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Teachers trained in soft skills



COURTESY/SCOTT MORGAN

Highlands County school teachers spent three days getting trained and certified in essential soft skills to equip students to become successful in the job market with interviews, team work, time management, work ethic, and awareness of self branding. The training took place from May 31 to June 2 at South Florida State College. From left: Linda Hernandez (Sebring High School business teacher), Raeleigh Jewell (Aon Park High School culinary teacher), Kristine Reifsnnyder (Lake Placid High School intro to teaching teacher), Melissa Sohn (LPHS, intro to teaching teacher), Scott Morgan (Career and Technical Education specialist), Randy Farless (APHS business teacher), and Craig Skalski (LPHS culinary teacher).

Bikar goes to Boston

Young lady's goal is to become a medical examiner

By **KIM MOODY**
STAFF WRITER

SEBRING — Beniah Bikar is a young lady with big dreams and she aims to get one step closer to achieving them as a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders June 24-25.

Beniah is an honor student who will be entering her senior year at Sebring High School and South Florida State College. She was nominated by Nobel Prize winner in medicine Dr. Mario Capecchi for the honors-only program. The purpose of the program is to encourage and motivate the students who are looking to make medicine a career. They offer programs and mentors and networking after the Congress of Future Medical Leaders.

Beniah is driven and has been so her entire life, her mother, Sherri Lewis-Bikar, said. She has a 4.3 GPA in honor classes and will also get high school and college credit for attending the event.

"I like to motivate myself," Beniah said. "My parents instilled that in me when I was young. It's always been a part of me."

While many medical students think of specialties like cardiology, gastroenterology and obstetrics, to name a few, Beniah dreams of becoming a forensic pathologist. That's right, a medical examiner and she has a very clear path



KIM MOODY/STAFF

From left: Beniah Bikar poses with her proud mother, Sherri Lewis-Bikar. Beniah is a delegate to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders later this month.

on how she will succeed and where she will work. Beniah said she is looking forward to working with people who aren't going to be talking back.

"I've always had an interest in the human body," Beniah said. "I'm always curious why people get sick and how they die."

Beniah said she has always enjoyed crime shows and those dealing with forensics, like *Criminal Minds*. She especially likes Dr. G: Medical Examiner, a reality show where Dr. Jan Garavaglia examines the dead to solve mysteries.

"She's already looked into Howard University," her proud mom said.

Beniah has been taking her prerequisites geared toward getting into Howard's medical program. After graduating from college, Beniah wants to become

a medical examiner in Washington, D.C. She already knows she likes the area as she took a tour with National Junior Leadership Conference there previously.

"She was able to tour D.C. and she loved it," Lewis-Bikar said. "That's where she wants to go to school. When she found out I had cancer, she changed her mind. She said, 'I want to stay home with you.' She decided she wanted to attend University of Central Florida. I was excited because that's where I graduated from, but after I rang the bell (beat cancer), she wanted to go to D.C. in her heart."

Beniah's biggest supporters are her family members from dad Beny Bikar Sr. to her brother Beny Jr. and her mom. Her grandparents play a big part in Beniah's life and will in the future

also. Her maternal grandparents are Pastor Charles Lewis and Lottie Lewis, who live in Michigan but fly back often to see the family. Her paternal grandparents are Everlene and Marvin Robinson in Winter Haven.

Beniah hopes to find out if her specialty is a good fit during the conference. If not, she could choose a different specialty but still stay in medicine.

