

Mayor's Mentors

A guest column by Mayor Alvin Brown

Dear Friends,

I recently launched Mayor's Mentors, an exciting new partnership in education that will pair dedicated volunteers with our youth to supplement classroom lessons and increase our graduation rate.

I have set ambitious goals for Mayor's Mentors and I need your help to achieve them. Goal number one is to train and place 500 highly qualified mentors in our schools by April 1. After that, my plans are to expand this program to recruit even more mentors from community and faith-based organizations.

These caring mentors will help children in our community reach their full potential. We don't ever want any child to lose hope.

That's why I'm asking you to sign up to be a Mayor's Mentor today. Would you be willing to donate an hour a week? The need is tremendous, and I assure you that the value of your service is priceless. We need to prepare the leaders of tomorrow to ensure that Jacksonville continues to grow – and thrive – in the 21st Century economy.

This partnership can and will change lives. I can still remember the mentors I had growing up and I trace my personal success to the sturdy foundation of character and hard work established by their guidance. Statistics show that exposure to caring adults will make our youth more likely to go to college and less likely to experiment



with alcohol or drugs.

The United Way of Northeast Florida is one of many community partners making Mayor's Mentors possible. To become a mentor, please call United Way's 2-1-1 or sign up online here. You can also visit www.coj.net/mayorsmentors for more information and to view my public service announcement about Mayor's Mentors.

I also encourage you to forward this email on to your friends and family, and ask them to help out as well. And please join the discussion on Twitter by using the hashtag #MayorsMentors. Together, we can chart a more prosperous future for our youth and our city. May God bless you and your families throughout this holiday season.

Remembering the Military This Holiday Season

A busy day of holiday visits gave Mayor Alvin Brown the opportunity to thank the men and women who serve in America's armed forces.

The mayor's first stop came along the Florida East Coast Railway tracks where employees of the railroad company pulled up with a shipment of more than 5,200 gifts for the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program.

Later in the morning, the mayor participated in Wreaths Across America at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. The wreath-laying ceremony honored departed members of the United States military at more than 570 locations around the world.

The mayor joined in an effort to lay



the nation. Also thanked were the military families for all the support they've given during times of deployment.

The mayor sang "Stand By Me," the 1961 classic song written by Ben E. King, to entertain the crowd of more than 100 people.

The Mayport party was on base. The mayor joined JAXPORT CEO Paul Anderson and elected

officials from the Beaches in thanking Mayport personnel for their dedication to the nation's safety and Jacksonville's future as a military-friendly city. City Councilman Jim Love, a Navy veteran, also was there.

There were about 150 people at the party. Part of the festivities surrounded large screen televisions broadcasting the annual Army-Navy football game.

Military installations in Jacksonville carry a \$12.1 billion economic impact in the city and a \$14.2 billion impact throughout the region.



3,476 wreaths, enough to adorn every grave in the cemetery. Others at the event included Capt. Jeffrey Maclay, commanding officer at Naval Air Station Jacksonville; Ralph Terreault from the Patriot Guard Riders; and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

"With the holidays here, it is important to remember those who are no longer with us to enjoy everything they fought for," said Mayor Brown. "It was an honor to participate in an event that pays tribute to all of the brave men and women who dedicated their lives to ensuring our nation would remain free."

In the afternoon, the mayor attended holiday parties for a local Army Reserve unit and Naval Station Mayport.

The U.S. Army Reserves' 10th

MAYORS CORNER



Great Crowd for Mayor's Holiday Festival

The Mayor's Holiday Festival for Senior Citizens drew a crowd of more than 2,000 to the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center.

Jacksonville's seniors gathered for an afternoon of dancing and dinner. Mayor Alvin Brown said the event is a great opportunity for fellowship and to say thank you for a lifetime of contributions to the city.

"You've set the foundation for Jacksonville's future by building your homes and starting businesses here. You've raised families here to make Jacksonville a stronger community," said the mayor. "And I know

your contributions go even deeper than that. Seventy-one thousand military veterans throughout Northeast Florida are age 65 or older."

The annual event is hosted by the city's Office of Special Events, the Mayor's Special Events Advisory Council and Community and Senior Center Services.

There also were more than 350 volunteers representing a number of organizations.

Throughout metropolitan Jacksonville, there are almost 425,000 people age 60 or older.

Mayor Joins American and European Lawmakers to Talk Economics at JAXPORT

Mayor Alvin Brown met with an international delegation to talk about JAXPORT's place in the global economy.

The meeting was part of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue, a goodwill effort that helps to build relationships among European and American lawmakers.

U.S. Rep. Cliff Stearns, R – Fla., co-chairs the event and picked Jacksonville as a meeting site. Mayor Brown spoke to the group about JAXPORT's prospects for job growth.

The port supports 65,000 jobs and has an annual economic impact of more than \$19 billion. Mayor Brown said it's an example of an economic engine that will be crucial to help Jacksonville turn around the unemployment rate.

"When we talk about putting people back to work, we're not just talking about a need for jobs. We want good jobs to provide the type of wages that empower workers to own homes and raise families," said Mayor Brown.