

Meet Mother Kate White Mt. Olive A.M.E. Church



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Happy
Mother's
Day!



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Saturday, May 14, 2022

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nalc-info.org/food-drive.

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

Shelia Arnett

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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(352) 897-1817

Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com
or Towntalkmagazine.org

EDITOR'S DESK



We Made it!

This month Town Talk Magazine is celebrating its one year anniversary.

It's hard to believe a year ago our dream of launching this publication became a reality. As I look back over the last year, I'm proud of the work my best friend Cynthia Wilson Graham and I have done, the people we've met and the stories we've told about regular people doing extraordinary things in our community. It's truly been a labor of love.

If you missed an issue, past publications are available on our website at www.towntalkmagazine.org.

This year we want to continue writing about things that matter to you. If you own a small business, submit a Business Profile form, it's free! Our Community Spotlight highlights a person, place or event in our community. It's also free. We want to share the Good News. If you know about things happening in our community let us know.

Our goal is still the same. We want to tell stories that may otherwise never get told, connect people with available resources that can improve their lives, share information, get YOU more engaged in your community and document our history to pass on to future generations.

We need your help! If you have any information or photographs on Paradise Park of the Madison Street Library formally located in side the Ed Croskey Center Wilson Graham would like to talk to you. Please call (352) 897-1817 or email her at hph5032@icloud.com.

Town Talk is not about us, as we said before, it's about our community and the people that live, work and play here. We hope that you will continue to support our efforts by purchasing an ad, making a donation or subscribing for a free copy via email or a printed copy mailed to you, is only \$50 annually.



Let's Talk!

Monica

Monica T. Bryant, Editor

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Sixth Annual Champions for Champions Fundraising Charity Dinner and Auction



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

WOMEN AND MEN OF PURPOSE AND DESTINY, INC



Chrissy Vickers, CEO/Founder

When Chrissy Vickers started her organization 12 years ago, it was just for women and teen girls, but over time, she saw the need in the community to help motivate and encourage men and young boys. She said teaching parenting classes to men incarcerated in the Marion County Jail touched her heart.

"Seeing grown men cry because of the mistakes they made and wishing they could turn back the hands of time inspired me to add a men's division along with me becoming a big sister to so many young men who come to me for advice," she said. "When we decided to add the men's division (2020) and a children's division (2021), it was a great opportunity to motivate, inspire and encourage everyone."

Women and Men of Purpose and Destiny Incorporated is all about helping women, men and youth of all ages achieve their dreams and goals, and motivate people to find their purpose and reach their destiny. said Vickers, CEO and Founder of the organization.

"What I enjoy most about this organization is that everyone's story at some point is the same," said Ernest Wiggins, II., who serves as president of the men's division. "Every man, woman and child at some point during their story have the glitch of a moment where they felt something, experienced something on the same level and they chose to deal with it the right way, the positive way, to become successful to win, and that has shown to be the branch that intertwines us to grow and celebrate it."

Wiggins, who is also the owner and founder of Atlas Speed Training, LLC., said being president of the Men's Division means being able to share wealth in energy, knowledge, leadership as well as being a team member in our community to elevate young men as well as young women to attain their goals and dreams without doubt nor limitations throughout all aspects of life. He became involved in the organization nearly two years ago because the community motivation benefitted his spirit and soul and gave him another reason to strive to continue to improve himself everyday as a leader, a listener and a motivator. Wiggins, the guest speaker at one of the Superwoman's Award, became more involved when he saw what Vickers was achieving with such an incredible and motivating vision for Ocala and Marion County.

"It's awesome to see her lifting a community. Why not stand by her side as a motivating brother who loves to see and do the same," he said. "Our world needs more of this."

The organization meets periodically throughout the year and offers mentoring to youth, self-defense classes and self-development workshops and seminars for men and women. They assist individuals with personal goals and in the future, plan to help with career goals. During the holiday season, the organization assists homeless and low-income families with food and personal hygiene items. Long-term, the goal is to provide scholarships and grants to women and men who want to go back to school or start a small business and provide scholarship opportunities for teens who want to further their education by going to college.



Superman Awards Ceremony

"This will be one of our main ways of helping adults and youth reach their purposes and destiny." she said.

Vickers said the organization has changed her life for the better. The ah ha moment for her was the many times she felt like giving up and closing the organization, but in those moments she said God always sent the reassurance that what she started was really changing lives.

The greatest challenge the organization needs to overcome right now is realizing that they can't help everybody, but they can contribute and connect people to the right resources in the community through partnerships which are vital to helping reach the entire community in one way or another. She said the organization hosts three large events annually: The Superkids Awards will be held in August 2022 and the Superman and Superwoman Awards will be combined this year and held October 22, at the College of Central Florida.



Superwoman Awards Ceremony

"Giving people awards who have never received anything throughout their entire life ... and seeing the looks of joy and happiness on their faces and their families is priceless," she said.

