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Spectacular sunsets and breathtaking panoramic views of the St. Johns River await you at this private 5-bedroom, 5.5 bath San Marco estate situated on nearly an acre in one of Jacksonville's most coveted neighborhoods! Enjoy outdoor living on the expansive lanai with pool & spa. With 2 docks and 300' of waterfront, there's room for all your water toys! \$2,395,000



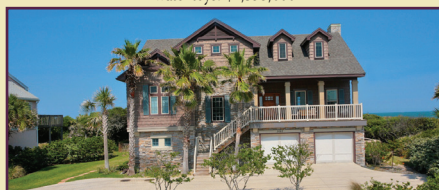
RIVERFRONT ESTATE - JACKSONVILLE

Drive through the wrought iron gates into this magnificent estate with majestic St. Johns River views. This 5-bedroom, 5 full and 3 half bath home features a separate catering kitchen, 2 formal dining rooms, 3 staircases, a music room and game room. \$3,900,000



SOUTH PONTE VEDRA BOULEVARD

Charming fully furnished Cape Cod style beach cottage on 75ft oceanfront lot. Main living areas and 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms on 2nd floor. Sleeping quarters for 6, bathroom, laundry facilities and 2 car garage on ground level. Multi-level decking, outdoor shower, built-in benches. \$795,000



OCEANFRONT - S PONTE VEDRA

Impressive 3-story, 5 Br, 5.5 Ba with bonus room, elevator & gourmet kitchen with plenty of decks and porches. Two master suites plus au pair suite. This is not your basic beach house! \$1,795,000



SPACIOUS WATERFRONT IN OLD PV

Move-in ready with everything you want! 3 bedrooms, 4.5 baths plus bonus/4th bedroom upstairs. Recent upgrades include new roof and Rhino Shield exterior ceramic paint, new pool marcite, a/c unit, windows and more. \$1,550,000



QUEEN'S HARBOUR - JACKSONVILLE

Magnificent resort-like custom home with 4 bedroom, 4.5 bath overlooking harbour with open floorplan, travertine tile throughout and soaring 2-story kitchen. Family room with 10' glass doors opening to lanai and media room with 120" screen. \$2,199,000



GLEN KERNAN GOLF & CC

Extraordinary custom home situated on 1.61 acres with views of 16th green, water and clubhouse. New professional kitchen, Pebbletec pool, home theater & oversized 3+ heated/cooled car garage. A beautiful lifestyle for the most discerning buyer. \$1,599,000



GLEN KERNAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Stunning custom 5 BR, 6.5 BA home with spectacular golf views in prestigious Glen Kernan Golf & CC. New pool, open patio with fire pit and large screened lanai with summer kitchen. Paver driveway and 3 car garage. \$1,795,000



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The First Coast Register is a bi-monthly general interest magazine published by The Ponte Vedra Recorder and OPC News, LLC. The magazine can be found throughout the upscale areas of greater Jacksonville. For advertising inquiries call 904.285.8831.

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on the cover

Holiday shoppers, families and visitors were welcomed to celebrate St. Johns Town Center's Holiday Spectacular, headlined by popular music star, Bea Miller, on Saturday, November 15, 2015.

© St. Johns Town Center



Be MAGICAL

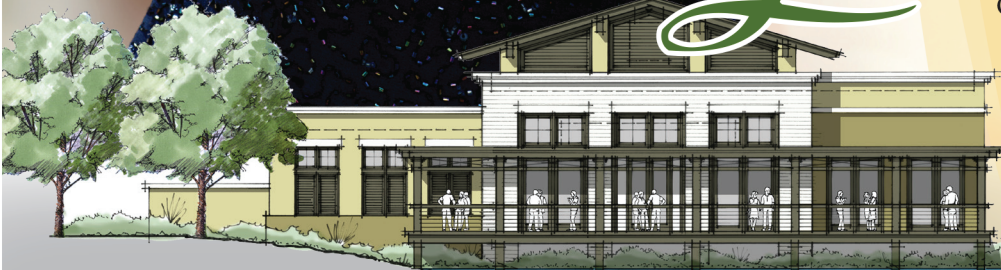
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- Lemon Twist Boutique..... 834-7096
- Marcia's Place 280-9212

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- J. Turner & Company..... *Opening January 2016*
- Village Arts Framing & Gallery..... 273-4925
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- ABC Fine Wine & Spirits..... 285-5760
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The show's music, dance, and stories speak a language everyone can understand. **"It's a superlative educational experience,"** says Matthew Kutolowski, a New Jersey Chinese history and language teacher, who has made taking his students to the show an annual tradition. **"The students were blown away,"** he says. **"One parent even wrote to thank me for giving his son an experience of a lifetime."**

"It was an extraordinary experience for us and the children."

-Cate Blanchett, Academy Award-winning actress

"It was very uplifting, very uplifting and inspiring, and at times—very deep."

-David Eaton, composer, music director and conductor at New York City Symphony director

"I think it's so important for people in the business community to understand the cultural values and traditional heritage of the Chinese culture."

-Stephen L. Norris, International businessman; Co-founder of The Carlyle Group

"I was uplifted. I was filled with hope. ... The world is a better place because of Shen Yun."

-Richard Swett, former U.S. Congressman of Connecticut



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One of Us

ROBIN ROSE

by CARRIE RESCH

Dr. Robin Rose is the new executive director of Girls Incorporated of Jacksonville. Rose was hired after Peg Ganger, the former executive director, retired in September.

Girls Inc. is a national organization, with 82 affiliates in the United States and Canada. Through after school, literacy, summer and outreach programs, Girls Inc. seeks to empower all girls to be Strong, Smart and Bold.

As the mother of three grown daughters, Rose is passionate about the organization's mission. She has been with Girls Inc. for two and a half years. Prior to leading the Jacksonville division, Rose served as the CEO of the Girls Inc. Sarasota division, and prior to that position, she headed Frameworks of Tampa Bay, Inc., an organization which teaches youth to manage their emotions, develop healthy relationships and make good decision for academic, career and personal success.

Rose and her husband, Capt. Wayne Ziskal, associate professor of aviation at Jacksonville University, currently live in South Ponte Vedra but will be relocating to St. Augustine after construction of their new home is completed.

Where are you from originally?

I am a native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, but I'm a military brat. My dad was in the Air Force. I've lived all over the world as a kid; it had its pros and cons.

How are you adjusting to your Jacksonville transition so far?

I think one of the things that I like about this area is I'm a southern girl born and bred, so I really like this area that's very reflective of the gentility of the South — some of the customs of the South. I've lived in South Florida for quite a while. I did my PhD in Ft. Lauderdale, and then I lived over in Sarasota where I led Girls Inc. I was the CEO over there.

I am now the new CEO for Girls Inc. here in Jacksonville. Though the climate is milder than here, you don't get the same sense of southernness [in those cities] as you do here, and that's something that I really appreciate about this area.

What do you like about living here?

I really like the business community in this area; I love the group of strong, smart and bold women that I have met in Ponte Vedra — women in the Women's Giving Alliance, women who are really committed to youth issues. There are just so many amazing things about this area and about the really great work that people are doing for kids — not only girls, but all kids — to make sure that they thrive in life and that has always been my personal calling and ministry.

How long have you lived in Ponte Vedra?

I just moved here August. My husband I just got married last November; we're getting



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ready to celebrate our first wedding anniversary. I relinquished the reigns in Sarasota, once they had found my successor, so I could do a seamless transition. So, the whole time [my husband and I have] been commuting between one coast to the other. He's a professor at Jacksonville University and a retired American Airlines captain. He teaches aviation at Jacksonville University.

How did you come by your new position?

Luckily for me, the CEO who was here, she was really the interim executive director and I knew her well from the Girls Inc. family, and she reached out to me. I applied and got the position.

Tell me about Girls Inc.

The mission of Girls Inc. is to inspire all girls to be strong, smart and bold. And really what those three words mean — they are related to the development of the whole child.

So, strong means we are delivering research-based programming to girls that helps them make healthy life choices for themselves to avoid risky behaviors. And that's really important for girls of all ages.

Smart, is exactly what it sounds like, which is around academic achievement, but we also know that that strong bucket, that healthy living bucket, that you don't like your body and you don't like a million things about yourself, that that leads to a low self-confidence which has impacted academic achievements. [At] Girls Inc. Jacksonville, we serve girls who are sort of the lower economic homes, to make sure that they know how to read, and our K-3 program is really around reading and literacy quite a bit.

And then the bold programming that we do is around teaching girls life skills. So, communication, conflict resolution — those skills and tools that they need to advocate for themselves throughout their lives.

So I like to say that the mission of Girls Inc. is very much about helping to break generations of cycles of welfare and poverty and to dream higher and to think bigger about who you want to become and have all of those resources at your disposal. I really love Girls Inc. for that mission.

What are some of your goals as the new executive director of Girls Incorporated of Jacksonville?

We're a national organization with 82 affiliates in the United States and Canada, and one of the things here in the Jacksonville area is people don't know the mission of Girls Inc. They have an opinion that we just do a safe place for girls to go after school because all of our programs are after school — but it's so much more.

So raising that brand awareness and helping our community understand the relevance of single gender education programming, why it's so needed and really the intentional work that we do in those three buckets and to set girls up for success along with schools and along with the community and families. I'm a big believer [that] it takes a village to raise a child these days — more than ever before. So helping people to understand our mission and to raise that brand awareness in Jacksonville is something that I will be working on very strategically along with the staff and board.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

[I enjoy] working out — running is definitely something important to me just to help maintain balance in my life, which is a good thing. I love the ocean — so walking on the beach or anything that has to do with that. [I like] bike riding, kayaking — those kinds of things. And with my husband being a retired airlines pilot, we have that ability to travel. I have four grandbabies. One is in Denver and two are in Sarasota, so as much as I can get to see those grandkids, is what I do.

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Sweet treats and historic beats

Annual tour in Amelia Island showcases signature cookies, inns and holiday décor

by CARRIE RESCH

Grab your walking shoes and your appetite.

The Amelia Island Bed and Breakfast Association Annual Cookie Tour takes place Saturday, Dec. 12 from noon to 5 p.m.

The self-guided tour features six inns located within a six-block area in the downtown historic district. Attendees can visit the inns in any order they wish. Each inn will feature a signature cookie for attendees to sample, as well as the cookie recipe card as a keepsake. Each inn will also be decked out in holiday décor so you can get inspired with some decorating tips.

For those wishing to take a load off, complimentary trolley service and carriage rides will be offered as available.

Tickets are \$25 each and are available for purchase online at www.ameliainn.com. Tickets will also be sold at the Fernandina Beach Public Library, the Amelia Island Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Amelia Island-Fernandina Beach-Yule Chamber of Commerce.

Each attendee, even children, needs their own ticket to participate.

The association chooses a local charity to

donate a portion of the proceeds to each year. This year, the chosen charity is the Friends of the Fernandina Beach Public Library.

At the same time as this year's holiday cookie tour, the inaugural "Dickens on Centre" festival will be happening. The 10-day festival will take place Dec. 4-13.

Historic downtown Fernandina Beach, which earlier this year was designated a Florida Main Street community, will be transformed into a Victorian-era Christmas scene.

The festival will include street vendors, carolers, stage performers, a window decorating contest, visits from Saint Nick and readings of "T'was the Night Before Christmas."

Saint Nick visits will take place Fridays from 7-9 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m.-noon and 2-5 p.m.

Readings of "T'was the Night Before Christmas" will take place Fridays and Saturdays at 6:45 p.m. and Sundays at 4 p.m.

For more information about Dickens on Centre, visit www.ameliainn.com/things-to-do/Festivals/Amelia-Island-Dickens-On-Centre.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY AMELIA ISLAND BED & BREAKFAST ASSOCIATION



Rum Pecan Patties
 1 cup butter, softened
 1 cup sugar
 1 egg yolk
 1 tsp rum or 1/2 tsp rum extract
 1/2 tsp vanilla
 2 1/2 cups cake flour
 1/2 tsp salt
 42 pecan halves

- In large bowl, beat butter with electric mixer on med. speed. Gradually add sugar, beating well. Add egg yolk, rum and rum extract and mix until well blended. Cover, refrigerate.
- Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Shape dough into 1 1/2 inch cookie sheets, place half 2 inches apart. Press 1 pecan half on each cookie. Bake 12-14 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool on cookie sheets to cooling rack.

