

# PONTE VEDRA RECORDER

June 23, 2022  
Volume 53, No. 34  
75 cents

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PonteVedraRecorder.com



**First Coast Register**  
INSIDE



**Local author wins award**  
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**INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!**  
The Recorder's Entertainment  
EXTRA featuring TV listings,  
streaming information,  
puzzles and more!



Photo by Susan Griffin

**Chemo Noir hosted its annual one mile and wine tasting event on the shore of Jacksonville Beach June 18. More than \$40k was raised by the nonprofit to help local cancer patients in their fight. See more on page 10.**

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# Send us your news

We welcome submissions of photos, stories, columns and letters to the editor. Let us know what's happening. If you have hard copies of photos you want us to feature, feel free to bring them to our office — we'll scan them and hand them right back. E-mail submissions to [news@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:news@pontevedrarecorder.com) or bring them by our office at **1102 A1A N., Unit 108, Ponte Vedra Beach.**



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## BRIEFS

### St. Johns County boards, committees seek volunteers

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners provides residents interested in serving their community and participating in local government with a variety of board and committee opportunities. The volunteer positions consider and make recommendations regarding various topics, including planning and zoning issues, development projects, libraries, parks and recreation facilities and programs, arts, culture and tourism.

- The following boards and committees are currently accepting applications:
  - Adjustment and Appeals Board (application deadline June 25)
  - Northwest Communication Tower Advisory Board (application deadline Aug. 5)
  - Mid-Anastasia Design Review Board (application deadline until filled)
  - South Anastasia Design Review Board (application deadline until filled)

Go to [sjcfl.us/Boards](http://sjcfl.us/Boards) to view the requirements and duties of each board and committee, download an application or contact the Board of County Commissioners office at 904-209-0300 or email [jspencer@sjcfl.us](mailto:jspencer@sjcfl.us) for more information.

### Bereavement support groups to meet

Grieving the death of a loved one is never easy, but support from others and sharing your loss can lessen the burden. To help, Community Hospice & Palliative Care conducts open bereavement support groups throughout the year. Led by trained bereavement counselors, these sessions are ongoing and available to anyone who has experienced a loss.

This group meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Contact the Bereavement Department at 904-407-7001 to

attend.

- June 23: 10-11 a.m. Beaches/Arlington – McGraw Center for Caring, 4715 Worall Way, Jacksonville.
- June 24: noon to 1 p.m. Westside – Acosta-Rua Center for Caring, 5450 Ramona Blvd., Jacksonville.
- June 28: noon to 1 p.m. St. Johns County – Chapman Center, 1355 U.S. 1 South, St. Augustine.

### Summer reading program in full swing

Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library and the entire county library system is running a summer reading program for adults. New adult books are being awarded as prizes for readers. The program started on Monday, June 13.

To participate, pick up a reading log or use the free ReadSquared app on your mobile device and dive on in. For every six days a participant reads or reads to someone else (such as a child or grandchild) or attends any St. Johns County Public Library System program (in-person or via Zoom), he or she wins a free book.

For more details on this or other summer events for all ages, go to [sjcpls.org/the-best-summer-22](http://sjcpls.org/the-best-summer-22), call 904-827-6950 or stop by the adult reference desk at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

### Tillman Ridge Transfer Station temporarily closed

The Tillman Ridge Transfer Station, 3005 Allen Nease Road, will be closed until July 3 for repairs to the facility floor. The facility will resume normal operations on July 4. The Stratton Road Transfer Station, 250 N. Stratton Road, will remain open to all residential and commercial customers. Hours there are: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday.

## DEATH NOTICES

### Patti Ann Burmeister

Patti Ann Burmeister, 75, of Jacksonville, Florida, died June 8, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – [www.pontevedravalley.com](http://www.pontevedravalley.com)

### Roy Daniel Castle

Roy Daniel Castle, 68, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, died June 15, 2022. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com)

### Louis B. DeAngelis

Louis B. DeAngelis, 93, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died June 8, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – [www.pontevedravalley.com](http://www.pontevedravalley.com)

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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**Hugh Osteen**  
COO/VP  
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**Susan Griffin**  
Publisher  
[susan@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:susan@pontevedrarecorder.com)  
(904) 686-3938

**Shaun Ryan**  
Editor  
[shaun@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:shaun@pontevedrarecorder.com)  
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1202

**Anthony Richards**  
Reporter  
[anthony@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:anthony@pontevedrarecorder.com)  
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1207

**Don Coble**  
Contributor  
[don@claytodayonline.com](mailto:don@claytodayonline.com)

**Amber Anderson**  
Page/Graphic Designer  
[amber@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:amber@pontevedrarecorder.com)

**April Snyder**  
Sales Assistant  
[april@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:april@pontevedrarecorder.com)  
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1204

**Kristin Flanagan**  
Account Executive  
[kristin@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:kristin@pontevedrarecorder.com)  
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1206

**Adele McGraw**  
Account Executive  
[adele@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:adele@pontevedrarecorder.com)  
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1208

**Debbie Apple**  
Account Executive  
[debbie@osteenmediagroup.com](mailto:debbie@osteenmediagroup.com)  
(904) 285-8831

**Joe Wilhelm**  
Circulation Manager  
[joe@osteenmediagroup.com](mailto:joe@osteenmediagroup.com)  
(904) 300-5374

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# HUGS launches 'Deputy Depot' program with SJSO

HUGS Across The County has announced a new partnership with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office to assist their deputies and staff as they provide support to local children-in-need.

HUGS has stocked "Deputy Depot" cabinets at the five SJSO substations with emergency clothing, shoes and kid-friendly food items for deputies, school resource officers and crossing guards to distribute to children whom they identify to be in-need. Cabinets will be re-stocked as needed throughout the year.

"Our SJSO sworn and support staff

are in a unique position to notice a child's need, and HUGS has equipped our agency with easy access to clothing items and kid-friendly food that we can give to satisfy a hardship and make a big difference in a child's day and ours," said SJSO Victim Advocate Cynthia Howell. "We anticipate many guaranteed shared smiles in this win-win partnership."

In addition to the items in the Deputy Depot cabinets, the HUGS volunteer team will pack emergency clothing bags filled with clothing, shoes, underwear and toiletries for local children identified by

SJSO staff throughout the year.

"For 10 years, HUGS has provided emergency clothing and food for thousands of St. Johns County kids, through referrals from St. Johns County school counselors and agency partners like the Betty Griffin Center and the Boys and Girls Club," said founder and director Brette Reiman. "Our volunteer team is very grateful for the work that SJSO deputies, school resource officers and crossing guards do every day to support local kids, and we are honored to provide clothing and food to assist their efforts."

All-American Air Charitable Foundation covered the cost of the cabinets. HUGS has also received community support from private donors and family foundations that have covered the initial cost of the clothing and food for each cabinet.

HUGS accepts donations for this program as it restocks cabinets often with clothing and food. Contributions may be made to [stjohnshugs.org/give](http://stjohnshugs.org/give).

