

ARCADIA THE COMMUNITY

JUNE 13, 2024



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Local

BRITISH ISLES CLUBS REMEMBER CADETS IN ARCADIA



STEVE KNAPP
sports@peacerrivershopper.com

**DESOTO COUNTY
SPORTS**

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Both the Union Jack and the Royal Air Force (RAF) flag were raised to open the ceremony for the British cadets on Memorial Day in Oak Ridge Cemetery. Photograph courtesy of Michael Wolfe.



CAROL MAHLER

Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided

Members of the Caledonian Club of Florida West, New World Celts, St. Andrews Society of Sarasota, St. Davids Welsh Society, Suncoast British Car Club, and the Suncoast Scots attended the Memorial Day Ceremony held by the Arcadia Rotary Club to remember and honor the British cadets buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery. They also brought flower wreaths to decorate the grave site.

Chairperson of the Arcadia Rotary Club's Memorial Day Ceremony Committee, Paul Bennett Seusy organized the event held annually at 10:00 a.m. on Memorial Day by the Club since 1956. This year's ceremony included raising the Union Jack and Royal Air Force (RAF) flags, invocation, keynote address, and a flyover by a PT-26 thanks to owner and pilot Ed Franco.

"THE BRITISH PLOT" IN OAK RIDGE CEMETERY

In Jan. 1941, John Paul Riddle purchased land near Carlstrom Field, southeast of Arcadia, where he had completed his basic training during World War I. In March, he opened the Riddle Aeronautic Institute (RAI) to train British and U.S. cadets. "Both American and British cadets are keenly anticipating the Rodeo shows this weekend," reported the July 3, 1941, "Arcadian."

Later that month, having just arrived at RAI, British Cadet Charles F. Russell, died at Arcadia General Hospital "following a brief illnesses said to have been due to pneumonia"—later identified as meningitis—according to the July 24 issue of The Arcadian." His death spurred the purchase of the first plots in Oak Ridge Cemetery. More gravesites were bought later to accommodate a total of 23 cadets who died of disease, drowning, in a car accident, or a flying

SEE BRITISH PAGE 2 >>



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GOVERNMENT MEETING SCHEDULE

CITY

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS OCCUR THE 1ST AND 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED

Margaret Way Building
23 N. Polk Ave., Arcadia, FL 34266

JUNE 25	DESOTO COUNTY REGULAR COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING
TUE 3P & 6:30P	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
JUNE 4	DESOTO COUNTY INDEPENDENCE DAY
CLOSED	County Office Closed
JUNE 9	DESOTO COUNTY REGULAR COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING
TUE 9A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266

Active dates and times are subject to change.
County: <http://desotobocc.com/calendar>
City: <https://arcadia-fl.gov/events/>

Realtor Showcase

See page 11

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ARREST REPORT

See page 13

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BRITISH
FROM PAGE 1 >>

mishaps—most during advanced training at Riddle Field in Clewiston.

As the guest speaker at the March 19 meeting of the Arcadia Rotary Club, Roach talked about the legislative session, including a bill he sponsored for property insurance reform that would offer universal wind coverage to home owners that would be similar to the earthquake coverage available in California. He noted that property insurance rates have increased 103% in the past three years, and after Hurricane Ian in 2022, many companies will no longer insure Florida homeowners. Democrat Hillary Cassel from Dania Beach co-sponsored the bill, and it received one reading. He hopes it will be brought back to the legislature's next session.

"Stopping the bad bills is more important than advancing the good bills," he said, and one of those "bad bills" was term limits for county commissioners. He believes that such matters should be decided by local voters. He also reminded that the legislature's primary function is to balance the budget, and he made sure that some appropriations for DeSoto County were included this year.

For more information about the event, contact the Chamber of Commerce at 863-494-4033 or chamber@desotochamberfl.com.



From left, Michael Ward of the New World Celts, Nat Bolin of the Suncoast Scots, Amy Ferrel of the St. Davids Welsh Society, and Ron Lee of the St. Andrews Society of Sarasota pose a moment with Rotarian Paul Seusy before the Memorial Day Ceremony commenced.



