

NORTHEAST JOURNAL

Good People ∞ Good Places ∞ Good Things Happening

St. Petersburg, FL

EARLY SUMMER 2020

EST. SEPTEMBER 2004

A Community Comes Together

— JANAN TALAFAER —

The outpouring of support during COVID-19 was unprecedented as St. Petersburg came together as a community, reminding us that we were all in this together.

Stories like these offer us hope. And that's what the *Northeast Journal* does best. For over a decade, we've been delivering good news about people and organizations doing good deeds. Here are few stories we've collected over the past few months – stories of how some of our neighbors overcame these challenging times with creativity, commitment and grace.



Terri Reid, Janice Chandler, and Garry Reid organized Sewing for St. Pete – Masks for COVID-19.

St. Pete Sews

In mid-March, as TV news anchors started alerting the country about the shortage of masks for healthcare workers in places like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, Janice Chandler and Terri Reid – a Snell Isle resident and global account manager for Cisco – decided to help.

“Terri emailed me and said what do you think, how would you like to make a few masks,” said

Janice. “She knew that I sewed and she was willing to buy some material to fund the project. I said, yes, let's see how we can help locally.”

Janice placed a call to St. Anthony's Hospital to see if they were interested. Initially, the hospital was a little uncertain, but within a few hours, Janice got a call back. “It was a charge nurse in the ER,” said Janice. “She said we will take everything you can get.”

That was just the start. The next day, Janice posted a notice on Nextdoor asking for help making masks. Several people responded right away. And then the requests started flooding in; the first one from a physician who sent a private message. He desperately wanted masks for his outpatient chemotherapy center in Countryside.

“I said I could make a few – he wanted 78,” said Janice. “On Monday morning, we dropped off some to him at the center, and when we gave



Janice Meidel clowning at the Social Distancing Block Party. Story on page 7.

Building the City: Hennessy Construction Centennial



Hennessy Offices, image circa 1965

— WILL MICHAELS —

It is said that a city's history is written on its buildings. Perhaps no other construction company has done as much to write that history in St. Petersburg as Hennessy Construction. This year Hennessy is celebrating its centennial. The company has continuously operated in St. Petersburg since 1920. Over that time, it has built some of St. Petersburg's most significant buildings, including St. Mary's Church, the Fine Arts Museum, St. Anthony's Hospital, and the Tampa Bay Times Press Building.

The company was founded by A.P. (Aneas) Hennessy. A.P. emigrated from Ireland to the United States at the age of 19. He first went to Chicago, but in 1917 he moved his family to St. Petersburg. A.P. began work as a carpenter, but soon formed a partnership with Charles DuBois. Together, they established a construction company known as DuBois & Hennessy, Inc.

Hennessy's first major project was the building of St. Mary Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church which still graces the corner of 4th Street and 6th Avenue South. It is one of the first of several St. Petersburg iconic buildings seen as you exit the Interstate via 175. St. Mary's was designed by renowned architect Henry L. Taylor who also designed the Vinoy Hotel. The church was built in the Byzantine style with Romanesque features and was constructed in 1929.

Hennessy – who himself was Catholic – became somewhat of a specialist in church construction. In the 1930s, he undertook significant projects involving St. Paul's Catholic Church, St. John's Catholic Church, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, and Congregation B'nai Israel Synagogue. At St. Paul's, he built the convent, rectory, and later the high school. At St. John Vianney, he constructed the auditorium. In 1930, DuBois and Hennessy also built the famous open-air Solarium for sunbathing on the approach to the Pier (nudity was permitted for ‘medicinal purposes’). The Solarium, the entrance of which was built in the style of an Egyptian temple, closed in 1961.

In the 1940s, Hennessy Construction was incorporated as A.P. Hennessy & Sons, Inc., and A.P.'s sons Lawrence (“Kel”) and

Continued on page 16



Continued on page 6



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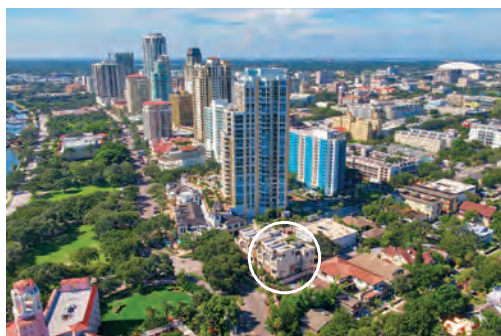
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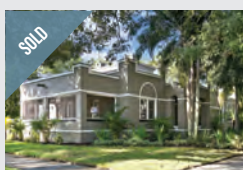
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Thank you, St. Pete!

So much has happened in the last few months that it's hard to describe the roller coaster of emotions we experienced as both individuals and a community. But one thing was clear – as the weeks went by, we knew we had to find the positive stories that might give us hope and lessen the fear. And there were so many! Thank you to the hundreds of heroes who shared their stories to remind us that St. Petersburg is a great place to live, work, and play.

We also want to thank our advertisers. We appreciate you, especially now during these tough economic times when so many media outlets are struggling. You'll notice that this issue is slightly smaller – 24 pages rather than our usual 36, but we are feeling optimistic. We are grateful that with our advertisers' support, we can continue pursuing our good-news mission.

I have personally been busy gardening – pulling weeds, trimming bushes, digging new planting beds, and placing more than 80 bags of mulch in my yard. I'm proud that my front yard now includes the sign *One Sunrise at a Time, We're In This Together*. Erin and Adam Erickson created the sign as a fundraiser for the St. Pete Free Clinic. Turn to page 7 for their story.

Janan Talafer

Editor, *Northeast Journal*



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ADVERTISING
Susan Seta-Williams
(727) 259-3149
northeastjournal@gmail.com

EDITORIAL
Janan Talafer, *Managing Editor*
editor@northeastjournal.org
Julie L. Johnston, *Copy Editing*

ART DIRECTION/PRODUCTION
Julie L. Johnston, *Ad Design/Layout*
JohnstonGraphicDesigner@gmail.com

DISTRIBUTION
Jamie Mayo, *Distribution/Subscriptions*
distribution@northeastjournal.org

WRITERS AND CONTRIBUTORS
Jeannie Carlson
Rick Carson
Jon Kile
Diana Krause Geegan
Will Michaels
Janan Talafer

NEJ FACEBOOK REPORTER
Lynn Lotkowitz

PHOTOGRAPHY
Diana Krause Geegan
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A COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER

Super Heroes to the Rescue

Since March, Shore Acres resident Sandra Botero Mounts has also been making masks for healthcare workers and first responders. But rather than colorful flowers or abstract patterns, her masks feature superheroes caricatures from popular comic books, especially her favorite: Wonder Woman.



Cartoons and superheroes are part of daily life in the Mounts household. Sandra's husband Paul is a comic-book color artist whose work has appeared in Marvel, DC Comics, and Top Cow, among others. By day, Sandra teaches high school Spanish with the Florida Virtual School, but at night, she gets out her superhero fabrics and makes clothing and accessories for her online fashion-design business, Heroicouture.

