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Lake City



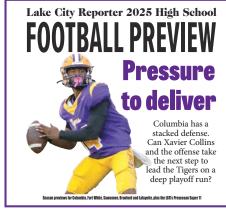
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Live Oak Reporter **INSIDE TODAY'S EDITION**



2025 FOOTBALL PREVIEW IN TODAY'S EDITION!

Teen's murder trial starts Monday

Burch is first of 3 in Mariah Smith shooting to be tried.

Staff report

One of the three Lake City teens charged with murdering a 12-year-old girl two years ago will go on trial, starting Monday.



Jury selecbegins tion Monday 8:30 a.m. at the Columbia County Courthouse for the Jayden

Burch trial. Circuit Court Judge Leandra Johnson will preside over the trial.

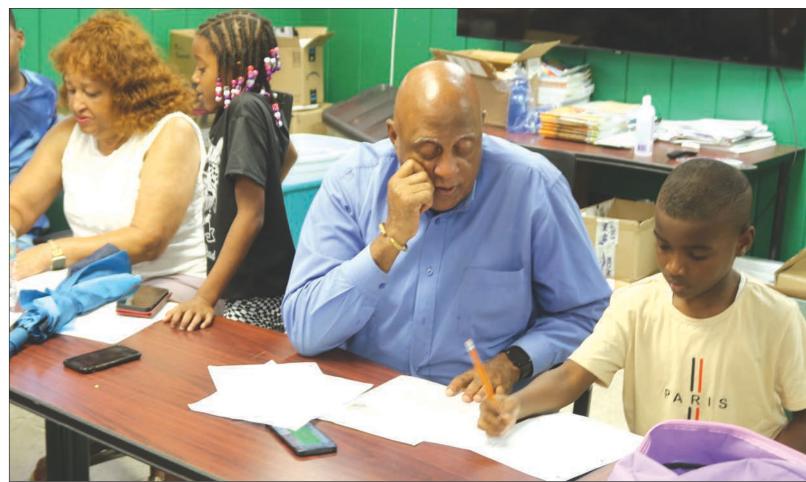
Burch, 17, is charged with second degree murder as well as two counts of attempted second degree murder.

The cases involving the other two teens arrested in connection with the August 2023 shooting death of 12-year-old Mariah Smith, 18-year-old Matthew Rice and 16-year-old Jatarious Fluellen II, are not yet ready for trial.

Rice was a "backup" case for trial behind Burch, according to court documents. His trial has been continued since the Burch

TRIAL continued on 7A

Works well with kids



TONY BRITT/Lake City Reporter

Narrie Smith, (far left) a volunteer at NorthStar Family Resource Center, and Philip Mobley, the facility's manager, help local students on Tuesday afternoon during a homework help program.

NorthStar recognized for youth programs based on 5-year study.

By TONY BRITT tbritt@lakecityreporter.com

A local family resource cen-

ter providing several services to community residents was recently recognized for its effectiveness for having a positive impact on five years of service.

Last month, NorthStar Family Resource Center, 255 NE Coach Anders Lane, was cited by the

Partnership for Strong Families, for its effectiveness for dramatic reductions in child welfare involvement for families engaged with family resource centers, based on a five-year in-depth study by the agency.

Partnership for Strong Families is the lead community-based care agency for Florida Judicial Circuits Three and Eight, including Columbia County.

Partnership for Strong the community during its first Families is contracted by the Florida Department of Children and Families to deliver comprehensive child welfare services to children who are victims of

abuse and neglect. Partnership for Strong Families also works with at-risk families to prevent child abuse and to decrease the risk of children entering the foster care system. Partnership for Strong Families serves more than 5,000 children in thirteen counties annually.

Other findings in the study showed out-of-home placement reductions were at 98.6%, with only removal occurring after family resource center engagement, compared to 20 patrons with 51 children involved in removals prior to engagement.

In addition, alleged maltreat-

ments investigated were reduced by 65%, from 7.78 allegations per patron to 2.74 post-engagement and screened-in hotline calls were reduced by 64%, from 2.18 calls per patron to .78 calls per patron post-engagement.

