

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

VOLUME XXXIII ❧ ISSUE 12 ❧ DECEMBER 2013

HERE COMES SANTA!

**SANTA AND MRS. CLAUS WILL MAKE THEIR 26TH ANNUAL VISIT TO BLOOMINGDALE
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2013 - 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.**



Santa and Mrs. Claus visit Bloomingdale each year to visit with children in the community. Don't miss out on this special neighborhood tradition.

BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION is pleased to sponsor this special holiday tradition and charity food drive in the Bloomingdale Community.

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Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) Office
3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, Florida (BSTD office is located behind CITGO and Sun Trust Bank)
For more information call (813) 681-2051.

Please bring a non-perishable food donation. Donated food items will be distributed to a local food bank.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"It isn't the size of the gift that matters, but the size of the heart that gives it." *Eileen Elias Freeman*

PLEASE  RECYCLE

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

Bloomington Homeowners Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 7221 - Brandon, Florida 33508 - (813) 681-2051
Email: BloomingtonHomeowners@gmail.com
Website: www.BloomingtonGazette.com

BHA Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Offices of Bloomington Special Taxing District:
3509 Bell Shoals Road
Valrico, Florida 33596

Directors at Large:

President: <i>George T. May IV</i>	<i>Billy Hightower</i>	<i>Joanie Wilson</i>
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YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



SUZANNE JONES

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Tampa Bay Times
Community Development Team

The official publication of the BHA since 1980

The Gazette is delivered free to Bloomington residents on the first Saturday of each month.



Special Event Classes

Every Friday in December, 7:30-8:30pm!

1st Friday, Dec. 6th:
"Teen Night"

2nd Friday, Dec. 13th:
"Singles Night: "Speed Bag" Dating"

3rd Friday, Dec. 20th:
"Family Night"

4th Friday, Dec. 27th:
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YARD OF THE MONTH



Photo: Suzanne Jones

Randy & Cheryl Kehrmeyer
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Yard of the Month is sponsored by Ace Hardware of Bloomington
Send your Yard of the Month nominations to:
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Winners will receive a \$25 gift card
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BLOOMINGDALE

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BLOOMINGDALE

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SCHOOL NEWS

All Schools

Hillsborough County Public School students will enjoy winter break Dec. 24-Jan. 4. Students return to school Monday, Jan. 7.

Bloomingtondale Senior High School

Dec. 10 Chorus Concert, 7 p.m.

Dec. 12 Band Concert, 7 p.m.

Dec. 17 Orchestra Concert, 7 p.m.

Congratulations to the Bloomingtondale Rajun' Bull Band for earning a Superior rating in November's FBA Marching Performance Assessment!

Burns Middle School

Dec. 12 Track Meet at East Bay, 6 p.m.

Dec. 13 Orchestra and Chorus Holiday Performance at Tampa Airport, 8 a.m.

Dec. 16 Band Concert, 7 p.m.

Dec. 19 Orchestra Concert, 6:30 p.m.

Cimino Elementary

Dec. 13 Monthly All Pro Dads breakfast in the multi-purpose room, 7 a.m.

Dec. 16 PTA Meeting in the media center, 6 p.m.

Alafia Elementary – No information available

Events listed may be subject to change. Check with your school to confirm dates and times prior to attending listed events.



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063316-01



BREAKFAST FOR BRAINIACS

By: Kim Miller

On Wednesday, Nov. 20, Bloomingdale High principal Sue Burkett, other faculty and staff honored 459 junior and senior students who achieved a G.P.A. of 3.5 or higher for the last school year. The invitation-only Academic Breakfast took place in the BSHS cafeteria where students were awarded an academic letter and served the most important meal of the day by the staff.

Seven students were also recognized with a “Letter of Commendation” from the National Merit Scholarship Program, based on their scores from the PSAT exam taken in the fall of their junior year: Hali Hosemann, Lily Elmore, Alex Pinner, Ashley Ericson, Madee Prether, Adam Lambert and Allison Bundy. Daniel Cardenas earned a National Merit Hispanic Scholar Achievement and Rory Martin was announced as a National Merit Achievement Semi-Finalist. Both students are eligible to submit essays to the program for college scholarships.

Assistant principal Katie Roche and Don Peek dole out academic awards to deserving students.



Photo: Kim Miller



BULLS FOOTBALL SEASON WRAPS UP

Bloomingdale defeated their final foe of the year, Middleton, with a score of 42-0. The Bulls failed to make a playoff bid but had the best football record in school history with a 6-4 season.



Photo: Clark Sports Media

Alan Yearby (#8) gets a defensive interception and return for touchdown with blocking help from Will Morgan (#25).



BLOOMINGDALE STUDENTS STRIDE TO THE TOP

By: Kim Miller



Photo: Kim Miller

BSHS students (pictured in red) lead the pack in the 2nd Annual Strides for Education 5K Walk/Run.

BSHS again took home the top honor in fundraising for the Hillsborough Education Foundation's second annual Strides for Education 5K Walk/Run. The Nov. 23 event held at the Tampa Bay Times Forum is a scholarship fundraiser for middle and high school students in Hillsborough County public schools. All funds raised by the students are placed in their school's scholarship fund, which is managed by the Hillsborough Education Foundation, and are used to award scholarships at the end of the year.

This year Bloomingdale brought in close to \$8,000 and registered more than 150 participants. Because of the hard work of college and career counselor Ms. Leena Hasbini, students, their friends, family, and the community, the foundation will award BSHS an extra \$5,000 for its scholarship fund. Also, for the second year, a Bloomingdale student claimed the designation of top fundraiser. Senior, Cassie Knight raised \$1010, and was awarded an iPad 2. Way to go Bulls!



CHORUS TEES OFF FIRST GOLF TOURNAMENT

By: Kim Miller

The BSHS Chorus hosted its first ever golf tournament fundraiser at the Bloomingdale Golfers Club on Oct. 26. Proceeds from the event were used to offset program costs such as music, a pianist, travel, awards, and registration fees for various competitions.

Over 30 golfers signed up for the event. Their registration included green fees, cart use, a goody bag filled with treats, and a catered lunch. Raffle tickets were sold for a chance to win various donated items such as a Jason Killorn signed hockey stick, Rays bobble heads, and various gift baskets. Golfers feeling extra charitable, or out of practice, were pleased to purchase a few mulligans on the side.