For more information, email [info@stjohnshugs.org](mailto:info@stjohnshugs.org) or call 904-580-4847.

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**KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE** *The Recorder's garden columnist Kathy Esfahani of Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery shares her tips for growing gorgeous gardens in Northeast Florida.*

# Beat-the-heat plants for your landscape

*"Love is the flower you've got to let grow." — John Lennon*



**By Kathy Esfahani**

The summer months in Ponte Vedra Beach and Jacksonville are often hot and humid! Plants must be tough enough to withstand

these sometimes-harsh conditions.

Ideas for plants that are heat tolerant and enjoy full sun are black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.), blue daze (*Evolvulus glomeratus*), coleus, bush daisy, globe amaranth (*Gomphrena globosa*), melampodium, gaillardia (also called blanket flower), gazania, ornamental peppers, Texas sage, milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.), pentas, periwinkle/vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*), moss rose (*Portulaca* spp), purslane, zinnia, lantana, dune (or beach) sunflower daisy and all types of sedums

and succulents.

Carolina jessamine, aka yellow jessamine, grows as a vine, so it's a perfect choice to climb up a landscape feature such as a trellis arbor or pergola. These butter-yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers release a sweet fragrance and are very heat tolerant.

Blue daze is salt tolerant and grows beautifully in eastern exposure. Once established, it requires little care other than extra water during dry weather. The plants are covered with small blue flowers that close during the afternoon heat; no deadheading required.

Vinca/periwinkle is a great annual flower that comes in a variety of colors for hot, dry weather. Their needs are minimal: low water and fertilizers.

Some of the top performers include beach sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*), butterfly bush (*Buddleia* spp.), bulbine, bush daisy (*Euryops pectinatus*), blanket flower (*Gaillardia pulchella*), cuphea spp. like Mexican heather, firebush (*Hamelia patens*), firespike (*Odontonema cuspidate*), hibiscus, hydrangea, plumbago,

salvia, shrimp plant, jacobinia (*Justicia* spp), lantana and yellow alder (*Tecoma stans*) — also called Esperanza.

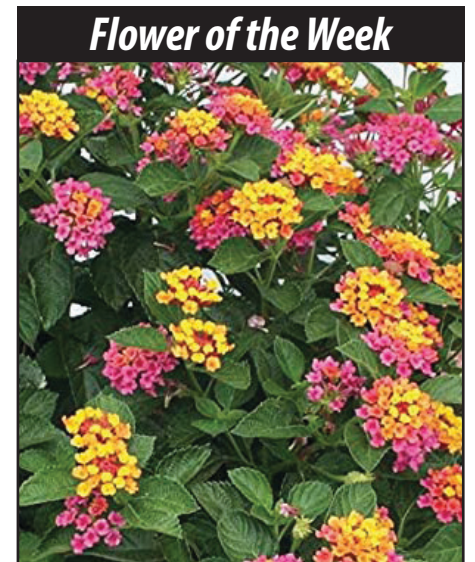
Several heat-tolerant shade/foliage plants are impatiens (such as New Guinea impatiens), wax begonia and euphorbia Diamond Frost — all annuals. Also, consider Alternanthera spp like Brazilian Red Hots or Joseph's Coat, Alocasia or philodendron, ornamental sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*), Persian shield (*Strobilanthes dyerianus*), Hawaiian ti plant (*Cordyline*), stromanthe, Arbicoloe, fox-tail fern, agapanthus (Lilly of the Nile), red salvia (Summer Jule) and caladiums.

Happy planting!

*Flower of the Week:* Lantana

**Please email Kathy at [kcg.pvr@gmail.com](mailto:kcg.pvr@gmail.com) for any questions or gardening tips you would like to see in the future. For more information & ideas, visit Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, 196 N. Roscoe Blvd. The phone number is 904-655-7373.**

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery



**Flower of the Week**

**Flower of the Week is lantana**



**When planting flowers in Florida, consider which ones will do best in the heat.**

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FAMOUS PONTE VEDRANS

# Baseball legend Bill Terry

By Scott A. Grant

In the summer of 1941, Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox became the last baseball player to hit over .400 for a season. It was a big deal then and a much bigger deal today. Williams also won the Triple Crown, leading the league in batting average, home runs and RBIs. What he did not win was the MVP award. That honor went to his rival Joe DiMaggio.

The Yankees won the pennant that year. DiMaggio also had his 56-game hitting streak that year. Many sportswriters saw the 56-game hitting streak as bigger accomplishment. It was such a big deal that Ted Williams followed his rival's progress closely. At home games, he would get reports on Joe's progress from the old guy that operated the left field scoreboard

and then relay that information to his centerfielder, Dominic DiMaggio, Joe's little brother.

One of the reasons that Williams' .400 season was not the huge deal it would be today was because someone else had hit .400 just 11 years before. His name was "Memphis" Bill Terry, and he is the last person to hit .400 in the National League. Terry played for the N.Y. Giants. He won a World Series in 1933 along with teammates Mell Ott and "King" Carl Hubbell. Later, he would manage the team as well. In 1954, he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

After he retired, Terry moved to Jacksonville and owned Bill Terry Buick over in Orange Park on Blanding Boulevard. He had a home in Ortega

TERRY continues on Page 7

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*Dr. S. Akbar Hasan grew up in Lexington, Kentucky, where his father served as dean at the University of Kentucky and his mother worked as a librarian at the university. He is a board-certified, fellowship-trained cornea, LASIK and cataract specialist. He came to the First Coast in 2002 and served as the lead cataract and corneal surgeon and director of the Laser Vision Correction Program at the Mayo Clinic for 10 years. He joined Florida Eye Specialists in 2012. His practice's nonprofit arm, Florida Eye Cares, provides eye surgeries and glasses to local residents in need.*

## Dr. S. Akbar Hasan

### As told to Shaun Ryan

#### Tell me about your career.

I'm an ophthalmologist. I've been in Ponte Vedra now coming up on 20 years. I was at the Mayo Clinic for 10 years, and then I joined Florida Eye Specialists. We were really the first ophthalmology practice to have a full-time presence in Ponte Vedra.

In medical school, you don't get a lot of exposure to ophthalmology. You just don't. Ironically, my brother-in-law at that time was starting his ophthalmology training in Bethesda, at the naval hospital. He was like, "Hey, why don't you look at [ophthalmology]?" ... And it just kind of clicked.

I like a lot of things about it. It's kind of a happy feeling in terms of you're really restoring vision, and it means a lot to people who need cataract surgery, LASIK surgery, corneal transplants. So, it's really just kind of gratifying being able to do that.

It's been a perfect fit for me. I couldn't be any happier.

#### Tell me about Florida Eye Cares.

We started that about three years ago. We had really big plans, but of course COVID hit. So, we had to kind of curtail some of those plans, but now we're getting past some of that.

This is the charity arm or foundation of our practice. Through Florida Eye Cares, over the last two or three years, we were able to provide free cataract surgery for a number of patients. We host an event where anywhere between 10 and 20 patients once a year have free cataract surgery. That includes everything: the surgery center, the anesthesiologists ... So, it's really a nice day. Everybody's there for the patients. It's huge.

