



BEFORE THEY WERE VILLAGERS | D5
Trevor Bailey owns his own construction company and at one point raced Alfa Romeos.

6 a.m. 77°
9 a.m. 81°
12 p.m. 87°
3 p.m. 87°
6 p.m. 84°
9 p.m. 82°

GARRETT SHIFLET ON SCHOOLS | D1
Local schools are making preparations for classes to return in August.



TOP WORLD AND NATION NEWS

U.S. ECONOMY MAY MAKE A 'SOFT LANDING,' A5

Across the Nation: Teen reported missing in 2015 was at home. **A2**

In Florida: Gov. DeSantis raised \$20 million since announcing run. **A3**

In Business: Companies are cooling off rewards programs. **D10**

SPORTS NEWS

WMHS RECEIVER RESHUFFLE KEY TO NEXT SEASON

Wildwood Middle High School had many of its top receivers graduate. This grants opportunities for a number of young receivers this season. **B5**

LOCAL NEWS

NEW WILDWOOD SCHOOL SEEKING SPONSORS

The newly opening Wildwood Intermediate School is offering sponsorship opportunities for local groups and organizations. **D3**

LOCAL NEWS

VHS GRADUATE RETURNS AS A YOUTH PASTOR

Self-described Villages Charter School "lifer" Brycen Holt has come back to serve as a youth pastor for Family Church Sumter. **D6**

TVH Honors Health Care Workers By Celebrating Core Values

The Villages Health awarded several staff members at the end of a staff appreciation week.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND
Daily Sun Senior Writer

As part of its mission to create and maintain a positive workplace, The Villages Health recently wrapped up a staff appreciation week that culminated in an awards ceremony.

Every TVH care center participated in themed dress days and special challenges throughout the week. Team members also nominated peers and leaders for The Villages Health Core Value Awards, given to those who demonstrate exceptional performance and exemplify the company's core values.

"This week has been a fun time as we celebrate the work that we do together and highlighted our team members' demonstration of the TVH core values," said Bob Trinh, CEO of The Villages Health. "It's in the spirit of our core values of passion and teamwork that we create a healthy and fun workplace where we can enjoy the work that we do with one another."

On June 26, a record-breaking 215 nominees were announced. The 30 semi-finalists were announced on June 28, and the top six were invited to The Villages Health administrative offices

Please See **HEALTH, A8**

OUR TOWN | CELEBRATING RECREATION



India Pantin | Daily Sun

The Villages Recreation and Parks employees work with residents to bring sports that they enjoy to recreation centers, such as water volleyball at Savannah Recreation. The department partnered with The Villages water volleyball league to create Villages-wide standard rules for the sport.

The Villages Toasts Its Parks and Recreation

By MADDIE CUTLER | Daily Sun Senior Writer

Opportunities for active and passive recreation are endless in The Villages, and this month is the time to celebrate.

July is National Parks and Recreation Month, and The Villages Recreation and Parks Department is honoring this year's theme of "Where Community Grows" with special events throughout The Villages.

Pam Henry, manager of lifestyle,

events and public relations for the department, said it is important for them to mark the occasion.

"As a longtime parks and recreation professional, National Parks and Recreation Month not only educates residents on the positive impact we have on this community every day, but reiterates to me and The Villages Recreation and Parks

Please See **PARKS, A8**

EXPLORE & EXPERIENCE

OUT & ABOUT IN THE VILLAGES

Try This Today: Soak Up the Sun With Beach Tennis at The Villages

Beach tennis is one of the more popular activities in The Villages. You can find the sport at five locations with a total of eight courts spread throughout the community. Games are filled with lots of laughs, sandy toes and competitive fun. Players use a racquet similar to a pickleball paddle to hit the ball over the net. There are players of all skill levels, so anyone is welcome to play. Summer is here and temperatures are high, so beach tennis is a great way to get outside like Lyndy Gaylor, of the Village of Pennecamp, to enjoy the sun. — Greg Hughes, Daily Sun



India Pantin | Daily Sun

IN ENTERTAINMENT

Come Visit the Market of Marion in Belleview

Find out more, **E1**

Plus: Find the lineup of entertainment at the town squares, theaters and beyond, **E3**

AT RECREATION CENTERS

Happening near you: From aqua aerobics to Zumba and everything in between, there's fun for everyone, **D8-9**



Plan your perfect day in The Villages, **E1**

Recipes	E1
Poetry	E4
Advice	E5
Comics	E6
Puzzles	E7-8
Horoscope	E9

from the front page



George Horsford | Daily Sun

Judy and Craig Deyer, left, of the Village of Hemingway, along with Rita Taylor, center, of the Village of Woodbury, and Recreation Supervisor Anna Summer, participate in the National Walking Day event in April.

PARKS

Continued from A1

staff that what they do day to day matters," Henry said.

For almost 40 years, National Parks and Recreation Month has celebrated the nation's parks and its more than 160,000 park and recreation professionals, according to the National Parks and Recreation Association. In Florida that includes an award-winning state park system comprising 175 state parks, as well as entities like The Villages Recreation and Parks Department that craft creative programming.

Throughout the month, the department will offer programs on health and well-being, environmental resilience and how to help the local community.

The first event, 5 Hacks for Mindfulness, is at 3 p.m. Tuesday at Lake Miona Recreation. Other events, like a trivia session with The Villages Health on July 14, focus on the benefits of being in nature, exercising and exploring national parks.

