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## Teen isn't defined by rare disease

By Kevin Weiss  
kweiss@lakerlutznews.com

Remington Walls is just like any other 17-year-old.

Except that he can't eat food. Walls, a junior at Land O' Lakes High School, suffers from a rare disease called Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE).

Essentially, all food deteriorates his esophagus — and there is no cure.

His only source of nutrition comes via a hypoallergenic amino acid-based liquid formula, called Neocate EO28 Splash.

It's specifically designed for patients who are allergic to proteins.

Walls drinks the "shake" 15 to 18 times per day, about every two hours.



COURTESY OF STEPHANIE WALLS

**Remington Walls is a switch-hitting, leftfielder on the Land O' Lakes Gators varsity baseball team. He suffers from a rare disease called Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE), in which all food sources cause inflammation in his esophagus.**

Moreover, he's been drinking the same flavor — orange-pineapple — every day since he was removed from all foods at age 4. It is his only flavor option.

The teen, however, doesn't let the disorder define him.

"You try not to think about it," he said.

It also hasn't prevented him from pursuing his passions, including baseball.

He's currently a switch-hitting, leftfielder on the Land O' Lakes Gators varsity squad.

"The only thing I can't do is eat," he said.

"That's how I look at it."

And, over the years, he's learned to cope with the realization he can't enjoy any of the foods his peers consume on a daily

See TEEN, page 19A



COURTESY OF MADONNA JERVIS WISE

Women played an important role in munitions factories during World War I.

## Sharing the story of women's progress

By B.C. Manion  
bcmanion@lakerlutznews.com

Madonna Jervis Wise, a local author who writes primarily about history, has been making the rounds lately, talking about women in the work force and "East Pasco Women Who Rocked."

Her talks, which have been delivered at the Pioneer Florida Museum and Village in Dade City, at the East Pasco Networking Group's breakfast meeting and at the Zephyrhills Public Library, have traced the evolving role of women in society.

The essence of her presentation traces the progress that women have made since ancient times to the present.

First, she delivers an overview of women in history and then she focuses on the contributions of seven East Pasco women.

While delivering her talk at the East Pasco Networking Group, Wise said she keeps her mother and grandmother in mind.

"My mother was Depression-era woman who worked most of her life. My grandmother was equally as industrious," she said.

"As we go through the presentation, please stop and think about the women in your life.

"Right now, we have 72 million women in the American workforce. That's 30 million more than 1984, and women roughly make up about 50 percent of the workforce," she said.

Despite their large numbers in the work force, women still trail men in terms of pay, Wise noted. Women receive approximately 81 percent of what men are paid, she said. And, only 14 percent of the executive positions in Fortune 500 companies are held by women.

There has been progress, however, compared to opportunities for women in the past.

"Women weren't allowed to participate in any capacity, throughout most of history



B.C. MANION

**Madonna Jervis Wise has been giving talks about women's progress at various venues during Women's History Month.**

—in terms of speaking, political involvement, certainly not leadership," Wise said.

"In the American colonies, women didn't own property and certainly didn't vote," she said.

"I do a lot of genealogy. Sometimes you don't even find the woman's first name in genealogy."

Census data from the 19th century shows blank spaces for occupations because women's work was not recorded, Wise said.

Women's role in the world of work has evolved over time, she said.

"By the 1820s, women were starting to go into the textile mills. Pay was about \$3 a week.

"By the early 19th century, women were still mostly involved in domestic services, laundry, cooking, cleaning, some teaching, nursing," she said.

But she noted, women's opportunities have expanded significantly — even during her own lifetime.

"I remember when I was in school. They'd say, 'Are you going to be a secretary,

See PROGRESS, page 19A

## Talented youths get time to shine

By B.C. Manion  
bcmanion@lakerlutznews.com

Jessica Twitmyer received the top scores to win a \$1,000 Pasco Heritage Scholarship, during the 34th "Spotlight on Talent" on March 11 at the Center for the Arts at Wesley Chapel High School.

Because of its popularity, the talent contest is divided into two shows, said Barbara Friedman, the executive producer for the competition, which is put on by the nonprofit Heritage Arts Center Association.

The afternoon performance features younger competitors and the evening show features older contestants.

More than 160 students auditioned on Feb. 28 for a chance to compete in the finals, Friedman said. Of those, a total of 140 competed in the two shows.

Friedman was helped by assistant producers Dr. Rebecca Groomes and Alicia Polk Guanio. Also, a 15-member board of directors worked on the project for three months, and a final production team, including 20 members of the community, pitched in to put on the competition, Friedman said.

Both performances drew audiences of hundreds of people, and performers competed for more than \$5,000 in trophies, ribbons and cash prizes.

Contestants included musicians, singers, dancers and musical theater performers.

There were two masters of ceremonies, Tom Jackson, who works for Pasco County

See YOUTHS, page 19A



COURTESY OF THE HERITAGE ARTS CENTER ASSOCIATION  
**Vocalist Jessica Twitmyer won the top prize during the 34th annual 'Spotlight on Talent' competition, receiving a \$1,000 Pasco Heritage Scholarship.**

## Shoe Carnival steps into Land O' Lakes

By Kathy Steele  
ksteel@lakerlutznews.com

Shoe Carnival will host a grand opening in the Village Lakes Shopping Center on April 1, real estate officials with the shoe company have announced.

That's no April Fool's Day joke.

The store is planning a soft opening a few days before, on March 27.

The new shoe shop will be located in a suite next door to Ross Dress for Less.

Construction workers are busy getting the approximately 7,800-square-foot store ready for its debut.

Village Lakes Shopping Center opened in the 1980s.

Former occupants in the center included Walmart and Sweetbay Supermarket, which formerly was Kash n Karry.

Center tenants now include Ross Dress



KATHY STEELE

Shoe Carnival is planning an April 1 grand opening in a storefront next to Ross Dress for Less, at the Village Lakes Shopping Center in Land O' Lakes.

for Less, Marshalls, You Fit Health Club, Dollar Tree and Beef O' Brady's.

The national chain shoe store conducts research to determine locations, largely zeroing in on "underserved" markets, said Jeff Fink, vice president of Shoe Carnival's real

estate department.

"We liked the shopping center, and we liked the community," Fink said.

Other Shoe Carnival stores in the region operate in Tampa, Bradenton, Brandon, Largo, St. Petersburg and Spring Hill.

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inside this week

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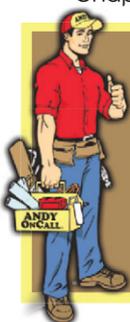
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# Local student finds freedom, opportunity in United States

By B.C. Manion  
bcmansion@lakerlutznews.com



B.C. MANION

Wiregrass Ranch High senior Luis Pereira has been inducted into the National Society of High School Scholars. His family left Venezuela 18 months ago to seek political asylum in the United States.

Wiregrass Ranch High School senior Luis Pereira doesn't take his freedom for granted.

Less than two years ago, his family arrived in Wesley Chapel — after emigrating from Venezuela to seek political asylum in the United States.

Since that time, the 19-year-old has managed to be inducted into the National Society of High School Scholars, has won the TEDX Talk competition at Wiregrass and has been awarded a scholarship to Oglethorpe University in Atlanta.

The scholars society was established in 2002 by James W. Lewis and Claes Nobel. Nobel is the senior member of the family that established the Nobel Prizes.

The society recognizes "top scholars who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, scholarship and community commitment," according to a news release announcing Pereira's induction. The society helps to advance the goals and aspirations of high-achieving students through learning experiences, scholarships, internships, international study and peer networks.

Despite his achievements, it hasn't been an easy road for Pereira.

His family moved to Wiregrass Ranch because of the difficult political situation in Venezuela.

"I was part of an opposition group, since I was 14. I was active in protests and demonstrations against the government.

"It wasn't good for my family. We started receiving threats," Pereira said.

His dad received calls about the family being watched.

"They said: 'I saw your wife, picking up the kids. You should look out for them. You should take care of them,'" Pereira said. "Imagine living everyday knowing that there is someone who wants to hurt you.

"A year and a half ago, we decided this is too dangerous for us," he said.

Besides his parents, Luis Sr. and Madelin, Pereira has two little brothers, Guillermo, 12, and Santiago, 10.

Initially, the family moved in with relatives in the Wiregrass Ranch area, but that didn't work out.

"At one point, we were homeless," he said.

"When the people at Wiregrass (Ranch High School) found out, it was amazing. The community got together and found out ways to help my family. They gave us food. They gave us money. They found us a place to stay. They've been helping us through this process of trying to settle in a new country. I had a lot of support from my teachers, from the staff at Wiregrass," he said.

The communities of John Long Middle School and Double Branch Elementary School also were incredibly kind, Pereira said. His brother, Guillermo, attends John Long, and his other brother, Santiago, attends Double Branch.

Education is important to the family. Pereira scored a 1340 on the SAT, and carries a 3.87 grade point on a scale of 4.0. He's taking Advanced Placement Chemistry, Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Advancement Placement English Literature, among his other classes.

"I'm very interested in speech and debate. I really like the fact that by speaking out you

can influence people, to change their outlook on things. I think that's really amazing," he said.

One of things he enjoys most about being in the United States is being able to freely share his thoughts and beliefs.

"Just being able to express myself here, to be able to say what I believe is right. That's amazing. It's a right that I've never had in my life," Pereira said.

Pereira aspires to become a brain surgeon.

"It is different from psychology, in that you are investigating what drives human behavior, but you are investigating it from a biological point. You want to know the process that makes people do stuff," he said.

Pereira said his interest in medicine was influenced by his father, who was a pharmacist in Venezuela. His mom taught elementary school there.

Now, his mom cleans homes and his dad works in a retail store. Pereira recently landed a job at McDonald's.

He plans to continue his education, and at the moment his primary choice for college is Oglethorpe University in Atlanta.

He applied there after seeing a flier that noted the architectural similarity between the campus and Hogwarts University in the Harry Potter novels.

"I did some research about the school, and I liked it," he said.

He applied in November, and they called him to let him know he'd been accepted in January.

And, they invited him to the college's scholarship weekend.

He qualified to compete in the Civic Engagement scholarship category.

"I had to do a presentation about how I participated in civic engagement and leadership in my everyday life. And, out of 102, they selected two people, and I was one of them," he said.

Still, attending the university is no sure thing.

"The main problem — everything takes money," he said.

"I haven't committed yet. I don't have the money. It's \$300 to pay the deposit," he said, noting the scholarship covers tuition, but not housing.

He has a job now, and that will help, but he still needs to raise money for housing and other college expenses.

He recently set up a GoFundMe account at GoFundMe.com/kharmcdc, in case anyone wants to help.

Pereira is not sure where he will end up, but he wants to continue his education.

"I feel a responsibility to give back to the community that's helped me. That's one of my main goals of going to college, to be able to come back and help the community that gave my family so much," Pereira said.

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## There's an art to the proper pruning of palms

By Whitney C. Elmore  
Special to The Laker/Lutz News

How do you know if you've properly pruned your palms?

There are some telltale signs. A properly pruned, and healthy palm, should have a round canopy and green leaves from the top of the canopy down to the crown.

Unfortunately, too often palms are pruned too much — making them unattractive, unhealthy and weaker than a properly pruned palm.

Palms are not supposed to look like a flat rake or feather-duster.

The concept that "hurricane pruning" strengthens palms against strong winds and improves the tree's health is contrary to research observations.

Palms with a more natural canopy are able to withstand higher winds and have less chance of becoming a structural hazard in a storm when compared to those that have been "hurricane" cut.

Pruning can damage the sensitive growing points, or heart, at the top of the plant, nestled at the base of the leaves.

With repeated over-pruning, palms can develop a tapered appearance just below the leaves, at the heart of the palm, which can become a weak point especially in high winds.

These plants have evolved in locations with a great potential for high wind storm events, so they are built for these conditions.

Palms rely on their leaves for nutrition, so removal of leaves/fronds drains the plant of vital nutrients. Research shows that nutrient-deficient plants have smaller leaves, reduced ability to make food and reduced canopy size. With repeated removal of green leaves, the palms may have smaller and weaker trunk diameters. These factors can lead to weakened and unhealthy plants.

Removal of nutrient deficient (not dead) leaves will eventually starve the plant of nu-



COURTESY OF TIMOTHY K. BROSCHEAT, UF/IFAS

**Someone was too enthusiastic when pruning these palms. Too much pruning harms a palm tree's health.**

trients leading to the slow death of the palm.

So, which palms need to be pruned?

Tropical palms with crownshafts, or areas of the plant with bright green, tightly clasped leaf bases just above the trunk, do not need pruning. Many of the tropical palms will self-shed when leaves are dead, so very little pruning is required to maintain these palms. On these palms, old, dead leaves will simply fall off by themselves through a natural process.

However, these plants may sometimes exhibit nutrient deficiencies in older leaves toward the bottom of the plant.

A leaf that's deficient in potassium will begin to brown very quickly and can hang on for months. Older leaves show this deficiency first, since their nutrients are being used as they are being sacrificed by the plant to nourish the younger leaves. A defi-



**This spindle palm is suffering from a severe potassium deficiency.**

cient leaf doesn't mean it's a dead leaf, just one that needs nutrients.

If the leaf stays in its normal position and doesn't droop or fall down against the trunk, it's still alive, but this is a sign that the plant needs to be properly fertilized.

Those leaves that droop and hang against the side of the trunk, out of a normal upright position, are dead and can be pulled or pruned away.

Queen palms, various date palms, etc., which do not have crownshafts, frequently will have dead leaves that droop and hang on for months unless they are pruned away.

When pruning, be sure that pruning equipment is properly sanitized between use on different palm plants, as several fatal

diseases can be spread from plant to plant by the equipment. A 5-minute soak in a disinfecting solution will help reduce the chance of spreading diseases.

Those palms with skirts made of dead leaves, such as Mexican fan palms, will eventually shed old leaves, but they can become hiding places for undesirable wildlife, such as rodents and snakes, so removal of skirts of dead leaves can sometimes be necessary.

So what, if anything, should be pruned from palms?

Flowers and completely dead leaves can be removed with no problems, but discolored or browning lower leaves should be left alone. They indicate that the plant needs to be properly fertilized.

If you find broken or kinked petioles (the long shafts leading from the leaf to the trunk), it's acceptable to remove that leaf, especially if you fear it might fall and do damage.

The fruit of some palms can leave a mess at the base of the plant and cause unwanted sprouting. Removal of clusters of fruit is fine.

Some research even suggests that removal of flower and fruit stalks increases leaf production. Just keep in mind that any pruning should be done with sanitized equipment.

When should palms be pruned, if pruning is necessary?

There's no specific time of the year when it's better or worse to prune palms.

Only prune completely dead leaves when they appear, and certainly before a storm.

Pruning palms only when necessary will keep them healthier and you happier.

For information on how to properly fertilize palms and sanitize pruning equipment, call your local UF/IFAS Extension Office.

*Dr. Whitney C. Elmore is the UF/IFAS Pasco County Extension Director and an Urban Horticulture Agent III.*

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The Hugh Embry Library, 14215 Fourth St., in Dade City, will host "Cowboy Bob Sings Live!" March 30 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The presentation includes cowboy songs, stories, jokes and sing-alongs. For information, call (352) 567-3576.

