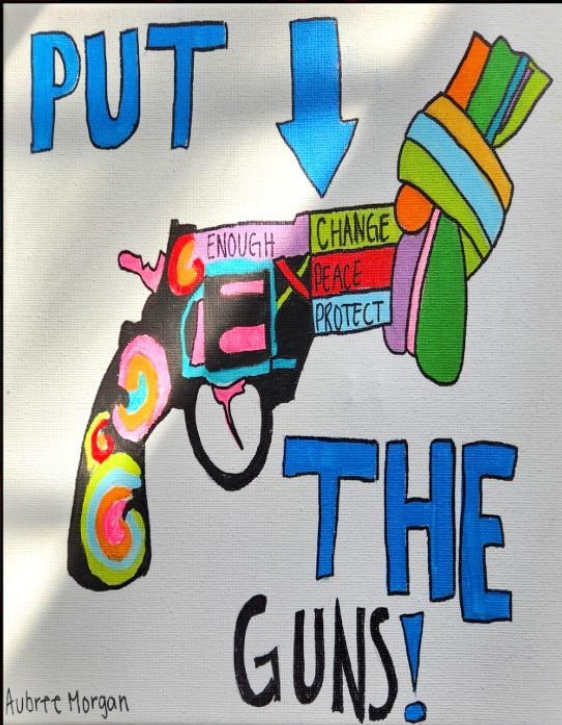




STOP GUN VIOLENCE: EVERY LIFE MATTERS!



In this issue:

*Women Walking on Purpose:
"Killing Shame" Conference*

*CHP Teaches Residents How
to Order Groceries Online*

*Seeking Justice for All Victims:
We Won't Forget ~ Say Their Names*

*Apply Now for the Next Build
A Better Business Series Class*

*Second Edition of the Town Talk
Small Business and Community
Resource Directory Coming Soon!*

CITY OF OCALA ANNOUNCES HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

City of Ocala business offices will be closed Tuesday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. There will be no residential collection for sanitation, yard waste or recycling routes Tuesday, July 4.

Residential sanitation collection regularly scheduled for Tuesday, July 4 through Thursday, July 6 will experience a one-day delay and will be collected Wednesday, July 5, through Friday, July 7.

Waste Pro recycling collection for City of Ocala residents regularly scheduled for Tuesday, July 4 through Thursday, July 6 will experience a one-day delay and will take place Wednesday, July 5 through Friday, July 7.

The SunTran bus system will be closed for operations Tuesday, July 4. Regularly scheduled routes will resume on Wednesday, July 5, from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

For more information, contact the City of Ocala Residential Sanitation Department at (352) 351-6697 or SunTran at (352) 401-6999 or visit www.suntran.org/home.

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.



TOWN Talk MAGAZINE

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

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

All submissions become the sole property of Town Talk Magazine.

The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Town Talk. All articles, announcements and advertisements submitted are subject to refusal and editing at the editor's discretion.

Contact Us:

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Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com
or Towntalkmagazine.org

EDITOR'S DESK



We need a BREAK! This month has been filled with tragedy after tragedy for our community. It started with the death of 35-year-old Ajike "AJ" Shantrell Owens, a single mother of four children, who was shot and killed by her neighbor for doing what any mother would do when your children tell you someone has done something to them, you go to that person to find out what is going on! Never do you expect it to end in death. Understandably emotions are still running high because this one was and still is a hard one for our community to process or accept. The pain is real because I don't know any mother, including myself, that would not have done what Ajike did! The process from the beginning has seemed unfair. First the shooter wasn't arrested until days after the shooting, and although the family and the community wanted the charges upgraded from Manslaughter with a firearm to Second Degree Murder, that didn't happen either! State Attorney Bill Gladson explained the reason why the charge was not changed, but the community is not happy and continues to protest and express their dissatisfaction about his decision.

Four days after we lost Ajike, a lawn maintenance man found the body of 17-year old Lezarius A. Graham in a wooded area. He had been shot to death. And nearly two weeks later, 18-year-old Tylique Le'John Christie, who was shot in the same area Graham's body was found, died of his injuries.

It's too much! We definitely need real solutions and we need them NOW to address the senseless deaths of our children as a result of gun violence. If we don't come together to do something, no one else will. This is OUR COMMUNITY and we must save OUR CHILDREN!

This won't make things any better. The Ocala Police Department shared this on their Facebook page to remind us about PERMITLESS CARRY: **as of July 1**, a new Florida law enables eligible citizens to carry concealed firearms without a permit. Gun owners can now carry concealed firearms without the minimal training required for a concealed weapons permit. It's important to note that this law does NOT change existing regulations regarding gun ownership, purchase eligibility, and permissible carry locations, but here are a few things to remember:

- ✓ NOT Open Carry: Open carry of firearms is generally prohibited in Florida, except for certain limited activities like hunting, fishing, or camping.
- ✓ Carry Requirements: You must meet specific criteria to legally carry a firearm, like being a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, at least 21 years old, having no felony convictions, and having no other disqualifying conditions.
- ✓ Valid ID: You must have valid identification while carrying a concealed firearm and you must provide it to law enforcement upon request.
- ✓ Prohibited Locations: There are specific locations in Florida where it is prohibited to carry a firearm, like schools, government buildings, bars, airports, hospitals, and certain private properties.

Carrying a concealed firearm comes with a lot of responsibility. Please, take education, safety, and training seriously. Learn the law and seek out training to become proficient with a firearm. Always remember to store your firearm safely and never leave it unsecured in your vehicle.

Let's Talk!

Monica

Monica T. Bryant, Editor

Please be safe celebrating the Fourth of July with your family and friends. If you are lighting fireworks, remember they are like guns, and both can severely injure or kill someone if not handled properly.

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Advertise with Us: Business card: \$35 ~ Quarter-page: \$65 Half-page: \$100.

Ads are black and white and must be submitted in Jpeg or Pdf format and sent to Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com.

Payments can be made via Cash App ([\\$Towntalkmarion](https://www.cash.app))
or make check payable to Town Talk Magazine and mail to P.O. Box 6212, Ocala, FL 34478

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

WOMEN WALKING ON PURPOSE ~ KILLING SHAME ~ CONFERENCE

We all have secrets or things in our life that we are ashamed of, have never told anyone and don't ever want anyone to find out.

