



# THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

VOL. XLII



Issue 7



JULY 2022



WWW.BLOOMINGDALE.LIFE

THIS MONTH

**Congratulations  
Class of  
2022!**



Jerricho Knowles  
proudly representing  
the Class of '22

THE WHITE OAK COTTAGE  
*Page 4*

YARD OF THE MONTH  
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WELCOME TO THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
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*Page 7*

GRADUATION 2022  
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CREATIVE THERAPY  
*Pages 14-15*

PLEASE RECYCLE



**WINNER**

2013, 2014, 2016,  
2018 & 2019

Hillsborough County  
Neighborhood  
Recognition Award

Best Communications  
Newsletter Category

“Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.” *Abigail Adams*



## YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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**Jane Owen**  
**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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**Tampa Bay  
Times**

## BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

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

Email: [Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com) Website: [www.Bloomingdale.Life](http://www.Bloomingdale.Life)

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

**President:**  
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**Vice President:**  
Sean Donahue

**Treasurer:**  
Grace Lewis

**Directors at Large:**

Laney Balis

Kalyn Dukes

Bobbi Ferraro

Billy Hightower

# BNA BRIEFS

## BNA CALENDAR

Tuesday, July 12, 7:00 p.m. / BNA Board Meeting, 3509 Bell Shoals Road / Community is welcome to attend. Call 813-252-0252 or email [bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com) for information

Saturday, September 10 / Community Garage Sale

Friday, October 28/ Trunk or Treat at the Campo YMCA

Sunday, December 4 / Santa Visit

## JOIN THE BNA!

Just \$35 annually helps keep our community programs going. Please send your membership in today and be part of making Bloomingdale a great place to live!

Membership can be paid through PayPal!

Scan this QR Code or visit <https://bloomingdale.life>  
At the bottom of the homepage, click Membership.



## HCPS Superintendent Speaks at Bloomingdale Special District Meeting

Hillsborough County Superintendent of Schools Addison Davis was the special guest at the Bloomingdale Special District board meeting on June 13. He gave a presentation on his initiatives for the school district, school security, and the need for a millage increase in ad valorem tax (It will be on the Primary Election ballot in August – more details to come in the August Gazette!)



BSD President Tom Leech with  
Superintendent Davis

## 2022 Primary Election Day is August 23!

**Deadline to Register: July 25**

Visit [VoteHillsborough.gov](http://VoteHillsborough.gov) to register to vote or check your voter information to verify your name, address, political party. This Primary Election will include nonpartisan issues and races for school board members and judges that everybody votes on, whether affiliated with a party or not.



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This Eagle Bluff Dr  
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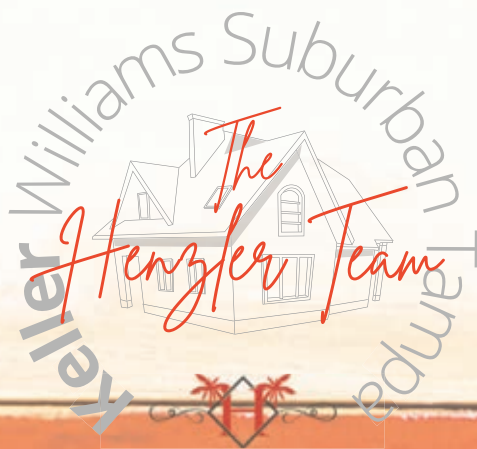
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# The White Oak Cottage: Drink. Dine. Shop.

By Deidre Morgan

As a little girl born and raised in Brandon, Florida, Shaunessy George Dobish had a love for shopping, decorating and family dinners. It all started with her grandmother, who would take her shopping for treasures. She called it the “thrill of the hunt.” After they spent the day shopping, her grandmother would let her come home and rearrange a room to find a place for their treasures. Her mother would allow her and her sister Heather, to use their creativity to design their rooms, within reason of course, with curtains, comforters, pillows and wall art. Shaunessy loved to play store with her kiddie cash register and credit card machine; so you can say, she had the entrepreneurial gene from an early age.

