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Aging Outlook

WINTER 2025

Secretary's Message

It is my pleasure to share our Winter 2025 edition of Aging Outlook with you. As we embrace the holiday season and look forward to a new year, I am especially excited to highlight an important initiative that will make a real difference in the lives of Florida's seniors: Operation Senior Shield.

Led by our devoted Lieutenant Governor Jay Collins, we have launched this statewide effort to protect older adults from scams, fraud, and financial exploitation. Three successful press conferences in the past month officially kicked off the initiative, and we are working closely with law enforcement, community partners, service providers, and families to ensure seniors have the tools and knowledge to stay safe. Florida's older adults deserve to live with confidence, dignity, and security, and Operation Senior Shield demonstrates our strong commitment to protecting them from those who would seek to take advantage.

This edition also includes helpful guidance on recognizing the early signs of Alzheimer's disease during the holidays. Families often spend extended time together, creating opportunities to notice subtle changes in memory or behavior. Early detection and compassionate support can make a meaningful difference, and I encourage you to share this information with your loved ones. Supporting those living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers continues to be a top priority for our agency.

We are also highlighting the importance of senior mental health. Winter months, holiday stress, and feelings of isolation can be challenging, and it is vital that seniors feel supported and connected. I hope the resources included in this edition bring guidance, comfort, and reassurance to both seniors and their families.

None of this work would be possible without the continued



ABOVE: Secretary Michelle Branham visiting with a group of elders.

support of Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Legislature. Their commitment to seniors allows us to expand our programs, services, and protections to reach more Floridians than ever before. I am incredibly proud of the progress we have made and look forward to continuing this important work in 2026.

As we celebrate this season, I encourage all of our seniors to check in on each other, reach

out for help when needed, and continue building strong, caring connections with neighbors, friends, and family. Even a simple phone call or visit can make a world of difference. If you or someone you know needs assistance, our Elder Helpline is always available at 1-800-963-5337. If you'd like to sign up for Operation Senior Shield, please visit opsenior-shieldfl.com.

Florida Celebrates America's 250th Anniversary



By Secretary of State Cord Byrd

Last December, Governor Ron DeSantis signed an executive order designating the Florida Department of State as the lead agency to develop and encourage a celebration for America's 250th anniversary in Florida. America250FL will commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence and recognize Florida's profound influence on America's past, present, and future.

While often overlooked in the traditional narrative of the 13 colonies, Florida played an important role in the War for Independence. Sometimes referred to as the "14th colony," because of its strategic location along the Gulf, many countries including the United States, France, Great Britain, and Spain were interested in taking possession of Florida.

The Siege of Pensacola in 1781 highlighted the global aspects of the war when Spanish forces defeated the British. And many Floridians may not realize that two Revolutionary War battles were fought in Nassau County, and the last naval battle was fought off Cape Canaveral.

We are fortunate to celebrate America's founding in a state with such a rich history. Today, Florida continues to be an important part of the American story, and I hope you will contribute to our story by joining in the celebration.

You can get involved by contacting your local Main Street community, county, municipality or library to see how you can volunteer to support America250FL. Events

will be held in all 67 counties so attend a celebration near you.

I encourage you to visit the website at America250FL.com where you will find a comprehensive list of state Historic and Heritage sites you may want to visit. Plan a road trip or share a story about how you or your family contributed to the history of our state or country. Follow America250FL on X, Facebook and Instagram to learn fun facts about Florida and our history.

Florida's celebration will inspire patriotism, civic engagement, and a deeper appreciation for America's historic rise as the most powerful nation in the world. I hope you will participate and encourage others to join in the celebration.



Below: Aerial view of the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, a Spanish fort located in St. Augustine Florida.



OPERATION SENIOR SHIELD

HELPING FLORIDA SENIORS AVOID SCAMS BY EQUIPPING THEM WITH THE REAL-TIME, RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT KEEPS THEM SAFE FROM FRAUD

THE CRISIS IN NUMBERS

The problem is accelerating. Nationwide, Americans over 60 lost nearly \$5 billion in 2024—a 43% increase in losses and 46% increase in complaints over just one year.

Most victims suffer in silence. Only 1 in 5 elder fraud victims report the crime, meaning the **true scope of this crisis is far greater** than official numbers suggest. Older adults tend to suffer the largest losses to fraud yet are least likely to report being victimized by scams.

As the fastest-growing and wealthiest segment of the population, older adults are increasingly likely to be targeted by scammers.

From **2020 to 2024**, the number of reports from older adults who lost **\$10,000 or more** to scams increased more than fourfold.

During the same period, reports of **losses over \$100,000** by seniors increased **nearly sevenfold**.

STATEWIDE FRAUD STRIKE TEAM:

This team brings together top cyber experts, law enforcement, government agencies, community leaders, and seniors themselves, all united in the mission to protect Florida's seniors from fraud.

The Strike Team will coordinate intelligence, raise public awareness, and confront senior fraud with the speed and focus it demands.

FLORIDA'S VULNERABILITY

THREE FACTORS MAKE FLORIDA A PRIME TARGET:

- Large senior population
- Dense metropolitan areas like St. Petersburg and Jacksonville
- Tourism-driven economy with transient populations and high mobile phone usage



WHY IT MATTERS:

- Florida has one of the largest older populations in the nation.
- Scam tactics are evolving faster than ever.
- Seniors are being scammed out of thousands of dollars – and the stories are heartbreaking.
- This initiative empowers Floridians to protect themselves with confidence and foresight.

HOW IT WORKS:

- ✓ *Sign up with an email or phone number.*
- ✓ *Receive timely alerts about current scams in Florida.*
- ✓ *Alerts include what the scam is, how it works, and what to do next.*
- ✓ *Designed to protect older adults, families, and caregivers.*

Sign Up Today to Stay Informed and Secure:
WWW.OPSENIORSHIELDFL.COM

Elder
Affairs
FLORIDA



Recognizing the Warning Signs of Alzheimer's During the Holidays



By Jennifer Braisted, Director of Government Affairs, Alzheimer's Association Florida Chapters

The winter holidays are a special time for families to gather, share traditions and reconnect. They can also be a time when loved ones notice changes in a parent, grandparent or relative they have not seen in a while. Forgetting things once in a while is normal with age, but ongoing changes in memory, behavior or daily routines could point to Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia.

Dementia is the general term for loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia. Spotting the early signs matters. It helps people get the right care, support and time to plan for the future.

Holiday visits can be an opportunity for loved ones to notice changes in a relative they have not seen in a while.

10 WARNING SIGNS OF ALZHEIMER'S



1 Memory Loss That Upsets Daily Life Forgetting things you just learned, missing important dates or asking the same questions many times. Relying more on notes, reminders or family.

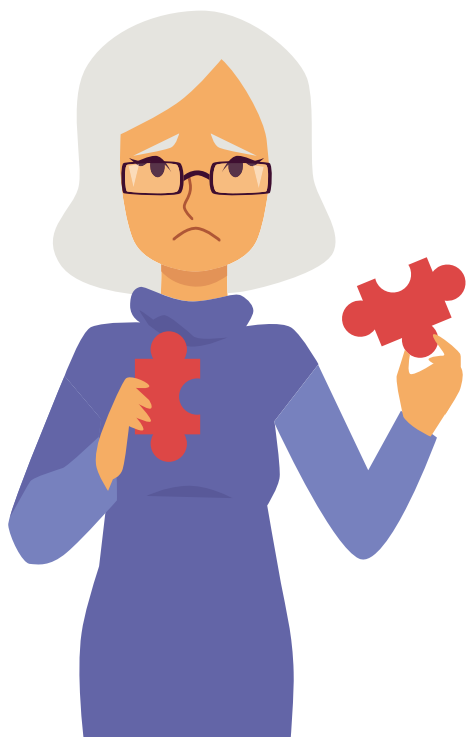
2 Trouble Planning or Problem Solving Things may take much longer than before. Struggling to follow a recipe, pay bills or finish a projects.

