



SENIORS in SERVICE
GEARED UP TO SERVE

GEARED UP News

Seniors in Service presents
the News You Need to Know
About Community Service in Tampa Bay

Has it really been 40 years? Come celebrate with us!

★ 40th Anniversary Bridging Generations Dinner ★

Join us in creating a brighter future for generations to come at our 40th Anniversary Bridging Generations Dinner! For 40 years, Seniors in Service has mobilized volunteers to transform lives in Tampa Bay's most vulnerable communities, and we're just getting started! Hear inspiring stories from our volunteers and see how your donation can help struggling students learn to read, provide companionship for isolated seniors, connect veterans with vital resources, and feed hungry families. RSVP today to help us make an impact!

Thursday, September 26, 2024
5:30-7:00 pm
Tampa Garden Club
2629 Bayshore Blvd. Tampa



Scan Here to
Purchase Your Ticket!

Tickets are \$100 per person with sponsorship opportunities available. Contact Amy Manning with any questions at amanning@SeniorsInService.org or (813) 492-8918

www.seniorsinservice.org/bridging-generations-dinner/



Keynote Speaker Colonel DJ Reyes knows from a lifetime of experience that service to others is life-changing. Colonel Reyes served over 33 years in the US military, including deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, North Africa, Kosovo, Bosnia, Haiti, and Korea. He's a national advocate for veteran's rights and services involving veterans in the criminal justice system, including mentoring veterans who deserve a second chance.

Concurrently, Colonel Reyes is collaborating with the US Attorney's Office, the US Federal Defender, and the Chief Judge for the Middle District of Florida to establish a federal-level Veteran Treatment Court and Veteran Mentors Program.

He has been honored through multiple local, state and national awards for his service including Notre Dame's Reverend Corby Award for Distinguished Military Service, Florida Veterans Hall of Fame, Volunteer Florida's "Champion of Service" Award, and Tampa Bay Lightning Community Hero Award. Some would say he's an "EXPERT" in service. **Don't miss this chance to be inspired!**



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Thank You to Our Sponsors



Steve Marciano



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CEO Corner



At the end of July, our Seniors in Service team spent four days in Baltimore at the AmeriCorps Seniors Annual Convening. We met professionals from all over the country who are as passionate as we are about engaging older adults as volunteers, because they see the powerful transformation that can happen when seniors use their talents to serve others.

The best new catch phrase I heard at the conference was, **“Not retiring, instead re-wiring.”** And I thought, WHAT IF... What if an entire workforce of older adults decided to “re-wire” for service when they stopped working? How would that change our community?

I know the answer. We could solve tomorrow’s problems today. We could put Classroom Grandparents in every Preschool through 3rd-grade classroom to ensure all children can read by 3rd grade. Every lonely senior who needs support wouldn’t have to fear living alone because they would have a Senior Companion to watch out for their well-being. Middle-schoolers who are just starting to figure out life would have mentors with lived experience to guide them through this pivotal time. Organizations that feed families, serve veterans, and help the homeless would all have the volunteer support they need to make a difference.

And best of all, we would have an entire senior population that is aging with purpose and reaping the benefits of staying physically and mentally active.

This isn’t a pipe dream. This could be our reality in Tampa Bay. We could create a culture where the next step after retiring is finding a meaningful opportunity to serve that brings you joy. As you read this newsletter, you’ll hear stories of people who did just that—found joy in serving others.

All you retirees out there, I’m looking at you. That’s right. This is your moment. Visit our website at www.SeniorsInService.org to get started.

-Robin Ingles, CEO



Community Partner SAGES Recognized as “RAD Humans” on the Kelly Clarkson Show!

Scan here to see SAGES featured on the Kelly Clarkson Show! We’re so honored to be connected to a community partner who helps seniors use their talents to create “Plays with Purpose”! Congratulations to SAGES and all the volunteers who make this wonderful organization who they are. We’re so glad seniors staying active, finding new purpose, and following their passion is getting the recognition it deserves not only in our community here in Tampa Bay but now worldwide!



From Classroom Hero to Homebound: How a Senior Companion Volunteer Brought Joy Back into Betty's Life

Betty Odne is used to being the one serving others. She loves spending time serving children in their classroom. Answering their questions and helping them learn to read. But after a recent surgery to fix her pacemaker, Betty had to take a break from volunteering. "I forgot how lonely it feels to be stuck inside. Staying home makes you boring!" she shared.

That's when Senior Companion volunteer Frances Hill stepped in. Frances helps Betty with errands, light meal prep, and, most importantly, provides some much-needed companionship.

