Richard Prudom  
Secretary  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Florida is home to more than 5.5 million older residents and boasts the largest 65+ population in the nation. In the next 10 years, our senior population will increase to more than 7.6 million. There are challenges in promoting the health and well-being of this growing and increasingly diverse older adult population. Aging, especially as baby boomers reach ages 85 and older, signals a likely surge in the use of long-term care services. Disability rates evolve over time, so Florida’s Aging Network has been given a significant challenge – to ensure that the needs of the frailest elders continue to be met.

Additionally, the caregiver crisis is real and growing. One of the most important things we are working on is how to make Florida more age-friendly, and a significant part of this is ensuring our communities are livable, accessible, and supportive of our caregivers.

There are many factors affecting Florida caregivers, but one of the most significant ones is the increasing incidence of dementia. The Alzheimer’s Association projects there are 540,000 Floridians living with Alzheimer’s disease – a number that is expected to increase to more than 720,000 in the coming years. Sadly, these figures do not include those living with other forms of dementia, like Lewy Body dementia or vascular dementia, nor does it include the millions of caregivers affected.

There are more than 1.1 million caregivers providing care and support for family members with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia. And, as we know, there are still more caregivers providing other support outside of the dementia spectrum. When a loved one is diagnosed with an illness, we know it is not just the individual who suffers. Whole family structures and dynamics must be adjusted accordingly. There becomes a “new normal.” And the stress family caregivers experience is a very real and serious issue. Burnout is a problem we want to prevent.

In 2016, AARP conducted a study on caregiving and reported that:

- 68 percent of respondents who were current or past caregivers reported feeling emotionally stressed.
- 34 percent felt financially stressed.
- 57 percent found it very difficult to get rest.
- 45 percent had no time to exercise regularly or keep a healthy diet.

Our caregivers are not able to take care of themselves because of all the demands they face providing care. And while the study noted that typical family caregivers in Florida are women over age 55, we know we also have people who fit in as the “sandwich generation,” where they are taking care of their children AND other loved ones.
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Allison Burtoft
Editor-in-Chief

As winter comes to a close, we say hello to a new season with warmer weather and longer days. It always seems like spring is a whirlwind – from the change of Daylight Savings Time to the change of weather, it is certainly one of the busiest times of the year. If you’re planning on traveling during this time and will change your address temporarily, please let us know if you would like for us to temporarily suspend your subscription until your return. We have received many changes of addresses out of state, and we want to ensure all of our Florida subscribers continue to receive the paper.

Inside this issue of Elder Update, you’ll learn about happenings across the state from the Department of Elder Affairs and from our new Governor, Ron DeSantis. We are excited to share this progress with you, excited to continue moving forward, and we thank you for allowing us to serve your communities. As always, we will have information from our SHINE Program and updates from our partners through the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. You’ll also see highlights of some of our wonderful volunteers and professional guardians.

If you’re staying in the state in the coming months, this spring is the perfect time to experience new activities. This March and April, there are many opportunities to try something different from your normal routine or learn something new.

Whether you choose to come out to the Historic Capitol for Senior Day on March 27, or join a new organization in your hometown for Florida Volunteer Month, spring is a great time to start fresh with new beginnings. We feel that this issue of Elder Update is a great opportunity to share different ways to stay engaged with your community.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and we always appreciate hearing from you. If you have suggestions, please write to us at the address in the left column or visit elderaffairs.org for more information.

SPECIAL THANKS

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

• Adelaide M Wagstaff

SUDOKU

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

Solution found on page 22.

www.brainbashers.com
Sudoku Puzzle © Kevin Stone
Two New Exciting Programs
AAAPP is proud to announce the launch of two new pilot projects, aimed at addressing the needs of caregivers. These projects include the following:

**Training on and Implementation of Savvy Caregiver,** an evidence-based program to help caregivers of adults with Alzheimer’s disease or related disorders better manage their stress and learn healthy coping skills. Four to six agency representatives will be trained to provide the program, and a pilot course will be held in both Pinellas and Pasco counties.

**Development of Caregiver Connect,** a Facebook-live educational series and informal peer support group for family caregivers who cannot leave their homes but are in need of information, support, and resources to assist in caring for their loved ones. The series is expected to launch late spring 2019 via the AAAPP Facebook page.

Partnerships to Address the Needs of Older Adults
AAAPP has partnered with the WellMed Foundation to ensure medical providers are also addressing the social needs of older adults as they provide medical care. The local WellMed medical clinic is working with AAAPP to ensure the holistic needs of their older adult patients are being met, either through services provided by either organization, or by providing funds for crisis-relieving services where appropriate.

A First-of-Its-Kind Needs Assessment
AAAPP has worked to build a coalition of municipal and foundation partners to fund an evidence-based Community Assessment Survey of Older Adults. This survey will be mailed to 18,000 homes where at least one adult over the age of 60 lives and will collect a wide range of information on the needs of our community’s elders to live safely and independently. The survey is expected to be mailed in March of 2019, with data available late summer 2019.

Free, Anonymous Incontinence Supply Bank
Over the past year, AAAPP has received two grants to build out a free and anonymous incontinence supply bank throughout our PSA. Older adults who call the helpline in need of incontinence supplies are directed to a variety of community sites where they can pick up several packs of supplies at a time. In the first year of the program, AAAPP and its distribution network provided more than 22,000 individual pull ups and 7,000 individual pads to older adults in need.
Portions of CMS News Release (January 16, 2019)

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently completed a large-scale effort to provide new Medicare cards without Social Security numbers to people with Medicare. The new cards support the agency’s work to protect personal identity and reduce fraud and abuse. Over the past nine months, CMS sent new cards to more than 61 million people with Medicare across all U.S. states and territories, completing the mailing ahead of schedule.

“Safeguarding our beneficiaries’ personal information continues to be one of our top priorities,” said CMS Administrator Seema Verma. “The Trump Administration is committed to modernizing Medicare and has expedited this process to ensure the protection of Medicare beneficiaries and taxpayer dollars from the potential for fraud and abuse due to personal information that existed on the old cards. All beneficiaries should continue to use these new cards as a valuable resource when seeking care. These new cards will not only be easier for beneficiaries, but also provide the Medicare program with essential protections due to the new unique identifier on the cards.”

In April 2018, CMS began mailing the new Medicare cards, each of which features a unique, randomly assigned Medicare number known as a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI). The MBI is a combination of letters and numbers that helps protect against personal identity theft and fraud. CMS mailed the new cards on a rolling schedule to all people with Medicare, completing the task three months before the April 2019 deadline for replacing old Medicare cards set by Congress as part of the legislation passed under the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) of 2015. Medicare patients are successfully using their new cards in doctor’s offices and other healthcare facilities.

**Assistance Available**

For anyone with Medicare who has not received a new card by now, CMS offers these tips:

- Call 1-800-MEDICARE for assistance. They will verify your identity, check your address on record, and help you get your new card.
- Log into your mymedicare.gov account to get your new Medicare number or print your official card. The new Medicare number is now available in your account, even if you didn’t receive your card in the mail. Accounts are password-protected and secure. To access or create an account, visit MyMedicare.gov.
- Ask your healthcare provider. Providers may be able to look up your Medicare number through a secure portal when you come in for healthcare services.

