



MARION COUNTY CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Website: Mcchildrensalliance.org

Volume 25, Issue 1 ~ January 2025



Annual Food Drive

Saturday, January 11, 2025 - 9:00 a.m.
2nd Bethlehem Association
N.W. 4th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34475

Contact: Ire Bethea, (352) 208-0819 or Eric Cummings, (352) 804-6871

Prayer Breakfast

Saturday, January 18, 2025 - 9:00 a.m.
Mary Sue Rich Center at Reed Place
1812 NW 21st Ave. - Ocala, FL 34475

Contact:
Loretta Jenkins - (352) 351-0824

MLK Youth Day

Saturday, January 18, 2025 - 1:00 p.m.
Mary Sue Rich Center at Reed Place
1812 NW 21st Ave. - Ocala, FL 34475

Contact:
Dwanette Dilworth - (352) 207-6036

Wreath Ceremony

Saturday, January 18, 2025 - 12:00 p.m.
Martin L. King Jr. Park
500 SW MLK Jr. Ave. - Ocala, FL 34471

Contact:
Cassandra Boston - (352) 209-2973

Ecumenical Services

Sunday, January 19, 2025 - 5:00 p.m.
New St. John Baptist Church
2251 N.W. 2nd Street - Ocala, FL 34475

Contact:
Shirley Wright - (352) 732-0097

The Historic March

Monday, January 20, 2025

8:00 a.m. (line-up downtown) - 9:00 a.m. (the march begins)

Contact: Ire Bethea, (352) 208-0819

Transportation available at 7:00am - 8:00am, MLK Raquetball court

Contact: Kelvin B. Richardson, (352) 207-9558

Day in the Park

Monday, January 20, 2025 - 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

(Activities & Vendors)

Contact:

Dr. Dwanette Dilworth, (352) 207-6036

(Performance Space)

Derek Ponder - (352) 857-4118

Te'Sha Jackson - (352) 426-0861



For performance applications for the Day in the Park, please email Tesha Jackson at entconsultantbyteshaj@gmail.com.

MARION COUNTY CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

3482 N.W. 10th St. Ocala, FL 34475 Phone: (352) 438-5990 Fax: (352) 438-5994 www.mcchildrensalliance.org

Board of Directors

Mike Balken
Lori Boring
Thomas Buss
Matt Clay
John Cooper
Craig Curry
Dr. Diane Gullett
Robert Haight
Tanya Hanks
Connie Larsen
LeAnn Mackey-Barnes
Adam Lombardo
Rep. Stan McClain
Jim McCune
Pamela Michell
Kevin McDonald
John Paglia III
Randy Reynolds
Brad Rogers
Pete Lee
Matthew Seese
Billy Woods

Our Vision

For all of Marion County's Children to have a safe, healthy and nurturing environment in which to grow.

Our Mission

"To improve the lives of Marion County Children"

~ Partners in Excellence ~

Barrett, Liner & Company; City of Ocala; Community Coalition Alliance; Cox Communication; Dept. of Children and Families; Dept. of Juvenile Justice; Drug Free Communities; Duke Energy; Florida Blue; Florida Department of Health in Marion County; Friends Recycling, LLC; Jenkins Auto Group; Kids Central, Inc.; Marion County Board of County Commissioners; Marion County Hospital District; Marion County Public Schools; Marion County Sheriff's Office; Ocala Police Department; Palmer Family Foundation; Radiology Associates of Ocala; Renasant Bank; Signature Brands; Tri-Eagle Sales;

Staff

E-mail: mcca@mcchildrensalliance.org

Executive Director	Beth McCall	executivedirector@mcchildrensalliance.org
Family Violence Prevention Coordinator	Monica Bryant	Monica@breakthesilenceonviolence.org
Prevention Coordinator	Hilary Jackson	Hilary@mcchildrensalliance.org
Supporting Kids, Involving Parents Coordinator (S.K.I.P) ..	Kelley Windham ..	Kelley@mcchildrensalliance.org
Outreach Specialist	Tanya Ousley	Tanya@mcchildrensalliance.org

Notice: The Children's Alliance informs readers of current events in the nonprofit and social service fields. Opinions expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of the Marion County Children's Alliance. Inclusion or exclusion of any agency does not imply either endorsement or disapproval by the Alliance. MCCA reserves the right to edit **ALL** submissions. Information should be e-mailed to **Monica@breakthesilenceonviolence.org** by the **FIRST** Friday of each month for the following months publication.



