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WINTER 2022

Aging Outlook

Secretary's Message

Dear Reader,

My name is Michelle Branham, and I have the honor of serving as your Secretary for the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. I was appointed in 2021 by Governor DeSantis following Secretary Prudom’s retirement. I feel called to serve the State in this way because my career and heart have led me here. As my mom would tell you, helping others – especially our elders – is a life-long passion of mine. Service to community and my fellow Floridians is a deeply rooted family value that I have known since my childhood years.

It was especially exciting to join Elder Affairs in 2022, as this year marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Department. What started as a group of six workers and a few volunteers has blossomed into an agency of hundreds with offices located throughout the Sunshine State. This mighty force of staff and volunteers work tirelessly each day to support nearly six million older Floridians. Florida’s senior population now outnumbers the senior populations of 20 other

states combined. As a result, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and the 11 Area Agencies on Aging across the state have expanded their programs and services to better cater to the needs of those aging in Florida today.

The history of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) begins with the Older Americans Act of 1965, signed into federal law by President Johnson as part of his “Great Society” initiative. This important legislation was the government’s comprehensive effort to offer older Americans resources and support services that could help them live well and age well at home, independently, for as long as possible. DOEA is Florida’s state unit on aging under this federal initiative, with the 11 Area Agencies on Aging providing services at the local level.

In 1988, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs was created under Governor Lawton Chiles in a state constitutional amendment. In January 1992, the Department officially opened its



ABOVE First Lady Casey DeSantis (RIGHT) and Secretary Michelle Branham (LEFT) introducing Hope Florida – a Pathway to Purpose (more on page 3).

doors under its first secretary, E. Bentley Lipscomb.

The Department now oversees more than \$300 million annually in state and federal funding while working to plan, coordinate, and advocate for Florida’s Aging Network. Last year alone, more than 1.2 million Floridians age 60 and older received services from the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, with 95 percent of the Department’s budget spent providing direct services.

Now, under Governor DeSantis’ administration, our older residents are receiving more priority

attention and care than ever before. The Governor has positioned our state to be a leader in Alzheimer’s research, treatment, and care. He also nearly doubled state funding for Florida’s Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative since taking office in 2019. Given that Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias are the sixth leading cause of death in Florida, I cannot tell you how impactful these resources are for Floridians living with the disease as well as their caregivers. On top of this momentous support, Governor

Continued on page 2

Getting 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 for a printed copy.

To subscribe to the digital copy, visit elderaffairs.org.



Living Well & Aging Well In the Sunshine State

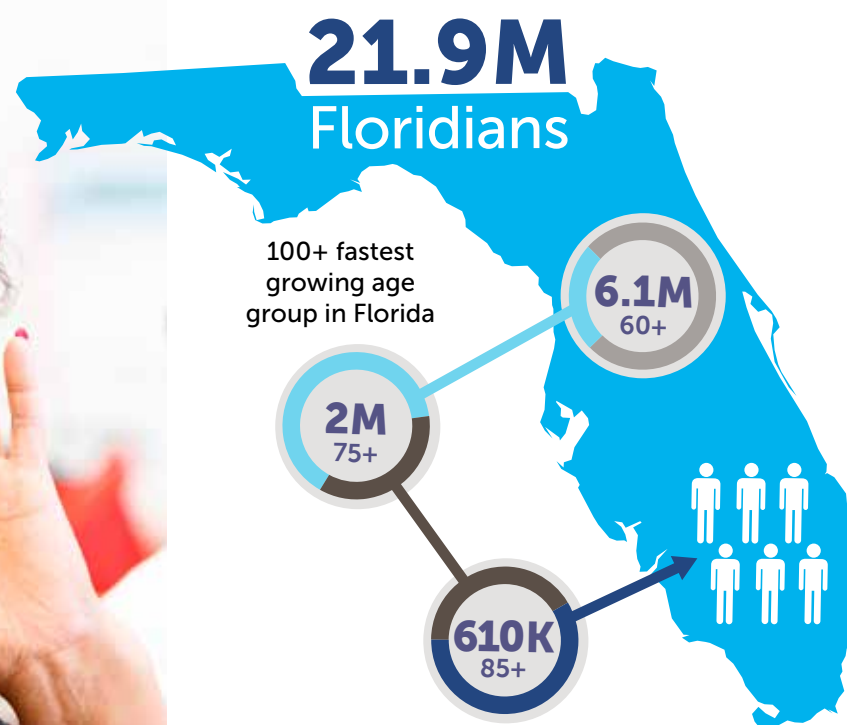
By Florida Department of Elder Affairs

What makes being a senior in Florida so great?

The Sunshine State boasts well over 230 days of sunshine each year! No need for winter coats or snow boots - our breezy tropical evenings and sunny days make Florida a top retirement destination, but we've got much more to offer than weather.

Florida is one of the few states without state income tax! This means no state taxes on social security benefits, pensions, IRA's, 401K's, and other retirement income. You will find that the cost of living is far more affordable than states like California, where you will find yourself paying up to 16% more for housing and 33% more for gas.

It is certainly not a coincidence that Florida's senior population outnumbers the senior



populations of 20 other states...combined! Home to over 250 senior centers, Florida offers a wide variety of activities for all mobility levels. Our eleven Area Agencies on Aging offer programs across the state for all interests, from computer and art classes, to gardening, fitness, and dance.

There are approximately 6.1 million adults 60+ in Florida currently, and this number is estimated to grow to 8.4 million by the year 2045! As our senior populations expand, so do our programs and funding. Florida has the infrastructure to support the lives of all seniors, from active seniors to those needing extra care and support.

Living in Florida as a senior means living in a state where you can age in place and access resources and care to ensure a vibrant life! To keep in touch with the Department of Elder Affairs, visit elderaffairs.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn!

- facebook.com/elderaffairs
- twitter.com/elderaffairs
- instagram.com/flelderaffairs/
- linkedin.com/company/fdoea/

Source: Cost of living in Florida (US) compared to California (US) mylifeelsewhere.com

Secretary...continued from page 1

and First Lady DeSantis have helped build a bridge between government and community. The Department is now partnering with private, nonprofit, and faith-based institutions to better support the needs of aging Floridians through the *Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose* initiative.

I am incredibly grateful to Governor DeSantis for giving me the opportunity of a lifetime – serving the elders of Florida! I believe that aging well is a gift we can give ourselves, our futures, our families, and our communities. I am also proud to be a part of reshaping the culture of aging in our great state, as we forge a more dynamic and robust future for ourselves and our aging loved ones. This anniversary is a wonderful and exciting time to be working and learning from older Floridians, and I know we will continue to do amazing things together over the next 30 years!

Warm regards and gratitude,
Secretary Michelle Branham

Hope Florida

A Pathway to Purpose

In late August, First Lady Casey DeSantis was in The Villages to announce the expansion of her Hope Florida initiative to include the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. This expansion, called Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose, provides support for Florida’s elders by increasing assistance for seniors in need while helping to facilitate opportunities for seniors looking to serve.

