

Fueling Young Men With a Purpose

While serving as a pastor for the past 20 years, Jay Thompson awakened to a major need in his home city of Savannah. The need for a network of people to bring change to the lives of young men whose development had been marked by the loss of healthy relationships in the home. In 2012 he formed a nonprofit organization called Xcel Strategies - A Mentoring Network. By networking with other men, local businesses, schools, trade schools, and colleges, Xcel has given the city of Savannah a new surge of responsible young men who are filling jobs in the trades of our community.

With all the negative press surrounding young men from 15 to 25 years of age, Xcel strives to unveil the value of our young men, who when fueled with purpose can be a tremendous asset to their families, employers and the city.

As a young child, Jay's life was changed by adoption. "My dad, John Thompson, adopted me when I was two. He gave me my name and set a tremendous example for me, leading my family. My desire is for Xcel to be an example of strong leaders for young men just like my father provided for me."

Xcel has written a curriculum called "Fueled With Purpose"



Front Row (4) - Roberto Griffin, Peter Hoffman, Javier Vasquez, Shemar Orr
Second Row (5) - Diajion Foxworth, Cody Brown, Isaac Feld, Zach Thompson, Malachi Rivers; Back Row - Jay Thompson

that focuses on 6 Life Disciplines that will prepare young men to make wise decisions in the area of Goal Setting, Time Management, Health & Fitness, Financial Stewardship, Valuing People and Developing Relationships.

Once the young men have completed their training, Xcel prepares them for job interviews by "suing up" at J. Parker Ltd. Mentors spend 12 months with the young men preparing them in soft skills, helping pursue driver's licenses, writing resumes, setting up bank accounts, celebrating special milestones and obtaining entry level jobs.

Lastly, Xcel specializes in moving its participants into support jobs

that provide for their families. Companies will partner with Xcel to provide internship to apprenticeship opportunities. Xcel partners in the fields of Welding, Plumbing, Mechanics and Logistics. They are looking to add two new fields in 2017.

This year Xcel is expanding into Bryan County. Xcel will now be training guys in two counties and providing employees to the workforce in both communities.

To get more information about how you can be involved or provide support, please contact Jay Thompson at jay@xceltoday.com or visit the website xceltoday.com.

Editor's Note:

In January, I had the privilege of attending Xcel's "Coating Ceremony" at Wesley Gardens on Burnside Island. (You can learn more about Xcel on the front page.) I got a firsthand look at how this organization, led by Jay Thompson, is making a difference in the lives of young men in Savannah. I was pleasantly surprised to see that some of the participants were from Bethesda Academy, where I used to teach several years ago.

As Jay overviewed the program and curriculum Xcel uses to mentor, I was even more impressed. I commend Jay on meeting a huge challenge that the Savannah community faces by helping young men live purposefully.

About the same time, I received an email from Hospice Savannah on the grant they've received to help counsel those who have been affected by the overflow of violence that has plagued Savan-

nah during the last few years. You can learn about it on page 7.

I also learned about the A-Town Get Down for the first time. This is an event organized in the honor of Anthony Townsend who passed away in 2010. It's purpose is "to create an environment where music and art education can be nurtured and thrive in the Savannah community."

These are just a few of the programs that have inspired us at the Isle of Hope News to give back to the IOH community. So we've decided to start investing a portion of our earnings back into the Isle of Hope area. You can read about our first initiative on page 6.

Also, if you're an advertiser or contributor you will likely hear from my wife, Lauren, soon. She has joined the Isle of Hope News and will be managing our day-to-day operations. Trust me this is a

welcome change, as she is a lot more organized than me.

Finally, as always, thanks to all our advertisers -- without you we would not be able to do what we do.

Chris Brantley, Editor Isle of Hope News (chris@isleofhopenews.com)

The Isle of Hope News is a bi-monthly publication serving Isle of Hope area residents and advertisers. It was started by Isle of Hope resident Ed Yannett in 2011 and mails to 2,400 residents in Isle of Hope, Dutch Island and surrounding areas.

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A-Town Get Down Festival

A Family-Friendly All Day Event Coming in March

Savannah's A-Town Get Down Festival, an all-day family-friendly music and arts event, recently announced their new date and location. Formerly held at the Morris Center, the festival is moving to Indian Street between Fahm and Warner March 25th, 2017 from 12:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. The move comes after the 2016 attendance had outgrown the location's occupancy.