3 Difficulty With Familiar Tasks Trouble driving to places you know well, making a grocery list or remembering the rules of a game.

4 Confusion With Time or Place Losing track of seasons, dates or how much time has passed. Sometimes forgetting where you are or how you got there.

5 Vision and Space Problems Trouble reading, judging distance or telling colors apart. This can affect balance and driving.





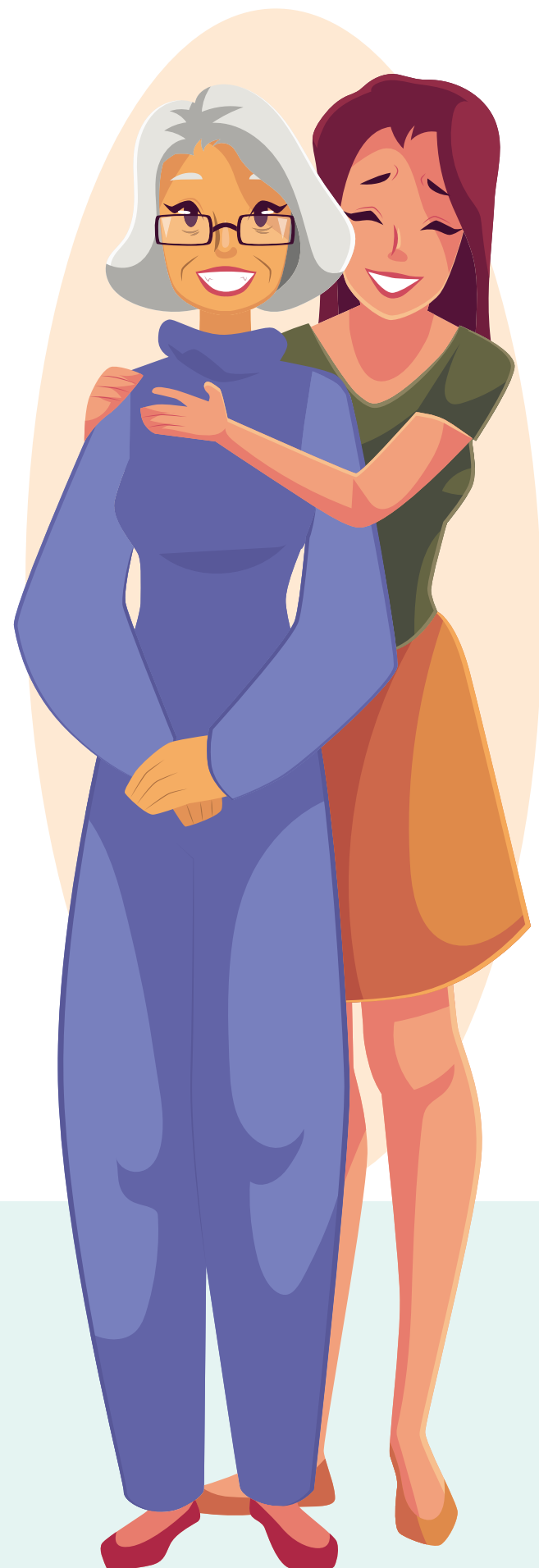
6 New Problems With Words Stopping in the middle of a conversation, repeating yourself or using the wrong word for a common item.

7 Misplacing Things Putting items in strange places and not being able to find them again. Some may think others are stealing.

8 Poor Judgment Making risky money choices, ignoring self-care or showing poor decision-making.

9 Pulling Away From Work or Social Life Avoiding hobbies, sports or gatherings because it is hard to follow along.

10 Changes in Mood or Personality Becoming confused, suspicious, anxious or upset, especially in new places.



TAKE ACTION

Seeing these signs in yourself or someone you love can be scary. It may feel easier to ignore them or avoid talking about it, but getting help early is important. A doctor can check what is happening and explain next steps.

If you are worried, do not wait. Call the Alzheimer's Association free 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900 or visit [alz.org](https://www.alz.org) for information and support.

This holiday season, as you gather with family and friends, take time to notice changes in your loved ones. Looking out for one another is one of the greatest gifts you can give.

TALLAHASSEE COUPLE JOINS SENIOR GAMES COMMUNITY



Senior Games Runner Kelley El-Urfali



By Nick Gandy, Florida Sports Foundation

What began as a husband supporting his wife from the sidelines ultimately became an opportunity for them both to compete in the 2025 Florida Senior Games.

For the last couple of years, Alan El-Urfali has watched his wife Kelley El-Urfali run on the track and in road races, often serving as a photographer. This past year, Kelley had the opportunity to watch Alan from behind the Archery shooting line as he fired arrows into targets.

"He was always wearing Senior Games t-shirts and others would ask what sport he was in," Kelley said. "He got tired of telling them he was the cameraman."

Kelley has been a competitive runner since her high school days at Miami Killian High School. Her career as an investigator for the Department of Corrections saw her move around the state, until she and Alan settled in Tallahassee almost 20 years ago.

She became involved in Gulf Winds Track Club events around Tallahassee, running in races from 5K to half marathons at the

annual Tallahassee Marathon, held annually in February.

"A couple of years ago, I saw a notice from the Gulf Winds Track Club about the Capital City Senior Games and became involved," she said.

That was March of 2022. At the Capital City Senior Games, she qualified for the Florida Senior Games. Once there, she qualified for the National Senior Games in the summer of 2023, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

"I wasn't really happy with my time in the 1500 meter run," she said. "It was the only event I ran. It was fun to travel to Pittsburgh. Everyone was very welcoming."

Alan joined the Senior Games community as an athlete for the first time at the 2025 Florida Senior Games, in December, in Pasco County."

While he had some archery experience in his youth, his decision to revisit an activity from his younger days stem from his current professional career.

"My career as a traffic safety engineer is target based," Alan said. "We aim for a target zero, which is zero crashes. It's hard to attain because of driver errors and mistakes. Archery is about acquiring a target and hitting the target at its pinpoint space."

"A couple of years ago, I saw a notice from the Gulf Winds Track Club about the Capital City Senior Games and became involved."

In Archery the target zero is the center 10-point target. It's hard to attain because the yellow target is between 9 and 10 inches in circumference. Also, you're acquiring the target from 40, 50 and 60 yards away while lifting a bow.

At the 2025 National Senior Games, Kelley entered in the 5K and 10K Road Races and the 800 and 1500 meter runs. She posted better times on the track than in the 2024 Florida Senior Games and 2023 National Senior Games and had very respectable times in the 5K and 10K Road Races. She made it to the awards platform in each of the events, but did not medal.

However, she competed in the first Powerlifting competition of the National Senior Games and won a gold medal in the bench press in her age group and weight class.

"My lifts were great, especially for my weight class," she said.

Her first Powerlifting competition was in March, 2025 at the Capital City Senior Games where she bench pressed 85 pounds. At the National Games, in August, 2025, she increased her total to 105 pounds.

Welcome to the Senior Games community, Alan and Kelley! Keep acquiring those targets, decreasing those times and improving those lifts. The community is very welcoming.

For more information about the Florida Senior Games, please visit floridaseniorgames.com. The Florida Senior Games is an annual program of the Florida Sports Foundation, the official sports promotion and development organization of the State of Florida. The 34th annual Games are presented in conjunction with Florida's Sports Coast.



Senior Games Runner Kelley El-Urfali

SAFE STEPS FOR HEALTHY AGING



*By Juliana Ortiz,
Communications
Coordinator, The
Area Agency on
Aging of Palm Beach/
Treasure Coast, Inc.*

Falling is not a normal part of aging, yet unintentional falls are the leading cause of both fatal and non-fatal injuries in seniors in Florida. In 2023, over 260,000 Florida residents aged 65 and older visited the emergency room due to falls.

