In a fast-moving world, it is easy for us to get tunnel vision. We remain focused on the things going on immediately around us and fail to see that we are a part of something bigger. A sense of community, of camaraderie, doesn’t exist as much as it used to, in my opinion. Oftentimes neighbors do not even know each other. I remember a time when the phrase “it takes a village” rang true.

Today, it is common for us to remain separated into our own age groups. Many seniors feel left behind by technology in a world of texting, social media, iPads, iPods, and having “an app” for everything. Many youth feel that they have nothing in common with their elders. I am the first to admit that the world is a very different place today than it was when I was a child. However, what I think remains true is that we all belong to each other. We all have something to say – an experience worth sharing. And we can all learn from each other.

So while demographics, music, movies, and technology try to classify us into our own age groups, at the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA), we encourage you to reject the premise that we are just too different to benefit from each other. At the state level, the Department provides an education and outreach component, coordinating and developing intergenerational activities that connect seniors and youth. These programs and initiatives provide opportunities for individuals, families, and communities to enjoy the benefits and richness of an age-integrated society.

Recently, the Department recognized Florida’s Intergenerational Week by encouraging all Floridians to become more involved in volunteer opportunities that unite the young and old within their communities. Events and activities held during Intergenerational Week and throughout the year help to bridge the experiences and wisdom of elders with the unbridled curiosity of youth.

The DOEA’s Office of Volunteer and Community Services works with other agencies and organizations throughout Florida to promote the importance of intergenerational activities. These programs improve the quality of life for all ages by strengthening families and communities. Examples of programs include active reading groups, tutoring a young person, teaching elders

continued on page 2
Call for Nominations for the 2011 C. Colburn Hardy Older Advocate Award

Recognizing Volunteer Advocates Making a Difference in the Lives of Older Floridians

For the past 12 years, an outstanding elder person living year-round in Florida has received the C. Colburn Hardy Older Advocate Award for volunteer efforts demonstrating vision, advocacy, and leadership regarding the future of the growing aging population in the state of Florida.

It is once again time to nominate and recognize an individual who practices the values articulated by C. Colburn Hardy when he wrote, “Hopefully, some of the projects in which I was involved helped to make the world a better place in which to work, to live, to love, and to have our being.”

The C. Colburn Hardy Older Advocate Award is presented to an individual who has consistently made significant contributions to policies, programs, and services for older Floridians. This individual should serve as an advocate who volunteers his or her time, energy, and expertise toward making a difference that has statewide impact. Activities and efforts can range from policymaking to new program development to service improvements. Additional information, including award criteria and nomination forms can be accessed at www.ccolburnhardyol-deradvocateaward.com or www.CCHOAA.com. The deadline for submission of nominations is Friday, April 20, 2012.

Presentation of the 13th annual award is an event that is recognized by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs in its ongoing efforts to support outstanding volunteer advocates. Presentation of the award will be made by the leadership of the Department of Elder Affairs and the Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc., at the Prime Time Celebration in Palm Beach Gardens on Thursday, May 10, 2012.

The award is presented by the Honorable Dorcas R. Hardy, Colburn’s daughter, and former Commissioner of Social Security. The Selection Committee is comprised of Ms. Hardy, Carole Green, former Secretary of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, John Stokesberry, former awardee and CEO of Alliance for Aging, Cathy deHeron, formerly CEO of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast Area Agency on Aging, and several other representatives of Florida’s aging network.

For more information about C. Colburn Hardy, award criteria, nomination forms, contact information, and award presentation, please visit www.ccolburnhardyolderadvocateaward.com or www.CCHOAA.com or call 301-651-8568.

Governor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

leum products a year. To be completed in 2014, the $45-million expansion will provide two new petroleum berths and rehabilitate the petroleum terminal infrastructure.

Most importantly, this project will enhance Florida’s infrastructure and get our state ready for a new generation of international trade with the Caribbean, South America and beyond. That is why I directed the Florida Department of Transportation to invest $22.5 million in the new facility. The port estimates the project will create over 641 construction jobs, as well as more than 8,200 direct and indirect jobs over the next 30 years.

Investments that encourage business growth ensure Florida companies are able to expand and create more jobs. Last year, Florida added 141,500 new private-sector jobs and unemployment dropped 2.1 percentage points. With these numbers moving in the right directions, Florida is clearly on the right track.
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ASSISTS SENIORS DURING NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK

Florida’s Public Service Commission (PSC) is reaching out to seniors and low-income residents across the state during the 14th annual National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW) March 4 – 10, 2012. The PSC is helping seniors save money on their utility bills with easy energy and water conservation strategies, such as turning lights and ceiling fans off when leaving the room or running the dishwasher and clothes washer only with full loads.

Telephone discount programs will also be offered to eligible seniors. The federal Lifeline Assistance program saves $13.50 per month on basic telephone service bills, and the Link Up Florida program saves 50 percent on telephone connection charges, up to a $20 maximum. You qualify for the programs if you receive certain public assistance programs or if your income is 150 percent of the U.S. poverty guidelines. To learn more about the programs, visit www.floridapsc.com and find the Link Up and Lifeline link on the right-side menu.

PSC staff has scheduled several events during NCPW. For a schedule of events, go to the news release ticker tape on the PSC’s home page, www.floridapsc.com, to access a full listing of events. You can also call the PSC’s consumer assistance line at 1-800-342-3552 to request Lifeline and conservation brochures over the phone.

Sponsored by the Federal Trade Commission and other consumer groups, NCPW was created to highlight consumer protections and encourage consumers nationwide to take full advantage of their rights to make better-informed decisions in the marketplace. To learn more, visit www.ncpw.gov.

ELDER UPDATE
Subscription Announcement

In order to comply with the United States Postal Service regulations guiding periodicals, we must regularly update our subscription list and provide proof of your request for our newspaper. To prevent an interruption in your subscription, please send us a new subscription request, found on page 7, with your complete and current address. Don’t forget to sign and date it! For those of you who have already submitted your forms, we thank you. We are also appreciative of the input you are providing on the content of our paper. We take seriously each suggestion that you have provided and are already preparing future articles based on your requests. We would also like to thank the many of you who have made donations to Elder Update during this time. Your generous donation helps us continue to distribute this award-winning publication. Please see our Special Thanks box for this month’s donors.

We look forward to continuing to serve you through Elder Update.

Secretary's Message
(Continued from page 1)

to use computers or cell phones, mentoring, and other activities that engage individuals from different generations.

DOEA encourages all Floridians to participate in some form of intergenerational opportunity throughout the year. Take the time to share your life with those around you, regardless of their age.

We will all benefit from this, and together we will enrich the culture of this great state.

For additional information, contact the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, Communities for a Lifetime, 4040 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000. You may also call 850-414-2000 or visit our web-site at http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/intergenerationalconnection.php.

Write for Elder Update

Many of you have asked us for a chance to contribute writing pieces to Elder Update. Should you want to submit a Letter to the Editor, a poem, or a short writing piece, we welcome all submissions. Due to space limitations, we will not always be able to include everything, but we will do our best to accommodate these requests. Thanks for your interest!

Ambassadors
for Aging Day

Join us March 8, 2012, at the 12th Annual Ambassadors for Aging Day at the Capitol. The event serves as an opportunity for Florida’s leaders to celebrate the many accomplishments of our seniors, while allowing seniors to learn more about the programs and services available to them. Visit www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/afad.php for more information.

Special Thanks

Elder Update staff is deeply gratified by the many generous donations given recently by our readers. Your generosity and kindness are truly appreciated and will be used to ensure the continued production of Elder Update.

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Medicare Part B Deadline Approaching

Rashad Mujahid
Social Security Administration

If you didn’t sign up for Medicare Part B medical insurance when you first became eligible for Medicare, you now have an opportunity to apply — but time is running out. The deadline for applying during the general enrollment period is March 31. If you miss the deadline, you may have to wait until 2013 to apply.

Medicare Part B covers some medical expenses not covered by Medicare Part A (hospital insurance), such as doctors’ fees, outpatient visits, and other medical supplies and services.

When you first become eligible for hospital insurance (Part A), you have a seven-month period in which to sign up for medical insurance (Part B). After that, you may have to pay a higher premium — unless you were covered through your current employer’s group health plan or a group health plan based on a spouse’s current employment. You are given another opportunity to enroll in Part B during the general enrollment period, from January 1 to March 31 of each year. But each 12-month period that you are eligible for Medicare Part B and do not sign up, the amount of your monthly premium increases by 10 percent.

There are special situations in which you can apply for Medicare Part B outside the general enrollment period. For example, you should contact Social Security about applying for Medicare if:

- you are a disabled widow or widower between age 50 and age 65, but have not applied for disability benefits because you are already getting another kind of Social Security benefit;
- you worked long enough in a government job where Medicare taxes were paid and you meet the requirements of the Social Security disability program and became disabled before age 65;
- you, your spouse, or your dependent child has permanent kidney failure;
- you had Medicare medical insurance (Part B) in the past but dropped the coverage; or
- you turned down Medicare medical insurance (Part B) when you became entitled to hospital insurance (Part A).

You can learn more about Medicare by reading our electronic booklet, Medicare at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10043.html or visit the Medicare website at www.medicare.gov. You may also call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY 1-877-486-2048).

Social Security plays a vital role in the lives of women.

Rashad Mujahid
Social Security Administration

March is Women’s History Month — a time to focus not just on the past, but on the challenges women continue to face in the 21st century.

Social Security plays a vital role in the lives of women. With longer life expectancies than men, women tend to live more years in retirement and have a greater chance of exhausting other sources of income. With the national average life expectancy for women in the United States rising, many women will have decades to enjoy retirement. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a girl born today can expect to live more than 80 years. As a result, experts generally agree that if women want to ensure that their retirement years are comfortable, they need to plan early and wisely.

