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2017

The Weekly Challenger

BLACK MEN MUST SELL AS WELL AS BUY OR ELSE REMAIN A BEGGAR RACE.

VOL. 50 NO. 50

AUGUST 16 - AUGUST 22, 2018

50¢

IN THIS WEEK



PAGE 4
COMMUNITY NEWS
Wife of a politician



PAGE 6
COMMUNITY NEWS
Black Girls Read



PAGE 16
COMMUNITY NEWS
Youth Unleashed

INDEX

COMMUNITY
NEWS

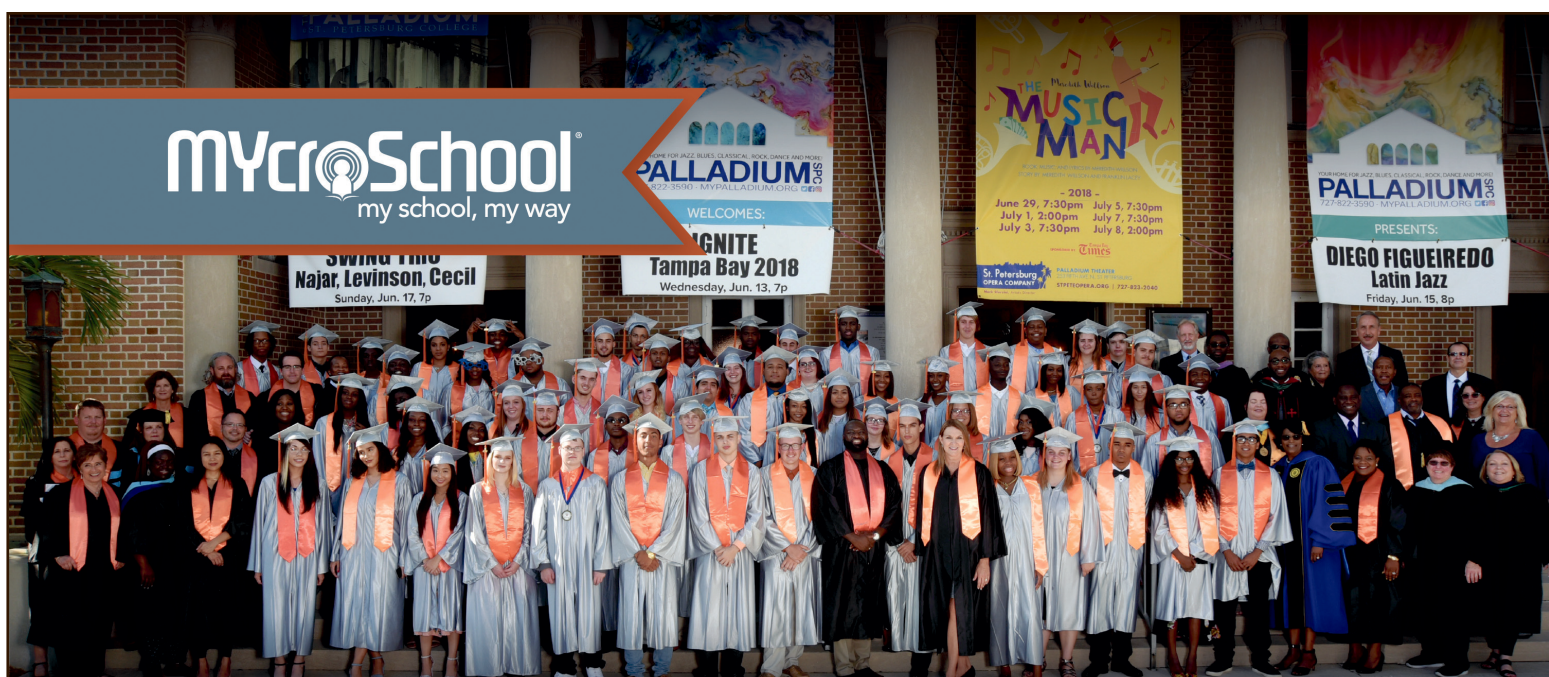
PAGES 2 - 13, 16

CHURCH NEWS

PAGES 14 - 15



8 53619 00471 2



Pinellas MYcroSchool, a tuition-free public charter high school, blends online and classroom learning to help you graduate and achieve your goals! They serve students 16-21 years old, grades 9-12.

MYcroSchool offers a fresh start

BY CINDY SWISHER
NEIGHBORHOOD
NEWS BUREAU

ST. PETERSBURG – One out of seven 16-24-year olds in the Tampa-St. Petersburg metropolitan area are not working or in school.

MYcroSchool is a tuition-free, public charter high school that exists to change those numbers by re-engaging recent dropouts, as well as at-risk students still in high school.

Kelvin Neal was one of those students.

Neal enrolled in MYcroSchool a little over three years ago when counselors at Boca Ciega High School in-

formed him he was too far behind in credits to graduate on time. He chose MYcroSchool because of the setting.

"You have a lot of kids that can't deal with 30, 40 kids in class at the same time," Neal said. "That was my problem. Here you can work at your own pace."

The students that have already dropped out, MYcroSchool offers them a second chance to earn a diploma.

While the average age of the students is 19, anyone between the ages of 16 and 22 can enroll.

Because of its diverse student population, MYcroSchool has developed a flexible, at-your-

own-pace schedule. Students can choose between two school days from 7:30-12:30 p.m. or 11:17-4:17 p.m.

"This accommodates the many students who work full-time," said Faune Walker, administrative services and Title I coordinator at the school. "They don't work because they want money for a car or clothes, they work because they are supporting themselves and their families," she said.

MYcroSchool does more than offer a chance to finish high school, for many students, it is the catalyst that changes their lives.

When Neal came to MY-

croSchool, he was facing some legal issues. "I was in and out of the streets, not focusing on any goals," he said.

Shortly after enrolling, he decided to make some significant changes.

"I figured out I needed to leave the streets alone," he said. "Leave the riff-raff alone, all the friends, leave it all alone."

Neal credits Principal Steven Humphries and Christopher Wolf, Exceptional Student Education teacher, with keeping him out of trouble and showing him something different.

"They became the real pushers for me to do good," he said.

See **SCHOOL**, page 10

Back-to-school bash for special needs families

BY ALLEN A. BUCHANAN
Staff Writer

CLEARWATER – The Miracle 4 Michael second annual Back 2 School Bash for special needs families went off without a hitch Aug. 4 at the Kingdom Bible Christian Church.

"Last year we had about 15 families sign up for special needs services," said Monique Whitaker, the founder of Miracle 4 Michael, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

The organization's mission is to be a resource for single parents within the Tampa Bay area with special needs children. They provide utility assistance, emergency food assistance, school supplies, toiletries, household items and hearing aid batteries for low-income special need families.

Miracle 4 Michael also holds at least three family fun day events a year, allowing special needs families bonding time with



L-R, Michael Whitaker-Russell and Pastor Ayakao Watkins at a 2016 event.

their children and other families.

This year's Back 2 School Bash saw 123 families pre-register. Not just a school supplies giveaway, families attended workshops on understanding Individualized Education Programs and 504 Plans; they learned how to become a parent advocate and received help with understanding

See **BASH**, page 12

Operation Young Boss

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

CLEARWATER – Leslie "The Heiress" Coley is working on a bold mission she has crafted for herself: "Taking over the land one business at a time and creating doors of opportunities for those who have limited or restricted doors available to them."

With her newly opened Dyvine Appointments Salon, Hair Loss Clinic & Training Institute, Coley is using her decade, and then some, worth of experience as a hair loss specialist, business and life coach, speaker and author to not only bring healing to the community but to also raise a new generation of leaders.

This past summer, she launched "Operation Young Boss" at the Greenwood Recreation Center to teach youth about entrepreneurship, goal setting and creating a vision for their future. Youth created vision boards were schooled by entrepreneurs and business people who shared life lessons and inspiration and



Tah-Janay Hayes, left, the college-aged daughter of Leslie "The Heiress" Coley, right.

learned various beauty and hair-styling techniques.

Tampa's Terrance Ramses of Ripe Brand Clothing was on hand one Thursday to share his experience and advice to the Operation Young Boss youth.

"Leslie's work aligns with the vision of Ripe Brand Clothing...to respect black children and repair black communities."

Lee Oliver, Jr. of Fundamentally Funded Prosperity, a financial coach, also shared financial

See **BOSS** page 9

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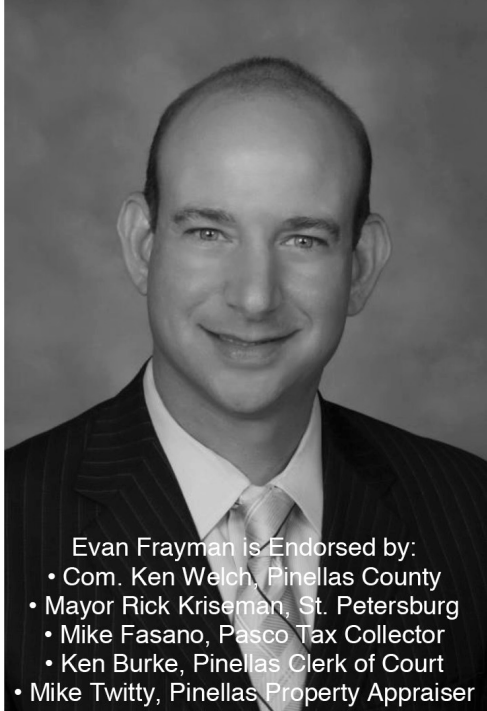


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COMMUNITY NEWS



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DOG DAYS



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AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY FRONT AND CENTER

The importance of the Declaration of Independence to African-American liberation

BY JACQUELINE HUBBARD
President, ASALH

On November 7, 1775, the representatives of the English King George III issued a proclamation to the American colonies that freed “all indentured servants, Negroes or others ... able and willing to bear arms...” with British troops. Less than eight months later on July 4, 1776, the American colonies declared their independence from England and King George. Representatives of the American colonies signed the Declaration of Independence a month later.

Although they clearly wanted their freedom from England, no steps were taken to grant freedom to black Americans. Several thousand black people fought for the colonies in the Revolutionary War, yet few were freed afterward.

The war did nothing to abolish the institution of slavery in America; however, the words in the Declaration of Independence served as the touchstone of American egalitarianism. After the Revolutionary War, this declaration was used in many ways such as the struggle to abolish slavery, establish the foundation for the Emancipation Proclamation and the justification for the Civil War that ended slavery some 90 years later in 1865.

