

NEWSLETTER OF THE MANATEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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Manatee County Democratic Executive Committee

proudly invites you to the

2020 Manatee County Annual Democratic Gala Saturday, April 18th.

The Grove Ballroom

10670 Boardwalk Loop
Main Street, Lakewood Ranch, 34202
Valet Parking will be available.

Cocktails at 6 PM. Dinner at 7 PM.
Silent Auction and Live Auction
Bruschetta Chicken or Tuscan Vegetable Pasta
Signature Cash Bar

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Join Us at 2020 Democratic Dinner on April 18

Reservations are open for the anticipated Manatee County Annual Democratic Dinner. An extra surge of interest is expected this year, so it's recommended you make reservations soon.

The event draws top-notch keynote speakers. In previous years Manatee Dems have welcomed DNC Vice Chair Michael Blake, Governor Michael O'Malley, Mayor Andrew Gillum and all 2018 Florida Gubernatorial candidates, Congressman and former Governor Charlie Crist and Congresswoman Val Demings.



Lucy Lapides continues as Chairwoman of the Gala

The evening includes a vibrant silent auction and fun live auction with a professional auctioneer. Previous live auctions have featured significant artwork, entertainment packages and vacation home stays donated by generous Democrats in Manatee County and around the country. If you have ideas for something creative you can donate, contact Lucy Lapides at lucy@lwrdems.com, 941-704-5971.

For details and reservations contact Lucy Lapides or visit manateecountydemocrats.com/demdinner.



Mark Your Calendar

March 7 to 14: Early Voting for Presidential Preference Primary (See five locations at manateecountydemocrats.com)

March 17: Voting at the Polls for Presidential Preference Primary

April 2 and 4: Vote for Congressional District 16 Delegates to Democratic National Convention (more info in Page 4)

August 25: Primary Election Day for Local Races

November 3: General Election Day



For Manatee's Hispanics, a Democratic Caucus of Their Own

It began last summer. Hispanics living in Manatee County and Bradenton decided it was time to align themselves for common cause with Democrats. And the Manatee County chapter of the Hispanic Caucus of Florida was born.

Welcome them, but more importantly than that, join them! The tent is large. Hispanics make up 29 percent of the population in the United States. In Manatee County, they are 18 percent of the populace.

The Hispanic Caucus wants your intelligence, your bilingual skills and your energy. It also wants what all Democrats want: improved and affordable health care and housing, better public education, an end to racial and ethnic discrimination and perhaps, most of all, a say in getting this nation back on the right track. "These issues are up to all of us," said Graciela Greenberg, the Hispanic Caucus's president.

Much of the caucus' mission centers on rallying Hispanics to help set the political agenda and in actively supporting and promoting causes that are best for the Latino community – whether they're on a local, state or national level. "We're inclusive," said Ofelia Uribe, an activist and canvasser. "All Hispanics are urged to join." Volunteer with the caucus and use your Spanish skills to help register voters – a crucial need – or use those skills to canvass neighborhoods. All of our volunteer opportunities are listed at www.manateedemocrats.com.

Don't hesitate. "Think of your children's future," said Ms. Uribe. And, she added, "Do it with your fellow Hispanic brothers and sisters." The caucus meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Manatee Democratic Party headquarters at 435 Cortez Road in Bradenton. The next meeting is March 24. For more information contact Graciela Greenberg at 914-325-0560. You needn't be a Spanish-speaker, just a person willing to work for a cause. "Please join us," said Irene Simpson, vice president of the caucus, and "make a difference in your community." (This article is in Spanish on Page 3.)



L to R, board members Dave Moreno, Irene Simpson, Graciela Greenberg, Ofelia Uribe

Landing Big Numbers in Manatee's Blue Wave Partnership



The Manatee County Democratic Party and the Blue Wave Coalition seem to be made for each other. What is the Blue Wave Coalition? It is an organization of like-minded people who band together and canvass neighborhoods to help elect leaders sharing progressive and democratic values. It was first tried in Florida in St. Johns County in 2018.

In Manatee County, Democrats and others in the Blue Wave canvassed Precinct 415 on February 22. Quick meet-up and training sessions were held at the home of Leslie Harrell, who graciously allowed her house to be used as a headquarters and for an after-canvassing party.

The canvassers tallied 39 new voter registrations and 94 vote-by-mail signees after spending two hours knocking on roughly 500 doors; about 220 people answered. The Blue Wave effort was considered a rousing success. "It's quite clearly an effective tool because it mobilizes resources that would go untapped," said Bob McCaa, who teamed with Karen Curlin and others to organize the canvassing. "People choosing to vote by mail are much likelier to vote," McCaa said.

Next on the list: Precinct 401 on March 22, a Sunday, starting 3:30 p.m. at Good Liquid Brewing Company, 4824 14th Street West. Join us, won't you? And, when the canvassing ends, plan to stay for a party.

Para los Hispanos de Manatee Un Caucus Democrático Propio

Comenzó el verano pasado. Los hispanos que viven en el condado de Manatee decidieron que era hora de alinearse con los demócratas por causas comunes. Y nació el capítulo del Condado de Manatee del Caucus Hispano de Florida.

Denles la bienvenida, pero más importante que eso, ¡únase a ellos! La carpa es grande. La comunidad hispana representa el 29 por ciento de la población en los Estados Unidos. En el condado de Manatee, son el 18 por ciento de la población.

