



Florida Voices for Animals, Inc.

PO Box 17523 Tampa FL 33682 www.FloridaVoicesForAnimals.org
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Apr/May/June 2026



Saturday, April 18, 2026 1pm-4pm

Lotus Vegan Restaurant presents **POWER YOUR HEALTH WITH POWER FOODS**

Discussion - Dinner - Book Signing

Phone: (727) 549-1688 . (727) 544-0103



Dr. Neal Barnard, president of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

Dr. Neal Barnard is an Adjunct Professor of Medicine at the George Washington University, President of the Physicians Committee, and one of the world's leading nutrition experts.

Certain foods have intrinsic properties to speed weight loss, cut cholesterol, and promote longevity. They are also the most delicious foods you can imagine. On April 18, Neal Barnard, MD, gives you the chance to learn about and taste these foods and put their power to work.

New York Times bestselling author of *Power Foods for the Brain*

NEAL D. BARNARD, MD

With recipes by DUSTIN HARDER *and* LINDSAY S. NIXON

THE POWER FOODS DIET

The Breakthrough Plan That
Traps, Tames, and Burns Calories
for Easy and Permanent Weight Loss



Cost: \$30 per person.

THE COST FOR THE EVENT INCLUDES THE PRICELESS
DISCUSSION BY DR. BARNARD, DINNER AND BOOK
SIGNING

Food catered by Lotus Vegan Restaurant

Event Location:

**M & N Event Hall
7725 78th Street North
Pinellas Park, FL 33781**



**Physicians
Committee**
for Responsible Medicine

FVA Have-A-Heart 2026

FVA's 31st Annual Have A Heart for the Animals Awards Dinner Fundraiser was held at the Carrollwood Rec Center in Tampa. Chef Panos Ly, of World Vegan Cuisine prepared a buffet feast with an incredible variety of vegan food that was enjoyed by over 100 attendees! The popular silent auction full of lots of donated items, that included: beautiful gift baskets, gift cards to area businesses and many vegan restaurants, lots of books and fun items, including the coveted gift basket donated

Items that included: beautiful gift baskets, gift cards to area businesses and many vegan restaurants, lots of books and fun items, including the coveted gift basket donated by Friends of Island Parks and Caladesi Island Adventure, full of goodies from Honeymoon Island State Park was quite successful and helped FVA raise much needed funds.



Gene Baur, CEO of Farm Sanctuary, Watkins Glen, NY, was the featured speaker at HAH. Gene grew up in Hollywood, where he did commercials for McDonald's and others as a young man. However, upon learning some truths about animal agriculture, he became vegan and started selling tofu dogs at Grateful Dead concerts. As his knowledge about animal suffering and the consequent harm to our planet expanded, so did his activism. There are now two Farm Sanctuaries, one in New York and one in California, for rescued "food" animals. Gene lives in Washington, D.C., where he works on legislation designed to lessen or stop the suffering of farmed animals. He encourages alternate uses of land where animals are raised for food, such as farmers switching to plant products, and advocates for vegan meals in schools. Gene's activism includes authoring books, such as Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds about Animals and Food, writing articles and opinion pieces for newspapers, and appearing as a guest on numerous broadcasts and podcasts. - by **Cathy Unruh**

Gene Baur, founder of Farm Sanctuary, Watkins Glen, NY, was our keynote speaker for our Have-A-Heart Dinner & Silent Auction Fundraiser.



Vice President, Kim Gronemeyer (on left), awarded FVA Business of the Year, to Thalia Tatham (right), House of Vegan.



Board member, Laura Pennington (on left), awarded Florence Marsan (right), with FVA Activist of the Year.



Suzanne House (on left) was awarded: FVA Lifetime Activist of the Year by Myriam Parham (right)



"Becoming a vegan is not about self denial; it's more a matter of self-awareness. It is about trying new foods and broadening your palate, expressing the joy of being alive, and knowing that you're making a daily effort to live less violently and more sustainably." Gene Baur, Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds about Animals and Food.