It has continued to be used in arguments for equality and due process under the law for all Americans.

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams primarily drafted the language in the Declaration of Independence. On June 11, 1776, a committee consisting of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert R. Livingston and Roger Sherman was appointed to draft the document.

In his autobiography, Adams states the committee of five decided to appoint Jefferson and himself to write the final document. The final draft utilized many phrases and terms to justify and preserve freedom for all citizens.

For example, it states in part as follows:

“When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another and to assume... the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.”

It further states: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. “That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”

This notion of equality for all is im-



Speculative 19th-century portrait of Crispus Attucks, the black American Patriot martyr of the 1770 Boston Massacre.

portant because there is within the Declaration, no allegation of the superiority of any one race. The Declaration of Independence does not state that it was intended only for white Americans. It does not mention slavery or involuntary servitude.

William Lloyd Garrison used the phrase “self-evident truths” in his anti-slavery arguments. Frederick Douglass called the drafters of the Declaration “hypocrites” for not using the document to abolish slavery.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, the Quaker David Cooper stated the document declared “...that blacks are born equally free with whites: it is declared and recorded as the sense of America.”

It was also used as the basis for the Amistad case, and Abraham Lincoln used it in his arguments for the righteousness of the Civil War, stating the framers “...meant to set up a standard ...for free society...augmenting ...happiness...to all people of all colors everywhere.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. referred to the Declaration of Independence in his 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech by declaring “...we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren used the reference to the Declaration of Independence in the Civil Rights cases of the 1950s and 1960s. It was also referenced in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title II and Title VII).

It remains relevant and useful today as the struggle for equality for all people from all segments of society continues.

Attorney Jacqueline Hubbard graduated from the Boston University Law School. She is currently the president of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc.

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



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COMMUNITY NEWS



Visionary Brief

by Keisha Bell, Esq.

When she regained consciousness



In 2015, Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson was honored by Pres. Barack Obama during his State of the Union Address.

One's vote is one's power. Knowing how to read and how to comprehend are critical components in maximizing that power. It is no surprise then that there has been, and continues to be, great pushback for ensuring these things for our nation's poor and minority groups.

The Voting Rights Act was signed in 1965, yet far too many are still fighting for the right to vote. Do you ever wonder if those fighting with you are truly fighting with you? Progress does not have to be slow, especially when you vote.

Meet Amelia Isadora Platts Boynton Robinson. (For this article, she will be referred to as "Boynton.")

Boynton lived from August 18, 1911, until August 26, 2015. Not only was she a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, but she was also a key figure in the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches. She was awarded the Martin Luther King, Jr., Freedom Medal in 1990.

Boynton's parents encouraged her and her siblings to learn how to read. As a youth, she became involved in campaigning for women's suffrage. In 1927, Boynton obtained a degree in home economics from what is now known as Tuskegee University. Note, Boynton also studied at what is now known as Savannah State University, Tennessee State, Virginia State and Temple University.

Born in Savannah, Ga., by 1934, Boynton had relocated to Alabama. Its state constitution sanctioned discriminatory practices, which in effect excluded African Americans from the political process. That year, however, Boynton registered to vote.

By the early 1960s, there was an increase in activism in the Civil Rights Movement. Boynton was residing in Selma, Ala. In an attempt to encourage more African Americans to vote, in 1964 she ran for Congress.

By doing so, Boynton made history by becoming the first African-American woman to run for office in Alabama and the first woman of any race to run for the ticket of the Democratic Party in the state. Boynton received 10 percent of the vote.

In 1965, Selma had a population that was 50 percent black, but only 300 of its African-American residents were registered as voters. By 1966, after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, that number grew significantly to 11,000.

Boynton helped to organize a march to Montgomery, Alabama's state capital. Its goal was to protest the continued segregation and disenfranchisement of blacks.

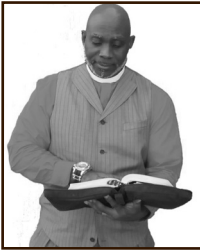
The event became known as "Bloody Sunday" because county and state police stopped the march and beat demonstrators after they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Boynton was beaten unconscious, and a photograph of her lying on Edmund Pettus Bridge circulated around the world.

After regaining consciousness, Boynton continued to participate in marches to reach Selma. Note, the marchers continued to be deterred after crossing the Pettus Bridge. More and more people joined the march. With federal protection, finally, the marchers reached Montgomery on March 24, 1965.

The power of the people's demand for voting rights shifted the national public opinion on the issue. Soon afterwards, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed.

Boynton was a guest of honor at the ceremony when President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. Some would have thought this to be a miracle, but could the miracle really have been when she regained consciousness?

Keisha Bell is an Attorney, author, and public servant. www.emergingfree.com



Breaking the Cycle

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

The thief on the cross, paradise and the place of the dead – Pt. 2

Peter writes in his 2nd epistle about the angels in prison (in the abyss and Tartarus) that are awaiting the judgment indicating they are the same beings he is addressing in 1 Pt.

Hades is divided into two parts of which no one can cross over from one to the other. On the Hell side of Hades there are both angels and humans being confined awaiting their eternal punishment. In this 2nd compartment there is a division for both angels and humans. For the humans their is Abaddon and the pit. For the fallen angels there is the Abyss which is a temporary place of confinement in which they will be let out during the tribulation. (Rev.9)

The other division is Tartarus which is a permanent place of confinement for those angels of Gen.6 (Jude 6, 2 Pt. 2:4) 1 Pt.4:5" Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. 6: For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." There are numerous views for this passage some relate this to Noah's preaching. but this couldn't be since the gospel was not yet known. One thing we know it does not mean the gospel is preached to those who are currently dead. The better fitting view is that the gospel was preached to those who were at the time alive and then died, just as it is currently being preached to those alive. That they were judged in the body by dying but are alive now (live in the Spirit like God).

After the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus paradise was moved to heaven. The

area for the righteous was emptied out, now the believer goes directly to heaven. From the New Testament teaching we find that the new location of paradise is heaven. Christ when seated at the right hand of God sends the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and gave spiritual gifts to the new entity, the Church.

Paul also stated before he recalled this account of his visit to the third heaven that all believers go there when they die 2 Cor.5:8 "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. not Soul sleep , not purgatory. There are three heavens distinguished in scripture. the first heaven our immediate atmosphere, where birds fly. (Gen. 1:20; Jer. 4:25 ; Mt. 8:20; Acts 10:12). The next heaven is a level above our atmosphere called outer space where the planets, the stars and the sun and moon are located. (Gen. 1:14-18,22:17;Mt.24:29;Rev.6: 13) These first two are visible portions of the universe. The third heaven is invisible, and references are found in many of the major books of the Old Testament. In the New Testament the Gospels, the book of Acts, 2 Cor.; Eph.;Col. and other epistles mention it. Jesus testified of its reality saying he came from there.

Paul testifies of it and writes of his experience in 2 Cor.12:2 where he was brought to the third heaven where God dwells and in vs.4 calls it Paradise. Yet he did not tell anyone of this revelation for 14 years because it was so awesome and unlawful to speak of. Today we have so many claims of people going to heaven one would think there are daily flights of the Spirit going. It has become very lawful to

write about their experiences. If one checks out what is being said from the heavenly travelers they will find it is contradictory to each others tall tales and especially to the bibles.

Jesus stated in Jn. 14:2-4 that he went ahead of us to prepare a place in heaven which is where his father dwells. That where he is we may be also.

When Stephen was martyred he looked up to heaven seeing a vision of the Lord standing- and said Lord Jesus receive my Spirit (under inspiration of the Holy Spirit). He knew he was going to be immediately transferred into heaven the location of the Lord.

When Christ ascended he led captivity captive (Eph.4:8-10), those who had waited in faith in Abraham's bosom for their sins to be removed were gathered together in another place, the new Paradise in heaven.

Rev.2:7 "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God which is now in heaven. In Rev.22:2 we find this tree is located in the new Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-24). (Whether this is symbolic or literal is a matter of view, the fact is we will partake of it). The location of paradise will again change in the future to be on the new earth, as the new Jerusalem comes down and the dwelling place of God is with man forever (Rev.21:1- Rev.22). The same tree that Adam was forbidden to eat from, so that he would not become eternal in his fallen state, will be offered to everyone that has received their immortal resurrected bodies.

*Till next week,
God Bless.
Elder Dr. Robert L. Harrison*

Local dancer and New York entertainer features free community tap dance workshops

DUNEDIN – The Florida Tap Dance Project taps its way front and center Saturday, Sept. 15 at its ribbon cutting and dolphin unveiling ceremony. Sponsored by Clearwater resident, dancer, choreographer and instrumentalist Kayla Cowart, the free event will feature tap dance workshops at no cost (open to all Tampa Bay area tap dancers) from 10-1:30 p.m. at Patricia Ann Dance Studios, 941 Douglas Ave., Dunedin.

Workshop participants will have an opportunity to take classes with the Tap Dance Ambassadors of Florida, some of Florida's most accomplished and passionate tap dance performers. The tap dance workshops will be followed by the Project's ribbon cutting ceremony at 2 p.m. and a dolphin unveiling of "Rhythm," the Florida Tap

Dance Project's official dolphin mascot.

The community festivities will continue from 2:30-4 p.m. in Dunedin's Pioneer Park, 420 Main St., with tap dance performances by the Tap Dance Ambassadors of Florida and three of Pinellas County's premier tap dance ensembles.

"Rhythm" is the newest addition to a pod of more than 220, six-feet-tall, mixed-media dolphins, designed by local artists and sponsored by local businesses that are making a splash along the Rhythm Trail in St. Petersburg/Clearwater.

Dunedin is the first stop on Rhythm's tap dance trail in honor of the late Elaine Forestier who founded Patricia Ann Dance Studios, a staple business in downtown Dunedin for more than 56 years.

Morgan Angillilis-Storrison of Tapped In, Inc. and Cowart—tagged the Tap Girl of Florida— both tapped under the toe-tapping musicality and tutelage of Forestier, who tapped actively until the age of 93. Forestier died this year at the age of 95.

Cowart views 2015 as a memorable year because not only did she graduate from Largo High School's ExCEL Magnet Program in that year, but she also founded the Tap Dance Ambassadors of Florida comprised of herself and St. Petersburg/Clearwater tap dance professionals Angelillis-Storrison of Tapped In, Inc., Ruth Ann Martin of the Truth Tap Company, Ashlyn Bolton of the Rhythm and Sole Tap Ensemble, New York dancer Aubrey Cheek and Raymond Bennett.

