

The Weekly Challenger

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO YOUR COMMUNITY

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50¢

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Several grassroots groups organized the "Count on Us" voting rights rally in front of City Hall last Saturday, Nov. 7, to not only celebrate their hard work in this elections, but to also celebrate President-elect Joe Biden's win.

Grassroots Groups savor electoral victories

BY DEIRDRE O'LEARY
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — Hundreds of supporters gathered on the afternoon of Saturday, Nov. 7, in front of City Hall for a rally following the announcement that Vice President Joe Biden is now President-elect Joe Biden. With enough electoral college votes to defeat Trump, the originally scheduled "Count on Us" voting rights rally evolved into a celebration of democracy.

Several grassroots groups organized the event, including

the Community Development and Training Center (CDAT), Organize Florida, the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC) and Bay Area Dream Defenders.

The event was one of many around the country, coordinated to support voting rights as state by state results continued to come in following the Nov. 3 election. Volunteers handed out t-shirts, watch caps and masks with the phrase "Voters Decide."

Jabaar Edmond, senior program director for CDAT, said

the group worked tirelessly to register voters and ran "get out the vote" efforts this election season. They were also part of the local COVID relief, handing out thousands of masks and hand sanitizers through Atwater's Cafe and the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg.

CDAT also worked on increasing census forms to help direct more federal funds to the community. Edmond thanked the FRRC and Organize Florida, who, along with CDAT, registered 2,000 voters. Biden's mar-

See **GROUPS**, page 2

Residents weigh in on the south St. Petersburg 22 I-MIX Redevelopment proposal

BY NICOLE SLAUGHTER GRAHAM
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — On 22nd Street South, between First Avenue and Sixth Avenue South, large parcels of land — mostly vacant — sit unchanged, as they have for decades.

The land is currently zoned for industrial use. Unlike commercial use zoning, industrial zoning only allows for businesses such as packaging and manufacturing, which means manufacturing plants and packaging businesses are the only options for the vacant land.

Joe Furst, a private developer and the founder and managing principal of Place Projects, is hoping to change that. He recently purchased right around seven acres of the vacant land on 22nd Street South.

"Until there's a zoning change, there's no business or residential or office opportunity," he said.

The vacant land blocks off



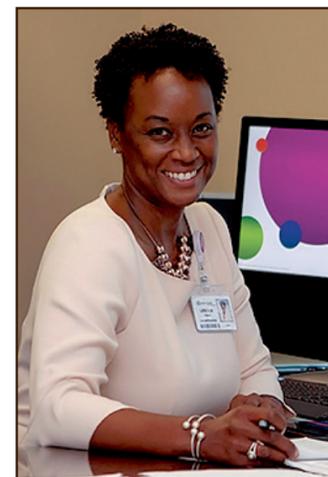
I-MIX: Industrial Mixed-Use would encourage a mixed-use, walkable destination with right-priced housing for St. Petersburg's creative workforce. The Pinellas Trail and 22nd Street South intersection would be the primary meeting and gathering plaza along the corridor.

vital access from the downtown area and the Warehouse Arts District to the Deuces, he said in Place Projects, in collaboration with local stakeholders, which include The Deuces Live and the Warehouse Arts District, presented 22 I-MIX, a proposal that includes a mix of commercial

and residential development, during a public meeting on a website created for the project. Around 100 community members—some invited by stakeholders and other concerned citizens who reached out about the project—attended the

See **PROPOSAL**, page 11

LaTasha Barnes brings a new vision to Bayfront Health



LaTasha Barnes

BY NICOLE SLAUGHTER GRAHAM
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — It's been over a year since Orlando Health made plans to buy out St. Petersburg's Bayfront Health System, but the official announcement did not reach the public until this past July, and the sale of Bayfront to Orlando Health was not completed until October.

Latasha Barnes, the CFO of Orlando Health's Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies, knew about the company's plans to acquire Bayfront, and at first, she did not think it would affect her position with the company.

"I thought I was going to stay in Orlando," she said in an interview.

But the ins and outs of acquisitions — figuring out how to integrate one institution into a larger organization — is a challenge Barnes could not pass up.

"This is what I love. I'm an auditor by background and this is the work I like to do."

Barnes comes to the table with 20 years of experience in hospital finance. Before transitioning into hospital finance, she worked as an auditor in an external auditing firm before joining an internal auditing firm at a hospital.

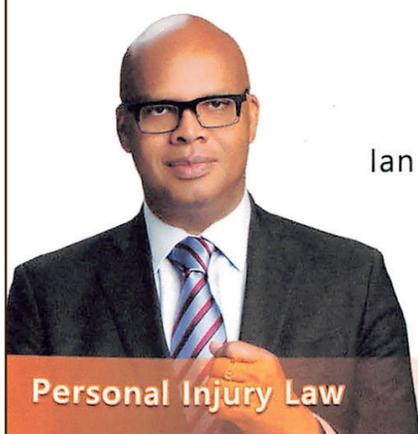
When she found her way into hospital finance, though, Barnes said she'd tapped into a clear path to make a difference in healthcare. She saw in Bayfront an opportunity to make the lives of the community better and healthier. After moving to St. Petersburg and settling into her new role, Barnes hit the ground running.

Through conversations with many team members, she and other Orlando Health executives learned that those on the frontlines felt that Bayfront had forgotten them. She said her first order of business was to ensure Bayfront's team members knew Orlando Health would stand by and support them.

"The biggest win we could have right now is just making sure we have invested, engaged, team members.

See **BARNES**, page 11

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GBY LAW
Ian Stanislaus Gómez, Esq.
2037 First Avenue North
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Grassroots Groups savor electoral victories

GROUPS, from front page

gin of victory in Pinellas County was 1,200 votes.

"We have to keep working. Stay engaged," Edmond told the crowd.

Since the passage of Florida Amendment 4, the Voting Rights Restoration for Felons Initiative in 2018, Edmond became eligible to vote, just in time to help elect his wife, Caprice Edmond, to the Pinellas County School Board.

Ashley Green of Bay Area Dream Defenders was cautiously optimistic.

"There's still a lot of work to be done in this country and community, but for just a moment, we can be happy that an out-right textbook fascist is no

longer at the head of this country's government."

Green urged attendees to work in the upcoming Georgia senate runoff elections so that Democrats will control both chambers of Congress.

Michele Rayner, newly elected to the Florida House of Representatives, was jubilant: "This is what happens when the people win — when they take what is rightfully theirs. We need to clap for Joe and Kamala, but we also need to clap for ourselves."

Richie Floyd from Fight for 15 spoke about the Amendment 2 victory, raising Florida's minimum wage to \$15 an hour by the



year 2026. "We will make sure that working people's issues are front and center from now on."

Amy Weintraub of Progress Florida also addressed the crowd. "What a great day to be an American; what a great day to be a woman in America. Those who work in social

justice fields have worked so hard. Who won today? Those who stand on the side of love, of women's rights, LGBT rights, Black Lives Matter, and for mother earth. We all won today."

Brother John Muhammad of CDAT and Organize Florida called himself a



"super voter," having voted in every election since he became eligible. He credited Edmond with encouraging him to become active in the Childs Park Civic Association back in 2012.

Muhammad praised the teams of returning citizens who knocked on 30,000 doors in Pinellas

County. "You cannot win without the Black vote. And now we as citizens have a responsibility to present our ideas to those who were elected. They call it co-governance."

To reach Deirdre O'Leary, email doleary@theweeklychallenger.com



We're here for you.

In Florida, the spread of the virus is particularly concerning in the black/African-American community; where the prevalence of diabetes, obesity and hypertension contribute to the higher mortality rate.

"Just as prevention is the key to lower cancer risk, the same holds true for lowering the risk of COVID-19— understanding how to prevent it. We have to ensure these populations are getting the necessary information to help lower their risk of the virus."

-Dr. B. Lee Green, Vice President, Diversity, Public Relations & Strategic Communications at Moffitt

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PICK OF THE WEEK!

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461
993
120

DOG DAYS

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P.O. Box 35130, St. Petersburg, FL 33705
Phone: (727) 896-2922
Fax: (727) 823-2568
Email: editor@theweeklychallenger.com
www.theweeklychallenger.com

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Authentic Colombian fare this side of the Bay

BY C. PINEDA
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Just off the 54th Avenue North exit on I-275 is the Mi Carreta Restaurant and Bakery, 2705 54th Ave. N, St. Petersburg, which is fast becoming a gathering point for the Latinx/Hispanic community and fans of Colombian cuisine in the Tampa Bay area.

