

NEW BEGINNINGS

"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams."

– Henry David Thoreau

appy New Year! Yes, we are all counting on 2021 to be a better year, so let's go confidently in the direction of our dreams! It's been tough, and there will be some tough times ahead; therefore we have included a few articles about coping. Please see "Coping Through Crisis," which offers some tips on navigating stressful periods of life. You'll also find an inspiring story about handling difficult times—the story of June Haines, who volunteered as a young girl as a plane spotter during World War II.

Tapping into our creativity is a wonderful coping mechanism. If you've ever dreamed of writing poetry, journaling, sketching, or if you are curious about using the arts as a tool of self-care, be sure to read "Atlantic Center for the Arts Virtual Activities."

Take a look at our Impact Report, which spotlights some of COA's 2020 service delivery, the level of which would not have been possible without the support of our community. One of these supporters is COA board member Bobby Thigpen, profiled in this issue. And please see our Resource page, which provides helpful numbers and websites should you or a loved one need to reach out for assistance.

2021 is the year when our President & CEO, Sarah Gurtis, is retiring. Read her important words on the next page. If anyone has gone in the direction of her dreams, it is Sarah, and COA has benefited because of that. As Sarah says goodbye to COA, she offers us some things to think about. We will miss Sarah and we wish her a happy retirement. We also wish her and all of you a 2021 that brings good health, connection with others, contentment, happiness—and big, big dreams!

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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. www.coavolusia.org

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SENIOR MATTERS



MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

Sarah F. Gurtis

2020 was a year of profound change and it came at us more rapidly than we'd prefer. Health precautions meant that our families were not able to gather as we may have previously. That meant more time in smaller groups. Perhaps more time preparing meals together. Time for parents to step into the challenging world of academics. I don't know how they managed. If you want to have a moment of "Maybe I'm not so smart after all," try guiding a child through a 7th grade curriculum. For us here at COA, the saddest part was the isolation of our friends, family members, and clients in assisted living situations. I know that for many of you that was a heartbreaking reality. It reminded us that our elders are integral to the continuity of our family story. Perhaps we'll appreciate them more and make keeping them actively involved in our lives a greater priority in 2021 and beyond. I hope so.

The start of a fresh year is always one of new beginnings. 2021 may include more than most. For some, it will be the start of putting their lives back

together following the death of a loved one due to COVID-19. Some will start down a new career path knowing that their employer has to scale back or may no longer be in business. Some will choose to begin again in a new town or a new state. And all of us will learn the new best practices needed to keep each other well.

The new year will hold a specific change for me. I will be retiring in early April. To tell the truth, it feels a bit surreal. Except for a two-year hiatus between my bank marketing and motorsports careers (which was self-imposed so I could go traveling), I don't ever remember not working. Luckily for me, I love working and have always had jobs that had me in "way over my head." Being challenged and engaged and in a constant state of growth has been the norm. But the timing must be right because I am genuinely looking forward to retirement and not at all concerned about how I will fill my days.

My six years at the helm of COA have been the most challenging and rewarding of my career. I was hired by our Board of Directors to bring a business focus into our non-profit environment. That meant that I had to learn about state and federal grant-funded senior services and the COA staff had to learn to think more like a business with an eye to cost controls, budget management, and increasing revenue without losing their empathy and commitment to serving our elder population.

Continued next page



Because we had each other to rely on, it has worked out just fine.

The pandemic has resulted in COA being called to serve more clients than ever before. The service and financial challenges will continue to come, and permanent funding for all of that won't be coming from government grants. It will come from you, our fellow residents of Volusia County and from the generous companies that do business here. In our next issue, you'll be introduced to our new co-Executive Directors: Eveline Kraljic, who is currently our Chief Operating Officer; and Terri Karol, our Chief Financial Officer. They are strong leaders.

I want to extend a special thanks to our Board of Directors. They bring their individual talents to our cause and serve selflessly and with great compassion. I thank each of you for your encouragement, support, and trust. It has been an honor. It is most definitely a season of new beginnings. God bless you all.







MATTERS

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF ADVERSITY: JUNE'S STORY

une Haines, like all of us, has been coping with various types of adversity at different points in her life. A COA client who receives in-home care and other services, June looks back on a particularly trying time that began December 7, 1941.

June stayed home from church that day because she wasn't feeling well. Her father, who had stayed

home with her, was outside working on the car when the announcement came over the radio: Pearl Harbor had been attacked. Only 11-years-old at the time, June ran outside to tell her father. He didn't believe her at first, and they ran back into the house to listen to the news. Although much of Europe had been at war since 1939, the United States had just become an active participant.