The chorus consists of 270 members and performs at various events and competitions throughout the year. This year started off with an invitation to sing the National Anthem at one of the Tampa Bay Rays games. Director of Choral Activities, Jason Locker, is very proud of his chorus members, and thanks all of the event sponsors for their support. Members of the community are invited to attend the free winter concert on Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. in the BSHS auditorium.

The Tampa Bay Lightning fundraiser night is just around the corner. Tickets (priced \$30-\$60) for the Dec. 29 New York Rangers vs. Tampa Bay Lightning hockey game may be purchased through the chorus department. For more information on this or any chorus event contact Jason Locker, jason.locker@sdhc.k12.fl.us.



Photo: Kim Miller

Chorus members, boosters and other volunteers welcome golfers to the 1st choral golf tournament fundraiser.

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STUDENTS AND TEACHERS COMPETE IN SECOND ANNUAL BLOOMINGDALE FEUD

By: Kayla Hayes

"Name something you get at the dentist that makes the trip worthwhile." With that question the second annual "Bloomingdale Feud" was underway. The game show evening provided an entertaining opportunity for students and teachers to compete for funds to be used for special school programs and events. After more than an hour of competition, the students came out on top with 2044 points (teachers with 885).

Bloomingdale Feud was student-hosted by seniors Corey Geer and Marcus Butler, and was played similarly to "Family Feud," the popular TV game show. The Bloomingdale Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) planned the event as a way for the students to earn money for their classes. Eight students representing every grade competed for \$100 toward each class account, which later supports events like Homecoming and Senior Prom.

Teachers competing this year included Mr. Sheehan (History), Ms. Hasbini (Career and College Counselor), Mr. Saviet (History) and Mr. Blondino (Science). Had they triumphed, winnings would have funded various Bloomingdale clubs and programs, including Rho Kappa (Social Studies Honor Society), Best Buddies and Strides for Education.

For more information on fundraisers and events at Bloomingdale High School, visit the Bloomingdale website at bloomingdale.mysdhc.org or bloomingdaleguidance.org.

BSHS Student Government and PTA converted the school's auditorium stage into a game show set for November's Bloomingdale Feud.



Photo: Kayla Hayes



Special Event Classes

Every Friday in December, 7:30-8:30pm!

1st Friday, Dec. 6th:
"Teen Night"

2nd Friday, Dec. 13th:
"Singles Night: "Speed Bag" Dating"

3rd Friday, Dec. 20th:
"Family Night"

4th Friday, Dec. 27th:
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THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

Here's a look at December happenings (holiday and otherwise) in the near vicinity. If you are hoping to visit Santa, plan in advance—from the looks of things he's one busy fellow!

Santa & Mrs. Claus Visit

Bloomingtondale / Dec. 7 / 10 a.m.–2 p.m. / Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association / 3509 Bell Shoals Road / The BHA is pleased to sponsor this special holiday tradition for children in the Bloomingtondale Community. Children are invited to share their holiday wish lists and pose for a photo with Santa & Mrs. Claus. For more information call (813) 681-2051 or email us at bloomingtondale.homeowners@gmail.com. **Visits with Santa are FREE.** Donations of a non-perishable food item(s) are welcome will be distributed to an area food bank.

Santa's Holiday Workshop / Dec. 7 / 11 a.m.–2 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association, Inc. / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon / Come

and join Center Place for a fun-filled day of cookie decorating and crafts, and a visit with Santa! Moms, Dads, Grandparents, and children ages 5 and up are welcome! Children must be accompanied by an adult. Tickets \$10.

All Jazzed Up / Dec. 7 / 7–10:30 p.m. / The Regent / 6437 Watson Rd, Riverview / A full complement of artists in every media will be on hand displaying and selling their work. Enjoy wonderful food, a cognac bar and other libations, cigar lounge, great live jazz, silent auction and gifts for the art officianados on your list. Proceeds benefit Congregation Beth Shalom of Brandon. Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$25/person or \$40/couple.

Stuff-A-Bus to Benefit Toys for Tots / Dec. 9–14 / 7 p.m. / Brandon Mall (across from Sears) / Sponsored by 93.3 FLZ; DJs Ratboy and Staypuff will be living on the bus until it is stuffed. Bring new, unwrapped toys for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve

Toys for Tots Tampa Bay. No toy guns, weapons, or zombie toys. Visit www.toysfortotstampa.org.

Brandon Holiday Charity Ball / Dec. 12 / 6:30–10:30 p.m. / The Regent / 6437 Watson Rd, Riverview / The Holiday Ball is an opportunity for the Brandon community to celebrate the art of dance and get into the holiday spirit of giving. Entertainment will be provided by the amazing award winning dancers of The Way 2 Dance, with great musical artistry and open dance to be enjoyed by all. Black tie optional; suit and tie for men, and semi-formal for women. Expect a red carpet entrance with a paparazzi photo, followed by the swinging sounds of music, live and interactive entertainment, dancing exhibition, silent auction, and amazing food! Cash bar available. Benefits the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots. Visit www.holidaycharityballbrandon.com.

Experience Christmas / Dec. 13, 7 p.m.; Dec. 14, 2:30 p.m. & 7 p.m. / Bell Shoals Baptist Church / 2102 Bell Shoals Road, Brandon / Welcome the most wonderful time of the year with a grand display of dazzling holiday sights and sounds extolling the miracle of Christmas! **Experience Christmas** is a yuletide celebration that will delight your entire family! All seating is reserved. Tickets \$8; discount available for tickets purchased in groups of 10 or more. Visit www.bellshoals.com or call (813) 689-4229.

Christmas Festival 2013 / Dec. 14 / 9 a.m.–4 p.m. / Music Showcase / 402 Oakfield Drive, Brandon / Dozens of local vendors selling crafts, make-up, jewelry, books, and much more. **BIG SALE** in store on Musical Instruments, Books, and Accessories. Live holiday music outside featuring The Rockestra, Playground Junkies, and Glee by FAOPA. Student recitals inside. Prizes, activities, food vendors, bounce house, temporary tattoos, face painting, balloon

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Brandon Ballet Presents The Nutcracker / Dec. 14, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 15, 2 p.m. & 5:30 p.m./ Spoto Auditorium / 8538 Eagle Palm Drive, Riverview / Nothing can match the thrill and magic of experiencing Brandon Ballet's The Nutcracker! With beautiful sets, costumes and glorious music, enter the magical world of Clara and her Nutcracker Prince, waltzing Snowflakes, and the regal Sugar Plum Fairy. Tickets \$25 for Adults, \$15 for Children (18 or younger), \$20 for Seniors (55+). For more information visit www.brandonballet.org or call (813) 684-4282.

