

City of Gainesville presents



A Very GNV Holiday Parade

Sat., Dec. 7

2024





City of Gainesville

Office of Cynthia Moore Chestnut

City Commissioner At-Large, Seat B

December 7, 2024

Dear Friend and Sponsor,

Along with giving thanks and exchanging gifts, one of the most cherished traditions of this season is the simple yet profound act of gathering as a community—celebrating together as family, friends and neighbors.

Thanks to your generosity and support, the City of Gainesville is proud to join with you in presenting the 2024 A Very GNV Holiday Parade, a joyous event that brings our community together in the spirit of the season.

On behalf of the Gainesville City Commission, our approximately 1,500 community builders, and the wonderful neighbors we serve, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for the joy your contribution brings to our city.

“In the midst of winter, we find within us an invincible summer.
This is the season of light, hope, and warmth shared freely
among us all.”

May this festive season bring you every happiness and fulfillment that imagination can offer.

With deepest gratitude,

Cynthia Moore Chestnut

Mayor Pro-Tem

2024 Holiday Parade Champion

City of Gainesville Holiday Festivities



- 10 a.m. **Dignitary Brunch**
Santa Fe Blount Center, 530 W. University Ave.
- 11:45 a.m. **Pre-Parade Entertainment: Smooth Flava**
Bo Diddley Plaza, 111 E. University Ave.
- 12 p.m. **A Very GNV Holiday Parade**
West Sixth Street to 620 E. University Ave.
- 3 p.m. **Holiday Kids' Dance Party**
Bo Diddley Plaza, 111 E. University Ave.
- 5 p.m. **Holiday Lights Celebration**
Thomas Center Gardens, 302 NE Sixth Ave.

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One year ago, the City of Gainesville introduced a new tradition by ushering in the holidays with a seasonal parade. An estimated 5,000 participants and spectators filled downtown to see Grand Marshal Steve Spurrier, former head coach of the Florida Gators football team and 1966 Heisman Trophy winner, lead the marching bands, motorcycle riders, shiny convertibles, dancing groups and floats along University Avenue.



This year's grand marshal is media personality and global superstar Shaquille O'Neal, the four-time NBA champion who was inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016. He is among the most famous basketball players in the entire world.

"We were overwhelmed by the community response last year," said Mayor Pro-Temp and parade champion Cynthia Moore Chestnut. "It exceeded all expectations. One of our biggest challenges for year two was finding a grand marshal to bring as much fun and excitement as Steve Spurrier, and with Shaquille O'Neal, I know we have succeeded."



For the parade this year, the city introduces a new float with a Winter Wonderland theme. The procession will start at noon, moving from West University Avenue and Sixth Street and traveling east approximately one mile, to end at the Alachua County Public Schools Administration Building at 620 E. University Avenue.



Along with the many wonderful new and returning parade participants, a 40-foot Regional Transit System (RTS) bus also will appear in the parade, decorated with giant decals to celebrate the season. Joining it along the route will be emergency response vehicles from the Gainesville Police Department and Gainesville Fire Rescue, trucks and crews from the Public Works Department, a contingent of the City of Gainesville's new Block by Block Downtown Ambassadors and dozens of organizations and groups from across the community.



Enjoy the parade!

The **City of Gainesville Police Department** leads *A Very GNV Holiday Parade* with an appearance by officers of the motorcycle unit. They are joined by members of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, the City of Alachua and the City of High Springs.

The **Eastside High School Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps** marches as the parade color guard. Please stand for the Presentation of the Colors.

Grand Marshal Shaquille O'Neal is a four-time NBA champion who was inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016. He is among the most famous basketball players in the entire world, a global superstar and a musician who has released four albums and is currently a touring DJ. Back in 2016, O'Neal surprised a group of neighborhood children in our community by playing street basketball alongside Gainesville Police Department Officer Bobby White. "It's always good to be in Gainesville," Shaq has said. "The street game with those kids really stuck with me. It's all about building friendships and bringing people together. I'm happy to come back, see old friends, and help the City of Gainesville bring holiday cheer with a community parade."

Gainesville's Youth Steering Committee advises the city on important issues facing young people. The members first gathered for One Nation One Project, part of a nationwide initiative to improve youth wellbeing through culture and the arts. Gainesville's focus was on reducing gun violence, and with input from these young leaders the City funded 29 programs, 85 artists and organizations, and involved 3,605 youth participants.



The **City of Gainesville** has created a winter wonderland for *A Very GNV Holiday* float. Riding the float is our very own Gainesville Mayor Harvey Ward. He is joined by the University of Florida mascots Albert and Alberta and Santa Fe College mascot Caesar the St. Bernard. High atop and playing the sax is Emmanuel Garilus, winner of the city's

One Nation One Project Apollo Theater Talent Search and a finalist at Amateur Night at the Apollo.

