



AUGUST 2025 ISSUE

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." — Eleanor Roosevelt

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) is proud to welcome Robert "Bob" Asztalos as its new Director.

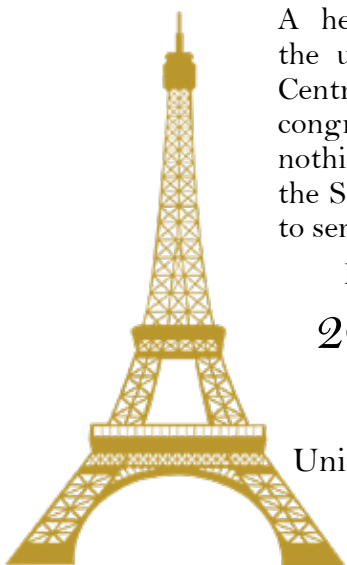
Mr. Asztalos brings decades of leadership and public service experience, most recently serving as Deputy Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, where he oversaw operations for the state's network of veterans' nursing homes and domiciliary care facilities.

His extensive background spans government relations, health care advocacy, and service to our nation—having completed 29 years in the U.S. Navy and Navy Reserve, along with 17 years in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

With a career dedicated to improving care and access for vulnerable populations, Mr. Asztalos is well-positioned to lead APD in advancing its mission to support Floridians with developmental disabilities in living, learning, and working in their communities. APD looks forward to the vision and dedication Mr. Asztalos will bring as he leads the agency.



A NIGHT IN PARIS



A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to the unforgettable success of the Night in Paris pageant. Centralized Support Services Team extends our warmest congratulations to all participants—your performances were nothing short of extraordinary. The depth of talent within the Sunland community is truly inspiring, and it is an honor to serve and celebrate such a remarkable group of individuals.

Please join us in congratulating our newly crowned
2025–2026 Kings and Queens:

Unit 1 King & Queen: Shawn W. & Susan F.

Unit 2 King & Queen: Columbus W. & Johnnie Mae W.

Unit 3 King & Queen: Lilly S. & Randolph R.

Welcome to the Sunland Team

July 18, 2025

Darrell Hand
Shirley Edwards
Chelsea Corbin
Jadarious Bell

August 1, 2025

James Lincoln
Antwan Sims
Mary Dozier
Ne'Kia Barnes
Crystal Mack
Niymeshia Bryant
Trycon Mchellon Jr.
Madison Bland
Brianna Taylor
Rose Dougherty
Hope McClelland
Jaeda Hall

A Magical Evening: Second Annual Sunland Pageant

Sunland residents joyfully participated in the 2nd Annual Sunland Pageant, making it a truly delightful and unforgettable celebration. The evening's theme, A Night in Paris, provided the perfect backdrop for residents to

showcase their unique talents and shine brightly under the spotlight. It was a magical night filled with laughter, applause, and heartfelt moments—one that will be fondly remembered by residents and staff

alike. The event left the Sunland community with lasting memories and a joyful sense of togetherness.

This special evening was thoughtfully designed and planned by Sunland's Centralized Support Services.



resident (Sandra R.),
staff (Brett Holloway)



Unit 3 King Randolph R.



Unit 3 Reigning Queen Kathie Josephson



Pierce House ladies (Ruby P., Judith O., Mary F., Johnnie Mae W.)



Brian B



Reigning Queen Crystal P.



Reigning King Johnny C.

Unit II 2025 Night in Paris King and Queen



Unit II King Columbus W.



Unit II Queen Johnnie Mae W.

Intermission entertainment by two of UNIT II Residents



Daniel T. on the Piano



Jeremiah B. Singing

Unit II Men Contestants in "Night in Paris" Pageant

Our Unit II gentlemen want everyone to know that participating in pageants is about more than crowns and titles—it's a celebration of diversity, individuality, and confidence. Pageants show that beauty and talent come

in many forms, and that every person has something valuable to share.

Their message is simple: embrace your unique qualities and let your inner light shine!