The Rev. Ed. Horne, Pastor of Pine Level Church, gave the invocation at the Memorial Day Ceremony held by the Arcadia Rotary Club. Photograph courtesy of Michael Wolfe.



The keynote speaker for the Memorial Day Ceremony was John G. Clary, son of Reed R. Clary, who was a flight instructor at Riddle Field in Clewiston. John Clary shared recollections of his father and some of the British pilots whom he met later in life. Photograph courtesy of Michael Wolfe.



Chairperson of the Arcadia Rotary Club's Memorial Day Ceremony Committee, Paul Bennett Seusy stands for a moment with Bill Dalgarno of the Caledonian Club of Florida West, who helped invite the British Isles clubs to the Memorial Day Ceremony.



Pilot Ed Franco flew his PT-26 over Oak Ridge Cemetery during the Memorial Day Ceremony for the British cadets. Photograph courtesy of Bert Mitchell.



Members of the Suncoast British Car Club parked their distinctive vehicles together near the burial site of the British cadets who died while training to be pilots. Photograph courtesy of Michael Wolfe.

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SPRING SPORTS AWARD WINNERS



The 2024 track and field team gets together for a final photo.



The softball team picked up their awards at the awards ceremony.



Don Knoche talks about the State Farm Sportsmanship awards that are given to a team member in every sport in every season. This award has been going on for many years.



Revel Rodriguez got his Sportsmanship award as a member of the baseball team.



Diego Sandate picks up his Sportsmanship Award from Don Knoche as a member of the track team.



Isabelle Zolkos earned her award as a member of the tennis team.



Joni Taylor won the Sportsmanship award for the softball team.

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TRENTON ALLEY
Offensive MVP

LOGAN ADKINS
Most Improved

CORBIN GILMORE
MVP

REVEL RODRIGUEZ
State Farm

SOFTBALL

JONI TAYLOR
State Farm

JONI TAYLOR
Leadership Award

DAYSHA IZAGUIRRE
MVP

CALEIGH DUKE
Coaches Award

TENNIS: GIRLS
ISABELLE ZOLKOS
Statefarm

BRIANA ROBLES
Team Leader

ANNETT FLORES
Most Improved

VANESSA VILLAFUERTE
Bulldog Award

TENNIS: BOYS
DARRECUS BARTEE
State Farm

EZRA MORENO
Team Leader

AARON HENNING
Most Improved

ANTHONY JACKSON
Bulldog Award

TRACK

DIEGO SANDATE
Sportsmanship

ZARIONNA JARVIS
Sportsmanship

JALIJAH LUTHER
Coaches Award

FERNANDO ZEPADA
Coaches Award

CAMILA TREJO-BALDERAS
Do It All Runners

DANIEL DIAZ
Do It All Runners

MICHELLE MERIDA
MVP

CHARLIE WILKERSON
MVP

JADA REED
Most Improved

I'VARION TICE
Most Improved

CONGRATULATIONS!

LOTS OF FUN AT SENIORS GRADUATION PARTY



Just some of the many volunteers before the graduates arrived.

Students gather around as more prizes are given away. There were a lot of gift cards and electronics given away. Local donors did a fine job for the graduates.



Lots of money was given away but Natalie Yanez came home with the big prize of \$1000.



Some of the kids attempted to follow along with the dancers.



The audience were enjoying the talented dancing program.



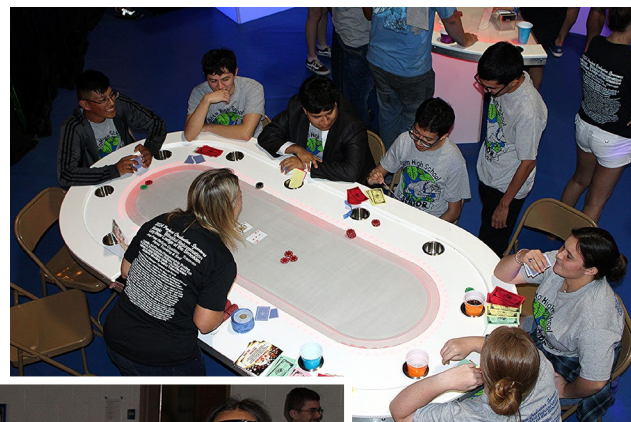
The entertainment put on a good show for the graduates and guests.



