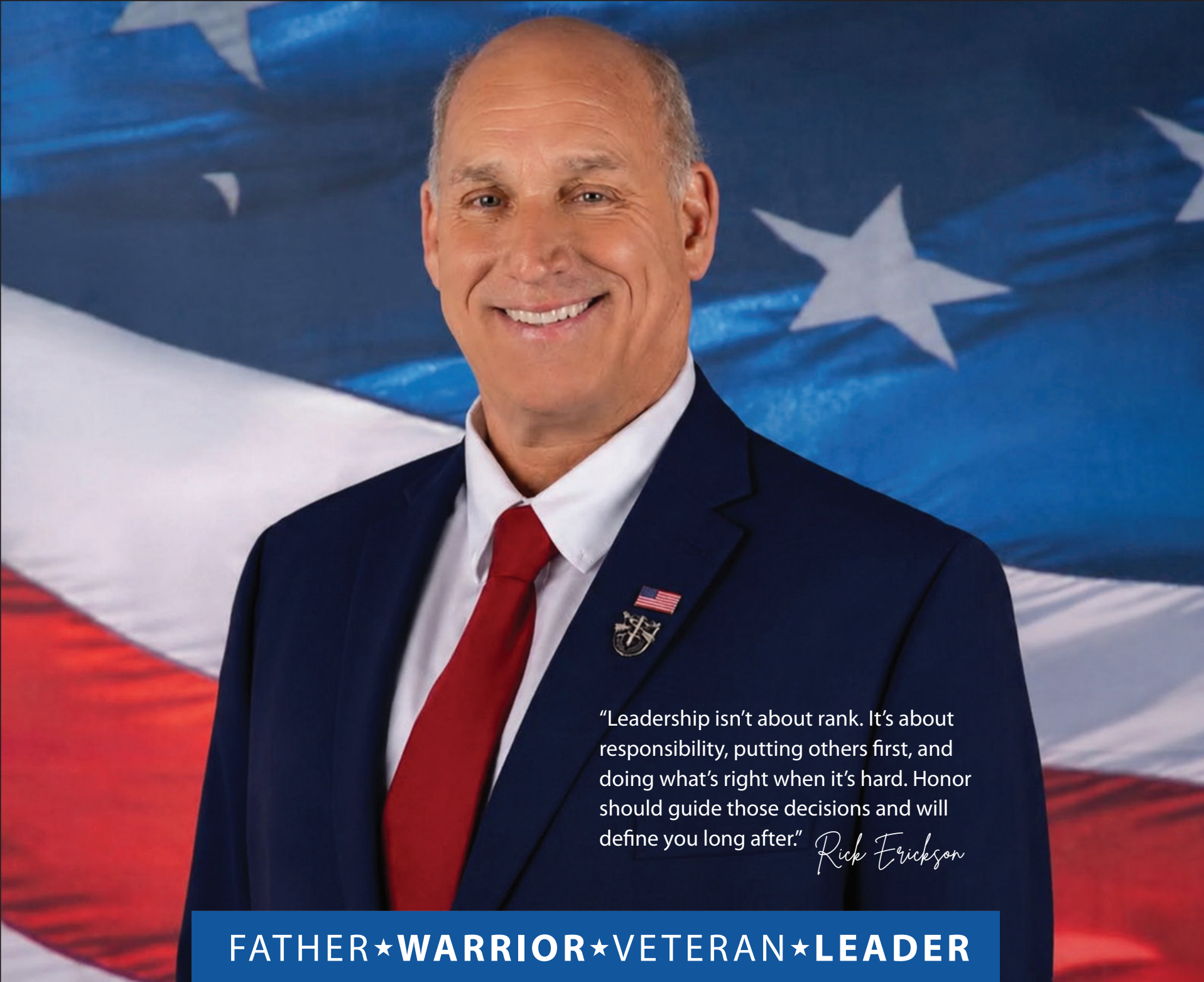


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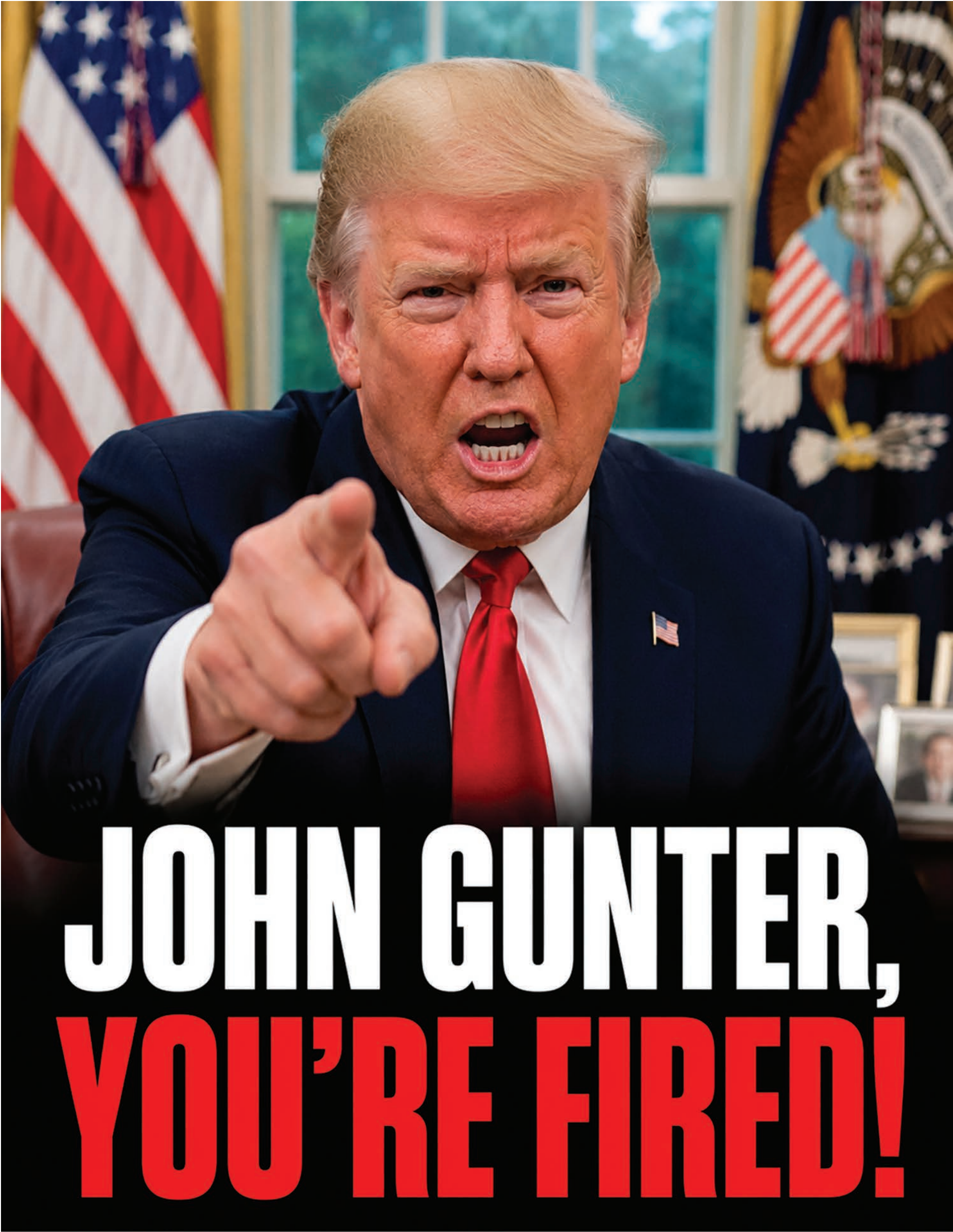


JOHN TOBLER

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LEE HEALTH EXPANDS HEALTHCARE ACCESS IN EASTERN LEE COUNTY WITH NEW OUTPATIENT CENTER AT THE FORUM

Residents of eastern Lee County will soon have greater access to healthcare services closer to home with Lee Health at The Forum. Scheduled to open next year off State Road 82, the facility will offer primary care, Lee Convenient Care, and on-site laboratory services, creating a convenient healthcare destination for patients in Lehigh Acres, East Fort Myers, and surrounding communities.

The outpatient center will provide comprehensive healthcare services, including primary care with space for up to eleven providers, Lee Convenient Care services, and an on-site laboratory draw suite.

“This new outpatient center is another example of how Lee Health is growing alongside our community and investing in the services people need most,” said Lee Health Chief Administrative Officer of LPG and Ambulatory Care Services Kris Fay. “By bringing these services closer to home, we are making it easier for patients and families to access the care and support they need to achieve their health and wellness goals.”

The new Outpatient Center at The Forum is part of Lee Health’s broader work to invest in healthcare infrastructure and expand access throughout Southwest Florida. As the population continues to grow, Lee Health remains focused on creating more opportunities for patients to receive timely, coordinated, and high-quality care close to home.

Lee Health team members and project partners gathered for the ceremonial groundbreaking to celebrate the start of construction and the positive impact the facility will have on the area.

When completed, the Outpatient Center at The Forum will provide a convenient healthcare destination for residents across eastern Lee County, supporting healthier communities and improving access to essential services throughout the region.