Myriam Parham, President of FVA, presented Max Chesnes, Environmental Reporter Extraordinaire Award. He wrote the story about our hero, Maggie, and the 2024 destructive plan to develop FL State Parks

(Continued on page 3)



Thalia Tatham presented the FVA Animal Hero of the Year to **Maggie Serus** "The Tortoise Lady"

Maggie didn't set out to become an advocate, a symbol, or a hero. She simply saw a problem. She saw vulnerable tortoises losing their lives to something preventable- speed and distraction. Maggie didn't wait for someone else. Day after day, she showed up, standing in the heat, in the wind, holding a sign, raising awareness, and quite literally standing between harm and the lives of creatures that cannot speak for themselves. What makes Maggie extraordinary isn't just the tortoises that were saved, though that alone is remarkable. It's the reminder she gives all of us: that one person, with consistency, heart, and conviction, can shift an entire environment. A Hero is not defined by grand gestures, but by relentless compassion, by the willingness to care when it would be easier not to, and to act when silence would be more comfortable. Maggie embodies that spirit fully. Because of her, drivers slowed down, awareness grew, and countless lives continued. It is truly an honor to recognize Maggie as this year's Animal Hero.

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Lotus Vegan Restaurant/FVA Speaking Events



Ellen Jaffe Jones, Speaker, Health & Fitness Coach, Plant-based Author, is demonstrating cardio, balance & weight training to prevent Osteoporosis!



Jacinda Shapiro, RN, CDCES, DipACLM speaks about The Protein Myth and The Diabetes Epidemic

*** **

NEW FVA EVENT!

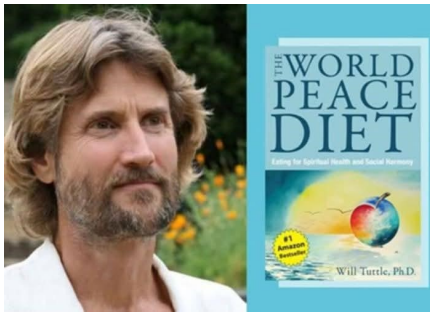


FVA Hike & Dine!



FVA is proud to announce a new bi-weekly event called Hike & Dine hosted by **Nachiket (Nachi) Burade**.

Will Tuttle at Lotus Vegan



Will Tuttle



Madeleine Tuttle



Attendees at Lotus Vegan

*** FVA in Action - Quarter 1, 2026 ***

Again, we share with you our recent FVA meetup events! We have over 4100 signed up as 'interested' in our group and activities. As you can see, we continue to have a variety of opportunities for you to become involved. WHERE ARE YOU? Please join our Meetup group, sign up for events that interest you, then attend the events and help the animals! (If for any reason you are unable to attend, *please* be kind enough to change your RSVP. This will help us know what attendance to expect at our events and plan appropriately.)

FVA in the Community:

2/5, 3/5 - Vegan Support Groups held for the past two quarters. Our monthly meetings are Open Forums, held virtually via Zoom. You can join in great discussions with some regular attendees and new ones each time. No pressure to chat, but we always like everyone to introduce themselves. Join our hosts: Kimberly Gronemeyer, Psy.D., Myriam Parham, RD, CDCES, and Cathy Unruh, Journalist, Author, and Animal Advocate.

1/2, 2/6 & 3/6 - Karaoke and Potluck Nights at Universalist Unitarian Church, a monthly event organized by FVA Board member, Trevor Chin. Those who attend enjoy sharing yummy vegan foods, meeting new people, and having fun singing or listening to those brave ones who do!

2/21 - Our first of a new series of refreshing biweekly hike/nature walks followed by a community meal at a local vegan spot. Six people, including Nachiket, our delightful guide, enjoyed the lovely walk and then a delicious lunch, at Divine Leaf Vegan, a hidden treasure inside Nutrition Smart in Wesley Chapel. Divine Leaf is full of healthy and comfort food choices that will delight everyone. All food is freshly prepared by a small group of friendly and efficient staff ready to please your palate.

Join us at any of the future events of this series. You will enjoy multiple benefits, including:

1. connecting with like-minded people
2. supporting vegan restaurants (many are closing)
3. Boosting your physical + mental health in a fun, low-pressure way

3/8 - Al Lopez Park Quarterly Cleanup – We had 11 wonderful attendees, who accomplished a lot in a short time. Huge thanks to our hard-working volunteers, many of our usual and two new helpers. All greatly appreciated! Next time we hope more will join us, as the trash never stops. Thanks for ALL your help!

