

Sean Thomas: An Orchestra in the Making!



See Story on Page 5

In this issue:

Community With A Heart: A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out!

Feed 42: Clint Hart Has A Heart For Others

Sean Thomas Plans to Start A Steelpan Orchestra

Bring the Harvest Home Holiday Food Drive

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Schedule of Events



FREE PARKING THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN OCALA FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

To celebrate the holidays and to support local businesses in downtown Ocala, the City of Ocala is providing free parking in all metered spaces beginning Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022, through Monday, Jan. 2, 2023. The parking meter rates of 50 cents per hour will not be in effect during this time, but the time limit of three hours per space, for most spaces, will still be enforced. Normal parking operations downtown resume Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023.

The parking meters downtown are normally in effect on weekdays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. There are approximately 160 parking meters located throughout the downtown and midtown areas.

In addition to the metered parking spaces, free parking is available daily at the downtown parking garage located at 296 SE Broadway St.

For more information, please contact the City of Ocala at (352) 629-8201.



TOWN Talk MAGAZINE

Sharing the good news happening
in our community.

Founders

Monica Bryant & Cynthia Wilson-Graham

Editor

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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.

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EDITOR'S DESK



My phone rings constantly from people desperately looking for help. It's heartbreaking to know that as I listen to their story, sometimes as they are fighting to hold back the tears that eventually fall anyway when the reality of their situation overwhelms them while they are explaining their problem, that my response lately has been the same, "I'm sorry, we currently do not have any funding available for _____." You fill in the blank.

Sadly, most of them didn't do anything wrong. They didn't squander their money or buy things they didn't need. With the increase in rent, food, electric and gas, they just don't make enough to make ends meet anymore.

I got this call last week. What would you do if you were in this situation?

"They will cut our utilities off if payment isn't received today, and they will evict us if rent isn't paid on time. I'm not able to pay them and haven't heard back from anywhere. Being a single mom and a domestic violence survivor with four kids under my roof, I can't lose power/utilities or be evicted - especially during the holidays. Is there anything anyone can do to help please?"

There's never a good time to be evicted, with or without kids, but when it happens during the holidays, it just makes it so much worse. Unfortunately, I still couldn't help her. She was already two months behind in her rent and utilities, and she didn't qualify for assistance from any agency because she was no longer employed, had no other income and couldn't demonstrate self-sustainability.

Although I couldn't help this single mom, others might be able to get some assistance through the annual Community With a Heart program that kicked off in November. The program, supported through community donations, exists to help individuals and families who have experienced an unexpected major life event get back on their feet. See page 4 for more information on how to apply for assistance.

Don't know what additional resources that are available in the community to help you, your clients, family members or friends? Consider attending the Children's Alliance Annual Vendor Fair featuring more than 40 community partners. RSVP **not** required, and lunch is provided while supplies last.

As we get ready to celebrate this holiday season and enjoy time with our family and friends, please keep in mind that some families, like the single mom above, are struggling to survive! Do what you can to make their season brighter.

Let's Talk!

Monica

Monica T. Bryant, Editor

From our family to yours,
we wish each of you a
Merry Christmas and a



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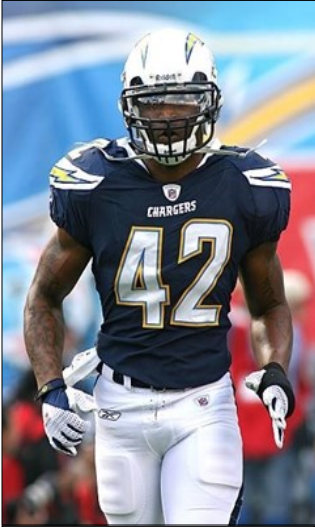
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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

FEED 42: CLINT HART HAS A HEART FOR OTHERS



NFL Player, Clint Hart

Clint Hart remembers Christmas being challenging for his mom, but he said they always managed and made the best of it. Back then, Hart said he doesn't remember any community programs that helped families with Christmas when he was growing up.

"Our gifts were wrapped in newspapers," he said.

Hart, who returned to Ocala after playing eight years in the National Football League (NFL) for the Philadelphia Eagles, San Diego Chargers and the St. Louis Rams, said his family, high school coaches, friends and members of Healthy Hart Fitness have all invested in him over time.

