

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

agency for persons with disabilities  
State of Florida



# Special Olympics County Games

You can count on it ~ with the changing of the seasons, Springtime ushers in the annual Special Olympics County Games. This event, held at Sunland's Howell Field, brings in athletes from Sunland, Hope School and other communities within Jackson County. The games are always filled with anticipation as athletes vie for a spot in the Area Games, with hopes of moving on to the State Summer Games. At least 200 individuals compete in this early competition. Clint Cox, Recreation Director summed it all up when he stated *"It was a really great day for Special Olympics Jackson County. The athletes did outstanding and we certainly thank everyone who had a hand in making this such a successful day!"*





# St. Patrick's Day Dance

Sunland residents and staff enjoyed dancing the afternoon away at the St. Patrick's Day dance, held at the Gymnasium on March 17. Live entertainment, provided by Royce Reagan and the Original Bama Jam band added a lot of excitement to the event!



# APD & Sunland Honors Leon County No. 5 Independent Order of Odd Fellows

Officials from APD State Office to include Deputy Director Tom Rankin, Dr. J.R. Harding, Meghan Murray and Minerva Barndt, along with Sunland Superintendent Geri Williams, CSS Director James Godwin and others from Sunland recently paid tribute to the Leon County No. 5 Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The group was honored with a cookout at Rish Park in appreciation of their commitment to serve families of individuals with disabilities. The Order has provided scholarships to Rish Park for beach vacation get-a-ways for numerous families throughout the State.

Following lunch, the group enjoyed a guided tour of the park, to include the newly renovated Bay side pavilion and walk way. During the tour, Dr. J.R. Harding discussed proposed renovations for future amenities. He noted the Governor's 2016-17 Florida First Budget allotted APD \$1.3 million for maintenance and repairs at Rish Park. The park, open year-round, allows people with disabilities, their families, guardians and caregivers to enjoy Florida's natural beauty. Over the last four years, a total of \$3.2 million has been invested in the park.

A few points of interest: As an organization, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows aims to provide a framework that promotes personal and social development. Specifically, the IOOF are dedicated to the following purposes:

- *To improve and elevate the character of mankind by promoting the principles of friendship, love, truth, faith, hope, charity and universal justice.*
- *To help make the world a better place to live by aiding each other, the community, the less fortunate, the youth, the elderly, the environment and the community in every way possible.*
- *To promote good will and harmony amongst peoples and nations through the principle of universal fraternity, holding the belief that all men and women regardless of race, nationality, religion, social status, gender, rank and station are brothers and sisters.*





## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Congratulations to the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce on their 88th Annual Chamber Banquet! The event, held on March 10, offered a great opportunity for business leaders from the private sector, state and county government to gather for a time of networking and fellowship.

Sunland is proud to be a member of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is a center of community influence focusing not only on traditional business issues, but on the overall well-being of the community. Relationships matter and supporting our local Chamber connects Sunland with our local community.

Several staff members from Sunland attended and are pictured below. Front row L-R: Tony Reed, Adrian Bishop, Heather Traylor, Kim Kennedy, Darlene Copeland, Dr. Priscilla Thorn, Syntha Alvarez, Beth Basford and Ann Marie Shelton. Back row L-R: Bobby Raines, Jennie Ann Dean, Allen Ward and Geri Williams.



Governor Rick Scott and Florida Cabinet members, together with APD Director Barbara Palmer, proclaimed March as *Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month*. Pictured below, David Poepping holds the proclamation declaring March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.



Grateful,

*Geri Williams*  
Superintendent

# State Of Florida

## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, in 1921, the first state-funded program for individuals with developmental disabilities opened in Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, many major changes have occurred in society and attitudes, in addition to the Americans with Disabilities Act which celebrates 26 years of success, plus other state and federal laws and regulations have been developed to support and maximize the independence of people with developmental disabilities to create a more inclusive society; and

**WHEREAS**, Florida Governor Rick Scott and the Legislature have increased funding by \$96 million to offer waiver services to more than 5,300 people over the past three years; and

**WHEREAS**, for the past two years, the State of Florida has made record investments to eliminate the APD critical needs waiting list for Floridians with disabilities to live more independently and find a great job; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Florida supports many thousands of citizens with developmental disabilities by providing services through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Children and Families, Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Elder Affairs, Department of Health, and Department of Education's Divisions of Exceptional Student Education, Blind Services, and Vocational Rehabilitation, and by partner organizations and thousands of private-sector and community providers; and

**WHEREAS**, employers across the State of Florida have embraced diversity and inclusion by hiring people with disabilities, and have been recognized by the state and within their communities as leaders through example; and

**WHEREAS**, encouraging awareness of disabilities is vital to the success of all sectors of Florida's economy; and

**WHEREAS**, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is an appropriate time to recognize Florida's public policy improvements, the accomplishments of community organizations, state agencies, and most importantly, the achievements of thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities who contribute daily to our communities.


