



# THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

**VOL. XLIII**



**ISSUE 12**



**DEC. 2023**



**WWW.BLOOMINGDALE.LIFE**

**THIS MONTH**

## PALM TREE SANTAS VISIT BLOOMINGDALE



Photo: Fred Ocasio

**PALM TREE SANTAS AND TRUMPETER CHUCK WEIRICH AT THE SHRIMP BOAT SEE STORIES PAGES 8-9**

**KIERSTEN SUTTON JOINS BNA BOARD**  
*Page 3*

**BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT: PATTICAKES CUSTOM CAKES**  
*Page 6*

**EASTERN HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY BAND HOLIDAY CONCERTS**  
*Page 8*

**FAMILY FUN FOR THE HOLIDAYS**  
*Page 10*

**BSHS ATHLETES SIGN NATIONAL LETTERS OF INTENT**  
*Page 13*

**BSHS SUTHERLAND HALL FOR PERFORMING ARTS**  
*Page 15*

**PLEASE RECYCLE**



**WINNER**

2013, 2014, 2016, 2018 & 2019

Hillsborough County Neighborhood Recognition Award

Best Communications Newsletter Category

*“It’s not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.” Mother Theresa*



**YOUR COMMUNITY  
NEWSPAPER**

LIKE US ON  **FACEBOOK!** [www.facebook.com/BLGazette](http://www.facebook.com/BLGazette)



**Jane Owen**  
**Editor - The Bloomingdale Gazette**  
P.O. Box 6313, Brandon, FL 33508 - (813) 681-2051

Design/Layout: Chris Pascucci, NTZ Studios (ntzstudios.com)  
Staff Writers: Michelle Colesanti, Nick Nahas & Amanda Ragan  
Student Reporter Edward De Freitas

The official publication of the BNA since 1980, delivered free to Bloomingdale residents on the first Wednesday of each month.



**Andrea Daly**  
**Community Publications Manager**  
1000 North Ashley Drive, Suite 700  
Tampa, Florida 33602  
(813) 731-2490  
Email: [adaly@tampabay.com](mailto:adaly@tampabay.com)



**BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD  
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

P.O. Box 6313, Brandon, FL 33508 (813) 681-2051  
Email: [Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com) Website: [www.Bloomingdale.Life](http://www.Bloomingdale.Life)  
Follow on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Bl.Neighbor1](http://www.facebook.com/Bl.Neighbor1)

BNA board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Bloomingdale Regional Library.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>President:</b><br><b>Suzy Watts</b>        | <b>Directors at Large:</b><br><b>Laney Balis</b> |
| <b>Vice President:</b><br><b>Sean Donahue</b> | <b>Kalyn Dukes</b>                               |
| <b>Treasurer:</b><br><b>Grace Lewis</b>       | <b>Bobbi Ferraro</b>                             |
|   | <b>Kiersten Sutton</b>                           |



Jessica Robertson  
BNA Office Manager

**BNA BRIEFS**

**BNA CALENDAR**

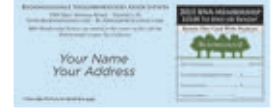
**\*Note\*** The BNA is not meeting during December. The next scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, January 23, 7-8 p.m. / BNA Meeting / Bloomingdale Regional Public Library - McLean Family Community Room / Community is invited to attend. Call 813-252-0252 or email [bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com) for information.

Saturday, February 3, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. / Fall CleanUp. For more information, follow the BNA at Bloomingdale.life and on Facebook: @ Bl.Neighbor1

**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.



**A Message from BNA President Suzy Watts**  
**Season's Greetings this Holiday Season!**

I am so thankful I live in Bloomingdale. We are a friendly, diverse neighborhood. Our association likes to have fun! Hundreds of neighbors have been delighted with our Santa Visit, Bunny Visit, Music Bingo Night and participation in the Y's Trunk or Treat. Many neighbors enjoyed the services we provide with the Clean-up Day and reporting code violations. I have attended many county meetings to learn about plans and voice concerns about traffic and other things that impact Bloomingdale. I need your help to continue our important work. Please join BNA! Membership information will be mailed out in January. I welcome you to attend our monthly one-hour meetings. The next one is January 23rd at 7 o'clock at Bloomingdale Library. I am thankful for our volunteer board members. Sean, Grace, Bobbi, Laney, Kalyn and Kiersten are truly good neighbors. Jane keeps us informed with The Bloomingdale Gazette and Jessica is our problem solver as the BNA office manager.

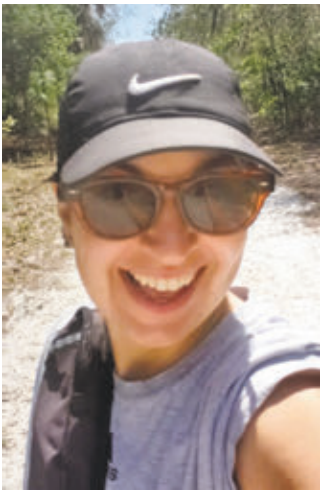


Bloomingdale is a great neighborhood. With your help, we will be greater tomorrow!

The BNA Board met on November 12 at The Shrimp Boat for an annual planning meeting. Great things to come in 2024!

# Meet Your New BNA Board Member: Welcome Kiersten Sutton

By Jane Owen



The Gazette is thrilled to introduce the newest Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association board member. Kiersten Sutton joins the board after living in Bloomingdale just over a year and becoming connected to the community.

In her short time in the area, Kiersten volunteered at a few Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association events where she found friendship and connection.

“I’ve met so many great people in my short time here. I have volunteered at a few events and have really enjoyed working with the Board members. They have a genuine commitment to promoting community and enhancing our neighborhood. I’m honored to be part of the team,” Kiersten said.

Kiersten brings passion and experience to the board. She currently works as the Special Projects Manager for the national office of Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA). Kiersten shared that PCA America is committed to preventing child abuse before it happens. They promote policies, programs and resources informed by science and work to create the conditions for all children, families, and communities to thrive.

“I’ve spent a lot of time in the non-profit world on the opposite side-board development

and board relationships. While the BNA functions a bit differently, I believe my knowledge will be valuable and helpful. I’m a people person, am very organized and operate from a solution focused lens,” Kiersten said.

As part of the board, Kiersten plans to have an ear to the ground in the community as to what’s important and how we can continue to elevate this great neighborhood.

She loves the walkability and accessibility of Bloomingdale. “Everything is here—the YMCA, library, parks, grocery stores and shops,” Kiersten said.

In her free time, Kiersten enjoys nature, reading, traveling, and spending time with family.

“I absolutely love being outside doing ‘all the things!’ But mostly, hiking—even though FL is flat, there are beautiful nature preserves and trails—taking walks and visiting the beach. I also love a good book and traveling. And, spending time with my family and friends is always one of my joys!” Kiersten said.

Kiersten just celebrated 26 years with her husband Samuel. They have five children: Sam, Rashad, Jumah, Maya, and Elijah.

