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See page 8

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Details on page 18

Gas tax could add nickel at pump

By B.C. Manion
bcmansion@cnewspubs.com

People living, working or traveling through Pasco County will pay 5 cents more per gallon of gasoline beginning Jan. 1, if a proposed tax hike is approved by the Pasco County Commission.

The increase will help the county do a better job of filling potholes, tending landscapes, grading dirt roads and maintaining the county's roads, officials said.

Commissioners are expected to vote on the issue on Sept. 10. But two commissioners already have spoke in favor of a higher gas tax.

Ted Schrader and Pat Mulieri supported a potential gas tax increase during a commission workshop last week. Schrader said county staff members made a solid case for it.

"This is not a 'wants' plan, it's a 'needs' plan," Schrader said.

See GAS TAX, page 14



Picture-perfect opening

It's back to school for young people all over the region, and these three Lake Myrtle Elementary School students decided to frame their first day. All ready to learn are, from left, Connor Henson, Emily Henson and Gabriella Lopez. Connor, 5, had his first day in kindergarten, while Emily and Gabriella — both 7 — have started second grade. (Photo courtesy of Amy Henson) See more from the first day of school, page 11.

Hospital's first year better than expected

By B.C. Manion
bcmansion@cnewspubs.com

When Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel was preparing to open its doors last October, it expected to have 400 employees.

Less than a year later, it has 600.

"For the 600 jobs that we have, we had over 25,000 applicants," hospital chief executive Brian Adams said last week. "Not all of those applicants, of course, were qualified for roles in health care. But even in nursing, for every one job, we had more than 10 applicants."

Adams was sharing the news with the economic development committee of the Greater Wesley Chapel Chamber of Commerce. Having so many applicants means the hospital can really be selective, and focus purely on talent. The Wesley Chapel hospital, for example, has an average of 10 years experience.

And the hospital has outpaced projections in other areas as well. Its

See HOSPITAL, page 2

Charity is give and take for Habitat volunteer

By Michael Hinman
mhinman@cnewspubs.com

Tiffany Porter is accustomed to helping other people. But she never expected the tables to be turned, courtesy of Habitat for Humanity.

Porter, a compassion ministry director for Victorious Life Church in Wesley Chapel, is the area's newest Habitat homeowner, receiving the keys earlier this month for the home at 15054 Gainesville Road.

"I had no idea that Habitat even did this for people like me," Porter said. "I thought they only helped single moms, or people who were destitute and homeless."

In fact, Porter was trying to help a family get a Habitat home, and realized through the process that she actually qualified.

"So I said, 'what the heck, let's try this thing,'" she said. "My best friends kept telling me that all they could do is say no. And they didn't."

Porter, 29, grew up in New Mexico, but realized at a young age she wanted to be a pastor. But it was while she was in seminary, she discovered an even more direct calling.

"I wanted to be more hands-on and see people's lives improve," she said. "VLC gave



Volunteers through Habitat for Humanity's National Women Build Week program put up a wall for Tiffany Porter's house during its construction in north Land O' Lakes. Porter, who dedicates her time to helping others through her church, moved in earlier this month. (Photos courtesy of Stephanie Black)

me the opportunity to do that."

Porter started as an intern at the church in 2003, and since 2005 has served as the compassion ministry director. She runs the church-owned Lily of the Valley food pantry outreach center in Wesley Chapel, where she not only helps feed those who are hungry, but provides other help when they

need it.

That includes even her home, where she has served as a foster mother for teenagers who need a home.

"With my budget, I was not able to find a place that was able to foster a young child,"

See HABITAT, page 14

Can't afford training? There may be a grant for that

By B.C. Manion
bcmansion@cnewspubs.com

Businesses have to overcome many obstacles to find success, but the Pasco-Hernando Workforce Board wants to remind them they are not alone.

The board, which administers local workforce development and welfare reform programs, is connecting businesses in Pasco and Hernando counties with grants that can be used to help employees learn new skills

or can provide on-the-job training for new hires. The grants are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until the money runs out.

"We put the word out to everybody," said Ana Segovia, a business services consultant for the workforce board. "It's set up to help the local employers for what their needs are."

For example, someone has worked at a company for five years gets promoted and now has to work with different software,

Segovia said. The employee may need training to handle their new responsibilities.

Or maybe the company has a new bottling line, and its staff needs to learn how to work it. Training dollars may be available to help meet that need, she said.

Under the Employed Worker Training grant program, companies can seek reimbursement of 50 percent to help employees upgrade their skills. But they must meet specific requirements. These grants seek to help companies perform well, with the increased skills of their workforce leading to greater success, which is good for the overall economy, Segovia said.

To receive reimbursement, the training must meet industry-recognized standards, Segovia said. But the process is simple, especially if companies consider all of their training needs for a year and then put together a single application.

There are some restrictions, however. For instance, a company can be eligible for a grant two years in a row, but it cannot receive reimbursement for training involving the same employee year after year, Segovia said.

People are sometimes intimidated by the paperwork, but they shouldn't be.

"The paperwork we're talking about initially for your employer to fill out is six



Ana Segovia



Nathan Stevens

pages," said Nathan Stevens, who also is a business services consultant for the workforce board. "It's free money. You would think people would be standing in line. Why wouldn't you come and try to get it?" Companies can apply for any amount they'd like, and the application will be considered.

"If there's money available, and there's justification for this amount, they may be able to get it," Stevens said.

On another front, there's also funding available through an on-the-job grant program. The company can receive up to 50 percent of a new employee's wages for up to 12 weeks through the program.

The arrangement must be pre-approved, the employer must document the training plan and the employee must be a new hire and cannot be a relative, Segovia said.

Some companies use on-the-job training because they want to mold their employees to complete the work the way they want it to be done, Segovia said.

For more information about the programs, go to www.CareerCentral.jobs. Click on the "Job Seekers" tab to find out more about on-the-job training, and click on the employers tab to find out more about the Employed Worker Training program.



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HOSPITAL, from page 1

26,000 emergency room visits and 380 baby deliveries are roughly double original expectations, Adams said. Other first-year figures include 3,800 admissions and 1,800 surgeries.

Business owners may wonder if people will travel into Wesley Chapel to get health care, and the answer to that is that they do, Adams said.

"The economic development piece of having a business that not only employs 600 people in the community, but also attracts people into Wesley Chapel, is a real benefit," he said. "Many of the individuals who now come to Wesley Chapel for care were traveling out of the county for care, so they were going down into Hillsborough County, which means they see physicians in Hillsborough County, which means they stop for lunch on their way to see those physicians in Hillsborough."

Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel sits on 52 acres on Bruce B. Downs Boulevard, west of SR 56. It has 83 beds, with the capability expanding to 299.

The hospital itself is three stories now, but can rise to six when the hospital needs more room to handle increasing health care needs, Adams said. And it might be sooner rather than later. Figures by the hospital show population growth in the area between 2.9 percent and 4 percent by 2017.

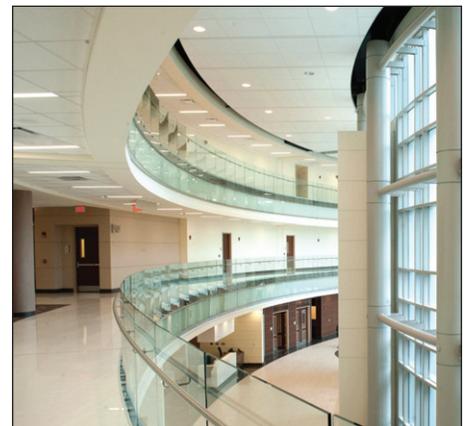
There are other factors to consider as well beyond just population growth, and that's something the Wesley Chapel hospital stays cognizant of, Adams said. One is how much health care people are using.

"In this community, it's going down, mainly because of the shift of cost from employer-based health plans to individual-based health plans," Adams said.

The age of the population also figures in. In a community like Wesley Chapel, where the population is growing younger, the amount of healthcare used is lower than in a community like Zephyrhills, where the population is older.

The hospital is working to be a good neighbor, and may even reach out to Pasco-Hernando Community College after it opens its Porter Campus at Wiregrass Ranch in January. The college is taking shape on a site near the intersection of SR 56 and Mansfield Boulevard, not far from the hospital.

"Having PHCC in the community will only benefit all of us," Adams said. "I've had a



A look at the interior of Florida Hospital Wesley Chapel. (File photo)

number of conversations with the leadership at PHCC, and we believe part of our role is to create opportunities for students to learn and grow in a real-life setting."