Raegan Hancock and Chloe Pomerleau enjoyed the air hockey table.



Many students got a photo with the dancers after their performance.



Poker was a very popular game.

Bernabe Torres-Angel become cat man with a little face paint.



Three time Soccer coach of the year Fernando Zepeda lets out a shout as he drums along with the professional drummer.

Samantha Hershberger drives the tricycle course with "drunk glasses" supplied by drivers training teacher Mitchell Johnson.





Dancers put on a good show.



Blake Gross looks pretty confident on the bull. Moments later he was smiling after he got thrown from the bull.

Mitchell Johnson gets ready to follow along with the drummer.



Anthony Jackson comes out of the money machine with a hand full of bills.



Jenga blocks come tumbling down in a popular game.



Cooper Hancock and Owen Roe play a little cornhole.



Blackjack was a very popular game for the graduates.



Roulette seemed to be the game of choice for the night.

Foosball was another very popular game for the night.



SENIORS 2024

“SISTERHOOD” PRESENTS JUNETEENTH EXHIBIT



CAROL MAHLER
Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided

Deborah Clifton and a group of friends who call themselves “The Sisterhood” will present a Juneteenth exhibit in historic photographs and “inspired artifacts” from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on June 19 at the DeSoto County Library, 125 N. Hillsborough Ave. The event is free and open to the public.

Juneteenth is an elision of June 19, the day in 1865 when the Emancipation Proclamation was announced in Texas, the last of the Confederate States of America to learn that slavery was abolished. Also known as Juneteenth Independence Day, Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day, Juneteenth was first officially celebrated in 1866 in Texas and its observance spread across the United States from then to the present time. In 2021, it became a federal holiday. Clifton wrote, “Come let us journey together in unity to get more

understanding of the importance of this celebrated day.”

The Juneteenth exhibit will include informational boards, photographs and “inspired artifacts—so it will be 3-D,” Clifton said. She hopes that people will walk around the exhibit and ask questions or have a discussion. “It will be a learning process for us all,” she said. “We celebrate our ancestors—and give them homage forever” for their endurance, perseverance, and suffering during and after slavery.

Many surrounding communities are holding their Juneteenth celebrations on the weekends before and after June 19, but the Sisterhood wanted to honor the actual day. “Juneteenth is everybody’s history,” she said.

The mission of the Sisterhood is “to empower ladies to do activities for the community, especially the elderly,” Clifton said. “We hear about activities for the children, but we never seem to hear about interesting and engaging events for the elderly. We can learn from them as well as they can learn from us.”



This collection shows some of the photographs and “inspired artifacts” that will be in the Juneteenth exhibit from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Wed., June 19, at the DeSoto County Library, 15 N. Hillsborough Ave. Photograph courtesy of Debra Clifton.

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ADVENTURE INTO THE PAST AT THE LIBRARY



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Photos provided

As part of the Library's summer reading program, the DeSoto County Historical Society will present "Adventure Into The Past"—three programs at 1:00 p.m. on June 18, 19, and 20, at the DeSoto County Library, 125 N. Hillsborough Ave., and a fourth program from 10:00 a.m. until noon on Sat., June 22, at the John Morgan Ingraham House Museum, 120 W. Whidden St.. The events are free and open to the public.

In addition, lunch is free for all children age 18 years or younger from noon until 1:00 p.m. on Tues., Wed., and Thurs., in the DeSoto County Library Courtyard.

On Tues., June 18, the Society will tell the story of the railroads that crossed the County; the Florida Southern Railway, Charlotte Harbor and Northern Railway, Atlantic Coast Line, Seaboard Air Line, Tampa Southern Railroad, and more. Children will have a

chance to learn how to read a time table and decorate a route map.

On Wed., June 19, the Society will share a story about the pioneer skill of quilting and traditional quilt patterns. Children will have the opportunity to design their own quilt patterns.