This announcement comes on the heels of the First Lady’s Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity initiative, which she launched in 2021 to break down traditional community silos to unite the private sector, faith-based institutions, non-profits, and government entities to maximize resources and uncover opportunities for Floridians in need. Implemented by the Florida Department of Children and Families, Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity has served nearly 50,000 individuals, helping them find an individualized path to prosperity, economic self-sufficiency, and hope.

With the expansion, the Department of Elder Affairs and the state’s eleven Area Agencies on Aging established their own Hope Navigators, who will further break down traditional community silos by uniting seniors

and caregivers with community partners, giving seniors direct access to help locating immediate needs. In addition, the Hope Navigators will help identify ways for these seniors to find purpose, which could take the form of volunteering or mentoring. To be paired with a Hope Navigator, call (850) 300-HOPE.

For seniors who wish to give back to society, Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose is simplifying opportunities for seniors to help meet the needs of their communities. One way to serve is with Elder Affairs’ newly established “Hope Heroes Program,” through which retirees can learn how to support seniors in need. To become a Hope Hero or to learn about additional volunteer opportunities, call (800) 96-ELDER or visit helpcreate-hope.com.

With Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose, faith and private sector entities in Florida’s communities who want to help meet the needs of seniors can also sign up to receive real-time alerts of requests for assistance in their area and, when able, volunteer services in response. To sign up to receive alerts regarding needs in your community, call (800) 96-ELDER or visit helpcreate-hope.com.

“Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose is an all-hands-on-deck operation to meet the needs of seniors while creating opportunities for them to give back,” said First Lady Casey DeSantis. “We are not only aiding Floridians in search of help, but also tapping into the Florida retiree population to volunteer. It’s incredible to see so many seniors already lined up as Hope Heroes today;



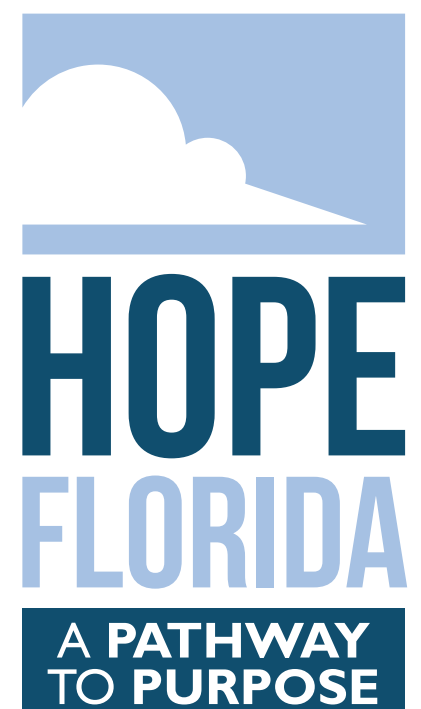
ABOVE Volunteers gather with First Lady DeSantis, Secretary Branham, and Secretary Harris to announce the Hope Florida program.

we are grateful for their willingness to serve and are committed to making it easier for them to do so. We are also expanding the role of the private sector and faith-based organizations by alerting those who wish to help but may not know of seniors’ needs in their area. With this expansion, we are continuing the Hope Florida theme of organizing the generosity and goodness of neighbors to help one another.”

“We are thrilled to be part of Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose and to launch the Hope Heroes initiative,” said Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Michelle Branham. “Florida has a robust aging network that has an engaging presence in each local community. It’s our goal to ensure seniors are living well and aging well in the place of their choosing. Hope Florida is an innovative and thoughtful initiative that gives us a new, hands-on approach to care.”

“We are so appreciative of the First Lady’s commitment and

dedication to ensuring the needs of our State’s most vulnerable populations are met,” said Department of Children and Families Secretary Shevaun Harris. “Through Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose, we are helping to connect those in need with individuals and organizations who want to help and are so excited to see the program expand to serve Florida’s seniors.”



Dear Judy

Your Questions
Answered by



This issue, we define the term "Maximum Out-of-Pocket Limit," consider the choice to defer Medicare Part B coverage, and explain how you can become a SHINE volunteer.



Dear Judy,

I signed up for a Medicare Advantage plan last fall during the Open Enrollment Period. In reviewing my plan's documents, I notice that my plan has a "maximum out-of-pocket limit" for one year. Can you please explain what this means?

Thanks – Needs Clarification

Dear Needs Clarification,

Thank you for taking advantage of Medicare's Open Enrollment Period. It is wise to check your coverage every year. The Maximum Out-of-Pocket Limit is the highest yearly amount you will have to pay out-of-pocket for covered health care services. This spending maximum is one important difference between Medicare Advantage plans and the original fee-for-service Medicare program; Original Medicare doesn't have a yearly cap on your health care costs. This yearly cap does not include monthly premiums, but it does include annual deductibles, co-insurance, and copayments. They may all count toward this maximum limit.

The Maximum Out-of-Pocket may be different for each individual Medicare Advantage plan and can change from year to year. Once you have reached the plan's limit for that year, then your Medicare Advantage Plan will cover 100 percent of covered health care costs for the remainder of the calendar year.

Dear Judy,

I am interested in becoming a SHINE volunteer and was wondering how to get started.

Thanks – Hopeful Volunteer

Dear Hopeful Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer! SHINE volunteers serve their community by providing free, unbiased, and confidential health insurance information and counseling assistance to Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and their caregivers. This can involve distributing educational and promotional materials, delivering educational presentations or speeches, assisting or counseling in person or over the phone, or even training and leading other volunteers.

Not only do SHINE volunteers make a difference in their communities, but they also benefit in from their volunteer work. SHINE volunteers learn new skills, meet and help new people, and feel a sense of pride by being a part of an award-winning team that is professionally trained by the Department of Elder Affairs and local Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Volunteers must complete orientation, training, and agree to uphold the integrity of the SHINE Program. To get started in applying to be a SHINE volunteer, you can complete online volunteer application at [FloridaShine.org](https://www.floridashine.org), or call 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337)

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](https://www.floridashine.org).

Getting to Know You



Meet Secretary Michelle Branham

Michelle L. Branham was appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis to serve as Secretary of the Department of Elder Affairs in late 2021 following the retirement of Secretary Richard Prudom.

Q What should our readers know about you?

A I have a wide range of experience in public policy, public relations, marketing, and communications. My job as Secretary of Florida Department of Elder Affairs is really the culmination of all my experiences and passions. I have a bachelor's degree in political science from Stetson University and a master's degree in theological studies from Emory University. I reside in Jacksonville with my husband, Jeb, my teenage son, and my rescue dog.

Q Prior to becoming Secretary of the Department of Elder Affairs, what kind of work did you do?

A I have more than 20 years of experience and more than a decade of senior executive experience in federal and state-level public policy initiatives, including advanced healthcare and Florida senior initiatives. Prior to serving in this role, I was the Vice President of Public Policy at the Alzheimer's Association for nine years. Previously, I also served as the Chair for the State of Florida's Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Committee, Co-Chair for the State Health

Improvement Plan Alzheimer's priority area, Advisory Member for the State Plan on Aging Task Force, and was appointed to serve on the Governor's Safe and Limited Return Task Force during the public health emergency.

