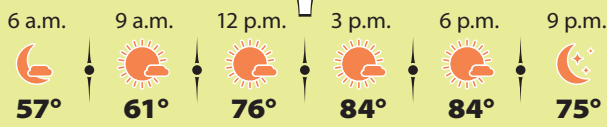




BEFORE THEY WERE VILLAGERS | C5
Peggy Leonard was a 4-H leader for 20 years and a camp counselor for the Boy Scouts.



LEAH SHEWMAKER ON FLORIDA | C1
Experience a classic Florida attraction nearby — glass-bottomed boats.



TOP WORLD AND NATION NEWS

CHINA, U.S. BATTLE FOR MIDDLE EAST INFLUENCE, A5

Around the World: Garbage becomes symbol of protest in Paris. **A3**

Across the Nation: Huge fire destroys New Jersey church. **A2**

In Florida: Museum welcomes two manatees to rehab facility. **C12**

ARTS & CULTURE NEWS

STORYTELLING LAB RETURNS TO THE SHARON

At The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center's fourth Storytelling Lab, students will craft stories about their lives. **A22**

SPORTS NEWS

FAMILIAR FACES AT VILLAGES OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Village Open Championships saw Todd McLain and Eric Wilson defeat Ted Meyer and Gary M. Miller in a best-of-3 championship round. **B5**

LOCAL NEWS

W. VIRGINIA CLUB TO HOST FASHION SHOW AND TEA

Former residents of the Mountain State will come together for their third annual fashion show to raise money for a good cause. **C7**

OUR TOWN | CONGREGATIONS ON THE COURT



Arianna Bennett | Daily Sun

Christine Granata, visiting from Virginia, left, and Kevin Jolicoeur, of the Village of McClure, participate with the Live Oaks Community Church pickleball group at Burnsed Recreation.

Churches Serve Up Fun With Pickleball

By JAMES DINAN | Daily Sun Senior Writer

Ray DiTirro was known around The Villages for being a pickleball instructor, but about a year and half ago, he got a request that would change his focus. "Lake Deaton United Methodist Church asked me to set up a pickleball outreach ministry," the Village of Pinellas resident said. "In less than two years, we already had around 220 people on our pickleball roster." Lake Deaton UMC is one of a handful of local churches that has turned a popular local activity into outreach, offering fun and fellowship to those looking to find a game, learn the rules and make friends. What makes Lake Deaton UMC's pickleball ministry a bit unusual is that it doesn't meet on any of the more than 200 pickleball courts available at recreation centers

Please See PICKLEBALL, A6

The Villages Health Using Alternative Recruitment Methods

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

The organization is offering up to \$10,000 for community members who refer doctor candidates.

By LEAH SCHWARTING | Daily Sun Specialty Editor

When it comes to hiring, The Villages Health is getting creative.

Right now the hiring landscape for the health care industry is still tough in a lot of places. To help fill its openings, TVH has turned to various methods, including offering up to \$10,000 for community members who refer a doctor who begins a career with them.

The health care industry was strained by the pandemic, and it's also a market with a lot of growth in its future. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects employment will increase by 13% from 2021 to 2031. That's

Please See HIRING, A10



The Villages Health has nine doctor openings: Four in primary care and five in specialty.

ONLY IN THE VILLAGES

By Leah Shewmaker

Mark Kirschenbaum will realize a dream soon when he performs with his father, Howard Kirschenbaum, for the first time on a Villages stage.

The pair will perform in Smash Productions' "Little Shop of Horrors" at 3 and 7 p.m. March 30-April 1 at Savannah Center.

"We actually did a show together when I was about 15, but we were in different scenes," said Mark, of the Village of Pennecamp. "In this show, he gets to sing to me. It's neat to watch him shine up there."

The sci-fi horror musical comedy, written by Alan Menken

Please See LITTLE SHOP, A10

EXPLORE & EXPERIENCE

OUT & ABOUT IN THE VILLAGES

Try This Today: Put on a Show With The Villages Twirlers & Drum Corps

The Villages Twirlers & Drum Corps celebrates its 20th anniversary entertaining spectators in Central Florida this year. The group is broken into three teams: the Show Team, the Parade Corps and the Drum Corps. The Show Team and Drum Corps perform at as many as 30 events a year, encompassing shows and parades. The parade corps focuses solely on parades. The Twirlers are filled with high-spirited performers such as Anne Pelle, of the Village of Briar Meadow. Events showcase a variety of music and costumes. Visit thevillagestwirlers.com for more information. — Greg Hughes, Daily Sun



Arianna Bennett | Daily Sun

IN ENTERTAINMENT

Take a Tour Of the Historic Baker House
Find out more, **D1**

Plus: Find the lineup of entertainment at the town squares, theaters and beyond, **A15**

AT RECREATION CENTERS

Happening near you: From aqua aerobics to Zumba and everything in between, there's fun for everyone, **C8-9**

LOVIN' THE LIFESTYLE

Plan your perfect day in The Villages, **D1**

Recipes	D1
Poetry	D3-4
Advice	D5
Comics	D6
Puzzles	D7
Horoscope	D9

from the front page

LITTLE SHOP

Continued from A1

and Howard Ashman, follows the shy Seymour Krelborn (Mark), who works for Mr. Mushnik (Bill Krone) at a floral shop.

He stumbles upon a strange plant, which he names “Audrey 2” (DJ Hiner), after his co-worker, Audrey (Pinky Bigley), who he is in love with.

