



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

## Sunshine Gala

The annual Sunshine Gala was held on Friday June 1 and a large crowd was on hand to enjoy the evening. This year's theme was "Caribbean Nights." The decorating crew did a fantastic job of making the Sunland Gym feel like a tropical island! The weather was great (*no thunderstorms to deal with like last year*) and over 100 residents attended the annual event. And rest assured, they were decked out in their finest outfits for the big dance. Upon their entrance to "Caribbean Nights," each resident's grand entrance was by James Daniels, so that everyone could make sure to check out just how special they were looking.

Stephanie Parker was on hand to photograph all the attendees, ensuring that they will have a keepsake of this special night. In addition, a collage of photos were taken during the evening, capturing the big time that was had by all who attended. No dance at Sunland is complete without Diamond D as the DJ, and as usual he did a great job of getting everyone out on the dance floor. Tonya Kelly and her "refreshments crew" did an outstanding job, setting up outdoors by the pool under the pavilion. The refreshment area had their own music pumping out the hits while attendees enjoyed a delicious selection of meatballs, sandwiches, chips, cupcakes and punch. Thanks to all who had a hand in making this year's Sunshine Gala a night to remember.

Contributed by: Clint Cox



"Caribbean Nights"

## Scenes from Caribbean Nights



## Summer Program in Full Swing

At Sunland, summer programs get into full swing upon the conclusion of the school year. Residents enjoy abbreviated work days which allow them many opportunities to engage in a variety of summertime activities. Thanks to Clint Cox and the Recreational staff, a wide array of activities are offered for leisure time enjoyment, including pool parties, arts and crafts, music therapy, wagon rides, cycling, karaoke, pickleball, and sno cones. Special events are also a big hit to include trips to Rish Park, the annual SunFest talent show, guest musicians, and much more.



## From the Superintendent...

Summertime is so beautiful here in North Florida. The grass is green. The air is clean. And, the breeze is cool to the touch. As I sit in my office on the campus of Sunland, I appreciatively take in the view. Through the window I see decades old big oak trees. Some standing tall, others leaning with extended welcoming arms, branches, and moss framing silhouettes. Silhouettes symbolic of long limbed ballerinas flowing with the ease of grace and command of gravity while the wind exact their moves. Then there are the leaves. They are crisp with glistening reflections from the sunlight. It is almost as if they are speaking to me. I am listening. What can we learn from listening to everything in our immediate environment? There may be some great takeaways! The lesson for me is to listen for the good in everything in nature and apply that goodness and kindness in this very important work that we do. It is a privilege to serve and lend support where needed. We have an awesome responsibility and because of our collective gifts we will continue to ensure that the path forward is better than our starting point.



Doug Larson asserts, "Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk." I tend to agree with him. The lesson from the Oak Tree deeply rooted in centuries of Jackson County's best soil encourages us to keep tilling well into the night. Listen and do the work. Talk a little and listen a lot. And, let our lights of goodness shine brightly in all that we do. Remember there really is an acorn in that oak. Wisdom. Evolution. And, time!

Grateful,

*Geri Williams*  
Superintendent

## Sunland & DDDP Host Legislative Tour

Sunland and the Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program (DDDP) hosted a legislative delegation tour on Tuesday, June 26. Visitors included Caleb Hawkes, APD Director of Legislative Affairs; Rebeca Grissom, APD Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs; Zoe Linafelt, APD Deputy Communications Director; Peter Delia, Senior Attorney Florida Senate, Committee on Children, Families, And Elder Affairs; Bryan E. Mielke, MPA Budget Analyst, Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee; Oaj Gilani, Attorney Analyst, Health and Human Services Committee, Florida House of Representatives; and Brook Gerbrandt, Budget Analyst, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services .

The group toured educational, recreational and vocational programming areas, as well as residential homes in Units 1, 2 and 3, Cox Medical, and Pathways. During the afternoon hours, they visited DDDP, touring various areas of the forensics program.



## Mission San Luis Pine Needle Basket Class

Students from the Hub art class, along with staff Maria Johnson and Jennie Ann Dean, visited Mission San Luis, in Tallahassee, on Saturday, June 9.