Nancy Smith shame stems from her relationship with her only daughter, who she has been estranged from for many years due to her lifestyle choices and substance abuse and mental health issues.

"I haven't spoken of this in four-and-a-half-years," she said. "I have kept this secret and been silent because this hurts, and there are so many wounds. Only my children, myself and God above knew these details."

Smith said the trouble started when she called the police to have her daughter and her boyfriend removed from her home because they were doing drugs in her basement. Out of spite, her daughter called the police and told them that her mom had stolen her bank and food stamp cards. She also called Smith's job and talked to her supervisor, which resulted in her being suspended from work and investigated by the police.

"I was so hurt and humiliated and for years I have been so ashamed of my life," she said. "I've been arrested. I've been accused of kidnapping, theft, detained and interrogated by the police, and I lost my job.

But when her daughter called her crying for help three days later, Smith did what any mother would do. She went to help her child. She found her daughter laying on a dirty bed on the first floor of an abandoned, boarded up building. Her daughter had given birth to a stillborn baby, but she was so high she didn't even remember having a baby. Smith immediately called the police and a paramedic. She touched the baby's leg to see if there was any movement, but it was too late.

Smith's daughter was taken to St. Bernard's Hospital, but the same police officer that was investigating her from the first incident, along with a detective, showed up at Smith's son's home at 6 p.m. to pick her up. She was interrogated for 72 hours because her daughter had lied again. She told the officers that her mom had harmed the baby.

"I should have never went there ..., but I'm a mother and she's my daughter and I love her. I thought was helping her, but I trapped myself," Smith said. "I feel so much disgrace, disrespect and shame."

Although shame is a hard topic to talk about, (WWOP) is hosting a mini-conference on "Killing Shame" on Saturday, July 8, at 11 a.m. at the church located at 3318 East Silver Springs Blvd., to give women like Smith a safe space to share their stories. The event, which is free, is open to all women ages 18 and up and includes lunch, activities, ministry through worship, and a panel discussion.

"Killing Shame" is an extension of the panel discussion during our "Living My Best Life" WWOP Conference in 2022. "The women on that panel told their stories of challenges and trauma as well as where they are now," said Janice Wynn, a member of the WWOP core team. "What we did not have time to hear was "how" they did it, so "Killing Shame" will move us beyond just the storytelling and into the process of growth."

Wynn's prayer is that the ladies walk away with a sense of normalization of their life experiences through the stories told by others.

"I hope that they will learn how to move beyond shame and leave the fellowship on the path of increased self-worth leading to new experiences of productivity in all areas of their lives," she said. "Shame must die so we can truly live."

Today, Smith is in a better place. She wanted a new start and decided to move to Florida to be with family and to provide a different environment for her grandson, who she is raising as a single mom. Although her family decided to relocate, she chose to stay.

"I have friends and a church family. I have learned many things from this experience some good and bad," she said. "I learned that I had to forgive her in order to help myself and my grandson. I had to forgive her for her sin because I wanted God to forgive me for my sins."

Smith said she normally hears from her daughter once a year, usually around a holiday.

"I am confident that God will eventually get my daughter to a better place, and I can't rush that," she said. "My advice to others is to forgive those people who hurt you, forgive yourself and them and pray about everything because God will make a way!"

Registration is not required, but preferred for lunch count by Wednesday, July 5.
To register, send your name, email address and phone number to valerie@krctoday.org.
You can also register at the event.



The **Community Spotlight** highlights a person, place or event in our community. Tell us what's happening around town so we can share your **Good News** with others. Email submissions to Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com.

PLAN TO ATTEND THE NEXT COMMUNITY MEETING

The Strategic Community Alliance, Inc., a local nonprofit organization working with community members to develop a strategic plan for the Black Community, will hold its next meeting on Thursday, July 27, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Mary Sue Rich Community Center at Reed Place, 1812 N.W. 21st Ave., Ocala, Fl.

All citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity, etc., are encouraged to attend. A future meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 31, 2023.

For questions, please contact Cain Davis at (352) 871.4555 or caindavis03@yahoo.com.

You can also find out more about our organization by visiting www.scacommunities.org to receive information/updates.



CHOW DOWN. GIVE BACK.

Mention Big Brothers Big Sisters Marion County at checkout between 4:00PM-7:00PM on 07/07/23 and 15% of the proceeds will be donated to fund our mission of igniting the potential of all youth!



Date: July 7th
Time: 4:00pm - 7:00 pm
Location: Paddock Mall
3100 SW College Rd, Suite 334
Ocala, FL 34474

If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Gavin: StephanieG@bbbstampabay.org or Call/text at 352.566.3094

HOWARD MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS: THEIR SUCCESS IS OUR SUCCESS

Our local Eagles from Post # 3556 sponsored their annual God, Flag and Country Oratory contest, which was open to students between the ages of 10 to 15 on April 1.

The God, Flag & Country Oratory program originated in 1967 in Chevoit Ohio. This program was started to build patriotism, and instill pride in our youth. Mrs. Pamela Earnest, from Howard Middle School, coached sixteen students who participated in the God, Flag & Country Oratory Competition at the Eagles Post #3656 in Ocala.

Each student wrote and delivered a speech in front of a panel of judges and a live audience. Speeches answered the question, "What does God, Flag and Country mean to you?" All students represented Howard in the best possible way with their professionalism and dedication!



Two Howard students **won first place** in their respective age groups, Joneisha Donaldson and Zari Moses.

These young ladies moved on to compete in the state competition in Tallahassee earlier this week. Both Joneisha and Zari once again won their age groups and will be travelling to Reno, Nevada to compete at the INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION at the end of July!

We are so proud of these young women who have earned this honor with the help of their teacher and the support of their families!!



SAVE TIME AND MONEY BY ORDERING YOUR GROCERIES ONLINE

Annie Boyd learned how to order groceries online during the pandemic, but it wasn't until she saw a flyer advertising the program about ordering groceries online that she inquired and decided to sign up for the class.

