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# East hospital all grown up

Florida Hospital East to double the size of its emergency department

■ **MEGAN STOKES AND DAVE CARRIERE**  
 Sun Staff

Florida Hospital East Orlando will nearly double the size of its emergency department (ED) over the next two years and will add 40 more patient rooms to its hospital in the next year.

With a record 78,000 patients moving through the ED last year and the department being on track to see more than 81,000 by this year's end, the need for more space has never been greater.

The ED will jump from 36 exam rooms in 24,000 square feet to 65 exam rooms in 51,000 square feet. This will be the first time the ED will be renovated since it was built in 2000.

"Wait times vary depending on the influx and volume; at our busy times we have some significant wait times — longer than what we would certainly like," said Mike Thompson, Florida Hospital East Orlando administrator and vice president.

■ Please see **HOSPITAL** on page 4



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY FLORIDA HOSPITAL

After the expansion, the hospital will offer more specialties, more efficient care, less waiting and more patient space.

- 1941** ----- Began as Orlando General, a community-based, osteopathic hospital with 15 beds. Osteopathy differs from allopathy, which is what medical doctors practice, in that it emphasizes bone placement and full-body alignment in addition to traditional medicine. 
- 1961** ----- Orlando General expands to become a 48-bed facility.
- 1990** ----- Orlando General is purchased by Florida Hospital, which at that time had campuses in downtown Orlando, Altamonte and Apopka. There are now eight campuses in Central Florida. Medical doctors integrate into the staff. What would be known as Florida Hospital East had 197 beds at this time.
- 2000** ----- Florida Hospital East builds a new emergency department, replacing the one that was in the back of the hospital. It is a 22,000-square-foot space with room for 36 beds. In recent years the emergency program has seen an average of about 250 patients a day.
- 2007** ----- In the hospital's biggest expansion since it was purchased by Florida Hospital in 1990, the West Tower — a four-story, 195,000-square-foot tower — is added, bringing the total beds to 225 and added space for a state-of-the-art equipment as well as a new cafeteria and an outdoor "healing garden."
- 2008** ----- Florida Hospital East opens its first emergency residency program for medical students.
- 2009** ----- Florida Hospital Surgery Center, a 15,000-square-foot outpatient surgery center, opens in the newly built, 60,000-square-foot medical office building at Florida Hospital East in November.
- 2010** ----- The Florida Hospital East Cancer Institute begins treating patients on campus. 
  - In June, the hospital expands and renovates two operating rooms, adding a state-of-the-art integration system for surgeons. The hospital serves more than 3,000 surgical patients a year.
  - Florida Hospital East opens its own retail pharmacy on campus in October.

# Playing a new tune

Eastwood teen gets full ride to college, plans medical career

■ **MEGAN STOKES**  
 Sun Staff

At age 4, Kirk "KJ" McCall pored over his father's human anatomy book, which to him looked like a coloring book.

When he got a little older, he wanted to examine the remnants inside his sister's tissues after she was diagnosed with allergies to see if he could help. When she had an ear infection, he wanted to peer inside her ear to see what it looked like.

Years later, while watching ESPN in his bedroom in Eastwood, 17-year-old KJ got a call from someone who offered him a four-year, paid internship to partici-

To donate to Evan's cause or the giveaway the McCalls help put together each year, contact Sandra McCall at skmccall6@aol.com or 321-945-1908.

pate in cardiovascular research at East Orlando's Sanford Burnham Medical Research Institute. He sat on his bed stunned until his father came into the room, asking who was on the phone.

"Why didn't you tell me first?" he had asked.

"I was shocked," KJ answered.

His reaction was similar to the one he experienced after opening a package from Xavier University of Louisiana a few weeks ago, which told him he had earned a \$100,000 scholarship — a full ride — to the university where he plans to dual major in biology and music performance.

While he's excited to step onto the New Orleans campus, KJ is most excited about the hands-on experience he'll get each summer at the Sanford Burnham Institute.

"The things we'll be doing will be in text-

■ Please see **KJ** on page 6



PHOTO BY MEGAN STOKES

**KJ McCall plans to double** major in biology and music at Xavier University of Louisiana in the fall.



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# Coffee with Beat

Beat Kahli



## The Supreme Court in East Orlando

It isn't often that decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court directly affect us here in East Orlando.

Certainly, the Court's most momentous decisions have had an impact on all Americans and that includes us here in East Orlando, but relatively few have had as much direct impact as the recent one.

We here in East Orlando are blessed with an enormous opportunity. That opportunity is still in the developing stage, but by the time our youngest children are ready to enter adulthood, it will be flourishing.

I'm talking about the way the Court's decision to pass health care reform will affect Medical City, an awkwardly named development in Lake Nona that includes a major medical research facility, a hospital and the new University of Central Florida College of Medicine.

These three facilities are already changing the way we live now. Look at the improvements to Alafaya Trail. They likely would not be under way but for the develop-

ment of Medical City.

Better yet, look at Orlando International Airport's new plan to break ground next year on a \$470 million expansion with a train depot and parking garage

### The Court's decision to pass health care reform will affect Medical City

that might lead to a new \$1 billion terminal. I've not seen the planned documents, but you can bet next week's paycheck that you can find references to Medical City in the rationale.

And there's more.

As Medical City generates well-paid professional jobs (opportunities for our children) they in turn

will generate demand for more and better schools to help educate and train workers — not only doctors and research scientists but many more transcriptionists, phlebotomists, physical therapists, receptionists and about as many "ists" as you can name.

And they in turn will generate demand for recreational facilities, restaurants, shopping, even farmer's markets, parks and nature trails.

They'll also generate more tax revenues (instead of higher taxes), which will help pay for public services, like those schools, parks, nature trails and maybe a mass transit link that will take us to pedestrian-friendly stations in downtown Orlando, Winter Park and even Tampa or Miami.

Does all that sound optimistic?

It certainly is. But it is not unrealistic.

For you pessimists who are reading this, feel free to worry about rising traffic congestion, noisy kids, crime rates and the like, but in fact we can and will elect

*As Medical City generates well-paid professional jobs, they in turn will generate demand for more and better schools*

leaders who can manage these issues before they become burdensome.

That's up to us. If "optimism" means I have faith in human beings to do what is best for themselves, I plead guilty as charged.

The foundation is laid. The Supreme Court has issued its ruling on health care reform in the U.S. and now it's up to us to fix the problems and build a better future for our kids, and theirs as well.

We have a lot of work to do.

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# Deal makes Avalon Park more Swiss

More housing and possibly church space is on its way in Avalon Park thanks to two international developers

■ JORDAN KEYES  
Sun Staff

Two real estate tycoons say the success of the Avalon Park community can be boiled down to one shared characteristic.

"We are Swiss!" said Beat Kahli, president and CEO of Avalon Park Group, which developed the community.

"That's why Avalon Park works," said Urs Gribi, managing director for Swiss development firm sitEX and Swiss Real Estate Association president. "It's like the village life. You have all the people together and they are really coming to live together and share their interests."

Gribi and Kahli have sealed a deal that will add a 92-unit, four-story mixed-use building near Tanja King Park by spring 2013. There have been talks with several local churches to possibly occupy the first floor of the building.

Kahli, who has lived in the U.S. for 20 years, and Gribi, who lives and works in Switzerland, have teamed up to bring the best of both worlds to the community, making a global village tailored to American tastes. In the beginning, experts told Kahli it couldn't work.

"Then I said, 'Wait a moment! Most of the world is very similar to Avalon,'" Kahli said. "There's usually about 10,000-20,000 people with a little village center."

The multi-use unit is part of a larger \$39 million deal that will not only bring a little more Swiss style to Avalon, it'll also bring

a little Avalon to Switzerland. APG traded the ownership of Avalon Park's Keith A. Ewing Medical Office Building along with the 1.8-acre property the housing units will be built on to make APG co-owner of sitEX Properties AG in Switzerland.

Gribi will also join APG in developing the 1,800-acre Avalon Park West, which is located about 30 minutes north of Tampa in Pasco County. Kahli said both groups invested more than \$10 million to make sure Avalon's sister project is "off to a good start".

## Bringing the community closer

This new building is the next step in fulfilling the idea of a self-sufficient village. While another high-rise apartment complex might seem like a move towards a bigger city feel, one of its features could connect the community even more.

That feature is handicapped accessible apartments on the ground floor, with hopes to accommodate people graduating from the rehab center nearby.

"When those people learn to function again they still need some accommodation with ground-floor apartments and this is something we want to accommodate," Kahli said.

The rehab center, NeuroRestorative, treats many patients who need handicapped-accessible living quarters once they are discharged. Patti Dorrell, the program director for NeuroRestorative, says that



PHOTO BY JORDAN KEYES

Beat Kahli and Urs Gribi will create more housing in Avalon that could also include more church space.

these apartments could meet those needs.

"For many people, it's hard to find accessible apartments," she said. "Sometimes they can't find them anywhere. And even if they can find accessible living space, it's not in a good area, so having them right here in Avalon Park is really great."

## International appeal

This sense of tight-knit community that Kahli and APG established is what first attracted Gribi to the area. The town center captured his attention. He confesses with a smile that he especially enjoys Margarita's

Grill.

"My favorite place is the Mexican restaurant," Gribi said.

As an international investor, Gribi says that investments need to tell a good story. The new apartments and the medical plaza make a story that Gribi and his company wanted to be a part of.

"The medical building is a piece of that story," Gribi said. "And I think with the apartment building coming soon, they have a very close future. To be part of developing this is a good story and I think it's a very good product."

## Florida Hospital Medical Group Proudly Welcomes Dr. Melissa Hartman



**Melissa Hartman, DO** is a board-certified family physician, serving the Avalon Park community. She is dedicated to patient-focused, comprehensive care to patients age 13 and older, fellowship trained in women's health with special interests in contraceptive management, menopause, osteoporosis, pelvic pain and other gynecological disorders.

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PHOTO BY MEGAN STOKES

The emergency department will double in size to 65 exam rooms in two years.

**HOSPITAL**

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Dr. Dale Birenbaum, who oversees the ED, said patients who experience shorter wait times tend to get better care, especially for patients with time-sensitive conditions, such as a stroke where there's only a three- to four-hour treatment window.

"You have to be responsive to the community's needs and the people in need who may not have access to care elsewhere," he said. "We're the safety net to provide care to patients, so you want to have the services and availability to help the patients in any way that you can. We want to decrease the door-to-doctor time."

Orange County District 4 Commissioner Jennifer Thompson said having a good hospital in the community is a lot like having good schools in the community — they increase the quality

of life and raise property values.

"Without a good hospital you have nothing," she said. "Hospitals are a stakeholder in the community. You want your doctor to be close to you — it's an important building block to a good community to have all these different services."

But it's not just about growing larger. The new ED will offer a more tranquil design to help patients relax. Emergency vehicles will drop off patients toward the back of the new ED, away from the patients who are still in need of emergency care but are not in quite as serious a condition.

"We're creating an environment for those who need acute care but also for those who are walking in sick who need help," Mike Thompson said. "We recognize that if we can create an environment that's more alleviating of stress, we can care for the patient in a better way. We want to create a new environment that's

more calming and better addresses the whole person, the feelings of the person."

The ED expansion will be built to the east of the current building, taking up some of the parking lot. Once the new part is finished and opened, the existing building will be renovated so hospital functions are not disturbed.