## MOVIE & SNACK

The New River Library, 34043 State Road 54 in Zephyrhills, will host a preteen movie and snacks March 30 at 4 p.m., for grades four to seven. For information and what movie is showing, call (813) 788-6375.

## ANNUAL FISH FRY

Knights of Columbus Council 8104 of Land O' Lakes will host a Lenten Fish Fry from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., on March 31 and April 7, at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, 2348 Collier Parkway. The cost is \$9 for adults, \$5 for children, or \$30 for a family (parents and three children younger than age 13). Dessert, and beer and wine are available for an additional cost. Credit cards will be accepted. Proceeds support the Baldomero Lopez State Veterans Nursing Home, special-needs students, and scholarships to Bishop McLaughlin Catholic High School.

## DONATE BOOKS

The Friends of the Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, is looking for gently used books for its April book sale. Books can be donated Tuesday through Saturday. For information, call (813) 929-1214.

## JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

The New Tampa Players will present "Jesus Christ Superstar" March 31 and April 7 at 8 p.m., April 1 and April 8 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and April 2 and April 9 at 2 p.m. Performances will be at the University Area Community Development Center, 14013 N. 22nd St., in Tampa. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$23 for students and seniors, and \$20 for group tickets of 10 or more. For tickets and information, visit [NewTampaPlayers.org](http://NewTampaPlayers.org).

## ZEPHYRHILLS GRANGE

Zephyrhills Grange 194 will host an informational meeting March 31 at 2 p.m., at the Zephyrhills Library, 5347 Eighth St. Anyone interested in doing good for the community can attend. For information, call Sharon McHenry at (813) 610-6580.

## PIZZA AND PJS

Congregation Kol Ami, 3919 Moran Road in Tampa, will host a Pizza & PJ Shabbat March 31 at 6 p.m. There will be a pizza dinner followed by a short musical service and ice cream for dessert. The cost is \$5 per person, with a \$25 family maximum. Children ages 3 and younger are free. For information or to RSVP, email [frontoffice@kolami.org](mailto:frontoffice@kolami.org).

## THE WIZARD OF OZ

Live Oak Theatre's season finale, "The Wizard of Oz," will be performed on Fridays and Saturdays March 31 through April 8, and Sunday, April 9, at Faith Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 200 Mt. Fair Ave., in Brooksville. Doors open a half hour before showtime. Tickets are \$18 for adults, and \$5 for children age 13 and younger (when purchased with adult ticket). All shows include coffee, tea and dessert. For information and tickets, call (352) 593-0027, or visit [LiveOakTheatre.org](http://LiveOakTheatre.org).

## PRELUDE TO EASTER

The Florida Hospital Zephyrhills Chorale will present "The Prelude to Easter" April 1 at 5 p.m., at East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church, 7333 Dairy Road in Zephyrhills. Admission is free.

## SPAGHETTI DINNER

The East Pasco Democratic Club will host a spaghetti dinner April 1 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., in Alice Hall Community Center,

38116 Fifth Ave., in Zephyrhills. The meal includes spaghetti, sauce, meatballs, tossed salad, garlic bread, dessert and a drink. The cost is \$7 to eat in or take out. For information, call Fern Williams at (813) 838-0767.

## MAD HATTER TEA PARTY

The Land O' Lakes, 2818 Collier Parkway, will host a Mad Hatter Tea Party April 1 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., for ages 7 to 14. Participants can have tea, cookies and make a craft. Registration is required. For information, call (813) 929-1214

## JUGGLING & ILLUSION

The Hugh Embry Library, 14215 Fourth St., in Dade City, will host "Out of My Hands Juggling & Illusion Show" April 1 at 1 p.m. Gerard Tricarico will perform this high-energy show. For information, call (352) 567-3576.

## WRITER'S ASSOCIATION

Florida Writer's Association-Wesley Chapel will meet April 1 at 10 a.m., at the New Tampa Regional Library, 10001 Cross Creek Blvd. Participants can learn writing and publishing tips in working with a nationally known publisher. For information, email [LesleyTouchton@icloud.com](mailto:LesleyTouchton@icloud.com).

## BOOK CLUB

The New River Library, 34043 State Rod 54 in Zephyrhills, will host the First Saturday Book Club April 1 at 11 a.m., to discuss "The Marriage of Opposites" by Alice Hoffman. For information, call (813) 788-6375.

## MAKE EASTER BASKETS

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will offer an Easter basket-making class April 1 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., for ages 9 to 15. A proper dress code and liability waiver are required. To register, call (813) 929-1214.

## RICHLAND YARD SALE

Richland Baptist Church, 40443 Stewart Road in Zephyrhills, will have its annual yard sale April 1 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be furniture, household items, tools and clothing. For information or to donate, call (352) 567-2990.

## BUTTERFLY SEMINAR

The UF/IFAS Pasco Extension Office will host "Butterflies and Their Blooms" April 1 from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., in Clayton Hall, 36702 State Road 52 in Dade City. The seminar is free, but registration is required. Participants can learn the six steps to designing a butterfly garden. To register, visit [tinyurl.com/cs8v4kw](http://tinyurl.com/cs8v4kw).

## SEED PROPAGATION

The UF/IFAS Pasco Extension Office will host a free "Propagation from Seeds" seminar April 4 at 6:30 p.m., at the Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway. Participants can learn tricks to germinate seeds and raise the seedlings to plants. Registration is required. For information and to register, visit [tinyurl.com/kqe4p7f](http://tinyurl.com/kqe4p7f).

## MEDITATIVE DOODLING

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will offer "Meditative Doodling: By The Book" April 1 from 10 a.m. to noon, for ages 9 to 15. Participants will use recycled books to create a poem and a related doodle. A liability waiver is required. For information, call (813) 929-1214.

## UNCORKED IN DADE CITY

The Dade City Garden Club will present its third "Uncorked" fundraiser April 2 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., at 13630 Fifth St., with wine, food and music. Guests can sample wine, mingle with "celebrity" wine pourers, stroll through the gardens, listen to music, see three cooking demonstrations and win gift baskets. Tickets are \$30 in advance. A limited number of tickets will be sold at the

## Master gardener plants

There will be a Master Gardener Plant Sale April 1 from 8:30 a.m. to noon, in front of the Pasco Cooperative Extension Office, 36702 State Road 52 in Dade City. There will be ornamentals, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, tropical, native plants, butterfly host plants, shade plants and more. Cultural information will be included with each plant. There will be educational material and master gardeners to answer questions. Cash or checks only.

## Spring plant sale

Town 'N Country Garden Circle will host a Spring Plant Sale April 1 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., at 7215 Turnmore Drive in Tampa. There will be plants for sale, tool sharpening, craft tables and raffles. Admission and parking are free. For information, contact Sharon Cooper at (813) 727-2947 or [copra1@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:copra1@tampabay.rr.com).

## Cacti & Things

Kessler's Cacti & Things plant festival will take place April 1 and April 2 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine, under the big tent at Bearss Groves, 14316 Lake Magdalene Blvd., in Tampa. There will be varieties of cactus and succulents, desert roses, herbs, orchids, bromeliads, cactus soil, pots, fertilizer, decorative gravel and more. Guests can bring their own cactus and succulent, and "Ask a Botanist." Admission is free. There will be food available for purchase. For information, contact Benjamin Larochelle at (813) 971-8582 or [blarochelle@kesconsult.com](mailto:blarochelle@kesconsult.com).

door. For information, call (352) 567-9003, or email [DeblParks@aol.com](mailto:DeblParks@aol.com).

## STAMP & COIN EXPO

The Tampa Collectors Club will sponsor the Tampa Stamp & Coin Expo April 1 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and April 2 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Tampa Stadium Hotel, 4750 N. Dale Mabry Highway. Stamps, picture postcards, coins and paper money (U.S. and worldwide) will be bought, sold and appraised. Admission is free. For information, call (727) 364-6897, or email [h.rogg@verizon.net](mailto:h.rogg@verizon.net).

## TASTE OF CARROLLWOOD

The Carrollwood Area Business Association will host its Taste of Carrollwood April 2 from noon to 5 p.m., at George M. Steinbrenner Field, 1 Steinbrenner Drive in Tampa. There will be free fun, free food and free activities. For information, visit [UseCABA.com](http://UseCABA.com).

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Hillsborough County Commissioner Pat Kemp, District 6 Countywide, will host a "Community Conversation" about trails, greenways and active transportation in Hillsborough County and the region April 4 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Robert Saunders Public Library, 1505 Nebraska Ave., in Tampa. The event is the first in a series, to discuss topics of interest with residents. Seating capacity is 150 persons, admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. There will be a question-and answer-session after the presentation.

## GARDEN CLUB MEETING

The Land O' Lakes Garden Club will meet April 4 at 10:30 a.m., at the Land O' Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd. There will be a presentation by Karen Destefano, inspector from the Division of Plant Industry with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The topic will be "History and Impact of Invasive Fruit Flies in Florida." For information, call Marie Woody at (813) 961-2697.

## PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

The Land O' Lakes Photography Club will meet April 4 at 7 p.m., at the Land O' Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd. The program will be "Post-Processing Software Options." There will be a discussion on Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, Lightroom and Google Photos. For information, email [LOLPhotoClub2017@gmail.com](mailto:LOLPhotoClub2017@gmail.com).

## HONORARY MAYOR BINGO

The Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce, along with AARP-Land O' Lakes Chapter and the GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club, will host bingo April 4 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Land O' Lakes Library, in support of Rosie Heim's candidacy for honorary mayor. The cost is \$10, and includes a light lunch and coffee. For information and to reserve tickets, email Phyllis Bross at [pebross@verizon.net](mailto:pebross@verizon.net) or Rosie Heim at [heim50@aol.com](mailto:heim50@aol.com).

## CIGAR CITY HISTORY

The Lutz Senior Center, 112 First Ave., N.W., will present "Cigar City: The History of Ybor City and West Tampa" April 5 at 11 a.m. For information, call (813) 264-3804.

## JOB EXPO

The Wesley Chapel Chamber of Commerce will host a Job Expo April 5 from 2:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., in Wesley Chapel High School's gymnasium, 30651 Wells Road. Participating companies will include America's Security, Culver's of Wesley Chapel, District School Board of Pasco County, Fast Track Urgent Care Center, Florida Hospital Centra Care, Hampton Inn & Suite-Tampa/Wesley Chapel, Mosquito Hunters, State Farm Insurance, Wesley Chapel Nissan, and Berkshire Hathaway Home Services of Florida Properties Group.

## CARROLLWOOD TOASTMASTERS

The Carrollwood Toastmasters will meet April 5, and every Wednesday, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at the Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library, 2902 W. Bearss Ave., in Tampa. For information, visit [Carrollwood.ToastmastersClubs.org](http://Carrollwood.ToastmastersClubs.org).

## LUTZ GARDEN CLUB

The Orange Blossom Garden Club of Lutz will meet April 5 at 10 a.m., at the Lutz Civic Center, 98 First Ave., N.W. The guest speaker will be Betsy Hirons, owner of Gardensmith Plant Shop, on the topic of bromeliads. Members should bring a small rooted cutting to trade, and a canned good for the food bank. For information, visit [Facebook.com/OrangeBlossomGardenClubofLutzFlorida](http://Facebook.com/OrangeBlossomGardenClubofLutzFlorida).

## KATHRYN STARKEY TO SPEAK

The Pasco Federated Republican Women's Club will meet April 7 at 11:30 a.m., at Seven Springs Golf & Country Club, 3535 Trophy Blvd., in New Port Richey. The guest speaker will be Kathryn Starkey, chair of the Pasco County Board of Commissioners. The cost for the luncheon is \$20, and must be paid for by April 4. For reservations and information, contact Fran Scerbo at (727) 597-3727 or [fmncerbo@yahoo.com](mailto:fmncerbo@yahoo.com).

## DRIVE-THRU PRAYER

Atonement Lutheran Church, 29617 State Road 54 in Wesley Chapel, will offer Drive-thru Prayer every Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Stop by. Stay in your car. Ministry partners will be there to share your cares and concerns in prayer.

## BOOKS FOR TROOPS

Books for Troops needs four volunteers for data entry on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., in Land O' Lakes. To sign up, email [BooksforTroops@verizon.net](mailto:BooksforTroops@verizon.net), or visit the website at [BooksForTroops.org](http://BooksForTroops.org) to fill out a volunteer application.

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**Noon - Easter Egg Hunt:**  
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• 7-9 years @ 1:00 • 10-12 years @ 1:15

**Egg Drops filled with jelly beans:**  
1 per age group (starts the egg hunt)

**2:00 - Mr. Tommy Presents**

1 mile north of downtown Dade City off US Hwy 301 at 15602 Pioneer Museum Road 33523

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Zephyrhills, FL 33543

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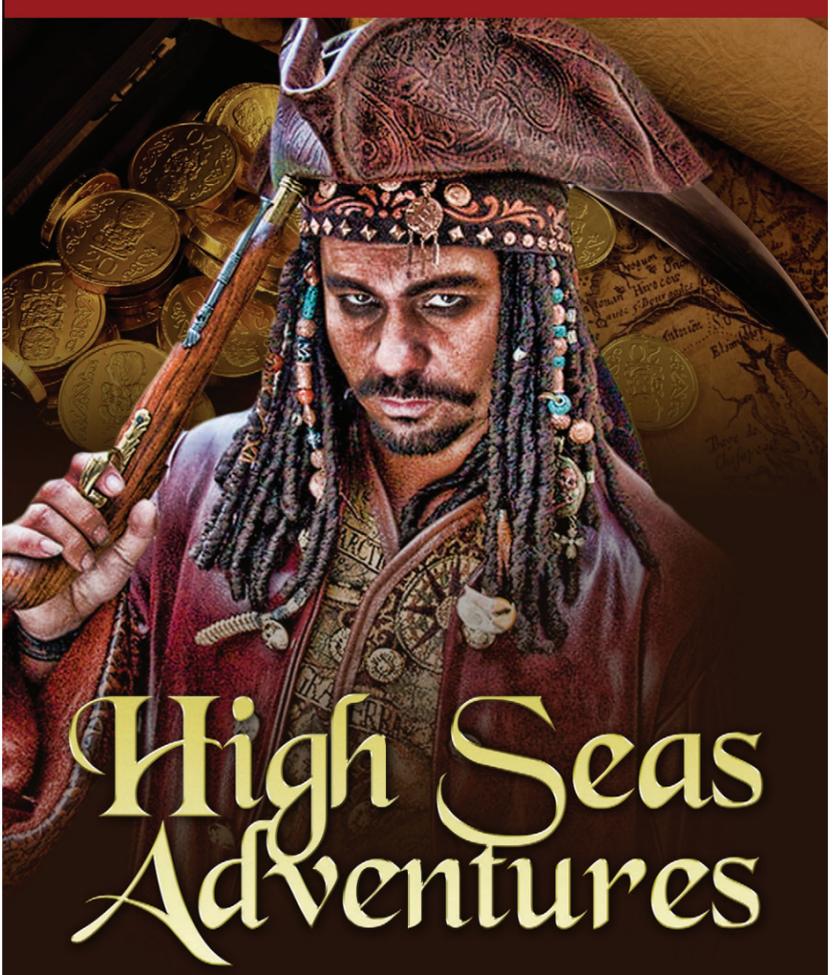
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## Security expert: Think ahead to reduce risks

By B.C. Manion  
bcmansion@lakerlutznews.com

While there's no way to be entirely safe from potential natural disasters, criminal acts and terrorist threats — there are ways to reduce potential risks.

