

School News

HAPPENINGS FROM OUR CLAY COUNTY SCHOOLS

September 2017

Vol. 6 — Issue 1

Teachers learn hands-only CPR

MIDDLEBURG – The first wave of Clay County School District teachers to receive Hands-Only cardiopulmonary resuscitation training is complete.

Teachers recently took part in a one-day CPR training session at Middleburg High with officials from the American Heart Association. Hands-Only CPR works to save lives without using mouth-to-mouth breaths. It is recommended for use by people who see an adult suddenly collapse in an “out-of-hospital” setting. Hands-Only CPR performed by a bystander has been shown to be as effective as conventional CPR – which uses breathing – in the first few minutes of an out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest.

The training comes on the heels of a unanimous vote by the Clay County School Board to require students to receive CPR training before they graduate. The goal is to develop future generations of lifesavers.

The Heart Association has been working with the school district to make this training sustainable and has been pushing for statewide legislation mandating the training since 2011. Florida was the first state to introduce statewide CPR in Schools legislation, which has been adopted by 37 other states in the nation, including all Southern states, except Florida.

Several months ago, Nassau County and



PHOTO BY PROVIDED BY CLAY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Teachers and coaches recently took part in Hands-Only CPR training held at Middleburg High with officials from the American Heart Association. The training comes on the heels of the Clay County School Board approving a policy requiring students to have CPR training before they graduate from high school.

Duval became the fourth and fifth counties in Florida to make CPR training in schools a sustainable policy.

In just one hour of a student’s four-year high school career, this CPR training can provide the skills needed to help save lives, and it requires no certification. Seventy percent of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen in homes. So, the

odds are high that if students are called on to act, they’ll be saving the life of a loved one.

“For the Clay County School District to be the seventh district in Florida to require Hands-Only CPR demonstrates our commitment to the safety and well-being of not only our students and staff, but our citizens. We believe this skill can potentially save lives in unexpected scenari-

os. Our high school physical education teachers stand prepared to provide insight and knowledge into live-saving training,” said Superintendent Addison Davis.

Only 46 percent of people who experience out-of-hospital cardiac arrest get the immediate

SEE CPR, 6

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Sarah Lawson, Principal
(904) 529-2126

Clay Hill Elementary
Adele Reed, Principal
(904) 289-7193

CopperGate Elementary
Amy Dyal, Principal
(904) 291-5598

Doctors Inlet Elementary
Thomas Gerds, Principal
(904) 213-3000

Fleming Island Elementary
Jennifer Collins, Principal
(904) 278-2020

Grove Park Elementary
Scott Voytko Principal
(904) 278-2010

Keystone Heights Elementary
Melanie Sanders, Principal
(352) 473-4844

Lake Asbury Elementary
Tiffany Outman, Principal
(904) 291-5440

Lakeside Elementary
Jeff Schriver, Principal
(904) 213-2966

McRae Elementary
Tammy Winkler, Principal
(352) 473-5686

Middleburg Elementary
Becky Wilkerson, Principal
(904) 291-5485

Montclair Elementary
Bill Miller, Principal
(904) 278-2030

Oakleaf Village Elementary
Tracey Kendrick, Principal
(904) 291-5458

Orange Park Elementary
Carole McCullough, Principal
(904) 278-2040

Plantation Oaks Elementary
Jennifer Roach, Principal
(904) 214-7478

R.M. Paterson Elementary
John O'Brian, Principal
(904) 278-2078

Ride Out Elementary
Kimberly Marks, Principal
(904) 291-5430

Ridgeview Elementary
Tracy McLaughlin, Principal
(904) 213-2952

S. Bryan Jennings Elementary
Elise Love, Principal
(904) 213-3021

Shadowlawn Elementary
Nancy Crowder, Principal
(904) 529-1007

Swimming Pen Creek Elementary
Rodney Ivey, Principal
(904) 278-5707

Thunderbolt Elementary
Lacy Healy, Principal
(904) 278-5630

Tynes Elementary
Laura Fogarty, Principal
(904) 291-5400

W.E. Cherry Elementary
Angie Whiddon, Principal
(904) 278-2050

Wilkinson Elementary
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(904) 291-5420

JUNIOR HIGH

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Jen Halter, Principal
(904) 529-2140