Q Why are you passionate about Florida's aging population?

A If we are all lucky enough, everyone is going to become a senior at some point! It is my priority that all seniors in Florida are able to live well and age well. This means expanding our outreach, diversifying our resources, and identifying critical gaps to better serve aging Floridians today and for years to come. It is so rewarding to be able to connect seniors and their caregivers who may not know the right next step with the resources available to them to better meet their specific needs and level of care.

Q What is an issue facing seniors that is especially important to you right now?

A My main focus is ensuring that seniors know how to get in touch with our resources and know they are available. It breaks my heart to hear a family member or caregiver say, "I wish we had known about this resource sooner." I believe every person should be able to age in their home or place of their choosing, so we are prioritizing services that allow seniors to do just that.

Q What is your favorite part of leading the Department of Elder Affairs?

A My favorite part of my job as Secretary of Elder Affairs is being out and meeting with our seniors! In my first year as Secretary, I have prioritized traveling throughout our eleven Area Agencies on Aging, and by the end of this year, I will have visited each of them. On every trip, I get to mingle with the seniors being served through our programs, and it truly is the highlight of each trip. We are taking feedback from the field and turning it into meaningful change

to make sure our providers have the support and flexibility needed to serve in the best way possible.

Q Why do you think Florida is such a great place for seniors?

A With over 6 million people over the age of 60, Florida is a great place for seniors because we prioritize providing outreach and services to meet senior Floridians' needs at all stages. Governor DeSantis has been instrumental to our overall success, and we would not be able to serve our aging population as effectively as we have without his leadership and prioritization of Florida's seniors. We have really been working on reaching outside our agencies and building partnerships with those that are very innovative in the space of aging.



From Silver Screen to Gold Medal

Former Stuntman Hubie Kerns Now Competes for Senior Gold

By Nick Gandy, Florida Sports Foundation

Hubie Kerns, a swimmer from Fort Lauderdale, dove in the Plantation Central Park Pool on a sunny Florida day and swam 400 yards in a combined five minutes and 29 seconds to win a pair of gold medals.

That's a pretty big deal for a 72-year-old athlete competing in the 2022 National Senior Games, presented by Humana. Well, it is. But it isn't, for Kerns.

He made a career as a stuntman in television and movies, specializing in car and water stunts.

Beginning in 1969, Kerns drove in high performance car chases, flipped cars, fell from great heights into the water, and did stunts for more than a few recognizable names.

His list of credited stunt work on IMDb.com includes 375 movies and television shows stretching from Beneath the Planet of the Apes in 1970 to recent Fast and Furious movies.

Diving into the pool from the starting platform is like a walk in Plantation Central Park for Kerns.

All that stunt work was in the past at the 2022 National Senior Games as swimmers roamed around the pool deck comparing times and

practice schedules and swapping swimming stories with fellow athletes from Florida, Texas, and California.

Kerns was an All-American swimmer in high school, swam in the 1968 Olympic Trials, and earned a swimming scholarship to the University of Denver. Like most Senior Games athletes, family and careers got in the way.

"There was no swimming from age 21 to 50," Kerns said. "I got back in the pool because I was out of shape and needed some conditioning."

He had just started competing in Master's Swimming and was working his way up the ranks when he broke his leg doing stunt work.

"Someone screwed up and ended up hitting me," he said. "I did a flip in the air and broke the bone so badly, it wrapped the muscle around my bone."

A botched surgery by an emergency room doctor that didn't line up the broken bone correctly led to another operation to re-break the leg and correct the previous surgery.

"The doctor told me I could get back into the pool after the wound from surgery healed," Kerns said. "Once that healed, I got in and started swimming by kicking with one leg."

After five months of recovery, he returned to the pool for the Southern California Championships and recorded the 10th fastest breaststroke time ever in the age group.

His time of 2:36.96 in the 200-yard 2022 Individual Medley is the fourth fastest time in the history of the National Senior Games, in the 70-74 age group, just behind his time of 2:30.58 in the 2019 Albuquerque Games. He closed out the day with the seventh fastest time in the 200-yard breaststroke, swimming the eight laps in 2:53.56.

In the 200-yard breaststroke, he topped fellow Floridian, Rudy Vazmina, the 2015 Florida Senior Games Male Athlete of the Year, from Sarasota, by six seconds.



"I've always been a good breastroker," Kerns said. "When I first moved to Florida, I started training at the International Hall of Fame Pool and that's helped."

The work has paid off as a swimmer in the 70-74 age group. To qualify for the 2022 National Senior Games, he won five gold medals at the 2021 Florida Senior Games, while setting records in the 200-yard breaststroke, 200-yard butterfly, and 400-yard Individual Medley. All five of his races were 200 yards or more.

Things have calmed down for Kerns since doing stunt work in Transformers movies, Wild Hogs, and Dodgeball. "I'm enjoying life and swimming."

Florida Family Caregiver Month

Celebrating Compassion and Commitment

By Florida Department of Elder Affairs

With an estimated 2.9 million family caregivers in the Sunshine State, it's important to recognize the individuals who provide an estimated 2.4 billion hours of care each year to support their families.

While family caregivers are most often the primary source of support for their loved ones, many caregivers experience competing responsibilities and must frequently deal with the emotional, physical, and financial toll that can come with providing support. Family caregivers across Florida provide regular care to loved ones with health problems or disabilities, and almost a quarter of family caregivers are seniors themselves.

November is Florida Family Caregiver Month. This is an opportunity to recognize family caregivers in the Sunshine State for their commitment, compassion, and sacrifice that enables Florida's aging and disabled populations to live and age well.

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs recognizes the important work and support these family caregivers provide. Many of these family caregivers support aging family members, and the Department works to promote the well-being, safety, and independence of

Florida's elders, their families, and caregivers. Florida Department of Elder Affairs offers year-round programs, such as the National Family Caregiver Support Program, the Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families (RELIEF) program, and the Home Care Elderly Program.

Governor DeSantis has championed numerous initiatives to enhance the well-being, safety, and independence of Florida's senior, their families, and their caregivers. In June of 2022, he announced the Florida Alzheimer's Center of Excellence to provide resources to help caregivers maintain their own physical and mental health while caring for their loved ones. Additionally, this year, the Legislature provided a \$12 million increase for Alzheimer's Disease Initiative Services, including funding for the counseling, education, and training for caregivers.

To be connected to a caregiver program, call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER.



Safe Driving Today and Tomorrow

By Gail M. Holley, Florida
Department of Transportation

Aging can impact everyone's ability to be safe behind the wheel, but there's no "one size fits all" timeline for when or how aging may impact our safe driving skills.

As drivers, we have a responsibility to learn about how aging impacts our driving skills and what changes to look for. During this year's Older Driver Safety Awareness Week, happening December 5-9, 2022, the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition encourages everyone to take control of their transportation future by learning the Three Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life: Understand, Be Proactive, and Plan.