As news of the pandemic began dominating headlines, it was natural for Sandra to think about how she could help. Her father, Dr. Luis Botero, was a long-term St. Pete cardiac surgeon. Her sister is a physician assistant. And she has many friends in the medical field. "I kept seeing on the news that was a need for protective masks," said Sandra.

One of the news shows reported that a hospital in Indiana had posted a tutorial on how to make masks. So she went to the website, printed out the pattern, and set up shop. "I had this huge amount of colorful superhero fabric," said Sandra. "I realized that this is why I've been hoarding it without knowing why."

Since then, she's donated over 900 masks, with the majority donated to healthcare professionals, police, EMTs, and other frontline workers locally and around the country, including hard-hit areas in New York and New Jersey.

She does all of the cutting of fabric and elastic, and sewing the masks herself. "I like to stay busy and be productive," said Sandra. "Doing what we can to offer support during this time is important. We have to remember we are a global community, part of a global world. We're not singular, but part of this giant puzzle." ◆

Above: Sandra Botero Mounts. Below: the Maknis family



A COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER *Continued from page 1*

some to the patients, they started crying. That was it; we were hooked. We realized we were really making a difference."

From there, everything began moving quickly. Terri's daughter Erika set up a Facebook page for the newly organized group: Sewing for St. Pete – Masks for COVID-19. That ramped up requests even more from nursing homes, doctor's offices, hospitals, medical clinics, early childhood centers, and more. "Little did we know how it would explode," said Terri. "Every week it was exponentially more."

Donations were coming in, too. An early GoFundMe campaign generated \$1,200 in a day-and-a-half. People were also donating supplies of buttons, thread, bolts of fabric, and spools of elastic. "Special recognition goes to Elizabeth and Tom Bunberry of Answered Prayers, who gave us fabric and elastic, as well as loaned us sewing machines, and to Jill Orobello of Whim So Doodle, who donated fabric," said Terri.

By now, more than 100 sewing angels had jumped in to help. At first volunteers were doing it all – cutting the material, sewing masks, and adding elastic. But Janice and Terri quickly realized they needed a more efficient system to keep up with the growing number of volunteers and the demand for masks. They organized teams of "sewing angels" and "cutting warriors" – splitting up the tasks depending on skill level. Then they came up with the idea of putting together small kits for each group, placing everything needed in small plastic bags to make it easy for volunteers to take home and get started. They even began coordinating fabrics – front and back – to make sure the completed masks were not only useful, but also attractive.

They also organized pick-up and drop-off boxes – one on the front step of Terri's home in Snell Isle,



and one in Allendale at Janice's home – further adding to the team's organization, and keeping everyone protected while socially distancing.

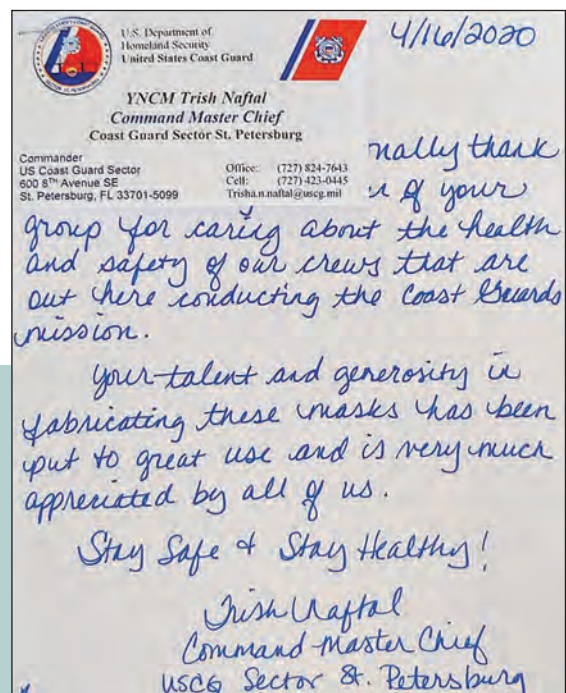
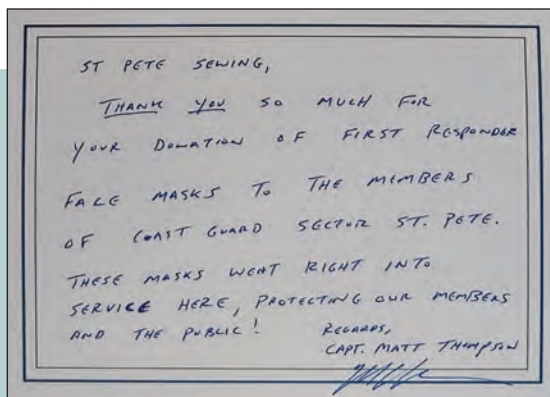
Everyone had a role. "We started joking that I was the CEO and quality control officer. Terri was in charge of acquisition, distribution, and fundraising. Terri's husband Garry, was the CFO and accountant, keeping track of donations and how many masks were being made and distributed," said Janice. Garry also had the initial task of cutting spools of elastic into the sizes they needed. He jokes that he cut about 10 football fields of elastic, seven inches at a time.

There are so many silver-lining stories that have come out of this project, Terri said. Nyla and her mother Flower Nguyen – a professional seamstress – helped provide many spools of elastic, which initially had been unavailable. John Andry of Shore Acres – a 20-something young man who has autism – was eager and enthusiastic in tackling the time-consuming task of cutting thousands of strips of elastic to the exact size needed, an important job to make sure the masks fit correctly.

Then there was the time when Chief Petty Officer Tim Abrams – on the orders of Captain Matt Thompson of the US Coast Guard St. Petersburg station – came to Terri's door in uniform to personally thank the team for making hundreds of grey-and-navy-blue masks to protect the men and women stationed here locally.

"It's been a true grassroots effort, just unbelievable and so heartwarming," said Terri. "We are honored to be part of it. A lot of our volunteers have told us that getting involved helped them stay busy and sane. It kept them from feeling paralyzed." Garry adds, "I want to give a shout-out to the women who have undertaken this challenge. There are a few men involved, but it's mostly the women who have done the hard work. They have been amazing."

The amount of work the team has undertaken is staggering. By June 1, the team had made and donated over 12,500 masks. "We are going to have a big party when this is over," said Terri. "It's just been a village of untold angels to help our local heroes! It's been people-connecting-people to help out." ◆



A COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER

Reaching Out to the Neighbors

As the weeks went by and everyone began to feel more and more isolated at home, Janice Meidel and Deann Coop were cooking up a way to connect friends and neighbors while still maintaining healthy social distance. The result was a Social Distancing Block Party on a Saturday night in early April. Homeowners in a three-block vicinity of 18th Avenue NE and Cherry Street joined in the fun.

It was definitely not your typical party. Janice and Deann videotaped the invite, encouraging neighbors to “enjoy their own dinner, bring their own drinks, and set up their own chairs and table in their own front yard or sidewalk. No mixing and mingling, just waving from afar.”