When you first meet Shaunessy you can’t help being drawn in with her beautiful smile, welcoming hugs and infectious laugh. She is the definition of hospitality and home. Along with her business partner and co-owner, Melanie Bently-Montanaro, that’s exactly what they have created with The White Oak Cottage. A warm inviting family affair business filled with great treasures and delicious food. Along with Shaunessy and Melanie, both of their families are heavily involved with The White Oak Cottage. Their husbands are behind the scenes offering financial and moral support, Shaunessy’s sister Heather and friend Terie are the faces of the store front, and their kids can be seen working there as well, helping with the store and restaurant.

When Shaunessy opened her first store, at the corner of Lithia and Erindale, she was never in the store and people began to wonder if she even existed! She was always busy going from store to store trying to find just the right home décor for her clients. Her husband, Jeff, encouraged her to focus on what works best and what would allow her to be more visible to her customers and clients—and The White Oak Cottage was born. With the new building she could not only stop the running around from store to store but be more involved in the day-to-day operations. She could now have a place to showcase her finds and allow customers and clients the opportunity to touch the merchandise and ask for assistance on how to make those items work in their homes.

The store offered fresh baked cookies, coffee and water to customers when they entered the store, but Shaunessy wanted more. She wanted customers to enjoy a fun day of shopping and eating so the idea for the restaurant was put into motion. She wanted to create an environment where everyone knew everyone, and friendships and relationships could be built.

In order to have the best experience for her customers, Shaunessy concentrated on the very best wines from the Pacific Northwest. With over 40 wineries in Idaho, she settled on the wines from the Ste. Chapelle Winery in Caldwell, Idaho and the Browne Family Vineyards in Seattle, Washington, where her husband Jeff played semi-pro hockey. These wines cannot be purchased in stores but are available at TWOC by the bottle or you can go in and purchase a flight or a glass for tasting.

Shaunessy is looking to the future to expand her hours to offer a light breakfast menu and to allow her Chef to showcase his talents with an expanded dinner menu. If you have not tried this little slice of Heaven, that this area so desperately needed, you are missing out. Treat yourself to a day to Drink, Dine & Shop. Speaking from personal experience, you will not be disappointed!

The White Oak Cottage is centrally located to Plant City, Valrico, Brandon and Wimauma at 10530 S. County Rd 39 in Lithia. The store is open 7 days a week, hours of operation are 11am to 7pm. The restaurant is closed on Monday and Tuesday, hours are same as the store. Check them out on Facebook and Instagram or at [www.thewhiteoakcottage.com](http://www.thewhiteoakcottage.com).



L to R: Heather, (Shaunessy’s Sister), Shaunessy and Melanie (Co-Owner)





# YARD OF THE MONTH

**BILL AND ELIZABETH MERRITT**  
**2525 WRENCREST CIRCLE, VALRICO**



The Yard of the Month is sponsored by  
Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale and Campo YMCA.

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## Welcome to the Neighborhood: Stretch Zone

### Stretch Back the Years

By Amanda Ragan

Driving through Lithia Crossings, you may have noticed a new store front go up next to Little Greek and The Fresh Market. Stretch Zone, located at 3478 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., is a new option in your health and wellness routine. Whether you are an athlete hoping to improve your mobility, or someone that suffers from chronic aches and pains, Stretch Zone offers a zen retreat where certified professionals will spend a 30 minute session performing assisted stretching techniques in a program specially formatted to meet individual needs.

Dylan Hayes, the owner and general manager of Stretch Zone, explained that, "a person's range of motion can be increased by up to 30% by having someone else assist in the stretching process. It can be really hard for people to obtain the results they need or want stretching by themselves," but now thanks to Dylan and his staff of certified practitioners, anyone that needs help stretching can get it. Under the current promotion, the first stretch is free and during this consultation, a program can be designed for those interested in moving forward with a 12 week program. At the time of this article, sessions range in price from \$35 - \$55 dollars depending on the individual needs of the client.