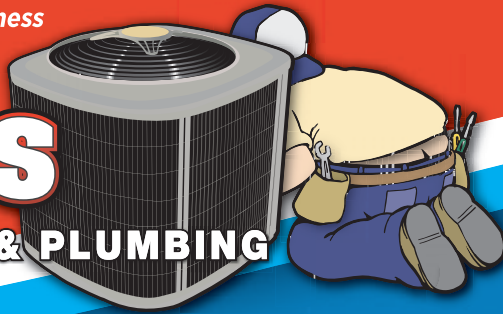
Kiersten encourages the community to come to a BNA meeting:

“Everything the BNA does provides opportunities for neighborhood cohesion. The Board is continuously seeking ways to elevate opportunities to build a sense of community. Come to a meeting and you’ll quickly learn the value of joining!”

IERNA Your Trust — IERNA Your Business

# IERNA'S

HEATING, COOLING & PLUMBING



**100% SATISFACTION  
GUARANTEED**  
**FREE ESTIMATES**  
from our Comfort  
Consultants

**20% OFF**  
**YOUR NEXT REPAIR**

Must present coupon at time of service.  
See [iernaair.com/coupons](http://iernaair.com/coupons) for details.



[iernaair.com](http://iernaair.com)

**\$1,500 OFF**  
UP TO  
**A NEW COOLING  
AND HEATING SYSTEM**

Must present coupon at time of service. See [iernaair.com/coupons](http://iernaair.com/coupons) for details.



[iernaair.com](http://iernaair.com)

**\$400 OFF**  
UP TO  
**A REPLACEMENT  
WATER HEATER**

Must present coupon at time of service. See [iernaair.com/coupons](http://iernaair.com/coupons) for details.



[iernaair.com](http://iernaair.com)

EMERGENCY **HOTLINE** (727) 616-0090

[www.IernaAir.com](http://www.IernaAir.com)

© By Ierna's Heating & Cooling. All Rights Reserved. LICENSE #CAC1813676, #CFC1429475

0000311424-01



# WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

## KO Kickboxing

by Amanda Ragan



### Maryland's "First Family of Martial Arts" Expands Legacy to Bloomingdale

If you have been searching for a way to kickstart your fitness routine after the busy holiday season, look no further than KO Kickboxing located in the Bloomingdale Plaza next to Urban Air. This knockout addition to our neighborhood is led by owner, Julie Elrod and her children Wyatt Elrod and Kami Bellamah, making KO Kickboxing — a family affair.

Although new to the Bloomingdale area, this family trio is not new to the world of kickboxing, having earned the title, the "First Family of Martial Arts" in Maryland. Julie Elrod, a Martial Arts Hall of Fame Inductee, and the driving force behind KO Kickboxing, has dedicated her life to sharing the benefits and teachings of martial arts with others. Her love of martial arts has obviously been passed down in her own family, but it has also been shared through several critically acclaimed books Julie has written, including the best-selling children's martial art book, "Moral Combat." It is clear that Julie is much more than just a successful business owner; she is a passionate advocate for the positive impact of martial arts on individuals and communities. Now, with KO Kickboxing, she aims to share her expertise and knowledge and "help others improve both their physical fitness and their confidence through kickboxing."

To celebrate their grand opening, KO Kickboxing is offering a special of unlimited trial classes for two weeks and a pair of boxing gloves for just \$29.99. It's the perfect opportunity to try-out the different classes the studio offers including kickboxing, MMA, and circuit training. With classes designed for children, teens, and adults, KO Kickboxing aims to cater to the diverse needs of the community. The studio is not just a place to work out; it's a space where individuals can learn self-defense, build confidence, and foster a sense of discipline.

Hoping to bolster this sense of community and camaraderie, KO Kickboxing also hosts a KO Glow Party, every Friday night, where participants can combine socializing and exercising under black lights and neon brights. It's a unique and vibrant way to kick off the weekend, and your fitness journey.

Located at 173 E Bloomingdale Ave, KO Kickboxing is open Monday - Friday 12PM - 8 PM and Saturday from 9AM - 1PM. For more information on KO Kickboxing's class schedules, and the grand opening specials, visit their website at [www.kokickboxingtampa.com](http://www.kokickboxingtampa.com), or call (813) 588-5425.



# WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

## DRIP Infrared Sauna Studio

By Edward De Freitas, Student Reporter



In July, best friends Chelsea Watts and Jessica Zachar opened DRIP Infrared Sauna Studio in Bloomingdale. Unlike other traditional sauna experiences, DRIP Studio offers Sauna blankets, different sweat rooms, base beds, TVs, and noise cancelling to really enhance your experience, healing, and peace. DRIP also offers cold water submersion therapy.

DRIP stands for Detoxify, Restore, Intensify, and Perspire. A sweat or cold plunge at DRIP services can eliminate toxins, restore damaged skin, alleviate muscle and joint pain, boost immune systems, reduce stress, improve sleep and enhance weight loss progression.

With a background of serving our community, Tampa General Hospital is where Chelsea and Jessica met. Serving patients with occupational and physical therapy services, Chelsea and Jessica have over 20 years of combined experience working for health and wellness.

Jessica says it is quite incredible what regular use of an infrared sauna can do. She discovered infrared sauna treatment after the birth of her first son.

"I couldn't exercise like I wanted in my immediate post-partum period. Well after the 50-minute infrared session that we did, I was drenched, my heart rate was bumping, I had those post-workout endorphins flowing, and great energy for hours after. Needless to say, I loved it!" Jessica said.

Both Jessica and Chelsea absolutely adored the rejuvenating and relaxing effects they experienced after trying infrared saunas. After their experiences, they researched together the medical benefits of infrared saunas. This opened their eyes to the health benefits of detoxification, accelerated healing, anti-aging, weight management, profound relief, and relaxation properties among many other benefits. This was the spark that led to DRIP Infrared Sauna Studio.

"We chose the Valrico area because there are no services like this currently offered in this area." Chelsea said. "This is important to provide a unique and relaxing experience to our clients."

DRIP is running a Christmas gift card promotion: buy a certain value and get a certain value for free. On January 18th, DRIP will celebrate being open for 6 months with a ribbon cutting. There will be food, door prizes and free services offered. For more information, [dripinfraredsaunastudio.com](http://dripinfraredsaunastudio.com), email [saunastudio.drip@gmail.com](mailto:saunastudio.drip@gmail.com), or Follow DRIP on Facebook: @Drip\_infrared sauna studio. Drip is located at 1578 Bloomingdale Avenue.





# YARD OF THE MONTH

**MICHAEL & DOROTHY HUDGINS**  
**4027 EASTRIDGE 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.

**VOTED BRANDON'S #1 ROOFING COMPANY 8 CONSECUTIVE YEARS!**  
**SAVE MONEY ON HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE**



Tampa Bay's leading family-owned and operated roofing company, **Shingle Masters** provides every re-roof customer with a wind mitigation inspection to measure hurricane protection, saving most homeowners hundreds of dollars each year on insurance.