“We had no ulterior motive except to spread a little cheer to our neighbors,” said Janice, who is employed with Suncoast Youth For Christ and mentors girls in public middle schools through a program called Girl Talk.

Janice definitely brought a spirit of fun to the party, as she strolled up and down the street dressed as a clown, tossing candy, toilet paper rolls, and small wrapped gifts for the kids in the crowd. Her husband Mike, director of Pinellas County Economic Development, brought an enormous bubble wand and walked down the street ahead of Janice, creating bubbles that she described as the size of a small car.

“At the last minute, I decided to wear my clown costume from when I had participated in the chaplain program at Naples Memorial Hospital,” said Janice. “A group of us would regularly dress up as clowns and visit patients.”

After the party, Jeanne Sanchez texted Janice, telling her “thank you for thinking of doing this. It was so nice to socialize even from afar. It made me forget what we’re all going through for a couple of hours.” Janice definitely agrees. “It was so refreshing to have a time of lighthearted connection with our neighbors,” she said. “People were lingering and talking from a distance. It was like a movie from another era. No one was in a hurry and everyone seemed genuinely happy to be there.”



Facing page: Terri and Donna Cothron of St. Anthony's Foundation. Above: While Janice Meidel ‘clowned around’ (see cover photo), her husband Mike, director of Pinellas County Economic Development, walked down the street creating huge bubbles. Below left: Deann Coop and family ‘dine out.’ Below right: Desiree Chubb mixing hand sanitizer at 3 Daughters.

One Sunrise at a Time

It’s hard to miss them... the brightly colored yard signs in tropical pinks and purple and green with the blue waves of Tampa Bay in the foreground. They’ve been popping up in front yards all over Northeast St. Pete.



The signs are the inspiration of Allendale residents Erin and Adam Erickson, who own Vampt Co., a local marketing agency. They had gone on vacation with their two sons, Avery (12) and Adam (8). And when they returned home, stay-at-home orders were going into effect. Some of their clients, as non-essential businesses, had to close their doors temporarily. The Erickson’s found their workload lightened, and as social distancing became the norm, they decided to do something creative that would help everyone feel more connected.

Erin is a graphic designer and began thinking about a yard sign. “I kept playing around with the idea of Sunshine City and thinking about our colorful sunsets,” said Erin. “Then I got the idea for a sunrise as a fresh start for every day.” The result – *One Sunrise at a Time, We’re In This Together* – was a hit with everyone who saw it.

“Originally, we were just going to make enough for friends and family, and we were going to surprise people; but then the more we brainstormed, the bigger it got,” said Adam. They teamed up with their printer, Florida State Graphics, and with friends who manage St. Pete Run Fest, and before long, the sign had evolved once again, this time to become a fundraiser for the St. Petersburg Free Clinic. The signs are \$15 each, with all proceeds besides the cost of materials going to support the Free Clinic’s Food Bank. By early May, the signs were sprouting up in yards all over Northeast St. Pete, and by June 1, they had sold more than 1,000 signs and raised more than \$8,400 for the Free Clinic to help individuals and families in need.

Protecting the Front Line With Hand Sanitizer

In the first few weeks of COVID-19, as people rushed to take precautions and hand sanitizer was nowhere to be found, Leigh and Mike Harting stepped in to help. The Placido Bayou residents own the popular 3 Daughters Brewery. “We thought, we have everything we need,” said Leigh. “We have a chemist on staff, an onsite lab, a facility to sterilize the bottles, and the raw ingredients to make the sanitizer. We can do this.” And they certainly did.

Over the next eight weeks, they made and donated an enormous quantity of hand sanitizer, giving it away in bulk to medical professionals, first responders, and essential-business owners, and also to the public in small quantities at scheduled drive-through events. In total, said Leigh, it comes to over 4,000 gallons of hand sanitizer (nearly 10,000 containers). Over 300 organizations benefitted, including police departments in St. Petersburg and Tampa, fire departments locally and around the state, Tampa Bay hospitals, and even childcare centers, schools, and organizations like Feeding Tampa Bay.

That’s what it’s all about. Taking big or small actions to help neighbors in a time of crisis. Sometimes it takes a life-changing event like this to make us stop, take stock of our blessings, and reach out to help one another.



“I Feel Lucky To Be Alive”

— JANAN TALAHER —

As we’ve struggled over the last few months to make sense of a new reality and to adjust to the limitations on our lives imposed by the coronavirus, Tony Cappelli’s story of overcoming hardship offers inspiration. A resident of the Old Northeast, Tony says he feels lucky to be alive and always looks forward to tomorrow.

He was 11 years old when bombs began falling near his family’s farm in Ausonia, a small Italian town about 12 miles south of Cassino, home of the ancient Abbey of Montecassino. Situated on a mountaintop overlooking the valley, the abbey has an illustrious past – St. Benedict first established the Benedictine order there in the 5th century. Some of the fiercest fighting in Italy took place during the Battle of Montecassino with both Allied Forces and Germans fighting for control of the area.

“We could see the fires burning at night from all the bombs,” says Tony.

The Allied Forces thought the Germans were headquartered in the abbey and they were determined to drive them out. During an air raid in March of 1944, 1,250 tons of bombs were dropped on Cassino, killing more than 2,000 civilians and leaving the abbey in ruins.

Fearing for their safety, the residents of Ausonia had already fled to nearby caves. Tony recalls many families crowded together in the caves. “We couldn’t go outside. We had no bathrooms, no food, nothing to cook over except a flat stone placed over a fire,” says Tony. “Every once in a while somewhere would go out and get a cow or a sheep and butcher it. We all shared the food.” Even now, he says it’s hard to talk about.

They hid out in the caves for nearly six months before they were discovered by the Germans and transported to a ‘camp’ in northern Italy. “We were outside in a camp setting, but it felt like a jail,” says Tony. “We were surrounded by a fence and we couldn’t leave.” He doesn’t remember how long they were there. To a young boy it could have been weeks or months.

After the war, the Americans liberated the camp and brought the families back to Ausonia. But they couldn’t go back to their farms. The bombs had ripped up the farmland. Everywhere you looked, there were explosives and scattered

shrapnel. In time, the Americans cleared the land, but they had to go inch-by-inch to take the bombs out, Tony says.

Eventually the farmland was cleared, allowing local residents to return. The abbey was rebuilt, too, and today supports a thriving monastery and cathedral, as well as a museum. Visitors are welcome.

Tony returned to school to study agriculture, while also working at the family farm and as a handyman at a nearby girls’ orphanage, learning skills that would later come in handy. Even so, it was a difficult time, he says.

He had always wanted to come to the US to continue his education, and in 1956, when he was 21, he came to St. Petersburg to visit an uncle who lived here. Tony managed to be in the right place at the right time. He got a job with the Wedding family doing landscaping, although it was only temporary until his visa expired.

Randy Wedding, former St. Petersburg mayor from 1973-1975, was an architect who designed the original Busch Gardens. His father, Charles Wedding, was the landscape architect for the project. And it wasn’t long before the Wedding family arranged for Tony’s return to help him landscape the park.

