



News >> Page 4  
**Broward HealthPoint and Pompano Beach Launch “Stay Healthy Together”**



Inside the Hierholzer Teen Center

## Boys & Girls Clubs OF BROWARD COUNTY OPENS NEW TEEN CENTER IN POMPANO BEACH

By Attiyya Atkins,  
Villij News Staff

Pompano Beach, FL — A new community center in Pompano Beach aims to help teens reach their potential.

ON August 14, city officials, sponsors, and community leaders gathered at the Thomas D. Stephanis Club, 212 NW 16th Street, to cut the ribbon on the Hierholzer Teen Center. The new facility became The Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward County (BGBC) 17th Club and sixth

Teen Center within the County. The state-of-the-art center will focus on educating local teens with leadership skills, workforce development, mentoring and academic support for teens ages 13 to 18. There are also spaces for podcasting, gaming, pool tables, and a gym. It's been dubbed “a safe space, a creative space, a space for growth, learning, leadership, friendship

and opportunity for our teens... it took a village,” said Jazmine Williams, Teen Club Director. “It’s the place where your future begins to take place.” Nicknamed “The Club”, the center was designed to provide older BGBCB  
 ■ Boys & Girls, see page 11



Hierholzer Teen Center interior featuring youth programming spaces



Pompano Beach District 4 Commissioner Beverly Perkins visits the Hierholzer Teen Center



Woody Poitier at Fire Station 52 dedication



Commissioner Beverly Perkins, Fire Department staff, and Commissioner Alison Fournier commemorate the opening



Novice Johnson, Fire Department staff and Commissioner Perkins at the dedication ceremony

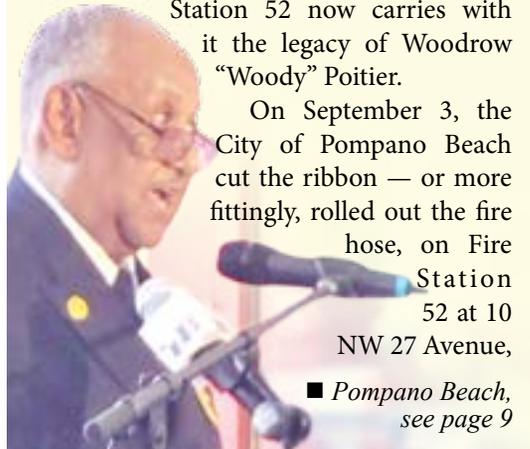
## Pompano Beach Honors Black History with Dedication of Fire Station 52

By Attiyya Atkins, Villij News Staff

POMPANO BEACH, FL — Every alarm answered from Pompano Beach’s Fire Station 52 now carries with it the legacy of Woodrow “Woody” Poitier.

On September 3, the City of Pompano Beach cut the ribbon — or more fittingly, rolled out the fire hose, on Fire Station 52 at 10 NW 27 Avenue,

■ Pompano Beach, see page 9



## Collier City Substation Opens, Residents Push for 24/7 Presence

BY VILLIJ NEWS STAFF

POMPANO BEACH, FL — Collier City residents and city leaders gathered on August 4 to mark the opening of a new Broward Sheriff’s Office (BSO) substation, a \$2.1 million investment designed to strengthen public safety in one of Pompano Beach’s most underserved neighborhoods.

The 2,750-square-foot facility at 441 NW 27th Avenue is the first of its kind in Collier City. Construction began in April 2024, and city officials say the building represents more than bricks and mortar. “It’s delivering for the residents — that’s really what it’s all about,” said Mayor Rex Hardin, who credited teamwork across  
 ■ Collier City, see page 11



Pompano Beach City Commissioners cut the ribbon at the new Collier City BSO Substation



# YOUR SEASON IS COMING

By **The One Minute Preacher**

Galatians 6:9

Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

**W**HAT is it that you want? What are you chasing? Success will cost you something — sacrifice, sweat, maybe even a few hits along the way. But don't let setbacks stop you.

As summer turns to fall, remember that every season has its purpose. The heat of summer tests your endurance. The cool winds of fall remind us that change is coming, that harvest follows

hard work, and that nothing we push through is wasted.

Brace yourself. Stay in the fight. Don't get tired. If chasing your dream were easy, everybody would already be living theirs. But just like the farmer waits on the season to shift, you've got to wait for your harvest to break through.