Steven B. of Hayes House



Gary T. of Hayes House



Kenny A. of Lincoln House



Billy O. of Hayes House



Clinton V. of Lincoln House



Daniel T. of Hayes House

Unit II Women "Night In Paris" Contestants

Queens of Pierce house (RP, JO, MF, JW) gracing us with their beauty, strengths and personalities at the 2025' Pageant, held in the auditorium. The lights were dimmed but these ladies shined brightly as a diamond.



Judith O. of Pierce House



Johnnie Mae W. of Pierce House



Ruby P. of Pierce House



Mary F. of Pierce House

Crystal P. Takes Her Final Walk as Queen



Last year's queen, Crystal P. of Pierce House, made her final walk with poise and grace. A sash may symbolize victory, but it is her spirit that defines her legacy. The most beautiful thing she wears is her confidence.

Message from the 2024 King



2024's King, Mr. Johnnie C. of Hayes House, shares this inspiring message: "With determination and a positive attitude, dreams can be achieved."

Behavioral Services Welcomes New Supervisor, Tracie Toole

— Submitted by Kendra Weeks

Sunland's Behavioral Services Department is excited to welcome Mrs. Tracie Toole as our new Behavioral Specialist Supervisor.

Mrs. Toole has been with APD for nearly four years, serving as Environmental Health & Safety Supervisor and Risk Manager. Prior to joining APD, she spent approximately 23 years with the Department of Corrections, rising through the ranks from Officer to Captain.

Her expertise spans Emergency Operations, Environmental Health & Safety, Accreditation Standards (ACA), and Quality Assurance policies and procedures. While working with DDDP/Pathways, she gained valuable experience in maladaptive behavior reporting, behavior plans,



incident reports, and reactive strategies for FS 393 and FS 916 residents.

With extensive supervisory experience—including managing over 1,300 inmates and more than 100 staff—Mrs. Toole brings strong leadership and operational skills to her new role. She holds a BS in Criminal Justice with a minor in Forensic Psychology and has earned numerous professional certifications.

Mrs. Toole looks forward to working closely with each unit and support department to strengthen communication, foster unity, and achieve better

outcomes for the residents we serve.

Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Toole to the Sunland family!

Hayes House Residents Participate in Social Skills Training

— Submitted by Kendra Weeks

On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, residents from Hayes House took part in a social skills training led by Behavioral Services staff and volunteer AnnMarie Shelton.

As part of the session, residents engaged in a hands-on crafting activity while practicing important social skills, including starting conversations, staying on topic, sharing materials, and making socially appropriate comments.

This interactive approach provided a fun and creative way for residents to strengthen their communication abilities while enjoying time together.



DID YOU KNOW?

When individuals with disabilities are given opportunities to practice social interaction, they become better prepared for the wide variety of social situations they may encounter. Even if the circumstances are different from their past experiences, they will have the skills to navigate unfamiliar social expectations with confidence.

These experiences not only build communication skills but also boost self-assurance—encouraging individuals to pursue new challenges, advocate for themselves, and request accommodations when needed.

In today's world, it's nearly impossible to get through daily life without interacting with others. As adults, we must navigate a range of social situations each day to be happy and successful. That's why it's essential that social skills are intentionally taught and regularly practiced in programs like ours.

Behavioral Services Celebrates Crystal Spurlock's New Role

— Submitted by Kendra Weeks

Congratulations to Ms. Crystal Spurlock on her new position within Sunland's Behavioral Services Department!

Ms. Spurlock recently earned her M.A. in Exceptional Student Education with a certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis. She is also a proud Magna Cum Laude graduate of Florida A&M University, holding a B.S. in Health Science with a focus on mental health counseling rehabilitation.

With over a decade of experience in behavior analysis and therapeutic services, Ms. Spurlock has been an integral part of the interdisciplinary team—facilitating therapeutic services, tracking resident progress, and providing valuable feedback. She is passionate about fostering a safe, supportive environment and building strong rapport with residents.

