On the menu: SFSC Lunch Box Program

By JIMMY PETERS
ARCADIAN HOMETOWN EDITOR

Yes, there are some free lunches in life. Members of the Kingsway Country Club Ladies Association chose as their 2018 Christmas charity the DeSoto campus of South Florida State College to help fund lunches to hungry students. It's an initiative called the Lunch Box Program, getting nourishment to dual-enrollment students who miss lunch at the high school.

"Students simply sign in with their name and student ID, choose a menu, warm up the food, and enjoy a hot lunch," said Asena Mott, director of the SFSC DeSoto campus.

Donations have provided funds to get the program started. Meals include hot oatmeal, tuna salad, various canned meats, a fruit cup, mac' n' cheese, an assortment of soups and ravioli.

Ladies Association members spearheading the program are co-chairs Ann Rezek and Debbie Nemesi. It takes organizations that care about our community such as the Kingsway Country Club Ladies Association to step out of the box and into the lunchbox to get things done!

Ann Rezek from the Kingsway Country Club Ladies Association and students from South Florida State College check out tasty items in the new Lunch Box Program.
SFSC Holds Graduation Ceremony

For the South Florida State College graduates who gathered in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday, Dec. 13, the 2018 Fall Commencement ceremony was a time to celebrate.

Student speaker Theodosia Shannon, who received her Correctional Officer Occupational Certificate through SFSC’s Criminal Justice Academy, offered her classmates three words that helped her in her own personal journey: focus, fight and finish.

She explained “successful individuals maintain a positive focus in life no matter what is going on around them.” In reference to “fight,” she said that each of us faces tough times, but “the difficulties which you face will make you more determined to achieve your objectives and to win against all the odds.” She then urged them to finish, to never give up and, in spite of setbacks, always get up and get back in the fight.

In conclusion, she congratulated her fellow classmates on rising up to the challenges of academic life and urged them “to always push boundaries to make this world a better place, even in the small ways.”

Earlier in the program, Tami Cullens, SFSC Board of Trustees chairwoman, addressed the graduates, quoting novelist Haruki Murakami: “When you come out of the storm, you won’t be the same person who walked in.”

She compared the essence of the quote to the graduates’ academic experience at the college. “I can guarantee that South Florida State College has positively changed who you are, even in the slightest of ways. Your college experience, no matter the length in years, has helped define you.”

The graduates received congratulations and further words of wisdom from Dr. Thomas Leitzel, SFSC president. “My charge to you is to go forth, find your corner of the sky, and do amazing things,” he said.

More than 252 students met SFSC December graduation requirements. Of those, 14 received their Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Supervision and Management, 75 received their Associate in Arts degree, 18 received their Associate in Science degree, 30 received their State of Florida High School Diploma, and 115 received occupational certificates, college credit certificates, or advanced technical diplomas.

Participating in commencement were 161 students.

Mace bearer and chief marshal for this year’s ceremony was Michelle Macbeth. Faculty and staff selected to serve as marshals were Elizabeth Andrews, Davida Austin, Courtney Green, Robert Hampton, Dr. Theresa James, Lorraine Jaques, Cynthia Kinser, Claire Miller, Tasha Morales, Asena Mott and Ricardo Pantoja.

Paul Phelan of Hardee County accepts his diploma from Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel (right), president of South Florida State College. Phelan graduated with his occupational certificate in Electric Line Service Repair.
South Florida State College Youth Services Program Specialist Eddie Cuencas and Student Life Coordinator Andy Polk welcome a couple of students Tuesday morning while others wait for the elevator in Building B.
The year 2018 was great and there are amazing initiatives planned for 2019."

SFS President Thomas Leitzel

under Gov. Rick Scott to promote economic opportunity.
- The mobile welding lab will be rolling out with instructional classes this spring.
- The college has expanded its Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training courses at the Crews Center.
- From the SFS 2018 Year in Review:
  - 97.4 percent of graduates are satisfied that they attained their educational goals at SFS.
  - Cosmetology and corrections students had 100 percent passing rates for licensure and certification exams, and practical nursing had 96 percent.
  - 92 percent of Associate in Science graduates obtained employment in their field of study.
  - 19 SFS student-athletes attained FCSAA (Florida College System Activities Association) All-State, which is a 3.3 GPA or higher.
  - SFS Cultural Arts celebrated 35 years of performances.
  - The college was awarded $500,000 through a special funding allocation by the Florida legislature to create a mobile welding lab, and the trailer just arrived on campus.
  - "SFSC continues to contribute to our community's vitality in various impactful ways. Enrollment is up.

