



MKEYS CITIZEN

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MARLINS TOP REDS, 3-2, TO SALVAGE SERIES FINALE — B1

\$3.00

Tuesday

July 16, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 140 • 14 pages

Thursday, July 18, in Truman Waterfront Park. For information, visit facebook.com/kwfarmersmarket or kwfarmersmarket.com/.

CFK admissions session

The College of the Florida Keys will hold "Fast Track to Fall" events from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 24, at the Key West campus, 5901 College Road, and at the Upper Keys Center in Key Largo, Mile Marker 106.4, to help prospective students quickly get on a path for this fall semester. New student applications are due Thursday, Aug. 1 and

classes begin Monday, Aug. 19. For information, visit cfk.edu, contact Marissa Owens, at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.

School supplies

A Unity in the Community event from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 27, will offer free back-to-school supplies for all grades. It will be held at Douglass Gym, 111 Olivia St.

Garden Club

The Key West Garden Club is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at 1100 Atlantic Ave., at Fort West Martello on Higgs Beach. Admission is free.

Teoscar Hernandez



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DODGERS' SLUGGER HERNANDEZ A BIG HIT AT HOME RUN DERBY — B1 \$3.00

Wednesday

July 17, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 141 • 13 pages

FLORIDA KEYS

CFK to host 'Fast Track' event

The College of the Florida Keys will hold the first "Fast Track to Fall" event from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Wednesday, July 24, at the Key West campus and at the Upper Keys Center in Key Largo to help prospective students quickly get on a path toward their academic and career training goals this fall semester.

New student applications are due Aug. 1 and classes begin Aug. 19. New students who participate in a Fast Track to Fall session will have their application fee waived, a savings of \$30, and receive a \$100 Kick-Start Scholarship.

For information, visit cfk.edu or contact Marissa Owens, CFK Manager of Recruitment, at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.

PHOTO PROVIDED

CFK student Alden Denard walks to class on the Key West campus.





Stream Scene —
Inside and online

KeysNews.com

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**YOUR GUIDE TO FLORIDA KEYS ENTERTAINMENT
— INSIDE AND ONLINE**

Thursday

July 18, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 142 • 32 pages

\$3.00

THE KEYS

and the Keys, e-mail the who,
com@keysnews.com.

CFK admissions session

The College of the Florida Keys will hold “Fast Track to Fall” events from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 24, at the Key West campus, 5901 College Road and at the Upper Keys Center in Key Largo, Mile Marker 106.4, to help prospective students quickly get on a path toward their academic and career training goals this fall semester. New student applications are due Thursday, Aug. 1 and classes begin Monday,

Aug. 19. New students who participate in a Fast Track to Fall session will have their application fee waived, a savings of \$30, and receive a \$100 Kick-Starter Scholarship. For information about the opportunities available at CFK and items needed to expedite the admissions process, visit cfk.edu, contact Marissa Owens, at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.

Community health event

The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County will host a free “Health To You” community event from noon to 4 p.m. on Thursday, July 25, from noon to 4 p.m. at the Murray E. Nelson

CFK to host 'Fast Track' event

MONROE COUNTY — The College of the Florida Keys will hold "Fast Track to Fall" events from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 24, at the Upper Keys Center in Key Largo and the Key West campus on Stock Island to help prospective students get on a path toward their academic and career training goals for the fall semester.

New student applications are due Aug. 1 and classes begin Aug. 19. New students who participate in a "Fast Track to Fall" session will have their application fee waived, a savings of \$30, and receive a \$100 Kick-Starter Scholarship.

For more information, visit cfk.edu, or contact Marissa Owens at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.



CONTRIBUTED

CFK student Alden Denard walks to class on the Key West campus.

College receives \$100K for scholarships

KEY LARGO — The College of the Florida Keys Foundation recently received \$100,000 from the Ocean Reef Community Foundation (ORCF) to fund the ORCF Building Bridges Scholarship.

This financial aid opportunity is available exclusively to students attending the college's Upper Keys Center starting during the fall semester. Designed as a "last dollar" scholarship, it covers remaining expenses after federal, state and other aid are disbursed. Funds can be applied to tuition, lab fees and certain course-required expenses. Priority consideration will be given to students pursuing credentials in career technical education and professional skills programs.