There could also be a dedicated pediatric space in the ED.

"Obviously when a child gets ill and comes into a large emergency department, it's very overwhelming. We're working really hard to include a more kid-friendly space that will help us provide better care," Birenbaum said.

Technology at the hospital will also improve with the expansion. Imaging equipment needed in emergencies, such as CAT scans, will be moved from other parts of the hospital to the ED.

More than 90 percent of Florida Hospital East admissions come through the ED, so with improvements to emergency care comes the addition of 40 new rooms to the hospital's patient tower and specialty care.

So far, the hospital has added two orthopedic surgeons, a urology surgeon, a colorectal surgeon and an andrology department for male infertility with the only board-certified andrology doctor in the region. They also recently added one of the most renowned hand specialists in the region — Dr. Brian Leung, who works with the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra.

"People think we're just an emergency department, and it was that for a long time, but it's turned into so much more than that," said Natalia Cabrero, Florida Hospital's community liaison.

Maria Rodammer, an Avalon Park resident, said her father was recently diagnosed with diabetes and is thankful that all the specialists he needs are nearby. As a real estate agent in the area, she's also optimistic that the expansion will help the local economy.

"Anything we can do as far as expansion in the medical field is going to attract new residents, new business and it's going to create new jobs," she said. "That, paired with the Medical City (in Lake Nona), is going to have everyone wanting to live here. I just think it's so powerful."

Mike Thompson said people can not only take comfort in the fact that they won't have to leave East Orlando to get specialty care but it should also give the community a sense of pride.

"Before, patients had to go downtown or to one of the larger facilities," he said. "There's a certain comfort level that those services are immediately available to you in your community."

The extra rooms will come in handy during the hospital's busy times, such as flu season when the patient tower can reach 100 percent capacity.

"You combine [seasonality] with the surgical specialties we've added, and you see the very high occupancy (more than 80 percent) that we've had over the last six to eight months," Thompson said.

"When people are sick, we see that as our opportunity to be able to meet that need and more and more we are having the ability to meet the community's need at a higher level."

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# Candidates vie for east seats

■ MEGAN STOKES  
Sun Staff

The County Commissioner District 5 seat is up for grabs — a seat that represents parts of east Orange County, including the University of Central Florida, Lake Pickett, Chuluota, Bithlo, Christmas and Wedgefield communities.

Ted Edwards, who currently occupies the seat, won the straw poll at the East Side Regional Hob Nob event on June 26 with 141 votes against his sole opponent Gina Duncan, who gathered 76 votes.

“That was very gratifying,” Edwards said. “We’re just hoping to continue to have the support of the voters in east Orange County for the work we’ve been doing.”

Edwards said if elected, his focus in east Orange County will be roads — he’s been working to push the widening of State Road 50 from Dean Road to Old Cheney Highway forward and is now promoting the widening from Old Cheney to State Road 520. He said his other big issues are job creation, public safety with a focus on the recent spike in property crimes, the prohibition of simulated gambling and getting more services to the Bithlo community, specifically public water, if it’s wanted.

“The majority of residents



PHOTO BY REBECCA MALES  
Several East Orlando residents are battling for open national, state and local political seats, including a Timber Creek teacher.

didn’t want public water 10 years ago when we last looked at it, but I think we need to take another look now,” he said. “Not everyone wants to have city water and pay monthly water bills.”

But his opponent said the commissioner has not done enough for Bithlo during his tenure. Duncan has begun working with Tim

McKinney, a long-time advocate for the community, and said the fact that the housing, environmental and transportation conditions are still subpar in Bithlo is evidence that new leadership is needed.

“What strikes me is my opponent has been in office for 10 years and Bithlo is still neglect-

ed,” she said.

She’s begun work with Habitat for Humanity and local municipalities to plan ways to get better housing into the community.

Duncan said she was able to collect the 1,100 signatures needed to qualify as a candidate in less than 90 days because of her message, which revolves around bringing government to the people — something she said resonates in east Orange County, which is far from downtown Or-

■ Please see **HOB NOB** on page 6

## Straw poll outcomes

Local politicians took the August and November elections for a test drive at the East Side Regional Hob Nob on June 26 at UCF, answering questions that could only come locally. The event, hosted by the Oviedo-Winter Springs Regional Chamber of Commerce and East Orlando Chamber of Commerce, was a catch-most roundup of politicians competing for posts in Orange and Seminole counties.

But what kept attendees on the edge of their seats for four hours was a straw poll that summed up the leanings of nearly 450 voters from the two counties.

Find the winner and runner up for each district that affects East Orlando:

### Congressional District 7

John Mica—229 votes  
Sandy Adams—157 votes

### Congressional District 8

Bill Posey—164 votes  
Shannon Roberts—59 votes

### Congressional District 9

John Quinones—73 votes  
Todd Long—67 votes

### Florida Senate District 13

Andy Gardiner—186 votes  
Christopher Pennington—49 votes

### Florida Senate District 50

Tom Goodson—151 votes  
Sean Ashby—70 votes

### Orange County Commissioner District 3

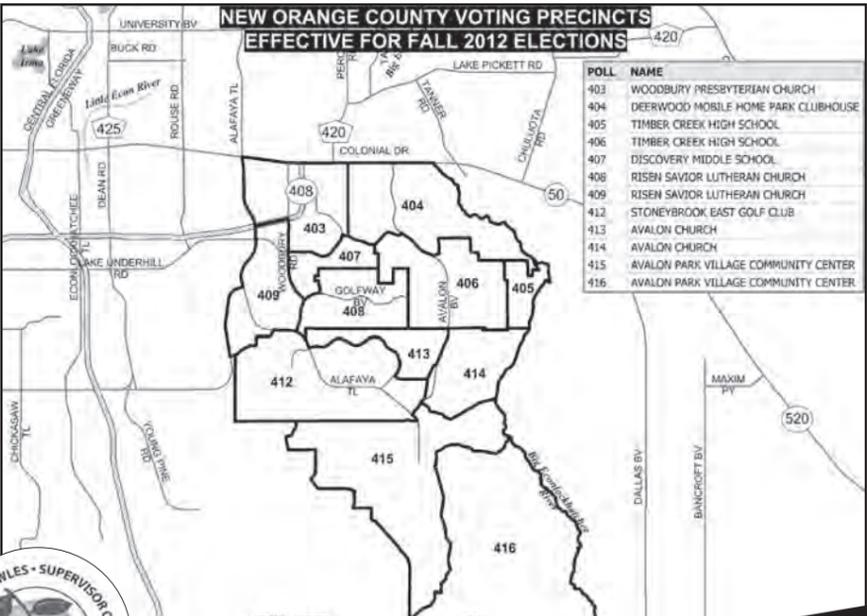
Lui Damiani—65 votes  
Pete Clark—55

### Orange County Commissioner District 5

Ted Edwards—141 votes  
Gina Duncan—76 votes

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**HOB NOB**

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

lando where the Commission meets.

"I plan to host a town hall meeting once a month in all areas of the district. They should know their commissioner..." said the retired banker who's now a silent partner in a travel business.

While Orange County District 5's boundaries stayed largely the same, a slew of new state and federal districts has changed the political map in east Orange County, with districts moving and putting some old faces in the running for new seats.

The ballots themselves may look familiar and the process of checking boxes may be the same, but the district numbers next to the candidates and who's representing which parts of our cities, in many cases, will be very different.

The new U.S. House District 7 was formed by the melding of some of U.S. House District 24, currently represented by east Orange County resident Sandy Adams, into some of the old District 7, represented by Orange County resident John Mica. The new District 7 spans all of Semi-

To learn more about the redistricting and which district you now live in and to get more information on candidates, visit [www.ocfelections.com](http://www.ocfelections.com). On this website you can also find information on how to update your voter registration before the Aug. 14 primary election.

nole County, some of east Orange County, including Bithlo, Maitland and sections of Winter Park. The two Republican incumbents will face each other in the primary election on Aug. 14.

In November, they'll face the winner of the Democratic primary between Jason Kendall and Nicholas Ruiz, and the independent write-in candidate Fred Marra. None of those three currently hold office.

Another political hopeful living in East Orlando is Sean Ashby, an Avalon Park resident who teaches at Timber Creek High School and is running for Florida Senate District 50. He said his experience in the classroom has made him a better public speaker on the campaign trail. It's even given his students with interest in local government some campaign experience.

"I teach American govern-



PHOTO BY ISAAC BABCOCK

Orange County District 5 Commissioner Ted Edwards, second from right, poses with friends at the East Side Hob Nob.

ment, law studies and economics. Some of my students have pitched in and helped me with the campaign, which has been great," he said.

Another East Orlando resident running for state office is Marco Pena, who lives in the Lake Pick-

ett area. While campaigning for Florida House District 49, Pena said the biggest concerns he's head from voters is about jobs and the economy and the state of education in Florida.

"I plan to work with small business incubators to give peo-

ple a start who have great ideas," he said.

"As for education, the first thing I'm going to do in Tallahassee is take a hard look at FCAT and make sure it's helping our students learn better. We need to invest in education in this state."

**KJ**

■ CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

books 10 years from now. We're really paving the way for medical education," said the teen, dressed in a 2011 band T-shirt and basketball shorts and fingering his smart phone.

KJ said he wants to have an impact on people's lives and surgery is the most direct way to do that.

"You're fixing them. You can't get more direct than that," he said.

Fueling his drive to fix people is Evan Campbell, a family friend in Ohio who, at age 16, was in a roll-over car crash that left him a quadriplegic from a fractured neck and a severe spinal cord injury.

The crash happened in 2010 and with intense physical therapy, Evan has been vastly improving,

getting stronger every day and slowly gaining back some of his independence. For him, being able to keep his body upright in a car when the driver brakes abruptly is a huge accomplishment.

KJ is happy for his friend's progress but said that no one should have their lives taken away like that after a car crash, and he's going to be a part of the medical community that will make sure that in the future, no one does.

"He and I are really similar and seeing how active he was and then seeing everything taken away, I wouldn't want anyone to go through what he's gone through," KJ said, his eyes narrowing. "It got me thinking that I don't want anyone to have to deal with those issues."

Last year, KJ and his family and friends organized a garage sale and raised \$5,000, which

helped alleviate some of Evan's treatment costs.

"For someone to take all that time out for me even when he's so many miles away, it shows a lot of character," Evan said about KJ.

KJ and his family didn't stop the day of the sale. They continued to collect items and sell them online through December of last year. The idea that giving back is a duty, not a choice, is ingrained in the whole family. In fact, they and several other families host a giveaway every Christmas Eve in an impoverished community in west Orlando.

"It's important to give back, and it's very fulfilling. It's such a good feeling to have an impact on someone's life, to put a smile on someone's face. You can't beat that," KJ said.

Now the family is planning another garage sale, collecting furniture and other items with a goal to make this event even better than last year's. He said Evan not only inspires him professionally, his

*"Even right after the accident he was joking around, trying to keep everyone around him happy."  
- KJ McCall*

positive attitude is infectious too. "He's always been positive. Even right after the accident he was joking around, trying to keep everyone around him happy," KJ said. "All that he's been through and he doesn't let it affect his demeanor. We deal with little problems on a day-to-day basis and let it tear us down."

