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NEW BOARD BRINGS CENTER PLACE OF BRANDON BACK TO LIFE

By Libby Hopkins

Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association has been a part of the Brandon community for more than 44 years and has been known as the "heart and art" of the community.

The community was shocked in March 2020 to learn that Center Place was closing its doors for good. The pandemic, yet again, took a local landmark.

Many people came together to save the heart and art of the community. "This is my mother's legacy, so why wouldn't we keep it alive?" said Tom Odiorne.

Patricia Odiorne was the creator of Center Place. Her sons, Tom and Ryan Odiorne, are just two of the board members who came on board to breathe life back into Center Place. "We're here to make sure Center Place survives," Board President Ryan said. "We need to have this building be here for future generations."

Local realtor Todd Allen is also one of the new board members. "Center Place benefits our community and right now the community needs Center Place," Allen said.

Local business owner J.J. Massaro wanted to be a part of the new board because he couldn't imagine our community without it. "Center Place has



Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association's new board members, Tom Odiorne, Ryan Odiorne, Todd Allen, J.J. Massaro, Mike Owens, Betty Jo Tompkins, Bernadette Pello, JoAnn Shea and Claudia Yake have joined forces to bring the heart of the Brandon Community back to life.

always held a special place in the heart of our community, so we needed to step in and save it."

Betty Jo Tompkins is well known throughout the Brandon community and she is on the board because she wanted to keep the history of Center Place alive. "I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to serve on the Center Place board because [it was] instrumental in securing the facility that became Center Place," Tompkins said.

Local lawyer Mike Owens had fond memories of Center Place from his childhood, so that is why he wanted to be a part of the board. "While I can clearly say God did not bless me with artistic talent, I love the arts and what Center Place stands for," Owens said. "I grew up across the street at South Brandon Little League. We had

our All-Star Banquets at Center Place and many other events that I hold dear to my heart."

Bernadette Pello, founder of Livingstone Academy, wanted to be a part of the board because she feels it's a pillar of the Brandon community. "Center Place is one of the pillars in the Brandon community and I am excited and honored to serve an organization that serves our community in such a unique way," Pello said.

Board members JoAnn Shea and Claudia Yake have strong ties to Center Place. Shea was on the board previously and Yake was a former director of Center Place "I want help to create and experience the feeling of community and fellowship that is so needed, especially in trying times," Shea said. "I wanted to be a part of the Center Place board because I feel it is important for Center Place to become an integral part of our community again," Yake said.

The board has been working with Hillsborough County to secure an opening date, which should be released in the coming weeks.

To learn more about Center Place, visit www.centerplacebrandon.org.