At the Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc. (Agency), preventing falls isn't just something we talk about during Fall Prevention Month – it's work we do all year long. From providing evidence-based wellness classes to connecting seniors with home safety resources, our efforts build a foundation that helps older adults live stronger, safer, and more independently. That year-round commitment came together this fall through the Multi-Agency Fall Prevention Fair and Education Series, hosted in partnership with two trauma hospitals and six fire rescues across Palm Beach County (PBC).

Over the course of two months, seniors and caregivers attended a series of interactive events at different community sites throughout the county. Participants received complimentary health screenings and information about medication safety, balance and exercise, evidence-based wellness classes, home safety, and more. Trauma



doctors informed seniors about the injuries sustained from falling while first responders explained what happens when fire rescue is called to their home.

For many participants, the series was an eye-opener. "I am so happy to have this program," said Alice, one of the attendees. "The doctor that took time out of his day to talk with us was so informative and answered so many questions. What a great way to bring this information to us!"

Another participant named Ben didn't realize that there were so many factors that went into a fall. Fire Rescue provided him with information about how they can gain access to his home in case of an emergency, and he was given a free blood pressure check. "This event has motivated me to take one of those classes on fall prevention."

The fair was a success not only because of the information shared, but also because of the partnerships behind it. By bringing hospitals, fire rescue teams, and community organizations together, the Agency created a network of support that seniors can continue to rely on long after the event.

Currently, the Multi-Agency Fall Prevention Fair and Education Series only takes place in PBC, but the program will be expanding to cover other counties in the service area as early as next year.

If you are interested in learning more about this series, fall prevention classes, or healthy aging, feel free to contact Maureen McCarthy, Healthy Aging Director at the Agency, by calling (772) 521-4813. Know us before you need us.

A FUN GAME HELPS FIGHT A SERIOUS PROBLEM



*By Katheryn Bursch,
Outreach Manager,
Area Agency on Aging
of Pasco-Pinellas*

Where there's bingo, seniors are bound to gather. But on this day, the game going on inside the Casa Miguel apartment complex is a bit different.

There's still plenty of enthusiasm "I'm just a big bingo player," says Linda C. "I love it!"

However, the fun game going on here also has a very serious purpose. It's informing seniors about Medicare fraud.

"Medicare fraud is a 60-to-100-billion-dollar industry. That's how much Medicare loses," Geralyn Fortney, SHINE Program Manager at the Area Agency on Aging Pasco-Pinellas (AAAPP) tells the group. "And I always like to remind you—that's your money!"

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Bingo plays just like regular bingo, but the cards also contain vital information about scams and how players can detect fraud. The seniors gathered around tables at Casa Miguel appreciated the information.

"I try to stay pretty informed, but you're adding to it and expanding it," says 79-year-old Vivian P.

"I learned a lot about things that I need to stop doing," adds Ophelia M.

The SMP program empowers older adults, caregivers, and professionals to protect themselves and their communities from Medicare fraud, errors and abuse. It's funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and supported in Florida



through the Department of Elder Affairs and the Area Agencies on Aging. SMP volunteers provide education and one-on-one assistance to help Medicare beneficiaries.

A common scheme right now works like this. Scammers somehow get or persuade a senior to give them their Medicare number. And once they have that information, they send medical equipment to the senior's home—equipment their doctor never ordered. The fraudsters then over-bill Medicare—costing taxpayers billions.

Upon reflection, Ophelia M. thinks she may have been scammed that way. She received stomach medication in the mail, even though she doesn't have any stomach problems. "So, I called my clinic to ask about it. The doctor was mad at me, because he said he didn't send it."

Whether you're reviewing your Medicare statement at home or playing a fun round

of SMP Bingo, the message is the same - staying alert and informed is the best defense against fraud.

If seniors suspect Medicare fraud, they should report it. AAAPP staff can help them with the reporting process. People can also report Medicare fraud directly by calling **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)**.

And when scammers are caught, we're all winners. "BINGO"!



GET TO KNOW YOUR MEDICARE OPTIONS

Get Support From SHINE



By Alessandra Zupan,
SHINE Information
Specialist, Florida
Department of
Elder Affairs

Every year, from October 15 to December 7, Medicare beneficiaries can review and adjust their coverage during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period. This is your chance to make changes that may impact your health-care access, costs, and benefits.

Your Options During Open Enrollment

During this time, you can:

- Enroll in a new Medicare Advantage Plan
- Sign up for a stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan
- Switch between Original Medicare (with or without Part D) and Medicare Advantage

Making the right choice can help ensure you have access to the care you need while keeping costs manageable.

Key Factors to Consider

When reviewing your options, think about:

- Provider Access: Can you see your preferred doctors and specialists?
- Pharmacy Access: Are your preferred pharmacies included?
- Benefits and Services: Does the plan cover your needed treatments?

- Cost: Review premiums, deductibles, and other out-of-pocket expenses.

Could You Be Dual Eligible?

Some individuals qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid, known as dual eligibility. Medicaid may help cover expenses that Medicare does not, such as premiums, deductibles, and even long-term care. Understanding how the two programs work together can be complex, but help is available.

The Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program provides free, confidential, and unbiased guidance to determine if you may qualify for programs like Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB), Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB), Qualifying Individual (QI-1), or Qualified Disabled and Working Individuals (QDWI). These programs can reduce costs for premiums, copayments, and prescriptions, making coverage more affordable.

About SHINE Assistance

Changes made during Medicare's Open Enrollment take effect on January 1 of the following year. If you have questions about your Medicare coverage, need help exploring dual eligibility, or want assistance with applications, SHINE is here to help. SHINE offers free, unbiased counseling for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers. Call 1-800-963-5337 or visit floridashine.org/Contact-Us.aspx to connect with a counselor.

Eligibility for Open Enrollment

This period is especially important for Medicare Advantage enrollees. Before



switching plans, understand how changes could affect your coverage. For example, if you move back to Original Medicare and want a Medigap policy, your ability to purchase one may depend on timing and where you live.

When Will Changes Take Effect?

Changes made during Open Enrollment begin the first day of the following month. For instance, if you switch plans on January 23, your new coverage starts February 1.

The SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) program supports the Florida Department of Elder Affairs' mission by providing free and unbiased health insurance counseling through a dedicated network of volunteers, empowering Florida seniors to make informed health care choices. For more information, visit FloridaShine.org.



Aging Boldly, Writing Bravely

Senior Friendship Centers Inspires Older Adults to Reimagine Their Stories-Literally!



By Erin McLeod,
President and
Chief Executive
Officer, Senior
Friendship Centers

At Senior Friendship Centers (SFC), life after retirement is anything but quiet. For decades, the organization has empowered older adults to embrace fresh challenges, explore passions, and create new chapters in their lives. The Gussin Center for Creative Writing—one of the organization's newest initiatives—shows how deeply that mission can transform lives.

SFC recently celebrated the completion of its first memoir writing course with the release of *Joyful Journeys*, Vol. 1, an anthology of stories penned by seven first-time authors. The book captures moments of humor, resilience, love, and loss, revealing the wealth of lived experience among its participants. More than a collection of stories, it represents a leap into unfamiliar territory for these older adults, many of whom had never written creatively before.

Senior Friendship Centers' mission has always been about connection, purpose, and possibility. For members of the writing class, the experience became an exercise in rediscovering their voices and sharing them with others. Participant Art Mahoney contributed three deeply personal pieces, ranging from family celebrations to reflections on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Yet, he says the real gift was hearing the stories of his classmates—windows into lives filled with remarkable and meaningful experiences.