**Prioritizing Security**

Although the new Medicare cards are designed to protect against identity theft, people with Medicare should continue to look out for scams. CMS offers these tips:

- Destroy your old Medicare card so no one can get your personal information.
- Start using your new Medicare card right away. Carry it when you need healthcare. Medicare coverage and benefits are the same. The new card does not impact or change your healthcare benefits.
- Keep your other plan cards. If you’re in a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) or a Medicare Drug Plan, keep using that plan ID card whenever you need care or prescriptions. However, please carry and protect your new Medicare card — you may be asked to show it.
- Protect your Medicare number just like a credit card. Only give the new Medicare number to doctors, pharmacists, other healthcare providers, insurers, or people you trust to work with Medicare on your behalf. Medicare will never call uninvited for your Medicare number or other personal information.
Dear Judy,
I signed up for a Medicare Advantage plan last fall during the Open Enrollment Period. In reviewing my plan’s documents, I notice that my plan has a “maximum out-of-pocket limit” for the year. Can you please explain what this means?

Thanks,
Ms. M.A.

Dear Ms. M.A.,
Thank you for taking advantage of Medicare’s Open Enrollment Period. It is wise to check your coverage every year.

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

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

Dear Judy,
I am turning 65 in August 2019. Should I defer my Part B coverage?

Thanks,
Mr. Bass

Dear Mr. Bass,
Welcome to Medicare! You are not required to sign up for Medicare Part B when you are first eligible if you still have insurance coverage through a current employer, be it through yours or your spouse’s.

“Current” is the operative word here. Retiree, COBRA, Veterans’ benefits, or individual insurance purchased from the Marketplace does not count as coverage from a current employer. If you miss your deadline to sign up for Part B for this or any other reason, you may be required to pay a late enrollment penalty for the rest of your time on Medicare.

You can enroll in Part B without a penalty at any time during the eight months after you or your spouse stop working or your employee health care ends. If you miss this window, you may be subject to a penalty for as long as you are covered by Medicare.

Judy Archey is the Area Coordinator for Putnam, Alachua, Bradford, and Union counties. She also serves as a statewide trainer for the Department of Elder Affairs’ SHINE Program.

If you have a question you would like answered in our new Dear Judy column, please send an email to information@elderaffairs.org. You may also send a question by regular mail to:

Elder Update: Dear Judy
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000
Volunteer Retires From SHINE Program After 21 Years of Service to Southwest Floridians

The secret to Jo Marshall's over two decades as a successful counselor?

“I’ll do anything I can for you, but I don’t take any nonsense from anyone.”

Kirsten O’Donnell, MBA
Area Agency on Aging for SWFL

For 21 years, Southwest Florida’s seniors have counted on Jo Marshall to help them with their Medicare and health insurance issues. Marshall served two-plus decades as a volunteer with the SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) Program through both the State of Florida’s Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) and the Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida (AAASWFL).

In October, SHINE volunteers past and present, along with current and former employees of AAASWFL and Cape Coral Hospital gathered to wish Marshall the best at a retirement reception at AAASWFL’s North Fort Myers headquarters.

SHINE is a DOEA program and is operated locally through AAASWFL. SHINE counselors like Marshall provide free and unbiased information to help clients understand their Medicare health care options so they can make the best decisions for their individual needs. SHINE counselors also help beneficiaries understand benefits available through Medicare, such as preventative health care services.

Volunteering from her counseling site at the SHARE Club in Cape Coral Hospital, Marshall assisted thousands of clients over the past two decades. Marshall’s SHINE duties included helping seniors evaluate insurance plans and apply for financial assistance. However, her true passion came from filing appeals on behalf of clients who were seeking assistance with denied claims by insurance companies or health care providers.

“My very first client was an appeal,” Marshall smiles. “It was for $20, which was a lot more money 21 years ago. And I won it.”

Marshall filed hundreds, if not thousands, of appeals during her two-plus decades with SHINE, winning nearly all of them. She once won an appeal on behalf of a client for more than $500,000.

The SHINE Program has grown significantly since Marshall joined the team. She recalls that in 1997, there were only about three or four SHINE volunteers serving AAASWFL’s seven counties. Marshall would sometimes need to travel as far away as Sarasota and Clewiston to provide counseling and information to Medicare beneficiaries. Today, 60 volunteers provide Medicare counseling services for the agency.

Marshall provided one-on-one counseling to 450 clients last year. Available reporting data shows that Marshall has counseled 3,541 clients since 2010 and has spent an incredible 2,229 hours assisting those clients.

Marshall will tell you that she loves helping people, but that passion isn’t the secret to her success. Ask her to reveal why she was such an effective counselor for more than two decades, and Marshall will answer with a laugh.

“I’ll do anything I can for you,” she’ll reply. “But I don’t take any nonsense from anyone.”

ABOUT THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING FOR SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

The Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida is a nonprofit organization serving Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota counties. AAASWFL is the state’s designated Aging and Disability Resource Center for Southwest Florida. The organization is committed to connecting older adults and adults with disabilities to resources and assistance for living safely with independence and dignity. More information is available at www.aaaswfl.org or by calling the toll-free Helpline at 866-413-5337 (866-41-ELDER).

SHINE counseling is available year-round across Florida. To receive help from SHINE, individuals may call to schedule appointments at designated SHINE counseling sites, attend enrollment events in their local communities, or arrange to speak with a trained SHINE counselor at 1-800-963-5337 (1-800-96-ELDER). SHINE is also actively seeking volunteer counselors. For more information about counseling or volunteer opportunities, please visit floridashine.org.
Lee Eakin: PROFESSIONAL GUARDIAN

Lee Eakin is a professional guardian in private practice in North Palm Beach, Florida. Lee was the first recipient of the Guardian Excellence Award presented by the National Guardianship Association (NGA) and is highly regarded in the field. Through his work, he helps many people in need of guardianship and shines a light on the positive work of professional guardians.

What interested you in professional guardianship?

Finding guardianship was a stroke of good luck for me. I was working for a large social services agency, coordinating Alzheimer’s respite care, when I was asked to move over to the new guardianship program. It was ideal: I found guardianship fit well with my background and interests, and I’ve been a guardian for the 15 years since. I have a masters in social work and a masters in health administration, and I’m a nursing home administrator. I’m also certified in gerontology, so guardianship and I fit nicely together. I’m on the board of trustees of the Center for Guardian Certification (CGC) and served as president of the Florida State Guardianship Association (FSGA) for two terms, having been on its board for 10 years.

What is the role of the professional guardian?

Guardianship is a valuable tool for protecting those who lack the ability to act for their own protection. While it varies from locale to locale, it focuses on helping maintain the person’s standard of living; protecting them from abuse, exploitation, or neglect; and when possible, helping them learn the skills or gain the supports needed to maximize their levels of autonomy and independence. Of course, the incapacity with which the person deals may impact the practicality of these goals. Those persons with developmental limitations may have more opportunity to “increase” or “improve” their functional levels than those suffering from late-life cognitive loss. But that doesn’t necessarily change the goal.

Are there requirements to becoming a professional guardian in Florida?

