

Welcome



Angelia Perry



Monique Olson

The Association of Fundraising Professionals Indian River chapter is pleased to welcome two members to its board of directors. **Angelia Perry** is the executive director of the Gifford Youth Achievement Center, and **Monique Olson** is the development coordinator at the Indian River State College Foundation. Both women are Florida natives who bring extensive backgrounds in local philanthropy and leadership to their work on the board.



Trudie Rainone



Carolyn Butler Norton

Youth Guidance Mentoring Academy is thrilled to welcome two new members to its board of directors. **Trudie Rainone** has served as co-chair of Quail Valley Charities and on the boards of the Alzheimer and Parkinson Association, Senior Resource Association and the Senior Collaborative. **Carolyn Butler Norton** is a board-certified elder-law attorney who has been practicing for more than 35 years. The passion, experience and expertise the women bring to the board is already driving results for the organization.



United Against Poverty is pleased to welcome its new executive director, **Matthew Tanner**. Tanner has a strong background in leadership and community engagement. He worked at Florida International University and Miami Dade College, where he served as director of workforce readiness and internship initiatives. Most recently, he spent three years with The Mission Continues, a national nonprofit organization

that empowers veterans to mobilize with their communities to complete powerful service projects. Tanner, who served as a youth development volunteer in Costa Rica with the Peace Corps, received his B.A. in sociology from the University of Miami and a Master of Social Work from the University of Maryland in Baltimore. He and his wife, Kathy, are busy raising two sons, both under the age of two.



Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital welcomes board-certified family medicine physician **Mary O'Meara, M.D.** Dr. O'Meara is a Vero Beach native who earned her medical degree from Florida State University and completed her family medicine residency at West Kendall Baptist Hospital in Miami. O'Meara, a member of the AMA, Florida Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians and Florida Academy

of Family Physicians, is happy to be back home and is now accepting patients at the Health & Wellness Center.

Congratulations



Executive assistant **Barbara Pearce** of the **Gifford Youth Achievement Center** was part of a collaborative group that received a Scalability Award in the Florida Race Equity Challenge. The challenge, presented by the Florida Youth Justice Commission, was to identify and tackle issues related to race, equity and

inclusion. Pearce and her team focused on the arrest rate and were recognized for developing a project that could be easily scaled to improve practices across the state. Pearce was honored to be a part of the challenge and feels the experience will enable GYAC to better meet the needs of the families it serves.



The Kiwanis Club of Vero-Treasure Coast is pleased to announce that **Al Sammartino** has been chosen to succeed Tom Maher as president. Sammartino's long involvement with the club includes, among other things, leading Kiwanis Youth in Action, where he coordinates hundreds of youth volunteers who assist local

residents in need, clean beaches, and help out at area venues such as the Environmental Learning Center. The Kiwanis Club looks forward to Sammartino's leadership.



When Florida's first lady, Casey DeSantis, announced the winners of the Excellence in Education awards during Hispanic Heritage Month in the fall, **Libna Sierra**, an Indian River County teacher, was among those honored. The theme for 2020 was "Celebrating Untold Stories and Contributions of Hispanic Americans in Florida."

Master's Academy of Vero Beach is proud of Sierra, who is originally from Campeche, Mexico, and enjoys sharing her heritage, culture and native language with her students. Sierra teaches three courses at Master's: high school Spanish, middle school Modern Languages and Computer Applications. She also takes time to volunteer in the community by assisting Hispanic families.



Philip Cromer has been named as the new chief executive officer of the **Mental Health Association in Indian River County**. Cromer, a licensed psychologist who has been serving as the organization's chief clinical officer, is honored to take on the new role. He is especially well suited to the position, given his extensive

experience in both leadership and counseling. In addition to running a successful local private practice, Cromer was involved in the management of Counseling & Psychological Services at Florida Atlantic University. His background will serve the organization well in meeting expanded community needs for services brought on by the pandemic.



McKee Botanical Garden is celebrating its 20th anniversary since reopening in November 2001. Nearly 800,000 people have enjoyed the magical gardens since that time, and hundreds of workshops, classes and camps have been held. Numerous traditions, such as the annual Motor Car Exhibition (11 years), Holidays at McKee (19 years) and the annual Waterlily Celebration (16 years) have enhanced our community. The garden has also received national recognition time and again and continues to expand its offerings, including the addition of the Children's Garden in 2020. We can't wait to see what else McKee has in store. ☀



Waterway Village donates wrapped Christmas gifts for GYAC students.



Jemel Baxter, Theresa Baxter and LaJohnathan Harris



Aleah can't wait to open her present.



Barbara Pearce and Chef Michael Gratz

CHRISTMAS A GO

GIFFORD YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT

In the midst of the financial struggles faced by many people as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gifford Youth Achievement Center wanted to make sure Christmas was a "go" for its 80 after-school students as well as 80 homebound seniors. Thus, in addition to the annual Christmas party for its students, GYAC conducted an impressive community outreach. GYAC's senior programs coordinator, Theresa Baxter, prepared, packaged and delivered 80 home-cooked meals with the help of "elves" Jemel Baxter and LaJohnathan Harris. Not only that, but more than 50 gift bags filled with toiletries, nonperishables, snacks and a few comfort items were distributed to local homebound seniors.



Robbie Walker, Ellen Flanagan and Barbara Pearce



Johnathan receives a gift from Santa.



Santa with GYAC's fourth grade class