

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

agency for persons with disabilities  
State of Florida



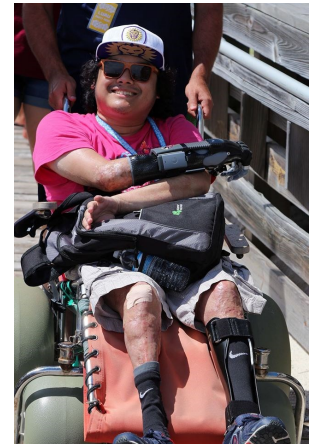
During the month of July, the atmosphere at Rish Park was transformed into a magical hub of excitement filled with fellowship and laughter as campers and staff with "Camp Amigo" settled in for a week long camp. This unique camp, sponsored by the Children's Burn Camp of North Florida, is in its sixteenth year of operation. Children from across the State of Florida, ages 6 to 18 who have survived burns which resulted in hospitalization, are eligible to attend. Camp Amigo exists to provide kids who have physical and emotional scars a place to be themselves and build a network of support that will last throughout their lives. The camp is fully funded by private donations and the campers stay free of charge.

Camp organizers have chosen Rish Park as their host site for many years. Rusty Roberts, a twenty-seven year veteran with the Tallahassee Fire Department is the Camp Coordinator. Discussing the origins of the camp, he noted *"the nucleus that started the group was the Tallahassee Fire Department, and now includes firefighters and volunteers from all across the state to include Escambia County, Panama City Beach, Gainesville, Jacksonville, Marion County, Orlando, Orange County, Punta Gorda, Boca Raton, Brevard County and other communities. Volunteer firefighters, nurses, physical therapists and others organize camp activities. Many of the camp counselors were previous campers who attended the camp as children and have now returned to give back and serve others. Accessibility and new upgrades at the facility make the park an ideal environment for this camp."* Mr. Roberts and his team are thrilled about the park's renovation. He goes on to say *"everything at Rish Park is user friendly ... they've got a fantastic kitchen that was remodeled a few years ago and the new walkway to the Bay is incredible...we want to thank the State Legislature for funding these things, that's huge."* When asked about the future of Camp Amigo, Mr. Roberts readily admits he has a lot of hopes and dreams for Camp Amigo and says *"I feel I have been very blessed to be able to do this."*

The many exciting and therapeutic opportunities afforded to these children is truly reflective of Camp Amigo's logo *"helping heal their burns from the inside."* One step inside the camp and you witness it in the twinkle in their eyes and the joy of their laughter. And forever, your heart is changed. *Congratulations to another successful year Camp Amigo, where kids are having fun...again!*



# Camp Amigo In Action!



Photos Courtesy of Paul & Debbie Goulding / Real Florida Magazine



# Spotlights Rish Park

Real Florida Magazine, a subsidiary of The Goulding Agency in Chipley, Florida recently featured a segment dedicated to APD's Rish Park. Sunland Superintendent Geri Williams, James Godwin, Jennie Ann Dean and Beth Basford, along with APD officials Melanie Eppers, Dr. JR Harding and John Milton were on hand for the filming at the park. They also enjoyed participating in the exciting activities taking place during Camp Amigo.

Highlighted in the interviews were Mrs. Carol Rish, widow of former State Representative The Honorable William J. Rish, and her son Jay Rish. The Rish family is proud of the heritage established by Mr. Rish, a longtime advocate for accessibility and individuals with disabilities. During his service as a Florida Legislator, Representative Rish was responsible in large part for the development of the 98 acre park located on Cape San Blas in Port St. Joe, Florida. Sunland and APD applaud the vision of Representative Rish and his family.

Interviews with Park Manager, Victor Rowland and Rusty Roberts, Founder and coordinator of Camp Amigo provided a lot of insight into day-to-day activities and experiences campers enjoy. Mr. Rowland provided a great overview of Rish Park, the amenities the facility offers and thoughts about future opportunities to improve services. Mr. Roberts, a huge supporter of Rish Park, spoke about the history of Camp Amigo, to include the mission and purpose of the week-long event and the tremendous impact it has on the children who participate in the camp. Additional interviews took place with Dr. JR Harding, Melanie Eppers and Superintendent Geri Williams.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities appreciates our friends of Rish Park, Real Florida Magazine for their support to increase public awareness of the wonderful barrier-free opportunities Rish Park affords for individuals with disabilities.

