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**Queen's King
Movie Premiere
Luniversal
Films Unites
Black
Community
Against Black-
on-Black Gun
Violence**

VILLIJ NEWS, THE OFFICIAL BLACK-OWNED MEDIA PARTNER OF THE POMPANO FALL FESTIVAL



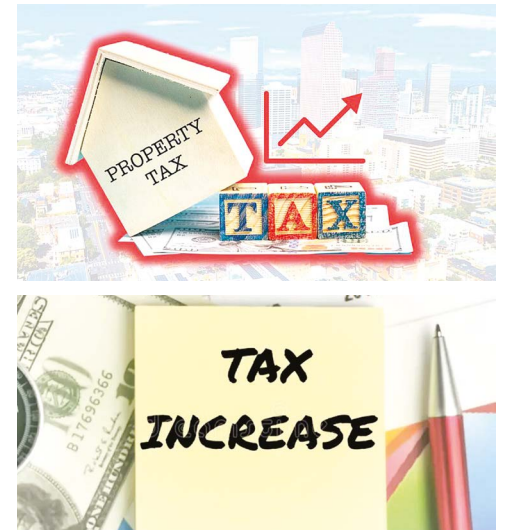
Business owners at the Smallbiz CEDC pop-up shop.



Owners of skincare line Supernatural Beuti Ashaunti Williams, Ashley Pierre, and Sade Clarke.



Ruky Afanu from RRA Beads



POMPANO CELEBRATES NATIONAL BLACK BUSINESS

MONTH BY EMPOWERING SMALL BUSINESSES

By China Boynton

Pompano Beach - The first small biz pop-up shop by the Smallbiz Community and Economic Development Corp (CEDC) was held on August 24 at the E.Pat Larkins Center in honor of National Black Business Month.

THE Small Biz CEDC is a non-profit organization established to promote economic development and self-sufficiency by providing assistance to start-up businesses, micro-businesses, and small businesses.

■ *Black Business, see page 10*



Vendors at Smallbiz CEDC pop-up shop.



Pompano Beach City Commission Votes 3-2 to Raise Property Tax

By Kristen Hernandez

Pompano Beach, FL - During a tense city commission special meeting in September, commissioners voted 3-2 to raise property taxes by 10% starting this fiscal year. Additionally, the Pompano Beach Emergency Medical Services District tax, or EMS tax, was also raised to 11.21%. The proposed tax increase is based on the general operating millage rate of 5.2705.

■ *Property Tax, see page 10*

State of our Schools: It's Time for us to Stand up and Call Them out



Blanche Ely Principal Tavures Williams addressing concerns from the crowd.

By China Boynton

Pompano Beach - Pompano Beach residents have raised concerns over the conditions of some schools operating within Broward County.

There have been numerous reports to the Broward County School District of unclean and unsanitary bathrooms, mold, flooding, and a list of other repairs that have been overdue at the public schools in Pompano Beach.

A meeting was held on September 25 by Florida State Representative Patricia Williams

for parents and residents to express their concerns over the conditions of schools like Blanche Ely High School, Sanders Park Elementary, and Robert C. Markham Elementary School.

"The problems that we are discussing didn't happen overnight and we need to save ourselves," said Williams.

Fifty concerned residents filled the E. Pat Larkins Center to speak on what they have witnessed when visiting schools in their community.

■ *Stand up, see page 11*



ONE MINUTE IN THE WORD

FAILURE

verse 61 and 62, "The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter, then Peter remembered the Word, the Lord had spoken to him, before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times and Peter went outside and cried bitterly."

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We all are just like Peter in the text. He missed the mark, fell off the wagon and failed. Failure feels like a car that just won't start, a television that won't turn on, or like The Colorado Buffaloes, that just lost a game.

Don't let failure define you, let failure focus you. Even the ones we consider "The GOAT" have failed. Michael Jordan in 1984, in his rookie year, lost in the first round of the playoffs to the Milwaukee Bucks. In Michael Jordan's sophomore year, he lost again in the first round of the playoffs to the Boston Celtics, and Michael Jordan's junior year, he lost again in the first round to

the Boston Celtics.

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Don't look at failure to be final, look at failure as a friend that teaches you, not to make the same mistake twice.

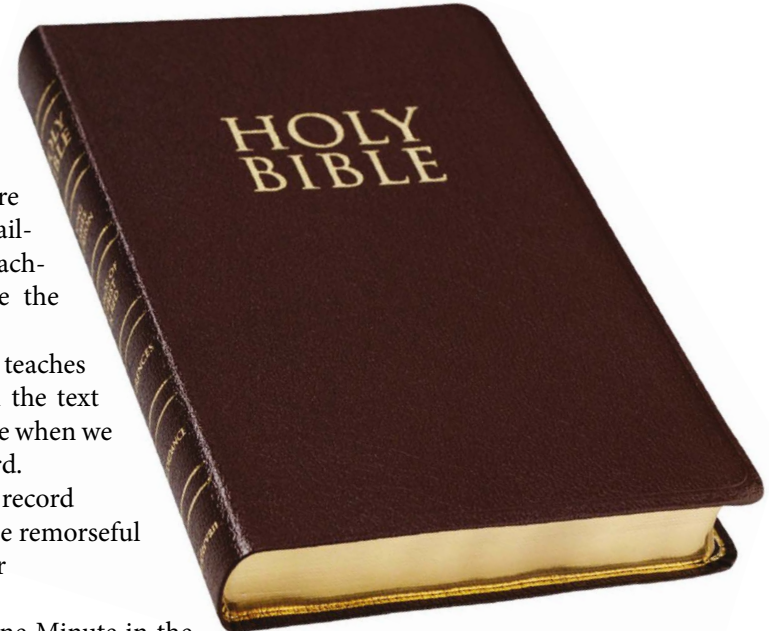
As I close, Peter teaches us three things from the text that happens in failure when we don't listen to the Lord.

