

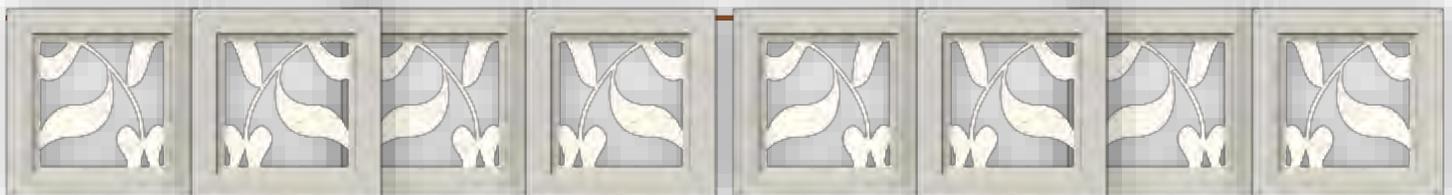
IN THE NEWS

July 2017

Parks & Recreation Programs
Frances Meadows Aquatic and Community Center
Gainesville Civic Center
Lake Lanier Olympic Center
City / County Issues
Miscellaneous



Gainesville Parks and Recreation Agency
830 Green Street
Gainesville, GA 30501



* **Boat Sunday service.** 9 a.m.
June through September. Meet at Longwood Boat Dock, ride boat to Gainesville Marina for 30 minutes, service at the pavilion. Ride back to Longwood. Longwood Park, 20 Pearl Nix Parkway, Gainesville. Lanier Christian Church. Registration required. 574-527-4702.

Community prayer meeting. 6-6:30 p.m. prayers. 5:30-6 p.m. dinner Wednesdays. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 2023 Memorial Park Road, Gainesville. 770-532-8384.

Divorce Care classes. Mountain Lake Church, 3105 Dahlonoga Highway, Cumming. 770-888-2513.

Echo Ministries for single adults. Ongoing weekly events in various locations near Gainesville. www.echoministries.com or 770-316-9200.

Family of God Church of God in Christ. 10 a.m. Sunday school service and 11 a.m. worship service. 7:30 p.m. Bible study Wednesday. Family of God Church of God in Christ, 1039 Athens St., Gainesville. 770-536-1617.

Free Bible courses. Maranatha Baptist Church, 5153 McEver Road, Oakwood. 770-532-6501.

Free clothing store. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday. Infant, children and adult clothing available for those in need. Donations appreciated. Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 7049 Spout Springs Road, Flowery Branch. 678-336-6964.

Georgia Mountains Unitarian Universalist Church. 11 a.m. Sunday service. Georgia Mountains Unitarian Universalist Church, 439 S. Park St., Dahlonoga. Child care provided. 706-864-0661. www.gmuuc.org.

Gentle Hearts Ministry Food Pantry. Distribution of food. 5-6 p.m. every Wednesday. St. Paul United Methodist Church, 705 Summit St., Gainesville. 770-536-4910.

* **Grace Bible Fellowship non-denominational worship and Bible study.** 10:30 a.m. Sundays. Gainesville Civic Center, 830 Green St. NE, Gainesville. 770-713-5513 or tmiles_2@hotmail.com. 7/1/2017

ANNUAL CHAMBER EVENTS

Thursday, August 31, 2017: **Healthcare Reform Seminar**
8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. - Brenau Downtown Center

Wednesday, October 11, 2017: **HealthSmart Wellness Expo**
7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Gainesville Civic Center

Tuesday, November 14, 2017: **Industry Appreciation Luncheon**
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Chattahoochee Country Club

Thursday, December 14, 2017: **Eggs & Issues Breakfast**
7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. - Gainesville Civic Center

For Event Sponsorship Information, call 770-532-6206.



Photos by SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

A Gainesville Connection bus drops off seniors Wednesday morning at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center. The buses began a new route to take seniors to the Senior Life Center's temporary home at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center.