Students are graduating on time and getting good jobs or transferring to prestigious universities," said Thomas C. Leitzel, president of SFS.
- For the second year in succession, SFSC was recognized as a Gold Level college based on state performance indicators.
- "It's exciting to see the difference we're making through high quality instructional programs led by committed faculty. The year 2018 was great and there are amazing initiatives planned for 2019," he said.
- "Although it's thrilling to reflect on past accomplishments, the best is yet to come. Stay tuned."
Get Nurse Degree Via Night Classes

South Florida State College is introducing alternative evening/weekend classes for its Associate in Science degree in Nursing beginning Jan. 28, the first day of the third flex session of spring term.

Classes will meet two or three weekday evenings and one weekend day for four terms.

"SFSC is committed to providing high-quality, innovative, and flexible teaching and learning opportunities," said Dr. Michele Heston, dean of health sciences at SFSC.

The curriculum for the evening/weekend program is the same as the traditional schedule ADN program. Students will graduate with an Associate in Science in Nursing degree, and become eligible to take the NCLEX test for Registered Nurse (RN) licensure.

“Our new alternative schedule Associate in Science degree in Nursing option will allow students to access our nursing program that had not been able to in the past due to occupational or personal constraints," said Mary von Merveldt, director of nursing at SFSC. "It will allow the college to offer quality nursing education to a greater number of students with more flexibility.

“It is our hope and our intention that this new option will better meet the needs of the community and students we serve," she said.

For more information about the Evening/Weekend ADN, contact (863) 784-7027 or healthsciences@southflorida.edu."
Albandoz awarded scholarship
The Leaders 4 Life Scholarship is an initiative of the Asofsky Family Foundation, which supports programs aimed at helping the state's youth. The foundation awards the scholarship in partnership with TSIC. The South Florida State College Foundation is the lead agency for TSIC within the College's service district of Desoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

Albandoz was eligible for the scholarship because of her participation in the local TSIC program. The program matches students at-risk of not completing high school with mentors who guide them toward earning their high school diplomas and onto college with scholarships in hand.

"We are happy for Amy for being selected as one of six winners of the Leaders 4 Life Scholarship," said Irene Castanon, student service coordinator for the local TSIC program. "Her outstanding academics speak for themselves, and she has been an exceptional leader in her school and community. More importantly, she is humble and genuine. With this scholarship, Amy is now able to fulfill her dreams at the University of Florida without stress and financial burden."

"Basically, this scholarship means that I can go forward with my life," Albandoz said tearfully. "This is something that I was worried about because I don't really come from a background that's very wealthy. But getting this money means that I can actually do some good in the world."

Albandoz graduates from Sebring High School in May 2019, has earned a 4.57 GPA, and is placed in the top 5 percent of her graduating class. She plans to attend the University of Florida to major in sustainable architecture. "I want to make buildings more efficient," she said. "I think about the planet and how humanity has to advance. We don't want the planet to deteriorate and not have any way for people to live."

Nancy McDuffee has served as Albandoz's TSIC mentor since she entered seventh grade. "All throughout school, Amy told me, 'I'm going to get straight As,'" she said. "I thought that was a bit too lofty an expectation and, as a parent, I didn't want her to have that kind of pressure on her. But she did it—she got straight As. But I also told her when she was a freshman in high school that she was going to win the Leaders 4 Life Scholarship, and she did it."

