

The Sunland Beacon

Volume 1/Issue 1

March 2015

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

agency for persons with disabilities
State of Florida



On March 5, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day, was observed at the State Capitol. Residents Michele B. and Ruby P., accompanied by staff Jennie Ann Dean and Maria Johnson, were excited to represent Sunland. This annual event gives individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities an opportunity to meet legislators and advocate for issues that are important to them. Upon arrival, we proceeded to the Plaza; the wind was whipping, the music was playing loudly and the excitement was building. Resident Michele B. was insistent that we take front row seats. There our Sunland Advocate Ambassadors sat listening intently to speakers Lt. Governor Carlos Lopez-Cantera, APD Director Barbara Palmer, Representatives from various districts and other state officials as they discussed various Bills being presented before the Legislature this year; they encouraged those in attendance to advocate for his/her special needs. Michele B. seized a moment to have her photograph taken with Lt. Governor Lopez-Cantera, afterwards taking control of the camera and snapping many photos to preserve memories of the visit. (Continued, Page 2)



Ruby P, Director Palmer & Michele B



Michele B & Lt. Governor

Our Day at the Capitol... **Front Row Seat!**

CONTINUED: After enjoying lunch on the Plaza and visiting with Director Palmer, Deputy Director Tom Rankin and several others, the residents were off to their tour of the State Capitol Building. First stop Security - no problem. Next stop, the Governor's office. Even though Governor Scott was not in the office, they enjoyed having their picture taken inside and signed the guest book. The second floor proved to be interesting and informing. Vendors from many agencies that provide services to individuals with disabilities were set up there to hand out goodie bags, literature, tee shirts, cups and many other items. Next stop, after a "butterflies in the tummy" ride in the elevator, the 22nd floor. A scenic birds-eye view of the city, and a tour of the art gallery filled with images of Seminole Indians was enjoyed by all at the top of the Capitol. Then we were off again to a meeting with Representative Brad Drake, in his office. Representative Drake sent a personal invitation for us to meet with him during our visit. After introductions, he welcomed us to the Capitol; Michele B. and Ruby P. presented him with a plaque made by Sunland staff and residents. They thanked him for representing our District and for all that he does for Sunland. He was thrilled with his plaque and stated that he was going to hang it in his office, even if he had to remove something else to make room for it. Representative Drake had pictures taken with the residents and gave them memorable gifts.

The ride home was filled with lively conversation about our visit. Recapping the day to Maria Johnson and Jennie Ann Dean, and all the wonderful things that Ruby and Michele had seen that had made them very happy, especially that we had a **"Front Row Seat!"** They both stated they could not wait to share their experience with the wonderful staff at Sunland. Michele and Ruby told Representative Drake and his assistant that Sunland has the best staff.

Article Contributed by: Jennie Ann Dean & Maria Johnson



Ruby P, Michele B & Rep. Brad Drake



Ruby P & Michele B at the Governor's Office

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

"It's just nice to be nice!"

Author: Everybody's Grandmother, Grandma, Granny, Nana, MeMaw or Muh Deah

This is an old statement, perhaps heard many, many times in our homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, churches, or community settings. How we treat each other is vitally important in every environment. I can recall as a small child hearing my grandmother reminding me and my older sister to "play pretty." You may have figured out from her having to tell us that - that she didn't like the way we were playing. On one occasion, my sister mustered up the courage to ask my grandmother "why?" In my experience, children never asked grown people "why." The story didn't end the way you might have guessed or maybe it did. My grandmother took her strong hands, grabbed both me and my sister in one fell swoop, pulled us close to her and said, "Because I said so!" Then she said, "It's just nice to be nice!"

Although I have heard this statement many times, I never took the time to examine its meaning for the workplace. Borrowing from M. Thompson (media expert), I am passing this on for your consideration:

Greet people with a smile, look them in the eye and make an effort to exchange polite conversation. A positive attitude can be contagious and your friendly greetings each day demonstrate your respect for everyone from the receptionist to your boss to the janitor. Fall back on the manners your parents drummed into you as a child: hold doors for people, say "please" and "thank you."

A special experience to share when Michele B. , Ruby P., Bonnie Spates, Jennie Ann Dean and I visited Chipola College last week. Rhonda Thomas, Legislative Aide from Representative Brad Drake's Office, said this to Michelle and Ruby:

It's nice to see you ladies from Sunland. Thank you so much for stopping by to see us. Representative Drake is grateful for your kindness. It was so nice of you!

Thought provoking quotes:

What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness – Jean Jacques Rousseau

We rise by lifting others – Robert Ingersoll

I chatted with my sister last evening. She was preparing to take my grandnieces to a community event. I could hear the loud noises in the background. I wondered if she thought of our grandmother...

