRON

Taverna Restaurant owner Kiley Efron, the Coronavirus crisis has been an especially challenging time for her family and their business. Efron, who co-owns the restaurant with her husband, Sam, had to lay off 62 people and has been working hard to support the 10 they retained. They have been offering curbside and pickup and offering additional grocery items including toilet paper, paper towels, meat, eggs and different items. She also works long days at home while her husband is at the restaurant, and she helps her children – Dillon, 10, and Brody, 4 – with their schoolwork. It's been a juggle. Every day the teacher sends us an outline for all the different projects, and that outline has different links for videos to watch. They also do a daily Zoom session," she said. Efron also sets aside an hour every day to meditate and do yoga, which helps her cope with all of the responsibility. Her yoga teacher taught her that the more people that rely on you, the more important it is to take care of yourself. "It's been incredibly challenging. My biggest challenge is that to manage all of operations, I oversee everything. We work with an operations and financial manager. I'm doing all of the process of applying for loans, all the business strategy. I'm handling all the structural aspects, and my husband is handling the service aspect. I'm not going to lie; it has been the most challenging thing I've done. It's trying to be patient and helpful a time when you are getting pulled in every direction."

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changes in her I work from



Eres McKee with Karis and Koryn

ERES MCKEE

Staying at home during the Coronavirus crisis has provided the perfect opportunity for Eres McKee and her family to live their Christian values. As a fundraising professional and director of marketing development at San Jose Episcopal Day School, McKee handles crisis communications for the school. Meanwhile, her husband, Christopher, is a pastor at First Baptist Church of Oakland in Jacksonville and is working on his doctorate in ministry. The couple balances their work with raising their two daughters, Karis and Koryn, who attend the San Jose school. And, during the pandemic, the family has "adopted" an older neighbor, too.

"Every day is not perfect," McKee said. "We are grateful for what this time means for them and giving back." The family has focused on kindness and their convictions. "We try every day to loop it back into our faith," she said. "Christianity is kindness." School is completely online for her family, and in helping her daughters, she juggles two different personalities, with her older daughter an extrovert and the younger one an introvert. Routine helps them both.

"I have a master to-do list, with a time next to it: high priorities, medium priorities, low priorities. I look at those activities we get to do it together. I turn my dining room table into a shared workplace. I learned, after the first week, it is less important to be rigid about remote learning plans and more important what I get to do with my children."



Cindy Pearson and husband Alex with Paige, Andrew and Lucy

home and I'm used to a certain amount of freedom when they are at school. I drop them off and that part of the day is mine," she said. Instead, her family has had to figure out how to stay out of each other's way and is now discovering new parts of the house. "I'm making phone calls in my front yard like a lot of parents are," she said.

Pearson also finds it a challenge to facilitate online learning for her children, especially when one child needs motivation to finish the quarter, another has technology issues and the third cruises through it. "We try to approach each child as an

individual," she said, and she has a lot of praise for Duval County Public Schools and the teachers, who have salvaged the school year by putting together a virtual curriculum so quickly. "DCPS has stepped up," she said.

But being forced to stay at home also has had a silver lining. Her family has good conversations and has enjoyed watching movies, doing puzzles, playing games, and baking from scratch. "My kids are empowered to cook," she said. "I don't think we realized how tired we were. The rest has been good."



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Turners Underseal offers quick, efficient disinfecting

Turners Underseal, a leader in crawlspace disinfecting and drying systems, is now offering a fogging treatment that can be done in just an hour and that is certified against mold, viruses and bacteria that are present inside commercial buildings and homes, and the strain of Coronavirus now causing closures and sickening many people. It doesn't take long to fog an area and the treatment provides three months of residual protection or longer, which will be especially helpful as social distancing rules are relaxed in stages over the coming months.

"We can go in a restaurant as they open, or a bank, home, any place indoors. This fog sanitizes everything, and it goes through the ducts," Chris Turner, owner of Turners Underseal, explained. "I think that we need to take steps, once people go back to work, toward keeping things cleaner, and fogging is much more effective than other methods. It treats the entire inside of a house or a building. This is just a great way to mitigate the problem, just like social distancing helps and not hand shaking. The places people are most likely to get sick are indoors or in houses."

The process has been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and utilizes a plant-based product. Turners Underseal is also offering a 20 % discount for readers of The Resident. Turner said that the process is more efficient than trying to wipe down surfaces by hand and is just one more way people can make sure their clients, families and communities are safe.

"We need to take steps, once people go back to work, toward keeping things cleaner, and fogging is much more effective than other methods. It treats the entire inside of a house or a building."

— Chris Turner

He pointed out that indoor spaces are the main places people can get sick, so making sure the things they touch aren't as likely to have contaminants is helpful.

"It's a big step in the right direction, to keep people from getting sick," he said. Treatments for a whole house start at \$450.



The fogging treatment can be used together with Turners' dehumidifying system for the crawl space area in many historic homes and buildings. Crawlspaces are located between the ground and the first floor of a home or building and allow access to utility lines, but those spaces also hold in moisture because

of Florida's humidity and high water table. The collection of moisture can in turn breed toxic mold that causes respiratory illnesses and poor indoor air quality. Turners Underseal can install a system that keeps crawlspaces dry and free of mold. For a consultation for one or both services, call 904-903-9659.

In addition to the Turners Underseal Dry Crawlspace System Turners Underseal also does sub-floor sanitizing, permanent wood sealing and home air quality inspections. For \$300 off installation services, contact Chris Turner at (904) 903-9569 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. or check out Turners Underseal at turnersunderseal.com



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RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS PROVIDES GOOD NEWS, REFRESHING EXPERIENCE IN GREATER MEDIA LANDSCAPE

It's no secret the Coronavirus crisis and its economic fallout has thrown everyone for a loop. Many small businesses within Jacksonville's historic districts are struggling. Unfortunately, a few may not survive. The same holds true for our city's beloved community nonprofits, organizations that

do so much to help those in need. If they aren't there to respond, the most vulnerable among us may lose a valuable safety net, and they also may not survive.

Small local businesses, of which *The Resident* is one, count on the faithful support of their neighbors. Restaurants, boutiques, family-run shops, realtors, hair salons, gymnasiums, schools, and personal service providers all require buoying up from customers and community members during times of need.

But the *Resident Community News Group* has come up with a plan that is a win-win for caring community members, businesses, and nonprofits, as well as our publications, which provide the perfect conduit in between.

Over the past 13 years *The Resident* has worked hard to share with readers stories about the good works and deeds of those in Jacksonville's historic communities. Our newspapers cut their teeth during the Recession of 2007-2008, and we made it through those tough times thanks to your support, as we know we will again through the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite our optimism that we'll remain in business to continue to deliver your local newspaper, our team is facing tough times. Yet, we've come up with a creative solution that will enable you to help others by using your funds to the greatest impact within the community.