"The goal for the Ocean Reef Community Foundation is to uncover opportunities that allow residents in the Upper Keys, Florida City and Homestead to grow both personally and professionally. We have a



CONTRIBUTED

From left, ORCF Chairman and CEO William J. Nutt, ORCF Executive Director Yurianna Mikolay, CFK President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra, CFK Vice President of Advancement Lana Gaspari and CFK Trustee and ORCF President and COO Richard Weinstein

strong belief that the primary way to achieve that goal is through education," said Richard Weinstein, ORCF president and COO and CFK Board of Trustees member.

ORCF previously contributed toward the construction of the college's Upper Keys Center in Key Largo, which opened in 2021, and provided a grant to purchase equipment for its testing center.

Details, criteria and the application for the ORCF Building Bridges

Scholarship can be found on the college's website at cfk.edu/discover/cfk-foundation/scholarship-info.

The initial deadline to apply for the fall 2024 opportunity is July 25. The college will hold scholarship application workshops at the Upper Keys Center library from 1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Monday, July 22.

For assistance with scholarships, contact Shania Duarte-Vera at 305-809-3153 or foundation@cfk.edu.

As we've stated once before, Betsy the lobster remains off limits.

1c



UPPER KEYS WEEKLY / JULY 18, 2024

'LAST DOLLAR' SCHOLARSHIP

Funds support students attending college's Upper Keys Center



From left, William J. Nutt, Ocean Reef Community Foundation chairman and CEO; Jonathan Guevara, ORCF executive director; Lana Gaspari, College of the Florida Keys president; Lana Gaspari, CFK vice president of advancement; and Richard Weinstein, CFK trustee and ORCF president and chief operating officer. CONTRIBUTED

The College of the Florida Keys Foundation recently received \$100,000 from the Ocean Reef Community Foundation (ORCF) to fund the ORCF Building Bridges Scholarship.

This financial aid opportunity is available exclusively to students attending the College's Upper Keys Center, starting this upcoming fall semester. Designed as a "last dollar" scholarship, it covers remaining expenses after federal, state and other aid are disbursed. Funds can be applied to tuition, lab fees and certain course-required expenses. Priority consideration will be given to students pursuing credentials in career technical education and professional skills programs.

"The goal for the Ocean Reef Community Foundation is to uncover opportunities that allow residents in the Upper Keys, Florida City and Homestead to grow both personally and professionally.

We have a strong belief that the primary way to achieve that goal is through education," said Richard Weinstein, president and chief operating officer for ORCF. Weinstein is also a board of trustees member for CFK.

The scholarship expands on ORCF's investment in CFK efforts for more education opportunities in the Upper Keys. The foundation previously contributed to the construction of the college's Upper Keys Center in Key Largo, which opened in 2021, and provided a

grant to purchase equipment for its testing center.

"The Ocean Reef Community Foundation Board unanimously agreed to provide \$100,000 scholarship funding, focused on the Upper Keys Center, for the 2024-2025 school year as part of our transformational impact funding for major projects. We look forward to seeing this support both the college and the many students who will benefit from the life changing opportunity this educational opportunity provides," Weinstein said.

Details, criteria and the application for the ORCF Building Bridges Scholarship can be found at www.cfk.edu/discover/cfk-foundation/scholarship-info/. The initial deadline to apply for the fall 2024 opportunity is Thursday, July 25. The college will hold scholarship application workshops at the CFK Upper Keys Center library on Monday, July 22 from 1 to 3 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. For assistance with scholarships, contact Shania Duarte-Vera, CFK coordinator of alumni and donor relations, at 305-809-3153 or foundation@cfk.edu. The college may reopen an additional application period after the initial deadline.

For more information about donating to the college, contact Lana Gaspari, CFK vice president of advancement and CFK foundation director, at 305-809-3214 or foundation@cfk.edu. Gifts to the CFK Foundation are tax-deductible.

— Contributed

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**YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO FLORIDA
KEYS SPORTS — INSIDE AND ONLINE**

Weekend Edition

July 20-21, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 144 • 64 pages

\$3.00

AROUND THE KEYS

To have your event listed in Around the Keys, e-mail the who, what, where and when to newsroom@keysnews.com.

for all grades. It will be held at Douglass Gym, 111 Olivia St.

Farmers Market

The Farmers Market will be held from 2 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 25, in Truman Waterfront Park. For information, visit facebook.com/kwfarmersmarket or kwfarmersmarket.com/.

CFK admissions session

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MONROE COUNTY

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CHISHOLM'S 3-RUN HOMER LIFTS MARLINS OVER METS — B1 \$3.00

Tuesday

July 23, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 145 • 16 pages

FLORIDA KEYS

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For information, visit cfk.edu or contact Marissa Owens, CFK Manager of Recruitment, at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.



