

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

agency for persons with disabilities
State of Florida



MERRY CHRISTMAS

The Christmas season is without doubt the most wonderful time of the year at Sunland Center! For it is during the holidays that the campus transforms into a magical community filled with twinkling lights, beautiful holiday decorations, parties galore and the observation of many holiday traditions that warm the hearts of residents and staff alike. All remind us of the true spirit of Christmas: *Love*.

We, at Sunland, are truly privileged to serve those who call Sunland home. It is within the practice of service that we often experience love. Love for one another; love as it should be. The greatest gift you can ever own is not found under a Christmas tree; it is found in the hearts of those we love, our family and friends.

May lovely, happy times decorate your holiday season, may warm, special memories brighten your New Year, and may the wonder of Christmas be with you forever!



SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER



Merry Christmas

"Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmastime." "My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving and caring for others."

Anonymous

In early 2016, I challenged the team to embark on the Year of Training. What gifts they delivered: Training in Communications, Customer Relations, Resident Advocacy, Behavior Analysis, Art, Culinary, Music, Dance, Repurposing, Human Relations, Team Building, and so on. What a fabulous time they had doing it; all while learning new skills. Encouraging the team to expand the normal rhythm of their duties with zest, vigor, and creativity took the team from internal to external training environments. Pictures of team members participating in sessions such as Live to Lead and Global Summit warmed my heart and my resolve to ensure that others get the same opportunity in 2017.

Challenge for 2017 – The Year of Building. Team Champions must complete the sentence for their teams. One such example would be: The Year of Building Community Relationships. It is going to be another exciting year. Great things are happening at Sunland Center, DDDP, and RISH Park.

Special thanks to all the staff for the wonderful Holiday Celebrations. It was great to see all the beautiful smiles and hear the hearty laughter. Residents and staff enjoyed the festivities.

Thank you team for caring so deeply for the individuals we are privileged to serve and lend support to. What a meaningful journey we are on together!

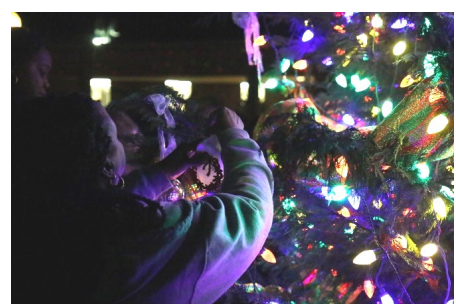
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

With gratitude and appreciation,

Geri Williams
Superintendent

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

Sunland's annual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony, held Thursday, December 1, was the perfect occasion to kick off the holiday season. This year the location was changed to the area between the Suntown Mall and Habile Building. The tree, a majestic 25 foot Leyland Cypress, was beautifully decorated, special thanks to a number of employees and the assistance of Michael Smith, owner of Artistic Designs by Michael, and supporter of Friends of Sunland. Residents and staff enjoyed cool weather, spicy wassail, hot cocoa and fresh baked cookies sponsored, in part, by Friends of Sunland, Inc., who partnered with Sunland to provide refreshments for the event. Special guests for the event were Santa and Mrs. Claus who spent time at the Mall to greet residents and staff. Many residents eagerly shared their wish list and were excited to receive a scarf, complete with mittens, handmade by Santa's Elves, and pose for a photo with Santa.



Marianna Christmas Parade



Sunland Center was well represented at the annual Marianna Christmas Parade on Friday, December 2. Employees James Godwin, Maria Johnson, Annette Odom, Antonia Speights, and Delmar Decree, accompanied Cheryl D., Rachel M., and Brian B., on a beautiful float crafted by residents and staff. The float was also flanked by a decorated cart driven by John Brewer, owner of Brewer's, Studio and member of Friends of Sunland, Inc., who proudly promoted his business's support of Sunland's "Hub" arts program.





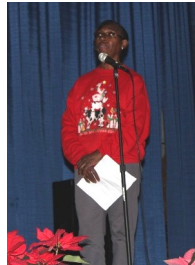
Sunland Christmas Parade

Everyone loves a parade! Sunland residents and staff look forward to the Center's annual Christmas Parade, lining the streets to catch a glimpse of their friends and co-workers, and, of course, scooping up a variety of candies being tossed to the onlookers. The parade includes floats, walking groups, decorated cars and trucks, and marching bands.



Annual Christmas Program!