- #1 You will have a record
- #2 You will become remorseful
- #3 You can recover

And that's your One Minute in the Word...

I'm not out of Word, but I am out of lines, until the next issue know this, I'm pulling for you, and I'm praying for you, God Bless you stay connected.

Life's Question: A man is great, not



because He has not failed, but because He has not let failure stop Him.

Follow The One Minute Preacher
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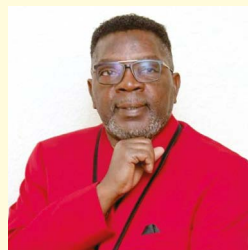
BY THE ONE MINUTE PREACHER

I'm in the Book of Luke a Gospel of Relationships (The Good Samaritan) (The Lost Son), (The Rich Man and Lazarus), are all stories of Classic Pieces of Literature.

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Can you outlast the old you in order to get to the new you?
The text says, in Luke Chapter 22

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Ask Annie

Should I have a baby with my friend?

Q : I've got a female friend who I made a pact with about 10 years ago. If we both reached the age of 35 and had no kids, we would have a baby together. We haven't spoke in about four years because we live in different states, and we've been respectful to our partners. Our relationship is just a friendship, nothing sexual. About a month ago she contacted me on Facebook and asked me if we could revisit the pact we made to have a child. If she didn't mention it, I probably would have never said anything. The man in feels like I made a promise, what should I do?

A : The best advice I can give you is live your life. Because ain't no one coming into my space and my life talking about a "pact" and want me to change and uproot everything, no sir. Do you want to have a baby with this person at this point in your life? Are you still attracted to this person? Where is the baby going to live? Do ya'll have to be in a relationship? Are you lonely? Having a baby is no easy task for both the man and the woman, so don't take it lightly. Ya'll are acting like you're planning a vacation together and not the rest of your lives. After you really analyze situation, make your decision and don't worry about her feelings. To me, she sound broke, dusty, and ugly. Like I'd be embarrassed to ask a man that I haven't talked to in four years to get me pregnant. You can do better sir.

SNAP Food Assistance Benefits Increase

If you or a family member receive aid from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as food stamps, your benefits will increase soon.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) said benefits will automatically rise to reflect the recent changes in the cost of living due to high inflation. Benefit changes will be based on the Consumer Price Index from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for June 2022.

Based on data from the USDA, SNAP benefits will increase an average of over 3% for 12 months starting in October, compared to the year prior.

Below you can see the breakdowns of new benefit amounts based on family size from the USDA:

- Household size 1 – \$291
- Household size 2 – \$535
- Household size 3 – \$766
- Household size 4 – \$973
- Household size 5 – \$1,155
- Household size 6 – \$1,386
- Household size 7 – \$1,532
- Household size 8 – \$1,751

Each additional person adds \$219.

Monthly income eligibility has changed, too. The new amounts are:

- Household size 1 – \$1,580
- Household size 2 – \$2,137
- Household size 3 – \$2,694
- Household size 4 – \$3,250
- Household size 5 – \$3,807

- Household size 6 – \$4,364
- Household size 7 – \$4,921
- Household size 8 – \$5,478

For those who receive SNAP benefits, there is no extra paperwork required to receive the increase as they will be automatic, according to Forbes Advisor.

The recent increase in benefits comes after the age requirements to qualify for SNAP expanded on September 1. Starting on that day, childless workers under 50 years of age were required to show they were working 80 hours or more a month, pursuing an education, or training program to qualify for SNAP.

Starting October 1, not only will benefits increase, but



USDA
Supplemental
Nutrition
Assistance
Program

Putting Healthy Food Within Reach

age requirements will expand as well. SNAP will be expanded for people up to age 52, and then they will expand to age 54 on Oct. 1, 2024.

Homeless, veterans or youth ages 18 to 24 who aged out of foster care are exempt from these requirements. People who cannot work due to a physical or mental limitation, are pregnant or have a child

18 or younger living in their home will also be exempt.

If you don't meet the work requirements, you will only be eligible for SNAP for three months of benefits in a three-year period, according to the report.

To read more about the changes coming for SNAP benefits beginning October 1, [click here](#).

