



THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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WWW.BLOOMINGDALE.LIFE

THIS MONTH

Warm Wishes for a Happy Holiday



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PLEASE RECYCLE



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2018 & 2019

Hillsborough County
Neighborhood
Recognition Award

Best Communications
Newsletter Category

Festival of Lights and Bloomingdale Lights
See Page 8

"A little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness." Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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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 Website: www.Bloomingdale.Life

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

President:
Suzy Watts

Vice President:
Sean Donahue

Treasurer:
Grace Lewis

Directors at Large:

Laney Balis

Kalyn Dukes

Bobbi Ferraro

BNA BRIEFS

BNA CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 13, 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 for information.

February 4 / Clean-up Day

April 2 / Bunny Visit

August 3 / Music Bingo Night at Bullfrog Creek Brewery to benefit Seeds of Hope Food Bank

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.



BNA / SEEDS OF HOPE FOOD DRIVE

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association is partnering with Seeds of Hope this holiday season. The BNA is collecting nonperishable food items through December 12th for the Seeds of Hope food bank. Items can be brought to the Bloomingdale Community Office, located at 3509 Bell Shoals, Monday through Thursday 12-3.

Seeds of Hope provides weekly a food distribution to the community at 710 E. Bloomingdale Ave. For more information, visit: [Seeds of Hope | Serving Southeast Hillsborough County \(sohopefl.org\)](http://Seeds of Hope | Serving Southeast Hillsborough County (sohopefl.org))

Questions? Email bl.neighbor1@gmail.com



HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE



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Many Thanks, Billy Hightower!

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association would like to thank Billy Hightower for his countless hours of service to the Bloomingdale community. Thank you is simply not enough. Billy is retiring from BNA board after serving since 2012.

Last year, when asked about why he decided to be part of the board, Billy said he simply enjoyed being part of the activities in the community. "I really enjoy helping the community with anything we do for the kids, like the Santa Visit or when we celebrated the high school baseball state champions," Billy said.

Billy helped with all of the BNA activities throughout the years, including Clean-up days, Fall Festivals, and Santa Visits. Billy was the BNA representative at the Community Sherriff's Station meetings.

Suzu Watts, the current BNA President, said Billy will be greatly missed. "Billy was always smiling, reliable and thoughtful. I am thankful for his years of service to our neighborhoods," Suzu said.

Previous BNA President George May shared that Billy's commitment made a tremendous difference to the board and community. "Billy is an ideal board member. Always there, dependable and committed. The same commitment he brings to the board, he brings to the community with hopes of making it a better place to live. It has been through this commitment that the board has won so many awards in the past with Billy being a very integral part of it. Having someone like Billy on your board, you are able to accomplish many things, definitely a role model for a board member. It was with great pleasure to have served with Billy," George said.



Santa Visits Bloomingdale!

On December 4, Santa visited Bloomingdale East and West with his elves and BNA volunteers. He loved seeing all the kids and families! The BNA would like to offer a special thank you to Alex Phillips, Eli Santos, Joan Byrd, Heidi Adams and BSHS's National Honor Society for helping at the special event.



BLOOMINGDALE SPECIAL DISTRICT

Bloomingdale Special District Works Hard for our Community

By Kristine Schroeder, BSD Community Relations

DECEMBER BSD UPDATE

Storm debris from Hurricane Ian and Tropical Storm Nicole has nearly disappeared. Your Green Team has been hard at work clearing brush piles and some larger debris will be removed by Hillsborough County Public Works.

It's looking quite festive as you drive around the streets and neighborhoods of the Bloomingdale Special District. Holiday banners adorn many of the area light posts and poinsettias are welcoming the holidays in style. You might even spot a snowflake or two peeking from the trees.

Please remember you are always welcome to join us for our District Board Meetings held the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm at our offices at 3509 Bell Shoals Rd. We would love to see you there.

As 2022 draws to a close we wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season!