Owner Marlon Yepes, who immigrated to Florida from Medellin, Colombia, 10 years ago, is dedicated to recreating the traditional dishes of his roots. Colombia boasts a variety of dishes that reflect its vast regions and diverse population.

Influences include African, indigenous and Spanish flavors. Mi Carreta caters to these regional tastes with inclusions from the best of all these influences.

Yepes shared, “I was 18 when I came here 10 years ago. I came with my mom, dad and brother and sister.”

Shortly after that,

Yepes found a job working for a cleaning company. It was there that he heard his coworkers talk about the lack of authentic Latinx restaurants in Pinellas County.

“They complained about having to go to Tampa to purchase bread and Hispanic food,” said Yepes.

His coworkers’ yearning for a taste of home sparked what was later to become the Mi Carreta restaurant and bakery. With the help of his wife, Yepes embarked on the American dream of entrepreneurship.

“It was just me and my wife, starting from scratch,” he shared.

Mi Carreta is very much a family affair. “My mom works here with me; she’s in the kitchen making the empanadas. We sell about 7,000 a week. That’s how good they are.”

Yepes recruited his cooks via social media. The baker and cooks are all originally from Colombia. “This is a way to keep

the food authentic,” he shared.

Yepes is focused on offering a welcoming experience for all visitors, especially those trying out Colombian dishes for the first time.

His advice to anyone new to Colombian dishes, “Unlike Mexican food, Colombian food is not spicy.”

Popular items include the empanadas and cheese bread from the bakery and the bandeja paisa from the dinner menu.

“I love it here; the food is so good. Bandeja paisa is what I order. I absolutely love the food; it tastes like homemade,” expressed regular diner Gloria Karasick.

Yelp, Google, and Facebook reviews speak to Yepes’s high standards in the dining world.

Along with typical Colombian dishes, Yepes has added familiar items to the menu to reach all his customers, such as hamburgers and hot dogs.



Marlon Yepes, owner of Mi Carreta Restaurant and Bakery, immigrated to Florida from Medellin, Colombia, 10 years ago, and is dedicated to recreating the traditional dishes of his roots.

The music and walls of Mi Carreta reflect the owner’s deep connection with his culture and his Afro-Colombian heritage. Showcased on the walls are portraits of Colombian gold-medalist triple jumper Caterine Ibargüen and writer and Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

An acoustic guitarist entertains on Saturday and Sunday evenings. “People use this place to come together. Mi Carreta is a place to relax and connect,” Yepes added.

There is typically a soccer match on one of the many television screens on the wall dedicated to sports.

“Whenever there is a Colombian soccer team playing, we advertise the event, and we watch the game with passion; it’s fun,” he shared.

Yepes has dreams of expanding. He hopes to get a permit to build a billiards room to offer an-



Marlon Yepes and his mother, Luz Echeverri, sell about 7,000 empanadas a week.

other place to connect. “There are few places for the community to come together and hang out.”

A fixture now in the area for six years, Yepes stated that his sales increased during the pandemic as other restaurants closed. “We stayed open doing delivery and curbside pickup.”

The restaurant took on five new employees during the pandemic to meet the demand. “All employees speak English

and Spanish,” stated Yepes.

All employees wear masks and follow all protocols.

Yepes is happy to become a destination restaurant for the Tampa Bay area. “We are happy to welcome everyone interested in what our menu has to offer.”

Longtime Lealman resident Carrick Bradley agrees: “This place hits all the right notes. It will be the best meal of your day.”



All employees of Mi Carreta Restaurant and Bakery speak both English and Spanish.



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Green Book of Tampa Bay grant builds free websites for area Black-owned businesses

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

TAMPA BAY –Green Book of Tampa Bay (GBTB) is an online resource that offers its readers information on Black-owned businesses, entrepreneurs and cultural experiences.

Recently, GBTB has expanded its goal of “Helping you put your green into Black” by enabling more businesses to promote themselves through their own website – for free.

Through a \$25,000 grant from the Pinellas Community Foundation’s Venture Philanthropy Fund (VPF), GBTB is on track to have completed

30 free websites for Black-owned businesses by the end of the year.

Recent data points out that having a web presence is more vital than ever. Surveys reveal that 55 percent of people state they will search online for reviews and recommendations to help them find outlets and make purchases. Nearly half of those reviewed will visit the company’s website before purchasing.

But according to reports, 35 percent of small businesses feel they are too small to have a website and opt not to have one. Just over a quarter of small businesses without a website list cost as the key reason for choosing to

function without one.

GBTB founders Hillary Van Dyke and Joshua Bean decided this was an area they wanted to help bridge the gap. They were able to secure the VPF grant through a partnership with the non-profit Deuces Live, Inc., a certified Florida Main Street organization. With the primary goal of encouraging the revitalization of the historic Black business district on 22nd Street South, Deuces Live supported the project, with Deuces Live acting as the grant’s fiscal sponsor.

“In March, we rebooted our website, and in the process of moving the information over to the



GBTB founders Joshua Bean and Hillary Van Dyke

new directory, we saw a lot of businesses did not have a website,” Van Dyke shared. “We decided to apply for a grant to help business owners get a website, and with that money, we were able to pair business owners with Black web developers who created their sites.”

Van Dyke said that in some cases, owners were paired with graphic designers to create logos for their business or photographers to supply photos for their new sites.

Noting that statistics reveal that 30 percent of people would rather return to a website they’ve purchased from in the past, Van Dyke added, “I would say that if we can help have that sort of an impact on people’s businesses, then we feel successful.”

She also acknowledged that the project offered GBTB valuable lessons in grant management and keeping themselves and their grantee businesses on schedule

and meeting deadlines.

“The first few sites moved along slowly, but the projects move much quicker now,” she offered.

Van Dyke said the organization hopes to continue providing websites for Black-owned businesses.

“We hope to get a grant that will allow us to provide tech support so that these sites stay functional for three years.”

To reach J.A. Jones, email jjones@theweeklychallenger.com



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BAYFRONT HEALTH

St. Petersburg

Coalition celebrates passage of \$15 minimum wage amendment

BY DEIRDRE O'LEARY
Staff writer

STATEWIDE - A coalition of Florida labor unions and progressive groups, including Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), is claiming a major victory with the passage of Amendment 2 on Nov. 3. The Amendment passed with 60.8 percent of the vote, squeaking by the required threshold of 60 percent. The minimum wage will rise from \$8.56 to \$10 per hour on Sept. 20, 2021, and increase one dollar per hour every year until it reaches \$15 in 2026.

Richie Floyd, the St. Pete-based chapter or-

ganizer for Pinellas DSA, sees this as evidence of the growing power of labor and socialism in Florida.

"Workers across the state have been pushing for this under SEIU (Service Employees International Union) and the fast-food union," he said. "They have had strikes and demonstrations for years. This victory belongs to them."

Floyd said his group endorsed the amendment before it was on the ballot and assisted with signing petitions. Later they merged with Florida Fight for 15 and SEIU. SEIU built the infrastructure for text banks and phone banks. The coal-

ition sent 3.1 million texts for both education and got out the vote efforts.

Floyd sees the victory as proof that the traditional liberal approach in Florida is missing the mark. "Left-wing, socialist values are popular in this state. Speaking to working people's issues is popular."

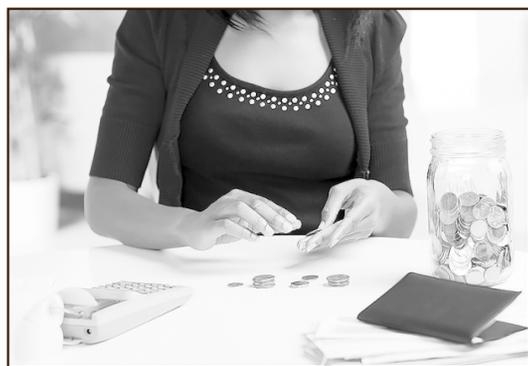
Grayson Lanza, co-chair of Orlando DSA, said, "We got over 6 million votes for raising the minimum wage, about 1.3 million more than Biden and nearly a million more than Trump."

Lanza said Florida is a poor state, with 50 percent considered working poor households. She said there was no convinc-

ing involved once the people were informed. They even converted nonvoters into voters.

According to Lanza, the Democratic Party did not engage in the campaign for Amendment 2. "The moderate centrist approach is a losing formula in Florida. It has led to lost elections."

Florida Fight for 15 coalition members include the Black social justice group Dream Defenders, progressive political organizations Common Ground and Organize Florida, the Tampa and Pinellas chapters of DSA, the domestic worker advocacy organization WeCount!, the Florida Immigrant Labor



Coalition and SEIU.

