

2015-12-24

The Weekly Challenger : 2015 : 12 : 24

The Weekly Challenger, et al

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/challenger>

Recommended Citation

The Weekly Challenger, et al, "The Weekly Challenger : 2015 : 12 : 24" (2015). *Newspaper collection*. 363.
<https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/challenger/363>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the The Weekly Challenger at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Newspaper collection by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.



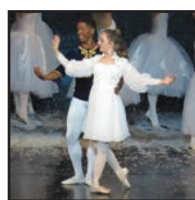
4 COMMUNITY: Melrose girls



6 COMMUNITY: Fashion play



7 COMMUNITY: Holiday luncheon



10 COMMUNITY: 'The Nutcracker'

The Weekly Challenger

We Value Diversity | We Value Education | We Value History

VOL. 48 NO. 18

DECEMBER 24 - DECEMBER 30, 2015

50¢



Happy Holidays

from the Staff of The Weekly Challenger



Lakewood Elementary parties hard



BY RAVEN JOY SHONEL
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — When community activist Theresa “Momma Tee” Lassiter plans a party, she plans a party. In two weeks, she threw together a holiday bash for 95 children from Lakewood Elementary last Fri., Dec. 18.

With money left over from her 12th Annual Lawfest and Community & Fair back in October, she decided to throw a holiday party that the kids would not soon forget.

“This is my school that I’ve chosen out of the five that they say are failures—I don’t call them failures—and I talked with Principal Cynthia Kidd and asked if we could do a Christmas Cantata [sic],” said Lassiter.

Although Santa didn’t make an appearance, he sent some very prestigious helpers, in the form of Mayor Rick Kriseman, Commissioner Ken Welch, Reverend Manuel Sykes, Juvenile Welfare Board’s Trenia Cox and even Pinellas County Schools Superin-

See **TEE**, page 15



Top L-R Elder James Myles, Dr. Goliath Davis, Dr. Ricardo Davis and Atty. Guy Burns
Bottom L-R Maria L. Scruggs, Dr. Michael Grego, Trey Moore and Atty. Amir Whitaker

The school-to-prison pipeline in Pinellas

BY SKYLA LUCKEY
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — The recent Pinellas County Schools “report card” compiled by the Southern Poverty Law Center echoes the *Tampa Bay Times’* investigative report with its startling statistics.

More than 100 concerned parents and community members met at

Bethel Community Baptist Church last Thurs., Dec. 17 to listen to a panel discussion with Dr. Ricardo Davis, president of Concerned Organizations for Quality Education for Black Students (CO-QEBS), Maria Scruggs, President of NAACP St. Petersburg Branch, Dr. Amir Whitaker, staff attorney with the Southern Poverty Law Center and

Elder James Myles from Bethel Community Baptist Church.

Pinellas County has some of the lowest achieving and most segregated schools in the state. Harsh discipline policies deprive students of tens of thousands of education hours annually. Students are arrested at a rate nearly twice the state average and five times the

rate of counties like Miami-Dade and Broward.

Moderated by Trey Moore of Micah Center, Superintendent Michael Grego and several Pinellas County School Board members sat in the audience and listened to angry citizens call for their resignations.

See **PIPELINE**, pages 12

Enough is enough

BY FRANK DROUZAS
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — In view of two recent deaths due to gun violence in the community, Mayor Rick Kriseman took to the streets of St. Petersburg to convey the simply message: enough is enough.

Along with residents, city leaders and members of the police department,

the mayor marched down Central Avenue on Fri., Dec. 18 to raise awareness to the shootings and deaths by firearms, and encouraged the community to speak out in “one very clear, loud voice” that gun violence in unacceptable.

Kriseman stated that it was only one of many steps that need to

See **ENOUGH**, page 14



March to end gun violence.

The legacy of a queen



2004 Miss America
Erika Dunlap

BY JULIA RUDGERS
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — “Dreams are extremely important. You can’t do it unless you imagine it,” said George Lucas, the creator of the Star Wars franchise. In so many ways, his quote embodies the philosophy of Erika Dunlap, Miss America 2004.

She is a persistent, driven and intelligent young woman who also believed in the beauty of her dreams, and through her will power and determination, as well as focus, made those dreams become a reality.

Sun., Dec. 13, the Carter G. Woodson African American Museum and the ladies of Zeta Upsilon Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. hosted an event entitled “Conversations with the Queen.” This was an opportunity for the sorority’s youth organization to chat with Dunlap about her experiences as Miss America and growing up as a young black woman in pursuit of her dreams.

Dunlap immediately drew the crowd in with her warm demeanor, and held them there with the strength and maturity behind her words. She is now a public speaker and travels around the country in hopes of helping others

See **QUEEN**, page 9

48 Years of Service to the Tampa Bay Area • www.TheWeeklyChallenger.com • 727-896-2922

INDEX: COMMUNITY 2 - 15 • CHURCH NEWS 16 - 17

SMALL FIRM ATTENTION. BIG FIRM RESULTS.

Atty. Darryl Rouson
727-224-4557

Dolman Law Group



Car Accident and Personal Injury Attorneys

DARRYL E. ROUSON

JULIA MCGRATH

ALEXANDER KNAPP

MATTHEW A. DOLMAN

CHRISTIAN MYER

REBECCA HEIST DOLMAN

AUTO ACCIDENT & CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEYS

(813) 229-5353

**Martin J. Hernandez
Daniel J. Fernandez**



www.FernandezHernandezLaw.com

COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Pete Sigmas to honor living legends

ST. PETERSBURG — The brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. will celebrate 102 years of service Jan. 9 at the Harold Seltzer's Steakhouse.

The "Evening of Blue & White" will be a semi-formal celebration hosted by the local chapter. Members, elected officials and guest will gather to honor members who have reached the momentous milestone of 50 plus years of membership in the prestigious organization.

Each honoree will be recognized for their contributions to one of the three national principles of the fraternity: Samuel Kicklighter, last living charter member, for brotherhood; Reuben Nesbitt for scholarship and Thomas "Jet" Jackson for

service.

Under the leadership of Chapter President Cedric Ferrell and Corey Givens Jr., event chair, the fraternity members will present Emma Cavin, a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., with the 2016 Dove Award.

The keynote speaker for the evening will be well-respected Bay area physician Dr. Fredrick Guerrier, who is also a member of the fraternity.

During the inaugural Founders' Day Banquet, the fraternity will announce the kick-off of their Sigma Sundays Scholarship Award. The initiative will officially launch in January to support the educational needs of students and youth ministries in churches through-

out south St. Petersburg. Award amounts range from \$1,000 to \$1,200 in total.

Other event highlights include proclamation presentations by the City of St. Petersburg, Pinellas County School Board and the office of Congresswoman Kathy Castor.

For more information, contact Bro. Corey Givens Jr. at (727) 433-5477.

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. was founded on January 9, 1914, at Howard University in Washington, DC. Led by International President Jonathan A. Mason, Sr.; the organization equips college-educate men with the tools necessary to improve the social and economic conditions of communities worldwide.



NAACP Emancipation Proclamation Service

ST. PETERSBURG — January 1, 2016, will mark 153 year since President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The NAACP commemorates this moment in history as a reminder of how precious our liberty is. In his September 12, 1962, speech during an Emancipation Proclamation commemorative event, Dr. Martin Luther King said the proclamation "was a constructive use of the force of law to uproot a social order which sought to separate liberty from a segment of humanity."

The NAACP hopes by continuing the tradition of commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation, we

will take the necessary actions to ensure that we will never allow our freedom to be taken for granted.

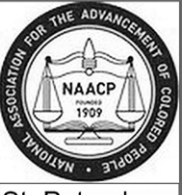
The 2016 Emancipation Proclamation Service will occur next Fri., Jan. 1 at 10 a.m. at Bethel Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church, 3455 26th Ave. S, St. Pete, where Dr. Rickey L. Houston tends his flock. This year's speaker will be Rev. Don A. Gaskin, senior pastor of New Philadelphia Community Church.

The celebration will place a spotlight on young people in our community who are doing great things. Jermaine Robinson from Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High will

recite excerpts from the Proclamation. Maiya Stevenson will return home from Florida A& M University where she is a voice major and perform gospel and Negro spirituals. Dundu Dole West African Ballet rounds out the showcase of young talent.

Local artist Alvin Lewis and Carla Bristol, owner of Gallerie 909, will also be present. Membership applications for the NAACP will be on hand.

For further information contact the NAACP Communications Chair Tony King at (727) 643-1551 or President Maria L. Scruggs at (727) 798-5361! You will not want to miss it.




St. Petersburg Branch #5130

Annual Emancipation Proclamation


JUBILEE 2016: CELEBRATING THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

January 1, 2016 10:00 a.m.


Host Pastor: Dr. Rickey L. Houston
Bethel Metropolitan Church
3455 26th Avenue South St. Petersburg, FL 33711
[All Invited]




Alvin Lewis
Local Artist Display




West African Ballet
Dundu Dole




Guest Speaker
Sr. Pastor Don Gaskin
New Philadelphia Community Church



Carla Bristol
Gallerie 909 Exhibit



Song & Recitation
Gbbbs HS Students
Jermaine Robinson, Jr.
Maiya Stevenson




PICK OF THE WEEK!

23 24 12

CASH 3
585
120
847

DOG DAYS



5-1	3-5
7-2	2-3
8-6	4-7

CUSTOMIZED ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

OFFICE: 727-865-1591
FAX: 727-866-1728
WWW.WRXB.US

WRXB PRAISE



WRXB 1590 AM & 96.5 FM
RADIO PERSONALITIES LINE UP
7AM-12 Noon Undignified Praise & Worship
Richard C. Guess, Host
12 Noon-2PM Sister Diane Hughes
3PM-7PM Bro. Michael Walker
7PM-7AM Inspirational Music with Joe Simian
HOTLINE 727-864-1600

WE ENCOURAGE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Weekly Challenger

Home Delivery to South St. Petersburg for \$50 yearly
First Class Mail Subscription Cost: \$80 yearly

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone No: _____

Email Address: _____

New Subscription _____ (or) Renewal _____

Date: _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____ Cash _____ Check _____

Comments: _____

Make Checks Payable to: The Weekly Challenger

Mail this form & payment to: The Weekly Challenger, P.O. Box 35130, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Email: editor@theweeklychallenger.com • Phone: (727) 896-2922 • Fax (727) 823-2568

RATE REDUCTION SPECIAL!

