



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

St. Francis Reflections Lifestage Care's Edward M. Poe Care Center for Patients and Families is celebrating its 10th year. The inpatient hospice facility in Titusville, situated in a campus-like setting, is a key part of the North Brevard health-care community. The care center building includes a chapel, playroom for children, and a kitchenette for the families. The care center accepted its first patient in March 2014. From left, the St. Francis Reflections team includes: Dr. Mina Zeini, medical director; Joe Killian, president and CEO; Dr. Elizabeth Galfo, hospice and palliative care specialist; Michelle Petrillo, care center manager; Jennifer Creel, chief clinical officer; Dr. Ryan Chapman, chief medical officer; Quinesha Miller-Chambliss, care center team assistant; and Dana Lewis, care center nurse.

## Edward M. Poe Hospice Care Center in Titusville marks 10th year

By Ken Datzman

TITUSVILLE — Ten years ago this month, St. Francis Reflections Lifestage Care accepted the first client at its new freestanding Edward M. Poe Hospice Care Center for Patients and Families, the only such facility of its kind in North Brevard County.

Emilie Sasko, a registered nurse who founded Hospice of St. Francis in 1977 — the second hospice in Florida, now St. Francis Reflections Lifestage Care — attended the ground-breaking ceremony in February 2012.

Sasko passed away in early 2014, but she had the opportunity to see her dream for the organization come to fruition with the construction of the Edward M. Poe Hospice Care Center.

The inpatient complex is situated in a wooded, landscaped campus-like setting on Grumman Place.

The campus even includes a dog park. Patients and families can bring their dogs.

"The 12-bed facility came about because there was a need in Titusville for an inpatient hospice care center," said Joe Killian, president and chief executive officer at St. Francis Reflections. "These patients typically are too ill to be cared for in their homes. Before the Edward M. Poe Hospice Care Center was built, they were cared for at Parrish Medical Center. So, we saw a need and decided to build a hospice inpatient facility in Titusville. We received substantial support from Ed Poe, which helped us greatly toward that goal. And we received money from the state to build the facility."

The late philanthropist and businessman Poe graduated from Titusville High School and attended Florida Southern College in Lakeland.

A U.S. Navy veteran, Poe and his sister Mary built the first Burger King in Brevard County in 1957. Their father, Henry Martin Poe, operated Poe's Grocery in Titusville. Edward Poe was also a real estate investor in Brevard and involved in other ventures.

Dr. Mina Zeini, a geriatric medicine specialist, estab-

Please see St. Francis Reflections Lifestage Care, page 23

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## Unlocking the heat in mosquito modeling: Exploring disease transmission under climate change; new insight

By Lourdes Mederos  
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Public Relations Manager  
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IFAS Communications  
University of Florida

GAINESVILLE (Feb. 26, 2024) — Thermal adaptation is the ability for organisms to adjust their life history traits as the temperature changes. In the case of mosquitoes, these traits can determine their risk of transmitting mosquito-borne diseases and how this risk might change in the future as they respond to climates warming.

“Global drivers such as transport, trade and climate change, are altering the distribution of mosquitoes around the planet and, with this, comes shifting patterns of disease risk,” said Matthew Thomas, a UF/IFAS professor and UF/IFAS Invasive Science Research Institute (ISRI) director.

In the study, “Phenotypic adaptation to temperature

in the mosquito vector, *Aedes aegypti*,” published in the journal *Global Change Biology*, a team of scientists including some researchers at the Invasive Science Research Institute, examine a critical aspect often overlooked in models that examines the impact of climate change on mosquito-borne diseases. Many models don’t take into account the potential influence of thermal adaptation in mosquitoes.

“It is well accepted that temperature affects mosquito biology but the implications for disease transmission are still not well understood,” said Thomas.

The authors contend that if mosquitoes undergo thermal adaptation in their local environments, it could lead to variation in how different populations respond to temperature. Models that take a uniform approach, a “one-size-fits-all” method, might not accurately represent the diversity of responses among different mosquito populations. Additionally, these models may fail to predict how mosquitoes could adapt in the future as temperatures change.

“It is likely that if there is local adaptation in mosquito populations, there could be increased

variation in the expected results of climate change on mosquito-borne disease transmission. In other words, there may be cases where we would expect a decrease in disease transmission, but we see the opposite,” said Nina Dennington, a co-author and doctoral student in Thomas’ previous lab at Pennsylvania State University.

The authors focused on *Aedes aegypti*, commonly known as the yellow fever mosquito. This mosquito is one of the most important invasive species globally, responsible for infecting more than 400 million people worldwide each year with viruses such as dengue, yellow fever, chikungunya and Zika.

Researchers aimed to assess how *Aedes aegypti* populations may adapt phenotypically — what scientists call observable characteristics — in response to temperature changes. By understanding these adaptive responses, researchers can improve the accuracy of models that predict the spread of mosquito-borne diseases under different climate scenarios.

They started by examining five populations collected from different locations in Mexico, together with a longstanding lab colony. This part of the study revealed significant variations in thermal tolerance, or the ability to withstand high temperatures between the different populations. The researchers then conducted a novel experimental evolution study to explore whether these differences were likely a response to environmental temperature.

“We provided support that there are existing differences in thermal tolerance for populations of mosquitoes, due to local adaptation. We then show how differences in environmental temperature can affect mosquito fitness over time, and in this case only 10 generations,” said Dennington. “We aim to better understand whether a change in temperature that is similar to the increase expected with climate change may influence mosquito fitness responses and consequently vector-borne disease transmission.”

The results showed that temperature tolerance, together with other key biological traits such as survival and the ability to produce an abundance of offspring, could shift in response to temperature within just 10 generations.

“Our results provide support for local thermal adaptation in a primary mosquito vector. Not only do we find differences in thermal responses between populations in the field, but we also show that these responses are not static and have the potential to shift in response to changing environments,” said Dennington.

“This study challenges the assumption that you can take a temperature-based model derived from measures in one location and simply extrapolate it to all other locations or future climates,” said Thomas. “We now need further research to confirm what this means for disease risk and whether similar patterns might exist for other mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria.”

### ● About UF/IFAS

The mission of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences ([ifas.ufl.edu](http://ifas.ufl.edu), @UF\_IFAS) is to develop knowledge relevant to agricultural, human and natural resources and to make that knowledge available to sustain and enhance the quality of human life. With more than a dozen research facilities, 67 county Extension offices, and award-winning students and faculty in the UF College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, UF/IFAS brings science-based solutions to the state’s agricultural and natural resources industries, and all Florida residents.

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## Neighbor Up Brevard announces retirement of founding executive director Brockwell-Carey

By Andrea Sasson  
[development@neighborupbrevard.org](mailto:development@neighborupbrevard.org)  
Community Engagement Director  
Neighbor Up Brevard

MELBOURNE (March 6, 2024) — It is with both gratitude and sadness that we announce Lynn Brockwell-Carey's retirement as executive director of Neighbor Up Brevard (NUB), effective March 31, 2024.

Brockwell-Carey has served as NUB's founding director for 23 years. She wholeheartedly embraced the vision to bring a Christian community development corporation to Brevard County. She has proven to be an effective leader, bringing resident leaders of under-resourced communities together with members of the construction and development sector, financial supporters, government officials, churches, and volunteers.

Brockwell-Carey has overseen their collective efforts to address many needs commonly faced by communities that have long been plagued by poverty and injustice.

- Between 2006–2018 nearly \$5 million was invested in development of the Dorcas Outreach Center for Kids (DOCK) and Greater Heights apartments in north Melbourne's Booker T. Washington neighborhood.

- In 2018–2019 over \$1 million was invested in the Driskell Heights/Powell neighborhoods of northeast Palm Bay and southeast Melbourne, through Neighbor Up Brevard's development partnership with Evans Center Inc.

Under her directorship, Neighbor Up has operated a variety of programs that are vital to neighborhood restoration, spanning from after school and summer child care, to teen mentoring, affordable housing, crime reduction, food security, and health and wellness. Plans are currently underway for development of Greater Heights II, which will bring affordable housing for eight more families.

Neighbor Up Brevard was launched in 2001. Founding Neighbor Up Brevard board member Diane Key had recently formed the Booker T. Washington Neighborhood Association (BTWNA). They were looking for partners, and invited Neighbor Up Brevard to come alongside their efforts to meet community needs and to reclaim their streets.

While conducting early service projects, Neighbor Up Brevard leaders were introduced to Irene Summerford. A longtime, well-respected neighborhood leader, "Sister Irene" was passionate about helping children. She was conducting sidewalk outreach to provide children with food, Bible stories, and puppet shows under the shade of the neighborhood's old oak trees. Irene had a much bigger vision though. She shared her vision with Brockwell-Carey and in 2003, the two tenacious women joined forces.

Together they built relationships with both neighborhood residents who welcomed positive change, and well-resourced supporters from the greater Brevard area. Sister Irene's contagious joy and deep commitment accelerated their efforts to open a safe haven for children (2004). Inspired by Dorcas, a servant-hearted woman, the program was named the Dorcas Outreach Center for Kids, commonly known as the "DOCK."

Initially operated from a public housing apartment, in 2007 Neighbor Up Brevard built the 3,500-square-foot facility that is now home to the DOCK's elementary program. In January 2018, Neighbor Up Brevard opened a new 3,800-square-foot building next door to serve teens.

The DOCK provides a holistic year-round program that equips youth with the knowledge, skills, character development, and spiritual foundation they will need to overcome challenges and be successful in school and life. More than 125 children and teens came through the DOCK doors in 2023.

Across the street from the DOCK is a section of the neighborhood formerly known as "the Bottoms." The area used to be notorious for drug and criminal activity. This block of dilapidated, asbestos-laden housing contributed to an overall sense of discouragement. When the City of Melbourne targeted the area for improvement and asked local nonprofits for ideas, Neighbor Up Brevard proposed a bold initiative: transforming the Bottoms into a safe, affordable place for families and seniors to live.