**Shingle Masters** also maximizes roof ventilation to lower cooling costs and extend the life of the shingles.

**Financing Available. Lifetime Workmanship Warranty Available.**

**Shingle Masters Roofing & Construction**

**(813) 661-4600**

**www.Shingle-Masters.com**

Licensed Certified General Contractor // CGC 1513621  
 Licensed Certified General Contractor // CCC 1328724

0000315605-01

**Now offering INDEPENDENT LIVING** with complimentary services for a savings of **\$3600 a year!**  
**Call for details and a tour!**

Assisted Living Facility #AL13150

## Assisted Living

*"Tessera Brandon... Living your lifestyle."*

**Call Jill Andrew, Director of Marketing, to learn more!**

## Memory Care

*"Living the present... cherishing the past."*

AN EMBASSY HEALTHCARE ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY

1320 Oakfield Dr., Brandon 33511 • (813) 607-6880

[tesserabrandon.com](http://tesserabrandon.com)

Located in the heart of Brandon close to I75, Hwy 60 and Hwy 301

0000315624-01



# Sweeten Your Holidays and Upcoming Year with PattiCakes Custom Cakes

By Michelle Colesanti

Patti Burnett's home-based business, PattiCakes Custom Cakes LLC, began because of her love for both baking and art. She has been able to use her two passions together to create cakes, cupcakes, cookies, and other goodies. Burnett can bake something specific upon request or use her creativity to come up with something just based on an idea you may have.

"I have always loved baking and art. Growing up, I would draw cartoons and took art classes when I was younger."

Before she started her business, Burnett had wanted to cheer in college. So, she attended USF, and while there, got her degree in Education. She then taught for six years, five in Hernando County and one in Hillsborough County at FishHawk Creek Elementary School.

She has five kids. When her twins were born, she realized that daycare would be too expensive, so she chose to leave teaching position and stay home.

"I needed the extra income and realized after baking for my kids, other family members, and friends, that I had something unique to offer," Burnett said.

She started her baking business five years ago. This has given her the flexibility that she needs to be able to enjoy field trips and other school events with her kids.

The business is growing, mostly by word of mouth. She currently has a high school junior working part-time with her to help.

Burnett works with Tampa International Airport (TIA) when needed to provide cupcakes and cookies for events such as when Phoebe, the Flamingo's grand opening took place. Since TIA likes to work with small local businesses, she also has baked goodies to celebrate the inaugural flights of new airlines.

Burnett really enjoys making dessert tables that can showcase a variety of items at one time. She can do this for weddings, banquets, and school events such as teacher appreciation.

Burnett lives in Bloomingdale West with her husband Chip, whom she has been married to for more than 15 years. Her five children range in age from 6 to 15.

If you would like to place an order, she usually needs a turnaround time of two weeks to one month. If you do have a last-minute request, you can contact her for availability, and she may be able to accommodate you.

For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/patticakescustomcake](http://www.facebook.com/patticakescustomcake). If you would like to place an order, visit the Facebook page or call/text 352-942-3455.



For your next celebration or function, PattiCakes Custom Cakes LLC, will create the perfect cake, cupcakes, cookies, or other goodies.

## A Community of Women Changing Lives

Submitted by Bernadette Boyle

The Community for Women of St Stephen Catholic Church is a diverse group of women who gather for fun, service, and to lend a helping hand. Our mission is to assist our priests and the parishioners of St. Stephen to serve others through social and spiritual events.

Our events are packed with informative speakers, spiritual gatherings, and game nights. This year we are also incorporating field trips. Our meetings have a casual atmosphere. After taking care of business, we relax and enjoy each other's company.

We change lives by organizing and leading many events that benefit the community such as "Underwear Sunday" where we serve 16+ impoverished local elementary schools in Hillsborough County. During a weekend in September, the parishioners bring in different sizes

of undergarments for both boys and girls and then it is divided and distributed to local schools in our surrounding area. Another organization we support is T.H.O.R.N. – Thankfully Helping Others Real Needs. One of the biggest gatherings at St. Stephen's is our Fish Fry during Lent. Along with other ministries, we raise money for the parish to help with the purchase of equipment or support other ministries that need assistance.

DO YOU LOVE TO PLAY BINGO? Join us on the fourth Tuesday of every month in the Family Life Center 10136 St. Stephen Circle, Riverview. Doors Open at 5:30. Games begin at 6:30. Bingo proceeds provide support to many ministries that impact the community.

For more information about The Community for Women, email: [cfw@ststephencatholic.org](mailto:cfw@ststephencatholic.org).

## BSHS Invites Community to Holiday Under the Stars Concert on December 14

Get into the holiday spirit at Bloomingdale High School's free Holiday Under the Stars concert and festival Thursday, December 14! The Bloomingdale High School Music Department welcomes the community to attend their outdoor holiday concert at Bloomingdale's Charley Harris football stadium. Attendees will enjoy performances by the Bloomingdale choirs, bands, the Crimson Guard, and orchestras. The festive event will include a market for holiday shopping. Concert starts at 7 p.m. Admission is FREE. Attendees are encouraged to bring toys to donate to Toys for Tots.





## Bloomingtondale Special District Works Hard for Our Community

By Kristine Schroeder, BSD Community Relations

The community is all decked out for the holidays! Holiday banners are in place and festive poinsettias adorn some of the medians around Natures Way as well as some of our community neighborhood entrances. You will also notice a fresh coat of paint on sections of the perimeter walls, wood fences and the wrought iron benches.

A reminder to please call the office if you have any questions or concerns about creeping fig that needs trimming on the common side of the perimeter wall. Also, when pruning and trimming trees and bushes please pick up and properly dispose of any debris that falls over the perimeter wall into the common area.

The Bloomingtondale Special District currently has an open seat on the Board of Trustees. If you are interested in becoming a Trustee please come by the district offices at 3652 Erindale Drive and pick up a form of intent. The office is open 8am – Noon Monday through Thursday. You must be a resident and a registered voter. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm and we would love for you to join us.

Stay safe and have a happy, healthy holiday season.