The Gainesville Mayor and City Commissioners are committed to bettering the quality of life for all neighbors. Our City Commissioners are: Gainesville Mayor Harvey Ward, Mayor Pro-Tem and At-Large Commissioner Cynthia Moore Chestnut, At-Large Commissioner Reina Saco, District 1 Commissioner Desmon Duncan-Walker, District 2 Commissioner Ed Book, District 3 Commissioner Casey Willits and District 4 Commissioner Bryan Eastman.

Queen Mother Mangye Vivian Filer is a prominent community leader, retired Santa Fe College professor and historian who has dedicated her life to preserving Gainesville's Black heritage. Queen Mother Filer is the founder and chair of the board of the Cotton Club Museum and Cultural Center, reflecting her mission to celebrate Black culture and empower future generations. She frequently gives the "Gainesville History Moment" at Gainesville City Commission meetings. **Donna Waller**, professor emeritus at Santa Fe College, is also a "Gainesville History Moment" contributor. She is recognized for her expertise in political science and interest in civic engagement. Ms. Waller has taught and mentored students for over three decades. With their deep knowledge and a commitment to education, both Queen Mother Filer and Ms. Waller are making a difference in our community.

Alex Book is a graceful stilt walker towering above the crowd. It takes acrobatic flair and training to maneuver along the parade route. Alex Book continues the centuries old stilt walking tradition with style that always brings a smile. Her proud father is Gainesville City Commissioner Ed Book.

The Miss Gainesville Scholarship Program features Miss Gainesville Halle Burton, Miss Ocala Tia Unsell and Miss Gainesville's Teen Larkin Mainwaring. They are part of the Miss America Organization, which is the largest scholarship provider for young women in the world. Our current Miss Florida 2025, Casana Fink, is a former Miss Gainesville and Miss Gainesville's Teen.

UF Health is a Platinum Level sponsor and is represented by the Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit. This is the first response vehicle of its kind in Florida. It is specially equipped with a portable CAT scanner on board and can diagnosis and treat stroke on scene.

The Eastside High School Marching Ram Band is accompanied by the school's cheer team. These spirited students perform at all Eastside High School home football games, the University of Florida Homecoming Parade, the Santa Fe High School Showcase of Bands and other school functions. The Ram Band is proud to represent Eastside High School.

State Representative Yvonne Hayes Hinson brings you greetings from the Florida House of Representatives and wishes you a happy and safe holiday season. Representative Hinson, our Democratic lawmaker from Gainesville, has held the District 20 seat since 2020 and served on the Gainesville City Commission from 2012 to 2015.

Coach Jesse Bobby Heard is a legendary local educator and leader. Heard coached his Lincoln High School football players to win after win through the 1960s. Then he started the athletic and football programs at newly organized Buchholz High School in 1969. Coach Heard made history as one of only three Black head football coaches to lead large, previously all white high schools after public school integration in the state of Florida.

Alachua County Commissioner Anna Prizzia is one of five Alachua County Commissioners, along with Marihelen Wheeler, Ken Cornell, Charles Chestnut and Chair Mary Alford. Commissioner Prizzia says, "At the heart of my vision is a commitment to growth that preserves the unique character of our communities while ensuring we meet the needs of our future."

The Alachua County Sheriff's Office is committed to building and developing relationships across our community through the services and information it provides. These are aimed at enhancing our personal safety and quality of life. Sheriff Emery Gainey and his deputies, officers and staff are proud to serve and protect Alachua County.

Zion Soldierz Riding Club is a non-profit organization committed to building a ministry of motivated members. This motorcycle group serves others by combining their deep faith with love of riding to support the community and give back.

The officers and staff of the **High Springs Police Department** set a "higher" standard in law enforcement by providing exceptional service to all citizens. High Springs has bones of prehistoric mammals and tools of Paleo-Indians recovered from local waters. Given its name in 1880, the community today is famous for hiking, diving, swimming, fishing, canoeing and tubing.

Tamari Davis is a professional track and field Adidas athlete, born and raised in Gainesville. Davis ran the first leg for the USA Women's 4x100 relay Gold Medal team in Budapest, Hungary at the World Championships in 2023. Davis was a Paris Olympian this year and finished her season ranked second in the 100m.

Oelrich Construction is a Sapphire Level sponsor of today's parade. Established in 2004, Oelrich Construction has grown into a trusted construction management company with more than 30 professional team members. With offices in Gainesville and Orlando, Oelrich Construction works on a diverse array of education, government, commercial, healthcare and civil and public infrastructure.

Florida Antique Bucket Brigade member Larry Rovak brings to our parade his antique fire engine. The Florida Antique Bucket Brigade is a statewide group of firefighting history enthusiasts, many of whom have their own their own fire trucks spanning from the early hand-drawn days to modern response vehicles.

GFL Environmental is a Gold Level sponsor. GFL is the only major diversified environmental services company in North America offering services in solid waste management and liquid waste management. We are grateful for the work GFL Environmental does to keep our community clean and healthy and to encourage greater environmental responsibility through safe, accessible and cost-effective solutions.

Alpha Pack Riders are a family-oriented motorcycle club from the Gainesville area. For nearly a decade, this group of motorcycle enthusiasts has joined together in events to support the community and strengthen the bonds between neighbors.

