

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

MAY 2022 Volume 9 Issue 5

Ponte Vedra, Palm Valley, Nocatee and South Ponte Vedra Beach

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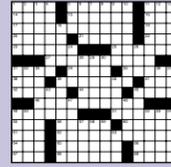
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Photo courtesy St. Johns County Clerk of Court
St. Johns County Clerk of Court and Comptroller
Brandon Patty.

Clerk of Court offers fraud noticing service at no charge

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

While traveling a few months back, St. Johns County businessman Jim Browning's attention was captured by a radio ad promoting property fraud protection. As a business owner with multiple properties, he called the advertiser for more information, learning that the paid commercial identity protection service would monitor his records and alert him of any potentially fraudulent activity.

"I have five or six properties, and it was about \$1,500 a year to list them with a service," said Browning, owner of The Browning Agency, a full-service insurance brokerage and consulting firm in Ponte Vedra.

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Beaches Go Green expanding its reach through school clubs

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Anne Marie Moquin started Beaches Go Green shortly after watching the documentary "A Plastic Ocean" and realizing the devastating impact of plastic pollution. It inspired her to first begin speaking at schools and then ultimately led to the non-profit as a way to provide free environmental education.

"There is a huge gap in environmental education in our community. We like to break it down into manageable pieces that will reach the everyday person. We look at it as 'Do this, instead of that,'" said Moquin, Beaches Go Green founder and executive director. "It matters."

Moquin said that while the group does beach clean-up projects, Beaches Go Green focuses on education, awareness and making complex environmental issues simple so that every person has the opportunity to protect the planet.

To that end, Moquin and her all-volunteer staff spread this message by creating Beaches Go Green clubs at local schools through the help of teacher sponsors. So far, eight clubs exist (four in St. Johns County: Ponte Vedra High, Nease High, Toco Creek High and Bartram Trail High) with Creekside High School coming online this fall. Moquin is currently looking for a club sponsor if any teacher is interested at Creekside and Landrum Middle School.

"The student clubs help us to execute our plans and to deliver the message to their peers," said Moquin, who founded Beaches Go Green in 2018. Beaches Go Green covers from Amelia Island to Flagler Beach.

For example, the clubs will often present to elementary school children and also make videos that are then shared with younger students. Two main themes are shared: eliminating single-use items and plastic pollution in the oceans.

"We encourage everyone to choose reusable versus single use, make less waste, and we teach that there is no 'away,'" said Moquin, explaining that sometimes children



Photos courtesy Anne Marie Moquin
Beaches Go Green event involving Ponte Vedra High's club by the same name.

grow up thinking that trash is magically sent "away" and just disappears without causing harm.

Ponte Vedra High's Beaches Go Green Club recently completed their second presentation to Ocean Palms Elementary School's fifth graders with more than 130 students and staff members participating in the event.

"This is the kind of student leadership and collaboration that we need in our community to create true change," said Moquin. "These ladies rock and knocked it out of the park. They made learning fun and educational too."

Ponte Vedra High Beaches Go Green Co-President Taylor Brown, who has been a part of Beaches Go Green since 2019, said she joined because she knew how harmful single-use plastics were to the environment, and she wanted an opportunity to influence others to make a change at the school.

"I love being co-president because I feel that my position has no limits, and I can challenge myself to be a model for the club," said Brown, a junior.

Brown said making presentations at

Beaches Go Green cont. on pg. 14



Ponte Vedra High girls' weightlifting team shows off the reusable water bottles.

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Clerk of Court cont. from pg. 1

Interested in saving money while still protecting his properties, Browning sought out St. Johns County Clerk of Courts and Comptroller Brandon J. Patty for information about the Clerk's free service to alert property owners to any unusual activity in their official records filed with the county.

Motivated by the conversation with Browning, Patty launched a year-long public awareness campaign in March to urge St. Johns County property owners to register for the free noticing service, which alerts a subscriber via email any time an official record document is recorded in their name with the Clerk's office. The campaign's goal is to sign up 10,000 residents for free property fraud notifications this year.

Like commercial alert systems, the Clerk's free noticing service does not prevent a fraudulent action from occurring. It does, however, provide a free early warning system for subscribers, giving them a tool to become aware of activity that may have otherwise gone undetected.

"Property and mortgage fraud is one of the nation's fastest growing white-collar crimes," said Patty. "To combat this, identity protection companies charge monthly or annual fees to monitor your official records — for instance, your deed — but you can do it yourself for free. Simply subscribe to receive email alerts when an official record document is recorded in your name with the Clerk's office."

Property fraud is when someone illegally

uses your property for financial gain, such as creating a fraudulent document that will deed your home to them, and then they record that document in the county's Official Records.

When receiving an email alert from the Clerk's office, a subscriber knows to take prompt action if the recording activity is determined to be fraudulent. The alert email provides a subscriber with an Official Records (OR) book and page number to view the document in public records. The book and page number are the document numbers on the email alert.

"With the Clerk of Court's free property fraud notifications, you don't pay a monthly charge and you have an automatic email trigger if recording activity occurs," Browning said.

Where paid alert systems tout coverage up to a million dollars for lawyers and experts, the Clerk of Court and Comptroller's free subscription service is a do-it-yourself option in which the subscriber would contact local law enforcement to investigate potentially criminal activity and/or contact a civil litigator to seek damages and to correct the fraudulent record in the county's Official Records. A court order would likely be necessary to correct the record in the county's Official Record books.

"Remember, you don't have to pay for alerts that are free through our service," Patty said. "If there's fraudulent recording activity on your property record, immediately contact law enforcement."

Visit the Clerk's website at stjohnsclerk.com/recording-activity/ to subscribe to this free service.