Boyd was one of the eight people who participated in the first class held in March to learn how to order groceries online through the Community Home Project (CHP), a project of the Marion County Hospital District (MCHD). She was the only one that was familiar with how to do it but not completely comfortable with the process. The other seven participants had never done it before.

Boyd used to spend one and a half hours weekly shopping and browsing the aisles. Now she saves about an hour and 15 minutes ordering through the program.

"This was my first time completely understanding the system to feel comfortable doing it on a regular basis. This is an amazing time saver that I need to use weekly," she said. "Thank you CHP for caring for the community and helping me save time, money and energy."

The next class will be held on Thursday, July 27, from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Howard Academy Community Center, 306 N.W. 7th Ave. Participants will learn to order groceries online for delivery or pickup to save time and money. Individuals need to have a form of payment when placing an order such as a credit card, EBT, Debit Card or Walmart Gift Card. The first 20 people to register receives \$50 off their initial grocery order. Space is limited. To register, call **(352) 671-4186**.

Although the focus is on residents in West Ocala, Shayna Colyer said they will assist anyone that needs the service if they live in Marion County. The maximum number per class is 20, but they will offer additional classes if it exceeds capacity.

Colyer, a Community Home Project Coordinator for the MCHD, said the staff at CHP has been ordering groceries online before the program was introduced. They understand the system and the process for successful ordering and delivery, and with the knowledge already gained, they are confident in teaching the program and answering questions that may come up. Melissa Casto is also a coordinator.

"The benefit of participating in the online grocery program at CHP is learning how easy it is to access healthier food options and have it delivered right to you," Colyer said. "For Marion residents that work and are unable to be present for a delivery at their home, they can have their groceries delivered to Howard Academy Community Center and it will remain refrigerated until they are able to pick it up."

In addition to ordering groceries online, CHP assists families with diabetes education, employment, educational tutoring and continuing education, healthcare navigation and dental clinics, fitness and much more.

CHP can assist with any type of grocery store ordering such as Kroger, Instacart and Walmart, but they have a Walmart account set up for clients to use. The convenience of ordering groceries as well as household items makes Walmart the ideal place for individuals that come in and need more than food items.

"During our classes, we also work with families on meal preparation, reading and understanding food labels and replacing unhealthy habits with healthy ones," Colyer said.

Currently, CHP only orders from Walmart due to the wide variety of items that are available. They have computers that families can use to place their order, but families must return to Howard Academy to place reoccurring orders since the membership belongs to the Community Home Project.

"The idea is to meet with individuals often to address other needs they may have," Colyer said. "This is a great opportunity for this to take place."

Participants who use the grocery ordering service can have the groceries either delivered to their home or to Howard Academy at no additional charge. Families have the option to select a date and time that is convenient for them during check-out. If the order is delivered to Howard Academy, they will arrange a time that is based on their schedule and CHP staff to pick up their items.

"The West Ocala area is considered a food desert and residents have stated with limited transportation and no grocery stores close by, it is challenging to always eat healthy," Colyer said. "The goal is to work with families and educate them on the benefits of healthy eating on a budget and how making one small change can lead to healthier lifestyles for the entire family."





MARION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS HOMETOWN HIRING CAREER FAIR

Whether Marion County is already your hometown or you are looking to make Marion County your hometown, Marion County Public Schools is excited to host a Hometown Hiring Career Fair!

Three school locations will host hiring events for surrounding hometown schools. We are hiring teachers, support staff, Marion Afterschool Program team members, transportation team members, custodial team members, and food service team members on-the-spot! Join our team!

Location: Fort King Middle

Fort King Middle will be the host site for career opportunities at:

- College Park Elementary School
- Forest High School
- Fort King Middle School
- Fort McCoy School (PK-8)
- Legacy Elementary School
- North Marion Middle School
- Oakcrest Elementary School
- Wyomina Park Elementary School
- Transportation, Custodial, Food Service, Marion Afterschool Program

Location: Marion Oaks Elementary

Marion Oaks Elementary will be the host site for career opportunities at:

- Dunnellon High School
- Horizon Academy at Marion Oaks
- Liberty Middle School
- Marion Oaks Elementary School
- Romeo Elementary School
- Sunrise Elementary School
- West Port High School
- Transportation, Custodial, Food Service, Marion Afterschool Program

Location: Lake Weir Middle School

Lake Weir Middle School will be the host site for career opportunities at:

- Belleview Elementary School
- Belleview-Santos Elementary School
- Emerald Shores Elementary School
- Harbour View Elementary School
- Lake Weir High School
- Lake Weir Middle School
- Shady Hill Elementary School
- Transportation, Custodial, Food Service, Marion Afterschool Program

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19TH, 11:00-2:00



MARION OAKS ELEMENTARY

280 MARION OAKS TRAIL, OCALA

FORT KING MIDDLE SCHOOL

545 NE 17TH AVE, OCALA

LAKE WEIR MIDDLE SCHOOL

10220 SE SUNSET HARBOR RD.
SUMMERFIELD, FL 34471



Please scan the QR Code to complete an RSVP

An Equa Opportunity School District

TIPS TO LOWER YOUR ELECTRIC COSTS AND STAY COOL

As temperatures continue to rise, Ocala Electric Utility (OEU) is offering a few simple tips to keep homes cool and electric costs down.

- Keep thermostats set no lower than 78 degrees when home.
- Keep thermostats set at a minimum of 83 degrees or higher when away from home for more than four hours. Every degree below 78 degrees raises cooling costs by approximately six to eight percent per degree.
- Change air conditioner filters monthly.
- Reduce water heater temperature settings.
- Keep blinds or drapes closed during the day to reduce heating from the sun.
- Adjust ceiling fans to turn counterclockwise during the summer months.
- Be sure to turn off or unplug any unnecessary lights and electronic devices.

“We want to encourage customers to download the MyUsage app,” said Doug Peebles, Director, Ocala Electric Utility. “Available to all OEU customers for free, MyUsage will show daily details of your electric usage. This is a great tool to monitor energy use all year long, especially during the summer months”.

For more information, please contact Ocala Electric Utility at **(352) 629-2489** or visit **www.ocalaelectric.org**.