Today's need to find a reliable source of trustworthy information has never been

greater. With so much gloom and doom emanating from national and regional media sources, *The Resident's* focus on the "good news" happening with our local neighborhoods is more important than ever. If you enjoy reading about what is going on in your neighborhoods and want to make a difference to the businesses and nonprofits within your community, you can pay it forward by becoming a part of our Connecting by Caring Campaign, a marketing approach where we're not simply asking for funds but offering to put them to work in order to increase impact — exponentially.

.....

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 25**

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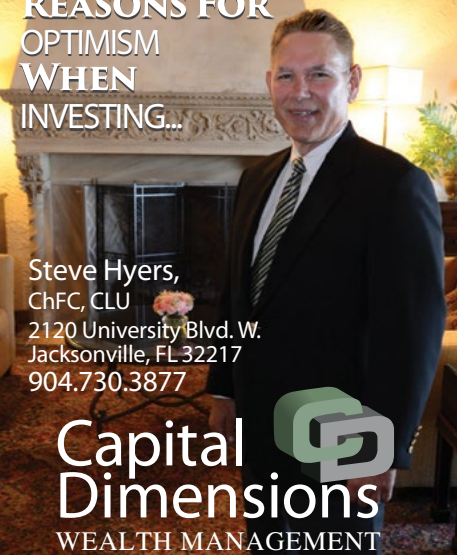
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The Way it Works: Expanding your message’s reach by way of the multiplier effect, mirroring, and leadership

In seeking ways to give back to the community, we are often hindered by our ability to participate and be ‘hands-on,’ yet there are creative ways to help and many avenues to do so. In Northeast Florida, we’re fortunate to have a great network of nonprofits and support organizations that are rallying to deliver support to the most vulnerable in our society, and that’s where we step in. Instead of simply giving a monetary donation directly to a charitable

organization we ask that you entrust that money to our publication so that we can design, write, edit, and complete a marketing campaign of your choosing. For instance, perhaps you wish to direct a gift that will consist of a written story in *The Resident*, one that showcases your passion for a nonprofit organization that assists hungry children or desperate animals seeking forever homes, or maybe promotes a Go Fund Me campaign for

local service industry neighbors in need. Or perhaps you might wish to purchase a display ad campaign for your favorite restaurant, or retailer that needs a boost as they return to business. It’s your call. The Connecting by Caring Campaign is a campaign that doubles, triples, or quadruples your impact by allowing *The Resident* to curate your message in three ways: mirroring, leadership, and utilizing the multiplier effect.

Why it Works: Quality content and reliable editorial produces results, grows trust

Whether you’ve been reading *The Resident* for a few weeks, or 13 years, it is clear our newspaper provides the best fiercely local journalism has to offer by highlighting volunteers, donors, and people of all ages as they give back to their community. Impressed by others that do great deeds, we mirror their benevolence when we are drawn in and inspired to take similar action ourselves. The people who are the focus of our “feel- good” stories model selfless behavior and the lessons from their actions resonate with our readership. Children are inspired when their parents say – ‘check out this article in *The Resident* that shows what that Eagle Scout

did!’ or ‘Take a look what Johnny is doing for the homeless.’ Over the years, *The Resident* has recounted countless stories of regular people making a difference in their neighborhoods. One such story, which may provide inspirational leadership to others is the recounting of an elderly woman’s regifting of plush toys to the Fraternal Order of Police after washing and stitching up imperfections. A major donor stepping up and challenging others through a story in our newspaper has a multiplier effect because it is direct mailed to 15,000 to 30,000 homes in Jacksonville’s historic neighborhoods and averages at least two readers per household.

Perhaps Clara White Mission Executive Director Ju’Coby Pittman’s letter on page 2 of this paper illustrates best the tremendous impact *The Resident* can have spreading a message of need throughout the community. Pittman’s missive outlines the response the Mission received after *The Resident* outlined Clara White’s great need for volunteers, food donations and funding, so that it can continue to serve Jacksonville’s most vulnerable populations. Our Connecting by Caring Campaign is a simple process, but it only occurs when captive and educated readers get a hold of our local paper. We want to continue being this impactful source, but we need your consideration at this time.

Please call with questions and/or clarifications, we’re here to help and want to ensure this program is successful - call Debra at (904)-885-6031, or Seth at (904)-885-6849.

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THE WAY WE WERE: ARTHUR CHESTER SKINNER, JR.

BY CHRISTINA SWANSON
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

As the sun’s rays penetrated through the pine trees, a young man galloped down the dirt roads of a primitive South Jacksonville in the 1930s on his horse, Vinny, long before commercial and residential areas and the city and state roads needed to provide transportation to them, were developed. This was when the lands south and east of the St. Johns River were mostly woods, marsh or sand dunes; before Southside subdivisions, Southpoint, Deerwood or University of North Florida existed, or Southside and Beach boulevards, Phillips Highway and State Road 220, for that matter.



A Chester Skinner, Jr.’s family as a young man included a brother and sister: from left, C. Brightman Skinner, Virginia B. Skinner, A. Chester Skinner, A. Chester Skinner, Jr., and Mary Virginia Skinner Jones, in front of the family home on the Southside.

Yet this young man, Arthur Chester Skinner, Jr., and family generations before him, would play a major role in the creation of what we now know as Jacksonville’s Southside, all because of the Skinner family’s hard work, vision and generosity.

“The Skinner’s are originally from South Carolina and my dad and several uncles

ended up in Jacksonville due to my grandfather’s continuing quest to acquire more virgin lands for his timber and turpentine business in the late 1800’s,” explained Skinner. Timber was the mainstay of family patriarch, Richard Green Skinner’s naval store business, and he was able to find enough financial backing to acquire an empire of pine trees along the St. Johns River – estimated to be more than 40,000 acres – all the way to the Intracoastal. When Skinner’s grandparents unexpectedly passed away in the early 1900’s from pneumonia, the responsibility for the family business and the landholdings fell to the seven sons, one of which was his dad, still a teenager himself, who eventually settled in Jacksonville.

When Skinner was a kid, there were two Jacksonville’s, north and south, divided by the river. “As a child, we would ride a ferry back and forth to cross the river where the Main Street Bridge is now, although it was called the John T. Alsop, Jr. Bridge, after the mayor,” Skinner said. (Actually, it’s the second bridge built in Jacksonville and is the oldest bridge still standing in its original form.)

Skinner’s father built his family’s wood-frame home as the first house on Old Kings Road South, when Old St Augustine Road, running in front of their home, was brick and San Jose and University boulevards were dirt roads. Years later, Skinner’s father would rebuild a brick house on the same spot, and when Chester grew and married, he also built a brick house next door to his father’s.

Skinner’s main passions throughout his 89 years have been his family, football, The Bolles School, and creating opportunities to be a good community steward. When he was a kid, The Bolles School was a hotel, and in



In the early days running Meadowbrook Farms dairy with Brightman, left, and Chester in front of one of their trucks.

