

Community **F.I.R.S.T.** Initiative

Facilitative **I**nnovative **R**estorative **S**upportive **T**imely

Newsletter

City of
Gainesville

Issue 01 / Spring/Summer 2025

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About Community F.I.R.S.T.

Community First is a community driven initiative to uplift and strengthen neighborhoods throughout Gainesville, with special emphasis on SugarHill, University Park, Greater Duval, Pine Ridge, 5th Ave – Pleasant Street, Porter’s and Phoenix community.

Initiative Goals:

- Enhance access to services.
- Foster trust and collaboration among neighbors, community leaders, and local agencies.
- Invest in improving overall quality of life.
- Proactively plan for the evolving needs of the community.
- Provide support for impactful community programs.
- Encourage resident driven solutions that directly respond to community identified needs.

Community First - Action Items List

Neighborhood Improvements

Neighborhood	Inquiry/Request	Department	Status
SugarHill	Retention Pond Overgrowth	PRCA, Public Works	Complete
Univ. Park	Abandoned Vehicles	Code Enforcement	Complete
Univ. Park	Tree Debris	Code Enforcement	Complete
Greater Duval	Sidewalk at Bus Stop NE 25 th	Alachua County Code	In-progress
Pine Ridge	Community Center roof, mold, and fungus	PRCA and GPD	Complete
5 th Ave- Pleasant St.	Noise from Shands helicopters	Gainesville Fire and Rescue	Complete
Porters	Overgrown Yard	DSD, Code Enforcement	In Progress
Phoenix	Loud Vehicle Exhaust	GPD	In Progress

Community Focus:

1. Public Safety Tips - Seasonal safety advice

- ❖ Summer is just around the corner, and we are heating up community events and sharing exciting news. Let's work together to stay safe, smart and community strong.

2. Beat the Heat

- ❖ Hydrate Often: Drink plenty of water even if you are not thirsty.
- ❖ Avoid Peak Sun: Limit outdoor activities between the hours of 11am and 4pm.
- ❖ Cool spaces: Spend time in shaded or air-conditioned spaces and check on the elders and neighbors without air conditioners.
- ❖ Dress Smart: Wear light, breathable clothing and use sunscreen (SPF 30+).

3. Water Safety

- ❖ Never leave children unattended near water – to include kiddie pools.
- ❖ Learn to swim – www.gainesvillefl.gov/SwimLessons
- ❖ Life Jackets Save Lives: Always use when boating or near open water.
- ❖ Empty Containers: Dump standing water to avoid mosquito breeding.

4. Fire & BBQ Safety

- ❖ Keep a water source nearby when grilling or using fire pits.
- ❖ Supervise children near grills, hot surfaces and fireworks.
- ❖ Proper Disposal: allow coal to cool completely before tossing.

5. Kid & Pet Safety

- ❖ Never leave kids or pets in hot cars, heatstroke happens fast.
- ❖ Create safe play zones away from grills, sharp objects and roads.
- ❖ Know where your kids are and set check in times and safety plans for older youth.
- ❖ Sign Up for local weather alerts and emergency notifications.
- ❖ Follow city safety pages for updates. www.gainesvillefl.gov/PublicSafety

Community Engagement Opportunities:

Gun Violence Awareness Month

- | | |
|---|---|
| Saturday,
May 31
9-11 a.m. | Survivors of Gun Violence Memorial
A day of recognition, remembrance and healing
<i>Squirrel Ridge Park (1608 SW Williston Rd.)</i> |
| Thursday,
June 5
5:30 p.m. | Gun Violence Awareness Day Proclamation
A day of recognition, remembrance and healing
Join Mayor Ward and the Gainesville City
Commission as they name Gun Violence
Awareness Day
<i>City Hall auditorium (200 E. University Ave.)</i> |
| Friday,
June 6
8 p.m. | Teen Midnight Basketball
with Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs
A night of unity, teamwork and positive action! Wear Orange!
<i>MLK Center (1028 NE 14th St)</i> |
| Wednesday,
June 11
4-7 p.m. | IMPACT GNV Open House
Join the City of Gainesville as we open the new IMPACT GNV office space!
<i>IMPACT GNV office (401 NW Sixth St.)</i> |



City of Gainesville
Gun Violence Prevention

Securing
the Bag
**Family Financial
Empowerment
Summit**

[Saturday, June 28 · 9 a.m.-3 p.m.]
UF Hilton · 1714 SW 34th St.]