LIGHT UP OCALA RETURNS! DEADLINE FOR VENDOR APPLICATIONS DUE SOON

The City of Ocala Recreation and Parks Department announced the return of Light Up Ocala on Saturday, Nov. 18, 4 to 8 p.m. Light Up Ocala is a longstanding community tradition that kicks off the holidays and attracts thousands of people to downtown Ocala. This year will mark the 39th anniversary of the event.

Light Up Ocala will display thousands of lights throughout the downtown area and will feature over 100 vendors including arts, crafts, interactive displays, live music and plenty of food options. Vendor applications are currently open, and the deadline to apply is Friday, July 28, 5 p.m. Digital and hard copy applications are available. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

For more information about upcoming holiday programming, visit **www.ocalafl.org/holidays** or call **(352) 368-5517**.

LILY’S SPLASH PAD REOPENED ~ GO ENJOY IT

The splash pad at Lillian Bryant Park, 2200 NW 17th Pl., has reopened effective immediately. Park hours are sunrise to sunset, seven days a week.

For more information, call the City of Ocala Recreation and Parks Department at **(352) 368-5517**.

ART WALK APPLICATIONS DUE BY AUGUST 1

The First Friday Art Walk Steering Committee is now accepting applications for the 2023-24 First Friday Art Walk season. Applications are open for participating artists, arts organizations, participating downtown businesses, and business sponsorships.

To participate in the complete season of First Friday Art Walk, applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. August 1. Applications are reviewed by the First Friday Art Walk Steering Committee and are available on the City's website at www.ocalafl.org/artwalk. Submissions received after August 1 are reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the First Friday Art Walk season.

First Friday Art Walk begins Sept. 1, 2023 and concludes May 3, 2024. Each year, there are over 30 participating artists and 15 arts and cultural organizations showcased at the event. Artists are paired with participating downtown businesses along the streets surrounding Ocala's Historic Downtown Square. The monthly event is filled with original artwork, live art demonstrations, family-friendly free arts activities and performing artists.

For more information, please contact the City of Ocala Cultural Arts Division at (352) 629-8447 or artinfo@ocalafl.org; or visit www.ocalafl.org/artwalk.

Back to School: Backpack in the Park



Saturday, July 15, 2023
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Martin Luther King Jr.
Recreation Complex
1510 NW 4th St.
Ocala, Florida 34475

A backpack giveaway, hosted by local DJ's on the turntables playing music. This event includes free hot dogs and bottled water.

For details, please contact Apostle Samuel Melton Jr. Ministries of Old School DJ's at (912) 409.8465.

A vibrant graphic for the 'BACK 2 SCHOOL BASH'. The text 'BACK 2 SCHOOL BASH' is written in large, colorful, bubbly letters. 'BACK 2' is in blue and green, 'SCHOOL' is in purple, and 'BASH' is in green. The graphic includes illustrations of school supplies like pencils, a pencil sharpener, a paperclip, and a notebook. A speech bubble in the top right corner says 'Don't Miss the 20th Annual'.

SATURDAY, JULY 29, 2023

DRIVE THRU ONLY EVENT

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Friends Recycling Center
2350 N.W. 27th Ave., Ocala

For more information, to donate supplies, sponsorship opportunities, call (352) 438-5993 or (352) 509-9279

An illustration of five diverse children standing together, each with a backpack.

Children MUST BE in the car to receive Backpack No Exceptions	Registration NOT Required!
--	-----------------------------------

Free Meal for Adults and Children, SWAG Bags with Community Resources for Adults while supplies last!

Sponsored by Marion County Children's Alliance, Community Legal Services and the City of Ocala

STILL SEEKING JUSTICE FOR ALL VICTIMS

Yvonne Raines is pleased that the community has come together to seek justice for the shooting death of Ajike "AJ" Shantrell Owens, a single mother of four children. Owens was shot to death on June 2, in her Ocala neighborhood after going to confront her neighbor, Susan Lorincz, after her children told her the 58-year-old woman yelled at them, used racial slurs and threw skates at them. Lorincz fired a shot from inside her locked house which struck Owens in the chest, while her 9-year-old son was standing next to her. Owens died after being taken to a nearby hospital.

Raines said this case is different from most because there wasn't an arrest made right away. She said the community was upset and felt as though if a black person had shot a white person, an arrest would have been made immediately before any further investigation.

Raines, whose 26-year-old son and father of three children, two boys and a girl, was shot to death seven years ago while sitting in his vehicle outside the Platforms nightclub, at 2913 N.E. Jacksonville Road, is hoping her family and others in her shoes will get a little justice of their own one day.

"I stand with the community on this and there should be justice for Ajike," Raines said. "As for my son Jairah there has been no justice that we can see," she said. "I have no doubt that God is in charge and the person responsible, although they think they've gotten away with murder, they haven't."

Raines said if she could say something to the person responsible for killing her son, she would ask: "Was it that serious that you had to shoot him? Do you even realize how Jairah's death affected his family? Do you realize the devastation, the pain, the sleepless nights, the numbness, the crushed hearts we suffered because of you?" she said. "You broke our hearts, but even through all of that, I forgive you. You killed my son, but I choose to forgive you."

Since the beginning of 2023, there have been eight deaths as a result of gun violence in our community. No one has been arrested in four of the shooting deaths including Davonte Harris, 30, Abdul Hakeem Van Croskey, 24 who was killed New Years Day and most recently Lezarius A. Graham, 17 and Tylique Le'John Christie, 18.

Raines can relate to what these families are going through.

"Mothers, I know your pain because losing my son in 2016 was the greatest pain I've ever experienced. I cried every day, all day for ten months and still cry some days," she said. "I didn't think that I could withstand the constant attacks on my heart."

Raines credits War Cry 4 Peace, led by Kimberly Pompey-Wilkerson, for helping her during her darkest time after losing her son. The organization was created to provide comfort and support for families and friends who lost their loved ones because of gun violence.

"They reached out to me while I agonized over my son's death. They loved on me and lifted me and my family up and encouraged us by letting us know God was with us and He would bring us through," she said. "I decided to become a part of this organization that was helping others through their pain and suffering. I found that as I was lifting others up, I was also lifting myself up."

