

# Elder Update

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 10



## Celebrate Intergenerational Connections

Intergenerational Week  
December 1-7, 2003

**By Nicole Hargraves**  
Volunteer and Intergenerational Initiatives/Department of Elder Affairs

As the holiday season approaches, once again we begin the beloved rituals of preparing our homes to welcome family from both near and far. We will enjoy meals together, catch up on each other's lives, marvel at each generation gathered together, and wish we could see each other more often. It is the time of year that allows us to appreciate the rich cultural heritages, traditions and histories our families share. These relationships enrich our lives and are the foundation that supports each generation.

Traditionally, family has been the common framework for the sharing of values and purpose. When mul-

iple generations live together, knowledge about family and religious and cultural traditions are exchanged. Economic, educational and cultural interdependence are the norm in multigenerational homes. Older family members share responsibility for raising the children, and in turn enjoy the benefits of continued interaction, purpose, enthusiasm, emotional support, and financial assistance from their involvement with other generations.

In our increasingly mobile and technological society, multigenerational families can be rare. The different generations are unlikely to have throughout the year the kind of everyday contact that we share during the holiday season. Many activities that traditionally took place

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## Governor Bush and Secretary White Applaud Florida Retired Educators Association

Volunteers Celebrate Record Year for Volunteer Literacy Services



Members of the Florida Retired educators Association, with Secretary White, present Governor Bush with a check representing volunteer hours produced by the association during 2002-2003.

Governor Jeb Bush and Secretary Terry White met with executive members of the Florida Retired Educators Association (FREA) on September 8, 2003, in honor of International Literacy Day.

Governor Bush accepted a check presented by Margaret Poppell, FREA Literacy Chairman, representing the monetary value of the total volunteer hours generated by the association. Based on the dollar amount used by AARP to calculate the value of volunteer hours, the

association generated \$18,255,671 of "in-kind" service to the State of Florida. The check represented the 1,139,555 volunteer service hours produced by the association during 2002-2003.

"Our state is fortunate to have a vibrant retiree population," said Governor Bush. "Florida's retired residents give our communities a wealth of generosity and knowledge that only a lifetime of experience and dedicated service can provide. I applaud the Florida

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#### Senior Dental Health Week

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## Caregivers Should Adopt Strategies for Improved Health



By Secretary Terry White

November is National Caregiver Month

Providing care for an older person — whether a spouse, parent, or friend — can be a stressful responsibility. I often learn about caregivers who have become so involved in meeting the needs of their loved one that they overlook taking care of themselves. I can appreciate the dedication and love that compels caregivers to feel they must focus completely on the person who needs their care. However, if the caregiver becomes ill as a result of this dedicated focus, and the caregiver suddenly cannot provide care, then the chances are high that the loved one will have to move to a nursing home — the very thing the caregiver was working so hard to avoid.

Having a caregiver is the number one reason that a person can avoid moving to a nursing home for long-term care. This is why the Department of Elder Affairs is committed to providing respite to caregivers — which is the opportunity to take a break to run errands, visit the doctor, or simply rest or to do something fun. These breaks can help caregivers maintain their own health and continue providing care longer.

Two studies provide insight into some ways caregivers can protect their health. One study shows that the stress of caregiving can increase a person's risk for getting a cold. People who report higher levels of stress — especially over

*Continued on page 15*

Please submit your calendar items by the first of the month previous to the event.

## Elder Update

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Elder Update welcomes submissions from readers. However, due to the volume of submissions, acknowledgments cannot be mailed. Articles selected for publication must provide accurate information to Florida's elders about aging-related programs and services and complement the Department's mission. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted material.

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### 2003 Florida Senior Games State Championship

- December 2-7, 2003
- The Villages

Florida senior athletes, age 50 and older, who qualify at one of 22 Florida Senior Games competitions at the local level may register for the Florida Senior Games State Championship. Qualified athletes wishing to participate in the 23 sports and events may request a registration book by calling toll-free 1-866-FL-GAMES (1-866-354-2637) or visit [www.flasports.com](http://www.flasports.com). Six sports are "open" events and do not require a qualifying event at a local senior games competition. These sports are archery, lawn bowling, pickleball, race walk, road race and shooting. Registration fees begin at \$16 and increase in \$3 increments for additional events. Postmark deadline for preregistration for most sports is November 14.

### 2003 Best Practice ExChange

- December 3-4, 2003
- Crowne Plaza Tampa at Sabal Park,  
10221 Princess Palm Avenue,  
Tampa, Florida 33610  
(813) 623-6363 phone  
(813) 621-7224 fax
- **Hotel Reservation Deadline: November 14, 2003**
- **Best Practice ExChange Registration Deadline: November 14, 2003**

On December 3-4, 2003, in Tampa, Florida, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs will host the second Annual Best Practices ExChange Conference to showcase and share Florida's best practices in aging services and programs. Approximately 16-20 best practice models will be presented in 30-minute sessions, and others may be shared through print and electronic means so everyone can benefit from the exchanges of the featured programs gathered from across the state. **SPACE IS LIMITED SO REGISTER TODAY!**

#### This two-day conference will:

- Build a knowledge base of "Best Practices" in Florida
- Help attendees develop their ideas for program innovation
- Enable attendees to walk away with concepts, models, and contacts
- Inspire attendees to introduce change in local communities
- Engage and challenge attendees to learn in new ways

#### Topics to be covered include:

- Intergenerational Initiatives
- Transportation and Non-Driver Alternatives
- Triad/Crime Prevention and Substance Abuse
- Caregiver Support and Guardianship
- Administration and Technology
- Wellness and Disease Prevention

#### Awards to be presented include:

- Department of Elder Affairs Awards
- C. Colburn Hardy Older Advocate Award

For questions, please contact Genelle L. Frazier at (850) 414-2047 or by e-mail at [fraziergl@elderaffairs.org](mailto:fraziergl@elderaffairs.org).

### ST. PETERSBURG

#### Inaugural TriUmpth Classic

- November 16, at 8:00 a.m.
- North Shore Pool,  
901 North Shore Drive

AARP presents the TriUmpth Classic 50+ Swim-Bike-Run, a short-distance triathlon series and the

inaugural TriUmpth Classic National Championship. The TriUmpth Classic events include a 400-meter swim, a 20K bike ride and a 5K run/walk. The TriUmpth National Championship course will feature an 800-meter open water swim in the Gulf of Mexico, a 30K bike ride and a 10K run. For more information, call 1-866-812-AARP or visit [www.aarp.org/triumph](http://www.aarp.org/triumph).



### NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS ONLY!!

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c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))	92,214	66,000
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(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541		
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(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS		
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**Emily Hawker, Editor** Date: **9/11/03**

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PS Form 3526, October 1999 (Reverse)

**YOUR COMMENTS ARE IMPORTANT To Us!**

*We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please let us know how we are doing.*

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Signature and Date



## Spotlighting Shirley Williams, RELIEF Volunteer

*RELIEF (Respite for Elders Living In Everyday Families) Program*

**By Crystal Bartlett**

*Senior Friendship Centers of Lee County*

Shirley Williams became a RELIEF (Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families) volunteer in June 2002. Since that time she has proven herself to be a very compassionate and valuable volunteer. Her clients have grown to depend on her for her warm smile and encouraging words. One client, Ms. K, cannot speak and has limited physical capacity. Ms. K looks forward to Shirley's visits as evidenced by the way that she lights up when Shirley enters the room. They immediately hug when Shirley arrives, and Ms. K never wants to let go.

Ms. K's husband, her caregiver, has said that Shirley is the most wonderful person to have and doesn't know what he would do without her. Shirley has not only been a blessing to the client but to her husband as well. She has helped him with his own isolation by taking the time to talk with him. So many of our caregivers do not have adequate interaction with others because their time and lives are filled with caring for their loved one. They both enjoy her companionship very much and wish there were more volunteers just like Shirley.

Another client of Shirley's is a man who has been diagnosed with

Alzheimer's disease. His wife, who is also his caregiver, cannot leave him alone. Her only break is when someone else is there. She is so appreciative of Shirley's visits, which enable her to leave her home without worry because she knows her husband is receiving the best care.

Shirley truly makes a positive difference in the lives of her clients and their caregivers. Shirley was instrumental in initiating the process of getting one of her client's the in-home services needed to continue living in their own home. When asked why she volunteers, she said, "I just enjoy what I'm doing, and I feel like I am really helping others. My clients make me feel that I am helping them. Not that I need a pat on the back for what I do—I just like doing for people."

Shirley has cared for many clients during the past months and has served more than 950 hours in that short time. Her dedication to the program and to her clients is appreciated more than she will ever know. For those reasons, Shirley is an inspiration to others that they too can make a difference in someone's life by simply giving a little time and having a big heart.

*For more information about the RELIEF Program or if you are interested in volunteering, call 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).*



*Shirley Williams*

### What is RELIEF?

**(Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families)**

Available in 12 counties, the RELIEF program is a volunteer based program that provides caregivers of homebound elders a break from the daily responsibilities of caregiving. In many cases, the only break the caregiver receives is when a RELIEF volunteer visits.

### Tips for Healthy Aging

#### It's Time to Get Your Flu Shot

The U.S. Administration on Aging recommends four things that older adults can do to maximize health throughout the aging process. The first three — staying physically active, eating right, and getting health screenings for diseases such as diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer — should be addressed throughout the year. The fourth, however, must be taken advantage of during the fall months—before flu season starts.

#### Consider Getting Flu and Pneumonia Shots This Fall

Flu-related deaths have increased since late 1970s due to the aging of the population and stronger strains of flu virus. A recent study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (April 2003) states that people who were vaccinated receive the following benefits:

- While the connection between flu and cardiovascular disease is not fully understood, people who are vaccinated reduce their chances of hospitalization for heart disease or stroke.
- People who are vaccinated are...
  - 50 percent less likely to die from any cause.
  - 32 percent less likely to be hospitalized for flu or pneumonia.

#### Who Needs a Flu Shot?

You should get a flu shot if you...

- are age 50 or older.
- are a resident of a nursing home or assisted living facility.
- have chronic heart or lung disease, including asthma.
- have diabetes, kidney disease or weakened immune system.
- are a health care worker.
- are a caregiver of people in high-risk groups.

## FLIPS\* Tips

*Prevention Requires Attention*

- Install grab bars next to toilets and in showers and bathtubs.
- Use a shower or tub chair when bathing.
- Use at least a 60-watt bulb or higher throughout your home.
- Ensure small scatter rugs are taped to the floor and not easily tripped over.
- Remove all clutter and newspapers from the floor.
- All stairs and steps should have sturdy handrails.

\* Florida Injury Prevention for Seniors



*Submitted by Janet I. Lehman*

*FLIPS Coordinator / Department of Elder Affairs*

## SHINE Volunteer Receives Award



Governor Jeb Bush recognized Jan Rauer as a Points of Light Award recipient. Jan (center), with Stephanie Curry (left) and Maureen Kelly, Executive Director of the West Florida Area Agency on Aging, Inc., is a SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Elders) volunteer and Statewide Volunteer Coordinator for the SHINE program.

*"Jan's compassion for*

*the senior citizens of Florida demonstrates her dedication to the SHINE program and its mission," said Governor Bush.*

*The award recognizes exemplary volunteer and community service throughout the state. Volunteer Florida, a governor-appointed commission that promotes volunteerism and service throughout the state, administers the award.*

## Independent Living Adult Program

If your vision loss is affecting your ability to perform everyday activities, the Independent Living Adult Program can assist you. Services may include:

- diagnosis and evaluation to determine eligibility;
- counseling and guidance;
- orientation and mobility training;
- activities of daily living training;
- communications training;
- assistive low vision screening;
- provision of assistive devices;
- advocacy;
- information and referral; and
- peer counseling and support group opportunities.

