



THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

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Lady Bulls Win District Championship!



See p. 9

Courtesy Photo

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2018 & 2019

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"It is absolutely still possible to make a difference." *Michelle Obama*

THE AWARD-WINNING

BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



JOY BOISSELLE

Editor - The Bloomingdale Gazette

3509 Bell Shoals Rd.
Valrico, FL 33596 - (813) 681-2051
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The official publication of the BNA since 1980, delivered free to Bloomingdale residents on the first Wednesday of each month.



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BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

3509 Bell Shoals Road - Valrico, Florida 33596 - (813) 681-2051

Email: Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com

Website: www.Bloomingdale.Life

BNA Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Bloomingdale Community Office.

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BNA

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JOIN THE BNA!

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association membership drive continues. Just \$35 will help keep our programs and services on track. Please send your membership in today and be part of making Bloomingdale a great place to live, work and call home!

MONTHLY CALENDAR

BNA Board Meeting / Tuesday, May 11, 6:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road / Call 813-252-0252 for information. Send topics you want addressed to bl.neighbor1@gmail.com.

HOT! Spring Community Clean-up, TBD / Our Spring Clean-up has been postponed by Hillsborough County. We are still exploring our options to hold a mini-event. Keep watching for more info on our web and FB pages.

2021 Scholarship - Winner will be announced at our May Board Meeting!

Community Garage Sale - Sept. 11, 8am to 1pm, Information to follow!

Campo YMCA Trunk or Treat, October, TBA

Fall Community Clean-up, Nov. 6, 9am to 1 pm, Stay tuned for details.

Santa Drive-through, December 5

"TEAM BLOOMINGDALE" NEEDS YOU!

We need residents like you to add your energy and a little of your time to the Association Board. Let's put our hearts and efforts into our community. Call 813-681-2051/252-0252 or email Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com for information.

Please Note: Our event dates may change, be rescheduled or even be cancelled due to COVID-19. We will make decisions based on the safety of our residents.

BNA BRIEFS

LOCALLY YOU HAVE MANY SHOTS AT FINDING THE COVID VACCINE

By Michelle Colesanti

COVID vaccines, now available to anyone over 16, can now be found locally at many places. Still operating are the state location at Raymond James Stadium (sign up for an appointment at <https://myvaccine.fl.gov/#/>) and the FEMA site at the Tampa Greyhound Track at 755 E. Waters Ave.

However, there are options available within five miles of our community. Visit <https://vaccinefinder.org/> to find out which places have the vaccine and what type is offered. There is no cost to you at any of the vaccination sites.

Publix - Publix Pharmacy administers the Moderna vaccine. Book an appointment at publix.com/covid-vaccine/florida.

CVS - You can check for vaccine availability on the cvs.com website; schedule an appointment at www.cvs.com/vaccine/.

Walgreens - Schedule three ways: Online at www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/, download the Walgreens App on your mobile device, or call your local Walgreens pharmacy or 800-925-4733. Choose option 1 for Covid 19 vaccine appointment information.

Walmart - To register, visit www.walmart.com/cp/flu-shots-immunizations/1228302.

Sam's Club - Visit www.samsclub.com/pharmacy/immunization?imzType=covid. Vaccines are available for anyone.

Winn Dixie Store #2499, 16751 FishHawk Blvd - Visit www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine.

Brandon Pharmacy, 1035 Professional Park Dr. - Visit www.brandonrx.com/ for an appointment.

Palm Plaza Pharmacy, 162 N. Parsons Ave. - Call 813-689-7700 for information. Register at <https://scheduling.bestrconnect.com/Covid19>.

The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy, 216 Oakfield Dr - Call 813-662-9926 for information. Visit <https://brandon.medicineshoppe.com> to sign up.



Bloomingdale resident and owner of Canine Cabana, Kendall Duncan, was excited to receive the Covid vaccine at a Publix location. Courtesy Photo

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

The Salt Room Valrico

Location: 110 Hunter Road Valrico, FL 33594

For more info: <https://saltroomvalrico.com>

Phone: 813-653-3310 Email: info@saltroomvalrico.com

The Salt Room Valrico opened in January 2021, celebrating with an official ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce on March 30.