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Becky Murphy, Principal
(904) 291-5582

Lakeside Junior High
Mallory McConnell, Principal
(904) 213-2980

Oakleaf Junior High
Kristin Rousseau, Principal
(904) 213-5500

Orange Park Junior High
Al De Jesus, Principal
(904) 278-2000

Wilkinson Junior High
Christina Cornwell, Principal
(904) 291-5500

HIGH SCHOOL

R.C. Bannerman Learning Center
Mike Elia, Principal
(904) 529-2100

Clay High
Cary Dicks, Principal
(904) 529-3000

Fleming Island High
Thomas Pittman, Principal
(904) 541-2100

Keystone Heights High
Aaron McWilliams, Principal
(352) 473-2761

Middleburg High
Roger Dailey, Principal
(904) 213-2100

Oakleaf High
Treasure Pickett, Principal
(904) 213-1900

Orange Park High
Clayton Anderson, Principal
(904) 272-8110

Ridgeview High
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Clay Virtual Academy
Lana Racine-Haffner, Principal
(904) 336-9875

Adult and Community Education
Shannah Kosek, Supervisor
(904) 336-4450



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CLAY COUNTY FARM BUREAU

From left event judge Tom Hackney, Clay County Farm Bureau volunteer event organizer Ashlee Hughes, Karlibeth Leitheiser, Brooklyn Hall, Bailey Davis, event judge Susan Hendry and event judge Rev. Bobby Lewis of First Baptist Church Middleburg.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CLAY COUNTY FARM BUREAU

Back row, from left, event judge Tom Hackney, Clay County Farm Bureau volunteer event organizer Ashlee Hughes, event judge Susan Hendry and event judge Rev. Bobby Lewis of First Baptist Church Middleburg. Front row from left, Jackson Murphy, Hunter Russell and Hailey Huskey.

Hall to represent Clay in state contest

MIDDLEBURG – A senior from Oakleaf High will represent Clay County in the Florida Farm Bureau District Speech Contest after winning first place in the county-level competition.

Bailey Davis won first place in the senior division for her speech that was based on the prompt, "Today's food companies employ many tactics including food labels to gain a market-

ing edge. How can farmers and ranchers ensure that consumers understand these labels and have confidence in the safety and quality of their food?"

Clay County Farm Bureau made the announcement on Aug. 30 for the annual contest,

SEE CONTEST, 3

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McDonald's to award teachers with \$1,000 for supplies

JACKSONVILLE – McDonald's of Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia are hosting the Classroom FUNds Contest to celebrate the back-to-school season and reward three local teachers.

The contest is open to teachers who demonstrate exceptional efforts in furthering students' education started Aug. 15 and runs through Sept. 22. The contest is open to teachers to kindergarten through 12th grade teachers in an 18-county area in northeast Florida and southeast Georgia.

Winning teachers will receive \$1,000 each for classroom supplies.

"We are very excited to host this Classroom FUNds Contest as a way to highlight our extraordinary teachers and the impact they make on children's education," said Mike Potapow, local McDonald's owner/operator. "We understand sometimes educators might invest their own dollars for school supplies for the programs they believe in. This contest is a way to help support classrooms with the funds they need, as well as recognize the significant work these exceptional teachers do every day in our schools."

Eligible teachers are invited to enter the contest by submitting a video, letter, art project, etc. to highlight how they are making

an educational impact and what they would do with the \$1,000 prize. All submissions can be emailed to McDcontest@daltonagency.com and are due by Sept. 22.

A panel of judges will review the contest submissions, and the three winners will be selected based on their creativity and how the teacher is making a difference in their classroom.

McDonald's of Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia Classroom FUNds Contest includes Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Camden, Charlton, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Gilchrist, Glynn, Levy, Nassau, Pierce, Putnam, St. Johns, Suwannee and Ware counties.

No purchase is necessary and entry is free, but submissions must be from a licensed teacher for grades kindergarten through 12th grade in one of the 18 counties listed above.



Contest from page 2

which is open to all Clay County students. Undisclosed cash prizes are awarded for both junior and senior divisions.

"The effort that these students put into writing and delivering their speeches was evident to all who attended to watch the presentations," Clay County Farm Bureau officials stated.

