

Volume 5, Issue 6 ~ June 2025

REGI HARRIS: MAN ON A MISSION



In this issue:

Artist with a Purpose: A Mobile Art Business

The Knowledge Age: Empowering Personal Growth Through Al

Level Up Your Child's Summer

Regi Harris:

Shooting Jump Shots For Jesus!

United Way Recruiting for Strong Families Class 19

Mark of Excellence: Felix Snow **Selected for Prestigious Award**





County Commission Meetings June 3 and June 17 9 a.m.

McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium 601 S.E. 25th Ave. Ocala, FL 34471

Ocala City Council Meetings June 3 and June 17 4 p.m.

110 S.E. Watula Ave., Ocala, FL 34471

Marion County School Board June 10 and June 24 5:30 p.m. School Board Meeting Room 1614 E. Fort King Street Ocala, FL 34471

Our mission is to record the rich history of the people, places and events in the community and share information that impacts the lives of residents in Marion County.



Sharing the good news happening in our community.

Founders

Monica Bryant & Cynthia Wilson-Graham

Editor

Monica Bryant

Photography/Editor

Cynthia Wilson-Graham

Contributors

Scott Hackmyer Elgin Carelock Monica M. Jacobs

Let's Talk

We want to hear from you:

Email your submissions, events, comments or questions to **Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com**.

Please include contact information (name and phone number) on the submission. Deadline is the first Monday of each month for the following month's publication.

Policy Statement

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Contact Us:

Town Talk Magazine P.O. Box 6212 Ocala, FL 34478 (352) 897-1817

Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com or Towntalkmagazine.org.

EDITOR'S DESK



Another year in the books! Summer is here!

Although Memorial Day is often recognized as the unofficial start of Summer, some of our kids will only get a brief break since summer school starts the first week of June for those who need credit recovery to get back on track.

Elementary students can participate in Elementary Camp Curiosity, a virtual summer opportunity that starts June 2. Go to **www.marionschools.net** for more information.

June is the start of hurricane season. Are you prepared? Check out these hurricane safety tips to prepare yourself and your loved ones for dangerous weather:

- 1. Create an emergency plan and review it with everyone in your home. Make sure everyone knows the safest location in the home.
- 2. Be sure to have the proper necessities such as water, blankets, first aid kits, flashlights, batteries, radios and any pet care items if applicable.
- 3. Make sure you have an out of state friend or family member as contact so they can check on your whereabouts.
- 4. Follow all instructions from authorities regarding evacuation or other safety measures. Check radio, television or other media outlets for emergency information.
- 5. Be sure you know your evacuation route before the hurricane hits and keep a full tank of gas.
- 6. Make sure important documents such as ID cards and other vital information are placed in a secure waterproof container.

If you have not signed up for AlertMarion go to **www.alertmarion.com**. This system quickly provides residents with critical information in situations such as severe weather, critical law enforcement activity, missing persons and evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods.

Residents receive time-sensitive messages wherever they specify, such as their home, mobile or business phones, email address, text messages and more. It's better to be safe than sorry.

During June, we also celebrate Black Music Month. This month-long celebration is a time of reflection, celebration and appreciation for the rich history and ongoing legacy of Black music. A few ways you can celebrate include: Looking for local events or festivals that celebrate Black music, Listening to Black music from different genres, Supporting and streaming Black artists and record labels, Learning about the history of Black music through documentaries, Reading books on Black

Let's Talk!

**Monica Bryant*

Monica T. Bryant, Editor

music or visit the Black History Museum at Howard Academy, 306 N.W.7th Ave. Call (352) 671-4175 to schedule an appointment for a tour.

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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT ARTIST WITH A PURPOSE: A MOBILE ART BUSINESS



Semeion Richardson's journey with art began as a child growing up in an unsafe environment where creativity became her refuge and a means of self-expression. That experience shaped her commitment to ensuring that art is not just seen but felt, experienced and used as a force for positive change in the community.

"Growing up in a neighborhood with little access to the arts and parents who couldn't afford to enroll me in art programs, I know what it feels like to be unseen," said Richardson, a full-time therapeutic artist who uses her art practice to support individuals living with depression, anxiety, PTSD and other mental health challenges.

With eight years of experience working in suicide crisis counseling, Richardson has seen firsthand how powerful creative expression can be in the healing process. She holds an A.A. in Commercial Art, a B.A. in Human Services and a Master's in Organizational Leadership, all of which shaped the way she serves others through leadership and art.

But it was Richardson's art teacher Mrs. Smith, who changed her life. Smith came to her neighborhood, saw her potential and took her to her studio. She entered Richardson's work into contests across the region, but most importantly, she said, Smith believed in her and that belief planted a seed.

With \$10 in her pocket, she founded Artist with a Purpose in 2012 driven by a personal mission to bring healing, empowerment and unity to the community through expressive art.

Semeion Richardson

"Artist with a Purpose, a mobile art business, is the fruit of that seed. The seed grew very fast because the need was greater than me," said Richardson, CEO and founder of the nonprofit organization. "I created this organization so that the next generation, especially those from under-resourced communities, can have a safe place to express themselves, use their imagination and experience the healing power of art."