Now Hart, who wanted to pour the same energy into people that he poured into his goals, opened Healthy Harts Fitness in 2012 and founded Feed 42 to invest in others.

In 2014, he established the Hart Neal Foundation to fill a need in the community. The foundation focuses on taking care of families in need who may not otherwise enjoy the holidays.

His youngest brother, Keanu Neal, an NFL player too, followed in his big brother's footsteps. Neal previously played for the Atlanta Falcons and the Dallas Cowboys. Now he plays for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

"The Feed 42 idea came from me wanting to feed 42 families and it being my number in the NFL when I played for the Chargers," Hart said. "My vision for this event is to change lives through experience."



Although the families have already been selected for this year's event, on Thursday, December 8, at his Ocala gym, Hart will feed 42 families again as part of the 10th Annual Feed 42. So far, 420 families have benefitted from the event since its inception. To participate, children must be 17 and under.

"Families can expect a great experience filled with a hot meal, a bag of groceries and toys for their children," Hart said. "We have 40 volunteers that are dedicated to helping serve families. We have been blessed with so many people that

donated different items, but monetary donations will be helpful in the future."

Hart's most memorable moment happened during his first Feed 42 event.

"I saw the joy on one of the kids faces from receiving love from the gym team," he said. "There was also one family that came back years later thanking me for changing their lives through the event."

Hart said the jersey #42 he wore on the field has blessed his family and always brought him luck. He said Feed 42 is a way to continue honoring his blessings off the field.

"I would like to be remembered for having a heart to serve everyone in need including the homeless who also benefit from Feed 42," he said. "Any leftover food goes to the homeless."

For more information, visit <https://healthyhartsfitness.com> or follow Hart on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/>



Clint Hart and Feed 42 volunteers at last year's 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.

COMMUNITY WITH A HEART: HAND UP, NOT A HAND OUT

The first time Lena Hopkins attended a Community With a Heart (CWAH) meeting, she saw the people gathered around the table as a group of individuals committed to making a difference in the community.

They still are!

Hopkins, Manager of Pro Bono Services for Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida (CLSMF), said the board was and still is comprised of representatives from all areas of our community so they are able to provide for the immediate need of a family. They also have the ability to take a holistic approach to what they do.

“CWAH is able to cut through the red tape that many programs have for various reasons,” said Hopkins, who has served on the board since 2008. “Many programs need your first born and a pint of blood to even consider offering you assistance.”

She said many of the people helped by CWAH don't have birth certificates or Social Security Cards for every family member. Many don't have the last six paystubs.

“If for some reason a birth certificate is lost or a State ID has expired and you are already struggling with keeping a roof over your head or food on the table, replacing birth certificates and ID's cost money,” Hopkins said.

The annual campaign, which was initially organized by the Star-Banner in 1986, brings together social service and charitable agencies to assist those in need. In 2012, control of the program was passed to the agencies that served on the board.

The CWAH board, which meets each week beginning in November to discuss requests for assistance and allocate funds, runs through mid-January. Assistance is capped at \$1,200 per request, and individuals do not receive any money directly. All payments are made on their behalf.

Hopkins said all of the funds that come in to CWAH are donated by individuals in our community. As a board, she said, they have an obligation to be good stewards of those funds.

Karla Grimsley-Greenway, CEO of Interfaith Emergency Services and a long-time board member, said CWAH is a remedy for the gaps that our local nonprofits can't fill. She said all of the assistance goes for those needs that are outside of the normal services available in our community.

“For the families that receive assistance, it's often their only hope,” she said.

Hopkins said the one time assistance is all many people need to become stable and productive members of our community. She said from her agency's perspective, their attorney's have been able to save homes from foreclosure and eviction because of the financial assistance they received from CWAH.

“Our intent is to help people, who many times due to circumstances beyond their control, have encountered a hardship,” she said. “The analogy of giving a man a fish or teaching him how to fish is the best way to describe how I view the hand up that is provided by CWAH.”