Where is Santa? / Dec. 14 / 2-3:15 p.m. / Bloomingdale Library Community Room/ 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue / It's an American Fairy Tale with Santa, elves, and goblins reminding children

why they should be happy with the gifts they receive. A little girl uses a hammer and nails to make a doll house. A tough boy uses artist's paints on his sled. And everyone is happy ever after! Presented by Bits 'N Pieces Theater. Funded by the Friends of the Bloomingdale Regional Library. Call 813-273-3652 for more information.

Winter Break Camp / Dec. 23, 26, 27, 30; Jan. 2, 3 / 9 a.m. -4 p.m. / Campo Family YMCA / 3414 Culbreath Road, Valrico / Join in some winter break fun at the Campo Family YMCA. Activities will include arts and crafts, sports, indoor/outdoor games, fitness activities, Campo's youth and teen center, and much more! Cost per day: \$30 facility; \$45 program (Early drop off from 7 - 9 a.m. and late pickup from 4 - 6 p.m. are available at no extra charge.) Sign up at the Campo Y Welcome Center or online. For more information, contact Dan Ribas at dan.ribas@tampaymca.org or (813) 684-1371.

IT'S A WRAP



Let the Bloomingdale Senior High School Crimson Guard wrap your gifts this holiday season. The Guard is raising funds toward the purchase of equipment for their 2014 Winter Guard season. Simply drop off your gifts at the Bloomingdale High cafeteria on the following dates, and a Guard member (along with an adult) will ensure your gifts are beautifully wrapped. Donations are welcome and accepted with great appreciation.

Dec. 11, 3:15-5 p.m. & Dec. 18, 3:15-5 p.m.

The Guard will also be wrapping gifts at the Brandon Barnes & Noble Dec. 14 & Dec. 21, 6-9 p.m.

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- ◆ Pillows
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Photo: Miriam Leech

Twelve-year-old Audrey Freathy swings with glee in the Sensory Gym of the newly-opened Livingstone Academy Autism Center located on Bloomingdale Avenue across from the high school.



Photo: Miriam Leech

Twelve-year-old Audrey Freathy is just one of the many success stories celebrated at the Livingstone Academy Autism Center (LAAC) since its first day of classes on Aug. 18. Just a few short weeks ago Freathy would not use a swing, refusing to lift her feet off the ground. But because of the positive and uplifting environment at the school, and the dedication of her teachers, the young autistic girl can now be found swinging with glee—reluctant to get off of the equipment that once made her uncomfortable.

The LAAC focuses solely on the needs of children with autism. Located on Bloomingdale Avenue across from the high school, the center is operating at full capacity with 31 students and 14 full-time employees. And since the school's new sign went up out front, inquiries have increased significantly.

As Kristin Seltzer, Director of LAAC, explains, “Love and acceptance are critical parts of our success.” Children who previously had to be dragged to school now can't wait to go to their classes. Activities such as making moon sand or doing the freeze dance help the students with their sensory experience. And Bella, a teacher's pet pot-bellied pig, is a frequent visitor to the center.

Academics are taught in classrooms with filtered light, because many children with autism have light sensitivity. For those who are sensitive to noise, headphones are available for students to wear during class activities.

The centerpiece of the LAAC is its Sensory Gym. There, occupational therapists work with students on gross and fine motor skills; movement; and visual-spatial, oral, and auditory senses. And like Freathy, many students have breakthrough moments in the gym while using equipment such as the swing, rockers, body socks, and weighted blankets.

Seltzer said that during the first few weeks of the school being open the staff felt the weight of their responsibility to the students and their families. But their passion and commitment soon translated into success. “These teachers go above and beyond their duty, and I have never seen a more dedicated, passionate group of people,” explained Seltzer.

For more information on Livingstone Academy Autism Center, call 813-438-8550.

Teacher and certified occupational therapist Beth Lint helps Livingstone Academy Autism Center students make pumpkin moon sand to enrich their sensory experience.

Time is flying and the holidays have arrived! In the chaos that often consumes us this time of year it's easy to neglect the seemingly small things in our world, such as the lawn and our home's aesthetic appearance. Something as simple and quick as trimming the bushes not only provides your home with curb appeal, but can make the community an attractive surprise to visitors and people driving through to gaze at holiday light displays.

Once the craziness dies down, it is the perfect time to trim trees, lay mulch, fertilize grass, and pressure wash a home's exterior and driveway. Doing so improves or maintains a homeowner's property value, and can increase the demand and home prices for an entire neighborhood. Sounds like a new year's resolution!



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Real Estate Statistics for Bloomingdale East and West
Oct. 15-Nov. 15, 2013

All data was pulled from MLS and public records with a cut-off date of Nov. 15 and does not include For Sale or Rent by Owners. Data below varies depending on conditions of sale, financing, square footage, bedrooms, etc. and should be used as a guideline only.

For a comprehensive analysis specific to your neighborhood and home or overall real estate questions, please contact me directly.



Total homes sold: **12**

Foreclosures sold: **1**

Short Sales sold: **2**

Average Days to Contract (not including Short Sales or Foreclosures): **34**

Average Days to Close (not including Short Sales or Foreclosures): **68**

Average List Price (not including Short Sales or Foreclosures): **\$214,111**

Average Sold Price (not including Short Sales or Foreclosures): **\$208,022**

Number of Homes currently for Rent: **48**

Average monthly rent: **\$1600**

Number of Total Homes currently for sale (not under contract): **39**

Number of homes Active with Contract / Pending sale: **48**

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If giving clients the perfect look is Bleu Salon's goal, then giving back to the community is surely its mission. Located in the Publix shopping center on Lithia Pinecrest Road, the salon has involved itself in a number of community outreach projects this year, from raising funds for the Wounded Warriors Project to this season's toy and food collection drives.

"There's a lot of ways I could spend my money to advertise, but I'd rather focus my time and money on community-based things that can make a little more impact," said owner Mike Jonson.

Besides offering special deals during the month of December, Bleu Salon is busy collecting non-perishable items for ECHO and new and gently used toys that can be easily wiped down.