Richardson will host her first pop-up art event in Ocala on Saturday, June 14, at The Grand Reserve, 3001 S.W. 24th Ave., from noon to 1 p.m. for kids ages six to 12 who live in that apartment complex. Participants will create an art project to take home and learn different styles of art. The free event includes supplies and is limited to 15 kids registered by The Grand Reserve. In the future, she would like to connect with other communities to offer more events in Marion County.

"This upcoming pop-up is more than just an art event; it's an opportunity to bring people together, inspire creativity and highlight the power of art as a tool for social impact," she said. "Whether through live painting, interactive exhibits or partnerships with local artists and organizations, our goal is to reach and uplift the community in a meaningful way."

Richardson said starting the organization in Leesburg where she lives was intentional because she wanted to connect directly with the people in her neighborhood, individuals who often feel overlooked or underserved. She operates an art studio, the first Black-owned art gallery in Lake, Sumter and Marion counties with a deep-rooted mission to make art accessible to everyone especially those who have faced challenges such as trauma, mental health struggles or social barriers. The art studio, open Tuesday - Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. is located at 100 S. 4th St., Leesburg, FL 34748.

"My journey with the art studio has only been three years. I decided to do this after my mother passed away from cancer," she said. "I wanted to live life in full purpose."

By creating mobile art programs, community workshops and public art events like 4th Street Live/Art Walk, Richardson has been able to meet people where they are, break down access barriers and promote mental well-being through creative expression. Through community events and gallery shows at her studio, she brings people together, celebrates diversity and makes the art accessible to all.

Artist with a Purpose currently has three staff members but could use art supplies and volunteers to help with pop-up events when they expand to other locations. Besides donations, the organization is primarily supported by Richardson. In a year, they reached more than 3,000 kids in the community. Her goal is to have a mobile Art Studio and create a place where she builds on the next generation to connect art, build more leaders and create a safe space in every community.

Richardson said the next generation needs them and it takes everyone coming together for change to happen. She said Martin Luther King was able to change with love something the world needs right now. He was only one man, but his purpose was greater.

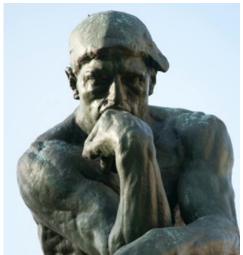
"Artist with a Purpose connects more to the community because it's rooted in lived experience and a deep understanding of local needs. It's not just about making art, it's about creating belonging, fostering resilience and giving people a voice through art," Richardson said. "Art gave me a voice, and now through Artist with a Purpose, I help others find theirs."

Artist with a purpose

Connect with the organization on Instagram, Facebook or their website at **Artistwap.com** to make a donation. For more information, contact Richardson via email at **Artistwithapurpose1@gmail.com** or call **(352) 826-1144.**

THE KNOWLEDGE AGE: EMPOWERING PERSONAL GROWTH THROUGH AI AND THE RISE OF KNOWLEDGE CONSULTANTS

By Elgin Carelock, Chairman of the Greater Ocala Community Development Corporation



(Photo courtesy of Charl Durand on pexels.com)

We are living in a transformative era where technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), is redefining how we acquire and share knowledge. This "Knowledge Age" promises unprecedented opportunities for personal growth and development, particularly for those who have been underserved or marginalized. With the barriers to knowledge crumbling, AI is leveling the playing field, providing access to tools, resources, and expertise that were once reserved for a privileged few.

However, this shift is not without controversy. Critics argue that AI threatens to replace teachers and disrupt traditional education systems. But such fears miss the broader picture. AI is not here to replace educators; rather, it offers them a powerful tool to evolve into "knowledge consultants." By embracing AI, educators can transcend the limitations of conventional teaching and unlock the full potential of their students.

The Role of Teachers in the Knowledge Age

Far from becoming obsolete, teachers who leverage AI will find themselves at the forefront of a new educational paradigm. Instead of being constrained by standardized curriculums and one-size-fits-all approaches, they can use AI to:

- Test Learning Techniques: All can analyze the effectiveness of various teaching methods, offering insights into what works best for different students.
- **Deliver Tailored Content:** From personalized video lessons to interactive simulations, Al allows educators to create customized learning experiences that meet individual needs.
- Foster Deeper Understanding: Teachers can focus on guiding students through complex concepts and critical thinking exercises, using AI to provide the foundational knowledge and data analysis.

This shift will not only enhance the quality of education but also empower teachers to act as mentors and strategists, helping students navigate their unique learning journeys.

The Rise of Micro-Schools and Project-Based Learning

As traditional public school systems struggle to adapt, micro-schools — small, community-based learning environments — are poised to take the lead. These schools, often led by knowledge consultants and enlightened parents, prioritize project-based learning and real-world applications over rote memorization. In this model, students engage with practical challenges that foster creativity, collaboration and critical thinking.

Al plays a crucial role here, enabling micro-schools to provide resources and expertise that were once out of reach. From virtual field trips to Al-driven tutors, these tools allow students to explore subjects in depth and at their own pace. The result is a more dynamic and engaging educational experience that prepares students for the challenges of the modern world.