What you can do
The best place to begin is by knowing what you can expect to receive from Social Security, and how much more you are likely to need.

You can start with a visit to Social Security’s Retirement Estimator. There, in just a few minutes, you can get a personalized, instant estimate of your retirement benefits. You can find it at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator.

You should also visit Social Security’s financial planning website at www.socialsecurity.gov/planners. It provides detailed information about how marriage, widowhood, divorce, self-employment, government service, and other life or career events can affect your Social Security.

If you want more information about the role of Social Security in women’s lives today, Social Security also has a booklet that you may find useful. It is called Social Security: What Every Woman Should Know. You can find it online at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10127.html or call toll-free 1-800-772-1213.

Support Elder Update

Help support this valuable and informative publication for Florida’s seniors!

If you would like to make a donation, please mail a check made payable to the Department of Elder Affairs to:

Department of Elder Affairs
c/o Elder Update
Grants and Donations Trust Fund
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000

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Fostering Collaboration in Florida’s Fight Against Public Assistance Fraud

Jeff Atwater
Chief Financial Officer, State of Florida

Every Floridian deserves to know how the dollars they send to their government are being spent and that those dollars are being used properly and for their intended purpose. Unfortunately, the level of fraud that has infiltrated our public assistance programs is crippling our state’s budget and siphoning money away from those legitimately in need of assistance. The Medicaid and Public Assistance Fraud Strike Force, created by the Legislature in 2010, is working through a collaborative, multi-agency approach to fight public assistance fraud, particularly fraud related to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps).

EBT fraud is typically facilitated by a store owner who will pay cash for cards or allow cardholders to use their EBT cards to pay for unapproved items such as cigarettes or alcohol. But these store owners are savvy criminals and only deal with a localized population, making these cases difficult to investigate and prosecute.

Over the past year, the Strike Force has researched many different models used to combat this kind of public assistance fraud and found a multi-agency investigative approach to be a proven, effective model. A great example of this collaborative approach is a 2009 case that focused on retailers in and around northwest Miami. State agencies including the Department of Financial Services, the Department of Revenue, and the Department of Business and Professional Regulation coordinated with the Miami Police Department and the Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office. The multi-agency effort resulted in multiple felony arrests and the retailers being removed from the EBT program.

As your Chief Financial Officer, I recognize the impact of the economic challenges of the past few years. Florida’s public assistance programs have helped an unprecedented number of people during that time, but fraud committed by the collusion of fraudsters and rogue retailers undermines the program and hurts honest consumers. If you have any information regarding suspected fraud in Florida’s public assistance program, please call, toll-free, 1-866-762-2237, and for more information about the Medicaid and Public Assistance Fraud Strike Force, please visit www.MyFloridaCFO.com/StrikeForce.

Editor’s Note:
The Medicaid and Public Assistance Fraud Strike Force is a policy oversight and advisory board for interagency and intergovernmental cooperation against Medicaid and public assistance fraud. The Strike Force’s mission is to oversee and coordinate state and local efforts to eliminate Medicaid and public assistance fraud and to recover state and federal funds. The Strike Force is chaired by Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, and Attorney General Pam Bondi serves as the vice-chair.

Folks…We’re Still Being Scammed!
Stop the Madness with These Simple Steps

Marilyn Gregory
Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida

While we do our best to remain cognizant of the latest scams targeting seniors, we can never be too careful. Sadly, statistics show that seniors continue to be victimized at an alarming rate. Take these simple steps to protect yourself before you are a victim. Be careful, informed, and prepared!

Never purchase anything from someone who calls or visits without being invited. Don’t purchase anything from someone soliciting door-to-door or over the telephone. This is especially true when dealing with charitable organizations. If you are interested in the product or wish to know more about the charity, invite the solicitor to send you material that you can examine at your convenience. After you have had an opportunity to review the material and determine its legitimacy, YOU make the call to order the product or make the contribution. Legitimate companies and charitable organizations will never pressure you for money. Remember, you are in control!

Be aware that you are at risk from strangers – and those closest to you. Over 90 percent of all reported elder exploitation is committed by family members. Sadly enough, most often children and grandchildren are the culprits of financial deception. Common tactics are to deplete joint checking accounts, promising and not delivering care in exchange for monetary compensation or property, and outright stealing right under the victim’s nose. Surround yourself with trusted, insured, bonded, experienced professionals who can provide you with information and security. When dealing with home repair or service providers, check the Florida Department of Professional Regulation to verify appropriate licensing, never pay for unfinished work, and review all contracts carefully.

Shred, Shred, Shred. Take special care when disposing of any materials with your personal information on them. If you are able, shred these documents. Identity theft is a profitable business for crooks. Monitor your bank and credit card statements, and report any discrepancies immediately to your financial institution.

Don’t give any personal information over the phone unless you initiated the call. Legitimate businesses and agencies will not call you asking for your personal information over the phone or email.

Sign up for the Do Not Call List. Visit www.donotcall.gov, or call toll-free 1-888-382-1222 from the phone you wish to register to stop telemarketers from calling you. This service is sponsored by the Federal Trade Commission. Remember to register both your home and cell phones.

If you suspect financial exploitation or a potential scam, report it to local law enforcement immediately. For more information on senior services in Florida, contact the Elder Helpline toll-free at 1-800-963-5337.
**KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS**

Natalee Singleton  
Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Florida’s law enforcement officers work vigilantly to put criminals behind bars, but at some point, after their time is served, many former convicts will return to our communities. This includes those with a history of sexual crimes.

Luckily, Florida has one of the most complete and user-friendly public sex offender databases around. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement’s Florida Sexual Offender/Predator Public Registry website provides names, addresses, and information of all registered sexual offenders and predators living in your area.

The basic distinction between sexual offenders and predators is that an offender has been convicted of at least one qualifying sex offense, while a predator has been convicted of a first-degree or higher felony sex crime or two second-degree felony sex crimes and has been designated a predator by a court order. From planning outdoor activities to hiring a handyman, it is wise to be aware of those around you.

There are three ways to search the Florida Sexual Offender/Predator Public Registry website.

You can enter a city, county, or ZIP code to obtain a list of all the offenders and predators living in an area. In Florida, sexual offenders and predators are legally required to register and maintain accurate, up-to-date addresses with authorities.

Another option is to utilize the Neighborhood Search function, which allows you to enter a location (your home, school, park, etc.) and access the residences of all offenders and predators within a one-to-five mile radius. It provides a map view and lets you easily download or print the information.

In March 2008, FDLE implemented the Florida Offender Alert System. This system, accessible through the same website, provides free alerts notifying you when a sexual offender or predator moves into the area you select. The system currently has over 151,000 subscribers and has delivered close to five million email alerts.

The website also provides a wealth of safety tips and encourages joining or organizing a local Neighborhood Crime Watch service. Visit FDLE’s Florida Sexual Offender/Predator Public Registry website at [http://offender.fdle.state.fl.us](http://offender.fdle.state.fl.us) or call 1-888-357-7332 for more information.

**TO BE OR NOT TO BE**

*Proving Who You Are in the Age of the Real ID Act*

Ellen Cheek  
Florida Senior Legal Helpline

Not long ago, a driver's license was required, well, to drive. For most Floridians, the most significant obstacle to acquiring the license or to renewing it year after year was the line at the DMV. Now, however, even senior citizens who no longer drive must have a government-issued photo I.D. Not only is this credential required for airplane travel, but it must often be presented upon the first visit to a new doctor or to pick up prescriptions for certain medications. Even one's own bank may require ID to cash checks and perform other routine banking business.

Ironically, just as the need to prove identity becomes more ubiquitous, the Real ID Act of 2005, intended by Congress to thwart terrorist activity by improving the integrity of government-issued identification, makes renewing a driver's license or acquiring a photo ID a much bigger deal. Whereas driver's license renewals used to be automatic in most cases, now applicants must literally prove who they are. Who may have trouble doing so? Older Americans who were not born in this country, or who were, but not in a hospital and may not have a birth certificate; those who may have adopted a nickname over the years, or Americanized their names over a lifetime in the U.S.; and those whose school/baptism/military records have disappeared for reasons large and small all may have difficulty proving their identities.

Bay Area's Florida Senior Legal Helpline is hearing from more and more elders who are having trouble proving they are who they say they are. Consider the longtime U.S. citizen who was baptized as "Teodoro," but who has registered for Social Security, served in the military, and voted as "Ted"; the older woman whose ability to access medical care for her developmentally disabled niece was impaired, because as caregiver she was not legally entitled to her niece's birth certificate, while her niece was not legally competent to request it; the senior whose mother used her husband's name on her newborn's birth certificate but who then changed her child's name to that of his real birth father after her husband's death; and the senior who was delivered by a midwife at home in the rural South and whose state has no record of his birth at all. These are just some of the many cases in which the documents required by the Real ID Act of 2005 are either non-existent or are inconsistent.

If you are curious about a specific offender or predator, you can search by his or her name. Selecting the registrant’s link provides you with a photograph, information about the specific crimes, counties of conviction, and other data.

Fortunately, Helpline advocates are often able to assist. Sometimes we have been able to resolve the issue administratively by getting an "exception" from the DMV; creativity in finding and linking pieces of a paper trail are key in these situations. Court-ordered name changes are the answer in some cases, as court issued "delayed" birth certificates are in others.