Vickers said as they continue to expand, more volunteers will be needed in different areas such as helping mentor youth or they would love to have more sponsors for their big events, which would help them be able to provide scholarships to well-deserved women, men and children in the community.

"It would be amazing to see this organization expand to different cities," Wiggins said. "Keeping the same focus and umbrella of achievements again, celebrating all."



Superkids Awards Ceremony

For more information call (352) 304-3908, e-mail WOPD@womenofpurposeanddestinyinc.com or visit their website at www.womenofpurposeanddestinyinc.com.



Mission:
To empower women, men and youth to see their God given potential, boost self-esteem and reach their purpose and destiny in life.

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.

A DIFFERENT MOTHER'S DAY FOR ME THIS YEAR

Submitted by Shelia Arnett



Jaclyn Hostetter

It's been a rough six months for me. My daddy, Jack Campbell, died unexpectedly on October 19, 2021. My husband Earl was hospitalized with a pulmonary embolism two days later on October 21, and my 38-year-old daughter, Jaclyn Hostetter, was diagnosed with terminal cancer on November 2. The emotional storms that were battering me were relentless.

My girl and my three grandchildren came from Virginia the week after her diagnosis, and we had a "Week of Joy." She had a bucket list of things she wanted to do: She wanted the kids to see manatees in Crystal River, go horseback riding, see alligators in the wild and we did them all. We had a second "Week of Joy" between Christmas and New Year's at the Outer Banks in North Carolina. There weren't any big plans that week – her treatment was taking its toll. We knew how blessed we were to be able to spend time together.

On January 15, 2022, I posted on my Facebook page that I'm living in two worlds right now.

The Present -- my beautiful, awesome, larger than life daughter Jaclyn is in the present when I can call her on the phone and she answers. The present world where she is fighting every single day to beat cancer.

The Future -- the world that her diagnosis/prognosis has told us she won't be here on earth to see my 60th birthday in 2023. The future that, without a miracle from the Lord, she won't see her grandchildren, she won't see Brooke and Christopher graduate high school and she won't see Emily graduate college.

I am joyous knowing I can call and she answers the phone and, at the same time, I see a world that my first-born doesn't live in anymore on earth and the immense grief that the hole she leaves threatens to swallow me.

This mama is not okay!"

Unfortunately, my girl lost her battle with cancer right before 3 a.m. on January 28, just 12 weeks after her diagnosis. I held her hand as she took that last small breath in the same hospital where I had given birth to her 38 years before in Lexington, Virginia.

The emotional storm became a hurricane time stood still there were days that I didn't know if I would survive the grief. In the first weeks after her diagnosis, I prayed so very hard for a miracle. Hundreds of people, all over the world, were petitioning the Lord on my girls' behalf. Then my prayers changed. I prayed that the Lord didn't let my girl suffer. She was in healthcare and had watched many of her elderly patients languish in a bed and suffer before their death. She was more afraid of being bedridden and in pain than she was of dying.

I realized right after her death that the Lord had answered my second prayer. She didn't suffer. It was always going to be hard for us. For her, it was better that it was quick. When I got back to Florida, a couple of weeks after her death, my Lord gently reminded me that He answered my first prayer as well. He DID heal my girl, He just healed her in heaven not here on earth.

This Mother's Day will be very different for me. I am still mom to two beautiful daughters, Jaclyn and 23-years-old Elizabeth Arnett. Jaclyn just lives in heaven now.



Family trip to Crystal River



Elizabeth Arnett, Shelia Arnett and Jaclyn Hostetter

It's so hard for us mama's that have children that are no longer here. A wife that loses her husband is a widow. A husband that loses his wife is a widower. Children that lose their parents are orphans. But there is no word for a mom that has lost her child. It is unspeakable!

We used to go to church and then out to lunch to celebrate the day, and there were always special phone calls from Jaclyn, who lived in Virginia, and the grandkids.

So this Mother's Day, if you have someone in your life that has lost a child, don't be afraid to talk about the child that is gone. Don't think that you will remind us that our child is gone and it will make us sad. We are sad! Now our memories of our child are all we have. You honor us by letting us talk about our child. We love to hear your stories about them. Even if we cry, it's okay, I promise. The worst has happened to us – our child is gone. Now we fear that people will forget them!

This mama is still not okay! But my Lord is with me every single step of the way. I will find my way back. My grief has forever changed me. I will be more tender to the hurting. I will take the time with my friends and loved ones. I will talk to those that are grieving about their loved ones! You honor us by doing the same!



Elizabeth Arnett and Jaclyn Hostetter



Editors Note: You may not know what to say, but reach out to a mother who is grieving the loss of a child. Give her a hug, pray for her, listen to her or just say her child's name. It's the sweetest sound a mother can hear!

~LEGACY OF LIFE: SERVICING IN LOVE~

Since she lost her mom, Margaret A. Harvey, 11 years ago, attending church on Mother's Day has never been the same for Erica Tuggerson.

