Jeffrey S. Bragg
Secretary, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

I am pleased to share with you Governor Rick Scott’s 2017-18 “Fighting for Florida’s Future” Budget, which recommends $315.5 million for the Florida Department of Elder Affairs to reduce waitlists for frail elders in need of services, expand programs that protect impoverished elders needing guardianship, and assist individuals and families affected by Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias.

Governor Rick Scott said, “Florida has the highest percentage of residents age 65 and over, and as our elder population continues to grow, we must remain fully committed to ensuring they have the support they need to remain healthy, safe, and independent. We are proud that so many elders are choosing to call the Sunshine State their home, and we look forward to continuing to welcome more seniors to our great state.”

Governor Scott’s “Fighting for Florida’s Future” Budget includes:

- $3 million to provide services for additional elders with Alzheimer’s disease and relief for their caregivers through the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative (ADI);
- $4 million for home and community-based services for more seniors at risk for nursing home placement through the Community Care for the Elderly Program (CCE);
- $4.7 million to provide services for more of the frailest individuals through the Home Care for the Elderly Program (HCE);
- $750,000 for the Office of Public and Professional Guardianship to continue guardianship services for vulnerable Floridians; and
- $352,000 for the Aging and Disability Resource Centers to assess needs and provide services to elders across Florida.

Governor Scott continues to make clear his priorities for the essential services we provide to seniors across Florida. I applaud Governor Scott for his commitment to serving Florida’s seniors and thank him for his continued support of our Department. I am thrilled with the enormous good that this additional funding will do for our 5.2 million elders.

To view the Fighting for Florida’s Future Budget highlights, visit http://fightingforfloridasfuturebudget.com/web%20forms/OtherInfo/Reports/BudgetHighlights.pdf.
A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING AWAITS INSIDE

Rick Burnham  
Editor in Chief, Elder Update

Chances are, by the time you read this, 20 percent of 2017 will already be in the books. Time flies, does it not?

Despite that, many of the biggest events and observances for seniors living here in the Sunshine State are still to come, including several over the next couple of months. We present a few of them right here in this edition, beginning with, of course, Florida Senior Day 2017.

We’ll all meet March 29 on the back steps of the Old Capitol Building in Tallahassee to celebrate the lives of our seniors and to chat about issues that are central to the continued high quality of life our elders deserve. Staff and volunteers from DOEA and the United Way of Florida will roll out the proverbial red carpet, state officials will be on hand to discuss key issues and meet face to face with their constituents, entertainers will do what they do best, and our seniors will get the type of recognition they deserve. We tell you all about it with a number of stories on the pages that follow.

If Florida Senior Day was the only thing going on in the next couple of months, it would certainly be enough. It’s not though.

Did you know that National Volunteer Week is April 23-29? As the name suggests, this is a national observance, but it takes on special meaning here in Florida, where a higher percentage of seniors live than any other place in America. Seniors love to volunteer, and many people love to volunteer to assist seniors. To further illustrate this, we have put together a handful of stories about volunteers who strive to make the lives of our seniors better. You will find them on the pages that follow.

Know what else you will find? Details about Read Across America Day, which is March 2. You are probably thinking, “Hey, Rick, why is Read Across America Day important to seniors living in Florida?” Well, nobody knows more about great literature than our seniors, who grew up without smartphones and big screen TVs. Many spent their spare time reading Hemingway, Faulkner, and Fitzgerald, along with Cather, Steinbeck, and Zora Neale Hurston. They know great literature, and since many Florida seniors are directly responsible for raising their grandchildren, they also have a great opportunity to pass that wonderful passion along.

This is just our way of reminding them to sit down with a child and celebrate Read Across America Day.

We also remind you to file your taxes, and to be aware of the numerous tax schemes and scammers that are out there on the prowl. It is a highly unfortunate aspect of life, but a valid one nonetheless. Unscrupulous people are seemingly everywhere, and if you give them an inch toward taking away your precious resources, they will take a mile. Fortunately, there are talented and dedicated people on your side, working hard to keep you safe. Did you know that we have Elder Abuse Prevention Coordinators across the state? Our very own provides an article in this issue to help keep you aware.

There’s plenty more, of course, in this edition of the Elder Update. The fine folks at the Department of Health want you to know more about Colorectal Cancer, since March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. We also tell you about a Stuart man and his mission to shine the light on the Merchant Marine. Finally, a special project highlighting African Americans suffering from Alzheimer’s disease, along with their caregivers, is ongoing at Florida State University. We have all the details inside.

Thanks again for reading the Elder Update, and for choosing the Sunshine State as your home.

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 your donations will be used to ensure the continued production of Elder Update.

Gladys Reid  
Mary Caffareli

Martha C. Sonderegger  
Elizabeth Hadoulis

CORRECTION

On Page 11 of the November/December edition of Elder Update, a photo caption incorrectly identified Florida Senator Bill Montford as Bob Binger, the husband of Dorothy Binger. The staff of the Elder Update regrets the error and any discomfort it may have caused.
When thousands of seniors from around the Sunshine State converge on Tallahassee for Florida Senior Day 2017 on March 29, dozens of volunteers will be on hand to greet them and help make their experience a very rewarding one.

Three will play very specialized roles in that regard.

Tallahassee residents Lew Wilson, Nick Gandy, and Anna Johnson Riedel are set to return in 2017 for the big day, reprising their responsibilities as masters of ceremony and hosts of the Town Hall Meeting. Each expressed gratitude for the opportunity to once again contribute to Florida’s signature event for seniors living in the Sunshine State.

Riedel, a familiar face around Tallahassee because of her time as a co-anchor for WCTV, said as host of the Town Hall Meeting she gets to meet and talk with new friends from around the state. She added that they always arrive with plenty of enthusiasm for discussing the key issues facing our senior population.

“Our seniors are strong, smart, and energized and not afraid to ask the tough questions to the panel,” she said. “This is our time, and I love meeting and talking with new friends from around the state.”

While Anna’s smile and friendly persona help keep things on track during the Town Hall Meeting, it is Wilson’s keen wit and light-hearted approach that pace the general program. That his upbeat style and presence come naturally should surprise no one; Wilson has served as an emcee for various events — many of which have been senior-oriented — for more than 30 years.

Florida Senior Day, he said, is one of his personal favorites.

“Florida Senior Day brings together seniors from all over the state to the Florida State Capitol,” he said. “This plays a key role in showing the legislature why it is important not to forget about our aging population and bring about legislation that will help to improve their everyday lives.”

Besides lending their talents to FSD, Riedel and Wilson also formerly worked together on the local Tallahassee television program “Ageless in America,” which aired throughout 2015.

While Gandy’s name is nowhere to be found on the credits of that show, he is equally known to seniors around Florida — particularly those involved in sports. As a Director of Communications for the Florida Sports Foundation, his name can be found on numerous newspaper and magazine articles touting the achievements of Florida’s athletes — including those age 50 and above.

He has been associated with Florida Senior Day in one capacity or another since around 2003. He will serve as Wilson’s co-emcee for the day and looks forward to conversing with people from around the state.

The Town Hall Meeting will begin at 10 a.m. in Tallahassee City Hall, located on Adams Street, adjacent to the State Capitol Complex. Organizers stress that seating is somewhat limited at City Hall and suggest people arrive early if they would like to ensure attendance.

Even if they are unable to attend the Town Hall Meeting, Senior Day visitors will be able to monitor it via large-screen televisions set up in the Courtyard — between the old and new Capitol Buildings.

That is also where more than a dozen different entertainers will put on a show later in the day. This year’s list includes several groups of dancers from around the state, along with musicians, singers, and a performer who styles her show after those of Michael Jackson and Tina Turner.

As if that is not enough, exhibitors from all around the state will be on hand to offer information on a wide variety of subject matters, and experts will be available to provide memory screening, as well as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and education.

Newk’s Eatery will be on hand with hot meals, while Starbucks will have plenty of coffee available for those who might need a nudge.

Finally, staff and volunteers from the Department of Elder Affairs will be on hand to ensure visitors have all the information they need to take
Sharon Fox admits to having felt a bit isolated when she moved from Long Island to rural Crawfordville, Fla., a decade ago. Looking out over the family’s 31 acres and seeing only “rattlesnakes and cows,” she began to assess her long-term plans. What would she do with the rest of her life?

The key to Fox’s future would be found in her past, she explained. “When I was in the third grade, I wanted to join the band,” she said. “The instructor needed a saxophone and suggested I try it. I played from the fourth grade to the ninth grade.”

Fox was in her ‘50s when she walked into a Wakulla County Wal-Mart and purchased a handful of CDs featuring 1940s jazz musicians such as Glen Miller. She dusted off her saxophone and began to play along – slowly at first and eventually reaching a level at which she was comfortable performing for the general public.

Before long, Fox was volunteering to play for area audiences. She very quickly found the most rewarding to be those with seniors in attendance. She performed initially at a nursing home in Crawfordville, along with Tallahassee Memory Care. The experience, she said, was overwhelming.

Fox says she truly enjoys making a difference for those who listen to her music and experience the range of emotions that music can bring. “I can make people smile, be blessed, or cry just by doing something that is fun,” she said. “It doesn’t change the world, but maybe it brings light to someone for at least a minute.”

“I would go to a nursing home where someone is in a wheelchair and relatively noncommunicative,” she said. “I would start playing ‘40s jazz, and suddenly they would start mouthing the words or moving their hands. Someone would tell me ‘That is the song that was playing when I proposed to my wife.’ Things like that just move me and give me so much joy. It is amazing.”