DIASPORA WHISPERS INC PRESENTS



Amara's Adventures

Book Signing Party

COME, MEET THE AUTHOR, RECEIVE A FREE SIGNED BOOK FOR EACH FAMILY AND
ENJOY GAMES CRAFTS AND REFRESHMENTS.

 **January 11th, 2025**

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

MARY SUE RICH COMMUNITY CENTER AT REED PLACE

 1821 NW 21st Ave, Ocala, FL 34475



www.dwhispersbooks.com

[@dwhispersbooks](https://www.instagram.com/dwhispersbooks)



DIASPORA WHISPERS

OCALA
Recreation and Parks

DIASPORA WHISPERS

DIASPORA WHISPERS

GRACEFUL STRETCHING SERIES



Lead by AIHOM Practitioner
DeNaya Wilkerson

HYBRID: IN-PERSON & ON ZOOM

10 - 11 AM Every Saturday

Preregister and get each month for \$20
or pay \$10 at the door (cash or check only)

Register:
<https://aihocala.networkforgood.com/projects/234071-graceful-stretching>

 2330 NE 8th Rd., Ocala, FL 34470

Visit aihocala.org for more information



A yoga class for every body.

Thank you Concert for Good \$44,000 Raised for the Marion County Children's Alliance and Brother's Keeper



Thank you to all of our AMAZING Sponsors We Appreciate your Support!



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
COMMEMORATIVE COMMISSION

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
SERVICE WEEK 2025

VOLUNTEERS' MEETING

SAFETY COMMUNITY CENTER
615 MARTIN LUTHER KING AVE.
OCALA, FL 34475

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
DR. DWANETTE DILWORTH
(352) 207-6036 or DRDILWORTH@GMAIL.COM

MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025

@6PM

**CALLING ALL
VOLUNTEERS!**





Join Us!
for the

Alliance Monthly Meeting

Sponsored by Jenkins Auto Group

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Mary Sue Rich Community Center
at Reed Place,
1812 N.W. 21st Ave., Ocala, FL 34475

Agenda

MCCA Board Chair ~ Pam Michell

2025 Programming ~ Beth McCall

Your input into the programs for 2025 is important! Please plan to attend this meeting to help us determine programming that will be of value to your organization.

Round Table



Working in collaboration with



For uninsured and under-insured residents of Marion County

FREE DENTAL



TO BE SCHEDULED

GO TO www.freedomclinicusa.org

Sponsored by



**FOR
MARION COUNTY
RESIDENTS ONLY**

**HOWARD ACADEMY
COMMUNITY CENTER**



306 NW 7TH AVE. OCALA, FL 34475



MAKE PLANS TO SPEND A FEW HOURS WITH US



Howard Academy Community Center

SAVE THE DATE

*Annual
Black History
Awards Gala*

"A Night of Stars"

This formal gala is an annual event that acknowledges the accomplishments and contributions of individuals to the Ocala/Marion County, FL community. If you would like to nominate someone for the Black History Museum Archives, stop by our office for an application or use the link below to submit online. Proceeds from this event will go to Howard Academy Community Center to continue providing programs for the community.

Friday, February 28, 2025
6:30 in the evening

Venue: College of Central Florida Klein Center

For more information, please call (352) 671-4175



@Howard Academy



www.marionschools.net

For tickets or more information contact our office at (352) 671-4175.

