



## For The Love of Music: John J. Livingston



See story on page 10 and 11

### **In this issue:**

**Ruach Life, Inc.:**  
*Helping Others Heal From Trauma*

**Noah Widmann:** *Being a Father Means More to Me Than Anything in This World!*

**For The Love of Music**

**Grand Opening Set For  
New Event Center:  
Diamondz and Pearlz**



**HURRICANE SEASON IS HERE!  
ARE YOU PREPARED?**



If not, create an Emergency Kit for you and your family.

#### **Things to include to get started:**

- flashlight
- extra batteries
- medication
- first aid kit
- manual can opener
- non-perishable food
- water: 1 gal. per person per day
- battery or hand crank radio
- battery or solar phone charger
- toiletry items

#### **If you have Pets:**

- medications
- veterinarian information
- food and water
- collar and identification tags

Sign up for Marion County's citizen alert system at [alertmarion.com](http://alertmarion.com). to receive information and updates.



# 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:

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

**Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com  
or Towntalkmagazine.org**

## EDITOR'S DESK



School's out and Summer is here. There's so many great things happening in our community this month, so there's no way you can say there's nothing to do.

Since 1979, the month of June, formally known as Black Music Month, allows us to appreciate the musical contributions of local artists like John J. Livingston, who's featured in this edition. Former President Jimmy Carter initiated the month-long celebration, which recognizes and celebrates African-Americans' historical influence on the music industry. Former President Barack Obama renamed the national observance African-American Appreciation Month, so let's celebrate local artists in our community.

Next, get ready for Juneteenth, which is celebrated annually on June 19. The local 2023 Juneteenth Celebration is set for Saturday, June 17, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Webb Field, 1501 W. Silver Springs Blvd. The day commemorates the liberation of the last enslaved people in Texas, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation had abolished slavery in the Confederate States in 1863. It became a federal holiday when President Joe Biden signed it into law on June 17, 2021. Our local celebration includes food, vendors, entertainment and so much more!

And, don't miss the opportunity to help two great organizations raise funds to support their programs throughout the year. On Saturday, June 3, R.A.M.A.L Education and Social Services, Inc., will host its annual Juneteenth Celebration Dinner and Dance Fundraiser, from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at One Health Center, 1714 S.W. 17th St. It usually sells out so you may not be able to get a ticket. On Friday, June 16, Larmonica "Sam" Samuel, founder of The Circle, Inc., is relaunching the organization and presenting Juneteenth: Grown Folks A Night of Elegance, from 6 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. at the Mary Sue Rich Community Center at Reed Place, 1812 N.W. 21st Ave. Both events include dinner, dancing, live entertainment and vendors, but each also features additional festivities for attendees to enjoy.

And for a few more weeks, our community can enjoy a variety of artists as part of the Levitt Amp Ocala Music Series. Yusa, will kick off the Juneteenth Celebration Weekend on June 16. The free concerts will be held through June 23, on Friday evenings, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Webb Field, 1510 N.W. 4th St. Don't forget to bring your lawn chairs and/or blankets! Rain won't stop the show. Concerts will move to the E.D. Croskey Recreational Center in case there's inclement weather.

Thank you for your feedback. We listened and because of your input, we will periodically run stories about former residents, like Noah Chase Widmann, whose roots are here, but they've moved away and are doing great things.

Noah's story shows the love a father had for his child, and the sacrifices he made to make a better life to take care of his infant daughter. Regardless of if you are a father, role-model, father figure, mentor or just standing in the gap, your presence or involvement in that child's life DOES make a difference! Noah said it best: "This country has a crisis of single motherhood and homes without dads. Each of you CAN change that one family at a time."

Let's Talk!

*Monica*

Monica T. Bryant, Editor

## Happy Father's Day!

We hope you enjoy this edition of Town Talk Magazine.

### Subscribe with Us:

To receive a **free** copy via e-mail, subscribe at [Towntalkmagazine.org](http://Towntalkmagazine.org)  
Annual subscription (printed copy) via mail: \$50

**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](mailto: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

## RUACH LIFE, INC. ~ HELPING OTHERS HEAL FROM THEIR TRAUMA



**Natalia Wolf**

Natalia Wolf believes everyone, including herself, needs healing at some point in our lives since we've all faced some type of trauma. She said healed people means a peaceful world. Wolf said she needed pastoral counseling to deal with some situations that happened to her, and while going through a divorce, she sought help from a professional psychologist.

"The only true healing and help I have received has been directly from the Lord. He has shown me how supernatural healing happens," she said. "I have been through it, and now I help others receive it as well."

Wolf started Strong Lady, Inc., in 2012 to mentor young mothers, but started including all mothers as the group grew. After a break from 2016 to 2018, the board of directors decided to expand and rebrand the group because of a greater need to minister to men and children. Now they focus on individuals who need to heal spiritually. The name was changed to Ruach Life, Inc., which is the parent to Strong Lady, Strong Guy and Strong Youth. Ruach, she said, is a Hebrew word for Breath of God and Holy Spirit.

"I minister to the individual to heal. This means there is a great deal of vulnerability and confidentiality," Wolf said. "There are great relationships and friendships established as everyone who comes is looking for authenticity, rawness and a family."

Wolf, who has helped people heal from physical and sexual abuse, narcissistic abuse, divorce and past traumas from their childhood, said all trauma can be healed.

"When you come, you will be welcomed with authentic love. The culture is somewhat of a Bible Study to a support group," she said.

Wolf, who is continuing her education in her practice area, also offers private one-on-one coaching and deliverance sessions. An intake questionnaire is sent to the individual and she speaks with the person several times to get to know them to evaluate their situation, pray and then schedule the deliverance session. Those sessions can take three to 12 hours, but she breaks them up into several meetings. The coaching sessions, which are similar to therapy, are done next.