Brooklyn Hall, a member of the Clay High FFA Chapter, took second place, while Karlibeth Leitheiser of the Keystone Heights High FFA Chapter took third. Both students delivered very well thought out speeches, according to a press release.

The year's prompt for the juniors was, "Why do many Americans believe that chocolate milk

comes from brown cows? How can we help to debunk this myth, and many others about agriculture?"

Clay County's first place winner in the junior division was Jackson Murphy, a Clay County junior high student. Murphy captivated the audience with his broad knowledge of the topic and his delightful humor. Hunter Russell and Hailey Huskey, both elementary school students took second and third place, respectively.

"It was a pleasure to watch both of these young people gives such honest and insightful facts on the topic at hand," stated the press release. "Clay County Farm Bureau would like to thank all of the participants for their hard work. Public speaking is a challenge for many, and these youth have all exemplified themselves with their great effort."

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A storm of social media

Students go viral after lowering flag in storm

By Jesse Hollett
School News

MIDDLEBURG – Two weeks of non-stop fame for two Coppergate Elementary sixth graders has begun to taper off.

Isaac Davis and Nate Helmuth – who braved a rainstorm to lower and fold the United States flag – gained national media attention for their honorable treatment of Old Glory. Jennifer Moore teacher and school social media manager said the fading attention is bittersweet.

Bitter, mainly because for two weeks she has oscillated constantly from teacher and social media manager, and sweet, because Davis and Helmuth's patriotic gesture that reached more than 118,000 people around the world.

Moore said the gesture has given many a respite from the constant barrage of bad news, if only for a moment.

"How many people it touched how many people it affected, how many people saw it – that's what surprised me a lot. People all the way in England saw this," said Helmuth, 11. "People all across the country saw this."

The notoriety began on Sunday, August 20 when Moore posted a picture of the two safety patrollers lowering and folding flag that was snapped by fellow teacher Kim Miskowski on Thursday, August 17.

Once it soared through the web of social media, the photo quickly became a viral sensation, and come Wednesday, August 23, Moore was receiving media requests from across the country.

"Everywhere I turned around I was getting a request from a news organization. I was like, what? I'm just a teacher," Moore said. "And the comments are still coming in, they're still commenting. They've come from all over the world."

The children have received accolades, including "Good Citizenship" awards from the American Security Council Foundation, and will attend Florida Gov. Rick Scott's next cabinet meeting to recite the

Pledge of Allegiance after a recent invitation.

Davis is dumbfounded at the attention the gesture has received and said, rain or shine, they will continue to lower and fold the flag.

"We do it every day," Davis said. "We put it up in the morning and in the afternoon, we take it down. We just do it every day."

Two Coppergate Elementary teachers taught the children the proper method of folding the flag with 13 folds.

Helmuth said one man contacted his mother after seeing the photographs online and donated \$150 in his name to a local charity.

As far as precedence, Moore, who has taught at Coppergate since the school opened, and said nothing the school has ever posted on social media has come close to reaching as many people as the flag folding did.

A close second, she said, occurred last year when two students submitted a video to the Jim Harbin Student Media Festival that honored Clay County's first black teacher.

Even then, Moore said, that post only reached a fraction of the views Helmuth and Davis' actions attracted.

"It's good for the world, the nation, at this time to see something so heartwarming and positive," Moore said. "I wish that would carry on. Selfishly, I wish I didn't need to respond to messages every 5 minutes. But, you know, it's worth it. I don't mind them blowing up my phone."

"In this time where there are so many divisions and separations in our country, it would be good just for our school community, let alone the world, for people to see this," Moore said.

Coppergate Elementary has a history of honoring American traditions and veterans. In 2015, the school created a 'Wall of Heroes' with help from students and the school's military life counselor to honor military families and veterans.

Both Helmuth and Davis hope to attend the University of Florida for engineering and use their knowledge to help others – or play in the National



PHOTO BY JESSE HOLLETT

From left, Nate Helmuth and Isaac Davis, both 11, stand at the same pole they folded the United States flag at during an Aug. 17 rainstorm at Coppergate Elementary.

Football League, whichever comes first.

"They haven't been different kids since this hap-

pened," Moore said. "They're the same kids today that they were the day they took that flag down."