Seniors get new ride around town

Hall transit opens 'Senior Center Circulator' route for buses

BY CLARK LEONARD
cleonard@gainesvilletimes.com

Senior citizens in Gainesville now have a new way to get around that's tailored to some of the places they may need to go.

Hall Area Transit on Wednesday began rolling out a "Senior Center Circulator," which has a route that includes the Gainesville-Hall County Senior Life Center — temporarily located at Fair Street Neighborhood Center during renovations at the Prior Street facility — and many neighborhoods that feature large numbers of senior residents.

Some of those neighborhoods include Riverside Condominiums, Candler Square Condominiums, Windcliff Apartments, Church Street Manor, Lighthouse Manor, Myrtle Terraces and Ashton Senior Living.

Seniors don't have to go to the Senior Life Center to make use of the new bus route, with other destinations including the downtown Gainesville square, Northeast Georgia Medical Center, The Longstreet Clinic, Guilford Clinics on Jesse Jewell Parkway, Publix on Thompson Bridge Road and Kroger on Jesse Jewell Parkway.

"Our goal is to better facilitate senior transportation to frequently visited locations," said Phillippa Lewis Moss, director of the Gainesville-Hall County Community Service Center that oversees the Senior Life Center, Hall Area Transit and Meals on Wheels. "If this plan goes well, we may create other circulators to popular places like grocery stores, medical offices and recreational facilities."

Gainesville resident Barbara Dysart said "it's going to be very convenient for me," adding that she likes



Gainesville Connection began a new route Wednesday morning to take seniors to the Senior Life Center's temporary location at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center. The route also includes other destinations for seniors.

that it means she won't be on the bus for as long.

While the new routes, which will have two buses driving them, are geared toward seniors, anybody can ride on them.

Rates for the circulator will be the same as other Gainesville Connection buses: 50 cents per ride for seniors and \$1 for others, as well as \$3 for an all-day pass that includes unlimited rides.

Moss said many seniors become dependent on Hall Area Transit's door-to-door bus service, Dial-A-Ride, that picks them up at their homes at a specific time. The circulator,

which runs from 8-10 a.m. and 12:30-2:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, will allow them to catch another bus if they don't get on the first one that comes near where they live.

Instead of the traditional 12 hours that most Gainesville Connection bus routes drive daily, the circulator has a pair of two-hour service times.

Moss called the circulator an experimental idea she hopes to be able to expand on in the near future. She considers it efficient and cost-effective, hoping the circulator will catch on with seniors.

"We're excited," Moss said. "We had a good day today."

7/6/11

Barefoot prayers and praises



Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

Zakary and the rest of the Haitian orphan choir perform Wednesday morning for seniors at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center. The group has returned to the U.S. for the second year in a row and will be available July through September for performing.

Haitian orphans perform at Fair Street Neighborhood Center

BY CARLOS GALARZA
cgalarza@gainesvilletimes.com

The happy children sang and danced in colorful dress, joyfully proclaiming God's abundant and unending love for them.

"Who am I that you are mindful of me?" they sang before breaking into the chorus: "I am a friend of God ... He calls me friend."

It could have easily been vacation Bible school at any of the local churches in Gainesville. Instead, the lively revival took place Wednesday morning at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center, which is now the interim home of the Gainesville-Hall County Senior Center, while its Prior Street facility undergoes expansion and renovations.

The troupe of young children

■ Please see **PRAISES, 3D**

To learn more

To see the choir's full schedule and learn more about Love Him Love Them, visit www.lovehimlovethem.org.



The Haitian orphan choir performs barefoot Wednesday for members of the senior center. Nearly all of the children lost everything in the Haiti earthquake, most of them losing their entire family that day.

7/6/17



Photos by SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

PRAISES

■ Continued from 1D

that performed at the center are from an orphanage in Haiti. They have been brought on visas to tour parts of the United States by the ministry Love Him Love Them headed by David and Linda Gunter and Troy and Macarena Poole.

