

Here are 3 encouraging developments in our city

OUR OPINION

Editorial Board

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Amid the daily sturm und drang of reporting daily events around Tallahassee — our state-leading crime rate, quarrels over growth and preservation, the passing political scene — we really like to have an opportunity to discuss some good news.

So it was nice that we were able to report not one, but three upbeat, encouraging developments in our community. It helps remind Tallahasseeans that there are many optimistic, hard-working people dedicated to helping some of the most needy among us.

The newly opened **FSU PrimaryHealth** is going to focus on improving medical services for the southwest community. The 10,000-square-foot center at Roberts Avenue and Eisenhower Street, not far from Sabal Palm Elementary School, is not an emergency room, but will provide a wide range of health care services for an underserved part of Leon County.

FSU medical students will work with doctors and other providers, gaining hands-on experience to augment their classroom learning. The facility will also have mental and behavioral health specialists practicing there, to address stress management, anxiety and depression, as well as impacts of drugs and alcohol abuse.

“This is really a major step forward for the College of Medicine in practicing what we have been teaching for the past 15 years,” said Dr. Daniel Van Durme, a senior associate dean for clinical community affairs. “We’ve been teaching about addressing the needs of underserved communities, we’ve been teaching about patient-centered care, and we’ve been teaching students about dealing with the community’s health.”

For another kind of health

care, the Apalachee Center and the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church are teaming up to open a mental-health center for Frenchtown residents and homeless people in the area. The Bethel Family Counseling and Outreach Center on Tennessee Street is on the edge of Frenchtown, an area with documented higher levels of anxiety and depression among area residents.

The Rev. R.B. Holmes of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, which previously ran the family counseling center, contacted the Apalachee Center about starting the partnership. Apalachee will reassign some staff to the new facility from its Florida Assertive Community Treatment Team.

“If you look at all the inner-city issues across the country, and specifically here, many people go without mental health care,” Holmes said. He said the new center means “people can live a quality life with the correct mental health counseling and medication.”

And then there’s Joseph House. That’s a ministry launched in late May by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, helping exconvicts fit back into society. Located on Bradford Road, just west of Meridian, the program is intended to let the community feel safe living with former felons in their midst — as well as helping those men and women reintegrate into the outside world.

“For too long, I think we’ve had organizations like this put into certain areas of town that can be heavy on social services but aren’t well-integrated with the larger communities in our area,” said Father Dustin Feddon, executive director of Joseph House. “At times, that cuts people off from networking and connecting with good, vital jobs and a safe community.”

We wish these three new projects a lot of success. It’s nice to have some happy news for a change.

The Rev. Dustin Feddon, executive director of Joseph House, and intern Tyler Parker stand on the front porch of Joseph House, a ministry to assist the formerly incarcerated, created by the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee that recently opened in Tallahassee. TORI SCHNEIDER/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

Dr. Daniel Van Durme walks into the new FSU PrimaryHealth center at Roberts Avenue and Eisenhower Street on the southwest side of the city. ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT