

The Weekly Challenger

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VOL. 53 NO. 22

JUNE 23 - JULY 6, 2022

50¢

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The Woodson African American Museum of Florida and its First Ladies Society hosted the Jazzy Juneteenth Jubilee at the historic Coliseum on Sunday, June 19 to help raise funds for the new museum.

Woodson First Ladies Society's Juneteenth Jubilee

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

ST PETERSBURG - The Woodson African American Museum of Florida and its First Ladies Society hosted the Jazzy Juneteenth Jubilee at the historic Coliseum on Sunday, June 19, featuring local, national, and international musicians. The sold-out event saw approximately 1,000 guests and supporters for the launch of what will be an annual event.

"This party with a purpose was designed with the First Ladies engaging at a different

level to help raise funds for the museum," shared Woodson Executive Director Terry Lipsey Scott.

The all-white attire evening featured an array of gorgeously appointed table displays created by attendees as part of the Juneteenth-themed celebration.

Entertainment included NAACP Image Award nominee Nathan Mitchell along with Marcus Anderson and Glenn Jones, as well as performances by local artist saxophonist Jordan Bolts and vocalist Theo Valentin. The

sold-out event was a classy success, which Scott said she was extremely grateful for.

"We are in the throes of trying to achieve and accomplish the creation of Florida's first purpose-built African-American museum," Scott explained. "There are several museums throughout the state of Florida, but they're all retrofitted buildings — nothing that has been designed or created for the purpose of it being a museum exclusively."

Retrofitted buildings limit

See **JUNETEENTH**, page 11

A grave situation: part 7

BY JAMES A. SCHNUR
The Gabber

A safe harbor of rest, once forgotten and now remembered

SAFETY HARBOR — Along Old Tampa Bay east of Clearwater, the city of Safety Harbor sits. Well into the 1970s, a noticeable divide separated these cities. Even as subdivisions such as Countryside took shape in eastern Clearwater, much of McMullen-Booth Road between Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard and Tampa Road resembled a two-lane country road. Citrus groves and undeveloped acreage abounded.

This area had very few homes in the early 20th century. Here and there, small Black settlements appeared near orange groves, citrus packing houses, and other agricultural lands. Laborers from these enclaves helped farmers and grove owners get their products to market in a timely fashion.

West of Safety Harbor, one such settlement took shape "on the other side of the tracks" to support farms and



A gravestone uncovered at Whispering Souls African American Cemetery.

Photo by James Schnur.

groves around Safety Harbor, as well as provide a labor force for businesses in the city. This Black community was known as "Brooklyn."

An isolated sanctuary Lacking a site nearby to bury their departed, Black residents near Safety Harbor established a cemetery on a small piece of land once owned by Solomon Smith Coachman, a landowner and business leader who came to Pinellas in the late 1800s.

A strong advocate for the

creation of Pinellas County, Coachman owned a substantial amount of acreage that he had purchased from the family of Captain James McMullen, along with a cabin that McMullens and Coachmans had used for years before it was moved to Heritage Village and restored.

According to some accounts, Coachman set aside this parcel as a burial site for Black families in the area. Located on a lot along the north

See **GRAVE**, page 3

BSBC launches two new reading initiatives



Antonio Brown giving advice to a young man.

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

ST PETERSBURG - Barber-shop Book Club (BSBC) Summer-Cuts Workshops and Dad's Treasure Chest Initiative will provide free books and positive adult role modeling/mentoring reading engagements to low-income Black and Brown youth in south St. Petersburg camps and neighborhoods throughout the summer.

Master Barber Antonio Brown, owner and operator of Central Station Barbershop & Grooming in the Grand Central District, launched the book club in 2016 to address St. Pete's literacy crisis and, in 2020, brought the project to other community barbers.

Youth ages 1 through 18 receive free haircuts and age-appropriate, culturally relevant books from barbers participating in the BSBC. The club's core values are the three Es: Encouraging, Edifying, and Excelling, to foster a life-long love of literacy.

"This summer, we started the SummerCuts program where we go into camps that are already up and running, and we provide a service, and also provide free books to each and every child to help them build their own personal libraries at home," said Brown. "We encourage reading to all youth but predominantly young Black males, Brown boys, and children. Our goal is to help impact and help save lives with this initiative."

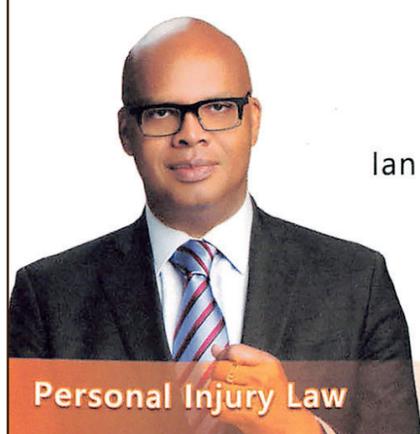
During the 2022 summer camp season, BSBC SummerCuts project will partner with camps to bring local artists, educators, and business professionals to engage children and youth in conversation, read books together, and enjoy related learning activities as the youth receive free books and haircuts.

Additionally, Dad's Treasure Chest Initiative provides fathers free books to bring home to their youth during June, July, and August. Participating barbers will offer books from their locations, and any father coming in for a haircut and has a child may take one to build their child's library.

Both programs could also help

See **CLUB**, page 2

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COMMUNITY NEWS

The children at the Sanderlin Center had a great time reading their new books.

CLUB, from front page

combat reading loss during the summer. Data shows that youth lose two months of reading skills during the summer, known as the "summer slide."

Experts note that the lack of culturally relevant reading material that Black and Brown boys can relate to contributes to low reading outcomes and is needed in low-income homes. Studies show reading culturally relevant books improves students' comprehension.

Research also indicates that Black mentors offer positive influences and challenge negative internalized feelings that underserved youth may have about their own race.

In a recent study from Milwaukee, Black male mentors and tutors worked with Black boys through a virtual schooling program during April, May, and June. The mentoring program kept the children's enthusiasm high; 87 percent reported to school daily, and all completed their reading work at grade level or higher.

Dreammakerz Pro-

ductions' filmmakers Jabaar Edmond and Cranstan Cumberbatch will lend their expertise in literacy and film during one of the workshops.

Edmond noted, "Reading is fundamental, and comprehension is key. Reading opens up the imagination of our youth and adults." Cumberbatch agreed, adding, "We look forward to this opportunity and stand in full support of this amazing program."

Debraca Russell, MBA CPCC of Agape Career Counseling and author of "Navigating Life's Choices After High School," will be visiting camps during BSBC's sessions. Her experience at Barbershop Book Club has been positive as she's seen how the interaction with Brown and his young readers impact students.

"Antonio Brown found a formula of educating youth when they are ready to talk and listen, during a time where they could speak freely and feel comfortable," she said. "He has poured into my own child with encouragement about leaving for college."

Brown hopes by offering a combined experience of free haircuts and books, along with reading and engaging with local role models and mentors, students will be even more engaged.

Other guests this summer include filmmaker Robert Bruno, Sheena Qualles-De Freece, Founder/CEO of Kidzonomics, LLC, and independent music artist Reeves.

Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, author of the seminal book on Black male education, "Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys," believes the literacy crisis among Black boys is a civil rights issue.

He told The Menformation Project, "Can you fathom if we simply taught Black males how to read, we could reduce disproportionate number of Black males in special education, suspended, dropping out, unemployment, crime, drug addiction, incarceration and fatherlessness? That's why I believe literacy is the 21st century civil rights issue."

Kunjufu said another



The children at the Sanderlin Center had a great time reading their new books.

factor contributing to illiteracy is that Black boys have never fallen in love with reading. "They never were given a book they could not put down. They have only read books to pass a test," he said. Black boys need to love to read. They need books where they see themselves, their communities, their history, and culture."

As for the Dad's Treasure Chest initiative,

Brown explained that when dad's come to the barbershop to get a haircut, they can pick up a book to take home and read to their child in the privacy and comfort of their home. He hopes the program will help build bonds between dad and child.

"These are awesome times to remember when you're doing stuff like this; this is something

that these children will never forget."

If you are interested in having a SummerCuts in Camps presentation, email Brown at bsbcsummercuts@gmail.com or text 727-710-6427. For more information on how you can get involved or donate to Barbershop Book Club, visit barbershopbookclub.org.

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Barbershop Book Club SummerCuts in Camps

Barbershop Book Club will be swooping in to provide free haircuts and books at summer camps during June and July!

Master Barber Antonio P.O. Box is bringing Barbershop Book Club barbers, books, and special guests to local camps this summer.

If you're interested in booking a Barbershop Book Club SummerCuts in Camps session, email bsbcsummercuts@gmail.com or text 727-710-6427.

WE ENCOURAGE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!

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The Weekly Challenger

is distributed in the following cities:
St. Petersburg • Clearwater • Largo
Tarpon Springs • Dunedin • Safety Harbor

P.O. Box 35130, St. Petersburg, FL 33705
Phone: (727) 896-2922
Fax: (727) 823-2568
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PUBLISHED WEEKLY
on Thursdays

READERSHIP
100,000 monthly

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
\$50 for 1 year (local only)

SINGLE COPY 50 cents

ATTN. POSTMASTER:
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believes that America can best lead the world from racial antagonism when it accords to every man, regardless of race, creed or color, his human and legal rights. Hating no man, fearing no man... the Black Press strives to help every man in the firm belief that all men are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

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FLORIDA ASSOCIATION

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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Volume 53 • Number 22
Published Thursday,
June 23, 2022
18 pages • 1 section

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A grave situation: part 7

GRAVE, from front page

side of South Drive, it currently sits in a residential area southeast of the intersection of Sunset Point Road and US Highway 19.

