

# KENDALL GAZETTE

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## Residents share ideas about improving Kendall Dr. corridor

BY RICHARD YAGER

**S**treetscapes, transportation and land uses are top priorities to improve N. Kendall Drive and adjacent areas, as voiced by more than 100 West Kendall residents during a Mar. 1 Kendall Corridor Charrette.

A dozen tables were staffed by Miami-Dade County planning specialists and architects to begin plotting a potential new look for Kendall Drive (SW 88th Street) and one-half mile on either side of the main thoroughfare from SW 137th Avenue to Krome (SW 177th) Avenue.

"An absolutely incredible day, having ideas, suggestions, comments and concerns from the community," Miami-Dade District 11 Commissioner Juan C.



Teacher Esther Garvett makes a point to Miami Dade Commissioner Juan Zapata while Frank Irrizzary listens at Kendall Corridor Charrette.

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**Library's Museum Pass Program: Your ticket to arts, entertainment**

BY VINORA HAMILTON

**M**iami-Dade Public Library cardholders now have greater access to the arts with the addition of the new Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) to its Museum Pass Program.

The Museum Pass Program offers patrons, with a valid library card, free admission to Deering Estate at Cutler, Fruit and Spice Park, HistoryMiami, Miami Children's Museum, Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, and PAMM (formerly offered as Miami Art Museum).

How the pass works:

- To check out a Museum Pass, cardholders may visit any branch or mobile library stop and select the attraction of choice.

- Passes are good for a family of four. (For Deering Estate, a family of four is two adults and two children ages 4-14, and for Fruit and Spice Park, a family of four is two adults and two children ages 6-11.)

- Passes are good for one visit.
- Passes are not renewable or available for reserve.

- Passes are valid for seven days from the time of checkout.

- Passes are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

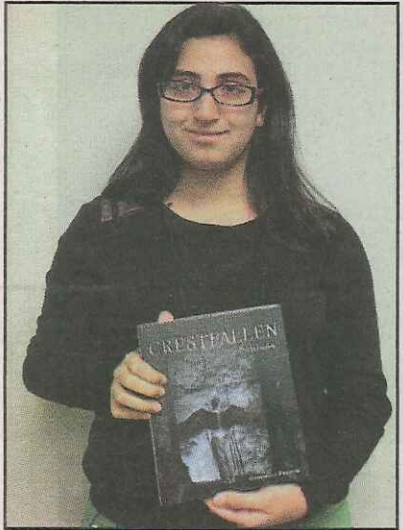
- Passes will not be replaced if lost or stolen.

- Only one pass may be checked out at a time.

Each attraction may apply restrictions, blackout dates or separate admission for special events and exhibitions.

For complete details about the program, visit <www.mdpls.org>.

## Local high school student publishes her first novel



Gabriella Francis is pictured with her book, *Crestfallen*.

BY RICHARD YAGER

**G**abriella Francis has experienced the thrill few writers enjoy in a lifetime.

For admiring friends on Feb. 23 at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, 2055 Coral Way, Francis happily signed copies of her newly published book, *Crestfallen*, a fantasy-styled tale of a curious girl named Destiny.

According to the copy on the book cover, Destiny is a girl who "takes a wrong turn in life, setting her on the path of danger, jeopardy and dark romance" in a "daring adventure" that Francis said, "I spent as much time writing as I did getting the volume in print."

The John A. Ferguson High sophomore said she already is planning to write a sequel that will trace Destiny's origins and how she discovers new abilities.

"It took me seven months to write the book

and six months to get it through the publishing process," she said, saving "all the money I received from my Sweet 15 with my grandmother helping me to get it copyrighted and in print."

Also inspiring her were her grandfathers on both sides of her family — maternal grandfather, Edward, and paternal grandfather, Joseph, a poet.

Her inspiration for *Crestfallen* came from reading the popular saga, *Hush Hush* by Becca Fitzpatrick, a successful young adult author who wrote a similar tale of a girl whose romance leads her into a strange adventure.

Any problems with first-time authorship?

"I faced things like writer's block, and it was difficult when plot holes started to come up," Gabriella admitted. "And there were people

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## H&R Block Answers Six Essential Tax Questions for First-Time Filers

More than 5 million taxpayers will file their own individual tax return for the first time this tax season and they may not know where to start.

Generally, anyone earning income should consider filing a return. However, filing requirements depend on a combination of circumstances, including filing status, income and age. Workers who are not required to file a tax return because their income is below their filing threshold should file a return to get a refund of all taxes withheld and/or to claim other tax benefits.

Form W-4 is completed by the employee and is used by the employer to determine how much income tax is withheld from paychecks to cover tax liability.