Harvey and her daughters usually took turns organizing the celebration for Mother's Day. They cooked together, had dance contests, attended church, went out for dinner and sometimes out of town for the weekend. The traditions, she said, were focused on her mother.

Tuggerson said they all went to Orlando to eat dinner at the Bahama Breeze restaurant the last Mother's Day they spent with her mom. We had a really nice time, she said.

But things changed on September 13, 2010. Early in the morning, Harvey called her siblings and told them she loved them. Then she called her children and told them the same thing, she loved them. Her mom managed to take her nieces and nephews to school and make it back home. She went and sat on her porch and suffered another stroke. Harvey died September 19, 2010, nine days after her 58th birthday.

Tuggerson said the hardest part after her mom died was not being able to see her, talk to her, hear her voice or just be in her presence. She said the first Mother's Day without her mom in 2011 was awful. Her one-year old daughter Skylar was in the hospital and nearly died. The staff at UF Shands Hospital watched Skylar while she attended church with her husband.

"It was terrible. Everyone was enjoying their mothers with speeches, duets, poems, giving them flowers and doing presentations," she said. "I cried the entire time. It wasn't good for me. I wasn't ready. Since then, I've only attended one other Mother's Day service."

Tuggerson has experienced more than her share of loss and grief. In addition to other family members and friends, she lost her mother-in-law (1996); her father-in-law (2005), and her father, Mack Harvey, died September 15, 2013, three years after her mom and on her son's 10th birthday. In September 2019, her nephew Tyrese Rembert was shot as a result of gun violence and passed away six months later on March 19, 2021.



The Tuggerson Family

Tuggerson said she always enjoyed journaling and after losing her mother, she found herself doing it a lot more. She said it was very therapeutic, and she began writing a book and the name Legacy of Life, Servicing in Love came to her.

The culmination of her own experiences combined with the experiences of others motivated her to launch Legacy of Life, Servicing in Love. Tuggerson, a griefshare coach, now helps others navigate through their darkest moments and supports them through their journey. She also offers a Legacy Building Workshop that helps individuals work through all of the difficult pieces associated with dying and passing on and leaving instructions and plans behind for the family to follow.

"When you do something and help someone from the kindness of your heart, the feeling that you have within is rewarding and humbling," she said.

She said the key points she wants people to know about Legacy of Life, Servicing in Love is that it's okay to grieve, but grieve healthy. Know the five stages of grief and know that we all grieve differently. Tuggerson said acceptance was the hardest stage for her to overcome.

"There is no specific order of grief. Talk about it, write it down, record yourself. Think about your loved ones legacy, but also find you and create a legacy for yourself," she said. "I experienced more meditating, sensitivity, humbleness and patience during her grieving process. This has helped me to help others."

For Tuggerson, Mother's Day still doesn't get any easier to celebrate. She said they continue to do their traditions and added singing contests, a cookie baking contest and a best dish contest. She also goes away with her sisters for at least 24 hours Mother's Day weekend to do whatever they want. The rest of the family, their husbands, children and grandchildren, joins them on Sunday for Brunch.

"I have to think now that I must embrace myself as a mother, take care of me not only on Mother's Day and allow my husband and children to celebrate me," she said.

Tuggerson, who has three children, said she always thought she would be the greatest aunt ever, but her mom constantly told her she would be a firm, militant mother. She was right!

As another Mother's Day approaches, Tuggerson's favorite memory of her mom is that she loved the Lord, she loved their dad and her children. She also adored her grandchildren, her entire family and her church family. She loved everyone!

"The ways she influenced me to be a mother was her relationship with God, to always pray and have faith in God," Tuggerson said. "She would say baby, you're my spiritual daughter and things will not always be easy, but always know that you can go to God for anything and everything."

For more information, visit Yourlegacyoflife.com or send an email to legacyoflife21@gmail.com.



Margaret A. and Mack Harvey Sr.



Legacy of Life

- Servicing in Love -

~ Vision ~

To encourage, educate and counsel individuals who are grieving.

~ Mission ~

To make a meaningful impact in the lives of families and businesses, in communities across the country and abroad, by providing griefshare-centered services and legacy planning workshops

~ Services ~

Griefshare
Loss of loved one/relationship
Legacy Building Workshops
Self-Care Tips

They also book for singing engagements and provide referral services, upon request.

CELEBRATING MOTHERS OF THE CHURCH: THEY STILL FILL AN



Pastor Regina Womack and Mother Kate White

Before the pandemic, you could always find Mother Kate Ruby Irving White sitting on the third pew on the right side of the sanctuary in the seat on the end at Mt. Olive African Methodist Episcopal Church in Anthony, Florida.