A favorite tradition at Sunland is the Annual Christmas Program where staff take to the stage to show off their talents, offering an assortment of musical performances and funny antics that draw huge rounds of cheer and side-splitting laughter. This year's program was certainly one to remember, showcasing the creative talent of our staff which delighted the audience and even sprinkled in a few surprises. The "dancing dwarfs" from Pathways stole the show early on with a medley of pop music that had the audience singing along and several dancing in the aisles. Not to be outdone, CSS brought down the house with "Fat Albert and the Gang" as they attempted to find ways to help their co-workers get into the holiday spirit. Frosty the Snowman made his debut, surrounded by staff from the Accounting Department who enjoyed dancing in the snow and tossing a few snowballs to the crowd. Unit 3 performed their rendition of "Rudolph" dancing to the "Temptations." In between the laughter, the audience was serenaded with beautiful Christmas carols from Food Service, Jackson County School staff, Unit 1, Unit 2, Unit 3 and CSS Recreation. As the program ended, Santa, the real star of the show, made his way onto the stage where he was greeted by residents, eager to grab a hug and a handful of candy. A special thanks to everyone who participated and helped spread a little holiday cheer at Sunland!



'Tis the Season to be Jolly!

Sunland Administration staff really went all out to get into the holiday spirit this year! To kick off the season, an Ugly Christmas Sweater contest was held on December 8. A lot of very creative sweaters were sported which created lots of laughter and opportunities for selfie photo shoots. Congrats to Amanda Johnson who took 1st Place. For her creativity, she received a ribbon and \$10 gift certificate to The Oaks Restaurant. On December 14, everyone enjoyed a wide assortment of holiday goodies and a time of fellowship. Then, on December 21, staff shared their favorite holiday desserts and enjoyed playing an exciting "Dirty Santa" game and a "Memory Lane" baby/childhood photos game. It was quite the challenge to match the photos to the staff! Let's just say time moves on and "you've come a long way baby!" *Merry Christmas to everyone from Administration!*



'tis the season...
TO ROCK
UGLY
SWEATERS



Riverside Elementary Beaver Chorus



Sunland residents and staff enjoyed a beautiful Christmas program on Wednesday, December 14, thanks to Riverside Elementary School choral director Flora Davis, and the Riverside Beaver Chorus. The students performed a musical about Melton, the warm-hearted snowman who is everyone's friend. The lively performance had every clapping and cheering and singing with their favorite holiday songs! Following the event, the children were presented with goodie bags, courtesy of Friends of Sunland, Inc., and donated gift certificates from McDonald's.

A special thank you to Ms. Davis and her students for sharing their talents with Sunland!



Christmas Decorating Contest

On Tuesday, December 6, Sunland's annual Christmas Decorating contest took place. We extend our sincere appreciation to the judges for this event: Michael Smith, of Artistic Designs by Michael; Jennifer Griffin, from Evangel Worship Center, and Becky Partin, from the City of Marianna Police Department. The trio visited all areas of the Center, observing the beautiful décor. All agreed it was quite difficult to choose 1st, 2nd and 3rd place for Interior, Exterior and Traditional decorations, as the grounds of the Center were decorated so beautifully. With the final tallies counted, the winners were as follows:



1ST PLACE INTERIOR: SUNTOWN MALL, THEIL CENTER, WHISPERING OAKS, RECYCLING
2ND PLACE INTERIOR: HARRISON
3RD PLACE INTERIOR: WOODRIGE, CONNALLY MANOR

1ST PLACE EXTERIOR: RECYCLING, THEIL CENTER
2ND PLACE EXTERIOR: HARRISON, WHISPERING OAKS, PARKVIEW, EAST TRUMAN, WOODRIDGE, PATHWAYS & SUNTOWN MALL
3RD PLACE EXTERIOR: LINCOLN

1ST PLACE TRADITIONAL: RECYCLING, WHISPERING OAKS, SUNTOWN MALL
2ND PLACE TRADITIONAL: EAST WASHINGTON, PATHWAYS, THEIL CENTER, SUNTOWN MALL
3RD PLACE TRADITIONAL: UNIT 2/HALLWAY, HARRISON, PARKVIEW, PIERCE, WOODRIDGE

PARTICIPATION CERTIFICATES:
 RANCH, MANUAL SKILLS, BUCHANAN, UNIT 1 ADMINISTRATION, MONROE, ADAMS, EAST WASHINGTON, HAYES, WESTSIDE, GRANT, UNIT 2 LEARNING CENTER/CLASS #30

◆ **BEST OVERALL** - RECYCLING

Chapel Hosts Nativity Program



On December 18, the Chapel hosted their annual live Nativity Program. Residents eagerly volunteered to participate as shepherds, wise men, Mary & Joseph, while many other gathered celebrate the reason for the season!

