

**Community Partnerships Committee  
Of the Orange County Commission on Aging**

**Tuesday, May 4, 2018 \* 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**  
Pine Hills Community Center, 6408 Jennings Road, Orlando FL 32818

*Bringing together local organizations that work directly with & provide services for seniors, their caregivers & their families in the Central Florida community. Providing the Commission on Aging input on proposed projects & identifying needs of older Orange County adults.*

**Members Present**

Carolyn Austin, Representative Bruce Antoine's Office, Florida House District 46  
Sara Danczyk, Office of the Attorney General  
Cheryl Fix, Florida Department of Children and Families  
Nancy Gavaghan, FUNctional Independence Training  
Edith Gendron, Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center  
Helen Jones, AARP Florida  
Taylor Martin, Flourish In Place  
Delilah McKay, Volunteers for Community Impact  
Jeanne McKnight, Keller Williams  
Bridget Monroe, Cornerstone Hospice  
Stephanie Palacios, Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy  
Eric Randazzo, Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling  
Kelly Robertson, Volunteers for Community Impact  
Wynter Solomon-Cuthbert, Ninth Judicial Circuit Court  
Ken Terrell, OAK Central Florida  
Ada Tirado, Community Health Centers, Inc.  
Abby Walters, AARP Florida

**Staff Present**

Mimi Reggentin, Office on Aging

**Minutes**

- Ms. Gendron opened the meeting thanked everyone for attending.

**Presentation** – Advocacy and Lobbying for Elders

- Ms. Gendron introduced Abby Walters with AARP Florida.
- Ms. Walters provided a history of the AARP organization and the programs that AARP provides in the community.
- Ms. Walters lead a discussion on what “advocacy” means. There was discuss that “advocacy” involves going into the community to talk and educate residents and community leaders about issues. It is information, education, empowerment and awareness. It involves a dedication to understanding the issues.
- Ms. Walters stated advocacy involves more than just talking with legislators. It can also involve social media, community demonstrations, mailers and more.

- Ms. Walters led a discussion in how to be successful when approaching elected officials. You can request a meeting both to “ask” for their support on an issue as well as to “inform” them of what your organization is doing in the community. It is important to tell stories, not just sharing statistics.
- There was discussion that both the state and federal websites have resources to help people track proposed bills. These website also allow users to determine how elected officials have voted on past bills.
- Ms. Walters stated AARP is currently focusing on three big issues at the national level.
  - SNAP benefits – Current regulations state that individuals ages 18-49 must work 20 hours a week in order to receive SNAP benefits. There is a proposal to increase this age to 59. AARP opposes this proposal.
  - Medical deductions – While the new federal tax law included a provision to allow taxpayers to write off a portion of their medical expenses, the law stipulates this provision will expire in 2019. AARP is lobbying to keep this provision.
  - Assisting caregivers – AARP is encouraging people to join the newly established bipartisan Congressional “Assisting Caregivers Today” caucus, which focuses on bringing greater visibility to the value of and need to support family caregivers.
- Ms. Walters stated that, at the state level, AARP is focused on preserving the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and ensuring seniors are recognized as a population that has significant affordable housing needs. Ms. Walters noted that another concern is many seniors do not have homeowners insurance and have difficulty paying for repairs after a disaster. The Committee discussed the need for more community outreach to elders about disaster service programs so that seniors can apply for these benefits before they expire. There was agreement that news organizations should have a “senior” segment in their broadcasts. Agencies should also look at radio and print resources.
- Ms. Walters stated she would share the comments from this meeting with state AARP leaders.

### **Minutes**

- Ms. Gendron asked the Committee to review the minutes of March 2, 2018. No changes were made and the minutes were approved.

### **Commission on Aging Update**

- Ms. Reggentin stated the Commission on Aging is involved in several community events. The next 50+ FYI Expo is June 1 and will be held at the Renaissance Senior Center. The annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Symposium is scheduled for June 15 at the Community United Methodist Church in Casselberry.