“Mr. Wedding came to Italy and talked to the American Consulate about my returning to St. Petersburg. He had the contract with Busch Gardens. They said to go Italy, take pictures, and get labor. They brought me back and sent me to do the landscaping at Busch Gardens,” Tony recalls.

The Wedding family also had the contract to do landscaping at Whispering Waters, a new condo complex being built on North Shore Drive. It was 1961, and Tony was sent there to spruce up the grounds. Not long after, Whispering Waters asked him if he would come to work for the condo association taking care of maintenance and the landscaping – a job he would have for the next 60 years. “I loved it,” says Tony. “It gave me great satisfaction to take care of the property for all those years.” During that time, he received three beautification awards from the city.

Tony also used his handyman skills to transform several other properties. One of the most significant was the Holiday Motel on 4th Street North known for its colorful front doors. The motel was recently demolished to make way for new modern storefronts. But, in the early 1960s, it was a popular place for seniors to live, especially seasonal visitors from up north.



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“The property was for sale and every day on my way to work at Whispering Waters, I would see that for-sale sign,” says Tony. “Finally one day, I stopped by and told the owner I would like to buy it. He said the city had condemned it, but that didn’t scare me. I thought I could fix it up. I wanted to save the motel.”

Over the course of two years, he completely remodeled the property and rented out all of the efficiency units. Eventually, Tony and his wife Lina moved in, too, with Lina manning the front desk and Tony continuing to work at Whispering Waters.

In 1981, the Chamber of Commerce presented him with yet another beautification award, this time for the motel.

But by 1984, with a growing family – two girls and a boy – Tony and Lina decided it was time to sell the motel and move into their own home on Oak Street in the Old Northeast. Then in 1997, with their children grown, they decided to downsize to a condo on the third floor of Whispering Waters. Tony has long since retired as the property’s full-time landscaper and maintenance man. But, he continues to volunteer to keep the hibiscus blooming and help longtime residents with small maintenance-related repairs.

When Tony told me that he had at one time owned the Holiday Motel, I asked him how he felt about it being knocked down, especially after all the controversy over whether it deserved historical designation. He shrugged and noted it was progress – part of the always-changing landscape of St. Petersburg. Besides, he said, when he sold the property back in the '80s, he had used the money to send all of his children to college. One daughter went to Stetson University in Deland. His son went to Yale and Fordham. His own education had to be put on hold. “I had been interested in studying engineering, and everyone was encouraging me to back to school, but with working and raising a family, it was just too much for me,” says Tony. He went to night school to learn English at Mirror Lake’s Tomlinson Adult Learning Center. It’s definitely a hard-earned success story.

Tony will be 85 in June. “The other day, I talked to my grandson who is 12, the same age I was during the war, and I told him about what we had experienced, the hardship, no food,” says Tony. “But I survived it, and I’ve had a good life. I reassured him that we would survive the coronavirus, too.” ♦

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR



Bill Thomas
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How long have you lived in St. Pete and where are you from originally?

I'm originally from the Detroit area, the home of Henry Ford, and have been in St. Pete for seven years.

Best hidden gem(s) in St. Pete?

Mazzaro's Market

Top two places in the world on your bucket list?

Tahiti and Denmark

What famous person, current or past, would you like to meet?

President Obama

Favorite sport, recreational activity, or hobby?

Meditation

If you could have one super power what would it be?

To be able to fly

What are you watching/binge watching on Netflix?

Schitt's Creek... it's hilarious!

Favorite restaurant in St. Pete?

Rotates weekly, but my go-to's would be Kraft Café and Cider Press Café!

If you were a dog, what breed would you be?

A Golden-Doodle

Tell us about a situation or a person who has inspired you.

On Christmas Day, my team put together a dinner for a group of seniors. It truly was so amazing that they pulled together an amazing time for the needs of others.

Current book you've read and would recommend?

Tribe of Millionaires

What St. Pete venues are on the must-see list for out-of-town guests?

Either The Palladium or St. Pete Shuffleboard Court

Tell us about an accomplishment, current or past, of which you are proud.

Co-founder for Detroit Aids Walk

Something people might not know about you?

I am a twin!

What do you do for a living – what do you enjoy about it?

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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LIVING IN THE OLD NORTHEAST IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

During these extraordinary times, my almost-daily luxury has been a one-hour afternoon walk along the waterfront or a foray into the neighborhood. As someone who has lived in the ONE for 20 years, I've spent a fair amount of time going up and down our streets, usually driving a car, but not often enough on foot or bike. And I'm convinced that walking our blocks is the only way to really appreciate what a special place this is.

As I stroll up and down the avenues (and don't forget the streets!), I inhale the fragrance of the jasmine, gardenias, and plumeria. I observe close up the unique plantings, yard art, and landscape designs. And then there are the sidewalk libraries and chalkings. I admire the knock-your-socks-off paint color combinations and the intricate architectural details that you'll never spot driving past. I notice houses that I've missed appreciating, and I somewhat grudgingly have to admit – even for me, an 'old house' type – some of the 'new builds' aren't half bad. I concede how

they may add positively to our diversity along with the stunning remodels and restorations of older properties.

So, as you are reading this, and if we are still spending way too much time tethered to our homes, I encourage you to do yourself a favor and take the time – no, make the time! – to practice physical distancing and walk our blocks and really see what you've probably been missing.

~ Rick Carson, HONNA page editor

The pandemic is altering how all of us are living our lives and dealing with a 'new normal.' We're sharing with you how some of your neighbors have been taking care of themselves and one another. These snippets are only the tip of the iceberg in terms of how your Old Northeast neighbors are responding to this unprecedented experience, but we hope they may inspire you into new ways of thinking and doing as we journey ahead.

HONNA Encourages

The HONNA board posted a notice encouraging Old Northeast residents to consider making a donation to local causes providing essential services such as Daystar Life Center, Meals on Wheels, Pet Pal Animal Shelter, St. Pete Free Clinic, and St. Petersburg Fighting Chance Support fund. HONNA also invited neighbors to go out on their front porches and stoops to make some noise clapping and cheering at 8pm on Fridays as a thank-you to all those performing essential duties during the pandemic. ●



Happy Easter, Bunny!

