

October, November, December 2020



SENIOR MATTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COUNCIL ON AGING OF VOLUSIA COUNTY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

“Resilience is the capacity of a system, enterprise, or person to maintain its core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances.”

– Andrew Zolli

RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

This has been an unprecedented six months. You’ll see our CEO’s thoughts on this unparalleled time and how we have navigated adversity on page 3. And on page 4, you can read about how “COA Delivers.” Just prior to the pandemic, we were planning our PetMeals on Wheels™ program to ensure that our Meals on Wheels clients’ beloved pets would also receive adequate nutrition—and we have officially launched this program! While we’re on this topic, note that October is Adopt-a-Shelter-Dog month. In case you are looking for a new companion, please see page 12 for more information.

October is also Guardianship Month in Florida, followed by Alzheimer’s Awareness Month in November. On page 14, we celebrate Veterans Day by featuring some amazing veterans associated with COA. Veterans know resilience, something we have all gotten to know a little better in 2020, which means we are going to end the year stronger! Have a safe and wonderful holiday season.



Veterans Day 2020
Honoring all who served

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The mission of Council on Aging of Volusia County is to enrich the lives of our most vulnerable elderly citizens by providing needed services that enable them to remain safely in their own homes.

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OCTOBER IS GUARDIANSHIP MONTH IN FLORIDA



Did you know that COA is the Public Guardian for the 7th Judicial Circuit and one of only 17 public guardianship offices in the State of Florida? Our professional guardians look after those no longer able to handle their own affairs. We create care plans and manage our wards' social, psychological, direct service, health, housing/property, financial, and personal needs. We also arrange for and oversee medical, mental, rehabilitative, and/or personal care. Services are provided for those at home and in facilities. While these services are available at no cost for people determined indigent, private guardianship and Durable Power of Attorney are available on a private-pay basis.



**For more information, please email
guardianship@coavolusia.org
or call 386-253-4700, ext. 224.**



*"Out of adversity comes opportunity."
— Benjamin Franklin*

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

Sarah F. Gurtis

There is a lot of truth in the quote above.

The Huntington Library, Art Museum & Botanical Gardens near Pasadena, CA houses a large collection of original manuscripts belonging to Benjamin Franklin. A few years ago, I got to actually hold one of his personal journals. It was opened to a page listing items that had just arrived by ship. Apparently ordering foodstuffs to be delivered to your home is nothing new.

As we navigate this pandemic, all of us are acquiring new skills and I've noticed that those who seem to move more smoothly through it are the ones that stay flexible, creative and hopeful...the problem solvers. Organizations like COA have been called to an accelerated rate of service like never before. We are proving up to the task. The dire need for home delivered meals had to be filled. We have re-deployed staff from our closed Senior Centers and, in a short period of time, phoned every person on the "wait list". . .nearly 1,000. We partnered with additional food vendors to take advantage of a large amount of one-time funding from the federal government. Within three weeks, our weekly number of outbound meals went from 2,500

per week to over 15,000 per week—a service level we maintained for four weeks. We have now begun the arduous task of speaking with all of those new clients to determine if they qualify for our traditional Meals on Wheels program. Thus far, we have more than doubled our pre-COVID deliveries while losing 100 Meals on Wheels volunteers due to their own COVID concerns. Our mission is now to find the additional volunteers we need and the funds to pay for it all.

As you know, the range of services we provide is vast and our beloved seniors have borne the brunt of this virus. Out of adversity, your COA is emerging as a larger and stronger service provider. Our staff is more committed than ever to our clients. We are incredibly gentle with each other so that we can be strong for those we serve. Join us in this new opportunity. . .we need you and just think of all the good we can do together!

Sarah



***Sarah F. Gurtis, President
& CEO, Council on Aging
of Volusia County***

COA DELIVERS

"I look forward to my visits from COA. They take good care of me and we always find something to smile about."

— COA Client

For more than 50 years, Council on Aging of Volusia County has been a trusted provider of critical services that prevent the premature institutionalization of local seniors. We remain steadfast in our focus on our most vulnerable elderly neighbors, empowering them to remain safely, comfortably, and with dignity in their own homes.

Through the years, we have weathered many storms—both literally and figuratively—and, like the rest of the world, we entered uncharted waters as the COVID pandemic hit last spring. While it is always a challenge to meet the constantly growing need for services in a county with a rapidly expanding older population, we were suddenly faced with receiving 100 calls a day for help during the Safer-at-Home order.

