



The Agency Supports Persons with Developmental Disabilities in Living, Learning, and Working in their Communities

# Sunland Job Fair Huge Success!

With the arrival of Spring, fresh new beginnings and opportunities often come to mind. For Sunland Center, Spring was certainly in the air at the Center's Job Fair, held on Thursday, April 6. Individuals seeking job opportunities lined Hwy 71 N of Marianna early in the morning, patiently waiting to visit the job fair where they would learn about exciting career opportunities at Sunland. A crowd estimated near 300 quickly filled the Sunland Gymnasium where the event was held. Superintendent Geri Williams and the Sunland staff were elated with the large turnout, and happily welcomed special guests Michael Mayfield, Tacachale Administrator and several Tacachale staff along with Dale Sullivan, APD HR Manager. Informational booths staffed by the various departments at Sunland offered a wealth of information and materials about open positions, as well as many other jobs at the Center. Hundreds of applications were submitted via the People First online application process, with over 100 participating in on-site interviews. Guided tours of the Sunland campus were also provided for those interested in learning more about the facility. Superintendent Williams was especially pleased with the success of the event, stating *"Sunland is a fantastic place to work. Through this job fair, we hope to make people aware of the career opportunities and achievements possible through state service. Sunland offers rewarding and meaningful careers, along with the opportunity to make a difference in the field of human services."*



## Sunland Job Fair Huge Success!





*April is Autism Awareness Month. At Sunland we focus on sharing positive, respectful, and informative information about Autism and people with Autism. We promote acceptance and celebration of people as family members and friends, all making valuable contributions to the Sunland community. Autism is simply a natural variation of the human experience. It is important that we create a community which values, includes, and celebrates everyone. To sum it up, Autism Awareness Month is about treating everyone with dignity and respect.*

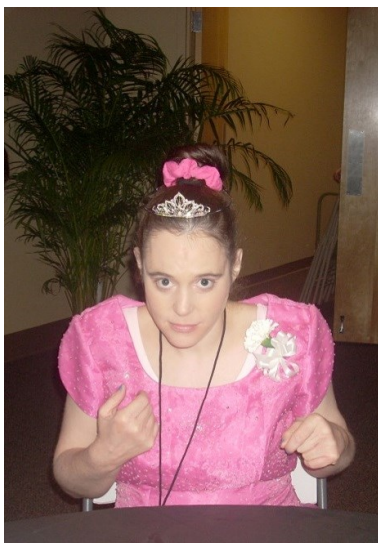
For the Cotton family, April means colorful flowers, birthday celebrations, and the very important support plan meeting for our daughter Catherine. The good news is all these pieces came together in a positive way for us this spring. This is a lot to celebrate, and I want to begin by saying it works because of Catherine's support system, which include caring staff, administration and extended family.

Part of preparing for the support plan meeting every year means I carefully review the plan from the preceding year. This year I was struck not by numbers in specific categories, but rather by her list of personal attributes. Without listing them all, our team seemed to pick up on the theme. If we can give Catherine positive attention, well timed food, and offer her preferred activities she does super. Idle time is the most frequently listed precursor on SBRs (significant behavior report). What an encouragement to know this is really working at Thiel House. Recent highlights included bike riding as a group on Saturdays, individual time with some beads, and Catherine's special birthday celebration.

We never take any of this for granted, and it helps when there are rough times. Catherine was less than perky for our visit because she was struggling with the remains of a yucky cold.

We'll be back, of course, and in the mean time we know that Sunland staff will be doing all they can to care for our Catherine and the other 15 residents who call Thiel House home.

Provided by: Anna Cotton, Catherine's Mom



## Thiel Center Celebrates Autism Awareness Month



"Light it up Blue for Autism" is a world-wide movement sponsored by the Autism Speaks organization to increase understanding and acceptance, and further support for people with Autism. At the Thiel Center, the "Light it Up Blue" theme provided an exciting experience for residents and staff to come together and create a unique banner in recognition of Autism awareness. On April 20, the staff of Thiel put on a delicious BBQ cookout, complete with ribs, grilled burgers, hotdogs and all the trimmings. The day could not have been more perfect: blue skies, a cool breeze and plenty of sunshine, along with the enticing aroma from the grill! Certainly, a great time was had by all! Congratulations Thiel for an awesome job!



## From the Superintendent...

### **Do April Showers Really Bring May Flowers?**

I was trying to recall my earliest memory of this rhyme: *April Showers Bring May Flowers*. I have concluded that it was most likely in elementary school. Both Mrs. Bynes and Mrs. Murrill allowed us a lot of recess time. Those were beautiful memories. I distinctly remember the green grass, beautiful flowers and lots of little kids laughing and running around like energizer bunnies. Those were the days. Springtime was fun time.

