



## The Importance of Information & Education

Joe Steckler, President  
Helping Seniors of Brevard

On December 1, 2017, I received a Superstar Award from 2-1-1 Brevard & Parrish Medical Center recognizing my work with Helping Seniors. It is a humbling experience to be selected by your peers for such an accomplishment, but after 38 years in the military & 29 years with nonprofits, I know that such an achievement is the result of a team effort by family, staff, volunteers, & donors.

Driving home from the awards ceremony, I reflected on the many wonderful organizations we have in Brevard that serve people in need. Parrish Medical Center & 2-1-1 Brevard did a splendid job with the event - presentations & attendees were all supportive of programs that help people. Arriving home I checked the answering machine. News from our Information Specialist at Helping Seniors quickly brought me back to reality.

Helping Seniors had received a call from a 63-year-old woman who was living on civil service retirement of \$895 a month & taking care of a 31-year-old disabled son. The son worked as a bagger to help out, but they were still living in a van, paying \$500 a month for medical insurance & \$400 a month for two storage units containing all their possessions. They were getting a mere \$15 a month in food stamps because they were MAKING TOO MUCH MONEY (but living

in their van).

The lady did not know where to start to try to solve her immediate problems. She needed help, most of which concerned where to go for help. As questions were asked, it became apparent that what she initially called about was the tip of the iceberg. What she really needed was more information on the many programs available in Brevard that could help her with food, housing, & disability services.

We might say that this is a rare case, but in fact it occurs rather often, we just do not hear about it. Our ignorance does not mean that such happenings are not important or do not exist. On the contrary, these cases underscore the need for more education & information. The programs that help people in Brevard cannot be effective if no one knows about them. That is why organizations like Helping Seniors that inform, educate, & connect people to the help they need are such an important part of the care equation.

The title of this article is a wake-up call: all of us should be more aware of the many nonprofits that exist to serve others. Finding out that people who desperately need help, especially with food, only receive assistance of \$15 a month demonstrates the urgency of our mission. This type of information gathering also underscores the need for a County Aging plan that can bring together Comm. resources to plan for the future.

Joe Steckler is the President of Helping Seniors of Brevard, a nonprofit organization designed to advocate, educate, & fundraise on behalf of Brevard's senior citizens. Feel free to contact us at: [info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org](mailto:info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org) or calling :321-473-7770. **SS**

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# UPCOMING EVENTS



**Mt Dora Art Festival** - Sat, Feb. 3 - \$40 - enjoy the day at one of Central Florida's largest craft fairs, vendors from around the country. Sign up by Jan. 15th, min. of 35

**11th Annual Historical Farmall Tractor Show** - Fri, Feb. 16th - \$55 - enjoy the day at the 11th annual Tractor show, with tractor pulls and antique tractor parade. Sign up by Jan. 25th, min. of 35

**Strawberry Festival** - Thur. March 1st - \$79 - I have 50 reserved seats in section 3A for the Oak Ridge Boys. Included in cost are your gate admission, reserved seats for Oak Ridge Boys and Strawberry Shortcake. Sign up by Jan. 15th, when tickets are sold out they are gone

**St John Riversip with Lunch** - Wed., March 14 - \$86 - sail on the St. Johns River and see the wildlife while you enjoy fabulous lunch.

Deadline to sign up Feb. 14, min. of 35

**Waitress** March 24, 2018 - \$92 - inspired by Adrienne Shelly's beloved film, Waitress tells the story of Jenna, a waitress and expert pie maker. Jenna dreams of a way out of her small town and loveless marriage. A baking contest in a nearby county and the town's new doctor may offer her a chance for a fresh start, while her fellow waitresses offer their own recipes for happiness. Jenna must summon the strength and courage to rebuild her own life. These are upper balcony tickets at this time, if Broadway Across America opens lower level tickets then we will have first dibs for them and we will reprice, final payment due by Feb 1st

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