And, there are ways to get help in responding to incidents that have occurred.

Those were the twin messages delivered by a security advisor from the Department of Homeland Security to members of the Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce, during a chamber luncheon meeting.

O.T. "Ollie" Gagnon III is a protective security advisor in the Central Florida District for the Department of Homeland Security, office of infrastructure protection.

He came to the luncheon to share his knowledge about the nature of threats and to alert chamber members to the myriad free resources that are available to help them.

There's a wealth of information intended to help business owners to keep their businesses, customers and employees safe from potential threats and hazards, Gagnon said.

"We have a ton of resources that are available to you," he said.

Gagnon advised those in the audience to check out the website, DHS.gov/hometownsecurity, to find out about the department's Protective Security Advisor Program.

Gagnon also recommended Ready.gov/business to help businesses develop plans to ensure safety, security and business continuity.

He understands the importance of protecting infrastructure, to ensure the continued supply of electricity, communications and water.

Ready.gov/business also offers to help people learn how to identify and report suspicious activity, and to prepare to follow a security plan, in case of an emergency.

The Department of Homeland Security also offers pointers on how to spot suspicious behavior and how to report it. Those details can be found at DHS.gov/see-something-say-something.

Gagnon, whose district includes 17 counties, knows his ways around security issues.

Before joining the Department of Homeland Security, he was a 23-year veteran of the Air Force, engaged in assignments all over the world.

At one point, he was chief of security for Air Force One, under the G.W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations, he said, estimating he had about 200 trips on Air Force One.

He also understands potential threats surrounding large events, such as the Super Bowl and the Republican National Convention.

But, there are other threats that can arise in daily life, in less secure environments, Gagnon said.

One of the biggest threats that businesses face is the potential for being unable to continue their business when there's a natural disaster, an active shooting incident, or some other major incident.

"Seventy-five percent of businesses that are down for two weeks never come back up," Gagnon said. That's because they don't have multiple locations or deep pockets.

Businesses need to know how they will continue to operate, if they are knocked out of commission by a Category 1 or Category 2 hurricane.

When it's a Category 5, help will be coming, he said. For a less severe storm, a business might be on its own.

"How does your business get its power and water?" Gagnon asked.

"A tornado can affect your area for three, four, five, six, seven days," he said. "An active shooter event, too, you can be down for a week because of the investigation."

Whether an incident happens on a business's property, or next door, it could affect the business's ability to continue its operations, he said.

Obviously, risks arise in places where people routinely go, Gagnon said.

"Does anyone here not go to a mall? You go to movie theaters. You go to night classes. Your children go to school," he said.

There's an online course offered through the Department of Homeland Security that can help prepare people to know what to do when an active shooter threat arises.

"We've all heard of the 'Run, hide, fight.' That comes out of our office," Gagnon said.

"The chance of actually being involved in an active shooter incident, you probably have a greater chance of being bit by a shark or attacked by a gator. It's like one in a million, literally, the odds," he said.

On the other hand, threats from cybercrime continue to increase.

"Cyber security comes out of our office," he said, and there are ways to reduce the threat.

When it comes to staying safe, preparation is important, Gagnon said.

"(FBI) Director (James) Comey said it best: 'You don't want to be that person who locks himself in a room and never comes out because he's scared that something is going to happen, but you don't want to be that person who's standing on a subway platform in New York city with his iPod and his headphones in, reading something, standing a foot from the platform, oblivious to the world around him.'

"You want to have a healthy sense of awareness."

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# 2017 Parade of Homes Community and 'Stud' Party

**J**oin the parade to the Tampa Bay Builders Association Parade of Homes. This year, the Showcase Community is right in your own backyard at Connerton in Land O' Lakes!

Five fully furnished models are being presented by four of the area's finest builders. There is no charge to tour our model homes by M/I Homes, Taylor Morrison, Homes by WestBay and Lennar, all in one convenient location at Connerton.

In addition to touring our models, we also invite you to special activities and tasting events we're planning for Parade weekends, from food trucks to an Easter egg hunt to an international dessert weekend. Be sure to check the Connerton website for details and updates.

In addition to being selected as the 2017 Showcase Parade Community, Connerton is also proud to partner with Lennar and Operation Finally Home to provide a mortgage-free home to the David Roca family.

David is a U.S. Army veteran who served in Iraq. His strong work ethic and devotion to duty are evident by his Valor Device, an award David received for saving the life of his commander while in battle. David has also received a number of other accolades during his time in service, including an Army Commendation Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award and Army Good Conduct Medal.

Operation Finally Home is a national, nonprofit organization with a unique network of experienced



builders, suppliers and supporters dedicated to building homes for wounded, ill or injured veterans and their families. The Connerton home for the Roca family is the organization's first home in Tampa Bay.

#### WHAT IS A 'STUD' PARTY?

During the Parade's first week (on Sat., April 1; Sun., April 2; and Sat., April 8), the Connerton community, local dignitaries, school children and the public will have the opportunity to write "notes of love" on the interior studs of the Roca home currently being built by Lennar.

These notes are intended to be an

expression of welcome and good wishes for the Roca family. If you cannot come by when the house is open for signing, you can express your good wishes on a paper heart at Club Connerton, and your heart will be stapled to the building studs before the drywall is placed.

A video tour is being created to capture all the notes of love from the community, so that the Roca family has a permanent remembrance of the many heartfelt wishes offered to them by their new neighbors and community leaders.

If you enjoy touring new homes — whether you're in the market for a

new home or you just enjoying looking for decorating ideas — be sure to visit this year's Showcase Community!

Connerton has so much to offer with its miles of hiking and biking trails, beautiful conservation areas and ponds, quality schools, wonderful neighbors, and 10,000 square-foot clubhouse with resort-style pool, fitness center, tennis and basketball courts, and activities for all ages.

Connerton is located on U.S. 41, about six miles north of State Road 54. Visit [Connerton.com](http://Connerton.com), or call (813) 996-5800 for additional information and Parade of Homes updates.

2017 PARADE OF  
**HOMES**  
Tampa Bay Builders Association

SHOWCASE COMMUNITY!

The Community of *More...*



#### THE PARADE HAS ARRIVED AND WE ARE THE STAR!

The biggest showcase of new homes is about to begin and this year Connerton is the designated Showcase Community. In prior years, the Parade focused on a single showcase home. However, this year, Connerton is offering a collection of showcase homes, featuring five unique models from our renowned builders all in one location.

The parade runs all of April and we've packed the entire month with special events you won't want to miss.

Our exceptional builders have an array of offerings to highlight the latest building trends, interior designs and new home styles you've got to see to believe. So, don't miss your best chance to find your next dream home at Connerton, the leader of the parade.

To learn more, come out and visit us any day of the parade to tour our models and the long list of the amenities you've only dreamed of, or visit us online to see why we truly are the Community of More!



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The Community of More...

CONNERTON.COM

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# Welcome to the 2017 Parade of Homes!

**T**he 2017 Parade of Homes is an exciting time to explore Tampa Bay's new home market. It's a great way to gather new ideas in design, and to learn more about the multitude of communities in Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties.

The Parade opens this weekend and is celebrated the entire month of April. Participating builders give you exclusive access to 92 model homes. There is absolutely no cost or appointment needed.

We invite you to visit TampaBayPOH.com and learn about the unique visions of our many builders, model homes and custom projects. New this year is our Custom Builders category, which offers exclusive online virtual tours to preview their luxury homes.

The best place to start your journey is with our Showcase Community of Connerton, located right here in Land O' Lakes, and featuring four distinct builders in one convenient spot.

Not in the market to buy? Homeowners and renters can enhance their current residence by visiting Parade homes as well. Plus, online you will find a stunning home renovation and custom backyard projects.

It is an exciting time to live in Tampa Bay, and an even better time to buy a new home! Interest rates are down, rental rates are high and this market area is in demand.

Tampa Bay not only sustains a stable economy, but is also an economy that is thriving. In recent years, our area has been recognized among Forbes top ten lists for "Fastest Growing Job Market," "Fastest Growing Cities" and "Top Cities Americans Are Moving To."

There is truly something for everyone during the Parade of Homes.

On behalf of TBBA, I would like to thank all our sponsors, visitors, builders and volunteers. I do hope you take the time to discover this year's Parade route!



Mark Spada, President  
Tampa Bay Builders Association



## Experience Bella Lago



Bella Lago Model Home  
18707 Cypress Shores Drive in Lutz  
Lutz, FL 33548

**TOUR THIS YEAR'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS PARADE HOME  
APRIL 1 - 30, 2017**

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Fabulous, unique design details



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- Brookside in Wesley Chapel
- Saddlewood Estates in Wesley Chapel
- Stone Lake Ranch in Thonotosassa
- Turnbury Tampa Palms



# New Homes Going Up Fast In Asturia

It has been less than a year since the first residents began moving into their new homes in Asturia, a beautiful master-planned community being developed in Odessa.

And, in that short time, homeowners have quickly become friends with their new neighbors, coming together at family events hosted by the developer, and enjoying the community's many amenities, nature trails and playgrounds.

To celebrate these new friendships, and to make new connections, Asturia has recently begun a unique monthly party they've christened "Front Porch Friday."

This fun event brings together residents, friends and folks looking to make Asturia their home for wine, appetizers and warm conversation.

New homes continue to go up at a fast pace in Asturia, a new mixed-use, master-planned community in Odessa developed by Hines. This natural community offers a variety of single-family home sites and home styles, and a unique amenity center that residents are raving about.

Chad and Sarah Raaymakers, Asturia's very first residents, moved to the community last July from Oldsmar. The couple wanted to be closer to their work, and also wanted their two young children, George and Theo, to attend better schools.

"We love the area, and we love Asturia! We chose Asturia for the intimate feeling of neighborhood and its real sense of community," said Sarah.

## UNIQUE AMENITIES

With its modern and unique architectural design, the Amenity Center is at the heart of the new community. At over 5,800 square feet, the Amenity Center includes a community clubhouse, a fully equipped state-of-the-art fitness



the most beautiful homes sites in the Tampa area.

New homes continue to go up at a fast pace. The community offers a variety of single-family home sites and home styles from

center, covered outdoor living rooms, a luxurious resort-style swimming pool and expansive lawn areas for recreation.

"Our new Amenity Center focuses on a healthy lifestyle and complements the best-in-class home styles provided by Ashton Woods and David Weekley Homes. Asturia has

truly raised the bar," said Lane Gardner, managing director of Hines, the developer of Asturia.

## 8 BEAUTIFUL MODELS

Set against a backdrop of serene natural wetland preserves, neighborhood parks and open green spaces, residential lots at Asturia are some of

award-winning builders Ashton Woods and David Weekley Homes. Each builder has four model homes that are open for tours daily.

Asturia is located on State Road 54, just west of the Suncoast Parkway. For more information, go to [AsturiaFlorida.com](http://AsturiaFlorida.com), or call (813) 227-4148.

# Asturia

A NATURAL PLACE TO...

PARADE OF HOMES  
**APRIL 1st - 30th**  
 MONDAY-SATURDAY: 10AM - 6PM  
 SUNDAY: 12PM - 6PM

# EXPLORE.



### The Ferrara

14839 Caravan Avenue

- Great open floor plan with vaulted ceiling
- Master bedroom with spacious master bath and oversized shower
- Gorgeous outdoor living area and front porch
- Kitchen opens to family room

**Explore** the most desirable master-planned community during the 2017 Tampa Bay Builders Association Parade of Homes April 1st to 30th. Asturia offers an unrivaled amenity package with a modern, sophisticated community clubhouse, a fully-equipped fitness center and a luxury resort-style swimming pool, as well as recreational parks, walking trails, lush picnic areas and an incredible explorer dome playground located next to our model homes and parcels for retail and office. **Stop by today!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US TODAY.

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

(813) 227-4148 / 14701 STATE ROAD 54 / ODESSA, FL 33556



### The Mendocino

14823 Caravan Avenue

- Open concept Kitchen to Family Room
- Upstairs Retreat
- Spacious secondary bedrooms
- Lanai with outdoor kitchen, pergola and spa



A **Hines** Community



# Visit The 2017 Parade of Homes In April

**T**he 2017 Tampa Bay Parade of Homes, hosted by the Tampa Bay Builders Association (TBBA), takes place the entire month of April, over five convenient weekends.

This is one of the largest Parades in Florida, with 96 production model homes and additional custom entries throughout Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas Counties. The Parade is sponsored by Banko Overhead Doors, Simpson Air and MIDFLORIDA Credit Union.

The Parade is the exclusive opportunity to get to know more about the Tampa Bay housing market and to learn about the regions most notable communities and builders. There is absolutely no cost or appointment needed.

New this year, Custom Builders are offering exclusive online virtual tours to preview their luxury homes and projects at the Parade's website, TampaBayPOH.com.

With 39 participating builders and 90-plus homes to tour in-person and online, the Tampa Bay Parade of Homes starts with its Showcase Community of Connerton, in Land O' Lakes, with models from its four distinctive builders.

"The Parade of Homes is a celebration of the new home market in the Tampa Bay area. There is no better time to explore housing options, and no easier way, than during the Parade of Homes," said Parade Chair Melissa Chaumont, of Grey Street Studios. "I am proud to lead the efforts on this once-a-year opportunity."

This year's Parade will display the latest new home designs and housing trends. Parade home entries will be judged by a panel of building-industry professionals



## 2017 PARADE OF HOMES

**PARADE DATES:**  
April 1 - 30, 2017

**PARADE HOURS:**

**Monday - Saturday:**  
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

**Sunday:**  
12:00 PM - 6:00 PM

**Please note:**

*Custom Homes do not have open house hours*

- Check the map and directions before heading out. Newer communities may not be on all online map web-sites.
- You can quickly tour a showcase of homes and get great new ideas at all price points - new design, styles, and layouts.
- There is NO COST! It's FREE to familiarize yourself with 39 builders and 90+ homes.
- Extended model home hours allow for greater flexibility! No appointment needed.

es in Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties. These include builders, developers, suppliers, subcontractors, lending institutions, architectural and engineering firms, and other related businesses.

The TBBA promotes professionalism and continuing education within the tri-county building and development industries, while encouraging industry participation in the community at large.

For more information about the TBBA, call (813) 571-TBBA, or visit TBBA.net.

from across the country, who will evaluate a home's site plan, curb appeal, design, materials, outdoor living spaces, architectural detailing and workmanship.