McDuffee considers herself a support system and something of a cheerleader for Amy. "But motivation has never been a problem for her," she said. "She is a self-starter and a hard worker. She gets involved in so many things." In fact, Albandoz was a drum major for the Spirit of Sebring Marching Band and a member of the National Honor Society. As a member of the National Art Honor Society, she participated in the service project "Soup Up the Arts," in which proceeds went to a local family who lost their home and to another member of the community who is fighting cancer. She was also involved in "80 Ways to Sweeten Up Parkland," a service event that was dedicated to raising funds for the victims of the Parkland shooting. Albandoz attributes much of her academic and personal success to the TSIC program.

"Every member of the TSIC staff and my mentor have been supporting me since day one and helped me keep my grades up and stay optimistic," she said. "They've done so much for me."
Hole-in-one shootout on tap

Special to the Highlands News-Sun

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College (SFSC) Foundation will host its Second Annual Million Dollar Hole-in-One Golf Shootout at Sun ‘N Lake Golf Club with qualifying rounds taking place on Thursday, Jan. 17, Friday, Jan. 18 and Saturday, Jan. 19 from 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. The final round will take place on Sunday, Jan. 20 at 9 a.m.

"Any day you spend on the golf course is a great day, but when you're playing for $1 million, it doesn't get any better than that," said Jamie Bateman, executive director of institutional advancement at SFSC. "We are excited to host the Second Annual Million Dollar Hole-in-One Shootout at Sun ‘N Lake's driving range. Join us to see if you could be the next millionaire. It's a fun event that supports a great cause with all proceeds benefiting the SFSC Athletic teams.

One of our greatest supporters this year is Event Sponsor Ronnie Carter from Century 21 Advanced All Service Realty, Inc. and we are very grateful for their generosity."

Amateur adult golfers are eligible to participate in the Shootout and compete for $1 million provided through Putting Hole-in-One Shootouts Prize Promotions. If no one sinks a hole-in-one, the closest shot to the hole will win prizes. First place will receive $500, second place will receive $250, third will receive $100 and fourth will receive a gift card from Sun ‘N Lake Golf Club in the amount of $50.

Golfers can purchase a bag of 10 balls for $10. There is no limit to how many bags a golfer can purchase. Sponsorships are available. For more information about the Million Dollar Hole-in-One Golf Shootout, contact the SFSC Foundation at 863-453-3133 or foundation@southflorida.edu.

ABOUT THE SFSC FOUNDATION

The South Florida State College (SFSC) Foundation enhances community awareness of the College, solicits and accepts gifts, receives bequests, and manages and helps to appreciate cash gifts or non-cash gifts donated to the SFSC Foundation. Such contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Funds received by the SFSC Foundation are distributed to endeavors that benefit the college and subsidize its students, staff, and programs. The SFSC Foundation offers scholarships and provides funding to maintain educational facilities.
MOFAC exhibits Maggie Dillon’s ‘Portraits in Fiber’

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS SUN

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College (SFSC) Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC) is exhibiting Maggie Dillon’s photorealistic textile work now through Wednesday, Jan. 30 in the lower lobby of the Alan Jay Wildstein Theater for the Performing Arts on the SFSC Highlands Campus in Avon Park. This exhibition depicting candid moments from the 1930s through the 1950s is called “Sweet Temporary: Portraits in Fiber.” Those interested in Dillon’s work may meet the artist during the exhibition’s opening reception on Thursday, Jan. 17 at 1 p.m. in MOFAC.

Dillon is a textile artist who works exclusively in batik fabric. She uses photography to create portraits in fiber.

“My work reawakens a calm moment that is simultaneously ordinary and meaningful,” Dillon said. “I choose images that have photojournalistic qualities and celebrate natural, honest, situations. Piecing different shades and textures together, the fabric creates an open-ended story, encouraging the viewer to imagine the subjects as if they were characters in a book.

“I, primarily, work in the decades ranging from the 1930s to 1950s, based on candid moment—a girl’s day at the lake, a...
picnic in a poppy field, reading a bible in the wee
hours of the morning. There is something hum-
bler about those eras. People were less aware
of the camera. Vintage images seem purer, even
elegant in their simplicity. Because of this, I work
in a nostalgic, subdued palette like old film."