The orphan girls performed in blue blouses with ankle-length white skirts emblazoned with the red, white and blue Haitian flag. The boys wore black pants, long-sleeve white shirts, black bowties and blue vests.

They all were barefoot.

Linda Gunter told the audience between songs of her first trip to Haiti in 2011. She said the home her family visited had none of the Christmas trimmings most are familiar with.

"There was no turkey, no ham, no Christmas tree," Gunter recounted. "There was a stench in the place. The children were barefoot, they had nothing."

Gunter said that what those children had at that Christian orphanage was a joy in their heart that came out when they sang.

From that experience, as well as their adoption of five Haitian children in 2007, Gunter and her husband expanded their Atlanta-area ministry of helping the poor and homeless to also focus on Haiti.

Macarena Poole, a Mexican who married an American businessman, said she and the Gunters expanded their Love Him Love Them outreach to include Ukraine after the Pooles adopted

a son from an orphanage there. They offer jail ministry and an after-school program and provide for foster children and special-needs adults throughout Northeast Georgia. The ministry is based in Lavonia.

Among the songs in the children's repertoire at the center Wednesday was a Chris Tomlin tune.

"This is not a professional choir, this is an orphanage that sings ...," Gunter said before introducing the song. "When you live in an orphanage, the words good, good father take on a whole new meaning."

After performing about a half-dozen songs, the nine girls and 10 boys in the orphan choir went throughout the room to pray for someone. After praying, the children took a rubber bracelet with a Bible verse inscribed on it and gave it to the person they'd just prayed for.

Nancy Simpson, the senior programs coordinator for the city's community services, jumped at the opportunity to have the children perform at the center. She took up an "act of kindness" collection for the orphans from those in attendance.

Poole said the visas for the orphan choir expire Oct. 10, but they will head back to Haiti Oct. 4. She said the Haitians are housed by local churches and private individuals wherever they go to perform. They recently stayed a few days in Charleston, S.C., and will stay busy with a packed schedule that will take them to areas of Georgia, Alabama and North Carolina.

"We're going to West Virginia and Virginia too," Poole said. "We want to make it all the way to the White House."

Top left: The Haitian orphan choir performs Wednesday morning for the Gainesville-Hall County Senior Life Center at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center. The orphaned children are survivors of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti with some of the children themselves rescued after being buried under debris from the quake. **Top right:** Haitian orphan choir member Samaika, left, sings and dances Wednesday morning with the other members of the choir.



Left: Haitian orphan choir member Bianca, center, and the rest of the choir perform for the seniors.

Right: Members of the Haitian orphan choir wait backstage at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center before a performance.



7/16/17

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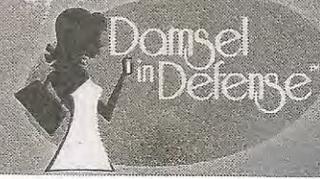


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7/20/17



SEPT. 13

Healthy Aging Expo 2017, Frances Meadows Aquatic
Center, , Gainesville

7-20-17

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7/22/17

ONGOING

7-22-17

101 Bible Class. 10 a.m. Sundays.
Central Baptist Church, 785 Main
St., Gainesville. 770-534-3528.

AXIS Teen Ministry. 6:30-8 p.m.
Wednesdays. Compass Church, 6
Jones St., Suite A, Gainesville. 770-
695-2998.

**Bible Study Fellowship Roman's
study.** 6:45-8:30 p.m. Thursdays,
Sept. 14 through early May 2018.
Registration 7-7:30 p.m. May
4. Westminster Church, 1397
Thompson Bridge Road, Gainesville.
678-549-2470 or winterscarlett@
gmail.com.

Bible study. 10 a.m. Tuesdays
and Wednesdays in the Parish
Hall; 5:30 p.m. Thursdays in the
adult classroom. St. Mary & Martha
of Bethany, 4346 Ridge Road,
Buford. 770-271-4067, lcolombe@
maryandmarthabuford.org.