According to the Mission San Luis website, the mission is a National Historic Landmark, and is the only reconstructed 17th century mission in the Southeast. At Mission San Luis, meticulous reconstructions of Apalachee Indian and Spanish structures re-create a community that disappeared three centuries ago. Costumed interpreters welcome groups and guide them on a visit to a place where time stands still. The skills and activities of the 17th century are demonstrated while the sights and sounds of mission life mingle with the smell of wood smoke. At Mission San Luis, the entire site is a classroom where lifelong learning and fun take place.

While there, Sunland's Hub art students enjoyed participating in a Pine Needle Basket Making Class. They learned that pine needle basketry is one of the oldest-known coiled basketry techniques, and one which many cultures have practiced. They observed the basic techniques of making coils from pine needles and stitching them together with natural fibers to make a simple basket. They especially enjoyed the scent of the pine needles used in making the basket and touring the facility.



Contributed by: Jennie Ann Dean

## Unit 1 Pirate Ship Adventure

There is an old saying, "Dream Big or Go Home." During the month of June, Unit 1's big dream became a reality. Earlier in the month, I contacted the Sea Dragon Pirate Ship Cruise company in Panama City regarding a plan to have Grant House residents go out on their ship. In a two day period, we were able to negotiate a discounted fare for 60 residents and staff. Transportation arrangements were coordinated by Ms. Tiffany LaCount who worked with Recreation, Unit 2, and Pathways who all quickly offered us use of their vans.

On June 15 our dreams became reality as we made the drive to Panama City Beach and boarded the Sea Dragon ship, a replica of a 17th century pirate ship. Despite the heavy rains encountered on our drive, as the last resident was boarding the ship the rain stopped and we set sail with clear skies. Thankfully, the weather was beautiful during the entire 1 ½ hour cruise. The residents absolutely loved the trip, as did the staff. The crew aboard the vessel was especially helpful and went out of their way to accommodate us. Everyone was thrilled that we got to see dolphins, a huge sea-going ship, many birds and other costal sights.

Afterwards, everyone enjoyed a buffet lunch at the Golden Corral restaurant. The trip was a huge success and we are hopeful to do this again next year. Thanks to so many inside and outside of Unit 1 for finding such creative and positive means to make this happen. Everyone agreed that it was so worth the effort.

Contributed by: Greg Roberts & Tiffany LaCount





The Beacon and Sunland Employee Recognition Committee are happy to announce "I See You" a fun and informal way to recognize staff and residents for random acts of kindness or good deeds. A huge thank you to Greg Roberts, Unit 1 Social Worker for the great idea!

*Greg relates "Recently, I met with a family whose mother died and they were sharing some humorous stories about her. One was when she went to the hospital and was so embarrassed about the ill fitting hospital gown. Her son told her, "Mama, that's why they call this ICU (I see you). Even with her dementia they said she "got it" and laughed all day. Well, I was thinking about that story last week and laughing to myself, when I observed Katrena Chaney, a Grant House staff walking back to Grant after going somewhere. I saw her stop to pick up some litter in the yard and throw it away. I started to tell her that I saw her take the initiative to do that deed. That's when I thought, hum, we ought to have a way to acknowledge random acts of kindness or good deeds. Perhaps something in the Beacon ...to let people tell about seeing staff or even residents who do such simple but important things to enhance lives or just to make a difference."*

We all know Sunland employees are generally, very kind people. But every now and then you see someone do something special – something out of the ordinary, something so exceptional that it makes you remember all over again what kindness is all about.

"I See You" is your opportunity to acknowledge those people – to catch that moment in time and ensure it's recognized and highlighted – an example to be shared with many. "I See You" will allow you to give a shout-out to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to another person, or the community of Sunland.

Beginning with this edition of the Beacon, staff and residents are encouraged to share the random act of kindness or good deed of someone you wish to acknowledge. Simply submit a 2-4 sentence acknowledgement with your name, the name of the staff or resident, and what they did that captured your attention. Nominations may be submitted via email, to [beth.basford@apdcare.org](mailto:beth.basford@apdcare.org), or to the Sunland Communications Office via on-center mail.