ABOUT LEE HEALTH

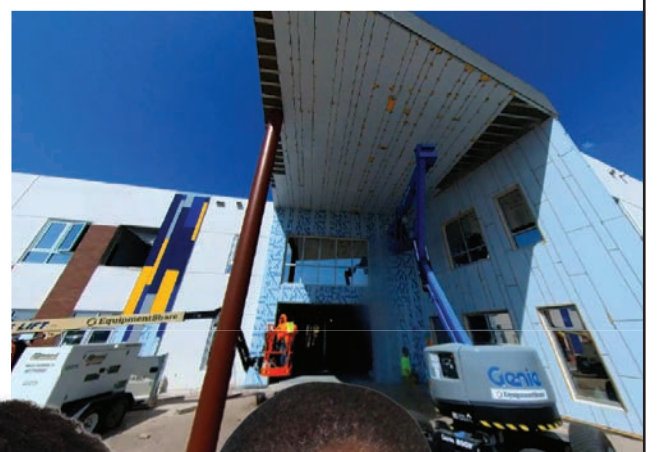
Lee Health has been a cornerstone of health care in Southwest Florida since opening its first hospital in 1916. As a non-profit, integrated health system, Lee Health is dedicated to providing high-quality, compassionate care to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. With a strong commitment to community health and wellness, Lee Health commits to evolving with the growing and changing needs of the region. The system offers comprehensive services through four acute care hospitals, Golisano Children's Hospital, three skilled nursing locations, outpatient facilities, urgent care centers, and a wide network of primary care and specialty practices. Lee Health supports every step of the health journey, from preventive care to advanced treatment for every member of our community. Learn more at www.LeeHealth.org.

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Supporting Tourism and Our Local Economy

The Paradise Coast Trail also offers an opportunity to strengthen one of Southwest Florida's most important economic engines: tourism.

Visitors increasingly seek experiences that allow them to explore a destination rather than simply travel through it.

Walking, cycling, running and nature-based recreation provide a different way to experience Naples and Collier County—at a pace that allows people to see our neighborhoods, parks, waterways, natural environment and local businesses up close.

Imagine beginning the morning with a bicycle ride from a hotel, stopping for coffee, visiting a park or attraction, enjoying lunch at a local restaurant and discovering a part of Naples or Collier County you might never have seen from a car.

As the network expands, visitors may eventually be able to plan longer outings connecting Naples with other communities throughout Southwest Florida.

That type of activity can create opportunities for hotels, restaurants, bicycle shops, retailers, tour operators and other local businesses while broadening the range of experiences our region can offer.

For a destination already celebrated for its beaches, dining, shopping, arts, culture and natural beauty, a connected regional trail network adds another reason to get outside and discover what makes Southwest Florida special.

An Investment in Quality of Life

Perhaps the greatest value of the Paradise Coast Trail is that it can be many things to many people.

It can be a place for a sunrise walk, a family bicycle ride or an afternoon run. It can encourage healthy activity and time outdoors. It can introduce a visitor to a new corner of our region. It can support local businesses. And it can bring communities that once seemed separated by roadways and distance a little closer together.

The first seven miles are therefore more than the completion of a single project. They are the beginning of a much larger vision for how people can connect with and experience Southwest Florida.

This first phase would not have been possible without the dedication of community advocates, local leaders, partner agencies and residents who worked together over many years to bring the vision to life.

As additional segments take shape, each mile has the potential to create another connection—to a neighborhood, a park, a business, another community or simply to the natural surroundings we are fortunate to enjoy.

For Naples, the Paradise Coast Trail reinforces our longstanding commitment to thoughtful planning, recreation, connectivity and preserving the exceptional quality of life that makes our community so special.

The first seven miles provide a wonderful beginning. But what makes the Paradise Coast Trail truly exciting is not only where the path leads today.

It is about where it may take our community tomorrow.

On July 30, the first seven miles of the Paradise Coast Trail officially opened, marking an exciting milestone for Naples and Southwest Florida. This new trail segment represents years of planning, partnership and a shared commitment to enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

More than simply a recreational amenity, the Paradise Coast Trail creates opportunities for people to walk, run, bike and enjoy the natural beauty that makes Southwest Florida such a special place to call home. It promotes healthy lifestyles, strengthens connections between communities and gives residents and visitors another way to experience our region.

For the City of Naples, the trail complements a commitment we have been building upon for many years. Our network of bike lanes, shared-use paths and neighborhood greenways, together with destinations such as Baker Park and the Gordon River Greenway, provides opportunities to move through the city, enjoy the outdoors and connect with neighborhoods, parks and businesses.

The Paradise Coast Trail takes that vision beyond our city limits.

Building a More Connected Region

The long-term vision for the Paradise Coast Trail reaches well beyond the first seven miles now open. The planned corridor encompasses approximately 75 miles throughout Collier County and is envisioned as part of a larger regional network connecting Naples with South Naples, Marco Island, Immokalee, Bonita Springs and other communities.

Plans also envision connections with larger trail systems, including the Florida Gulf Coast Trail and the Collier-to-Polk/Florida Heartland Regional Trail.

For Naples, those connections are significant. Our existing pathways have the potential to become part of something much larger—a regional recreation and transportation network that could allow someone to begin a morning bicycle ride in Naples and someday continue well beyond the city, exploring parks, neighborhoods and destinations throughout Southwest Florida.

A local pathway could become the starting point for an entirely new way to experience our region.

That is one of the most exciting aspects of the Paradise Coast Trail. Trails do more than connect points on a map. They connect people with places.

They encourage us to slow down and notice what is around us—a park we may not have visited, a local restaurant we have been meaning to try, a neighborhood we have never explored or a stretch of natural Florida that reminds us why so many people are drawn to this part of the state.



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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Life is filled with changing seasons ,some bring joy, while others bring challenges and uncertainty. Whatever season you are entering, remember: If God allowed you to enter it, He has already provided the grace to carry you through it. You are Graced for the New Season!

The Bible reminds us in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." This Scripture teaches us that every season has a purpose. Nothing in our lives ever takes God by surprise. Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that God knows the thoughts and plans He has for us—plans that lead us toward hope and a future. He knows when one chapter must close and another must begin. He knows when it is time for us to grow, change, release, rebuild, or move forward. Therefore, I encourage you to forget those things which are behind and press forward with grace toward what God has placed ahead of you.

Ladies and gentlemen, you may not feel ready for what lies ahead, but God's grace is not dependent upon how prepared you feel. His grace will give you strength for the difficult days, wisdom for the decisions you must make, peace that surpasses all understanding during uncertain moments, and courage to take the next step.

As you embrace this new season, remember the words of Philippians 4:6-7: "Be anxious for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Whatever this new season brings, you do not have to face it alone. God is already there, His grace is already available, and the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross is your assurance that God is with you.

Therefore, walk forward with faith, peace, love, and confidence. Do not allow fear to make you retreat or anxiety to cause you to stand still. You may not know everything the new season will bring, but you can trust the One who holds every season in His hands. Move forward knowing that you are graced for the new season!

With Love,
Pastor Demetrius Thomas



Pastor Demetrius Thomas
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THE INNATE CIRCLE

by Monique Wooley



HEALTH | HEALING | WELLNESS

TRAUMA INDUCED MEMORY LOSS

Daily stress doesn't just cause anxiety or hypertension, it can keep the brain and body in a heightened state for months or even years. When your nervous system is repeatedly activated by family conflict, money problems, grief, divorce, job insecurity, health threats, police brutality, or the fear of losing housing, memory can become unreliable because problem solving and attention gets diverted toward survival.

When you're constantly worried, or pre-occupied with overwhelming thoughts, your brain may not register details enough to store them. You may remember the feeling of anxiousness, or being overwhelmed more than the "facts" of what was said, or what day it happened.

Stress can make it harder to focus, listen, read, or juggle multiple tasks at once. When that happens, it often becomes tougher to hold information in your mind, so remembering it later may be unreliable.

This type of stress can also make sleep less consistent or less restful, and sleep plays an important role in how memories are formed and stored. On top of that, financial worries, caregiving stress, and ongoing work pressure can keep your mind busy with problem-solving and worry, leaving less space to take in new information and retrieve it later. Over time, repeated stress responses in the body can affect the hippocampus, a brain area that supports making and recalling memories.

If you have struggled with brain fog, gaps in time during intense periods, missing instructions, appointments, or bills, confusion between past and present or if you find yourself in a repeat learning phase, it may be steaming from "trauma induced memory loss".

Triggers

Then there's triggers. **Examples: A sudden scream from a playful event, a car horn, or people in a heated argument or disagreement that has no connection with a person who suffers from traumatic memory loss, may cause igniting triggers.** Even certain smells or events like stepping into a certain establishment such as a courthouse or the sight of a police car can also cause triggers.

A different example: I have a dear friend who recalls the traumatic impact of watching news clips of the St Petersburg bridge collapsing in 1980 as a young girl. Her family was some how indirectly affected by this event. The high intensity of years past household conversations, and the lasting effects that it left on family closest to her, has caused direct trauma induced memory loss that has filtered over into her now adult life. To this very day she breaks out into hives, losses all focus and memory at the very mention of a bridge or at the very sight of a bridge, even if it's on a GPS system. She can not drive long distances alone. She can not recall the most simplest task when faced with the adversity of traveling across a bridge.

For people who are victims of violent crimes, they will suffer in cases where they can recall acts of trauma, but may not be able to recall the details because they simply "can't remember" fully. This can also trigger trauma-linked fragments such as sudden panic, intrusive

images-sensations, or emotional reactions that make it feel like the past is happening again. Sometimes the mind avoids full recall because it's too activating, especially when life seems to prove the feeling of being unsafe.

So when you are in contact with someone who shows signs of trauma related memory loss, it's not a laughing matter or a chance to insert a witty joke at their demise, or starting rumors that holds no value. Remember, this is a real diagnosis that requires understanding, patience, mental health treatment and support. We don't know the aspects or dynamics of what people has experienced in their lives, and quite frankly, it's just not our business. But if we should happen to recognize signs or if sacred information is shared with us, we have the God-given opportunity to do the right thing. Understanding that non of us are exempt. This can also happen to anyone of us at anytime in life.