To start implementing the Three Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life, you can:

- Understand the impact age-related changes can have on your safe driving skills.
- Be proactive by taking a driver safety course, participating in a CarFit event, and learning about new road features, devices, or traffic safety laws.
- Plan for a safe transition by building a personalized transportation plan that incorporates multiple transportation options.

It is important for everyone to talk openly about safe driving skills and our transportation futures with family, friends, and health-care providers. These proactive conversations are key to remaining safe, mobile, and independent!

For resources to help you identify age-related changes, sharpen your driving skills, and start the conversation, visit the Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center at fdot.tips/resource-center or call us at 1-833-930-2952.



Understand

the impact aging has on driving



Be Proactive

about safe driving skills



Plan

for a safe transition from driving

10 Ways

Love Your Brain with These 10 Healthy Habits

From Alzheimer's Association, alz.org

Growing evidence indicates that people can reduce their risk of cognitive decline by adopting key lifestyle habits. When possible, combine these habits to achieve maximum benefit for the brain and body. Start now. It's never too late or too early to incorporate healthy habits.

Break a Sweat

Engage in regular cardiovascular exercise that elevates your heart rate and increases blood flow to the brain and body. Several studies have found an association between physical activity and reduced risk of cognitive decline.

Hit the Books

Formal education in any stage of life will help reduce your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. For example, take a class at a local college, community center or online.

Butt Out

Evidence shows that smoking increases risk of cognitive decline. Quitting smoking can reduce that risk to levels comparable to those who have not smoked.

Follow Your Heart

Evidence shows that risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke — obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes — negatively impact your cognitive health. Take care of your heart, and your brain just might follow.

Heads Up!

Brain injury can raise your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Wear a seat belt, use a helmet when playing contact sports or riding a bike, and take steps to prevent falls.



Fuel Up Right

Eat a healthy and balanced diet that is lower in fat and higher in vegetables and fruit to help reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Although research on diet and cognitive function is limited, certain diets, including Mediterranean and Mediterranean-DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), may contribute to risk reduction.

Catch Some Zzz's

Not getting enough sleep due to conditions like insomnia or sleep apnea may result in problems with memory and thinking.

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Some studies link a history of depression with increased risk of cognitive decline, so seek medical treatment if you have symptoms of depression, anxiety or other mental health concerns. Also, try to manage stress.

Buddy Up

Staying socially engaged may support brain health. Pursue social activities that are meaningful to you. Find ways to be part of your local community — if you love animals, consider volunteering at a local shelter. If you enjoy singing, join a local choir or help at an after-school program. Or, just share activities with friends and family.

Stump Yourself

Challenge and activate your mind. Build a piece of furniture. Complete a jigsaw puzzle. Do something artistic. Play games, such as bridge, that make you think strategically. Challenging your mind may have short and long-term benefits for your brain.

Silver Tones

Senior Choir Celebrates 16 Years!

By Ben Earman, Senior Resource Association, Inc.

Senior Resource Association's Silver Tones choir will be entering its 16th year in 2023. The all-volunteer senior choral group, open to adults age 55 and older in the Indian River County area, gives older adults a meaningful musical outlet by performing a series of public concerts open to the community.

"The idea to form the Silver Tones started after visiting the Council on Aging in Osceola County, where their senior choir performed," recalls Karen Deigl, President, and CEO of Senior Resource Association. "I knew the seniors in our community would benefit from a group like this and appreciate the opportunity to share the beauty of song."

Music fits into Senior Resource Association's commitment to help older members of the community stay socially connected, healthy, and independent as long as possible. Music benefits seniors physically and emotionally. Performing or listening to music promotes memory and enhances mood, as evident at Silver Tones concerts.

"After one of our performances, a choir member's daughter shared



with me that this group saved her father's life," Deigl relates. "She told me he was withdrawn and isolated after losing his wife. Then he was introduced to the Silver Tones, and he became more social and invigorated. It truly is an outlet for many of our seniors."

The choral group started with just 15 members and now has close to 100 members. The choir is under the esteemed direction of Dr. Jacob Craig, the Director of Music & Arts at First Presbyterian Church in Vero Beach, Florida.

Since its inception, the choir has been generously supported by the Pierce family. Initially Peggy and Leo Pierce and their family foundation sponsored the Silver Tones. In 2015, Kathie and Michael Pierce picked up the baton and continue to carry on the family tradition.

The Silver Tones present three seasonal concerts in December, February, and April, with smaller concerts throughout the year. All their concerts are free to the public, with donations accepted to support the mission of Senior Resource Association. They perform many genres of music,

from jazz to gospel to current popular music. Choir members enjoy a welcoming space where their talents can grow, from vocal technique to sight-reading ability. And they relish performing.

"I love the continued support we get from the community and how our audience has grown over the years," notes Anne Sofronas, an original member and chair of the group. "When we share our Summer Program and sing for various assisted living facilities in Indian River County, it is wonderful to know you are bringing such joy to them."

For information about joining the Silver Tones volunteer choir, please call 772-569-0760 or



email Ben Earman at beerman@srmail.org.

Senior Resource Association, Inc. (SRA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the designated lead agency on aging in Indian River County. Now in its 48th year, SRA continues to provide essential services and support for the community's older adults and their families. Promoting independence and dignity for all adults, SRA programs include Meals on Wheels, Adult Enrichment & Respite, In-Home Services, Public Guardianship, as well as public and demand-response Transportation services. To learn more, visit SeniorResourceAssociation.org.

FDVA

Connecting Senior Veterans to Personalized Resources

By Lee Anne Sferrazza-Rios,
Public Affairs Manager, Florida
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Many seniors are also veterans who have sacrificed so much to defend our country. Thank you for your time, bravery, and service to protect our freedoms.

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs helps connect the state's more than 1.5 million veterans and their families with earned services, benefits, and support through all stages of life. Florida has the third largest veteran population, including the more than 750,000 who are over the age of 65. With many state and federal veterans' programs, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs can assist senior veterans in identifying the earned services, resources, and benefits they need.

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs operates eight skilled nursing facilities and one assisted living facility. All facilities are licensed by the Agency for Health Care Administration, which inspects each facility annually along with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The homes are supervised round the clock by registered and licensed nurses. To be eligible



**Ardie R. Copas
Veterans'
Nursing
Home**

to be placed in a state veterans' home, veterans must have an honorable discharge

This year, two new nursing homes were added, the Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando and the Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie. The Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando is a 112-bed facility that also features a 32-bed memory care neighborhood. The Ardie R. Copas Veterans' Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie is a 120-bed facility that, when fully operational, can accommodate 60 residents with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

To learn more about state veterans' homes, available benefits, services, and support, visit floridavets.org or call the Florida Veterans Support Line at 1-844-MyFLVet (1-844-693-5838).