1933 was converted into a boy’s military school serving grades 7 through 12. During the Great Depression, the timber and real estate businesses slowed down. To survive, Chester’s father turned to selling milk by starting and operating a dairy, named Meadowbrook Farms. He got some pointers from their first cousins who were already operating Skinner’s Dairy near Downtown.

Skinner, who humbly still refers to himself as a country boy from the woods, was able to attend The Bolles School during its military era in exchange for his dad supplying milk for the entire school for his tuition. He credits his education at Bolles, and then at Georgia Institute of Technology, as opening up a whole new world for him for which he is grateful. Over the years he has shown his appreciation through a

multitude of monetary donations as well as his time and talent. Skinner played several sports both at Bolles and Georgia Tech including football as a guard, basketball as a point guard, baseball as a right fielder, track and wrestling. He graduated from Bolles in 1940, as class battalion commander, president, valedictorian and an honor cadet.

“Bolles did a lot for me with a prodigious education, introducing me to the military and great athletics,” said Skinner. “It truly was the beginning of my awareness of the world and all its opportunities.”

When he graduated with high honors from Georgia Tech with a degree in mechanical engineering, he was technically a part of the U.S. Army being in ROTC, and with World

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 25**

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A. Chester Skinner, Jr.

War II still two years out before ending, Skinner was immediately sent to Fort Monroe as part of the U.S. Army’s coastal artillery unit. He was trained to be a radar technician back when this was something new, installing and testing radar equipment along the coast of the Chesapeake Bay.

“Here they formed convoys of ships going to Europe to fight and so we all witnessed so many amazing things,” said Skinner. “We’d go to bed at night and the coast would be jammed full of ships, wake up the next morning and they’re all gone headed to Germany or Great Britain.”

He got to serve with other friends from Georgia Tech, like best friend Harold Achey, originally from Chattanooga, Tenn., who was assigned to the motor transport division. They continued to be life-long friends visiting each other’s hometowns. Achey even named his first son after Chester. After six years of service, Skinner retired from the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant.

He joined Reynolds, Smith and Hills, Inc., downtown, as an engineer where he designed and coordinated various construction projects including local power plants, such as the one on Talleyrand Avenue, and electric generating stations all over the state. He got to know various other engineers and influencers, such as John Lanahan, when they both worked on getting the Matthews Bridge built, which played a role in future development of Skinner land holdings.

Skinner is very proud of the role the former and current generation of his family has contributed to development, economic success and quality of life that is southside Jacksonville. “My dad and brothers gave away a lot of land for highways to the city and state to open up the land, increase its value and make new developments possible,” he said. “My brother, sister and I cleared and gave the state right of way for so many major highways here such I-295, J. Turner Butler and Southside boulevards, and donated a large portion of acreage where the University of North Florida is today.”

After Skinner had been with RS&H for a few years, his dad wanted to concentrate more on real estate and asked his two sons to take over running Meadowbrook Farms. Skinner would ride Vinny or his shiny, black Model A Ford down mostly dirt roads to the dairy farm, located on the corner of St.

Augustine and Old Kings roads, before it was eventually moved to where the Town Center is now. Chester and brother, Brightman, managed the dairy farm and accompanying stores for more than 30 years into the 1970s.

“Brother was in charge of the milking operation while I took care of daily maintenance like fixing fences and keeping water troths full,” said Skinner. The company bottled and sold retail milk delivered by truck to homes and supermarkets in Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Daytona, Palatka and New Smyrna Beach. The San Jose land associated with Meadowbrook Farms dairy became known as Skinner’s Pasture.

By the late 1970s, after the dairy was sold, Skinner focused more on managing his large acreage holdings with a vast amount of tasks such as overseeing maintenance, digging canals for water drainage, meeting with road development people or folks wanting to buy land. He worked from an office he built behind his home.

He had married Katherine Godfrey and they had four children, his namesake, A. Chester, III or “Chip,” as well as David, Christopher, and Kathy. Eventually, parts of Skinner’s Pasture would become the grounds of Wolfson High School, the Dupont YMCA, various residential areas and Baker/Skinner Park, among others. In the 1980s, the land was passed down to his son’s generation. After his wife, Katherine, passed away in 1996, he became friends with a widower at his church, Constance Stone, and they married in 2002.

All the while, Skinner has stayed close to both of his alma maters, especially during football season. In the early days, he helped coach the Bolles Bulldogs and has supported the team and all its coaches over-the-years. His desire to help, along with a love of designing and building, has resulted hand-crafted stone benches and wooden banquet tables around Bolles Hall, and players’ benches on the football field all, which were made by Skinner in his backyard. He was also instrumental in the many campus statues memorializing Bolles’ military history, commemorative flagpoles, tree plantings, and school crests, to name a few.

By the time his son, Chip, was a senior, the Bolles wooden stadium had seen better days and so Skinner spent several years fine-tuning his vision for a grand stadium -- from designing and gathering other alumni support to overseeing the construction, and consistently adding to it glory since it first opened in November 1984.

“I visited other private schools in Chattanooga and Atlanta and came up with an idea for a design that sat high enough so that everyone could see the field well, even the bottom row,” he said. “As ideas were swirling, I came across an alumni who was a contractor and charitable enough to come in and rebuild, as well as several prominent supporters including Charlie Barco, for which the Skinner-Barco stadium is named.”

Skinner did not stop there, but has continued to design and build additions to the stadium in his backyard workshop, such as stadium lighting made from junkyard

material, athletic storage and signage facilities, athletic display cases, entrance signage, and even the school’s San Jose Boulevard billboard. He even built an elaborate press box in four pieces that was delivered to the school with a crane and sits at the 50th yard line above the stands.

Last year, another one of Skinner’s visions was realized with the construction of the Corky Rogers Plaza – a new front entrance to the stadium located at the west side that also showcases Rogers’ legendary wins. It was unveiled last summer with both the Skinner and Rogers families gathered to commemorate the plaza. Skinner had befriended many of Bolles coaches and was especially fond of Rogers, who died in February and his Bolles football record.

Named a Bolles Trustee in 1961, Skinner was inducted into the Georgia Tech College

of Carlton Engineering Hall of Fame in 1999. His brother, Brightman, who passed away last year at age 94 and sister, Mary Virginia Jones, who is 92, have all been honored for their significant philanthropy. Most recently, the University of North Florida renamed Buildings 3 and 4, which house classes and offices for various academic departments, after them.

Since Skinner’s attendance and graduation in 1940, all of the Skinner family including his children, grandchildren and now great grandchildren have gone to school at Bolles.

“Of all the experiences I’ve had and of the people who have helped me along the way, my father influenced me the most,” he said. “I look up to him for so many reasons, one his being the captain and quarterback on the Furman University team in Greenville, South Carolina.”