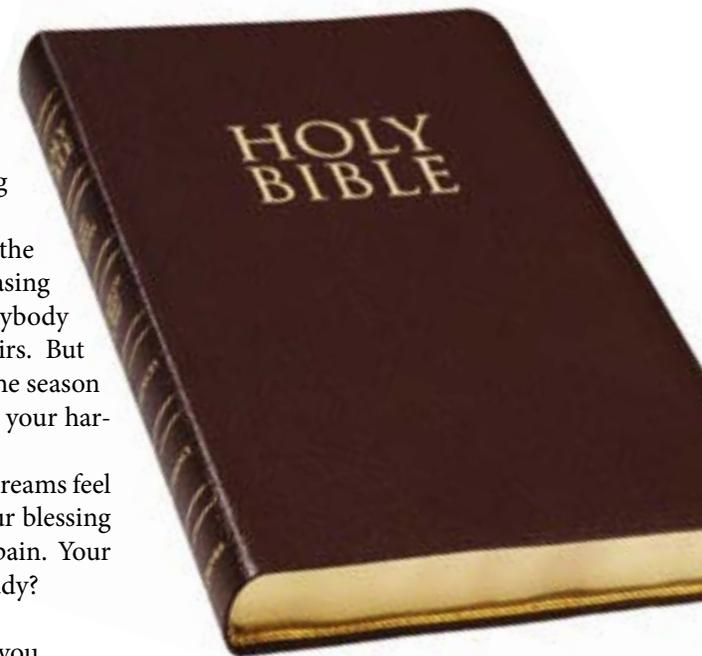
Hold on, even when your dreams feel like they're slipping away. Your blessing is on the other side of this pain. Your season is turning. Are you ready?

Stay connected. God bless you.

Follow The One Minute Preacher

Instagram: @The1MinutePreacher

YouTube: @TLGFashion



## ADVERTISE YOUR CHURCH IN

# VillijNEWS

**REACH YOUR COMMUNITY**

Connect with thousands of local, faith-centered readers.

**PROMOTE YOUR MISSION**

Share services, events, and outreach programs.

**SUPPORT A TRUSTED VOICE**

Partner with a Black-owned community publication.

**SPECIAL CLERGY RATE**

call 954-543-1423 or email [ads@villijnews.com](mailto:ads@villijnews.com).

## What You Can Do Today for a Healthier Tomorrow

# SEPTEMBER IS HEALTHY AGING AWARENESS MONTH

By Villij News Staff

As we celebrate Healthy Aging Awareness Month, Broward Health's internal medicine specialist, Dr. Denise Cohen, D.O., shares expert advice on how to stay healthy at every stage of life. From preventive screenings to lifestyle choices, Dr. Cohen emphasizes that small, consistent actions today can lead to a healthier tomorrow.

### PREVENTION IS POWER

“YOUR primary care provider is your top ally in fighting aging,” says Dr. Cohen. She stresses the importance of early detection and routine screenings. Women should begin Pap tests at age 21 and mammograms at 40, while colonoscopies should start at 45 for everyone. Staying up to date on vaccinations—including flu and shingles—and monitoring blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol are also key components of preventive care.

### MOVE MORE, AGE BETTER

Physical activity is a cornerstone of healthy aging. The CDC recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise



Dr. Denise Cohen, Broward Health

per week, such as walking, biking, or even mowing the lawn. Strength training twice a week is also encouraged to maintain muscle mass, protect joints, and support bone health. “Exercise not only benefits your body but also slows aging in the brain,” Dr. Cohen notes.

### GENETICS AREN'T DESTINY

Even with a family history

of chronic conditions like heart disease or diabetes, lifestyle choices can make a significant difference. “People who are fitter tend to have better outcomes if they do get sick,” says Dr. Cohen. A strong immune system and overall good health can help mitigate genetic risks.

### EAT FOR LONGEVITY

Dr. Cohen recommends

At Broward Health, we treat people with dignity and provide exceptional care with compassion and excellence,” Dr. Cohen says. “We’re here to help you stay healthy every day of your life.”

the Mediterranean diet for its heart-healthy benefits. This eating plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and olive oil, while limiting red meat, sugar, and saturated fats. “You truly are what you eat,” she says.

### RETHINK YOUR DRINK

When it comes to alcohol, moderation is key. The CDC advises no more than one drink per day for women and two for men. While a daily glass of wine may not be harmful for some, Dr. Cohen cautions that alcohol can increase the risk of falls, certain cancers, and skin aging. “Less is more,” she advises.

### SUN-SAFE FUN IN THE FLORIDA SUN

Enjoying the outdoors is vital for staying active, but sun protection is essential. Dr. Cohen recommends broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher, along with UV-protective clothing, hats, and

sunglasses. Staying hydrated is also crucial, especially in Florida's heat.

### THE DOCTOR'S TOP TIP

“If I could convince my patients to do just one thing, it would be to eat a healthy diet and keep up with preventive care,” says Dr. Cohen. “Prevention is the best way to make a difference, regardless of your genetics.”

### A JOYFUL HEART IS GOOD MEDICINE

Dr. Cohen practices what she preaches. “Laughter and a joyful heart are good medicine,” she says. “Find something every day that makes you laugh.”

### WHY BROWARD HEALTH?

“At Broward Health, we treat people with dignity and provide exceptional care with compassion and excellence,” Dr. Cohen says. “We’re here to help you stay healthy every day of your life.”

## YOU ARE APPRECIATED

# Black Business Month Event by Friends of Collier City Learning Library and the Black Xperience

By David Miller, Cultural Arts Ambassador

It is a wonderful feeling to know that Black independence is still alive in the city of Pompano Beach. On August 27, at the Jan Moran Collier City Learning Library, 2800 NW 9th Court, Pompano Beach, an event was held in honor of Black Business Month. Hosted by the Friends of the Library and the Black Xperience, the program acknowledged Bojo's Seafood Kitchen, 1540 NW 3rd Ave,

Pompano Beach, for 10 years of business in the community.