**BLOOMINGDALE**  
SPECIAL DISTRICT

**813-684-6667**  
**bstd@verizon.net**



## Bloomingtondale During the Holidays



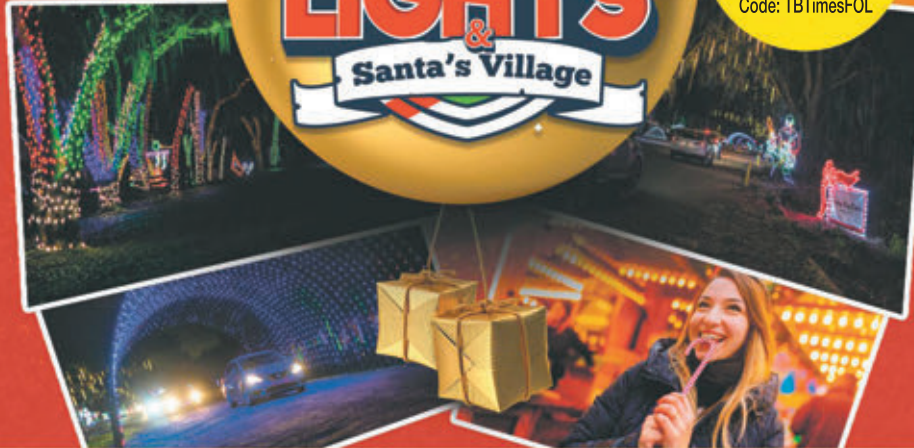
**NOVEMBER**  
**23** - **31**  
**DECEMBER**

Your Hometown  
Holiday Tradition



SAVE!  
**\$5**

Code: TBTimesFOL



**HILLSBOROUGHCOUNTYFAIR.COM**

## Great Gift Giveaway!!

# Happy Holidays



"All of us at Air Masters of Tampa Bay thank you for your business and wish you Happy Holidays!"

♥ WE SUPPORT LOCAL VETERANS, FAMILIES AND ANIMALS ♥

<b>NO PAYMENTS FOR 90 DAYS</b> 0% Interest Financing for 60 months (deferred)	<b>GET \$1000s OFF</b> a new A/C unit now PLUS up to \$2500 clunker trade-in.	<b>FOR AS LOW AS \$5995 OR \$19 A WEEK!</b> We will install a brand new A/C system with a 10-year warranty.
<b>BOGO!!</b> Buy a NEW A/C Unit Get a FREE duct cleaning! (with purchase of qualified units)	<b>WIN A 1K HOLIDAY SHOPPING SPREE!</b> With every A/C unit purchase, you will be entered to win a \$1000 VISA gift card! (Drawing on 12/15/23; Air Masters of TB employees & their families are not eligible for this promotion.)	<b>REFER A FRIEND = WE PAY YOU CASH!</b> Share the love! Please refer us! If we visit their home to discuss A/C systems, you get \$100. If they purchase any A/C system from us, you get a total of \$250. Referral offer expires 12/31/23

# Air Masters

of Tampa Bay, Inc. Since 1983  
Air Conditioning & Heating

## CALL TODAY! 813-964-7155

Family Owned & Operated since 1983 • 4th Largest Trane Dealer in Florida  
Home Advisors / Google Guaranteed Contractor / CMC 1249497

Hablamos español.



Offer expires 12/31/23.



\*0% Interest – Good or Bad Credit, 99% Approved Rate! Subject to credit approval & credit limit.



## Local Community Band to Perform Holiday Concerts

By Michelle Colesanti



Celebrate the season with the Eastern Hillsborough Community Band (EHCB), which will perform two holiday concerts in December. Everyone is welcome to come and listen to this band that has been entertaining the community since 2009.

The founder, Kim McKarney, began the band with 10 members rehearsing in a small Plant City church. He still plays trumpet with the band. Today, a larger rehearsal facility in Seffner accommodates the 80 members who enjoy performing throughout Tampa Bay.

The Band performs four concert series per year, including a spring concert, a patriotic concert, a fall Concert, and the upcoming Christmas holiday concerts, which will take place on December 7 and 14. The concerts are about one hour long and include band classics, pop songs, jazz standards, show tunes, and holiday-appropriate music.

J. Kevin Lewis and Tim Hoffman currently direct the band.

Lewis retired from the Hillsborough County School District after 37 years, spending 27 of those years as Band Director at Burns Middle School. He was selected twice as teacher of the year and his resume has many additional accolades earned throughout his career. He currently also serves as the Instrumental Music Director at First Baptist Church in Brandon, where he plays trombone in the orchestra.

According to Lewis, "Our members range from amateurs to seasoned professionals from a variety of backgrounds. They include music educators, business professionals, and retirees. Every member is a volunteer."

Hoffman came to Florida from Sylvania, Ohio, where he instructed instrumental music for 35 years; the last 23 as Director of Bands at Sylvania Southview High School.

The band is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation and is funded by generous donors as well as proceeds from the concerts. Membership is open to all residents of the Tampa Bay area. Past directors include Ken Watts, John Sinibaldi, and Shanna Holland.

EHCB also includes a separate Jazz Band under the direction of Jeff Brant that performs throughout the community.

The Christmas Holiday concerts will take place on Thursday, December 7 at 7 p.m. at New Hope Church, located at 213 N Knights Ave., in Brandon, and Thursday, December 14 at 7 p.m. at St. Stephen Catholic Church, located at 10118 St. Stephen Cir., in Riverview. Donations are accepted at the door.

If you can't attend, but would still like to donate, you can do so online at [www.ehcb.org](http://www.ehcb.org) and via mail to Eastern Hillsborough Community Band, P.O. Box 63, Valrico, FL 33595-0063.

The community is invited to attend the two holiday concerts to be performed by the EHCB on December 7 at New Hope Church and December 14 at St. Stephen Catholic Church.



## Palm Tree Santas Gather in Bloomingdale Before the Start of the Holiday Season

By Jane Owen

*Every Palm Tree Santa believes in the tradition of Santa Claus and the love of the season.*

'Tis the season for perfect beach weather, festive boat parades and decorated palm trees. While Florida are unique, most everyone agrees a visit from Santa is a highlight of the season.

On October 7, well before the season began, the Palm Tree Santas visited Bloomingdale restaurant was full of Christmas spirit and exclamations of "Ho, Ho, Ho!" Christmas tunes were playing, and a couple of Mr. and Mrs. Clauses danced to the festive music.

If you are looking to see Santa or hope he will make a special visit, the place to start your search is Palm Tree Santas. Palm Tree Santas is an organization of professional Santas and Mrs. Claus's who are all required to carry a professional entertainers liability Insurance, and maintain a membership in the International Brotherhood of Professional Santas (IBRBS).

Bob Elkin, known as 'Santa Bob,' is the President of the Palm Tree Santas. In 1993, Elkin first portrayed Santa at a preschool. He soon became passionate about sharing the traditions of Santa in a professional way. He started Palm Tree Santas in 2006. The organization was incorporated as a non-profit in 2007. "Hiring a member from our website means the client can rest assured they are hiring a professional, with a background check, liability insurance and a Santa who abides by a Code of Ethics," said Elkin.

The number of Santas in the organization varies from year to year but it is between 125 and 150 currently 26 Santas. On the Palm Tree Santa website, Santas can be located by county. Santa's can provide contact information. They can be emailed and, in many cases, called or texted. There is a place to hire a Santa from a Santa for a public event. In addition, there is a Santa coordinator who will send a card to the client.

It's been 30 years since Elkin portrayed Santa for the first time, and his passion for the role is still strong.

"Each time a child sees Santa they seem to light up. The love, the hope and the joy that it brings warms your heart. I am so very blessed to portray Santa Claus," Elkin said.