Rebecca Thomson
724.968.7602

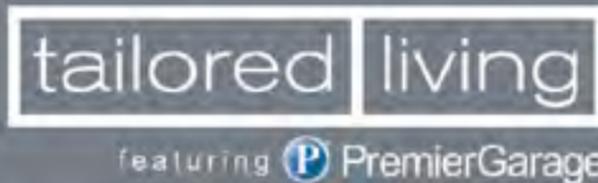
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Publisher

Mark Pettus
Publisher@FloridaNewsLine.com

Editor

Martie Thompson
Editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

Bookkeeper

Emily Whitehead
Accounting@FloridaNewsLine.com

Social Media

SocialMedia@FloridaNewsLine.com

Advertising Sales

Linda Gay
Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com
(904) 607-5062 cell

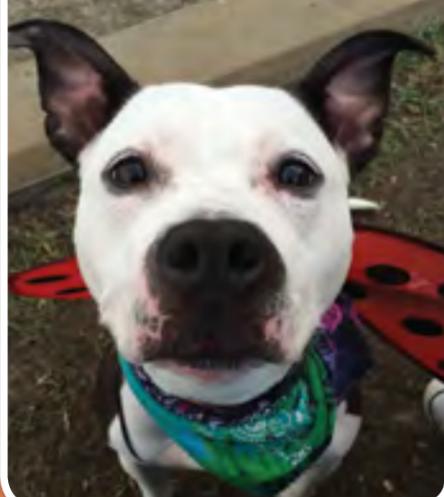
Rebecca Thomson
Rebecca@FloridaNewsLine.com
(724) 968-7602 cell

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Zoe!



BREED:
American Staffordshire Terrier

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Snuggling and sniffing the sunshine.

FAVORITE TREAT:
Banana puddin'!

FAVORITE FRIEND:
She loves everyone. Everyone is her favorite friend. To her strangers are just friends that she hasn't met yet.

HOW YOUR BFF GOT HER NAME:
Zoe was named after Zoe from the sci-fi TV show "Firefly."

Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answer to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Also tell us you saw the BFF contest in Ponte Vedra NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in Ponte Vedra NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.

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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Are you interested in promoting your business in St. Johns Business Monthly, a feature section included in both The CreekLine and Ponte Vedra NewsLine? **Call Linda 904-607-5062**

MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you guess where this is?
Submit your answer to:
mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.

Last month's Mystery Photo was the building housing Beaches Dermatology on Solana Road. Our winner was Lynn Scielzo. Congratulations!

CRYPTO FUN

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Answers: A. trail B. cycle C. pedals D. exercise

Answers to our Puzzles
PG 10

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with St. Johns County School Board Member Kelly Barrera, District 4

Q: What is the latest on the proposed construction of K-8 School NN [as of interview date of April 18]?

A: We had to reject the bids that came in for this proposed construction because they were all too high. The cost to construct this school in a timely manner was out of our affordability range, and so we are delaying the construction by one year. We feel that the high bids were very situational, due to the lack of supplies and workforce. We will rebid the project with a finish date of fall 2024 and see if that doesn't make it more palatable.

Q: How does this affect proposed rezoning in District 4?

A: We were already looking at rezoning due to the 7.2 percent growth rate we had this year. In particular, the Beachwalk/Beacon Lake/Creekside communities are showing a lot of growth. Our growth planning department is analyzing the area and one proposal is to rezone the Beachwalk community from Ocean Palms Elementary and Landrum Middle School to Liberty Pines Academy, which just underwent an expansion last year. This is all with the understanding that there is likely more growth

coming to this area and student population will continue to evolve.

Q: What in general is happening in area schools during this month?

A: In May, we are celebrating our teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week and our seniors, who will be participating in graduation ceremonies at the end of May and the beginning of June. I'd like to highlight that this has been another difficult year for teachers and staff and school leaders. I and so many others in our community appreciate their hard work, perseverance, and dedication to our students and for each other.

From the administration side, there is a lot of hiring going on, including movement between schools in addition to adding new faces to our district.

Q: Do you have any kudos to share?

A: I'd like to congratulate Pia Lachner from Landrum Middle School. She won best overall for her project entitled "Radium Girls Debate Who is Guilty" at St. Johns County's National History Day competition. She will advance to the state competition in May.

Also, we had several County Art Award winners from District 4. Congratulations to Jessica Shattles from Ponte Vedra High School who earned first place in the Ceramics/Pottery division and Azsia Thomas who earned Honorable Mention. In the 2D-Mixed Media/Printmaking category, congratulations to Cole Shapiro of Ponte Vedra High School who earned first place.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

A: They can email me at kelly.barrera@stjohns.k12.fl.us or call me at (904) 547-7510.



with St. Johns County Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker, District 4

Q: Can you share some insight on the reopening of Mickler's Beach on May 20?

A: We are very excited that Mickler's Beach will be reopening soon and we can get residents back to the beach. We have had an extension of the FEMA berm project, but other access points, yet to be determined, will be utilized. The Board of County Commissioners determined that Mickler's Beach should be open going forward and we don't anticipate any further closures as a result of the berm project. We appreciate the public's patience with this project.

Q: Since it is peak beach season, do you have any comments for residents at the beach?

A: We definitely want constituents to enjoy the beach, but we also need to focus on safety. Lifeguards, Parks and Rec personnel, Fire and Rescue, and the SJSO will all be on high alert so everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer at the beach. We ask residents to be alert

and patient, and to notify law enforcement if they see any issues or safety concerns.

Q: Are you still hearing from residents about yard waste collection delays?

A: We are still having some challenges in parts of the county. We continue to work diligently with the contractor to ensure that delays are kept to a minimum and that services, if missed, are back on track as soon as possible. I'd encourage constituents to notify our office if necessary due to delays because we want residents to get the services they are paying for.

Q: Do you have an update on the American Rescue Plan Act funds that the Commission decided not to allocate at the March meeting?