Lanza estimates \$100,000 was spent on the statewide campaign, a relatively modest budget. They did not have money for TV ads but used radio and social media to get the message out.

Tampa-based attorney

John Morgan ran ads initially to help get the amendment on the ballot. The opposition likely spent much more as they ran TV ads. Large corporations such as SeaWorld and Publix voiced their opposition.

CONNECT WITH US!



Experts In Life-Changing Care

By LaShante Keys, Empath Health Community Outreach Specialist



Dispelling hospice myths during National Hospice Month

ST. PETERSBURG – Hospice care is an important step in the care journey for people living with a serious or advanced illness.

Yet many studies have documented that African Americans and other minority older adults utilize hospice care at far lower rates than older white adults across all diagnoses and settings of care.

This is due largely to the African American community's historical distrust of the health care system and misconceptions about what hospice care is.

Suncoast Hospice, a member of Empath Health, has been Pinellas County's community hospice for more than 40

years. With that experience comes the understanding of how it can improve quality of life while honoring important cultural beliefs.

Carol Li, DO, medical director of Suncoast Hospice, offers the facts behind some common misconceptions:

Myth: Hospice is a place someone is "sent away" to or is a type of nursing home

Suncoast Hospice can provide care wherever the patient calls home.

"Hospice is not a location; however, we offer Care Centers for patients experiencing symptoms that cannot be managed in another setting," explains Dr. Li. "Some will see improvement and transition back home

after a short stay, while others, who are closer to the end of life, may pass there."

Myth: Hospice takes over caregiving from family members.

Suncoast Hospice supports both the patient and their family. The care team works together to not only provide patient care but to ensure loved ones are involved in decision-making roles, have the resources they need to continue caregiving, and are emotionally supported. This team typically consists of a physician, nurses, health aides, a spiritual care coordinator, social worker and volunteers.

Myth: A hospice referral can only come from a physician



Suncoast Hospice Medical Director Dr. Carol Li

Enrollment in hospice care doesn't need to happen through a doctor. Patients and family members can call at any time and speak to the care navigation team about needs and options for care.

"Many families have

found they could begin services earlier than expected by calling on their own," adds Dr. Li. "Earlier hospice referral is beneficial for patients and families so they can receive the most of what can be offered and improve quality of life during that time."

Myth: I won't be able to afford hospice care

As a community hospice, it is the mission of Suncoast Hospice to make sure everyone in our community needing hospice care receives it. Our services are covered by Medicare, Medicaid, managed care, private health insurance and private pay. Through the community's generous support to Suncoast Hos-

pice Foundation, we can help cover care and other essential needs for those having difficulty paying.

Myth: Hospice requires you to forgo all hospitalizations

Early treatment in the home or in one of our Care Centers can reduce the need for hospitalization. The hospice approach focuses on easing symptoms and creating support for the best quality of life. Patients receiving hospice services are still able to go to the hospital for care if needed.

If you or a loved one is interested in how Suncoast Hospice could improve quality of life, visit SuncoastHospice.org or call (727) 467-7423, day or night, to speak with our care navigation team.

WE ENCOURAGE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!

How visible or invisible is the Latinx community?

BY C. PINEDA
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – The Hispanic/Latinx community was recently invited to attend the ¿y dónde está mi gente? LatinxVisible online event sponsored by the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg and organized by the Estrategia Group on Oct. 24 via Zoom.

According to the event organizers, their goal is to open the Latinx community to conversations on achieving health equity and eradicating inequality, a goal of the Foundation since its inception five years ago.

The Foundation has fast become a leader in confronting inequity issues the local community faces in housing, education, medical care, food, employment and wealth-building.

Carl R. Lavender, Jr., chief equity officer of the Foundation, shared the need for a race equity movement to build health equity.

"We cannot advance race equity in a smart way

unless we have our Latin brothers and sisters cocreating plans with us," said Lavender.

The term Latinx is being used to identify people with origins in Latin America. The Latinx label is growing in popularity by organizers and the media in the United States, although it is not widely used by Latino/Latina/Hispanic individuals to self-identify.

The event commenced with upbeat Latin rhythms. There were introductions by Lavender, Kelly Kirschner of Eckerd College and Randall H. Russell, CEO of the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg.

Host, Jessica Estévez of the Estrategia Group, welcomed all participants with energy and music.

"I want to invite you all to be listening for what helps you feel seen and heard," Estévez said to the audience. She invited each participant to share what makes them feel valued and gives them a sense of belonging.

The Latinx community

is one of the fastest-growing populations in the US, according to Pew Research Center. Estévez commented on the community's need to come together to become thought partners in conversations regarding equity.

Notable speakers included the keynote, Paul Ortiz, professor of history at the University of Florida. He is the author of An African American and Latinx History of the United States.

Ortiz highlighted the Latinx community's commonalities, such as a strong belief in family, mutual aid, cooperation, and solidarity. He connected Latinx history directly to African-American history.

In his conversation, Ortiz talked of the alliances between the indigenous peoples and African Americans in their shared resistance against enslavement. Ortiz's history lesson included the impact of the Haitian and Mexican revolutions in the fight against brutalization by European coloniz-



Carl Lavender

ers. He touched upon Florida Statute 1003.42 that states Florida public schools "shall teach efficiently and faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the highest standards... the history of African Americans."

Ortiz stressed the importance of funding this statute to understand our ancestors' struggles as we push for an anti-racist curriculum and racial equity in our schools.

"The old narrative... is



Jessica Estévez

not good enough anymore," said Ortiz.

The event continued with presentations discussing the disparity in education, immigration, and health.

Rita Vasquez of Pinellas County Schools gave insight into education. Guadalupe Pimentel of the Indianapolis Foundation spoke on immigration, and Abraham Salina Miranda of USF Health talked about health disparity in the Latinx community.

"I know there are lots

of points of pride in our community, and I want to elevate that," said Estévez.

Estévez invites the public to stay engaged to increase and fuel the voices of the Latinx community to "eradicate inequality, achieve health equity and improve population health."

The entire event is now available to view online in English and Spanish.

To reach C. Pineda, email cpineda@theweeklychallenger.com

CHURCH NEWS



955 20th Street South • St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 894-4311
Email: info@mzprogressive.org
Website: www.mzprogressive.org

Sunday Worship Services.....7:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School.....9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Mid-Day Bible StudyNoon - 12:30 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study6:30 p.m.
Youth Chapel Services - 921 20th Street South
Sunday Worship Service10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Small Group Bible Study6:30 p.m.

Mission Statement:
*Impact the world by equipping believers
to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

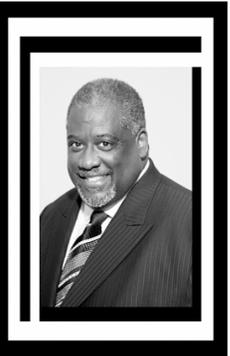


Rev. Louis M. Murphy Sr.
Senior Pastor

First Baptist Institutional Church
3144 Third Avenue South,
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Phone: 727-323-7518

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Praise Time 10:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Tuesday Night Live -
Prayer Service & Bible Study 7 p.m.

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REV. DR. WAYNE G. THOMPSON,
PASTOR

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Telephone (727) 327-0554 • Fax (727) 327-0240
E-mail: bchurch5@tampabay.rr.com Web site: www.bmmbc.org

Sunday Worship Service10:15 a.m.
Sunday School9:00 a.m.
Teen Summit (Wednesday)7:00 p.m.
Bible Study (Wednesday)7:00 p.m.



Rev. Rickey L. Houston,
Pastor

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BETHEL COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH
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Rev. Dr. Manuel L. Sykes

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Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.
Mid-Week Worship: Wednesday 7:00 p.m.



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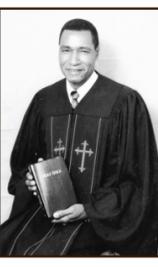
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Communion and Healing Service 11:00 a.m. Tuesdays

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MATTHEW 28:18-20, JOHN 15:4-5



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SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL 9:30AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 10:45AM
TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY 7:00PM

First Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church
1121 22nd Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 327-8708

Sunday Worship Services 8:00 and 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Prayer Meeting (Tuesday)6:00 p.m.
Bible Study (Tuesday)7:00 p.m.
Baptist Training Union (Sunday) ..4:00 p.m.