How to apply for assistance from CWAH:

To seek help from CWAH, individuals should contact one of the following agencies for a referral to see if they qualify for assistance from the program: Marion County Children's Alliance, Brother's Keeper, Interfaith Emergency Services, Marion County School Social Services, Salvation Army, Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida, Ocala Housing Authority, Isaiah Foundation, Central Florida Community Action Agency, Marion County Community Services and Habitat for Humanity.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Now in its 36th season, CWAH has collected **more than \$1.8 million**, of which **\$31,531.80** was raised during the 2021-2022 campaign to help those in need in Marion County.

HOW TO HELP:

To donate, send checks to Community With a Heart, P.O. Box 1777, Ocala, FL 34478 or donations can be made online at: <https://www.ocalafoundation.org/community-foundation-funds/community-with-a-heart/>.

Donations are tax-deductible. There are no overhead costs and every cent donated goes to help residents of Marion County.

List of ongoing needs:

Marion County Children's Alliance: Funds for emergency shelter in motel/hotel for victims and survivors of domestic violence; gas cards or new, unwrapped toys or gift cards for teenagers 12 – 18 years old. Call **(352) 438-5993**.

Brother's Keeper: Gas cards, bus passes, unwrapped toys for children ages 1-12. **(352) 622-3846**.

Salvation Army: Shampoo and conditioner, coats for children ages 2 to 12 years old, towels, bedding, bus passes and canned food items. Call **(352) 732-8326**.

Interfaith Emergency Services Towels, coats for all ages, Bus passes and non-perishable food items. Call **(352) 629-8868**.

SEAN THOMAS PLANS TO START A STEELPAN ORCHESTRA

Being a part of an orchestra has always been a family affair for Sean Thomas. At the age of 17, his dad started a steel band orchestra called Triple Tones. In 1977, he created the Moods Steel Orchestra, which he led until he passed a way, and made the steelpan instruments they used.

“My dad, the late Leroy Thomas, fell in love with the instrument at a very young age and was destined to make it happen,” he said. “His main objective was to train youth in the art of playing the instrument.”

Thomas, who was seven when he started playing the steelpan instrument with his older brother Roger Thomas, said the tenor pan was the instrument in his dad’s orchestra he liked the best. His brother, three sisters and his mom still manage the Moods Steel Orchestra, which has been in existence for more than 40 years.

“My dad did not play,” said Thomas, also known as SeanTMusic Global. “However, my mom Rufina Thomas-Thompson became one of the first women to play a tune in 1946 called Symphony of Love.”

Now Thomas, who managed his dad’s orchestra and did the arrangements for seven years, is following in his dad’s footsteps by starting an orchestra called the Ocala Steel Orchestra. Although he still needs a venue that can accommodate 40 people, he is offering free lessons to the Ocala community for ages 7-12, 13-17 and 18 and up.

“It’s a steelpan orchestra. It mirrors the European Orchestra using steelpan instruments created in my hometown of Trinidad,” he said.

If anyone wants to donate a space for them to use, Thomas said, they will need it for five days a week for rehearsals, music theory, etc. If someone has a space for rent, he said, they can potentially pay up to \$800 per month. In addition to finding a venue, they also need to purchase instruments for the front line, which includes tenor, double tenors and double seconds; the middle section, which includes double guitars and triple cellos; and the background section, which includes tenor bass and six bass. Cow bells, tambourines, triangles, conga drums and drum sets are also needed.

“The instruments are made from the oil drums (steel drums),” he said. “My dad made all the different section instruments It took him approximately a week to produce four of the front-line instruments.”

The orchestra’s greatest need right now is funding to purchase the instruments and rent a venue. The instruments they’re currently using belong to him, and the orchestra is funded through various sponsorships, grants and donations. He said they are working on getting the orchestra registered so they can accept donations via various payment methods such as PayPal, Zelle or Cash App in the future. For now, if anyone wants to support the orchestra, donations by check can be made payable to Ocala Steel Orchestra and mailed to 6315 Lakewood Drive, Unit A, Ocala, FL 34472.

“We invite people to make in-kind donations and financial donations towards purchasing more instruments,” he said. “The cost of the instruments can range from \$3,596 for four tenor pans to \$4,390 for two six bass pans.”

Thomas said no experience is needed and registration is open until the end of December. The hour-long lessons, which will be taught by Thomas, will start next year in January or February. He has four volunteers from Trinidad and Ocala that helps him out. So far, 20 people have registered, and the maximum number of students per age group is 18.