Some comfort was taken, June says, in that the entire country united and swung into defense mode. But as WWII progressed, many weren't sure if the Germans, too, would invade. Therefore, communities across the country began air raid drills. Nighttime blackouts included turning off indoor lights, closing drapes—even painting car headlights black halfway down—to prevent the public from being targeted by enemy planes. Because food was rationed, Americans began growing victory gardens.

These were very scary times, especially for a pre-teen going into the world eyes wide open. June describes how, in school, air raid drills involved going to the basement and crouching down for what seemed like hours. She has a very



June Haines today

clear memory in one instance of panicking during one of the drills. She got up and ran out of school with a girlfriend chasing after her. She just wanted to be home safely with her family.

Near Medford, New Jersey, where June and her family lived, and in many other coastal areas, watchtowers were built to help spot enemy aircraft and submarines.

Civilian spotters were recruited to volunteer to look out for anything unusual and report it to the authorities. June was eager to help any way she could, so she stepped up to volunteer with the Ground Observation Corps as a plane spotter. As part of her training, she was provided with

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June Haines during World War II

SENIOR MATTERS

silhouette cutouts of every aircraft type to learn how to identify them. Once a plane flew overhead, June called in the details to the Philadelphia command center. She continued her service until the war began to wind down—when it was clear the Germans were not going to invade—and the watchtowers began to be dismantled. June "retired" at the ripe old age of 14. On May 29, 1944, she was presented with a Certificate of Honorable Service for her volunteer work and became a member of the Army Air Forces Aircraft Warning Service Reserve.

Taking action during difficult times often helps with stress, and June indicates that her volunteer work, along with her family and friends, helped her handle this stressful time. In fact, she says that family and friends have always been a source of strength and inspiration throughout life. After the war, she met and married Edwy Haines, and the couple raised three children together. Edwy passed away in 2009.

The following year, June began receiving services from COA to help with meals, homemaking, and personal care. But since March 2020, things have been more difficult. Like many older people, June doesn't leave her house very often with the exception of going to occasional doctor appointments. While being homebound sometimes occurs naturally with aging, self-isolation for many has come about due to the pandemic. For her own safety, June limits who comes into her home.

In July, June came down with pneumonia and didn't know it. Because she was so weak, she took a tumble in her living room. "Fortunately, I had this Life Alert help button from Council on Aging. That saved my life, really." After a brief stint in the hospital, followed by rehab, June fully recovered. She emphasizes that staying connected has been crucial to getting through these tough times. Although she doesn't have Internet service, she maintains contact with others by phone and mail. She is often on the phone with her

children, grandchildren, other family members, and friends—including a close friend in England who she has on speed dial. June has many birthdays memorized and, with help, she sends cards and letters throughout the year. She says that two of her most important possessions are her address book and her telephone, always nearby.

June's story reminds us that we all have endured difficult times, and there are ways we can navigate crisis. As June has adjusted to interacting with others a little differently during the pandemic, her example tells us that we can reach out to others to help, to provide and be provided with that all-important human connection.

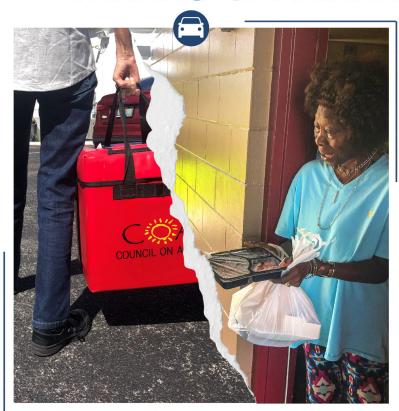
There is a refurbished WWII watchtower right here in our own back yard! The Ormond Beach Watchtower is one of more than 15,000 watchtowers built along U.S. coasts during WWII. Located just feet from Ocean Shore Boulevard (A1A), the watchtower sits four miles north of Granada Blvd.



The Ormond Beach Watchtower on A1A (near Spanish Waters Drive), similar to the watchtower where June was a plane spotter in WWII.



COVID-19 **MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICES**



CA

Pre-COVID meal delivery:



Spring and Summer 2020 emergency & regular delivery:



Going forward:

6,000 - 7,000

Meals Per Week

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 ar	ea.	
	coavolusia.org, by calling 386.253.4700 x 215, or mai atress Blvd., Daytona Beach, FL 32114. Thank you!	l a check
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The newsletter of Council on Aging of Volusia County

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MATTERS

COPING THROUGH CRISIS

he last several months have been tough on everybody, but especially the elderly, the most at-risk group when it comes to both COVID-19 and social isolation. A November 2020 Center for Disease Control report indicates that Americans over the age of 65 have accounted for more than 79 percent of COVID-19 deaths. In addition, a report from the National



Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine states that nearly one-quarter of Americans age 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated, which seriously impacts both emotional and physical health. Social isolation has clearly become more of a problem since last March, when those most vulnerable to COVID-19 were advised to self-isolate.

