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## Trayvon case poses questions for HOAs

Recent tragedy puts spotlight on neighborhood security methods

■ JORDAN KEYES  
Sun Staff

George Zimmerman was a neighborhood watch volunteer in a Sanford neighborhood.

On the night of Feb. 26, he reported a suspicious individual standing on a street corner. Up to that point, he was well within his duty as a citizen. What happened next is where things turn tragic.

Though details are still emerging about that night, there are two things that are certain: Zimmerman was carrying a gun, and he fatally shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin.

Now the role of neighborhood watch groups has come under scrutiny. What responsibilities do these civilian organizations have in regards to law enforcement? How far should they go? Should they have weapons at all?

Many neighborhoods in East

■ Please see **HOA** on page 5

## Bank helps church in crisis

New Covenant Church in Bithlo gets land back from bank and they fight to keep it

■ MEGAN STOKES  
Sun Staff

The small sanctuary, filled with white fold-up chairs, smells of clean laundry. Little vases of flowers and lace doilies appear throughout the church's offices, classrooms and recreational rooms. A large butterfly hanging adorns the baby room, silky fabric drapes the windows and to Pauline Baxter, deep-seeded memories hang in every corner of her former home.

It's where her three boys, now ages 21, 19 and 17, grew up. It's where they had family dinners, birthday parties and many Christmas mornings.

The family moved there in 1999 and although they left in 2006 to make room for New Covenant Church — Pauline's hus-

New Covenant Church is located at 990 Belvedere Road in Bithlo and can be reached at 407-568-1267.

band Charles is the pastor — she still likes to tidy up the place and leave homey touches about.

To her, it'll always be home. So when Charles went to the Orange County auction house, where the church would be sold to the highest bidder, without a dime in his pocket to save it on March 22, Pauline crumpled to the floor in the sweet-smelling sanctuary and wept.

"If someone saw me they would have thought I had lost another child or that I had lost my parents again," she said. "I allowed myself to cry—to let it



PHOTO BY MEGAN STOKES

Pastor Charles Baxter stands on the land he came very close to losing.

all out. I took all of the scriptures in my hands and read all of the promises."

She stayed in the sanctuary crying and praying from the time her husband left the house at 8 a.m. until he called at noon

to tell her that the property had not been sold.

"He said, 'Are you sitting down? It didn't happen. We were not on the list,'" Pauline said. "I felt such relief. This is home."

■ Please see **CHURCH** on page 4

## Community loses core connector

Former EOCC President Annie Winterbottom passed away on March 6 at age 58

■ SARAH WILSON  
Sun Staff

Annie Winterbottom made a career out of connecting people.

Whether it was between local business owners, residents, or her friends and family, Annie provided a link of connections that can join together thousands of people throughout Central Florida.

"She was a connector for east Orange County," her friend and former colleague Scott Bender said. "She held the pulse of East Orlando."

Winterbottom, who served as president of the East Orlando Chamber of Commerce from 2005 to 2008, passed away at the age of 58 on March 6 following complications with brain cancer. But the effects of her actions are still far reaching throughout Central Florida and beyond.

Serving as president of the MainStreetChamber - Seminole County chapter at the time of her death, Winterbottom had recently been awarded the MainStreetChamber (MSC) National Leadership Award, for her leadership and humility in growing her chapter into the third largest in the nation in only a year's time. The award has since been renamed the "Annie Winterbottom Award" in her honor.

The MainStreetChamber will hold an event in Annie Winterbottom's honor from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 26, at the Rink at Northland Church, 530 Dog Track Road, Longwood. The event will feature a silent auction, with proceeds going to Project WALK Orlando and Annie's granddaughter Alanna's college fund. To learn more about the event, visit the MCS - Seminole County Chapter's Facebook page at [tinyurl.com/MSCSeminole](http://tinyurl.com/MSCSeminole)

"She was involved everywhere," said Loraine Powell, Winterbottom's close friend and president of the MSC - Orlando chapter. "She had such drive and tenacity. She was a go-getter and a go-giver."

Winterbottom was credited with nearly quadrupling membership of the EOCC in her time as president, and grew her MSC chapter to more than 1,000 members only a year after chartering it.

"She just wanted to make her community a better place," her daughter, Heather Jones, said. "That is what she loved to do."

Former MSC - Seminole County member and newly appointed EOCC membership director Gege

■ Please see **TRIBUTE** on page 5



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WINTERBOTTOM'S FAMILY

Winterbottom, above middle, forged connections in her personal and professional life. Her loved ones say she continues that in her wake.



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# Coffee with Beat

Beat Kahli



## Can anything good come from Trayvon Martin tragedy?

You'd have to be living under a rock not to have heard about the terrible tragedy that unfolded in Sanford recently. There's not a word of good news to be found in this story. It brings shame and sadness to all of East Orlando and Central Florida.

Given the mass media paroxysm that marked the Casey Anthony case last year — and still flares up every other week or so — we can expect Trayvon Martin's tragic death to dominate news coverage in Florida for many months to come.

If only. There are a dozen "if only's" in this case, and my list is probably light — like most of you — I don't want to hear the details. I didn't want to think about it. I wish it never happened, and I wish it was over already.

But it won't be over anytime soon. It won't be over, ever, for the family of Trayvon Martin, for the multitudes of young people through Florida and all across America who identify with him, or for the millions of parents who

shudder with concern each and every time one of their children steps out of the house.

My own grief over this incident and my concern for my son leads me to look for something positive.

*The best we can do — the only thing we can do — is to take steps to assure that nothing like this ever happens again.*

We can't bring the young man back to life.

And as much as we may condemn the actions that resulted in his death and pray that justice is rendered, no amount of retributions against the young man accused of shooting Trayvon Martin will do any of us any good.

The best we can do — the only thing we can do — is to take steps to assure that nothing like this ever happens again.

In Florida, professional security guards must be licensed. In order to carry a weapon, they must complete training in the safe use of firearms. Part of that training includes how, when and where

they may use firearms to protect themselves.

Yet Florida's now infamous "Stand Your Ground" law makes it possible for a neighborhood watch volunteer without the least bit of training or supervision to go out "on patrol" through residential neighborhoods armed with a deadly weapon.

That's crazy!

God bless our neighborhood watch volunteers. They are an

important adjunct to professional law enforcement and I support them fully. But committed neighborhood watch volunteers will tell you — as they have told me in Avalon Park — that their job is to be the "eyes and ears" of professional law enforcement, not gunslingers.

Perhaps our "Stand Your Ground" law needs to be revisited. Yes, one must possess a permit to carry a gun, and yes, some training is required in order to have such a permit. But in the case of Trayvon Martin, one part of that training was obviously either omitted or ineffective.

Nothing we can do can reverse this tragedy. We can only grieve with the family, the neighborhood, and the communities that are affected by it.

But we need to do more. We need to change the structure that would permit something like this to happen. And we need to reassure ourselves, and especially our young people, that nothing like this will ever happen again.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW COVENANT CHURCH

**Volunteers, folks in need and** members of the community gathered on March 31 for New Covenant's monthly Saturday feeding where 300 families leave with food. At this event, hams were given away for Easter.

## CHURCH

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

The Church of God, New Covenant's parent church, purchased 19.5 acres in Bithlo in 1999 and leased it to New Covenant. To pay the money back, Charles planned to use the land to build a housing subdivision with the church at the front of the parcel. All 14 half-acre lots were scooped up and in 2004, and the \$470,000 owed to Church of God was paid off.

New Covenant planned to build a new \$500,000, 320-person church and turn their food pantry from a run-down trailer distributing about 60,000 pounds of food a month to a new \$200,000 facility

distributing 90,000 pounds of food a month. The 30-member church currently feeds about 300 people each week through its Harvest of Hope food pantry.

To execute his plan, Charles relied on former Broward County developer Jeffrey Phillips. Without Charles' knowledge, Phillips remortgaged the New Covenant property for \$1.6 million and then never made the payments, sending the land into foreclosure and threatening not only the Baxters' life savings, but investments from all of the people who made down payments on the lots there. Phillips has since been convicted for fraud and is currently in prison.

Some of the church's partners were able to buy back the seven

acres repossessed by Wachovia bank for \$29,000. But the biggest relief came on March 19 when New Covenant closed on the 8.6 acres donated back to the church from Regions Bank.

Regions became aware of the church's situation about a month ago during a workshop for churches dealing with foreclosure. Waterford Lakes resident Linda Westerberg of Regions said that when they heard New Covenant's story, they were moved.

"We ended up owning parts of the land through a very unique set of circumstances and we had the opportunity to give that back," she said. "It really was a win-win to donate the land back. It doesn't fit in with anything we do and we knew he'd really been defrauded the land."

Days after the church closed on the reclaimed property, Charles was at the auction house where

he stood to lose the land all over again. Taxes on the property had added up to \$29,000 for 2008, 2009 and 2010 and the church did not have the funds to cover it.

Charles cradled his chin in his large hands remembering that morning. "If the land would have been taken away, we wouldn't have anything," he said.

Luckily, the Orange County Sheriff's Office delivered the auction notice a day too late, making the property ineligible for auction. The property is scheduled for auction again in June, this time for \$33,000 after 2011 taxes are included.

Charles is hopeful that they can raise the funds. One man who purchased land within New Covenant's planned subdivision has already pledged \$20,000.

"I think if we get enough of a drum beat we can get the help we need," Charles said.

He's also planning to make a formal appeal to Orange County to reduce the assessed value of the sum of the property, which he said was inflated by Phillips' actions.

Daphne Nelson, officer in the church and leader at Harvest of Hope, said clients at the food pantry have been worried that New Covenant will have to close.

"We've become such a part of the community that even if they don't come to church, if you ask them who their pastor is, they say Pastor Baxter. If you ask them what is their church, they say New Covenant. If they have a death in the family, they call; if they have a baby, they call; if they need to pray, they call," she said.

"By ourselves, we can't do it. We are trusting that other people will come in and help us: people to donate, legal people to donate their time. I believe anything can happen."

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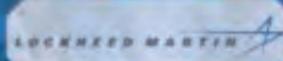
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**HOA**

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Orlando keep an eye out for trouble in a variety of ways, including neighborhood watch groups. So what are they doing differently to ensure that everyone participating in these efforts remains safe and responsible?

For the Avalon Park Neighborhood Watch Group, the emphasis stays on the reporting of suspicious activities. They go to great lengths to make sure that intervention is not a part of their policy.

"We don't patrol or anything like that," member Arnold DeJesus said. "We simply report what we see. We are an information sharing group."

The Avalon Park Neighborhood Watch consists of a network of more than 650 residents who have been instructed to simply contact the authorities if they witness something that could be considered a crime. They connect through email and Facebook to discuss possible situations.

Their efforts are in line with the goals that the Orange County Sheriff's Office outline for neighborhood watch groups in the area.

"We have a great relationship with the groups in our area," Captain Angelo Nieves, OCSO spokesperson, said. "We work with them closely and we work toward bringing down the crime rate."

Some communities bypass the civilian watch groups all together.

The various incorporated neighborhoods in the Waterford Lakes development did away with neighborhood watch groups long ago in favor of more professional expertise.

Waterford Lakes property manager Ken Zook says that as long as he's been around, they've either hired off-duty sheriff's deputies or paid private security firms. The professionalism that you get with these choices are worth it, Zook said.

"The potential liability over using a volunteer who, by the way, is toting a gun, supposedly this could be devastating to that HOA," he said. "And unless the insurance can cover that aspect, it's going to be a tough situation for that group over there."

Eastwood, a Waterford subdivision, contracts Bob Williams, an employee of G4S Security, to patrol their properties in a marked SUV as well as on foot. He makes his rounds unarmed.

"It's nice to see him driving around all the time," resident James Matamoros said.

Matamoros went on to say that the security officer can take his job a little too seriously sometimes, citing an instance when Williams took down his charity yard sale signs, but the trade-off of having someone who knows what they're doing provides a feeling of added safety.

"It's good to know that there's a trained professional out there who's giving 100 percent to doing their job."

**Correction**

The photo that accompanied the article "Daring to be a star" in the March 2 issue of the East Orlando Sun was taken by Eric Dean of Eric Dean Photography. The caption mistakenly credited the Orlando Repertory Theater.

**TRIBUTE**

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Venant said in her work throughout Orange and Seminole counties, Annie did just that.

"She always did everything she could do to bring local businesses together and have them give back to the community at the same time," Venant said.

From hosting power networking events, open house get-togethers at local businesses, and participating in weekly Toastmasters of Oviedo meetings, Winterbottom's friends, family and coworkers say she was always looking for more ways to get involved with connecting the communities in which she lived and worked.

"The idea of sleeping in to my mom was 7 or 8 o'clock, I think that says a lot about my mom as a person," her son, Danny Inghram, said. "... She was the best at what she did, bar none."

Winterbottom's passion for communicating and making connections followed her everywhere she went, her daughter said.

"When she got up on a stage, or talked to you in a crowd and all eyes were on her, she could make people feel like they were the only ones in the room," she said.

Outside of her work, the most important people in Winterbottom's world were her family members: her son, daughter, mother and granddaughter, Alanna.

She loved to cruise and have beach days with her daughter, go to the movies and play word games with her son, and spend any and all the time she could with her granddaughter. She was a die-heart fan of professional Philadelphia sports teams, Bruce Springsteen and the University of



PHOTO COURTESY OF WINTERBOTTOM'S FAMILY  
Winterbottom was very close with her granddaughter, Alanna, and spent a great deal of time with her.

Central Florida.

"She was a big UCF fan," her son said. "She was just an overall big East Orlando fan."

A fan, members of the community say, they will sorely miss having on their team.

"She walked her walk and she talked her talk," Loraine Powell said, "and she will be sorely, sorely missed by many, many people."

