

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS HERALD

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Keystone Height's Ulsch climbs from hole of doubt, despair to graduate with honors

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Sam Ulsch thinks about his parents every day. We wonder if they'd be proud of his accomplishments in sports and the classroom. He questions whether they found a way to beat their demons.

So many questions. So few answers.

"I wish they could see how things turned out," he said. "They missed a lot."

Sam's father lost his job as a youth pastor. He didn't last long as an insurance salesman, either. That's when both of his parents started down a dark road of substance abuse.

"It got tough early on for my parents," Sam said. "I'm the oldest with five broth-

ers. Because of everything they had to deal with, (my parents) didn't make the best decisions. They turned to substance abuse. They made it very difficult for my brothers to be successful."

Then came the call on Sept. 18, 2018. His parents died instantly in a remote area of Bryceville in Nassau County.

Now a senior at Keystone Heights High, Ulsch will celebrate a rebirth when he gets his diploma. His emotional collapse started before his parents, Phillip and Holly Ulsch, were killed after a logging truck turned in front of them, and they ran into the back of it.

"When I got the news, I bottled up," Sam said. "I knew my brothers needed me, but

SEE GRADUATE, 16



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CLUES ACROSS

1. Dylan and Marley are two
5. Makes healthy
10 The Who's "ORiley"
14. Side sheltered from wind
15. Flat-bottomed sailboats
16. Egyptian supreme god
17. Advice
18. Mass of small, loose stones
19. Online learning services provider
20. 'Lords' in Northwest Semitic languages
22. Of she
23. A place to relax
24. Critical and mocking
27. Consumed
30. You get one in summer
31. Bath
32. Luxury automaker
35. Spiders spin one
37. Guy (slang)
38. Greek personification of Earth
39. Large instruments
40. Domestic cattle genus
41. Appetizer
42. Oil group
43. Where to put groceries
44. Speak incessantly
45. Popular color
46. A place to sleep
47. Make fun of

48. Former CIA
49. Salts
52. Bleated
55. Never sleeps
56. Sword
60. Water (Spanish)
61. Cyprinids
63. 'Dark Knight' actor Christian
64. Fictional demon
65. Old World lizard
66. The content of cognition
67. Makes a mistake
68. A way to make wet
69. Tide

CLUES DOWN

1. One-liner
2. Evergreen genus
3. College in Rome
4. Prevents from seeing
5. Cycles/second
6. Mischievous child
7. Less common
8. Honorably retired
9. Midway between south and southeast
10. A confusion of voices and other sounds
11. Bony fish genus
12. Type of pear
13. Egyptian cross

21. Satisfies
23. Founder of Babism
25. Bar bill
26. Chicago ballplayer
27. Performer
28. Hairpiece
29. Partner to flowed
32. Aircraft formation
33. You have 3 per day
34. Goes into
36. College athletic organization
37. Wet, muddy ground
38. Talk
40. Witty conversation
41. Gurus
43. 'French Price of ___ Air'
44. Sports equipment
46. Try to get
47. Flower cluster
49. Sea dwellers
50. Palmlike subtropical plant
51. Polio vaccine developer
52. Baseball's Ruth
53. Gelatinous substance
54. Hungarian violinist Leopold
57. Offered
58. Ancient Greek City
59. A way to derive
61. Touch lightly
62. Witnessed

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April is National Sexual Assault Month

Quigley House, law enforcement join forces to stop ‘scourge’ of abuse

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Law enforcement, prosecutors and advocates for survivors of sexual abuse were stoic and resolute Tuesday when they talked about April being National Sexual Assault Month.

They were steadfast in their determination to rid the community of those who prey on families, neighbors and friends. Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook and Quigley House CEO Jennifer Rodriguez talked of resources – and consequences – of those who hurt others.

Their backdrop was an array of T-shirts with messages written by survivors and friends. The color of the shirt categorized the crime, with white representing someone who died in an assault.

“It is a time for us to join together to



prevent sexual assaults by educating our community and focusing on how the scourge of sexual violence impacts everyone in our community,” Cook said. “I, along with



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE
Sheriff Michelle Cook is flanked by Assistant State Attorney Pam Hazel (left) and Quigley House CEO Jennifer Rodriguez while remembering April has been designated as National Sexual Assault Month.

everyone standing here today, know that a single month isn’t enough to address the widespread problem of sexual assault. However, it does provide an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the issue, focus our support on the survivors and energize our prevention efforts.”

Three of the T-shirts draped on the fence and on a clothesline at Quigley House’s headquarters were white. They reminded ev-

eryone of the senseless and brutal outcome of acts of terror.

One was made by someone who remembered Brittany Nicole Cherubini, a 2-year-old girl murdered by her mother’s boyfriend.

“In April, we focus on building awareness around sexual assault and breaking the stigmas and biases that surround the subject,”

SEE FORCES, 7

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OPINIONS & VIEWPOINTS

It will take all of us working every day to end sexual, domestic abuse

By Don Coble
Managing Editor

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – We are lucky to have someone so passionate and unrelenting running Quigley House. It's clear CEO Jennifer Rodriguez doesn't view her role as a job. It's a calling. And we should all be happy she's here.

And mad that we need her.

But as long as people are sexually and domestically abused, we will need Rodriguez. And she needs us. It should outrage all of us that people are subject to so much physical and emotional. What kind of person hurts a woman or a child?

Quigley House is a secure home for people who are trying to escape abuse. It's a place where bruises can heal; survivors can



Don Coble

get counseling and find support to chart a new course in life.

Going to Quigley House is a difficult choice. It often requires severing a relationship and financial support. It means working through uncertainty and rebuilding a sense of importance.

Rodriguez and her staff and investigators joined with the Clay County Sheriff's, State Attorney's and Clerk of County Courts offices Tuesday to remind everyone April is Sexual Awareness Month. The group stood shoulder to shoulder, both symbolically and literally, to assure survivors they could help break the vicious cycle of abuse.