Easter Egg Hunt

On 21st Avenue NE, Doug O'Dowd's neighbors decided to celebrate Easter by having an Easter egg hunt in the front yards of each family with kids. After the Easter Bunny stopped by, the kids enjoyed finding numerous eggs, and sharing their enthusiasm with their family and friends. Little Henry enjoyed some kisses (the chocolate kind) with his mom (Turner) as his two friends, Chad and Nora, excitedly found their eggs. All of this was done keeping social distancing in mind. ●

BYOE

For several weeks, John Johnson and his neighbors have been sitting out in the back alley and chatting for an hour or so on Saturdays at 6:30. They call it BYOE (bring your own everything). They are physically distancing (about 12 feet) but socially connecting. ●



Mobile Bunny

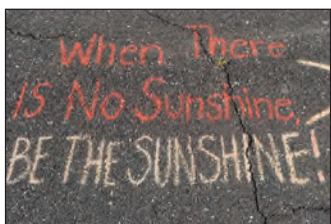
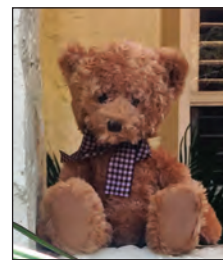
Nicole Hays, an entertainer who lives in the 'hood and wanted to 'give back,' offered HONNA to do a mobile Easter Bunny drive-by for the neighborhood. She also encouraged residents to support local artists (check out her website at www.stpeteartsalliance.org/directory/the-curiositorium). ●

Easter Music

Donna Guillaume opened her door on Easter morning so passers-by could hear her play seasonal hymns and other joyful music on her virtual pipe organ. ●

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

Anna Broshears has a teddy bear on her front porch to greet walkers. Many homes in the Old Northeast are displaying stuffed animals for children to find while walking with their parents. ●



CHALKINGS BRIGHTEN THE DAY

Westminster Palms initiated "Operation Brighten Our Community with Messages of Hope" because it wanted to invite its resident and staff community as well as neighbors and friends to surround the campus with uplifting messages. On May 7 and 8 everyone was invited to use sidewalk chalk provided by volunteers to leave messages for neighbors, school friends, Palms residents or a loved one.

The first day had over 60 participants including First Presbyterian Church Day School families, local walkers and joggers from the neighborhood, residents of the Palms and staff and friends. Several families left messages thanking Westminster

Palms healthcare workers as well. All participants practiced physical distancing and did not come onto the Palms campus to insure everyone's safety, according to Tish Burke, the Palms Director of Development who organized the two-day event.

As Evelyn Moorefield, a Palms resident and volunteer, shared, "Harry and I are so glad that our community is using sidewalk chalk art to leave messages of hope. Many of us have lived here locally for years and this area remains our home to this day. When we walk around our campus sidewalks and see these messages from our neighbors, friends and families it just makes our day better."

This was all capped off with a parade of well-wishers with signs, balloons and horns marching around the campus on Mother's Day morning. Thanks to neighbor Alicia Reyes Shapiro and others for making this happen. ●



The Symbolism of Cormorants

Theresa Matthews (14th Avenue NE) had the opportunity to go kayaking near Fort DeSoto on April 14, the first time she's done this since moving to Florida four year ago. As they kayaked alone just after sunrise, two cormorants showed up swimming, diving, and feeding near and under their kayaks. Before they finished there were a dozen! She says that she just had to look up the spiritual meaning of these birds and learned "cormorants make a presence in your life when it is time to overcome obstacles and see possibilities." Could that be more perfect for where we are in this pandemic, she asks? ●

evening, which worked perfectly as the table's centerpiece. Deann and the boys succeeded in surprising Tim, and it was truly a night to remember for them all. ●



Nice Gestures

Eric Wallens says nice gestures abound in the Old Northeast, but he has one neighbor who has been especially kind by making and delivering food including bread and biscuits. Such a treat! ●



25th Wedding Anniversary

Tim and Deann Coop hadn't yet planned how they were going to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary before COVID-19 came into their lives. But, as April 22 approached, Deann really wanted to do something fun and surprise Tim. So their three sons – Brandon (22), Connor (18), and Carson (14) – decided they would create a restaurant experience at home. They turned the master-bedroom balcony into a pop-up restaurant. The boys picked up a delicious take-out dinner for them and acted as their wait staff. They surprised both Deann and Tim with a beautifully set table and a video of their favorite family trips projected onto the wall of the house. Tim surprised Deann with a gorgeous bouquet of tulips that



Ice Cream Sandwiches to Benefit the St. Pete Free Clinic

The Skidmore family on 18th Avenue NE hosted a socially-distant ice cream sandwich happy hour on May 5 to benefit the St. Petersburg Free Clinic. They hired Alexa Rivera, owner of local Eleanor's Ice Cream, who brought her repurposed vintage pull-behind trailer to their block. As she usually does weddings and large celebrations, the pandemic halted a booked spring and summer schedule. The Free Clinic has seen a 400% increase in the number of clients who are in need of food because of the pandemic. The Skidmores were grateful to the wonderful, generous people of the Old Northeast and their community – the donations brought in over \$1,200 for the Free Clinic! ●

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES

HONNA joins all Old Northeast residents in congratulating these 2020 high school graduates from our neighborhood, and we hope everyone enjoyed the car parade we organized on Saturday, May 23, to show our support. We wish you all the best as you journey forward, and thanks to your families and friends for the guidance they have provided you over the years.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
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(out of state)
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Madison Brunson
Logan Carr
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Ian Wittbreuk
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| CLEARWATER
CENTRAL CATHOLIC
Emma Kornatowski | SHORECREST
Isabella Acuna
Sebastian Acuna
Emery Camp
Liam Cobb
Ceci Garcia
Luke Goldman
Anna Mesimer
Erin Mullins
Emerson Quilty
Asher Rovin
Kyle Wadley | |
| DIXIE HOLLINS HIGH
Ainsley Williams | GIBBS HIGH
Julia Berman
Ava Marx
Darby McNeill | |
| LAKWOOD HIGH
Caitlin Faykus | NORTHEAST HIGH
Colin Dansby
Madison Fowler
Zachary Gregory | ST. PETE CATHOLIC
Grace Sovrini
Michael Paige Grouding |



Creative Family Dinners

Themed dinners at the Kantner household were the brainchild of oldest daughter, Caroline (15), and enthusiastically carried forward by her and her younger sister, Kate (13). Parents Sharon and Rick even had their own nights to come up with and execute a theme. Themes have been devised, menus created and printed, and foods

served to match the theme. Some of the themes: Aloha (pictured), Star Wars, Disney Princess, Famous Person, French, Italian, Rays Baseball, Disney Characters, and Winnie the Pooh. These themed dinners were a way to have some fun, add some interest, and fight off the monotony of eating at home three meals a day, day after day during the Safer At Home order. ●



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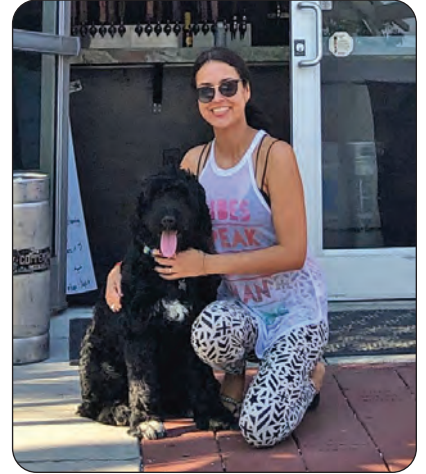
Amy and Bob with Copper
Beach Drive NE



Tommy with Lucy
4th Ave NE



Donna and Joe with Weezie
1st Street South



Elena with Doobie
49th Ave NE



Chris and Beth
with Captain (L) & Ellie Mae (R)



Cathy with Benny
Beach Drive NE



Kristen and Mason Terry with twins Rheese and Avery
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HISTORY Continued from page 1
 Thomas assumed partial ownership with their father. A significant project at that time was the construction of St. Anthony's Hospital. A.P. Hennessy died in 1951 at the age of 68. Projects undertaken by Hennessy Construction in the 1950s were the MacDill Air Force Base fuel-storage facility, the Webb City Supermarket, St. Joseph's Manor, the cafeteria at St. Paul's Catholic Church, and the YMCA educational building.