Once you have Medicare it's covered, but most of these people are under 65 and they have cataracts but can't afford cataract surgery. So, they're just losing vision. And it's very frustrating for them. So, it's nice to be able to do that.

We have a skill set, so it's nice to be able to use that skill set for people, as opposed to just donating our time in other ways and our resources in other ways. For these people, it's life-altering to have cataract surgery.

In addition, we're looking to restart a monthly charity clinic. We've partnered with Vision Is Priceless, which is a more established nonprofit group, and we will run a monthly clinic for them.

It's for individuals who can't afford the exam, can't afford the glasses. They get the free eye exam. There's an



Dr. S. Akbar Hasan with the team at Florida Eye Specialists.



Contributed photos

#### Dr. S. Akbar Hasan

optician there, and through VIP, they're going to get free glasses, as well.

We'll be starting that back up again in the fall.

We have a fundraiser, an Eye Ball, in October. It's kind of a masquerade party. It should be a lot of fun. I'm looking forward to that.

And the next thing, we hope to host a 5K, too, for the community. For us, it's just a fun way to give back to the community.

We're part of the community as a practice, and now we're looking to grow the charity arm of our practice so that we can provide care for the greater Jacksonville community, as well.

#### How great would you say is the need for the nonprofit's services?

I think that there's a tremendous need. I think it's largely unmet, unfortunately.

We have to cap it. We just get so much demand and so many calls for it, there's just no way. It's for people who are underinsured between 50 and 65 who get a premature cataract but may not have the insurance or the means to afford cataract surgery.

The other thing we do at Florida Eye Cares is we host an annual educational event for the local eye care providers.

We had it at Sawgrass Marriott last month. It was well-attended. Well over 100 eye doctors there. Not just from Northeast Florida, but throughout Florida. We had a two-

day program. It was great. So, that's another thing we're really doing — we have an education arm.

#### How can people get in touch with Florida Eye Cares if they want to help?

Probably the easiest way is through our website. Either go to [floridaeyespecialists.com](http://floridaeyespecialists.com) or [floridaeyespecialists.com/about-us/giving-back](http://floridaeyespecialists.com/about-us/giving-back). And then there's a way to donate through the website.

#### What do you like best about living here on the First Coast?

This is home for us now. It's been 20 years. It's great. We raised our family in Ponte Vedra. We've had four kids. They've all gone through the schools.

It's nice to have a community. In one sense, you're connected to the community of Jacksonville. In another sense, it's kind of a small town, which I really like.

Of course, you've got all the outdoor activities, from the hiking to the beaches. We're big hikers. We like the outdoors. It's fun to do just all the stuff that North Florida offers, we participate in that.

#### How do you like to spend your free time?

I enjoy reading, which is a big thing. I'm a real big fan of hiking. Just being outdoors — it kind of gives me that sense of peace and calm, just to be out in nature. That's kind of my big "go to" when I need to kind of recharge or recharge.



# Terry

Continued from 5

and another house on the beach in Ponte Vedra. He remains one of this area's most famous residents. His grandson, Ray Terry Jr., remembers going to visit his grandfather at the beach and says, "He wasn't the kind of guy you ran up to and jumped in his arms." Terry was a tough guy. He grew up in an era where players were tough. In the off-season he worked for the railroad loading and unloading heavy sacks.

Terry continued to have an association with baseball after he arrived in Jacksonville. In 1958, he bought the Jacksonville Braves from Sam Wolfson, of Wolfson Children's Hospital fame. Wolfson had bought the team in 1953 and immediately integrated it and the South Atlantic League, adding a 19-year-old Henry Aaron and two other African-Americans to the roster. By 1958, Sam was in failing health and he was looking to sell. Bill Terry was the perfect buyer for the franchise, now known as the Jumbo Shrimp. Terry also served as commissioner of the South Atlantic League for a period.

In 1986, Memphis Bill gave an interview to famed sportswriter and broadcaster Red Barber. He was



almost 88 years old at the time. He told Barber he was still running the Buick dealership. He got up every day at 5:30 a.m. and was in the office by 7:30 and home by noon. He also related a story about how he had raised over \$200,000 for desperately needed renovations of St Mark's Episcopal Church in Ortega back in the early '50s. Barber asked if Bill was chairman of the building committee. Terry responded, "I was the committee."

**Scott A. Grant is a local historian and author. By day, he is president of Standfast Asset Management, a fiduciary asset management firm. He welcomes your comments at [scottg@standfastic.com](mailto:scottg@standfastic.com).**

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# Business Expo, Family Olympics planned at the link

By Shaun Ryan

One of the difficulties of running a home-based business is connecting with the customer base. There are exceptions — businesses that sell exclusively online, for instance.

But for any entrepreneur wanting to connect with the local community, a physical storefront and foot traffic are almost essential.

Fortunately, on July 15, local businesses seeking to increase their public profiles and access the Nocatee and Ponte Vedra market will have an opportunity.

That's because the link, located at 425 Town Plaza Ave., is planning a Business Expo where business owners and staff can meet the public and chat about the products and services they offer.

"The goal is, if we help them drive

exposure, they'll get stronger, they'll have access to the customers and we are collectively helping the community," said Raghu Misra, co-founder of the link.

Misra said he is hoping to have between 50 and 60 businesses represented. He said the number of people who run home-based businesses was "significant."

The idea is not dissimilar to the Nocatee Farmer's Market, except that it is focused more on "white-color-type" businesses rather than, say, agricultural products.

Businesses that would like to participate would reserve an exhibitor table by going to [thelink.zone/events-1](http://thelink.zone/events-1) and clicking on the Business Expo link at the top right. Tables are priced between \$100 and \$500.

The expo will run from 6 to 9 p.m.

## Family Olympics

Concurrent with the expo will be the Family Olympics, happening just outside the link. Here's an opportunity to spend some quality time with the family and have some good old-fashioned fun.

"Our goal is to see if we can bring some of these older games back into a fun environment," said Misra.

Games being planned will include (but may not be limited to): sack race, water balloon toss, two-legged race, tug-of-war, Hawaiian Linky Tinky Bird Relay and Topsy Tossy Waiter.

"They are all designed toward the entire family participating," said Misra. "Not just the kids."

He said he hopes that, eventually, this will evolve into an annual Nocatee Olympics.

Attendees can sign up for games during



Photo by Shaun Ryan

The link, located in Nocatee, is planning a Business Expo and Family Olympics for July 15.

the event.

The Family Olympics will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. It is free to attend both the Olympics and the expo, though attendees should register in advance. Go to [thelink.zone/events-1](http://thelink.zone/events-1) and click on the link at top left titled "Join Us in Commemorating Our 1st Year Anniversary."

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Fireworks Over the Matanzas is produced by the City of St. Augustine with funding support from the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council. Visit [www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com](http://www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com) for St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and the Beaches visitor information.