Thomas Tusser, I am told, is the originator of this rhyme. Tracing its original wording reveals a slightly different version. Here it is: *Sweet April Showers...Do Bring May Flowers* (around 1557).

Since we have a thriving Horticulture Department at Sunland, I wanted to see if this saying has merit. Here's what I saw:



Pictures are worth a thousand words. We invite you to visit our Horticulture Department and see what the richest soil in Jackson County produces. You have the option to take in the beauty or take something home. Either way you won't be disappointed.

I am a believer that "April Showers Bring May Flowers!"

Grateful,

*Geri Williams*  
Superintendent

## National Volunteer Week April 23-29, 2017

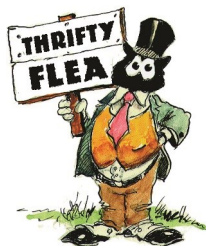


On Tuesday, April 25, Sunland Center hosted its Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. Volunteer Coordinator, Maria Johnson, reported that 60 volunteers attended. Volunteers were treated to lunch, served by Sunland's Culinary Department. Door prizes were provided by the Sunland Credit Union. St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church was awarded Volunteer Group of the Year and Mr. Wendell C. Bellamy was selected to receive Volunteer of the Year. Sunland Center staff and the residents we are privileged to serve, appreciate the support we receive from our volunteers. For information on how to become a volunteer, contact Maria Johnson at 850-482-9373.



Contributed by: Maria Johnson

## CSS Holds 2nd Annual "Thrifty Flea"



A festive spirit filled the air on April 21 as residents and staff alike gathered at the commons beside the Suntown Mall for the "Thrifty Flea" open air market, sponsored by Centralized Support Services. The event offered fresh produce, plants, swings and things, a book cart, jewelry and more. A line quickly formed at the Culinary Mixer for BBQ sandwiches, which turned out to be a big hit. Also offered was a variety of homemade cookies, popcorn and drinks. Hats off to the CSS staff for a job well done! Great boost for resident activities!



## Suntown Mall Shines!



Tonya Kelly and her staff at the Suntown Mall continue to raise the bar! Swing by the Mall to see the newly refurbished "Outfitter" clothing store and the delightful Sunny's Corner Boutique for a unique shopping experience! While you're there, grab breakfast or lunch at the Coffee Shop. You won't be disappointed!



## Food Service

During the month of April, Food Service Director Amy Mincy and Administrative Services Director Kevin Bailey recognized staff with 90-day perfect attendance. Congratulations to the following staff!

1st Shift -Evelyn Boyd, Robert Davis, Judy Sims, and DeShawn Wooden

2nd shift- Nancy Friend, Zyneshia Henderson, Justin Lester, Victoria Richards, and Tommy Williams

When addressing the celebration of her staff, Ms. Mincy stated "We also recognized the supervisors that were on duty and orchestrated the bulk out we had to do when our boiler was being replaced. Thanks to Robert Ham, Lynette Scott, Jody Wade, Justin Lester, Ruth Jones, and Victoria Richards for stepping up to ensure meal preparation and delivery continued with no interruption."



Provided by: Amy Mincy



## Easter Basket Deliveries!

The Recreation Department delivered Easter baskets to the Sunland homes on April 13. The baskets, donated by the United Methodist Church of Alford, were filled with a variety of items to include candy filled colorful eggs. Staff, along with Ronnie B., enjoyed delivering the baskets.



## Residential Services - Unit 1

The Roosevelt Day Program hosted an Easter Program, filled with many exciting activities for the residents of Unit 1. The day was perfect with beautiful blue skies, a gentle breeze and much excitement in the air! A special thanks to all of the staff who worked hard to make this a fun event for the residents of Unit 1!



Provided by: Renee Perry

## Residential Services - Unit 2



Whispering Oaks has been leaving footprints and creating wonderful memories this Spring with lots of exciting outings! Residents and staff recently enjoyed a trip to Gulf World in Panama City and thankfully, there were no lions, tigers and bears! There were however, penguins, dolphins and gators! *Um-hum...not the orange and blue gators, thankfully!* Seriously, we all had an awesome time! Everyone was excited to see the wildlife and taking pictures with them.

We also enjoyed a bowling trip to Kindel Lanes in Marianna. Staff were thrilled to see that many of the residents bowled and knew exactly when it was their turn, cheering and dancing when someone got a strike! Several played a game of pool, and enjoyed choosing their favorite tunes on the juke box. To round out the trip, everyone enjoyed eating at Pizza Hut.

In early April, we took a trip over to Lake Seminole for a combination of church services, with Sunland's own Adrian Abner bringing the Word, as well as seeing some motorcycles by the lake. What a picturesque view and beautiful singing by the St. Peter's choir! We also had the pleasure of seeing some former Sunland friends. It was a perfect day!