A New Era of Economic and Social Change

As knowledge becomes more accessible, we can expect profound changes in our economic and social systems. Individuals who harness the potential of Al-driven learning will find new opportunities to achieve their goals and improve their quality of life. Yet, as Jesus said, "The poor you will always have with you" (Matthew 26:11). This is a sobering reminder that not everyone will or can take advantage of these advancements.

In the Knowledge Age, it is our responsibility to ensure that no one is left behind. We must create systems that support those who struggle to adapt, providing them with the tools and encouragement they need to thrive. This commitment to equity and compassion will be critical as we navigate the challenges and opportunities of this new era.

Embracing the Knowledge Age

The Knowledge Age represents a monumental shift in how we think about education, personal growth, and community. By embracing Al and reimagining the role of teachers, we can create a world where knowledge is not a privilege but a shared resource. The rise of micro-schools and project-based learning signals a bright future for education, one that values creativity, critical thinking, and individual potential.

As we move forward, let us remember that technology is a tool, not a replacement. It is the wisdom and guidance of educators, parents, and communities that will ensure the Knowledge Age delivers on its promise of a more equitable and enlightened society. Together, we can use these tools to build a brighter future, one where personal growth and the pursuit of knowledge are within reach for all.

Protecting, Promoting, and Improving Community Health

The Florida Department of Health in Marion County

provides a wide range of services for county residents, including:

Medical, Dental, Nursing

- Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program
- · Dental Health
- · Disease Reporting
- · Family Planning
- Hepatitis Services
- HIV/AIDS Services and PrEP
- Immunizations
- Sexually Transmitted Infections Testing and Treatment
- · Tuberculosis Services

Community Health

- Positive Youth Development Program (BRAZEN)
- Chronic Disease Management and Prevention
- · Health Education
- Healthy Start
- Mobile Health Unit
- · Overdose Data to Action
- · Refugee Health
- School Health

Community Services

- Birth and Death Certificates
- Disaster Preparedness
- Volunteer with the Medical Reserve Corps

Environmental Public Health

· Environmental Public Health

WIC

WIC Program (Women, Infants, and Children)

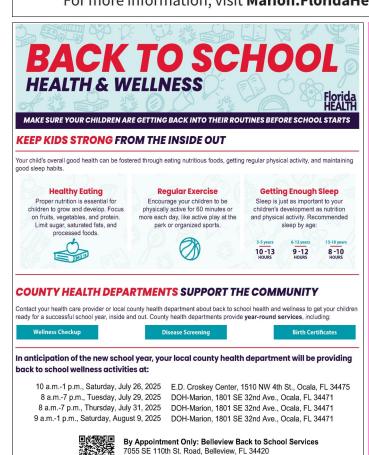


Main Office: 1801 SE 32nd Ave., Ocala, FL 34471 • 352-629-0137

Dental Clinic: 1501 W Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL 34475 • 352-622-2664

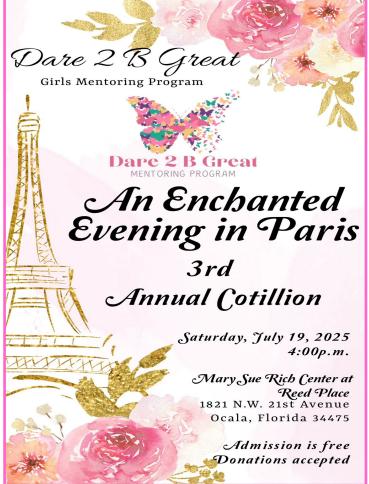
WIC: Ocala, Belleview, and Reddick • 352-622-1161

For more information, visit Marion.FloridaHealth.gov or email Info.Marion@FLHealth.gov.



Mondays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 352-644-2637

For more information, please visit Marion.FloridaHealth.gov



UNITED WAY RECRUITING FOR STRONG FAMILIES CLASS 19

THROUGH STRONG FAMILIES



The Strong Families Initiative Provides:



- Goal Setting
 Work Ethic & Career Opportunities
- Barriers to Poverty Resume Building & Interview Skills
- Budgeting
- Understanding & Managing Credit
- Conflict Resolution
 Parent's Role in Children's Education
- Educational Opportunities
- Nutrition/Cleaning/Organizing

Dual Services for Children Including

- Money management
- Life skills

A Success Coach meets with the families on a hiweekly basis for a year. They assist families weekly basis for and long-term goals. The Sucess Coach also tracks the families' progress such as goals of the family, public assistance and referrals to social services.



STRONG FAMILIES WORKS:



Graduating Families moved from temporary to permanent housing*

household debt*









FUNDING













The United Way of Marion County is recruiting families for its next Strong Families class which starts on July 31. Applications must be received by June 20, 2025.

Families participate in the Strong Families program for one year, with 15 weekly skill-building classes and bi-weekly meeting with Success Coaches throughout the year-long program. Families establish financial goals in the Success Coaching sessions and work with the Success Coach, who offers guidance, education and encouragement. Success Coaches also serve as accountability partners for families as they take steps toward changing behaviors that influence their financial decisions and subsequent outcomes.