With some emergency state and federal funding, COA temporarily supplemented our meal and supply delivery operations, at one point increasing the number of meals we



Jane Crawford, Holly Hill Meals on Wheels volunteer

deliver by 500%! As seniors especially began self-isolating, we quickly launched a Telephone Reassurance program, checking on more than 350 clients each week. To keep seniors engaged, we scheduled Virtual Senior Center activities on our Facebook page and via ZOOM. After Phase 2 of reopening began, we organized "Grab n' Go" meals at our Dining Sites for our clients who can drive. Those who cannot were kept on the traditional program of home-delivered meals.

We pulled seniors from the state waiting list for meals, more than doubling the number of our Meals on Wheels clients.

As our president & CEO has said, "We will not allow any of our clients to go hungry. That is unacceptable." And this is why we need your help. Our community has weathered so many storms with us and has always



COA CNA Mo Shelton serves lunch to a client

been so generous about helping us get through them. We are counting on you again to ensure that our at-risk seniors receive the services and care they need through this storm and beyond. Please help COA to continue to deliver!

"I am enjoying the meals I'm getting from you all because I'm 83, I live by myself, and I'm not able to go out anywhere."

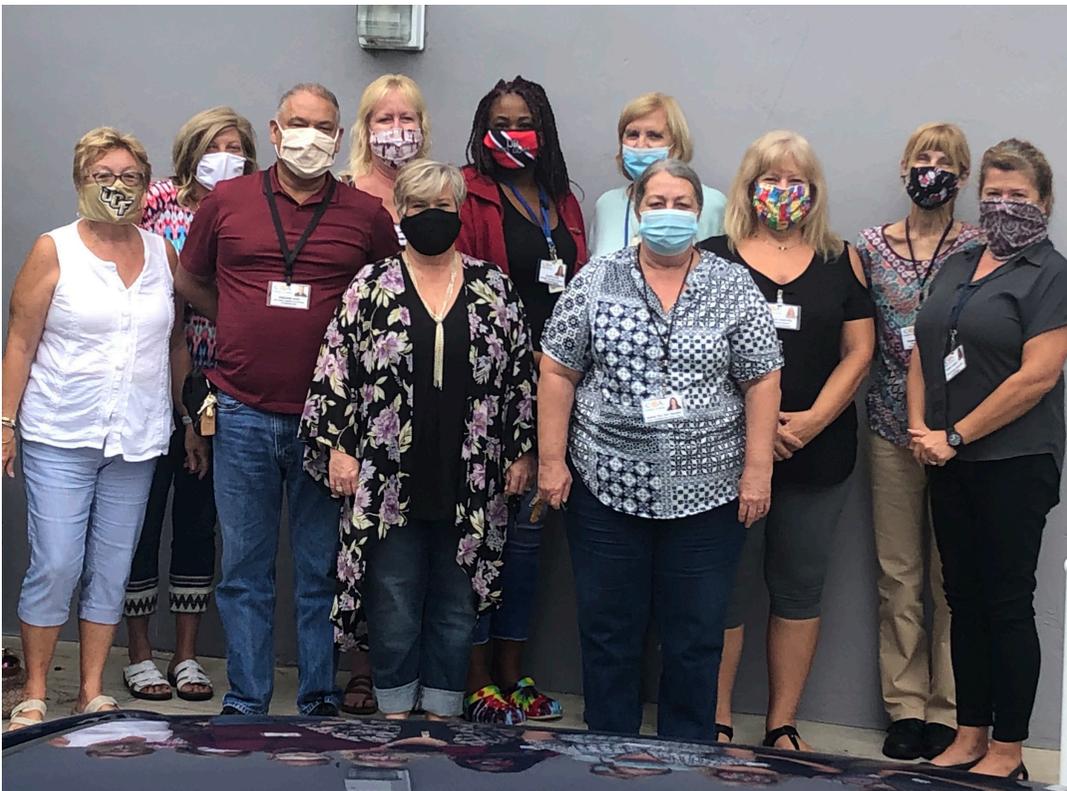
— COA Client



New Smyrna Beach volunteer Maryalice Ditzler packs meals for delivery



Volunteer Larry Lewis delivers a meal



When COA temporarily closed on-site activities at our Senior Centers and Dining Sites, our Senior Center Coordinators and Dining Site Coordinators quickly changed course to focus on Grab n' Go drive-thru meal operations from our sites. They have also filled in as meal delivery drivers as our volunteer numbers declined due to concerns about COVID-19.

Here is the group with their leader, Gladys Lacen (center), Manager of Recreation, Nutrition, & Respite Programs (L-R): Front row: Caryn Carmack, Jackie Van Der Heiden. Back row: Marie Tomaselli, Brenda Bayer, Freddie Diaz, Kay Brown, Gladys Lacen, Linda Holmquist, Patricia Sanford, Connie de Prado, and Tammy Fasold.