To become a guardian in Florida, one completes a 40-hour course, takes an exam, and submits background research (including law enforcement and credit reports) to the Office of Public & Professional Guardians (OPPG), which is the registering agency in Florida. I belong to the National Guardianship Association (NGA) and am certified by the CGC. Belonging to the NGA and FSGA (and their local chapters) helps keep a guardian’s skills and knowledge honed, as well as offering great networking. Continuing education is required and necessary to maintain one’s status and professional proficiency. Our practice is guided by state law, through the courts, and by standards of practice promulgated by our profession.

Are there benefits of planning ahead and avoiding guardianship? Where is this practicable?

When I speak with others, I stress the need for planning prior to any form of incapacity. I encourage everyone to meet with an attorney to formalize structures to assure they will maintain control of their life for as long as possible, and then have that control move to a trusted “other” who will assure that their quality and direction of life reflects their wishes. My documents (will, living will, durable power of attorney for health care, and others) are all in place. I’ve discussed them with the people who’ll carry them out, and copies have been given to those who need them. I can’t imagine not taking this step to assure my end of life is lived the way I’d want it to be.

Is there a specific case that you would like to share where the individual was under guardianship and benefited?

While I won’t identify any specific person under guardianship with whom I’ve worked, I can say there are those for whom I’ve worked who stand out in my mind. Among them are a bright, socially-adept woman who found the guidance guardianship provided to be a match for her and, ultimately, decided she wanted to go for “restoration.” But when she realized that restoration meant she would not have her guardian, she balked, saying she “kinda liked” having someone like her guardian in her life. Often, the guardian can identify alternatives to the less-than-safe or less-than-optimal life their client is leading and, working with them, is able to improve their life. Sometimes this is medical care, sometimes support services, sometimes placement in a more appropriate setting, or other intervention. Occasionally, it’s stepping in to stop exploitation and financial or physical risk. I helped one woman transition to a residential program, fully expecting her to hate it. On my first visit, she grabbed me and said, “If I’d known it would be this wonderful, I’d have moved 10 years ago!”

Discuss the role of oversight by the courts.

All professional guardianship practice is under the oversight of the courts. We work closely with the auditors, investigators, and ultimately, the judges themselves. Many of the actions of a guardian, especially those actions which may be seen as “extraordinary” or those involving finances, are under the supervision of the courts. Palm Beach County’s courts and the office of the Palm Beach County Clerk of Courts have been very active in helping to make guardianship better for those we serve.
Vaccines for a Healthier Life

Joy Barbee, BSN
Clinical Coordinator
West Florida Memory Disorder Clinic

D. Garrett Smith
PharmD Candidate 2019
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As another winter season comes to an end, we say “goodbye” to the cool weather, and “hello” to new beginnings and lifestyle modifications. While staying organized usually tops the list of goals for the new season, there is one rather unique resolution that could lead to a healthier way of living not only for ourselves, but for our friends, neighbors, and loved ones as well: Get needed immunizations.

First up: the Pneumococcal vaccine, which may provide added protection from, and decreased severity of, Pneumococcal diseases such as pneumonia. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines recommend that all individuals age 65 and above receive vaccination with Prevnar 13 (PCV13), followed 12 months later with Pneumovax 23 (PPSV23). Be sure to speak with your health care provider to ensure proper administration of this series, as the scheduling of this vaccination may vary slightly depending on patient-specific factors.

Additionally, there is the herpes zoster, or shingles vaccination. This painful condition results from re-activated varicella zoster—the virus that causes chickenpox. The American Journal of Epidemiology states that one in three persons will develop the virus, during which time it may be transferred to others. This may even cause chickenpox in susceptible individuals. The CDC recommends adults age 50 years or older be administered two doses of Shingrix vaccine, separated by two to six months. This is a relatively new vaccine and replaces the formerly recommended Zostavax®. The Shingrix vaccine is recommended even in those individuals who previously received Zostavax. Keeping an updated list of all previous vaccinations and administration dates can prove very beneficial for both yourself and your providers, and can take much of the guess work out of the equation.

This brings us to Tdap and Td. The acronyms alone are enough to make us want to run in the opposite direction. However, this immunization protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis; three bacterial diseases that can prove to be life-threatening if contracted. The CDC recommends that all adults age 65 and older with no record of having previously received Tdap should receive a single dose of this immunization followed by the Td booster every 10 years. This is of special importance to those who plan to have close contact with children under the age of 12 months. One caveat to the timing of the Td booster is the event of certain skin injuries. In these cases, an early booster may be recommended.

Last, but definitely not least, is the influenza vaccine, a vaccine that is updated yearly and tailored to fight the strains of the flu that are predicted to be the most prevalent of the season. Studies on vaccines show as we age we become more vulnerable to complications, severity of symptoms, and potential hospitalization resulting from the flu. Therefore, it is important that we adhere to the current recommendation proposed by the CDC, that all individuals above the age of 6 months receive a yearly flu vaccine, with those age 65 and older receiving a higher dose to prompt a stronger immune response.

My hope is that this article has invoked empowerment and enthusiasm for immunizations. May it spark a conversation between you and a provider, a stranger, a neighbor, or a family member, and from that conversation, inspire the decision to take action. A healthier generation begins with our elderly population.

Sources available upon request.
The Florida Department of Elder Affairs: Our Mission, Programs, and Services

Office of Strategic Initiatives
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

With more than 5.5 million people age 60+, Florida has the highest percentage of older adults in the country, and, like the rest of the nation, is aging rapidly. Many people of retirement age are still working and will stay active for many years to come. While most of our older residents are active and healthy, we know that everyone ages differently and that some may need help with their daily activities. The Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) helps elders meet their needs with many types of programs and services, using funds provided by the federal government, the State of Florida, and government grants. Our mission is to help Florida's elders remain healthy, safe, and independent.

Compared to many of the other state agencies, DOEA is relatively young and not very large, having been created in 1991 and currently with a staff of fewer than 500 full-time workers state-wide. We are the primary state agency that administers social and human services programs for older adults and adults with disabilities. DOEA leads Florida’s "Aging Network," which also includes 11 regional Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), 51 lead agencies, and direct care service providers who in turn employ the many direct care workers who provide hands-on care. The state’s AAAs are non-profit organizations that contract with local providers to provide the various services offered in each region. They operate as Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) to provide “no wrong door” access to services for those who need help due to frailty and/or disability.

Programs Administered by DOEA

DOEA administers many programs including the federally-funded Older Americans Act (OAA) programs, which provide many services that help support elders living at home and in the community, helping to prevent or delay entry into a nursing home. These services include homemaker services, companionship, help for caregivers, home health assistance, home repair, transportation, meals and nutrition, employment, information and referrals, legal support, and health and wellness activities, among others.

The ADRCs also use OAA funds to support the statewide Elder Helpline that connects elders and families with the local programs and information they are seeking. Nutrition services provide healthy meals and snacks to local elders through home-delivered meals, also known as “Meals on Wheels,” or at congregate meal sites such as senior centers, along with nutrition education to help elders learn how and why eating healthy meals and snacks is important at any age.

Caregiver assistance programs offer support services including much-needed respite to caregivers, giving those who care for seniors a break from the difficult job of taking care of others; they also include education, training, support groups, and other assistance for caregivers.