TBBA boasts more than 800 members from the local building industry. Headquartered in downtown Tampa, it is a professional organization serving Tampa Bay area construction-related business-

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# 2017 PARADE OF

# HOMES

Tampa Bay Builders Association

**APRIL 1 - 30**

*The LAKER / Lutz NEWS*



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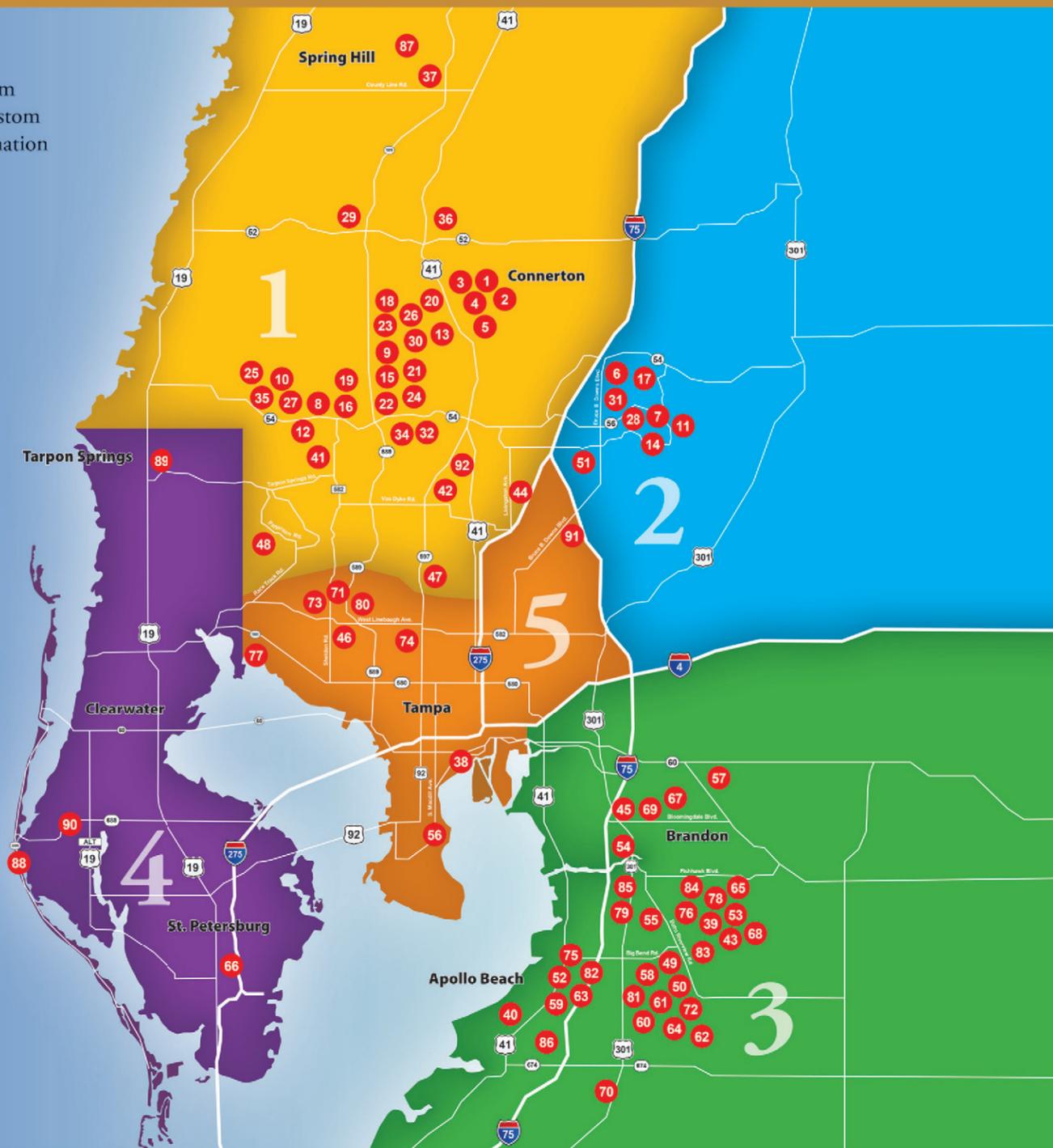
# 2017 PARADE OF HOMES

Tampa Bay Builders Association

## 2017 Parade of Homes - Model Homes

- |   |   |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| 1 Beach Park - Homes by WestBay<br>8647 Savory Walk Drive, Land O' Lakes, FL 34638  | 19 The Ferrara - Ashton Woods Homes<br>14839 Caravan Avenue, Odessa, FL 33556             | 37 Joyce - William Ryan Homes Florida<br>14100 Bassingthorpe Drive, Spring Hill, FL      | 56 The Summerhill - Domain Homes<br>5701 S MacDill Ave, Tampa, FL 33611                      | 75 Applause - Neal Communities<br>7217 Meeting House Lane, Apollo Beach, FL 33572         |
| 2 Kentwood III - Taylor Morrison<br>9740 Sentiero Drive Land O' Lakes, FL 34637     | 20 Biscayne II - Homes by WestBay<br>19560 Hayden Lake Court Land O' Lakes, FL 34638      | 38 400 SOLA : AADMIXX Design+Build<br>400 South Orleans Avenue Tampa, FL 33606           | 57 Verona - Homes by WestBay<br>915 Floresta Street Brandon, FL 33511                        | 76 Sweetwater - William Ryan Homes Florida<br>12012 Creek Preserve, Riverview, FL         |
| 3 Roxbury - M/I Homes<br>8635 Savory Walk Dr. Land O' Lakes, FL 34637               | 21 Jefferson II - CalAtlantic Homes<br>17257 Richness Way, Land O' Lakes, FL 34538        | 39 Shenandoah - ICI Homes<br>13925 Lake FishHawk Drive Lithia, FL 33547                  | 58 Jensen - William Ryan Homes Florida<br>11622 Iris Spring Court, Riverview, FL             | 77 Liberty - CalAtlantic Homes<br>12319 Bayou Flats Lane, Tampa, FL 33635                 |
| 4 The Winthrop - Lennar<br>8547 Savory Walk Drive, Land O' Lakes, FL 34637          | 22 The Waterford - David Weekley Homes<br>3959 Broad Porch Run Land O' Lakes, FL 34638    | 40 Siesta Key 2 - Neal Signature Homes<br>713 Manns Harbor Drive, Apollo Beach, FL 33572 | 59 Hyde Park - Homes by WestBay<br>6304 Heirloom Place Apollo Beach, FL 33572                | 78 Bellhaven - CalAtlantic Homes<br>5802 Village Center Drive, Lithia, FL 33547           |
| 5 The Winchester - Lennar<br>8541 Savory Walk Drive, Land O' Lakes, FL 34637        | 23 Cypress - Homes by WestBay<br>3917 Balcony Breeze Drive Land O' Lakes, FL 34638        | 41 Le Jardin - Adobe Homes<br>19307 Shortleaf Pine Ln., Odessa, FL, 33556                | 60 Capri - Homes by WestBay<br>13845 Moonstone Canyon Drive Riverview, FL 33579              | 79 The Newton - Holiday Builders<br>10512 Park Meadowbrooke Drive Riverview, FL 33578     |
| 6 Barrington - CalAtlantic Homes<br>28649 Marsciano Lane, Wesley Chapel, FL 33543   | 24 Sandpiper II - CalAtlantic Homes<br>3909 Balcony Breeze Drive, Land O' Lakes, FL 34638 | 42 Claybourne - CalAtlantic Homes<br>18213 Pine Hammock Drive, Lutz, FL 33548            | 61 Dockside Grand - Pulte Homes<br>13809 Galway Sand Road, Riverview, FL 33579               | 80 Forester - Gables & Gardens LLC<br>11232 Moultrie Place, Tampa, FL 33625               |
| 7 Sebastian - GL Homes of Florida<br>30451 Sunland Court Wesley Chapel, FL 33543    | 25 Aster III - Crestwood Homes<br>4000 Watson Dr, New Port Richey, FL 34655               | 43 Gasparilla - Homes by WestBay<br>6204 Knob Tree Lithia, FL 33547                      | 62 Madison - Beazer Homes<br>13312 Palmera Vista Dr. Riverview, FL 33579                     | 81 2620 - KB Home<br>11411 Brighton Knoll Loop Riverview, FL 33579                        |
| 8 Key Largo II - Homes by WestBay<br>2934 Barbour Trail Odessa, FL 33556            | 26 Sweetwater - William Ryan Homes Florida<br>19636 Hidden Glen Circle, Land O' Lakes, FL | 44 Bellingham - CalAtlantic Homes<br>2516 Cordoba Ranch Blvd., Lutz, FL 33559            | 63 Eco Series 2500 - Eco-Friendly Homes<br>6304 Heirloom Place Apollo Beach, FL 33572        | 82 Tidewater - Neal Communities<br>7318 Parkshore Drive, Apollo Beach, FL 33572           |
| 9 St. Lucia - Cardel Homes<br>16766 Courtyard Loop Land O' Lakes, FL 34638          | 27 Chatham - M/I Homes<br>12502 Rangeland Blvd Odessa, FL 33556                           | 45 Kerrville - Meritage Homes<br>10406 Alcon Blue Riverview, FL 33578                    | 64 Mira Lago - M/I Homes<br>Clement Pride Blvd., Riverview, FL 33579                         | 83 Coquina - Mattamy Homes<br>12109 Night Jasmine Cove, Riverview, FL 33579               |
| 10 Pallazio - Taylor Morrison<br>11411 Juglans Drive, Odessa, FL 33566              | 28 Devonshire II - M/I Homes<br>2558 Stapleford Place Wesley Chapel, FL 33543             | 46 Eden III - Taylor Morrison<br>9824 Stillchase Street, Tampa, FL 33625                 | 65 Summerfield - Pulte Homes<br>14110 Barrington Stowers Drive, Lithia, FL 33547             | 84 Crystal Sand - Neal Communities<br>13627 Circa Crossing Drive, Lithia, FL 33547        |
| 11 Key Largo Grand - Homes by WestBay<br>32258 Watooga Loop Wesley Chapel, FL 33543 | 29 Aruba - Avalon Building Corp. of Tampa Bay<br>15304 Serengeti Blvd., Hudson, FL 34610  | 47 Carrington I - Mobley Homes<br>3309 Ehrlich Rd. Tampa, FL 33618                       | 66 The Egret - Domain Homes<br>2401 9th Ave N, St. Petersburg, FL 33713                      | 85 2294 - KB Home<br>10636 Medford Lake Dr. Riverview, FL 33578                           |
| 12 Saratoga - CalAtlantic Homes<br>12577 Lilly Reed Court, Trinity, FL 34655        | 30 The Willow - Lennar<br>4146 Bexley Village Drive, Land O' Lakes, FL 34638              | 48 Monterey II - Larson Communities<br>12410 Eagles Entry Drive Odessa, FL 33556         | 67 Juniper - William Ryan Homes Florida<br>708 Kingsfield Reserve, Brandon, FL               | 86 The Delaware - Lennar<br>1220 Oak Pond Street, Ruskin, FL 33570                        |
| 13 The Brooke - ICI Homes<br>16754 Courtyard Loop Land O' Lakes, FL 34639           | 31 The Magnolia - Lennar<br>28489 Cozy Creek Drive, Wesley Chapel, FL 33543               | 49 Key Largo - Homes by WestBay<br>11889 Frost Aster Drive Riverview, FL 33579           | 68 The Redwing - David Weekley Homes<br>14270 Natures Reserve Dr. Tampa, FL 33547            | 87 The Don Calais - Dream Custom Homes<br>12377 Spring Hill Drive, Spring Hill, FL 34609  |
| 14 Conrad - GL Homes of Florida<br>30451 Sunland Court Wesley Chapel, FL 33543      | 32 Erie - Beazer Homes<br>2117 Lake Waters Place Lutz, FL 33558                           | 50 Sterling - Meritage Homes<br>11883 Frost Aster Dr. Riverview, FL 33579                | 69 The Verona - Bridge Land Development<br>11380 Bloomingdale Avenue, Riverview, FL          | 88 The Schooner - Ashton Woods Homes<br>19915 Gulf Boulevard, FL 33785                    |
| 15 The Tangelo - David Weekley Homes<br>16778 Courtyard Loop Tampa, FL 34638        | 33 The North Carolina - Lennar<br>3858 Balcony Breeze Drive, Land O' Lakes, FL 34638      | 51 Lazio - Taylor Morrison<br>8515 Grand Alberato Road, Tampa, FL 33647                  | 70 Palisade - Minto Communities<br>2219 S. Pebble Beach Boulevard, Sun City Center, FL 33573 | 89 Fitzgerald - CalAtlantic Homes<br>1488 Keystone Ridge Circle, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688 |
| 16 The Mendocino - David Weekley Homes<br>14823 Caravan Avenue Odessa, FL 33556     | 34 Champlain - Beazer Homes<br>2117 Lake Waters Place Lutz, FL 33558                      | 52 The Baycrest - David Weekley Homes<br>7207 Meeting House Lane Apollo Beach, FL 33572  | 71 Venice III - Taylor Morrison<br>8750 Terracina Lake Drive, Tampa, FL 33625                | 90 Biscayne - Gulfwind Contracting<br>12200 Ridge Rd Largo, FL                            |
| 17 Huntington - Meritage Homes<br>30346 Five Farms Ave. Wesley Chapel, FL 33543     | 35 Faro Blanco - F Street Homes<br>3381 Bumelia Ln New Port Richey, FL 34655              | 53 The Lorenzo - David Weekley Homes<br>6004 Thrushwood Rd. Lithia, FL 33547             | 72 Rialto - Holiday Builders<br>11882 Frost Aster Drive Riverview, FL 33579                  | 91 Miramar - CalAtlantic Homes<br>6207 English Hollow Drive Tampa, FL 33647               |
| 18 Bayshore II - Homes by WestBay<br>16972 Courtyard Loop Land O' Lakes, FL 34638   | 36 Ventura - M/I Homes<br>12785 Moorish Place, Spring Hill, FL 34610                      | 54 Coronado II - M/I Homes<br>8009 Arbor Park Lane Riverview, FL 33578                   | 73 2333 - KB Home<br>11678 Fox Sparrow Rd. Tampa, FL 33626                                   | 92 Bella Lago - Waterford Designs Inc.<br>18707 Cypress Shores Dr. Lutz, Florida 33548    |
|   |   | 55 The Mayflower - Lennar<br>12209 Ballentrac Forest Dr., Riverview, FL 33579            |  |   |

Go to TampaBayPOH.com to find custom homes, custom projects, and more information on these model homes



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# Buying a Home? What to Know about Down Payments

If you're in the market to buy a home, your down payment is probably top of mind. It is important to understand all your options, particularly if you've heard the rule of thumb that you shouldn't pursue homeownership unless you can put 20 percent down. "In today's market, misconceptions about down payments are some of the most common, unfortunately" says Danny Gardner, Freddie Mac vice president of Affordable Lending. "And this discourages many prospective buyers from even leaving the starting gate." Gardner points out that a growing

number of homebuyers are putting down between 5 and 10 percent, and even as little as 3 percent with some Freddie Mac products. This is important to keep in mind when determining how much home you can afford. Prospective homebuyers concerned about down payments should also be aware that there are nearly 2,500 homeownership programs across the country that can help with down payment and closing costs, and an estimated 87 percent of U.S. homes are eligible for one or more of these programs. According to industry research, the down payment program benefit

that's most frequently found is about \$10,000, making researching these options and discussing them with your lender and real estate agent a worthwhile step. To determine your eligibility and learn more about down payment assistance, visit [downpaymentresource.com/are-you-eligible](http://downpaymentresource.com/are-you-eligible). Of course, homebuyers should not forget that there are benefits to putting more down initially. This will lower your monthly mortgage payment and reduce the amount you will owe the bank. Additionally, those who put down at least 20 percent don't have to pay Primary Mortgage Insurance (PMI),

an added insurance policy that protects the lender if you are unable to pay your mortgage. However, if putting 20 percent down will deplete all of your savings and leave you with no financial reserves, it's probably not in your best interest. What's more, you can cancel your PMI once you've built equity of 20 percent in your home. Don't assume the dream of homeownership is beyond your reach. Get savvy! There are numerous programs and products available that can help you afford your down payment and beyond. *Courtesy of StatePoint Photo credit: Fotolia*

## Why It's Important To Service Your HVAC

Your air conditioning unit works hard all year long to keep your house comfortable. With regular tune-ups, you can extend the life of your HVAC unit and keep it operating at peak efficiency. To make sure everything is working as it should, your AC unit should be serviced twice a year. If there are any issues, they can be corrected before becoming bigger problems. Plus, regular AC maintenance adds years of life of a heating and cooling system.



