

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

agency for persons with disabilities  
State of Florida



## Sunland Fishing Rodeo

It was a beautiful day at the Environmental Park on September 23rd as a large group of residents and staff gathered for Sunland's First Annual Fishing Rodeo. The rodeo was sponsored by the Centralized Support Services staff with approximately 75 residents participating. In addition to the fishing action, participants and spectators were treated to fresh popped popcorn and punch.

As folks arrived at the park, they selected their "favorite fishing hole" to begin the contest. It didn't take long for the fish to start biting and "record catches" were pulled to the banks. Joan B. from Unit 1 was especially thrilled as she eagerly reeled in her first catch. After landing her lunker catfish, she covered her face and exclaimed "I just think I'm gonna to cry, I just think I'm gonna cry...I feeled him pulling, I feeled him pulling!"

Three different categories were established for the tournament - (1) Most Fish Caught (2) Biggest Fish Caught and (3) Total Combined Weight. Congratulations to Frank B. who took 1st Place for the Biggest Fish Caught coming in at 8 lbs; Connie S. took 1st Place for the Most Fish Caught, reeling in a total of five catfish, and Bennie R. captured 1st Place for Total Combined Weight with his total catch weighing in at 10.5 lbs. Awards will be presented to all winners at an award ceremony scheduled for October 5 during softball games at Howell Field.





# Fishing Rodeo Fun!





# F.U.E.L. Food Drive a Huge Success!



The air at Sunland has been filled with excitement and purpose as Sunland residents have undertaken a project they have never done before! Those who participate in our F.U.E.L. (Faith Used in Everyday Living) program recently had a wonderful opportunity to give back to the local community in a huge way.

When F.U.E.L began, Chaplain Ruthie asked participants this question: *"Is there something that you have never done, that you would like to do?"* Yes there was! What could it be? One of their many heartfelt answers was *"We would like to have a food drive to help feed the poor."* So they began a food drive. They placed boxes around the

Center and finally collected the food that was so generously donated. On Tuesday afternoon, September 20th, they counted the donations. There were 685 items. The residents, accompanied by staff proudly took them to the Chipola Family Ministries where the food was donated. They presented the food to Mr. Fred Cook. Scriptures were read to explain why they wanted to do a food drive. The meaning of F.U.E.L was explained and each one had an opportunity to tell why they were involved in the food drive. Jesse thanked Mr. Cook for allowing them to donate. Michele said she had been homeless and knew what it was like to be hungry. Charles said that he learned about giving food to others with his mother and family. They certainly felt fulfilled. They want to continue to show the love of God through the F.U.E.L program by doing many other things for the community. And in doing so, they found a wonderful opportunity to show appreciation to Jackson County for all it does for Sunland.



Article & Photos contributed by: Chaplain Ruthie Moore

## Rish Park Participates in St. Joseph State Park Appreciation Day

Staff from Sunland and Rish Park participated in the annual St. Joseph State Park Appreciation Day on Sunday, September 25th. This event, sponsored by Friends of St. Joseph State Park, recognized Park Rangers, volunteers and others that make the park the great place that it is. The day-long event provided visitors with live music by Brian Bowen, delicious food by the Cape San Blas "Sand Bucket Smokehouse and Grill," and free boat rides by Seahorse Water Safaris. There were also numerous family fun activities led by rangers and a live bald eagle from Audubon Center for Birds of Prey.

Superintendent Geri Williams, along with Park Manager Victor Rowland, and Sunland staff Maria Johnson, Jennie Ann Dean, Annette Odom, Clint Cox and Beth Basford represented APD at this event. This was a unique opportunity to showcase Rish Park and educate the community about the facility, the individuals we serve and the many wonderful amenities that offer unique recreational experiences for people with disabilities.





## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

It has been a fantastic month! Opportunity after opportunity to aid in making a difference at Sunland and in Jackson, Gadsden, and Gulf Counties. From Backpack Give Back to Reading Pals to the St. Joe's State Park Celebration, Sunland, DDDP, and Rish Park staff members are giving time and talent to support community functions. This is so exciting! Great things happening at Sunland!

Speaking of great things, I want to spotlight the distinguished Class of 2016 Leadership Jackson County and their mentor David Melvin. What a phenomenal group of professionals! Sunland was delighted to host and provide a tour of our beautiful community to these change agents. Prior to speaking with the class, Mentor David Melvin enlightened me on the mission. He said, *"The key to Leadership Jackson County is understanding the important issues of our county, developing the skills to work on these areas and meeting other people who want to make a difference."* I had the privilege to have an engaging conversation with these folks. We are appreciatively grateful for the experience.