Bailey Contemporary Arts and Latin American Art Pavilion

Present Roots of an Identity

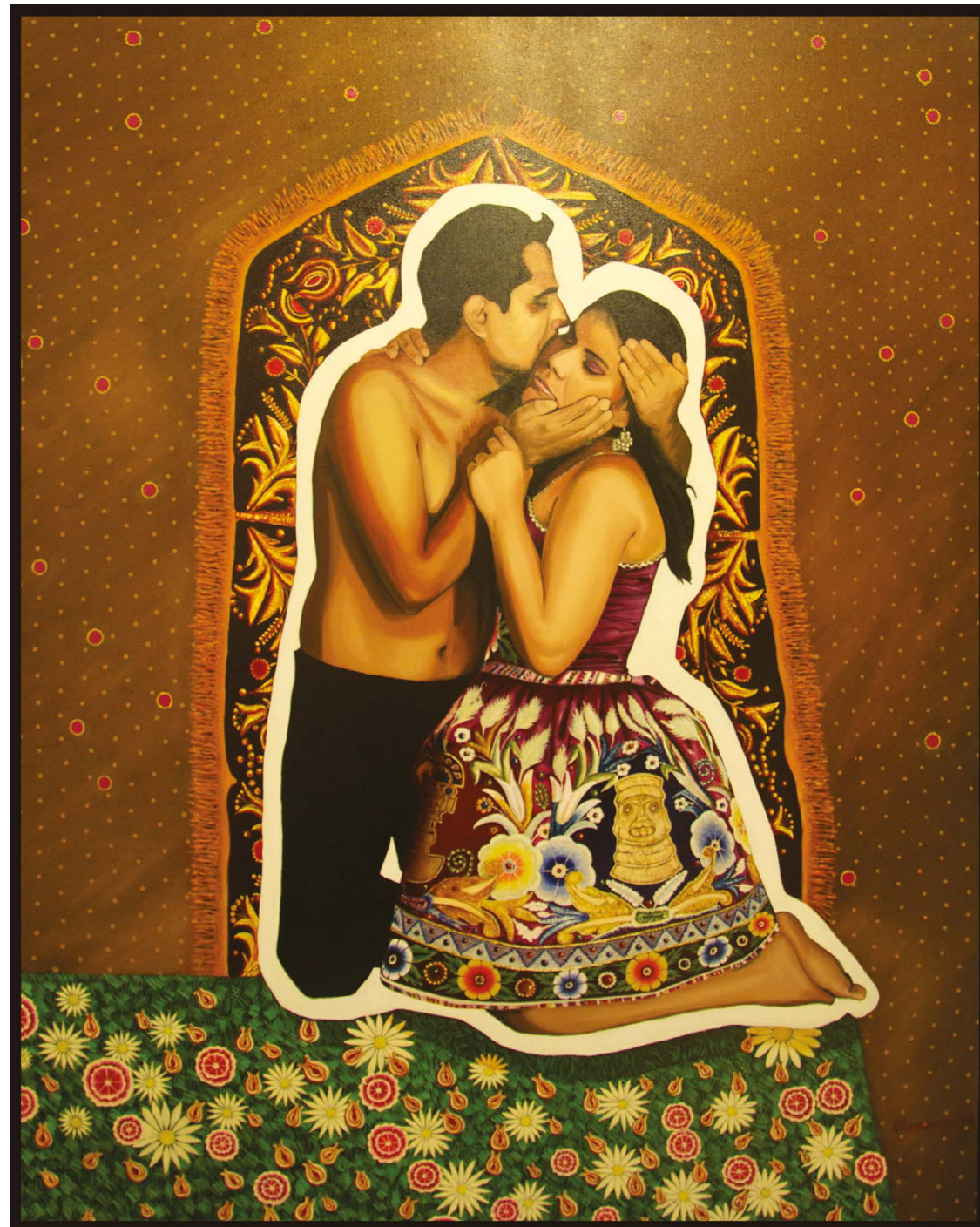
An Artistic Celebration of Latin American Heritage

Bailey Contemporary Arts Center (BaCA) and Latin American Art Pavilion (LAAP) are proud to present the meticulously curated exhibition, *Roots of an Identity*. This important celebration, debuting during National Latin American Heritage Month, methodically shifts the viewer's gaze toward the expanse of Latin culture, its traditions, and its impact beyond geographical borders.

FEATURING 19 artists working in concert, *Roots of an Identity* represents the essence and depth of the Latin American heritage on canvas. The opening reception takes place on Friday, October 6, 2023, during Old Town Untapped, from 6 pm-10 pm, and the exhibition runs through December 1, 2023.

"We are thrilled to once again be collaborating with LAAP on another powerful and moving exhibition celebrating Latin American arts and heritage," said Ty Tabing, Director, Department of Cultural Affairs. "Roots of an Identity is a 'must-see' for anyone interested in learning more about the rich and diverse cultures of Latin America."

Featuring a variety of artistic styles and mediums, including painting, sculpture, photography, and video, the artworks in this exhibition explore a wide



range of themes, including family, community, religion, history, and politics.

"By encouraging the pres-

ervation and commemoration of Latin American identity, this exhibition helps to foster a deeper understanding and

appreciation of the rich cultural history of Latin America," stated Maria Napoles, Founder and Director LAAP. "Roots

of an Identity also serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining and passing on this cultural heritage to future generations. The exhibition strives to cultivate a sense of pride, security, and value beyond Latin American communities."

The artists who are participating in the event include Ignacio Perez Vazquez, Mary Frances Attias, Martha Espinoza, Anavis Somoza, Sheila Fraga, Adriano Nicot, Radame Potrony, Orlando Bosch, Martha Cabane-Navarro, Mario Mogrovejo, Martin Cano, Hugo Almonte, Teeyah, Katiana Jarbath-Smith, Franco Bracho, Patricia Meier, Sara Slipchinsky, Armando Tejuca and Judit Vidal Faife.

Bailey Contemporary Arts Center is located at 41 NE 1st St., Pompano Beach, Florida. The exhibition is free and open to the public.

Tuesdays through Fridays: 10:00 am – 6:00 pm | Saturdays: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

About Latin American Art Pavilion (LAAP)

LAAP is an organization dedicated to promoting Latin American and Caribbean emerging and mid-career contemporary visual artists worldwide. LAAP's trademarked platform propels the artist's career through representation, coaching and consulting services helping them navigate and understand the dynamics of the world of art as a business.

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Queen's King Movie Premiere Luniversal Films Unites Black Community Against Black-on-Black Gun Violence

By Kristen Hernandez

Broward County, FL - An uptick of black-on-black violent crimes throughout our community has led local film maker, Eugene Luner, to create a movement that brings unity and healing to people of color. Luniversal Films presented Luner's third movie, Queen's King, which showcases that true love can lift anyone struggling to make good choices even in the most unlikely place.