MARION COUNTY DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING COMMEMORATIVE COMMISSION

MARY SUE RICH CENTER

at Reed Place

Martin
**LUTHER
KING JR**

YOUTH DAY 2025

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
1812 NW 21ST AVE OCALA, FL

**SATURDAY
18
JANUARY**

SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

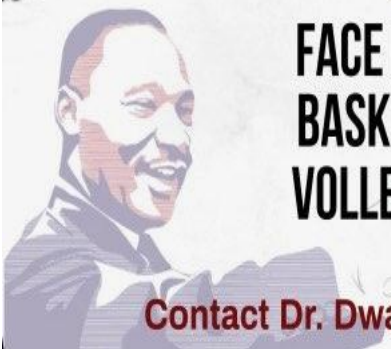
FACE PAINTING
BASKETBALL
VOLLEYBALL

BOW TIES & BELTS
ETIQUETTE
LINE DANCING

NUTRITION
FITNESS/EXERCISE
COLLEGE BOUND INFO

FREE FOOD-ARTS-CRAFTS

Contact Dr. Dwanette Dilworth for more information (352) 207-6036



Marion County Chapter
The Charmettes, Inc.



STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Community
Awareness EVENT**
11TH JAN.

WORLD DAY AGAINST
HUMAN TRAFFICKING

JOIN US!

11 AM TO 3 PM

☎ 305-282-4585

SCAN TO
REGISTER



**Guest Speakers!
Lunch!
Education & Fun!**

#IGIVEHOPE

505 NW Martin Luther King Jr Ave, Ocala, FL 34475

NAACP
5114 MARION
COUNTY BRANCH



JUBILEE

COMMEMORATING FREEDOM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2025

6:00PM

FIRST BETHEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
11840 N WILLIAMS STREET
DUNNELLON, FLORIDA 34432



REV. KEVIN W. THORPE

A MINISTERIAL SON OF THE HISTORIC MT. ARARAT BAPTIST CHURCH OF JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA. HE HAS SERVED AS THE SENIOR PASTOR OF FAITH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH OF GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA SINCE 1998.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR'S ANNUAL **FOOD** CARAVAN

JANUARY 11, 2025



IN CONJUNCTION WITH:
MARION COUNTY FAITH COMMUNITY,
MLK COMMITTEE, LOCAL GREEK ORGANIZATIONS

PLEASE LOAD YOUR CARS WITH
NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS TO DONATE TO OUR
LOCAL FOOD PANTRY

LINE UP WILL BEGIN AT
THE OCALA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
STARTING AT 9:00AM
1205 NW 4TH ST, OCALA, FL 34475

MONETARY DONATIONS ARE ACCEPTED.
PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO : INTERFAITH EMERGENCY SERVICES



Join us for our 2nd Annual

BENEFIT LUNCHEON

AND DESSERT AUCTION

Come see what ROH has accomplished
in 2024, and hear our vision for 2025.
As we “Impact Lives Together”!!

5066 Se 64th Ave Rd Ocala, Fl 34472

JANUARY 25, 2025
11:00 - 2:00

Ticket Includes:
lunch, desserts, giveaways, and prize drawing



Cost: \$15 or \$35 for all 3 workshops!

Self-care Reset Series

Led by Artist
Practitioner Loretta Bell

Vision Board Workshop

Ages 17 +

CREATED FOR WOMEN, BY WOMEN

Manifest your Dreams

Sunday, January 19, 2025

2 - 4 PM

Join us for an inspiring workshop to design your dream future! Craft a personalized vision board using images, words, and creativity to set your goals and bring them to life. This hands-on experience will guide you in visualizing aspirations, sparking motivation, and turning dreams into reality. Materials provided. Bring your imagination!

Register:

<https://aihocala.networkforgood.com/events/80400-manifest-your-dreams-vision-board-workshop>

WORKSHOP SERIES: #1 VISION BOARD, #2 AFFIRMATION
BRACELETS, & #3 CREATIVE WRITING

Visit aihocala.org for details.

