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Elder Affairs
FLORIDA

Agging Outlook

SUMMER 2026

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

As spring blooms across Florida, it brings a renewed sense of hope, connection, and gratitude for the communities that make our state such a special place to live and age. This season serves as a reminder of the importance of supporting older adults, caregivers, and families while continuing to create opportunities for every Floridian to thrive at any stage of life.

This past February, I was honored to be appointed by President Trump and Secretary Kennedy as Chair of the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA) Advisory Council, where Florida has the opportunity to showcase our leadership in aging and dementia care on a national stage. Under Governor DeSantis' steadfast direction, Florida continues to lead the way through innovative programs and research, strong community partnerships that provide support and care, and a commitment to improving quality of life for older adults and their caregivers across our great state.

In addition to my role at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, I am also honored to serve as the liaison for the Governor's Faith and Community Initiative. Faith-based and community organizations are often at the heart of supporting older adults and caregivers, providing connection, encouragement, outreach, and

critical resources to those who need it most. Through these partnerships, we are continuing to strengthen and enhance communities across Florida and ensure older adults feel supported not only through services, but through meaningful relationships and compassion. It has been incredibly rewarding to work alongside organizations and faith leaders who are so dedicated to serving others and making a lasting impact to each Florida family we engage.

Of course, none of this important work would be possible without our incredible team at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. I am continually inspired by the passion, compassion, and dedication our staff and partners bring to serving Florida's seniors each and every day! Their commitment to making meaningful change in the lives of older adults and caregivers is what drives our mission forward and makes me so proud and grateful to serve alongside them.

As we look ahead to our warmer summer months, I also encourage everyone to begin preparing for hurricane season by reviewing emergency plans, checking supplies, and staying connected with older loved ones and neighbors. Taking a few simple steps now can make a meaningful difference later. And as always, if you or someone you know



ABOVE: Secretary Michelle Branham.

needs support, resources, or information on services available for older adults, Florida's Elder Helpline is always here to help at **1-800-96-ELDER** (1-800-963-5337).

As always, thank you for your continued partnership and dedication to supporting Florida's seniors and caregivers.

Together, we are building a brighter future for generations to come

INTO THE WOODS

A Volunteer's Craft Elevates Florida's Parks



By Quinlan Halpain,
Park Services
Specialist, Florida
Department of
Environmental
Protection

For Florida Park Service
Volunteer Larry "Dunk"

Duncanson, retirement means two things, both of which he happens to love: Florida State Parks and carpentry.

While Dunk and his wife, Lenore, were vacationing at Lake Kissimmee State Park, the park's manager noticed the beautiful wood sculptures outside of Dunk's RV and stopped for some conversation on the artwork. It wasn't long before Dunk found himself volunteering with the Florida Park Service, directing staff and volunteers on carpentry projects: everything from state residences, offices, trail markers, signs, pavilions and observation towers to rebuilding entire lengths of boardwalks!

Prior to retirement Dunk was a manager of "roughneck" crews on oilfields in Alaska, working long hours in harsh conditions overseeing crews on multiple projects. With this experience under his belt, Dunk's knowledge and skills were perfectly suited



to his volunteer work with Florida State Parks, where he has trained and inspired many staff and volunteers and impressed thousands of park visitors.

Persistent water on the trail at Lake Kissimmee State Park prompted the creation of a bridge over that section. When the water dried up a few years later during a period of prolonged drought, Dunk decided to add the water back (see picture). It's now the most photographed spot in the park!

With more than 30,000 volunteers contributing nearly one million hours per year, the Florida Park Service depends on volunteers like Dunk. After 18 years of service at the age of 80, Dunk is considering retiring once more; however, we may have convinced him to come back for two more years so he can qualify for the 20-Year Service Award!

If you would like to get involved, reach out to your local Florida State Park or go online to apply [floridastateparks.org/get-involved!](https://floridastateparks.org/get-involved/)

YOU CAN START TODAY!

10 Healthy Habits for Your Brain



By Jennifer Braisted,
Territory Grassroots
Advocacy Director
Southeast, Alzheimer's
Association Florida
Chapters

Data from the Florida Department of Health shows 1 in 10 Floridians age 45 and older report they are experiencing confusion or memory loss that is happening more often or getting worse. However, research shows that healthy behaviors may reduce the risk of cognitive decline and help reduce the risk of dementia.

"Understanding the role that brain healthy behaviors may play in reducing cognitive decline is a robust area of research," says Jennifer Braisted, Alzheimer's Association, southeast territory grassroots advocacy director. "There are steps we can take now to help reduce the risk of cognitive decline later. This is true even for people who have a history of dementia in their families. It's never too late or too early to take charge of your brain health"

Based on mounting scientific evidence, the Alzheimer's Association offers these 10 healthy habits for your brain.

1 Challenge your mind. Be curious. Put your brain to work and do something that is new for you. Challenging your mind may have short- and long-term benefits for your brain.



2 Stay in school. Education reduces your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Continue your own education by taking a class at a local library, college, or online.

3 Get moving. Engage in regular exercise. This includes activities that raise your heart rate and increase blood flow to the brain and body. Find ways to build more movement into your day — walking, dancing, gardening — whatever works for you!

4 Protect your head. Help prevent an injury to your head. Wear a helmet for activities like biking, and wear a seatbelt. Do what you can to prevent falls, especially for older adults.

5 Be smoke-free. Quitting smoking can lower the risk of cognitive decline back to levels similar to those who have not smoked. It's never too late to stop.

6 Control your blood pressure. Medications can help lower high blood pressure. And healthy habits like eating right and physical activity can help too. Work with

a health care provider to control your blood pressure.

7 Manage diabetes. Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or controlled by healthier eating, increasing physical activity, and medication, if necessary.

8 Eat right. Eating healthier foods can help reduce your risk of cognitive decline. This includes more vegetables and leaner meats/proteins, along with foods that are less processed and lower in fat. Choose healthier meals and snacks that you enjoy.

9 Maintain a healthy weight. Talk to your health care provider about the weight that is healthy for you. Other healthy habits on this list — eating right, physical activity and sleep — can help with maintaining a healthy weight.

10 Sleep well. Good quality sleep is important for brain health. Do all you can to minimize disruptions. If you have any sleep-related problems, such as sleep apnea, talk to a health care provider.

LIGHTS, CAMERAS, ACTION!

"Aging on the Suncoast" TV Program Features Older Americans Act Services



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

Aging on the Suncoast is an informational talk show that explores issues important to seniors. People living in Pinellas and Pasco counties can watch the broadcast multiple times a week on county government TV channels or catch taped episodes on YouTube.