The land is a short distance away from the Sylvan Abbey Cemetery, where many Pinellas pioneer families are buried. In the early 1900s, laws and customs mandating racial segregation meant Blacks could not occupy graves at Sylvan Abbey.

Burials on this land quietly began by the early 20th century, with the earliest known burial being that of a man who passed away in 1896. It remains uncertain whether this man, Samuel E. Swann, was originally buried there or reinterred. Coachman lost this land and some of his other holdings to the state for delinquent taxes in the 1930s during the Great Depression.

Alfred and Louisa Ehle acquired some of Coachman's land and platted a subdivision for much of it except the lot where burials had occurred. In 1951, the Ehles deeded the cemetery to the St. Vincent Helping Hand Society. Two years later, this lot was transferred by deed to the "Safety Harbor Colored Community," a nebulous designation that lacked clarity.

Burials continued, but nobody maintained accurate records. Funds for the perpetual care of the cemetery did not exist. The site fell into a terrible condition by the 1960s and 1970s. Overgrown grass and clutter

filled this lot, while adjacent lands became a residential subdivision. In time, burials ceased. Clearwater annexed the formerly unincorporated land that included this cemetery and adjacent areas.

Re-discovering a forgotten resting place

Homeowners grew tired of the tall grass and unkempt vegetation on the large lot in their neighborhood. Nobody knew who owned the property. They simply wanted the excess brush removed so it would not attract wild animals or other pests in their subdivision of ranch homes and manicured lawns.

County workers arrived in 1996 to clear the overgrowth. Shortly thereafter, they saw a few headstones. Work stopped as they assessed the situation.

A review of property records and newspaper archives answered some questions. White residents learned about the historically Black cemetery that sat in their midst. People with loved ones buried on this property began to recall the dearly departed that time had forgotten. Some wondered how such a sacred place could have disappeared from our collective memory.

The exact number of burials remains a mystery. With the weeds and brush cleared away, volunteers began to inspect the gravesites and document names on the headstones. During a canvassing of the site in August 2000, a handful of

additional markers were located. One tombstone had cracked into more than 30 pieces.

The disappearance of some markers, especially wooden ones that deteriorated long ago, led some family members to wonder about unmarked or unknown burials.

An organization known as Whispering Souls African American Cemetery, Inc. devotes its energies to restoring this site. A corps of volunteers help to maintain the grounds. About a year ago, a real estate lawyer working on the group's behalf began the process of obtaining a clear and legal title to the land. Public hearings are currently taking place as notices have been filed regarding the group's intentions.

When clear ownership is secured, and the ambiguous 1953 deed no longer poses an obstacle, this organization can develop a strategic plan to restore and preserve Whispering Souls.

In the final installment of "A Grave Situation," we visit a historically Black cemetery with a thorny and sometimes troubled past that has received renewed interest and national recognition. Could the experience at Rose Cemetery in Tarpon Springs offer lessons for Lincoln?

Exhuming the Past of Lincoln and Forgotten Cemeteries in Pinellas: An eight-part series originally in The Gabber



Whispering Souls African American Cemetery.

Photo by James Schnur.



Whispering Souls African American Cemetery.

Photo by James Schnur.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CITY OF LARGO

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FY 2022-2023 ACTION PLAN

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership (HOME), Pinellas County Housing Trust Fund (HTF), State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Programs

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Largo City Commission will meet at 6:00 PM on July 19, 2022, in the Largo City Hall Commission Chambers at 201 Highland Avenue, FL 33770 to consider Resolution No. 2328 - Adoption of the FY 2022-2023 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Action Plan. In the event that this public hearing is rescheduled or moved to virtual digital media, notice will be posted at this location and online at the City of Largo's website (www.largo.com) with the new date and time and/or location of the public hearing. This meeting is open to the public and there will be a public comment period at the meeting.

The Action Plan identifies projects and activities to be undertaken in the third year of the Five-Year CDBG Consolidated Plan period toward addressing the housing and community needs identified in the Consolidated Plan.

A thirty-day public comment period for this document opened June 1, 2022 and remains open through June 30, 2022. The final version of the document is available on the City's website at: www.largo.com/housing. Hard copies or electronic copies are available upon request to: housing@largo.com. Hard copies will also be available for review during normal working hours at:

- Largo City Hall: 201 Highland Avenue, Largo, FL 33770
- Largo Public Library – Reference Desk: 120 Central Park Drive, Largo, FL 33770

Any person who decides to appeal any decision of the Largo City Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

The City of Largo is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for meeting access and communication for persons with disabilities and non-English speaking persons. Anyone needing assistance or further information with regard to these meetings should contact the City Clerk's Office at (727) 587-6710 or the Library TDD line at (727) 587-6778 at least two days prior to the meeting. Para solicitar un traductor, llame al (727) 586-7489 ext. 7216, por lo menos dos días antes de la reunión.

Community development and housing programs are administered in a nondiscriminatory manner, consistent with equal employment opportunities, affirmative action, and fair housing requirements. Questions, concerns, complaints or requests for information in alternative formats should be directed to the City of Largo Housing Division at (727) 586-7489 ext. 7216.

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Vaccine Outreach Program

The following assistance for clients (age 60 and over) and/or their caregiver (any age) is now available through the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.

- Vaccine visits at home
- Provide free transportation to vaccine appointment
- Provide respite care for caregivers to get their COVID-19 vaccine
- Provide reminder calls for second vaccine appointment



Call our Helpline at 727 217-8111 option 4, today!



COVID-19 vaccine visits for homebound seniors and caretakers

BY KARIN DAVIS-THOMPSON
Staff Writer

PINELLAS COUNTY—A program organized by the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco - Pinellas (AAAPP) will now ensure seniors and caregivers have an easier road to getting the COVID-19 vaccine. The Vaccine Outreach Program provides specialized assistance to seniors ages 60 and over and if necessary, their caregivers as well. Organizers said many times that without the proper respite assistance, caregivers don't have the support they need to leave their loved ones to visit the pharmacy or doctor's office for their shot.

Additionally, seniors may not have the help they need. In some cases, they are homebound, and in other instances, hurdles such as transportation issues may make it more challenging to get vaccinated. They said it is essential to provide help for those who want the vaccine but face barriers that make it difficult to obtain.

"Seniors in our community, and those who care for them, continue to be at most risk of getting covid and being hospitalized," said Ann Marie Winter, executive director of the AAAPP. The Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas encourages all seniors to get vaccinated and boosted."

AAAPP's program is an extension of the state's We Will Meet You at Home campaign sponsored by the Department of Elder Affairs. The department saw a need, real-



izing that not all seniors would have the ability to leave home to get vaccinated and that those individuals deserved the opportunity to be vaccinated if they chose like anyone else.

"Now more than ever, seniors and their caregivers need to get vaccinated," Winter said. "We are here to help not only answer any questions they may have but also make appointments for both doses, provide transportation and help those who are homebound get the vaccines brought to them."

Along with providing respite for caregivers and transportation for seniors who need it, the initiative includes reminder calls for second vaccine appointments and, in some cases, other individualized assistance as needed to ensure the participant can receive the vaccine.

More than 2,500 clients have received assistance from the program, about 1,100 have been provided resources and services by phone, and more than 250 clients have received help scheduling their vaccine appointment.

The AAAPP is a not-

for-profit organization whose mission is to provide assistance in various forms for seniors and individuals with disabilities in Pasco and Pinellas counties. The organization has been in service to those communities since 1974.

Along with the Vaccine Outreach Program, the AAAPP group provides access to resource information for seniors and caregivers, including affordable food and nutrition options, Medicare enrollment, health and wellness resources, and community engagement activities.

"As an agency in general, we're always looking for opportunities to connect with seniors, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities," Winter said. "We welcome opportunities to engage with seniors at [places like] churches, community events, and senior living facilities."

The Vaccine Outreach Program is available until Sept. 30

For more information on the Vaccine Outreach Program or any other services provided by AAAPP, visit their website at www.agingcarefl.org or call 1-800-963-5337.