"I promise you we will be here for you," Sheriff Michelle Cook said. "You know, working together, we can hold those responsible for sexual violence accountable. I said it before, and I'm gonna say it again: the Clay County Sheriff's Office will continue to take action needed to prevent these crimes, support our victims and hold violators accountable."

It's difficult to understand why survivors – abuse centers don't use the word 'victims'

– don't just walk away. It's not that easy, Rodriguez said, because some don't know what services and support are available. More important, many aren't aware others care.

"Cultural norms have contributed to misunderstanding and confusion around sexual violence," Rodriguez said. "This makes it difficult for survivors to wrap their minds around their own personal experience, often leading to shame and guilt. At Quigley House, we work to educate survivors on the dynamics of sexual assault and provide intervention to heal. So survivors can rebuild their lives and have a healthy and safe future."

Cook said a month-long to bring awareness to sexual assault wasn't enough. It should be something everyone should commit to every day.

Rows of colored T-shirts were hung from a line and along the fence at Quigley's management headquarters Tuesday. They were a sad reminder of the torturous pain inflicted. Survivors were encouraged to

ABUSE, 6

Florida universities ban TikTok on state-owned devices

By Alexa Herrera
alexaherrera@freshtakeflorida.com

Florida's decision this week to immediately ban TikTok from its campus networks and college-owned devices is occurring amid broader bipartisan efforts in Florida's Legislature to limit or prohibit students in public schools from using social media.

UF said it planned to start actively blocking use of TikTok and WeChat, an instant messaging app especially popular among Chinese students. Other universities – including University North Florida, St. Johns River State College, University of Florida, Florida State and University of Central Florida – already had similarly banned TikTok and WeChat, responding to a directive last week from the state's Board of Governors calling the services a data security risk because their parent companies were based in China.

The latest bill moved through Florida's Capitol to effectively ban TikTok for all public employers, including state and local government agencies, public schools, colleges and universities and more. It prohibits installing TikTok on a government-issued device or accessing TikTok over a government network, such as office or school Wi-Fi networks.

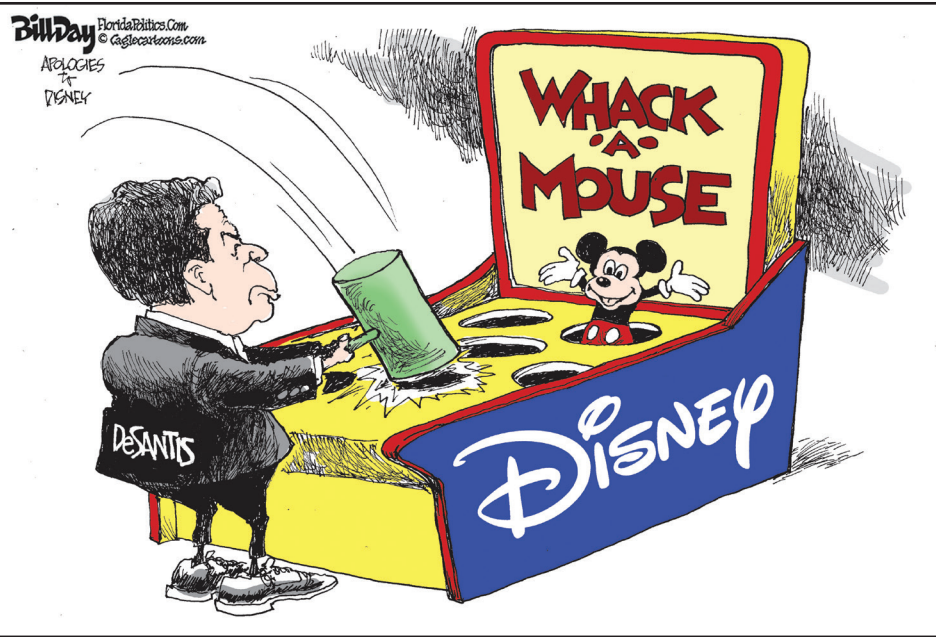
Meanwhile, other measures proposed by lawmakers would crack down on a broader number of social media services. One would require teachers to warn students about the social, emotional and physical effects of social media; prohibit students from using social media during classroom instruction; and require schools to block social media on their networks.

"These kids are walking around with a live digital hand grenade, and we're not educating them on the safe use of it," Burgess said.

The House voted 110-0 last week to pass a companion bill, sponsored by Rep. Brad Yeager, a New Port Richey Republican.

Under those bills, classroom lessons

SEE TIKTOK, 6



Word OF THE MONTH

Word of the month is a feature that aims to help readers boost their vocabulary in a meaningful way that has practical application. Each week, our editorial staff presents a word, its definition and its use in a sentence.

Saturnine: (SAT-ur-nahyn) an adjective that means slow and gloomy.

"Rainy weather during the first two days of my vacation put me in a saturnine mood."

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We'd like to hear from you. Perhaps you are concerned about the county commission, the school board or your city council or commission, sit down and take a few moments to write us

a letter. All we ask is that you keep it civil, no name-calling and write no more than 600 words. All we ask is that you stick to local issues, be clear and make a point. We reserve the right to edit for AP Stylebook errors, grammar and spelling. In your

email, type Letter to the Editor in your subject and send it to Managing Editor Don Coble at don@claytodayonline.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Opinions ...

The views and opinions expressed on this page are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Clay Today.

THIS MONTH
IN HISTORY

Five years ago, 2018

- After listening to several county department leaders, the Board of County Commissioners reverse course and vote to return Rescue Unit 19 to Orange Park.
- The school board votes to reinstate Orange Park art teacher Michael Bowman, who was dismissed after he was accused of receiving pay and training as park of a fraudulent work scheme.
- Cleveland Browns defensive back Jacob Hagen and UCF defensive lineman Seyvon Lowry visit Ridgeview Elementary to encourage students to embrace a “Finish

Strong Attitude” ahead of the Florida Standards Assessment test.