He plans to summon Evan's positive energy if he gets too overwhelmed with the 20-hour course load he plans to take on each semester at Xavier — a plan his mother is confident KJ will be able to handle.

Sandra McCall said her son has always been determined, a trait that's most evident in his music. When he started playing the saxophone in fifth grade, Sandra said he would practice a single note over and over again until he got it right.

He continued playing through high school and will play at Xavier through his double major.

"We never told him to practice. I would tell him, 'You have to go to sleep' because he would practice until he got it perfect. I'm going to miss the sound of him working hard," she said about him leaving for college.

Some of that motivation also comes from an intense yet playful competition between KJ and his father, Kirk. They're very similar: Kirk was accepted into medical school but went into nuclear pharmacy. He also played the saxophone in high school and college and said KJ keeps suggesting a play-off.

"Fortunately for him, I haven't taken him up on any of his challenges," Kirk said through a smile. "He's in the works so I'm trying to elevate his game."

Despite their competitiveness, Kirk is quick to compliment his son's talent and intelligence.

"As a parent, it's always gratifying to see your child show an interest in anything. You want them to be happy. This is an opportunity to make some huge contributions to the community. We're really proud of him," he said.

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**Correction**

In the story "East scored well on FCAT," which ran in the June 1-July 5 issue of the Sun, it was reported that 82 percent of Stone Lakes Elementary fourth-graders scored a 4 on the FCAT or higher when it was actually 52 percent. The figure was confused with the 82 percent of the students who scored a 3.5 or higher on the FCAT.

# Solutions for 'dangerous' Bithlo bridge

Political heat gets ball rolling on bridge heavily used by Bithlo

■ MEGAN STOKES  
Sun Staff

Wind off a tractor trailer truck hit Jacob Hyers with enough force to make him sway toward the rail of the bridge — Womp!

The 19-year-old from Bithlo said he walks the State Road 50 bridge just east of Avalon Park Boulevard on a regular basis but still, it's unnerving.

"It's really dangerous. I always feel like I might get hit," Hyers said, crossing the bridge after visiting a friend.

"There's no other place to cross. There's a swamp down there you can't cross," he said pointing to the Econlockhatchee River below the bridge.

The state is researching temporary methods to make the bridge safer and should have a plan in the next few months, said Gene Ferguson, Florida Department of Transportation's MetroPlan Orlando liaison.

He said the most promising solution seems to be adding a platform onto the side of the existing bridge for pedestrians. This would likely not require obtaining any right of way or permits and the estimated construction time is one year. Ferguson said he's not sure how long it would take to design.

The bridge, which is a four-lane road with about a foot-wide shoulder, isn't currently set for a makeover until 2018 when the state plans to add one lane in each direction to S.R. 50 from Old Cheney Highway to State Road 520.

"Old Cheney Highway to S.R. 520 is on the MPO-prioritized project list ranked No. 10, which means there are nine projects ahead of it," Ferguson said. "Over



PHOTO BY MEGAN STOKES

Jacob Hyers said this dangerous bridge is the only way to cross into other communities. Below, John Mica, Marco Pena and Sean Ashby check out the bridge up close.

\$300 million is needed for those nine other projects. In a good year, the department can pick off several projects but with the way government budgets are these days, it's kind of hard to project."

Officials were also looking into lumping permanent bridge work into the larger plan to widen S.R. 50 to six lanes from Dean Road to Old Cheney Highway — which is just shy of the bridge. That project, carrying an estimated price tag of \$54 million, will go out to bid in July 2013 with construction likely to start in October. Ferguson said a project of that scale

usually takes about two years to complete.

"The bridge is not a part of the project. It's not something you can just throw out and do at the same time as this road project," he said.

He said a permanent solution to that bridge would take one to two years to design and would likely require obtaining right of way and permits. "The soonest we could do things there would be three years roughly and it could be longer."

### In the political crossfire

The bridge caught the attention of Congressman John Mica, who went out to visit the bridge, only walking a few feet out once he saw the conditions there, and of his challenger, Congresswoman Sandy Adams, who said she travels the bridge by car on a regular basis as an east Orange County resident and said she's horrified to not only see people crossing it on foot and bicycle but also by skateboard.

Standing on the bridge with tousled hair from a trailer truck that had just roared by, Congressman John Mica said last month that he's putting his foot down.

"I've driven over this bridge several times but standing on it, I never realized how serious this is to pedestrian safety," he said. "This bridge has to be made a top priority."

Tim McKinney, United Global Outreach executive vice president, who has been lobbying local, state and federal officials to do something about the bridge and Bithlo's many other transportation needs since he started advocating for the community in 2009, said the bridge affects Bithlo residents most because of a lack of public and private transportation. Many Bithlo residents must travel by foot.

Orange County District 5 Com-

*"I've driven over this bridge several times, but standing on it I never realized how serious this is to pedestrian safety," Mica said. "This bridge has to be made a top priority."*

missioner Ted Edwards, whose seat is also being contested this election year, said he's surprised the bridge gets much foot traffic considering the amenities in Chuluota, which is between Bithlo and the bridge. He agreed that the bridge is antiquated and due for restructuring.

"It's certainly an old bridge. It's been there since 1948, and the last time they added two more lanes to it was in '64," he said. "That's the condition it's been in for years. My concern is more the

entire widening of 50 in east Orange County, which was delayed due to budgetary cuts."

His opponent for District 5, Gina Duncan, said Edwards' attitude toward the bridge is a reflection of how he's handled Bithlo issues in the past. But Edwards said the bridge isn't even in Bithlo and therefore is not a Bithlo issue.

"The commissioner is from Winter Park and the bridges in that part of town are not the kind of bridge that's over the Econ there," Duncan said.



## Rotary Business of the Month

### Orlando School of Music

July's Rotary Business of the Month is Orlando School of Music, with studios in Avalon Park, Waterford and East Colonial. OSM offers its musical talents to the community on a regular basis, whether it's performing for East Orlando schools, organizing a rock concert for the community or playing their annual Drums in the Park event. Owner John Kolbrich said it not only benefits the community, it also gives his students the practice they need. OSM is also a Partner in Education, giving monetary donations to local schools or hosting teacher breakfasts to show appreciation. And since many schools have had to cut their budget for music programs, OSM brings a team of teachers to schools in need to help introduce music to students.

Orlando School of Music has locations in East Orlando at 4968 E. Colonial Drive (321-281-8386), Waterford at 11333 Lake Underhill, Ste. 104 (407-447-7272) and Avalon at 12001 Avalon Lake Drive, Suite E1 (407-770-0323). Visit [avalonschoolofmusic.com](http://avalonschoolofmusic.com)



(Left to right) Rotary of Avalon Park's Jim Foulks, Orlando School of Music Owner John Kolbrich and Manager Natalie Reinsel

Co-sponsored by the Rotary Club of Avalon Park, the East Orlando Sun and Pinnacle Awards & 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).

# Cuts at Space Coast hit home in East Orlando

■ DAVE CARRIERE  
Sun Staff

Steve Walker knew for months that the layoffs were coming. But he was still in shock on a Friday in April of last year when he cleaned out his desk, reminiscing with coworkers over photos of past launch missions — signed by the astronauts and members of his team — before packing them in a cardboard box. After 27 years at United Space Alliance, he would never work with the space shuttle again.

"[It was] tough going through it, knowing I wouldn't be going back to work on Monday," Walker said.

When the shuttle program was retired, thousands of workers were laid off at NASA and companies that did work for the space program, such as United Space Alliance — the main contractor for Kennedy Space Center's shuttle work.

"Not having a job, not having that security of knowing you're gonna be working — it was a little difficult to handle," Walker said. "But you save up as much as you can and you go on from there."

The shuttle program was located in Brevard County, but the job losses greatly impacted other communities such as East Orlando. Walker, who lives in Waterford Lakes, says he and many of his coworkers commuted from

the area before they lost their jobs.

Walker said he saw many people have to choose between staying in East Orlando and finding work elsewhere to support themselves and their families.

"A lot of people have gone on to other jobs, just spread out to other parts of the state, other parts of the country," Walker said.

Sean Snaith, a University of Central Florida economist, said that the "economic ripples" from the Space Coast have left a sizable gap in Central Florida's economy.

"A lot of the industry was highly specialized for the space shuttle itself," Snaith said. "Those losses are going to be a little tougher to recuperate. It's a pretty big hole in the region's economy to fill in."

Attempts are being made in East Orlando to evolve with the changing space industry and begin to recuperate some losses.

On May 23, the UCF-based Florida Space Institute announced that it had selected nine UCF and University of Florida research projects that will receive a total of \$400,000 from the institute for research into space industry-related topics through its Space Research Initiative.

The Florida Space Institute is trying to broaden the space industry in Central Florida to include private companies as well as NASA.



UCF Engineering Professor Xun Gong's space project earned an \$80,000 grant.

Xun Gong, a UCF electrical engineering professor, leads a group of graduate students on a project that received \$80,000 from the initiative grants. The group is researching a design for an antenna that is more practical for communicating with vehicles traveling in space.

Gong said that while the NASA space shuttle program was a huge part of the space industry, it wasn't the only part.

"The Kennedy Space Center retired the shuttle program, but there's still a lot of activities going on," he said. "At the end of the day, they just shifted their focus. They're still doing a lot of research."

The research being done at the university level, Gong said, is important because researchers at universities can take risks and do more with less money due to smaller facilities and fewer employees to pay.

Walker, who knows firsthand that the space industry is changing, said that research like UCF's can spur economic growth and generate interest in the field for technological advances.

"Research is where breakthroughs come from," he said. "It'll be good for creating jobs, but it's also good for getting people into aerospace careers."

Programs like the Space Research Initiative can't fully make up for the economic loss Central Florida suffered when the shuttle program was retired.

Snaith said that while private companies like SpaceX, which

Funding for the Florida Space Institute is provided by the University of Central Florida, as well as grants generated by institute members whose proposals have been accepted by agencies such as NASA, the Department of Defense and the National Science Foundation. It was founded by UCF and moved from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral to UCF's Research Park during the last week of June.

recently sent its own unmanned capsule to the International Space Station and back successfully, have made some progress and demanded research from Central Florida industry specialists, it will be a while until that gap closes, if it ever does close completely.

"It obviously won't be an easy recovery," Snaith said. "The question is: How long will it take?"

The changes in the space industry have caused some workers to switch fields completely. Walker, at age 55, now attends Winter Park Tech for certifications in the computer-technology industry.

He hopes to finish his studies at the end of this year and go on to a career in the IT field, although he misses working in the space industry.

"It gets to be a job, but you realize, too, that you're around a vehicle that goes into space," Walker said. "It was exciting being out there and being able to work with the program."

This year the March of Dimes Central Florida Division will honor nurses, the unsung heroes of healthcare, by hosting its first-ever Nurse of the Year awards. Kicking off with nomination process on July 2nd, co-workers, supervisors, and other health professionals can nominate registered nurses, nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, and licensed practical nurses. Self-nominations are also encouraged. The nursing profession has played a key role in the history and success of the March of Dimes dating back to our founding in 1938. March of Dimes salutes and recognizes nurses in their leadership and service in the health care community

The Nurse of the Year awards will be presented in 15 categories during an evening celebration at the Walt Disney World Dolphin and Swan Resort on Saturday, November 10, 2012. Nurses who work in Orange, Seminole and Osceola counties who demonstrate excellence in providing care, comfort, and support to patients can be nominated in the following categories:

**Advance Practice** – Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certified Nurse Midwife, Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Anesthetist or Nurse Psychotherapist

**Clinical / Academic Education** – Made significant contributions in clinical nurse education, professional development, and have advanced research, theory generation and the development of nurses at entry level, graduate level and doctoral

**Community / Mental Health / Ambulatory Care** – Public health, clinic, office and other ambulatory care settings and/or school health, transplant coordinators, mental health, parish and correctional nursing.