**Alwyn C. Cashe State
Veterans'
Nursing Home**

Lighting the Way for 100 Years

Celebrating Our Service to Florida's Most Vulnerable Citizens

By Crystal Crowell, Agency for Persons with Disabilities

On November 1, 1921, Florida opened the doors to its first community facility for Floridians with developmental disabilities in Gainesville. Originally called The Florida Farm Colony, the facility boasted three buildings on a 4,000-acre campus, 3,000 of which were donated by the citizens of Alachua County.

The Florida Farm Colony had 240 residents by the end of 1921, with most being children. The farm had originally hoped to be self-sustaining, with residents working in capacities such as sewing, agricultural work, serving food, and other tasks. Because many of the residents were unable to work, the focus of the farm changed. In 1957, The Florida Farm Colony's name was changed to Sunland Training Center of Gainesville, reflecting the desire to provide more educational opportunities for its residents.

Between 1947 and 1961 the farm expanded their facilities, with the number of residents reaching more than 2,000 individuals, including many children. The needs, interests, and activities of the residents of Sunland changed. The facility's focus shifted to providing residents with meaningful life experiences, such as therapy, recreational activities, and paying jobs. Residents enjoyed activities



A Timucuan word meaning "lighting a new fire in times of transition."

such as picnics, swimming, field trips, and arts and crafts. There were also well-established Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Explorer programs.

Five additional Sunland Centers opened throughout the state between 1960 and 1967. However, as community care centers became more common and available to those in need, four of the five additional centers closed throughout the 1980s. In 1990, the Gainesville center was renamed to Tacachale, a Timucuan word meaning "lighting a new fire in times of transition." The facility added individualized supports for residents, such as person-centered planning, to help each resident achieve their goals and dreams. Person-centered planning focused on the gifts, talents, and skills of each resident.

Between 1989 and 2022, residents received dental care through a partnership with the University of Florida. Services were provided by Dr. Timothy Garvey at Tacachale's on-site dental clinic. Over the course of his career, Dr. Garvey received the Dr. E.A. Cosby Community Service Award (2010), the Humanitarian Award – Florida Dental Health Foundation (2010), DentaQuest's Health Equity Hero Award (2020), and many others for his work with individuals with disabilities. While at Tacachale, Dr. Garvey also provided services to individuals with developmental disabilities in the community. In honor of Dr. Garvey, the Tacachale clinic will be renamed The Dr. Timothy Garvey Dental Clinic.

Today, residents of Tacachale are provided with a variety of opportunities for community engagement and leisure activities, including Special Olympics, cultural events, crafts, and other activities. Those interested in earning a paycheck have many opportunities to do so, both on and off campus. Tacachale began partnering with ClosetMaid in the 1990s, providing work for residents to assemble brackets for storage systems. Residents currently assemble over 5 million brackets a year. Another vocational opportunity for residents is working with Tacachale Recycling, where approximately 7,000 pounds of paper and cardboard are processed each week.

As of December 2021, Tacachale had 268 residents in their care. Residents are cared for by a medical team consisting of physicians, advanced practice providers, and nurses, as well as long-term support staff who provide one-on-one services when needed.

Tacachale's vision to be a national leader in services to persons with intellectual disabilities and an excellent place to live and work is clear to anyone that enters the facility. Tacachale's mission and vision to enhance the quality of life for its residents will continue being the "fire that lights their way" through the twists and turns of the future.

SSA FAQ

Social Security Administration Answers Common Social Security Questions

By Social Security Administration,
South Florida Area

Social Security benefits are an important factor to consider in planning your retirement. There can be a lot of questions surrounding how Social Security benefits work!

Can my husband/wife receive spousal benefits?

Even if you have never worked under Social Security, your spouse may be eligible for benefits if they are at least age 62 and you are receiving retirement or disability benefits. Your spouse may also qualify for Medicare at age 65.

How much will my spouse receive if they qualify for benefits under my Social Security?

If your spouse qualifies for benefits on their own record, Social Security will pay that amount first. If the benefit on their record is higher, they will get an additional amount on their record so that the combination of benefits equals that higher amount.

How do I accumulate Social Security credits and how many are needed to qualify for benefits?

We use the total annual amount of your earnings to calculate your Social Security credits. In 2022, the amount of earnings needed for a credit is \$1,510. You may earn a maximum of four credits in any one year. The amount you need to earn a credit automatically increases each year as average earnings levels increase.



You need to accumulate a certain number of credits to qualify for Social Security benefits. The number of credits you need depends on your age when you apply and the type of benefit you are applying for. No one will need more than 40 credits to receive any Social Security benefits.

What is the earliest age I can start receiving Social Security retirement benefits?

You can start receiving Social Security retirement benefits as early as age 62, but your monthly benefit amount is reduced by about 30 percent because you'll start receiving them before your full retirement age.

For more information about social security, please visit ssa.gov.

10 Early Warning Signs

Watch Out for Changes that May Indicate the Onset of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

From Alzheimer's Association, [alz.org](https://www.alz.org)

Memory often changes as people grow older. Some people notice changes in themselves before anyone else does. For other people, friends and family are the first to see changes in memory, behavior, or abilities. Memory loss that disrupts daily life is not a typical part of aging. People with one or more of these 10 warning signs should consider seeking medical guidance to find the cause. Early diagnosis gives them a chance to seek treatment and plan for the future.

01 Memory loss that disrupts daily life: forgetting events, repeating yourself, or frequently relying on more aids to help you remember (like sticky notes or reminders).

02 Challenges in planning or solving problems: having trouble paying bills or cooking recipes you have used for years.

03 Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work, or at leisure: having problems with cooking, driving places, using a cell phone, or shopping.



04 Confusion with time or place: having trouble understanding an event that is happening later or losing track of dates.

05 Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relations: having more difficulty with balance or judging distance, tripping over things at home, or spilling or dropping things more often.

06 New problems with words in speaking or writing: having trouble following or joining a conversation or struggling to find a word you are looking for (saying "that thing on your wrist that tells time" instead of "watch").

07 Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps: placing car keys in the washer or dryer or not being able to retrace steps to find something.

08 Decreased or poor judgment: being a victim of a scam, not managing money well, paying less attention to hygiene, or having trouble taking care of a pet.

09 Withdrawal from work or social activities: not wanting to go to church or other activities as you usually do, not being able to follow football games or keep up with what's happening.

10 Changes in mood and personality: getting easily upset in common situations or being fearful or suspicious.

If you notice any of these warning signs in yourself or someone you know, don't ignore them. Schedule an appointment with your doctor. Visit [alz.org](https://www.alz.org) for more information.

FACE

Florida Alzheimer's Center of Excellence Works to Connect Communities with Resources

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

The Department of Elder Affairs is proud to announce a new innovative initiative, the Florida Alzheimer's Center of Excellence (FACE), focused on enhancing the infrastructure available to support impacted seniors, families, and caregivers. FACE was launched by Governor DeSantis in June 2022 as a new form of support for caregivers and people with dementia by placing local, knowledgeable Care Navigators in communities across Florida. The Care Navigator's role is to offer ongoing care-planning services, expert referrals, counsel, and encouragement.