Congratulations to Leadership Jackson County 2016 on your journey to strengthening your leadership skills. Your time, talent, and intellectual capital will enrich the lives of so many. Sunland encourages your forward steps. Our community is the beneficiary of your contributions. John Maxwell says it best: *"Success is...knowing your purpose in life, growing to reach your maximum potential, and sowing seeds that benefit others."*

Similar to Leadership Jackson County 2016, Sunland/DDDP/Rish Park staff members continue sowing seeds in and around Jackson County. Sowing seeds that aid in eradicating illiteracy, promoting understanding, demonstrating empathy, and educating folks about this population of individuals we are privileged to serve and lend support to. We continue to rediscover that this important work is purposeful, meaningful, and reaches beyond the Sunland Community.

Grateful,

*Geri Williams*  
Superintendent





# Sunland Hosts Leadership Jackson County

Sunland was pleased to host Leadership Jackson County for its September meeting. The group convened at the Center on September 22nd. Following lunch, Superintendent Geri Williams addressed members of the group, providing an overview of Sunland and the services provided for the individuals who reside at the facility. Class members were taken on a guided tour of the Center during the afternoon visiting residential homes, vocational worksites, the Center's Suntown Mall, Gymnasium and the Environmental Park.

The purpose of membership in Leadership Jackson County includes developing emerging leaders within the business, education, government, professional and local communities and assist them as they prepare for well informed, engaged leadership positions. Leadership Jackson contributors and presenters include top business, civic, community, and organizational leaders who represent the most influential entities in Jackson County. The mentor for the Leadership Jackson Class of 2016 is David Melvin of David H. Melvin, Incorporated.







# Friends of Sunland Gear Up for 5K Run



Friends of Sunland, Inc. is pleased to announce the "Rock, Roll & Stroll" 5K, which will take place on Saturday, October 15th at the beautiful Sunland Environmental Park. Proceeds from the fundraiser will advance its mission to grow this organization and celebrate residents and staff. The Friends group has been working diligently to raise awareness about Sunland and its awesome staff and residents. Friends are committed to showing appreciation to all who work and live at Sunland/DDDP and Rish Park.

Gail Hill, a member of Friends of Sunland says "Sunland has been a huge part of the Jackson County community for over 50 years, providing a safe home where people with developmental disabilities can enjoy and live a happy life. We know how important Sunland is to our community and the hundreds of people who have dedicated their careers to the Center. Sunland is Jackson County's largest employer and we don't take that for granted. We want to make sure the employees and residents at Sunland know how much they are appreciated. I am just so proud to be a part of the Friends of Sunland and look forward to seeing this group grow."

Friends of Sunland anticipate a large turn out at its inaugural "Rock, Roll & Stroll" 5K event. We encourage all employees to come out to support this event. Registration applications are available on the "Friends of Sunland Rock, Roll & Stroll" Facebook event page.

For further information, please contact any of the following supporters at Sunland: Maria Johnson at 482-9373, Jennie Ann Dean at 482-9281, or Beth Basford at 482-9210. At DDDP, please contact Tony Reed or Corey Chafin at 663-7138 .

Article & Photos Contributed by Maria Johnson and Beth Basford



# ANNUAL BAXTER SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT A BIG HIT!

Each September Sunland pays tribute to a former employee, the late Lynwood Baxter, by hosting the Lynwood Baxter Softball Tournament. The annual softball tournament was held on September 14th and a capacity crowd came out to enjoy the day. The tournament began with Superintendent Geri Williams throwing out the first pitch.

This year's tournament was an all Sunland affair as the teams taking part were the Sunland Sonics, Sunland Boom and the Pathways Jets. In the first game the Sunland Sonics battled the Pathways Jets in a close game and came out on top with a 6-4 victory. In the second game it was the Sonics taking on the Boom and posting a 7-1 win.

Members of Baxter's family were also present and were recognized between innings. On hand were his wife Carolyn, son-in-law Michael John Carr and three of his grandchildren. Baxter was a longtime Sunland employee and was instrumental in the implementation of the Center's transition to becoming an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF). He also helped establish the Quality Assurance program. In addition, Baxter worked for a period of time in the Recreation program. He passed away in March of 1996, two weeks before his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. A plaque, granite bench and marker are located at the Gym to honor his service at Sunland.





# Special Olympics Bowling



The Jackson County Special Olympics hosted County Bowling Games on Thursday, September 29th at Marianna's Kindel Lanes. Sunland was well represented with a total of 45 participants. The happy smiles on their faces were priceless! Following a morning of bowling, everyone was treated to homemade sandwiches provided by the Marianna Woman's Club.

According to Clint Cox, Recreation Director, the County Games are the lead up tournament to Area Games which then determine the State Game qualifiers. Area Games are set for October 13th at Kindel Lanes. Sunland appreciates the staff at Kindel Lanes for the hospitality extended to our residents, the Marianna Woman's club for their generosity and the many staff who serve as volunteers for these events.