Though elderly Americans are more likely than most to have compromised identity records due to the passage of time and changes in the culture of recordkeeping, other populations are also challenged by the Real ID requirements. For example, homeless people who no longer have their records have an especially difficult task. Legal service advocates can be very effective in helping clients navigate the tightrope between gathering sometimes unconventional corroboration and respecting the national need for a credible and uniform ID system.

The Senior Legal Helpline provides free legal advice and brief services by telephone to eligible Florida residents age 60 and older, for civil (not criminal) legal problems. The Senior Legal Helpline – 1-888-895-7873 – also provides solutions to seniors to help them resolve their legal problems, makes referrals to state and local regulatory agencies, and, when it is determined that court representation is necessary, helps seniors find legal providers in their communities.
The Importance of Understanding and Managing COPD in Elderly Patients

John W. Walsh
Co-founder and President of the COPD Foundation

Older Americans can expect to live longer than ever before, but identifying barriers to quality of life remains as challenging as ever. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the third leading cause of death in the U.S. according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a preventable, incurable disease that often goes undetected among senior patients because symptoms are frequently dismissed as “normal” signs of aging.

Fortunately, a national public awareness campaign is helping to identify the 12 million Americans who are symptomatic but undiagnosed with COPD in order to increase prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. This effort signals an opportunity for managers of long-term care facilities, physicians, and care providers to use the newly published guidelines to incorporate treatment designed to enhance quality of life for patients living with COPD.

A majority of individuals with COPD have the disease as a result of exposure to tobacco, so a critical first step is to get a proper diagnosis and then take action to quit smoking by joining a smoking cessation program that offers a comprehensive approach with counseling, peer support, medications, and pulmonary rehab treatments.

It’s important for healthcare providers to recognize the signs and symptoms of COPD and be familiar with interventions available to help engage the patient with proper education materials and encourage participation through self-management in coordination with a healthcare provider. Because senior patients often suffer from poor vision and impaired mental and memory functions, treating COPD can be more challenging than it is for younger populations.

Treatment programs should include a comprehensive pulmonary rehabilitation program – designed to improve quality of life and exercise capacity for patients with mild and moderate COPD. Patients with moderate or severe COPD may require inhaled steroids to help reduce inflammation in airways. But with the right treatment and guidance for safe exercise, previously inactive patients can gain renewed self-confidence and begin participating in community activities.

Patients with severe COPD are greatly limited by breathlessness, exhaustion, pain, anxiety, and depression, requiring a more tailored exercise program designed to improve physical activities and self-management. Oxygen therapy improves shortness of breath, helps protect the heart and other organs from damage, improves sleep, and raises alertness during the day.

During end-stage palliative care for COPD patients, appropriate treatment strategies should incorporate the advanced care planning preferences of the patients and their families with regard to withholding or withdrawing hospital treatment and hospice care.

While COPD is a growing threat among all Americans, new classes of therapies are emerging, and more effective comprehensive treatment strategies are being implemented to help engage the patient to participate in providing quality of life. Caregiver education and effective disease management not only improve the lives of patients, but generate greater peace of mind among family members. Healthcare providers should keep in mind that COPD is mostly preventable, almost always treatable, and might someday be curable.

About the Author: John W. Walsh, who was diagnosed with Alpha-1-related genetic COPD in 1989, is the Co-Founder and President of the COPD Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to developing and supporting programs that improve the quality of life through research, education, early diagnosis, and enhanced therapy for persons whose lives are impacted by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). He is also the Co-Founder of the Alpha-1 Foundation (a research organization) and AlphaNet, Inc., (a unique, not-for-profit disease management services company run by and for patients). He can be reached at jwwalsh@copdfoundation.org.

About the Author: John W. Walsh, who was diagnosed with Alpha-1-related genetic COPD in 1989, is the Co-Founder and President of the COPD Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to developing and supporting programs that improve the quality of life through research, education, early diagnosis, and enhanced therapy for persons whose lives are impacted by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). He is also the Co-Founder of the Alpha-1 Foundation (a research organization) and AlphaNet, Inc., (a unique, not-for-profit disease management services company run by and for patients). He can be reached at jwwalsh@copdfoundation.org.
DASH Diet Rated Number One

Holly Greuling
Nutrition Program Manager
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Have you heard the news? US News and World Report recently rated the DASH diet as the Best Diet Overall for 2012. What is the DASH diet? In short, it is an eating plan that encourages you to eat a wide variety of whole foods and delicious flavors every day.

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet was originally developed to lower blood pressure, so for those of you who suffer from hypertension or high blood pressure, this diet can help you lower your numbers. The DASH diet is best because it is relatively easy to follow, nutritious, safe, and effective for weight loss and in the fight against diabetes and heart disease.

The DASH diet’s eating plan is low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and total fat, while emphasizing fruits, vegetables, and fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products. It includes a limited amount of lean red meat, sweets, added sugars, and beverages containing sugar. The diet is rich in potassium, magnesium, and calcium as well as protein and fiber. In summary, the DASH eating plan encourages consumption of “nutrient-rich foods,” or foods that give more bang for the calorie.

The best part of the DASH diet is you do not have to buy any special foods, or join any clubs, or go to any special stores to purchase items. If you shop at the grocery store now, then you already shop at the right place. The DASH diet emphasizes consuming whole foods, instead of processed foods. For example, buy sweet potatoes rather than boxed scalloped potatoes.

Whole foods are generally located on the outer perimeter of the grocery store, so when you are shopping, keep to the outer perimeter, and you will naturally avoid most processed foods.

If you are considering starting the DASH diet, please keep the following in mind:

You can adapt your lifestyle to DASH and make a more lasting change, if you DO IT GRADUALLY. For example:

- If you currently do not eat whole fruit, or if you only consume juice at breakfast, then make a commitment to add a whole piece of fruit to your daily intake.

- If you are eating more than three ounces of meat at each meal (i.e., the size of a deck of cards), then you need to gradually cut down on that portion so that you can sustain the change.

Remember, check with your doctor before making this diet change, make changes gradually, always

continued on page 17
Builders Ready to Meet Aging-in-Place Needs

Paul M. Thompson, CAE, MIRM
Florida Home Builders Association

The Florida Home Builders Association (FHBA), a trade organization serving home builders and professionals allied with the housing and construction industries in Florida, is pleased to have entered a dialogue with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs on ways to meet the needs of Florida’s growing population. FHBA is scheduled to be a co-sponsor of the Department’s upcoming Statewide Aging-in-Place Summit on May 11, 2012, at the Renaissance Senior Center in Orlando.

FHBA long ago embraced the unique role its members play in allowing seniors to safely, independently, and comfortably live in their homes longer.

Working through its affiliated National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), FHBA long ago embraced the unique role its members play in allowing seniors to safely, independently, and comfortably live in their homes longer.

In addition to supporting strong building codes and conducting extensive training to increase code compliance, FHBA promotes a professional designation known as Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS).

The designation is the result of the work of NAHB Remodelers® in conjunction with the NAHB Research, 50+ Housing Council, and AARP.

The three-day CAPS training program equips graduates with the technical, customer service, and marketing skills required to effectively service the burgeoning market for aging-in-place home modifications.

Demographic trends indicate that homeowners who plan to stay in their homes as they get older instead of making other housing accommodations are one of the fastest growing segments of the residential remodeling market. Many of these households can be expected to call on remodelers to adapt their homes to their changing needs and lifestyles in order to maintain their independence.

Projects for the aging-in-place remodeling segment range from installation of bath and shower grab bars and adjustment of countertop heights, to the creation of multi-functional first-floor master suites and the installation of private elevators. CAPS training participants learn the mechanics and nuances of effective assessment of clients’ needs and then integrate myriad considerations into unified, aesthetically pleasing, functional solutions.

AARP’s landmark study “Fixing to Stay” was a wake-up call to the residential remodeling industry. The results of the study sent two messages loud and clear:

- Americans prefer to remain in their homes as they mature, rather than seek assisted living and other arrangements, and
- Older consumers want a reliable means of identifying the professionals they can trust to remodel their homes.

Millions of baby boomers will turn 55 this year, and millions more will cross this significant threshold in the next 15 years. About 80 percent of all Americans age 55 and older currently own their own homes, making it the highest rate of homeownership of any age group in the country. Members of this population group also tend to be healthier and wealthier than previous generations of similar age, and expect their homes to reflect their active, independent, and upscale lifestyles.

"There's been a growing demand for remodeling as a means to enhance Americans' independence as they choose to remain in their homes into their retirement years," explained Leon Harper, who represented AARP on the task force that developed the CAPS program.

"While there's a growing need, there's also been a growing fear, as a result of the unfortunate work of a few unscrupulous contractors. This program represents a welcome opportunity for us to help our members identify the good guys, the professionals they can hire with confidence."

In Florida, over 150 builders and housing professionals have earned the CAPS designation. They can be contacted through the NAHB website (www.nahb.org), word search “CAPS Directory.”

CAPS is just one aspect of what the Florida Home Builders Association believes will be a productive partnership with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs to serve the needs of Florida’s seniors.

Florida HHF Program: Financial Assistance for Unemployed Homeowners

Taylore Maxey
Florida Housing Finance Corporation

In February 2010, U.S. Treasury (Treasury) created the “Housing Finance Agency (HFA) Innovation Fund for the Hardest-Hit Housing Markets” (HFA Hardest-Hit Fund). The funds were allocated to 18 states and the District of Columbia to assist in foreclosure prevention efforts. A total of $7.6 billion has been allotted for this fund; Florida’s total award amount is more than $1 billion.

Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) is the administrator of the Florida Hardest-Hit Fund (HHF) program for the state, and was directed by Treasury to use a portion of the funds for a targeted unemployment/underemployment program to provide temporary financial assistance to eligible homeowners.

