

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

agency for persons with disabilities
State of Florida



NIGHT *to Shine*

SPONSORED BY THE **TIM TEBOW**
FOUNDATION™

"The most emotional part of the night for me was traveling to 5 proms in 2 countries and seeing that they all had one thing in common, Love... this is so much more than a prom, it is a time to celebrate people, to celebrate life and to tell each King & Queen that they have great purpose and value. I am blown away by the magnitude of Night to Shine 2017 and the way that God has truly blessed this worldwide movement!" - Tim Tebow

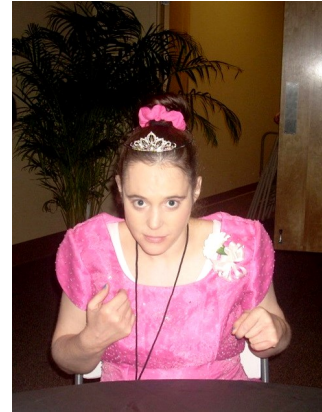
The Tim Tebow Foundation's vision is to provide an extraordinary prom night experience, centered on God's love, for people with special needs, ages 16 and older.

Night to Shine is:

- A worldwide movement.
- Changing Valentine's Day weekend from simply a celebration of love, to a celebration of God's love for people with special needs.
- An unforgettable prom night experience.
- A celebration of the value of life.
- A night when all guests are kings and queens of the prom.

Night to Shine provides a red carpet entrance complete with a friendly welcome from paparazzi, limousine rides, hair and makeup stations, shoe shining areas and, of course, a dance floor. For Sunland, this has become the event of the year; an evening that is truly a night to remember. A special thanks to the Tim Tebow Foundation for a wonderful evening and all the Sunland staff who worked diligently to make this a special event for our residents!







SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Team,

A few days ago I was talking with my friend Tapy about the latest text she sent me to share with you on team building. BJ Gallagher's *The Power of Positive Doing: Getting Good at Getting Results* made the trip to Sunland via carrier in mid-February. As usual, I read the text first, then we talked about it. We had a rich spirited conversation about the book and how it fits very nicely into the context of our theme: The Year of Building. Each of you enthusiastically presented complete themes (i.e., Building Connections, Building Exceptional Leaders) earlier in the year. Tapy shared an abiding sense of appreciation for the professional growth opportunities leaders at Sunland, DDDP, and Rish Park have created for our team members.

As conversations go, we evolved from the collective team to what more can we do for individual team members. Then she said this: "I read somewhere – don't ask me where - about work being the journey of the heart and that's exactly what you all do." I thanked her for those kind words and assured her I would share them with each of you.

After my discussion with Tapy, I re-read Peter Matthiessen's *The Snow Leopard*. You may be wondering, "Why that particular book?" Well, it was also about an individual's personal journey in a different time, space, and place. It reminded me that no matter where we are in the world as we search for individual meaning, when we make that important connection we're better for all of humanity.

Thank you for continuing to create great learning communities in your respective work places. We know that the true benefit will be not just to the individuals we are privileged to work with but also our team as a whole.

Farewell February! Welcome March!

Grateful,
Geri Williams
Superintendent



Rish Park Sign Unveiling

On Friday, February 24, Rish Park hosted a sign unveiling ceremony to showcase its new entrance sign. On hand for the event were APD staff, family members of the late State Representative Billy Joe Rish, and others from the Fish and Wildlife Commission, Florida Forest Service, and the Gulf County government and business communities. The event began in the main lodge with James Godwin, Director of Centralized Support Services welcoming those in attendance. Victor Rowland, Park Manager addressed the crowd, thanking everyone for their support and discussed ongoing renovations at the facility. Jay Rish, son of Billy Joe Rish, shared sentiments about his father's legacy and the vision he had when the park was established. He thanked the staff of APD for their commitment to the ongoing improvements at the park. APD Communications Director Melanie Efters also spoke of the innovative vision Representative Rish had for the park and the agency's ongoing commitment to his vision.