In addition to helping the neighborhood become more flexible, Dylan hopes to be an active part of the Bloomingdale community by providing free stretches before community events like golf tournaments or some of our local markets. So after your next visit to the gym or walk around the neighborhood, make sure to swing by for a stretch and to meet Dylan and his team of professionals. For more information regarding Stretch Zone call 239-810-4132 or visit them on the web at bloomingdale@stretchzone.com.

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Owner/General Manager  
Dylan Hayes stretching  
Caitlin Harper

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# Provide Your Feedback on New Water Pipeline Route by July 8

Tampa Bay Water, the region's wholesale water utility, wants your feedback on the three pipeline routes under consideration to bring more water to fast-growing southern Hillsborough County. The new South Hillsborough Pipeline will be approximately 25 miles long and will range in diameter from 36 inches to 72 inches. It will start at the Tampa Bay Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant in Brandon, connect to Hillsborough County's Lithia Water Treatment Plant and end at the County's new connection point at Balm Riverview and Balm roads. Learn more about the project and provide your feedback in a survey at [www.tampabaywater.org/shp](http://www.tampabaywater.org/shp). The survey is open through July 8, 2022.



## Notice! Bank of America Branches Closed



Recently Bank of America closed their offices on Lithia Pinecrest and Bloomingdale and Bell Shoals. Clients may go to the branches on Parsons (300 S Parson Ave) or Brandon Blvd (2105 W Brandon Blvd).

The Gazette received this statement from Bank of America, courtesy of Matthew Daily, Bank of America Media Relations: "The Brandon financial center within four miles has access to specialists to help clients with an array of life and financial priorities. There will be no impact to client accounts, which can be accessed via mobile, online banking, an ATM or at any financial center.

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# GRADUATION 2022

## BLOOMINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL 2022 GRADUATING CLASS

- Earned \$16 million in scholarships
- 85% attending college
- Completed over 16,000 hours of community service



Chase Chappell and Grace Jordan



Cole Wloczewski



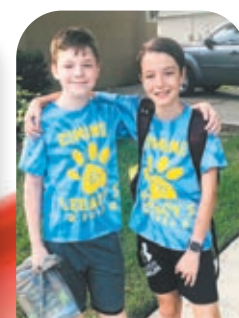
Elsie Owen  
graduating from  
Progress Village  
Middle Magnet  
School



Vinnie Escalera



Ashlyiane Dejesus



Luke Gilbert and Carson Holt graduating from 5th grade at Cimino. They met in kindergarten there and have been best friends ever since.



Gabriella Beach and Coach Macko at end of year 5th grade field trip at Islands of Adventure



Shaun Fidler graduated with Honors from The University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science. Shaun has accepted a position in the Fall as a Software Developer with Citrix out of Raleigh, NC.



Gloria Hernandez and Joey Gillespie



Karissa Annette Ford, Graduating from Bloomingdale High Going to USF to study psychology



Burns graduate and



Karissa Ford and Olivia Penty. Karissa will be attending USF, and Olivia will be attending FSU.

## CONGRATULATIONS 2022 GRADUATES!

"I am extremely proud of the graduating class of 2022. As a class, they navigated through constant barriers presented by the global pandemic. Even through tough times their relentless efforts to be successful never faltered. I have no doubt that the class of 2022 will lead us to a brighter future. A special thank you goes out to the guidance team, teachers, administrators, and staff at BSHS for helping our seniors make it to this pivotal moment in their lives. Lastly, I would like to thank our families for instilling high academic values in their students. Without them this moment would not have become a reality. I can't wait to see all the great things the class of 2022 will accomplish! Go Bulls!"

Dr. Marcos Rodriguez, Principal • BSHS

## CONGRATULATIONS 5TH GRADERS!

The very best of wishes to our exiting 5th Graders! Middle school is gaining an exceptional group of students from Alafia Elementary. We are so proud of all of our students and know they will make amazing accomplishments in the years to come. "Always remember, you are Braver than you believe, Stronger than you seem, Smarter than you think, and Loved more than you know" (Christopher Robins/Winnie the Pooh). You are all meant for great things, and we are so proud of you! Love, Mrs. Jackson

Lisa Jackson, Principal • Alafia Elementary School





Ethan Rosas and Micah Elliott



Amelia Holloway graduated with her AA from HCC and will be attending UCF as a junior academically in August.