The Weekly Challenger

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

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

Ethel L. Johnson
CEO/Publisher Emerita

Lyn Johnson
Publisher/General Manager

Irene Johnson-Pridgen
Advertising Dept. 727-642-3499
advertising@theweeklychallenger.com

Lorrie Bellinger
Art Director

PUBLISHED WEEKLY
on Thursdays

READERSHIP
100,000 monthly

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

SINGLE COPY 50 cents

ATTN. POSTMASTER:
Send all address changes to:
The Weekly Challenger
P.O. Box 35130
St. Petersburg, FL 33705

NO PAPER?
If you have not received your paper during delivery, call (727) 896-2922

DEADLINES
All news items, advertising copy and related art submitted for publication on Thursday must be received no later than 4 p.m. Monday.

COLUMNIST'S DISCLAIMER
The views expressed by The Weekly Challenger columnists/ advice columnists do not necessarily reflect the views of The Weekly Challenger. By publishing such columns, The Challenger is not advocating the following of any advice or suggestion expressed.

SUBMISSIONS POLICY
Submissions to The Weekly Challenger may be edited for reasons of space, clarity or for considerations of liability. All submissions become the sole property of The Weekly Challenger. The Weekly Challenger reserves the right to run all or part of any submission at a later time. Some submissions may take precedence due to timeliness or newsworthiness.

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



Volume 48 • Number 18
Published Thursday,
December 17, 2015
18 pages • 1 section

© The Weekly Challenger

All rights reserved. No portions of this periodical may be reproduced without expressed consent.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Being clean does not equal a good school

Dear Editor,
The December 8 *Tampa Bay Times* article entitled “Pinellas down-plays problems at failing schools, but hires leaders to fix them” should force the African-American community to simply draw a line in the sand.

In what was described as a two-minute video of one hour bus tours to Campbell Park, Maximo, Fairmount Park, Lakewood and Melrose Elementary Schools, the article highlights the fact that after a one hour visit to just two of the schools, a couple of conversations with staff and an opportunity to see our children dance, Pinellas Education Foundation Chairwoman Cathy Collins concluded:

“I was pretty confident that things would be in order and that there was progress being made, because I have watched the leadership of Mike Grego over the last three years, and he is a true leader... and there is no way that some of the issues that were described in those articles were going on in those schools.”

In a follow up phone conversation with a *Times* reporter, Collins goes on further to say that the two schools on the tour were amazingly clean and well put together. After reaching this point in the article, I braced myself for her to comment on how clean the children were.

Maybe the reporter

spared the African-American community from further insult, or just maybe Collins has had enough cultural sensitivity training in her life that when she found herself at that point, she didn’t want to travel down a path where she would find herself standing head and shoulders with Donald Trump.

Will we ever get past the historical rhetoric that suggest African Americans are not clean and therefore when a white person sees a black home, person or institution that is not filthy they must make comments to the fact.

Vice President Joe Biden found himself in a similar twist when he referred to then candidate Barack Obama as articulate and clean, to suggest that even though he graduated from Columbia University, Harvard Law School, taught part time at the University of Chicago Law School, practice law and became a U.S. Senator, he still wasn’t expected to be articulate or clean.

Collins’ comments were egregious and insulting; however, they are just the tip of the iceberg of the most insulting actions from leaders in this community that I have experienced.

I am certainly not a fan of the *Times*, however, I like to think I am able to rise above my own biases and give credit where credit is due. After a year-long investigative report,



they brought to light the fact that five of our elementary schools within south St. Petersburg have been identified as five of the 13 worst performing schools in the state of Florida.

Yet, three of the community’s most prominent citizens: Alex McKenna, Collins and Debra Faulk all concluded after a one-hour tour at two of the schools the *Times* call “failure factories,” that their reporting is faulty. And, in spite of the thousands of African-American children being let down at these five schools, Pinellas County Superintendent Dr. Grego is an “excellent leader.”

What is equally disturbing is McKenna, Collins and Faulk serve on one of the most prestigious governing bodies in the county and with some of the A-listers representing major corporations, and yet after one hour they felt comfortable enough to conclude that because our schools were clean, the system is not failing.

Maria L. Scruggs

All I want for Christmas

BY DEXTER MCCREE
Feature Writer

Tis the reason for the Christmas season. The joy of family, challenges of world peace and unity of

people headline a season of jingling bells and lights so bright.

In December kindness and good gestures is on the rise and the desire to maintain that attitude

throughout the year. Selfishness will take a temporary back seat to the good will of others.

What do we really want for Christmas? Here is a start.



Michael Glock
“All I want for Christmas is for the people that I care about and family to find peace and happiness.”



Evangelist Queen Mims-Davis
All I want for Christmas is to spread the news of what Christmas is all about. I hope my children and all others remember to show the love of Jesus.”



Nathan Halford
“All I want for Christmas is for people who are having hard times to be able to take of them. It’d be nice to get a car, my license and get rid of this stupid cell phone.”



Luci Scratton
“All I want for Christmas is peace. That’s really it!”



Vader Green
“All I want for Christmas is to be in good grace with the Lord.”



Terrell Dukes
“All I want for Christmas is peace, love and unity with my family.”

Saving youth with teachers and leaders who care

Dear Editor,
In the past few weeks several young black men have been murdered in St. Petersburg. Earlier this year in Tampa at least seven men and women were shot. Most died and very few even made the Bay area television news. Education is one tool that could benefit our community if only it were more embraced by everyone.

That includes young people, leaders and teachers who all care. To care means not just to feel bad but react.

On Thurs., Dec. 10, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The United States Senate voted 85 to 12 to overhaul the No Child Left Behind Law signed by President Bush. This new law replaces one that came under fire for many reasons. The ESSA will give the federal government less control and states more.

President Obama gave credit to President Bush and the previous law. This is in sharp contrast to the Republicans and others who rarely give this president any credit for anything. He actually got bipartisan help to pass this new law.

ESSA, however, is not a panacea for two of the biggest problems in education: closing the achievement gap and raising the performance of the worst schools.

Last week I attended a school and observed one classroom in hot pursuit of those goals. We are often overwhelmed with horrible narratives of public schools failing our children, but at Booker T. Washington Elementary School in Tampa, I observed just the opposite.

It was a last-minute situation and I got a lot of help

from the principal and the guidance counselor. They sent me to the fifth grade classroom of a very impressive young, African-American teacher named Ms. Hampton.

To say I was impressed is a gross understatement. I spent the last two years living in Tampa not far from the school. I frankly feared the teenagers I saw on the street. I often saw and heard disrespect for everyone to everyone including themselves. In sharp contrast was the behavior of the students in Ms. Hampton’s class. Instead of gaining crime and contempt “cred in da street,” Ms. Hampton’s fifth-graders are learning respect, control and how to communicate.

They were so friendly and polite I was taken aback. Honestly, it is my experience that in Tampa and St. Petersburg, many adults are not very friendly and polite, let alone young people.

Too often I walk up to the counter and say: “How are you today,” instead of it being the other way around. How can we expect young people to be polite and professional when adults don’t practice it?

Ms. Hampton fifth graders seemed to mirror her enthusiasm for learning. The atmosphere was relaxed with limits. Posters and slogans with words of encouragement painted the walls. Although colorful and neat, the classroom was no a playpen. She let her kids know they are expected to achieve. Bad behavior is not tolerated or excused. These fifth-grade kids are told they are responsible for their own lives and that no superhero was going to come and save them.

Ms. Hampton’s class had so much more than we



did when I was growing up. Booker T. Washington Elementary has computers and even a music studio with instrument and recording equipment. But most importantly, Ms. Hampton and the music teachers showed a genuine concern for the kids.

In her class, students are taught how to communicate without confrontation. When a student makes a comment, the next student acknowledges that comment and adds to it. If there is a disagreement, it is presented in a manner that would shame Congress in Washington.

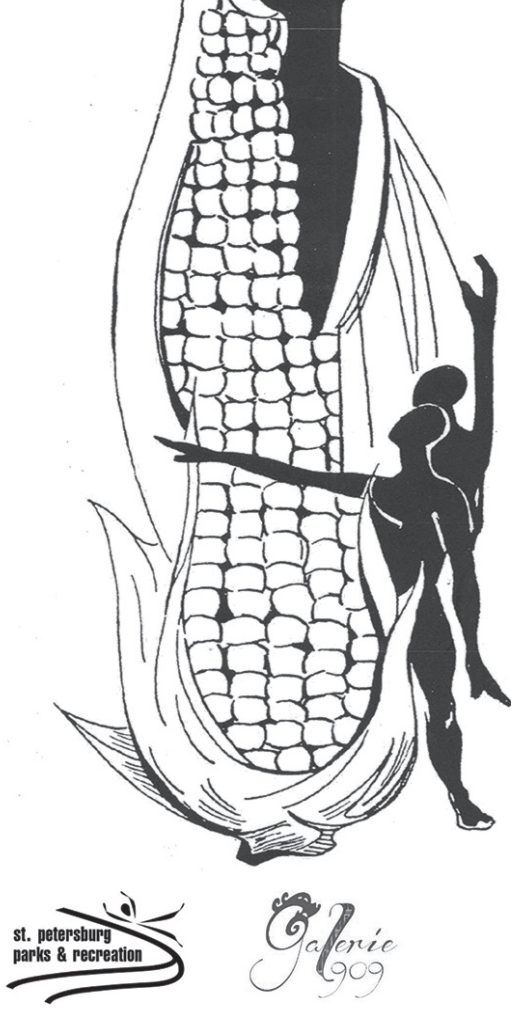
What we need are masterful teachers like Ms. Hampton who enforces discipline while showing how much they really care. Intellectual inquisitiveness must replace laziness and apathy. There are many problems in our schools and to ignore them is foolish. Truth and progress demands that we acknowledge when things are done well. We can build upon what is good and do better.

Ms. Hampton’s fifth-grade class is proof that we can do better if only we try harder and not be overwhelmed by what is bad. Our children and our future depend on this. Every student can succeed.