The Urban Yachting Club has a holiday rhyme: He was a mean one – Mr. Grinch, but he had a change of heart. He heard about the Holiday Parade, and now he's taking part. The Grinch joined the Urban Yachting Club, which really made things happen. He formed a crew of Max and Cindy Lou Who, and he made himself the captain. He won't steal your tree or take your roast beast, but a green pirate he is now. So I think some good advice is—best not to cross his bow.



The Martin Luther King Jr., Commission of Florida celebrates the life, commemorates the death, and recognizes the achievements of this great American. Founded in 1984, the commission has continued the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., working toward the elimination of poverty and racism. To date, the Martin Luther King Jr., Commission has given over half-a-million dollars in scholarships to high school seniors.

Destiny Dance Company is stepping into the holidays with ballet, jazz, tap, hip-hop and more. Classes are suitable for all ages and skill levels. Destiny Dance brings all the right moves for seasoned artists and those just starting out. When in doubt, just keep dancing! Join the dance community and express yourself through movement.

Hearts of Gold / Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid-Florida is not only about rescuing and re-homing goldens, the organization is also about providing therapeutic visitation to those in need. In this year's A Very GNV Holiday Parade is a full special team of handlers and dogs. These trainers and best friends wag their tails at the chance to represent their rescue at community events.

The Ministries of Expressive Song and Dance, created by Elois Waters, is a nonprofit, affordable dance company for children and adults. Established in 1995, the studio teaches many styles including ballet, gospel, hip-hop, lyrical and modern dance. Today the students of this dance ministry are wishing all the very best this festive season.

Bradford County Board of County Commissioners is headed by Chair Carolyn Brown Spooner, the first African American woman elected to the Bradford County Board in more than 160 years and the first to be selected as chair. Bradford County Commissioners are striving to make their community a better place to live for the next generation.

Northwest and Woodland Park Boys & Girls Clubs are part of the Boys & Girls Clubs of North Central Florida. Every day after school and all summer long, a safe and caring club experience is provided for children in need of opportunity. They are empowered to excel in school, become good citizens and lead healthy, productive lives while charting a course toward a healthy adulthood.

Santa Fe College is a Gold Level sponsor and we are proud to welcome Santa Fe College President Dr. Paul Broadie, the fifth president of this institution, who is wishing all of us a happy holiday season.

Following Dr. Broadie is the **Santa Fe Association of Black Faculty and Staff**. This group has a mission to empower communities by promoting an environment that fosters cultural awareness and enrichment through mentoring, professional networking, quality programming and building partnerships. Membership includes administrators, faculty and staff employed by Santa Fe College.

The Richard E. Parker Alumni Band is composed of passionate musicians who once graced the field as students of Eastside High School. Named in honor of legendary band director Richard E. Parker, the alumni band embodies a powerful blend of tradition and talent. They bring rousing performances and timeless sound, a true testament to the legacy of music and community in Gainesville.

The Regional Transit System (RTS) celebrated 50 years of service this year. With a fleet that moves thousands of passengers daily, the City of Gainesville's RTS not only connects us, but also fosters a sense of unity and progress. The mission of the many incredible drivers, mechanics and staff of RTS is to provide safe, courteous, equitable and energy-efficient transportation services.



The Infamous Diamonds are a majorette dance team founded in 2016 for dancers of all ages, sizes and backgrounds. They perform complex steps, acrobatic flips and choreographed tricks. The Diamonds have performed at multiple University of Florida events, including the Homecoming SoulFest and parade, the UF Black Student Assembly and the annual Florida International Step Show.

Gainesville Fire Rescue responds to approximately 30,000 calls a year. Today they have a command vehicle, an aerial truck and a medical response unit in the parade. These firefighters do more than put out flames. They also specialize in emergency medical services, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, confined space rescues and more.

The Neighborhood Housing and Development Corp. strongly believes that each individual and family deserves an equal opportunity to live in decent, affordable housing. To make this a reality, they have initiated

housing development and rental property services and provide tools to help first-time homebuyers.

WPZM PRAISE 107.5 FM is part of the Community Praise Center founded by Dr. Shirley Watts in 1994 to bring restoration, deliverance and healing without denominational barriers. The center has served as a supplemental educational service provider for the Florida Department of Education and has partnered with Florida Works to provide adults with job search support and training.

The Pleasant Street Neighborhood Association represents Gainesville's oldest, most intact, comprehensive African American neighborhood. The group includes families who have lived in the neighborhood for decades. Its historic structures include Friendship Baptist Church, the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, and the old Mount Carmel Church, along with the A. Quinn Jones Home and School.

Lavish Petals is an award-winning florist business that started with the simple idea of creating the best and providing it to clients. From the talented founder to the front-line workers, Lavish Petals puts love and careful thought into all they do. This holiday season, they hope all will enjoy the beauty of flowers and share the inspiration with others.

