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# Lake City Reporter



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INSIDE TODAY'S EDITION

## Lake City Reporter 2025 High School FOOTBALL PREVIEW



Pressure  
to deliver

Columbia has a stacked defense. Can Xavier Collins and the offense take the next step to lead the Tigers on a deep playoff run?

Season preview for Columbia, Fort White, Seawater, Bradford and Lakemont, plus the LCR's Preseason Super 11

## 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 selection begins Monday at 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 center providing several services to community residents was recently recognized for its effectiveness for having a positive impact on the community during its first 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 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

93 72

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 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 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."

NorthStar Family 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 five-year 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



TONY BRITT/Lake City Reporter

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

## Tawanna Nicole Jackson-Jones

Tawanna Nicole Jackson-Jones was born in Fort Hood, Texas on November 3, 1979, to Jimmy and Karen Jackson. T a w a n n a attended school in Suwanee County graduating from Suwanee High School in 1998. She continued her education at Lake City Community College earning an associate degree.



Tawanna attended Ebenezer AME Church, later joining Mt. Moriah AME Church, Padlock Community. She married Jamichael D. Jones, Sr., on July 11, 2015.

On August 6, 2025, the Lord decided to bring His precious angel home to rest. She is preceded in death by grandparents, Matthew and Bessie Jackson, Gladys Hicks, Buster Lee Allen, and aunt, Angela Williams.

Tawanna leaves cherished memories in the hearts of a devoted husband, Jamichael Jones, Sr; sons, Ta'Davius Freeland and Amare Ferrell; stepchildren, JaMichael, JaDayce, and Ja'Nya Jones; parents, Jimmy and Karen Jackson; brother, Matthew (Toi /Ian), Tallahassee,

FL; mother and father-in-law, Rosa and Solomon Bell; special aunts, Jannie Hicks, St. Petersburg, FL, Earnestine Riley (Peggy), Lorraine Williams (Bobby), Sheila Bates, Frances Garrett, Phyllis Postell, 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.; god-daughters, Kenya Patterson, Kiari Collins, godson, Quin Wilkinson; god-grandson, Kaiden Benjamin; godbrother and sister, Andre and Monique Davis; brothers-in-law, Darryl Reed, Solomon Bell, Jr.; sisters-in-law, Salome Bell, Alexis Callaway; special cousins, Monica Hicks, Chanise Cameron, Crystal Hicks, LaQuenda Fuller, Lashunda Hicks, Kimberly Wilkison, Michelle Fleming, Tiffany Smith (Tracy); best friends, Shameka and Henry Howard, Shauntae and John Cherry, Stephanie Butler, Shelly Watson (Matt); hosts of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

A Celebration of Tawanna's life will be 11:00 a.m. Saturday, August 23, 2025, at New Ebenezer AME Church, 411 Parshley St, Live Oak, FL.

Viewing will be 1 hour prior to

the service (10:00 - 11:00 a.m.) on Saturday.

Arrangements entrusted to **COMBS FUNERAL HOME**, 292 NE Washington St., Lake City, FL (386) 752-4366, Marq Combs Turner L.F.D. "The Caring Professionals."

## Alvin "Albo" Williams

A l v i n W i l l i a m s "Albo" 71, of S a n d e r s o n , Florida passed away on August 9, 2025, at PAM Specialty Health in Jacksonville, Florida.



Alvin was born on May 8, 1954, to Reatha Mae Williams 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.

He was married to Nancy Blue 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;

grandchildren, Moses (Keyonna), Mikea, Imani, Mikeria, Reyuanna, Joslynn, and Amari; great-grandchildren, Breonna, Izabella, Carson, Keyara, and Rhaki; sisters, Jerine Coleman, Donna Williams, Jacqueline Williams, Irish Williams; brothers, Nathaniel Williams (Judy), Fredrick Williams, Rev. Eugene Williams (Nonani), Ivory Williams (Shawna); great-aunt, Hattie Smith, Komo, IN; aunts, Mary Wilson, Jacksonville, FL, Doris Williams, Sanderson, FL; uncle, Allen Smith, Jacksonville, FL; hosts of nieces, nephews, other relatives, classmates, and friends.

Funeral services for Mr. Alvin Williams will be 3:00 p.m. Saturday, August 23, 2025, at Faith Bible Church, 15902 US Highway 90, Sanderson, FL.

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 City, FL (386) 752-4366, Marq Combs Turner, L.F.D. "The Caring Professionals."

*Obituaries are paid advertisements. For details, call the Lake City Reporter's classified department at 752-1293.*



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