

One-day event aims to explore forgiveness theme

By Erin Jester / Staff writer

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Market Street Pub & Cabaret, 112 SW First Ave., will host a National Forgiveness Day celebration from 4 to 8 p.m. Saturday.

The kid-friendly event features comedy, an open-mic, live performances and a community discussion on the theme of forgiveness.

Local performance artist Rachel Wayne, another co-organizer, will speak on the subject of bullying and her own experience with forgiveness.

"If we can't let go of our past hurts and our wounds . . . then we're just going to be stuck and re-traumatizing ourselves," said Rachel Hofer, founder of Gainesville-based Loving Therapy and the event's co-organizer.

Hofer said the event will address both personal trauma and national tragedies, like the shooting death of Trayvon Martin and others like him.

There will be an emphasis on self-forgiveness, as well.

"It's something that everyone has experienced, and just talking about it is healing," Hofer said.

An acupuncturist and a University of Florida professor specializing in play therapy will be on hand to talk about other ways of healing.

The event is free and open to everyone.

Fourteen states, excluding Florida, have a proclamation recognizing a Forgiveness Day in October.

Hofer said she's asked Gov. Rick Scott to make a similar proclamation, but hasn't heard back yet.

"Whether it's state-recognized or not, we're celebrating it," she said.