Wolf is currently working on the group's new website, but is using Instagram, Tik Tok and Facebook Live to increase their online presence. Meetings, which are held on Tuesday's at 6:30 p.m. at Wolf's home and online, will resume in July. All ages are welcome to attend, and there are no special requirements to participate, but Wolf said individuals should have a desire to grow and find their tribe. She said they've had about 50 people participating at times and the Lord brings them.

"We are more than a group," she said. "We are an incorporated not-for-profit ministry with a purpose to heal people from all forms of trauma and grow in their relationship with our heavenly father."

For more information, contact Wolf at **(352) 843-7884** or send e-mail to **[Ruachlife.org@gmail.com](mailto:Ruachlife.org@gmail.com)**



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](mailto:Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com)**.

## CITY OF OCALA'S AQUATIC FUN CENTERS ARE NOW OPEN

Both facilities will be open five days a week during the season. Tuesdays through Saturdays will offer two sessions, a morning session from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and an afternoon session from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Admission for a single session is \$2 for children ages 17 and under and \$3.50 for adults ages 18 and up.

The **Jervey Gantt Aquatic Fun Center**, 2390 SE 36th Ave. will move to Saturday-only sessions in August until the end of the pool season on Saturday, Sept. 2. Due to necessary repairs, the water slide will remain closed until further notice.

The **Hampton Aquatic Fun Center**, 255 NW Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., pool season ends on Saturday, Aug. 5.

The Aquatic Fun Centers offer several aquatic programs, including Learn to Swim lessons, Aquability for individuals with disabilities and a Junior Lifeguard program for young teenagers interested in serving as lifeguards. More information and program registration are available at [www.ocalafl.org/aquatics](http://www.ocalafl.org/aquatics).

For more information, go to [www.ocalafl.org/aquatics](http://www.ocalafl.org/aquatics) or call the City of Ocala Recreation and Parks Department at (352) 368-5517.

**SAVE THE DATE**

The Ocala Juneteenth Celebration Commission

**JUNE TEENTH CELEBRATION**

Saturday, June 17, 2023  
10am to 3pm

Webb Field  
1501 W. Silver Springs Blvd. - Ocala, FL 34475

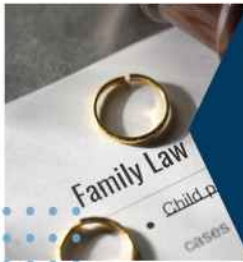
For more information, email  
[ocalajuneteenth2020@gmail.com](mailto:ocalajuneteenth2020@gmail.com)

**FOOD ★ VENDORS ★ ENTERTAINMENT & MORE!**



## First Friday Family Law Forms Review Clinic

Marion County



Have you completed your own forms for Divorce, Child Support, Child Support Modification, Paternity, Name Change, or some other family law matter?

Would you like an attorney to review your forms before filing them?

Not sure what forms you need to file?

Occurs the first Friday of each month  
1:00PM - 3:00PM

Marion County Courthouse  
Room 1057  
110 N.W. 1st Ave., Ocala, FL 34475

Register: <https://bit.ly/2MLv7Sb>  
or call 1-800-405-1417



SCAN ME

## ADD TO YOUR CALENDAR, YOUR PARTICIPATION IS NEEDED!

Strategic Community Alliance, Inc. is a local nonprofit organization working with community members to develop a strategic plan for the Black Community.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 29, 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.

The group has met several times with local citizens, including spending one evening conducting a very valuable SWOT analysis, which consisted of local citizens providing input regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the Black Community.

Once developed, community members can begin the process of executing the plan. All citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity, etc., are encouraged to participate in this process. Your input is valuable to us, whether you hold a position of leadership or not. All meetings are held at the Mary Sue Rich Center from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Additional meetings are scheduled for July 27 and August 31, 2023.

For questions, please contact Cain Davis at (352) 871.4555 or [caindavis03@yahoo.com](mailto:caindavis03@yahoo.com). You can also find out more about our organization by visiting [www.scacommunities.org](http://www.scacommunities.org).

# THE SIRCLE INC., IS BACK TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY



Larmonica D. "Sam" Samuel,  
Founder, The Sircle, Inc.

Larmonica D. "Sam" Samuel and several members of the inaugural class of Focus on Leadership wanted to do something that would unify minorities in Marion County to increase community involvement, political awareness, voter participation, cultural awareness and economic empowerment.

In 2001, Samuel founded The Sircle Inc., to fulfill that goal. During its glory days, the organization sponsored several popular events, including C.O.N.N.E.C.T.I.O.N.S., a quarterly networking event; The R.E.A.D. program, which provided resources to increase literacy and motivation to develop a love for reading; The Sircle of Honor, which recognized individuals who demonstrated a longstanding commitment to the community; and held its premier Black History Month Gala, which featured national speakers such as Dr. Benjamin Carson, Tony Brown, Venice Armor, Dr. Gwendolyn Goldsby Grant and Dr. Dennis Kimbro.

Now after several years of inactivity, Samuel is bringing The Sircle Inc., which became a 501c3 Nonprofit organization in 2004, back to serve the community.

"I personally wrote the goals, mission and vision and purpose .....," he said. "What I envisioned is happening now or currently in process."

Samuel said the 2023 Juneteenth Gala, a Black-Tie optional affair commemorating the countless contributions of African Americans in history, yesterday, today and tomorrow, marks the first event since Samuel relaunched the organization in 2022. Juneteenth: Grown Folks, A Night of Elegance Gala will be held on Friday, June 16, from 6 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. at the Mary Sue Rich Community Center at Reed Place, 1812 N.W. 21st Ave. Tickets cost \$50 per person. Sponsorship opportunities are still available.

The featured speaker is Lizzie Robinson Jenkins, Founder and President of The Real Rosewood Foundation, Inc. The event serves as the organization's primary fundraiser so they can continue serving the community throughout the year. The Gala includes entertainment by DJ Tony, Dothan, AL., dances by Be Heard Through Movement, Orlando, FL., an exquisite dinner by American Sunday Plate Catering and three \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded. Scholarship recipients have been invited to read their essays at the event.