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# Chemo Noir race, wine tasting raises more than \$40k

By Anthony Richards

Chemo Noir founder Katrin Casey used one word, “remarkable” to describe the nonprofit’s annual race and wine tasting event June 18.

The fundraiser took place at Casa Marina with the run itself taking place along the Jacksonville Beach shoreline.

The run began at the Jacksonville Beach Pier and the course included going one half of a mile down the beach before turning around and finishing where it got started.

“The energy, generosity and sense of community was inspired and next level,” Casey said. “We are still waiting on all of our fundraising numbers but definitely will cross the \$40k mark.”

The event is one of the organization’s marquee events to raise money to support those locally that are battling cancer.

It is described as a “fun run,” and that is evident with a wine tasting social and

brunch theme that took place for participants following the run.

“I am always so humbled by how many amazing people are a part of our Chemo Noir tribe and show up to our events to help the cancer fighters in our community,” Casey said.

The winners of the 2022 race were 15-year-old Derek Robinson, who won the overall and was the top finishing male with a time of 5:21.

He was followed by Justin Holstein (5:25) and Kyle Scott (5:29), who came home second and third, respectively.

Rosie Scott defended her title as the top female finisher in fourth overall with a time of 5:45. Eddie Emery (5:56) and Macy May (6:31) also received awards as the second and third place female finishers.

A wide range of participants registered for the run, with 3-year-old Vincent Hill as the youngest and the oldest being 82-year-old Diana Whelan.



Contributed photo

Chemo Noir founder Katrin Casey stands at the start/finish line with volunteers Wendy Alexaitis and Keri Cole.



Jacksonville Icemen mascot “Fang” interacts with a young participant during the event June 18.



Lori Adams and Barbara Roberts volunteer at the event.



Katrin Casey speaks during the event.

Photos by Susan Griffin

## Dancing Stars of St. Johns County returns July 9

St. Augustine Community School of Performing Arts is planning its annual fundraiser, Dancing Stars of St. Johns County. It will be held July 9 at Flagler College Lewis Auditorium.

Tickets will be sold at the door and at [dancingstarsofsjc.com](http://dancingstarsofsjc.com). Prices are: student \$15, general \$25, VIP \$55.

The event includes a competition among local celebrities who pair up with professional dance instructors from Arthur Murray Dance Centers and perform in front of a panel of judges. Dancers compete for two awards: People’s Choice

Award and Judge’s Choice Award, judged on points and the celebrities’ dance performances.

Following the competition, attendees will enjoy a professional show with the championship dancers of Arthur Murray St. Augustine and South Jacksonville studios.

Pre-show lobby activities begin at 5:30 p.m. and include a silent auction and music performed by the St. Augustine Community School of Performing Arts’ outreach piano performance team. The auditorium opens for seating at 6 p.m.

with a slide show and a special guest performance on the stage with St Augustine Community Chorus at 6:30 p.m.

Platinum sponsors feature Murray Automotive Group Superstores including Murray Ford Superstore of Starke, Murray Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram of Starke and Murray Ford Superstore of Kingsland, Georgia. Gold sponsors are Henry Advanced Orthodontics, The Gift of Dance, Task Force Hydro 1, STA Augustine Nutrition, Dr. Anita Knight Kuhnley, St Augustine Youth Services and Beck Automotive.

Proceeds from the event benefit St. Augustine Community School of Performing Arts with a mission to “find and nurture the spirit of creativity and talent that rests within everyone.”

For more information on St. Augustine Community School of Performing Arts, go to [sacspa.org](http://sacspa.org).

To purchase online tickets, donate or sponsor Dancing Stars of St. Johns County, go to [dancingstarsofsjc.com](http://dancingstarsofsjc.com).

Check donations may be mailed to: SACSPA PO Box 164 Elkton, FL 32033.



# 1884 Giving Society event benefits children on First Coast

Contributed photos

Daniel, Florida's oldest child service agency, recently hosted its annual 1884 Giving Society event at its Belfort Road campus in Southpoint.

The outdoor event celebrated the generosity of the nonprofit's loyal donors and enabled them to see how their gifts are making a positive impact with opportunities to tour one of their newly renovated residential treatment cottages and to get a peek at the cottage currently under construction.

The organization, originally established as an orphanage, is today a multi-service agency that helps thousands of children, youth and families through a variety of programs.

Program services include a residential treatment/statewide inpatient psychiatric program, specialized therapeutic foster care, Project Prepare (a homeless youth program), case management and support, Daniel Academy School, school-based support, a school-based mental health program, a community adult mental health program, Daniel Memorial Institute and the Florida Adoption Information Center.

Daniel is named after James Jaquelin Daniel, the legendary Jacksonville community leader who dedicated his time, wealth and life to the betterment of children.



Chuck Ayers and Sally Ayers at the 1884 Giving Society event, which benefits Daniel.



Rick Powell and Kelly Kenne-Powell of Abentras, located in Ponte Vedra, during the 1884 Giving Society event, which benefits Daniel.



Angi Palmieri, Stacey Starsiak, Janet Coulther, Mindy Sigle, ShiAnne O'Connor, Annie Cuneo and Stuart Ferber, all representing The Ferber Company, gather for a photo during the recent 1884 Giving Society event, which benefits Daniel.



Bruce Brownell, Jan Brownell, Emily Smith and Scott Smith at the 1884 Giving Society event, which benefits Daniel.

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Last year, with the community's help, we served more than 15,220 clients and helped an additional 1,300 children and families through George Washington Carver Elementary School. Help us continue to fulfill our mission of helping people help themselves.

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# Local United Way CEO to lead state organization



File Photo

United Way of St. Johns CEO and President Melissa Nelson has been hired to lead the statewide organization.

By Shaun Ryan

United Way of St. Johns CEO and President Melissa Nelson will soon be serving a much larger group of people in need. On Thursday, June 16, the United Way of Florida Board of Directors announced that she has been tapped to preside over the state organization of 28 local United Ways.

“This is a bittersweet moment for United Way of St. Johns,” said Kelly Green, chair of the Board of Directors. “We celebrate this announcement with Melissa and with the United Way of Florida Network, but we will truly miss her passion, commitment and leadership here in our community.”

Green noted that, during Nelson’s time with the local organization, it has exceeded fundraising goals, initiated new programs and responded to two hurricanes and a pandemic.

“She has earned the trust and support of our community by demonstrating what it looks like to ‘Live United,’” Green said.

“As a local United Way CEO who transformed the United Way of St. Johns County, Melissa possesses the interpersonal skills, business acumen and Florida legislative advocacy experience that make her the perfect choice to lead the

organization,” said Jeff Hayward, United Way of Florida board chair.

Nelson, of St. Augustine, has been with the United Way of St. Johns since March 2014. During that time, annual support has increased from \$1.12 million in 2015 to \$2.37 million in 2021. In 2019, the organization expanded to include Putnam County, where it has administered \$1.2 million in CARES funds to individuals.

During Nelson’s tenure, the local organization added rolling strategic grants that focus solely on food insecurity, housing and mental health. It was recently tapped by the Board of County Commissioners to handle the vetting and distribution of \$7.7 million in American Rescue Plan Act Funds in St. Johns County.