With help from the Pinellas County TV communications team, the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas has produced the program for more than 14 years.

However, starting in 2025, viewers may have noticed a change. *Aging on the Suncoast* continues to focus on senior issues and feature guest experts on diverse topics but now does so through more engaging video storytelling. The program also supports AAAPP's outreach under the Older Americans Act, including Title IIB supportive services outreach, by helping older adults and caregivers better understand available programs and where to turn for help.

Outreach Manager Kathryn Bursch joined the AAAPP team in January of 2025. With a background in TV journalism, Bursch shoots and edits video stories about AAAPP services and profiles the seniors we serve. Bursch



also writes the *Aging on the Suncoast* script and hosts the program.

Daniel Eggleston, a Video Specialist with Pinellas County, says the county has improved the look of the show with upgraded cameras and sets. He adds that Bursch has "raised the bar further with her knack for creative storytelling and the use of topical video footage to make the show more engaging."

"This has been a perfect fit for me!" says Bursch. "Producing *Aging on the Suncoast* utilizes all of my TV skills and I hope people are finding the program both fun and informative."

Aging on the Suncoast focuses on Older Americans Act related topics, including services and supports funded through the Act, as well as SHINE, SMP and MIPPA programming that helps older adults access benefits, make informed Medicare decisions and avoid fraud. Segments have included the importance of preventing senior abuse neglect and exploitation, nutrition programs like home delivered meals, and the fun evidence-based exercise program Bingocize.

AAAPP's Director of Programs Christine Didion has appeared on the program several

times sharing her expertise on Senior Mental Health and Caregiving. Didion says, "By highlighting stories and through the use of videos, seniors and caregivers can truly get a glimpse of the positive impact our services can provide."

The program boosts outreach efforts by reaching underserved seniors and caregivers tied to their homes. AAAPP also repurposes video content in shorter form for social media.

In-kind support from both Pinellas and Pasco County makes *Aging on the Suncoast* possible. Pinellas County Communications Director David Connor says, "The county is proud to partner with AAAPP to put forward life-enhancing information for the many seniors in our community."

AAAPP's goal is to help seniors "Live Well at Home" and *Aging on the Suncoast* does just that—by broadcasting information about the Older Americans Act programs for seniors and caregivers.

"And that's a wrap!"

Visit us on YouTube to watch recent episodes of *Aging on the Suncoast*: [youtube.com/@areaagencyonagingofpasco-p8086](https://www.youtube.com/@areaagencyonagingofpasco-p8086)

LEARN NEW SKILLS WHILE SUPPORTING YOUR COMMUNITY



*By Anne Chansler,
Director, Division of
Elder Opportunities,
Florida Department
of Elder Affairs*

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is an opportunity to stay active, build new skills, and make a meaningful impact on your community. Designed for adults aged 55 and older, SCSEP places participants in part-time roles with nonprofits and government agencies, where you can contribute your talents, earn a modest wage, and gain valuable experience.

More than just a job, SCSEP is a pathway to renewed confidence and purpose. Participants receive hands-on training tailored to today's workforce, including computer skills, resume development, and interview preparation. Whether you are reentering the workforce, changing career paths, or simply looking to stay engaged, SCSEP provides the tools and support needed to succeed.

Equally important are the personal benefits. SCSEP helps individuals reconnect with their communities, build new relationships, and rediscover a sense of accomplishment. Many participants find that their work not only supports local organizations but also strengthens their own well-being, offering structure, social interaction, and a renewed sense of independence.

SCSEP is looking for individuals who are 55 or older, unemployed, low-income, or facing barriers to work, with priority given to veterans, individuals with disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency. The program is especially committed to serving those who may have been overlooked in



the workforce but still have valuable skills and experiences to share.

Participants are placed in a variety of community service assignments, such as assisting at senior centers, supporting libraries, working with schools, or helping local nonprofits expand their reach. These roles allow individuals to give back while gaining current, relevant job experience that can lead to unsubsidized employment.

To join, email scsepinfo@elderaffairs.org or call the Department of Elder Affairs at 850-414-2000 to connect with your local program office. Friendly staff are available to guide you through the enrollment process and help you determine eligibility.

With SCSEP, you don't just prepare for new career opportunities, enrich your community, build lasting connections, and embrace the next chapter of life with purpose. It's never too late to learn, grow, and make a difference.



DEMENTIA CARE & CURE JACKSONVILLE

Offering Special Experiences for Caregivers & Loved Ones



*By Andrea Spencer,
Vice President of
Communications,
ElderSource*

Caregivers and their loved ones living with dementia often struggle to find ways to communicate and stay meaningfully engaged, a challenge that can leave both feeling isolated. Recognizing this need, ElderSource and the Mayo Memory Disorder Clinic formed innovative partnerships with the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens and the Jacksonville Zoo & Botanical Gardens to create private, supportive walking tours designed to foster connection, spark conversation, and provide education for families on the dementia journey.

This initiative began in 2023 through the Jacksonville Chapter of the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI), a collaboration of

community partners dedicated to building dementia-friendly environments. As part of the program's development, key staff members at the Cummer Museum participated in a 90-minute training session covering the causes and signs of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, as well as best practices for communicating with individuals living with dementia. The training also highlighted the emotional, physical, and financial stress caregivers often experience.

Following this preparation, museum staff worked closely with ElderSource and Mayo's DCCI team to design a specialized tour that would guide families through the galleries using art as a catalyst for meaningful conversation and shared moments. The program quickly proved successful, and over the past three years, the Cummer has continued to host at least four tours annually, each one offering families a calm, enriching, and judgment-free space to connect.



These tours have come to be named ARTful Moments.

Building on this success, Jacksonville DCCI members approached the educational team at the Jacksonville Zoo & Botanical Gardens to replicate the experience in a new environment. Zoo staff completed similar dementia-friendly training, and the partnership now offers guided tours in both the spring and fall. To ensure a personal and supportive experience, each tour is intentionally limited to no more than ten participants—typically five caregiver-and-loved-one pairs—allowing for deeper discussion, sensory engagement, and individualized attention.

Wild Wonders tours at the zoo have proven to be most effective and enjoyable.

Together, these partnerships demonstrate how community institutions can play a powerful role in supporting families affected by dementia, transforming local cultural treasures into places of connection, comfort, and joy.