Samuel said an official announcement about upcoming meetings and events will be made soon. He said they plan to collaborate with other local organizations that have similar objections and missions. Samuel currently serves as the President, his wife, Satonya Samuel, is Vice President and TeSha Jackson of TeShaJ Consulting, is an advisory board member helping the organization with Public Relations and Marketing.

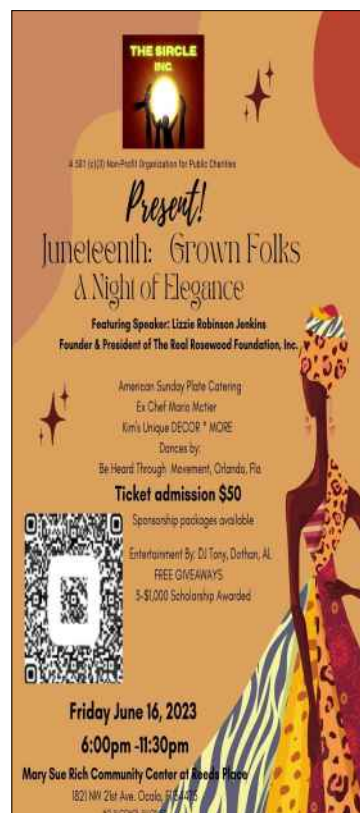
"Current recruiting has been taken into consideration since the revised process," Samuel said. "We will continue to scout and recruit worthy community stakeholders within Marion County."

Samuel said his long-term goal for the organization is to continue to achieve and accomplish a positive change within our local community.

"We extend a plea to our community to support The Sircle by continuously participating and supporting current and upcoming events, sponsorships and donations are always needed," he said.

For more information about The Sircle Inc., email Samuel at [sircleinc32@gmail.com](mailto:sircleinc32@gmail.com) or follow on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091343509686>.

To purchase a ticket or to help support the event, go to <https://checkout.square.site/buy/ERQRW3HURNLQWOEZABBW2C66>.



OPD PRESENTS:  
**HOOPS AND BADGES**



**Two games!**  
**OPD vs. F.A.M.U. 352 | OPD vs. MCSO**

**FREE!**  
**Friday, June 16 @ 10 a.m.**  
**Mary Sue Rich Community Center**  
**at Reed Place**



FOR MORE INFO,  
CONTACT TARA WOODS  
@ 352-369-7182



**GREAT GIRLS!  
EMPOWERMENT  
THROUGH ART**



**Dates**  
**June 7, 14 & 21, 2023**

**Time**  
**1 pm - 2:30 pm**

**Register Now**  
**OcalaFL.org/RecPark**  
**or call**  
**(352) 401-6980**

**Girls Ages 12 - 16**  
**12 Seats Available**  
**All Supplies**  
**Included**



AIHOM Instructor  
Becky Hudson

**Projects Include:**

- Making empowerment bracelets
- Painting an inspired self-image
- Creating an affirmation painting.

**FREE PROGRAM!**

Mary Sue Rich Community Center at Reed Place  
1821 NW 21st Ave, Ocala, FL 34475



**LILY'S SPLASH PAD CLOSED FOR MAINTENANCE**

The splash pad at Lillian Bryant Park, 2200 NW 17th Pl., is closed effective immediately. Due to equipment repairs, the splash pad will remain closed until further notice.

Citizens' Circle Splash Pad, 151 SE Osceola Ave., is available for use. 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**.

**SUMMER  
BREAK SPOT**

at Marion County Public Library System

Make memories all summer long. Bring your family to one or all library locations, do something fun and let your kids, 18 years of age or younger, enjoy delicious BreakSpot meals.

*BreakSpot meals are USDA sponsored in partnership with the Shores Assembly of God.*

**Tuesdays, 10 a.m. program | noon meal**

*Bellevue Public Library*

**Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. program | noon meal**

*Reddick Public Library*

**Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. program | 11:30 a.m. meal**

*Fort McCoy Public Library*

**Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. drop-in program | noon meal**

*Headquarters-Ocala Public Library*

**Thursdays, 3 p.m. program | 4:30 p.m. meal**

*Dunnellon Public Library*

**Thursdays, 4 p.m. program | 5 p.m. meal**

*Freedom Public Library*

**Fridays, 11 a.m. program | 12:30 p.m. meal**

*Forest Public Library*

**June 1-July 29**



# GRAND OPENING SET FOR NEW EVENT CENTER

Natalie Lewis-Ross knew she wanted a catchy name that represented elegance and class just like the event center she planned to open in her hometown.

When she thought of what elegance looked like, she remembered all the church mothers during her childhood, including her grandmother Louise Mosley Jackson, her Big Momma, Reacy Bostick Lewis Butler and her great aunts Emma Lewis Culpepper, Leila Bella Lewis and Thelma Brown with their pearls, white gloves and elegant hats.

“Even if they had a rough week, you would not be able to tell on Sunday morning because they held their heads high and carried themselves with an air of confidence and elegance,” she said.

After many construction and permitting delays, Diamondz and Pearlz Event Center, located in the JHR Park Plaza, will hold a grand opening on Saturday, June 24, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The facility is located at 4875 S.W. 60th Ave., Building 200, Ocala, FL 34474. Refreshments will be served. Lewis-Ross said the center was the brainchild of her sister Pamela E. Lewis. It features 3,000 sq. ft. of usable space, 19 ft. high ceilings, eight beautiful chandeliers and dramatic accent walls. The center can accommodate 210 people comfortably with a dance floor or a stage. Lewis is the Event Center Coordinator and her son, Terrance Lewis, is the Operations Director.

Before settling on the current location, Lewis-Ross wanted to build a center. She said her sister and nephew searched for a solid year without any luck in locating land in a desirable area to purchase and build their own center.

“My father always taught us to own your own home and own as much land as you can acquire,” she said. “We plan to eventually build our own and expand to include other businesses that will enhance Diamondz and Pearlz.”