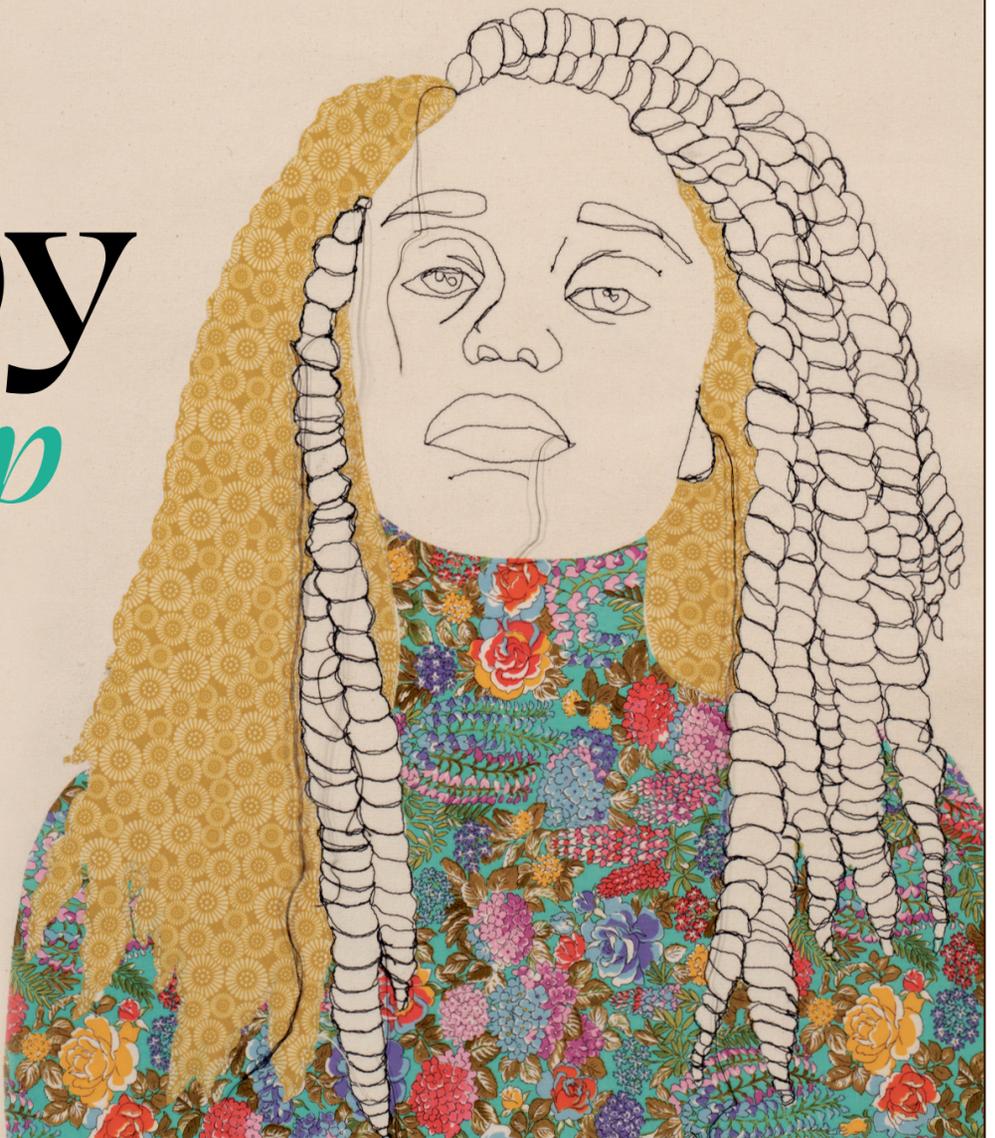
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Gio Swaby, *My Hands Are Clean 4* (detail), 2017, Thread and fabric sewn on canvas, Collection of Claire Oliver and Ian Rubinstein



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Fresh Up Dance Party

Friday, July 29

Don your best *Going Out Clothes* and join us for the hottest party of the summer. Celebrate the debut museum exhibition *Gio Swaby: Fresh Up* and meet the artist at our tropical-themed party featuring a DJ, dancing, and Bahamian-influenced cuisine and drinks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PRICING, AND TICKETS, VISIT MFASTPETE.ORG

Organic gardening for beginners

Getting started: Focus on plant diseases

BY JOYCE WOODSON
GARDEN ENTHUSIAST



Something is always eating, infecting or digging in my garden. Every day I inspect for damage. Every week I am treating one plant or another. Managing pests and disease is my most time consuming gardening chore. This blog will cover common diseases and the next one will cover insects and other pests.

Fungus and bacterial viruses are common in Pinellas County. I regularly fight diseases in the garden but too often lose these battles. Fungus diseases are numerous but vegetables are most often affected by the following fungal diseases.

• **Powdery Mildew** — Powdery mildew primarily affects beans, peas, squash, melons, and cucumbers, but can affect almost any plant. The disease appears first as yellowish spots that become white and take on the powdery appearance. Warm humid conditions favor the growth of powdery mildew and

wind spreads the disease.

• **Dampening Off** — Dampening off primarily affects seedlings, and the most obvious symptom is wilted, rotting stems that ultimately die. This fungus is soil based.

• **Silverleaf** — Squash, pumpkin and sometimes cucumbers and melons are affected. Entire leaves take on a silvery sheen. Whiteflies often introduce and spread silverleaf. While silverleaf is unlikely to kill infected plants it can stunt growth and predispose plants to more dangerous diseases and insect damage.

• **Little Leaf** — Like silverleaf, this disease looks like its name. Plants, tomatoes in my experience, grow but become smaller and smaller as the disease progresses. This fungal disease is caused when soil is deficient in minerals.

Treatments vary based on the type of fungus, but generally the fol-

lowing approaches are useful.

• DIY treatments include spraying foliage with water mixed with either milk, hydrogen peroxide or baking soda with the following proportions: 1 cup of milk to 2 cups of water; one tablespoons of potassium bicarbonate or baking soda to one gallon of water, plus 1 tablespoon of liquid soap; ½ cup of hydrogen peroxide to 5

cups of water.

• There are chemical sprays approved for organic gardens. I have used Southern Agriculture's "Garden Friendly Fungicide" and Bonide's "Copper Fungicide". All sprays, commercial and DIY, should be used in the early morning or late afternoon/evening so leaves are not burned.

Prevention is tricky since fungus spreads so easily, however all of the

following suggestions will help prevent the spread of fungus.

- Purchase disease resistant varieties when available, and don't plant susceptible plants near each other.
- Practice wider spacing for susceptible plants and plant rotation.
- Throw infected leaves/plants into the trash and keep the garden clean by regularly removing plant debris.

• Do not use garden soil to start seedlings in pots because it may harbor damping off fungal spores.

• Water the soil and not plant leaves.

Fungus is preventable and treatable, bacterial infections are preventable but there is no effective chemical or organic treatment. The most successful prevention tactics include purchasing resistant varieties, purchasing healthy seedlings and seeds from reputable nurseries, and insect management, which will be covered in the next blog.

Real estate agent Joyce Woodson loves gardening and sharing what she knows. The founder of "Straw Hat Gardening," she has taught classes on basic organic gardening and provided garden consultations. To reach Joyce, email gardening@joyce-woodson.net.



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WINTER GARDEN – While Jehovah’s Witnesses have chosen to temporarily suspend their door-to-door ministry due to the pandemic, their activity was almost permanently banned by one U.S. village in the late 1990s — that is until the United States Supreme Court stepped in with a historic 8-1 decision on June 17, 2002, declaring the local ordinance unconstitutional.

As the 20th anniversary of that precedent-setting decision nears, some Winter Garden residents wonder what their lives would be like if one of their neighbors had not knocked on their door and shared a life-changing message with them. Constitutional scholars marvel at the outsized impact the decision has had on the protection of free speech for all, agreeing with Justice Antonin Scalia’s opinion in the case, “The free-speech claim exempts everybody, thanks to Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

The 2002 Supreme Court decision in *Watchtower v. Village of Stratton* affirmed that a local village ordinance in Stratton, Ohio, requiring a permit to knock on doors violated the rights of any person who wanted to engage in free speech with their neighbor, including Jehovah’s Witnesses who practice door-to-door evangelizing. The court

overturned two lower court rulings that upheld the ordinance and thus paved the way for all citizens to maintain open dialogue with their neighbors on any number of issues, including environmental, civic, political, or educational.

Thomas Laughrey of Winter Garden is thankful that Jehovah’s Witnesses came knocking in 2010. The father of two remembers how one morning, as if out of nowhere, a woman appeared in his garden offering Bible-based magazines. He accepted to be polite, not realizing this would be the first step toward improving his life in many ways.

Eventually, Laughrey started to study the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. What he learned helped him begin to view his work challenges in a more positive way. A change in his mindset led him to improve family relations, yelling less and listening more. There were even physical benefits. Laughrey explained that he was able to get rid of some harmful habits. “I was able to clean up that part of my life.” That knock on his door changed his life.

“Looking back on the two decades since the decision, it’s clear to see the wide-ranging impact that *Watchtower v. Stratton*

has had on free speech for all,” said Josh McDaniel, director of the Religious Freedom Clinic at the Harvard Law School. “This is just the latest of some 50 Supreme Court victories by Jehovah’s Witnesses that have helped establish and broaden First Amendment jurisprudence throughout the last century.”

The Village of Stratton became a center of controversy in 1998 after the mayor personally confronted four Jehovah’s Witnesses as they were driving out of the village after visiting a resident. Subsequently, the village enacted the ordinance “Regulating Uninvited Peddling and Solicitation Upon Private Property,” which required anyone wishing to engage in door-to-door activity to obtain a permit from the mayor or face imprisonment. Jehovah’s Witnesses viewed this ordinance as an infringement of freedom of speech, free exercise of religion, and freedom of the press. Therefore, they brought a lawsuit in federal court after the village refused to modify its enforcement of this ordinance.

“Our motive for initiating the case was clear: We wanted to remove any obstacle that would prevent us from carrying out our scriptural obligation to preach the good news of the Kingdom,” said



Winter Garden residents reflect on the impact of a 2002 historic Supreme Court Ruling 20 years ago.

Robert Hendriks, U.S. spokesman for Jehovah’s Witnesses. “Making it a criminal offense to talk with a neighbor without seeking government approval is offensive to many people, but particularly to God who commanded Christians to preach the gospel.”

While Laughrey and his family continue to engage in a productive ministry through letter writing, phone calling and virtual visits, they are looking forward to knocking on doors again. They want others to obtain the

benefits they have enjoyed from their Bible lessons. Even so, Laughrey admitted he has one regret. He said, “If I had to do it all over again, I think I probably would have answered the door a lot sooner.”

“We are thankful that we have the legal right to practice our ministry from door-to-door,” said Hendriks. “When the time is right, and conditions are safe, we hope to visit our neighbors in person once again.”

This victory is one of more than 250 rulings in

cases brought by Jehovah’s Witnesses in high courts worldwide that have expanded the rights of people of all religious faiths. “It’s hard to point to any organization, let alone a religious organization, that has had such a profound impact on the shaping of constitutional law over many decades in the Supreme court,” said Harvard’s professor McDaniel.

For more information on the *Stratton* case, go to www.jw.org and type *Stratton* in the search field.