On Thurs., June 20, the Society will read a "tall tale," and host a visit from some local legends, such as Arcadia Matilda Albritton Coker, the woman who had a town named for her because she baked a cake, and Acrefoot Johnson, who walked in one day from Fort Ogden to Fort Meade to deliver the mail.

From 10:00 a.m. to noon, on Sat., June 22, the "Library On The Go" will visit the John Morgan Ingraham House Museum, 120 W. Whidden St. Families may tour the Museum and enjoy some hands-on activities as well as books and other materials from the mobile library.

For more information, contact the Society at 863-266-5774 or online at desotocountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.



Courtesy of the DeSoto County Historical Society



Courtesy of the DeSoto County Historical Society

Learn about the Florida Southern Railway and other railroads during "Adventure Into the Past," a series of four events presented by the DeSoto County Historical Society as part of the DeSoto County Library's Summer Reading Program.

James Mitchell "Acrefoot" Johnson will visit the DeSoto County Library, 125 N. Hillsborough Ave., as part of the DeSoto County Historical Society's program about legendary characters at 1:00 p.m. on Thurs., June 20.

Realtor Showcase



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These class members spent eight months focused on different community topics and learned more from leaders and businesses throughout DeSoto County. We're proud to have a graduating member and to support the DeSoto County Chamber of Commerce as they educate, challenge and develop leaders who live or work in the County!

Learn more and apply at DeSotoChamberFL.com



FROM CLERICAL TO CLASSROOM: A JOURNEY ROOTED IN DEDICATION AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

JODIE DELOACH

DeSoto County Education Foundation

At the DeSoto County Education Foundation, we take immense pride in supporting the aspirations of individuals committed to making a positive impact in our community. One such inspiring story is that of Jamie Atherton, whose journey from a clerical role to becoming an educator exemplifies dedication, resilience, and the power of community support.

Jamie's path to becoming a teacher was marked by determination and hard work. Over the course of four years, she balanced full-time employment with the School District of DeSoto County while pursuing higher education. Jamie earned her Associate of Arts degree from South Florida State College and her Bachelor's degree from St. Petersburg College, majoring in Elementary Education K-6 with infused ESOL and Reading Endorsement. This rigorous academic path reflects her commitment to equipping herself with the skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of her future students.

Family support played a crucial role in Jamie's journey. Her partner, Andy Heine, provided unwavering support, while her three children – Savanna,

Archur, and Madalynn – served as both motivation and cheerleaders. Additionally, Jamie received support from her two godsons, Shon and Shane Galloway, during her studies.

The DeSoto County Education Foundation is honored to have played a part in Jamie's journey. Through grant funds from the "Teacher To Be" program, we were able to assist in alleviating some of the financial pressures associated with her studies. This support enabled Jamie to focus more on her academic and professional growth, highlighting the importance of community in fostering educational aspirations.

Jamie's years of experience within the school district have ingrained in her the values of empathy, patience, and resilience. As she steps into her new role as an educator, she is committed to creating an inclusive and engaging learning environment where every student feels valued and empowered to succeed.

Jamie's journey serves as an inspiration to others in our community to pursue their passions, no matter the obstacles they face. Her commitment to education and her passion for making a difference in the lives of students are qualities that will undoubtedly benefit

the entire school district.

We at the DeSoto County Education Foundation are proud to support educators like Jamie Atherton, whose dedication to their profession and community exemplifies the very best of what education can achieve.

If you are interested in our Teacher To Be Program or have questions, please visit desotoeducationfoundation.com or email us at director@desotocountyeducationfoundation.com



REMEMBER

Joshua 4:1-3 When all the people had crossed the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, "Now choose twelve men, one from each tribe. Tell them, 'Take twelve stones from the very place where the priests are standing in the middle of the Jordan. Carry them out and pile them up at the place where you will camp tonight.'"

God had performed a miracle, His children, the children of Israel are crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land on dry ground. Now, God wants them to take 12 stones from that dry riverbed and set them up in the place where they will camp their first night in their new home.