What you can do as a caring friend, colleague or family member: I suggest you read the book by: Bessel van der Kolk, MD "Regaining Memory". In order to gain insight and ideas of possible resources.

Be supportive by gently suggesting specific therapy resources with that information on hand.

Otherwise, here are encouraging ways to protect memory after traumatic memory loss:

- Stabilize your sleep: Aim for consistent sleep/wake times. If sleep is disrupted by grief/anxiety, treating that (even partially) often improves attention and memory. Reduce cognitive overload.
- Break tasks down, use one "source of truth" (one calendar/one task app), and limit multitasking. Stress plus multitasking is a common recipe for forgetting.

Create "stress buffers" for high-risk days: During job loss, housing threats, or family conflict, protect memory by using reminders for everything (meds, bills, deadlines) and preparing lists in advance.

- Adopt a regular exercise routine even if it's just 15-20 minutes daily. A brisk walk or bike ride outside or shutting the phone off for a yoga mat routine of meditation, stretching and breathing.

When to get extra help urgently

If memory loss is sudden, severe, or includes confusion/disorientation, or if you're worried about safety, it's important to seek medical help. And if the memory loss is tied to trauma symptoms (intrusions, shutdown, panic), a mental health professional can help.

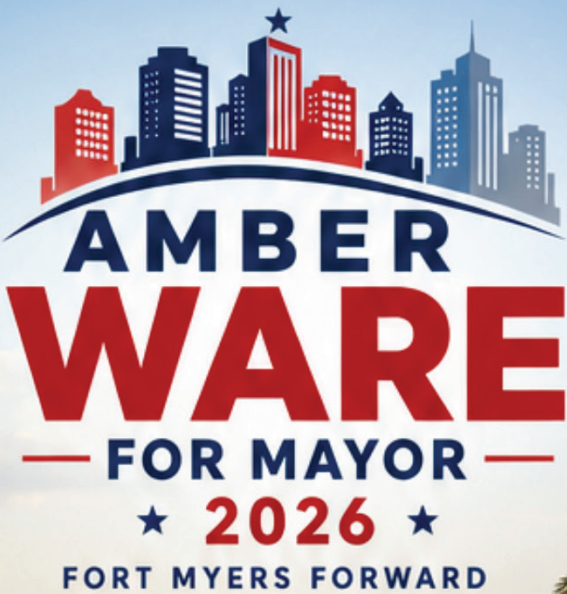
Memory tends to improve when you feel safer. Techniques like slow breathing (inhale 4, exhale 6), or a short calming routine before trying to "remember" can reduce the brain-fog effect, having a cup of tea from your favorite tea cup, a short walk outside or humming a favorite melody may be helpful.

Prayer and your Faith should always be a daily practice in healing.

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ABOUT AMBER WARE

I'm Amber Ware – a devoted public servant, community advocate, and lifelong leader committed to making Fort Myers a better place to live, work, and raise a family. I bring experience, integrity, and a heart for service to City Hall. My focus is simple:
put people first and create real results that improve our quality of life.

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- ✓ Committed to fiscal responsibility and smart, transparent government
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Dear Readers of THE SWFL CHRONICLE,

Planning for retirement is one of the most important financial decisions a person will make during their lifetime. While many individuals work hard, save diligently, and contribute to retirement accounts, financial success in retirement depends on more than simply earning a paycheck. It requires understanding how money grows over time. One of the most valuable skills anyone can develop is financial literacy, particularly knowledge of the stock market. Learning how the stock market works can be the difference between merely surviving in retirement and truly enjoying financial freedom.

The stock market has historically been one of the most effective ways to build long-term wealth.

Although the market experiences periods of volatility, it has consistently produced positive returns over extended periods.

Individuals who understand concepts such as diversification, **compound growth, risk management, and long-term investing** are better equipped to make informed financial decisions. Rather than allowing fear or emotions to dictate their investments, financially literate investors recognize that market fluctuations are a normal part of investing and often present opportunities for future growth.

Financial literacy also empowers individuals to take control of their retirement planning instead of relying solely on employers, government programs, or financial advisors. While professional advice can be valuable, understanding the basics of investing allows people to ask informed questions, evaluate investment opportunities, and avoid costly mistakes. Investors who lack financial knowledge may (and WILL eventually) become victims of scams, make emotional decisions during market downturns, or invest in products they do not fully understand. Education serves as a powerful safeguard against these common financial pitfalls.

Another important benefit of stock market literacy is understanding the power of compound interest. When investments earn returns and those returns are reinvested, the portfolio begins generating earnings on both the original investment and the accumulated gains. Over several decades, this compounding effect can transform modest monthly contributions into a substantial retirement nest egg. The earlier someone begins investing, the greater the potential impact of compound growth, making financial education especially valuable for younger generations.

Financial literacy also helps investors appreciate the importance of diversification. Rather than placing all of their savings into one company or one type of investment, knowledgeable investors spread their money across different industries, asset classes, and geographic regions. Diversification reduces overall risk while allowing investors to participate in the growth of multiple sectors of the economy. This balanced approach provides greater financial stability throughout the various stages of retirement.

Understanding the stock market also enables retirees to better manage inflation. Over time, the cost of housing, healthcare, food, and other necessities continues to rise. Money held solely in low-interest savings accounts often fails to keep pace with inflation, causing purchasing power to decline. Historically, investments in quality stocks and diversified mutual funds have outperformed inflation over long periods, helping retirees

preserve and increase their wealth throughout retirement. Equally important is the confidence that financial literacy provides. Individuals who understand how markets operate are less likely to panic during temporary downturns because they recognize that investing is a long-term journey. Confidence rooted in education helps investors remain disciplined, avoid emotional decisions, and stay focused on achieving their retirement goals.

In conclusion, financial literacy regarding the stock market is one of the greatest investments a person can make. It provides the knowledge necessary to build wealth, reduce financial risk, make informed decisions, and create lasting financial security. Retirement should be a time to enjoy family, travel, hobbies, and the rewards of decades of hard work—not a time of financial uncertainty. By learning how the stock market works and applying sound investment principles consistently, individuals place themselves in a much stronger position to achieve a comfortable, secure, and fulfilling retirement. Financial education is not simply about making money—it is about creating opportunities, preserving independence, and building a future that offers peace of mind for years to come.

Financially,
I am
McKinley G. Williams

Historically, investments in quality stocks and diversified mutual funds have outperformed inflation over long periods, helping retirees preserve and increase their wealth throughout retirement.



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MORE THAN FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS:

JORDAN INGMAN'S INVESTMENT IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY'S NEXT GENERATION

For Jordan Ingman, coming home to Charlotte County was more than a return to familiar streets and Friday night football. It was a decision to invest in the same community that helped shape him into the man, coach, husband, and father he is today.

Ingman grew up in Charlotte County, attending Port Charlotte High School before leaving home to play college football at Wofford College. After college, he spent a season coaching at Auburn University. But eventually, the pull of home—and a desire to invest in young people—brought him back to Port Charlotte High School, where he now leads a football program built around far more than wins and losses.

“My whole childhood was spent here in Charlotte County and I loved it,” Ingman said.

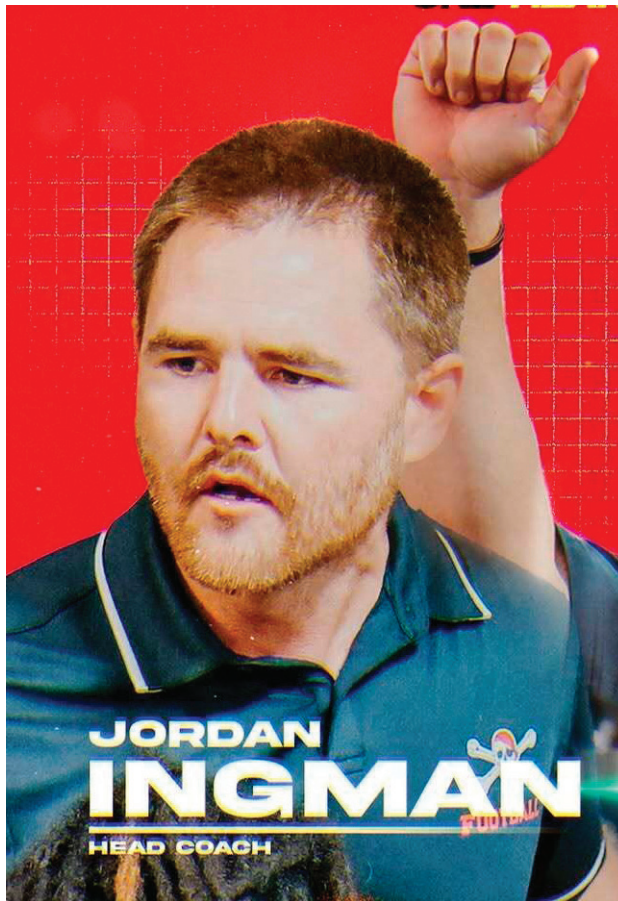
Some of his earliest memories are rooted in the local rec center on Harold Avenue, where he played baseball, basketball, and football. Football was especially important to his family. His father played and coached college football, and Ingman remembers attending Friday night games to watch the Port Charlotte Pirates.

Those experiences gave him an appreciation for the community’s character. Today, he describes Charlotte County with one word that continues to guide his leadership: grit.

Ingman also remembers the hardship Charlotte County experienced after Hurricane Charley. Seeing the destruction and the community’s response became one of those childhood experiences that stayed with him.

Port Charlotte High School became another defining part of his story. Ingman credits the relationships he developed with classmates, teachers, administrators, and coaches for helping prepare him for what came next. Coach Hixson, whom Ingman now works alongside, taught him discipline and toughness. English teacher Ms. Flowers left an even different kind of impression. Although English was Ingman’s least favorite subject, she made it one of his favorite parts of the day. More importantly, he watched her continue to show strength, positivity, and perseverance while undergoing chemotherapy. Today, she remains part of the football staff as chief of staff.