PHOTO PROVIDED

CFK student Alden Denard walks to class on the Key West campus.



NL-WORST MARLINS SPLIT 4-GAME SERIES AGAINST METS — B1 **\$3.00**

Wednesday

July 24, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 146 • 15 pages

KNOW

The Key West Chapter of the National Organization for Women will hold a meeting at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 24, at Brady's Pub, 1800 Flagler Ave. For information, contact kwnowinfo@gmail.com or [305-304-1043](tel:305-304-1043).

CFK admissions session

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Fantasy Fest King and Queen campaign

The Florida Keys SPCA is taking applications for the Royal King & Queen Campaign of Fantasy Fest 2024. Meetings will be held to potential candidates

SWIMMING

CFK women's swim team earns national academic recognition

SPECIAL TO THE CITIZEN

The College of the Florida Keys' women's swim team has been named the 2023-24 Academic Team of the Year for Women's Swimming and Diving by the National Junior College Athletic Association.

The Tuga women were among 30 programs across

the country recognized for achieving the highest grade-point average in their respective sport throughout the previous academic year. The women honored on the 2023-24 Tugas team are Isabella Oliverio, Lillian Zebny and Lauren Walterson.

More **SWIM** | B3



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CFK

The College of the Florida Keys' 2023-24 men's and women's Tugas swim teams are, back row, from left, Juan Carlos Foster, Seth Bullard, Eddie Kertis Jr. and Kaemon Fagley, front row, from left, Athletic Director Lori Bosco, Isabella Oliverio, Lillian Zebny, Mason Egan and Lauren Walterson.

Swim/ from B1

Earlier this month, the men's swim team received a similar award at the state level. They were named the Male Academic Team of the Year, in the small roster category with 10 or fewer participants by the Florida College System Activities Association.

"In the pool and in the classroom, our athletes strive to perform their best," said Lori Bosco, CFK Athletic Director and swim coach. "I am incredibly proud of their commitment to balance their swimming ambitions with their college goals alongside many other responsibilities."

The college is currently recruiting new athletes to join both the men's and women's teams. Preseason practice will begin in August, with the season starting in September.

For information about CFK's swim teams, visit cfk.edu/studentlife/cfk-swim-team/.

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**YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO FLORIDA
KEYS SPORTS — INSIDE AND ONLINE**

Weekend Edition

July 27-28, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 149 • 64 pages

\$3.00

State gives Keys' schools mostly As for education

JILL ZIMA BORSKI
Special to The Citizen

The Florida Department of Education recently released school grades and Monroe County Schools showed significant gains in all areas, according to a news release. Six schools improved a letter grade and 10 schools maintained their grade from last year.

Poinciana Elementary, Plantation Key School, Treasure Village Montessori and Somerset Island Prep each improved to an A grade; Key Largo School moved to a B grade and May Sands Montessori improved to a C.

Somerset Island Prep Principal Thomas Rompella attributed the school's high marks to three aspects of learning — inclusiveness, parent and student buy-in and field trips.

"We have always fostered a culture where every student feels valued. Every student feels like an all star,"



Rompella said. "Students, staff and families want our school to succeed. When students immerse themselves in the world around them, it inspires them to learn... Field trips are good for school grades. Students come back willing to work harder."

"(The A grade) validates our philosophy that experiential learning — field trips and connections to the community — leads to student success," added Somerset Headmaster Nick Wright. "Field trips translate to test scores and bright futures."

Overall, there were eight A-graded schools in the district, including

Schools/

from A1
Sigsbee Charter School, The College of the Florida Keys Academy, Ocean Studies Charter and Treasure Village Montessori in addition to those above. The Keys' six B-graded schools are Coral Shores High School, Key West High School, Marathon Middle/High School, Sugarloaf School, Stanley Switlik Elementary and Key Largo School. The C-graded schools are Gerald Adams Elementary, Horace O'Bryant School and May Sands Montessori.

A noteworthy improvement was in learning gains. Monroe schools are close to reaching the district's strategic plan goal of 62% learning gains overall, with 61% in math and 60% in English/language arts.

The district received a grade of B, earning

62% points, just two percentage points from an A. With this improvement, the district moves in state rankings from 36th to 26th place among Florida's 67 county school districts.

"I am very proud of the work we have done in the district," said Schools Superintendent Theresa Axford. "Principals and teachers have been focused, and it has made a difference for our students."