This pre-anniversary celebration featured fine art drawings on display by Broward Black Artist Group member S. Dawkins Art. A brief presentation by the Black Xperience highlighted the importance of supporting Black-owned businesses, along with a slideshow of images chronicling Bojo's growth over the years. The evening closed with catered food from Pollo Tropical.

The Friends of the Library

recorded 32 attendees on their sign-in sheet. Among the community leaders present were Attiyya Atkins, Publisher of Villij News; City Commissioner Darlene Smith (District 5); Evencia Janvier, President and CEO of the Pompano Beach Chamber of Commerce; Ed Phillips, Chairman of the Tiger Trail Festival; Victor Johnson, President of the Circle of Brotherhood Pompano Chapter; and Mary Phillips, CEO of Small Biz. Each offered remarks on the power of

Black business and made community announcements.

Bojo's Seafood Kitchen, a staple in Pompano Beach since 2015, has become a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) example of success in the future downtown corridor. Since opening, owner Brandon Smith has been recognized not only for his food but for his compassion—providing pans of fish to bereaved families and offering employment opportunities to second-chance in-

dividuals. These commitments have made Bojo's a noteworthy Black-owned business in Broward County.

Over the past ten years, Smith and his family have continued to weave Bojo's into the fabric of local tradition. Each year on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the restaurant serves free breakfast bowls before the annual parade. This ten-year milestone is more than just a business anniversary—it is a triumph for Black history and resilience in Pompano Beach.

# Broward HealthPoint and Pompano Beach Launch “Stay Healthy Together”

POMPANO BEACH, FL – In July, hundreds of residents gathered at Mitchell Moore Park to celebrate the launch of Stay Healthy Together, a new initiative from Broward HealthPoint and the City of Pompano Beach aimed at expanding access to community healthcare.

**T**HE program is designed to bring preventative and primary care directly into neighborhoods, reducing barriers and improving outcomes for families across Broward County.

“Our healthcare system is committed to extending care far beyond the walls of our hospitals,” said Shane Strum, President and CEO of Broward Health. “Through mobile units and partnerships with local municipalities, we are changing the healthcare delivery model.”

#### Breaking Down Barriers

Mobile health units for children and adults are already providing free health screenings and school physicals. Residents can also access workshops on topics such as creating birthing plans, car seat safety, and hypertension management. Community partners—including



Group photo featuring Pompano Beach Commissioner Beverly Perkins and Broward County School Board Superintendent Howard Hepburn

211 Broward, Area Agency on Aging, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the American Heart Association—were on hand to connect residents with additional services.

“We are truly invested in building a healthier Pompano Beach by making healthcare more accessible to everyone,” said Melida Akiti, Corporate Transformation Executive at Broward Health.

At the kickoff event, kids enjoyed face painting and art activities, while organizers distributed 600 bags of food and served 700 hot lunches.

Leaders and Community

#### Support

Florida State Senator Tina Polsky, Broward County Commissioner Lamar Fisher, Pompano Beach Mayor Rex Hardin, Vice Mayor Alison Fournier, and Commissioner Audrey Fesik joined residents at the launch. Legislative aides from Representative Mitch Rosenwald’s office also attended.

“Working together, we’re changing the way we deliver primary and maternal services while also addressing food insecurity,” Strum said. “This is what happens when community organizations unite to create real change.”

#### WHAT’S NEXT

Broward HealthPoint’s mobile units will continue to be stationed at Mitchell Moore Park and in targeted Pompano Beach zip codes three days a week for the next eight

weeks. Services include screenings, nutrition counseling, and referrals to specialists. After the initial rollout, the units will remain in the community one day a week for the next two years.

The long-term vision is to expand Stay Healthy Together into additional cities across Broward County.



**Villij**NEWS  
BROWARD COUNTY NEWS  
VILLIJNEWS.COM

**Publisher** : A+ Editing & Content Creation

**Editor-in-Chief** : Attiyya Atkins

**Distribution** : Atkins United Moving

☎ 954-543-1423

✉ Villijnews@gmail.com



# Goats, not Ghosts, at Westview Cemetery

By Christ Saint-Hilare

Westview Cemetery has a goat problem. As odd as it may initially sound, goats are a relatively common sight at cemeteries. They're usually used as a low-cost alternative source of lawn care, but from a cursory glance at Westview Cemetery, located on West Copans Road in Pompano Beach, it's clear that adequate lawn care has not been a priority for quite some time.

**T**HE goats serve as the perfect metaphor for the state of the cemetery. Their ears are clipped. Their fur is matted, gray and dirty. Some are half sheared, and through divine irony there is even one whose fur has completely dreadlocked. It is a heartbreaking sight, matched only by the state of the cemetery itself.

Before even stepping foot into Westview, visitors are greeted by an abandoned bus, piles of trash, and tires underneath a sign that surely has never been used, with a number to call regarding dumping concerns. Visiting hours end at 6 p.m., but the gate which surrounds the cemetery is falling apart, leaving several unintended entrances, and the likelihood of enforcement doubtful.

