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# AGING Outlook

WINTER 2023

## SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

It is an absolute pleasure to share our beautiful Aging Outlook newsletter with you!

I'm incredibly proud of all the work being done both in the field and in our Tallahassee headquarters – from our team here at DOEA to our great partners and providers around the state. In this edition, you're going to see examples of outstanding groups, services, and programs in our aging network that showcase, again and again, our commitment to not only prioritizing our great state's cherished seniors, but also giving them the opportunities and support to live well and age well in the place of their choosing for as long as they want. We know that aging in place is the greatest gift we can give to our older adults now and to ourselves for our own futures.

During my first year as Secretary, I visited all our Planning Service Areas (PSAs) with our Area Agency on Aging (AAA) partners and learned so much from them, our providers, and – most importantly – our seniors! I am so delighted that there are next generation innovations, technologies, healthcare initiatives, and exorbitant amounts of creativity to remind us how far we've come in just a year's time, and how hopeful the future is looking, as we continue to work on collective goals and objectives that prioritize our beloved elders.

If you know me, you know this mission means the world to me, so I want to humbly thank Governor DeSantis for his long-standing, generous, and consistent support for our seniors in Florida and for reappointing me to this position. I also want to express my appreciation to the Florida Senate for again confirming my appointment and working with our Department to affirm a dedicated and robust pathway forward with critical resources that directly assist seniors.

The ongoing commitment made by Governor DeSantis and the Legislature to enhance services that support seniors has resulted in many great achievements, including Florida leading the nation in state funding for Alzheimer's disease related dementias (ADRD).

Focusing on people living with these diseases and their caregivers and families has always been an important priority because Florida has the second highest prevalence of these diseases in the country. This tremendous dedication to infrastructure, innovation, and collaboration resulted in ground-breaking treatment in one of our Florida hospitals earlier this year and offers renewed hope and promise to the 580,000 Floridians living with these cruel diseases.



The signing of the Framework for Freedom Budget also marked a significant increase in the Department of Elder Affairs' budget, another great testament to the Governor's dedication in maintaining an infrastructure that supports older residents as more and more Americans flock to the Sunshine State.

These few examples of important milestones are wonderful testaments to the work we have done and the measure of excellence we continue to strive for in our service to seniors in Florida.

I know that 2024 will bring another extraordinary year of service, nurture, and care to Florida's most treasured members of our communities: our seniors! The Department of Elder Affairs will be building on our momentum with our partners across the state to continue the work, fill the gaps, and replicate the local innovations in order to extend our reach.



## Over \$1 Million Allocated to Support People Living With Alzheimer's and Their Caregivers

An estimated 580,000 people age 65 and older in Florida are living with Alzheimer's disease, and around 827,000 Floridians are serving as family caregivers. Governor DeSantis enacted a robust and comprehensive five point Dementia Action Plan in his first term, which came to fruition last June with the launch of the Florida Alzheimer's Center of Excellence (FACE). FACE received over \$1 million in additional funding in the Framework for Freedom Budget to expand to serve more families in Florida.

During the 2023 Legislative Session, Governor DeSantis proposed and secured record funding for Alzheimer's care. To celebrate this funding to support Florida's advancements in service and care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez and Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Michelle Branham were joined by local leaders, advocates, and caregivers in Marion County. "With Governor DeSantis at the helm, Florida has put our seniors first when they needed it most," Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez said. "The Framework for Freedom Budget included over \$65 million for Alzheimer's support, an increase of more than \$12.5 million over the last year. We will continue to fund, support, and fight for those who live with Alzheimer's disease, their families, and caregivers."

The state budget, signed by Governor DeSantis in June, included \$12.5 million in



additional funding to expand the work of the state's 17 Memory Disorder Clinics and the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative, which assist residents and caregivers affected by the disease. This also included nearly \$500,000 in support for the Alzheimer's Association's Brain Bus, a mobile outreach unit that helps educate Floridians on early warning signs and available resources.

"Governor DeSantis and Lieutenant Governor Nuñez have been consistent advocates for the 580,000 Floridians battling Alzheimer's disease from the very beginning," Department of Elder Affairs

Secretary Michelle Branham said. "Thanks to their continued support and our partners in the Legislature, we've seen innovation, advancement, and renewed hope in Florida that puts our state at the very forefront in the fight against Alzheimer's disease."

"I am grateful for the dedicated funding and prioritization of our seniors by our state leadership so we may continue to implement impactful initiatives to that keep Marion County a special and thriving place for seniors to live," added Jennifer Martinez, Executive Director of Marion Senior Services.