Photo (L to R): Erin McLeod, Declan Sheehy, Bob Gussin, Art Mahoney, Pat Gussin, Jason Cannon, Carol Hochberg, Valerie diLorenzo, Debby Vento Russek, Silvia Flores, Janice Boring and Lynne Anast

That's exactly what the Gussin Center for Creative Writing was designed to do: encourage older adults to take a step into the unknown, tackle a new skill, and find joy in self-expression. It's a natural extension of Senior Friendship Centers' broader vision to help older adults stay engaged—mentally, socially, and creatively—while enriching the community with their talents and wisdom.

The program was made possible by the vision and generosity of Drs. Pat and Bob Gussin, longtime supporters of Senior Friendship Centers. Their belief in the importance of preserving life stories for future generations led to the creation of an endowment, ensuring the writing program will continue for years to come. This investment means that more seniors will have the opportunity to transform memories into lasting works, and perhaps even see their names in print for the very first time.

For the participants, the accomplishment is tangible: a 180-page printed book that now sits proudly in their hands and is available for sale on Amazon. But the deeper achievement lies in the courage it took to begin. The Gussin Center for Creative Writing stands as a testament to what can happen when older adults are invited to reimagine what's possible in the later chapters of life and supported by their community.

Through initiatives like this, Senior Friendship Centers continues to prove that aging can be a time of exploration, not limitation. Whether it's through creative writing, fitness, lifelong learning, or social connection, the organization offers countless ways for older adults to keep writing their own stories—one chapter at a time.

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH IN SENIORS: RESOURCES AND TIPS



*By Sherry Ledbetter,
Navigator Supervisor,
Florida Department
of Elder Affairs*

Mental health is a vital part of overall well-being, yet it is too often overlooked in older adults. Seniors may encounter unique challenges that affect their emotional health, including the loss of loved ones, health changes, reduced independence, or social isolation. These experiences can create stress and sadness, but with the right support and resources, older adults can continue to thrive, remain connected, and enjoy fulfilling lives.

Some of the most common mental health concerns in seniors include depression, anxiety, memory changes, and loneliness. Depression is more than simply feeling sad—it can disrupt sleep, appetite, motivation, and the ability to enjoy daily activities. Anxiety is also common, with worries about health, finances, or personal safety sometimes becoming overwhelming. In addition, loneliness and reduced social interaction can take a toll on both mental and physical health, making it essential to recognize and address challenges early.

There are many practical ways to promote mental wellness in older adults. Staying connected with others, whether through regular phone calls, video chats, or local community programs, helps reduce feelings of isolation. Physical activity, even gentle exercise such as walking, chair yoga, or stretching, can boost mood and improve overall health. Keeping the mind engaged through reading, puzzles, or lifelong learning opportunities provides mental stimulation and a sense of accomplishment. Seniors also benefit from maintaining a daily routine, which brings



structure and purpose to the day. When emotional struggles become too difficult to manage alone, reaching out for professional help—whether from a healthcare provider, counselor, or support group—can make a significant difference. Relaxation practices such as meditation, deep breathing, or prayer also support stress relief and emotional balance.

In addition to these strategies, small acts of self-care can help seniors feel more grounded and positive. Drinking plenty of water, keeping a gratitude journal, trying a new hobby, or revisiting an old one can all spark joy and mental clarity. Spending time outdoors, enjoying fresh air and sunshine, also nurtures both mind and body.

Importantly, seniors should never hesitate to ask for help when needed—support is available and seeking it is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Mental health in seniors is too important to ignore. By recognizing common concerns, encouraging positive habits, and making use of available resources like local Area Agencies on Aging, which play an important role, often offering counseling referrals, caregiver support, and wellness activities tailored to the needs of older adults, we can help older adults live with resilience, connection, and joy throughout their later years.

University of Florida's Dementia Care Network

Supporting Patients and Families From Diagnosis to Hope

By Interdisciplinary Dementia Care and Research Team, University of Florida

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) are complex conditions that no single discipline can address; UF's deep collaboration across centers ensures patients and families receive both medical care and research-informed support.

To show how this works in practice, imagine Mary and her family seeking answers for memory changes. While fictional, Mary's story reflects many Florida families' experiences.

When Mary first visited the UF Memory Disorders Clinic (MDC)—a state-designated resource located on the campus of the Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases serving more than 2,400 individuals with dementia across more than nine counties each year—she received a comprehensive evaluation from neurologists and neuropsychologists. Diagnoses resulting from this evaluation are explained with clarity, empathy, and a roadmap for next steps. This process is guided by the state-supported research of UF neurologists on how best to share a dementia diagnosis. But her care did not stop there. Mary was connected with physical, occupational, and speech therapy to help her stay active and support her daily functioning. Additionally a dedicated social worker guided her family to caregiver support groups, respite services,

and educational programs, turning a diagnosis into a network of ongoing support.

Mary might be referred to UF's NIH-funded 1Florida Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC), with its clinical hub at the Fixel Institute. The 1FLADRC connects patients and families to research discovery, including opportunities to participate in research on new diagnostic tools and in clinical trials. For Mary, that meant opportunities for cutting-edge diagnoses and treatments—all without leaving north-central Florida. ADRC staff not only train the next generation of clinical scientists but also work with primary care providers statewide to recognize dementia earlier, helping other families get answers and resources sooner.

After the clinic visit, Mary's family wanted to know practical steps they could do at home to enhance memory function and reduce risk for dementia progression. The UF Institute on Aging translates research into practical advice on exercise, nutrition, and sleep that families can use immediately. For Mary's caregivers, these strategies offered agency and reassurance.

Additional centers also play a vital role in shaping the care Mary and her family receive. UF's Center for Translational Research in Neurodegenerative Disease (CTRND) is the bridge from discovery to impact: it generates novel disease models and insights into the causes of neurodegenerative

disease, supports the UF Human Brain and Tissue Bank, and provides advanced neuropathology and microscopy support for researchers at the UF McKnight Brain Institute (MBI) and broader UF campus. The MBI and CTRND are UF's primary training hub for basic Alzheimer's and dementia research, offering hands-on opportunities for students and young scientists through National Institutes of Health (NIH)-supported programs. The Center for Cognitive Aging and Memory (CAM), also based in the MBI, advances research on healthy brain aging and cognitive resilience. Its studies of neuroplasticity, behavior, and clinical interventions complement UF's dementia-focused efforts by promoting strategies to preserve memory and function as we age. The Brain Injury, Rehabilitation, and Neuroresilience (BRAIN) Center supports investigations into how brain injury influences dementia risk, promotes brain health initiatives, and helps link the MBI and the Fixel Institute. Mary's family may never meet these researchers, but their work shapes today's care and will drive advances for decades.

Mary's fictional journey shows what collaboration means—sooner answers, clearer options, and support beyond the exam room—for thousands of Florida families who benefit from UF's approach. The programs at UF endeavor to ensure that a dementia diagnosis is not the end of the story but the beginning of care built on dignity, compassion, and hope.



Protecting Yourself From Telephone Scams



By Mark Meadows,
Inspector, Office of
Inspector General,
Florida Department
of Elder Affairs

Telephone scams continue to be one of the most common ways criminals attempt to steal personal information and money. The phone remains a trusted tool for many people, and scammers exploit that trust to deceive victims. Understanding how these scams work and how to protect yourself is the first step in reducing your risk.

How Telephone Scams Work

Telephone scams take many forms. Some involve callers pretending to represent government agencies, banks, or well-known companies. They may claim you owe money, your account has been compromised, or you've won a prize. Others try to create fear or urgency, such as threats of arrest or suspension of services, to pressure you into quick decisions. Scammers often use technology to "spoof" phone numbers, making the call appear as if it's coming from a legitimate source.

A common tactic is to request sensitive information, such as your Social Security, credit card, or bank account numbers. Others may ask for payment through unusual methods like gift cards, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency, clear red flags of a scam.

Red Flags to Watch For

- **Urgency or threats:** Scammers often push you to act immediately. Real businesses and government agencies do not demand instant decisions over the phone.

