



As Seen On TV: "Grandma" Judy helps Children Succeed

10 Tampa Bay featured "Grandma" Judy in news coverage to highlight the amazing work she is doing to engage students in learning. Judy is a volunteer in our Foster Grandparent Program, spending three days a week in the Ready, Set, Kindergarten classroom at Girls Inc.

Judy provides one-on-one support for girls as they learn their letters and numbers and prepare for kindergarten. She brings value to the classroom by providing the patient learning environment all students need to fully develop their knowledge and skills, something Judy says she wishes she had in school.

Ready, Set, Kindergarten is a pilot program at Girls Inc. in Pinellas Park designed to help young girls develop the educational and social foundation they need for success in kindergarten. Girls Inc. says Foster Grandparents help support social and emotional wellness in the classroom. Every girl has a story to tell and it's important that their stories are heard. Judy is able to provide the attention each student needs to feel connected in ways that a traditional teacher, overseeing the entire class is unable to do.

When Judy retired as a nurse in Ohio she began looking for an opportunity to serve as a volunteer, and found the Foster Grandparent Program. She fell in love with the experience, so when she moved to Florida a few months ago one of her first priorities was to connect with Seniors in Service in Pinellas County.

Judy was asked what her favorite thing about volunteering is, and she responded, **"Everyday is a good day here!"**



Grandma Judy provides one-on-one learning support in a classroom at Girls Inc. as they prepare for kindergarten.



10 Tampa Bay provided news coverage, showing the important role our Foster Grandparent volunteers play in the classroom.

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A Message from our CEO

We're officially halfway through 2021 – a year already leagues better than last. Our world is changing again as people feel safe to leave their houses and come back together for in-person events. We'll hold on to the important lessons we learned in 2020 and continue to connect with people through technology, but we're thrilled to be able to meet our volunteers and those we serve in person. As the world opens its doors it also opens new opportunities, and Seniors in Service is GEARED UP TO SERVE!

It's a hopeful time for many. Some of us are seeing family for the first time in over a year. Others are getting their hair cut from someone other than our spouse for the first time in months. Many are excited to get back out into the community, engage with their peers, and make a difference. To those individuals: we're glad you're here!

During this time of optimism and hope, it can be easy to forget that 2020's isolation wasn't temporary for everyone. The Loneliness Epidemic started long before toilet paper shortages and Zoom birthday parties. In 2019, The U.S. Census Bureau reported 28% of older adults lived alone. 1 in 5 Americans reported feeling "lonely." 2020 didn't create the Loneliness Epidemic - it pushed it into pandemic proportions. We learned in real-time the devastating health effects of loneliness. Please don't lose sight of what 2020 taught us. Don't forget those who have been isolated all along.

While loneliness and isolation are deadly, connection is the cure. Simply reaching out can save a life. I've personally seen the power of networks and connection. If you're at a loss for where to start, don't worry! That's why we're here. We have opportunities for everyone - from cardmaking to daily check-in calls to helping run errands. Don't forget those who can't step out. Connect with Seniors in Service to volunteer. Use your passion and skills to make a difference.

-Robin Ingles, CEO

Brunch Buddies and Bingo!

Join us on Zoom every other Friday from 11 a.m.- noon. Brunch Buddies is a VIRTUAL opportunity to engage with other like-minded volunteers for an hour of connection, guest speakers, bingo, and more! Each week there will be a different theme and/or guest speaker.

For more information contact Aria Garling at agarling@seniorsinservice.org or (813)492-8931.

Upcoming Brunch Buddies dates:

August 6	September 3
August 20	September 17

Service Moments



750 meals

prepared and served to community members living with food insecurity.

Operation: Veteran Connect Feeds Hundreds

Operation: Veteran Connect volunteers are veterans and military family members who feel a calling to support others who served our country. Volunteers recently teamed up with Feeding Tampa Bay through Trinity Cafe to prepare food for individuals and families in the Tampa Bay area. Each volunteer played an essential role in meal prep, forming an assembly line that produced complete, nutritious meals. After assembly, the meals were sealed and handed off for delivery. Volunteers didn't stop there! Before heading home for the day, they labeled and laid out the assembly line for the next round of volunteers. While to some this might seem like some simple food prep, volunteers know it means much more. Feeding Tampa Bay projects they will serve 86 million meals this year. Operation: Veteran Connect volunteer Pam Plager said, "We were able to contribute to and help feed hundreds of people across Tampa Bay. All of us were glad to be there."