Have you ever lost your car in a parking lot, or forgetting where you parked it? It's frustrating, but not near as frustrating as it was for a man in Frankfurt, Germany, who found his car after forgetting where he parked it 20 years before that. The man, now 76-years-old, reported the car missing to police when he couldn't find it after leaving it in a parking lot outside an industrial building. After hearing nothing, the man assumed the car was lost permanently. But a construction crew preparing to demolish the building and lot reported the abandoned vehicle to police. After

checking through old records, police located the two-decade-old report. (WORLD magazine, "Quick Takes" 12-30-17; www.PreachingToday.com)

God wanted His people to remember what He had done for them that day. They had been slaves for 400 years in Egypt and nomads 40 years in the desert. Now, they have to get ready to face the hardships of battle as they get ready to conquer the Promised Land.

And if they're going to move forward in victory, they have to be able to look back and remember the miracle God did for them that day. And if you want to move forward in your life, then you must do the same. Look back and remember.

Today we remember something else God did for us, He sent Jesus.

Prayer: Father you have done so much for us, today let me ask what I can do for you. In Jesus name, Amen.

Pastor Ed Horne
Pine Level Church
DeSoto Ministerial Association



OBITUARIES

SHIRLEY HELEN TAYLOR



Shirley Helen Taylor 91, passed away peacefully at her home on June 1, 2024, preceded by her husband Elmer. Mrs Taylor was a long time resident of Arcadia and was affectionately known as "Grandma Shirley". She is survived by her Daughters Debi Gilmore (Donnie), Cathleen Roberts (Richard), Theresa Stone, and her brother Jimmy Peters (Kathy). Shirley had 12 grandchildren, 32 great grandchildren, and 9 great great grandchildren. Grandma Shirley was truly in love with her family.

She loved Calvary Baptist Church, teaching Sunday school, Bible School, and volunteering wherever needed.

Shirley was an award winning artist, illustrator and author, and a member of the Desoto Arts Center. We remember her contagious sense of humor, how she loved teaching art to children at the Desoto Public Library, and in her home. She cherished the outdoors, boating with Elmer and the kids, her dog, and playing the piano. We will all remember her prayerful blessings.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Calvary Baptist Church, 48 N.15th Ave., in Arcadia on Sunday, June 30 at 4 pm.



MARCIA DEANA BROWN



Marcia was known for her positive demeanor, her cheerful and energetic personality, as well as her strong sense of service. She was organized, and reliable in all aspects of her life.

In her career, Marcia served as a Church Secretary at the First Presbyterian Church of Arcadia and the Trinity United Methodist Church. Prior, she was the Owner of Green Belt Fuel Distributors of Arcadia - Union Oil Company. She was a member of St. Edmunds Episcopal Church, Arcadia.

Marcia enjoyed traveling, especially to Scotland, exploring literary works, visiting the Ringling Museum, and attending dinner theatre. She cherished RV'ing in the Great Smoky Mountains,

attending Friday Night Dinners with her friends, and leading DeSoto 4-H activities. Marcia had a passion for colorful jewelry, followed college football, and enjoyed watching golf.

She is survived by her daughter Laura Louise Amendola, son-in-law James William Amendola, grandsons Alex Clark Grantham and Tyler James Amendola, great-granddaughters Natalee Laura Grantham and Zoey Joel Grantham, and niece Barbara Norris-Dees. Marcia was preceded in death by her spouse Franklin (Frankie) Brown, parents James and Helen Louise Wilson, sister Mary Ann Dees, and brothers Richard Wilson and Robert Wilson.

A service to honor Marcia's life will be held on Wednesday, June 12,

at 10 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Arcadia, FL. Interment to follow and early luncheon immediately afterwards in Phrangle Hall. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the DeSoto County 4-H Youth Development UF/IFAS Extension, (863) 993-4846 Attn Katelyn Mulinix kmulinix@ufl.edu 2150 NE Roan St, Arcadia, FL 34266; or the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

The funeral arrangements are entrusted to Ponger Kays Grady Funeral Home of Arcadia, FL. Condolences and/or your fondest memory of Marcia can be shared at PongerKaysGrady.com.