Learn how to manage your finances in preparation for hurricane season:

NextGen Wealth (Youth Track):
Entrepreneurship and financial habits
for middle and high school students

Future Funds (Adult Track):
Budgeting and
disaster preparation

-  Kids room available for ages 5-10
-  **EVERYONE** walks away with a gift
but space is **LIMITED**, so register ASAP!

GainesvilleFL.gov/FinancialEmpowerment

**Scan to
Register**



City of
Gainesville



**Got
Skillz?**

Join us for:

**Teen
Midnight Basketball**

3 v 3 co-ed basketball for middle and high school-aged youth

**First Fridays
April - August
8 p.m. - 12 a.m.**

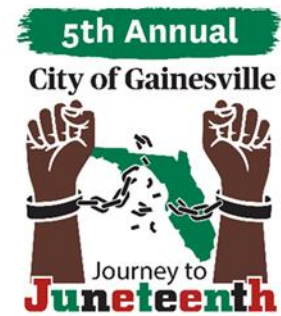
**Free
Entry!**

For more info: 352-334-5067
gainesvillefl.gov/midnightbasketball

City of
Gainesville

Journey to Juneteenth 2025

While Juneteenth (June 19) is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of emancipation, freedom was proclaimed in Florida on May 20, 1865, nearly two-years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the proclamation. One month later, on June 19, 1865, Union soldiers finally arrived in Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and the people who had been enslaved were free.



The City of Gainesville's month-long "Journey to Juneteenth" celebration, from Florida Emancipation Day (May 20) through the widely recognized Juneteenth holiday (June 19), honors the long and turbulent journey to freedom while staying true to our history of Florida Emancipation on May 20.

Journey to Juneteenth Event Schedule			
Tuesday – May 20	Juneteenth Flag Raising and City of Gainesville Kickoff	10 – 11 a.m.	City Hall Plaza
Saturday – May 24	Florida Emancipation Celebration (Food and Fun)	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Cotton Club (837 SE Seventh Ave.)
Saturday – May 31	“Silver Linings” Community Day at the Harn	12-4 p.m.	Harn Museum of Art (3259 Hull Rd.)
Saturday – June 7	GNV Film Festival	6 – 7:45 p.m. & 8 p.m.	The Hippodrome Cinema, (25 SE Second Pl.) & Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E. University Ave.)
Wednesday- June 18	Honoring the Past, Living in the Present, Building for the Future	12 - 8 p.m.	Santa Fe College Blount Hall (530 W. Univ Ave.)
Thursday – June 19	Juneteenth Breakfast & Black Music Month Celebration	7:30-9 a.m.	Cotton Club (837 SE Seventh Ave.)
Thursday – June 19	“An Evening with Avery*Sunshine” Juneteenth Concert	6-9 p.m.	Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E. University Ave.)
Friday – June 20	Storytime at Depot Park	10:30-11 a.m.	Depot Park play area, (874 SE Fourth St.)
Saturday – June 21	Freedom Fest 2025	3-9 p.m.	Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E. University Ave.)
Sunday – June 22	Tha Cookout: A Juneteenth & Fatherhood Celebration	12-6 p.m.	SupportBLKGNV.com/ Tha-Cookout

Ongoing Community Engagement Opportunities:



Bo Diddley Plaza

Monday & Wednesday	Community Yoga Class	10:30 – 11 a.m.
Tuesday & Thursday	Beginning Line Dance Class	5:45 - 6:45 p.m.
Tuesday & Thursday	Community Yoga Class	7 – 8 p.m.

Rosa B. Williams Center (GNVArts Programs)

Sunday (First, Second, Fourth)	Gotta Dance: Stepping' Into Dance with Smooth Flava	4– 7 p.m.	Partnered Program
Wednesday	Gotta Dance: Gainesville International Folk Dance	7:30 – 10 p.m.	Partnered Program
Thursday	Gotta Dance: Gainesville Swing Dance	7:30 – 10 p.m.	Partnered Program

Thomas Center Galleries (Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Saturday: 1 – 4 p.m.)