10 years ago, 2013

- The Florida Charter School Appeal Commission approves the application for Orange Park Performing Arts Academy after the Clay County School Board denied the school's application.
- Walmart announces it will open a Neighborhood Market on the corner of College Drive and County Road 220 in Middleburg.
- The Green Cove Springs City Council votes to borrow \$3.1 million to build a new police department headquarters.

20 years ago, 2003

- Former Orange Park Mayor Garry McIntyre is charged with battery after a woman in the public works office said he “patted her” down at town hall.
- An elderly man is found floating face down at Spring Park in Green Cove Springs.
- Green Cove Springs continues to debate whether to shuttle its fire department and merge with Clay County Fire Rescue.

30 years ago, 1993

- A Green Cove Springs woman, Joan Susanna Burns, is arrested and charged with first degree murder of 87-year-old Lewis Hensley in St. Augustine.
- Middleburg High senior Jane Glover is selected as one of 20 finalists for the Johnson

and Wales University Cooking Contest.

- Despite facing a lawsuit after a child drowned at Keystone Beach, the city decides to reopen the popular site on Lake Geneva.

40 years ago, 1983

- Wayne Floyd Bateson, 30, is sentenced to 80 years in prison for kidnapping and raping a 43-year-old grandmother.
- Florida Container Express in Orange Park sets up donation spots to ship supplies to victims of flooding in Louisiana and Mississippi.
- Publix Supermarkets in Clay County change their policy and plan to be open on Sundays.



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TikTok
from page 4

would change based on grade level but cover kindergarten through 12th grade. Students below sixth grade would learn about internet safety, injury prevention and personal health. Lessons for older students would include how social media manipulates behavior, the spreading of misinforma-

tion and dating violence. Social media companies have long been the target of Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Republican-controlled Legislature, which passed a bill DeSantis signed in 2021 requiring large social media companies to publish standards that described how they decided to “censor, deplatform and shadow ban.” It also allowed Florida residents to sue social media companies for up to \$100,000 if they feel they were treated unfairly.

Federal courts overturned most parts of the law, saying it was an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment, and DeSantis has asked the Supreme Court to intercede. Republicans’ efforts to crack down on social media platforms also are occurring amid the party’s efforts to improve its allure among young voters, who are the most active users on social media and who generally identify as progressives.

Another bill would require social media platforms to provide disclaimers of “additive features” and would prohibit schools from using social media for educational purposes. When users log in, minors would have to be shown a disclaimer about how social media can be addictive and harmful to their mental health. It would also describe how the app might collect a user’s personal data “to further manipulate your viewable content,” according to the bill.

Abuse
from page 4

write a message against their aggressors and for their recoveries as part of the healing process. Tiny hands wrote some of the messages. Others were painted on smaller shirts.

You quickly realize this behavior must stop. “We recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress in children, families and caregivers by providing education on trauma, increasing coping skills and incorporating these skills into programs and policies. In other words, we are here for survivors,” Rodriguez said.

“Today, we stand together, hoping that survivors who are in need will call our helpline (904-284-0061) to learn more about programs and services and the options they have after an assault.” We must stand with Quigley House, law enforcement and prosecutors as a community. It will take all of us to end this madness.

We can reach out to a victim and let them know we are willing to help. We can hug them and tell them we love them. But they must take the biggest step by contacting Quigley House or the sheriff’s office. And when they do, they will be comforted by a fortress of support, protection and compassion.

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Forces
from page 3

Rodriguez said. “Cultural norms have contributed to misunderstanding and confusion around sexual violence. This makes it difficult for survivors to wrap their minds around their own personal experiences, often leading to shame and guilt. We quickly work to educate survivors on the dynamics of sexual assault and provide intervention to heal so survivors can rebuild their lives and have a healthy and safe future.”

Quigley House is the county’s only dual-certified domestic violence and sexual assault center. It provides a haven for victims as they try to rebuild their lives. It’s a place

Crisis Line

Quigley House’s 24-hour crisis line is (904) 284-0061.

To report abuse, call the Sheriff’s Office at (904) 264-6512 or leave a message on SaferWatch.com.



where they can get counseling, education and other tools to find a new path in life.

Cook said her department, investigators from the Attorney General’s Office, and Quigley House officials would relentlessly pursue justice.

“Every day, the men and women of the Clay County Sheriff’s Office focused our attention on sexual assaults, especially our investigators and our special victims and Internet Crimes Against Children units,” she said. “They have a job that isn’t easy to stomach, but they do it every single day. And they do it exceptionally well.”

“Our victims advocates work countless hours to bring the support needed for survivors. We must work together to educate our community about preventing sexual assault,

sexual violence. We must work together to support survivors and to speak out against the harmful attitudes and actions that may promote sexual violence by partnering with Quigley House to help bring resources and healing to victims of these terrible, terrible acts.”

Cook said making the public aware of sexual abuse should be a year-long project, not just focused on April.

“This is something that we need to be talking about and working towards ending every single day of the year,” she said. “If you are a victim or you know of a victim, we’re asking you to please come forward, and I promise you this team right here that standing with us, we are here to support you.”

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Program helps underserved residents log into broadband service