The Repurpose Project is a nonprofit community-based effort to divert useful resources from our landfills by turning them into items for art and education. A junk shop that specializes in things you might otherwise throw away, the Repurpose Project is working to reinvent the concept of reusing to help our planet and protect our future.



Westwood Middle School Cheerleaders are making an appearance in this year's parade. More than 20 members strong, this cheer squad carries on a tradition of excellence. Westwood strives to provide an educational atmosphere that gives students opportunity to improve as citizens and people. No other middle school waves as many championship banners as Westwood.

We are pleased to welcome sororities and fraternities of the Divine Nine to A Very GNV Holiday Parade:

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is walking in the parade today to showcase their sisterhood and commitment to helping others. This group of women has launched many successful local initiatives to benefit our community. Their signature programs and fundraisers include “Pink Goes Red for Heart Health,” seasonal wraps give-away, and the annual Pink Dress Luncheon for breast cancer education. All have made positive impacts in the Gainesville community.

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity is the nation’s oldest intercollegiate historically African American fraternity. It was founded in 1906. The Nu Eta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha of Gainesville Florida was chartered in 1979 and is celebrating 45 years of existence this year. They also represent the House of Alpha Education Foundation.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority’s Gainesville Alumnae Chapter is one of 211 chapters in the Dynamic Southern Region. This chapter was chartered in 1985 by 40 phenomenal women. Delta Sigma Theta started on the campus of Howard University in 1913 and has grown to 350,000 initiated women and over 1,000 chapters worldwide sharing a common bond in service, scholarship, sisterhood, and social action.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity’s Gainesville Alumni Chapter members vow to inspire service while promoting brotherhood, education and achievement in every field of human endeavor. The fraternity was founded in 1911 and has grown to include more than 160,000 members with chapters in every state of the United States and in ten countries.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority is an organization that gives back to the community. For 103 years, the women of Zeta Phi Beta have upheld their founders’ vision. The Zetas are committed to setting themselves apart as an organization built on the ideals of scholarship, service, sisterhood and finer womanhood.

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity was founded on Jan. 9, 1914 on the campus of Howard University. For the 110 years since, this brotherhood has given back to the community, led social movements and inspired generations. Sigma men embody “Culture for service and service for humanity,” and promote brotherhood, scholarship and philanthropy.

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority was founded by seven educators in 1922 at Butler University in Indiana. Their mission is to enhance the quality of life for women and their families in the U.S. and globally through community service, civil and social action. Their motto is “Greater Service, Greater Progress,” and they are accompanied today by their mascot “The Poodle.”

The Gainesville Housing Authority is a Sapphire Level sponsor and an advocate and provider of affordable housing for families in Gainesville. Their vision is to be the leader in developing affordable housing to provide a foundation that helps families improve their quality of life.

Whitaker Wellness Spa, founded by retired educator and Gainesville native Shantell Whitaker, is dedicated to promoting wellness with a heart for service. Embracing a mission to support both mental and physical health, Whitaker Wellness Spa is honored to bring a relaxing, healing presence to Gainesville.

Cox Communications is the parade’s Platinum Level sponsor. Cox is committed to connecting people through technology. It operates fiber-powered networks in more than 30 states, serving nearly seven million homes and businesses nationwide. Cox is dedicated to empowering others to build a better future.

PEAK Literacy says, “Literacy lights the way.” PEAK is a local nonprofit that uses community volunteers to help struggling readers in kindergarten through high school in Alachua County. They offer virtual lessons as well as in-person lessons through partner schools and after schools. They make volunteering easy with as little as 15 minutes a day!

Sugarhill Little Princess represents the Sugarhill neighborhood. This close-knit community celebrates with reunions and parades every year to remember their ancestors and honor their shared history. Sugarhill is located between Fourth Avenue and the Waldo Road intersection, near Evergreen Cemetery.



Florida Horse Riders are a popular attraction at any parade. The group was founded under Douglas Green in 2001. It consists of 15 riders who actively participate monthly. They love parades, trail riding and helping others ride. So come and join them. “Can I Get A Yee Haw?”

Alachua County Public Schools is dedicated to giving students the knowledge, skills and personal characteristics to be lifelong thinkers and independent learners. The district is led by a board consisting of Chair Sarah Rockwell, Vice-Chair Tina Certain, and members Leanetta McNealy, Kay Abbitt and Thomas Vu.

The Alachua County Public Schools Transportation Department is here in a big yellow school bus. School bus drivers provide safe, efficient and effective student transportation to and from school throughout the year. The school bus is truly an extension of the classroom and the drivers are committed to the success of every student.

Upper Room Ministries is a set of outreach ministries led by the Upper Room of Greater Gainesville Church of God in Christ. For more than 20 years, Upper Room has offered support, mentoring and guidance to neighbors. Led by Pastor Pearlie Shelton and Superintendent Karl Anderson, Upper Room works to help all members of the community.

LifeSouth Community Blood Centers is the sole supplier of blood products to the hospitals in Gainesville and the surrounding communities. LifeSouth inspires people to give blood by sharing the stories of the patients who need it. They encourage you to consider becoming a blood donor today.