Al Lopez Park Year-Round Feral Cats feeding, trapping for medical care and/or sterilizations-

The feral cat care and feedings have been coordinated by Tom Bird for many years. We now need more volunteers. Currently a few dedicated volunteers take turns once a week making sure the cats are fed. Thanks to Tom Bird, Suzanne House, Ron Gray, Laura Pennington, Amy Anderson, Maggie Litchman, Shawn Beckland and Kenny Echezabal for doing this 365 days a year. Total dedication! Please volunteer to take a turn if possible! We REALLY could use the help!

PLEASE consider helping us with our feral cat colony medical bills fund. This also helps sterilize any cat that joins any of the colonies.

Media and Other Activities:

1/25 – Lotus Vegan Restaurant, Pinellas Park Social – A delicious buffet meal was shared by a sold-out group of over 60 FVA volunteers & friends. Our speaker, Jacinda Shapiro, gave an informative talk on “the Protin Myth and the Diabetes Epidemic. Jacinda is the owner and operator of Empower Me Diabetes Health. She is a Registered Nurse (RN), Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (CDCES), and a Diplomate of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (DipACLM). John Nguyen provided lovely music during the meal.

2/22 – FVA’s 31st Annual Have A Heart for the Animals Awards Dinner Fundraiser
Our annual awards were as follows: (For more details on each award please see Page 2)

This year’s **animal hero award** went to **Maggie Serus**, the Honeymoon Island tortoise lady, presented by Thalia Tatham, owner of House of Vegano.

A surprise award, the Environmental Reporter Extraordinaire was presented to Max Chesnes, Tampa Bay Times, reporter, presented by Myriam Parham.

This year’s FVA Business Supporter of 2025 was awarded to **House of Vegano**, accepted by **Thalia Tatham**, owner and presented by Kim Gronemeyer.

Florence Marsan was recognized as **FVA Activist of the Year** and the award was presented by Laura Pennington.

Suzanne House received the well-deserved **Lifetime Achievement Award**. Which was presented by Myriam Parham.

(Continued on page 7)

The Importance of Supporting Local Vegan Restaurants - Laura Weiss

You might not it, but our local vegan restaurants are facing an incredibly challenging time. In just the past few years, 23 vegan restaurants have been forced to close their doors. Think about that for a moment: 23 places where you could enjoy plant-based meals, explore new flavors, or support businesses that align with values like sustainability, animal welfare, and health. These closures aren't just statistics, they represent dreams that were shattered, jobs that were lost, and a community that has been weakened. Vegan restaurants are often small, independent businesses, and when one of them closes, it sends ripples through the entire ecosystem—affecting farmers, suppliers, workers, and customers who rely on these spaces for connection and nourishment.

But we *can* make a difference.

The solution is simple: we need to show up. We need to support these businesses, not just when we're feeling like trying something new, but as an ongoing commitment to the values they represent. It's not just about food; it's about supporting ethical choices, promoting environmental sustainability, and standing by businesses that care deeply about the impact they have on our world. When we dine at local vegan restaurants, we're doing more than satisfying our hunger. We're sending a message that we care about the future of our community, our planet, and the lives of animals. We're helping to keep small businesses alive and thriving, ensuring that the variety of plant-based options continues to grow in our area.

And it's not just about the big, flashy names. Every local vegan café, diner, and bakery plays a vital role in the fabric of our local economy. They're creating jobs, supporting local farmers, and contributing to a more sustainable, compassionate world. By supporting these restaurants, we're helping to diversify our dining options and encourage a culture of health, inclusivity, and kindness. We need to support every vegan restaurant, spread the word about their incredible food and the values they stand for. Whether it's a casual takeout night, a celebration at your favorite vegan spot, or simply sharing your experiences on social media, every little action helps.

Together, we can ensure that these restaurants continue to flourish. We can make sure that we don't lose any more of the places that make our community vibrant, diverse, and forward-thinking.

All vegan establishments need our support year-round!