I am very interested in your life lessons that have helped you to demonstrate kindness in the workplace. I am a firm believer that *it is just nice to be nice!*

I trust you will enjoy The Sunland Beacon and find it to be an informative and relevant communication tool. To all who submitted entries in the "Name the Newsletter" contest, your interest is greatly appreciated! Out of 115 entries, the winning title "The Sunland Beacon" was chosen. The title represents a "beacon of light...a bright light shining out" and that is exactly what we want this newsletter to be. Congratulations to Marian Herring for submitting the winning title!

~ Superintendent Geri Williams

UNIT 1 - RESIDENTS & STAFF WELCOME SPRING!



The Residents and Staff of Unit 1 eagerly look forward to the following upcoming Spring time events:

On Tuesday, March 24, Unit 1 will observe our annual Field Day. This has proven to be a very exciting day for residents and staff alike. Activities will begin at 9:00 am and conclude around 3:00 pm. The day will be packed with many fun and competitive events, along with the residents all time favorites: *music and dancing*.

March 25 - 27, Unit 1 residents will take a "spring break trip" to the beach, visiting the William J. Rish Recreational Park in Port St. Joe. A visit to Rish Park is always a wonderful experience for our residents. They enjoy the opportunity to lounge around the pool, walk along the beach, and most importantly, the fun and fellowship of their friends.



Article Contributed by: Unit 1 Recreation Department/ Clevelando Wedderburn, RTS

UNIT 2 - Welcome Aboard Lucious Williams, POA

Mr. Lucious Williams is no stranger to the grounds of Sunland. Having served as the Unit 1 Program Operations Administrator for over 25 years, he is known for having a deep passion for the people we serve and for the wonderful programming that was designed to help residents achieve at their optimal level, as well as caring for the staff of Sunland.

Mr. Williams is also known to go the extra mile to support Sunland's mission and to ensure his staff deliver the highest quality of services for which Sunland is recognized.

Mr. Williams' dedication to those we serve can be best summarized by a quote from Winston Churchill - "*We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.*"

WELCOME BACK MR. LUCIOUS WILLIAMS!

Pictured is Robert P. of Lincoln House welcoming Mr. Williams with a warm hand shake.



Article & Photo Contributed by Lawanda Calhoun

Unit 3 Happenings...

February was definitely the month of love and celebration for Unit III. Unit wide celebrations included Valentine's Day, African American History Month, and our monthly birthdays. Residents from each house took delight in partaking in all of the lovely Valentine's festivities leading up to Valentine's Day, including Valentine's parties, arts and crafts, and sending Valentine's cards and notes to their families and friends. If you had the opportunity to visit a home within Unit III, we are sure you could tell that Cupid shot his arrow and left his mark with the beautiful decorations that were disbursed throughout the homes.

In addition to celebrating Valentine's Day, February is also identified as African American History Month. Residents and staff reflected on African American figures of the past and present who impacted both African American History and American History; African Americans who have greatly contributed to the American culture of the United States of America.

The most significant celebration of all are the birthdays of our individuals. Staff truly enjoy hosting birthday parties, and treating our residents as stars and the center of attention on their special day.

What is next for Unit III you might ask? March will be as fun filled as February ~ comprised of celebrating St. Patrick's Day, more fantastic birthday parties for our individuals, recognizing our staff birthdays, and recognizing and showing appreciation for our social workers during Social Work Month. The best is yet to come for Unit III, so stay tuned!



February Birthday Stars

Residents: Clifford H., Ira B., Eddie C., Evelyn H., Norman H., & Wilma P.

Staff: Rodrek Gainer, Angela Brown, Merry Warren, Patricia Newsome, Kenneth Grantham, Valoris Richardson Laura Brunson, Carrie Tripp & Belinda Kirkland

March Birthday Stars

Residents: Johnnie M. & Gary A.

Staff: Susan Deming Jarmon, Monica Clayton, Tiffini Guster, Sue Green, Gail Tipton, Becky Snyder & Quinton Yon

PATHWAYS

PATHWAYS EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION LUNCHEON



On February 20th Pathways Administration staff provided appreciation meals for employees on all three shifts. Employees from first and second shifts enjoyed chili dogs, chips, drinks and desert. Third shift employees were treated with sausage biscuits for breakfast. Sunland's new Assistant Superintendent for Forensics, Tony Reed, attended the luncheon, taking the opportunity to meet with employees at Pathways. Thank you again Pathways Employees for all of your hard work and dedication.