Rental fees are a flat rate based on the type of event, i.e., wedding, anniversary, birthday, conference, reunion, etc. A fee will be charged if additional hours are needed.

Included in the rental cost are free Wi-Fi, a built-in audio system, an hour setup and an hour breakdown, round and rectangular tables, folding chairs, a choice of black or white table clothes, access to a warming room with high-end commercial appliances including two commercial microwaves, ice maker and refrigerator and lounge area. A stage, uplighting, microphones, DVD player, large HDTV and a bridal/private suite are also available for an additional fee.

Anyone interested in booking a reservation should visit [dpeventcenter.com](http://dpeventcenter.com), click on the calendar and enter potential dates for your event. Tours to view the center are also available. Reservations require a 50% deposit to reserve the date. Text messages or phone calls for reservations will not be accepted.



For questions or more information, email to [info@dpeventcenter.com](mailto:info@dpeventcenter.com), call (800) 932-3380, or visit their website at <https://dpeventcenter.com>. You can also connect with them on Instagram and Facebook.



# NOAH CHASE WIDMANN: BEING A FATHER MEANS

Noah Chase Widmann's entire life changed in the blink of an eye.



Noah Widmann, Courtney Kivlan and daughter Elizabeth at E.M.T Swearing in Ceremony Nov. 2015

The 18-year-old had planned to focus on either health or wellness while attending Brewton Parker College in Georgia on a wrestling scholarship. He was on his way to his first-ever college class as the first in his family to attend a four-year college when he found out he was going to be a father.

"I am where I am today because of the news of finding out I would become a dad changed my life for the better," he said. "I dropped out right away and ran back to Ocala to be the father I never had."

After turning down his scholarship, he started working at Sonic Drive-in and enrolled in the College of Central Florida. At 19, he earned his Emergency Medical Technician certificate in 2015 and worked the night shift for the Marion County Fire Department on the ambulance while paying his way through college and supporting his infant daughter. He graduated with his Associate of Arts Degree in 2017.

Two years later, he was accepted into Columbia University and moved to New York City with \$15 in his pocket, no school supplies, no pillow or blanket and a determination to make it. He earned his Bachelor's of Arts

in Sociology in 2020.

Among other great jobs and opportunities, Widmann worked as a Congressional intern in Washington, D.C., and as a fellow on the Biden campaign before making his way into Georgetown Law. He graduated with his Juris Doctor (J.D.) in May 2023 right after his daughter Elizabeth turned eight.

"The way my son accomplished everything the way he did, the way he stayed focused and the way he fought for his education to give his daughter a better future makes me immensely proud as a mother," said Leslie Widmann. "And, I think he always stayed structured in his vision for the future so he could provide the best future for his daughter."



Noah Widmann and his daughter Elizabeth, Georgetown Law graduation (B.A. degree) May 2020

But Widmann, who grew up in Ocala and lived in subsidized housing his entire life, said without a stable place to stay, who knows where he would be today. Although he never felt like giving up at any specific moment, he said there were always many deep valleys of darkness among the bright and shining peaks on his educational and professional journey.

"I could not have done any of this without solid, safe and funded housing that folks like you and those among us who believe that a high tide lifts all boats," Widmann wrote in an email to Dr. Gwendolyn Dawson, CEO of the Housing Authority. "I really appreciate you for the tireless work you do on behalf of families like mine. Know that you and everyone who does your work made a great impact and positive impact on my life."

While not being the single most important reason, he said one of the biggest factors pushing him to be the best father he could be was that he wanted to be the father he never had. He said his mother bravely raised him by herself in Section-8 housing with no co-parent and who couldn't work due to her disabilities.

"My daughter is the most important person in the entire world to me," he said. "I get to see her often, but there is no such thing as often enough."



Noah Widmann and daughter Elizabeth at CF graduation (A.A. degree) May 2017

Continued on page 9



# MORE TO ME THEN ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD

Continued from page 8



Ashley Widmann, Elizabeth and Noah Widmann and Leslie Widmann  
Georgetown Law graduation, Juris Doctor (J.D.) May 2023

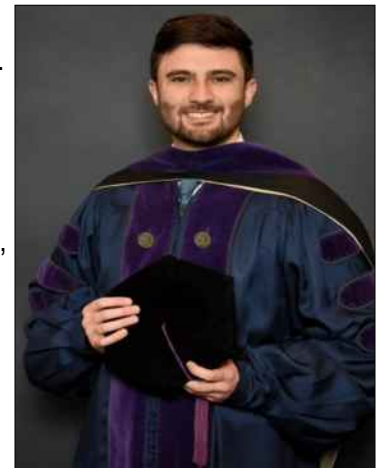
Widmann and his daughter love to read together, go to Disney World; they went twice last year, watch videos and explore museums or other fun sights when they can. He said none of this would be possible without the immense sacrifice and work his daughter's mom, Courtney Kivlan, puts in 24/7.

"Being a father means more to me than anything in the world. I am so excited to see what the future brings for my daughter and I," he said. "My plans for the future are to take the bar exam in July and then gain valuable law firm experience. I am thrilled to be entering a challenging, exciting, fun and engaging career in law."

This Father's Day, Widmann wanted to share the following with other dads. He said, please know the power, importance and centrality you as a young father will play in the life of your child. Know that if you are not there, it will shape them as a person,

and if you are there, it will positively shape them as a person.

"It was so scary as a young teenager finding out I would have nine months to clean up my act and become a parent, but I promise you that nothing in your past, present or future will light the fire in your heart like coming home every day knowing you did all that you could do for your child," he said. "This country has a crisis of single motherhood and homes without dads. Each of us can change that one family at a time."