Olivia Penty, Olivia will be attending FSU in the Fall



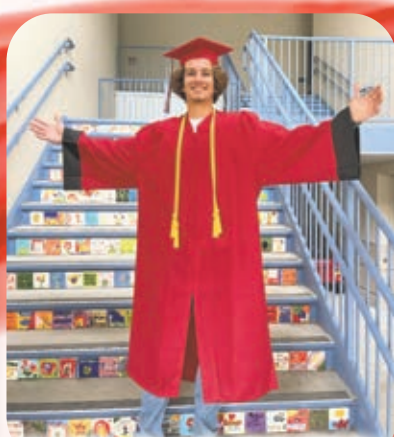
Deyon Hayes



Layla Moran - who graduated 8th grade at Burns Middle and will now be heading to Bloomingdale HS



Joey Gillespie Jr. He will be attending The University of West Florida and majoring in Marine Biology. His focus will be conservation and education initiatives for sharks.



Evan Burnette on the steps of Cimino



Savannah Bond, 17 graduated from Bloomingdale High School on May 24th. She has signed a 6 year contract with the U.S. Navy to be an Intelligence Specialist, and leaves for boot camp in August.



Anthony Climber



Guidance Counselor Laura Hogg with student James Monet



s Marcus Banner, Luke Long  
Garrett McCranie



Grads at the Cimino  
Elementary Clap Out



Cole Wloczewski, Jared  
Donaldson, Brandon Garrett



David Owen, Addy Higgins, Ashley  
Serniotti, John Pignataro



Jordan Hierholzer



John Pignataro



Frances Delgado

## CONGRATULATIONS 8TH GRADERS!

I am very proud of our 8th graders. They have persevered through almost three years of a pandemic during their middle school years. Middle school is challenging enough without the ills associated with Covid. It has been an unprecedented time in education. This student cohort has demonstrated tenacity, perseverance and flexibility in learning through various means than any other 8th grade group that has come before them. I am pleased with their ability to navigate the challenges they have faced. I wish them all the best!

Matthew DiPrima, Principal • Burns Middle School



# GRADUATION 2022



**Rylie Gilbert,**  
graduating from Burns  
middle school



**Joseph Pignataro** graduated  
The University of Tampa, BS  
in Business Management,  
Minor in music.



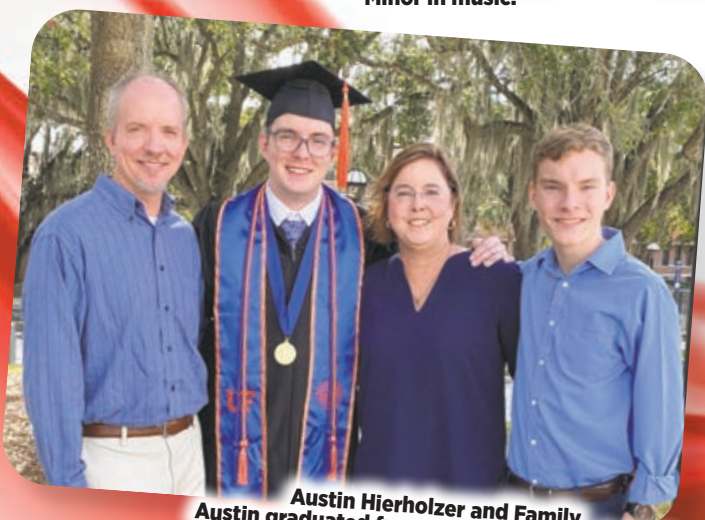
**Jasper Lancaster**



**Skylar Cardin**



**Sydney, Tyler, Chase, Allie, Grace, Kasey**



**Austin Hierholzer and Family**  
Austin graduated from UF with a degree in Civil  
Engineering.



**Josh and Jo Jo Davis**



**Madelyn Porter and 5th grade  
teacher, Mrs. DiVincenzo**



**Kennedy Lynn Tatum** graduated  
from Bloomingdale high school  
class of 2022. She plans to  
attend Nova Southeastern  
University in Fort Lauderdale to  
study Biology and Nursing.