To view all of the video clips, photos and interviews please visit [www.RealFloridaMagazine.org](http://www.RealFloridaMagazine.org)



Superintendent Geri Williams with Jay Rish and Carol Rish

Photo Courtesy of Paul & Debbie Goulding / Real Florida Magazine



## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

*“Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.”*

*~ William James*

### **Happy July!**

For the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, this is the beginning of the Fiscal Year. So, I could say Happy New Year!

One of the things I love about a new year is the opportunity to look back, reflect and plan ahead. Thankful for closing out this Fiscal Year with numerous trainings from both internal and external sources; and creating great spaces to advance communication.

You may be wondering what conversations we are having as a team?

Lots of talks about training. We are investing greatly in training our employees – new and experienced. It is absolutely essential in the growth process for Sunland/DDDP.

Most experts in human resources affirm:

*Training is an excellent opportunity to expand both the knowledge base and skills of all employees. However for many organizations, the cost of training and professional development can be quite expensive. Another reason why many employers cut down on training opportunities for their employees is that attending training sessions can delay the completion of projects due to workers needing to take time out in order to attend. However, despite the potential drawbacks, training and development is able to provide both individual employees and the organization as a whole with benefits that can make the time and money spent a worthwhile investment.*

I concur that there may be barriers to attaining training objectives, but it is important to keep moving forward. That being said, we are creatively channeling the works of others by way of reading materials, engaging volunteer training facilitators, and tapping into the expertise of our own staff. We are determined to continue the year of training by spotlighting lived knowledge and demonstrating what is learned in the workplace. The greatest benefit will be to the people we are privileged to serve. Thankful for committed staff who desire to grow professionally.

Grateful for a celebratory year of making a difference with the wonderful staff who daily enter and exit Sunland, DDDP, and Rish Park. Thanks to all staff whose hands fertilize our work space with generosity, kindness, and thoughtfulness.

Grateful,

*Geri Williams*  
Superintendent





# Sunland Sunfest 2016



At Sunland, Summertime Means It's Sunfest Time! For the past several years, the Summer Recreation Program has included the much enjoyed "Sunfest" program. Sunfest is a music and dance show put on by the individuals that live at Sunland. Individuals sign up to sing along with or dance to their favorite music selection.

When it first started about four years ago, a Sunfest program would have about 10-12 acts in the program. Sunfest has grown in popularity and this year's program included over 25 music and dance acts.

The first Sunfest for 2016 was held on June 29<sup>th</sup> and a capacity crowd was on hand at the auditorium. The final Sunfest for 2016 was held on July 28<sup>th</sup> and it also included a musical act by the summer workers that was to the delight of another capacity crowd.

Thanks to all who had a hand in putting on the show. But most of all thanks to all the talented individuals living at Sunland who got up on stage and showed how much they love to sing and dance. Until next summer, keep on Sunfesting!



Articles & Photos Contributed by: Clint Cox

# nfest 2016





# Summer Sports

The heat that accompanies summer often encourages people to move inside to cool off. The gymnasium at Sunland is a popular spot for residents looking to hang out, shoot some basketball and enjoy fellowship with one another. In addition to shooting basketball, other indoor activities at the gym include but are not limited to volleyball, walking, badminton, indoor bowling, ring toss, bean bag toss (Cornhole/Baggo) and listening to music. And just outside the Sunland gym is another favorite spot to beat the heat, the Sunland swimming pool. In addition to leisurely relaxing in the pool on floats and noodles, fun things such as water basketball and frisbee are available for those that desire a little more excitement. And of course, swimming laps is one of the best exercise routines around.

While the gym and pool are cool places to hang out and have fun things to do, basketball is still the hot attraction! This summer the Recreation Department has a four team league that plays every Wednesday afternoon. Four "coaches" were selected from the Sunland Recreation Department as well as the Pathways Rehabilitation Therapy Department. Those four coaches "drafted" their teams from a list of residents who expressed a desire to be part of the summer basketball league. Each team will play a total of nine games with the winning team having bragging rights until next summer. Almost 50 residents are involved in this year's summer basketball league.