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“[Dutchman] remains as seditious today as it [ever] was.”- *The New Yorker*

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Improving Your Leadership

BY Michael F. Broom, Ph.D.
Organization Development Psychologist



Expanding your experience of choice

From our previous article, we know that we all make many choices automatically. They save us time and energy, and we don't notice them as choices even when they are doing the opposite — when our automatic choices are actually wasting time and energy.

Time and energy are resources that we too rarely have enough of, and leaders never seem to have enough of either. There are staffs to be managed, customers to coddle, finances to figure out, superiors to satisfy, and the partner and kids at home to be pleased and loved. The list goes on and on. Time's a-wasting.

Yet, we rarely think about the things we do on automatic that waste time and energy. I'm not talking about watching TV, resting, having a glass of wine, or playing with the kids. Those activities are not wasteful. They are useful for both pleasure and energy renewal. Do them well.

It's our automatic choices to complain, blame, worry, make excuses, and rationalize that should concern us. Procrastinating is another; too often, I'll do anything else when I



should be working on my next article.

Then there is analyzing for the 30th time how I'll talk my editor into giving me a bigger advance. Arguing and trying to convince are too rarely useful to be anything but energy sponges. All are activities that sponge up our time and energy, resulting in nothing worthwhile.

Then there's pretending: pretending we know something we don't, pretending we're okay when we're not, pretending we're cool when we don't feel cool at all. Again, the list goes on.

What are your energy sponges? Make a list of them. If you can't think of

many, ask your buddy at work or your partner and kids at home. They know.

The complexity of life in today's organizations and the pace of change within them is ever-increasing. Successful leaders must efficiently use their energy and time and minimize behaviors — their energy sponges — that waste them.

Why do we have energy sponges if they are such a waste? At some point in our lives, they helped us accomplish whatever goals were at hand. Your whining got you that toy your parents were reluctant to give you. Through procrastinating, someone else

took out the garbage. When you argued long enough, the other person gave in.

As adults, these energy sponges are rarely useful. To minimize them, we must notice them. Notice them as automatic habits from our past. Then we can, with intention and deliberation, choose a different focus for our energy.

Dr. Maggie Parker owns and runs a sizeable data-mining organization. She needed to have a conversation with a new vice president about his seemingly uncooperative demeanor.

She procrastinated, worrying about offending him and possibly los-

ing him. She also blamed herself for not working more closely with him.

I asked her what she would do if she were at her very best? She said she would calmly and politely ask him why he seemed to question everything she said. Getting the point, she said she would speak to him the next day.

At our next meeting, she said all her energy sponges started the morning she planned to confront him. However, she focused on her ability to choose action rather than continue with her sponges. She told him about her concern.

He said he had not meant to be uncooperative. He just wanted to show that he was on top of his game and promised to tone it down.

There isn't enough time in a day for leaders to satisfy all the demands that their role and life offer them. Time and energy are too precious to use up doing things that are neither productive nor satisfying.

By expanding our choice experience, we can master how we use our energy to improve our efficiency and effectiveness. From there, we

can also help those who follow us to expand their experience of choice.

A great formula to create great teams and organizations that will thrive and prosper!

There is always more to learn about creating great teams and organizations. You will significantly deepen your understanding and skills for working with organizations and teams if you sign-up for the powerful programs: "The Nine Disciplines of Leadership & Self-Mastery and The Seven Core Actions of Complex Change."

These master class-level programs are both intensive and comprehensive, with a clear focus on skill-building. Check them out at chumans.com/master-classes or email me at michael@chumans.com.

Michael F. Broom, Ph.D., has been an organization development psychologist for 45 years. He consults with organizations of all types, including Google and Genentech, among others. He has taught at major universities, including Johns Hopkins and American. For more information, you can contact him at www.chumans.com or michael@chumans.com.

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St. Petersburg Deltas packed the Coliseum with the return of their signature Prayer Breakfast

ST. PETERSBURG – When the St. Petersburg Alumnae Chapter (SPAC) of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. hosted their first in-person event since the COVID-19 pandemic, they united the community with fervor. The sold-out event at the Coliseum was the return of their signature Prayer Breakfast fundraiser.

This year, like every other, chapter members adorned the room in a wave of red and white, from coordinated garments to unique centerpieces. Vendors offering unique fashion and accessories lined the back walls of the Coliseum for attendees to shop.

The Prayer Breakfast was hosted on June 4, with every element of the event

carefully orchestrated.

“After two and half years of holding events in the virtual space, it was great to see so many come out and support the 2022 Prayer Breakfast!” said Adrienne Reddick, chair of the prayer breakfast. “And what better way for the chapter to serve our community than an event that was like a healing balm to the soul.”

Bishop J.L. Wright, the event’s master of ceremony, guided the program with a warm and anointed presence. A choir assembled with SPAC members welcomed guests as they entered the Coliseum. At the same time, the audience was captivated by the essence of Mt. Zion Progressive Missionary Bap-

tist Church’s Pure Expressions praise dancers.

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, National Chaplain of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., delivered an inspirational word.

“Tell your neighbor, ‘Oh yes, I will,’” she began.

Bishop McKenzie delivered a message from the Lord that started with an analogy about a woman standing up in her spiritual she-shed and declaring, “I don’t have time for that.”

The magic of the morning was further celebrated by St. Petersburg’s own Charles Jenkins, who delivered an all-out “praise party.” He and his band performed several musical selections, including his top hits “Awesome

and “War.”

The program concluded with the presentation of scholarships to college-bound students as they strive to attain higher educational goals while honoring their achieve-

ments throughout their high school careers. A portion of the event’s proceeds sustains academic scholarships, youth initiatives, and community outreach programs.

St. Petersburg Alum-

nae Chapter has awarded more than \$40,000 in scholarships over the last two years to deserving students. Dr. Shameka S. Jones serves as the St. Petersburg Alumnae Chapter President.



Charles Jenkins



Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie

S U P P O R T O U R A D V E R T I S E R S



Know Your Status with Just a Little Prick

HIV doesn't discriminate. Male, female, trans, black, brown or white. And almost 40% of new infections happen because one of the sexual partners didn't know they were HIV+. Living in and having unsafe sex in Hillsborough or Pinellas counties also makes you more of a risk as both rank in the top 48 counties nationally for new HIV infections in recent years.

So, What Can You Do?

Know your status through regular testing and practice safe sex. EPIC (Empath Partners in Care) can help with free, fast and confidential testing at locations throughout Tampa Bay and provide you safe sex supplies and education. You can also request an at-home test and learn your status from the comfort of your home while receiving support from EPIC staff.

Get Tested

Learn more about testing and how EPIC can support your sexual health today.

Go to our website [JustALittlePrick.org](https://www.JustALittlePrick.org) to receive your at-home testing kit or request to receive more information or call us in Pinellas at (727) 328-3260 or Hillsborough (813) 237-3066.





Summer meals assistance: Pop-Up Pantries Reach Services

Reach St. Pete is bringing groceries on the go with Pop Up Pantry Bus Routes this summer! Get fresh, free produce, meat, milk, eggs, dry goods, and more. Just show up to one of the route's stops every second and fourth Thursday of the month:

- Enoch Davis Center - 12:00-12:45 p.m. 1111 18th Ave S, St. Petersburg
- Campbell Park Rec Center - 1:00-1:45 p.m. 601 14th St S, St. Petersburg
- Pinellas Hope - 3:15-4:00 p.m. 5726 126th Ave N, Clearwater
- SPC Douglas L. Jamerson, Jr. Midtown Center - 4:30-5:15 p.m. 1300 22nd St S, St. Petersburg
- Northside Baptist Church - 5:30-6:00 p.m. 6000 38th Ave N, St. Petersburg

Learn more at reachstpete.org/pop-up-pantry-bus-stops

Summer Meals Assistance: Summer BreakSpot

FREE breakfasts, lunch and snacks, or dinner is available for kids and teens 18 and under through Summer BreakSpot – all summer long! Families have three ways to find a location:

- Call 2-1-1
 - Text “food” or “comida” to 304-304
 - Visit SummerBreakSpot.org
- Summer BreakSpot is federally funded under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Sites are locally operated by nonprofit organizations (sponsors). Summer BreakSpot sites serve nutritionally balanced meals that meet USDA guidelines.

Free school meal waivers ending for 2022-23 school year

The USDA's nutritional waivers that allowed school districts to provide free

lunch to all students during the height of the pandemic expire June 30. Pinellas County Schools will return to a free, reduced, or paid lunch program for the 2022-23 school year. This change does not impact all schools.

- School meals will continue to be free through the Community Eligibility Program.

- Some schools will return to regularly priced lunch.

- PCS students are still able to apply for free and reduced lunch meal benefits online.

- Online application for free meal benefits is available at www.myschoolapps.com.

- School breakfast will remain free for Pinellas County Schools students. PCS Food & Nutrition Lunch prices: Elementary = \$2.25 | Middle School = \$2.75 | High School = \$2.75

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*Additional terms/rates available for model years 2016 and older.

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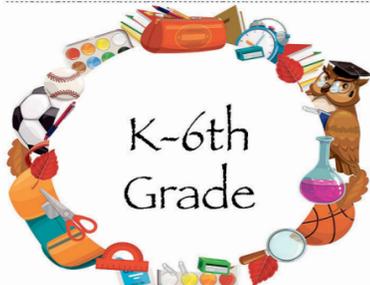


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- We provide differentiated instruction to meet individual student's needs
- Bible study and chapel are part of our daily curriculum
- We follow the Florida State Standards of Academics
- Student academic progress is monitored using NWEA's MAP Assessment to ensure student achievement
- Develop a partnership with parents to build consistency
 - Low student/teacher ratio
 - Students have 1:1 technology

Dominance on campaign trail pays off

BY JODI YONDER
Contributor

PALATKA – Former governor and current U.S. Representative Charlie Crist worked his way through small-town Florida, celebrating Juneteenth weekend with Black business owners in Deland, participants at a community cultural event in Palatka, the Melanin Market of businesses, and the faith community at three churches in Jacksonville.