Marcia Deana Brown (nee Wilson), passed away on June 4, 2024, in Port Charlotte, FL, at the age of 89. She was born on March 2, 1935 in Cincinnati, OH. She moved to Arcadia from Sarasota in 1952, graduating DeSoto High School, Class of 1953.

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



ARREST REPORT | 5/31/24 - 6/6/24

Arthur, Glen D:

Hit And Run - Leave Scene Of Crash Involve Damage To Prop, Drug Equip-Possess - And Or Use

Barnes, Sarah:

Drug Equip-Possess - And Or Use, Drugs-Possess - Cntrl Sub Wo Prescription

Colunga, Roberto:

Prob Violation

Cortes, Erguin Nicolas:

Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Drive While Lic Susp 2Nd Off, Out Of County Warrant

Dacruz, Manoel Lucas:

Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh

Dahr, Alan Michael:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear (X2), Drugs-Possess - Cntrl Sub Wo Prescription (X2), Marijuana-Possess - Not More Than 20 Grams, Drug Equip-Possess - And Or Use (X2)

Durand, Rose A:

Smuggle Contraband Into Prison - Any Currency Or Coin To Inmate

Durrance, Kary Michelle:

Drugs-Possess - Cntrl Sub Wo Prescription

Edwards, Nicholas Drew:

Disorderly Conduct - Brawling Fighting Corrupt Public Moral Decency

Flowers, Tyrek Antwon:

Prob Violation

Gomez, Brian:

Marijuana-Possess - Not More Than 20 Grams

Hernandez, Haley Elizabeth:

Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Drive While Lic Susp 1St Off

Hernandez, Manuel:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear

Hodges, Sam Hardy:

Out Of County Warrant

Jones, Amy Janelle:

Prob Violation

Layport, Daniel Shane:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear

Martin, Lewis Raymond:

Aggrav Asslt - Weapon - W Deadly Weapon Without Intent To Kill

Mercer, John Adam:

Contempt Of Court

Mitchell, Roderick Joe:

Prob Violation (X2)

Roman, Anthony Miguel:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear

Vieira, Jairson Lima:

Out Of County Warrant

White, Travis:

Smuggle Contraband Into Prison - Control Subs Defined Provisions Of S.893.02(4), Drugs-Possess - Cntrl Sub Wo Prescription

Williams, Gloria Jean:

Drugs-Possess - Cntrl Sub Wo Prescription (X2), Drugs-Health Or Safety - Poss Harmful New Legend Drug Wo Prescription, Drug Equip-Possess - And Or Use

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 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

CRYPTO FUN

☽ ☾ ♁ ✨ ♁ ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨
 Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to computers.
 Each number corresponds to a letter.
 (Hint: 1 = E)

A. 20 11 5 11

Clue: Information

B. 14 1 14 15 4 13

Clue: Storage capacity

C. 16 10 12 1 22

Clue: Containers for storing information

D. 22 1 4 17 1 4

Clue: Provides service to another computer

Answers: A. data B. memory C. files D. server

STUDENTS WORKING AGAINST TOBACCO GIVES FLORIDA YOUTH THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO HELP REDUCE THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY'S INFLUENCE AND ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE.

GRACIE SAGER

SWAT Club Member at DeSoto High School

The need for youth to speak up and make their voices heard about the issues they care about is as important as ever, which is why one student-led organization in Florida is leading the way in the fight against the tobacco industry and the addictive products that target youth.

Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) is a statewide youth organization focused on educating, empowering, and mobilizing Florida youth to revolt against and de-glamorize Big Tobacco. As a member of the DeSoto County SWAT chapter, I believe SWAT is an important cause more youth should get involved in. SWAT has not only supported its members but has also positively impacted the community through its efforts. They have helped raise awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco, for instance, the dangers of more popularized tobacco products that industries have aimed their advertisement to the youth who are more susceptible to following the crowd and purchasing. Despite significant progress over the years, tobacco and e-cigarette use is still prevalent, and the tobacco industry's antics must be stopped. SWAT is working to change the social norms associated with tobacco, including e-cigarettes.