* **Boat Sunday service.** 9 a.m.
June through September. Meet at
Longwood Boat Dock, ride boat to
Gainesville Marina for 30 minutes,
service at the pavilion. Ride back
to Longwood. Longwood Park,
20 Pearl Nix Parkway, Gainesville.
Lanier Christian Church. Registration
required. 574-527-4702.

7-23-17

Parks and Rec's No. 2 asset



Photos by **DAVID BARNES** | The Times

Michael Graham, deputy director at Gainesville Parks and Recreation, shows off the weight room Tuesday at the Frances Meadows Aquatic Center in Gainesville. For the past 12 years, Graham has worked to strengthen the department for city residents.

Graham stays behind the scenes as Gainesville's deputy director

BY CARLOS GALARZA
cgalarza@
gainesvilletimes.com

It's no coincidence that one has to turn into Community Way to get to the Frances Meadows Aquatic Center in Gainesville.

On a hot, sunny day in the South, the place teems with activity.

Since opening its door in 2008 at a total cost of more than \$15 million, Frances Meadows has become a focal point of sorts in the Gainesville community. It is there where 52-year-old Michael Graham, deputy director of Gainesville Parks and Recreation, has his office.

Graham runs the agency's day-to-day operations and tracks its many assets such as Frances Meadows, which for the first time since it opened surpassed \$1 million in revenues at the close of fiscal 2017 on June 30.

Graham also is in charge of an array of venues and programs, including the Civic Center, Lake Lanier Point Park and Athletic Complex and the network of interconnected park trails known as Rock Creek Greenway. Together, the Parks and Recreation programs and assets generate economic impact of more than \$16 million.

Melvin Cooper, the agency's director for 45 years, hired Graham to be his deputy in 2004. Since then, Graham has presented the Parks and Recreation budget to Gainesville City Council with Cooper by his side. The general consensus is that Graham will step into the top position if and when Cooper decides to stop down.



Graham walks past a rendering of Frances Meadows Aquatic Center that hangs in his office in Gainesville.

Graham said he's in no rush to see that day come, and even jokes about it.

"I kid Melvin all the time that when he's ready to leave, I'm leaving, too, because we have such a great working relationship," Graham said in a recent interview.

Having enlisted in the Army right out of high school, Graham is the first to admit he was somewhat stiff in his ways. He said that working with Cooper has helped him learn to loosen up.

"When I first came aboard I was much more rigid and much more black and white as they say," Graham said. "But working at Parks and Recreation, that doesn't really work. I came to find out it doesn't work in life either. Almost everything is gray. ... I think I've mellowed in

terms of that over the years and I think Melvin's had a big role in making that happen."

Graham said he's also learned to be more patient working with Cooper.

"He really wants everybody to be happy," Graham said. "He wants the win-win in everything. What's really nice about it is Melvin sets up this hierarchy — this is my philosophy, here's my work ethic, here's what I believe in. He's set it up so everybody below him knows that, and it carries through to everybody that works with us."

In 1997, Graham left a position as director of the E ue Ridge Outdoor Education Center in Toccoa to take over as executive director of Friends of the Parks in Gainesville. He did so because his wife, Joan, was then commut-

ing to teach at Brenau University.

Graham is convinced that the Friends of the Parks board members hired him because of his advanced degree in geomorphology so he could address the many erosion problems on Ivey Terrace and Longwood Cove, both key components of the Rock Creek Greenway.

Graham remembers the advice given to him by the chairman of the board at Friends of the Park at the time, Joe Bidy.

"Joe said to me, 'Whatever you do, I want you to stay as close to Melvin Cooper as you can and you'll go far,'" Graham recounted. "Those were his exact words to me."

Sammy Smith, a member of the Gainesville City School Board,

■ Please see **GRAHAM, 3C**

GRAHAM

■ Continued from 3C

remembers that exchange between Graham and Bidy because he was with Friends of the Park at the time.

"That was sage advice," Smith said laughing.

