

The Sunland Beach

Volume 1/Issue 10

DECEMBER 2015

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

agency for persons with disabilities
State of Florida



The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

The holiday season is truly the most wonderful time of the year at Sunland! Beginning in early December and continuing throughout the month, residents and staff enjoy many exciting opportunities for celebration and fellowship. The Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony was held on December 3 and ushered in the Christmas season in a meaningful way. Decorations, provided by the various departments throughout the Center, were presented and hung on the tree by many of our residents. As the ornaments were presented, a special holiday greeting was read. Beautiful decorations were on display all across the campus, making the annual decoration judging contest held on December 8 quite a competitive event. The celebration continued on December 10 with the annual Christmas Parade. The smiles on the faces of everyone were truly a reflection of the heartfelt joy that makes the Christmas season such a special time filled with friendship and goodwill. Festivities continued on December 18 with the Sunland Christmas Program. The talent of our staff is quite impressive! Residents and staff alike shared in laughter and applause, and everyone got a kick out of the "Grinch" as he made his way throughout the auditorium! To wrap up the month, Sunland residents put on their own talent show at the Christmas Fest! Not to be outdone, they showcased their many talents and delighted the crowd with amazing performances! So yes, Christmas at Sunland is the most wonderful time of the year and we are thankful!



Sunland Center - Marianna Campus
Developmental Disabilities Center
3700 Williams Drive, Marianna, FL 32446


agency for persons with disabilities
State of Florida

Sunland Center - Chattahoochee Campus
Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program
100 N. Main Street, Chattahoochee, FL 32324

Christmas Decoration Contest

Each year, the grounds of Sunland are transformed into a magical, winter wonderland to the delight of residents and staff alike. The annual Christmas Decoration Contest brings in volunteers from the local community to determine the winning areas for interior, exterior, and traditional decorations. The judges for this year's contest were Mr. Nakeya Lovett, City of Marianna Fire Chief; Mrs. Amber Baggett, 14th Judicial Circuit; Mrs. Denise McGriff, Sunland Retiree and her husband, Mr. Shedrick McGriff, Captain, Jackson Correctional Institution/Mayor of the town of Bascom, Florida. The judges were amazed at the creativity around the Center and agreed the task of determining the winning areas was quite a job! Way to go Sunland! You pulled out all the stops and had the Center shining with holiday cheer!

Congratulations to the following areas who were recognized as being among the "best of the best" for Christmas 2015!

HOUSES/INTERIOR:

- 1ST PLACE – THIEL CENTER
- 2ND PLACE – BUCHANAN
- 3RD PLACE - HARRISON, HAYES, WHISPERING OAKS, EAST TRUMAN, PARKVIEW & EAST WASHINGTON

VOCATIONAL/INTERIOR:

- 1ST PLACE – RECYCLING/SORTING
- 2ND PLACE – SUNTOWN MALL
- 3RD PLACE – MANUAL SKILLS

HOUSES/EXTERIOR:

- 1ST PLACE - EAST TRUMAN & THIEL CENTER
- 2ND - HARRISON, PATHWAYS, EAST WASHINGTON, PARKVIEW AND ROOSEVELT DAY PROGRAM
- 3RD - BUCHANAN, MONROE & HAYES

VOCATIONAL/EXTERIOR:

- 1ST - SUNTOWN MALL
- 2ND – MANUAL SKILLS

HOUSES/TRADITIONAL:

- 1ST PLACE – PATHWAYS, EAST WASHINGTON, HAYES & ROOSEVELT DAY PROGRAM
- 2ND PLACE - THIEL CENTER, EAST TRUMAN, WHISPERING OAKS, HARRISON, BUCHANAN & UNIT 2 LEARNING CENTER/HALLWAY
- 3RD PLACE - MONROE

VOCATIONAL/TRADITIONAL:

- 1ST PLACE – SUNTOWN MALL
- 2ND PLACE - MANUAL SKILLS

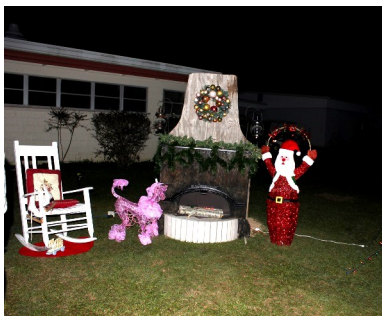
Lincoln & Pierce – Certificate of Participation

HOLIDAY CARDS:

- 1ST PLACE - UNIT 1
- 2ND PLACE - CSS/A TEAM
- 3RD PLACE - THIEL CENTER



Christmas Decoration Contest



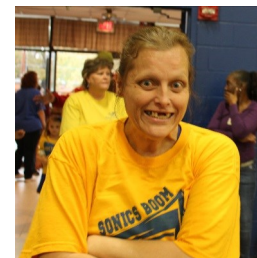
Christmas Party!