Due to Covid-19 precautions, White, who is 97-years old, does not physically attend church right now. Still, the pastor shares the messages with her via Facebook Live and video recordings. Her pastor, Regina Womack, visits her, prays with her, shares scriptures and serves Holy Communion.

On Mother's Day this year, when children all across the country take the time to honor their mothers for their contributions to their families and acknowledge the hard work and sacrifices they've made, some churches are recognizing women like White who serves as a Mother of the Church.

Mother Wilhelmenia Jones, who oversaw a Mothers Board for 10 years, but never served as a church mother, said women in that role are usually appointed by the pastor and had to live an upright life before all men and women. She said church mothers are usually long-time older women in the church. She said they wore white

as a sign of purity.

Jones, who has attended Draw All Men Ministries Church for 12 years, said church mothers at their church are responsible for preparing and assisting with Communion, visiting the sick, mentoring younger women, assisting the pastor or bishop with sensitive matters, involved in outreach activities and they are prayer warriors that assist at the altar when people need prayer.

Womack said White has been the Mother of the Church at Mt. Olive A.M.E. Church since 2010, when her pastorate began. White grew up in Anthony and is the mother of eight children, six of which still live in Marion County, she said.

Womack honored White recently by naming the local Lay Organization at her church The Sister Kate White Lay Foundation of Mt. Olive AME Church.



Mother Wilhelmenia Jones

Characteristics of Church Mothers

Church Mothers are Usually Over the age of 70.

Their age provides them with the knowledge and experience of many generations. They have children and grandchildren and carry with them the wisdom of the world. They have incredible stories to tell and the recipes and cooking tips they hold have been passed on from their parents and grandparents. Can you imagine the amount of information and knowledge they carry? Church Mothers have more than 7 decades of information and wisdom, both from their own experiences and also the knowledge that has been passed on to them.

Church Mothers are Dedicated to the Church.

They earn their appointed distinctions through many years of dedication, prayer, worship, and selfless sacrifice to the ministries of the church. They have great knowledge of the Bible and have superb oratory talents that allow them to become role models, counselors, and educators of the congregation. Not only will you learn to cook the most delicious soul food, but you will also learn about religion, spirituality, and the godliest ways to live your life.

Church Mothers Strengthen the Family.

They are obligated to show younger women the spiritual ways on how to promote healthy family lives. They guide these women and youth, steering them away from behaviors that can cause trouble in the home. They teach mothers, wives, and young women the proper ways to behave within the family, and how to manage households, which can include cooking for the family.

Source: <https://gospelchops.com/who-are-church-mothers/>

The Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1946, is commissioned to teach, train and empower its members for lay ministry, global leadership and service following the tenets of Jesus Christ.

"We're honoring her as a pillar in her community and as the oldest member of our church," Womack said. "She is a mother to many far and near. She is known for her phone ministry at Mt. Olive. She calls and checks on the welfare of members of the congregation, the Anthony community and surrounding communities via the phone."

White has served at Mt. Olive her entire life and her phone ministry has existed for more than 50 years, Womack said. As Mother of the Church, she said White was responsible for spearheading Family and Friends Day and fostering a Holy-Ghost-filled and loving church environment.

Womack says White's favorite scripture is Psalm 91, her favorite song is "Show Me The Way," and she loves the hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." She said her favorite memory is hearing White's recitation each year of a poem she wrote years ago titled "If Only We Would Live Right."

Continued on page 7

IMPORTANT ROLE IN MANY LOCAL CHURCHES TODAY!



Edna G. Simmons

“They must be a Christian woman with high faith in God. They must be honest, trustworthy and be considerate of personal feelings,” said Edna G. Simmons, Mother of the Church at New Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church since 2015. “They must be able to recognize and recommend corrections when needed.”

Prior to serving in that role, Simmons, who is 90 years old, served in a variety of other positions including Church Clerk, President of the Pastor’s Esteem Ministry, Vice President of Choir No. 1, Deaconess Ministry Assistant and Mother Board Administrator. Growing up, she said Agnes Starker, Doretha Williams and Clara Johnson were like a mother and they all were very loyal and dependable when it came to their church involvement.

Simmons said a church mother, when necessary, gives guidance to the younger members and mothers when needed, and she is always available to all members regardless of conversational need. In her church, she said, the younger generation have very limited conversations, but they do recognize the role of the Mother of the Church. They are always willing to participate in whatever is asked of them, she said.

Chandra J. Simmons-Grant, Simmons daughter, said she never envisioned following in her mom’s footsteps and being in the Mother of the Church role back in the day.

But Simmons, who has been a member of New Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church for 78 years, enjoys serving in that role.

“It has become very fascinating I must say,” Simmons said. “To hear the respect when the sisters and brothers relate to me as “Mother Simmons,” and just to see how they (especially the Deacons) make sure that I am safe and have a comfortable space when we are on the grounds for service or special programs.”



