

# NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

*Talented Neighbors & Good Things Happening*

*in North Port and Newtown*

## “How are you doin’?”

### **Neighborhood Gatherings**

**La France Ave., North Port**

North Port Residents Don Vande Krol and his wife Terry hold weekly neighborhood gatherings at their house. **On Tuesday nights, neighbors join one another in the Vande Krols’ living room and answer the question: “How are you doin’?”** When that question is asked in a genuine way, the answers can be both profound and illuminating. The neighbors can share with the group anything from a bad day at work to a personal insight learned after the last meeting, news of someone who needs a job or is hiring.

Besides being a way for neighbors to make meaningful connections with each other, the gatherings are also an opportunity for neighbors to do fun things together in the community. The La France Area neighborhood gathering is planning an **all-day picnic at the**



**Myakkahatchee Environmental Park on Sunday, March 21, 2010. The picnic is open to anyone in North Port who is interested in coming.** Food and/or donations are welcome also.

**The Vande Krols are also very interested in helping other people in North Port start their own neighbors’ gatherings.** If anybody is interested in starting a neighbors gathering of their own or wants to know more information on the picnic and other upcoming events, visit <http://www.neighborsgathering.com/>.



## **Seventh Day Adventist Church**

**Welcomes You** to its Annual

### **Easter Concert**

**April 3, 11 am**

43330 South Biscayne Drive,  
North Port, FL, 34287



**North Port Seventh Day Adventist Church invites the community to attend its Easter Concert.** The Concert, along with the Christmas Cantata, are among the highlights of the year for the choir and church. Bring your friends & neighbors! Contact: Charles Stoddart, (941) 426-5708

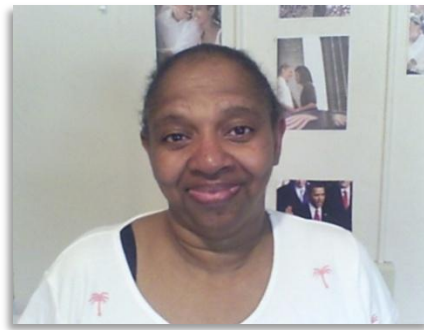
# Doing Together: A Connection Story

Newtown

**“What can we do together that we can’t do alone?”**

This is a powerful question that can open the way for new and valuable partnerships between neighbors, helping them reach their goals, make a bigger difference in the community, or just make life easier and more enjoyable. Asking and answering this question helps re-weave the fabric of our neighborhoods to make them strong. **This is the story of two neighbors who discovered the power of connection around their shared passion for helping others.**

Jackie Green is resident leader with the Orange Court Bertha Mitchell (OCB) resident’s office. (see below for full story) Started in 2008, OCB has a weekly food bank visited by about 80 residents each week and a clothes closet. They also plan to re-start a previously successful peer-to-peer women’s group and will begin holding a weekly fun day for kids 3-6 years old.



Jackie Green

Bishop Stanford Perkins & his wife, Theresa



Bishop Stanford Perkins is the minister of Trinity Multicultural Church. In addition to the Church’s work to connect the skills of Newtown residents with employment opportunities, Bishop Perkins also cares about getting food to people who need it.

When Jackie and Bishop Perkins met each other through Mary Butler of the SCOPE Neighborhood Team, they found a way they could help one another do their community work better and formed a partnership around OCB’s weekly food bank. Now, Jackie runs her food bank as part of Bishop Perkins’ Church Food Ministry and Bishop Perkins will host a food fundraiser to benefit Jackie’s Food Bank.

For more information:

**Jackie Green, Orange Court/Bertha Mitchell Resident’s Office, (941)951-6999**

**Bishop Stanford Perkins, Trinity Multicultural Church, (941) 504 7976**

## Fish Fry

*to benefit*

**Orange Court/Bertha Mitchell Food Pantry**

*Sponsored by Trinity Multicultural Church*

*Serving*

**Basa sandwiches  
with sides**

**Mon thru Weds  
9am–4pm**

1731 E. Gore Court  
Sarasota, FL 34234



## Jackie Green: *Caring Neighbor, Gifted Poet*

*Orange Courts/Bertha Mitchell Neighborhood,  
Newtown*

Jackie Green is a passionate and gifted Newtown Resident who has been working for years to improve her neighborhood in the Orange Court Bertha Mitchell (OCB) housing complex. Today, she says, OCB is looking better, but not too long ago Jackie remembers when she was not able to provide OCB residents with the Food Pantry or even the Clothes Closet.

Especially when the economy started to change, residents were losing their jobs, and there was no food, no rent money, and no hope in sight. But that did not stop Jackie. She continued to work with the residents until they could see hope in sight. “Getting an eviction notice with three small kids to feed and take care of only makes you want to cry,” she said. “I stayed up many nights on the phone, brain-storming how to help the residents, **when I knew the mother personally and know she goes to work every day, takes good care of her kids and is a good person, that’s when I went to bat and gave it all I got for these residents.**”

As word got around about what she was doing, slowly Jackie began to get food donations. Bishop Perkins of Trinity Multicultural Church was pleased to know she has such a big heart and lent a helping hand. Since then others have joined in on her mission to feed, clothe and support the residents of OCB. When asked what she would like to share with everyone, Jackie said, “A poem.” (see panel)

## I’m not here by Mistake

*Jackie Green*

*I am sitting here looking out the window,  
what is my purpose,  
I’m not here by mistake  
Asking which way am I to go,  
I’m not here by mistake  
Finding the path has been my struggle  
I’m not here by mistake*

*I looked outside my window  
only to look out again  
seeing my path I must go,  
I’m not here by mistake  
I have not asked anymore  
which way I must go,  
I’m not here by mistake  
Believing in myself has been my battle,  
I’m not here by mistake  
Showing who,  
I’m not here by mistake  
Feeling myself  
I’m not here by mistake  
With God and your help I know  
I’m not here by mistake*



Shane

## Talented Teens Produce Music

*North Port*

When you speak to almost any young person in North Port, a primary concern that comes from the conversation would be the lack of things to do and places of connection for youth.