A: In April, the Board of County Commissioners directed staff to work with the United Way to act as a type of clearing house and vet local St. Johns

Q & A with Jeremiah Blocker cont. on pg. 8

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John, Resident at Westminster St. Augustine

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May

Community Calendar What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

Council on Aging offers interest groups at the COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee. Meetings are free and self-guided except for the Caregiver's Support Group. Advance registration for clubs and meetings is required; email pbrunell@Stjohnscoa.com or call (904) 819-3234. Tuesday clubs include: Caregiver Support Group, 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.; and Widows and Widowers social group, second and fourth Tuesday of each month, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Wednesday groups include: Community Crafting, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.; and Genealogy Group, 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

3rd: The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library will present the last concert of the season of the Dr. Gerson Yessin music series on May 3. Concert pianist Lucy Chen will perform with UNF graduate student Corina Danica on violin, along with UNF students Evan Guttormson, violin, Grace Raper, cello, and Eunice Palily, piano. Also performing will be the Cathedral Arts Project String Ensemble with Conductor Joshua Stone. The concert is at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library and is free to the public. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the concert begins at 6:30 p.m.

4th: The Newcomers Alumnae monthly luncheon will be held on Wednesday, May 4 at 11 a.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway. Patty Trousdell, Volunteer Event Director for Tunnel to Towers Foundation, will give a presentation about the non-profit organization. The cost of the luncheon is \$23; email bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible to reserve a seat. Visit www.newcomersalumnae.org for more information.

newcomersalumnae.fl.wildapricot.org for more information or to become a member.

7th: The Northeast Florida Chapter of Sisters in Crime presents award-winning author and editor Nancy Quatrano at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. (FOL Room), at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 7, 2022. Bring your coffee and bring a friend. The group welcomes misters and sisters to learn more about writing, promoting, and enjoying crime fiction. Visit www.nefloridasistersin-crime.org for more information.

9th: The St. Johns County Civic Roundtable will meet on Monday, May 9 at 12 p.m. via Zoom. The meeting will feature guest speaker Vicky Oakes, St. Johns County's Supervisor of Elections. Email info@sjcroundtable.org to register for the meeting or visit www.sjcroundtable.org for more information about the St. Johns County Civic Roundtable.

15th: First Coast Cultural Center of the Arts Beaches - A Celebration annual fundraising event will be held on Sunday, May 15 from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at The Surf Club Patio at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, 200 Ponte Vedra Blvd. The gala event theme is Hawaiian with traditional foods and drinks along with a performance by Prince Pele's Polynesian Revue. Visit www.firstcoastculturalcenter.org for more information about individual and table ticket pricing, sponsorships and program inclusion.

15th: The BRASS 30th annual Gala & Concert will be held

on Sunday, May 15 from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club. The event will feature hors d'oeuvres, an open bar and dinner in addition to a live auction

performance by the Jacksonville Symphony. Black Tie is optional and valet parking is available.

17th: The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library will feature Rona Brinlee with summer reading suggestions on Tuesday, May 17. Brinlee is the owner of The BookMark bookstore in Neptune Beach. In August 2022 the Book-Mark will celebrate 32 years in the beaches. The program, at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library's FOL Room, is free and open to the public. Doors open at 6 p.m.

17th: Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will meet on Tuesday, May 17 at 6 p.m. for Chat & Chew before the 6:30 p.m. meeting at Christ Episcopal Church, Room 106, 400 San Juan Road. Email janetkary@gmail.com for more information.

17th: The Newcomers of North St. Johns will host a meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, May 17 beginning at 11:15 a.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. in Ponte Vedra Beach. During lunch, pianist Carl Grant will entertain attendees with a medley of soft ballads and love songs. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$30 for members. All reservations must be received by May 6. Contact Sue Aird at sjaird@comcast.net to register. The Newcomers of North St. Johns offers a wide variety of activities, including smaller lunch groups, wine socials, golf, Mah

Jongg, holiday parties, day trips and cultural events.

18th: Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will hold its May General Meeting to wrap up the club year and distribute checks to charities on May 18 from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at Southern Kitchen + Bar, 831 1st Street in Jacksonville Beach. Register for this event at www.pontevedrawomansclub.com. Everyone will order off the dinner menu.

21st: The Nocatee Farmers Market will be held on Saturday, May 21 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. The Farmers Market is open to the public.

28th: The Ponte Vedra Writers group will meet on Saturday, May 28 at 10 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Featured speaker will be award-winning author Ken Pelham, who will explain the importance of a writer delivering a strong ending to the story: "Big Finish! Writing the Story Climax." The meeting is free and open to members and non-members alike. Visit www.floridawriters.org for more information.

28th: GTM Research Reserve will host its monthly Beach Cleanup on Saturday, May 28 from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. No registration is required; meet at the Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road in Ponte Vedra Beach where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Visit gtmnerr.org for more information.