The moment you walk in The Salt Room Valrico you begin to relax and decompress – the longer you stay, the more you benefit. The Salt Room Valrico provides a unique tranquil experience for adults, children, and families to enjoy the therapeutic benefits of salt therapy.

What is salt therapy? Also known as Halotherapy, it is a means of concentrating the positive effects of salt in nature. It can improve your health as it is a scientifically proven treatment for respiratory and skin conditions such as allergies, asthma, bronchitis, cystic fibrosis, emphysema, and dermatitis.



The salt room uses top-of-the-line halogenerators to crush pharmaceutical grade salt into small particles for inhalation creating the microclimate. Every wall surface, including the floor, is covered with natural rock salt to create a sterilized and negative ion environment.

Photos: Jane Owen



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THE COMMUNITY'S COMMON AREA CONNECTION

TOM LEECH, BSD PRESIDENT

Landscape News

Natures Way medians will see some new plantings over the next couple of months. Our landscaping team is finalizing a standardized plant palette for the community that will guide future planting options.

The bigger news is that the District has been working with the University of Florida, Hillsborough County, and a commercial turf provider to introduce two innovative products into our landscaping plan at little or no cost to the District. The first is a new St. Augustine hybrid that resists chemical weed killers and requires less water.

The second innovation is a new underground drip irrigation line. This one is more efficient at delivering water and is resistant to tree root intrusion. With no rotors or sprinkler heads, this dripline system promises a good deal in irrigation maintenance savings.

We offered the developers an opportunity to test both the new turf and irrigation system, so, the only expense will be delivery of the turf. We hope to begin introduction of both of these exciting options by summer. If successful, the District will look into expanding both of these innovations throughout Bloomingdale.

Natures Way Fatality

Bloomingdale experienced another traffic fatality along Natures Way last month. I say "another" because this marks the third fatality in ten years in the same 50-yard stretch of roadway near the Golfer's Club.

BLOOMINGDALE SPECIAL DISTRICT

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The common thread is excessive speed (more than 20mph over the posted speed limit). Other factors may have been involved but speeding has always been involved. Speeding was also a factor in automobile fatalities elsewhere in Bloomingtondale.

The speed limit along Natures Way -- and all Bloomingtondale public streets -- is 30mph. When the streets were originally laid down, they were graded to support traffic at 30mph. Natures Way has a series of curves that are safe at a top speed of 30mph. Until last year, a large section of Natures Way was four lanes. The County pared the four lanes to the current design (two lanes, bike lanes, and medians) to help calm and deter excessive speeding.

I mentioned earlier that speed was the common thread in automobile fatalities. There is another, sobering reality -- in all but one instance, the driver of the vehicle was the fatality. In the incident last month, in addition to the fatality, a bicyclist was seriously injured and remains hospitalized. On that topic, thank you to those who sent cards and gifts to the District office for the bicyclist. They have been forwarded and were greatly appreciated.

I ask you to please observe the posted speed limits and drive safely. Our community's safety depends on everyone.

Monthly Meeting

The next meeting of the Bloomingtondale Special District is Monday, May 10, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. (EDT). You can access the meeting via GoToMeeting at this address: <https://www.gotomeet.me/MiriamLeech/new-meeting> Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: +1 (408) 650-3123

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For information on the Bloomingtondale Special District visit :

mydistrictwebsite.com/

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Visit the Enchanting Bok Tower Gardens

By Michelle Colesanti

When Edward Bok immigrated to the United States from the Netherlands as a child, he had no understanding of the English language. Through determination and hard work, he became a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, respected humanitarian and an advocate of world peace and the environment.