Together, we're better!

Seniors in Service partnered with the Center for Economic Development and Womenade of Tampa to help Mrs. Janice, a senior in need.

Mrs. Janice reached out to Kella McCaskill and the Center for Economic Development when she could not pay her property tax bill. The Center for Economic Development combats community deterioration in many ways, including connecting residents to resources. Kella met with Mrs. Janice at her home and learned that property taxes were not the only issue. Mrs. Janice had also been living without running water **for the last seven years**. Kella knew she could not let this continue and turned to Seniors in Service for assistance.

Seniors in Service immediately reached out to Womenade of Tampa, an organization that provides anonymous, short-term modest financial assistance to eligible individuals and families. Within days, Womenade responded with financial support for the request. Womenade and Seniors in Service worked together to pay Mrs. Janice's property tax, while the Center for Economic Development ensured Mrs. Janice had running water. Rose Rolon of Seniors in Service explained, "It was amazing to receive help from Womenade to pay Mrs. Janice's property tax and to know that the Center for Economic Development assisted with her water bill. It really signifies how partnerships between our organizations can make a difference."

Church Volunteer Group Discovers the Rewards of TelePals

Seniors in Service is thrilled to partner with the ladies of Busy Bees from the First Baptist Church of Wesley Chapel! Senior Pastor Rob Allison describes the Busy Bees as "...a group of ladies that have such missional hearts." For several months, the Busy Bees searched for a way to get more involved in their community. Their search was over when they discovered Seniors in Service! "We've found a perfect match in Seniors in Service," Pastor Rob explains. **"The TelePals service has really been a phenomenal piece of our ladies ministry here. Being able to take time out of their day to call and invest in the lives of individuals who may have little to no interaction, we've seen such a joy expound out of our ladies."** TelePals offer socialization and wellness checks through telephone reassurance. All it takes is a phone call a week or even a quick daily check-in to make a real difference in someone's life.

"To have somebody like my TelePal who needs me, it's wonderful. It's a conversational need, two adults having a conversation and understanding each other's humor. We know in the middle of the conversation you might get a, 'Excuse me, I gotta go the bathroom.' I mean it happens! We understand the humor, and the nuances of getting older, and we can share our experiences."

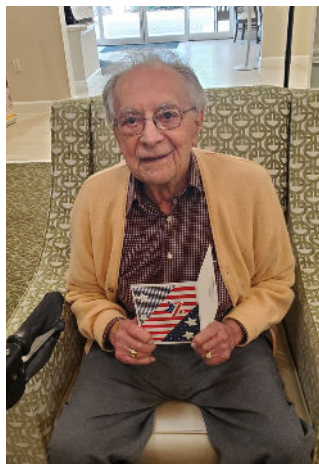
- Janet, TelePal Volunteer
Busy Bees of First Baptist Church of Wesley Chapel

RSVP Volunteers Show Appreciation for Our Veterans

Connie Larrieu Brown, Community Liaison for Seniors in Service of Tampa Bay recently distributed our "Thank You" cards to five different locations housing veterans. While distributing the cards at one location, she met a veteran who served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam and was only visiting the facility to meet with a relative. "When I handed him the card and told him it was handcrafted for him by artisans with disabilities, **he teared up,**" said Connie. **"He told me that no one had ever thanked him for serving his country before."**



RSVP Pinellas volunteer, Frank Pinto, writes notes of gratitude and support to veterans in our community, including Mr. Nick.



Connie Larrieu Brown gives card of gratitude to Vietnam veteran who had never been thanked for his service.

RSVP Pasco thanks our local heroes

Vernell Mullins, Seniors in Service volunteer for RSVP Pasco, delivered donuts and thank you cards to first responders at Pasco County Fire Rescue Station 16 in Zephyrhills. The cards were signed by community volunteers at Moore-Mickens Education and Vocational Center. The fire station guys were thrilled to receive the cards! RSVP volunteer opportunities are available in Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas County. For more information contact Chris Noble at cnoble@seniorsinservice.org or (813) 492-8916.