Things To Do With Mom Mother’s Day Weekend

Silver Springs Shores Community Center Mommy and Me Offspring Fling

Drinks and sweet treats will be provided as you and your children dance the night away. The event includes a live DJ, photos, games and arts & crafts for this Candy Land themed dance party! All proceeds benefit the Marion County Public Education Foundation.

Friday, May 6, 2022

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

590 Silver Road, Ocala, FL, 34471

Cost: \$20 per person

Lowe's Mother's Day Giveaway

Register by May 4, to pick up a free annual for Mother’s Day. It’s a great gift for your favorite mom.

To register, go to <https://www.lowes.com>
Limit 1 registration per person while supplies last

May 6 and 7, 2022

Lowe’s is located at

3535 S.W. 36th Ave., Ocala, FL 34474

Picasso's Palette Mother's Day Tea Party

We throw the best Tea Parties for Mother’s Day! You get to have tea and pastries and paint your own pottery too! We will be featuring ceramic tea cups to paint in addition to our wide variety of vases, planters, plates, mugs, banks, boxes, mermaids and unicorns!

The ceramics painted stay in studio for up to two weeks to be fired in our kilns and returned to you food safe. This event is friendly for all ages!

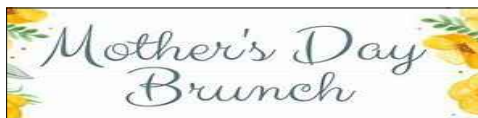
Sunday, May 8, 2022

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

106 SW 17th Street, Ocala, FL, 34471

Cost: \$5 (plus tax) per person for the Tea Party.
Additional cost for ceramic item to paint that day.

Serve Mom breakfast in bed or treat her to a



Friday, May 6, 2022

7 p.m. to 9:00 PM

Webb Field at Martin Luther King Recreation Complex,
1510 N.W. 4th St., Ocala.

Opening Artist: Sheba the Mississippi Queen

Headlining Artist: Indigenous



Barnes and Noble Special Mother's Day

Kid's Storytime

Join us, at the Storytime Stage in the Children’s Department for a special storytime celebrating mom!

We’ll be reading Jimmy Fallon’s book, “Everything is Mama” and making special crafts.

Recommended for Ages 3 - 6.

Saturday, May 7, 2022

11 a.m. to noon

4414 SW College Road, Ocala, FL, 34474

Cost: Free

Painting With A Twist Mommy and Me Blooming Love

All ages welcome but we recommend ages 8 and up!

Parents are encouraged to let children work by themselves. There may not be room enough for non-painting parents to sit next to their child.

ARRIVE 10 -15 MINUTES EARLY to get smocked and in your seat! Late arrivals may not be able to catch up

Sunday, May 8, 2022

Noon

4414 SW College Road, Ocala, FL, 34474

Cost: \$30 and up



Friday, May 6, 2022

6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Features Local Artists, Live Music and Free Art Activities

www.ocalafl.org/artwalk

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To apply, visit Elc-marion.org or call us at (352) 369-2315 and we are happy to help you see if you qualify!

SUMMER CAMP \$ FOR ELIGIBLE FAMILIES!

The Early Learning Coalition of Marion County helps eligible families cover the cost of summer camp* or childcare for children 12 and younger so parents can work or pursue their education.

*with School Readiness contracted providers



To apply, visit www.elc-marion.org.
Call us at 352-369-2315

Sponsored by the the Early Learning Coalition of Marion County and State of Florida, Division of Early Learning



The Humanists of North Central Florida is offering scholarships up to \$1,500 for post-high school education:

Vocational-Technical Schools and Programs
Adult Education and Continuing Education Programs.
College (2 or 4 years)
University



To qualify, a student must be committed to pursuing formal education beyond high school. Two letters of recommendation from non-relatives will be required. The first should discuss your commitment to reach your short-term goal(s), and the second letter should address your current status and potential for success in reaching your short-term goals.

Applications must be received by midnight **Saturday, July 30, 2022**. Applicants will be notified of their status within one month from their application date. *The scholarship will be paid directly to the education program.*

For more information or to request an application, email humanistsncfl@gmail.com.

Applications requested will be emailed or snail-mailed to student. Completed applications should be mailed to Scholarship Committee, 8878 S.W. 86th Loop, Ocala, FL 34481-9800.

Business Spotlight



Business Name: Amazing Floral Events

No. of Employees: 3

Business Owner: Mary L. Bess

Business Address: 1931 N. Magnolia Ave.
Ocala, FL

Business Phone: (352) 512-9619

What Year Did You Start Your Business?
2008 in North Carolina and 2015 in Ocala, Florida

Hours of Operation:
Tuesday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday - 9 a.m. to noon

Products and/or Services: Fresh florals for all occasions, Consultation and Delivery. Custom flower arrangements also available.

Email: info@amazingfloralevents.com

Website: amazingfloralsflorist.com

Are you on Social Media? No

What or Who Inspired you to start your business?
My mother Pastor Mary J. Robinson and her love of flowers. Since I currently do not have a college degree, it pushed me to utilize my skills that I was gifted with.