Rivers Cleveland

KWANZAA

2015-2016



UMOJA (UNITY)
Saturday, Dec 26, 2015, 6:30 pm
GALLERIE 909
909 22nd Street S. ~ St. Petersburg, FL
Contact: Carla Bristol @ 727-565-3930

KUJICHAGULIA (Self Determination)
Sunday, Dec. 27, 2015
Individual Observation Recommended

UJIMA (Collective Work and Responsibility)
Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 @ 6:30 pm
Enoch Davis Center
1111 18th Avenue S. ~ St. Petersburg, FL
Bro. Kevin Johnson Family & Friends
Contact: L. Buchanan @ 727-893-7134

UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics)
Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2015 @ 6:30 pm
Uniquely Original Art Studio
915 24th Street S. ~ St. Petersburg, FL
Contact: Catherine Weaver @ 727-239-3696

NIA (Purpose)
Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2015
Individual Celebration Recommended

KUUMBA (Creativity)
Thursday, Dec. 31, 2015
Individual Celebration Recommended

IMANI (Faith)
Friday, Jan. 1, 2016 @ 6:30 pm
Enoch Davis Center & Community
1111 18th Avenue S. ~ St. Petersburg, FL
Bring a dish to share at the ‘Karuma’
Contact: L. Buchanan @ 727-893-7134



**BE SURE
TO CHECK
OUT OUR
WEBSITE!**

TheWeeklyChallenger.com

COMMUNITY NEWS

Melrose girls got the silver spoon treatment

BY ALLEN A. BUCHANAN
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — The Women of the Woodson treated 17 glowing Melrose Elementary School girls to a Cinderella-like weekend entitled Christmas Silver Spoon Tea Party with Mrs. Terri and the Carter G. Woodson Museum, said Erika Dunlap, who was crowned Miss Florida in 2003 and became 2004 Miss America.

“To be dressed up and put into a limo, that’s an unbelievable experience for any nine or 10 year old. They now know what it takes to present themselves well and to be a lady...that’s very important to us,” said Dunlap.

The queen shared with the little princesses that growing up she felt she was ugly. “That was a challenge for me growing up dark skin to think that I was pretty, that I was beautiful. At events in our neighborhood the lighter skin girls would get all the favor but the darker skinned girls would be kind of in the background. So it was very important for me to be here to express to all the girls, especially the dark skin girls that you’re beautiful no matter what hue you are. You have to see your beauty for yourself,” exclaimed Dunlap.

Dunlap punctuated the essence of knowing and feeling one’s own inner beauty. “You have to celebrate yourself so that no one thinks they can compromise you or you compromise yourself.”

signed a mentor who escorted them to their final destination where they met up with the queen herself.

As well wishers looked on as Scott introduced each girl who received gifts from their adult female mentor in the courtyard decorated for the Christmas holidays, a spirit of wellness and solidarity warmed the chilled fall air.

The girls were sponsored by Dana Battle, Thelma McCloud, Cynthia Jenkins, Rachella Moody, Frechette Bradley, Beatrice Morris, Rita Wesley, Donna McRae, Ya La Ford, Jenee Skipper, Manitia Moultrie, Jacqueline Gayle Kelly, Colleen Vieux, Brenda Gordon, Erika Lopez, Shannon Ligon and Terri Lipsey Scott.

The princesses from Melrose were Sanyiah McRae, Kloie Thomas, Asihya Madison, Solanzje Jones, Alexia Levesque, Taniya Bell, Diamond Witchard, Anaya Graham, Malazzha McDaniel, Alana Gipson, Nevaeh Gamble, Mykeira Webb, LaNiya McCaulla, Shavion Hobbs, Tyzeona Gray, DaNiyia Gray and Samaria Tunsil.

The women who provided special assistance to make the Christmas Silver Spoon Tea Party Weekend a success were Roslyn Graham, Yolanda Hudson and Ashley Scott.

Special thanks to Melrose teachers: Shaday Lackey, Caprice Johnson, Shenoah Washington Davis, Jennifer Jackson and Ottesha Williams. Major sponsors of the event were Duke Energy, Marriott, Walmart, Exceptional Dental and Mt. Zion Human Services.

Each of the little girls was blessed with new dresses, pajamas, slippers and under garments. Sunday morning they were limo driven around town and stopped at several sites in the city. Top photographer Rodney Newsome was there to capture the whole experience.

The 17 girls ended their busy, luxurious day with a proper tea party at the Woodson. Each of the girls was as-





National Council of Negro Women Inc.
proudly presents



The 30th Annual
MLK
LEADERSHIP AWARDS
BREAKFAST
Monday 18 2016
January 7:30 AM

Keynote Speaker
Dr. Jamal Harrison Bryant
The Coliseum
535 Fourth Avenue North
St. Petersburg
\$250 ~ Reserved Table for 10
Includes Preferred Seating and Table Signage
\$25.00 per person
\$30.00 at the door
Tickets available at
The Coliseum Box Office:
(727) 892-5202
www.mlkbreakfast-stpete.com
NCNW (727) 896-6556

Presenting Sponsor:

Title Sponsor:

Specialty Sponsors:
The City of St. Petersburg | St. Petersburg College
Tampa Bay Times | Bright House
Sustaining Sponsors:
St. Anthony's Hospital | Coca Cola Beverages Florida

IN HONOR OF INDIA NICOLE WELCH WE PRESENT

GOODBYE FEAR
HELLO VICTORY
UNITY FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 2016



FOOD TRUCKS - SHOP WITH LOCAL BUSINESS VENDORS - KIDZ ZONE
FAMILY FRIENDLY GAMES - COMMUNITY PARTNERS - LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

FEATURING: TIFFANY ANDERSON | THURMAINE BURRELL | SAMUEL MITCHELL | CHARLES SMITH | DARIUS WASHINGTON | MARTINA SYKES | MIJ ROBINSON | JE WHITE | YOUNG SAINT
RICKA RILEY | TYE SHERM | P. MIKE | HEARTY IN MOUTH | KENTÉ JAMISON | CONNECTED TO CHRIST | LEO THOMPSON | CJ MELTON | GLORIOUS PRAISE PANTHIME | DAT GUY INC

Location: Gibbs High School
850 34th St S St Pete, FL 33711
Gates Open @ 1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
FREE EVENT | \$15 VIP TICKETS
HOSTED BY: RAHN HORTMAN AND COCO
VIP INCLUDES: PREFERRED SEATING | MEET & GREET W/ MEAL TICKET | SWAGG BAG

Special Thanks To Our Sponsors:


Call (727) 656 4576 Or Visit www.GFHVUnityFest.com To
Contact VIP Ticket Holders & Become A Vendor Or Sponsor
Proceeds Will Benefit India Nicole Welch Ministries and Scholarship Fund



IT'S A SHOWDOWN!

Grandma's smoky greens vs. Mama's black-eyed pea salad. What a delicious and exciting way to ring in the new year. Publix has all the fresh ingredients you love. The entertainment... we'll leave to you. Happy New Year from Publix.

Log on to publix.com/aprons and check out some additional recipe ideas.

Publix®

WHERE SHOPPING IS A PLEASURE®

COMMUNITY NEWS

Winter Wonderland Fashion Play

BY RAVEN JOY SHONEL
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – The Childs Park YMCA was turned into a winter wonderland fashion show complete with a runway, celebrities and proud parents watching their little ones strut their stuff in the latest “kiddie kouture.”

The Dec. 10 fashion show served as a finale to the 2015 Fashion, Etiquette, & Health Boot Camp put on by Audrey “Pat” McGhee, CEO of APM Images, Inc.

Attendees were asked to donate a toy that went to the YMCA Neighbor to Neighbor Christmas Program, where 330 families received a live Christmas tree, a \$50 Publix gift card and were able to handpick five brand new toys.

St. Pete celebrity Taylor Barnes, home from Idyllwild Arts Academy in California, showed why she won a scholarship to this internationally acclaimed residential arts high school. After graduation, she hopes to

matriculate into Juilliard. Emcee for the evening was celebrity award-winning photography and television talk show host Ricc Rollins, who is a Tampa native. This best-selling author and motivational speaker’s work can be seen on numerous CD, magazine and book covers.

Rollins paid tribute to the recently passed Marquee “Tate” Lynche Jr., a St. Pete-bred singer and actor who starred on “The All New Mickey Mouse Club,” Broadway and even made it to the semifinals of “American Idol.”

He said that Lynche’s message was that every young person deserves to dream, and dedicated the fashion show to him. Rollins also said that when Lynche’s mother spotted talent in her children, she put them in every program she could to make sure they had opportunities.

“Aren’t we grateful for Audrey “Pat” McGhee who makes sure that our young people have something to

focus on,” Rollins asked the crowd.

The fashion show was setup like a play with four scenes: “Christmas Chic,” “Wonderland Fashionistas,” “Snow Flakes in the Mist” and “Hip Hop Christmas.” In each scene, the mini models walked the catwalk in fashions that can all be found at Macy’s.

McGhee honored a few people who made the boot camp a success such as Terri Lipsey Scott from the Carter G. Woodson African American Museum, who donated her time and the museum to work with the girls on proper table etiquette and life coach Brandi Winans who worked with the youth with building an image and branding themselves.

She also honored professional photographer Jerrod Douse, who treated the kids to a professional fashion shoot and taught them how to operate a camera and Rollins for helping her with anything that was needed from creating a logo to speaking to the youth.



Word, Worship & Laughter

WATCH NIGHT SERVICE 2015

Featuring

Sister Cantaloupe

December 31, 2015 / 9PM

Mt. Zion Progressive Missionary Baptist Church

955 20th Street South — St. Petersburg, FL 33712

www.mzprogressive.org

THE GENERATIONAL WEALTH PLEDGE FOR BLACK FAMILIES

I pledge to...

- shift my money mindset from spending to building wealth.
- regularly check my credit score to ensure that it's at least 740.
- calculate how much I will need to retire and to contribute to a retirement plan.
- plan for my children's education.
- awaken the financial genius of my children.
- rely on more than one source of income for building my wealth.
- consistently allocate at least 20% of my income to savings.
- leave my family a legacy.
- consciously support black-owned businesses and boycott businesses that discriminate and dehumanize the black community.

BLACK AND MARRIED WITH KIDS.COM

COMMUNITY NEWS

Sickle cell families enjoy fun-filled holiday luncheon

ST. PETERSBURG — The Sickle Cell Disease Association, St. Petersburg Chapter sponsored their annual Christmas luncheon at the Enoch Davis Center Sat., Dec. 5. More than 70 families were represented.