The most disturbing sight is the graves themselves. No headstones to identify them, caskets only partially buried, weathered by time and the elements.

In contrast, located at 400 SE 23rd Ave, Pompano Beach, FL 33062, less than five miles from Westview is the Pompa-



Westview Cemetery, Pompano Beach

no Beach Cemetery. There are no goats in the Pompano Beach cemetery. No trash anywhere in sight. The lawn is so well maintained, the best comparison is a country club. The gate completely surrounds the enclosure, and each entrance is closed outside visiting hours. The graves are fully submerged, with flowers and headstones on everyone. One glance and you can feel the reverence with which they treat the citizens of the cemetery.

Pompano Beach has a sordid history with segregation and a lack of prioritization — or even consideration — regarding its citizens of color. The type of desecration occurring at Westview doesn't happen overnight. It takes consistency in beating down the public being serviced enough they internalize that there is absolutely nothing they can do. The struggles of the community whose families reside at Westview is real. They've had parts of the land

sold off without their consent, tried to sue to regain control multiple times and have been shot down by the courts. They've been promised change, but efforts only last about the time it takes the ink to dry.

It's a tough pill to swallow in 2025, in the face of this seemingly endless progress. But the disparity between Westview and the Pompano Beach cemetery isn't isolated, it's a reflection of an issue that lies at the core of America and even

its politics. Indiana Governor Mike Braun has gone on record to say that interracial marriage should be decided by the state. That mentality is the same one that led to the creation of Westview. If someone in a position of power that high can boldly make an assertion like that, and the effects of segregation are still being felt today with not even the dead being spared... has anything changed? or has the Black community been pacified with the illusion of equity?

## Hurricane Season Alert

Hurricane Season is from June 1 to November 30. Pompano Beach has one evacuation shelter at Pompano Beach High School.

# Sheriff Tony Backs Unions' No-Confidence Vote in Deerfield Beach City Manager

By Villij News Staff

DEERFIELD BEACH, FL — Broward Sheriff

Dr. Gregory Tony is publicly siding with public safety unions after their vote of no confidence in Deerfield Beach City Manager Rodney Brimlow, escalating tensions over ongoing budget negotiations.



Deerfield Beach City Manager Rodney Brimlow



BSO Sheriff Gregory Tony

**I**N a statement released August 14, Tony said the unions' action reflected "deep concerns" about how the city has handled funding for Broward Sheriff's Office personnel. "Their collective action reflects deep concerns regarding the handling of critical budget negotiations that directly impact the safety and well-being of Broward Sheriff's Office personnel and the residents and

visitors we serve in Deerfield Beach," Tony said.

At issue are salary and staffing concerns. Sheriff Tony noted that deputies and civilian

staff "work tirelessly under difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions" and deserve competitive pay aligned with industry standards. Accord-

ing to Tony, one BSO proposal could have saved the city roughly \$900,000. Instead, he said, "misinformation, false information or incomplete infor-

mation" from the city manager to commissioners has left both staff and residents with "an unacceptable level of uncertainty."

The unions' letter of no confidence signals rare public discontent, underscoring a strained relationship between city management and law enforcement during high-stakes budget talks.

Sheriff Tony urged city leadership to reset course. "I encourage city leadership to listen to the voices of our public servants and work toward a resolution that prioritizes safety, fairness and transparency," he said.

The Sheriff added that his office remains committed to serving Deerfield Beach residents, even amid political friction. "I will continue to advocate for the resources and support our personnel need to do their jobs effectively," Tony said.

The unions' letter, which outlines their concerns in detail, can be read in full here.



## Man on Scooter Killed in Pompano Beach Crash

By Villij News Staff

POMPANO BEACH, FL — A 63-year-old Pompano Beach man died after losing control of his scooter in an afternoon crash on South Powerline Road, according to the Broward Sheriff's Office.

The incident happened around 1:34 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 1, in the 500 block of South Powerline Road near Palm Aire Drive. Detectives say Jeffrey Ferrer, who was riding a 2023 Italica RX 150 scooter, was headed south in the far-right lane when he entered the intersection.

Investigators reported

that a gray vehicle stopped at Palm Aire Drive, but as Ferrer continued through, he veered toward the center lanes. His scooter struck the raised concrete median, ejecting him into the northbound left-turn lane.

Ferrer was rushed by Pompano Beach Fire Rescue to Broward Health North Medical Center, where he later died.

BSO detectives said speed and impairment do not appear to be factors in the crash. The Traffic Homicide Unit is continuing to investigate.

## EXCLUSIVE: TWO BODIES FOUND ON POMPANO'S BEACH

### *Months later, Villij News remains the only source reporting on the case*

By Christ Saint-Hilaire

Two individuals were found deceased on the beach between Fourth and Fifth street and Briny Avenue at approximately 2:30 p.m. Sunday, July 20, after the Broward County Sheriff's Office received a call regarding the unresponsive individuals. First responders from Pompano Beach Fire and Rescue confirmed the individuals were deceased. The Broward County Sheriff's Office homicide and crime unit immediately opened an investigation.

