

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

agency for persons with disabilities
State of Florida



Have you ever considered the meaning of Thanksgiving? Google the word and you're sure to find lots of definitions and commentary on the subject. For instance:

Thanks giv ing: *In North America, an annual national holiday marked by religious observances and a traditional meal including turkey. The holiday commemorates a harvest festival celebrated by the Pilgrims in 1621, and is held in the US on the fourth Thursday in November.*

Many Americans think of Thanksgiving as a wonderful opportunity to celebrate taking time from work for a long weekend, gathering with family and sharing a delicious meal with loved ones. Family gatherings often involve travel to distant locales, adding to the exciting anticipation of being with loved ones not seen in a while. Children and the young at heart often look forward to a quiet morning watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, all the while savoring an assortment of delicious aromas drifting from the kitchen while mama prepares a family feast. Then there are the football fans who are on the edges of their seats in hopes their favorite team wins a coveted bowl title. Still others see Thanksgiving as the kick off to the Christmas holiday season, scrambling to get the latest gadgets, toys or electronics at the frenzied Black Friday sales. Tradition. Runs. Deep. One thing is certain, during the Thanksgiving season, if we stop to really ponder our blessings, we will agree that we all have something we are grateful for.

We asked our Sunland family to share their favorite Thanksgiving memories and traditions. As you will learn from the variety of responses, the central theme is one of thankfulness. Clearly, we are blessed!



Thanksgiving...What it Means to Me



"God is so good to bless us with times of remembrances, to reflect on loved ones who are no longer with us but whose love is still felt through a favorite recipe. I have such fond memories of my mother cooking and the sweet smell of turkey and dressing that filled the house, and yes, the Lane Cake that was full of "the recipe" just like on the Walton's....Precious Memories, how they linger. I thank God for the short time I had with my mother." Pam Mayo, Accounting

"It reminds me to be Thankful every day for the One who gave us our greatest gift, the gift of salvation." Cindy Fitzgerald SRNS

"Thankfulness and a time of reflection and praise come to mind when I think about Thanksgiving. Individually, I take time to reflect upon the past, review the present, and look to the future during this period in our calendar year set aside to focus on family, friends, and fun. The mere source of my thankfulness lies deep within my faith. Our tradition starts off in our individual homes with family prayer and then we end up together at our family home or meeting location to enjoy one another. We then take to hold hands before indulging in a wide variety of food and express what we are thankful for and then pray for unity and wholeness. Thanksgiving reminds me of love, sharing, and caring because we take time to remember those who are less fortunate and serve as a blessing to them also. My fondest memory is of the night before Thanksgiving staying up to assist my Grandmother in preparing everything. This has served me well because as a result, I have learned her recipes and the history of our traditions." Adrian Abner, Unit 1 POA

"This Thanksgiving was so very extra special to me. It was a huge blessing to watch our FUEL team actually give a complete Thanksgiving dinner PLUS as they presented two needy families with boxes of food. It was overwhelming to see the joy on their faces as they gave the gift of food with love. It was an experience I will never forget." Ruthie Moore, Chaplain

"This Thanksgiving was the first Thanksgiving without my mom, who passed away in December of 2015 at the age of 89. A few years before she passed away I had gotten her to write down the recipes for her dressing and pecan pie. So I made her dressing and pecan pies this year for our family's Thanksgiving as a little way to still have Mom with us. And while they were certainly good, I'll be the first to admit they'll never be quite as good as what Mom made." Clint Cox, Recreation Director

"I am thankful to have spent this Thanksgiving with my family and my 13-month old Granddaughter, Maybry Olive Burseson." #BEST THANKSGIVING EVER! Allen Ward, Maintenance

"I am thankful for the health of my family and the possibility of retirement in my near future!" Roger Cosson, Maintenance

"I am thankful for this Thanksgiving that I spent with my family and the Thanksgiving feast I had with my co-workers in Maintenance!" Lori Baggett, Maintenance

"I am thankful to have spent this Thanksgiving with 2 of my 4 Grandchildren in Jacksonville, FL." Janet O'Pry

"Happiness is being at peace, being with loved ones, being grateful....but most of all, it's having those loved ones and the memories of those who remain with us in our hearts. Be thankful every season of the year, be gracious in our attitudes towards others, we never know, we may be the only Bible someone reads." Shellie Owens, Quality Management





Special Olympics Fall Classic Florida



The Sunland Sonics softball team traveled to Kissimmee November 10-13, to take part in the Special Olympics Florida Fall Classic. Congratulations to the Sonics who earned a Bronze medal at the competition. The Sonics fought hard through two very close games, falling 17-14 to the Miami Magic; in game two it was even closer as we were just nipped 9-8 by Pinellas County. In both games we had the tying run either on the bases or at the plate in our last at bat. Sunland and Jackson County can be proud of how the Sonics softball team battled hard and never quit. They represented Sunland and Jackson County well. We had great weather, great fellowship and had safe travels.