With strong backing from the City of Melbourne and Brevard County, Neighbor Up Brevard leveraged

private-sector support for the project, acquired the properties, and demolished the old buildings. The 18-unit Key West style Greater Heights Apartments opened in 2009, and the street where they stand was renamed Irene Summerford Way.

Neighbor Up Brevard has acquired an adjacent lot and is planning to expand Greater Heights by building eight additional units of affordable housing. Neighbor Up Brevard's developments have helped lower crime in Melbourne; calls to police dropped by 92 percent on the block where the DOCK and Greater Heights were developed.

A comparison of calls to police over the five years prior to development (2002–2007) and the most recent five years (2018–2023) shows a drop from 212 to 18 calls.

Neighbor Up Brevard was a critical partner on the Evans Center project. Opened in 2019, this development brought a community market, classroom, and a Brevard Health Alliance health clinic to residents in the Powell/Driskell Heights area of northeast Palm Bay and southeast Melbourne. While the market was closed in 2023, health and wellness programs and the clinic continue to serve the community. Evans Center leaders are exploring options for repurposing the Evans Center, so that it might continue to be a community asset for years to come.

Neighbor Up Brevard organizational accomplishments during Brockwell-Carey's tenure include:

- Selected as "Florida Today's" Organization of the Year in 2009, and nominated again in 2019
- Named a Bank of America 2020 Neighborhood Champion
- Achieved platinum status on Guidestar
- Has been a United Way of Brevard partner agency for 22 years

In 2015, Brockwell-Carey received the Rev. Harvey L. Riley Bridge Builder Award at the annual MLK Commemoration at Florida Institute of Technology.

Neighbor Up Brevard Board President Leslie Tibbetts said, "We are so grateful for Lynn's steadfast leadership across so many years and multiple initiatives. Her commitment to the communities we serve is an outstanding model for our continued work. Our board and staff are committed to Neighbor Up Brevard's mission and will use this inflection point as an opportunity to cultivate and carry on the transformational work Neighbor Up Brevard has become known for."

Tibbetts added, "We are excited to announce that our current operations director, LaShaundra McGhee, will be taking the helm as the organization's next executive director. She has worked under Lynn's leadership for the past three years."

In a statement to the board, Brockwell-Carey said, "I am convinced that LaShaundra has the faith, passion, skill, and leadership acumen to lead Neighbor Up Brevard into the future."



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Brevard Business News is published every Monday by Brevard Business News Inc. Bulk Rate postage is paid at Melbourne, FL and Cocoa, FL. This publication serves business executives in Brevard County. It reports on news, trends and ideas of interest to industry, trade, agribusiness, finance, health care, high technology, education and commerce.

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## South Brevard Branch of NAACP to host a gala at Hilton Melbourne

MELBOURNE (March 5, 2024) — The South Brevard Branch of the NAACP will host its "Thriving Together" Freedom Fund Gala at 6 p.m. on Friday, March 22, at the Hilton Rialto.

The event will feature guest speaker Sen. Rosalind Osgood of District 32.

Dedicated to improving the welfare of men, women, and children, the organization's Gala will benefit youth programs, health-care seminars, computer laboratories, and non-partisan voter registration.

For more information and to purchase tickets, contact Josephine Hunter, aka Lady J, at (321) 914-8006 or [josephinehunter616@gmail.com](mailto:josephinehunter616@gmail.com).

- About NAACP — South Brevard Branch

The South Brevard unit of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is one of more than 2,200 chapters nationwide whose vision is to "ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights and there is no racial hatred or racial discrimination."



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**Current Mailing Address**

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**2023 FLORIDA NOT FOR PROFIT CORPORATION ANNUAL REPORT**

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**Current Mailing Address:**

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440 SOUTH BABCOCK STREET  
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Electronic Signature of Registered Agent

**02/24/2023**  
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**02/24/2023**  
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File photo

Timothy Michaud

'Based upon my investigation as a criminal investigator with the Craven County Sheriff's Department there is probable cause to arrest Timothy Michaud for sexual assault on R(xxxx) Michaud.'

John Whitfield  
May 7, 2010



Brevard County Sheriff's Office photo

'I need to report suspected abuse.'

Dana Delaney Loyd  
aka Theresa Smith  
to Florida Abuse Hotline  
at 11:12 a.m., April 29, 2015



Brevard County Sheriff's Office photo

'Loyalty is everything to me!!!'

Sheriff Robert Wayne Ivey  
to Dana Delaney Loyd  
at 5:19 p.m., April 29, 2015

IS THE EIGHTEENTH CIRCUIT AN ONGOING HUMAN TRAFFICKER?

BBN NOTE: John M. Stewart — a partner at Rossway Swan — is a past president of the 107,000 member The Florida Bar.  
BBN 4212 PAGE 5  
To Be Continued ...



## Six Aerodyne Industries employees honored at annual awards banquet at Rosen Single Creek Resort in Orlando

By John Janokaitis  
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Chief of Media Relations  
Aerodyne Industries LLC

CAPE CANAVERAL (March 5, 2024) — Six Aerodyne Industries employees were honored with 2023 annual awards for their support to the Consolidated Operations, Management, Engineering and Test (COMET) contract at the Kennedy Space Center.

The annual Illuminations Award Banquet was held Feb. 24 at the Rosen Single Creek Resort in Orlando.

Headlining the sextet was Sean Guertin, who received Aerodyne's President's Award, which is given to an individual who has made significant contributions to the success of the company. Other honorees included Jeremy Painter, Zachary Ross, Craig Tretheway, David Waters and Perry Wiseman.

Guertin is flow manager for the mobile launcher (ML) and multi-element verification validation, where he is responsible for integrating multiple schedules for KSC and construction contractors. This includes planning and

integration of extensive repairs to the ML, preplanned construction modification as well as other critical milestones.

He assumed the role of flow manager in December 2021, where he worked as the integrated operations chief, directly with other element flow managers, area integrators, engineering, shop, and quality personnel.

"I am both humbled and in awe at being selected to receive the Aerodyne Presidents award," said Guertin. "This is truly a reflection of the amazing Aerodyne/COMET Team I am privileged to lead."

"To continue our successful Artemis II launch campaign, teamwork is vital, and COMET veterans and new folks alike have stepped up to the challenge, are completely engaged, and contributing the very best they have to offer. There's a long, sometimes frustrating, road ahead of us, and we will get there together as a team."

Guertin joined Aerodyne as a master planner in 2017. Before, he spent 10 years with United Space Alliance supporting the space shuttle program and was an Aerostat operator in Afghanistan. He previously graduated from the Defense Language Institute, where he became a Russian linguist for the U.S. Air Force.

● Painter, an industrial hygienist, was honored with an Innovation Excellence Team Award for support to the Hearing Conservation Program. He was among a trio recognized for developing a series of proactive tools designed to prevent hearing loss for their co-workers.

"I was surprised and humbled in receiving the COMET Innovation Excellence Award," Painter said. "It's wonderful to be recognized for protecting and affording the best protection for my fellow coworkers. I feel a deeper sense of appreciation for my career choice and the colleagues I glean information and experience from."

● Ross, a senior engineer for the flight processing electrical power system (EPS) and pyrotechnics team, received a Superior Performance Award in Operations for resolving critical software testing issues at the Integrated Testing Lab in Denver, Colorado. His technical expertise and leadership abilities are a primary reason he was chosen to lead the EPS team for Artemis II.

With such a young workforce, it is critical to have a voice leading the way for a new generation of engineers in human space flight. Zachary Ross is that voice.

● Tretheway, Waters and Wiseman were recognized with the Teamwork Award for support to the Payload and Spacecraft Mechanical Engineering Space Station Processing Facility Technicians Team. The trio was recognized for their superior work completing the flight processing and integration of the pump module on schedule to support the launch of SpaceX 30.

"It felt good to receive the award and be recognized," said Tretheway. "It was a team effort with everyone working hard to achieve our goal and making sure the project was completed to the best of our ability."

"It was a pleasure to work with such an outstanding and dedicated team to work through a very challenging process to get the pump module ready to fly," said Waters.

"While I am excited to receive this award, I am even more proud to be part of something bigger than myself," said Wiseman. "It was definitely, at times, challenging when various equipment didn't present the results we had anticipated, yet we persevered through innovation, communication, and having a positive approach to those situations."

"I thank my fellow teammates and all engineering departments for their help along the way to see this critical mission a success."

"We are so proud of all of our honorees," said Aerodyne CEO Andrew Allen. "Their dedication and support are a primary reason we continue to have the opportunity to support NASA and the Artemis Program for many years to come."

### ● About Aerodyne Industries LLC

Aerodyne Industries LLC is a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business that was established in 2006 by Allen. The company is headquartered in Cape Canaveral, with a primary focus on serving NASA programs and resolving NASA's most challenging technical issues.

A seasoned business executive and program manager, Allen is a former U.S. Marine Corps aviator who has logged over 6,000 flight hours in more than 30 different aircraft. He is also a former astronaut, space shuttle pilot and mission commander.