SWAT has been educating and empowering youth and communities since 1998. SWAT has had several successful initiatives throughout the years. 'Not a Replacement' was a statewide campaign where thousands of youth reminded tobacco companies that they are unique individuals with the potential to make a positive impact on their community. 'Not a Lab Rat' is the current statewide campaign that focuses on the truth behind e-cigarettes and how youth can stop the spread of misinformation. Through such initiatives, SWAT continues to work toward changing the way people think about

tobacco, making it less desirable, less acceptable, and less accessible.

My reason for joining SWAT was clear. When I was in middle school, I would see other students vape in the bathrooms all the time and I wanted to educate them on the harm they are doing to their bodies. Joining SWAT helped me by not only being educated on the negatives but also has taught me leadership skills and how to be involved in my community.

In our community, the DeSoto County SWAT chapter helped make a difference by recruiting youth to join SWAT at Back-to-School open houses, participating in local events to raise awareness about the dangers of youth e-cigarette use, organizing community cleanups, educating at the county fair and presenting to local government representatives in our city and county to support anti-tobacco and anti-vaping legislation.

There is still work to be done to protect our generation and future generations from the tobacco industry. By working with peers, students can create change that will keep tobacco products out of DeSoto County and improve the health of our family, friends, and community. SWAT is open to all Florida youth in 6th-12th grade. There is a SWAT chapter in every county in Florida, and some counties also have clubs in schools and community organizations. In DeSoto County we have 5 SWAT Clubs. We have two community clubs, West and Nocatee. We also have a clubs at our middle and high school. We also are excited that we started a club at our new private school this year as well.

If you are interested in learning more about SWAT and how youth can get involved, contact our local SWAT Coordinator, Lindsey Sager at lsager@quitdoc.com or visit www.SWATFlorida.com. I hope that in writing this, more youth are inspired to stand up and speak out against the tobacco industry by joining SWAT.

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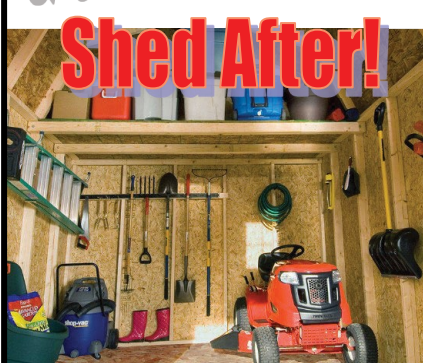
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STUDENTS WORKING AGAINST TOBACCO

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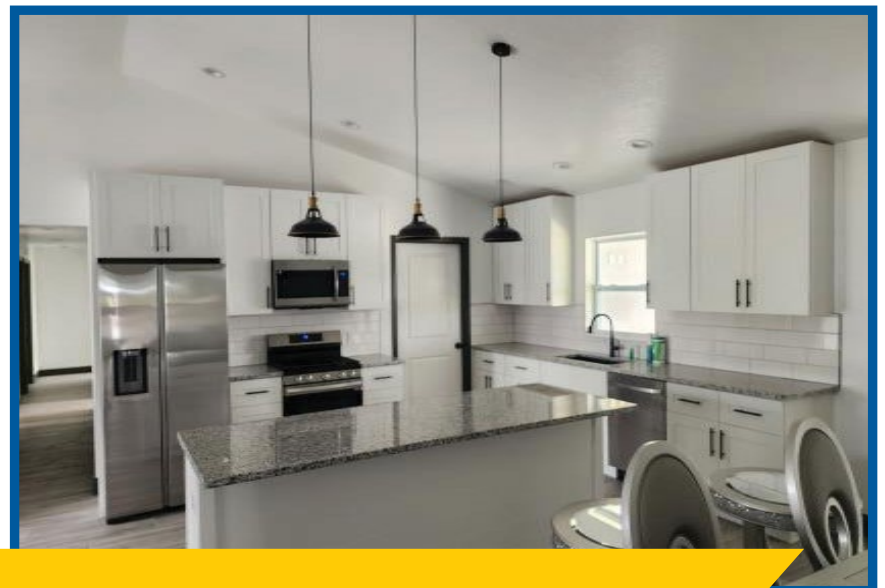


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