Mofac is located in
the Wildstein Center at
SFSC, 600 W. College Dr.,
Avon Park. The museum
is open to the public on
Wednesday, Thursday,
and Friday, 12:30 –
4:30 p.m., or by appoint-
ment for group tours.
Patrons of the Wildstein
Center may visit the
museum one hour prior
to matinee and evening
performances. For more
information about

Maggie Dillon’s ‘Illumination of Grace.’

Mofac and its programs
or to request a museum
tour, contact Stepe at 863-784-7240, email
stepem@southflorida.edu
or visit mofac.org.
SFSC Mechatronics program partners with CitraPac

AVON PARK — South Florida State College is partnering with CitraPac to give students unique educational experiences and hands-on skills.

The mechatronics training at SFSC includes state-of-the-art instruction in its Advanced Manufacturing Center using industry-standard Siemens, Kuka, and Festo technology, which align well with the needs of CitraPac.

Students earn college credit certificates, industry-recognized certifications, and an Associate in Science degree in Engineering Technology (Advanced Manufacturing concentration).

Through the mechatronics program, students learn about robotics; AutoCAD and SOLIDWORKS; laser engraving; 3-D printing; electromechanical components and mechanisms; industrial safety; process control; programmable logic controllers (PLCs); manufacturing processes and materials; and technical writing, among others.

“We have done some rapid prototyping with our 3-D printers to support enhancements to the CitraPac production line and hope to expand this into student projects,” said Erik Christensen, dean of applied sciences and technologies at SFSC.

“Whenever students work on real world issues, they get more engaged and motivated as they see the 'why' behind what they are learning. We are excited to have CitraPac as an industry partner and look forward to working closely in the future.”

CitraPac is highly supportive of new local science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) educational programs and looks forward to sending some of its team members to participate in mechatronics classes next year. They also encourage local high

In this file photo, CitraPac workers sort oranges before they head to the pasteurization process at the company’s new facility at Sebring Regional Airport. South Florida State College is partnering with CitraPac to give students unique educational experiences and hands-on skills.
school students to explore SPSC's valuable training environment, as many of these skill sets are much needed in the growing field of manufacturing.

"The new mechatronics programs at SPSC offer tremendous in-depth training opportunities to students, and will no doubt open doors for those students to become highly valued 'solutions providers' and 'problem solvers' for local manufacturers," said Gregg Harshman, CEO of CitraPac Inc. "After touring the new labs, I am truly impressed by the level of technical and analytical systems that have been built to train our future systems experts."

*From electrical to PLCs, Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs) to safety and lean manufacturing, they have created a complete learning environment," he said. "CitraPac commends the vision of the SPSC leadership team."

With leaders in manufacturing, like Amazon, Walmart, and Zappos, expanding their warehouses and product lines, the field of advanced manufacturing is rapidly growing and workers are in high demand. SPSC prepares students to successfully step right into a high-paying career with any one of these companies and many others right in our backyard.

For more information about the mechatronics program at SPSC, call 863-459-6661, email recruiter@southflorida.edu, or visit southflorida.edu.
Panthers open with a bang
South Florida blanks Palm Beach in season opener

By RUTH ANNE LAWSON
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK – The South Florida State College Panthers started the season off with a bang. The Panthers blanked the Palm Beach State College Panthers by a of 4-0 on Friday.

South Florida's Shelby Young pitched a complete game and only gave up two hits, allowed two walks and struck out two.

"I enjoyed this game," said South Florida Coach Carlos Falla. "We held them to two hits and no runs. We had eight hits and four runs. We had a little bit of bad luck when we hit line drives right at people but it was a good game. Shelby Young did a great job on the mound. April Alvarado did well at shortstop. It was everyone. It is not about an individual it is about all of us being successful after seven innings."

Both sets of Panthers battle hard and were scoreless the first two innings. South Florida got on the board in the bottom of the third when Hannah Eden reached on an error and pinch runner Danielle Boyd came in and stole second based. Sunni Bearden hit a grounder to shortstop and a wild throw allowed Boyd to move to third base and Bearden to advance to second. Alvarado singled to left field to score Boyd to give the Panthers a 1-0 lead.

"I think the team came out and played really good," said Shelby Young.