PATHWAYS EMPLOYEES ON THE MOVE

The staff at Pathways would like to congratulate Jason Huckaby on his promotion. Jason will be starting at Unit 2 Hayes as the Human Services Senior Supervisor.

THE PATHWAYS JETS HIGHLIGHTS

The Jets played three basketball games during the month of February. On February 4th the Jets took on the Sonics and won. On February 11th the Jets played Rush at DDDP and incurred a loss. Then it was the Jets vs. Boom playing the last basketball session and the Jets walked away with a victory. Great teamwork Jets!!

BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS AT PATHWAYS – SUNLAND PROJECT P.R.I.D.E.

During the month of February our Vocation staff and residents painted Pathways' residents dining area in the dining hall, the staff break area and the recreation room. Thank you Vocational Instructor Rick Hendrieth and residents Clarence M., Robert C., William H., Calvin B., Gary P., and Greg D. ~ GREAT JOB!

Article Contributed by: Juanita Alford

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DEFENDANT PROGRAM

On January 2, 2015, Tony Reed joined the Sunland Executive Management Team as the Assistant Superintendent at the Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program in Chattahoochee. He is also responsible for the oversight of the Pathways program on the Marianna campus. Mr. Reed has a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology from Florida State University and has completed the Certified Public Manager Program through the Florida Center for Public Management at Florida State University. He has over 22 years of experience in state government having held various positions in both the mental health and developmental disability fields. When asked about his philosophy and goals for DDDP, Mr. Reed stated " *I believe in transparency and accountability and strive to be accessible by subscribing to an open door management philosophy. I believe that visibility is very important as we are an institution that provides care 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. I stress the importance of communication as it the foundation for success in our program. I am very much a resident advocate and my goal is to strive for resident satisfaction, employee retention and morale. I am from this area, committed to my family, involved in my Church and community. I am proud to have the opportunity to lead the DDDP and Pathways' Programs.* " Welcome aboard Tony Reed!

DDDP STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

DDDP hosted its annual staff appreciation luncheon on February 17, 2015, at the Florida State Hospital Large Chapel. During the luncheon, Assistant Superintendent Tony Reed expressed his appreciation to the direct care staff for their hard work and contributions to the agency. It was a grand opportunity for the direct care staff to enjoy great food and fun in appreciation for their many contributions and sacrifices to the DDDP organization.

DDDP SERVICE AWARD CEREMONY

On February 26, 2015, DDDP hosted its Semi-Annual Service Award Ceremony at the FSH Arsenal, honoring employees who have attained 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years of creditable service to the State of Florida. Superintendent Geri Williams and Assistant Superintendent Tony Reed presented the 5, 10, and 15 year honorees with a certificate of service and service pin. The 20 and 25 year honorees were presented a letter of appreciation, certificate of service, and an acrylic award. "Star Employees" and "Star Teams" were also recognized during the ceremony for their commitment to providing quality services to our residents. In her closing remarks, Superintendent Williams expressed appreciation to the employees for their dedicated service. Following the awards presentations, the group gathered for picture taking and refreshments.



Assistant Superintendent Tony Reed acknowledges the "Star Employees" & "Star Teams"



Sierra Harris sings "I Won't Complain"

Articles & photos contributed by: Cynthia Raines

CENTRALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES

In recognition of the positive therapeutic aspects of art, Superintendent Geri Williams has enlisted the help of several staff members to host monthly Art Classes in preparation for the upcoming art exhibition scheduled for May 2nd at Sunland's Environmental Park. On February 26th, Wayne Winkle and Maria Johnson presented a class for residents on the use of willow charcoal and texture to create design through rubbings. Approximately twenty residents participated, along with Donna Conrad and Tambra Cabrera, who assisted with the class. The smiles on the participants faces and the creative enthusiasm rendered the class a huge success! The next class is scheduled for March 18th and will explore the use of mixed media. For further information contact Maria Johnson at 482-1331. The Art Show is open to all residents and staff and we encourage you to participate.

Article Contributed by: Maria Johnson



Jeremy G. - Thiel Center



Bingle G. - Harrison House



Roosevelt E. - East Truman House



Michael F. - E. Truman House



Aaron O. - Thiel Center



Randy H. - East Truman House

SPECIAL OLYMPICS – Sonics Bring Home Bronze

The Jackson County Sonics Basketball team traveled to Tavares, Florida, to take part in the Special Olympics Florida North Region State Basketball Tournament on February 20 & 21, 2015. The team finished third in their respective division and each member earned a bronze medal. The Sonics were coached by James Godwin, Jr., with assistance on this trip from Clint Cox, Lee Cranford and Josie Hall (Nurse).