We look forward to hearing about all the good things going on at Sunland and giving some well deserved "I See You" shout-outs to our awesome staff and residents!



# Character Matters...



**Dependability** ~ Dependability is an important quality for a worker to possess because it enhances a wide variety of job performance categories. A dependable employee shows up for work on time and produces consistent work. By showing your dependability, you make it easier to establish stronger workplace relationships because your fellow employees see you as a consistent performer. Your co-workers will also work harder to complete tasks because they can see your steady work ethic as an example of how a good employee should function in the workplace. This can lead to increased productivity across your entire team. Dependability leads to responsibility. A dependable member of the workforce usually garners steadily increasing levels of responsibility within their department. Continuing to show dependability and consistency at each job level increases your value to your employer.



## DEPENDABILITY

Building trust with others by doing what you say you will do.

## JOYFULNESS

Maintaining a good attitude, even when faced with unpleasant circumstances.



**Joyfulness** ~ Joy is contagious, and being around joyful people can fill your day with positivity. Joy is an outcome of doing something that makes you happy. Joy is contagious. It has a force of energy that moves people forward with optimism. Daily joy is a necessity to live a satisfying life in which we can bring our best selves to those we lead and those we love.

**Dependability and Joyfulness - two important character traits. Let's aspire to attain them!**

# June Star Awards!



**Gold Star Team ~ William J. Rish Park  
Victor & Lisa Rowland**

Pictured L-R: James Godwin, Lisa Rowland, Victor Rowland  
& Adrian Abner



**Gold Star Team Award ~ Unit 3 Learning Center**  
Pictured L-R: Adrian Abner, Bart Harrell, Allison Jones, Zina  
Coleman, LaRhonda Barnes, Dollette Everett, Amy Nelson,  
Rima Kolanda, Gloria Jackson.

Not pictured: Belinda Kirkland & Tiffany Pollock



**Silver Star Award ~ Elizabeth See**

Pictured L-R: Heather Traylor, Elizabeth See &  
Adrian Abner



**Gold Star Award ~ Velma Tensley**

Pictured L-R: Heather Traylor, Velma  
Tensley & Adrian Abner



**Gold Star Award ~ Elaine Keen**

Pictured L-R: Heather Traylor, Elaine Keen &  
Adrian Abner



**Gold Star Award ~ Lenora Edwards**

Pictured L-R: Lucious Williams, Lenora  
Edwards & Adrian Abner



**Gold Star Award ~ Edward Perry**

**Not Pictured:**

Cathy McWaters, Quality Management; Noreather Knox, Unit 3; Gail Spears, Unit 1 - All are Gold Star Award Recipients

## Summer Sun Safety Tips

According to the CDC, the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes. Follow these recommendations to help protect yourself and your family:



### Hat

Wear a hat with a wide brim to protect your face, ears and neck.



### Sunglasses

Sunglasses protect your eyes and eyelids from UV rays and reduces the risk of cataracts.



### Sunscreen

Sunscreen protects your skin against harmful UV rays. Opt for SPF 15 or higher.



### Shade

Reduce your risk of skin damage or skin cancer by seeking shade underneath a nearby tree or umbrella.



### Clothing

Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants when possible. Tightly woven fabrics offer the best protection.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

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

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

Information regarding vacancies can be obtained at the People First website at:

<https://peoplefirst.myflorida.com>

## NEW EMPLOYEES

  
Welcome Aboard!

Peggy Baker  
Paige Pittman  
Shandrell Mount  
Chubby Virgin  
Saxon Hendrieth  
Brandi Lenderman  
Rosetta Kirkland  
JoeAnna Heidelberger  
Vicki Baxter  
Vivienne Treharne  
Belinda Blount  
Tjuana Bennett



agency for persons with disabilities  
State of Florida

## Project Sunland PRIDE



Beautification Program!

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN A DESIRABLE ENVIRONMENT

### "Community Spotlight of the Month"



#### **"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