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www.victorychristiancenterchurch.org



Donn & Jean
Freshler

Schedule of Services
Sunday Worship*
10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study* -7:00 p.m.
Friday Prayer -7:00 p.m.
Intercessory Prayer - 9:00 a.m.
(except Wednesdays)

Victory Christian Center is a Word of Faith Church.
For more information about the other services and
ministries at Victory Christian Center, please call (727) 321-0911.
*Nursery and Youth Services Available

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Bro. Robert Smith

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Sunday Morning Worship9:45 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship6:00 p.m.
Ladies Bible Class Monday7:00 p.m.
Monday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Morning Bible Class10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.

UNITY
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CHURCH

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 A.M. *

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St. Petersburg, FL 33712
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INSPIRATIONS

BY DIERDRE DOWNING-JACKSON

Joy and Peace

When you allow joy and peace to be taken from you; Your life seems to stand still.

Your sadness results in lies that are told; and you pray for revelation of GOD’s will.

You see GOD gave each of us a choice to make; and HE leaves it in our hands:

To be destroyed by the enemy’s prowess or to decide gently to take our Master’s hand.

GOD’s wisdom taken from HIS Word says, NO weapon will prosper against us;

When we stand on HIS Word and hold on to our faith; there is nothing that is impossible for us.

Decide to let no one, no circumstances and nothing, rob you of your joy in CHRIST JESUS. Always remember ‘... the joy of the LORD is your strength’.

The peace of our GOD will rest upon you, as you press toward your mark in CHRIST JESUS; Just remember to pray and that in HIS presence, you can go to any length.

Be willing to speak the truth in love and always be obedient to HIS call.

Keep trusting and know that our Heavenly Father will catch you when you fall.

The peace of GOD will hold you steady ; And HIS joy for you will be restored.

Your choice to follow JESUS CHRIST, will restore your peace and your joy .

Our GOD in heaven will forever equip you to handle every challenge that this life will hold.

Choose to walk by faith and trust in HIM; and your enemies will be destroyed.

Walk by faith and show them all, that your peace and joy no one can take.

Love unconditionally and be a blessing to all; restoration of your joy and peace in CHRIST JESUS will never break.

May the joy and peace of GOD be with you.”

AMEN

“...For the joy of the LORD is your strength.”
Nehemiah 8:10 KJV

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through CHRIST JESUS.”



CHURCH NEWS

ST. MARK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
 1301 - 37th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL
 (727) 321-6631 • www.stmarkch.org

Schedule of Services

Church School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Baptist Training Union..... 5:00 p.m.
Prayer Meeting and Bible Study
Wednesday 7:00 p.m.



Rev. Brian K. Brown

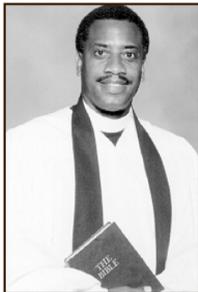
THE ROCK OF JESUS MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SERVICES/WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

10:30 a.m. Worship Service
 9:00 a.m. Breakfast (First Sunday only)
 9:30 a.m. Sunday School (First Sunday Only)
 Sunday School 9:15 a.m. / Devotion 10:15 a.m.
 Praise & Worship 10:20 a.m. / Worship Services 10:30 a.m.
 Saints of Prayer - Monday 12:00 noon
 Weekly Bible Study - Tuesday 6:30 p.m.
 Adult Choir Rehearsals - Thursday 6:30 p.m.

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 Email: fmbc3300@verizon.net



Dr. John A. Evans, Pastor

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

Sunday Worship7:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
 Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
 WednesdayNoonday Wednesday in the Word and Bread of Life
 7:00 p.m. Prayer and Wednesday in the Word
 7:00 p.m. Youth Enrichment

Our Mission: Friendship Missionary Baptist Church is a family of believers in Christ, reaching out to the world, preaching the gospel to the unsaved and teaching the saved to serve by demonstrating the Love of Christ.

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DR. DORAL R. PULLEY
 Spiritual Leader Today's Church

CHURCH NEWS



Pastor's Corner

BY REV. DR. DORAL R. PULLEY,
 SPIRITUAL LEADER
 TODAY'S CHURCH Tampa Bay

Early Morning Fresh Anointing Prayer

"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me (Proverbs 8:17)."

I became a morning person during my freshman year at Morgan State University. As a graduation requirement, I did my pastoral internship at the United Pentecostal Miracle Church under the auspices of Bishop Joseph M. Showell. Bishop Showell introduced me to the idea of early morning prayer. He, along with a group of about ten others, went to the church for prayer every Wednesday at 6:00 am.

I was not used to waking up so early, so it was a struggle to be on time for prayer. To be prompt for prayer on Wednesdays and give God the first fruits of my day, I learned to reorder my Tuesday nights. Around 9:30 pm, I started winding down, getting my clothes ready for

the next day, and preparing for bed. By 10:00 pm, it was lights out. This event became the cornerstone of my prayer life.

I extended early morning prayer from just Wednesdays to every day. God and I had an appointment to have a conversation every day at 6:00 am. This intimacy produced daily morning messages on social media: The Daily Download, Mental Note, and The One Minute Oneness. The Bible says in Psalm 127:2, "he gives his beloved sleep."

In addition to being on time for prayer, my body benefitted from getting the proper rest that it needed. 8 Self-Care Strategies form the acronym D.I.R.E.C.T.O.R.* The third strategy is Rest, which is represented by the first "R." When you get the rest that you need, your body functions at its optimum, and you do

things in a more excellent, effective, and efficient manner.

*We demonstrate our love for ourselves through 8 Self-Care Strategies.

Digestion (the foods and beverages we consume) Romans 14:2-4

Intimacy (knowing and being known) Ecclesiastes 4:8-10

Rest (getting the sleep we need to function at our optimal) - Psalm 127:2

Exercise (physical movement, activity) - 1 Timothy 4:8-5

Check-ups (going to doctors and dentists) Jeremiah 8:21-22, Matthew 9:12

Treat Yourself (rewarding ourselves for our progress) Ecclesiastes 9:7

Outward Appearance (hygiene and looking our best) 1 Samuel 16:7, Matthew 5:16

Recreation (having fun, entertainment, vacations) Proverbs 17:22

St. Mark M.B.C.

What will you remember?

Psalm 20

The Psalmist of Psalm 20 suggests in verse 7 that some put their trust in chariots and horses. But as believers our faith and trust are in the Lord our God. Chariots and horses suggest where we are in our society today (government and gain). The Psalmist reminds the church that we are to remember God.

Using Psalm 20, Rev. Brian K Brown, senior pastor of St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, pointed out things we ought to remember.

Verse 1 lets us know we should remember who hears our voice. While elected officers may not hear our voice there is one who sits higher will hear our cries. There are times others can't hear us but there's never a time God does not hear us.

The second point of remembrance coming from verse 2 is remember who helps our voids. The text reveals that we are all in need of good defenses against the cracks and holes in us

and that wherever there's a crack or void, God will send help. All of us have things we can't cover (voids). God will send from His presence what we need in our times of voids. God can defend what we can't think of. What voids are in our lives (humanity, wellness, brotherly love, unity)? No matter how we try to balance the covering we need, we can't do it, but God covers us with His mercy and grace. What we can't handle, do or figure out God can work out.

The final point came from verses 7 and 8, where again the Psalmist says some trust in chariots, but they turn to rust, and horses that become lame. Though the chariots and horses fail God does not, so we remember who hands us victory. It will not come from the White House, the State House or our house. God gives victory.

We remember Calvary where it looked bad, but three days after Jesus died, He got up from the grave. We may be down, but God will



Rev. Brian K. Brown,
 Pastor

pick us up and He alone will give victory. Our hope should not be in elected official but in Jehovah our God who will give us victory. We are not the one who gives victory for our lives. Victory comes because of our victorious God who exercises victoriously in our lives.

While it's time to vote and let our voice be heard, more importantly it's time to let our voices be heard by the one who matters the most, Jehovah God who is ready to talk to us and hear us.

Rev. Brian K. Brown is the pastor of St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church. Please join our live streaming service on YouTube @ St Mark MBC each Sunday @ 10:45 and Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.



EARLY MORNING FRESH Anointing Prayer



Dr. Doral R. Pulley
 HOST

Minister Mother Renet Dennard Cole
 COHOST

WEDNESDAYS 7:05 AM EST

Type in your prayer requests in the comment section and we will agree with you in prayer (Matthew 18:18-20)

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A Prayer Vigil

FOR THE CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

THE STEPS OF THE ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT
 1301 - 1st Avenue North
 St. Petersburg, Florida 33705

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21
 9 AM - 10 AM EST

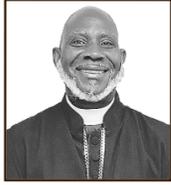
Theme:

CAN YOU NOT PRAY WITH ME ONE HOUR
 (Matthew 26:40)?