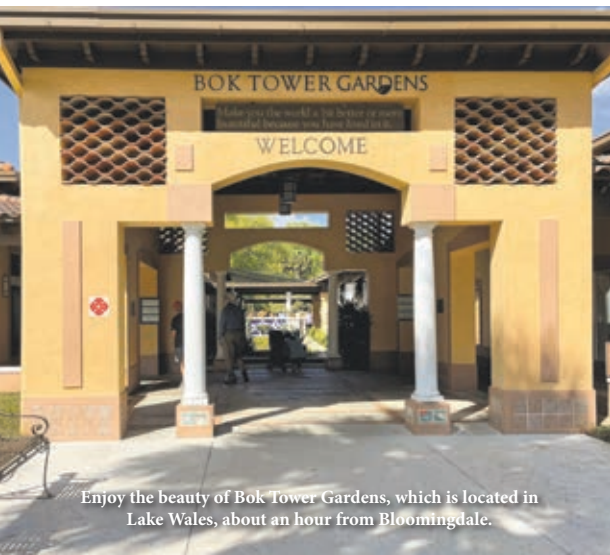
During visits to Florida as an adult, Bok became enchanted with the beauty and vistas from nearby Iron Mountain. He envisioned creating a place that would “touch the soul with its beauty and quiet.” We can say for certain that he accomplished what he set out to do almost a century ago.

Originally called Mountain Lake Sanctuary and Singing Tower, Bok presented this gift to the American people in 1929 as an enduring token of his appreciation for the opportunities he had been given. The famous 205 ft. neo-Gothic Singing Tower Carillon stands 295 feet above sea level and can be spotted for miles before entering the Bok Tower Gardens’ gates.

Your stroll through the gardens will provide you with plenty of inspiration to stop and literally smell the roses.

The garden paths offer acres of flowering foliage. Many pathways are paved and wheelchair accessible. Unpaved paths wind in and out of the gardens offering space to spend some quiet moments.

Depending on the season, spectacular displays of color surround you. Spring’s blooms of azaleas, camellias and magnolias are beautiful. About 126 species of birds can be seen at the Gardens throughout the year. There is also a 1.5-mile preserve trail with interpretive signs along the way that describe the flora, fauna and wildlife.



Enjoy the beauty of Bok Tower Gardens, which is located in Lake Wales, about an hour from Bloomingdale.

“Give to the world the best you have, and the best will come back to you” ~ *Edward Bok*

Younger kids, along with those young at heart, will enjoy the unique 2.5-acre Hammock Hollow. Water features, vibrant plantings, a boardwalk, play areas with climbing features, a stage for little performers, and plenty of space will encourage youngsters to build, dig, create and explore.

On the grounds is the 20-room Pinewood Estate; a Mediterranean-style mansion which has been closed to tours during the Covid pandemic. You can still enjoy the grounds and gardens surrounding the Estate, which are beautifully manicured.

When you get hungry, check out Blue Palmetto Café’s great choices for lunch. There is plenty of outdoor seating by the gardens where you can enjoy a meal, including beer or wine if you so desire. You can also find a place near the bell tower to spread a blanket and have a picnic lunch.

Live performances by carillonneur Geert D’hollander are held Thursday to Sunday at 1 and 3 p.m. at the bell tower. On other days, you can hear recordings from the Anton Brees Carillon Library collection. The visitor’s center houses a small museum with information about the history and architecture of the tower and bells.

Bok Tower Gardens is located at 1151 Tower Blvd. in Lake Wales just a short one-hour trip from Bloomingdale. Hours are from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily. Admission is \$15, children 5-12 are \$5 and those under 5 are free. Dogs are welcome for a \$5 fee. Masks are required in all buildings.

For information, visit <https://boktowergardens.org>.



Photos: Michelle Colesanti





BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By Community Resource Deputy Clifford Fletcher

"One Team, One Family, One Community"

Bloomingtondale Area Community Council Meetings (BACC) are postponed at this time. For information, call the Bloomingtondale Community Station at 635-8040, or come by the station.

BE IN THE KNOW! Over the years, we have had our share of traffic crashes in the Bloomingtondale area and some of them have been fatal. We also know it is up to us individually to check our driving habits. As a parent, please talk with your kids about driving safety and set a good example.