Fox, who will be among the performers at this year’s Florida Senior Day, scheduled for March 29 at the State Capitol Complex, says she initially began playing gospel music selections because of the historical aspect associated with them. “These make me feel much bigger than myself,” she said. “Playing them makes me feel like I’m connecting with the thousands of people who have played these songs for centuries.”

She added that her rendition of “Amazing Grace” – her favorite – is a bit different. “It is the jazziest, rockiest arrangement you have ever heard.”

She loves to play “In The Mood,” and says “Ave Maria” gives her the chills. Some songs bring her to the brink of tears.

Fox says she truly enjoys making a difference for those who listen to her music and experience the range of emotions that music can bring.

When I began to consider what I could do with the rest of my life, I came to the conclusion that this is the one thing that I can do,” she said. “There are a lot of bad things in the world, and there is not much I can do about it. But I can be a bright spot in somebody’s life for just a moment or two, and that is why I enjoy it so much. It is just the best thing I have ever done.”

Sharon Fox is scheduled to perform at 11 a.m. for those who would like to hear her play.

“We speak often of the important roles our seniors have played in making Florida such a great place to live, work, and play,” the secretary said. “Florida Senior Day is our way of saying thanks for everything our seniors have done and continue to do. We hope to see a very large crowd at the State Capitol on March 29.”
Gov. Rick Scott announced during the “Fighting for Florida’s Future” Tax Cut Tour that he is proposing $618 million in tax cuts to help Florida families and small businesses, and ensure taxes are cut for Florida’s future generations. These tax cuts will encourage job creators to add more jobs and build opportunities now and in the future. Scott kicked off the “Fighting for Florida’s Future” Tax Cut Tour Jan. 25 in Jacksonville and subsequently made stops in Tampa, Fort Lauderdale, Riviera Beach, Orlando, and Fort Myers.

“While Florida’s economy has made great strides over the past six years, we have to continue to fight for Florida’s future and ensure our children and grandchildren have the opportunity to succeed in our great state,” Scott said. “We know one of the best ways to do that is to keep cutting taxes, and even though we have already cut more than $6.5 billion in taxes, we can do more. That is why I am fighting for Florida families and our future generations by recommending to cut taxes by $618 million this year.”

The reasoning behind the tax cuts is simple, Scott said.

“When we cut taxes, it helps businesses create jobs – jobs that ultimately help the poorest, most disadvantaged families in our state,” he said. “As I travel the state, I have been humbled by the stories of single parents, young students, new citizens, and countless other Floridians who have shared with me how much of a difference a job has made in their life and in the lives of their families. These incredible stories are why we are fighting to secure a bright future for Florida, and cutting taxes will help make our state the top location for job creators to invest in for generations to come. I made a promise to keep fighting for jobs until my very last day as Governor, and I ask the Legislature to join me in fighting for the future of our students, our small businesses, our veterans, and our families by cutting $618 million in taxes this year.”

Governor Scott’s “Fighting for Florida’s Future” tax cut package includes the following:

**DECREASING THE TAX ON BUSINESS RENTS BY $454 MILLION** Florida is the only state that has a tax on commercial leases which unfairly targets small businesses. Governor Scott is proposing to reduce the tax on commercial leases by 25 percent in 2018, saving Florida businesses $454 million a year.

**SALES TAX HOLIDAYS TO SAVE FAMILIES AND VETERANS $98 MILLION** Governor Scott is proposing four sales tax holidays which will save Florida families and veterans an estimated $98 million in the upcoming fiscal year. These sales tax holidays include:

- $72 million from a 10-day back-to-school sales tax holiday;
- $7 million from a nine-day disaster preparedness sales tax holiday;
- $18.4 million from a three-day veterans’ sales tax holiday; and
- $500,000 from a one-day camping and fishing sales tax holiday.

**CUTTING THE BUSINESS TAX TO SAVE JOB CREATORS $15 MILLION** Governor Scott is proposing to exempt 22.5 percent of businesses from having to pay income taxes by increasing the corporate tax exemption from $50,000 to $75,000. Eliminating this tax will provide annual savings of $15 million and help more small businesses hire additional workers. This proposal will eliminate these taxes for more than 80 percent of Florida’s businesses. This exemption was increased from $5,000 to $25,000 in 2011 and $50,000 in 2012.

**EXEMPTING SCHOOL BOOK FAIRS FROM THE SALES TAX TO SAVE FAMILIES AND STUDENTS $3 MILLION** Governor Scott is proposing to exempt the purchases of books at school book fairs from the sales tax, saving Florida families $3 million each year.
Gov. Rick Scott announced the reappointment of one person and the appointment of 11 others to the Department of Elder Affairs Advisory Council Jan. 4. The council now includes the following individuals:

DOTTIE PEOPLES, of Navarre, is the former executive director of the Northwest Florida Area Agency on Aging. She succeeds Neil Davis and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2017.

BEN GIRTMAN, 71, of Tallahassee, is a retired attorney and Navy captain. He succeeds Kathie Brown and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2017.

DREXEL COLLINS, 72, of Ocala, is a former inspector for Public Service Enterprise Group. He succeeds Allison Thall and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2017.

JANICE ANCRUM, 56, of Fernandina Beach, is the executive director of the Nassau County Council on Aging. She succeeds Mary Terbrueggen and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2019.

KERRY MARSALEK, of Clearwater, is the manager for the Clearwater Office on Aging. She succeeds Charles Robinson and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2017.

LARRY POWELL, 71, of Winter Haven, is a former program specialist for the Alzheimer’s Association, Florida Gulf Coast Chapter. He succeeds Ellen Campbell and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2019.

LANCE JARVIS, PhD, 73, of Melbourne, is a former professor for the University of Central Florida and the current area coordinator of SHINE. He succeeds Fran Carlin-Rogers and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2019.

KATHLEEN RICE, 66, of Sanibel, is the former president and chief operating officer of Summa Cuyahoga Falls Hospital. She succeeds Wendy Hayes and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2019.

KELLY WILSON, 52, of Royal Palm Beach, is a publisher at Fairfax Publishing. She succeeds Pat Sacco and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2019.

WILLIAM EDELSTEIN, 64, of Fort Lauderdale, is an administrator at Memorial Manor. He is reappointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2019.

EDELINE MONDESTIN, 62, of Miami, is the R.N. chief of the Miami-Dade Community Action and Human Services Department. She succeeds Olga Connor and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2019.

RICK DAVIS, 73, of North Miami Beach is a retired private investigator. He succeeds Major Stroupe and is appointed for a term that began Jan. 4 and ends Sept. 30, 2019.
Positive changes are in place, with more to come, for the office within the Department of Elder Affairs that regulates public and professional guardians for the state of Florida.

The implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 232 – signed into law by Gov. Rick Scott during the 2016 legislative session – changed the name of the office to the Office of Public and Professional Guardians (OPPG) and tasked it to adopt rules to establish standards of practice, receive and investigate complaints, establish procedures for disciplinary oversight, conduct hearings, impose specific penalties, and take administrative action. SB 232 also assigns the regulation of professional guardians to the OPPG. Professional guardians had not been previously regulated by the Department.

Passage of the bill came following a series of articles published by the Sarasota Herald Tribune in December 2014 that alleged abuses in guardianships in Florida.

DOEA initiated rulemaking for guardians in April 2016 to develop standards of practice, with the goal of providing the level of accountability for professional guardians set forth in SB 232, without creating unnecessary regulatory cost increases. The OPPG published its Notice of Change – available at [elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/oppg_rulemaking.php](http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/oppg_rulemaking.php) – in January. The rulemaking is now in its final phase and should be completed by early May.

Complaint tracking and investigations commenced on Oct. 1, 2016. The OPPG entered into a memorandum of understanding with six of Florida’s Court Clerks and Comptrollers’ Inspectors General offices. The six Clerk Inspectors General offices perform enhanced audits statewide for investigations of legally sufficient complaints against professional guardians, using professional investigation standards. For more information about filing a complaint, please refer to [elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/oppg_complaint.html](http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/oppg_complaint.html).

In January 2017, the OPPG published its Notice of Change, available at [elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/oppg_rulemaking.php](http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/oppg_rulemaking.php).

Those serving as guardians in Florida can expect continued refinement of the program that regulates their responsibilities as DOEA works to ensure that our senior population is taken care of in a manner that reflects its importance to our great state. For more information, you may also call 850-414-2000.
TALLAHASSEE
A Special Dementia-Caring Community

Gil Ziffer
Tallahassee City Commissioner

Tallahassee is a vibrant town, with ample offerings for art, culture, education, athletics, and more. Nestled in a canopy of trees in Florida’s Big Bend, it offers a quality of life that’s hard to match. Because of its unique amenities, more and more seniors are choosing to make Tallahassee their home. In fact, seniors continue to be Tallahassee’s fastest-growing segment of the population, which comes with an increased responsibility to provide the necessary services. It is a responsibility that impacts our entire community—from our local government to our neighborhoods, and one that my colleagues and I on the City Commission take very seriously.

According to the Alzheimer’s Association’s 2016 Report, Florida has the second highest incidence of Alzheimer’s disease in the nation, and the prevalence of dementia-related diseases only continues to grow.

As the capital city, Tallahassee is leading the state in developing ways to support our seniors, and we are committed to addressing some of the major challenges faced by our community’s aging population. It is this leadership and commitment that led to Tallahassee recently being named the first Dementia-Caring Community in Florida by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs as part of its Dementia Care and Cure Initiative that aims to create a more dementia-friendly community, promote better care for Floridians affected by dementia, and support research efforts to find a cure.