“QUEEN'S King is a symbolism of peace and unity. It's when we all come as one, spending time together to fight against violence and gun violence,” said Luner, during an exclusive interview with Villij News. “When I see the division within the black community and how black on black crime seems nonstop, it hurts me.”

Luner wrote, directed and produced Queen's King which celebrates black love between two Haitian-Americans that live in a crime-infested area within Fort Lauderdale. Ram is faced with choosing between life as a gangster or follow his aspiration to become a rap artist, and Nefe is faced with choosing to follow the strict path her parents required or support her man.

“I asked God to use me,” Luner said. “There's too much violence within the black community. As we created the film, we also created a logo which became the Queen's King Apparel line, along with the Queen's King song featured in the movie.”

Luner imagined a movement brought to life using music, film, art and honest discussions to stand up against black-on-black violence of all kinds. During the pre-release event, Luner presented a discussion panel with speakers from law enforcement,



The crew, cast and audience at the Queen's King movie premiere. 99 Jamz radio personality Stichiz gets a selfie.

law makers, mothers who've lost children due to black-on-black violence, and activists to openly discuss solutions to the growing problem.

Mendell's Rule

“Gun violence is the leading cause of death in children aged 14-25,” said Omorose Butler-Lebel, mother to 17-year-old Mendell Butler, who was shot and killed in 2018 in front of his apartment complex in Miramar. “Something 100% preventable is snatching our children.”

Bulter was murdered the day after his 17th birthday, and right before he was to attend Florida State University to become an attorney. Bulter-Lebel held her son as he bled out in the park-

ing lot. Countless stories like Mendell's are the reason Luner wanted to take a stand and offer words of encouragement, hope, and solutions.

“I was unaware of the severity of gun violence,” Butler-Lebel said. “Mendell is gone, I can't get him back. So, I'm not in this fight for me. I'm doing it for your children.”

Butler-Lebel's relentless fight led to Mendell's Rule, which provides additional reward money to unsolved murders of children.

Law makers like Florida State Representative Dotie Joseph questioned why American children are less safe here than children in other countries. She believes that solutions are universal



Queen's King actor Mecca Grimo and director Luner Eugene at the movie premiere.

background checks and curbing access to high power weapons. “We need people in office that actually care,” Joseph said. “Our politicians sold us out.”

Sergeant Nicole Graves of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department has helped collect over 67 high-powered guns within the past six months.

“Residents must stay proactive and not react to the gun violence,” Graves said. “We need to find out the why. Why are y'all so angry? Why is it so easy to pick up a gun and totally disregard humanity. All of this is in vain if we don't go out there and put action behind it.”

Each guest speaker on the panel felt the music and films of today is hurting our black community.

“Our movie has community action behind it,” said Tonia Exantus, COO of Luniversal Films and Founder/CEO of Silent Cries, Inc., a non-profit organization for domestic violence. “We're killing each other, killing our men and we're killing our women because we're divided.”

Changing Mindsets

Exantus and Luner want to change mindsets when it comes to violence. They believe disunity, toxic relationships and domestic violence only adds fuel.

“This is just the first season of Queen's King and we're going to expand more on it to where we can illustrate the true reality of what's going on around us,” Exantus said. “And at the same

time learn from it. It's never going away so we can educate ourselves more and we can build out resources within our community.”

The Queen's King apparel line features a black hoodie with their logo. During the movie premiere, each audience member wore it to show support for the movement. Luner said that wearing the hoodie shows that we all can come as one, regardless of the different challenges that we are dealing with in our lives.

After the premiere, audience members were left hanging and somewhat confused. Local film maker and founder of 2 Reel Kweenz, Lovely, hopes that the next few installments of Queen's King will bring the cliffhanger ending some closure.

“I've been following Luner since his first film, Love Until it Hurts,” Lovely said. “He is someone trying to make a change. He has something to speak about: stopping the violence. The movie depicts royalty and having a certain standard of yourself. It was interesting, I have my own views as a film maker, but it takes a lot to get to this capacity.”

Queen's King is more of a series than a film, and what debuted was the first three episodes. Along with Luniversal Films first two movies, Love Until it Hurts and Bae Night, the remainder of Queen's King can be streamed on Tubi or Amazon Prime.



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November 11th, 2020 the Florida Health Department Reports that within the past 30days, new cases of Covid-19 have increased by 52%. Green Glove Cleaning Service is running a special of \$125 for a home of up to 4 bedrooms and office spaces up to 2,500 Sq. Ft. using a disinfectant that does not need to be wiped off and kills COVID-19 in 10 minutes, in support of reducing the spread of COVID-19.

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Large 9-Foot Female Crocodile Spotted Hanging Out Beneath the Pompano Beach Pier

By: Kristen Hernandez

Beach goers received a huge shock on a Tuesday in September, when a large crocodile was spotted swimming among the pillars of the Pompano Beach Fisher Family Pier.

Captions: photo by Sean Martin of Reel Nauti Assets

A SOCIAL media post by the city of Pompano Beach said the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission was notified.

Local resident and owner of fishing charter Reel Nauti Assets, Sean Martin, reached out to Villij News and let us know that he spotted the same large reptile just a few days prior.

"It's really not rare to see crocs here," Martin said. "I saw one the last time I went down to Peanut Island, but they're also spotted throughout Miami."

While most associate crocodiles with brackish or swamp

They occur in brackish or saltwater areas and can be found in ponds, coves, and creeks in mangrove swamps

waters, crocs can make their way into ocean water through the dozens of canals throughout the area. The Pompano Beach visitor perhaps reached the beach from the Intracoastal Waterway through an inlet, like the Hillsboro Inlet, which is only about two miles away from where he was water-bathing. It's also possible that the crocodile simply walked over for a swim.