As drivers, control your vehicles and know and understand traffic laws. Driving is a privilege not a right. However, pedestrians and bicyclists also have to follow laws. Pedestrians/Joggers are required to use sidewalks when in a useable condition. If you must walk on the road, always walk against traffic so you may see oncoming traffic.

Bicyclists must follow vehicle traffic laws when on the road. Ride in the same direction as vehicle traffic and stop at stoplights, stop signs, and crosswalks. Additionally, they must follow speed limits and laws in school zones.

AREA LAW AND ORDER ROUND-UP

In Bloomingtondale East and West this year:

- 29 Vehicle crashes inside or at entrances of Bloomingtondale East / West
- 50 traffic stops
- 31 persons arrested
- 450 calls for service

In 2020 there were 408 firearms stolen in Hillsborough County, 240 of them were from vehicles and 183 of those were unlocked. Secure your vehicle. Remove valuables and never leave a firearm in a vehicle.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Everyone can play a valuable part in making your neighborhood safer. Remember to watch out for what is happening in your neighborhoods and if you see something make sure to call Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency number: 813-247-8200.

NATURES WAY FATALITY

Courtesy TBT

"[We] are waiting for toxicology results that would reveal whether alcohol was a factor in this crash. We know the vehicle was driving over the speed limit. This is a tragic example of the importance of obeying traffic laws and making safety the top priority. One person is dead and another is fighting for their life due to reckless driving." *SHERIFF CHAD CHRONISTER*



Anyone who witnessed the crash or has information that may be useful to the investigation is urged to call the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office at (813) 247-8200.

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Bloomington Bulls Thrive During 2020-21 School Year

Bloomington High School students have distinguished themselves despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Students learned that even with the frustrations and changes they faced, they could persevere and still be winners and champions. Be it academics, athletics, or arts—nothing has impeded their successes and their continued drive for excellence.



A Statement from a Proud Principal

"I could not be prouder of our students for their accomplishments in both academics and athletics this school year. Their success has truly been a testament of the students' dedication to their studies and their extracurricular activities," said Dr. Marcos Rodriguez, BSHS principal, "We have had many teams make it to state and regional competitions in their respective sports. As a result of our athletes' hard work, we have earned several regional and district championships in multiple sports."

Academics have been no less impressive. "We have had several students become national merit finalists, over 100 joined our NHS (National Honor Society) and over 500 students earned honor roll so far this school year." In the arts, he added, "Our crimson color guard also had first place finishes this school year."

"Our students have been determined to not let the pandemic slow them down. Instead, they have persevered and have overcome these challenges. I would also like to thank our amazing teachers, staff, and athletic coaches at Bloomington. Without them this culture of success would not exist! Go Bulls!"

Quick Stats (2021)

- Grades: 9-12
- Students: 2,346 students
- Student:Teacher Ratio: 19:1
- Minority Enrollment: 48%
- Graduation Rate: 96% (Top 10% in FL)
- Overall Testing Rank: Top 50%
- Math Proficiency: 61% (Top 50%)
- Reading Proficiency: 59% (Top 50%)
- Diversity Score: 0.64 (Top 30%)

Source: <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/bloomington-high-school-profile>

BSHS Valedictorian and Salutatorian Named

Courtesy Photos



Valedictorian Jude Delikat

Jude Delikat has an unweighted GPA of 4.0 and a weighted GPA of 8.2. Some of his many accomplishments and activities include National Merit Finalist, Benacquisto Scholarship recipient, Mental Health Awareness Club co-founder/President, National Honor Society, Science Honor Society and Senior Steering Committee. He will attend the University of South Florida in the Honors Program where he plans to study Biomedical Sciences and hopes to attend medical school. His parents are Dr. Terrence and Jemy Delikat.



Salutatorian, Joseph Neidig

Weighted GPA 8.16

Joseph Neidig is a National Merit Finalist, Benaquisto scholarship recipient and E-sports club president. He will pursue a dual degree in Computer Science and Data Science at the University of Central Florida. His parents are Scott and Pamela Neidig.