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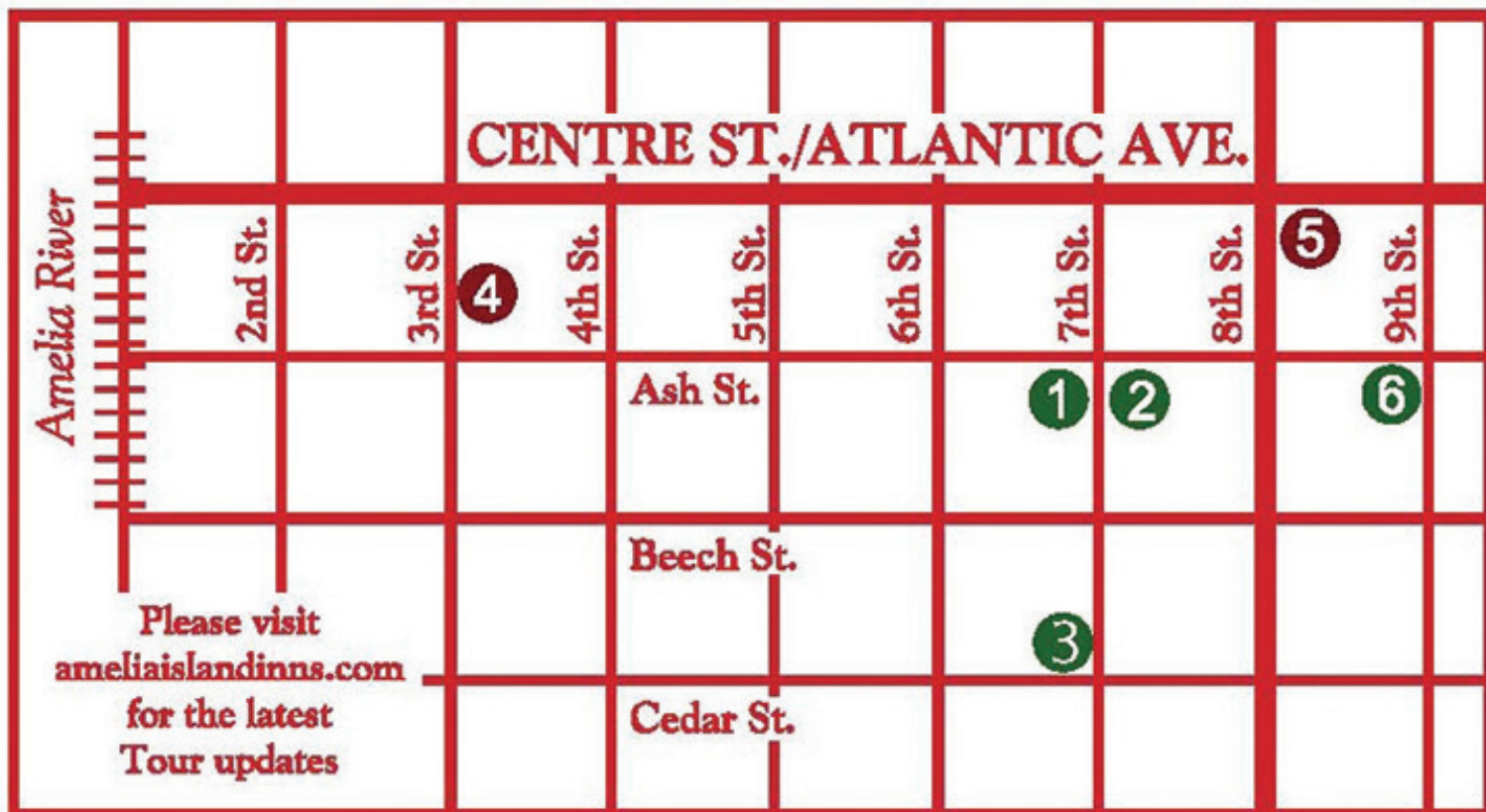


German Chocolate Cookie Bars
 1/2 cup butter, softened
 1/2 cup brown sugar
 1/2 cup white sugar
 1 egg
 1/2 tsp vanilla
 1/2 tsp almond extract
 1/2 cup pecan halves
 1/2 cup walnuts
 1/2 cup coconut
 1/2 cup flour
 1/2 tsp salt

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In large bowl, beat butter with electric mixer on med. speed. Gradually add sugars, beating well. Add egg, vanilla and almond extract. Mix well.
- Stir in pecans, walnuts and coconut. Press dough into 12 inch x 18 inch cookie sheet. Bake 12-14 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool on cookie sheet to cooling rack.

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addisononamelia.com

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ameliaislandblueheroninn.com

3 - Fairbanks House
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 (904) 277-0500
fairbankshouse.com

4 - Florida House Inn
 22 S. Third St.
 (904) 491-3322
floridahouseinn.com

5 - Hoyt House
 804 Atlantic Ave.
 (904) 277-4300
hoythouse.com

6 - Williams House
 103 S. Ninth St.
 (904) 277-2328
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Red Rose Ball

TO CELEBRATE
100 YEARS OF
COMPASSIONATE
CARE

Preparations for the 35th Annual Red Rose Ball are underway. The event, hosted by the St. Vincent's HealthCare Foundation, will be held at the Jacksonville Marriott at Southpoint on February 12th, 2016, as St. Vincent's celebrates its 100th anniversary. Chairing the 2016 Red Rose Ball are Rhonda and Mark Mostovych, MD; Rosalind and Mark Travis and Jan and Lou Walsh along with the Honorary Chair, Sister DeSales Wisniewski, D.C.

Each year, the Red Rose Ball raises money for various projects at St. Vincent's HealthCare, a member of Ascension, the nation's largest Catholic and non-profit healthcare system. Last year, the event raised almost \$400,000.

"The Red Rose Ball is a wonderful event which helps us fulfill our Mission to provide compassionate care to all people in our community, no matter where they are in life," said St. Vincent's HealthCare Foundation President, Jane R. Lanier, CFRE. "Each year, our sponsors and patrons help us raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for programs that help make our community healthier for all."

This year, all proceeds will benefit the St. Vincent's Mobile Health Outreach Ministry, which provides free medical care to those who are struggling the most, including uninsured or underinsured men, women and children throughout the area.

This year's theme will focus on the 100th anniversary of St. Vincent's, founded by the Daughters of Charity in 1916 to provide health



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services to the communities in North Florida. The event will feature a cocktail hour, dinner and dancing, as well as live and silent auctions. Cocktails begin at 7 p.m., followed by dinner at 8 p.m.

For more information about the Red Rose Ball, including how to make reservations or to become an event sponsor, contact Jessica Waugaman at St. Vincent's Foundation at 904-308-7306 or Jessica.Waugaman@JaxHealth.com.



Red Rose Ball 2016 Co-Chairs, Left to Right: Mr. & Mrs. Mark Travis, Mr. & Mrs. Lou Walsh, and Dr. & Mrs. Rhonda Mostovych



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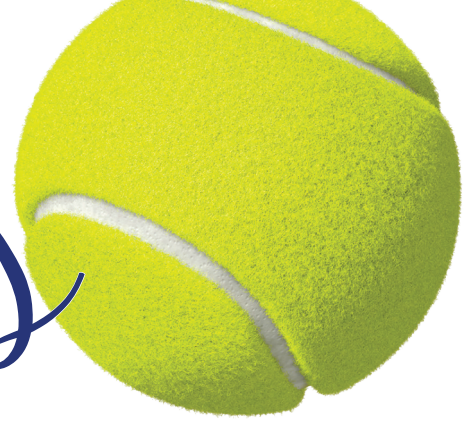
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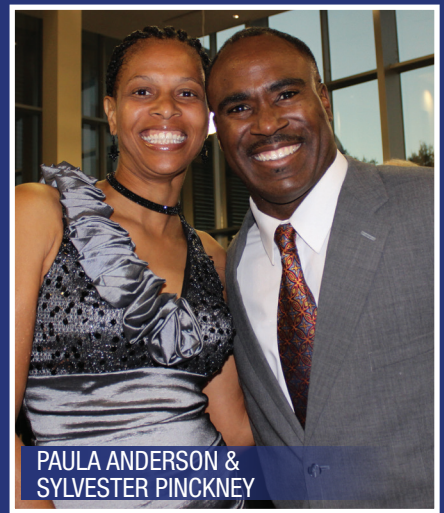
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\$775,000

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MALIVAI WASHINGTON

In October, the Malivai Washington Youth Foundation presented its largest annual fundraiser, the Current/Sherman Group of Merrill Lynch Champions for Children Gala at the Florida Blue Conference Center in Jacksonville.

The gala has traditionally raised approximately \$200,000 annually to support the programs and services of the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation (MWYF).

Eighteen MWYF students who have earned scholarships were recognized during the dinner, and guests had the opportunity to participate in several raffles and bid on auction items.

Alumni members Keanna Bell and Deshawn "Scotty" Brown gave testimonials about the foundation during the dinner. Guests also heard from founder and Ponte Vedra resident MaliVai Washington and featured guest Chris Evert.

"Chris' first appearance at the Gala was in 1997 and we are so pleased that she has chosen to return to support us at our 19th event," said MWYF Founder and Ponte Vedra Beach resident MaliVai Washington. "Chris' work ethic and accomplishments both on and off the court make her a great example for our students."

During her career, Evert won 18 Grand Slam titles and appeared in either the finals or semifinals in 52 of her 56 Grand Slam appearances. Evert's career highlights include holding the No. 1 rank in the world for seven years, being the first player to win 1,000 singles matches and having a .904 win average during her 17 year career.

MWYF promotes academic achievement and uses tennis to engage students in an active and fun youth development program. Their flagship program, TnT (Tennis-n-Tutoring), is a comprehensive five-day-per-week after school program which includes tennis lessons, daily homework assistance, and life skills classes to Jacksonville's most underserved youth. The mission of the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation is to develop champions in classrooms, on tennis courts and throughout communities. For more information, visit www.malwashington.com.



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HISTORIC HOMES ON DISPLAY AT THE *holidays*

by LEIGH CORT

Two of the most celebrated bed and breakfast inns in America, the legendary and historic St. Francis Inn (circa 1791) and Casa de Suenos (circa 1904) are considered outstanding lodging properties in St. Augustine. Both Inns are participating in the 22nd Annual Holiday Tour of Bed & Breakfast Inns, Dec. 12 and 13. The much anticipated weekend has chosen 'Christmas in Toyland' as their event theme.

Proudly partnering with Meehan's Irish Pub to bring the flavors of Ireland to tour guests, the St. Francis Inn will be serving two of their popular dishes along with Meehan's Irish Crème (Taste of St. Augustine Grand Prize Winner 2014)! The Casa de Suenos is partnering with Mojo's BBQ and The Gifted Cork, serving a delicious pairing of BBQ and holiday wines to tour attendees.

Casa de Suenos is scheduled on the Sat., Dec. 12 tour, and St. Francis Inn is scheduled on the Sun., Dec. 13 tour.

Additionally, there is a free tour shuttle trolley, courtesy of Old Town Trolley. It stops at several locations along the tour route. Tickets are good for one or both days and once ordered, will be emailed to tour goers.

Visit www.staugustinehistoricinns.com or email sahistorictours@yahoo.com for ticket information.



The Inns treat their guests 365 days a year to complimentary evening desserts that are homemade and uniquely created for a perfect ending before bedtime. After guests enjoy their dinner or activities throughout St. Augustine, they enjoy returning to the comforting parlor or dining room, sipping a beverage and indulging their sweet tooth on something yummy and surprising from cook Janice Leary's kitchen.

For Christmas 2015, once again the Inns' themed desserts will be paired with one of the '12 Days of Christmas'. Each of the desserts pays homage to the English Christmas Carol that represents a series of increasingly grand gifts presented on each of the 12 days of Christmas.