For more information contact:

### The Division of Blind Services

1320 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100, Atkins Building  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2050

Website: <http://www.state.fl.us/dbs>

State Office: 850-245-0310

District Office: 850-205-0370

# Communities for a Lifetime is now on the Internet!

## Learn more about the initiative and what it means to create a Community for a Lifetime.

- Practical suggestions
- Connect with participating communities
- Clearinghouse of information

[www.communitiesforalifetime.org](http://www.communitiesforalifetime.org)



Since 2000, more than 60 Florida cities, towns and counties have committed themselves to creating a better place for seniors to live, providing all residents with the opportunity to achieve their full potential and contribute to the betterment of their communities.

Our Values

Compassion

Accountability

Caregiver Support

Quality

Intergenerational

Partnerships

Diversity

JEB BUSH  
Governor

TERRY WHITE  
Secretary



- What Is a Community for a Lifetime?
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Areas of Discovery
- Start an Initiative in Your Area
- Toolkit
- Participating Communities
- Best Practices
- News
- Grant Opportunities
- Links



*If you are planning for a year, sow rice;  
If you are planning for a decade, plant trees;  
If you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.*  
- Chinese proverb

For more information on the Communities for a Lifetime initiative, contact the Florida Department of Elder Affairs by phone at (850)414-2000 or by e-mail at [communities@elderaffairs.org](mailto:communities@elderaffairs.org).

## SHINE Success Story Senior Gets Connected to Blind Services

Irene Brzozowski, a SHINE Volunteer believes miracles can happen. As a Certified Nurses Aide (CNA) trainer for the Charlotte County Council on Aging, Irene invited her CNA students to a SHINE-sponsored seminar. Irene was scheduled to present information on the SHINE program at the Visually Impaired Persons office in Port Charlotte, Florida. One of the CNA students brought her mother to the seminar so that she could learn about health plan options available in Charlotte County.

Previously, the CNA student had tried to get assistance for her mother but was not sure where to go or whom to call. It was at the SHINE seminar where she learned about her Medicare rights and the options available for her health insurance needs. Besides receiving Medicare information booklets in Braille, her mother was able to get assistance through Division of Blind Services. Arrangements were also made for her to receive a computer for the visually impaired and attend special education classes.

A guide dog is on its way to join the student's mother at home and provide assistance with day-to-day activities. According to Irene, "The miracle happened when SHINE information was combined with resources available at the Visually Impaired Persons office. This woman now feels good about herself and is living her dream of being able to make her own choices and becoming an active member within her community."

For more information about SHINE or the Division of Blind Services, contact the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).



## Sunshine For Seniors Program Launches January 2004

Submitted by Beverly Paris  
Project Director, Sunshine for Seniors  
Program / Florida Department of  
Elder Affairs

Beginning January 2004, a new program will be launched that will enable eligible seniors in Florida to learn how to get a break on the costs of their prescriptions. The Florida Legislature has mandated, through the Department of Elder Affairs and in coordination with the Agency for Health Care Administration, a service to be offered to seniors that will help them access current pharmaceutical assistance programs. The 2003 Legislature appropriated funding for the new prescription assistance program. This program enhances the existing Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program's service.

The new Sunshine for Seniors Program is designed to help seniors take advantage of existing pharmaceutical assistance programs now being offered by many companies. These programs may enable lower-income individuals to pay less for their prescriptions. These programs are available to seniors age 60 and older, and offer prescription drugs at discount prices or at no cost to the consumer. Eligibility is established by criteria established by the pharmaceutical manufacturers, and with many consumers utilizing multiple prescriptions, the existing application procedures can be cumbersome for consumers.

The Sunshine for Seniors Program volunteers, known as prescription

assistance specialists, will provide information about available prescription programs, help elders determine their eligibility and assist with the application process if needed. If it is determined that the consumer is ineligible for one program, the counselor may provide information about other applicable prescription programs. These volunteers will be located in the SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Elders) offices throughout the state as well as other locations, which will be publicized once established. Senior consumers may also call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337) and ask for a Sunshine for Seniors volunteer/SHINE Counselor.

Through the existing infrastructure of SHINE, the Department of Elder Affairs is expanding services that will address one of the main concerns seniors have today — how they can afford their prescriptions. This very important project will provide a much-needed service to our senior community. As Florida's older adults become aware of and take advantage of available programs that will enable them to better afford their medications, the stress of having to stretch a tight budget will be significantly reduced. The intent of Sunshine for Seniors is to help elders reach that goal and enjoy better health and quality of life.

Information on Sunshine for Seniors will be available soon. For other beneficial senior program information, log on to the Department of Elder Affairs Web site at <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us>.

**SHINE Services Available Statewide**

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) is a free insurance counseling program designed for elders and their caregivers.

Highly trained volunteers assist elders with their health insurance questions. If you need assistance with Medicare, Medicaid, or health-related insurance, a SHINE volunteer counselor can help.

**Call 800/963-5337**  
The Florida Elder Helpline can direct you to the SHINE site nearest you.

### What Is SHINE? (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Elders)

The existing SHINE Program is a statewide volunteer-based program that educates seniors about health insurance options thus enabling them to make more informed decisions in choosing the best insurance coverage. SHINE has been providing services since 1993 and is funded through a federal grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Approximately 450 trained volunteers offer counseling and assistance with health insurance issues. These volunteers also provide education through presentations to community groups. Education efforts focus on health promotion, consumer protection and beneficiary rights.

To contact a SHINE counselor, call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).



## Talking Books Make Reading Easy

by Greg Carlson

Library Program Administrator/Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Library Services, Division of Blind Services

"It's a grand thing," said 81-year-old Audrey Griffey of Holly Hill, Florida. A lifelong reader with an appetite for mysteries and westerns, her failing vision eight years ago threatened to take away the stories she loved so much. That is, until her daughter introduced her to audiocassettes from the Library of Congress talking book program. "I am enjoying my recorded books now more than ever," she added.

Talking books appeal to people of all ages who can no longer use standard print after a temporary or permanent visual, physical, or reading disability. Registered individuals and institutions in Florida select from more than 50,000 book titles and more than 70 subscription magazines on audiocassette and in Braille. All reading materials are delivered and returned via the U.S. postal service with no postage necessary, and all services are free.

The Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Library Services (Library) located in Daytona Beach is the talking book program hub in Florida. The Library is a state agency administered by the Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services. Subregional libraries contribute local services and outreach in 11 metropolitan areas from Pensacola to Miami.

While Griffey values talking books as a diversion from the sometimes unpleasant events of modern life, 90-year-old Mary Gallagher of Port Orange finds companionship in the program. "When my eyes started going from macular degeneration I was frightened — what would I do with my time?" she wondered. A neighbor suggested she sign up for talking books and the results were "absolutely wonderful." She is never alone with a book at her bedside. "It saved my sanity," she said.

Both readers choose their talking books with the assistance of library staff members who are familiar with

their reading preferences. Those who want to select books on their own can browse large type, cassette, Braille, or computer diskette talking book catalogs. The Library also offers an online catalog that is compatible with screen readers and other computer access devices for people with disabilities.

### A Variety of Books and Videos Available

Award-winning narrators read talking books word for word from print originals. Popular authors such as Danielle Steel, Louis L'Amour, and John Grisham are perennial customer favorites, although the talking book collection offers a full range of reading interests. Magazine choices include *National Geographic*, *Southern Living*, and *Consumer Reports* — even *Elder Update*.

Many customers with limited vision also enjoy described videos as part of their talking book service. The process adds descriptions of visual elements such as costuming and gestures to the pauses between scenes. Hundreds of Hollywood films and PBS programs are available. The Library recently added the first descriptive DVDs to its collection of items for loan. In addition, the Library of Congress provides direct service to talking book customers who need music materials such as large type scores, musical instrument instruction on cassette, or a course in music appreciation on audiocassette.

The Library also loans machines designed to play talking books, which are not compatible with standard cassette players. Customers may also borrow pillow speakers and other machine accessories from the Library to enhance their listening experience.

Nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult day care centers, and other facilities may choose to maintain a deposit collection, or mini-library, for the use of residents who qualify for talking books. An activity director or other staff member determines how many cassette players and books are necessary to meet local needs. Once started, a

deposit collection requires little intervention or attention to run smoothly.

The benefits of a deposit collection include the following:

- The therapeutic value of reading is available to residents even if they can no longer see standard print or hold a book;
- Talking book services demonstrate a commitment to resident quality of life;
- Talking books create programming opportunities such as audio book clubs; and
- Residents who are eligible for the program can try out the service before registering as individual customers.

Ms. Griffey and Ms. Gallagher invite older adults who can no longer use printed books to try the talking book program. They adjusted to reading in a new way, and think anyone can do the same. For Ms. Gallagher, a self-described bookworm, talking books has kept her connected to the joy of reading. "It changed my life for the better," she said.

### For More Information

The Talking Book Library offers excellent volunteer opportunities for older adults in the Daytona Beach area. Volunteers assist paid staff in producing audio and Braille materials, preparing cassette books for mailing to customers, repairing talking book playback equipment, and other tasks important to service provision. Contact volunteer coordinator Doug Hall at 1-800-226-6075, ext. 6040, for more information about volunteering at the library. Individuals and groups are welcome.

Florida residents may request an application form for talking book services by calling the Library at 1-800-226-6075. The application is also available on the Web (<http://www.state.fl.us/dbs/library/default.shtml>), and can be printed out, completed, and then mailed to the Bureau for immediate processing. In the case of visual or physical disability, a doctor, nurse, social worker, librarian, or other professional may certify applicants as eligible for the program. 🐾

Access the Department of Elder Affairs

# On The INTERNET

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us>

Part of the  
**MyFlorida.com**  
effort to serve you better

**An Important Announcement About Our Web Page**  
Tell your Spanish-speaking friends:  
Our Web site is now accessible in Spanish.  
<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/ancianos.html>

To access the Department of Elder Affairs from [www.MyFlorida.com](http://www.MyFlorida.com), click on "Find an Agency" and then on "Elder Affairs."



## Experience Works Honors Senior Workers

**E**xperience Works is a national, nonprofit organization that offers training, employment and community service opportunities for mature adults. The organization began the Prime Time Awards Program in 1998 as a way to recognize people age 65 and older who contribute to their communities and keep healthy by working. The Prime Time Awards Program includes three categories: Oldest Worker, Outstanding Older Worker and Outstanding Employer of Older Workers.

In Florida, Jessie Bradley, Elaine Bartelt and Tallahassee Senior Services received awards at the state level.

### Jessie O. Bradley

*One of America's Oldest Workers*

Ms. Bradley has distinguished herself in her community as a teacher and a musician. At age 101, she is still a piano teacher with five pupils. One 12-year-old girl, who has been her student for seven years, enjoys a special relationship with her mentor.

She worked as a nursing assistant at the Florida State Hospital in Chattahoochee and saved enough money to go to high school. Her determination to get an education turned into a lifetime commitment to make certain the children of her community received an education also. She opened Wilson's Kindergarten in 1936 and for 44 years she taught the children of Chattahoochee how to count, read and write. She continued her education, graduating from the Chicago School of Nursing with training in Practical Nursing and Child Care in 1947.

She began singing at age four and music has in her words "calmed my fears and soothed my sorrows." She taught vocal music lessons for 31 years and served as director for the Sunshine Band of the Union Baptist Association for 57 years. Her desire to "leave some footprints

on the side of time" affirms her dedication to serving others.

### Elaine Bartelt

*Florida's Outstanding Older Worker*

Recently retiring from 15 years as executive director of Big Bend Hospice, Ms. Bartelt led the agency's expansion from four patients in a one county area to 200 patients daily in eight counties. Under her leadership, a thriving group of caregivers have come together to provide quality, compassionate care.