For more information about Palm Tree Santas, email Santa Bob at: [santa@santatb.com](mailto:santa@santatb.com). To



Groups from the Palm Tree Santas met for dinner in October at The Shrimp Boat in Bloomingdale.



While it is true that holiday traditions in

for dinner at The Shrimp Boat. The restaura-  
were played by Valrico trumpeter Chuck

search is with the Palm Tree Santas. Palm  
to submit an annual background check,  
International Brotherhood of Real Bearded

spread joy as a Santa at his granddaughter's  
way. Elkin has a Ph.D. in Santa Clausology.  
11.

trained professional with a background

and 150. In Hillsborough County, there are  
as are listed with a picture and biograph-  
e on each Santa's page to request a quote  
quote on whichever Santa is available.

e has grown every year.

shows in their eyes and in their smiles,

to find a Santa, visit: [palmtreesantas.com](http://palmtreesantas.com).



## Valrico's Chuck Weirich's *You Don't Know Me* Album is a Must Listen

By Jane Owen

On August 2nd, I took my teen daughter and five of her friends to Anna Maria Island for a before-school-starts-beach-day. While I was reluctant to be the adult-in-charge, I capsulized on the opportunity for a beach get-away. Late in the afternoon, I agreed to let the teens stay to see the sunset. Then, I decided I should grab some food. I made my way to the Anna Maria Island Beach Café. While in line to order, I enjoyed music from the band playing. In line waiting for my food, I started a conversation with someone I didn't know. It was an opportune meeting. I didn't know him, but I am so glad I met him. Chuck just happened to be the trumpet player in the band and just happened to be from Valrico. Happenstance.

Most Saturdays, Chuck Weirich plays trumpet at The Shrimp Boat in Bloomingdale. Shrimp Boat owner Albert "Al" Paone welcomed Chuck when they moved the restaurant to Bloomingdale in 2014.

"Chuck plays trumpet and his music comes through the PA system. People love him," Al said.

Chuck started playing trumpet 59 years ago when he was 8 years old after listening to his dad's Herb Albert albums. In 2011, he released the album, "You Don't Know Me."

Considering our meeting, I find my new favorite trumpet album, aptly titled. I asked Chuck about the title of the album, and he explained that the song has always been a favorite of his (the best-selling version is by Ray Charles, #2 on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1962) and that it's his wife of 41 years' (Rita's) favorite of the album.

He added, "No one really knows me, so the title fits for two reasons."

Chuck has had some brushes with fame – he ended up meeting his inspiration, Herb Albert, in 2012 and unexpectedly entertained music icons Rick Braun, Dave Koz, and Richard Elliot at a gig in Sarasota in 2021.

Hans Christian Andersen is quoted as saying, "Where words fail, music speaks." I don't know Chuck well, but I learned a lot from him while I listened to him play his trumpet. His music invokes passion and love.

"I am a local musician who loves to play and make people happy. I enjoy what I do," Chuck said.

Chuck plays for private events and assisted living facilities in the Tampa Bay area, including Twin Creeks Assisted Living and Memory Care in Riverview.

You can (and should!) stop by The Shrimp Boat to hear Chuck play this month. He'll be there December 9, 16, 23 and 30 from 6-9. Weather permitting, he will be at Anna Maria Beach Café on December 12.





# Local Ideas for Family Fun Over the Holiday Break

By Michelle Colesanti

*The holiday break is a great time to explore some local businesses offering family entertainment in a variety of ways.*



The holidays are a great time to create special memories with your family, and you don't have to travel far to find some fun and unique activities to do together. Here are some fun ideas within 20 to 30 minutes from the Bloomingdale area.

When was the last time you put on a pair of roller skates? Grab the kids and head to **Astro Skate**, located at 750 W. Robertson St. in Brandon. Visit <https://astro skatingcenter.com/brandon-florida/> for skate times and additional information.

If you prefer ice skating, there's no better way to cool off than heading to the **TGH Ice Plex**, located at 10222 Elizabeth Pl, Tampa. Visit [tghiceplex.com](http://tghiceplex.com) for public skate times.

**Brandon Crossroads Bowl (BCB)** is a 40-lane bowling alley at 609 Cater Ln. in Tampa, offering open bowling as well as parties and other fun events. Visit <https://brandoncrossroadsbowl.com/> for more info.

**Oakfield Lanes** at 1001 Oakfield Dr. also offers open bowling. Visit [www.oakfieldlanes.com](http://www.oakfieldlanes.com) for schedule.

**Urban Air Trampoline Adventure Park** at 179 E. Bloomingdale Avenue in Brandon offers thrilling attractions to challenge the body and mind of all ages. It's a safe place where your whole family can jump, soar, race, climb and play. Visit [www.urbanair.com](http://www.urbanair.com) for more information.

**Heroes Paradise** provides a wide assortment of entertainment ranging from fully immersive, outdoor Laser Tag, Archery Tag, an interactive free-climb Rock Wall as well as virtual reality experiences and remote-control car courses. It is located at 733 Knowles Rd. in Brandon. Visit [www.heroesparadise.com](http://www.heroesparadise.com) for more information.



You can exercise your brain during the holiday by visiting one of the local Escape Rooms. **Game Over Escape Rooms** has two locations nearby, 10266 Causeway Blvd. in Tampa and 2119 W. Brandon Blvd., Ste. D. Each Escape room has a choice of four different rooms where you can try to make your escape within 60 minutes. For more information on these locations, visit <https://tampa.escapegameover.us/>.

**Legends Escape Room** offers six unique rooms to choose from. Work together to complete your objective. You have 60 minutes to solve the challenge and escape. It is located at 952 W. Brandon Blvd. in Brandon. Visit [www.legendsestaperoom.com](http://www.legendsestaperoom.com).

If you need to release some stress during the holidays, you may want to visit **Bury the Hatchet** for urban axe throwing. It's perfect for friends and team building. The minimum age to throw is 14 years old. It is located at 939 Oakfield Dr. in Brandon. For more information, visit <https://burythehatchet.com/axe-throwing-tampa-fl/>.

**iSMASH**, located at 863 E. Bloomingdale Ave. in Brandon, also has Axe Throwing. The minimum age is 13 years old there. Other activities include iSmash Sessions (for ages 8 and up) and Splatter Paint Sessions (for ages 3 and up). A smash room (or rage room) is a controlled environment in which participants can safely break items for entertainment or stress relief. In the Splatter Paint Sessions, make a giant paint mess without having to clean it up. Visit <https://ismashusa.com/> for more information.



Everyone should be given the opportunity to spread their wings. If you've ever wanted to skydive, but are not quite ready to take the plunge, check out **iFLY** for an indoor experience giving you a similar sensation to taking flight in a plane. Flyers must be over 3 years old. Visit [www.iflyworld.com](http://www.iflyworld.com) for more information and to book your flight.