That's common in the medical field, especially in the nursing field, he said. Having PHCC offer a transition to bachelor's-level nursing can only help surrounding hospitals like Wesley Chapel's.

Finally, with the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act on the horizon, Adams was optimistic that many pieces of the federal plan will benefit the community.

"People having access to the health care, at the primary care level, is probably the best way to best reduce our overall health-care spend," he said. "The most expensive time to care for a patient is when they have reached a point in their health where the intervention takes heavy resources."

It also means taking steps now to prevent more serious health problems in the future.

"If you can help someone who didn't have insurance to go to a physician and get their diabetes under control before that diabetes wreaked havoc on their heart, it's a totally different approach," Adams said.

But there will also be changes in the way employers handle insurance, by some employers no longer covering spouses that can get insurance elsewhere, and the proliferation of high-deductible health plans as companies try to offer affordable insurance to low-wage employees.

Ultimately, Adams thinks that consumers will drive the need for quality care, especially if they are paying the first \$10,000 of their health care costs out-of-pocket due to high deductibles in their insurance plans.

Local invention vying for spot on Walmart store shelves

By Michael Hinman
mhinman@cnewspubs.com

Time is running out for two local medical professionals to get their invention on the shelves of Walmart stores across the country. And they need your help.

BariBowl is an innovative portion control food container developed by Land O' Lakes-based physician assistant Dezi Zevin and bariatric surgeon Dr. Tiffany Jessee. It's designed to help anyone managing their nutritional intake for a healthy life, and it's quickly advancing through Walmart's "Get it on the Shelf" contest.

BariBowl uses two 4-ounce dishes that can be subdivided right down to 1-ounce portions. It seems simple enough, and Zevin said she was surprised no one else had thought of it before.

"Dr. Jessee does weight-loss surgery, and I was her PA, and we talked about whether there was anything out there that would help patients keep track of their eating after surgery," Zevin said. "I went home and researched it, and I found nothing. So she said we should come up with something."

That was 2010, and later that year, both had created a company — BariWare LLC — and had a working prototype going. By 2011, they were manufacturing the BariBowl from a facility in Clearwater. The bowls come in pink, blue and green, and are both microwave and dishwasher safe.

So far, marketing and sales efforts for the BariBowl — which retails at about \$20 — have been focused on doctor's offices, especially those specializing in bariatric surgery. However, the product has a wide range of uses that go beyond that, whether it's someone managing diabetes, trying to lose weight, and even body builders and athletes.

"I use this for my kids instead of going through the drive-thru at McDonald's," Zevin said. "I prepare their meals in the morning, and can use it throughout the day."

Zevin says she can pack lunch for her kids, and then have a second one ready at the end of the day when she picks them up and takes them to soccer.

Since the product launched, sales have doubled year-over-year. Yet, getting into Walmart could push those numbers right through the roof. For that to happen, it's going to take votes, however.

Walmart's "Get on the Shelf" contest features a number of products evaluated by the



Dezi Zevin, a physician assistant based in Land O' Lakes, shows off the BariBowl, a product she co-created with bariatric surgeon Dr. Tiffany Jessee. (Photo by Michael Hinman)

store's management staff, and then put up for a public vote to see what consumers might be interested in. The BariBowl was part of the contest last year, but did not advance. And with voting running through Sept. 2, Zevin and Jessee are hoping for a much different result this time.

And even if they do succeed and turn the BariBowl into a booming business, neither plans to give up their day job.

"It would be like a dream come true, and it would be a game changer for both our lives," said Jessee, who was Florida's first female bariatric surgeon. "We don't have the financial ability to do much advertising, so to walk into a store and see your product on a shelf for a national chain, that is just unbelievable."

Extra profits would be reinvested back into the company, Zevin said, to help them expand the BariBowl line to other complementary products. That could include a larger bowl for those who have to eat more but still want to portion food.

To vote for the BariBowl in the Walmart "Get on the Shelf" competition, visit tinyurl.com/nxsgt7.

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

NAMI caregivers course

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is offering a free 12-week course for family caregivers of individuals with severe mental illnesses. The next course is Aug. 29-Nov. 14 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the NAMI Pasco office, 6480 Land O' Lakes Blvd. Those participating can get up-to-date information about medications, side effects and strategies for medication adherence. Topics covered will include problem solving, listening and communication techniques, as well as how to cope with worry, stress and emotional overload. For information, call Pat Scimone-Almasy at (813) 918-3205 or Gloria Strother at (727) 848-5169.

Alzheimer's support group

Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point's Alzheimer's monthly support group will meet on Sept. 3 from 10 a.m. to noon at 14000 Fivay Road in Hudson. The meeting is open to caregivers and others interested in discussing and exchanging ideas in the care of Alzheimer's patients. For information, call Laura Arnold at (727) 863-0176.

Florida Cancer groups

Florida Cancer Affiliates will host a general cancer support group on Sept. 4 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and a breast cancer

support group meeting on Sept. 5 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Both are at its New Port Richey center, 5500 Little Road. For information, call (727) 372-9159.

Medicare presentation

The Medical Center of Trinity is collaborating with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs SHINE program to present "Medicare 101" on Sept. 5 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 9330 SR 54 in Trinity. Topics for the program, which stands for "Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders," include eligibility, supplemental insurance and new legislation. This is a free seminar. Due to limited seating, reservations are required and can be made by calling (727) 834-5630.

Co-Dependence Anonymous

The Medical Center of Trinity hosts the Co-Dependence Anonymous group every Thursday from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the West Pasco campus, 5637 Marine Parkway in New Port Richey. Upcoming meetings are Sept. 5, Sept. 12, Sept. 19 and Sept. 26. For information, call Shirley at (727) 816-8678 or Judy at (727) 858-3013.

—Health notes are run for free on a first-come, first-served basis. Please send all information at least two weeks before an event.

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The Cameo Story

Over-The-Top Salon Services and Superb Customer Care

In the seven years that Olav and Lori Malm have owned Cameo Salon and Spa, it has become one of the most personable and best-known hair salons in central Pasco and north Hillsborough counties.

Cameo attracts hundreds of new clients every month to its full-service salon located in the heart of Lutz, Land O' Lakes and Wesley Chapel. Women and men of all ages come for its trendy as well as traditional hairstyles, stunning colors and highlights, head-to-toe spa services and genuine customer service.

"I love my customers and treat every one of them like family," said Olav. "There is nothing more important to Lori and me than our clients' complete satisfaction. We want every guest leaving feeling pampered and more beautiful than when they walked in the door."

Cameo Salon and Spa opened under different ownership in 1999, and Lori joined the salon two years later. When the owners decided to sell in 2006, it was a natural progression for Lori, who had been doing hair in Lutz since 1984, to buy the business.

Joining Lori was her husband, Olav, who left the medical field to become the salon's business manager. Together the couple has developed a talented and dedicated team of hair and spa specialists who are just as committed as the Malms to customer service and staying on top of the latest in hair fashion, color treatments and spa services.

Olav greets customers with his trademark check-to-cheek kisses. An outgoing man who combines a unique teddy-bear style with European suave, Olav's large stature and smooth bald head is hard to miss in a salon full of customers from teens to seniors.



Lori and Olav Malm, owners of Cameo Salon & Spa.

"Olav knows how to make every woman feel welcome and beautiful," said Diane, a local business owner and long-time client and friend of Olav. "His staff is always prepared, creative and respectful of my time."

Most of Cameo's employees have worked at the salon for several years because they value its customer appreciation, relaxing atmosphere and commitment to learning the latest trends.

"It feels like family here — we're very personable," said Mike Gold, a stylist at Cameo for the last seven years. "In addition to our great atmosphere, we're an Elite Redkin Salon, which means we use and sell the best hair-care products available in the industry."

Working alongside Mike is Ashlee Baker, a stylist at Cameo for more than five years.

"I love our atmosphere — people feel at home here," Ashlee said. "Plus we have a lot of continuing education and are always going to hair shows to keep us at the top of our game."

Lori personally trained Mike and Ashlee and most of the other stylists at Cameo, whom she holds to the highest professional standards.

"We put a tremendous amount of time into training, both here at the salon and at industry trade shows and schools. We've been to shows in Orlando, Miami, New York, Chicago, and Las Vegas to give our stylists the best training possible," said Lori.

Before making their first cut, Cameo stylists spend time talking with their guest about his or her desires, expectations and lifestyle.

