

# Recent move solidifies advocacy for seniors

I have been writing this column since 2012 when Helping Seniors was founded. From the beginning we knew that one of our main charges would be to advocate for the elderly. We have taken a big step toward that goal with our recent move to 2401 N. Harbor City Blvd., Suite 134. This location, former Keiser University and now Unity of Melbourne, offers space to host events that will help promote seniors causes throughout Brevard County.

My own senior status has made me aware of the many issues that remain unresolved in our community. It may seem I am on an endless loop when writing about the need for a Brevard County aging plan, eldercare endowment, senior advocacy and education, and funding of local nonprofits. The reason I repeat myself is because seniors still do not know what services and programs are available for them here in Brevard.

You may ask why a private citizen has to advocate for these things. After all, we pay taxes to fund the Brevard Housing and Human Services Department, which has charge of the Brevard Commission on Aging. What does this department do to justify?

Did it even comment when the Board of County Commissioners voted to defund all nonprofit funding from the Brevard County General Revenue Fund?

A search of social services rendered by



**HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD**  
**JOE STECKLER**

other United States counties shows that Brevard provides minimal support to nonprofits that serve young and old alike. Seniors and children both require assistance, for it is at the beginning and end of the life cycle that these most vulnerable of our citizens need our help. The main challenge is to generate funding to support such programs.

Recent *Florida Today* headlines have focused on the need to fund the Children's Services Council of Brevard. I was a member of the Council for nine years, trying to foster development of a program that would unite all of Brevard in support of youth and elders. The best way to assist these two equally deserving elements of society is a joint effort, not pitting one against the other.

Does a current lack of financial support mean we should forego programs to assist identified risk areas? Does it make sense to fund the Children's Services Council without a complete understanding of its need, objectives, and ultimate cost when we

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# Calendar

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For more information, call (321) 636-5346 or visit [www.NARFE.org/Chapter1137](http://www.NARFE.org/Chapter1137).

**Grief support group:** Hospice of St. Francis will host a Grief Support Group at 1 p.m. Mondays and 10 a.m. Thursdays, at 4875 N. Wickham Road, Suite 108, Melbourne.

For more information, call Christy Taylor at (321) 269-4240 or email [bereavementservices@hospiceofstfrancis.com](mailto:bereavementservices@hospiceofstfrancis.com).

**Things to do at Lipscomb Community Center in Melbourne:**

**Mondays:** Adult Morning Club from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays. Ages 18 and older. Free.

**Tuesdays:** The Cub Scouts meet (ongoing) from 6:30 to 8 p.m. For ages 6-11 years. \$24 yearly.

**Wednesdays:** After School Youth Club, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Ages 6-11. Free

**Thursdays:** Youth Game Night, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Ages 6-11. Free.

**Saturday:** The Breakfast Club from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, April 7. Ages 5-13. \$3.

All events take place in the Lipscomb Community Center, 3316 Monroe St., Melbourne.

For more information, call (321) 608-7450.

## TUESDAY, AUG. 14

**Sunrise yoga:** Enjoy yoga at 7:30 a.m. Tuesdays at the Barrier Island Center, 8385 State Road A1A, Melbourne Beach.

Improve your health with BIC volunteer Isa. There is an \$8 donation.

For more information, call (321) 723-3556 or visit [www.barrierislandcenter.com](http://www.barrierislandcenter.com).

**Aikido classes in Cape Canaveral:** The Cape Canaveral Culture and Leisure Services department will host Aikido classes from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays at the Nancy Hanson Recreation Complex, 7300 N. Atlantic Ave., Cape Canaveral.

Instructed by Carlos Johnson, this class is designed to teach the basic techniques of this type of martial arts to connect mind and body and lead students on the path to peace.

Sensei Carlos has been training Aikido for eight years and has attended Aikido seminars throughout the world.

The cost is \$60 per month.

For more information or to register, contact Carlos at (205)-792-9787 or email at [scjSoftware@yahoo.com](mailto:scjSoftware@yahoo.com).

**Karaoke night:** Elks Lodge No. 1744 welcomes Elks and guests to their lodge, 211 S. Nieman Ave., Melbourne, for Karaoke with Janice and Rene from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesdays. Supper is available after 5 p.m.

For more information about room

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# Company to hold open auditions for 'Nutcracker'

By Jamie Desena-McFarland

For Hometown News

BREVARD COUNTY — This month, aspiring dancers from around Brevard County will have a new opportunity to audition for Space Coast Ballet Company's annual production of "The Nutcracker."

Prior to this year, the company's "Nutcracker" included dancers from the company's school — which has closed — in addition to guest performers.

The open audition format is part of a new approach to the company's leadership.