In 1958, Hennessy & Sons began construction of the St. Petersburg Times Press Building and Warehouse which is still in operation on 34th Street N. This was their most challenging project up to that time. The complex required 300 tons of structural steel and 1700 cubic yards of concrete. The 10 press units weighed 542 tons and had to be mounted on a deep steel and concrete footing, separated from the shell of the building by a two-inch cushion of cork, to keep the building's walls from vibrating. A gigantic 5-by-7-foot air intake system was provided to capture the fine spray of ink tossed off by the presses. The building's floor supported 500 pounds per square inch. Two vaults were constructed 11 feet below the warehouse to accommodate electric transformers, and two 5,000-gallon ink tanks, capable



of off-loading a railroad tank car of ink, were also located below ground. A shaft was sunk 30 feet below ground to support a 4-ton capacity elevator.

The *Times* likened the building to the Great Pyramid of Egypt. However, instead of "a tomb for an individual mortal" the Press Building was declared "a monument for hundreds of thousands of readers – now living and yet unborn." The building was designed by famed architect William B. Harvard and his associate Blanchard Jolly. Throughout the project, Hennessy never missed a construction schedule deadline.



In the 1970s, Hennessy began to specialize in electrical power substations, much of it for Florida Power. The company was purchased by Ken Hall in 1982. Hall was a seasonal resident of St. Petersburg from North Carolina. A significant project at that time was maintenance on the Crystal River Nuclear Plant. Another was renovation of St. Petersburg High School. In more recent times, projects have included the Belleair Country Club, the Jim and Heather Gils YMCA on 1st Avenue South, the Hazel Hough Wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Spa Oceana at the Don CeSar Resort, YMCA of Greater St. Petersburg Childs Park Community Center, Stetson Law School renovations, the

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In 1999, St. Petersburg native Bronson Alexander



Facing page: St. Anthony's Hospital, built by Hennessy Construction, image 1949. St. Petersburg Times Press Building and Warehouse built by Hennessy, image 1958. Far left: Mark Stalker presenting employee achievement award to Bill McClung. The Hennessy Construction company has hired thousands of people over its 100 year history. Left: In addition to churches, government, and corporate buildings, Hennessy also built private homes. This is an ad featuring a "Hennessy House," image 1940. Below left: St. Paul's School cafeteria. Below right: Hennessy Construction's first major project was St. Mary's Catholic Church, image circa 1930.



Michaels Family Collection

purchased the company from Ken Hall, and in 2017, Mark Stalker purchased the company from Bronson. Mark is also a native of St. Petersburg, born in St. Anthony's, the hospital Hennessy built. Mark joined Hennessy in 2009 as vice president and became president in 2013. Mark says, "Both my dad and I were born in St. Pete, and I feel a personal obligation to keep the business going as a locally owned company. I feel more like a caretaker for the next generation than an owner." People often tell Mark they once worked for Hennessy. The company has employed thousands of people over its long history, including Mark's son.

Hennessy has a long record of supporting St. Pete charities. To name just a few: the Mayor's Mentors and More Program, Doorways Scholarship Program, St. Petersburg Free Clinic, Pinellas Hope, YMCA, Salvation Army, St. Anthony's

Hospital, Resurrection House, and Southeastern University. Recently, Hennessey supervised construction of the Benoist Centennial Plaza for the World's First Airline Monument on the approach to the Pier. This was done on a largely pro-bono basis.

The company is a past recipient of the Philanthropic Small Business of the Year Award. It may be that Hennessy's community generosity is a reflection of its 100-year connection with St. Petersburg. As Mark Stalker observes, "It's our town."

Hennessy has enjoyed remarkable continuity over its 100 years. This is reflected in its largely family and local ownership, but also in the construction itself. Time and again, Hennessy has returned to a building it constructed years

Continued on page 18

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Managing a Museum While Parenting

Laura and Hank Hine Share Their COVID-19 Perspective

— JON KILE —

One of the things that defines St. Petersburg is its museums. When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit our shores, the thought of closing down these landmark institutions seemed incredible, but what was impossible to imagine in early March soon became the new reality. Even so, as these cornerstones of our community sat dark, the creative people at the helm were busy.

One local couple keeping the pulse alive was Laura and Hank Hine. The two are powerhouses in the museum scene. Hank has been the director of The Dali Museum since 2002, leading it from its days on 3rd Street S. through the campaign to build its now-iconic home adjacent to the Mahaffey Performing Arts Center.

Laura Hine took over the helm of the James Museum of Western and Wildlife Art in 2019, but her involvement with the museum dates back much further. She was part of the team overseeing the unlikely conversion of a downtown Mediterranean Revival parking garage into the beautiful facility it is today with a decidedly cool, southwest feel.

Laura said that at first, she had to check her expectations. “I thought we needed to start school right at 8:45am because that’s when school starts,” said Laura. “But, I soon realized that I need some time in the morning to get some work done. You have to be flexible.”

Flexibility is definitely called for, whether in dealing with their children’s education or piloting a museum through a pandemic. The Hines take a calm, thoughtful approach and they both commend their staffs for doing a great job reaching out to the community. “Our first priority has been our employees,” Laura said. “Our team has been focused on reaching out to our founding members.”

Museums are built to be experienced in person. But, as COVID-19 unfolded, Hank and Laura and their teams switched to online programming that could serve as a virtual escape for sheltering-at-home art lovers. Usually, this type of project would take months of planning and execution. There wasn’t time for that.

Laura oversaw the launch of The James Museum From Home, online programming updated weekly with different themes ranging from Navajo Culture, to the Sky, Wildlife, and Cowboys. The museum staff offered in-depth background on art in the museum’s vast collection, while curating book and film recommendations, as well as children’s activities.

The Dali’s online experience included curated online exhibits, videos, children’s activities, lesson plans and Virtual Reality. Visitors had a chance to literally immerse themselves in a Virtual Reality trip through a 3-D depiction of nearly 100 pieces of art from the museum’s collection. Dali’s art is best experienced in person, but, of course that wasn’t possible. “It’s definitely a substitute,” Hank said,

about the attempt to describe Dali’s art online. “It’s difficult to translate.”

In mid-May, Laura and Hank were already discussing plans to gradually reopen the museums at reduced capacity with safe-distance guidelines in place. Laura had also taken the big step of declaring her candidacy for a seat on the Pinellas County School Board for District 1. “I have been

considering it for a while,” said Laura, who served as the PTA president for North Shore Elementary School and helped found a parent fundraising effort called Friends of North Shore Elementary. “When the pandemic hit, the only thing on my mind was taking care of my family and the museum,” said Laura. “But, I realized the election is happening regardless. And I think it’s too important to sit out.”