“What makes this program so special is the way our community has come together. The museum staff, the zoo educators, the caregivers, and the families—all of them



contribute to moments of connection that truly matter. It’s a reminder that when a community invests in understanding dementia, everyone benefits,” said Andrea Spencer, Vice President of Communications for ElderSource.

Sochenda Stephens, Mayo Memory Disorder Clinic Program Director added, “Families affected by dementia deserve moments of connection that feel natural, joyful, and human. By partnering with these beautiful venues, we’re creating spaces where caregivers and their loved ones can simply be together—engaged, curious, and supported. These experiences remind us that meaningful connection is still possible, even in the midst of a difficult journey.”



The Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Committee

A Voice for Seniors and Those Who Care for Them



By Cari Eyre,
Deputy Secretary,
Dementia Director,
Florida Department
of Elder Affairs

Across Florida, families, caregivers, and professionals are navigating the growing impact of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). Behind the scenes, an important group is working year-round to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are addressed—the Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Committee (ADAC).

What Is ADAC and Why It Matters

Established by the Florida Legislature in 1986 under Section 430.501, Florida Statutes, ADAC plays a critical role in shaping how our state responds to Alzheimer's disease. As part of Florida's broader Alzheimer's Disease Initiative, the committee provides guidance to the Department of Elder Affairs and the state's leadership on policies, programs, and services that directly affect individuals living with dementia and the people who care for them.

Recognizing the growing need for expertise and representation, the Legislature expanded the committee in 2019 from 10 to 15 members. Today, ADAC brings together an array of voices, including healthcare professionals, researchers, caregivers, aging service providers, and state legislators.

A Mission Centered on Support and Solutions

At its core, ADAC exists to improve the lives of Floridians impacted by ADRD. The

committee advises state leaders on a wide range of issues, including:

- Strengthening clinical care and support services
- Expanding home- and community-based programs
- Addressing caregiver challenges and workforce needs
- Advancing research and innovation
- Improving public safety and awareness

For seniors and families, this means that real-world concerns—like access to care, long waitlists, and affordability—are being elevated directly to decision-makers.

Driving Change Through Planning and Policy

One of ADAC's most important responsibilities is helping shape Florida's Alzheimer's Disease State Plan. This roadmap guides how the state allocates resources, develops programs, and prepares for the future.

Each year, the committee submits a comprehensive report to state leadership, including the Governor and legislative leaders. This report includes:

- Evidence-based recommendations for Alzheimer's policy
- Updates on state-funded programs and their outcomes
- Strategies to improve care delivery across settings
- Proposals for strengthening the State Plan



These recommendations directly influence the work of the Alzheimer's and Brain Health Division within the Department of Elder Affairs, helping ensure that services evolve alongside the needs of Florida's aging population.

Collaboration That Makes a Difference

ADAC meets quarterly, bringing together experts and stakeholders from across the state. These meetings are more than administrative updates; they are working and learning sessions focused on solving real challenges.

Topics often include:

- Gaps in care and service delivery
- Training and education for caregivers and professionals
- Financial pressures on families and providers
- Ethical and legal considerations in dementia care
- Emerging research and treatment approaches

The committee also hosts research and educational presentations throughout the year, offering valuable insights into new developments in Alzheimer's care and science.

Continued...

An Open Door for the Public

One of the most important, and sometimes overlooked, aspects of ADAC is its accessibility. While members are appointed, meetings are open to the public and available virtually. This means seniors, caregivers, and industry professionals can:

- Stay informed about state initiatives
- Hear directly from experts and policymakers
- Share their experiences and concerns
- Participate in public comment sessions

For those working in senior care, these meetings provide a unique opportunity to help shape the future of services in Florida. For families and individuals living with dementia, they offer a platform to be heard.

Looking Ahead

With Florida's senior population continuing to grow, the work of the Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Committee has never been more important. By bringing together varied perspectives, advancing thoughtful policy, and maintaining a strong connection to the community, ADAC is helping build a more responsive and compassionate system of care.

Whether you are a senior, a caregiver, or a professional in the aging services field, staying engaged with ADAC's work is one meaningful way to be part of the solution.

To learn more or attend an upcoming meeting, connect with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs online at elderaffairs.org and explore opportunities to participate. Your voice matters in shaping the future of Alzheimer's care in our state.

GET YOUR GUIDE



By R. Steven Murray, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (Ret), Communications & External Affairs Director, Emergency Coordinating Officer, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

The 2026 edition of the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide, published by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, is now available in both print and digital formats. The 32-page full-color annual publication highlights available federal and state benefits and services, as well as phone numbers and websites for additional information.

- For individual copies, please contact Mary.Frazier@fdva.fl.gov.
- For bulk orders, please contact LeeAnn.Sferrazzarios@fdva.fl.gov.

To learn more about earned benefits, please contact one of our State Veterans' Service Officers by calling **(727) 319-7440**. You may also contact them via email at fdva.vso@fdva.fl.gov. Our team of Hope Navigators is also hard at work connecting Veterans and their families with



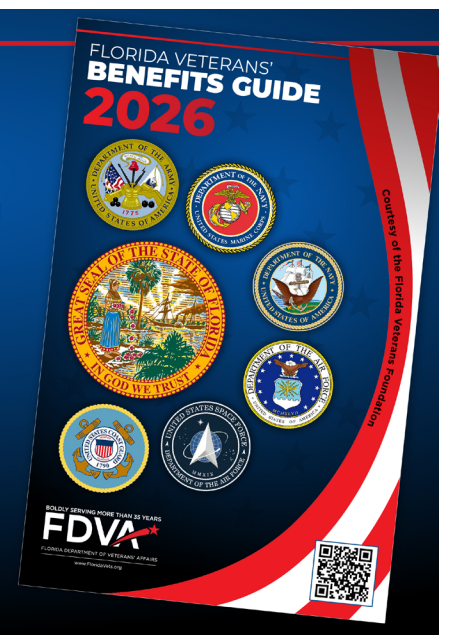
information and resources to improve their quality of life. Contact them via email at HopeNavigators@fdva.fl.gov or call **(833) GET-HOPE**.

Operating as the premier point of entry for Florida's nearly 1.4 million Veterans, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs operates a network of nine State Veterans' Homes and provides statewide outreach to connect Veterans with their earned services, benefits and support.

FLORIDA VETERANS' BENEFITS GUIDE 2026

NOW AVAILABLE!

FDVA is proud to announce the updated 2026 version of the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide.