These programs are as follows:

- **Unemployment Mortgage Assistance Program (UMAP)**—can provide up to six months of mortgage payments (with a cap of $12,000) paid directly to the mortgage lender to assist unemployed/underemployed borrowers with their first mortgage until they can resume full payments on their own.

- **Mortgage Loan Reinstatement Payment (MLRP) Program**—can be used to bring a delinquent mortgage current (up to $6,000) for a homeowner who has returned to work or recovered from underemployment/underemployment.

For additional information on the HHF program and to apply, visit www.FLHardestHitHelp.org or call 1-877-863-5244.
Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles: Don’t Fall for Internet Trickery

Henry Cabbage
Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles does not require customers to pay a surcharge for purchasing a driver license online, but some website owners do.

Internet users can get access to an amazing array of websites and information by typing in the name of such search engines as Yahoo.com, Google.com, Bing.com, or many others at the top of the home page. But beware: those who visit certain search engines and type in keywords, such as “Florida driver license” or “GoRenew,” and click on the Search button will discover a list of websites, and at the top of the list are sites that charge up to $50 to do nothing more than guide them to DHSMV’s websites.

Customers can renew licenses without paying a surcharge by visiting www.GoRenew.com on the Internet. DHSMV officials recommend typing “www.GoRenew.com” directly into the web address box at the top of the computer screen, rather than using search engines, such as Yahoo and Google, to type in the address.

Although the websites that charge the extra fee look quite official, they include a small disclaimer that says they are not affiliated with any government entity.

DHSMV officials caution drivers not to fall for the trick. To purchase a driver license online, deal directly with the DHSMV at www.GoRenew.com, or call (850) 617-2000 for more information.

TIMESHARE FRAUD

Liz Compton
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

In the current economic climate, many timeshare owners are being pushed to sell their properties as the maintenance and other fees associated with ownership are no longer affordable. Consumers, especially seniors, should be aware of common timeshare scams so they do not fall victim to unlawful or deceptive business practices.

Some businesses pose as “resellers” of timeshares, claiming to have a buyer for a timeshare and requiring an upfront fee under the guise that a sale is just days away.

Some “resellers” actually charge fees to advertise the timeshare for sale, but they offer no certainty that there will be a buyer and offer unrealistic time frames for the sale of the timeshare. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has received complaints from victims of these scams who have paid thousands of dollars to timeshare reseller businesses but never heard back from the business.

The Department will continue to investigate these reseller businesses and, if warranted, will take action against them. However, it can be difficult to recover the money that timeshare owners have lost.

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services urges Floridians to be wary of reseller businesses. It is important to learn more about a business and the risks involved before entering into an agreement. The old adage “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is” is especially appropriate in the case of timeshare scams. For more information, call 1-800-435-7352.

SUDOKU

There is only one valid solution to each Sudoku puzzle. When you start a game of Sudoku, some blocks will be pre-filled for you. You cannot change these numbers in the course of the game. Each column must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same column of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each row must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same row of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each block must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same block of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Good luck!

Solution found on page 23.
Sudoku © Kevin Stone [Protected Puzzle]
Sudoku Ref: 76211
Dear Deputy Joe:
Recently I have been receiving numerous telephone calls by individuals trying to sell me something. I no longer want these people to call me. What should I do?

Signed,
Fed Up

Dear Fed Up:
It’s illegal for a telemarketer to call you if you have asked not to be called. The federal government has created the National Do Not Call Registry. This registry should reduce the telemarketing calls you get at home. To register call 1-888-382-1222 from the phone you want registered or go online at www.donotcall.gov for more information.

Those of us who registered five years ago should re-register. There is a law being put into place for an automatic renewal, but to be safe we should all re-register. Most telephone companies have a program called Privacy Directory, and for a small monthly fee this service can be added to your telephone, making it even more difficult for the telemarketer to call you. And in some cases you can request the company to put you on its own Do Not Call List; the company must honor your request. Presently various phony charities are being set-up to push you into an immediate monetary gift. They also try to confuse you by using names that sound like well-known charitable organizations, and, yes, even names of law enforcement agencies as well as different branches of the military are being used.

1. It’s illegal for telemarketers to misrepresent any information, including facts about their goods or services, the earning potential (work at home scams), and other misleading information.

2. It’s illegal for telemarketers to withdraw money from your checking account without your express, verifiable authorization.

3. It’s illegal for the telemarketer to call you before 8:00 a.m. and after 9:00 p.m.

Remember when you send money to people you do not know personally or give personal or financial information to unknown callers, you increase your chances of becoming a victim of telemarketing fraud and identify theft.

The FBI has some warning signs of telemarketing fraud; here is what the telemarketer might tell you:

• “You’ve won a ‘free’ gift, vacation, or prize.” But you have to pay for “postage and handling” or other charges.

• “You must send money, give a credit card or bank account number, or have a check picked up by courier.”

If you hear these or similar lines from a telephone salesperson, you just hang-up your telephone.

Other Tips for Avoiding Telemarketing Fraud:

1. Don't buy from an unfamiliar company. Legitimate businesses understand that you want more information about their company and are happy to comply.

2. Always ask for and wait until you receive written material about any offer or charity.

3. If you get brochures about costly investments, ask someone whose financial advice you trust to review them.

4. Always check out unfamiliar companies with your local consumer protection agency, Better Business Bureau, state attorney general, the National Fraud Information Center, or other watchdog groups. Unfortunately, not all bad businesses can be identified through these organizations.

5. Always obtain a salesperson's name, business identity, telephone number, street address, mailing address, and business license number before you transact business. Some con artists give out false names, telephone numbers, addresses, and business license numbers. Verify the accuracy of these documents.

For more information on consumer issues, contact the Federal Trade Commission toll-free at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) or check its web page www.ftc.gov. I recommend that when a telemarketer contacts you, be suspicious. Once you get into a conversation with that person, you are opening the gates to future potential telemarketing scams. When you get involved with a telemarketer, you most likely will be put on a list, and you will be contacted by other telemarketers on a regular basis.


If you have a question for Deputy Joe Bowen, please send it by email to information@elderaffairs.org or by regular mail to Elder Update: Ask Deputy Joe, 4040 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000.

St. Johns County Sheriff’s Deputy Joe Bowen is a 46-year law enforcement veteran with experience in patrol, detective work, general investigations, juvenile offenses, sexual battery cases, undercover stings, bicycle patrol and crime prevention. In 2002, Deputy Bowen was certified by the Florida Attorney General’s Office as a Crime Prevention Practitioner. As the St. John’s County Sheriff’s Office Crime Prevention Officer, Deputy Bowen helps educate the community, especially seniors, about crime prevention techniques.
Kristin Roberts and Christina Goss  
Florida Department of Health

While the New Year and time for resolutions has passed, we would like to offer you 10 simple lifestyle changes as you approach a healthier and happier 2012.

1. **EAT FLORIDA FRESH.** Let Florida’s Department of Agriculture (DACS) help you Eat Florida Fresh all year long with its *Flavorful Seasons* cookbook. Not sure what Florida fruit or vegetable is in season? Use this tool to help you always stay fresh! Encourage healthy eating in your family by offering recipes and tips to stay on track with your nutrition. Create healthy eating habits and be a positive role model for your children or grandchildren in 2012.

2. **QUIT SMOKING.** Seven out of 10 adult smokers report that they want to quit completely. Last year, about half of them tried to quit, yet few (6.2 percent) were successful. As 2012 approaches, Tobacco Free Florida is encouraging smokers in Florida to use their free and convenient quitting resources to start the year smoke-free and increase their chances of staying smoke-free for good. Evidence-based cessation counseling and FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) provided by the program can double to triple your chances of successfully quitting. Call the toll-free Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW (1-877-822-6669) to speak with a trained and certified Quit Coach® who will help you assess your addiction and create a personalized quit plan.

3. **RESOLVE TO BE READY!** FEMA and Florida’s Division of Emergency Management (DEM) encourage you to make a change that is easy and can save lives. For 2012, Resolve to Be Ready for emergencies by taking simple steps to prepare your family, home, business, and community in the face of potential disaster. Get informed about the different types of emergencies that can happen in your area and the appropriate responses; make a family disaster plan; build an emergency kit; watch for DOE’s *Disaster Preparedness Guide* this May; and get involved in community preparedness to be ready for anything in 2012.

4. **GET BACK TO NATURE!** Participation in traditional outdoor activities is dwindling. Today’s children are increasingly disconnected from nature and devote nearly eight hours a day to entertainment media, while the number who spend time hunting and fishing continues to decline. Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network (FYCCN) is a statewide network that partners with schools, communities, youth organizations, volunteers, land owners, and donors, to enrich and expand participants’ understanding of conservation and natural Florida by providing outdoor experiences for youth. So get outside in 2012 with your children and grandchildren, and let one of the FYCCN centers show you how to enjoy Florida’s great outdoors.

5. **SPEND MORE TIME WITH SENIORS IN YOUR LIFE.** Florida’s 60-plus population of more than 4.45 million represents a quarter of the state’s population, but often there is a natural gap in understanding across different generations. This year, the DOEA encourages you to take the time to find connections through intergenerational activities and programs that teach youth and elders how to relate to each other. It can be as simple as reading to one another, baking together, going fishing, playing card games, or sharing music—anything that helps create opportunities for all age groups to spend time together in order to build and strengthen relationships.