Jonson describes Bleu Salon as high-end with reasonable pricing. Their haircuts start at \$40 and include a shampoo, head massage, cut and complete style. Since moving to their new location in March, the salon no longer offers nail, massage or skin services; however, clients may still avail themselves of facial waxing and makeup services.

"When we moved, we eliminated our spa. It was more of a luxury item that people have cut back spending on. Hair has always been our core competency," Jonson said. According to Jonson whose mother was a hair stylist, "hair" is always a community need.

Bleu Salon offers hair products by Redken, a company that supports Bleu Salon with the best hair education and community benefits. Associates at Bleu Salon are offered career growth education through Redken, starting after graduation and continuing to business ownership if that is the path they choose. "Our ability to give our people a career path gives them the incentive to work hard and progress," said Jonson. "We have very good ratings for what we do and we have a lot of pride for everything that goes out the door," he continued.

Bleu Salon is located at 3451 Lithia Pinecrest Rd. and can be contacted by calling 813-651-4020. Customers are invited to participate in a gift card raffle through Feb. 1 by referring customers. (Enter to win \$250 by referring one or two people or \$1,000 for referring three or four people.) See Facebook.com/BleuSalonandSpa for Bleu Salon's December gift card special, and visit www.bleusalon.com for general information.

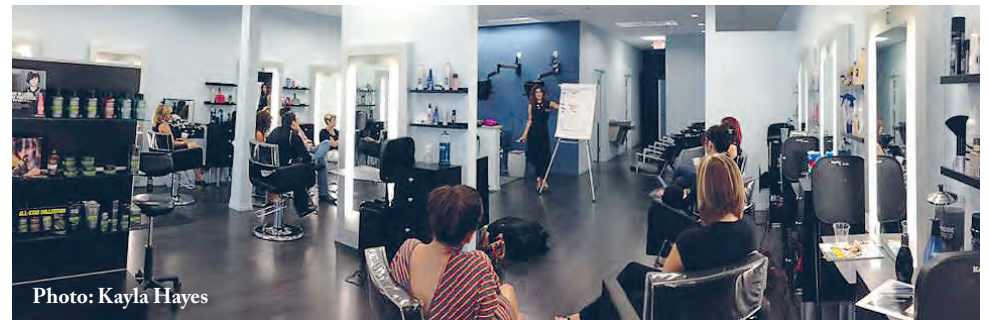


Photo: Kayla Hayes

Staff avails themselves of Bleu Salon's continuing education—one priority that owner Mike Jonson says sets them apart from the competition.



Photo: Kayla Hayes

Stylist Troy Peirce designs a special occasion basket weave updo.

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LIZ 'N' THINGS CONSIGNMENT OPENS ON BELL SHOALS

By: Kayla Hayes

Liz 'N' Things Consignment Boutique sells well-kept, brand name clothing (as well as hand bags, jewelry, shoes and other accessories) at affordable prices. The store opened in Valrico in February, but after three months the consignment shop outgrew its store on Kings Avenue and opened at a new location on Bell Shoals Road.

Owner Elizabeth Cureton ventured into the consignment business this year after being out of a job for two years. "I've always been a working person," Cureton said. But even with 40 years of experience in real estate property management elsewhere, she found it impossible to find work in her field here and was overqualified for most other local jobs. "I'm not looking to get rich," Cureton said. "I'm happy if I can pay my bills."

"I've been very blessed with the people I've encountered and doing what I love. I never expected to have so much business and so many excellent consigners," Cureton commented. Describing herself as a people-person, Cureton loves engaging with her customers. Her motto is to "keep it affordable" since she, too has been a consignment shopper. "I want to cater to the working-class woman and older persons on a budget," Cureton said.

Cureton recalls the story of one woman who visited her shop when the store first opened. Nervous for an upcoming interview, the Spanish-speaking woman (Cureton is bi-lingual as well) visited Liz 'N' Things on a tight budget. "It was so rewarding that the young lady could find shoes, a jacket, pants and a blouse for under \$40. Being an avid Christian, that was so rewarding for me." The consigner came back to purchase more items after she received her first paycheck.

Liz 'N' Things is located at 3515 Bell Shoals Rd. Visit liznthings.com or call 324-8951 for store hours and more. Liz 'N' Things offers a 15 percent discount for all military and Hillsborough County employees. Through Dec. 31, all \$20 purchases will be rewarded an additional \$5. Cureton is looking for more handbags, large shoes and plus-size clothing. Email Cureton at liznthings@gmail.com.



Photo: Kayla Hayes

Liz 'N' Things Consignment Boutique opens between Majik Touch Cleaners and Papa Johns on Bell Shoals Rd. The store is stocked with like-new and brand name items for affordable prices.



Photo: Kayla Hayes

Besides carrying shoes and clothing, Liz 'N' Things has recently added a variety of home goods to the collection.

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065250-01

A SALT YOUR AILMENTS

By: Dina White

The Salt Grotto opened its doors in April 2013 bringing the healing nature of salt therapy to the Bloomingdale area. Tucked away at the corner of Lithia Pinecrest Road and Lynx Paw Trail, the human-made grotto specializes in halotherapy (aka dry salt/saline therapy), an increasingly popular treatment in the U.S. purported to remedy a wide variety of common ailments from allergies and sinus infections to dermatitis and acne.

Halotherapy is a well-known and sometimes regimented European treatment that can compliment or serve as an alternative to Western medicine. Using state-of-the-art technology known as a halogenerator, the Salt Grotto transforms pure salt into minute particles fine enough to penetrate deep into the respiratory tract, where the anti-allergenic, antibacterial, and antifungal effects may heal and aid in clearing airways while softening and healing the skin.

Upon entering the Salt Grotto, clients are greeted with a gentle, spa-like atmosphere swirling with warm lighting and the soft scent of essentials oils. The intimate décor is sprinkled with Pink Himalayan salt lamps, bricks, and edible salt - all of which are for sale. Customers can choose between multiple types of halotherapy, from individual, group, and even children's therapy. All treatments take place in one of two therapy rooms: a group room with salt covered floor and warmly lit Himalayan salt panels covering the walls; or a private room, home to a sophisticated salt bed layered with mineral-rich Himalayan salt, untouched by earth's elements and toxins, designed for isolated skin and respiratory treatment.

No matter the treatment, the Salt Grotto anticipates that clients will leave feeling enlightened, refreshed, and prepared to "Just Breathe." For more information call 813-324-8946 or visit www.thesaltgrotto.com.