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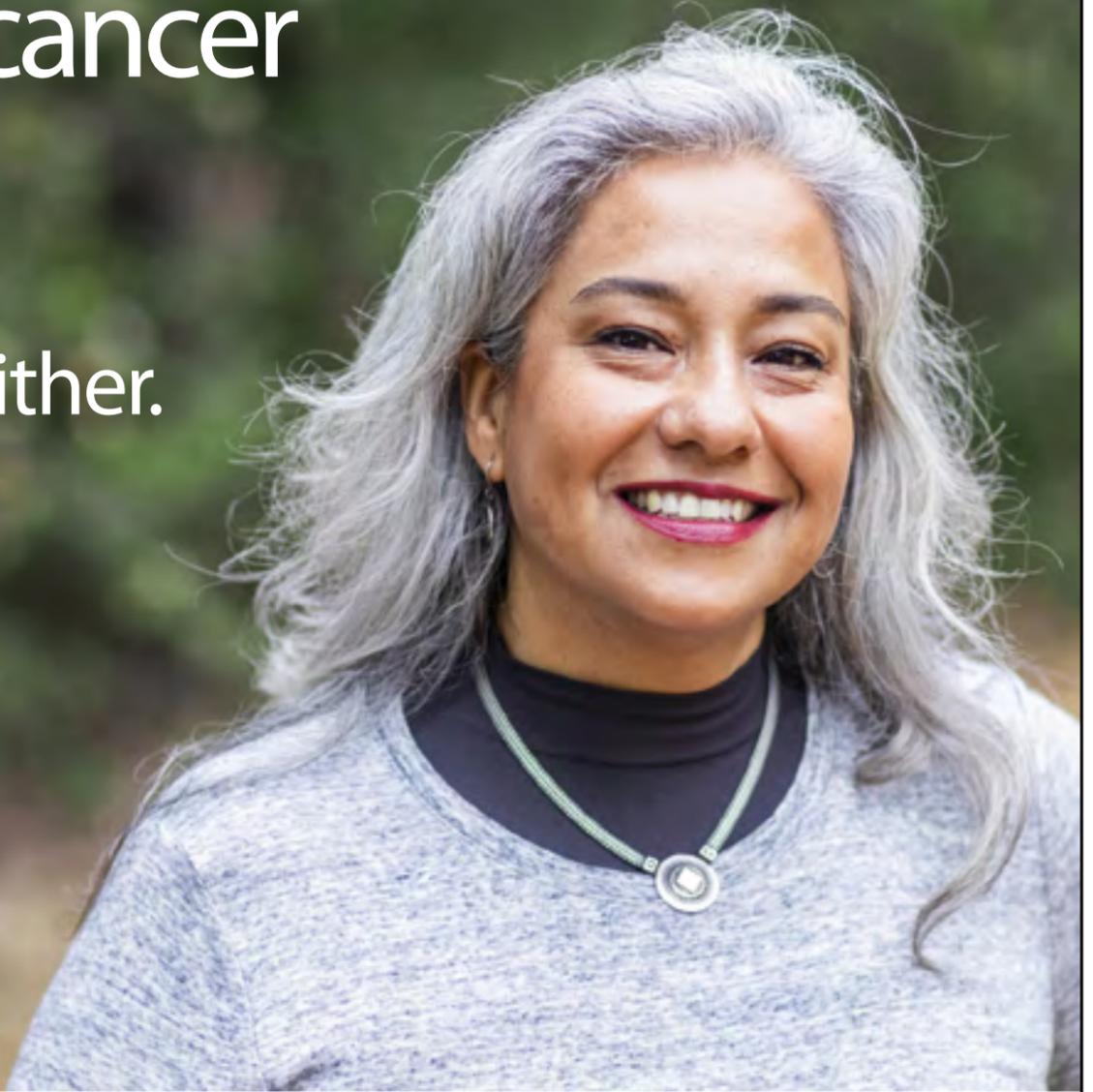


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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Business Briefs

Virtual Care offerings expanded

Telescope Health and Flagler Health+ have announced a partnership that virtually connects patients to emergency and family physicians for on-demand telehealth visits. The partnership demonstrates the organizations' shared commitment to providing quality, convenient, accessible healthcare to Northeast Florida residents.

As part of the partnership, Telescope Health will use emergency and family care physicians to treat patients with non-emergent conditions virtually using the Flagler Health+ Anywhere platform. The partnership also includes a dedicated team of care coordinators who are available to connect patients to a primary care physician or specialist, arrange follow-up appointments, locate in-person care, and check individuals into a nearby emergency room if/when needed.

Flagler Health+ Walk-in Clinics are open inside select Publix Super Market locations during pharmacy hours and feature devices that patients and doctors can use to enhance their virtual visit. Smart devices like blood pressure cuffs, dermoscopes, thermometers, and high-definition cameras can help physicians make a more accurate diagnosis when

needed. Patients have the added convenience of picking up their prescriptions at the Publix pharmacy within minutes of their visit.

Virtual on-demand care is available for patients two years old and older who are experiencing ailments such as cold symptoms, allergies, sinus problems, earaches, pink eye and more. Kiosks are located inside Publix locations at Nocatee Town Center, Moultrie Square, Bartram Market, Beach Village, Cobblestone Village, Mission Trace and the Shoppes at Beachwalk clinic is opening soon. As part of the Flagler Health+ community schools partnership, walk-in virtual care is also available inside The Webster School and South Woods Elementary School. Telehealth visits are also available on-demand on the Flagler Health+ Anywhere App.

New mobile clinic for speech and hearing therapy

Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center (JSHC), a local nonprofit devoted to providing high quality professional and compassionate care to all individuals with hearing, speech and/or language disorders in our community, launched its Mobile Clinic Initiative on March 22. The Mobile Clinic, dubbed the Communication Station, will allow the



Photo courtesy Jacksonville Speech and Hearing

Station will help us address this growing need by removing the transportation barrier that so often keeps members of our community from the healthcare services they so desperately need," explains Michael Howland, president and CEO for Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center.

The mobile clinic also will support Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center efforts in treating Jacksonville's preschool populations.

Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center to offer services to those unable to access care in the clinic. Made possible by funding through a grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, a 15 passenger sprinter van was modified into a mobile speech and hearing center that will allow clinicians to provide communication health services at preschools, assisted living facilities, and other venues outside of their clinical offices.

"In the past year we have seen an increased demand for speech and hearing therapy. The JSHC Communication

Much of the center's speech and language work surrounds early intervention, ensuring that children can start kindergarten on the same communication level as their peers and ensuring that equitable intervention opportunities are provided for all preschoolers, regardless of a child's socioeconomic background. Through community outreach initiatives, Speech-Language Pathologists perform screenings, evaluations, and therapies to children in preschools and daycares throughout Jacksonville at no cost to their families.

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Guest Column

New precinct lines and new polling locations to be announced soon

By St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Staff at the Elections Office have completed the project of redrawing precinct lines due to the redistricting process. The next step, as required by law, is for the Supervisor of Elections to request that the new precinct lines be approved by the Board of County Commissioners. I'm scheduled to appear before the Commission during the May 3 regular board meeting to request that approval. Once the board votes to approve our new precinct lines, they will be effective immediately and we will release the new precinct maps to the media, on our website, and on social media.