School Board Chair Sue Woltanski said she thinks the district is moving in the right direction.

"[These results] are due to the hard work of everyone in the district, and I appreciate everyone's efforts. I don't believe you can use only one letter grade to show all the things happening in the district. We have to look beyond statistics and focus on all areas. Still, the [students'] learning gains are fantastic."

CFK women's swim team earns national academic recognition



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CFK

The College of the Florida Keys' 2023-24 men's and women's Tugas swim teams are, back row, from left, Juan Carlos Foster, Seth Bullard, Eddie Kertis Jr. and Kaemon Fagley, front row, from left, Athletic Director Lori Bosco, Isabella Oliverio, Lillian Zebny, Mason Egan

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"In the pool and in the classroom, our athletes strive to perform their

best," said Lori Bosco, CFK Athletic Director and swim coach. "I am incredibly proud of their commitment to balance their swimming ambitions with their college goals alongside many other responsibilities."

The college is currently recruiting new athletes to join both the men's and women's teams. Preseason practice will begin in August, with the season starting in September.

For information about CFK's swim teams, visit cfk.edu/studentlife/cfk-swim-team/.

Wednesday

July 31, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 151 • 15 pages

STROKE OF GENIUS



PHOTO PROVIDED

Athletic Director at The College of The Florida Keys Lori Bosco, left, leads an initiative alongside her team of certified Water Safety Instructors to train 91 children in grades one through five from schools and camps in the Lower Keys.

Monroe County Health Department offers swim lessons

CITIZEN STAFF

The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County offers swimming lessons at no cost to students and instructor

candidates in an effort to prevent drownings as part of the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Pool Safety Initiative.

The lessons are provided through DOH-Monroe using state grant funding.

Lori Bosco, The College of The Florida Keys Athletic Director, led an initiative alongside her

team of certified water safety instructors to train 91 children in grades one through five from schools and camps in the Lower Keys. "It is wonderful to watch the children transition from being afraid of the water to feeling comfortable and eager to learn new skills," Bosco

Swim/From A1

said. "Seeing their smiles as they learn new skills and incorporate water safety is incredibly rewarding."

Florida Keys Kids CEO Tana Carson trained 12 adults in the American Red Cross' Basic Swim Instructor certification course at Jacobs Aquatic Center in Key Largo. The course, considered the gold standard for swim instructors, equips candidates to teach all courses in the Swimming and Water Safety program to all age groups. These newly trained instructors will provide free swim lessons to Monroe County students as part of the Florida Keys Kids program.

"This group of instructor candidates represents a dream team of local leaders, including teachers, business owners and community volunteers who will be excellent swim instructors. They are ready to go!" Carson said.

"We are excited to provide the funds to help prevent drowning in Monroe County," said DOH-Monroe Health Officer Dr. Carla Fry. "We can offer kids these important swim lessons and train more instructors to promote water safety here in the Florida Keys."

For information about swimming lessons at The College of The Florida Keys, visit CFK.edu/StudentLife/Pool. For information about free swim lessons in the Upper Keys, contact Carson at Tana.Carson@gmail.com.

Earlier this month, Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez held a news conference at Jacobs Aquatic Center in Key Largo regarding water safety. She was joined by Florida Department of Health Surgeon General Dr. Joseph A. Ladapo, Florida Department of Children and Families Secretary Shevaun Harris.

Florida has a history of leading the nation in child drowning deaths. In 2023, Florida had 99 fatal



PHOTO PROVIDED

Lori Bosco, Athletic Director at CFK, and Carla Fry, Health Officer at DOH-Monroe, supervise kids from Poinciana Elementary School practice swimming at the CFK pool.

drownings, and in 2022, it had 94. Florida ranked fourth in the United States in unintentional drowning deaths among all ages in 2021, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Florida had the highest unintentional drowning death rate for children ages

1 to 4 in the U.S. from 2019 to 2021, at 6.64 per 100,000 population. For children to age 9, Florida's rate was also the highest at 3.25 per 100,000.

Most children who drown are 4 and younger, and nearly all fatal drownings are caused by wandering,

eloping or missing from a caregiver, according to the Florida Department of Health. Roughly 87% of drowning deaths for children younger than 5 occur in home pools or hot tubs, usually owned by family or friends, according to stopdrowningnow.org.

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2024 - VOLUME 38, NO. 31 - 24 PAGES

FREE

State gives schools mostly A grades

JILL ZIMA BORSKI

Free Press Contributor

MONROE COUNTY
— The Florida Department of Education released “school grades” recently and local public schools showed significant gains in all areas, according to a

Monroe County School District press release. Six schools improved a letter grade and 10 schools maintained their grade from last year.

