



As we celebrate Independence Day and begin commemorating America's 250th birthday, we have an opportunity to reflect on our nation's history and the values of service, freedom, and opportunity that continue to unite us. I would also like to thank Governor Ron DeSantis for recognizing the hard work and dedication of Florida's state employees by providing two additional days off this year. His leadership and continued support of public servants are greatly appreciated. Thank you for all you do to support individuals with disabilities and their families. I hope you have a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July and take time to celebrate with family and friends. – Director Bob Asztalos

APD's Karen Hagan Honored for Excellence in Emergency Management

APD Emergency Coordination Officer Karen Hagan was recently honored with the Excellence in Emergency Management Award at Florida's Training for Emergency Management Symposium. This recognition highlights Karen's exceptional leadership, dedication, and commitment to strengthening emergency preparedness efforts across the state. Through her work, Karen helps ensure APD is ready to support individuals with disabilities before, during, and after emergencies. We are proud to celebrate this well-deserved achievement and grateful for the impact she continues to make for the people of Florida.



Observances

- ADA Anniversary – July 26th

HELP EXPAND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH THE UNIQUE ABILITIES PARTNER PROGRAM



The Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program (UAPP) recognizes businesses, organizations, and public entities that support employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. As APD advances Florida's Employment First Initiative, we encourage organizations to explore becoming a partner. Many employers already qualify through existing hiring practices, workforce initiatives, or community partnerships. To learn more about the program and its benefits, visit apd.myflorida.com/unique/.

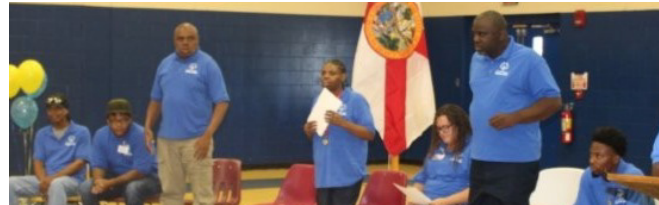
Pathways to Opportunity



Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida was recently presented with a UAPP certificate in recognition of its commitment to creating employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. During the visit, APD representatives toured Goodwill's existing programs and learned more about plans for a new, significantly larger facility that is expected to break ground in the coming weeks. The expansion reflects Goodwill's continued investment in serving and empowering individuals with disabilities throughout Southwest Florida.

RESIDENTS SHINE AT THE 2026 SUMMER STATE GAMES

After a spirited sendoff from staff, residents from Sunland Center traveled to the 2026 Special Olympics Florida Summer State Games, where they joined athletes from across the state for a weekend of competition, camaraderie, and achievement. Competing in a variety of events, Sunland's athletes demonstrated determination, sportsmanship, and teamwork, earning an impressive collection of accomplishments along the way. Their enthusiasm, perseverance, and team spirit were on full display throughout the games, making it a memorable experience for everyone involved.



APD Made Simple: More Videos Now Available

The APD Made Simple video series continues to grow, providing individuals, families, providers, and stakeholders with easy-to-understand information about APD programs and services. Since launching the series, we have added several new videos covering important topics designed to help viewers better navigate APD resources and processes. If you haven't checked out the series lately, visit our video library to explore the latest additions and learn more about the services and supports available through APD: <https://apd.myflorida.com/resources/videos.htm>.



SUNLAND CENTER CELEBRATES RESIDENT APPRECIATION DAY

Sunland Center recently celebrated its annual Resident Appreciation Day, recognizing residents who participate in the Vocational Work Program for their hard work, dedication, and valuable contributions throughout the year. During the event, participants were honored with certificates celebrating their achievements and commitment. APD is proud to recognize these residents and the positive impact they make every day.



REGISTRATION OPEN FOR THE 2026 PREVENTION CONVENTION



Professionals, advocates, and community partners are invited to attend the 2026 Prevention Convention, Florida's premier conference focused on strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect. Scheduled for August 20–21 in Orlando, the conference will feature sessions on topics including home visiting, fatherhood engagement, safe infant sleep, reducing stigma, and other strategies that support healthy families and communities. Learn more and register at preventchildabusefl.org/2026pcon.

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