The D.E. Scorpio Corporation is a Sapphire Level sponsor of the parade. Scorpio has a devoted and seasoned team of construction professionals who create spaces that enliven communities and beautify cities. From project inception to completion, Scorpio seeks the most effective, sustainable solutions to make everything they build a benefit to the people who live and work in the area where it is constructed.

Morgan & Morgan is America’s largest personal injury law firm with over 900 trial-ready attorneys and thousands of capable support team members. Morgan & Morgan is also a Gold Level sponsor here today. The firm is located in all 50 states and has recovered over \$15 billion for their clients. “Morgan & Morgan. For the people, not the powerful.”

Alachua County Property Appraiser Ayesha Solomon grew up in east Gainesville and is passionate about helping neighbors by ensuring everyone has access to basic services. The property appraiser is charged by the State Constitution and Florida Statutes with appraising all property in Alachua County at 100 percent of market value as of Jan. 1 every year.

Chestnut Funeral Home has been part of Gainesville since 1914. Four generations of Chestnuts have owned and managed the business for more than a century. The family has worked to advance causes from integration to education. Today, Charles “Chuck” Chestnut IV is an Alachua County Commissioner and Cynthia Chestnut is Gainesville Mayor Pro-Tem and the champion behind A Very GNV Holiday Parade.

Cumbia Collective is a traditional Colombian Cumbia group that is sponsored by the owners of Abuela’s and Flaco’s. They are costumed in traditional Christmas colors representing their cultural heritage. Cumbia Collective members represent a tradition of carnival parades from all over South America but specifically Baranquilla, Colombia.

The Real Rosewood Foundation is a historical foundation committed to advancing public interest in the history around Rosewood, its legacy, and the communities that call it home. The work is propelled by research, education and immersive public programs. Lizzie Robinson Jenkins is CEO and Founder of the Real Rosewood Foundation.

Williams Temple Church of God in Christ is a family ministry that seeks to strengthen the total man placing a special emphasis on unity, family and fellowship. Williams Temple leaders believe if the total man is healed, then the overall family is successful. Williams Temple Church of God in Christ works to meet the needs of our community with the resources and spiritual care essential to daily life.

Premier Moms supports working moms and those in school. The group coordinates and supports opportunities for training, mentoring, coaching and networking. Moms meet virtually monthly, and childcare is provided during in-person meetings. Training topics include health, finances, co-parenting, safe dating, childcare and more.

The award-winning **P.K. Yonge Blue Wave Marching Band** inspires through music. The goal is to use the arts to foster, challenge, motivate, develop and help students become responsible and mature young adults in all facets of their life.

The town of Micanopy offers a glimpse into the past with its beautifully preserved 19th-century architecture and vibrant community spirit. Whether it's a stroll through its antique shops, enjoying a festival in the park, or simply basking in the quiet beauty of nature, Micanopy is a treasure trove of culture and character.

Allstars Twirling Academy is dedicated to teaching the art of baton twirling, dance, and performance, offering a nurturing environment where students build confidence, discipline, and teamwork. These young athletes shine from beginner to elite competition levels. Watch them bring joy and skill to the holiday parade.

Pavlov Media is a Gold Level sponsor and a national provider of broadband, voice and managed network services, with a significant presence here in Gainesville. Specializing in serving multi-family housing, student communities and businesses, Pavlov Media delivers high-speed internet and advanced connectivity solutions tailored to meet the growing demands of modern users.

K. Allen Universal specializes in clean outs, junk hauling, light demolition and even delivery services. Whether your needs are mulch, gravel and soil or furniture and appliances, K. Allen is the best in dealing with mess and can deliver you from that stress.



The Concrete Rose Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides advocacy and assistance to minority youth through targeted

mentorship. The goal is to minimize the risk factors faced by adolescents in underserved communities. The Concrete Rose Foundation serves youth in Alachua County.

Generation of Decision is a talented dance team from Howard Bishop Middle School. These students embody holiday spirit and school spirit, as well. They perform their choreography outfitted in the school's beautiful royal blue and white dance uniforms to a soundtrack of seasonal classics.

Mainstreet Daily News is a Sapphire Level parade sponsor. This local, independent news outlet is dedicated to telling the story of Gainesville and its surrounding area. Its mission is to inform, engage and inspire readers to make a difference in the communities and neighborhoods it serves.

Tu Fiesta Radio is the heartbeat of Latino culture in north central Florida. Broadcasting the best in Latin hits and community news, Tu Fiesta Radio is a celebration of a diverse and vibrant heritage that brings rhythm, information and unity to Gainesville and beyond. ¡Que viva la fiesta, Gainesville!

Florida Blue says, “Be kind to yourself over the holidays.” With a strong and evolving network of providers, Florida Blue can help you manage stress, injury or illness over the holiday season and throughout the year. The Florida Blue network includes hospitals, surgical facilities and medical professionals specializing in all areas.