Those of us who have cared for or interacted with a person suffering from dementia know that a little education and an abundance of patience and understanding go a long way. That’s the approach the City of Tallahassee is taking to tackle this issue. Local first responders, including our police officers and firefighters, receive comprehensive training to gain a better understanding of dementia, including the symptoms, causes, and progressive stages. Similar training is also being provided to healthcare providers and family members also improved substantially.

African American Alzheimer’s Project Reports Positive Results

Tomeka Norton-Brown
Florida State University

African-American dementia caregivers who’ve participated in the African-American Alzheimer’s Caregiver Training and Support Project 2 (ACTS 2) over the past 18 months report that their stress has decreased and their spiritual and emotional support has improved greatly.

This free, five-year project is coordinated by Rob Glueckauf, Ph.D., faculty member in the Florida State University College of Medicine, and his health service team is seeking new caregiver participants and group facilitators.

“We have developed a skills-building program led by African-American facilitators who share a faith orientation and family values similar to those of caregivers, thus breaking down barriers to access—and using telephones so that the participants don’t have to travel for help,” said Tomeka Norton-Brown, ACTS 2 project coordinator.

ACTS 2 is currently recruiting African-American adults who provide direct care for a loved one with dementia at least six hours a week and have a strong need to reduce their own stress. They’re involved in the program for 12 to 14 weeks and receive up to $90 for their participation. Trained faith community workers, or “lay pastoral care facilitators,” help the caregivers with communicating effectively in stressful situations; dealing with their loved one’s difficult behaviors, wandering, and general safety; managing the stresses and worries of caregiving; and increasing their self-care, rest, and relaxation.

“We have developed a skills-building program led by African-American facilitators who share a faith orientation and family values similar to those of caregivers, thus breaking down barriers to access—and using telephones so that the participants don’t have to travel for help,” said Tomeka Norton-Brown, ACTS 2 Project coordinator.

ACTS 2 currently provides services to African-American caregivers residing in communities in North and North Central Florida.

“Over the next two years,” Glueckauf said, “we plan to expand farther south to Orlando and the Tampa Bay region. Another important goal is to expand our presence on the web to caregivers, the extended family, health-care professionals, and other interested individuals. Our newly modified website, www.ACTS2Project.org, serves as a vehicle for providing information about ACTS 2 and recruiting new caregivers and lay pastoral care facilitators.”

ACTS 2 receives financial support from Dave Groves, VALIC Inc., the Sandy Halperin Alzheimer’s Research Fund, the 11th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Florida State Primitive Baptist Convention.

“Alzheimer’s is an epidemic,” Glueckauf said, “and it disproportionately affects minorities. Providing skills and support to African-American dementia caregivers is what the ACTS 2 staff, lay pastoral care facilitators, and I feel led to do and is an important mission of the FSU College of Medicine.”

To register for skills training classes, get information, or make a donation, call (850) 274-4945 in Tallahassee or toll-free (866) 778-2724. You can also visit www.ACTS2Project.org.
ASK LANCE: Your Questions Answered by a SHINE Counselor

Is There a SHINE Volunteer in Your Future?

This column is dedicated to Joseph Wesley “Wes” Philp, a Brevard SHINE volunteer who unexpectedly passed away in December 2016. Wes exemplified the very best in volunteerism during his five years on the SHINE team. He was a patient, caring, knowledgeable, and conscientious counselor to hundreds of SHINE clients. He was also a superb mentor to new counselors, a fine colleague and friend to all Brevard SHINE counselors, and an innovator who constantly looked for ways to make SHINE more efficient and effective in serving clients. His passing leaves SHINE more efficient and effective and an innovator who was also a superb mentor to new counselors, a fine colleague and friend to all Brevard SHINE counselors, and an innovator who constantly looked for ways to make SHINE more efficient and effective in serving clients.

I am frequently asked (often by SHINE clients) questions like these:

- Are SHINE counselors already “experts” in Medicare matters when they become volunteer counselors?
- How do volunteer SHINE counselors learn so much about Medicare and Medicaid and their rules, plans, and options?
- How much time do they devote to counseling each month?
- How much training do they get?
- How does someone become a SHINE volunteer counselor?

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) counselors provide free, confidential, and unbiased counseling and information to Medicare beneficiaries and others. Clients are counseled, questions are answered, and problems are addressed concerning Medicare, Medicaid, Medicare Advantage Plans, Medicare Supplemental Insurance, prescription drug plans, and other health insurance issues.

SHINE is a program of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and works in partnership with 11 local Aging and Disability Resource Centers.

SHINE counselors find their work to be among the most rewarding volunteer experiences they have ever had. The problem-solving work is stimulating, challenging, and extremely gratifying. SHINE counselors have an impact on their clients’ lives, and clients are extremely grateful for the assistance. Medicare is complex, has numerous options, is constantly changing, and is difficult for many to understand. It is an extremely enjoyable experience to guide others through the Medicare “maze.”

Most volunteers know little about Medicare when they start their journey to become a SHINE counselor. SHINE’s excellent training program gives them the knowledge and tools needed to assist others. Prospective volunteers do, however, have the following strengths in common:

- Strong interest in helping seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries in their community;
- A customer service mindset including professionalism, tact, and courtesy in dealing with individuals served;
- Strong listening and comprehension skills; and
- Basic computer and internet skills.

SHINE counselors are expected to commit a minimum of 16 hours a month (more during Medicare’s seven-week annual Open Enrollment Period) counseling clients. They are also asked to make a two-year commitment to SHINE. Many counselors also serve at outreach events by giving presentations to community groups and/or by staffing a SHINE booth at health fairs or other local events.

The basic steps to becoming a SHINE volunteer counselor are as follows:

- Complete an application and an interview by one of the experienced Brevard counselors. The application is online at [www.floridashine.org](http://www.floridashine.org).
- Participate in SHINE orientation.
- Complete an online training program that immerses the prospective counselor in Medicare – how it works, how to enroll, the many options through which one may receive Medicare benefits, and the use of computer tools and resources used to assist clients in making Medicare choices. Also included is training that helps counselors assist low-income Medicare beneficiaries to apply for financial assistance programs.
- Take an electronic, open-book exam on the material covered in training.
- Complete fingerprinting, which includes an FBI background check (paid for by SHINE).
- Complete a minimum of six weekly sessions working alongside a seasoned mentor at a SHINE location, which helps to further develop the new counselor’s skills and provide them with actual counseling experience with guidance.

Upon successful completion of these steps, the new counselor is assigned to one of the Brevard SHINE locations.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11
HAS SUCCESSFUL AGING BEEN A SUCCESS?

Mindy Sollisch
Manager of the Office of Strategic Initiatives
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The concept of “successful aging” has been around for more than five decades. One definition, created in the late 1990s by researchers Rowe and Kahn, deemed a person to have successfully aged if the person (1) lived free of disability or disease; (2) had high cognitive and physical abilities; and (3) was interacting with others in meaningful ways.

A researcher at Virginia Tech recently set out to determine whether people were familiar with the concept of successful aging and whether many years of successful aging discourse had reduced ageism – defined simply as “discrimination against seniors.” Reducing ageism was the goal of Rowe and Kahn, which they thought was possible by eradicating the narrative of decline and burden, highlighting the positive aspects of aging, and emphasizing individuals’ ability to age successfully.

Ageism can take the form of negative beliefs and attitudes, which, some say, can be changed through education. Ageism may also include negative behaviors. An example would be retirement policies that include a mandatory retirement age. Another example is how the antiaging industry, estimated to be worth over $50 billion in 2009, depicts aging as something to be avoided. The researcher points out that negative attitudes and behaviors result in seniors being culturally devalued and suffering inequalities in distributions of authority, status, and income.

About the Study
The study included nine men and 10 women who were between the ages of 42 and 61 in 2006 and 2007. All study participants were white. Seventeen of the participants had at least some college with the other two individuals having completed high school. All 19 participants described their health as good to excellent without major disability.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews that covered a wide range of topics including their changing bodies, their ideas about age-appropriate behaviors and appearance, ageism, the meaning of and thoughts about middle age, knowledge and use of antiaging products and services, the meaning of successful aging, and their thoughts about growing older. The participants were also asked whether they felt they could control their aging and if they thought they should control their aging. The interviews lasted approximately two hours.

Findings
Responses by participants showed that they were aware of the concept of successful aging. Some phrases that were used to define successful aging were “healthy,” “active,” “optimistic,” “happy,” “maintaining their relationships with people,” and “curious.” Their definitions were compatible with the definition by Rowe and Kahn.

The participants also talked about the ways in which their bodies were changing. There was uncertainty about what they could control and what they could not. They felt aging could be controlled by exercising, not smoking or drinking heavily, getting enough sleep, and learning about nutrition and health. Many participants also mentioned the lack of control they had. For example, one participant said, “It doesn’t matter how much exercise you do, your body just looks more and more different as you age.” Genetics was also mentioned as a factor they could not control that can affect how successfully they age.

When talking about their bodies, emotions switched between acceptance, denial, and unhappiness. Stress and worry were also evident. Some respondents stated they had not done all they should have and appeared stressed by the bodily changes they were seeing. Concerns about physical and mental losses were also expressed. Worries about being alone were also mentioned. Respondents learned aging and having to give up things they liked to do. Concern about their changing physical appearance was expressed by the female participants who stated they had already begun using anti-aging cosmetics.