Under the OAA, DOEA has been using more preventive services and evidence-based programs to help us all stay healthy and vital as we grow older. Programs that help regain or retain good balance, help manage chronic diseases like arthritis and diabetes, and those that teach us how to make healthy food choices are becoming more and more popular and available at local senior centers and other venues. DOEA is also working to find ways to continually improve the current long-term care system better and to give more community choices and options to all older Floridians in need of care.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) helps unemployed and under-employed low-income Floridians who are at least age 55 by placing them in part-time jobs where they develop skills and gain work experience before moving on to full-time employment.

The Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (E HEAP) assists low-income households, with at least one person age 60 or older when they are experiencing a home energy emergency. Home energy emergencies may be delinquent utility bills, a lack of fuel or wood, or getting a shut-off notice, and can happen in any season. The program provides one benefit per household per season and can help with repairs to existing heating and cooling systems, along with vouchers for portable heaters, blankets, and fans.

State-funded programs include the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI), Community Care for the Elderly (CCE), and Home Care for the Elderly (HCE). The ADI program provides supportive services such as respite, caregiver training, and counseling for clients and families affected by Alzheimer’s disease or related disorders. ADI also funds Memory Disorder Clinics, which offer services to those diagnosed with or suspected of having a memory loss, and the Alzheimer's Disease Brain Bank, an active research database.

The CCE program helps frail elders remain at home by providing adult day care, case management, consumable medical supplies, home-delivered meals, emergency alert response, personal care, respite, and other community-based services.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22
The Importance of Volunteer Recognition

Janice Harvey  
Office of Volunteer and  
Community Services  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

April is Florida Volunteer Month. This special month provides an opportunity for organizations to recognize their volunteers for being an integral part of their team. Florida’s volunteers are providing an invaluable service in their communities and are doing a tremendous amount of work across our state. It is important to take time to let your volunteers know that they are appreciated. Although April is set aside to recognize volunteers, you can choose to recognize your volunteers at anytime.

Recognizing a volunteer can be as simple as saying thank you, which doesn’t cost anything but speaks volumes. Volunteering is giving back from the heart without the expectation of compensation in return, but it is no secret that recognizing volunteers is considered one of the most effective retention strategies.

If you don’t have a recognition program for your volunteers, consider starting one. First, review what’s most important by starting a priority list and decide who will coordinate a recognition event (not a volunteer). Consider holding the event at a volunteer meeting, a volunteer training session, or at a planned formal event.

The following are ideas to make the recognition successful:

- Inventory items that you or an associate presently have that could be used for the occasion.
- Write thank you cards or letters for each volunteer to be presented at the event.
- Recruit family, friends, and co-workers for donations of food items, decorations, music, and other items needed for the celebration.
- Seek in-kind donations from local businesses for items you are missing.
- Consider personalizing the tokens of appreciation that you will give to your volunteers.
- Utilize your organization’s social media site to post recognitions.
- Place an article in your organization’s newsletters.
- Send a write-up to your local community newspaper.

Once you start a recognition program in your organization, make sure to continue it. Not only will your volunteers look forward to it, but staff members in your organization will expect it. It will become an anticipated event to recognize the value and importance of your volunteers.

Plan your next recognition event well in advance so that you can relax and enjoy it with your volunteers.

If you are unable to hold an event, or are between events, there are simple ways to recognize volunteers. Take time to recognize special achievements or a milestone that has been reached. Show interest in your volunteer and what they are doing for your organization. Talk with your volunteer. Send a birthday card or invite the volunteer to a one-on-one meeting or lunch to say thank you. Create a list of questions for the meeting or lunch that can be used to keep a conversation going and that will allow you to get to know your volunteers better – these questions are also good for the initial orientation of new volunteers.

Try some of the following questions:

- Who is your favorite author?
- What is your favorite restaurant?
- Do you enjoy going to the movies?
- What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
- What are some of your favorite snacks?

Let us acknowledge that volunteers are essential at all levels, even including the highest level of government. I encourage all organizations to recognize and thank their volunteers within their local communities.

The Department of Elder Affairs Office of Volunteer and Community Services (OVCS) is charged with recognizing elder volunteers who provide a service to other elders. For more information on how to recognize your volunteers, contact OVCS at (850) 414-2000.
Every April, Florida Volunteer Month is celebrated throughout the state. It’s a time for Floridians to engage in volunteerism, while raising awareness of the countless benefits of community service.

Though it’s often overlooked, human capital is an easily accessible, cost-effective solution to community-wide problems. Volunteers can tutor at-risk students and help them overcome barriers to success. They can protect public land and conserve precious natural resources. They can even respond to disasters, like hurricanes, by performing damage assessments, distributing supplies, or removing debris.

There are seemingly endless ways to participate in community service, but many Floridians still find themselves wondering: How do I get started? In the coming months, Volunteer Florida, the state’s lead agency for national service and volunteerism, will offer a simple answer to that resounding question.

Through an online portal, Florida-based organizations will be able to post volunteer needs. Then, interested individuals, families, and groups can search through a list of opportunities in their communities.

“Fostering volunteerism is a top priority and a critical component of our mission at Volunteer Florida,” said Jovita Woodrich, Director of Volunteer Services. “Through the portal, we can serve as the conduit between nonprofits and volunteers, making the process easier and more efficient for everyone involved.”

For organizations, the portal will primarily assist with volunteer recruitment and management, including registration, attendance, and approval of service hours. They will also be able to send targeted emails to volunteers regarding specific projects and events and search for individual volunteers based on skillset, certifications, and more.

Volunteers can filter their searches by location, availability, and interests. For instance, a volunteer who is visiting her friend in Pensacola, only free one afternoon during her trip, and passionate about animal welfare can incorporate those parameters in her search. As a result, she might sign up for a one-hour shift at the humane society that’s less than two miles away from her friend’s house.

If desired, volunteers can also choose to connect with a specific organization, like Habitat for Humanity, or serve a certain population – children, the homeless, cancer patients, etc. Virtual volunteering will be an option as well, engaging those who can’t leave their homes, are unable to arrange transportation, or have restricted schedules.

In the coming months, the portal will launch to participating organizations, followed by the general public. Volunteer Florida is very excited about its potential to increase volunteerism in Florida.

“It’s going to be a game changer,” said Woodrich.

For more information about the portal or to be involved in the upcoming launch, please email Jovita Woodrich, Director of Volunteer Services at Volunteer Florida, at volunteer@volunteerflorida.org.

More information about Volunteer Florida can be found at volunteerflorida.org.
Highlights of First 30 Days in Office

Tallahassee, Fla. – Today, Governor Ron DeSantis marks his 30th day in office that is exemplified by a fast-paced but purposeful schedule. Holding more than 30 events and an equally high number of press briefings across the state, Governor DeSantis recognizes that there is still more work to be done for the people of Florida. Below are highlights of the Governor’s time in office thus far.

“Being Governor is a better job than I could have ever imagined,” said Governor DeSantis. “While we have accomplished a lot in these first 30 days, I would like the people of Florida to know there is no intention of slowing down as I will continue to fight for the issues that are important to our great state.”

HURRICANE RECOVERY
Following the devastation left behind by Hurricane Michael, Governor DeSantis has made recovery a top priority of his administration. His first full official day in office was spent in Mexico Beach to emphasize that he is committed to aiding recovery efforts. Since then, he has made multiple additional visits to the Panhandle, announced $2.8 million in state matching funds and has met one-on-one with President Trump to secure 45 days of 100% reimbursement for hurricane recovery efforts.