# Knights of Columbus Sponsor Annual Picnic for Unit 1 Grant & Buchanan Houses

On Saturday, September 10th, the Knights of Columbus traveled from Niceville, Florida to Sunland to host their annual picnic for Grant and Buchanan Houses at the Environmental Park. It was a beautiful day for this special event.

Residents and staff were treated to hamburgers, hotdogs and all the trimmings! Joy and laughter filled the park as well as the aroma of a delicious dinner. Smiles were plentiful on the faces of all the participants; it was heartwarming. To complete the feast, ice cream and baked goodies were served, followed by photos and grateful goodbyes to our friends who make this yearly trip.



Article & Photos Contributed by: Maria Johnson



# Pathways

## Pathways Annual Employee Appreciation Cookout

On Thursday, September 15th Pathways' Annual Employee Appreciation Cookout was held at the Sunland Environmental Park. Pathways Administration provided lunch for all three shifts. Superintendent Geri Williams, Human Resource staff and Sunland nurses enjoyed the cookout as well. Employees were served grilled pork and chicken, potato salad, baked beans, corn on the cob, boiled peanuts, drinks and dessert. Staff expressed gratitude and appreciation.



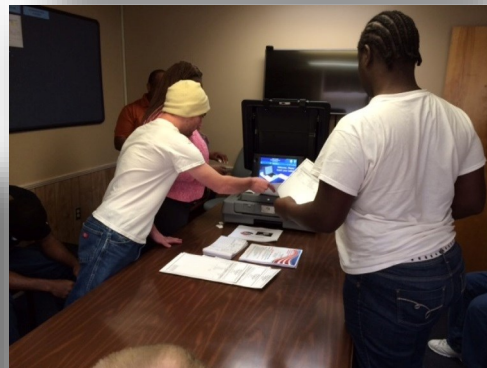
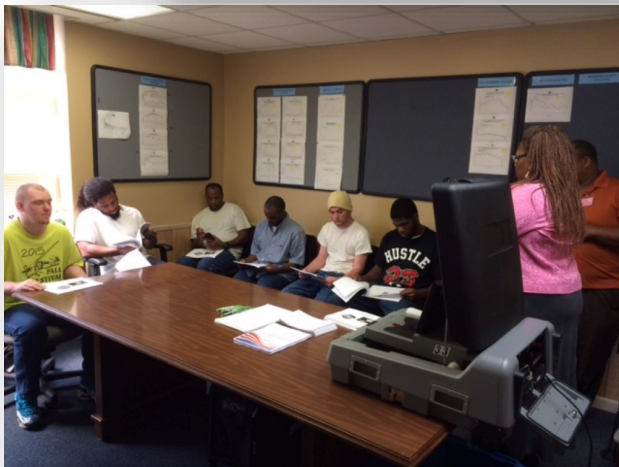
Article & Photos Contributed by: Juanita Alford

# Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

## DDDP Hosts Staff from Supervisor of Elections Office

On September 20th, staff from Gadsden County's Supervisor of Elections office visited DDDP to give a voting demonstration and educational session to DDDP residents who are registered to vote. Residents were informed of how the election process works at both the local and national levels, and saw firsthand how votes are counted and processed. A mock election was held which allowed them to see how the ballots are scanned and tallied using secure electronic equipment.

Much thanks to Latina Germany Godfrey, Human Services Program Administrator at DDDP for coordinating this event and to the Gadsden County Supervisor of Elections office for their willingness to visit and give our residents this learning opportunity!



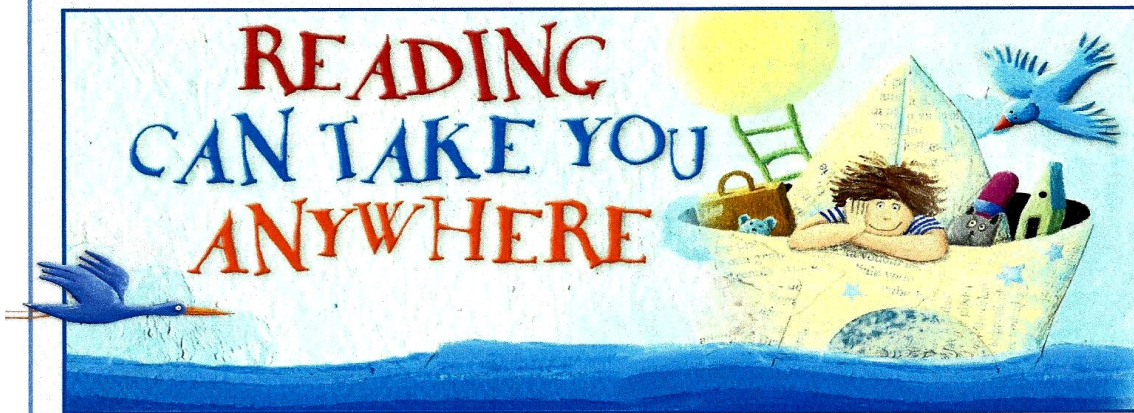
Article & Photos Contributed by: Corey Chafin



# Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

DDDP is pleased to announce they will be participating in the Gadsden County "ReadingPals" Volunteer Program. Four employees Stacey Gibson, Heather Carnley, Peggy Green and Danielle Shaw have stepped up to participate for this school year. Look for updates throughout the school year on this Program. DDDP is excited about this opportunity to make a difference by volunteering in the Gadsden County school system!