**Tampa, St.Pete, Pinellas Park, Wesley Chapel, Brandon,
Tarpon Springs, Lutz, Gainesville, Ybor City,
Winter Park, Safety Harbor**

BARE Blends, Tampa
Cinnaholic, Tampa & Dunedin
Divine Leaf Vegan, Wesley Chapel
Good Intentions, St Petersburg
Halelife Bakeries & Bistros, Tampa & St. Pete
House of Vegano, St. Petersburg
Kalesia Tea Lounge, Tampa
Lotus Vegan Restaurant, Pinellas Park
Oopsy Daisy Sweets, Tampa
Pure Kitchen, Tampa
Ray's Vegan Soul, St. Pete
Seasoned Green, Tampa (vegetarian)
Skoops Italian Ice, Brandon
Solid Rock Eats, Tarpon Springs
The Green Table
The Green Table on Tour, Tampa
The Meatless Mexican, St. Pate
The Twisted Vegan, Tampa
Urban Jungalow, Tampa
Vegan Gator, Gainesville
Vegan International, Tampa
Vegan Halal Cart, Tampa Area
We Vegan Cafe, Tampa
World Vegan Cuisine, St. Petersburg

MANATEE & SARASOTA COUNTY AREA VEGAN PLACES, POPUPS, & ONLINE

Beauty of Sprouts, Sarasota
CROP, Sarasota
FAM, Sarasota
IONIE, Sarasota
Project Coffee, Sarasota
Sip Sip Hooray, Englewood
Sarasota Pop ups & Products
Catalyst Creamery
Corrine's Conscious Cuisine, online
It Takes You There! Vegan Treats
Good Earth Pure Soaps
Grounded Gourmet
Island LeLu Coffee
Nutty Girl
Simply Organix
Totally Nuts! Premium Almond Milk
The Meatless Mexican
Planted Into Wellness

Serves Vegan Food:
Café Hey, Tampa
La Setima Club, Ybor City,

Revelations, Lutz
Xtreme Tacos,
 Tampa

Volunteer Appreciation Lunch at World Vegan Cuisine



Donors for FVA’s 31st Annual Have A Heart for the Animals Awards Dinner

Denise Anderson
 HQ Salon AVEDA, Wiregrass
 Blast with Glass
 Maria Bott
 Canine Cabana Riverview
 Cason Photography
 Liza Carter, Sponsor
 Brenda Csik
 Dali Museum
 Dave & Busters – Games
 Divine Leaf Vegan
 Ellen Jaffe Jones
 Elev 8 Fun Indoor Adventure Pk
 Espat Law/JoJo Hulett
 Karen & Jim Evans
 First Watch Brandon
 Florence Marsan
 Florida Orchestra
 Jennifer Forlini, Bowl
 Health Muttt
 Honeymoon Island State Park
 Friends of Manatees
 Friends of the Island Parks
 Caladesi Island Adventure
 House of Vegano (HOV)
 Suzanne House
 Imagine Museum, St. Pete
 Kalesia Tea Lounge – Kim Pham
 Keel & Curley Farm
 Diane Koon
 Lotus Vegan Restaurant
 Meredith Tenouri
 Nutrition Smart, Wesley Chapel
 Myriam Parham
 Stella Pavlides
 Publix

Pure Kitchen
 Revelations Café
 Sanctuary at Solid Rock
 Sea Maids Creamery
 Side Splitters, Carrollwood
 Side Splitters, Wesley Chapel
 The Green Table
 Top Golf
 Trader Joe’s Palm Harbor
 Trader Joe’s Tampa
 Cathy Unruh
 Cate White
 WMNF
 Xtreme Tacos

Volunteers:
 Genevieve Arle
 Kristen Baker
 Nachiket Burade
 Trevor Chin
 Cara Godwin
 Kim Gronemeyer
 Lorenzo Licata
 Brittany Livingston
 Myriam Parham
 Laura Pennington
 Keith Silvester
 Thalia Tatham, Owner, HOV
 Meredith Tenouri
 Laura Weiss
 Tara Woodard
 Cathy Unruh



[World Vegan Cuisine](#) catered the event with a delicious buffet.

You can receive this newsletter via email or download it from the FVA website. To go paperless, please email fvaonline@yahoo.com and let us know. You will both help the environment and to enable FVA have more

YES I want to support Florida Voices for Animals, Inc.

Enclosed is my annual membership fee or donation:

\$300 Teddy* Lifetime \$100 Patron \$50 Family \$30 Individual \$15 Student _____ Other

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____

E-mail: _____

I would like to volunteer for:

Phone Tree Attending Demonstrations Staffing Outreach Tables Website Newsletter
 Investigations Other: _____



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Full Page	\$200	\$360 Save \$40	\$520 Save \$80	\$640 Save \$160



(FVA in Action from page 4)

Our guest speaker, was Gene Baur, President and Co-founder of Farm Sanctuary, who shared his amazing and inspiring story leading up to the creation of Farm Sanctuary. He also included an interesting and humorous video of an interview by Tucker Carlson. For more details see story on page 2 by Cathy Unruh.