Board member Milton Bailey began the program by introducing Mistress of Ceremony Busara Pitts, another board member. Things quickly got underway as Mt. Zion Progressive's dance group, Creative Expressions, per-

formed under the direction of Michelle Mann. They were a real crowd pleaser. A local balloon artist was an added treat.

Minister Micah Poole did the invocation and grace before Pitts introduced the 2015-17 poster child, Xavier J. McKinney. The eight-year-old student excitedly gave the welcome.

Melvin Smith was introduced by Chapter President/Founder Mary Murph as the new sickle cell outreach coordinator.

Later, he and registered nurse Shanika Jackson from Largo Medical spoke about the support group.

As Christmas music played in the background, children and adults alike were delighted when jolly ol' Santa Claus arrived bearing gifts. Portrayed by Chris Calloway, Santa took pictures with clients and spread holiday cheer all around.

Special thanks to Robert Pitts, program and board participants.



SHIHAN SCHOOL OF SURVIVAL 1ST ANNUAL YOUTH KARATE TOURNAMENT

Special Tribute Honoring

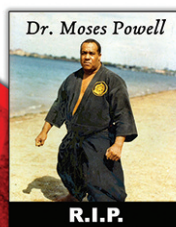


JANUARY 30TH, 2016

10:00 A.M. SHARP

North Greenwood

Recreation & Aquatic Complex
900 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue,
Clearwater, FL 33755



HOST:
SHIHAN WALTER EVANS

Registration: 8:30 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.

Early Registration Fee: \$40.00 - 1st Event before December 31st, 2015.

Cost after Dec 31st, 2015: \$45.00 for 1st Event - \$10.00 for additional events

Spectators: \$5.00 - Kids under 5 Free

For more info contact Walter Evans at 727-641-0127 or pre-register online at
www.shihansos.com by December 31, 2015

Mail money orders and registration forms to P.O. Box 213, Clearwater, FL 33757 - NO CHECKS

KWANZAA

GALLERIE 909
presents
Walking together in Unity!

Happy Kwanzaa!!

UMOJA
(Unity)

Saturday, December 26, 2015 @ 6:30PM
Drumming begins at 7:30PM | Refreshments
909 22nd Street S, Saint Petersburg, FL 33712

We are one COMMUNITY
ALL ARE WELCOMED!
For Information call: 727-565-3930

**PLEASE
SUPPORT
OUR
ADVERTISERS**

PHSC
Pasco-Hernando State College

Help Desk Technician (Job #0553)
New Port Richey Campus
Pasco-Hernando State College (PHSC) is now accepting applications. For more information and to apply online visit our website at www.phsc.edu/jobs. Application closing date is 1/15/2016. The College is closed December 17, 2015 - January 3, 2016 for Winter Break. EOE/ADA Compliance

Imagize • Believe • Achieve

PHSC
Pasco-Hernando State College

Paralegal (Job #0551)
District Office - New Port Richey
Pasco-Hernando State College (PHSC) is now accepting applications. For more information and to apply online visit our website at www.phsc.edu/jobs. Application closing date is 1/8/2016. The College is closed December 17, 2015 - January 3, 2016 for Winter Break. EOE/ADA Compliance

Imagize • Believe • Achieve

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

B. Brinson Insurance Agency

Auto, Life, Health and Home Owners
brinsoninsagy@yahoo.com



Bennie Brinson
1830 49th St. So.
St. Petersburg, FL 33707
Tel: 727-328-9878
Cell: 727-215-3048
Fax: 727-328-9545

ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE CONTROLLING THE WAY YOU EAT?



CALL FOR HELP
727-724-6292 (PAT)
FOOD ADDICTS
IN RECOVERY
ANONYMOUS
OR VISIT OUR
WEBSITE

www.foodaddicts.org

Vitu International

4301 34th St. South
St. Petersburg, FL 33711

727-254-3608
727-825-3719

African artifacts
Scarfs & sarongs
Live plants
Handmade jewelry
Djembe drums

Gwendolyn S. Fields
www.vituinternational.com
gfields2@tampabay.rr.com



SYLVIA J. TAYLOR P.A.

ATTORNEY & COUNSELOR AT LAW
*Specializing In Real Estate Closings,
Refi's and Probate*
1900 Main Street, Suite 750
Sarasota, FL 34238
(941) 309-5188
Fax (941) 309-5201
sylviajtaylorpa@cs.com

Make \$\$\$
as a certified braiding stylist!!!
76 hr Hair braid
Certification
Get your share of the
Multi-billion dollar
Hair industry now!!
1-855-427-4849
www.hairitizsalon.com

INSUROR®
Trusted Choice
Auto Home Flood Watercraft Liability
321-1212
For Insurance Ask For
Rob Sepúlveda
5201 22nd Avenue S.
1 Block West of McDonald's

Deannie K's Beauty Salon



*Beauty is more
than skin deep.*

Call TODAY for an appointment

Phone: 727-894-1734

2500 9th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Law Office Of RONALD L. NELSON, P.A.

ATTORNEY AT LAW

- Auto Accidents and Injuries
- Divorce and Family Law
- Employment Discrimination
- Wills and Probate

1247 First Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33705
727-345-9292 • www.RonNelsonLaw.com

The hiring of a lawyer is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisements. Before you decide, ask the lawyer to send you free written information about their qualifications and experience.



HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE

Cancelled or Non-Renewed??

WE CAN HELP!!!
727-393-4617

Larry Eugene Walker • Insurance
Great Automobile Rates • Over 20 Years of Experience

COMMUNITY NEWS

AKA annual dance swings into the holiday season

BY ALLEN A. BUCHANAN
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – The Zeta Upsilon Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. held their annual Holiday Fundraiser Dance last Fri., Dec 18 at the downtown Hilton.

More than 400 people packed the ballroom and helped kick off a weekend

of planned activities including a member's only gala on Dec. 19 and 60th anniversary reception on Dec. 20.

The money raised will help fund their Youth Development Foundation, which funds scholarships for their AKA AKAdemy members (Exquisite Gems and Pathfinders). Monies raised will also go towards supporting community service

organizations such as the Enoch Davis Center, the Childs Park YMCA, The Sanderlin Center, the Alzheimer's Foundation and the National Cancer Society.

After dining on sautéed shrimp, chicken, a variety of green vegetables and potatoes, the crowd took to dance floor, shaking a tail feather for a purpose—community service.



REEVES BUILDING, PLUMBING & ROOFING CONTRACTOR

Over 37 Years in Tampa Bay



Specializing In:

Painting • Drywall • Flooring • Plumbing • Windows
Roofing • Soffit & Fascia Cabinets • Kitchen & Bath
Garage & Porch Rehabilitation • Custom Home Remodeling

Approved Rehabilitation Contractor for: City of Tampa, Hillsborough County,
City of St. Petersburg, Pinellas County and Polk County

Call MICHAEL REEVES - Phone/Fax 813-238-6197
Email: reevesbuilding@verizon.net • www.ReevesBuilding.com

Licenses: CFC025588 CCC1326860 CBC1251478

The Produce Patch

Your Local Wholesale Produce Company

Delivering wholesale produce exclusively to restaurants, schools,
bars, churches and special functions in your area.

Try us out for two weeks and receive a FREE case of tomatoes!



Call Matt Freeman at (727) 422-0421
or Jason Cheatham at (813) 504-7717
www.ProducePatchTampa.com

COMMUNITY NEWS

Miss America visits the Woodson

From *QUEEN*, page 1

learn how to achieve their dreams.

“My focus is for you all to decide what you want to accomplish and then decide the steps you will take to accomplish your goal,” said the Orlando native.”

Dunlap had always wanted to be Miss America, but never thought in a million years that it could happen; it is a 14,000 in one chance to win the competition. Still, despite the seemingly insurmountable odds, Dunlap began to compete in pageants at a young age, developing and honing her strengths and correcting her weaknesses as best she could. She focused in on her education so that she could continue to compete in the pageants, an arrangement she made with her mother.

“I wanted to be a great entertainer,” Dunlap admitted. “I wanted to be the smartest girl in the interviews, even if I wasn’t the prettiest. She explained that her mother was not able to afford coaching like many of the contestants so she would replay tapes of her pageants to find out her strengths and weaknesses.

Then, Dunlap said, she discovered boys. At the age of 12, she wrote a letter to her mother as a petition to begin going on group dates when she turned 15. Her mother was amused but told her it was not an option.

Dunlap is extremely grateful for this lesson from her mother. “Your focus has to be on you and what you’re accomplishing. The boys will come, and trust me they will be there forever. Your focus has to be on what you want,” she cautioned. You can’t allow your friends, boys or peers to derail what your focus is. What is important is you becoming successful and you deciding what to ac-

complish.”

Dunlap continued competing in pageants, and at the age of 19 won Miss Orlando. Her motivation didn’t only extend to the pageants, however. Before graduating from high school, Dunlap applied for every scholarship she could get her hands on and accumulated over \$68,000 to fund her college education.

“You have to start living your life as though you’re already doing what it is that you want to be doing,” Dunlap averred, even though there may be obstacles in your way. A particular struggle for her was mathematics when she was in school.

While in college, she changed her diet and learned about nutrition. She started listening to talk radio to become more knowledgeable on perspectives vastly different from her own. She decided that this was the best way to prepare for trick questions, critiques and criticism during the interview portion of the pageants.

Her road to success was not always so smooth, though. Once onstage at the Mahaffey Theater, she had technical difficulties during a performance with her microphone. It took four tries before Dunlap was able to sing her song, but she did not allow herself to be discouraged or give up, and despite the discrimination within the system, she prevailed. Dunlap believed that this was simply another test that she would pass, and she did.

Later in the process, she met and interviewed with one of her idols whose poster hung on her wall as a child, former Miss America of 1990 Debbye Turner, who was the third African American to hold the title. Turner, who was a judge, vetted and qualified Dunlap

for the rest of the competition, and immediately after she was crowned asked her, “Where did you get your shoes? I absolutely love them!” A moment she said she would never forget.

So what is Dunlap’s advice for dealing with negativity, you may ask?

After receiving discriminatory anonymous letters during her reign, Dunlap said, “There will always be haters that come in every color, shape, size and age. Wisdom is not commensurate with maturity. We all have our gifts and just because you’re young does not mean that your wisdom is not keen and that you have to listen to the negativity that comes from people who didn’t accomplish their dreams and don’t know how.”