Throughout her career at Sunland, Ms. Spurlock has served as Residential Services Supervisor, Qualified Intellectual Disability Professional, Behavioral Specialist, and now, Behavior Analyst. Her professional expertise and personal dedication uniquely position her to excel in this important role.



Please join us in congratulating Ms. Spurlock on this exciting new chapter!

Behavioral Services Hosts July Local Review Committee Meeting

— Submitted by Jerry Mixon

On July 29, 2025, Behavioral Services hosted the July Local Review Committee (LRC) Meeting. During the meeting, the team extended best wishes to Dr. Michelle Ammon, who has accepted a position outside of APD and will be resigning from her role as Sunland's LRC Chair.



Dr. Kristin Korinko, APD's Senior Behavior Analyst, will assume the role of Sunland LRC Chairperson. Her ongoing oversight and consistent participation in Sunland's LRC Committee have already been an integral part of our behavioral services. Like Dr. Ammon, her leadership and guidance have been instrumental in our continued efforts to improve the quality of behavior plans and services for the residents we serve.

Pictured from right to left: Heather Evans, Behavioral Specialist; Tracie Toole, Behavioral Specialist Supervisor; Jerry Mixon, Senior Behavioral Analyst; Dr. Jon Bailey; Dr. Kristin Korinko; Dr. Michelle Ammon; Rima Williams, Behavioral Specialist; Shantrell Brown, Behavioral Specialist; Kendra Weeks, Behavioral Specialist; Nicholas Spragg, Behavioral Analyst; and Crystal Spurlock, Behavioral Analyst.

The Behavioral Services team looks forward to continuing its strong collaboration with Dr. Korinko as she steps into this leadership role.

**From the
Chaplain:**

We have kept busy with programs and wonderful volunteers at the Chapel. Our F.U.E.L team has been quite busy as well. They absolutely love doing things for others.



The Four Friends blessed us with some good music in July.



Trevor Shelton is a wonderful new volunteer. He comes and sings for our Chapel Services.

**Walter Wilson
Gospel Singer**

A friend who agreed to come and bless us with his great style of Gospel music.



Vacation Bible School with our volunteers, Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Nolen. They provided two wonderful sessions for our residents.

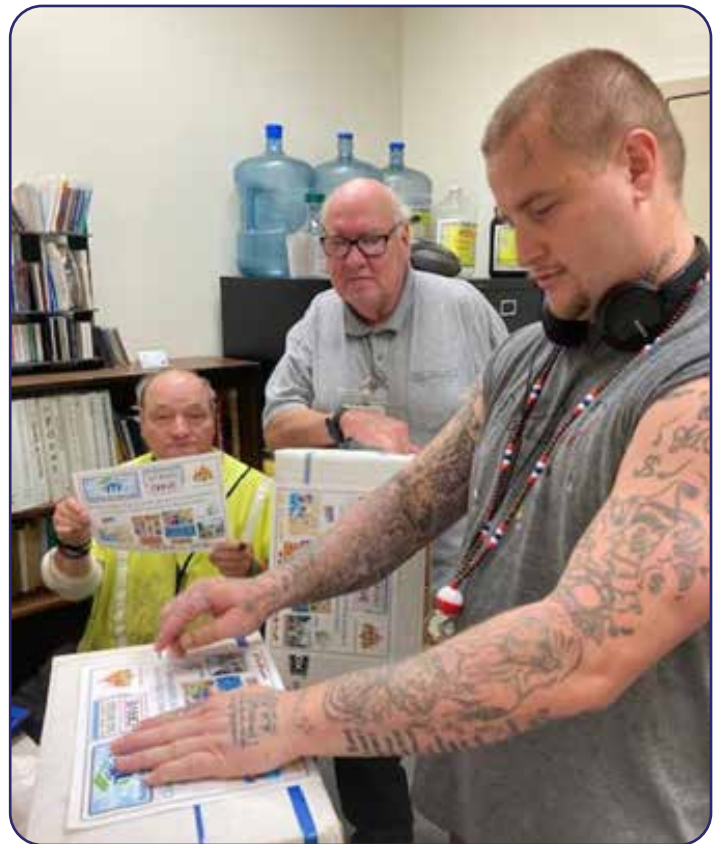
A Special Welcome Home



Our talented artist resident, Steven B, created a heartfelt “Welcome Home” picture for Habitat for Humanity. This special artwork was placed in the new house on dedication evening as a warm greeting to the new homeowners. To make it even more meaningful, our F.U.E.L. team members added their signatures, leaving a lasting message of community, support, and love.