Noah Chase Widmann

## STRONG FAMILIES PROGRAM RECRUITING FOR CLASS 15

**GAIN FINANCIAL STABILITY THROUGH STRONG FAMILIES**

**The Strong Families Initiative Provides:**

- Skill Building**
  - 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
- Coaching**

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



**STRONG FAMILIES WORKS:**

- 100% Graduating Families moved from temporary to permanent housing\*
- 84% Graduating Families reduced household debt\*
- 45% Increase of household income for Graduating Families\*
- 85% Graduating Families began taking steps towards advancing their education\*

\*Results from Strong Families 2020 Graduating Class

**PARTICIPANT CRITERIA:**

- Participants need to have stable housing.
- Participants must be interested in attending classes.
- Participants are required to have substance abuse and mental health issues under control.
- Participants must be motivated to make positive, long-term changes to their lifestyle.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
352-732-9696  
1401 NE 25th ST., Ocala, FL 34470 | www.uwmc.org

The United Way of Marion County is recruiting families for its next Strong Families class which starts on August 1. Applications must be received by **June 23, 2023**.

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.

- Classes meet every Tuesday night from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- (6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.) Meals provided for the whole 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 ad 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 8:15 p.m.) Sign the gift card form to confirm your \$20 Walmart gift card receipt. \*Only families that attend the entire class receives a gift card.
- Families with perfect attendance receive a total of \$300 in gift cards.

Families establish financial goals in the Success Coaching sessions and work with the Success Coach, who offers guidance, education and encouragement. They also serve as accountability partners for families as they take steps toward changing behaviors that influence their financial decisions and subsequent outcomes.

For questions or more information, call Pebbles Vance, Strong Families Director/ Success Coach, United Way of Marion County at **(352) 732-9696**, ext. 215 or email Pebbles at [pvance@uwmc.org](mailto:pvance@uwmc.org).



# CELEBRATING THE HISTORICAL INFLUENCE OF

As a kid living in New York, John J. Livingston was exposed to music and musicians all the time. But his uncle, Chick Morrison, who played the drums in Louis Armstrong's band for seven years and traveled all over the country, was the one that really inspired him.

"I was in awe of my uncle and what he could do with a set of drums," Livingston said. "I remember sitting in the wings of the stage at the famous Carnegie Hall watching him play, thinking to myself, I want to be like Uncle Chick."

Livingston followed in his uncle's footsteps and made a name for himself too. During his career, he not only met a lot of celebrities, but played with many of them. He recalled being in the audience when B.B. King's drummer got sick right before a show. Somebody told King he was there, and King asked if I would help out and of course he said yes.



The month of June, formally known as Black Music Month, but renamed African-American Appreciation Month by former President Barack Obama, allows us to appreciate the musical contributions of artists like Livingston. It also recognizes and celebrates African-Americans' historical influence on the music industry.

"Yes, it is important that this month is celebrated. For too long, black music has been relegated to the back burner," he said. "People need to be reminded of the contribution black music has made to American culture and especially to the music industry."

Livingston was recruited when he was 15 years old by a band called the Melody Makers. The drummer was his cousin Aavon Watson, who had to leave when he got drafted into the Army. The band had a contract to play in a week at the Zodia Cocktail Lounge in the Bellaire Shopping Plaza in Daytona Beach and now they needed a drummer. His high school band director asked him if he was interested and he said yes, but he told the director he had to ask his mother. She said yes as long as he stayed on the honor roll and kept his grades up.

"I had never played a drum set before, but I knew I could do it if given a chance. Here is my chance," he said. "I was excited but nervous since I only had four days to practice."

Livingston made the most of his chance

Even though the band members had to constantly tell him to watch the tempo and not speed up the song, he got better with time. He got paid \$8 a night, \$32 a week, but for a 10th grader in 1962, he said that was a lot of money.

"I gave it all to my mother. All I needed was lunch money and maybe an extra dollar in my pocket," Livingston said. "... That \$32 a week doubled the household income and life became easier for the both of us."

In 1963, he started playing in a band called Houserockers with Dwayne and Greg Allman, who played the guitars. They left the group that year and later formed the famous Allman Brothers Band. Abe Alexander, who was the keyboard player, became the new leader and the band's name changed to Abe and the Fabulous Houserockers.



The band was known to back up a lot of recording groups and artists that came through Daytona Beach including: The Drifters, whose hit songs included: "Save the Last Dance for Me," "Under the Boardwalk," "This Magic Moment" and "Up on the Roof;" They also backed up Eddie Floyd, who sang "Knock on Wood" and "California Girl;" Robert Parker, who's hit included "Bare footin," Peggy March with "I Will Follow Him;" and Dee Clark whose hit song was "Rockin Robin."

Livingston said he admired a lot of singers and musicians growing up. He said he liked all of them if they had talent, but if he had to choose the one he liked the most, it would be his uncle.

Continued from page 11

# AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Continued from page 10

"I admired him most because he could stomp his feet and beat on the table and sing and you would think that a big band was performing," he said. "I was mesmerized whenever he did that."

Livingston moved to Ocala in 1969 and continued playing with Abe and the Fabulous Houserockers until 1972. By then he was tired of traveling back and forth and formed his own duo, the Livingston-Lamb Duo, with Michelle Lamb in Ocala and started playing in lounges. A year later, he met Phil Goldinher, an accomplished jazz pianist, who played with the Jackie Gleason Band in Miami. Goldin moved to Ocala and was looking for work as a musician. Livingston had a contract at the Winner's Circle Lounge at the Holiday Inn on Highway 40. He had been playing there for about six months when Lamb, his piano player, got a call to join "Wild Man Steve" on a cruise ship and she left. He formed another duo with Goldinher called the Livingston – Goldin Duo. They played at Lillian's in downtown Gainesville for four-and-a-half years and played together for 24 years.

When Goldinher couldn't play anymore, he met Sal Solomine and formed the Livingston-Solomine Duo. They played on Friday and Saturday nights for two years. Livingston also played with the late Rudy Turner and Gary Christiansen for about three months. His last performance was at Tavern on the Square.

"As a musician, the passion comes from knowing that your talent is giving a form of release to the listener's in terms of dancing, singing along, tapping their feet and having a good time because of what I'm doing," he said. "It's not about getting paid to perform, it's the satisfaction of seeing the positive reaction of the audience."