OUR GOAL

60 SPIRITUAL LEADERS - BUSINESS CASUAL - EACH PRAYING 1 MINUTE - OR 30 FOR 2 MINUTES

RSVP with your FULL NAME & MINISTRY NAME ON FACEBOOK
 The Gathering of the Pastors FB GROUP



Breaking the Cycle

REV. DR. ROBERT L. HARRISON, PH.D.
Men of S.T.E.E.L. Ministries
www.menofsteelministries.com

No matter what, Jesus is omnipotent
Praise the Lord.

At the time of this writing, we still do not have our 46th president.

It should come as no surprise based on the days and weeks leading up to Nov. 3, and from what is being said, it's going to take some time even if one of them hits 270 electoral votes.

Be that as it may, congrats to one of my wife's besties, Sis. Rene Flowers on winning her race. It wasn't a mystery, just a prolonged inevitability. We wish you much success as you have some huge shoes to fill following Bro. Ken. With Jesus at the forefront, it will be a breeze.

I want to ask a few questions and remember, as I always do, I allow the Spirit of God to lead and guide my writing.

Back during the days of prohibition, two prominent groups ran this country, so to speak: the Mafia and the KKK. Both groups had political affiliations, one democratic and the other republican. The question is, do you know which is which, still to this day?

The next question is for those professing to be Christians, born-again believers, saints, or whatever title you are professing to be. Note, each of the aforementioned is NOT interchangeable; there are specific differences.

Did you know which group, democrat or republican, have violated several of God's laws, commandments, Word? Some of these laws that are being violated back in the day were met with death. I understand law versus grace, so don't go there.

There are very specific things that God stated were things that He hated and there is no evidence this has changed. The only justification that some use today is that we are now in the dispensation of grace, and it does not matter. This could not be further from the truth and could be quite deadly because it gives people a

false sense of safety and protection against God's wrath.

Grace is defined by many as God's unmerited favor, or in layman's terms, God gives us something we didn't earn or couldn't earn even if we wanted to.

The misrepresentation is this: grace allows you to live your lives however you want without consequences no matter how wicked, evil, ungodly, unjust, filthy and unrighteous it may be.

Grace is a stay of execution from the punishment or penalty of committing sinful acts and not repenting of them. We all know the scriptures say that the wages of sin, or the reward of committing a sinful act, is death, so grace affords the sinner or person guilty of committing the act the opportunity to repent, turn from their sinful ways and start to obey and follow Jesus.

Watered-down, sugar-coated, false teachings that many of these jelly back religious leaders have polluted the pulpits across America have misled the people and created a tsunami of sin the likes we have never seen nor thought would ever happen in our lifetime.

This tsunami of sin is equivalent to those back in Noah's days and in the days of Sodom. Question, what did God do back then, and why do you think He decided just to let it all "slide" and turn a blind eye to it all?

One thing is sure, while God has extended grace for an undetermined amount of time, He has not suspended your sentence if you are choosing not to repent and are choosing to pile on the list of sinful acts, thoughts and beliefs.

Why are you going to church still and reading your holy scriptures if there are no more consequences for living this lawless, anything goes as long as I'm happy lifestyle? Oh right, my bad, there are some golden nuggets for obtaining wealth and riches in there.

Well, while this is true,

riddle me this Batman, have you read the account of Lazarus, the beggar, and the rich man who wouldn't even let Lazarus eat the crumbs that fell off his table in the Book of Luke 16. Whose end was victorious and whose was, well, you know?

Revelation is the culmination of mankind's interaction with Jesus Christ and the result of that interaction. If grace sums it all up and there is no consequence for living however you want, explain to me this passage that's being spoken to us by Jesus Christ Himself only ten scriptures before this holy bookends.

Revelation 22:11-14

11 Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy (vile, impure), still be filthy; and the one who is righteous (just, upright), still be righteous; and the one who is holy, still be holy."

12 "Behold, I (Jesus) am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to each one according to the merit of his deeds (earthly works, faithfulness). 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End [the Eternal One]."

14 Blessed (happy, prosperous, to be admired) are those who wash their robes [in the blood of Christ by believing and trusting in Him—the righteous who do His commandments], so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs [the godless, the impure, those of low moral character] and the sorcerers [with their intoxicating drugs, and magic arts], and the immoral persons [the perverted, the molesters, and the adulterers], and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying (deception, cheating).

Till next week,
Blessings,
Bishop Dr. Robert L. Harrison, Ph.D., DD

92-year-old serves as Roll to the Polls grand marshal

ST. PETERSBURG — During the recent Roll to the Polls initiative to Get Out the Vote, 92-year-old Gladys Gist was named the parade's grand marshal. Gist, a beloved member of the St. Petersburg Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., was honored as not only the most senior female member of the motorcade but also a representative of the sorority's legacy as the only African-American female group to participate in the 1913 Women's Suffrage Parade in Washington, D.C.

The women of Delta were relegated to the back of the march; how-



ever, not deterred, they marched anyway. During St. Petersburg's parade for democracy, the Carter G. Woodson African American Museum's leadership invited Gist and members of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. to the front of the line.

She was presented a

bouquet of crimson and cream roses by the museum's chair, Frechette Bradley, and was escorted to a red and white 1964 Mustang convertible where she followed Mayor Rick Kriseman, leading the way with more than 200 other parade entries.

Class of 2021: PCS want to know your future plans

PINELLAS COUNTY — Pinellas County Schools wants to assist graduating seniors make their next move after high school. In a few months, this school year will come to an end, and seniors will transition to another chapter in their lives.

They will either decide to become a college or technical career student, military enlistee or employee. The district wants to make sure that this decision is one that



will bring self-fulfillment and happiness.

To assist with making post-secondary plans, Pinellas County Schools

has provided a brief survey that will allow the district to help graduating seniors find the right resources to pursue their goals after graduation.

Seniors, please select from the list below what best describes your plans 90 days after graduating from high school. Return your answer, along with a way that we can contact you to Dr. Lewis Brinson, the district's Minority Achievement Officer. He can be reached via email at brinsonle@pcsb.org or by mail, P.O. Box 2942, Largo, FL 33779-2942.

1. Enrolled in college
2. Enrolled in a career or technical school
3. Enlisted into a branch of the military
4. Employed full-time
5. Other



REV. DR. ROBERT L. HARRISON, PhD
Senior Pastor
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CHURCH OF GOD & TRUE HOLINESS, INTL.
www.cogath.org
727.265.6437 pastorrobbharrison@gmail.com

3rd Annual

Caring for the Caregiver

Virtual Event

KEY NOTE SPEAKER: ELDER DR. BARBARA WILLIAMS

WHEN: FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2020
9:30 am-11:15 am

WHERE: ZOOM MEETING ID: 489 007 0177
PASSCODE: 101820 DIAL IN: 1 646 558 8656

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BUILDING UNITY IN OUR COMMUNITY
CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

- SATURDAY, NOV. 14, 2020
- MANGROVE BAY GOLF COURSE,
- 875 62ND AVE NE, ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33702
- 727.893.7800 TEE TIME 11AM REGISTRATION STARTS AT 9:00 AM
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- \$85.00 INCLUDES CART, GREEN FEES, GOODIE BAG
- GET A HOLE-IN-ONE WIN A 2020 BUICK!
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3 TIME GOLF HOFER
MR. HERBERT DIXON

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Fostering diversity and inclusion in challenging times

BY REV. WATSON HAYNES
President & CEO, PCUL

ST. PETERSBURG – The unpredictable and unprecedented difficulties of this year have brought unsettling changes to our individual lives and to organizations like the Pinellas County Urban League (PCUL)

This year will always be remembered as the year of the pandemic, a time of pain and death, a renewed struggle for racial justice and one of financial hardship. For the PCUL, this confluence of events has increased demand for our services, with requests for help soaring 400 percent.

Our annual fundraiser, the Equal Opportunity Dinner, had to be a virtual event this year. During the Oct. 29 program, we announced the launch of an emergency fund to raise a \$250,000 by the end of the year. The funds will allow us to continue to help the many people in Pinellas County who come to us in desperate need.

We were very fortunate to have a number of leaders and supporters at our virtual event. Our keynote speaker was Marc Morial, the National Urban League's dynamic president and former New Orleans mayor. His message was both important and inspiring.

He spoke of the four pandemics engulfing our nation: the coronavirus, the economy that has cost people their jobs and homes, the fight for racial justice and a crisis of the

American soul. Morial stated the crisis of the American spirit and morality "envelopes and intertwines" the other pandemics "like one of those wicked vines that take over your garden that you just can't get rid of."

