

UPLIFT Florida Network

February 2024



Mission: To improve the well-being of individuals and communities via a network of villages and organizations supporting them.

Vision: Communities where individuals thrive together.

Values: Connection * Collaboration * Inclusion * Innovation * Excellence

UPLIFT has great potential to influence the future of all Floridians for years to come by making Florida a healthier, more equitable place for all to age. Let's create a better future together!
Contact us at info@upliftflorida.org.



Connecting Through the Arts

“The Ringling believes the arts are for everyone. We are honored to partner with UPLIFT to bring quality art classes to older adults in our community, and we are looking forward to continuing this new partnership toward a brighter future.”

Katie Nickel, Head of Education Programs for The Ringling

On January 17th, UPLIFT, in partnership with [Casa Santa Marta](#) (CSM), [Sarasota Military Academy](#) (SMA), and [The Ringling](#), began a five-week watercolor painting program for the residents of Casa Santa Marta in Sarasota. The Ringling supplies all class materials, and honors students from SMA are teaching assistants.

Judy Feffer, artist and UPLIFT volunteer, designed once-a-week classes especially for CSM residents of all skill levels. Classes offer students a relaxed, personalized, and encouraging environment with a new theme every week. “At the end of each class,” says Judy, “I want students to have a finished painting and a sense of pride and accomplishment in what they have learned and achieved.”

In addition to learning new skills, students have an opportunity to socialize and make new friendships. And this has been noticed by other residents. Jessica Herrera, Program Services Coordinator at CSM, commented after the first class: “Everyone is saying wonderful things about the class. People that were not even there are congratulating me on the program’s great success.”

Alice Greenspan, a student, states, “The class is fun, creative, and inspiring and brings people together.” Alicia Arguiz, a life-long painter with acrylics, enthused that the class is “.... wonderful, wonderful, wonderful. This is the first time I have taken an art class, and I am learning so much from someone who provides instruction at the moment when I need it.” Judy thoroughly enjoys teaching: “I love helping to create magic with my new friends!”



Dr. Angel Brana-Lopez Teaching Breath-Body-Mind Program

Neighbors Network of Lee County: Progress Through Programs and Partnerships

by Barbara Shearer and Patty Duncan

[Neighbors Network of Lee County](#) (NNLC) recently published our president's report on our progress throughout 2023, which we view as SUBSTANTIAL. We have many people and organizations to thank for this progress.

Our journey began in 2019 as a subcommittee of the Aging Coalition of Lee County, and over the past four years we formed our own informal "coalition for aging in community." With this as our foundation from the beginning, NNLC built long-term relationships with agencies and organizations supporting older adults in Lee County. These relationships have yielded our volunteer-driven programming as well as venues for holding programs free of charge to NNLC and attendees and a partnership base for future collaborative projects.

In addition to coalition building, NNLC stays open to cost models requiring no membership fees. We continue to explore new sustainability models, while keeping in mind that a fee-based model may close doors to potential members and sponsors. Fundraising and sponsored programming are critical objectives in 2024.

We recruit volunteers based on the passions of each person. Sustainability is not just about organizations and budget – it's also about personal sustainability. Waking up each morning knowing the day can bring new learning opportunities is what will keep our volunteers' "engines" going.

Beginning with the end in mind, NNLC continues spreading the word about the hub-and-spoke model throughout Lee County while focusing on developing our pilot village/neighborhood in the Six-Mile Cypress Parkway area of Fort Myers.

To learn more about our partners, progress, and plans for 2024, please read our [January/February newsletter](#).



Source of photo collage: [AARP Livable Communities website](#)

Villages and Age-Friendly Communities

“Some early research on the connection with Age-Friendly communities and villages noted that slightly more than 85% of villages provided assistance with at least six of the eight domains of livability.”

Sue Berger, Aging System Coordinator, Sarasota County Government

Speaking to villages across Florida, Sue Berger, Sarasota County’s Aging System Coordinator, shared how villages dovetail with the Age-Friendly movement. Using the [8 Domains of Livability](#) framework, AARP’s Age-Friendly initiative encourages communities to pay increased attention to the environmental, economic, and social factors that influence health and well-being.

The work of villages aligns with the Age-Friendly initiative by providing rich social opportunities, community support, and connection to information, transportation, and outdoor spaces. Berger highlighted that some early research on the connection with Age Friendly communities and villages noted that slightly more than 85% of villages provided assistance with at least six of the eight domains of livability.

With communities across Florida not prepared for the increased demands on infrastructure and services necessitated by a burgeoning number of older adults,

Berger emphasized the importance of planning and focusing on prevention. Toward that end, she believes that villages can lead to better health outcomes by promoting social connections, which affect our psychological and physical well-being and can positively influence lifestyle behaviors.



Remember the movie scenes where a man suddenly gasps, clutches his chest, and falls to the ground?

In reality, the warning signs of a heart attack may not be that dramatic. However, chest pain or discomfort (including uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness) is a major warning sign. Other symptoms include shortness of breath, feeling weak or light-headed, and pain or discomfort in the arm(s), back, neck, jaw, or stomach.

Women are more likely to ignore their symptoms, which can be subtler. Chest pain or discomfort is also a common heart attack warning sign for women, but other symptoms less often associated with heart attack should be considered. Women often chalk up the symptoms to less life-threatening conditions such as acid reflux, the flu, or normal aging.

Don't wait to get help if you experience any heart attack warning signs. Know what the symptoms are and pay attention to your body.

Source: [American Heart Association](#)



We'd love to hear from you if you're interested in helping UPLIFT with our bi-monthly newsletter. Various roles are available from writing or editing short articles, preparing the newsletter layout, or coordinating with the technology team on publication. [Email our volunteer coordinator](#) for more information.

Join Us



There are many reasons – and many ways – to be involved with [UPLIFT Florida Network](#). [Volunteer](#) to have the opportunity to translate your values into actions that will be appreciated. [Partner](#) to work together to develop programs that benefit the broader community. [Donate](#) to invest in a better future with UPLIFT and help to build vibrant and healthy intergenerational communities.