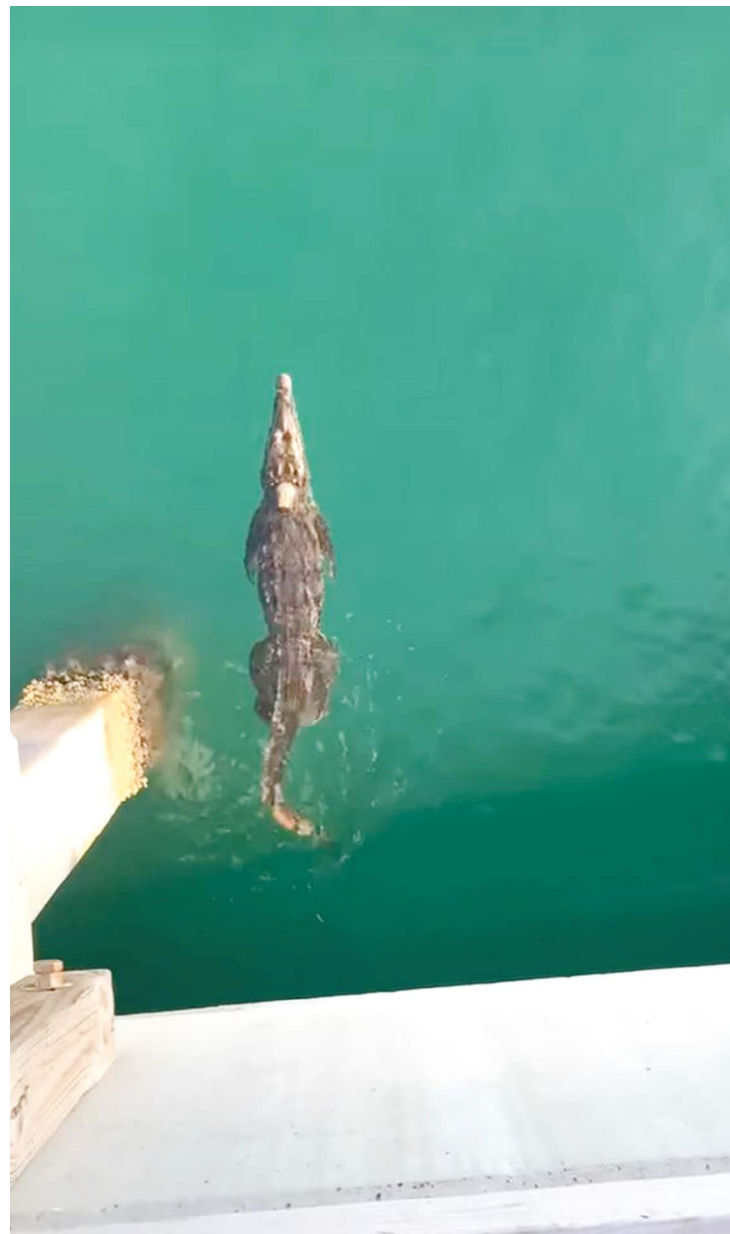
"American crocodiles live in coastal areas throughout the Caribbean and occur at the northern end of their range in South Florida and the Keys," the FWC posted on its website. "They occur in brackish or saltwater areas and can be found in ponds, coves, and

creeks in mangrove swamps."

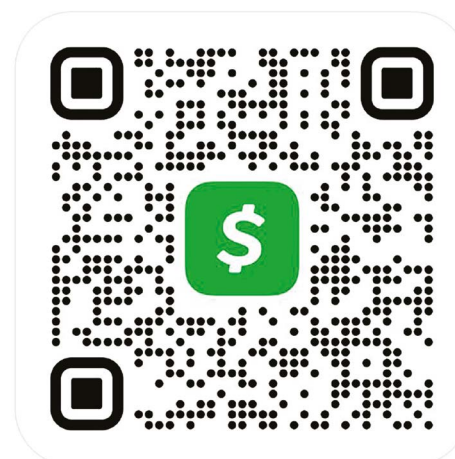
American crocodiles are generally shy and reclusive, according to the FWC. In 1975, American crocodiles were listed as an endangered species, but have since recovered from several hundred to now about 2,000 across the United States. The Florida native is now classified as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Florida FWC has created a Crocodile/Alligator Nuisance Hotline. If you are concerned about a crocodile or alligator, they'll dispatch a contracted nuisance crocodile trapper to resolve the situation. Any less than 4 feet in length are not large enough to be dangerous to people or pets, unless handled.

If you spot one while swimming in our beaches, alert nearby beach staff members or call the FWC. For beachgoers, it serves as a stark reminder that when swimming in our ocean water, you're swimming with unknown sea creatures that should always be respected.



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Attiyya Atkins

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September 11th Recognition and Remembrance Ceremony at Founders Park – Lest We Forget

By Kristen Hernandez

Pompano Beach, FL - Tuesday, September 11, 2001, was an unusually beautiful day as millions of commuters arrived in Manhattan for what should have been a typical workday. But the usual hustle and bustle suddenly stopped. In one moment, millions of lives across the earth were irrevocably changed forever.

As thousands poured into Times Square, a horrible image was playing on the Megatron. An airplane crashed into the beloved beacon of New York City, where thousands of people were beginning work. Then, another airplane swerved and crashed into the second tower.