New precinct lines will also drive the need to update the list of 2022 polling places. We hope to have those confirmed by May 3 so we can release them along with the new precinct lines. In addition, we anticipate mailing new voter information cards to all registered voters in early June; however, a court

decision regarding Florida's congressional districts must be made before the database of new districts can be completed and the mailing of voter information cards can occur. Additionally, the voter lookup tool on our website will not be updated with new districts, precincts, and polling places until congressional districts are finalized.

We will notify voters when the new voter information cards are going in the mail and the new information is available on our website for viewing. Updated voter information cards will reflect the new districts, precincts, and election day polling places. All voters are advised to review their new voter information cards carefully as many precincts and election day polling places have changed. It's also very important to keep your address up-to-date with the Elections Office. Voter information cards are sent as "return service requested," which means if you

move and have your mail forwarded, your card will not be sent to your new address — it will be returned to the Elections Office. Returned voter information cards with associated forwarding addresses provided by USPS are processed in this manner:

- Address change within St. Johns County: Your address is updated and a new voter information card is sent to your new address.
- Address changes within the State of Florida: Your voter registration record and new address are sent to the county elections office for your new residence. Your record will be updated and you will receive a voter information card from the Elections Office in your new county notifying you of your district, precinct, and polling place.
- Address changes outside the State of Florida: Your voter record will be updated with the out-of-state address as

your mailing address. You will be sent a list maintenance notice following the election requesting your record be updated which you can use to cancel your Florida Voter registration or provide the correct information.

- Notice returned as undeliverable with no address provided: Voter is sent a list maintenance card following the election which the voter can use to cancel or provide correct information.

Any first class mail returned to the Elections Office as undeliverable by the Post Office will result in the cancellation of any preexisting vote-by-mail ballot request. You must reapply if you wish to continue voting by mail.

Readers can contact me at the office by calling (904) 823-2238 or emailing me at voakes@votesjc.gov. Our website also has a wealth of information and a signup form for our newsletter at votesjc.gov.

POINT OF SALE

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Q & A with Jeremiah Blocker cont. from pg. 4

County charities who request these funds. Home Again St. Johns will be allocated funding and then going forward the United Way will act in a fair and equitable way so we can best address the needs of our community.

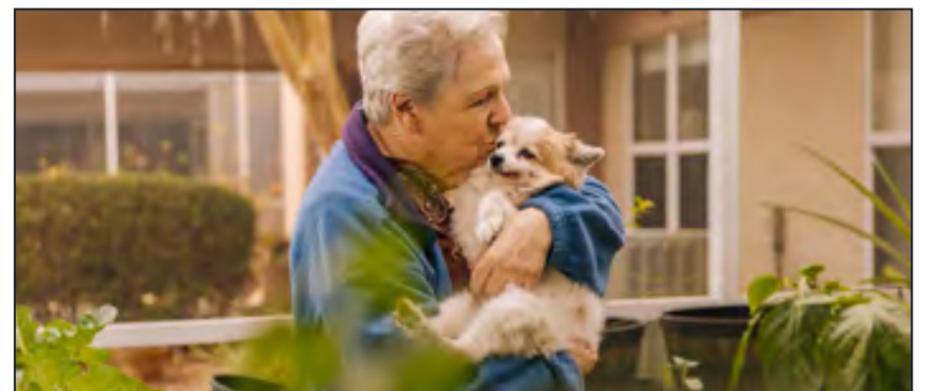
Q: Do you have dates and times for your next local office hours?

A: Yes. I will be available on May 13 and June 10 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. each day

to meet with constituents at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Constituents wishing to meet with me need to call my office and schedule a time, as well as let us know the topic they wish to discuss so I can have staff available if necessary.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you?

A: Readers can email me at bcc4j-blocker@sjcfl.us or call me at (904) 679-2620.



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Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Gabe Coleman

When high school sophomore and Ponte Vedra Beach resident Gabe Coleman participated in the Jacksonville Walk to End Alzheimer's last year, he carried a yellow flower with him, a "Forget Me Not" that symbolized those who care for someone living with the disease.

"I also carry it as a symbol of the love I have for my grandmother. The 'Forget Me Nots' are just a really beautiful way to make fighting for a cure more personal," said Coleman, adding that there are four different colors of flowers/meanings offered at the walks.

Coleman's reason for walking is very personal. His Grandmother Pat, 82, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2017. That diagnosis has motivated Coleman to do more, not just for his grandmother, but for everyone battling the disease. Coleman, who attends Bolles High School, partnered with the Alzheimer's Association and the Jacksonville Walk to End Alzheimer's two years ago, raising with his team nearly \$10,000 "and counting" for the cause.

Coleman, 16, remembers visiting his grandmother every summer when she lived in Tampa. Those memories are precious to him, especially waking up early, heading to his grandmother's room and watching "Spongebob Squarepants" together. Coleman visits his grandmother now at Starling at Nocatee, an assisted living and memory care facility, where she was moved to be closer to family. While the visits are different today, Coleman said that he still finds ways to connect with his grandmother through nature and humor.

The end game for Coleman: Find a cure for Alzheimer's. Eliminate the statistic in which 6.5 million Americans are living with the disease.

Get to Know ...

Interested in being featured? Email Martie Thompson at editor@FloridaNewsLine.com



Photo courtesy Sean Coleman
Gabe Coleman

"That number will be zero," said Coleman. "That is when I will be satisfied."

Q: How did you first get involved in the Alzheimer's Association?

A: My dad, who is a professional photographer, and I volunteered to be photographers at our first walk in 2019. We then created many videos about the cause, and the videos got a lot of exposure. It was amazing to see how it spreads by word of mouth and to see heartfelt reactions to videos of my grandmother. We then asked "How can we do more?" That's when we began to reach out to more of our social circles (Coleman plays soccer at Bolles and at Florida Prime), and everyone responded. Our goal is to always get bigger and find more things to do. In November 2021, I was able to get the Acosta Bridge lit up purple for Alzheimer's Awareness Month, which was a spectacular sight.

Q: What have you learned about your grandmother because of this disease?