She left her captivated audience with the message that there is always a choice, hard work and perseverance is invaluable, stay focused and above all to like yourself.

When asked by a student to define self-beauty, she remarked: “The definition of self-beauty is knowing for yourself, without anyone else having to tell you you’re beautiful, that you like yourself a lot.”

If you missed seeing Miss America, you can come out to view the museum’s latest exhibit entitled, “Her Majesty: The Reign of Erika Dunlap,” which charts her journey to the throne. The exhibit will be on display at the Carter G. Woodson African American Museum, 2240 9th Ave. S, St. Petersburg, until Dec. 31.

Although she may not be physically present, Dunlap’s message is as beautiful and as crystal clear as if she were: be true to yourself, be prepared and the rest will follow.



**Choices are
Abundant**
in Pinellas County Schools
**70 magnet, fundamental and
career programs!**

APPLY JAN. 6-15

Questions? Call 727-588-6210
Visit www.pcsb.org/choice



My Choice. My Pinellas County Schools.
www.pcsb.org/choice



COMMUNITY NEWS

‘The Nutcracker’ at Gibbs High School

BY ALLEN A. BUCHANAN
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — The three-day run of Pinellas County Center for the Arts fall dance performance of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s “The Nutcracker” set the bar high for artistic talent.

The production showcased some of the most gifted young dance perform-

ers in the Tampa Bay area.

Hundreds of parents, students, faculty and community members packed the Gibbs Grand Theatre Dec. 10-12 to see artistic director Doricha C. Sales’ version of a holiday classic. Additional choreography was provided by Patricia Paige Parks.

The plot revolved around 16-old-Marie who works for Drosselmeyer’s Dolls. She is

a compassionate, kind-hearted, young woman who comes to the rescue of a poor girl in the store during a holiday celebration catering to the upper echelon and their children. One of the girls in attendance falls in love with one of the Nutcrackers for sale in the store and starts dancing with it. The owner of the store sees this and forbids the girls to

continue, but she is rescued by Marie who pays for her Nutcracker. For Marie, the magic of the holiday season had just begun.

The gifted performers sparkled with a continuous flow of artistic energy and talent. Never was there a dull moment from curtain opening to the cast’s final bow of the evening. The lead dancers of the show pre-

sented Sales and Paige with flowers at the end of the matinee performance on Saturday afternoon.


The students worked on the production the entire fall semester, putting in many extra hours after school for rehearsal. Featured dancers included Taylor Berger, Kalee Curtner, Shawn Cusseaux, Sarah Eisenbaum, Jonas Godwin, Han-

nah Husenitza, Maya Leonavicius, Kelli Macauley, Kiera Morgan, Zacchaeus Page, Teagan Reed, Nicole Denise Robinson, Ayssa San Giacomo and Isabella Valdes.

In addition to the performers, close to 30 volunteers worked on the production crew to make all the magic of the show seem effortless.



Your Family Vision Center



Dr. Deborah C. Flanagan
Optometric Physician

*“A Personal Touch
from Caring Professionals”*

DC EYE ASSOCIATES

- Comprehensive Eye Examinations
- Children’s Vision Care
- Contact Lens Specialist
- Eye Disease Management
- Medical Consults for Laser Refractive and Cataract Surgery

MEDICARE AND MOST VISION PLANS ACCEPTED

Students
Professionals
Adults
Athletes

Conveniently Located
4940 Central Avenue
727-321-6600 x1



City of Gulfport

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Day of Service

Saturday, January 16, 2016

8:30 am to 1:30 pm

Tomlinson Lake Park, Gulfport

Would You Like to Participate in the 2016 MLK Day of Service?

- Now is the time to identify a community service project
- Register a project you already regularly volunteer at
- You also have the option of being assigned to a pre-selected service project
- Volunteer as an individual participant or as a team
- **Easy Registration at:** <http://mygulfport.us/mlkdayofservice/>
- For information call: 727-893-1118

COMMUNITY NEWS

Ice cream social to celebrate the holidays

BY RAVEN JOY SHONEL
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — The Thaise Educational and Exposure Tours (TEET) held a holiday ice cream social for program members and their families Fri., Dec. 18 at Enoch Davis Center.

Instead of the monthly enrichment program, which teaches at-risk youth from six to 17 about proper etiquette, life skills and fea-

tures guess speakers such as City Councilmember Wengay Newton and Director of Urban Affairs Nikki Gaskin-Capehart, this month's meeting featured ice cream, healthy snacks, not so healthy snacks, games and prizes.

TEET's Executive Director Teresa Clove and Program Manager Barbara Burnett decided to have the party so that they could celebrate not only with the

kids, but with the parents also.

"This is a way to keep the families celebrating together and keeping us connected with the parents," said Burnett. "This is a thank you for trusting us to help their children."

The mission of TEET is to empower, educate, enhance and improve the quality of life for youth through counseling, mentoring, enrichment classes,

tutoring, college and exposure tours. They want to bring out the best in each youth by elevating their minds through education and exposure so they can realize anything in life is possible.

Sponsored by The Department of Juvenile Justice and the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services, TEET's goal is to work with the youth to reduce or eliminate high

school dropout, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, tobacco use, juvenile crime and sexually transmitted diseases.

Additionally, TEET arranges guided college tours for their older students. The tours are aligned with students' breaks so that children do not have to miss school days.

The college tours are usually in state but can be

out of state as well. Private donors help fund the field trips. On the last tour, the kids caught a train to visit a campus in Savannah, Ga. While touring a campus, Clove said the students will also often visit nearby museums or art galleries.

But last Friday, program members along with their families were happy just to tour the snack table. A good time was had by all.



Saturday, December 26, 2015: An Elegant Affair

CHAMPION OF HOLIDAYS

St. Petersburg Historic Coliseum
535 4th Avenue North
8:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.



CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

Ticket Price: Advance \$25.00 At The Door \$30.00

Ticket Outlets

St. Petersburg Coliseum 535 4th Avenue North (727) 892-5202 Monday - Friday	Looking Good Fashions 2201 34th Street South (727) 327-1756 Monday - Saturday	Sports Cuts Barber Shop 3166 18th Avenue South (727) 323-8388 Monday - Saturday	Frogue's Beauty Salon 2535 MLK Street South (727) 896-3555 Wednesday - Saturday
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Melvin Dandridge (727) 252-9189 George's Grill (727) 323-4286

SEMI-FORMAL ATTIRE - ABSOLUTELY NO JEANS

NO RESERVE SEATING BYOB SET-UPS AVAILABLE

GLOSS UP AND SHINE DARLING EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM PRESENTS



Founder & CEO of flawless Expressions Make Up Artistry

GIRLS EMPOWERMENT Extravaganza

Sponsor A Girl Raffle Prices valued over \$20 each



Fashion Segment: Altrichia Cook
CEO & Owner of Allusions by A.Lekay Swimwear



Health Segment: Malinda Rivers/Registered RN
Clinical Adjunct Instructor at University of Tampa



Education Segment: NaKena Cromartie M.B.A.
Miss Florida A&M University 2011-2012

Enoch Davis Center Auditorium
1111 18th Ave S, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

December 26th 2015
10Am - 2Pm
Check-Ins 9:45Am

Tickets Prices \$20 - \$25 at Door - Lunch Provided Only For Middle School & High School Girls
Purchase Tickets Today's Hair Salon 2750 Central Ave St. Petersburg, Fl 33712 or gusd.eventbrite.com

COMMUNITY NEWS

Funneling students through the school-to-prison pipeline

From **PIPELINE**, page 1

“The story before us is old,” said Moore about the educational system in Pinellas County. “Because it is so old and dark and sad, we want this story to change.”

Moore contends that without a decent school system, the city will never attack industry.

“How will we get real investments into our city with a school system that looks like this? Is Google coming? Microsoft?” he asked, saying that the first thing they will look at is where their children will go to school.

“At what point does the school board and the superintendent take responsibility for the lack of closing the disparity between academic achievement in Pinellas County Schools,” Davis asked.

Davis gave a history lesson on the disparity between African-American students and their white counterparts. Back in the

1980s when the district was busing black students, there was achievement gap.

“For those who think that busing will solve this problem, I beg to differ,” Davis said. “We now have them concentrated in the schools in the south side and the problem is much more visible.”

Pinellas County Schools is the seventh largest district in Florida, and has some of the lowest achieving schools in the state. For example, *U.S. News and World Report* has a school ranking review of each high school in Pinellas County and reports that 69 percent of Gibbs High School students are not proficient in reading, and 76 percent are not proficient in mathematics.

Goliath Davis, the former police chief and deputy mayor of St. Petersburg, remarked how when the first *Times* article hit the wires,

the district was quick to claim that the data was flawed. COQEBS, the Southern Poverty Law Center, The Micah Center and the NAACP all received data from the district.

“How is it that we can all get the same data and reach the same conclusions, but yet the district says the data is flawed, but it’s their data,” he asked.

Scruggs said that in the last 36 years, there has been a lot of legal activity and a lot of programs created that have not yielded results.

“Nobody is going to change the circumstances in our community unless we decided enough is enough,” said Scruggs. “It’s time to stand up and hold Dr. Grego and all of the school board members accountable. If they cannot do the job...we fire them.”

Whitaker, of the Alabama-based nonprofit Law

Center, said during his presentation that African-American students are underrepresented in gifted classes; 48 percent of students identified as emotionally and behaviorally disabled are black, twice as many black students drop out of school than white, 32 percent of students held back a grade are black and only eight percent of teachers are African American, nearly half the state average.

In terms of school discipline, he reported that 252,681 hours of school have been missed by black students being suspended since 2010, 54 percent of black students received an in-school suspension compared to 20 percent of white students; 53 percent of students given out-of-school suspensions are black and 23 percent of black students without disabilities were suspended multiple times,

nearly four times the rate of white students.

The Law Center said that “unnecessary school-based arrests, suspensions and expulsions... are part of the school-to-prison pipeline that cuts short a child’s education and increases the likelihood of incarceration.”

Myles, who has spent more than 40 years as a prevention and intervention specialist in youth programs said, “We have to come to the table together. No longer can the school board plan for us. No longer can the community be ignored in terms of having a voice and having ideas about what works and what we’d like to see happen.”