- **Requests for personal or financial information:** Never give out passwords, Social Security, or bank details to unsolicited callers.
- **Unusual payment methods:** Any demand for gift cards, wire transfers, or prepaid debit cards is a scam.
- **Caller ID spoofing:** Just because a number looks familiar or official does not mean the call is legitimate.

How to Protect Yourself

- **Don't answer unknown calls:** If you don't recognize the number, let it go to voicemail.
- **Hang up immediately:** If something feels off, end the call. You are not obligated to continue speaking.
- **Verify independently:** If a caller claims to be from your bank, utility company, or government agency, hang up and call the official number from a trusted source.
- **Register with the National Do Not Call Registry:** While this won't stop all scam calls, it can reduce legitimate telemarketing calls and make it easier to spot fraud.
- **Contact the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services** to report unsolicited communications or to subscribe to the Florida Do Not Call List.
- **Use call-blocking tools:** Many phone providers and apps offer services that can identify, and block suspected scam calls.
- **Educate yourself and others:** Talk to friends and family, especially elderly relatives who are frequent targets, about common scam tactics.



What to Do if You Are Targeted

If you suspect a scam, act quickly. Contact your bank if financial information was shared and report it to the Federal Trade Commission and local law enforcement. It might feel embarrassing, but reporting helps protect others.

Conclusion

Stay alert, recognize red flags, and never share sensitive information. Only you can protect yourself and your loved ones. Knowledge is your best defense; knowing when to hang up may be your most powerful tool against fraud.

Senior Medicare Patrol

Fighting Medicare Fraud, Waste, and Abuse



*By Melanie Ginn,
Elder Abuse Prevention
Coordinator, Florida
Department of
Elder Affairs*

Medicare fraud is a growing concern across the nation, costing taxpayers and beneficiaries an estimated \$60 billion every year. Fraud, abuse, and billing errors not only drain resources but also threaten the quality of care for older adults and people with disabilities.

Fraudsters use many tactics to steal from Medicare and its beneficiaries. Some pose as officials offering “new” plastic or chipped Medicare cards to obtain personal information. Others bill for tests, treatments, or visits that were either unnecessary or never provided. Telehealth services are another target—dishonest providers may claim to offer virtual visits but instead bill Medicare for fake consultations, services, or prescriptions.

Durable medical equipment (DME) is a frequent source of abuse as well. Scammers often promise “free” braces, wheelchairs, or supplies, only to submit inflated bills to Medicare. Prescription drug fraud is also widespread and can involve altering prescriptions, overprescribing medications, or pharmacies billing for drugs that were never dispensed. In some cases, providers



exploit hospice benefits by enrolling individuals who are not terminally ill simply to collect payments. Another growing concern is genetic testing fraud, where personal and medical information is stolen while Medicare is billed for unnecessary or fake tests.

Protecting yourself from Medicare fraud begins with treating your Medicare card as carefully as you would a credit card or Social Security number—never share it with anyone who does not need it. Be wary of unsolicited offers, especially if they are advertised as “free.” Whether it is equipment, medical tests, or healthcare services, these offers are often ploys to capture personal and health information. If you receive a call from someone you do not know, let it go to voicemail first and then decide whether to return the call.

Another important safeguard is to review your medical statements and records regularly. If you notice any unfamiliar or questionable charges, report them immediately to your provider or health insurance company. If you need help reading or

understanding your healthcare statements, a SHINE counselor can assist you. Finally, never hesitate to ask questions. If your provider recommends a test, procedure, treatment, or piece of equipment you do not understand, request a clear explanation before agreeing.

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) works to educate beneficiaries and caregivers on preventing, detecting, and reporting Medicare and Medicaid fraud. SMP also assists individuals in taking the necessary steps to file complaints with the proper authorities. To reach an SMP counselor, call 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337). Protect your benefits. Protect your identity. Protect Medicare.



Creepy, Crawly and Totally Cool

Florida's Spectacular Spiders Aren't So Scary After All

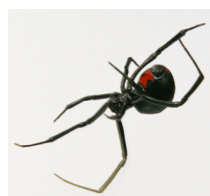


By Meredith Bauer,
Senior Public
Relations Specialist,
University of Florida
Institute of Food and
Agricultural Sciences

Halloween may be long over, but it's always a good time to spotlight some of Florida's coolest spiders—that aren't so scary after all. Spiders are often misunderstood, but many are shy, harmless and downright fascinating.

Lisa Anne Taylor, assistant research scientist at the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), said that spiders "get a bad rap and aren't so frightening."

Here are 10 standout species that bring both cool, spooky vibes and ecological value to the Sunshine State. Instead of fearing spiders, celebrate their mysterious style and ecological superpowers. They're nature's pest control, silk engineers and stealthy hunters. As Taylor puts it, "No one should be afraid of them."



Black Widow

The black widow is perhaps the most iconic spider, the OG creepy crawly, instantly recognizable by the red hourglass on its jet-black abdomen. Despite its reputation, black widows are shy and rarely bite unless provoked — like when someone slips on a shoe that the spider was hiding in.

"Nobody should be scared of them; they should just not hold them. They should keep a respectful distance," said Taylor, who works for the Department of Entomology and Nematology.

Florida is home to both native southern and northern black widows. Their venom is hazardous to people and animals, but bites are uncommon. *Photo: Thomas Wright, UF/IFAS*



Brown Recluse

The brown recluse is feared but is actually very uncommon in Florida. Most "sightings" in Florida are mis-identifications, and bites are rare.

"They get blamed for a lot of things, but it's rarely actually a brown recluse bite," Taylor explained. *Photo: UF/IFAS*



Red Widow

The red widow is a stunning native Florida spider with a black body with red and white splotches and bright red legs. Found only in Florida's scrub habitats, this spider is rarely seen and even more rarely bites. Its vivid, spotted red-and-black patterns and elusive nature make it a mysterious and beautiful part of Florida's spider diversity. *Photo: UF/IFAS*



Brown Widow

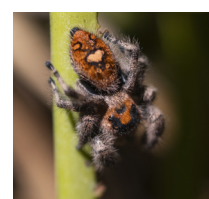
The brown widow, an invasive species in Florida, is a close relative of the other widows but their venom seems to be less potent for humans. It has a dark-orange hourglass marking on its brown abdomen and is often identified by its spiky egg sacs.

While it may look spooky, the brown widow is not aggressive and prefers to stay hidden in quiet corners. Like the black widow, it's best to check shoes and outdoor gear before use for these stowaways. *Photo: Thomas Wright, UF/IFAS*



Ogre-faced Spider

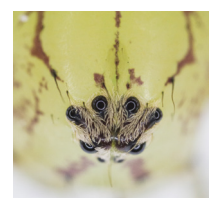
The ogre-faced spider is one of the more bizarre-looking and captivating spiders. With enormous eyes and a unique net-casting hunting style, it can see in near-total darkness and uses a silk net to snatch prey mid-air. During the day, it hangs motionless, resembling a twig. At night, it becomes a stealthy predator, making it a true terror to its prey. *Photo: Laurel B. Lietzenmayer, UF/IFAS*



Regal Jumping Spider

The regal jumping spider is a fan favorite, known for its iridescent green or pink jaws and bold, colorful patterns. These spiders are curious and often seem to watch humans with interest.

"They've become internet famous," said Taylor, noting that influencers even keep them as pets. They tend to be larger than other spiders, making them easy to hold, and they do well in a small terrarium. *Photo: Tyler Jones, UF/IFAS*



Green Lynx Spider

The green lynx spider blends perfectly into Florida's foliage with its bright green body and long, spiny legs. It's a master of camouflage and a skilled hunter, often found on flowers and shrubs. Though it looks fierce, it poses no threat to humans and helps control garden pests. Taylor noted they're common in gardens and flowerbeds and are great for natural pest control. *Photo: Tyler Jones, UF/IFAS*



Twin-flagged Jumping Spider

The twin-flagged jumping spider is a tiny acrobat with oversized eyes and a curious nature. These spiders are known for their impressive leaps and use silk safety lines like bungee cords. Their bold movements and alien-like appearance make them a fun and fascinating species to watch. Though they may look intimidating, they're completely safe for people – but horrifying to ants.