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A. Chester Skinner III (Chip), Katherine Godfrey Skinner, David G. Skinner (David), Katherine E. Skinner (Kathy), Christopher F. Skinner (Chris) and A. Chester Skinner, Jr. (Chester).

Help Protect Our Seniors

During this time, please call on your elderly neighbors: offer to help, keep them connected, make sure they have access to their prescribed medications.

In Memoriam

William Wiley “Bill” Gay

October 15, 1926 to March 31, 2020

His doctor described him as “a mountain man, the gold standard,” and when it came to establishing his company, respecting his employees, supporting his family, and giving back to the community, he was all that and more.

William Wiley Gay, who built W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractors into the largest HVAC contractor in Northeast Florida, passed away at his Cedar Hills home March 31 while surrounded by the family he dearly loved.

“He was a man who would say money doesn’t buy you happiness,” recalled his daughter, Joy Gay Jones. “He’d say you have to be able to look in the mirror and feel good about the way you lived your life. You need to help other people.”

Known as Bill to those who knew him, Gay was born in West Palm Beach and had “nothing as a child,” said Jones. His father worked for the railroad, and after a brief stint in Pennsylvania, his family made its way to Jacksonville, where they lived on Cherokee Street in Ortega. Gay graduated from Robert E. Lee High School and served in the Merchant Marines during World War II then headed to the University of Florida, where he graduated with an education degree in 1949. It was at UF where he met his wife, Eloise, while working as a graduate assistant for an industrial arts class.

Gay began his career in mechanical contracting as a part-time employee with Henley and Beckwith while he was still an undergraduate at UF. He worked continuously in the field until branching off in 1962 to start his own company with the blessing of his boss. “Mr. Beckwith was like a father to him and endorsed him when he went out to business,” said Jones. It was something Gay would not forget, and when some of his employees started businesses of their own, he always helped them, she said.

Gay built W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractors Inc. into a firm with \$160 million in annual revenue – twice the amount of its closest competitor – and 950 employees. His firm did work on nearly every commercial building in Jacksonville, but he was especially proud of work he did at Baptist Hospital. “It used to be when you went over the bridge there was a glass building where the pipe work was,” Jones recalled. “Daddy would take us over there on Sunday, and we would look at the pipe work. Daddy was so proud of that building.”

Gay worked regularly until Oct. 2018, when he cut back his time at the office to

only a few hours a week. “He loved to work, and he loved the people that he worked with. He never said people worked for him, instead they always worked with him,” Jones said noting her father also promoted the slogan, “My employees are the best in the business.”

Gay loved Christmas and had a room in his home dedicated to the holiday where he kept his vast collection of Santa Clauses, said Katy Towers, wife of the late Charlie Towers, Gay’s best friend. “He loved to play Santa Claus, and he sponsored the best company Christmas parties,” she said.

And when it came to supporting non-profits and other civic and business associations, Gay was extremely generous. There were very few organizations that helped people in Jacksonville to which he did not contribute his time, treasure or talents. “You name it, and his finger was probably in it,” said Gay’s grandson, Will Croft. And Towers agreed. “Bill Gay was one of the biggest philanthropists in the city,” she said. “He gave an incredible amount to different causes, and a lot of it went unheralded and was done quietly.”

“He was a very successful man from a financial standpoint, but that didn’t matter to him. He gave all the time and never asked for anything in return,” Jones confirmed. “He never did anything for a thank you or to be acknowledged. He just did. And if people were in need, he helped them. Whatever he was involved in, he gave 150%. Up until his last day, he still wanted to be producing. He saw no reason to be on this earth if he was not giving something back.”

Yet, many who received the benefit of his largesse showed him the recognition he deserved. Gay received many accolades and helped so many civic and philanthropic organizations that the walls at his company headquarters are lined with plaques, said-Towers. “He won every award there was in the book, and yet he was such a low-key, humble person that I didn’t even know he was a bigwig in the city until I saw them. He never brought any attention to himself.”

A small sampling of Gay’s tributes included the 2007 Florida’s Ernst and Young Entrepreneur



of the Year in Real Estate and Construction; Past President and Board Member of the Gator Bowl Association; Co-founder of the Prisoners of Christ; 2010 Honorary Doctorate of Business and Commerce from Jacksonville University; Past President and Charter Member of Westside Rotary Club with 52 years of perfect attendance; 2000 Jacksonville Billy Graham Crusade Co-chairman of Finance; two-time recipient of the First Coast 50 Company of the Year Award; God and Service Recognition Medal presented by the Presbyterian Church and Boy Scouts of America 1996; Past President of North Florida Council Boy Scouts of America, Silver Beaver Award, 1979 and Distinguished Citizen Award 1982; 1999 Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award by the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce; and 2002 Flagler College Outstanding Philanthropist.

Yet above everything else, Gay “loved his Lord” and put his family first. Married for 67 years to his wife, Eloise, who died in 2017, Gay had four children, eight grandchildren, and 20 great grandchildren.

“He was an integral part of each one’s life,” Jones said, noting every Sunday 18 to 20 family members would gather with Gay and his wife to do lunch, and after her death, various family members would eat with Gay at his home several days a week. “It was important to Daddy that the family be close,” said Jones. “With his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, he would always try to find something that they liked or that they were good at and help them to develop it.”

Gay and his wife enjoyed traveling and would take all eight of his grandchildren on a two week trip every summer, said Jones. “It was great for the parents because we got a two-week vacation, but it was really wonderful for the grandchildren because they went to places as a group that their parents had never been.” One year, Gay and his wife flew into the Alaskan wilderness on two small planes with the grandchildren divided between them. While flying around the mountains in the fog, the planes collided, and Gay’s plane crashed into a lake. “Momma and Daddy always lovingly argued about who hit who,” said Jones. “It’s a miracle they weren’t hurt, and he walked off the plane. But the next year they did a cruise because we told them we didn’t want them flying.”

“He was one-of-a-kind,” said Croft. “Of course, I’m prejudiced, but I don’t think there will ever be another W.W. Gay.”



Bill Gay and his beloved family

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In Memoriam

Janet Owens

January 4, 1953 to April 8, 2020

A rare spirit. A phenomenal community leader. A sharp, clear-eyed thinker. An impassioned advocate. A wonderful, talented, and caring person.

Those are just a few ways Janet Owens was described by people who knew her well.

Owens, who was executive director of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) passed away April 8 from a long battle with cancer. Her passing left behind “enormous shoes to fill,” said Maurice A. Jones, CEO/president of LISC’s national office. “In her honor, we commit to continuing her life’s work.”

During the past 10 years that Owens had served as executive director for LISC, a nonprofit that revitalizes and rebuilds urban neighborhoods, she was often described as “a tremendous driving force” in advancing the nonprofit’s mission.