A-Town invites all ages to enjoy interactive creative experiences, multiple stages of live music acts, live art installations and more. The festival is FREE for all ages until 5 p.m., when it turns into a ticketed event for the headline performers.

With the new location, attendees can now expect more interactive creative

workshops, vendors, food trucks and even a shipping container entertainment area under the Talmadge Bridge, with the help and support from the Savannah Development and Renewal Authority.

This year's festival will feature over 25 local and regional bands and visual artists each representing diverse music genres and a myriad of artistic styles. Artists and musicians include Cracker, Bobby Rush, Col. Bruce Hampton, Snarky Puppy Horns, The Billy Jonas Band (Kid - Friendly!), Lowcountry Voices, Old Salt Union, Walter Parks, Savannah Children's Choir, Marques & The Marvelous Miracles, Waits & Co, Complicated Animals, Annalise Curtin, Billy Engel, The Live Art of Will Penny, Jason Armstrong Beck, Matt Toole, The Live Art of Will Penny, Jason Arm-

strong Beck, Matt Toole, Shea Slemmer, SCAD Fashion, Adobe Digital Art, Loop It Up Savannah and so much more!

The A-Town Get Down Festival is moving to Indian Street near the Talmadge Bridge and will take place on March 25, 2017, from 12:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. After 5 p.m. ticket prices are \$35 for the general public; \$25 for students and military; and \$95 for V.I.P. passes which include the Friday, March 24 pre-event dinner, meet and greet with artists and musical performers, and a complimentary VIP tent during the Festival.

A-Town Get Down was created in honor of art student and musician, Alex "A-Town" Townsend, who passed *(continued on p.5)*

A-TOWN GET DOWN ART & MUSIC FESTIVAL

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OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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Savannah Power Yoga - IOH Business Spotlight

Kate Doran

Savannah Power Yoga

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(912) 349-2756

M-F 6:00 am - 7:00 pm

Saturday 7:30 am - 12:30 pm

Sunday 8:30 am - 9:30 am &

2:00 pm - 7:00 pm

How long have You been in business? Since January, 2011

Why did you choose this business? At Savannah Power Yoga our mission is to create an environment and experience which empowers you to live a healthy, balanced life through the consistent practice of yoga. For me, consistent practice means at least 3 times a week. My goal was to create a clean, friendly space with lots of options to come in and have a GREAT

yoga experience. We work hard to create a high quality experience, no matter what time of day you can come in.

How did you get started?

I started practicing yoga in 1998 while I was working in the software industry. Over the years I traveled to yoga studios all over the country and kept mental notes on what I loved about each place. When my life shifted gears and I had a chance to start my own business, I designed and built Savannah Power Yoga. I sometimes joke that I opened SPY just so that I would have a place to practice, and it is not really a joke! When I practice yoga, I want to be in a clean, beautiful space with a great teacher. I hope that is what each and every

person experiences when they come to SPY.

What was your biggest break getting into this business?

The best business advice I got was to hire folks who are good at the things you can't or don't want to do. I hired an architect, a lawyer, and an accountant and started with 4 other teachers on the team. That gave me the space to focus on the things I am good at. I have friends who have opened yoga studios and tried to do it all themselves and got so burned out that there wasn't much time left for the fun parts of owning a studio - like taking yoga classes and connecting to the community.

Why did you choose the IOH Area?

I was living on Dutch Island before I
(continued on p. 10)



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A-Town Get Down

(cont. from p.3)

away in 2010. His parents, Tom and Jeanne Townsend started the festival in their son's honor with the mission of creating an environment where music and art education could be nurtured and thrive in the Savannah community.

This year A-Town will once again

collaborate with Loop It Up Savannah to connect students from Title I school districts to free access to interactive art and music projects. The two organizations work together during the school year as well, preparing backdrops and other art for display at the Festival.

The A-Town Get Down is a project

of the Alex Townsend Memorial Foundation, a tax-exempt non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The event also raises funds for arts initiatives and arts education.

For more information about the event, please visit www.a-townget-down.com or email info@a-towngetdown.com.