Bloomingdale Special District
813-684-6667
bstd@verizon.net

YARD OF THE MONTH

CARL AND CASSANDRA DAVIS
3830 COLD CREEK DRIVE, VALRICO



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

Send Yard of the Month nominations to: bl.neighbor1@gmail.com or call 813-681-2051. Winners receive a \$25 Gift Card to Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale and a 1 month family membership, plus join fee to the Campo YMCA.

11.30.2022 / WEDNESDAY

No. 00004

REALTOR MONTHLY



YOUR GO TO MAGAZINE FOR ALL YOUR REAL ESTATE NEEDS - FROM WHATS TRENDING TO TIPS ON REAL ESTATE

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Manatee Viewing Center Offers First-Hand Look at Florida's Most Gentle Creatures

By Michelle Colesanti

Get a first-hand look at Manatees this winter at TECO's Big Bend Power Station in Apollo Beach. Learn about these magnificent gentle creatures and what it takes for their survival.

Manatees, which are mammals, need warmer water. In colder months when gulf and bay temperatures drop below 68 degrees, they migrate to warmer areas. The discharge canal at the TECO site is a state and federally designated manatee sanctuary where the water is a constant 72 degrees.

"We're proud to be the showcase for Tampa Electric's commitment to environmental stewardship," said Stan Kroh, Manager of Land and Stewardship Programs for Tampa Electric. "The Manatee Viewing Center proves that you can have fun while learning about the natural treasures of Florida."

Although the manatees are the main attraction, there is so much more to see and do.

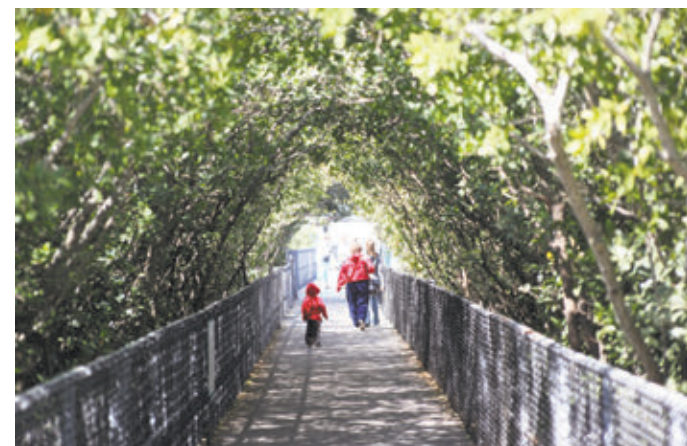
Visitors can enjoy the stingrays touch-tank. You can touch them gently as they glide past you. Wander along boardwalks overlooking the warm-water area where manatees gather while also watching for birds and larger fish that may be visible from the walkway.

Wear comfortable shoes as you can also hike a coastal habitat trail which is close to a mile in length and winds through saltern, coastal high marsh and coastal strand habitats. The setting is very natural and showcases a variety of plant and animal life. Along the trail is an observation tower with a 50 ft. vantage point. Relax or bring a picnic lunch to enjoy at one of the tables at the base of the tower or get a bite to eat at the Southshore Café.

Manatees often swim in water less than six feet deep where underwater vegetation is most abundant. Sadly, this makes them susceptible to boat strikes. Many have recently suffered from starvation as their food source diminishes. More than 735 deaths have already been reported this year.

The Manatee Viewing Center draws about 400,000 visitors annually. It is located at 6990 Dickman Rd. in Apollo Beach and is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily (except Christmas and Easter) through April 15, 2023. Trails close at 4 p.m. Admission and parking are free. No pets are allowed except trained service dogs.

Visit the center at www.tampaelectric.com/manatee or call 813-228-4289 for more information.



Visit the Manatee Viewing Center in Apollo Beach now open through April 15, 2023.



Welcome to the Neighborhood New Business *Bin*efiting the Bloomingdale Community

By Amanda Ragan

Cleaning and sterilizing trash bins is a dirty job that no one wants to do, well no one except a Bloomingdale local that is! Wes Brown, a resident of the Bloomingdale community for over 11 years, just launched his new business, Bin Steamers. The company specializes in providing trash bin and dumpster cleaning services that can be done as a regular or one time service.

