

NEWSLTR

A PUBLICATION OF THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS

AGE-FRIENDLY LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Click [here](#) for more information on Age-Friendly Livable Communities.

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Livable Community Spotlight:

Sarasota County

Celebrating a Milestone in Florida's Age-Friendly Community Movement

By Kathy Black, Ph.D., M.P.H. AARP Florida Age-Friendly Communities Consultant
Professor, School of Aging Studies
University of South Florida,
Sarasota-Manatee Campus

At this reflective time of year, there is much to celebrate across Florida's growing network of Age-Friendly communities. The network is 37 members strong and growing, and the state's first Age-Friendly community, Sarasota County, has completed its initial cycle of membership. The model outlines a five-year framework for communities to become Age-Friendly across four phases:

- 1 Assessment
- 2 Planning
- 3 Implementation
- 4 Evaluation

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LIVABLE COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: SARASOTA COUNTY

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Age-Friendly Sarasota reports much progress on its Action Plan across all domains of livability - and particularly in the area of the built environment: Housing, Transportation, and Outdoor Spaces.



In the area of **HOUSING**, the community identified the need to enhance awareness of and access to universal design features in new and existing housing stock. Universal design features can help individuals stay in their homes and live more independently too; for example, having a grab bar

in the shower. To help meet this need, Sarasota County adopted a Voluntary Resolution for Builders on Universal Design and Visitability to increase the development of new housing stock. In helping to spread awareness, the Universal Design Coalition conducted two dozen sessions reaching nearly a thousand residents, builders, and architects on the smart design principles that benefit living at home.



TRANSPORTATION plans for Sarasota County included promoting safe mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and transit users of all ages and abilities - which is particularly important to meet the needs and wellbeing

of the community. To help people get around, Sarasota County created **SeeClickFix** to electronically report issues impacting mobility (like a sidewalk crack) and also created a multi-mobility phone application for quick access to transit lines, stops, bike lanes, and sidewalks. This digital technology works for everyone!



In the area of **OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS**, Sarasota County aimed to promote access to public parks, buildings, and spaces for people of varying ages and abilities. Sarasota residents expressed an interest in getting out to the beachfront; however, mobility issues and the use of aids such as canes, were problematic. Sarasota County Parks and Recreation responded by deploying 400 sq. feet of a mobility mat (known as the Mobi-mat) to enhance beach accessibility - and the mat is also benefiting everyone including parents with strollers. In addition, five Sarasota County libraries equipped their meeting spaces with hearing assistive devices. This hearing loop technology enables people with hearing aids to communicate and fully participate in conversations.

Click [here](#) to view the Age-Friendly Sarasota Five Year Progress Report.



SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE OFFERS CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH EDUCATION

By Sergeant James Darby, Sarasota County Sheriff's Office

Sarasota County is located just south of Tampa Bay, with a population of approximately 440,000 people and of this, people 65 years of age and older make up more than 30 percent. To reduce crime and the fear of crime within this population, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office's Crime Prevention Unit focuses on education.

One of the biggest areas of concern is the ever-evolving problem of fraud and financial crimes. The days of check kiting and fraudulent checks are transforming into internet fraud, credit card schemes, and identity theft. The Crime Prevention Unit combats this by hosting seminars and educational courses that provide insight into these crimes and tactics to prevent being victimized. Working with our partners

in federal law enforcement, the banking industry, and Sheriff's Office detectives who specialize in fraud, a lot of valuable advice and information is presented to help protect them from being victimized.

Twice a year, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office hosts a Citizen's Law Enforcement Academy (CLEA). This eleven-week program offers a look into the Sheriff's Office's operations and covers Law Enforcement, Special Operations, the 911 Center, Investigations, the Court House, etc. It also includes a ride-along with a patrol officer. This provides opportunities for first-hand exposure to real-life law enforcement operations and connecting the community with its Sheriff's Office. Applications for CLEA can be downloaded from the Sheriff's Office [website](#) and mailed to Crime Prevention.