Meetings on Monday nights at 7:30-8:30pm from March 27th - May 5th



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Isle of Hope Area Family Safety Day

Dear Readers,

I usually use this space to talk about what's going on in the real estate market, but this issue I wanted to do something a little different. I've lived in the Isle of Hope Community since 2004 and my wife Lisa grew up here. We used to live downtown, but when we started our family we knew this was the place we wanted to raise our kids.

When I originally started this newsletter in 2011, I wanted to create a resource for the community and make a positive contribution to the Isle of Hope area. Now that it has grown into a viable business, we plan to invest a percentage of the profits back into our community

To get started, we are organizing a family safety day for the Isle of Hope area. We will take a portion of our profits and money that was slated to go to the IOH T-ball league last year (before the season was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts with the IOH School) and purchase bike lights, reflectors and smoke detectors for community families. We will also be supporting the Isle of Hope pool and other community-oriented projects. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

For more information, go to isleofhopenews.com/ioh-safety-day. To submit a suggestion, go to isleofhopenews.com/give.

Stay tuned over the next few

months as we share other projects that will make our community even better. We hope you will join us in supporting them!

Thanks!

Ed Yannett



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Savannah Hospice Helps Kids Affected By Violence

Hospice Savannah recently received a \$100,000 grant from the New York Life Foundation to fund a two-year initiative entitled *We the Living: A Community-based Children's Grief and Violence Support Network*.

predominantly African-American children and youth in Savannah-Chatham County who have experienced the death of a loved one as a result of the escalating rates of homicide and gun violence.

The grant supports developing specialized services to address the urgent and unique bereavement needs of 200 low-income,

The initiative will be spearheaded by the bereavement counselors of Hospice Savannah's Full Circle.



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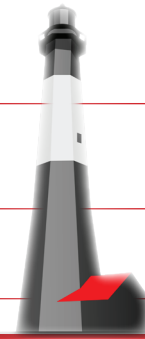
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A series of grief counseling support groups staffed by trained bereavement counselors will be offered within the familiarity and accessibility of the neighborhoods where the children live. Also, 100 neighborhood-based bereavement volunteers will be identified and trained to serve as a new network of ongoing and sustainable support.

Using proven clinical interventions and incorporating art, music therapy, personalized music, yoga and mindfulness, support groups will help children to understand and express grief, address specific issues of traumatic loss, develop skills to cope with grief and stress, and model positive alternatives to violence. Without intervention, children who have lost a loved one to violence are highly likely to experience a more complicated pattern of grief including post traumatic stress, higher hyper vigilance, school truancy, and fear.

Volunteers interested in participating in the "We the Living" project may contact Full Circle Grief and Loss Center at 912.303.9442.

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Matthew 25:40

- Clean Water is the most fundamental need we can serve. Humans can only live 3 to 5 days without water.
- 801,000 die every year from diseases related to unclean water..... 801,000 children!!!
- 6 to 8 million people die from dirty water related diseases.
- 783 Million people or 1 in 10 people do not have access to safe water.
- 2.5 BILLION people – 1 in 3 lack access to a toilet
- More people have mobile phone then toilets
- Imagine for a second you could not shower! EVER with clean water!
- You could not wash your hands! Ever with clean water!
- EASY SOLUTION! Answer.....wells! Drill Water Wells!
- Women, boys and girls spend 4 to 6 hours a day fetching water.
- Now when they get a well they not only get clean and safe drinking water....
- They can go to school, plant crops and just be more productive and healthy!
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Congratulations!

Diajion Foxworth, Roberto Griffin, Cody Brown, Peter Hoffman,
Isaac Feld, Javier Vasquez, Zach Thompson, Shemar Orr, Malachi Rivers

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Savannah Yoga

(cont. from p.4)

opened Savannah Power Yoga. There was a group of folks who would pay me to come teach in their homes every morning because they didn't have the time or the desire to drive downtown for a class. I did a little asking around and soon realized that there was a whole community of people who might practice yoga if we had a studio in Sandfly. My hunch was right! 50% of our regular students live in the 31406 zip code.

What is your favorite part of the IOH community? IOH is like a small town within Savannah. I know most of our customers by first name and sometimes even their dog's name. Our community feels like one big, extended family.

What is your favorite part of your day? First thing in the morning! I wake up early and make my coffee and just sit still for the first 20 minutes of my day. Sometimes I meditate, sometimes I play with my cats. Sometimes I count playing with my cats as my morning meditation.