6. **TRAVEL MORE—AND TRAVEL GREEN.** If you vow to see more of the world this year, make sure you are viewing it through green-colored glasses. Traveling green helps the environment around you and is relatively easy to accomplish. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) encourages travelers of the New Year to increase their environmental cognizance by staying at one of the 167,000 green hotel rooms in Florida, ranging from four-room properties to 5,500-room resorts, including all Disney resort properties. DEP’s Green Lodging program accounts for 681 designated facilities around the state, which have adopted numerous green practices that conserve energy, reduce water consumption, protect air quality, and reduce waste. See which Green Lodging facilities are near your area of travel. Bon voyage!

Make it a Healthy 2012

Appreciate what you have and remember to view health as wealth!
RESERVE TIME TO READ TO A YOUNG LOVED ONE. Reading is healthy—for the mind, soul, and imagination! Make an effort to mark allotted time each month to read to or with younger ones. Your quality reading time could have an overwhelming impact on their educational future. Research from the Florida Department of Education (DOE) shows that children who read just 20 minutes a day are more successful students and have a reduced chance of dropping out of school. In addition, one of the most consistent predictors of children’s academic achievement and social adjustment is their parents’ expectations of the child’s academic achievement. Venture out into different media—everything from magazines and newspapers to books and blogs counts!

PLAN AHEAD TO BOLSTER YOUR FUTURE. In tough economic times, pledging to secure a job by an outlined deadline can be challenging. This New Year, refocus your time on familiarizing yourself with the available resources that can help you for years to come. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) boasts a variety of go-tos for seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities, teachers, state government employees, and green-sector interests. Research job openings, create a great resume, apply for jobs, and research labor market trends in DEO’s Job Search Resources, and develop an awareness of the workforce world around you. Remember that small strides today can be instrumental in securing a brighter tomorrow.

VOLUNTEER IN YOUR COMMUNITY. Volunteering is a humble act of kindness that can have great magnitude on the community around you. Rather than viewing volunteerism as a good deed, it can be looked at as a way of life. Volunteering can be as simple as planting flowers at a neighbor’s house or as committed as visiting a foreign country to teach a language. No matter how you decide to volunteer—there are always people in need—and the world around you will benefit from your thoughtfulness. Approach this year with a fresh schedule of civic participation—Volunteer Florida is a great resource to help you get started. Locate a volunteer center, roll your sleeves up, and help your community!

WEAR YOUR SEATBELT. The most important way to ensure safety while driving is to wear a seatbelt all the time, every time. Fortunately, Floridians are making headway on incorporating seatbelt-wearing into their driving habits. The Florida Department of Transportation’s (DOT) newest Florida Safety Belt Use Final Report showed that the statewide seat belt use rate for Florida is 88.1 percent, its highest level to date. Although this number is promising, it illustrates that a percentage of residents still aren’t prioritizing their safety in the car. In fact, in 2010, Florida experienced 1,450 traffic deaths of drivers and passengers in safety belt equipped vehicles. The tragic note of this is that 54 percent, or 777, of these people killed were not wearing seat belts. Develop a routine when you drive, and adhere to it.

Don’t turn on your car until you have completely fastened your seatbelt, and remember that “sometimes” doesn’t equal safety. To make sure that you do buckle up and drive safely, make sure that you give yourself plenty of time to get to your destination. Buckle Up in 2012 – Every Time, Every Trip!

Appreciate what you have and remember to view health as wealth. Use 2012 as a time to not only improve upon your previous year, but to reflect on the positive adventures that make your life extraordinary. Resolve to tell yourself one thing you love about your life each day so that you develop an appreciation for the excitement that each new morning this year brings.
**SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders)** is an award-winning volunteer-based program at the Department of Elder Affairs that provides information and free, unbiased counseling for people on Medicare, their families, and their caregivers. Trained counselors provide personal and confidential assistance over the phone or at local counseling sites. To speak with a SHINE counselor, call our Elder Helpline toll-free at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).

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**ASK LYNNE:**

Your Questions Answered by a SHINE Counselor

Lynne Meagher is the Brevard County area coordinator and a volunteer trainer for the Department of Elder Affairs’ SHINE program. In 2006, Lynne was honored with the Department’s “Arnold Abrams Volunteer of the Year Award” for her work with Brevard County seniors.

To find out if you qualify for a SEP to enroll in Medicare Part B, consider the following question. Did you have health insurance through your own or your spouse’s current employer during this time? If so, you are eligible for a Special Enrollment Period and can enroll in Medicare without penalty at anytime while you have group health insurance and for eight months after you lose your health coverage or you or your spouse stops working.

If you do not have health coverage through your or your spouse’s employer, you must wait to enroll in Medicare Part B until the General Enrollment Period (GEP). If you enroll in Medicare Part B during this time, your Part B coverage will begin July 1, and you will have to pay a Part B premium penalty.

What is the Part B premium penalty? Beneficiaries who delay enrollment in Medicare Part B are assessed a late enrollment penalty on their Part B premium. The penalty is 10 percent Part B premium for each full year of delayed enrollment after the close of your Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) and in most cases is required to be paid for as long as the beneficiary remains covered under Part B. The IEP is the seven-month period comprising the three months before you turn 65, the month you turn 65, and ends three months after the month you turn 65. Anything less than 12 months is not counted toward your penalty. In your case, you turned 65 in June 2008, so your IEP ended September 30, 2008.

By the start of the 2010 General Enrollment Period (January 1–March 31), you would have delayed enrolling in Medicare Part B for one full year and three months. Most Medicare beneficiaries will pay $96.40 a month for Part B in 2010, so your monthly premium with the penalty would be 10 percent higher or $106.04. Again, you may have to pay this penalty for as long as you have Medicare, and the penalty will change as the Part B premium cost changes.

If you still need help understanding health plans, or would like to get a head start on comparing them, the SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) program can help (see contact information below).

**Dear Lynne:**

I have only worked for seven years which is not enough to qualify for free Part A through Medicare. My wife, however, has worked many more years than I have. Can I qualify for this free hospital insurance through her?

**Soon Sixty-Five**

**Dear Soon:**

If you did not work enough in your lifetime to get Social Security benefits, but your spouse did, you may be eligible for free Medicare Part A based on your spouse’s work history when you turn 65.

When you turn 65, you may be eligible for free Medicare Part A based on your spouse’s work history if:

- You are married and your spouse is eligible for Social Security benefits (either retirement or disability). In addition, you must have been married for at least one year before applying.
- You are divorced and your former spouse is eligible for Social Security benefits (either retirement or disability). In addition, you must have been married for at least 10 years, and you must be single.
- You are widowed and you were married for at least nine months before your spouse died. In addition, you must be single.

To date, the federal government does not recognize domestic partners (neither opposite gender nor same gender) as spouses. Therefore, you cannot be eligible for Medicare based on the work history of a domestic partner.

You also are not eligible for Medicare based on your spouse’s work history, if you develop a disability before reaching age 65.

If you have a question you would like the Ask Lynne column to answer, please email Lynne at information@elderaffairs.org or send mail to Elder Update: Ask Lynne, 4040 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000 and look for a response in one of the next issues. Volunteer counselors of the SHINE program are trained to assist you with questions like this. To contact a SHINE counselor for assistance with Medicare or other health insurance concerns immediately, call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).
QUESTIONS ARE THE ANSWER

Patty Shaffer
SHINE Program
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

“Oh no, I forgot to ask him about…” How many times have you thought of questions you should have asked your doctor, therapist, or clinician after the office visit? Or, perhaps you have a health condition pop up in between check-ups that you need to remember the next time you see your healthcare provider. Once we remember what we forgot, connecting back to those who can respond to our question may be nearly impossible because of their busy schedules. So, what if you had your thoughts and questions prepared ahead of time?

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality provides a consumer-friendly website (www.ahrq.gov) designed to help you in your search for answers to healthcare issues. Click on the “Questions Are the Answer” section in the right-hand column of the main page. Once there, you will find an assortment of options that provide you with information to consider before, during, and after your appointment, as well as brief patient and clinician videos and helpful tips.

Your health depends on good communication between you and your healthcare providers, and time is often limited during your appointment. Asking questions can help you feel better about your healthcare, assists you to take better care of yourself, and, on some occasions, may even save your life. Find your voice and speak up. Here are 10 questions to help get you started:

1. What is the test for?
2. How many times have you done this procedure?
3. When will I get the results?
4. Why do I need this treatment?
5. Are there any alternatives?
6. What are the possible complications?
7. Which hospital is best for my needs?
8. How do you spell the name of that drug?
9. Are there any side effects?
10. Will this medicine interact with medicines that I’m already taking?

The previous information may be helpful to you as an individual or in assisting you with the healthcare of a loved one. Are you one of the nearly 66 million Americans who care for an aging, seriously ill, or disabled family member or friend? If so, you know that a typical day can involve everything from preparing meals and running errands, to getting answers to questions about Medicare coverage, to searching for the best long-term care.

With this in mind, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) also created a resource on its new website called “Ask Medicare” (www.medicare.gov/caregivers), a one-stop resource for information and support just for caregivers like you. Ask Medicare can also be used by the many healthcare, faith-based, or community organizations and associations that support caregivers nationwide.

Although much of a SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) counselor’s time is devoted to helping individuals find the best health or prescription drug plan, or resolving a bill or appeal, even more important is the opportunity we have to educate our clients. The SHINE program is pleased to provide you with information about the “Questions Are the Answer” and “Ask Medicare” websites in hope that they will be trusted resources for you. If you have health insurance questions that SHINE may assist with, please feel free to contact a SHINE counselor by calling the Elder Helpline toll-free at 1-800-963-5337.

How many times have you thought of questions you should have asked your doctor, therapist, or clinician after the office visit?

Use the “Build Your Own Question List” feature to help you create a personal list of questions for use at your next healthcare visit.