Seymour soon discovers that the carnivorous plant has a taste for human blood.

“A lot of people might be skeptical because it’s a dark comedy, but it’s very funny and hard not to enjoy,” Mark said. “We have an extraordinary chorus and audiences will love the singing.”

Howard plays Bernstein, a bigshot from NBC who offers Seymour his own gardening show.

“I come in as a representative of NBC and I get to pick on him — it’s great,” he said. “It’s easy to do with him.”

Mark said Seymour has been a dream role for him since he was 14 years old.

“It’s usually cast with a much younger person, but in The Villages, I finally have an opportunity to do it,” he said. “And of course, doing that with my dad onstage with me is awesome.”

Howard always supported Mark in his theatrical endeavors, which started with Mark’s role as Charlie in “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” in high school.

Howard said he was so proud of Mark when he came home and announced that he got the title role in the show.

“Everyone always said how talented he was,” said Howard, of the Village of Pennecamp.

Howard said he started



Arianna Bennett | Daily Sun

Mark and Howard Kirschenbaum, both of the Village of Pennecamp, rehearse for “Little Shop of Horrors.”

performing after one of Mark’s directors asked him to help out, so he worked backstage and performed in a few shows.

When he moved to The Villages, he didn’t perform for a while, but Mark inspired him to try it again.

Mark said he sometimes helps his dad with song choices for auditions, as well as music and character work for shows.

“He always drove me to play practice, so it’s cool seeing him do it now,” Mark said. “I’m so proud of my dad, seeing him do what I chose to do as my career. I love watching him enjoy it and thrive at it.”

Mark studied musical theater at University of Miami and started working on cruise ships as a singer and dancer.

“I was nervous about the career he picked, because it’s a hard one,” Howard said. “But every time we saw him perform, we saw how

great he was. My wife and I started going on cruises again because of him.”

Mark also performed in musical theater shows around the country for about 20 years before moving to The Villages.

Now, he performs in shows around the area, and audiences may recognize him from his most recent performance as Dindon and Renaud in The Studio Theatre Tierra Del Sol’s “La Cage aux Folles.”

“I was cast as the villain in the last three or four shows I’ve done at The Studio Theatre,” Mark said. “Seymour is the hero in this one, so it’s fun to do that.”

Howard said Mark and Bigley are doing a great job together, as well as the rest of the cast, preparing for the opening of “Little Shop of Horrors.”

“I am a really proud father,” Howard said. “Mark is so talented. I enjoy watching him — it’s my favorite part of the show.”

HIRING

Continued from A1

much higher than average for all occupations, and equates to about 2 million new jobs during that period.

While that’s good news for health care professionals, it also means employers must find people to fill those openings.

“So, 2 million new jobs — how many new applicants?” said Dr. Jeff Lowenkron, TVH chief medical officer.

“That’s really the key question, because that’s the demand side of it. The supply side though seems to be smaller, which means everybody’s competing for the same folks.”

TVH’s patient-focused model has its own specific demands. The practice sizes are capped at 1,250 patients who are served by a doctor, a nurse-practitioner or physician’s assistant, and three support staff.

This model allows doctors to spend more time with their patients, but it also means that, as The Villages grow and more patients sign up with TVH, they need more staff members to support it.

“We’re committed to keeping the practice sizes the same and the growth of The Villages links in with the growth of The Villages Health,” Lowenkron said. “The surrounding communities are all growing, and that commitment to keeping the patient experience similar means you have to hire more physicians than other places.”

To get the staff members it needs, TVH sent out mailers, made targeted phone calls, offered incentives to existing employees to help fill

“We’re committed to keeping the practice sizes the same ... and that commitment to keeping the patient experience similar means you have to hire more physicians than other places.”

DR. JEFF LOWENKRON
The Villages Health
chief medical officer

openings, recruited through conferences, “everything except for standing out by the road with a sign,” said Cheri Benedetti TVH’s senior vice president human resources officer.

Doctor recruitment is a particular area of focus. One of the ways TVH recruits is through educational programs for medical students. But, while those studying to become physician’s assistants and nurse practitioners can be hired after they finish training, those studying to become doctors must complete their residencies.

“So we’ve had a much more

successful ability to fill those positions,” Lowenkron said. “So, even as we grow and we add those in, they’ve been more accessible from the perspective of finding folks and filling the positions.”

That’s where the outside referral program comes in. Anyone who has a connection with an experienced and qualified physician can refer them to TVH and go through the process, Benedetti said.

TVH currently has nine openings for doctors, most of them to accommodate future growth. Four of those are for primary care doctors, and five are for specialty care.

However, that doesn’t mean they’re necessarily limiting themselves to hiring nine doctors, said Bob Trinh, TVH chief executive officer.

“If we find more physicians than our current need, we’ll hire them given it’s hard to find high quality physicians,” Trinh said.

To get the referral money, job candidates must mention the name of the person who referred them when they get a call from a recruiter. Only submit referrals if the physician in question knows and approves of you referring them.

The money will be distributed based on how long the doctor works with TVH, with the first payment made after the doctor has worked at TVH for three months.

Those who want to know more about the specific criteria can email clinician.recruitment@thevillageshealth.com or visit tinyurl.com/2p8n8tu9.

“Our hope is if we can get one hire from this external initiative, that’s a win,” Trinh said.

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