Beth Fulford, who nominated Ms. Bartelt, says, "When discussing any issue regarding Big Bend Hospice, the ultimate decision and desires reflect, 'What do you think Elaine would want us to do?' Her charm and wit are endearing, her knowledge is humbling and her professionalism unmatched. There are few, I feel, at any age, which match the stamina and expectations of Elaine Bartelt."

Elaine is involved on multiple community panels, including the Panhandle Area AIDS Consortium, the Florida Council of Community Mental Health and the United Partners of Human Services. She is also a member of the United Church in Tallahassee and is an active member in her community. Elaine has received many awards, including the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation for Cancer Research Women of Distinction Award and the Leadership Tallahassee Award.

### Tallahassee Senior Services

*Florida's Outstanding Employer of Older Workers*

Tallahassee Senior Services promotes a positive older worker image by providing many opportunities for senior adults to continue to use their valuable talents and skills in the work place. Senior receptionists use their customer service training to make newcomers feel welcome. Center visitors are impressed with the variety of activities and programs



*From left to right: Jessie O. Bradley, Jerry Duewel of Experience Works, Elaine Bartelt, Sheila Salyer of Tallahassee Senior Services, Barbara Smith-Fisher of Experience Works, Lana Brown of Experience Works, Deputy Secretary Susan Tucker and JoAnn Williams of the Department of Elder Affairs.*

offered, many being led or taught by senior volunteers and workers. Seniors are encouraged to develop new skills that could be beneficial in today's workplace, such as computer skills, writing and conversational Spanish.

Older workers' job descriptions are written to best match their skills and interests with the tasks to be accomplished. For example, one senior worker (age 83) is classified

as support staff. However she also has exceptional communication and writing skills and is often assigned public relations' duties, such as writing feature articles and escorting media and dignitaries when they visit the center.

All Senior Services staff show extra respect and sensitivity to senior workers, while at the same time, senior workers are treated as an equal part of staff team. 🐾



## Elder Affairs Recognizes Older Workers

**T**he Department of Elder Affairs recognized older workers by presenting the following awards: George Williams (right), Senior Clerk, won the Outstanding Older Worker Award for his leadership, dedication and commitment to the Department's mission; and Nancy Avirom, Administrative Assistant, won the Unsung Hero Award for coordinating with all levels of staff and assisting co-workers with a generous and helpful attitude.



## St. Johns County's Donna Fee Named Case Manager of the Year

By Lisa Love

St. Johns County Council on Aging

Since joining the St. Johns County Council on Aging in December 2000, Donna Fee has worked diligently to develop new and innovative ways to meet the needs of the elders she cares for. Recognizing the importance of allowing elders to age with dignity in their own homes, Donna is a strong advocate of community and home-based services for the elderly. Donna assists seniors in St. Johns County access services such as personal care, homemaking, respite care and home-delivered meals.

Understanding that traditional resources do not stretch far enough to meet the need of all seniors who request them, Donna established an emergency fund in December 2001. These funds cover supplies and services for clients who may not be eligible for assistance through government-funded programs. All of the additional funds raised have gone directly to client assistance.

Donna was also instrumental in establishing the agency's "Adopt-A-Senior" program in December 2002. This innovative program has also raised additional funds for direct client assistance.

Donna also develops resources within the community to support services for seniors. She serves as a voice for seniors on both the Habitat for Humanity committee and the Community Task Force. She works with local groups and businesses in identifying ways they can help, particularly during the holiday season.

Donna's case management team considers each elder as an individual

with the right to make decisions and as a partner in obtaining services. The goal of the team is to assess the client's true needs, using advocacy and creative resources to meet those needs. An evident characteristic of Donna's team is their commitment to and support for each other. They share the same respect and sensitivity with the seniors they serve. Regular training, team meetings and problem-solving sessions keep the team motivated and on track, with the mission to serve the elderly always the highest priority.

Donna's inspiration to work with the elderly came from her experiences with her own grandmother. Crippled with rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis, Donna's grandmother, Virginia, lived with her family until her death at age 94. Although she was bedridden for the last years of her life, she was always a source of wisdom and unconditional love. This early awareness of both the great resource and the suffering of the elderly gave Donna the desire to focus her career on helping the elderly.

"Case managers are sometimes told to stay objective and to distance themselves emotionally from their clients," says Donna. "However, I believe that true compassion and caring bring about positive results in both the elder and the case manager." Indeed, compassion for and commitment to the elders she serves is certainly evident in all aspects of Donna's life. She is a tremendous asset to the elders of St. Johns County and an inspiration to her co-workers, colleagues and friends. 🐦



Donna Fee, Social Services Manager for the St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc., serves clients like the late Mildred Peacock (left), a former client and friend.

### SAVE MONEY ON YOUR LOCAL PHONE SERVICE

The **Lifeline Assistance Program** provides up to a **\$13.50** credit on qualified residential customers' local monthly phone bills, including a federal credit of up to **\$10.00** and a matching credit from their telephone company of up to **\$3.50**.

**Link-Up Florida** provides up to a **50%** reduction in the telephone service hook-up charge, to a maximum of **\$30.00**, making telephone service affordable to low-income consumers in our state.

You may be eligible for savings if you receive benefits under one of these programs:

- ◆ Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- ◆ Food Stamps
- ◆ Medicaid
- ◆ Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- ◆ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ◆ Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- ◆ Bureau of Indian Affairs programs:
  - Tribal TANF
  - Head Start Subsidy
  - National School Lunch Program

You may also be eligible for benefits if your household income is no more than 125% of the federal poverty income guidelines.

LIFELINE  
ASSISTANCE



LINK-UP  
FLORIDA

#### PROGRAMS

If you have questions about eligibility, or would like to sign-up for either of these programs, please check the front pages of your telephone directory and

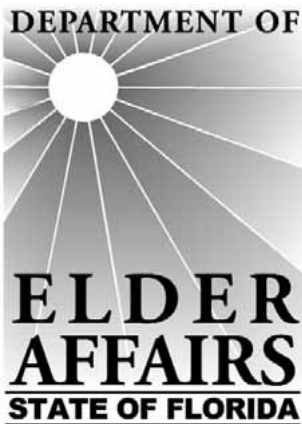
**CALL YOUR LOCAL TELEPHONE COMPANY**

Or the Florida Public Service Commission at 1-800-342-3552.

[www.floridapsc.com](http://www.floridapsc.com)

### About the Award

Donna Fee, Social Services Manager for the St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc., was named Case Manager of the Year at the 2003 Florida Association of Aging Services Providers Best Provider Awards Program. The award, recognizing Donna as a "tireless crusader" on behalf of the elders she serves, was presented in Orlando on August 12, 2003.



### Mission Statement

*To create an environment that provides choices, promotes independence and enables older Floridians to remain in their communities for a lifetime.*

### Vision: Golden Choices

*To lead the nation in assisting elders to age in place, with dignity, purpose, security, and in an elder-friendly community.*

### Values


- Compassion
- Accountability
- Caregiver Support
- Quality
- Intergenerational
- Partnerships
- Diversity

## Alzheimer's Month Raises Awareness

**By Natalie K. Kelly, M.S.**  
*Public Policy Director  
Alzheimer's Association of Florida*

Twenty-one years ago President Ronald Reagan invited the Alzheimer's Association to the White House to launch a national campaign against Alzheimer's disease. President Reagan proclaimed November as National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease, highlight people with the disease and their families, and emphasize the importance of finding treatments, preventions, and a cure. In an irony of history, over a decade later, President Reagan publicly announced his personal struggle with the disease, becoming one of the four million Americans who now have the disease. We must continue this fight in efforts to change the lives of people with dementia and create a world without Alzheimer's disease.

As a world leader in Alzheimer research and support, the Alz-

heimer's Association has worked tirelessly for more than 20 years to conquer Alzheimer's disease. Through our 29 local offices around Florida, we offer a full spectrum of services, including information and referral, care, consultation, educational programs, support groups, and our Safe Return Program. For more information, contact your local Alzheimer's Association Chapter or call 1-800-272-3900. 

## 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease

The Alzheimer's Association, a leader in the fight against Alzheimer's, has developed 10 warning signs to help people recognize symptoms of dementia. An early diagnosis of Alzheimer's or a related disorder is an important step in getting treatment, care, and support services.

- 1 Memory loss.**  
One of the most common early signs of dementia is forgetting recently learned information, such as appointments, names, or telephone numbers.
- 2 Difficulty performing familiar tasks.**  
People with dementia often find it hard to complete everyday tasks that are so familiar we do them without thinking.
- 3 Problems with language.**  
A person with Alzheimer's often forgets simple words or substitutes unusual words, making his or her speech hard to understand.
- 4 Disorientation to time and place.**  
People with Alzheimer's may get lost, forgetting where they are, how they got there, or how to get back home.
- 5 Poor or decreased judgment.**  
An individual with Alzheimer's may use poor judgment, spending money on unnecessary items or wearing clothes inappropriate for the weather.
- 6 Problems with abstract thinking.**  
A person with Alzheimer's may have problems with abstract concepts, such as knowing what to do with the numbers in a checkbook.
- 7 Misplacing things.**  
A person with Alzheimer's disease may misplace items, putting things in unusual places and not remembering how they got there.
- 8 Changes in mood or behavior.**  
Someone with Alzheimer's disease can show rapid mood swings—from calm to tears to anger—for no apparent reason.
- 9 Changes in personality.**  
A person with Alzheimer's may experience profound personality changes, becoming very confused, suspicious, or dependent on a family member.
- 10 Loss of initiative.**  
The person with Alzheimer's disease may become very passive, sleeping more than usual or not wanting to do usual activities.

For more information or to locate the chapter nearest you, contact the Alzheimer's Association.

Toll-free 24 hours a day: (800) 272-3900  
Web site: [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)  
E-mail: [info@alz.org](mailto:info@alz.org)





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*Supporting Dementia Caregivers*

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- Find caregiver resources in your area
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- Regular interactive phone presentations featuring speakers from a variety of healthcare and service organizations.
- Helpful and professional staff sensitive to the needs of today's caregiver

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# Alzheimer's Disease Initiative

*18 years and counting!*

By **Francine Parfitt**  
and

**Mary Ellen Ort-Marvin**  
*Alzheimer's Disease Initiative  
Committee Members*

Though researchers are still working to find a cure for Alzheimer's, there has been a great deal of progress during the last 18 years in the diagnosis, research and treatment of Alzheimer's and memory disorders.

The Florida Legislature created the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI) in 1985 to provide a continuum of services to meet the changing needs of individuals and families dealing with Alzheimer's disease and related memory disorders, and their families. In conjunction with a 10-member advisory committee appointed by the Governor, the program includes four components:

- Memory disorder clinics to provide diagnosis, research, treatment and referral.
- Supportive services including counseling, consumable medical supplies and respite for caregiver relief.
- Model day care programs to test new care alternatives.
- A research database and brain bank to support research.

## Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Committee

Fran Carlin-Rogers, *Chair*  
Orlando  
Susan Leger-Krall, *Macclenny*  
Sherry King, M.D., *Jacksonville*  
Linda Groene, M.D.,  
Ft. Lauderdale  
Juergen Bludau, M.D.,  
West Palm Beach  
Michelle Bourgeois, Ph.D.,  
Tallahassee  
H. Murray Todd, M.D.,  
Lighthouse Point  
Pamela Quarles, *Jacksonville*

*November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month*



## ADI Advisory Committee

As the official body (under Section 430.501, Florida Statutes) that advises the Department regarding legislative, programmatic and administrative matters that relate to Alzheimer's disease, the ADI Advisory Committee represents the interests of thousands of stakeholders across the state. Under the leadership of Committee Chair Fran Carlin-Rogers, this group has expanded its structure to address a broader array of issues affecting people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers.

ADI Advisory Committee meetings are held quarterly and are open to the public.