"It's all about the consultation," said Lori. "Spending 15 minutes up-front with a guest makes all the difference in the world to achieve the style and look a client is looking for that also fits with how they live their life, including time restraints and job restrictions."

Located on Collier Parkway, two blocks south of State Road 54, Cameo Salon & Spa is convenient to women and men living and working in Lutz, Land O' Lakes, Wesley Chapel and New Tampa.

"Some people think we only cater to affluent customers, and that can't be farther from the truth," said Olav. "We have stylists at all levels of experience and our prices are very competitive."

For example, Cameo is currently offering a color and cut special for just \$65 — less than what many of the national chains charge that employ stylists with little experience or training.

In addition to hair, Cameo offers manicures, acrylic gel nails and pedicures by its highly trained technicians. Certified massage therapists offer a full array of massages in luxurious rooms. And licensed, medical aestheticians skin care consultants offer waxing, facials and microdermabrasion.

Completing its full line of services is Jane Iredale makeup, a professional line used by movie stars and recommended by plastic surgeons and dermatologists. The salon also sells Redkin, Pureology and other professional hair care products.

"Cameo is a salon that belongs to our guests," said Olav. "Their health, beauty and comfort are our only concerns. Please give us a call or stop by for an experience you will find nowhere else."

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A trio of computer businesses under one roof

By B.C. Manion
bcmansion@cnewspubs.com

When Michael Sawyer recently set up shop in Lutz, he brought together three businesses offering a broad array of computer services.

The storefront at 18125 N. US 41, Suite 101, is the new home for Aware Media, TechGuyToGo and Tampa Technology Training.

Aware Media Marketing focuses on design work, ranging from business cards to website design. Sawyer had that business before he opened his new storefront.

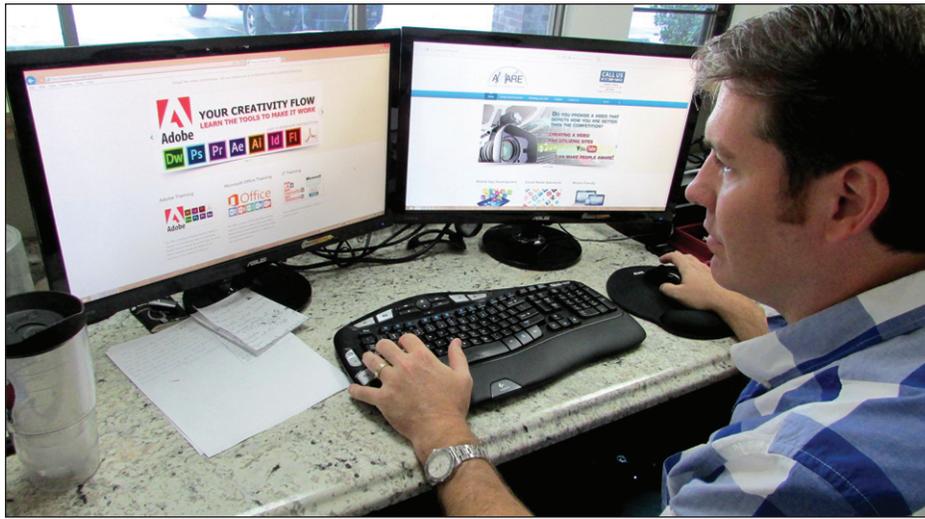
He added TechGuyToGo to bring consumers into the shop for computer repairs, as well as repairs to the screens on their hand-held devices and computers. Sawyer also offers business services and technical training.

He launched Tampa Technology Training to provide courses for those wanting to improve their computer skills. Sawyer wants to share his knowledge with students, whether they are seeking a job, want to handle new responsibilities, or are interested in engaging in creative pursuits.

A part-time teacher at Hillsborough Community College, Sawyer said he's excited about launching his training center because he wants to create an educational environment he believes will help students thrive.

"This is a small class. I have eight seats," said Sawyer, who also previously taught at Aparicio-Levy Technical Center in Hillsborough County. "I might go to 10 eventually, but at the end of the day, it's going to be a small-class environment. I just think the dynamics of the whole class changes, when you have that small classroom size."

Personal interaction is helpful in computer courses because students arriving at class often come with wide-ranging levels of experience, he said.



Michael Sawyer works at his computer in his new storefront in Lutz, which has three computer businesses under one roof. (Photo by B.C. Manion)

To learn more about Mike Sawyer's businesses, visit:

www.awaremediamarketing.com
www.TampaTechnologyTraining.com
www.TechGuyToGo.com

"You have people who think they know, and they don't. And, you have people who have no clue," Sawyer said.

When people lack experience, they tend to be tentative, Sawyer said.

"You have to break down some of that intimidation. You have to make sure there are some steps for people to follow," he said.

Small classes encourage greater collaboration in the learning process, Sawyer said.

"I think it makes people feel more comfortable because they're not afraid about asking a question because they're not holding up 29 people," Sawyer said.

He plans to offer a wide array of courses, including those for people who want to get

a better job, but may not be so strong with their computer skills. Sawyer will also offer classes for those looking to get into Web design.

He also plans to provide corporate training classes, as well as classes focused on desktop publishing. Training will be geared toward preparing students to obtain certification.

Because it is his own business, Sawyer said he is able to offer classes when he wants, usually around his HCC teaching schedule. However, he is planning to survey students to find out when they would like classes to be offered.

Sawyer moved to Lutz about a year and a half ago because he was attracted by the community's natural beauty and quiet nature, he said. He chose to locate his storefront on US 41 because the busy highway that bisects the community brings thousands of cars past his business each day.

The location is also about midway between computer repair shops to the north and south, Sawyer said.

LIBRARIES

Land O' Lakes Branch Library

- Closed Labor Day, Sept. 2
- Anime Club, 6 p.m. Sept. 3
- Baby Storytime, 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. every Thursday
- Toddler Storytime, 10:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. every Friday
- Preschool Storytime, 11:30 a.m. every Friday
- Popcorn and a Movie, 2 p.m. Sept. 7
- Teen Advisory Board, 6 p.m. Sept. 10 and Sept. 24
- Computer Skills, 10 a.m. Sept. 11
- Social Seniors, 10 a.m. Sept. 12
- Florida Blood Services Blood Drive, noon on Sept. 12
- Friends of the Land O'Lakes Library, 2 p.m. Sept. 12
- Teen Event – 6 p.m. Sept. 17
- Family Night Out – Camping Adventure, 6:30 p.m. Sept. 17
- Land O' Lakes Book Club, 1:30 p.m. Sept. 18
- Friday Afternoon Movie, 1:15 p.m. Sept. 20
- Kids Crafts – Pirate/Princess Party, 2 p.m. Sept. 21
- Tablet Time, 10:15 a.m. Sept. 25
- Senior Games, 10 a.m. Sept. 26
- Flash Fiction Writing, 10 a.m. Sept. 28

The library is closed Sundays and Mondays, and is located at 2818 Collier Parkway, and can be reached at (813) 929-1214.



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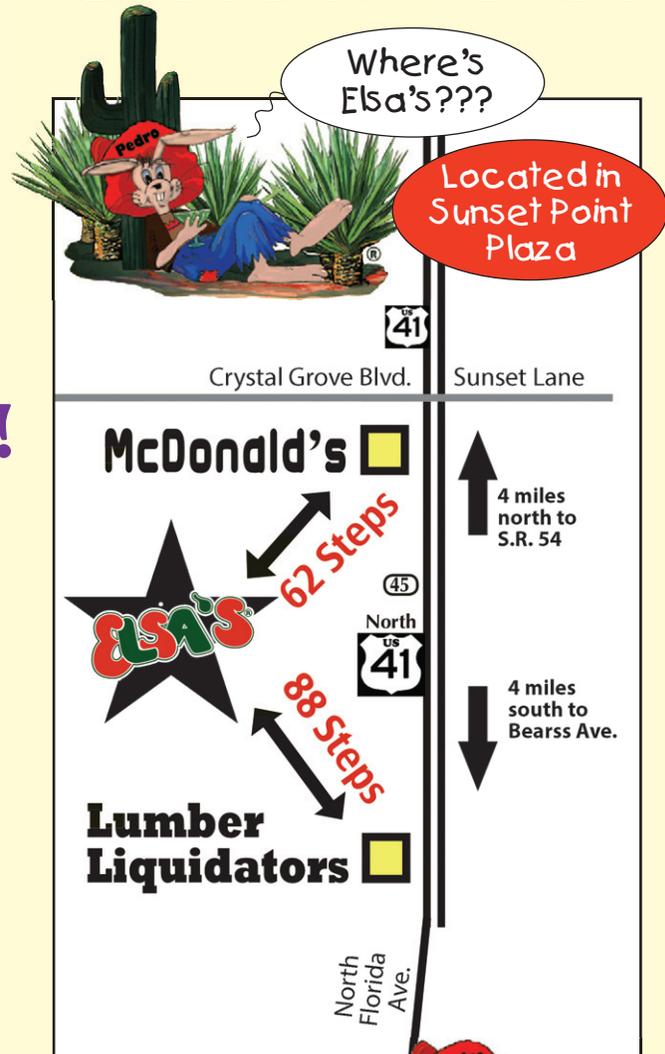
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89 - 132 lbs	\$85	67 - 88 lbs	\$90
		89 - 132 lbs	\$105