Poinciana Elementary, Plantation Key School, Treasure Village

More **STATE** | **A2**

State/_{from A1}

Montessori and Somerset Prep Academy each improved to an A grade; Key Largo School moved to a B grade and May Sands Montessori improved to a C.

Overall, there were eight A-graded schools in the district: Poinciana Elementary, Plantation Key School, Sigsbee Charter School, College of the Florida Keys Academy, Ocean Studies Charter, Somerset Prep Academy, Treasure Village Montessori; six B-graded schools: Coral Shores High School, Key West High School, Marathon Middle/High School, Sugarloaf School, Stanley Switlik Elementary and Key Largo School; and three C-graded schools: Gerald Adams Elementary, Horace O'Bryant School, May Sands Montessori.

A noteworthy improvement was in learning gains. Monroe schools are close to reaching the district's



MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

strategic plan goal of 62% learning gains overall with 61% in math and 60% in English/language arts.

The district received a grade of B earning 62% points, just 2 percentage points from an A. With this improvement, the district moves in state rankings from 36th place to 26th place among Florida's 67 county school districts.

"I am very proud of the work we have done in the district," Schools Superintendent Theresa Axford said. "Principals and teachers have been focused and it has made a difference for our students."

Monroe County School Board Chair Sue Woltanski said she thinks the district is moving in the right direction.

"(These results) are due to the hard work of everyone in the district, and I appreciate everyone's efforts," she said. "I don't believe you can use only one letter grade to show all the things happening in the district. We have to look beyond statistics and focus on all areas. Still, the learning gains are fantastic."

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CFK/CONTRIBUTED

The College of the Florida Keys' 2023-24 men's and women's Tugas swim teams are, back row, from left, Juan Carlos Foster, Seth Bullard, Eddie Kertis Jr. and Kaemon Fagley, front row, from left, Athletic Director Lori Bosco, Isabella Oliverio, Lillian Zebny, Mason Egan and Lauren Walterson.

CFK swim team earns national recognition

STOCK ISLAND — The College of the Florida Keys' women's swim team has been named the 2023-2024 Academic Team of the Year for Women's Swimming and Diving by the National Junior College Athletic Association.

The Tugas women were among 30 programs across the country recognized for achieving the highest grade-point average in their respective sport throughout the previous academic year. The women honored on the Tugas team are Isabella Oliverio, Lillian Zebny and Lauren Walterson.

Earlier this month, the men's swim team received a similar award at the state level. They were named the Male Academic Team of the Year in the small roster category with 10 or fewer participants by the Florida College System Activities Association.

"In the pool and in the classroom, our athletes strive to perform their best," said Lori Bosco, CFK Athletic Director and swim coach. "I am incredibly proud of their commitment to balance their swimming ambitions with their college goals alongside many other responsibilities."

The college is currently recruiting new athletes to join both the men's and women's teams. Preseason practice begins in August, with the season starting in September.

For more information, visit cfk.edu/studentlife/cfk-swim-team.

May Michael Mosi's 'sunbeams splinter in an Azur atmosphere' - A Key West smile gone too soon.

1c



KEY WEST WEEKLY

August 1, 2024

KEY WEST WEEKLY / AUGUST 1, 2024

STATE RELEASES SCHOOL GRADES

Monroe County gets 8 A schools, 6 Bs and 3 Cs



The Florida Department of Education released school grades last week and Monroe County Schools showed significant gains across all areas, according to a statement from the school district.

Six schools improved a letter grade and 10 schools maintained their grade from last year. Poinciana Elementary, Plantation School, Treasure Village Montessori and Somerset Prep each improved to an A grade. Key Largo School moved to a B grade and May Sands Montessori improved to a C.

Overall, there were eight A-graded schools in the district: Poinciana Elementary, Plantation School, Sigsbee Charter School, College of the Florida Keys (CFK) Academy, Ocean Studies Charter, Somerset Prep Academy, Treasure Village Montessori; six B-graded schools: Coral Shores High School, Key West High School, Marathon Middle/High School, Sugarloaf School, Stanley Switlik Elementary, Key Largo School; and three C-graded schools: Gerald Adams Elementary, Horace O'Bryant School and May Sands Montessori.

CFK Academy is the district's newest charter school, and its leaders said they are proud of their initial accomplishments with an A grade.