“Janet was a rare spirit, always filled with love and a positive outlook, and possessed an extraordinary ability to make everyone she encountered feel important and heard,” said Sherry Magill, chair of the LISC Advisory Board. “She inspired and challenged everyone, in her uniquely kind and gracious manner, to overcome obstacles in creating a better quality of life for all. Her devotion to her family, her work, and her community was selfless. Jacksonville has suffered a tremendous loss, but we are also filled with gratitude and lifelong appreciation for having received all that Janet gave to so many for so long.”

Owens shifted LISC’s strategic focus to a more comprehensive approach to community development when she took on the job of executive director in 2010. She directed the launch of numerous initiatives that have improved access to quality education, increased family income and wealth, created affordable housing, spurred economic investment and development, and fostered safer and healthier neighborhoods for thousands of urban residents and stakeholders.

Under Owens’ tutelage, LISC Jacksonville took a “bottom-up” approach to community revitalization, investing millions to improve Jacksonville’s inner-city neighborhoods. Believing that each community had its own human resources, Owens viewed her organization as a bridge builder between community members and external resources, such as capital and lending. Her methods empowered members to create their own redevelopment plans, and the positive impact was apparent in improvements in Northwest Jacksonville, Historic Springfield, New Town, the Railroad District, and others.

She was also a driving force behind LISC’s investment in the historic preservation of the Barnett Bank and Laura Street Trio.

Prior to joining LISC Jacksonville, Owens served as vice president of marketing and communications for United Way of Northeast Florida. She also previously held leadership roles at Girl Scouts of Gateway Council and Volunteer Jacksonville.

In 2019, she received the University of North Florida’s OneJax Humanitarian Award in recognition of her integrity and dedication to improving human relations among diverse local groups. She was also recognized by Leadership Jacksonville as an outstanding trustee during its 2018 Leadership Celebration, and she received the Women of Distinction Award for her career accomplishments and commitment to community service by the Girl Scouts of Gateway Council in 2009.



She inspired
and challenged
everyone, in her
uniquely kind and
gracious manner,
to overcome
obstacles in creating
a better quality of
life for all.

— Sherry Magill,
chair of the LISC Advisory Board

Over the years, she was a Paul Harris Fellow, member of the Rotary Club of Jacksonville, and served on numerous nonprofit boards.

Nina Waters, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, said she was fortunate to work with Owens in the nonprofit sector for many years. “Janet dedicated her career to improving the quality of life for all our citizens, especially those who live in neighborhoods that have been neglected for far too long,” she said. “She had the perfect balance of patience and tenacity – finding ways to bring together and mobilize the right group of people to bring complex community projects to completion.

J.F. Bryan IV of Ortega, former chair of the LISC Jacksonville Advisory Council, had nothing but praise and admiration for Owens. “Janet was a phenomenal community leader whose passion for helping our most vulnerable neighbors was rooted deeply in her soul, and she radiated that passion to everyone around her,” he said. “She was an uplifting individual who had remarkable intuition on how to bring people together and enact long-lasting, positive change for so many. Janet was a very courageous individual, persevering in advancing LISC’s mission despite the personal health challenges she faced in recent years. I am honored and grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside her for so many years. Being around her was absolute, pure joy.”

ASK THE EXPERT



Celebrating
your passions

Matt Tucci

Jacksonville Market Director,
Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes
and Cemeteries

Q: I’m planning ahead and can’t decide between a traditional funeral and something totally unique. Any advice?

A: First, I’d like to acknowledge the important step you’re taking to plan your final arrangements in advance. Planning ahead gives you the opportunity to design a meaningful and memorable service that reflects your personality and passions, and you’ll also help to prevent your loved ones from having to second-guess what you would have wanted. A traditional service can include personal touches, like your favorite color or song. Similarly, elements of your customs and heritage can be incorporated into a nontraditional funeral. From simple details to a more elaborate affair, the funeral provider you choose should help you weave the essence of your life throughout all aspects of a ceremony.

Q: I love to cook and enjoy a great meal. Is it possible to incorporate food into my funeral or memorial service?

A: Absolutely! There are so many memories and traditions associated with good food. If you love to bake, consider serving an array of desserts with keepsake recipe cards or personalized wooden spoons for your loved ones to take with them after the service. Or, if cherished pastimes include family and friends gathered around the dinner table, you can design a final send-off that allows them to enjoy a memorable meal with your favorite foods – and also find comfort in sharing their favorite stories. Whatever your culinary tastes, your memorial service can include a menu with personal significance. Our funeral home even offers a variety of catering options and can help you arrange anything from appetizers to a full-course meal. You can contact us today for more information about incorporating food into your or a loved one’s remembrance service.

Q: Where do I start?

A: A good place to start, whether planning for yourself or a loved one, is by reflecting on what’s most important in life. Do you love to travel? What about sports, dancing or family traditions? Your final send-off should truly be a celebration of what makes you—you. If you’re passionate about the ocean, consider a seaside tribute complete with nautical décor and pathways made of sand. If you love football, a tailgate memorial may be the perfect way to bring the whole crew together. However you choose to be remembered, record your wishes and share them with the funeral home of your choice—and your loved ones. That way, you’ll have peace of mind in knowing that your final wishes are known and may be carried out just as you envisioned. If you have more questions, visit your local funeral provider. They are a good source of information for funeral, cremation and cemetery options.

“Your final send-off should truly be a
celebration of what makes you—you.”

— Matt Tucci

Matt Tucci is the Jacksonville Market Director with Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes and Cemeteries, which serves the greater Jacksonville area. For more information, Matt can be reached at 954-821-7103 or visit him at the Hardage-Giddens Funeral home in Mandarin, 11801 San Jose Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32223 San Jose Blvd. or email matthew.tucci@dignitymemorial.com



Tucker named to All-State basketball team

Patrick Tucker, a senior at Bishop Kenny High School, was selected to the Florida Dairy Farmers Academic All-State basketball team. Patrick was selected to the 24-member team for his outstanding academic and athletic achievements. Each team member receives a \$1,700 scholarship and a commemorative medallion and becomes a finalist for the FHSAA's Scholarship Athlete-of-the-Year award.

Crusaders' Head coach Jerry Buckley said he is very proud of Patrick's achievement. "He's a highly intelligent player who also know how to work hard. The work ethic he displays in the classroom carries over onto the court."

Patrick, who competes on two varsity teams for the Crusaders, lead Bishop Kenny's golf team to a fourth-place state finish.

Virtual Dance Marathon raises \$29,931 for Wolfson Children's Hospital

Despite the adversity of a COVID-19 lockdown, Bishop Kenny Seniors Patrick Patangan and Katie Vossman wanted to make sure that the Jacksonville community came together for the annual high school Dance Marathon.