Joe Massa, owner

- Clean and remove debris and insects from outdoor coil and electrical section
- Clean and flush drain line and pan
- Check high and low voltage equipment
- Check amperage of motors
- Check refrigerant levels
- Check blower wheel, heat strip and indoor coil
- Check filter (will change with customer-provided filter)
- Check thermostat, supply air temp and return air temp
- Check heating and cooling operation

Contact owner Joe Massa at (813) 929-HAWK (4295), or by email at [JMassa@AirHawkAC.com](mailto:JMassa@AirHawkAC.com). Website: [AirHawkAC.com](http://AirHawkAC.com). CAC License: 1817999.

## Advantage Real Estate Services

is a full service real estate company representing both buyers and sellers of residential and commercial property primarily in Pasco, Hernando and Hillsborough counties. It also has an active property management division with more than 17 homes in its rental program.



**13127 OLD FLORIDA CIR, HUDSON**  
This stunning, meticulously maintained 4 bedroom, 2 bath, 2 car garage home with 1,975 sq ft is a MUST SEE! Upgraded kitchen with wood cabinets, Corian counter tops and all appliances included. Home located on conservation. Priced at \$195,900. Contact Patrick Harpe at 813-382-8888.



**3445 RED ROCK DRIVE, LAND O LAKES**  
Location! Location! This move in ready townhouse located in the gated community of Santa Fe at Stagecoach has fresh paint and clean carpets. This 2 bedroom, 2.5 bath has 1,297 sq ft of living space and comes with all appliances and has a beautiful screened lanai. Priced at \$123,900. Contact Karen Hernandez at 813-918-5765.



**8205 PONKAN RD, LAND O LAKES**  
Super maintained, upgrades abound! Beautiful courtyard 2 bedroom 2 bath with 1,749 sq ft located in the gated 55+ community of The Groves. Upgraded kitchen with maple cabinets, Corian countertops and includes all appliances. Relax on your extended screened in paver lanai. Priced at \$245,000. Contact Karen Hernandez at 813-918-5765



**GLORY PATH SITES LOT 1**  
Beautiful Lake Front Lot in the heart of Lutz (1 of 2 available). 1.95 acres on Lake Charles conveniently located between Dale Mabry and US 41. The perfect spot to build your dream home. Priced at \$450,000. Contact Heather Patierno at 813-833-7804.



**22503 SOUTHSHORE DR, LAND O LAKES**  
One of the last waterfront lots in Lake Padgett Estates. Vacant lot located on wide canal to East Lake only short distance from lake. Lake Padgett community has 3 ski lakes and 1 fishing lake plus horse stables, tennis courts and parks on East Lake and Lake Padgett, boat ramps on East Lake, Lake Padgett and Lake Saxon. Fishing dock on Lake Joyce. Priced at \$150,000. Contact Sharon Molnar Johnson at 813-245-4971



**21410 HOPSON RD, LAND O LAKES**  
Super sweet LAKE FRONT Old Florida style home features 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, 1,370 sq ft and huge screened in porch. Property is very private with lush landscaping make this home a must see. Priced at \$259,900. Contact Karen Hernandez at 813-918-5765.



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# The Promenade at Lake Park Matches Homebuyer's Wish List

**A**shton Woods, one of the nation's largest private homebuilders, has a new, fully decorated Elm model home now open at Asturia in Odessa.

It's not often that a new community comes to market and has so much to offer prospective residents.

The Promenade at Lake Park by CalAtlantic Homes, one of the nation's largest homebuilders, matches the wish list of many longtime residents of Lutz, Carrollwood and Land O' Lakes — beginning with new homes in a uniquely designed community that incorporates the best of suburban north Tampa.

As it is so often when it comes to real estate, the real value of living in The Promenade is its unmatched location. The development of 207 homes is the first major new home community adjacent to Dale Mabry Highway in over 25 years. And, it couldn't be located in a prettier, or more strategic, spot.

Built on undeveloped land that in recent years encircled Exciting Idlewild Baptist Church, The Promenade sits on 163 acres surrounded by some of the most beautiful wetlands and open spaces in suburban Hillsborough County.

The land's beauty is only surpassed by its vital link to north Tampa's transportation hub — direct access to Dale Mabry Highway and the Veterans Expressway.

"The pent-up demand for this location was beyond our expectations," said Dave Bulloch, Tampa Division President for CalAtlantic Homes. "So many people want to be in this area, and had been waiting for years for a new home community like The Promenade. We couldn't be more pleased by the reception we've received from families moving from nearby communities, and those new to Tampa Bay."

Bulloch explains that The Promenade is one of the last large land parcels for new homes avail-



able in Lutz, and there's no other tract quite like it.

"Many people prefer to live in Northwest Hillsborough County because of its schools and close access to the Veterans, jobs and activities in downtown Tampa and Westshore," said Bulloch.

The Promenade's schools are one of its strongest selling features. Lutz Elementary is a highly regarded K-5 school in Hillsborough County, and close-by Lutz Preparatory is an outstanding public charter school. The much-desired Steinbrenner High is

among the county's best high schools, and long-established Buchanan Middle School serves grade 6-8 students with its many traditions.

Because CalAtlantic Homes is both the developer and builder at The Promenade, the community is uniquely positioned to control its high standards and future look.

"CalAtlantic Homes is the exclusive homebuilder within The Promenade, so buyers can expect stunning exterior designs and upscale streetscapes that our company

## The Promenade at Lake Park

CalAtlantic Homes  
18209 Pine Hammock Blvd.  
Lutz, FL 33548  
Phone: (813) 302-9471

**HOURS**  
Monday: 11am-6pm  
Tuesday-Saturday: 10am-6pm

is well-known for," said Bulloch.

Perhaps the icing on the cake at The Promenade is its unique — some may say extravagant — entryway and natural-gas flamed archway.

"We want residents to cross that threshold when they come home to The Promenade, knowing they are living in a truly special place," said Bulloch.

Incorporated into The Promenade's name is Lake Park — the popular 589-acre park located southwest of the community. Lake Park annually draws 300,000 users, and encompasses five lakes, cypress swamps, pine flatwoods and hardwood hammocks. Popular activities include biking, birdwatching, hiking, horseback riding and canoeing/kayaking.

### 15 FLOOR PLANS

The Promenade offers buyers 15 floor plans; beginning at homes with 1,866 square feet that are priced at the mid \$300,000, to over 4,000 square feet and reaching over \$800,000. The community has no CDD.

"The Promenade at Lake Park offers homeowners more than just a luxurious home. It provides the perfect address surrounded by everything one needs — excellent schools, St. Joseph's Hospital-North and other medical facilities, parks and shopping, and direct access to the Veterans Expressway," said Bulloch.

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Gibsonton	Lutz	Sarasota	Wesley Chapel

For more information, visit [CalAtlanticHomes.com](http://CalAtlanticHomes.com).



### Models Open at Bexley!

CalAtlantic Homes is proud to offer two collections of home designs in Bexley. This new master-planned community is designed to allow you to experience life outdoors with amenities including parks, trails, a community pool and dog parks.

The new on-site elementary school is just a 1/2 mile away.

**CalAtlantic Homes in Bexley**  
3909 Balcony Breeze Drive  
Land O'Lakes, Florida 34638  
813-445-7705



Prices, plans and terms are effective on the date of publication and subject to change without notice. Depictions of homes or other features are artist conceptions. Hardscape, landscape and other items shown may be decorator suggestions that are not included in the purchase price and availability may vary. Ryland Homes of Florida Realty Corporation CQ268118. Standard Pacific of Florida CQ1038741.



## Tips For Buying or Refinancing Your Home

Many Americans start to think about their housing needs this time of the year.

For some, spring aligns with the school calendar and gives them time to find the right home, arrange financing and move in before the next academic year. For others, an income tax refund coupled with refinancing a mortgage is the way to fund a home improvement project.

So how do you find the right loan products and lender?

• **Research products and terms.** Home loans come in two forms: fixed rate or adjustable rate. Fixed rate loans come with terms varying from 10 to 30 years for consumers who want the security of consistent monthly payments plus a rate that won't change over the life of the loan. Adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs) typically are offered at a lower rate with an initial term of five to 10 years.

"A 30-year-fixed-rate loan is by far the most popular mortgage product with borrowers, but ARMs can be a good option if you plan on moving or refinancing," says Craig Evans, Ally Bank's mortgage executive. "When we start a dialogue with a potential customer, we'll discuss the various options and suggest products geared toward their specific needs."

• **Choose a lender focused on your needs.** In a crowded mortgage landscape, it's important to find

loan experts to help you through the process. Service and communications are the biggest considerations when it comes to choosing a lender.

• **Ask your lender what products fit your needs.** For example, Fannie Mae's HomeReady product may be a good option for first-time homebuyers and millennials. Key benefits include down payments as low as 3 percent, plus these loans are priced similarly to standard loan pricing, and flexible sources of funds can be used for the down payment and closing costs.

• **Establish your limits.** Some lenders provide useful tools to get you started that help you analyze your household income and current financial obligations and estimate how much house you can afford.

• **Refinance an existing loan.** Refinancing is a potential option if it offers a better rate than your existing loan, allows you to lower your mortgage payment, or shortens the term of your existing loan. If you have considerable equity, it's also a way to consolidate debt or fund home improvements if used wisely.

For most people, buying a home is the biggest purchase of their life. Once you find your perfect house, make sure you make the right financing choices to complete the picture.

*Courtesy of StatePoint  
Photo credit: Fotolia*

## Expert, Professional Locksmith Service

Marius and Angelina Ferezan wanted a business where they could offer excellent customer service and give back to their community. The couple researched many franchise opportunities, but when they discovered The Flying Locksmith, they knew it fit their goals perfectly.

"The Flying Locksmith is a 70-year-old company with an outstanding customer service reputation," said Marius.

Because family was close-by, the couple chose Tampa as the location for their Flying Locksmith franchise, and opened their company last August. It serves families and businesses in central Tampa, and the northern suburbs of Lutz, Land O'Lakes and Wesley Chapel.

"It's great to finally be open and helping people with their locksmith and security needs," said Angelina.

The Flying Locksmiths began in Boston 70 years ago by a WWII veteran and pilot, who handed it down to his sons and, today, is the largest locksmith service in the northeast.

Customers value The Flying Locksmith because of the expertise, reliability and its technicians, and for its extensive inventory of parts and accessories. They especially like that technicians undergo a security background check, wear professional uniforms and always present identification.



Marius and Angelina Ferezan, owners

"When you allow a service person into your home or business, you want to be sure there are no security concerns," said Marius.

When customers call The Flying Locksmiths, there is always a live operator who answers and quickly dispatches technicians when needed.

"The company has over 100 years of combined experience in the field. If one tech hasn't seen a particular lock, it's highly likely someone else has," said Marius.

Be sure to call The Flying Locksmiths for all your security needs. Services include home and vehicle lockouts; deadbolt lock rekeying; master key systems; keyless entry solutions; safe and filing cabinet locks; door repair and replacement; and alarm and surveillance systems.

*If you're ready to increase the safety and security of your home or business, call The Flying Locksmiths Tampa Central at (813) 377-3674 or online at [FlyingLocksmiths.com/tampa-central](http://FlyingLocksmiths.com/tampa-central).*

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## New, Affordable Office Condos on U.S. 41 Ready For Occupancy This Summer

Russell Adams Realty has been one of the most recognizable names in Pasco County real estate for 50 years.

The firm's patriarch and namesake, Russell Adams, began doing business in Land O' Lakes back in 1966, when he sold his first lot in Lake Padgett Estates.

Over the years, the firm expanded into commercial and industrial sales — market segments now handled primarily by son Cody Adams, who joined his father's company in 1996.

"Back then, Land O' Lakes was still considered off the beaten path. But, now it is a suburban city with tremendous opportunities for businesses of all sizes," said Cody.

"While the area has certainly developed since I was a boy growing up on Lake Padgett, Land O' Lakes still has a lot of charm, and remains a great place to live and work."

Cody and his father are bringing their extensive knowledge of the central Pasco market — in particular their commercial real estate experience — as brokers for Black Lake Professional Center.

"We are honored to be the sales agent for Black Lake, and are aggressively negotiating with a variety of businesses looking to move to this ideal location in the heart of Land O' Lakes," said Cody.

Construction on the 7,800-square-foot building, which is located just north of the Land O' Lakes Post Office, will be completed this summer. Five offices are being configured in 1,500 and 1,800-square-foot units. Because the building is strategically zoned C-2, its space is suited for either retail storefronts or professional offices.

Three local businesses have already reserved their office condominiums — an eye doctor, communications company and service business.

"These businesses chose Black Lake because of its optimum location and affordability," said Cody. "There's no better value in commercial prop-



erty in central Pasco than Black Lake."

One of the development's strongest assets is its direct frontage on U.S. 41, which see 45,000 vehicles a day. Black Lake has excellent highway signage and visibility, and is the first new office park to be built along this fast-developing corridor.

The building is also located just three miles north of booming State Road 54, and is convenient to Interstate 75, Dale Mabry Highway and the Suncoast Expressway.

"Buying at Black Lake now is a smart move because prices have not yet caught up with the redevelopment of 41," said Adams.

The new building's architectural design matches the upscale, Mediterranean style of the original Black Lake building, with its distinctive terra cotta stucco exterior.

Owners will work with designer/builder Toliver Payne of

Waterford Designs Inc., to design their interior space exactly as they need to maximize production and sales.

#### WAREHOUSE BUILDING

Soon-to-be under construction is a 20,000-square-foot warehouse building being built immediately behind the two office buildings. Space is being divided into seven, 2,800-square-foot units, all which come with a 400-square-foot office.