Participants also voiced uneasiness about aging in their communities. For example, one participant worried about becoming a victim when he became frailer. Another respondent expressed concern about becoming an annoyance when he was no longer able to get around as quickly. The respondents also said they felt they were beginning to be marginalized and becoming invisible at home and at work, possibly limiting their employment advancement opportunities.

Discussion
The concept of successful aging as defined by Rowe and Kahn was known to the participants of this study. And like Rowe and Kahn’s definition, the participants’ definition did not include frailty, disability, or social disengagement. The participants felt they maintained some control over how successfully they will age. The researcher points out that a result of believing that people have control over how successfully they age may be the justification of ageist attitudes for those who have not successfully aged.

The researcher concluded that successful aging was not successful in alleviating ageism among the respondents. The researcher states that a definition of successful aging that just dismantles myths or points to positive models of successful aging does not address the sources of ageism. A definition of successful aging that accepts the reality that bodies will change, social circles will contract, and life course changes may result in fewer roles would be a positive step. And even better would be a definition that values them.

Limitations
The sample in this study was small and, therefore, the findings of this study are not generalizable. The sample was also not diverse by race and ethnicity; different opinions may exist among racial and ethnic minority groups.

March Is National Nutrition Month

Ginnifer Barber RD, LDN
Nutrition Program Manager
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics tells us that “National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. In addition, National Nutrition Month® promotes the Academy and its members to the public and the media as the most valuable and credible source of timely, scientifically-based food and nutrition information.”

This year the theme is “putting your best fork forward.” To me that means choosing to have good nutrition. Many people think that good nutrition means avoiding and depriving yourself of food; however, good nutrition is quite the opposite. The goal of good nutrition is to provide your body with all the essential nutrients it needs for optimal performance. In order to meet your nutritional needs, it is vital to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, whole grains, and healthy fats like what is found in nuts and fish. When you fuel your body with what it needs first, you can then give into the wants only after the needs are met. If we develop a sense that we are adding to our daily diet versus taking away from it, that can help us create a lifestyle change versus a quick fix. Good nutrition needs to be sustainable in our lives, not a fleeting resolution. We can choose to embrace what food can add to our lives in contrast to what foods need to be taken out of our lives. Let’s all put our best fork forward and remember that every single good food choice is just that, a good food choice!

If you actually focus on meeting your nutrient needs as defined by USDA’s “my plate” you may find your self feeling quite full and satisfied. The average adult needs 1.5-2 cups of fruit every day, 2.5-3 cups of vegetables every day, 6-8 ounces of grains with at least half of them being whole grains every day, 3 cups of low fat dairy, 5-6 ounces of protein, and 5-6 teaspoons of healthy fat every day. Try to make a conscious effort to meet those needs first, before you give into less-nutritive choices.

I like to think of food just like I do money in a bank account. If I have a set amount of money to spend each month, I need to pay my bills first then use what is left on things that are wants instead of needs. The same principle applies to food. If you fuel your body with what it needs first, you can then give into the wants only after the needs are met. If we develop a sense that we are adding to our daily diet versus taking away from it, that can help us create a lifestyle change versus a quick fix. Good nutrition needs to be sustainable in our lives, not a fleeting resolution to meet a certain number on the scale or fit into a smaller pant size.

We can choose to embrace what food can add to our lives in contrast to what foods need to be taken out of our lives. Let’s all put our best fork forward and remember that every single good food choice is just that, a good food choice!

and will normally work three to four hours at a scheduled time each week.

SHINE training is ongoing throughout the year. Conference calls, webinars, handouts, emails, quarterly training meetings, and working with other experienced counselors are some of the ways training is continuously updated and expanded. There is a strong feeling of pride, fellowship, and loyalty among SHINE counselors.

If you are interested in considering this volunteer opportunity, we welcome the opportunity to speak with you. Please call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337), and let us know that you are interested in learning more about volunteering as a SHINE counselor. We will be happy to answer your questions and give you all of the information you need. We look forward to hearing from you. There may be a SHINE volunteer counselor in your future!

March Is National Nutrition Month

COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING SAVES LIVES

Heather Kelleher
Florida Department of Health

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, which is a time set aside every year to raise awareness about colorectal cancer. This month is also a great reminder that adults over the age of 50 should have regular screenings for colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer related deaths among men and women in the United States, yet it can be prevented or detected at an early stage. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regular screening is the best way to find precancerous polyps, or abnormal growths in the colon or rectum, and screening also helps doctors find colorectal cancer in its early stages when it is easiest to treat.

The CDC estimates that more than 40 percent of adults age 50 to 75 are not up to date on their colorectal cancer screening. There are several types of screening tests that can identify polyps or colorectal cancer.

Some screening test options are:

• Fecal Immunochemical Test or FIT (testing for blood in the stool) every year.
• Sigmoidoscopy (a procedure to examine the lower portion of the colon) every five years with FIT every three years.
• Colonoscopy (a procedure to examine the entire colon) every 10 years.

You should talk to your doctor to choose the test that is right for you.

Colorectal cancer is most common in people who are over the age of 50, and you might be at a higher risk if you have a family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps, if you have an inflammatory bowel disease like Crohn’s disease, or if you suffer from certain genetic conditions like familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP).

There are certain lifestyle changes you can make to reduce your risk. Maintaining a healthy diet that is high in fiber and low in fat, exercising for at least 20 minutes three to four times a week, and avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption are great ways to reduce your risk of many chronic diseases, including colorectal cancer. However, regular screening still remains the best way to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer.

To learn more about colorectal cancer and the importance of screening, call the Florida Department of Health’s Colorectal Cancer Control Program at (850) 245-4330 or visit FloridaHealth.gov/CRC or the CDC at CDC.gov/cancer/colorectal/index.htm.
Woodlands, prairies, wetlands, caverns, bluffs, lakes, beaches, rivers, and springs. Florida State Parks are more than places to protect our natural landscapes and the species within. Florida State Parks are also places that protect the story of our past. Part of that past includes the birth of our state park system – the land, the layout, and the recreational facilities created during the tough times of an economic depression.

Developed under the New Deal Era of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Civilian Conservation Corps provided jobs for young men during the Great Depression. The program implemented one of the largest natural and cultural resource conservation efforts in U.S. history.

In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps was the first New Deal agency to begin operations in Florida. From 1933 to 1942, the CCC and the Works Progress Administration programs constructed an impressive collection of facilities throughout Florida, including nine state parks.

Two of those state parks – Torreya and Florida Caverns – are within day-trip distance of Tallahassee. Torreya is one of the original Florida State Parks. The site was selected to be a park not only because of its steep forested ravines, rare Torreya tree, and scenic bluffs overlooking the Apalachicola River, but also because it possessed significant historical associations, including six Confederate gun pits along Neal’s Bluff and an antebellum cotton warehouse at Rock Bluff Landing. The CCC quickly added another historic resource to the park – the Gregory House. The historic plantation mansion was located across the Apalachicola River from the park and was dismantled, hauled across the river, and reconstructed at its current location. Tours of the historic home are available.

At Florida Caverns State Park, the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration initiated park development, which included the preparation of the tour cave. During the 1930s, workers removed mud, broadened passages, added headroom, and installed lighting. The CCC also constructed the visitor center. Built with stone masonry on concrete foundations, the structure is still in use and features exhibits where visitors can learn about the cave system and CCC history.

O’Leno State Park, along the banks of the Santa Fe River, is located near High Springs. The site of the park was initially a Florida Forest Service Camp used for forestry training and education. Between 1935 and 1936, the CCC cleared land, built roads and trails, and constructed the dining hall, pavilion, museum, and suspension bridge. In October 1940, the camp was transferred to the Florida Park Service.

Ravine Gardens State Park, a 59-acre park located in Palatka, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Works Progress Administration constructed cypress buildings, rock gardens, and fieldstone terraces. Near the park entrance stands a 64-foot obelisk dedicated to Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Highlands Hammock State Park, a 9,000-acre New Deal era park, is located four miles west of Sebring. Local citizens acquired the property in 1931 for environmental preservation. It became one of the four original Florida State Parks when the state park system was created in 1935. Housed in a CCC-built structure, the Florida Civilian Conservation Corps Museum provides an opportunity to learn more about the CCC and its camps.

Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park, located in Clay County near Keystone Heights, covers about 2,000 acres. During the 1930s, seasoned craftsmen and young men from the CCC planted trees, cleared
areas for campsites, and built roads. Nineteen of the 23 original buildings constructed by the CCC remain. These buildings include cabins, a picnic pavilion, a blacksmith forge, support structures, and the ranger station at the park entrance.

Fort Clinch State Park benefitted from the New Deal Era’s Civilian Conservation Corps. Projects included new construction, restoration of the fort and shoreline stabilization. CCC Company 1420 worked at Fort Clinch State Park constructing the museum, campground, and park roads as well as beginning the restoration of historic Fort Clinch. The men removed more than 10,000 cubic yards of sand and debris from the fort – by shovel and wheelbarrow.

Opened in 1938, Hillsborough River State Park is one of Florida’s first state parks. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps established the area surrounding the river rapids as a public park. Many park structures and the suspension bridge are examples of the CCC style of rustic architecture, designed to be in harmony with the natural environment.

Located nine miles east of Sarasota, Myakka River State Park, one of the oldest and largest state parks, covers more than 37,000 acres. CCC workers were transferred to Sarasota County from Green Cove Springs to establish the park in 1934. Most of the park’s rustic structures were built of natural materials, including limestone, cabbage palm logs, and timber from the surrounding area. The palm log cabins reflect the CCC philosophy that park structures should blend with the environment.