Wes was an ER medic for 12 years, so he knows the importance of limiting the spread of germs, especially during this time of the year, when the flu and other viruses are so prevalent in our community. Wes explained, "Most people just don't realize the amount of bacteria that lives and thrives on trash bins. Being in the medical field, I started having my own trash bins cleaned at the start of the pandemic, and I noticed how much better my garage smelled and how nice it was to throw a bag in and not be nauseated by the smell of the lid shutting. But then the man that was servicing our bins moved and when I tried to find another company, I realized there was a need for this service in our area, and I decided it was a need I could fill."

So, whether your trash bin is constantly full of diapers, or perhaps the remnants of your annual crab boil, Bin Steamers provides curbside bin cleaning that cleans both the outside and

the inside of the bin. The process involves the use of a \$6200 piece of equipment that picks the trash bin up and places it at an angled downward position while a rotating head propels 230° water that sterilizes, disinfects, and deodorizes the bin in an eco-friendly manner using less water than if you were to clean the bin by hand. All services are performed directly after trash pickup and then Bin Steamers rolls the freshly cleaned bins back up to the garage. Currently Bin Steamers provides three service packages:

- A one-time cleaning at \$39.95 and \$10 for each additional bin
- A quarterly rate of \$29.95 and \$10 for each additional bin
- A monthly rate of \$19.95 and \$5 for each additional bin

This service can also be purchased as a gift for others for the holidays, if you are trying to find something practical for the person who already has it all!

For more information or to order your first cleaning service, please visit www.BinSteamers.pro or call 813-444-3009.



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It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas... in Bloomingdale

By Amanda Ragan

The cobwebs of Halloween have been dusted away, and it is clear that the Christmas season is here! Residents throughout the Bloomingdale community have been working hard to create holiday inspired decorations that thrill both family members and neighbors alike. Grab a mug of hot cocoa or eggnog and make sure to walk, bike, or drive by the beautifully decorated houses of Bloomingdale this holiday season. From whimsical fairytale scenes to fun inflatables, to the classic lights of our youth, there is truly something for everyone to enjoy.

Don't miss the holiday display set up by Kelly and Murl Householder that includes a reindeer pen, Christmas tree farm, hot cocoa stand, and ice skating rink!



MacDonald Home



Benton Home



Eckebrecht Home



Householder Home



Householder Home

Festival of Lights and Santa's Village Open at Hillsborough County Fairgrounds

The Festival of Lights and Santa's Village will deliver winter wonderland magic at the county fairgrounds through Sunday January 1, 2023. Guests can enjoy more than 1 million lights as they drive through 2 miles of seasonal and Florida-themed displays. New this year in Santa's Village, guests can take a speedy slide on the Arctic Plunge Inflatable Snow Tube, Ride the Reindeer Carousel and chug along on the Holiday Train. Santa's Village is filled with activities and treats that tempt the young and young-at-heart, such as Santa's Interactive Barnyard; camel rides; craft stations; hot chocolate, warm cider, apple cider donuts, and corn dogs; and visits with Santa. Tickets for this year's event cost \$25/ car or \$80/bus. For more information and tickets, please visit www.hillsboroughcountyfair.com.



The Holiday Classic Series at the Tampa Theatre

By Amanda Ragan



The holiday season is the perfect time to sit with loved ones and watch a movie. While there are countless options to stream these days, if you're in the mood to watch a classic, what better place to do it than the historic Tampa Theatre. If you have never been, consider this a must do, and if you have been to the Tampa Theatre, then you know that its beautiful architecture and unique setting makes this venue a magical place year round.

This year, the Tampa Theatre will once again be showing their Holiday Classic Series which includes:

Sing - Along White Christmas on December 4th at 3:00 p.m.

Elf on December 11th at 3:00 p.m.

It's A Wonderful Life, December 16th - 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

Eight Crazy Nights on December 18th at 6:30 p.m.

Sing-Along Frozen on January 8th at 3:00 p.m.