After graduating, Ingman took those lessons to Wofford College, where academics, football, and work demanded discipline every day. He competed alongside players who eventually reached the NFL, learning that success required consistency and a



willingness to bring his best every day. His season at Auburn University as a coach further developed his understanding of leadership.

Yet leaving Charlotte County helped him appreciate home in a new way.

“A lot of young people including myself take for granted how special Charlotte County is,” he said.

When Ingman returned to Port Charlotte High School, football became his vehicle for something bigger. He wanted players to develop habits that would make them successful regardless of what happened on the scoreboard. He also wanted to strengthen his alma mater and address inequities he had noticed as a student.

The result is a program where success is measured by more than victories. Ingman points to graduation, job placement, and the kind of people players become years after they leave high school. Among players who have been in the program for at least two years, he reports a 99.37 percent graduation rate.

But perhaps the most important measure is relationships.

“The wins and losses fade but the relationships last a lifetime,” Ingman said.

That philosophy extends beyond football through Next Steps, a career-readiness program for senior football players entering its fourth year. The program helps students explore what comes after graduation, whether that means college, the military, public safety, skilled trades, entrepreneurship, or entering the workforce.

With help from community partners, including Donna Barrett of the Charlotte-DeSoto Building Industry Association, students hear directly from local professionals about careers, finances, business ownership, responsibility, and opportunity. Friday sessions are intentionally held on game days, reinforcing that preparation for life deserves the same commitment as preparation for a game.

The program does not stop with speakers. Beginning in February, seniors receive individualized assignments based on their career interests. A student interested in becoming an electrician, for example, may be asked to identify local companies, explain why he wants to work for them, arrange a job shadow, and begin applying before graduation.

That practical approach has already reached roughly 75 students. Former player Charles Dunn discovered the Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office through the program and later entered law enforcement. He has since returned to speak with current players, becoming a living example of what Next Steps hopes to accomplish.

“Being a great teammate is the same exact thing as being a great coworker,” Ingman said.

That belief captures the heart of his work. Showing up, communicating, accepting coaching, working hard, being dependable, and putting others first are not simply football habits. They are life and workforce skills.

Ingman wants students to understand that they do not have to leave Charlotte County to build meaningful lives. The community offers opportunities to attend school, build careers, raise families, start businesses, work in the trades, serve others, and give back.

For Ingman, that message is personal. Charlotte County helped shape him, and now he is helping shape the next generation.

His four defining traits for success—integrity, work ethic, communication, and relentless competitiveness—are qualities he hopes players carry long after their final game.

Ultimately, Jordan Ingman’s story is not simply about a football coach who came home. It is about a homegrown leader who chose to turn his experience into opportunity for others. Through football, mentorship, family, and Next Steps, he is showing students that their future does not have to begin somewhere else.

It can begin right here, in the community that helped raise them.



Isaiah 6:8

BY LISA ESWAY



“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.” Isaiah 6:8

Isn't it interesting how we can take something that has been written so long ago and apply it to our lives today? Here, Isaiah was not called to an easy assignment. He was called to go where God sent him – a place where the people may not even listen. This is where the deeper message becomes so beautiful. Sometimes the assignment isn't about the response we receive, it's about our obedience to the one who sends.

Have you ever heard that question deep in your spirit? Have you ever had that moment in your life where God asked that question who will go?

In this moment Isaiah found himself standing in the presence of a Holy God. He's seen the Lord on high and lifted up with glory filling the temple. In that moment Isaiah became painfully aware of his own unworthiness. He cries out.

Before Isaiah was sent... he was surrendered. Notice the order. Before he carried the message God dealt with the messenger. Before he stepped into the assignment, he had an encounter with the one who was assigning him. And perhaps sometimes that is where God begins with us too. Sometimes we want to know where we're going. Before we say yes we want to know what it will cost? Who will be there? Will the people will receive us or reject us? Will the road will be comfortable?

This is what I have learned in my own experience the same message that will soften a receptive heart will also harden an unreceptive heart. So in sending forth the message to people known to be unreceptive their condition is worsens. Notice where you are. Notice where God places you. Notice the people around you. It's not about me. Someone taught me that a long time ago it will never be about me. It's about who God will reach through me and my message.

Willingness. The quality or state of being willing. A condition. A way of existing. Just like the word gratitude. Words like these show how something exists rather than an action it does.

Whom Shall I send?

What will your response be? Because we all have purpose. Isaiah didn't say send me if it's easy. He didn't say send me if they will listen. He didn't say send me if I understand everything.

Simply

Here Am I. Send me.

Powerful five words life-changing, mountain moving words. That is the heart of an available life. He may send us into a difficult season, an unfamiliar environment, or a place where we never expected to be... sometimes our assignment isn't found in a place we would have ever chosen for ourselves. But what if the place that we thought was a detour was actually a divine appointment? What if the difficult place was not evidence that God had forgotten us, but the very place where

He intended to use us?

Isaiah's assignment wasn't easy. God told him he would speak to people who would not readily receive what he said. His mission would require endurance. He was being sent into a hard place with a hard message. Come on!

There is something powerful about being willing to be used wherever you are. You don't have to wait till everything is perfect. You don't have to wait until you have the right title, the right platform, or the right circumstance. You don't have to wait until your life looks the way you think it should look. God can use you right where you are. He can use the places you have been.

He can use the things that you survived. He can use the lessons you learned in the valley. He can use the scars that remind you that you made it through. Nothing surrendered to God is wasted. Every ending is a new beginning. There was a quiet lesson here about surrender. We don't always get to choose the assignment. We don't always get to choose the people. We don't always get to choose the timing. But we can choose our response. Here Am I. I am available. I am willing. I'm no longer running. I give you control. Send me. These words are freeing. Because when we stop trying to direct every step and become willing to follow God's direction something changes inside of us. We begin to understand that our lives are merely not about getting from one comfortable place to another. We are here to become vessels through which God can reach somebody else.

Maybe God has placed you somewhere difficult because someone there needs the testimony of what God can do with a surrendered life. And what He used, the steps you took that got you there. We do not need to be perfect to be useful. He asks us to be available.

Isaiah didn't volunteer because he had everything figured out, he volunteered because he had an encounter with God. And when you've truly encountered God you begin to

understand that your past does not have to disqualify you from your purpose. The very places that once broke you became places from which God sends you to help somebody else. Who will go? Who will go into the difficult place? Who will love when it isn't returned? Who will speak life when everyone else is speaking to death? Who will stand when it's easier to walk away? Who will carry the message? ***Who will say yes?*** Here Am I.

3 words - Then. Send me.

Wherever He sends you go. Whatever He asks you to do trust Him. Whoever He places in your path love them. Whatever part of your story He chooses to use surrender it. Because your assignment may not always look like what you imagine. Maybe it will look like an ordinary Wednesday night. And with God never leading you, you will know that your placement can be your platform. Because your pain has become purpose. Do not wait for the perfect circumstance, do not hide if you don't feel like you're ready. You have been prepared. Just remember wherever He sends you, He has already gone before you.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE TO
THE VOTERS OF DISTRICT 4

To the voters of Lee County School Board
District 4,

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to
everyone who cast a ballot on my behalf and
placed their trust in my candidacy. Though the
outcome of this election was not what we had hoped for, I
remain profoundly moved by the support, encouragement,
and belief so many of you extended throughout this
campaign.

While my time as a candidate has concluded, my
commitment to the students, parents, and educators of this
community has not. I intend to remain actively engaged in
the work of strengthening our schools, and I look forward to
continuing to serve alongside you in whatever capacity I can.

As we look toward the November election, I ask those who
supported me to consider extending that same support to
Tony Beougher. As a parent with children currently enrolled
in Lee County Schools, Tony brings both a personal stake
and a genuine passion to this role. Throughout this process,
I have come to recognize that we share a common vision for
what is best for our students and teachers — one rooted in
accountability, opportunity, and respect for the people who
make our schools function.

Thank you again for the privilege of running, and for
your continued dedication to the future of our children's
education.

With sincere appreciation, Gigi



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MEET THE FAMILY BEHIND BEASTRX

For James Vargas and his wife, Yuliia, BeastRx has always been about more than health and nutrition. Since opening in Cape Coral, they have worked to create a place where people can learn about fitness, nutrition and wellness while feeling welcomed and supported.

Over the years, BeastRx has become part of the local community, supporting customers ranging from competitive athletes to people simply looking to live healthier lives.

Giving back has also been an important part of their journey. BeastRx has catered lunch for teachers at Mariner, donated to and sponsored a girls PAL softball team, supported APEX 5K events and sponsored local athletes throughout Cape Coral.

They have also participated in a peanut butter and jelly drive for local Realtors, helped fill the box for Toys for Tots with Fort Myers PA and supported many other local events and causes.

James and Yuliia believe that when a community supports your business, you should support that community in return.

Today, BeastRx has grown to two Southwest Florida locations, but their goal remains the same: take care of their customers, promote healthier lifestyles and continue giving back to the community they call home.

