



## Thanksgiving Blessings!

**Thanksgiving is a special time of year. A time to think about and consider our many blessings. For Sunland, 2017 has been a year of abundant blessings for our residents and staff. As we reflected back over the past year, it was clear that Sunland has much to be grateful for. When asked about Thanksgiving, a number of residents, families and staff shared their thoughts regarding things they are thankful for.**

*Happy Thanksgiving to everyone at Sunland. The Kozlovski family is truly thankful for all the staff at Sunland. They are so kind and patient. They give excellent care to each and every client. There is a special star in the heavens for each and everyone of them! ~ Paulette Kozlovski, mother of Steven*

*Ms. Shirley Dunn, mother of Carol Sue, expressed her sentiments regarding the care her daughter receives at Sunland. She stated "I share the newsletter with all of our friends and they can't believe the programs Sunland has. They said no wonder you can lay down at night and go to sleep knowing SUE SUE is being loved and taken care of. Keep up the good work!"*

*Joe N., Unit 1 Grant House said "the best thing about Thanksgiving this year was the BBQ and the yellow chicken & rice I got at my family's gathering."*

*Robert B., Unit 1 Grant House said "the best thing was getting to go to my brother's house in Tallahassee."*

*Britt W., Unit 1 Grant House said "the best thing was having good food and talking with my brother and mom on Thanksgiving day."*

*Santa Maria D., Unit 2 Pierce House Unit 2 said "I am thankful for my friends and new eye glasses."*

*Cheryl D., Unit 2 Woodridge said she is "very thankful that my sister came to visit me and took me camping in Alabama."*

*Lonnie F., Unit 2 Pierce House said "I am thankful that I was selected to go out to lunch at the Oaks Restaurant "...and that put a big smile on her face!"*

*Johnnie Mae W., Unit 2 Woodridge House said "I was very excited and thankful that I was able to go for a home visit to see my family in Deerfield Beach and was able to go shopping."*

*Bert C., Unit 3 Connally Manor, said "I am thankful for my cousin."*

*Shirley H., Unit 3 Monroe House, said "I am thankful that I went home with my family for Thanksgiving and I am going back for Christmas."*

GRATEFUL  
THANKFUL  
BLESSED

## Today I'm **Thankful** for...

*Desmond, from DDDP said "I am thankful to be alive and that I have people helping me. I am also thankful for turkey. I am thankful for Jesus and all the residents. And I am thankful that we are all safe and happy."*

*Jason, from DDDP said "I am thankful to be alive."*

*Stanley, from DDDP "I am thankful for the food and the sodas."*

*Henry, from DDDP said "I am thankful for the Thanksgiving dinner and for the Holiday Season."*

*James, from DDDP said "I am thankful for a place to stay and I have a roof over my head and I get to eat. I am thankful I have friends."*

*Robbie T., from Pathways said "I am thankful for food mostly, family, and friends to talk to and be nice to."*

*Robert G., from Pathways said "I am thankful for God and the Indians and Pilgrims that did it first."*

*Daniel T., from Pathways said "I am thankful for my mom that can still come to see me, my friend Scott, & the food that was provided."*

*Luis C., from Pathways said "I'm thankful for the food and that I'm still living."*

*Michael S., from Pathways said "I am thankful for having a big meal and eating together with everyone."*

*Gary P., from Pathways said "I'm thankful for my niece and nephew, Jesus Christ, and the rest of my family."*

*Greg D., from Pathways said "I'm thankful for my family and the staff that treats me like their family. I love them from the bottom of my heart."*



**A number of staff Sunland/DDDP also shared some of the blessings they are most thankful for.**

*"I am thankful for being born in a country where I can worship my Savior without fear of persecution. Our country has its problems, but, I still believe this is the greatest country in the world and I am thankful for those men and women that protect me and my family every day while they are away from their own families." ~ Cindy Fitzgerald, RN*

*"I am thankful for God's love for all of us; I am thankful for my loving family and friends; I am thankful for my Church; I am thankful for wonderful parents who taught me about the Lord, who taught me about faith and love, how to have a compassionate heart and empathy for others, to care for those who less fortunate, to always strive to do the right thing and be honest, to try not to judge others, to look for the good in people, to walk with integrity and be the best person you can be and to never lose sight of what is important in life over monetary things." ~ Juanita Alford, Senior Clerk, F/C - Pathways*