**Critical Care / Surgical Services** – Special procedures, Perioperative, Preoperative, Interventional radiology, Day surgery, Catha Lab, OR, PTCA, PACU, OR, NICU, PICU and Endoscopy.

**Emergency / Trauma** – Flight, ambulance, pre-hospital, and telephone triage, pediatric ER and ER

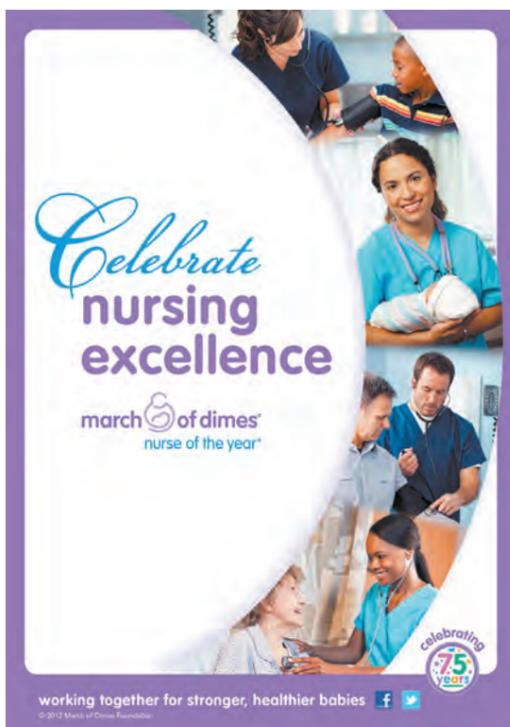
**Hospice / Home Health / Palliative Care** – Inpatient/outpatient hospice settings, nursing homes, health care settings, specialty long term acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities and acute rehabilitation

**Leadership / Executive** – An entrepreneur, researcher, consultant, CNE, CNO, VP, Administrative Director or Department Director

**Leadership / Managers** – Demonstrate exceptional leadership in management in patient care, including general medical/surgical or specialty unit areas that function in staff leadership roles.

**Medical / Surgical** – Nurse who is dependent upon specialty for either category; medical, surgical, orthopedics, neurological, renal, respiratory, cardiovascular, adult and pediatric

**Pediatric / Adolescent Health** – Nursery, general pediatric units, pediatric clinics, pediatric oncology



**Quality / Risk and Case Management / Care Coordination** – Nurse advocate for patient admissions to specialty units/programs, perform assessments, performance improvement, quality management, risk management, informatics, patient advocate and patient safety

**Rising Star** – Nurse who within the first 2 years of practice exemplify outstanding caring, leadership and professionalism

**Student Nurse / undergraduate** – Student enrolled in a nursing preparatory program showing great promise

**Student Nurse / graduate** – Student enrolled in a graduate nursing program or nurse enrolled in a graduate program in a related discipline (e.g., MPH) showing great promise.

To nominate a nurse, visit [marchofdimes.com/florida](http://marchofdimes.com/florida) and complete the nomination form. The deadline for nominations is September 3, 2012. After a nomination is received, an application packet will be sent to the nominee for completion. The Selection Committee will review blinded applications and reserve the right to consolidate or change categories without notice.

The Nurse of the Year is sponsored by FloridaMD, East Orlando Sun, Seminole Voice, Winter Park/Maitland Observer and Baldwin Park Living Magazine. For additional information on the event, please contact Angela Alexander at 305-477-1192 or [aaalexander@marchofdimes.com](mailto:aaalexander@marchofdimes.com).

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# Family strong

East River graduate thanks family for talent, achievement

■ ALICIA ROSE DELGALLO  
Sun Staff

Battling through single-elimination games in the playoffs this year, the Timber Creek boys volleyball team made it all the way to the state championship where they fought the undefeated defending champion Southwest Miami and won, finishing with a perfect (30-0) season. But it was an experience that one original member of the starting lineup would not share.

Tito Rodriguez could have had the opportunity to start in the playoff games and possibly the state championship game as a star member of Timber Creek's JV volleyball team, but a C in advanced placement geography kept him in the bleachers.

"The rule was that if I got a bad grade then they (his parents) would have to take me off the team, so that's what they did," he said. "They follow through on everything."

Rodriguez worked hard to bring his grade up, and when he transferred to the newly built East River High School the following year, was allowed to again try-out for the volleyball team.

Now, three years later, Rodriguez is a recent graduate of East River's class of 2012. He graduated third in his class with a 4.88 GPA. He also graduated as the captain of the volleyball team, and was honored as the All-Academic athlete for the East Metro Conference. The award is given to the athlete with the highest GPA out of 10 schools in the Metro.

"I thought there had to be somebody else that was in a better position than me, academically and athletically, to win this award," Rodriguez said. "But when they told me it was actually me... it was very surreal and I was at a loss for words."

The honor may have surprised Rodriguez, but it didn't surprise his volleyball coach. "From the first time I met Tito, I could tell that he was different from other kids," East River coach Maureen Brennan said. "There was just something about him. I guess he just has 'it,' whatever that is."

That "it" allowed Rodriguez to succeed in academics after his freshman year stumble, and go on to lead the East River volleyball team (17-5) to their first district appearance, becoming their most valuable player and racking up the most kills (171) on the team. He was also nominated to the Orange County All-Star team and the All-Central Florida third team.

But Rodriguez doesn't believe the "it" has to do with him at all — he credits his strong family values and spirituality for everything he has achieved.

As the youngest of four children, he is part of a large, closely knit family. Multiple cars line the driveway, but there's no party inside, just everyday life for Rodriguez. He lives with his parents, older brother, two sisters and three very large dogs. His grandparents live in a house behind theirs, and his aunt, along with four cousins, live next door.

The family attends Iglesia Morada de



PHOTO BY ALICIA ROSE DELGALLO

Tito Rodriguez was named All-Academic athlete for the East Metro Conference for his stellar grades.

Dios, a Reformed Christian church, three times a week. Rodriguez has volunteered more than an hour of his time every week since 2006 to clean the church.

"The way I was raised, I know that all my accomplishments, so to say, were not my doing," Rodriguez explained, "It was God who allowed me to accomplish these things; it's humbling. It doesn't let my head get too big."

His mother, Diana, explained that, among many other ideas, they believe everything happens for a reason, and it is important not to dwell on failures and successes, but to see lessons in them. Their family values also place a high priority on academics.

"I don't like the stereotype that a sports person has to be dumb. Why can you not have one and the other?" Diana asked. "So we push him, like OK, you can have volleyball, but you have to have a brain."

Rodriguez' father, Carlos, agreed.

"When it comes to values, we don't let him choose much, we guide him, but everything else he chooses," Carlos said, insisting that their children are not held back from expressing themselves. Laughing, he pulled a photo off the wall showing his daughter at prom sporting a bleached blonde mohawk and black bands of makeup across her eyes to prove his point.

Although Tito had several options, he chose to attend the University of Central Florida on an academic scholarship in the fall. There, he will continue to play volleyball on the school's club team, while majoring in biomedical science. He plans to continue living at home for the next four years, before heading off to medical school.

"I'm not sure what kind of doctor I want to be," he admits, "but for the purpose of giving an answer, I say general practitioner. That may change in the future."

He'll see where life, and his faith, lead him.



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### ABOUT JOSE

Jose is first and foremost a loving father to his two young children. He participates in their extracurricular activities, helps them study for school and coached youth soccer for 7 years.

Jose speaks fluent Spanish and is conversational in Portuguese.

He is a member of St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church in Winter Park. As a 55-year-old father of two, he has the life experiences necessary to serve as your Circuit Judge.

### BUSINESS BACKGROUND

Jose has been a sole practitioner attorney in Orange and Osceola counties for the last 21 years. This means taking care of payroll, insurance coverage and finding new clients. His quick smile and friendly demeanor have won him many friends throughout the community and in our courthouses.

Before becoming an attorney, Jose worked in marketing management for R.J. Reynolds and British American Tobacco — both domestically and in the international divisions.

### LEGAL BACKGROUND

Jose started his legal career working for the Orange Osceola State Attorney as a prosecutor. He tried hundreds of cases over 3 years. He knew he wanted to be a lawyer who spent his days in the courtroom and decided to open his own practice specializing in criminal defense. He has helped many thousands and tried over 250 cases since opening his own firm. Jose is also admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court in Washington D.C. Since 2002.

### EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon
- Masters in Business Administration from Thunderbird School of Global Management in Glendale, Arizona
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# Waterford CAN marks first year

■ DAVE CARRIERE  
Sun Staff

Every Monday morning, Bill Tobin hands out bags of food to people in line at the Woodbury Presbyterian Church food pantry — a line that sometimes stretches out the door. He leaves when the pantry closes with his own bag of food.

After falling from a tree while doing work for his small landscaping and tree-cutting business, Tobin began experiencing epileptic seizures and was put on disability. He lost the business and now his disability checks barely pay the rent at his cramped East Orlando apartment, let alone feed his family of seven, which include growing teenage boys.

“What do you tell your kids when they’re starving?” he asks, his voice lowered.

He said he thanks God that there is a place like Woodbury for him to go to get food.

“If it wasn’t for the church I don’t know how I would have done it,” Tobin said.

Tobin’s family of seven is just one of the more than 200 families that depend weekly on the church for food. A small percentage of the donations to Woodbury Presbyterian come from Waterford Lakes residents through their food-donation program Waterford CAN, which marked its first full year in June.

At 9 a.m. on the last Saturday of each month, when some people might still be enjoying a morning cup of coffee, about 30 volunteers spread through the 26 subdivisions that make up Waterford Lakes, picking up bags of canned goods and other

Waterford CAN collects donations on the first Saturday of each month from every neighborhood in Waterford Lakes. Donations can also be left at the Waterford Lakes Community Association office at 453 Mark Twain Blvd., Orlando. For more information about what and how to donate, call Jamie Rodriguez at 407-380-3803 or email [jamie.rodriguez@mywaterfordlakes.org](mailto:jamie.rodriguez@mywaterfordlakes.org)

non-perishable foods that their neighbors have left at the end of their driveways.

After they’ve done their rounds, they load a truck heading to Spirit of Joy Church with a bounty that will be distributed to five East Orlando food pantries, including Woodbury Presbyterian.

More than 8,500 cans have been collected through the program — about 300-500 cans a month. Volunteers consider that a success but wish more residents would get involved. They said that if every household in Waterford Lakes donated just one can, they’d collect their goal of 3,380 cans a month.

Dolly Warfel, a Waterford CAN volunteer, said she’s glad to help such a worthy cause and her only disappointment is that in such a big community, there aren’t more donations to collect.

“I don’t think it’s because the community doesn’t care,” Warfel said. “I think they just forget (to donate).”