Panic ensued as thick, black smoke poured from the Twin Towers and could be seen as far as New Jersey. The fire raging through over 100 floors of steel and glass was so hot and intense, some people felt no choice but to leap out the windows.

Then, the unthinkable hap-



Pompano beach city commission and guests at the 9/11 ceremony.

pened. In what seemed like slow motion, the Tower's floors began to collapse onto themselves. As they hit the ground and the people below, it felt

like an earthquake. A gigantic plume of thick, chemical laden smoke engulfed half of New York City, and the people unlucky enough to be near the

World Trade Center.

The city of Pompano Beach acquired a chunk of the tower's twisted remains and created a memorial for residents. Local

artist, Cherie Saleeby, took on the task of making art from the bones that was once the welcoming beacon of New York City.

One piece of charred steel and some glass was transformed into a work of art that commemorates the heroes who died during the attack on America. It became a piece aptly titled Unbroken Spine: A Book of American Heroism and contains the names of all first responders who perished that day onto its glass "pages."

"I chose those elements [glass and steel] because they represent the fragility and strength of first responders, and the actions they had to take in entering the towers and saving those lives," said Saleeby, during a YouTube video interview with Pompano Beach Public Art Program Manager, Laurie Atria.

Atria placed Unbroken Spine at Founder's Park in Pompano Beach, located at 215 NE Fourth Street, the site of Pompano's first fire station. This year on the 22nd anniversary of that tragic day, the city of Pompano hosted a special recognition and remembrance ceremony to honor all our heroes.

■ Founders Park, see page 9



9/11 ceremony



Pompano Beach Fire Department Honor Guard (left to right) Kyle Kurth, Newman Searle, Andrew Morgan, and Pete Linhares

Founders Park

continued from page 8



Founders Park sign

Guest speaker, Broward Sheriff's Office Major Wayne Adkins, summed up the day in one phrase - "Lest we forget." Simply put, it means September 11, 2001, is a day that should never be forgotten.

"The terrorists attack on 9/11 caused nearly 3,000 deaths that day, as well as over 10,000 injuries," Adkins said. "Since then, nearly as many died from related illness. In fact, the number of first responders that have died from 9/11 related illnesses now almost equals the number that died during the terrorist attack. These

first responders demonstrated the silent power of compassion, patriotism and self-sacrifice. Values that have distinguished our nation from those of others. These are the defining attributes that brought our nation together and will continue to make this country an example for all over the world."

Pompano Beach Fire Rescue Chief, Chad Brocato was one of the first responders on the scene of the fateful helicopter crash in Pompano earlier this month. "We only have 250 people in Pompano Beach Fire Rescue.

They [New York] lost 343. That would be our entire fire department and some part of another fire department. Consider the gravity of that. Those people also had children, they had spouses, they had family, friends. And yet they knew what their job was."

First responders are so few, but they sacrifice so much, for so many. Ordinary citizens become someone's hero each time they put on a uniform to serve and protect our community.

"If the tragic events of this day do not deter the drive for so many to answer the call to serve,

that commitment alone deserves a lot of respect," said guest speaker and former Vietnam Veteran, Joseph Hayes.

Hayes was also the recipient of the Pompano Beach Local Community Hero Award, presented by Mayor Rex Hardin during the ceremony.

"Could you only imagine what the results would be if we had no one to respond?" Hayes asked. "Say thank you to a first responder, regardless of what uniform they wear. It may seem like a small gesture, but it would mean so much."

BSO Captain Efrain Torres asked his fellow partners in all divisions to renew their pledge to Broward County residents. "Let this be our commitment to those heroes we honor this evening. Let us carry on their unfinished work and strive, in their honor, to promote not only safety and security, but also peace, and above all justice. And as we leave this place, let us do everything in our power to ensure in our lifetime, the stories and the memories, and the rich legacy of those we lost on September 11th will never be forgotten."



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Property Tax

continued from page 1

“Every year, we’ve got to match up the expenditures and revenues,” said Mayor Rex Hardin, during the meeting. “The city is at the mercy of higher expenses like everyone else. Gas costs more, everything does. I’m not trying to minimize anything, but the numbers are the numbers. Ten percent is still ten percent, and no one wants that. The decision is not taken lightly, but a lot goes into providing all the services we provide for the residents of this city.”

Although a notice was sent out in August notifying every property owner within the City of Pompano Beach about the budget meeting schedule, just a handful of residents attended.

After a previous budget meeting, commissioners may have taken lack of public participation as approval of the tax increase. Resident Mercedes Morasse directed her comments at District 5 commissioner, Bar-

ry Moss, echoing a majority opinion. “During the last budget meeting, Mr. Moss said in a pompous way that since only four people showed up, that must mean residents support the increase. I’ve got news for you, Mr. Moss. No, it doesn’t. Leave us alone and don’t raise our taxes.”

Not all the city commissioners agreed with the proposed hike. Commissioners Alison Fournier and Beverly Perkins both voted against the tax increase. Although Vice Mayor Andrea McGee verbally sided with them, she eventually voted in favor of the 10% jump.

“One of the drivers [of the tax increase] was the referendum of half million that was voted on to pay teachers,” Fournier said. “We have a lot of overhead expenses, but I think there’s an opportunity there for cost reduction. I wanted to pass a motion to reduce or find \$400,000 of

cost savings that we didn’t save with Sand and Spurs. We could reduce charitable donations and overhead expenses.”

Fournier referred to the recent commission vote to continue funding local equestrian park, Sand and Spurs, which had a \$400,000 price tag. But questions circled about the ability of Pompano Beach’s city manager, Greg Harrison, to make unilateral financial decisions on projects under \$75,000, without voting approval by commissioners.