The song, first published in England in 1780 (only a decade before the Inn was built), was performed without music and offered as a chant or rhyme. Representative of that era – the St. Francis Inn was built in 1791!

ENGLISH CHRISTMAS CAROL

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11. Pipers Piping
10. Lords-a-Leaping
9. Ladies Dancing
8. Maids-a-Milking
7. Swans-a-Swimming
6. Geese-a-Laying
5. Gold Rings
4. Calling Birds
3. French Hens
2. Turtle Doves
1. Partridge in a Pear Tree

INN DESSERT

- Whoopie Pie Drums
- Pecan Pie
- Lords a Leaping
- Log Cake
- Strawberry Lady Finger Cake
- Tres Leche Cake
- Swan Cream Puffs
- Goose Nest Cupcakes
- Gold Rings Upside Down Cake
- Calling Birds
- Christmas Cake
- French Macaroons
- Turtle Dove Cheesecake
- Pear Custard Pie

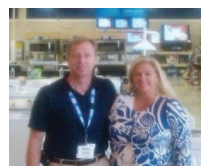
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Season
OF
Giving

by CARRIE RESCH

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GIVE THAT
BENEFIT
LOCAL
CHARITIES

The holidays are all about giving — not receiving. That is, unless of course you are a charity.

In the season of giving, it is possible to do both.

Some local charities and organizations sell items you can purchase as holiday gifts that in turn benefit the charities or programs they offer. It's the gift that gives... twice!

So when you're doing your holiday shopping this season, consider giving a gift that gives back to a charity. You can even seek out a charity or organization that matches your recipient's interests, such as homeless pets, special education or emergency assistance for low-income families.

Here are just a few ideas of 'gifts that give' to local organizations.

Seasons of Grace Garden Cookbook

BEAM, which stands for Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry, assists low-income beach residents, providing guidance and aid in times of emergencies

and guiding qualifying families to be self-sufficient. The non-profit organization has been serving the Beaches community for 30 years.

Two years ago, BEAM developed Grace Garden, a production farm built and run almost entirely by community volunteers. The garden provides fresh, organic produce to families needing assistance from BEAM to pay for groceries. The garden's bounty is offered in conjunction with BEAM's food pantry.

BEAM's "Seasons of Grace Garden Cookbook" includes recipes inspired by what is grown at the garden. Recipes are divided into four seasons, with each season featuring recipes for appetizers, salads, sides, entrees and dessert. Each recipe features a vegetable, herb or fruit grown during

that season at Grace Garden.

The cookbook can be purchased for a \$15 donation to BEAM and is available to order online at www.jaxbeam.org or can be purchased at the BEAM office located at 850 Sixth Ave. S., Jacksonville Beach. It is also available for purchase at The BookMark, 220 First St., Neptune Beach.

If you have a gardener in your life, or someone with a culinary passion, the cookbook would make the perfect gift. Additionally, Grace Garden has an adopt a garden box program. A \$250 tax deductible donation funds the garden box for an entire year. For more information, call (904) 631-6062 or email maryellen@jaxbeam.org.

2016 Pin Up Paws calendar

For this year's St. Augustine Humane Society pet calendar, pets were asked to sit, stay and strike their best pose in a pets-in-chairs themed 2016 calendar.

Pets featured in the calendar were chosen through a contest where pet owners submitted photos of their pets online and competed for a spot in the calendar. Winners were chosen through an online voting process, which



also served as a fundraiser for the animal rescue organization. To community voted for their favorite pet at a fee of \$1 per vote cast and the entry fee for the contest was \$5.

The top 13 finalists were chosen to appear in the calendar with the pet with the most overall votes being chosen as the featured "cover pet." The 12 runners-up each represent a month in the calendar.

The winning pets were photographed at Garrett Brothers Home Decor by award-winning professional photographer, Addison Fitzgerald. Fan favorite June Carter, a Golden Retriever puppy owned by Adam Whittington was chosen as this year's calendar cover pet.

The full-size, color calendar is available for purchase at the SAHS located at 1665 Old Moultrie Road in St. Augustine or at Garrett Brothers Homes Décor, 1764 Tree Blvd., Ste. 4, St. Augustine. The cost of the calendar is \$10. One hundred percent of the proceeds from submissions, votes, sponsorships and calendar sales benefit SAHS programs and services.

For more information, call the SAHS at (904) 829-2737, email info@staughumane.org or visit www.staugustinehumanesociety.com.

Artwork, furniture and home décor

The Arc Jacksonville was founded 50 years ago by a group of parents, families and educators who wanted to create new opportunities for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The mission of the organization, to help these individual achieve their full potential and participate in community life, is accomplished through programs and services that serve over 350 individuals daily at several locations throughout Jacksonville.

Among the programs and services the organization offers, which include but are not limited to employment opportunities, job skill training, education and advocacy, The Arc Jacksonville offers two distinct

programs that creatively engage the individuals the organization serves.

These programs channel a creative outlet while simultaneously benefitting the individual participating in the programs.

A.R.T., which stands for Artistic Realization Technology, is an art method program open to individuals participating in Max Care. Paintings are created by a "surrogate" artist, but all manner of the design aspect of the art piece is designed by the I/DD individual for the surrogate artist to create the actual art piece.

These works of art are available for purchase with half of the proceeds benefitting the individual as earnings and half of the proceeds being invested back into the program. A full catalog of artwork along with pricing information, is available online at www.arcjacksonville.org/a-r-t-program.

Transform Abilities is a budding program that allows individuals to earn a fair wage through the creation and sale of furniture and home décor accessories made from reclaimed and recycled materials.

The items are all made from solid wood and include several different styles of coffee tables and matching end tables, book shelves, wine racks, tool carts and holiday décor items.





A cost calculator is used to determine the cost of the piece based on labor and materials, but décor items generally range in cost from about \$5-\$25 and furniture is in the price range of around \$40-\$350 depending on the piece.

The program also offers a customizable furniture option, where the public and commission a furniture or accessories. A popular option is using Pinterest for inspiration and having someone's "pinned" item be created by the individuals in the Transform Abilities program.

To learn more about the program or inquire about purchasing a piece, visit www.arcjacksonville.org/transform-abilities or call or email William Adams at (904) 355-0155 or transform_abilities@arcjacksonville.org.

Dried herb mixes and Barkin' Biscuits

The North Florida School of Special Education, located in Jacksonville, was established in 1992 with a mission to improve the lives of students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities through academic, vocation and social skills.

One of the schools programs, Berry Good Farms, was established with the goal of teaching horticulture to NFSSE students ages 6-18 and a self-sustaining industry for transition students, ages 18-22 and post

graduates, ages 22 and over.

At the farm, the students and post grads grow a variety of fruits, vegetables and herbs. Besides the sale of seasonal produce to students, the community, restaurants and caterers, Berry Good Farms also produces packaged food items such as Barkin' Biscuits dog treats and dried herb mixes.

The products are created by students with fresh, cultivated items grown at the farm. Barkin' Biscuits are \$6 per box and spice and ranch dip mixes are \$3 each.

Another way to support the organization is through the farm adoption program. Options range from purchasing a buckets of worms or garden tools for a student, all the way up to adopting the farm, greenhouse or aquaponics program for a year, and everything in between such as adopting a vegetable garden or berry producing row. Prices range from \$25 all the way up to \$10,000.

To learn more about the North Florida School of Special Education or Berry Good Farms or to donate, visit www.northfloridaschool.org.

To order Barkin' Biscuits or the dried herb mixes, contact Ellen Hiser, director of Berry Good Farms at (904) 724-8323 or email ehiser@northfloridaschool.org.



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Delicious

DINING IN SUPPORT OF CHS

photos by SUSAN GRIFFIN;
story by KELLY H. MCDERMOTT

The best of the best in First Coast food returned to the Avenues Mall on Oct. 25 for the 32nd annual Caring Chefs event, benefitting the Children's Home Society of Florida. The event is touted as the biggest and best food and wine tasting in Jacksonville, hosting crowds of upwards of 2,000 attendees in the mall to sample cuisine from across Northeast Florida. This year's event raised more than \$200,000.

Both levels of the Avenues Mall were taken over by restaurant vendor booths as visitors were invited to roam, the halls sampling wine and spirits while listening to live music, all in the name of helping children. More than 10 new restaurants joined the roster this year including Orsay, Black Sheep, Table 1, Kazu Japanese Restaurant and

Terra Guacha Brazilian Steakhouse.

Thirty years ago, the board of directors for the Children's Home Society of Florida began the Caring Chefs event in hopes of gaining community support for their cause. The event supports the group's overall mission: embracing children, inspiring lives.

The proceeds from Caring Chefs are a major portion of the funding for the 22 programs that provide aide and prevention of child abuse. The programs are broken down into three categories: embracing families, residential and clinical programs.

For more information found at www.chsfl.org/caringchefs.



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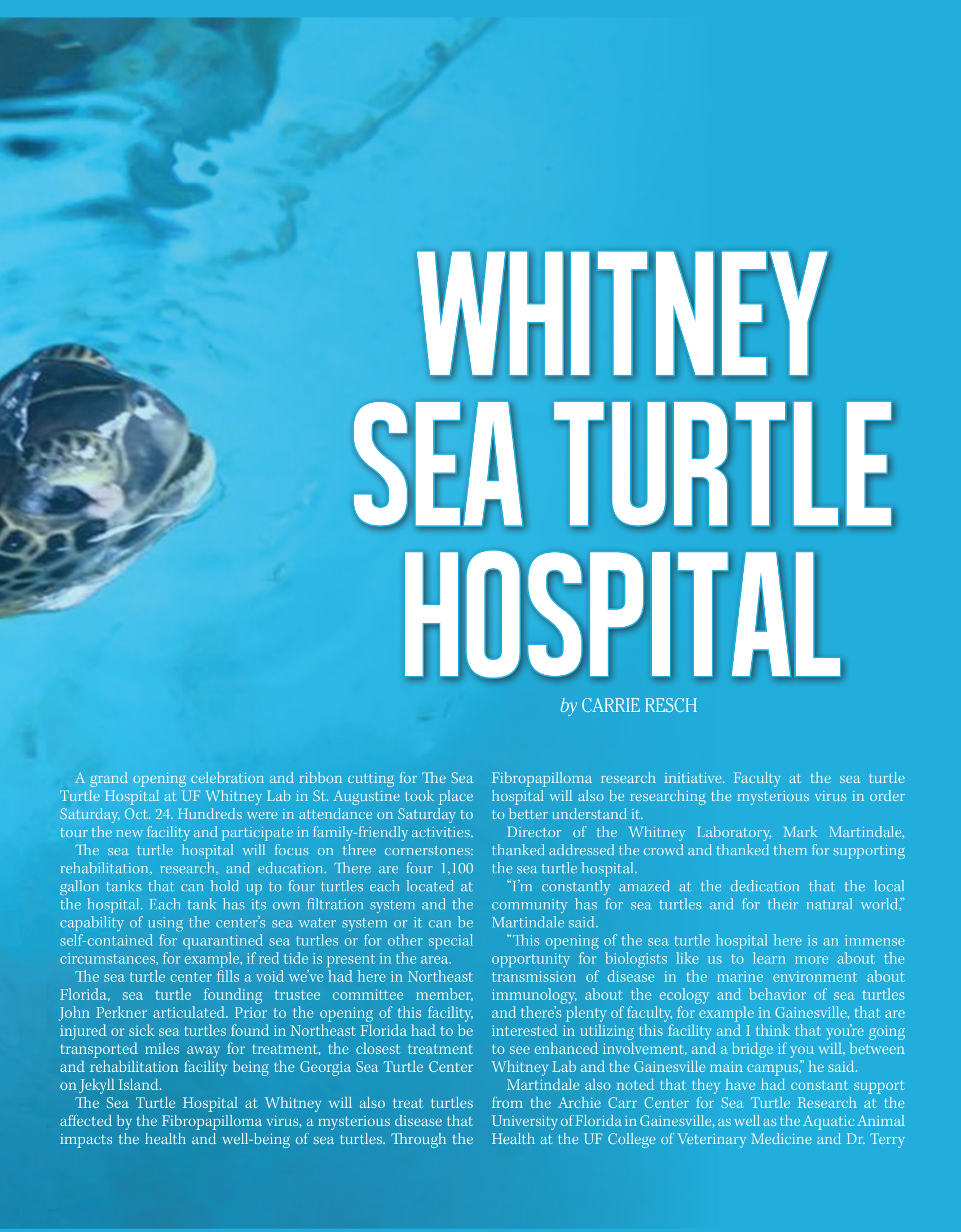


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WHITNEY SEA TURTLE HOSPITAL

by CARRIE RESCH

A grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting for The Sea Turtle Hospital at UF Whitney Lab in St. Augustine took place Saturday, Oct. 24. Hundreds were in attendance on Saturday to tour the new facility and participate in family-friendly activities.