She also pioneered the Florida Tap Dance Project

with the goal of showcasing Tampa Bay's emerging tap dancers in St. Petersburg/Clearwater and branding this local area as the "capital of Florida's tap dance industry," which is an integral part of the national tap dance community.

Dancing since she was two years old, Cowart entered community theater at age six and was a part of Ruth Eckerd Hall's "Chocolate Nutcracker" and the Mahaffey Theatre's "Chocolate with a Twist."

Following high school graduation, Cowart attended a semester at St. Petersburg College before heading to the Big Apple for an open-call audition for Off-Broadway's "Stomp." After three auditions, she landed a part (currently playing two different characters) in the energetic music and dance production that has



been entertaining New York audiences since 1994, and now in touring companies worldwide.

The Florida Tap Dance Project's ribbon cutting and dolphin unveiling event are all about sensational sounds, good vibrations, the rhythmic beat of tapping feet and a heel-to-toe tapping great experience that you won't want to miss!

Mark your calendars for Sept. 15, and let your-

self discover the creative culture that is emerging throughout St. Petersburg/Clearwater's unique tap dance industry.

Arts enthusiast that are interested in getting involved in the project and dancers that would like to reserve their spot for the free dance workshops can do so by emailing info@floridatap.com.

For more information, visit www.floridatap.com.

COMMUNITY NEWS

The wife of a politician

BY KARIN DAVIS-THOMPSON
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Speaking to the ladies of the St. Petersburg Metropolitan Section of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc., Angela Rouson said being married to an elected official has its ups and downs.

“Some people just see it as something their spouse is doing,” she said. “It can be a blessing or a curse. It’s all in how you look at it.”

As the wife of Senator Darryl Rouson for nearly 19 years, she enjoys the opportunity to help promote and support causes that are important to her. However, there are the times that his responsibilities mean he’s away from the family and is not at home to bounce ideas off of, help with managing the household and their blended family.

“I tend to be more of the disciplinarian,” she said. “And I liked to bounce things off of him with the kids because I know I could be pretty strict.”

And although the world of politics wasn’t new to her—she grew up with a father who worked as a lobbyist—marrying someone in politics has proven to be different in many ways.

As Rouson worked through figuring out how she would determine what her role would look like, she decided to use two former first ladies as role models: Eleanor Roosevelt and Michelle

Obama.

She admired how Mrs. Obama’s Let’s Move initiative, in some ways, helped lay the foundation for her husband’s Affordable Healthcare Act. Rouson also appreciates the way Mrs. Roosevelt used her platform to champion women’s and civil rights.

And like a first lady, Rouson said there is no manual on being a politician’s wife. For her, she learned that the role would require her to wear many hats.

“Sometimes I have to be the cheerleader-in-chief and his biggest fan,” she said.

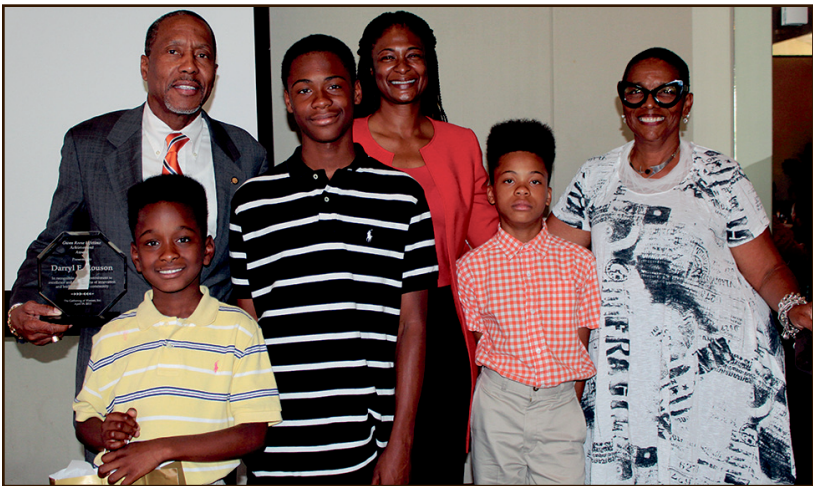
One particular race was extremely close, and she wanted her husband to know that his ability to make a difference isn’t just based on whether or not he wins a political race.

“I wanted him to know that he had done great things for the community already and that he could continue to do so even if he wasn’t elected,” she said.

Rouson said helping her husband reach his goals has also meant putting her career on the back burner to take the lead in raising their children and managing the household.

At first, she had a job she loved in marketing but realized she needed to spend more time with her children while her husband began his political career.

“I was able to be there when the children got home, attend their field trips with them and have



Angela and Darryl Rouson accepting the Lifetime Achievement Award with their family at the 2015 Men & Women of Distinction Awards.



Angela moderating the 2014 Juvenile Welfare Board Children’s Summit.



Angela Rouson helping her husband celebrate 20 years of sobriety at the Palladium Theater March 15, 2018.



Angela Rouson served as the president of the St. Petersburg Metropolitan Section of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. for two years. Seen here with Rev. Dr. Jamal Harrison Bryant and her husband at the 2016 Dr. Martin Luther King Leadership Awards Breakfast.

time during the day to accompany Darryl to campaign events,” she said.

More than anything, her life as the wife of an elected official has taught her that balance is key.

“There has to be give and take,” she stated. “You both have to make sure that you have the chance to do things that are important to you.”

If she could give advice to anyone embarking

on this journey, it would be to make sure to remember to take time for themselves if they want to help their spouse.

“You won’t be good for anyone if you don’t take care of yourself.”

She also would caution them that the job comes with a lot of scrutiny.

“People aren’t judging you based on a speech you gave or a policy you passed, they are judging

you purely on what they are seeing,” she averred. “It’s unfortunate and unfair, but it is the reality. It’s a challenge that you have to be willing to face. You have to be confident enough in who and whose you are to let it roll off like water off a duck’s back.”

What is most impor-

tant, she said, is remembering your quality of life and making the decisions that are best for you, no matter what others may think. Being successful in this role means embracing it and finding your way.

“Success is really all about the journey.”

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Mt. Zion Human Services receives \$5,000 donation

BY KARIN DAVIS-THOMPSON
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Senator Darryl Rouson brought along some of his friends to church on First Sunday to Mt. Zion Progressive Missionary Baptist Church.

One such friend was Robert Rubenstein, founder of Rubenstein Law, a personal injury law firm headquartered in Miami. He presented a \$5,000 check to the church’s human services initiative, whose goals are to help foster a healthy environment, strong economy and the well being of the people living in the community.

Mt. Zion Human Services strives to:

- Help children achieve superior outcomes in the areas of education

and academic preparedness through tutoring, as well as social, physical, and spiritual development

- Aid parents and families in achieving family success, financial security and a basis of material, and spiritual wealth
- Work alongside private investors and public stakeholders in creating a competitive and attractive landscape of commercial and housing development

Rubenstein’s values align with the organization’s goals and said giving back to the community has always been important to his firm. He hopes his donation will allow Mt. Zion Human Services to continue its work in the community.

During the presentation, Rubenstein, who has law offices throughout the

state of Florida, also told the congregation that Rouson has joined his firm and will be assisting in setting up a brand new office in St. Pete before the end of the year.

Along with the check presentation, Rouson and Rubenstein encouraged the congregation to vote.

“I won’t tell you who to vote for either, but I know we got a crazy guy in the White House, and we don’t want a crazy governor,” Rubenstein said at the Aug. 5 10 a.m. service. “We’d like to get the right people into office.”

He reminded the congregation that the last two governors’ races that put Rick Scott in office were only won by 60,000 votes, which is a small amount considering the millions of people in the state.

He urged everyone not

just to vote, but to also bring 10 people along with them. With Mt. Zion’s 3,000 members that would calculate to 30,000 voters, half of what was needed to defeat Scott in the last two elections.

“Don’t ever think that your vote doesn’t count,” Rubenstein said. “Every vote makes a difference.”

Also joining Rouson was Jennifer Webb running for House District 69 in the Florida House of Representatives; Kionne McGhee, the incoming Florida House Democratic leader; State Rep. Janet Cruz running for the state senate in Tampa and the State Rep. Onkia Onfo.

After the presentation, Senior Pastor Rev. Louis Murphy Sr. thanked the group for the donation and echoed Rubenstein’s call for everyone to get out and



L-R, Mt. Zion Human Services Chairman of the Board Tom Hochhausler accepting a check from Robert Rubenstein, center, and Sen. Darryl Rouson

vote.

“If you don’t know by now that voting really matters, then something is really wrong,” Murphy said.

He told the congregation that when the community doesn’t show up at the polls, it leads to who’s currently in Washington and Tallahassee.

For more information on the Mt Zion Human Services, call (727) 822-0443. To learn more about early voting for the Primary and General Elections, visit the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections Office website at www.voteinellas.com.

Black Girls Read initiative encourages out of school literacy

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

TAMPA – During July’s Black Girls Read summer session, Dominique Cobb encouraged young attendees to scour the Robert Saunders Library as she coached them on how to identify genres. She asked the girls to call names of authors or books they might have heard of even if they hadn’t read them.

“James Patterson!” suggested one of the older girls.

Cobb nodded. “OK. What about James Patterson, what genre are his books?” she responded.

“Mystery?” the girl answered.

Nodding, Cobb moved on. “I heard someone say they like ‘Captain Underpants.’ What kind of book is that? It starts with a ‘C,’” she hinted after several moments of silence. “Comics!” a tweener across the room crowed proudly.

Cobb is a mother of four and a self-described “avid reader and foodie” who has always loved to explore new cultures and

experiences. In 2012, she and co-worker Dr. Louise Vincent were both mothers with daughters struggling in school. Her daughter was being labeled as having ADHD because she wasn’t reading aloud and was having trouble retaining information that she read.

The two mothers decided to take matters into their own hands, convinced the school systems weren’t interested in helping find the solutions to the challenges their daughters were facing. Black Girls Read was born, starting with seven girls.

Now on any given month, Cobb sees between 15 and 25 young attendees.

“We met at the Children’s Board because it was one of those places that welcomed us,” recalled Cobb.

After about a year, they moved to the Robert Saunders Library where they were thrilled to find a room devoted solely to African-American authors and subject matters. Soon Cobb started putting together packages to assess

the girls’ reading levels, tailoring packets for their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Cobb’s passion runs deep.

“I’m up at two or three in the morning pulling articles, researching statistics, checking on school board meetings to see what issues the children are facing in school or Common Core additions to their curriculum for the upcoming year.”