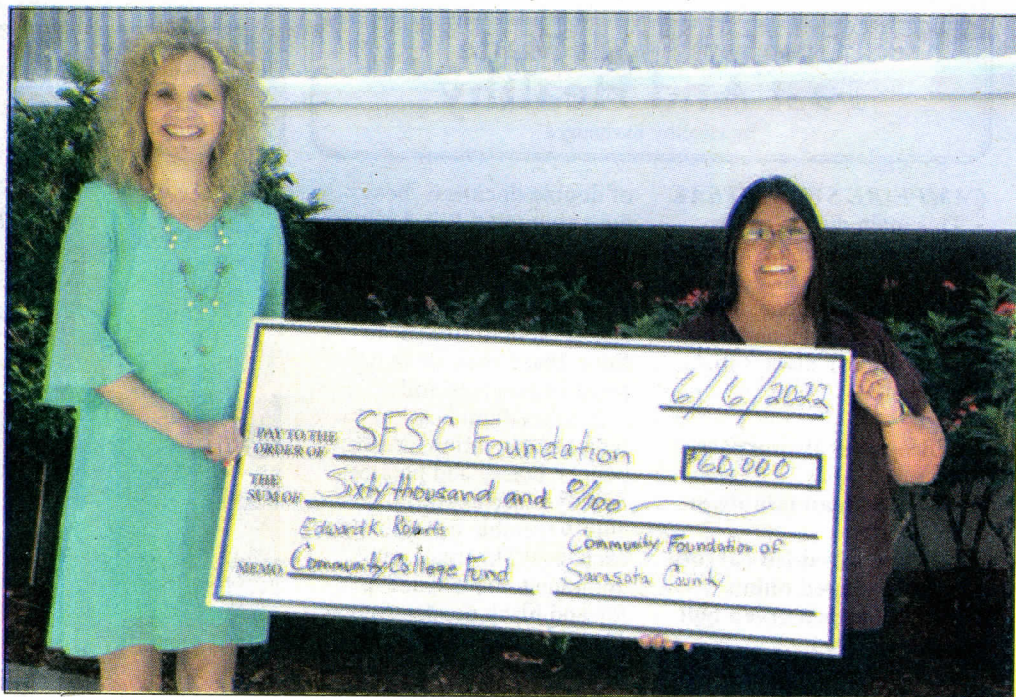
"I want to get personal experience in the medical field, get my feet wet," Beniah said. "Your options on something can change in a blink of an eye. So, I want this to be a deciding factor for me. Whether I continue on this track or if I end up switching."

She just got her first job at Claude's Funeral Home and expects to work her way up through the ranks until she is able to prepare the bodies. When she is not at school or studying, Beniah likes to play basketball.

"I try to do my best with time management," she said.

Beniah urges all students to follow their dreams.

"There's so many options open," she said. "Don't do something just because other people want you to do it. You can listen but that doesn't mean you have to do it. Go with what your heart tells you."



COURTESY PHOTO/SFSC

Jamie Bateman (left), SFSC executive director of institutional advancement, and Tina Stetson, SFSC director of financial aid, display a ceremonial check from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County for \$60,000 to be used to assist part-time students.

SFSC Foundation Receives \$60,000 Grant For Part-Time Students And Parents

Special To The Herald-Advocate

A \$60,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County has been awarded to the South Florida State College (SFSC) Foundation, Inc. to benefit part-time students and parents who are attending SFSC in summer 2022, fall term 2022, and spring term 2023.

The grant comes from the Edward K. Roberts Community College Fund, which was established by Roberts as a legacy to support Florida's community colleges and other charitable organizations. Managed by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, the fund continues Roberts' vision of making higher education a

priority, particularly for those motivated to seek a better life for themselves.

SFSC's grant funds are designated to aid students who attend college part-time and may not qualify for other forms of financial aid and students who are parents, whether single or married. Individual students may receive up to a maximum of \$2,500 through the end of the grant period, March 2023. The grant covers tuition, housing, books, childcare, transportation, and needs that would otherwise prevent students from attending college. Recipients are identified by SFSC's Office of Financial Aid.

"Because of grants from organizations such as the

Community Foundation of Sarasota County, the SFSC Foundation can support the educational goals of SFSC's students," said Jamie Bateman, SFSC executive director of institutional advancement. "The funds from this grant allow our students to concentrate on their studies and prepare for personally and financially rewarding careers. This grant also addresses the needs of parents. With this financial support, students can achieve their higher education goals."

For information, contact Bateman at 863-453-3133 or email foundation@south-florida.edu. For information about the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, visit cfsarasota.org.

Electrical Lineworker program returns to SFSC DeSoto Campus in the fall

Special to the Highlands News-Sun

PROVIDED BY SFSC

AVON PARK, Fla. — South Florida State College (SFSC) is bringing the Electrical Lineworker Career Certificate program back to its DeSoto Campus in Arcadia in fall 2022. The program is currently offered at the SFSC Hardee Campus in Bowling Green.

“Locally providing skills needed for high-wage occupations is a big part of what our College is about,” said Asena Mott, SFSC DeSoto Campus director. “Students can study for their future without the barriers of traveling. In some fields, online classes can work fine, but in the field of lineworker, so much hands-on learning is required that virtual learning is not feasible. Offering these classes for students locally brings the opportunity directly to the student.”