Eric Hoyer goes the extra mile to motivate people in the neighborhood he lives in to give. Each month before collection, the Timber Creek High School freshman leaves



PHOTO BY DAVE CARRIERE

Volunteers at Woodbury Presbyterian Church give food to hundreds of hungry people each week.

a bag for donations on every door in the Barrington neighborhood with a note attached telling residents how much people in need appreciate their donations. Barrington is the program’s top contributor.

Carolyn Skok, Waterford CAN project co-chair, said she admires all of the volunteers for their service.

“It wouldn’t be a success without the volunteers,” Skok said. “They’re dedicated.”

Warfel said she appreciates the chance she gets to connect with her neighbors whom she may not have met otherwise, all while helping people who are in need.

“I really think it’s a worthy cause, especially the way things are nowadays,” Warfel said. “It’s not a chore to do it.”

Although they rarely get to see who the

donations go to, the Waterford CAN volunteers know that the food is desperately needed and appreciated by people right in the Waterford and East Orlando community. They said they’ve received notes attached to donations from people saying that at one time they were in a position where they needed food, and that they were happy to return the favor.

Tobin, who can say firsthand how far food from Waterford CAN and other organizations goes, is grateful for the generosity shown by people in East Orlando. To him, it means he might be able to feed his family for another week.

“A lot of people don’t realize we take so many things for granted,” he said. “[The people who donate] definitely do a great job. They help out so many families.”

## Play in the Mudd for stronger, healthier babies

The 20th Annual March of Dimes Mudd Volleyball Challenge is set for Saturday, August 25, 2012 at the Lee Vista Field. Gates open at 7am and play begins at 9am. To register, visit [mudvb.com](http://mudvb.com) and click the Register Button, or call 321-274-8676 for more information.

[marchofdimes.com/florida](http://marchofdimes.com/florida)

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Food Truck Crazy

**JULY**  
There will be **free adult dance classes** during the week of July 9-13 at Avalon Dance, 12001 Avalon Lake Drive, Orlando. Classes include dance conditioning, adult ballet, modern/jazz and hip-hop. For more information, visit [avalondance.net](http://avalondance.net) or call 407-380-3444. The studio will also offer a musical theater camp from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. July 9-13. The camp costs \$155, and registration is required. For more information, visit [avalondance.net](http://avalondance.net) or call 407-380-3444.

Avalon Park resident Tina Culbreth will participate in the **Susan G. Komen 3-Day walk** beginning July 27 in Boston to raise money to help find a cure for breast cancer in honor of her best friend who lost her battle with the disease. Culbreth has committed to walk the full 60 miles and has agreed to raise a minimum of \$2,300. To support Culbreth and her goal, find her page on [www.the3day.org](http://www.the3day.org) or call 800-996-3329.

**JULY 8**  
**Food Truck Crazy** will return to Oviedo from 4-8 p.m. Sunday, July 8 at the Oviedo Mall, 1700 Oviedo Mall Blvd., Oviedo. The event will feature

20 affordable gourmet food trucks, five of which will be making their first appearance at Food Truck Crazy. Parents are encouraged to bring their families to the safe, kid-friendly event. Patrons can also bring tables and chairs.

**The Florida Flight basketball team**, East Orlando's semi-pro team, will play the Tampa Bay Rebels at 5 p.m. Sunday, July 8 at Avalon Middle School, 13914 Mailer Blvd., Orlando. Tickets can be purchased on game day for \$10. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [flighthoops.com](http://flighthoops.com) or call 407-592-9841.

**JULY 11**  
**A free screening of the children's film "Meet the Robinsons"** will be shown at 10 a.m. Wednesday, July 11 at Avalon Church, 13460 Tanja King Blvd., Orlando. All children are welcome with an adult chaperone. For more information about Free Movie Wednesdays, visit [www.avalonchurch.org](http://www.avalonchurch.org)

**JULY 12**  
Avalon Park Accounting will host a

**small-business social** from 6-9 p.m. Thursday, July 12 at Margarita's Grill, 3891 E. Avalon Park Blvd., Orlando. Small-business owners and self-employed professionals of East Orlando can meet and network, and APA will introduce its Smart Start-Up program. There will be drink specials all night for guests. For more information or to RSVP, call 321-221-0175.

**JULY 14**  
There will be a **debate for 9th Congressional District candidates** from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Saturday, July 14 at Avalon Church, 13460 Tanja King Blvd., Orlando. For more information, email [npwagner001@gmail.com](mailto:npwagner001@gmail.com)

**Florida Flight plays the Palm Beach Titans** at 5 p.m. Saturday, July 14 at Avalon Middle School, 13914 Mailer Blvd., Orlando. Tickets can be purchased on game day for \$10. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [flighthoops.com](http://flighthoops.com) or call 407-592-9841.

**JULY 18**  
**A free screening of the children's film "Tangled"** will be shown at 10 a.m. Wednesday, July 18 at Avalon Church, 13460 Tanja King Blvd., Orlando. All children are welcome with an adult chaperone. For more information about Free Movie Wednesdays, visit [www.avalonchurch.org](http://www.avalonchurch.org)

**JULY 19**  
**A Career and Wellness Expo** will



Baby Squirrel Shower

be held at 10 a.m. Thursday, July 19 at Florida Technical College, 12900 Challenger Pkwy., Orlando. The expo will include employers, job opportunities, food and refreshments, giveaways and a children's area with activities. Children can receive a free back-to-school physical exam.

The East Orlando Chamber of Commerce will host their bi-monthly **Coffee Club**, a networking event that attracts 50-80 people from East Orlando, from 8:30-9:30 a.m. Thursday, July 19 at Fairwinds Credit Union, 3087 N. Alafaya Trail, Orlando. The speaker will be Dan Richards talking about "Dreamscaping." For more information, contact Gege at 407-277-5951 or [gege@eocc.org](mailto:gege@eocc.org)

**JULY 21**  
Orange County's **18th annual Community Conference** is from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, July 21, at the Orange County Renaissance Senior Center, 3800 S. Econlockhatchee Trail, Orlando. There will be educational workshops about Orange County services, opportunities to share new ideas for preserving and enhancing the quality of life in county neighborhoods and a crime prevention workshop by Deputy Stanley

Murray of the Orange County Sheriff's Department. A light breakfast and lunch are included with admission. Registration is \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. For more information, call 407-836-5606 or visit [www.ocfl.net](http://www.ocfl.net)

**JULY 28**  
Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge's Third Annual **Baby Squirrel Shower** is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, July 28 at the Refuge, 18515 E. Colonial Drive, Orlando. There will be food, raffles, a silent auction, arts and crafts, a bake sale and face painting—all to help raise funds and awareness for baby squirrel season, which means about 600 squirrels in need, some of the youngest needing expensive formula and round-the-clock care, coming to the shelter from Aug. 1-Dec. 31. The cost is a suggested \$5 donation or an item off of the Baby Squirrel Wish List at [BTNwildlife.org/#/wishlist/4538487551](http://BTNwildlife.org/#/wishlist/4538487551)

The following are free events at the Alafaya Branch Library, 12000 E. Colonial Drive, Orlando:  
**Technology Petting Zoo** is at 5 p.m. Wednesday, July 11 and noon. Friday, July 13. Get hands-on experience with downloadable devices like the iPad, Nook, Galaxy, Sony eReader and more. Learn how these devices can be used to download free music, videos and eBooks from the library's collection.  
Learn the **basics of vegetable gardening** in Florida at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 25. Master gardener Ed Thralls will be giving tips on growing and maintaining a vegetable garden. Registration is required. Call 407-835-7481.  
**The Pet Safety Fair** is at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 28. Learn about microchipping, pet adoption, first-aid tips and more. Well-behaved pets are welcome to attend outside events.  
**Learn how to use social-media platforms** like Facebook and twitter to collaborate and share information on the Internet at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 31. Registration is required. Call 407-835-7323.

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# 'Sounds of Summer' in Orlando

## July 9 – Tango Music on Philharmonic's "Sounds of Summer" concert series

Bring on the variety. The Orlando Philharmonic's "Sounds of Summer" chamber music series continues with an all-tango program led by violinist Olga Ferroni and her musical group Kalinka. Formed in 2010, Kalinka performs regularly at Epcot, Downtown Disney and private events, and tangos are its trademark. "Tango combines the glamour of ballroom and the allure of the underground," says Ferroni. Kalinka's July 9 performance will feature classical Argentinean tangos, and the performance will be held at the Shakespeare Center in Loch Haven Park. Call 407-770-0071 or visit OrlandoPhil.org



**Josh Garrick**  
Culture worthy of your calendar

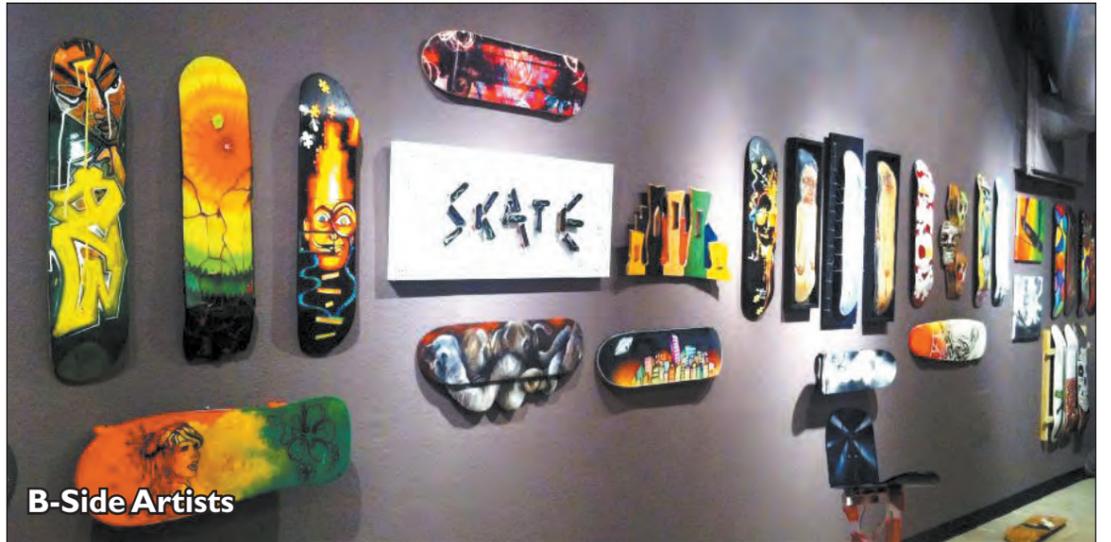
fusion of dance, movement, spoken word, aerial acrobatics and original music. "fragment(ed)" explores the very adult world of love, sex and desire, guilt and rejection, violence and destruction, and ... fragmentation. With direction by John DiDonna, choreography by Mila Makarova, fight choreography by Bill Warriner, and original music by Tod Kimbro "fragment(ed)" will host seven performances from July 12 to July 16 at the Shakespeare Center located in Loch Haven Park. Call 407-328-9005 or for online ticket purchases, visit redchair-project.com

## July 12 to July 16 – Empty Spaces Theatre Co(IIaboration) presents "fragment(ed)"

"fragment(ed)" is the oddly titled sequel to Empty Spaces Theatre Co(IIaboration) with DiDonna Productions' Best Dance winner of the 2011 Fringe Festival. This group is known for original and thought-provoking performances, and this one is a

## July 13 and monthly – Summer Concert Series

Art & History Museums – Maitland (A&H) has begun a "meet your neighbors" Sum-



**B-Side Artists**

mer Concert Series outdoors in A&H's beautiful gardens at 231 W. Packwood Ave. in Maitland. The series, called "Art. Music. Food. Architecture." takes place the second Friday of each month through September. July's concert features Evan Taylor Jones, a soul singer and songwriter whose influences are from blues and funk. Jones is from California and now resides in Orlando. The event is perfect for summer evenings under the stars with music, poetry and an array of food truck fare. Guests bring blankets or chairs, and a bar is available for those who would like a drink or two. The museums stay open, and the atmosphere is welcoming and full of talent. Call 407-539-2181 or visit ArtandHistory.org

## July 14 – Orlando Philharmonic performs "Legend of Zelda" concert

Attention Nintendo gamers and symphony concert-goers! While you may not usually find yourselves in the same audience, the evening of July 14 at 8 p.m. will find you shoulder to shoulder at the Bob Carr PAC for a live orchestral performance of music from Nintendo's "The Legend of Zelda." Conducted by Eimear Noone, the new four-movement symphony recounts the classic storylines from "The Legend of Zelda" along with orchestral music from other series games. Since 1986, "The Legend of Zelda" game series has sold more than 65 million units worldwide. The Orlando Philharmonic, who will perform, is currently celebrating its 20th anniversary season offering a variety of programs from classical and pops concerts, to chamber music, staged musicals and opera productions. Visit orlandophil.org or call 407-770-0071.