At the library, Cobb has the girls pick out books and encourages them to share something about their selection.

“A lot of kids don’t actually touch books—if it’s not their phone, they’re working on the computer. My thing is the sensory thing—getting them to touch the book; touch the pages.”

Cobb said that many of her readers are from public housing and even though the library is in close vicinity, for many, coming to a Black Girls Read session is their first visit to a library.

Getting the girls to practice public speaking is also part of Cobb’s mis-

sion, so icebreakers and open sharing are incorporated in each session.

“Sometimes girls are shy. I had an issue with [reading aloud] in school. I was scared to read out loud, so I want the girls to be as comfortable as possible,” Cobb stated.

Parental involvement is also vital, and Cobb was happy to report that at each session she’s had nearly 100 percent parental attendance.

“I tell them at the beginning, ‘I’m not a babysitter; we are in this together. It’s a village and whatever I’m teaching them you need to learn too.’”

Cobb believes there’s an issue in the African-American community in relation to parent-teacher communication. Often, she thinks, parents and teachers aren’t on the same page.

She wants the parents to be there to watch what she’s doing so whatever she’s teaching them can be implemented at home. Cobb also supplies the girls with journals and offers the parents writing prompts to encourage them to write each day.

Cobb, who has returned to school for project management and business, is considering new paths for her mission because parents have repeatedly approached her about their sons. Realizing the boys need help too, she hasn’t turned any away when they’ve shown up for the girl’s group. She’s contemplating starting an inclusive version this fall.

A recent graduate of the CRED program in Urban Development Certification through USF’s Institute of Government, Cobb—who was a 2018 Athena Society Grant recipient for female leadership—wants to run her own program, and eventually go into politics on behalf of the community.

Mary Bird, a grand-mother of an 11 and seven-year-old, was thrilled about the initiative.

“I knew Dominique from a child; she’s a brilliant young lady, and she is bringing these little girls together so they can bond and have everlasting relationships,” said Bird, who is happy that her grandchildren, who love to read, now see other girls who

enjoy reading as well.

Monique Henry, a mother, nurse and nursing instructor, was there to volunteer. She liked the fact that the event taught the girls about the importance of reading and writing, “not just in school but during the summer, out of school, on the weekends.”

Cobb credits her daughter’s turnaround in school for inspiring her. After a year of being a part of Black Girls Read, her daughter jumped six reading levels and landed on the honor roll for the first time.

“I was like, ‘we’ve got to be doing something right,’” laughed Cobb.

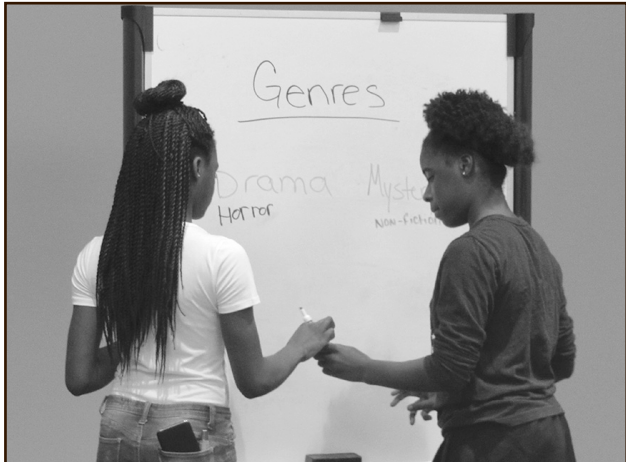
So far, she’s been doing everything out of pocket, but for her, it’s been worth it. Cobb is hoping to expand the organization and raise money for field trips while continuing to share the strategies that propelled her daughter to success with others.

For more information on Black Girls Read visit them on Facebook.

To reach J.A. Jones, email jjones@theweekly-challenger.com.



Dominique Cobb teaching her young charges the different genres in literature.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Jack and Jill and Shorecrest partner for 2nd annual HBCU College Fair

ST. PETERSBURG — The Suncoast Chapter Teens of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. will host its second annual Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) College Fair from 1-3pm Sunday, Sept. 16 at Shorecrest Preparatory School.

The inaugural event featured college recruiters and alumni representing more than 30 HBCUs, including Howard University, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Fisk University, Tennessee State, Edward Waters College, Florida Memorial and Florida A&M University.

More than 300 guests attended to meet with the schools. Now in their second year, the event leaders expect an even bigger turnout of both colleges and families.

“Our pilot HBCU College Fair was a great success,” said Jack and Jill of America Teen Sponsor Dr. Nathalia Jeffrey-Fort. “Supporting and promoting HBCUs are critical compo-

nents to Jack and Jill’s mission of education and leadership. We’re pleased to partner with Shorecrest once again for this event.”

Attendees will have the opportunity to speak to alumni and admissions reps from colleges and universities, as well as talk with dedicated experts about general college-related topics such as the college admissions process, financial aid, scholarships, Greek life and more.

“As an HBCU alumnus, I know that unique college experience strongly influenced my career choice and passion for education,” said Roderick Fludd, Shorecrest director of Diversity and Inclusion. “We at Shorecrest are proud to offer this event, not just to African-American families, but to all families in our community who are exploring their options for higher education.”

Shorecrest Preparatory School is located at 5101 1st St. NE in St. Petersburg. Below is the schedule of events:

- 12:30 p.m. — Registration opens (Lobby of Shorecrest Athletic Center)
- 1-3 p.m. — College Fair (Crisp Gym in Shorecrest Athletic Center) HBCU admissions and alumni representatives

Admission to the HBCU College Fair is free and open to the public. Registration is available online at 2018HBCUcollegefair.eventbrite.com

About Suncoast Jack and Jill of America, Inc.

Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated is an African-American organization of mothers who nurture future leaders by strengthening children through chapter programming, community service, legislative advocacy and philanthropic giving. They believe every child, with proper guidance and opportunity, can be a leader.

The Suncoast Chapter of Jack and Jill of America is composed of 35 dedicated mothers and 86 children between the ages of 2-18 years old. The chapter

is uniquely positioned and committed to making a difference in the lives of families residing in Pinellas, Manatee and Sarasota Counties. For more information, visit JackandJill-Suncoast.org.

About Shorecrest

Founded in 1923, Shorecrest is a coed, non-

sectarian, PK-12 independent school in St. Petersburg. In a safe, student-centered environment, Shorecrest educates a diverse community of students to become lifelong learners in the pursuit of personal and academic excellence, physical well-being, creative achieve-

ment and the development of a commitment to social responsibility.

Shorecrest graduates empathetic, independent thinkers who succeed at the university level, pursue their passions and lead purposeful lives. Learn more at shorecrest.org.



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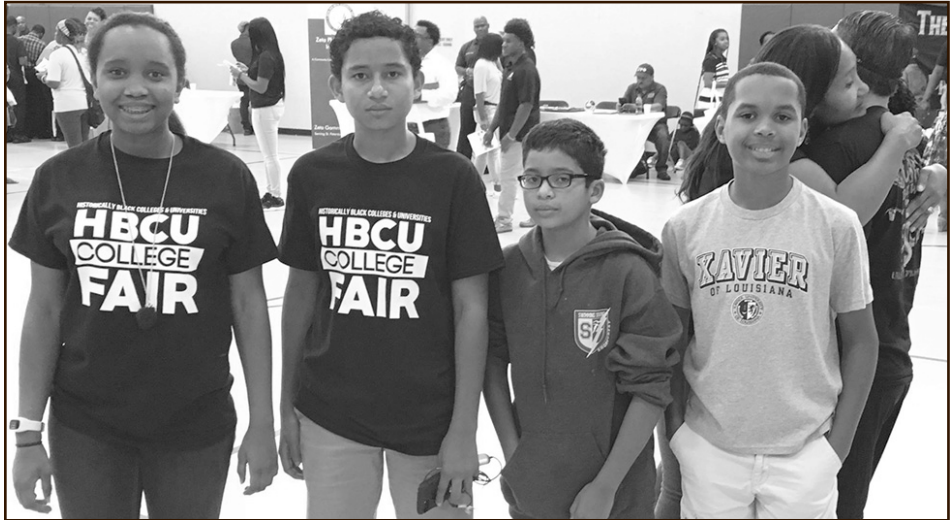
All students are encouraged to participate and speak with representatives about admissions, financial aid, testing, majors and more.

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Hosted by Suncoast Chapter Teens of Jack & Jill of America, Inc. in partnership with AKA AKAdemy, The St. Petersburg Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, Mt. Zion College Prep 101, and members of the Divine Nine.

For those who are interested in volunteering, sponsorship opportunities and more, contact Dr. Nathalia T. Jeffrey-Fort at SCJHBCU@gmail.com or Call (727) 851-6618.





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COMMUNITY NEWS

It’s that time

BY DEXTER MCCREE
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — The bright blinking lights of yellow school buses have started rolling down neighborhood streets, making frequent stops to pick up anxious youngsters. The activities of summer camps, sports camps and Summer Bridge programs have come to an end and replaced with afterschool care and homework. Parents’ minds have shifted to school supplies, uniforms and signing school planners. They are focused on arranging drop off and pick up schedules for the younger children while older high school students are vying for school parking passes.

It’s that time of the year where school bells are ringing, morning announcements are heard, and new friendships are formed. How prepared are the kids for the new experience of the upcoming year? One set of parents, Roy and Isabella James, decided to leave nothing to chance for their fifth-grade son Jermaine’s educational progress. “We know that it is important for our children to focus in a classroom and pay attention to small things,” said Roy James, Jr., an insurance broker. “His mom and I try to teach him to study, learn through homework and prepare to take tests.” This summer, the Jame-

ses sent Jermaine to the Shirley Proctor Puller Foundation (SPPF) Summer Camp, featuring the M.A.S.T.R. Kid curriculum to keep his mind sharp. The educational camp is for boys and girls in grades K-8. The M.A.S.T.R. Kids curriculum centers on math, art, science, technology and reading, and focuses on ways to encourage academic excellence over the summer months. The program offers activities that decrease learning loss and guarantee fun while highlighting significant areas of learning including S.T.E.M. (Science-Technology-Engineering-Math), health and wellness and field trips.