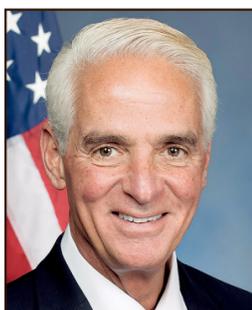
President Morial also said that battling the other three pandemics will be made more difficult without confronting the nation's crisis of its soul. He reminded us that moments such as these bring people together and that the Urban League is a leadership organization that brings people together to address the problems that face the community.

What does it mean to take to build a nation "that is truly one for all," he asked, a nation where equity, decency, tolerance, opportunity and collective responsibility are themes and values that we embrace and elevate.

"We can commit to do what we can to build the biggest and strongest coalitions we can command to attack these challenges," he urged.

He dispenses similar wisdom in his bestselling book, "The Gumbo Coalition: 10 Leadership Lessons That Help You Inspire, Unite and Achieve." In a brief Q&A session, Morial spoke of learning about leadership from people from all walks of life and of harnessing the help of grassroots organizations, faith communities and all levels of government.

He urged us to commit to be transformational



U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist

agents and praised Urban League affiliates for quickly pivoting to respond to the nation's current crisis.

I was proud that our own Ailyn Alvarez-Perez of NULITES, Urban League's youth program, introduced Morial.

Dr. Germaine Smith-Baugh, president and CEO of the Urban League of Broward County, represented the Florida consortium of Urban League affiliates spread over 19 counties. She gave a brief but stirring talk about our commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion during these difficult times. That means, she said, challenging outside organizations to be part of the effort.

In Pinellas County, the Urban League is pleased that it can count on the support of the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg for such commitment. Randy Russell, founding president and CEO of the Foundation, told our virtual audience that he was participating in our Equal Opportunity Dinner not as a funder, but as a partner.

He spoke of the Foundation's goal of making



St. Petersburg City Council member Deborah Figgs-Sanders

Pinellas County the most anti-racist county in the nation. To that end, he made a significant announcement. The Foundation is launching the Pinellas Race Equity Leadership Council. I am one of the — for now — 22 to 23 inaugural members of this groundbreaking endeavor.

"A revolution means a change in approach," Russell said. "It's not scary. It's right."

There was other news. Urban League board member Joe Bourdow spoke about the emergency fundraiser. He reminded us of the disproportionate effect of the coronavirus on Black Pinellas County residents and of the enormous increase in requests for help.

Bourdow told the audience that the PCUL board, headed by chair Linda Marcelli, has begun to tell the Urban League story — about its job training, food, health, youth, housing and other programs — to win new supporters for its work. More than 120 informa-



Former Pinellas County Commissioner Ken Welch



State Sen. Darryl Rouson

tional packages have already been mailed to potential benefactors.

Jade Spradley, our director of special projects, also spoke about the new fundraising campaign, HH2H (Here's How to Help). Please go to our website at www.pcul.org or <https://give.classy.org/HH2H> to learn how to participate.

I am thankful for the support we received for our virtual Equal Opportunity Dinner program, which was moderated by St. Petersburg City Council member Deborah Figgs-Sanders. St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman, outgoing Pinellas



St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman



Rev. Watson Haynes

County Commissioner Ken Welch, U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist, State Sen. Darryl Rouson and Carl Lavender, chief equity officer for the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg, all participated.

My prayer that night was that the Pinellas County Urban League would be the hands and feet of Jesus to help those in need and that we would convey a message of hope. I also prayed that God would help us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to look out for others.

It's a prayer I continue to offer today, not only for the Urban League but for all people in our nation.

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Shatavia Buchanan is Assistant Branch Manager for Achieva's Palm Harbor branch where she has worked for the past year. Buchanan leverages her more than 20 years of experience working with credit unions to make sure that the operations of the branch are running smoothly and providing members with VIP service.

Contact Shatavia by calling 813.448.2799 or by emailing sbuchanan@achievacu.com

- 3. Get used to checking your account, regularly.**
Checking your account regularly to see your balance is at the heart of managing your finances. Technology has made spending money easier, but not necessarily managing your money. "Once kids see their money and how quick it can go, they stop spending it as freely," Buchanan says. "It teaches independence."
- 4. Treat this as the foundation for your financial future.**
Establishing credit is not as easy to start these days as it once was, so consider something like a credit card to build your credit. "Your credit score is one of the most important numbers in your personal finances as you get older," Buchanan says. "Achieva's 'credit builder' credit card allows a responsible teen to become accustomed to what having a credit card means and allows them to learn good habits."

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SPC to enhance health education programs to combat nursing shortage

PINELLAS COUNTY—A transformational gift from The Hough Family Foundation has provided St. Petersburg College with the seed funding needed to grow its nursing, certified clinical medical assistant (CMA) and patient care technician (PCT) programs.

The transformational gift will be used to expand SPC's nursing simulation lab and provide additional training equipment and faculty support for the CMA and PCT programs.

"Bill and Hazel Hough were true philanthropists who worked tirelessly for their community. Longtime supporters of St. Petersburg College, they helped found our performance venue gem - The Palladium - and improved the lives of many students over the years," said SPC President Tonjua Williams. "We miss them terribly, but their spirits live on through their foundation and their beloved children. We are grateful beyond measure for this generous gift, which will help promote equity and excellence in education for our students and access to high-quality healthcare professionals for our community."

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, by 2026, there is a projected 21 percent job growth for nurses in Florida. With the increase of COVID-19 testing and the high demand for healthcare workers even before the pandemic, employers are in even greater need of trained medical assistants at outpatient clinics and urgent care centers.

To combat these healthcare needs, SPC is prepared to greatly increase the number of nursing students through simulation expansion.

"The College of Nursing is so honored and grateful for the generous gift by the Hough family to our frontline workers," said SPC Dean of Nursing Louisiana Louis. "Words cannot express the difference this expansion will make in providing the additional space to educate student nurses while making a difference in our community."

Expanding SPC's simulation lab will:

- Offer an alternative learning environment needed due to decreasing hospital time and space
- Provide a safe, non-threatening learning environment for students to demonstrate their clinical judgment and critical thinking abilities
- Allow faculty to use a controlled environment to create or choose scenarios to meet specific learning objectives without risk to an actual patient

SPC also offers a variety of healthcare programs to help students advance their skill sets. The expansion of workforce institute programs will include:

- Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CMA)
- Patient Care Tech (PCT)
- Cath Lab Tech

"Many people have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. We wanted to grow the capacity of the CMA



training by doubling the number of students who complete the 18-week training and then can enter the medical field immediately," said Dr. Susan Hough Henry, President of Hough Family Foundation, Inc. "SPC is very responsive to the needs of its students, and thoroughly prepares them to enter the workforce."

Michael Ramsey, SPC Dean of Workforce, said the donation will allow students to pursue their passion for helping others while providing a pipeline of skilled workers for area healthcare facilities.

"We are extremely thankful for this gift from the Hough Family Foundation. Their generosity will enable us to launch a new Patient Care Technician program and expand our Certified Clinical Medical Assistant program at the SPC Midtown Center," Ramsey said. "These programs will help to open the door to a career in the healthcare field to the members of this community."

To learn more about SPC's health education programs, visit spcollege.edu/health.

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Civic groups join together to save the historic Melrose Clubhouse

BY DEIRDRE O'LEARY
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — The historic Melrose Clubhouse was the subject of last month's virtual "Community Conversation" sponsored by Tombolo Books. Event organizers and speakers included Gwendolyn Reese, president of the African American Heritage Association of St. Petersburg, Veatrice Farrell, executive director of Deuces Live Redevelopment Corp. and Monica Kile, local historian and former executive director of Preserve the Burg.

The Melrose Clubhouse was dedicated in 1942 at the height of the Jim Crow area by a group of African-American women, including prominent civic leaders Fannye A. Ponder and Olive B. McLin. It served as a meeting place for several groups such as a women's club, a war nursery, the Boy and Girl Scouts, the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women and the Colored YMCA.

The historic building

currently is on the campus of Melrose Elementary School and is owned by the Pinellas County School Board. Details of the purchase are not shown on the Pinellas County Property Appraiser website. Its future is uncertain, as the School Board recently considered tearing it down.

The clubhouse is one of 12 historic buildings in south St. Pete and received historic designation by the city in 1993. It is one of three buildings of interest to the African-American community outside the 22nd Street corridor to receive this designation. The others include the Bethel AME Church and the Fannye A. Ponder Council House.