South Florida's Raylee Coleman (12) slides safely home in Friday's season opener against Palm Beach State College. The Panthers won by a score of 4-0.
South Florida's Shelby Young (13) pitched a shutout and only allowed two hits in Friday's win over Palm Beach State College.
"We had high energy. It was a fun game. We came out and had fun. I am really proud of how well we did. It was our first game and our first win. I loved it. I think I did really well on the mound but you can always do better. I think I hit my spots as best as I could. It worked. I think we are going to do excellent this season. I love my team and my coaches. Our coaches have taught us a lot and really prepared us for the season. As a team we want to 250 strikeouts and 13 shutouts."

South Florida extended its lead in the bottom of the fourth as Raylee Coleman tripled and Hannah Perez hit a sacrifice fly to plate Coleman for a 2-0 lead.

In the bottom of the fifth, Jadyn Clark hit a liner into right field for a triple and Alvarado singled to make it 3-0. South Florida added to its lead in the bottom of the sixth as Perez sent a rope into the right-center field gap for a single and then stole second base.

Payton Pilon followed suit with a base hit to score Perez for a 4-0 lead.

Young retired Palm Beach in the top of the seventh inning to seal the season-opening victory.

"The girls can compete," said Fella. "They are going to have to stay focused. There are things that we can do well and there are also things we have a hiccup with. We just have to remain focused all seven innings."

South Florida is back on the diamond with a road game at Lake Sumter State College on Feb. 5.
Singer/songwriter Jon Secada to perform at SFSC

By MARC VALERO
Staff Writer

AVON PARK — Grammy award-winning singer and Broadway performer Jon Secada will be in concert Saturday at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at South Florida State College.

Secada's expressive voice and singing style yielded hits like "Just Another Day," "If You Go," and "Angel" and his writing credits include being a co-writer on the Gloria Estefan number one song "Coming Out of the Dark" along with songs for Jennifer Lopez and Ricky Martin.

He has toured and collaborated alongside opera legend Luciano Pavarotti and recorded duets with Jim Brickman, Olivia Newton-John and the iconic Frank Sinatra.

Secada, who has had numerous hits in English and Spanish, spoke with Highlands News-Sun by phone recently from his home in Miami.

He has been touring in South America recently. "I am going back; I was there a few months ago and getting ready to go back in March, back to Chile and back to Brazil," he said. "So the year is starting out a little bit busy and thank God it is good."

"I have always been lucky that I have had an international career and I have been able to travel all these different places," he said. Secada graduated from the University of Miami with a master's degree in music with voice as his primary instrument and piano as his secondary instrument.

"I attribute a lot to my education ... and the relationships I was able to establish," he said.

His career started in songwriting, arranging, production and vocal work and his live shows reflects a little of that, too, Secada said. "It gives a history of everything that I have done, not just my own music as a solo artist, but a little bit of the things that I have done for other artists, too," he said.

More Spanish language and influenced songs have crossed over to the mainstream in recent years with songs like "Havana," by Camila Cabello, Highlands News-Sun noted.

Secada responded, "The '90s was a big decade for crossover music for a lot of artists, myself included. It was the decade that introduced Enrique Iglesias, Ricky Martin, Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony."

In the late 1980s there was Gloria Estefan, Julio Iglesias and if you go further back there is Santana and Jose Feliciano, he said.

"I think at this point the fusion and that crossover element is in the mix of what"
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Jon Secada will perform Saturday at South Florida State College.
people do," he said. "A lot of artists are realizing it is a part of their DNA, which is great. I love to see that."

Secada said his show at South Florida State College on Saturday will be a mix representing the journey of his career.

"I have been a solo artist now for over 25 years so it is a reflection of a little bit of everything I have enjoyed starting with my own records, of course, but also touching base on who I am as a songwriter," he said. "It's a high-energy show. So I am excited to be able to sing in my home state. I love it."

Secada will be performing at 7 p.m., Saturday.

For tickets contact the SFSC Box Office at 863-784-7178 or visit the Box Office, which is open 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Also, the Box Office opens one hour prior to performances.

Jon Secada will perform Saturday at South Florida State College.