BULLS Wrestlers Have Highest GPA in the County

Photos: Jane Owen

The 2020-21 Bloomington Bulls Wrestling Team achieved the Highest GPA for Wrestling in Hillsborough County with a staggering team average of 3.809. It is the highest GPA since the trophy has been awarded!



Lady Bulls Flag Football Team Wins District Championship

Courtesy Photos

Not to be outdone by their male football counterparts, the Lady Bulls Flag Football team shutout Durant 19-0 on April 22 to win the District Championship! The team compiled a 9-6 record and is headed to Regional competition. At deadline, the team has faced Dr. Philips in the first semi-final game held April 28. If they were winners, Regional Finals took place on May 3. The best scenario is the team is still competing at the state semi-finals later on Friday, May 7!

Junior Grace Elliott said, "Coach [Larry] Langston drilled in a message to us the entire season. It was always 'Trust the process'. We faced adversity the entire season, but ultimately trusting the process won us that district final. On to regionals!!"

Coach Langston became head coach last year bringing a lot of experience and training techniques and strategies to a young team. Their hard work paid off!

GO Lady Bulls!



Calling All 2021 Graduates, Parents and Friends!

We want your graduation photos for our June and July issues! The Gazette wants to help you celebrate your upcoming graduation moments, including pre-k through college graduations, Alafia and Cimino clap outs, formal pictures, parties, and more!

For the June issue, send your graduation photos or selfies to inbloomingenews@gmail.com by May 23. At a minimum, identify those in the photo from left to right, the school graduating from, and the plans of the graduate. Photos need to be no less than 600x600 resolution, but preferably 1 mb or better for best results.

We will do the rest! Don't forget to provide contact information just in case there are questions.

Mr. and Miss Bloomingdale Competition Emphasizes Health

The Mr. and Miss Bloomingdale competition held April 10 highlights fitness and health. This school tradition couldn't be timelier with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing many to look at improving their lifestyles.

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to the Senior Steering Class for hosting the event!

Courtesy Photos



Crowd Favorite:
Isabell Hilton

GirlsLightweight
Champ:
Avery Rodgers



Winners:
Miss Bloomingdale Haven Longanecker
and Mr. Bloomingdale Ashton Lockard

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Bloomingtondale Royalty Crowned

The first-ever Bloomingtondale Royalty Pageant took place April 16. Participants were judged in various categories including evening wear and public speaking. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to the Junior Steering Class for hosting the event!



Queen and King:
Kayla Ashwood & Ben Grizio



Prince and Princess:
Charlie O'Brien & Ava Hilton



Duke and Duchess:
Sean Byrd & Skyler Runyon



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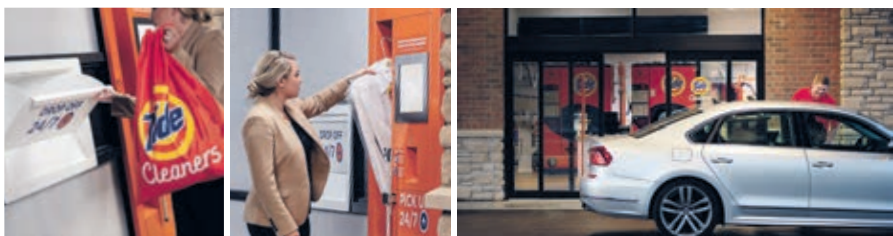
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Track 1st place District Finishers Head to Regionals!

The 4A District 7 Track Meet was held April 21 at Sumner High School. The Lady Bulls track and field team finished 3rd while the boys finished 4th.

The following athletes placed first in their events and will compete in Regional competition along with 24 BSHS teammates who also qualified. This May 1st event will have happened prior to publication. We will post results on our FB page.



Zekira Snow: 1st in 100m,
1st in 200m



Girls 4x400m 1st Place: Siniah Marchman, Victoria Phillips,
Caitlin Beery, Makenna Mach

Photos: Heather Beery



Boys 4x100m 1st Place: Jaylen Bryant, Unique Lewis, Curtis Thomas, Michael McGee



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*Tampa Convention Center COVID 19 Mitigation Protocols will be followed including, but not limited to health screenings for all TCC guests, employees and contractors prior to entering the building, Mandatory Face Coverings and 6' physical distancing while in the building.