## Now through July 29 – "Cinderella" on Shakespeare's stage



**"Cinderella"**

There are many reasons why children of all ages can enjoy the delightful performance of "Cinderella" currently offered by the Shakespeare Festival in Loch Haven Park. There is the parade of young princesses in the audience with "gowns" from Orlando's most famous palace and the autograph signing — with time for each young prince or princess — after the performance, but the most fun is the playwright who has written a pivotal role for himself as a mouse. This fairytale is cleverly told with help from the younger members of the audience as author Brandon Roberts reminds us how a mouse can make things happen in Orlando. The always-inventive Patrick Flick directs this fairytale world. Cinderella is suitable for audiences of all ages as it runs through July 29 at the Shakespeare Center at 812 E. Rollins St. Visit orlando-shakes.org or call 407-447-1700.

## Now through July 13 – B-Side Artists at the City Arts Factory

A group of 'urban pioneers,' the B-Side Artists have brought their talent inside the City Arts Factory in a stunningly original and beautifully produced show that is a must-see for art-lovers of all ages. These artists continue to amaze with their unique style and content. On exhibit through July 13, the City Arts Factory is at 29 S. Orange Ave. in downtown Orlando. Call 407-648-7060 or visit cityartsfactory.com

## Now through Aug. 18 – Witness to Creativity III

The Florida Museum for Women Artists presents the third in its series of installation exhibits called "Witness to Creativity III." Viewers were invited to watch the process of creation as 10 art pieces were installed, engaging the artists as to their projects, work methods and messages. The artists include: Greer Dauphin, Tallahassee; Ofra Friedman, Bradenton; Kathleen Ivers, Lake Helen; Cecilia Lueza, St. Petersburg; Deborah Mitchell, Miami Beach; Mindy Matthews, Sanford; Natasha Nestic, Miami; Deb Paradise, Helena, Ala.; Libby Ware, Port Orange; and Beau Wild, Port Orange. The works will be on view through Aug. 18. The museum is at 100 N. Woodland Blvd. in DeLand. Call 386-873-2976 or visit FloridaMuseumforWomenArtists.org

## Breaking News – ever closer to our new Performing Arts Center

Every time we walk into the Bob Carr we are reminded of how much Orlando needs the new Performing Arts Center being built across from City Hall. This week the builders came up with more good news as they began demolition of the building located on the future site of the Acoustical Theater. This signals the Center's commitment to complete the project, which will open doors to four new theaters including the new performance hall for the Orlando Ballet and the Orlando Philharmonic. Bravos and thanks to Mayor Dyer, Dr. Phillips Center President Kathy Ramsberger and Board Chairman Jim Pugh for making this happen. It's a legacy we will all be proud to share for generations to come.

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. Contact Garrick at joshgarrick9@gmail.com or 407-522-3906.

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# Student goes from no English to a 4.0

■ BRITTON JOHNSON  
Sun Staff

When Hai Nguyen came to the U.S. from Vietnam, the extent of his English language skills were "Hi, how are you?"

After spending the first 13 years of his life living with his grandparents, Nguyen's dad brought him to Florida. His dad moved to the U.S. to make money for his family after his mother died when he was just 1 year old. Nguyen hadn't seen his father in 12 years, and leaving his grandparents, friends and other family was heartbreaking.

"I lost everything when I was coming here, starting a whole new life in the United States," he said.

He made a place in his new family, which now included a stepmother and three older stepbrothers, and adjusted to life in the U.S. through hard work. He spent hours teaching himself English, carrying around a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words he heard, keeping a pen and paper with him to practice by writing down his personal experiences and describing things around him. It was quite a departure from his life in Vietnam of riding bikes to friends' houses and playing soccer, and it hasn't exactly been a fun past few years. But it was the only way he could make it his home.

"He just poured himself into his studies," his math teacher, Michele Casey-Driscoll, said.

"I went through it myself — I had to adapt," his stepbrother Thien Luu said. "It's hard."

Four years later, he's found success. He's an incoming senior at East River High School and his persistence hasn't gone unnoticed. Nguyen's dedication has been recognized by those around him, and he recently won Orange County's English Language Learner Spirit of Excellence Award. He's one of just 50 students given this award out of 30,000 English language learner students in the district.

His first couple years in school were tough, but he hit his stride in his sophomore year, and this past year as a junior, he achieved a 4.0 grade point average. And while he has seen the positive effects of his studying, Nguyen is never comfortable slowing down. His teachers said he spends hours and hours studying, getting up at 4 or 5 a.m. each day and working through the evening. That's just who he is, they said.

"Hai takes every free moment there is to complete his work and ask questions so that he completely understands," Driscoll said. "He works during lunch, he works before school, he works in between classes, and when he goes home, he works for hours again."

He's one of Driscoll's best students, and shows that through helping others in her Algebra II class, but he also always makes sure to ask her questions and

double check his work. He spends lunch at her tutoring sessions, not for help necessarily, but only to be with other students studying.

In his reading class, he writes down every word his teacher, Suzanne Roth, says that he doesn't know, translates it to Vietnamese, and shares it with her, asking for clarification. There's never a moment he's not listening.

"He is just one of those students where he is so motivated, and so determined," Roth said. "Every day knowing that he was so eager and willing to learn — it was truly an inspiration for me as a teacher to work harder for him."

"He leads by example," said Julie Helton, the school's assistant principal.

He's taken on the role of ambassador for two new students from Vietnam, has shown them around, helped them with their English and assisted their parents in filling out paperwork to get them enrolled in classes. Helton hopes next year Nguyen will be able to play a leadership role in a school organization.

"He's very independent and self motivated," said Trung Luu, his stepbrother. "It rubs off on others."

Nguyen wants to help others for the long term. After he graduates he plans to attend Nova Southeastern University and study dentistry.

One day, he wants to be able to go back to Vietnam to visit his



PHOTO BY BRITTON JOHNSON

Nguyen went from knowing four English words to earning a 4.0 in four years.

family, and he said he'll always be there if they need anything. Nguyen hasn't had it easy, but he's always had hope and appreciated the opportunities he

has just by being in America. His advice for others facing the same obstacles is simple:

"Don't let anything stand in your way. Just follow your goal."

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# Sunrise's trash-to-treasure art

Sunrise Elementary unveils bottle-cap mural

■ MEGAN STOKES  
Sun Staff

Two Sunrise Elementary fifth-graders told their classmates how bottle caps are often discarded at recycling centers as trash because they are either made from unrecyclable material or they jam up the center's machines.

Because of this, bottle caps are a huge contributor to the growing garbage problem that's mounting nationwide.

After their sermon, the children unveiled a 200-pound trash-turned treasure mural on June 6 — a project the whole school and the community chipped in on.

Students spent the entire first semester of school last year collecting the caps. They were incentivized by the promise of a smoothie party by Planet Smoothie in the Waterford Lakes Town Center for the class that collected the most caps.

"Planet Smoothie tries to do as much community outreach as possible. Having the kids come out and get involved in the environment is such a wonderful concept," Planet Smoothie General Manager Phil Van Schepen said.

Ana Santos' fifth-grade class

won the party by collecting 70 pounds of bottle caps. She said the kids' love of art and the environment, plus a little competition, motivated them to do their best.

"Every day they'd compare how many each of them brought in," she said.

Abbie McGuire, Sunrise parent and facilitator of the school's environmental club, which spearheaded the project, saw a similar mural in a South Carolina school and pitched it to Sunrise administrators. She was drawn to it not only because it teaches kids to recycle but also because it gave them the opportunity to take on a large-scale project that spanned the entire year.

"The kids were a huge part of the planning — how to advertise it to the school and the community, how to collect the caps, what the prize should be for the winner. They even had a program about it every day on the morning announcements," McGuire said. "The ability these kids had to come up with a lot of ideas and see it through was a big part of this project other than just the art."

After collecting the caps in



PHOTO BY MEGAN STOKES

The 200-pound mural saved thousands of bottle caps from the trash. Students said the caps often get excluded from recycling.

the fall, the school and the community spent the spring semester designing the mural. UCF Engineering student Drew Rossi, 23, donated drawings for the contractors to hang the mural in the school. Because of its weight, there were some safety concerns about children pulling it down or hanging on it.

The Avalon Park resident said his professor sent an invitation to work on the project to all students involved in the American Society of Civil Engineers and Rossi jumped on the chance.

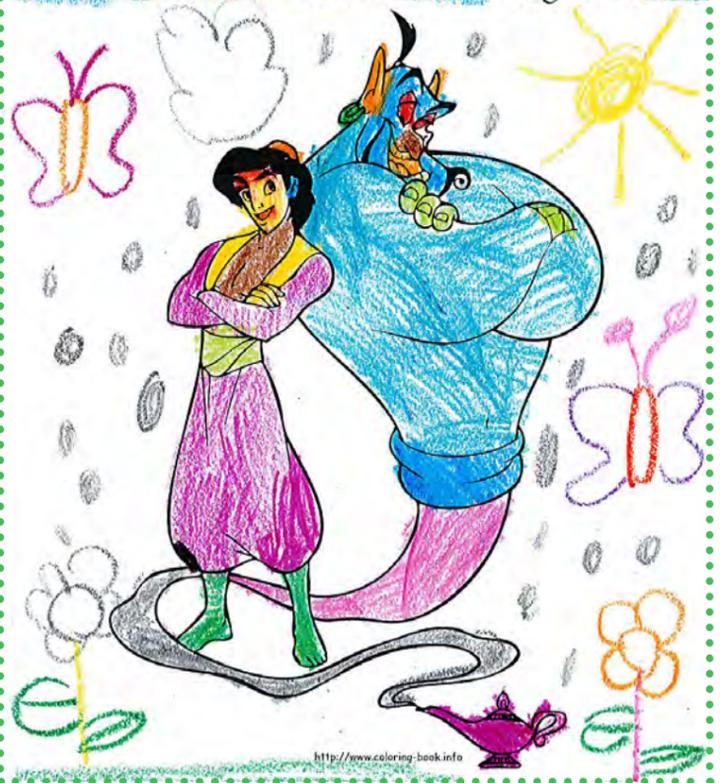
"Anything that teaches kids and people in the community about recycling is a good thing.