It is also helpful to have support and historical information ready when attending an office visit such as:

• Ask someone to go to your appointment with you to help you understand and remember answers to your questions.
• Create a health history that includes your current conditions and past surgeries or illnesses (bring it to your appointment).
• Know your family’s health history, such as your parents’ health conditions.
• Bring all your medicines with you.
Florida SHIP Sails to Nassau County for Training

Andrea Gary
SHINE Program
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

With the hectic pace and challenges of the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period now behind them, the volunteer counselors who stand ready to help tens of thousands of Floridians understand their health coverage options recently met in Amelia Island to hone their skills and deepen their understanding of a constantly changing health care system. There to greet the illustrious SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) volunteers was Fernandina Beach Mayor, the Honorable Arlene Filkoff, who joined several other local and state officials in recognizing the contribution and impact of SHINE.

The three-day training offered SHINE volunteers tools and resources to address the myriad issues they face as health insurance counselors and volunteer leaders in their communities. The SHINE Annual Training Conference provided nearly 400 volunteers with the most up-to-date information on volunteer management, the role of the state’s 11 Aging Resource Centers, working with diverse populations, and the application of new technologies in counseling techniques.

Among those offering important information to volunteers at the conference was a variety of subject experts, including those from the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Florida Senior Medicare Patrol program, and even some of their very own volunteer colleagues.

The conference was about more than preparing for further counseling and program development. It also provided an opportunity to honor the work, commitment, and accomplishments of SHINE volunteers during a special recognition breakfast.

Featured during the breakfast was the announcement of the annual Harold Barnes and Arnie Abrams Award recipients. Candidates for the Harold Barnes Award, which commemorates volunteer leader and educator Harold Barnes, recognizes one volunteer leader among the roles of Area, Local, and Assistant Coordinator within the SHINE volunteer corps. Harold was known for his supreme commitment to leading the SHINE program to new heights, and for being a tireless advocate for Medicare beneficiaries. The honoree for the this award is one who displays outstanding leadership in service to SHINE clients and fellow SHINE volunteers.

The 2011 Harold Barnes Award recipient, Priscilla Davis, serves as the Local Volunteer Coordinator of 30 SHINE volunteers in Duval County. Among other feats, Priscilla was instrumental in establishing a valuable partnership with the Social Security Administration in Jacksonville, which resulted in the opening of a SHINE “window” where she works three days a week. Since the opening of the SHINE window, Priscilla has counseled over 400 clients.

The Arnie Abrams Award is an annual award given to one of the many outstanding SHINE volunteers in honor of long-time SHINE volunteer counselor and leader, Arnie Abrams. Arnie was known for his determination, tenacity, and sense of humor. Each year our statewide network of SHINE volunteers and staff nominate many deserving candidates for this award. This year the Arnie Abrams award was for the first time presented to a volunteer duo – Ocala volunteer leaders and husband-wife team, Drexel and Deanna Collins.

The Collinses have been counselors with SHINE in the Ocala area for the last seven years, where they have mentored and managed more than 25 volunteers and have established 11 counseling sites just in Marion County. A fellow volunteer said about the two, “Drexel and Deanna set the standards bar really high for all of us. Their leadership, friendship, and dedication give me the support and strength that I need.”

In addition to presenting the 2011 Harold Barnes and Arnie Abrams awards, all SHINE counselors were recognized for their many years of service, including those volunteers who reached or surpassed their 2-year, 5-year, 10-year, and 15-year milestones with the SHINE program.

“The breadth of commitment, compassion, and volunteerism of our entire statewide network of SHINE volunteers is what makes this program work,” SHINE Statewide Director Anne Rogers said of the recent opportunity to recognize counselors for their years of service. “We truly cannot serve Florida’s Medicare beneficiaries, families, and caregivers without them.”

The award for the Planning and Service Area (PSA) of the Year is determined using Florida’s National SHIP Performance data, which scores counties based on eight criteria. For their outstanding performance and commitment, the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc., received the 2011 SHINE PSA of the Year Award. The SHINE volunteers and Area Agency on Aging staff from this year’s PSA of the Year successfully made more than 12,200 contacts with Medicare beneficiaries, including more than 3,200 contacts with disabled beneficiaries. Additionally, the SHINE volunteers serving Pasco and Pinellas counties logged more than 7,500 counseling hours.

Through their daily activities conducting health insurance counseling sessions, identifying and reporting fraud and abuse, and providing educational presentations and trainings, the SHINE volunteers provide a noteworthy example of altruism and public service. The SHINE program congratulates its 2011 award recipients and extends a sincere thank you to its entire volunteer corps for their efforts to serve an ever-growing population of Medicare beneficiaries.
Rise and SHINE Florida Volunteers

Andrea Gary
SHINE Program
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

A SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) program volunteer counselor never knows from one day to the next what impact his or her efforts might have on the lives of their clients. Take it from 66-year-old SHINE volunteer Harolyn “Hallie” Devlin:

“It was a delightful surprise for the beneficiary and his wife to discover that they could save $10,693.22 per year,” Devlin humbly stated after assisting a couple who were just looking to save a few dollars per month on their new higher premium. Also delighted were Devlin’s colleagues, the SHINE volunteers of Collier County, who could record a new record high savings for a beneficiary. Previously, the volunteers had saved a beneficiary nearly $7,000.

SHINE Statewide Program Director Anne Rogers said she hopes the program can convince Floridians through outreach and public awareness campaigns that volunteering with SHINE has a positive impact on those it serves.

“Our goal is to increase volunteer participation from 450 to 600 or more. We understand the challenge this will present, but we are up to it if in the end more seniors make sound decisions about their healthcare,” Rogers said.

According to Volunteering in America, the federal government’s online resource for volunteerism data, Florida ranks 49 out of 50 states in volunteerism with just over 21 percent of residents donating their time. Research shows that several factors affecting the state correlate to the marked lower volunteer rates. Influences such as higher foreclosure, unemployment, and poverty rates have all contributed to a reduction in the overall propensity to volunteer.

However, Florida is home to nearly 4 million people age 65 and older or with a permanent disability who are covered by Medicare. Combine that number with the number of baby boomers turning 65 over the next several years, and it is evident that the need for the services provided by SHINE volunteers will continue to escalate. In 2011, SHINE volunteers served approximately 95,000 Medicare beneficiaries and received the acclaimed Davis Productivity Award for enhancing productivity in state government and improving the lives of Florida citizens.

SHINE and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs hope people will be spurred to volunteer when they learn about people like Hallie, who has already helped in such a great way. Training new volunteers and building the state’s volunteer base for this program are of utmost importance. The special volunteer recruitment activities to be highlighted in April 2012, corresponding with the recognition of National Volunteer Month, will aim to pique the interest of potential volunteers from diverse communities around the state.

“Our volunteers come from all walks of life,” says Rogers, “yet all of them have the desire and determination to empower other people to get the type of healthcare to which they are entitled.”

SHINE offers many opportunities for people interested in giving back to their communities. The program’s volunteers may perform a variety of functions including one-on-one counseling by phone or at designated sites in their local communities. Bilingual volunteers are especially needed to enable Medicare beneficiaries less proficient in English to benefit from SHINE services.

If you would like to help others like Hallie did, be on the lookout for SHINE recruitment events going on in your community to find out more about how you can help. But you don’t have to wait if you would like to help Florida seniors with their Medicare and other health insurance questions; please call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-963-5337. The program is always looking for dedicated volunteers who are committed to going above and beyond for the people they serve.

DASH Diet
(Continued from page 8)

include some physical exercise in your routine, and keep going.

Helpful resources on the internet:
For more information on the DASH diet, visit the following website: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf.

For more information on best diets, see http://health.usnews.com/best-diet/best-overall-diets.

For more on nutrient rich foods, visit http://www.nutrientrichfoods.org/index.html.

For more information on “MyPlate,” visit http://www.choosemyplate.gov.
For many of us, the New Year brought plans of eating better and exercising more. We pledged to get in shape, join a gym and actually go, or to work out at home. However, a few months later, the trips to the gym may have become less frequent – or maybe non-existent – and our diets have gone out the window.

But we don’t need the gym or fancy exercise equipment, because nature provides just what we need for a healthy lifestyle. Florida is home to 160 award-winning state parks and thousands of miles of greenways and trails that offer a variety of ways to exercise.

For example, there’s the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway – a 110-mile corridor that stretches from just south of Palatka on the St. Johns River across Florida to the Gulf of Mexico. You can enjoy all kinds of activities there, like hiking, biking, and horseback riding – all while observing an abundance of wildlife. Or Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park in Micanopy, where hikers, bikers, and equestrians can choose from eight trails or climb the 50-foot observation tower for a great cardio workout. With more 270 bird species identified there, this park is also a bird watchers’ paradise.

Looking to give your arms a workout? Florida’s state parks and trails are there to accommodate. Why not spend the day canoeing or kayaking in the quiet backwaters of Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park? At Lake Louisa State Park in Clermont, you might also choose to bring along a fishing pole and do some casting as you paddle the chain of lakes.

For the serious paddler, the state’s longest sea kayaking trail, the 1,515-mile Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail begins in the northern part of the state at Big Lagoon State Park near Pensacola and winds around the peninsula before heading up the east coast to its final destination, Fort Clinch State Park in Fernandina Beach. Recreational paddlers can choose to paddle any of the 26 individual portions of the trail.

Since we live in Florida and have the luxury of enjoying outdoor activities nearly 365 days a year, it doesn’t matter if you’ve faltered a bit on your New Year’s resolution to get in better shape. Our state parks, greenways, and trails are open every day, from dawn to dusk, and best of all, nature provides all the equipment you need and there’s no annual membership fees.