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

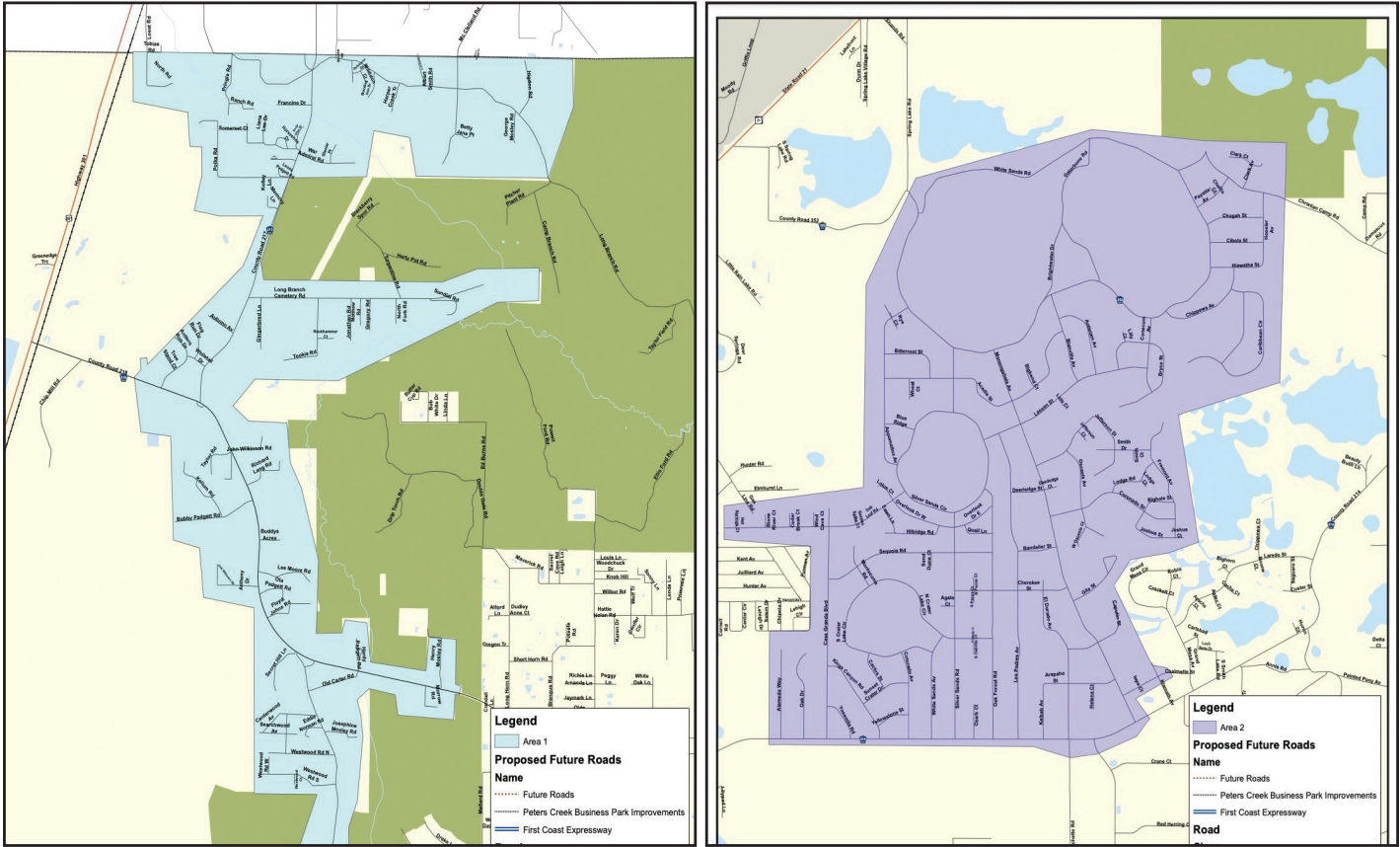
CLAY COUNTY – Residents in rural areas of Clay County are now connecting to faster broadband internet service.

The Board of County Commissioners voted last year to approve a significant measure with Comcast to extend broadband service into areas with either spotty or no internet service.

In a recent interview with Clay Today, Commission Chair Betsy Condon, whose district includes Keystone Heights and Clay Hill, provided an update on Phase 1 and Phase 2 portions of the project, which will be owned, operated and maintained by Comcast.

The Phase 1 portion of the project will provide internet service to the northwest portion of Clay Hill and the area of Keystone Heights north of County Road 214 and State Road 21 toward McRae. Many of the homes in that area now have service.

Condon said by April 10, the project connecting Clay residents to the much-needed essential service will have reached approximately 1,200 homes in the Clay Hill area and another 600-to-800 homes in the southern part of the county.



SEE PROGRAM, 9

Left, Phase 1 of the Clay County Broadband Project is nearly done, and residents will soon be able to sign up for service in Phase 2. Plans were approved to improve internet connection in rural areas of Clay Hill and Keystone Heights with the approval of County Commissioners in 2022.



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Condon said only about 30% of homes in the Keystone Heights area were connected during Phase 1 due to permitting delays with Clay Electric Cooperative lines.

"It is a little bit behind schedule and (that) is in a more compacted area," she said.

Condon maintains the first phase is still on track for timely completion.

"I think it's been on track. Keystone Heights does not have as many homes, but it is a much more rural area that has been underserved. The whole project is expected to be right on schedule," she said.

The commissioner said Comcast had honored its commitment dates well within the time frames. Meanwhile, the landing page for the Clay County Broadband Project on the county website maintains that the Phase 1 portion of the project is "completed."

Condon said Phase 2, which will encompass more of the Keystone Heights area, is set for an official timeline of two years, although she hopes it will be completed ahead of schedule. After all future improvements, including Phase 3, are done, 96% to 99% of the county will have access fast, affordable, high-speed internet, Condon said.

She said that contract language for Phase 2 is being completed "as we speak," which would then go through the engineering, construction, and permitting process. Comcast was awarded grants for Phase 2 of the project through the State Department of Economic Opportunity, Condon said.

As the process unfolds, county commissioners continue to come across some road-

blocks that come with the unique circumstances of connecting rural areas to the world wide web. For example, Condon said officials learned Penney Farms was formerly under the contract of a small, independent provider that went out of business.

The county is working with the town so it can be part of future phases.

While high-speed internet infrastructure is a challenge for parts of the county, much of

the project is done, so it should provide relief for several residents struggling with connection issues.

Condon said a college student enrolled at St. Johns River State College in Orange Park who was taking an online class had to go to the library or work in the McDonald's parking lot to be connected. Another example is a Middleburg-based Telehealth nurse who worked remotely had to find a hotspot. And a

dock builder in McRae had to use city wifi to conduct estimates via computer software.

"There are a lot of underserved residents in Clay County and my district, so I want to put them on an equal playing field with everyone else in the 21st Century. Internet is an essential part of family life," Condon said.