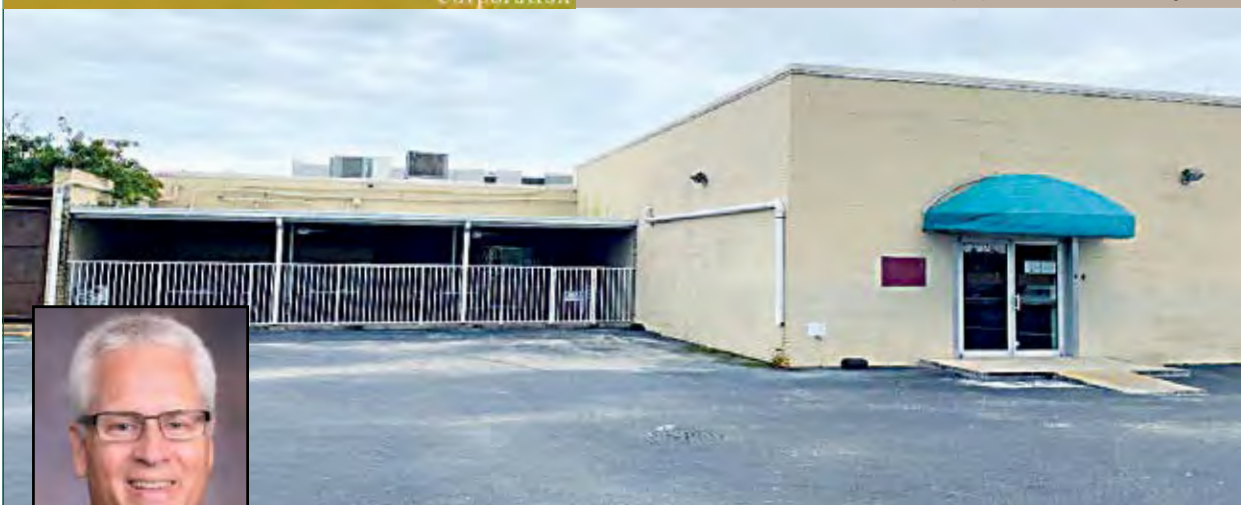
Aerodyne Industries is a subcontractor on the Consolidated Operations, Management, Engineering and Test contract at Kennedy Space Center. The contract provides overall management and implementation of ground systems capabilities, flight vehicle/spacecraft processing and launch, landing and recovery operations at KSC. These tasks support the International Space Station, Exploration Ground Systems, Space Launch System, Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle, Launch Services Program, and other NASA programs, commercial venture, and partnerships at Kennedy Space Center.

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Local companies are invited to make a tax-free donation in any amount to the WIDSC STEM Scholarship Fund. The scholarships will be awarded in June 2024. The companies that donate directly to the Fund will be recognized as Scholarship Sponsors and singled out for making workforce development a priority initiative.

To learn more, visit <https://widsc.org/scholarships>.

The guest speaker will be Brandy Crisafulli, who will present "Uncovering the Myths of Human Trafficking." The dinner fee is \$36 for ABWA members and \$40 for guests. For more information and to register, visit [www.abwaoceanside.com](http://www.abwaoceanside.com) or email [abwaoceanside@gmail.com](mailto:abwaoceanside@gmail.com).

The image features the NAACP logo on the left, which is a circular emblem with the text "NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE" around the perimeter and "NAACP FOUNDED 1909" in the center. To the right is a black and white photograph of a large group of people, primarily African American, marching down a street. Many of the marchers are holding signs, some of which clearly display the NAACP logo and the text "MARCH FOR NAACP". The photograph is partially obscured by a large, stylized orange and black graphic element that resembles a torn piece of paper or a dynamic brushstroke.

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## Overwatch Imaging launches artificial-intelligence driven automation software solution for full-motion video gimbals

By Adam Lapierre  
[adam@overwatchimaging.com](mailto:adam@overwatchimaging.com)  
Marketing Manager  
Overwatch Imaging

HOOD RIVER, Ore. (Feb. 20, 2024) — After nearly a decade of developing software-forward multispectral smart sensors, Overwatch Imaging has launched a first-of-its-kind solution dedicated to enhancing full-motion video gimbals with automated search, detection, and analysis capabilities.

Overwatch Automated Sensor Operator (ASO) software lives at the edge, is rapidly deployable, and delivers tactical, real-time capabilities to otherwise manually-dependent full motion video gimbals. ASO leverages the same proven software architecture as Overwatch Imaging's suite of smart sensors to automate gimbal control and data collection, analysis, and reporting.

"In a dynamic and overburdened operational environment, the ability to automate the manual, repetitive, and focus-intensive tasks inherent to many intelligence and search missions is an invaluable and immediate tactical force-multiplier," said Greg Davis, Overwatch Imaging founder and CEO.

"We've invested heavily in the growth and innovation of our AI-based software capabilities, and have worked in parallel to isolate those solutions from our hardware so they can be deployed on systems beyond our own. ASO represents an exciting evolution in our mission to deliver critical intelligence faster through automation."

Overwatch ASO automates three distinct areas of

sensor operation: search, analysis, and reporting. The software controls the physical movement of the sensor, converting it from a manually operated video gimbal into an image-based system that adjusts dynamically to collect data optimized for analysis by AI-driven detection algorithms. Data from the sensor is analyzed in real-time with models and detection algorithms tailored for different mission sets. Intelligence outputs, displayed on an interactive graphical user interface for operators and decision makers to review, are automatically extracted from the full data stream and synthesized into lightweight data products, which can be transmitted rapidly in network-constrained environments.

"The rising demand for sensors and the intelligence they produce is rapidly outpacing the bandwidth and availability of skilled sensor operators and imagery analysts," Davis said. "Enhancing existing hardware and human capability with artificial intelligence and automation, in particular for repetitive and visually-intensive roles, will contribute to increased mission success by scaling up intelligence availability and accuracy, and by helping crews focus on broader situational awareness and impactful decision making."

Overwatch ASO is compatible with a growing number of leading full motion video electro-optical and infrared sensor payloads, including gimbal lines from L3Harris WESCAM and Trakka Systems. Capabilities are growing and evolving over time and currently include maritime search and object detection, infrastructure security and monitoring, mapping, wildfire intelligence, and more.

"One exciting benefit of bringing a software solution into this space is that the capabilities continue to evolve

over time," Davis said. "As we continue to grow and expand our technology, we're adding new search cues to automatically focus on the highest-value areas, additional detectors for new objects of interest, new computer vision solutions that automatically extract the important parts of scenes, and automatic reporting capabilities so we can share the information we're discovering in ways that integrate cleanly into other third-party systems. We're also learning to exploit more data faster so we can work with bigger sensors in more complex environments and mission sets."

### ● About Overwatch Imaging

Overwatch Imaging is dedicated to supporting missions that matter by empowering decision-makers with time-critical intelligence as efficiently as possible.

Founded in 2016 in Hood River, Oregon, Overwatch Imaging is a venture-backed small business with customers serving a wide variety of important missions around the world, from fire, flood, and emergency response to counter narcotics, border security, tactical intelligence, and maritime ISR.

Overwatch Imaging develops sensor-agnostic software and purpose-built smart sensors that leverage the latest in artificial intelligence, computer vision, edge computing and sensor-band combination to automate the collection, analysis, and delivery of time-critical geospatial intelligence. The company has a strong track record of cross-platform compatibility, with its native line of smart sensors integrated on more than 24 different crewed and uncrewed aircraft types and its ASO software compatible with a growing number of common sensor types.

Visit [www.overwatchimaging.com/ASO](http://www.overwatchimaging.com/ASO) for more information about Overwatch Imaging.

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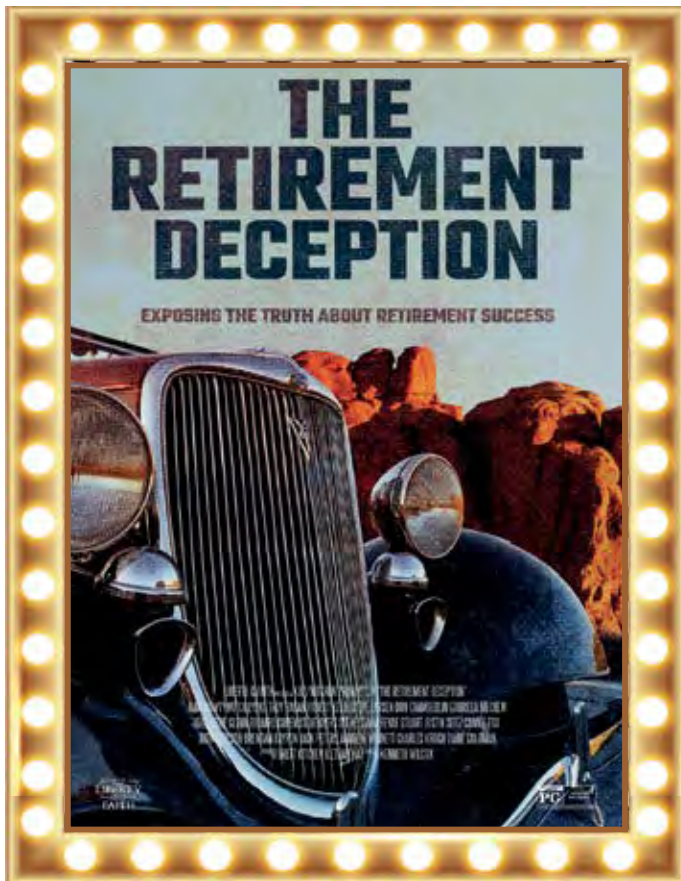
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## 'Color in Motion' a big success; BAC arts program manager, longtime educator Lee Sorensen says it is very important to bring 'art into everybody's life every day'

By Ken Datzman

Brevard Zoo was buzzing with students, teachers, family, and friends during the 39th annual Brevard Achievement Center "Color in Motion" Art Festival.

The event, which 1,154 area students registered to attend over three days, Feb. 27–29, showcased the artistic and creative talents of young people. This year's theme was "Together We Shine."

At Color in Motion, students transformed the Brevard Zoo into a canvas. The festival was filled with visual delights, interactive installations, and engaging performances.

Each day, students from Brevard Public Schools and private schools were given the opportunity to make crafts, watch live art, and explore the Brevard Zoo.

When art and nature come together, boundless possibilities come alive.

"There were 12 art stations, we call them art stops, where tents and tables were set up in different parts of the Brevard Zoo," said Lee Sorensen, Brevard Achievement Center's arts program manager who organizes the event.

"The art stops are where the inspiration takes place. We had everything from watercolor painting to rock painting to a musical petting zoo and a drummer circle. Even members from the Star Wars Florida Garrison 501st Legion were in outfit and participated in the event as special guests."

Florida Garrison is part of the worldwide "Star Wars" costuming organization and is divided into five squads covering the state. The 501st Legion is dedicated to celebrating Star Wars through the creation and use of costumes that portray the characters from Star Wars.

Sorensen said every year teachers from Eastern Florida State College "bring their education students and they participate in all kinds of activities. And Color in Motion includes the participation of professional artists who volunteer their time."