Asked about these successes, Nelson was quick to credit everyone involved.

“United Way does great work,” she said, “and we have a passionate, collaborative group of partners, whether they’re residents, donors, people from the faith community, corporate partners, our board of directors, our volunteers — we just have a great group of collaborative agents that want to do good work in our world.”

Despite the many successes she has seen since joining United Way of St. Johns in March 2014, Nelson acknowledged the work still needing done.

Though the county is advantaged in many ways, “so much of our population lives one paycheck away from disaster,” she said. “They’re working families that can barely keep afloat. We need to be aware of that in our community, especially with the affordable housing issues that we face and the eviction crisis that’s looming and inflation.”

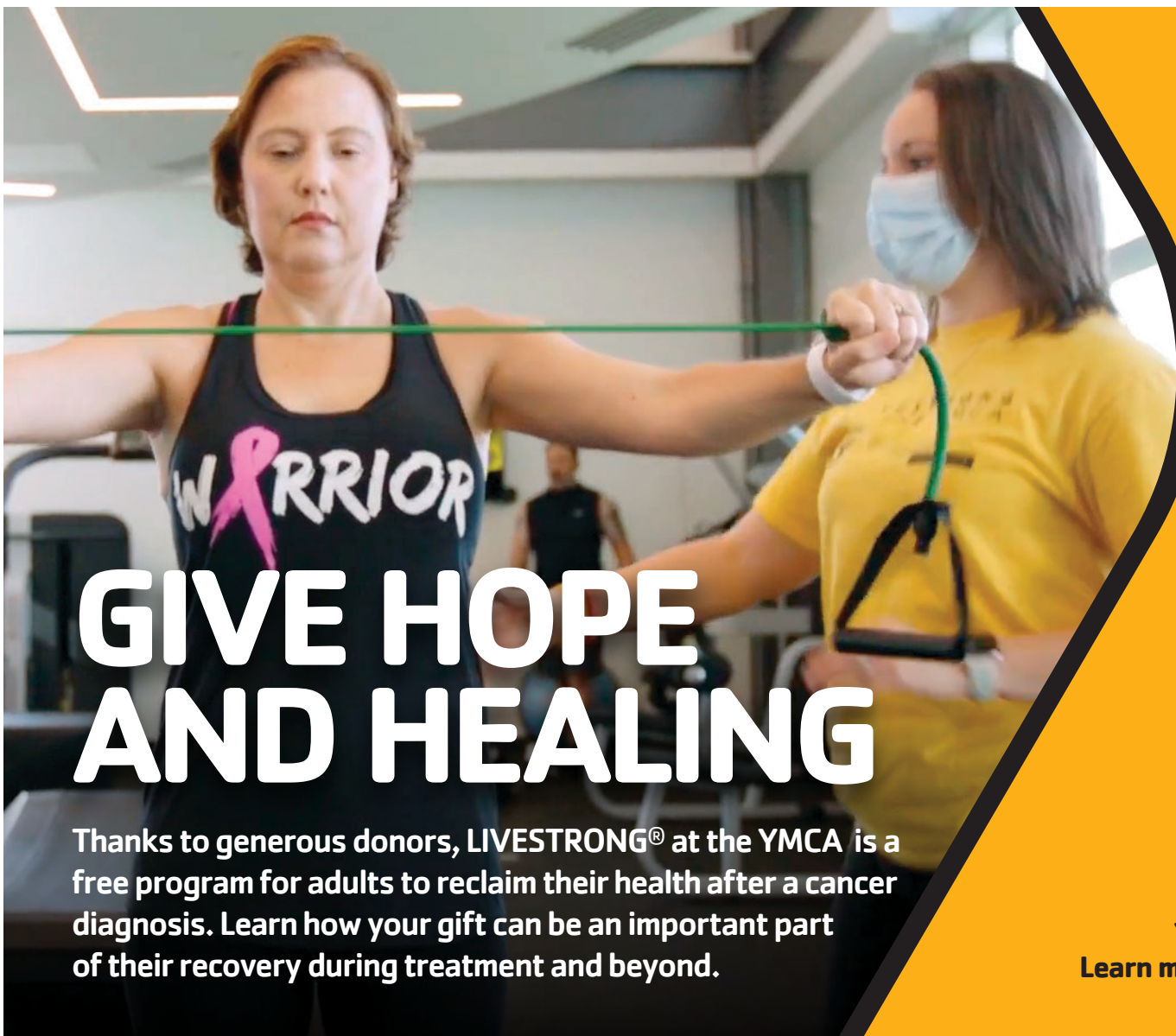
She said that, because fuel prices have increased so much, some families have already spent their entire gas budgets for the year.

“So where do they get gas money for the second half of the year?” she asked, rhetorically. “Their food budget? Their rent budget?”

United Way of St. Johns, which has existed since 1957, will immediately launch the search for its next president and CEO. Throughout the transition, United Way and its community partners will continue to address the challenges faced by residents of St. Johns and Putnam counties.

Nelson, who assumes her new role on July 18, said she appreciated the trust, support and friendships of the board, staff, partners and community.

“I am so grateful to all of our partners in the community,” she said. “I love that we can share that we have done this great work together.”



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# Benefit raises 30K for Fostering Connections Career Readiness Academy

Contributed photos

## Program supports teens impacted by foster care

Fostering Connections recently hosted the annual Night of the Arts fundraiser at the link in Nocatee to benefit its Career Readiness Academy program. The event was chaired by Fostering Connections board member Lori Pugh Marcum. Night of the Arts was sponsored by the Lynch Family Automotive Group and attended by 150 guests from across Northeast Florida.

Guests were treated to an array of appetizers, desserts, drinks, a live auction, a silent auction, a photo booth provided by Leonard's Photography, a live paint by local artist Jessica Shippee and live entertainment by John Csorba, Ohana Hui Jax and Flagler College Theater Arts students.

Past foster parent Greg Driskell gave a moving testimony about his late foster daughter Rosie and a call to action to guests to support the programs of Fostering Connections that serve teens aging out of foster care.

More than \$30,000 was raised at the event.

"It was so wonderful seeing all of our guests in attendance and their passion for supporting youth in care," said Aubrie Simpson-Gotham, founder and CEO at Fostering Connections. "There is much work to continue to do to help youth in care. We are changing lives, one child a time."

"Night of the Arts was an extraordinary evening," said Rob Thomas, board chair at Fostering Connections. "As I reflect on the success of the event, I am grateful knowing how many kids Fostering Connections will now be able to assist through Career Readiness and other essential programs."

The Career Readiness Academy is a job skills training program for teens ages 14-19 impacted by foster care focusing on:

- Career skills assessment, job application, resume writing, interview skills, work attire, employee etiquette, customer service and basic budgeting.
- Job shadowing in career fields of interest.
- Internship opportunities.