Philip Mobley, North Star Family Resource Center manager, said he was pleased to learn about the evaluations findings.

"I'm very pleased to hear those results," he said. "The folks that have been keep track of the numbers from Day 1, have continued to see the progress. It's a lot of

HELP continued on 6A



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TODAY'S WEATHER

A few showers, 2A

Opinion 4A Obituaries 6A Advice & Comics 5B Classifieds 6B-7B

HELP

Continued From 1A

work, but when we know that we're helping families, one family at a time, one child at a time, it's actually fulfillment of what I like doing."

NorthStar Family Resource Center originally opened March, 2021. Mobley said he and staff members anticipated reaching their goals within five years, because the Lake City facility was patterned after four other successful family resource centers.

"Our Family Resource Centers are founded on the principle that strong families are not meant to stand alone," said Pebbles Edelman, Chief of Clinical and Community Services for Partnership for Strong Families in a prepared statement. "They need hope and can thrive when they have access to meaningful connections, community resources and consistent

County.

Mobley said what made NorthStar Family Resource Center different from other family resource centers is that they were able to survey the community and specifically address areas where families sought help, to develop programing around the needs of the community.

"That means we're constantly changing," he said. "As the community needs changes, we have to change to be able to help the community. But, we know the foundation of everything that we do is helping children and helping families. These resource centers are really prevention models for Partnership for Strong Families and Department of Children and Families to keep children out of state custody."

Family NorthStar Resource Center provides an array of free services ranging from allowing computer, fax and public notary services as well providing clothing giveaways, OB-GYN services for women on select days of the month, food giveaways, homework help programs and family counseling services.

"The main thing is just being that resource,"

Mobley said. "We have people that are considered homeless, off homeless, people that are financially distressed and if we can help them financially, we will get the help or work with one of our 40 partners that we have in the community to be able to find other resources that they need. We try not to let any leave without trying to make sure we have helped them or connected them with someone that can help them."

NorthStar Family Resource Center serves approximately 2,000 people annually and its service numbers are expected to increase in the near future. NorthStar serves residents of Columbia and surrounding counties. The center is staffed by a Partnership for Strong Families Center manager and aided by several volunteers. NorthStar provides an array of free services and resources.

Mobley the Children's Bureau grant the agency received five years ago when it started was a fiveyear grant that has expired and now the agency is being funded through opioid Abatement dollars and now the agency offers more services in helping people



Narrie Smith, a retired Columbia County School District educator, helps children with their homework while they are at the NorthStar Family Resource Center on Tuesday afternoon. NorthStar Family Resource Center provides an array of free services ranging from allowing computer, fax and public notary services as well providing clothing give-aways, OB-GYN services for women on select days of the month, food giveaways, homework help programs and family counseling services.

with opioid addictions.

He said he feels its important that NorthStar Family Resource Center continues to provide services for local residents, noting that when he was young man, there were people in the community that

continued to support and encourage him throughout his life.

"I think it's important for us to be able to figure out ways to help children and help families and realize that people fall upon some hard times," Mobley

said. "So where can they fall. We want to be able to be that. When we choose the name NorthStar, we wanted to be the NorthStar, that light that when nobody else knows where to come, they'll be able to come to NorthStar."

OBITUARIES

.Jones Tawanna Nicole Jackson-Jones

was born in Fort Hood, Texas on November 3, 1979, to Jimmy and

Karen Jackson. Tawanna attended school

in Suwanee County graduating from Suwannee High School in 1998. She continued her education Collins, godson, Quin Wilkinson; Sanderson, at Lake City Community College earning an associate degree.

Tawanna attended Ebenezer AME Church, later joining Mt. Darryl Reed, Solomon Bell, Jr.; PAM Specialty Moriah AME Church, Padlock sisters-in-law, Salome Bell, Alexis Health in Jacksonville, Florida. Community. She married Jamichael Callaway; special cousins, Monica D. Jones, Sr., on July 11, 2015.

decided to bring His precious angel Hicks, Kimberly Wilkison, home to rest. She is preceded in Michelle Fleming, Tiffany Smith death by grandparents, Matthew (Tracy); best friends, Shameka and and Bessie Jackson, Gladys Hicks, Henry Howard, Shauntae and John Buster Lee Allen, and aunt, Angela Cherry, Stephanie Butler, Shelly Williams.

