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# UPLIFT Florida Network

March 2022

UPLIFT Florida Network's mission is to improve the well-being of individuals and communities via a network of villages and organizations supporting them. For more information or to get involved, contact UPLIFT Formation Team's chairperson Emile Gauvreau: [revgauvreau@protonmail.com](mailto:revgauvreau@protonmail.com).



Left to right, top to bottom: Deborah Gauvreau TPF/UPLIFT, Kiarra Louis TPF/UPLIFT, Emile Gauvreau UPLIFT, Dionne Polite AARP, Margie Bell FLDOEA, Sue Berger Sarasota County/UPLIFT, Laura Cantwell AARPFL, Cynthia Kemp UPLIFT

## Connecting with AARP Florida and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The purpose of our meeting was to share about UPLIFT, identify areas of mutual alignment, get initial feedback from representatives of [AARP Florida](#) (AARPFL) and the [Florida Department of Elder Affairs](#) (FLDOEA), and listen.

We discussed our mutual goals for an age-friendly Florida serving community members of all ages and abilities and livable communities where people live well and age well. We are all in alignment with these intentions. It was terrific to hear the positive and enthusiastic feedback from AARPFL and FLDOEA leaders.

The most profound takeaway was the importance of “creating a livable Florida

engagement and having the conversations that create synergy and promote getting our network out.” UPLIFT is committed to doing just that!

## The IRS Said YES to UPLIFT



After months of patiently (well, mostly patient waiting), we have a favorable determination from the IRS relative to UPLIFT’s status as a 501(c)(3) organization. Our determination letter is dated January 4, 2022, and technically our status was effective October 7, 2021. UPLIFT will continue its relationship with Senior Friendship Centers until UPLIFT has sufficient internal resources to manage the financial aspects of its operations. We completed our 2022 strategic planning process and identified four key strategies for the year, as follows:

- Launch and support the growth of UPLIFT villages
- Develop and implement the operational functions of the hub organization, support village development, and advance strategic relationships
- Expand revenue streams to enhance and achieve financial sustainability
- Strengthen and grow the CallConnect Program

We are looking forward to a dynamic and successful year! Join Us!

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**Presenting at Florida Blue’s  
Community Health  
Symposium and Sapphire  
Awards**



## UPLIFT Village Development LIFTS OFF!

2022 promises to be a great year for UPLIFT. On March 2, the UPLIFT elected its first Board of Directors, as follows:

- President: Emile Gauvreau
- Vice President: Cynthia Kemp
- Treasurer: Bill Little
- Secretary: Rachel Rivlin
- LaVerne Green
- Carol Levy
- Pam Mahoney

Sue Berger, Deborah Gauvreau, Brenda McKay, and Kiarra Louis will continue to be key members of the UPLIFT leadership team.

The Village Development initiative of UPLIFT is launching with a series of four meetings. UPLIFT will be sending email invitations in the coming weeks.

- **March 8 at 2pm:** A presentation to the Florida Villages Network.
- **March 22 at 9am:** UPLIFT Lift Off! A presentation to individuals statewide who have expressed an interest in the villages movement in Florida. Stay tuned for an email invite in the coming weeks!
- **April 12 at 9am:** An information meeting about creating a village and UPLIFT’s first village development cohort. You can sign up for the orientation [here](#).

May 4-5, 2022

## 2022 Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards

*Big Issues in Health: A Focus on Health Equity*

Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress  
Orlando, Florida

We're thrilled that UPLIFT will present at Florida Blue's 2022 Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards May 4-5, 2022, at the Hyatt Regency in Orlando. Their theme is Big Issues in Health: A Focus on Health Equity.

UPLIFT's session is Healthy Aging for All Floridians – A Fresh Approach addressing both the profound impact of the age shift in Florida when one in five Americans will be 65 or over by 2030 and how UPLIFT Florida Network, its partnerships, and volunteer-powered villages will reduce social isolation, help people connect to supports, and age in community while improving equity and outcomes.

The event features general sessions, roundtable discussions, professional development, and networking opportunities for more than 500 executives and others.

Join us at the conference. You can [register here](#).

### Finding Friendship

By Sue Berger, Sarasota County's Aging System Policy Coordinator



UPLIFT  
Florida Network

Early in the pandemic, I connected with

- **May 10 at 9am:** The first village cohort session. You can sign up to attend [here](#).

Simultaneously, the UPLIFT board and team members are working on grant opportunities, building the CallConnect program, and establishing strategic relationships with like-minded nonprofit organizations. If you are interested in being part of this exciting work, please email Emile Gauvreau at [revgauvreau@protonmail.com](mailto:revgauvreau@protonmail.com).

### Volunteer Spotlight: Sue Berger



Sue Berger joined the UPLIFT Florida Network Exploratory Team back in July 2020. In the beginning, the idea was to start a local Sarasota Village, but through the outstanding volunteer efforts of like-minded community members, it has grown into a model program garnering statewide attention. As the Aging System Policy Coordinator for [Sarasota County Government](#), it was easy to see the village concept had many similarities with the [Age-Friendly Sarasota](#) initiative. Both have a collective approach that connect community and services to enhance quality of life and wellbeing.

"I love so many things about this community, including its rich history, beautiful parks and beaches, entertainment venues, and great restaurants. I am also extremely grateful to have my family close.



the daughter of a local couple. They live in Sarasota, and their daughter lives in New York. She had challenges navigating her parent's care from far away and sought help through the Age-Friendly website. Through community resources, her parents received support, and all worked out well for them.

My reason for telling the story lies in the friendship I developed with the couple's daughter. Over the past two years, I have regularly communicated with her through email and phone calls. We developed a long-distance friendship beyond the needs of mom and dad. We check in on each other to see how things are going, and of course, we still check in on mom and dad. The friendship started with a need but developed into something more meaningful – an outlet for conversation, a friend to listen to when things weren't going as planned, and a human connection with someone who cared.

There is a wonderful program with caring people right in our community who can become that trusted voice on the other end of the line and be that friend to you! Read more [here](#).

My hope is that more community members join us as we continue to build UPLIFT Florida Network."

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## Weird But True: Unbelievable Facts about America's National Parks

Dreaming of a summer vacation at a national park? Learn more from these [fun facts from National Geographic](#).

If you're looking for something closer to home, discover these [national treasures in Florida](#).



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