HISTORIC INVESTMENTS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT
The environment is a major part of what makes Florida, Florida. That is why Governor DeSantis has made the environment an early priority. In his recently released proposed budget, Governor DeSantis recommends investing $625 million for Everglades Restoration and protection of water resources. By investing this amount each year, $2.5 billion will be invested by the end of his first term, which is $1 billion more than what was invested the previous four years. $360 million would be specifically dedicated to Everglades restoration, allowing Florida to complete the C-44 Reservoir and storm water treatment area, the C-43 Reservoir and an additional 20 projects over the next five years. He also signed an Executive Order calling for the formation of a Blue-Green Algae Task force, the appointment of a Chief Science Officer and the creation of the Office of Environmental Transparency.

HISTORIC SUPREME COURT APPOINTMENTS
As promised during his inaugural address, Governor DeSantis made historic appointments to put an end to judicial activism on the Florida Supreme Court. These appointments included Justices Barbara Lagoa, the first Cuban-American female Justice, Carlos Muñiz, the first Nicaraguan-American Justice and Robert Luck, the first Orthodox Jewish Justice.
FLORIDA Senior Day 2019 is just around the corner. Join us to celebrate and advocate for Florida seniors! Groups travel from all over the state to join and be a part of Florida Senior Day each year. This event is in place to support their needs and celebrate their contributions. The annual celebration will be held on March 27, 2019, and is expected to bring more than 1,500 elders and advocates from across the state. There will be entertainment, free health screenings, a complimentary lunch, and much more.

For the fifth year, the Department of Elder Affairs will partner with United Way of Florida to offer a day to celebrate seniors and to share a deep appreciation for their contribution to our great state. There will be booths from sponsors and resources filled with information available for guests.

The event will begin at 10 a.m. at the back steps of the old Florida State Capitol building with a complimentary breakfast provided on a first come, first served basis. The luncheon, including food from Chick-Fil-A, will follow in the late morning and early afternoon, but the fun doesn’t stop there. Live entertainment, featuring musical and dance performances, is ongoing throughout the event from the beginning until 2:30 p.m. Resources will be available with information on housing, health care, and more.

For more information about the event, visit floridaseniorday.org. Register online at floridaseniorday.org/our-events/register-now.
Florida Cabinet Approves Danny Burgess as Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs

Steve Murray
Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs

Recently the Florida Cabinet unanimously approved Governor DeSantis’s appointment of State Representative Danny Burgess to serve as the Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

“I thank my fellow members of the Florida Cabinet for approving Danny to lead the Department of Veterans’ Affairs,” said Governor Ron DeSantis. “His unwavering commitment to our nation and support for our veterans during his time in the Legislature make him the right man for the job, and I could not be more excited to see what all he accomplishes for our veteran community in this new role going forward.”

Danny Burgess is a Captain and Judge Advocate in the United States Army Reserve. He was elected to represent eastern Pasco County in the Florida House of Representatives in 2014, and he was subsequently re-elected in 2016 and 2018. Prior to joining the Florida House of Representatives, Burgess served on the Zephyrhills City Council and as mayor of Zephyrhills. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of South Florida and his Juris Doctorate from the Barry University School of Law.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to serve those who served us,” said Burgess. “Together, we will work to ensure Florida continues to lead the charge as the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.”

GOVERNO R RON DESANTIS LEADING WITH PURPOSE AND CONVICTION…CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

HOLDING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ACCOUNTABLE

Governor DeSantis has made it a priority to suspend officials who are negligent and incompetent. Since taking office, he has ordered the suspensions of Okaloosa County Superintendent of Schools Mary Beth Jackson, Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel and Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections Susan Bucher and has appointed successors who will bring competency and dignity back to the respective offices. In addition, he requested the resignations of all South Florida Water Management District board members, all of whom have either adhered to the Governor’s request to resign or plan to. The Governor has appointed Chauncey Goss and intends to appoint “Alligator Ron” Bergeron to the board.

ELIMINATING HARMFUL REGULATIONS

To ensure a brighter future for Florida’s economy, Governor DeSantis recently kicked off a one-day event called “Florida Deregathon” to find solutions to harmful regulations facing Floridians. Hosted by Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Núñez and Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation Secretary Halsey Beshears, along with Florida’s Professional Licensing Boards, Florida Deregathon was a success as numerous burdensome regulations were identified.

PROPOSED MEDICAL MARIJUANA REFORM

Governor DeSantis feels that the current medical marijuana legislation is not in line with the will of the more than 70% of Florida voters who supported it in 2016 via a constitutional amendment. Because of this, he has called on legislators to provide a solution to People United for Medical Marijuana v. Department of Health within the first two weeks of the upcoming legislative session. If a solution is not reached, the Governor will drop the state’s appeal and the lower court ruling, stating a ban on smoking medical marijuana is unconstitutional, would stand.

SAVING TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Governor DeSantis’ Bold Vision for a Brighter Future budget amounts to a total of $91.3 billion, including $335 million in tax cuts for Florida families. The proposal also includes the continuation of the highly successful 3-day back-to-school sales tax holiday, as well as the weeklong disaster preparedness sales tax holiday, for a total tax cut of $45.3 million. It also sets aside $5.2 billion in reserves, including $1.6 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund.

STANDING FOR FREEDOM IN VENEZUELA

Standing alongside Vice President Mike Pence, Governor DeSantis declared his support for democracy in Venezuela, issuing a proclamation recognizing Interim President Juan Guaidó as the only legitimate leader in Venezuela and standing against Nicolás Maduro’s oppressive regime. The proclamation affirms Florida’s deep affection for the Venezuelan people and decries the individual liberties that have been stripped from them. The Governor also called on the Florida Legislature to act swiftly during the 2019 legislative session to follow suit in recognizing Juan Guaidó as the Interim President of Venezuela.

Governor DeSantis has accomplished much in his first 30 days in office. Stay tuned.
Reverse Mortgage Relief Available for Florida Seniors

Taylore Maxey
Florida Housing
Finance Corporation

Do you owe your reverse mortgage lender/servicer money for taxes, insurance and/or association dues? Are you facing the threat of foreclosure? There is a program that could help you! The Elderly Mortgage Assistance Program (ELMORE) is designed to provide up to $50,000 to eligible seniors with reverse mortgages to bring property taxes, insurance policies, and association dues (property charges) current. If you qualify for assistance, you could additionally receive up to 12 months of future property charges to be paid on your behalf.

The ELMORE program is still open and accepting applications, but it will not be around forever. Now is the time to apply. To assist seniors in applying for the ELMORE Program, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) has established a partnership with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) and National Foundation of Debt Management (NFDM), a certified reverse mortgage counselor. The NFDM counselors are available to assist seniors in completing the Florida ELMORE application. They will be happy to talk to you about the program and explain the requirements. This service is FREE OF CHARGE, and seniors will not be asked to pay for any services. The toll-free number is 1 (800) 601-3534. The line is open Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

There will be ELMORE events throughout the state until June 2019, where you can go to meet one-on-one with a counselor to assist you with the application and any documents. Make sure to ask when we will be having an event in your area for a face-to-face meeting!

Please call 1 (800) 601-3534 to talk with an ELMORE counselor who can answer any questions and let you know the steps that need to be taken to get you qualified.

For a complete description, terms of assistance, and eligibility criteria for the ELMORE program, visit www.floridaelmore.org.