Also note that the Inspirational Athlete and Coach award for Jackson County went to Anthony Peterson and Mary Herring. They were recognized for their accomplishments on Saturday night during the closing ceremonies. Anthony, one of our community players, has not missed a game or practice in our three team sports in more than 3 years. He always has a great attitude and is a pleasure to coach. As the Sunland Nurse, Mary has been traveling with Special Olympics for a number of years now. But she is much more than just a nurse. She cheers us on at all the events, helps out with the residents when needed, encourages the residents and goes the extra mile to make sure they know they are truly special. She is without question a valuable member of our team. Please join us in congratulating Mary and Anthony on receiving these well deserved awards at the 2017 Fall Classic.



Kneeling (Left to Right) Jonathan R. , Roosevelt E., Jesse D. John B.
Standing: Tony P., Jeffery E., Eddie M., Francoise P., James R., Charles V.S., Robert H.



Inspirational Athlete & Coach Award
L-R: Mary Herring, Coach
Tony Peterson, Athlete

Article & Photo Contributed by: Clint Cox

2016 Peanut Festival Fun



Each November Sunland residents gear up to go to the National Peanut Festival in Dothan, Alabama. This is an exciting time of year for Sunland as everyone looks forward to gobbling up their favorite festival foods, exploring the fairgrounds for exciting rides and fun filled games!





Mingle & Jingle with Friends of Sunland!

Tis the Season to Mingle & Jingle! On the evening of Thursday, November 10, Friends of Sunland, Inc., sponsored "Mingle & Jingle" a holiday craft boutique at the Culinary Mixer. The event offered unique, one of a kind, original handmade gifts displaying the work of local artists and artisans. Guests were welcomed into an inviting warm and festive atmosphere.

Traditional holiday music and the enticing aroma of warm wassail and homemade teacakes beckoned guests as they mingled during the gathering. Event organizers and supporters were thrilled with the turnout from staff and many individuals from the local community.



Article & Photos contributed by: Jennie Ann Dean

Maintenance Department

WHEN DUTY CALLS!

On any given day, the hard working staff of the Maintenance Department are seen throughout the campus of Sunland tending to all sorts of maintenance needs.

It is not uncommon to catch a glimpse of Allen Ward, Director of Operations and Maintenance, rolling up his sleeves and pitching in to assist when and wherever needs arise. He recently took to the back hoe to help clean up debris following an early Fall storm.

Hats off to Allen Ward and the staff of the Maintenance Department for all you do to take good care of the Sunland campus!



Veteran's Day Parade

The Sunland Swingers were honored to participate in Marianna's 12th Annual Veteran's Day Parade on November 10. The group, accompanied by Donna Conrad, Recreation Therapy Aide II, enjoyed the ride through downtown Marianna and greeting those lined up along the parade route.



SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

SUNLAND COMMUNITY GAINS COVETED SPOT AT THE AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES STATE OF THE STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES CENTERS

Director Palmer together with the state office Executive Management Team hosted leadership from the Developmental Disabilities Centers (DDCs) in Tallahassee, Florida on November 17th and 18th. DDC staff commented that conversations were richly influenced and thoughtfully impacted by the director, Deputy Director Rankin, Deputy Director Dobbs, Chief of Staff Hagan and other state office participants.

It is widely known that adults with I/DD are living longer, healthier, more meaningful lives in communities where preventative care, acute care, and chronic care situations are managed within the construct of an informed multidisciplinary team complemented by active engagement with parents, guardians and people who provide purposeful life connections (i.e., neighbor, sponsor, advocate, church family). Much appreciation to the state office team for creating space and time to further this conversation.

Sunland Health Care Division Professionals seized the helm to educate on the I/DD population, aging process and implications on health care and health care needs. Executive Nursing Director Michele Pettis and Health Care Practitioner Sandra Helms presented on the unique health challenges adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities face day to day and how multidisciplinary teams work together to manage health care needs.