3/15- Lotus Vegan Buffet with Will Tuttle, PhD – Over 60 attendees enjoyed a delicious world class buffet and presentation by Will, peace activist, and author of several books, including the international best seller *The World Peace Diet*, published in 18 different languages. He spoke on the “Art of Healthy Living” and shared highlights of some of his books, including his newest *The World Peace Way* &. He is a former Zen monk and Dharma Master and the co-founder of The Worldwide Prayer Circle for Animals. His wife Madeleine, an accomplished artist and flutist, shared her beautiful artwork.

FVA sends donations to local shelters - Sanctuary Monthly Donations:

Feb - Birds of Paradise Sanctuary & Rescue - \$200

Mar – Rescue Pink - \$200

FVA Demos for the Animals:

1/17, 2/14, 3/21 – Go Vegan Demo at St. Pete Market - a ☺ peaceful demonstration to help spread compassion for all sentient beings. Many people do not think about the most common cruelty that is committed every day to the weakest and meekest of the animals - the ones that are used as production units for "food". Help us raise awareness about our food choices and spread the word that ♥ Love and Peace☺ starts on our plate. Hosted by Hussein

Please check our FVA Meetup calendar to join us at events like these and more so we can get to know each other. Finally, PLEASE support vegan restaurants in your area. Most need your support to survive these challenging times. If you cannot dine in, order take out! We hope to see you soon!

FVA's BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Myriam Parham - President
Kim Gronemeyer -Vice President
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Suzanne House
Laura Weiss
Laura Pennington

NEWSLETTER STAFF
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Tom Bird
Maria Bott
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Our mission is to educate the public about animal abuse and exploitation. Please renew your membership if it has expired. Check your label.

M Paid membership and renewal date **L** Lifetime member
X Newsletter exchange **C** Courtesy

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TAMPA, FL 33682

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Go Green!
 Have me emailed to you!
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

All events are posted on our Meetup Calendar so if you haven't signed up for our meetup, go to www.meetup.com, search for Florida Voices for Animals, and then sign up.

Visit <https://newdaynewchef.com/episodes/> to watch **New Day, New Chef** vegan cooking show hosted by **Jane Velez-Mitchell**

Every Tue & Thu at 10:30am WUSF Ch 16.3 **Christina Cooks** cooking show with **Christina Pirello**

Every Wed at 11am WMNF 88.5FM **Talking Animals** radio show with **Duncan Strauss**

Every Fri at 11am WUSF Ch 16.1 **Jazzy Vegetarian** cooking show with **Laura Theodore**

Check out the **Vegan Myth Busters** radio show hosted by **Ellen Jaffe Jones** anytime by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1667198786868267/> or live every Tuesday at 6PM EST on The Dr. Don Show on KAAA and KZZZ at <http://www.talkatoz.com>

4/2, 5/7, 6/4 6:30pm Vegan Support Group Zoom Mtg. FVA is hosting a series of vegan support groups on the first Thursday of each month to help you cope with the challenges of living in a non-vegan world. Please check FVA Meetup Calendar.

4/3, 5/1, 6/5 6:30pm Vegan Potluck & Karaoke, Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa, 11400 Morris Bridge Rd, Tampa 33637 FVA hosting this fun event every month. Bring a vegan dish and your best singing voice. Please RSVP on FVA Meetup.

4/18 1pm-4pm FVA/Lotus Vegan Special Buffet with Dr Neal Barnard, H&M Event Hall, 7725 78th St N, Pinellas Park, FL 33781. 813-765-0389 Dr Neal Barnard, president of Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (www.pcrm.org), will give a talk on **Power Your Health with Power Foods**. You **must** purchase tickets **in advance**, either from FVA Meetup or from an invitation email. He will have his latest book available for sale.

5/31 9:30am-10:30am FVA's Al Lopez Park Cleanup, 4810 N Himes Ave, Tampa, FL 34614 Volunteers are needed to help clean up Al Lopez Park. The animals could use your help to keep their environment clean. Bring drink (eg water or other beverage), sunscreen, bug repellent, hat, sunglasses, long pants & long sleeves. Gloves, trash bags & grabber poles will be provided.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has" - Margaret Mead