Florida Housing Finance Corporation was created by the Legislature more than 35 years ago. We are the state’s housing finance agency (HFA) that administers state and federal resources to help provide affordable homeownership and rental housing options for our hardworking and vulnerable Floridians across the state.

Caring for the Caregiver…Continued from Page 1

like a parent. It is no surprise most caregivers who participated in the study reported they felt extremely stressed about trying to balance their work and family duties and taking care of their household.

We cannot leave our caregivers behind. In a nutshell: support, care, and understanding are often falling short of caregivers’ needs, and that is why we are committed to helping through programs like the National Family Caregiver Support Program, our Home Care for the Elderly Program, the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative, and the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative, to name a few.

I thank Governor DeSantis, Lieutenant Governor Nunez, and the Legislature for their support and funding for essential care programs like respite and adult day care that provide relief for care partners in order for them to stay well, and we hope funding continues as demands rise.

Our vision is for Florida communities to be places where residents feel comfortable to live through all stages of life. We are proud of our efforts but recognize we still have a long way to go. Until every family caregiver can say they feel supported and they have access to the help or services they need, our work is not done.
AARP Florida and the Department of Elder Affairs have been working together to engage communities across the state in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities is a collection of communities that have committed to actively work together toward making their town, city, or county a great place for people of all ages. The network helps participating communities become great places by looking at the eight domains of livability, which consist of features such as walkable streets, better housing and transportation options, access to key services, and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities. Currently, there are 24 communities in Florida that have joined the network. To keep the communities connected and informed, and to engage new communities, AARP Florida and DOEA will hold their annual Age-Friendly Sharing Symposium in May.

The Sharing Symposium is a two-day event for community leaders and partners across the aging network who are working together to make Florida an age-friendly and dementia-caring state for older adults and their families. By sharing best practices, this event will provide a framework for collaborative partnerships with the state’s 11 Area Agencies on Aging, 16 Memory Disorder Clinics, AARP’s Network of Age-Friendly Communities, existing Communities for a Lifetime, and Dementia Care and Cure Initiative task force groups.

The event will be held in Miami on May 14 and 15. To register for the event, please visit aarp.event.com/2019AgeFriendly. To learn more, email Tracey Aittama at aittamat@elderaffairs.org.

If you are interested in learning more about the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, log onto AARP.org/agefriendly, or for more information, contact Laura Cantwell at lcantwell@aarp.org.

ARRP Florida also holds monthly webinars on the third Thursday of the month at noon EST. If you are interested in joining these calls to learn more, please email lsmith@aarp.org.
Slow Your Roll
A Guide to Low Speed Vehicles and Golf Carts

Stephanie Whitfield
Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

With the increasing development of self-contained and retirement communities, low speed vehicles (LSVs) and golf carts are becoming a familiar sight on residential streets throughout Florida. In designated areas, these vehicles offer a convenient, affordable mode of transportation for local travel and can provide an alternative for senior citizens transitioning from an automobile.

Since 2015, the number of registered LSVs in Florida has risen by 22 percent from 8,761 to 10,690 as of December 2018. Because of their growing popularity, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) is working to ensure that consumers understand the differences between golf carts and LSVs and the traffic laws and regulations that apply to each.

Florida Statutes defines LSVs as “any four-wheeled vehicle whose top speed is greater than 20 miles per hour, but not greater than 25 miles per hour.” These vehicles must be equipped with certain safety equipment allowing them to be operated on roadways where the posted speed limit is 35 mph or less. In Florida, LSVs are required to be titled, registered, and insured with personal injury protection (PIP) and property damage liability (PDL) coverage.

Anyone operating an LSV is required to have a valid driver license.

Florida law allows golf carts to be driven on designated roadways with a posted speed limit of 30 mph or less. Golf carts are not required to be titled, registered, or insured. Although a driver license is not required, a person must be 14 years or older to operate a golf cart on designated public roadways.

Golf carts can be converted to LSVs. Consumers buying golf carts that have been modified to an LSV, should be aware that the registration and title date will not reflect the actual age of the vehicle. Instead, it indicates the year the vehicle was registered and titled as an LSV. This means the vehicle could be older than the date listed on the title. Prior to purchasing, consumers should ask to see documentation of the manufacture date to verify the age of the vehicle.

Prior to titling and registering a converted golf cart, the vehicle must be inspected and assigned a VIN at a DHSMV Regional Office. The converted golf cart must be street-legal before applying for title and registration.

For more information on LSVs and converted golf carts and the documentation required to title and register these vehicles, visit flhsmv.gov/low-speed-vehicles.
Contemplating the possibility of memory loss in your future is probably something you’d rather not think about. However, having a financial plan for the potential of memory loss could go a long way to maintain the financial stability you’ve worked so hard to reach.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reported that the ability to manage your finances is one of the first daily-life activities to deteriorate with mild cognitive impairment and the beginning stages of memory loss. So, it’s important that you have a plan in place beforehand. Below are some helpful tips to help you get started.

**Make a list of all accounts.** Note all assets, including bank and investment accounts that you have with amounts and contact information. Be sure to include all expenses that you pay every month. Record the amount you pay, the due date, and contact information. This will help you keep track of your finances and provide a roadmap for someone else in the event you need help.

**Consider a power of attorney.** Identify family members or other trusted people that will provide support if you have memory issues and include them in your financial plans.

**Organize vital information.** Keep insurance policies, online account logins and passwords, and contact information for your key contacts (like accountants and health care professionals) in one place so that you or your designated person can easily locate and access the information.

**Know the red flags of financial scams.** Learn how to spot a potential financial scam so that you can protect yourself. Be wary of any unsolicited offers, especially via phone or email, and don’t give out your personal financial information without independently verifying the person’s identity.

You may also find it useful to seek assistance from properly licensed and qualified financial and legal advisers to help you create a plan. Be sure to check the license of any financial-services person or business with the Florida Office of Financial Regulation at [www.flofr.com](http://www.flofr.com) or by calling (850) 487-9687. You should consider having an independent third party to talk to; everyone can benefit from a good sounding board – someone you trust who has nothing to gain or lose from your financial decisions.

The Florida Office of Financial Regulation oversees Florida’s financial services businesses, and we are a valuable financial capability resource. We also offer helpful consumer resources on our website, [www.flofr.com](http://www.flofr.com), where you can find information on financial topics, including how to spot financial scams.
If you have questions concerning this article or anything pertaining to Medicare, please contact SHINE at 1-800-963-5337. SHINE provides free, unbiased health insurance counseling and information to elders and their caregivers. Through a statewide network of trained SHINE counselors, individuals with Medicare-related questions and issues can receive personal and confidential assistance.

SHINE counselors are also associated with the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), whose mission it is to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education. For more information, you may visit our website at floridashine.org.

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NEW MEDICARE CARD DISTRIBUTION IS COMPLETED...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

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FLORIDA OFFICE OF FINANCIAL REGULATION

FINANCIAL WORD SCRAMBLE

1. KBNA
2. ITEDCR
3. TOGRGEAM
4. NOPIZ
5. ONIPSNE
6. TEINRREMET
7. SANSIGV
8. LCNFIIANA
9. CMSA
10. IECRMECBRY
11. ISGPNHHI
12. IVTMNNETSE
13. RETCSSUEII
14. RGIEOTLNUA
15. HRATET
16. UFRAD
17. OEMYN
18. PTRYRUCCRYEONC
19. OCOBRLAL
20. OANL

See answers on Page 22

ELDER UPDATE

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Mail this form to:
Department of Elder Affairs
Elder Update
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-7000

* If you are a current subscriber providing an updated address, please include your previous address in the comments box below.