Having life and educational experiences during the summer months help students to be better prepared for a challenging school year. When students participate in various events, activities and travels outside of their immediate surroundings, they gain knowledge of other cultures and environments. This is helpful upon returning to school to have expanded dialogue with others. Having support in school is also crucial for students to have success. If students have had a summer of total relaxation, it can be difficult making the switch to a rigorous academic schedule. One organization recog-

nizes the challenge and has committed to help the students and school. “We are concerned about the total welfare of our kids, not just them playing and cheering on Saturday,” said Tawana Maybell, president of Lakewood Jr. Spartans. The Lakewood Jr. Spartans youth organization serves more than 400 children in Little League football and cheerleading. Their students are required to turn in progress notes and report cards throughout the school year. The Jr. Spartans have tutoring, homework help and a computer lab to help students with their academics. The tutoring session starts 90 minutes prior to

football and cheerleader practice. The organization representatives volunteer at various schools and set aside time to eat lunch with their students while mentoring them. *** Well, the streets are once again filled with early morning rush hour traffic, kids with backpacks riding their bicycles and school buses making wide turns. The early morning bells are followed by the principal’s voice heard over the intercom greeting students, teachers and staff, “Good morning! Once again, it’s that time of year!” To reach Dexter McCree, email dmcree@theweekly-challenger.com



Isabella James



Roy James



Tawana Maybell

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Entrepreneur and hair loss specialist encourages ‘Operation Young Boss’ program to inspire youth

From **BOSS**, front page

information and encouragement with the class. Oliver said he walked into Coley’s new salon, saw what she was doing in the community and loved it.

“[Her vision] fits right in line with what I do. I always tell people to put money where it makes money... and the goal is to retain money and grow our generational wealth.”

Coley said her path to building her empire as the self-professed “hair doctor” actually began en route to her journey into fashion.

“Originally I thought cosmetology was going to be my way into the fashion industry because I wanted to be a personal stylist—that was the original goal—but it evolved from there,” shared Coley, who today treats both clients with hair

loss syndromes and natural hair.

After training alongside nationally-renowned cosmetologist Toni Love, Coley spent three years researching and studying groundbreaking techniques in hair loss (alopecia) treatment, which culminated in her alopecia guide and workbook “Targeting the World of Hair Loss.”

Different forms of hair loss include androgenic alopecia or androgenetic alopecia, also called male or female pattern baldness; telogen effluvium, a reversible hair loss condition caused by extreme stress and traction alopecia, caused by pulling on the roots for prolonged periods and often results from tight braiding or weaving styles.

Coley’s clients also ex-

perience alopecia due to everything from cancer treatment to thyroid issues to sickle cell anemia and high blood pressure—all illnesses that have medications that can result in hair loss.

While Coley uses industry leader XTC Rejuvenation products to treat alopecia, she has created her own line geared to natural hair.

“Our ‘Heiress’ collection is about offering preventative hair care. My regular clients that I’ve had for over 12 years kept telling me, ‘OK, we have great results, we’re natural, but our hair doesn’t grow as fast, and it’s not getting the nutrients needed.’”

Coley related that her new Heiress hair care line is all about feeling empow-

ered and healthy. Long-time customer Andi attested to how Leslie’s treatments brought her hair back to a full healthy mane after her relocation to Florida’s heat had dried out her hair resulting in hair loss.

She established the Dyvine Appointments Training Institute to offer students a pathway to economic stability. Her program is a licensed provider for the braiding license course offered by the State of Florida Department of Cosmetology – a required license to offer braiding services at any salon or store.

Tah-Janay Hayes, Coley’s college-aged daughter, works with her mother as a personal assistant and helps her with social media. She said her mother has led her to think more deeply



Financial coach Lee Oliver, Jr. sharing financial information and encouragement with the class.


about business, economics and what it means to be an African-American woman in this country.

“She’s definitely impacted what I do a lot. Her business ventures have really educated me on being self-sufficient, what it means to be more than an employee, working towards being an employer...what it

really takes to succeed in this world and the decision and sacrifices that you have to make to be successful.”

For more information on Dyvine Appointments Salon, Hair Loss Clinic, & Training Institute, visit Dyvineappts.info.

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



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Applications open for cutting-edge Reading Scholarship for Florida public school students


STATEWIDE – Florida parents can begin applying today for a first-of-its-kind state scholarship program designed to help thousands of public school students who are struggling with reading. The Reading Scholarship is an education savings account available to public school students in third-, fourth-, or fifth-grade who scored a Level 1 or Level 2, in 2018, on the English Language Arts portion of the third- or fourth-grade Florida Standards Assessment. The scholarship is worth \$500. It can be used to reimburse parents for tuition and fees for part-time tutoring; fees for summer and after-school education programs designed to improve reading or literacy skills; and instructional

materials or curriculum related to reading or literacy. Providers can include public school districts that offer such services. “We are excited about the opportunities this scholarship offers to parents to further customize education for their children,” said Doug Tuthill, president of Step Up For Students, the nonprofit that will administer the program. “We also look forward to partnering with school districts and other providers to help improve academic outcomes for struggling students.” The Florida Legislature passed the Reading Scholarship in the spring, and Gov. Rick Scott signed it into law. It is the first program of its kind in the nation that is avail-

able to students in public schools. With the passage of this new scholarship program, Florida continues to push the frontiers of education customization. The Legislature appropriated \$9.7 million for the program, enough to fund more than 19,000 scholarships statewide. The scholarships are available on a first-come, first served basis. English Language Learners receive first priority. Parents may apply at www.stepupforstudents.org. *Step Up is a 501(c)3 non-profit scholarship organization. Step Up administers the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, Gardner Scholarship, Hope Scholarship and Reading Scholarship Accounts program.*



IS YOUR CHILD HAVING TROUBLE READING?
Help is Here!



Reading Scholarship Accounts

In 2018, Florida became the first state to offer an education savings account program for students enrolled in public schools. The Reading Scholarship, administered by Step Up For Students, was created to help public school students in third through fifth grade who struggle with reading. The program offers parents access to education savings accounts, worth \$500 each, to pay for tuition and fees related to part-time tutoring, summer and after-school literacy programs, instructional materials and curriculum related to reading or literacy.

Who Is Eligible?

- Third- through fifth-grade public school students who scored a 1 or 2 on the third or fourth grade English Language Arts section of the Florida Standards Assessment in the prior year.
- Students who are classified as English Language Learners, and who are enrolled in a program or receiving services that are specifically designed to meet the instructional needs of English Language Learner students, will receive priority.




What Is It?

- The scholarships are worth \$500 each and can be used for reimbursement for the following:
 - » Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring provided by a person who holds a valid Florida educator's certificate, a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject, an adjunct teaching certificate, or has demonstrated mastery of the subject area knowledge.
 - » Fees for summer education programs designed to improve reading or literacy skills.
 - » Fees for after-school education programs designed to improve reading or literacy skills.
 - » Instructional materials and curriculum related to reading or literacy.

How Do I Apply?

Visit StepUpForStudents.org for the latest information.

Reading Scholarship Questions?
✉ reading@sufs.org ☎ Scholarship Hotline 877-735-7837

 StepUp4Students  **sufs.org**  @StepUp4Students

As of June 2018 for the 2018-19 school year.

www.TheWeeklyChallenger.com

Changing lives, one student at a time

From **SCHOOL, front page**

Humphries has been principal at MYcroSchool for three years. He believes it can be a fresh start for kids who are forgotten by the public school system. “Whatever happened the day before, I don’t judge you,” Humphries tells students. “Every day is brand new; you walk through the door, that’s a step.” The biggest reason students can make such major life changes is because of the family-like atmosphere the staff creates. “One thing we pride ourselves on is that the kids come in here one way, and because we treat them like our own and create a safe environment, they leave more confident, more mature,” said Humphries. Wolf is proud of the way the staff approaches each student. “We treat each one differently because they each come from such different backgrounds and experiences,” he said. As well as being able to work at their own pace, every student has an individualized learning plan tailored to meet their specific needs. Since 80 percent of MYcroSchool students have experienced some form of trauma—such as physical abuse, homelessness and even witnessing family members gunned down—much of what the staff does involves gaining their trust and rebuilding their self-esteem. “They have been hurt so much they are always in survival mode,” said Wolf. “We make this building a safe haven for them

and try to show them education is a way out.” That approach seems to be working. This year’s graduation rate double last year’s. Despite a shaky start, Neal was among those graduates. According to Wolf, Neal has gotten over some very challenging hurdles and made some major life changes. “He took that turn; he’s on the right path,” he said. Neal agrees. During his time at MYcroSchool, something finally clicked. He told himself, “You need to get your mind right, stay focused, stay in school and get your diploma.” And the effort paid off. Neal was one of three MYcroSchool who received full scholarships to Pinellas Technical College. He will be studying heating and air conditioning in the fall and is looking forward to doing something he enjoys that also provides financial stability. *Cindy Swisher is a student reporter in the Neighborhood News Bureau of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. Visit <http://www.nnbnews.com/> for more info.*

Davion Only-Going : An inspiration to us all
BY HOLLY KESTENIS
Staff Writer

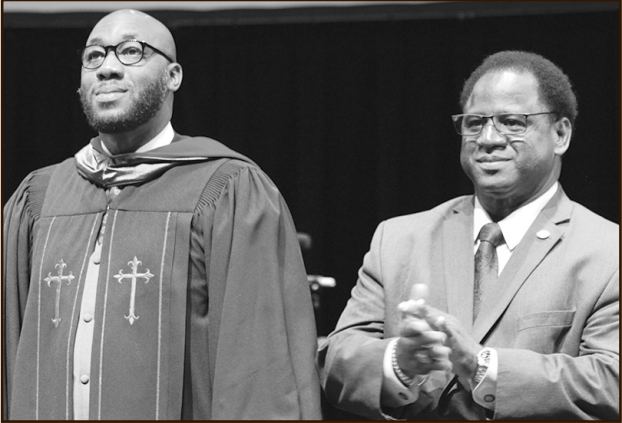
Compared to graduations in the past, MYcroSchool’s 2018 graduation ceremony was so large it had to be held at the Palladium Theater.