According to Clint Cox, Recreation Director, the gym is a popular hangout for the many different activities offered. "We have a number of folks who come to the gym for various activities, but without question basketball and swimming are the top two things to do at the gym. And some folks will play basketball and then go cool off in the pool. What better way to enjoy the hot days of summer," Cox said. But Cox also wanted to remind folks of other summer time activities such as arts and crafts (at the Geslein Habile Building), fun and games at the Kennedy Leisure Center, and special programs like the Sunfest (music and dance show). Pictured below, Calvin B. tries to block a shot by Jesse D. during a summer basketball league game.

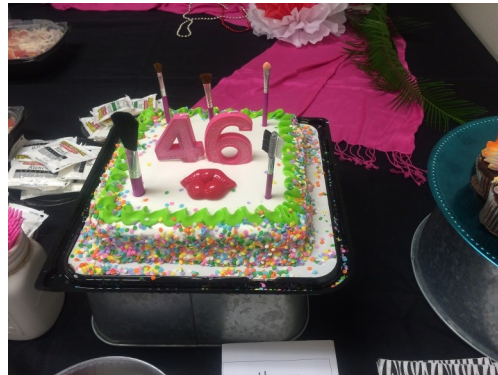


Contributed by: Clint Cox; Photo courtesy of Jackson County Floridan

# Woodridge Ladies Host Surprise Birthday Party!

The ladies of Woodridge House recently hosted a surprise birthday party in honor of house supervisor Lawanda Calhoun. Much love and weeks of planning went into this special event for the guest of honor, a special lady that they sincerely appreciate and hold in high regard.

Ms. Calhoun had to wipe back tears when she entered the room and saw the beautiful decorations the ladies made in honor of her birthday. Calhoun stated, "When I walked in and saw what they had done, I was overwhelmed." The room was decorated in a "cosmetic-makeup" theme, complete with cupcakes and a delicious birthday cake. The ladies sang "Happy Birthday" to Ms. Calhoun and thanked her for all that she does for them every day. Everyone enjoyed pizza, salad and desserts, but most of all, sharing this special surprise with the lady of the hour!



Article/Photos Contributed by: Ladies of Woodridge



# Habitat for Humanity

Congratulations to Lee Cranford, Sunland Recreation Specialist on his new home located in Greenwood! Mr. Cranford and his family were the recipients of a "ReHab Home" through the generosity of the Jackson County Habitat for Humanity. The house dedication ceremony, held July 7, was packed with Habitat volunteers, family, friends and a large number of Lee's Sunland CSS Family.

Lee is grateful to Sunland employee and Habitat member Jennie Ann Dean who first made him aware of the Habitat for Humanity program and told him he might qualify for it. Lee stated that he didn't realize Habitat was an option. Three years ago he experienced some difficult circumstances that were challenging to his living arrangements. With Ms. Dean's encouragement, he checked into the Habitat program, applied and was selected to receive the house. After a two-and-a-half-year process, the dream of owning a new home finally became a reality for Lee and his family. During the dedication ceremony, Ms. Dean was given the honor of presenting Lee his keys.

Lee stated he is especially appreciative to his co-workers for their assistance and support during the rehab of the home. The "sweat equity" Habitat requires recipients to put in involved 500 hours of volunteer work on the home and also at the local Habitat "Re-Store." To his surprise, some of his co-workers at Sunland pitched in by helping him in their off duty hours. He said Sunland's support was so important to him throughout the build-out process. His supervisors allowed him time to complete the work, with the encouragement of his co-workers who willingly stepped in to take up the slack during his time away.

The support of Sunland throughout the process earned the Center the prestigious "Good Neighbor Award" at the dedication ceremony, presented by Carmen Smith, Executive Director of Habitat. This honor speaks well of the caliber of employees who work at Sunland; people who rally around their co-workers and consistently demonstrate genuine love and concern for one another.



# Pathways

Beautification efforts are ongoing at Pathways. Vocational staff and residents, recently joined by administrative staff pitched in to lend a hand to ensure the grounds of the facility remain immaculate. Landscaping timbers were stained and replaced around the grounds. The boxwood hedge bed trimmed to spell out Pathways, was filled in with fresh pine straw. New plants, pine straw or wood chips were add to the other existing beds to refresh and update them.