First Name ___________________________ Last Name ___________________________

Phone Number ___________________________ Year of Birth ___________________________

Business/Organization, if applicable. ________________________________________________

Street Address or P.O. Box No. ___________________________ Apartment/Suite ___________________________

City ___________________________ State ___________________________ Zip Code ___________________________

Florida County ___________________________

Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

*Comments

Or subscribe at elderaffairs.org/doea/elder_update.php
Lorraine Domanski and fellow long-term care ombudsmen investigate complaints made by or on behalf of people living in nursing homes and other long-term care settings. They work to resolve residents’ concerns and to help protect their health, safety, welfare, and rights.

Lorraine discovered the Ombudsman Program shortly after she moved to Florida in the 1990s from a small farming community outside of Buffalo, New York. She quickly grew bored with retirement and began researching ways to volunteer that involved developing a one-on-one connection with elders. Lorraine chose the Ombudsman Program because it would allow her to directly impact elders in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

Twenty years later, Lorraine continues to make one-on-one connections with long-term care residents and shows her care for their well-being by working tirelessly to advocate for them. Lorraine makes a point to stop in and see residents who have developed a connection with her, even if she is in the area on other business.

Lorraine takes time to fully understand residents’ concerns and collaborates with other agencies to resolve complaints to residents’ satisfaction. Lorraine is known by staff and peers for her kindness in reaching out to other volunteers by visiting, calling, and sending cards when they are ill.

Long-term care residents call the office to specifically request Lorraine by name. She can be counted on to help complete other volunteers’ assignments. Her peers describe her as a compassionate advocate who deeply cares for residents. Known for her positive attitude, Lorraine is respected as a mentor to all.

“I think everyone in our council has been mentored by Lorraine at some point,” says West Coast District Ombudsman Manager Annette Perry.

For Lorraine, there is a simple reason for staying with the Ombudsman Program all these years.

“There’s a lot of benefits to volunteering with this program. I like elders and get satisfaction in helping them. I can choose my own schedule and work independently, which is important to me as a retiree who also volunteers for two other organizations. I get to know residents and become a part of their life. It’s very satisfying work,” says Lorraine.

Lorraine describes the desired qualifications of a good ombudsman as follows: “Anyone interested in becoming a long-term care ombudsman must have compassion and the ability to listen well, even if the conversation is lengthy and may be unrelated to what you intended to talk about. You need a desire to help residents have a better life.”

Lorraine hopes that long-term care will change to provide more individual attention, assistance, and activities to residents in a home-like, friendly environment. Her hopes echo the work of Dr. Bill Thomas, one of her role models, who pioneered the philosophy that long-term care facilities can and should be resident centered and home like.

“I’ve seen some facilities try to implement parts of a resident-centered philosophy, like having pets in the facility or allowing the residents to direct things — for example, to spontaneously bake cookies. Of course, not all facilities or residents are able to do things like that. But there are things the facility can try to do to help all residents feel at home,” says Lorraine, “When I ask residents what they dislike the most about being in a long-term care facility, the most common answer I hear is being homesick. They want to go home. It makes sense to help them feel at home in any way.”

Lorraine gives an example of a challenging family dynamic that prevented a resident from moving out of state to be closer to home. Some family members were opposed to the idea and sought to discourage the resident. Lorraine negotiated among relatives in multiple states to resolve differences and satisfy the resident’s wish to move closer to home.

Lorraine does not plan to leave the program anytime soon.

“When I get to where I need to scale back, I will not let this program go until I have to. The satisfaction of helping these residents is immense,” states Lorraine.

“After 20 years of service volunteering with the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, Lorraine has reached an incredible milestone and has our deepest and sincere appreciation,” said State Ombudsman Michael Milliken.
The dedicated volunteers of the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program were asked to share local stories highlighting how a resident was helped by their work. The stories, submitted from all over the state, are bound together by residents who have a better quality of life and increased quality of care due, in part, to the dedicated efforts of volunteer ombudsmen.

**NORTHWEST**
A person with power of attorney contacted the local ombudsman for help with obtaining an overdue refund from a facility. An investigation revealed that the facility had not sent the resident a refund within the required 45 days stipulated in Florida Statutes, Chapter 429.24(3)(a).

The ombudsman informed the facility that it was in its best interest to expedite all refunds, as statutes authorize a fine equal to three times the refund amount if found not in compliance by the licensing agency. The person with power of attorney was made aware that this statute also directs half of the fine imposed to be sent to the resident and then filed a complaint with the licensing agency and has since received a sizeable check along with the refund amount.

**PANHANDLE**
A resident who used a wheelchair did not have access to appropriate transportation, leading to missed doctor appointments and community activities. Facility staff made several promises to obtain transportation for the resident, but months continued to pass with no progress made. The local ombudsman requested receipts from the facility to determine whether a wheelchair-accessible vehicle had been ordered. After discovering a vehicle had not been ordered as promised, the ombudsman arranged a meeting to discuss the situation with corporate representatives of the facility. Within a week of the meeting, a new wheelchair-accessible van displaying the facility name was parked in the lot.

**BROWARD**
Residents complained about dining issues at a facility. The local ombudsman determined most residents liked dining changes introduced by a new chef but wished they could be informed of any changes in advance. The ombudsman found incorrect menus on display and discovered the coffee station had been moved to a new location without residents’ knowledge.

The ombudsman met with the administrator and chef to discuss the residents’ preference to be given advance notice of changes. The ombudsman recommended the chef meet residents to determine what they prefer. In response, the facility began updating menus weekly and residents were able to discuss their dining preferences directly with the chef.

**EDITOR’S NOTE**
We will continue to highlight the successes of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program throughout upcoming issues in the series titled Local Council Success Stories.
**THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS: OUR MISSION, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES…CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9.**

The HCE program provides a subsidy to caregivers of older adults that can be used to pay for food, housing, and medical care.

Consulting with the Agency for Health Care Administration, DOEA also manages PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly), a Medicaid waiver program, which provides a full range of home and community-based services to frail and needy elders, usually in an adult day care setting.

Another program managed by the Department is SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders). SHINE volunteers in each county help elders with health insurance counseling related to Medicare issues, especially prescription drug coverage. SHINE also now manages the Senior Medicare Patrol Program, which seeks to identify, report, and prevent Medicare fraud and abuse.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is managed by a small staff and a large dedicated group of volunteers that advocate for the needs of Florida’s long-term care residents. These volunteers go to nursing homes and assisted living facilities all over Florida to assist residents and their families. Their visits focus on quality-of-life issues, and they work to protect the well-being of some of our most at-risk citizens. DOEA also administers the Office of Public and Professional Guardians, which is responsible for appointing public guardians and overseeing professional guardians who assist those unable to make decisions on their own, working to protect their personal and property rights.

The Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) is a partnership with the 11 Area Agencies on Aging, the 16 Memory Disorder Clinics, and local communities to bring awareness, education, and sensitivity regarding the needs of those affected with dementia and their families. Communities that participate in DCCI form task forces with interested members of the community, aging professionals, and community advocates to create a local plan that can be used to help educate and bring awareness about the ways to develop a more sensitive and safe community for those with dementia and related diseases.

Additional information about DOEA programs can be found in the Summary of Programs and Services online at [http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/sops.php](http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/sops.php). General information and a resource directory are in the Consumer Resource Guide, an easy-to-use publication with subjects of interest to elders, their families, and caregivers. Created to help Floridians find the resources and help they may need, the Consumer Resource Guide also has a directory of national, state, and county agencies that provide information and services to elders. It is available online at [http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/crg.php](http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/crg.php). The Older Floridians Handbook offers legal information about issues affecting elders and their families and can be viewed at [https://www.floridajustice-institute.org/publications/](https://www.floridajustice-institute.org/publications/).

Finding services in your area starts with a call to the Elder Helpline toll-free at 1-800-963-5337, or you may visit [elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php](http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php).

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**SUDOKU SOLUTION**

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2 1 5 3 9 7 6 4 8
8 9 6 1 4 5 3 7 2
3 4 7 2 8 6 9 5 1
5 6 1 4 7 8 9 2 3
9 7 2 5 3 1 4 8 6
4 3 8 9 6 2 7 1 5
6 2 3 7 1 4 8 5 9
7 5 9 8 2 3 1 6 4
1 8 4 6 5 9 2 3 7
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**ANSWERS TO WORD SCRAMBLE ON PAGE 19**

1. BANK
2. CREDIT
3. MORTGAGE
4. PONZI
5. PENSION
6. RETIREMENT
7. SAVINGS
8. FINANCIAL
9. SCAM
10. CYBERCRIME
11. PHISHING
12. INVESTMENT
13. SECURITIES
14. REGULATION
15. THREAT
16. FRAUD
17. MONEY
18. CRYPTOCURRENCY
19. ROBOCALL
20. LOAN
Information and referrals for elder services are available through the Elder Helpline within each county. For the hearing or speech impaired, all Elder Helplines can be accessed through the Florida Relay by dialing 711 from anywhere in Florida.

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

**Northwest Florida**

**Area Agency on Aging, Inc.**
5090 Commerce Park Circle
Pensacola, FL 32505
850-494-7101
(Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging for North Florida, Inc.**
2414 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850-488-0055
(Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington Counties)

**Elder Options**
100 SW 75th Street, #301
Gainesville, FL 32607
352-378-6649
(Aladchua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee and Union Counties)

**ElderSource**
10688 Old St. Augustine Road
Jacksonville, FL 32257
904-391-6600
(Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns and Volusia Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.**
9549 Koger Boulevard North
Gadsden Building, Suite 100
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
727-570-9696
(Pasco and Pinellas Counties)

**Senior Connection Center, Inc.**
8928 Brittany Way Tampa, FL 33619
813-740-3888
(Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee and Polk Counties)

**Senior Resource Alliance**
988 Woodcock Road, Suite 200
Orlando, FL 32803
407-514-1800
(Brevard, Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida**
15201 N. Cleveland Avenue,
Suite 1100
North Fort Myers, FL 33903
239-652-6900
(Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties)

**Your Aging and Disability Resource Center**
4400 North Congress Avenue
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
561-684-5885
(Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties)

**Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County, Inc.**
5300 Hiatus Road
Sunrise, FL 33351
954-745-9696
(Broward County)

**Alliance for Aging, Inc.**
760 NW 107th Avenue, Suite 214
Miami, FL 33172
305-670-6500
(Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties)

If you need information about, or referral to, a service provider outside Florida, call the national Eldercare Locator Service at 1-800-677-1116. An information specialist will assist you Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 11 p.m. Eastern time. For people with Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDDs), all Elder Helplines, as well as the Eldercare Locator Service, can be accessed through Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771.

**FLORIDA ELDER HELPLINE DIRECTORY**

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<td>800-262-2243</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
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**Elder Helpline Can Assist Non-English Speakers**

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

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).
On February 5, the Alzheimer’s Association lit up the Historic Florida Capitol with purple lights to raise awareness for Alzheimer’s disease and prepare for the annual Rally in Tally event. The Alzheimer’s Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer’s care, support, and research. Rally in Tally provides the opportunity for people living with Alzheimer’s disease and their caregivers to meet with state legislators, tell their story, and explain why finding a cure for Alzheimer’s disease is a top priority. The Alzheimer’s Association had over 85 meetings with lawmakers at the State Capitol during this annual event. Activists and advocates travelled from all over the state to participate, wearing purple and bringing awareness to a disease affecting over half a million people throughout the state. Speakers included Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez and several advocates hoping to bring awareness to the disease.

Lieutenant Governor Nuñez spoke on behalf of Governor DeSantis, sharing her support for finding a cure and her personal experiences with Alzheimer’s disease, and ensuring that it is a priority to continue to raise awareness and provide resources for people living with the disease and their caregivers.

Gina Waterhouse, a woman living with early stage Alzheimer’s disease, shared her inspiring story. Waterhouse is an advocate for people living with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers. She is currently going through treatment at Mayo Clinic. She shares her experiences with the stigmas surrounding Alzheimer’s and the fear most people have with talking about it. She hopes that talking about Alzheimer’s disease can erase the stigma surrounding it, so those living with it can embrace the time they have left. She hopes that caregivers and patients have the resources and ability to seek help. Most importantly, she hopes that research continues to find a cure.

Secretary Richard Prudom spoke on behalf of the Department of Elder Affairs focusing on the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI). DCCI is engaging communities throughout Florida to become more dementia caring and continue research to find a cure for Alzheimer’s disease and other types of dementia. With over half a million people living with Alzheimer’s disease in Florida, it is necessary to provide resources for these individuals and their caregivers so that they can live well. Local task forces are implemented throughout the state to focus on making communities more dementia friendly. With these task forces, the goal is to provide more support, care, and understanding to those living with dementia and their caregivers.

Representative Byron Donalds spoke about his experience with dementia within his family and thanked the Alzheimer’s Association for working on the initiatives he supports during the Legislative Session. Representative Matt Willhite shared his passion for bringing Alzheimer’s awareness to the Legislature and the initiative to wear purple on Wednesdays to recognize the disease within the Florida Capitol.

Representative Scott Plakon shared his experience being a caregiver to his wife, who had Alzheimer’s disease. He shared his story of his family’s fight and explained the effect Alzheimer’s has on families and loved ones. He will continue to tell his story to policymakers, and hopes to make an impact on the effects of Alzheimer’s disease.

These activists and advocates spoke about their personal experiences with Alzheimer’s disease. They communicated their passion to find a cure and educate the public on the toll it takes on individuals, families, and caregivers.

As the sun went down, the Historic Capitol changed from white to purple to raise awareness for the thousands of people who are affected by Alzheimer’s disease. The lights shone throughout the night and into the morning for the Rally in Tally Alzheimer’s advocacy event.

Help Is Available:
Alzheimer’s Association
24/7 Helpline: 800-272-3900
Website: alz.org

The Historic Florida Capitol on February 5th
Secretary Richard Prudom speaks in front of the Historic Capitol
The Historic Capitol is lit purple for Alzheimer’s Awareness