Fifty-seven young men and woman were able to check getting their high school diplomas off of their to-do-lists. One such young man could be the poster child for not giving up—Davion Only-Going. Born while his mother was incarcerated, Davion went from foster home to foster, from school to school so much so he has trouble counting them. Like many children in the system, he was angry and exhausted. In 2013, he decided to stand in front of the St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church congregation one Sunday and pleaded for a family. “I’ll take anyone,” he begged the congregation. “Old or young, dad or mom, black, white, purple. I don’t care.” His story went viral, and he even appeared on ABC’s “The View,” where Barbara Walters interviewed him. Thousands of people were interested in fostering him. He landed in Ohio with a minister and his family. He was soon sent back to Florida after a fight. Back in Florida and back in a new foster

home. He called his caseworker, the one constant in his life, and asked her to adopt him. She said “yes.” Connie Going folded Davion into her life, calling him an inspiration to the 10,000 children in the foster care system. Davion proudly walked across the stage in June to receive his high school diploma and a full scholarship from Pinellas Technical College where he plans on attending the Culinary Arts program. During the June 7 commencement address, it was almost as if Rev. Shawn Thomas, youth pastor at Mt. Zion Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, was using Davion as an example of keeping the faith when life will inevitably send you off-track. “There are potholes, there are bends and turns along the way,” he said, encouraging graduates not to get frustrated and throw in the towel, but to acknowledge the moments as a learning process in life. “There are times when you have to slow down so you don’t wreck.” Which is what MYcroSchool is all about. They offer not only a high

school curriculum geared toward college readiness, but up-to-date technology to ensure students have a hands-on experience. A computer workstation is offered to each student, and a flexible curriculum adaptable to individual interests and skill levels is incorporated. With a project-based curriculum, students become experts in internet research and publishing of creative ideas. Graduates listened intently as Thomas continued to bestow the importance of keeping their heads up and their lives free of negativity. “I’m sure there are many people out there who could testify to these graduates that there are people and things in life that have been designed to specifically stop them from moving forward.” He explained that progress in life tends to become stagnant at times and frantic at others. “But you can’t stop moving. No matter how hard the task is, no matter how hard the situation is, you have to keep moving in life.” Thomas also cautioned the youths on comparing themselves to others their

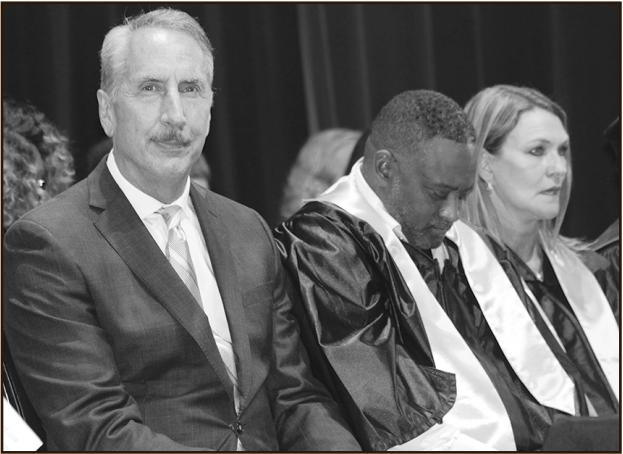
age and becoming obsessed with racing through life to play catch up with family members or friends. “You’re only running this race against yourself. You need to move at your pace because we all have different paces.” Students were encouraged to make a life plan and to write it down, solidify it in their mind so no matter what obstacles pop up in life, they will be able to deal with them effectively. “Stick with the plan you create for your life.” Thomas finished up recognizing the hardships that many of the graduates had to endure to reach graduation day. Whether it was a wrong choice that steered them off-track or a circumstance beyond their control, MYcroSchool graduates chose to get it together and deal with the potholes, bends in the road and the machinations of those intent on their failure. *For more information about MYcroSchool, located at 840 Third Ave. S, contact them at 727-825-3710 or visit PinellasMycroSchool.org.*



L-R, Rev. Shawn Thomas, youth pastor at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church and State Rep. Wengay Newton.



MYcroSchool Principal Steven Humphries



Director of Pinellas Technical College Boe Norwood handed Kelvin Neal his full scholarship to the college.



Davion Only-Going posing with his mom, Connie Going, after receiving his high school diploma.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Meals on Wheels in Midtown

BY STEPHANIE FARID
Neighborhood News Bureau

ST. PETERSBURG – Shortly after moving from Indiana to Florida, Kevin Mcfall’s wife passed away. He decided to become a volunteer with the Meals on Wheels program through his church, Maximo Presbyterian, and has been on a Midtown route for more than six years. “I’m out here delivering, and these people can’t even get out,” he said. “They’re in a difficult position.”

Meals on Wheels has served the Midtown area for more than 30 years. “Meals on Wheels has been here forever, since this building opened,” said Cheryl Holliday, coordinator of the Midtown Meals on Wheels service, referring to the Enoch Davis Center. The service at the Enoch Davis location has many routes that exclusively serve Midtown. At the core of the program are nutritious meals and a watchful eye on the health and safety of seniors.

They serve one hot meal and one cold meal (usually a sandwich) Monday through Thursday, and one hot meal and three cold meals on Friday to last through the weekend. Most of the people who receive this service are unable to leave the house, so the meals that they receive are sometimes all that they eat. On Mcfall’s route, there is Flymae Culbreth. She sits on her couch by the door waiting for her delivery. Inell Jackson, a former bus driver of 35 years,

expressed how difficult it has become to get around. This is where Meals on Wheels gives back to those who once served the area. According to Mcfall, one recipient on his route has never once emerged from the inside. A caretaker handles the chores that require a lot of movement. “I’m sure she gets out of it occasionally, but I have never seen Joyce up from that chair,” said Mcfall. The Meals on Wheels program is a necessity for seniors living alone and ex-

periencing a decline in mobility or health. The safety check that accompanies each meal delivery ensures that in a case of an emergency or problem, medics will be called and families will be notified. “We really make sure to actively note anyone that doesn’t answer the door,” said the Midtown coordinator Holliday. “The main office makes a call to check on anyone that may be needing help.” Mcfall is a substitute volunteer for his route, so he is not assigned any par-

ticular day of the week, but he comes to the rescue when one of the regular volunteers cannot make it. The route serves 10 people; the last four, however, are in the same building, resulting in seven stops. Anyone interested in volunteering can sign up at www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org. *Stephanie Farid is a student reporter in the Neighborhood News Bureau of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. Visit <http://www.nnbnews.com/> for more info.*



Inell Jackson, left, expressed how difficult it has become to get around.

Joyce has a caretaker handle the chores that require a lot of movement and rarely leaves her chair.

WWW.THEWEEKLYCHALLENGER.COM

Running for Pinellas County School Board, District-7 Seat

Two weeks ago, I wrote about some of the factors leading up to my decision to run for the Pinellas County School Board (PCSB), District-7 seat. This week I want to use this space to drill down a little further and discuss some of the specifics I heard from families and other community members whose children attend many of the schools in District 7. First, it must be acknowledged that, for a long time, there has been a general air of immense frustration on the part of parents and guardians of children attending Pinellas County schools in District-7. This is especially true for families of those children enrolled in elementary and middle schools. There are numerous reasons why south county families are frustrated with the school system their children attend and I will get into those as we go. However, there is a genuine belief by many that their voices are not being heard when they reach out to school board officials. The apparent lack of communication between the school board and the community, and the desire for change, is one of the reasons I am running to replace the present member for district-7. The second important reason I am challenging the incumbent for the District 7 seat is that I believe the work of a school

board member is a full-time job. A school board member cannot hope to adequately hold down two full time jobs without giving poor service to one or both jobs. Therefore, as a policy position, I will not be holding a second full-time job while I hold the position of school board member for my district. As a Pinellas County School Board member, I intend to spend my time focusing on the concerns of public school students, teachers, and the communities that support them. I believe that only by being present on the ground in our schools can a board member effectively learn about the concerns of the schools, children, and the community they represent. I understand that a board member is concerned with setting policies for the direction of the district, as well as managing its budget (among other things). However, it is also important that board members make time to listen to students, families, teachers, and the community. Education is personal to each child and the 5000-foot view is an inadequate position from which to communicate with children or their families. The following are six major issues identified by the community as critical for the success of students in Pinellas County public schools.

- Better Learning Resources – It is my intention to work with others to bring greater learning resources into the schools for students and teachers in order to help close the achievement gap and other disparities that currently exist in the system.
- Increase Early Childhood Learning – It is my intention to work with various community organizations to find ways to expand the availability of early childhood learning facilities and resources, especially in communities of low income, and working families.
- Research has shown that the more children that have access to early learning resources such as Head-Start, more will do better, and struggle less, when they get into kindergarten and then the elementary school stage of their education.
- Improved Communication - As mentioned earlier, families and the community believes that inadequate communication between the school board and the community is a major issue. Therefore, increasing communication with our students, parents, teachers, and the community will be one of my focus items on the school board. This includes bringing school board meetings into communities around the county in a rotating basis. Also examining ways to design and implement programs that make schools attractive as multi-purpose and re-

- source centers for parents and families.
- Improving School Safety - Working on improving school safety, not by hiring more gun-carrying personnel for on-campus duty, but by first undertaking a comprehensive safety assessment on every campus. This must include site survey of physical plant, interviews with classroom teachers, students, and parents. Then designing processes and systems to prevent unauthorized access to our campuses.
- Establishing a better student transport system – I will seek to work with parents, business organizations, and other community interests to establish a 21st Century transportation program for all students in the Pinellas County Schools system. Cities around America and other countries have achieved this: Why shouldn't Pinellas County? One of the pluses is that once accomplished, this could lead to establishing a later start time for all school levels in our county without any significant drain on existing transportation resources.
- Changing our approach to discipline – The community have been asking for this and I believe the time has come for us to revise and reconfigure the disciplinary process in our schools to eliminate off-campus dis-



ciplinary remediation. Research has shown that academics tend to take a back seat when students are suspended out of school. My goal will be to work with all stakeholders to ensure that discipline is done effectively and with productive benefit for the student and the school community. This must also include greater utilization of the principles and practices of Restorative Justice/Practice. Teachers and community groups have voiced the concern that this cannot be directed solely by the school system administrators. It must be owned and utilized by teachers who have been properly trained by persons author-

ized by the International Institute for Restorative Practice (IIRP). Let me conclude with this statement I heard during a campaign meeting. Because more failure is not an option, we must be willing to make the kind of changes that will ensure the future success of our students, our schools, and our communities. As a community, we must be willing to give change a chance if we are to ensure the success of our children and students. I would ask you to join with me to make the changes necessary to ensure the kinds of success our children and students deserve. Remember to vote on (or before) Aug. 28.