## ADI Memory Disorder Clinics

In Florida, some of the most respected and internationally renowned researchers and practitioners in the Alzheimer's field work at 13 memory disorder clinics and other research facilities where services, training and research opportunities are available.

## Services

Memory disorder clinics provide clients with comprehensive diagnostic services. Diagnosing a memory problem is a complex and intricate process requiring highly trained specialists with a keen understanding of geriatrics, behavioral neurology, and

the willingness to utilize a team approach.

In addition to clinical assessment, the memory disorder clinic teams:

- Identify treatable and reversible disorders that can often mimic dementia.
- Identify and design care plans for treatment of other conditions which may compound the concurrent illness.
- Evaluate and identify the needs of individuals and family members so that appropriate referrals may be made for support services.

Each clinic provides a complete diagnostic assessment and an individualized care plan. Neuro-psychological tests measure memory, thinking skills and assist the professional team, the family and client in understanding both the strengths and weaknesses of the current cognitive status.

## Training

A vital component of memory disorder clinics is providing specialized

*Continued on page 3*

## Florida's Memory Disorder Clinics

University of South Florida  
(813) 974-3100

University of Florida  
(352) 392-3491

University of Miami  
(305) 243-4082

The Wien Center  
(305) 674-2543

North Broward Memory  
Disorder Center  
(954) 786-7392

East Central Florida  
(321) 768-9575

Mayo Clinic Jacksonville  
(904) 953-7103

West Florida Hospital  
(850) 494-6497

St. Mary's Neuroscience Center  
(561) 882-6363

Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare  
(850) 431-5001

Orlando Regional Healthcare  
(407) 843-7880

Lee Memorial Health System  
(239) 334-5768

Sarasota Memorial Hospital  
(941) 917-7197

*Call for locations or visit the  
Department of Elder Affairs Web  
site at <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us>.*



# Behavioral Challenges in Long-Term Care

## *The Problem, Some Solutions*

By Sue Leger-Krall, ARNP, Ph.D.  
and

Juergen Bludau, M.D.  
*Alzheimer's Disease Initiative  
Committee Members*

The Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI) Committee last year created a task force in response to members of our service and provider network sharing the problems that develop when people with dementia have catastrophic reactions. Because of the resulting behavioral problems that occur, it often becomes difficult, if not impossible, to allow the person with dementia to continue living in their current environment.

Long-term care facilities cite the reasons of safety and liability for other residents, and families are faced with the dilemma of where to turn for alternative placement. While this situation can affect residents in all long-term care settings, the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI) Committee focused on these problems as they occur in nursing homes, since this group of residents are at greatest risk for being discharged and not allowed to return to the facility.

The task force, composed of experts in dementia care, attempted to develop a Best Practice model of care for dealing with this issue, focusing on three areas: dementia unit protocols, community resources, and dealing with agitation and delirium.

The committee recommends that prevention of catastrophic reactions should include a long-term care philosophy that is person-centered and committed to dementia care, administrative leaders with dementia knowledge and skills, and an understanding that catastrophic events are not always preventable—but many times are predictable. Long-term care units should pay particular attention to the following factors.



### **Environmental Factors**

Especially important are noise levels, lighting, safety factors such as crowding, and barriers to safe walking. Units should also have specific programs that meet the needs of residents with dementia, especially creative client-centered activities.

### **Resident Factors**

**Admission:** The admission process is crucial. Care providers need previous life history as well as all medical diagnoses, previous experience and response to psychotropic medications, and an accurate, formal diagnosis of dementia.

**Treatment:** The care plan should include treatment of any coexisting psychiatric conditions such as psychosis, depression, agitation or aggression, as well as physical conditions that are correctable such as pain, hunger, or infection.

**Psychological Issues:** Identify distress behaviors such as unexplainable screaming that might respond to environmental and/or medication management. Staff should emphasize the caregiving environment (people and places), focusing on the individual's remaining abilities rather than the deficits.

**Spiritual Issues:** Continued involvement in religious rituals can

be comforting if the person still maintains some contextual understanding.

### **Staff Factors**

Staffing plans should include appropriate numbers of staff for the resident's level of dementia as well as consistent resident assignments.

Staff should be proactive in preventing catastrophic behaviors by being prepared for catastrophic behavior and having ready solutions in mind. Redirection and reframing skills should be reviewed frequently.

Administration should empower staff, especially direct-care CNAs to use creative problem-solving skills. This element requires constant dialogue between all staff and administration.

### **Education Factors**

Direct-care staff should receive frequent training on how to problem-solve a crisis situation as well as how to deflect a potential adverse incident, with constant reinforcement by unit leadership. Staff should demonstrate a focused attempt to determine the "meaning" behind reactive behaviors.

### **Emergency Situations**

When a resident becomes a danger to self or others, staff should have knowledge and familiarity

with community resources, especially geriatric psychiatric services. A knowledgeable and committed staff may be able to circumvent many adverse incidents with careful planning and follow through. When all plans fail, a Baker Act transfer may be required—but should be used as a last resort, not as an initial plan. For this reason, it is a good idea to have a facility plan/protocol for Baker Act use and a staff member on-call who understands Baker Act procedures.

The ADI Committee also identified that nursing homes should become part of the community in which they reside, and conversely, communities groups such as churches and schools should be encouraged to interact with nursing home residents. Nursing homes can also become partners in community projects such as the *Communities for a Lifetime* initiative and Triad, a program that primarily works with seniors and law enforcement for crime prevention. Nursing homes should focus on training and linkages with other agencies. Training can include accessing a myriad of resources, such as Web sites, various Alzheimer's associations, and training manuals already developed by the state (for example, the Alzheimer's Disease Training Manual developed by the Department of Elder Affairs in 1996).

Lastly, many times a change in behavior may be an indicator of a catastrophic event. A group of physicians decided to develop and evaluate a tool for CNAs to use in the day-to-day care of residents. This tool could be used as the basis for improved communication between nursing aides and nurses, and also between the nurse and physicians.

*Dr. Sue Leger-Krall is the Director of Research and Community Clinical Services at River Garden Hebrew Home in Jacksonville. Dr. Juergen Bludau is the Medical Director of Morse Geriatric Center in West Palm Beach.*

# Research on Alzheimer's Helps Diagnosis and Treatment

By H. Murray Todd, M.D.  
Neurologic Consultants PA

During the past few years, there has been a marked increase in the number of patients suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Because of this seeming epidemic of this disastrous disorder, intense research has taken place concerning the diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

There has been some excitement in regards to the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease by way of spinal fluid analysis. The spinal fluid bathes the brain and, therefore, any substance within the spinal fluid can be measured from a lumbar spinal tap removal of fluid. Patients with Alzheimer's disease have two abnormal proteins, tau and amyloid. Recent spinal fluid analysis on patients suspected of having Alzheimer's disease have shown a fairly characteristic change in the amount of amyloid and tau that is present in the spinal fluid. There also has been some suggestion that measurement of these two proteins in the spinal fluid of patients with dementia of unknown origin may assist in the differential diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias. Unfortunately, the specificity and sensitivity of this particular assessment is still not good enough to rely accurately on establishing the proper diagnosis.

Another diagnostic endeavor involves the use of a chemical called PIB, which is able to get into the brain and attach itself to the amyloid protein. This has been studied, at this time, only in mice that have been genetically changed to have excessive amyloid in their brains. The analysis of PIB is made through the use of a PET scan, a form of computerized scan that evaluates radioactive substances. If indeed this process works in human beings, one would be able to inject the PIB



substance into the human and ask that the PET be performed to see if there is excessive uptake of the PIB in the brain. This would indicate, indirectly, increased amyloid deposits and therefore would suggest the presence of Alzheimer's disease. Hopefully, by this mechanism, patients will be able to be evaluated

for what is called mild cognitive impairment (MCI), which in many cases turns out to be a precursor of full-blown Alzheimer's disease. It would be imperative to find these cases prior to the onset of Alzheimer's disease in order that we could impact the process by medical intervention.

Another theory of brain degeneration relates to overexcitation on nerve cells. This excessive excitement, so-called excitotoxicity, results in nerve cell death and may play a role in the development of Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias. A new compound, Memantine, recently received approval from the Food and Drug Administration. This is a product that does not work like an acetylcholinesterase inhibitor, but does tend to block the excessive excitement of nerve cells and, therefore, decrease excitotoxicity.

Hopefully, in the near future, better means of diagnosing dementia and related disorders will become available. In addition, not only will the diagnosis be more clear-cut, but I am confident we will have beneficial treatments for these disorders that at present are free to ravish our cognitive abilities. ❧

## Alzheimer's Disease Initiative

*Continued from page 1*

training for family members, health care professionals and special care units and programs focusing on dementia.

Training topics may include:

- Diagnostic skills.
- Care management strategies.
- Stress reduction techniques for caregivers.
- Facts about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.
- Legal and financial issues to assist families in planning for the future.
- Accessing community resources.
- Ethical considerations such as hospice, long-term care placement and end-of-life issues.

### Research

Florida Statutes require memory disorder clinics to conduct research

in a diagnostic and therapeutic setting. It is through research that the ability to understand and solve the mystery of dementia exists.

### ADI Caregiver Support

In addition, a dedicated network of service providers offers much-needed respite and supportive services to family members and caregivers. The Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI) was one of the first programs in the nation to fund services to directly benefit caregivers.

For example, Alzheimer's Community Care of Palm Beach and Martin Counties provides a variety of dementia-specific services, including more than nine adult day health care centers. Share the Care, Inc. in Central Florida provides varied support to caregivers, including an

annual forum attended by hundreds of family caregivers. These programs and many others in Florida started small with ADI support and have since grown to serve caregivers through various federal, state and local funding sources.

In spite of these advances, there is still a need for ADI services. ADI is the only service administered by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs which is not age-eligible because Alzheimer's and other dementing illnesses are not exclusive to those age 60 and older.

For more information on the committee or on the ADI programs and services, please contact the Department of Elder Affairs at (850) 414-2000 or visit <http://elder-affairs.state.fl.us> (click on "Alzheimer's Assistance"). ❧





By **Fran Carlin-Rogers**  
*Consultant, Senior Resource Alliance  
and*

**Selma B. Sauls**  
*Department of Highway Safety and  
Motor Vehicles*

Florida estimates having more than 418,000 residents with probable Alzheimer's disease, with many others experiencing problems with the early signs of memory loss. Because of our society's dependency upon cars, it is very likely that some drivers are dealing with the effects of cognitive impairment or memory loss. While it is not appropriate to remove an individual's driving privileges in the early stages of the disease, driving is certainly a skill that erodes over time for those experiencing memory loss. Caution must be taken to watch for warning signs and to know when safety becomes a concern.

The task of driving an automobile is a very complex one. It relies on many cognitive abilities, such as vision, reaction time, problem solving and judgment, attention and perception. When we drive, we use these skills simultaneously. This complexity can present a significant challenge to the safety of drivers with cognitive impairment and create risk to the driver and others.

Research findings tell us that a driver with cognitive impairment is seven times more likely than another driver of the same age without memory loss to be in an at-fault crash. We also know that an older driver who is involved in an accident is much more likely to sustain serious injury or to die due to physical frailty. Additionally, the driving environment has become increasingly complex and difficult to navigate during the past several decades, increasing the risks to a dementia driver even more.

### Special Concerns

Since memory loss or dementia is a progressive disease, there are several concerns that place these drivers at increased risk. First, those affected

## A Driver in the Family with Memory Loss? Use Caution!

experience a loss of insight. They may not be aware at all that their driving skills are changing. They also tend to overestimate their abilities and underestimate the complexity of the driving task. Many may not restrict their driving as others do when they know that they do not drive as well or as safely as they once did. A driver with memory loss may experience confusion about the traffic environment and a lack of recognition of traffic situations (for example, stops in an intersection at a green light). Because the disease can be highly variable, they may drive well on one occasion and dangerously on others.