Thank you to Chaplain Ruthie Moore and all who participated.

Thiel Center Hosts Christmas Dinner

The staff of Thiel Center hosted a magnificent Christmas dinner for residents, families and staff on Wednesday, December 21. The meal consisted of fried turkey, baked ham, fried chicken, baked chicken, chicken and dressing, gravy, collard greens, green beans, potato salad, rice, corn casserole, deviled eggs, sweet potato casserole, cornbread, and an assortment of delicious desserts. Congratulations to the staff of Thiel for a marvelous meal, and thank you for your hard work and dedication to the individuals who reside at Thiel. Merry Christmas to all!



Volunteer Services Celebrates Christmas!

For Volunteer Services, December is one of the busiest months of the year. Maria Johnson, Volunteer Coordinator, along with numerous staff volunteers, civic clubs, churches and organizations, works tirelessly to schedule and host an assortment of activities and holiday parties. Sunland is very appreciative of the support our volunteers provide for our residents and their spirit of service and giving that comes from the heart!

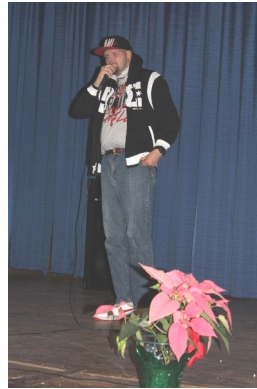


People's South Bank in Malone presented Sunland Center "Shoe Box" gifts on December 21st. The boxes were filled with a variety of items, including personal care, puzzle books and small gift items. They were tied with pretty ribbons and decorated with cards made by Malone School students. Bank representative, Mrs. Amy Dillard delivered the gifts and they were distributed to the residents in Unit I.

Sunland is grateful for the community support we receive. It provides additional opportunities for the people that reside here and that we are privileged to serve.

"ChristmasFest"

The Recreation Department hosted a new event, "ChristmasFest" on December 20 in the Auditorium. The program was designed to be a Christmas music celebration and featured singing, dancing and musical performances by residents and staff. Congratulations to all who performed for an outstanding job! Sunland certainly has a lot of talent!



Celebrating the Fantastic Staff of Food Service!

The staff of Food Service were recently honored by Amy Mincy, Food Services Director and Kevin Bailey, Administrative Services Director. Staff were treated to a delicious lunch consisting of grilled chicken, baked beans, coleslaw and dessert, catered by Wayne Winkle and the students of "The Mixer" culinary arts program. To add to the excitement, everyone enjoyed participating in a "Saran Wrap" game where they were timed to unwrap a ball of saran wrap hoping for a chance at grabbing the well hidden gifts. It was certainly a day with lots of laughter, good food and fellowship with co-workers.

A total of nine employees were presented certificates of appreciation for 90-day perfect attendance and included: Evelyn Boyd, Diane Chance, Robert Davis, Judy Sims, Dewey Wells, Barbara Gammons, Neshia Henderson, Mark Morehead, Vickie Richards.



Happy Holidays!





SPECIAL OLYMPICS STATE BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Five individuals from Sunland traveled to Orlando recently to take part in the Special Olympics Florida State Bowling Championships. Those five individuals were Vickie P, David R and Cedric M from Unit 1. Representing Unit 2 were Henry P and Benny R. The event took place at The Boardwalk Bowling Center and featured over 600 bowlers from around the State. As expected, the competition was tough and medals were hard to come by. David R from Grant House won a bronze medal for finishing third in his respective division. The rest of the Sunland contingency gave a valiant effort and received various ribbons for their participation. Traveling with the team were Nurse Mary Herring and from Recreation Clint Cox, Johnny Hodges and Donna Conrad.