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# Elder Affairs FLORIDA

## A New Look for a Brighter Future

*By Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

In July, we proudly introduced our new and improved logo for the Department! The culmination of our 30th anniversary celebration in 2022 showcased all our Agency had achieved over decades of outstanding teamwork. Now, in 2023, our refreshing new look has the Department entering a new era that reflects the modern and innovative Agency we have become. Our growth, innovation, and commitment to evolving over the years in every pillar of the Department reflected, in all resources, services, and support we provide.

The Office of Communications poured creativity and passion into diligently designing a new logo that was announced in three phases. Secretary Branham first announced the new logo through a video that was shared to headquarters' employees stating her excitement.

"It may seem like a small or slight change, but it signifies something new, refreshing, and something that really meets where we're heading," said Secretary Branham.

The next two phases consisted of sharing the exciting news with our Area Agencies on Aging and publicly on our social channels including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The positive feedback received encourages Department staff to continue being innovative and creative.

We believe this updated logo reflects how innovative Florida's aging network has become and furthers our commitment to forward thinking over the next 30 years.

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# 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: When my brother went into an assisted living facility, the administrator said that the facility had to be the one who took care of his money. He was an accountant for over 30 years. Are they allowed to do that?**

According to the Residents' Bill of Rights, a resident has the right to "manage his/her own financial affairs unless the resident (or the resident's legal representative) authorizes the administrator of the facility to provide safekeeping for funds."

If your father has the ability and desire to manage his own money, he should be allowed to do so.

**Q: My father is in an adult family care home. An old friend of his who lives near the facility visits him regularly. The owner of the facility says that every time the visit is over, my father gets agitated and angry. Can I write a letter to the owner telling them not to let this friend visit with my father?**



Your father has the right to visit with whom-ever he chooses, even if the visitor makes him agitated or upset. No one can place limitations on who can or cannot visit your father other than your father himself. If he were not capable of expressing whether he desires a particular visitor, the decision would then fall to his Power of Attorney or guardian.

Florida Statute states that visits for residents of adult family care homes can take place between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. at a minimum.

However, special accommodations can be made if necessary.

*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.*





# Upcoming Medicare Enrollment Options

## SHINE Has You Covered!

By Jamila Griffin, Director of Elder Protection, SHINE Program

Medicare's annual Open Enrollment Period occurs each year from October 15 to December 7. This is a time of year when you can change the way you access your Medicare coverage. Seniors can join a new Medicare Advantage Plan or a stand-alone prescription drug plan (Part D) and/or switch between Original Medicare with or without a Part D plan and Medicare Advantage.

As you review your Medicare coverage during the annual Open Enrollment Period, you should consider:

- Your access to providers you want to see;
- Your access to preferred pharmacies;
- Your access to benefits and services you need; and
- The total costs for premiums, deductibles, and cost sharing amounts.

### About SHINE Assistance

The last change made during Medicare's annual Open Enrollment Period will take effect on January 1. If you have questions or need more information about your Medicare options, please call **1-800-963-5337** and ask for a SHINE counselor. You may also contact SHINE on its website at [floridashine.org/Contact-Us.aspx](http://floridashine.org/Contact-Us.aspx).



SHINE provides free, unbiased health insurance counseling and information to elders and their caregivers. Through a statewide network of trained SHINE counselors, individuals with Medicare-related questions and issues can receive personal and confidential assistance.

### Am I Eligible for This Enrollment?

You can only use this enrollment period if you have a Medicare Advantage Plan. Before making any changes, make sure you know how changing health and drug coverage will affect you, such as if you switch to Original Medicare and want to purchase a Medigap. Depending on where you live, you may be able to buy a Medigap policy, which helps pay Original Medicare costs. Limitations apply as to who can buy a Medigap and when. For more information, contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). You can find contact information for your SHIP at [floridashine.org](http://floridashine.org).

### When Will the Changes Occur?

Changes made during this period are effective the first day of the following month. For example, if you switch from a Medicare Advantage Plan to Original Medicare and a stand-alone Part D plan on February 10, your new coverage will begin March 1.

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





# RELIEF

## *Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families*

*By Melanie Ginn, Office of Volunteer and Community Services Coordinator, Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families (RELIEF) is a volunteer-based service that offers up to four hours of in-home respite to caregivers of frail, home-bound elders. The purpose of RELIEF is to provide respite care when the provision of other respite services is not available, placing an emphasis on nights and weekends. The caregiver would be able to run errands, go to an appointment, or participate in an activity of their choice while the selected volunteer provides temporary care to the elder.

Each volunteer is background screened and was provided training prior to being paired with an elder. The volunteer is carefully matched with an elder to ensure personalities, skills, interests, and abilities are a good fit, and that the quality of time with the elder is fulfilling!