"Just a few years ago, we set a vision to establish new educational opportunities to further serve the families of our community," said CFK President Jonathan Gueverra. "Today, we have an A grade high school that demonstrates our commitment to academic excellence and innovation. CFK employees and especially CFK Academy principal Wendy McPherson and her staff have put an incredible amount of time, energy and creativity to get the Academy functioning at its peak."

One of the most noteworthy improvements was in learning gains. Monroe County School District is close to reaching its strategic plan's goal of 62% learning gains overall with 61% in math and 60% in English/language arts.

The district received an overall grade of B, earning 62% points overall, just two percentage points from an A. With this improvement, the district moves up in state rankings from 36th to 26th place among all 60 or so Florida school districts.

"I am very proud of the work we have done in the district," said Superintendent Theresa Axford. "Principals and teachers have been focused and it has made a difference for our students."

— Contributed

'Tis the season for judging athletes with talent we could only dream of - from our couches.

1c

MARATHON WEEKLY

Aug. 1, 2024

MARATHON WEEKLY / AUGUST 1, 2024

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— Contributed

UPPER KEYS WEEKLY

August 1, 2024

STATE RELEASES SCHOOL GRADES

Monroe County gets 8 A schools, 6 Bs and 3 Cs



The Florida Department of Education released school grades last week and Monroe County Schools showed significant gains across all areas, according to a statement from the school district.

Six schools improved a letter grade and 10 schools maintained their grade from last year. Poinciana Elementary, Plantation School, Treasure Village Montessori and Somerset Prep each improved to an A grade. Key Largo School moved to a B grade and May Sands Montessori improved to a C.

Overall, there were eight A-graded schools in the district: Poinciana Elementary, Plantation School, Sigsbee Charter School, College of the Florida Keys (CFK) Academy, Ocean Studies Charter, Somerset Prep Academy, Treasure Village Montessori; six B-graded schools: Coral Shores High School, Key West High School, Marathon Middle/High School, Sugarloaf School, Stanley Switlik Elementary, Key Largo School; and three C-graded schools: Gerald Adams Elementary, Horace O'Bryant School and May Sands Montessori.

CFK Academy is the district's newest charter school, and its leaders said they are proud of their initial accomplishments with an A grade.

"Just a few years ago, we set a vision to establish new educational opportunities to further serve the families of our community," said CFK President Jonathan Gueverra. "Today, we have an A grade high school that demonstrates our commitment to academic excellence and innovation. CFK employees and especially CFK Academy principal Wendy McPherson and her staff have put an incredible amount of time, energy and creativity to get the Academy functioning at its peak."

One of the most noteworthy improvements was in learning gains. Monroe County School District is close to reaching its strategic plan's goal of 62% learning gains overall with 61% in math and 60% in English/language arts.

The district received an overall grade of B, earning 62% points overall, just two percentage points from an A. With this improvement, the district moves up in state rankings from 36th to 26th place among all 60 or so Florida school districts.

"I am very proud of the work we have done in the district," said Superintendent Theresa Axford. "Principals and teachers have been focused and it has made a difference for our students."

— Contributed



NEW FACES IN THE CLASSROOM

Upper Keys schools welcome educators

W ZACK WOLTANSKI
www.keysweekly.com

Teachers eager to welcome students back for another year have prepared their classrooms and coursework. Wednesday, Aug. 14 marks the first day of school for pupils who will see some new teachers and staff leading the charge. The Upper Keys Weekly had the chance to gain a little insight into the newest educators' backgrounds, teaching styles and hobbies.



HOPE PIAZZA

Ocean Studies Charter School

Grade or subject: Second and third grades

Where did you get your degree? I obtained an associate's in art from the College of the Florida Keys and a bachelor's of science in exceptional student education from Florida International University.

How long have you lived in the Keys? I have lived in the Florida Keys for the past five years now.

How would you describe your teaching style? I would describe my teaching style as hands-on and relationship-based. Students can learn through movement and building connections between their peers.

What is your special talent that no one knows about? I could be a cosmetologist ... but for animals. Years of showing livestock in Texas has made me a pro when it comes to washing, spraying, clipping and fitting cattle for exhibition.

Where have you taught before? I have previously taught at Treasure Village Montessori, but I am excited to start my new role in the Jellyfish Classroom.

What would you want students to know about you? I want my students to know that I am so excited to spend the year with them and each one of them holds a special place in my heart. I want my students to know that they are important individuals and have a strong voice that is meant to be heard.