**Sue Burkett with Guidance  
Counselor Laura Hogg**

## CONGRATULATIONS 5TH GRADERS!

Remember, as Cimino Cougars, you will always be our pride and joy. Be active participants in your learning by setting goals and staying focused on achieving them. As I congratulate you on your accomplishments, I encourage you to continue to persevere through all challenges by demonstrating the character traits and core values that have been our point of pride at Cimino.

Joanne Griffiths, Principal • Cimino Elementary



**Grads at the Cimino Elementary Clap Out**





**Chris Burkes**



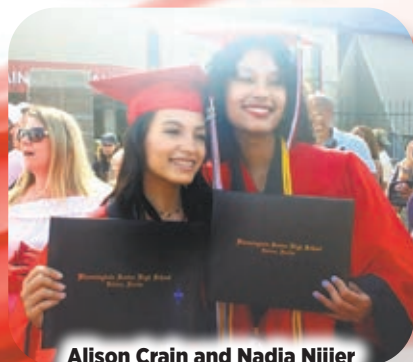
**Ayden J. Fasig**



**Jacob McCullen, Crystal McCullen, Kayley McCullen (the graduate), William McCullen, William McCullen Jr, Ricky McCullen all celebrate Kayley McCullen who is graduating from Bloomingdale high school and plans to head to Hillsborough Community College to do basics in the fall and Major in Nursing in the spring.**



**Jaide and Jordan Abdul**



**Alison Crain and Nadia Nijjer**



**David Owen**



**Cookies by PattiCakes Custom Cakes**

## **Congratulations to Bloomingdale's 2022 Valedictorian and Salutatorian!**

**Huge congratulations to BSHS valedictorian Emily Shrieves and salutatorian Samuel Sebastian! They put in the hard work, the dedication and drive to be the best of the best of BSHS class of 2022.**



**Emily Shrieves** graduated with an 8.85 GPA, while earning her Associate Degree from HCC. She earned the Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish and the Seal of Fine Performing Arts. She was in the Mental Health Awareness Club and the Humane Society Club, on the Hillsborough Community College Innovator Team, and an Intern for Robotics for All. She was in National Honor Society, Science Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, National English Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, and Tri-M Music Honor Society. She was Junior Varsity Cheer Captain and awarded team player for leadership and sportsmanship. She was on Varsity Tennis and was Co-Captain her senior year. She is a Cellist, Leadership representative, and President of the Orchestra program. Emily was the Relay for Life Team Captain and Student Liaison, was on the IncrediBULLS committee, the SAVE Promise club Community Service Liaison, and was an active member of Key Club and UNICEF. Also, she volunteered at various organizations on and off campus, earning over 325 community service hours. Emily will be attending Harvard University.



**Samuel Sebastian** graduated with an 8.19 GPA, while earning numerous industry certifications, including Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Indesign, and ASSA Certification. Samuel was on Senior Steering, was founding vice-president of the Mental Health Awareness club, was on the Student Government Association Executive Board, was the SAVE club Mental Health Liaison, and the Key club vice president. As a member of BETA and Key club, he has contributed his time and efforts to various causes, earning 100 community service hours. Samuel will be attending the University of Florida.



# Congratulations to Bloomingdale's 2022 Scholar Athletes!

Every year, Hillsborough County awards a Scholar Athlete Award to a top male and female from each high school. The students receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Congratulations to Bloomingdale High School graduates **Emily Seltzer** and **David Owen**!

**Emily Seltzer** graduated with a 5.88 weighted GPA and a 4.0 unweighted GPA. Emily played Girls Basketball for four years and played Golf for 3 years. She received the Most Improved Player Award in 10th grade, was the team Captain in 11th grade, and received the GPA Award all four years. Emily was a member of the Spanish Honor Society and Math Honor Society. She excelled in art, receiving the Award of Merit at the Dali Museum. She received the Principal Honor Roll all four years and she received a 100% Bright Futures Scholarship. Emily served the community giving 75 hours of service. Emily will be attending HCC and plans to study Biology.