"Right now, I desperately need the help as I recover, but I think I'd like to continue to have Frances visit even after my recovery since I love the company," Betty explained.



Pictured left to right: Betty Odne and Frances Hill.



Betty can't wait to make a full recovery and get back to tutoring children in the classroom. In the meantime, she's incredibly thankful for Frances's friendship and support.

Senior Companion volunteers like Frances make a world of difference in the lives of homebound seniors by not only helping with day-to-day tasks but also by bringing a bit of joy and friendship that helps them both!

To learn how you can become a Senior Companion, email SCP@seniorsinservice.org or call Jeannice our Hillsborough Coordinator at (813) 445-5332 or Carmen our Pinellas Coordinator at (727) 382-7121

Our Team is Pursuing Even Bigger Goals!

We have some wonderful news and a few bittersweet farewells to share with you as our team changes roles and pursues new adventures.



Aria Garling was promoted from Health Buddies Coordinator to Manager. Her leadership has built new partnerships and enhanced services to help hundreds of seniors with chronic conditions improve their health and well-being. We can't wait to see how she continues to use her skills to take Health Buddies to the next level.



Jeannice Cardonza has served as Readers in Motion Assistant for over a year, engaging volunteers to serve as Classroom Grandparents and encouraging parents to take an active role in their child's education. Now, she's been promoted to use her talents in engaging volunteers in a new role as the Senior Companion Program Coordinator in Hillsborough County.



Two of our cherished team members Senior Companion Program Coordinator **Gabby Lugo** and Foster Grandparent Program Assistant **Andrea Kambou** are both moving on to new adventures to pursue their Master's degrees. Congratulations on this exciting new phase of life. We'll miss you!



Support Veterans: Donate Clothing in Tampa Bay

Operation: Veteran Connect is making it easy for you to donate your gently used clothing to support veterans. We've set up six charity clothing donation boxes right here in Tampa! Many of our heroes face tough times, especially when trying to get back on their feet after experiencing homelessness. Your generous donation will provide them with essential clothing for job interviews, work, and daily life, helping them feel confident and proud as they get a fresh start.

Clean, well-fitting clothes do wonders for boosting a veteran's self-esteem and dignity, making a real difference in their overall well-being and mental health. Interested in making a clothing donation? Check out the addresses listed below to visit a box or scan the QR code to get a map of the locations.



Visit these Tampa locations and make a life-changing donation today:

- Quality Meat Market 4020 Orient Road
- Kwik Stop 2508 East 131st Ave
- Mobil on Fletcher 2265 E Fletcher Ave
- Teresa's Grocery 11733 N. 15 St
- New Season Ministries 7416 E. Mohawk Dr
- Little Eagle Christian School 2801 E 17th St

Classroom Grandparents Shine at Youth STEAM Day

Classroom Grandparent volunteers had a blast helping to inspire the next generation of innovators at The St. Petersburg Foundation's annual Youth STEAM Day Event at The Lealman Exchange. By exposing our youth to Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM), we're unlocking a world of possibilities. Providing these hands-on opportunities is key to developing critical thinkers, problem solvers, and innovators. Leading to a bright future for our community.



Ashley Morales, Engagement Director at St. Petersburg Foundation shared, "We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and the STEAM organizations, with many specifically mentioning the impact of your volunteers. Your team's efforts have not only contributed to the success of this year's event but have also set a high standard for future Lealman STEAM Days. Thank you for your indispensable support. Your volunteers truly embody the spirit of "being a hero" through community service."



Not Retired! Instead, Re-wired for Service!

When Herman Archie stopped working in 2019, he did not just retire; instead he re-wired his life for service.

Every week, Herman serves up delicious, restaurant-style meals at Trinity Cafe. Here, anyone in need can enjoy a hot meal served with dignity and compassion.

Regular guests greet Herman by name with warm smiles, a testament to the strong relationships he's built. "I'm grateful for what I have and even more grateful for the opportunity to help someone else," he shared.

The feelings of joy and sense of purpose that come from helping others are addictive. Eager for more of that magical feeling, Herman signed up to be a Senior Companion.

Now, he provides companionship for two homebound seniors: Peter and Merton (affectionately known as Murph). Both are vision-impaired, and Herman's weekly visits are crucial in helping them live independently. He assists them with grocery shopping, laundry, errands, and reading mail.

For Herman, the most rewarding part of being a Senior Companion volunteer is the close relationships he builds with his clients.

"Peter is very bright, so we talk a lot about science, which is also a passion of mine," Herman explains. "I've always enjoyed listening to people older than me share their life experiences, and I get a lot of that from Murph. Being a Senior Companion is unique, fascinating, and incredibly rewarding."