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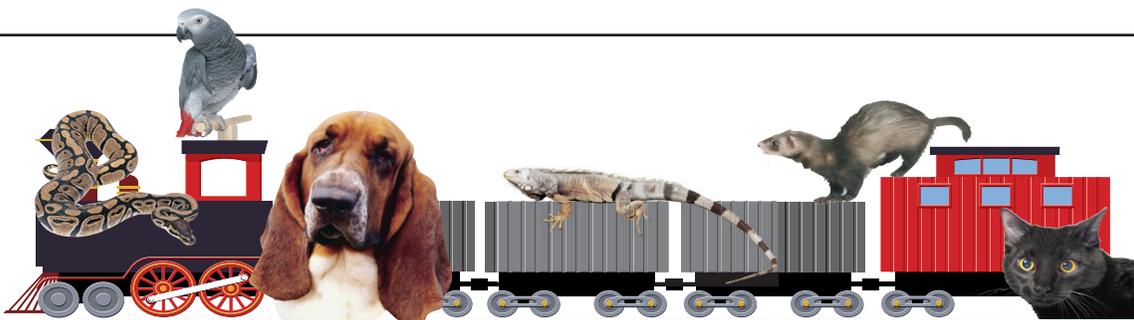
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What's Happening

Your Community Calendar • Submit 2 weeks in advance to: whathappening@cnewspubs.com • All listings free of charge

THURSDAY NIGHT TRIVIA

Whole Foods Market in Carrollwood is hosting a free trivia night on Aug. 29 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. All participants will receive a free snack pack, and the winner will receive a grand prize. A free beer tasting begins at 5 p.m. Registration is required. The store is at 3802 Northdale Blvd. For information, call (813) 264-3600.

T-SHIRT LOGO DESIGN CONTEST

The Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce and the Land O' Lakes High cross-country team are looking for contestants to design a logo for the 20th annual Flapjack 5k & Family Fun Run T-shirts. The winner will receive a free race entry, two free T-shirts and their design on all shirts. Contest deadline is Aug. 30. For information on contest specifics, call Meredith Kleker at (813) 909-2722. For information on the race, email Kris Keppel at jkeppel@pasco.k12.fl.us.

MOSI FOOD TRUCK EVENT

MOSI is hosting a Food Truck Madness event, featuring "Monsters After Dark," on Aug. 30 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. The event will be the last chance to view the Sea Monsters Revealed exhibit. Visitors can try a variety of foods, and enjoy games and music. Admission to Food Truck Madness is free. MOSI general exhibits will be available for \$5. Additional fees apply for the Sea Monsters exhibit and Sky Trail. For information, call (813) 987-6000, or visit mosi.org.

GULFPORT GECKOFEST

The 13th annual Geckofest Gulfport is Aug. 31 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at 3129 Beach Blvd. S. in Gulfport. The event includes live music on two stages, a costume contest, street performers, artisans, a kids zone and food vendors. For information, visit www.GulfportMA.com or www.Geckofest.com.

FOOD TRUCK RALLY

Generation Food Truck and The Florida State Fairgrounds Authority will present the world's largest food truck rally on Aug. 31 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the fairgrounds, 4800 US 301 N. in Tampa. There will be more than 100 gourmet trucks and a free concert headlined by Escape Tonight from St. Petersburg. Parking is \$6 per car and \$12 per RV or bus. For information, email 100TruckRally@gmail.com or Generationfoodtruck@gmail.com.

VOLUNTEER FOR COASTAL CLEANUP

The annual Central Pasco Coastal & Waterways Cleanup is looking for volunteers to help clean up the Land O' Lakes area, including school grounds, parks and roads. The annual cleanup is Sept. 14 from 8 a.m. to noon starting at SunTrust Bank, at the corner of SR 54 and Osprey Lane in Land O' Lakes. Participants can reserve a territory when their team is registered. Volunteers need to preregister online at pasco.ifas.ufl.edu/fcs, by clicking on "Coastal Cleanup 2013." For information, call Betsy Crisp at (813) 929-2725 or Kurt Conover at (727) 861-5141.



OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE

Grace Community of Wesley Chapel will host an outdoor worship service on Sept. 1 at the main pavilion of Wesley Chapel District Park, 7727 Boyette Road. This family-friendly gathering begins at 10:30 a.m. and will include upbeat music, an object lesson for kids and a short message. There will be a free lunch and activities for kids. For information, visit ExploreGrace.com.

DINOSAUR WORLD DISCOUNT

Through Sept. 2, Florida residents will be treated to discounted admission to Dinosaur World, 5145 Harvey Tew Road in Plant City. Children younger than 3 are always admitted free, but the cost of admission will be \$10.95 for adults and children ages 3-12. Proof of residency is required. The park boasts life-sized models of dinosaurs, some up to 80 feet in length. Dogs on leashes are welcome. For information, visit www.dinosaurworld.com.

GARDEN CLUB WELCOMES FALL

The Land O' Lakes Garden Club will open its fall season on Sept. 3 at 10:30 a.m. at the Land O' Lakes Community Center, 5401

Land O' Lakes Blvd. The guest speaker will be Pat Duncheon from Duncheon's Nursery. The topic will be fall planting, and plants will be available for purchase. For information, call Marie Woody at (813) 961-2697.

MUSEUM 'SWAPTEMBER'

Beginning Sept. 3, MOSI pass holders will be admitted free to the Florida Aquarium and the Lowry Park Zoo throughout the entire month. MOSI members must present valid membership documentation along with a photo ID for admission into the zoo. Some restrictions may apply. To confirm offer before a scheduled visit, call MOSI at (813) 987-6000, the aquarium at (813) 273-4000, or the zoo at (813) 935-8552.

SAN ANTONIO GARDEN CLUB

The Founders Garden Club of San Antonio will meet on Sept. 5 at the home of Ginger Storch. Coffee fellowship begins at 9 a.m., followed by the business meeting at 9:30 a.m. The club hosts a variety of guest speakers and field trips throughout the year. For directions or information, call Kathy Barco at (352) 424-1616, or Donna Swart at (352) 588-3631.

FIRST UNITED BIBLE STUDY

First United Methodist Church of Land O' Lakes is hosting an interdenominational Bible study for women on Thursdays starting Sept. 5, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The church is at 6209 Land O' Lakes Blvd. Children are welcome. For information, contact Jeanine Coris at (813) 910-7670, or ejcoris@live.com.

TIMBER LAKE BINGO

Timber Lake Estates in Zephyrhills hosts bingo every Thursday beginning Sept. 5. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. and bingo starts at 6 p.m. Food will be served. Timber Lake is at 34301 Country Side Drive, just south of Chancey Road on Morris Bridge Road. For information, call (813) 788-6647.

GREYHOUND DOGS

Greyhound Rescue and Adoptions of Tampa Bay will host a meet and greet with greyhounds and their adoptive or foster parents on Sept. 7 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Wesley Chapel Petco, 1231 Bruce B. Downs Blvd. For information, call (813) 971-4732, or visit great-greyhound.org.

CHEER TEAM RUMMAGE SALE

Diamond Elite Cheer All-Stars will have a rummage sale on Sept. 7 from 8 a.m. to noon in the Dance and Gymnastics Academy of Tampa parking lot, 23633 Venezia Drive in Land O' Lakes. All proceeds benefit the All-Stars. The cheerleaders will sell doughnuts, coffee and other refreshments.

RUN FOR THE FALLEN

The 2013 Run for the Fallen, an event to honor military men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice, will take place Sept. 7-8 at Veterans Memorial Park, 3602 US 301 N. in Tampa. Participants can walk or run, volunteer, wave flags, cheer the runners, buy a shirt, attend a candlelight ceremony, eat at the cookout, make a donation, or view the Florida Fallen Memorial, which will be on display from Sept. 1-8. For a complete schedule or to register for the run, visit www.usmcfamilysupport.org.

CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Connerton Court Assisted Living & Memory Care will host a 1950s Classic Car Show to benefit the Alzheimer's Association on Sept. 9 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at 21021 Betel Palm Lane in Land O' Lakes. For information, call Aaron Stover at (813) 996-9919.

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Local Feeding America branch thanks volunteers

The Laker/Lutz News Staff Report

With summer coming to a close, the Suncoast Branch of Feeding America Tampa Bay is thanking all of its volunteers who helped out at its Land O' Lakes office during the seasonal campaign.

The volunteers, made up primarily of youth and their parents, recorded more than 2,500 volunteer hours, according to a letter from Feeding America. Those volunteers performed various tasks, including sorting food, stocking shelves, pulling food orders and cleaning.

"While we cannot name and thank each participant individually for all your time and efforts, we do want to share our gratitude with you all, and remind you that

you played a role in our ability to handle an annual amount of 4.8 million pounds of food historically through this small branch of Feeding America Tampa Bay," the letter said.

The organization also thanked all of the businesses and community members who helped plan food drives, or made individual contributions at the food bank.

Feeding America was formed in 1979, and manages a nationwide network of 200 food banks and food rescue organizations. Feeding America supports 50,000 charities that involve food banks, emergency shelters, soup kitchens and more.

For more information on the local chapter, and how to volunteer for the fall, visit www.feedingamericatampabay.org.

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MILITARY



Army Pvt. Taylor J. Hill graduated from basic combat training at Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C.

During the nine weeks of training, Hill studied the Army mission, history, tradition and core values, physical fitness, and received instruction and practice in basic combat skills, military weapons, chemical

warfare and bayonet training, drill and ceremony, marching, rifle marksmanship, armed and unarmed combat, map reading, field tactics, military courtesy, military justice system, basic first aid, foot marches, and field training exercises.

Hill is a 2011 graduate of Wiregrass Ranch High School in Wesley Chapel.



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Wilderness Café

early morning coffee and more

Tiffany, General Manager of Wilderness Café tells us, she now opens at 6:45 am to better serve the early morning school and commuter traffic.

"We are located directly across from the high school, and are a convenient stop for the Wilderness Preserve, The Groves and Connerton commuters on their way to work.

"We brew fresh coffee, bake fresh bagels and croissants, and have breakfast sandwiches all ready for that 7:00 am wake up call," Tiffany explains.

Chris says that they pay special attention to the students and teachers TO GO ORDERS, to insure no one is late for class.

"We are also experimenting with TEXT AHEAD and eMAIL ordering for added convenience." Chris added.

"After school Gelato, specialty Coffee and Frappe drinks are a big hit also," Tiffany smiled.

"We are really enjoying the first time Gelato customer."

"Some people get so excited by the unique tastes and flavor offerings." "It's like nothing they've ever tasted before."



Chris has expanded the luncheon Specialty Panini menu. Including some surprise specials, there are now over a dozen succulent combinations, served on Multi-Grain or traditional White Panini breads.

"We are already getting requests for special after school events and study groups," Chris said. "We have FREE WIFI, and The Internet Plug In Table provides a great work and relax atmosphere."

The Wilderness Café is located at the north entrance to Wilderness Commons Shopping Center.

20646 Wilderness Lake Boulevard
813-388-6872
Visit their Facebook page: Wilderness Market and Café for daily posts and updates

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Schools are newsy places. Chalk Talk wants to help you share the news when students win awards, teachers do neat projects, someone gets promoted or retires, or you are planning a play, festival or other fun event.

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ADULT COMMENCEMENT

Pasco County Schools' Office for Career and Technical Education will host the 79th Adult Commencement on Aug. 29 at 7 p.m. at Wesley Chapel High School, 30651 Wells Road. The ceremony is open to the public.

OPEN HOUSE AT DOUBLE BRANCH

Double Branch Elementary School will have an open house Sept. 5 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. for kindergartners to second graders, and from 7 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. for those in grades 3 through 5. The PTA will conduct a general assembly meeting in the cafeteria at 6:30 p.m. Spirit items will be available. The school is at 31500 Chancey Road in Wesley Chapel. For information, call (813) 346-0400.

ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE CLASS

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church, 19911 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., will host an English as a Second Language class on Thursdays beginning Sept. 5 from 9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Classes are for beginner through intermediate level speakers. Topics include American culture, English idioms and slang. Cost is \$20 per quarter, which covers the workbook and class materials. For information or to register, call Heather at (813) 753-8567.

FOOD HANDLER COURSE

The Pasco County Extension office is offering the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Food Managers Food Safety and Quality Program and ServSafe Certification Exam on Sept. 11 starting at 8:30 a.m. at the Central Pasco Professional Center in Land O' Lakes. There will be a break for lunch and the exam from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. This is a comprehensive food handler course, which includes food safety concepts. Upon completion of the training, participants will receive a state Certificate of Achievement from the university. Upon passing the ServSafe manager's examination, participants receive a national certification valid for five years. Class size is limited. Training, exam and textbook cost is \$165. To register, call (888) 232-8723, or visit fycs.ifas.ufl.edu/foodsafety.

SAINT LEO OFFERS DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Saint Leo University's Donald R. Tapia School of Business is accepting applications through Sept. 15 for its new doctor of business administration degree program. The course-work emphasizes applied knowledge and practice, and is designed to develop graduates for college-level teaching, academic leadership or consulting. The first class of students will be

capped at 25 participants. For information, contact graduate admissions at (800) 707-8846, or grad.admissions@saintleo.edu.

PHCC HOSTS ARTIST

Pasco-Hernando Community College will host a lecture by Michael Conway, artist of Beyond the Proof Sheet, the first fine arts exhibit of the season, at Rao Musunuru M.D. Art Gallery on Sept. 5 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Conway will discuss his artistic journey from an early focus in photography to the use of mixed media. The gallery is in the library of the West Campus, 10230 Ridge Road, New Port Richey. For information, call (727) 816-3231.

SAT AND ACT PRACTICE TEST

The Wesley Chapel High School PTSA is sponsoring the Princeton Review Practice test on Sept. 7 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the school's cafeteria. The practice test features a mix of questions from both the ACT and SAT. Cost per student is \$20. Preregistration is preferred. Students will need to arrive by 8:45 a.m., and bring a calculator and No. 2 pencils. Lunch will be provided. A detailed score report will provide a side-by-side comparison of a student's projected test scores. For information, call the school at (813) 794-8700, or email Heidi Bernaldo at ptsawchs@yahoo.com.

SAMUEL WATKINS EARNS BUSINESS DEGREE

Samuel Watkins of Lutz has graduated from the University of Houston with a degree in business. The University of Houston is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized by The Princeton Review as one of the nation's best colleges for undergraduate education.

ACCREDITATION

Saint Leo University announced its master of social work program has received accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education, just four years after the technologically innovative program was launched.

The accreditation assures workplaces, prospective students and the general public that the Saint Leo program meets the teaching and curricular standards established by the profession. Through the accredited program, master of social work graduates are eligible to take the examination to become licensed clinical social workers.

LEE ON DEAN'S LIST AT ECKERD

Laura Lee of Lutz has been named to Eckerd College's Dean's List for the spring 2013 semester. Lee is majoring in American studies. To qualify, students must complete at least four courses with a grade point average of 3.75 or higher. Eckerd College is at 4200 54th Ave. S., in St. Petersburg.

NEW LEADERSHIP

The Pasco-Hernando Community College District Board of Trustees elected a new chair and vice chair for the 2013-14 academic year. Trustee John L. DiRienzo was elected to serve as chair, succeeding Rao Musunuru, and Trustee Leonard H. Johnson was elected as vice chair.

DiRienzo, of Spring Hill, is an adjunct faculty member at Saint Leo University. He is a retired school principal with a master's degree in special education and additional certification in educational leadership. DiRienzo is past president of the Board of Directors for Arc of Florida and Arc Nature Coast in Hernando County, and currently is an active volunteer for the organizations. DiRienzo has served on the college's board since July 2009.

Johnson, a Dade City attorney, is a shareholder at Johnson Auvil & Pratico P.A., where he practices real estate law, business and banking law, construction law and estate planning.

Johnson received his bachelor's degree from the University of Florida, and his law degree from the University of Florida College of Law. He also sits on the board of directors of Gator Boosters Inc., and has served on the college's board since November 2011.