June 27 – Aug. 30	Gallery Exhibit: Serenity – Art in Meditation	Building Hours	City Produced
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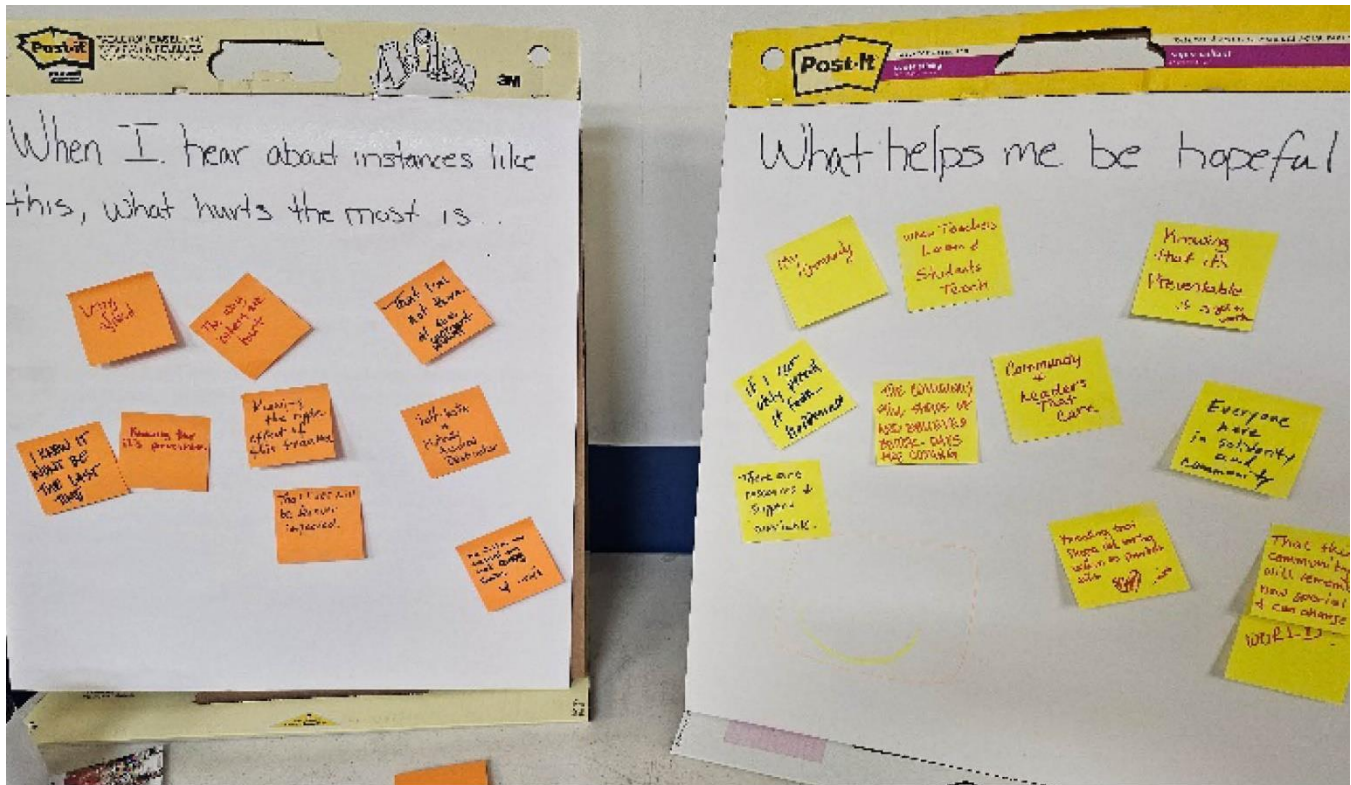
Swimming

Andrew R. Mickel Sr. Pool	2025 Summer Swim Lessons “Swimming fun for everyone!”	Pool Hours: 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.	Registration: PRCA Office, 306 NE Sixth Avenue. Questions? Please call 352-334-5067
Cherry Pool	2025 Jr. Lifeguard Camp	8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Registration: PRCA Office, 306 NE Sixth Avenue. Questions? Please call 352-334-5067

Community Care Callout

A Community Care Callout (CCC) was held to support those who were present at the incident on Easter Sunday, those who may be impacted or triggered, and those for whom it hits close to home.

The Community Care Callout is an opportunity to connect with City of Gainesville, Alachua County and other local resources. Educational and counseling materials were distributed, along with information about available services and outreach. The event is family-friendly and children are welcome. This was conducted in partnership with 1000 Voices of Florida.