## Today I'm **Thankful** for...

*"I am very Thankful for my job at Sunland!" ~ Alesia E. Holland, Human Service Counselor III, Unit 2*

*"I am blessed with 4 grandchildren and 2 children that I am very proud of! I am thankful for my health and my job at Sunland! Happy Thanksgiving!" ~ Janet O'Pry, Staff Assistant - Maintenance/Operations*

*"I am Thankful to be placed with an Agency that promotes growth internally and recognizes the great attributes that ALL staff bring to the table to make one team DDDP!" ~ Sophia Jackson-Grandison, Behavior Specialist, Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program*

*"I am truly thankful for being able to give back to new employees some of the training I got when I first came to Sunland and truly guide them thru each step as they embark on serving these residents. I am truly Thankful for every person who has touched my life to help me continue to grow as a person, as a mentor and especially a mother. It's not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them that's the true measure of Thanksgiving." ~ Velma Tensley, Human Service Program Analyst, Quality Management*

*"My top 4 "thankfuls" ~ I am thankful that my chains are gone and I've been set free, that His grace is sufficient. I am thankful for parents who taught me right from wrong and loved me enough. I am thankful for my family, beginning with my husband. I am thankful that we have been blessed to still live in a free Country, therefore thankful for all who have sacrificed to make this happen and continue to make it happen." ~ Faith Bentley, Personnel Tech III, Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program*

*"I am Thankful for a life in Christ, wonderful family, great life, good health and a job/co-workers/intern that I really, really enjoy. Human Services Counselor III for Unit 3 (the best place to be). And last but not least I am thankful for my salary increase." ~ Faye Johnson, Human Services Counselor III, Unit 3*

*"Thanksgiving for me is a time to thank my creator for giving me eternal life, for my memories of a loved one who is not with me anymore who gave me 3 beautiful children, who now have children of their own... for all the wonderful memories of a father and mother who loved and cared for me and did without so that I could have. Thanksgiving reminds me of love and warmth with friends and family stuffing their face with turkey and dressing until the buttons on their pants are loosed. Thanksgiving also is a time to share with others the abundance we have so richly been blessed with...not only with a physical blessing but spiritual as well...even though the practice of Thanksgiving should be our daily walk. I love this time of year." ~ Pam Mayo, Accountant II*

*"There are a few things that I am thankful for. Thankful for my position here at Sunland, and having the pleasure of watching the smiles on the clients faces when they are happy. Thankful for my position here, and being able to meet such wonderful staff. Watching children smile. Watching a sunrise or sunset. Family & friends. & so much more!" ~ Lynn Kern, Accountant I*

*"I am thankful for the residents that we work with, my job, my church, FAITH Riders, my friends, family, coworkers and the wonderful life that I have because of my Heavenly Father." ~ Ruth Moore, Chaplain*

## Count Your BLESSINGS





## From the Superintendent...

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time of year. Folks are seemingly warmer and kinder. The weather is wonderfully crisp and just enough cool or cold to invite a snuggle. An embrace with a blanket, a stuffed animal, long lost friend, or dearest loved one; either way a snuggle is moving in the direction of warmth. Thanksgiving is gratitude in motion. Warm expressions of kindness can be found every where we look. The center of warmth is found on the dining room table...lots of food and baked goodies. This is all very nice, but what really makes Thanksgiving Day Special are the wisdom prayers from the seasoned elders, the hearty laughter of babies, and the awkward giggles of teenagers. Families and friends together for a wonderful meal and memory making moments. What could be better? 'Tis so sweet to reflect on the precious memories.

While reflecting, I want to say a special Happy Thanksgiving to the phenomenal staff members who make up the Sunland/DDDP/Rish Park Family. Thanks for the great work you do all year. Special gratitude to those who work on Thanksgiving and those who come to the facilities on Thanksgiving Day to make sure that the folks we are privileged to serve enjoy the gift of community celebration, laughter, and all the trimmings that make this day one to look forward to every year.

Gratitude in motion is evidenced in all areas of our work. I am so proud to serve with you. Lending support to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities is important work and you all excel time and time again. I am, indeed, thankful for our service, commitment, and outpouring of support year round.

Happy Thanksgiving everyone and do take care!