### Role of Family and Friends

If there is a concern about safety of a driver who is experiencing memory loss, there are several important actions which family members and friends can take:

1. Do not wait until there is an accident to start addressing the issue. Pay attention to near misses, close calls and fender benders where no significant damage is done. Often, there are warning signs of a problem long before a major event occurs.
2. Talk about driving. Feedback on driving is very important, as a person with memory loss may not know that skills are changing or when problems are developing. Go for a ride with your family member. Would you go again or allow children or grandchildren to go?
3. Do not rely on the passenger who is riding "shotgun" to make things safer. While their assistance may be helpful in reading a map, for example, they cannot help when an unexpected situation arises.
4. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor or healthcare provider. There may be medical conditions affecting driving skills where treatment or medication may play a role.
5. A formal driving evaluation can help you determine whether it is safe to continue to drive or not. Florida Senior Safety Resource Centers have been opened as pilot projects in St. Petersburg, Orlando, Melbourne and Boca Raton,

through the efforts of the Florida Department of Transportation and the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Additionally, there are certified driver rehabilitation specialists throughout Florida who can conduct evaluations and make recommendations about adaptive equipment for a vehicle and/or driver retraining. Locate a certified driver rehabilitation specialist in your area: <http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us/ddl/evaluate.html>.

6. A driving refresher course is helpful for some drivers. Courses offered by AARP or the National Safety Council are excellent ways to refocus skills and may be helpful for individuals in the earliest stages of memory loss.
7. When driving safety becomes an issue, make a confidential report to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Florida law provides that "any physician, person or agency having knowledge of any licensed driver's or applicant's mental or physical disability to drive...is authorized to report such knowledge to the Department." All reports are confidential. If the concern relates to a medical condition, medical information is requested and a factual review is conducted. More information on how to report an unsafe driver can be found at: <http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us/ddl/helpful.html>.
8. Plan in advance for the time when driving is no longer possible. Begin to identify alternative modes of transportation with your family, friends and in your area. State and federal policy makers are focusing on keeping all drivers on the road — safely — for as long as possible. Drivers with memory loss are at increased risk and have special needs. Feedback and assessment of driving skill is important. Family and friends, with the assistance of professionals, help these special drivers know when it is no longer safe for them to drive. Family and friends perform a critical role in helping to identify other ways for drivers with cognitive impairments to remain safe and to stay connected with their community.

### When Is Driving Not OK?

- Incorrect signaling
- Speeding
- Trouble with turns
- Delayed responses
- Not staying in the proper lane
- Not anticipating dangerous situations
- Confusion at exits
- Near misses
- Parking inappropriately
- Stopping in traffic for no reason
- Hitting curbs
- Scrapes or dents 🚗

### Resource Information

#### Driving & Dementia Resources

- Florida Atlantic University: Two brochures? One for individual with memory loss "Is Driving Your Best Choice?" and one for families and caregivers "Is it time to stop driving?"  
Web site: <http://www.fau.edu/memory-wellnesscenter>  
Contact: Dr. Ruth Tappen (561) 297-2613
- AARP & The Hartford Brochure: "At the Crossroads A Guide to Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving"  
Web site: <http://www.thehartford.com/alzheimer>
- Alzheimer's Association: Position statement and brochure on driving and dementia  
Web site: [http://www.alz.org/what's\\_new/driving.htm](http://www.alz.org/what's_new/driving.htm)  
Contact: (800) 272-3900

#### General Resources about Driving Issues

- Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles: Brochure with tips on driving safety, exercises and self assessment "Transportation Lifetime Choices"  
Web site: <http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us>  
Contact: Selma Sauls (850) 487-0867
- AARP: Information about driver retraining classes  
Web site: <http://www.aarp.org/drive>
- Automobile Association of America Foundation for Traffic Safety: Several topical brochures  
Web site: <http://www.aaafoundation.org/multimedia/index>
- National Highway Safety Traffic Administration  
Web site: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>  
Contact: 1-888-DASH-2-DOT
- Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists  
Web site: <http://www.driver-ed.org>



## “Florida’s Seniors in Cyberspace – You Bet!!”

**By Colonel Rocky McPherson**  
*Executive Director, Florida  
Department of Veterans’ Affairs*

Many people think the Internet is a “world” created exclusively for – and inhabited solely by – the “younger generation.” That is simply not the case. Everyday, more and more of our “elder generation” are discovering the wonderful resources available via the World Wide Web (or WWW) and how they can enrich their lives by tapping into “the web.” In fact, several studies have documented that senior citizens are among the fastest growing group using the Internet (the growth rate has been 15 percent each year since 1990). Likewise, Kansas State University researchers have estimated that senior citizens represent approximately 25 percent of the total population using the Internet. A November 1995 SeniorNet Survey found that among all adults owning home computers, those between the ages of 55 to 75 years own 30 percent of them; and, adults 75 years or older own 23 percent of all home computers.

Clearly, the statistical research shows that today’s elders are becoming increasingly “web savvy.” What’s generating such levels of interest? While there are many reasons for this “web explosion” among our elders, one major reason is that it’s a quick and easy way for them to keep in touch with grandchildren, family members, and distant friends. Today’s elders have also discovered they can find useful information on senior health issues, including explanations they can understand and discuss with their family members and/or health providers. What elders have quickly discovered is that the Internet allows them to educate themselves and to exercise more control over their health care needs. One study has even shown that seniors who regularly access the Internet typically score higher on measures of health and well being than those who do not use the Internet.

With all of these research “factoids,” how can Florida’s senior citizens make the most of the Internet – specifically information provided by Florida State government? The first stop should be the new *MyFlorida.com* Web site. This site has been developed as a single entry source (or web portal) for Florida’s citizens to access a vast range of citizen services information presented by all State Agencies – including the Governor. Simply log-on to: [www.MyFlorida.com](http://www.MyFlorida.com).

Looking for State of Florida health care information? Go directly to Florida’s E-health portal called *FloridaHealthStat.com*. Visit this site by either first passing through *MyFlorida.com* or go directly to

the site by using this address: [www.FloridaHealthStat.com](http://www.FloridaHealthStat.com) This site was produced by the following five state organizations working together in partnership: Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Children & Families, Department of Elder Affairs, Department of Health, and the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs. This site includes timely information on Florida’s inpatient and outpatient health providers and where they are located, health insurance, healthcare consumer guides and reports, as well as pharmaceutical information.

Need the latest information on veterans’ benefits, including information on state veterans’ nursing homes? Visit the Florida Department

of Veterans’ Affairs (FDVA) Web site either by passing through *MyFlorida.com* or go directly to the site by using this address: [www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org). This site also provides information on such veterans’-related topics as: veterans’ memorials (including Florida’s WWII Memorial), veterans’ publications, education, links to the federal VA, legislative and budget issues concerning Florida’s veterans, and numerous other sites of interest.

For more information, please contact Cat Mills, Public Information Administrator at (727) 518-3202, ext. 508, or e-mail at [mills@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:mills@fdva.state.fl.us). Check out our Web site at [www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org) or write to: FDVA, 11351 Ullmert Road, Suite 311-K, Largo, FL 33778. 🐦

## Be a Smart Consumer: Use Online Services to Learn About Businesses

Whether you are planning to hire a professional, or are researching hotels and restaurants before taking a vacation, visit the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) online at <http://www.MyFloridaLicense.com>.

DBPR licenses and regulates nearly 200 types of businesses and professionals in Florida, from architects to veterinarians, condominiums to restaurants. DPBR is charged with protecting the health, safety and welfare of Florida’s citizens and visitors.

You can find up-to-date license and complaint information on the professional or business you are planning to hire or visit. Click on *Search for a License, Permit or Registration* and choose which type of search you prefer: name, license number, city or county, or license type.

Name searches are the easiest to perform, and it is usually best to start with a minimum amount of search criteria. For example, if you are searching for an **individual**, last name and first name are the only required fields. You may want to enter the license holder’s board, such as *Construction Industry Licensing Board* or *Board of Cosmetology*. Also, make sure the address type is *Main Address*.

If you are not quite sure of the professional’s last name, a helpful feature is *Search by Partial Name*. For example, if you believe the last name could be either Thomas or Thompson, select this feature and enter “Thom” in the last name field. You must enter at least four characters in the last name field and at least one



character in the first name field. You must also select the board for the professional.

If you are interested in finding out about a **business**, select *Search Organizations Only* and also select *Search Alternate Names*. This selection searches for “doing business as” names; for example, the company may be owned by Thomas Enterprises, but the business name could be Thomas Contractors. Again, select the appropriate board and make sure the address type is *Main Address*.

Once your search is complete, the results listed will show you the licenses held by the individual or company. By clicking on the blue hyperlink, you will see more information about the license holder. Clicking on the *View License Complaint* link will show you any public complaints for the individual or company.

If you do not have access to the Internet, call our Customer Contact Center at (850) 487-1395 to research a business or professional by phone. Be a smart consumer and check out the facts today. 🐦

## Seniors Can Help Prevent Oral-Health Problems

Florida Dental Association

Today's seniors want to stay healthy and look good. Exercise, eating right and having regular physicals help. But seniors also can enhance their overall well-being by taking good care of their teeth and gums.

A simple prevention program — brushing twice a day with a fluoride

toothpaste and flossing daily — can help seniors avoid many oral-health problems. Regular dental checkups and having your teeth professionally cleaned also are important.

But as we get older, there are subtle changes in the mouth. Normal aging and some medications can lead to a condition called dry mouth, in which the salivary glands do not provide enough saliva to keep the mouth moist.

"Decreased saliva flow in seniors can lead to cervical caries, increased rates of periodontal disease and burning-mouth syndrome," said FDA spokesperson Gerald A. Cioffi, DMD, an Orange Park dentist and oral-medicine expert. "Patients with dry mouth also may have trouble speaking, swallowing and tasting food."

Seniors who take prescription drugs should know about side effects some medications may have on oral health. More than 400 drugs — including calcium channel blockers for high blood pressure and heart disease, anti-epilepsy medications and some amphetamines — can interfere with good dental health. Procardia, Cardizem and Dilantin also may cause side effects.

## Oral-Hygiene Tips Help With Diminished Dexterity

Florida Dental Association

Seniors can maintain good oral health, even if they suffer from arthritis or other dexterity problems.

Brushing, flossing and regular dental visits are common ways to maintain good dental health. Different techniques allow seniors to play an active part in their oral-health care. Consider the following suggestions.

### Brushing

- Use a wide elastic band to attach the toothbrush handle to your hand.
- Enlarge the toothbrush handle using a sponge, rubber ball, or handle grip.
- Lengthen the toothbrush handle with a piece of wood or plastic,

such as a ruler or wooden tongue depressor.

- Have someone bend the toothbrush handle. Use hot water to soften it.
- Use an electric toothbrush.

### Flossing

- Tie the ends of the floss together, making a circle before flossing.
- Try different floss holders.

Daily brushing and flossing guard against plaque and help prevent tooth decay and gum disease. Seniors should consult their dentists for specific oral-hygiene advice. 🦷

### If you take medications, you should:

1. Give your dentist complete, up-to-date medical information, including whether you've recently been hospitalized, had surgery or have been ill.
2. Give your physician's name, prescription/non-prescription medications, doses and frequency.
3. Advise your dentist of any health or medication changes between visits.
4. Ask your dentist about drug side-effects or any oral-health problems and how to control drug-induced oral-health problems.
5. Read all medication instructions carefully and take notes. 🦷

## Elder Update Gift...

*In Memory of my beloved husband,  
Harold D. Balaban, of Boynton Beach  
Submitted by Rae Balaban of Boynton Beach*

*In Memory of my beloved husband of 63 years,  
Lawrence C. F. Feemster  
Submitted by Janice E. Williams of Dover*

*...with our deepest appreciation and thanks and most sincere blessings.*

## Give a lasting tribute

*A memorial gift to the Department of Elder Affairs, Elder Update is a loving and lasting tribute. Remembering a deceased relative or friend helps to serve the living through the publication of Elder Update.*

*Acknowledgements of memorials and other remembrances are always mailed to the family and no reference is made to the amount of the gift. The name of the individual being honored is published in Elder Update.*

*To acknowledge your gift to a family, please send the appropriate name and address. Memorial gifts may be made by sending your check to:*

*Department of Elder Affairs, Elder Update, c/o Lasting Tribute,  
P.O. Box 6750, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6750*

## Florida Dental Association Promotes Oral Health Care for Seniors

Florida Dental Association

Every year, the Florida Dental Association (FDA) sponsors an outreach program focusing on the importance of oral health care for Florida's older adults.