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AT&T awards \$40,000 to help launch STEM programs

JACKSONVILLE – AT&T and the AT&T Foundation recently awarded \$40,000 to the Northeast Florida Regional STEM 2 Hub to implement three programs over the next school year in Nassau, Duval, Clay, St. Johns, Baker, Putnam and Flagler counties.

Two of the programs, a STEM Bicycle Club and a 3D Printing Club, are being modeled after a successful program implemented by the Greater Cincinnati STEM initiative. The staff of the Northeast Florida Regional STEM 2 Hub learned about these programs through their affiliation with the STEM Learning Ecosystem Initiative, a national community led by the STEM Funders Network and supported by the Teaching Institute for Excellence in STEM.

"We are committed to full participation in our national community of practice and to bringing the best ideas to Jacksonville so that we can positively impact economic development by seeding a robust STEM-ready pipeline," said Kathleen Schofield, program director.

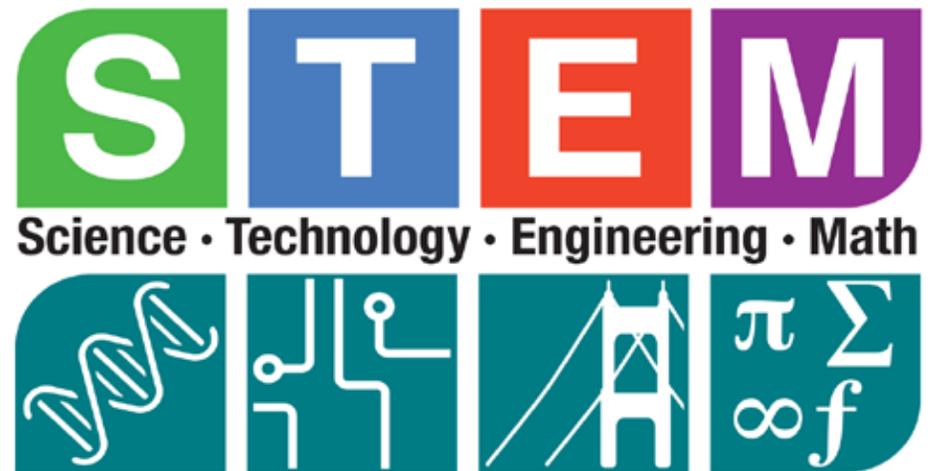
In both programs, STEM skills and the engineering design process are modeled through project-based learning experiences where students break down and reassemble a bicycle, solving problems and discovering math and science principles at work. The 3D printing club provides students with the opportunity to explore the future through innovative technologies that are revolutionizing the

world we live in. Students will conceive, design, and create solutions using 3D printing.

The third program to be implemented is called the Web Design Krewe. This innovative, new program has been developed in collaboration with JHANA, a Jacksonville-based firm committed to advancing business strategy through digital transformation and advanced analytics. The Web Krewes will learn the full realization cycle associated with meeting a business need with emphasis on website development, will design and launch a website for an ultra-small business or nonprofit, and will participate in robust competitions. The program has the potential to scale nationally, building a talent pipeline to meet critical needs in the areas of communication, coding, and website development.

"The Northeast Florida Regional STEM 2 Hub was established to convene, inspire, and invest in the STEM 2 field by providing the critical missing elements to accelerate the growth of STEM 2 education and careers, and this generous support from AT&T will launch three new programs in our area," according to Robert Copeland, Executive Director. He continued, "we are thrilled to have the opportunity to work with AT&T, and to support them in their national commitment to STEM education."

AT&T's giving has demonstrated their ongoing commitment to STEM education and



the STEM field. AT&T has developed many programs and partnerships that are focused on increasing the number of STEM-ready high school graduates in the pipeline. Through these efforts with the Northeast Florida Regional STEM 2 Hub, AT&T continues its long tradition of inspiring and empowering young people to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Since 1995, AT&T and the AT&T Foundation have

given nearly \$87 million to support STEM initiatives supporting a wide range of programs including robotics, STEM summer camps and technology initiatives. AT&T is committed to assuring that all youth, especially those seen as at-risk youth are given every opportunity to engage with the technology-rich world of the future. AT&T is committed to systematic improvement in K-12 education, and to helping educators blaze an innovative trail leading to a robust pipeline of STEM-ready high school graduates.