**David Owen** graduated with a 6.16 weighted GPA and a 4.0 unweighted GPA. David played Football for four years and ran Track one year. He was the Western Conference 1st Team Kicker and on the County All-Star 1st Team. David received the Special Teams Most Valuable Player Award and the Principal's Award. David was a member of National Honor Society and Beta Club. He received the National Merit Scholar Commendation and Principal's Honor Roll all four years. David served the community giving 157 hours of service to organizations such as Seeds of Hope, Cimino Elementary, Bay Life Seeds of Faith Community Garden, IncrediBull Special Olympics, Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association and Bloomingdale High School. David will attend the University of Alabama and plans to study Mechanical Engineering and Prosthetics.



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# BSHS Students Complete Summer Fire Academy

Bloomington High School students Cole Tucker (Junior) and Raquel Tucker (sophomore) completed Hillsborough County Summer Youth Fire Academy in June. The Hillsborough County Fire Rescue Foundation's Summer Youth Fire Academy offers students in Hillsborough County an exciting opportunity to learn what it takes to be a first responder through activities including: the history of the Fire Service, Fire Group Operations, Hands Only CPR and First Aid, Use of Firefighting Bunker Gear, Ropes and Knots, Fire Behavior, Ladder Climb, Water Safety, Public Education, and Emergency Dispatch.



Congratulations Cole and Raquel!



# Cello Ensemble Performs Free Concert

On Saturday, June 25th Diego Villa's cello students and alumni performed a free concert, "A Mellow Cello Afternoon," for the community at the Brandon Christian Church. Five of the celloists are current or recently graduated Bloomington Senior High School students. Two, Jordan Hierholzer and Arthur Lekov, were All State musicians for 11-12 grade.



Photo by Laura Hierholzer

Left to Right: Taylor Treloar, Rosalyn Hasse, Dale Lewis, Austin Hierholzer, Tegan Pennington, Arthur Lekov, Jordan Hierholzer, Diego Villa, Catlin Witherow, Ethan Vargas, Emily Eldridge, Katie Robbins, Judy Galbraith, Hannah Phillips and Steven Zhao

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# Non-Profit Spotlight: Creative Junk Therapy

By Jane Owen

Turn the ordinary into the extraordinary, while supporting local artists, at Creative Junk Therapy. Creative Junk Therapy is a non-profit creative reuse center where your imagination can run wild as you create all kinds of cool projects by reusing or upcycling materials.

The center has three components to its mission: Art, Environment, and Therapy. The mission is to promote creativity, environmental awareness and community through reuse.

The art showcase supports local artists by consigning their artwork and hosting classes. Several of the artists are local to Bloomingdale, including Beth Smedley (Smedley Creative) and Katherine Carrier (Art Beyond the Frame). Classes by local artists are scheduled regularly. The class schedule is available on the Creative Junk Therapy website: [www.creativejunktherapy.org/our-events](http://www.creativejunktherapy.org/our-events)

The center promotes environmental awareness by challenging people to reconsider what waste is. Creative Junk Therapy is part thrift store and part reuse resource. Items are collected from businesses and individuals and offered as resources for educators, artists, and creators.

Executive Director Karen Koseck said the center is making a direct impact on what is going in landfills by collecting materials that many would normally trash. To date, Creative Junk Therapy has received over 11,000 pounds of donations.

"We are promoting the concept of doing something with things so they don't go in landfills. Whether it is using it for what it is or making it into something else. We are inspiring people to see beyond what a thing is," explained Karen.




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The therapy side of the center is when people get lost in creativity. The welcoming class space and 'make and take' area provide a place for people to creatively express themselves.

"Therapy comes in when you get lost in a project. You get lost in the thing you are creating and you get in touch with something deeper inside of you," said Karen.

Creative Junk Therapy opened in 2020 during the pandemic. It is run by volunteers and managed by a small board. It is located at 727 W. Lumsden Rd. in Brandon.

To find out more information, call (813) 324-9777 or email: [creativejunktherapy@outlook.com](mailto:creativejunktherapy@outlook.com)



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