To increase oral health care awareness and to improve dental health among senior Floridians, dentists and their staffs will organize and participate in dental-health screenings at nursing homes, senior centers and retirement villages. Many also will give presentations to community organizations and senior associations about oral health care, including topics such as oral cancer, periodontal disease, dentures and dental implants.

### Senior Dental Health Week November 10-14

The Department of Health's Volunteer Health Care Provider Program and the Department of Elder Affairs are joining the FDA's efforts to provide older adults with dental health care information and resources to help them maintain a lifetime of healthy smiles. For more information about activities scheduled in your area, contact your local dental society or ask your dentist. For additional resources, contact the Volunteer Health Care Provider representative for your region. 🦷

## Volunteer Dentists In Florida Number More Than 1,200

By Joyce Hughes

Prevention and Education Coordinator, Department of Health

According to the Florida Dental Association, more than 1,200 retired dentists volunteered time to *Project: Dentists Care* in 2002.

"Many retired dentists who volunteer say that they are having the most fun they have ever had in practice," said Karen Dany, Florida Department of Health Coordinator for dental volunteers. "There is an old saying 'Old dentists don't retire; they just lose their pull,' well that's not the case in Florida. These volunteer dentists are greatly impacting our community."

Thanks to Florida's sovereign immunity protection for volunteers enrolled through the Department of Health Volunteer Health Care Provider Program, dentists may feel legally safe to volunteer. Retired dentists aren't the only ones volunteering. Some dentists see needy patients in their offices or see them on scheduled off days. Such volunteer activities allow the dentist and the dental staff to give back to the community and help needy patients who greatly appreciate their services. Dental assistants and hygienists are necessary part of the dental team and also volunteer. Since most dentists choose to go into this profession to help people improve their health, volunteering is truly something they enjoy. Just ask any of the 1,200 volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering for *Project Dentist Care* or through the Department of Health Volunteer Program call Karen Dany (850) 475-5277 or e-mail to Karen\_Dany@doh.state.fl.us.

U.S. Surgeon General's Report

## Oral Health Effects Overall Health

What amounts to "a silent epidemic" of oral diseases is affecting our most vulnerable citizens including the elderly and ethnic minority groups.

Oral diseases contribute to poor ability to bite, chew, and swallow foods, limiting food selection and leading to poor nutrition.

Research shows possible links between gum diseases and respiratory infections, diabetes, heart and lung diseases, and stroke.

About one-quarter of the elderly population has severe gum diseases and about one-third has no teeth.

A side effect of medicines is often dry mouth, which increases risk of decay and gum diseases.

Nursing homes and other long-term care facilities have limited capacity to deliver needed oral health services to their residents, most of

whom are at increased risk for oral diseases.

Federal and state assistance exists for selected dental services; but the services are severely limited, and the reimbursement rates are low compared to the usual fee for dental care.

The number of dentists compared to the U.S. population is declining, creating concern about the dental workforce meeting the future oral health demands of society.

There are safe and effective oral disease prevention measures that everyone can use; fluoride in drinking water, toothpaste and mouthwash; brushing and flossing; and dental visits.

Oral health requires individual action, community-based prevention and professional care.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Oral Health in America; A Report of the Surgeon General — Executive Summary, 2000.*

### Links Between Oral Health and Other Health Conditions



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General—Executive Summary, 2000.*



Florida's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is searching for volunteers across the state to advocate for the rights of long-term care facility residents.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer who improves the quality of life and guarantees the rights of our elders residing in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult family care homes, please contact us. We would love to speak with you.

Toll-Free 1-888-831-0404

Real People,  
Helping  
Real People

ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS

Medicare is offering new services to people age 65 and older who smoke.

To learn more, call toll-free  
1-866-65BEGIN.  
(652-3446)



This program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Available in selected states only.





*Project: Dentists Care***Access to Dental Care Program Includes Senior Citizens**

**P**roject: Dentists Care (PDC) is a community of Florida Dental Association dentists who volunteer their time and services to provide a safety net of preventive and restorative dental care to those in the greatest need, including Florida's seniors who qualify. The mission of the project is to establish dental-access programs statewide.

Working with local health department dental clinics, migrant-worker health clinics, other community health centers and institutional dental facilities, dentists are joining forces and making a difference in the lives of those who are the hardest to reach and have the greatest unmet needs.

Currently, there are 40 affiliates in the statewide PDC network. In 2002, 1,256 dentists provided about 19,021 hours of dental care to 18,224 patients who otherwise might not have received the care they needed. The estimated value of all PDC services performed in 2002 was more than \$4.1 million.

In 1996, PDC joined the Florida Department of Health's Volunteer Health Care Provider Program. This allows PDC to seek assistance for its dental programs through local fund-raisers or through public funding. It also provides volunteer health-care providers with sovereign immunity and workers' compensation. PDC recruits existing *pro bono* or reduced-fee dental-access programs and places them under the statewide PDC "umbrella."

*Project: Dentists Care* has received the American Dental Association's Golden Apple Award for "Excellence in Dental Health Promotion." In Florida, this project is recognized as a key example of how local government, private health care practitioners and businesses can work together to make their communities better.

For more information on *Project: Dentists Care* locations, services, and eligibility requirements, contact the volunteer health care coordinator in your region.

**REGION 1**

*Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Holmes, Jackson, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, Washington*

**Karen Dany**  
Medical Center Clinic  
8333 N. Davis Hwy.,  
1st Floor, Room 14  
Pensacola, FL 32514-6049  
(850) 475-5277

**REGION 2**

*Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Suwannee, Wakulla*

**Sunny Phillips**  
Regional Volunteer Office  
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin #C18  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1723  
(850) 245-4151

**REGION 3**

*Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Union*

**Pauline Lindstrom**  
Regional Volunteer Office  
910 North Jefferson Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32209  
(904) 360-7070 ext. 278

**REGION 4**

*Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy, Marion, Volusia*

**Joyce Coufal**  
DOH Volunteer Health Services  
2113 Griffin Road  
Leesburg, FL 34748  
(352) 315-4491

**REGION 5**

*Citrus, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter*

**Darlene Hilkert**  
DOH Volunteer Health Services  
P.O. Box 620906  
Orlando, FL 32862-0906  
(407) 249-4704

**REGION 6**

*Hardee, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk*

**Sonia Hogue**  
Hillsborough County Health Department  
Mailing: P. O. Box 5135,  
Tampa 33675-5135  
Physical: 4951B Adamo Drive,  
Suite 228  
Tampa, FL 33605  
(813) 307-8015, ext. 6305

**REGION 7**

*Brevard, Highlands, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie*

**James Kuczek**  
St. Lucie County Health Department  
5150 N.W. Milner Drive  
Port St. Lucie, FL 34954  
(772) 873-4970

**REGION 8**

*Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Sarasota*

**Kathy Wilczynski**  
Sarasota County Health Department  
P.O. Box 2658, Suite 2001  
Sarasota, FL 34230-2658  
(941) 861-2893

**REGION 9**

*Palm Beach*

**Diane Carlson**  
Palm Beach County Health Department  
826 Evernia Street  
West Palm Beach, FL  
33401-5708  
(561) 355-4514

**REGION 10**

*Broward*

**Vera Sharitt**  
Broward County Health Department  
780 Southwest 24 Street,  
Room 202  
Fort Lauderdale, FL  
33315-9942  
(954) 467-4864

**REGION 11**

*Miami-Dade, Monroe*

**Maria Ortega**  
8175 Northwest 12 Street,  
Suite 437  
Miami, FL 33126  
(786) 845-0210

**HEADQUARTERS**

**Jean M. Gonzalez,**  
State Director  
Volunteer Health Services  
4052 Bald Cypress Way,  
Bin # C18  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1723  
(850) 245-4104

**ELDER UPDATE WINS AWARD**

**T**he Florida Department of Elder Affairs' bi-monthly publication, *Elder Update*, is a winner in the 12th Annual National Mature Media Awards Program. *Elder Update* received a Merit Award for the Newspaper/Tabloid category in Government division.

"We are honored that our Department's publication has received this prestigious award," said Secretary Terry White. "*Elder Update* shares timely information with Florida seniors and members of the aging network."

The 12th Annual National Mature Media Awards Program, presented by the Mature Market Resource Center, a national clearinghouse for the senior market, recognizes the nation's finest advertising, marketing and educational materials designed and produced for older adults. More than 1,000 entries were judged by a distinguished panel of mature market experts from across the United States for overall excellence of design, content, creativity and relevance to the senior market.

## Oral Cancer: The Importance of Early Detection

Oral cancer kills more people nationwide than either cervical cancer or melanoma (skin cancer). Currently only half of all patients diagnosed with oral cancer survive more than five years.

### What you should know about oral cancer

- Oral cancer often starts as a tiny, unnoticed white or red spot or sore anywhere in the mouth.
- Oral cancer occurs most often in those who use tobacco in any form. Alcohol use combined with smoking greatly increases risk.
- *Still, more than 25% of oral cancers occur in people who do not smoke and have no other risk factors.*

### Regular checkups are important

Regular dental checkups, including an examination of the entire mouth, are essential in the early detection of cancerous and precancerous conditions. You may have a very small, but dangerous, oral spot or sore and not be aware of it.

### What to expect during your oral exam

Your dentist will carefully examine all areas of your mouth. In about 10 percent of patients, the dentist may notice a flat, painless, white or red spot or a small sore. Although most of these are harmless, some are not.

Harmful oral spots or sores often look identical to those that are harmless—testing can tell them apart.

If you have a sore with a likely cause, your dentist may treat it and ask you to return for reexamination.

Dentists often will notice a spot or sore that looks harmless and does not have a clear cause. To ensure

that a spot or sore is not dangerous, your dentist may choose to perform a simple test, such as a brush biopsy, which usually is painless and can detect potentially dangerous cells when the disease is still at an early stage.

If your dentist notices something that looks very suspicious and dangerous, a scalpel biopsy may be recommended. This usually requires local anesthesia. Your general dentist may perform this procedure or refer you to a specialist for it.

Protect yourself — know the early signs and see your dentist regularly.

Oral cancer often starts as a tiny, unnoticed white or red spot or sore anywhere in the mouth.

Other signs of oral cancer can include:

- A sore that bleeds easily or does not heal.
- A color change of the oral tissues.
- A lump, thickening, rough spot, crust or small eroded area.
- Pain, tenderness, or numbness anywhere in the mouth or on the lips.

Remember to see your dentist regularly because in many parts of the mouth, you may not be able to see a small spot or sore yourself. If you do notice any of the above signs, you should call your dentist without delay.

Your dentist has the skills and tools to ensure that early signs of cancer and precancerous conditions are identified. You and your dentist can fight and win the battle against oral cancer. 🦷

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## Secretary's Message *Continued from page 1*

a longer period of time — before exposure to a cold-causing virus are at greater risk for illness. The study also found that people who have social relationships with neighbors, friends, faith communities and social groups are less likely to develop a cold when exposed to the virus. Other important health practices include eating right, avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption and getting sufficient sleep, exercise and vitamin C.