Since launching Career Readiness Academy in 2020, 24 students have completed the program. This year, the



The team from title sponsor Lynch Family Automotive Group



The Fostering Connections executive team: Rob Thomas (board chair), Stephanie McFee (vice chair), Founder and CEO Aubrie Simpson-Gotham, Amanda Bunk-Sizemore (treasurer) and Donna Wagner (secretary).

program is expanding to Duval and Volusia counties. For more information about this program, email [fosteringconnectionsfl@gmail.com](mailto:fosteringconnectionsfl@gmail.com) or call 904-813-5809.

Fostering Connections is a nonprofit organization that lifts up children and youth impacted by foster care or trauma by providing needed essentials, educational programs and community connections. Established in 2019, Fostering Connections serves youth impacted by foster care or trauma from birth through age 24 in St. Johns, Duval, Putnam, Flagler and Volusia counties.

In 2021, Fostering Connections served more than 150 youth across Northeast Florida.



Artist Jessica Shippee doing a live paint during Night of the Arts.

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# Annual Wine, Women & Shoes Event nets \$90K For Episcopal Children's Services

Contributed photos

Hundreds of guests slipped into their most fashionable shoes for the second annual Wine, Women & Shoes Jacksonville, an evening of shopping and fun supporting Episcopal Children's Services (ECS). Colleagues, daughters, mothers and grandmothers, sisters and friends throughout the Northeast Florida area gathered at Timuquana Country Club on May 12 to raise more than \$90,000 net to benefit the nonprofit.

"First Coast News" and "First Coast Living" anchor Jordan Wilkerson served as the host for the evening as guests sipped, shopped and supported the agency that serves more than more than 25,000 children and their families in 14 Florida counties offering School Readiness, Head Start and Early Head Start programs and services.

Attendees were treated to a never-before-seen fashion show featuring fashions from Zags, Cedric Brown Collections and local business An Unlikely Pear. They also enjoyed a sophisticated evening of wine tastings, a live auction featuring lavish trips and experiences, a silent auction featuring incredible products and retail goodies and a fun fashion marketplace.

Guests also enjoyed what was described as a "spectacular" marketplace with the latest trends and go-to finds, and one resident won the "Key to the Getaway," a trip to Sonoma, California.

All the funds raised will be used to directly benefit the children and families of North and Central Florida.

"This event exceeded our expectations, and we are beyond pleased with the generosity of the Jacksonville community and their support of ECS," said Chief Development Officer Lauren Hopkins. "We are looking forward to next year's event and raising even more funds for the well-being of the children and families in North and Central Florida."

"We are so grateful to have the help of our many sponsors and thankful for their fervent support of our ECS community," stated Chief Executive Officer Connie Stophel. "We could not do what we do without our community partners, and we are appreciative of their investment in our children and families."

Community sponsors for the event included Jacksonville Business Journal,



Wine, Women & Shoes attendees are welcomed to the event.



The Wine, Women & Shoes event was an evening of fun for attendees.

EVENT continues on Page 15

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# Event

Continued from 14

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Episcopal Children's Services offers programs in St. Johns, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam, Marion, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lake, Levy, Citrus and Alachua counties. It uses research and best practices to help families ensure their children enter school ready to learn. Teachers and staff work with children from birth to age 5 and their families to build a strong educational foundation.



The Wine, Women & Shoes event offered opportunities to do some shopping.



The Wine, Women & Shoes event featured a fashion show.



The Wine, Women & Shoes event was an evening of fun for attendees.

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# Business Weekly

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PAGE 17 THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2022



## Real estate company collecting backpacks

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty has launched its 23rd annual Backpack Challenge.

The Northeast Florida real estate firm is collecting new backpacks and school supplies for students in kindergarten through high school at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty offices now until Aug. 1. The company is also collecting cash and check donations to purchase backpacks and school supplies, which will be provided to local charities that serve Northeast Florida children.

“Backpacks containing essential school supplies give children the tools they need to start school with enthusiasm and confidence — and to succeed throughout the year,” said Berkshire Hathaway

HomeServices Florida Network Realty Founder and Chairperson Linda Sherrer. “Our Backpack Challenge is one of the ways our company assists children and families in our community. We encourage everyone to join us and support this worthy cause.”

Donations may be dropped off at the following office locations:

- Ponte Vedra/Nocatee: 333 Village Main St., Suite 670, Ponte Vedra Beach
- MuraBella at World Golf Village: 196 Capulet Drive, Suite 3, St. Augustine
- St. Augustine: 112 Sea Grove Main St., Suite 210, St. Augustine Beach
- Beaches/Intracoastal West/Southside: 375-1 Atlantic Blvd., Atlantic Beach
- Home Office: 4190 Belfort Road, Suite 475, Jacksonville

- Avondale/Ortega/San Marco: 3627 St. Johns Ave., Jacksonville
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ated since some schools have adopted a clear bag policy. Label the outside of the backpacks with the suggested grade level. A list of recommended school supplies by grade level is available at [FloridaNetworkRealty.com/Backpack](https://FloridaNetworkRealty.com/Backpack).

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# Three Seabrook neighborhoods prepare to open

Seabrook Park is a new amenity center set to open in summer 2023 in the Seabrook Village neighborhood, west of the Crosswater collection of neighborhoods on Conservation Trail. It will feature a pool, dog park and playground.

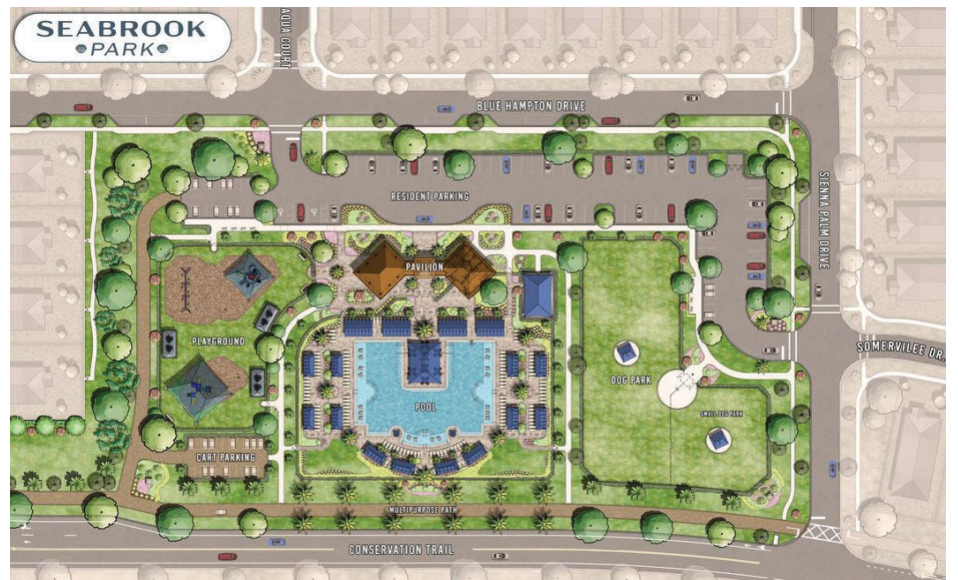
Three Seabrook Village neighborhoods are scheduled to open in late 2022. They are:

- Palm Crest, with 100 home sites similar in size to Crosswater's Heritage Trace, and homes between 2,500 and 3,200 square feet.
- Coral Ridge, a neighborhood with controlled-access and 182 of the largest home sites in the final phase of Nocatee.