Smith said board members were impressed with Graham's demeanor.

"He came as a well prepared young man, personable and eager to learn, not just about the parks, but the city and acclimating himself to the area," Smith said. "Michael had done his homework to be a top-notch candidate, and his enthusiasm to be a self-starter to get Friends of the Parks rolling."

Graham said it will be a sad day for him when

Cooper decides to call it a career. He said people forget that Cooper has been president of the Georgia Parks and Recreation Association and is extremely well respected in the industry.

"This is what he loves," Graham said. "He cares about it that much. I want him to be able to do this as long as he wants to do it and I will back him up the whole way."

7/23/17

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HEALTHY AGING EXPO

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AQUATIC AND COMMUNITY CENTER

1545 Community Way, Gainesville

Join Us for...

Scheduled to Speak:

10:30 AM Dianne Appling, Lifeline,
Topic: Keep Playing!

11:00 AM Atlanta Gastroenterology,
Topic: Stay Healthy!

11:30 AM Caroline Pierce, Good Nutrition,
Topic: Stay Fortified!

12:00 NOON Scott, Chris and Brian Moore,
Moore's Wealth Management,
Topic: Protect your Financial Health!

12:30 PM Dr. Andrew Lake, Gastroenterology
Associates, Topic: Screenings are Important!

1:30 PM Philippa Moss, Community Senior Center,
Topic: Lending a Hand Keeps You Healthy!

Classes:

Frances Meadows Aquatic Center will
be offering the following classes FREE
during the event:

Land Classes – Wellness Room

10am-11am – Zumba

11am-11:45am- Strength in Motion

12pm-1pm- Gentle Yoga

1pm-1:45pm – Barre Tone

Water classes – Warm Pool

10am-11am – Water Works

11am-12pm – Gentle Movements

Spin class – Spin room in Fitness Center
(9 bikes available. First come, first served)

11am-11:45am- Your Ride

More classes to come.

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Water Classes – Warm Pool

- 10am-11am - Water Works
- 11am-12pm - Gentle Movements
- 12pm-1pm - Aqua Moving & Grooving
- 1pm-2pm- Stretch and Flex

Spin class – Spin room in Fitness Center
(9 bikes available. First come, first served)

- 11am-11:45am- Your Ride

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7/27/17

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Damsel in the Park
Wilshire Park • Gainesville, GA
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www.mydamselpro.net/PRO17559

7/27/17

LAKE LANIER
OLYMPIC PARK

7-27-17

Venue has new park manager

About 100,000 visitors
frequent area each year

BY CLARK LEONARD
cleonard@gainesvilletimes.com

Robyn Lynch is still in her first month as venue manager at Lake Lanier Olympic Park, and she's already looking to make sure Hall County residents don't overlook the resource the park offers them.

"We want to make sure that the community knows that this is a public park and everyone is welcome," Lynch said.

The venue earned its name by hosting both rowing and canoe/kayak events since its role in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. It continues to bring in major events on an annual basis in conjunction with Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club and Lake Lanier Rowing Club. Looming large among those events is the 2018 World Dragon Boat Championships, which Lynch said will be the event's first stop in North America and Hall's largest event since the Olympics.

It also welcomes the Atlanta Dragon Boat Festival and the summer John Jarrard Foundation concert annually.

But Lynch noted the park includes plenty to enjoy even when there's not a major event in town, including picnic areas, a boat ramp and a public beach.

Lynch comes to the venue after previously working at the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, then in fundraising and event planning. She is from Savannah, and she has lived in

■ Please see **LYNCH**, 2D



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Robyn Lynch is the new venue manager for Lake Lanier Olympic Park. Lynch comes to the venue after previously working at the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, then in fundraising and event planning.

7/27/17

LYNCH

7-27-17

■ Continued from 1D

Gainesville for 13 years.