When a member of the community is victimized, the Sheriff's Office will reach out to them and evaluate what went wrong and how they can prevent being victimized again in the future. This will involve an educational approach, going over general crime prevention practices, conducting a survey of their home, and finding ways they can protect themselves moving forward.

Education and prevention are formidable tools in reducing crime and reducing the fear of crime in the community, especially the elder populations. This is something that we strive towards with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office's Crime Prevention Unit. Although programs have been curtailed, due to the current pandemic restrictions, we are looking forward to getting back to business as usual.



Congratulations to Florida's AARP Community Challenge Grant Winners!

For the fourth annual [AARP Community Challenge](#), AARP received more than 2,800 applications from nonprofits and government entities, resulting in a highly competitive selection process. A total of more than \$2.4 million is being distributed to fund 184 quick-action projects across the country, helping urban, rural, and suburban communities make immediate improvements and jumpstart long-term progress to support residents of all ages.

The winning projects are designed to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- Create vibrant public places
- Deliver a range of transportation and mobility options
- Encourage the availability of a range of housing

- Increase civic engagement and demonstrate the tangible value of "Smart Cities"
- Other community improvements

Florida's 2020 grantees:

- Fort Pierce: [City of Fort Pierce Police Department](#).
- Gainesville: [City of Gainesville](#)
- Lake Placid: [Highway Park Neighborhood Preservation and Enhancement District](#)
- Orange County: [Curry Ford West](#)
- Sunrise: [City of Sunrise](#)
- Tallahassee: [Goodwood Museum and Gardens](#)

AARP® Real Possibilities
Florida

FloridaElderLaw.org

Call the Florida Senior Legal Helpline for free legal advice and brief service on civil legal issues at 1-888-895-7873, open from 9am to 4pm, Monday through Friday.

OLDER Floridians Legal Assistance Program

FLORIDA SENIOR LEGAL HELPLINE
1-888-895-7873 MON-FRI 9AM-4PM



ELDER Update

Coming Soon!

The Office of Communications at the Department of Elder Affairs is pleased to announce a new format and schedule for the 2021 *Elder Update*. The first issue of 2021 will publish in February.

The *Elder Update* is a publication produced by the Department of Elder Affairs. It is distributed for free to up to 45,000 Floridians including seniors, caregivers, policymakers, and elder-care service providers.

To subscribe to the *Elder Update*, fill out the online form at elderaffairs.org/doea/elder_update.php.

The Angel Gets to Stay

By 3 WEARTV, Pensacola, FL

There are many seniors who are homebound and rely on outside help to be able to stay safely in their homes. The pandemic caused some fears about whether that help would continue.

Reporter Sue Straughn of 3 WEARTV was there when one senior got the news about her companion: her angel. [Click here](#) to watch the rest of the story.



Properly Dispose of Unwanted Medications






Properly disposing of expired or unused medications can help reduce the prevalence of prescription drug abuse in Florida. It also helps prevent accidental ingestion by children or pets, helps prevent accidentally taking the wrong medication, and prevents medications from entering water sources. Here are some dos and don'ts for disposing of your medications.

UFIFAS
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Best Option



Drug Take-Back Locations or Events

-  The DEA sponsors biannual National Prescription Take Back Days in April and October.
-  City or county trash and recycling services may handle drug take back.
-  Many sheriff's offices and police departments offer anonymous medication drop-off locations.
-  Many pharmacies have drop-off locations in store.
-  Find a year-round public disposal location here: <https://tinyurl.com/MedicationPublicDisposal>

Source: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss680>

Alternatives

Household Disposal

-  Take medication out of container.
-  Mix with cat litter, used coffee grounds, or similar undesirable substance.
-  Place in sealed container or bag.
-  Remove personal information from your prescription container.
-  Place both containers in your normal trash.



Don't

flush medications down the drain.

Water treatment plants don't remove medication from the water, and compounds end up released into surface or groundwater, contaminating them.