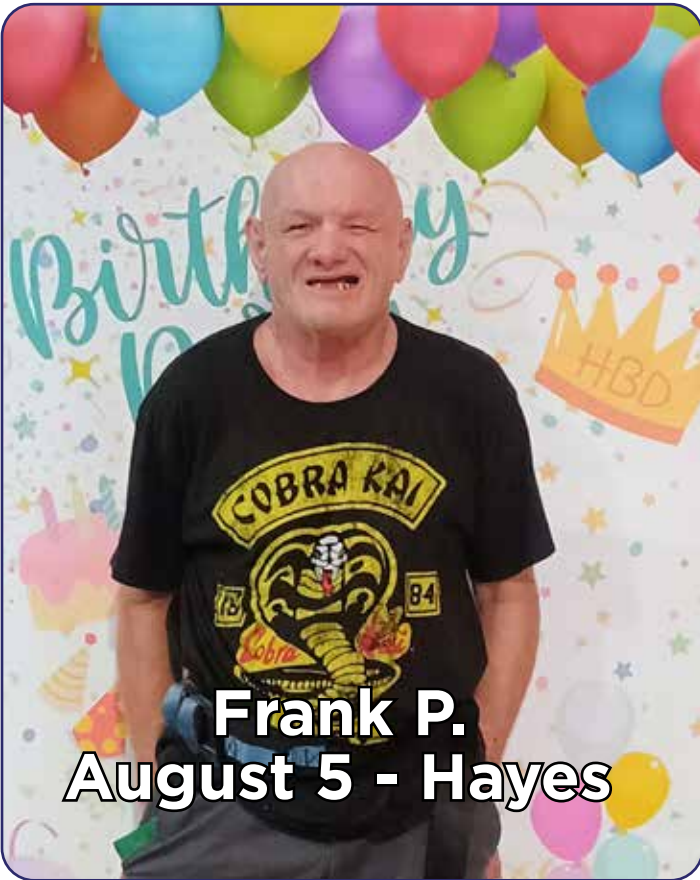
F.U.E.L. Team in Action

Our F.U.E.L. team members have been busy labeling collection boxes as they prepare to gather snacks and drinks for the volunteer crew who will soon be building a new Habitat for Humanity home. Their efforts help ensure the builders are refreshed and supported as they work to create a brighter future for the new homeowners.