**We Rock the Spectrum** provides a place for children of all ability levels to play and grow together. The kid's gym offers uniquely designed sensory equipment that is specifically designed to aid children with sensory processing disorders. It is located at 1076 E. Brandon Blvd., Ste. 101 in Brandon. Visit [www.werockthespectrumtampa.com](http://www.werockthespectrumtampa.com) for more information.

## Cimino and Alafia Elementary Schools Celebrate Veterans Day

Cimino and Alafia Elementary were two of many schools across Hillsborough County that honored Veterans on November 9. Cimino's courtyard assembly began with students, staff and attendees clapping in a procession of veterans. Veterans were honored by speakers and the Cimino chorus. Alafia honored veterans in an assembly with speakers and music. The Alafia Drum Ensemble performed with the new Gator Chorus.



Sydney Stringfellow, Alafia 1st grader



Alafia Drum Ensemble



Reese Stringfellow, Alafia 5th grader with her grandfather, Robert Stringfellow, Veteran (retired Marine)



# Bloomington Youth Sports Association Players Compete During the World Series

By Jane Owen

In July, the Bloomington Youth Sports Association (BYSA) held their first ever Major League Baseball Pitch Hit & Run event. Major League Baseball Pitch Hit & Run (PHR) is a free event that provides boys and girls an opportunity to showcase their baseball and softball skills, while competing for a chance to attend the national finals at the Major League Baseball World Series.

Two of Bloomington's PHR winners, Madison Ooley and Christian Gaines, made it to the PHR National Finals that took place on Sunday, October 29th.

Madison (age 8) won the 7/8 Softball Division team finals for the Miami Marlins on August 26. Christian (age 12) won the 11/12 Baseball Division team finals on October 2 for the Tampa Bay Rays. They both earned an all-expense paid trip to nationals in Texas for themselves and one guardian.

Christian won the 11/12 Division PHR National Finals. He competed against players from Canada, Puerto Rico, Arizona, and Texas.

"I loved being able to compete against players throughout North America. I learned the importance of putting in hard work. I practiced for many hours to increase my chances of winning," Christian said.

Madison said what she learned from the PHR program is the importance of working towards goals.

"I learned that I should always be confident in myself and work hard for something I really want," Madison said.

The PHR program created a memorable experience for each child at nationals. In addition to getting to compete at the national stage level, the trip included video interviews, photographers, unlimited arcade time and tickets to attend game two of the World Series.

"The best part was all of the fun events they had planned for us and that we got treated like celebrity athletes," Madison said.

BYSA President David Nolte is excited about the PHR event and success from Bloomington.

"BYSA is extremely proud of both Christian and Madison and very excited for their success! Two players who both played at Bloomington and also qualified for the MLB Pitch, Hit & Run event at our park," Nolte said. "BYSA is also excited to be hosting the MLB Pitch, Hit & Run event again in 2024. We would love to see future players emulate the success Madison and Christian achieved this year."

For more information, visit: <https://www.bysafl.com>



Christian Gaines (12) and Madison Ooley (8) at the MLB Pitch, Hit & Run National Finals during the 2023 World Series

## THE AWARD-WINNING BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

### YOU CAN ADVERTISE IN THE GAZETTE!

Delivered monthly to over 5,200 homes reaching 23,000 residents. Distribution points include the Bloomington Library, Campo YMCA and our local schools.

**Contact: JESSICA PETROSKI**  
**[jpetroski@tampabay.com](mailto:jpetroski@tampabay.com)**  
**(813) 731-8021**

**Tampa Bay Times**  
tampabay.com



**MILITARY  
FAMILY  
SUPPORT**

### MFS SCHOLARSHIPS NOW OPEN

WHO CAN APPLY?

A FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR WITH A PARENT OR GRANDPARENT, WHO IS CLASSIFIED AS RETIRED, VETERAN, ACTIVE DUTY, NATIONAL GUARD, AND RESERVE OFFICER, OR A FORMER OFFICER OF THE US ARMY, NA VY, MARINE CORPS, AIR FORCE, COAST GUARD, PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, AND MEETS THE RANK REQUIREMENTS.

\*CADETS IN FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOL JROTC PROGRAMS PARTICIPATING FOR A MINIMUM OF 3 YEARS\*



SCAN TO GO DIRECTLY TO THE MFS WEBSITE.

**MILITARY FAMILY SUPPORT  
CALL OUR OFFICE  
813-634-4675**

**Must be received post  
marked Feb. 1, 2024**

**Florida  
Veteran, Active  
Duty Families  
or  
FL JROTC  
Students**

0000317273-01



# Ring in 2024 with Spectacular New Year's Eve Events Across the Tampa Bay Area

By Amanda Ragan

As the year draws to a close, the Tampa Bay area is gearing up for a night of glitz, glamour, and celebrations to welcome 2024. From family-friendly festivities to lively parties, there's something for everyone. Here's a glimpse of the exciting New Year's Eve events happening across the bay:

## Downtown Tampa's Fireworks Extravaganza: Midnight

The iconic waterfront of Downtown Tampa will be illuminated with a breathtaking fireworks display at the stroke of midnight. Join the crowds along the Riverwalk for a front-row seat to the spectacular show, with the city skyline as a stunning backdrop.

**FREE**

## First Night St. Petersburg: 4PM - 8PM

St. Pete's family-friendly First Night celebration promises an evening of art, music, and festivities. With live performances, interactive art installations, and a bubble stomp, it's a fantastic way for families to welcome the New Year together. The event will be held at North Straub Park in Downtown St. Petersburg.

**FREE**

<https://firstnightstpete.com/event-info/>

## Yacht StarShip New Year's Eve Cruises: 10PM - 1:00 AM

Set sail into 2024 on the luxurious Yacht StarShip. Offering adult only dinner cruises with gourmet meals, live entertainment, and a front-row view of the Tampa fireworks, it's an elegant way to bid farewell to 2023 while enjoying the stunning views of the .

Tickets starts at \$149.95

<https://yachtstarship.com/event/tampa-new-years-eve-cruises/>

## Armature Works Noon Year's Eve: 11AM - 1PM

Who says the little ones have to miss out on the New Year's excitement just because bedtime is before midnight? Bring the entire family out for the annual Noon Year's Eve event, a morning celebration tailor-made for the youngest members of

the community. With a vibrant countdown to noon, a daytime smoke fireworks display, bounce houses, and engaging kid-friendly performances on the riverfront stage, it's a joyous way for families to ring in the New Year together.

**FREE**

<https://armatureworks.com/event/noon-years-eve-2/>

## New Year's Eve with Donna the Buffalo at Skipper's Smokehouse: 8PM

Jam out with the honky tonk band Donna and the Buffalo at Skipper's iconic outdoor music venue. Admission includes "party favors, a breakfast buffet, and a champagne toast at midnight!"

Tickets are \$40 - \$45

<https://skipperssmokehouse.com/event/new-years-eve-w-donna-the-buffalo-8pm-40-45-2/>

## Jackson's Bubbles and Bow Ties New Year's Eve Ball: 8PM - 2 AM

For those seeking an adult only, upscale affair, Jackson's Bistro will be hosting a New Year's Eve Ball. This black-tie affair promises an unforgettable night of elegance and celebration.