Classes meet every Thursday night from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

- -- (5:50 p.m. to 6:20 p.m.) Meals provided for the family to eat together
- -- (6:30 p.m. to 6:40 p.m.) Register/sign in your child(ren) at the childcare room. Must have proper ID and sign each child in and out with full name.
- -- (6:45 p.m. to 8 p.m.) Local business and agency professionals present on various topics to assist all families in reaching their financial goals.
- -- (8 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.) Sign gift card form to confirm your \$20 Walmart gift card receipt. *Only families that attend the entire class will receive a gift card. (Gift cards are distributed immediately after each weekly lesson. Families with perfect attendance will receive a total of \$300 in gift cards for perfect attendance.

For questions or more information, call Pebbles Vance, Strong Families Director/Success Coach, United Way of Marion County at (352) 877-8830, or email Pebbles at pvance@uwmc.org.



2ND ANNUAL CHARITY

Taste of the Town Fundraiser

Mark your calendars for

Friday, September 12, 2025, from 5-8p at the Ocala Downtown Market

for an evening or fun, music, libations, and savory samplings of many of our community's different restaurants, including beer and wine vendors.

You won't want to miss this event that will offer something for every palate, Come Eat For a Cause!

HOSTED BY:

352.875.2226 | www.ebwchc.org

Save-the-Date for the 22nd Annual



DRIVE -THRU ONLY!

Saturday, **July 26, 2025** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friends Recucling 2350 N.W. 27TH Ave.

Ocala, Florida

~ FREE BACKPACKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES ~

STUDENT(S) MUST BE PRESENT ~ NO EXCEPTIONS!

THEN, STOP BY OUR BOUTIQUE

FREE CLOTHING AND HYGIENE ITEMS, (WHILE SUPPLIES LAST) FOR TEENS!

SATURDAY, JULY 26, 2025 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **ED CROSKEY CENTER**

1510 N.W. 4TH ST., OCALA **Backpacks and School Supplies** NOT available at this location!



Immunizations (Must Bring Current Shot Record), School Physicals, Vision and Hearing Screenings, dental cleanings, fluoride, sealants and exams for children birth to 18 years old.

Vendors include: Marion County Health Department, Central Florida Community Action Agency, Community Home Project, Estella Byrd Whitman Community Health Center, Ocala Fire Rescue and more.

Sponsored by

Marion County Children's Alliance, Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida, Inc. and the City of Ocala For information, vendor and sponsorship opportunities or to donate school supplies, call (352) 438-5990

LEVEL UP YOUR CHILD'S SUMMER: WHAT TEACHERS SAY YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO KNOW BEFORE THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

By Monica M. Jacobs, Teacher and Author of "My New Church," a children's book

I've been a teacher for nearly a decade, and one thing's crystal clear: if students don't use it, they lose it! The Florida Department of Education has done a wonderful job at layering benchmarks and skills so that students cannot forget what they have learned throughout the year. As parents, you can do the same thing over the summer to ensure that your child starts the new school year strong.

As a kindergarten teacher, I wish that all my kindergarteners started the year knowing the alphabet, how to write the letters of the alphabet and how to recognize and produce the sound for each letter. They should count and write their numbers to 20. When given a number, they should count that many objects (e.g. pieces of cereal) and only that many. The help you give them at home will ensure their success.

First-grade teachers hope their students know their letter names and sounds, their sight words, can read up to three paragraphs and write simple sentences. Without these skills it takes too much time to bring them up to speed with the rest of the class and students begin to become demotivated. Students should also know how to count forward to 100 and backwards from 20, identify numbers through 100, count fluently and add and subtract through 20.

Second-grade teachers anticipate that students will come into their classroom as fluent readers. They are expected to enter the year reading 50 words per minute. If they struggle and have difficulty with sounding out words and with vocabulary, their brains get tired. However, they are expected to answer comprehension questions which becomes hard. Students should also know how to add and subtract two-digit numbers quickly.

Third-grade teachers expect students to arrive already knowing how to read a summary independently and answer comprehension questions on story elements. Students need to read alone. They also need to know their multiplication facts.

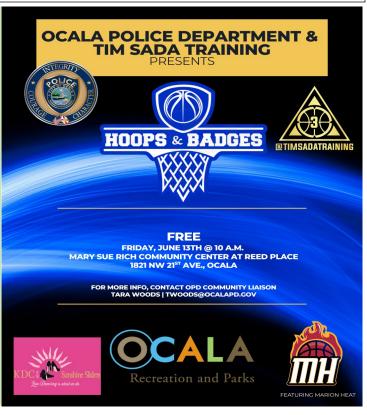
Fourth-grade teachers want students to have sound vocabulary skills and reading fluency. Students should also know their multiplication facts, be able to add and subtract 4, 5, and 6-digit numbers across zeros, know fractions equivalent to ½ and 1 whole and round to the nearest thousand.

Fifth-grade teachers anticipate students coming to their classrooms having mastered the skill of reading a text and writing a summary paragraph using correct grammar and usage. Two fifth grade mathematics teachers informed me that the most important thing they hope their students can do is multiplication. They are crippled the whole year without this skill.

Here are four things you can do now based on your child's grade:

- -- Check out fiction and non-fiction books from the public library
- -- Ask your child a series of questions based on the text they have chosen.
- -- Have your child write a summary (retell) of what was read. Kindergarteners can draw summaries.
- -- Purchase multiplication, addition/subtraction, or number recognition flash cards.





REGI HARRIS: SHOOTING JUMP SHOTS FOR JESUS!

All Regi Harris ever wanted to do is play basketball.

Growing up in the country, he said his grandparents believed in hard work and treating people right and your word was your bond.

Harris wasn't raised by his father, but they had a good relationship. He said most of his nurturing came from his grandfather who believed in God and doing things God's way. He was expected to attend church, he didn't have a choice, and although they didn't have a lot, he said he never knew it.

"He was a strong disciplinarian which I hated then but appreciate now," he said about his grandfather.



As a kid, Harris was very athletic and could play any sport. His first love was football and he was good at it, but he eventually became passionate about playing basketball.



Regi Harris

"Every opportunity I got I was shooting, day after day," he said. "My parents would make me come inside, but all that shooting started paying off."

Harris, a standout at North Marion High School and Sam Houston State University, could shoot. Once, he made 96 free throws in a row. He really believed that he was good enough to play professionally, however, God had other plans. While he was working out trying to get into a pro camp, he broke his knee cap.

"It was then I heard God say, I gave you all of that talent and ability and I can take it away whenever I want to," Harris said. "You see basketball was my God. It's what I worshipped, spent most of my time with and was most passionate about. When God says thou shalt have no other gods before me, he means it!"

With his basketball career over, Harris felt a loneliness and emptiness he didn't know how to deal with. He started drowning his disappointments with drugs and more drugs trying to fill a hole that kept getting deeper.

"At that time, God was just someone I grew up knowing about, not my personal friend, protector or provider who I could go to and trust with anything like I can now," he said.

Harris' life continued to spiral out of control. Eventually his lifestyle landed him in and out of prison several times. While incarcerated at Lake Butler Correctional Institute, he heard Jimmy Larche, a youth pastor at Lakeview Baptist Church in Delray Beach, preach.

"His message was simple, practical and to the point. I wanted that. I pursued it," Harris said.

As a teenager, Larche had been down a similar road. He served time at Marion Regional Youth Detention Center in

Ocala. While there, he said, a minister came to the center and connected with him and shared the gospel with him.

"It changed my life. I went from being this suicidal, wayward, rebellious teenager to having instant purpose and hope," Larche said. "I really had a radical transformation from a really traumatic childhood that I experienced."

Larche, said the same minister who led him to the Lord started mentoring him and took him back into the detention centers to share his testimony.

He knew he wanted to work with youth, so his mentor helped him lay the framework for an organization that would serve youth. In 1995, he filed the paperwork to incorporate Breakaway Outreach. A few months later, he met Harris.



Breakaway Outreach Camp Elevate 2025

Continued from page 8



"The only way I could describe it is a kindred spirit. It was like we had the same heart," Larche said. "We both recognized that young people needed help, especially young people who found themselves in dire situations like being locked up or those wondering if they could ever break away from what got them there. He shared the same passion that I had."

When Harris was released, he moved to West Palm Beach, FL., where Larche lived to do his work release and to work alongside him.

Harris wanted to use basketball to connect with young people so they started going into the detention facilities playing basketball with the guys.

Harris said God was orchestrating his plan. They found out that after the guys played basketball, they were more than willing to listen so that's when they presented the gospel, and a lot of young men gave their lives to Christ.

That was the beginning of Breakaway Outreach, Harris said. What started as two guys going into juvenile detention centers to play basketball is now in 15 countries spreading the gospel through sports outreach.

"Regi was really the pilot of helping us to launch the sports ministry," said Larche, the global director for Breakaway Outreach. "It gave Breakaway Outreach an added element that we didn't have in the beginning which was sports outreach."

Harris recently went to Cleveland, Tenn., to participate in the organizations 19th annual residential youth summer camp called Camp Elevate, which primarily focuses on children who have been affected by some type of family incarceration. In July, he will travel to Heubach, Germany to expand the baseball sports camp they've held there since 2017. Harris will help launch a basketball camp there this year.

Harris said he would not be the man he is today without the influence of his mentor, Bob Felder, who he got his passion for mentoring, coaching and trying to make a difference in young peoples lives.

"If I can leave half the mark on them that he left on me, then I know my work will not be in vain," he said.

Harris said surrendering his life to Christ has made all the difference in the world. He said it's an awesome feeling to know that God would choose to come live in him and he can share him with others, especially the youth.

"I want to make him as appealing to them as possible," he said. "I want them to fall in love with him and experience his love as I have."

Harris said he's part of an awesome men's accountability group called "Purposeful Men," who helps keep him grounded and he knows has his back.

"In spite of all of the hardships and disappointments I went through, I always believed that one day I would get through it," he said. "I don't know what my life would be like now if I had made it to the NBA, but I wouldn't trade the life I have now with Jesus for the NBA."