"I'm honored to know how much she did impact the community," her daughter said. "... She gave so much to the community, and now I feel like as a group, they're giving as much as they can back to her. It's amazing to see she's touched so many lives."



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PHOTO BY MEGN STOKES

The Woodbury Presbyterian Church is one site where the Samaritan Resource Center operates from, offering many of the services the potential homeless resource center would provide to the community.

# More options for homeless center

Orange County staff is currently studying two possible sites: Blue Haven and the East Orange Community Center

■ MEGAN STOKES  
Sun Staff

Each week Orange County staff gets a step closer to finding a suitable location for the East Orlando homeless resource center.

Orange County commissioners directed county staff on March 20 to vet two possible locations for the center – fully evaluating the costs associated with locating the resource center in the East Orange Community Center, near the intersection of East Colonial Drive and Alafaya Trail, and negotiating a contract at 9833 E. Colonial Drive where Blue Haven Pools & Spas is currently located and operating – and to update them again in six weeks.

The county received an \$800,000 grant to lease or purchase land for a homeless resource center in 2009. More than 60 locations have been scouted and dismissed due to either the county's price limitations, opposition from neighbors or issues with the site itself.

Benj Hurt with the Orange County Real Estate Division said they've inspected the Blue Haven building, met with the property's broker and plan to start contract negotiations soon. The contract is subject to commission approval.

Orange County District 4 Commissioner Jennifer Thompson has championed moving the home-

less resource center into the East Orlando Community Center. To do that, Head Start, a county preschool program that currently operates out of the community center, would have to relocate.

Sarah Flynn-Kramer, acting manager of Orange County Capital Projects, said they've ruled out one replacement site already for Head Start and have a few more lined up to tour. She said staff is also exploring various community partnerships.

County staff estimates the cost of building a 10-classroom Head Start building at \$3.2 million. Leasing costs are estimated at \$400,000 to \$600,000 for build out, and \$78,000 to \$108,000 for rent annually.

Adding to the detriment of this option, the move would not increase the number of classrooms that is needed for the program that employs a constant waiting list, and it would take about six to nine months for the new space to be ready.

But Thompson argued that the county has yet to fully explore public and private partnerships that could make this option more affordable. For instance, she said schools in East Orlando, such as Corner Lakes Middle, have shown interest in partnering with Head Start, allowing them to use

their available spaces. She also said some churches may be willing to help.

Flynn-Kramer said staff is currently exploring those options.

"I believe where there's a will, there's a way. If the commission and staff wants to find a way to move Head Start and make Head Start better, they will find a way to do it," Thompson said.

Orange County District 5 Commissioner Ted Edwards said he no longer supports moving the resource center to the community center.

"Sometimes the worst decision is to not make a decision at all. We have lost site after site. I recommend that we get Blue Haven under contract," Edwards said.

Blue Haven property owners are asking more than \$1 million for 40,000 square feet of land, which is out of the county's price range. And although Orange County Administrative Services Director John Terwilliger said the owner was not willing to drop the price, he believes that might change with time since the property just hit the market.

"It's appealing for a variety of reasons and price isn't one of them," he said.

There was concern that the Blue Haven property was too close to schools and public parks, but Terwilliger said there's ample buffer to protect those sites.

While the county continues to struggle to find a site, the Samaritan Resource Center, a mobile homeless service center that rotates between churches that feed the hungry in East Orlando, must wait to offer additional services.

Since September 2010, nine volunteers have been providing the homeless and those at risk of homelessness with a wide variety of services, ranging from food stamps to showers. A host of other services could be provided if SRC had a stable location, such as daily meals, computer classes, dental and medical aid and laundry.

"We are seeing more people," Samaritan Resource Center volunteer Karen Akers said. "What

we really want to offer is classes but you need a draw, which is food and clothing. At the resource center, we would have that every day."

## Other county news

The commission approved the purchase of 60 acres of land off of Young Pine Road for \$2 million, which came out of the Park Impact Fee Reserve Fund.

Thompson said almost half of that acreage can become ball fields for the community's use. Building more parks and ball fields was a huge part of the commissioner's campaign in 2008.

"It doesn't mean we're getting a park anytime soon, it just means that it's sitting there," she said. "I would hope that when I run for office again that it would be something we would be looking at. No one's going to put parks in the

budget by this July so realistically [it will wait until next term]."

She said the county is also working with the city of Orlando to acquire some park land, and with the Orange County School Board to scoop up some surplus school property.

## Fire station

A \$1.2 million construction contract for a new Orange County fire station in Christmas was approved on Tuesday, April 3. The ground breaking is planned for April 16.

"There's been a lot of excitement in the community. Everyone has kind of had their fingers crossed that it'll actually go forward because this is by far the closest they've gotten," said Commissioner Edwards, who championed the new station. "It should be a real boost for morale."



PHOTO BY MEGAN STOKES

Samaritan Resource Center Karen Akers helps a client at Woodbury Church.



## Rotary Business of the Month

### Soho Office

April's Rotary Business of the Month is Soho Office in Avalon Park. Owners Jennifer and Ron Housewright have been involved with national charities, such as Toys for Tots, since they opened in 2005, but recently wanted to focus their charitable efforts on the local community.



Soho Office Owners Jennifer and Ron Housewright with Rotary of Avalon Park's Jim Foulks.

They hosted a food drive to benefit East Orlando food pantries during the holidays and got such a great response that they decided to start hosting them quarterly. Their most recent was in March. They also host a shoe drive by Timber Creek High School's Student Government Association that benefits Edge Outreach Shoes for Water, which helps provide safe, reliable drinking water to people around the world. They are also Partners in Education with Avalon Middle and Camelot Elementary schools. Soho Office is located at 3564 E. Avalon Park Blvd., Ste. 1, Orlando. For more information, call 407-482-0662 or visit [www.orlando1.sohooffice.com](http://www.orlando1.sohooffice.com)

Co-sponsored by the Rotary Club of Avalon Park, the East Orlando Sun and Pinnacle Awards and Promotions, the Rotary Business of the Month recognizes East Orlando businesses and organizations that are actively involved in their communities and embody the motto of Rotary: Service above self. Winners receive a plaque, a free advertisement in the Sun and a spot in the Downtown Avalon Park Discount Card, which serves all of East Orlando. Nominate a business at [facebook.com/avalonparkrotary](http://facebook.com/avalonparkrotary).

## Athlete uses prosthetic leg and passion for sports to inspire

■ JORDAN KEYES  
Sun Staff

Trajan Tracey hates sitting on the sidelines.

He's new to lacrosse and East River High School, but that doesn't make it any easier for the 14-year-old to watch the March 2 game against the formidable Boone High team from the bench.

"I hate just sitting here," Trajan says, eyeing the field hungrily. "I'd much rather be out there playing the game – hitting people and stuff."

Trajan made the lacrosse team and he still has a lot to learn about the sport, but being new is only a minor setback. Trajan is a competitor who hasn't let anything stand in his way, not even the fact that he was born with only one leg.

Before he was born, Trajan suffered from a congenital disorder called Amniotic band syndrome, which took several fingers and toes as well as his right leg below the knee. Despite all that, Trajan is making his mark both on and off the field.

In his first year at East River, Trajan made the wrestling team as well as the freshman football team, where he started as middle linebacker.

Trajan strives to be an inspiration. One of his favorite moments was lasting all three rounds in a close wrestling match and losing by one point. The intense one-on-one struggle showed that he could put up a fight without anyone's help.

But he's still a typical, competitive 14-year-old. He yells encouragement and critiques to his teammates fighting the Boone team, fidgeting from all the pent-up energy. His eyes rarely leave the field, breaking concentration only to stretch and stay limber. He doesn't sit very often, opting instead to rock back and forth between his real and prosthetic leg.

Near the beginning of the fourth quarter against Boone, he's snapped out of his trance by James Bouzas, assistant coach for the East River lacrosse team.

"How's your leg feeling?" Bouzas asked.

"Great," Trajan replied.

"You sure?"

Trajan nods with a smile. He's



# Never sidelined

PHOTOS BY JORDAN KEYES

Even when Trajan Tracey is physically on the sidelines, his head never leaves the game. He's constantly shouting words of encouragement to his teammates, thinking of ways he can help and is ready to go in at a moment's notice.

about to go in.

Bouzas, also the head coach for the East River freshman football team, knows Trajan's tenacity better than most. The two met on the first day of football conditioning. Due to the fast-paced, full-contact nature of the sport, Bouzas had a watchful eye on Trajan.

"Seeing him sprint faster and harder than kids who had two legs -- it baffled me," Bouzas said. "I didn't know what to expect, because I hadn't coached anyone in his situation. I'd been coaching for six years and I'd never seen anything like that."

Trajan jogs out to the near side of the field to take position, his whole body tense like a loaded spring. At the first sign of action in his zone, he and a teammate rush to defend. On the sidelines, Trajan looked uncomfortable and anxious. Now he's in his element.

After two minutes of intense play that saw Trajan sprinting, pushing and diving for the ball,

he's hit with another setback.

He stops abruptly then signals for a replacement as he carefully walks off the field. He's feeling back spasms and he's having trouble walking the short distance from the field to the bench. Everyone is concerned, but none more so than Trajan's mom Alisha Rivera.

"I get worried all the time," Rivera said, laughing at herself. "I was standing over there, waving my arms saying, 'Tell me! Tell me! Tell me what's wrong.'"

Since his first foray into athletics on a sixth grade soccer team, Trajan said his mom has never missed a game.

"She's the one voice I can always hear over the crowd," Trajan said grinning. "Whether I'm hitting someone in football or if I'm wrestling and I'm on the bottom trying to fight out of it I can hear her."

Rivera's presence in Trajan's life has played a big part in his success in athletics as well as other areas of his life. Along with his success in sports, Trajan is an honors student who plans on working in orthopedics with a focus on prosthetics.

"I always told him that there's nothing that he can't do and at home I never made things easy for him," Rivera said. "But I told him, 'When you walk out that door, life is very hard.'"

This is why, ever since his first soccer practice, Rivera gave him one rule: "I don't let him say 'I can't.'"

Trajan hobbles to the bench, his face betraying a mix of frustration and determination. He's unhappy, but not defeated.

As a trainer massages his back and applies ice, Trajan is already talking about getting in the game, assuring himself and the trainer, "I'll be back in."

He tries to stand, but pain immediately breaks his usually re-



laxed expression.

"The kid doesn't quit," Bouzas said. "The fact that he plays the way he does in the situation that he's in is absolutely ridiculous. He just doesn't quit."

Unfortunately, today just isn't Trajan's day. Despite multiple attempts to get back on his feet, he's forced to sit out the rest of the game due to severe back pain. As the clock runs out and East River takes a hard loss, Trajan takes solace in the fact that there will be other games.

After hitting the locker room, Trajan's attitude has perked up considerably as he walks toward his smiling mother. He smiles

back sheepishly as she greets him with a hearty, "There's my champ!"

"He doesn't like losing," Rivera said. "But I tell him it's not about winning or losing, it's about having fun with the sport. He looks at me and I tell him, 'Just remember, you'll always be my champ.'"

Win or lose, Trajan seems to know that his sports career is bigger than any one game.

"People come up to me all the time and tell me that I inspire them," Trajan said. "It makes me feel good. That's the reason why I come out here and play sports, to inspire people and do what I love."



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# UCF Knights attack conference

■ ISAAC BABCOCK  
Sun Staff

A spot in the NCAA Top 25 is a rarity among UCF's big three sports. Cracking the top 15 is even rarer. In the past few weeks, the Knights baseball team has managed both, rising steadily in the ranks to hit No. 14 on the tide of a 23-6, 5-1 start to the season.

That impressive record includes a string of four straight wins in a whirlwind tour last week that ended with the Knights outlasting Houston in a 3-1 extra-innings win. That win closed out a three-game sweep of Houston; their second series win to start Conference USA play.

But most of the Knights' wins haven't even been close, with blowouts becoming the routine. In March they won six games by 8 runs or more.

And they owe that massive run differential to an experienced team that has carried a powerhouse core of players over from the last season. Ronnie Richardson, Darnell Sweeney, D.J. Hicks and Ryan Breen were regulars on the scoreboard last year, and they're giving more of the same to the Knights this time around.

Against Houston on April 1, the Knights' first three batters started slowly but were the heroes of the game by the end, with Richardson and Sweeney scoring in the top of the tenth, and Hicks and Chris Taladay adding an RBI each and combining to put the icing on the Knights' win.

The Knights took a trip to Miami on April 4 at press time in a revenge match against the Hurricanes who beat them 3-2 in their last meeting.

When they return home on April 6, they'll host UAB with a 6:30 p.m. start time. That'll be the first of a three-game series over three days. They'll play again at 4 p.m. April 7 and 11 a.m. April 8. They'll resume conference play after back-to-back home games against Florida A&M and Bethune Cookman April 10-11, then they'll hit the road for Southern Miss. That three-game series starts 7 p.m. April 13.

## The Scoop

After earning all-league first-team honors, junior forward **Keith Clanton** of the UCF men's basketball team was selected to the Conference USA All-Defensive Team. He was then given a spot on the National Association of Basketball Coaches All-District II First Team. During conference play, the Orlando native led C-USA in blocked shots, averaging two per game. He's also averaging 14.6 points and 8.1 rebounds for the Knights.

UCF women's soccer head coach **Amanda Cromwell** is traveling to Argentina this week as an advocate for women's soccer in affiliation with the Sports United U.S. Sports Envoy Program. Cromwell and her former coach Laruen Gregg will travel to the provinces of Buenos Aires, Salta and Jujuy to run clinics for hundreds of girls and speak to coaches about the sport. There is little support for women's soccer in Argentina since it is viewed as a "men's game," but Cromwell and the program hope to change that.

Despite being in the middle of what the coach called a "rebuilding year," the **Timber Creek girls lacrosse team** is entering district competition as the No. 1 seed in the tournament.