Michele Pettis articulately and gracefully covered the following areas:

- Data reflecting close approximation between life expectancy for persons with I/DD and that of the general population;
- Provisions of nursing care for persons with I/DD and age related complexities; and
- The need to develop additional skillsets for direct service caregivers.

The Case of Rose sensitively, confidently and passionately presented by Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Sandra Helms unpacked in an understandable way Geroscience and the biology of aging. Explaining the life of Rose in increments of decades, she spotlighted relationships between aging, aging with I/DD, age related diseases, and the impact of pharmaceuticals. After responding to questions, she summarized her presentation by applauding staff at Sunland and Tacachale for diligent and conscientious work; noting that "our desire is to catch up in the health span with additional resources to continue preventative work and compress the spread of decline for folks with I/DD." Final words to state office staff: "Thanks for the opportunity to make this presentation. It was a pleasure."

Both presentations by Sunland Health Care Division Professionals Pettis and Helms were well received and applauded. As shared there is no question that this population of individuals like others pose unique medical challenges. That being said, we are extremely grateful to have these talented professionals leading the charge in their areas of responsibility for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities in the Sunland Community.

Grateful,

Geri Williams
Superintendent



F.U.E.L Presents Thanksgiving Baskets

On Tuesday, November 22nd, several residents who participate in Sunland's "Faith Used in Everyday Living" (FUEL) program, along with Chaplain Ruthie Moore and Clint Cox, took time to reach out to families in the local community to present them with bountiful Thanksgiving baskets. This was a very rewarding outreach effort to give back to the community and bless others with an outpouring of love and compassion. Michele B. spoke on behalf of FUEL, communicating their desire to give back and bless others.

Chaplain Ruthie expressed her appreciation to Sunland, stating *"The FUEL team would like to thank everyone for their participation. You have made it possible for some families to have a good Thanksgiving dinner! And you have made our FUEL team so proud and thankful. We appreciate all of you."*



Jackson County School at Sunland

Things we are thankful for this month of Thanksgiving. The school has been blessed with the opportunity to work with a great organization here at Sunland. The wonderful employees working collaboratively with us to provide a meaningful life for our residents. We should all slow down and be thankful for even the small things in our daily lives. Too often we only recognize the special occasions and big events that come our way. As we look around, if we really take the time to see our surroundings, the small things we often take for granted such as health, family and friends, our jobs and the opportunity to serve the wonderful residents of Sunland are all blessings. All of us here at the school say: Slow down, look around and count your blessings!

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas as we transition from Thanksgiving to Christmas holidays. Take time to drop by and visit us at the Jackson County School program for holiday smiles and cheer!

Have a wonderful holiday season!



Pictured: Kevin Husted, Wilma Johnson, April Goodwin, Connie S. & Jennifer Grantham

Unit 2 on the Move...

"He who thanks but with the lips, thanks but in part; the full, the true Thanksgiving comes from the heart." – J.A. Shedd

On Tuesday, November 22 the men of East Truman gathered for their Thanksgiving meal with guests from Pierce, Buchannan, and Woodridge. The weeks prior were spent running around preparing the fall atmosphere to make this a special event. With a carefully planned menu of succulent carved turkey with a savory giblet gravy, glazed ham, homemade cornbread dressing, cranberry sauce, green bean casserole, field peas with snaps and okra, and homemade macaroni and cheese where could you go wrong?

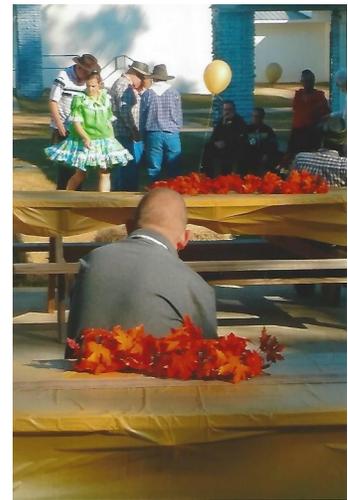
A few of our men who participate in the Culinary Art Department volunteered to bake desserts for everyone to enjoy. A special thank you to Wayne Winkle for assisting Charles V., Bennie R., Steven G., Dwayne B., and Jacob H. with their delicious creations. Bennie R. gave our blessing over the food, and Eddie M. shared his thoughts about celebrating the Thanksgiving holiday. Let us not forget to thank Mr. Williams for stopping by to help celebrate, and to serve our men and their guests. Again thanks to everyone who participated and helped make this event possible for our guys!