As of Sunday, Aug. 17, according to the incident report, it has been determined that the incident is not suspected to be gang-related. According to the Broward County Sheriff's Office Public Information Unit, "At this time, there is no foul play suspected in their deaths, and there is no indication that the individuals washed up onto

At this time, there is no foul play suspected in their deaths, and there is no indication that the individuals washed up onto the beach."

The investigation remains active, and much of the information regarding potential suspects, victims or any other interconnected members has been redacted.

No other information has been released from the Broward Sheriff's Office.

According to the FBI's Crime Explorer data as of December 2024, Florida's aggravated assault rate is triple that of the national average, and the clear-

ance rate, which is when police either arrest, charge or turn an offender over to the courts for prosecution, is nearly half of the national average. The Pompano Beach division of BSO stopped reporting its numbers in 2020, but as of the last time they did, Pompano Beach's aggravated assault rate was 1,122.5% higher than the national average.

The year 2020 was an outlier due to COVID-19 and other unforeseen circumstances, but since 2022 Florida's aggravated assault rate has stayed at or just above triple the national average. With those numbers being so comparatively high, some cases are likely to fall through the cracks. But with this incident occurring in broad daylight, on a weekend, in a high-traffic area, it paints a grim picture of the information—or lack thereof—being communicated to the public regarding their safety.



# BSO Seeks Help After Drive-By Shooting in Collier City

By Villij News Staff

POMPANO BEACH, FL — A quiet early morning in Collier City was shattered when bullets ripped through a home on Northwest 27th Avenue — and now detectives are asking for the community’s help.

**A**ROUND 3:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 6, Broward Sheriff’s Office deputies responded to reports of a shooting near the 1300 block of NW 27th Ave-

nue. According to investigators, a light-colored vehicle drove past the home, reversed back into view, and then two armed suspects jumped out. Surveillance video shows them firing more than a dozen rounds into the residence before fleeing.

Miraculously, no one inside the home was injured. Still, neighbors say the violence is another reminder of why families in Collier City have long called for stronger safety measures.

Detectives with BSO’s Violent Crimes Unit are leading the investigation. They’re urging anyone with information to contact Det. Lisa Almanza-Londono at 754-333-0693 or submit a tip through the SaferWatch app. Anonymous tips can be shared through Broward Crime Stoppers at 954-493-TIPS (8477), online at broward-crimestoppers.org, or by dialing TIPS (8477) from any cellphone in the U.S. Cash rewards may be available for information that leads to an arrest.

**SUPPORT THE FRIENDS OF THE JAN MORAN COLLIER CITY LEARNING LIBRARY**

**2800 NW 9<sup>th</sup> Ct,  
Pompano Beach, Fl 33069**

**SUPPORT LOCAL JOURNALISM**

**Attiyya Atkins**  
Scan to pay \$Tiyais

# HAMILTON HITS THE BIG SCREEN: A REVOLUTION REIGNITED

By June Atlas,  
Villij News Staff

The revolution has returned to the big screen. On September 5, Hamilton, the Broadway phenomenon that flipped history into hip-hop, made its long-awaited movie theater debut in honor of the show's 10th anniversary.

**Y**ES, we've streamed it, we've sung along to it, but there's something different about seeing a story of uprising, vision, and voice on a giant screen, together. And honestly? That message couldn't come at a better time.

Hamilton reminds us that revolutions don't just happen with guns or battles, they happen with ideas. They happen with words on paper, ink on documents, and voices refusing to be silenced. Alexander Hamilton wrote himself into history. He took nothing but his pen, his hunger, and his audacity, and changed the world.