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Samantha Touriello, an incoming fifth-grader at Connerton Elementary School, gets some reassurance from principal Aimee Boltze while her mother Jessica Cottrell looks on during the first day of school last week. Samantha was able to wipe away her tears, and make her way to her new classroom. (Photos by Michael Hinman)



Janine Kiley, a secretary at Connerton Elementary School, helps check in students during the first day of classes at the new school.

Local schools add another 1,000 students to rolls

By Michael Hinman
mhinman@cnewspubs.com

More students are walking through the front doors of area schools as communities in Pasco County continue to grow.

The 39 schools in east and central Pasco County added 1,000 students since this time last year, according to population numbers released by Pasco County Schools. On average, the student population growth in east and central Pasco would be equivalent to adding a classroom per school. The additional students bring the total public school population to 30,800 — a 3.4 percent increase.

“We’re not exactly sure where they are coming from as we haven’t had a chance to analyze it just yet,” said Christopher Williams, director for planning services at Pasco County Schools. “There are certainly some new houses being built, but I’m not sure how much of that has impacted the schools.”

The biggest student population jumps came in Wesley Chapel, where Watergrass and Wesley Chapel elementary schools added 382 students, many of them coming from Quail Hollow Elementary School, which is closed this year for renovations. Both schools already taught more than a combined total of 1,000 students, but this year are operating with 1,438 — a 36 percent jump.

Also on the rise is Wesley Chapel High School, adding 206 students from this time last year, and increasing its student body by nearly 16 percent. Wiregrass Ranch High School was not far behind, adding 159 students to cross the 2,000 mark with an 8 percent jump.

“The Wesley Chapel and (SR) 54 corridor is where we’re seeing the most growth,” Williams said, adding there are still serious overcrowding issues at schools like Seven Oaks Elementary, Long Middle and Wiregrass Ranch.



Parents take pictures of their kids as they get ready for their first day of classes at Connerton Elementary School last week.



Pasco County Schools superintendent Kurt Browning welcomes families to Connerton Elementary School during the first day of classes last week.

And it will be that way, at least for the near future.

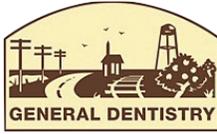
“We don’t have much of a budget for new schools, other than having enough money to build a new elementary school, in the next five years,” he said. “In the meantime, we’re doing what we can to help these schools.”

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Hot cars and spicy chili coming soon to Lutz

By B.C. Manion
bcmanion@cnewspubs.com

Chili aficionados and classic car buffs can compete for bragging rights on Nov. 2 at the Lutz Centennial Cars & Chili event.

The event is one in a series of celebrations this year to mark the 100th anniversary of Lutz, which has a rich history of bringing people together for community gatherings.

"The main thing I'm hoping for is a good day," said Bob Moore, chairman of the centennial committee. "What I'm trying to do is involve people from Lutz. I know there are a lot of people in Lutz that have classic cars."

Car buffs and motorcycle enthusiasts are encouraged to take part in the show, which will feature classic cars, exotic cars and motorcycles.

"Come show off your Harleys," Moore said.

The chili cook-off will have two categories: Families and individuals will compete in one, and clubs and organizations will square off in the other.

Steve Otto, a widely known columnist for The Tampa Tribune, has vast experience in judging chili contests and will lead the team judging this cook-off.

Suzin Carr, the honorary Guv'na of Lutz, will also get to choose her favorite chili.

Centennial Committee member Janet Hardy said the committee wants to put the word out early, to encourage people to take part. The deadline for registration to compete in the cook-off is 5 p.m. on Oct. 25, and there is a \$25 team entry fee.

She hopes chili cooks will pull out their

deep pots, long-handled ladles and special recipes to test their skills against other chili lovers. She also hopes that they'll show off their team spirit, because organizers are trying to promote good old-fashioned fun.

The idea, she said, "is just to celebrate the fact that Lutz is a great place."

Chili cook-off teams can consist of one chef and two assistants. The chili must be cooked on-site. Since there's no electricity, teams must provide their own LP-gas cooking appliance. They must also supply their own ingredients and cooking utensils.

Patrons will be able to purchase official centennial chili cups for \$5 each, which they can carry around from team to team to sample different kinds of chili. The tastings

will begin at noon and will end when the chili runs out, or at 2 p.m.

The celebration will be on the grounds between the old train depot and the Lutz Community Center, between US 41 and the

Lutz Branch Library.

To find out more about the chili cook-off, email lutzchilicookoff@gmail.com. To learn more about the car show, email bigwoofer@tampabay.rr.com.



Organizers of the Lutz Centennial Cars & Chili event hope that classic and exotic car lovers will want to show off their vehicles at the Nov. 2 event. (Photos courtesy of Bob Moore)



Exotic car owners are encouraged to bring their prized vehicles to Lutz to show them on Nov. 2.

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Tiffany Porter hammers in a nail on what will eventually become her new home through Habitat for Humanity.

HABITAT, from page 1

Porter said. Just before moving into her new home, she was living in a mother-in-law suite that was not in the best living conditions.

But now she can apply to take in younger children, thanks to having a safe home in a safe neighborhood.

And while Habitat's mission is to provide homeownership for those who may not have had it otherwise, it's certainly not a handout, said Stephanie Black, director of development and public relations for Habitat for Humanity of East and Central Pasco County.

"I think the biggest misconception is that Habitat gives away homes, but they don't," Black said. "We provide a zero-interest, no-profit mortgage, but it's still a mortgage."

Candidates for home ownership have to meet certain income levels ranging from between \$11,950 to \$31,850 annually for one person, to between \$21,150 and \$56,400 for a family of seven.

Families have to demonstrate a need for affordable housing and currently live in a substandard home. However, they also have to prove they can make mortgage payments, and have a steady job with no recent bankruptcies or court judgments.

"Most of our home payments are less than what people are paying for rent," Black said. "That includes their taxes and



The newest home from Habitat for Humanity has plenty of room for Tiffany Porter and a small foster family.

their insurance."

And while Habitat is always looking for volunteers, their biggest need recently has been qualified candidates.

Porter's home was the 117th Habitat home built in East and Central Pasco County. It was constructed over a seven-month period, and was a women-built project. The entire construction crew was female, part of an international campaign to encourage more women to join construc-

tion teams typically dominated by men.

All of that is just a bonus for Porter, who is enjoying her new home with plans to stay in it for quite a while.

"I didn't grow up here, but I just love this area," she said. "I never know what might happen next, but right now, I don't plan on living anywhere else."

For more information on how to apply for a Habitat home, call (352) 567-1444, or visit www.ephabitat.org.

GAS TAX, from page 1

"This is an extremely important issue," Mulieri said. Additional funds are needed because Pasco is a different place than it used to be. "It's not your grandfather's Pasco."

The county's current gas tax is 7 cents a gallon and the proposed tax would take it to 12 cents a gallon, which is the maximum level.

Commissioner Henry Wilson asked if the county could set the tax so that it would automatically expire in 10 years. Such a tax might be more acceptable to some people if they knew it was only temporary, he said.

County Administrator Michele Baker said

that was possible. But if commissioners do move forward with an increase, the county's proposed budget — already under consideration by the commissioners — would need changes.

Either way, the county must find a way to address its needs, Baker said.

"Our infrastructure is aging and falling apart," Baker said. "This is a national problem."

As the federal and state governments grapple with finding ways to repair their roads and bridges, it is unlikely that the county will receive additional funding to address local needs, Baker said.

"If we want to improve the infrastructure in Pasco County, it's on us," she said.

Baker also noted there's a direct link be-

tween the quality of the community's infrastructure and its property values. It affects not only current property owners, but also affects the county's ability to attract new businesses.

Schrader agreed. "People, when they come here to look — that's what they're looking for, is the appearance."

"Curb appeal, literally," added Commissioner Kathryn Starkey.

The county has been waging a losing battle in its quest to maintain its roads and landscaping because of deep budget and staffing cuts, Baker said. The road and bridge department has lost a third of its budget since 2008, going from \$8.9 million to \$6.3 million. Its staff has been reduced from 90 employees down to 40, and at the same

time, the county has added 240 lane-miles of new road.

"You have 50 less people to grade roads, mow right-of-way, do landscaping, fill potholes, put up signs, trim trees," Schrader said.

Public Works director Mike Garrett told commissioners that the county's response times for maintenance needs have lengthened because of staff and budget cuts. That

Situation, he said, will only grow worse without additional funds.