Here are some tips on coping:

- When self-isolating, it might be easy to skip that shower or bath—don't do that! Keep up with your personal hygiene. You will feel better.
- Make the effort to eat healthy meals. Try new recipes. Use this time to get creative with cooking.
- Remember to exercise. Endorphins released through exercise trigger positive feelings. You don't have to push yourself too hard—walking is a very beneficial exercise. COA offers walking groups at our Senior Centers. Call 386-253-4700 x 204 for information.
- Take time to do what you enjoy. Devote time to an old or new hobby. What did you used to do that you loved? What have you always wanted to learn to do?
- Minimize your news/screen time. You don't have to watch or listen to negative or upsetting stories. We can be mindful of staying informed without being "too informed" and feeling overwhelmed.

- Volunteer. Helping others makes all of us feel good. Our Meals on Wheels program is always in need of help. Call 386-253-4700 x 239 to inquire.
- Engage in regular contact with others. Consider setting up a phone tree with a group of friends or relatives to check in with each other on a regular basis. Join an online group of people with similar interests. Keep up with family and friends via Facebook, FaceTime, ZOOM, Skype, or other

apps and video conferencing platforms. Join a COA walking group (call 386-253-4700 x 204).

- Join an online class. AARP (aarp.org) offers several options, and COA has been providing free Zumba and Yoga classes as well as educational programs on Facebook (www.facebook.com/COAVOLFL) and ZOOM. Senior Planet (seniorplanet.org) also offers an array of free events and classes. See page 12 for Atlantic Center for the Arts offerings.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink—or don't drink alcohol at all.
- **Get outdoors!** Just sitting outside has been proven to help reduce stress. If you can't get outdoors, open some windows, get some fresh air, and listen to the birds (putting a bird feeder near your home will help)!
- Seek help to deal with feelings of anxiety or depression. (See Resource Directory on page 14.)

At the start of the pandemic, COA launched a Telephone Reassurance Program. Since then, staff have made more than 10,000 phone calls to check in with our clients who are homebound or self-isolating. Jacqueline Bartlette, a Senior Center Activities Coordinator, has been making phone calls since March. "Some people want that weekly check-in," she says.

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"They're fine with just reporting that they're doing o.k., but they want to make sure that we'll check in again the following week." She continues, "There are others who I might be on the phone with for an hour, and some who prefer to have short conversations maybe three times a week—and still others who want a more in-depth connection perhaps every other week."

The social connection—even through a phone call—is important. Not surprisingly, Jacqueline reports that isolation is wearing on people. She says she encourages the people she calls to turn off the television news for a while and spend some time learning how to communicate with their families and friends by computer. She also urges them to get outside. She mentions that COA has referred some of our clients to counseling services to assist them with dealing with the anxiety and loneliness that has been part of the COVID crisis.

"Some of our clients had neighbors who would bring them groceries or other items they needed prior to the pandemic. But then everyone started self-isolating."

Jacqueline says she has informed seniors who are not receiving Meals on Wheels of

We are here to help: 386-253-4700

grocery delivery options and no-contact grocery pickup. "We also make sure that everyone we call is made aware of all of COA's services so they can obtain the help they need to remain healthy—both physically and emotionally."

Last spring, COA partnered with Aging True in Jacksonville to ensure that our clients and others who call in for help can receive professional counseling by phone free of charge once or twice a month. The new Wellness Counseling Program is available to anyone of any age or income, reports Lisa Lewis, Vice President of COA's Case Managed Services. "We regularly arrange for clients to be served through this program to help them with coping with various problems such as being widowed, feeling depressed, and handling isolation," she says.

When the Safer at Home order went into effect, COA's Respite Care Program had to put on hold both the in-person activities for our clients with early stage

dementia and the support groups so critical for their caregivers. Respite Care engages those with early-stage dementia in healthy interactive activities while providing their caregivers time to gain or maintain balance in their lives. Since in-person Respite Care programming has not been reinstated, Theresa Yousif, Manager of Dementia Respite Programs, maintained contact with her clients through phone calls and virtual meetings. In addition, she has mailed out activity packets to her clients, paying special attention to materials that will engage those with early-stage dementia and support their caregivers.