"If you're an ant, these are ferocious predators," Taylor said. "They're completely harmless to people, but they're ant specialists." Photo: E. C. Powell, UF/IFAS



Spitting Spiders

The spitting spider brings a comic-book twist to the mix. It spits sticky glue to trap prey, à la Spiderman, using a

rapid-fire technique that's highly effective against insects. These spiders are small and secretive, but their hunting method is one of the most unique in the arachnid world. Photo: Lisa A. Taylor, UF/IFAS

Golden Silk Orb Weaver

The golden silk orb weaver, also known as the banana spider, adds dramatic flair to Florida's landscapes with its large, golden webs that shimmer in the sunlight. Females can grow impressively large and display vibrant colors of gold, white and black. Their webs often span several feet, serving as natural decorations in gardens and forests. Photo: Marisol Amador, UF/IFAS (above)

For even more spider fun, check out Taylor's kid-friendly coloring book, "Coloring with Spiders: Our favorites from Florida" at edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN1390

ABOUT UF/IFAS

The mission of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) is to develop knowledge relevant to agricultural, human and natural resources and to make that knowledge available to sustain and enhance the quality of human life. With more than a dozen research facilities, 67 county Extension offices, and award-winning students and faculty in the UF College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, UF/IFAS brings science-based solutions to the state's agricultural and natural resources industries, and all Florida residents.

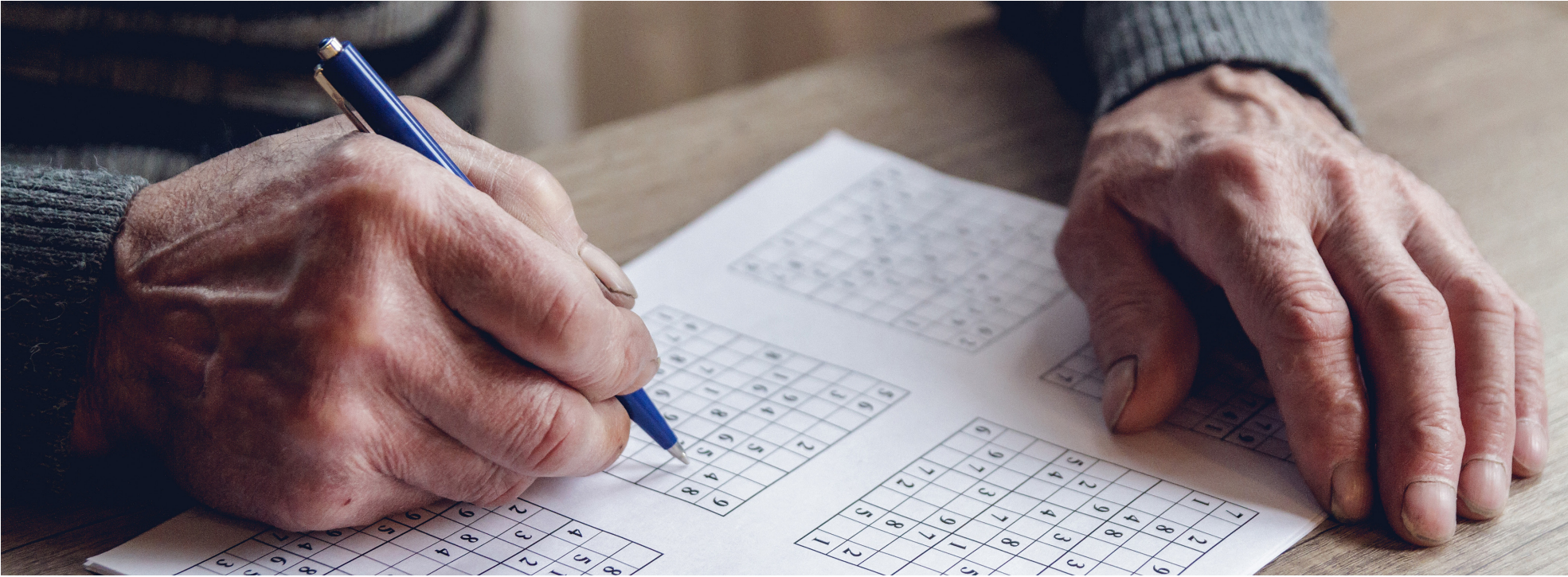
ifas.ufl.edu | @UF_IFAS

Sudoku Puzzles

Solutions found on page 22.

	8	4	2					
9	3		8	4				
	5	7						
6			4		1	7		
4				7				2
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DON'T GET FOOLED

How to Protect Yourself From Lottery Scams



By Chelsea Owens, Strategic Communications Manager, Florida Department of Lottery

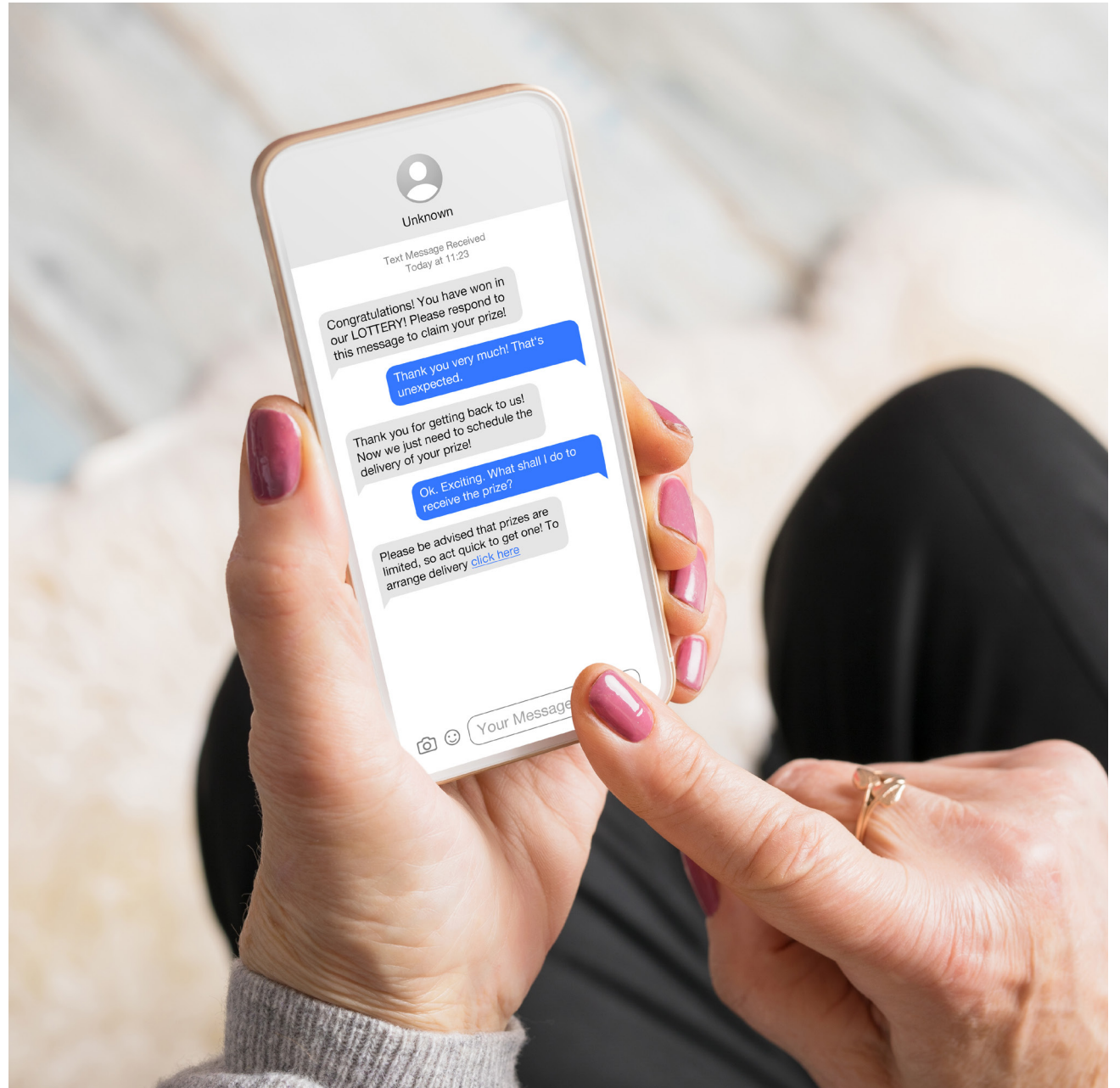
Scammers are constantly finding new ways to trick people into giving up their money and personal information, and seniors are often their primary target. One of the most common schemes involves fake notifications claiming "lottery winnings" or sweepstakes prizes.