Every year, the Ft. Walton Beach Sons of Italy club sponsors a Christmas Party for Sunland residents. Everyone looks forward to an exciting time of fun and fellowship with their friends, lots of good food and a visit from Santa Claus!



Gwen Skeete Invitational Basketball Tournament

Sunland hosted the 2015 Gwen Skeete Invitational Basketball Tournament on December 2, which included teams from Sunland, Pathways and Hope School. The tournament was established in 2014, and was named in honor of Gwen Skeete, who was a long-time employee of Sunland. Ms. Skeete passed away in 2012 following a battle with cancer. "She was an exceptional employee and a special person to all who knew her" said Recreation Therapy Manager Clint Cox. The tournament's participants and cheerleaders enjoyed a wonderful time of friendly competition and good sportsmanship!



SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Team:

Where did the time go? Here we are in the 12th month of the year 2015. It seems like only yesterday we were talking about the Art Show, Disability Rights Florida Staff Training, Leadercast 2015, Fall Festival, Residents' Talent Show, The Thiel Experience, Turkey Day, Staffs' Talent Show, Holiday Parade and the true meaning for the season; all with an abiding sense of gratitude and gratefulness.

And with the year drawing to a close, I want to illuminate your hard work and commitment to the individuals to whom we are privileged to lend support. We had a fantastic year of serving and giving back; not just to our clients, but also to the community at large. Serving others is worthy of applauding and celebrating. The irony is those who serve do it because of values and beliefs and when given the choice, they choose not to be applauded or celebrated. They would rather give of their time and talent quietly and as the young folks say, "keep it moving!" At the end of this year, I pause to say thank you for the many acts of kindness beyond what was expected and with no thought of reciprocity. John Bunyan makes it plain. He says, "*You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.*"

In reflecting on the organizational workings, I am assessing what worked and what did not work. It is important to examine the lessons and barriers, admit the missteps and reevaluate systems and strategies that are not advancing the important work that we do.

Looking forward to 2016

Improved communication seems to be a recurring theme in every conversation or survey. We have executive management meetings, leadership team meetings, departmental meetings, resident town hall meetings, staff town hall meetings, etc. This affords many opportunities for meaningful exchanges. We have learned a lot through these channels and we are open to new ones. Your direct input will help us continually improve how we do business. Own your voice and communicate ideas, recommendations, and proposed solutions to the team. You're an important part of the team.

Looking forward to **Coffee at Midnight** with the third shift leadership team. This will be a quarterly roundtable that will be open dialogue for all things that impact our 24-7 delivery system. While it infers that only coffee will be served, I am happy to tell you that we will also have tea and water.

Strengthening the team, modeling the vision, and working harder for the people that we are privileged to serve is my abiding commitment carrying over into 2016. This together with more training and educational opportunities for staff will position us well to continue building on a rich history steeped in service to humanity.

Happy New Year!

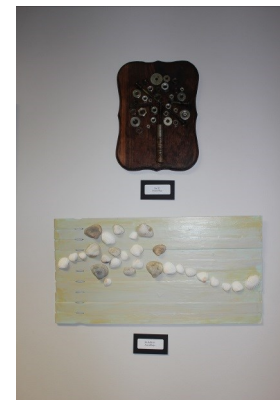
Geri Williams

Superintendent



Sunland Art Work on Display at APD State Office

Sunland is very proud to display artwork at the APD State Office. The art was featured during Sunland's 2015 Art Show. Maria Johnson, Vocational Instructor I, Jennie Ann Dean, Resident Advocate and David Byrd, Maintenance Mechanic/Carpentry Shop, together with Jacquelyn Ledbetter, APD Office of Residential Supports arranged the wall display.