On this day when more than 400 students were at Color in Motion, the professionals working the event were Mary Moon, a visual artist; Charles Baumgartner, a drum facilitator; and Cricket "Kirsten" Moros, musical petting zoo.

"It was a privilege to work with the Brevard Achievement Center at its annual Color in Motion Arts Festival at the Brevard Zoo," said Moros on her Facebook page. "The instrument petting zoo was an opportunity for the kids to interact with ukes, bass, autoharp, mandolin, xylophone, and violin."

"My young adult helpers were from the American Sign Language class from Eastern Florida State College. Little did they know that they were going to learn an instrument themselves."

The educators from Eastern Florida State College that took part in Color in Motion included Marika Koch, Kim Collucio, and John Favuzza.

"More than 300 volunteers came together for this event," said Sorensen, a longtime educator. "Color in Motion, which we think is unlike any other event in the region, would not be possible without them. And we love having the event at the Brevard Zoo. This is the perfect venue for Color in Motion."

The volunteers included Brevard Achievement Center's Arts Committee. The members are: Peggy Nolan, chair; Lindy Johnson, secretary; Lisa Rogers, hospitality;



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

The 39th annual 'Color in Motion' Art Festival was held Feb. 27–29 at the Brevard Zoo. More than 1,000 students registered to take part in the event, which showcases the artistic and creative talents of area students. Brevard Achievement Center organizes the event. Lee Sorensen, left, is BAC's arts program manager. She is a former Brevard Public Schools teacher. Debbie Fry is a BAC volunteer.

and Kat Milikin, honorarium. They are joined by Jenna Beck, Mary Dru Bowman, Karen Miller, Donna Naylor, Sally Shinn, Andrea Smith, Joan Taddie, and Cindy Wickham. The BAC Arts program staff includes Sorensen and Heidi Popp.

Brevard Achievement Center's board of directors includes: Patricia Tellechea, chair; Julie Thompson, vice chair; Jason Miller, treasurer; Diane Payne, secretary; Don Weiss, past chair; and Ellen Brown, Michael Cadore, Chris Delaney, Kamen Jenkins, Peter Kamon, Cindy Kane, Karen Ludeman, Trudy McCarthy, Travis Proctor, and Michael Rogero.

Sorensen said the mission of the long-running Art Festival is to "present to teachers, ideas and ways in which to bring arts into their classrooms and integrate the arts with the teaching of science, mathematics, and other subjects."

She continued, "It's pretty easy to do with literature, especially with students in the elementary grades. But integrating the arts into science and math often presents

a new challenge for teachers. In general, the idea is to have them start thinking about the arts as part of their daily instruction."

The event is designed to help children succeed in school and in their communities by engaging in quality art experiences.

"Our mission is to bring art into everybody's life every day," said Sorensen.

An overwhelming majority of Americans consider the arts part of a well-rounded education.

They also say arts education is important at all grade levels and the value of arts education is not just limited to in-school experiences.

Those are some of the findings in a nationwide survey conducted by Americans for the Arts, a more than 60-year-old nonprofit headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Nine in 10 respondents believe it is important for K–12 students to receive an education in the arts, including

Please see Brevard Achievement Center, page 19



## Marine Bank & Trust thrives on relationship building, knowing its customers; emphasis on customer experience as the community bank continues to grow

By Ken Datzman

Successful companies know how to provide customers with a great experience.

One industry segment that is long known for building personal relationships and growing partnerships is community banks.

These institutions thrive on their relationship-based business model which revolves around providing a high level of personal service. It is called “customer experience” or “customer engagement.”

Community bankers offer guidance and support and take a vested interest in their client’s business journey.

“We strive to build strong foundational relationships with our customers. As community bankers, we know our individual and small-business customers, and we know our communities,” said Lory Milton, vice president, commercial loan officer at Marine Bank & Trust Co.’s office on Suntree Boulevard in Melbourne.

“Some banks are closing branches and shutting their drive-thrus. They are putting ATM machines in their lobbies to serve as tellers. That is certainly not Marine Bank’s approach to doing business. When someone walks in the door of Marine Bank, they are greeted. We provide old-fashioned customer service, and clients tell us they appreciate it.”

Over the past 12 months, bank branches in the U.S. have shrunk more than one-fifth, to 78,000 from nearly 100,000 in 2009, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Analysts say banks are investing more in their online platforms than in branches.

“We blend physical bank branches with cutting-edge technology,” said Milton. “Finding the right balance between the two is key. We have been able to integrate a personalized, relationship-banking approach with technology.”

While community banks have embraced the digital revolution by adopting and offering online banking, mobile apps, and other technology-based solutions, their foundation lies in being from the community and being part of that community.

Marine Bank’s model has worked impressively. The institution continued to grow assets, loans, and deposits through the fourth quarter of 2023.

As a result of its continued financial performance, Marine Bank is rated “4 Stars” by Bauer Financial, the leading bank-rating organization in the nation.

Marine Bank has an “Excellent” rating. These institutions are recommended by Bauer Financial. Star ratings are based on a review of financial data. The ratings are assigned on a scale of Zero Stars to 5 Stars, with 5 Stars being the strongest.

Vero Beach-based Marine Bank ended 2023 with \$654 million in assets, a 3 percent year-over-year increase, and more than 2 percent over assets in the previous quarter. Deposits as of Dec. 31, 2023, totaled \$583 million, an increase of 1 percent over deposits at the end of 2022, and 1 percent more than deposits in the third quarter. Loans as of Dec. 31, 2023, totaled \$454 million, an increase of 7 percent over loans at the end of 2022, and 2.7 percent more than loans in the third quarter.

Charlie McCoach, branch manager at Marine Bank in Melbourne, said his office’s goal in 2024 is to “raise \$9 million in deposits. But our big focus is on the customer experience. We want to make sure clients have a positive



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

Vero Beach-based Marine Bank & Trust Co. continues to grow in its markets. The community bank, which emphasizes personal service and local decision making, ended 2023 with \$654 million in assets, a 3 percent year-over-year increase. It also posted increases in deposits and loans. Lory Milton is vice president, commercial loan officer at Marine Bank’s office on Suntree Boulevard in Melbourne. Charlie McCoach is the branch manager. They are upbeat about growth prospects in 2024 for their institution.

experience when they bank at the Melbourne branch.”

Bill Penney, president and chief executive officer, said Marine Bank “continues to attract new clients to our popular business and personal checking accounts due to our outstanding personal service and technological conveniences. Our new clients typically come to us seeking relief from the big non-personal banks and they are delighted to experience the Marine Bank difference.”

He added that Marine Bank is “adept at helping clients structure their deposits to gain the maximum possible Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. insurance coverage. Additionally, we offer a reciprocal deposit service that helps our clients obtain FDIC coverage into the millions of dollars.”

Marine Bank has just rolled out a special certificate of deposit for six to nine months with a 5.05 annual percentage yield. “And we have a liquid money market special (\$100,000) that pays 3.75 percent. People are shopping and looking for CD and money market deals. We think we are well positioned with our offerings,” said McCoach.

Offering a personal touch is one reason why locally based banks say they are growing.

Marine Bank’s hospitality includes “Cookies on Friday.” McCoach said his bank has “partnered with a local small business in the promotion.”

“The Sweet Heartist Gourmet Cookie Co. is just down the road from our office,” he said. “Crystal Morales runs that business and they make incredible cookies. Her cookies have been a big hit with our customers.”

“Through this promotion we are reaching out to help local small-business owners. That is what community banks do. They help other small businesses whenever they can. Our clients who come in on Fridays will leave with a treat, something sweet to remember us by.”

The Sweet Heartist Gourmet Cookie Co. is in Suntree Square. The company has grown from a 590-square-foot space in Eau Gallie to a 2,000-square-foot space in Suntree Square.

Morales is a native of Melbourne and graduate of Melbourne High School. Morales said she has always had an “entrepreneurial spirit, but for 20 years stayed in a comfortable corporate job for stability.”

Please see Marine Bank & Trust Co., page 21



## UM's Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center receives \$50 million transformational gift from Kenneth Griffin

By Megan Ondrizek  
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Executive Director  
Communications & Public Relations  
University of Miami

MIAMI (March 5, 2024) — The University of Miami today announced a transformational \$50 million gift from Kenneth C. Griffin, founder and chief executive officer of Citadel and founder of Griffin Catalyst, to Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, part of the University of Miami Health System and the Miller School of Medicine.

The gift will double Sylvester's research footprint, accelerating efforts to develop new therapies, enhancing care for patients, and expanding access to clinical trials in a new 12-story, 244,000-square-foot facility set to open in 2025.

In recognition of the gift, which is part of the University's \$2.5 billion Ever Brighter fundraising campaign, the facility will be named the Kenneth C. Griffin Cancer Research Building.

"This landmark gift advances our sophisticated and comprehensive cancer research efforts. With bench scientists

and clinicians co-localized, we can deliver on the promise of precision medicine and enable even more families in the region to benefit from novel life-saving treatments," said Dr. Stephen Nimer, director of Sylvester, Oscar de la Renta Endowed Chair in cancer research and executive dean for research at the Miller School. "This building demonstrates Sylvester's commitment to our community and its dedication to reducing the burden of cancer in our nation."

"Sylvester's team of physicians, scientists, and healthcare professionals plays a leading role in our community's efforts to defeat cancer," said Griffin. "I am honored to support the transformational work of these incredible individuals in discovering, developing, and delivering life-saving treatments to those affected by this disease in South Florida and beyond."

One of the country's leading philanthropists, Griffin has long been committed to pushing the frontiers of science and medicine to drive progress and improve lives. His efforts have included major contributions to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Nicklaus Children's Hospital, and the Michael J. Fox Foundation, among others. This donation is Griffin's largest philanthropic gift in Florida to date and among the ten largest healthcare-related philanthropic gifts

in Florida in the last decade.