Pompey-Wilkerson started keeping track of the names of victims who died as a result of gun violence in 2014. She added a few names that were killed before that year, but some names are still missing. Currently there are more than 170 names listed. If you want to add your loved one or know of someone who's name is not listed that died as a result of gun violence, please email Pompey-Wilkerson at Warcry4peace@gmail.com.

"My son captivated my heart and will always hold that special place of being my one and only son whom I loved with a passion," Raines said. "His death was not in vain because he served his purpose well. He touched many lives through his love, support, compassion, encouragement and through his music."



Jairah Raines

Continued on page 9

WE WON'T FORGET ~ SAY THEIR NAMES!

WAR CRY 4 Peace Marion County's Victims of GUN VIOLENCE

Abdul Croskey
Ajike Owens
Albert Rocker
Alphonso Charles
Altwan Crim
Angelo Treherne
Angelica Ard
Annette Vereen
Annie Mae Watkins
Anthony Carrasquillo
Anthon Crim
Antion Shade
Antonio Gordon
Antonio Jones
Antwan Williams
Arnette Vereen
Arthur Daymon
Asa Strickland
Bailey Zylo
Benetria Robinson

Benetria Robinson
Billy Simmons
Bishop Shells
Bridget Alexander
Briell Vickers
Cameron Lissimore
Carlos Henderson
Carlos Reynolds
Carnika Cox
Casey Hubbard
Cedric "Wayne"
McFadden
Cedric Rashad Thorton
Cedric Scott
Chad Nordberg
Charles "Andy" Brady
Chaz Bailey
Chenita Howard
Chopra Williams
Chris Harmon

Chris James
Christopher "Ying
Yang" Jones
Cordarrin Hill
Corderrica Hill
Courtney London
Courtreaez Goldsmith
Curnelius "Curby"
Brown
Dalton Edwards
Da'monta Harris
D'Andra Flythe
Daniel Davis
Darnell Jacobs
David "Gucci" McCants
David Rose
Delvontaye Boyd
Devin Barron
Devonte "Retro"
Jenkins
Donald Colston Jr.
Donald Robinson Sr.
Donnell Dewes

WAR CRY 4 Peace Marion County's Victims of GUN VIOLENCE

Dorian Gaskin
Douglas Smith Jr.
Edward Lee Bartley
Edwin C. Bryant
Erica Young
Eugene King
Everette "Peanut"
Jackson
Ezekiel Tuggerson
Fabian McFatten
Ferron Marquis Williams
Frank Friday
Frederick "Stankk"
Thomas
Gerald Rawls Jr.
Gregory Ellis
Greg Palmer
Jacorie "Palay"
McCullough
Jairah Raines Sr.
Jaire "Breezy" Burgess
Jamal Hester
James Maxwell

Jason Thomas
Jeffrey Scott III
Jeffrey Aaron Jr.
Jeffrey Aaron Sr.
Jeremy Hester
Jerry "Jr." Bynes
J'Mya Woods

John Marcus Weeks
Johnny Mann
Johnathan Sullivan
Jordan "Keke" Davis
Josue "Sway"
Santiago
Julius Jacobs
Julius Watkins Sr.
Kayla Bing Jackson
Keith Boone
Keith Bostick
Kelsey Smith
Kendrell Stocker

Kenneth Carr Jr.
Kent Patterson
Kerman Jackson
Kerrian Dukes
Kobe Bradshaw
Kristoff "Haze" Salmon
Kyron Weathers
Latoya Floyd-Williams
Lee "Grumpy" Davis
Leon Roberts
Leslie Washington
Lezarius A. Graham
Litherio Blunt
Lizzy Bracey
Mallory "Hollywood"
Moton
Marvin Coleman
Marvin Wilkerson
Master Bracey
Michael Drayton Jr.
Michael Tolbert

WAR CRY 4 Peace Marion County's Victims of GUN VIOLENCE

Officer Ivory Leonard
Officer Walter Pressley
Ortiz Phillip Samuel Jr.
Otis McBride Jr.
Paris Weston
Quenton Walker
Quilla Donerson
Quin'Yon Berry
Ramone Mike
Raymond "Limbo" Williams Jr.
Raymond Bell
Reginald Jerome McKnight Sr.
Reshard Williams
Reshay Butler
Rizaki Thomas
Robert Jamerson
Roderick Kesler
Rodaney "Blind" Davis
Roland Debron Jenkins Sr.
Samuel Pierce

Sariah Dixon
Searron Brooks Sr.
Shamekia Ramsey
Shandera Smith
Sonja Stahl
Spec. Ben Howard
Sylvester Jones
Telva Burton
Tiffany Bracey
Tony Thomas
Tre Johnson
Travis Flowers
Tyler "TK" Richardson
Victor "Cadillac" King
Vontavia Robinson
Vontrail Stafford
Walter Christopher
Walter Cook
Wendell Hill
William Lolley

William Allen
Moore III
William "Bunk"
Sancho
William James
Douglas Jr.
Willie Jones Jr.
Willie Young
Zion Willis
Zy'Keria Smith

Recently added:
Latoya Reaves
Wintrell Jones
Joshua A. Tyson
Chris Chevelon Jr.
Tylique Le'John Christie

If you want to add your loved one or know of someone who's name is not listed that died as a result of gun violence, email Pompey-Wilkerson at Warcry4peace@gmail.com.

WE HOPE YOU SUPPORT THE TOWN TALK SMALL

Second Edition! Coming Soon...

Building Back Generational Wealth

TOWN Talk

**SMALL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY RESOURCE DIRECTORY
SERVING OCALA/MARION AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES**



Let's Do Business

Together We Can Serve Our Communities Better.

2023 Top Supporters

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**ADVERTISE YOUR
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*For Information email
hhp5032c@icloud.com
or call 352-286-1772.*

**PUBLICATION DATE:
ONLINE & PRINT
JAN. 2024**

Town Talk Magazine
Monthly Publication



Towntalkmagazine.org

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BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE DIRECTORY



JULY 1, 2023

Dear Small Business Owners and Community Partners,

I had to make my own living and my own opportunity. But I made it! Don't sit down and wait for the opportunities to come. Get up and make them.

-Madam C.J. Walker

When you have a large amount of the workforce being laid off, some of them have no other choice but to go out there and invent something.