■ Please see **SUNRISE** on page 16

## COLORING CONTEST WINNER!

Allison Lee from Timber Lakes Elementary got four tickets to see Magic Curtain Production's "Aladdin" for winning the East Orlando Sun's coloring contest.

EAST ORLANDO SUN Aladdin Coloring Contest!



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School News

Avalon Middle School students **Cesar Olmeda, Isabel Aviles, Kayla Ortiz, Ankit Vishnubhotla, Michael Hoffman, Giana Ortiz, Caleb Diaz** and **Clyde Bujari**, were honored at the University of Florida Recognition Ceremony for the Duke University Talent Identification Program.

**Kumon Math and Reading Center** hosted its inaugural award ceremony at Sunrise Elementary School on June 9. **Bella Dao, Jack**

**Haynes, Emelie Jayawiyanto, Koray Tekin** and **Arianna Jenkins** received awards for demonstrating proficiency in reading and/or math two or more years beyond their school grade level. **Grace No**, a 10th-grader, received the highest award for completing a math program that is equivalent to a college-level algebra course.

**The University of Central Florida** received the James S. Cogswell Outstanding Industrial Se-

curity Achievement Award June 13 for protecting national security information.

East Orlando's **Allison Tucker** was one of 29 Central Florida girls awarded the Gold Award by Girl Scouts of Citrus. Tucker developed a project to provide Grace Bags for the homeless population, which include a clean pair of socks, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, comb, soap and shampoo.

All pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade students in Orange County Public Schools now have access to **myON Reader** and **Moby Math** — electronic resources that let students practice their math skills and grant access to a library of more than 2,500 digital books with multimedia support. Students can log onto [www.myon.com](http://www.myon.com) and [www.RunMoby.com](http://www.RunMoby.com), select their school and enter their student ID and password to utilize these tools.



Girl Scout Gold Award



Kumon award ceremony

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SUNRISE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

In ASCE, one of our big things is teaching kids about engineering and general good practices for the environment," he said. "If we don't teach kids how to preserve stuff, we're going to run out of materials. Everything now is disposable so if we can teach kids how to recycle and reuse stuff, that's always a good thing."

In addition to UCF Engineering and Planet Smoothie, Lowes in Waterford donated all the construction materials and many

*"If we don't teach kids how to preserve stuff, we're going to run out of materials. Everything now is disposable so if we can teach kids how to recycle and reuse stuff, that's always a good thing."*

Sunrise parents helped their children collect caps, said Sarah Gonder, a parent at Sunrise who runs the school's environmental club.

"We're representing recycling by taking something that can't be recycled and putting it to good use," she said. "This is a real community project."

This is not the first time Sunrise has focused their energy on helping the planet. Last year they received national recognition for their project that turned their unrecyclable Styrofoam cafeteria trays into useful plastic by working with local company Blue Earth Solutions.

"They do a really good job," Gonder said of the kids.

# 2012 Downtown Avalon Park *Calendar of Events*

**Absolutely Avalon**  
Saturday, April 14th, 2012, 5-9 p.m.

**July 4th**  
Wednesday, July 4th, 5-9 p.m.

**Oktoberfest**  
Friday, October 12th, 2012, 6-10 p.m.  
Saturday, October 13th, 2012, 6-10 p.m.

**Spooktacular**  
Saturday, October 27th, 2012, 5-9 p.m.

**Avalon Jubilee**  
Friday, November 16th, 2012, 3-10 p.m.  
Saturday & Sunday, November 17th & 18th, 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.

**Avalon Aglow & Holiday Parade**  
Saturday, December 1st, 2012, 3-9 p.m.

**Movie Under the Stars**  
Check [www.AvalonPark.com](http://www.AvalonPark.com) for Up-to-date Listings

Hosted by Avalon Park Merchant Association. For more information on this and other events visit [avalonpark.com](http://avalonpark.com) or call 407-658-6565.  
Avalon Park is conveniently located in East Orlando, 5 miles south of the 408 Expressway on Alafaya Trail.





**Daryl Flynn**  
Commissioner's Corner

## Board raises FCAT questions

Parents and educators have long had concerns regarding the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), which is taken annually by all Florida public school students in grades 3-10. FCAT is intended to measure a student's achievement against state education standards.

Recently, a ground swell of discontent with the state's educational accountability system has pushed local school boards to pass resolutions questioning the validity of FCAT and other Florida testing measures. This was certainly the case when this year's FCAT writing test showed a dramatic decline statewide over last year's results.

As the District 2 school board member, I've heard the frustration from many parents and teachers who believe that FCAT has taken on another dimension beyond accountability and has now begun to dominate the students' school experience. I share concerns that the current system of testing may be resulting in a narrowed curriculum, reducing many high school students' access to elective courses due to required remedial classes and limiting creativity, collaboration and innovation among students and teachers.

Earlier this month, several Central Florida public school boards started passing resolutions calling for a reassessment of the state's educational accountability system that pivots mainly around the FCAT tests. The Florida School Board Association also met and passed a resolution on high-stakes testing.

At the June 26 Orange County School Board meeting, my fellow board members and I passed a similar resolution calling for Gov. Rick Scott, the Florida Legislature and the Florida Department of Education to conduct an independent study on the validity of the Florida educational assessment system, use various assessments to determine student learning gains, give more time to phase in new requirements and fully fund the accountability system.

I want to emphasize that the Orange County School Board resolution does not seek to eliminate assessments or accountability but rather to improve the reliability, validity and fairness of Florida's accountability system. Neither my fellow board members nor I shirk or deny the value of accountability. I've never met a teacher who doesn't want to be held accountable. Furthermore, I acknowledge that there have been many gains in student learning since the FCAT accountability system was initiated. Yet, it is time that we ensure that the gains made in education over the past decade aren't overshadowed by an over-reliance on one test.

Our resolution will go to Gov. Scott, the commissioner of education and Florida legislators. If you support our resolution, please write and let them know you support it as well. To read the entire Accountability and Testing Resolution, visit [www.facebook.com/daryl.flynn.District2.OCSB](http://www.facebook.com/daryl.flynn.District2.OCSB) or contact me at [daryl.flynn@ocps.net](mailto:daryl.flynn@ocps.net)

*Daryl Flynn is a member of the Orange County School Board.*

## A chef's secrets to healthy and delicious

As a chef, my love for food transcends the stigmas that plague most people. I go beyond the flavor of an item, and look at the techniques used, the simplicity or difficulty of the dish and the love poured into it.

My challenge is to show you how amazing all foods can be when done properly, especially healthy, light foods. The recipe you are getting today is one of those recipes. It is light and refreshing but full of flavor. How do we get that flavor without using a ton of fat and unhealthy products? We are using strong flavors such as ginger and garlic. When added with other products, they give amazing depth of flavor that is intense and satisfying.

We are crusting the fish with bread crumbs. Here's a super chef secret about using the bread crumbs: It's not necessary to make your own, however if you have some old, hard bread lying around, it's easy to make and will save you money. When roasting breaded foods, they tend



**Richard Rosado**  
Chef Rich's Kitchen

not to get that dark, rich color like if they are fried. What I want you to do is take your bread crumbs and lay them out on a cookie sheet. Throw them in the oven and brown them to the dark, rich color you are looking for. Then use them as you normally would. You can't do this process when it is on the fish already. Waiting for them to brown will render your fish dry and tough. These are the little secrets and techniques that will make your foods healthy and delicious — something the whole family will enjoy.

For more tips and secrets and hands-on cooking classes, email me at [chefrich@healthyflame.com](mailto:chefrich@healthyflame.com)

*Chef Rich lives in Avalon Park and owns Healthy Flame, a cooking school dedicated to fighting obesity. He has been cooking and teaching professionally for more than 14 years. Email any questions or comments to [chefrich@healthyflame.com](mailto:chefrich@healthyflame.com)*

### Crusted Fish with Yellow Squash and Snow Peas

MAKES FOUR PORTIONS

#### Ingredients:

24 oz snapper, de-boned and skinless  
1 tbsp olive oil  
2 tbsp fresh ginger, peeled and minced  
1 tbsp garlic, minced  
1 shallot, minced  
2.5 cups snow peas, cut on bias (diagonal) and string peeled  
2 cups yellow squash, medium, diced  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 cup bread crumbs, pre-toasted  
2 eggs, beaten  
1 cup flour  
2 tbsp Old Bay Seasoning

#### Method:

In a bowl, mix the flour and the Old Bay Seasoning. Take each piece of fish and dredge it in the flour mixture. Make sure they are coated well then shake off any excess. Do this to all four pieces.

Then place each piece of fish into the egg mixture, and again, make sure they are coated well. Place the fish into the bread crumb mixture and make sure each piece is coated and covered well. Remove and place them on a dry surface, not touching each other.

Place them in a preheated 400-degree oven until cooked, with an internal temperature of 145 degrees or until the fish, when gently pressed, separates.

While the fish is cooking, heat a sauté pan and add the olive oil. When hot, add the minced shallots and cook for about five minutes or until translucent. Add the ginger and cook for four minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Add the garlic and cook just until the aroma of garlic is prevalent. Add the snow peas and sauté for four minutes, stirring to mix flavors well. Add the yellow squash and mix well. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

## Learn East Orlando business

If you're interested in learning about the latest happenings in our business community this summer, the East Orlando Chamber of Commerce has some great programming that can help give you and your business a competitive edge.

### Doing business in Medical City

I'm very excited to announce the East Orlando Chamber of Commerce's partnership with the Orlando Business Journal as they host the 2012 Doing Business in Medical City luncheon. This luncheon will provide an overview of current business opportunities in the area, upcoming projects and bioscience and research partnerships being formed there. You will have the opportunity to be introduced to the leaders and organizations that are shaping the future for one of Central Florida's fastest growing regions. Please take advantage of this opportunity to learn about the economic drivers in our region and how you can benefit from this growing industry.

The luncheon is from 11:30-1:30 p.m.



**Gege Venant**  
From the Chamber

Friday, July 13 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando International Airport, 9300 Jeff Fuqua Blvd., Orlando. Tickets cost \$45 in advanced. Corporate packages are also available. Seating is limited! Please register online at [www.orlandobusinessjournal.com](http://www.orlandobusinessjournal.com)

### Small Business Expo

On Friday, Aug. 10, the East Orlando Chamber of Commerce will host a Small Business Expo at the Renaissance Senior Center located on 3800 S. Econlockhatchee Trail, Orlando, from 9 a.m. to noon. This expo will be a great opportunity

to showcase your business, network with your fellow chamber members and learn some useful business tips through informative workshops geared to provide you tools to help grow your business.

There will be a total of six workshops to choose from, with a variety of guest speakers. Topics range from social media marketing to financing small businesses. I encourage you to come out and participate in our Small Business Expo. If you're interested in participating as a vendor, please visit our website at [www.eocc.org](http://www.eocc.org) or email [gege@eocc.org](mailto:gege@eocc.org). Tickets to attend the expo are available for \$5 for chamber members and \$10 for non-chamber members. Donations of school supplies equal to the ticket price will also be accepted for admission. Purchase tickets online at [www.eocc.org](http://www.eocc.org)

I encourage you to get involved and become a part of our chamber family! Please visit [www.eocc.org](http://www.eocc.org) for additional information or call 407-277-5951.