Matchmaker Realty of Alachua County serves the community in and around Gainesville. With this festive trolley, the folks at Matchmaker have the experience and expertise to help homebuyers and sellers navigate the north Florida home market.

CandE Factory enriches the development of young people and adults through a focus on community and a wide variety of activities. We believe Everybody can Art in their own way. All you need is a heART! These mentors want to spread the joy of creative arts in learning, art in various forms, and help others realize their own individual creative potential.

The Visionaires –a local civic club – was established in 1938 by eight African American women who wanted to enhance the cultural and educational opportunities for the African American community in Gainesville. They are still thriving 86 years later. The Visionaires provide financial support for community-based organizations, award annual scholarships to college-bound students, raise awareness for important community issues and support the local performing arts scene.

Siatech MYcro School is a tuition-free public charter high school. The curriculum is a blend of cutting-edge educational software and in-person instruction in math, English as a second language, English, reading, science and social studies. Class sizes are small, and students work at their own pace.

Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church was founded in 1867 with the Rev. Isaac Davis serving as the first pastor. As the oldest Black congregation in Gainesville, it holds a place in history as the social and religious center for the Pleasant Street neighborhood. The neighborhood is approximately 150-years-old, dating to the period of Gainesville’s founding, and remains an important part of our cultural history.

The Alachua County Branch of the NAACP was chartered on June 11, 1945. Members of the NAACP make a difference every day in the fight for social justice and civil rights in Gainesville and across the country. The Alachua County NAACP is led by President Evelyn Foxx.

The Gainesville Dazzling Black Hat Divas are a society of women who support each other. A social organization that began as an offshoot of the national Red Hat Society, the Dazzling Black Hat Divas were inspired when



members decided to dress in black and wear bling to celebrate Black Friday, the discount shopping event the day after Thanksgiving. The sorority has been going strong ever since.

Caring and Sharing Learning School is a place where every child can learn. Caring and Sharing is a 2010

National Title 1 Distinguished School, a 2017 National High Flying School, and a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School. The vision is to provide the best academic and personal education for students in an environment that promotes achievement, personal excellence and a sense of pride.

The baton twirlers from the Caring and Sharing Learning School dazzle the crowd with their precision, energy and infectious enthusiasm. Known for their dedication, teamwork and commitment to excellence, these students represent the heart of their school's mission—empowering young minds to dream big and achieve even bigger.

The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Board reviews transportation planning proposals and programs that impact bicyclists and pedestrians in the Gainesville area. The City of Gainesville is a Silver-tier Bicycle Friendly Community and is designated a Trail Town by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Greater Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church is a historic congregation first founded by 13 original worshippers in 1869. This congregation ministers to the social, spiritual and physical development of all people under the esteemed Pastor Ron Rawls. No matter where you have been, where you are, or where you are going, there is a place for you at Greater Bethel.

Communication Workers of America Local 3170, known to most in our area as CWA, is a workers union that proudly represents and serves employees of the City of Gainesville, Gainesville Regional Utilities, the Gainesville Housing Authority and the Alachua County Library District.

Evan Roseman and his community group are filled with holiday spirit, coming down the parade route with a Jeep Wrangler decorated with 1,200 lights and a Christmas flag. They even remembered the music!

MARC Radio has stations in the Gainesville-Ocala area, Orlando, Melbourne and in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas. Their mission is to reimagine new and legacy media to connect with and super serve the community.

Gainesville Roller Rebels (GRR) is a roller derby league that empowers its members to realize their full potential both on and off the track. Founded in 2007 by Catherine Seeman, aka Ms. Rebel, GRR was incorporated as a Florida non-profit organization in June 2008. In January 2013, GRR became a full member of the Women's Flat Track Derby Association. The core values of GRR are athleticism, community and empowerment.

Meridian Healthcare has been proudly serving north central Florida with compassionate care since 1971. They have expanded their service area to include 13 patient service centers to better support those challenged by substance abuse and mental health disorders. Together, Meridian hopes to transform communities from the inside out. One life at a time, one community at a time.

Dr. Sinn's Freak Island Musical Sideshow bills itself as your favorite hometown clown band. The group brings a zany sense of seasonal spirit and fun to *A Very GNV Holiday Parade*. Filled with unexpected silliness,



the troupe involves a marching contingent of kazoo players, a color guard of hula hoops, stilt walkers, ribbon wands, a drum major playing rubber chickens and a poodle in a tuxedo!

High-Class Educated Role Models (HER) Academy is Florida's first all-girls preparatory preschool. Founded by Chancellor Shawndria Dennison in 2020, HER Academy establishes the educational foundation of the world's

next leading ladies while providing a loving, safe, luxurious educational environment. At HER Academy, we promise to give parents peace of mind.

The Latina Women's League has represented their community in Alachua County and north Florida for 20 years. The Latina Women's league brings us the Gainesville Latino Film Festival, citizenship preparation classes and storytelling in Spanish and English, along with Spanish lessons – free of charge.