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VFW awards nearly \$500,000 in Veteran Scholarships

More than 100 student veterans to receive scholarships this fall

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., America's largest and oldest major combat veterans' organization, is proud to announce 107 student veterans have been named recipients of a VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" for the 2017 fall semester.

During its eighth-straight award period, the scholarship program will distribute nearly half a million dollars in financial assistance in the upcoming fall semester to service members and veterans working toward their education goals in colleges or trade schools worldwide.

To date, more than 800 service members and veterans have received post-secondary scholarships totaling more than \$3 million.

"I believe that veterans should pursue careers in education, because our experiences are so unique. We should have a bigger impact on today's future leaders," said scholarship recipient Stephen Gerard. "With your help, some of my financial burden will be lifted, and I can continue to push forward in my pursuit of a career that I truly believe I am connected to."

Teaming up with Sport Clips Haircuts, the Help A Hero scholarship program was created in January 2014 to help ease the burden of student loans as student veterans work to achieve their educational

goals, and take the next steps to starting their careers in the civilian workforce. Each semester, service members and veterans can apply for scholarships of up to \$5,000.

"The hard-earned benefits service members and veterans receive don't always cover everything they need to succeed," said VFW National Commander Keith Harman. "We're so pleased to work together with Sport Clips' owners, stylists, professional partners and loyal customers to help ensure successful future careers for the men and women of our armed forces who have sacrificed so much for us already."

The Help A Hero scholarship program is now accepting applications for the 2018 spring semester until Nov. 15, 2017. Learn more about scholarship eligibility requirements, and apply online today.

\$30,000 VFW scholarship accepting applications

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Commander Larry Hill

of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1988, located at 421 S. Orange Ave. in Green Cove Springs, announced the kick-off of this year's VFW's Voice of Democracy Scholarship competition. Clay County high school students have the opportunity to compete for thousands of dollars in scholarships and a trip to Washington, D.C.

Students must write and record a three-

to-five minute essay on the selected theme using an audio CD or flash drive and present their recording, typed essay and completed entry form to their local VFW Post by Oct. 31. The 2017-2018 theme selected is "American History: Our Hope for the Future."

Students begin by competing at the local Post level, then Post winners compete at the District level with the winner advancing to the state competition. All state first-place winners receive a four-day trip to Washington, D.C. and the chance to compete for their share of more than \$150,000 in scholarships. The first-place winner receives a \$30,000 college scholarship.

The National Association of Broadcasters started the Voice of Democracy Scholarship program in 1947. The VFW became a national sponsor in the late 1950s and assumed sole responsibility for the program in 1961. The competition was created to provide students grades 9-12 the opportunity to express themselves in regard to democratic ideas and principles.

Around 40,000 students participate in the competition each year and VFW awards more than \$2



million in scholarships every year. Interested students and teachers should contact the Voice of Democracy Chairman at VFW Post 1988 by phone at (904) 284-0775 or email the Post at tjhartley@att.net for more information. For details visit <https://www.vfw.org/.../youth-scholarships>.



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9/14-9/28

CPR from page 1

help they need before first responders arrive, and less than 10 percent of victims survive. Given right away, CPR doubles or triples survival rates. Teaching CPR in schools will empower students to act in a cardiac emergency and give victims the immediate help they need to survive until emergency medical services arrive.

The new CPR in Schools amendment to the student progression plan ensures an estimated 3,000 new lifesavers are trained in Clay County each year.

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke, which are America's No. 1 and No. 5 killers, respectively. The Dallas-based association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke.

Healthy Schools to provide free flu shots in October

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Healthy Schools, in cooperation with Clay County Schools and the Florida Department of Health, has launched the “Teach Flu a Lesson” program for 2017-18.

The program provides free flu vaccinations to children while they are in school. Healthy Schools will be administering flu vaccines in Clay County Schools in mid-October, beginning Oct. 10.

Every year, thousands of children miss valuable school days because of the influenza virus. Offering flu vaccinations in a school setting has proven to be effective in preventing illness and reducing absenteeism.