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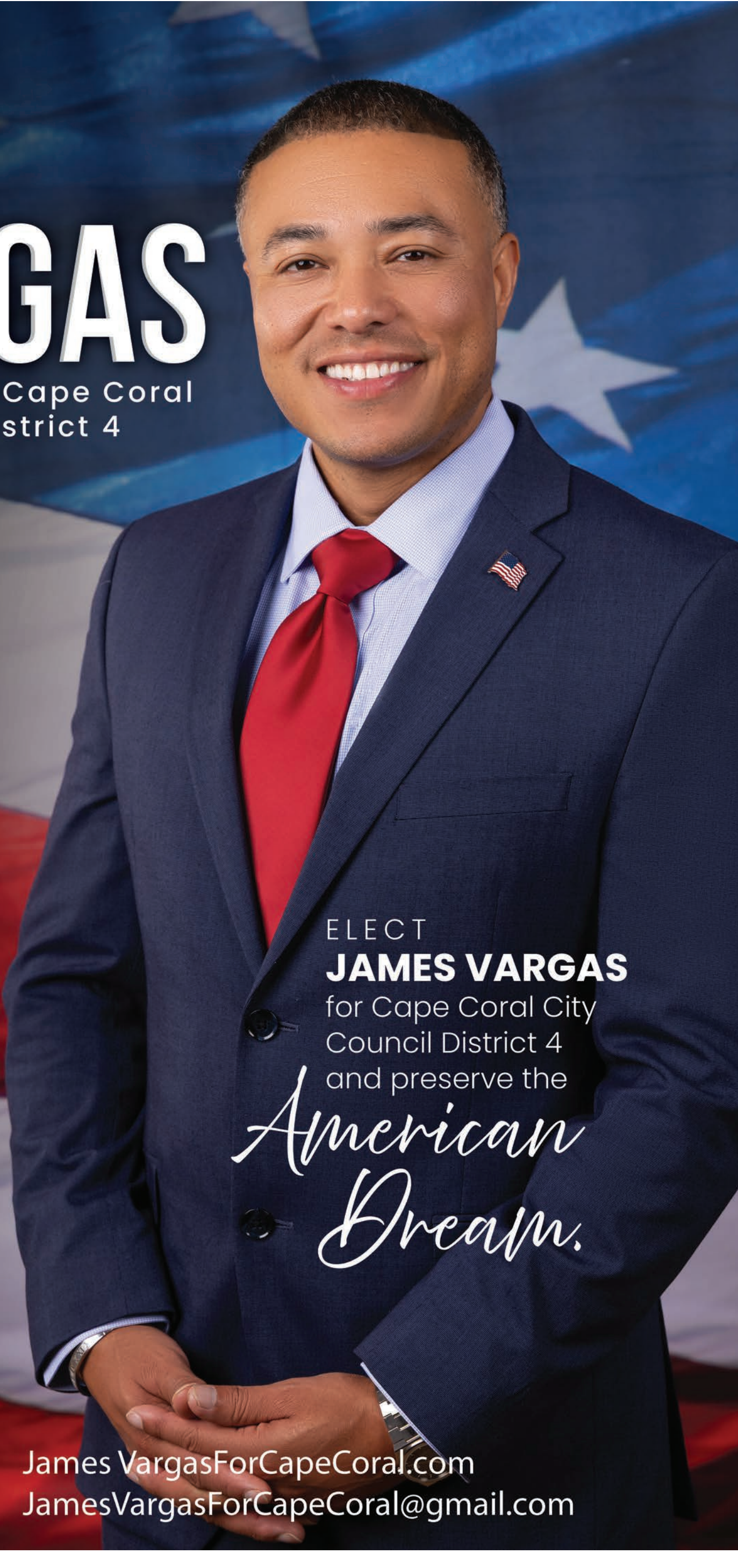


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A portrait of James Vargas, a man with short dark hair, smiling. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a light blue dress shirt, and a red tie. An American flag pin is on his left lapel. His hands are clasped in front of him. The background is a large American flag.

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THE JOY OF DATING

as a Senior Citizen

BY VERNON BROWN THE DUNBAR SHADE TREE PHD.

When people think about dating, they often imagine young people meeting for the first time, going to movies, holding hands, texting back and forth, and talking on the phone late at night.

But dating is not only for young people. Senior citizens can enjoy dating, too. In fact, dating later in life can bring a special kind of happiness. It can give people a chance to make new friends, share experiences, laugh together, and even find love again.

One of the best things about dating as a senior citizen is having someone to spend time with. As people get older, their lives can change in many ways. They may retire from work, move to a new home, or have friends and family members who live far away. Sometimes, they may feel lonely. Having a person to talk to and spend time with can make each day brighter. Even something simple, like having coffee together or taking a walk, can become a special memory.

Another wonderful part of dating later in life is that older adults often know themselves very well. When people are young, they may still be trying to figure out what they want from life. Senior citizens have had many years to learn about themselves, their interests, and their values. Because of this, they may be more comfortable being honest about what makes them happy. They do not have to pretend to be someone they are not. They can simply be themselves.

Dating can also bring excitement and adventure. Growing older does not mean that a person has to stop trying new things. A couple might go to a restaurant they have never visited, take a trip, see a concert, or learn a new hobby together. They might even discover that they enjoy things they never expected to try. These experiences can make life feel fresh and exciting.

There is also a lot of joy in having someone who understands your life experiences. A senior citizen may have lived through many important moments, including raising children, building a career, losing loved ones, and reaching personal goals. Dating someone who has also experienced many of life's ups and downs can create a strong connection. They may understand each other's

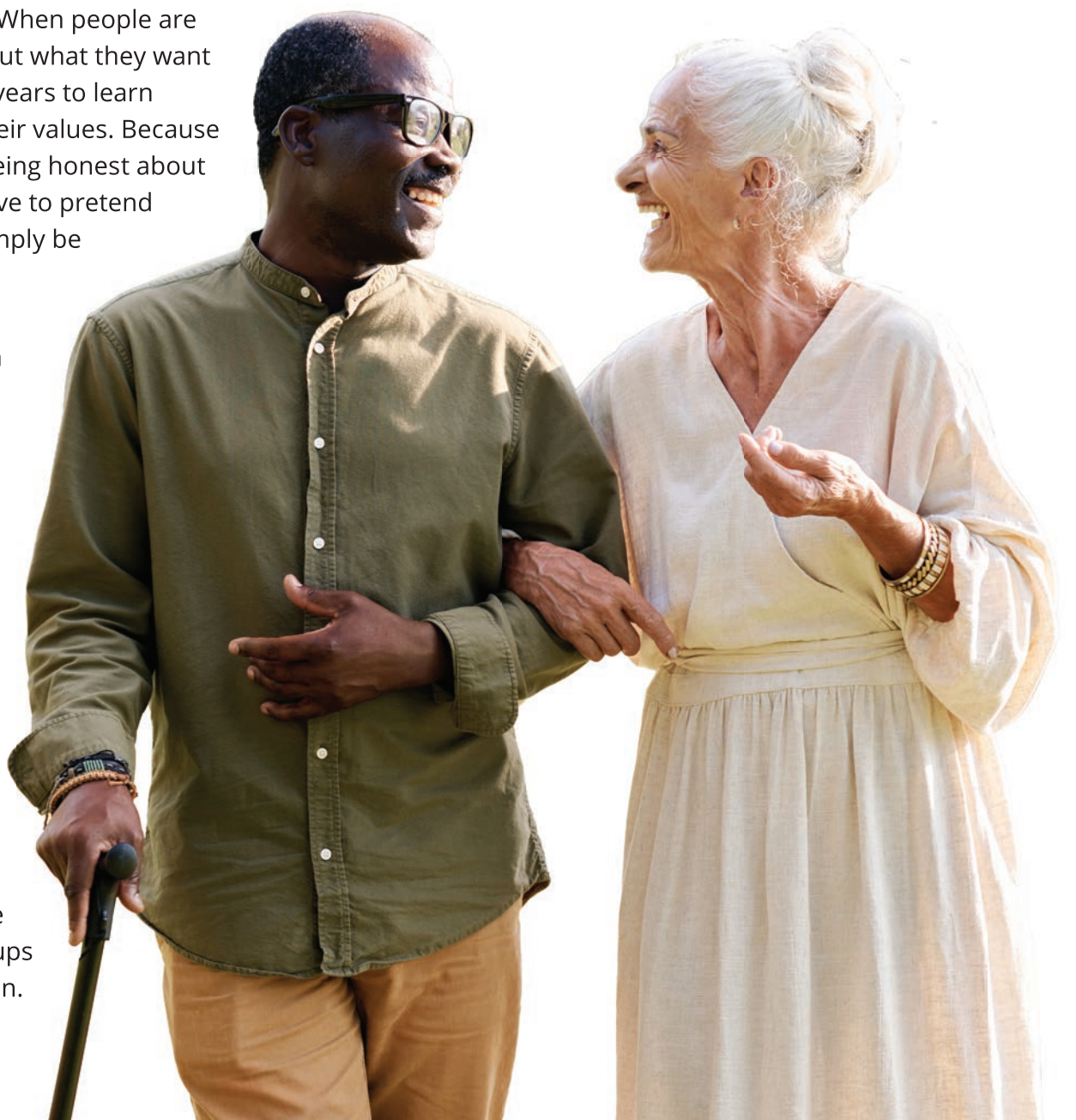
memories and challenges in a way that younger people cannot always understand.

Of course, dating is not always easy. Meeting someone new can feel scary at any age. A person may worry about being rejected or wonder whether the other person will like them. Senior citizens may also have concerns because they have been through relationships before. However, taking a chance can be worth it. Even if a relationship does not become romantic, two people can still become good friends and enjoy each other's company. The latter is the best in my opinion.

Dating as a senior citizen can also remind people that it is never too late to find happiness. Love does not have an expiration date; albeit the body parts may have an expiration date for some men. People can fall in love when they are twenty, fifty, seventy, or even older. What matters most is the connection between two people and the happiness they bring into each other's lives.

The joy of dating as a senior citizen comes from many things: companionship, laughter, adventure, friendship, and love. Older adults deserve the chance to enjoy these things just as much as anyone else. Dating can show that growing older is not about giving up on fun or romance. Instead, it can be a new chapter filled with wonderful possibilities.