The **East River Boys Weight Lifting Team** finished the season 8-0, beating all representing teams in the East. The team moved on to the first round of the State Qualifiers in March and will compete in the Metro Championship this month.

The **UCF football team** will play its annual spring game at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 14, in the Bright House Networks Stadium on East Plaza Drive. The cost is only \$5, and UCF students and youth ages 12 and under will be admitted free. For more information, visit [ucfathletics.com](http://ucfathletics.com)



Keith Clanton



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PHOTO COURTESY OF YOGA WARRIORS

Through yoga, vets learn techniques, such as deep breathing, that allows them to deal with a number of afflictions they bring back with them from overseas, such as Post-traumatic stress disorder.

# Yoga teaches war vets to breathe

Yoga East owners Michelle and Greg Owens get training to teach local vets to relax, bond and heal through yoga

■ BRITNI JOHNSON  
Sun Staff

For many military personnel, adjusting to life after combat is a struggle. For Sean McGrath, a Marine, retiring and returning to normal life was made worse by a divorce at the same time. Life was difficult for him, and readjusting to everyday life with his family back home wasn't going smoothly. They were worried.

"They didn't know how to help me," McGrath said.

But that next Christmas his sisters had an idea — yoga. McGrath, a Massachusetts resident, got a gift certificate to attend a Yoga Warriors class. He wasn't so sure at first, but with one session he was hooked. McGrath felt comfortable in a class surrounded by people just like him. It was made for veterans.

Teacher Lucy Cimini, director of the Yoga Warriors, developed the program specifically

for veterans dealing with Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the daily and specific stresses military members are exposed to. Through yoga, soldiers are able to cope with situations that trigger memories that cause fear or aggression by using the tools taught in the program, like deep breathing to calm down.

After getting an interest in how yoga helps military members, Cimini partnered with representatives from the U.S. Air Force, Tufts University and Worcester University to conduct a study on its effects. The study, published in the January/February 2012 issue of the American Journal of Occupational Therapy found that hatha yoga is effective in treating PTSD and the stresses experienced by military personnel, even better than other more common treatments, like talk therapy.

"A lot of veterans say, 'This not only helped me but it saved my

life,'" Cimini said.

Now Cimini is bringing her skills as the founder of the first and largest yoga for veterans program in the U.S. to Yoga East in Avalon Park. Cimini will be teaching yoga teachers how to conduct their own yoga for veterans program. She'll teach Yoga East owners Michelle and Greg Owens while she's there this April. And then, most likely in May, Yoga East will offer its own free yoga for veterans class once per week.

With the coming opening of the VA Medical Center in Orlando, this program will be in-demand by the community, Owens said. There's also the growing number of veterans returning home disabled and in need of treatment from the wars in the Middle East.

While yoga does address making a healthy body, when it comes to veterans it's very much about healing the mind. And it's been

Yoga East is hosting a training session to learn to teach yoga to wounded veterans and amputees on April 20-22. For more information, visit [yogaeast-orlando.com](http://yogaeast-orlando.com). For more information about Yoga Warriors, visit [yogawarriors.com](http://yogawarriors.com). Yoga East will likely begin their free, once-per-week yoga for veterans program in May after their training.

proven to work — Cimini's study found that in veterans who participated, 54 percent reported sleep improvement, 37 percent felt more calm or relaxed and 11 percent reported reduced frustration and anger or better anger management.

"These wounds can be very deep and not always visible," Cimini said.

"It's just been a Godsend for me... the daily ups and downs of life are tolerable," Massachusetts client and Vietnam veteran Jim Mitchell said. "I'm not doing it by myself."

McGrath agreed. Not only does he feel a great sense of well-being after class, he also likes the

support system he finds there.

"Just the going and being social with people is really helpful," he said.

"We all have that one unifying experience," Mitchell said.

And that unifying experience is combat. Because of this, a yoga class for veterans has to be taught in a slightly different way. Cimini lets her class be a little more social to build a support system and trust between students. The class is in a non-clinical, relaxing and safe environment. They avoid certain music and phrases used in yoga like "surrender to the mat" or "take corpse pose" because that may trigger bad memories for the veterans. Cimini leads with positive affirmations throughout class about being in the present moment — one way she tries to help soldiers cope with their experiences. They must leave the past and connect to their bodies, let go of their fight-or-flight mentally and try to learn to be more relaxed.

"They're not waiting for something bad to happen and can let go of the past," Michelle Owens said. "You can appreciate and exist in the present moment, and to realize that is a great relief."

Owens has seen the benefits of yoga reflected on her own husband, who just retired from the military in December. She said he's more grounded, and uses it as a way to cope with stress and not let his experiences in the Middle East rule his life.

McGrath and Mitchell have found that yoga has done that for them as well. They're letting go just a little bit of that past, and recognizing that the present is what's important.

"I took a chance ... and it got me out of my bubble and it's a way for me to move forward," McGrath said.

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Calendar



**APRIL**  
The East Orlando Track Club will start training at Avalon Middle School, 13914 Mailer Blvd. in Avalon Park, with meetings from 5:30-7 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. For more information, call 407-574-7033 or email eastorlandotc@live.com

**APRIL 6**  
The Strates Fun Fair will return to the Waterford Lakes Town Center April 6-15 in the parking lot behind Friendly Confines. The fair will open at 5 p.m. on weekdays and 1 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Unlimited rides cost \$15 per person. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/StratesFunFair

**APRIL 10**  
Comedian Aziz Ansari will be performing at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 10 at the UCF Arena, Bldg. 50 N. Gemini Blvd., Orlando. Tickets are \$5 for students with UCF ID and \$25 for the general public. For more information, visit ucfarena.com

**APRIL 12**  
UCF's One Act Festival features five one-act plays running each evening at 7 p.m. April 12-15 at the UCF Black Box Theatre. There will also be a matinee at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 15. The plays



are "The Unwanted" by Walter Wykes, "Road Trip" by Melissa Landy, "House of the Holy Moment" by Cary Pepper, "Brutal Imagination" by Cornelius Eady, and "Stingray" by Sam Liguori. Admission is free and open to the public. Visit tinyurl.com/OneActFestival

**APRIL 14**  
Absolutely Avalon, a free family event featuring

a bounce park, arts and crafts booths, live music, cultural performances and a laser light show, is from 5-9 p.m. Saturday, April 14, in downtown Avalon Park. Bring your children ages 6-12 to the Bunny Hop at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 14 at the Alafaya Library, 12000 E. Colonial Drive, Orlando. Kids can make a craft and watch the movie "Hop." Registration is required. To register or get more information, call 407-835-7323.

**APRIL 15**  
Join UCF students as they present NanoFest Florida, a community awareness event regarding the emerging field of nanotechnology starting 2 p.m. Sunday, April 15 at the Alafaya Library, 12000 E. Colonial Drive, Orlando. For more information, call 407-835-7323

**APRIL 20**  
Avalon Park's April Movie Under the Stars is "Hop" playing at dark on Friday, April 20. Bring a blanket and lawn chairs and enjoy free popcorn. Activities start at 7 p.m.

Friday Night Life, a free teen club in Avalon Park, offers water bounce houses, water balloons and more water fun from 5-9 p.m. Friday, April 20, at Avalon's Founder's Square.

Rotary Clubs of Avalon and Orlando East's 2012 Golf Tournament is at 1 p.m. Friday, April 20, at North Shore Golf Club, 11507 N. Shore Golf Club Blvd., Orlando. Registration starts at noon. This four-person Team Best Ball Scramble will benefit Fairways For Warriors. The cost is \$80 per player (includes range balls, foursome photo, and awards ceremony and dinner). For more information or to register, contact Jim Foulks at 407-488-5111 or jim.foulks@gmail.com

Rapper Mac Miller is performing at 7 p.m. Friday, April 20 at the UCF Arena, Bldg. 50 N. Gemini Blvd., Orlando. He will be joined by special guests The Cool Kids and The Come Up. Tickets start at \$45 and can be purchased through ticketmaster.com and at the Arena box office. For more information, visit ucfarena.com

**APRIL 21**  
A kite event is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 21, at the band shell in Avalon Park. Bring a kite to fly and a picnic lunch or make a "free" kite at the band shell. Food and kites will be available for purchase. For more information, contact russmozier@yahoo.com

**APRIL 25**  
University High School is performing "Les Miserables" as their spring musical April 25-29

and May 3-4.

**APRIL 26**  
The Kiwanis Kwik Mix, a speed-networking event for the community, is from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, April 26, at SunTrust Bank in Eastwood, 1999 S. Alafaya Trail, Orlando. A minimum suggested donation of \$5 will be collected for United Global Outreach and the Bithlo community. Visit www.avalonkiwanis.com

**APRIL 27**  
The Festival of Chocolate will be April 27-29 at the UCF Arena. The event runs 4-10 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets can be purchased on ticketmaster.com and the prices are \$15 for adults and \$9 for children. For more information, call Aileen Mand at 407-497-1588 or visit orlando.festivalofchocolate.com

**APRIL 28**  
The Florida Flight, Avalon Park's semi-pro basketball team, will host a game benefiting Orange County Academy in Bithlo on April 28. A sold-out game could mean the \$10,000 the school needs to purchase a bus to transport its students. Visit www.fliighthoops.com for more information or to purchase tickets.

The inaugural Victim Service Center Ride to Reach, a bicycling, walking and outreach event to bring awareness to sexual violence, is from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 28, at the Town Park Amphitheater, 3651 E. Avalon Park Blvd., Orlando. There's a three-mile walk that begins at 10 a.m., a 17-mile ride that begins at 9 a.m., vendors and community booths as well as speakers throughout the event. For more information, call 407-644-2577 or email jody.swain@ocfl.net

**APRIL 29**  
The 2nd Annual Kiwanis Family 5K for the Kids starts at 8 a.m. Sunday, April 29, at Blanchard Park in Orlando. Check in starts at 7 a.m. All proceeds will go back to support the local community. There will be free kids fun runs for ages 1-2, 3-5, and 6-8 starting at 9 a.m. To register, visit eockiwanis.blogspot.com

**MAY 5**  
Epic Family 5K races, presented by Nemours Children's Hospital and Orange County Parks and Recreation, will host a 5K race at Blanchard Park, 2451 N. Dean Rd., Orlando on May 5. Races are for all ages and the cost is \$25 per person. For more information, visit www.OrangeCountyParks.net or connect on Facebook at Orange County Government Parks and Recreation.

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# Coward's 'Private Lives' at Mad Cow

## Now to April 29 — "Private Lives"

An evening of sophisticated one-liners and sexy rejoinders make up Noel Coward's best play. "Private Lives" is scandalous, very British and as sparkling as chilled champagne. Playing at the Mad Cow Theatre with Jennifer Palmer as Amanda and Philip Nolen as Elyot — the tempestuous, and once-married/once-divorced couple — "Private Lives" runs through April 29. Call 407-297-8788 or visit mad-cowtheatre.com



**Josh Garrick**  
Culture worthy of your calendar

Time Magazine, "Carousel" follows the dramatic story of Billy Bigelow, a swaggering, carefree carnival barker who captivates and marries naïve mill worker Julie Jordan. Michelle Knight, Todd S. Mummert and Andrea Canny are just a few of the super-talented singing actors you will recognize in this production. Call 407-770-0071 or visit orlandophil.org

## Now to April 22 — "Red"

The Tony-award-winning play for 2010 is "Red", an often-disturbing look at painter Mark Rothko. Written by John Logan, nominated for Oscars for writing "Avatar" and "Gladiator", Rothko is seen struggling to create new works. In 90 short minutes, the venomous Rothko embodies the will to create that drives great artists, but in the end, the audience comes to understand a defensive artist struggling with his pride, his legacy, and his will to create. It's presented by the Orlando Shakespeare Festival. Call 407-447-1700 or visit orlando-shakes.org



## April 13 to June 10 — Treasures of the Chrysanthemum Throne

A much-anticipated new exhibit called Treasures of the Chrysanthemum Throne opens at the Museum of Arts and Sciences on April 13 featuring exquisite Japanese bronzes, intricate ivories and paper-thin porcelains in which each artwork was created during the reign of Mutsuhito. The Meiji Emperor ascended the Japanese throne in 1867 at the age of 15 and ruled — with the aid of Samurai advisors — until his death in 1912. MOAS is located at 352 S. Nova Road, Daytona Beach. Call 386-255-0285 or visit moas.org

## April 7 — "Carousel"

I highly recommend the Orlando Philharmonic's opera/musical stagings with the orchestra onstage and the performers in front of the Orchestra. Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Carousel", conducted by Christopher Wilkins and directed by Frank McClain, will be performed on April 7 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. at Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, and both performances feature an all-star cast including dancers from the Orlando Ballet. Named the best musical of the 20th Century by

## April 17 to May 13 — "The Lion King"

Disney's "The Lion King" leaps onto the stage of the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center in Orlando with all its stunning theatricality and beloved musical score. Giraffes and elephants strut



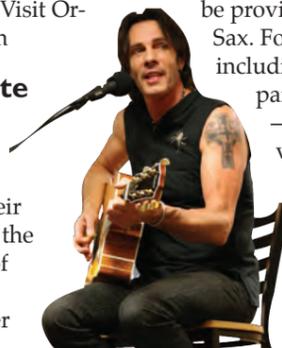
'The Lion King'

as gazelles leap and Africa comes to life as the Tony Award-winning Broadway sensation features Elton John's Oscar-winning "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" and "Circle of Life." Themes of love, family, guilt and the strength of friendship are woven into the brilliant theatricality of "The Lion King", which also makes it the perfect family musical. "The Lion King" roars into Orlando from April 17 to May 13. Visit OrlandoBroadway.com

## April 18 — Taste of Winter Park

Serious foodies need to bring their serious appetites to the 27th Annual Taste of Winter Park presented by the Winter Park Chamber of

Commerce on Wednesday, April 18, from 5-8 p.m. Appropriately held at the Winter Park Farmers' Market, 200 W. New England Ave., in Winter Park, Taste of Winter Park is an epicurean indulgence featuring tastings from a virtual "Who's Who" of popular Winter Park restaurants, chefs and catering venues. Along with maxing out on the food and drink, live entertainment will be provided by Johnny Mag Sax. For more information — including a complete list of participating restaurants — call 407-644-8281 or visit winterpark.org



## April 20 — Rick Springfield

There's something about Rick Springfield that is

and always has been ... real. His songs about love and loss and greed and envy speak to generations. Lately the Grammy-Award winner is more upbeat and fun than dark and introspective, marking a return to Rick's pop/rock roots. To date, Rick Springfield has sold more than 19 million records with 17 Top 40 hits. He'll be at Plaza Live in Orlando on April 20 at 8 p.m. Visit plazaliveorlando.com

## April 23 — "Stomp"

In the wildly popular Broadway show "Stomp", the eight-member troupe uses brooms, garbage cans, Zippo lighters and hubcaps — to fill the stage with "beautiful noise." Perfect for audiences of all ages, you can "see what the noise is all about" on April 23 at 7:30 p.m. at the Peabody Auditorium in Daytona Beach. Visit peabodyauditorium.org

## April 28 & 29 — Great American Pie Festival

Diet — What diet? It's time for the 11th Annual Great American Pie Festival (and Championships). Last year 447 commercial, 142 professional, 301 amateur and six junior bakers competed for the title of America's top pie baker, but the big news is that 32,000 (of us pie lovers) will descend upon the Disney-created town of Celebration on April 28 and April 29 for the Pie Fest and the never-ending pie buffet. Last year 87,000 slices of pie as well as ice cream and toppings from America's best known bakers were served. The buffet and the children's activities are the only paid events; all stage entertainment and demonstrations are free. Tickets for the pie buffet are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children younger than 5 to enjoy.