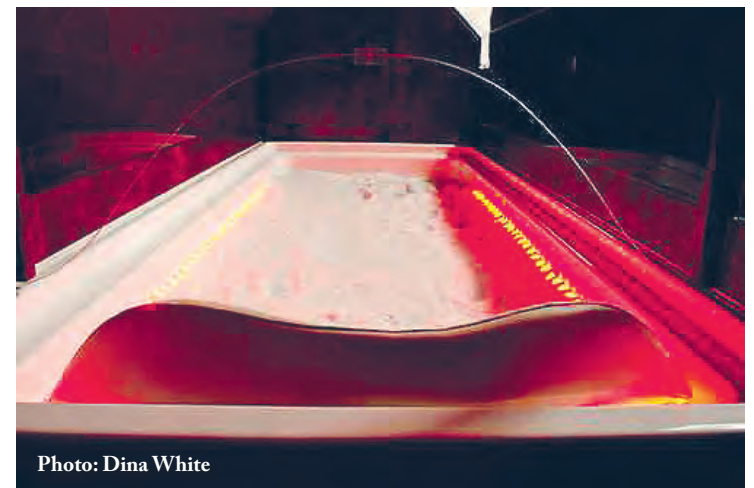


Photo: Dina White

The Salt Grotto offers clients several types of salt therapy including treatment on a salt bed—a multifunctional unit with adjustable concentration levels of salt particles.



STARS SHONE BRIGHT AT CAMPO YMCA FUNDRAISER

By: Miriam Leech

Campo Family YMCA rolled out the red carpet for guests attending its Nov. 15 Corks & Forks event. Keeping with this year's theme, "A Night of the Stars," guests were treated like Hollywood celebrities while wining and dining on delicious drinks and cuisine provided by local restaurants.

Corks & Forks is the Campo Y's signature fundraising event, with 100 percent of donations going toward scholarships for children and families who may not otherwise have the opportunity to benefit from the YMCA due to financial hardship.

Guests were also treated to a live auction, charity casino, raffle, dancing performances, and singing. "The dollars we raise at events like Corks & Forks ensure we keep our doors open to everyone in the community—regardless of age, income or background," said Cindy Sofarelli, senior group vice-president for the Tampa YMCA.



Photo: Miriam Leech



Campo Family YMCA volunteer Amanda Salb tends bar in the casino during "A Night of the Stars." Funds raised at the event support healthy living and youth development programs such as summer camp, swim lessons, and LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA for cancer survivors and their families.



Photo: Miriam Leech

Silent Auction items line the length of the YMCA hall. Guests of Corks & Forks 2013 bid on a wide variety of items including a dermatology package, tickets for the Tampa Bay Lightning v. New York Islanders match, a wine tasting for 15, and a two-night stay at the TradeWinds Guy Harvey Outpost Beach Resort in St. Petersburg.

INs & OUTs

WHAT EVERY BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PARKING

Parking concerns are one of the top two most reported complaints to the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA). Whether you live in a mandatory or voluntary HOA, or are an owner or a tenant, you are bound by your neighborhood deed restrictions. Here is what you need to know about parking in Bloomingdale.

There are five types of *mandatory* deed restrictions addressing parking in our community (see “Deed Restriction Parking by Neighborhoods”). Generally, many of the deed restrictions begin with, “No motor vehicle, boat, boat trailer, camper, mobile home, travel trailer or other vehicle, trailer or conveyance shall be parked, kept or stored on any lot.” From there the restriction varies by neighborhood.

With so many different restrictions throughout the community, the BHA board adopted a standard to address parking complaints. Beginning in July, board members began validating complaints based on three priorities: the deed restrictions of the property in question, curb appeal, and most importantly, common sense.

BHA violation letters target vehicles, boats, or trailers of any kind that are parked on the grass, or blocking the street, or between the sidewalk and the street. The last of these is also a county violation, which warrants a citation by the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office. Association letters will also be issued for parking unregistered or inoperable/dilapidated vehicles. These cases will be forwarded directly to Hillsborough County Code Enforcement. And, finally, no business or commercial vehicles/trailers may be parked at any residence unless construction, repair, or maintenance is ongoing. This is also a county code violation.

Residents utilizing parking pads attached to their driveways, either original construction or add-ons of concrete, gravel, or pavers, will not be cited. Parking vehicles, boats, and trailers behind property fences is encouraged.

Keeping our community a great place to live is a BHA board priority. Since the implementation of the parking standard, many neighborhoods are looking better thanks to residents following their neighborhood deed restrictions.

As with last month’s article closing.... “Do the right thing,” know your *mandatory* deed restrictions, comply with violation notices, and first and foremost, communicate with your neighbors. You, your neighbors, your neighborhood, and the Bloomingdale community will benefit.

Do you have a question on deed restrictions, other local home ownership requirements, or a violation notice? Contact the BHA office at 813-681-2051, or via email to bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com, and check the Gazette for general homeowner information.



Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is now on Facebook. Check out our page and like us at:
<https://www.facebook.com/BloomingdaleHoa>.

TO PARK OR NOT TO PARK?

Deed Restriction Parking By Neighborhoods

Deed restrictions are mandatory for owners and tenants no matter whether you live in a mandatory or voluntary HOA neighborhood!

Type 1 (17 Neighborhoods): No motor vehicle, boat, boat trailer, camper, mobile home, travel trailer or other vehicle, trailer or conveyance shall be parked, kept or stored on any lot except on the *paved parking area* of such lots installed as part of the original construction of the improvements upon the lots.

Type 2 (9 Neighborhoods, 2 with weight restrictions): No motor vehicle, boat, boat trailer, camper, mobile home, travel trailer, car, or other vehicle, trailer or conveyance shall be parked, kept or stored on any lot except in such a location as to *not be visible from the street*.

Type 3- (4 Neighborhoods): so as *not to be visible from the public streets or neighboring lots*.

Type 4 (1 Neighborhood): on any lot *other than inside the garage*. Only automobiles may be parked in driveways. No vehicles of any type, other than automobiles, may be parked on streets.

Type 5- Mandatory HOA: Each of our mandatory HOA neighborhoods has very specific, varied, and detailed parking restrictions.