African-American landmarks typically hold cultural relevance rather than notable architectural features.

"It's less about the style of architecture oftentimes than it is about who it's associated with or what happened there," explained Kile. "You'll find that a lot in Black commu-

nities because there wasn't necessarily always the money to build these big grand style buildings that you might see in white communities, and so you get a lot more vernacular architecture."

The area Blacks were allowed to live expanded slowly in St. Petersburg. In 1920, African Americans lived in Methodist Town, Gas Plant, and Pepper town, all north of Fifth Avenue South. Pepper Town was near the railroad and was a convenient place for railroad workers to live.

By 1930, the segregated area extended south of Fifth Avenue to include the Manhattan Casino and Mound Park Hospital.

In 1931, the city codified the segregated residential Black area to be contained within Sixth Avenue and 15th Avenue South, and between 31st Street and 18th Street. Residential segregation became law.

By 1951, the Black residential community grew around the 22nd Street business district. A Black dentist, Dr. Robert Swain, broke the 15th Avenue boundary when he established his dental office and other buildings just over the legal line. He sued the city in 1954 and won the right to have his practice there.

Regarding the future of the Melrose Clubhouse, the Pinellas County School Board has to go through a

formal process to demolish it, according to Reese. It must submit a request to the City Commission for Planning and Preservation, where Reese holds a seat. She said this process could be influenced by the community coming out in large numbers to city council meetings.

Reese added that the school board stepped back from demolishing the building currently but is not speaking to community representatives about its plans. She saw architectural renderings that modify the outside of the building. Reese said a Freedom of Information Act request revealed that someone was given a contract to curate the history of the Melrose Clubhouse building.

"It was really one of the only places where you could have large group meetings or activities in the Black community, and the fact that it is now threatened, that there is any discussion of demolishing it to me is just a travesty."

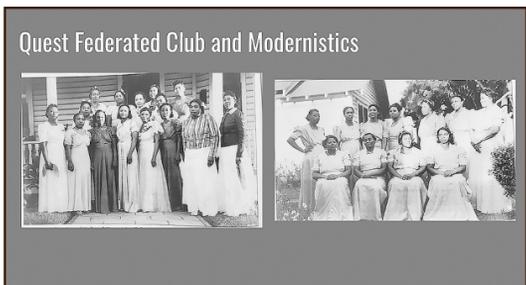
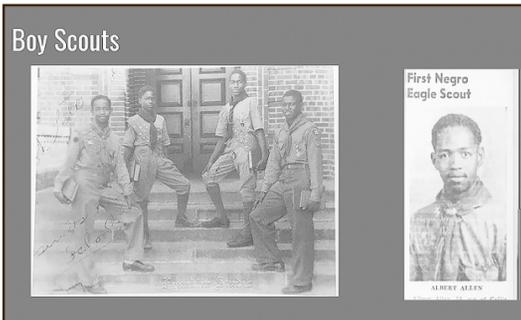
Farrell thinks the community should also communicate directly to the school board. This past February, representatives of Deuces Live spoke at a school board meeting, urging them to preserve the clubhouse.

The presentation included a slide show featuring several African-American historic buildings in St. Peters-



The historic Melrose Clubhouse is owned by the Pinellas County School Board and sits on the grounds of Melrose Elementary School. The future of this important piece of Black history is in danger of being demolished.

Fannye A. Ponder Council House - 1835 9th Ave S



burg. The entire virtual event can be viewed on Tombolo Books' Facebook page.

Local historical landmarks associated with African-American history in St. Pete

- Bethel AME, 912 3rd Avenue N
- Fannye A. Ponder Council House site, 1835 9th Ave S
- Mercy Hospital, 1344 22nd St S
- Manhattan Casino, 642 22nd St S
- Southside Junior High, 1701 10th St S
- Dr. Robert Swain Dental Office, 1501 22nd St S
- Swain Apartments, 1511 22nd St S
- Trinity Presbyterian Church / Happy Worker's Day Nursery, 902 19th St S
- Royal Theater, 1011 22nd St S
- Jordan Elementary

School, 2392 9th Ave S

- Jennie Hall Pool Complex, 2650 10th Ave S
- Merriwether Building, 951-63 22nd St S (demolished in a storm)
- Washington-Harden Grocery, 901-03 22nd St S
- Moure Building, 909-13 22nd St S

Upcoming Community Conversations:

Nov. 11 at 6:30 p.m. EST - The Boston brothers' "Black Pioneers of the Sunshine City" documentary and discussion (90 minutes)

Dec. 16 at 6:30 p.m. EST - Pinellas Remembers: The Lynching Memorial Dedication

Jan. 20 at 6:30 p.m. EST - A Conversation with Dr. Charles Dew, author of "The Making of a Racist"

To reach Deirdre O'Leary, email doleary@theweeklychallenger.com

LaTasha Barnes brings a new vision to Bayfront Health

BARNES, from front page

Those are the people who are taking care of our community," she stated. "Our patients need to know we're here for them, and that starts with engaged, passionate and happy team members."

A cognizant CFO, she said, knows that everything from quality to compliance and nursing care to maintenance is tied to the bottom line.

"I like to tell my managers I'm not your typical CFO. I understand that with-

out the mission, there is no margin. The sky is the limit when that foundation is set, and that culture is in place."

This unique perspective is what she plans to bring to Bayfront to revitalize the hospital's legacy, and that starts with team members and company morale.

Additionally, Barnes said Orlando Health is invested in civic engagement and is currently seeking ways to engage with the community.

"We're planning on connecting with the community

through the St. Pete Downtown Partnership, the Economic Development Council and the Chamber of Commerce to start."

She said community engagement would allow Orlando Health to figure out what the community needs in a hospital and believes Bayfront is in a unique position to create a culture of more equitable health within the community.

"Typically, we don't have to go looking for patients, but I think we have an op-

portunity to take stock of what's happening in our community and figure out what needs some extra attention," she said. "We need to figure out where can we focus on prevention and wellness in the community."

Everything takes time, but she said Orlando Health is fully committed to long-term, overall community health.

"We're just really excited to be here, Barnes averred. "We're looking forward to being a positive impact on



the community. We're looking forward to making our presence known. We want everyone to know that this is the place you come for qual-

ity care." To reach Nicole Slaughter Graham, email nslaughtergraham@theweeklychallenger.com

Residents weigh in on the south St. Petersburg 22 I-MIX Redevelopment proposal

PROPOSAL, from front page

meeting. Right now, St. Petersburg residents, and particularly those who have lived and worked in south St. Petersburg, have mixed feelings about the project.

For Martina Sykes and her father, Rev. Manuel Sykes, the project feels all too familiar.

"This (project) is designed to bring the downtown group further west, and then south, which encroaches on the existing Black population," said Rev. Sykes, who has lived in various south St. Pete neighborhoods for the past 28 years. "Who will it serve? What's the ultimate goal of the project?"

Rev. Sykes stated Furst is not the first person to try to redevelop areas on the south side of St. Petersburg. In the past, he said, many of the redevelopment projects have undercut the area's history and caused harm to the predominantly Black community living in these areas.

"It's one of those things where Black life is being circumvented, changed, removed, and someone else's vision is coming in."

For Martina Sykes, who lived, worked, and went to school on the south side and currently resides in New York, the project doesn't feel very transparent.

"At the meeting, they talked about how the project will be a benefit the community and add cultural value to the area," Sykes said. "My question is benefit to what community and who's culture? Will this benefit the Black community that has lived and worked in that area for generations? We don't know because nothing is really concrete."

Martina Sykes said during the meeting, talks about affordable housing and business opportunities were brought up, but not much information was given. She and other community members, such as Mierela Setki, a local business owner and long-time St. Peters-

burg resident, want more concrete information.

"A lot of the progress that's happened in the city has been really great and exciting," Setki said. "But it's very concerning that it's not been evenly distributed or accessible throughout the city. For this particular project, I want to know how much of the space will be dedicated to affordable housing. Will there be things put in place that make sure the current community is able to benefit?"

Specifics have not been given to the community regarding what percentage of the residential development will be affordable because those figures are not available, Furst said.

"The reason we're in a little bit of a holding pattern and haven't offered those specifics," Furst stated, "is because until the city works side by side with what we're doing, we can't promise anything without knowing what we're working with."

Furst said more would

be revealed once the city moves forward with its StPete2050 Plan, which outlines how the city will grow and change. Planning for StPete2050 started in mid-October. As the weeks go by, Furst hopes to have more information about the parameters in which the city will let him develop the acreage he's purchased.