Perhaps the most enchanting element of the Holiday Classic Series is the fact that the entire audience sings Christmas carols accompanied by the "Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ," before select shows.

Tickets for all shows are on sale now.

The Tampa Theatre is located at 711 N. Franklin St., Tampa, FL, 33602. For more information or to order tickets please visit <https://tampatheatre.org/movie-categories/holiday/> or call the box office at (813) 274 - 8286.



Winter Village at Curtis Hixon Park Offers Ice Skating and Much More

By Michelle Colesanti

Santa's already making his lists, but before his travels around the world, he will make surprise appearances at Curtis Hixon Park's Winter Village on Friday, December 9 and 16. For clues on times when you may be able to catch a glimpse of St. Nick, stay tuned to the @WinterVillageTampa Facebook and Instagram pages.



The Winter Village, presented by the Tampa Bay Lightning, is a great way to celebrate the holiday season with friends and family. The park is located along the Tampa Riverwalk, and during the holidays it is transformed with plenty of sights, sounds and activities for everyone. You can visit daily through Wednesday, January 4.

The big draw is the ice-skating rink. Skate daily through January 4. Individual tickets cost \$17 and includes skate rental. Tickets may be purchased on site if there is availability, but it is highly recommended to buy them in advance. Each session runs for 75 minutes.

The little ones will enjoy the Curtis Hixon Park Choo Choo presented by Tampa General Hospital. Climb aboard for a five-minute ride and enjoy the sights. The train is free and runs Friday through Sundays from 5-10 p.m.

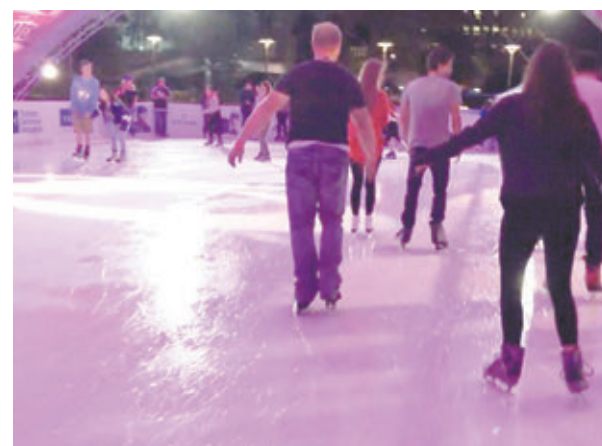
While enjoying the festivities, visit The Shops of Winter Village where you will get many gift ideas for those on your list while supporting local artists and vendors. The Icicle Craft Kitchen in the village will offer you a taste of the holidays when hunger strikes.

Some special events will also take place throughout the season. The Tampa Theatre will partner with The Winter Village to present Disney's "A Christmas Carol" on Friday, December 16 at 7 p.m. The free event will take place on the lawn where seating is first come, first served. Mark your calendars for Tampa's lighted boat parade on Saturday, December 17 at 6 p.m. (rain date December 18) which will run along the Hillsborough River in downtown Tampa. The parade begins at the southern tip of Davis Islands, travels through the Convention Center basin and up to the Heights where the boats will turn around and head to Sparkman Wharf where judging will occur, and the parade ends.

For more information or to purchase ice skating tickets, visit <https://wintervillagetampa.com>.



Bring your family and friends out to celebrate the holidays at the Winter Village in downtown Tampa's Curtis Hixon Park now through January 4.





Get Snowed in at the Florida Aquarium

By Michelle Colesanti

Lots of fishy things can happen at the Florida Aquarium, but one of the most unusual is that even though this is Florida, you can still enjoy some winter play at the aquarium's Snow Days!

This fun event, which is perfect for the entire family, will be back at The Florida Aquarium from Monday, December 26 to Friday, December 30 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Grab your gloves and get ready to join in for a week full of winter festivities and hands-on snow experiences. Dash your way through the flurried Snow Daze Snow Maze—but you better hurry or the abominable snowman might catch you.