Contact the BHA for a breakdown of which neighborhoods fall into the above categories, or see detailed restrictions by neighborhood by visiting www.bloomingdalegazette.com. Mandatory HOA residents may also wish to contact their neighborhood board or property manager.

ATTENTION RESIDENTS OF BLOOMINGDALE ESTATES!

Did you know that you while you live in a *voluntary* homeowner association neighborhood you still are subject to *mandatory* deed restrictions that were written over 30 years ago? Deed restrictions for Bloomingdale Estates (Sections D1-D3) were written by the original developer. Your neighbors, Shaun Jones and Steven Woolheater, with the assistance of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, are spearheading an effort to update the Bloomingdale Estates restrictions to be more in line with how families live today.

Updating the deed restriction entails multiple steps:

A 100% resident review of the documents, and the drafting of new proposed deed restrictions

A door-to-door campaign by residents to gather signatures and approval of the document

A legal review by the Bloomingdale HOA attorney

Filing of the new deed restrictions with the Hillsborough County Clerk of the Circuit Court by the Bloomingdale HOA

How can you help?

Volunteer to help Shaun and Steven with the process.

Look for more information in the January issue of the Bloomingdale Gazette, and watch for updates at www.bloomingdalegazette.com.

Provide contact information to Shaun or Steven by emailing bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com, or by calling 813-681-2051.



Photo: Steven Woolheater

Updated deed restrictions affect all 177 homes located in the 33-year-old neighborhood of Bloomingdale Estates, which lies southeast of Bloomingdale Avenue and John Moore Road.

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BHA PROVIDES FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO CAN-DO

On Nov. 12, The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board of directors overwhelming voted to provide CAN-DO with a check for \$500 to help the organization with its efforts to prevent the building of a big box store near the Bloomingdale Regional Library.

CAN-DO representatives Gretchen King and Dee Bristol approached the BHA board at its November meeting with a request for financial support. According to King CAN-DO had thus far raised \$5,500, falling short of the \$7,000 needed to fully cover legal expenses, promotional materials and other costs incurred during the initial phase of the group's undertaking. While they had received contributions from Lithia Oaks, King and Bristol explained that several other area homeowners associations were waiting to see what the BHA would do before contributing.

The BHA officially stated its position against the development back in September, and following the November meeting, was pleased to include financial opposition support as well. "The BHA is adamantly opposed to the building of a big box in our back yard," commented BHA president George May. "One of our roles as a voluntary, umbrella association is to advocate for our homeowners. The majority (95%) of residents who responded to our survey on the issue were firmly against the location of this type of development, with many expressing serious concern over lowered home values as a result."

CAN-DO UPDATE:

Bloomingdale CAN-DO announced on Nov. 20 that a lawsuit was filed concerning the text amendment, LDC 11-0607, that affected the Bloomingdale property. The defendants, Hillsborough County and Red Cast Bloomingdale LLC were served on Thursday, Nov. 21. The case number is 2013-CA-014098 and it has been assigned to Division K and Judge Levens.

Offers of volunteer time and in-kind donations (printing services, accounting assistance, etc.) may continue to be sent to bloomingdalebigbox@gmail.com. Donations are accepted thru PayPal at <http://www.bloomingdalebigbox.com/Page.asp?ID=140> and checks may be sent to: Bloomingdale CAN-DO, PO Box 1028, Valrico FL 33595. Updates are posted on the Facebook page, BloomingdaleBigBox.



Photo: Suzanne Jones

CAN-DO supporters distribute "No Big Box" flyers at the intersection of Lithia Pinecrest Road and Bloomingdale Avenue following their Nov. 9 meeting. Approximately 20 people attended the gathering to hear updates on the group's progress, including lawsuit filing update and fundraising plans.




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060914-01

BHA CLOSES 2013 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE DECEMBER 31 – KICKS OFF 2014 DRIVE IN JANUARY

WHAT'S COMING IN THE NEW YEAR

The BHA board of directors extends a heartfelt thank you to those residents who paid membership dues, donated to our Bloomingdale Senior High School scholarship fund, and/or purchased a "Neighborhood Pride" license plate in 2013. The 2014 membership drive will begin in January with a tentative post date of Jan.15. At \$25 a year, BHA dues are some of the lowest, if not the lowest, in Hillsborough County. For 7 cents a day, your dues payment allows the BHA to provide a myriad of programs and activities all aimed at bettering the community. Remember, 100 percent of collected dues go back to our community.

2013 was a rebuilding year for the board. Board member numbers grew from three to eight members, invigorating the board with new energy and ideas. Additionally, the BHA moved into a new office, hired an office manager to assist residents, and made significant improvements to its community newspaper, The Bloomingdale Gazette.

What's coming up in 2014?

Continuation of established programs:

- ✿ Providing community service volunteer hours to students for Bright Futures requirements
- ✿ April Spring Clean-up Day
- ✿ May scholarship award of a \$2,000 to a Bloomingdale resident in his/her senior year at Bloomingdale High School Senior
- ✿ October's Fall Festival
- ✿ December's Santa & Mrs. Claus Visit and Charity Food Drive
- ✿ Deed restriction compliance

Realization of current initiatives:

- ✿ A "Name your Neighborhood" and sign installation project is underway for the last unnamed neighborhoods in our community—Section A off Greenhollow, and Section M off Nature's Way.
- ✿ Provision of support for residents in Bloomingdale Estates to accomplish the first-ever deed restriction update.

Introduction of new programs and initiatives:

- ✿ The board hopes to add a Bloomingdale Golf Tournament Fundraiser in April aimed at benefitting our local area schools: Alafia and Cimino Elementary Schools, Burns Middle School, and Bloomingdale Senior High School.

BHA programs are free to residents, but they require funding through the association. Your support is urgently needed if BHA is to continue providing the services and programs many residents have come to expect. You can help! Renew (or join) and donate when you receive your membership letter and scholarship donation letter in January. Get involved by attending BHA board meetings or better yet, consider joining the board. Event volunteers will also be needed throughout the year. Your involvement is essential to building a strong community, which in turn benefits all Bloomingdale residents.

Have questions? Contact the BHA at 813-681-2051, or via email to bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.



Pink ribbons brightened Bloomingdale on Oct. 26 for the Project Cure Walk to benefit the Don and Erika Wallace Comprehensive Breast Program at H. Lee Moffit Cancer Center. Over 150 bicyclists and walkers participated, raising nearly \$11,000.