A: I've learned a lot about my grandmother, and not

just the stories of her childhood from Minnesota that she tells on her better days. I've learned a lot about her as a person because she's battling a challenge that is about as unique as they come. She is just an amazing person, and she has lived an amazing life.

Q: What have you learned about yourself through this journey?

A: I've learned that each and every participant in the fight to find a cure makes a huge difference. I've only been actively supporting the Alzheimer's Association for a few years, but the reach I've somehow managed to have has amazed me. And this goes back to my number one principle of Alzheimer's Association support: spread the word.

Q: What do you want people to know about Alzheimer's?

A: I think a lot of people just don't know enough about Alzheimer's in general, from how many people it affects to the way it creeps up slowly and its varying ways of hiding away one's memories or personality. Sometimes it starts with the memories that are farthest back, and sometimes it ravages everything in the short-term instead. Sometimes it does both. And then sometimes, it does neither until one day, small physical impediments morph into complete memory loss. Like I said, it creeps up slowly, but once it takes hold, there is no cure. Not yet, anyway.

Q: How do you feel about the support you have received for this cause from all areas of your life?

A: The community support at the last walk meant everything to me. There were 800 walkers and 200 volunteers, gathered for an outdoor event on an especially gloomy day. The array of "Forget Me Nots" brightened up the day, though, as did the smiling faces of 1,000 people who had chosen to be there. The best feeling is that walks like the one at the University of North Florida happen all over the United States, and that our 1,000 is just one example of a huge community all walking towards the same goal.

[Author's Note: If you are interested in participating in the Jacksonville Walk to End Alzheimer's or getting involved in any way, please go to the Alzheimer's Association's (Central and North Florida Chapter) website at alz.org.]

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PopHistory
 By Scott A. Grant
 mail@floridanewsline.com

What would you do for a cold RC Cola?

On June 17, 2017, Congressman Ron DeSantis stood at home plate in Nationals Stadium with a bat in his hands. He was hitting fourth for the Republicans in the annual Congressional baseball game. Congress has been playing these games, pitting the Democrats vs. the Republicans, off and on since 1909.

The day before, a crazed gunman had opened fire on the Republican team's practice at Eugene Sampson Park in Arlington, Virginia. The shooter fired 60 rounds, wounding five before being shot to death by police. House Whip Steve Scalise was in critical condition. The terror of the day before hung heavy in the air that night.

DeSantis faced down pitcher Cedric Richmond, a Democrat from Louisiana making his sixth straight start in the game. The future governor swung at the first pitch and laced an opposite field line drive to right center. As the ball came off his bat and he trotted toward first base, DeSantis must have smiled and pictured himself drinking a cold RC Cola.

Back in 1991, DeSantis' little league coaches rewarded opposite field hits like the one the Congressman had just executed with an RC Cola. They must have been pretty good coaches. They took Dunedin National all the way to the Little League World Series in Williamsport, New York. At the time, Ron DeSantis was one of the best 12-year-old baseball players in the state.

Back then, everyone called him "D." Sometimes opponents heckled him for having an initial as a name. In a critical

game against Seminole for the state title, DeSantis responded to the taunts of "why don't you have a real name" with a two-run homer. DeSantis got two more hits in that game and struck out five in three innings of pitching.

In the Southern Regional tournament, the future Governor got four hits against a team from Mississippi and a win on the mound against a team from Marietta, Georgia. A final win against Lake Charles, Louisiana, advanced the team to the Little League World Series, the dream of every 12-year-old baseball player in the world.

In Williamsport, the players wrote the letters W.W.T. on the brims of their baseball caps. It stood for "We Want Taiwan." At that time Taiwan was the perennial favorite to win the tournament. Unfortunately, the team from Dunedin suffered two heart-breaking losses and were eliminated. Their only win was a drubbing of Saudi Arabia. DeSantis struck out 11 and homered in that game.

Dunedin National is still one the best Little League teams to come out of the Sunshine State. Four players from that team were drafted into the pros. Ron DeSantis might have been able to sign a professional contract as well. Instead, he went to Yale where he was captain of the baseball team. And then to Harvard, and then to the Navy, and then to Afghanistan, and Congress — and you know the rest.

Scott A. Grant is a local Pop Historian and author. By day he is president of Standfast Asset Management.

St. Johns County Chamber members socialize



Photos courtesy Rebecca Thomson

Erin Kelly and Kelly Farm Events hosted a joint St. Johns County Chamber Social on Thursday, April 14 at their beautiful venue located just west of St. Augustine. Networking, socializing and touring the facility were on the agenda and a great time was had by all. Ericha Gore, St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce events manager, was on hand to help attendees sign in.



Nease NJROTC captures third place at national championships

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Competing against the top 27 NJROTC drill teams across the country, Nease placed third at the 2022 Navy National Academic, Athletic and Drill Championships in Pensacola on April 1 – 2. The Navy Nationals comprise a series of 10 events — personnel inspection, five drill, three athletic and one academic — where the cumulative scores are added to determine the overall national champion. Nease represented NJROTC Area-12, which covers the 60 NJROTC programs across Northern Florida and the state of Georgia, having won the Area-12 Drill Championship last month in Coffee County, Georgia.

Nease won first place in two events: the 16 x100 Relay and Unarmed Basic Drill. The team garnered eight additional trophies, including second place in Personnel Inspection, third place in Overall Athletics and Pushups; fourth place in Overall Drill, Unarmed Exhibition Drill and Situps; and fifth place in Armed Basic Drill and Academics. Five cadets earned individual medals – Emmelie Neff finished second in Situps, Keegan Mapa – fifth in Situps, Emily Chang and Nicholas Gallego, 10th in female and male Pushups, and Ben Prohofsky, 10th in Academics.

“These young men and women have persevered since August practicing at 7:30 a.m.,” said senior naval science instructor Captain Scott LaRochelle. “Finishing third in the nation validated their commitment to excellence.”