It was quite a schedule, but nothing new for Crist. He has been visiting Black communities in rural areas and big cities with equal vigor since May 2021, when he announced his candidacy against Governor Ron DeSantis. His opponents are rarely seen anywhere.

Absence from the campaign trail could prove fatal for a candidate. A recent poll shows Crist trouncing his Democratic opponent Agriculture Commissioner Nikki



Crist admires Black art at Jacksonville's Melanin Market on Juneteenth.

Fried by 25 points. He commands overwhelming support among Hispanics and voters under 30, but Black voters remain committed by a 34 percent margin.

He has also locked down endorsements from most groups, individuals, and organizations. Tallahassee City Commissioner Diane Williams Cox endorsed Crist early and said he believes in earning your vote.

“Charlie has gone

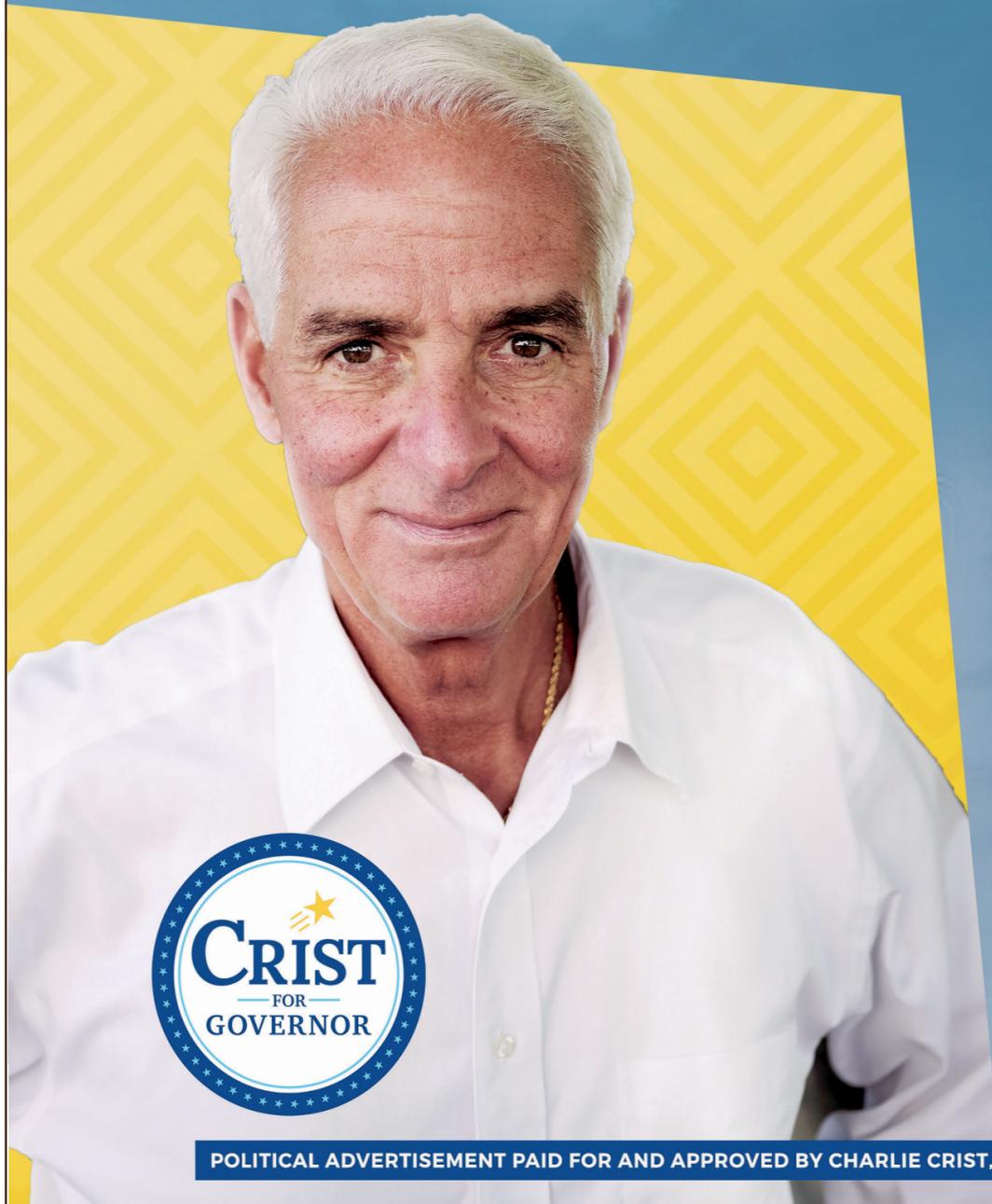
where no gubernatorial candidate has gone before in the Black community. It's a winning strategy. People must see you to tell you what's on their mind. And right now, we need someone to believe in because DeSantis has targeted us.”

During a Juneteenth forum, Crist described how candidates should not treat voters. “They show up late and go away when they win. Not Charlie Crist.”



Democratic gubernatorial candidate Charlie Crist celebrates Juneteenth with children in Palatka.

Life Changing



CHARLIE CRIST

restored the civil rights of 155,000 non violent felons because it was right. As governor he returned dignity and citizenship to those who served their time giving them the fresh start they needed. He honors the Golden Rule because he believes it's the best way to serve as your next governor. As the disciple of Donald Trump, Ron DeSantis will return us to the darkest time in our history to serve his base.

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charliecrist.com/issues

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Woodson First Ladies Society's Juneteenth Jubilee

JUNETEENTH, from front page

the opportunity to bring in world-class exhibits. Standing by and watching other museums bring in Black art and culture, admitted Scott, "breaks my heart over and over. Because we're not in a position to do that, we don't have the facilities needed to not only attract them but host them."

Scott conceived the Jazzy Juneteenth Jubilee to provide an opportunity for the community to be part of the ongoing \$27 million capital campaign to raise funds for the new museum. The Woodson has partnered with Pinellas Community Foundation on the capital campaign effort and has plans to build the new museum on 5.5 acres of city-donated land along 22nd Street South, otherwise known as The Deuces.

"We're in a capital campaign, and you usually don't go public until you have about 75 percent of the funds raised," she acknowledged. "However, we're an African-American museum, and there is absolutely nothing traditional about our fundraising methods because we don't have the base to create capital campaigns."

Scott noted that she envisioned the event as an opportunity "for us to be a part of this fundraising effort. We have an opportunity to be a part of the creation of this new museum, and we have something that we can invest in."

Since 2014, the Woodson has held an annual "First Ladies in African American History" program, acknowledging women who have reached

levels of excellence in their lives and careers. The creation of the First Ladies Society is recent.

"This is a group of women who have been named First Ladies and who have made the investment in being a part of the society," Scott said, acknowledging that members of the society have committed to invest further in Black history in the region.

For First Ladies who commit to being in the society to assist in the creation of The Woodson African American Museum of Florida, a fee is associated with being a part of the society.

The Jazzy Juneteenth Jubilee is an opportunity for the First Ladies Society members to elevate their presence and raise awareness for the museum's

fundraising efforts. The celebration will be their annual signature event, and other forthcoming activities will help generate revenue for the capital campaign.

In Scott's opinion, the campaign is going exceptionally well, amassing more than \$5 million since the campaign launched on the steps of City Hall in February.

She is still hoping for more significant governmental investments, whether from the city, county, state, or federal coffers. "I've been to Tallahassee and spoken with those in the governor's office. I have spoken with our legislators in Tallahassee, and I've gotten to Pinellas County government and made them aware of what we're doing. City council is definitely

aware."

The museum director pointed to states with world-class African-American museums, including Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and now South Carolina, where the governments "came through big for them," Scott asserted.

At this point, Florida and the City of St. Pete — which has some of the best museums in the world, from the Museum of Fine Arts to the Holocaust Museum to the James, Dali, and Chihuly — should be as competitive as these other states, rather than locating its African-American museum "in a public housing community center," she averred.

Scott is excited about what will continue to be accomplished as word of the

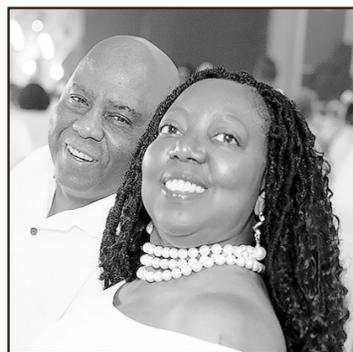
Woodson fundraising campaign spreads.

"I have women now across the state of Florida wanting to know how they can be in the First Lady Society; there are African-American females who are first in their communities as well."

Scott believes forming chapters of First Ladies that can help elevate the history of Black people in Florida can ultimately be a powerful fundraising mechanism.

"So, I'm just hopeful that we have started something that will certainly gain momentum and traction across the state."

For information on supporting The Woodson Museum of Florida and its fundraising efforts, visit pinellascf.org/thewoodson, or the museum's website, woodsonmuseum.org.



VFW Post 10174 gives to the community

BY RAVEN JOY SHONEL
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — School is out for the summer, and thanks to the veterans at VFW Post 10174, three local high schools will have a jump start on the new school year with donations of \$1,000 each.

Trustee Louis Williams wants the com-

munity to know that the Charlie King Tutson VFW is not just a “drinking hole.”