Sponsored by the Hope is Contagious ministry of St. Stephen Catholic Church, the 20-mile walk began and ended at the Bloomingdale East Neighborhood Park and followed along Nature's Way. St. Stephen Catholic School children raised a whopping \$2,720 to go toward the total amount raised. Community sponsors provided food and drinks to keep the participants hydrated and energized.

The Hope is Contagious ministry is in its third year and is headed by church members Ed and Tina Sleyzak and Rosemary DeMarco. The ministry is the legacy of Mr. Sleyzak's sister Mary Ann Smith, who during the last six months of her life came up with the idea of creating a support group for those stricken with cancer. "The day was beautiful not only in the atmosphere," said Mr. Sleyzak, "but we could not have asked for a better day weather wise."



Six of the nearly 150 Project Cure Walk participants prepare to begin the 20-mile trek around Nature's Way during the Oct. 26 event that raised almost \$11,000 to support breast cancer patients.

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What Family Members Say about Alzheimer's Care at Superior Residences

Sisters Terrie and Dawn knew their mother needed the assistance with daily living that they could not provide her. After researching various Alzheimer's communities, they visited Superior Residences of Brandon and found it to be the perfect home for mom.

Dawn stated, "The fact that all the staff at Superior understands Alzheimer's makes us comfortable. And Mom has felt safe and comfortable since the day she got there." Terrie agreed by emphasizing, "They're wonderful caregivers. It's a special gift they have and we're fortunate they're here. They know our mother and they love her."

Find out first hand why our community is aptly named Superior Residences and may be the better choice for your loved one. Call today for your personal tour.



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Pastor Antonio Cordovi of Christ Community Church on John Moore Road in Brandon was host to the area's first formal dance for people with special needs ages 16 and up. A capacity number of people attended "Night of 1000 Stars," the brainchild of Laura Lee Minutillo, who is a special needs person and a member of the church.

Minutillo has cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair, but that hasn't stopped this young lady from achieving her goals and beyond. Minutillo held the title of Ms. Wheelchair Florida 2012, she is a senior at the University of Central Florida majoring in Psychology, and has plans to earn her master's degree in Public Policy. She came up with the idea from a similar event held in the Bradenton area. "There is nothing in this area for older special needs people. Some of these individuals have never had the experience of a homecoming or a prom. Some of them may have been lucky enough to be mainstreamed, but those with severe or profound disabilities were never included," she explained. Minutillo, along with her mother, father, and Ani Hudgens (event coordinator) brainstormed and came up with the theme "Night of 1000 Stars."

Due to space constraints, the maximum number of attendees for the event could not exceed 300. Registration opened in August and by mid-September all reservations were filled. The Brandon, Valrico community helped make the prom a tremendous success. Food was donated from Honey Baked Ham, Beef O' Brady's, Obrien's Pub and Golden Corral, just to name a few. "Noise Box," a Brandon-area music coordinator, set up a charity concert with local performers to help raise funds, and

DJ Valerie Silver provided dance music during the event. Bloomingdale High School's National Honor Society, Jr. ROTC, and LEO club members acted as hosts, servers, parking attendants, and photography assistants; handed out corsages, boutonnieres, and tiaras; and, helped with clean up. "It is a really cool, unique, eye opening experience," said BSHS Jr. ROTC member Magia Valdez, "Not a lot of kids get to do this kind of thing."


Colleen Ellis who traveled all the way from Spring Hill with her brother summed up how she felt about attending the prom—"Excited."

Pleased with the community support and response to this year's event, Minutillo and Hudgens hope to host it annually, and would like to be able to open it up to even more special needs people next year.



Dekethia Oliver and Richard Wimbley make their entrance through a ceremonial saber arch furnished by Jr. ROTC members.

Bloomingdale High students lend extra hands to make this event especially memorable for prom goers. Pictured: George Francis (LEO Club), Ryan Torres (Jr. ROTC), Laura Lee Minutillo, Sam Miller (NHS) and Marsha Minutillo.




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061833-01

Hillsborough County Traffic Engineering Services Department representative, Bob Campbell, presented results of a September 2013 Nature's Way traffic study at the Nov. 12 Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) board meeting. While results of the 48-hour study validated resident complaints of speeding along the heavily traveled and county-maintained corridor, excess speeds were not enough by county standards to warrant county-funded traffic calming measures.

The BHA requested the traffic study following a May 2013 meeting between the County Office of Neighborhood Relations and leaders of Bloomingdale East neighborhood homeowner associations, BHA president George May, and others to discuss numerous resident complaints about traffic speed and motor vehicle accidents along Nature's Way.

The study captured vehicle speed counts at three locations: 1.) Between River Crossing Drive and Oak Circle, 2.) Vicinity of East Ridge Drive, and 3.) Vicinity of Hickory Ridge Drive. Crash history along the neighborhood loop was also reviewed. Findings indicated that the 85th percentile speed ranged from 9 to 13 mph higher than the 30-mph regulatory speed limit, with the greatest average speed of 43 mph captured at Location 2 (the 4-lane stretch between Glenhaven and Springvale). The 85th percentile speed represents the speed at, or below which, 85 percent of the free flowing vehicles are traveling.

The report concluded that Nature's Way Boulevard experiences moderate to excessive speeding throughout most of the day, and that "speeding is taking place regardless of the presence of traffic control devices and pavement markings emphasizing the speed limits throughout the corridor." Overall, however, findings did not indicate that excessive speeding met the county's Class II excessive speed criteria—12 miles per hour or greater in excess of the posted speed limit measured in the 85th percentile. As a result, the county did not suggest the need for traffic calming road improvement measures such as speed bumps or roadway redesign. Instead, four recommendations were offered:

- 🌿 Seek an increase in Law Enforcement.
- 🌿 Consider installation of traffic calming devices if increased enforcement does not reduce the speeding.
- 🌿 Check solar powered radar displays to ensure proper operation.
- 🌿 Install a pedestrian crosswalk with warning signs for the Bloomingdale East Neighborhood Park. (County supplied after receipt of BHA written request.)
- 🌿 Since the BHA's November meeting, radar displays have been restored to full operation, and the written request for a pedestrian crosswalk (with warning signs) has been issued by the BHA. Residents may review the complete traffic study at the BHA office by calling (813) 681-2051.



Photo: Suzanne Jones

County Traffic Engineering Services Department representative Bob Campbell presents findings of the Nature's Way Traffic Study to the BHA board.



BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By: CRD Master Deputy Curtis Warren

5 TO DRIVE

In October, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration launched a new campaign that encourages parents to spend time with their teen drivers discussing “5 To Drive” safety topics:

1. No cell phone use or texting while driving
2. No extra passengers
3. No speeding
4. No drinking and driving
5. No driving or riding without a seatbelt

Parents, please take the time to discuss these critical safety guidelines with your teens. Get them talking about driving safety and sharing them with their friends. You may just save their lives! To learn more about the 5 to Drive rules, visit:

<http://www.safercar.gov/parents/rules-4.htm>.

IT'S THE LAW: MOVE OVER

The 2002 “Move Over” law requires that all motorists move over a lane or slow down to 20MPH below the posted speed limit when an emergency vehicle has its flashing lights on and is parked on the side of the road. This applies to emergency vehicles on all roadsides, not just interstates. Along with the emergency vehicle, emergency workers, highway patrol officers or other law enforcement officers are usually at the scene assisting other motorists. They are working in harm’s way, getting in and out of their patrol vehicles. Since 1999, crashes caused by drivers not moving over or slowing down killed more than 170 law enforcement officers nationwide who were parked on roadsides working cases.

In Hillsborough County, a citation for violating the “Move Over” law means a \$153 fine and points on a driver’s license. It is a primary traffic offense. In Hillsborough County alone, over 295 citations were issued from January 2011 to October 2013.

Motorists should also be courteous when other motorists are stopped on the side of the road, changing a flat tire or taking care of other emergencies. One day that driver could be you! Please spread the word about this very critical, life-saving law!

WISHING YOU A SAFE AND SECURE HOLIDAY SEASON

December and January are filled with holiday activities including shopping and parties. Those of us in the Sheriff’s Office want all of our residents to have a safe and enjoyable holiday season. The following safety and security tips will help each of you stay safe and secure this season. Take the time to follow them.



While Shopping - Be extra cautious and stay aware of your surroundings and your actions. Don’t get in a big rush and be careless. Do not leave your car unlocked. Do not leave packages or other valuables in your car. Lock them in the trunk.

While Traveling - Secure your home before you head out for holiday traveling or shopping. Burglars watch for homes and vehicles that are easy targets; garage doors and vehicles left open are an invitation. Don’t post on Facebook that you are out shopping or traveling. This information can get into the wrong hands!

While Driving - **Do not drink and drive, or ride with those who do!** Talk to your teens about the dangers of drinking and driving. Set the right example. A few minutes discussing the dangers and setting strict rules can save a life—your teen’s life.

**FROM ALL OF US AT THE SHERIFF’S OFFICE,
HAVE A SAFE AND SECURE HOLIDAY SEASON!**



COMMUNITY SERVICE FORUM DRAWS A CROWD

By: Miriam Leech

Any high school student will tell you that school is about more than the three R's of reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic. Today, community service is an important part of academic success.

On Nov. 6, The Community Roundtable of Brandon hosted its first Community Service Forum at Bloomingdale High School, giving students an opportunity to meet and ask questions of local non-profit organizations who are in need of volunteers. Over 330 students plus their families packed the school's cafeteria, where over 30 organizations (including the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association) set up displays.

Leena Hasbini, College and Career Counselor at Bloomingdale High School, along with The Community Roundtable Coordinator Janine Nickerson, worked to bring the non-profits and students together. "This was such an amazing collaboration," said Hasbini.

Community service hours not only help students become well-rounded citizens, but also help them earn scholarships for college. The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship requires 75 hours of community service over four years of high school for the Florida Medallion Scholarship, and 100 hours of community service for the top award, the Florida Academic Scholarship. Many other civic and private organizations take community service into account when awarding scholarships.

The mission of The Community Roundtable is to instill a sense of community and pride for the Greater Brandon area through participation. According to Nickerson, "Not only did we meet our mission, but we helped parents, students, non-profits, and school guidance counselors come together." Organizers reported that feedback from the community was overwhelmingly positive.

Nickerson says to look for The Community Roundtable website to become a resource for community service opportunities in the future. For more information visit www.thecommunityroundtable.org.



Photo: Miriam Leech

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) board member Dann Berkowitz explains neighborhood volunteer opportunities. The BHA recently started a Volunteer Registry, and encourages teens and other residents of Bloomingdale East and West to sign up and help make Bloomingdale a stronger and more cohesive community. For BHA volunteer information, call 813-681-2051, or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.



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2013 December Community Events



Weight Loss Options *Dr. Keyur Chavda*

December 11th • 6:00 p.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom B • Suite 260

NICU Family to Family Support Group

December 3rd & 17th • 6:45 p.m.
Brandon Regional Hospital
Women's Center Lobby
119 Oakfield Drive

Savvy Seniors - Lunch and Learn

December 3rd • 11:00 a.m.
The Bridges - Retirement Community
11350 Bloomingdale Avenue
Riverview, FL 33578

Healthy Heart Nutrition

December 4th • 2:30 p.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom A • Suite 262

Vascular Victories Cardiac and Stroke Support

December 9th • 12:00 p.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom A • Suite 262

Gestational Diabetes

December 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th • 8:30 a.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom C • Suite 258

Prenatal Tour

December 8th • 3:00 p.m.
December 9th & 17th • 7:30 p.m.
Women's Center Lobby
119 Oakfield Drive

Prenatal Breastfeeding

December 10th • 6:30 p.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom B • Suite 260

Nutrition for Cancer Prevention and Treatment

December 11th • 2:30 p.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom B • Suite 260

Prepared Childbirth

December 14th • 9:00 a.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom B • Suite 260

Newborn Care

December 16th • 6:00 p.m.
December 21st • 9:30 a.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom A • Suite 262

Outpatient Diabetes Self-Management

December 18th • 8:30 a.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom B • Suite 260

Surgical Solutions for Weight Loss

Alfredo Fernandez, MD
December 19th • 6:30 p.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom B • Suite 260

Surgical Weight Loss Support Group

December 19th • 6:30 p.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom A • Suite 262

The Childhood Obesity Epidemic: Should We Worry?

John Monaco, MD
January 22, 2014 • 6:00 p.m.
Oakfield Medical Plaza
Classroom B • Suite 260



Brandon Regional Hospital

To register, please call

813-653-1065

or visit

BrandonRegionalHospital.com



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