So, if a senior citizen meets someone special, there is no reason to be afraid to take a chance. Put on a nice outfit, share a smile, and enjoy the moment. Life is too short to stop looking for happiness. Love and friendship can make every stage of life more meaningful.



Senior Citizen Texting Code

BFF - Best Friend Fell

LOL - Little Old Lady

BTW - Bring the Wheelchair

TTYL - Talk to you Louder

DWI - Driving While Incontinent

FWIW - Forgot Where I Was

WTP - Wheres the Prunes

LMDO - Laughing My Dentures Out



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SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S ALARMING RISE IN IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

Southwest Florida is becoming an increasingly important center of immigration enforcement in Florida, and the numbers coming out of the region should command attention. In communities such as Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres, Immokalee and Bonita Springs, immigration enforcement is no longer something residents only hear about on the national news. It is increasingly visible in traffic stops, arrests and encounters involving federal immigration authorities and local law enforcement. The scale of the crackdown raises difficult questions about how aggressively immigration laws are being enforced and what the consequences will be for families and communities.

Lee County stands out in particular. According to recently reported data from Florida's State Board of Immigration Enforcement, the Lee County Sheriff's Office recorded 3,377 immigration-related encounters since statewide tracking began in August 2025. That placed the agency second among Florida law-enforcement agencies for total encounters, behind the Florida Highway Patrol. More strikingly, approximately one-third of those encounters reportedly resulted in federal immigration charges, amounting to at least 920 arrests—the highest number reported by any individual local law-enforcement agency in the state. Those numbers are alarming because an "encounter" does not necessarily mean an arrest. An encounter can involve identifying, questioning or stopping a person, meaning the total number of interactions with immigrants can be substantially larger than the number ultimately taken into custody. The distinction is important, but it also illustrates how deeply immigration enforcement has become integrated into ordinary policing.

The expansion of enforcement in Southwest Florida is part of a much larger statewide crackdown. Florida has embraced partnerships between local law enforcement and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement through the federal 287(g) program. These agreements give participating state and local officers expanded authority to assist with federal immigration enforcement. Florida officials say these partnerships are designed to identify dangerous criminal offenders and protect public safety. But the consequences reach far beyond the people directly arrested. In Southwest Florida, agriculture, construction, hospitality and other industries depend heavily on immigrant workers. When immigration enforcement intensifies, workers and their families may become afraid to drive, go to work, report crimes or interact with government agencies. A traffic stop that once would have resulted in an ordinary citation can potentially become the beginning of an immigration case. Recent reporting from Southwest Florida illustrates how quickly these situations can escalate. In July, federal authorities confirmed the arrest of a Southwest Florida man in the Lehigh Acres area after an attempted vehicle stop. The arrest generated a protest outside a Department of Homeland Security facility in Fort Myers, demonstrating the level of fear and controversy surrounding immigration enforcement in the region. The larger Florida numbers are equally disturbing. An Associated Press analysis found that nearly 39,000 immigrants were arrested in Florida during the first 416 days of President Donald Trump's second term, more than triple the number recorded

during the comparable period under the Biden administration. Florida's extensive network of 287(g) agreements has made state and local agencies increasingly involved in federal immigration enforcement. Southwest Florida therefore deserves close scrutiny—not necessarily because it has been proven to have the highest overall ICE arrest rate in Florida, but because Lee County has emerged as one of the state's most active local centers of immigration enforcement. The sheer number of encounters and arrests should force residents, elected officials and law-enforcement leaders to confront a fundamental question: How far should local policing go in assisting federal immigration authorities?

For immigrant families, the answer is not an abstract political debate. It can determine whether a parent comes home from work, whether children return to an empty house and whether entire neighborhoods **live in fear** of the next knock at the door.

Southwest Florida is witnessing a dramatic transformation in immigration enforcement. Whether residents view that transformation as necessary law enforcement or an alarming expansion of government power, one fact is increasingly difficult to ignore: immigration enforcement has become a major part of everyday life in the region.



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They Fought Beside America. Don't Let America Forget Them.

BY JENNY LU

There are wars that end on the battlefield. Then there are wars that continue to live in the hearts of those who survived them. For my family, the Vietnam War never truly ended.



Like millions of Americans, I honor the brave men and women who served our nation. But there is another side of the Vietnam War that many Americans have never heard—the story of the South Vietnamese soldiers who fought beside American troops and the families who believed in the same ideals of freedom and liberty.

My father was one of those soldiers. He fought alongside American troops because he believed freedom was worth defending. During a nighttime mission, a land mine explosion killed nearly everyone in his unit. He survived alone until daylight.

I believe God spared his life for a purpose—to build a family, bring us safely to America, and one day allow his daughter to tell the story of those whose sacrifices history has nearly forgotten.

My father's story is not unique. Many South Vietnamese soldiers later endured imprisonment, persecution, and the loss of everything after the fall of South Vietnam before rebuilding their lives in America through refugee and humanitarian programs.

Before he passed away, my father told me: 'Always fight for what is right. Never let anyone threaten you into silence. Never back down from defending those who cannot defend themselves.'

I am a fighter because my father taught me to be one. Every day I carry his last name—Lu. It reminds me to fight for those who need help and to be the voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

For more than thirty years, I have carried the stories of two Vietnamese refugee families in my heart. They came to America legally, made serious mistakes as young people, served their prison sentences, rebuilt their lives over decades, worked, paid taxes, raised American families, and became productive members of society.

This article is not about excusing crime. It is about asking whether decades of rehabilitation, lawful living, and contribution should matter.

I respectfully ask Congress and the President to consider legislation creating a carefully structured pathway for qualified long-term Vietnamese refugees connected to the Vietnam War. The program could provide conditional lawful status and employment authorization for three years, requiring lawful employment, tax compliance, no new crimes, English instruction if needed, civics education, and continued good moral character. After successfully completing the program, participants could become eligible to apply for lawful permanent residence under standards established by Congress and later pursue citizenship through the existing legal process.

This proposal does not erase the past. It requires accountability, rewards rehabilitation, and protects public safety.

Every time I sign my name—Jenny Lu—I remember my father and the promise I made to him: to continue fighting for those who cannot fight for themselves.

I hope America will honor the sacrifices of those who fought beside American soldiers and remember the families who paid the price for standing with us.

History remembers those who fought. Character is revealed by whether we remember those who fought beside us.

The family stories in this article are based on real experiences. Names and identifying details have been omitted to protect privacy.



For millions of Floridians and visitors, a day at the beach means sunshine, warm Gulf water and a chance to escape the heat. But lurking in warm coastal waters is a naturally occurring bacterium that can, in rare circumstances, cause an extraordinarily serious infection.

The bacterium is *Vibrio vulnificus*, often sensationally called “flesh-eating bacteria.” While that nickname can be frightening, the bacteria does not literally eat flesh. Instead, severe infections can destroy tissue and enter the bloodstream, potentially causing life-threatening illness. Florida health officials warn that the organism naturally occurs in warm salt and brackish water.

That makes awareness especially important along Southwest Florida’s coastline, including the waters surrounding Marco Island.

There is an important distinction: the presence of *Vibrio* in coastal water does not mean that every beach is contaminated at dangerous levels or that beachgoers should panic. *Vibrio* occurs naturally in marine environments. The greatest concern is for people who enter the water with open cuts or wounds, particularly those with certain underlying health conditions.

Florida reported 17 *Vibrio vulnificus* cases and three deaths through August 20, 2026, according to the Florida Department of Health.

WHO FACES THE GREATEST RISK?

People with weakened immune systems and chronic liver disease are particularly vulnerable to severe infections. However, serious illness can occur in other people as well.

The simplest safety rule is also one of the most important: do not enter warm seawater with an open wound or broken skin.

A cut that seems insignificant on land can become an entry point for bacteria in coastal water. Recent wounds, sores and other breaks in the skin deserve particular attention.

Beachgoers should also pay attention to changing weather conditions. Heavy rainfall, flooding and storm activity can increase exposure to *Vibrio* because bacteria can be present in coastal and brackish waters following these events. Florida health officials specifically advise avoiding floodwaters and taking precautions following storms.

WHAT SHOULD MARCO ISLAND BEACHGOERS DO?

FIRST, check current beach-water advisories before swimming. Florida’s Healthy Beaches program monitors water quality and posts advisories when bacterial levels meet state criteria.

SECOND, keep cuts and wounds out of seawater. If exposure cannot be avoided, Florida health officials recommend protecting wounds with waterproof bandages and thoroughly washing exposed skin and wounds with soap and clean water afterward.

THIRD, don’t ignore unusual symptoms after water exposure.

Signs of a wound infection can include increasing redness, pain, swelling, warmth, discoloration or discharge. Fever and chills can also occur. The Florida Department of Health emphasizes that suspected *Vibrio* infections require immediate medical attention because severe illness can progress rapidly.

The message is not “stay out of the Gulf forever.” It is know the risk, recognize the warning signs and take sensible precautions.

Marco Island is one of Florida’s great coastal destinations, but beautiful water does not necessarily mean risk-free water. Beach safety should include more than sunscreen and watching the waves. Checking advisories, protecting wounds and responding quickly to concerning symptoms could make an important difference.

The Gulf should be enjoyed — but it should also be respected.



THE FINANCIAL MASTERPIECE

That Bets on Nothing Happening

BY MCKINLEY G WILLIAMS

Well Readers - Welcome to the wonderful world of iron butterfly spreads, where butterflies have four wings, options have four legs, and your money can disappear with remarkable efficiency. If that sounds complicated, don't worry—you're not alone. Let's unravel this financial masterpiece before the market decides to teach us humility.