While some onsite activities have slowly started up at a few of COA's Senior Centers and Dining Sites, CDC guidelines are strictly followed, limiting the number of people at each site. COA looks forward to eventually safely and fully reopening all of our sites so that the seniors in our community can once again come together for enjoyable, engaging activities that are so important for their wellbeing. In the meantime, we encourage everyone to get enough rest, reach out to connect with others, eat well and exercise, and get involved in activities you enjoy.

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COUNCIL ON AGING OF VOLUSIA COUNTY

2020 IMPACT REPORT

COA Delivers!



Nutritious Meals Provided to Seniors

375,512





Hurricane Preparation Guides Mailed

650+



Emergency Hurricane Supply Kits Delivered

350









420 Fentress Blvd., Daytona Beach, FL 32114 (386) 253 - 4700 www.coavolusia.org

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE - BOBBY THIGPEN

member of COA's board of directors since 2010, Bobby Thigpen began serving as treasurer last year. A native of Savannah, he attended high school in Alabama and graduated from the University of Alabama with a BS degree in Human Resources. He later attended the National Automobile Dealers Association Academy and Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

Bobby has been a fixture in the local automotive business since 1998, serving as president of Lloyd Automotive until 2006, after which he continued consulting with Ritchey Automotive. He has also made himself known in the community through his dedication to local organizations, serving on the board of directors of the Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce (one year as chairman); the Daytona Beach Checkered Flag Committee; the Daytona State College Foundation (serving as chairman for two terms); Halifax Health Foundation; United Way of Volusia and Flagler Counties; and the FUTURES Foundation, among several others. He is a past board member and current member of the Daytona Beach Rotary Club. An avid golfer, Bobby has co-chaired the Rotary Club annual golf tournament to benefit Easterseals since 2005.

Not surprisingly, Bobby has received many honors in our community, including the Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce Lou Fuch's Award in 2011, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Philanthropist of the Year Award in 2015, the Daytona State College Falcon Award in 2015—and he was inducted into the Embassy of Hope Foundation Hall of Fame in 2019.

Bobby says that he chose to work with Council on Aging, "... because it's a wonderful organization that gives so much back to the *The newsletter of Council on Aging of Volusia County*

"I feel fortunate to be a part of COA and it makes me proud to say I'm a board member."

- Bobby Thigpen

community." He explains that his family was a private-pay client of COA: "That experience was wonderful. COA helped get us through." He adds, "I feel fortunate to be a part of COA and it makes me proud to say I'm a board member. Regarding COVID-19, COA employees and volunteers have stepped up to the plate and provided so many more services to those in need in our community."

Bobby and his wife, Lee, live in Port Orange with their daughter, Kalee, a junior at University of Florida, and son, Trey, who just graduated from Florida State University (family pictured below).



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ATLANTIC CENTER FOR THE ARTS VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES

Eve Payor, Director of Community Programs, Atlantic Center for the Arts

n these uncertain times,
Atlantic Center for the
Arts (ACA) has continued
to work for the community by
bringing programming into the
homes of thousands of people.
Throughout the first month of
the pandemic, all programming
immediately shifted online.





Executive Director Nancy
Lowden Norman reflected, "The shutdown gave us a chance to focus on enriching experiences for those isolated at home during COVID-19 and we expanded our virtual programs. Using Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, we quickly moved our in-person programs, including COA programming, to virtual platforms, enabling us to continue providing services while extending the reach to new audiences."

ACA welcomes everyone, including seniors, to participate in its diverse array of **free** online creative activities that give a boost to the mind, body, and spirit.

At left: ACA artist Bethany Bennett

COMING UP ONLINE THROUGH ATLANTIC CENTER FOR THE ARTS

• Join us on Facebook Live for *Nurturing the Soul of the Artist*, a self-exploration workshop with journaling, drawing, and painting with Rachel Chase **January 16 – 1:00 pm**.

Facebook LIVE: https://www.facebook.com/atlanticcenterforthearts

Additional workshops are available on the ACA website: **www.atlanticcenterforthearts.org** (click on *Events and Exhibitions*):

Creative Caregiving

Caregiving for a loved one is a journey of joy and difficulty. Learn how to connect mind, body, and spirit by using the arts as a tool of self-care, social interaction, and lifelong learning.

- Fresh Perspectives in Poetry with award-winning poet and Florida's Poet Laureate for Volusia County M.B. McLatchey.
- Expressive Art Journaling with artist and art therapist Laura Bohn.
- Nature Sketch Club with ACA Community Artist and Daytona State College adjunct professor Bethany Bennett.

We welcome you to join us! Call 386-427-6975.