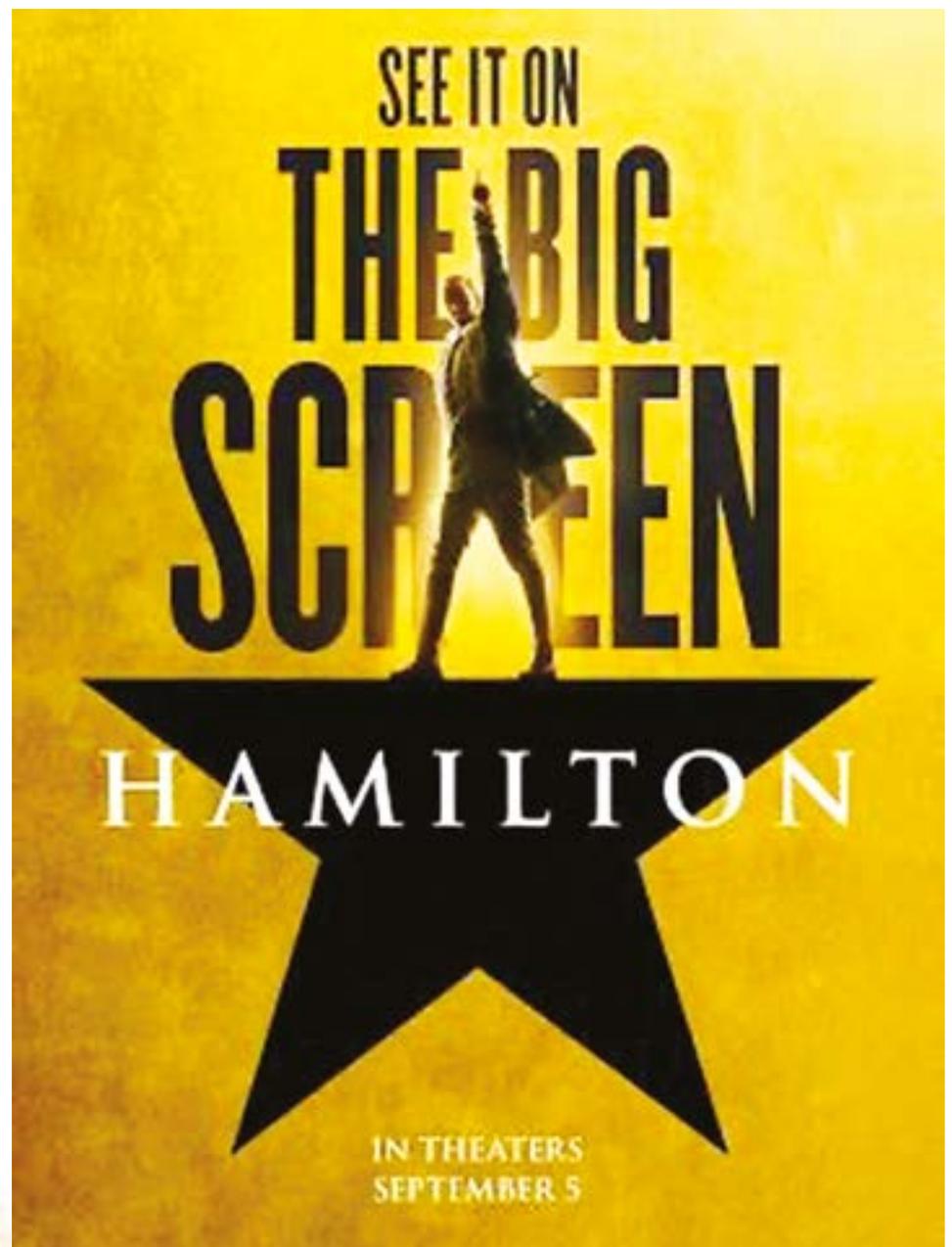
That's a lesson for us right now.

In a time where misinformation runs wild, literacy is power. Reading is resistance. Writing is revolution. Our communities need to own their narratives, just like Hamilton did. Because if you don't tell your story, somebody else will — and they'll tell it wrong.

And just as important: living authentically. The cast of Hamilton re-imagined America's founders with faces and voices that looked like ours, soundtracked with the rhythms of our culture. That wasn't just theater, that was a statement: history is not just what happened, it's who tells it.

So as Hamilton lights up theaters this fall, don't just see it as entertainment. See it as a reminder. A reminder to pick up your pen, to raise your voice, to live boldly and truthfully—even when the world prefers you muted.

As Hamilton himself declares, "History has its eyes on you." The question is, what story will you write?



# Majority of Americans Still See Racism Against Black People as a National Problem

By Villij News Staff

A new national poll shows that Americans continue to see racism against Black people as a serious issue across the country. In Gallup's latest survey, nearly two out of three adults said racial discrimination toward Black people is "widespread." This level of concern matches the highest point ever recorded since Gallup began asking the question in 2008.

## Who Sees It Most Clearly?

Black respondents were by far the most likely to recognize racism as a pressing issue, with

more than 8 in 10 saying it is common. Majorities of Hispanic and White participants also agreed, though at lower rates. These findings suggest that while most Americans acknowledge racism exists, Black communities experience and perceive it most directly.

## Where Bias Shows Up

When asked about daily life, more than half of U.S. adults said Black people are not treated fairly in encounters with law enforcement, particularly during traffic stops. Other areas — including healthcare, retail shopping, workplaces, restaurants, and neighborhood businesses — also showed significant levels of perceived unfairness.

Black adults consistently reported higher rates of discrimination than White and Hispanic adults. The biggest divide was in the workplace: almost 6 in 10 Black respondents said they are treated less fairly on the job compared with only 3 in 10 White respondents.

## Civil Rights Gains — With Limits

Most Americans still believe civil rights for Black people have improved over their lifetime, though the sense of progress is weaker than in the past. Fewer people now say rights have "greatly improved," while more describe the changes as only "somewhat better."

At the same time, fewer Americans support creating

new civil rights laws than did in 2020, when the killings of George Floyd and others sparked a nationwide push for reforms. Black adults remain the most likely to call for stronger protections, with three-quarters saying new laws are needed.

## Jobs and Housing Equality in Question

The poll also found skepticism about whether Black Americans have equal opportunities in employment and housing. Roughly 4 in 10 respondents said Black people face disadvantages in both areas. White and Hispanic adults were much more likely than Black adults to believe opportunities are equal, showing a persistent

gap in perception.