So why are you still sitting there? To learn more about Florida’s state parks, greenways, and trails, visit www.FloridaStateParks.Org or by calling (850) 245-2157.
Protecting Our Children and Grandchildren

Lauren Book
Lauren’s Kids Foundation

As an educator and a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, I am often asked by parents and grandparents, “What can we do to protect our children?” The answer is simple: Talk to them. Arm them with the tools they need to avoid the traps predators set. Don’t be so intimidated by the topic that you avoid it and leave your children or grandchildren unprotected. You are often the first line of defense against abuse.

Sexual predators lead children through a calculated grooming process. They ask children to withhold harmless information to see whether they can be trusted to keep more damning secrets. They provide attention and privileges that seem so beneficial; they win the favor of children and parents alike.

The fact is, childhood sexual abuse cuts across every demographic, all ethnic lines, and every income level. For six years, from age 11 to 17, I was sexually assaulted, daily, as a child of privilege behind the gates of an exclusive, protected community. My abuser was my nanny, my substitute parent, a person with unlimited access to me, while my parents were largely absent.

Fortunately, you can protect children by arming them with protective strategies without having a conversation that is explicitly sexual or scary. The greatest protection for children is an open and honest relationship with key adults in their lives where they feel empowered to go to them with anything. Equally important, is letting children know that their bodies are their own and they have a right to reject advances that make them feel uncomfortable.

Recently, I was teaching abuse prevention strategies to a kindergarten class, and I asked them whether they have the right to tell an adult that they don't want a hug or a kiss. I watched their intent little faces pondering the question, cautiously nodding yes and no and looking confused.

While it may be embarrassing when a child doesn’t want to give a hug to a visiting relative, it’s dangerous to send the message that adults have the right to force children to render physical forms of affection against their will or that children need to endure uncomfortable behaviors to be polite.

Children need to be told that safe secrets are those that eventually are told and that bring smiles to everyone's faces, such as planning a surprise party. Any other secrets are unsafe and they shouldn't be asked to keep them.

It's tempting to allow adults who take a special interest in our children to take them places without us, especially if they offer opportunities that we can't. But, we must keep up our guard on behalf of our children. Researchers with the Center for Behavioral Intervention say the odds are high that we all know one or two child molesters and don't even realize it, a fact supported by an FBI estimate that there is a sex offender living in every square mile of the U.S. Sadly, they are a part of our daily lives, and they seek out situations where they will have contact with children.

All children deserve to be empowered to listen to the little voice inside them that says, "Something here is not quite right." When that voice speaks, they have to speak, and a trusted adult must be ready to listen.

Today, take the opportunity to talk with your children or grandchildren about abuse and empower them to own their bodies. You truly are the first line of defense for them.

Lauren Book is author of It's OK to Tell and founder of the Lauren’s Kids foundation. Her sexual abuse prevention curriculum, Safer, Smarter Kids, is being implemented in Florida elementary schools in 2012. Lauren also conducts an annual awareness walk for 1,500 miles across the state of Florida to raise awareness about sexual abuse and help survivors tell their stories. To join Lauren on her annual walk or find out more information about her foundation and curriculum, visit laurenskids.org.
MEET MARY BRUELS, AN OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM VOLUNTEER

Erin Wilson
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

What do I look for when choosing a long-term care facility? My mother says she doesn’t like the food at the assisted living facility she’s in. Does she have a choice? Where can I go to get help? Mary Bruels, three-year veteran ombudsman volunteer of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program often hears questions like these while conducting facility visits or complaint investigations at assisted living facilities, nursing homes, or adult family-care homes.

Bruels is one of the 300-plus volunteers who make up the unique and mostly volunteer-run Ombudsman Program that works to protect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents living in long-term care facilities. Ombudsmen volunteers are trained and certified to take complaints from or on behalf of residents living in long-term care facilities. Volunteers also educate family, caregivers, residents, facility staff, and consumers about important rights given to residents upon entering a facility. Volunteers from the program’s 17 districts across Florida assist residents with questions about long-term care, resident rights, and what to look for when visiting and choosing a facility.

Choosing a long-term care facility like a nursing home, assisted living facility, or adult family-care home can be a daunting task. Knowing where to get help to navigate the roadways of long-term care can be more than a little confusing, and as baby boomers and their parents age, the discussion of long-term care is likely to arise.

After retiring as a manager and director of provider relations, Bruels was looking for a way to serve the community. Little did she know she was about to jump into the world of long-term care and become an expert on the subject. It all started when Bruels received a phone call from her sister.

“My sister saw a booth about the Ombudsman Program at a convention and recommended I check it out for volunteer opportunities. Later, I saw an advertisement in the newspaper and decided to call and get more information,” said Bruels, “and the rest is history.”

Bruels quickly rose into leadership positions within the program, serving as State Representative for Pinellas and Pasco District. As the State Representative, Bruels assisted in rolling issues and concerns up from the local level to the state level. Currently, Bruels serves as the District Chair for the Mid and South Pinellas District. As the District Chair, Bruels focuses on leading the council in cooperation with the district manager.

"Mary Bruels is an outstanding ombudsman with a thorough understanding of residents' rights," said former Mid and South Pinellas District Manager, Natalie Clanzy. “She has the knowledge and experience needed to be a strong advocate for residents. She conducts thorough investigations and follows through to ensure issues are resolved. Her leadership skills have been a great asset to residents, facilities, fellow ombudsmen, and the community.”

Considering the work Bruels does, it was no surprise that she inspired the “Ask the State Ombudsman” column. “Many people are unfamiliar with the Ombudsman Program and the services it provides to long-term care facility residents,” said Bruels.

With this column, Florida long-term care residents, elders, caregivers, and their families will have another avenue to get their long-term care concerns and questions answered from the state-level and learn more about the services provided by the Ombudsman Program.

If you would like to submit a question to the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Jim Crochet, about long-term care, please send it via email to ltcopinfomrer@elderaffairs.org or by regular mail to: Ask the State Ombudsman, at 4040 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000. Look for a response in future Elder Update issues.
Access to information regarding elder services and activities is available through the Elder Helpline Information and Referral service within each Florida county. For the hearing or speech impaired, all Elder Helplines can be accessed through the Florida Relay by simply dialing 711 from anywhere in the state.

### Florida Area Agencies on Aging (Counties Served)

**Northwest Florida**
- **Area Agency on Aging, Inc.**
  - 5090 Commerce Park Circle
  - Pensacola, FL 32505
  - 850-494-7101 • 1-866-531-8011
  - (Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties)
- **Area Agency on Aging for North Florida, Inc.**
  - 2414 Mahan Drive
  - Tallahassee, FL 32308
  - 850-488-0055 • 1-866-467-4624
  - (Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Levy, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington Counties)

**Mid-Florida Area Agency on Aging, Inc., dba Elder Options**
- 5700 S.W. 34th Street, Suite 222
- Gainesville, FL 32608
- 352-378-6649 • 1-800-262-2243
  - (Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Suwannee and Union Counties)

**Northeast Florida Area Agency on Aging, dba ElderSource**
- 4160 Woodcock Drive, 2nd Floor
- Jacksonville, FL 32207
- 904-391-6600 • 1-888-242-4464
  - (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns and Volusia Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.**
- 9887 4th Street North
- Suite 100
- St. Petersburg, FL 33702
- 727-570-9696
  - (Pasco and Pinellas Counties)

**West Central Florida**
- **Area Agency on Aging, Inc.**
  - 5905 Breckenridge Parkway, Suite F
  - Tampa, FL 33610-4239
  - 813-740-3888 • 1-800-336-2226
    - (Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee and Polk Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging of Central Florida, Inc., dba Senior Resource Alliance**
- 988 Woodcock Road, Suite 200
- Orlando, FL 32803
- 407-514-1800
  - (Brevard, Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida**
- 15301 N. Cleveland Avenue, Suite 1100
- North Fort Myers, FL 33903
- 239-652-6900
  - (Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/ Treasure Coast, Inc.**
- 4400 North Congress Avenue
- West Palm Beach, FL 33407
- 561-684-5885 • 1-866-684-5885
  - (Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties)

**Areawide Council on Aging of Broward County, Inc., Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County**
- 5300 Hiatus Road
- Sunrise, FL 33351
- 954-745-9567
  - (Broward County)

**Alliance for Aging, Inc.**
- 760 NW 107th Avenue, Suite 201
- Miami, FL 33172
- 305-670-6500
  - (Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties)

### Information and Referral 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337)

ElDER rESOUrcES

**FLORIDA ELDER HELPLINE DIRECTORY**

Please call the telephone number below in your area for information and referrals.

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### Elder Helpline Can Assist Non-English Speakers

By calling the Elder Helpline, Florida’s elders can access information and referral services through a translation service. Telephone interpreters provide live, on-the-line assistance by translating from English into as many as 148 different languages.

If you need information about, or referral to, a service provider outside Florida, call the national Eldercare Locater Service at 1-800-677-1116. An information specialist will assist you Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 11p.m. Eastern time. For people with Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDDs), all Elder Helplines, as well as the Eldercare Locator Service, can be accessed through Florida Relay Service at 1-800-965-8771.

Are you worried that an elder relative or friend may be the victim of abuse? You can report known or suspected cases of abuse by calling Florida’s Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).
### Consumer Demand for Universal Design Is Catching on in Florida

Gail Matillo  
*Communities for a Lifetime*  
*Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

Both universal design and home modifications can make your home more comfortable and convenient in many stages of life. Universal design features may add flexibility, simplicity, style, and individuality to the ways you use your home. And, they make your home safer to live in. It’s about creating a home “just for you,” regardless of your age or physical ability.