Nease has qualified and competed at the Navy Nationals every year since 2015 with this year being the team’s best finish. Pace High School in Pensacola and Troy



Photo courtesy Scott LaRochelle
Cadet Kaitlyn Boggs leads the Nease NJROTC Unarmed Basic Drill team to a first place finish during the Navy Nationals Academic, Athletic and Drill Championships.

High School in Fullerton, California placed top two.

“I couldn’t be more proud of all of my teammates,” said Battalion Commander Kaitlyn Boggs, commander of the freshly minted #1 Unarmed Basic Drill team in the nation. “Coming out on top in this event knowing the talent from other programs in California, Virginia, Texas and Florida makes this trophy even more special.”

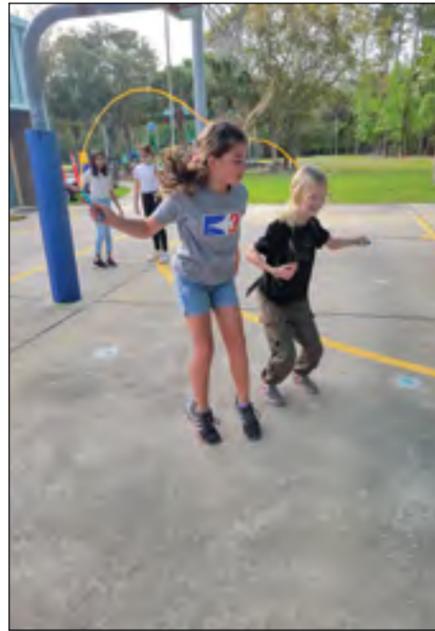
Ocean Palms is full of heart and goodwill

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

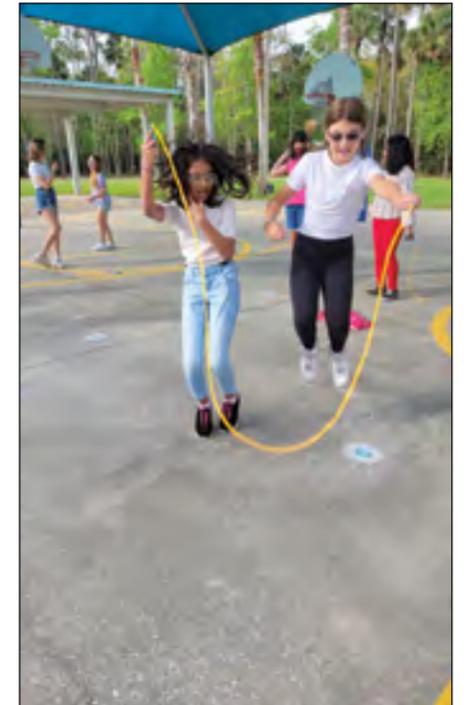
Ocean Palms Elementary School participated in Goodwill’s 25th annual Bag it Up! donation drive where students, over the course of two days, brought in used items to donate to the cause.

Additionally, students were tasked with a heart challenge. Jennifer Bouaziz, physical education teacher at Ocean Palms, led students in the American Heart Association’s Kids Heart Challenge. Here students were educated about the importance of heart health,

heart-related diseases such as stroke, and ways to exercise with jump rope challenges. Students in third, fourth and fifth grades were given one, two and three-minute challenges, attempting to jump consecutively, without mistakes, for the allotted time. Meanwhile, the younger students attempted to join the Kangaroo Club, which required jumping five, 10 or 20 times consecutively. Students not only met the challenge, but hopped right over their goal to raise more than \$9,000 for the American Heart Association.



Photos courtesy Lisa Farese
Ocean Palms students competed in jump rope challenges as part of the American Heart Association’s Kids Heart Challenge.



Ocean Palms students had a fun day jumping rope.



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Emergency Centers



Photo courtesy Laurel Madson
Nease cheerleading.

Competitive cheer and dance at Nease High School

By Laurel Madson
mail@floridanewslines.com

At every Nease High School home football game you see the Nease Cheerleaders and Pantherettes on the track performing — but did you know both teams start over the summer practicing for their competition season?

This year, Nease Cheer competed in the following competitions: Infinity Winter Classic: (second place), UCA Regionals: (fifth place), Stingray Showdown: (first place), FHSAA Regionals (fifth place), FHSAA states: (fourth place), UCA Nationals (17th place).

“This competition season was very special with having seven seniors on mat with us,” said Nease Cheerleading Head Coach Bailey Reed. “We were able to continue improving our routine throughout the year because of all their hard work. We also had new coaches and the girls were very receptive to the change and made this year incredible. I couldn’t have asked for a better year!”

Nease Pantherettes competed in Var-

sity Jazz and Varsity Gameday in the following competitions: NDA Citrus Regional, Dance Team Union Regional, and NDA Nationals in Orlando

Pantherette Head Coach Amy Case said, “This was a great competition season as we saw improvement for our scores in both categories not only at each competition as the year progressed, but also compared to last year. The past two years had seasons disrupted due to COVID, so this was a great first year back with a full competition schedule. It was also our first time competing with the Dance Team Union organization so I’m really proud of the sixth place finish there.”

Both Nease Cheerleading and Pantherettes will have youth camps over the summer to fundraise for their competition seasons. Cheer Cub Camp is July 20 – 22. Visit the Nease Cheerleading Cub Camp page on Facebook for more information. Pantherette Mini Camp is June 27 – 29. Visit NeaseDance.com for more information.

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Beaches Go Green cont. from pg. 1

Ocean Palms Elementary and creating videos has been fun and incredibly important to enhance environmental education for younger students.

Ponte Vedra High Co-President Veronica Shoff, also a junior, said one of her club goals is to educate members on how to make simple changes in daily life, seemingly small changes that add up over time.

"I want our members to grow, be able to go out and take action on their own and want to take part in the care for our environment," said Shoff, adding that the club has 300 members. "I have learned many valuable assets by being a part of Beaches Go Green. Not only leadership skills but also knowledge."