“I voted no for this budget because of the proposed taxes,” Perkins said. “We need to know how this money is being spent. We can’t give him [Greg Harrison] a blank check to do what he wants. Spending is too high.”

Some residents in the area are still financially reeling from the setbacks experienced during and after the coronavirus pandemic. Rents in the area have substantially increased and so have the

costs of homeowners insurance. Some homeowners around the city have been forced into foreclosure because of the excessive financial burden. Working renters unable to afford the massive rent hike have contributed to a new generation of homelessness.

“Raising our property taxes by this much and the appraised increased values are not realistic,” said local resident and business owner, Michael Sully. “It’s unsustainable. I don’t know where you want us to get that money from. Come up with a better plan. This doesn’t work.”

Commissioners briefly discussed the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year for the city of Pompano Beach, and even on that subject, they were divided. Voting ended at 3-2 in favor of a city budget of \$400,154,323.

“Our residents are definitely hurting and it’s something we need to take into consideration,” said McGee, when discussing the

budget. “Maybe there are things we can cut to get us through the next few years. We could take advantage of the investments we’ve made and maintain, not expand. The whole idea of city investments is to not take money from taxpayers.”

Commissioner Barry Moss quickly ended that discussion by saying, “Any way we can cut expenses [should be looked at] but this is not the time to reinvent this conversation. Not at the last minute.”

Unlike the commission, residents in attendance seemed to agree.

“We’re just getting over Covid, and it was devastating,” said resident, Reverend John Mohorn. “To raise taxes at this time would be just as devastating as Covid. I think the timing is not right. People are still struggling. I pray that you consider that it’ll devastate the residents of Pompano Beach.”

Black Business

continued from page 1

The executive director for the Smallbiz CEDC Mary Schofield-Phillips wanted the event to have the networking energy of a Chamber of Commerce but with community support.

“I really liked the idea of being able to pop up, sell items, and network while presenting other products you might have for sale,” Phillips said.

Eleven vendors filled the Larkins auditorium with handcrafted items like RRA Beads. Locals Robert and Ruky Afanu have been selling hand-beaded purses, shoes, and earrings since 2017.

Small businesses like Crafted by Design, Sophia J’s Jewelry, and Peace and Harmony Candle Co. started in Pompano Beach.

Shaniqua Rolle owner of Peace and Harmony Candle Company was present with her 8oz Coconut Apricot Cream Wax candles for sale.

“I did everything before bringing my business to market, I let the candles burn around my house, I did testings and a focus group,” said Rolle. “My candles are homemade with 24 hours of burn and I’m very proud to share something I created with the public.”



Executive Director of Smallbiz CEDC Mary Schofield-Phillips posing next to the raffles table



Vendors at Smallbiz CEDC pop-up

Scented Candles like Blossom, Exuma Shore and, Mahogany Teakwood are available for \$20 on her online Etsy shop.



Vendors at Smallbiz CEDC pop-up.

The event had everything from natural to supernatural products like all-natural vegan handmade skincare line Super-

natural Beuti.

“We mostly try to target busy working-class entrepreneurs because we’re always

working so we lack the time to pour into ourselves,” said one of the co-founders of the brand, Ashaunti Williams. Williams along with business partners Ashley Pierre and Sade Clarke hand make affordable products like turmeric soap, rose hip oil, and honey oat scrub for affordable prices online at supernatural-beuti.com

The pop-up shop served multiple purposes, one of which was fundraising efforts for the program that the Smallbiz CEDC is hoping to launch in October called ‘The Teens Chasing Dreams’ program. Which is an after-school program for high school students where they will receive assistance with scholarships, summer jobs, and discuss topics such as entrepreneurship, mental health, and gun violence.

“We will be reaching out to the community to get young people to sign up and meeting weekly to pour into our youth,” said Phillips.

The free program will be held at the Northwest Branch Library.

For more information on the Small Biz CEDC or the Teens Chasing Dreams program go to smallbizinfo.net

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF DRUG OVERDOSE

IN today's world, where substance abuse has become a pressing concern, it's crucial to be aware of the signs and symptoms of a potential drug overdose. Drug overdoses can happen to anyone, regardless of age, background, or circumstances. Being able to recognize the warning signs could mean the difference between life and death. Here are some symptoms to watch out for when it comes to drug overdose awareness.

Changes in Consciousness

One of the first signs of a possible drug overdose is a sudden change in consciousness. This can include extreme drowsiness, confusion, or difficulty staying awake. If a person is unable to respond coherently to questions or seems disoriented, it's time to take action.

Difficulty Breathing

Respiratory depression is a serious symptom of a drug overdose. Shallow or labored breathing, irregular breathing patterns, or even complete cessation of breathing can occur. If you notice someone struggling to breathe or gasping for air, seek medical help immediately.

Unresponsiveness

If a person is unresponsive to stimuli, such as shouting their

name or gentle shaking, it could be a sign of an overdose. Unresponsiveness may be accompanied by pale or clammy skin, as well as bluish lips or fingertips, indicating a lack of oxygen circulation.

Vomiting and Nausea

Excessive vomiting, especially if it is persistent and uncontrollable, can be indicative of an overdose. This is a concerning sign as it can lead to choking, dehydration, and further complications.

Changes in Heart Rate

A rapid or irregular heartbeat, also known as arrhythmia, can be a sign that the body is under extreme stress due to drug toxicity. This is often accompanied by chest pain, dizziness, or fainting.

Seizures

Seizures are a serious and alarming symptom of a drug overdose. If someone is experiencing convulsions or involuntary muscle movements, it's vital to seek medical assistance right away.