If the proposed increase is adopted, the 5-cent increase would generate \$6 million the first year and \$8.1 million per year thereafter. The first year is less because the tax would only be in effect for nine months of the fiscal year.

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“If anyone is thinking of doing this, just do it!” ~ Karen Sandifer

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Buddy Baseball a big hit with special needs community

By Michael Murillo

The Laker/Lutz News Correspondent

Athletes cheer each other on, talk strategy, share high-fives and enjoy the camaraderie of playing a team sport.

They make friends, celebrate good plays and congratulate each other while parents watch the games and support their children. After the game, everyone leaves with a smile and a desire to take the field again the following Saturday.

The only thing missing is the hard-core competition: There isn't any. The score is an afterthought at best.

Just getting a chance to play is what matters, because the athletes might be in a wheelchair, have autism, or have some other physical, psychological or neurological challenge that makes playing more difficult. But none of those challenges prevent them from playing in the Buddy Baseball League, which partners each athlete with a "buddy" who guides them through the game, offers encouragement and allows them to take part in an experience that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

Now in its fifth year, Buddy Baseball plays its games on Saturdays, beginning in late September, at the Temple Terrace Recreation Complex, 6610 E. Whiteway Drive. But its players — boys and girls with special needs ages 10-22 — come from all over the Tampa Bay Region (some even as far away as Sarasota or Plant City), and the league provides helmets, bats and balls, as well as hat and T-shirt uniforms to all participants.

Each player is also assigned at least one buddy and will get a feel for their role during a designated practice before each scheduled game.

According to Russ Oberbroeckling, Buddy Baseball commissioner, the format allows disabled children to go from permanent spectators to instant athletes.

"They really can't play baseball on a regular team because their disability holds them back," Oberbroeckling said. "Now they can play on a team and be successful at it because they have a buddy there to help."



April Dean receives a game ball at Buddy Baseball, an organization that allows children with disabilities to participate in team sports with the help of on-field assistants who provide physical and emotional support. (Photo courtesy of Russ Oberbroeckling)

The activity also allows them to make friends and enjoy the camaraderie of organized sports.

Oberbroeckling also explained that the buddies, who are normally in the same age range as the participants, enjoy helping the players and being part of a special organization. But Buddy Baseball impacts people off the field as well: Parents get to cheer on their children and be part of a sports community that otherwise might not be available to them.

"It's very social for the parents," Oberbroeckling said. "For an hour and a half, they can go out to a baseball game, sit in the stands, enjoy the game and they're meeting other people with similar situations."

Amy Dean, a Lutz resident whose daughter plays Buddy Baseball, agrees that parents also benefit from the organization.

"We've gotten to where we know each

other now, because the same parents tend to be there," Dean said. They give each other tips and advice, and enjoy the games together.

But the biggest recipient is her daughter, April. The 20-year-old, who has hypotonic cerebral palsy, is starting her fifth season with Buddy Baseball (the league plays two seasons a year), and she's gone from knowing nothing about the sport to practicing with her family between games.

"She's looked forward to it from day one. Just absolutely loves it," Dean said. The social component is also important, as Dean wants her daughter to be comfortable interacting and making friends in an atmosphere that includes people without disabilities, such as the buddies.

And April has had no problem making friends and enjoying herself at the games.

"I've been having fun at Buddy Baseball,"

Be a fundraising buddy

Buddy Baseball will host its third annual Buddy Run and 5k Fun Run Nov. 3 at Lake Park, 17302 N. Dale Mabry Highway. Funds support both Buddy Baseball and Congregation Beth Am.

To register, email BuddyRunDirector@gmail.com, or visit www.active.com and search for "Buddy Run 5k."

she said. "The coaches and the helpers, they help us with the batting and the pitching. We have a lot of fun at the games."

While the Buddy Baseball League continues to grow in popularity (the league will have 90 to 100 players in two age divisions this season), it remains an expensive endeavor. A nominal fee for players only covers a small portion of the cost, and they offer a number of scholarships for families who might have financial difficulties. The league depends on outside sponsorships, donations and a charitable event to continue operating.

That event is the third annual Buddy Run 5k and Fun Run, which will be Nov. 3 at Lake Park, 17302 N. Dale Mabry Highway. Last year's event featured approximately 260 runners and raised more than \$10,000 for Buddy Baseball and Congregation Beth Am, a Reform Jewish congregation serving Lutz, New Tampa, Wesley Chapel, Westchase and all surrounding areas. The event includes a competitive 5k Run at 8 a.m., a one-mile Fun Run at 9 a.m. and a Buddy Dash for runners with special needs only.

For information about the event, e-mail BuddyRunDirector@gmail.com. To register online, visit www.active.com and search for "Buddy Run 5k."

The upcoming Buddy Baseball season runs from Sept. 28 through Nov. 9, and registration ends on Aug. 28.

For more information about Buddy Baseball or registration, visit www.buddybaseball.org, e-mail BuddyBaseball@verizon.net, or call (813) 416-5742.

CHECK THIS OUT

Micheal Jones new hoops coach at PHCC

Pasco-Hernando Community College stayed local for its new basketball coach, naming former Fox Chapel Middle School athletic director Micheal Jones to the role.

Jones, who was an assistant coach at PHCC between 2010-12, also was a middle school basketball coach at Challenger K8 in Spring Hill, West Hernando Middle School in Brooksville, and was the assistant junior varsity high school back coach at Florida State University School in Tallahassee.

"My priority is to teach the student athletes how to become successful in all areas of their lives by developing a solid foundation of basketball and sports knowledge they can carry with them through their life journey," Jones said in a release.

Jones is also a former player at PHCC, leading the Conquistadors to the Suncoast Conference championship in 2000. He appeared twice in the Florida Community College Activities Association state tournament, and represented PHCC in the 2000 state all-star game.

Jones received his bachelor's degree from Florida State University, and his master's degree in athletic administration from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in sports psychology through the University of the Rockies in Colorado.

Jones replaces longtime hoops coach Steve

Winterling, who was promoted to the school's athletic director last month.

Build houses, play golf

Hit the links with a favorite high school golfer and raise money for charity at the same time during the Habitat Business Challenge Charity Golf Tournament, slated for Sept. 20-21 at Silverado Golf & Country Club.

The country club is at 36841 Clubhouse Drive in Zephyrhills, just off Eiland Boulevard.

The tournament, which raises money for Habitat for Humanity of East and Central Pasco County as well as the golf organizations at Zephyrhills and Pasco high schools, teams a high school golfer with three other players as part of a four-person scramble. That golfer is "purchased" during a talent auction on Sept. 20, ready to play on Sept. 21.

CRay Inc., Bahr's Propane Gas & A/C and Silverado have teamed up to host the tournament. The entry fee is \$250 per business, and is limited to the first 30 business teams that sign up.

The fee includes Saturday golf, three dinner tickets to the Friday mixer and auction, cart, lunch and swag bag. The mixer on Friday begins at 6 p.m., while the tournament itself starts Saturday at 8:30 a.m.

Awards include a first-place business challenge trophy for net and gross, along with gross payouts and net prizes paid through pro shop credits. Silverado is also offering a \$10,000 hole-in-one prize.

To participate or sponsor, call Cliff Howell at CRay at (813) 277-8800, Sean Klotz at Silverado at (800) 853-4653, or Kevin Bahr at Bahr's Propane Gas & A/C at (813) 782-5013.

Senior league looks for players

The Senior Slo Pitch Softball League, which plays at the Land O' Lakes Recreation Complex in the fall, will have a registration drive on Sept. 20 at 8:30 a.m.

The recreation complex is located at 3932 Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes.

The group, which caters to older residents, also offers golf, tennis and bowling throughout the year.

For more information, call Walt Bockmiller at (813) 527-8211.

Soccer league registration

The Greater Tampa Bay Football Club is hosting a fall and winter soccer registration online for players ages 4 through 19.

Practice begins at the end of September or early October with game days running between Oct. 19 and Feb. 22.

Games will be played at the Land O' Lakes Recreational Complex, 3032 Collier Parkway. Fees range between \$89 and \$159, and uniforms may be extra.

To register, go to www.gtbfcc.com and click on "register." For more information, visit the website, call Mike Pearson at (813) 748-2060, or email him at mpear3118@msn.com.

Zephyrhills '80s-style mud run

Hidden Creek in Zephyrhills has organized another 5-kilometer mud run event, this time with the theme of the 1980s, for Saturday,

Sept. 21 at 3:30 p.m.

A portion of the proceeds will go to the local ROTC, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, who will all be help out at the race.