-Daymond John, Founder of FUBU

Excellence is the best deterrent to racism or sexism.

-Oprah Winfrey, HARPO

This kind of confidence will aid the economic rise of the race by bringing together the pennies and dollars of our people and ploughing them into useful channels.

- Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune

Helping Hands Photography and Design Publishing Inc. (HHP), in collaboration with Town Talk Magazine, is launching its second edition of the Small Business and Community Resource Directory to support small businesses and highlight community resources.

This comprehensive Directory aims to link businesses to consumers to increase sales, revenue, and visibility by providing this platform to market your products and services.

Your support is vital to our success. There are several sponsorship opportunities available:

Sponsorship Levels:

Gold Sponsor

(\$1,000); Sponsorship includes company name and logo featured on social media platforms; signage on promotional materials; social media recognition leading up to the launch of the Directory; logo recognition on the front cover of the Directory; and a Full-Page Color Ad.

Silver Sponsor

(\$500); Sponsorship includes company name and logo featured on social media platforms, social media recognition leading up to the launch of the Directory, logo recognition on the front cover of the Directory, and a Half-Page Color Ad.

Monetary or In-Kind Donations

Donations of \$100 or more and gifts of goods and services (i.e., printing, mailing, advertising, etc.) will be recognized on the Patron's Page with the value of the donation.

Purchase An Ad

Ad sizes range from Full-page to Business Card Size -or- a complimentary Business Listing includes Name and Email Only, as space permits.

To request a Sponsorship Form, email hhp5032c@icloud.com or download a form from TownTalkMagazine.org. Click on the Small Business and Community Resource Directory tab at the top.

Sponsorship forms and payment can be mailed to: Helping Hands Photography & Design Publishing Inc. (HHP) c/o Cynthia Graham, P.O. Box 6752, Ocala, Florida 34478.

All ads must be **Camera Ready** (JPG, PDF or TIFF format) and should be emailed to hhp5032c@icloud.com.

*Please Note:

Payment must be received before ad placement.

A copy of the Directory will be available January 2024 online and in print.

For questions or more information, contact Cynthia Wilson Graham at (352) 286-1772.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Wilson Graham

Cynthia Wilson Graham, CEO, Publisher
Helping Hands Photography & Design Publishing Inc.



BUILD A BETTER BUSINESS SERIES CLASS SET FOR AUGUST 3

Charlene Robinson has always had an eye for decorating. She started with parties for her children, which evolved into decorating for friends, family and her church. Over the years, people began inquiring about her work and hired her to plan, coordinate and decorate small events.

Robinson, who always wanted to be an entrepreneur and leave an inheritance for her children and grandchildren, officially started her business in 2017.

"The gift that I thought was a hobby developed over time and is now "Simply Elegant Event Planning, Coordinating and Décor," she said.

Although she was already an established business owner, Robinson felt she needed more knowledge and support about the basics of owning a business, but wasn't prepared to pay thousands of dollars to hire someone to teach her those critical factors about business ownership.

She didn't have to. Robinson was able to get what she needed for free through the Build A Better Business Series (BBB) launched in 2018 by Elgin Carelock, who founded the program, to teach entrepreneurs and small businesses the critical factors of starting, growing and sustaining a business.

"We have helped start over a dozen businesses, helped people go from a business in their home to an actual business location, but most importantly, we have helped people understand when they are not ready," said Carelock, president of the board for the Greater Ocala Community Development Corporation (GOCDC).

The next class is scheduled to start on Thursday, August 3, at 6 p.m. at the Cascades, 1515 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Suite #134. If more than seven people register, the class will be moved to a bigger venue. To register for the next class, go to <https://www.gocdc.org/build-a-better-business.html>.

The nine week program includes 90 minute classes once a week and at the end of the program students who have completed all classes have an opportunity to compete in a "Shark Tank" style presentation to a panel of judges with the winner receiving \$5,000.

"The biggest benefit is the ability to ask questions on a deeper level," Carelock said. "We bring in professionals from every facet of building the business so the students can gain knowledge that would have cost them thousands of dollars otherwise."

Robinson, who was in the inaugural class, said taking the series was one of the best decisions she's made as a business owner. She said some of the concepts she learned were imperative to the success of her business. For instance, she said she needed to understand the importance of needs analysis, strategic planning, financial projects, marketing planning and creating a business structure. The series offered those invaluable vital concepts.

"The BBB series is for anyone who is teachable and looking to be successful as an entrepreneur. I quickly found that it was one thing to "decorate and plan" as a hobby, but to operate as a legitimate business owner was a totally different level of responsibility and commitment," she said. "I've utilized all the concepts and they've helped me maintain the integrity of my business."

Robinson said she still receives support and mentorship from the program since graduating. Her favorite part, she said, was meeting other small business owners, community partners and the Shark Tank experience.

"My favorite part is watching the looks on their faces as they begin to connect the dots on what it truly takes to run a successful business," Carelock said.

Business Spotlight



Business Name: Peaceful Transitions

No. of Employees: 1

Business Owner: Michelle Johnson

Business Address: Mobile Business

Business Phone: (352) 426-2034

What Year Did You Start Your Business? 2021

Hours of Operation: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but hours vary based on the need of the client.

Products and/or Services:

We specialize in grief support and end of life non-medical support.

Email: peacefultransitions2021@gmail.com

Website: <http://Peacefultransitions.info>

Are you on Social Media? Yes

Facebook: Peaceful Transitions 2021

What or Who Inspired you to start your business?

My experience during the loss of my parents inspired my business. One day I'm my mom's caregiver and the next I'm planning her funeral. Three months later, I was planning my father's funeral. "I felt so alone."

What Makes Your Business Unique or What's Your Specialty?

Peaceful Transitions was created to be a non-medical support for those who are dying, their loved ones, anyone grieving and caregivers.

What Advice Would You Give Someone Starting A Business?

Believe in yourself and your vision. Your gifts are needed!

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.

Strong Women Democratic Women's Club of Marion County Strong Women

Save The Dates

July 22, 2023 - "Time to Rock 2024- Get Involved"
 Voter Registration/How to Get Involved in Preparation for 2024
 Speaker: Stacey Peters - President of Small County Coalition

PERIOD DRIVE
Through the summer

DONATIONS OF
Pads, Tampons, Panty Liners, etc.