NAVIGATING MEDICARE



By Anne Chansler,
Director, Division of
Elder Opportunities,
Florida Department
of Elder Affairs

Medicare can be complex, but programs like SHINE, MIPPA, and SMP are designed to provide guidance and support every step of the way. Understanding what each program offers and how SHINE counselors can assist makes it easier to access the benefits you deserve and make confident healthcare decisions.

What is SHINE?

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) provides free, confidential, and unbiased counseling to older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers. SHINE counselors assist with Medicare-related questions, explain coverage options, and guide beneficiaries through programs designed to reduce costs. Whether you are reviewing Medicare Advantage plans, considering Original Medicare with a Part D plan, or navigating dual eligibility for Medicare and Medicaid, SHINE is here to provide individualized, trusted support.

Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA)

MIPPA helps eligible Medicare beneficiaries access programs that reduce healthcare and prescription drug costs. These include the Low-Income Subsidy (Extra Help) for Part D and Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs), which can assist with premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance. SHINE counselors can help beneficiaries apply for all Medicare Savings Programs, including:

- **Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB)** Pays Medicare Part A and B premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance

- **Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB)** Pays Medicare Part B premiums
- **Qualifying Individual (QI-1)** Pays Medicare Part B premiums for certain low-income individuals
- **Qualified Disabled and Working Individuals (QDWI)** Pays Medicare Part A premiums for certain disabled beneficiaries who are working

SHINE counselors can also assist with completing applications, helping ensure beneficiaries access the full range of benefits for which they may qualify.

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

SMP empowers beneficiaries to detect, prevent, and report Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse. SHINE counselors can connect you with SMP resources and assist you with reviewing medical bills, identifying suspicious charges, and reporting fraud, helping you protect both your healthcare coverage and your identity.

Support and Resources from SHINE

SHINE counselors provide personalized, one-on-one assistance tailored to your unique situation. They can:

- Explain Medicare coverage options, including Medicare Advantage and Part D plans
- Help you apply for MIPPA-related programs, including the Low-Income Subsidy and MSPs (QMB, SLMB, QI-1, QDWI)
- Answer questions about dual eligibility for Medicare and Medicaid
- Provide access to SMP resources to prevent fraud and protect your benefits

All SHINE services are free and confidential. To contact a SHINE counselor, call



1-800-963-5337 or visit floridashine.org/Contact-Us.aspx to find local assistance.

Making Medicare Easier to Navigate

With SHINE, navigating Medicare, MIPPA programs, and SMP resources becomes more manageable. From exploring coverage options and applying for cost-saving programs to prevent fraud and understanding your benefits, SHINE provides reliable, unbiased support, so you can make informed decisions and feel confident in your healthcare choices.

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.



Operation: Senior Shield

Strengthening Protections for Florida's Seniors in a Digital Age



By Anne Chansler,
Director, Division of
Elder Opportunities,
Florida Department
of Elder Affairs

At the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, we are committed to ensuring that every Floridian can age with dignity, independence, and security. A key part of that mission is Operation Senior Shield (OSS), a proactive initiative designed to educate and empower older adults to recognize, avoid, and report fraud and financial exploitation. As scams become more sophisticated and increasingly digital, OSS serves as both an educational tool and a prevention strategy, helping older adults stay informed, confident, and one step ahead of evolving threats.

The Evolving Threat Landscape

Today's fraudsters rarely rely on in-person deception. Instead, they use phones, emails, text messages, and social media to target victims remotely. These scams are carefully designed to create urgency, fear, or confusion, pressuring individuals into making quick decisions without verification. Common examples include claims of compromised bank accounts, overdue bills, or a loved one in crisis. In each case, the goal is the same: to bypass critical thinking through emotional manipulation and a false sense of urgency.

Common Scam Tactics Targeting Older Adults

Operation Senior Shield focuses on educating Floridians about the most common fraud tactics affecting older adults. These include government impersonation scams, where criminals pose as representatives from agencies such as Social Security, Medicare, or the IRS to demand personal

information or payment; tech support scams, which use fake alerts or pop-ups to gain remote access or charge for unnecessary services; "grandparent" scams, where a fraudster pretends to be a family member in distress and urgently requests money through gift cards or wire transfers; and phishing or smishing attempts, which use deceptive emails or text messages to steal passwords, financial data, or personal information.

The "Pause and Verify" Approach

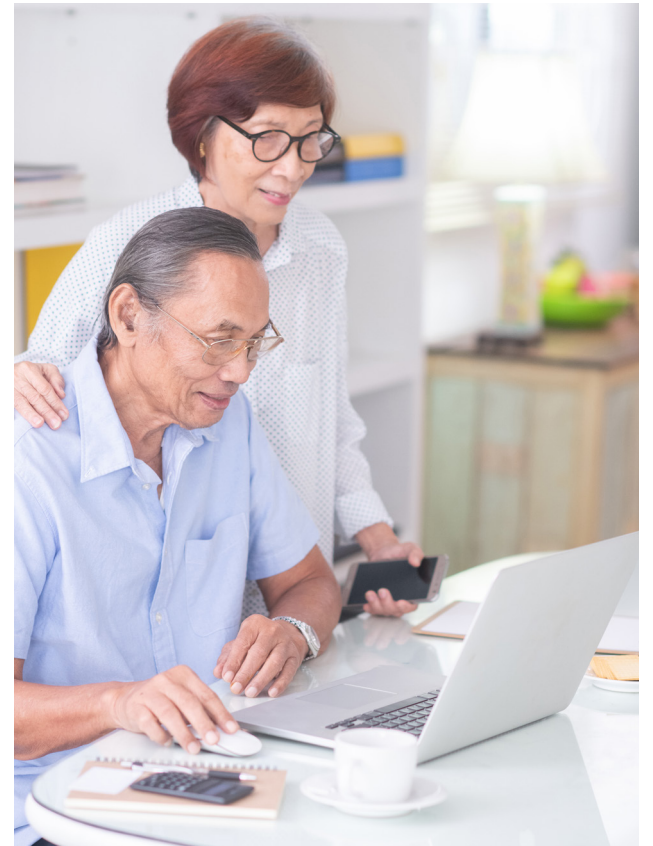
A core component of OSS education is the "Pause and Verify" approach. If you receive an unexpected request for money or sensitive information, pause before responding. Treat it like an unexpected visitor at your door; you would not grant access without confirming identity. Instead, independently verify the request by contacting the organization or individual directly using a trusted phone number or official website, rather than any contact information provided in the message. This simple step can prevent costly mistakes and stop scams before they succeed.

