



APRIL 2014

HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING 2013



THE 6TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING CELEBRATION WAS AN UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS THIS PAST DECEMBER, ATTRACTING AN ESTIMATED 600 CHILDREN AND ADULTS TO THE CYRUS GREENE COMMUNITY CENTER.

In addition to the formal tree lighting ceremony, the event featured the Orange Grove Showstoppers and Carolers, the Lomax Elementary Panther Chorus, the James Elementary Drum Line and Chorus as well as numerous guest speakers and elected officials. Jolly St. Nick, aka Santa Claus, also made a special guest appearance, much to the delight of the hundreds of children on hand.

The Master of Ceremonies was Bob Conigliaro, Vice President of Community Relations for the Caspers Company McDonald's Restaurants, one of the event's major sponsors.

For all the celebrations and attractions before and after the Tree Lighting, perhaps the most important aspect of the annual event, according to its organizer Denese Meteye-James, is that it "brings the community together in a fun and festive atmosphere during the holiday season."

Ms. Meteye-James feels that it's particularly important having the event for the kids, and estimates that children from every one of the 16 schools in the East Tampa CRA attended.

Since the Tree Lighting Celebration occurs in the middle of the school year, priority is given to replenishing school supplies for the attending children. Some 300 supply-filled backpacks were given out at this year's event. Baskets full of holiday foods were distributed to many of the adults as well.

Ms. Meteye-James is already looking forward to the 2014 Tree Lighting Celebration. "It gets bigger and better every year," she says proudly.

Small Business Development Center at Hillsborough County

Satellite Office Update

Small business education and opportunities continue to strengthen in East Tampa. Since 2010, the SBDC at Hillsborough County and the East Tampa Redevelopment Office have partnered to provide business technical assistance and outreach to East Tampa business owners. A business consultant is available at the East Tampa Redevelopment Office on Tuesdays and Thursdays and is also available to meet at the owner's place of business.

Topics include business plan creation, marketing, cash flow, enterprise zone incentives, minority business certification and small business registration and many more!

Lynn Schultz, Special Projects Coordinator, at the East Tampa SBIC satellite office, reported the following activities from October 2012 through September 2013:

- 540 points of assistance were provided to business owners.
- 28 businesses were started as a result of business technical

assistance provided based on surveys conducted.

- 68 new jobs were created and/or retained as a result of business technical assistance provided based on surveys conducted.

For additional information or to schedule a FREE business consultation, contact (813) 914-4028.

Community Redevelopment Area FACADE IMPROVEMENT Grant Program

THE CRA FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROVIDES PROPERTY OWNERS WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (GRANT) TO IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF THEIR PROPERTIES IN DESIGNATED AREAS OF TAMPA'S COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA (CRAs).

"the grant saved me"



1023 E. COLUMBUS DRIVE

When Deborah Ramos, in her own words, "jumped in head first" and bought the abandoned former gas station at 1023 Columbus Drive, she soon found herself in deeper water than she'd anticipated.

Even doing much of the interior renovation work herself, Ramos quickly discovered she was way over-budget. It was panic time. Then the young interior designer discovered the City of Tampa's Façade Improvement Grant Program. "The grant saved me," Ramos freely admits.

With the help of the Façade Grant Ramos was able to complete the renovation of the building's outside. Additionally, she finished the restoration of the upstairs, which serves as her beautiful, loft-like living space. Now comes completion of the roomy downstairs, which Ramos

plans on dividing up into "creative studio spaces" tailored to serve the needs of architects, graphic designers and the like. A coffee shop may be in the works as well. Ramos hopes to begin leasing space as soon as this summer.

Ramos's renovation of a dilapidated gas station makes for a wonderful, forward-looking addition to what she already describes as "a great neighborhood."



BEFORE

"the opportunity for
our firm to excel."



1708 E. COLUMBUS DRIVE

Design Styles Architecture +

Jason Dickens mentions several factors when he talks about his decision to move his architectural firm from Clearwater to 1708 E. Columbus Drive in East Tampa:

- The available land – Jason's firm needed both a larger office space and lots of parking
- The uniqueness of the building, the historic former Paolo Spoto grocery store built in 1930
- Price & availability
- Location – just north of I-4 and just east of I-275 – "We do lots of business in Orlando as well as Pinellas County, and it makes travel easy."
- And most importantly, as Jason puts it, "the opportunity for our firm to excel."

Demolition of the abandoned building began in September 2011, while construction commenced in August 2012. Jason and his staff moved into their beautiful new two-story digs in April 2013. Jason says the experience has been "amazing" and cites the benefits of being able to integrate his business into a community.

"It's something you just can't do in a business park," Jason explains.

The evolution of the Design Styles building, from demo to occupancy, can be viewed at: <http://youtu.be/MPyTB4Rxz7s>

BEFORE



Enterprise Zone ▽ Did you know East Tampa is an Enterprise Zone?

An Enterprise Zone is a state-designated geographical area targeted for economic revitalization. Tax incentives are offered to businesses and people in the zone to encourage economic development and investment.

New and existing businesses, or any property owner who builds new or renovates, and is in the zone boundaries, may qualify for various incentives such as job tax credits, business equipment sales tax refund, property tax credit, building materials sales tax refund, and more.