**Marcus Christopher and his brother Shane are two teens who have found a way to change this situation using their talents and a shared passion for music.**

Marcus



Marcus, 17 goes to North Port High School and his brother Shane goes to Heron Creek Middle School. Both of these brothers enjoy southern style rap music and other sub-genres of hip-hop. Yet they do more than just listen to their favorite music—they also make their own. **In collaboration with a schoolmate who lives down the road from them, Marcus and Shane record musical tracks in a home-based studio that they created themselves and share.** They both ‘free-style’ and perform written lyrics.



**In collaboration with a schoolmate who lives down the road from them, Marcus and Shane record musical tracks in a home-based studio that they created themselves and share.** They both ‘free-style’ and perform written lyrics.

In addition to their musical and innovative production skills, Marcus and Shane are talented at cutting hair and are interested in becoming professional barbers. Marcus is also considering nursing, as his mother, grandmother, and aunt are all nurses.

Marcus and Shane both aspire to make North Port a place that is friendlier to young people. Whether they realize it or not, they are already doing just that.

## James Palk: *Mechanic Making a Difference*

### Newtown

James Palk is a community member skilled in car repair who spends his days helping residents of Newtown. He repairs resident’s cars who can’t afford to take their car to a regular auto shop. He rescues residents when their cars have stopped on the side of the road, when they have a flat tire, when they need a jump—you name it—and he will try and help out. **“Even if the person cannot pay, I will still help them,”** James says. James cares about helping others because he knows what it’s like to be down and out, wanting to do better but can’t—**“so if changing a person’s tire helps them get to work and keep their job and I can help I will.”** James also does a ministry with prisoners through Fellowship of Believers, an interdenominational church located on 12<sup>th</sup> St. My wife and the church keeps me grounded,” says James, “and that’s all that I need.”

(Fellowship of Believers: [www.fob.info](http://www.fob.info))

## Local Business: **Abbe’s Donuts**

North Port



Abbe’s Donuts in North Port is touted as a place that has the best donuts in the area and with good reason. Every day, donuts are baked on premises and served to loyal customers. But it’s not just the donuts that make it special. **Abbe’s is a place where North Port residents connect and share stories and news.**

Abbe’s also donates their day-old donuts to some of the local non-profits in town.

### Visit:

**13625 Tamiami Trl.  
North Port, FL  
(941) 426-5758**



In Memory of...

## Lilly Mae Langston

**Poet, Mother, Life-long Learner**

Oct. 30, 1940 – Feb. 27, 2010

*I met Lilly in late 2009 over fish and grits at New Bethel Church. Our short encounter reminded me to stay curious about every person I meet and never to assume that I know what's behind any face, age or expression. It encouraged me to keep asking questions of both strangers and friends that will reveal what makes someone remarkable: "What are your gifts? What interests do you have? What is your dream?" I am grateful to Lilly for this lesson and to her two sons for sharing her life story. ~April Doner*

Described by her son Adrian as "a loving woman," Lilly Mae Langston lived a life of constant striving and contribution.

A native of Newtown, Lilly attended Booker High School. She was a licensed nail technician, and worked over 15 years in the healthcare field as a nursing assistant and home health aide. She earned an Associate of Arts Degree from State College of Florida in 2009.

Lilly never stopped striving to learn and accomplish. At the age of 70, Lilly continued to pursue her passion for education and self-development by earning her Bachelor's Degree



at USF, with plans to pursue a Master's Degree. Her son Adrian notes, "She really thought education was a priority in

life to be successful." Lilly loved tutoring children and her dream was to work as an after-school tutor for individual children or small groups.



Lilly was a gifted poet who enjoyed reading and discussing poetry with others. She especially enjoyed classical poetry because it was a challenge to understand.

Lilly's two sons Terry and Adrian have both used their mother's example to keep learning, creating, and caring for others. Terry says, "She was a strong woman. She fought to the very end. I'm proud of her—she was in her 60's and still earning her degree. [Even when she was sick] she was still going to school. I'm proud of her because if my mom can get a degree at her age, I can get a degree!"

Terry is gifted in comedy and communication and cares about ending drug problems and violence. His dream is to use his skills and experience to help kids struggling with drugs. Adrian, an ordained minister, inherited Lilly's passion for education and works in Technical Education in Tampa. He is also developing a mentoring program for young men. Of his career and project, Adrian says, "[My mother] helped push me to do it."

Lilly also enjoyed gardening and was a gifted cook. Her sons shared that she also loved little figurines, angels, stuffed animals—and, Terry added, "she loved lipstick."



**“Citizens are...the producers of democracy. And strong local communities are created when citizens are also the producers of the future. They cannot be replaced.”**

*- John McKnight,  
[ABCD Institute](#)*



These stories have been shared by neighbors with SCOPE’s Neighborhood Team.

Through our Neighborhoods Initiative, SCOPE works with residents in Sarasota County neighborhoods to discover and activate community assets toward strengthening community, economy, and improving the quality of life for all residents.

*To learn more, contact us  
at (941) 365-8751 or  
[adoner@scopexcel.org](mailto:adoner@scopexcel.org)*



**Mary Butler**



**Jenn-Marie  
Grant**



**April Doner**



*“Connecting and Inspiring citizens to create a better community”*

[www.scopexcel.org](http://www.scopexcel.org)