Pictured below are the Sonics team members that traveled to Tavares. (left to right) Tony P., Roosevelt E., Marcus H., Charles V.S. and Jonathan R.

Article & Photo contributed by: Clint Cox



UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS IN RECREATION AND CENTRALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES

March 17 St. Patrick's Day Dance
Harvest Cafeteria 6:30 pm



March 18 Special Olympics Florida Jackson County Games
Howell Field 9:30 am



April 3 Easter Church Service
Chapel 9:00 am



April 8 Special Olympics Florida Area Two Games
Howell Field 9:30 am



April 16 Volunteer Appreciation Picnic
Environmental Park 11:00 am



April 17 Sunland Recreational Horse Show
Howell Field 9:00 am



March is National Nutrition Month



HEALTH & WELLNESS CORNER

The National Nutrition Month® (NNM) is a nutrition education campaign sponsored annually by the American Dietetic Association (ADA) and its Foundation. It is appropriate and fitting that March is National Nutrition Month, since it is in between winter and spring. Winter holiday gatherings have past and have left many of us with cherished memories and frequently unwanted weight gain! Healthy eating and routine exercise are needed all year round; but many of us need a friendly reminder to get ourselves back on track. Be kind to your body and reacquaint yourself with healthy eating habits and fitness. Replace your unhealthy habits with smart health choices for a healthier body.

Fitness at every age comes from a lifestyle that includes good nutrition and regular physical activity. The sooner you start the better your health. Food and physical activity choices are personal. Foods nourish your body. Being well-nourished means you get enough of the nutrients your body needs. Part of being well nourished also means eating portions of foods just right for you. The true definition of fitness refers to your own optimal health and overall well being. *Fitness is your good health - at its very best.*

- The taste of foods adds pleasure to eating - especially if you eat a greater variety of foods and learn how to include your favorites in an overall healthful eating style. Staying fit means you have a better chance for a higher quality of life, and perhaps a longer one, too.

When you are fit, you:

- ◆ Improve your mood, reduce your stress, and increase your energy.
- ◆ Reduce your risk for heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.
- ◆ Can look and feel your best.
- ◆ Have the physical strength and endurance to do the things you want to do.

*Healthy snacks
for a healthier weight*



Contributed by: Beth Basford
Article & graphics reproduced with permission from
the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics/ National Nutrition Month
For additional healthy tips, visit www.eatright.org

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SERVICE AWARDS

Sunland recently hosted our semi-annual service awards ceremony for staff having attained 20 - 40 years of service with the State. A total of 13 employees were recognized during the program. Honorees were presented with a letter of appreciation from Superintendent Williams, certificate of service, service pin and acrylic award representing their years of service.

20 Year Employees: Jennifer Long, Kevin Nesmith, Bill Himes, Kathy Fears

25 Year Employees: Barry Vickson, Vickie Maloney, Darlene Vickery, Alice Jennings

30 Year Employees: Clint Cox (not pictured, Robert Keys)

35 Year Employees: Chuck Dickson, Vanessa Shelley

40 Year Employee: Gail Tipton



Star Team

Maintenance: Adam Chambliss, JC Folsom, Clay Mitchell, Scotty Edwards, Keith Jarrett, Jimmy Brooks, Steve Barwick

Star Employee — Aaron Pittman, Maintenance

Article Contributed by Beth Basford/Photos: Ethan Smith

FLORIDA TAX WATCH - PRUDENTIAL PRODUCTIVITY AWARDS

In January, Florida Taxwatch announced the winners of the 2015 Prudential Productivity Awards at the Capitol in Tallahassee. This year marks the 27th annual awards and had record participation by state employees. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities was the recipient of five awards and we are very proud that four of these awards came from Sunland! The honorees were recognized at the annual Prudential Productivity Awards ceremony held at the Tallahassee Civic Center on March 12. Congratulations to the following winners:

Team Awards:

- **Saved \$2500 on handrails at Rish Park -**

Sunland Maintenance Team - Scotty Edwards, Randy Lowry, Adam Chambliss, Clay Mitchell and JC Folsom.

- **Saved \$2,800 on Reactive Strategies Training**

Prevention and Safety Strategies (PASS) Transition Team at Sunland - Heather Traylor, Stacy Collins, Willie Stevens, Phil Anderson, Stacy Gibson (DDDP) & team members from Tacachale: Jose Martinez, Michael Holloway, Chip Hensgen

Individual Awards:

- **Saved \$3,400 on pool pump at Rish Park - Janet O'Pry**
- **Saved \$820 on washer frames - Steven King**



Pictured:

Front Row L-R: Allen Ward, Operations Director, Lindsey Boyington, APD Communications Coordinator, Heather Traylor, Clay Mitchell

Back Row L-r: Adam Chambliss, Phil Anderson, Janet O'Pry, Scotty Edwards, Willie Stevens, JC Folsom

Not Pictured: Randy Lowry, Stacy Collins, Stacy Gibson (DDDP), Jose Martinez, Michael Holloway & Chip Hensgen (Tacachale)

Article Contributed by: Beth Basford; Photo: Lindsey Boyington, APD Communications Office

HUMAN RESOURCES



Welcome Aboard!!