RAYMOND JAMES

0000149287-01



Golf Tourney Supports Bulls Football

Brief: Jane Owen

The 4th Annual Bulls FB Golf Classic Tournament took place on April 24 at the Bloomingdale Golfer's Club. The tournament was a success because of the many business sponsorships and the support of 1 Stop Golf Shop located at 3321 Lithia Pinecrest Rd. The football team had their most successful season in school history and is excited for the coming season.

Head Coach Jake Coulson said, “We’re just very thankful for all of the community support and are looking forward to having another great year. #TPW (Tough People Win)”

The team welcomes business support for the upcoming season. To support or sponsor, email: gobullsfootball@gmail.com.

Clubs at the ready – Donny Peek (previous Bloomingdale AP), head Coach Jake Coulson, AP Nathan Francis, and Steve Bariko



Sign up for the 4th Annual Running of the Bulls

By Jane Owen



The Bloomingdale High School 5k is May 23! Mark your calendar now to support the school. Run or walk the 3.1 miles.

The Running of the Bulls 5k is sponsored by the Bloomingdale Band Boosters. Bloomingdale's Director of Bands, Jon Sever, says the 5k provides invaluable support for the band, this year more than ever. All of the profit goes directly to benefit students.

Kim Harris, a Brandon Running Association member and BSHS Alum (class of 1990) has run the 5k every year and is signed up again. “I love

Running of the Bulls because I’m giving back to my high school. I have fun each year I’ve done it because it’s like a mini runner’s reunion. I see a lot of my friends out there- whether they are walking, running, or volunteering at it. Everyone has a blast out there!”

Made possible by local business sponsors, such as Gold Sponsors Acropolis Riverview and Heroes Paradise, registered participants receive a dri-fit shirt and finishers receive medals. The race is chip-timed by Fitniche Events and age group winners will receive awards.

2021 Running of the Bulls 5k

May 23, 8 a.m. at the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds
215 Sydney Washer Rd, Dover, FL 33527

Questions? Email: BloomingdaleBulls5k@gmail.com

Registration is \$30. To register, go here and scroll to the May 23 date:
<https://fitniche.com/events/>



Village Early Learning Center Plans For June Expansion

By Michelle Colesanti

The Village Early Learning Center (VELC) is growing with the purchase of a school building next door to its current location on Canoga Park Drive. The expanded availability will benefit its full and partial day programs, VPK as well as its K-5th out-of-school care (before and after school and camps). Once the new building is ready to open on June 1, enrollment will be increased by about 100 children.

According to Tami Howell Bakke, Coordinator of Community Life at the Center, “The building, playgrounds, and gardens will be a welcome addition to our current property, which has been serving children and families since 2000.”

She also noted that this will be the beginning of the summer session. “The building will house our popular ANTS Camp program; summer camp for K-5th grade.”

Part-time day programs including VPK will begin in August for 3 and 4 year-olds. Classes will be offered in the morning with the after-school program meeting in the new building each afternoon. Full day programs, serving children 6 weeks through VPK, will still be offered in the original Village building.



A member of the Village Early Learning Center staff interacts with a student.

At the VELC, children are seen as naturally curious, creative and capable citizens of the world, and teachers and staff act as co-researchers with the children as they work together to help children discover, learn and grow. Children and families of all backgrounds, beliefs, and traditions are welcome.

On the campus are multiple gardens, a butterfly hatchery, and developmentally appropriate playgrounds which ensure that children have ample opportunity to explore nature and the outside world.

Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC.org), The Village Early Learning Center is currently enrolling for start dates in June and August 2021. It is located at 3741 Canoga Park Dr. in Brandon. Call 813-651-0779 to enroll or for more information, visit villageelc.com. COVID protocols can be found on the villageelc.com home page.

Photos: Michelle Colesanti



Courtesy Photos

The Village Early Learning Center is expanding and will open its new building to students on June 1.



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