This year it is even easier to participate in “Teach Flu a Lesson” by signing up with a digital consent form. Visit the link to sign up: <https://secure.caredox.com/enroll/clay-flu-2017-18>

The digital consent form is provided by CareDox, a secure electronic health management plat-

form for schools. Follow the simple instructions and make sure you fill out all the required information.

Please provide your insurance or Medicaid information. Healthy Schools will bill insurance companies for the flu vaccination they provide. There will be no out of pocket cost. If you have no insurance, your child will still receive a flu vaccine at no cost.

Parents are encouraged to read the Vaccine Information Statement and electronically sign it. Parents will receive a confirmation email after signing up. Parents are also encouraged to check their junk or spam folder if the confirmation email is not received.

Healthy Schools keeps parent and student personal private and secure. Healthy Schools’ Privacy Practices and more information about CareDox may be found at www.HealthySchoolsllc.com.

Contact Healthy Schools at (800)566-0596 or email at info@healthyschoolsllc.com for more information.




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School district approves new medication guidelines

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – All over the counter medications that need to be administered at school during school hours or school activities require a physician's order or prescription for the 2017-18 school year.

The Clay County School District changed its policy after receiving guidance from the Department of Health, which oversees all the health clinics in Florida.

Over the counter medications may be given at school with a completed Parent Authorization for Administration of Medication Form, which includes the parent/guardian signature and healthcare provider's signature with written prescription or an order authorizing the administration of the medication.

If instructions for the administration of the OTC medication are in hospital discharge paperwork or written on the medical management plan, this is acceptable and a signature on the PAAM, by the healthcare provider is not needed. Medi-

cations must be delivered to school by parent or guardian in their original container, be age appropriate, and be within current expiration date.

Each child – including siblings – receiving medication, including OTC medication, should have their own supply of medication, as prescribed by the health care provider.

Cough drops may be administered in school with completed PAAM Form with only the parent authorization. This medication must be kept in the health room.

Chapstick can be carried by a student with no PAAM.

A student may carry and use a topical sunscreen product while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity without a physician's note or prescription if the product is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration.

If the student will be carrying and self-administering, then the PAAM form is not required or if a parent requests that a apply

the product, then the PAAM is required to be completed with only the parent authorization.

If you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail shelley.luter@myoneclay.net.



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We recognize the teachers and administrators of the Clay County School System for their commitment to academic success. Their dedication is an inspiration to us all.



MT-1133618.1 8/17

Help Clay Schools get 40,000 free books

Teachers, support personnel and parent volunteers who serve Title 1 schools in Clay County are needed to sign petitions to help Clay County get 40,000 free books from the national nonprofit organization First Book.

It's a program being spearheaded by the Clay County Education Association and Clay Educational Staff Professional Association in cooperation with the Florida Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers.

The Title 1 schools that are eligible to participate in the registration drive are Charles E Bennett, Wilkinson Elementary, McRae Elementary, Grove Park Elementary, Montclair Elementary, Ridgeview Elementary, S. Bryan Jennings, Keystone Heights Elementary, Clay Hill Elementary, W.E. Cherry Elementary and Middleburg Elementary. Any employee of Clay County Schools who serves these Title 1 schools in any capacity is eligible to register.

Paper registrations are available at all Title 1 schools for teachers, support and parent volunteers to fill out. Once registrations are completed, CCEA and CESPA volunteers will upload them into the First Book website. Once registered, individuals will have full access to the First Book catalog of discounted and free books, school supplies, electronics and teaching resources.

For more information, call CCEA at (904) 203-2092

Thunderbolt teacher depot expands



By **Kile Brewer**
School News

FLEMING ISLAND – In her first year as the event's organizer, Thunderbolt Elementary School Kindergarten teacher Heather Thompson has opened the school's teacher depot to teachers throughout the county.

"This is something that was started in the school to recycle goods within the teachers here," Thompson said. "It's been going on since I've been here, and long before that."

The depot operates under the name Kudos to Karen in honor of former Thunderbolt teacher whose idea sparked the current day iteration of the teacher swap shop. The basic idea is that teachers from within Thunderbolt gather up any unused or unwanted supplies from their rooms, and store the

items in an unused classroom at the school. Teachers can then pay a \$10 donation into their school account and take as many items as they want.