RSVP Pasco volunteer, Vernell Mullins, thanks local first responders with cards and donuts.

Partner Highlight

The next generation of volunteers is supporting our current volunteers.

Junior Civitan International is a service club that trains young people to become “Builders of Good Citizenship”, developing initiative and leadership in youth to encourage fuller lives, enriched by unselfish service to others. The Junior Civitan program is comprised of middle and high school students who are members of local clubs dedicated to serving their communities. This year, they hosted their annual Junior Civitan International Convention at Westshore Grand in Tampa, and participated in Seniors in Service projects. Here's how their help made an impact on our programs.



121 Letters of Love

That will be distributed in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, hospices and other senior centers by our volunteers.



200 bags for Foster Grandparent Volunteers

Packed with items that will help volunteers tutor and mentor students



Seniors in Service Volunteers

who are confident and equipped to serve the community.





Volunteer Spotlight

Congratulations to Foster Grandparent volunteer Lillie Nichols for receiving Senior Connection Center's Salt & Pepper Award! The Senior Connection Center created the Salt & Pepper awards as a tribute to the late Honorable Claude Pepper. The Salt & Pepper awards go to outstanding individuals in three categories: Health & Wellness, Arts & Entertainment, or Community Service & Volunteerism.

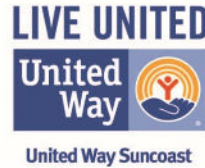
Lillie Nichols won the Community Service & Volunteerism award based on her decade of service with Foster Grandparents! "Grandma" Nichols always goes above and beyond to enrich the lives of everyone she meets – especially the underserved children with special needs in her community. What makes "Grandma" Nichols a shining star is not only her consistent mentorship, tutoring, and social-emotional support to her students through the Foster Grandparent Program; it's also the extra love and comfort she gives that sets her children on a path to a successful future.

When COVID-19 closed "Grandma" Nichols' Head Start site to in-person volunteer service, she did not give up. "Grandma" Nichols once again showed up and showcased the guidance and lessons she teaches the children. She persevered and GEARED UP TO SERVE by learning how to use the internet, a tablet computer, apps, email, video conferencing, and more. It was not easy, but she persevered to continue serving the children in her community.

And that is not all! Following strict COVID-19 safety precautions, "Grandma" Nichols found ways to go out and get the materials she sought to make the most of every virtual session with the students. Over the most recent Holiday break, "Grandma" made special arrangements to safely drop off baskets of goodies and materials to the children and their teachers. It was indescribable hearing the joy and excitement from "Grandma" when she told us about her experience of being able to 'see all the kids smiling faces.' Something we can all remember to never take for granted, especially during these unprecedented times.

YOU can make a difference in the lives of children in your neighborhood! Volunteer to provide educational and social support for kids in a classroom near you. To learn more contact Lorena Meilke at (813) 492-8925 or lmeilke@seniorsinservice.org.

Thank you to our funders!





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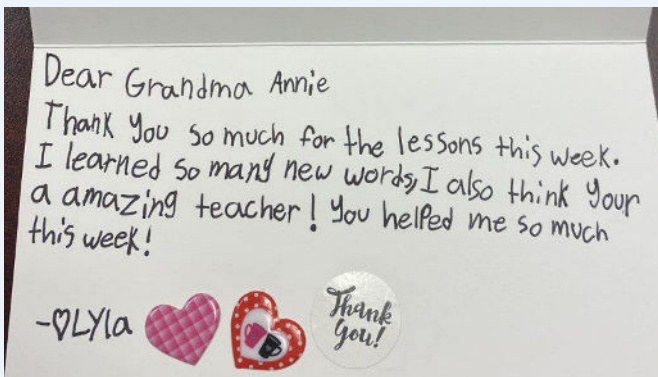
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It's Back To School Time!

And the Foster Grandparent Program is **GEARING UP TO SERVE.**



185 Foster Grandparent Volunteers will be providing support to **185 classrooms** which means **THOUSANDS of students** will have access to the mentoring and tutoring they need for success in the classroom.



Become a Foster Grandparent and enhance a child's learning experience.

For more information contact
Lorena Meilke
(813) 492-8925 or
lmeilke@seniorsinservice.org