SENIOR

COMMUNITY SERVICE
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

A Program of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs

By Krysta Carter, State Director,
Senior Community Service
Employment Program

The current health emergency has had a tremendous impact on the way of life. These impacts are felt especially with the senior population. [The Senior Community Service Employment Program \(SCSEP\)](#) is the only job training program Federally administered and is Title V of the Older Americans Act. SCSEP provides a source of income and reduces social isolation and the harmful effects associated with it. SCSEP is working hard to find new and innovative ways to partner with not for profit organizations and provide critical services to participants.

Recently, SCSEP has established a partnership with Florida Ready to Work that provides online training. The online platform allows SCSEP participants with access to internet and hardware such as PCs and tablets to train in basic skills necessary for employment. Additionally, SCSEP staff have diligently worked to develop soft skills trainings that can be used in conjunction with Florida Ready to Work. These trainings can also be facilitated to SCSEP participants who do not have readily accessible internet for fully inclusive remote trainings. With continued support from Florida's not for profit organizations and Livable Communities, SCSEP continues to strive towards successful outcomes, training, and employment for seniors.

For more information, contact Krysta Carter at carterk@elderaffairs.org or (850) 414-2171.

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment: JAN 1 - FEB 14



By Anne Chansler,
Director of Elder Protection

Are you aware of the Medicare Advantage Special Enrollment Periods? While people with Medicare Advantage (MA) generally must remain in the plan they enrolled in for the remainder of the year, the MA Open Enrollment Period (MAOEP) and/or a qualifying Special Enrollment Period (SEP) provide potential opportunities to change plans.

The annual MAOEP runs January 1 - March 31 each year. The MAOEP allows individuals enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan as of January 1 to make a one-time election to another MA plan or return to Original Medicare and a standalone Medicare Part D Plan (PDP). This enrollment period does not allow for Part D changes for individuals enrolled in Original Medicare. Additionally, new Medicare beneficiaries who enroll in an MA plan during the first three months they have Medicare have an individualized three-month MAOEP to switch to another MA plan or return to Original Medicare and a stand-alone Medicare Part D plan. The MAOEP replaces the Medicare Advantage Disenrollment Period, which ran from January 1 to February 14.

People who enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan when they are first eligible at age 65 get a "trial period" (up to 12 months) to try out Medicare Advantage. This SEP allows them to disenroll from their first Medicare Advantage plan to go to Original Medicare (at this time, they also get a "guaranteed issue right" to purchase a Medigap supplemental plan). This SEP begins when the person first joins the Medicare Advantage plan and lasts up to 12 months. The Original Medicare and the PDP enrollment (if applicable) take effect on the first day of the month following the month in which the SEP was used.

Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) is a program of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and is operated locally through the eleven Area Agencies on Aging. Specially trained volunteers help Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to understand their health care options. SHINE volunteers are trained to offer free, unbiased, and confidential information and counseling concerning Medicare. To receive help from SHINE call 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337) or by visiting www.floridashine.org.

Helping Floridians Maintain Mobility Independence

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

According to the 2018 AARP Home and Community Preferences Survey, most people age 50 and over want to remain in their current home and community. While natural age-related changes do not affect all drivers at the same age or in the same way, many people will see a steady decline in some of the important skills needed for safe driving. As we age, how do we ensure that transportation is not a barrier to getting around our communities, even when we are not driving?

A personal vehicle does not equal mobility independence; it is achieved through planning and safe access to a variety of transportation options. Florida's Safe Mobility for Life Coalition has developed specific resources designed to support lifelong communities and educate about the availability of viable transportation choices beyond the driver's seat. Working together, Safe Mobility for Life and citizens can reduce fatalities, serious injuries, and crashes for aging road users while improving a safe connection to communities.

Well-designed communities that support aging in place provide opportunities for people to live rewarding, healthy, and mobile lifestyles as they reach retirement age and beyond. With a little planning, the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition can help older adults and community leaders find or create their ideal Florida Age-Friendly community.