Thomas moved to Ocala in 2018 and started working at the Boys and Girls Club. Until he gets the orchestra up and running, he conducts Hip Hop Jazz Courtyard Jams, a free outdoor session, in the courtyard of the Marion Cultural Alliance, 23 S.W. Broadway St., every Friday evening, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. with a drumming circle using bucket drum

(Continued on page 6)



Sean Thomas, Founder of Ocala Steel Orchestra



THINGS TO DO THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Continued from page 5

"I combine the bucket drumming with folk dance and original poetry to deepen the experience of participants," said Thomas, who produced and performed this year with his jazz quartet and the Keith Caton Blues Band at the International Jazz Day Ocala held at the Marion Theater. "I created a program called "Drum Therapy in Motion" which now serves five assisted living institutions in Ocala."

Thomas was selected to perform at an arts and public health conference, hosted by the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine, because of his work with his "Drum Therapy in Motion" program.

His long-term vision for the Ocala orchestra, he said, is to perform in Miami and New York panorama and throughout the United States. Both places are the premiere competition locations in the U.S., Thomas said.

To register to participate in the orchestra, email your name, age and phone number to ocalasteelorchestra@gmail.com by the deadline.

For more information, they are on Facebook as Ocala Steel Orchestra and Instagram as [ocalasteelpanorchestra](#).



FARM SHARE

STATE REP YVONNE HAYES HINSON
- DISTRICT 21, STATE REP JOE HARDING - DISTRICT 24,
COUNCILMAN IRE BETHEA, &
COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA'S
HAMPTON CENTER

DECEMBER 9, 2022
8 AM - UNTIL FOOD IS GONE
COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
HAMPTON CENTER
1501 W SILVER SPRINGS RD
OCALA, FL 34475

DRIVE-THROUGH DISTRIBUTION
Food is first come, first served.
Farm Share is an equal opportunity provider.

QUESTIONS? 352.562.0514 LEARN MORE AT FARMSHARE.ORG






War Cry 4 PEACE

Youth Fun Day

1PM-4PM

SATURDAY DECEMBER 17TH

VICTIMS: CHILDREN OF GUN VIOLENCE

YOUR DAY OF LOVE

COMPETITION PARK
1200 NW 9TH AVE. OCALA, FL 34475
1PM-4PM

**FUN GAMES
FREE FOOD
RESOURCES**

EMAIL: WARCRY4PEACE@GMAIL.COM

PLEASE SCAN & REGISTER ANY CHILD OF GUN VIOLENCE TO BE RECOGNIZED




Don't get **Wrapped** up in the Holiday **Stress**

JOIN THE FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORKGROUP
FOR ITS ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIFT WRAPPING CAMPAIGN

Friday, December 9 through Saturday, December 24, 2022
available during holiday hours at the Paddock Mall
Gift wrapping Booth located near Starbucks Coffee.

Bring any unwrapped gifts to the Mall and our volunteers will wrap them for you. We provide everything needed i.e wrapping paper, bows and gift tags!

~ Volunteers Needed ~

Must be at least 18 years or older **and** have previous experience wrapping gifts.

Pick the days and hours you want to volunteer. Groups welcome!

For information or a volunteer form, call **(352) 438-5993** or email Monica@breakthesilenceonviolence.org

All proceeds benefit victims and survivors of domestic violence



MUSIC IS IN THE AIR
ENJOY THESE ACTIVITIES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

SYMPHONY UNDER THE LIGHTS

Bring your chairs and blankets and enjoy the sounds of the Ocala Symphony Orchestra and Ocala Youth Symphony on Friday, December 2, at 7:30 p.m. in Tusawilla Park at the Reilly Arts Center's outdoor stage, 500 N.E. 9th St., Ocala.

POPS! GOES THE HOLIDAY

The Ocala Symphony Orchestra's annual holiday concert will be held on December 3 at 7:30 p.m. and on December 4, at 3 p.m. at the Reilly Arts Center, 500 N.E. 9th St., Ocala. For more information, go to <https://www.reillyartscenter.com>.

KINGDOM OF THE SUN CONCERT BAND'S SEASON CONCERTS

The Kingdom of the Sun Concert Band will perform holiday favorites on December 3, at 2 p.m. and December 4, at 3 p.m. at the Marion Technical Institute auditorium, 1614 E. Fort King St. Performances are free and open to the public.

