

## Accessing assistance for Space Coast seniors

In a county that has more than 550 people, with about half meeting AARP standards to qualify as senior citizens, there is a definite need for accurate and accessible information about senior care resources and programs. What are seniors to do if such information is not available?

In 2011, Helping Seniors of Brevard County was formed to answer this question. We are a nonprofit organization engaged in making information, education and resources available to seniors and those who care for them. Ensuring that nearly 250,000 seniors are aware of assistance is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing story that needs to be told daily.

We also advocate for seniors and essential programs like Meals on Wheels.

According to Kaiser Health News, funding for Meals on Wheels is lagging behind the increase in numbers of elderly, causing a reduction of meals in many locations. This has spurred some providers to build health and safety screenings into daily meal deliveries. By partnering with hospitals and insurers, Meals on Wheels can generate additional revenue while decreasing emergency room costs.

With the current thrust on repealing the Affordable Care Act, there could be a tendency for valuable programs such as Meals on Wheels to become endangered species. Too often, the most needy of needs are not identified in the overall rush to reduce expenses. Meals on Wheels has been in existence for 60 years and is critical to the



HELPING SENIORS  
OF BREVARD  
JOE STECKLER

survival of many frail elderly who have no other source of nutritious food.

This is just one example of an elder care service we take for granted. Can you imagine how many people would be affected if this most necessary program was reduced? Nonprofit organizations like Helping Seniors serve a vital function by informing us of needs that are not being met.

In Florida, we have about 50,000 people on wait lists for home care services. Now is the time to ensure that all counties have identified plans that will enable their citizens to age safely and with dignity.

Brevard County does not have an approved plan for seniors to age with dignity. There is a Commission on Aging but it has not taken an active leadership role in promoting the development of an active plan to develop financial resources to assist a rapidly elderly community. Saying we are an elder friendly community requires an active effort to make it this. Government need not necessarily fund all resources, but it does have a responsibility to take a role in the development of active elder leadership.

See SENIORS page 8

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**PET OF THE WEEK!**



A 3-month-old Pit bull, 'Sasha' is the blue-eyed baby of Jennifer Diaz of Melbourne. Sasha loves to play, run and snuggle.

### Is your pet worthy of the spotlight?

*Hometown News* will be the judge of that.

We are asking our readers to submit photos of their beloved pets, as part of our "Pet of the Week" Contest. The winner for the week will have his or her pet displayed in our newspaper, while also being qualified to become the Hometown News "Pet of the Year!" Email a photo of your pet (one entry per owner) that is at least 1 MB in size to [yourphotos@hometownnewsol.com](mailto:yourphotos@hometownnewsol.com). Write "PET OF THE WEEK CONTEST" in the subject line, and in the body of the email, please include the following information:

- Name of pet
- Age
- Breed
- Three of your pet's favorite things to do
- Pet owner's full name and hometown
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## Health First Aging Services benefits from golf tournament

By Brittany Mulligan

[bmulligan@hometownnewsol.com](mailto:bmulligan@hometownnewsol.com)

BREVARD COUNTY — Residents, it's time to haul out those golf bags and tie up your shoes because Health First is hosting its annual Golf Classic on Monday, Jan. 30 at the Suntree Country Club.

This golf tournament will benefit Health First Aging Services, and it's still not too late for teams of four to assemble for the golf scramble tournament.

According to its website, Health First Aging Services is dedicated to improving the quality of life of adults by providing high-quality health care for seniors and support for their caregivers.

"We are so grateful for the generosity of the Health First Foundation," said Dr. Visa Srinivasan, Medical Director of Health First Aging Services. "As the beneficiary of the Health First Golf Classic, we will be able to provide more resources,

education and services to our patients and their caregivers."

Registration will open at 7 a.m. on the day of the event, followed by breakfast from 7-8 a.m. and a shotgun start at 8 a.m.

Trophies and awards will be given to first-, second- and third-place teams, as well as for Longest Drive and Closest to Pin.

Participants will have multiple chances to win contests and prizes through a Hole in One, On and Off the green, Move the Tee, putting contest, door prizes and a ball launcher.

There are plenty of sponsorship opportunities still available, starting with a two-some at \$600.

All golfers will get a tournament shirt, special giveaway, range balls, breakfast, lunch and gifts.

The Suntree Country Club is at 1 Country Club Dr., Melbourne.

For more information, visit [HFgive.org](http://HFgive.org).

## Community Calendar

### FRIDAY, JAN. 27

**LEAD Brevard to host board governance workshop:** LEAD Brevard, with support from the Community Foundation for Brevard, presents the most requested board training workshop "Engage Your Board in Dynamic Governance and Fundraising" for board members and staff leaders serving nonprofit organizations in Brevard, Friday, Jan. 27 at Suntree Country Club.

Chuck Loring, Senior BoardSource Governance Associate, returns to Brevard to share his expertise in helping Boards of Directors develop a culture of philanthropy and showcases the critical roles of board members in development planning, including easy ways to engage board members in fundraising.

This workshop can help you build the capacity of your board and therefore your organization. During this interactive day, you'll learn from Mr. Loring and your peers and gain knowledge of the major building blocks of an effective board. Areas of discussion include topics like how to identify, recruit and orient board members, board roles and responsibilities, effective board structure and the board's role in fundraising.

The investment for the workshop is \$60 for LEAD Brevard members and \$75 for general public. Registration includes workshop materials, continental breakfast, lunch and refreshment breaks.

To register for the workshop or for

additional information, visit [www.LEAD-Brevard.org](http://www.LEAD-Brevard.org), call (321) 632-8222 or email Kristen Klein at [KristenK@LEADBrevard.org](mailto:KristenK@LEADBrevard.org).

**'Captain Wattage' to connect with Florida students:** Florida Power and Light, Company and The National Theatre for Children have partnered again to bring energy efficiency education to elementary schools throughout FPL's service areas in the winter of 2017.

Through these innovative programs, teachers have the opportunity to educate their students about resources and energy conservation via unique live theatre performances. This winter, troupes will visit more than 60 elementary schools.

The educational and entertaining program will focus on:

- What is energy?
- The uses of energy
- Ways energy is wasted
- What YOU can do to conserve energy

The program offers live theatrical performances to schools with students in kindergarten through sixth grades. In addition to the live performances, the program includes online student playbooks, teacher guides, e-books and digital games and activities that align with the important concepts outlined in the live shows.

Performances will take place through

See **CALENDAR** page 11

## Seniors

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*Seniors of Brevard, a nonprofit organization designed to advocate, educate and 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.*

*Joe Steckler is the President of Helping*