According to an AARP survey, 90 percent of those age 65 and older want to continue to live in their current homes and communities for as long as possible. It is easy to understand why. Your home, neighborhood, and community are reflections of who you are and hold cherished memories and life experiences. Enhancing your home’s usability will allow household members of all ages, sizes, and abilities to live more independently.

Universal design features can accommodate small and large changes, from telephones with volume controls, to grab bars in tub/shower units, to widening door entrances and hallways. Together with other strategies for independence, different accessible design elements may play an important role in enabling older persons to age in place.

By increasing consumer demand for universal design products, architects, builders, contractors, and remodelers will begin to use universal design features to modify existing homes and include features in new construction. Doing so will help to prevent accidents, increase comfort and safety, and enhance independence.

Universal design is catching on in Florida. Since 2002, Florida Housing, the State’s housing finance agency, has required accessibility and universal design features in the senior rental housing developments it funds. In 2010, Florida Housing funded the development of nearly 18,000 new construction and rehabbed rental units for family, elderly, and special needs households. In 2011, Florida Housing began an initiative to require and provide incentives to all affordable rental housing developers to incorporate a variety of accessibility and universal design features in all its rental housing developments, not just the rental housing specifically for senior citizens. It also incentivized the inclusion of additional universal design features in rental housing for seniors such as 40-inch hallways, pull-out kitchen cabinet drawers for pots and pans, and higher toilets for greater ease of use. The following are examples of accessibility and universal design incorporated in Florida Housing-funded rental housing units. These features not only assist older and disabled residents who live in rental apartments, duplexes, townhomes, and other types of dwelling units, but also make living easier for any household member:

- Thermostat placed at 48-inch maximum height
- Tight-napped Berber-type carpet or non-skid/non-glossy tile in all living areas or a combination of both
- 36-inch entrances on all exterior doors
- All wall electrical outlets placed between 18 and 48 inches above the floor
- Lever handles on all faucets and all faucets with anti-scald features
- Peephole at 58 inches on all exterior doors
- Toggle-type switches for each light and each fan throughout the unit
- Adjustable shelving in master bedroom closets (elderly developments)
- Lever-action handles on all doors in units and public areas
- Horizontal grab bars in place around each tub and/or shower
- Roll-out shelving or drawers in all bottom bathroom vanity cabinets
- Roll-out shelving or drawers in at least one bottom kitchen cabinet
- Roll-in showers (15 percent in new construction, 10 percent in rehab) (elderly developments)
- Primary entrance door threshold with no more than a half-inch rise
- Interior doorways with a clear opening of not less than 32 inches
- Clear floor space of 18 inches beside the door to provide space to move out of the way of the door’s swing when pulling it open
- Flush thresholds at all interior doorways
- All hallways at least 36-inches wide
- At least one bathroom on an accessible level of the unit with clear floor space at toilet of at least 48 inches x 36 inches with a minimum of 30 inches x 48 inches of clear floor space outside swing of door
- Clear floor space at sink of at least 30 x 48 inches in bathroom on an accessible level of the unit (sink and vanity cabinet must permit clear floor space)
- At least one four-plex electrical outlet in all bedrooms for electrical equipment such as computers, printers, radios, and medical/personal care equipment
- Electrically-wired doorbell accessible to a seated person at the entrance of unit, not more than 48 inches from finished floor of primary entry door
- Lighting inside and outside of primary entrance door
- All living spaces, including hallways, within the unit equipped with overhead lighting operated by a wall switch
- All cabinet drawer and door handles in the kitchen and bathroom looped or D-shaped

Other features in at least 15 percent of the new development’s units and as many in rehabilitation units as feasible:

- Hallways at least 40-inches wide
- Turning space in living room and one bedroom at least 60 inches (five feet) in diameter
- Height of toilet in an accessible bathroom 17 inches to 19 inches
- Kitchen sink knee clearance of at least 27-inches high and 30-inches wide

In the last few years, public acknowledgment and progress toward implementing universal design has become more accepted and widespread, but the potential benefits are still untapped. Universal design strives to integrate people with disabilities into the mainstream. There is still much to learn from rehabilitation technologists familiar with the ergonomics of disability and aging, but Florida is taking steps to create products and environments that are functional, safe, attractive, and marketable for a wide diversity of users.

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Please join us for the 1st Annual Statewide Aging in Place Summit on Friday, May 11th at the Renaissance Senior Center in Orlando. For more information, call 850-414-2165.
Seniors Volunteering Throughout Florida

Page Merkison
Communities for a Lifetime
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

April marks National Volunteer Month, as well as Florida’s Volunteer Recognition Month, with April 15-21 selected as National Volunteer Appreciation Week. This is the perfect time to express your appreciation to those who serve others and give of their time freely throughout the year. Volunteering not only benefits the neighborhoods and communities where the work is done, but it also benefits the persons providing the service. Studies reflect that by participating in volunteering activities, seniors experience better health, both mentally and physically, and have a more positive attitude toward aging.

April marks National Volunteer Month.

UnitedHealthcare and Volunteer Match identified some of the key health benefits of volunteering in a survey released in April 2010. According to the survey, 92 percent of volunteers feel that volunteering deepens their sense of purpose in life, while 73 percent of volunteers feel their stress levels were lowered by volunteering. Also, 97 percent of volunteers feel that, through volunteering, one can make a difference. Additionally, the survey results indicate that the overall health and well-being of individuals who volunteer on a regular basis tend to be much higher than those of individuals who volunteer sporadically or not at all. Volunteers are more active and have a much more positive outlook about themselves. Ninety-six percent of individuals who volunteer also feel that their efforts help create a stronger and healthier America.

The programs within the Department of Elder Affairs could not be as successful as they are today, were it not for the outstanding number of volunteers, particularly senior volunteers, who give of their time to assist the citizens of Florida throughout the year. Florida’s senior volunteers bring knowledge, commitment, and hope to their fellow citizens by building a stronger, more compassionate state for us all. Their volunteering also contributes to the improvement of their own health.

We truly appreciate the commitment and dedication of our volunteers, particularly our senior volunteers, as well as the valuable role they play. Thank you for your willingness to volunteer your services to the people of Florida and for your tireless work ethic and generosity of heart. You truly do make Florida a better place, and we hope you will continue to support and serve the elder citizens throughout the state.

The roles of volunteers throughout Florida vary from one opportunity to another. So go out and volunteer no matter how big or small the challenge, and encourage others from your communities to do the same. Remember, not only is volunteering beneficial for your health and overall well-being, but it also strengthens the neighborhoods, communities, and the state you serve … making your world a better place to live.

For more information on volunteer opportunities in Florida, please contact Zsa Zsa Ingram-Fitzpatrick at fitzpatrickzz@elderaffairs.org or 850-414-2086, or visit DOEa’s website at www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us.

Preparing for Tomorrow - Today

Can your community benefit from technical assistance and resources in housing…transportation…health and wellness…employment…volunteerism…or intergenerational programs?

Communities for a Lifetime helps Florida communities plan and implement locally defined initiatives that benefit all residents, from youthful to elder.

Join more than 100 communities statewide that:
• Plan for seniors who want to be actively engaged in their community
• Recognize that before long, one-third of Florida’s population will be age 60 or older
• Seek strategies to engage youth and seniors through multi-generational opportunities
• Understand the benefits seniors provide for overall future growth and development
• Seek strategies to develop additional local partnerships

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Senior Center Recognition

Think your senior center is simply the best? Tell us why. Elder Update is looking to recognize senior centers from across the state. Does your senior center have the coolest staff, the best programs, or the highest participation in your region? Mail us a short note about why your senior center stands above the rest (see the address on page 2). You may also email us at eueditor@elderaffairs.org with this information. For any photos submitted, please express rights to print the photo, as well as the names and places of the photographed.

River House Senior Center in St. Augustine
By Martha Amico and Sally Walton

River House, at the Council on Aging in St. Augustine, Florida, is a very magical place full of fun, laughter, and, most of all, love. The beautiful Matanzas River adds to its beauty and charm and gives it its name.

We, the seniors, gather for classes, friendship, talking, sharing our lives, and eating together. We are always looking forward to the excitement of dance classes, shows, and activities of all kinds.

We are still learning and loving life. The devoted staff is great, and the people who come through the doors of River House bring love, and make life “a bowl of cherries.” My friends at the River House and I say the same thing – our lives have never been happier.

Stop by and see for yourselves how great it is at River House. We’d love to show you around!

Davie Senior Center Is the Place to Have Fun
By Sarita Jennings

The minute I read about a senior center recognition, I immediately thought of all the activities the Town of Davie Florida Senior Center provides for our aging locals. Any day of the week you come through the doors of the center and meet the smiling staff at the front desk. They may be a small staff, but they pack a wallop! Pick your activity or activities in any month at the front desk and you are off on an adventure. For example, last November we had a Thanksgiving luncheon, a beach concert trip in the evening, a veterans’ breakfast, and excursions to Butterfly World and Christmas Las Olas.

Ongoing activities at the center include crafts and bingo and a meeting of the senior citizens’ advisory committee, which is sponsoring a drawing every month for a free activity trip, all expenses paid, for one lucky Davie resident.

Many join in for a party for anyone who reaches 100, so this is an incentive to live life large and strong. Throw in home-cooked meals by this small staff at all the luncheons, and they draw a crowd from neighboring towns. Seniors just want to have fun, and this is the place to do it!

For more information, contact the Davie Pine Island Park Multipurpose Center, 3801 S. Pine Island Road, Davie, FL 33328, 954-327-3940.

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To learn more about this exciting event, call: 850-414-2000 or TDD: 850-414-2001