Through his dedication, Herman enriches the lives of those he serves and finds a profound sense of fulfillment in his own life. **You can find a life of purpose too. Email RSVP@seniorsinservice.org for more information**



Photo at Left: Senior Companion Volunteer Herman Archie with Seniors in Service Pinellas Community Engagement Coordinator Sarah Rosenbaum. Photo at Right: Senior Companion Client Murph with Volunteer Herman Archie



Senior Citizens Services at Pinellas Community Foundation Helps Boost Senior Independence and Well-Being



Senior Citizens Services at Pinellas Community Foundation is helping seniors stay healthy, independent, and socially connected by supporting Senior Companions and Health Buddies. Their generous \$5,000 grant provides Senior Companion Services for seniors, like Peter and Murph from the above story, who need extra help with errands and light chores to remain independent. Senior Companions also provide friendship, social connection, and a watchful eye to protect the well-being of isolated seniors so they can continue to age in place safely.

Additionally, Senior Citizens Services provided a \$6,100 grant for Health Buddies to enhance the well-being of Pinellas County seniors. With their support, Health Buddies provides encouragement and health coaching to those battling loneliness, isolation, and chronic health issues.

Thanks to Senior Citizens Services, we're committed to aiding homebound seniors in gaining self-sufficiency and finding joy in their daily lives through social connection and a caring friend.

Honoring Four Years of Dedication



Operation: Veteran Connect is celebrating another year of helping Tampa Bay's most vulnerable veterans connect to vital services. This year members served over 3,700 veterans!

As our service year comes to an end, we want to recognize three of our most dedicated members. Stanley Foster, Tianna Matthews, and Hortencia Francis, have each served four years and are now graduating out of Operation: Veteran Connect, armed with experience and skills to take on their next adventure.

For the past four years, these incredible volunteers have dedicated their time and energy to transforming the lives of veterans throughout Tampa Bay. Their unwavering support and service have made a significant impact in the lives of those who have selflessly served our nation. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of them for their invaluable contributions and for showcasing the true power of volunteering.

Scan here to watch how our members are supporting veterans.



Have You Ever Dined in the Dark?



Experience "Dining in the Dark" and walk a mile in the shoes of seniors with low or no vision. Join us for this unique fundraiser where diners will be blindfolded and enjoy a buffet-style meal in complete darkness. A member of our Blind and Low Vision Support Group will share insights into their daily lives. Tickets are just \$15 each, and sponsorship opportunities are available. Stay tuned for more details!

A BIG thank you to HCA Florida South Shore Hospital for being the Key Sponsor of Dining in the Dark. Not only are they committed to offering advanced healthcare services with a compassionate, patient-focused approach but they are also committed to supporting those who are low vision or blind in the Sun City Center community!

Save the Date!

Monday, November 4, 2024
Veterans Theater – Kings Point
(Located in the Main Clubhouse)



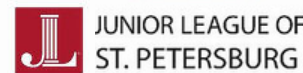
Scan here to learn more!

1900 Clubhouse Dr., Sun City Center, FL 33573
Dinner is 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Shoutout to all the sponsors of Dining in the Dark!



Thank you to our funders!





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This is Your Moment: Become a Classroom Grandparent and Inspire Young Minds!



This is your moment to shine! Children in Pinellas and Hillsborough County Schools are struggling more than ever. You can be the Classroom Grandparent who makes a difference, just like Grandma Angel. Check out her story below and then email FGP@seniorsinservice.org to learn how you can inspire the love of learning in children this school year.

When Grandma Angel's doctor suggested she start volunteering to stay active after losing her husband, she never imagined how rewarding it would be. Now, she spends time every week with the same first-graders at Frost Elementary, and it's been one of the most fulfilling experiences of her life.

Grandma Angel truly became an integral part of the classroom, getting to know each child and feeling like their "real grandma." She shared, "My heart went out to the students who were frustrated and struggling to read. So, I decided to make it fun. In our small groups, we'd form a circle, hold pinkies, and chant 'Reading Team' together! I noticed that after a few times, the kids' self-esteem soared. They felt included and empowered, thinking, 'Hey, I can do this!'"

At the end of the school year, Grandma Angel gave each child their own book with a heartfelt, handwritten message encouraging each of them to stay confident and keep learning.

This simple act of volunteering transformed Grandma Angel's life and made a lasting impact on the children she served. If you're looking for a way to make a difference and find joy in your life, consider becoming a Classroom Grandparent. It's a beautiful way to connect, inspire, and be inspired.



Learn more about becoming a Classroom Grandparent by scanning the QR code here!