Along with the '80s-style 5k mud run, there will be uphill slide climbs, slides and log crossing. After the run, music bands Hired Guns, the Ryman Fillmore Band and No Name Band will perform live. There will also be dancing, music and volleyball.

Each participant receives one free beer or water, a free T-shirt, a custom finisher's medal and free entry into the after party. The cost for registration starts at \$45, and up to \$90 the day of the event.

To register online, visit www.hidden-creekrecpark.com.

The event is free for spectators, but there is a \$10 parking fee.

For more information, call (813) 714-2528.

FAPA golf tournament

The Pasco County Foster Adoptive Parent Association is hosting its annual Fore Families golf tournament on Sept. 28 at 1 p.m. at the Lansbrook Golf and Country Club in Palm Harbor.

The cost is \$90 for each player, or \$320 for a foursome. All players must be 16 years or older.

Registration includes a box lunch, 18 holes of golf with shared cart, prizes and a special awards dinner following play. Team prizes will also be awarded for players finishing first, second, third and "Last but not least."

All players in the tournament are automat-

Continued on next page

Romeo to match golf talents with PGA Champions on tour

By Don Trello
Special to The Laker/Lutz News

Terese Romeo combines above-average athletic ability with strong perseverance and character to get eye-popping results on the golf course. And that hard work is paying off as she's set to take part in the Nature Valley First Tee Open in Pebble Beach next month.

The open, Sept. 27-29, will give Romeo a chance to pair up with members of the PGA Champions Tour, who serve as mentors.

"I had to apply for a spot," said Romeo, a member of The First Tee of Tampa Bay, a golf group designed to provide affordable and accessible golf to children from moderate socioeconomic backgrounds.

Romeo is one of 81 participants selected from First Tee chapters from around the country, and was the only girl asked to apply from the Tampa Bay chapter.

"You have to write essays, and have volunteers hours, along with golf," she said.

The 16-year-old Freedom High School junior from Tampa Palms has already accomplished quite a bit, both on and off the links. Just last year, she won the Class 2A-District 10 golf championship as well as a regional title en route to an 11th-place finish at states — all after recovering from surgery.

"Terese had surgery and came back with a cast," Freedom girls golf coach Rich Simard said. "She had to play four matches to qualify for district, and I had her go out and play. She used her left hand and swung with one hand. I've never seen anything like that all the years I've been around golf."

The team played off the red tees, which are typically placed behind the white tees for championship tournaments.

Romeo has battled with injuries in the past. She hurt her wrist competing in gymnastics a couple years back, forcing her to miss her entire freshman golf season. Now, after two surgeries, Romeo is poised to have her best-ever high school season on the links.

"Now everything is great," she said. "I hit the ball really straight and put the ball in places where I need to place it."

Romeo competes in American Junior Golf Association tournaments, and is a longtime member of The First Tee of Tampa Bay, a program of the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA.

"I've known Terese since she first started with us when she was eight or nine years old," First Tee golf coach Jeff Leonard said. "She's such a competitor. Her putting and chipping comes naturally, and her swing is consistent. She can drive the ball 230 yards."

Leonard is also impressed with Romeo's work off the links, amassing at least 400 vol-



Terese Romeo tees off during a practice round at Rogers Park, part of The First Tee of Tampa Bay. Romeo, who participates in the group designed to provide affordable and accessible golf to children, will take part in a Champions Tour event in Pebble Creek in September. (Photo courtesy of the Tampa YMCA)

unteers hours, mostly as a park camp counselor for younger kids.

"The First Tee has been really good for her," Leonard said. "It gives her a place to channel her energy."

And now it will give her a chance to play with a PGA legend at Pebble Creek where the competition will be tough, but there will be a lot to learn as well.

"I'd like to play with Tom Watson or Hale Irwin," Romeo said. "I met Hale during a senior tour tournament here in Tampa. I was in the gallery during the pro-am event and his amateur walked over to me and asked me to hit his golf ball."

It was a par-3 hold, and Romeo had to hit it on the green.

"Hale came over and talked with me, and walked with me down the fairway," Romeo said. "I've seen him a couple of times since, and he remembered me. He's a nice guy."

"It was a par-3 hole and I hit it on the green. Hale came over and talked with me and walked with me down the fairway. I've seen him a couple of times since and he remembered me. He's a nice guy."

The 5-foot, 93-pound Romeo works hard at refining her game when she isn't competing against opponents.

"I practice almost every day," said Romero, who scored a hole-in-one when she was 13. "I'll play four, nine or 18 holes. I need to practice more."

Romeo's plans for the future include playing golf in college — just to start.

"I want to become a teaching pro out of college," she said. "Then maybe try to make the LPGA tour."

And if anyone can accomplish that, it's Romeo, her Freedom coach added.

"Terese has a great attitude for the game of golf," Simard said. "I think if she continues to progress like she has progressed, she could be one of the top high school players in the country."

The expo will include clinics, workshops and programs from fly-fishing experts, writers, authors, fly-casting instructors, charter captains, and fly tiers.

Admission is \$10 for the two-day expo, with children 16 and younger admitted free.

For more information, call (850) 212-5396, or visit tinyurl.com/l4t93h.

Sunlake band fundraiser

The Sunlake Soaring Sound marching band and color guard is having its annual car wash fundraiser on Saturday, Aug. 31 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the 7-Eleven on the corner of US 41 and SR 54 in Land O' Lakes.

Money raised will pay for music, show props, instruments and transportation for the band.

For more information, contact Mary Makal at (813) 495-0088 or email sunlakehsband-fundraise@gmail.com.

—Submit your sports updates to news@cnewspubs.com.

Continued from previous page

ically entered in the Hole-in-One contest to win cash or a new car.

Nonplayers can also attend the dinner buffet for \$20 per person.

FAPA is a nonprofit organization based in Pasco County, which strives to provide foster and adoptive parents with the necessary resources to deal with the many challenges they face in raising our communities' children.

All donations are tax deductible.

For more information, email Christina Nunez at becharmed2@gmail.com.

Fly fishers invited to Crystal River

The Florida Council on the International Federation of Fly Fishers and the Tarpon Coast Fly Fishers are hosting the 2013 Florida Fly Fishing Expo Oct. 18-19 on the grounds of Plantation on Crystal River, 9301 W. Fort Island Trail in Crystal River.

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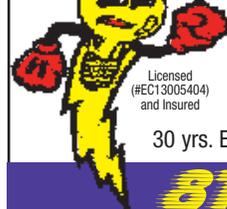
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Oakstead! This 3/2/2 home is situated on conservation in The Gated Section of Marchmont. Home features an open great room floor plan with tile entry areas. **\$1400/mo.** (ott)



Cory Lake Isles Pool Home in Tampa! This is a 4/3/3 home on conservation, screened cage with an in ground pool with a child safety fence, and a bonus room. **\$2950/mo.** (can)



Cross Creek Pool Home in Tampa! Beautifully maintained 4/3/2 is a winner, with a premium corner lot with side entry garage. Home offers hardwood floors in the right areas. **\$2100/mo.** (kin)



Summerfield Village in Riverview! Adorable 2/2/1 with new tile countertops, freshly painted, tile floors in main living area, and laminated floors in the bedrooms. **\$1050/mo.** (lar)



Townhome in Riverview! This very nice home features 3/2.5 with neutral colors in the great room and dining room, with a pass thru between the kitchen and dining room. **\$1095/mo.** (bri)



Tampa Palms Pool Home in Tampa! Absolutely gorgeous 4/2.5/2 includes formal living with beautifully tiled floors, formal dining room and also a family room. **\$2200/mo.** (ebe)



Holiday Gardens Estates in New Port Richey! 4/1.5/1 newly updated with fresh paint inside, beautiful wood floors, new carpet, spacious kitchen, and a fenced yard. **\$895/mo.** (alc)



Stagecoach Village Pool Home in Land O'Lakes! Beautiful 4/3/2 w/a wonderful floor plan, including family room, formal dining, and formal living room have new dark wood flooring. **\$1900/mo.** (gra)



Village on the Pond in Lutz! Excellent condition 3/2/2 on a quiet cul-de-sac with a huge fenced backyard. Spacious open great room floor plan with vaulted ceilings. **\$1200/mo.** (cib)



Asbel Creek in Land O'Lakes! Gorgeous 5/3/2 with 3060 Sq. Ft. home in a wonderful community. Formal living and dining have wood flooring, and tile in all the wet areas. **\$1600/mo.** (new)

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