Dance Marathon 2020 was held virtually April 13-17, to raise money for Wolfson's Children Hospital. It followed a daily theme starting with Monday, "Not Done Fighting, FTK", Tuesday, "What are you doing during quarantine?", Wednesday, "You Can Still Make an Impact", Thursday, "Morale Dance Challenge" and Friday culminated with "We will NEVER stop fighting for the kids, FTK". The event was a huge success and raised \$29,931.59 in five days.

Vossman and Patangan said they wanted to stand for those children who can't stand by themselves and give something back in a time of need. The students along with Bishop Kenny sophomore Charli Esposito attended a Zoom meeting after the lockdown, hosted by Children's Miracle Network, with colleges around the globe to learn how to move forward with the event virtually.

The BK Interact Club joined forces with Bolles and the Episcopal School of Jacksonville's Interact Clubs for the virtual event. "This event would not have been possible without the efforts of all three schools who have been involved in the fundraising and planning efforts since the beginning of the school year," Patangan said, adding "without the help of Charlotte Rosenberg



Seniors from Bishop Kenny, Episcopal and Bolles held a virtual high school dance marathon over Zoom, raising \$29,931.59 for Wolfson Children's Hospital April 13-17. From left: Charli Esposito, Katie Vossman, Mary El Hassan, Christian Nackashi, Somerset Acosta-Rua, Leila Roberts, Bianca Degrado, Knox Greene, Jack Adams, Alston Rachels. Bottom left: Patrick Patangan, Gentian Fairman and Charlotte Rosenberg

from Episcopal, and Gentian Fairman from Bolles, this event wouldn't have been the same."

Interact Club sponsor Christine Keyser shared her thoughts on the event and her students. "I have had the humbling blessing to be the teacher sponsor for the Interact Club and thus the Dance Marathon," she said. "Over the last few weeks, I have spoken with, planned with and prayed for the 'saints among us' who are determined to carry out service

above self. They have Zoomed from their kitchen tables, bedrooms, backyards and sitting in the middle of the St. John's on their boat. To complete this call to service has never left the minds and hearts of these Bishop Kenny student leaders. Still with the gift of innocence, they do not completely comprehend the power of love that they are giving in a time of desperation and fear. They have been the teacher and I the grateful student."



Tommy Bishop

Episcopal School of Jacksonville

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Grandparents

Children's Chorus receives national award



The Jacksonville Children's Chorus (JCC) has received the 2020 Chorus America's Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award.

The prestigious national award honors the life and achievements of Brazeal Dennard, a prominent educator, conductor, and arranger by recognizing individuals or organizations whose work builds upon Dennard's commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and furthering African-American and other diverse choral traditions through performance, research, or the creation of new compositions of significance.

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E-Sports continue amid COVID-19 crisis



Bishop Kenny may be on lockdown and practicing remote learning, but that did not keep the school’s E-Sports team from competing.

In mid-April, Luke Gould, a junior at the school took part in a varsity E-Sports match from his home when he competed in a PlayVS tournament.

This is the second year that Bishop Kenny has fielded varsity and junior varsity E-Sports teams. Each team is comprised of three players. The Crusaders are currently ranked first in the Eastern Division for the High School E-Sports League. They also compete in Generation E-Sports, but both went on hold in late April.

Bishop Kenny also has teams of students who compete in Rocket League, Mario Smash Brothers and League of Legends.

Three from Stanton named as National Merit Scholar finalists

Three students from Jacksonville’s historic neighborhoods have been recognized as National Merit Scholar finalists.

Sarah Penland of Riverside and Kaylee Conrad and Andrew Lopez from San Marco were among 24 students at Stanton and 15,000 nationwide to be considered for a National Merit Scholarship.

The National Merit® Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. Approximately 1.6 million high school students enter the program each year. High school students can become eligible for the program by first taking the Preliminary SAT (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQT). Approximately 15,000 semifinalists advance to finalist status. Within the finalist group, winners are



Sarah Penland



Andrew Lopez



Kaylee Conrad

chosen for the Merit Scholarship based on their abilities, skills, and accomplishments. About 7,500 finalists will be selected to receive a scholarship between the beginning of March and mid-June.

Lopez is planning to attend Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania in the fall. Conrad and Penland plan to attend the University of Florida.

High school students to benefit from new scholarship program

High School 9:12 is pleased to announce its partnership with LandSouth Construction, a Jacksonville-based multifamily construction company, to launch the LandSouth Construction Scholarship Program, providing scholarships for Jacksonville area students.

The LandSouth Construction Scholarship Program will award multiple \$2,500 scholarships each year. Eligible students must demonstrate classroom and academic excellence, community service, and leadership qualities. Students can apply online at <https://www.jaxhighschool912.com/> until May 1.

The uncertainty of the world today is felt by everyone, especially our high school students. The LandSouth Construction Scholarship program is another way High School 9:12 can assure local families and students that the future is still bright, and help is available.

“We are thrilled to sponsor this scholarship program,” stated Erica Zumstein, LandSouth’s Marketing Director and a board member for High School 9:12. “LandSouth is equally committed to contributing to the success of Jacksonville youth, now more than ever. High School 9:12 is a great resource for students to realize their vision of a college education.”

High School 9:12, a 501(c)3 non-profit, launched in 2018 by Airstream Ventures to create opportunities for students in sports, academics, and all areas of life. Over the past two years, more than 200 students have completed academic boot camps to prepare for college entrance exams. The results have been positive, leading to more lower income students achieving higher test scores, and benefitting from the Florida Bright Futures program. The LandSouth Construction scholarship program will provide even more funding to help these students realize their dreams.

The LandSouth Scholarship Program started in earnest this fall with a donation by the Law Offices of Pajcic & Pajcic, creating two \$2,500 scholarships that will be awarded in May as well.

“Every child who dreams of attending college after high school deserves the chance,” said Alan Verlander, CEO of Airstream Ventures, who operates the High School 9:12 non-profit. “We are thankful to LandSouth for sharing our vision and joining our efforts with this partnership. Helping these students is more important than ever, especially with the changes and upheaval from Covid-19. We ask others in our community to consider donating to High School 9:12 so that students from our area will be able to attend and thrive in college next year.”

For more information about the LandSouth Construction Scholarship Program and how you can donate to the scholarship, visit High School 9:12’s website – www.jaxhighschool912.com.



LOOK HOW WE’VE GROWN ...



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Family in Healthcare | Everyone I Depend on Could Be Gone



By Avani Bansal
Co-editor of
The Bolles Bugle

It has become the new daily routine- as soon as they get home, they go straight from the garage to the nearby bathroom to take a shower, sterilize their cellphones, throw scrubs in the wash, and leave work gear in the car so we never touch it. No declaration that they are home. No hug or discussion. Just disinfect and shower.

Each day it is the same routine- my parents leave the house early, often before we wake up. Fewer calls from them during the day because they don't want to disrupt our online school schedule.