COMMUNITY NEWS

The Miracle 4 Michael second annual Back 2 School Bash

From **BASH**, front page

the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Lunch was provided along with physical and sensory activities. Whitaker created the nonprofit to help families cope with children with disabilities. She understands the trials these families go through because her son was diagnosed with Mucopolysaccharidosis type II (MPS II), also known as Hunter syndrome. Doctors told Whitaker that if her son, Michael Whitaker-Russell, did not receive a bone marrow transplant before the age of two, he wouldn't live to see the age of five. MPS II mainly affects boys, and it develops when an X-linked defective chro-

mosome is inherited. This x-linked recessive trait results in the body not being able to break down a specific sugar that builds bones, skin, tendons and other tissue. As a result, victims could experience joint problems, numbness, weakness and tingling in the hands, respiratory infections and inflammation, sleep apnea, hearing loss, weak muscles and trouble walking. Michael is developmentally delayed, but unlike many children with the disease, he can walk and talk. He also suffers from an enlarged heart, scoliosis, chronic asthma, glaucoma in both eyes, and must have thickened liquids due

to aspiration. Through the grace of God, Michael will be turning 12 years old in Dec. He is blessed to have an advocate mother who makes sure that he will have the best quality of life possible given his situation. Whitaker has also taken on the task of helping other parents become disability advocates in the Tampa Bay area. Laquanda Whitaker is Ernestine Monique's sister. She is in awe of her sister's inner strength not only to take care of Michael but to also advocate for other parents who are in tough situations caring for their special needs children. "She's awesome," exclaimed Laquanda

Whitaker. "I try to give her a break every one or two months or so and keep Michael at the house. I commend her because what she's doing every day for him, it takes strength because he is a lot to care for." Linda Duart from God's Special Friends was on hand giving away school supplies and reaching out to families. Inspired by Whitaker's tenacity, she has participated in the giveaway both years. GTE Financial is a new participant in the Miracle 4 Michael event and offered financial advice to families. They participated in the back-to-school bash to offer the community and their families an opportunity to

become members of GTE Financial Federal Credit Union. Misti Pollaro is a parent resource specialist at Family Network on Disabilities and an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) parent and professional caregiver/trainer. She shared some of her woes of having a special needs adult child. Before she became a special needs parent trainer, she was in the dark about guardianship options for her son. When her son reached 18, he signed himself out of high school. "From ages 18 to 25, he slept on my couch with no job, no education," she said. "I could not let that happen to my other children, so I started doing

what I had to do! Learn to advocate, learn the law, and that is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act." Pollaro has helped open the information door for parents to learn to advocate effectively for their special needs children from kindergarten through young adulthood. If you have a child with a disability, please contact Pollaro at (727) 523-1130, ext. 21, or misti@fndfl.org. For more information on the Miracle 4 Michael non-profit organization, please visit miracle4michael.org, or call (727)-692-2679. To reach Allen Buchanan, email abuchanan@theweeklychallenger.com





EARLY VOTE
WITH
MAYOR PHILIP LEVINE
SATURDAY, AUGUST 18
3:30 PM
PINELLAS COUNTY
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS
COUNTY BUILDING
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ST. PETERSBURG, 33701
RSVP:
JOCELYN@MAYORPHILIPLEVINE.COM
PAID BY PHILIP LEVINE, DEMOCRAT, FOR GOVERNOR



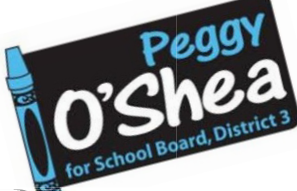
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Gibbs High School Advisory Council 1996-2002 &
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Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas, Chairman, 2005-2006
Helped create BETA Academy at Gibbs High School
Volunteer tutor
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COMMUNITY NEWS



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HEALTHY ST. PETE

HEALTH360

Diabetes Empowerment Education Program (DEEP)
Wednesday, August 29, 2018 6:00 p.m.

DEEP is a program that encourages small lifestyle changes while learning about your diabetes and the way it affects your health. Call (727) 820-7880 to learn more. Registration is required. Classes meet once per week for 7-weeks. Class program sponsored by St. Anthony's Hospital.

Participants receive a FREE produce voucher with each class attended.

HealthyStPeteFL.com
727-892-5994

Nicole CARR

SCHOOL BOARD

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the opportunity to
Thrive!

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for School Board

Free Sprinkler System Check-up

St. Petersburg residents:
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To help answer this question, the city is offering a free check-up to customers irrigating with potable (city), well, or reclaimed water.

Participants in the program will receive at No Charge:

- Complete sprinkler system evaluation
- Installation of a rain sensor device if one does not exist
- Suggestions that may help you save water and money
- An automatic shut-off watering nozzle

To be eligible, you must be a city of St. Petersburg water customer, and your property must:

1. Have an operating in-ground sprinkler system with timer
2. Irrigate with drinking (potable), reclaimed, or well water
3. Not have received a previous program evaluation within the last 5 years.

APPLY NOW!
E-Mail: SensibleSprinkling@stpete.org
or call 727-551-3177

Limited time offer. Restrictions may apply. Installation of suggested modifications not included in this offer. Partial funding provided by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Southwest Florida
Water Management District

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St. Petersburg Toilet Rebate Program

St. Petersburg water customers can receive a **rebate up to \$100** for each high flush toilet replaced with an EPA WaterSense, high efficiency toilet.

To check your eligibility:
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Available for a limited time; restrictions and specific procedures apply.

Customers must call to check eligibility and receive an application **PRIOR TO** toilet purchase.

This program is cooperatively funded by the City of St. Petersburg and the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Mt. Zion
Progressive Missionary
Baptist Church



Rev. Louis M. Murphy Sr.
Senior Pastor

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

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

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

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

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

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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.



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




Rev. Dr. Manuel L. Sykes

SERVICES
Sunday School: 8:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service: 9:30 a.m.
Mid-Week Worship: Wednesday 7:00 p.m.



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Maria Watson, Minister of Prayer
HOST


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

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)



Donn & Jean
Freshler

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



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

Sunday Bible Class (All Ages)8:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship9:45 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship6:00 p.m.
Ladies Bible Class Monday7:00 p.m.
Monday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Morning Bible Class10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.



Pastor Michael T. and
Elect Lady Sheila Culbreth

GENESIS WORSHIP CENTER CHURCH
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Gulfport, FL 33707
727.898.5571
Sunday Worship
10:30 a.m.



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Step Two: During fellowship, pose and take your pictures. Remember to open Camera, hold at arms length, pose and smile!
Step Three: Post on UTTC: Selfie Sunday Facebook page with Dr. Pulley's message title and the hashtag #selfiesunday

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Victory Through Faith Ministries
Dr. Vanessa Cox

Services

Sunday	
Sunday School	9:30 am
Morning Service	11:00 am
Tuesday	
Bible Study	7:00 pm
Friday	
Prayer	7:00 pm

3451 Central Ave
St. Petersburg, FL 33713
727-385-9151



Victory Through Prayer Line
1-641-715-3680 (passcode 296282#)
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 5am
Wednesday & Friday 12pm

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

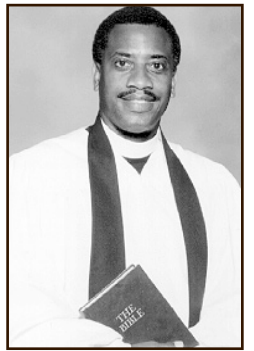
THE ROCK OF JESUS MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SERVICES/WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

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

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

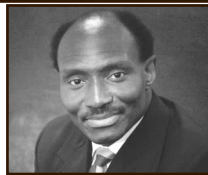
THE ROCK OF JESUS IS LOCATED AT:
3940 – 18th AVE. S., St. Petersburg, Florida
Telephone: 727-327-0015 • Fax: 727-327-0021
Email: rojmbc@knology.net
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Rev. Frank W. Peterman, Jr.
Pastor

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

3300 31st St. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 906-8300 www.fmbctheship.net
Email: fmbc3300@verizon.net



Dr. John A. Evans, Pastor

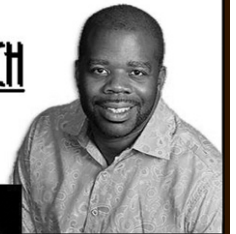
WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

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

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



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Dr. Doral R. Pulley
Spiritual Leader

WEEKLY SERVICES

Sundays: 8:45 am Christian Education
9:45 am Meditations & Devotions
10:00 am Morning Worship
(Children's Church Available)

Tuesdays: 6:30 pm Bible Study

Thursday: 6:30 pm Prayer & Healing Service

CHURCH NEWS

St. Mark MBC

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. John 14:1

St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, its pastor, Rev. Brian K. Brown, and congregation thank God for his continual mercy, grace and abundant blessings. We strive to give God our utmost praise for the awesome gift of His Son, Jesus Christ and extend to our community an invitation to share in our praise as we pursue our mission of Creating a Bible-Based Haven of Hope, Help, and Healing.

Pastor Brown continued with more lessons about Vision with a message from Habakkuk 2:1-3. The question raised from the scripture was 'When Vision Comes What Will It Create?' The message revealed to us that Vision creates a productive atmosphere, positive advocacy and patient attitude. As the scripture tells us God told Habakkuk to write the vision upon tablets that Habakkuk made, Habakkuk was told to make it plan so that as the vision is known,

they who have vision can work toward the vision. God explained to Habakkuk, as he also tells us, that his time is not our time, the vision has an appointed time, a time ordained by God, we can trust the vision and know that it will come to pass. We are to wait on God as he gives vision. We don't have to be anxious about vision God has given, it will come at God's appointed time. Our doors are always open to you, so join us on Sundays at 10:45 to receive the full depth of each message.

We continue to press forward in the month of August. Congratulations to the WIA for a successful prayer breakfast and the Deaconess for a spirit filled service at Mt. Tabor on Sunday afternoon at the South Florida Progressive Baptist Association Worship Service and we're looking forward to the Senior Women's Ministry participation in the South Florida Progressive Baptist Association's Annual Fellowship Brunch on August 18 @ 10:30 am at New Mt Zion

MB Church in Lakeland, Florida.

We invite you to join us on August 26 @ 3:30 for an 87th Pre-Anniversary Service. New Jerusalem M.B. Church, Rev. Troy Adams, Pastor will be coming over to help us praise God for all the years he's given us to serve the community. Many other events are planned as we continue to march to the culmination of the 87th Church Anniversary on October 14, 2018.

Weekly Events:
Sunday School - Sundays @9:30 a.m.

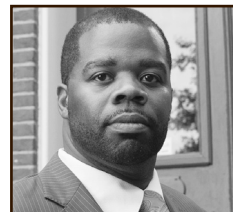
Worship Service - Sundays @10:45 a.m.

Young Adult Ministry (YAMS) - Sundays @9:30 a.m.

Mime/Praise Dance Rehearsal - Sundays from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Senior Hour of Power Bible Study - Wednesdays @9:30 a.m.