When Grego was given a chance to speak, he explained that principals and other school board members would start looking for alternate disciplinary actions to suspension. A man

from the audience interjected, “They’re going to start looking?” Grego corrected himself and said, “No, they are. They are.”

When the floor opened up for comments, things got heated very fast. Parent after parent gave examples of how the county is failing their children.

Former Chair of the board of trustees at St. Petersburg College, Deveron Gibbons, said he blames the school system for the recent shootings. He feels if the young black men were in school, they wouldn’t have lost their lives.

Theresa “Mamma Tee” Lassiter told School Board member Linda Lerner that it’s time to retire.

Before the meeting concluded, Grego committed to reducing the maximum amount of days of suspension from 10 days to five.



Reco Ingram, father of 13 children, said that the real problem is living in poverty. He said he’s tired of all the talk, and wants action.



Pastor Eddie Robinson said that it takes a village to raise children and that Grego is not the blame for all the problems.



Thomas Riggins, father of a child in middle school and one in high school, said that education doesn’t start in the school. “If you can’t start it in your home, that’s part of the problem.”



Deveron Gibbons

RSVP

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

Calling for Volunteers!

We’ve got some shoes to fill!



Volunteer Opportunities:

- Tutors kids in reading/math 3-5pm
- Train and showcase new technology resources
- Clerical support and front desk managers for Social Services
 - Mentors and tutors at Pinellas County Schools
 - Clerical support for homeless and veterans

A Program of



Interested?
Contact: Sandra Devaughn, 823-4101 ext 122
sdevaughn@poc-inc.org

If you’re willing,
you’re able

Shear Essence Hair Salon

3425 22nd Ave. S., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 328-7189



Get a jump start on a
NEW LOOK
for the holiday season!

New stylist/makeup artist Maceo Brown
Shear Essence now has an Eyelash Specialist!

Specializing in:

- ◆ Semi Permanent
- ◆ Strip lashes
- ◆ Clusters
- ◆ Bottom lashes

Nail Tech Wanted

Plus, get your eyebrows done
for only \$5 with service.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Senior dinner embraces holiday spirit

BY JOYCE NANETTE JOHNSON
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — The Gathering of Women, Inc. held their inaugural senior Christmas dinner last Sat., Dec. 19 at the Harbordale YMCA. The special occasion was a celebration to honor and embrace our seniors who have contributed wholeheartedly to their loved ones and the community throughout the years.

"The idea for the senior Christmas dinner came about because the Gathering of Women felt that when Christmas time rolls around, many seniors have no one with which to celebrate the holiday season," explained Chairperson Samantha Richardson.

She encourages all to include older ones in on the holiday cheer. Since many people are focusing on the kids this time of the year, seniors can be overlooked.

The young-at-heart seniors were treated to a bountiful dinner of fried chicken, ham, rice, macaroni salad, green beans and salad. Each guest was served by a member of the organization as

these honored guests were treated with respect as the elders of the community.

Laughter could be heard throughout the room as it was an opportunity for the seniors to come together and reminisce with old friends and make new acquaintances.

"It's an opportunity to meet people I've never seen before," said guest Steve Wynn.

Bertha Jones echoed the same sentiment and said she was a "person who goes out to mingle," while Sadie Martin said, "I love people."

The seniors expressed their gratitude in being included in the celebration. "I don't get out much," Viola Gordon commented. "I was excited I was asked to come."

Vestell Nelson was invited by Josephine Lampley, one of the Gathering of Women committee members. Nelson and Lampley are fellow members of New Jerusalem Baptist Church. "I'm always happy to come out," Nelson said. "She [Lampley] treats me as part of her family."

The program included a reading of the "Christmas Story" by seven-year-old Zaria

Albritton. Zaria is a member of the Flower Girl program, which was founded by the Gathering of Women. Named after School Board member Rene Flowers, the program fosters life lessons, self-respect and empowerment of young black girls.

The appreciative audience was invited to sing Christmas carols while accompanied by keyboardist Nancy Mims. Santa, portrayed by Austin Watson, was there resplendent in his red suit. He said he likes playing Santa to see the sparkle in the children's eyes. As for playing Santa for the seniors, he laughed and said that he too would soon be a senior himself.

Gift bags, donated by all of the committee members and spearheaded by Renee Ambrose were chock full of personal items and passed out to the guests.

"We truly appreciate the opportunity to bring seniors together for a holiday meal," said Richardson. "We care for this population and want the seniors to know they are part of a community and a resource for everyone."





Donation Fact:

Every day, 22 people die waiting for a life saving organ transplant.

By saying "yes" to donation, you have the power to save lives.

Are you a donor?
Sign up today!

Questions about donation?
Call 1-800-262-5775



Kyle, Kidney Recipient

www.DonateLifeFlorida.org



COMMUNITY NEWS

Matters of the Heart 8th Annual Christmas Toys for Tots event

BY RAVEN JOY SHONEL
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — Matters of the Heart Radio Ministry hosted its 8th Annual Christmas Toys for Tots Event Sat., Dec. 12 at Glad Tidings Assembly of God. The event was hosted by radio personality Princess Denise Wright from Praise 1590 AM WRXB & 96.5 FM Radio.

For eight years, Wright and her ministry has hosted this event to bless poverty stricken families in the community, but this year she also decided to reach out to families suffering with health issues such as sickle cell and cancers.

Through social media she got the word out. Family members, friends and organizations contacted her with names of families in need, such as Mary Murph, president of the St. Petersburg chapter of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America.

“The vision God gave me for 2015 was to seek out children and parents who have been diagnosed with a disease,” said Wright.

She was able to bless Amber McCaskill whose one-year-old daughter, Carly, is in need of a liver transplant; Alchea Frazier, a mother of two stricken with cancer; Markita Miller, who

has two children suffering with sickle cell and a host of other families.

Raising three children as a single parent, Wright is no stranger to the hardships that many families are up against, especially in the current economic climate.

“Many times I didn’t have food in the refrigerator, lights were off, water was off, car broke down, getting evicted,” she said.

But while attending New Mt Olive Primitive Baptist Church some three decades ago, a member approached her confessing to having turned in her name as a recipient for a food basket. “I remember that,” Wright said. In fact it is this very type of act of kindness that has fueled her all these years to keep giving back. “Somebody was always thinking of me, they knew I needed help.”

Although it’s been a long time since Wright needed assistance herself, she will never forget Mother Dora Livingston and Mother Emma Davis who reached out to her when she was in need.

Each year she gives back with the help of the community. This year’s event wouldn’t have been possible without the help of Senior Pastor Dr. Randy Helms of Glad Tidings Assembly of

God and his congregation, who always financially support her efforts. Donations from the Walmart on 18th Ave. S, city council members, personal donations and organizations such as Childs Park YMCA all poured in.

This year an anonymous couple donated more than 200 brand new clothing items, toys and shoes, which contributed to a successful and joyous event where more than 50 families were able to have a merry Christmas.

“There is no greater blessing than helping someone,” said Wright. “Only what you do for Christ is going to last and be counted in the end.”

Before the giveaways and food, there was Anointed Praise and Worship by Derrick Isham, storytelling time by Veronica James, Pastor Fred Hinton of Calvary Worship Center Florida entertained the audience, Pastor Roger Asselin from Glad Tidings Assembly of God delivered a powerful message on the theme “Jesus is the reason for the season” and special prayers were given by Marge Asselin and Evangelist Bambi Jones for the infirmed. Mistress of Ceremony was Prophetess Laquanda Everett.



The community marches to end gun violence

From **ENOUGH**, page 1

be taken to bring an end to the violence, and hopes that policies he has in place will help make a difference in curtailing the violence.

“We’ve got a number of policies that we’ve got in place,” Kriseman stated. “We’re working with the school system; we’re investing in summer jobs and jobs in general for kids. We are certainly working to attract businesses that are going to create those jobs.”

Above all, he underscored that ending gun violence must be a community-wide effort, and cannot be something that the city government or the police department do on their own.

In separate incidents within a couple of days, local youths Tyler Lord and Gabriel Wallace, both 17, were fatally shot just a few blocks apart. That makes

six young people gunned down within the last six weeks.

“Enough violence is enough violence,” the mayor said simply. “It needs to end. One homicide is one too many.”

Assistant Chief of Police Luke Williams noted that it’s encouraging for the police department to know it has community support.

“We’ve always had a very good working relationship with the community,” Williams said. “We know we have that, but sometimes it’s a little silent. I think the focus that we should have now is that as a community and as a police department and as a city, we all can come together and accomplish great things.”

Williams encourages residents to take an active role in protecting their

neighborhoods by calling in tips, and they can do so through the department’s website or by calling (727) 893-7780, and remain anonymous.

“It takes an entire community to address issues and have the positive impact on what’s happening,” Williams pointed out.

Gun violence is not only a city problem, the mayor explained in addressing the crowd, but also a national problem. And within St. Pete, it cannot only be south St. Pete or north St. Pete, but the entire city must come together to help put an end to the violence.

“It’s because of people like you who are here with us today,” Kriseman said, “who care about this community as much as you all do, and you’ve demonstrated how much you care by being here with us today

and by speaking out loudly. By speaking out in one loud voice that’s it’s enough. Enough!”

Eddie Pelham, who served over 25 years in Florida state prison for violent crimes, founded Moving Forward With A Purpose, Inc., an organization that helps at-risk youths. He had his own perspective on violent crimes.

“I made some bad decisions in my life when I was 15, 16 years old, and I spent over 25 years of my life in prison for bad decisions. Don’t make a bad decision,” Pelham implored the crowd. “One bad decision can cause you a lifetime of pain.”

He stressed the importance of the need for mentors in the city, saying we need “good men, upstanding men, to teach our



young men how to be men.”

Kriseman explained that city hall will do anything it can to address the root causes of the problem of violence, but effective solutions cannot be merely “window dressing” or quick fixes, of which St. Pete has been guilty in the past.

“That doesn’t benefit anybody,” he said, “because that’s been our history here. The fixes we do, they’ve got to be for the

long term. They’ve got to be sustainable. Giving people a second chance and being a second chance city is who we need to be, because people need a second chance. Everybody deserves a second chance.”

Lagon to TheWeekly-Challenger.com to watch video from the march.