Building a Community Safety Net

OSS strengthens protection efforts through partnerships with trusted programs such as SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) and the Senior Medicare Patrol. These collaborations ensure that older adults have access to trained counselors who can help evaluate suspicious calls, questionable bills, or potential identity theft situations. By connecting resources across agencies and community programs, OSS creates a coordinated safety net, ensuring that no one must navigate fraud concerns alone.

How to Get Started with OSS

Older adults, caregivers, and community members can sign up to receive Operation



Senior Shield alerts and educational updates by visiting opseniorshieldfl.com. These alerts provide timely information about emerging scams, prevention tips, and resources to help you stay protected. You can also contact the Florida Department of Elder Affairs at **(850) 414-2000** or visit elderaffairs.org to learn more about available programs and support services in your area.

Protecting What Matters Most

Ultimately, Operation Senior Shield is about restoring control and confidence to older adults while reducing the impact of financial exploitation across Florida communities. Through education, awareness, and coordinated support, OSS equips individuals with the tools needed to protect their personal information and financial well-being. Florida's older adults have earned the right to safety, dignity, and peace of mind, and Operation Senior Shield exists to help safeguard that right.





POLK COUNTY SENIOR GAMES

A Tight Knit Family of Athletes and Organizers



By Nick Gandy, Florida Sports Foundation

For more than 30 years, the Polk Senior Games have been a family affair, fostered by the matriarch of the Games, Nancye Thornberry.

After traveling to Syracuse, New York for the 1991 National Senior Games, Thornberry envisioned the same kind of event for athletes age 50 and over in Polk County.

The first Polk Senior Games in 1992 attracted 777 participants and over the years has grown to as many as 2,600 participants. Besides those who register to compete in the annual event, the Polk Senior Games has an impressive amount of community support with over 700 volunteers and numerous sponsors.

While Thornberry's involvement in the Polk Senior Games dwindled over the years, and

her passing in 2020 at 89 years old, the responsibilities never left the family.

At the Polk Senior Games, held annually in late-February through mid-March, the limbs of the family tree are spreading throughout Polk County.

The Opening Ceremony, prior to the Track and Field running events at All Saints Academy, featured Gus Palas as the emcee. His sister, Lisa Palas, opened the program singing, "For the Love of the Game," and later led the crowd in the Polk Senior Games song. It's a song she wrote, because that's what she does.

Palas is an award-winning songwriter who has penned hits for such country music chart toppers as Alabama, Reba McEntire, The Oak Ridge Boys, Randy Travis, Kris Kristofferson, and Conway Twitty.

It's a catchy tune that will get stuck in your head. Here's a small sample:

Polk Senior Games, a great way to have fun.

Polk Senior Games, a great way to stay young.

We're going for the gold in our golden years,

Winners all the way, hooray for Polk Senior Games, come on out and play!

Deena Wilbur, a family member, relocated from Miami to Lakeland after Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and has served as the Polk Senior Games Director since 1993.

Wilbur's son, Nick, is the softball event director and Wilbur's daughter runs the Sudoku event.

More branches have sprouted and will continue to grow as Gus' 15-year old granddaughter has been waiting in the wings to officially volunteer when she turns 16 for the 2027 Games.

"Mom didn't want for any of us to be sitting on the bench," said Gus.

Gus and Deena's sisters, Julie Palas and Linda Bradley, have also contributed greatly. Linda was the Torch Bearer for the 2026 Opening Ceremony as the Outstanding Women's Competitor at the 2025 Polk Senior Games and competed in 19 events in eight different sports in the 65-69 age group.

Julie directs the Senior Smarts competition and competed in 19 events at the 2026 Games.

Providing technical expertise with the Polk Senior Games for 2026, was Deena's daughter, Nancy, and her husband, Joe, who initiated and managed a new athlete registration system. The move to the registration system also assisted in generating competition reports for the sport directors.

"Even my Aunt Donna, my mom's sister in law, came in from Kentucky to help out and play Euchre," Wilbur said. "I don't think we had any of my cousins helping out this year."



What makes the Polk Senior Games one of the most successful Local Senior Games Qualifiers for the Florida Senior Games is its variety of events outside of the Olympic events offered at the Florida Senior Games.

Polk Senior Games participants are offered events such as Card Games, Dancing, Fishing, Punt, Pass & Kick, and Sport Shooting.

The 2026 Polk Senior Games featured over 1,700 athletes competing in 37 sports/activities and 97 events at 30 venues in eight Polk County communities. The long history and sense of community and family draws folks from around the state.

"I travel to a lot of the Games around the state and have been going to the Polk Senior Games forever," said track and field and swimming athlete, Jocelyn Lowther, from Cocoa Beach.

If the Polk Senior Games had a family dinner during the 15 days of the event, several tables would have been pushed together to accommodate everyone.



The Polk Senior Games are one of 21 Florida Senior Games Series Qualifiers. For a listing of Fall 2026 qualifiers, visit floridaseniorgames.com/all-sports-schedule.

Ask an Ombudsman

Volunteers advocating for Florida's long-term care residents answer your questions regarding the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents in long-term care facilities.



*By Terri Cantrell,
State Ombudsman,
Long-Term Care
Ombudsman Program,
Florida Department
of Elder Affairs*

Q: What is a Long-Term Care Ombudsman?

A Long-Term Care Ombudsman is a specially trained and certified volunteer with the authority, under both federal and state law, to identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, residents in long-term care facilities. Ombudsmen handle a wide range of resident concerns, from issues related to medication and care administration to matters involving dignity and respect. Their role is to protect the legal rights of residents, ensuring they receive proper treatment and quality care.

The assistance provided by an ombudsman is often a source of comfort for residents. Our volunteers offer free, confidential, and personalized help, striving to resolve concerns with warmth, professionalism, and a commitment to advocacy.

Q: What should I do if I have a concern about long-term care?

Anyone can raise a concern about long-term care, whether you're a resident, relative, friend, facility staff member, legal representative, or a concerned citizen. Complaints may involve the facility, its staff,



or any individual or agency that threatens or violates a resident's rights, health, safety, or welfare.

Complaints filed with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program remain entirely confidential unless the resident or complainant grants permission to disclose information. Once a complaint is filed, it is documented, and a local ombudsman is assigned to investigate. The ombudsman contacts the complainant or resident within seven calendar days to begin a thorough investigation. After gathering all the facts, the ombudsman advocates for the best possible

solution to resolve the issue and ensure the resident's satisfaction.