With Your Help, COA Delivers!



*Council on Aging
of Volusia County*



#COADELIVERS

Yes, I'd Like To Help!

COA is the only local non-profit focused solely on assisting Volusia County's senior population—the fastest growing age group in our area.

You may donate online at www.coavolusia.org, by calling 386.253.4700 x 215, or mail a check made payable to COA to 420 Fentress Blvd., Daytona Beach, FL 32114. Thank you!



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Phone: _____ Check Amount: \$ _____

Email Address: _____



Make my donation a monthly recurring gift

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Q4 2020

NOVEMBER IS ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS MONTH

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan designated November Alzheimer's Awareness Month to raise awareness of the disease, including recognizing the care required for someone with Alzheimer's. Ironically, Reagan himself was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 1994 and ultimately died due to complications of the disease in 2004.



Alzheimer's Disease & Caregiver Resources:

- Alzheimer's Foundation of America: 1-866-232-8484
- ElderSource Helpline: 1-888-242-4464
- National Institute on Aging Alzheimer's & Related Dementias Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center: 1-800-438-4380
- Alzheimer's Association Helpline: 1-800-272-3900
- www.alz.org

COA's Respite Care Centers, which provide services to those with early-stage dementia and their caregivers, are temporarily closed due to COVID-19. For more information on Respite Care and the Respite Care Support Group for Caregivers, call 386-253-4700, ext. 216.

FACTS ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE



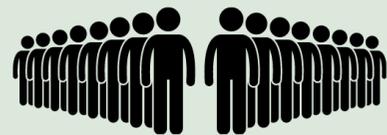
EVERY 70 SECONDS

Another family is affected



MORE THAN 5.8 MILLION

Americans are living with Alzheimer's



MORE THAN 10 MILLION

are providing care for a loved one afflicted with Alzheimer's

80%

of Americans with Alzheimer's dementia are age 75 or older



ALZHEIMER'S IS A
degenerative brain disorder, **NOT** a normal part of aging

Source: alz.org

Progressive Medical Research Welcomes Dr. David Billmeier To Our Team



From left: Dr. Alexander White, Basil White, and Dr. David Billmeier

Dr. Billmeier has been a physician in our community for many years, most recently at Florida Health Care Plans. He did his residency at Halifax Medical Center Family Practice Residency with Dr. Alexander White. Dr. White knows his character and what he can do to help grow PMR, so he invited him to join us. Dr. Billmeier graduated from Florida State University and the University of Florida College of Medicine. He has been a Clinical Assistant Professor at FSU since 2007, and a medical consultant for NASCAR since 2008.

We are thrilled to have him because he is excellent with patients and employees. He is interested in helping recruit applicable candidates for our studies here at Progressive Medical Research. Like Dr. White, he is wanting to help people in our community. He is passionate about treating diabetes, fatty liver, and triglycerides, and he is learning more about Alzheimer's and Parkinson's studies. He will also carry on with his Florida Health Care Concierge business right here at PMR. We are fortunate to have such great doctors and all the professionals that work here at Progressive Medical Research.

WHEN DID YOU LAST CHECK YOUR:

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- ✓ CHOLESTEROL?
- ✓ SUGAR & GLUCOSE?
- ☐ MEMORY?

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Virtual Activities

We invite our Senior Center members and readers to enjoy these free virtual activities until we are able to reopen our Senior Centers. Also, please visit our Facebook page for special COA offerings!

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SENIORS LOVE THEIR PETS:

COA's PetMeals on Wheels™ Supports Them!

“People or their pets should never be hungry or forgotten. They should never be afraid that they will be either of those things.” — COA donor

It's not too difficult to imagine having pets as our only—or closest—family members, and this is often a reality for many people, particularly the elderly. Research conducted in 2017 shows that nearly half of Americans age 70 and older have pets. Locally, Council on Aging surveyed our Meals on Wheels clients to find that well over half of them have cats or dogs (or both).



Emma loves her PetMeals on Wheels™

This is not surprising. The importance of pet companionship related to healthy aging is a topic receiving more attention by the medical community. In fact, the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (habri), whose mission is in part to advance, through science, education, and advocacy the vital role of the human-animal bond, reports the following benefits of pet ownership, particularly as related to seniors:

- Facilitation of pain management and physical healing
- Increased physical activity and improved weight
- Stress reduction
- Enhanced social connection
- Alleviation of feelings of loneliness
- Mood improvement

The National Institute on Aging links higher risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, weakened immune systems, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, and Alzheimer's Disease to loneliness and isolation. Therefore, pet companionship can truly be life enhancing, if not lifesaving, for the many seniors living alone. The Humane Society of the United States reminds us that a deep connection with pets is an experience transcending the boundaries of economic status and age. This is why COA works with our clients who have pets—68% of whom reported that they needed help feeding their dogs and cats—to ensure that they not only keep their beloved companions, but that they keep them fed and healthy.