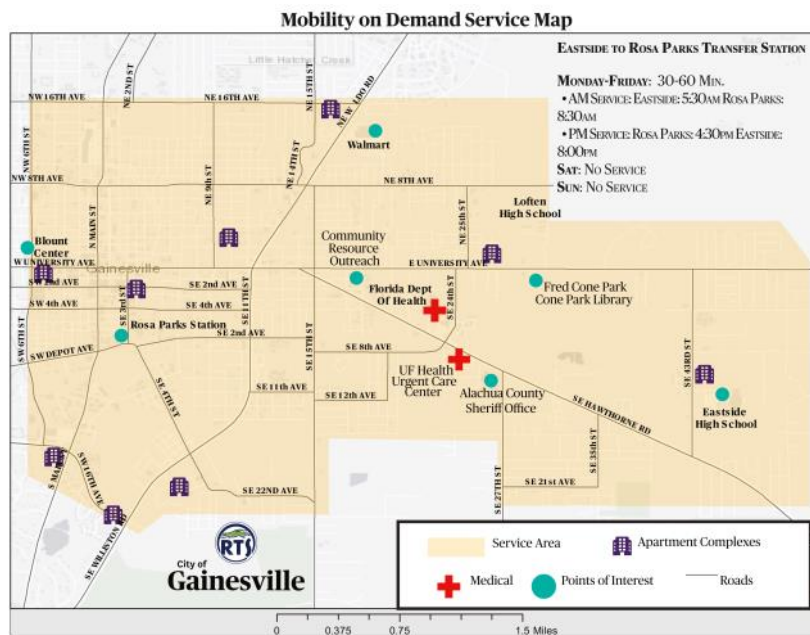


Gainesville's "Mobility on Demand" transit service offers free transportation to East Gainesville clinics, health screenings and support programs

Neighbors in East Gainesville can call the city's Regional Transit System (RTS) "Mobility on Demand" (MOD) service for free transportation to clinic visits, health screenings and other essential community resources. The shuttles go door-to-door for passengers who can't walk to an RTS bus stop or need additional support to reach their destinations reliably and affordably.

"This initiative is about making sure everyone in our community has access to the services they need to stay healthy and thrive," said Gainesville Mayor Harvey L. Ward.

"By offering free, on-demand transportation, we are removing barriers and making vital resources more accessible to our neighbors in East Gainesville."



The Mobility on Demand service has vehicles that run on weekdays from 5:30 a.m.–8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.–8 p.m. They take passengers to any destination within the East Gainesville MOD zone. The service is a refresh of the First Mile/Last Mile program, with the goal of supporting the transit needs of young families, neighbors with limited incomes and anyone lacking reliable transportation for daily activities, including attending medical appointments.

Residents can schedule a ride up to seven days in advance using the RTS Connect app, which is available for download on both iOS and Android devices. After the ride request is received, an RTS vehicle will pick them up at their home and take them directly to their destination at no cost. Those without access to a smartphone can also schedule rides by calling RTS Connect at (352) 393-RIDE.

Important locations that can be visited through Mobility on Demand include the new UF Health Urgent Care Center – Eastside at 457 SE 20th St., the Florida Department of Health in Alachua County at 224 SE 24th St., the Partnership for Strong Families Family Resource Center at 1734 SE 2nd Ave., and the Cone Park Branch of the Alachua County Library at 2801 E. University Ave. The service is funded through the Local Option Gas Tax.

For more information on Mobility on Demand, including service hours and eligibility, visit www.go-rts.com or call RTS customer service at 352-334-2600.

Spring has Sprung in the Neighborhood:

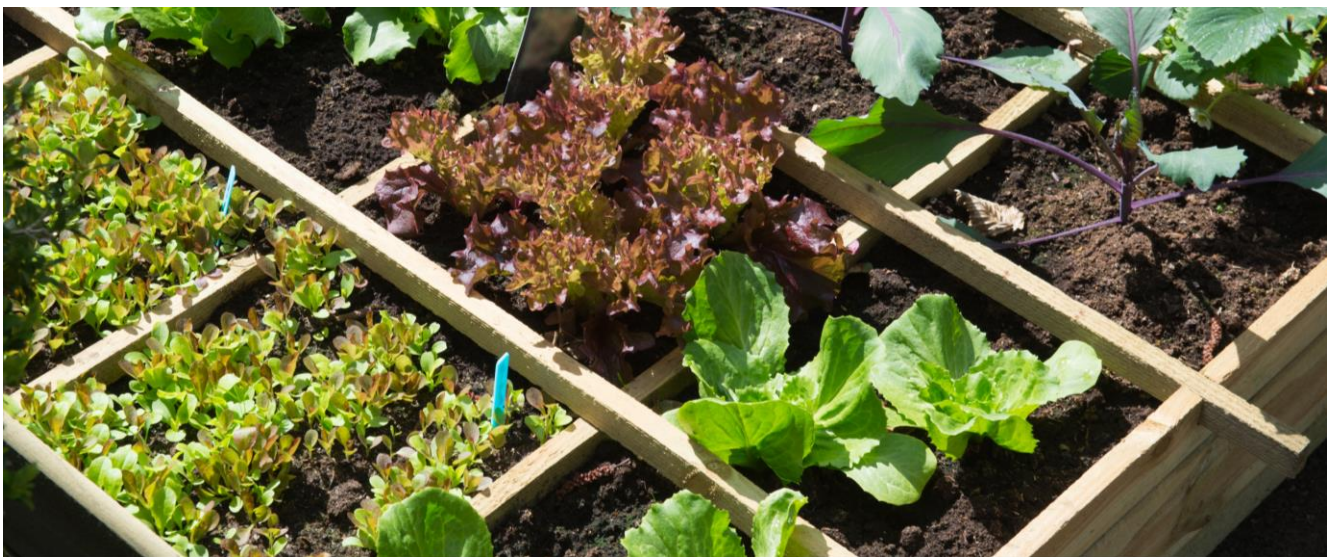
There is something magical about springtime in Gainesville, longer days, blooming flowers and neighbors out enjoying the sunshine. It's a perfect season to refresh your space, reconnect with community and get growing!