Later in the month, residents can attend activities such as learning how to cultivate native plants on July 28. For a full list of events, check out the Recreation and Parks publication available at any recreation center or online at districtgov.org.

The month also celebrates the volunteers, part-time and seasonal workers who help keep parks and recreation programs going.

Linda Morrison, of the Village of St. James, volunteers with the Friends of Lake Griffin State Park group that supports Lake Griffin State Park in Fruitland Park.

State park staff and volunteers who work in the recreation and parks industry are thankful for the month because of the spotlight it puts on the importance of these public spaces, Morrison said.

"I'm really aware of the need for parks, aware of how our job is to work in sync with nature," Morrison said. "We all need to take the time to reflect on our impact on nature and its lasting effects, but also how being in nature has an impact on us."

The Villages Recreation and Parks Department also is assisted by its own dedicated volunteer corps.

In 2022, more than 5,000 volunteer leaders of resident lifestyle groups gave at least 252,500 service hours — breaking the department record.

And while the department is hosting special events in July, its impact on residents is felt year-round, Henry said.

Hundreds of residents meet at Villages recreation centers every day to socialize and participate in department events. The department also works with about 4,300 clubs in The Villages to make sure they have what they need to thrive.

Gino Mion, leader of The Villages water volleyball league, said he is grateful The Villages provides so many opportunities for residents to be active.

"There are different levels to play water volleyball in The Villages, so people of

minimal skill level don't have to feel pressure if they play with advanced players," said Mion, of the Village of St. James. "It's such a popular thing in The Villages, so there are plenty of chances to play."

Mion said he appreciates that the recreation department is willing to work with residents who love water volleyball. Several years ago, the league partnered with the department to create Villages-wide water volleyball rules.

"There are water volleyball meetups at least once a day every day here, and we had people playing by one set of rules at one pool and different rules in another," he said. "We didn't want there to be confusion or frustration if people played in multiple pools."

Abundance of Love, a nonprofit, meets at three recreation centers twice a month. The group is made up of lifelong knitters and beginners, so people help each other when they can.

"We all like coming to the recreation centers because we know we can see our friends and have fun while helping other people," said club leader Jen Smith, of the Village Santiago. "The group is sometimes pretty large, so without the recreation centers we'd have to host at our houses, which could be difficult."

Senior writer Maddie Cutler can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5386, or maddie.cutler@thevillagesmedia.com.

HEALTH

Continued from A1

June 30 to receive their awards.

"We also want to promote diversity," said Cheri Benedetti, human resources senior vice president at The Villages Health. "It's not the same person winning every year. We make sure that people in every department get a chance."

Rolling monitors were set up in every cafe and lounge throughout The Villages Health care centers to broadcast the award ceremony.

Judges for the awards included a panel of up to 20 people, including Dr. Elliot Sussman, chairman of The Villages Health Board of Directors.

Sussman personally announced new patient advisor Katherine Hildenbrand as the overall top finalist.

"The recipient of this year's award has exceeded all of these expectations and has trained several new team members by sharing extensive experience and knowledge of TVH's processes, procedures and workflows," Sussman said. "Over the past year, when the department's supervisor was working on a project that pulled her away from day-to-day operations, this person made significant contributions to fill in whenever necessary to assist the department leaders and teammates."

Last year's winner presented Hildenbrand with the Dr. Elliot J. Sussman TVH Core Values Award of Excellence, a crystalline traveling trophy engraved with the names of past winners.

Hildenbrand was not expecting a nomination, let alone the multiple ones she received.

"I was really shocked," Hildenbrand said. "I didn't know that so many people voted. It's a nice feeling."

As a member of the New Patient Team at The Villages Health Specialty Care Center at Spanish Springs, Hildenbrand is used to being behind the scenes. She joined the company three years ago and said she was overwhelmed by the acknowledgment.

"It just shows the compassion of everybody and it's nice to know that you're appreciated," she said. "Especially being on the New Patient Team, we answer the phones

all day, so we don't have that one-on-one connection with everybody. This is a nice way to be able to feel that connection."

The New Patient Team takes all incoming calls from new patients, scheduling appointments and answering insurance questions.

Hildenbrand was chosen because of the amazing work she did at a time when her department was facing challenges, Trinh said.

"She was nominated multiple times, and just the specific examples of her demonstration of core values helped her stand out," he said. "It's a tough department because of the number of calls that come in every day, and she was helping all these new team members be onboarded when they were significantly short-staffed, which put even more pressure on the team."

The Villages Health doesn't plan to stop when it comes to expanding staff appreciation efforts, Benedetti said. In addition to the core



Bob Trinh, right, CEO of The Villages Health, presents the Dr. Elliot J. Sussman The Villages Health Core Values Award of Excellence to Katherine Hildebrand, a new patient advisor. George Horsford, Daily Sun

value awards ceremony, The Villages Health expanded its employee appreciation programs to include Cheers for Peers and the more recent Kudos for Caregivers.

Cheers for Peers allows team members to nominate peers throughout the year, and hundreds of submissions come in each month, Benedetti said. Winners are chosen through a chance drawing and receive perks like gift cards.

Kudos for Caregivers allows

patients to nominate individuals and care teams. Patients can submit their nominations at kiosks set up inside every The Villages Health care center.

"Those programs have really ignited our culture," Benedetti said. "They have really boosted morale and helped build a positive workplace environment."

Plans are in the works to ensure all care members nominated for Cheers for Peers and Kudos for Caregivers receive some kind of recognition.

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