"More than 12,000 families in Miami-Dade County are impacted by cancer each year," noted Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine-Cava, who participated in the announcement. "We are grateful for Ken Griffin's generous support to ensure that our county has the necessary resources to be a national leader in the fight against cancer."

University of Miami Health System Board Chair Stuart A. Miller emphasized the significance of Griffin's commitment to a thriving South Florida.

"Great communities are defined by the commitment and enthusiastic support of those who give to ensure excellence and success," said Miller. "The Ken Griffin name has become synonymous with philanthropic leadership that drives value in the communities in which he operates. Miami is privileged and fortunate to now call Ken Griffin one of our own."

The new building comes as Sylvester — currently one of only 72 cancer centers nationwide to hold the distinction — renews its coveted NCI status. Its design will advance innovative research to develop new therapies and expand ongoing clinical trials, and includes such features as a focus on total-body wellness and state-of-the-art equipment.

"This building cements Miami in the national narrative around excellence in health care, and quickens our trajectory towards more cancer cures," added University of Miami Health System Chief Operating Officer Dr. Dipen Parekh.

"Ken Griffin has an amazing history of high-impact and effective giving," University of Miami President Julio Frenk, also a medical doctor, concluded. "Battling cancer requires a team approach and this building will bring warriors together — scientists, clinicians, and patients — to deliver inspiration and hope."

● **About Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center**  
Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, part of UHealth — University of Miami Health System and the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, is the only National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center in South Florida. It is known as South Florida's leader in patient-focused cancer research and care and offers the only phase 1 clinical trials in the region. Sylvester is a high-performing cancer center among the nation's top 10 percent in leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma, and in colon, lung, ovarian, prostate, and uterine cancer surgeries. With a network of 10 facilities in South Florida and one office in Southwest Florida, Sylvester operates 15 site disease groups including transplant and cellular therapy and skin, thoracic, myeloma, lymphoma, gynecological, genitourinary, gastrointestinal, neuro-oncology, sarcoma, pediatric, endocrine, leukemia/hematology, breast and head and neck cancers. For more information, visit [Sylvester.org](http://Sylvester.org) and follow @SylvesterCancer on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Threads.

● **About The University of Miami**  
The University of Miami is a private research university and academic health system with a distinct geographic capacity to connect institutions, individuals, and ideas across the hemisphere and around the world. The university's vibrant and diverse academic community comprises 12 schools and colleges serving more than 19,000 undergraduate and graduate students in more than 180 majors and programs. Follow @UnivMiami on Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

● **About Griffin Catalyst**  
Griffin Catalyst is the civic engagement initiative of Citadel founder and CEO Ken Griffin, encompassing his philanthropic and community impact efforts. Tackling the world's greatest challenges in innovative, action-oriented, and evidence-driven ways, Griffin Catalyst is dedicated to expanding opportunity and improving lives across six areas of focus: Education, Science and Medicine, Upward Mobility, Freedom and Democracy, Enterprise and Innovation, and Communities. For more information, visit [griffincatalyst.org](http://griffincatalyst.org), and connect with us on LinkedIn and Instagram.



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## Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Andreana Leggett joins Parrish Healthcare team and Parrish Medical Group

TITUSVILLE (Feb. 29, 2024) — Parrish Healthcare and Parrish Medical Group have welcomed Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Andreana Leggett.

She joins Parrish Medical Group's Primary Care practice, located inside Parrish Healthcare Center, at 250 Harrison St. (Titus Landing).

Leggett provides her patients comprehensive primary care, including assessing patients; ordering, performing, supervising, and interpreting diagnostic and laboratory tests; making diagnoses; initiating and managing treatment, including prescribing medication and non-pharmacologic treatments; coordinating care; counseling; and educating patients, their families, and their communities.

Leggett earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from Herzing University in Orlando, and her master's in nursing from South University in Orlando.

She has received educational training in pediatric advanced life support, basic life support, advanced cardiovascular life support and as a family nurse practitioner.

Leggett also holds certification from the National Institute of Health in the administration and scoring of the stroke scale.

New patients are welcome and most

insurance plans are accepted. To schedule an appointment, or for more information visit [parrishhealthcare.com](http://parrishhealthcare.com), or call (321) 268-6868.

### ● About Parrish Healthcare

Parrish Healthcare, America's first Joint Commission Integrated Care Certified system, includes: Parrish Medical Center, one of the nation's most recognized hospitals for clinical quality, patient safety, and healing environments; Parrish Medical Group, NCQA certified patient-centered medical homes; and Parrish Health Network, a coalition of health-care providers, insurers and others working together to improve quality and safety and lower health-care costs on behalf of individuals, families and businesses. Visit [parrishhealthcare.com](http://parrishhealthcare.com) for more information.

### ● About Parrish Medical Group

Parrish Medical Group, a NCQA Certified Patient-Centered Medical Home, offers a comprehensive approach to health care. Parrish Medical Group is part of Parrish Healthcare's nationally certified integrated care system and North Brevard's largest multispecialty medical group with convenient locations in Titusville, Port St. John (Cocoa), and Port Canaveral. Visit [parrishmedgroup.com](http://parrishmedgroup.com) for more information.

## Merritt Island-based Launch named as a top credit union in Newsweek's nationwide survey of 35,000 respondents

MERRITT ISLAND (Feb. 12, 2024) — Launch Credit Union announced today that it is recognized as one of America's Best Regional Banks and Credit Unions for 2024 by Newsweek and Plant-A Insights Group.

The analysis was based on independent customer surveys of more than 35,000 U.S. citizens. The survey was designed to review institutions through their customer journeys on 12 categories using 75 items.

The survey collected more than 140,000 reviews for regional banks and credit unions distributed across all states. In addition, more than 1.3 million social media reviews and 148 million Apple App store and Google Play store reviews were collected to support the scoring model.

"Regional banks and credit unions play

a pivotal role in meeting the needs of communities across the nation. Newsweek and market-data research firm Plant-A Insights are proud to introduce 'America's Best Regional Banks and Credit Unions 2024,' highlighting local lenders that are committed to the needs of their communities," said Nancy Cooper, Newsweek's global editor-in-chief.

Established in 1963, Launch is a full-service credit union, with 17 branches in Brevard and Volusia counties. Launch has \$1.4 billion in assets with 80,000 members. Membership is open to all who live, work, worship or attend school in Brevard, Volusia, Seminole, Orange, Flagler, or Osceola counties. For more information about Launch, visit [Launchcu.com](http://Launchcu.com) or call (321) 455-9400.

## EFSC to host open house for Medical Assistant Specialist program

COCOA (March 5, 2024) — Eastern Florida State college will host an open house for its Medical Assistant Specialist certificate program from 4-7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 10, at its Palm Bay campus, 250 Community College Parkway. The event will be held in Building 1, Room 343.

This event will provide the opportunity to network with faculty, advisors, and current students to learn more about a career in this exciting health-care field. Medical assistant students master clinical skills, including taking vital signs and medical histories, non-intravenous injections, phlebotomy procedures, diagnostic testing, surgical techniques and assisting, and pharmaceutical principles and administration of medication.

Attendees will also be assisted in applying for the fall 2024 term.

For more information or to RSVP, visit [efsc.edu/MedAssistant](http://efsc.edu/MedAssistant) or call (321) 433-7575.

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## Verizon Innovative Learning reaches 7 million students nationwide to tackle digital divide; many still lack access

By Hope Arcuri Armanus  
[hope.arcuri.armanus@verizon.com](mailto:hope.arcuri.armanus@verizon.com)  
Verizon Sourcing LLC

BASKING RIDGE, N.J. (March 4, 2024) — Today, Verizon announced that Verizon Innovative Learning, the company's award-winning education initiative focused on supporting digital equity and inclusion for students nationwide, has reached 7 million students with digital skills training.

According to the Federal Communications Commission, there are still nearly 17 million school children in the U.S. that lack internet access at home. That's why, over a decade ago, Verizon Innovative Learning was launched to address barriers to digital inclusion in Title I schools.

With leading education partners, Verizon empowers students with new ways of learning through extensive support for educators, technology-integrated curriculum, emerging technologies including 5G, and free internet access.

Verizon has expanded access to its education programs to all nationwide through free immersive applications for any device, microcredential-aligned professional development, and tech-focused learning resources.

This effort is part of Citizen Verizon, the company's responsible business plan for economic, environmental, and social advancement, which uses leading-edge technology to help drive social impact and create lasting change across communities. This extended reach of the flagship program brings Verizon one step closer to the company's goal of reaching 10 million youth with digital skills training by 2030.

"For over 11 years, it has been our commitment to

ensure students are provided equal access to digital technology and next-gen tools. Without this access, millions of young people risk being left out of the digital economy, and the world will be deprived of the economic, social, and environmental benefits of a diverse tech workforce," said Rose Stuckey Kirk, chief corporate social responsibility officer at Verizon. "Reaching 7 million students is a monumental milestone toward this goal. We are, of course, keeping the momentum going so that millions more students can have access to next-generation technologies to unlock educational and career opportunities."

### ● Bringing Digital Learning Skills to Classrooms in Need

This year, Verizon is continuing to expand its Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program, in partnership with Digital Promise, and will welcome 34 new Title I schools from 13 school districts to its 11th cohort for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year.

These additions include expanding partnerships with returning school districts, such as Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Kansas City Public Schools, and Norwalk Public Schools. The Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program is also excited to welcome 10 new school districts, including two new cities, such as Whitehall City School District in Columbus, Ohio, and the Albuquerque School of Excellence in New Mexico. The addition of these schools brings the program's reach to 626 middle and high schools nationwide.

Participating schools in the transformative Verizon Innovative Learning program receive free tablets or laptop devices with up to a four-year Verizon data plan for every student and teacher. Teachers gain access to extensive professional development that supports

powerful teaching and learning with technology in and out of the classroom. In addition, these schools receive a subsidy for a full-time technology coach to support teachers in effectively integrating technology into learning.