Grateful,

*Geri Williams*  
Superintendent

*Happy  
Thanksgiving* 



# 2017 National Peanut Festival

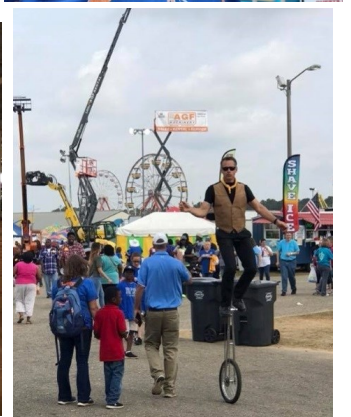
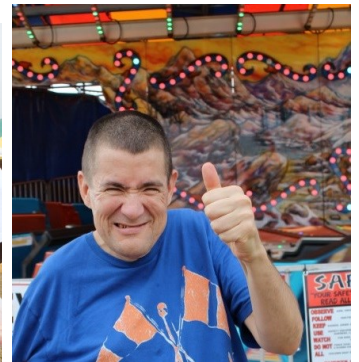
Each year, Sunland residents and staff enjoy attending the National Peanut Festival, held in Dothan, Alabama. The annual festival is a highly anticipated trip for many reasons...many enjoy the amusement rides and live entertainment, while others enjoy visiting the agricultural and livestock exhibits, but hands down...everyone enjoys the delicious carnival food! There is literally something for everyone at the Peanut Festival! A total of 106 residents and 125 staff had the opportunity to visit the festival over the course of four days. A highlight of the festival was Special Citizens Day when adults and children with special needs had the fairgrounds all to themselves where they enjoyed a full day of corn dogs, fair rides and music.





# 2017 NATIONAL PEANUT FESTIVAL

BEST TIME OF THE YEAR!  
NOVEMBER 3-12





## Residential Services

**UNIT 3** - On November 8, Unit 3 joined in on the caravan to Dothan, Alabama for Special Citizens Day at the National Peanut Festival. Residents from each of our homes participated in the wonderful festivities, and fun was had by all! Special thanks to Centralized Support Services for coordinating such a successful event.

On Tuesday, November 14, Unit 3 was covered in a sea of blue. A *Smurf invasion perhaps?* Staff and residents alike wore blue in support of World Diabetes Awareness Day. World Diabetes Day was launched in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and The World Health Organization (WHO) in response to the rapid rise of diabetes around the world. The day itself marks the birthday of Frederick Banting who, along with Charles Best and John Macleod, first conceived the idea. Monroe Activity Center welcomed residents and staff from the Unit to raise awareness and help improve the lives of people with diabetes, and those at risk. Event facilitator Laura Brunson, Therapy Aide II addressed the following topics: differences between type 1 and type 2 diabetes, symptoms of the disease, other health risks associated with the disease, portion control, and a testimonial on her own experiences of living as a diabetic. Educational materials were also shared. Participants enjoyed a reception of healthy snacks including fruits, veggies, humus, pita chips, and lemon infused water.

It's starting to look a lot like Christmas!! On November 30, several of our individuals enjoyed sharing their Christmas list with Santa and Ms. Claus at the Suntown Mall. Then we went to the Christmas tree lighting, where our residents took pride in hanging their ornaments on the tree. It was wonderful to participate in the fellowship, and the enjoy finale with the lighting of the beautiful Christmas Tree.

In Loving Memory ~ Ms. Barbara F. of Connally Manor passed away on November 11, 2017. Ms. Faircloth's kind smile and presence will be missed by all in Unit 3.



Contributed by: Allison Jones



## Mingle & Jingle with Friends of Sunland!

On Thursday, November 2, the Friends of Sunland, Inc., non-profit 501(c)(3), hosted their 2nd Annual Mingle & Jingle holiday craft boutique. The event was held at the Historic Bank Building in downtown Marianna. Holiday shoppers were excited to browse through the wide assortment of one of a kind, original handmade gifts made by local artists and artisans. Members of Friends of Sunland were pleased with the turnout and show of support for their fundraiser. Proceeds from the event will be utilized to benefit the individuals who reside at Sunland.





## Sunland Supports 44th Annual Jackson County Farm City Festival

In 1973, a group of citizens from Jackson County began an annual "Farm City Day" to celebrate agribusiness and honor the heritage and bounty of Jackson County's agriculture. Now in its 44th year, the event is celebrated as a two day festival. The festival begins with an early morning breakfast where local farmers are recognized for their contributions to the Jackson County community. A wide array of activities take place throughout the two day event, to include a parade of tractors, an antique tractor pull, lawn mower pull and arts/crafts vendors, food vendors, lots of kids activities and demonstrations.

