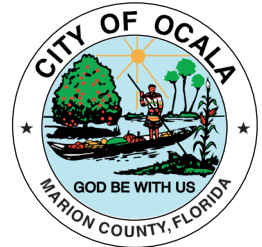




# News Happening Around Town

## Sept. 2020 Newsletter



City of Ocala  
Office of the Mayor

### *Message from the Mayor*



“As an Ocala native, I deeply care about what happens in our city. The people and places that make up this town are an important part of our community. Serving as your mayor for nine years is both an honor and a privilege and I remain committed to staying connected to our citizens. My hope is that through this monthly newsletter, you will see the continuous progress of our city as we work together to make this city a great place to live, play and prosper.”

### Calendar | Upcoming Events

**6**  
**Oct.**

**City Council Meeting**  
**5 p.m.**

**20**  
**Oct.**

**City Council Meeting**  
**5 p.m.**

# Updates from the Police Department



**SEE  
SOMETHING?  
SAY  
SOMETHING.**

As kids are back in school, remember to pay attention for signs of abuse or neglect. If you see something, speak up. Help keep our children safe.



City of Ocala  
Office of the Mayor

## Guns & Hoses

On Saturday, September 12 “Heroes Ride & Bike Raffle” participants rode from the Warhorse Harley-Davidson location to the downtown square. Once riders arrived at the square, a drawing for a 2020 Sportster motorcycle took place. Shane Pack was the lucky winner of the bike.



The folks with Guns and Hoses did a great job raising funds to help with the local mentor program that prepares young men and women for fire college.

\*Photos courtesy of Ocala Main Street and War Horse Harley-Davidson

## Kimberly’s Center For Child Protection

Kimberly’s Center works alongside local law enforcement and the Department of Children and Families to provide a safe, child-friendly



environment for children to talk about their abuse and begin healing. Some of the services they provide include: expert investigative services including forensic and specialized interviews so children aren't re-traumatized, in-house medical exams specifically designed for children, prevention and awareness education in schools

and family therapy for families healing from abuse, among others. Thank you to Kimberly's Center for all the work they do in our community for our children!

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## From Around the Community

### Keeping our Community Accessible

If you see City of Ocala employees out and about with a level, they are measuring the slopes of our sidewalks, crosswalks and curb ramps as part of an ongoing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation Action Plan. This is to see if our existing surfaces meet current regulations for ADA compliance. Having such an Action Plan improves our chances to receive grant funding that can help fund future city projects. We are always working to make Ocala a welcoming, accessible community for all people.



### Key to the City

Juanita Perry Cunningham has been an Ocala resident since 1949. She worked in the Marion County School District for 33 years and educated thousands of Ocala and Marion County young people, retiring from the school system in 1990. In 1961, she was a founding member of the Ocala Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., whose guiding principle is service to the community. Ms. Cunningham is also a member of Altrusa International of Ocala Inc. by which she has been honored as "Altrusan of the Year" for spearheading its "Read-In" program at Marion County elementary schools.

For more than 25 years, Ms. Cunningham has served on the Board of Directors of Marion County Senior Services, Inc. which is dedicated to assisting elderly, disabled and disadvantaged residents of Marion County maintain independent living status. She has also served as Chairperson for the City of Ocala's Block Grant Advisory Committee, on the Central Florida Community College Senior Institute Executive Board and established the Juanita P. Cunningham Endowed Scholarship at the College of Central Florida.

On Friday September 25, Ms. Cunningham received the Key to the City at a small gathering (outside and socially-distanced) at her home attended by myself, her family and close members of her church. I am proud to join others in applauding Juanita for her commitment, dedication and remarkable achievements in this community.



## Open Arms Village

Throughout my tenure as Mayor, one of my goals has been to help provide better assistance to the homeless community to alleviate homelessness and clean-up our historic downtown. I have always felt that there has to be a better way to help those in need. Early on in my term, I attended a lecture series and heard former Mayor of St. Petersburg, Rick Baker, speak on how he developed a program for the homeless community in Pinellas County. Myself, Karla Grimsley, Father Patrick Sheedy of Blessed Trinity, Brothers Keepers, Catholic Charities and First Methodist Church visited their program, called "Pinellas Hope," and it inspired us all to get moving on creating our own version here in Ocala.