Broadband sign-up is tentatively scheduled for April 29, but details on the time and location still have to be determined.

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PHOTOS BY NATALIE GILSTRAP

The Trading Post allows students to turn in their “Indian bucks” earned during the week for snacks every Friday. The program benefits many low-income students.

Keystone Heights’ Trading Post ‘removes stigma’ for those in need

By Natalie Gilstrap
For The Herald

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – In 2019, Community Partnership School performed a needs assessment that identified the challenges

and opportunities of Keystone Heights Junior/Senior High. The Trading Post was the result of the assessment. It opened as a way for students to be rewarded for positive behaviors and receive needed items. “The Trading Post is set up in a way that removes the stigma of a low-income student coming in for a specific need,” said Tina Baker,

er, the Director of Community Partnerships Schools. Community volunteers fully operate the store and supplied by community donations. “We depend on donations from the community members and grants to stock the Trading Post,” Baker said. The Trading Post is open every Friday for students to visit during their lunch break. Students can purchase something from the store by using Indian Bucks rewarded to students who demonstrate positive behaviors such as having good attendance, showing teamwork, showing respect, taking responsibility, persevering and showing determination. Though students are limited to buying one soda and two snacks, the store offers a variety of items. Chips, small toys, sodas,

cheese sticks and salads are available. In addition, students can put their extra Indian Bucks into a bin for a chance to win a \$25 gift card to either McDonald’s, Subway, Dunkin Donuts, Taco Bell or Wendy’s. The Trading Post also is working toward providing healthier options for students. “They love the salads and the fresh fruits,” said Alicia Hunter, Family and Community Engagement Coordinator. “My goal for next year is to have even more healthier options.” Abbey, a student, said that she likes the Trading Post because of volunteers. Another student named Delilah also said she likes the store because it’s always welcoming. “I’ve seen change and growth,” Hunter said. “I feel like it’s affecting more kids across the board and not just our behavioral kids.”

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Students emerged in politics at Senate Page Program

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – In 2009, the Children's Home Society of Florida wanted to provide students, through its own or Community Partnership Schools, an opportunity to attend the Senate Page Program.

The program allows junior and senior high students to experience the state's legislative process firsthand as senate pages. They have provided 120 students with the opportunity and continue to do so. "We have 15 this year that will be serving in those nine weeks," Summer Pfeiffer, Vice President of Governmental Relations, said.

Paige Wilkinson from Keystone Heights



Paige Wilkerson and Rachelle Simmons, both of Keystone Heights High, took part of the Senate Page Program in Tallahassee. The program was offered by Community Partnership Schools.

High and Rachelle Simmons from Orange Park High were two students who recently attended the Senate Page Program in Tallahassee.

"It provided me with an irreplaceable experience that I could hold into for the rest



of my life," Wilkinson said.

The program includes a five-day stay in the state's capitol. Wilkinson and Simmons stayed either with a host family that the Children's Home Society coordinated or at a hotel with a family member. The students

toured the capitol's museums, spoke with senators, and attended committee meetings. In addition, they learned about creating bills and amendments, campaigns, and the Senate's protocols. They also assisted the senators on the state senate floor, which involved delivering and taking messages, fetching bottled water or completing deliveries. Students were allowed to choose a collective topic to make bills and amendments before presenting them in a mock session at the end of the week. "It was really exciting," Simmons said. "It really made me look at bills and laws with a deeper lens."

After attending the Senate Page Program, Wilkinson and Simmons found the experience to be educational and influential.

"It affected my view on government, and it helped me understand the process that I hope to be a part of someday," Wilkinson said. In addition, they would recommend other students to apply whether they are planning to enter political science or not. "It's one of those programs where you think you know a lot of things, but there is always some nuance," Simmons said.

Justin Smith from Orange Park High is currently attending the program as a page.

For more information about the Senate Page program, visit senatepages.flsenate.gov/, or to contribute visit, chsfl.org/advocate/.



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Penney Retirement Community to welcome pianist Gail Smith

PENNEY FARMS – Renown pianist Gail Smith will play a recital at 7 p.m. as part of the Community Commemorate Concert Series on April 23 at Penney Memorial Church. Smith has performed and taught internationally. In addition to being a concert pianist, she is also a music historian, author and piano instructor. She will play selections by Johann Strauss, Frederic Chopin and Cesar Franck, as well as some of her own compositions. Penney Memorial Church is located at 4465 Poling Blvd. at Penney Farms. The concert is free and open to the general public. Street parking is plentiful.

Prescription drug take-back hosted at Orange Park Hospital

ORANGE PARK – With April 22nd being National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, the team at HCA Florida Orange Park Hospital, in cooperation with the Clay County Sheriff's Office and the Drug Enforcement Agency, will be outside of the ER collecting unwanted or expired prescription medications – for free. The event is drive-thru style from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There is no need to get out of the car, and the DEA safely discards all medicine.

Clay Humane needs donations for severely injured dog

ORANGE PARK – Clay Humane, a nonprofit veterinary clinic in Orange Park, is asking for donations to care for Trevor, an injured Border Collie mix found by Clay County Animal Services on Jan. 21. "Clay County Animal Services transferred Trevor to us. He came in lame on his left hind leg with a deep laceration in his neck, more than likely from an embedded

collar," said Clay Humane Executive Director Linda Welzant. "He had little fur and a severe skin infection affecting the entire body due to malnutrition and neglect." Trevor is recovering from a cranial cruciate ligament repair. With the help of heavy antibiotics, antiparasitic medications, pain management, medicinal bathing and quality nourishment, he is healing nicely from all his conditions. While officials don't know the exact circumstances of Trevor's situation, they

suspect neglect. Although he has multiple fractures in his tail, they don't believe he was involved in dogfighting. Trevor is between 5-8 years old and weighs about 60 pounds. He has several potential adopters and will go into a forever home following his recovery over the next few months. The total cost of Trevor's rehabilitation so far is approximately \$4,000. To donate to Trevor's Fund, visit www.clayhumane.org/donate.php or call (904) 276-7729.