To ask for an ombudsman's assistance, learn more about the program, or to become a volunteer ombudsman, call toll-free at 1-888-831-0404 or email LTCOPinformer@elderaffairs.org.



**Long-Term Care
Ombudsman
Program** FLORIDA

Eat from the Rainbow!



By Ashley Apthorp,
Division Director,
Community-based
Services, Florida
Department of
Elder Affairs

Should we “Eat a Rainbow” of foods?

Yes, by incorporating color into our meals and snacks this can help you live longer and have a healthier life. US Dietary Guidelines recommend consuming 2 ½ cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit based on a daily 2,000 calorie diet. Each color group has unique vitamins, minerals and nutrients. It is important to eat as many plant-based colors as possible as each color has numerous health benefits such as supporting eye health, heart health, brain health and digestive health. Below is an overview of “Eating the Rainbow.”

- **RED** fruits and vegetables have anti-inflammatory and antioxidants including Folate, Potassium, Vitamin A (lycopene), Vitamin C and Vitamin K1. Examples include red potatoes, tomatoes, watermelon, guava, red apples, strawberries, raspberries and grapefruit.
- **ORANGE & YELLOW** fruits and vegetables have anti-inflammatory and antioxidants including Fiber, Folate, Potassium, Vitamin A (Beta Carotene) and Vitamin C. Examples include yellow squash, butternut squash, carrots, sweet potatoes, corn, pumpkins, yellow and orange peppers, lemons, bananas, mangos, cantaloupe, tangerines, oranges, apricots and pineapples.
- **GREEN** fruits and vegetables have anti-inflammatory and antioxidants including Fiber, Folate, Magnesium, Potassium, Vitamin A (Beta Carotene) and Vitamin K1. Examples include all leafy greens (such as spinach, kale, broccoli, bok choy), zucchini, peas, asparagus, okra, green beans, artichokes, green cabbage, brussel sprouts, cucumbers, celery, limes, avocados, and kiwi.
- **BLUE AND PURPLE** fruits and vegetables have anti-inflammatory and antioxidants including Fiber, Manganese, Potassium, Vitamin B6, Vitamin C and Vitamin K1. Examples include blueberries, blackberries, concord grapes, figs, plums, purple cabbage and eggplant
- **DARK RED** fruits and vegetables anti-inflammatory and antioxidants including Fiber, Folate, Magnesium, Manganese, Potassium and Vitamin B6. Examples include beets, red bell peppers, cherries, pomegranates and prickly pears.
- **WHITE AND BROWN** fruits and vegetables have anti-inflammatory and antioxidants including Fiber, Folate, Magnesium, Manganese, Potassium, Vitamin B6, and Vitamin K1. Examples include dates, jicama, cauliflower, garlic, leeks, onions, mushrooms, parsnips, turnips, rutabaga and white potatoes.

Florida is home to many fruits and vegetables. By visiting your local produce stand, farmers market, U-Pick Farm or grocery

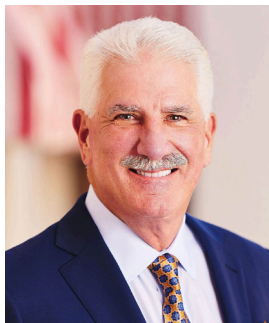


store will give you many options on “eating the rainbow” to ensure a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Please visit fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Buy-Fresh-From-Florida for Fresh from Florida to provide the location of your local farmers market and U-Pick Farm in your area along with what Fresh from Florida fruits and vegetables are in season.

Always consult with your physician before following this or any other dietary advice.

Lookout for Our Wildlife

Animals Are More Active in Spring



By Rodney Barreto,
Chair, Florida Fish and
Wildlife Conservation
Commission

Spring has sprung, and that means Florida's wildlife is stirring. Migration, breeding, feeding and nesting all increase this time of year. The following seasonal tips can help protect wildlife and minimize disturbances during this busy season and throughout the year.

BATS Bat maternity season runs from April 16 through Aug. 14, the time of year when bats give birth and raise their young. It's



illegal to block or exclude bats from their roosts during this period. Exclusion during maternity season can trap flightless pups inside structures, causing unnecessary harm to the bats and additional complications for the property owner.

BEARS As temperatures rise, bears become more active, and mothers begin teaching their cubs what to eat and how to survive. Help ensure your garbage, pet food and bird seed don't become part of that lesson by removing or securing potential attractants around your property. When bears can't find an easy meal in your yard or neighborhood, they typically move on. Seeing a bear in your neighborhood is not necessarily cause for alarm, but it is important that people give

bears space and secure food attractants so that they do not linger in the area.

GOPHER TORTOISES Florida's only native tortoise becomes more active this time of year, foraging for food and seeking a mate. If you spot a gopher tortoise or its distinctive half-moon-shaped burrow entrance, please give it space and avoid disturbing it. If you see a gopher tortoise crossing the road and it's safe to help, you may gently move it in the direction it was headed (not in your vehicle). And remember, gopher tortoises are land animals that cannot swim, so they should never be put in water.

MANATEES For boaters and personal watercraft users, staying alert for manatees





can help prevent collisions with these large aquatic mammals. Encounters are more likely this time of year as manatees leave their winter habitats and travel through waterways along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, as well as inland waters. Slow down and watch carefully for manatees below the surface when boating. Always follow posted speed limits, especially in designated zones. Be aware that many areas establish seasonal zones that align with manatee migration patterns to help protect them during this active period.

SEA TURTLES Large marine turtles begin nesting on Florida's beaches from about March through October. You can support their nesting season by keeping beaches dark and free of any obstacles at night. Artificial lighting can disturb nesting turtles and disorient hatchlings, so avoid using flashlights or cellphones on the beach after dark. If you're in a building along the beach, close the curtains, pull the shades, or turn off the lights to prevent disruptions. It's recommended you also collect your beach gear at the end of the day and fill in any sand holes to give turtles the best chance of successfully navigating the shoreline.

SNAKES You might start seeing some of Florida's native snakes as they become more active during warmer temperatures. Snakes are shy and usually try to avoid encounters; however, it is not unusual to find them basking in the sunlight on artificial surfaces. If you spot one in your yard, on your sidewalk or driveway, or while hiking, give it space and admire from a distance.



Keep dogs leashed to prevent unwanted encounters.