What are your hobbies? I love spending time outside and on the water. My hobbies consist of boating, pickleball, the occasional co-ed softball games and spending time with friends and family.

FLORIDA WEEKLY®

Student Scholarships

Hemingway look-alikes help young people with college tuition

The "Papas" of the Hemingway Look-Alike Society make some local students very happy by presenting \$31,500 in scholarships to students at the College of the Florida Keys.

Hemingway Look-Alike Society Scholarship Chair and "Papa 2013" Stephen Terry announced 13 CFK scholarships: four for students with literary talent, six for nursing students, one for a student training to become a first responder, one for a veteran, and one for a CFK-bound Key West High School graduate.

The scholarships increased to \$2,500 this year, split evenly between the fall and spring semesters.

The Hemingway Look-Alike Society established the CFK scholarship 25 years ago to encourage education and literary talent in the community that the legendary writer called home.

Hemingway lived in Key West in the 1930s, where he produced some of his



THE COLLEGE OF THE FLORIDA KEYS / COURTESY PHOTOS
The Hemingway Look-Alike Society established the scholarship 25 years ago to encourage literary talent in the Key West community the legendary writer called home.

most enduring literary works. The scholarship was later opened to nursing students, veterans, and first responders. To date, they have awarded more than



The Hemingway Look-Alike Society presented \$31,500 in scholarships.

300 scholarships and built an endowment to fund future scholarships. For more information, visit cfk.edu/paying-for-college. ■

Making the Grade

The College of the Florida Keys' CFK Academy, its newly established tuition-free public charter high school, has earned an "A" grade from the Florida Department of Education.

"Just a few years ago, we set a vision to establish new educational opportunities to serve the families of our community further. Today, we have an "A" grade high school that demonstrates our commitment to academic excellence and innovation," says CFK President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra.

According to the Florida Department of Education, school grades are an understandable metric for measuring performance. The grading system pulls from various student success metrics, including student achievement, learning gains, graduation rates, and acceleration success, and focuses on students who need the most support.

The CFK Academy opened in August 2023. It offers a curriculum focused on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and Career Technical Education (CTE).

With a project-based learning approach, the school provides students with hands-on engagement and real-world problem-solving experiences. Students also have the unique opportunity to enroll in college-level courses through CFK's Dual Enrollment program, allowing them to earn high school and college credits simultaneously.

"I am incredibly proud of our students, teachers, and staff. Our 'A' grade is a testa-



COLLEGE OF THE FLORIDA KEYS / COURTESY PHOTOS
CFK Academy, a tuition-free public charter high school, opened in August 2023.

ment to their hard work and the challenging and nurturing environment we have created where students can thrive academically and personally," says Dr. Wendy McPherson, Principal of CFK Academy.

An enrollment lottery was held in March for new students starting the upcoming school year. Students may still apply online via a waitlist for any remaining seats. To learn more, visit CFK.edu/CFK-Academy. ■



CFK Academy's first classes of students sit in the stairwell of the new building.



KEY WEST WEEKLY / AUGUST 29, 2024

COLLEGE GETS \$2M BOOST FOR NEW STUDENT HOUSING

Grant comes from Edward B. and Joan T. Knight Foundation



The late Joan and Edward Knight founded the Edward B. and Joan T. Knight Foundation, which recently provided \$2 million to College of the Florida Keys for its new residential complex to offer students affordable housing. CONTRIBUTED

The College of the Florida Keys is \$2 million closer to developing its new residential complex for students and the workforce on the Key West campus, thanks to a pledge from the Edward B. and Joan T. Knight Foundation. The gift is the largest contribution to the CFK Foundation in its history.

The college's new residential complex could include as many as 240 student beds and up to 50 units for CFK employees, educators, first responders and health care workers. Dining and recreational facilities may be incorporated in the design to enrich the living experience. When fully operational, this facility will add to the current 100-bed residence hall, Lagoon Landing, on the waterfront "Point" area on the northwest part of campus.

"We are grateful to the Edward B. and Joan T. Knight Foundation for recognizing the college's residential complex as a worthy investment in educational opportunities and workforce housing in the Keys," said college President Jonathan Gueverra.

"With approximately 90% of our current residential students holding

jobs that support the Keys' economy, an increase in the number of beds will result in an increase in the labor market. These student workers will support CFK's enrollment growth and fuel the Keys economy with a steady supply of workers without additional pressure on the housing market."