The caregiver can be set at ease knowing that their loved one is being well taken care of while they are tending to other needs. Volunteers can read to the elder, help them with correspondence, prepare a snack (with caregiver approval), or just sit and talk. RELIEF services are currently provided in the following counties: Duval, Brevard, Lee, and Miami-Dade.

If you live in one of the counties mentioned above and believe that you could benefit from RELIEF, or you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact our **Elder Helpline at 1-800-963-5337**.





# Helping Seniors Get Ready for Hurricane Season

*By Margie Bell, Special Projects Coordinator, Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

On July 14, 2023, over 100 volunteers across Florida assembled more than 1,000 disaster preparedness kits for Florida seniors and individuals with unique abilities. The Disaster Preparedness Day brought together multiple state agencies including the Division of Emergency Management, the Department of Elder Affairs, and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

Older adults and individuals with unique abilities who are homebound, low-income, or at-risk can be especially vulnerable during severe weather. The disaster kits contained roughly 25 emergency preparedness items that were packed into a 10-gallon bucket and included NOAA battery-powered weather radios, first-aid kit medical supplies, flashlights, hygienic items, general-use multitools, extra batteries, mess kits, crossword puzzles, playing cards, emergency signal whistles, hurricane recovery information flyers, evacuation plan checklists, and more.

The Northwest Florida Area Agency on Aging, Inc., was one of the many partnering volunteer sites on this special day of service. The Agency has received multiple handwritten thank you notes from bucket recipients across the state. This wonderful and collective testament of the need for assistance during times of disaster was especially meaningful to the volunteers! It was an amazing, state-wide effort. Special thanks to all of our Area Agencies on Aging for their partnership.





# SCSEP

## Helping Seniors Gain Job Training Through Community Service

*By Krysta Carter, Chief of Elder Rights,  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a work-based job training program for older adults. SCSEP has a goal of job training through non-profit organizations and public agencies.

The program provides hands-on training that gives participants the skills needed to transition into employment while assisting local agencies as they provide vital services in their community.

### Who Qualifies?

SCSEP participants must be 55 or older, unemployed with low employment prospects, and meet income requirements. In addition, SCSEP works to serve those who also are most in need, which includes individuals who are homeless or at risk for homelessness, disabled or frail, have either limited English proficiency or low literacy



skills, hold veterans' status, or were formerly incarcerated.

Since September 2022, SCSEP has had more than 1,000 individuals inquire about services, showing a growing demand for employment training and entry or reentry to Florida's workforce by our senior population. Employment training through SCSEP enables Florida's seniors to gain more economic self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, SCSEP promotes good health by staying active, exercising cognitive function, and eliminating isolation. Additionally,

income enables seniors greater medication access, the option to make quality food choices, and the ability to live well and age well.

If you are interested in SCSEP, you can email [SCSEPInfo@elderaffairs.org](mailto:SCSEPInfo@elderaffairs.org) for more information or visit [elderaffairs.org/programs-services/senior-community-service-employment-program-scsep](https://elderaffairs.org/programs-services/senior-community-service-employment-program-scsep) to complete the SCSEP information request.



# Cooking Our Way

## A Cookbook for Those Families Living With Dementia

By Amber Ladd, Dementia Care and Cure Initiative Coordinator and Krysta Carter, Chief of Elder Rights, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Susan Wehry, MD, Director of AgingME helped create *Cooking Our Way: A Cookbook By and For People Living with Dementia* in partnership with the Dementia Action Alliance (DAA), Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging, the McArthur Library, and

the National Council of Dementia Minds. Wehry was inspired to collect dementia-friendly recipes after hearing Minna is living with dementia, and shared how her family discouraged her from cooking after receiving her diagnosis. Minna's family feared that she might forget to turn off the stove or cut herself while preparing a meal.

"They said it would make my life easier, but instead it made it emptier," said Minna.

This was not the first story Wehry heard from a person living with dementia facing concerns of families and friends regarding cooking. With funding from the AgingME grant, the DAA was able to offer a collection of recipes designed by and for people living with dementia and their caregivers.

AgingME is Maine's Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program that works to build an age-friendly healthcare system. Through community-based efforts, the program equips patients, families, and caregivers with knowledge and skills to improve health outcomes for older adults.

The cookbook aligns with AgingME's mission by highlighting a daily function of life that could cause barriers for seniors. There are a range of recipes including vegetarian and pescetarian dishes with step-by-step cooking instructions. Authors of the cookbook shared health, shopping, and safety tips for individuals and caregivers to utilize for a smoother cooking experience.

For many, cooking preserves a person's identity, culture, and memories. Download a free copy of *Cooking Our Way* by visiting [daanow.org](https://daanow.org). Printed copies can also be ordered at [lulu.com](https://lulu.com).