This year, after the items had been picked over by the teachers at Thunderbolt, Thompson, in an effort to get more of the items into classrooms where they would be used, opened the program up. She announced that the depot would accept a \$5 donation from teachers from throughout the district who wanted to sift through what was left.

Thompson said the fund is used for providing lunch and other special occasions for the teachers throughout the school year.

The depot became open to the district Sept. 5 at 3:30 p.m. and was open again the next day at the same time. Depending on continued interest from teachers, Thompson said she may reopen the store next week as well.





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September is Attendance Awareness Month

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Clay County Schools is part of a nationwide effort to celebrate September as Attendance Awareness Month.

District officials have pledged to raise awareness about the value of regular school attendance and focus on reducing chronic absenteeism in the new school year.

Good attendance is essential to academic success, but too many students are at risk academically because they are chronically absent. Chronic absence is described as missing 10 percent of the school year – about 18 days – for any reason, excused or unexcused. That's the point at which absenteeism begins to affect student performance, research shows.

Nationally, 5 million to 7.5 million miss nearly a month of school in excused and unexcused absences every year. Starting as early as kindergarten or even preschool, chronic absence predicts lower 3rd grade reading scores. By middle school, it's a warning sign that students will fail key classes and drop out of high school.

Chronic absence disproportionately affects children from low-income families and creates attendance gaps that exacerbate achievement gaps in local schools. This is not just a matter of truancy. Many children, especially in the early grades, miss too much school because of chronic health prob-

lems, unreliable transportation or housing moves – barriers that can be addressed if the student's teachers are made aware of the issue.

In September, schools, human service agencies, community nonprofits, faith-based groups, businesses and others around the nation are committing time and resources to raise public awareness, map local attendance gaps and work with community partners to improve school attendance starting as soon as children enter school.

During Attendance Awareness Month, the

Clay County School District is asking school leaders, community advocates, parents and students to act upon these critical first steps to help stem chronic absenteeism:

- Build a habit and a culture of regular attendance
- Use data to determine when and with whom chronic absence is a problem, and
- Identify and address barriers to getting children to school.

Multiple studies show that chronic absence is an early warning indicator that a student will

drop out of a high school. A recent study from Utah found that a student who was chronically absent in any year between eighth and 12th grade was 7.4 times more likely to drop out than students with better attendance.



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Food truck to nourish and teach



GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Culinary students in the Clay County School District will soon have a roving classroom where they can hone their skills.

Using \$162,000 in funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the district is buying a custom-made and outfitted food truck that will travel to schools and serve students food made by other students. Staff salaries would also come from federal funding.

As proposed, the food truck will be 24-feet long end to end and include a television that will display its menu items, steam tables, a three-foot griddle and preparation tables lining both sides.

School Superintendent Addison Davis said the food truck will boost food sales and increase excitement both in regular and Culinary Academy students.

“We wanted to think different about how we can be creative by engaging students who are in our culinary programs,” Davis said. “One of the things we see from a national trend is we see...restaurants engaging in a new, creative way of providing exciting opportunities for food, and one of those mechanisms is through a food truck.”

The new food truck will be patterned after the one shown here that is currently in use in the Alachua County School District.



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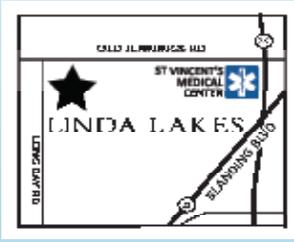
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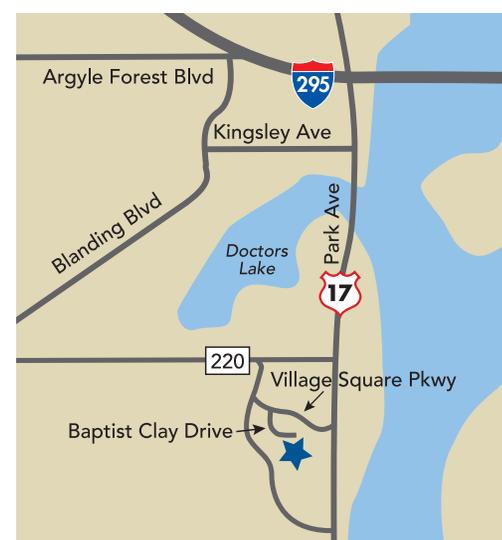
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