In preparation for this year's festival, which was held on November 3 & 4, Sunland partnered with the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce to lend support with decorations. Thanks to Maria Johnson, Jennie Ann Dean, Israel Davis, Robert C. and Jerry S., who donated their time and talent in support of the 2017 Farm City Festival.



Antique Tractor Drive—Friday, November 3rd  
10 am: Hwy 90 Ag Center to Madison Street Park  
2 pm: Madison Street Park to Hwy 90 Ag Center

# Direct Care Core Services Graduation

November 17 was a special day at Sunland. Thirty-seven employees were recognized at a graduation ceremony for the Center's new Direct Care Core Services Course! Congratulations to the honorees upon their achievement of this milestone in their new careers at Sunland Center, and to Velma Tensley, Direct Services Field Staff Instructor. Pictured below are some of the graduates with Superintendent Geri Williams, Deputy Superintendent Adrian Abner, and several members of the Sunland Leadership Team.

Krisyuanna Baker  
Na'Stacia Sims  
Alexis Clayton  
Niya Beavers  
Latia Bass  
Eva Bounds  
Caytlin Brown  
Maria Sanchez-Shilon  
Porshae Garrett  
Rachel Hernandez  
Krisalynn Lawrence  
Neva Wooden

Derrika Fitzpatrick  
Ophelia Pittman  
James Daniels  
Brittany Watson  
Erik Utter  
Corey Smith  
Dominique Murrell  
Eric Weddington  
Nyleah Merritt  
Marquita Cooper  
Rebecca Mullins  
Celeste Schrieber

Desmond Bellamy  
Selena Godwin  
Jalan Johnson  
N'Gall Henderson  
Javoris Garrett  
Christopher Fielder  
Willie Mae Joiner  
Chubby Virgin  
Keith DeWitt  
Ace Curl  
Tequaris Brigham  
Otis Orange





## Little Jimmy Reed Rocks the House!

On Wednesday, November 22, Sunland residents and staff were treated to an awesome blues concert by Little Jimmy Reed, known as "The Alabama Bluesman." Little Jimmy certainly put on a show that was lively and engaging, encouraging participation from the audience. The laughter, singing and dancing, and especially the smiles on everyone's faces...priceless!

A special thanks to Clint Cox, Recreation Director, for organizing this event. It was truly a huge hit!



## Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

Congratulations to Bernard Smith, DDDP Employee of the Month! Mr. Smith serves as a role model to all residents in his community by demonstrating that he is a good listener and communicator who is willing to listen to resident issues and concerns. Mr. Smith engages in activities with the residents on the Ward, such as pool games and sports trivia. Upon walking on the Ward, Mr. Smith performs inspections to ensure the Ward meets Fire Marshal standards by making sure all bedroom areas are clean and beds are made before starting any activities. Mr. Smith works well with his colleagues and is always willing to help them whenever they need assistance. For example, when resident a began choking, Mr. Smith was the first one to recognize the resident was in distress. Without hesitation, he quickly responded and began performing the Heimlich maneuver, which was successful and ensured the safety and well-being of this individual. Mr. Smith is truly a dedicated team player who exemplifies total commitment, not just to the department, but to the Agency as a whole. He is a true asset to the Agency, his colleagues, and the residents we are privileged to serve. We are pleased to honor Mr. Bernard Smith for his noteworthy contributions to the Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program.



Pictured are Bernard Smith, November Employee of the Month, along with Michael Weber, Assistant Superintendent



# November Star Awards

Star Awards for the month of November were presented on Tuesday, November 28. Award presentations were made by Deputy Superintendent Adrian Abner, along with Felicia Smith, Unit 1 POA, Lucious Williams, Unit 2 POA, and James Godwin, Director of Centralized Support Services.