NESTING WATERBIRDS You can help protect shorebirds, seabirds and wading birds as nesting season begins by keeping your distance (at least 300 feet) while on the beach or out on the water. You'll know you're too close if the birds appear agitated or fly off their nests. Shorebird eggs and chicks nestled among the sand and shells aren't easy to spot, so watch your step while you're enjoying the beach. Wading birds, such as herons and egrets, along with pelicans, are also busy nesting in mangroves and tree islands. Staying aware of your surroundings and giving birds the space they need helps ensure a successful nesting season.



INJURED AND ORPHANED WILDLIFE Encountered a fawn or fledgling? It's almost always best to leave young animals where you find them, even if you think they are alone. The parents are often nearby, foraging for food. If you suspect the animal might be injured or orphaned, you can report it to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. If you aren't sure, your nearest FWC Regional Office can help.

For more information on wildlife in spring, visit [MyFWC.com/News](https://myfwc.com/news) and click on "Spring Wildlife News." The FWC encourages the public to report suspected wildlife violations to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at **(888) 404-FWCC (3922)**.

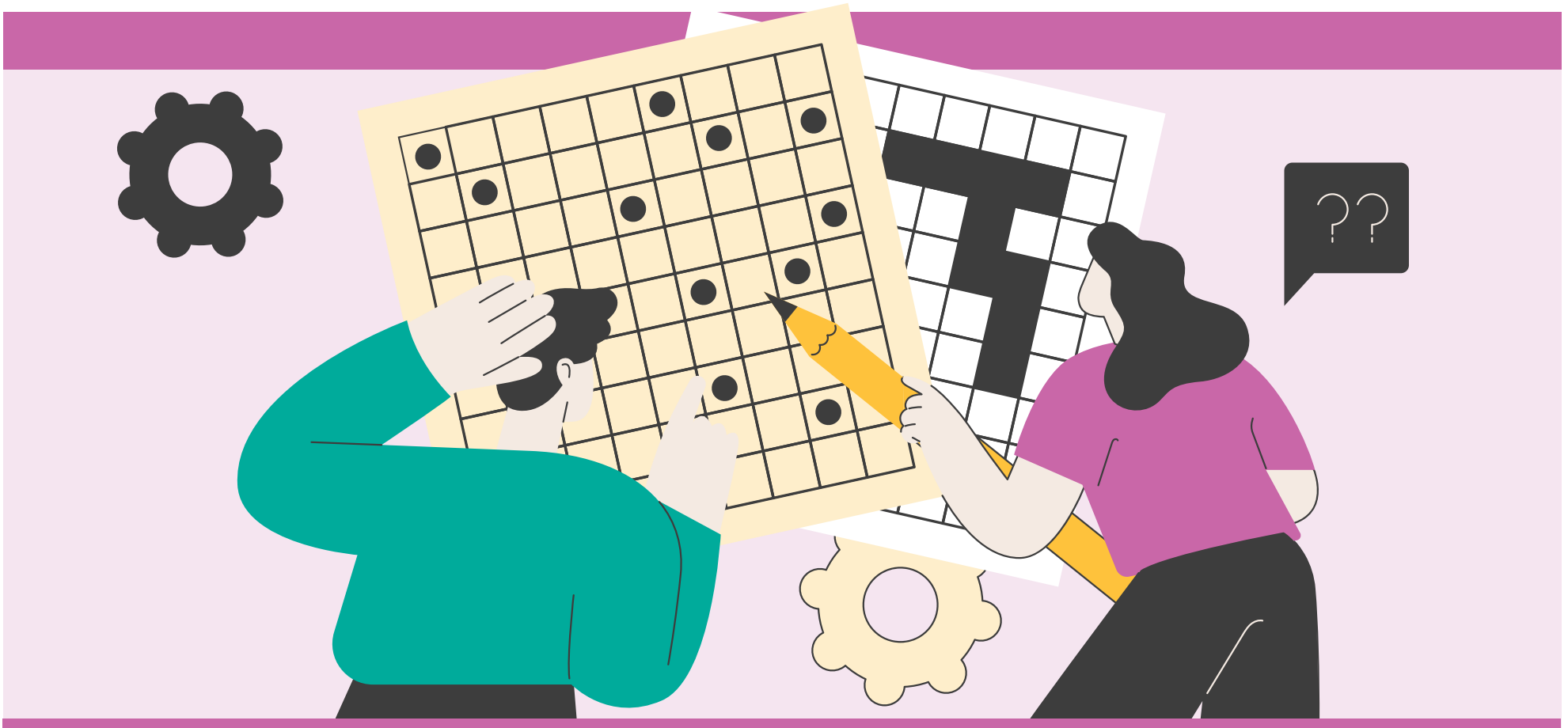


Sudoku Puzzles

Solutions found on page 22.

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

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



You're in Control

Learn Available Resources to Support Your Transportation Future



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

Planning and preparation are essential tools that can help you maintain independence and stay connected to your community, even beyond the driver's seat. By being proactive and familiarizing yourself with the transportation options available in your community now, you can take control of your transportation future.

To help you get started, Safe Mobility for Life has compiled a summary of transportation resources. Explore the options below and learn more about transportation services in your area:

• Find a Ride Florida

- » Provides a list of transportation options based on your location, trip type, and need
- » Provides contact information and hours of operation for your local transportation options
- » Operates a helpline at (352) 273-9624, if you need help navigating the website or have questions
- » Website: FindaRideFlorida.org

• Public Transportation Agencies

- » Provide transportation to the public within a local service area
- » Offer ADA paratransit transportation services for eligible riders with a disability that prohibits them from accessing the public transportation system

- » Helps plan trips for any rider through Travel Trainers, where available
- » Website: fdot.info/public-transit

• Community Transportation Coordinators

- » Help with eligibility applications for the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program
- » Provide or coordinate rides for TD individuals who, due to disability, income, or age, cannot transport themselves or afford transportation and must rely on others for essential travel
- » Coordinate rides with public and private agencies based on available resources and rider needs
- » Website: fdot.gov/ctd/ctcsbycounty

Looking for additional tips and information on how to maintain safe mobility for life? The Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center offers a wide range of educational materials designed to help you plan for and meet your transportation needs as you age. You can access the Resource Center in the following ways:

- Type fdot.info/guide directly into your browser.
- Call the Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center toll-free helpline at (833) 930-2952.
- Scan the QR code.