# Meeting Needs in Our Community

*By Margie Bell, Special Projects Coordinator, Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

The Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) is proud to help Florida's seniors overcome barriers by assessing their different needs and connecting them to the organizations that can provide them services which allow them to live well and age well. The following success stories are just a few examples of how the Department prioritizes the needs of our state's most vulnerable population.

## We Prioritize Disaster Preparedness and Recovery

Gerald, an 88-year-old veteran and Hillsborough County resident fell victim to the devastation following a natural disaster. Gerald was forced to evacuate his home and seek temporary shelter after it sustained damage and was no longer safe to live in. DOEA was able to connect Gerald to Senior Connection Center (SCC), the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA). Crisis funds were used to provide stabilized housing for eight months, and SCC was able to address Gerald's immediate needs and overcome his housing barriers.

## We Address Health, Emotional, Social, Legal, and Financial Needs of Seniors

Jayne, a 74-year-old located in Largo, reached out requesting assistance with health matters, nutrition programs, and transportation. DOEA immediately turned to Jayne's local AAA, the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc. The AAA scheduled a screening for services for her and connected her with the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority Access, which is a low-cost local transportation service for residents. Through her connection with



the AAA, Jayne also received counseling from the Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program. This allowed her to discuss her medical costs, get answers to her questions about receiving durable medical equipment for a new mattress, and research whether her current plan covers Farmbox Rx, which would deliver fresh fruits and vegetables to her home. Jayne was also facing a barrier following recent bunion surgery, when her podiatrist insisted she purchase orthopedic shoes, which cost nearly \$200. The community health coordinator at the AAA was able to tap into local resources to cover the cost of the shoes for her.

## We Connect Seniors to Personalized Resources

Jamie, a South Florida senior, requested assistance with food and utilities. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) provided her with SNAP benefits and sent a referral to DOEA to further assess her needs. After learning she lives with a

disability that is causing her to lose her speech and ability to write, the Department connected Jamie with financial assistance programs, additional food resources, and the Emergency Home Energy Assistance for the Elderly Program (EHEAP).

After the initial assistance, Jamie expressed a need for help with being placed in nursing home care because of the prognosis and struggles with her disability. At age 61, she does not qualify for Medicare, which has created issues for her to easily find the care she needs. She is now working with a liaison in the Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program to navigate her long-term care needs and insurance options. Additionally, the Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast is working to find additional resources to help support her.



# Connecting Seniors Through Technology

*By Margie Bell, Special Projects Coordinator, Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

Maria Tunicka is a beautiful 88-year-old Brevard County resident. She reached out to the Department of Elder Affairs because she was suffering with severe isolation and depression.

After talking with Maria, our Director of Elder Opportunities, Anne Chansler, contacted the local Area Agency on Aging, Senior Resource Alliance, to get local help. Maria's case was then referred to Aging Matters of Brevard County. Aging Matters worked closely with Maria to identify her immediate needs and connect her with homemaking and companionship services. Additionally, she was able to receive a Claris Companion tablet with different activities to help her engage and feel less isolated and alone.

Then, Anne went a step further by sending Maria a robotic companion pet, pictured here, while Margie Bell wrote her a note to lift her spirits with a quote that read, "By being yourself, you put something wonderful in the world that was not there before. Never forget that you are awesome! Love, Margie." The package was personally delivered to Maria by Aging Matters staff to add another personal connection.

To express her appreciation and joy, Maria shared photos and a video of her holding her new friend and the note sent to her. Everyone involved went above and beyond to enhance her quality of life and ensure her needs were fulfilled. Maria's smile in this photo lit up the entire team both from the State and locally. Her successful case shows the power of community and teamwork!







# Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

*By the Nutrition Team of SFMNP*

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is a special program provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) designed to provide low-income elders with fresh, locally grown produce across the country. There are a few requirements for SFMNP including:

- adults age 60 years and older,
- residence in a participating county, and
- income not exceeding 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

The SFMNP operates from April to November each year. Florida offers a spring coupon season which is from April 1 to October 2 and a fall bundling program season which is from October 3 to November 30. During the spring coupon season, eligible elders receive \$40 worth of

coupons to be redeemed by an authorized farmer at a local farmers market. During the fall bundling season, eligible elders receive a bundle of pre-selected produce worth \$40 from an authorized farmer.

In Florida, the SFMNP is operated with a partnership between the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). At DOEA, we recruit and maintain local agencies that help to qualify elders and distribute the program benefits. FDACS provides the training, authorization, and monitoring of local farmers and farmers markets where eligible elders can redeem their benefits. To learn more about the program and to see a map of participating farmers markets, visit our website at [elderaffairs.org](https://elderaffairs.org).