Form W-2 is prepared by employers at the end of the year and reports wages paid and taxes withheld for the year so employees can use the information to file their tax returns. Employers mail Form W-2 in late January and some provide them online. W-2 information also is sent to the IRS and the Social Security Administration.

There are three versions of Form 1040: 1040EZ, 1040A and Form 1040. Form

1040EZ is for the least complex individual tax situations and Form 1040 is for the most complex.



Maria Alfert, EA

The deadline for filing federal individual tax returns is typically April 15. This is also the deadline to request an automatic six-month extension to file, generally allowing taxpayers until Oct. 15 to submit a return without a late-filing penalty. To avoid late payment penalties and interest, any taxes owed must be paid by the April deadline.

Do-it-yourself software and online tax programs select the appropriate forms and use everyday language, making tax law easier to understand. However, the assistance from a qualified tax professional can help put taxpayers of all income levels at ease and does not require any understanding of taxes. Ultimately, it is the taxpayer's comfort level and personal preference that determine the best method.

For information about assistance preparing your taxes, contact Maria Alfert, Master Tax Advisor and Enrolled Agent. H&R Block office is located at 11772 N. Kendall Drive, Miami. Call 305-595-6890 or visit [www.hrblock.com](http://www.hrblock.com).

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Zapata said about the four-hour session at Felix Varela High School.

The school's cafeteria tables were used for small resident groups to pinpoint areas and land usages, jotted down by county planners who also sketched suggestions on maps.

Primary resident focuses summarized by Jess Linn, Miami-Dade Principal Planner:

- Landscaping, wide sidewalks, and bike paths/lanes for SW 88th Street and connecting streets.

- Improved transit service, bus shelters, installation of a local trolley/circulator bus service, and traffic calming circles.

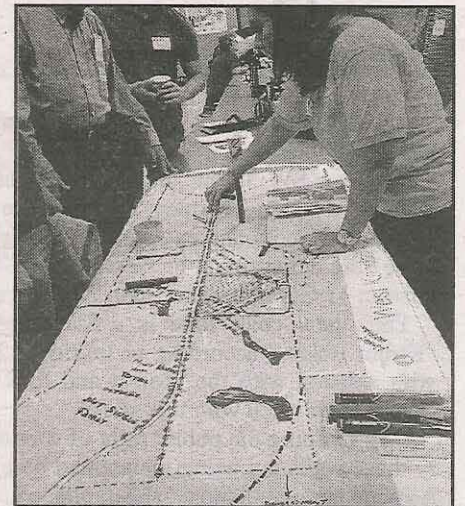
- A better mix of land uses adding more areas for employment and entertainment as well as civic facilities, including a community building.

Because not everyone could attend the Mar. 1 event, Zapata arranged to have planners at his West Kendall office daily until Mar. 7 to permit additional resident input.

All input will be analyzed "as a whole" to develop a framework reflecting the desires of the community in future development, according to planning procedures outlined during a resident meeting on Oct. 6, 2013.

A follow-up presentation will be conducted with initial recommendations by planners before issuing a draft report for review, Linn said. A final report will be presented to the Planning Advisory Board and county commissioners for acceptance.

"We have not yet determined any specific means for implementation such as zoning changes and the like," he added, estimating the review process to take about



Ideas go on planning maps.

one to three months before formal actions.

"I asked for a charrette and this endeavor was really more than I could have wished for," said West Kendall activist Martha Backer. "It really was a citizen-driven program."

"At our table, we worked on the map for about an hour before making our presentation that included ideas for better street landscaping and lighting which could be decorative, signage, and a bus hub for park and ride passengers."

She said they also included new soccer fields, mixed use business and residential areas, places to safely walk in shopping areas, and sidewalks. She added that looked at a civic center for cultural arts and area bike paths with safety barriers.

"The idea was not to worry about financial things but to form a 'wish list' of what we would like to see."

## NOVEL from page 1

who thought I was too young to get published."

Now that she is published, Gabriella advises others to "have a rough draft" and "always be planning" the literary path of fictional characters.


"If you ever get discouraged, don't think about giving up. Think about what you want to accomplish and keep the outcome in mind," she said.

A student of English classics, she aims to continue her literary journey at the

Savannah (GA) College of Art and Design, known as "SCAD," a private university specializing in creative careers.

Meanwhile, her family in the Deer Creek neighborhood is more than proud of her effort, as expressed by Gabriella's mother Sandra Francis: "She's really worked hard for this."

*Crestfallen* in paperback (\$13.72) is available through Amazon, as well as a Kindle version for \$3.99, published by Archway, a division of Simon & Schuster.



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