Harris said he still loves basketball and every now and then he'll take a few jump shots even though he can't shoot like he used to, but that doesn't matter.

"The goal that I'm shooting at now is different," he said. "Now I'm shooting jump shots for Jesus and if that's what God is using to reach souls then let it be so."



NEW LIBRARY PLANNED FOR SILVER SPRINGS SHORES COMMUNITY



The Marion County Board of County Commissioners has officially selected a name for the area's newest public library branch: Silver Springs Shores Public Library.

Set to open this fall, the new branch will be located in the county-owned building currently operating as the community's youth center, west of the Silver Springs Shores Community Center, 590 Silver Road, Ocala.

Earlier this year, Marion County invited residents to help shape the identity of the new library by submitting name suggestions throughout January. After reviewing community input, the top two names were presented to the county commission. On May 20, the county commission voted unanimously in favor of "Silver Springs Shores Public Library"—a name that reflects the branch's connection to and pride in the community it will serve.

Find out more about library programs and services by visiting the Marion County Public Library System website at **Library.MarionFL.org** and stay connected with us on Instagram @MCFLPublicLibrary and on Facebook @MCPLibrary.

MARION COUNTY READS

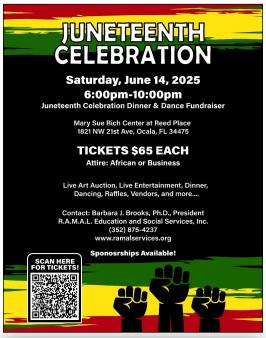
Visit any library location, check out library materials and get a chance to win great prizes! Prize drawings held on Friday, July 25 at the Headquarters-Ocala Public Library. Winners will be notified. One entry slip allowed per library card per visit.

All ages, all library locations June 2-July 18

FINDERS KEEPERS

There's treasure hidden at each library location. Can you find it? View the Marion County Public Library System's geocache holdings at **www.geocaching.com** or ask a librarian about getting started. The hunt is on!

Ongoing at all library locations.











at Marion County Public Library System

Make memories all summer long. Bring your family to these library locations, do something fun and let your kids, 18 years of age or younger, enjoy free, delicious BreakSpot meals. Check out this menu of offerings!

BreakSpot meals are USDA sponsored in partnership with the Shores Assembly of God. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. program | noon meal

Belleview Public Library 13145 SE Highway 484, Belleview 352-438-2500

Tuesdays, noon program | noon meal

Reddick Public Library 15150 NW Gainesville Road, Reddick 352-438-2566

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. program | 11:30 a.m. meal Fort McCoy Public Library

14660 NE Highway 315, Fort McCoy 352-438-2560

Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. drop-in program | noon meal Headquarters-Ocala Public Library

2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala 352-671-8551 Thursdays, 11 a.m. program | 12:30 p.m. meal

Freedom Public Library

5870 SW 95th St., Ocala 352-438-2580 Fridays, 10:30 a.m. program | noon meal

Dunnellon Public Library 20351 Robinson Road, Dunnellon 352-438-2520

Fridays, 11 a.m. program | 12:30 p.m. meal Forest Public Library 905 S. Highway 314A, Ocklawaha 352-438-2540

June 2-Aug. 8







WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY EVENT

SAVE THE DATE
JUNE 19TH, 2025 AT 1:00PM

Please join us at One Health located at 1714 SW 17th
St Ocala, FL.

The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse, neglect and exploitation of older adults. This event will feature speakers from the State Attorney's office, law enforcement, Seniors vs.

Crime and SHINE/SMP.

HOSTED BY: MARION SENIOR SERVICES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ELDER OPTIONS





SENIORS DESERVE OUR RESPECT AND ATTENTION.





Register

回係為巡回



iars into vibrant works of art!

Using paints and simple

techniques, participants will

create their own nature-inspired

or abstract designs.

MONEY SMART TIPS

By Scott Hackmyer

TIPS TO STAY HEALTHY INCLUDE EATING PROPERLY!

A major factor in keeping your finances healthy is keeping yourself healthy. Getting sick results in missing work, doctor and medical bills and feeling miserable. I know a lot of people who were doing fine with their bills until they missed a week or two of work and quickly fell behind with everything. There are lots of things you can do to reduce your chances of getting sick, starting with what our mothers and grandmothers taught us, wash your hands with soap or water or use hand sanitizer frequently. One of the most important things you can do is quit smoking and vaping if that is a habit you have. There is absolutely no doubt that tobacco products can cause lung cancer, high blood pressure, emphysema, heart disease and many other ailments. There are resources to help you quit. Call AHEC at (386) 462-1551 for information or check out tobaccofreeflorida.com.

Eating properly is another major tool in staying healthy. Reduce your fried foods, instead try baked or grilled. Eating more fresh fruits and vegetables is a big plus, visit the local farmers' markets for a great selection. Stay away from highly caffeinated drinks, reduce the amount of coffee you drink and reduce eating foods with large contents of sugar and salt. Why are we drinking sodas that actually will dissolve the rust off of our car battery terminals?