Hats off to the Pathways team for their support of Project Sunland PRIDE. Without doubt this team takes **Personal Responsibility in a Desirable Environment!**



Contributed by: Juanita Alford



# Developmental Disabilities Defendant Program

On July 8, 2016, DDDP recognized the Rehabilitation and Vocational Departments with a special luncheon for the excellent jobs they do. D'Quan Brigham, Rehabilitation Therapy Supervisor, Kathy Mitchell, Behavioral Program Supervisor, and Corey Chafin, Division Director of Operations, all spoke on the importance of the work these departments provide to the residents of DDDP on a daily basis. These departments afford residents the skills and confidence needed to improve in the areas of education, life and social skills, fitness, stress and anger management, substance abuse and vocational development skills. The group enjoyed a delicious lunch and a time of fellowship.



Article & Photos Contributed by: Corey Chafin

# Service Awards

The Sunland Employee Recognition Committee hosted the center's semi-annual Service Awards Ceremony, Wednesday, July 27, at the Culinary Mixer. Staff having attained 20 - 40 years of service with the State of Florida were honored at this event. Honorees received an acrylic award, certificate, service pin and letter of commendation from Superintendent Geri Williams. Following the presentation of awards, honorees and guests were served a delicious assortment of refreshments catered by the Culinary Mixer students. A special shout out to Wayne Winkle and his students for sharing their talents! Congratulations to the following employees on their career milestones:

### 20 Years of Service

Randall Wynn/IT  
Marvin Barnes/Unit 1  
Tabatha Hearn/Unit 1  
Ronald Martin/Unit 3  
Kit Reagan/Unit 2  
Biagio Longo/Unit 2  
Freddie Pruett/Pathways

### 25 Years of Service

Jennifer Bailey/Nursing  
Gloria Jackson/Unit 3  
Michael Barnes/Food Svc  
Marion Delaney/Unit 1

### 30 Years of Service

Patricia Newsome, Dietary Svc  
Beverly Cobb/CSS  
Eunice Henderson/Unit 1  
Marylin Pierce/Unit 2

### 35 Years of Service

Debra Baker/Unit 2

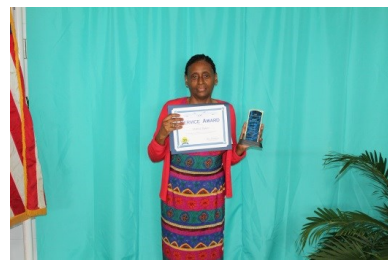
### 40 Years of Service

Jimmy Brooks, Maintenance

Pictured Below L-R: Randall Wynn, Biagio Longo, Tabatha Hearn, Gloria Jackson  
Not Pictured: Marvin Barnes, Ronald Martin, Kit Reagan, Freddie Pruett, Jennifer Bailey, Michael Barnes, Marion Delaney



Pictured Below L-R: Eunice Henderson, Beverly Cobb, Patricia Newsome, Marylin Pierce, Jimmy Brooks and Debra Baker





# Service Awards

Congratulations are also in order for the following staff who have completed 5 - 15 years of service to the State of Florida. These employees will receive certificates and service pins.

**5 Years:** Randy McKinnie, Kayla Farmer, Tammy Foster, Steven Laramore, Antwon Hall, Ronald Richards, Deronda Spencer, Terrence Pittman, Janice Baker-Williams, Desmond Barnes, Clyde Davis, Latoya Pollocks, Erica Smith, Keshia Williams, Ebonilena Long-Battle, Willie Williams

**10 Years:** Lynn Kern, Angela Brown, Luther Rule, John Peacock, James Reed, Barbara Green, Natalie Spires, Joseph Amison, Dorothy Dean, Cheryl Sheffield, Demerious Johnson, Penny Enfinger, Angela Jackson, Orlando Jackson, Tracey Beavers, Bernard Barkley, Keith Bryant, Rayburn Rehberg, Fredrick Donaldson, Robert Hinson

**15 Years:** Amanda Johnson, James Conrad II, Jerry Rabion, Wilbur Mills, Jr., Rodell Pete, Stacy Croft-Holden, Joseph Loving, Cananea Staley