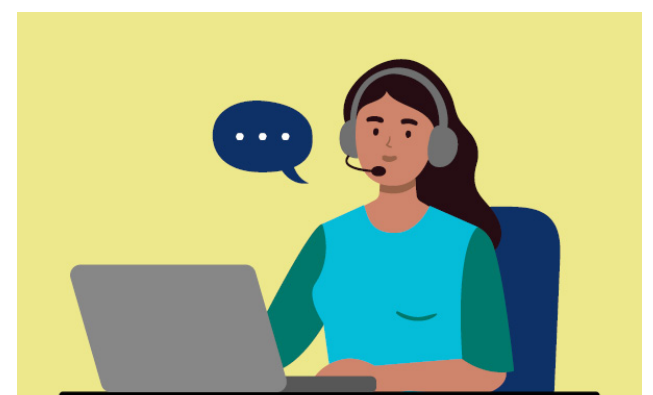
All Safe Mobility for Life resources are research-driven and designed to educate and empower you to take control of your transportation future and stay connected to the people and places you love—whether you're driving or not.



**FIND A RIDE
FLORIDA**
(FindaRideFlorida.org)



**PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
AGENCIES**



**COMMUNITY
TRANSPORTATION
COORDINATORS**



WAVES OF COMPASSION

Southwest Florida Celebrates Inaugural Volunteer Awards



*By Maricela Morado,
President & CEO,
Area Agency on
Aging for Southwest
Florida, Inc.*

On February 27, 2026, something remarkable happened in Venice, Florida. Thirty-four nominations had been submitted. Seven awards would be presented. What unfolded was not simply a ceremony, it was a long-overdue acknowledgment of a truth we do not say often enough: the people holding our communities together are frequently the ones we never think to thank.

The inaugural Waves of Compassion: The Endless Tides of Service Volunteer Awards Luncheon, hosted by the Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida, gathered volunteers, partners, and guests from across our seven-county region to say: we see you! We are grateful. And this community

is better because of you. Research confirms why this matters — a 2015 Age Wave and Merrill Lynch study found that adults who give or volunteer are significantly more likely to describe themselves as happy, purposeful, and healthy than those who do not. Volunteerism is not just good for communities. It is good for the people who give.

The seven honorees made that truth impossible to ignore. Marilyn Lowe, 81, has delivered Meals on Wheels every Tuesday for 15 years, returning to her route within weeks of losing her husband, because her clients were counting on her. Marge Sandness, an Army veteran living with disabilities, has averaged 120 volunteer hours monthly for over 40 years. Maestro Kenneth Bowermeister has led Strings con Brio for a decade, giving musicians of all ages and abilities a place to belong. Stephanie Malally has reached more than 17,000 Floridians as an Alzheimer's Association educator and support group facilitator, and has never

once said no. Louise Gallagher has spent 15 years building support systems for families facing dementia, founding the Sarasota Dementia Care and Cure Initiative after her own sister's early-onset diagnosis. Shauna McVay started delivering meals as a student during COVID-19, navigated debris-covered roads after Hurricane Ian to reach isolated seniors, and last summer mobilized her network to cover six short-staffed routes in a single day — proof that compassion is not inherited with age. It is chosen early, and it grows with practice.

And then there is Mary Bartoshuk of LaBelle, recipient of the Lifetime Beacon Award, for over 70 years of uninterrupted community service. Mary reads to children, calls bingo at the senior center in full holiday costume, advocates for animals, and serves through Toys for Tots and the Rotary Club. She knows intuitively what research confirms: joy is not a luxury in aging. It is medicine. In LaBelle, people do not describe Mary as a volunteer. They describe her as the heart-beat of a community.

In all seven, we see what Albert Schweitzer described when he wrote that the purpose of human life is to serve and to show compassion and the will to help others. In Southwest Florida, that purpose is lived — across generations, across counties, with extraordinary grace. The 2027 Waves of Compassion Volunteer Awards are on the horizon. If you know someone whose service deserves to be seen, visit aaaswfl.org.

Top to Bottom, Left to Right: Kenneth Bowermeisters and guest; Janelle Olson and Shauna McVay; Louise Gallagher, Lisa Kiddon, and Stephanie Mallaly; Eric Radditz, Charlotte Miller, Mary Bartoshuk, Marciela Morado, and Susan Berger





SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

PUZZLE ONE

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

PUZZLE TWO

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

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.

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

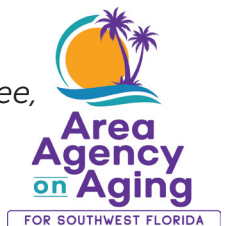
Serving Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota Counties

Phone: 239-652-6900

Elder Helpline:

866-413-5337

aaswfl.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



A Social Gathering for People Experiencing Cognitive Challenges & Caregivers



By Amanda Jones, Lead Care Navigator, FACE, Division of Alzheimer's and Brain Health, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The St. Johns County Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) Task Force was established in the spring of 2025, and six initiatives were quickly chosen to focus on. One of these initiatives was to create memory cafes in St. Johns County. By September 2025, the first memory café started at Island Doctors Wellness (2477 U.S. Rte-1, St. Augustine, FL 32086), and soon after, the next memory café began at the St. Johns County Bartram Trail Branch Library (60 Davis Pond Blvd., Fruit Cove, FL 32259) in October 2025. In February 2026, two more memory café locations have started at the following: St. Johns County Ponte Vedra Beach Library (101 Library Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082) and The Stephen R. Chapman Family Community Campus (1355 US Hwy 1 South, St. Augustine, FL 32084).

Now, four memory cafés across St. Johns County are in full operation, highly attended, and serving their purpose of a safe and welcoming space where caregivers and their loved ones can come together for fellowship and meaningful engagement. The success of these memory cafes is thanks to the dedicated SJC DCCI Task Force members and volunteers, plus community supporters such as the generous locations where the cafes are being held at and other donors. Their willingness to serve their communities with compassion and heart is invaluable and we are extremely thankful.

What is a Memory Café?

A welcoming social gathering where people experiencing cognitive challenges and the people who care about them come together for friendship, fun, and acceptance.

Join us at the MEMORY CAFÉ



Brought to you by Florida Department of Elder Affairs and your local Dementia Caring Task Force.



Who Can Attend?

Both the person living with a cognitive decline, Alzheimer's Disease, or related dementias, along with their primary caregiver or a loved one. Together, they would attend as a pair. Cafés are not designed to offer drop-off respite care. They are designed to offer support to both the person living with a cognitive decline or dementia, and the ones who care for them and care about them.

What Happens There?

At a memory café, we focus on bringing people together and meeting new friends through socializing, interaction, and activities. We do not focus on medical conditions. Therefore, attendees choose how they wish to participate and what they want to share with others.

How Do I Attend?

Visit coasjc.org/dementia-caring-task-force for more information and location details.