For a number of years, COA has received occasional donations of pet food and supplies to deliver to our Meals on Wheels clients with pets. While the SPCA of Volusia County has helped in this endeavor, we haven't operated an official pet food program until recently, in part due to the lack of storage space. But with the launch of COA's PetMeals on Wheels™—a name created by COA for this formalized pet food delivery program—we are officially serving local seniors' pets!

The project was spearheaded by two animal-loving COA board members, Nancy Lohman and Sherry Graffagnino. Jen Adams of Hush Puppy Haven stepped in to seal a formal partnership. Hush Puppy Haven is an all-volunteer non-profit providing pet food and supplies to needy pet owners in the community while helping survivors of domestic violence readjust to new living situations through temporary foster care, food, and vet care for their animals. Working with COA, Hush Puppy Haven collects and donates pet food and supplies. COA organizes the donations based on need, and volunteer Meals on Wheels drivers deliver the goods with clients' regular meals.



Jen Adams, Founder and President, Hush Puppy Haven

Launched in March, PetMeals on Wheels™ is currently focusing on the east side of the county as a pilot project through the end of 2020, while we continue to supply pet food to clients on the west side of the county with the help of the SPCA of Volusia. As program operations are tested and streamlined, we will likely officially expand to other areas of Volusia County in 2021.

“Hush Puppy Haven is excited to have partnered with Council on Aging of Volusia County to supplement their existing Meals on Wheels program,” says Jen Adams. “We currently are providing pet food for Daytona Beach, Holly Hill, and Ormond, but hope to be able to expand our donations to cover all of Volusia County. We are dedicated to helping out the needy pet owners in our community, and that need is especially high in the senior citizen demographic, many of whom live alone and isolated with no companion other than their pet.” She adds, “Our mission is to keep pets and their families together, healthy and happy.”

As the program was in the planning stages, one unforeseen challenge rose: The COVID-19 pandemic has fueled the need for many more

home-delivered meals, and COA has more than doubled the number of Meals on Wheels clients we serve. Estimating that at least 50% of these clients also have pets, we see the need for PetMeals on Wheels™ to grow, too.

Gladys Lacen, COA’s Manager of Recreation, Nutrition, & Respite Programs, said, “PetMeals on Wheels™ assures that our Meals on Wheels clients’ pets have needed supplies—whether that be pet food or kitty litter, their needs are met. The Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers often share stories of the joy and gratitude the clients express when their pets’ food or supplies are delivered with their own meals. This program allows our clients and their pets to live better lives, and the program touches a part of our community that needs more attention: pets of homebound seniors. We are thrilled to partner with Hush Puppy Haven.”

For more information on Hush Puppy Haven, or to donate food, supplies, or monetary gifts to this program, visit <https://hushpuppyhaven.org/>, call 386-320-3413, or email info@hushpuppyhaven.org.

To support the SPCA of Volusia County in supporting us by donating to their pet food drives, or to get information about county-wide low-cost vaccination clinics, please contact Sally Combs at 386-748-8993 or visit spcavolusia.org.

General financial support for COA may be made via our website at www.coavolusia.org, by calling 386-253-4700 x 215, or by mailing a check made payable to COA to 420 Fentress Blvd., Daytona Beach, FL 32114.

COA wishes to thank all who have made cash donations or who have donated pet food and supplies to help the beloved pets of older people in our community: Hush Puppy Haven, SPCA of Volusia County, For Paws & Tails, Molto Bella Boutique (Sherry Graffagnino), and many others.

See page 12 for upcoming Adopt-A-Shelter-Dog events.



Every dog counts!
OCTOBER
IS ADOPT-A-SHELTER-DOG
MONTH

Bissell Empty the Shelters

Help the Halifax Humane Society "empty the shelter"

Saturday October 3, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
and Sunday October 4, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Specific animals will be available for a special \$25 adoption fee with the balance being paid by Bissell.

Halifax Humane Society
2364 LPGA Blvd., Daytona Beach
386-274-4703

ASPCA Subaru of Daytona Adoption Event
October 17
9:00 a.m. – Noon
Subaru of Daytona
670 N. Tomoka Farms Rd.
Daytona Beach
For more information, call the Halifax Humane Society: 386-274-4703



BISSELL PET FOUNDATION'S
empty the shelters

Visit bissellpetfoundation.org/ets for more information



BISSELL PET FOUNDATION
Until every pet has a home.