Everyone was eager to return to Panama City on an outing, this time choosing Zoo World for a new adventure. And yes...there were lions, tigers and bears, oh my! The guys were in awe to see the wildlife up close, enjoying opportunities for pictures and feeding the animals. So far, Spring has offered many great adventures for our guys! We can't wait to see what the Summer months bring for Whispering Oaks!

Contributed by: Barbara Calhoun

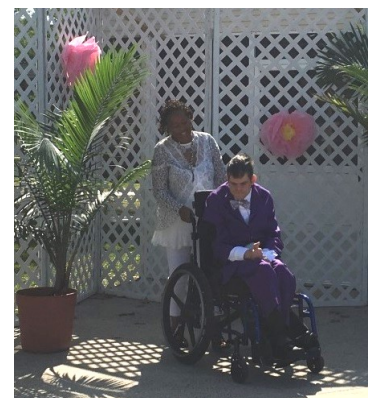


## Residential Services - Unit 3

Unit 3 brought in the month of April with our annual Spring Fling. Residents who participated looked outstanding in their spring attire!. Whether they were in their casual spring attire or sporting a suit, everyone dressed to impress from head to toe. Special thanks to the Maintenance Department and CSS for assisting with the set up; Ms. Maria Johnson and Mrs. Jennie Ann Dean for the decorations; Mr. and Mrs. Mayo for the entertainment, and Ms. Belinda Kirkland for serving as our Mistress of Ceremony!

On behalf of Unit 3, we would like to congratulate our Spring 2017 graduates! Nelson Myrick is graduating with a degree in Accounting, and Belinda Kirkland is graduating with a Master's degree in Theology! We wish you both success in your future endeavors!

Contributed by: Allison Jones



## Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

On April 4, representatives from Project Empower in Pensacola visited DDDP to provide career counseling to Residents who are employed in DDDP's Vocational Program. This training coincides with Department of Labor's requirements for all 14(c) certificate holders. Three representatives from Project Empower facilitated three sessions with twelve Residents. The Residents enjoyed the presentations and DDDP would like to thank Project Empower for assisting in this career counseling for our residents.



Contributed by: Corey Chafin

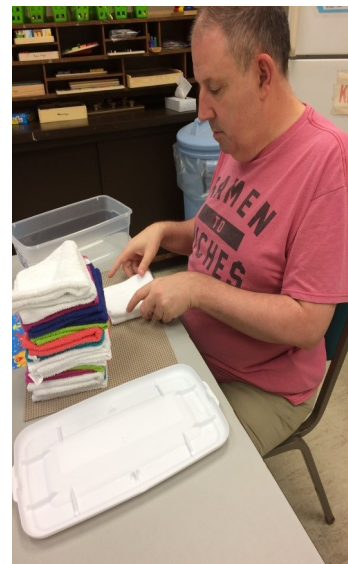
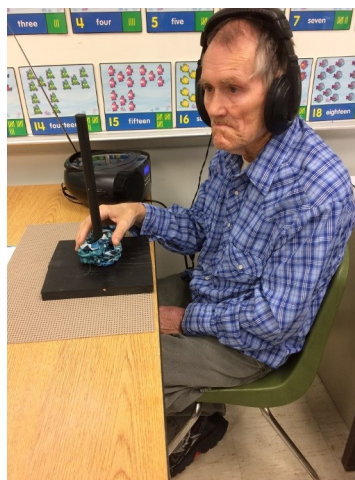


## Jackson County School at Sunland

### FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK...

Here's a little food for thought from the principal's corner. It's a short quote by Derek Botz. "If you think that education is expensive, try ignorance." Think closely about what Mr. Botz has said. Education doesn't have to be years of knowledge acquired from a higher institution of learning. It can come from our every day jobs and experiences. Education is really about learning all we can with knowledge made available to us daily. Ask yourself, "Do I know everything there is to know about what I do for a living?" Can I learn more? If you do not, then I believe Mr. Botz is saying your ignorance may be something that is very costly during your lifetime. You see, we all have the ability to make our lives better through knowledge. Give it a try!!

At the JCS Program, a variety of educational opportunities are provided to assist residents in the development of new skills. Pictured below are Marty B., sorting by color, George J. working on his fine motor skills stacking rings on a pole and Billy M., practicing folding skills.