Arts in Health Ocala Metro
2330 NE 8th Rd., Ocala, FL
34470

courage

FREEDOM

ARTS IN
HEALTH
OCALA METRO



Cost: \$15 or \$35 for all 3 workshops!

Self-care Reset Series

kindness

Led by Artist
Practitioner Becky
Hudson

Affirmation Bracelet

Workshop

Manifest your Dreams

Smile

CREATED FOR WOMEN, BY WOMEN

Ages 17 +

Sunday, February 23, 2025

2 - 4 PM

Join us for a fun and meaningful workshop where you'll create your own custom affirmation bracelet! Use beads, charms, and words of empowerment to design a piece that inspires positivity and self-love.

★ What to Expect:

- Guided bracelet-making in a supportive, creative space
- All materials provided
- A chance to reflect, connect, and express yourself



Leave with a beautiful reminder of your inner strength and the power of affirmations. Perfect for all skill levels!

Register: <https://aihocala.networkforgood.com/events/80402-manifest-your-dreams-affirmation-bracelets>



WORKSHOP SERIES: #1 VISION BOARD, #2 AFFIRMATION
BRACELETS, & #3 CREATIVE WRITING

Visit aihocala.org for details

Love

SHINE
dreamer

Arts in Health Ocala Metro
2330 NE 8th Rd., Ocala, FL
34470



Open Call to Artists



Levitt AMP Ocala Music Series Community Art Project Opportunity

Apply to design and paint two MCA awning panels during Levitt AMP concerts with community help. Apply online at www.ocalafl.gov/levittamp

Deadline: February 7, 2025



We're looking for artists to design and oversee a paint-by-numbers style community project for a new awning mural for Marion Cultural Alliance (MCA) at Brick City Center for the Arts during the 2025 Levitt AMP Ocala Music Series.

Five artists will be selected to design and paint two metal awning panels inspired by different genres of music.

This opportunity is open to artists currently working and residing in Marion County, and the surrounding counties. All designs will be approved before the start of the 2025 Levitt AMP Ocala Music Series to ensure artwork will be family-friendly, non-political, and without copy right infringement.

It's FREE to apply. Accepted artists or art groups will receive a \$800 honorarium at the conclusion of the concert series.

For more information and to apply, visit our website at www.ocalafl.gov/levittamp. Entries can be submitted online, via email to artinfo@ocalafl.gov, or mailed to City of Ocala Cultural Arts, 201 SE 3rd St., 2nd Floor, Ocala, FL 34471. Applications due February 7, 2025.

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January 11th, 2025

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

MARY SUE RICH COMMUNITY CENTER AT REED PLACE

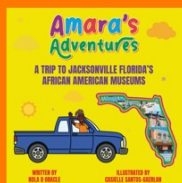
1821 NW 21st Ave, Ocala, FL 34475



www.dwhispersbooks.com



@dwhispersbooks



FREE 8-WEEK DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM

JANUARY 23RD, - 5:30PM - HOWARD ACADEMY COMMUNITY CENTER



Join our DEEP classes and learn valuable tools for managing diabetes and living your healthiest life!

Our FREE 8-week Diabetes Education Empowerment Program starts January 23, 2025

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Howard Academy Community Center

To register, call **(352) 671-4186** to save your spot

<https://mchdt.org/community-home-project/contact/>



Arts in Health Ocala Metro



Is Moving to a New Location

Come check out
our new space!

1.3 MILES DOWN
THE ROAD!



2330 NE 8th Rd.
Ocala, FL 34470

OPEN HOUSE

Friday, January 10, 2025

1 - 4 PM

Contact information
remains the same

Phone: 352-723-5444

Email: info@aihocala.org

Website: www.aihocala.org





PAW CHILI CHALLENGE & HUB-CAT CARSHOW

Celebrating Our Partners in Animal Welfare

January 11th 2025 - McPherson Complex in Ocala

FREE Public Admission - Doors OPEN at 11am

RAFFLES VENDORS GAMES MUSIC

Presented by Sheltering Hands, Inc



Now that the Christmas season has come and gone, it's time to start planning for the next big thing! Join us in celebrating our partners in animal welfare on January 11, 2025 beginning at 9 a.m. at the McPherson Government Campus located at 601 S.E. 25th Ave, Ocala, FL 34471. The Marion County Board of County Commissioners and Sheltering Hands, Inc. are working together to bring our wonderful community the "P.A.W. Chili Challenge & Hub-Cat Car Show".