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Graduate
from page 1

the year that happened, I quit all sports. I didn't try in school. I didn't put forth much effort."

Things changed the moment the Indians hired Steve Reynolds as its defensive coordinator. He was promoted to head coach three months ago.

"Well, myself and coach (Lantz) Lowery, his weightlifting coach, we spent a lot of time with Sam," Reynolds said. "And look, Sam makes it easy to want to spend time with because he's a great kid. He does all the right things. He takes time. And, you know, he puts effort into everything he does. He's an impressive kid. A person like that has something so drastic happened to them, we just wanted to do everything we can."

Sam returned to football and weightlifting as a sophomore. He was a three-year starter in football and a member of two

state-winning weightlifting teams.

He also is the Senior Class Secretary and close to earning his Associate's degree from Santa Fe College in the dual-enrollment program.

"I was mourning my parents' loss, but I had to find a way to get around that," Sam said. "I started to move along. I got back into sports. In my sophomore year, I started taking school serious. I took (advanced placement) classes. I got my stuff straight."

"I give all the glory to God, but I wouldn't be where I am today without the people around me."

"I'm going to miss him terribly when he graduates," Reynolds said.

Reynolds said he plans to stay at the school as long as there's a Ulsch boy in the pipeline. Ben Ulsch will be a senior next year. Other brothers are currently in seventh grade and ninth grade.

"I'll be coaching a Ulsch until I retire," Reynolds said. "There's three more here and there's two more across the street (at Keystone Heights Elementary).



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Hope Christian holds fifth annual STEAM Fair

KEYSTONE – Out of 80 student participants at the fifth annual Hope Christian Academy Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math Fair, three were recognized as top overall scorers and one was named Crowd Favorite.

“In an age when some have moved away from Science Fairs,” said HCA instructor and coordinator for Physical Science and Biological, Adina Leon, “I push to continue. It’s about the process for me: Students recognize a problem, research to learn more, develop a plan to investigate a solution to their hypothesis, conduct a controlled experiment, analyze their results, form a conclusion, visualize their data, and then present their findings.”

Students were required to present their final projects in class oral presentations, to the event judges, and to the student body and other guests at the event. “These are the life skills I trust our students will take with them along with a confidence that they can



Physical and Biological STEAM winners
From left; Natalie Lowe - eighth grade (high honors), Gaia Sama, 11th grade (Crowd Favorite and second Place Overall - Biological), Lucas Grider, seventh grade (Overall Biological), Landen Perry, ninth grade (Overall Physical Science) and Rainey Norman, seventh grade (High Honors Physical Science). Back row from left; Brendan Musser, 11th grade (Honors - Biological), Alyssa Hunt, 10th grade (High Honors Biological), Kylie Maloy, eighth grade (High Honors Physical Science), Adam White, ninth grade (High Honors Physical Science), Instructor and event co-coordinator Adina Leon, and Noah Leon - eighth grade (High Honors Physical Science).

solve a problem in their path.” Penny Hunt, coordinator for arts, asked her students to base their projects around the famous Winnie-the-Pooh characters. “Based on the theory that A. A. Milne meant to represent psychological disorders in his Winnie-the-Pooh characters, students researched what disorder each character supposedly represented,” she said. Each student then was tasked with conducting a research paper on their chosen psychological disorder followed by a “character analysis...and to also determine whether or not the character they chose truly reflected the mental disorder they researched,” Hunt continued. Additionally, each student participant took a Pooh Pathology test to see which character they were most like. Leon said, “The feedback from the students this year referenced their surprise at how well they improved in speaking in public, how they loved teaching younger students, and how proud they were to share their learning with others.”



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STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Keystone Heights High weightlifter Anthony Rozier-Tyler celebrates final 270 pound bench press lift that "lifted" Indians to 56-53 win over Class 2A defending champion Suwannee High School at region championships at Suwannee High.

Indians land Bulldog body blow

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

LIVE OAK - Intent on at least a respectable effort to push to the FHSAA boys weightlifting championships on Friday, the Keystone Heights High boys team, led by an explosive last bench press highlight from Anthony Rozier-Tyler, snuck out of Suwannee High School with a region 2-1A team title by just three points; 56-53, over the formerly Class 2A host Suwannee High Bulldogs, also the defending Class 2A team champion now in Class 1A in the Olympic Snatch scoring; second in Class 2A in Traditional.

"We missed a lot of our first and second lifts and against a team like Suwannee, now in Class 1A, you can't do that and win," said Keystone Heights High coach Lantz Lowery, who is a back to back state title coach in all disciplines and scoring. "This was a good first look at them in a championship atmosphere of course in their home gym and that makes things even tougher."

In the Olympics format, Keystone Heights finished second to Suwannee by a more decisive score; 74-54.

"Their technique is flawless and they are disciplined in that format," said Lowery. "We are more of a power lifting team and do better in the Traditional format. We'll tweak our technique this week and hope to get a better effort at state."

In the Traditional scoring, with Keystone Heights banking on massive bench press totals from their upper weight veterans; Bryar Schenk, Landon Hovsepian; both in 183 going second and third; Dakota Roper and Bryson Wester in 199; second and third; Larry Jeffries III in 219; Traditional champion, Rozier-Tyler in 238, Traditional champion, Lowery and coach Steven Reynolds were feverishly crunching numbers for the possible upset.

"Our veterans; Landon, Bryar, Bo Overton, Wyatt Van Zant, did what they were supposed to do; clean lifts, competitive totals," said Lowery. "We got the seconds and thirds; Landon, Reid Begue and Bryar, that we expected. They have to realize that we are the hunted now."

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Keystone Heights High lifter Trey Jeffries lifts successful in front a host of Suwannee High fans in critical lift at region championships.

Lift
from page 19

battles of the day, Rozier-Tyler waited and waited until his 238 weight class competitors finished their lifts before entering the fray. “Coach says to don’t think, but just lift,” said Rozier-Tyler, who hit his first lift on bench press at 330 with an bench-rattle finish that nearly flipped the platform. “From there, it was just to get mentally ready to go big and push my confidence.”