Josh Garrick is a writer, photographer, educator and fine art curator. He is a member of the Curatorial Council for the Museum of Florida Art. Garrick can be reached at joshgarrick9@gmail.com or 407-522-3906.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCH OF DIMES

The 2012 March of Dimes March for Babies is Saturday, April 28, at Lake Eola to bring awareness to preterm babies.

# Walking for babies

■ KRISTY VICKERY  
Sun Staff

Doctors told Stephanie Arthur her twin boys only had a 20 percent chance of survival.

"I looked at my husband, and said, 'A 20 percent chance is better than a zero percent chance,'" Arthur said.

Arthur's twins were born premature, at 23 weeks, four months too soon, and have been defying the odds ever since with the support of the March of Dimes.

"We were told Jackson (her son) would be paralyzed from the waist down, and basically told to turn off the machine for Quincy (her other twin son)," she said. "It was a pretty traumatic and emotional time for us."

Arthur's twins are among the 633 babies born preterm every week in Florida, and like so many other mothers she never thought she'd be tackling the obstacles that can accompany babies born prematurely.

"When many women get pregnant you think you're going to have a natural and full pregnancy," she said. "You never, ever think you're going to have to encounter what we encountered."

Arthur said that when she started researching the causes of premature births March of Dimes immediately came up.

"After reading hundreds of stories (on the March of Dimes online support group), I first realized I wasn't the only woman going through this, but at the same time I realized there was a purpose there for me," she said. "And once I saw the impact they (March of Dimes) made on the community, and how I could get involved, that's really what drove me to really make a difference."

The March of Dimes is continuing to impact lives with their biggest fundraising event, March for Babies, at Lake Eola on Saturday, April 28. The five-mile walk or run will help raise money and awareness for the March of Dimes, and support families in need.

March of Dimes Central Florida Division's Executive Director Elisabeth Stuart said the March for Babies is a family event. This year's goal is for the event to raise \$670,000.

"We have a lot of family teams that are parents that have had babies born premature or with a

The 2012 March of Dimes, March for Babies is on Saturday, April 28, at Lake Eola in downtown Orlando. Registration begins at 6:30 a.m. For more information or to sign up visit [marchforbabies.org](http://marchforbabies.org) or call 407-599-5077.

birth defect, and they know how they've benefited from the care they have received from all of the advances in medicine that have been achieved by the March of Dimes," Stuart said.

The infant mortality rate is 6.9 per 1,000 live births in Orange County, and one in seven babies (14.8 percent of live births) are born preterm.

The March of Dimes spends 75 percent of the money raised in March for Babies on research and programs that promote the health of babies. By walking and raising money to help the March of Dimes, it supports all-important research offering preventions and solutions for babies born too soon or with birth defects, educates women on things they can do to increase their chances of having a healthy baby, provides comfort and information to families with a baby in intensive care and pushes for newborn screening and health insurance for all pregnant women and children.

March of Dimes board member and volunteer Roger Jeffrey has been involved with the March of Dimes for 25 years, and said he believes it's a great way to help others.

"You can't walk away from that event without feeling good about people, because everyone's there for the same purpose to do something in some way shape, or form to save babies," Jeffrey said. "It's very uplifting and a joy to be involved."

Arthur and her family are now also experiencing the joy of being involved in the March of Dimes by becoming this year's ambassador family, as they continue to tackle the obstacles that come their way; while reaching out to share their story and walking for a cause near and dear to their hearts.

"We decided to share our story and give parents hope," Arthur said. "It doesn't matter how many times I talk about them, my eyes always tear up."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCH OF DIMES

Stephanie Arthur poses with her twin boys who were born four months early.

## march of dimes march for babies

### 2012 CENTRAL FLORIDA MARCH FOR BABIES FACT SHEET



**WHEN:**

Saturday, April 28, 2012  
Registration Begins: 6:30 a.m.  
Bolt for Babies Begins(5K Fun Run): 7:15am  
March for Babies Begins(5K walk): 7:30 a.m.

**WHERE:**

Lake Eola in Downtown Orlando

**WHAT:**

March for Babies is the March of Dimes biggest fundraiser and America's favorite walking event. Money raised for babies supports the March of Dimes mission to give every baby a healthy start. It is used to fund important research and community programs that help moms have full-term pregnancies and babies begin healthy lives. We've been walking since 1970 and have raised an incredible **\$1.9 billion** to benefit all babies.

**WHY:**

Thousands of companies, schools, and organizations get involved in March for Babies in their communities and show they care about moms and babies. And rallying behind a common cause is a great team-building experience. Company teams are an important part of the success of our event. In 2011, the top 25 national company teams together raised an amazing \$31 million.

Funds raised enable the March of Dimes to continue its fight to save babies because every week in Florida:  
633 babies are born preterm  
399 are born with low birthweight  
350 babies are born to mothers who received late or no prenatal care  
33 babies die before their 1st birthday

Millions of babies and children do not have health insurance  
**The United States has a higher infant mortality rate than 29 other countries**

**HOW:**

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407-599-5077

Or sign up at [marchforbabies.org](http://marchforbabies.org)  
[marchofdimes.com/florida](http://marchofdimes.com/florida)



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Healthy Living



# Your food, your baby

"You are what you eat," a common refrain, also translates to "your baby is what you eat, too." Mom's healthy eating for growing a strong, healthy baby starts before conception and continues through breastfeeding. The healthier you are before getting pregnant, the more likely you are to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Balanced meals with a variety of fruits and vegetables, mixed with lean protein sources and whole grains are a great formula for good health. Find new ways to add vegetables to your meals. Switch to veggie pizzas. Add an extra tomato slice to your sandwich.

Of course, avoid alcohol and tobacco before and after having a baby. We don't know what a



**Nancy Rudner Lugo**  
Health Action

safe level of alcohol might be, so it is best to avoid all beer, wine and other alcoholic drinks. And the damage of prenatal smoking and second-hand smoke is well known. Don't do it to yourself or your baby. If you smoke, call the Florida Tobacco Free Help Line at 877-UCANNOW for help.

Look for these nutrients:

Folate, a Vitamin B, prevents birth defects affecting the brain and spinal cord, such as spina bifida. Prior to and during pregnancy, try to have plenty of foods with folate, which is found in leafy green vegetables, beans, citrus, prenatal vitamins and foods fortified with folic acid.

Calcium is a critical building block for bones and teeth, and a great source of Vitamin D. Aim for at least three cups a day of low-fat milk, yogurt or cheeses. If you and milk don't get along, try calcium-fortified soy milk and juices.

Iron is used to make red blood cells. Iron-deficiency anemia (red blood cells that are too small and too light) can be avoided with dark leafy vegetables. Popeye got his strength from spinach (a dark leafy vegetable) precisely because it prevented anemia.

Lean protein helps the baby's growth. Look for lean cuts of meats and don't underestimate the power of beans and soy cooked with good flavoring — the secret is in the sauce.

Water is a basic building block of life. Especially in the warm weather, aim to drink 10 glasses of water, juice or other fluids a day. Avoid sodas as much as possible. They provide no nutrition and give you either calories or artificial sweeteners.

### Avoid risky foods

Eating fish is a mixed bag. Fish provide protein and omega-3 fatty acids, which are good for brain development. But with so much contamination in our planet's waters, fish can have enough mercury to hurt a baby's nervous system development. Avoid the fish likely to have more mercury: swordfish, shark, king mackerel and tilefish. Aim for no more than two fish meals a week, with a lower mercury seafood such as shrimp, crab, salmon, catfish, cod, tilapia or canned tuna.

Stick to well-cooked foods. Raw or undercooked fish, meat, poultry or eggs can carry harmful bacteria and viruses. When you are pregnant, your immune system is not as strong so you need to avoid infection risks. Raw oysters may be the food of love, but not of pregnancy. Raw fish sushi, undercooked chicken, turkey or eggs can make you sick, too. Eggs over easy may not go over easy with your health. Pasteurized dairy products are also a safer way to go than unpasteurized.

### Breastfeeding

When breastfeeding your precious baby, continue to eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water so your body can make healthy milk. Know that anything that can cause gas or heart burn in you is doubly likely to upset a newborn stomach. A great night out at Taco Tuesday may mean staying up late Tuesday night with an unhappy baby.

Maitland resident Nancy Rudner Lugo is a nurse practitioner and president of Health Action, offering workplace health consulting and nurse coaching. Visit [www.healthaction.biz](http://www.healthaction.biz)

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Healthy Living

# Try to avoid pre-term delivery

■ **DR. PAMELA SNOOK**  
Guest writer

If you are a new mother or recently pregnant, chances are you have felt the wisp of air that follows the pendulum of modern medicine as it swings by yet again. The topic this time: elective deliveries before 39 weeks of gestation. Prior to taking a hard look at outcomes, the consensus in the

medical community was that 37 weeks was considered "term" and deliveries after that point are deemed safe. So off we went and phone calls funneled into labor and deliver wards to schedule elective deliveries.

"Her husband is getting deployed."

"Her mom is flying in from Texas to help with the sibling."

"She's miserable. We are heading for the finish line."

In 1990, 10 percent of deliveries were electively performed before 39 weeks. Until recently, they accounted for nearly 25 percent of all deliveries. With the emphasis of evidence-based medicine, the pendulum is now swinging the other way and we, as a community, are learning that

there is true merit to the saying, "patience is a virtue." So what is the big deal?

It has become apparent that babies born between 37 and 39 weeks are more likely to have respiratory problems and simply put, they have more growing to do. The brain and liver continue to develop between 39 and 40 weeks. Perhaps most evident is the increased trouble they have with feeding because the coordination required for sucking has not matured. On the maternal front, there is a higher rate of C-sections in this patient population as well. This mode of delivery inherently carries increased risks including infection, bleeding and post-delivery pain.

And if this isn't reason enough to shy away from early elective deliveries, there is also a significant economic impact as a result of this practice. C-sections are more expensive to perform and lead to longer hospitalizations. Infants that are not fully mature can require intensive neonatal care and that is costly. A study last year estimated that reducing early-term births to 1.7 percent could save close to \$1 billion annually.

I personally have found that after appropriate counseling, patients are supportive of whatever delivery plan is best for their baby. Not only is an elective induction before 39 weeks against my practice's policy, but it is also against hospital policy. Increased awareness of the dangers associated with preterm births is on the rise thanks to initiatives such as the March of Dimes Prematurity Campaign. Hospitals in multiple states, including Florida, have stopped elective deliveries — inductions and cesarean sections — before 39 weeks.

This information wouldn't be complete without offering a few points for clarification. Health care professionals do not hesitate to recommend delivery before 39 weeks if there is a medical reason to proceed. These indications could include, but are not limited to: a mother sick with preeclampsia, uncontrolled diabetes and concerns for baby's health, such as small size. Patient care in these situations is very individualized, and the risks of continuing the pregnancy can outweigh the



**Dr. Pamela Snook**

benefits.

This subject leads me to reminiscence about my interview days before residency. A wise physician sat in front of me, looked at my resume, and then pulled his reading glasses down on his nose to look me in the eyes. He then asked, "Can you tell me three attributes that make a good obstetrician?" As I paused and shifted uncomfortably in my chair, much to my relief, he proceeded, "A good obstetrician is a team player, decisive and perhaps most importantly... is patient. We are the only docs that wait 9 months for something to happen. Don't rush things in its final stages," advised Dr. Keith Stone. Coming from a physician who has long felt the breeze from the ever-swinging pendulum of medicine, I take great heed in his guidance. And from our experiences, we've learned. It is time to be patient and let Mother Nature do the planning.