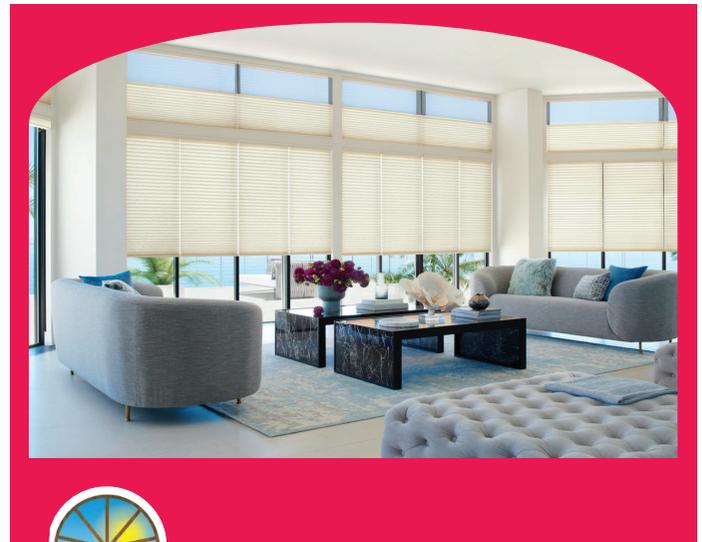


NOTICE

Due to COVID-19, our Senior Centers and Dining Sites continue to be temporarily closed except for drive-thru Grab n' Go meals.

TEMPORARILY CLOSED

For information on virtual senior center activities and staying connected, follow us on Facebook or call 386-253-4700 x 250.



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COA SALUTES OUR VETERANS

November 11th is Veterans Day. Originally called Armistice Day, the date was chosen because WW1 fighting ceased at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918 even though the war officially ended seven months later. After WWII and the Korean conflict, the name was formally changed to Veterans Day so that all veterans would be honored. While Memorial Day honors those who have died while in military service, Veterans Day honors all U.S. Veterans.



Anthony Branch, United States Marine Corps veteran and former combat diver

"While the world has been ordered to shelter in place. . .my wellbeing is due to the care of your combined personnel. We are all heroes during these horrible times that will truly define us."

With Florida having the third largest population of veterans in the nation with more than 1.5 million veterans, it's no surprise that COA has many clients and volunteers who have served. Anthony Branch retired from the Marine Corps, having served in the special forces during Vietnam. Trained as a combat diver, he and his team helped secure nuclear weapons on warships. Mr. Branch continued his service, serving many months in Ireland, London, and Scotland. Mr. Branch retired in 1987. Recently, he said,

Another veteran, Ken Holdeman, has been volunteering as a delivery driver for Meals on Wheels in Orange City since 2007. At age 87,



Ken Holdeman, U.S. Air Force, in 1951



Ken Holdeman, volunteer, in 2020

Mr. Holdeman is a firm believer in giving back to the community. He may have inherited that instinct from his father, who was also a Meals on Wheels driver in Orlando until he was about 90. Says Ken, "I do it because it makes me happy, and I'll do it until I can't anymore."

Mr. Holdeman spent five years in the Air Force working ground control during the Korean War. Stationed stateside, he supported the troops who went overseas, and was part of a core group of soldiers who built a new unit at McGhee Tyson Air Force Base near Knoxville, Tennessee.

As part of our Meals on Wheels Adopt-a-Route program, Team Rubicon, a team of veterans and first responders, has joined us through the end of the year, jumping in to deliver meals at a time when our need for volunteers is great. Team Rubicon serves communities by mobilizing veterans and first responders to leverage their skills and experience to usually help people prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and humanitarian crises. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, they have launched an initiative to help meet the needs of communities. To learn more about Team Rubicon, please visit: www.teamrubiconusa.org.

***We are grateful to all
who have served.
Thank you!***



Adopt-a-Route volunteers from Team Rubicon
Front row (L-R): Lisa Williams, Jose Pineiro. Back row (L-R):
Larry Morgan, Luke Walsh, Robert Williams, William Jessee,
Jon Campbell.

Call for Volunteers

We need volunteers at COA Meals on Wheels operations sites throughout the county

- Assist with Grab n' Go meals (drive-thru)
- Home delivery of meals
- Regular cleaning and sanitizing of sites

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386-253-4700
ext. 240**



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 Council on Aging
 of Volusia County

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