What Makes Your Business Unique or What's Your Specialty? We pride ourselves on providing great customer service, attention to details and the vision of our clients.

What Advice Would You Give Someone Starting A Business? Start somewhere, but start. Commit to excellence and persevere. Pray and seek wisdom of others in the industry.

Sample Arrangements:



SAVANNAH
STYLE



PINK
EXPLOSION



BLOOMING
AT DAWN

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, request a form from Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com. Completed forms can be returned via email or mailed to P.O. Box 6212, Ocala, FL 34478.

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS RETURNS TO MARION COUNTY

Stephanie Gavin credits her mom, Lillie Hope, who she admires and was her mentor, for being the reason she's the woman she is today. Growing up, she said, her mom taught her to believe in herself and that there was nothing she couldn't achieve if she put her mind to it.

"She also taught me courage and to treat others the way I wanted to be treated," she said. "She taught me to always stand for something and never let anything or anyone hold me down or back."

Before moving to Ocala, Gavin, served as a big sister in El Paso, TX., to Jesus, a young man from a single family home who's father had passed away before they were matched up when he was in the seventh grade. She said they met through the Big Brothers Big Sister (BBBS) program and now his family is her family and vice versa, and they continue to keep in touch.

"We've gone to museums, seasonal events like Christmas plays, the pumpkin patch, circus, fairs, cookouts and many company events such as bowling and so much more," said Gavin, who is now the BBBS program coordinator for Marion County. "I was there when he graduated, when he got his first car, when he attended college and I attended his wedding."

Now she is hoping to help children in our community by matching them up with caring adults that want to help youth who may have experienced or be experiencing the loss of a loved one, parents separated or divorced, incarceration of a family member, academic and/or behavioral struggles, prior abuse or neglect or witnessing domestic violence or adapting to changes in circumstances (including the pandemic), reach their full potential.

On Saturday, May 7, from 10 a.m. to noon Big Brothers Big Sisters will launch its program in Marion County. The event will be held in the Community Building at the First Responders Campus, 515 S.W. MLK Jr. Ave. and features free food, drinks, ice cream for the kids and fire truck tours.

"I've seen the positive change this program has provided in the lives of so many children over the years. I've seen self-esteem get better, grades turned around to the positive, attitude towards school turned around and parent and child relationship get better," said Gavin, who started as a temp with BBBS in El Paso in 2005 and was hired permanently in 2006.

Although there have been several attempts in the past by other agencies to bring a BBBS program in Marion County, none lasted. The Tampa Bay BBBS program is not affiliated with any of those previous agencies.

Jennifer Libby, Chief Program Officer, Tampa Bay, said BBBS of Tampa Bay has been an established agency since 1964 and is the fifth largest BBBS agency in the network. The agency serves 9 counties (Alachua, Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sumter and Marion) and is able to leverage resources, leadership and funding to grow and sustain mentoring relationships in Marion County.

"We are committed and dedicated to serving children in Marion County for the long-term," she said. "We know the impact caring adult mentors can have in the lives of children."

Gavin said they are already working with families and have formed some great partnerships. They currently have 21 Littles enrolled in the program in Marion County, but not all of them are matched with a mentor yet so they need more. She said she hasn't been matched with another little yet since she's only been here six months. She wants to get the BBBS program established here first, but getting another Little is definitely on her radar.

To be a Little: Your family must live in one of the nine counties BBBS operates in; child(ren) must be between the ages of five (enrolled in kindergarten) and 13 years old; Parent has to commit to 15 months in the program and the child must want to be in the program.

Becoming a Big is easy, Attend a 90-minute orientation and training session; Submit an application at the orientation (including references); Complete an interview and undergo a Level II background check; and Meet your new potential.

"If I can see one child less angry due to situations in their life and dealing with that situation better, it's a win win. If I see one child pass their grade that they were failing because of this program, it's a win, win," Gavin said. "If I see one child believe in themselves more regardless of the situation they may face, it's a win. That's why I do what I do. Advocate for the children."

To join Big Brothers Big Sisters and learn more about mentoring services for youth in Marion County, contact Stephanie Gavin at (352) 566-3094 or email StephanieG@bbbstampabay.org. To learn more about BBBS mentoring programs, go to BBBSTampaBay.org.



Big Brothers Big Sisters OF MARION COUNTY

YOU'RE INVITED: BBBS LAUNCH MARION COUNTY

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2022 10:00AM - 12:00 PM

COMMUNITY BLDG. AT MLK FIRST RESPONDER COMPLEX 515 SW MLK JR. AVE

Free food & drinks
Ice cream for the kids
Fire truck tours

Join Big Brothers Big Sisters to learn more about mentoring services for youth here in Marion County Community!

