

HIVE

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

principal, and she was ready for a new chapter where she could continue to invest in children and families. She was able to use everything she had learned throughout her time in the education field to “create programs and experiences that would support children’s growth, curiosity, and love of learning outside of a traditional school setting.” While The Hive may have begun as an indoor playground, Melissa and Anna’s goal has always been to provide opportunities that help children grow, while also making life a little easier for parents.

Over the years, The Hive has grown to include different elements that serve families in a variety of ways. Children can explore the clean and safe environment, while also making new friends as their parents relax or meet other families. For the younger children, there are Open Play sessions on Monday and Wednesday mornings that include story time and music camp. There is also supervised drop-off play, which gives parents a chance to run errands, or to simply enjoy time for themselves. Before and after school care is provided for families throughout the school year. This program allows students to complete their homework in an engaging environment; they can also enjoy a healthy snack and spend time with friends before they head home. Camps are offered during school holidays and summer. The Hive also has launched their fall Homes-



The Hive offers an environment where children can play, create, and learn.

chool Enrichment program, which focuses on the growing community of homeschool students. These children can participate in weekly outings that feature hands-on science, fitness, and social activities. Monthly Kid’s Night Out are held, as well as private birthday parties on the weekends. There are enrichment programs and clubs offered that have been designed to encourage children to explore new interests through fitness, cooking, art, drama, and much more. These clubs give children the opportunities to learn new skills, make friends, and pursue the things they’re passionate about.

With so much to offer, it felt like the perfect time to properly showcase all the wonderful things happening at The Hive. Melissa and Anna wanted families, as they transition back into starting school, to “know about the many programs and resources available to support their children and make family life a little easier.

“The start of a new school year is also the perfect time

for families to establish healthy routines and explore new interests.” Melissa shared, “Whether it’s beginning a fitness journey with Crescent City Community Fitness, enrolling in karate classes with New Orleans Karate Club, or discovering creativity through Grace Menagerie’s art and drama programs, there’s something for every age and interest under one roof. Our Open House is an opportunity for families to explore the space, meet our partners, ask questions, and discover all the ways 1510 Woodland Highway is becoming a community hub where children can play, learn, grow, and thrive.”

The three businesses that can be found within The Hive have helped make the center unique and more versatile. The New Orleans Karate Club, a family-owned and community-rooted club, has been open since 1999. Over the years they have helped thousands of students build confidence, discipline, and real self-defense skills. Programs for all ages and skill levels are offered. The Crescent City Community Fit-



The Hive welcomes community members to learn more about what makes them unique at the Open House on Aug. 8.

ness gym can be found towards the back of The Hive building. They specialize in “coach-led functional fitness and HYROX classes in a welcoming, supportive environment.” The gym offers expert coaching for all fitness levels, and they help members build strength, endurance, and other healthy habits. Finally, the Grace Menagerie is the beautiful gallery and workshop of local artist Patsy Grace. Her space consists of her creative workspace, a gallery, and a boutique that features her work. Patsy and her business offer original artwork, custom portrait commissions, and thoughtfully curated gifts. The space is a welcoming one, where art, imagination, and community come together.

With so much going on behind its doors, it’s no wonder The Hive is eager to share it all with the community. All four businesses complement each other and allow for countless situations to be able to happen.

“It’s one of the things that makes our little corner of Woodland Highway unique.” Melissa proudly expressed,

“For example, parents can attend an afternoon functional fitness class at Crescent City Community Fitness while their children enjoy playtime at The Hive. Some of The Hive’s after-school children head straight to New Orleans Karate Club, where our team helps them get ready and walks them to class. Local artist Patsy Grace, owner of The Grace Menagerie, has led The Hive’s drama-themed summer camp and other creative projects.”

With just a short visit, it’s clear that rather than “simply being neighbors, they have created a small community where movement, creativity, learning, and play all work together to support local families.” Their upcoming open house is a wonderful opportunity for others to see this for themselves. As they continue to grow and strengthen themselves on Woodland Highway, The Hive will also continue to provide for the community. So, if you have the time, stop by The Hive on Saturday, August 8, and learn how they’re building a healthier, happier community – together.