What's Hot in your business now? Meditation is hot! Given the amount of stress most of us are exposed to, it is not surprising that people are seeking out some peace and quiet in their lives. Yoga itself can be a moving meditation, but we offer more traditional seated meditation classes on Sunday nights at 6:00 pm, as well as shorter 15 minute meditation sessions after some of our classes.

Anything you'd like to say to the IOH area community? Thank you. We have been in business for 6 years and it's thanks to YOU.

Any Special Promotions going on right now? We have a 1 month introductory special for \$45. Yoga can and will change your life. Commit to taking 10 classes in your first month and you'll see what I mean.

Thanks Kate!

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Mails: April 21 (Typically takes 1 to 3 days to hit mailboxes)

Summer Issue

June/July

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Mails: June 23 (Typically takes 1 to 3 days to hit mailboxes)

End of Summer Issue:

Aug/Sept

Ad Deadline: July 24

In Mailboxes: August 25 (Typically takes 1 to 3 days to hit mailboxes)

Fall Issue:

Oct/Nov

Ad Deadline: September 18

Mails: October 20 (Typically takes 1 to 3 days to hit mailboxes)

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Can You Make Your Investments Less “Taxing”?

Tax Freedom Day, which typically occurs in late April, according to the Tax Foundation, is the day when the nation as a whole has earned enough money to pay off its total tax bill for the year. So you may want to use this opportunity to determine if you can liberate yourself from some investment-related taxes in the future.

Actually, Tax Freedom Day is something of a fiction, in practical terms, because most people pay their taxes throughout the year via payroll deductions. Also, you may not mind paying your share of taxes, because your tax dollars are used in many ways – such as law enforcement, food safety, road maintenance, public education, and so on – that, taken together, have a big impact on the quality of life in this country. Still, you may want to look for ways

to reduce those taxes associated with your investments, leaving you more money available to meet your important goals, such as a comfortable retirement.

So, what moves can you make to become more of a “tax-smart” investor? Consider the following:

- **Know when to hold ’em.** If you sell an investment that you’ve held for less than one year, any profit you earn is considered a short-term capital gain, and it will be taxed at the same rate as your ordinary income. (For 2017, ordinary income tax rates range from 10% to 39.6%.) But if you hold the investment for longer than one year, your profit will be taxed at the long-term capital gains rate, which, for most taxpayers, will be just 15%. If at all possible, then, hold your investments at least long

enough to qualify for the lower capital gains rate.

- **Look for the dividends.** Similar to long-term capital gains, most stock dividends are taxed at 15% for most taxpayers. Thus, dividend-paying stocks can provide you with an additional source of income at a tax rate that’s likely going to be lower than the rate on your ordinary earned income. As an added benefit, many dividend-paying stocks also offer growth potential. With some research, you can find stocks that have paid, and even increased, their dividends over a period of many years. (Be aware, though, that companies are not obligated to pay dividends and can reduce or discontinue them at their discretion.)

(continued on p. 14)

So Much Planning Goes into Retirement. Have You Thought About Taxes As Well?

It’s likely that your retirement income may come from many sources, such as Social Security, pension distributions, a 401(k), or IRA withdraws. That’s why, if taxes are a concern for you, it’s important to choose the right investments for your portfolio.

At Edward Jones, we have many options that can give you more control over your taxes, so you can enjoy what you’ve worked so hard to achieve.

Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors cannot provide professional tax advice. You should consult with a qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.

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Does Your Child Need a Tutor or Academic Coach?

Does your child need personalized assistance catching up to his classmates or getting ahead of the learning curve? Is the SRI, MAP or GMAS causing you concern? Are you behind on the SAT/ ACT timeline?

A good instructor will inspire and help students, at all levels of academic accomplishment, and develop study habits and organizational skills which will result in significantly improved schoolwork and test scores. Taking the time to consider whether or not to hire a personal instructor means parents are giving their children an opportunity to excel in the classroom.

When children succeed in school, they build confidence that translates into all areas of their lives, helping them build strong foundations for successful futures.

Tutoring teaches children efficient learning skills and techniques to use in the classroom and, ultimately, in the workforce as adults. If tutoring is needed, parents should take action early and seek a reputable supplemental education service – like Sylvan Learning - that creates individual learning plans and develops the skills needed to achieve success.