“We do things within the community and if you know of anyone that needs anything, just let us know,” said Williams, an 84-year-old U.S. Army and Air Force veteran. “We’ll do the best that we can do about that.”

Williams personally

handed Gibbs and Boca Ciega High Schools their checks, which will go a long way in helping underfunded programs. Lakewood High School was the third school to receive funds.

“[We are] very, very grateful that we had this opportunity to apply and give our proposal to the VFW, as well as the things that they have done for us

and this country,” said Gibbs High School Band Director Robert Thomas.

Thomas plans on getting the band’s uniforms cleaned, buying a new banner to showcase during parades, raincoats so the band can perform in the rain, and other equipment if funds are available.

“We will stretch it out as much as we can so that we can put it in the areas that are needed,” noted Thomas.

To determine how funds are distributed, Post 10174 requires a short proposal on how the money will be used, and a committee will decide who and how much will be distributed. Schools, recreation centers, and non-profit organizations are all welcome to apply.

Not only is Williams a trustee, but he’s also a sort of community liaison.



Gibbs High School Band Director Robert Thomas and Louis Williams



Members of the 2021-22 Gibbs High School Band with Principal Barry Brown and Louis Williams

He’s looking to start a swimming program to teach young Black children how to swim and intends on spending \$3,000 every six months helping the community.

“Well, that’s what we were supposed to be about in the beginning,” said the Vietnam War vet. “When we earn money, we’re supposed to disperse so much of it back into the community.”

It’s been five or six years since Post 10174 has been active in the community, citing the out-

going regime and the pandemic. But Williams plans to put the money train back on track and help the underprivileged.

Besides dues, the post makes money through the bar and rentals. The community can rent the facility, located at 1780 49th St. S, for probably the cheapest rates in the area.

“We have a bar, we have food, tables, and we have karaoke,” Williams said. “We have bingo, and I just invite everybody to stop by.”

Public hurricane shelters

As we prepare for hurricane season, here are a few key things we want you to be aware of:

- Following social distancing will keep everyone safer. In general, public shelters we will increase amount of space per individual/family households, increase routine cleaning of common areas, and work to provide proper hand washing materials and hand sanitizer, as able.

- Cloth face coverings are recommended when you are in public places. Plan to bring your own mask to a shelter. Have enough clean masks per person in your household in your hurricane kit.

- We also recommend hand sanitizer and wipes as part of your kit. The county will work diligently throughout the season to obtain additional sanitizer at shelter sites.

- Family units will be allowed to share the space assigned to them. We will need to maintain appropriate distance requirements between each family unit.

- Remember: public shelters do not have cots or generators, and the space you will be able to utilize is limited. Prepare by bringing:

- A one-person air mattress

- Books and activities
- A fan
- Earplugs
- Covering for your eyes for sleeping

- Other hygiene, comfort items and medications

Often, there is food and water served, but you may want to bring your own food if you are on a special diet.

If you are COVID-19 positive or pending test results

If you are feeling ill at the time of an evacuation, are awaiting test results, or have tested positive for COVID-19, you may have to shelter in a separate shelter, away from other individuals for health and safety. Stay informed for the latest CDC guidance and local orders as a storm approaches.

Special needs shelters

Special needs shelters are for those who have minimal medical needs or who are dependent on electricity for life-sustaining equipment. They are not for residents of assisted living facilities or long-term nursing care. You can ask your facility’s administrator for information on your facil-

ity’s emergency plan.

The guidelines that apply to general public shelters will be the same in special needs shelters. Additional precautions will be taken when transporting citizens to the shelters.

- Caregivers and immediate family members will stay together as a family unit, with appropriate spacing between each unit.

- As with public shelters, precautions will be taken to keep the area clean and sanitized. Keep in mind that not all special needs shelters have cots for everyone, so bring a one-person air mattress with you. You will need your own medical equipment and cloth face coverings for each person in your party.

- Please preregister for special needs shelters by calling (727) 464-3800 or go to the website at www.pinellascounty.org/specialneeds to download a form and to get more information.

- Please see the section on public sheltering for other general guidelines.

Special needs and pets

If you are staying at a special needs shelter, your pet cannot stay with you. If you do not have a family member or friend who can

take care of your pet while you are in the special needs shelter, the staff and volunteers at Pinellas County Animal Services will care for your dog or cat.

- Simply bring your dog or cat with you to the special needs shelter. An Animal Services staff member or volunteer will bring them to the dog and cat shelter on Ulmertown Road in Largo.

You will need to provide a leash, carrier, license, health records, medication and any special instructions. Food is supplied but you can send your own.

- Once you return home, Animal Services staff will bring your pet home to you.

- Remember, to be eligible you must be preregistered with the Emergency Management Special Needs program. Call Emergency Management at (727) 464-3800 to receive a form by mail or call your nearest fire department or home health provider.

Please note this is only for cats and dogs. If you have a pet other than a cat or dog, make plans now for someone to care for them while you are staying in the shelter.

Service animals are



welcome at any shelter; note that you must bring the service animal’s supplies.

Special needs transportation

If you need assistance with transportation, your fire department will pick you up and bring you to a special needs shelter, but you **MUST REGISTER**. You can register by filling out a special needs registration form, which you can get by calling (727) 464-3800 or downloading at www.pinellascounty.org/specialneeds.

When an evacuation is called, your fire department will call you, and verify that you are still in need of transportation assistance to a shelter. Please be ready with your belongings. They will assist you with your belongings and any medical equipment that you have.

How kids can help

Make plans with the whole family

- Involve children in emergency planning.

- Let them help build the Emergency Preparedness Kit. Use matter-of-fact language to discuss safety steps you will take.

- Play “let’s pretend” games with young children to help them work out “what if” situations.

What you might need

If you are evacuating or even if you’re riding out the storm at home, don’t forget the everyday items your children will need. Think through a typical day at home and plan as if there will be no power. A few suggestions:

- Face masks
- Diapers and wipes
- Powdered milk
- Blanket and pacifier
- Stuffed animal or favorite toy
- Favorite non-perishable snacks
- Toys
- Games
- Plenty of batteries

County Shelters

Status	Shelter Name	Address (Google Maps)	Shelter Type
Closed.....	Bauder ES	12755 86th Ave N, Seminole	General Shelter
Closed.....	Belleair ES.....	1156 Lakeview Rd, Clearwater	General Shelter
Closed.....	Boca Ciega HS.....	924 58TH ST S, Gulfport	General Shelter
Closed.....	Campbell Park ES	1051 7th Ave S, St. Petersburg	General Shelter
Closed.....	Carwise MS.....	3301 BENTLY DR, Palm Harbor	General Shelter
Closed.....	Clearwater Fundamental MS.....	1660 PALMETTO ST, Clearwater	General Shelter
Closed.....	Dunedin Community Center.....	1920 PINEHURST RD, Dunedin	General Shelter
Closed.....	Dunedin Highland MS.....	70 PATRICIA AVE, Dunedin	Special Needs
Closed.....	East Lake HS.....	1300 SILVER EAGLE DR, Tarpon Springs.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	East Lake MS.....	1200 Silver Eagle Dr #9101, Tarpon Springs.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	Fairmount Park ES.....	575 41ST ST S, St. Petersburg	General Shelter
Closed.....	Gibbs HS	850 34th St S, St. Petersburg.....	Pet Friendly
Closed.....	Gulfport ES	2014 52ND ST S, Gulfport.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	High Point ES	5921 150TH AVE N, Clearwater	General Shelter
Closed.....	Jamerson ES	1200 37th St S, St. Petersburg.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	John Hopkins MS.....	701 16th St S, St. Petersburg.....	Special Needs
Closed.....	Largo HS	410 Missouri Ave, Largo	Pet Friendly
Closed.....	Lealman Exchange.....	5175 45th St N, St. Petersburg.....	Special Needs
Closed.....	Lealman Innovation.....	4900 28th St N, Lealman.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	McMullen Booth ES	3025 Union St, Clearwater	General Shelter
Closed.....	Melrose ES.....	1752 13th Ave S, St. Petersburg	General Shelter
Closed.....	Mildred Helms ES.....	561 Clearwater Largo Rd S, Largo	General Shelter
Closed.....	New Heights ES	3901 37th St N, St. Petersburg.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	Oak Grove MS	1370 S Belcher Rd, Clearwater	General Shelter
Closed.....	Palm Harbor CSA.....	1500 16th St, Palm Harbor	Pet Friendly
Closed.....	Palm Harbor MS.....	1800 Tampa Rd, Palm Harbor.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	Palm Harbor University HS.....	1900 Omaha St, Palm Harbor	General Shelter
Closed.....	Ross Norton Recreation Center.....	1426 S Martin Luther King Jr Ave, Clearwater	Special Needs
Closed.....	Sanderlin K-8.....	2350 22nd Ave S, St. Petersburg.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	Sexton ES	1997 54th Ave N, St. Petersburg.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	Skycrest ES.....	10 N Corona Ave, Clearwater	General Shelter
Closed.....	SPC Midtown	1300 22nd Street S, St. Petersburg.....	General Shelter
Closed.....	Thurgood Marshall MS.....	3901 22nd Ave S, St. Petersburg.....	General Shelter

The freest state?

BY FRANK DROUZAS
Staff Writer

Welcome to Florida, which Gov. Ron DeSantis assures us is the freest state in the country!

Here, **WE ARE FREE** as parents to protect our kids from COVID — as long as we expect ZERO help from Tallahassee on this front. Gov. Ron DeSantis saw to it that Florida was the last state in the nation to not pre-order the vaccines available for children under five.

For now, pediatricians can order the vaccine, but the Florida Department of Health will continue not to order doses. Therefore, state and local health departments — where many low-income families receive healthcare — will not have immediate access to the shots.