Tickets start at \$75

<https://www.jacksonsbistro.com/new-years-eve-2024/>

## Swingin' The New Year at the St. Pete Coliseum: 7PM - 1AM

The 14th Annual Swingin' in the New Year will feature live music with the famous Mitch Woods and his Rocket 88's. So put on your dancing shoes and twirl into the New Year under a 2000 balloon drop.

Tickets are \$50

<https://newyearswing.com/>

As the countdown to 2024 begins, the Tampa Bay Area is ready to bid adieu to the old and welcome the new with open arms. Whether you choose to dance the night away, enjoy a family-friendly event, or savor a gourmet meal on the water, the bay area has something special in store for everyone this New Year's Eve. Wishing you a joyful and prosperous 2024!

# Bloomington Resident Returns as Teacher and Head Coach

By Jane Owen

Bloomington resident Chandler Elsner graduated in 2017 as part of Bell Creek Academy's first graduating class. Bell Creek Academy (BCA) is a charter school in Valrico that is recognized for its high standards for academic achievement. BCA has an innovative academic environment that includes being part of the Cambridge program. By design, BCA provides teaching techniques to meet individual needs of students. The focused attention Elsner received in high school gave him the skills to follow his passions. He graduated from Florida College with a Bachelor of Arts in History in 2022. That same year, Elsner returned to the school as the first alum to be on staff as a teacher. This year, Elsner took the helm as the school's head boys' basketball coach, taking over a program that won its first 3A District 7 championship in 2022.

The principal of Bell Creek Academy, Dr. Margaret Fahringer, says the milestone is both sentimental and profound. Elsner's academic success plays out first-hand on campus and is as an asset to the school.

"The great thing is, Chandler came through in our atmosphere of high expectations. We work very hard with our expectations. He was raised with it," Fahringer said. "He is one of our youngest teachers and he has a very good rapport with the students. They respect him."

Fahringer says Elsner's roles as both coach and teacher enable him to teach dedication to goals. BCA Head Girls Basketball coach Charles Leadingham witnesses Elsner's success on the court and in the classroom next to his. He says Elsner's leadership skills are evident in the way he dedicates himself to his students and players.



"Coach Elsner genuinely cares. He is organized and knows how to make learning enjoyable for the students. I know there's an added layer of pressure when one returns to their alma mater to teach or coach, and Coach Elsner is doing both well," Leadingham said.

Elsner's decision to teach evolved in college while pursuing a history degree. Inspired by his aunt, teacher Deanna Ingram, he decided to apply his love of history in the classroom.

"I found in studying history, there are no shortcuts. You have to take time to process the information you are given," Elsner said. "That has made its way into coaching basketball and my classroom. I adapt the lessons from the past."

Elsner's past at BCA includes being a student and basketball guard. From basketball to the classroom, he embodies the academic rigor of the school and the passion he learned from his favorite coach.

"The one coach I pull from the most is my dad. I pull motivation from him and getting kids to not only believe in you as coach but believe in themselves," Elsner said.

Elsner is the first alum to return to the school as a teacher and head coach. His legacy will be his passion to work to the betterment of whoever is in front of him.

Bell Creek Academy anticipates a great first year with Elsner as head basketball coach. Elsner will lead the team passionately to honor former player Elijah Payne:

"The Bell Creek Panthers are dedicating this season to our teammate, friend, and leader, Elijah Payne. Elijah will be greatly missed. BCA plays for 33 this year!"





# Five Bloomingdale Athletes Sign on National Signing Day

By Nick Nahas

Bloomingdale High School's gym was crowded with anticipation on November 8, National Signing Day, as five athletes signed on the dotted line, taking the next step toward their futures.

The signees included: Pierce Collins (baseball), Cooper Hinson (baseball), Johnny De La Rosa (baseball), Madison Sofarelli (volleyball), and Josiah Davilla-Richardson (soccer).

Pierce Collins signed to play baseball with Drury University in Springfield, Missouri. The third baseman said that the school was the right fit for him because it had his computer science program and he has a good chance to play on the baseball team as a freshman right away.

"I loved the surrounding of the school. It was really beautiful," said Collins. "It's super exciting, I am really grateful for all the people that have helped me along the way."

Baseball outfielder Cooper Hinson signed with Marshall University and will get the chance to play immediately for his team. He wants to help his team win and build a successful program at his school. He will major in political science.

"It's a dream come true," said Hinson. "It's everything I've ever dreamed of. It's really surreal today to finally get this opportunity."

Johnny De La Rosa will be attending and playing baseball at Saint Leo University. The pitcher/outfielder said that the opportunity to play for the school was an unexpected surprise and is thrilled to continue his baseball career. He is currently undecided on his major.

"This celebration is a new chapter in my life, a new beginning," said De La Rosa. "I get to see what God has in store for me and what baseball will do for me in the future. If baseball doesn't work out, I'll always have an education. I want to work hard for every opportunity I get."

Volleyball star Madison Sofarelli signed with Division II perennial power University of Tampa. The middle blocker said that she wanted to go to UT since she was 12 years old, and has been going to camps there for that long. Sofarelli led the Bloomingdale volleyball team to a state semifinal appearance this season. She wants to major in either exercise science or physical therapy.

"I love the community, the coach, all the girls," said Sofarelli. "I actually had a tryout when I went there for a visit. That all led to my decision."

Josiah Davilla-Richardson will play soccer for Wake Forest University. The striker said that Wake Forest was always his favorite of the five schools that were pursuing him. He likes the style of play and the culture of the program. He will major in either sports medicine or business. The soccer star has high hopes of making it past college and into the pros.

"I went on a visit and as soon as I left the school, I made up my mind," said Davilla-Richardson. "I had the best time of my life, and that's when I knew I wanted to go there. I didn't wanna go anywhere else."

Congratulations from The Gazette and Bloomingdale Community!

From Left to Right: Johnny De La Rosa, Pierce Collins, Cooper Hinson, Josiah Davilla-Richardson, and Madison Sofarelli





## BSHS Rajun' Bull Band Rated Superior at Marching Band Performance Assessment

Under the new leadership of Band Director Jordan Frazee, the Bloomingdale Band earned an "Overall Superior" rating at the annual Florida Bandmasters Association Music Performance Assessment on October 28. The band has earned the rating each year since 1987.

## BSHS Chorus Members Qualify for All-State

Congratulations to BSHS Chorus members for making All-State!

Luciana Granados  
Angelina Lekov  
Anjali Pathania

CONGRATULATIONS  
ON MAKING ALL-  
STATE!

SSAA  
Luciana Granados  
Angelina Lekov  
Anjali Pathania

## BSHS Swimmers Compete at States

Madison McKendree and Keely Finan competed at the Swimming and Diving State Championships in Ocala on November 10th. Madi came in 14th in the state in the 100 Back, with a 59.31, and 17th in the state in the 200 IM.