El Caucus Hispano quiere su inteligencia, sus habilidades bilingües y su energía. También quiere lo que todos los demócratas quieren: atención médica y vivienda mejoradas y asequibles, mejor educación pública, el fin de la discriminación racial y étnica y quizás, sobre todo, una voz para que esta nación vuelva a la senda correcta.

"Estas emisiones dependen de todos nosotros," dijo Graciela Greenberg, presidenta del Caucus Hispano. Gran parte de la misión del caucus se centra en reunir a los hispanos para ayudar a establecer la agenda política y apoyar y promover activamente las causas que benefician a la comunidad latina, ya sea a nivel local, estatal o nacional.

"Somos inclusivos," dijo Ofelia Uribe, activista y encuestadora. "Se insta a todos los hispanos a unirse." Ofrézcase como voluntario en el comité y use sus habilidades en español para ayudar a registrar votantes, una necesidad crucial, o use esas habilidades para sondear los vecindarios. Todas nuestras oportunidades de voluntariado se enumeran en manateedemocrats.com. No lo dude! "Piense en el futuro de sus hijos," dijo la Sra. Uribe. Y agregó: "Hagalo con sus hermanos y hermanas hispanos."

El caucus se reúne el cuarto martes de cada mes a las 7 p.m. en la sede del Partido Democrático de Manatee en 435 Cortez Road en Bradenton. La próxima reunión es el 24 de marzo. Para más información contacte a Graciela Greenberg al (914) 325-0560. No es necesario ser hispanohablante, solo una persona dispuesta a trabajar por una causa.



The banner translates to "Democratic Latin Power"

Geneva Presha Is Chosen for Health Care Advisory Board



Geneva Presha

Geneva Presha has been named to the Manatee County Health Care Advisory Board, which monitors and advises the County Board of Commissioners on the health care system in Manatee.

As an appointee, she said she planned to push for improved delivery of health care services to low-income residents and indigent residents of Manatee County. "That's who we're directed toward," she said, adding that she also wants to push for dental care and improved mental health services for low-income and indigent people.

Presha, who will be one of 13 members of the advisory board, is retired. She worked as a city planner in New York and in California and has been a real estate and mortgage broker. Presha holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in sociology and has volunteered with the League of Women Voters, with youth organizations in California and with a prison ministry in Florida.

All members of the advisory board serve three-year terms.

Major Push by Black Caucus Registers Scores of Returning Citizens

The Manatee County Democratic Black Caucus has been registering returning citizens and others starting early last year at community and business locations in Bradenton and Palmetto. Nearly 400 people have registered so far – with about 80 percent of those returning citizens, or former felons.

That alone is a great accomplishment for an organization that has a long history with Democrats in Manatee County. “It’s important for us because returning citizens are part of our population. They paid their debt to society and deserve to vote,” said Susie Copeland, the president of the Black Caucus.

But for the Black Caucus, the work doesn’t end there. The caucus’s follow-up efforts make sure that new voters receive their registration cards and that they vote. To do so, the Black Caucus assists voters in understanding ballots and voting procedures, and also offers transportation to polling places. “Everyone we register, we also follow-up to ensure they get to the polls,” Copeland said.

Recently, the Manatee County Democratic Party received a generous financial gift and matching donations to be used to register returning citizens to vote. In developing a plan to put this new funding to work, the party turned to the Black Caucus for the initial portion of the plan. As a first step, the Black Caucus will expand its current voter registration initiatives. Plans are to step up voter education.

The Black Caucus is also partnered with the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, or FRRC, a grassroots organization based in Tallahassee helping to restore voting rights to former inmates, including participation in an advocacy day in Tallahassee in February.

In addition, every Sunday until the Presidential Primary on March 17, Ms. Copeland and Tracy Washington, the FRRC’s representative for Manatee County, take questions on voting rights for returning citizens on WWPR Radio, 1490 AM, during the Sister Dolly Gospel Show.

The registration work has gotten more difficult. Last year, the Republican-led Legislature passed a law requiring that any returning citizen pay all court-related debt, fees or restitution before gaining the right to vote. As a result, about 800,000 of the 1.4 million returning citizens in Florida now owe the fees, according to the FRRC, which has some funds to help pay those fees. Last month, a federal appeals court ruled that the fee-paying requirement was unconstitutional because it required a payment to vote – but the ruling only ended the fees for the 17 plaintiffs in that case. The state has said it is planning an appeal.



L to R: Susie Copeland, Florence Shelton-Clark, Geneva Presha and Betty Rhodes

Run for Delegate to the National Convention. The Vote Is April 4.

Sign up to become one of the six delegates - three men and three women (plus an alternate) - from Manatee County at floridadems.org/convention. The deadline is Saturday.

More information is at floridadems.org/convention. The convention is in July in Milwaukee.

Delegates are chosen at caucuses on April 2 and on April 4 and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at three locations in the Manatee County: IMG Academy, the Manatee Performing Arts Center and the Palmetto Library. On April 4, voting is also scheduled at the Lakewood Ranch Town Hall.

To vote, bring a valid ID, then sign a pledge to support one of the Democratic presidential candidates. You will then receive a list of all delegate candidates for Congressional District 16, from which the delegates will be chosen. If you are elected, you will be required to meet in Orlando before the convention on May 30 and 31.