To reach Frank Drouzas, email fdrouzas@theweekly-challenger.com



COMMUNITY NEWS

A good time was had by all

From **TEE**, page 1

tendent Michael Grego made an appearance.

Donated items poured in from people throughout the community, which made it possible for each child to select from a cadre of gifts for their parents. An assembly line of Santa's helpers wrapped the gifts so mom and dad can unwrap a gift on Christmas morning.

Kelly Davidson, Lakewood Elementary social worker, provided a list of 95 children to be guest at the party. The list was made up of students who are in the Pack-A-Snack Program, which provides healthy, non-perishable snacks for children on the weekend who may not have an opportunity to eat outside of school.

A party such as this could not have been possible without the staff at Lakewood Elementary. Momma Tee's go-to-person was Office Clerk Malori Watson, who not only was her right-hand woman, but she brought her family in to make the afternoon a success.

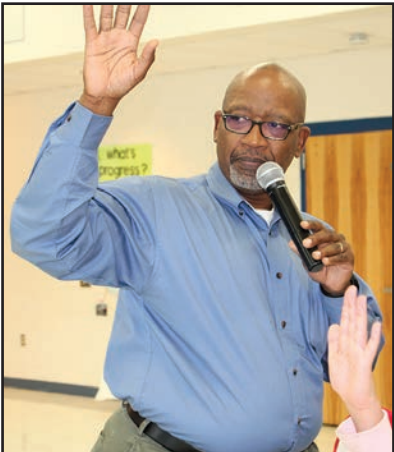
Watson has a non-profit organization comprised of all family members called Family Matters 925, Inc. They help raise money for different causes, such as donating money and items to a Lakewood Elementary family whose child passed away.

"Before my mom passed, she made me promise to keep us [the family] together," said Watson, who decided to create

the nonprofit as a way to honor her mother.

Educational games and toys were raffled off, which proved to be a challenge because the youngsters were too excited to listen for their numbers and the sugar pumping through their veins in the form of cupcakes and candy canes didn't help the situation either. But all in all, these well-behaved children had a great end-of-the-year party and all of Santa's helpers left with smiles on their faces.

"Next year I plan to do every kid out here. Now that I've had this idea, we're gonna blow it up next year," said Momma Tee. "It's gonna be an all-day affair."



Faith-Based CHAMPION for Children

Photo by: Carol Walker of Thomas Bruce Studio



Akeela

**Prayer
Child
Champion**

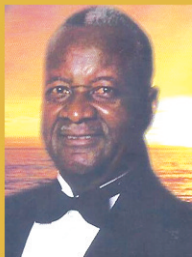
Please pray for the kids in our foster care system to find a safe and loving forever family.

To learn more about adoption or to foster a child in the foster care system, please visit FosteringTampaBay.org or call (866) 233-0790.

Partnership with:



Leon M. Thomas III
President / CEO



Robert Lee Creal Sr.
Founder

Seasons Greetings from
Creal Funeral Home
"60 Years of Servicing
the Community"

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS!!!
IT'S OUR WAY OF GIVING BACK TO THE
COMMUNITY THAT BROUGHT US THIS FAR

SPECIAL OFFER WITH EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS
20 GAUGE METAL CASKETS STARTING AT
\$1,895 DISCOUNTED BY FACTORY REBATE

YOUR COST ONLY \$199

with the purchase of our professional services, removal, embalming, dressing and casketing

Complimentary Items Included With Package:

7 passenger limousine, casket spray,
100 funeral programs, register book, visitation, wake service

**For More Details
Contact Our 24 Hour Hotline
(727) 896-2602**

Visit us on the web: crealfuneralhomeandcremation.com
"Experience the Difference"

Creal Funeral Home and Cremation
1940 7th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Leon M. Thomas III President
Ronald J. Derr Sr. L.F.D.I.C.



Your pillar of
strength in a
time of need...

CHURCH DIRECTORY



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

Sunday Worship Services7:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Mid-Day Bible StudyNoon - 12:30 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study.....6:30 p.m.
Youth Chapel Services - 921 20th Street South
2nd & 4th Sunday Worship Services.....10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer6:00 p.m.
Bible Study.....6:30 p.m.

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



Rev. Louis M. Murphy Sr.
Senior Pastor

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

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

Come Worship With the First Baptist Family



REV. DR. WAYNE G. THOMPSON,
PASTOR

BETHEL METROPOLITAN BAPTIST CHURCH
3455 - 26th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33711
Telephone (727) 327-0554 • Fax (727) 327-0240
E-mail: bchurch5@tampabay.rr.com Web site: www.bmmbc.org

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



Rev. Rickey L. Houston,
Pastor

“God’s House To The City”



Rev. Wallace Elliott
Sr. - Pastor

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

Sunday Worship Services 8:00 and 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School9:30 a.m.
Prayer Meeting (Tuesday)6:00 p.m.
Bible Study (Tuesday)7:00 p.m.
Baptist Training Union (Sunday) 4:00 p.m.

“The Little Church Where Everybody Is Somebody”



Rev. Dr. Doral R. Pulley



“Let’s G.R.O.W. Together!”
511 Prescott Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712 • (727) 898-2457
www.UNITYofMidtown.org • unityofmidtown1957@gmail.com

WEEKLY SERVICES

Sundays	9:30 am Spiritual Education Classes 10:30 am Praise & Worship 11:00 am Morning Service	Tuesdays	6:30 pm Bible Study	Thursdays	6:30 pm Prayer & Healing Service
---------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------	---------------------	-----------	----------------------------------

Queen Street Church of God in Christ
Elder Willie Williamson, Pastor
First Lady, Patricia Williamson
1732 9th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
727-896-4356



SERVICES

Sunday Sunday School – 9:30 a.m.
A. M. Service – 11 a.m.
Tuesday Morning Prayer – 9 to 10 a.m.
Wednesday YPWW Bible Study – 7:30 p.m.

MOUNT PILGRIM MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
4000 5th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33711
Telephone: 727-321-7375



Pastor Clark Hazley, Sr.

Mission Statement
Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and on the profession of our faith. We the people of God returning to God’s Word, proclaiming, God’s Will in provoking His love among one another.

“God’s People Return to the Word of God”
Service Schedule
SUNDAY
Sunday School 8:45-10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.
Communion - 1st Sunday of each month
New Members Orientation - Sunday at 8:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY
Tutoring offered Tuesday & Wednesday at 3:30 p.m.
Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Bible Study 11:00 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Youth Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

HOLY TEMPLE CATHEDRAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH, INC.
3101 Freemont Terrace South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712
727-452-3191 • www.holytemplepaoc.com
“A Church Where the Fire of the Holy Ghost is Burning and Holiness is Still Right!”



Bishop Zema J. Florence, III, Th.D.
& Elect-Lady Shaneeta Florence

Order of Services:

Noonday Prayer.....Wednesdays at 12:30 PM
Pastoral Teaching.....Wednesdays at 7:00 PM
Evangelist Service.....4th Fridays at 7:00 PM
Sunday SchoolSundays at 9:00 AM
Morning WorshipSundays at 10:15 AM
WRXB (1590) Radio Ministry2nd and 4th Saturdays at 10:30 AM

Follow us on Social Media: Facebook Page-Holy Temple Pentecostal Assemblies of Churches, Inc/ YouTube-Bishop Zema Florence

YOUR
CHURCH
AD
COULD
BE HERE

Friendship
Missionary Baptist Church
3300 31st St. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 906-8300 www.fmbctheship.org



Dr. John A. Evans, Pastor

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES
Sunday Worship.....7:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Wednesday.....Noonday Bible Study and Bread of Life
7 p.m. Prayer and Bible Study
Thursday.....7 p.m. Youth Enrichment - Awana

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

Victory Christian Center Church
3012 18th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Fla. 33712
(727) 321-0911
www.Victorychristiancenterchurch.org



Pastor
Claude Williams
and First Lady
Cecelia Williams

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

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

10th Street Church Of God
207 - 10th Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33705
(727) 898-9407



Rev. Carl Mobley, Sr.

Sunday School9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship11:00 a.m.
Wednesday Evening Prayer6:30 p.m.
Wednesday Night Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.

*The church where
what God’s word teaches
is practiced!*



Pastor Michael T. and
Elect Lady Sheila Culbreth

**GENESIS
WORSHIP
CENTER
CHURCH**
1601 49th Street South
Gulfport, FL 33707
727.898.5571
Sunday Worship
10:30 a.m.



Bro. Robert Smith

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

Sunday Morning Worship7:45 a.m.
Sunday Morning Bible Class9:20 a.m.
Sunday Morning Second Worship10:40 a.m.
Ladies Bible Class Monday.....7:00 p.m.
Monday Evening Bible Class.....7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Morning Bible Class.....10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.

**BETHEL COMMUNITY
BAPTIST CHURCH**
2901 - 54th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL. 33712
(727) 866-2567



Rev. Manuel Sykes

SERVICES
Sunday School:
8:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service:
9:30 a.m.
Bible Study: Wednesdays
at 6:30 p.m.

YOUR CHURCH AD COULD BE HERE!

Contact: www.TheWeeklyChallenger.com

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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

Schedule of Services

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



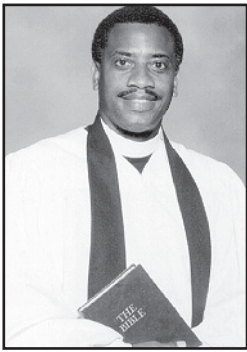
Rev. Brian K. Brown

THE ROCK OF JESUS MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SERVICES/WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
9:10 a.m. Breakfast (First Sunday only)
9:30 a.m. Sunday School (First Sunday Only)
Sunday School 9:15 a.m. / Devotion 10:15 a.m.
Praise & Worship 10:20 a.m. / Worship Services 10:30 a.m.
Saints of Prayer - Monday 12:00 noon
Weekly Bible Study - Tuesday 6:30 p.m.
Adult Choir Rehearsals - Thursday 6:30 p.m.
Van service is available by calling: (727) 327-0015

THE ROCK OF JESUS IS LOCATED AT:
3940 - 18th AVE. S., St. Petersburg, Florida
Telephone: 727-327-0015 • Fax: 727-327-0021
Email: rojmbc@knology.net
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Rev. Frank W. Peterman, Jr.
Pastor

YOUR Church Ad Should Be HERE!