Evelyn Barrios-Lundy, Meals on Wheels Coordinator

Kaylyn Brown, Dining Site Coordinator

Emily Culver, Certified Nursing Assistant

Sara Dawson, Certified Nursing Assistant

Dennis Jefferson, Sub Site Coordinator

Diamond Jones, Homemaker

Kimberly Karkovice, Certified Nursing Assistant

Kristy MacNeil, Certified Nursing Assistant

Lanei Moore, Sub Site Coordinator

Cheryl Piatt, Dining Site Coordinator

Amanda Pittman, Homemaker

Jessica Reynolds, Certified Nursing Assistant

Marie Tomaselli, Sub Site Coordinator

Kriste Warren, Administrative Assistant



COA Delivers

www.coavolusia.org



Tickets go on sale August !! Mark your calendars!

Friday, Sept. 17, 2021 6:00 - 10:00 pm

\$45 per person/ \$35 age 65 and older Event proceeds to benefit



A NON-PROFIT SERVING VOLUSIA SENIORS

Council on Aging of Volusia County

The Ocean Center - 101 N. Atlantic Ave., Daytona Beach

For Sponsorship Opportunities, call 386-253-4700 x 215





COUNCIL ON AGING OF VOLUSIA COUNTY RESOURCE DIRECTORY

BEREAVEMENT/GRIEF SUPPORT

AdventHealth Hospice: 386-586-4424

Halifax Health-Hospice: 386-425-4738

Hospice of Volusia: 386-322-4701

or 800-272-2717

GriefShare: griefshare.org

CRISIS INTERVENTION and WELLBEING

Anxiety Support Group at The House Next Door: 386-860-1776

Lifeline Crisis Chat (online): suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

24-hour helpline: 1-800-950-6264

National Domestic Violence Hotline:

1-800-799-7233

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-8255 (English) 1-888-628-9454 (Spanish)

SMA Healthcare 24/7 Hotline: 800-539-4228 (help for mental health, addiction issues, suicide

prevention)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline:

1-800-622-HELP (4357)

United Way of Volusia-Flagler Counties First Call for Help: 2-1-1 or 386-253-0563

EMPLOYMENT

CareerSource Flagler Volusia: 386-323-7001

or online: careersourcefv.com

SERVICES FOR SENIORS

Council on Aging of Volusia County (COA):

386-253-4700

Elder Abuse Hotline:

1-800-962-2873

ElderSource: 1-888-242-4464

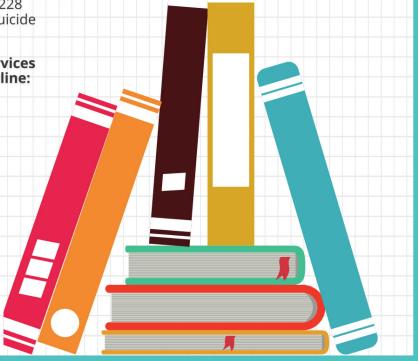
Florida Dept. of Elder Affairs: 850-414-2000

SERVICES FOR VETERANS

Department of Veterans Affairs: 1-844-698-2311

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) Online chat: veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat

Daytona Beach Counseling Center: 386-401-5121







Janssen Vaccines & Prevention B.V.

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A Clinical Research Study to Evaluate an Investigational Vaccine for the Prevention of COVID-19 in Adults is Now Enrolling

We are seeking healthy adult volunteers who want to help us in the fight against COVID-19.

The purpose of the ENSEMBLE 2 clinical research study is to evaluate the safety and efficacy (whether it works) of an investigational vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19 in adult participants.

You may be able to participate in this study if you:

- are 18 years of age or older
- are in good or stable health (you may have underlying medical conditions, if your symptoms and signs are stable and well-controlled).

Additional eligibility criteria will be assessed by the study doctor or staff.

If you take part in this study, you will be in the study for up to 2 years and 3 months.



Qualified participants will receive study-related medical care and the investigational vaccine or placebo at no cost. Qualified participants will also be reimbursed for reasonable trial-related travel expenses to and from study visits. The study will not pay for other medical care or current medication(s) needed to support your daily healthcare routine.

To learn more about this clinical research study, please visit: www.ensemblestudy.com or you may contact the site at:

Call Andie, Colby or Scott to get on list for study (386) 304-7070



ALL VACCINES WILL BE DONE ON THE FIRST FLOOR

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In the Next Issue:

- **Elder Abuse and Harassment**
- Volunteer Profile Volunteer **Appreciation Month**
- **Senior Center Activities Update**
- Introducing our Co-Executive Directors

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Twitter: www.twitter.com/coavolusia

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/council-on-aging-

of-volusia-county/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/coavolusia/

YouTube: Go to YouTube.com and type in COA Volusia











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