An annual physical with your doctor is highly recommended as is mammography for women readers. If cost prevents you from getting medical care when you are sick or in getting your routine checkups, Ocala has many places where you can get quality medical care at a very reasonable or no cost. Call Interfaith Emergency Services' Center for Life, the Heart of Florida Health Center or the Estella Byrd Whitman Community Health Center to ask about their availability and costs. Keeping your teeth and gums healthy is another often overlooked fact in staying healthy. Infections in your gums or rotted teeth can damage your heart and other organs in your body. Again, call Interfaith or the Hampton Center at the College of Central Florida to see what services are available.

With hot summer weather here, two things are back, mosquitoes and high electric bills. I know so many people who just get by month to month and when those high summer bills come in it puts them in a real hole. There are some things everyone should do to keep those bills lower. Fans are very inexpensive to run and help you feel much more comfortable indoors. A real key to lowering your electric bill is to make sure your air conditioner filter is clean. Experts have told me that inexpensive filters are fine as long as you change them frequently. I buy a three pack of filters at Home Depot, HDX brand with a FPR rating of 5 and change it every 6 to 8 weeks. At less than \$5 a filter I know I am saving money by letting my air conditioner work more efficiently. Don't forget to clean the dust off your refrigerator coils, try cold water when using your washing machine and invest in a little caulk to seal around windows and doors if you can see the outside from the inside around where they should be sealed.

If you have children or grandchildren at home once school is out remember the school system has a summer feeding program. Starting June 4, youth ages 1 to 18 can get free breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday at the Ed Croskey Center or Monday through Thursday at Howard Middle, Ft. King Middle, Vanguard High or Fordham Early Learning Academy. They serve nutritious food at no cost to you so it's a great way to help feed your children this summer. I also suggest not taking them to the grocery store with you if you have a trustworthy person you can leave them with. The stores are pros at putting items like gum, candy and other snacks just at children's eye level, often right by the checkouts and you know your kids will always want something. It is too easy to say "just one thing" to keep them quiet but those "one things" add up to pretty big money after a number of shopping trips.

Enjoy the summer sunshine.

Business Spotlight



Business Name: Dailey Travels

(formerly Dailey Training International)

No. of Employees: 2 - 5 core team members

Business Owner: Eric Dailey Sr.

Business Address: Operates Worldwide and Globally

Business Phone: (803) 240-1054

What Year Did You Start Your Business? 1997

Hours of Operation: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily

Products and/or Services: Sports and wellness cruises, basketball and pickleball retreats, corporate wellness programs, international sports academies and church and gospel retreats, We operate globally in 12 countries with luxury accommodations including Royal Caribbean cruises and Florida Elks Youth Camp.

E-mail Address: daileytraining@gmail.com

Website Address: www.daileytraining.org

Are You on Social Media? Yes. If yes, on what platforms?

LinkedIn (primary platform)

Facebook: Instagram:

What or Who Inspired You to Start Your Business? My professional basketball career and passion for developing athletes at all levels, from youth to Olympic and WNBA players, inspired me to create opportunities for sports excellence combined with luxury travel experiences.

What Makes Your Business Unique or What's Your Specialty? We offer Olympic-level coaching combined with luxury sports adventures. Our unique selling points include 25+years of global excellence, partnerships with Royal Caribbean and Club Med and exclusive programs for all ages, genders, backgrounds and skill levels. We're the only company offering comprehensive sports retreats with celebrity coaches like NBA Hall of Famer Rick Barry.

What Advice Would You Give Someone Starting A

Business? Focus on your passion and leverage your unique expertise. Build strong partnerships and never compromise on quality. Persistence and authentic relationships are key to long-term success.

Additional Comments: Dailey Travels creates unforgettable sports and wellness experiences worldwide. From our flagship Florida Elks Youth Camp (45 minutes from Disney World) to luxury Royal Caribbean cruises, we combine professional athletic training with premium accommodations and cultural experiences.

The **Small Business Profile** is **FREE** and open to small businesses located in Marion County with less than 25 employees or solo entrepreneurs.

To have your business featured in an upcoming edition, please request a form by emailing **Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com**. Completed forms can be returned via email or mailed to P.O. Box 6212, Ocala, FL 34478.

MARK OF EXCELLENCE: FELIX SNOW SELECTED FOR PRESTIGOUS AWARD

Felix Snow wanted to be an attorney when he grew up, but life had other plans for him.

Snow was always fascinated by the way James and Albert Cunningham carried themselves - how they looked, dressed, spoke and served their community.

"Though I originally wanted to be an attorney, I found a deeper calling in funeral service through the mentorship of my uncle, Albert L. Cunningham, Sr.," he said. "Watching him serve families with dignity and excellence sparked a passion in me that never faded."

Snow's admiration led him to start working at Cunningham Funeral Home, and he had the honor of working at Community Funeral Services in Miami, Caballero Rivero Woodlawn Funeral Home and Sunrise Funeral Home in Sanford. He did trade embalming services for multiple firms in Miami, which broadened his skill set and industry perspective.

"These opportunities helped shape my journey into the field of funeral service," he said.