# Creating a Transportation Plan Is Key to Mobility Independence

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

Think about the last time that you experienced a dead battery or a flat tire. Chances are that your car trouble delayed or canceled your plans. If your car is out of commission, or if driving is no longer an option, how will you get to where you need to go? Being prepared for unforeseen circumstances is one key to remaining safe and mobile for life.

What is mobility independence? It is the ability to get to the places that you need or want to go to with or without a car. Many people relate driving with freedom. Scenarios like the one above reminds us that having a car makes us car-dependent, not independent. Having only one option for transportation is why those who stop driving make fewer trips for health, shopping, and social activities. This reduces quality of life and impacts community connections.

Car trouble is not the only concern. Natural age-related changes vary from person to person and can happen at any time. If you build, practice, and adjust a personalized transportation plan now, you will be prepared if changes occur. As you practice, you can enjoy the health, social, financial, and environmental benefits of getting around without your car.

The Safe Mobility for Life Coalition has tips and educational materials to ensure that building and practicing a transportation plan is not a stressful experience. Here are a few to get started:



- **Order** free educational materials directly from the Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center by going to [fdot.tips/resourcecenter](https://fdot.tips/resourcecenter) or calling 1-833-930-2952. Recommended materials include:
  - » **Florida's Guide to Safe Mobility for Life.** It includes tips to help talk about aging and safe driving, how to use different transportation options, and materials to help you develop your personalized transportation plan.
  - » **Transportation Options in Florida Series.** Each brochure contains helpful tips on how to use walking, bicycling, public transit, transportation network companies, and golf carts to safely get from place to place.
- **Sign up** to receive either the digital or print versions of our Insider Newsletter. Each quarterly issue is packed with tips

and information to help you learn how to achieve safe mobility for life. Go to [fdot.tips/InsiderSignUp](https://fdot.tips/InsiderSignUp) to subscribe.

- **Explore FindaRideFlorida.org** to find your local transportation options that you can build into your transportation plan. Simply input where you are traveling from, select the best option that meets your needs, and then contact the provider when you are ready to secure your ride.

You hold the keys to your transportation future, and choosing to be proactive about creating and implementing your plan means that you will remain independent beyond the driver's seat.





## Communication and Dementia

### *What We Know Works*

Have you ever watched a movie or TV show in a language you don't understand? Often, you can follow the plot lines by zeroing in on the actors' tone of voice, volume, and gestures. The actors' clothing and underlying musical score can convey significant meaning to the storyline as well.

People living with dementia are a lot like you and me when we attempt to watch a movie in a language we can't speak. The

person with dementia must follow the non-verbal forms of storytelling to understand what is happening. These types of communication cues are more effective for people living with dementia because their desire to connect with others and convey thoughts and feelings remains intact long after Alzheimer's or other types of dementia cause their language skills to deteriorate.

The following list breaks down the various types of non-verbal communication. You likely will find that understanding this will be helpful in all areas of your life – not just caregiving.

#### Types of Communication<sup>1</sup>

**Physical Movement** This category includes everything from the way you hold your body as you move, the gestures you make

when you speak, and the way you move your head and shoulders when having a conversation. Think about the differences between these well-known images and the meaning that each conveys through posture and movement:

- Superman (confidence, dominance)
- Rodin's The Thinker (concentration, attention)
- Cross-legged yoga posture (calmness, peace)

**Eye Contact and Facial Expression** Our ability to convey meaning through facial expression is one of our most effective forms of non-verbal communication. Happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and disgust make up the core of our facial expressions and are similar across nearly all cultures. Eye

<sup>1</sup> University of Minnesota: Types of Nonverbal Communication, [open.lib.umn.edu/communication/chapter/4-2-types-of-nonverbal-communication](https://open.lib.umn.edu/communication/chapter/4-2-types-of-nonverbal-communication) last accessed October 31, 2023



contact can have many meanings, but most significantly, it signals that we are trying to connect with another person. Sometimes, the connection is comforting; while other times, eye contact can signal aggression or intimidation.

**Touch** Placement and intensity of touch can send incredibly strong signals that span emotions from romantic intimacy to violence. How would you touch someone if you were attempting to convey comfort and respect?

**Use of Voice** Subtle (and not-so-subtle) changes in pitch, volume, and intensity can carry significant meaning. Consider the phrase “Good morning.” How might your voice change if you were trying to wake someone gently or to startle someone?

**Personal Space and Sense of Time** The placement of your body next to someone else carries much more meaning than you might expect. Proximity and height differences can make a person feel incredibly uneasy. Most Americans expect a wide circle of personal space and do not feel comfortable with others entering the space too quickly. If your loved one is in a wheelchair or is often seated, how and where do you position yourself?