### **Partnership “Go Around”**

- Ms. Gendron asked attendees to share any new programs or events associated with their organization.
  - Bridget Monroe, Cornerstone Hospice – Ms. Monroe stated that Cornerstone Hospice is apply for a certificate of need to expand into Pasco County and is asking community partners for letters of support.
  - Sara Danczyk, Office of the Attorney General – Ms. Danczyk stated reducing the incidence of elder abuse one of the priorities of Attorney General Pam Bondy. She added the Osceola County Council on Aging has a three year grant to educate law

enforcement on how to prevent elder abuse. Ms. Danczyk stated that many people do not know about their victim's compensation program.

- Ms. Walters and Ms. Jones, AARP Florida – Ms. Walters stated that AARP is hosting a caregivers workshop on May 22 at the Winter Park Community Center. Ms. Jones stated the Winter Park AARP is known as the “traveling” chapter and offers both local and long-distance travel opportunities to its members. Their next meeting is May 15 at the Aloma Methodist Church in Winter Park.
- Eric Randazzo, Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling – Mr. Randazzo stated that 20 percent of the calls into the state gambling hotline are from seniors. He added that gambling is now considered a mental health condition and is listed in the DSM-5 manual produced by the American Psychiatric Association.
- Kelli Robertson, Volunteers for Community Impact – Ms. Robertson provided an overview of the federal Foster Grandparents and RSVP programs. She added that RSVP programs are offered at many of the local senior high rises so that individuals who can no longer drive can continue to volunteer in the community. Ms. Robertson stated the annual Foster Grandparents celebration is June 1 and they are soliciting gift baskets to give to the 400-500 seniors who will be attending.
- Taylor Martin, Flourish In Place – Ms. Martin Lee provided an overview of their home companion agency.
- Ada Tirado, Community Health Centers, Inc. – Ms. Tirado stated their organization now have 13 medical centers in Lake and Orange County. The newest location will be in Clermont and there is an open house for community partners on May 16.
- Stephanie Palacios, Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy – Ms. Palacios stated Congresswoman Murphy's office has staff that can help constituents navigate through federal benefits programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and the VA. She encourage attendees to reach out to their elected officials and become engaged.
- Ms. Austin, Representative Bruce Antoine's Office, Florida House District 46 – Ms. Austin stated Representative Antoine's Office can help local residents navigate through the state benefits system, including child support and prison visitation privileges. Staff also helps local residents navigate federal benefits programs.
- Jeanne McKnight, Keller Williams – Ms. McKnight stated her real estate practice focuses on older adults and helping elders transition to their next home. She added that she is focused on building relationships with other organizations to better serve her clients.
- Ms. Gavaghan, FUNctional Independence Training – Ms. Gavaghan stated their next falls prevention class will begin on September 11 and will be held at the Center for Independent Living from 10 a.m. to noon for eight weeks.
- Cheryl Fix, Florida Department of Children and Families – Ms. Fix stated she is one of three medical investigators for the central region and she covers Orange, Seminole and Brevard counties. As a medical investigator she is often called to court as an expert witness for elder abuse cases.
- Ken Terrell, OAK Central Florida – Mr. Terrell stated his organization is focused on delivering information and advocacy to local seniors. He is located at Two Spirits Health, which has received a grant from the City of Orlando to provide primary care and mental health counseling to city residents (age 55+) who lack health insurance. Mr. Terrell stated he is hosting the You Shall LHiV performance company on May 5 at Joy Metropolitan Church. Mr. Terrell reviewed some of the recent 2015-16 data

incidence of HIV. There has been a 72.8 percent increase in HIV in Florida. The Orlando MSA area ranks fifth in the nation for new instances of HIV.

- Ms. Gendron, Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center – Ms. Gendron stated the next Savvy Caregivers program is schedule for July. Their website, [www.adrccares](http://www.adrccares.com), has a list of all their educational outreach efforts.

- The meeting ended at 10 a.m.

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