Support from a Care Navigator will take a uniquely individual shape with each family interaction. Consider the following scenario to get a glimpse of how this program can offer support:

John and his wife live a few blocks from his mother, Diane. He connects with a Care Navigator because he worries about his 80-year-old mother's declining cognitive abilities. His mother, Diane, has always been an athletic, social person who enjoyed cooking and visiting sporting events in their community with her husband. When her husband passed away, Diane began to withdraw from social events and spend more time alone. As a result, her declining cognitive abilities became more apparent, and John worried about her being alone.



The Care Navigator works with John over the phone to make recommendations for services that might be helpful for Diane at this stage of her life. These suggestions might include an assessment with a neurologist, a home-safety evaluation from an Occupational Therapist, a grief group, and arranging transportation so that she can continue visiting places in the community she enjoys, such as the local ballpark.

The doctors and medical professionals determined her memory loss is slight, and she is safe to remain at home since John and his wife live nearby. The Care Navigator speaks with John regularly to ensure all safety precautions have been taken and offers tips for self-care so that the new routine of visiting his mother's home several times a day does not become unmanageable.

John and the Care Navigator keep in touch. The Care Navigator develops an understanding of Diane's interests and needs, and John and Diane benefit from all that the Care Navigator knows about the community.

The Care Navigator has become a trusted voice in the care circle for Diane. John is

grateful for a local touch point to turn to, someone who knows his mother's needs and understands when he needs to vent about stressful changes.

Over time, Diane's needs change. Through their regular check-ins, the Care Navigator helps John know what to look for and how to prevent inevitable changes from becoming crisis moments. If the family and experts determine that a new living arrangement is necessary, the Care Navigator can offer tools to help seek the best care.

By building on this current infrastructure of Alzheimer's and dementia resources, initiatives, and funding by connecting the state's Memory Disorder Clinics, Dementia Care and Cure Initiative Task Forces, the Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Committee and the Department of Elder Affairs' Care Navigators, FACE provides the resources to create a family-centered support system throughout the continuum of care.

To be connected with a Care Navigator through FACE, call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-93-ELDER.

Navigating Aging Needs

NAN Helps Caregivers Find the Help They Need

By Barbara Epes, Marketing and Communications Manager, Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County

Caring for a loved one is not easy and caring for a loved one with dementia brings an entirely new set of challenges. Few people are prepared to care for an ailing parent, but a sizable percentage of the population will one-day have no choice but to face the difficulty of getting help for a mother or father with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementia.

Recognizing this need, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and the Area Agency on Aging of Broward County have united with Navigating Aging Needs, LLC (NAN) to ease the burden for caregivers of older adults with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementia.

Recognized for her expertise in geriatric medicine, Dr. Rosemary Laird, the founder of NAN, works to provide caregivers with the support they need to ensure their loved one receives the most appropriate and compassionate care.

NAN Navigators expertly assess the needs of each individual client, developing a care plan that serves as a guide to address their health, emotional, social,

legal and financial needs. A key part of the care plan is ensuring that the needs of the caregiver are not overlooked or forgotten.

“For anyone who has ever been a caregiver, the demands are 24/7,” said Area Agency on Aging of Broward County Chief Executive Officer Charlotte Mather-Taylor. “It is emotionally, as well as physically, draining. Providing care for the caregiver is what sets NAN apart,” Charlotte added.

“NAN Navigators have a lot of compassion as well as knowledge,” said Charlotte. “When faced with the challenges of caring for a loved one with Alzheimer’s or related Dementia, those challenges can be overwhelming. A compassionate, insightful, and knowledgeable voice on the other end of the phone can make all the difference in the world,” Charlotte added.

NAN is part of The Department of Elder Affairs’s new, innovative initiative, the Florida Alzheimer’s Center of Excellence. To learn more about the NAN Program and how a Nan Navigator can help, please call the Area Agency on Aging of Broward County Helpline at (954) 745-9779.



SUDOKU

Solution found on page 21.

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ALZ Stars

It's Time for All Floridians to Be ALZ STARS

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

Nearly 13% of Floridians aged 65 and over live with Alzheimer's disease, a progressive brain disease with no known cure. Knowing the warning signs and where to turn for help can help loved ones seek medical care and receive an early diagnosis.

Early detection with early diagnosis is the best line of defense against Alzheimer's disease. A diagnosis in the early stages of Alzheimer's can make a big difference. It means access to treatment options that can reduce cognitive and functional decline and help lessen symptoms. Early medical care presents an opportunity to prioritize health and preserve cognitive function and physical abilities for as long as possible. Most importantly, an early diagnosis allows more time to make decisions about the future and to express wishes about legal, financial, and end-of-life decisions. For all Americans alive today, if those who will get Alzheimer's disease received a diagnosis when they had mild cognitive impairment (before dementia), it would collectively save approximately \$7 trillion in health and long-term care costs.

In response to this crisis, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and the Alzheimer's Association Florida chapters have developed the ALZ STARS program, a joint initiative to bring increased awareness of dementia and the resources available to Floridians. The new program helps ALZ STARS identify the early warning signs, take steps to receive an accurate diagnosis, understand simple communication tips when engaging with someone who has Alzheimer's, and access local resources. The ALZ STARS program connects Florida viewers to content



ALZ★STARS

Know the signs. Know the resources.
Make a difference.

developed specifically for where they live. Participants will learn about the local organizations that serve their regions, hear about the services, and learn how to get connected to support. It's free, short, and available to anyone.

It's time all Floridians became ALZ STARS. With the number of Floridians impacted by the disease expected to grow 24% by 2025, we owe it to our family and friends. Know the signs. Know the resources. Make a difference. Register today at alzstars.org.



Caregiver Resources & Respite

Caregivers Share & Learn through Area Agency on Aging Program

By Alice Tennis, MSW, Ruth & Norman Rales Jewish Family Services

Since its inception in 2014, the Caregiver Resources & Respite (CGR&R) Program at Ruth & Norman Rales Jewish Family Services has sought ways to help sustain and nurture caregivers. Located in Palm Beach County, Ruth & Norman Rales Jewish Family Services offers help, hope, and humanity through their comprehensive range of programs and services that support people of all ages and beliefs. Programs and services offered include food and financial assistance, senior services, counseling, mental health services, and many volunteer opportunities.

Through virtual programming, the Caregiver Resources & Respite Program offers support groups, one-on-one consultation, educational workshops, yoga/Tai Chi classes and music therapy sessions while focusing on increasing knowledge of caregiver resources and improving caregiver skills.

A support group helps people discover that they are not alone in their situation and can be a vital lifeline for participants. Resources, advice, support and friendships are the balm the caregiver needs.

"Unless you've gone through the caregiving experience, people don't understand how frustrated, tired and isolated caregivers are," states Alice Tennis, VP/Senior Services. "My



parents were older than everyone else's parents, and so at an early age I got to experience first-hand how daunting the medical system can be. Caregiving for my dad took a huge toll on my mom."