Woodlands 5K Trail Run to Promote Community Health and Wellness

The Woodlands Conservancy 5K Trail Run, 1-mile Fun Run and 7th Annual Hike-a-Thon, organized to encourage community members to “get outside to give back”, raises funds for preservation and enhancement of lands for public benefit. The Woodlands 5K and 1-mile Fun Run is scheduled to take place on Saturday, September 26, 2026 at Woodlands Preserve, 449 F. Edward Hebert Blvd. in Belle Chasse.

When Kelly Haynie, CEO of Ochsner Medical Center – West Bank Campus was presented with the opportunity to again partner with Woodlands Conservancy he didn’t hesitate to claim the opportunity for the hospital to be the Presenting Sponsor. This partnership highlights OMC – West Bank Campus’ commitment to foster a healthier, more active community.

Onsite registration starts at 7 a.m. followed by a member of the OMC – West Bank Campus’ physical therapy team leading warm-up and stretching exercises at 7:30 a.m. The 1-mile Fun Run starts at 8:10 a.m. followed by the 5K at 8:30 a.m. The events will

be followed by awards, music and refreshments. The event is also the kick-off for the 7th Annual Hike-a-Thon that encourages participants to hike, run or walk a marathon, 26.2 miles, during the month of October. Participants can clock their miles anywhere of their choice and upload their miles on the Woodlands Run-SignUp site. To register for any of the events, visit <https://tinyurl.com/5K-Woodlands>.

“We are thrilled to support Woodlands 5K Trail Run and month-long Hike-a-Thon,” says Haynie. “Encouraging outdoor activity is so important to overall health and wellness, and this event reflects OMC – West Bank Campus’ dedication to preventative care and empowering healthier lives in our community.”

“The generous sponsorship from OMC – West Bank Campus is invaluable to our efforts to preserve and restore our forested wetlands that provide a unique wilderness recreation opportunity for community members while serving as a natural sponge during storm events. This partnership will allow us to expand



From left: Guy Davis, Vice President, Woodlands Conservancy, Katie Brasted, Executive Director, Woodlands Conservancy, Kelly Haynie, CEO, Ochsner Medical Center - West Bank Campus

our reach and impact, enabling more individuals and families to experience the benefits of connecting with nature while supporting a healthier community,” says Katie Brasted, Woodlands Conservancy’s Executive Director.

OMC- West Bank Campus' spon-

sorship underscores its dedication to community engagement and preventative healthcare. By supporting events like the Woodlands 5K and Hike-a-Thon, Ochsner aims to inspire healthy lifestyles and encourage individuals to take an active role in their well-being.

Belle Chasse Barber-Turned-Author to Hold Aug. 8 Book Signing at Retro Roast

Belle Chasse barber and storyteller David J. Burdick, known to many local residents as Dave the Barber, will hold a book signing for his debut fantasy adventure novel, The First True Song: An Ayam Handsoom Story, from noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 8, at Retro Roast, 8443 LA-23 in Belle Chasse.

Readers will have the opportunity to meet Burdick, learn more about the novel and purchase a signed copy for \$15 while enjoying a beverage from the café. Coloring books and crayons will also be available for children during the event.

Retro Roast is located next to A&L

Barbershop, where Burdick cuts hair and has become a familiar face to customers throughout Belle Chasse and Plaquemines Parish.

Already available on Amazon, The First True Song introduces readers to Ayam Handsoom, a young bard who leaves behind his con-artist parents' life of crime to follow his own moral compass. Alongside a sharp-tongued gnome and a fire dancer whose uneasy calm disappears when her friends are threatened, Ayam sets out to build a traveling theatrical troupe and soon encounters rival performers, dangerous choices and more trouble than any

of them expected.

Blending music, magic, humor, adventure and found family, the novel follows a group of misfits trying to do some good in a world that does not always make that easy.

For Burdick, the story grew out of years of tabletop role-playing, character-building and storytelling.

“After years of role-playing, Ayam stopped feeling like just a character and started feeling like someone with a real story to tell,” Burdick said. “Writing The First True Song was my way of bringing him fully to life and sharing that adventure with readers.”

Burdick has spent more than two decades cutting hair and talking with people from all walks of life. He credits the stories, conversations and humor he has encountered behind the barber chair, along with his years of role-playing, with helping shape the characters and relationships found in the novel.

The First True Song: An Ayam Handsoom Story is available now on Amazon at <https://a.co/d/0eJS5nLF>.

More information about Burdick’s books and upcoming events is available at <https://www.barberdave.com/books>.

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