OCALA CHRISTMAS PARADE

The annual Christmas parade will be held on Saturday, December 10, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. This year's theme is Hometown Christmas. The route begins at the intersection of SE 25th Avenue and Ft. King Street, moving North to E Silver Springs Blvd. It turns left/West onto the Boulevard and goes 1.6 miles to NE 8th Avenue. The parade then turns right/North onto 8th Avenue, ending at NE 3rd Street, just before Tusawilla Park. For more information, go to <https://ocalachristmasparade.org>.



NEW DATE

**HOWARD ACADEMY
COMMUNITY CENTER**

**HOLIDAY
LUNCHEON**

**Wednesday, December 14, 2022
11:30 a.m.**

• COME JOIN US AND LEARN ABOUT ALL THE WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO OUR COMMUNITY HERE AT THE CENTER. WE WILL BE SERVING A FREE LUNCH FOR ALL WHO ATTEND! WE NEED YOU AND YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE WONDERFUL PROGRAMS WE HAVE HERE AT HOWARD ACADEMY FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

YOU MUST REGISTER AT [EVENTBRITE.COM](https://www.eventbrite.com) OR USE THE LINK BELOW:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/439925788877>

For more information, please call (352) 671-4175



Howard Academy Community Center
presents their annual

*Black History
Museum Archives
Awards Gala*

Friday, February 24, 2023

7:00 pm

Mary Sue Rich Community
Center at Reed Place
1812 N.W. 21st Avenue
Ocala, Florida 34475

This will be a night to remember! This formal gala will acknowledge the accomplishments of several individuals who have made contributions to the Ocala/Marion County Community.

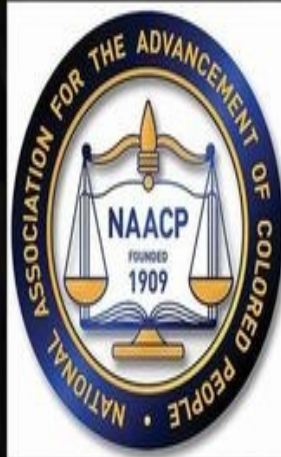
Nomination forms are available at our office and can be picked up from 8:30am to 4:00pm or emailed.

For more information, please call (352) 671-4175

NAACP 5114 Marion County Branch

Presents

Taste of Soul Marion



- Big Man's Cafe
- Carrabbas
- Greg Good Eats
- Mario McTier
- Sassy Sweets
- Conch Man
- Big Wheels
- JRocks
- B&H Soul Creations
- Southern Palate Restaurant & Catering
- Sisers Harmony
- *And Others still to confirm

If you are interested in showcasing please contact TeSha Jackson @ 352-426-0861

December 3, 2022

Ocala One Health Center

1714 Sw 17th St.

Ocala, Florida 34471

2:00pm - 4:00pm

*Special Musical Guest

Sheba the Mississippi Queen

Tickets Available: **\$30.00**

Branch Office or Officer

352-352-4560

www.eventbrite.com/e/taste-of-soul-marion-tickets-456146956827

Business Spotlight



T3 IMPACT TAX SOLUTIONS
WHERE CUSTOMER SERVICE MATTERS

Business Name: T3 Impact Tax Solutions

No. of Employees: 3

Business Owner: Tamra Sorey Balkcom

Business Address: 9311 S.E. Maricamp Rd.
Ocala, FL 34472

Business Phone: (850) 326-5554

What Year Did You Start Your Business? 2000

Hours of Operation: Open During Tax Season
Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sunday, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Products and/or Services: Tax Preparation, Tax Resolution, Bookkeeping, Notary, Life Insurance, Print/Copy/Fax Services and Document Prep.

Email: T3impactllc@gmail.com or
Admin@t3impacttaxsolutions.com

Website: www.t3impacttaxsolution.com

Are you on Social Media? Yes

Facebook: T3 Impact Tax

Instagram: T3 Impact Tax

What or Who Inspired you to start your business?

Growing up, I always wanted to be my own boss and help people in need. My grandmother Millie was a jack of all trades. She sold everything from jewelry, Tupperware, wigs, plates and more. She taught me how to hustle and be a successful business woman.