Home sizes will start at approximately 3,200 square feet.

- Seabrook Village, with 327 home sites (in phase one) similar in size to Crosswater's Freedom Landing and Liberty Cove neighborhoods, and homes up to 2,800 square feet.

For general information on the Nocatee community, neighborhoods and amenities, call the Nocatee Welcome Center at 904-924-6863.



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# In the Arts



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THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2022 • PAGE 20 www.PonteVedraRecorder.com



Contributed photos

St. Johns resident Jennifer Farmer's first book, *Blue Sky Gone*, is now an award winner after being named a recipient of the IndieReader Discovery Award in the new adult fiction category.

## Long journey ends with award for local author

By Anthony Richards

St. Johns resident Jennifer Farmer's first book, "Blue Sky Gone," is now an award winner after being named a recipient of the IndieReader Discovery Award in the new adult fiction category.

"You put so much of your heart and soul into your book," Farmer said. "You just want people to enjoy it and get something from it. It is an honor because these are well-renowned people within the author and publishing world."

The book depicts a fictional account of two sisters, one a police officer and the other working in the financial world, that were in New York City during 9/11. New adult fiction was one of about 40 categories that earned awards.

Farmer began working on the book in 2019, and when the idea for the book came to her it seemed like the perfect fit, because she was about to graduate from the police academy while living in Connecticut when the events of 9/11 took place.

"For me 9/11 was very personal," Farmer said. "I'll never forget wanting to get out of the academy and get started with my career so bad. When 9/11 happened, it was very sobering because it was the sudden realization of what my chosen field would entail. It defined to me what being a hero meant."



"Blue Sky Gone" depicts a fictional account of two sisters, one a police officer and the other working in the financial world, that were in New York City during 9/11.

One of the driving forces for writing the book was to have it come out in time for the 20th anniversary of 9/11 in 2021.

However, she was halfway done with the book when the COVID-19 pandemic began and suddenly she found herself homeschooling her children and moving the family to Florida, which left little time to focus on her book.

"I had lost a little bit of hope that I would be able to get it finished," Farmer said.

But just when she was about to put the book on hold, she walked into her 9-year-old daughter's room one day and found her overcome with emotion as she held her mother's half-completed book in her hands.

She encouraged her mother to finish because it was a story that needed to be out there for others to read.

Farmer was moved by her daughter's words and began dedicating time to the book once again, and it paid off as it was finished and released to the public a couple of weeks prior to the 20th anniversary date.

"I give her all the credit, because without her support, I wouldn't have had the nudge I needed to get it finished," Farmer said.

Art camps coming up next:  
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# Sports



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## PLAYERS Championship names new tournament chair, vice chair

THE PLAYERS Championship has announced that Houston Bowles has been named its 2023 tournament chairman. Bowles succeeds Matt Welch for the role that oversees the more than 2,000 volunteers who support all elements of the PGA TOUR's flagship event.

In addition, Laura Renstrom has been appointed the newest vice chair, becoming THE PLAYERS' fourth female chairperson.

The volunteer leadership team, commonly known as the Red and Blue Coats, manages the 47 committees responsible for the operations integral to THE PLAYERS' success. The 2023 volunteer leadership team is as follows: Chairman Houston Bowles, First Vice Chair Lee Nimnicht and vice chairs Tyler Oldenburg, Marc Hassan, Kevin Copeland and Laura Renstrom.

### Houston Bowles

Entering his 24th year as a volunteer with THE PLAYERS, Bowles has managed a variety of committees, including benefactor, commissary, corporate hospitality, ecology, general parking, offsite parking, volunteer parking, VIP parking and walking scorers.

"I am so honored to work alongside the amazing volunteer team at THE PLAYERS and assume the position of 2023 chairman," said Bowles. "THE PLAYERS volunteers have become my extended family over the last 20-plus years, and their passion and dedication continually motivate me to always do my best. I hope to live up to the high standards



Houston Bowles has been selected as The PLAYERS Championship 2023 tournament chairman.

set by Matt Welch and all past chairpersons and am looking forward to a 2023 championship that is successful on the course and throughout the greater Northeast Florida community."

A Maryland native, Bowles holds a Bachelor of History degree from the University of Lynchburg, where he played on the school's lacrosse team. Bowles moved to Northeast Florida in 1998 and is currently a federal account manager for North Florida at Florida Blue.

Bowles has been an active volunteer in Northeast Florida's nonprofit community, with past involvement including work with the American Red Cross, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida, Seaside Community Charter School, Cathedral Arts Project, American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society.

Bowles and his wife, Trisha, live in Atlantic Beach with their two daughters, Ellie and Kadie.

### Laura Renstrom

Renstrom, a Northeast Florida native, began volunteering at THE PLAYERS as a child, first as a runner on the practice grounds and later as a standard bearer. THE PLAYERS 2023 will mark Renstrom's 15th year as a volunteer.

Prior to being named vice chair, Renstrom held leadership positions on the apparel, benefactor, standard bearers, tournament support and volunteer off-site shuttle committees.

As the newest vice chair, Renstrom will oversee the

Volunteer Services division, which supervises apparel, credentials, concessions, office and volunteer personnel, photography, recognition, supplies, volunteer information, offsite shuttle and volunteer transportation.

Renstrom graduated from Nease High School and then received several degrees from the University of Florida: Bachelor of Music in piano performance, Master of Science in business management and Juris Doctor from the Levin College of Law.

In 2013, she was inducted into the University of Florida Hall of Fame.

Renstrom currently works as a trial lawyer in Holland & Knight's Jacksonville office. She has been recognized as a 2022 First Coast Women in Law honoree by Attorney at Law Magazine, among other accolades. In addition to her involvement with THE PLAYERS, Renstrom has also served on the board of directors for Sanctuary on 8th Street as well as vice president of the Jacksonville Chapter of the Federal Bar Association.

Laura and her husband Nathan have two children, Parker, 3, and Caroline, 1, and live in Mandarin.

"I am incredibly honored to be selected as a vice chair at THE PLAYERS," said Renstrom. "This tournament holds a special place in my heart as I have been a volunteer at THE PLAYERS since I was a child. I was born and raised here in Jacksonville, and I have directly seen the community impact that this tournament makes on Northeast Florida. Getting to serve on the leadership team has been a lifelong dream, and I'm honored to work with thousands of dedicated volunteers and the hardworking team of staff to ensure that the tournament grows and improves each year."

THE PLAYERS 2023 will be held on March 7-12. Volunteer registration is slated to open in the fall.

For further information, go to THEPLAYERS.com/volunteer.



Photos courtesy of PGA TOUR  
Laura Renstrom has been selected as The PLAYERS Championship 2023 vice chair.