You can then engage in an epic battle to defeat ocean pollution by throwing snowballs at pollution monsters. The wharf monsters are up to 'SNO' good too. So, head over to the SNO Fly Zone, where you will find snow slingshots to thwart off the pesky monsters by loading the slingshot with snowballs to blast them away. Move and groove on the dance floor at the Winter Wonderland Dance Party.

The Florida Aquarium is located at 701 Channelside Dr. in Tampa. If you are already a member, the fun is free. Snow Days is also included with any general admission to the Aquarium, so plan to make a day of it enjoying all the other exhibits that the Florida Aquarium has to offer.

For tickets or more information, visit www.flaquarium.org/events/attend-an-event/snow-days/.

THE FLORIDA AQUARIUM

DOWNTOWN TAMPA



The Florida Aquarium's 'Snow Days' will take place Monday, December 26-Friday, December 30 and is included in the general admission price of the Aquarium.

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Bloomingtondale Students Win Hillsborough Community College 5k

By Edward De Freitas, student reporter

Bloomingtondale juniors Miranda Mayaudon and Fabian Mercado recently ran HCC's Hawk Run 5k on October 22nd and equally finished in first place for the men's and women's divisions. Miranda had a time of 21:55 and Fabian had a time of 18:19. What makes the accomplishment even more special is that the two have been friends since elementary school and were BSHS Homecoming Court partners this year.

Fabian decided to run the HCC Hawk Run 5k after Homecoming. "My sister goes to HCC and she told me about it and how I could join for free since I'm a student, so I said why not," said Fabian.

Fabian posted on his Instagram story that he was running the HCC Hawk Run 5k and asked if anyone wanted to run it. Miranda replied that she would sign up. They both signed up and knew they were physically and mentally ready for the race having athletic backgrounds. Fabian, decided to do extra preparation by watching and reading a book named "Can't Hurt Me," by famous runner David Goggins. Fabian was inspired by the philosophy that

"being prepared for no matter what challenges may come your way is great" he said.

Miranda and Fabian have a history of sports of athletics in their own lives and in their families. Along with running, Miranda also plays tennis. Fabian plays soccer and grew up around sports, competing with friends outside in his neighborhood, and taking part in sporting events from an early age. Both trained in sports all their lives yet started training seriously over a year ago for running with support from their families.

They were both delighted and surprised to finish first. "I was incredibly happy and proud of the both of us. I had no idea how fast Fabian was," Miranda said.

If you want to come to watch these two athletes compete in Bloomingtondale, they both plan to join the Bloomingtondale High School cross country team next year.

Congratulations, Fabian and Miranda and as always Go Bulls!!



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BSHS Boys Cross Country Team Competes at State

The Bloomingdale Boys Cross Country Team topped off their 2022 season at the State Meet on November 12, held at Florida State University's home course in Tallahassee.

The boys qualified for the State Meet by running 10 personal best times in the District and Regional qualifying meets.

The seven runners that ran at the State Meet:

Thomas Schilling
Brandon Witherow
Wisny Cherident
Jeremy Hagenbarth
Keagan Leisure
Brandon Turner
Andre Williams



Coach Bateman commended the boys on a great season. "I am proud of the hard work the runners put in and the encouraging atmosphere between teammates. This combination was the key for a successful season," Coach Batemen said.



BSHS Girls Swim Team members Compete at State Championship Meet

Four members of the Bloomingdale Girls Swim Team competed at the Florida State Competition on November 5 at the Sailfish Splash Water Park in Stuart, Florida.

Alexa Brown, Madison McKendree, Emily Nicols, and Lexi Henry competed in the 400 free relay. Madison also competed in the 200 IM and 100 Backstroke.

Coach Autumn Shoun expressed that she could not be more proud of the girls.



Madison McKendree

"Each of these swimmers-Alexa, Emily, Madison and Lexi- are fierce athletes who, individually, consistently win their events. But, together they are a coherent team that makes that relay flow as if they are one athlete instead of four working together. They are so intuitive together. And no one works harder than my girls! My heart is full of pride for what they have accomplished, Coach Shoun said."