**Personal Presentation and Environment** The presentation of the people and the space around us sends meaningful cues. As caregivers, we can influence the caregiving environment to make our loved ones feel more at ease within their space by using familiar and comforting imagery to help them feel at home. Familiar style, dress, sounds, and scents can all play an important role.

## Tips for Success

**Know Your Loved One’s Preferences** The most important thing to consider when assessing your non-verbal communication is not what the communication signal

says to you, but what meaning is perceived by your loved one. People with dementia will make sense of the people and environment around them based on what they already know. For example, if a person with dementia fears doctors and medical settings, seeing caregivers wearing scrubs and medical equipment might make the person anxious and agitated. Similarly, some people with dementia might feel more at ease knowing they are in a medical setting and be comforted by that imagery. It is critical to recognize the person’s preferences so we can adapt the non-verbal signals that we are sending to our loved ones.

**Be Ready With Visual Prompts** Whenever possible, pair a visual cue with what you are trying to convey. Pictures of food can indicate it is mealtime, or holding up a familiar nightgown can convey that it is time to change for bed. Be careful to use these images naturally to avoid inadvertently demeaning your loved one. A tablet can be especially helpful to pull up nearly any image on demand. You can also use familiar images of hobbies or familiar places to recall stronger memories from the past.

**Do Not Startle** People living with dementia often startle easily. Be careful to approach from the front whenever possible; do not move too quickly; and call out with a gentle, easy-going tone of voice to ensure they do not feel threatened.

**Go Low** Whenever possible, allow your physical posture to be lower than your loved ones. If they are seated or lying down, squat and pull up a chair – the lower the better. This position places the person in a place of “authority” above the caregiver.

**Hold Their Hand** When speaking to your loved one with dementia, gently hold their hand to signal trust and comfort (unless you know your loved one does not like physical touch). Even better, use of the hand-under-hand technique<sup>2</sup> (pioneered by Teepa Snow). This form of touch inspires trust,



respect, and comfort for the person with dementia.

**Use Your Loved One’s Strengths** Memories of familiar words, phrases, songs, and rhymes remain long after Alzheimer’s or a related dementia has affected your loved one’s ability to hold a traditional conversation. Sing a familiar song, recite a well-loved prayer, and you might be amazed at what your loved one can still vocalize. Even old commercial jingles and phrases signal comfort and trust.

**Respond** When your loved one resorts to gestures or vocalizes without using the correct words, respond to what you think they are trying to convey. Respond as though they stated it as they always did. Although their ability to create words and sentences will become impaired, the emotions displayed in their actions are still genuine.

Have patience for yourself and your loved one. No one gets it right every time. Remember, it likely will take some time to become aware of your habits and strengths. Learn to recognize what you do well and what habits appear when you are tired or stressed. Take time for yourself so that you can approach all your caregiving interactions with the patience and grace that you and your loved one both deserve.

<sup>2</sup> Positive Approach to Caregiving: Why is Hand-under-Hand effective and powerful? [teepasnow.com/blog/why-is-hand-under-hand-effectiveanother-reason-to-use-hand-under-hand-in-providing-support-and-care](https://teepasnow.com/blog/why-is-hand-under-hand-effectiveanother-reason-to-use-hand-under-hand-in-providing-support-and-care). Last accessed October 31, 2023



# South Florida Cycling Fabbri Family Makes History at National Senior Games

By Florida Senior Games

If the Fabbri family had a three-seat bicycle, it would go in three different directions.

The patriarch of the South Florida cycling family, Luigi, now 88 years old and living in Lake Worth, rides 20 miles every day at Okeeheelee Park in West Palm Beach. He has been a consistent medalist in the Florida Senior Games since 1997.

Luigi's wife, Eva, rides occasionally and has competed intermittently in the Florida Senior Games over the years. She has ridden in Velodrome competitions (a schedule of various track racing events) in Canada, the United Kingdom, South America, and Italy. Their daughter, Gabriella, is a self-proclaimed "workaholic," and tries to go cycling once a week.

In July, the three-seat bike made its way to Plain Grove Township, a city located 45 miles north of Pittsburgh, Pa., for the Fabbri family to compete in the Time Trials and 2023 National Senior Games 20K Road Race.

With all of them crossing the finish line in Pennsylvania, they became the first Florida Senior Games father, mother, and daughter trio to compete in the same sport together.

While Luigi began his cycling endeavors in 1952, Gabriella began competing only two years ago and was sidelined with a broken wrist for nine months. The 2023 National Senior Games was her first 20K Road Race.



"I should have trained more for the hills," she said a few minutes after crossing the finish line. Elevation on the Plain Grove Township course was over 1,200 feet with inclines up to nearly 100 feet.