Rozier-Tyler, with teammate Jeffries on his six; Jeffries after winning his 219 weight also with a 330 start and a 350 finish, had enough of the competitive fire to share with his teammate to get Rozier-Tyler smoothly past 350 and successful at 370 to a roaring gym crowd.

“It’s all about mental confidence,” said Lowery. “He has a a 375 maybe 380 in him and that may be what’s needed at state. For now, we have that in our back pocket.”

Jeffries, in equally dramatic fashion, missed on his opener in Olympic Snatch, but recovered to tie the best lift; 225, in the event then opened with two big clean and jerk lifts; 290 and 315 with Suwannee’s Brandon Robinson staying steady to his final 315 and Jeffries missing at a 325 attempt to get second by body weight. In lift totals, a tie is determined by body weights of individual lifters with Jeffries heavier at 216.10 to Robinson’s 201.30.

“He showed his was going to be compet-

itive in a tough weight class and we will keep and eye on the numbers next week to decide his lifts,” said Lowery. “It’s sometimes a matter of five pounds here, 10 pounds there.”

In the lower weights session, Lowery got Brian Overton as Traditional champion at 169 with multiple top 10 finishes from Colton Hollingsworth and Jeddiah Tisdale at 119 (5th, 7th); Begue and VanZant at 139 (2nd, 3rd); Samuel Ulsch and Damien Dunlap at 154 (2nd, 10th) and Overton and Vernell Jackson at 169 (1st, 9th).

At 183 and 199, Suwannee and Keystone Heights had double 1-2-3 finishes with Suwannee winning both weight groups and Keystone Heights getting second and third; Sam Wainwright at 183 with Hovsepian and Schenck; 640-615-575; and, at 199, Will Wainwright besting Dakota Roper and Bryson Wester, 675-575-560.

“Those two Wainwrights will be state champions if they show up,” said Lowery. “We get the second and third and we will be okay. We had our first title won on our guy going big against a favorite (Kaleb Vojnovski in 2021) for fourth place instead of fifth.”

In the Olympics scoring, Suwannee got five individual titles to cruise to that team title with Keystone Heights getting individual titles to Overton, and Rozier-Tyler with Van Zant and Begue second and fourth, Ulsch fifth, Schenck and Hovsepian second and third; Wester and Roper fifth and 10th; Jeffries second with Jayden Goodman third at 219, Jackson Herman third at 238 and Tyler Duncan fourth at Unlimited.

Woman’s Best Friend
A marathon runner and
her dog tackle seizures

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

MIDDLEBURG - In 1789, King Frederick of Prussia once said that a dog is a “man’s best friend.”

Ask Lisa Casson, a 43 year old Middleburg runner, what she thinks of her dog and the sentiment is the same.

“She is my furry angel,” said Casson, talking about her three year old service dog, a hound and pit mix. “She can sense when my medical situation goes bad and knows what to do.”

Casson smartly advises and guards the name of her dog only because, as a working dog, the dog’s focus is to not be distracted by friendly people seeing her ever-smiling doggie face next to Casson while she runs.

Casson, who has run the River Run 15K, handfuls of local 5K and is endeavoring to run Walt Disney’s Dopey Challenge in January 2024 and the October 2023 Marine Corps Marathon. Casson’s warmup is the upcoming Disney Spring Challenge in May; a 5K a 10k and a 10 miler.”

“The Dopey Challenge, my fifth one, is a 5k, a 10k, a half marathon and a full marathon, all run in four consecutive days in Orlando,” said Casson, about a 14-16 minute distance pace runner. “The Marine Corps Marathon in October is my test. I finished my last Dopey marathon with seven seizures and a Margarita in my hand.”

The challenge, not withstanding the running of a ton of miles in a weekend, is that Casson has been experiencing seizures and blackouts since six years old with little affirmation of a cause.

“The seizures started at six and the doctors explained them away as something from a traumatic experience; epileptic, which I never had,” said Casson, married three years to husband Chuck. “None of the seizures over my lifetime have shown evidence on any scans.”

After tons of tests and scans and doctors, Casson’s family was given an evaluation of a functional neurological



Middleburg area runner Lisa Casson sits after a local 5K with her service dog of three years.

disorder.

“That is sort of like a software malfunction in my brain,” said Casson lightly quipped. “All the tests were fine, but the seizures kept coming and the blackouts kept coming.”

As a youth, mom, Linda Elder, encouraged Casson to just be very careful, but to live my life.

“Of course, she was scared, but she did not want the seizures to run my life in a negative way,” said Casson.

Casson got some clarity in her life situation in September 2020 after a series of 78 seizures and a possible mini stroke while working 15 hours a day as a daycare manager.

“That year I woke up one morning and could not speak,” said Casson, who grew up in Middleburg. “It still comes and goes; my speech still has occasional issues.”

Prior to the September 2020 events, Casson was running a bit, but stopped for a bit before realizing that the running was a good part of her feeling better.

SEE DOG,21

Dog
from page 20

“The doctors were pushing therapy, but nothing was working,” said Casson, who, after losing her speech for two years (Sept. 2020-2023), learned fluent sign language and other non-verbal communications skills in preparation for her loss of speech episodes. “Nothing from EEG (brain scans), MRIs and all of them showed little.”

Casson went to a service dog training center; Double Six Service Dogs in Lake City, for about a year to see if a service dog would help.

“Once a week for a year, I went to Lake City with a dog they found for me, the one I have now, and we worked together and I trained her,” said Casson. “She picked up a lot of the techniques very quickly. I did a lot of follow up training at home that she learned very quickly.”

Part of the dog training is to determine what sense; smell, chemical, sight, the dog would focus on with the client to determine that safe signals.

Now that Casson has had her dog for the past three years, the amazing transformation to being a health body guard has grown. One glitch in the regime is that Casson and her dog were in a recent car accident and caused major leg damage; two torn ACLs, to the dog.