The sea turtle hospital will focus on three cornerstones: rehabilitation, research, and education. There are four 1,100 gallon tanks that can hold up to four turtles each located at the hospital. Each tank has its own filtration system and the capability of using the center's sea water system or it can be self-contained for quarantined sea turtles or for other special circumstances, for example, if red tide is present in the area.

The sea turtle center fills a void we've had here in Northeast Florida, sea turtle founding trustee committee member, John Perkner articulated. Prior to the opening of this facility, injured or sick sea turtles found in Northeast Florida had to be transported miles away for treatment, the closest treatment and rehabilitation facility being the Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island.

The Sea Turtle Hospital at Whitney will also treat turtles affected by the Fibropapilloma virus, a mysterious disease that impacts the health and well-being of sea turtles. Through the

Fibropapilloma research initiative. Faculty at the sea turtle hospital will also be researching the mysterious virus in order to better understand it.

Director of the Whitney Laboratory, Mark Martindale, thanked addressed the crowd and thanked them for supporting the sea turtle hospital.

"I'm constantly amazed at the dedication that the local community has for sea turtles and for their natural world," Martindale said.

"This opening of the sea turtle hospital here is an immense opportunity for biologists like us to learn more about the transmission of disease in the marine environment about immunology, about the ecology and behavior of sea turtles and there's plenty of faculty, for example in Gainesville, that are interested in utilizing this facility and I think that you're going to see enhanced involvement, and a bridge if you will, between Whitney Lab and the Gainesville main campus," he said.

Martindale also noted that they have had constant support from the Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research at the University of Florida in Gainesville, as well as the Aquatic Animal Health at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine and Dr. Terry

Norton, director and veterinarian of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center. He also said that an emerging pathogens institute in Gainesville that's also expressed a lot of interest in utilizing this resource for their own research. The Sea Turtle Conservancy located in Gainesville helped outfit the surgery center.

Funding for the sea turtle hospital was accomplished through private donors and a State License Plate Grant from the Sea Turtle Conservancy, making it truly a community and grassroots-type effort, according to Martindale.

As if on cue, two days after the grand opening, a juvenile green sea turtle was found floating near the Swoope Site Boat Ramp in New Smyrna Beach. "Swoope" became the hospital's first official sea turtle patient.

Gas in Swoope's GI tract was causing the sea turtle to float. Swoope was also diagnosed with the Fibropapilloma virus and underwent a CT scan at Precision Imaging Centers in Jacksonville to make sure the sea turtle didn't have any internal tumors along with the external tumors the turtle had from the virus.

Once Swoope's red blood cell numbers increase, he or she will undergo surgery to remove the tumors.

The Sea Turtle Hospital at UF Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience is located at 9505 Oceanshore Blvd., St. Augustine.

For more information, to make a donation to the Sea Turtle Research and Rehabilitation fund, or to join the Friends of the Sea Turtle Hospital, visit www.whitney.ufl.edu/education-conservation/sea-turtle-hospital.



WHITNEY LABORATORY



Jesse Grosso Garcia, research grants coordinator for The Whitney Laboratory, greets visitors at the check-in table. The sea turtle hospital was funded through private donors and a State License Plate Grant from the Sea Turtle Conservancy.

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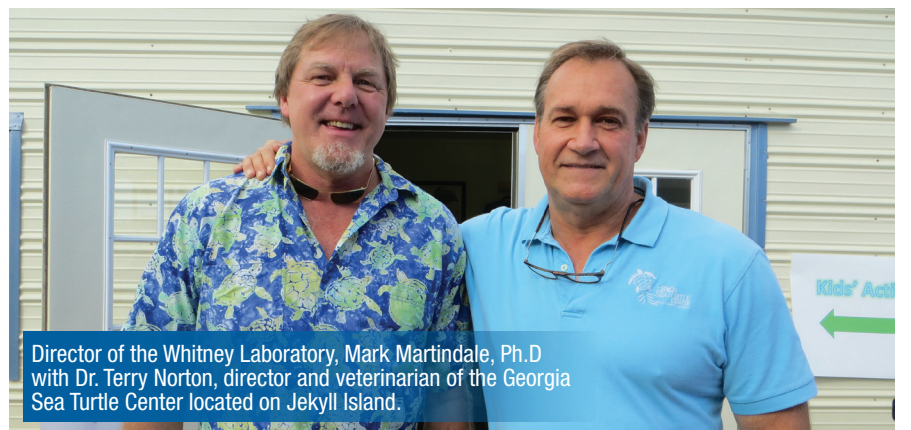
The treatment room: Steven Nelson, certified veterinary technician at the sea turtle hospital, answers visitors' questions during the grand opening celebration.



Nancy Condron and Catherine Eastman, local sea turtle advocates who were instrumental in the development of the sea turtle hospital, do the honors of cutting the ribbon. Eastman is the sea turtle program coordinator for the sea turtle hospital and Condron is on the sea turtle founding trustee committee.



Luke Gregoire, 3, from St. Augustine gives a high-five to "Barry" the sea turtle mascot.



Director of the Whitney Laboratory, Mark Martindale, Ph.D with Dr. Terry Norton, director and veterinarian of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center located on Jekyll Island.



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Sawgrassvillagepvb.com/lemon-twist-boutique

Lemon Twist Boutique specializes in resort “preppy” fashions for women, men and children. You can find designer clothing, shoes, accessories and gifts for any occasion.

Native Sun

3rd St., Baymeadows Rd., San Jose Blvd.
Nativesunjax.com

Native Sun offers food, gifts, and other items that are all-organic and hand-selected by an expert staff to be healthy and ethical.

Olde Towne Toys

113 King St., St. Augustine
(904) 814-8710

Oldetownetoys.com

Olde Towne Toys is the largest independent specialty toy store in St. Augustine, offering brand favorites like Lego, Playmobile, Thomas the Train and Melissa & Doug.

Paradise Palms

2 Fairfield Blvd., #3, Ponte Vedra Beach
(904) 686-1464

Paradise Palms offers hot stone massage, facials, skin care and massage therapy to give anyone on your list the gift of relaxation and beauty.

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Olde Towne Toys

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Premier Garage of Northeast Florida

11651 Central Pkwy., #112, Jacksonville
(904) 830-0912

Garages-Jacksonville.com

Premier Garage of Northeast Florida installs garage flooring, garage cabinets and garage organization systems throughout the First Coast area.

Raintree Restaurant

102 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine
(904) 824-7211

Raintreerestaurant.com

Raintree offers casual, intimate dining with a selection of more than 300 wines and continental cuisine with a picturesque St. Augustine background.

The Reef

4100 Coastal Hwy., St. Augustine
(904) 824-8008

Thereefstaugustine.com

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Scan Design

8206 Philips Hwy., Jacksonville
(904) 721-7877

Scandesign.com/pages/Jacksonville

Scan Design's Jacksonville store offers 36,000 square feet of modern, contemporary furniture and Scandinavian teak.

Shen Yun

(888) 974-3698

Shenyunperformingarts.org/jacksonville

Shen Yun performing arts celebrates 5,000 years of Chinese civilization live on stage through the universal language of music and dance. Shen Yun will visit Jacksonville Jan. 16 and 17 for two performances.

Sidney Cardel's

237 5th Ave. S., Jacksonville Beach
(904) 372-4000

Sidneycardels.com

Sidney Cardel's is the go-to place for home shopping, accessorizing and unique boutique gifts in Jacksonville Beach.

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(904) 352-1177

Simplywine.com

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TPC Sawgrass

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(904) 273-3235

Tpc.com/tpc-sawgrass

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Village Arts

1520 Sawgrass Village Dr., Ponte Vedra Beach
(904) 273-4925

Villageartspbv.com

Village Arts offers more than 150 paintings to choose from, featuring local and nationally renowned artists.

Village Jeweler

880 Sawgrass Village Dr., Ponte Vedra Beach
(904) 825-4812

Villagejewelerofpontevedra.com

Village Jeweler offers a large selection of fine jewelry from noted contemporary designers, along with nautical and island-themed pieces and watches.

Willie's

3567 St. Johns Ave., Jacksonville
(904) 384-3664

Williesforkids.com

Willie's carries all the looks a family needs for the holiday season for classic to contemporary, offering children's apparel for infants, toddlers, girls and boys.

Village Jeweler



TPC Sawgrass



A SMALL WORLD OF WONDER REVEALED IN PONTE VEDRA

by JASMINE MARSHALL



Fantasy Farms is a “farm” in the least traditional sense.

Where there should be bright red barn doors, there’s a red wrought iron gate nestled in brush and hidden behind the colossal palm trees lining South Roscoe Boulevard. Between unassuming churches and residential communities is one of North Florida’s best kept secrets: an eclectic mix of classic cars, exotic animals and a modge-podge of kitsch collectibles that add up to create one bizarre wonderland called Fantasy Farms — and it’s unlike anything else.

Fantasy Farms is a semi-private property and 501c3 non-profit founded by interior designer Louie Williams that plays host to a variety of animals, many of which are rescues. A few among them are an umbrella cockatoo, several macaws, two

wallabies, ring-tailed lemurs, peacocks and an ocelot — all housed on two acres of land in the heart of Ponte Vedra.

For its proximity to the beaches and the shopping centers of the town, it may as well be a rainforest or a tropical island all its own. It’s a corner of the world that Vice President of Operations Ramon Jimenez calls “a hidden gem.”

“I’m ex-military — I did 25 years Navy and I thought I’d seen everything in my travels,” Jimenez said. “I thought I’d seen all the world had to offer but this microcosm of a place in such a small town — it’s a blast. Unlike anything I’d ever seen.”

And those rarities don’t end with animals. Fantasy Farms also houses a selection of automobiles collected by Williams and President Frank Barker, including one red 1955 T-Bird that

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belonged to Colonel Sanders, a green 1954 Foxtrot MG and a 1929 Hacker-Craft boat.

But the real showstopper is Roscoe's, the all-in-one dining hall, dance floor, bar and pop-culture museum. The floorspace is a wall-to-wall time trip featuring cultural artifacts: a Mrs. Pac-Man machine, shelves stocked with model cars and a collection of vintage Pez dispensers, an authentic piece by the late Keith Haring, a miniature Japanese slot machine overflowing with tokens, animatronic mascots, vinyl records and an assortment of neon signs and strobe lights are just a handful of the collected pieces on display. It extends to an outdoor bar with even more eccentricities; a gigantic Piggly Wiggle sign and a displaced (functional) traffic light adorn the dock. As Vice President of

Marketing Scott Nelowet said, the oddities add to the charm.

"It's a completely random assortment of things that just work together," said Nelowet. "It's a mix of items that makes this place a completely unique experience."

And it's an experience the team at Fantasy Farms is excited to share according to Vice President of Administration and Finance Cathy Dugan.

"We've been closed for so long and there's just so many neat and cool things here," Dugan said. "We don't want to get too big, but we want to continue to rescue these animals and keep educating the community about the wildlife here."

For more information about Fantasy Farms' attractions and event services, visit fantasyfarmsevents.org.

first coast ARTISTS

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OWN YOUR OWN STYLE IN *St. Augustine*

by KELLY H. MCDERMOTT

The doors opened to Christé Blue 13 years ago, inviting shoppers to enjoy “fashion for a fraction” from this “upscale resale” store.