Contact:
727-896-2922

Witness of the Kingdom Ministries

1640 9th Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL
813-919-0485

Email: witnessofthekingdom2015@gmail.com



**Pastor Mark Owen and
First Lady Hazel Owen**
Sunday morning worship
10:00 a.m.
Open Bible Study
Wednesday 7:00 p.m.

We are a non-domination Church that exists to see people encounter the incredible life that God offers through Jesus Christ. It starts with a relationship with Him, and spills over into all other areas of life: finances, marriage, career, parenting, relationships and even recreation.

Our ministry is all about people just like you! We are diverse, multi-cultural who follow Jesus! It's a place where hurts are healed, needs are met, and dreams become reality.

CHURCH NEWS

Mt. Zion Progressive MBC

Reverend Louis Murphy, Sr. and the entire Mt Zion family extend an open invitation to join us not only in Sunday worship, but also throughout the week for various programs and ministries. Wednesday Bible Study – Noonday and 6 PM. The Men's Ministry invites the men of Mt. Zion to join them every 3rd Thursday at 7 pm in the Youth Chapel and learn how to develop a strong relationship with the Lord.

Stay Connected by keeping us updated. If your address or other information has changed just check the change of address box on your envelope or go to www.mzprogressive.org and click the resources link. All personal info is kept confidential and is for church use only. Let's Get Connected! Mt. Zion Progressive is now social. Checkout the latest events, ministry news,

and more by following us on FACEBOOK, TWITTER and YOUTUBE (Keyword: MZPMBC). Visit our website and let's get connected today! www.MZProgressive.org For additional information on any of these announcements, please contact the church office. Mt. Zion Progressive MBC 955 20th St. S., St. Petersburg Florida. 727-894-4311, email: info@mzprogressive.org.

St. Mark MBC

The St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, its pastor, the Reverend Brian K. Brown, its official staff of Deacons and Trustees, and the entire congregation, extends to the community at large, its wish that there would be an overflowing of God's blessings upon their lives. St. Mark is grounded in a Christ-centered doctrine that has as its central core, the belief that we are a haven of hope, help, and healing for a lost world hungry and thirsty for the word of God. At St. Mark, we as a body of believers are Christians willing to work and partner in unity, praising God for the awesome gift of His son, Jesus Christ.

Events for December
Dec 25-Christmas Day-Church Office Closed
Dec 31-Watch Night Service-10:00 p.m. @ St. Mark M. B. C.
Sunday school held for both children and adults of all ages. Sunday school starts each Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. All are invited to come out and join us.
Young Adult Ministry (YAMS) Every Sun. 9:30 a.m.
Baptist Training Union is each Sun. 5 p.m. Members and the general public are invited to come out to study the Bible with us, and learn

"What Baptists Believe". Children and Youth Ministry Meetings are held every Tues. at 6 p.m. Children in the community are welcomed to join us. Mime/Praise Dance Rehearsal on Sun. 2-4 p.m. Sunday School Teachers' Meeting is held every Tues. 7 p.m. Senior Hour of Power Bible Study is held every Wed. 9:30 a.m. Prayer Meeting and Bible Study every Wed. 7 p.m. Children Youth Ministry Bible Study 1st & 3rd Wed. of each month 7:30 p.m.

Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Church

Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Church, "God's House to the City," under the leadership of Dr. Rickey L. Houston extend an invitation to the community to join us as we declare the living Word of God. Join us at 9 am for Sunday School and at 10:15 am worship service. Bible Study and Teen Summit/ Children Rising are held on Wednesday at 7 pm. We cultivate the fullest spiritual life possible both individually and corporately; and we communicate God's truth at every opportunity, building a stronger congregation and community to the Glory of God. Living out these principles results in a kaleidoscope of ministries for all ages and interests. We also encourage the community to make use of our Prayer Line 727-321-9645. Kingdom Man Series Con-

tinues With Victory In Spiritual Warfare. "The Shield of Faith" The Laymen invite you to join them every Mon. at 6 pm for this study. "Knowing Jesus Christ in 2015" II Corinthians 2:2 Philippians 3:8 Telephone: 727-327-0554 Fax: 727-327-0240 Email: bcchurch5@tampabay.rr.com Website: www.bmmbc.org

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 3300 31st St. S, St. Petersburg, Florida 33712 Church Office: (727) 906-8300 E-Mail: fmbc3300@verizon.net NOW "LIVE STREAMING": Visit Our Website: www.fmbctheship.net & CLICK on the PASTOR'S IMAGE at the top of the Page. Also, USTREAM - Visit West Coast Baptist District Association Website: www.expericencethecoast.com NEED A RIDE TO CHURCH? Call our Transportation Ministry - (727) 906-8300 and leave your information. Support West Coast Baptist District Association Women's Auxiliary Foreign Mission Project which is underway.

Friendship MBC

Looking for a place that sinners are welcomed? The Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, the Pastor, Dr. John A. Evans, Sr., Official Family and the entire Church Family extend to you a cordial invitation to join "THE SHIP" in fellowship at our 7:45 am or the 10:45 am worship service, and Sunday Church School at 9:30 am. Pray for our Sick, Shut-in, Children, Men/Women in Uniform, and Bereaved Families. "Wednesday in the Word" noon day until 1 pm (the best one hour of your day) and at 7 p.m. - the community is welcomed to join us - you don't want to miss Wednesday in the Word where we are studying from 1st John, Chapt. 6. Mr. Harrison Nash - healing prayer is an action.

December at a glance:
"Go Tell It On The Mountain" Watch Night Service, Dec. 31 at 9:45 pm. First Messenger - Dr. Joseph Gordon. Second Messenger - Pastor Dr. John A. Evans, Sr. Thought for the Week: Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy - Forgiveness - To an opponent - Tolerance - To your family and friends - Your Heart - To those in need - Charity - To All the children that cross your path - A Good Example and to yourself - Respect. Don't let "The Ship" sail without you! For additional information on any of the announcements, please contact us by the following methods:

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 3300 31st St. S, St. Petersburg, Florida 33712 Church Office: (727) 906-8300 E-Mail: fmbc3300@verizon.net NOW "LIVE STREAMING": Visit Our Website: www.fmbctheship.net & CLICK on the PASTOR'S IMAGE at the top of the Page. Also, USTREAM - Visit West Coast Baptist District Association Website: www.expericencethecoast.com NEED A RIDE TO CHURCH? Call our Transportation Ministry - (727) 906-8300 and leave your information. Support West Coast Baptist District Association Women's Auxiliary Foreign Mission Project which is underway.

Pastor's Corner

BY REV. DR. DORAL R. PULLEY,
SPIRITUAL LEADER
Unity of Midtown



Worship with your hands - Part 1 (clapping) Luke 2:21-35

The Christmas Story is really about worship. Through the various characters of the Christmas story we learn to worship in various ways. Simeon was a citizen well-seasoned in years who received a promise that he would not die until he saw the Christ child. When Mary and Joseph were in the temple with Jesus for the circumcision on the 8th as the Jewish custom required, Simeon was right there. Like a godfather, he grabbed the baby Jesus with his hands, embraced him in his arms and began to praise God.

In any given worship service, we use our hands in various ways to worship God. Unfortunately, many people have no idea of the meaning behind it. Many congregants and guests are just following the worship leader's instructions, trying to blend in with the crowd or doing what they have seen done for generations. Worshipping without understanding is merely religious ritual. True spirituality empowers us to worship on purpose knowing exactly why we are doing what we are doing. The left hand is the hand of

humanity and the right hand is the hand of divinity. When we clap our hands we are bringing our humanity and our divinity together to manifest the good desires of our hearts (Psalms 47:1). The speed in which we clap signals to the universe how fast we need demonstration. We clap our hands because we need our marriages, families, neighborhoods, careers, health and finances to come together. Clapping brings our good from the heavenly realm of idea to the earthly realm of manifestation (Psalms 98:8).



"THE SHIP"

ON BEHALF OF
DR. JOHN A. EVANS, SR., PASTOR,
FIRST LADY TERESA L. EVANS,
CHURCH OFFICIAL FAMILY &
THE ENTIRE CHURCH FAMILY OF
FRIENDSHIP MISSIONARY
BAPTIST CHURCH

WE WISH YOU A VERY

*"Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa & Happy
New Years"*

"If our Master had to face impossible tasks, how could we as His followers be spared? As a Church this year, we have been Blessed. Christmas reminds us that if God can open a virgin's womb, He can also open doors for us and He will continue to open doors for **ALL** of us. So during this Christmas time I want to take the time to Give Thanks for Opening Doors for us this year. The Doors into the **Greater Mysteries of the Word**, to **Reach the Community, Unity within the Church**, and thanking God in advance for **Future** doors He will **Open for US Next Year.**" **"The Prince is Coming"**

JOIN US!

"GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN"

WATCH NIGHT SERVICE

December 31, 2015 ~ 9:45 pm

First Messenger ~ Dr. Joseph Gordon

Second Messenger ~ Pastor Dr. John A. Evans, Sr.

Don't let "THE SHIP" sail without YOU! For additional information on any of the announcements, please contact us by the following methods:

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
3300 31st Street South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33712
Church Office: (727) 906-8300
E-Mail: fmbc3300@verizon.net

NOW "LIVE STREAMING": Visit Our Website: www.fmbctheship.net & CLICK on the PASTOR'S IMAGE at the top of the Page. Also, USTREAM - Visit West Coast Baptist District Association Website: www.expericencethecoast.com - FACEBOOK

"IT'S JUST NICE TO BE NICE"

The Better Way To enjoy the **SEASON**



2015 Mercedes-Benz
GLA250
Starting at \$31,300[^]

HOLIDAY SERVICE SPECIALS

Check Engine Light On?

FREE

Check Engine Light Decode*

Problem Diagnosis Scan

\$72.50

Price deducted off any resulting repair or service.
First 1/2 hour*

Parts & Installation

10%OFF

Illuminated Front Start*

[^]Offers exclude all options, taxes, title registration and dealer fee of \$697 and \$925 transportation charge. See dealer for details. *Must present coupon at time of write-up. Cannot be combined with other offers, discounts or specials. Cannot be applied to prior purchases. See service advisor for details. Other restrictions may apply.



Mercedes-Benz

6001 34th Street North | St. Petersburg, FL 33714
866-369-3751 • CrownEurocars.com

