

Spread the good news about uplifting work

Something the Pope said on Christmas Eve jumped out at me, “May we not wait for our neighbors to be good before we do good to them, for the Church to be perfect before we love her, for others to respect us before we serve them. Let us begin with ourselves.”

We live in a generous community in North Florida where good deeds, kindness and love are actually everywhere you look. We also live in world full of hate, terrorism, injustice and violence. Sometimes it is hard to see the good through the avalanche of negative.

I wanted to share some stories of those doing some good who made the decision to put the needs of others first and maybe it will inspire me and those reading to make sure we all are doing our part.

Life is a team sport and we all have to know our down and distance. Making sure we are pushing the team forward for the first down and ultimately the touchdown of kindness; without getting any penalties (see FBI investigation) as those flags really hurt Team Tally. Ha! I have watched every bowl game so far, so brace oneself for more football puns.

Rick Kearney is the Chairman of Mainline Information Systems and in 1986 he started a not for profit with some other citizens called Good News Outreach. GNO provides quality housing for low-income moms with kids, a team of volunteers who provide daily food and other assistance to the poor and elderly, a program for reintegrating released prison inmates successfully into society, and a clinic for indigent [mothers.In](#) more recent years, Kearney was instrumental in

children in need. Sean also helped create a scholarship in his name at FSU Law School.

I first met Dr. James Harding several years ago and we have collaborated on some columns in regards to assistive technology for the disabled community and more recently working with some of his students at Aegis.

It will be hard to summarize Harding’s accomplishments. He is a teacher at FSU, husband, author, two time U.S. Presidential appointee, speaker, advocate, serving FFAST, the Delta Airlines Disability Advisory Board, The Florida Network on Disabilities, and so many more. The man is relentless in his quest to advocate, assist and give back.

A two-time quadriplegic, Harding survived a brutal attack as a teenager, and instead of changing his hopes and dreams, he found the courage and drive to overcome profound challenges. Earning master and doctorate degrees, graduating from Leadership Tallahassee and Leadership Florida, and co-founding the Florida Disability Mentoring Day – considered the best in the country – JR Harding not only reached, but exceeded his dreams. (The last sentence is from his bio at [jrharding.com](#) if you wish to learn more about his journey.) Did you catch the band Sister Hazel at Opening Nights recently? Do you know where they got their band name from? They are named after a woman named Sister Hazel Williams who ran a homeless shelter in Florida. She welcomed all in need and had nothing but love

When the planes hit the Twin Towers, as far as I know none of the phone calls from the people on board were messages of hate or revenge – they were all messages of love. If you look for it, I’ve got a sneaky feeling you’ll find that love actually is all around.”

Happy New Year, stay hydrated and God bless you.

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FSU students of Dr. Harding’s doing class work at Aegis in 2019. SPECIAL TO THE DEMOCRAT



Blake Dowling

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getting the Kearney Center open, which helps serve the needs of our homeless in Florida.

I have been listening to Sean Pittman's radio show lately. I loved hearing him and Gary Yordon chat all things on one of the more recent shows. Sean is all over Florida, on TV, radio, the Orange Bowl committee and as a lawyer but I first met Sean in the not for profit space. I was invited to a Children's Home Society Board Meeting back in 2010 or so and he was the Chair of the Board and lead the organization to new heights as they grew their mission to help our communities'

and unconditional regard for her fellow human beings.

My thanks to these wonderful human beings for their contributions to our state. They are certainly a reminder to make sure we do what we can as we might not all be able to score touchdowns in the football game of life, but we can make sure we throw some solid blocks, kick a nice field goal or even call the right play when needed.

As we close, we turn to Prime Minister of England (not the real one, he looks a little worked up, but the one from "Love Actually.") "Whenever I get gloomy with the state of the world, I think about the arrivals gate at Heathrow Airport. General opinion's starting to make out that we live in a world of hatred and greed, but I don't see that. It seems to me that love is everywhere. Often it's not particularly dignified or newsworthy, but it's always there – fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, boyfriends, girlfriends, old friends.