Rising Sun Lodge is the only Prince Hall affiliated lodge of Master Masons in Alachua County. Rising Sun has been located in Gainesville since 1870. Always working in service of others, the good brothers of Rising Sun recently collected essentials for the citizens of Cedar Key to help with hurricane recovery.

Gainesville Bulls Youth Basketball and Cheerleading is a dynamic force in youth sports. Founded by Charles and Lotiea Penny, and led by Pastor Diane Jackson with Joy of the Lord Outreach Ministry, Gainesville Bulls gives young athletes opportunities to grow. The Bulls emphasize skill development, sportsmanship and community spirit to make a positive impact both on and off the court. They believe in no child left behind.

Gainesville Street Rods bring a blast from the past. These car enthusiasts are dedicated to preserving and showcasing the beauty and craftsmanship of classic and custom cars. From shiny chrome to roaring engines, these vintage rides turn heads wherever they go, celebrating the golden era of automotive history.

The Fabulous Woman Pageant is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. This pageant is founded, funded and directed by Tonya Thomas, an African American woman with a focus on empowering all women. For building confidence and promoting body positivity, there is nothing better than the Fabulous Woman Pageant.

The Gainesville Santa Crawl is a local tradition. This is the fourteenth year that participants will dress in their favorite holiday costume and join in the fun. The event supports the Catholic Charities Weekend Hunger Backpack Program. The Santa Crawl is on Dec. 14, and funds raised help feed approximately 400 children who otherwise might go without meals.

Cub Scout Pack 127 is for all students in kindergarten through fifth grade. They are one of the oldest packs in Florida and the first registered inclusive unit in Gainesville. From cooking and archery to pinewood derbies,

bicycling, parades, pocketknives and campfires—they get involved in amazing activities that help children learn, explore and grow.

Girl Scouts of Gateway Council serves over 13,000 girls across 35 counties in north Florida, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean. Much more than cookies and crafts, Girl Scout leadership consists of helping girls discover themselves and their values, connect with others, and take action to make the world a better place.

CDS Family and Behavioral Health Services has provided counseling and residential services to Gainesville and north Florida families for over 50 years. CDS continues to provide the best care and residential counseling services for youth and families in need in our area. The CDS mission statement is, “Empowering youth and building strong families for a brighter tomorrow.”

Choreograph Gainesville is a resort-style, 55-and-over community situated in the heart of Celebration Pointe. It’s all about taking the next step in life, dancing to your own rhythm, and finding friends and neighbors to share activities, festivities and interests.

The Gainesville Empowerment Zone Family Learning Center is “Growing Greatness.” Spearheaded by Gainesville For All, the center serves children from infancy onward. The mission is to eradicate the achievement gap between Black and white students in Alachua County by teaching skills necessary for success and connecting families to vital community services.

Best Water Solutions was founded in 1982 and has spent decades working to become “the water experts” of north central Florida. This independent, local, family- owned and operated company understands how important water is to you, your family, home and business. They have more than a century of combined experience in effective, cutting-edge water technologies.



The British Car Club is comprised of fans with a special affinity for antique cars from Great Britain. These vehicles date from the period after World War II, which severely weakened the British economy. These cars may not have air-conditioning, power windows or other amenities, but the club members say they sure are fun to drive.

The Alachua County Library District is celebrating the season with a library cart drill team. These staffers are walking with the carts used to shelve books, festively decorated, doing short weaving and formation routines. The Alachua County Library District is an independent special district and the sole provider of public library services to approximately 271,000 citizens in urban and rural communities. There are 12 branch locations and two bookmobiles.

Gladden Boxing Club, founded by former professional boxer Lee Gladden Jr., provides Gainesville with a safe and healthy environment to learn the art of boxing through teamwork, good sportsmanship and fair play. Gladden teaches boxers to improve mentally, spiritually and physically, paving the way to become a better person and athlete.

Gainesville Area Rowing promotes rowing as a sport in the Gainesville/Alachua County area. They teach the physical fitness, nutrition and psychological skills that lead rowers to heightened mental and physical self-awareness. With programs for all ages, Gainesville Area Rowing provides the equipment and professional coaching staff to compete on a national level.

Gainesville Regional Utilities is a Sapphire Level sponsor and they are bringing joy to A Very GNV Holiday Parade with very useful trucks that keep our utilities running. GRU is a multi-service utility owned by the City of Gainesville and managed by the GRU Authority Board. It is the fifth largest municipal electric utility in Florida. GRU provides electric, water, wastewater, natural gas and telecommunication services to its customers.

Snyder Air Conditioning, Plumbing and Electric believes a strong community is built on the foundations of support and trust. Their commitment extends beyond providing exceptional service and quality; they aim to foster meaningful connections. Snyder brings that spirit of excellence to the parade, showcasing their team of experts who work day and night to ensure comfort and safety for all.

Capital Choice Insurance Agency has joined A Very GNV Holiday Parade with a festive entry that matches the seasonal theme of our very jolly holiday celebration.

