

PEOPLE

Tip o' the hard hat to 'Achievement Center' expansion

BY STEPHANIE LaBAFF
Staff Writer

The sound of buzz saws and drills filled the halls of the Gifford Youth Achievement Center's expansion project last Thursday morning, as donors toured the partially constructed facility during a Hard Hat Thank-You Tour.

Freddie Woolfork, GYAC director of public relations and facilities operations, walked guests through the unpainted hallways and unfinished classrooms, pointing out the untapped potential that will be nurtured within its confines.

Referring to the project as the "Miracle on 43rd Avenue," Woolfork noted that the organization stemmed from a vision more than 20 years ago led by Dr. A. Ronald Hudson and the late Danforth K. Richardson and Rev. Dr. William Nigh.

"These men decided to address a problem, not just talk about a problem," said Woolfork. "You've got some people that will talk about a problem but not do anything – a lot of lip ser-



Freddie Woolfork, Scott Alexander, Angelia Perry and Jeff Pickering.

PHOTOS: LEIGH GREEN

vice and not enough hip service." The 14,000-square-foot expansion will include seven classrooms, a computer lab and office space, enabling the nonprofit to help 200 additional children and continue its mission to

develop self-esteem, teach character and encourage each individual to reach for their ultimate potential.

With construction projected to be completed by April, they anticipate using the facility over the summer to

acclimate the children before regular afterschool sessions begin in August.

"Right now you are sitting on top of what was a retention pond, but we're going to use it as a launching pad. Because this is where the kids that come, the families that come, are going to be launched off to do great things in the future," added Woolfork.

The summer and afterschool GYAC educationally-based programs and activities are designed to increase school participation, high school and college graduation rates, parental involvement and the positive self-worth of the children and adults of the Gifford Community.

GYAC typically has a 60-student wait list, said Scott Alexander, past board president. While temporary measures have been implemented to allow them to serve additional children, an ever-increasing number of families wanted their children to participate.

"Philanthropy has gotten us to the point where we are right now," said Alexander. "The thought behind the

Own It Now Don't miss out. Over 50% are SOLD!



Rarely does an opportunity like this arise. Everything you could ask for to house your classic cars, boat, motor home, or other valuable assets. A central Vero location, 24 hr. security. Select the square footage you need, interior customization to satisfy your every desire, a second floor "man cave" if you'd



VERO AUTOHAUS

950 12th Street, Vero Beach, Florida 32960
772-696-4287

like. AutoHaus structures *exceed* hurricane codes. All wrapped in a superb Euro design you'll be proud to own. There's simply nothing else like AutoHaus on the Treasure Coast. There will only be 25-30 fortunate owners, and AutoHaus will be SOLD OUT SOON. *Don't miss out!* Call today for details & special *Pre-Completion pricing* starting at \$144,900.

PEOPLE



Trudie Rainone and Todd Fennell.



Indian River County Commissioner Joe Flescher.



Mary B. McKinney and Dr. A. Ronald Hudson.



Logan Dritenbas and Don Proctor.



Rick Chuma and Joe Idelette III.

project was to not only pay for the building, but also increase our endowment. We need funds that will create sustainability for this organization going forward. The great thing about this organization is it has tremendous community support.”

Jeff Pickering, president and CEO of the Indian River Community Foundation, offered a welcomed surprise with the presentation of a check for \$100,000 from the Community Enrichment Fund.

“We treat these grants like an investment today and into the future,” said Pickering. “When we look for characteristics that demonstrate sound investments, we look for good gover-

nance, strong management, sound financial principles and programs that get results. Across the board, Gifford Youth Achievement Center exemplifies every single one of those characteristics and then some.”

“We are here because of you,” said Angelia Perry, GYAC executive director, acknowledging donors for their financial support. “I just want to say thank you on behalf of the children and families that we serve. We wouldn’t be here this morning sitting in this building were it not for those of you that are in our audience today.”

GYAC will host its Snow Ball fundraiser on Jan. 26. For more information, visit gyac.net. ■

NANTUCKET BASKET MAKING DEMO



THURSDAY, JANUARY 24
11 AM TO 4 PM

Learn the intricacies of this unique art with accomplished local weaver Andrea Molloy.

3201 Cardinal Drive 772-213-8069
TRIMMINGSVB.COM



ROBERTO DEMEGLIO

THE NEW LUXURY

This Collection is great for stacking
.....and perfect to wear every day



LEIGH Jewelers

WWW.LEIGHJEWELERS.COM
3401 OCEAN DRIVE
VERO BEACH • 772.234.8522

CERTIFIED GEMOLOGISTS • AUTHORIZED ROLEX SALES & SERVICE