From a few state parks constructed during our Great Depression has grown an award-winning Florida Park Service that manages 174 state parks, trails, and historic sites. Florida’s state parks hold the memories of our past cultures, preserve our native landscapes, and protect natural and cultural assets for all time.

Learn more about our past, how state parks protect our future, and how you can enjoy the present state park system by calling (850) 245-2157 or visiting FloridaStateParks.org.
Editor’s Note: The following is the first of a three-part series by “Authentic Florida,” a travel blog detailing the simple pleasures of Florida living.

A Fresh Start With Five Authentic Florida Adventures for 2017

Robin Draper
Authentic Florida

As we turn the page of a fresh, new calendar, we have a chance to move forward with new goals for a happier and healthier year and to find more physical and spiritual renewal. At Authentic Florida, that begins with discovering the simple pleasures for Florida living – especially along the roads less traveled.

Get to Know the “Real” Everglades
South Florida’s Everglades National Park and the Big Cypress National Preserve are two of the state’s most beloved natural resources. For those who want to truly experience these stunning treasures, try an immersive eco-tour. Begin with a guided kayak trip through the state’s most extensive mangrove tunnels, experiencing a magical forest, birds, and wildlife from the seat of a kayak. Next, take a Big Cypress Swamp Walk where you’ll trek through slow moving fresh water shrouded by dense hammocks of Bald Cypress within a pristine, quiet world of tropical bromeliads, orchids, and blue skies above. And finally, board a guided boat ride through the 10,000 Islands, a stunning wilderness in a protected national wildlife refuge.

Take a Jungle Cruise on the Silver Springs River
Located in Central Florida, Ocala is an adventurer’s paradise and home to one of Florida’s oldest tourist attractions, Silver Springs State Park. Enjoy a nostalgic tour of “old Florida” in a vintage glass bottom boat on the Silver River as boat captains tout the history and ecological features while peering down at the bubbly springs and wonders below. Those who want to be on their own should consider a kayak paddle of the Ft. King Waterway by taking the two-mile loop over the springs and past the Ross Allen Island and remnants of a bygone roadside attraction that featured Ft. King and a Florida Cracker village. Admire the alligators, otters, manatees, and even the non-native monkeys brought in years ago that still swing from tree to tree. For a guided eco tour, go to Silver Springs Kayaking.

Beach It at Anastasia State Park
Whether planning a romantic getaway or a seaside vacation, there are plenty of things for you to do and see in the charming old town of St. Augustine on Florida’s northeast coast. The “oldest U.S. city” draws most travelers because of its rich history, but after visiting St. Augustine’s attractions, you may be ready for a walk on the beach, and the local Anastasia State Park has one of the best. Miles of gorgeous, wide-open beaches are accessed by long, wooden walkways across towering sand dunes. It’s a perfect and picturesque place to take in a view of the vast blue Atlantic as you breathe in the fresh salt air.

Climb a Fort in the Dry Tortugas
Seventy miles west of the Florida Keys is a cluster of small coral islands called the Dry Tortugas. Surrounded by clear turquoise water and rimmed with crystalline sandy beaches, these islands were discovered by explorer Ponce de Leon in 1513 who found the area filled with sea turtles, thus calling it Las Tortugas (The Turtles). Today, this rare combination of marine wildlife refuge, national park, and 19th century historical fort in a tropical, exotic setting make it a trip you don’t want to miss while visiting the Florida Keys. Surrounded by a moat, the fort was home to thousands of soldiers and civilians who lived in the remote setting.

Observe Manatees in Citrus County
North of Tampa and west of Orlando, Citrus County is known as the Manatee Capital of the World. More than 1,000 of these gentle mammals congregate near the springs, especially during the winter as they seek the warmer spring water when Gulf water temperatures dip below 68 degrees. Crystal River Kings Bay draws the largest aggregation of manatees, especially at the Kings Spring known as the Key Hole; or Hunter Springs, a local county park surrounded by clear turquoise water and rimmed with crystalline sandy beaches. Crystal River offers an underwater observatory. The emerald blue-green Three Sisters Springs has surrounding boardwalks for viewing manatees in crystal water and the Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park offers an underwater observatory.

Florida native Robin Draper is a columnist, author, and owner of the award-winning “Blog of the Year” and “Best Travel Blog” website, AuthenticFlorida.com. For more travel updates, visit the website and sign up for the free weekly e-newsletter.
Volunteers Remain Vital to Florida’s Seniors

Jeffrey S. Bragg  
Secretary, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

In the aging network, we have the immense responsibility of caring for the nearly 5.2 million elders in Florida. Our population in Florida is continuing to age, and we must work together as a network to ensure that they are getting the best from us. Many of our programs rely on the help of volunteers; they are truly the heartbeat of our work.

Our official job descriptions here at DOEA are, of course, senior-related, so it should come as no surprise that our days are filled with activities in support of that group. Many here take it a step further though, donating time at the end of the day or on the weekends to help our elders out. I see it on a regular basis – their compassion and generosity never cease to amaze. Our people climb into their own cars and trucks to deliver Meals on Wheels each week, a two-hour trip that takes them through Tallahassee and surrounding Leon County. You can also routinely find them participating in special events around the state – such as 5K walks and runs – that are specifically designed to financially benefit our seniors.

Our Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, charged with advocating on behalf of seniors in long-term care facilities, is staffed all across the state with volunteers. These are people who dedicate their time and efforts to becoming a voice for those who oftentimes have no voice at all. They work to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents in long-term care facilities to ensure that their health, safety, well-being, and rights are protected and that they enjoy a high quality of life.

Similarly, our SHINE Program (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) serves as a voice of reason – an island in the stream – for those trying to make sense out of the Medicare and health insurance world. They provide free, unbiased, and confidential Medicare and health insurance counseling for Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers across Florida. In a sea of regulations and red tape, they often make all the difference in the world for our senior population.

The folks in LTCOP and SHINE are just a tip of the iceberg of our volunteer efforts at DOEA. Many more people in other offices give freely of themselves in support of our elders. It is important to recognize their efforts not only during National Volunteer Week (April 23-29), but throughout the rest of the year as well.

If you’d like to make a difference by volunteering in one of these programs, contact SHINE at 1-800-96-ELDER and ask to speak to a SHINE counselor or visit FloridaSHINE.org. For the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, please call 1-888-831-0404. Consider becoming a volunteer today. We promise you won’t regret it.

Celebrate Our Senior Center Volunteers

Selena Coles  
Office of Communications  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

April is National Volunteer Month; surprisingly, not many people know that. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we honor the people, especially our seniors, who give back to their community.

Most people think of volunteering as a school-instructed course, similar to community service. However, volunteerism is a big “to do” and is encouraged after retirement. Besides the heartfelt reward of helping others, volunteerism after retirement is a great way to stay active – physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally.

One of the greatest aspects of volunteerism is that there are several different ways to do it. Having the ability to maintain your independence and craft a meaningful and fulfilling life after retirement is always welcomed at local senior centers.

Older adults (age 55+) are specifically encouraged to lend their interest and skills to center activities. Their time and talents are matched with opportunities to serve in ways such as greeters, customer service, teaching classes, serving lunch, helping with data entry, administrative duties, providing health screenings, and many more. The hours contributed by volunteers have surprisingly high monetary values.

For example, the Friendship Centers, a non-profit network of centers in Southwest Florida with services in Sarasota, Charlotte, DeSoto, Lee, and Collier counties, estimates that in one year more than 1,000 volunteers provided nearly 66,000 hours of service with an in-kind value of $3.5 million. Since it started in 1973, through December 2015, volunteers have contributed time valued at more than $40,926,367.

To find a senior center near you, please visit elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/seniorcenter/sc.pdf.
2015-2016 ARNIE ABRAMS AWARD
SHINE Volunteer of the Year

Mica Bell
SHINE Program
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The SHINE Program team would like to recognize the winner of the 2015-1016 Arnie Abrams Volunteer of the Year Award, SHINE volunteer counselor Barbara Kirksey.

TENURE
Since she began volunteering with the SHINE Program in 2011, Barbara’s efforts as a SHINE volunteer have brought considerable recognition for commitment and advocacy on behalf of SHINE, the Department of Elder Affairs, the Area Agency on Aging for North Florida, and to elders in Florida.

Barbara has counseled over 2,200 clients in PSA 2’s 14-county area since she began counseling, attended over 80 outreach venues, and given many Medicare 101 presentations to area organizations and senior groups and continues twice a week as an onsite counselor with the Jefferson County Senior Center. She also mentors new incoming SHINE volunteers, and her input has become an important element in SHINE volunteer meetings with PSA 2.

EFFORT
A retired registered nurse by profession with a masters in nursing and minor in gerontology from Vanderbilt University, Barbara’s wealth of knowledge and professionalism are put to work for senior health issues on a daily basis. She exhibits a great amount of compassion and empathy for those who need the extra time to grasp the scope of Medicare and the part it plays in their lives. She recalls the challenges her own loved ones faced when navigating the Medicare system and tries to help others avoid the pitfalls.

Barbara stepped into her role as a SHINE counselor with reverence for every client she counsels and makes sure they understand her role and the level of service she can provide for them as a SHINE representative. She spends countless hours with clients, either in person or on the phone, providing assistance to those needing help with an appeal to Medicare, medical equipment, hospice care information, prescriptions, and open enrollment comparisons. She strives to be sure a client understands all options available. Barbara also works tirelessly assisting clients with application for financial assistance programs such as Extra Help with prescription drugs and Medicare Savings Programs that help pay out-of-pocket expenses associated with Original Medicare such as premiums, deductibles, and coinsurances.