## The Takeaway

The numbers paint a complicated picture. On one hand, there is broad agreement that racism is a continuing problem in America. On the other, fewer people believe bold new policies are needed to address it. For Black communities, the statistics reflect realities that go beyond opinion polls — unequal treatment by police, at work, and in access to housing and healthcare remain part of daily life.

As conversations about race and equity continue, the question for the nation is clear: will recognition of the problem lead to lasting change, or will progress stall at perception alone?

## Pompano Beach

*continued from page 1*

the city's newest state-of-the-art firehouse. But the celebration was about more than new walls and shiny bay doors. The station was dedicated to Poitier, Pompano Beach's first Black firefighter, whose legacy of service and leadership continues to shape the city.

## Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges

Poitier broke barriers in the 1960s as Pompano Beach's first Black firefighter, serving 24 years as a firefighter and paramedic before rising to lieutenant and earning recognition as Firefighter of the Year in 1986. He later carried his leadership into public service, representing District 4 on the City Commission for six years.

Today, Poitier still serves the city as a mentor, community activist, and member of both the Housing Authority Board and EMS Advisory Board. He also operates the Poitier Funeral Home, continuing his family's 57-year legacy of providing compassionate service to the community.



Firefighter amphibious response vehicle on display



Memorial wall dedicated to Terryson Jackson inside Pompano Beach Fire Station 52

Current District 4 Commissioner Beverly Perkins called the dedication "a milestone celebration of diversity and service, honoring a trailblazing firefighter who broke barriers as the first Black firefighter in the City of Pompano Beach."

**A Station Rooted in Wellness**  
The new 16,145-square-foot, two-story facility was designed not only to withstand Category 5 hurricane winds but also to reflect Poitier's commitment to wellness. In addition to four drive-through bays, private bunks, and modern kitchens, the firehouse includes training

and fitness rooms that were built with health and safety at the forefront.

"Woody Poitier wanted this station to be built on the foundation of health and wellness," said Fire Chief Pete McGinnis during an August tour. "We put special focus on the fitness room, and a health and safety committee of firefighters designed it from the ground up."

"This training room is essentially Woody's room," McGinnis explained. "He chairs the EMS Advisory Board, and all of their meetings — where decisions are made about medications

and equipment — will now be held here."

The station also features a bronze plaque highlighting the eight dimensions of wellness. "Woody wanted health and safety to be the foundation, and this plaque explains exactly why the station is dedicated to him," said McGinnis.

## Honoring Service and Sacrifice

Station 52 also carries a powerful reminder of sacrifice. On the wall hangs a mural created by firefighter Ashley Coupe honoring Battalion Chief Terryson Jackson, who died in a helicopter crash

on August 28, 2023, while responding to a medical call.

"Terryson was a rock star. He was one of the best of us, one of the brightest," Sheriff Gregory Tony said following the crash. "The type of effort and commitment he had for this community — impeccable."

## More Than a Firehouse

From the bifold bay doors that shave seconds off response times to the new wellness plaque that cements Poitier's legacy, Fire Station 52 is more than just a building — it's a living story about progress, sacrifice, and Black history in Pompano Beach.



living room  
CONCERT SERIES

MARLO  
VASHTI

SEP 25 | 7PM

**Feel Every Word —  
Marlo Vashti Live, Up Close**  
Poet. Jazz Vocalist.  
Soul-Stirrer. An intimate  
night of powerful music  
and presence.



THE HIVE BLACK BOX THEATER  
335 DR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR BLVD. POMPANO BEACH, FL  
POMPANOBEACHARTS.ORG | 954.786.7879



SCAN FOR  
MORE INFO

Boys & Girls

*continued from page 1*



Inside the Hierholzer Teen Center



Mayor Rex Hardin and Commissioner Beverly Perkins at the Hierholzer Teen Center dedication event



Podcast recording station at the Hierholzer Teen Center

members with their own space and tailored programs. The Thomas D. Stephanis Club serves more than 180 kids daily, city documents show. Roughly 58% of members live in households earning less than \$30,000 annually, 71% are from single-parent families, and 87% are Black youth.

The long-term effects of providing a safe space for teens has positive effects on community development, said Peter Oldbury, BGCBC

Board Chair. “There’s a multiplier effect to these teen communities...The teens come back and provide the services they got and pay it forward.”

Take Otto McCullough, former BGCBC member and current Broward Sheriff Deputy, as an example. He spoke at the event and reminisced about his time at BGCBC and the opportunity he received to attend a Dale Carnegie public speaking course.

According to Club Sponsors Larry and Christy Hierholzer, teen clubs increased club attendance by approximately 67%. To the Hierholzer’s, investing in this club is an investment in the future of Pompano. The City of Pompano matched the Hierholzer’s donation to create the club.

The club is teen approved. “It’s a place where you can come be yourself,” said BGCBC Youth of the Year, Kaleb E. at

the ribbon cutting ceremony.

“It’s nice we don’t have to be in the same rooms as the little kids,” said Carmelo L., a teen at the event.

“It could really get kids off the streets,” said Klayton D., a teen at the event. He added that teens can use the resources at the center to apply for colleges and find jobs.