Residential Services Holiday Fun!

Residential Services, comprised of Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 3, celebrated the holiday season with plenty of fun and exciting activities. It is said "a picture is worth a thousand words" and we think you'll agree that saying is almost an understatement as you look at the pictures that captured some of the holiday memories



Pathways



Boxes of decorations came out of storage and plans to decorate Pathways for the Christmas season began in early December. Each year we create a new area, utilizing materials and skills we have available at Sunland. This year we transformed the Security Gatehouse into a Gingerbread House. Manual Skills cut out gingerbread men, candy canes and lollipops. Old pallets were recycled into Christmas trees and picket fences.

Vocational staff member, Ursula Bolds along with several residents painted all the pieces. Through team work and imagination the front area was transformed into "Candy Cane Lane." As always, the residents and staff of Pathways really enjoyed decorating the grounds and interior areas for Christmas!



Articles & photos contributed by: Juanita Alford

Congratulations ☆☆☆☆ 2015 Star ☆☆☆☆ Award Winners!

Sunland's Employee Recognition Program is pleased to announce a total of 104 employees were recipients of a Star Award during 2015. These staff were recognized as either a Star Employee or as a member of a Star Team. We are so proud of our staff! So many of you continually demonstrate strong commitment and dedication to your jobs and to those we are privileged to serve. A sincere congratulations to everyone for their remarkable achievements!

Congratulations to the following individuals who were recognized as December Stars: CSS/ Residential Services Star Team - Clint Cox, Debra Baker, and Tiffany LaCount and CSS Star Team - Annette Odom, Deron Johnson and Michael John Carr.

Stars of the Quarter for the 3rd Quarter (July-Sept) and 4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) were honored at the December 16 Town Meeting. Congratulations Unit 3 - LaRhonda Barnes, Roderek Gainer and Allison Jones who were recognized as the 3rd Quarter Star Team, and to CSS/Residential Services - Clint Cox, Debra Baker, Tiffany LaCount and LaRhonda Barnes who were recognized as the 4th Quarter Star Team. The Star Employees of the Quarter were also presented during Town Meeting and went to Greg Roberts (3rd Quarter) and Steve Barwick (4th Quarter).

And finally, a huge shout out to Greg Roberts who was named as the Star Employee of the Year and to Unit 3 's LaRhonda Barnes, Roderek Gainer, and Allison Jones who were named at the Star Team of the Year!



2015 Star Employee of the Year
Greg Roberts
with Unit 1 POA Kim Kennedy



2015 Star Team of the Year
Allison Jones, LaRhonda Barnes
and Roderek Gainer

HUMAN RESOURCES

FSECC CAMPAIGN ~ \$150 GIFT CARD DRAWING

Congratulations to DDDP employee Phyllis Porter, winner of the FSECC Campaign drawing for a \$150 Gift Card!!!

December New Employees:

Jessica Sanders
Terri Clayton
James Rhynes
Niki Simmons
Demontray Edwards
Amos Spires
Marnee McCloud
Lisa Jones



November & December Retirees:

Mae Rhynes
Joseph (Jody) Davis
Don Newsome
Leontyne Clay
Darlene Vickery
Gloria Bess



For information regarding vacancies, deferred compensation or other personnel issues, the Human Resources Department may be reached at 482-9230 or *04.

In addition, information regarding vacancies can be obtained at the People First website at:

<https://peoplefirst.myflorida.com>

Contributed by: Joni Laramore



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State of Florida

Project Sunland PRIDE



Beautification Program!

PERSONAL **R**ESPONSIBILITY **I**N A **D**ESIRABLE **E**NVIRONMENT

"Community Spotlight of the Month"



Maintenance Department Christmas Display

"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; Ashley Hill, CSS/Print Shop; Maria Johnson, CSS/Print Shop; Ethan Smith, IT; Cleve Wedderburn, Unit 1; LaWanda Calhoun, Unit 2; Allison Jones, Unit 3; Juanita Alford, Pathways; Lynn Baxley, Maintenance/Operations; Joni Laramore, Administration; Mary Gallagher, Quality Management; Suzanne Laramore, RN/Nursing-Medical; Sandra Helms, ARNP - Wellness Committee