And I know they want to get home as fast as possible.

Each night I hear about new COVID scares, just hoping my parents don't get it. Last week my mom was not feeling well. I tried to offer her food, water. She would not let me in the room. She did not want me to get sick. Instead,

I took care of the meals for me and my siblings, dishes, helping my little brother with his homework- praying my mom did not have COVID. She got tested. That was the most stressful 24 hours, but then we found out she was negative. During this whole time, I am waiting to hear news about the modified AP exams and the SAT/ACT plan.

Somehow I am supposed to think about my future while every day I worry about my family.

In other countries where ventilators are being rationed, the elderly are not allowed to get this machine. They could suffer not from the virus but from the inability to receive proper care. I have never heard my parents talk of not having enough to treat patients. I thought that only happens in less advanced countries, but it appears not.

My grandparents are typically a great source of help, especially taking care of my 9 year old brother. But we have not seen them in three weeks because my parents are terrified that we will somehow give the virus to my grandparents. If they were to get the virus, with the ventilator shortage, it could be extremely dangerous for them – another one of my worries.

“Somehow I am supposed to think about my future while every day I worry about my family.”

— Avani Bansal

We miss our grandparents so much and we try our best with Facetime, but it is not the same as seeing them in person for our traditional Sunday night dinners or daily drives to school.

I feel selfish thinking of what else I am losing — time with friends (Zoom just isn't the same), missing prom or science fair, going to the movies. I wonder what will happen with college selection if I can't take required tests or I don't perform as well with all of these stresses and distractions.

I also see the financial impact of this virus. Instead of bringing patients in, my parents are trying to stop patients from coming to the clinic and hospital. They worry about their staff. It's like gearing up for a war: pooling resources, minimizing exposures...trying to flatten the curve while the hospitals prepare extra rooms, block off COVID areas and ask the doctors to be ready to work hard as now the expected peak is in May.

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IT’S NOT WHERE WE ARE, IT’S WHO WE ARE ...

AND WE ARE FOREVER CRUSADERS.

CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2020!



Aydan Ali



Ethan Bissell



Aleda Cashwell



Hannah Hatcher



Saige Higgins



Maggie Pajcic



Kaley Salameh



Daniel Curtis



Quinn Edwards



Connor Gray



Katherine Bell



Bubbie Brown



Sahana Gummadi

Class of 2020

Your senior year may look drastically different, and your world may have changed; however, that doesn't stop us from thinking the world of you.

We Celebrate Our SJEDS 6th Graders!



Sydney Jennings



Matthew Kalil



Zuri McClain



Parker Mitchell



Roman Penland



Julia Pilla



Averie Pyron



Bennett Kirk



Ava Salman



Madison Smith



Noelle Thomas



Harper Wartell

Schools grapple with commencement changes during Coronavirus pandemic



Bishop Kenny Seniors Rachel and Rose Dolmovich will both play basketball for Oglethorpe University next year.



Leslie DeStefano cheers on the senior class at St. Johns Country Day School April 20.



Bishop Kenny senior Lee Barry with his mother, Donna Berry

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

They were born in the shadow of 9/11, the worst terrorist attack in United States history, and now members of the Class of 2020 have also been dealt another unsettling blow: graduating amidst a devastating global pandemic.

In mid-March when most schools in Jacksonville’s historic districts complied with directives from Gov. Ron DeSantis and Mayor Lenny Curry to shutter their doors immediately and cancel all school and extra-curricular activities, there really was no warning that it might be the end of normalcy for the rest of the school year.

Initially, no one envisioned that there would be no prom, no senior trips, no parties, no end-of-the-year awards ceremonies, and no hanging out with friends to savor the “last times” or to celebrate college acceptances. And it seemed inconceivable that

graduation itself, a landmark ceremony marking the transition between adolescence and adulthood, might be postponed or perhaps even cancelled. But that is what many high schools serving Jacksonville’s historic neighborhood are facing.

Like most high schools in the area, Bishop Kenny successfully navigated its overnight transition from operating in a brick and mortar school to become an online school. “Fortunately, we have been a 1:1 iPad school for eight years,” said Bishop Kenny Principal Todd Orlando. “All of our teachers and students already had school-issued iPads complete with a learning management system, digital textbooks, and other resources, which provided them with all of the tools they needed to implement our distance learning plan. Our students and teachers have risen to the occasion, and while life has certainly been interrupted, learning continues at Bishop Kenny High School.”

However, the school is still working with the Diocese of St. Augustine to figure out the best way to preserve the traditions

of graduation week, which was originally scheduled for the weekend of May 21, 22 and 23. At that time, activities were to include a senior awards program, graduation Mass, and commencement exercises, which unfortunately have been eclipsed by the Coronavirus pandemic, he said, adding that Bishop Kenny’s plans, which were evolving at press time, still will celebrate the school’s 285 seniors and its traditions.

“While we look forward to these virtual programs, we also look forward to being able to gather together for a more personal celebration in the near future. We miss all of our students, but most especially our seniors, who have missed out on so many important activities,” Orlando said. In that spirit, Bishop Kenny initiated several gestures of celebration including a night-time illumination of the entire campus in honor of its Class of 2020, as well as a series of social media posts and several other surprises for the students who comprise the 68th graduating class at the school.

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 33**

Congratulations

Wolfpack Class of 2020!

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Janie Day

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SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

You have extraordinary accomplishments and characteristics. We appreciate all that YOU HAVE BEEN, ARE and WILL BECOME.
The world is at your piano-playing fingertips.
Vaya Con Dios.

We love you
— The DAY and JULIAN families

Bolles

Meanwhile, at The Bolles School, the plan is to continue with the traditional graduation celebration while taking precautions to keep social distancing and other guidelines in place. After learning about the governor’s mandate, Bolles closed its campus educational facilities until Friday, May 22 for middle and upper school students and Thursday, May 21 for those in its lower school, practicing distance learning instead. However, at press time Bolles educators said they are planning to hold commencement on its regularly scheduled day, Saturday, May 23, while limiting the number of people who will attend. Saturday, June 6, has been selected as a fallback date, should circumstances warrant a change. “One thing we do know, it will be the most unprecedented and memorable commencement in school history,” wrote Head of School Tyler Hodges in a letter to parents.

“One thing we do know, it will be the most unprecedented and memorable commencement in school history.”

— Tyler Hodges, Bolles

At press time, sports activities and summer camps were still scheduled to begin the week of May 25. To herald the seniors, Bolles has set up a Celebrating Bolles Seniors page online and will include stories and the names of its “lifers,” and “legacy” students.