In the meantime, the Hine family, like so many other families juggling high-profile careers with kids at home, is doing their best. It may be a while before Hank can make a giant platter of his famous signature paella for a large gathering, or Laura gets to shake a voter’s hand in person while she campaigns for the School Board. But, they are confident it won’t be long. “Forecasting is difficult,” said Hank, “but I think travel and tourism will take some time recover. So we’re talking about bringing in mostly local visitors. We’re hoping people will have a hunger to come back as soon as it’s safe.”



As the pandemic took hold and stay-at-home orders were put into place, Hank and Laura had to step up to the challenge of not only turning their home into an office, but also a school. Their sons, Stuart (9) and Garret (5), attend North Shore Elementary, which of course, had also temporarily closed its doors. That meant mom and dad not only had to continue managing their respective museums, but also they got a trial-by-fire in homeschooling. To say it was surreal was an understatement.

While keeping a socially distant eight feet apart, I talked with Hank and Laura on the front porch of their home at 16th Ave NE about what it was like to keep the museums ‘open’ virtually, while also overseeing their sons’ daily school work. Pinellas County schools might be closed, but learning was continuing digitally.

Laura and Hank have taken a team approach to teaching at home, making sure to share the load, and not to schedule conflicting Zoom business meetings.



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GOODNESS INDEED

St. Petersburg Free Clinic, Going Strong After 50 Years

— JEANNIE CARLSON —

When Jennifer Yeagley assumed the role of CEO at the St. Petersburg Free Clinic at the beginning of March, she had no idea she would be in the trenches fighting the financial fallout from the coronavirus less than a month later.

In the beginning of her tenure as CEO, a busy day at the Free Clinic's food pantry was providing groceries for 200 families and individuals. By the first week of April, 700 families and individuals a day had become the new normal. "[On Good Friday,] we had a line of cars three blocks long the better part of the day," said Yeagley.

Previously, the food pantry was set up like a grocery store where food-insecure people were able to pick the items they wanted. Once the crisis hit and more and more people were laid off from work, the process of providing food evolved to accommodate the constantly changing situation. First, the pantry was moved outdoors, then the food was pre-packaged, and finally the set-up was organized to become a drive-through.

Food pantry safety procedures were updated for the protection of the staff, volunteers, and clients. Social distancing was instituted, and the combined staff and volunteers working at the food bank were reduced to 10 people.

The Free Clinic has its own food warehouse, the Jared S. Hechtkopf Community Food Bank that services 60 partner food banks throughout Pinellas County. "We are able to purchase bulk food for pennies on the dollar," said Yeagley.

In addition to the food pantry, the Free Clinic provides free health services for the uninsured which includes primary medical care, dental care, and an in-house pharmacy so clients can get their prescriptions.



The other component of the Free Clinic's efforts to provide help and hope to families and individuals in need is sheltering. Three separate shelters provide interim housing for men, women, and families respectively. The men's shelter and women's shelter provide housing for people recovering from addiction. The shelter for families reached capacity within days of the current COVID-19 crisis.

"Usually, we give families 30 days [to find alternate housing], but we have promised the families there now that they can stay as long as the pandemic warrants," said Yeagley.

Yeagley has a solid 20-year background in running community-based nonprofits. Prior to joining the St. Petersburg Free Clinic, Yeagley served as vice president for administrative and strategic operations at Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services in Clearwater, and before that she was

the executive director for Community Tampa Bay. She has a master's degree in literature from Texas State University and is a graduate of the Leadership Tampa Class of 2018.

Although the Free Clinic's board of directors selected Yeagley after a national search, she is, in her own words, a local. She has lived in Tampa Bay for the last seven years.

Prior to her time in Florida, Yeagley served in executive capacities for human services organizations in Texas and California. Yeagley officially became the CEO for St. Petersburg Free Clinic on February 28, 2020 where she succeeded Interim CEO Michael O. Bice.

When Yeagley took the reins, the Free Clinic had 60 employees on staff and 400 volunteers. According to the organization's records, the volunteers put in 33,000 hours in 2018 or "the equivalent of about 17 full time employees."

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“Eighty-three percent of our volunteers have been over the age of 60,” said Yeagley. COVID-19 changed everything. As the most vulnerable group, that high percentage of over-the-age-of-60 volunteers needed to be taken out of harm’s way. “We needed to incorporate our volunteers’ safety in the process.”

“I know the Free Clinic has always had a good number of volunteers from the Old Northeast area,” said Yeagley.

Yeagley commended six neighbors from the Old Northeast and vicinity (Crescent Lake, Crescent Heights, Snell Isle, Northeast Park, Shore Acres, and Venetian Isles) who are currently volunteering at the Free Clinic. Deborah Factor has been volunteering the longest at 16 years. Jan Miller has been volunteering for a year-and-a-half, Marcy Mortimer for two years, Glenn Mosby for three years, Timothy Mulligan for three years (We Help Bike Program), and Elizabeth Skidmore for two years.

Healthy volunteers with no underlying conditions are needed. Anyone interested in volunteering should go online to the Free Clinic’s website at www.stpetersburg-freeclinic.org. Training can’t be held in groups due to social distancing requirements, so virtual training is being developed for prospective volunteers to take online. The Free Clinic is accepting food donations and financial contributions via the website as well.

The Free Clinic was originally founded in 1970 as a free medical clinic. It grew and expanded its services over the years. When families and individuals fell through the cracks of governmental assistance, the Free Clinic has been there to help.

Today the Free Clinic operates eight programs: The Jared S. Hechtkopf Community Food Bank, We Help Services & Food Pantry, the Health Center,

“We’ve shifted our operation to a walk-up or drive-through food pantry. We’re serving anyone who needs help. So far, we’ve seen a 300 percent jump in the need for our services, with many new families who had never needed to access our services before. People have lost jobs and lost insurance, and they’re worried about being able to find a new job, especially if they are an older worker.”

Shaina Bent, Director of Food Programs, St. Petersburg Free Clinic



Facing page: Jennifer Yeagley, CEO, on the job. St. Pete Free Clinic volunteer Ben brings food to a client’s car. Above: Volunteers Lisette and Susan at the Free Clinic Drive-Thru Pantry.

the Dental Clinic, Health Education Program, Virginia & David Baldwin Women’s Residence, the Men’s Residence, and the Family Residence.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the Free Clinic had to put its gala scheduled for April 4th on hold. Yeagley said the Free Clinic will reschedule the gala event “when the time is right.” According to Yeagley, even if the right time doesn’t happen, the Free Clinic may hold smaller events. The Free Clinic will not let their golden anniversary pass without acknowledging it. “We need to honor the legacy of our founders to serve our community,” said Yeagley.

With a vast increase in demand, Yeagley is prepared for the crisis to continue for an extended period. “We [the Free Clinic] are seeing a real shift to serving people who never needed services before.” These are the unseen people who live one paycheck away from homelessness and/or food insecurity.