### ● Extending Innovative Lessons to Teachers Nationwide

In addition to supporting Title I schools across the U.S. with access to technology and innovative learning programs, Verizon also provides educators nationwide with access to tools to help bring new ways of learning into their classrooms through Verizon Innovative Learning HQ. The free next-gen online K-12 education portal offers hundreds of free lessons across subjects ranging from supplemental turnkey lessons to yearlong courses and immersive learning experiences with augmented reality and virtual reality. The portal combines nearly a decade of experience working in STEM education through the award-winning Verizon Innovative Learning initiative with resources created in partnership with Discovery Education, McGraw Hill, Arizona State University, Digital Promise, and others at the forefront of innovation in education. This portal has helped to reach millions of new students, more than doubling Verizon Innovative Learning's impact in the last year.

More than two dozen new courses and activities have been recently added to the platform for teachers to access for free. This includes Bridge to the Future, a virtual field trip experience from Discovery Education, which allows students to learn about Extended Reality and discover how this innovative technology impacts industries like entertainment, medicine, and education.

Verizon Innovative Learning HQ also provides educators with extensive training and resources, which now includes over 50 professional development courses, many aligned with microcredentials, enabling them to learn new skills and feel confident integrating technology into the learning experience.

New courses available now on the platform in partnership with NYC Media Lab include programming from museums and cultural institutions like the "Developing and Using Models" course by The Franklin Institute and "Using Visceral Science in Your Classroom" by the Liberty Science Center. Educators can visit [Verizon.com/Learning](http://Verizon.com/Learning) to sign up at no cost.

Citizen Verizon is the company's responsible business plan for economic, environmental, and social advancement. Citizen Verizon empowers Verizon to deliver on its mission to move the world forward through action by expanding digital access and resources, protecting the climate, and ensuring people have the skills needed for jobs of the future.

Through Citizen Verizon, and the key pillars of Digital Inclusion, Climate Protection and Human Prosperity, the company's responsible business goals include providing 10 million youth with digital skills training by 2030, supporting 1 million small businesses with resources to help them thrive in the digital economy by 2030, achieving net zero emissions in its operations by 2035, and preparing 500,000 individuals for jobs of the future by 2030. Learn more at [CitizenVerizon.com](http://CitizenVerizon.com).

### ● About Verizon Communications Inc.

Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE, Nasdaq: VZ) was formed in 2000 and is one of the world's leading providers of technology and communications services. Headquartered in New York City and with a presence around the world, Verizon generated revenues of \$134 billion in 2023. The company offers data, video and voice services and solutions on its award-winning networks and platforms, delivering on customers' demand for mobility, reliable network connectivity, and security.



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## MIT Leaders for Global Operations program gains new partnerships; Northrop Grumman, Stanley Black & Decker

By Matthew Aliberti  
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Assistant Director of Media Relations  
MIT Sloan School of Management

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (March 7, 2024) — The MIT Leaders for Global Operations (LGO) program announced today that two new organizations — Northrop Grumman and Stanley Black & Decker — have become the newest members of its industry partnerships. These additions bring the partner company total to 24, 19 of which are either Fortune 500 or Fortune Global 500.

MIT LGO collaborates with the MIT Sloan School of Management and the MIT School of Engineering to deliver an interdisciplinary Engineering-MBA dual degree program. The two-year curriculum features internships at partner companies. MIT LGO students develop leadership and technical skills for the pharmaceutical, manufacturing, automotive, aerospace, energy, high-tech and global supply chain industries, among others.

“Northrop Grumman and Stanley Black & Decker’s collective expertise at the intersection of manufacturing, engineering and technology will bring new internship opportunities for our students and introduce the students’ new

perspectives to these organizations,” said Thomas Roemer, executive director of MIT LGO.

“Our students bring technical skills and know-how to implement complex operations, manufacturing, and data analytics solutions. We’re looking forward to working with these two iconic American companies to explore innovative approaches both in the classroom and at the company sites, and for our students to become future leaders in these top organizations.”

Northrop Grumman is a global aerospace and defense technology company with more than 100,000 employees across the globe. They create and deliver advanced systems, products, and services for use in space, aeronautics, defense, and cyberspace. The company implements sustainable practices and is the recipient of the 2022 Robert J. Collier Trophy for its work on NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope. Matt Bromberg, corporate vice president of Global Operations at Northrop Grumman, is a 2000 alumnus of the MIT LGO program.

At Northrop Grumman, MIT LGO will have access to an array of research and career opportunities in supply chain, systems engineering, technology development and advanced manufacturing techniques such as AI/ML and additive.

“Northrop Grumman values fresh perspectives,” said Matt Bromberg, corporate vice president of Global Operations. “We are excited to partner with the MIT LGO program and team with students in engineering, manufacturing, and operations so that together we can develop innovative solutions. We welcome leaders who are committed to delivering operational efficiencies, quality, and speed.”

Headquartered in the United States, Stanley Black & Decker is a tools and outdoor manufacturer operating facilities globally. The company’s more than 50,000 employees produce power tools, hand tools, outdoor products, and engineered fasteners.

Jason Trujillo, vice president of Manufacturing Excellence at Stanley Black & Decker, is a 2007 alumnus of the MIT LGO program.

“Our partnership with MIT’s LGO program will develop a strong pipeline of talent to bring educational opportunities to the forefront and cultivate a strong workforce,” said Trujillo. “We’re eager to welcome them into an environment where they can push boundaries, solve problems, and develop their careers.”

MIT LGO students will partner with Stanley Black & Decker in specific areas to drive manufacturing process improvements, advance digital maturity in manufacturing, and understand how data analysis and machine learning can better be leveraged.

Students will choose from projects like digitization and automation in manufacturing, proves and flow modeling and optimization, energy reduction, data models and machine learning, and introducing sustainability practices in manufacturing.



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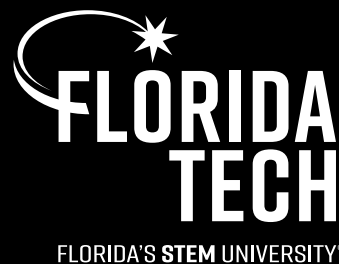
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Cape Canaveral Hospital on Newsweek's 'World's Best Hospitals' list for the fourth year; joins 17 other hospitals in Florida

By Lance M. Skelly  
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System Director, Public and Media Relations  
Health First

CAPE CANAVERAL (March 4, 2024) — For the fourth straight year, Health First's Cape Canaveral Hospital has been named to Newsweek's list of "World's Best Hospitals 2024."

Newsweek and Statista Inc., the world-leading statistics portal and industry ranking provider, present this prestigious award. The award was announced Feb. 28, 2024, and can be viewed on Newsweek's website.

The World's Best Hospitals 2024 ranking lists the best hospitals in 30 countries: United States, Germany, Japan, France, Italy, United Kingdom, South Korea, Brazil, India, Spain, Canada, Australia, Mexico, Colombia, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Malaysia, Thailand, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Israel, and Singapore.

The countries were selected based on multiple comparability factors, such as standard of living, life expectancy, population size, number of hospitals, and data availability. Major changes were made in this year's edition. A global board of renowned experts supports the continuous development of the methodology.

The lists are based on four data sources:

- Recommendations from Medical Experts: Online survey among tens of thousands of doctors, health-care professionals, and hospital managers in 30 countries
- Results from Patient Surveys: Survey of patient satisfaction with hospitalization
- Hospital Quality Metrics: Medical indicators, for example, data on quality of care for treatments, hygiene measures, patient safety, and waiting times
- PROMs (Patient Reported Outcome Measure)

Implementation Survey: Optional online survey on the implementation and use of PROMs in hospitals

Based on the above four pillars and their respective weights, a final source was calculated for each hospital.

With over 300 hospitals in the state of Florida, Cape Canaveral joins just 17 other Florida hospitals — including just three in Central Florida — on the prestigious list.

"This Newsweek inclusion placing Cape Canaveral Hospital among the best hospitals in the nation and state of Florida is a tremendous honor for every one of our clinicians, associates and volunteers, and certainly kicks off what we are anticipating to be a very impactful year at Health First," said Brett Esrock, executive vice president and chief financial officer, Health First Inc.

"As we are planning for and making progress toward the future of our new Cape Canaveral Hospital, this honor is reflective of Health First and Cape's commitment to providing the best wellness and medical care for our residents and visitors today, and well into the future."

Rita Pritchett seeks applicants to fill positions

VIERA (March 6, 2024) — District 1 Commissioner Rita Pritchett is seeking applicants to fill available seats on the advisory boards for the Housing Finance Authority, Investment Committee, North Brevard Public Library, and Contractor Licensing. The latter is seeking a plumbing contractor, fire safety professional, a roofing contractor, and a Contractor Licensing Board alternative. Applications are available at [www.brevardfl.gov](http://www.brevardfl.gov). Click on "Advisory Boards" listed under "frequent searches."



## Brevard Achievement Center

Continued from page 12

dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts. More than 3,000 people were surveyed.

Research proves that arts education helps students to do the following:

- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Increase imagination and creativity
- Learn discipline
- Provide alternative ways to communicate and express ideas
- Improve their understanding of other cultures
- Support academic success across the curriculum
- Increase personal growth outside the classroom
- Gain a positive outlook about school, which reduces dropout rates

Sorensen, who was a special education teacher in Brevard Public Schools for 30 years before retiring, knows the power of the arts in the classroom and outside the classroom.

"I have always appreciated the arts. I am a want-to-be artist. When I was teaching years ago, I incorporated the arts into my classroom with special education students. It gave them more hands-on opportunities and created a new learning environment for them. They excelled."

She said it was this event, which has had several names over the years and was once held at the Melbourne Auditorium, that inspired her to incorporate more art into her teaching.

Research shows while art is important for all children, it is crucial for kids with special needs. Artistic activities directly exercise and strengthen the cognitive and physical skills that generally challenge special needs children, such as oral, tactile, visual, sensory, and motor skills.

Studies have shown that engaging in work with "clay and paints" helps children with special needs become more aware of their "senses and emotional capacity for self-control."

When art is integrated into special education, children not only have fun exploring their creativity, but they also receive therapy.