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

I love people and while I love preparing taxes, I strive to be a resource to those in need in my community. I want to make a difference and leave a legacy of love, kindness, peace and prosperity.

What Advice Would You Give Someone Starting A Business?

Life is short! research your niche and know your target audience, but most importantly, have a plan, believe in your dreams and go for it.



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.

SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE COMMUNITY AND JOIN IN



In March 1865 with the Civil War nearly over, a 30-man team of mostly Black Union soldiers travel from Jacksonville 100 miles behind enemy lines for a crazy daring raid in remote Marion County. Then they had to return on foot to St. Augustine 80 miles from the target knowing a crack Confederate cavalry unit will be hot on their trail.

The Black raiders planned the operation, employed their own strategy, were led by a Black Sergeant-Major - no White officer - and carried out the mission.

Why? They sought to do what White leaders never had - "to succeed where others failed."

"White-washed" by Confederacy apologists, this book reveals a clearer story of this amazing raid by courageous, determined men, a keystone event in the Black soldier's journey to gain acceptance, parity, and respect in the White man's army.



BLACK HISTORY-LOCAL HISTORY-MILITARY HISTORY-CIVIL WAR

Available from Amazon

At Risk for Alzheimer's?



The image depicted contains models and is being used for illustrative purposes only.

A clinical research study for the prevention of Alzheimer's disease

As we age, it helps to assess our risk for Alzheimer's.

A great first step is a memory screening, which may be available in TRAILBLAZER-ALZ 3, a clinical research study for the prevention of Alzheimer's disease. We're seeking adults with normal memory, thinking, mood, and behavior patterns.

You may be able to participate if you:

- ✓ Are 55-80 years old
- ✓ Have a reliable study partner who knows you well and is familiar with your day-to-day life

Compensation may be available for time and travel. See if you qualify:



Call Renstar Medical Research:
352-629-5800

TRAILBLAZER-ALZ 3



WAITLIST OPENING

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (SECTION 8)

Reentry Housing Assistance from Jail or Prison

APPLY ONLINE ONLY
<https://ocalahousing.housingmanager.com>

- When applying online, applicants will need the following for all household members: income, society security number and dates of birth.
- Any individual who is income qualified is eligible to be placed on the waiting list. Other eligibility criteria will be required when name is selected from waiting list.

- **Any special accommodations, please call Jacalyn Brown at 352-620-3350.**
- OHA has bilingual staff available for translation

QUESTIONS???

Email: contactus@ocalahousing.org
Phone: (352) 369-2636 or
Visit our website:
www.ocalahousing.org



ACCEPTING 75 APPLICATIONS STARTS
December 2, 2022
at 9:00 a.m.
(Only 75 Available)

- 1- \$19,500
- 2- \$22,250
- 3- \$25,050
- 4- \$27,800
- 5- \$30,050
- 6- \$32,250
- 7- \$34,500
- 8- \$36,700
- 9- \$38,500
- 10- \$40,700

READY! SET! GO! LET'S GET COLLEGE READY!

for 10th-12th Graders



December 5, 2022
6:00 PM to 7:30 PM
Registration: 5:30 PM



TOPICS

- MAKE YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION SHINE!
- ENTRANCE EXAMS TIPS
- BEST WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE
- BECOMING A FAMU RATTLER
- STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES W/ COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
- SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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Howard Academy Community Center
305 NW 7th Ave, Ocala, FL

MONEY SMART

By Scott Hackmyer

MONEY SAVING TIPS TO LOWER YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

Leakage. Even the word sounds bad. SECO Energy recently shared some money saving tips for our electric bills that really come in handy with the extra costs we have all been feeling with rising electric rates. Just because you have turned them off doesn't mean they aren't using electricity and running up your bill.

Televisions, DVD Players, computer equipment, sound and gaming systems, cable boxes and charging devices all pull power when plugged in even when they aren't turned on. The solution to this is to use **power strips** where you can plug multiple devices into the strip and turn them all completely off by turning off the power strip. SECO estimates you can reduce your electric usage by 10 to 20 percent by using this method.