Frankly, this should be no surprise to parents and school administrators throughout the state who wanted school mask mandates in place only to have the governor fight those potentially life-saving measures tooth and nail. He even threatened to withhold school funding.

DeSantis and his henchman Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo have both claimed that masks don't even work (despite

evidence to the contrary), and the little tykes are essentially immune to COVID anyway (again, despite evidence that says otherwise).

Here, **WE ARE FREE** to take all the monoclonal antibodies (which may or may not be effective) we can get our hands on — after all, it's the only tactic the governor believes in to combat the pandemic. This “questionable-treatment-rather-than-smart-prevention” approach encourages us to never take any precautions to avoid contracting and spreading COVID and certainly doesn't encourage us to get vaccinated.

Well, the results speak for themselves as a staggering 75,000 Floridians and counting have now perished from this pandemic.

Here, **WE ARE FREE** to exercise our First Amendment right by speaking out against his “Don't Say Gay” law — that is, if you don't mind the retaliation. Just ask Disney. This Florida law bans classroom discussion on sexual orientation or gender identity can only lead to the stigmatization and ultimate isolation of LGBTQ youths.

Disney agreed, officially spoke out against it,

and got promptly slapped with payback measures from the DeSantis as he sought to dissolve the Reedy Creek Improvement District, the governing jurisdiction and special taxing district for Disney World — leaving the good taxpayers of Orange and Osceola Counties stuck with the \$1 billion debt.

Here, **WE ARE FREE** to openly discuss the race problem in schools and our terrible history associated with it, including the unspeakable evil of slavery — except that DeSantis really doesn't want you to. When he officially banned Critical Race Theory (CRT) from being taught in K-12, even he admitted that it was a university course only.

His reasoning for banning it? He claimed CRT principles are finding their way into younger kids' education, ultimately making this some kind of diabolical “indoctrination.” As a result, teachers are now more wary of approaching such topics or tend to keep clear of these issues that could and should be explored in the confines of a classroom, so we can better understand our history and one another.

Here, **WE ARE**



FREE to speak out against the ever-growing problem of gun violence in this country — but expect swift punishment if you do. Just ask the Tampa Bay Rays. The team tweeted awareness about gun violence following the Buffalo, N.Y. and Uvalde, Texas, mass shootings, among others, and sensibly called for change. Strike one.

Furthermore, the Rays donated money to the Everytown charity, which supports gun reform. Strike two. For this, uh, radical activism, DeSantis promptly vetoed \$35 million in state funding to the team — money that was to help fund a

sports training and youth tournament complex in Pasco County.

The governor, who has made his anti-gun reform stance well known, explained that it would be “inappropriate to subsidize political activism of a private corporation.” Strike three.

Here, **WE ARE FREE** to respect a woman's natural right of autonomy over her own body — unless you don't truly believe the woman holds that right at all. For over a half-century, women have had the right to seek safe and legal abortions in this country, but DeSantis seems bent on dragging us back to

the Dark Ages with a draconian anti-abortion law that bans the procedure after 15 weeks of pregnancy without exemptions for rape, incest, or human trafficking.

It's a brazen act indeed from a man who claims he doesn't believe in government overreach.

Yes, fellow Floridians, we are lousy with freedom here and free to express our thoughts if we fully agree with the governor and his views.

DeSantis has long claimed that Florida is the freest state, yet his words, actions, and methods are too often the antithesis of what freedom is supposed to mean.

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<https://www.pcsb.org/FamilyEcoaching>

USF St. Petersburg campus and St. Pete Youth Farm unveil Fresh and Local Greenhouse to fight food insecurity



ST. PETERSBURG – The USF St. Petersburg campus and the St. Pete Youth Farm have unveiled a new greenhouse that will provide the community with fresh vegetables and fish while giving students the opportunity to learn about sustainable and innovative farming methods.

The new greenhouse will enhance urban agriculture and help address food inequality in south St. Petersburg, where access to affordable and nutritious food is limited. The structure will allow for both hydroponics and aquaponics farming and help college and high school students grow their knowledge of food production and build business skills.

“Through this greenhouse project, I am hopeful that we will be able to advance the practical learning of sustainable food production, especially in urban settings,” said Winnie Mulamba, sustainability planner at USF’s St. Petersburg campus. “That it will also provide easy access to affordable fresh and local vegetables to our community, promote creativity among our youth, and attract supportive partnerships from various organizations and businesses within the county and beyond.”

Located in the most densely populated county in the state, St. Petersburg has a limited amount of land available for food production and a higher percentage of people who identify as food insecure than the na-

tional average. According to the nonprofit organization Feeding Tampa Bay, more than 190,000 people in Pinellas County are food insecure.

The greenhouse is growing a variety of lettuces and peppers, which will complement the many fruits and vegetables grown outside at the youth farm. Blue and red tilapia are also being farm-raised within the greenhouse, with their waste used as fertilizer to grow some vegetables within.

Besides providing food, this urban agriculture initiative will teach students various farming techniques and entrepreneurship. A majority of the produce will be sold through a youth-driven social enterprise led by the St. Pete Youth Farm and USF’s St. Petersburg campus, with proceeds going back to support the greenhouse and farm. The remaining produce will be given to local charity centers.

“We thought we were set up to just provide food, but it is way more than that. We are cultivating young people and cultivating food at the same time,” said Carla Bristol, collaboration manager at the St. Pete Youth Farm. “And this greenhouse will allow us to grow year-round, grow in a pest-free environment and teach young people about the variety of ways and technology used to grow for a greater breadth of knowledge and opportunity.”

The Fresh and Local Greenhouse was made

possible by a \$25,000 grant from the Ford Motor Company Fund in 2020. USF’s St. Petersburg campus was one of only seven higher education institutions nationwide to receive a grant through the Ford College Community Challenge that year. Additional funding from USF St. Petersburg campus alumni and internal grants supported the greenhouse and the hydroponics and aquaponics system within.

“The Ford Fund is very proud to have been able to support the Fresh and Local Greenhouse project through the Ford College Community Challenge grant. The opening of the greenhouse is a true testament to the hard work of the students and the local community,” said Mike Schmidt, director of Economic Mobility and Global Community Development at the Ford Motor Company Fund.

The greenhouse unveiling coincided with the St. Pete Youth Farm’s Juneteenth celebration, which featured students and community members working the farm, African drumming, food, and other festivities.

The St. Pete Youth Farm is located outside the Enoch D. Davis Center in south St. Petersburg. It is an urban farm project and youth development program where young people develop essential life skills while learning about growing their own food, leadership and financial literacy.

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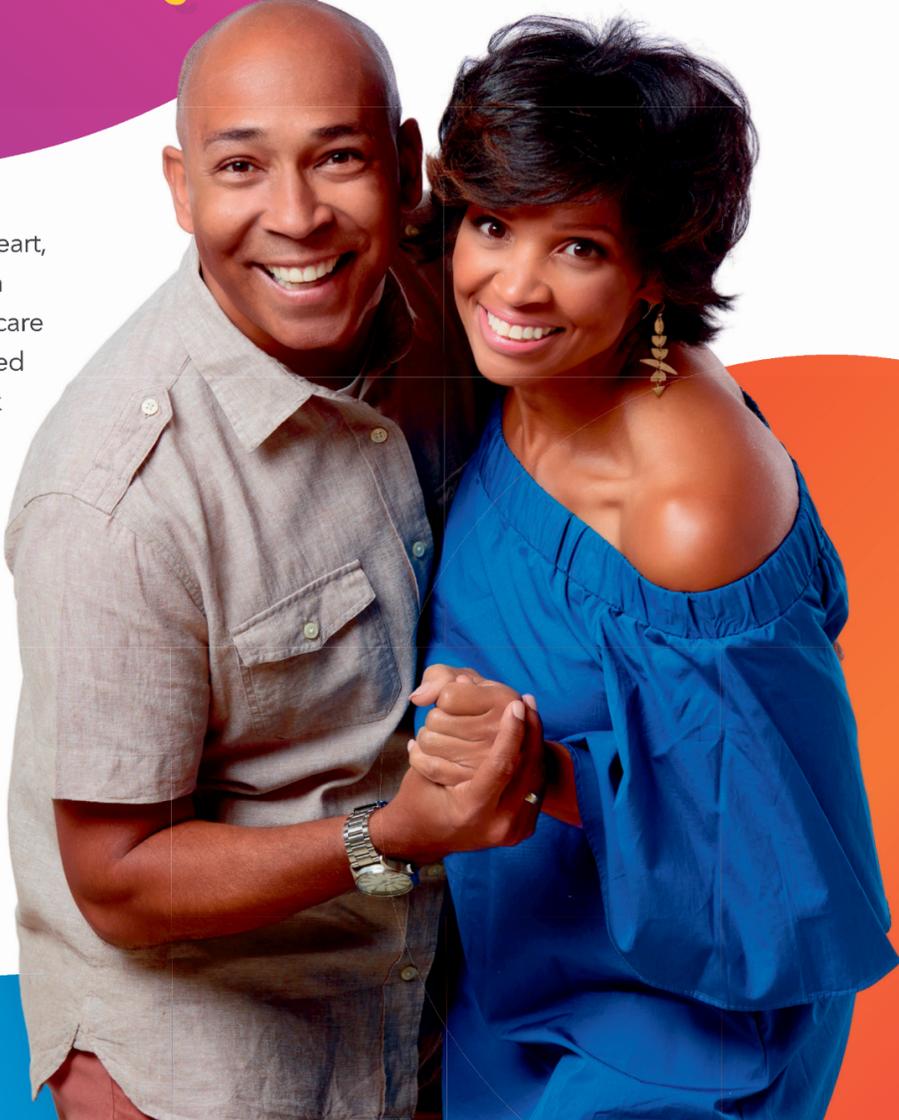
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Sunday Worship Services.....7:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School.....9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Mid-Day Bible StudyNoon - 12:30 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study6:30 p.m.