Sorensen said she is now gearing up for Brevard Achievement Center's 11th annual "Performing Arts Showcase" Oct. 23-24 at the Maxwell C. King Center for the Performing Arts on the Melbourne campus of Eastern Florida State College. She produces that program.

The Performing Arts Showcase features middle and high school Exceptional Student Education students from Brevard Public Schools, along with adults with disabilities from Brevard Achievement Center's Adult Day Training program. These talented artists will perform dance, theater, or musical routines they have learned over the course of eight weeks working in collaboration with a visiting artist. The event is free and open to the public.

"The arts play an important role for individuals with disabilities," said Sorensen. "With emotional, physical, cognitive, and social benefits, the creative process of art-making has a positive and helpful impact on their lives."

"When other types of communication may be challenging, art can facilitate the expression of thoughts and feelings in such a powerful way. We are looking forward to this year's Performing Arts Showcase."

Brevard Achievement Center is a "social enterprise" dedicated to building communities that support members with "unique abilities in growing their own personal success." The organization's empowerment programs provide life-enrichment opportunities for those with significant disabilities and help more than 1,200 people find "meaningful purpose in their lives."

Brevard Achievement Center has about 750 employees

around the nation. More than 375 of them work in Brevard County, with 148 employees at the Rockledge campus. Around 620 employees are individuals with disabilities.

Through corporate and government partnerships, the longtime nonprofit organization offers employment opportunities to more than 600 people at federal contract sites in Virginia, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, and Florida.

In Brevard County, Brevard Achievement Center

employees work at various locations, including Patrick Space Force Base, Port Canaveral, the Veterans Affairs Clinic, and NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

With her involvement in Color in Motion and the Performing Arts Showcase, Sorensen is a key cog in Brevard Achievement Center's mission and vision in which all people with disabilities are valued contributors in the workforce and the community.

"Being the arts program manager for Brevard Achievement Center is like my dream job come true," she said.



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## Steven Wilmarth celebrates 26 years with Raymond James & Associates; on Chairman's Council for last decade

By Victoria Wilmarth  
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Senior Client Service Associate  
Wilmarth Private Wealth Management  
Raymond James

MELBOURNE (Feb. 28, 2024) — Steven T. Wilmarth, CEP®, WMS, senior vice president, investments and managing director at Wilmarth Private Wealth Management Group ([www.WilmarthPWM.com](http://www.WilmarthPWM.com)), is celebrating 26 years with Raymond James and Associates Inc.

He's been a part of Raymond James' "Chairman's Council" for the last decade, which recognizes achievement by those financial advisors who have demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to personal service and professional integrity.

Members of the Chairman's Council represent the top echelon of the firm's financial advisors.

Membership for Raymond James & Associates advisors is based mainly on assets under management, education, credentials, and fiscal year production. Requalification is

required annually. The ranking may not be representative of any one client's experience, is not an endorsement or indicative of an advisor's future performance. No fee is paid in exchange for this honor.

Wilmarth joined Raymond James in 1998. "By providing sound financial options on multiple levels to the families we serve, we are honored to be a part of the family's journey and help shape their legacy."

The team offers customized investment, retirement and estate planning services for families, executives, and businessowners throughout the United States.

### ● About Raymond James & Associates

Raymond James & Associates Inc. (RJA), member New York Stock Exchange/SIPC, is an industry leader in financial planning and wealth management services for individuals, high-net-worth families, corporations, and municipalities. RJA is a wholly owned subsidiary of Raymond James Financial Inc. (NYSE-RJF), one of the nation's premier diversified financial services companies with approximately 8,700 financial advisors throughout the United States, Canada and overseas. Total client assets are \$1.26 trillion as of Sept. 30, 2023.

## Respiratory Care program open house planned April 10 at EFSC in Melbourne

COCOA (March 6, 2024) — Eastern Florida State College will host an open house for its Respiratory Care program from 6–8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 10, at its Melbourne campus, 3865 N. Wickham Road.

The event will be in Building 15, Room 122.

Attendees will gain valuable information about the benefits of a career in Respiratory Care and how the nationally accredited program at EFSC prepares graduates to be successful. This event will provide interactive, hands-on demonstrations in the laboratory and the chance to network with faculty, current students and working therapists.

To learn more and to register, visit [easternflorida.edu/go/breathe](http://easternflorida.edu/go/breathe). For additional information, contact Lisa Leib, Respiratory Care program manager, at (321) 433-7598 or at [leibl@easternflorida.edu](mailto:leibl@easternflorida.edu).



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## Marine Bank & Trust Co.

Continued from page 13

Unexpectedly, she was laid off in January 2021. Morales took that opportunity and turned it into a business venture. She and husband Nelson own The Sweet Heartist Gourmet Cookie Co., a growing enterprise.

In 2023, Marine Bank assisted 122 families in the purchase or refinance of their homes.

"Dianna Stewart, residential loan officer at our Melbourne branch, closed a lot of loans last year and she is off to a busy start in 2024," said Milton. "Marine Bank has a variety of products to help customers, including construction-to-permanent loans. There has been good activity in that niche."

A construction-to-permanent loan finances the construction of a home, then converts to a mortgage on completion of construction. These loans only require one round of closing costs compared to construction-only loans, but require a down payment. With a construction-to-permanent loan, the client can draw funds at specific phases of construction, up to a certain loan amount.

Milton said Marine Bank also finances vacant land. "A client may not be ready to build right now but wants to buy the property while it's available. Dianna is also doing a lot of loans for condominiums. People are moving here from other states and purchasing condos."

On the commercial lending side, Marine Bank closed 113 loans which enabled businesses to expand and create jobs.

Milton said she is seeing small-business owners that have been renting space now make the transition to real estate ownership. "Owner-occupied real estate deals are going on, and there continues to be a demand for warehouses and light industrial facilities."

Part of Marine Bank's mission is volunteering in the communities in which it operates. And last year, 49 Marine Bank employees logged 1,356 volunteer hours supporting 51 nonprofit organizations.

Penney, who has been with Marine Bank for 20 years, 14 as president and CEO, leads by example. He's out in the communities in Indian River County and Brevard County.

For example, Penney is a "Business Leader Build" ambassador for Indian River Habitat. He will join other business leaders in building a "forever home" for a working family in Vero Beach. The wall-raising ceremony is set for March 16.

"Bill Penney is not a CEO who sits in an office," said Milton. "He is out in the communities. He's everywhere."

Knowing that a healthy community benefits everyone, Marine Bank encourages its employees to volunteer at local nonprofits and organizations. With time off provided by the bank, the employees leverage their skills and resources, and supply manpower that contributes to the success of each organization.

"When the organizations succeed, the community thrives," said Milton, who is a board member of Melbourne Main Street, a nonprofit that works to revitalize and enhance economic growth in the downtown Melbourne area.

She is the treasurer for Melbourne Main Street. "It's an honor for me to serve on the Melbourne Main Street board," said Milton. "Kim Agee (executive director) is doing an amazing job. The board is comprised of a great group of individuals who care about the community. They have a passion for not only helping the businessowners but also for making the downtown area shine. This is an organization that I wanted to be involved with."

Like many nonprofits, Melbourne Main Street relies heavily on volunteers, board members, community leaders, and businesses to promote the district as a destination.

The Melbourne Main Street officers include: Cassandra Hartford, chair; Albert "Bert" Luer, immediate past chair;

Alexis McGuire, vice chair; Jordan Williams, secretary; Milton, treasurer; and John Frazier Jr., legal counsel and governance. The directors are: Kat Butler, David Cable, Matthew Flores, Don Hemmenway, Mike Hill, Corey Runte, Erin Trauger, Jason Williams, and Agee.

Last year, Melbourne Main Street received three Secretary of State awards at the 38th annual Preservation on Main Street conference at the Reilly Arts Center in Ocala. There are 57 Main Street communities throughout Florida.

Melbourne Main Street was singled out for "Local Leader of the Year," which went to Melbourne Mayor Paul Alfrey for his support of the organization. Runte of Certified General Contractors was named "Board Member of the Year." And Melbourne Main Street won in the category "Telling Your Story" to the community.

"We are proud of those honors," said Milton. "Everyone on the board has the same vision and passion for downtown Melbourne. I'm excited to represent Marine Bank and be involved with Melbourne Main Street."



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- LINDA STOUT
- ELLEN WINTER

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- CAREEN CLARKE
- REBEKAH COATES
- LISA FISHER
- JACQUELINE FLYNN
- ELIZABETH GAMMON
- YOLANDA LAMBERT
- VALERIE LAMMON
- ALEXIS MCGUIRE
- WENDY ROMEU
- JULIE SHIPLEY
- FELICIA STRONG
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- PATRICIA TELLECHEA
- MARTA "TIKI" FIOL
- JAMARA WILSON
- LATASHA WILLIAMS

**WOMEN TRENDING IN TECH**



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- VERONICA BETANCUR
- ELIZABETH HUY
- MARY "KATIE" KOSAK, PH.D
- MARJORIE MATIENZO
- JESSICA PATTERSON
- LAUREN RAY
- EVELYN STEIN

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- KODEY BOGART
- LUCILLE D' AMICO
- LAURA GAMBINO
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## Florida Star Fiction Writers set to host event at the Melbourne–Viera Conference Center

By Maria Geraci  
[mariageraci1@gmail.com](mailto:mariageraci1@gmail.com)

MELBOURNE (Feb. 20, 2024) — Florida Star Fiction Writers will host “An Evening with the Stars” from 6:30–8:30 p.m. Friday, April 8, at the Holiday Inn Melbourne–Viera Conference Center, 8298 N. Wickham Road.

This one-of-a-kind free reader event will feature dozens of bestselling and award-winning authors, a perfect setting for a book club outing, date night, or a fun-filled girls’ night out.

Fans of romance, cozy mysteries, thrillers, women’s fiction, and other popular genres will have an opportunity to mix and mingle with some of their favorite authors in an intimate meet-and-greet setting.

An Evening with the Stars will feature goody bags stuffed with book swag for the first 125 attendees, complimentary desserts, a cash bar, a photo booth with fun props, raffle baskets, and a pick-your-favorite book cover contest with prize drawings.