Another easy common sense approach to saving on your electric bill is just to walk through your house and identify places where you are using electricity for no reason. I did this in my house and discovered lights on in a bedroom not being used, a TV and DVD player in a guest room in standby mode, two printers turned on and waiting to print and a cell phone charger plugged in but not connected to a phone. Easy fixes that will all save money.

With winter coming it costs a lot to keep your home warm. I watched an Ace Hardware video with lots of good suggestions. Start by insulating your windows, many people put a clear, fairly thick piece of plastic over each window to help keep out cold air. Insulate around your window casings using caulk for the bigger leaks. Use door thresholds to keep cold air from coming in from under your door and weather seal around your doors. Use approved wraps to place around your hot water heater, keep the setting at 120 degrees or below and insulate the pipes going to and from the water heater. This one is so easy, put switch covers in or around your electric outlets that are on walls facing the outside. The plugs they sell so babies can't stick their fingers in the plugs are inexpensive and just plug in but effectively stop cold breezes from coming into the house through your outlets. Set your ceiling fans to turn in a clockwise direction blowing warm air down. You need to do this year round but make sure your heat system filters are clean. Set your thermostat no higher than 68 degrees. Heating costs go up about 4% for every degree higher than 68. It will save you money to put on a sweater or extra blanket if you need it.

HOLIDAY SAFETY: TAKE PRECAUTIONS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

It seems like every Christmas season we read a heartbreaking story of a family that lost everything due to a house fire. Here are tips I learned from Retired Deputy Fire Chief Brian Stoothoff on fire safety to keep your home safe during the holidays.


- Unplug or turn off all holiday lights before going to bed or when leaving the house. Never run extension cords through doorways, under rugs or pinched behind furniture. Firefighters suggest you not use extension cords at all.
- Although candles smell good they are easily knocked over and should never be left in a room unattended. It is also easy for curtains to blow into the candle flame and catch fire. Be very careful if you use candles in your home.
- Never place a Christmas tree so that it blocks an exit or is near an open flame, such as a fireplace.
- When decorating, never connect more than three strings of lights together.
- If you buy a real Christmas tree, make sure that it is fresh. Shedding needles is a sign of a dry tree. Cut one or two inches off the trunk to help it absorb water. Place the tree in a stand that holds water and check the water level daily.
- If you use an artificial tree, make sure it is fire retardant and has a UL label of approval.
- Every home should have a working smoke detector. If you live in the City, Ocala Fire Rescue will provide and install one free of charge by submitting a request online at <https://ocalafl.org?navid=155>. You will see the Smoke Detector Request Form on the left side of the page. You may also fill out the application in person at 3001 N.E. 21 St., at their headquarters.
- If your home is in the County, Marion County Fire Rescue will also provide one at no charge by calling (352) 291-8000.



GEORGE ALBRIGHT
MARION COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR
PRESENTS THE

13TH ANNUAL CHARITY CAR SHOW

PROCEEDS SUPPORT MARION COUNTY CHARITIES



* TOP 25 TROPHIES * PEOPLES CHOICE TROPHY * MUSIC * KIDS BOUNCE HOUSE
* FOOD AVAILABLE ON-SITE * CRAFT VENDORS * ANTIQUE VENDORS
* CAR PARTS SWAP SPACES

SHOW OPEN TO ALL VEHICLES
-PAST & PRESENT-

MCPHERSON GOV. COMPLEX

503 SE 25TH AVE OCALA, FLORIDA
9:00AM-3:00PM FEB 25th 2023

Make checks payable to MCTC Employee Fund \$15.00 Pre-registration by February 15th, 2023 \$20.00 at the gate
Mail to: PO BOX 63 all vehicle and car part swap spaces same price.
Ocala, FL 34478

Name _____ E-mail _____ Vehicle Make _____
Address _____ Year/Model _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

By execution of this form I hereby release the Marion County Tax Collector's Office from any or all damages during this event.

Signature _____ Date _____
For more information contact Jacob Wicklein at 352-368-8206 or e-mail at jwicklein@mariontax.com

A Dickens Christmas

The Urban Family's Annual Holiday Exhibition

On View Through January 8



Community Day

Saturday, December 3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Enjoy free admission all day, photos with Santa, holiday crafts and more!

Visit AppletonMuseum.org for details.