Another study shows that mild depression can unbalance the immune system, thereby making a person more susceptible to illness. Since present and former caregivers were identified as having modest levels of depression, it is very possible that caregivers can be vulnerable to illness. While caregivers were determined to not be clinically depressed, many reported feeling "blue" and were probably having difficulty getting enough sleep. For this reason, it is important for caregivers to adopt strategies to take care of themselves.

With these studies in mind, it is clear that caregivers must have the opportunity to maintain a balance of friendships and healthy habits in order

to maintain good mental health as well as physical health. Remember, many caregivers do not know how to respond when someone asks, "Let me know if I can do anything to help." I recently learned about how one caregiver learned to let other people help her with caregiving. She bought a notebook and wrote down every task she did for one week — everything from going to the drycleaner to buying groceries. Then, she took those tasks and put them on three-by-five cards and carried them with her. Then, when anyone said, "If you ever need anything..." she gave them a card. At first they looked shocked, but then they realized, "Hey, I can do this" and were very willing to pitch in.

Caregivers need encouragement and assistance. If you are a caregiver, I encourage you to take the time you need to attend to your own health. If you know someone who is a caregiver, take time to learn how you can help support him or her in this very significant endeavor. The Department of Elder Affairs can provide caregivers and their loved ones with information about respite for caregivers. For more information, contact the Department at (850) 414-2000 or visit online at <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us> 🦷

## Gum Disease: Major Culprit In Tooth Loss Among Older Patients

Three out of four adults experience periodontal (gum) disease at some time in their lives. The good news is that it often can be prevented or treated in its early stages.

Gingivitis and mild periodontal disease are common in older adults. A study in the January 1999 issue of the *Journal of Periodontology* reports that at least half of people age 55 and older have periodontitis, an advanced form of periodontal disease. Severe periodontal disease causes damage to the gums, bone and other structures that support the teeth.

"Regular checkups are an important part of prevention," said Dr. Teri-Ross Icyda, FDA president. "Identifying periodontal disease in its early stages can help patients avoid permanent and costly problems."

### Prevention Techniques

Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste to prevent cavities. Clean between your teeth daily with floss or interdental cleaners. Eat well-balanced meals and limit snacks and schedule regular dental visits. And recognize the warning signs of gum disease:

- Gums that bleed when you brush your teeth.
- Gums that are red, tender or swollen.
- Gums that have receded from the teeth.
- Pus between the teeth and gums when the gums are pressed.
- Loose teeth or teeth that are moving apart.
- Any changes in the way your teeth fit together when you bite.
- Any changes in the fit of your partial dentures.
- Persistent bad breath or bad taste.

## Mobile Dental Projects Meets Needs of At-Risk Seniors

*Hillsborough and Polk Counties*

**By Charlotte K. McHenry**

*Director of Information Services/West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging*

The West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging launched a mobile dental project in early 2003. Designed to reach "at-risk" elders with oral health needs, the project is targeted to elders that reside in Polk and Hillsborough counties. The development of the dental program arose from a concern about the growing needs of dental care among elders and limited resources to address these needs. It has been shown that an older adult's dental care is many times neglected and overlooked — typically out of fear of going to the dentist or limited resources available for such care.

The program is designed to be on a "referral-only" basis, with referrals coming from the aging network, such as the nutrition and Community Care for the Elderly programs. The uniqueness of the program is that participants do not have to go to the dental office. Dental services are

provided at sites where seniors normally congregate, such as senior centers and nutrition sites. Mobile dental services can even be taken to the client's home.

Emphasis will be on prevention and maintenance care, as well as a significant concentration on serving the dental needs of older adults with diabetes and cardiovascular disease. One of the most critical issues with maintaining the oral health of elders is the prevention of periodontal disease. Persons with diabetes are at a greater risk of developing this oral disease. Research is also indicating a trend of periodontal disease risk among persons with cardiovascular disease.

The program is so popular it is at full capacity and no referrals are being accepted. The West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging is currently seeking private foundation funds to keep the program operational after the end of the 2003 year.

*For more information, contact the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-336-2226.*

*Orange, Brevard, Seminole and Osceola Counties*

**By Carolyn LiCalsi**

*Health & Wellness Program Manager/Senior Resource Alliance*

The Dental Screening & Referral Program for Seniors in the Orlando area provides oral/dental exams on the Mobile Medical Clinic to the medically underserved, indigent, frail and isolated elderly in the communities where they live. These elders are unable to access health and dental services in the area due to lack of transportation, dental insurance coverage or lack of awareness of Medicaid adult dental coverage. These screenings are coordinated and scheduled by the Senior Resource Alliance (an Area Agency on Aging) at sites such as congregate meal sites, churches, senior HUD housing sites and senior community centers.

Established in January 1996 after the Senior Resource Alliance applied for and received a Non-Profit Permit from the Florida State Board of Dentistry, the program is supervised by William A. Moon, D.D.S., a Florida licensed dentist, and is the required "Dentist of Record."

In its eighth year, the program is approaching its 100th Dental Screening on the Mobile Medical Clinic. More than 1,000 low-income, medically underserved seniors have been given an exam, and approximately 500 have received much

needed dentures (the main goal of the program) or other types of dental/denture treatment.

Earlier this year, the Senior Resource Alliance, using Older Americans Act funds, along with additional funding from community partners Florida Hospital and Orange County Government, had a new Mobile Medical Clinic built. The 30-year-old Mobile Clinic used for the program from 1996 to 2003 was in need of major repair work and became unreliable for long-term, regular use.

In 1997, the Senior Resource Alliance Dental Program won the National American Dental Association's Meritorious Award in Geriatric Oral Health Care.

The program fulfills the unmet oral health needs of low-income elders in Orange, Brevard, Seminole and Osceola counties. The program includes the following services:

- Dental exam, dental charting and oral cancer screening on the Mobile Medical Clinic by the "Dentist of Record."
- Treatment plan at the time of exam for those who need dental or denture treatment.
- First appointments for treatment are scheduled by the program manager with community partners who provide dental treatment for the program.
- All dental and denture treatment provided through the program is completed at the Health Care Center for the Homeless Dental Clinic. Treatment is paid for with Older Americans Act or is provided in-kind.
- The treatment for each client is managed and followed by the Senior Resource Alliance Program Manager until the client's dental/denture treatment is completed.

*For more information, contact the Senior Resource Alliance at (407) 228-1800.*


**Medicare and  
Health Insurance  
Assistance for  
Elder Floridians  
Web Site:  
MyFlorida.com**

The Department of Elder Affairs' Medicare assistance Web page provides elders and their caregivers information about Medicare and health insurance that is specific to Florida. Topics include Medicare, HMOs, Supplemental Insurance, Options for Individuals under 65, Preventive Services, Fraud and Abuse, Medicaid Programs, Prescription Drug Assistance, Long-Term Care Insurance, and links to other informative Web sites.

To find the site, go to [www.MyFlorida.com](http://www.MyFlorida.com) and select the following sequence:

Find an Agency → Elder Affairs → SHINE/Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders

Or, go directly to Elder Affairs' Web page: <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us> and click on "SHINE/Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders."



**No matter who you are,  
we can help.**

**AMERICAN  
CANCER  
SOCIETY**

*Hope. Progress. Answers.*

**1-800-ACS-2345 | [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)**



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.

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



### FLORIDA AREA AGENCIES ON AGING (Counties Served)

#### Northwest Florida Area Agency on Aging

3300 Pace Boulevard, Suite 200  
Pensacola, FL 32505  
850-595-5428

(Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton Counties)

#### Area Agency on Aging of North Florida, Inc.

2639 N. Monroe St., Suite 145-B  
Tallahassee, FL 32303

850-488-0055 • 1-866-467-4624

(Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla, and Washington Counties)

#### Mid Florida Area Agency on Aging

5700 S.W. 34th St., Suite 222  
Gainesville, FL 32608

352-378-6649 • 1-800-262-2243

(Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee, and Union Counties)

#### Northeast Florida Area Agency on Aging

4401 Wesconnett Blvd., 2nd Floor  
Jacksonville, FL 32210-7387

904-777-2106 • 1-888-242-4464

(Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns, and Volusia Counties)

#### Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas

9887 Fourth Street North  
Suite 100

St. Petersburg, FL 33702  
727-570-9696

(Pasco and Pinellas Counties)

#### West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging

5911 Breckenridge Pkwy., Suite B  
Tampa, FL 33610

1-800-336-2226 • 813-740-3888

(Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, and Polk Counties)

#### Senior Resource Alliance

988 Woodcock Road, Suite 200  
Orlando, FL 32803

407-228-1800

(Brevard, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties)

#### Senior Solutions of Southwest Florida

2285 First Street  
Fort Myers, FL 33901

239-332-4233

(Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota Counties)

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

1764 N. Congress Avenue, Suite 201  
West Palm Beach, FL 33409

561-684-5885

(Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie Counties)

#### Area Agency on Aging of Broward County

5345 N.W. 35th Ave.  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

954-714-3456

(Broward County)

#### Alliance for Aging

9500 S. Dadeland Blvd., Suite 400  
Miami, FL 33156

305-670-6500

(Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties)

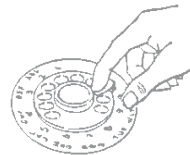
Please call the telephone number below in your area for information and referrals.

### FLORIDA ELDER HELPLINE DIRECTORY

County-by-county listings

Alachua.....	800-262-2243	Levy.....	800-262-2243
Baker.....	888-242-4464	Liberty.....	866-467-4624
Bay.....	866-467-4624	Madison.....	866-467-4624
Bradford.....	800-262-2243	Manatee.....	800-336-2226
Brevard.....	321-631-2747	Marion.....	800-262-2243
Broward.....	954-714-3464	Martin.....	561-383-1112
Calhoun.....	866-467-4624	Miami-Dade.....	305-670-4357
Charlotte.....	866-505-4888	Monroe.....	305-670-4357
Citrus.....	800-262-2243	Nassau.....	888-242-4464
Clay.....	888-242-4464	Okaloosa.....	866-531-8011
Collier.....	866-505-4888	Okeechobee.....	561-383-1112
Columbia.....	800-262-2243	Orange.....	407-849-2356
DeSoto.....	866-505-4888	Osceola.....	407-849-2356
Dixie.....	800-262-2243	Palm Beach:	
Duval.....	888-242-4464	in-county.....	211
Escambia.....	866-531-8011	out-of-county.....	561-383-1112
Flagler.....	888-242-4464	Pasco:	
Franklin.....	866-467-4624	in-state.....	800-861-8111
Gadsden.....	866-467-4624	out-of-state.....	727-217-8111
Gilchrist.....	800-262-2243	Pinellas.....	727-217-8111
Glades.....	866-505-4888	Polk.....	800-336-2226
Gulf.....	866-467-4624	Putnam.....	800-262-2243
Hamilton.....	800-262-2243	Santa Rosa.....	866-531-8011
Hardee.....	800-336-2226	Sarasota.....	866-505-4888
Hendry.....	866-505-4888	Seminole.....	407-849-2356
Hernando.....	800-262-2243	St. Johns.....	888-242-4464
Highlands.....	800-336-2226	St. Lucie.....	561-383-1112
Hillsborough.....	800-336-2226	Sumter.....	800-262-2243
Holmes.....	866-467-4624	Suwannee.....	800-262-2243
Indian River.....	561-383-1112	Taylor.....	866-467-4624
Jackson.....	866-467-4624	Union.....	800-262-2243
Jefferson.....	866-467-4624	Volusia.....	888-242-4464
Lafayette.....	800-262-2243	Wakulla.....	866-467-4624
Lake.....	800-262-2243	Walton.....	866-531-8011
Lee.....	866-505-4888	Washington.....	866-467-4624
Leon.....	866-467-4624		

### Elder Helpline Can Assist Non-English Speakers



By calling Elder Helpline, Florida's elders can access information and referral services through the **Language Line**. Telephone interpreters provide live, on-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 the State of Florida's hotline at **1-800-96-ABUSE (962-2873)**.