Guests will have the opportunity to buy books and have them signed by the authors.

For more information on the event and to see a complete list of participating authors, visit <https://www.floridastarwriters.com/an-evening-with-the-stars>.

The event is being held in conjunction with Florida Star Fiction Writers’ conference Writing for Success, April 5–7, 2024. See details at [floridastarwriters.com](http://floridastarwriters.com).

## St. Francis Reflections

Continued from page 23

expansion at its 40,000-square-foot headquarters in Titusville to accommodate a new government program. Called the “Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly,” or PACE, it shares many of the goals of hospice.

The focal point of PACE is an adult day care center where enrollees receive a host of health care and support services, from primary care to dental and vision care, physical therapy, nutritional counseling, and meals.

“We have been approved by the state to take care of 200 patients in the PACE program,” said Killian. “The state is funding that.”

“We did research and demographic studies and found there are 4,500 people in Brevard who could utilize the PACE services, of which 1,000 are located in the Titusville area. So, we soon will have a PACE program. We are working on getting permitted for the renovation of our building. I just signed a contract for the architectural drawings. We are excited to be launching this initiative,” he added.

St. Francis Reflections is recruiting volunteers to help the organization in a range of jobs, from assisting in the office to grief support and being involved in community events.

“Volunteers are the heart of St. Francis Reflections,” said Pitcher. “We have volunteers who are passionate about working at bedside, volunteers who work at the Edward M. Poe Care Center, volunteers who help us with community events and are ambassadors educating people about hospice and palliative care. And we have volunteers who help with administrative duties.”

To learn about volunteer opportunities at St. Francis Reflections, visit [ReflectionsLSC.org/volunteering](http://ReflectionsLSC.org/volunteering) or call (321) 269–4240. Training programs are offered both in person and online. And there are flexible work schedules.

“When the hospice movement first started in the United States it was a volunteer undertaking,” said Killian. “We are proud of our volunteers.”



## St. Francis Reflections Lifestage Care

Continued from page 1

lished the policies for the Edward M. Poe Care Center 10 years ago.

“The care center fulfills a very important part of the hospice team plan,” said Dr. Zeini, the medical director. “Patients may have uncontrolled symptoms that cannot be managed on an outpatient basis. That is where we come in. This facility also acts as a respite center.”

The ongoing demand of taking care of someone else can strain even the most resilient person, she said.

“That is why it’s critical for caregivers to ask for help and take a break when they need it. Respite care provides short-term relief for primary caregivers,” said Dr. Zeini, whose honors include having been named an “Inspirational Leader” in her field by the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

She added that the “beautiful campus is calming for patients and their families. That is important for anyone who is going through a difficult time. This is an uplifting, soothing atmosphere.”

Hospice and palliative medicine focus on improving quality of life and relieving pain and other symptoms in seriously ill patients.

The development of hospice programs in Florida is regulated by a “certificate of need,” (CON) which allows the entry of service providers if the local community has a demonstrated need.

Florida is one of more than 10 states and the District of Columbia that continues to utilize a CON program for the development of hospice services.

St. Francis Reflections sought a CON from the state of Florida in late 2011 and received approval in February 2012. The CON program has allowed Florida to develop an array of hospice providers that grows proportionally to the state.

From 2010 to 2020, Florida’s number of hospice providers grew by 9.3 percent, closely resembling its population growth (7.4 percent), according to a report by Florida TaxWatch.

Older adults are projected to represent nearly a third, or 32.5 percent, of Florida’s population by 2030, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This is up from a quarter of adults 65 and older currently living in the Sunshine State.

Jennifer Creel, Michelle Petrillo, and Dr. Zeini opened the Edward M. Poe Hospice Care Center and have seen it be embraced by patients and families over the last decade.

“At the Edward M. Poe Hospice Care Center, patients receive hospice care in a home-like environment,” said Creel, a registered nurse who is the chief clinical officer at St. Francis Reflections. “Visitors are welcomed 24/7. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not restrict families from visiting. That was huge for our patients and their families. Of course, we had safety measures in place.”

Creel will celebrate her 20th year with St. Francis Reflections in April.

“I have seen this organization grow to meet the needs of hospice patients and families throughout Brevard County,” she said. “I am proud to be part of St. Francis Reflections and the Edward M. Poe Hospice Care Center.”

The team provides short-term acute symptom management for hospice patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Each of the 12 suites provides space for family members to visit. And each suite has a private porch.

The building includes a chapel, a playroom for children, and a kitchenette for the families to use. The building itself contains 11,212 square feet. In all, the project totals 15,000 square feet.

Petrillo, manager of the Edward M. Poe Care Center, was hired by Creel 10 years ago.

“I worked there as a nurse for six years before becoming

the care center manager. My responsibilities include helping hire new staff to continue to provide the high quality of care this facility is known for. We all work closely as a team. Many families have come back over the years and have told us they were very thankful for the care we provided their loved one,” said Petrillo.

“The care center is a special place,” said Dr. Ryan Chapman, chief medical officer at St. Francis Reflections. “I am proud to be able to work at St. Francis Reflections and have always enjoyed working in our care center. We all work hard to get the patients’ symptoms under control, be it pain, shortness of breath, confusion, agitation, anxiety, or other medical issues. And we always strive to work with our community partners and hospitals, as well as the families. This facility is an integral part of the North Brevard medical community.”

He added, “Our physicians and team members are all experts in hospice and palliative care medicine.”

Palliative care is a resource for anyone living with a serious illness, such as heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer, dementia, or Parkinson’s disease.

Palliative care can be helpful at any stage of illness and is best provided soon after a person is diagnosed, said Dr. Chapman.

Like palliative care, hospice provides comprehensive comfort care as well as support for the family. The main difference between the two is that hospice care is provided for a person with a terminal illness whose physician believes he or she has six months or less to live if the illness runs its natural course.

Many older Americans die in facilities such as hospitals or nursing homes receiving care that is not consistent with their wishes. It is important for older adults to plan and let their caregivers, doctors, or family members know their end-of-life preferences in advance.

In 2022, St. Francis Reflections opened an inpatient unit partnering with Melbourne Regional Medical Center. St. Francis Reflections has a care center on the second floor of the hospital.

A team of St. Francis Reflections hospice and palliative care clinicians and physicians serve patients there when their care is no longer manageable in other settings. Volunteers, social workers, chaplains, and bereavement counselors also make up the care center’s staff.

“The 10-unit suite at Melbourne Regional Medical Center stays busy and is meeting a need in that market for people who require a higher level of care around the clock,” said Killian, who will mark his 10th year with St. Francis Reflections in December 2024. He has greatly expanded the organization’s reach in the county with programs and services.

Formerly Hospice of St. Francis, the organization rebranded in 2020 to reflect its expanded scope of community-based services designed to meet the growing need for serious illness and end-of-life care.

At the Melbourne Care Center, patients and families experience private suites with bathrooms. There is space for visitors to spend precious times with their loved ones.

Family and friends can visit around the clock and use overnight accommodations to remain by their loved one’s side. The care center includes a family room with a kitchenette.

In addition to serving clients at its inpatient centers, St. Francis Reflections delivers hospice care at nursing homes, assisted living facilities, hospital settings, and at individual homes. “We provide hospice care anywhere our patients call home,” said Killian.

Hospice care is fully covered by Medicare and Medicaid and other types of health plans.

“St. Francis Reflections is a not-for-profit entity, so we

do not turn anyone away because of their inability to pay,” he said, adding that his organization sustains itself in various ways, including through donations from the community and from the St. Francis Reflections Foundation.

The Medicare hospice benefit was established in 1982 to give recipients access to care “near the end of their lives. But research in the “Journal of the American Geriatrics Society” says those who utilize the service often do so too late.

By starting hospice early, it may provide months of meaningful care and quality time with loved ones, research shows.

The 2023 statistics show that longer stays reduced health-care costs in the last year of life by as much as 11 percent. All told, hospice care — regardless of length of stay — saved Medicare about \$3.5 billion for patients in their last year of life, a 3.1 percent reduction. But those with stays of six months or more yielded the highest percentage of savings.

The report was compiled by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, the National Association for Home Care and Hospice, and the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

St. Francis Reflections is a “4-Star” rated hospice, according to the federal government’s quality reporting program for hospices. The Star ratings program, with 5 the top, was created to help patients and families compare and select a hospice organization in their region.

“Only seven hospices in Florida received a 4-Star rating,” said Elana Pitcher, director of business development and communications at St. Francis Reflections. “We were one of two in Brevard County. We provide high quality care. We are proud of our outcomes. They rank above the national average. The impact we make on our patients and their families is a testament to why we are a 4-Star rated hospice. Hopefully, we will soon be a 5-Star rated hospice. That is our goal.”

St. Francis Reflections is also a “Level V” partner in the We Honor Veterans program. Level V partners provide specialized care to veterans who are facing serious illnesses. This includes a veteran-to-veteran volunteer program, training on conflict-specific medical and mental health concerns, and knowledge to assist veterans in navigating VA benefits.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the Department of Veterans Affairs started We Honor Veterans in 2010 to address the growing need for veteran care, especially as veterans from different eras are aging and need access to hospice and palliative care.

“About 25 percent of our population is comprised of veterans,” said Pitcher. “So, for any veteran who ‘comes on service’ with St. Francis Reflections, we recognize their branch of service, how many years they served, we recognize their family and much more as a part of the Level V program. Our social workers take a deep dive into their military backgrounds working closely with the families. We provide special pinning ceremonies for the veterans where they receive recognition for their service and we express gratitude for their sacrifice. They are honored with a certificate.”

Veterans on St. Francis Reflections’ hospice service are offered the opportunity to tell the story of their military experience. The information is compiled and a special pinning ceremony is conducted for the veteran, their family, and friends. Pitcher said families usually learn facts about their loved one’s time in the service that they never knew before.

Last year, St. Francis Reflections announced a major

Please see St. Francis Reflections, page 22



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