Bloco Gainesville is a group of electrifying Afro-Brazilian drummers who bring the heartbeat of Brazil to every street they march! With powerful beats, vibrant energy and a celebration of cultural unity, this talented group channels the spirit of samba and the rich traditions of Afro-Brazilian music. Every drumbeat is a call to dance, connect and celebrate the beauty of diversity.

The Invictus Fencing Club is dedicated to the ongoing development and growth of fencing and parafencing programs, athletes and coaches in a safe, inclusive and affordable environment. No equipment or experience is necessary. Fencing was originally a form of military training and started to evolve into a sport in the 14th or 15th century in both Germany and Italy.

Gainesville Wildcats Youth Sports and Educational Program is in its second season and is ready to compete. The Wildcats are members of the United Youth Football League and the Saint John's River Conference in Jacksonville, FL. The Wildcats is an organization where parents want to volunteer, and kids want to play.

Star Center Theatre, established and led by Rhonda Wilson, uses the arts to educate and empower young people. Over the past two decades, Star Center has launched more than 150 productions, taught more than 5,000 students, and collaborated with hundreds of artists. The theater is a place for young people to sparkle and shine.

UF Health Psychiatric Hospital is dedicated to providing compassionate mental health care. This incredible team works tirelessly to support individuals and families on their journey to wellness. Through innovative treatments, expert staff and a commitment to breaking the stigma surrounding mental health, UF Health Psychiatric Hospital is making a difference in our community. UF Health is a Platinum Level sponsor of today's parade.



University of Florida Clinical Research is all dressed up for the holidays. The team has brought along the vehicle they take into the community to provide vaccines, health assessments and scientific research to those who are not able to come to a hospital or clinical setting. The team outfitted the vehicle in holiday gear, as well.

Block by Block is the leading provider of ambassador services across the country, with more than 150 programs nationwide. The Block by Block Gainesville Downtown Ambassadors are now part of our community. These highly visible, easily identifiable helpers will make rounds on foot, bicycle and motor vehicle. Their work will include graffiti removal, street cleaning, landscaping, community outreach, hospitality and more.

Here comes “The Pride of the Sunshine”—the **University of Florida Fightin’ Gator Marching Band!** Known for their precision, power, and passion, these musicians bring Gator spirit to life with every beat, note and step. The Gator Marching Band is where music meets tradition and Gator spirit shines bright!

Riding in big red fire truck from Gainesville Fire Rescue is none other than **Santa Claus** himself! With holiday cheer blazing, this special delivery is brought to you by the City of Gainesville. Santa’s trading in his sleigh for this iconic fire truck today, spreading joy to kids of all ages.

Bringing up the rear with pride and purpose, it’s the hardworking heroes of **City of Gainesville’s Public Works Department**. These mighty trucks and dedicated crews ensure our streets stay clean and safe—not just during the parade, but every day of the year. Their tireless efforts festivities end on a spotless note.

Celebrating Peace, Connecting Community

When: Saturday, Dec. 14

12 – 3 p.m.

Where: Martin Luther King Jr. Multipurpose Center

1028 NE 14th St.

A holiday season event under the banner of IMPACT GNV, the goal is to help neighbors connect to valuable resources, enjoy a meal and provide some basic needs items.

A very special thank you to our partners and community builders!

We are grateful to parade champion extraordinaire, Mayor Pro-Tem Cynthia Moore Chestnut, for her leadership and commitment to the holiday parade as she was persistent in her call to rally parade sponsors. She also energized and engaged the community in parade planning. The parade execution was organized under the leadership of City Manager Cynthia W. Curry and her executive and senior management community builders. Executive Chief of Staff Cintya Ramos (tagged Ms. Christmas) and Kathleen Kauffman (the city's historic preservation officer and A Very GNV Parade director) guided efforts across all City of Gainesville departments. It is important to boast that Kathleen served as a longtime organizer of the Junior Orange Bowl Parade in Coral Gables spending countless hours coordinating the logistics required to create the fun-filled moment when floats, marchers and bands join together to turn that corner and begin the parade. The Public Works staff prepared the route. The Communications staff produced the parade artwork, announcer script and videos. The staff from Parks, Recreation



and Cultural Affairs assisted with logistics. The manager of the Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area spearheaded the volunteer squad. The team from Government Affairs & Community Relations supported parade operations. The Gainesville Police Department and Gainesville Fire Rescue are appearing in the parade while staying ready to respond to any emergency.

The City of Gainesville wishes you the best always and thanks you for joining our holiday parade festivities.

City of Gainesville



Gainesville City Commission

Mayor Harvey Ward

At-Large B & Mayor Pro-Tem Commissioner Cynthia Moore Chestnut

District 1 Commissioner Desmon Duncan Walker

District 2 Commissioner Ed Book

District 3 Commissioner Casey Willits

District 4 Commissioner Bryan Eastman

At-Large A Commissioner Reina Saco

City Manager

Cynthia W. Curry

***From our City of Gainesville family
to yours, we wish you a very
happy holiday season.***

City of Gainesville

A Very GNV Holiday Parade