## READINGPALS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED IN GADSDEN COUNTY!



**EVERY YEAR, ONE IN FOUR STUDENTS FAILS TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL ON TIME!**

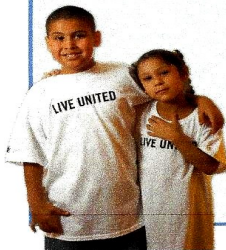
**UNITED WAY OF THE BIG BEND** is changing this statistic. Now in our fifth year, **ReadingPals** is continuing to work to improve the reading ability of children in Gadsden, Leon, Madison, and Taylor Counties!

Research shows that caring adults working with kids can boost academic achievement. **ReadingPals** relies on hundreds of volunteers every year to read one-to-one with children who have been identified as struggling readers.

### BECOME A READINGPAL AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY:

- Volunteers are matched one-to-one with a child in kindergarten, first, or second grade
- Volunteers report during the after school setting for one hour a week
- Volunteers present each student with a brand new book every week
- Volunteers utilize a user-friendly curriculum that is tailored to the needs of a young struggling reader
- Volunteers receive training and mentor certification from UWBB and Gadsden County School District

**GREENSBORO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- TUESDAYS 2:00-3:00PM**  
**ST JOHNS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- TUESDAYS 4:15-5:15 PM**



**YOU CAN CHANGE A CHILD'S FUTURE!!!**

If you are ready to become a **ReadingPal** and change a child's future, please contact **Charlotte Rice** today at [charlotte@uwbb.org](mailto:charlotte@uwbb.org) or 850-999-6000.

Contact us for more information about opportunities to volunteer in Leon, Gadsden, Madison and Taylor Counties!



Article & Photos Contributed by: TonyReed



# September

STAR  
awards

## Star Employees

Ebonilena Long Battles – Pathways  
Laderius Lee – Pathways  
Casie Mitchell – Pathways  
Clevelando Wedderburn – Unit 1  
Kelvin Jones – Unit 1  
Tracey Chambliss Curry – Unit 1  
Jasma Black -Unit 2  
Timothy Shirley – Unit 2

Cody Coley – Unit 3  
Deja McCollough – Unit 3  
Tarrence Ellis – Unit 3  
Annie Balcom – Unit 3  
Jenethal Reed – Unit 3  
Darlene Boykin – Unit 3

## Star Teams

### Unit 1, Unit 2, Nursing, Maintenance, Security, CSS

Akira Jennings – Unit 1  
Desmund Barnes – Unit 2  
Ronterrious Richardson – Unit 2  
Becky Snyder – Unit 2  
Edith Phillips – Nursing  
Wade Collins – Maintenance  
William Nelson – Security  
Robin Snellgrove – CSS

### Pathways

Sam Smith, Earnest Daughtery,  
Rich Mulder, Lee Florence, Jason  
McDuff, Jason Kent, Aarian Batson,  
Bonnie Edwards, Terrick Sullivan,  
Cornelius Snell, Laderius Lee,  
Robert Keys, Lonnie Gilbert,  
Deothron Clay

**Congratulations  
Sunland Stars!**





# Mark your calendar!

Open Enrollment starts 8:00 a.m. on Monday, October 17, and ends Friday, November 4, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. ET

## Take time now to do the following:

- ✓ Know your People First password. Passwords expire every 90 days for your protection.
- ✓ Be sure your mailing *and* email addresses are correct in People First.
  - Update mailing address by Sept. 30, 2016, to get your Open Enrollment benefits package on time.
  - Add a notification email address in People First to receive important emails.
- ✓ Learn more. Review benefit options on the MyBenefits website and call the insurance company directly if you have questions about coverage, network access and other plan benefits.
- ✓ Check out the benefits fairs schedule to see if there is an event near you.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

Amanda Johnson, HR Manager and her staff, Veronica Mullinax, Lizzie Holland and Stacey Goodwin 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>



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW EMPLOYEES

Kelvin Lawson

Keyandra Raines

Eva Ferguson

Christopher Whitlow

Shundreal Edwards





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" Environmental Park



### "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