*Dr. Pamela Snook is a board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist who completed her residency at Shands at the University of Florida. She has been a practicing physician for more than seven years and has garnered a special interest in high-risk obstetrics, infertility and minimally invasive gynecologic surgery. She practices at Contemporary Women's Care, 2111 Glenwood Drive, Ste. 208 in Winter Park. Call 407-478-OBGY(6249) or visit www.myobgynorlando.com*

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## March of Dimes wants you to know that Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait

More and more births are being scheduled a little early for non-medical reasons. Experts are learning that this can cause problems for both mom and baby. If possible, the March of Dimes recommends for you to stay pregnant for at least 39 weeks. If your pregnancy is healthy, wait for labor to begin on its own.

We know you can't wait to meet your baby face to face. But getting to at least 39 weeks gives your baby the time he needs to grow. There are lots of important things happening to your baby in the last few weeks of pregnancy. For example, your baby's brain and lungs are still growing.

You might not have a choice about when to have your baby. If there are problems with your pregnancy or your baby's health, you may need to have your baby earlier. But if you have a choice and you're planning to schedule your baby's birth, wait until at least 39 weeks.

The March of Dimes Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait™ education campaign and obstetric provider groups advise that you wait until at least 39 weeks to induce labor or have a cesarean birth (also called a c-section) if it is needed. The campaign was developed in response to the growing number of inductions and c-sections prior to 39 weeks for non-medical reasons.

### Why babies need time

Babies born too early may have more health problems at birth and later in life than babies born full term. Here's why your baby needs 39 weeks:

- Important organs, like his brain, lungs and liver, get all the time they need to develop.
- He is less likely to have vision and hearing problems after birth.
- Babies born too soon often are too small. Babies born at a healthy weight have an easier time staying warm than babies born too small.
- He can suck and swallow and stay awake long enough to eat after he's born. Babies born early sometimes can't do these things.

### Why scheduling an early birth can be a problem

Experts are learning that scheduling an early birth for non-medical reasons can cause problems for mom and baby. For example:

- Your due date may not be exactly right. Sometimes it's hard to know just when you got pregnant. Even with an

ultrasound, your due date can be off by as much as 2 weeks. If you schedule to induce labor or schedule a c-section and your date is off by a week or two, your baby may be born too early.

- Inducing labor may not work. If your labor is induced, the medicine your doctor or certified nurse-midwife gives you may not start your labor. When this happens, you may need to have a c-section.
- A c-section can cause problems for your baby. Babies born by c-section may have more breathing and other medical problems than babies born by vaginal birth. (Most babies are born by vaginal birth. The mother's uterus contracts to help push the baby out through the vagina, also called the birth canal.)
- C-sections can cause problems in future pregnancies. Once you have a c-section, you may be more likely in future pregnancies to have a c-section. The more c-sections you have, the more problems you and your baby may have, including problems with the placenta.
- A c-section is major surgery for mom. It takes longer for you to recover from a c-section than from a vaginal birth. You can expect to spend 2 to 4 days in the hospital after a c-section. Then you'll need 4 to 6 weeks after you go home to fully recover. You also could have complications from the surgery, like infections and bleeding. So it's important to stay in touch with your health care provider even after you go home.

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies®, the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. For the latest resources and information, visit [marchofdimes.com/florida](http://marchofdimes.com/florida) or [nacersano.org](http://nacersano.org). Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

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# Skate community

Local kid creates skate park and alternative to driving to school

■ BRITTON JOHNSON  
Sun Staff

One street in Avalon Park isn't as quiet as the others. In front of the Rodriguez family's house you'll hear the sounds of little wheels bouncing down pavement, grinding as they slide across the ground, and the pop of the board hitting the ramp and slamming over it. It's a street for skaters, and the whole neighborhood is invited.

Over the past couple years, the Rodriguez family has been working to make their passion for skateboarding a part of the Avalon Park community. They've got an open-garage policy, and any given evening after school, kids from the neighborhood will stop by, browse their vast collection of boards, and pick out their favorite. They'll skateboard, bike and have fun until mom or dad yells for them to come home. Francisco has seen the kids go from wary to excited, wobbly to smooth and gliding.

"It's nice to see the kids getting better," dad Francisco Rodriguez said.

Francisco noticed that the sport was popular with lots of teens in the area, but that there wasn't a spot close to home for them to skate safely and without grinding on public property. He decided to

invest in some ramps, and has set up a portable skate park at events in Avalon Park.

"I think it's just like any other sport, if your get kids involved in sports they stay away from other bad things," mom Rosanna Rodriguez said.

While in the past insurance costs has limited Francisco, this year he's found affordable insurance and will be having as many skating events as he can. He's starting with the community's Friday Night Life program, which is a special night for teens to hang out and have fun while being supervised.

During the first skate event, the older kids didn't have helmets and became disinterested. But a few minutes later they saw a crowd of people headed down the street in their direction. A group of younger skaters were ready for fun, so Julian decided to host a competition. A quick skate-off led to three winners, with prizes of skateboard wheels and bearings, and his son Julian getting the honor of ceremoniously tossing lots of stickers into the air for the skaters to grab - all donated by the Rodriguez family.

"Some of the kids were like, 'This was the best Friday Night Life ever,'" Julian said.

Stephanie Hodson, Avalon

Francisco Rodriguez hopes to be at many of Avalon Park's Friday Night Life events this year. Stop by with a helmet and your parent to check out his portable skate park.

Park Group marketing director, said she hopes to help him organize bigger skating events, including a distance skating race in Avalon. She loves how involved the family is, and that they bring something new to the residents.

"It's just a really good example of how getting involved in your community can really help make things happen and foster really great community spirit," she said.

Not only has Julian helped his dad organize skating events for the community, he's also done work to make skating a part of his schooling. Before, no skateboarding was allowed at Avalon Middle School. Julian, always the fervent defender of skating and its benefits, decided he was going to ride there anyway. He was told not to, but finally made a meeting with the principal to discuss why.

After a week of planning his proposal, solving potential safety problems, such as making sure kids wear their helmets and lock up their boards, and touting the environmental benefits with his homemade shirt with slogan



PHOTO BY BRITTON JOHNSON

Rosanna, Julian, Francisco and Adrian Rodriguez are Avalon's skate family.

"push don't pollute," Julian's plan to get skating to school allowed was approved.

"I felt good about myself," he said. "I set out to do something and I did it."

Principal Judy Frank said she encourages every kid to stand up for what they are passionate about.

"If you have something you really believe in, there's a right way to talk to people," Frank said.

Now, some of his friends are skating to school rather than getting their parents to drive them, and he sees about 10 skateboards locked up along with the bikes

when he skates to school every day.

Frank said the line is still very long during pick up and drop off times but any alternative is important to the environment and the health of the students, even if it hasn't relieved traffic yet.

"We promote healthy lifestyles," she said. "Not only is skateboarding good for the environment, it's good for you."

Julian is proud of his accomplishment, but is also just happy he can do his favorite thing right before school.

"It relaxes and wakes you up," he said. "It refreshes me."

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# Education

## School News

**The East River Chorus yard sale** runs from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 21 in the East River High School parking lot, 654 Columbia School Road, Orlando. For more information, contact K. Brillhart at kema.brillhart@ocps.net

March was **Youth Art Month** and artwork by 15 Avalon Middle School art students were chosen for display in the 2012 OCPS Educational Leadership Center YAM Art Show during the month of March.

**Two Theatre UCF actors** have been recognized by the National Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival for their performances in the 2011 production of "Gem of the Ocean." Kevia Goins, a junior in the BFA Acting program at UCF, was awarded Distinguished Performance by an Actress for her role as Black Mary. Be Boyd, a tenured associate professor was awarded Distinguished Performance by a Faculty Guest Artist for her work in the role of Aunt Esther.

**Forty-five Avalon Middle School** students received the highest rating possible from the judges in the countywide event Solo and Ensemble Festival. During this event, students perform an individual solo with a piano player accompaniment, or a small group performance (duets, trios, etc.) in front of a judge.

During the **100th Central Florida fair**, which ran March 1-11, The



Timber Creek Future Farmers of America chapter took home quite a few awards. Timber Creek FFA members Gabriel Maldonado Rosa, Rachel Casel, Alexis Anne Von Dyke, and Alisha Moore all brought back multiple ribbons and awards for their work.

**College students from Japan** will soon be studying at Valencia College while interning at Walt Disney World. Representatives from four Japanese colleges visited Valencia on February 16 to finalize an agreement that would provide for overseas academic training opportunities for their students. The agreement, established by Valencia Continuing Education, links academic coursework at the college with an academic training experience at Disney.

**Stacey Repass**, a world history teacher at East River High School, was selected by the English-Speaking Union of Central Florida to receive one of four scholarships awarded to teachers in Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties. The scholarship gives teachers the opportunity to

attend an all-expenses-paid, two-week total immersion seminar in the British Universities Summer Scholars Program. Repass will join the University of Oxford's History, Politics and Society Program.

**Avalon Middle School** held its 6th annual Hoops for Heart event March 19-20. Sponsored by the American Heart Association, Hoops for Heart has students participate in a variety of basketball-related activities to learn how to care for their heart. For the last five years, Avalon Middle School has ranked first, second or third in the state and in 2008 AMS was ranked fifth in the nation.

**Cricynda Quibell of Union Park Middle School** is the first winner in the Florida Flight's J's for A's program, which awards East Orlando students who earn straight A's a brand new pair of Jordan sneakers. The Flight is an Avalon Park-based minor-league basketball team. A new winner will be chosen during each marking period. For more information about the program, visit [www.fliighthoops.com/js-for-as](http://www.fliighthoops.com/js-for-as)

**East River High School's Keith Clements** had his art displayed at the 53rd Annual Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival. Clements, also a football player and a weight lifter for the school, also holds the school's weightlifting record of 620 pounds.

**NASA's Flight Opportunities Program** has selected three



University of Central Florida space technology projects for flights. The UCF projects were among 24 chosen by NASA for its program this month. NASA will pay for all projects to fly on a suborbital rocket, high-altitude balloon or on a parabolic airplane.

**The East Orlando 4-H robot-**

**ics team** also known as Exploding Bacon Robotics qualified for the World Championships of the FIRST Robotics Competition to be held in St. Louis, Mo. Their robot, driven by Matt Winchester from Timber Creek High School and Kris Walters, a homeschooler, advanced to the semi-finals at each event but was knocked out by the regional winners.

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Summer Camps

# Keep your little one busy with indoor kid-friendly activities

Too much time indoors can often lead to cranky, stir-crazy kids. But you can keep your kiddo occupied with kid-friendly, educational activities that will appeal to their imagination. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Pitch a tent and build a campsite. If the weather has prevented you from a camping excursion, pitch a tent in your living room. Use a table, chairs and a sheet to create a tent or fort in your dining

room or living room. Then, make a circle using potatoes in place of rocks and a flash light or lantern for a fire. Get the whole family involved and take turns telling funny stories. Remember to pack some good campsite treats, such as popped popcorn and dried fruits.

- Embark on an adventure. From your campsite, go exploring through the jungle of the living room. Encourage your child

to use their imagination. What animals do they see? Do they hear any foreign sounds? How tall are the trees? Will they have to cross a river? If so, will they need to build a bridge? If a bridge is needed, let them use some throw pillows to use as crossing stones. Remember, if you're excited, they'll be excited too. Create a journal. Ask your child to describe their adventure — or just their day — by writing, painting or drawing on a

series of pages. Have them start from the beginning by describing what they had for breakfast, what they found in the jungle, etc. You can use a hole punch and yarn or string to put together a journal to help them recall their exciting day.

- Head out on the town. What better excuse to head out — even in less than favorable weather — than to take a trip to the library? Keeping your child's book collection well-stocked and diverse are great ways to encourage their hobby, and help them to continue to develop a larger vocabulary. Find out if your local library has a reading program and get your child signed up, and don't forget to check to see if they have story time as well.

- Set up a book nook. There are few things better on a dreary weather day than to curl up in a cozy corner in warm pajamas with a good book and a trusted teddy bear. And after a long day of trudging through the jungle and the library, both you and your kiddo are likely to need some quiet time. Designate one corner of your home as the book nook with lots of comfy blankets, pillows and a reading light. Then snuggle up and read some stories together.

If you're looking for more educational activities, great reading material or tips for encouraging your child to read, look to "Kidsville News!" in your area or online at [www.kidsvillenews.com](http://www.kidsvillenews.com)

—Family Features



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CFSAORLANDO.COM**



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**Horseback Riding Summer All Day Camp**  
9 to 5pm

Riding, Grooming, Feeding, Mucking, Horse Games,  
Arts & Crafts, A/C Bunkhouse, Pool,  
Piano & Guitar Lessons

[www.PaintedOaksAcademy.com](http://www.PaintedOaksAcademy.com)

Ages 6 to 16

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## Summer of Fun and Learning



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chuluota@firstfriends.com  
141 West 4th Street, Chuluota, Florida, 32766

First Friends is conveniently located near the border of Oviedo and Chuluota on County Road 419. The location provides easy access to Lockwood Blvd and State Road 50

Waterford Lakes Town Center  
**407.273.9400**

waterford@firstfriends.com  
789 North Alafaya Trail, Orlando, Florida 32828

First Friends is conveniently located in Waterford Lakes Town Center. We are located in the back of the town center between LA Fitness and Regal Cinemas

# Summer is About Learning and Having Fun!

- Full-day camp programs available June 11- August 10
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Funded in part by Harper Family Charitable Foundation, Inc.

## Summer Camps

### Nurturing young nature lovers

Whether you're a parent, a classroom teacher, or a homeschool instructor, you know that students learn best when they can interact with their subject. It can be fun and inspirational to explore and experience an educational concept first hand.

The sample project featured here comes from a free resource that's helping to inspire elementary-aged students across the country: MyBotanicPlanet.com. Through online and hands-on experiences, this resource lets students customize an avatar to explore colorful plant environments and interactive games as they learn.