Contributed by: Clint Cox & Donna Conrad



Jackson County School at Sunland

The holiday break is upon us here at the school. We will see everyone when we return on January 5, 2017. This past year has really flown by for all of the Sonics' teachers. What a great year with so many accomplishments and blessings. As the principal, I want to personally thank the employees of Sunland that I've had the opportunity to get to know and work with. As we enjoy this festive season, let's always remember the reason we have the chance to celebrate. Over 19 centuries ago the birth of our wonderful Savior still gives us peace and salvation today. God Bless and enjoy your holidays from Jackson County School.

Kind Regards,
 Tim Baggett, Principal



JCS Instructor John Wynn, recently worked with JCS students to put on a production of story time characters from Charlotte's Web & Little Red Riding Hood. Students dressed in costumes depicting characters from these beloved stories. They enjoyed parading throughout the JCS program area representing their favorite characters

Pictured L-R: Representing characters from "Charlotte's Web" are Robin Hamilton, Kevin Husted, and Rachel B., joined by JCS Principal Tim Baggett

Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

Johnathan Smith, Institutional Security Specialist I, has been selected as DDDP's Star Employee of the Month for December. Mr. Smith has been employed at DDDP since September 2012. He is definitely a "Team Player", helping others and leading coworkers in a very productive direction. Johnathan is a person and employee of integrity, showing strong interest in enhancing his knowledge and skills of career choice. Mr. Smith understands that a positive attitude increases productivity and efficiency. He is well mannered and courteous to residents, staff and visitors, and is a respected professional. Johnathan works well with others and demonstrates an enthusiastic sense of pride in caring for our most vulnerable. He has a strong willingness to exercise servant leadership. Mr. Smith displays ongoing professionalism and is indeed the type of person most pursue diligently to become.



DDDP Enjoys the Holiday Spirit!

On December 16, DDDP hosted a "Christmas Tea" for all staff. A large group of employees enjoyed finger foods, desserts and time of fellowship. Much thanks to the DDDP Employee Recognition Committee for coordinating this event!



Article & Photos Contributed by: Corey Chafin

December Star Awards

Star Employees

Rosemary Cox, Unit 1
Felicia Smith, Unit 1
Randall Wynn, IT
Keith Caplinger, QM/Safety
Tambra Cabrera, Unit 2

Star Team

Unit 2, Maintenance/Operations
Lucious Williams, Phil Anderson, Lenora Edwards, Kassie Starrine, Howard Cotton, Marylin Pierce, Tambra Cabrera, Allen Ward, Michael Padgett, Janet O'Pry, Bill Himes, Mitch Yeomans, Wendy Jordan

Quarterly Star Award Winners

3rd Quarter Star Team (July - September)

Multi-Disciplinary Team: Unit 1, Unit 2, Nursing, Maintenance, Security & CSS

Akira Jennings, Desmond Barnes, Ronterrious Richardson, Becky Snyder, Edith Phillips, Wade Collins, Bill Nelson, Robin Snellgrove

3rd Quarter Star Employee (July- September)

Dewey Wells

4th Quarter Star Team (October - December)

Multi-Disciplinary Team: Unit 2, Maintenance/Operations

Lucious Williams, Phil Anderson, Lenora Edwards, Kassie Starrine, Howard Cotton, Marylin Pierce, Tambra Cabrera, Allen Ward, Michael Padgett, Janet O'Pry, Bill Himes, Mitch Yeomans, Wendy Jordan

4th Quarter Star Employee (October - December)

Rosemary Cox

Congratulations!

Star Team of the Year Maintenance Department

**Adam Chambliss, Clay Mitchell, Jimmy Jones,
JC Folsom, Roger Cosson, Randy Lowery**



Star Employees of the Year

Dewey Wells & Jennie Ann Dean



IMPORTANT DATES!

The following days are observed as paid Holiday by State Agencies for the upcoming Christmas and New Year's holidays:

Monday, December 26, 2016- Christmas Holiday

Monday, January 2, 2017- New Year's Holiday

Merry Christmas 
and
Happy New Year

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



SHANTIL REED
CAROLYN YOUNG
LEMUEL DRISKELL
KENDRA ROGERS
JOSHUA CARR
SHARON MERKISON
TIMOTHY BENTON
MELISSA BEEM
DADRIAN DABBS



Retirees

Teresa Bruner



agency for persons with disabilities
State of Florida

Project Sunland PRIDE



Beautification Program!

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN A DESIRABLE ENVIRONMENT

"Community Spotlight of the Month"

CSS Mall Grounds



"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; Ethan Smith, IT; Cleve Wedderburn, 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