If you need information about, or referral to, a service provider outside the state of Florida, call the national Eldercare Locator Service at (800) 677-1116. An information specialist will assist you Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - 11 p.m. EST. 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 (800) 955-8771.

## Celebrate *Intergenerational Connections*

*Continued from page 1*

in the home—tasks like caring for frail elders, preparing meals, minding young children, and teaching cultural history and skills — are often done by people outside the family. In some families, these intergenerational relationships may be nurtured only during the holiday season.

Not only are families in need of fostering intergenerational interaction, our communities are also lacking intergenerational contact. Children spend their days with other children of the same age group. Adults work with others who are for the most part in the same age group. Older adults often live and/or socialize in communities or facilities that include only members of their own generation. When communities are age segregated, each generation tends to see itself as separate, rather than an integral part of a larger community.

Intergenerational programs and initiatives provide opportunities for individuals, families and communities to once again enjoy and benefit from the richness of an age-integrated society. The goals of intergenerational programs is to bring people together to address the needs of all ages through cooperation and pooled resources while also filling gaps in community-based services for special populations such as persons with disabilities, frail elderly and at-risk youth. Intergenerational programs increase community awareness about issues that affect both young and old and promote understanding of shared values and respect for individuals in all stages of life.

Intergenerational week provides an opportunity to honor children, teens, adults, and elders. We celebrate people of diverse backgrounds, ages and experiences and the gifts they share with one with another. After all, isn't that what the holidays are all about.

*For more information on intergenerational week or to receive an intergenerational week resource kit contact Nicole Hargraves at the Department of Elder Affairs, (850) 414-2341. 🐾*

### Tell Us What You Did To Celebrate Intergenerational Week

*Send us your stories about intergenerational events or celebrations in your community. Be sure to include the name of your organization and name, address, and telephone number of the contact person. We also want to know the age-ranges of participants. If you send photographs, please ensure that you submit written permission to publish the pictures of program/activity participants. Send your stories to:*

Nicole Hargraves  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs  
4040 Esplanade Way  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-7000



## 24 Ideas for Celebrating Intergenerational Week

*December 1-7, 2003*

1. Plan an Intergenerational Day in your own family circle. Include multiple generation activities or crafts and take lots of photographs.
2. Organize a Grandchildren's Day in your nursing home, senior center or senior residence community. Have the children and residents join each other for a "tea party."
3. Organize a Grandparent/Grandfriend Day in your school or community.
4. Arrange for an intergenerational concert in your community.
5. Honor your local intergenerational program volunteers and participants.
6. Select a senior, student, teacher or other program participant for special recognition.
7. Organize displays in your school, organization, community center or agency.
8. Set up displays or special events in educational centers, malls, or municipal buildings.
9. Post Intergenerational Week flyers in your school, classroom, agency, organization, local stores, restaurants and shopping centers.
10. Issue media releases on Intergenerational Week in your community.
11. Ask your mayor to formally proclaim Intergenerational Week.
12. Approach your local cable network to feature a local program or an interview with program participants.
13. Offer to send someone to speak to local agencies and community groups about Intergenerational Week, the program(s) in your school or agency, and how s/he benefits from participation in an intergenerational program. Send an intergenerational team (a youth and an older adult) to speak about their experiences in participating in an intergenerational program.
14. Encourage local restaurants and theatres to feature a grandparent/grandchild "special" during Intergenerational Week, whereby they receive a reduced price on their meals or theatre tickets.
15. Approach a fast food outlet in your community about issuing special placemats during Intergenerational Week.
16. Encourage a teacher to conduct a class in a seniors' facility. The class would be centered on a topic of interest to both youth and older residents — history, music, drama, art, or gardening.
17. Have a group of students interview older adults about their experiences as a teenager. Have students record the oral histories on a computer, print it out and present it to the older adults.
18. Have a group of students work together to clean up the yards of older members of their community by raking leaves, digging up the garden soil for planting, etc.
19. Have a group of students teach a group of older adults how to use a computer, access the Web and send and receive e-mails.
20. Organize an intergenerational lunch in your school cafeteria. Invite the children and their parents and grandparents (or other older adults who play a significant role in the children's lives). Have them engage in a "sing along."
21. Organize an intergenerational symposium on a topic relevant to multiple generations.
22. Publish and distribute a booklet describing your intergenerational program.
23. Organize an intergenerational fitness activity. Have the children/youth and older adults participate together in an exercise program.
24. Plan an Intergenerational Stroll-a-Thon through your neighborhood or an Intergenerational Mall Walk.

## Governor Bush and Secretary White Applaud Florida Retired Educators Association

*Continued from page 1*

Retired Educators Association for their steadfast commitment to community and literacy service."

The Florida Retired Educators Association began its literacy initiative in 1991 in order to increase public awareness of the need for volunteers to serve as tutors, readers, mentors and offer other assistance to those with poor reading skills. During the 2002-2003 reporting period, Florida retired educators volunteered 222,307 hours in the area of literacy services. This is an increase of 73,949 hours from the association's previous reporting year, as reported by Chairman Poppell.

"Every year I have been amazed at the increase in participation by our membership in our volunteer programs," said Poppell. "My hope is to increase adult literacy awareness and inspire others to volunteer their time to organizations that help adults sharpen their reading skills."

Literacy volunteers participate in a full range of reading activities. Volunteers help children, teenagers and adults increase their reading, speaking and writing skills by tutoring one-to-one or in small groups. Volunteers also contribute by reading to audiences during story time at child day care facilities, public schools and libraries. Some retired educators work directly in reading classrooms supporting reading teachers; thus, providing smaller teacher to student ratios. "Our volunteers even work in family literacy classrooms where children, parents, and sometimes grandparents, learn together," said Poppell. "There is no end to our creativity when it comes to engaging a willing literacy volunteer." To learn more about the Florida Retired Educators Association, please visit <http://www.frea.org>.

"Florida's older adults and retirees provide our students and

children an important link to the past while also preparing them for the future," said Secretary White. "The connections made between students and older volunteers who mentor and tutor them strengthen Floridians as individuals and enrich our state as a whole."

International Literacy Day is celebrated every year on September 8 and was first observed in 1967. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the founder of International Literacy Day, and is responsible for appointing a jury to award international literacy prizes. The aim of International Literacy Day is to focus attention on the need to promote worldwide literacy. On this day, individuals, organizations, and countries throughout the world renew their efforts to promote literacy and demonstrate their commitment to providing education for all.

Governor Bush has expanded the Mentoring Initiative to include adult literacy as a key component of the mentoring movement. The expansion of the mentoring initiative includes calling on current partners such as state agencies, local school districts, nonprofit groups, 200 businesses statewide and city employees in more than 60 cities to ensure those employees who are given an hour off a week to serve as mentors understand the importance of adult literacy. To learn about volunteer literacy opportunities in Florida, please contact the Florida Literacy Coalition by calling 1-800-237-5113, or to register online, please visit <http://www.flamentoring.org>.

The Governor's Mentoring and Family Literacy Initiatives are innovative public/private partnerships between the Executive Office of the Governor and the Volunteer Florida Foundation. 🐦

## November 1st is National Family Literacy Day

**National Family Literacy Day** encourages programs and communities to recognize the importance of parent's, grandparents and children learning together. Established by the National Center for Family Literacy, the day provides an opportunity for intergenerational interaction and practicing literacy skills, but the real joy is the closeness developed between reader and child.

Examples of activities that develop reading skills include the following:

- Look together for things in your home that begin with the first letter of your child's name: "J is for Jack — what else starts with J? Jelly, jar, juice..."
- Teach the young person a song or nursery rhyme you remember from your childhood. Sing it, chant it, clap it!
- Tell the young person about a favorite teacher or coach from your childhood. Have the young person tell you about someone special.

Source: *Family Literacy: Cause for Celebration*. National Center for Family Literacy.



## Mark Your Calendars!

### Ambassadors for Aging Day

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2004  
Tallahassee

**MAKE PLANS** to join the Department of Elder Affairs and Floridians of all ages as they bring the adventure of aging to the Capitol building. For more information, call (850) 414-2000.

The Florida Association of Senior Centers and the Tallahassee Senior Center invite you to the

### Pre-Ambassadors for Aging Day Pep Rally

TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2004  
6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Enjoy the talents of seniors from across the state, as well as refreshments and fellowship.

Call Sheila Salyer at (850) 891-4000 for sponsorship opportunities and more information.





# Elder Update



Jeb Bush, Governor  
 Terry F. White, Secretary  
 November/December 2003  
 Volume 12, Number 10

## The Real Florida – Florida State Parks State Parks Dedicate Facilities

By Irene DeLaby, Volunteer Ambassador  
 Florida Park Service / Department of Environmental Protection

Improvement and enhancement are ongoing at Florida State Parks to improve recreational and educational opportunities for the quality of life of visitors, employees and volunteers. During August, I attended dedication ceremonies at two state parks where recent improvements add to visitor enjoyment.



### Lake Louisa State Park

When you want to spend some quiet time, Lake Louisa State Park is a place for peaceful charm. The broad setting is in the northeast corner of the vast wetland in the central Florida Green Swamp. Lake Louisa is the largest of a chain of 13 lakes connected by the Palatka River. Thousands of acres of Central Florida's water flows from this region. The park is a haven for nature lovers. The 4,372-acre park embraces 10 natural habitats for marsh rabbits, gray squirrels, red foxes, pocket gophers, bobcats, white-tailed deer and alligators. Along 19 miles of

trails, many species of birds are seen. Recreational activities include swimming, picnicking, fishing, boating (no gas engines), horseback riding and camping. With help from citizen support volunteers, a new ranger station and trails are now completed and by now the interpretive kiosks may be completed. On August 14, a ribbon cutting ceremony opened a 60-site tent and RV campground. The park is seven miles south of State Road 50 in Clermont on U.S. 27. Contact (352) 394-3969 for further information.



### Alafia River State Park

The 6,000-acre Alafia River State Park is an example of reclaimed land previously used for phosphate mining. The scenery of this unique park is provided by mixed forest, xeric hammocks, restored-forested wetlands, rolling hills and 20 scattered lakes. Call (813) 672-5123 for detailed information.

A day trip to the Alafia River site is worthwhile to appreciate how the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Recreation and Parks develops land for recreational value.

Recreational activities include lake and river fishing, hiking and canoeing. Amenities that add to

visitor enjoyment are picnic shelters, playground, equestrian trails and excellent bike trails. The campground has water and electrical amenities and pavilions.

The park is located east of Tampa on County Road 39, about ten miles south of State Road 60.

*The mission of the Florida Park Service is to provide resource-based recreation while preserving, interpreting and restoring natural and cultural resources.*

*Irene DeLaby is the Florida Park Service Volunteer Ambassador for the DEP Division of Recreation and Parks.*

## Elder Update

is available in braille and on cassette tape for persons with print disabilities from the Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Library.

Please call 1-800-226-6075 for additional information.

## Elder Update

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003

Moving? Address Change? Receiving Multiple Copies? Please let us know! We want to cut unnecessary postage costs. Allow 8 to 10 weeks for your address to be changed.

Send this label with your corrections in a stamped envelope to:

**Bonni Etherton, Database Manager**  
 The Florida Department of Elder Affairs  
 P.O. Box 6750  
 Tallahassee, FL 32314-6750

Corrections: \_\_\_\_\_

Elder Update is a bimonthly publication mailed in-state to Florida residents at no cost to recipients. Out of state, Elder Update can be accessed at <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us>.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003