Youth Chapel Services - 921 20th Street South
Sunday Worship Service10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Small Group Bible Study6:30 p.m.

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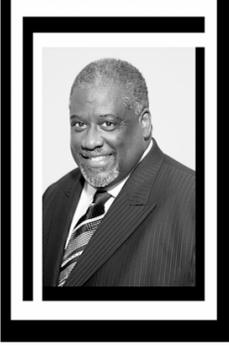
Rev. Louis M. Murphy Sr.
Senior Pastor

First Baptist Institutional Church

3144 Third Avenue South,
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Phone: 727-323-7518

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Praise Time 10:45 a.m.
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Tuesday Night Live -
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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,
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SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES:

- 9:30am in the Sanctuary
- 10:30am Outdoors on Church Grounds

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY: 7:00PM

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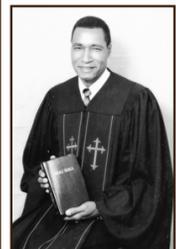
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MATTHEW 28:18-20, JOHN 15:4-5



REV. ROBERT A. VINSON, JR.

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Meeting ID: 226-033-6850 Dial-in #: 1-929-436-2866
Sunday Prayer Service: 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Church School: 9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

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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First Mount Pilgrim Evangelical Missionary Baptist Church

“But for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”
Joshua 24:15

2700 5th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33715
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lpdavismemorial@gmail.com

Sunday Worship Services
Sunday School 9:30 am • Worship Service 11:00 am
Prayer Meeting (Wednesday) 7 pm
Bible Study (Wednesday) 7:30 pm



Reverend
Darrel W. Davis, Sr.
Pastor - Teacher

Victory Christian Center Church

3012 18th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Fla. 33712
(727) 321-0911
www.victorychristiancenterchurch.org



Donn & Jean
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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

20th Street Church Of Christ

825 20th Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Home: 896-8006



Bro. Robert Smith

Sunday Bible Class (All Ages)8:30 a.m.
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.

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INSPIRATIONS

BY DIERDRE DOWNING-JACKSON

Understanding

It is a gift to grow and realize the meaning of true love;
To have a heart that yearns to know the wisdom of our LORD above.
Remembering that our lives are blessed because the Holy One shed His Blood.
A sacrifice no other man has made, to express a precious and eternal love.
We walk this life and must believe that there is a great reward;
When our hearts choose to give to one another, our trust and unconditional love.

The wisdom of our Heavenly Father must be the desire of our life journey.
Understand the Holy gift of JESUS, blesses us with His grace deliverance and amazing mercy.
So seek the wisdom of GOD, in all you say and do;
JESUS, the Holy One, will always see you through.
“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”
Proverbs 9:10 KJV =

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CHURCH NEWS

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 (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.



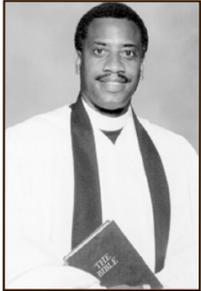
Rev. Brian K. Brown

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.

Van service is available by calling: (727) 327-0015

**THE ROCK OF JESUS IS LOCATED AT:
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Telephone: 727-327-0015 • Fax: 727-327-0021
Email: rojmbc@knology.net
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Rev. Frank W. Peterman, Jr.
 Pastor

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
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 (727) 906-8300 www.friendshipstpetersburg.org
 Email: fmbc3300@outlook.com
 YouTube: FMBC The Ship



Dr. John A. Evans, Pastor

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

Sunday Worship8:45 a.m. "The Hour of Power"
 Sunday School.....8:00 a.m.
 Wednesday in the Word
 12:30 p.m. via ZOOM - ACCESS CODE: 599-819-6863 PASSWORD: 778769
 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM - ACCESS CODE: 509-102-8823 PASSWORD: THESHIP

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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SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP 8:45AM Drive In Centering Service	SUNDAY AFTERNOON WORSHIP 2pm Cultural Integration Worship Experience

10:30AM CREATIVE EXPRESSION WORSHIP EXPERIENCE
 WEDNESDAY NIGHT WORD
 6:30 PM - COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS PRAYER
 7 PM - BIBLE STUDY

WWW.TODAYSCHURCHTAMPABAY
 ZOOM: MEETING ID 375 007 212 PASSWORD 5107



Pastor's Corner

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

Balancing Ministry & Family Jesus, the King of the Kingdom

READ | Matthew 12:46-50 "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, my sister, my mother, my family (Matthew 12:50)." When Jesus, the Wayshower, said my Father, he was claiming his personal relationship with God. His relationship with God superseded the religious rituals and dogmas of his time (John 10:30-36). Not only did Jesus say, my father but he also said my brother, my sister, my mother, my family. While Jesus was in the middle of teaching, his family of origin was requesting his time and attention. Jesus

chose to continue his ministry assignment and to take this opportunity to declare his right to choose his family dynamic. He was saying that my family is no longer limited to blood, marriage, or law. It is important that we pay attention to how we use the word, "my". Whenever we say, "my", we are claiming someone or something as our own. When we say, my family, we are accepting roles, responsibilities, rights, and rewards among a specific group of people. Following Jesus' example, gives us the right to define our family for ourselves. We are em-

powered to co-create with God the family that we desire and deserve based on love, divine connection, and covenant relationships. Having a personal relationship with God entitles you to all these rights and privileges as God's offspring. You are an heir of God and joint heir with Christ Jesus (Romans 8:17). There is no part of God that is cut off from you. You have access to all that God is and all that God has is yours. Therefore, it is completely up to you to establish priorities and set boundaries so that all your relationships can be harmonious.

Balancing Time Alone and Time with Others Jesus, the King of the Kingdom

READ | Luke 6:12-17 (Luke 6:12)." Spending quality time with family, friends and like-minded people allows you to benefit from the gifts that they are and for them to benefit from the gift that you are. This quality time spent together is called fellowship. The root of the word, fellowship, is fellow, which means that to have fellowship, there must be unity and equality. Unity means that you see yourself as one with all people. Equality means that you see other individuals as your equal (Luke 6:31). Therefore, whatever you do to others, you do to yourself and ultimately to Christ

(I Corinthians 12:26). Formal fellowship takes place when you regularly gather physically or virtually with others for prayer, services, classes, and events (Acts 2:42). Informal fellowship provides an opportunity for like-minded people to do fun things together. Both formal and informal fellowships strengthen and encourage you to continue your love journey and wholeness path. In addition to fellowship with others, it also important to have one-on-one time with God and with yourself. Jesus knew how to dismiss the crowds and go to the mountain to pray, especially before

making an important decision like choosing disciples. He was comfortable being with people as well as with being alone and having quality time with God. Follow Jesus' example and be a good steward of your time. Dismiss your crowded thoughts and ascend to the mountain of higher consciousness. Value your alone (all-one) time to focus on your oneness with God. Schedule some time in your planner every day to be still and breathe deeply. Set an alert for at least 7 minutes of silence. Prioritize weekly sabbaths and personal retreats.



Dear Reader:

Stay, Because We Need You Here

Dear Reader, I'm not sure how my words will find you when you read them, but I pray that they find you well and bring you hope and perspective. We need you here because there are details of your life still left to be lived. Dear Reader, you're like the missing piece to our puzzle that would be incomplete without you. So, stay, because we need you here. Dear Reader, when God made you, He created someone beautiful, so stay, because we need

you here. He loves you, dear reader, and there are so many others out there who do, too. And today, we would like you to know that you are valued, loved, seen, and heard. Stay, dear reader, because we need you here. Dear Reader, trust God even in the most difficult places, because He will see to it that you make it to the destination of His promises. I want you to know that you are not alone, and it is my prayer that this column will make you feel as though you have a place to belong and somewhere

to call home. Share your story and prayer requests and at SenecaHoward.com/contact, and our team will be sure to keep you lifted in our prayers. P.S., Yours Truly, The Writer, Seneca Howard www.SenecaHoward.com About Seneca Howard Seneca Howard is a pastor, author, mentor, and motivational speaker who inspires the lives of others through crisis ministry, counsel, and personal development.=



Dear Reader: Shine Your Light, and Be the Inspiration that Others can Make it through the Darkness

Dear Reader, I'm not sure how my words will find you when you read them, but I pray that they find you well and bring you hope and perspective. Shine your light and be someone else's inspiration that they can make it through the darkness. Be the inspiration that they can make it no matter how hard things get, and be the inspiration that one bad chapter does not have to be the conclusion of their story. You see, inspiration can be found in the things that surround us, and I would like to encourage you to inspire. Inspire to make a difference, and inspire to be the light so

that someone else can find their way through the darkness. Beloved, our light can be an example, and the testimony of our life can be the evidence necessary for others to continue to hold onto faith. So, be sincere, be genuine, and be someone who's willing to inspire, because the power of your influence just might be what someone else needs to make it through the darkness. Dear Reader, I pray that you will continue to trust God even in the most difficult places, because He will see to it that you make it to the destination of His promises. I want you to know that

you are not alone, and it is my prayer that this column will make you feel as though you have a place to belong and somewhere to call home. Share your story and prayer requests at SenecaHoward.com/contact, and our team will be sure to keep you lifted in our prayers. P.S., Yours Truly, The Writer, Seneca Howard www.SenecaHoward.com About Seneca Howard Seneca Howard is a pastor, author, mentor, and motivational speaker who inspires the lives of others through crisis ministry, counsel, and personal development.





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- CONFIDENCE IN LEARNING

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