*Gege Venant is membership director for the East Orlando Chamber of Commerce. Visit [eocc.org](http://eocc.org)*

## Tips to parenting around the media

Every parent has probably experienced it. You're cooking dinner, and your 7-year-old walks up and starts singing the FreeCreditReport.com jingle, word for word. OK, maybe not that exact scenario, but it's pretty common for kids to recite commercials. Our first response is usually to laugh, but as parents who try to limit TV viewing, especially ad-based programming, the laughter quickly turns to concern. Sure, it's harmless, but how frightening is it that their brains can be programmed that quickly with a catchy tune or animated hamsters?

Our kids are media-saturated. In the '70s and '80s, we had cable TV and video games and the Walkman, but we devoted a tiny amount of time to those



**Chris Carroll**  
Parent to Parent

pursuits compared to kids today. Recent studies show that kids are packing up to 10 hours of media content into their day, accelerated by multi-tasking and mobile and online content — these

kids report lower grades and less personal contentment.

While there may not be a study showing a direct negative impact of media saturation, the glazed-over look on my son's face when I caught him staring for minutes at an animated looping DVD menu pretty much told me all I needed to know. It was common sense that his time would be much better spent doing just about anything else.

And that's the parenting solution: common sense. It can feel like building a sand castle when the tide is coming in, especially when you have multiple kids of varying ages. But some approaches that have worked for us

■ Please see **PARENT** on page 19

## PARENT

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

include setting time limits on media use, redirecting their attention to other pursuits, having family dinners together with the TV off, and being pretty strict in terms of what they do get to watch and listen to.

Are we perfect? Of course not. There are times when we have to put the 3-year-old in his high chair in front of Backyardigans so we can make dinner and help the other kids with their homework. And sometimes, turning on the Wii is the only way to get the 11- and 8-year-old boys to stop running around the house screaming like a couple of burning spider monkeys. But in general, we stick to our rules, and we think our kids are better socialized, more level-headed and more appreciative of different family activities because of the controls we've put in place.

Not all parents will agree. Some will laugh at our naivety. And their kids will probably be fine — at the very least they'll be ambidextrous, texting in one hand while playing the DS in the other, all while watching YouTube videos of animated hamsters making out. Every kid is different, and every family dynamic requires a different approach. But all parents should, at the very least, use common sense. Don't let media saturation be the default position. Evaluate your kids' needs and define the parameters of their world. They'll thank you for it one day. They might *text* you a thank you, but at least they'll thank you.

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

# When to say goodbye

The moment has come to say goodbye to your pet and it's never the right time. You are just not ready. You want to try one more thing, you want to consult one more expert, you want one more hope for cure. You made the promise to never let your pet suffer but now you find yourself hanging on, unable to let go, unable to be strong, unable to hold true.

Letting a sick pet go is one of the toughest parts of pet ownership. Some struggle and mourn deeply, otherwise never finding closure, while others may choose to never get another pet. I remember that was the decision my family had made after losing our family companion, Rafiki, which means "friend" in Swahili.

I mourned deeply. I reflected on every moment I could remember. I cried myself to sleep some nights, not because I missed him, but because he was the one we all loved so dearly. He was the one who held us together, he was the one who made peace between us, he was the one who showed us how to love and he is the one who we let suffer. It was



Teena Patel  
Pet Living

a struggle to overcome after the fact: why did we not put him to rest sooner? How selfish we were to the one who gave so selflessly.

Day after day, night after night, I was seeking an answer. And then I realized there was none. I realized that I would do it all over again, and still this time, I would fight to hold onto him in hopes for that cure.

I don't recall the exact moment, but it was not until months later that I came to find myself at peace. In this moment, I also came to learn a lesson in life that we all struggle with, and that is life after death, or simply death. I came to accept death as a process, and I stopped referring

to death as "it."

I made a promise that moment — to never prolong suffering of an animal I had a helping hand in. I made a promise to be in tune with that animal and not in tune with myself — a promise to listen, feel, accept and encourage defeat, but not struggle. I promised to accept departure and not mourn it as loss. I promised to give relief, not burden.

It's never easy, no matter how many times you go down that road. It does not get better but it also does not get harder. It's just different each time around. This process of nurturing, growing, loving, being and then parting is the process of all life. A process of loving a life.

Teena Patel, certified dog trainer and canine behavioral counselor, has over 14 years of experience working with dogs, birds and children. She and her husband, Nimesh Patel, reside in Avalon Park and own University of Dogland, a dog training and boarding campus in East Orlando, and Groom Grub and Belly Rub, a pet grooming, sitting and supply store in Avalon Park. They are parents to three dogs.

## Letters to the editor

### Valencia refuses tuition increase

One of the most meaningful words for prospective college students is "success." At Valencia College, the nation's No. 1 community college as ranked by the Aspen Institute, we strive to provide programs and services to help students achieve success and reach their educational, career and life goals every day. Recently, with the ever-changing economic turbulence, we've had to make some very tough budget decisions that have direct impact on student services and success.

While our state leaders have been accepting of tuition hikes and increases to students, Valencia's Board of Trustees took a stand on behalf of students, and pledged to hold the current rate of tuition at \$99.06 per credit hour for the 2012-13 academic year. On Valencia's East Campus, that should come as good news to the nearly 33,000 students we serve. In order to freeze tuition, however, we will be forced to make cuts in part-time staff and other support resources, and employees will not receive raises.

You might be asking yourself, how is this going to impact the campus and students? It will require cuts in services to students, including reducing service hours for advising offices, the business office, custodial services, and other help centers to meet the budget shortfall. We'll need to assess and plan very prudently where cuts will have the least impact on students and the services vital to their success. College-wide, we'll also have to cut 800 class sections taught by adjunct faculty, which will limit students to fewer choices of days and times when a class is offered.

On East Campus, students who are having trouble finding all of the classes they need may be able to schedule some of them on the weekend. Developed as a creative solution for students who are starting back to work but have yet to earn their degree, the Weekend Degree Program allows students to earn their associate in arts degree in about seven weekend semesters. Students can schedule all of their classes on Fridays, Saturdays, and/or Sundays, and choose from traditional, online and hybrid courses, which are a combination of traditional and online classes. The Weekend Degree Program allows students to meet all of their general education requirements, plus choose from a variety of electives.

At Valencia, we'll continue to work hard and smart in the coming year. But until there is more state funding for the college, there will be sacrifices required from faculty and staff — and patience from our students.

— Michelle Foster  
Campus Dean of Academic Affairs, East Campus

### Don't let summer be a money bummer

Daytime trips to the movies or the mall, buying lunch and ice cream, paying for those summer camps and, of course, your summer family vacation can all add up and put strain on the family budget. According to a recent Gallup poll on consumer spending, Americans averaged \$73 in daily discretionary spending in May — an elevated figure that's been holding steady in recent months.

Summer is a lot like the holidays when we see a jump in consumer spending. People naturally want to treat themselves and their families and have some fun, and they should, as long as it doesn't set them back financially.

CredAbility is one of the nation's leading nonprofit credit counseling and education agencies. CredAbility offers tips for families to ensure summer fun while keeping to a financial plan:

- Set aside a manageable amount of "summer fun" cash each week. Consider allotting an amount to each child in the family. When it runs out, it runs out. The same goes for your older children, especially if they don't have a summer job. Starting a family "tip jar" for loose change can also help build up those summer fun reserves.

- Involve your kids in establishing a weekly or monthly budget and what they can earn through chores and then use toward getting things they want. This is a good habit and practice for your children to get accustomed to, and the earlier you start, the better.

- Refrain from using your credit card. It's easy to get out the credit card when you don't have cash on hand. Consider putting it away for the summer. And be on the lookout for credit card promotional offers over the summer. While incentives such as earning points for travel are enticing, it might not be the right time to open up another credit card right now. Keep

paying balances in full over these next few months, too.

- Seek out fun and cost-saving alternatives. Swap DVDs with other families or check out some from the library; get your children involved in volunteer projects; find free family events that include treats for kids. Seek out deals on dining and fun experiences through sites such as Groupon and Living Social.

- Plan ahead. It's a simple concept or reminder that can go a long way toward savings. The more you plan ahead, from dinners to fun experiences and excursions, the less risk you have of letting too many spontaneous and cost-related events pop up. Planning meals for the week, for example, can reduce the temptation of getting fast food or ordering pizza. Also, consider dropping junk food and sodas for the summer — you save and boost your health at the same time.

CredAbility offers consumers 24/7 services by phone at 800-251-2227 and online at [www.CredAbility.org](http://www.CredAbility.org)

—Judy MacKenzie  
CredAbility grants manager

### Avatars help kids with social anxiety

One of the most popular girls in school smiles and tells her classmate, "You are the nicest person I know!"

Many children would smile back and eagerly return the compliment. But some children with social anxiety may be too terrified to respond.

Social interactions give those children severe distress — not just a few minutes of nervousness or discomfort. Their fear can prevent them from playing on a sports team or participating in a dance recital or going to a birthday party.

Our research team at the University of Central Florida's Anxiety Disorders Clinic teaches children the skills they need to become comfortable socially — the skills most people learn from being around other people.

This month, we're launching a new study that we expect will benefit children in Central Florida and eventually around the country.

We partnered with Virtually Better of Atlanta to develop a new, one-of-a-kind computer simulation program that enables children to interact with avatars playing the roles of classmates, teachers and a principal.

Have an opinion? Send it to [newsdesk@eosun.com](mailto:newsdesk@eosun.com)

The simulation, designed for children ages 8-12, allows clinicians to play the roles of the avatars while the children sit at a computer in a different room and respond to situations they encounter routinely. The children practice greetings, giving and receiving compliments, being assertive and asking and answering questions.

The National Institute of Mental Health, part of the National Institutes of Health, provided a \$500,000 grant to fund the development of the software and a 12-week study that will begin this summer.

We are looking for 30 children ages 8-12 with social anxiety disorders to participate in the free study. Participants will need to come to the UCF campus twice weekly. The study also will feature homework that children will do on either a home computer or a laptop that the research team will provide for free during the study.

Parents or guardians who are interested in learning more about the study can call our Anxiety Disorders Clinic at 407-823-4254. The research team will conduct short interviews to determine whether children qualify.

Our clinic also offers what we call the "gold standard" of treatments. Children with anxiety disorders are paired with socially comfortable peers for outings to places, such as bowling alleys, restaurants and miniature golf courses.

The new study will give parents multiple treatment options at UCF. But parents in most communities aren't so fortunate. Many clinicians who treat children don't have the time or resources to recruit socially comfortable children and organize regular outings. Guiding clients through a simulation in the office may be the only feasible solution for them.

If the initial trial goes well, we hope to conduct a yearlong trial with more children. The program eventually could be expanded to include other settings, such as playgrounds, and to serve other children who need help improving social skills.

If you believe the initial study could help your child, we hope to hear from you soon. If you know other children in Central Florida who could benefit from our work, please encourage their parents or guardians to give us a call.

—Deborah Beidel  
UCF Anxiety Disorders Clinic director and psychology professor

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