The Florida Lottery is committed to helping players stay safe. "These scams are not only deceitful, but they are also dangerous," says Florida Lottery Secretary John F. Davis. "The Lottery will never call, text, or message you to inform you that you have won, and we will never ask for money to claim a prize. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

Scammers may request upfront "taxes" or fees or try to collect personal information such as Social Security numbers or bank account details. The Florida Lottery advises anyone who receives a suspicious call or message to hang up immediately, avoid sharing personal information, and report the scam. Reports can be made to the Florida Lottery's Division of Security at (850) 487-7730.

Legitimate Florida Lottery winnings can only be claimed in person at Lottery offices or by mail and require a valid winning ticket. The Lottery also provides a Security Center online with guidance and resources for protecting yourself, available at floridalottery.com.

It is essential to stay informed, particularly for seniors who may be more frequently

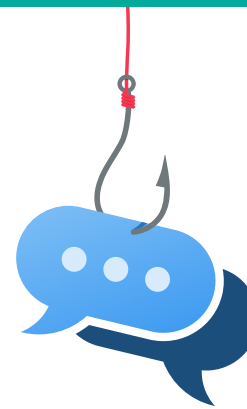


targeted. Following a few simple precautions can help protect your personal information and ensure that playing the Lottery remains an enjoyable activity without risk.

Why It Matters

In addition to providing entertainment, the Florida Lottery contributes more than \$49 billion to support education across the state,

including the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, which has helped more than one million students attend college. By staying informed and cautious, players can continue supporting this important mission safely.



Cybercrime: Prevention & Recovery

By Florida Department of Law Enforcement

The mission of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's (FDLE) Division of Cyber Crimes Technology and Telecommunications is to establish and protect technological and telecommunication systems in support of criminal investigations statewide. This includes investigating cybercrimes targeting our community's most vulnerable.

Identity theft, fraud and abuse are ways bad actors can victimize our community's elders. As technology grows and we help older adults adapt to the changing online landscape, it is also important to share cybersecurity tips to ensure their usage of the internet does not lead them to become cybercrime victims.

FDLE suggests that adults protect themselves and follow these suggestions when responding to identity theft. Here is the plan that the FDLE Cyber Division suggests you make:

- Create an emergency plan in case your identity is ever stolen. Having a plan in place helps you act quickly and confidently.
- Keep a folder or document with important contact numbers, including your bank, the Social Security Administration, your local police department, the IRS, credit card companies, and your state Attorney General's office.

- Maintain a secure list of your financial accounts, benefits, and key information. This will make it easier to reference what needs to be protected or updated if something happens.

If you think your personal identifying information has been compromised or released to a third-party source, FDLE suggests you follow these steps:

- Secure your accounts immediately to prevent fraudulent activity.
- Contact the credit reporting bureaus to report the incident and explore your protection options. You can request a fraud alert or a credit freeze to help stop unauthorized use of your information.
 - » Equifax: 1 (888) 548-7878
 - » TransUnion: 1 (855) 681-3196
 - » Experian: 1 (888) 397-3742
- Notify any agencies that provide you benefits, such as the Social Security Administration or Veterans Affairs, to ensure your payments and accounts remain secure.
- Contact the IRS if you suspect someone has filed a tax return using your name or Social Security number. The IRS can help protect your identity and ensure that future tax filings are verified properly.
- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) by visiting [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov). The FTC can help guide you through recovery steps and

provide documentation to support your reports.

If you or a loved one has become a victim of elder fraud or abuse, FDLE urges you to follow these steps immediately:

- Visit the Florida Attorney General's website for information and resources on identity theft prevention and reporting myfloridalegal.com.
- File a report with the Attorney General's Senior Protection Team.
- For non-emergency scams or abuse, call 1-866-966-7226 or file a complaint through the Citizen Services contact form .
- To report elder abuse, you can file online at reportabuse.myflfamilies.com/s/ or call the Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873.

Finally, if you or someone you know has been a victim of a cybercrime, it's important to report it to your local law enforcement agency right away and file a report with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at [IC3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov).

Secure Florida is an initiative of the FDLE's Cyber Crime Technology and Communications Division and offers information, tips and training opportunities to prioritize cybersecurity. Visit FDLE's Secure Florida website to learn more at secureflorida.org.

PREPARED FOR EVERY SEASON

Safety Guide for People with Access and Functional Needs



By Lauren Maheu, Strategic Communications Manager, Florida Division of Emergency Management

While Florida is well known for the hurricanes that can form during the Atlantic Hurricane Season, which runs from June 1 through November 30, severe weather can affect our communities all year long. From December 1 through May 31, Florida enters Severe Weather Season—a time when weather hazards such as thunderstorms, damaging winds, hail and tornadoes are likely. Staying prepared and vigilant to weather alerts throughout the year can help keep you and your loved ones safe.

From hurricanes and tornadoes to even rare extreme cold, Florida can experience a range of severe weather. That's why it is important for Floridians, especially older adults and individuals with access or functional needs, to take the precautions necessary to stay safe and ready for whatever weather Florida brings and the challenges that come with it.

Stay Informed

Florida weather can be very unpredictable, especially during Severe Weather Season, so be sure to stay informed by signing up for local emergency alerts. Local alerts will keep you up to date on any weather that may potentially impact your community. Visit [FloridaDisaster.org/AlertFlorida](https://www.floridadisaster.org/AlertFlorida) to sign up and follow the Florida Division of Emergency Management on Instagram, Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) and Nextdoor for weather updates and preparedness tips—@FLSERT.

Be Prepared

Keep your preparedness efforts going all year long by reviewing and updating your emergency plan regularly. Make sure it reflects the specific severe weather hazards that could impact your area, and maintain a disaster supply kit with enough food, water, medications and comfort items to last at least seven days. Don't forget to compile important official documents and medical information, update your emergency contact information for family, friends and neighbors, and share your plan so everyone knows how to stay connected when it matters most. Brush up on ways to stay ready for any emergency at [FloridaDisaster.org/PlanPrepare](https://www.floridadisaster.org/PlanPrepare).

Get Connected

Additional resources may also be available from your local emergency management office. When disaster strikes, it is crucial to know what preparedness and recovery resources are at your disposal, whether that be information and updates, supplies like sandbags to help protect your home, or shuttles and shelters to help residents evacuate or shelter in place—extra support may be provided in your area! Connect with local emergency management resources at [FloridaDisaster.org/Counties](https://www.floridadisaster.org/Counties).