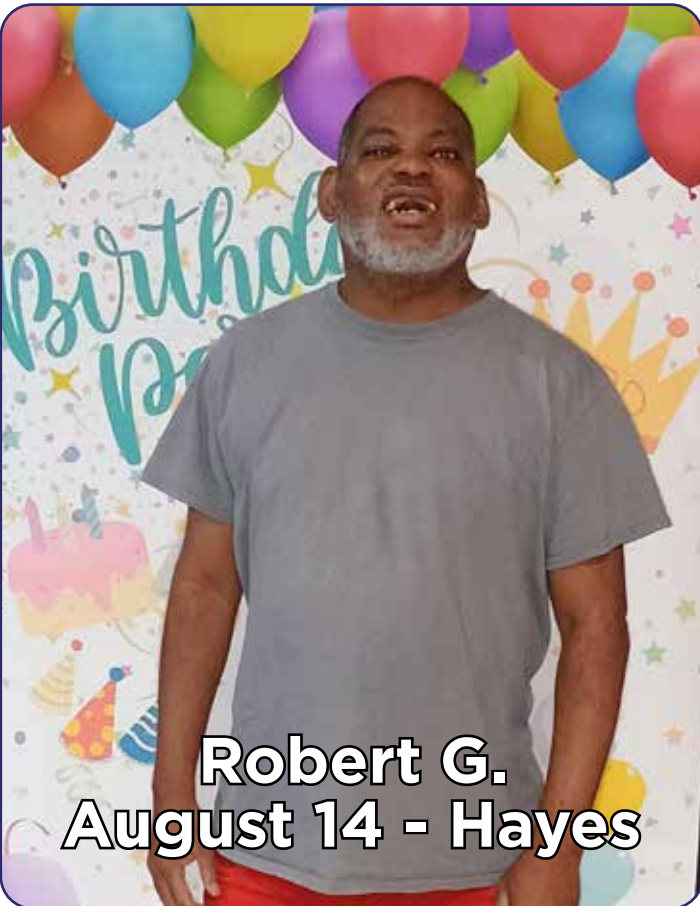


Faith Used in Everyday Life

In July we enjoyed the new popular movie, The King of Kings.



Frank P.
August 5 - Hayes



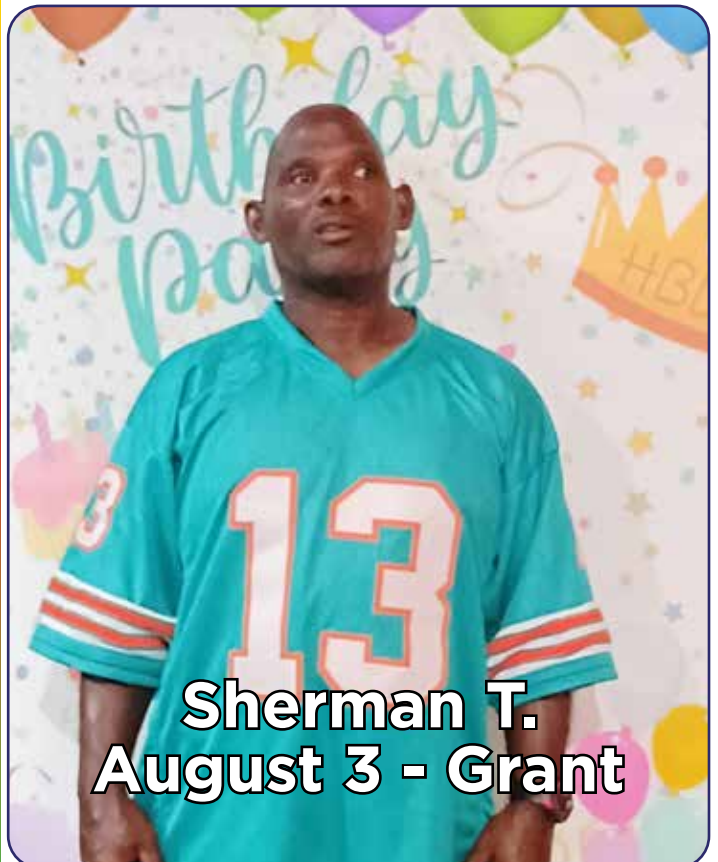
Robert G.
August 14 - Hayes

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Sherman T.	August 3	Grant
Frank P.	August 5	Hayes
Patti H.	August 9	Thiel Center
Robert G.	August 14	Hayes
Melanie S.	August 14	Parkview
Scottie T.	August 22	Lincoln
Cheryl T.	August 25	Buchanan
John M.	August 29	Thiel Center
George G.	August 31	Westside

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Marie D.	September 4	Buchanan
Nancy P.	September 11	Westside
Edith W.	September 19	Buchanan
Linda R.	September 22	Thiel Center
John A.	September 25	E Truman
Shila W.	September 26	Parkview
Johnnie C.	September 29	E Truman



Sherman T.
August 3 - Grant



Get Ready for the 2025 Parade!

Mark your calendars! This year's parade will take place on Saturday, October 25, 2025. Parade line-up begins bright and early at 7:30 a.m.—and we want YOU to be part of the fun!