Thirteen years later, the store stays true to its original credo — but now offers much more.

“Our emphasis is not to try and stay in the rotation with the circular fashion industry,” said owner Matt Cafiso. “It’s not

about chasing style. It’s taking possession of those quality items of clothing that you like, that you’ve always felt comfortable in, that you feel is ‘you.’”

The staff at Christé Blue has always helped shoppers take control of their own style, whether it was through the strong consignment offerings that carried the store for many years or through the newer Christé Blue Couture Collection. Cafiso

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Register

said that the store is moving away from consignment, instead offering discounted high-end clothing that has been acquired through boutique buyouts from luxury retailers across the country.

Even so, the store has always been an experience for shoppers. From the moment you walk through the electric doors and spot the signature chandelier, you can tell there is something special about the store. Shoppers are invited to explore the meandering showrooms filled with eclectic offerings from everyday fashion to couture gowns to new designer pieces and estate jewelry — all with an emphasis on quality.

“You just fall into the ambiance,” Cafiso said. “We want people to come in and have a good time. We want to give them value and we want to give them things that are different. People come in the door and they’re smiling – it’s a place where they can come and not feel forced or feel odd. It’s more friends than it is customers.”

The friendliness of the staff manifests in the way that the store has grown, too, as Christé Blue has expanded into more community-oriented activities such as hosting fashion shows. The fashion shows, which utilize everyday models from the community, encourage models and attendees alike to own their favorite style. Each model is invited to come into the store and work with Susan Cafiso, Matt’s wife and co-owner of Christé Blue, to select several outfits to model.

“We’re looking at the next step and the next phases,” Cafiso said – never satisfied by the status quo. “We’re doing a lot of higher-end all-solid, unique furniture as well as odd and eclectic pieces – those items and elements that accent your home and your personality. It could be an odd teak piece or a high-end leather sofa and loveseat.”

Visit www.christeblue.com for pictures of some of the great finds and offerings from the store, as well as information about upcoming fashion shows. Christé Blue is located at 1035 Anastasia Blvd. in St. Augustine (904-808-1235).





CHAMBER RECOGNIZES BUSINESS leaders

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce acknowledged some of this area's business leaders during the Annual Awards Event at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort. Entertainment was provided by the Chris Thomas Band & Dance Alday Ballroom & Latin studio.

The Chris Thomas Band presents big band music fashioned after great performers like Sinatra, Martin, and Davis. Full of soul and power, the band also performs Motown favorites as well as current hits.

Dance Alday is the premiere Ballroom and Latin Dance Studio in Ponte Vedra Beach. With over 45 years of combined teaching experience, knowledgeable instructors guide students from their very first step, all the way to becoming a champion.

For more information, visit www.sjcchamber.com.



Winner Spotlights:

Lori Adams received The Ponte Vedra Ambassador of the Year Award. This award is also known as Grace Hayes Ambassador of the Year Award, dedicated to Grace Hayes, former Editor of the Ponte Vedra Recorder. Lori Adams is known as gracious, hardworking and a team player. She has served as a Ponte Vedra ambassador for over 3 years.

Phil McDaniel, president of the St. Augustine Distillery Company, received the 2015-16 Fred Schroeder EDC Member of the Year Award.

Phil McDaniel has been a two-time nominee and winner of the BP Brand-Builder-of-the-Year award by BP, one of the world's largest refining and marketing companies. He started and led US Import and Promotions Co. as president & CEO, USI grew to become a recognized leader in consumer promotion products for the convenience and oil industry. For the last 11 years, Phil has given back to the St. Augustine community in a variety of local non-profit and philanthropic roles.

Among Phil's most recent milestones has been to lead a brave group of 28 local Augustinians to sign up for not only launching a small business but contemporaneously revitalizing an authentic turn-of-the-century manufacturing plant. His company and the revitalization project is so successful that both he and his neighbors received the 2014 Award for Excellence for the Reuse/Repurpose Sector by the Urban Land Institute and it has become a "must see" museum for locals and tourists alike.

Phil has a passion for using locally grown agriculture

products to distill super-premium, small-batch spirits better than anyone in the world. We want to thank and recognize our honoree for taking risk, making a significant private financial investment, adding to the attractions base in St. Augustine and for helping to generate dozens of new jobs.

Dr. Erika Hamer, owner of the Ponte Vedra Wellness Center received Chamber Member of the Year Award for Outstanding Contributions.

Dr. Erika Hamer graduated from Chiropractic School at Life University in Marietta, GA, holds the special post-graduate designation of Diplomate in Chiropractic Neurology and is also fully licensed in Neuro-Electrodiagnostics. In 2004, Dr. Hamer opened Ponte Vedra Wellness Center and since that time, she has continued to seek ways to better serve her patients medical and wellness needs. She is certified in Webster Technique for pregnancy, is currently a member of ICPA and pursuing her board certification in Chiropractic Pediatrics. In addition, she has received AFAA certification as a Fitness Trainer. Recognizing the strong relationship between wellness and fitness, Dr. Hamer opened the Ponte Vedra Wellness Training center in 2012, offering medically-supervised fitness training.

Dr. Hamer remains active in the local community through service and by conducting health talks and postural screenings at local businesses and senior centers. She has taught Anatomy & Physiology at the North Florida Institute of Massage Therapy.

Dr. Hamer is the immediate past president of the Chamber's Ponte Vedra Beach Division and a past president of the Northeast Florida Chiropractic Society.

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From left: First Sgt. Maurice Huffman, First Sgt. Jose Beltran, Cpl. Gabriel Gonzalez, Richard Mette, L. Cpl. Jacob Bell, Capt. Luis Jones and Maj. Simon Durso

JACKSONVILLE MARINES

birthday ball

REMEMBERING BOB METTE

by KELLY H. MCDERMOTT



In November, Lance Corporal Jacob M. Bell and Corporal Gabriel Gonzalez were presented with the Robert A. Mette Memorial Award and Mette Memorial Scholarship, respectively. Each year, locals remember Robert Allen "Bob" Mette with the two honors at the annual Marine Corps Birthday Ball.

Bob Mette stands out in the minds of his high school classmates because of his involvement in the community and his school, but also because he was the first member of the 1956 Landon High School graduating class to die. Mette received his Landon diploma on June 8, 1956, in Jacksonville and died just 65 days later on August 12, 1956 at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The Western Union Telegram began, "I regret to inform you that your son Pvt Robert Allen Mette USMCR is critically ill at this hospital due to Acute Meningitis." Mette's father was enjoying a quiet Sunday morning at home with his two younger sons when the message was delivered. Mr. Mette immediately drove to Mayfair Baptist Church to pick up his wife, Cora. They packed quickly, and the Mette family headed to Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, NC, to be with their oldest son. Their trip was in vain - Bob Mette died that afternoon before his family arrived.

The news of Mette's death shocked and saddened his high school classmates and the community. Mette was a high-profile high school athlete, active in his church, and little league baseball coach and an active participant at Landon.

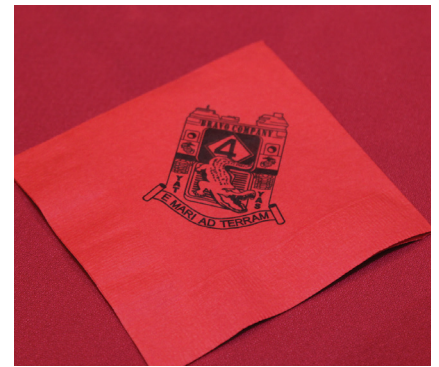
On Dec. 22, 1955, Mette had joined the 2nd Amphibian Tractor Co., U.S. Marine Corps based in Jacksonville. One of Mette's obligations as a U.S. Marine Corps Reservist was to attend two weeks of active duty training each summer. The designated training base for 1956 was Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, N.C. After a day of liberty during the following August, Mette became ill and disoriented and was admitted at the U.S. Naval Hospital. Mette died that afternoon of acute spinal meningitis.

After Mette's death, John Lanahan, then the commanding officer of his Marine Unit, established the Robert A. Mette

award in memorial of his outstanding leadership, dedication and involvement with the unit and his community. The first award was given in 1956 to a young man from Jacksonville Beach.

Additionally, since 1999, the \$1,000 Mette Family Scholarship has been presented annually by Richard Mette on behalf of the Mette family. It recognizes one Marine for academic achievement. Bob's only surviving brother Richard is fully involved in his brother's memory. He donated the Robert A. Mette Memorial Plaque for many years, and in 1999 he established the \$1,000 Mette Family Scholarship to compliment the Robert A. Mette Memorial Plaque. These two awards are presented annually to two Marines in the Jacksonville-based 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, 4th Marine Division.

"I am most proud and honored each year, on behalf of my brother and my family, to hand out the Robert A. Mette Memorial Award and Scholarship," Mette said. "These two winners should take pride in personifying the strong leadership traits the Marines so greatly cherish. The professional excellence and service to the Marine Corps is in keeping with the spirit of this award of the past number of years."



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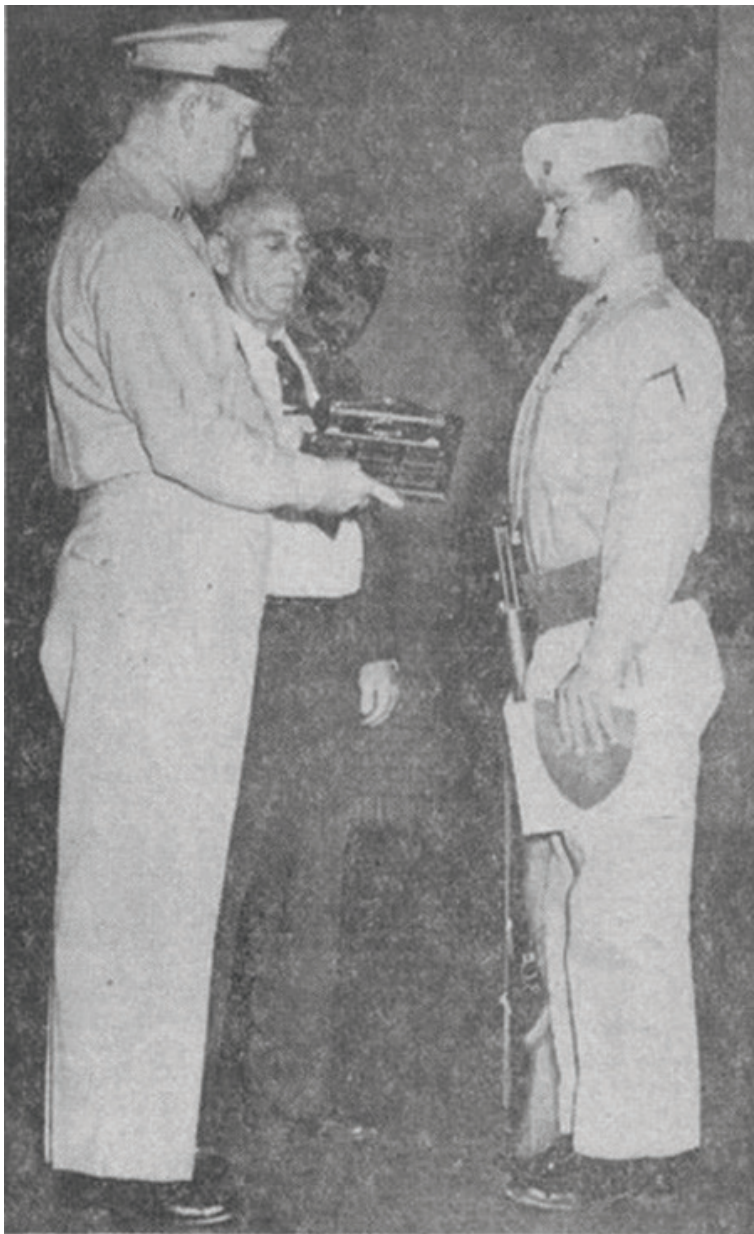
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FIRST MEMORIAL AWARD

Marine Pfc. Bobby Taylor of 521 Ninth Ave. S., Jacksonville Beach (right), last night was awarded the first Robert A. Mette Memorial Plaque. The plaque will be awarded annually to the member of the 2nd Amphibian Tractor Company, USMCR, who shows outstanding leadership, sportsmanship and initiative while attending annual field training. It is in memory of Pvt. Robert A. Mette, who was stricken with meningitis while in summer training with the unit. His father, Robert H. Mette (center), watched Capt. John Lanahan make the presentation.