Livingston's picture has hung on the wall at Lillian's, which used to be Lillian's Music Store in Gainesville, for the past 47 years. A few months ago, he went back with his son and daughter-in-law and the bartender told everyone who he was and then told them to order whatever they wanted because his money was good at Lillian's.

"Everything was on the house," he said. "I ordered a cake."

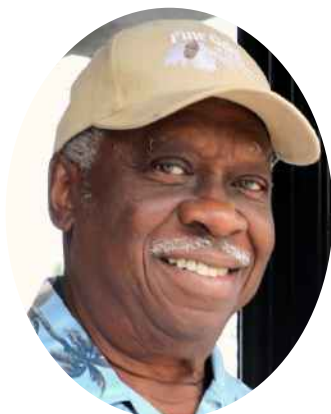
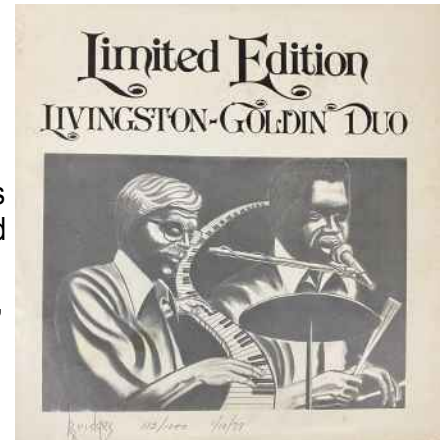
But Livingston wasn't just passionate about music, he loved making an impact in the lives of others. He spent five years as a teacher, teaching Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Human Anatomy and Physiology and eighth grade Math. He also spent 30 years as a school administrator. He was an assistant principal and principal at several schools in the Marion County Public School System.

"I was equally passionate about being a teacher/administrator and a professional musician," he said. "Being an educator, I was able to influence so many lives and have an input on their future."

Livingston currently owns John Livingston Insurance Inc. He also gives drum lessons to a few students, and he plays the drums at his church every Sunday to give back the talent God blessed him with.

Occasionally he still gets calls for a gig, and he said he'll play if it fits into his schedule. He also sings and can play the piano, keyboard and saxophone.

"I'm willing to do one night gigs, but not steady two or three nights a week gigs," he said. "Time takes its toll on the body."





## Express Enrollment Event

# JUNE 10

Free Lunch. Giveaways. Registration Assistance.



### Ready to earn a degree or certificate?

Visit the Ocala Campus Ewers Century Center for everything you need to get enrolled – from start to finish in a single day.

#### 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Fill out the admissions application
- Complete your FAFSA
- Explore the campus
- Meet with an academic advisor
- Complete student orientation
- Register for classes

Enjoy a **free lunch** and a chance to win **free tuition for a 3-credit class** at the in-state rate this fall!

CF.edu/Express | 352-873-5801



College of Central Florida does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, pregnancy, age, marital status, national origin, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status or disability status in its programs, activities and employment. For inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies contact Dr. Mary Ann Begley, Title IX Coordinator, Ocala Campus, Building 3, Room 116, 3001 S.W. College Road, 352-281-4410, or [ceew@ccf.edu](mailto:ceew@ccf.edu).

## BLACK NURSES ROCK LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS

Nurses at any educational level and specialty can join the Ocala, Florida Chapter of Black Nurses Rock.

### Are You A:

- Licensed Practical Nurse?
- Registered Nurse?
- Nurse in Advanced Practice?
- Masters or Doctorally prepared?
- Currently enrolled in a nursing program?



\*Individuals who support their mission and vision, but are not associated with the nursing profession can also join as ambassadors.

**To be a part of the local chapter**, new members must first join the national organization. Go to <http://www.bnrocalaf.com/how-to-join/> and click on the "MEMBERSHIP" tab. National membership dues are \$100 annually. After becoming a member, forward your proof of membership/receipt to [ocalabnrmembers@gmail.com](mailto:ocalabnrmembers@gmail.com) and you will be added to our Members Only group and to the official BNR Ocala Chapter roster! Then submit your \$40 local dues to the Ocala Chapter within one month of joining by visiting [paypal.me/bnrocala](https://www.paypal.com/bnrocala).

The Ocala Florida Chapter was started in 2016 under the leadership of Drumeka Rollerson, RN. Jokisha King, RN is the current president. Meetings are held monthly.

Their mission is to assist driven, determined and dedicated nurses of Ocala to grow professionally while addressing healthcare disparities within the Ocala/Marion County area. They are committed to making a difference because chapter members are empowered, engaged and ready to embrace the needs of the community.

## Business Spotlight



# SINCERE Cleaning Company, Inc

**Business Name:** Sincere Cleaning Company, Inc.

**No. of Employees:** 3

**Business Owner:** Jokisha King

**Business Address:** Mobile Business

**Business Phone:** (352) 598-4872

**What Year Did You Start Your Business?** 2019

**Hours of Operation:** Monday - Friday, 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.

### Products and/or Services:

We specialize in residential and commercial cleaning services.

**Email:** [sincerecleaningcompany@gmail.com](mailto:sincerecleaningcompany@gmail.com)

**Website:** N/A

**Are you on Social Media?** Yes

**Facebook:** Sincere Cleaning Company, Inc.

**Instagram:** [sincere\\_cleaning19](https://www.instagram.com/sincere_cleaning19)

### What or Who Inspired you to start your business?

Sincere Cleaning was started simply because of my love for a clean space. I would always get compliments on the cleanliness and scent of my home. I would give tips on the products I purchased and how I used them. Eventually, I thought of turning it into a business. The name is inspired by my first grandson, Sincere.

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

Our specialty is making windowsills and baseboards look new again!

### What Advice Would You Give Someone Starting A Business?

Do your research. Make a plan, then EXECUTE!