Whether you're a marching group, a community organization, a float designer, or just someone who loves to celebrate, this is your chance to showcase your spirit, creativity, and community pride.

Parade entry forms are now available! Don't miss your chance to join one of the most exciting traditions of the year.

For questions or more information, contact: Natalie Spires - Recreation Therapy Manager Recreation/CSS Office: 850-482-9372

Let's make this year's parade the biggest, brightest, and most spirited yet!



T-SHIRT SALE!

Starting August 1- September 19
Shirts will cost \$15
Sizes S-4XL

Wear your shirt at the Fall Festival!
Multiple T-shirt colors Available
CSS staff Racquel Coleman & Mel Lundgren will be taking orders around campus OR you can make your purchase at the Gift Shop in the Suntown Mall during regular work hours

Payment is due at the time of the order.
Any questions or concerns?

Contact: Ashton.wester@apdcares.org or at (850) 482- 9373

Thank you for your support!



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP MEETING SUMMARY

July 2025 Minutes

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR'S DESK

This July brought important updates to operations, staffing, safety measures, and resident activities. Our teams worked diligently to maintain high standards of care, prepare for seasonal events, and implement key state-level changes.

BUDGET & LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

- **ORG Code Changes:** All codes updated to 6710 effective July 1. Please update any remaining old codes in the system.
- **Legislative Budget Requests Approved:**
 - OPS Housekeepers pay rate increased to \$17/hour.
 - Additional funding for the Vocational Work Program.
 - Select equipment and vehicle requests approved for Sunland and Tacachale.
- **Statewide Budget Impact:**
 - 44 vacant positions eliminated across agencies; 30 split between Sunland and Tacachale.
 - State minimum salary raised to \$34,760/year (\$16.71/hour) with a 2% or \$1,000 salary increase for eligible employees.

HUMAN RESOURCES & STAFFING

- Vacancies reduced from 87 at start of month to 81 by July 30.
- **New Employee Orientation:** 3 on July 18, 10 scheduled for August 1.
- **OPS Custodial Worker pay** increased to \$17/hour.
- **Multiple separations** occurred during July.
- **Performance Evaluations:** Deadline July 21 — thank you to departments that submitted on time.

OPERATIONS & SAFETY

- **Nursing:**
 - Follow heat advisory guidance — keep residents hydrated and dressed appropriately.
 - For health monitoring, leave vomit in place until assessed by a nurse.
- **Behavioral Services:**
 - SOAR manual training progressing (three phases total).
 - Local Review Committee leadership transitioned to Dr. Korinko.

- **Quality Services:**
 - Census steady at 136 residents.
 - Worker's Compensation claims ranged from 27-30 active cases.
- **Security:**
 - Separated employees should not be on campus — report any sightings.
- **Maintenance:**
 - Interior painting, generator preparation, and HVAC replacements for Food Service underway.

EVENTS & RESIDENT LIFE

- **Fall Festival planning** in progress.
- **Special Olympics Bowling Trips successful** — residents earned multiple medals!
- **Resident Pageant** – “A Night in Paris” held July 30 in the auditorium.
- **Recreation updates:**
 - Game rooms reopened in Unit 2.
 - New furniture colors chosen for resident homes.

POLICY & PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT REMINDERS

(Highlighted at the July 30 meeting)

- **Maintain professionalism and boundaries at all times.**
- **Zero tolerance for:**
 - Sleeping on the job.
 - Abuse, neglect, exploitation, workplace violence.
- **No solicitation or personal business on state time.**
- **Follow APD dress code (no crocs/inappropriate attire).**
- **Use centralized printers (no individual ink purchases).**
- **Take lunch breaks per policy; document timesheets accurately.**
- **Adhere to resident supervision levels, safety guidelines, and rights.**

LOOKING AHEAD

As we move into August, our focus remains on resident care, staff development, and preparedness for seasonal events. Thank you for your continued commitment to excellence at Sunland Center.