

UPLIFT Florida Network

April 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.



READY. SET. GO. for the 2024 Giving Challenge!

The start of the 2024 Giving Challenge is days away! Happening April 9–10 from noon to noon, this is UPLIFT’s first year to participate, and we are calling on our amazing supporters to join us in making a difference in helping older adults live their best lives.

We are an all-volunteer organization working to ***strengthen “the community within communities” through connections*** – connections between people, connections to resources, and connections among organizations. The Giving Challenge is your opportunity to contribute to helping UPLIFT create an environment where good things can happen for older adults in our communities.

Thanks to the generosity of [The Patterson Foundation](#), all unique donations between \$25 and \$100 per donor will receive a 1:1 match! So, your donation between these amounts will be doubled – \$25 becomes \$50, \$50 becomes \$100, and \$100 becomes \$200.

Let's keep UPLIFT’s forward momentum going!

Click [Support UPLIFT](#) starting April 9 at noon.



Creating an Environment Where Good Things Can Happen

Imagine ... a room full of people with a shared passion to create an environment where good things can happen for older adults in Florida. Imagine ... innovative and collaborative thinking from community leaders considering a reimagined “village” model to achieve better outcomes by reaching more people with a sustainable and scalable approach.

UPLIFT convened several community leaders with decades of experience serving southwest Florida’s older adults to consider big ideas to address unmet needs among this demographic. Eric McLeon (CEO, Senior Friendship Centers), Laura Streed (Associate State Director, AARP), Sue Berger (Sarasota County Aging Systems Coordinator), and Maricela Morado (CEO, Area Agency on Aging of Southwest Florida) joined UPLIFT board members for a thoughtful discussion. Using the [8 Domains of Livability](#) framework, participants prioritized discussion on three domains: (1) Social Participation, (2) Respect and Social Inclusion, and (3) Communication and Information. “Connection” was the central theme that emerged – connecting people to people and people to resources.

Christine Bechtel of X4 Health facilitated the March 1st convening held at Gulf Coast Community Foundation. The meeting is best described in the participants’ own words – *Energizing. Encouraging. Thoughtful.*



Neighbors Network Celebrates Members’ Birthdays

By Mary T. Scott, Board Volunteers Chair

Ellen pressed her hand to her heart, gazing at the small cake a volunteer had just delivered to her. *"Today is my 90th birthday. This is the first birthday cake I've had in 12 years. You have made me feel very special."*

Vina, on her 78th birthday, couldn't wait to taste her beautiful cake. She couldn't remember the last time she had a homemade cake. No one she knows bakes anymore.

[Neighbors Network](#) volunteers love this program because every member is touched when a homemade cake is delivered to their door on their birthday. Here's what they say:

"I volunteer for this because I think it's really sweet to acknowledge the members' birthdays, and they are so appreciative! They love the personal visit and are delighted with the cake. Some members have told me they don't have family living close, and this cake makes them feel special. One member said, 'Just another reason why I LOVE Neighbors Network!'"

"Baking cakes is fun and a small thing on my part that can bring a lot of joy to a member. When you are alone, having someone remember your birthday can be a big deal. It's all about the 'village' caring for each other."

"My favorite was when I first delivered my cake and card, and was invited in. I sat down in the living room with this kind woman who opened the box with a smile. She said, 'I have never had anyone bake a birthday cake for me on my birthday in my entire life.' I will never forget that moment."

Neighbors Network started Bake 'n Take in 2020. Quarterly, a volunteer emails the team a list of member birthdays in the next quarter. Some sign up to bake, decorate, and box a 5" cake; others prefer to deliver. A few bake and take. They get to see first-hand the reactions to their beautiful creations.

Members living with diabetes receive a small bouquet of flowers instead of a cake. One volunteer painted a flower instead. The member has kept it for years.



Earth Day 2024: Planet vs Plastic

We've become used to scenes like the one shown above, especially after a storm along Florida's coastline. But it doesn't have to be that way.

This year's theme for Earth Day on April 22nd is ***Planet v. Plastic***. The campaign "60 x 40" is a step towards a larger goal to end the use of plastics "for the sake of human and planetary health."

To create a plastic-free future, those leading the movement are calling for a 60% reduction of plastic by 2040. Among the actions needed will be increased public awareness of the damage done by plastics and rapidly decreasing single-use plastics.

Learn more about the 60 x 40 campaign at Earthday.org. Find out how much you know about plastics and their impact by taking the [plastic pollution quiz](#).



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.
