

# First-time author strives to keep hope alive for young offenders

**Liltera R. Williams**  
Special to The Recorder

In a room filled with close to 100 supporters at Three Layers Cafe, which is nestled in the center of historic Springfield, first-time Author Renata A. Hannans spoke passionately about her nonfiction book "P.S. Never Give Up Hope."

The book chronicles the lives of 10 current and former youthful offenders as they candidly share details of the mistakes, consequences and regrets surrounding the irreversible crimes they committed. A project that was two years in the making proved to be a worthy effort as the author fought back tears to express the severity of a recurring epidemic that affects many juveniles worldwide.

She later declared the purpose of her mission by stating, "My goal is to spread awareness and make kids think of the consequences of their actions." Hannans also made it very clear that

she does not condone juvenile crime.

Instead, she hopes to bring more attention to the harsh punishments placed upon youthful offenders who may not fully understand the consequences of a respective sentence.

"Are you the same person you were when you were a teenager?" she asked the crowd.

As a member of the crowd, I did not only get to witness the delivery of such a powerful speech, I actually had the privilege of assisting the author throughout the entire process. We met at a Starbucks last summer. At that point, she had only composed an introduction and two of the 10 chapters, and presented me with one of the letters she had received from a subject in the book.

Over the course of seven months, we worked together to decipher hundreds of letters that included firsthand

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Chat with any one of the four sisters who own and manage Culhane's Irish Pub, and she will tell you they've achieved the "American Dream." Lynda, Michelle, Mary Jane, and Aine's fascinating story dates back to a childhood in Ireland, where they experienced an almost magical upbringing, working alongside their parents on the family farm. There, they developed a genuine love for the

land, organic, quality food, Irish traditions and hard work – a mix of lessons and passions that are paying off today. Their authentic Irish restaurant is one of the most-talked about establishments in its industry.

Since opening its doors in 2005, Culhane's has captured the attention of both everyday diners and culinary critics. It landed a coveted spot on the Food Network's "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" and has been covered by local reporters fascinated by the pub's distinctive menu and entertainment options. The Guinness Stew (as seen in photo above) will be featured in Guy Fieri's new cookbook this Father's Day. The cook book is bigger than his Triple D show! Secret house spices and plenty of Guinness bring a fresh twist to Irish favorites such as Bangers and Mash, Shepherd's Pie, and Arthur's Fish and Chips. Other savory delights are the pub's famous Blarney Lamb Sliders and the hearty Dingle Fish Pie, which are "comfort foods" gone gourmet. The sisters would like to acknowledge Chrissy for her hard work and dedication! Chef Chrissy is wearing the green chef jacket.



—CHEF CHRISSEY SCHNEIDER



## Culhane's Irish Pub

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www.CulhanesIrishPub.com



## Sidney Cardel's

Shore Décor & Fabulous Finds!



Sidney Cardel's, Shore Decor and Fabulous Finds is owned and operated by mother/daughter duo, Cathy Thomasson Hartford & Cara Murphy

With a double major in Fashion Merchandising and Fashion Design from Florida State University, Cathy Thomasson Hartford always knew she wanted to own her own store. Through the encouragement, trust and support of her dear friend and business partner, Sidney Cardel's opened its door in October of 2011. She was a key account sales rep in the home, decorative accessory and gift industry for 20+ years prior to opening her store. Her knowledge of sales, customer service, product and design trends serve her well as a storeowner.

Cara Murphy is the Manager, Marketing Director and Trollbeads Expert at Sidney Cardel's. After graduating from Florida State University with a degree in Studio Art and Art History, she thrives on the freedom to be creative and share her artistic background throughout the store. She is the eye behind the merchandising and visual displays at Sidney Cardel's. She is a freelance writer and photographer as well as a commissioned artist. A native beach girl, you can often find her in the ocean or riding her skateboard down 1st Street.

Sidney Cardel's carries various lines including slip covered furniture, Old Gringo Boots, Trollbeads, decorative accessories, jewelry and kitchen accessories. They also have design services available. Located in Jax Beach at 412 2nd St South. Visit them on Facebook and Twitter and follow them on Instagram.