Contributed by: Tim Baggett, JCS Administrator

## Congratulations April Olympic Medal Star Award Winners!



**GOLD - Medical** - Dr. Nikorn Arunakul

**BRONZE - CSS** - Robin Snelgrove

**SILVER - Unit 1 Team**- Tracy Swint, Naton Williams, Gayla Clower, Eara Brown, Mikel Patterson, Ollie Dubose, Sam Brunson, Kevin Jones, Neamia Gilbert, Bill Harris, Eric Utter, Malcomb Pryor, Austin Anderson, James Dallas

**BRONZE - Unit 2 Admin** - Cathy McWaters

**BRONZE - Unit 2/Whispering Oaks** - Shitay Williams,

**BRONZE - Unit 3/East Washington** - Geraldine Messer

**BRONZE -Unit 3/East Washington** - Leola Ming

**SILVER - Pathways** - Juanita Alford

**BRONZE - Pathways Team** – Entire staff

**BRONZE - Pathways Rehabilitation Department**

Michael Young, Marcus Mallet, Stephanie Russ, Daseana Bass,  
James Rhynes, Sarah Cowherd

**BRONZE - Pathways Vocational Department**

Lorriane Dean, Freddie Pruett, Rick Hendrieth, Cassie Mitchell, Randy McKinnie



## Information Technology

### Keeping your PERSONAL Information Safe

Protecting your personal information can help protect you from identity theft. There are many facets to protection your information. You should always know who you share your information with. You should always store and dispose of your personal information securely. Certainly, not the least of importance is keeping your personal information safe ONLINE. Below are just a few things to remember that are sure to help you avoid a cyber catastrophe.

**Lock down your login:** Strengthen your online accounts by enabling the strongest authentication tools available, such as biometrics, security keys or a unique one-time code through an app on your mobile device. Your usernames and passwords are not enough to protect key accounts like email, banking and social media. Many of the latest mobile devices have fingerprint scanning capabilities. This is not turned on by default, but I strongly encourage it when available.

- **Make your password a strong one:** A strong password is a sentence that is at least 12 characters long. Focus on positive sentences or phrases that you like to think about and are easy to remember (for example, "I love country music."). On many sites, you can even use spaces! But be sure and mix in special characters in place of some letters to make it even more **\$ecure!** See what I did there?
- **Unique account, unique password:** Having separate passwords for every account helps to thwart cybercriminals. At a minimum, separate your work and personal accounts and make sure that your critical accounts have the strongest passwords.

**Write it down BUT keep it safe:** Everyone can forget a password. Keep a list that's stored in a **safe, secure place away from your computer.** You can alternatively use a service like a password manager to keep track of your personal passwords. I can't emphasize enough...**PLEASE** do not keep your passwords near your computer!

**Be alert to impersonators:** Make sure you know who is getting your personal or financial information. Don't give out personal information on the phone, through the mail or over the Internet unless you've initiated the contact or know who you're dealing with. If a company that claims to have an account with you sends email asking for personal information, don't click on links in the email. Instead, type the company name into your web browser, go to their site, and contact them through customer service.

So, remember to remain as alert online as you do in the 'real' world. For more information on consumer protection, visit <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/> and <https://www.identitytheft.gov/>.

Contributed by: Randall Wynn

## Employee Tidbits...



### STATE EMPLOYEES:

A friendly reminder...as a condition of employment, you must sign up through People First to have your salary deposited directly into your bank account. Access the Employee Information tab, select Personal Information, and finally Direct Deposit. This will allow you to start, change or stop your Direct Deposit information. Access People First at: <https://peoplefirst.myflorida.com>.

If you cannot complete your EFT request through People First, complete the Direct Deposit Authorization form.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

Amanda Johnson, HR Manager and her staff, Veronica Mullinax, Lizzie Holland, Nicole Sims and Regina Decker are always happy to serve you!

For more information regarding career opportunities, deferred compensation, retirement or other personnel issues, the Human Resources Department can be reached at 482-9230 or \*04.

Information regarding vacancies can be obtained at the People First website at:

<https://peoplefirst.myflorida.com>



## NEW EMPLOYEES



Shanta Richardson  
William Searcy  
Adrian Carr  
Brandon Butler  
Kaci Deese  
Reaunna Spencer

## Retirees

Dan Basford





agency for persons with disabilities  
State of Florida

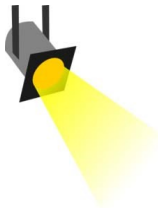
## Project Sunland PRIDE



Beautification Program!

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN A DESIRABLE ENVIRONMENT

### "Community Spotlight of the Month"



#### "The Sunland Beacon" - Newsletter Committee

Suggestions and/or news article submissions are welcomed; please contact any committee member:

Beth Basford, Administration - Editor; Clint Cox, CSS/Recreation - Co-Editor; Stephanie Parker, CSS/Print Shop; Renee Perry, Unit 1; LaWanda Calhoun, Unit 2; Allison Jones, Unit 3; Juanita Alford, Pathways; Joni Laramore, Administration; Mary Gallagher, Quality Management; Suzanne Laramore, RN/Nursing-Medical