Another initiative that has been a big hit at schools, said Moquin, is the Reusable Bottles for Sports Program. The program connects community sponsors with local sports teams and schools to provide custom (with school logo) reusable brand stainless steel water bottles with the intention that athletes will use them over single-use plastic beverage bottles, said Moquin.

"We ask that the team/school make the bottles part of the required sports uniform and encourage their use as a team. In addition, we ask that the team/school provide water refilling stations for the bottles at practices and games," she said.

The goal is two-fold: save the environment and reduce plastic chemicals or "chemical disruptors" from entering the body. As of October 2021, 10,850 reusable water bottles have been implemented, according to Beaches Go Green.



Photo courtesy Anne Marie Moquin

Students from Ponte Vedra High and Nease participate in a clean-up effort.

"This program has saved a potential 1,168,128 plastic bottles from ending up in landfills. This program has really taken off as everyone sees the value in it," said Moquin.

Locally, all sports/athletes at Ponte Vedra High, Nease High and sports teams associated with the Ponte Vedra Athletic Association all participate in this program.

Lastly, Ponte Vedra High students adopted a one-mile stretch of Mickler's Landing Road to keep it clean and tidy, with Beaches Go Green providing supervision and supplies.

Shoff said the next cleanup to end the school year will take place on May 21 at Mickler's Landing Beach from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

"We would love to have everyone come out and join us for hopefully our best turnout yet," said Shoff.

Email Moquin at annemarie@gobeaches.org for more information.



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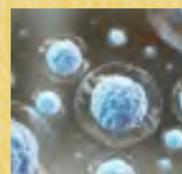
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Briefs

Mickler's Landing Beachfront Park to open in May

Mickler's Landing Beachfront Park will no longer be utilized as a staging site for FEMA Dune Enhancement Project by mid-May. Full public use of the parking lot and beach access is anticipated to be reinstated by May 20, 2022.

St. Johns County's contractor, CHC, will continue to work on the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project with proposed completion by October 2022.

Beach visitors are encouraged to exercise caution near areas of construction. Visit <http://www.sjcfll.us/coastalprojects/FEMAdunes.aspx> for more information on the project.

COA to offer "Into The Rhythm Drumming" program

"Into The Rhythm Drumming," a six-week program led by instructor Amber Hall, will be held at the Council on Aging's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center beginning Wednesday, May 4. "Into The Rhythm Drumming" is an evidence-based social and emotional learning program that is fun, interactive, therapeutic, and a positive experience. The program will be held on Wednesdays from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. from May 4 to June 8. Registration is required, and space is limited. The cost to participate is \$30 per person.

To register and for more information, contact COA's Amanda Jones at (904) 280-3233 or via email at ajones@stjohnscoa.com. THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center is located at 175 Landrum

Lane in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Newcomers of North St. Johns to host May luncheon

Newcomers of North Saint Johns will host its May luncheon on Tuesday, May 17 beginning at 11:15 a.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. in Ponte Vedra Beach. Doors will open at 11:15 a.m. During lunch, accomplished pianist Carl Grant will entertain members with a medley of soft ballads and love songs. The luncheon event will also include the installation of the club's Board of Directors for 2022 – 23.

The luncheon includes entrée choices of pot roast, vegetable lasagna or shrimp scampi with pasta. All entrées come with a house salad, warm rolls and butter and chef's choice sides. Beverages include Iced tea, coffee and water. Dessert is chef's choice and a cash bar is also available. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$30 for members with a guest price of \$35. All reservations must be received by May 6, 2022.

Contact Judy Belluso at nbkqi42@gmail.com if you are interested in a registration form for the luncheon.

Newcomers of North Saint Johns offers a wide variety of activities including smaller lunch groups, wine socials, golf, Mah Jongg, holiday parties, day trips and cultural events.

First Coast Cultural Center seeks funding for Sound Connections® Music Therapy

First Coast Cultural Center and its Sound Connections® Music Therapy program for

children with disabilities serves six public schools in St. Johns County including Cunningham Creek Elementary, Valley Ridge Academy, PVPV/Rawlings, Ocean Palms Elementary along with The Webster School and Osceola Elementary which are Title I schools.

According to Donna Guzzo, First Coast Cultural Center's executive director and CEO, it is now imperative for funding and contributions to continue the Sound Connections® Music Therapy program. Some funding has gone away due to the pandemic, and donors re-focusing their giving to homelessness or food pantries.

Since 2006, program classrooms have been donated for students in preschool to fifth grade, to participate in music therapy; however income to compensate therapists, supplies and training must be generated for continuation of services. For a reasonable fee, children and teens can work individually with a board-certified music therapist to maximize their potential through engaging music experiences. Clinic therapists provide a wide range of services including adapted piano, guitar, and ukulele lessons, among others for more than 400 children in Exceptional Student Education classrooms.

"We have reached out to several Foundations that have helped us in the past. We have reached out to the school district to inquire about grants or other possibilities to facilitate the program since we are servicing as early as Head Start. We are waiting to hear back as deadlines are approaching on July 1 to have therapists funded and placed for the 2022 – 2023



Photo courtesy First Coast Cultural Center

school year," said Guzzo. "Without additional funding, some changes will have to be made and the children will be impacted. An alternative is to hold the classes as an afterschool enrichment program for 90 minutes per class, only once a week, and have it be a self-funded program paid for by parents while hiring part time therapists for each semester. Only parents in the northwest part of St. Johns County and in Ponte Vedra Beach responded affirmatively."

A wide variety of fundraisers are held each year to support Sound Connections® Music Therapy. At a recent membership drive, guests learned about music therapy and were encouraged to donate and be part of the positive program. Also, the nonprofit's renowned Holiday Shoppes during the Christmas season and the upcoming third annual Beaches A Celebration of the Arts gala event on May 15 will help to benefit educational programs at First Coast Cultural Council.

Contact Donna Guzzo at dguzzo@firstcoastculturalcenter.org and (904) 280-0614, ext. 1201 for more information.



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