Following opening remarks, everyone gathered outdoors for the sign unveiling at the entrance of the park, which was met with much enthusiasm and applause. The new sign, courtesy of the Florida Forest Service, adds to the beauty of the facility. Park Manager Victor Rowland thanked guests for their attendance and invited everyone to a delicious low country boil lunch. Students from Sunland's Culinary Arts Program served as wait staff for the event. Following lunch, guests were invited on a tour of the facility, to include the new bayside improvements. Congratulations to Rish Park for hosting a beautiful event!



Residential Services



Unit 1 ~ Valentine's Day is a special day observed not only by sweethearts, but also with the family and friends we love. Unit 1's Donald S. received a very special valentine on Valentine's Day... a visit from his mother. By the smiles on their faces, you can see that's true love!

Unit 2 ~ The Optimist Club of Jackson County, sponsored a Valentine Party for the ladies of Unit 2's Woodridge House. Everyone certainly enjoyed the delicious refreshments and goodie bags prepared by the club.



Unit 1 Celebrates Staff Birthdays!

- Roderick Gainer..... Feb. 3
- Cheryl Sheffield..... Feb. 5
- Tiffany Brown..... Feb. 10
- Gloria Roulhac.....Feb. 21
- Mikel Patterson.....Feb. 24
- Jennifer Long.....Feb 25

Contributed by: Renee Perry, Unit 1 & Lawanda Calhoun, Unit 2

Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

Farewell and good luck!!

After many years of dedicated service, Mike Baugher, RNS and Charlotte Cowherd, SLPN have dashed off into the sunset to the land of retirement. We are grateful for their time served and wish them the best in the next phase of their lives. Congratulations, you will be missed by Team DDDP Nursing!



Contributed by: Richard Cook, DDDP Executive Nursing Director



Jackson County School at Sunland



Congratulations to JCS Teacher of the month Ms. Wanda Tidwell & JCS Employee of the month Mr. Emmitt Gaines!

Ms. Wanda Tidwell has been selected as the February Teacher of the Month for the Jackson County School program. Ms. Tidwell also retires this month. She will be missed here at the school by fellow staff and students alike. Teachers impact students' lives long term. We can all think back and recall the positive or perhaps the negative affect a teacher had on our lives. Most of us remember some of both. Those positive impacts are precious to us and proof again that teachers help shape the people we are. Mrs. Wanda Tidwell has been one of those teachers that just loved and cared for every student she taught. Her compassion and heartfelt humanity touched so many. We wish her well and hope she receives as much love in retirement as she has given while teaching.

Mr. Emmit Gaines has been selected as the Paraprofessional of the Month for the Jackson County School Program. Mr. Gaines has served with the JCS Program since the mid-1990's. He has proven to be a solid employee and brings many strengths to the JCS Program. Mr. Gaines is a retired Army veteran, a dedicated employee and friend to all. He has been cited as being "a wonderful man" which speaks highly of his character.



Contributed by: Tim Baggett, JCS Administrator

Sunland Service Awards

The Sunland Employee Recognition Committee hosted the center's semi-annual Service Awards Ceremony, Wednesday, February 1, at Sunland's Culinary Mixer. Staff having attained 5 - 35 years of service with the State of Florida were honored at this event. Honorees received an engraved award, certificate, service pin and letter of commendation from Superintendent Geri Williams. Following the presentation of awards, honorees and guests were treated to a delicious assortment of refreshments served by the culinary program students. Congratulations to the following employees on their career milestones.