New Employees:

Brenda Hall, Brenda Spencer, Michael Miller, Kiaire Barnes, Kevin Myrick, Vera Scott, Tiffany Chason, Anastasia Horne, Dwight Curl, Tamara Stewart, Breeanna Ballard, Joni Bonine, Coretta Smith, Mary Gilmore



Retirees:

Jolie LaTourelle-Jones, Lillian Davis, Bobby Heinemann, Marylin Deming, Janice Brown (DDDP)

Contributed by: Joni Laramore

Special Comp -

Reminder: All Special Comp—Holiday (Code 0091) is subject to forfeit if not used by April 30.



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>



QUALITY MANAGEMENT / STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Mark your calendars for upcoming meetings... The monthly Safety Committee Meeting is scheduled for March 26 at 10:00am in the Unit 2 Conference Room. The Sunland Operating Procedures Core Committee meets every Tuesday at 1:30pm in the OQM Conference Room.

Microsoft Excel classes are offered each month at Staff Development for any employee interested in learning new or fine tuning existing skills. Courses currently offered include Basic Excel, Excel Graphing, and Process Mapping. Check your monthly Staff Development calendar for scheduled courses.



Article contributed by: Mary Gallagher

SAFETY PROGRAM



WORKPLACE SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT QUIZ

1. Workplace safety is only the responsibility of the Sunland Safety Committee.

True

False

2. Any injury at work, no matter how small, must be reported immediately to the person's supervisor and receive first-aid attention.

True

False

3. Safety is just common sense. Sunland does not need to waste time training people in safety practices.

True

False

4. People will walk around spilled liquid on the floor; the best thing to do is to wait for the house-keeping staff to clean up spills properly.

True

False

5. Dress codes can decrease accidents and injuries.

True

False

Brought to you by the Sunland Safety Committee

Answers: 1. False, 2. True, 3. True, 4. False, 5. True

SUNLAND PARTNERS WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY TO GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY...

Every year, Spring Breakers from all across the nation descend on the State of Florida for some R &R. There is, however, a dedicated group of young adults who regularly spend their spring break vacations giving back to their fellow man ...an *Alternative Spring Break* that offers so much more than fun in the sun... the opportunity to make a difference! The "Collegiate Challenge" helps further Habitat for Humanity's mission of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. During the month of March, the Jackson County Habitat for Humanity welcomed three groups of spring breakers who chose to provide labor for two home build projects in Jackson County. There are a total of 47 students from Blackburn College in Illinois, Simpson College in Iowa and Rivier University in New Hampshire. The students are being housed with local families while they are here, and local churches and civic organizations prepare meals.

Sunland has partnered with Habitat to provide snacks for these hard-working students. Habitat Executive Director Carmen Smith thanked Sunland Center for our partnership during a recent luncheon held at St James A.M.E. Church. Ms. Smith noted the home being built in Marianna is for a single mother and her child; the home in Alford is for a family with three children. The houses are scheduled to be completed by June 30th, she said, and the more hands the better as Habitat works to meet the completion date. Superintendent Williams also addressed the group and expressed appreciation to the students for giving back to our community. She shared this quote with the students "Service is the price we pay for the space we occupy."

Way to go Sunland for stepping up to help! It's a great feeling to know we had a small hand in supporting such a worthwhile project!!!!

If you are interested in partnering with Habitat through homeownership or volunteering, please contact Carmen Smith, Executive Director at 482-2187, Extension 3.



Article & Photo Contributed by: Jennie Ann Dean





agency for persons with disabilities
State of Florida

Project Sunland PRIDE



Beautification Program!

Spring is in the air and plans are underway to kick off Phase II of Project Sunland PRIDE on the campuses of Sunland, DDDP & Rish Park. From the inception of the Center's beautification project, staff and residents alike took an active role in Project Sunland PRIDE to make Sunland a more beautiful place. A huge Thank You to everyone who stepped up, rolled up your sleeves and went to work!

By your actions you demonstrated the meaning of **PRIDE**.....

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



"The Sunland Beacon" - Newsletter Committee

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

Clint Cox, CSS/Recreation - Editor, Beth Basford, Administration; 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