Appleton Museum, Artspace and Store

Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday, noon-5 p.m.
4333 E. Silver Springs Blvd. | AppletonMuseum.org



-an equal opportunity college-



Free
Online Webinar

December 9, 2022

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

SIMPLIFYING SEASONAL STRESSORS

Hosted by
Consuella Shaw, LMHC

- Are you experiencing stress and anxiety about this holiday season?
- Join me as we discuss tips on how to manage your mind.

Register Today at www.assuagecc.com

Bring the Harvest Home Holiday Food Drive

Friday, December 2, 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Downtown Square 1 S.E. Broadway St. Ocala, Florida 34471

Drop off location is on the north access road right behind the gazebo.

Items needed:

- Dry foods and complementary goods (rice, pasta, pasta sauce, cereal, crackers, peanut butter, jelly). Plastic containers preferred.
- Canned meat (corned beef, chicken, ham, tuna)
- Canned vegetables and fruits
- Baby items (food, diapers, lotion, wipes)
- Toiletries (soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, toilet paper)

Your donations stay local! Bring the Harvest Home benefits Brother's Keeper, Salvation Army and Interfaith Emergency Services. For more information, call Stacie Causey of the Marion County Board of County Commissioners at (352) 438.2300.

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW FOR THE BLUEGRASS AND BBQ EVENT

The City of Ocala's Bluegrass and BBQ Event will be held on **January 20, 2023**, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Tusawilla Art Park, 213 NE. 5th St., The event kicks off the Tusawilla Art Park Series and features live performances by International Bluegrass Award winning Appalachian Road Show with The Wandering Hour. Food will be available from local food truck favorites, Big Lee's Serious About BBQ and Country Boyz. Big Man's Café will sell desserts. Beer and wine, sponsored by TriEagle Sales, will be available for purchase at the event.

Tickets: General Admission: \$10 online/\$15 gate. Includes admission to the concert; **General Admission PLUS:** \$15 online/\$20 gate. Includes admission to the concert and seating closer to the stage; and **VIP Pickin' Package:** \$75/online only. Includes 4 admissions to the concert, 4 beverages (beer and wine included), an upfront four-person comfy ottoman and a Tusawilla Art Park special gift bag.

For more information on the concert or to purchase tickets, visit the City of Ocala's Tusawilla Art Park Series webpage; or contact the City of Ocala Cultural Arts and Sciences Division at (352) 629-8447 or email artinfo@ocalafl.org.

Town Talk Magazine
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Ocala, FL 34478

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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Commission Committee

THE DREAM IN ACTION! UNITY IS UP TO ALL OF US!

Schedule of Events

Prayer Breakfast

Saturday, January 14, 2023 - 9:00 a.m.
Mary Sue Rich Center at Reed Place
1812 NW 21st Ave., Ocala, FL 34475
Contact: Loretta Jenkins - (352) 351-0824

Wreath Ceremony

Saturday, January 14, 2023 - 11:30 a.m.
Martin L. King Jr. Park
500 SW MLK Jr. Ave., Ocala, FL 34471
Contact: Cassandra Boston - (352) 209-2973

MLK Youth Day

Saturday, January 14, 2023 - 1:00 p.m.
Mary Sue Rich Center at Reed Place
1812 NW 21st Ave., Ocala, FL 34475
Contact: Dwanette Dilworth - (352) 207-6036

Ecumenical Services

Sunday, January 15, 2023 - 5:00 p.m.
Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church
55 S.W. 3rd Ave., Ocala, FL 34471
Contact: Shirley Wright - (352) 732-0097

The Historic March

8:00 a.m. (line-up downtown)
9:00 a.m. (the march begins)
Downtown on the square to the
Dr. MLK Complex
Contact: Ire Bethea
(352) 208-0819 or ibethea2008@cox.net

Buses and vans will be running
from the MLK Complex
raquetball court
to downtown 7:00am - 8:30am
Contact: Kelvin B. Richardson
(352) 207-9558

Day in the Park

(Activities & Vendors)
Contact:
Dr. Dwanette Dilworth
(352) 207-6036
drdilworth@gmail.com

(Performance Space)
Derek Ponder - (352) 857-4118
derek.pondero@gmail.com
Te'Sha Jackson - (352) 426-0861
entconsultantbyteshaj@gmail.com