5 Years of Service: Ebonilena Long-Battle, Zakaya Card, Lee Cranford, Tracy Curry, Leila Dahlhoff, Walter Holloman, Cheryl Jones, Andre Watson, Janice Baker-Williams

10 Years of Service: Joseph Amison, Bernard Barkley, Steven Barwick, Keith Bryant, Lawanda Calhoun, Brenda Earl Dawson, Joe Girmsley III, Johnny Hodges, Lawonda Holden, Ronnie Loray, Janet O'Pry, Luther Rule, Cheryl Sheffield, Natalie Spires, Demetra Williams, Ericka Williams

15 Years of Service: Barbara Barnes, Gaylatia Clower, Stacy Collins, James Conrad II, Boris Granberry, Clarence Holden, Jr., Stacy Croft-Holden, Jimmy Jones, Latonya Libert, Deronada Robinson, Gerelean Williams

20 Years of Service: Zena Cranford, Ruth Moore, Sylvester Simpson, Sheila Spencer, Tammy Sylvester-Beavers

25 Years of Service: Lenora Edwards, Carolyn Frazier, Annie Sue Saunders, Gail S. Snelgrove

30 Years of Service: Darlene Boykin, William Harris, Pamela Mayo, Annette Odom, Etta Speights, Richard Turnage

35 Years of Service: Ruth Brooks, Will Bryant, Susie Neel

Congratulations Honorees!

Sunland Service Awards Ceremony



5 Year Employees



10 Year Employees



15 Year Employees



20 Year Employees



25 Year Employees



30 Year Employees



35 Year Employees

Congratulations February Olympic Medal Star Award Winners!



Gold Medal Star Award: Unit 3 Team LaRhonda Barnes, Angelia Goldwire, Heather Polihronakis, Belinda Kirkland, Darlene Boykin, Tony Speights, Raquel Dunston, Tiffany Pollock, Tyler Weeks, Elizabeth Mitchell, Allison Jones, Terrence Ellis, Jenethal Reed, Tex Pittman, Rima Kalonda, Kelvin Lawson, Dolllete Everett, Lemuel Driskell, Doris Long, Tynetta Gainer, Nelson Myrick, Licia Sherrod, Faye Johnson, Geraldine Messer, Shelby Morris, Felicia Varner, Alice Jennings, Sha'Quanna Williams, Chandra Hart, Eva Ferguson, Cheryl Jones, Shantel Barkley

Gold Medal Star Award: Unit 3 Connally Manor Joe Grimsley

Gold Medal Star Award: Unit 3 Administration Faye Johnson

Gold Medal Star Award: Unit 3 Westside Felicia Varner

Gold Medal Star Award: CSS/Rish Park Team Terry Franklin & John Simpson

Gold Medal Star Award: CSS/Recreation Clint Cox

Silver Medal Star Award: Unit 3 Westside Sarah Johnson

Bronze Medal Star Award: Unit 3 Westside Cody Coley

Bronze Medal Star Award: Unit 3 East Washington Angela Schneckloth

Sunland Center Olympic Medal Star Awards



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

BEING A GOOD ONLINE CITIZEN

We all want to live in a safer world. We trust that our government is keeping us safe from those who would harm us, both locally and nationally. Many participate in community organizations and neighborhood watch programs to help keep the communities in which we live safer. We report suspicious behavior when we see it and teach our children the fundamental things like not interacting with strangers. We try to treat people the way we would like to be treated.

When it comes to cyber security, it is important to remember that the online community is just that...a community. And we are all citizens of that community. With that in mind, STOP. THINK. CONNECT.™ lists some things we should keep in mind if we are to be good online citizens.

- Safer for me, more secure for all: What you do online has the potential to affect everyone – at home, at work and around the world. Practicing good online habits benefits the global digital community.
- Post only about others as you have them post about you. The Golden Rule applies online as well.
- Help the authorities fight cybercrime: Report stolen finances or identities and other cybercrime to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (www.ic3.gov) and to your local law enforcement or state attorney general as appropriate.

STOP. THINK. CONNECT.™ is the global online safety awareness campaign to help all digital citizens stay safer and more secure online. For more information, visit www.stopthinkconnect.org

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>



NEW EMPLOYEES



Noreather Knox

Jeanne Giles

Aneesha Taylor

Sherry McClain

Daniel Price

Austin Anderson

Sheridan Dryden

Malcolm Pryor

Alesia Holland



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"

Rish Park



"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; 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