Contact: Stephanie Gavin
StephanieG@bbbstampabay.org
352.566.3094

Learn more about our mentoring programs at: BBBSTampaBay.org

INSPIRE INITIATIVES SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Funding available for exceptional students interested in STEM, Marketing, Communications, Art, and more!

APPLY: APRIL 11-MAY 20, 2022

*Scholarships available for high school seniors, current college students, and grad students.

NAACPORG/SCHOLARSHIPS NAACP

It's time to prepare for summer!

Do you have a child headed to kindergarten in the fall?

Now is the time to enroll in Summer VPK to ensure he or she is ready for school.

Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is a FREE, high-quality education program that focuses on early literacy and social-emotional skills, building a foundation for your child's success in kindergarten and beyond. Full day programs are available throughout the county at:

- Private childcare centers
- Faith-based childcare centers
- Licensed family childcare homes
- Public elementary schools

Florida VPK

It's getting hot outside!

Here are a few summer safety reminders, brought to you by:

- Always supervise children when they are in or near water and wear life jackets on boats
- Never leave a child unattended in a car
- Protect against sun and overheating
- Stay hydrated
- Wear properly fitted bike helmets

Stop by the Early Learning Coalition of Marion County in May 2022 for a **FREE summer safety kit!**

2300 SW 17th St., Ocala, FL 34471
www.earlylearning.org

UTILITY BILL ASSISTANCE NOW UP TO \$5000

NOW UNTIL 9/30/2022

Central Florida

How to Apply

(1) Click on <https://www.cflap.org/thisis>

(2) If you are elderly, have a learning disability, and/or your household does not have internet access, you can obtain a utility assistance approval by calling 1-855-373-7567

To Qualify

When applying for assistance, you must submit the following documents with your application:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo ID (not required for Assistance) Social Security Cards for all household members Proof of Income Letter showing amount received for current month (if applicable to your household) Two most recent, separate (signed) electric bills for your residence (the first or (overseas bills)) If you are a tenant, bring a letter from the utility company showing the amount needed to receive service. This letter must be signed, dated and show the meter address. Section 8 or HUD Housing, Rental Form 50209 (if applicable to your household) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All household income for 60 days prior to your appointment, excluding anything received on the day of your appointment. This includes wages, self-employment income, social security, retirement, pensions, etc. (2021 tax benefits, TANF, child support, unemployment, workers compensation, financial aid, subsidies, etc. (tax statements)) Valid signed letter of working or start new electric service
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All of the above documentation is REQUIRED for program application for LIHEAP services. An application submission is not a guarantee of service.

MONEY SMART TIPS

By Scott Hackmyer

Gas prices are very high and hurting everyone's budget. The other evening I was driving west on State Road 200 and traffic was unusually light. A Ford Explorer pulling a trailer raced past me even though the traffic light ahead was red. I took my foot off the gas and coasted to the light while the Ford kept driving then braked to come to a stop. The same thing happened for the next three lights. What a waste of gas for the Ford which made me think of some things that everyone can do to get better gas mileage and save money. Here is a short list that if you follow will increase your mileage and save you money:



- When no one is right behind you take your foot off the gas and coast to a red light. With luck, the light will turn green before you get there and you won't have to come to a stop. You burn the most fuel just getting your car moving again.
- Empty your trunk of anything you don't need. For every 100 pounds of "stuff" in your trunk your gas mileage goes down about 1%. I'm guilty of doing this myself.
- Check your tire pressure at least once a month. Most of us already own a tire gauge but they aren't that expensive to buy. When your tires are low on air you get worse gas mileage. WaWa stations offer free air at most stations. Others may too that I don't know about.
- Plan your trip so you combine as many errands as possible into one trip. Try to do your stops in one circular route so you are not driving back and forth across town. A cold engine gets bad mileage so not making multiple trips and combining into one stops you from wasting gas when driving a cold engine.
- You will hate this one but don't speed. Driving over the speed limit cuts down on your mileage and truthfully saves very little time. If you reduce your speed by just 5 mph and drive for an hour it will only take 5 extra minutes if driving at 60 mph.
- Make sure your air filter is clean and changed following the guidelines in the owner's manual.
- Download an app onto your phone like Gas Buddy which will help you find the lowest gas prices near your location. If you want to compare you can try Gas Guru or WAZE.

Other ways to save on gas reflect changing how you travel more than how you drive. SunTran has changed and improved their routes over the years and go to more places than ever. Call them at **(352) 401-6999** for information on routes and fares.

Carpooling is still a great way to save money, particularly if you are going to a set place like work every day. Ask at work or school to see if someone lives near you and you can set up an arrangement. If you are close enough, sometimes just riding a bike or walking might be the biggest cost saving of all.

