Sinners do good for others

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

Local nonprofits, including JASMYN (Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network), have Sinners to thank this past Christmas.

Acting more like saints, the Sinners, a competitive women’s rugby club established in 2006 by Melissa “Mamma Mel” Newkirk, held a food drive in November for JASMYN.

“During the holidays many look to larger organizations for food drives. We wanted to support a small, local non-profit that may not get as many donations,” said player Laura Ferrara, aka Unicorn, of Riverside.

“The volunteers at JASMYN were so excited to receive the food and toiletry items we collected. It’s great to support such a wonderful cause right here in our own community.”

This is the first time the team has done a food drive, but not the first time it has been involved in other nonprofit activities.

“We get involved with Girls on the Run multiple times a year to help with their biannual 5K,” said Newkirk, team president. “The women have also helped with fundraisers for Team Kate, a young girl who came down with a rare form of cancer; Newkirk stated she has recently gone into remission.

The team is composed of about 30 women and two coaches. Although Newkirk was not initially thrilled with the proposed team name, once she saw the logo she said she was won over.

The Sinners includes students, military, teachers, professionals, some who are residents in Riverside, Ortega and San Jose; the majority live in Arlington, the Southside and the Beaches. They practice every Tuesday and Thursday nights 7-9 p.m. at 9A/Baymeadows Regional Park and home games are played at Huffman Park.

“We compete against women’s and collegiate rugby clubs all over the Southeast,” said Newkirk. This season the team’s record was 4-1.

Red Shoes, ugly sweaters support Ronald McDonald House

The Red Shoe Crew, the young professionals group which supports Ronald McDonald House, ended the 2015 season with its traditional Ugly Sweater Party. The event was held Dec. 10 at Aardwolf Brewing Company with food by Son of a Butcher food truck. Raffle items included gift cards for V Pizza, Hightide Burrito Company, Firehouse Subs, Maple Street Biscuit Company, Painting with a Twist and golf for four at the Blue Sky Golf Club.