This event is free to the public and open to all makes and models of automobiles for the car show. Trophies will be available for multiple categories ranging from classic, modern, engine, paint, interior, best theme, best in show, and people's choice. The competition will begin at 9 a.m., and its "towels down" for judging at 11 a.m. Winners will be declared, receiving their TROPHIES at 2:30 p.m.! If you want to compete, registration is \$20 per vehicle - with all proceeds going to support the fight for feline wellness in our community.

Furthermore, after you check out the car show you can win big at the raffles, or even get your face painted! Starting at noon, guests can start to taste the wonderful creations from our community chefs and fellow rescues. Guests will need a "tasting pass", available for purchase at the event for \$8. Attendees can also purchase a pass in advance from ShelteringHands.org/pawshow. To make sure that every participant can taste all the festive flavors, these tickets are limited in supply.

"Providing a better tomorrow for our animals in Marion County is our goal here at Sheltering Hands", indicated Bronson Mosley, Media Director for Sheltering Hands. "We are excited to partner with Marion County Animal Services and Marion County Fire Rescue to bring awareness to our animals in need." Moreover, Mr. Mosley, said, "Engaging our community is the key to helping our pets live extraordinary lives! We want to help our K-9's and feline friends by engaging with our community and bringing them fun, smiles, car show trophies, and of course, delicious chili made by some of the best cooks with the biggest hearts."

The goal is to increase public awareness surrounding animal welfare. Marion County and its partners take pride in making sure our animals are receiving the protection they deserve. This is a great way to start out the year with a family-friendly event that everyone can enjoy, while raising awareness for our furry-friends!

For more information about the P.A.W. Chili Challenge & Hub-Cat Car Show, please visit: ShelteringHands.org/pawshow. You can also find more information on the Marion County Facebook page at facebook.com/MarionCountyFlorida/events. We look forward to seeing you and your family there!

Truckin' It To Preschool

The Early Learning Coalition of Marion County is hosting their inaugural Truckin' It To Preschool event at the Silver Springs Shores Community Center on Saturday, February 1, 2025. The free event is from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. A quiet hour for children with sensory sensitivities will begin at 10 a.m.

Event attendees will learn about the many preschool options available in Marion County and can receive assistance with applying for VPK, Florida's free Voluntary Prekindergarten program for all 4-year-olds. Children will also be able to get up close and personal to their favorite trucks and emergency vehicles. A Help Me Grow Books, Balls, and Blocks activity area will encourage families to complete free developmental milestone screenings.

Vendor opportunities are available for preschool providers, nonprofit agencies and organizations interested in displaying their

trucks. Email CommunityRelations@ELC-Marion.org for more information.

Applications are due January 24: <https://form.jotform.com/243394940381158>

The Truckin' It To Preschool event caps off *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* which begins January 27. An initiative of the Florida Department of Education's Just Read, FL!, Celebrate Literacy Week is designed to raise awareness about the importance of reading and to inspire Florida's students and families to make reading part of their daily routines. This year's theme is "Building Literacy: Constructing the Foundation for Success." The first 200 children at Truckin' It To Preschool will receive a free children's book.

The Coalition works to meet the early care and education needs of children and families in Marion County. They implement the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK), School Readiness, and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) programs on behalf of the Florida Department of Education Division of Early Learning plus additional complimentary programs that support parents as a child's first and most important teacher. For more information, call (352) 369-2315 or visit ELC-Marion.org.

FREE PRESCHOOL PARENTING PROGRAM STARTING SOON

Does your preschooler have challenging behaviors such as whining, temper tantrums or struggles sleeping?