Even racing in the 85-89 age group and training in the flatlands of South Florida, Luigi shrugged off the hills saying, "I raced in the Tour of Mexico, a 40-stage race in the mountains of Mexico."

Although it was quite a few years back when he rode the race that began in 1948, he's seen his share of courses in his 71 years on the bike. "He's the champion," Eva said of Luigi, but quickly added of Gabriella, "she's next."

Eva was the only Fabbri to claim a medal at the 2023 National Senior Games, a bronze

in the 10K Time Trials 80-84 age group. Luigi earned a fifth-place ribbon for the Road Race, in the 85-89 age group, and Eva was an eighth-place finisher in the Road Race 55-59 age group.

Luigi has no plans on stopping his routine of 20 miles a day any time soon. "Mom says he's probably going to die on a bike," Gabriella said. Luigi was quick to reply, "I don't want to die on a bike."

Based on the family tradition, it's hopeful that Luigi Fabbri's bike seat will be filled by future generations of his family. Visit [nsga.com](https://nsga.com) for more information and follow the Florida Senior Games on Facebook to see the latest from the 2023 National Senior Games.



# Sudoku Puzzles

Solutions found on page 21.

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

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





# Scams and Fraud Awareness

## Look Out for These Scams!

By Iyanna Peoples, Communications Coordinator, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

When it comes to financial exploitation, many scammers are out to target one specific group – our seniors. According to reports and estimations, nearly 90,000 complaints were filed by seniors falling victim to fraud in 2022 with an average loss of \$35,000 per victim. When it comes to scams, the best defense is a good offense. Here are some common schemes to be on the lookout for and tips on how to stay protected:

### Phone Call Scams

Scammers can set up robocalls with spoofed area codes to appear like they are calling from the victim's local area or with the caller ID of a government agency. The robocalls will often inform the victim that they owe money or need to take immediate action on an issue.

### Online Shopping Scams

Consumers are often lured into websites created by scammers due to their low prices and great deals, but the products they advertise are drastically different from what's received, or they never arrive at all. These fake sites often ask you to pay in ways other than a credit or debit card, leaving you without recourse when the item doesn't arrive.



### Tech Support Scams

Tech support scammers tell victims their computers have issues they can help resolve or ask for remote access to their computer. While legitimate tech support companies may do this to resolve technical issues, you shouldn't grant remote access if you haven't vetted whoever's on the other end.

### Healthcare Scams

Medicare and health insurance scammers will pose like government officials to steal your money or personal information. Always research any company offering health coverage and insist on receiving a complete copy of the policy you're considering. For help identifying potential Medicare scams, visit [floridashine.org](https://floridashine.org) or call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER.

### Social Security Scams

In the event of an issue concerning an individual's Social Security number or records, Social Security typically communicates via mail. For situations requiring payment, the agency will forward a letter outlining instructions and available payment options. If you suspect you have encountered Social Security fraud or a scam, please go to [oig.ssa.gov/report](https://oig.ssa.gov/report).

### Tips on How to Stay Protected

- Always guard your personal information.
- Don't act immediately. Scammers may pressure you to pay them quickly and can have a demanding tone. Take a moment to verify who they are and think about what they are asking for.
- Use caution when sending money. Always verify who the receiver is before sending any money.
- Check your bank accounts regularly for unauthorized charges on credit reports and bank statements.
- Keep security software up to date.
- Use different passwords for multiple accounts.
- Never click on links or attachments from unknown sources.
- Always remember, if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is!

If you've been contacted by a scammer, it's always helpful to file a complaint. You can report fraudulent activity to agencies such as the Better Business Bureau, the Federal Trade Commission, and the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center. When in doubt, you can always call the Elder Helpline!





## Foster Grandparent Marion Maher Celebrated as Outstanding Senior Volunteer!

*By Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc.*

We are thrilled to share that Foster Grandparent Marion Maher, also known as Grandma Mary, was selected as Palm Beach County School District Outstanding Senior Volunteer of the Year! This is an incredible honor as Palm Beach County School

District is the 10th largest in the nation and has an extraordinary number of volunteers.

Mrs. Balch, the kindergarten teacher with whom she serves, wrote, "The extra attention she gives my students who are in the lowest 25th percentile academically makes the difference whether they are able to catch up to the other students and increase their phonemic awareness and fluency in reading and spelling. Grandma Mary's success rate is amazing. Every student she has worked with has made academic and social gains. She brings out the best in them. Students enjoy coming to school just to work with Grandma Mary. Their attendance rate has improved by 80 percent. Grandma Mary is a blessing to all of us."

"Nothing keeps her down, not even cancer. This is the strongest person I know. She did not work with the students when she was ill from the chemotherapy, but as soon as she could, she was back on the computer, making a difference in the lives of my students."