**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Governor and the Cabinet of the State of Florida do hereby recognize March 2016, as

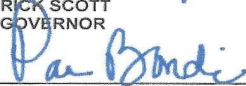
### **DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH**

in Florida, and commend the community organizations, agencies, and programs for their dedication, awareness efforts, and outstanding assistance toward improving the quality of life for Floridian's with developmental disabilities.

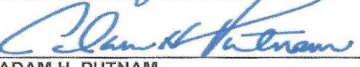
**IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF** the Governor and Cabinet of the State of Florida have hereunto subscribed their names and have caused the Official seal of the State of Florida to be hereunto affixed in the City of Tallahassee this the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2016.



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
RICK SCOTT  
GOVERNOR

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
PAM BONDI  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JEFF ATWATER  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ADAM H. PUTNAM  
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

# Sunland Retirees...Where are they Now?

Sunland is known for a rich heritage of employees who dedicate their lives and careers to serving the needs of individuals who call Sunland their home. Many of these employees have accomplished life-long careers ranging from 25, 30, 35 and 40+ years of service before their retirement. We honor their service to Sunland. Retirement offers new opportunities to engage in new hobbies and interests. Many individuals remain active by continuing to serve in their churches, civic groups and communities, while some return to serve as a volunteer at Sunland.



Such is the legacy of Julie Jackson.

Julie first became acquainted with Sunland in April 1963 when she toured the Center as a FSU student in graduate school under the tutelage of Ellen Thiel. Needless to say, after her first experience at Sunland she was hooked! Shortly thereafter, she joined the Sunland staff as an OPS employee assessing residents and planning programs. She continued in various special projects as a student and volunteer through December 1963. In 1965, she returned to Sunland as a teacher, later assuming the role as principal of Sunland's school. From there, she served as curriculum coordinator facilitating the Ellen Thiel's "Design for Daily Living." In 1977, she began assisting with "habilitation plans" in the Center's move toward ICF/MR certification. By 1978, Julie became an QMRP/RSS and continued in this role until her retirement in 2012.

For Julie, Sunland is home and the residents are her family. She enjoyed a long and fulfilling career caring for those she loved. Even in her retirement, she continues to volunteer and is often seen at Connally Manor doing what she loves ~ engaging with her beloved residents. She assists in getting the Connally family to special events, celebrating holidays, providing special supplies, baking for Connally's annual yard sales and for the Unit 3 cookie mobile. She consults with the Learning Center staff on goal development and serves on the Unit 3 advisory committee and sponsors residents.

With all that she does at Sunland you might wonder what else Julie does in her leisure time. Not one to be idle, she attends the fitness center three times per week for strength training, as she says "to combat the effects of aging and arthritis." Her favorite pastimes include gardening, reading, doing jigsaw puzzles, organizing family photographs and getting together with her family.

Julie's biggest weekly event is Saturday spaghetti night when her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren all gather to share the weeks events. A typical family gathering ranges 12 to 20 people, as everyone looks forward to her husband Gary's spaghetti which is "renowned throughout Jackson County."

Julie says her most exciting events are her grandson's baseball games. They all play on the Marianna High School varsity team. To fuel the excitement, on occasion all four are on the field at the same time which Julie says can be "very stressful!"

Without a doubt, Sunland will always be a special place for Julie Jackson. We proudly recognize Julie for her career achievements and her love and commitment to the individuals we serve. We wish her well in this exciting season of life!



# Pathways

Spring has arrived and Pathways staff are buzzing with projects! Administrative, vocational and recreational staff along with several residents are teaming up on spring cleaning and repairs. Picture below, Behavioral Specialist David Douglas along with residents Carlos R. and Freddie U. repainted several signs outdoors.

Also pictured are vocational staff Loraine Dean and recreational staff Marcus Mallett with residents Luis C. and Orlando S. as they worked to strip and wax floors throughout Pathways.

Thanks to everyone for your hard work to keep the Pathways grounds beautiful!



Article & Photos Contributed by: Juanita Alford



# Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

The Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program recently held their 4th Annual Cultural History Program at the DDDP campus. The theme of the event was "Empowering One Another while Breaking Chains." The program included a variety of musical selections, the reading of poetry and shared quotes by staff and residents alike. On hand was Chattahoochee Police Chief Vann Pullen who served as the guest speaker for this event. The program committee consisted of Darlene Copeland, Charlene Gibson, Tallulah Thomas, Sabrina Godwin, Sylvia Jackson, Amanda Bruner, and Dquan Brigham. Congratulations to everyone who participated, as well as the committee that worked tirelessly to put on such a fantastic program for all to enjoy.





# Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

DDDP is proud to announce that Ebony Goodson, Behavioral Program Supervisor F/C, has been selected as the March 2016 Star Employee of the Month. Mr. Goodson was nominated for serving as a role model to staff under his direction. He is able to remain calm and identify precursors to maladaptive behaviors and utilize effective interpersonal skills to de-escalate situations. He has successfully implemented the use of the safe zone concept on his assigned ward which has resulted in a decrease in reactive strategies. He has demonstrated flexibility by regularly adjusting his schedule to meet the needs of facility. In addition, he volunteers to assist with a variety of projects such as an abbreviated supervisory training tool, that is being utilized in the training of new employees. Congratulations Mr. Goodson for making a difference at DDDP!



DDDP celebrated Social Services' recognition on March 23, 2016, at the Arsenal on the FSH campus. The recognition of the Support Plan Coordinators was a way of saying "thanks" for all that they do. The Support Plan Coordinators lead and facilitate the Support Team and also provide social services for each of their caseloads. Ms. Latina Godfrey, who is responsible for the direct supervision of this area, coordinated a very nice luncheon for this event. Many thanks to Latina and this team for what they do each day for the residents of DDDP!



Article/Photos Contributed by Tony Reed



**Congratulations to the Following Stars!!**

# Star Employees

<b>UNIT 1</b>	JUANITA REGISTER SHERRY BABER
<b>UNIT 2</b>	TAMBRA CABRERA, KAYLA FARMER BREANNA BALLARD
<b>UNIT 3</b>	LATASHA BELLAMY ALLISON JONES JAMES RHYNES
<b>PATHWAYS</b>	FELICIA VARNER
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	JENNIE ANN DEAN

# Star Teams

**JOHNSON HOUSE:** ZAKAYA CARD, GAIL SPEARS

**UNIT 2 THIEL CENTER:** FELESCIA OLIVER, ERICA SMITH, DANIEL MARKS

**UNIT 2 THIEL CENTER:** LENORA EDWARDS, DEMETRA WILLIAMS, JAMES SOREY, ZEARWANNA JOHNSON, CANANEA STALEY

**UNIT 2 THIEL CENTER:**BERNARD BARKLEY, DEMETRA WILLIAMS

**EAST TRUMAN:** TASHA BELLAMY, BREON BELL, DEQWONE BLANKS, TRACY JOHNSON, BREANNA BALLARD, KEVIN GAMBILL, TYRONE WHITE, WILLIE KIRKLAND, PATRICK TIPTON

**UNIT 2 LINCOLN HOUSE:** DESMUND BARNES, NOREESE WILLIAMS

**EAST WASHINGTON:** DEBRA BELLAMY-CHATFIELD, MERRY WARREN

**UNIT 3:** LARHONDA BARNES, ALLISON JONES, BELINDA KIRKLAND, GEORGIA BRITT, DARLENE BOYKIN, RIMA KOLANDA, LAURA BRUNSON, RACQUEL DUNSTON, SUSAN BYERS, JAMES RHYNES, GERALDINE MESSER, SCOTTY HEWETT, QUINTON YON, GLORIA JOHNSON

**MAINTENANCE:** ADAM CHAMBLISS, CLAY MITCHELL, JIMMY JONES, JC FOLSOM, ROGER COSSON, RANDY LOWERY





# DID YOU KNOW?

If you haven't had an opportunity to meet our new Warehouse Manager, you'll want to take a few minutes to meet Mitch Yeomans. Prior to joining the team at Sunland, Mr. Yeomans worked the past 10 years in Asset Management with Fish & Wildlife. He is excited about his new role with Sunland and is eager to work with each department to improve service delivery. He says *"I have been in the trenches attempting acclimate myself to my role here at Sunland. My number one goal for our group here at the Warehouse is to provide excellent Customer Service to each and every one of you. We are a small group providing a big service for this campus. Lynn Baxley, Donnie Lipford, and Wade King (including support by Steven King from Maintenance) provide a variety of services within the group. We will be attempting to meet your needs and still maintain our duties/requirements for fulfilling SIMS, MFMP (DMS program for purchasing), purchasing, and accounting aspects of each item being distributed from the Warehouse. Please feel free to voice any concerns which you may have in order to help us better serve you, our customer."* Part of the process of increasing good customer service will include periodical "Did You Know" emails with instructions to make the Warehouse processes more efficient and easier to understand. Please refer to these email communications and share them with your co-workers. By working together, we can streamline processes and ensure the best possible service to all employees.



Pictured L-R: Warehouse Manager Mitch Yeomans with Warehouse staff Wade King, Lynn Baxley, Donnie Lipford, and Steven King (Maintenance)



### New Employees:

Bryan Henry  
 Shenise Stevens  
 Erik Utter

Contributed by: Joni Laramore



For more 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>



agency for persons with disabilities  
State of Florida

# Project Sunland PRIDE



Beautification Program!

**P**ERSONAL **R**ESPONSIBILITY **I**N A **D**ESIRABLE **E**NVIRONMENT

"Community Spotlight of the Month"

## Unit 1 Buchanan House



### "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