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Holiday Events

Celebrate the holidays North Florida-style with our holiday calendar of events. This special holiday event guide is filled with ample options for kids, adults and teens to enjoy the sights, sounds and tastes of the season. You'll find some traditional annual event and a few inaugural ones as well. Whatever your delight, let our holiday calendar lead you on a holiday adventure to make lasting memories while you share in the season. Happy holidays!



HOLIDAY IN THE GARDENS

Washington Oaks Gardens State Park's annual Holiday in the Gardens is Sunday, Dec. 13 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Festivities include live holiday music, children's activities and arts & crafts, tea with Mrs. Claus, photos with Santa, a plant sale and more. The event is included with park entry fee; additional activities extra. Washington Oaks Gardens State Park is located at 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd., Palm Coast. For more information, call (386) 446-6783 or visit <https://www.floridastateparks.org/park-events/Washington-Oaks>.

BEACHES MUSEUM & HISTORY PARK HOLIDAY EVENTS

The Beaches Museum & History Park presents three festival ways to celebrate the holidays: The Polar Express, Holiday Open House, and the Celtic Christmas Concert. The museum is located at 381 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville Beach. For more information, call (904) 241-5657 or visit www.beachmuseum.org.

The Polar Express

On Friday Dec. 4 from 2-6 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 5 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. the Beaches Museum welcomes the arrival of Santa and the Polar Express steam locomotive at Pablo Station.

Holiday Open House

On Thursday, Dec. 10 from 5:30-8:30 p.m., the public is welcome to visit the museum and park to share festive cheer and to light up the park.

Celtic Christmas

On Monday, Dec. 21 at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. the museum presents Celtic Christmas as part of the museum's concert series. Admission is \$20 in advance; \$25 day of show.

SCIENCE WITH SANTA

The Museum of Science and History presents a special holiday-themed Extreme Science Show Saturday, Dec. 5 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The event will feature holiday-themed education games and activities, a visit with Santa and Extreme Science Shows at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in the JEA Science Theater.

MOSH is located at 1025 Museum Circle, Jacksonville. For more information, call (904) 396-MOSH or visit www.themosh.org

WINTER DISCOVERY CAMP

Winter Discovery Camps at the Museum of Science and history take place Dec. 21-23 and 28-30. The camp is for kindergartners through fifth-graders and are designed to entertain kids while parents finish holiday preparations. Camps take place from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. The cost is \$60 per day; extended care is available for an additional charge.

MOSH is located at 1025 Museum Circle, Jacksonville. For more information, call (904) 396-MOSH or visit www.themosh.org.



CHAMPAGNE & SHOPPING AT THE CUMMER SHOP

Champagne & Shopping features expanded store inventory at The Cummer Shop and trunk shows from artisans' merchandise. Guests can partake in a glass of champagne while shopping. Additional discounts are available each day. Champagne & Shopping takes place Wednesday, Dec. 2 from 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 3 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Friday, Dec. 4 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The event is free; no registration is required. For more information, call (904) 899-6035. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens is located at 829 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville.

HOLIDAZZLE AT RIVERSIDE ARTS MARKET

The Riverside Arts Market will feature local vendors, holiday cheer and extended hours during the annual RAM Holidazzle on Saturday, Dec. 12 from 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Events include Christmas movies on the River Stage from 6-9 p.m. live music by Jacksonville Harmony Chorus, Pine Forest School of the Arts, Jax Treblemakers, Chris Thomas with Taylor Roberts and Courtney Frazier, winter brews and holiday cocktails and more. RAM takes place rain or shine under the Fuller Warren Bridge at 715 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville. For more information, call (904) 389-2449 or visit www.riversideartsmarket.com

'CHRISTMAS CAROLE' AT THE ALHAMBRA

Beginning Tuesday, Nov. 24, Bruce Allen Scudder's "Christmas Carole" will be performed at Alhambra Theatre & Dining. The play will be performed through Dec. 24. The theatre is located at 12000 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (904) 641-1212 or visit www.alhambrajax.com.

YAPPY HOUR CHRISTMAS PAWTY

The Yappy Hour Christmas PAWty is Sunday, Dec. 6 from 2-5 p.m. Festivities include decorating a dog ornament, prizes and cash giveaways. There will also be free dog photos with Santa with any \$10 value pet food or treat donation or a \$10 cash donation. Pet photos with Santa are limited to the first 50 dogs. The donations will benefit Animal Care and Protective Services. Yappy Hour takes place at The Jacksonville Landing, 2 Independent Drive in Jacksonville. The events are free and open to the public.

ZOOLIGHTS

Thousands of LED lights will be on display at the Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens for ZOOLights, Dec. 11-13 and Dec.18-Jan. 2 (closed on Christmas Day). The zoo closes at 5 p.m. and reopens for ZOOLights 6-9:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 6-10 p.m. Friday-Sunday. The cost is \$10 for non-members; \$8 for members. Other activities such as warm weather "ice" skating, train rides, s'mores kits and the 4-D Theater ride featuring "The Polar Express," are offered for an additional fee. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.jacksonvillezoo.org.

[jacksonvillezoo.org](http://www.jacksonvillezoo.org).

LIMELIGHT THEATRE PRESENTS 'THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER'

"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" will be performed on stage at the Limelight Theatre Dec. 11 through Jan. 3, 2016 with a special preview night Thursday, Dec. 10. Showtime is 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. There will be no performances Dec. 24-25. Limelight Theatre is located at 11 Old Mission Ave., St. Augustine. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (904) 825-1164 or visit www.limelight-theatre.org.

THE ATLANTIC BEACH EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE PRESENTS 'CONEY ISLAND CHRISTMAS'

ABET presents "Coney Island Christmas" Dec. 4 & 5, 11-13 and 18-20. Showtime is 8 p.m. for Friday and Saturday night performances; 2 p.m. for Sunday performances. Tickets are \$20 for adults; \$10 for children. The theatre is located at 716 Ocean Blvd., Atlantic Beach. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (904) 249-7177 or visit www.abettheatre.com.

SMALL OBJECTS HOLIDAY ART SALE

The annual Small Object Holiday Art Sale takes place from Dec. 4-28 at the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach, 50 Executive Way, Ponte Vedra Beach. Over 30 local artists will be displaying and selling their small hand-crafted art including handcrafted jewelry, glass work, paintings, pottery and more. All items are priced between \$25-\$350.

An opening reception will take place Friday, Dec. 4 from 6-8 p.m. For more information, call (904) 280-0614 or visit www.ccpvb.org.

AMELIA ISLAND MUSEUM HOLIDAY HOME TOUR

The 9th annual Amelia Island Museum Holiday Home Tour is Friday, Dec. 4 and Saturday, Dec. 5 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The home tours will showcase six private beach homes along the Amelia Island Coastline. Each home will be decorated by professional florists and designers. Tickets are \$25 and available to purchase online at www.ameliahometours.com and at selected venues on Amelia Island until 4 p.m. Dec. 3. Day-of-event tickets are \$30 and available at the Museum or any of the featured homes.

DICKENS ON CENTRE

The "Dickens on Centre" festival will be happening. The 10-day festival will take place Dec. 4-13 in historic downtown Fernandina Beach. Downtown Fernandina will be transformed into a Victorian-era Christmas scene. The festival will include street vendors, carolers, stage performers, a window decorating contest, visits from Saint Nick and readings of "T'was the Night Before Christmas." Saint Nick visits will take place Fridays from 7-9 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m.-noon and 2-5 p.m. Readings of "T'was the Night Before Christmas" will take place Fridays and Saturdays at 6:45 p.m. and Sundays at 4 p.m. For more information

about Dickens on Centre, visit www.ameliainland.com/things-to-do/Festivals/Amelia-Island-Dickens-On-Centre

'HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS! THE MUSICAL'

The tale of the Grinch who stole Christmas comes to life on stage at the Jacksonville Times-Union Center Dec. 1-6. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (904) 442-2929 or visit www.fscjartistseries.org.

CHANUKAH WONDERLAND CRAFT & FUN FAIR

Chabad @ the Beaches presents the annual Chanukah Wonderland celebration Monday, Dec. 7 at the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach, 50 Executive Way, Ponte Vedra Beach. The children's wonderland and fun fair takes place from 4:30-6 p.m., followed by a giant menorah lighting with free Chanukah delicacies at 6 p.m. There will also be an arts & crafts fair and an Olive Press Show. The event is free and open to the public. Donations are appreciated. For more information, call (904) 543-9301 or visit www.chanukahwonderland.com.

CHRISTMAS MESSIAH AT THE PONTE VEDRA CONCERT HALL

The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, located at 1050 A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach, will be hosting "Christmas Messiah," performed by UNF soloists, Chamber singers and Chamber Orchestra, Saturday, Dec. 5. There will be two separate performances – a matinee and an evening performance. Doors open for the matinee show at 2:30

p.m.; show starts at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15. The evening show begins at 7:30 p.m. with doors opening at 7 p.m. Tickets are sold separately for the two performances. Proceeds from this performance will benefit the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall and the UNF Music Department. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/messiah-favorites-matinee-performance-tickets-17498441309>.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY PHONE CALLS FROM SANTA

The St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department is hosting its annual Phone Calls from Santa event Dec. 8-11. The program is open to St. Johns County children eight years old or younger. Parents can register their children through Dec. 4. Registration forms can be found online at www.sjcfl.us/youth and faxed to (904) 209-0321 or emailed to jbaccari@sjcfl.us. Santa will be making his phone calls nightly from 6-7:30 p.m. Dec. 8-11.

CHRIST CHURCH PRESENTS 'THE NUTCRACKER'

Christ Church presents the 20th annual Nutcracker, Saturday, Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. at UNF's Lazzara Performance Hall. The 2015 Nutcracker will feature almost 300 performers who range in age from two and a half to 90-years-old. Proceeds benefit charitable organizations. Tickets are \$25 and are available for purchase online at www.missfeliciasdance.com. For more information, call (904) 923-0604.

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PALM VALLEY LIGHT & BOAT PARADE

The annual Palm Valley Light & Boat parade featuring festively decorated boats, is Saturday, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. The boat parade takes place in the Palm Valley Intracoastal Waterway. The event is rain or shine. For more information, call (904) 395-5217 or visit www.palmvalleylightparade.com.

REGATTA OF LIGHTS

The 2015 Regatta of Lights, a traditional light boat parade that takes place on the Bayfront in St. Augustine between the Bridge of Lions and the Castillo de San Marcos, is Saturday, Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. For more information, call (904) 824-9725 or visit www.staugustineyachtclub.com.

DECK THE CHAIRS

Decorated iconic red American Red Cross Life Saving Corps. Lifeguard chairs will be on display in downtown Jacksonville Beach throughout the month of December. For more information, visit www.deckthechairs.org.

COMMUNITY FIRST CREDIT UNION'S DECEMBER TO REMEMBER

Community First Credit Union presents A December to Remember through Dec. 19. The event features free and ticketed events including holiday favorite movies, concerts, a St. Augustine Fire Department Chili Cook-off and more! Events take place at either the St. Augustine Amphitheatre, 1340 C A2A S., St. Augustine or the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach. For a full list of events, visit www.staugamphitheatre.com.

ST. AUGUSTINE CHRISTMAS PARADE

The 61st annual St. Augustine Christmas Parade is Saturday, Dec. 5 at 10 a.m. The parade features floats, marching bands, antique cars and more. The parade starts at the Mission Nombre de Dios located at 27 Ocean Ave. and ends at the St. Augustine Visitors Center located at 10 W. Castillo Drive. For more information, call (904) 824-4997.