## *Culinary Mixer in Action!*





# Congratulations!



## July 2016

### Star Teams

**Unit 1 - Adams House/Social Services Team** Demerious Johnson, Renee Perry

**Unit 1 - Buchanan House Team** Cheryl Sheffield, Teresa Ellis, Treshay Patterson, Kineka Weston

**Unit 2 - Thiel Center Team** Lenora Edwards, Cassandra Starrine, Tyrone Davis, Bernard Barkley, Demetra Williams, James Sorey, Lisa Dixon, Zearwana Johnson

**Pathways Vocational Team** - Ursula Bolds, Randy McKinnie, Alex Baxley, Teresa Bruner

**Pathways Team** - George Rivers, Charles Wright, David Douglas, Juanita Alford, Lorraine Dean, Jeffrey Hawks, Mike Miller, Mike Young, Marcus Mallett, Gavin Tucker, Casey Mitchell, Antoine Hooks

**CSS Team** - Melinda Bishop, Beverly Cobb, Kim Lindahl, Earl Mathews, Marilyn McAlister

**Administration, CSS & Maintenance Team** - Beth Basford, Jennie Ann Dean, Maria Johnson, Donald Rehberg, Donna Conrad, John Metzler, Billy Joe Davis, Jake Wood, Bill Himes

**CSS & Maintenance Team** - Steven King, Clay Mitchell, Adam Chambliss, Jimmy Brooks, Maria Johnson

**Administration, CSS & Maintenance Team** - Jennie Ann Dean, Robin Snellgrove, Annette Odom, Michael Padgett, Kevin Nesmith, Stacey Collins, Bill Himes, Lori Burke

### Star Employees

Joanna Hatfield, Nursing

Kristina Lenderman, Nursing

Clevlando Wedderburn, Unit 1

Michelle White, Unit 2

Joe Grimsley, Unit 3

Darlene Boykin, Unit 3

Belinda Kirkland, Unit 3

Lorraine Dean, Pathways



## Sunland Applauds Our Star Employees!



# HUMAN RESOURCES

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING ADDRESS VERIFICATION

Very soon employees will need to complete the annual address verification process in People First. Informational messages letting employees know the address verification process will be posted on the People First System Log In and Home Page beginning Thursday, July 21. The address verification process will be activated in **People First ~ Monday, Aug. 1.**

Once employees log into People First, on or after Aug. 1, they will be presented with the address verification process each time they log into the system until they complete the entire verification process. In order to ensure employees, receive their 2017 Plan Year Open Enrollment Benefits Statement, employees should complete the process no later than Sept. 30. For further information, visit the People First website via the links provided below:

<http://www.dms.myflorida.com/content/download/85395/485035>

<http://www.dms.myflorida.com/content/download/85475/485351>



Amanda Johnson, HR Manager and her staff, Veronica Mullinax, Lizzie Holland and Stacey Goodwin are always happy to serve you!

Information regarding career opportunities, deferred compensation, retirement or other personnel issues is available through the Human Resources Department. Please call 482-9230 or \*04.

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

<https://peoplefirst.myflorida.com>



# NEW EMPLOYEES

Angela Schneckloth

Amy Jones

Stephanie Parker

Brittany Holmes

Cody Coley

Terrence Green

Chandra Hart

Jared Long



Ruthie Owens

Debra Baker

Contributed by: Joni Laramore



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# Project Sunland PRIDE

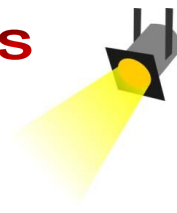
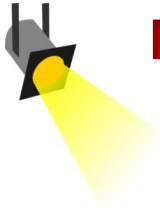


## Beautification Program!

**P**ERSONAL **R**ESPONSIBILITY **I**N A **D**ESIRABLE **E**NVIRONMENT

## "Community Spotlight of the Month"

**Developmental Disabilities  
Defendant Program  
West Unit**



### "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; Maria Johnson, CSS/Print Shop; Ethan Smith, IT; Cleve Wedderburn, Unit 1; LaWanda Calhoun, Unit 2; Allison Jones, Unit 3; Juanita Alford, Pathways; Lynn Baxley, Maintenance/Operations; Joni Laramore, Administration; Mary Gallagher, Quality Management; Suzanne Laramore, RN/Nursing-Medical