One participant recently told the CGR&R Program Director, "I can't imagine what I would do without this group. Talks are both heavy and light, always warm, candid, non-judgmental with laughs tears and everything in between. The constant is that I leave each session feeling understood, supported and reinvigorated by the empathy of others."

100% of the survey respondents in the last year indicated that they have gained knowledge or skills that help them take better care of their loved one

100% of respondents indicated that they have gained knowledge or skills that will help them take better care of themselves

100% of respondents in the last year have put into practice something that they learned at one of our sessions

The program is funded by the Palm Beach/Treasure Coast Area Agency on Aging and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. If you know of someone who could benefit from our Caregiver Resources and Respite Program in South Palm Beach County, have them contact Program Director Alex Chernis at (561) 866-6429 or alexc@ralesjfs.org.

Ask an Ombudsman

Answering your questions regarding the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents in long-term care facilities.



By Lori Berndt, North Regional Ombudsman Manager and Diandra Pilar Taylor, West Region Ombudsman Manager

What is a long-term care ombudsman?

An ombudsman is a specially trained and certified volunteer who has been given authority under federal and state law to identify, investigate and resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, long-term care facility residents. Ombudsmen respond to resident complaints and concerns ranging from issues with medication and care administration to matters of dignity and respect. It is the ombudsman's role to protect the legal rights of residents and assure that they receive appropriate treatment and quality care.

The experience of being helped by an ombudsman is often comforting. Our volunteers offer free and confidential direct assistance to those who need and request it, and strive to resolve concerns with warmth and professionalism.



What if I have a concern about long-term care?

Anyone can report a concern, including residents, relatives, friends, facility staff, legal representatives and other concerned citizens. Complaints may be related to the facility, its employees, or any agency or person who threatens or violates the rights, health, safety or welfare of a resident.

Complaints filed with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program are kept completely confidential, unless permission is given by the resident or complainant to disclose related information. Details of the complaint are documented and the case is assigned to a local ombudsman for investigation. The ombudsman contacts the complainant or resident within seven calendar days and begins a thorough investigation. Once all facts are verified, the ombudsman takes appropriate action by advocating for the best possible solution that satisfies the resident.

I had a friend tell me that his father was kicked out of an assisted living facility because he complained about the food too much. We're looking into sending my dad to an assisted living facility and don't want the same thing to happen to him. Can the facility just kick him out like that?

Assisted living facilities are required to give residents a 45-day written notice of discharge, stating the reason for the discharge. Assisted living facilities residents currently do not have the right to appeal such

a notice. However, you or the resident who received the 45-day notice may contact the ombudsman for assistance. If the resident wishes to stay in the facility, the ombudsman can advocate on behalf of the resident and mediate between the resident and facility to try and come to an agreement to allow the resident to stay.

My wife is at an assisted living facility and can't stand it anymore. She wants to come home. Is she allowed to leave?

Residents may leave a long-term care facility, including assisted living facilities, whenever they choose. These facilities are not prisons, and residents may choose to leave a facility before a doctor tells them it is safe to do so. Although facilities (and doctors) may be looking out for the medical best interest of the resident, ultimately, the resident is free to choose whether or not they want to remain in the facility. She is not trapped there.

You'll want to read the contract that was signed upon admission into the facility to see what sort of notice you'll be required to provide. This will also help you avoid any fees that might come with "breaking" the contract. If you need assistance in this matter, discuss it with the facility administrator, or call the ombudsman.

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 visit the website ombudsman.elderaffairs.org.

Communities Coming Together to Create A Pathway to Purpose

HOPE
FLORIDA

A PATHWAY TO PURPOSE

HOPE HEROES VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

WANT TO GIVE BACK?

You can be part of **Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose** by becoming a **Hope Hero**. This program is for retirees and everyday good citizens to volunteer their time and connect with their community.

Meet needs in your community:

- home repair
- lawn mowing
- automotive repair
- transportation
- companionship or peer-support
- wheelchair ramps
- grocery shopping

By volunteering, you will help seniors and their families meet important needs for them to maintain independence.

Seniors helping others creates a clear pathway to purpose and enhances everyone's quality of life. Visit helpcreatehope.com to be matched with a senior in need of assistance!

Contact the Department of Elder Affairs at **1-800-96-ELDER** for more information.



Its Time to SHINE

Whether you are a senior with Medicare questions or you are looking for a new volunteer opportunity, it is time for you to call the SHINE Program. We provide unbiased Medicare and health insurance information. SHINE's volunteer counselors are committed to helping you make informed choices about your Medicare benefits. All counseling is confidential and SHINE's services are free to Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers.

Volunteer Locally

As a SHINE counselor, you can help seniors by:

- explaining Medicare benefits;
- describing the difference between Medicare Prescription Drug plans;
- answering questions about Medigap and other health insurance programs;
- assisting with claims, appeals, and other Medicare issues;
- identifying other local benefits and programs; and
- offering educational presentations.

Bilingual Volunteers Are Always Needed!



FloridaShine.org

1-800-96-ELDER
(1-800-963-5337)

Isolation & Loneliness

How to Stay in Touch

By Florida Department of Elder Affairs

High-quality social connections are essential to leading a fulfilling and vibrant life! While loneliness and isolation are extremely common feelings as we age, there are many ways we can work to combat it. Isolation is a serious risk for us as we age, as it becomes more challenging to see our loved ones or participate in hobbies that were once enjoyed in our younger years.

Noticing isolation and loneliness in yourself or a loved one may not always be obvious. Check in with those around you, and be vigilant of symptoms like:

- Loss of interest in usual hobbies or social activities
- Dramatic changes in weight, as isolation can lead to poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle
- Poor sleeping habits
- Cognitive decline resulting from a lack of stimulation and engagement with the outside world
- Increased feelings of depression and anxiety

Social isolation and loneliness are very harmful to our health, and unfortunately far too common among seniors. Becoming more socially active seems like an obvious solution, but what does that look like for those that do not have family or friends nearby?

- Volunteering is a great way to connect to your community! Giving back to those in need is an excellent way to establish purpose in your life.



- Continuing your education through classes at your local senior center or community college!
- Utilize technology to connect with loved ones! Regular phone and video calls are a great way to connect with long distance loved ones.
- Adopt a pet! Taking care of a furry friend is an opportunity to get out of the house and form real bonds that help you feel needed and loved. What is better than the unconditional love of a dog?!
- Group exercise programs- while the gym can be an intimidating place, your local Area Agencies on Aging offer a wide variety of exercise programs that cater to every skill set.
- Pick up a new hobby, or rediscover an old one! Common interests are a great avenue of connection with others, and hobbies can bring you something to look forward to during the week.

Most of all, do not be afraid to reach out. Isolation threatens millions of older Americans. You are not alone! The Department of Elder Affairs and the 11 Area

Agencies on Aging are prepared to assist you today! Reach out to the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER to get information on activities in your area.