HEMMING PARK FOOD TRUCK RALLY AND KIDS WINTERFEST

Hemming Park decks the halls Saturday, Dec. 19 from noon-5 p.m. with food trucks, table vendors, kids activities and the arrival of Santa at 1:30 p.m. Hemming Park is located at 303 N. Laura St., Jacksonville.

'RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER'

A live-action production of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" will take place Sunday, Dec. 13 at 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. at the Thrasher Horne Center for the Arts, 283 College Drive, Orange Park. For more information, visit www.thcenter.org.

RIPLEY'S BIG RED TRAIN & WINTER CARNIVAL

Hop aboard one of Ripley's Red Trains for a "lightseeing" tour of the St. Augustine Night of Lights displays around the city. Guests will receive a free pair of glasses to enhance their light-viewing experience. New this year;

no-wait VIP tickets are available on Friday and Saturday nights that include a free carousel ride. VIP guests can reserve a time for the train tour and skip the lines. Additionally, Night of Lights ticket holders can play a round of Prancer's Putt-Putt mini golf for a \$1 from Nov. 22-Jan. 5. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.ripleys.com/redtrains. Ripley's Winter Carnival will be open Friday and Saturday nights from Nov. 27 through Dec. 19. The carnival features carousel rides, carnival games and free activities including family movies, visits with Santa, state shows, balloon art, popcorn and snow.

CHRISTMAS IN AVONDALE

Christmas in Avondale takes place Shoppes of Avondale Saturday, Dec. 5 from 5-9 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Avondale Merchants Association. For more information, visit www.shoppesofavondale.com.

ST. AUGUSTINE NIGHT OF LIGHTS

View St. Augustine's award-winning, stunning light display during the annual St. Augustine Night of Lights. The historic city is decked out in thousands of white lights for your viewing pleasure now through Jan. 31.

WINTERFEST AT ADVENTURE LANDING

The 5th annual WinterFEST takes place at the Jacksonville Beach Adventure Landing location on select nights and times now through Jan. 10. Enjoy outdoor ice skating, nightly snow falls, an alpine racer ice slide, games, holiday treats and more. Call (904) 246-4386 or visit www.jaxwinterfest.com for the complete operating schedule and ticket prices. Adventure Landing is located at 1944 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville Beach.

DRESSING OF THE PALMS

Palm trees adopted and decorated by Vilano Beach businesses and organizations compete for awards during the Vilano Beach's annual Dressing of the Palms. The palm trees will be on display through Dec. 31. The award ceremony will take place Saturday, Dec. 5 during the Vilano Beach Sunset Celebration on the Pier. For more information, call (904) 910-8386 or visit www.vilanobeachfl.com.

67th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS AND HOLIDAY CONCERT

The 100 voice strong St. Augustine Community Chorus, along with the St Augustine Youth Chorus present the 67th Annual Christmas and Holiday Concert, "Christmas Tableaux – Peace, Hope, Joy and Awe", under the direction of Michael Sanflippo with accompaniment by a chamber orchestra. Performances include festive works ranging from traditional to contemporary, including choruses from G. F. Handel's "Messiah." The performance will take place on Saturday, Dec. 12 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica in downtown St. Augustine. Ticket prices are: \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door; \$5 for Students. Tickets can be purchased online at www.staugustinecommunitychorus.org or at select venues. For further information, call John Reardon

at (904) 982-2210.

GARDEN CLUB CHRISTMAS TOUR OF HOMES

The Garden Club of St. Augustine presents the 47th annual Garden Club Christmas Tour of Homes “Christmas in St. Augustine 1565-2015” on Sunday, Dec. 6 from noon-5 p.m. Tour privately owned homes in the historic downtown district of St. Augustine decorated for the holidays by the club. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased online at www.gardenclubofstaugustine.org or at select retailers.

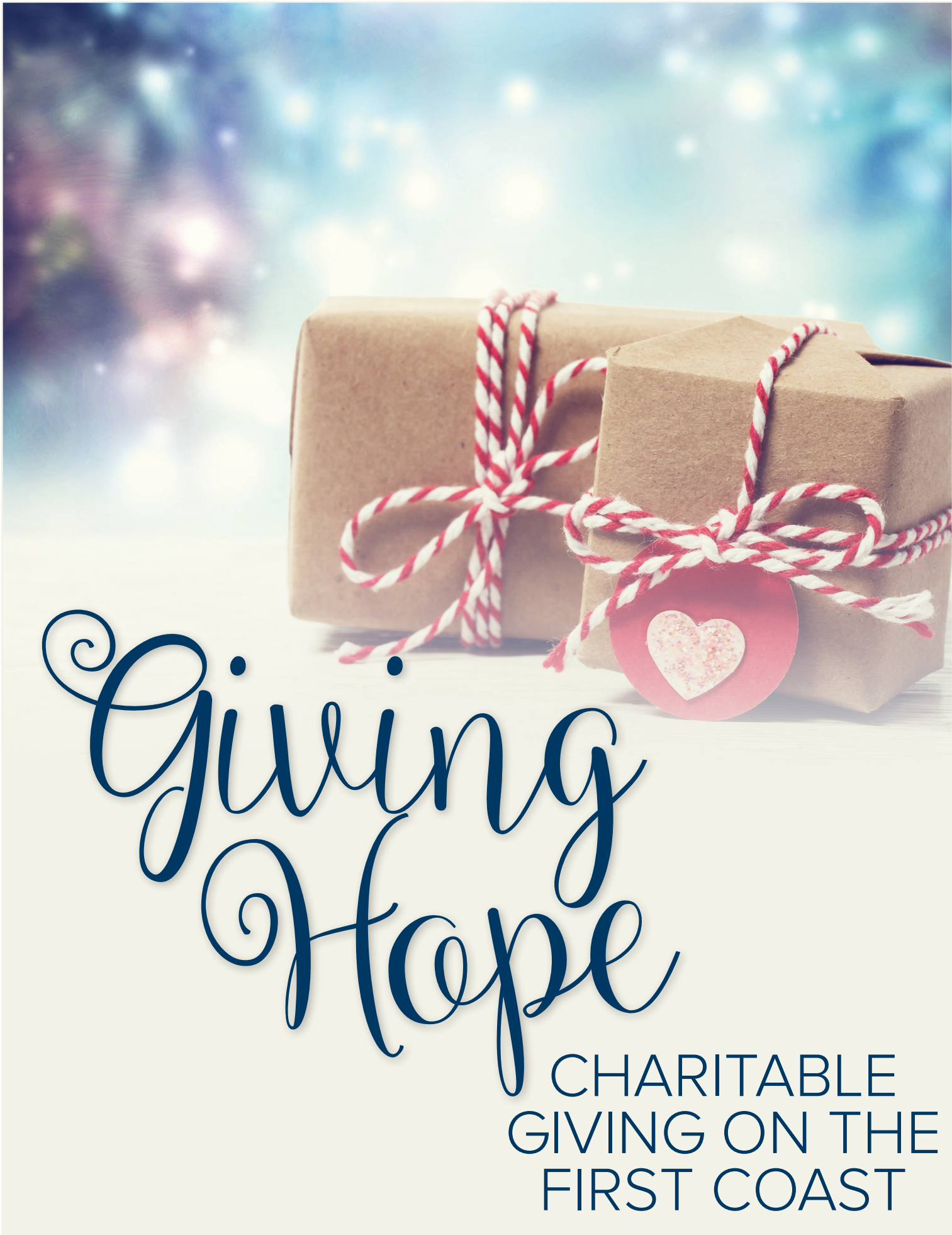
COMMUNITY NUTCRACKER AT THE FLORIDA THEATRE

The 24th annual Community Nutcracker, featuring more than 200 children from Northeast Florida will be performed Friday, Dec. 11 at 1 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 12 at 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at The Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St., Jacksonville. Tickets start at \$26. Tickets are on sale online at www.ticketmaster.com or at the Florida Theatre Box Office, (904) 355-2787.

SAINT AUGUSTINE BALLET PRESENTS ‘THE NUTCRACKER’

The 7th annual Saint Augustine Ballet’s production of “The Nutcracker” is Dec. 19-20 at the Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine. Performances are at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. each day. Tickets are \$25-\$30. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (855) 222-2849 or visit www.saintaugustineballet.com.





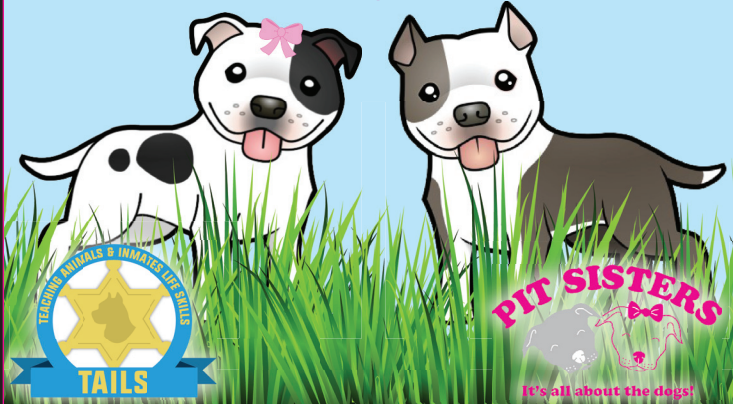
Giving Hope

CHARITABLE
GIVING ON THE
FIRST COAST

PIT SISTERS

Pit Sisters is partnering with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and the Florida Department of Corrections to pair shelter dogs with inmates in order to help the dogs and the inmates. The dogs live with the inmates while the inmates care for and train the dogs. Please help us with the critical program by donating to the TAILS (Teaching Animals and Inmates Life Skills) Program through Pit Sisters, a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

Please visit www.pitsisters.org/TALES for more information.



Happy Holidays

It takes a community to end domestic violence
Thank you for your support in being part of the solution.



Betty Griffin House

24-Hour Crisis Hotline 904-824-1555
Ponte Vedra Hotline 904-280-9898

Fulfilling dreams for LOCAL
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battling life-threatening
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Dreamer Easton
Battling heart disease
Walt Disney World Dream

Gift giving can take on new meaning when you donate to charity—but sometimes when you choose a national charity, the significance feels lost. The First Coast is home to charities that focus on enriching and improving our community. Whatever you're looking for, consider the donation options offered by charities right here at home.

Pit Sisters

Pit Sisters is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization funded 100% by donations. It is one of the few organizations that have no paid employees, enabling 100% of donations to go directly towards the dogs. The Pit Sisters mission is to provide voices, love to those who cannot speak; and advocate for homeless dogs and focus on education for both families and dogs in order to make dogs more adoptable and to keep dogs and their families together.



In their own words: "Pit Sisters is a foster home based rescue who promises to provide love, homes and voices for those who cannot speak. Our focus is on the misunderstood dogs who are judged solely on their appearance. Most of the animals that come to Pit Sisters are in need of rehabilitation due to undernourishment/neglect or have special needs and would otherwise be euthanized. Pit Sisters works with these animals in conjunction with their foster families to get the animals back to good health both mentally and physically. Our dogs are socialized in homes with other animals and/or children to ensure their best possible fit in their forever home."

Donate by visiting www.pitsisters.com, or by purchasing

apparel and gifts through their store online.