BSHS Athletes Sign Letters of Intent to Compete in College

On November 9th, seven Bloomingdale athletes signed their National Letters of Intent (NLI) to play sports at the collegiate level. Family, friends, and coaches gathered to watch the signing.

Soccer player Aubrey Cripe signed to play at Newberry College.

Six baseball players signed to play at the collegiate level:

- Jake Magadan - Barry University
- Alex Vasquez Rossi - Greensboro College
- Robert Rossi - Greensboro College
- Dawson Harmon - Highpoint University
- Trey Wilson - State College of Florida
- Tyler Clinton - Daytona State College

Congratulations to all the players and on this great achievement! Good luck with your next season!



Left to right: Jake Magadan, Alex Vasquez, Robert Rossi, Dawson Harmon, Trey Wilson, Tyler Clinton, and Aubrey Cripe

NOVEMBER 24 THRU JANUARY 1

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BSHS JROTC Wins Competition

Bloomingdale High School's Air Force JROTC excelled at the Sickles High Drill Meet on November 5 at Sickles High School, winning 1st Place Overall. In addition, the team won these awards:

- 1st - First Year Cadet Drill
- 1st - Armed Regulation Drill
- 1st - Unarmed Regulation Drill
- 3rd - Army Regulation Color Guard
- 1st - Air Force Regulation Color Guard
- 1st - Color Guard Inspection



BSHS Wrestling Starts Season Strong

The Bloomingdale Bulls Wrestling Team beat Riverview High School and East Bay High School at the 2022 Preseason Classic Meet on November 17.



Bloomingdale High School Invites Community to Holiday Under the Stars

By Jane Owen

Take a break and get into the holiday spirit at Bloomingdale High School's free Holiday Under the Stars concert and festival this Thursday, December 8! The Bloomingdale High School Music Department welcomes the community to attend their outdoor holiday concert at Bloomingdale's Charley Harris football stadium.

What began in 2020 as a way to hold a holiday performance while social distancing during the pandemic, the Holiday Under the Stars concert and festival has become an annual Bloomingdale tradition. Attendees will enjoy performances by the Bloomingdale bands, the Crimson Guard, choirs, and orchestras. The festive event will include a market for holiday shopping and food trucks for an easy dinner.

Jon Sever, Director of Bands at Bloomingdale High School, shared that both students and directors are looking forward to the night.

"We are excited to offer the community the third annual Holiday Under the Stars at Bloomingdale's football field. There will be food trucks, shopping, and of course, music will be the highlight of the night. The concert is free, but we ask that you bring a toy to donate to Toys for Tots," Sever said.

The event is special to Bloomingdale's Principal Dr. Marcos Rodriquez. During the first Holiday Under the Stars in 2020, Rodriquez performed with the Jazz Band playing saxophone.

Rodriquez shared, "The Holiday Under the Stars event is one of my favorite events of the year at BSHS. This event showcases the amazing talents of our students in the band, chorus, and orchestra programs while supporting the Toys for Tots charity. The event also includes local business displays in our "winter village" that help support our local community. If you want to hear great music, support a great cause, and support our local businesses make sure you plan to attend The Holiday Under the Stars event this year!"

Event Details:

Holiday Under the Stars, Thursday, December 8

5:30 p.m.: Vendors begin selling items.

Food options include Mr. C's Grilled Cheese, Taco-Holic Mexican, Nothing Bundt Cakes and JC's Coffee.

7 p.m.: Concert starts.

Admission: FREE

Attendees are encouraged to bring toys to donate to Toys for Tots



BSHS Rajun' Bull Band Rated Superior

The Bloomingdale Band earned an "Overall Superior" rating at the annual Florida Bandmasters Association Music Performance Assessment on October 29. The band has earned the rating each year since 1987.



BSHS Music Department Travels to London

The BSHS Music Department is traveling to London over the holidays! The chorus and orchestra will have multiple performances in the city. The marching band will perform in the London New Year's Day Parade, the largest parade in the world. Bloomingdale residents can watch the parade live on the local PBS station. More information about the parade can be found at this site: lnydp.com



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