#### Flower investigation

What you'll need:

- Enough real flowers for pairs or groups to work together. Alstroemerias and gladiolus work well and are available year round in supermarket floral departments. Azaleas or any member of the lily family could also be used because the parts are well-defined and easy to see.
- Plastic knives and tweezers could be used for dissecting equipment
- A magnifying glass would allow for closer inspection

#### Getting started

- Open up the flower. This is easily done by first locating the base of the flower and slicing or splitting it in half. Use a dissection tool or even a fingernail.
- Next, slice or pinch off the petals. Remind students to be careful with all of the tiny pieces. It's easy to damage or brush away some of the most important parts.

#### Review the parts of the flower

- Petal: This is the colorful part of the flower that attracts the attention of birds, bees and butterflies, letting them know



that there is food inside the flower. Have students record how many petals their flower has and what they look like.

- Stamen: This is where the pollen is made. For older students, you could also point out that the top part that holds the pollen is the anther and the stem part is called the filament. Students should record how many stamens their flower has. If it has six petals, it will also have six stamens. If they have an extra piece, then one should look a little bit different, and is actually part of the pistil.

- Pistil: This is where the seeds are made. The pistil is made of three different parts. The very top of the pistil is called the stigma. The stigma is where the pollen falls when a pollinator brings it in. The pollen travels down the tube (style) and goes down to the bottom (ovary) where the seeds will form. Split the pistil lengthwise to look inside. You should see unfertilized beginnings of seeds. The seed pattern inside will be the same pattern of seeds within the fruit later.

- Sepal: These are the tiny leaves on the lower part of the flower that protect it before it begins to bloom. Every flowering bud is hidden safely behind these two little leaves until the flower is fully developed. When the bloom begins to grow, the sepal will split open and the petals can break out.

Visit [www.MyBotanicPlanet.com](http://www.MyBotanicPlanet.com) for more.

—Family Features

## Summer Music Lessons Piano/Guitar/Voice/Drums + Ages 4 - Adult

**Piano/Guitar/Voice/Drums/Band & Orchestra School will be out soon and now is the time to start learning an instrument! Beginners welcome. Have fun and learn to play**

**Register now and receive 25% off your first month tuition with this ad. Call our "New Student Hotline" 407-567-7776 today!**



Avalon Park School  
12001 Avalon Lake Dr. Suite E1  
(next to Eastside Bistro in Avalon Park)

Lake Underhill School  
11333 Lake Underhill Rd. Suite 104  
(across from Legacy Middle School)



### CENTRAL FLORIDA'S WEEKENDER ENTERTAINMENT & EVENT GUIDE

Plan your weekend with  
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This weekly newsletter keeps you up to date on events happening in Central Florida's cities, including Winter Park, Maitland, Oviedo, Winter Springs, Avalon Park and Waterford Lakes.

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## THE ALL NEW Y SUMMER CAMPS

### SUMMER COOL CAMP



Weaving in a little bit of education along with a whole lot of fun, these **week-long day camps**, offered at 34 locations, ensure kids are spending summer days in a safe environment, exercising their bodies and their brains, too. Activities include sports, art, aviation, computers, swimming, book club and more.

### PASS, SCORE, PLAY CAMP



This camp is perfect for boys and girls who get a kick out of kicking, throwing, passing and scoring. We'll spend our days playing everything from **soccer** to **basketball** to **volleyball**.

### THE ALL-NEW MIND BLOWING BRAIN CAMP



We're turning summer camp up a notch with new camps that cater to the active imaginations and curious minds of 21st century kids. The Y's **Mind Blowing Brain Camps** challenge kids to become young inventors, engineers, chefs and more.

To learn more about  
Summer Camp,  
email us at  
[camp@cfymca.org](mailto:camp@cfymca.org)

[ymcacentralflorida.com](http://ymcacentralflorida.com)



YMCA OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Follow us at:



## Summer Camps

### Orlando Museum of Art



# Summer camp directory

## EAST ORLANDO

### Avalon School of Music

Kids ages 6 and up can sign up for piano, guitar, drums or voice lessons during Avalon School of Music's summer camp. The school is located at 11333 Lake Underhill Road, Ste. 104, in Orlando. Call 407-567-7776, email [JKolbrich@AvalonMusicCenter.com](mailto:JKolbrich@AvalonMusicCenter.com) or visit [www.AvalonMusicCenter.com](http://www.AvalonMusicCenter.com)

### Central Florida Soccer Academy

Train with professionals and World Cup champions at the Central Florida Soccer Academy's Amanda Cromwell's Girls Day and Overnight Camps at UCF. The camp runs from June 11-15, June 20-23 and July 15-18. Call 407-823-6611, email [Info@CentralFloridaSoccerAcademy.com](mailto:Info@CentralFloridaSoccerAcademy.com) or visit [cfsaorlando.com](http://cfsaorlando.com)

### First Friends

The Boing Jump Center, roller skating rink, bowling alley and rock climbing wall at First Friends summer camp program will keep any child occupied this summer. The center is located in the Waterford Lakes Town Center at 789 N. Alafaya Trail, Orlando. Call 407-273-9400, email [Waterford@FirstFriends.com](mailto:Waterford@FirstFriends.com) or visit [www.FirstFriends.com](http://www.FirstFriends.com)

### Legoland

Spend the summer building robots at 1 Brick Academy Lego RoboCamps for kids grades 3-8. Call 407-230-6100, email [fun@ibrickacademy.com](mailto:fun@ibrickacademy.com) or visit [www.IBrickAcademy.com](http://www.IBrickAcademy.com)

### Kids R Kids

Times machines, ice ages, castles and knights—These are all weekly camp themes at Kids R Kids summer camp for kids ages 5-12. Camp Dates are June 8 and Aug. 17. Call Tracy at 407-381-7979, email [Tracy@Kidsrkidsorlando.com](mailto:Tracy@Kidsrkidsorlando.com) or visit [www.KidsRKidsOrlando.com](http://www.KidsRKidsOrlando.com)

### Painted Oaks Academy

Learn how to groom, tack up, bathe and ride a horse at Painted Oaks Academy Horse Camp. Kids can also enjoy the pool and arts and crafts. The academy is located at 15100 Lake Pickett Road, Orlando. Call Lisa at 407-929-0970, email [Lisa@PaintedOaksAcademy.com](mailto:Lisa@PaintedOaksAcademy.com) or visit [www.PaintedOaksAcademy.com](http://www.PaintedOaksAcademy.com)

### YMCA

Y camps, whether overnight, day or specialty camps all share one thing: they're about discovery. Kids have the opportunity to explore nature, find new talents, try new activities, gain independence, and make lasting friendships and memories. They spend their days swimming, playing sports, learning positive character development, doing arts and crafts and going on field trips. Visit [www.ymcacentralflorida.com](http://www.ymcacentralflorida.com)

### UCP of Central Florida

UCP of Central Florida offers full day camp programs for children age birth through fourth grade. The school is for children with all abilities but this camp offers experts for children with special needs. UCP is located at 12702 Science Dr., Orlando, near UCF. Call 407-852-3300 or visit [www.ucpcf.org](http://www.ucpcf.org)

## CENTRAL FLORIDA

### Orlando Repertory Theatre

Create, explore and perform with the Orlando Repertory Theatre's Youth Academy summer camps with multiple sessions for kids entering grades 1 through 12. Also offered are special sessions for preschoolers and their parents or grandparents. The Youth Academy's camps are designed to foster self-confidence, creative thinking, collaboration, trust, and discipline through the medium of the performing arts. Most camps take place at the theatre's facility in Orlando's Loch Haven Park and conclude with a showcase on the final day. All instructors are screened and background-checked. Morning care and after care are available. For information and pricing visit [www.orlandorep.com](http://www.orlandorep.com)

### Bright Horizons

Through discovery and exploration, your child will experience the summer of a lifetime while enrolled in Our World Our Backyard, Bright Horizons' signature summer program. Teachers work to develop a curriculum that takes advantage of all that summer offers. The staff uses playgrounds and the surrounding community as an extension of the center, helping children to discover science and explore nature, creative art and music. These experiences include walking trips to local parks, libraries, zoos or museums. With multiple locations throughout Central Florida there is one in Baldwin Park. For more information please visit [www.brighthorizons.com](http://www.brighthorizons.com)

### Orlando Science Center

The Orlando Science Center is hosting a full schedule of summer camps for kids entering Pre-K through ninth grade. Tuition includes extended care (before and after camp) and a camp T-shirt. Lunch and snacks are available or campers can choose to bring their own. The OSC will host two open house events for families to preview and register for camp on Saturday, May 12, and Saturday, June 2. For more details visit [www.osc.org](http://www.osc.org)

### Orlando Museum of Art

See, discover and create art treasures at the Orlando Museum of Art this summer through the Summer Art Programs with sessions for students entering grades 1-9. Join OMA for a summer of unique art-making experiences that place value on the process of creating in a relaxed atmosphere. From programs for fun-loving kids to the more serious student of art, classes offer something for every budding artist. Register for one week or up to 10 weeks with a different theme each week. For information telephone 407 896 4231 x262, email [gneureuther@omart.org](mailto:gneureuther@omart.org) or visit [www.omart.org](http://www.omart.org)

### Orange County Regional History Center

Adventures in History camp programs offer kids an opportunity to explore their creativity, expand their imaginations and enhance their knowledge of the world around them. The OCRHC offers summer camp for grades K-8. Day camp hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Early drop-off starts at 7:30 a.m. Extended day available until 6 p.m. for an addition-

Summer Camps



Mead Garden

al \$10 per child, per day.) The cost for members is \$110 per child, per week and for non-members \$140 per child, per week. There is a 10 percent discount for sibling or multiple-week enrollment. Visit [www.thehistorycenter.org](http://www.thehistorycenter.org)

**Orlando Metro Gymnastics in Baldwin Park**

Orlando Metro offers Kidz Sports Day Camps on all major school holidays and vacations. Activities include gymnastics, games, swimming, arts and crafts, bouncer and much more!

During Summer Camp there are regular field trips to the LB McLeod location for skateboarding and other local businesses. Full-day or half-day sessions are available. Visit [www.Orlandometrogyrnastics.com](http://www.Orlandometrogyrnastics.com)

**Rollins College**

Rollins College summer camp programs combine interesting, hands-on activities with innovative course content to create a rewarding educational camp experience. Each course provides in-depth subject exploration while maintaining a fun summer camp atmosphere. The dates for the 2012 Rollins College Summer Camp are Session A: Tuesday, June 12 - Friday, July 6 and Session B: Monday, July 9 - Friday, Aug. 3. If you have any questions regarding the Summer Camp program please visit [www.rollins.edu/camp](http://www.rollins.edu/camp)

**Orlando Magic Summer Camps**

The Orlando Magic summer basketball camps are back for their best season ever! Join them at one of over 20 sessions that will offer expert instruction, fantastic giveaways and NBA excitement. Plus, register by April 1 and save an additional \$15! (Hurry — many sessions will sell out very quickly.) Visit [www.nba.com/magic/magiccamps\\_index.html](http://www.nba.com/magic/magiccamps_index.html) to register.

**Crealde School of Art**

Crealde's Summer ArtCamp, beginning Monday, June 11, offers kids between ages four and 17 more

than 20 classes in a variety of media including painting, drawing, clay and ceramics, sculpture, traditional film or digital photography, and print-making. Contact the Crealde School of Art at 407-671-1886 or [www.crealde.org](http://www.crealde.org). They are open Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and are located at 600 St. Andrews Blvd., Winter Park.

**Baldwin Oaks Academy**

Baldwin Oaks Academy Summer Camp is now enrolling ages 3-12. For elementary and middle school campers, each week features different themes like photography, robotics or drama. Preschoolers will be taking a "Road Trip to the Four Corners of the United States." Camp hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the cost is \$160/week. For an additional \$30 per week, extended care, until 6 p.m. is available. Contact 407-647-0119 or [BaldwinOA.com](http://BaldwinOA.com)

**Mead Garden**

Registration is now open for this summer's elementary, middle and high school camps. Early Bird discount registration for Mead Botanical Garden members and prior campers ends May 15. Enjoy fresh air and fun, wildlife and water, pine trees and pollinators, bees and butterflies, creeks and critters, going green and getting grimy with some good old-fashioned summer fun at Mead Garden's Young Naturalist summer camp. Visit [MeadGarden.org/Programs/Mead-Summer-Camp](http://MeadGarden.org/Programs/Mead-Summer-Camp)

**LEGO ROBOCAMPS**  
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 Grades 3rd - 8th (paired appropriately)  
 Camps run June 11, 2012 - August 3, 2012

**\$25 OFF ANY CAMP, ANY LOCATION\***  
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- \* Flexible Weekly Scheduling
- \* Weekly Field Trips
- \* Experienced Professional Staff

**Summer Camp Open House & Registration**  
 Junior Camp (VPK Graduates) and Senior Camp (School Age K-5th)  
**Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM**  
 The Kona Ice Truck will be at the Waterford location!  
 Enroll on April 17<sup>th</sup> and get a Goodie Bag that includes a FREE Kona Ice

**Waterford**  
 415 Woodbury Rd  
 Orlando, FL 32828  
 407-381-7979

**Kids R Kids Learning Academy**

**Avalon Park**  
 12001 Avalon Lake Dr  
 Orlando, FL 32828  
 407-306-9035

[www.KidsRKidsOrlando.com](http://www.KidsRKidsOrlando.com)  
 DCF Certificate Number C09OR0225

"KIDS' QUOTES"

What did you do on Spring Break?