**Find out more by contacting the
Enterprise Zone Coordinators:**

Ed Johnson - (813) 242-3806
Ed.Johnson@tampagov.net

Lynn Schultz - (813) 914-4008
schultzl@hillsboroughcounty.org

EAST HILLSBOROUGH AVENUE NEW DEVELOPMENTS

YUMMY HOUSE / COUNTRY PUMPKIN CAFÉ (SECOND WAVE)

It all started here. What has come to be known as the “Second Wave” of East Hillsborough Avenue redevelopment began with the arrival of Yummy House, a world-class Chinese restaurant, and the adjacent Country Pumpkin Café, which has proved so popular with area residents. In addition to the great food and drink, the friendly atmosphere and the central location, the restaurants’ architecture and landscaping have enhanced the neighborhood immeasurably.



BURGER KING - 2601 E. HILLSBOROUGH

Who says a fast-food restaurant can't enhance the appearance of a neighborhood? As part of Burger King's nationwide "facelift" program to upgrade and modernize many of its restaurants, the Burger King at 2601 East Hillsborough Avenue has recently undergone a from-the-ground-up renovation. In addition to enticing diners and growing its business, the restaurant's clean, modern, colorful new look integrates well with the people-friendly architecture and landscaping of the adjacent Eastgate Shopping Center.



2115 E. HILLSBOROUGH

This former Blockbuster at 2115 E. Hillsborough Avenue, which has sat vacant for over five years, is currently undergoing renovation and will soon offer multiple units of retail office space to area business people. The handsome building sits next to the recently renovated Walgreens on the corner of E. Hillsborough and 22nd Street, and will share the latter's attractive landscaping. 2115 E. Hillsborough Ave. will be yet another vital addition to the renovation and revitalization of East Tampa's Hillsborough Avenue business corridor.



3016 E. HILLSBOROUGH

This 10,000 square foot concrete block building, zoned for retail occupancy, replaces what used to be a vacant lot. Owner Ron Harjani expects the building to be ready sometime in May 2014 for its first tenant, a women's clothing store, with other tenants soon to follow. Transforming an eyesore into a potentially lucrative retail center is yet another example of how incoming businesses can positively affect the E. Hillsborough Avenue corridor.

EAST TAMPA COMMUNITY UPDATE

IT WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT TO SAY THAT THE REVEREND ESSIE SIMS HAS HIS FINGER ON THE PULSE OF THE EAST TAMPA COMMUNITY. AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE CRA'S COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, ESSIE'S AREAS OF ADVOCACY RANGE FROM SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR THE MOTHERS OF NEWBORNS TO PROGRAMS FOR THE ELDERLY.

And through the East Tampa Small Business Symposium, Essie and others on the Advisory Committee are working hard to encourage entrepreneurial economic development throughout the community.

But if Essie has one area of focus above all others it's the kids. The community's future.

Essie cites a sobering statistic: out of every 1,000 black males, 700 will drop out before they finish high school. This is not just a call for action. It's a crisis.

What are the solutions? It begins with the parents, and with the Wonder Years Developmental Club which provides guidance for mothers of young

children. It continues with early-stage tutoring through reading programs intended to ensure literacy by the time students graduate from the third grade.

And then there is the Midnight Basketball program Essie made a priority to revive when

he took over a leadership role two years ago. Held at the NFL YET Center in Jackson Heights, the program is intended to provide young people in the neighborhood with a healthy alternative to the violence and drugs found on the streets.

How have programs like Midnight Basketball helped the community at large and in particular the kids involved in them? Essie says it has provided "a sense of hope" and "changed the dynamics of a lot of kids' lives." And it's proven to have reduced neighborhood crime.

For Essie the way to a better community is through the hearts and minds of its children. "It's a journey," the community leader says.

BOB BUCKHORN MAYOR

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Essie Sims, Jr. Chairperson
Richedean Hills-Ackbar Vice Chairperson

Curtis Brown	Richard Muhammad
Ernest Coney, Jr.	Karen Peoples
Kim Headland	Thad Smith
Carrol Josephs-Marshall	Darrell Starling
Deborah Lawson	Jeraldine Williams-Shaw
Denese Meteye-James	

Meeting Location: Economic Development Office
TPD III, 3808 N. 22nd Street, Tampa

Time: 9:30 a.m.
Dates: April 1, May 6, June 3, July 1

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA) BOARD

Frank Reddick.....District 5 Chairperson
Mike Suarez.....District 1 Vice Chairperson
Yvonne Yolie CapinDistrict 3 At-Large
Harry CohenDistrict 4
Charlie MirandaDistrict 6
Lisa J. Montelione.....District 7
Mary MulhernDistrict 2 At-Large

Meeting Location: 315 E. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa

Time: 9 a.m.
Dates: April 10, May 8, June 12, July 24



EAST TAMPA REDEVELOPMENT NEWS

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(813) 242-3807

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YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION

Sixteen neighborhood associations in East Tampa are actively working to ensure a safe and vibrant community. Contact your neighborhood leader and get involved today. For more information, contact the neighborhood president directly by email.

COLLEGE HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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EAST TAMPA BUSINESS & CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Dianne Hart • dhartconsulting@yahoo.com

EASTERN HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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NORTHVIEW HILLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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