Barbara always excels on behalf of SHINE to make sure the client has been afforded the best possible service.

Attending all local SHINE volunteer meetings and trainings offered in the last 4.5 years, Barbara continues to pursue her knowledge of Medicare, working hand-in-hand with the local agency and the Department to stay up to date on any changes that may affect beneficiaries.

All of these efforts and more were recognized this year by the Area Agency on Aging of North Florida, which awarded Barbara the “AL Sulkes SHINE Award for Service.”

COUNSELING HISTORY
Barbara began her counseling as an on-site counselor with the Area Agency on Aging in 2011, driving 25 miles from her home, twice a week to counsel clients between five to six hours a day or whenever needed for over three years. During Medicare Open Enrollment, Barbara came into the agency sometimes three or four days in a row and traveled to numerous outreach events in other counties, always willing to fill in when other volunteer counselors could not make an event. Barbara was always conscientious about entering her clients and outreach events into the SHIPtalk data entry system on time, numbering over 80 some events over four-and-a-half years with the agency.

Barbara has always been very conscious of her time that she spends on behalf of her clients and makes detailed notes in order to assure the client that she is there in spirit and in detail. Her many attributes extend from establishing a true working partnership with the Jefferson County Senior Center near her home, where she has set up the first site-based SHINE counseling office in which she counsels clients two days a week from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. She assists clients with Social Security issues pertaining to Medicare coverage and has gone several times with elderly clients to the local Social Security office when needed to make sure information and details are clearly understood by the client.

She also stepped in as a SHINE representative for another SHINE counselor who needed hospice care and information and Medicare assistance in his final hours, as well as support for his spouse, who was also his caregiver and needed a shoulder to lean on. She has traveled to other nearby counties in our PSA to meet clients either at local senior centers or libraries or even to their homes, if the client was bedridden or it was a requested by a caregiver or case manager to meet with them concerning their Medicare issues.

When DOEAg made a media request for a SHINE volunteer to come and do an interview with a local magazine in June, Barbara wholeheartedly agreed and drove 30 miles in the rain at 3:30 p.m. to do the interview for SHINE at the state office in order to promote the program and its services to clients. The interview ran in the September - October 2015 issue of Tallahassee Magazine.

Barbara has truly exhibited Arnie Abram’s spirit of determination, reliability, and strength of purpose, with a smile on her face and commitment in her heart to SHINE’s goal of serving health insurance needs of elders for the past five years.
When Jim Lynch, 68, remembers why he became a volunteer ombudsman, he thinks of his 91-year-old mother who lives in New Jersey, his home state, and is cared for by his sisters. He visits when he can but misses the time in between those precious moments. Jim reflects, “She’s in the early stages of dementia. There are many people I meet in nursing homes who remind me of my mother. Some even look like her. Being an ombudsman gives back to me so much more than I give.”

Volunteer ombudsmen like Jim visit with residents of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult family care homes to document their quality of life. They also investigate complaints received by residents or on their behalf by family, friends, and others. However, the Ombudsman Program is not a regulatory or enforcing agency, so ombudsmen must rely upon savvy negotiation, bridge-building, and honed teaching skills to achieve outcomes that meet residents’ satisfaction.

The skillset required of ombudsmen is what led Jim, a retired attorney, to sign up to volunteer with the program after finding an ad in his local paper. Ombudsman work allows him to use prior legal experience in negotiation and investigation for the benefit of long-term care residents. Jim says, “It’s a fine art to balance getting cooperation. It’s a balance between pushing hard and showing others it benefits them to support residents. This program was a natural pick for me.”

Before Jim’s retirement in 2011, he had already developed a passion for serving the less fortunate, his country, and his community. Jim started out working civil cases while attending college in New Jersey through a legal aid service to low-income individuals who could not otherwise afford counsel. In the ‘70s, while in college, he spent a week-long vacation in Florida and decided he was in paradise and someday while in college, he spent a week-long vacation in Florida and decided he was in paradise and someday

He later joined the Army and served as a JAG Officer for over 20 years in various legal capacities as both prosecution and defense counsel, administrative law, labor law, and contract and procurement law. He worked on developing contracts for defense materials and projects, including the Mark V SOC (Special Operations Craft), a small boat used by the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command. He was last stationed at the United States Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa in the 90s, and has not left Florida since.

After military service, Jim practiced labor and employment law at the Hillsborough County Attorney’s office. Throughout his military service and employment with Hillsborough County, Jim also taught law at both the University of Phoenix and Saint Leo University, one of Florida’s oldest higher education institutions. After retiring, he spent a short time relaxing before volunteering with the Ombudsman Program and the Bradenton Beach Planning and Zoning Board.

When Jim is not volunteering, he’s likely playing pickle ball or jogging along the shoreline in Bradenton Beach, a small city on Anna Maria Island in Manatee County where he lives with his wife of almost 40 years. Jim worked with city commissioners to have an existing basketball court painted with pickle ball lines for city residents to have a place to play. Jim recently convinced commissioners to set aside resources to build a new pickle ball court (hopefully two) after demonstrating the value of the sport to tourists. As a member of the Planning and Zoning Board, Jim collaborates with others to both preserve the quiet, coastal community life on the small barrier island and continue to be an attractive destination for tourists.

In 2016, Jim volunteered over 494 hours, or over 41 hours a month, advocating for long-term care residents. He recently became the Chair of the Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition Workgroup. This workgroup focuses on developing ideas to boost volunteer numbers and recognize the efforts of current volunteers in order to keep them on board and advises the Ombudsman State Council on its findings.

Community and family are very important to Jim, who is deeply spiritual. His Christian faith propels him to seek deeper meaning for his life and ask questions such as “Why are we here?” and “What is our purpose?” His work as an ombudsman reminds him of these questions. “Many times,” Jim says, “residents are afraid, nervous. Just hold their hands and smile.” Through this program, Jim finds he can help people just like his mother, who forgets a little more each day. He can also be better equipped to help advise his sisters as they navigate their roles as caregivers. Jim says working with the program has also helped him view health care workers in a different way. “Many of them aren’t in it for the money,” he states. “They are helping people who are under very hard circumstances. If they give patience and love, they get it back tremendously. Not everyone is understanding or capable of that. If not, then they shouldn’t be there.”

The Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program relies upon state-certified professional volunteers, known as ombudsmen, who advocate for the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals residing in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult family care homes. Ombudsmen work with residents, family members, administrators, and others to resolve complaints brought by, or on behalf of, long-term care residents in Florida. For more information and volunteer opportunities, call 1-888-831-0404. Visit us online at ombudsman.myflorida.com.
Provided to our bus drivers, customer service representatives, and others who frequently interact with residents. Informed employees will be more prepared to interact with a person with dementia and appreciate the nuances that come with being a caregiver for someone with dementia.

In addition to training city employees, we are helping raise awareness in the community by partnering with organizations such as the Alzheimer’s Project and the Dementia Action Alliance. We’re also sharing information via the city’s TV station, utility bill inserts, and social media. In Tallahassee, we know that a more-informed and supportive community will help enhance the quality of life for those suffering from dementia, their caregivers, and their family members. Until there is a cure, we are committed to being a Dementia-Caring Community. To learn more about programs and services benefiting Florida’s elders, I encourage you to visit www.elderaffairs.org.

**Florida’s Meals on Wheels Programs March Forward**

Rick Burnham  
Editor in Chief, Elder Update

With the largest percentage of seniors living anywhere in the country, Florida is a hotbed for programs and services tailored specifically to those residents in their latter years.

Few of these programs, if any, have the impact of Meals on Wheels. And few times of the year are more important to Meals on Wheels than March.

Ever since March 1972, when President Richard Nixon signed into law a program that established a nutrition program for people age 60 and older – a program that later became Meals on Wheels – the people who make the program work have come together to celebrate the “proven collaboration of local community organizations, businesses, all levels of government, and compassionate individuals.”

March For Meals, now in its 15th year, is an important observance, said Jenny Bertolet, vice president of communications for Meals on Wheels, headquartered in Arlington, Va.

“This is really the only time each year that all the programs come together and celebrate Meals on Wheels in their communities,” she said. “It is an opportunity for them to unite together, to push similar messages, and to ride a national wave of publicity and energy, mobilizing volunteers across the country.”

A number of Meals on Wheels programs have announced special events for March, including the one that administers to seniors living in Osceola County. Wilda Belisle, nutrition director for the Osceola Council on Aging, said March is indeed a special month for everyone there.

“We participate in March For Meals every year, and this year will be no different,” she said. “We will partner with the Orlando Magic for a promotion on March 8. Our seniors will be special guests during their game against the Chicago Bulls, and the Magic will donate $5 per seat for all tickets sold to our Meals on Wheels program. We will also be recognized during their halftime show.”

Belisle said a 5k run and walk will be held March 18 along the City of Kissimmee lakefront. Rocking chairs will be made available for those seniors who cannot walk but who want to participate. Finally, she said, an event later in the month will feature community leaders delivering meals to those in need.

Similar activities are on tap for Seniors First, Inc., which takes care of the Meals on Wheels program for Orange County. Katherine Brown, Director of Communications for Seniors First, said members of her organization are actively reaching out to local businesses for assistance.

“We will be approaching local restaurants and asking them if they would be willing to donate a portion of the proceeds to the campaign,” she said. “Some restaurants will do this on an entire day, while others will offer lunch or dinner donations. We’ll encourage our donors, volunteers, and supporters in general to go to these restaurants.