Prayer Meeting and Bible Study - Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.



Pastor's Corner

BY REV. DR. DORAL R. PULLEY,
SPIRITUAL LEADER
Unity Temple of Truth Church

Form & Power - Genesis 2:7

God spoke the light into existence. Nevertheless, when God created human beings, the scriptures portray God actually touching the dust (the dirt, the clay) and the water to make us. "God got his hands dirty." Think of the time and the detail that God put into the creation of humanity. Take a moment to reflect on all of the internal and external organs, systems and senses of the human body. Meditate on how all of our parts work in harmony so that we can maintain balance and function effectively. We are definitely "fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalms 139:14)."

God did not just give human beings a dynamic form but God made us as a living organism. We are not just forms of godliness denying the power thereof but we have the power (II Timothy 3:5). The power is in our breath. God breathed into our nostrils the breath of life. When God breathed into Adam

that breath of life, God gave him everything that he needed to fulfill his purpose and accomplish his destiny. All the creativity, power and authority that Adam needed to rule and reign on the earth was given to him through the breath of God.

The breath of God did not stop with Adam but that breath has continued from generation to generation even until now. We have that same breath in our lungs. Let us use the breath that God has given us to complete our mission. Let us focus on that breath so that we can continue to become all that God has destined us to be. Whenever we doubt ourselves, our abilities or our capabilities, all we have to do is breathe. Through breathing, we are reminded of the truth that we are created in the image and in the likeness of God.

St. Augustine's Episcopal Church

"Mm! Mm! Good! Borrowing the slogan of the Campbell Soup Company, people have been saying "Mm! Mm! Good" about St. Augustine's Tasters' Luncheon for almost 20 years. This year's culinary event is next Saturday, August 18th, at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 2920 26th Avenue South, St. Petersburg.

Samples of over 50 dishes will be available between noon and 2 pm in a dressed up parish hall. A donation of \$12 is requested. Tickets will be available at the door.

The sharing of good food among loved ones and good friends creates a special fellowship. Appropriately, St. Augustine's Tasters' Luncheon is a south side tradition that highlights the cooking skills of church members who provide only the best of their culinary creations for this buffet. They take pride in the dishes they contribute. Some offerings are tempting recipes they've been honing for years. Other dishes come down through generations of family or reflect the

heritage of the old south.

All these tantalizing creations will accentuate the 2018 theme of "Savory Sensations to Nourish the Soul."

Patricia Stewart, co-chair of this year's event, has been contributing her Creole specialties as long as she's been a church member. Other cooks are known for their pulled pork and buttery pound cake. Specialties of the islands like Caribbean jerk chicken are included. Tastes of savory greens, sweet potato casseroles, marinated asparagus and "Oh, my goodness" desserts are served.

This Saturday's Tasters' Luncheon promises mouth-watering dishes blessed with the conversation of good friends and new acquaintances. Loads of door prizes are a delightful addition to the afternoon. Donna McRae, also co-chair, assures guests they'll be pleased. And there's more, she promises. "Cooking with love provides food for the soul."

An In-depth Study of the I AM
with St. Germain and Dr. Pulley

Tuesday BIBLE STUDY
Mid-Day Class @ 1:00 PM
Evening Class @ 6:30 PM

511 Prescott Street South • St. Petersburg, FL 33712
WWW.UNITYTRUTH.ORG

Friendship MBC

Consider this your Official Boarding Pass. Where, Dr. John A. Evans, Sr., Pastor/Captain and First Lady Teresa L. Evans (have a heart for the people), the Official Family and Members welcome you aboard the SS Friendship Missionary Baptist Church (The Ship), we trust that your time with us, first as an honored visitor/guest and if the Lord says so, become a part of our Church Family. We set sail every Wednesday starting our with our Bread of Life Ministry at 11:00 am, followed by Wednesday in the Word (the Learning Arm of our church) at 12:00 noon and again at 7:00 pm. We drop our Anchor until Sundays, where we set sail again with our Early Morning Worship Service at 7:45 am, Church Sunday

School (the Teaching Arm of our faith) begins at 9:30 pm and finally our Mid Morning Worship Service at 10:45 am. All are Welcomed to use this Boarding Pass to experience the "It's just nice to be nice" church. Don't sit out church, God has Blessed us to much, we owe Him at least a Thank You.

"The Ship" won't 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 us - Website: www.fmbctheship.net - Facebook - Friend-

ship Missionary Baptist Church and WCBDA Website: www.expericencethecoast.com

Transportion is available - Call the Church at (727) 906-8300 - Monday - Friday from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

FAMILY REUNION THE SHIP

CHURCH SCHEDULED EVENTS: WE ARE ON OUR "SUMMER BREEZE" SCHEDULE

Annual Family and Friends Celebration. Colors are Red and White.

In addition the Annual Family and Friends Reunion Choir Musical Starting on Thursday, August 16, 2018 at 7:00 pm-MUSICIANS NIGHT ONLY, Friday, August 17, 2018, WORKSHOP REHEARSAL FROM 7-9 pm, Sat-

urday, August 18, 2018, WORKSHOP REHEARSAL UNTIL 10:30 am, Sunday, August 19, 2018 both services 7:45 am/10:45 am Attire: WHITE WITH RED FLOWER.

Sunday, August 19, 2018, 7:45 am Guest Speaker TBA & 10:45 am Guest Speaker is Dr. Ellis Hodge, Pastor of the Word of Life Fellowship Church. A PEW RALLY BIG TROPHY will be awarded to the Member who brings the most Family and Friends, combination from the 7:45/10:45 am Worship Services, Members wishing to accept this challenge must sign-up to do so.

Sunday, August 26, 2018 at 4:00 pm - Fellowship with St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. Brian K. Brown,

Pastor, Pastor Evans is asking that the Adult Mass Choir, Male Chorus and 3rd Sunday Ushers Serve, let us show up in big numbers to help St. Mark in their Celebration of their Mortgage Burning.

Tuesday, August 28, 2018 at 7:00 pm, Located in Classroom 1, the Drama Ministry is inviting all singers, actors, dancers and helpers to our Christmas Drama Presentation Informational Meeting.

August 29-31, 2018, REVIVAL - Dr. John A. Evans, Sr., will be in Revival at 7:30 pm nightly at New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. Troy Adams, Pastor. Workshop will commence at 6:30 pm nightly, Pastor Fleming Tarver, Guest Lecture, Pastor Evans is asking for your Prayers and Support.

Revival is Coming: September 10-12, 2018 7:00-8:00 pm nightly, Prayer of Preparation, Pastor is asking All Ministries and Tribe Birth Months to see the schedule for the aforementioned. September 17-19, 2018 at 7:00 pm nightly, Adult Mass Choir, Male Chorus and the Ushers Ministries to serve nightly.

Special Thank You... Goes to RUSH HOUR CHICKEN AND WAFFLES

(2140 34TH STREET SOUTH) DONATION TOWARDS THE "RADICALS FOR CHRIST" EVENT Let's show our love and appreciation by Supporting His Business. BROTHER AHMAD WASHINGTON DONATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BACK 2 SCHOOL BACK PACKS.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Youth Unleashed gives back

BY DEXTER MCCREE
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – The drizzling rain may have wet the grounds at the Sanderlin Center on Saturday for the Youth Unleashed back-to-school event, but it did not dampen the spirits of the children who came expecting food, fun and school supplies.

The early morning downpour presented challenges to Rona Johnson, president of the Youth Unleashed organization, Clementine Wilson, vice

president and the volunteers who were excited to help prepare children for the start of the school year. They did not want to cancel the event, but the greater concern was for the safety of the participants, especially for the younger children who were excited to get to the various vendors.

“The rain was very concerning because we didn’t know how long that it would last, and we really wanted to serve the children. It was a time of wait, see and stay hopeful,” said Johnson.

At eight o’clock, there were no participants, and Johnson stayed waiting in anticipation. About 30 minutes later, 40 people arrived, opening the floodgates. The weather had begun to cooperate, and more than 300 people participated.

“It was exciting seeing the people begin to come. Our vendors were here bearing gifts, and we wanted to serve the people,” said Vickie Spradley, office assistant.

Youth Unleashed’s back-to-school event is in alignment with their pur-

pose to provide a positive place where every youth can become employed, regardless of race, religion or financial situation.

Founded by Johnson, a New York native who moved to the St. Pete area after attending business school, she brings with her a passion for working with the youth as a Girl Scout consultant and for eight years, working with groups of 65 girls and more that included the Daisy Brownies, Jr. Cadets and Seniors.

For the Aug. 11 event, Youth Unleashed collabo-

rated with businesses and other community organizations such as the Junior League of St. Petersburg who contributed 250 backpacks; Levy Restaurants added 200 Tampa Bay Rays tote bags and Rubinstein Law distributed custom pencil pouches filled with writing supplies.

Children filled their bellies with hotdogs and chips while enjoying bounce houses and face painting. Volunteers from Sanderlin Family Support Services and Sanderlin GED program were on hand to make the event a success.

When deejay Johnny Moore turned up the music, it sprouted a party atmosphere. By this time, the crowd had grown far beyond the early morning count. Adults and youths alike exchanged greetings and shared words of overcoming obstacles, including the rain.

The crowd sang and danced with each other, which brought smiles and laughter. Not even the rain could dampen their good time.

To reach Dexter McCree, email dmccree@theweeklychallenger.com



PRIMARY ELECTION AUGUST 28, 2018

3 WAYS TO VOTE

- ☒ **Vote By Mail – All voters are eligible to vote by mail**
 - Request a mail ballot at VotePinellas.com or call 727-464-VOTE (8683)
 - Ballots can be returned by mail or dropped off at any drop-off location
 - Drop-off location days and times vary - check locations at VotePinellas.com
- ☒ **Vote Early – Vote at any Pinellas County Elections Office**
 - Early Voting is available: Saturday, August 18 – Sunday, August 26
 - Monday-Friday: 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Saturday-Sunday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
 - Bring your photo and signature ID to avoid delays

Locations –

County Courthouse, 315 Court St., Room 117, Clearwater, FL 33756

Election Service Center, 13001 Starkey Rd. (Starkey Lakes Corporate Center), Largo, FL 33773

County Building, 501 1st Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33701
- ☒ **Vote on Election Day – Voters are required to vote in the precinct where they live**
 - Polls are Open 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
 - To find Election Day precinct and polling place information, visit VotePinellas.com or call 727-464-VOTE (8683)
 - Bring your photo and signature ID to avoid delays

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