*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](mailto:Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com). Completed forms can be returned via email or mailed to P.O. Box 6212, Ocala, FL 34478.*

# 9TH ANNUAL OCALA YOUTH ENERGY ACADEMY

A TWO-DAY EVENT OF CAREER EXPLORATION THROUGH INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES AND ENGAGING DISCUSSIONS DESIGNED TO EXPOSE YOUNG PEOPLE TO CAREERS IN ELECTRIC UTILITY INDUSTRIES AND RELATED STEM FIELDS.

**June 22nd & 23rd @ 8:00AM** [Click here to register](#)

(DAY 1) MARY SUE RICH COMMUNITY CENTER @ (NEED PLACE) > 1821 NW 21ST AVE., OCALA, FL 34476  
(DAY 2) MARY SUE RICH COMMUNITY CENTER @ (NEED PLACE) (TRANSPORT TO AND FROM BOTH LOCATIONS WILL BE PROVIDED FOR STUDENTS)



## INTERACTIVE HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

BE EMPOWERED AS YOU NAVIGATE THE ENERGY INDUSTRY WITH US



**WORKSHOPS ON "A DAY AS A LINE TECH", ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EV), CYBERSECURITY, PANEL DISCUSSIONS WITH INDUSTRY EXPERTS, COHORT-BUILDING GAMES, AND MUCH MORE**

## OCALA AREA YOUTH IN GRADES 8TH - 12TH ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

REGISTRATION WILL BE ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE BASIS.



## THE YOUTH ENERGY ACADEMY WILL DO THE FOLLOWING:

- EDUCATE AND SPARK THE INTEREST OF A DIVERSE POPULATION OF THE EMERGING WORKFORCE IN THE ENERGY ARENA.
- ALIGN EDUCATION WITH WORKFORCE NEEDS.
- ADVANCE THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN THE UTILITY INDUSTRY.



TO ENSURE YOU RECEIVE YOUR SPECIAL YEA PARTICIPANT SWAG PACKAGE, REGISTER TODAY! EARLY REGISTRANTS (BY FRIDAY, 6/9) WILL BE ENTERED INTO A SPECIAL DRAWING FOR A \$50 GIFT CARD!

- 8:30AM - 4PM each day, (Continental Breakfast 8:00AM - 8:15AM)
- Registration and permission slip required
- Continental breakfast, snacks and lunch provided
- Bring your mobile phone to participate in various activities
- Closed toe shoes required

GIFT CARDS & PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED THROUGHOUT THE DAY!

CLICK THE REGISTRATION LINK ABOVE OR GO TO [YEA2023OCL.EVENTBRITE.COM](http://YEA2023OCL.EVENTBRITE.COM) BY 6/15/2023!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:  
MIKLE GORDON @ 813.525.8559, MIKLE.GORDON@DUKE-ENERGY.COM  
KATHY JUDKINS @ 352.303.8470, KATHY.JUDKINS@SECOENERGY.COM  
SHEREE MUNROE @ 352.694.8437, SHEREE.MUNROE@DUKE-ENERGY.COM



To Register, go to [YEA2023OCL.EVENTBRITE.COM](http://YEA2023OCL.EVENTBRITE.COM)  
Early Registration: Friday, June 9, 2023  
Registration Closes: Thursday, June 15, by 11:30 p.m.



HOME INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL YOUNGSTERS (HIPPY)



**New Enrolling**  
Marion County families with 2, 3 and 4-year-olds

The HIPPY Program is Offered by Marion County Public Schools to All Eligible Families in the Community

30 weeks of curriculum provided

Scripted step by step lessons to complete with your child that cover literacy, math, science, gross motor, and language.



Weekly sessions with your Home Visitor to support you in preparing your child for kindergarten.



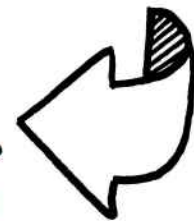
**FREE Children's Books**  
**Hands-on Activities Provided**

To apply, provide:  
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)  
1) Proof of Medicaid  
2) Copy of Child's Birth Certificate  
3) Copy of Driver's License or Valid ID  
4) Child's Social Security Number

Contact us at: 352.671.4171, Iris Starkes-Butler, HIPPY Coordinator or 352.236.0533, Vicki Nevelts, HIPPY Supervisor



Check out our **EARLY LEARNING DIRECTORY!**



Visit [www.familytimesmag.com/weve-got-issues](http://www.familytimesmag.com/weve-got-issues)

Find local child care providers by zip code, resources to financial assistance, links to learning tools and developmental screenings + more.



[ELC-Marion.org](http://ELC-Marion.org) | (352) 369-2315

# MONEY SMART TIPS

By Scott Hackmyer

## SHOPPING EARLY FOR CHRISTMAS SAVES YOU MONEY!

I started my Christmas shopping last week. Yes, I know Christmas is almost seven months away. My stepdaughter loves cats and I saw some adorable cat spoon rests at an outdoor festival. My Goddaughter collects Pokémon cards and I found a rare pack for sale at a consignment shop. With a few other purchases I spent about \$50, but the real reason for doing this shopping is this bill will be long paid for before Christmas comes. A little shopping every month will prevent that huge bill that comes in January if you do all your shopping in December. Some words of caution, be very careful buying clothes or shoes, particularly for children, as sizes will change between now and December. Also only buy things you know the person will not want to return as it will be hard to return a gift purchased six months ago. My favorite way to shop is to visit the various spring festival arts and crafts shows that many cities around us have. You get to combine some outdoor family fun walking around and browsing while looking for that perfect gift and avoiding that very large after Christmas bill that makes it hard to pay your other bills in January.

If you use a credit card for your shopping some words of caution. My favorite neighborhood Shell station just changed to selling Circle K gasoline. Circle K is not listed as a Top Tier Gas which is what I prefer to use. Top Tier gas includes more detergents and other additives to keep your engine clean and improves your gas mileage. Google search Top Tier gas and you will see which brands have this distinction. That being said, I have started using BP gas and using my BP credit card which reduces the price of gas by 15 cents a gallon at the pump. What I noticed when the bill came however is that the interest rate is 29.99%. When using any credit card if you can't pay the balance in full each month make sure you use the card that has the lowest interest rates. If you have balances that you are paying off on your current cards make sure you are paying off first those cards with the highest interest rates. At 29.99% almost a third of your payment is just going to cover interest.