Even a child who does well in the classroom can benefit from outside help to sharpen study and test-taking skills. A supplemental education provider can help your child prepare for a test or obtain academic enrichment in a particular subject.

Ask yourself these questions to determine if your child needs a tutor.

Is Your Child...

- In need of assistance to reach his or her full potential?



Education Matters

Dino Papadopoulos, Owner & Executive Director Sylvan Learning

- Developing low self-esteem?
- Losing interest in learning?
- Preparing for college testing, including college entrance exams, SAT and ACT tests?
- Struggling to focus on a task (e.g. – spending more time daydreaming than on reading or homework)?
- Receiving test scores that do not reflect his daily performance?
- Interested in enriching herself beyond the classroom? *(Continued on p. 14)*

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Taxes

(Cont. from p. 12)

• Use those tax-advantaged accounts. Virtually all retirement accounts available to you, whether you've set them up yourself or they're made available by your employer, offer some type of tax advantage. With a traditional IRA, or a 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan, your contributions are typically tax-

deferred. Contributions to a Roth IRA, or a Roth 401(k), are never deductible, but earnings can grow tax free, provided you meet certain conditions. The bottom line? Contribute as much as you can afford to the tax-advantaged plans to which you have access.

By making some tax-smart investment decisions, you might reap some benefits for years to come.

This article was submitted by Nicholas Ives, Financial Advisor with Edward Jones.

Tutor

(Continued from p. 12)

What should parents look for when electing a tutor?

- Get recommendations from family, friends, and teachers.
- Ask prospective instructors for references from previous employers and students. Or, hire a respected supplemental education company, such as Sylvan Learning, with a proven record of unlocking children's potential to achieve academic success.
- Make sure the instructor is licensed and certified.
- Ask personal instructors how they will help your child master a specific skill.
- Request an assessment to gauge your child's current level. A good teacher will require that a child learn a specific skill before advancing to the next academic level, and, by utilizing the results of an assessment, you can benchmark your child's progress.
- Most importantly, ensure the instructor will work with you and your child's classroom teachers to create a personal learning program based on your child's current needs and skill gaps.

For more educational resources for children in grades pre-K through 12, please visit SylvanLearning.com or call 912.355.2267.



Cell: 665-9934 — Office: 355-2142 — Email: moonriveros@att.net
Oliver B. Schroder, Jr.
Lifelong Isle of Hope Resident



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Stay Strong During & After Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a wonderful thing, but it changes a woman's body before and after the pregnancy. That's why exercise is one of the most important things for mother and baby development during this life changing event.

But exercise is not always about gyms and weightlifting. As moms, we need to feel secure about where we exercise and who works out with us. We also want to focus on strength training and toning our areas of weakness. Our abdominal muscles literally separate as our precious little ones grow inside of our wombs. This creates a huge weakness in our core muscles. To bounce back after giving birth, we need to keep our cores strong during pregnancy.

We need to have a strong upper body in order to maintain good posture and form -- and keep up with our little balls of energy. Upper body strength

also helps prevent slouching and achy backs that can come along during pregnancy. It also helps when you have to lug all your baby's "essentials" every place you go. (Some diaper bags weigh more than an Army Ranger's pack!)

Starting a new exercise routine can be a daunting task, but the benefits are worth it.

As mothers, we also need support from other mothers who can relate to our struggles. Having a "Mommy Village" is a wonderful way to learn, grow, vent, and build relationships outside of the family. We can support, motivate, encourage, and make each other look and feel awesome!

When I first moved here after my husband got out of the military, I didn't know anyone outside my own family. But I found my "village" with

FIT4MOM Savannah. This group of mamas has been getting me into shape since February of 2015. When my muscles are sore the day after a workout, I know that I am getting stronger.

I could never have guessed I would have made such meaningful and long lasting friendships through FIT4MOM. I love what we are about so I had to become a part of the fitness team. I am now the Body Back Instructor for our FIT4MOM Savannah group. If you are looking for a "village" and want to get into shape please feel free to check out our website <http://savannah.fit4mom.com/>.

Elizabeth Ross is the mother of two girls that she absolutely adores and thanks God for, but they keep her on her toes.



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