Article & Photos Contributed by: Alice Bandele, Unit 2

Unit 2 on the Move...

The staff of Whispering Oaks went above and beyond to provide a special “Western Day” event on November 18 for the men they serve. The event, complete with western gear, square dancing demonstrations, DJ music, and a delicious meal, was a real crowd pleaser. Special thanks to: Donna Conrad, Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Gibbs, Sunland Swingers Square Dance Team, Gym staff: Sabrina, Matt, Johnny and Bowen; Ranch Staff: Glenda and Tyler; Whispering Oaks Staff: Sue, Olly, Allyson, Pam, Tammi, Quay, Barbara, Jasma, Kendrick, Freddie, Shawn, Vickie and Marquell; Unit 2 Staff: Tammy B., Derit, Destiny, Andre, Marylin, Shenise, Kit and Phil, and DJ Diamond-D.



Article & Photos Contributed by: Jasma Black, Unit 2

What's Happening in Unit 3

Unit 3 had a blast at the National Peanut Festival in Dothan, Alabama. Residents and staff from Westside enjoyed the evening trip with CSS on November 8. The next day, residents and staff from all four houses within Unit 3 attended Special Citizen's Day. We all had a great time while enjoying the festivities, music, food, and fellowship!

Of course, we cannot forget why we all look forward for the month of November to come around every year! It is hard to believe that it is that time of year when we give thanks for what we have, and who we have in our lives. Unit 3's staff came together and put on a wonderful and outstanding Thanksgiving dinner on Tuesday, November 22. We were definitely thankful for the dishes that were contributed because they truly made the dinner a success.

On behalf of Unit 3, we hope you all enjoyed a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving!!



Article & Photos Contributed by: Allison Jones, Unit 3

Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

On November 2nd residents of DDDP who are registered voters were able to “head to the polls” to cast their votes in the 2016 election. Residents were given the opportunity to fill out absentee ballots which were then mailed to the Gadsden County Supervisor of Elections office. Afterward, they all enjoyed light refreshments. Much thanks to Latina Germany Godfrey for organizing this event, including securing the wonderful food and decorations.

DDDP has recently enjoyed several visits from the Tallahassee Memorial Hospital Animal Therapy Program. Residents were able to spend time with one of the “Comfort Pets” and learn all about the Animal Therapy Program and the various breeds of animals utilized. Much thanks to Stacy Gibson and Florida State Hospital Volunteer Services for assisting in securing these visits for our residents.



Article & Photos Contributed by: Corey Chafin



Star Employees

Stephanie Parker, CSS Print Shop

Michelle Williams, Unit 2 Thiel Center

HUMAN RESOURCES ANNOUNCEMENT

Please be reminded the People First recruitment site and Performance & Talent Management system- Application Profiles will NOT transfer.

We are just a couple of months away from the launch (January 2017) of the new People First recruitment site and Performance & Talent Management system.

Please note that ALL APPLICANT PROFILES that are currently in the People First job application site will not be transferred over to the new system.

Question ~ *What does this mean for staff?*

Answer ~ *Staff will need to go into the People First job application system and download/save their resumes, applications, or any other hiring documentation they may have saved within the system. As of January 7, these documents will no longer be available.*

For further information, please feel free to contact the HR Department at 482-9230 or *04.



Secure Your Financial Future!

Please join us for a savings seminar hosted by the
Florida Deferred Compensation Plan

Friday December 2, 2016

Sunland Auditorium

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Guest Speaker:

Taylor Corry

Communications Director

The Florida Deferred Compensation Plan

HUMAN RESOURCES

Amanda Johnson, HR Manager and her staff, Veronica Mullinax, Lizzie Holland, Nicole Sims and Regina Decker 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

Robbie Finch
Heather Polihronakis
Shelby Morris
Shitay Williams
Joseph Basford
Nanola Reigster
Regina Ervin
Regina Decker
Lisa Wilson
Antoinette Hunter
Floyd Johnson
Nicole Sims



agency for persons with disabilities
State of Florida

Project Sunland PRIDE



Beautification Program!

PERSONAL **R**ESPONSIBILITY **I**N A **D**ESIRABLE **E**NVIRONMENT

"Community Spotlight of the Month"

Sunland Front Entrance



"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