Check out their website, [www.sidneycardels.com](http://www.sidneycardels.com)



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Janet Johnson, in practice since 1994, is committed to aggressively defending people accused in all criminal matters. She is a member of the Florida Bar and the Colorado Bar, as well as the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and is on the faculty of the FACDL "Blood, Breath & Tears" annual DUI seminar. Ms. Johnson has appeared as a commentator on *First Coast News*, CNN, HLN, *Fox News*, TruTV and *The Wall Street Journal* Radio Network. She has received an AV Preeminent rating by Martindale-Hubbell, the highest ranking possible from her peers.

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# Author

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accounts of life before and during prison. With crimes that range from drug abuse to robbery to murder, every teenage subject in the book was sentenced as an adult.

The book serves as a form of redemption for the condemned criminals. It allows them to humbly and truthfully share their side of the story to prevent others from making the same mistakes.

The author/editor partnership that I developed with Hannans required long periods of research. We spent one weekend at the Jacksonville Public Library downtown searching for supporting news articles of crimes that occurred more than 20 years ago.

I also visited with her at her home to study the incoming letters that continued to flow from each youthful offender with whom she corresponded.

In November, we traveled to the Mayo Correctional Institution to visit an inmate serving 40 years for felony murder, an eye-opening experience for me, but familiar territory for Hannans. She had already traveled to various prisons to meet with every other subject in the book.

"The movement has only just begun.



Provided by Liltera Williams

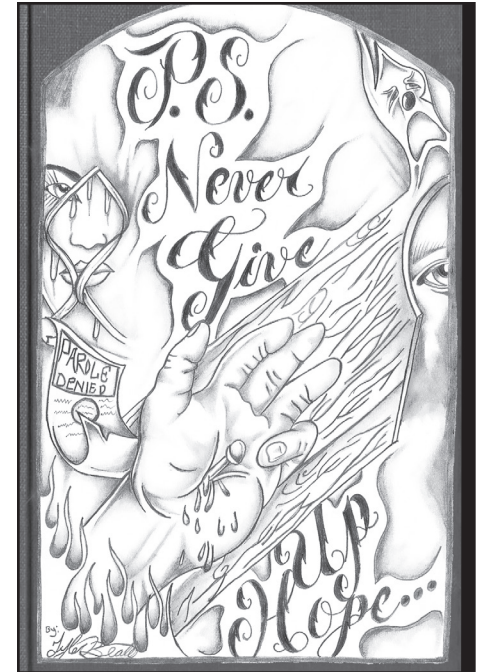
First Coast resident Renata Hannans teamed with Liltera Williams on her recently-released book.

Selling books is great but saving lives is better," Hannans told me.

A native of Jacksonville, she maintains an avid interest in criminal law. The journey to spreading hope started when Hannans began working as a case manager at a local Jacksonville high school. In addition, she has assisted Oscar-win-

ning attorney Patrick McGuinness with many cases as a pro bono intern.

McGuinness supported Hannans at the signing and she publicly addressed him as her mentor. Ron Davis, the father of slain teen Jordan Davis, was also in attendance. His son was not a youthful offender, but was sadly mistaken as a



criminal based on his appearance.

Hannans plans to speak publicly about her message as much as possible and will also begin filming a documentary featuring live video messages from subjects in the book.

"P.S. Never Give Up Hope" enables readers to truly appreciate the importance of good decision-making. The book is available for purchase at [www.psnevergiveuphope.com](http://www.psnevergiveuphope.com).

## Beaches local celebrates Dental Health Month



On Feb. 24, Shreena Patel of Beaches Orthodontics celebrated Dental Health Month with a visit to The Bolles School Ponte Vedra Beach campus to help educate students about taking care of their teeth. All five of the students at left are current patients of Patel.

Provided by Mark Berman

## Sawgrass

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growth," said Miller. "Ponte Vedra is a very welcoming environment, with top-notch golf courses and pristine beaches, and I look forward to spreading the word to leisure, group and business travelers alike."

A native of New Orleans, Miller earned a Bachelor of Liberal Arts Degree from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. She currently resides in Ponte Vedra, Florida.

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