"The warehouse space is very unique, and something we're getting lots of calls on," said Adams. "It's ideal for businesses needing large open areas and direct access to a major highway."

*Please call Cody Adams with questions about the Black Lake development, as well as any other real estate inquiries, at (813) 949-3603 or (813) 503-6933.*

#### Project Highlights

- Highway frontage on U.S. 41, one of the busiest roads in Pasco County, with daily traffic count of over 45,000 vehicles
- Just three miles north of State Road 54
- Excellent highway signage and visibility
- Fast access to Suncoast Expressway, I-75 and North Dale Mabry Highway
- Next door to the Land O' Lakes Post Office, and close to many surrounding residential communities and businesses
- Quiet professional setting with mature landscaping and ample parking



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# Clloser Look

AN ADVERTISER PROFILE



Owner, Ron Ierna

## Your Trusted Air Conditioning and Plumbing Expert

Special to The Laker / Lutz News

Ron Ierna, a respected and long-time HVAC technician in Pasco and Hillsborough counties, has established Lakeside Heating, Cooling & Plumbing in Land O' Lakes.

The business is located on Bell Lake on U.S. 41, on a site previously occupied by Bay Area Water Sports. Ron closed on the waterfront property in January, which includes a renovated 2,500-square-foot commercial building and parking area with fast access to Land O' Lakes Boulevard.

"Our location is ideal, because it is the center of the market area we service in Land O' Lakes, Lutz and Wesley Chapel," said Ron. "Plus, it's a beautiful setting on a lake that I'm personally attached to."

Ron is a native of the Lutz/Land O' Lakes community and is a graduate of Land O' Lakes High School. He learned to ski on Bell Lake as a teenager, and today his three children ski on the lake after school and on weekends, just as he once did.

In addition to Lakeside's high visibility on U.S. 41, which has 45,000 vehicles a day passing by, the business is also next to Larry's Deli – the iconic Land O' Lakes deli.

"I'm not sure what's better — being on Bell Lake or being next to Larry's," laughed Ron.

Before establishing Lakeside Heating, Cooling & Plumbing, Ron was a partner in a HVAC company based in Lutz.

"I'm taking all that I've learned from my previous business, and applying it to make Lakeside success-

ful," said Ron, who has been a licensed HVAC technician for 22 years.

Ron plans to keep his new company small, which he says will allow him to provide quality customer service and offer low prices.

"After 22 years in the business, I've seen every problem there is, and can quickly and accurately assess the best course of action when someone calls with a problem," said Ron.

Lakeside Heating, Cooling & Plumbing employs licensed technicians and highly skilled craftsmen who specialize in designing, engineering, servicing and installing HVAC systems and water heaters. Ron identifies the following as his core business principles:

\* We always tell you up front what your cost will be to complete your job correctly

\* Your experience with us will be enjoyable and hassle-free

\* If we make a mistake, we will correct it to your satisfaction

\* You get an exclusive written guarantee

\* If the equipment we install does not function to factory specifications, we will remove the unit and replace it with a new one

\* We always cover your floor with drop cloths or runners, or wear floor savers

\* We always clean up the work area and never leave a mess

"We take our responsibility very seriously when you place your trust in us," said Ron. "Please give us a call for your A/C service needs, and see what you've been missing."

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Send health news to news@lakerlutznews.com

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**  
Florida Hospital at Connerton Long Term Acute Care is looking for enthusiastic, committed individuals to join its volunteer team. The hospital's mission is to extend the healing ministry of Christ. As a volunteer, there are opportunities to apply your skills and talents to create a positive experience for patients, visitors and staff. For information, contact Anthony Cappellini at (813) 615-7286 or Anthony.cappellini@ahss.org.

**QUITTING TOBACCO**  
The Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St., will offer the IQuit Smoking Cessation program March 30 from 10 a.m. to noon. Participants can learn strategies for quitting all forms of tobacco, and receive free nicotine replacement therapy patches, gum or lozenges, while supplies last. For information, call (813) 780-0064.

**CAREGIVER SUPPORT**  
Access Health Care, 5350 Spring Hill Drive in Spring Hill, will offer a lecture called "A Caregiver Needs Help: Trying to Make a Life for Yourself while Helping Your Loved One and Others" March 30 from 5:15 p.m. to 7 p.m. For information, call Dr. Maria Scunzio-Singh at (352) 688-8116, ext. 4344.

**HEALTHY EATING, LIVING**  
The Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St., will offer "Healthy Eating & Living: Brain Maker" March 30 from 5:15 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Participants can learn how good bacteria in the gut can help the brain. Preregistration is required so enough materials will be on hand. For information, call (813) 780-0064.

**GIRL SCOUTS TO EARN HEALTH PATCH**  
More than 30 local Girl Scouts, ages 11 to 18, will earn a Mental Health Awareness Patch through a hands-on initiative at the Medical Center of Trinity, 9330 State Road 54, March 31 from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Girl Scouts will rotate through several stations to explore the science of mental health and tackle misconceptions; discover

famous achievers who experienced mental illness; practice personal stress management techniques; learn how to identify a friend in need; and, create mandalas in an art therapy session. The guest speaker will be Rachel Barcellona, Miss Florida International 2016, who will share her personal journey with autism in a speech, "The Ability Beyond Disabilities." Special sessions for parents will cover eating disorders, and the difference between typical teenage behavior and mental illness.

**HEALING TOUCH SEMINAR**  
The Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St., will offer "Reiki: Healing Touch and Core Energy Balancing Techniques" April 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Participants can learn about alternative medicine techniques to use every day for health and well-being. The program will offer practical hands-on exercises and information about the body's core energy system, reiki, and healing touch techniques that work, including how nutrition and energy balance assists the body in healing and relaxation. A reading list and handouts will be available. For information, call (813) 780-0064.

**BIRTH CENTER TOURS**  
St. Joseph's Hospital-North, 4211 Van Dyke Road in Lutz, will offer birth center tours at 1 p.m., on April 2, April 9, April 16, April 23 and April 30. The orientation program and tour introduces the many services available to the entire family and is an opportunity to have questions answered. Admission is free. Registration is required. For information and to register, call (813) 443-2046.

**DIABETES SEMINAR**  
The Lutz Senior Center, 112 First Ave., N.W., will present "Diabetes Prevention: Learn Everything You Need to Know" April 3 at 11 a.m. Materials will be provided. For information, call (813) 264-3804.

**MOVIE AND ALZHEIMER'S SEMINAR**  
Gulfside Hospice & Pasco Palliative Care will host a screening of the movie "Still Alice" and a discussion on Alzheimer's Disease April 4 at 2 p.m., at the New River Branch Library, 34043 State Road 54 in Zephyrhills. After the movie, a Gulfside representative will discuss the disease's progression and how it can affect day-to-day living. Admission is free. Light refreshments will be served. For information and to RSVP, call Anna Davis at (727) 992-8042.

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**Volunteer Way receives grant**

The Jean Griswold Foundation, a private charity established in 2010 and created by Griswold Home Care, awarded more than \$30,000 in grants to 28 organizations across the country. The Volunteer Way of Pasco County was selected for a \$1,000 grant. From left: Arthur Moseley, certified senior advisor and co-owner of Griswold Home Care; Martha O' Brien, assistant CEO, The Volunteer Way; and, Frieda Moseley, co-owner of Griswold Home Care.

COURTESY OF JEANNE SHANIN

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# She tends to much more than cuts and bruises

By B.C. Manion  
bcmanion@lakerlutznews.com

When Margaret Polk became a school nurse more than a quarter-century ago, there were full-time nurses in all of Pasco County's public high schools funded by a grant.

Those days and that funding are long gone. Now, "most of us have at least two or three schools," Polk said. She divides her time between Pasco High School and the James Ervin Education Center, and recently picked up a third school because the nurse there resigned.

It's a challenging job, with wide-ranging demands, but Polk — who was named the Florida Association of School Nurses' 2017 School Nurse of the Year — loves it.

Although she's picked up additional duties, Polk has always been at Pasco High, and that longevity in one place has its advantages, she said.

She not only knows the school's current students, in many cases, she knows their parents from when they were students, too.

Polk is deeply familiar with help available through community organizations or government agencies that can provide assistance beyond the school's resources.

Sometimes, for instance, a student screening will reveal a problem, but parents have no clue where to go from there. And, even when they know where to turn, money can be a problem, Polk said.

So, she turns to a network of community partnerships — including the West Pasco Dental Association, Kiwanis Club, and the Cattleman's Association — to try to bridge the gap.

"My husband (Ray Polk) was born and raised here (in Dade City). He knows people from way back. I use those connections," she said.

She also taps into resources available through other agencies and organizations.

She works closely with a nurse practitioner, provided through the Pasco Health Department, who gives onsite support at Pasco High.

Polk also is credited for spearheading an initiative for bringing mental health services directly to students at Pasco High.

"Most people, when they think of school nurse, they actually think of what our clinic assistants do," Polk said.

But, school nurses handle more than kids with headaches, stomach aches, twisted ankles or symptoms of the flu.

"We are seeing more and more kids come in with chronic illnesses," Polk said. "I'm seeing a lot more diabetes, a lot more asthma, severe allergies."

"We have so many kids with mental health issues," she said.

There are students who have special needs and require care plans.

"We need to figure out what we need to do to keep them safe at school, to get them the services they need," she said.

She also noted that sometimes a school nurse is the first to recognize what could turn out to be a serious health problem.

For instance, a student who has been losing a lot of weight may come into the clinic and require more help than the nurse can provide.

"You call the parent and they don't have insurance, and they don't know where to go," Polk said.

"I can start with my nurse practitioner. We do an evaluation," she said. If a student needs blood work, she has some funding she can use to pay for it.

"You do get to know the families, and you know what resources they have, or don't have," she said.

"Maybe you go out to do a home visit be-



B.C. MANION

Margaret Polk was selected by the Florida Association of School Nurses as the 2017 School Nurse of the Year.

cause you can't get a hold of the parents. You just need to face-to-face talk sometimes," Polk said.

Sometimes, during those visits, she'll find that another child in the family has health problems. In some cases, she may end up helping an entire family.

Generally, people are receptive — but not always, she said.

She recalled an instance when a student had severe scoliosis.

The parent was not inclined to seek help. The parent reasoned: "This is what she was given."

But, Polk reminded the parent there are also people who are given skills to treat the condition.

As for her own foray into nursing, Polk isn't precisely sure when she made the decision to pursue that career.

But, she thinks the seed was likely planted early.

"My dad was a doctor. My mom was a nurse," Polk said.

She belonged to the high school health education club and was a Candy Striper during high school, helping out at All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, where she grew up.

"I used to go with my dad to the hospital. He was at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Bay Pines Hospital in St. Petersburg.

"He was in nuclear medicine when it was first coming out. I got to watch them develop programs for it. It just fascinated me," Polk said.

She also remembers gravitating toward medical topics, when she did science projects.

"I always ended up doing things on blood, and the heart, those types of things," Polk said.

She wound up working at Pasco High School because her husband, Ray, grew up in the community. He's now director of Academy at the Farm, a public charter school.

Over the years, as Polk has watched students she has served grow up and have families of their own, she and Ray's children have done the same.

The couple now has three grown children who are married, and they have eight grandchildren.

Polk said she knew she was being nominated for the statewide honor, but didn't expect to win.

So, when she received a call from the Florida Association of School Nurses informing her that she'd won the award, she was dumbfounded.

"I sat there, sort of stunned," she said.

Even though the award was given in January, and Polk has been honored at gatherings in Orlando, and in Gainesville, she's still somewhat in awe of the distinction.

So many school nurses do such good work, she said, it's hard to imagine being singled out. "I am amazed. It's such an honor," she said.

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## PRIMROSE SPRING FLING

Primrose School of Carrollwood, 1770 W. Bearss Ave., in Tampa, will host a Spring Fling April 1 from 10 a.m. to noon., to benefit the local Children's Home Network and the Primrose Children's Foundation.

For information, email sdeng@PrimroseCarrollwood.com.

## MARIAN GALA AUDITIONS

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church is hosting open auditions April 1 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., for all middle school and high school performers, for its Marian Gala.

Auditions will take place at the church, 2348 Collier Parkway, in Rosary Hall, Room 4 and Room 8, near the Welcome Center.

Those interested must be available for rehearsals on May 11 at 6 p.m., and be available for the Marian Gala May 12 from 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

The church is looking for those who dance/perform, play instruments, act/perform a scene, and sing/vocal perform.

Auditions can be a prepared solo, duo or group performance.

For information, call (813) 949-7331, email NoraB@LadyRosary.org, or visit LadyRosary.org/gala.

## ART WALK RECEPTION

Pasco County Schools student-artists, teachers and administration, the Pasco County Clerk and Comptroller's Office, Florida West Coast Credit Union, and local leaders and stakeholders will host an All American Youth Art Walk Reception April 5 from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., at the Robert D. Sumner Judicial Center, 38053 Live Oak Ave., in Dade City.

The event will celebrate the talents of the Pasco County Schools student-artists in kindergarten through 12th grade.

There will be entertainment by music students, free cake and free punch.

For more information, contact Laurie Ansonge at (727) 847-8199 or send an email to lansorge@pascoclerk.com.



COURTESY OF GARY HATRICK

## Chamber honors 10 student citizens

The Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce recognized 10 Zephyrhills students as March Citizens of the Month. Students were chosen for exemplary effort, achievement and contribution to their school, family and community. From left: Gabrielle Flinn, Hope Ranch Learning Academy; Alex Hoffman, Heritage Academy; Melonie Monson, executive director, chamber; Kameron Paige, The Broach School; Carolyn Sentelik, president, chamber board of directors; Ariana Cotto, Woodland Elementary School; Jovonne Guzman, Raymond B. Stewart Middle; Johnathan Alford, Zephyrhills High; Alejandra Padilla, Chester W. Taylor Elementary; Lucas Burnham, East Pasco Adventist Academy; Roxxy Geisenheimer, chamber marketing and events coordinator; Benjamin Will, West Zephyrhills Elementary; Katy Boyd, chamber ambassador chairperson; and, Nicholas Rivera, Zephyrhills Christian Academy.

## CAMPUS OPEN HOUSES

Pasco-Hernando State College will host open houses for 2017 and 2018 high school graduates who are undecided about college plans, and any students seeking higher education opportunities.

- April 5 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., at East Campus in Dade City, 36727 Blanton Road

- April 6 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., at Porter Campus at Wiregrass Ranch, 2727 Mansfield Blvd, in Wesley Chapel

For information, visit PHSC.edu/open-house.

## ENTREPRENEURS COMPETITION

Pasco County Schools students from the business and entrepreneurship program will have a chance to pitch a business idea for a chance to be Pasco County's Future Entrepreneur.

Students conceived an idea for a new business or social venture, tested the idea by talking with potential customers and

gathered evidence to validate the viability of their business or social impact model.

All participating students learned to creatively develop ideas.

Students will pitch their idea by submitting a written concept and presenting to a panel of judges.

One student from each of the participating high schools will be selected to participate in the finals, where students will present in a traditional slideshow format to a live audience and judges panel.