The announcement was a surprise to Grandma Mary. The students lined the halls with banners and pompoms as she came to her classroom. The love and joy were felt by everyone! Congratulations, Mary!





# Sunshine in Every Bite

## *Florida's Fruits and Veggies Thrive in Winter and Early Spring*

*By the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.*

While most states brave cold winter temperatures, Florida's agricultural harvest boasts a bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the winter and into spring. Like people who flock to the Sunshine State

for a little warmth, fruits and vegetables also enjoy the tropical climate.

"Fresh From Florida" is a program that promotes Florida agricultural products grown by Florida's farmers, fishermen, and ranchers. Since many fruits and vegetables have longer produce seasons in Florida, agriculture has a \$180 billion economic impact that provides over 2.5 million jobs and a plethora of food sources.

Many Florida commodities are available from winter through spring, such as sweet corn, bell peppers, tomatoes, radishes, strawberries, green beans, lettuce, and more, as well as the famed Florida citrus. Several spring crops lead the domestic markets in Florida including blueberries, watermelon, and cantaloupe.

Florida produce is typically in season from December through June. During Florida's coldest months from mid-December through early March, Florida strawberries

are in peak season and available in stores. Tomato season in Florida kicks off in October and runs through June, comprising more than 50 percent of the market tomatoes in the U.S. With such a long produce season, people can continue enjoying tomato sandwiches and tomato pie for several months.

Purchasing "Fresh From Florida" ensures farmers throughout the state are supported and helps agriculture continue to thrive. Don't see the sunny "Fresh From Florida" logo? Ask your local grocery store and restaurant managers to source "Fresh From Florida" products to support our farmers, fishermen, and ranchers.

To learn more about what's in season and discover recipes featuring Florida's top commodities, save the "Fresh From Florida" Seasonal Availability Calendar and visit [FreshFromFlorida.com](https://www.FreshFromFlorida.com).





# It's Time to SHINE

Whether you are a senior with Medicare questions or you are looking for a new volunteer opportunity, it is time to call our 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.

If you are interested in being 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!**



**SHINE**  
SHIP | SMP FLORIDA

FloridaShine.org  
**1-800-96-ELDER**  
(1-800-963-5337)

## SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

### PUZZLE ONE

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

### PUZZLE TWO

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



# Fighting Isolation:

## Telephone Reassurance Programs Help Seniors Make New Connections

*By Gabrielle Garay, Communications Specialist, ElderSource*

Duval County resident Carla Furr says she believes in the importance of giving back to her community. It's something that was instilled in her by her mother who taught her the power of good deeds and helping others.

After retiring from the computer industry, Furr spent time volunteering in different organizations, but found something special with ElderSource's Caring Connections program in Northeast Florida.

ElderSource's Caring Connections telephone reassurance program is an initiative that provides a friendly phone call from a volunteer to an older adult who is living alone or homebound. The program helps eliminate or reduce some of the concerns facing homebound seniors such as isolation, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline.

"If you stick with it, you find that you can develop a relationship with the people that you call," said Furr, who talks to two senior women each week. "It's not a permanent fix for their loneliness, but it puts that in the background for a while and brightens their day. I can tell for a little while they've been lifted out of their loneliness."



The cornerstone of volunteering with Caring Connections is being willing to establish friendly, caring relationships with older adults over the phone. Volunteers must also have great listening skills, be willing to make a commitment to call a senior at least once a week for a minimum of six months to a year and pass a background check.

Orientation and free training sessions are provided once a person joins the program as a volunteer.

Furr joined the program during the pandemic after searching for opportunities to serve the community that did not require physical contact. While the phone calls with seniors vary, they usually ask for two hours out of a volunteer's weekly schedule.

The joy of calling the seniors is not a one-way street, she says.

"I have learned things from the ladies, and these calls benefit me, too," said Furr. "They've shared their wisdom and their life experiences. Even though we don't see

them in person, you do feel a relationship and a sense of kinship with the people that you call. And they have become a part of my life."

Older adults can sign themselves up for the program, or they can be referred by a friend or family. Volunteers are welcomed from any part of the country. If you want to learn more about the program or sign up, please call the toll-free ElderSource helpline at 1-888-242-4464.

In addition to ElderSource, several Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) across Florida offer telephone reassurance programs, including the AAA of Pasco-Pinellas, AAA of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Senior Connection Center, AAA of Broward County, and the Senior Resource Alliance.

Call your local agency or the Elder Helpline today at **1-800-96-ELDER** to get connected with resources.



# 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**







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## 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 for a printed copy. To subscribe to the digital copy, visit [elderaffairs.org](https://elderaffairs.org).