**Unit 1 Administration Silver Star Team Award**  
Robin Morris, Cassie Lipford, Susan Himes  
with Felicia Smith & Adrian Abner



**Unit 2 Thiel House Gold Star Team Award**  
Bernard Barkley, Tyrone Davis, Susan Byers, Lenora  
Edwards, Aaron Money  
with Adrian Abner & Lucious Williams  
Not Pictured: Michelle Williams, Arthur Gray,  
Jonathan Gilley



**Gold Star Award - Brenda Spencer**  
with Lucious Williams, Tracy Miller & Adrian Abner



**Whispering Oaks Gold Star Team Award**  
Kendrick Gardner & Freddie Staley  
with Lucious Williams & Adrian Abner  
Not Pictured: Tammy Garrett, Jasma Black, Vickie  
Chambliss, Shawn Everett, Erick Weddington,  
Nyleah Merritt, Brittany Watson



**CSS Manual Skills Gold Star Team Award**  
Tony Speights, with James Godwin & Adrian Abner  
Not Pictured: Michael John Carr & DeRon Johnson



**Silver Star Award - Tonya Kelly**  
with James Godwin & Adrian Abner

**Pathways Silver Star Team Award**  
Not Pictured: Samantha Guterrez, Willie Williams, Dadrian Dabbs, Chris Felder, Chandra Hart, Juquacion Hall, Bruce Jackson, Stephanie Curry



## Information Technology



Love online shopping? If so, you're not alone. Many people enjoy the benefits of online shopping. You don't have to fight the holiday traffic driving to the mall, only to end up circling the parking lot, hoping to grab that one last parking spot. There are many benefits with online shopping: Online stores are open 24/7, and you can shop from home in the comfort of your pajamas. And, it's very easy to compare prices between retailers before you buy. To shop online safely and protect your personal identity, consider these online shopping safety tips when holiday shopping:

### **Look for the padlock**

Look for the little padlock in the address bar or a URL that starts with "https" instead of "http," as the "s" stands for "secure." Some browsers will tell you it's safe to give out your credit card by showing you a green address bar, while unprotected ones will be highlighted in red.

### **Use a secure payment method**

Only shop on sites that take secure payment methods, such as credit cards and PayPal, as they likely give you buyer protection just in case there's a dispute. In other words, you won't be held liable for fraudulent charges. Even before it gets to that, you might be notified by your credit card company or bank if suspicious activity is detected. It's always a good idea to review your account transactions online or go through monthly paper statements to see if anything looks questionable. Beware of sites and apps that only accept money orders, wire transfers, or checks. Look for well-known security labels such as DigiCert, VeriSign, and other seals.

### **Password pointers**

A strong password is *at least seven characters long*, has a combination of letters, numbers and symbols, and with some uppercase characters, too. Change passwords routinely. It's good to reset your shopping passwords every so often, just in case someone guesses them, or if there's a data breach at an online retailer. And never use the same password for all online shopping sites (or other Web activities, like online banking), as once someone guesses one password, they'll have free reign over everything else.

### **Credit Card Management**

Do not shop with your debit card (i.e. the one tied directly to your bank account). Use a credit card to put a level of protection between you and the shopping site. Why? Just think about how many of these places have been hacked in recent years. If you use a debit card, your whole bank account is at risk.

**Keep these online safety tips in mind and enjoy happy shopping during the holiday season!**

## HUMAN RESOURCES



### SUNLAND HR TEAM

Veronica Mullinax, Katey Hobbs, Lizzie Holland and Nicole Sims

For any personnel needs, please contact Veronica Mullinax, Katey Hobbs, Lizzie Holland, and Nicole Sims at Sunland, and Debra Cone, Faith Bentley and Jodi Nesmith at DDDP. The HR Team is always happy to serve you!

For information regarding personnel matters, the Sunland Human Resources Department can be reached at 482-9230 or \*04. The DDDP Human Resource Department may be reached at 663-7738.

Information regarding vacancies can be obtained at the People First website at: <https://peoplefirst.myflorida.com>



### DDDP HR TEAM

Faith Bentley, Jodi Nesmith, Debra Cone

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## NEW EMPLOYEES



Katelynn Ballard  
Melanie McCroan  
Shedrick Brown  
Kayla Campbell

Lynn Baxley  
Shalona Hearn  
Adam Westmoreland  
Precious Bradwell  
Katey Hobbs

## Retirees Bon Voyage!

Wesley Sims



agency for persons with disabilities  
State of Florida

## Project Sunland PRIDE



Beautification Program!

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN A DESIRABLE ENVIRONMENT

# "Community Spotlight of the Month" Sunland Front Entrance



### "The Sunland Beacon" - Newsletter Committee

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

Beth Basford, Administration - Editor; Clint Cox, CSS/Recreation - Co-Editor; Stephanie Parker, CSS/Print Shop; Renee Perry, 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