Students have demanded on-campus housing for decades, but state colleges are not typically allowed to have it. CFK had to get legislative authority and external funding to build Lagoon Landing, which opened in 2011. After several years of operating at capacity, and with a wait list, the college again sought and secured legislative approval to expand the number of student beds and to add workforce housing units.

The college is working with industry leaders, philanthropists and government officials to procure support and seeks another \$20 million to begin the project.

More information is available from Lana Gaspari at 305-809-3214 or foundation@cfk.edu. Gifts to the CFK foundation are tax-deductible.

— Contributed

MARATHON WEEKLY

Aug. 29, 2024

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Tampa Bay Times

UF spending under Sasse keeps adding up as new leaders seek to cut costs

A roundup of Florida education news from around the state

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More in higher ed

Union representation: Florida's requirement that labor unions have 60% participation of eligible workers has led to the [decertification of 54 collective bargaining units](#), with higher education among the most affected sectors, WUSF reports. • Educators and other Florida public sector workers have filed suit [challenging the law](#), News Service of Florida reports.

Music lessons: The University of Florida is offering a course on the [lyrics and themes of Jimmy Buffett](#), Florida Politics reports. It's an honors course.

Lake-Sumter State College: Trustees named senior vice president Laura Byrd to serve as the [school's interim president](#), the Daily Commercial reports.

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We'll break down Tampa Bay's biggest environment, politics, business, education and culture news every weekday



College of the Florida Keys: The school [received a \\$2 million gift](#) toward developing student housing on its Key West campus, Keys Weekly reports.



Florida muddies water on rule to protect coral

WLRN Public Media | By [Jenny Staletovich](#)
Published September 6, 2024 at 12:10 PM EDT



▶ LISTEN • 1:43



Safer Cleaner Ships

Royal Caribbean's Serenade of the Seas docked at Key West in October 2021.

Three years after Gov. Ron DeSantis vetoed a move to limit cruise ships from crossing shallow waters to enter the Port of Key West near increasingly imperiled reefs, state environmental regulators are poised to deal another blow by ignoring their own recommendation to set stricter limits on the plumes of sediment that can smother coral.

Despite a 2021 recommendation by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to increase limits on turbidity, [draft rules](#) remain unchanged. A [public meeting](#) on the rules is scheduled for Sept. 10.

"DEP is apparently throwing out their report and keeping the limit as it is, although they know clearly that it is a threat to an ecosystem that is the last of its kind in the country," said Arlo Haskell, who co-founded [Safer Cleaner Ships](#) in 2020 to fight increasing cruise traffic.

...

But Florida has repeatedly fallen behind. The state conducted its last review in 2015, after neglecting revisions for nearly 25 years. EPA finally approved those changes in 2017. A new review was initiated in 2019 and included workshops that covered the stricter rules on turbidity. But the update stalled again amid the COVID-19 pandemic and criticism that the rules failed to address growing threats from toxic algae and chemicals hazardous to humans.

As the pandemic dragged on, Key West residents enjoying an island absent the massive ships began again rallying in the decades-long battle to limit cruise traffic.

Voters approved banning big ships — which can dump up to 100,000 visitors a month on the six square-mile island — and capping the number of visitors a day to 1,500 in 2020. But [DeSantis overturned](#) the local referendums. That led the city commission to take matters into its own hands and ban cruise ships at two city-owned piers, leaving only one privately-owned dock to accommodate ships. Earlier this year, [FDEP approved](#) a 25-year lease expansion at the dock to continue to allow bigger ships. In 2021, owner Mark Walsh [donated nearly \\$1 million](#) to a DeSantis political committee.

While the "one ship" policy cut cruise ship dockings in half, large ships continue to churn up ocean bottom as they lumber into port.

Monitoring started by the city near the dock over the last year and conducted by College of the Florida Keys found existing EPA limits on turbidity were exceeded 20 percent of the time.

"So one out of five dockings is above the federal lawful limit for turbidity," Haskell said. "And that's consistent with historical documentation, which the Florida Department of Environmental Protection found in the 90s and around 2000."

It's also consistent with that 2021 report prepared by FDEP to better protect coastal waters around reefs and inshore hard bottom areas inhabited by algae, sponges, stony corals and other sea life where fish, queen conches and other critters come to feed. The report concluded that existing limits failed to protect the areas, especially reefs that have been hammered by disease and rising ocean temperatures.

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KEYS SPORTS — INSIDE AND ONLINE**

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PHOTO PROVIDED

Joan T. and Edward B. Knight, benefactors of the Edward B. and Joan T. Knight Foundation.

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