Yeagley’s positive attitude stands out. She has a calm pleasant voice and a caring demeanor. When others in her position might be inclined to fold under pressure at the immense scope of the situation, she approaches every new challenge with optimism and skill.

It is the team that makes it all happen, according to Yeagley. She respects her staff as an incredible, hardworking, flexible, talented group of people. The volunteers are dedicated. She commends the board of directors for their support to both her and

her team. Her family supports her every step of the way. The way the community has come together in these unprecedented circumstances has been amazing to Yeagley. “I am so grateful for the support of the community at this challenging time. It’s been inspiring to see, and will continue to be next week, next month, next year, and in the next 50 years.” ●



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The Last Word

Uplifting Sayings & Good Deeds During COVID-19

If I could pick my perfect job it would be a talk-show host, so during our stay-at-home order, I started a YouTube series called Lunch with Louee starring my French bulldog Louee. He's 10, and 30 pounds of love – a little meatloaf with legs. He comes to the office every day and when I tape the show, he sits on the couch next to me while I answer a real estate question of the day. We've had a great response. Louee has become a real conversation piece. It's a fun little hook.

~ Bill Thomas, real estate advisor for Engel & Voelkers

I was thinking about how we could raise each other's spirits, and since I really like to dance, I created a Dance Zone in front of my house. I made some signs, drew some chalk art, and downloaded a playlist of songs. I've had people jamming on the sidewalk. Someone left a pair of red dancing shoes. It was a lot fun.

~ Chelley Tighe, Granada Terrace

I love when unexpected kindness happens. I scheduled my yearly air conditioning check up. When the owner found out I was not generating any income right now and also dealing

with an injured pet, he didn't charge me for the service!

~ Cheryl Gowen, CEO/president of All Funding Options

The best part of remote learning is seeing and hearing the kids' creativity during this experience. I have tried to make this experience fun for the kids! It's hard not being able to have closure, not being able to say 'Goodbye and good luck!' to my little Dragonflies.

~ Meagan Edleman, 1st grade teacher

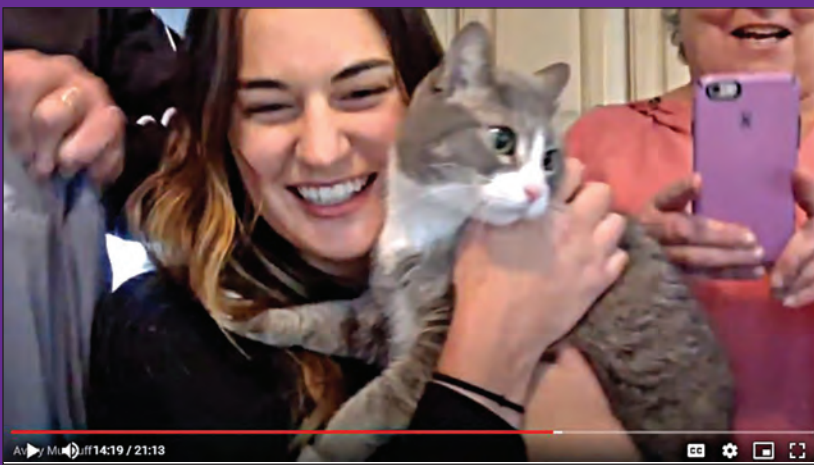
Appreciation and pride are the first two words that come to mind when I think how the faculty and staff at

Shorecrest pivoted over a weekend to become distance-learning educators. Some examples: A virtual Relay for Life and Homecoming Spirit Week. Students initiated a pen-pal program with quarantined senior citizens. Teachers in the younger grades prepared enrichment reading packages for parent pick-up. Art, Music, Spanish and PE teachers provided physical and creative breaks. Parents, especially of younger children, played a critical role in supporting students and teachers. Everyone united.

~ Mike Murphy, Headmaster, Shorecrest Preparatory School



Bill Thomas with Louee; Chelley Tighe in the dance zone; Cheryl Gowen is grateful for the kindness of her AC repairman; first-grade teacher Meagan Edleman on Earth Day; Shorecrest students getting goofy online; Eckerd College's first-ever remote Pet Graduation via Google Meet; Brian Zucker delivering meals to Bay Pines VA Hospital



Every night at 8pm, downtown residents come out on their balconies. People clap, whistle, cheer, even play a trumpet. My husband Bill is a musician so he plays the cowbell and I sometimes drum. It's a heartfelt thank you to the amazing healthcare workers and first responders. We're lucky to live in such a great city.

~ Lynn Lotkowitz, NEJ writer & videographer

Eckerd Pets Graduate

In May, Eckerd College held its first-ever remote Pet Graduation via Google Meet. It's true... graduating seniors and their pets – including small dogs, cats, ferrets, ducks, chinchillas, fish, hamsters, small birds, and small nonvenomous reptiles – enjoy the annual ritual that allows students to honor the animals that supported them during their college career. This year, everyone participated safely

from home, including President Donald Eastman who gave the congratulatory address with his wife Christine and their poodle, Samson.

Going Above & Beyond

Thank you to the many enterprising individuals who stepped in to help their neighbors, especially Brian Zucker and Anthony Close, of St. Pete Rising, who launched a fundraising drive to deliver meals to healthcare workers while supporting locally owned restaurants. The two raised over \$100,000 and delivered over 5,000 meals during the pandemic. Tony Mangiafico, the owner of Gratzzi Italian Grille, also deserves recognition for donating over 7,600 free meals to fellow hospitality and food-service workers whose jobs were lost when restaurants closed their dining rooms. ●

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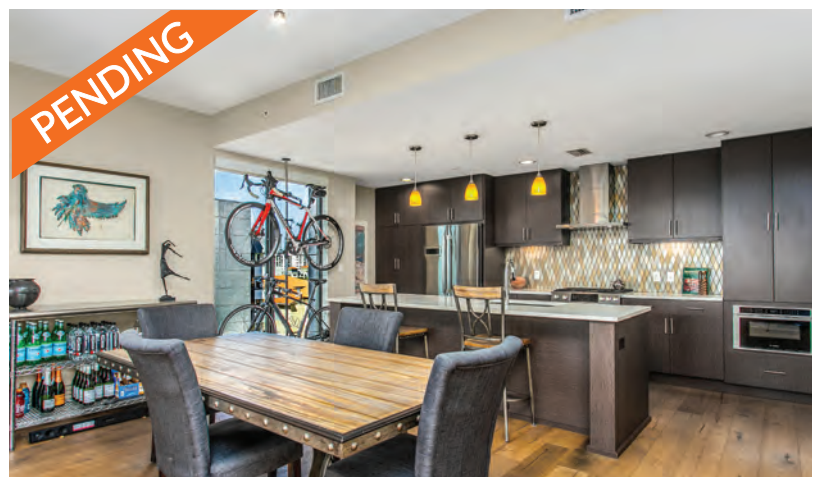
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