“We will kick off March For Meals with a press event that takes place at one of our neighborhood lunch centers, and will be joined by our city councilmen. There will also be a proclamation by the mayor.”

Brown added that her organization administers to about 1,400 clients a day for home delivered meals, ultimately delivering more than 230,000 meals a year.
Stuart Man Fights for Merchant Marine Recognition

Rick Burnham  
Editor in Chief, Elder Update

It is estimated that during World War II, 215,000 men and women set sail aboard vessels assigned to the U.S. Merchant Marine. One in 24 - 8,651 in all - never came back. More than 700 ships were lost to enemy action.

The Merchant Marine history and advocacy website -- www.usmm.org -- puts those numbers in perspective, declaring the percentage of Merchant Marine casualties to be considerably higher than the Army, Navy or Marines. (The Air Force became an official branch of service on Sept. 18, 1947.)

This was at the height of the submarine menace, back when John Palmer of Long Island, N.Y., called himself a Merchant Mariner.

If you live in or around Stuart, Fla., you may be familiar with Palmer. He is perhaps the country’s leading advocate of the Merchant Marine - a staunch supporter of the fight to recognize those who wore that uniform as wartime veterans. Articles bearing his byline have appeared in a variety of South Florida publications, while others have included his quotes and photographs.

Now 95 and living with wife Grace in a Stuart independent living facility, John remembers well his first exposure to the Merchant Marine.

“There was an article in the New York Times entitled 'Civilians Go to War,’” he said. “That was in December, 1941. I always liked boats, so I signed up. A month later I was sitting on an island in New York Bay going through boot training.”

Palmer would spend much of his time as a Merchant Mariner working on Liberty Boats, a cargo ship fleet designed to speed wartime material to Britain and the Soviet Union during WWII. U.S. shipyards are said to have built more than 2,700 between 1941 and 1945.

Palmer was aboard one such ship in the spring of 1945, part of a convoy making its way back from Australia. They cruised through the Panama Canal without incident, passed Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and headed north to their destination along the New England shoreline. As they passed Virginia, the SS Black Point, a steam ship carrying 7,000 pounds of coal to Boston, joined them.

Immediately behind the Black Point was the Liberty Boat with John Palmer aboard.

The convoy reached New York during the first week of May, with only the Black Point and Palmer’s boat continuing north. Palmer said the two boats had begun the narrow passageway through Long Island Sound, a trip of about 100 miles, when word came of possible German sub activity in the area. The Merchant Marine vessel headed into the relative safety of the New London, Connecticut area, but the SS Black Point continued ahead.

What happened next is a footnote in U.S. military history. Two days before the end of the war with Germany, the SS Black Point became the last allied boat torpedoed by a German U-boat. Twelve men died.

Looking back, John Palmer is certain that had the SS Black Point not joined the convoy, his Liberty Boat might very well have been the target of that U-boat. Perhaps he might not be here, and by extension, neither would his four sons. He thinks of the thousands of Merchant Mariners who never came home, including his boot camp bunkmate, 18-year-old Cal Krengeer, who was swept overboard in Alaskan waters, never to be seen again. And he vows to do his part in telling the story of the Merchant Marine.

“I just want to let the world know that we did our part,” he said. Since getting out, John has joined the fight to help gain veteran status for those Merchant Mariners who served in WWII. Official requests to the U.S. government have been turned down four times, although, in 1988 President Ronald Reagan signed legislation making WWII mariners eligible for Veterans Affairs benefits.

John and Grace moved to Florida in 1979, initially living in Islamorada, before moving to Tavernier and finally Stuart. Unsurprisingly, much of that time was spent on a boat - traveling back and forth between the Sunshine State and the Bahamas. A year and a half ago, when John’s health began to slowly fade, they found a home in the independent living facility they now call home.

Everyone at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs thanks John Palmer and all of his fellow Merchant Mariners for their service to the nation.
PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY ONLINE

Drew J. Breakspear
Commissioner
Florida Office of Financial Regulation

The internet is such an integral part of our lives, and we are all more connected than ever before. Unfortunately, it also means that it is easier to share more information about ourselves than we intend. It is important to recognize the risks associated with common online habits and take steps to protect your privacy while online.

When we think about personal information, name, address, and Social Security number come to mind. However, personal identifying information includes anything that can be used on its own or with other information to identify, contact, or locate you. Personal information is a valuable commodity to scammers, so it is important to be mindful about what information you are sharing and always keep your information protected.

Consider your personal information one of your most treasured assets:

- **Take advantage of privacy and security settings.** Do not rely on default settings. Many web platforms offer a variety of privacy and security settings that are customizable to your level of comfort with whom and when you share information. Consider only using apps or websites that clearly state how they collect and use your information.

- **Take your security a step up from just a simple password.** Passwords sometimes are not enough to protect email, banking, and social media accounts from hackers. Enable the strongest multi-factor authentication tools possible, such as security keys, biometrics, and touch ID to ensure you are the only user able to log into your accounts.

- **Use a strong password to secure your technological device.** This protects any information stored on the device if it is lost or stolen. Strong passwords contain more than six characters, including upper and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols.

- **Make certain you are always using a secure network.** Limit your activity on public Wi-Fi and always avoid logging into accounts that contain any personal information. You can reduce this risk by using a personal hotspot, rather than a public network, if you must log in to these accounts outside of your own secure network.

- **Think before you click.** Scammers look to steal personal information in the most inconspicuous ways. Be wary of online advertisements in emails and on social media or websites, and do not click on any suspicious links.

- **Be mindful on social media.** Think about what you share online and what information it can reveal about you. Also, ask permission before sharing information about someone else.

- **Ensure that your security software on your personal computer, laptop, and cell phone is up to date.** This is one of the best ways to lessen your vulnerability to viruses, malware, and other dangerous cyber threats.

The Florida Office of Financial Regulation (OFR), which can be reached at (850) 487-9687, is dedicated to protecting Floridians from financial fraud and providing resources to assist in smart financial decision making. Promoting consumer awareness is just one of the ways we are advancing that mission. The OFR offers a robust Online Consumer Knowledge Center, www.flofr.com/staticpages/consumerknowledge-center.htm, where you can find more information on reducing your risk of financial scams and other financial topics. Please take time to learn more about data privacy and implement protective measures for yourself and your family.

PSC to Celebrate Consumers During National Consumer Protection Week

Bev Demelo
Florida Public Service Commission

Consumers are at the forefront of the Florida Public Service Commission's (PSC) work year-round, but we especially recognize them every March during National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW).

For 10 years, the PSC – which regulates the state’s investor-owned electric, gas, and water and wastewater utilities – has joined government agencies, advocacy organizations, and private sector groups nationwide to highlight NCPW. It is a coordinated campaign designed to encourage consumers nationwide to take full advantage of their consumer rights and make better-informed decisions.

During this year’s 19th NCPW, March 5-11, PSC staff will make presentations to consumers in various locations around the state, showing them how to save money through energy and water conservation and how to sign up for the Lifeline Assistance (Lifeline) communications discount program, if they qualify.

Consumers want to conserve, and we provide saving strategies during our presentations. Watch for NCPW meeting updates on the PSC’s website, www.FloridaPSC.com. The PSC also has educational materials on a variety of utility-related topics consumers can download to share with family and friends or use at community events.

To continually better serve consumers, the PSC focuses on improving online accessibility, providing timely responses to requests, and delivering fair and prompt resolutions to consumer concerns. A great customer experience, after all, is primarily about delivering the right knowledge to the right place at the right time. Being able to provide consumers with the information they need when they need it is integral to the PSC’s mission. Customer communication is also very important to the utilities the PSC regulates and their customers’ satisfaction. The J.D. Power 2016 Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study reveals that “consistent and proactive communications alleviate the frustration utility customers feel when they experience any kind of service interruption.”

Remember, an informed consumer is a responsible consumer, and here are a few suggestions on your quest to become the best utility consumer:

- **Know your rights and responsibilities as a utility customer.** Your utility has the responsibility to honor your rights, and you, the customer, should know your rights and fulfill your responsibilities to maintain your service.

- **Check the accuracy of your utility bills each month to make sure you’re being billed correctly.** Contact the utility immediately with any questions about your bill.

- **Research your utilities’ energy efficiency and water conservation programs.** You can find home efficiency tips, information on current programs and incentives, and other useful information to help you save money on your utility bills by conserving energy and water.

- **Protect your identity.** Keep the following information safe: your name, your Social Security number, and your credit card and bank account numbers.

- **Learn how to spot and protect against scams.** Scammers are becoming more sophisticated and use high-pressure tactics to separate you from your money. Never provide personal, confidential, or financial information to unknown individuals. If you have any doubt about a call, e-mail, or visit from someone claiming to represent your utility, call the company’s customer service center for assistance.

For more PSC consumer information, call (800) 342-3552. To access that information online, or to subscribe to our quarterly newsletter, visit www.FloridaPSC.com.
Tax Scam Season Is Upon Us

Allison Bryant
Communities for a Lifetime
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

It’s tax season, and scammers are on the prowl. As a result, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) encourages tax filers to be diligent in filing their taxes as soon as possible.

The only way to combat tax fraud is to file taxes first (before the criminals use your information). Otherwise, you will only find out whether you’re a fraud victim after you attempt to file your taxes and get an IRS notice that more than one tax return was filed using your Social Security number.