Now he's the proud owner of his own funeral home. In 2001, their first location, Johnson-Snow,

opened in Eustis, FL. Four years later, Snow's Funeral and Cremation Ministry, a family business, opened in its current location at 5791 S.E. 23rd Ln., Ocala, FL 34480.

So when Snow received a call on a Tuesday night from the chairman of the Florida Mortician Board telling him his name was going to be submitted for the 2025 Mortician of the year of the Florida Morticians Association, Inc., to represent District 3, he initially thought it was a joke. When asked if he would accept the nomination, he said yes without hesitation.

Snow, a licensed funeral director and embalmer for more than 30 years, has been part of the association for nearly five years. He is a member of the Florida Morticians Association, National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association, Inc., the mortuary fraternity Epsilon Nu Delta and he actively serves his community.

He won! Snow will be honored at a banquet on Wednesday, June 18, at 7 p.m. at Rosen Plaza Hotel, 9700 International Drive, Orlando, FL. The prestigious award celebrates his outstanding dedication and impact within our community.

"They recognized my commitment to both the national and state funeral associations and my unwavering service to the families in our community," he said. "As my motto says, I strive to provide a memory that will never fade."

Although there was no formal application process, three other applicants, one from each district, were also considered for the award.

"I am proud to be the first in our community to receive the recognition," he said.

In addition to his wife, mother, children, siblings, extended family and friends, colleagues from the industry and families he's served, the Rev. Eric Cummings and Orlando Mayor Jerry Demings and his wife, Val Demings, former Congresswoman, are also expected to attend the banquet. Snow's longtime friend, Pastor Derrick Smith, will be the keynote speaker. Comedian Rayzor is the Master of Ceremony and Jamarien Moore, gospel singer and fellow funeral director, will perform.

"Being selected is part of my legacy. I think my style, along with my genuine compassion for both the funeral profession and the families I serve, set me apart," he said. "It's an incredible honor especially when I reflect on the funeral directors who were selected before me."

To attend the banquet, tickets had to be purchased by June 1, but the community can still support Snow by continuing to trust them during their times of need and by sharing their services with others.

Snow said Albert Cunningham shaped his foundation in funeral service. He was a master embalmer and refined everything he learned in mortuary school and groomed him into the professional he is today.

"I can't speak for others, but I can speak for Snow's. We lead with compassion, empathy, fairness and above all honesty," he said. "Our goal is to ensure every family feels supported and understood."

Snow's advice to anyone thinking about going into the funeral home business is don't enter the industry lightly.

"It demands passion, a servant's heart and true commitment to caring for others," he said. "If you're not in it for the right reasons, it's not the path for you."

Business hours are Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. but they are available 24/7 for emergencies, to answer questions or provide assistance. For more information, visit www.snowsfuneral.com or follow Snow's Funeral and Cremation Ministry on Facebook. Families can reach the funeral home directly by calling (352) 438-0007.

WAITLIST OPENING



HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (SECTION 8)

INCOME LIMITS

- 1 Person \$27,000 2 Persons - \$30,850 3 Persons - \$34,700 4 Persons - \$38,550
- 5 Persons \$41,650 6 Persons - \$44,750
- 7 Persons \$47,850 8 Persons - \$50,900

Tuesday, June 24 @ 9:00 AM through Tuesday, July 8 @ 9:00 AM

(or until 2,000 applications have been received)

APPLY ONLINE ONLY

https://ocalahousing.housingmanager.com

- To apply online, applicants will need the following for all households members; income, social security numbers, and dates of birth
- Any individural who is income qualified is eligible to be placed on the waiting list. Other eligibility criteria will be required when name is selected from waiting list.
- OHA has bilingual staff available for translation assistance.
- If you need special accommodations, please call Ms. Jacalyn Brown at . 352-620-3350.



Ocala TTY: 352-368-2969 Ocala Video Phone: 352-414-1833 TDD: 1-800-545-1833 x507

Computer **Availability Sites:**

Interfaith Emergency Services 421 NW 1st St.

> Career Source 2703 NE 14th St.

Early Learning Coalition 2300 SW 17th Rd.

Mary Sue Rich - Sankofa Library 1821 NW 21st Ave.

> Shepherd's Lighthouse 5930 SE Robinson Rd.

> > **Wear Gloves** 98 NE 9th St.

More sites may be available on our website

For questions:

Email: contactus@ocalahousing.org Phone: Jenna Brown - 352-732-1233 or visit our website: ocalahousing.org



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112 North Magnolia Avenue | Ocala, FL 34475 RSVP to Joe.Toscano@BankonMainstreet.com | (352) 355-4588

Open to the public | Food will be served



Member All loans subject to credit approval. NMLS#402783





APPLICATION DAY 2025

JUNE 21

Saturday, June 21 | 9-11 a.m.

AdventHealth Center for Nursing (Building 17) Ocala Campus, 3001 S.W. College Road

Get on the fast track to enrollment!

Take the first steps toward becoming a CF student, including:

- Filling out your admissions application (for free!)
- Taking a placement test*
- Applying for financial aid
- Touring the campus

Get free CF merch, plus enter to win tuition for a 3-credit hour class this fall! Registration is required for this event.

*Please arrive promptly at 8 a.m. if you wish to complete your placement test.