The Electrical Lineworker program prepares students for careers in the power distribution industry. It provides practice in climbing, framing, building single and three-phase overhead lines, pole top and bucket rescue techniques, operating bucket trucks, and maintaining and repairing underground systems.

Graduates of the program earn a Career Certificate and a Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Upon completion, 20 credits can be applied to the



COURTESY/SFSC

The Electrical Lineworker Career Certificate program returns to South Florida State College's DeSoto Campus in Arcadia in fall 2022.

SFSC Associate in Applied Science in Industrial Management. Those credits are approximately 30% of that degree.

Classes will be held Monday through Friday, and students may attend full time or part time. Morning class times are 8-11:20 a.m.; afternoon classes are 12:15-3:35 p.m.

Mott indicated that graduates' job prospects are outstanding. “Jobs are available all over the region, state, and across the country,” she said. “Graduates are prepared to enter the workforce with the knowledge needed for success at any of the local power companies or subcontractors.”

“I'm really excited that we're bringing the Lineworker program back to DeSoto County,” said Dr. Bobby Bennett, superintendent of the School District of DeSoto County. “It's been a fixture for our students for a number of years, and I'm so pleased

that Dr. Thomas Leitzel, SFSC president, and Dr. Sidney Valentine, SFSC vice president for academic affairs and student services, have the vision to bring it back to DeSoto County. It's a good move for our students in terms of future employment opportunities and the training they'll get. We did not want our students to have to get on the road to Hardee County for this program. We want to build it right here in DeSoto County, so we're just as pleased as we can be. I have friends who I went to high school with who are lineworkers and they have done exceptionally well in that career. It's a great opportunity for our students to have.”

For more information about the Electrical Lineworker Career Certificate program at the SFSC DeSoto Campus, contact Mott at 863-784-7041 or motta@southflorida.edu or Laura Wilder, student advisor, at 863-784-7052 or WilderL@southflorida.edu.



JAKE HITT/CORRESPONDENT

Hagen Turner slides into home with a smile on his face.

Panthers Baseball camp made a welcome return

By **JAKE HITT**
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK — The summer of 2022 saw the resurrection of South Florida State College's baseball camp. The five day event was held at Panther Field.

It's the first camp South Florida hosted in over two years. The Panthers couldn't hold it 2020 and 2021 due to safety precautions surrounding the pandemic. But head coach and athletic director Rick Hitt was happy to bring it back. According to him, the Panthers had 44 campers registered out of 50 allotted slots.

Campers paid \$100 to attend the week-long camp. The registration fee helps to benefit some of the fundraising and financing efforts for the department. It welcomed players aged 6 to 13.

Hitt said it presents a great opportunity to provide collegiate perspectives for players who are either just starting out and learning the game or have several years under their belt.

Baseball is a sport that takes loads of time, dedication and repetition. This camp tries to teach things like fundamentals and technique that players can continue to practice.

"Our goal is to try to encourage, encourage, encourage as much as we can for young players to stay with (baseball) and to keep playing," Hitt said. "But also to keep



JAKE HITT/CORRESPONDENT

Counselor Dayvon Terry (left) and camper Harlan Gamez (right) slap five after a scrimmage at the South Florida Baseball Camp.

practicing, to take the time to go out and practice."

He mentioned how this year's camp gave them the opportunity to get more people involved in the camp who specialize in agility training, timings and nutrition and physical wellness.

But outside all of that, the Panthers just hope to instill the routine that comes with being a baseball player like stretching, taking care of the body and doing a proper throw and catch every day. But they also go

CAMP

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over things like bunting and concentrate on specific positions in the infield and outfield. It's part of helping players find their place in the game.

"Baseball is one of those things that every kid with every size, every shape (and) every talent level can play," he said. "They can all go out and do it. You don't have to be a certain size and stature to play baseball if you find your niche within the game and we encourage guys to try to find it."

As with most camps, current players get involved as well.

Hitt said their inclusion has three personal impacts: it gives them a feel for coaching if they are interested in that, it's an opportunity to



Daymien Terry drops low to take a swing at a pitch.

give back to the community (the Panthers do a lot of community service) and the sport's youth and it gives the Panther players a little

perspective as to what their coaches are trying to do with them.

"It gives them a little bit more of a better understanding of what

JAKE HITT/CORRESPONDENT

we're trying to get them to figure out every day when they're trying to get these young campers to figure this out each day," Hitt said.



Maxton White throws a laser from shortstop.

JAKE HITT/CORRESPONDENT