Plan Ahead

If you think you may need additional assistance in the event of an emergency, the Special Needs Registry is a resource for just that! Managed by the Florida Department of Health, the Special Needs Registry provides additional support to residents with access and functional needs during emergencies. By registering, information is collected for emergency planning and response to connect individuals with local emergency personnel, services and resources. From emergency medical assistance to evacuation



support, this vital tool can help residents get the resources they need in the event of a disaster. Register at [FloridaDisaster.org/SNR](https://www.floridadisaster.org/SNR).

Staying prepared doesn't end when hurricane season does, it's something we can all do together, year-round. Everyone's preparedness journey looks different, but planning ahead ensures that you have what you need when it matters most. By keeping your emergency plan updated, staying connected with local resources, and knowing where to turn for support, you can help keep yourself and your loved ones safe no matter what Florida's weather brings.



HOW TO GET YOUR *Aging Outlook*

The *Aging Outlook* is published twice per year and is available digitally via email and our website. Printed copies are limited and only provided through our partner agencies. Please contact your local Area Agency on Aging (found on page 23) for a printed copy. To subscribe to the digital copy, visit elderaffairs.org.

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS PUZZLE ONE

1	8	4	2	5	9	6	7	3
9	3	6	8	4	7	5	2	1
2	5	7	1	3	6	8	9	4
6	2	3	4	9	1	7	5	8
4	9	8	3	7	5	1	6	2
7	1	5	6	8	2	4	3	9
3	7	2	5	1	4	9	8	6
5	6	1	9	2	8	3	4	7
8	4	9	7	6	3	2	1	5

PUZZLE TWO

9	4	7	8	6	1	2	5	3
2	1	8	4	5	3	6	7	9
5	6	3	7	9	2	8	1	4
1	9	4	2	7	6	3	8	5
7	8	2	3	4	5	9	6	1
6	3	5	9	1	8	4	2	7
3	5	6	1	2	4	7	9	8
4	7	1	6	8	9	5	3	2
8	2	9	5	3	7	1	4	6

Connect With the Elder Helpline

Local Resources and Assistance

Florida's Aging Network

Through our 11 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), we offer a wide variety of assistance programs and activities. AAAs are the designated private non-profit entities that advocate, plan, coordinate, and fund a system of elder support services in their respective Planning and Service Areas (PSAs).

The Elder Helpline

The AAAs operate a statewide network of 11 local Elder Helplines. Our Elder Helpline is ready to connect you with anything from caregiver assistance, meal programs, and health care counseling to group exercise

programs, volunteer opportunities, and even computer classes! Individuals and community agencies seeking accurate, unbiased information about federal, state, or local social, health, and human services in their area may access the Elder Helpline by calling toll-free **1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337)** or the county-specific Elder Helpline listed below.

Call our Elder Helpline today and speak with a real person! We are here to connect you to a multitude of resources and opportunities to promote vibrant and fulfilling lifestyles.

Other Assistance

1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)

Are you worried that an elder may be the victim of abuse? You can make a confidential report by calling Florida's Abuse Hotline.

Senior Legal Helpline 1-888-895-7873

For legal assistance specific to seniors, you can call the Florida Senior Legal Helpline. This helpline provides free civil legal advice and brief services over the telephone to eligible Florida residents 60 years and older (*income guidelines apply*).

Northwest Florida Area Agency on Aging

Serving Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton Counties

Phone: 850-494-7101

Elder Helpline:

866-531-8011

nwflaaa.org



Advantage Aging Solutions

Serving Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla, and Washington Counties

Phone: 850-488-0055

Elder Helpline:

866-467-4624

advantageaging.org



Elder Options

Serving Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee, and Union Counties

Phone: 352-378-6649

Elder Helpline:

800-262-2243

agingresources.org



ElderSource

Serving Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns, and Volusia Counties

Phone: 904-391-6600

Elder Helpline:

888-242-4464

myeldersource.org



Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas

Serving Pasco and Pinellas Counties

Phone: 727-570-9696

Elder Helpline:

727-217-8111

agingcarefl.org



Senior Connection Center

Serving Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, and Polk Counties

Phone: 813-740-3888

Elder Helpline:

800-336-2226

seniorconnectioncenter.org



Senior Resource Alliance

Serving Brevard, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties

Phone: 407-514-1800

Elder Helpline:

407-514-0019

seniorresourcealliance.org



Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida

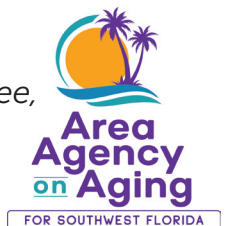
Serving Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota Counties

Phone: 239-652-6900

Elder Helpline:

866-413-5337

aaaswfl.org



Your Aging and Disability Resource Center

Serving Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie Counties

Phone: 561-684-5885

Elder Helpline:

866-684-5885

aaapbtc.org



Area Agency on Aging of Broward County

Serving Broward County

Phone: 954-745-9567

Elder Helpline:

954-745-9779

adrcbroward.org



Alliance for Aging

Serving Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties

Phone: 305-670-6500

Elder Helpline:

305-670-4357

allianceforaging.org



How to Safely Navigate a Roundabout



By Gail M. Holley,
Safe Mobility for
Life Program and
Research Manager,
Florida Department
of Transportation

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and many local agencies are using roundabouts as a tool to enhance intersection safety across the state. A roundabout is a one-way, circular intersection that uses signs to guide motorists around them. When evaluating changes to an intersection, FDOT assesses the best design for that intersection when all factors are considered. After this evaluation, FDOT works with local communities to determine the most appropriate design for that particular location.

When used properly, roundabouts help reduce injury crashes by 75 percent and fatality crashes by 90 percent. They also can accommodate up to 50 percent more traffic than typical intersections, which helps reduce delays for all road users.

Like anything new and unfamiliar, roundabouts may seem overwhelming at first glance. But by reading the tips below, you can confidently navigate a roundabout whether you are driving, walking, or riding a bike.

Safety Tips for Using a Roundabout

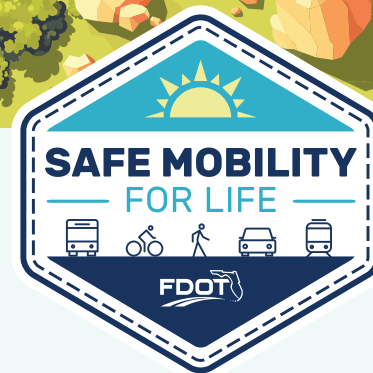
DRIVING

- Follow signs and markings to determine which lane you need to travel in before entering the roundabout.
- Yield to traffic in the roundabout. Only enter when there is a safe gap in traffic.
- Once you are in the roundabout, do not change lanes or stop.
- When approaching your exit, use your turn signal and safely exit the roundabout.



Q. WHAT'S A ROUNDABOUT?

A. A roundabout is a circular intersection. Drivers yield to cars in the circle on entry and flow around a central island.



WALKING

- Stay in the walkways as you approach the roundabout.
- Only cross at a designated crosswalk.
- Use the islands, or areas separating traffic streams, to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

- When traveling using sidewalks like a pedestrian:
 - » Follow the same rules as a pedestrian.
 - » Walk your bicycle at crosswalks.
 - » Give people walking the right of way.

BICYCLING

Bicyclists have two options in a roundabout: travel with traffic like a motorist or travel as a pedestrian and use the sidewalks and crosswalks. No matter which way you choose to travel, here are some tips to ensure safe travel as a bicyclist in a roundabout:

- When traveling in the roadway like a motorist:
 - » Follow the same rules as a vehicle.
 - » Use hand signals to signal your path when entering and exiting.

Interested in learning more? Safe Mobility for Life developed our Roadway Safety Series that consists of educational tips cards and graphics designed to help safely navigate roundabouts plus other roadway features with confidence. You can view, download or have the tip cards mailed directly to you for free at fdot.info/resourcecenter. Not interested in ordering online? Call the Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center at 1-833-930-2952 and one of our team members can assist you.

Learn more at SafeMobilityFL.com