Some additional credit card advice. Sometimes you might get an offer to skip a monthly payment without a penalty. Sounds like the company is being nice but remember they are in business to make money (your money). When you skip a payment it means you are paying interest on the balance due for another month which gets added to the amount you owe so then you end up paying interest on that interest. I read one example where by skipping a payment the real cost was about \$150 on that person's bill before they managed to get it paid off in full.

My last advice for this month, be very careful using Debit cards. Sure, it is convenient but with debit cards you do not have many of the protections that come with a credit card. If someone gets access to your debit card and is able to use it you have no way to get that money back. You hear all the time about how someone was scammed making a purchase with a debit card and then were just out of luck with no recourse to get their money back.

Remember, people want your money and you have to do everything possible to protect it.

**THIS COULD BE YOU**

**Junior Camp Counselor Program**  
**Ages 13 -16**

A FREE PROGRAM for teens interested in assisting camp counselors and gaining hands-on experience working with kids.  
For more information email: Jacob Baker at [jbaker@ocalafl.org](mailto:jbaker@ocalafl.org)




OCALA  
Recreation and Parks

An Evening of Everything Gospel!

# GOSPEL



Explosion



Guests: The Craytons | Comedian Des | Promises of the Gospel | Mr. Charles Groover Puppeteer | Pearlie Mae | Robert Leverette Praise Dancer |  
Vendors: Lady B's & TASforChrist

**Saturday, June 24, 2023**  
**4:00 P.M.**  
Appleton Museum of Art Auditorium  
4333 E. Silver Springs Blvd.  
Ocala, FL 34470

**Tickets: \$25.00**



To purchase tickets,  
go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gospel-explosion-2023-tickets-603872698497>

GL  
sean **T**Music Presents

# READING in MOTION

Florida Libraries Summer Tour  
with Ruby Boddie & Sean Thomas

**Venues:**

- Dunnellon Public Library - June 10, 1-2pm
- Freedom Public Library in Ocala - June 13, 3-4pm
- Belleview Public Library - June 15, 10:30-11:30am
- Marion County Headquarters Library - June 17, 2:00-3:00pm
- Orange County Library System - June 20, 10:30-11:30am
- Forest Public Library in Ocklawaha - June 23, 10:30-11:30am
- Sankofa Public Library in Ocala - July 13, 11:30-12:30
- Fort McCoy Public Library - July 15, 11:00-12:00pm

**Drums, Poetry, Rap, Dance, Clap, Fun-Fun-Fun**

Question? [seanmusic@seanfmusicglobal.com](mailto:seanmusic@seanfmusicglobal.com)  
[Facebook.com/seanfmusicglobal](https://www.facebook.com/seanfmusicglobal)

@LEVITTAMPOCALA

## 10 FREE CONCERTS

**FRIDAYS**  
APRIL 14 - JUNE 23\*  
7 - 9 P.M.  
\*excluding May 26

**Levitt AMP Ocala Music Series**

**WEBB FIELD**  
1510 NW 4TH ST.  
RAIN LOCATION:  
E.D. CROSKY RECREATION CENTER

### 2023 SERIES LINE-UP

- April 14 | Veronica Lewis
- April 21 | SambaDá
- April 28 | Bassel & the Supernaturals
- May 5 | Harlem Gospel Travelers
- May 12 | Shayna Steele
- May 19 | The Malpass Brothers
- June 2 | Chris Pierce
- June 9 | Vox Sambou
- June 16 | Yusa  
*Kicking off Juneteenth Celebration weekend*
- June 23 | Shamarr Allen

**MUSIC • FOOD • FUN**

[www.ocalafl.org/levittamp](http://www.ocalafl.org/levittamp) | [artinfo@ocalafl.org](mailto:artinfo@ocalafl.org) | 352-629-8447

**THE CORKSCREW** PRESENTS

**R.A. WILIE CONSULTING GROUP**  
*Friday Consulting*

# Sunday

SUNDAY JUNE 18, 2023

**Linen & Sundress**

**Afternoon Vibes**

PROFESSIONALS, ENTREPRENEURS  
- SUMMER MIX -

DAY PARTY  
OPEN MIC

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT OUTSIDE

**\$10 ADMISSION**  
4PM-8PM AFTERNOON MIXER

Special Guest  
Live Entertainment  
Sultry Sounds  
Special House Wine & Craft Beer  
Selections  
Hors d'oeuvres,  
Door Prizes  
Open Mic-Spoken Word

THE CORKSCREW 16 SW Broadway St. A Ocala FL 34471

**Town Talk Magazine**  
**P.O. Box 6212**  
**Ocala, FL 34478**

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
OCALA, FLORIDA  
PERMIT NO. 748

# WE'RE CELEBRATING 20 YEARS! SUPPORT US!



## DRIVE THRU ONLY **BACK 2 SCHOOL BASH**

Sponsored by:  
Marion County Children's Alliance and  
Community Legal Services



**July 29, 2023**  
10 AM to 1 PM



**Friend's Recycling**  
2350 NW 27th Ave  
Ocala, FL 34475



**FREE Backpacks**  
filled with school supplies  
for all school aged youth

### SPONSORS NEEDED!

Help us impact  
Marion County's youth so  
they can start the school  
year confident and  
empowered to learn!

**FREE**

CHILDREN MUST BE IN THE CAR TO RECEIVE BACKPACK!



Scan the QR Code or  
Follow the Link Below to become a sponsor!

Questions? Email [Monica@breakthesilenceonviolence.org](mailto:Monica@breakthesilenceonviolence.org)

<https://mcchildrensalliance.networkforgood.com/projects/194555-back-2-school-bash-2023>