Local leaders including Florida Senator Tina Polsky, State Representative Mitch Rosenwald, Pompano Beach

Mayor Rex Hardin, Pompano Beach Commissioner Beverly Perkins, and BSO joined BGCBC board members and staff for the celebration.

The impact of BGCBC’s programs was highlighted throughout the event: 97% of senior members graduate high school, 88% pursue higher education or trade schools, and 69% receive scholarships. The new center is expected to serve nearly 3,000 teens annually from across Broward County.

Collier City

*continued from page 1*

city departments for making the project possible.

Safety Concerns Close to Home

The location of the substation is deliberate. It sits just steps from the Community Food Store, a convenience store linked to drug activity and shootings. In February 2023, gunfire outside the store killed Delana James, a pregnant woman, and Dayvon Johnson, a father of four. Residents say tragedies like these made investment in Collier City non-negotiable.

“Anybody who has lived in Pompano Beach for any length of time knows Collier City has had issues in the past,” Hardin said. “But I tell you what — Collier City is a community on the move. It really is, and it’s flourishing out here.”

More Than a Building

District 5 Commissioner Darlene Smith, who represents the neighborhood, said the



project was years in the making. “This was just a dream, and it took some time, but here we are,” she told residents. “Substations build relationships. Officers will get to know the community, and residents will get to know their officers. That’s how trust is built.”

Sheriff Gregory Tony agreed, stressing that the new presence goes beyond enforcement. “There’s one thing for us to be called out to the community for an incident, but it’s another for us to reside here,” he said. “This is not us occupying a space. This is us living with you all,

day to day.”

The Debate Over Hours

Despite the celebration, some residents voiced disappointment that the station will not be open 24/7. For families who have endured late-night shootings, the limited hours feel like a missed

opportunity.

“We’ve waited years for this building,” one resident told Villij News. “Now we need it to be open when it matters most.”

Commissioner Smith echoed that sentiment, pointing to the facility’s hurricane-ready design, full kitchen, and backup power. “It clearly demonstrates the city’s willingness to provide safety and to listen to residents,” she said. “But Collier City deserves to feel secure — all day, every day.”

Looking Ahead

For now, city leaders call the substation a first step toward strengthening safety in Collier City. The real measure will be whether deputies stationed there can reduce crime, rebuild trust, and bring peace to a community that has been asking for both visibility and accountability.

“It’s vital for public safety,” Mayor Hardin said. “And it’s long overdue.”

## Letter From the Editor



## VILLIJ FAMILY

Let me keep it real with you. Recently, my car was stolen. Yes — straight out of my own neighborhood. But here's the twist: by God's grace, I got it back. And the person responsible? Closer to me than I ever imagined.

**S**EE, that's the part nobody warns you about: jealousy doesn't always come from strangers. Sometimes, it lives right next door. Sometimes, it sits at your table. As the saying goes, "The knives that cut the deepest are the ones sharpened by familiar hands."

But let me tell you this: no thief, no hater, no envious spirit can take what God has already placed in your life. "No weapon formed against you shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17). You can try to steal my car, but you can't steal my calling. You can try to slow me down, but you can't block the blessings

God has already written in my name.

People get jealous when they see you shining — but they don't realize the battles you've fought to get here. They want your fruit but could never handle your roots. And still, I move forward. Because every setback is just proof that God is still in control.

To my readers, I say this: don't be shaken by the envy around you. Take it as confirmation that you're walking in purpose. If no one's jealous, you're probably not making enough noise.

So yes, my car is back. My peace is intact. And my vision for this community is stronger than ever. Villij News is here to tell the truth, uplift the culture, and shine a light — even when others try to cast shadows.

**Unapologetically,  
Attiyya Atkins**

Editor-in-Chief, Villij News



## STOP TRYING TO TURN TRASH INTO TREASURE

**Q**: Annie, my homegirl has been with this man for four years and it's toxic. He cheats with women she knows from work and church... disappears for days, and has left bruises on her. Once she stayed with me a week to hide from him. But she always goes back. Now she's pregnant with their third child and still wants to marry him, saying marriage will make him change and give her kids "a real family," even though he's barely a father now.

I love her, but I'm exhausted and sick of wasting our

girls' nights on her drama. How do I get through to her when she refuses to see the truth?

- Tired of Playing Therapist

**A**: Baby, let's call it plain: your friend is trauma-bonded to a man who belongs on the curb with Saturday's trash. She's mistaking chaos for "commitment" and clinging to the fantasy of a family instead of the facts.

Here's the truth: marriage won't fix cheating, lying, or hands that get violent. A ring don't heal character, it just makes leaving more expensive. And pregnancy? That's

when abuse often gets worse, not better.

So what can you do? Set boundaries. Stop letting girls' night turn into group therapy for a man none of y'all even like. Tell her, "Sis, I love you, but I've only got 15 minutes for his drama—after that, it's cocktails and karaoke." Protect your peace.

If she won't listen, pivot: focus on safety planning, remind her the kids deserve stability, and let her know you'll be there when the fantasy finally burns down. Until then? Be her friend, not her fool.

Remember: a trash man doesn't turn into treasure just because you say "I do."

# VillijNEWS

## Gain local clout! Advertise with

# Villij News today