The schedule of local student pitches is as follows:

- April 6 from 7:30 a.m. to 8:25 a.m., at Zephyrhills High School

- April 7 from 11:15 a.m. to 12:05 p.m., at Sunlake High

- April 10 from 9:25 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., at Pasco High

- April 25 at 6 p.m., at Land O' Lakes High

For information, call the Office for

Career and Technical Education at (813) 794-2211.

## MORE THAN \$2,200 RAISED FOR DISABILITIES SERVICES

Pasco-Hernando State College's Office of Disabilities Services raised more than \$2,200 at its third annual Run, Walk, Roll 5K at Porter Campus at Wiregrass Ranch in Wesley Chapel.

To date, the event has raised \$4,200 to benefit the PHSC Access to Success scholarship, which helps absorb the cost of psychological evaluations for PHSC students who may have undiagnosed learning difficulties.

The 5K exceeded last year's number of participants with approximately 111 runners, walkers and "rollers," students and supporters who participated in the 5K in wheelchairs.

For information about PHSC's Office of Disabilities Services, call (727) 816-3240, or visit PHSC.edu.

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**Kristy from Land O'Lakes, Age 36**

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**David from Land O'Lakes, Age 52**



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## TEEN, from page 1A

basis.

"I've been around it so long it doesn't bother me at all. I drink my shake, they have their food," he said.

But, in recent months, a new hurdle has emerged.

Every year, Walls' formula was fully covered through insurance — until now.

His mother, Stephanie Walls, says coverage was coming through Verizon, her husband's employer. However, when Frontier Communications bought out the company in 2016, the insurance coverage changed under a policy with Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield.

As of Jan 1, the insurance company has declined any coverage of the formula.

The family has made multiple appeals, but has been denied each time — even after Anthem's board of doctors deemed that Walls' formula was medically necessary for "sustainability of life."

Stephanie's insurance plan, likewise, doesn't cover the elemental formula.

"For Rem, his nutrition is like insulin for diabetics," she explained. "How do you deny this? It's not like it just came up overnight. We've had this disease now since (Remington was) the age of 4. We are absolutely stymied that they are allowed to do this."

Remington, too, is aghast by the situation.

"I was shocked," he said, "because I knew insurance always said they covered it, and then they said they didn't cover it. I knew it was expensive, but I didn't know how expensive until the price is actually shown."

The formula, on average, costs about \$2,000 a month.

Stephanie predicts the monthly formula payments will become even pricier as her son grows.

On top of that, the family has travel costs from the seasonal visits they must make to the Cincinnati Center for Eosinophilic Disorders, in Ohio.

"It makes me nervous," she said of the looming expenses.

Fortunately, Stephanie said a private source has stepped forward to fund formula payments for the rest of the year.

But, the family is still battling the insurance company, trying to serve as a "voice for

the voiceless."

"We're going to stand up for the injustice that's taken place," Walls said. "I don't know if we'll ever make progress, but we're determined to get out there and make a difference, somehow."

The family is now pursuing legislation, calling for mandated coverage for those who suffer from Eosinophilic disorders and need the formula to survive.

Florida law currently has a mandate to cover formula for those with Phenylketonuria, but not Eosinophilic disorders.

Stephanie — an eighth-grade language arts teacher at Pine View Middle School — has already reached out to U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis and to U.S. Senator Marco Rubio.

"We're just trying to find the people we need to contact to get us in the right direction," she said. "I have to do a ton of research and gather data before I can even move forward."

She believes legislative efforts could take at least two years.

No matter how long it takes, she plans to keep fighting.

"It is imperative that we pass this legislation — something's got to change," she said. "What's going to happen to all the kids and grownups that need this formula for later on in life?" she asked.

Between dealing with the insurance company and pursuing legislation, countless hours have been spent to help her son — and others like him.

"It's absolutely mind-boggling the amount of time we've invested on this," Stephanie said. "But, we felt forced to do it."

Meanwhile, there has been a ground swell of community support for the Walls family.

A GoFundMe page was created on March 3 by Janeen Salzberger, a longtime family friend.

Word quickly spread after Land O' Lakes High principal Ric Mellin passed along the information to the Pasco County School District.

As of March 27, \$16,617 has been raised. The goal is set at \$40,000.

"It has humbled us greatly," Stephanie said. "This is something we could not take on ourselves."

To donate, visit [GoFundMe.com/remington-walls](http://GoFundMe.com/remington-walls).



COURTESY OF NEOCATE

**Remington Walls' only source of nutrition comes via a hypoallergenic amino acid-based liquid formula, called Neocate E028 Splash. He drinks the 'shake' 15 to 18 times per day, about every two hours.**

## PROGRESS, from page 1A

nurse or a teacher?," Wise said.

Women now have more career choices. They can belong to civic clubs that once banned them. And, there are more opportunities in athletics and the military, Wise said.

For generations, East Pasco women have played pivotal roles in expanding opportunities for the entire community, Wise said. She singled out these seven:

• **Irene Dobson:** She came from a large family and picked cotton as a child. She taught school in Georgia and later in Dade City, and was a founding member the Head Start Early Childhood program in Pasco County. She has been very active in the community and has helped to organize African-American programs to teach new generations about the contributions of African Americans in Florida and across the country.

• **Bernice Rooks:** Even at age 94, she remains active in the community. She was the valedictorian of the 1940 class at Zephyrhills High School. She worked at MacDill Air Force Base and was a school bus driver. When the University of South Florida opened in 1958, she enrolled, becoming student No. 18. She graduated and taught for 29 years. She is also known for the family business, the Crystal Springs Roller Skating Rink which opened in 1939 just before World War II. For 35 cents, you could skate all day.

• **Lorena Leatherman Neukom:** Known as Neukie and her husband, Charles, opened the iconic

Neukom's Drug Store drugstore in 1921. The store closed in 2001. She was in charge of payroll, buying and keeping the books until she was 93. The drugstore was a popular place for politicians, snowbirds and local residents.

• **Rosemary Wallace Trotman:** She was a widely known educator and researcher. She published "The History of Zephyrhills; 1821-1921." She founded the Zephyrhills Historical Association. Her research revealed the effects of the railroad on the community and detailed the colonial years of East Pasco, in which the day-to-day activities of the settlers involved log-rolling, sugar-caning, subsistence farming and the beginning of unique institutions. Her father was a pioneer settler of Abbott Station.

• **Willa Rice:** She has the distinction of being first and only female mayor of



COURTESY OF MADONNA JERVIS WISE

**Irene Davis Dobson was a founding member the Head Start Early Childhood program in Pasco County.**



**Bernice Rooks was in the first class at the University of South Florida. She was student No. 18. After graduating, she taught for 29 years.**

Zephyrhills. After being voted into office in 1958, she revamped the police department by firing two of the department's five policemen and accepting the resignation of the police chief.

• **Margarita Romo:** Her work to champion the causes of farmworkers in Pasco County and around the state led to her being named to the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 2012 & Hispanic Woman of the Year. She is founder of Farmers Self-Help, Inc., and has worked diligently for more than 40 years to help farmworkers help themselves.

• **Jean McClain Murphy:** Most recently she was the 2017 Zephyrhills Founder's Day Grand Marshal. She was an educator with Pasco County Schools. Known for her beautiful singing voice, she taught "Glee Club" at the high school level for six years. She remains the singing director at her Rotary Club, and has served as choir director for five different choral groups at the First Baptist Church in Zephyrhills.



COURTESY OF THE HERITAGE ARTS CENTER ASSOCIATION

**Stardancers 9-12 won first place in its group category during the 34th annual 'Spotlight on Talent' competition March 11 in Wesley Chapel.**

## YOUTHS, from page 1A

Clerk & Comptroller Paula O'Neil, and Mike Rom, principal of Countryside Montessori Charter School.

A panel of paid professional judges selected the winners.

The younger students competed in Act 1, and the older students competed in Act II.

### THE WINNERS IN ACT 1 WERE:

**Category 1:** Vincent Pham, piano, first; Samuel Wu, piano, second; and, Larkin Mainwaring, musical theater, third

**Category 2:** Kasey Lang, piano, first; Angelica Drobny, voice and piano, second; Emma Shireman, musical theater, third; Isabella Como, musical theater, fourth; and Jasmine Villa, pointe dance, fifth

**Category 3:** Agnes Hernandez, piano, first; Jadon Day, voice, second; Grace Williams, lyrical dance, third; Faith Phaller, contemporary dance, fourth; Sailor Wade, bal-

let dance, fifth

**Groups:** Showbiz, musical theater, first; Showtime, musical theater, second; Star Dancers, 6-8 tap dance, third

### THE WINNERS IN ACT II WERE:

**Category 1:** Julianna Mazza, lyrical dance, first; Gracie Scaglione, contemporary dance, second; Allison Crump, contemporary dance, third; Victoria Conn, ballet dance, fourth; Nora Urbuteit, jazz dance, fifth

**Category 2:** Victoria Neukom, contemporary dance, first; Maria Hernandez, piano, second; Kaira Torres, voice, third; Kiersten Herman, musical theater, fourth; Hannah Knight, voice and guitar, fifth; Catherine Beard, voice and piano, sixth

**Category 3:** Jessica Twitmyer, voice, first; Courtney Graham, musical theater, second; Clare Hernandez, piano, third

**Groups:** Star Dancers 9-12, contemporary dance, first; Piano Nerds, piano duet, second; Showstoppers, musical theater, third

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## Erik Thomas relishes NCAA tournament cameo

By Kevin Weiss

kweiss@lakerlutznews.com

Erik Thomas' illustrious collegiate career is over, but the former Wesley Chapel High basketball star has no plans to step away from the court.

On March 14, the University of New Orleans Privateers suffered a heart-wrenching 67-66 loss to Mount St. Mary's in the First Four game of the NCAA Tournament.

The defeat was a bittersweet ending to what otherwise was a noteworthy senior season for Thomas, the 2016-2017 Southland Conference Player of the Year and the Privateers' leading scorer (19.3 points per game), rebounder (7.8 per game) and shooter (58.9 field goal percentage).

Thanks in large part to contributions from the 6-foot-5 forward, New Orleans punched a ticket to the Big Dance for the first time since 1996. Moreover, it marked the team's first 20-win season since 1996-1997, and its first winning season since 2008.

Despite the early exit, reaching the NCAA Tournament was quite literally "a once-in-a-lifetime experience" for Thomas.

"A lot of dudes don't get to experience that," Thomas said. "Just being able to make it to the First Four and represent the school, it was an excitement for all of us, and I was just happy to be there; it was a blessing."

Along the way, Thomas, who remains Wesley Chapel's High's all-time leading scorer (2,138 points) and rebounder (1,203 rebounds), said he was inundated with messages of support from family and friends.

That included Doug Greseth, Thomas' high school coach at Wesley Chapel High School.

In fact, Greseth made the 640-mile trek to New Orleans to watch Thomas' final home game, on March 11.

"For him to come (to New Orleans), it meant a lot," Thomas said. "It felt good to have the support there."

Greseth, one of Pasco County's longest-tenured boys basketball coaches, was awestruck by Thomas' development since last coaching him during the 2012-2013 season.

That season, Thomas was named Class 5A Player of the Year after averaging a state-best 32.7 points per game and 16.3 rebounds per game.

"I got goose bumps watching him live," Greseth said, "because I was just so proud of how much better, how much of a well-rounded player he is."

"He's really become a complete player. He can play with his face to the basket, he can play with his back to the basket. He rebounds well. He's always been an excellent passer, and his defense has gotten a lot better."

Greseth, too, complimented Thomas' un-



FILE

**Erik Thomas remains Wesley Chapel's all-time leading scorer and rebounder, leading scorer and rebounder with 2,138 points and 1,203 rebounds, respectively. In his senior prep season, Thomas was named Class 5A Player of the Year after averaging a state-best 32.7 points per game and 16.3 rebounds per game.**

selfishness, leadership, and improved shot selection and basketball IQ.

"He really worked hard to improve," Greseth said.

With stints at Jefferson and Okeechobee high schools, Greseth acknowledged Thomas is one of the top "two or three players" he's ever coached during his career, which spans more than 30 years.

At Jefferson High, Greseth coached Tarence Kinsey, who was named the state's Class 4A player of the year in 2002. Kinsey later played for the University of South Carolina and spent two seasons in the NBA (Memphis Grizzlies in 2006-2007, Cleveland Cavaliers in 2008), before embarking on a basketball career overseas.

Thomas, likewise, is mulling a professional hoops career.

The basketball star said he's currently searching for a sports agent, as he works towards completing his bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies.

In the meantime, Thomas is sharpening his hoops skills.

"I'm just trying to stay in shape and keep working on my craft," Thomas said. "I'm always in the gym working. It doesn't stop no matter what. Even after the season, I took a couple days' break and then I was just back in the gym working out."

Though the NBA appears to be a long shot, a basketball career internationally seems well within reach for Thomas.

"I definitely think he can play overseas," Greseth said, confidently. "I think he could play in Europe; I definitely believe he can do that."

A four-year letterman at Wesley Chapel, Thomas helped lead the Wildcats to a com-



COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

**Former Wesley Chapel High hoops star Erik Thomas helped lead the New Orleans Privateers to their first NCAA Tournament berth since 1996. The 2016-2017 Southland Conference Player of the Year was the Privateers' leading scorer (19.3 points per game), rebounder (7.8 per game) and shooter (58.9 field goal percentage). He is now focusing on a professional basketball career.**

bined 74-38 overall record, a 37-17 mark in district play and berths in the playoffs each year, including identical 24-5 marks with District 8-5A titles his last two years.

Despite the production and flashy statistics, Thomas was relatively overlooked as a Division I prospect out of high school.

He opted to play two seasons in junior college — East Georgia State College and Baton Rouge Community College — before transferring to New Orleans his junior season.

Many Division I schools, Greseth said, were initially concerned Thomas was too undersized to play in the frontcourt and lacked the qualities needed to transition to the backcourt.

"I'd say most Division I schools thought he was too small to play inside," Greseth said. "I think they felt like he wasn't a good enough shooter to play on the perimeter — I think that's probably what got him."

Yet, Thomas was able to augment his skills each year, Greseth added, later proving naysayers wrong.

"A lot of that is mostly him putting in the work to get better," Greseth said. "Some kids — they don't get any better, they peak at an early age. He just seemed to get better and better every year that he played."

Regardless of what his future holds, Thomas said he wants to serve as a role model for others in the sport, particularly those forced to enter the junior college ranks.

"I just like to be a motivation," Thomas said, "to everybody else that's out there that goes through the JuCo route, or that's gotten injured coming out of high school."

That experience, however, served him well.

"I believe going through the process that I went through — it's just made me a better player and made me work harder," he said.



COURTESY OF JOHN MEDVID

## Nice Haul!

Land O' Lakes residents Greg Victor, left, and Matthew Kyle teamed up to win the South Pasco Bassmasters (SPBM) March 18 tournament at the Harris Chain of Lakes, in Lake County. The duo caught five bass, with a total weight of 16.39 pounds; the largest bass weighed 4.95 pounds. The next SPBM tournament is April 15, at Lake Istokpoga, in Highlands County. For information on the club, visit [SouthPascoBassmasters.com](http://SouthPascoBassmasters.com).