Be wary of anyone writing, calling, or emailing and asking for your personal identification information (this is called “phishing”). The IRS will NOT call you and ask for personal information. They will communicate with you by sending a letter and ask that you respond by calling them directly. If you are still unsure of a letter you have received or have any IRS questions, you can call the main general IRS phone number toll-free at 1-800-829-1040. Please keep in mind during tax season you may have to wait for a representative, so please be patient. You can find more information at www.IRS.gov.

For those of you who carry your Medicare card with you, we all know your Social Security number is printed on this card. Unless you have a doctor’s appointment that may require this card, please keep your card in a safe place at home. Do not carry it with you. A suggestion is to carry a photocopy of this card with the number blackened out and have a name and phone number of someone you trust printed on the copy of your card. This person will be able to obtain your card if you need it.

Remember, it is always better to sacrifice your convenience for security and not your security for convenience. The choice is yours.

If you feel you are a victim or may become a victim of tax fraud, you can call the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit toll-free at 1-800-908-4490. You will be asked to provide either a police report or the IRS Identity Theft Affidavit, Form 14039. You will then receive a special PIN.

The IRS is conducting a pilot program for Florida, Georgia, and the District of Columbia. At present, if you live in any of the mentioned states you can obtain an Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN) without having prior been a victim of identity theft. You may request this IP PIN at www.irs.gov/individuals/get-an-identity-protection-pin.

What you need to register and use the IP PIN service:

- Your Social Security number, date of birth, filing status and mailing address from your latest tax return,
- Access to your email account,
- Your credit card number or account number from a car loan, mortgage, home equity loan, or home equity line of credit, and
- A mobile phone with your name on the account.

You will also need to pass IRS's identity verification using its “secure access” process and then create a user profile.

Report suspicious online or emailed phishing scams to phishing@irs.gov. For phishing scams by phone, fax, or mail, call 1-800-366-4484. Report IRS impersonation scams to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration’s IRS Impersonation Scams Reporting. The IRS Impersonation Scams Reporting form must be completed online at www.treasury.gov/tigta/contact_report_scam.shtml.
VOLUNTEER SERVES KEY ROLE DURING SENIOR GAMES CYCLING EVENTS

Nick Gandy
Florida Sports Foundation

There are a few seconds, as the clock winds down just before Florida Senior Games Cycling Time Trials riders take off from the starting line, when they put their race in the hands of one man.

They are literally being held upright by Dutch Van der Kuyp, of Cape Coral, with their spikes firmly planted into the pedals of their bikes.

The countdown hits zero and Dutch, who is straddling the back wheel of the bike, releases the rider as he or she begins pedaling. The rider is on the way in the 5K and 10K Time Trials where they reach speeds of up to 25 to 30 miles per hour on bikes costing thousands of dollars.

In an annual event like the Florida Senior Games, featuring more than 3,000 athletes in 24 games over nine days, volunteers like Dutch Van der Kuyp are vital.

Dutch has been an avid cyclist for 35 years and is a member of the Caloosa Riders Club in Fort Myers. Currently in the 65-69 age group, he was a gold medal winner in the 2007 and 2008 Florida Senior Games Time Trials events riding his recumbent cycle. When he turned 50 he started riding his age in miles for his regular rides. With his upcoming 69th birthday, he will start rounding up his rides to 70 miles.

He has made a niche for himself in a specific job at the Florida Senior Games, but many more are needed. Fortunately, there’s something for everyone at the Games, which feature athletes age 50 and over.

“They call me the holder,” Dutch says, describing his duty. “When the clock hits zero, the riders feel safe because, as a cyclist myself, I know what has to be done. I’ve never had anyone wobble or fall when they take off. Their starts are always nice and straight.”

Dutch’s job is a tough one, done in a variety of elements, rain or shine and in warm and cold weather. It comes with some side effects at the end of the day.

“I will admit, my back hurts when I get home,” he said. “Some of the male riders are 200 pounds and over, and if they begin to lean to one side or the other, I have to straighten them out. That’s tough with some of the guys.”

Dutch began his volunteer efforts when the Florida Senior Games were held in Fort Myers and the City of Cape Coral from 2006-10 and again in 2013-14. The cycling events were held in his own backyard in Cape Coral. For the last two years with the Games in Pinellas County, he has made the trip to Fort DeSoto Park to lend his efforts as the riders place their trust in him just before they leave the starting line.

“I can’t just sit and watch,” he says. “When the event organizers see me and some of the other experienced volunteers, they can be at ease because we know what we need to do.”

Florida Senior Games cyclist Pete Butler, of Tallahassee, is one of those put at ease when he sees Dutch at the starting line.

“He’s so calming because when you come to the starting line, every athlete has a bit of the jitters,” Butler said. “He’s kind and strong, and his duty is highly specialized. He’s someone who has you without any risk of falling over. That means the world to a competitive cyclist. I’ve raced all over the country, and he’s one of the best I’ve ever encountered.”

To become a valued volunteer at the 2017 Florida Senior Games, scheduled for Dec. 2-10 in Clearwater/Pinellas County, please visit http://www.flaspersports.com/florida-senior-games/volunteers/.
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northwest Florida</th>
<th>Southwest Florida</th>
<th>Elderly Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area Agency on Aging, Inc.</td>
<td>Area Agency on Aging for South Florida, Inc.</td>
<td>100 2SW 75th Street, #301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5090 Commerce Park Circle Pensacola, FL 32505</td>
<td>21501 N. Cleveland Avenue, Suite 110 Orlando, FL 32803</td>
<td>Gainesville, FL 32607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>850-497-1101 (Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties)</td>
<td>407-514-1800 (Brevard, Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties)</td>
<td>352-378-6649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2414 Mahan Drive Tallahassee, FL 32308</td>
<td>1201 N. Cleveland Avenue, Suite 110 North Fort Myers, FL 33903</td>
<td>(Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee and Union Counties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>850-488-0055</td>
<td>239-652-6900 (Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties)</td>
<td>10688 Old St. Augustine Road Sunrise, FL 33351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>850-488-0055 (Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington Counties)</td>
<td>988 Woodcock Road, Suite 200 Orlando, FL 32803</td>
<td>305-670-6500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-670-6500</td>
<td>5090 Commerce Park Circle Pensacola, FL 32505</td>
<td>760 NW 107th Avenue, Suite 214 Miami, FL 33172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>850-494-7101</td>
<td>100 SW 75th Street, #301 Gainesville, FL 32607</td>
<td>352-378-6649 (Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee and Union Counties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-670-6500</td>
<td>760 NW 107th Avenue, Suite 214 Miami, FL 33172</td>
<td>305-670-6500 (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns and Volusia Counties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9549 Koger Boulevard North Gadsden Building, Suite 100 St. Petersburg, FL 33702</td>
<td>ElderSource 10688 Old St. Augustine Road Jacksonville, FL 32257</td>
<td>904-391-6600 (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns and Volusia Counties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>850-494-7101</td>
<td>4400 North Congress Avenue West Palm Beach, FL 33407</td>
<td>561-684-5885 (Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>888-242-4464</td>
<td>Alliance for Aging, Inc. 760 NW 107th Avenue, Suite 214 Miami, FL 33172</td>
<td>305-670-6500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington Counties)</td>
<td>5300 Hiatus Road Sunrise, FL 33351</td>
<td>(Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties)</td>
</tr>
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### Florida Elder Helpline Directory

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

|---------|------|-----|----------|--------|--------|---------|----------|--------|------|--------|----------|--------|-------|-------|---------|--------|---------|--------|-----------|-------|-------|---------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|----------|--------|---------|---------|---------|----------|--------|--------|

### 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.

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).
Reviewed by Liz Jameson  
As published in the Tallahassee Democrat January 14, 2017:

If you’d like a taste of North Florida’s rural culture, Rick Burnham flavors his latest novel with a piquant and robust blend of same. Hank, Burnham’s elderly storyteller, delivers rich tall tales that ring true enough to encourage the reader’s suspended disbelief.

Though Burnham is an editor and journalist for the State by day, at night his imagination soars, and from that out-of-the-box creativity, Hank sprang fully formed on to the page to delight listeners with his stories. Where Burnham ends and Hank begins is a blurred line, but no matter: creative juices flow both ways between the two.

Rick Burnham has a knack. A knack for getting inside the head of a character and rolling about in it gathering verdant, moss-like insight and then conveying it to the reader in a unique and enticing manner that has a powerful stick-to-it-iveness. His characters mesmerize the reader in this can’t-put-it-down, all-in-one-sitting read. They come home to roost, and they remain in the reader’s head long after the book is finished.

To read the rest of this review, please go to http://www.tallahassee.com/story/life/2017/01/14/rick-burnham-weaves-winning-tale-hank/96534948/

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PARTICIPATE IN READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY

What is Read Across America?
The National Education Association's (NEA's) Read Across America is an annual reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on March 2, the birthday of beloved children’s author Dr. Seuss.

Who sponsors Read Across America?
At the national level, the National Education Association sponsors and spearheads the program with support from 40 national nonprofit and association partners.

Why is this important?
Motivating children to read is an important factor in student achievement and creating lifelong successful readers. Research has shown that children who are motivated and spend more time reading do better in school.

Why should I, as a senior, get involved?
Why not! More and more seniors are becoming directly involved in the care of their grandchildren. Statistics vary depending on the source, but as many at 72 percent of grandparents take care of their grandkids on a regular basis, and 13 percent have become their primary caregivers. As Dr. Seuss might say, “If not you, then who?”

How can I get involved?
Contact your local school, education association, library, bookstore, or local chapter of a national NEA’s Read Across America partner organization about events that are taking place in your community. Just because you may not have children living in your home does not mean you can’t make a difference in the life of a child.