An iron butterfly is an options strategy designed for a situation in which a trader believes an underlying stock or index will remain relatively close to a particular price by expiration. It combines four options: two options are sold near the center strike price, while two options farther away are purchased to limit potential losses.

The Chicago Board Options Exchange, now known as Cboe, provides educational material describing butterfly strategies as limited-risk strategies intended to benefit when the underlying asset stays near a particular

strike price.

To understand the idea, imagine an index is trading around 5,000. An illustrative iron butterfly might involve:

- Buying a put at 4,900
- Selling a put at 5,000
- Selling a call at 5,000
- Buying a call at 5,100

The 5,000 options are the center of the butterfly. The 4,900 put and 5,100 call are the protective options on either side.

The trader receives money, called a net credit, when establishing the position if the premiums received from the two

options sold exceed the premiums paid for the two options purchased. The maximum potential profit is generally the initial credit received, assuming the position is held to expiration and the underlying finishes at the center strike.

The important concept is that the strategy is essentially making a prediction about where the market will finish, rather than simply predicting whether it will rise or fall.

If the index finishes very close to 5,000 at expiration, the strategy can produce its best result. If the index moves substantially above or below the protective strikes, the position can

An **iron butterfly** is an options strategy designed for a situation in which a trader believes an underlying stock or index will remain relatively close to a particular price by expiration. It combines four options: two options are sold near the center strike price, while two options farther away are purchased to limit potential losses.



reach its maximum loss. Because the outside options provide protection, the potential loss is defined rather than unlimited.

For example, suppose the distance between the center strike and each outside strike is 100 points. The basic maximum-loss calculation is related to that 100-point width minus the initial credit received, multiplied by the applicable contract multiplier. The actual dollar amount depends on the specific option product.

This is one reason it is extremely important to understand contract multipliers before considering any options strategy. A seemingly small movement in an index can represent a substantial dollar amount.

Cboe's materials emphasize that limited-risk strategies still involve meaningful risk and that investors should understand the potential losses before entering a position.

WHY WOULD SOMEONE USE ONE?

The main idea behind an iron butterfly is a belief that the market will remain relatively calm.

Imagine a weather forecast predicting that tomorrow's temperature will stay close to 70 degrees. An iron butterfly is somewhat similar to making a financial forecast that an asset will remain near a particular price.

The closer the underlying finishes to the center strike, the better the result generally becomes. A large move in either direction works against the position.

This makes an iron butterfly fundamentally different from simply buying a call because you expect a stock to rise. With a purchased call, a large upward movement can be beneficial. With an iron butterfly, an unexpectedly large movement can hurt the position.

Cboe has used an iron-butterfly strategy in its Cboe S&P 500 Iron Butterfly Index, which sells at-the-money SPX puts and calls while purchasing out-of-the-money options to reduce downside risk.

THE FOUR IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Anyone learning about this strategy should understand four numbers:

1. **Lower strike:** The protective put.

2. **Center strike:** The price around which the trader expects the underlying to remain.
3. **Upper strike:** The protective call.
4. **Net credit:** The amount received after accounting for the premiums paid and collected.

From those numbers, it is possible to determine the approximate maximum profit, maximum loss and the prices at which the position breaks even.

However, those calculations are only part of the picture. Options prices change constantly because of factors such as the underlying price, time remaining until expiration, implied volatility and interest rates.

EXPIRATION ISN'T THE ONLY CONSIDERATION

An important misconception is that a trader can simply establish an iron butterfly and forget about it.

The market value of the entire position can change substantially before expiration. A position that appears profitable one day can become less profitable if the underlying market moves or implied volatility changes.

Cboe notes that options strategies should be evaluated carefully and that market participants need to understand the risks associated with options.

For educational purposes, the safest way to learn is to begin with paper trading, where hypothetical trades can be recorded without risking real money. Learning how the four legs interact is much more important than rushing into an actual trade.

Finally, an iron butterfly should not be confused with an iron condor. Both are four-leg strategies, but an iron butterfly places the short put and short call at the same center strike, whereas an iron condor generally uses separate short strikes.

The key lesson is simple: an iron butterfly is essentially a limited-risk strategy built around the expectation that an asset will finish near a particular price. Understanding its four option legs, maximum profit, maximum loss, break-even points and sensitivity to market changes is essential before even considering its practical use.

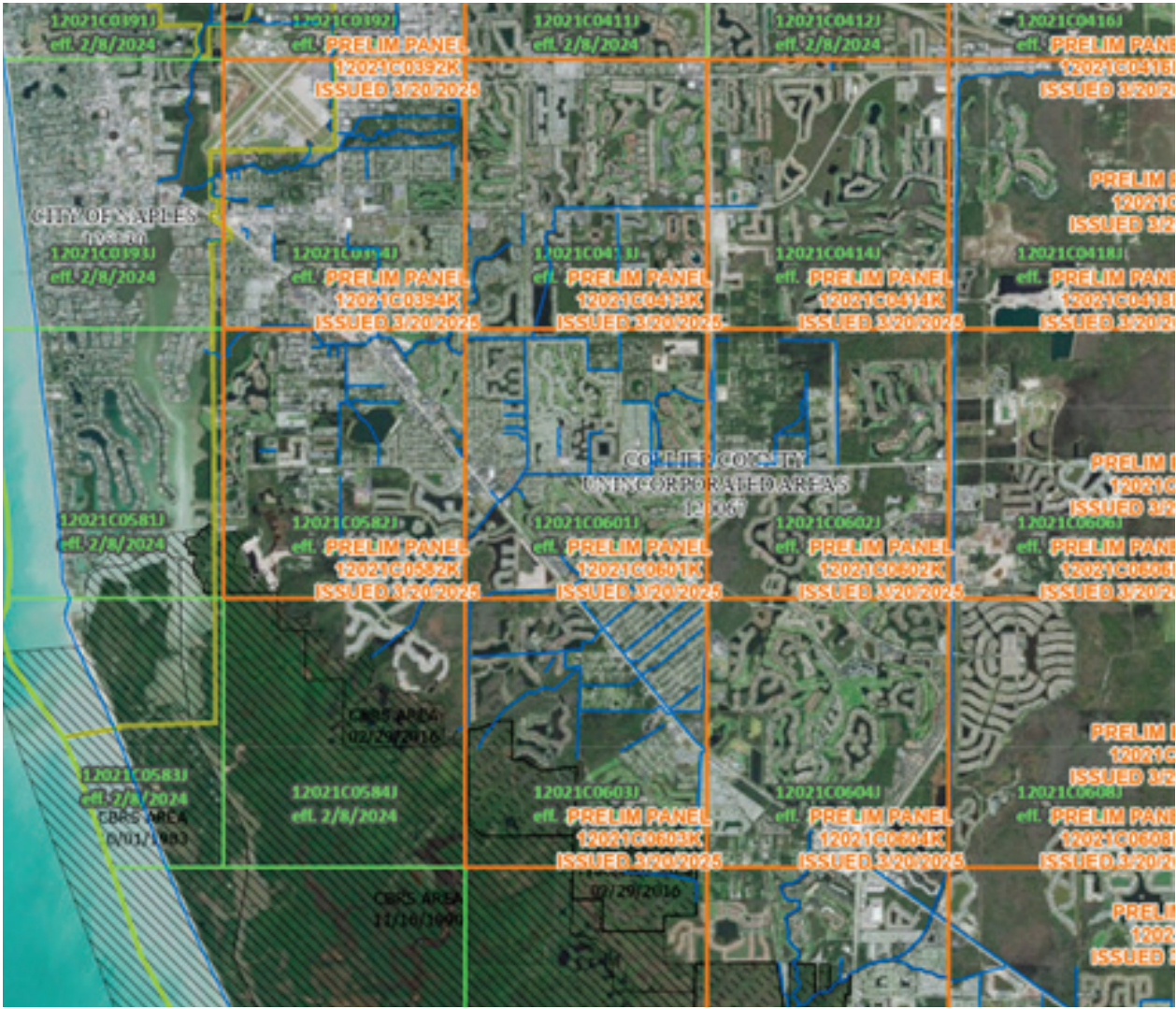
PROPOSED FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP REFLECTS CHANGES TO LOCAL FLOOD RISK

90-Day Appeal Period for Filing Appeals and Comments Began August 19, 2026

Updates to Collier County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) are nearly complete. The new map will provide Collier County with up-to-date flood risk information and tools that can be used to enhance local mitigation plans and help officials and residents make better decisions about reducing flood risks and purchasing flood insurance. The county’s mapping project is part of a nationwide effort led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to increase local knowledge of flood risks and support actions to address and reduce those risks. The work in Collier County has been led by FEMA Region IV and the Florida Division of Emergency Management, in partnership with local community officials. Before the new Flood Insurance Rate Map is finalized, a 90-day appeal period will give residents and business owners a chance to provide additional technical data or non-technical comments for FEMA’s consideration.

Collier County Flood officials encourage residents and business owners to review the proposed map changes, learn about local flood risks and potential flood insurance requirements, and share any concerns or questions.

If members of the community notice incorrect information that does not involve changing the flood hazard-related information—such as a missing or misspelled road name or an incorrect corporate boundary—a written correction, or “comment,” can be submitted. If members of the community have concerns about certain areas of the map and have technical and scientific information—such as detailed hydraulic or hydrologic data—that can be used to improve the maps, they may file an appeal during the 90-day appeal period. FEMA also indicates that appellants need to demonstrate that



better methodologies, assumptions, or data exist and, where appropriate, provide alternative analyses incorporating those methodologies, assumptions, or data. The results must demonstrate an overall change to the flood hazard information shown on the preliminary FIRM and/or in the FIS report.