Lake Lanier Olympic Park, which brings in an estimated 100,000 visitors each year, is undergoing a makeover with a series of renovations. The first phase, completed last year, included improvements to the tower and offices. Up next will be improvements to park bathrooms and the boathouse.

Lynch said the facilities were built with the Olympics in mind and not originally designed to be long-term.

"They're ready to be renovated," Lynch said.

Lynch replaces Morgan House, who announced his departure from the role in May after three years on the job.

Lynch, who began working at the venue July 1, is eager to work alongside the community at the venue.

"There are so many people who are passionate about the venue and understand what a jewel it is and are willing to step up and help in any way they can," Lynch said.

SAVE THE DATE!

Wednesday, September 13th • 10am-2pm



The Times
gainesvilletimes.com

HEALTHY, AGING EXPO

Free to the Public!


FRANCES MEADOWS
AQUATIC AND COMMUNITY CENTER
1545 Community Way, Gainesville

Join Us for

Scheduled to Speak:

- 10:30 AM Dianne Appling, Lifeline,
Topic: Keep Playing!
- 11:00 AM Atlanta Gastroenterology,
Topic: Stay Healthy!
- 11:30 AM Caroline Pierce, Good Nutrition,
Topic: Stay Fortified!
- 12:00 NOON Scott, Chris and Brian Moore,
Moore's Wealth Management,
Topic: Protect your Financial Health!
- 12:30 PM Dr. Andrew Lake, Gastroenterology
Associates, Topic: Screenings are Important!
- 1:30 PM Phillippa Moss, Community Senior Center,
Topic: Lending a Hand Keeps You Healthy!

Classes:

Frances Meadows Aquatic Center will be offering the following classes FREE during the event:

Land Classes – Wellness Room

- 10am-11am – Zumba
- 11am-11:45am- Strength in Motion
- 12pm-1pm- Gentle Yoga
- 1pm-1:45pm – Barre Tone

Water Classes – Warm Pool

- 10am-11am – Water Works
- 11am-12pm – Gentle Movements
- 12pm-1pm – Aqua Moving & Grooving
- 1pm-2pm- Stretch and Flex

- Spin class – Spin room in Fitness Center**
(9 bikes available. First come, first served)
- 11am-11:45am- Your Ride

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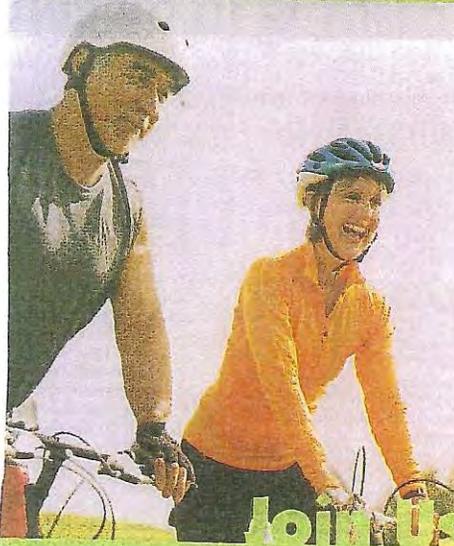


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email lnelson@gainesvilletimes.com

7/2/11

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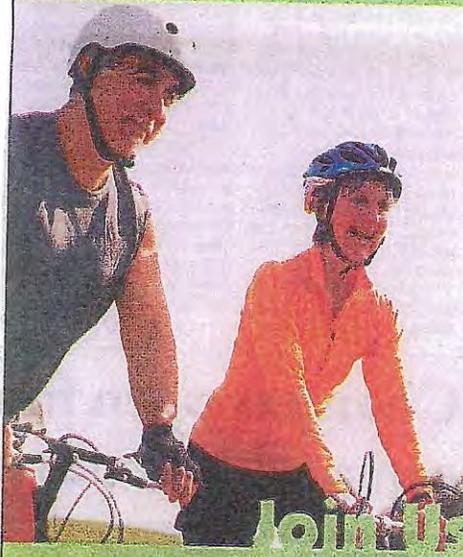


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