Cold and Clammy Skin

Skin that feels cold to the touch and is unusually clammy or sweaty can indicate a drop in



blood pressure. This is often a sign that the body is struggling to maintain normal function.

Confusion and Agitation

Severe confusion, agitation, or hallucinations can be indicative of a drug overdose. The person may not be aware of their surroundings or behave erratically.

Dilated Pupils

Unusually large pupils that do not respond to changes in light can be a sign of overdose. However, it's essential to note that pinpoint pupils (extremely small pupils) can also be a sign of opioid overdose.

Loss of Coordination

If someone suddenly loses their coordination, has difficulty standing or walking, or displays sudden clumsiness, it could in-

dicate an overdose affecting the central nervous system.

In Case of Overdose

If you suspect someone is overdosing, it's crucial to act quickly. Here are a few essential steps you should take:

1. Stay Calm: Panicking can make the situation worse. Try to remain calm and composed.

posed.

2. Call for Help: Dial 911. Provide clear information about the situation, the person's symptoms, and any drugs you think they may have taken.

3. Check Responsiveness: If the person is unconscious, try to wake them up by shouting their name or gently shaking them.

4. Administer Narcan: This medication is used for the emergency treatment of known or suspected opioid overdose and can be found for free at <https://isavefl.com>.

5. Perform First Aid: If the person isn't breathing, begin performing CPR. If they are unconscious but breathing, place them in the recovery position to prevent choking.

Recovery Position Steps:

1. Place nearest arm at right angle with their palm facing up

2. Put the back of other hand under their cheek closest to you and hold it there

3. Bend the far knee, grasp the far leg and roll them onto their side

4. Open airway

6. Stay with the Person: Never leave an overdosing person alone. Stay with them until help arrives.

7. Provide Information: Once medical help arrives, provide them with as much information as possible. Details about the drugs taken, the time of ingestion, and the person's health history can all be helpful.

Please keep in mind that the advice provided serves as a general guideline. It is crucial to always prioritize and follow the instructions of medical professionals in these situations.

At Broward Health Medical Center, there is a team of addiction specialists and clinicians that work hand-in-hand, delivering evidence-based practices that address underlying issues to support recovery.

If you or a loved one needs help, please do not hesitate to contact Broward Health Medical Center at 954.468.8964 or BrowardHealth.org/Addiction.

Stand up

continued from page 1

Vincinte Thrower was one of the first to stand up and speak about his frustration with how long it has taken the community to notice that schools in Pompano Beach are in disrepair and have been for decades.

Former teachers, local activists, and pastors expressed concern over the construction projects that have taken away the dining area for the students at Markham Elementary. Building 1 where the cafeteria is located on the Markham campus is scheduled to be torn down and rebuilt in the next 18 months, meanwhile students are left eating breakfast and lunch in their classrooms.

Alumni for Blanche Ely spoke

about witnessing unsanitary conditions throughout the school because of a shortage of custodial staff.

"Something is wrong with the standard that we are accepting this filth in our schools and not demanding that they be clean," Elizabeth Massey said.

During the meeting, it was announced that Sanders Park Elementary is on the list of schools heading for closure. This could not be confirmed by the Broward County School Board, but students have complained of parts of the roof falling on them while learning, classrooms with no air conditioning and broken equipment in magnet school's news and media department.



State Representative Patricia Williams

Terry Byrd who owns a contracting business, is a Blanche Ely alumnus and spoke

about how the school looks the same as when he attended 10 years ago.

"I did a walk-through with one of my nephews and it was bittersweet because I had great memories however to see the school in the same condition was heartbreaking," said Byrd.

Byrd offered the services of his contracting business Riggs and Byrd Home Improvement to complete repairs at the school.

The principal for Blanche Ely High School, Tavures Williams and Markham Elementary Principal Shedrick Dukes answered questions as well as brought clarity and assurance that they were working steadily to address the issues at the

schools.

One of the next steps discussed was meeting with Mayor Rex Hardin and City Manager Greg Harrison to ask them to join the fight for safe and clean environments for schools in Pompano Beach.

Pat Williams has made her stance on the issue known and spoke about how she planned to stand by the community in this fight for safer schools in minority neighborhoods.

We are a force to be reckoned with and people know that," Williams said. "Our main goal is to take care of our students for our community and it's time for us to stand up and call them out."

Letter From the Editor



THE POWER OF SEPTEMBER

September is a catalyst. This is the month that everything just zooms by. After Labor Day, you might as well put your Christmas lights up. Remember over the summer when you were begging for fall to begin, and now you can't get time to slow down. Life is like that, wanting what you can't have and then having what you don't want.

IN this upcoming fall season, I encourage you to be present in the moments ahead and enjoy every sip of pumpkin spice... every hug with a family member you haven't seen in a while...every gust of wind...everything that makes you feel loved, included and wanted. We are special people, and we have to remind ourselves of such. We are resilient. Let me take it back a few hundred years so I can remind you, in September of 1830, the First National Negro

Convention was held. In September 1910 the National Urban League was founded – an organization that helps millions of Black people buy homes, start small business, and further their education. September is a month filled with Black progress. In September 1857 the National Black Women's Organization Movement was founded, which helped to distribute messages of “unity, activism, and race pride” before there was such a thing as Black Girl Magic. On that note in 1983, Vanessa Williams became the first Black woman to win Miss America. These accomplishments are just a short list of the progressive Black moments in history made this month. As this month ebbs and flows, remember your ancestors and be grateful for all they've done. Also, remember you will one day be an ancestor so shine as bright as you can, and help as many people as you can. The future is depending on you.

**With love, power, and respect,
Attiyya**

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