"I went in the hot tub and played pool, and I also played air hockey."  
 — Justin, 8



"I went to the Smokey Mountains and I went horseback riding and I went on a hike."  
 — Savannah, 8



"I went to the beach twice, went to Disney and slept in a lot. I played with my friends and family and enjoyed my time away from school."  
 — Kyle, 11



"I went to the pool with my dad. The next day I went to a hotel and I saw Shrek and Fiona for breakfast."  
 — Charlisse, 9



"We went camping. We went swimming there. We went to the beach."  
 — Miranda, 12



"We went to Disney and my papa got me this T-shirt from Disney."  
 — Missy, 6



**Jackie Carroll**  
Parent to Parent

## Is there really a Lady Gaga?

They're just kids. Our kids. And we've protected them to the best of our abilities. Sometimes to the point where it may seem absurd. This became painfully clear the day my daughter came home with a burning question the second she walked in the door after school. 'Mom, it isn't true, is it?' 'What isn't true?' 'I told them, but they said I was wrong.' 'What, honey?' 'There's not a singer named Lady Gaga, is there? There can't be.' 'Ummm, I know it's a silly name, but yes, honey, there is a Lady Gaga.' At this point we had to ask ourselves, have we gone too far?

The first time I let her read a book without reading it first was in the middle of first grade. I was busy. No excuse, I know. But there was a picture of two elementary-aged girls with their arms around each other's waists on the cover, it was titled "As Long As We're Together" and she got it from the school library and from the correct area for her age group. Go ahead, honey. She may be naive, but she's not dumb. She read the whole book before asking me if daddies can really have girlfriends. And hey, why wouldn't anyone help that girl when she was bleeding? Ugh. Give me that. Topics ranged from French kissing to being pressured to go all the way and, of course, the obligatory smattering of sexual urges. My favorite line had to be about Marcella, the eighth grade slut.

Because we can't pre-read every book in the library, we had a conversation with the school. Of course we're not interested in banning books; and yes, some kids have split families, and some girls do get their periods before they leave elementary school; I get it. But it was a middle school reader, and she's 6. Still, I'm the parent. It was my fault.

How about when I decided to 'relax a little' and let the kids watch Speed Racer. What was I thinking? Yes it's PG. But I didn't think I'd have to mute and fast forward it almost continuously. I should have watched it first. My fault. Read the reviews, saw that it wasn't a great work of art. OK. Mindless viewing is alright every once in a while. But the reviews didn't really mention the language, or the piranha tank, or the young boy using his middle finger for evil instead of good. More research, mom. Get on the ball.

So, yes, we make mistakes. And we get tired of having to seem like the ogre parents. And sometimes we miss stuff. And that's our fault. But it's also our fault that our daughter doesn't know who Lady Gaga is. And she's never seen a scary news story. And she doesn't "surf" the Internet blindly. And she's never watched a movie more advanced than "The Goonies" and "E.T." (although they both have language that makes me cringe). And she's polite and respectful, most of the time. But, believe it or not, she really doesn't seem any the worse for wear.

My kids are sheltered. As sheltered as I can keep them without completely banning all media, homeschooling and running background checks on friends and neighbors. Things will slip through. But we're fighting the good fight because we think it's important for kids to be...well, kids. Too soon they'll know every curse word there is, every form of violence mankind can think up, and all of the horrible things that can happen to you on your way to the office. And then, like the rest of us, they can waste brain cells trying to figure out why Lady Gaga is dressed that way. But until then, we'll let them be kids.

Chris and Jackie Carroll co-author Parent to Parent and live in Avalon Park with their five children.

## Make a list of good qualities

Recently, the organization I work with held an employment seminar. We visited the topics of dealing with job loss, resumes, how employment has changed since 2001 (think digital) and interviewing.

I love listening to the presenters at these events because they have such great information for job seekers. The final speaker, Justine Loehlein, president of HR Concepts, talked about putting together a sheet of PAR statements to help prepare for interviews. I love this!

PAR statements are Problem, Action, Result. This is the perfect answer for behavioral interview questions. By writing down a list of problems you have faced, the actions you took and the results you had, you are in a story telling mode for the interview.

We are not talking about petty problems like the restroom had no toi-



**Sandi Vidal**  
Ask Sandi

let paper so I walked down the hall to get some (or screamed from the stall) and the result was the next person had paper. We are talking about ways you helped the company to grow, saved the company money, streamlined a process, or made a suggestion that made things better for you and your co-workers.

For example, instead of saying, "I landed a \$3 million account," you

could say, "When I took over the position, our branch was unprofitable, by leveraging networking connections, and diligent follow ups with potential customers, I was able to land a new account. This new account contributed to more than \$3 million in annual sales for my company." A true story for me in a job I previously held.

By thinking this way in advance of an interview, you are well prepared for the questions you will be asked.

On a side note, I asked a very professionally dressed lady at the event to tell me a little about herself and she told me that question always stumps her. Know the answer! Everyone asks it!

Sandi Vidal, an Avalon Park resident, is the executive director for Christian HELP and the Central Florida Employment Council and has more than 15 years of recruiting and human resources experience. Visit [www.cfec.org](http://www.cfec.org)

## Is my garden safe?

Deep-seated personality traits of mine have always been those of a designer and builder. Numerous career choices have been in the construction trades, starting as a carpenter's helper during college summer breaks, working in the wholesale building supply industry, and even as an electrician at the "Mouse House." During these 30-plus years, interspersed with creating my homestead and gardens, concern for job safety has evolved from non-existent to almost stifling. As part of my current position as an instructor of the noble art of growing your own food, imparting safe working habits has become a mission and duty.

What could possibly be dangerous safely ensconced in the tranquility of my garden? The soft, deeply turned soil, perfectly loosened to allow the roots easy penetration, was more than likely broken up with sharp steel implements. Whether using a sharpened spade-shaped shovel or the rapidly rotating tines on a gas-powered rototiller, our soft toes are no match when directing as much force as possible at targeted root clumps. Sandals or flip-flops, let alone bare feet, are out of the question when considering garden



**Tom Carey**  
From My Garden to Yours

attire. At a bare minimum, closed-toe sneakers should be worn, with steel toe combat boot probably recommended by the OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) guidelines.

The various denizens of the natural world all have their bag of tricks when feeling threatened. I am amazed at the tenderness of thin-skinned guests to my great out-of-doors when facing down the poison arsenal of mere mosquito bites, fire ant mounds and no-see-um welts, not to mention bee stings or scorpion zolts. Long-sleeve shirts and canvas jeans preclude the majority of itches. Chemical repellants, if used at all, should first be sprayed on a paper towel and then

applied sparingly to outer clothes and exposed skin. Timing is everything, with most biting bugs looking to snack on us right around sunset.

The most inconvenient safety chore during a cardio session in the garden on a hot, humid afternoon would be a dust mask. Dry soil will emit particulate of untold composition. Tossing granular fertilizer warrants an awareness of wind direction and pity for all those downstream from the dust cloud. Diatomaceous earth, an insect control, is jagged microscopic silica skeletal remains of diatom algae, akin to ground-up glass. My primary procrastinator when planning to muck out the chicken coop is the airborne manure powder.

Gardening is the oldest and most popular active hobby in the history of our species. The immediate enjoyment in an idyllic setting must be slightly tempered with safety measure to ensure future enjoyment. Have fun, grow safe!

Tom Carey is the owner of Sundew Gardens, a you-pick gardening business near the University of Central Florida in East Orlando. Visit the Sundew Gardens Facebook page.

### Commissioner's Corner

## OCPS leader takes over

At the end of this school year Orange County Public Schools Superintendent Ronald Blocker will retire after leading the district for 12 years. I want to thank Mr. Blocker for his strong leadership in achieving significant academic gains and growth for OCPS students.

Succeeding Mr. Blocker will be Dr. Barbara Jenkins. It's with great enthusiasm that I endorse Dr. Jenkins. She began her education career with OCPS as a teacher and principal, moved to the nationally recognized urban school district of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C. as assistant superintendent of human resources and is now the current OCPS deputy superintendent for teaching and learning.

Dr. Jenkins will assume the job against a formidable backdrop of challenges that includes escalating academic standards and accountabil-



**Daryl Flynn**  
Orange County School Board member

ity, lower funding, and a teacher work force that is stressed by recent legislative mandates.

State education funding levels are lower now than in 2007, while health insurance and utility expenses have risen. As superintendent, Dr. Jenkins will need to provide a budget that accounts for deficits, and at the same time protects the classroom. The Florida Department of Education recently

introduced higher "cut scores" for students to pass the FCAT and began revising the individual school grading formula, leading education experts to predict seeing fewer "A" schools and more "D" and "F" schools. Many educators worry that our English Language Learners and special needs students will be especially vulnerable to the revision.

I firmly believe that Dr. Jenkins will instill confidence, direction, hope and pride in the OCPS work force and in our teacher ranks. Providing our teachers with the support they need to cope and excel within their profession against the intense pressure of change will be an important task. Leading all of our students to academic success will be her No. 1 goal! Welcome aboard, Dr. Jenkins!

Contact Flynn at [daryl.flynn@ocps.net](mailto:daryl.flynn@ocps.net) or 401-317-3200, ext. 2989.

## Staff opinion

# Strip-searching the Fourth Amendment

If you're given a speeding ticket and forget to pay it for long enough, you may now be subject to a strip search. That's a rather extreme example, but one that's now legally allowed thanks to a split 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court decision made Monday that allows corrections officials to strip search anyone arrested for any reason.

Considering that America has the largest population of incarcerated residents in the world, that's an awful lot of humiliation about to happen.

About 13 million people are jailed each year in the United States, wrote justice Anthony Kennedy, who drafted the majority opinion on the ruling, which split directly down political lines with the court.

Don't think you'll be among them? Not so fast. The ruling comes from a seemingly unlikely case. In 2005 Albert W. Florence was arrested and strip-searched for not paying a fine. Funny thing about that: He had paid it. Due to a clerical error by a New Jersey court, the paid fine had not been processed. He found out the hard way what a clerical error can cost.

*In states with some stricter laws, someone could conceivably be strip searched after feeding the homeless, for violating a leash law or for not using a turn signal.*

Florence seemed an unlikely arrestee. A finance manager at a Philadelphia car dealership, he was riding in his BMW, driven by his wife, when she was pulled over for speeding. When police noticed he had an outstanding warrant for not paying a fine from a traffic infraction, he was arrested, even though he had a court document in his possession proving he'd paid it. He'd kept it, he told the New York Times, precisely to prevent this type of mix up. Standing alongside the highway, with proof that he should be free to go, he was arrested in front of his wife and 4-year-old son anyway.

When he arrived at jail, he was strip-searched. When he was moved to another jail in another county, he was strip-searched again.

"It was humiliating," Florence told the New York Times. "It made me feel like less of a man."

He was in jail for more than a week before he was finally set free when the courts discovered the clerical error. He filed a suit, stating that his Fourth Amendment right against unlawful search was violated.

Despite the obvious incompetence displayed in the arrest and treatment of a non-criminal in this case, Kennedy wrote that the courts "are in no position to second-guess the judgments of correctional officials." Actually, they are. They are some of the very few in a position to second guess the judgment of corrections officials — particularly in this case. They simply failed to do so.

Citing some of the more dangerous examples on hand, Kennedy noted that prior minor traffic-arrestees-turned-big-fish included terrorist bomber Timothy McVeigh and a 9/11 conspirator. The implication being that since we have examples of arrestees committing worse crimes than those they were arrested for, anyone who is arrested for any reason — even non-criminal reasons — is immediately suspected of being in the act of committing more crimes. So why not strip search everybody who's put in handcuffs?

Dissenting judge Stephen G. Breyer wrote about his own examples: a nun who was strip-searched after being arrested at an anti-war protest, a driver strip searched after driving with a noisy muffler and a bicycle rider strip searched after riding a bicycle without an audible bell.

In states with some stricter laws, someone could conceivably be strip searched after feeding the homeless, for violating a leash law or for not using a turn signal.

Florence thought police went too far in searching his naked body for drugs and weapons after he was wrongly arrested for a civil infraction he hadn't even committed. According to the Supreme Court, simply falsely arresting him wasn't far enough.

## Letters to the editor

## Save on gas and groceries

Gas and groceries are among our basic necessities. Commuting to work every day and putting food on the table are getting more expensive and, for families already struggling to make ends meet, these added costs only make it more difficult.

As the cost of filling our tank and our pantry continues to increase, CredAbility offers tips to help consumers save at the pump and in the grocery store.

Saving on Gasoline

- Look for opportunities to carpool. Work with neighbors and co-workers to share the expense of getting kids to school and driving to work.

- Telecommute. If your job requires little more than a computer, try and work from home one or more days per week to cut down on commuting costs.

- Look for the lowest prices. Websites, such as GasBuddy.com, keep track of gas prices throughout the country and post them. You can also download an app for your smart phone and get prices on the go.

- Look for discounted gas or rebate options. Some retailers offer discounts on gas for shopping in their stores or using a specific card. Winn-Dixie's Fuelperks program offers consumers 5 cents per gallon discount (up to 20 gallons) at participating stations for every \$50 in groceries purchased.) Other retailers also participate in the Fuelperks program; visit fuelperks.com for more information. Costco offers a cash back rebate on gasoline purchased with the Costco American Express Card. Walmart offers 3 cents off per gallon discount if you use a pre-paid gift card or store credit card.

- Pay cash for gas. If you don't know how much you are spending in gas, or you are struggling to pay off gas purchases made on a credit card each month, use cash to pay for gas.

- Lighten your load. If you have a trunk full of stuff, you are getting fewer miles per gallon. Empty your trunk and save.

- General tips: Keep the appropriate air pressure in your tires to get the best gas mileage. Reduce the cost to cool down a hot car by using a sun-shade in the front window and parking in a shady area. Plan your day so you can combine trips and drive fewer miles. Drive the speed limit—speeding reduces your miles per gallon.

Saving on Groceries

- Make a list, and stick to it. While grocery shopping can be expensive, it is often the unplanned purchases that put the bill over the top. Plan your menus for the week and make a list of things you need before you go to the store.

