

Building Elder Friendly Communities in the New Year



We have just celebrated Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, and now will start the New Year. Living in the sunny South, we often forget the ravages of winter and the experiences many of us had in a crueler North. Still, whether we lived north or south, it is impossible not to think about the needs we face as we age. For many years it has been my intent to "circle the wagons" around issues encountered by senior citizens.

Sadly, all of us age. How we manage to weather that process is a matter of personal accomplishment. Regardless of how we do the aging, it will happen, as this is one inevitable process. What we need to consider is how to enable the majority of us to age with dignity, while remembering that we are all created equal with rights that should be extended to all.

In the course of developing background material for over 400 television shows and 750 radio shows, I have looked under a few rocks, including one labeled "elder friendly community". My question is, if in fact we are an elder friendly community, why do we not have a written aging plan supported by financial resources? We have a few senior community centers and a Housing and Human Services office but there is a definite paucity of staff to serve senior citizens. In a county that is a rapidly growing senior haven, this should be a matter of concern.

Education, awareness, information and available senior services are a must if we are to be called an elder friendly community. In Ohio, certain counties have taken a stand by enforcing a tax on housing

that is placed in a fund to assist seniors. This is not a government program; rather it is one whereby the citizens of Ohio have said enough is enough, we are going to start preparing for a way to assist those seniors in need.

As we begin 2016, let us consider creating a plan for how we want to age. Such a plan will cost money, but it is possible to develop the necessary funding. That we are an aging community dictates that we think ahead. Failure to act now will ensure a non-capability in the future. The Helping Seniors Advocacy Council, a volunteer group of concerned Brevard citizens, has initiated the process by developing and submitting to the Board of County Commissioners a document outlining the need for an aging plan. Now we need to follow up.

On behalf of all who have made these columns, radio, and television shows possible, and the staff and Board of Directors of Helping Seniors, I wish each and all the best wishes for a prosperous 2016. One way to get a head start in the New Year is to call Kay at 321-473-7770. She can help you usher in 2016 with advice on seeking needed assistance. **SS**

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As we go into the new year, we couldn't be more excited here in the Heart of Historic Downtown, as 2016 offers not only the challenges of the unknown, but the start of a new apprentice, who we're real excited about, as well as a new outreach program we'll be sharing, called Mission Hearing.

Until then, I want to close by thanking all of my loyal readers, as well as patients, and call down a blessing upon each and every reader of an overflowing abundance of Hope, Health, Healing, Peace, Prosperity and Love throughout this new year. Be Blessed, as You Bless others, and live in the faith of being in the most exciting times, in a world of limitless beauty, and wonder.

Happy New Year! Dan

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New Year!**



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