Episcopal

Like Bolles, Episcopal also plans to hold its traditional commencement festivities on its regularly scheduled date. While all school classes and extracurricular activities continued to be conducted remotely through May 20, Episcopal plans to hold graduation activities in the early morning of Friday, May 22 and Saturday, May 23 on the school’s River Field. “This will provide us a beautiful venue to celebrate together, while at the same time providing us enough space for safe social distancing,” said The Rev. Adam Greene, head of school, in a letter to the school community. At press time, Episcopal was also planning to offer its full program of Episcopal academic and camp opportunities, said Greene. If circumstances do not allow for on-campus academic programs this summer, all courses



Lauren Nott, a senior at Episcopal, poses outside her Ortega home. She is the daughter of Chris Nott and Katherine Donahoo Nott.

Ryan Riggs, director of College Counseling at Episcopal, delivered signs in San Marco with Stephanie Schuester, a college counseling assistant at the school. Riggs’s daughter is a member of the senior class.

will be offered in a remote learning format for full credit, he said. To celebrate the Class of 2020, Episcopal also distributed yard signs to each senior’s individual home and is also creating a photo album for the seniors, which will include their favorite Episcopal memory, favorite photo, and where they are going to college. The album will be shared on social media and with each senior’s family. “Eagles, because of you, our school is thriving even in the midst of such difficult circumstances. Because of you, we have become an even stronger community, even while we are forced to be physically apart. Because of you, and your continued support, we will continue to be a light that shines through this time of darkness until we are physically reunited and together again,” Greene wrote.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34



RIVERSIDE

Presbyterian Day School



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020!

WWW.RPDS.COM

St. Johns Country Day School

Educators at St. Johns Country Day school are keeping their fingers crossed that they will be able to hold commencement exercises on the regularly scheduled date of Saturday, May 30, but the school does have several backup dates reserved with the Thrasher-Horne Center in June and July just in case. "While things are certainly still very much in flux, we hope and plan to have a live graduation ceremony as much as possible like our usual," said Regan Minners, a spokesperson for the school.

St. Johns has worked to keep its distance learning program as vibrant and engaging as possible, and has brought several guest speakers to its virtual classrooms including St. Johns alumni Dr. Saumil Oza, a cardiologist from Ascension St. Vincent's, who discussed COVID-19 with the AP biology class as well as his new project, Masks4Jax, and the importance of wearing masks. Meanwhile, Broadway actress and dancer Morgan Harrison visited the school's theatre classes and Rabbi Robert Goodman of the Congregation Ahavath Chesed helped history classes observe



The Hodges Family celebrated Jack Hodges, a senior at St. Johns Country Day School April 20.

Holocaust Remembrance Day. “I continue to be amazed by the incredibly rich experiences our teachers are bringing to life in Spartan Distance Learning,” said Acting Head of School Mary Virginia Fisher.

To celebrate the senior class, the school held a #BeTheLight celebration, turning on the lights on all the athletic fields at 8:20



The Robbins family of Avondale – Caroline Robbins, Ivonne Robbins and Jordan Robbins Rechigl – honored senior Parker Robbins during a drive-by event at St. Johns Country Day School April 20.

p.m., which is 2020 in military time. “The seniors drove by in their cars as faculty, spaced six feet out down our drive and wearing masks, waved and cheered them on. When they pulled out of the back gate, their parents were there also, with signs, posters, and photo blowups, also waving and cheering,” Minners said.

**Wolfson, Douglas Anderson and
Robert E. Lee High Schools**

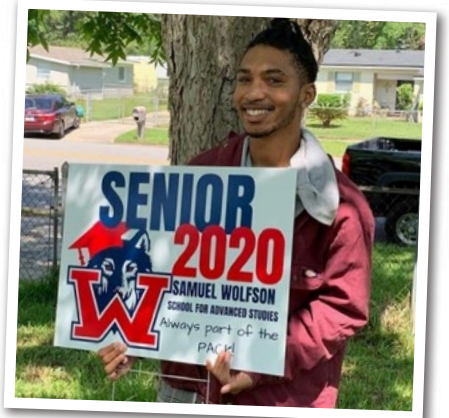
Seniors graduating from public high schools in Duval County, such as Wolfson, Douglas Anderson and Robert E. Lee will enjoy full “normal” commencement ceremonies this summer in July, with a virtual senior celebration – a collaboration between Duval County Public Schools and Channel 4 – to be held after classes are over in May.

“The location is going to be different, but that hasn’t been assigned yet,” said Wolfson Principal Christopher E. Begley, referring to the July ceremonies when the diplomas will be awarded.

Meanwhile, each school is doing as much as it can to celebrate its senior class.

Douglas Anderson School of the Arts will hold a virtual awards ceremony that will be shown on the school's website and through social media the week of May 18, said DA Principal Melanie Hammer. "We are doing a few things to honor our seniors," she said, noting a few are the virtual awards ceremony, Senior Showcase on Channel 4, and Senior Signing Day, a video featuring each senior saying where they are going for post-secondary studies.

Meanwhile, more than 30 Wolfson teachers took senior class signs and distributed them into each senior students' yards as a surprise on April 25. "They honked their horns and loved on them from afar," Begley explained. "I keep in touch with the seniors through



Wolfson senior Tyshawn Illery-Jones



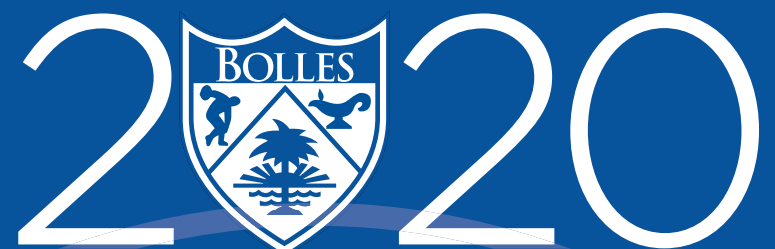
The Douglas Anderson mascots were filmed by Cinematic Arts students to honor the graduating class in the school's Senior Showcase video.

robo calls or emails reminding them that they are loved by Wolfson and to be strong.”

Senior activity week at Wolfson – Grad Bash, bowling, a barbeque, skating, and Adventure Landing, etc. – was supposed to be held May 18, but most likely will not take place this year, he said. “Every day is a fulfilled day, and that is the saddest part of all. Senior Week is a lifetime of memories,” Begley said. “Anyway, that is where we are, and, of course, we are not alone. The entire country is standing together.”

#AllThingsPossible2020
#CelebratingSeniors

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Parker Barrett
Stanton College Prep
Lacrosse player
Will attend UNF



Cara Robinson
Bartram Trail High School
DECA
Color Guard
Will attend UNF



Emily Waters
Florida State University
B.S. Marketing
Dean's List,
President's List



Sage Robinson
Bartram Trail High School
DECA
Color Guard
Will attend UNF



Brian M. Haynes II
Oak Leaf High School
Soccer Letterman
Will play soccer in a
college to be decided



Daley Pajcic
Auburn University
BA History, Summa Cum Laude
Distinguished Undergraduate
Award/History
Will attend FSU Law School



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