Safe Mobility for Life's "[Aging in Place](#)" webpage helps individuals and



Why it's important

Non-drivers make:



Source: Preserving the Mobility and Safety of Older Americans; TRIP; March 2018

communities assess their existing mobility features and services. We focus on four key areas to identify a community's mobility needs: Community Design, Getting Around, Street Safety and Security, and Neighborhood Support Services. An understanding of these needs helps community leaders address them, building places that are livable and accessible for all people. Visit fdot.tips/aginginplace to access resources to support your Lifelong Communities.

Want to learn more and share your thoughts? Safe Mobility for Life

will be presenting at the virtual Transportation Symposium for the Florida Department of Transportation on December 3 to share these resources benefitting engineers, planners, and lifelong community partners. There will also be an opportunity for you to share feedback about your issues to improve the design features that support lifelong communities and the safe mobility for all road users. If you interested in participating, please register at fdot.tips/register.

Glaucoma

What is it?

Glaucoma is a group of diseases that can damage the optic nerve. There are often no symptoms in its early stages. Left untreated, it can lead to vision loss & blindness.

Most common form: Primary open-angle



What are the numbers?

2.7 million people in the U.S. have **glaucoma**



50% KNOW 50% DON'T KNOW

By 2030, 4.2 million people in the U.S. will have **glaucoma**



Who's at higher risk?

African Americans **40+**
Everyone **60+**
especially Mexican Americans

with a Family history of glaucoma

What to do?

Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam every 1-2 years

Early detection and treatment can help save your sight

Where can I learn more?

Visit <http://www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma>

Source: National Eye Institute, 2013

Courtesy of the National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health (NEI/NIH)



Health Benefits of Walking



- ♥ **Lowers blood pressure.** Exercise causes blood vessels to dilate, which reduces the pressure on blood vessel walls.
- ♥ **Lowers cholesterol.** Exercise lowers your cholesterol level, which decreases the risk to your heart.
- ♥ **Strengthens heart and cardiovascular system.** The elevated heart rate you get from walking will help lower your heart rate when you rest.
- ♥ **Increases production of endorphins, improving mental and physical health.** Endorphins are the body's natural way to decrease stress, helping you to relax, and people often find they feel better and sleep more soundly.
- ♥ **Weight loss or weight maintenance.** Studies have shown that walking regularly can help you lose weight, and keep unwanted pounds from returning.

www.FloridaHealth.gov

Walking Safety Tips



- **Obey all traffic laws.** As a road user you should always obey the pedestrian traffic laws to be safe on the road.
- **Use sidewalks or walk against the direction of traffic.** If no sidewalks are present, walk against the direction of traffic so you can see oncoming vehicles.
- **Always use the crosswalk.** The marked crosswalk at signalized intersections is the safest place to cross.
- **Look then look again.** Look left, right, then left again before crossing.
- **Be visible.** Wear bright colors and reflective accessories such as belts, clothes, wristbands and shoes.

www.AlertTodayFlorida.com

Funded by FDOT



UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

- 1 World AIDS Day
- 7 National Influenza Vaccination Week
- Older Driver Safety Awareness Week
- 10 Hanukkah Begins
- 13 National Guard Birthday
- 15 Application Deadline for Walk Friendly Community Designation
- 25 Christmas Day
- 26 Kwanzaa Begins

JANUARY

- National Glaucoma Awareness Month
- Move Over Month
- National Mentoring Month
- 1 New Year's Day
- 18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 25 National Florida Day



Alert Tonight Florida. Because Safety Doesn't Happen By Accident!

From our very first steps, walking has been a symbol of independence. And for most of us, a bicycle was our very first mode of transportation. Yet every year there are thousands of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists in Florida.

Even more alarming is that 75% of all fatal pedestrian and bicyclist crashes occur after dark.

Motorists often say they never saw them. But why?

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO SEE THEM?



Headlight covers that are faded or yellowed can reduce nighttime visibility by up to 80%. Make sure yours are checked and cleaned routinely.

Carry a light when walking at night. Walk in well lit areas and always cross in the crosswalk.

Use lights and reflectors on your bike and always obey traffic laws.