August 26, 2023 - "EQUALI-TEA - Wake Up Everybody"
 Enjoy an afternoon with other women at the Appleton Museum
 Celebrating "Women Empowering Women Become Empowered"
 Speakers: Fl House Minority Leader Rep Fentrice Driskell & Fl State Representative Rita Harris
 Cost \$60 - More details to come

All meetings take place on the 4th Saturday of the month, 12:30pm, at DEC office - 970 SW 6th Ave, Suite 108, Ocala 34471
 Contact info: dwcmcpres2016@gmail.com

NAACP 5114 Marion County Branch

RE-REGISTER YOUR MAIL-IN BALLOTS NOW!

FLORIDA SENATE BILL 90
ALL MAIL-IN BALLOTS EXPIRED 12/31/2022

Please provide your:

- Voter's name
- Voter's address
- Voter's date of birth
- Voter's Florida driver's license number or Florida ID card number, or last four digits of social security number
- Voter's signature (written requests only)

How to Request:

1. **Online:** Online Vote-by-Mail Ballot Request Service
2. **By phone:** 352-620-3290
3. **In person:** Marion County Election Center, 981 NE 16th Street, Ocala, FL 34470
4. **In writing:**
 Email: VoteByMail@VoteMarion.Gov
 Fax: 352-620-3286
 Mail: PO Box 289, Ocala, FL 34478-0289

www.VoteMarion.Gov
 ★ 352-620-3290

SATURDAY AUGUST 5 2023

Free D.O.M. Clinic USA Inc.

Working in collaboration with **UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA College of Dentistry** and **Florida HEALTH Marion County**

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306 NW 7TH AVE. OCALA, FL 34475

Make plans to spend a few hours with us

MONEY SMART TIPS

By Scott Hackmyer

LOCK YOUR CARS, IT COULD SAVE A LIFE - MAYBE YOURS!

This perhaps has little to do with money but it is needs to be said so I am going to say it here. Keep in mind that funerals are expensive. Not being able to work because you were hurt destroys your budget. Businesses that close and new businesses that won't move into the neighborhood all drive up the prices we pay. The point is there are too many young people in our community with guns and too many who use them. In talking with some high-ranking community leaders I have been told that the main place that young people get these guns is UNLOCKED CARS. If you are going to keep a gun in your car PLEASE make sure that your car is locked at all times. Working together we can reduce the gun violence in our community which makes for a safer community and a more financially sound neighborhood for everyone.

This advice is so simple but I deal with this issue on a regular basis. Someone is looking for help with a bill, perhaps electric, rent or car repair or they might be looking for a job or a place to live. They leave their phone number with the agencies that are in a position to offer help but when they are called either their voice mail has not been set up or you get the recording that the voice mailbox is full. It is so hard to get this help you don't want to lose your chance just because the helping agency can't leave you a message. Most of the time the agency calling will skip you and just go on to the next person on the list. I have even had people tell me they are looking for a job but when I ask them for their phone number they don't have one. A future employer can not hire you if they can't reach you! There are a number of companies where you can apply for a FREE government sponsored phone. If you receive SNAP (food stamps), or Medicaid you are automatically eligible. Others may be eligible when you submit your financial information. Two of my favorite companies that provide phones are Assurance Wireless (Assurancewireless.com or (888) 321-5880 and Safelink Wireless (Safelinkwireless.com or (800) 723-3546. If you are hard of hearing, you may be eligible for a free phone that amplifies the speaker calling you or even shows you a text of what they are saying. Call (888) 497-1410 or www.fdtri.org/free to reach Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. Make sure you have a phone, set up your voicemail and make sure someone can leave a message on it.

If you are old like me, you might not be aware that many companies offer discounts to those over 50, 55 or 60. Go to SeniorLiving.org on the internet to look at complete lists but samples would include stores such as 15% off on Tuesdays at Beall's for 50+, 10% off at Goodwill on Tuesdays for 60+, 15% off at Kohl's on Wednesdays for 60+, 10% at Ross on Tuesday for 55+. A number of restaurants do this to from discounted coffee at participating McDonalds to IHOP, Arby's for those 55+, Applebee's and many more. There are discounts on car rentals, motels and even cell phone plans. It is worth checking out.

I have often written on the importance of comparing prices. I recently helped a West Ocala resident replace their Homeowner's Insurance with a new policy which had even higher limits of coverage and it reduced their yearly cost from \$3,100 to \$942. Her mortgage payment will now go down around \$180 per month. It took phone calls to just three companies before finding this better coverage. When it is time to renew your home or auto insurance make sure you compare prices with a handful of highly rated companies to make sure you aren't spending more than you need to. It is your money, make sure it can go as far as possible.

JOIN US FOR A RAGA JAZZ EVENING: A SONIC JOURNEY THROUGH INDIA

The Reilly Arts Center welcomes pianist and composer, Charu Suri for "A Raga Jazz Evening: A Sonic Journey Through India with Jazz and Sufi Music on Friday, July 14, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. at the Reilly Arts Center, located at 500 N.E. 9th St. Ocala, FL 34470.

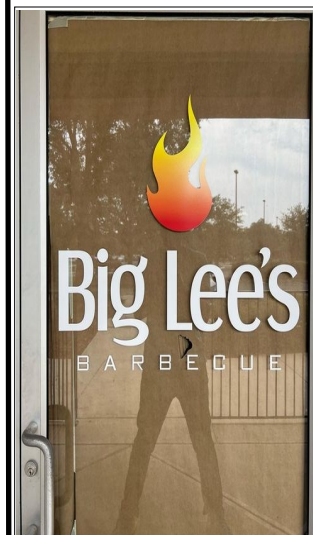


Charu Suri breaks new ground by combining several genres in her fresh blend bringing together the East and West. Experience her award-winning music that has been hailed as "works of pianistic and compositional genius" on the Reilly Mainstage.

This concert is supported by The World Equestrian Center with grant support from Culture Builds Florida. Tickets start at \$20. For information go to ReillyArtsCenter.com.