The struggle with providing housing for the homeless, is that most folks don't want it encroaching on their neighborhoods. That is, until we partnered with St. Marks Methodist Church on Northeast Eighth Avenue. They had heard about our project and wanted it to be their mission. We met with them and members of the surrounding neighborhoods to get their buy-in, and they all agreed to our plan. The idea was to convert unused Sunday School rooms to small apartments for homeless men. The program is run on a small budget, only employing an executive director and a counselor for case management. Now, at any given time, about 12 to 15 men are staying in the apartments. These men have decided they need and want help getting out of their situation, and we hold them accountable. That is the most important part. The key to what separates them from others you see on the street who are not willing to commit. When the men leave our program, they have jobs, a place to live and thousands of dollars in the bank. To date, we have served 178 men through this program with an 85% success rate.

I always brag on our community about how compassionate we are and how we want to help people if we know there is a need. If you're interested in helping, please contact our Executive Director, Pam McBride at Open Arms Village, 352-304-6229, 1839 N.E. Eighth Road, Ocala 34470.



# Proclamations



A proclamation is a formal public statement issued by a person of authority, dealing with matters of great importance or offering celebration to a person or organization. If you or your organization is interested in working with the Mayor's office to receive recognition, please contact Jackie McGuinness at (352)401-3977.

## Recent Proclamations

### Constitution Week - September 17-23

It is the privilege and duty of all Americans to commemorate the 233rd anniversary of the drafting of the Constitution of the United States of America with appropriate ceremonies and activities. The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Ocala Chapter organized local activities to commemorate this special observance. I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim September 17-23, 2020 as Constitution Week throughout Ocala, Florida and urge all citizens to study the Constitution and reflect on the privilege of being an American with all the rights and responsibilities which that privilege involves.

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## Opioid and Amnesty Information

The Ocala Police Department (OPD) has multiple protocols in place to help alleviate addiction in our community.

All officers in the field are equipped with Narcan® to aid during a response to a possible opioid overdose call. Narcan® is an FDA approved nasal spray that counteracts the life-threatening effects of an opioid emergency or overdose. OPD's Opioid Amnesty Program began in January 2018 and continues to be a prominent factor in the reduction of overdose deaths and crime throughout Marion County. If someone is struggling with addiction and needs assistance, upon request by the individual, an Ocala Police Officer will transport them to a local health treatment facility, free of charge. The officer will also take and properly destroy any drugs and/or drug paraphernalia surrendered to them by the individual without the fear of arrest for possession of those items. The goal of the Amnesty Program is to encourage individuals to seek treatment without the barriers of cost or arrest. It is the belief of the Ocala Police Department and Chief Graham that together, as a community, we can combat this crisis.

### OPD Numbers\* 2020 Year to Date

<b>Overdoses (OD)</b>	245
<b>OD Deaths</b>	32
<b>Narcan® Saves</b>	100
<b>Amnesty Program</b>	
<b>Total Participants</b>	327
<b>2020 Participants</b>	131

\*Numbers are as-of this writing and are subject to change.

# About the Mayor



Kent Guinn assumed the office of Mayor in December 2011 after serving the City of Ocala for 12 years as the Councilman representing District 4. Mayor Guinn is in the financial services business and is a representative of the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America as well as owner of the firm Guinn & Company, LLC.

For the past 29 years he has served on the Board of the Children's Home Society Mid-Florida Division which covers North Central Florida. He served on the CHS State Board of Directors for 26 years. CHS is a 112-year-old not for profit child welfare agency in the State of Florida. Mayor Guinn was adopted through CHS.

Mayor Guinn is a 5th generation Ocalan. His family has been in Ocala since 1850. He and his wife Sandra have been married for 39 years and have two sons.

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