Slow Down! Pedestrians and bicyclists are the most vulnerable people on the road. You can reduce the risk of a crash by reducing your speed and focusing on the road.

Let's all be:

Merry AND Bright



SAFETY DOESN'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT

www.AlertTodayFlorida.com



DEMENTIA CARE & CURE INITIATIVE

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS



DCCI TASK FORCE SPOTLIGHT

The Dementia Care and Cure Initiative Goes Virtual

By Laura Copeland, Statewide DCCI Coordinator

With so many people in the workforce having transitioned into a virtual setting over the past months, Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) Task Forces have followed suit. Task Force members throughout Florida have gotten creative in how they continue to keep their Dementia-Caring Communities aware of and sensitive to the needs of individuals affected by dementia and are seeing that community collaborations matter more now than ever. Task Forces have been working hard to bring virtual programming to their constituents and beyond.

The Mid-Florida DCCI Task Force, in collaboration with staff at Elder Options and the UF Health Memory Disorder Clinic, worked tirelessly in planning for its Dementia Resource Expo. This event was postponed in March 2020 and was rescheduled as a virtual event that took place

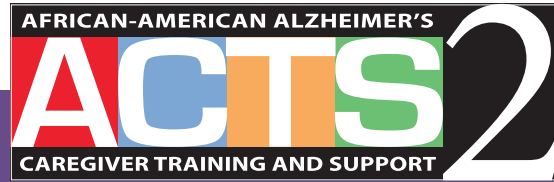
in October. This free virtual event featured a wide variety of speakers, exhibitors, information, and resources related to Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). All Floridians were invited to participate, and this Expo was appropriate for family and professional caregivers, community members, professionals in the aging network, and anyone wanting to learn more about ADRD. If you were not able to make it to the live Expo in October, please [click here](#) to see what you missed.

Another creative collaboration in the DCCI world was between the Lee County DCCI Task Force and the Alzheimer's Association in Southwest Florida, as they launched a three-part virtual seminar called "Memory Connections: Supporting You Through the Journey." Memory Connections was developed for individuals affected by dementia and their care partners throughout the state, and it kicked off on October 30. The first session

covered the topic of normal aging versus ADRD. The participants learned about coping with an ADRD diagnosis, and how to ask for and accept help. The focus of the second and third sessions was around navigating the holidays and included information on how to create meaningful memories with loved ones, modifying traditions, safeguards for traveling, safety tips for wandering, and what to expect in social and family situations.

Memory Connections is on a break following its fall sessions, but they will be back in 2021 with new content, materials, and information. If you would like to learn more about Memory Connections, please reach out to Casey Nobile, co-leader of the Lee County DCCI Task Force through email: casey.nobile@leehealth.org.

For more information or any inquiries relating to DCCI, please email DCCI@elderaffairs.org.



African-American Alzheimer's Caregiver Training and Support (ACTS 2) Project



Common issues to be addressed:

- Increasing self-care, rest and relaxation
- Communicating effectively with your doctor and family members
- Dealing with hygiene, bathing and difficult behaviors
- Safety and wandering
- Managing the stresses and worries of caregiving

ACTS 2 provides **free** skills training and support delivered over the telephone by trained, lay volunteers from the African-American faith community.

The skills-building program consists of 12 weekly sessions on topics such as relaxation, effective thinking, and problem-solving skills. Sessions are delivered over the telephone. Caregivers are encouraged to work on the problems and challenges they face everyday. Caregivers will receive **\$90.00** for giving feedback on the project.

The ACTS 2 Project offers skills-building and support services to African-American caregivers of loved ones with dementia across Florida. There is **NO CHARGE** for this service. The ACTS 2 Project is funded by the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program, AME 11th Episcopal District, FL State Primitive Baptist Convention, Joseph G. Markoly Foundation and Synovus Corporation.



For more information on how you can receive these services, please call: **toll-free** 1-866-778-2724 or 850-274-4945 Web: <http://www.ACTS2Project.org>
Facebook: ACTS2 Caregiver Project

We look forward to talking to you about our skills-building and support program for caregivers.