MT. MORIAH CELEBRATES 155 YEARS



The historic Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church in downtown Ocala, located at 55 SW 3rd Ave., will celebrate its 155th Anniversary on Sunday, May 15, with special worship services at 9 a.m. with Rev. Dr. Jerry Alexander, Pastor of Mt. Moriah; 11 a.m. with Rev. Dr. Gaston Smith, Sr. Pastor, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Miami; and

Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church 1867

3 p.m. with the Rev. Keith Blunt, Pastor, New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, Ocala

Established in May of 1867, Mt. Moriah is known as "The Mother Church" for its distinction as the first African-American Baptist Church organized in Ocala Proper. Several other churches later descended from Mt. Moriah during that era. The church has held prominence throughout Ocala and the Marion County community.

Other anniversary celebrations include a Pre-Anniversary Gospel Concert on Saturday, May 7, at 6 p.m. The concert features the well-known Brightside Gospel Singers of Tallahassee, FL.

Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased from any church member or contact the church office at **(352) 629-3782**.



Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church 2022

RECOVERY
on the *Square*

Breaking the stigma of addiction with hope and connections

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2022 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

1 SE Broadway Street
Ocala, FL, 34471

FOR MORE INFO CALL: (352)765-4943
HOSTED BY: ZERO HOUR LIFE CENTER

FUN FOOD

The 2022 FAMU National Alumni Association, Inc. (FAMU NAA) scholarship applications are now available!



The Deadline to apply is May 15, 2022, at 5 p.m. EST.

The scholarships for **incoming FAMU students** (graduating high school seniors) include the Academic Achievement Award, Herman Davis Award, and High School Award. To apply for this scholarship, go to <https://famunaa.org/page/2022FreshmanScholarApplication>.

The scholarship for **current FAMU students and transfer students** is the Sophomore, Junior, Senior and Transfer Student Award. To apply for this scholarship, go to <https://famunaa.org/page/2022SophJrSrTransferApplication>

Applicants will have to upload several documents as part of their application. It is imperative to read the instructions prior to beginning to ensure you have all documents ready to upload. Multiple application submissions will be removed from the selection process. All applicants will be notified via email on or before August 1, 2022.

For questions, please contact the scholarship committee chair, Mrs. Doris Hicks, at scholarship@famunaa.org.

COME OUT AND ENJOY THESE FAMILY FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES



Symphony Under the Stars

This Mother's Day, come enjoy the Ocala Symphony Orchestra directed by Maestro Matthew Wardell.

The Symphony Under The Stars is an outdoor concert being held on Sunday, May 8, at 3 p.m. at the Ocala Golf Club, 3130 East Silver Springs Blvd.

Gates open at 3 p.m. Music-lovers can enjoy opening entertainment with the Ocala Symphony Orchestra.

The concert begins at 7 p.m. The evening concludes with a spectacular Fireworks Display! (weather permitting). Fireworks start around 8:45 p.m.

Tickets on sale at www.fafo.org/ticket-outlets/ Regular and VIP tickets available.

Children 17 and under get in free

Adult tickets ~ \$20

At the gate ~ \$25

Bring your own picnic — including alcoholic drinks — or purchase food and drinks from local food trucks. Food Truck Rally, Adirondack Chair Rentals, Premium Parking (Pay online only), and the Ocala Golf Club will be selling beer and wine.

Please **DO NOT** bring tents, big umbrellas, barbecue grills or pets!



THE OCALA JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION COMMISSION

presents the 2nd Annual

Juneteenth

FREEDOM DAY

Celebration

Saturday, June 18, 2022

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Webb Field

1501 W. Silver Springs Blvd.

Ocala, Florida 34475

Food - Vendors - Entertainment & More!

For more information, contact

Sharington Houston at

ocalajuneteenth2020@gmail.com

Save the Date

@LEVITTAMPOCALA

10 FREE CONCERTS

FRIDAYS

APRIL 22 - JULY 1*

7 - 9 P.M.



WEBB FIELD

1510 NW 4TH ST.

RAIN LOCATION:

E.D. CROSKY RECREATION CENTER

**excluding May 27*

MUSIC



2022 SERIES LINE-UP

April 22, Davina and the Vagabonds with West Port High Real Teal Jazz Combo | April 29, LPT with Denis Vasenin

May 6, Indigenous with Sheba, the Mississippi Queen | May 13, The Byrne Brothers with Scott Jackson

May 20, The Drifters feat. Rick Sheppard with Billy Buchanan | June 3, Reggae Force with Nostaljah

June 10, Bette Smith with Ecliff Telford | June 17, Natu Camara with UF Afropop Ensemble

June 24, Melvin Williams with Gospel Echoes | July 1, Miles Nielsen & the Rusted Hearts with the Ocala Symphony Orchestra

FUN

FOOD



For more information visit ocalafl.org/levittamp or call 352-629-8447.



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ECRWSS



SATURDAY, JULY 30, 2022

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 or sponsorship opportunities, call (352) 438-5993 or (352) 509-9279

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 of Mid-Florida, Inc., City of Ocala in partnership with Marion County Public Schools