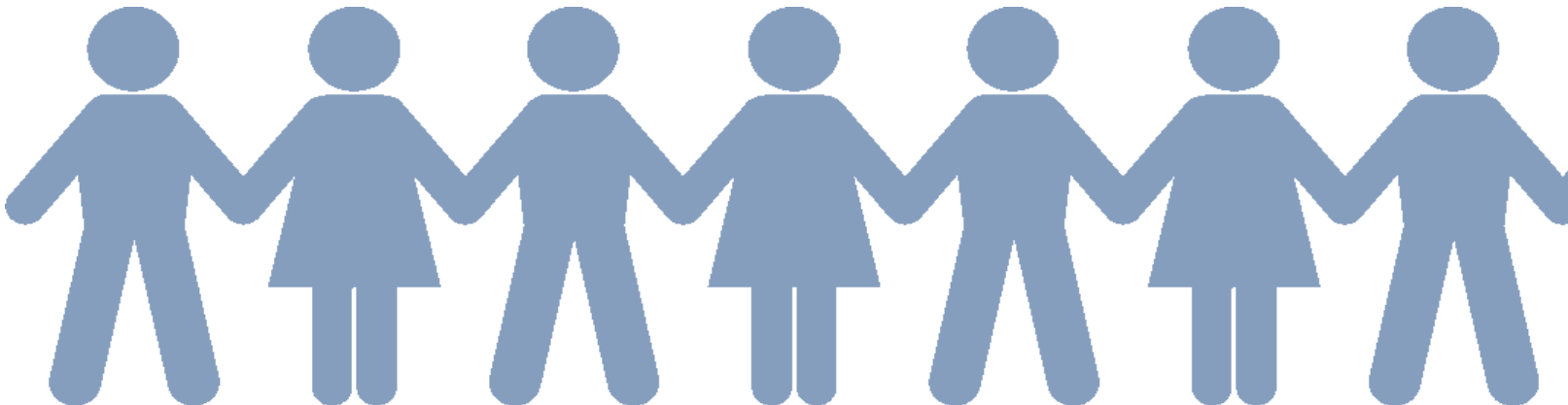
Dreams Come True of Jacksonville, Inc.

Dreams Come True is the First Coast's only locally based nonprofit dedicated to granting dreams for children with life-threatening illnesses. Dreams Come True has granted more than 3,000 dreams for children battling life-threatening illnesses in Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia. Dreams Come True of Jacksonville is not associated with any national organization and receives no state or federal funding. All donations, unless otherwise stated by the donor, are directed 100% to the fulfillment of dreams.

Children are referred by their physicians. There is no waiting list, and no qualified child has ever been denied a dream.

In their own words: "Dreams provide brave children and their families with a momentary reprieve from the rigors of medical treatment often associated with life-threatening illnesses. A dream temporarily removes the child from doctor visits, hospital stays, tests and needles and brings laughter, joy and childhood to the forefront. Dreams give the children and their families memories to carry them through the rough times and smiles to last a lifetime. Dreams bring hope and the promise of tomorrow."

Donate by visiting www.dreamscometrue.org/get-involved/donate.





Mission House

Mission House is the only day facility to help meet the needs of the homeless adults at the Beaches through compassion, faith and programs designed to provide assistance at an individual level. The facility and its staff addresses basic needs through our meal, shower, case management and medical programs. Mission House offers case management, clinic services, Alcoholics Anonymous and spiritual services to its clients. The facility's number one goal is to assist homeless people off the streets of the Beach and back to productive and self-sufficient lives. Clients who eat and shower at Mission House for at least a week must meet with the case manager. The staff and volunteers are there to assist them in planning a way back to an independent and positive way of life.



Donate or see the facility's wish list at www.missionhousejax.org/donate-now/.

Betty Griffin House

Located in St. Augustine, it is the mission of Betty Griffin House to offer protection and quality services for victims of domestic violence and their minor children and/or victims of sexual assault and their families of St. Johns County through operation of a shelter offering assistance, counseling and transitional support. Betty Griffin House educates the community about services provided and raise awareness of the problems of domestic violence and sexual assault in order to break cycles of abuse.

In their own words: "Since domestic and sexual violence is a learned behavior, BGH hopes that awareness of and access to such services and outreach activities will help end the cycles of violence, which can otherwise repeat for many generations."

To donate, visit <http://www.bettygriffinhouse.org>



Mission House

Mission House is the only facility at the Beach helping adult men and women who find themselves homeless, return to a productive and self-sufficient life. These are men and women just like you who didn't have a plan when life hit a bump. That is why Mission House is here, to help them get back on track. We know what they need and have the resources so they can become whole again.

But we need your help. None of our accomplishments could happen without your assistance. Mission House has proudly been supported by our community for the past 18 years. This is individuals, families, churches, foundations, companies and so many more who are a part of our vision and number one goal of assisting people to gain income and a place they can call home.

Because there are no overnight shelters in any of the beaches area, our case managers talk to each person and discover how they arrived at this point of their life. We discover what they need to get back on track. Not only do we offer the basics of a hot meal twice a day, a hot shower and changed of clothing, but our clients can do job research, make phone calls meet with the case managers to plan a course of action to obtain income and a place to live.

Please visit our website and donate to Mission House at www.missionhousejax.org. Click the DONATE NOW button. A gift of \$500 will assist a client with first month's rent in their new apartment and give them a move in package to start them on their journey to independence. A gift of \$50 will assist with a monthly bus pass to help with transportation to their new job.

During the winter months Mission House needs in-kind donations:

Men and women's underwear, white socks, triple edge razors, hats, gloves, blankets, hooded sweatshirts, hot hands, sleeping bags and coats. Please see our website for other needs. These can be dropped off at our location at 800 Shetter Ave., Jacksonville Beach, M-F 8:00 - 7:00pm. Thank you so very much for your continued support.

904-241-6767

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Mission House Inc.



for unto us a child is born, unto us
a son is given
 AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER
 ——— and his name shall be called ———

**WONDERFUL
 COUNSELOR, THE MIGHTY GOD
 THE EVERLASTING FATHER
 the prince of
 PEACE**

Isaiah 9:6

**Christ Church
 Ponte Vedra Beach**
 400 San Juan Drive, Ponte Vedra
 Beach, FL 32082
 904-285-6127

*Traditional and
 Contemporary Worship*

Christmas Eve

2 p.m. * Traditional,
 Christ Church

2 p.m. * Toddler Service,
 Contemporary Worship
 Center

4 p.m. * Contemporary,
 Contemporary Worship
 Center

6 p.m. * Children's Service
 and Pageant, Christ Church

8 p.m. * Traditional, Christ
 Church

10 p.m. Festival Christmas
 Eve, Christ Church

Christmas Day

10 a.m. Traditional
 Christmas Morning Service,
 Christ Church

be BOLD!
 Christ Episcopal Church

christepiscopalchurch.org

*We Wish You
 a Blessed
 Christmas*

Christ Church San Pablo

2002 San Pablo Rd. Jacksonville

Christmas Eve

5 p.m. * Family Christmas

Christ Church Serenata

At Serenata Beach Club
 3175 S. Ponte Vedra Blvd.

Christmas Eve

4 p.m. Christmas on the
 Beach

Vicar's Landing

Christmas Eve

5 p.m. Vicar's Chapel

Lessons & Carols

A morning of Carols accompanied
by members of the
Jacksonville Symphony,
the **Gainesville Orchestra & Brass Quintet**
and the **Navy Band.**



Presented by
Freedom Christian Fellowship
Sunday, December 13th, 2015
9:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.



Annual Christmas Eve Candlelight/Communion

Dec. 24th

6:00 p.m.



Freedom Christian Fellowship
is located at 3423 Loretto Road, 32223
Sunday Morning Services: 8:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
www.FCFJAX.org

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS FRUIT COVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Dec. 6 - Children's Choirs
6:00pm in the Worship Center

Dec. 12 & 13 - Emmanuel Christmas Musical
6:00pm in the Worship Center

Dec. 20 - Family Worship Service
9:30am & 11am in the Worship Center
Sunday School for Preschoolers only

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Family Service
4:00pm & 6:00pm in the Worship Center

501 State Road 13
Jacksonville, FL 32259
904.287.0996
fruitcove.com



Crosswater

community church



Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 4:00pm, 5:30pm, 7:00pm
Includes a Live Nativity



Join us for our weekly services:
Sundays 8:45 and 10:45 am

211 Davis Park Road
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32081
(In front of Davis Park and PV High School in Nocatee)

www.crosswaterchurch.net



Live United

BY GIVING BACK THIS
HOLIDAY SEASON,
YOU GIVE JOY

by NANCY WINCKLER-ZUNIGA

Joy, laughter and celebrations are all symbols of the holiday season. But for some families, this season of merriment can become an added burden to everyday struggles.

Second-grader Deangelo Wilson and his mother are a family who would not celebrate the season without help from people like you.

Deangelo's mother made some difficult choices to help her son. She chose to leave their home, fleeing in the night for safety reasons – even if it meant homelessness. She chose to take a night job, even if it meant working long hours, to keep food on the table.

Deangelo's reactions to her choices were aggression and anger. She had to find a way to help him adjust to their new life. United Way of Northeast Florida was there to help.

Therapeutic services through Sandalwood Family Resource Center, part of United Way's Full Service Schools initiative, helped him cope.

Full Service Schools is a program that helps students in the Duval County Public School system, like Deangelo, overcome non-academic barriers to success in school. Through his mom's persistence and guided therapy at Sandalwood Family Resource Center, Deangelo turned his behavior around. Full Service Schools is just one of the many ways United Way impacts Northeast Florida.

Bringing innovative experts together, United Way collaborates with 56 local nonprofit organizations to fund, develop and implement 77 proven programs. Trained, community-based volunteers evaluate initiatives, modify strategies and hold United Way and the agencies it funds accountable for results.

Dedicated to creating sustainable change, United Way touches more than half a million lives across the region, focusing on three main areas – education, income and health. These three key areas are interconnected blocks that create a foundation for a quality life.

When children receive quality education, they develop cognitive and literacy skills that keep them on track to graduation. Completing high school means higher wages for people and a stronger economic environment, which in turn, makes Northeast Florida a better community for all.

To continue to keep that economic environment thriving, United Way also offers financial-stability initiatives, such as RealSense. Over the last year, RealSense helped more than 20,000 hardworking families receive free tax preparation services, returning \$7.9 million to the local economy.

Continuously measuring impact, such as these RealSense results, United Way provides and reports on tangible, visible outcomes that inspire trust in the Northeast Florida business community.

"United Way has become a tremendous vehicle through which to channel my personal philanthropy," said Russ Thomas, CEO of Availity and United Way campaign chair.

In addition to his campaign chair duties, Thomas is an Achievers For Life mentor and spearheads a company that adopted Ribault High School for mentoring and other volunteer projects.

Last year, United Way kept nearly 1,400 kids on track to graduation through the Achievers For Life dropout prevention strategy as well as helped nearly 200 preschoolers receive a high-quality early education through Success By 6.

Local parent Angela Boyd's three daughters were able to attend quality early childhood programs thanks to Success By 6 scholarships. To share her gratitude, Boyd now gives back to United Way as a volunteer, serving as a Parent Ambassador for Success By 6, helping other families achieve the success in school her girls now experience.

"I believe Success By 6 isn't just for children," Boyd said. "It's also giving back to other parents."

We hope you include giving back to the community in your holiday plans. Reach out to bring joy, laughter and reasons to celebrate the season to a deserving family like Deangelo Wilson and his mother.

When you give to United Way, your gift will make a difference. Your support means children will enter kindergarten ready to learn, kids will stay on track to graduation and families will achieve financial stability – all of which build a stronger, more successful Northeast Florida for us all.

To learn more about our initiatives, results and how to contribute, visit www.unitedwaynefl.org/donate. Happy holidays from our United Way family to yours.

FALL HEAD OVER HEELS WITH HOLIDAY SHOPPING.

Fabulous gifts for great value, a brightly updated interior and affordable contemporary options like the area's only H&M and Old Navy Outlet plus Saks Fifth Avenue OFF 5th | Michael Kors | Hugo Boss | Wilsons Leather kate spade new york | St. John Outlet | Guess | Lucky Brand Jeans Kenneth Cole | Talbots | Nautica | Bath & Body Works | bebe BCBGMAXAZRIA | Dooney & Bourke | Cole Haan | Zales and many more.



EXTENDED HOLIDAY HOURS

Visit StAugOutlets.com for details.

Follow your heart to St. Augustine Outlets. I-95, Exit 318, East Side | 904.826.1311

LIVE UNITED

United Way
of Northeast Florida



HAILEY IS READING AND READY TO SUCCEED

96%

of Success By 6 students developed the cognitive and literacy skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten.



LAILA OVERCAME ANXIETY AND IS BACK ON TRACK TO GRADUATION

7,300

students received physical or mental health services through Full Service Schools.



REGGIE ACHIEVED FINANCIAL STABILITY FOR HIS FAMILY

20,162

free tax returns filed by RealSense volunteer tax preparers.

GREAT THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE LIVE UNITED

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