“That limits her running to about three miles,” said Casson. “Two miles is her longest run when we train at home. It took some time for her to overcome her separation anxiety, but she goes on the trips with me.”

The dog’s job is to monitor Casson’s reaction to her workouts, and like a good coach, sense when she is going a little too hard.

“When I go to the YMCA and take a class, she will stand in front of me when she senses I’m stressing too much in the class,” said Casson. “If I ignore her because I’m stubborn, she will get closer to a point that she lays on me to stop me from moving. She’s pretty insistent.”

In the Casson house, where Casson knows the dangers of being near a stove, a shower and walking around things in front of me present opportunities of danger for Casson with her random seizures.

“Initially, I had to bring her into the rooms, but she comes into the bathroom or kitchen on her own if she hears the shower come on or if I click the stove,” said Casson. “She will go get someone in the house if I blackout in the house. We have the doors now equipped for her to be able to click the handle to open the door.”

For now, Casson and her dog are inseparable.

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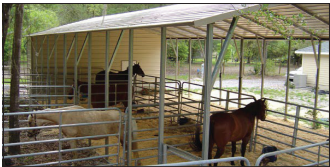


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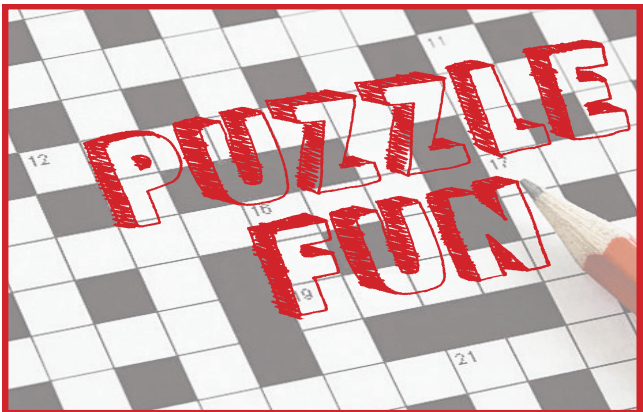
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| 9 | | | 5 | | | 1 | | |
| | | | | | 3 | | 4 | 8 |
| | | | | 7 | | | | |
| | | 8 | | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | |
| | 6 | | 9 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | 5 | |
| 6 | 2 | | | | | | | 7 |
| | | | 3 | 1 | | | | 9 |



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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | O | B | S | | C | U | R | E | S | | B | A | B | A |
| A | L | E | E | | P | R | A | M | S | | A | M | O | N |
| R | E | D | E | | S | C | R | E | E | | B | I | S | K |
| B | A | A | L | S | | H | E | R | E | | B | E | A | C |
| | | | S | A | T | I | R | I | C | A | L | | | |
| A | T | E | | T | A | N | | T | U | B | | B | M | W |
| C | O | B | W | E | B | | B | U | B | | G | A | E | A |
| T | U | B | A | S | | B | O | S | | S | A | L | A | D |
| O | P | E | C | | B | A | G | | B | A | B | B | L | E |
| R | E | D | | S | B | E | D | | C | R | A | G | | S |
| | | | S | I | L | I | C | A | T | E | S | | | |
| B | A | A | E | D | | N | Y | C | | S | | B | E | R |
| A | G | U | A | | | D | A | C | E | S | | B | A | L |
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 3 |
| 9 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| 2 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 8 |
| 4 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 6 |
| 7 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 1 |
| 8 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| 6 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| 5 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 9 |

CRYPTO FUN

☐ ☾ Ω ✱ ♂ ≍ ≈ ★ +
Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to soyfoods.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 13 = E)

- A. 6 13 15 10 1 13**

Clue: Plant of the pea family

- B. 19 13 26 16**

Clue: Small seed-type food

- C. 23 18 3 10**

Clue: Bean curd

- D. 12 18 18 21 7 16 15**

Clue: Preparing and heating food

Answers: A. legume B. bean C. tofu D. cooking

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to soy.

I M K L

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|

Answer: Milk

Guess Who?

I am an actress born in Texas on April 16, 2002. I started in theater, playing “Annie” on Broadway. I’ve been in a number of TV shows, but I am best known for my work on an ensemble show about strange happenings in a Midwestern town.

Answer: Sadie Sink

SOYFOODS WORD SEARCH

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | D | A | M | I | N | O | A | C | I | D | S | T | G | N | N | M | O | H | B |
| A | N | A | E | K | L | I | N | B | D | X | B | S | O | C | Z | Z | K | M | N |
| K | A | A | U | C | E | T | H | B | G | P | H | T | B | I | A | H | N | I | I |
| I | S | F | K | P | K | D | F | E | T | A | Z | A | L | M | D | F | H | R | H |
| S | O | U | O | M | Z | O | V | R | U | R | T | B | N | T | O | F | U | T | T |
| O | F | L | N | I | Y | C | A | A | N | E | M | I | F | I | B | V | A | N | C |
| F | L | A | E | F | D | B | E | G | T | E | K | I | S | S | N | T | B | E | E |
| V | O | N | N | H | A | E | I | E | D | S | X | R | O | O | O | V | E | E | L |
| O | N | E | S | O | R | I | U | D | B | P | N | C | H | E | E | U | A | H | H |
| N | S | U | D | R | T | F | E | R | E | U | T | O | I | D | I | I | V | H | O |
| D | A | E | B | A | P | Y | T | T | F | F | O | S | U | A | R | S | P | E | V |
| B | E | | | | | X | | | | | | | A | B | N | Z | I | C | |

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

AMINO ACIDS
BEAN
BEVERAGES
BUTTER
EDAMAME
EMULSIFY
FIRM
ISOFLAVONES
LECITHIN
MISO
MOISTURE
NUTRITION
OIL
PHYTOESTROGEN
PRESSED
PROTEIN
SAUCE
SILKEN
SOYBEAN
SOY FLOUR
STABILIZER
TEMPEH
TEXTURE
TOFU

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| | |
|----------------|-------------|
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