



News Happening Around Town

March 2021 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 10 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 Meetings

6
April

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

10
April

**“Jason Day”
Bowling Tournament**
6 p.m. at Galaxy
East Lanes

20
April

City Council
Meeting
5 p.m.

Updates from the Police Department

Memorial Tree Planting

On March 15, outside The Center's Addie Rawls Recovery Center, Chief Balken and I took part in unveiling a memorial tree for the late Chief Graham. Citizens gathered to hear tear jerking testimonials of those that were helped to the path of recovery by Chief Graham and the Amnesty Program. There was a great showing of clients, community members and OPD personnel who came for the memorial ceremony. Since 2018, the Amnesty Program has helped an astonishing 406 people find freedom from addiction at little to no cost to them.



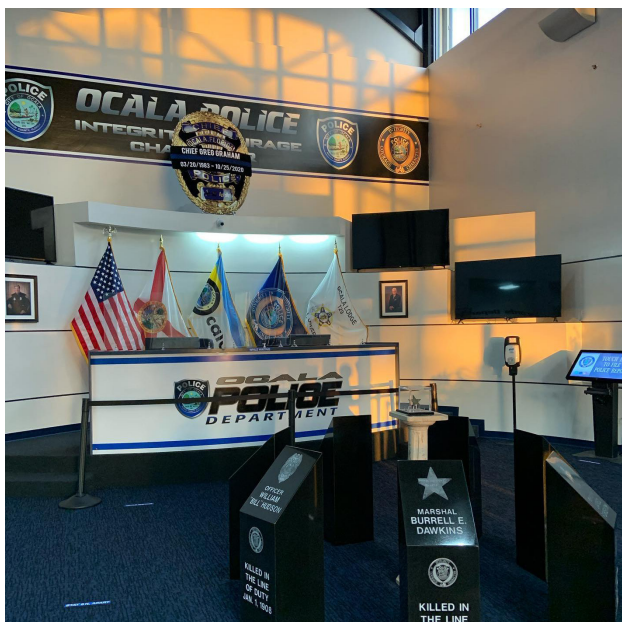
"Jason" Day

As many of you may have read, Officer Jason Douglas, a 24-year employee who was serving as School Resource Officer for Hillcrest School, is now battling Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. Officer Douglas is undergoing treatment in Gainesville and longs for his family and friends. Please join us in support of him and his family. Our goal is to provide for the Douglas family so that while Jason is in treatment, and away, they are taken care of by their OPD family and Ocala community. April 10 will be "Jason

Day” full of fundraising opportunities that the community as well as other law enforcement agencies can take part in. One event you can participate in is a bowling tournament, held on April 10, 6 p.m. at Galaxy East Lanes off Maricamp Road. Keep a lookout on the [OPD Facebook page](#) for more information about how you can help the Douglas family.

New OPD Lobby Now Open

While the OPD lobby was closed due to COVID-19, the station used that time to make some improvements. The walls got a new coat of paint. Tile was replaced with carpet to create a quieter environment. The center of the lobby now features a fallen officer memorial, a memorial badge for Chief Greg Graham, a kiosk for filing police reports, and a temperature scanner. This new addition can check temperatures, even with face coverings on, adding an extra level of safety for those coming in and out of OPD. We hope these new upgrades create a professional, welcoming feel for folks entering.



From Around the Community

Open Arms Village - Updates

Throughout my tenure as Mayor, one of my goals has been to help provide better assistance to the homeless community to alleviate homelessness. I have been thankful for the partnership with St. Marks Methodist Church in the opening and maintenance of Open Arms Village. Because of their work, at any given time, about 12 to 15 men have a place to stay where they are held accountable as they work to get back on their feet and build up savings.

We are very excited to announce that Open Arms Village will soon be expanding to accommodate more men, and a separate house will be opening for women. I always brag about how compassionate our community is and how we help people if there is a need. If you're interested in helping, please contact Pam McBride, Executive Director, at 352-304-6229 or oav.director@yahoo.com.

His House for Her

I recently had the pleasure of visiting a new nonprofit in Marion County, His House for Her. His House for Her aims to provide physical, emotional and spiritual support to women who are struggling to successfully reenter their communities after incarceration, recover from substance abuse, leave harmful relationships, and more.



His House for Her is a 12-15 month program and will serve up to eight women at a time teaching them valuable life skills such as: goal setting, housekeeping, financial management, conflict resolution, employment readiness, among other things. This is a great organization and I can't wait to see the benefits they will bring to our community.

Horseshoe Fever

You've heard of "Horse Fever," but have you heard of "Horseshoe Fever"?

This fundraising event will benefit the College of Central Florida Equestrian Club. All money raised will go to providing students the opportunity to attend events or participate in activities relating to the equine industry. For further information or to make a donation, contact Frenchie at (352) 216-4273.



Some of the painted horseshoes up for auction.

Community Success

I am so proud of our community. Throughout the last tumultuous year, Ocala has still continued to thrive. I am happy for what we have, and I hope we continue this upward trend.

Proclamations



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

Recent Proclamations

Southeastern Youth Fair Week

Each year the Southeastern Youth Fair provides the platform for area youths to display this region's finest examples of livestock production, home economic skills and horticultural talents. This event is made possible by volunteers from throughout the community who donate countless hours of their time to make the Southeastern Youth Fair a reality. This annual event would not be possible without support from local businesses, professional and agricultural leaders. This year's event promises to continue in the fine tradition of the youth fairs that have been held here for more than a half century. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim February 19 through February 27, 2021 as SOUTHEASTERN YOUTH FAIR WEEK in Ocala. I applaud the efforts of all the dedicated organizations and individuals who make this event possible.

Opioid and Amnesty Information

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

All field officers 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 continues to be a prominent factor in the reduction

OPD Numbers* 2021 Year to Date

Overdoses (OD)	60
OD Deaths	6
Narcan® Saves	29
Amnesty Program	
Total Participants	406
2021 Participants	19

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

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 OPD that together, as a community, we can combat this crisis.

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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