"Madi is a fierce and incredibly talented swimmer. Her whole team couldn't be prouder of her."

*BSHS Coach Autumn Shoun*



Keely Finan came in 14th in the state for Diving.

"Keely's state finish is remarkable. She started diving just under 6 months ago. This is just the beginning for Keely. She is going to do big things in diving over the next few years,"

*BSHS Coach Autumn Shoun*



**Congratulations  
Madi and  
Keely!**

## BSHS Cross Country Runner Competes at States

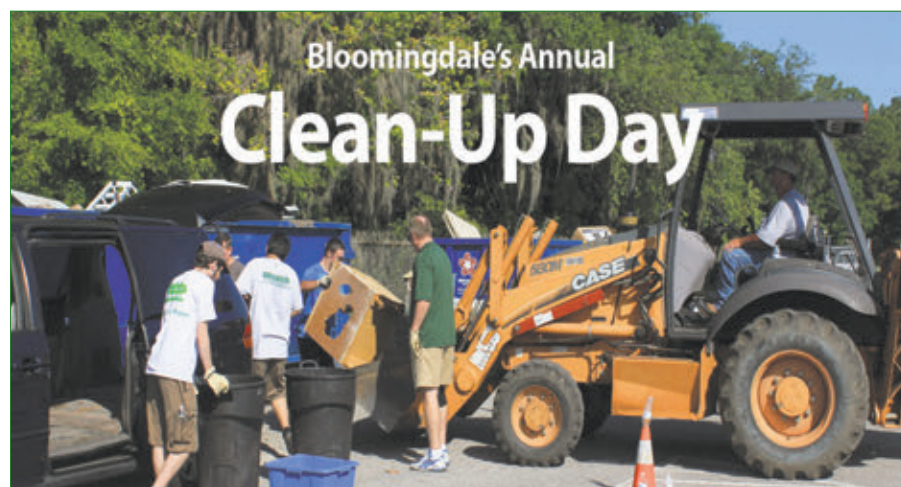


On November 17, BSHS Junior Brandon Witherow finished 19 out of 239 runners with a time of 16:03.50 at the 2023 Florida High School Cross Country State Championships at Apalachee Regional Park in Tallahassee.

**Congratulations Brandon!**

"I am so proud of the season Brandon has had, culminating at the State meet. His passion for the sport and drive to compete are second to none. I look forward to seeing what he can accomplish on the track!"

*BSHS XC Coach Beery*



**Saturday, February 3, 2024**

**9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (or until bins are full)**

**Hillsborough County Parks Maintenance Facility**

1629 Natures Way (behind Alafia Elementary School)

Commercial dumpsters • Shredding • Electronic recycling

Donation to a local charity



[www.BloomingtonLife.com](http://www.BloomingtonLife.com), [Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com)



# Hillsborough County School Board Approves BSHS Sutherland Hall for Performing Arts

By Jane Owen

On Tuesday, November 14, the Hillsborough County School Board unanimously approved the naming of Bloomingdale High School's auditorium to the "Sutherland Hall for Performing Arts" in memoriam of Beverly 'Bev' Sutherland.

Bev Sutherland was a teacher of music education in Hillsborough County for almost 40 years. She made Bloomingdale her home, serving at Bloomingdale for 20 of those years in various roles in the music department including choir director, assistant band director, orchestra teacher, and Crimson Guard flag corps assistant.

Principal Dr. Rodriguez requested the naming of the auditorium. He shared that the four best words to describe Bev are: motivation, dedication, love and inspiration.

"She truly was an inspiration, so much so that we had over 1600 signatures on our petition within the first 48 hours," Rodriguez said. "As the choir director, Bev's programs at Bloomingdale were massive and second to none. She taught with 'tough love,' and her personality and dedication to music education was infectious to anyone that she encountered."

Jon Sever, Supervisor of Secondary Music for Hillsborough County and former Bloomingdale High School Director of Bands, thanked the board for their support.

"Bev was a fantastic musician. She was a clarinet major but she ended up being one of the most amazing choral people

I have ever met. And she cared about the entire student and their well-being, well beyond the walls of our music department," Sever said.

Andrea Lange, Bloomingdale High Schools' Fine Arts Department Head, and School Board Member Patti Rendon also spoke at the meeting about the impact Sutherland had.

Sue Burkett, Hillsborough County Chief of Schools, first met Bev when she was the Assistant Principal of Curriculum at Bloomingdale High School. Burkett took a position at another school and then returned to Bloomingdale as Principal while Sutherland was there.

"Every student, every parent, every colleague became better just by our interactions with Bev Sutherland. She taught me how to be a better principal and I am confident everyone who knew Bev became better somehow, somehow by their mere relationship with her. To say she left her mark on our community, our children and our school is an understatement. There is no better way, no better space to honor the service, dedication and impact of Bev than to memorialize her at the Bloomingdale High School Sutherland Hall for the Performing Arts!" Burkett said.

Upgrades are underway at Bloomingdale's auditorium. Once they are completed (projected summer of 2024), a formal dedication and ribbon cutting for Sutherland Hall for the Performing Arts will take place in the Fall.



Supporters of the naming of BSHS's Sutherland Hall for the Performing Arts after the Hillsborough County School Board vote on November 14.

From Left to Right: Tracy Lisi/Elementary Music Supervisor, Andrea Lange/BSHS Fine Arts Department Head, Sue Burkett/Chief of Schools, Jordan Frazee/BSHS Director of Bands, Jon Sever/Secondary Music Supervisor, Sara Mirabal/Director of Orchestras, James & Kelly Jackson/Bev's daughter and her husband, Marcos Rodriguez/Principal BSHS, Susan Maley/BSHS Parent volunteer, Coleen Petree/Principal Secretary and previous Crimson Guard Sponsor, William "Billy" Sullivan/Counselor at Plant HS was our Crimson Guard Director, Wendy Denny/Retired, previous Crimson Guard sponsor and ELA teacher at BSHS.

# Great American Teach-In: November 16

Hillsborough County schools participated in the Great American Teach-In on Thursday, November 16. Local businesses and entrepreneurs shared their careers, life experiences, and hobbies with students.



Photos Courtesy: Tampa Electric and Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office



# TIS THE SEASON

BLOOMINGDALE LISTINGS AVAILABLE NOW



1123 GEORGIA TRACE



4405 BLANTYRE PL



4609 ACKERLY WAY

IF SANTA DOESN'T BRING YOU YOUR NEW HOME THIS CHRISTMAS  
SEASON CALL THE BRENDA WADE TEAM.  
YOUR #1 NEIGHBORHOOD TEAM!

# \$175

MILLION SOLD IN 2023  
BY THE BRENDA WADE TEAM



813-655-5333

1709 Bloomingdale Ave

Brenda@BrendaWade.com | www.BrendaWade.com



0000312174-01