He plans to hold more public meetings as time goes on, and he has more information on exactly how the 22 I-MIX project will move forward. He also said the community would continue to be engaged in these conversations.

"We built the coalition the way we have because I don't believe in speaking for other people," he said. "I've never been more passionate, enthusiastic and excited about a project. We are trying to be as historically thoughtful and community-engaged as possible."

One community member Furst reached out to and spoke with in-depth is

Gwendolyn Reese, a prominent area historian and president of the African American Heritage Association of St. Petersburg. Reese believes the project is a positive move in the right direction.

"Joe has a sense of the significance and importance of the Deuces," she said. "He's done a lot of research, and the area that he is developing is not a part of the historic Deuces. I support what he is doing."

Reese said she supports the change in zoning for the area because the community does not want or need factories, which is the only option under the current restrictions. She also rejected the notion that Furst's plans for redevelopment equate to gentrification.

"We did have Black people north of Fifth Avenue, but it was in the residential area near the west side of 23rd Street," Reese said. "I don't see this as gentrification because that area is not a part of the historic Black

neighborhoods on the Deuces."

Likewise, Veatrice Farrell, executive director of the Deuces Live — a community stakeholder in the 22 I-MIX project — said the Deuces board also supports the development plan Furst has set forth. She echoed Reese's thoughts about the area not being a part of St. Petersburg's historic Black neighborhoods and added that right now, the land serves no productive purpose for the area.

"The (current) zoning doesn't allow for any mixed use for the property," she said. "We wouldn't be able to bring more industry or housing into the corridor as it stands right now. (Furst) has made two presentations to the Deuces board, and we're supportive of bringing more commercial and residential zoning changes as they are presented to us."

To reach Nicole Slaughter Graham, email nslaughtergraham@theweeklychallenger.com

USF RISES to gather student opinions on disproportionate school punishment of African Americans

ST. PETERSBURG – Multiple studies have shown that African American students are disciplined at a disproportionate rate compared to their peers, which can significantly impact their ultimate ability to succeed.

Now a team of researchers from the University of South Florida is talking to students and families affected by this disparate treatment to get their opinions on how schools should address this corrosive problem.

The project is called Racism in School Exclusionary Suspensions (RISES), and it explores school suspensions and the extent to which perceptions of racism or differential treatment are held by African-American students.

“Rarely do we go to students and ask them, ‘What do you think is going on?’” said Brenda Walker, interim associate dean of the College of Education on USF’s St. Petersburg campus and the lead principal investigator for the initiative. “When we want to find out about suspensions, we typically go to the literature. But we don’t neces-

sarily go to the students or their families.”

The initiative is part of a year-long series of research projects funded by USF to explore the perpetuation of systemic racism in society that has resulted in economic inequities, social injustices, police violence, and other impacts. RISES was awarded \$30,000 from the \$500,000 fund jointly established by the Office of the Provost and USF Research & Innovation to support the first round of projects.

According to information from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), African-American students, who make up 16 percent of enrollment, account for 40 percent of suspensions nationally. Higher school discipline rates are tied to negative outcomes later in life, including encounters with law enforcement. Walker and other researchers have described this phenomenon as the “school to prison pipeline.”

“Think about what happens when you’re suspended – you’re removed from opportunities to learn. And it doesn’t take too long before you get the message that you’re not

ally wanted in the school environment,” said Walker. “These students never quite feel successful in school. That’s why it’s really important that we address suspension.”

RISES brings together a multidisciplinary group of researchers from across USF, as well as a group of community partners, including representatives from the Allen Temple AME Church in Ybor City, the Hillsborough County branch of the NAACP, and the Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa (CDC). Together, they will recruit 100 Black students from middle and high schools who have been suspended at least once between August 2018 and March 2020.

The students will be asked to participate in focus groups, along with family members and representatives from the community. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus groups will be conducted virtually, although space has been identified at several community centers for those who may not have reliable access to technology.

The focus group participants will share their per-



Brenda Walker

ceptions of how they and other African American students are treated by teachers and other school system personnel. They’ll also share potential solutions.

“One of the most important questions that we’re going to get at is, what do they recommend for teachers and school administrators so that they can be even more effective and more responsive to their needs?” added Walker.

The goal of USF RISES is to continue to raise awareness about this phenomenon and to seek answers from the community that is most impacted. A vital aspect of the project will be putting the findings in layperson’s terms and distributing the information widely so that it is accessible to school administrators, community members, and the students themselves.

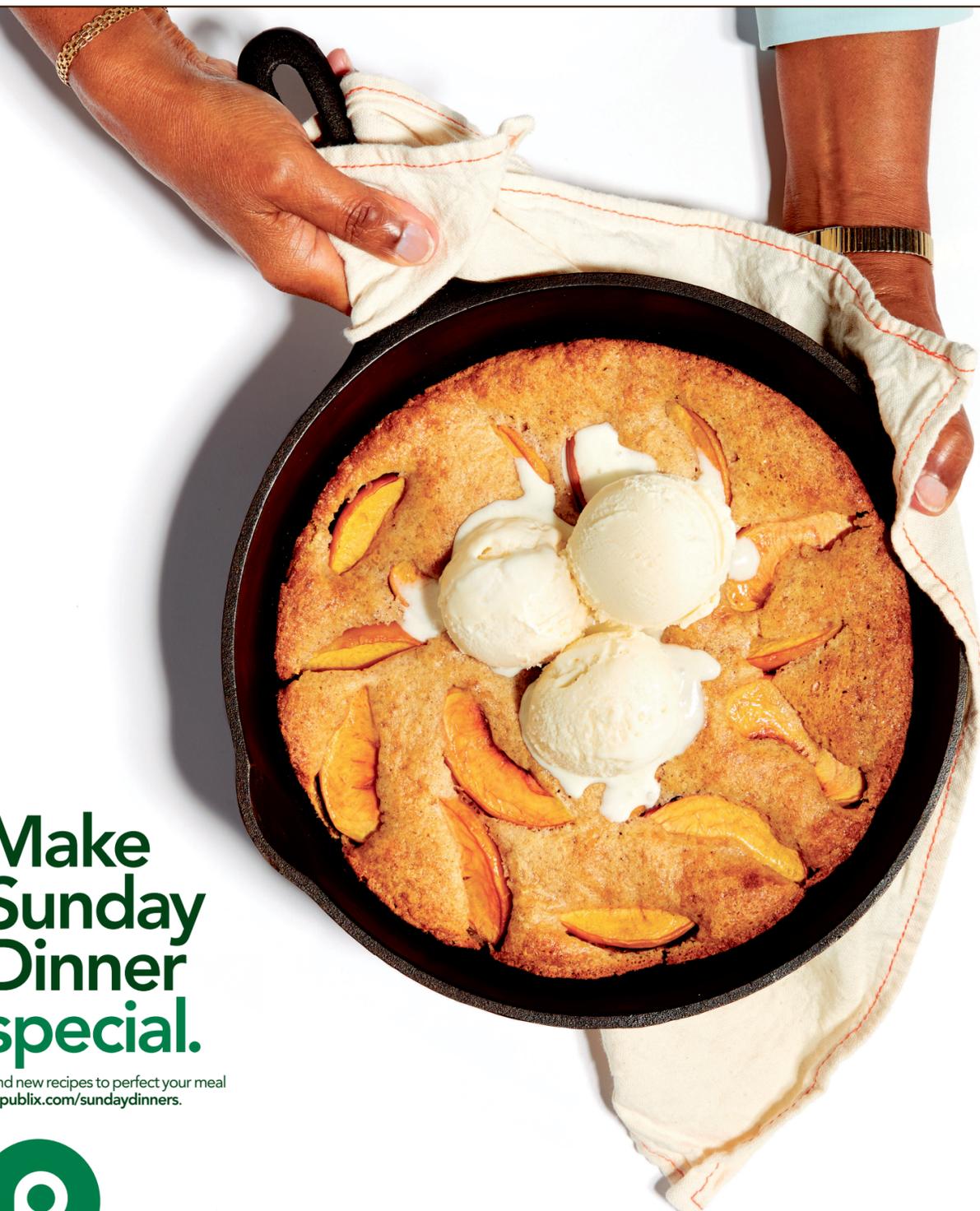
Walker said the group

is also taking great care to ensure the project is culturally responsive, emphasizing storytelling and a willingness to listen to counter-narratives that challenge conventional thinking. Each participant will be rewarded for their time and their contributions with a \$25 gift card.

Those who are interested in participating in the focus groups are encouraged to contact Walker at brendawalker@usf.edu.

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