- Take advantage of coupon savings, special purchases and buy-one-get-one promotions. Coupon savings are usually worth the cost of the Sunday paper. In addition to manufacturer's coupons, sites like CouponMom.com compare in-store specials at many grocery chains. A great sale or double or triple coupon values may make it worth the trip to a store you don't usually go to. For staple items with a long shelf-life, stock up during sales.

- Use technology to help you save. There are many apps to help you organize your lists, find coupons, track prices at stores in your area and more. Grocery Pal shows you what's on sale at your local re-

tailers. Apples2Oranges allows you to compare prices on various sizes to see which offers the better deal. Grocery Gadget can help organize your shopping list and track prices for maximum savings. Most apps are available for multiple devices.

- Buy in bulk, sometimes. It may be cheaper to buy three dozen eggs, but only if you don't end up throwing out a dozen because they have expired. Compare prices on bulk purchases. Consider shopping for bulk items with a friend and share the cost.

- Eat before you shop. Shopping on an empty stomach will always cost you more at the store. Have a snack before you go and you'll be less tempted to impulse buy.

- Don't limit your shopping to eye level. Many lower cost items, including store brands, are stocked on higher and lower shelves while higher-priced items are at eye level.

- Don't assume items are cheaper because they are a larger size or displayed separately — Take a calculator along to determine the price per ounce or pound so you can get the best deal. And remember: larger is not always better. Buy only what you will use.

- Save on eating out. While it may add slightly to your grocery bill, packing your lunch can save you a hundred dollars or more per month when compared to eating out.

— Richard Schram  
regional president of CredAbility

## Get a summer-ready lawn

Spring has officially arrived in Orlando. This means getting back into the yard and garden—either to prepare an outdoor space for entertaining, address a long-overdue home beautification project or to satisfy the needs of a "green thumb". Here are five tips to tackle your landscape like a pro this season:

- Start with quality seed: There are many factors that go into having a fuller, healthier lawn. It all starts with selecting the right seed. Having a drought-tolerant seed is critical, particularly during dry seasons and in drought-prone regions, such as Florida.

- Evaluate and prepare soil: Good soil conditions also are essential. This means that the soil will provide the right foundation for growth. Soil tests evaluate the condition and level of nutrients in the soil, namely pH, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium levels. A soil's pH level determines how well plants will be able to draw the nutrients they need. Because soil pH levels tend to change over time, test regularly.

- Improve nutrient update: Fertilizers help supply plants with the nutrients needed to grow properly. The ideal time to apply fertilizer is when a lawn is actively growing. For the Orlando area, grasses tend to require fertilizing in the spring and in the late summer.

- Effective watering: Watering can vary significantly between germination, establishment and ongoing maintenance. During germination, it's important to water every day to keep soil moist. This helps promote a strong root system — encouraging nutrient uptake, drought resistance and a lawn's ability to thrive under stress. Following the first two weeks, water every third day for 15-20 minutes until your grass has fully grown. As

part of ongoing maintenance, water every fourth day for 20-30 minutes. At this point, the primary goal is to keep a healthy lawn. This can be accomplished by monitoring color changes. A lawn does not need water until the color falls by 50 percent, at which time one inch of water should be added.

- Mowing and maintenance: Mowing schedules revolve around the length of the grass more than the time between mowing. Once grass is roughly one-third taller than the desired height, it's time to mow.

This is especially true with the first cutting after new grass is planted. This reduces stress on the grass.

— Russ Nicholson  
Senior Agronomist for  
Pennington Seed, Inc.

## Cooking with family

Cooking has always been such an important part in my family. For us, cooking together with my kids allows me to not only share generations after generations of favorite family recipes, but also a chance to bond with my children on a special level.

Food happens to be my passion and having kids that are so interested in that helps foster their own passion for food and all that is encompassed with being in the kitchen. I have had the extreme honor to cultivate a love for cooking with my daughter, Kayla. I see so much of myself in her, it amazes me from her spunky precocious personality to her love for food, she is truly a mini-me.

Every time I am in the kitchen, my daughter comes bouncing in, wanting to help me whether I'm chopping onions, which I just hate to do, or baking cinnamon rolls from scratch. No matter what it is she wants in. and I love it!

When I saw this amazing contest being sponsored by Uncle Ben's Rice and Rachel Ray I knew I wanted to give Kayla an opportunity to showcase her love for cooking. The requirements needed were to film a three-minute video showcasing you and your son/daughter cooking in the kitchen. Of course the main ingredient to use in this dish was Uncle Ben's Rice.

There were so many different recipes being filmed and nominated, from savory roasted stuffed peppers to sweet rice puddings. During the video you were supposed to have your child discuss why cooking is so much fun, tips for other kids who want to cook with their moms and dads and why they like cooking so much.

When I asked Kayla what she wanted to make for the video she first chose pineapple stir fried rice and I suggested to add shrimp to it. She loved the idea and went with it. One of the last questions I asked Kayla was, 'Why do you want to be on the Rachel Ray Show and to be chosen as a winner?' She responded: 'Because I want to show kids my age how much fun cooking really is and show kids how much I love to cook and have them eat my food. I think that answer alone was the best answer ever.'

Whether or not Kayla and I are chosen as one of the four finalists in the contest, our love for cooking together will continue to grow and we will continue to show families how important cooking together is.

— Natasha N. Kennedy  
East Orlando

Home Magnifier

# The wait for short sales is shorter now

**BRENDA:** Approximately 60 percent of all home sales in East Orlando are still short sales. This percentage has come down but still the majority of homes on the market are short sales. The banks have allocated a lot of their funds that used to go to foreclosures and are now going towards short sales, which is good. Karen, as a real estate attorney and owner of your own title company, what have you been seeing?

**KAREN:** The short sale climate has never been more seller friendly. If your mortgage holder is Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Citibank, Chase or Ally Bank, the news is even better. These five banks are participants in the \$25 billion government-backed program to assist distressed homeowners. These five banks have agreed to strive to have short sales approved within 30 days.

**PAMELA:** That is unbelievable news and this time frame is unheard of. Even if the time period is doubled this would be a major improvement over the past history of short sales. Many short sales have taken up to a year or more to get an answer back from the banks. And as a buyer's specialist, I see buyer's often getting impatient and cancelling their contract and moving on to another home. If short sales could be approved in 30 days, this would really speed up the process and get many of the short sales off the market.

**BRENDA:** Another very important aspect of short sales is the upcoming deadline of Dec. 31, 2012 to have a seller's tax liability waived on their primary residence (in all but a few limited cases). A seller needs to close on their short sale by this time or have their foreclosure completed on their home to have the taxes on the deficiency (amount owed to the seller's bank) waived on their primary residence.



**Brenda Kolbrich and Pamela Rehbein**  
Chit n' Chat

**KAREN:** Taxes are based on the seller's tax bracket when they file their taxes, so if you are in the 25 percent tax bracket and \$100,000 upside down on your home, you would owe \$25,000 in income taxes if you miss the deadline. So this is a very important consideration if a seller is thinking of short selling their home. Sellers need to have a Realtor who is very experienced in short sales to manage the whole process.

**PAMELA:** And a very experienced buyer's specialist is needed to represent the buyers throughout the process to handle their contract, paperwork and keep them constantly informed on the whole short sale process.

**BRENDA:** Our next educational short sale seminar is Saturday, April 14, 10-11 a.m. at 13013 Founders Square in downtown Avalon Park. Myself, buyer's specialist Pamela Rehbein and Karen R. Spell, P.A. will answer all of your questions and educate you on all the new government programs and tax implications for short sales.

*Brenda Kolbrich and Pamela Rehbein are Realtors with Keller Williams Advantage II Realty. Reach Kolbrich at 407-963-6876 or Brenda@TopOrlandoHomes.com. Reach Rehbein, at 407-488-4078 or Pamela@HomeforYourHeart.com. Karen R. Spell, P.A. Real Estate Attorney, 407-306-0454*

# Get your home in shape to sell

How to make sure the first impression of your home is a good one

**CHRISTINA RORDAM**  
Guest Writer

First impressions are priceless, in all aspects of life. Just like you wear a suit to a job interview, your home has a "dress code" to inspire love at first sight and get buyers to ask "Where do I sign?" I learned a few things in my years selling for new home builders, one being a properly staged and prepared home can often fetch thousands more for its seller. Some of the things you need to do make a memorable impression may be common sense to you, and some may surprise you. Let's start with the basics.

Make a punch list. If you've ever bought a new home you would've had several walk throughs with the builder wherein you made a punch list of items needing attention prior to close. It's a great idea to do the same thing prior to listing your home for sale. Walk your entire home, starting at the curb and jot down items in need of TLC or removal. A fresh set of eyes is crucial here. Rope a neighbor, friend or relative into helping you, or better yet your Realtor, and be thorough.

Put your home in the witness protection program. When potential homebuyers view your home, you want them to be able to visualize themselves and their families actually living there. This is a tall order if you have your family photos, stacks of dishes and a display of whatever it is you collect in plain sight. Less clutter and less personal items equals less distractions for the buyer. The idea here is to have them mentally put themselves in your space.

Repair, renew, revitalize. Once you've de-cluttered your home and made it neutral (think a builders model home), execute the items on your punch list, within reason. Areas with high return on investment are the

kitchen, flooring and bathrooms. And never under estimate the power of curb appeal. Fresh mulch, well cared for grass and pretty pink annuals go a long way. Cleaning works wonders as well. Be sure all light bulbs are working, and give your windows a good inside and outside Windex job.

Here's a helpful checklist of some of the best ways to make your home shine for its new owners:

- Clean windows inside and out, dust sills.

- Eliminate odors with plug-in fresheners and scented candles, brew coffee or bake cookies prior to showings if possible. Smoke? Consider repainting the interior, it helps neutralize the smoke smell. Remember to change your air filter.

- Draw the eye by grouping accents or knick knacks in small groups. Add a pop of color, and go easy with the accent walls, one is enough!

*Christina Rordam is a local Realtor. Contact her at 407-928-8294 or www.ChristinaSellsOrlando.com*

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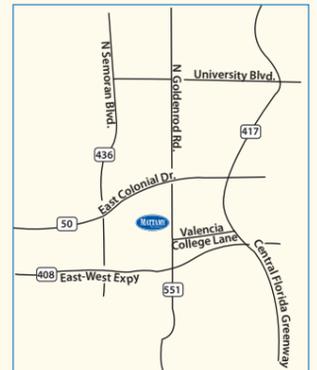
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Home Magnifier

# Report: Home sales and prices recover

The existing home market in Orange and Seminole counties continued to show signs of improvement last year with sales up nearly 6 percent and prices rising or holding steady in most categories, according to the recently published 2011 Hillman Report.

"The number of transactions last year were up considerably in nearly every category over 2010, and I'm confident we will see continued appreciation in all areas of the local residential real estate market in 2012, including million-dollar-plus homes," said Scott Hillman, president of Fannie Hillman + Associates—a 31-year-old Winter Park firm that twice a year publishes The Hillman Report, which takes a comprehensive look at the Winter Park, Maitland, College Park, Baldwin Park, Windermere and

downtown Orlando housing and condominium markets.

"The real estate industry is digging out of a deep hole that I believe reached rock bottom in the first quarter of 2009, but we can't put the shovels away just yet. Significant progress has been made in the past two years, but there's lots more work that needs to be done," said Hillman.

The 2011 Hillman Report showed transactions for all single-family homes were up 5.7 percent over 2010 and up 15.7 percent over 2009, while sales of condominiums were down 22.7 percent from 2010, but up 13.8 percent over 2009.

"The good news in the condominium market is that although total transactions were down last year, prices in the lower two categories (under \$200,000 and

\$200,001-\$500,00) were up 13 percent and 1 percent, respectively," said Hillman.

While there have been isolated cases where average and median prices for single-family home have spiked, "generally speaking prices throughout the area have stabilized or gradually appreciated, particularly in Baldwin Park and Windermere. This trend

bodes well for 2012 and beyond," Hillman said.

Higher-priced, single-family homes did particularly well last year. Sales of homes in the \$750,000 to \$1 million range were up 13 percent over 2010 and up 21.5 percent over 2009, while transactions of homes with million-dollar-plus price tags were up 4 percent over 2010 and 34

percent over 2009. Last year's increase in million-dollar-plus sales occurred even though average and median sales prices were up 9 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

For more information or a hard copy of The Hillman Report, call Scott Hillman at 407-644-1234 or visit fanniehillman.com and click on The Hillman Report link.



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-Services at 10 a.m. Sundays at Discovery Middle School (601 Woodbury Road, 32828)  
-Nursery & Children's Program available through fifth grade  
-Youth Group (6th-12th grade) meets at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays at Primrose School on Tanja King Blvd.  
-Visit [www.christkingdom.org](http://www.christkingdom.org)  
-A congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America

### CONGREGATION GESHER SHALOM OF ORLANDO

-"Bridge of Peace" Jews & Gentiles following the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus)  
-Rabbi, Dr. Charles I. Kluge  
-6969 Venture Circle, Orlando, Fla 32807  
-Service: Friday 8 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. Nursery-PreSchool-Shabbat School-Teen, College & Career, Singles Groups, Dance Workshops,

Spanish translation available, youth service, Interactive Adult Bible Study (ages 13-39) first and third Wednesday of each month, child care & nursery available.  
-All are welcome, Interfaith Couples  
-Phone: 407-671-4700  
-Find us now on Facebook- Congregation Geshers Shalom - [Rabbi@geshershalom.com](mailto:Rabbi@geshershalom.com), [www.geshershalom.com](http://www.geshershalom.com), Shalomorlando.com 407-671-4700 or 407-782-6177.

### AVALON CHURCH

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-Youth service Tuesday 6 p.m.  
-College group Tuesday 7 p.m.  
-Pastor Dale Brooks  
-[www.avalonchurch.org](http://www.avalonchurch.org)  
-407-275-5499

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