SUDOKU SOLUTION								
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Sudoku Puzzle courtesy of memory-improvement-tips.com

Take Action

Preventing Falls

By Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Unintentional falls are a common worry and a leading cause of injury for Florida's seniors. One in four elders fall each year, with one in five of those falls causing serious injury. Even more, falling just once doubles the chance of falling again. Experiencing a fall not only affects the person who was injured physically, but can have other negative effects in seniors' lives, such as a fear of falling again, concerned family members, and loss of independence.

However, there are ways to reduce the risk of unintentional falls that allow seniors to have an increased quality of life and sense of independence.

Risk Factors

It's important to consider all risk factors that may contribute to a person being at higher risk to experience a fall. This includes many types of biological, behavioral, and environmental factors, including:

- A previous fall
- Fear of falling
- Chronic health conditions
- Home conditions and environment – slippery floors, loose rugs, poor lighting, cords on the floor
- Medicines and their interaction effects
- Mobility problems – muscle weakness, balance
- Poor nutrition – leading to weakness, dizziness, fainting
- Poor vision or hearing

Measures to Prevent Falls

By understanding your or a loved one's personal risk factors, you can better determine the right steps to take in order to reduce the risk of falls. Some best practices include:

- Exercising regularly, including leg strengthening and balance exercises or trying an evidence-based falls prevention program
- Having an eye exam at least once a year
- Regularly reviewing medicines with a doctor or pharmacist (including interaction effects)
- Taking steps to create a safer home environment

Home Safety Checklist

- Stairs and Steps
 - » Remove stray objects
 - » Fix or replace loose handrails on both sides of the stairs, matching the length of the stairway
 - » Fix loose or uneven steps
 - » Ensure there is adequate lighting with a switch at the top and bottom of all stairs
 - » Check flooring – make sure flooring is even and attach carpet or non-slip rubber treads
- Floors
 - » Arrange furniture for a clear path
 - » Remove rugs or use non-slip backing
 - » Keep the floor clear of loose objects
 - » Ensure loose wires are tucked away and allow for a clear path
- Kitchens
 - » Keep most-used items on lower shelves and within easy reach
 - » If a step stool is needed, use one with a bar. Don't use a chair.
- Bedrooms
 - » Place a lamp close to the bed that can be turned on within reach
 - » Use a night light
- Bathrooms
 - » Use a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the tub or shower floor
 - » Install grab bars inside the tub/shower and next to the toilet

Falls Prevention Programs

Evidence-based falls prevention programs are a great way to get social while learning techniques to help reduce the risk of falls. Some of these programs are conducted

in-person in community settings or through virtual platforms. Programs include:

A Matter of Balance emphasizes strategies to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity. Participants learn to view falls as controllable, set goals to increase activity, change their environment to reduce risk, and exercise to increase strength and balance.

Enhance Fitness focuses on four key areas: low impact cardiovascular, balance, strength training, and stretching. Classes provide social stimulation and physical benefits.

Tai Chi for Arthritis includes warm-up and cool-down exercises, one or two movements per lesson that progressively lead to six core movements, advanced extension movements, breathing techniques, and improving physical and mental balance, strength, flexibility, and stamina.

Tai Ji Quan Moving for Better Balance includes warm-up exercises, forms practice, therapeutic movements, and cool-down exercises. Participants improve strength, balance, mobility, and daily functioning.

Bingocize combines bingo with exercise and health education. Participants learn exercises for range of motion, balance, muscle strengthening, and endurance. Health benefits include increased social engagement, brain function, and knowledge of falls risk reduction and nutrition.

Stay Active and Independent for Life emphasizes strength, balance, and fitness for older adults (65+) with a history of falls. Exercises can be done standing or sitting to accommodate mobility difficulty.

To learn about programs in your community, contact your local Area Agency on Aging or visit ncoa.org/older-adults/health/prevention/falls-prevention.

Connect with the Elder Helpline

Local Resources and Assistance

Florida's Aging Network

Through our 11 Area Agencies on Aging, we offer a wide variety of assistance programs and activities. Area Agencies on Aging 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

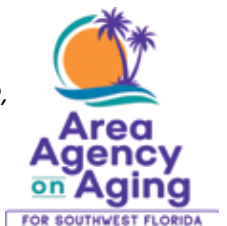
Serving Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota Counties

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



Farm Fresh

Access Seasonal Produce During the Holidays

By Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The holiday season can sometimes cause more stress on family or individual's already stretched budget. When a budget is tight, purchasing extra food for holiday festivities can seem overwhelming. If you need an extra boost during the holidays, or anytime, check these helpful organizations and programs.

Feeding Florida

This network of 12 food banks works to solve hunger in all 67 Florida counties, year-round. These food banks support more than 2,400 community-based partner agencies who provide food directly to individuals and families in need. Visit Feeding Florida's website at feedingflorida.org to learn more about the food banks and food access in your region.

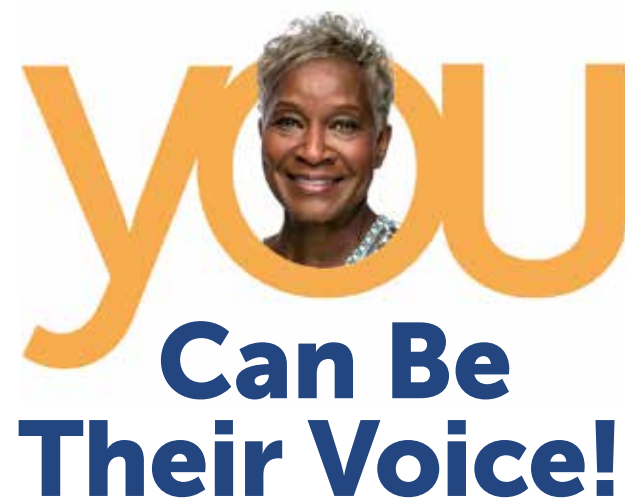
Fresh Access Bucks

Whether you are planning your holiday meals or looking for a way to stretch your grocery dollar during the holiday season, keep in mind that Feeding Florida's Fresh Access Bucks (FAB) program will match your SNAP/ EBT dollar, at participating outlets, for FREE Florida-grown fruits and vegetables. This USDA nutrition incentive program provides a \$1 for \$1 match for SNAP customers to buy fresh produce. There is no sign up necessary. If you spend \$20 in SNAP, you get \$20 in Fresh Access Bucks to fill your holiday table with season fresh produce. To find out if there is a Fresh Access Bucks Farmers' Market or retailer in your area visit their website feedingflorida.org/food-access/fresh-access-bucks.

Farm Share

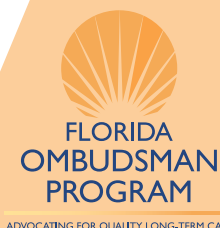
This non-profit organization's mission is to make sure that no Floridian goes hungry, and no food goes to waste. This organization works with donors, as well as Florida farmers, to distribute healthy and nutritious fruits, vegetables, proteins, and other non-perishable food to Florida residents. Go to farmshare.org/food-distributions-florida to find a distribution in your community.

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