Purchase tickets at reillyartscenter.com or contact the Reilly Arts Center box office at (352) 351-1606. Box office hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Reilly Arts Center during box office hours. Tickets will also be available at the event.



GET READY!!!

Grand Opening
July 4, 2023

Big Lee's Restaurant
2611 S.W. 19th
Avenue Road
Suite 100
Ocala, FL 34471

Hours Open:
Sunday - Monday
11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE
BACK TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY GIVEBACK

SATURDAY, JULY 29TH
10 LOCATIONS ACROSS MARION COUNTY



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Ocala/Marion County



SKANSKA



REGISTRATION LINK WILL BE AVAILABLE IN EARLY
JULY ON EVENTBRITE.
OVER 7,000 BACKPACKS WILL BE DISPERSED.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE EMAIL
ASHLEY@OCALAFUNDATION.ORG

NINETEENTH ANNUAL

MAKE

July 8th
8am-11am

IT



HAPPEN

YOUTH FOOTBALL
CAMP

ON-SITE REGISTRATION
7:45am-8:15am

Vanguard High School
7 NW 28th St, Ocala, FL 34475



LIBERTY CHAPEL MBC YOUTH PRESENTS
COMMUNITY FUN DAY
@BLUE SINK COMMUNITY CENTER
11230 NW HWY 225, REDDICK, FL

FREE EVENT

- >FOOD & DRINKS
- >BOUNCE HOUSE
- >WATER SLIDE
- >KICKBALL
- >VOLLEYBALL & MORE

SATURDAY
JULY 8TH
12PM TO 6PM

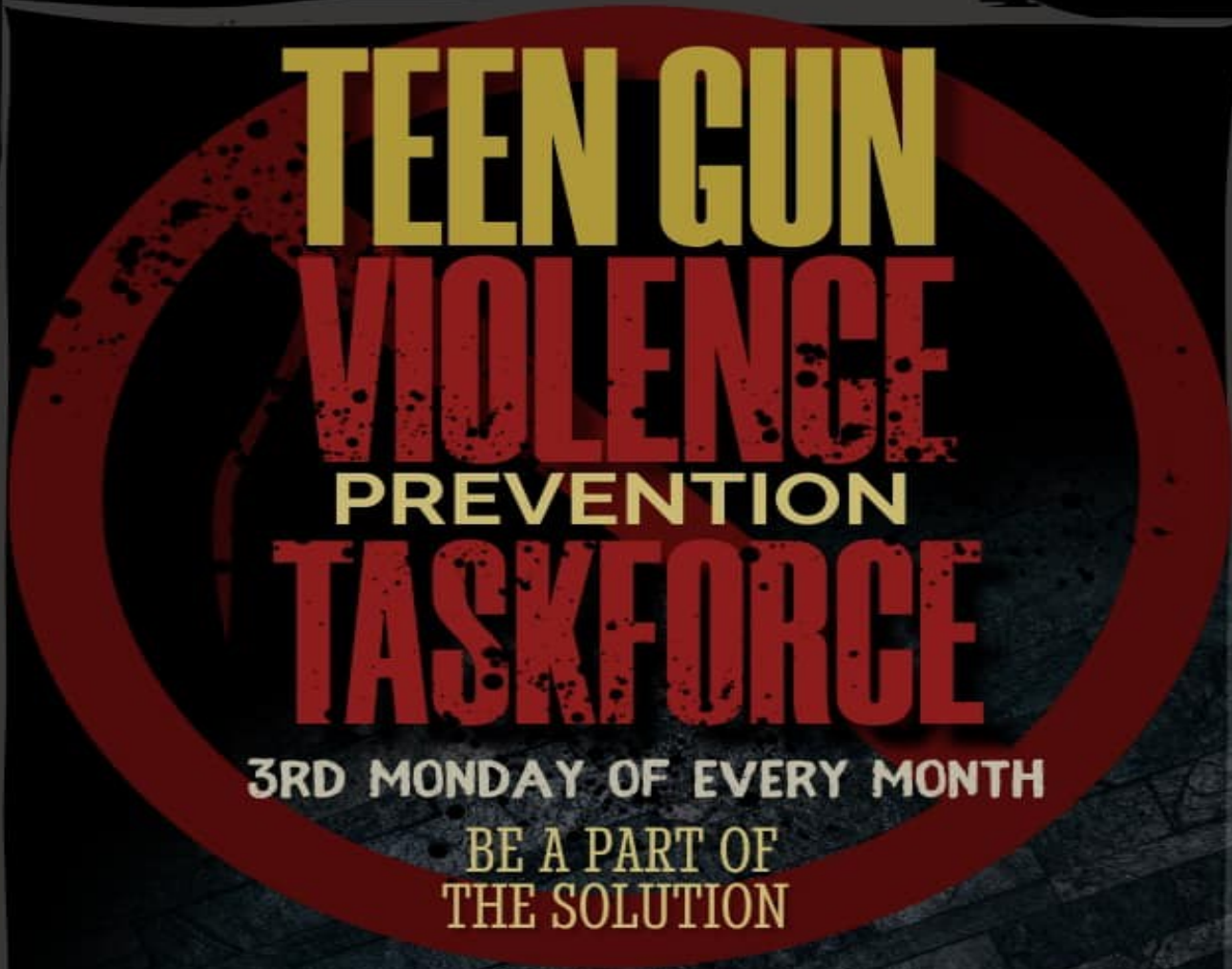
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL
(352) 843-6960 (TOYUNA GRANT) OR (352) 497-4880 (SAUNDRA FRAZIER)

LIBERTY CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
DR. CHARLES F. PERRY, PASTOR/TEACHER
13235 NW HWY 225, REDDICK, FL 32686

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Ocala, FL 34478

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IT ONLY WORKS IF WE “ALL” WORK TOGETHER
NEXT MEETING IS MONDAY, JULY 17, 2023



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VIOLENCE
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3RD MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH

**BE A PART OF
THE SOLUTION**

Community Taskforce
Facilitated by the Marion
County Children's Alliance



MARY SUE RICH COMMUNITY CENTER
1821 NW 21st AVE OCALA, FL 34475
6:00pm

For information contact: Jeremy Vickers
Cell: (352) 512-5276
email: Jeremy@mcchildrensalliance.org