Try These Simple Spring Gardening Tips:

- **Start with native plants:** Florida-friendly plants like coreopsis, milkweed and blue porterweed thrive with minimal maintenance.
- **Check your soil:** A quick test from your local extension office can help you know what nutrients to add.
- **Water wisely:** Early morning is best — it helps prevent fungal diseases and conserves water.
- **Add mulch:** It keeps moisture in and weeds out, plus it makes beds look neat and tidy.

Above-Ground Gardening Tip:

- Mix in compost and organic matter like shredded leaves or aged manure to improve drainage and boost fertility.
- Incorporate companion plants—such as basil with tomatoes or marigolds with vegetables—to naturally repel pests and improve crop yields.
- Rotate your crops each season to prevent soil depletion and maintain healthy growth year-round.
- Grow what you love: Tomatoes, herbs like basil and parsley, and peppers are all great spring picks for small spaces or raised beds.
- Bonus tip: Pollinators like bees and butterflies love colorful blooms, so mix in some flowers with your veggies!



From Garden to Table:

Fresh Spring Garden Salad

Ingredients:

- 2 cups mixed greens (spinach, arugula, romaine)
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/4 cup cucumbers, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup shredded carrots
- 1/4 cup feta cheese (optional)
- A handful of sunflower seeds or toasted pecans
- Fresh herbs like parsley or basil (optional)

Tip: Add grilled chicken or boiled eggs for a heartier version!

Easy Homemade Dressing:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar (or lemon juice)
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup
- Pinch of salt & pepper

Shake it all together in a jar and drizzle over your salad!



Wellness Corner

Spring Tip: 10 Minutes Outside

Step outside for a quick walk, water your plants or soak up the sun. Just 10 minutes a day can:

- Reduce stress
- Boost your mood
- Improve focus and energy

Bonus: Morning sun helps with vitamin D and sleep!

Mental Clarity: Mindful Minute

Try this simple reset: Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4, exhale for 4 — repeat. Just one minute a day can ease anxiety, sharpen focus and improve mood. Even in a busy season, you deserve a moment of peace. If you're feeling overwhelmed, reach out!



Hydration & Health

Remember to stay hydrated! Especially in the Florida heat. Check out this article from Mayo Clinic on hydration: www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/water/art-20044256

Department Contacts	Phone Number
City of Gainesville	352-334-5000
Code Enforcement	352-334-5030
Emergency	911
Equity and Inclusion	352-334-5051
Fire Department (Non-Emergency)	352-334-5078
Garbage Solid Waste/Recycling/Hazardous Waste/Missed Trash Pick-Up	352-334-2330
Gainesville Police Department (GPD)	352-955-1818
Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU)	352-334-3434
Housing	352-334-5026
Human Resources (HR)	352-334-5077
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs	352-334-5067
Planning/Development	352-334-5023
Regional Transit System (RTS)	352-334-2600

Resources for Neighbors	Phone Number
After-School Programs	352-334-5067
Building Permits	352-334-5050
Business Permits	352-334-5024
Fire Department (Non-Emergency)	352-334-5078
Garbage Solid Waste/Recycling/Hazardous Waste/Missed Trash Pick-Up	352-334-2330
Gainesville Police Department (GPD)	352-955-1818
Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU)	352-334-3434
Housing	352-334-5026
Human Resources (HR)	352-334-5077
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs	352-334-5067
Planning/Development	352-334-5023
Regional Transit System (RTS)	352-334-2600
After-School Programs Camp and Recreation Classes	352-334-5067



myGNV is the City of Gainesville's neighbor portal.
Download the app or visit online.

Explore the city
Discover things to do
Plan ways to get around




myGNV.org