All comments and appeals must be submitted through the local officials. Because submitting an appeal requires some time and effort, we encourage property owners and renters to review the updated flood maps now. Collier County recognizes that property owners, communities, organizations, and other interested parties may wish to submit technical data or documentation regarding the Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for consideration during the FEMA appeal process. Individuals or organizations seeking to appeal proposed flood hazard information must submit their supporting data and documentation to the Collier County Community Planning & Resiliency Division. The County will compile and transmit the information received to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and FEMA’s technical partners for consideration as part

of the map review and appeal process. All comments and appeals must be submitted to Christopher Mason at Christopher.Mason@Collier.gov or (239) 252-2932.

Collier County Community Planning & Resiliency Division’s role in the appeals process:

The Collier County Community Planning & Resiliency Division plays an administrative role in the flood map appeals process, focusing primarily on basic property verification. The Division will confirm that each property is evaluated against the correct map panel, jurisdiction, and map series. The County does not perform technical reviews of flood modeling or evaluate the scientific sufficiency of an appeal; that technical determination rests entirely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Collier County facilitates the submission of information to FEMA and its technical partners. FEMA is responsible for reviewing and evaluating appeals and determining whether revisions to the proposed flood hazard information are warranted. Submission of information to Collier County does not constitute an appeal determination or guarantee that the proposed mapping will be revised.

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FOR CITY COUNCIL OF
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NIGEL FULICK



RAY SANDELLI

OCTOBER ARTICLE
SLANDER WAR IN DUNBAR

A graphic featuring two pairs of portraits. The top pair shows a woman with glasses and a man with glasses, separated by a large red 'VS' and a lightning bolt. The bottom pair shows a woman with long dark hair and a woman with glasses and dreadlocks, separated by a large white 'VS' and a lightning bolt. The background is dark with red and orange flames and lightning.

A campaign ad for Tom Shadrach. On the left is a large portrait of Tom Shadrach, a man with white hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a white shirt, smiling. The background shows a waterfront with palm trees and houses. On the right, there is a blue circle with 'VOTE NOV. 3' in white. Below that, the text 'ELECT TOM SHADRACH' is written in large blue letters, with a clock icon integrated into the 'O' of 'SHADRACH'. Below this, it says 'CAPE CORAL CITY COUNCIL Time for action.' in red. At the bottom right, the website 'tomshadrach.com' is written in white. At the very bottom, a red banner contains the text 'Paid political Ad by Tom Shadrach Campaign District 1 Cape Coral 2026' in white.

VOTE
NOV. 3

**ELECT TOM
SHADRACH**

CAPE CORAL CITY COUNCIL **Time for action.**

tomshadrach.com

I AM READY TO SERVE THE TAXPAYERS OF CAPE CORAL
TOM SHADRACH FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 1 CAPE CORAL

Paid political Ad by Tom Shadrach Campaign District 1 Cape Coral 2026



Lee County Schools Owes Buckingham Families More Than a Facebook Post



Last spring, the School District of Lee County retreated from a plan to co-locate Buckingham Exceptional Student Center — a school purpose-built for medically fragile children — inside Royal Palm Exceptional Center, a campus designed for students with behavioral needs. Parents packed a school board meeting. Dozens rallied outside the district office. Hours before that rally began, the district announced a pause.

Now, with the primary elections behind us, the district has confirmed the move is proceeding after all, targeted for August 2027. Parents learned of it on August 25 through an email; the district posted the news publicly on Facebook the very next day. True to form, families learned of this not through a meeting or a hearing, but through a notice sent the day before the district told the rest of the county.

That timing invites scrutiny on its own terms. A decision this consequential — involving children who are nonverbal, wheelchair-dependent, or otherwise unable to advocate for themselves — should never appear to be timed around an election calendar. Whether or not that was the intent, the sequence of events tells families that their concerns were shelved rather than resolved, revived only once it was politically convenient to do so.

The underlying safety concerns, meanwhile, have not changed. Buckingham is a fully enclosed, climate-controlled facility with wall-to-wall carpeting and handrails designed for children who are blind or who move by crawling. Royal Palm has outdoor hallways and concrete walkways. For a child who cannot regulate her own body temperature, or one who depends on soft, continuous flooring to move safely, that is not a cosmetic difference — it is a health risk, and it was parents, not the district, who first identified it publicly.

There is also a basic accountability problem embedded in how this decision has been made. District officials confirmed last spring that co-locating the two schools did not require school board approval, because Buckingham was not technically closing. That is a technicality being used to route around the one body actually elected to answer to Lee County voters on matters like this. A plan significant enough to provoke a rally, force a pause, and now return is significant enough to merit a public vote — not an administrative memo.

Layered on top of all this is a fiscal question the district cannot avoid indefinitely. Facing a projected \$92.4 million structural deficit, Lee County Schools issued 457 non-renewal notices this year for budgetary reasons — 275 of them teachers. That

figure demands an honest answer from district leadership. Retrofitting Royal Palm for medically fragile students — new flooring, climate control, handrails, the relocation of specialized equipment — will not be inexpensive, and the district has yet to disclose what it will cost or which fund will absorb it. If there was not enough money to retain 275 teachers, taxpayers are owed a clear explanation of where the money for this project is coming from.

None of this amounts to an argument against improving services for students with behavioral needs, or against seeking efficiency in how the district allocates specialized resources. The broader ESE Cluster Model restructuring may well benefit some of the 216 students it touches. But housing a medically fragile population inside a facility built for a behaviorally intensive one is not consolidation — it is a mismatch dressed up as reform. “Co-location” is a tidy administrative term for placing two very different kinds of vulnerability under one roof and trusting that the logistics will sort themselves out over a single summer.

Families were told last spring that Royal Palm’s accessibility gaps would be “amended” before students arrived. Amended how, by whom, and verified by whom, on a timeline the public can actually see? There has been more than enough time to move past reassurance and toward specifics: architectural plans, climate-control documentation, an independent walkthrough with families present before a single child is reassigned.

Before August 2027 arrives, Lee County School District leadership owes the community four things. First, bring this decision to a public board vote rather than settling it administratively. Second, publish a binding, detailed plan for the physical modifications Royal Palm requires, with a timeline the public can verify as work proceeds. Third, disclose the full cost of this project and explain, in specific terms, how it will be funded at a moment when the district is non-renewing hundreds of positions elsewhere. Fourth, and most fundamentally, engage Buckingham families directly — before the next major decision arrives as a notice rather than a conversation.

These are not students who can afford to wait and see how a plan unfolds. Their safety depends on the district getting this right the first time, not the second. Lee County paused this plan once because families forced the issue into public view. It should not take another rally to get the district to answer honestly this time.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY NEW BUSINESS MIXER

The Charlotte County New Business Networking Event is a quarterly networking event designed to welcome and support new and growing businesses in our community. This informal, after-hours gathering brings together local entrepreneurs and partner organizations in a relaxed, approachable setting that encourages conversation, connection, and collaboration. We are excited to announce that the event is being co-hosted with the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce.

Based on feedback collected from participating businesses, entrepreneurs are eager to learn more about available resources and connect directly with organizations that can help them grow. The mixer creates space for business owners to ask questions, share challenges, and build relationships with partners offering support in areas such as marketing, workforce development, funding, training, and business services.

Partner organizations have the opportunity to showcase their services, share information, and engage one-on-one with business owners who are actively seeking guidance and next steps. For many attendees, this event serves as their first introduction to the local support ecosystem.

Whether you are a new business owner looking to expand your network or a partner organization dedicated to supporting small business success, the Charlotte County New Business Mixer offers a meaningful way to connect and contribute to a strong, thriving local economy.



EVENT DETAILS
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
5:00–7:00 PM
Ortiz Event & Venue – 2685
Tamiami Trail Port Charlotte
941-764-4941

Easy Skillet Apple Crisp

A cozy fall dessert with crisp-tender apples and a buttery oat topping
Serves 4 | Bake time: 35–40 min

Ingredients:

- 1 6 apples, peeled and sliced
- 1 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 1 cup old-fashioned oats
- 1 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 1 1/4 tsp salt

Instructions:

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. In an oven-safe skillet or baking dish, toss the apples with the granulated sugar and cinnamon until evenly coated.
3. In a bowl, mix the oats, brown sugar, flour, and salt. Pour in the melted butter and stir until crumbly.
4. Sprinkle the oat topping evenly over the apples.
5. Bake until the topping is golden and the apples are bubbling, about 35–40 minutes.
6. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving. Great with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

Notes: Any baking apple works well — Honeycrisp, Granny Smith, or Braeburn are all great choices.
Leftovers keep in the fridge for a few days.



★ ★ ★ **THANK YOU, CAPE CORAL!** ★ ★ ★

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**PRIMARY FOR
CAPE CORAL
MAYOR!**

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✓ **32.06%** OF THE VOTE

★ 12,170 VERIFIED VOTES ★

ADVANCING TO THE
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FOR MAYOR

LEAD ★ SERVE ★ PROTECT



THANK YOU to all who volunteered, supported, and voted.
TOGETHER, WE MADE OUR VOICE HEARD!

★ **ERICKSON'S PLAN FOR A BETTER CAPE CORAL** ★



PUBLIC SAFETY FIRST

Support our police, fire and first responders. Keep our city safe.



OPEN BOOKS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Financial transparency, full audits, and accountability at City Hall.



SMART, BALANCED GROWTH

Plan infrastructure today for a strong, sustainable tomorrow.



QUALITY OF LIFE

Parks, roads, and city services that make life better.



LOCAL CONTROL

Protect Cape Coral's interests and keep decisions close to home.



COMMUNITY FIRST

Decisions that put residents first—not politics.



EARLY VOTING
OCTOBER 19 – 31

MAKE YOUR PLAN. MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT.



ELECTION DAY
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3

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APPROVED AND PAID BY RICK ERICKSON FOR CAPE CORAL MAYOR