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CROSSWORD													
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55		56							57				
58									59				

- ACROSS**
- 1. Half-conscious states
  - 8. Unnatural
  - 13. Deep regret
  - 14. Rogue
  - 15. Took without permission
  - 19. An alternative
  - 20. After B
  - 21. Partner to "flowed"
  - 22. The best day of the week (abbr.)
  - 23. Helps you hear
  - 24. Egyptian river
  - 25. Lake \_\_, one of the Great
  - 26. Make free from bacteria
  - 30. Indigenous peoples of central Canada
  - 31. Sanctuaries in Greek temples
  - 32. Most unclothed
  - 33. NJ senator Booker
  - 34. Tibetan lake
  - 35. Desecrate something sacred
  - 38. John \_\_, English educator 1467-1519
  - 39. Obtains in return for labor
  - 40. Views
  - 44. Rugged cliff
  - 45. Not quiet
  - 46. Body part
  - 47. Newt
  - 48. German city
  - 49. A way to save money
  - 50. NBC's Roker
  - 51. Dire Straits frontman
  - 55. Actress Lathan
  - 57. Most meager
  - 58. Poems
  - 59. Companions
- DOWN**
- 1. Draws over
  - 2. Recur
  - 3. Current unit
  - 4. Neither
  - 5. Certified Radio Operator (abbr.)
  - 6. Power of perception
  - 7. Peace
  - 8. Supplemented with difficulty
  - 9. The last section or part of anything
  - 10. Dorm worker
  - 11. Bones
  - 12. Most unnatural
  - 16. Spanish island
  - 17. The skill to do something
  - 18. Where golf games begin
  - 22. Untethered
  - 25. Print errors
  - 27. The sport of engaging in contests of speed
  - 28. Ones to look up to
  - 29. Stringed instrument
  - 30. Gives whippings
  - 32. Type of tie
  - 34. Make more concentrated
  - 35. Die
  - 36. Part of a winter hat
  - 37. Young men's club
  - 38. Bathrooms need it
  - 40. U.S. president
  - 41. American novelist
  - 42. Take into custody
  - 43. Hurts
  - 45. Type of gibbon
  - 48. American actor Lukas
  - 51. Partner to cheese
  - 52. Some are covert
  - 53. Political action committee
  - 54. To and \_\_
  - 56. Atomic #28

SUDOKU								
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5			3				1	7

**Here's How It Works:**  
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



Contributed photos

Current and former players and coaches gathered recently to celebrate the successful career of retiring PVHS girls volleyball Coach Robin Mignerey.

# Celebration held for retiring PVHS volleyball coach

A surprise celebration for retiring PVHS girls volleyball Coach Robin Mignerey was held recently at Pusser's Bar & Grille. Current and former players (including her two daughters), coaches and their families attended.

Mignerey's 13-year tenure included 11 straight District Championships and six trips to the Final 4 after Regional Championships. Those appearances resulted in two runners-up in State Championships and three State Championship wins.

After capturing their first state title in 2017, Mignerey led the Sharks to become the first program in Northeast Florida to achieve back-to-back State Championships in 2019 and 2020. The Sharks were undefeated in 2020 (27-0) with a streak that ultimately stretched to 51 games and were ranked No. 1 nationally in several polls for multiple weeks during the 2021 season. The Sharks have not had a loss at home in five years.

During her career at PVHS, Mignerey



OG players representing years 2009-16 with Coach Robin Mignerey and Coach Dan Burkert

was named coach of the year multiple times by multiple sources, including the Times-Union's area coach of the year across all sports for the 2020-21 year. Additionally, she served as coach for the newly added girls beach volleyball program at PVHS finishing fifth in the state in their debut 2021 season and capturing the district title in 2022 with their official entry as an FHSAA sport.

## Author

Continued from 20

According to Farmer, cancer and respiratory diseases are still taking their toll on personnel that were on site during the fateful day, even more than 20 years later. She believes the book is a great way to create awareness.

"It brings forth the challenges that we're still facing today and brings to light the illnesses that many are still dealing with years later," Farmer said.

The events of 9/11 wound up changing her eventual career path, as years later she ended up working in government and doing her part to help by working for a defense contractor.

"I want people to come away with an overall feeling of hope even through loss and tragedy," Farmer said. "I also really

want to reach a lot of the younger generation, who were not around when it happened. Even though the story is fictional, I did my research and there are a lot of historical details within it."

A large portion of the proceeds from the book are donated to the 9/11 Memorial Fund and the Tunnels to Towers Foundation.

However, Farmer has been holding book signings and public appearances in the local area of late, where a portion of the proceeds also benefit The Fire Watch, a statewide organization with the goal of ending veteran suicide.

The book can be found in the St. Johns County library system, as well online outlets such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple Books and Walmart.

For more information about the book or to purchase personalized and signed copies, go to jsfarmerauthor.com.



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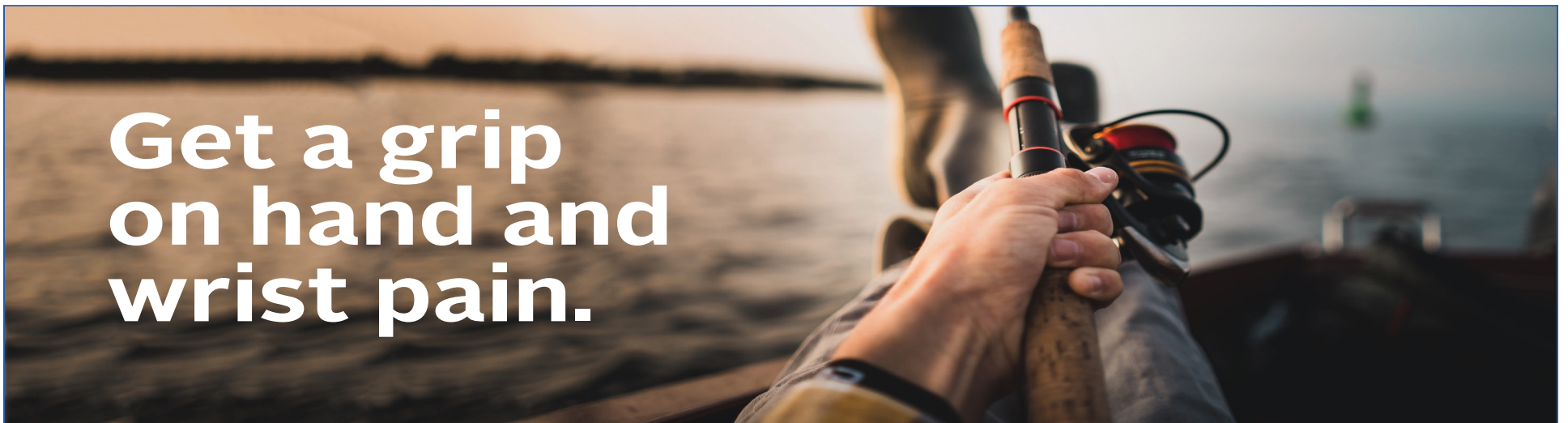
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