Join a FREE Preschool Parenting Program for families with children 3-5 years old starting January 13. Another session starts in August.

Receive a \$50 gift card when you attend at least 11 sessions.

Free child care and dinner are provided.
Registration is required.

For more information, call (352) 369-2315, ext. 212
or email ParentingPrograms@ELC-Marion.org.



Special Olympics!

January 19-Sunday, 8am-12pm-Area Coaches Training-If you plan on coming to any part of Special Olympics to volunteer(YES, we need A LOT of Volunteers!) Please, Please sign up ahead of time to be able to complete paperwork, online work and come to in person training- in accordance with Special Olympics. There will be an official background check, what it means to be a coach and of course how judges score in competition.

February 7-8-Area Games at Florida Horse Park. We will be taking most of our horses, saddles, bridles and a whole lot more. This will end up being an ALL WEEK event with set-up hosted by Stirrups 'n Strides! We will need LOTS of volunteers each and every day!

March 28-29-State Games at World Equestrian Center. Not as intense as the area games, but still requires a lot of work! We will need a lot of volunteers!

Look for sign ups or see Brandi!



Volunteer TO HELP OTHERS



Do you have a desire to be part of a group who is working together to make a difference in the lives of others?

Come experience the magical healing powers of the horse at Stirrups n Strides!

Classes days are:

Tuesday's, Wednesday's and Saturday's from 7:45am-12pm;

Tuesday 3pm-5pm

Leading, side walking, grooming, farm maintenance, fundraising, camps, horse shows, office help, interns and more.



No experience necessary, we will train you!



We could always use a maintenance, grounds keeper.



Come make a difference in someone's life #giveback

Please CALL/text Anita Gossett 352-817-6446 or Brandi Lashinski 352-286-2519.

**EMPOWER
ENRICH
INSPIRE**



352-286-2519



www.stirrupsnstrides.com



4246 W HWY 318, Citra, FL

FREE ZUMBA

MONDAY
JANUARY
13TH & 27TH
5:45P-6:45P

HOWARD ACADEMY
COMMUNITY CENTER

306 NW 7TH
AVE OCALA, FL

IN
PARTNERSHIP
WITH



Community Home Project
Healthy Options Made Easy

WITH
INSTRUCTOR

HEAVEN



2025 FUNDRAISING GALA

Benefitting Arts Programming & Music Education

February 13, 2025

6:00 PM | Reilly Arts Center

Black Tie Optional

***Join us for an elegant evening of
exceptional entertainment at the
Reilly Arts Center!***

Tickets \$150

Includes dinner and drinks

**Visit reillyartscenter.com/gala
for event details and tickets
or call 352-351-1606.**





Marion County Children's Alliance
3482 N.W. 10th St., Ocala, FL 34475
Ph: (352) 438-5990 Fax: (352) 438-5994



ALLIANCE WORKGROUP MEETINGS

January 8
Wednesday
Safe Streets of Marion County
10 a.m.
Mary Sue Rich Community Center
at Reed Place

January 8
Wednesday
Safe Kids Marion
9 a.m.
Florida Dept. of Health

January 13
Monday
Family Violence Prevention
Annual Workgroup Luncheon
11 a.m.
MLK First Responder's Campus
515 N.W. MLK Jr. Ave

January 20
Monday
Community Council Against
Substance Abuse (CCASA)
Noon
No Meeting this Month

For more information regarding the
Marion County Children's Alliance,
Follow us on Facebook, Instagram
or visit our website at:

<https://mcchildrensalliance.org>

UPCOMING ALLIANCE DATES

January 8
Wednesday
Alliance Monthly Meeting
11:30 a.m.
Mary Sue Rich Community
Center at Reed Place.

*Please
join us!*

**MCCA Board Chair
Pam Michell**

**2025 Programming
Beth McCall**

Your input into the programs
for 2025 is important!
Please plan to attend this
meeting to help us determine
programming that will be of
value to your organization.