Tawanna leaves cherished mem- es, nephews, other relatives and ories in the hearts of a devoted friends. husband, Jamichael Jones, Sr. sons, Jimmy and Karen Jackson; brother, FL. Matthew (Toi /Ian), Tallahassee,

Tawanna Nicole Jackson- FL; mother and father-in-law, Rosa the service (10:00 - 11:00 a.m.) on and Solomon Bell; special aunts, Jannie Hicks, St. Petersburg, FL, Earnestine Riley (Peggy), Lorraine Williams (Bobby), Sheila Bates, Regina Ford; uncles, Donnie Allen, Johnnie Allen, Rufus Allen, Harold Williams (Ann) Allison Ivey; special nieces, Amariah and Kylie Jackson, St. Petersburg, FL, Chivon and Quin Means, Quin, Jr.; goddaughters, Kenyia Patterson, Kiari god-grandson, Kaiden Benjamin; Florida passed godbrother and sister, Andre and Monique Davis; brothers-in-law, Hicks, Chanise Cameron, Crystal On August 6, 2025, the Lord Hicks, LaQuenda Fuller, Lashunda Watson (Matt); hosts of niec-

A Celebration of Tawanna's life Ta'Davius Freeland and Amare will be 11:00 a.m. Saturday, August Ferrell; stepchildren, JaMichael, 23, 2025, at New Ebenezer AME JaDayce, and Ja'Nya Jones; parents, Church, 411 Parshley St, Live Oak,

Viewing will be 1 hour prior to

COMBS FUNERAL HOME, 292 NE Washington St., Lake Frances Garrett, Phyllis Postell, City, FL (386) 752-4366, Marq Combs Turner L.F.D. "The Caring Professionals."

Alvin "Albo" Williams

A l v i n Williams "Albo" 71, of away on August 9, 2025, at

1954, to Reatha Mae Williams Mikea, Imani, Arrangements entrusted to and Lee Miles Williams. Both parents precede him in death.

> Alvin was a life-long resident of Baker County, retiring after 30 years of service as Supervisor of the groundskeeper department with Northeast Florida State Hospital. He loved his family and friends and was an avid fan of the Jacksonville Jaguars.

and to that union, three children were born with whom he leaves to cherish his loving memories, Felita Blue, Shameka Williams, both of Sanderson, FL, Damien Williams (Tati), Ocala, FL; friends.

Alvin was born on May 8, grandchildren, Moses (Keyonna), Mikeria, Izabella, Carson, Keyara, and Highway 90, Sanderson, FL. Rhaki; sisters, Jerine Coleman, Donna Williams, Jacqueline Williams, Irish Williams; brothers, Nathaniel Williams (Judy), Fredrick Williams, Rev. Eugene Williams (Nonani), Ivory Mary Wilson, Jacksonville, FL, Caring Professionals." Doris Williams, Sanderson, FL; uncle, Allen Smith, Jacksonville, FL; hosts of nieces, nephews, ments. For details, call the Lake other relatives, classmates, and City Reporter's classified depart-

Funeral services for Mr. Alvin Williams will be 3:00 p.m. Reyuanna, Joslynn, and Amari; Saturday, August 23, 2025, at great-grandchildren, Breonna, Faith Bible Church, 15902 US

> Visitation will be from 5:00 7:00 p.m. Friday, August 22, 2025, at Faith Bible Church.

Arrangements entrusted to COMBS FUNERAL HOME, 292 NE Washington St., Lake Williams (Shawna); great-aunt, City, FL (386) 752-4366, Marq He was married to Nancy Blue Hattie Smith, Komo, IN; aunts, Combs Turner, L.F.D. "The

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encouragement." Mobley said the funding the agency received from the Children's Bureau was to be able to mimic the successes from other facilities and bring to Columbia

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