

# The Orlando Times

Your Key to Florida's African-American Community

## Taylor Morrison Partners With Second Harvest Food Bank Of Central Florida On Community Food Drive Through Dec. 20



Taylor Morrison's five communities throughout Central Florida will serve as drop off locations for canned goods and non-perishable items now through Dec. 20.

**O**RLANDO - Taylor Morrison is partnering with the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida to provide food and grocery products to the hungry this holiday season. Taylor Morrison's five communities throughout Central Florida will serve as drop off locations for canned goods and non-perishable items now through Dec. 20.

Harvest is the best way we can do that this year. I encourage the Orlando community to join us in this effort and bring goods by our sales centers throughout the month."

The public can bring canned goods and non-perishable items during the hours of noon to 6 p.m. Sunday and Monday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday to Taylor Morrison's five communities including:

- \* Carriage Pointe, 15524 Golden Bell Street, Winter Garden, FL 34787, (407) 905-4674
- \* Clayton Crossing, 5002 Cypress Branch Point, Oviedo, FL 32765, (407) 657-0291
- \* Lake Mary Landings, 300 Canyon Stone Circle, Lake Mary, FL 32746, (407) 324-0620

\* Saddlebrook, 207 Homestretch Boulevard, DeLand, FL 32724 (386) 785-0120

\* Terracina at Lake Forest, 5062 Fiorella Lane, Lake Forest, FL 32771, (407) 330-2267

All goods dropped off at Taylor Morrison communities will be donated to Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida whose mission is to distribute food and grocery products to hungry people and to educate the public about the causes and possible solutions to problems of domestic hunger. The organization donates food to more than 500 partners in six Central Florida counties. More information about Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida is available at [www.foodbankcentralflorida.org](http://www.foodbankcentralflorida.org).

## Florida NAACP & Black Caucus Wants More Black Businesses In Contract Mix

**O**RLANDO - The federal stimulus dollars flowing from Washington, D.C. may be pumping up some businesses in Florida's struggling economy, but when it comes to minority-owned companies, change has yet to come.

So was the conclusion of "The Status of Black Florida," a three-day issues conference held by The Florida Conference of Black State Legislators.

Organized by Caucus Chairman Senator Gary Siplin (D-Orlando), the initiative, began on November 18, included Florida NAACP President Adora Obi Nweze, who served on several panels and addressed a broad range of issues important to Black Floridians.

Siplin emphasized that the Caucus mission was to gather information to help build the agenda for the upcoming 2010 legislative session which begins in March. "We have to propose solutions that will take our community to a bet-

focused and vigilant for the future and our survival," Nweze added.

The three day conference hosted over forty experts and state and federal government department heads who fielded questions from participants. Conference panels included the Census Plan of Action, Energy Policy, Healthcare and Education, Corrections and Juvenile Justice, and Economic Advancements.

More than thirty 30 Black business professionals and owners participated in the Economic Advancement forum. Secretaries and top administrators from the Departments of Corrections, Health, Juvenile Justice, and Transportation gave status reports on Black business participation, which is low. Despite stimulus revenues pumped into the system, Black businesses, large or small are not included in many of the billions of dollars in contracts



Dwight Howard presents BETA Center with a \$25,000 check on December 3. His donation will assist in the start up of a new on-site learning center. Pictured from left to right: (BETA Center President/CEO Tammi Dooley, BETA Board Chairman Walter Hawkins, BETA Center Director of Development Lisa Blackwelder, Dwight Howard, Orange County Commissioner Bill Segal, Orlando Magic Director of Community Relations Karl Conley) PHOTO CREDIT Gary Bassing, Orlando Magic



Dwight Howard poses with some of his biggest fans at the BETA Center. Howard presented BETA with a \$25,000 check on December 3. His donation will assist in the start up of a new on-site learning center. PHOTO CREDIT Gary Bassing, Orlando Magic

## Orlando Magic's Dwight Howard Gives Back To Central Florida

### Howards' latest recipient, the BETA Center

**O**RLANDO - This was certainly a first for Dwight Howard - getting kicked as he was giving out an autograph - but there was nothing malicious about the shot the Orlando Magic's superstar center took.

"I think he's kind of ticklish," Howard said with a chuckle as he signed the onsite outfit of six-month-old Jayden. "My pen is tickling his ribs."

Howard gave plenty of autographs on Thursday and took dozens of pictures with fans big and small at Orlando's BETA Center. The BETA Center program provides middle school and high school academic training to teen moms throughout the Orange County School System's Alternative Education Program. The center provides tutoring to teen mothers so they can stay on track to graduation and future educational goals.

Howard, the winner of the Rich and Helen DeVos Community Enrichment Award each of the past three years, donated \$25,000 to the

BETA Center from the DeVos Foundation. The remaining \$25,000 from Howard's 2009 win of the Community Enrichment Award will be donated to the Blessings in a Backpack program.

Howard said on Thursday that BETA Center was a cause near and dear to his heart because he's seen through the years how teen mothers are sometimes treated. When Howard heard about the program that helps young mothers stay in school, he jumped at the chance to get involved.

"Trying to help these young teens means a lot to me. Anyway I can be of service, I'm happy to do it," Howard said. "I don't know what it's like to go through something like this, but I have seen how people have treated teen mothers and I'm just glad that they have a great place to come to like the BETA Center. They get their education and can be around other girls who are pregnant with small kids. It's a great thing."

And it's certainly a great thing

what Howard has done in the Orlando community. He was awarded the NBA Cares Community Assist Award for November because of his work at Florida Hospital. Howard helped to create a state-of-the-art game room designed for teenage patients at Florida Hospital for Children. As part of his "Dwight Howard's Big Change for Kids" program, Howard provided an initial \$30,000 to fund the new room, which will feature the latest in videogame technology, movies, board games, and education resources to provide young patients undergoing difficult medical treatment with a place to relax and have fun.

Howard said he made a promise to himself when he was selected first overall in the 2004 NBA Draft by the Magic that he would do whatever he could to give back to the Orlando community. And Howard saw the \$25,000 gift to the BETA Center as a small token for all the support he's gotten from Magic fans.

"That's just me, whatever I can do to help anybody that's what I'm

willing to do," Howard said. "I've been blessed with everything in life and I don't need anything. But I can always give back to other people, especially people who really need it."

"For me, it's just about putting a smile on other people's faces and it makes me happier about myself and where I am in my life doing stuff like this."

Howard certainly put a smile on the face of several infant children on Thursday. He took one baby, nicknamed Cupcake, into his massive arms and asked if she wanted to go home with him. He bumped fists with one 3-year-old boy and he taught 2-year-old Masiyah Blount how to chant. "Dee-fense! Dee-fense!"

Christy Blount, Masiyah's 19-year-old mother, was in awe of Howard and said what he was doing for others should be lauded.

"It's so exciting just getting to meet him," Christy said. "It's a really great thing he's doing, helping the girls here at the center. It really means a lot to a lot of people here."



Senator Gary Siplin



NAACP President Adora Obi Nweze

ter place. Black Floridians are disproportionately impacted in a negative way, in every category from health care to employment to contract participation. Combine that with the bad economy, and there's a problem," Siplin said.

"We are not even close to where we need to be as participants on all levels. We will stay

awarded thus far.

Senator Siplin noted that the forum resulted in a positive exchange and pledges of future cooperation. But he cautioned that both he and Nweze would follow up on those commitments and monitor their progress during the next several months.