## ZEPHYRHILLS GOLF EVENT SET APRIL 8

The Zephyrhills Bulldog Booster Club is hosting a golf tournament and casino night

## Hoops star receives All-South District honors

Following a stat-stuffing senior season, Saint Leo guard Marcus Dewberry has been named to the second-team Division II All-South District, selected by the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC).

During the 2016-2017 season, the 6-foot, 180-pound standout led the Lions in scoring (20.7 points per game) and assists (4.8 per game), and was third in rebounding (5.1 per game). An elite shooter, Dewberry shot 48 percent from the field, 41 percent from 3-point range and 92 percent from the free throw line.

Over his four-year career, Dewberry left his mark in the Saint Leo program record books, ranking in the top 10 in



COURTESY OF SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY

**Saint Leo's Marcus Dewberry**

five major categories all-time: fourth in assists (406) and three-point field goals made (193); seventh in scoring (1,524); eighth in steals (133) and ninth in free throws made (277).



COURTESY OF WHARTON HIGH

**Wharton High's Justin Visconti**

## WHARTON PLAYER COMMITS TO SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Justin Visconti, a senior defensive tackle at Wharton High, has committed to Southeastern University, a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) school in Lakeland. The 5-foot-11, 285-pound lineman tallied 39 tackles, eight tackles for loss and five sacks in 2016. As a junior in 2015, Visconti racked up 22 tackles and five sacks. Visconti is also a member of the Wharton lacrosse team.

- Roy Halladay
- Steve Schmolli
- Brian Tollberg
- Rick Riechart
- John Frascatore
- Richie Schienblum

Lunch will also be provided at noon. For information, contact Desiree Fratianni at [Dfratianni@cityofbrooksville.us](mailto:Dfratianni@cityofbrooksville.us) or (352) 540-3835.

## FREE BASEBALL CLINIC APRIL 1

The Brooksville Parks & Recreation Department has partnered with the Major League Baseball Players' Association and Friends of the Children Inc., to offer a free baseball clinic April 1 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., at Tom Varn Park, 306 Darby Lane in Brooksville.

The clinic is for aspiring ballplayers to receive the opportunity to be coached by several former major league players, including the city's Parks & Recreation director Michael Charles Walker, a former professional ballplayer from 1988 through 1996.

Other former major league ballplayers expected to participate include:

- Alexander Vargas Hernandez

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## Turning back the clock to the 16th century

By Kevin Weiss  
kweiss@lakerlutznews.com

Every year, tens of thousands of people get a chance to transport themselves into the past and escape from the real world at the Bay Area Renaissance Festival.

Now entering its 39th season, the annual festival attracts about 80,000 people a year, according to the festival's website.

Set in 1524 in the fictional English town of Fittleworth, the seven-week long Tampa festival creates a captivating medieval adventure, with no shortage of sights and spectacles.

From re-enactments of King Henry VIII and Queen Catherine Parr, there's a litany of characters — peasants, gypsies and fairies — all of which never stray from using English accents.

At every turn, the festival offers amusement for children and adults, alike.

Besides an eclectic blend of renaissance-style mimes and madrigals, there's archery contests, live-armored jousting and elephant rides.

With modest beginnings in Largo, the jubilee relocated to Tampa in 2004, adjacent to the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), at 11315 North 46th St.

To accommodate its cult following and ever-growing demand, the festival expanded to seven weekends long.

Each weekend has a distinctive motif. The weekend of March 18, for instance, was titled Shamrocks & Shenanigans, an ode to St. Patrick's Day.

Festival Friday kicks off the final weekend, starting March 31.

That is followed by the pirate-themed High Seas Adventures, on April 1 and April 2.

Its attractions include a pirate costume contest, tattoo competition and pirate peg leg relay race.

For thousands of festivalgoers each year, dressing up in diverse medieval garb is a significant aspect of the event's charm.

So, too, is meeting like-minded people with similar interests in renaissance culture.

"It's fun. You get to know the people — the repeats," said Niko Alissandratos, of Tarpon Springs, who was sporting Vulcan ears and a vintage drinking horn during the



A knight and rook battle it out on a large chess board during one of the human chess match events at MOSI's Renaissance Festival.

FRED BELLET



This boxer-greyhound mix, named just "B," did not mind attending the Renaissance Festival in a pink sorcerer's dress. The 10-year old pet belongs to Keith Kolasinski, of Davenport.

March 18 weekend.

Another patron, Alicia Askey, makes it a point to drive down from Ocala each year

to attend the festival with her husband, Stephen.

Besides the varied food and entertainment offerings, she enjoys the ability to express herself, this year portraying an Anglo-Saxon from the 12th century.

"I like being able to dress up," Askey said, "and no one looks at you funny."

The same mindset can be applied to Lutz resident Scott Dorman, and his 8-year old son, Nathan.

Both portrayed members of a Scottish clan, wearing a MacLeod kilt and toting hardwood walking sticks.

Matching outfits aside, the festival's choreographed human combat chess match is one reason the father and son have attended the show three years running.

Dorman, who grew up playing Dungeons and Dragons as a youth, said he enjoys "everything" about the Bay Area Renaissance Festival.

"It's just a lot of fun," Dorman said. "Each year we come a little more often and get more into it."

The Renaissance Festival appears to be a hit among vendors, too.

Amanda Stevens is the owner and operator of Krakens Chest, which produces on-site pirate rings and other jewelry.

Part of the festival's appeal, Stevens said, is its leniency in portrayals from the entirety of renaissance period, which spans from the 14th century to the 17th century.

Unlike some other medieval-themed festivals, she values the ability to roam as any character, may it be a knight, a pirate, or a Greek warrior.

"I think a lot of people like this festival," Stevens said, "because it's not strict."

"It's more like a giant convention," she added, "because you see people dressed up as everything here."

A regular since the event's Largo days, Stevens noted the renaissance festival does have a "different feel" since it moved to Tampa.

Nearby traffic on Fowler Avenue and other urban noises, she explained, can sometimes disrupt the festival's ambiance, contrary to the wide-open, rural setting in Largo.

"You felt like you were transported back in time," said Stevens, referring to the festival



Lutz residents, Scott Dorman, left, and his 8-year-old son, Nathan, portrayed members of a Scottish Clan, wearing a McLeod kilt and carrying hardwood walking sticks. Like father, like son, the two have attended every weekend of the event for the past three seasons. Nathan hopes to participate at the event as a re-enactor, someday.

### If you go

The Bay Area Renaissance Festival kicks off its final weekend on March 31 and concludes on April 2. For information, visit BayAreaRenFest.com. The popular seven-weekend long event is at MOSI, 11315 North 46th St., near the University of South Florida.

venue in Largo. "It was in the backwoods and you had to walk like half a mile to get to the (entrance) gate, so you really felt like you were in the Renaissance period."

The proximity to the bustling Fowler roads, however, doesn't disrupt the experience for Cat Desharnais, one of Stevens' co-workers.

To her, it's still a "getaway" from everyday life.

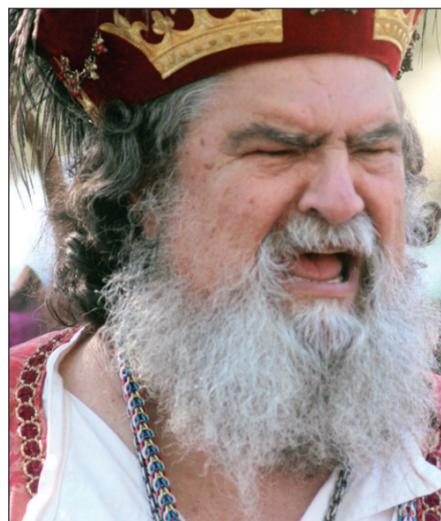
"I love it. It's a fun time to be artistic and creative," said Desharnais, of Tampa. "I meet a lot of crafty people and mobile artists; it's very nice."

For pop culture junkies, the festival incorporates some elements from Game of Thrones, the hit HBO television series.

Desharnais noted several attendees in recent years have dressed up as various characters from the show: "You'll find a dozen Khaleesis just walking around."

One of the best moments during the festival's March 18 offerings came during opening ceremonies, when re-enactors presented a Shakespearean-style purple velvet dress to Marina Khimko, a 14-year-old who lives from a wheelchair because of a rare birth defect.

As the teenager from Brooksville, smiled ear-to-ear, her mother, Rebecca Smith, said described the gesture as being "spectacular."



Shouting to members of his court, King Henry VIII was portrayed by Michael Marzella, who was joined by his last wife, Queen Katherine Parr, at right, portrayed by Catherine Jett, both of Tampa.



Fourteen-year old Marina Khimko, of Brooksville, who because of a rare birth defect lives life from a wheelchair, was overwhelmed when the re-enactors presented her with a Shakespearean-period, purple velvet dress with gold-braiding. She was there with her mom, Rebecca Smith, of Brooksville.



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# PET of the WEEK



## This is Charlie

Charlie is a rescue from the Humane Society. He was born in the Turks and Caicos Islands. He was a feral dog and considered a nuisance to the locals. An American couple was honeymooning on the island, and witnessed Charlie and his sister being drowned by one of the local children. The couple saved both dogs and took them to the local Humane Society. The society asked if they would be willing to take the dogs to the United States, and they agreed. The couple adopted the female dog, and Linda Colon, of Land O' Lakes, was very lucky to get Charlie. Charlie is very smart, and kind and lovable, and is Colon's best friend.

### Send us a picture and information on your favorite pet!

Write a short paragraph about why your pet is special along with a photo and mail to: **Pet of the Week, c/o The Laker, P.O. Box 479, Lutz, FL 33548** or email to [mrrathman@lakerlutznews.com](mailto:mrrathman@lakerlutznews.com), ATTN: Pet of the Week

**PLEASE NOTE: OWNERS NAME AND ADDRESS MUST BE INCLUDED FOR YOUR PET TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION.**

# Adopt A Friend FOR LIFE



COURTESY OF STEPHEN JOHN PHOTOGRAPHY

## Warren is a playful pup

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## Pet Loss Support Group



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For more information or to RSVP, call 727-484-7995.



## Jett needs a home

Jett is a younger girl who came to the shelter in early March. She is a sweet girl in need of a family to cuddle with. Jett is fully vaccinated and ready to go to her new home any day.

If you would like to adopt either Jett or Warren, be sure to visit Pasco County Animal Services at 19640 Dogpatch Lane in Land O' Lakes. The adoption center is open Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 6:30 p.m. All adoption fees include spay/neuter, microchip and vaccines. For more information, email [adoptionpartners@pascocountyfl.net](mailto:adoptionpartners@pascocountyfl.net).

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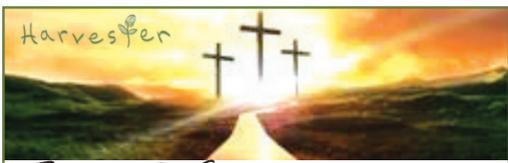
# FAITH &

# Worship



EASTER SERVICES  
AND ACTIVITIES

# 2017



## Easter Week:

Thursday, April 13th • 7pm . . . . . Maundy Thursday Service  
 Friday, April 14th • 7pm . . . . . Good Friday Service  
 Sat, April 15th • 10am - noon . . . Community Easter Egg Hunt  
 Sunday, April 16th • 7am . . . . . Sunrise Service  
 Sunday, April 16th • 9am . . . . . Traditional Service  
 Sunday, April 16th • 11am . . . . . Contemporary Service

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Wednesday Lenten Worship  
 March 8 - April 5 • 7:00 pm  
 Maundy Thursday  
 April 13 • 7:00 pm  
 (with communion)  
 Good Friday  
 April 14 • 12:00 pm & 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday (April 16)  
 7:00 am - Sunrise Service  
 10:00 am - Worship Service  
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| Arms       | Does   | Mugs          | Sliding |
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| Bait       | Fade   | Nets          | Streak  |
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| Belongings | Gear   | Owens         | Tired   |
| Blew       | Guides | Pain          | Twin    |
| Buys       | Gulf   | Plant         | Twos    |
| Calf       | Hole   | Polar         | Under   |
| Cans       | Ideas  | Possibilities | Useful  |
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SEE SOLUTIONS, PAGE 6B

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# BUSINESS DIGEST

Send business news to [news@lakerlutznews.com](mailto:news@lakerlutznews.com)

## GREEN INDUSTRY TRAINING

The University of Florida and IFAS Pasco County Cooperative Extension Service will host a Green Industry Best Management Practices training session March 29 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Land O' Lakes Community Center, at 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd.

The program is designed for landscape professionals who apply pesticides and fertilizers commercially.

Preregistration and prepayment are required and can be completed online at [tinyurl.com/kfy4pug](http://tinyurl.com/kfy4pug). Click on "March" and scroll to 3/29/17 Green Industry Best Management Practices Training - GI-BMP ticket link.

The cost for training and lunch is \$30 for green industry professionals. All participants must have a photo ID and a prepaid ticket for admission. No refunds allowed. For information, call (352) 518-0156.

## RIBBON CUTTING

Edward Jones Investments will have a ribbon cutting March 29 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., at 18932 N. Dale Mabry Hwy., in Lutz.

For more information, email the Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce at [office@CentralPascoChamber.com](mailto:office@CentralPascoChamber.com).

## POWER NETWORKING

The North Tampa Chamber of Commerce March 2017 Power Luncheon

will be on March 30 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at John Knox Village, at 4100 E. Fletcher Ave., in Tampa.

Lunch will be served in the Crystal Dining Room.

The cost is \$20 for lunch, if registered online by March 21, and \$25 at the door. Walk-ins will be served from a limited menu.

For information, call (813) 563-0180, email [ContactNTCC@gmail.com](mailto:ContactNTCC@gmail.com), or visit [NorthTampaChamber.com](http://NorthTampaChamber.com).

## JOB EXPO

The Greater Wesley Chapel Chamber of Commerce will have a Job Expo April 5 from 2:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., at Wesley Chapel High School, at 30651 Wells Road, in Wesley Chapel.

Companies have an opportunity to position themselves in front of qualified job seekers. Must have a minimum of two jobs available.

Vendors will be provided with 6-feet of

table space, complimentary water and snacks. Set up is at 1:30 p.m.

The expo is free to chamber members; \$50 for non-members.

For more information, contact the chamber at (813) 994-8534 or [office@WesleyChapelChamber.com](mailto:office@WesleyChapelChamber.com).

## NETWORKING BREAKFAST

The Wednesday Morning Network Group will meet April 5 at 7:30 a.m., at Hungry Harry's Family Bar-B-Que, at 3116 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes. Each attendee will be able to present a 30-second pitch. The cost for members only is \$7, if preregistered by March 30. Thereafter, the cost is \$10 for members and non-members at the door.

The Law Offices of Lucas/Magazine is the sponsor.

Register at [CentralPascoChamber.com](http://CentralPascoChamber.com).

For more information, please contact the chamber at (813) 909-2722 or [office@centralpascochamber.com](mailto:office@centralpascochamber.com).

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