"In the past SCBC has hired their artistic director from local dance studios," the company announced on Facebook in June. "We are now independent of any dance studio. We feel that our movement in this direction will encourage participation of all dancers in Brevard County."

The Open World Dance Foundation, a nonprofit whose motto is "united by dance," began providing artistic direction for the company in the spring.

The collaboration will continue at least through the Dec. 1 "Nutcracker" performance, said Open World's founder and president, Ekaterina Shchelkanova, a former soloist with American Ballet Theatre who was a guest performer for the Space Coast Ballet Company in the early 2000s.

"The Open World Dance Foundation is looking forward to joining forces with the Space Coast Ballet to bring a beautiful production to the Space Coast, and more

importantly, the opportunity to everyone who wants to learn more about theater and art," Ms. Shchelkanova said.

Run by Ms. Shchelkanova and Vice President Anton Boytsov, the foundation operates an Elite Training Program for a small group of dancers and holds a variety of ballet workshops and training events.

The foundation also produces ballets in Florida and elsewhere that are open to dancers of all ages and abilities.

Such experience with large-scale productions featuring local participants is one of the main reasons the company approached the foundation for artistic direction, Ms. Shchelkanova said.

Additionally, like the company's productions, the foundation's have also included guest performers.

When it premiered in Houston, the foundation's 2016 production of "Cinderella" featured Misty Copeland, who is well-known in the ballet world for becoming the first African-American female principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre.

The cast of 200 included 123 local children who gained experience in a professional theater environment while also participating in educational activities covering history and culture, Ms. Shchelkanova noted.

"Open World Dance Foundation is about sharing," the foundation's website explains. "From the very beginning we wanted to share love for our art form, the history and tradition of it, so it inspires others and leads them into a better yet



Photo courtesy of Open World Dance Foundation

The Open World Dance foundation currently is providing artistic direction for Space Coast Ballet Company's December performance of 'The Nutcracker.'

unknown future."

"That's why it's called Open World —" Ms. Shchelkanova added, "to open doors of the professional world to any member of the community."

Auditions for "The Nutcracker" will be held Sunday, Aug. 19 in rooms 158 and 160 of the King Center Rotunda at the Maxwell C. King Center for the Performing Arts, 3865 N. Wickham Road, Melbourne.

The audition schedule is as follows:

1:30 p.m. - Girls ages 3-4

2:15 p.m. - Girls ages 5-7

3 p.m. - Girls ages 8-9

3:45 p.m. - Boys ages 5-15; girls ages 10-11

4:30 p.m. - Girls ages 12 and older - on pointe

5:30 p.m. Adults ages 18 and older

Audition participants are asked to arrive 20 minutes ahead of their age group's scheduled time in order to make a payment and fill out forms.

The cost to audition is \$20 per person or \$35 per family.

For more information about the auditions, visit [www.spacecoastballetcompany.com](http://www.spacecoastballetcompany.com).

## Shelter

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blankets."

Rev. Peters said there are also several church and nonprofit groups that have agreed to offer hot meals and overnight supervision on cold nights, although more teams are needed.

Mosaic has partnered with Volunteers of America, which will provide case management for the guests to ensure that they not only have a warm place to stay, but also have support services available.

"We are hopeful we can get some electrical and plumbing work done at the church so we can install a washer and dryer," said Rev. Peters. "We'd also like to see about obtaining a mobile shower to offer hot showers on the cold nights."

Mosaic Church opened its doors a year ago and Rev. Peters said the congregation has been supportive of the shelter idea.

"They have a heart to serve and care for those in need," said Rev. Peters. "I believe as Christians we are called to live out our faith actively."

Discussion of a cold weather shelter arose from a Poverty Solutions Workshop held at

Palm Bay City Hall in late March and a follow-up workshop in late May. The charge to develop a cold night shelter in south Brevard County and to move Palm Bay's homeless population toward supportive housing has been led by Palm Bay resident Thomas Rebman, who was recently recruited to serve in the volunteer role as the city's social services administrator.

After the May meeting, partnerships were quickly formed with churches including Mosaic and Tomoka, as well as Ascension Catholic Church, Centerpointe Church and the Salvation Army of Melbourne.

Sponsors to date include the Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce, Palm Bay Rotary Club, Brevard Homeless Coalition, Volunteers of America, Tapestry Sharing Ministries and Community of Hope.

Brevard County Emergency Management designates a cold night when the temperature is expected to be at 45 degrees or below. This is the first cold weather shelter to be located in Palm Bay. Other cold night shelters in Brevard County include His Place Ministries in Melbourne, Central Brevard Sharing Center in Cocoa and North Brevard Coalition of Human Services in Titusville.

## Seniors

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do not even have a plan for half our county's population to age with dignity? I believe we are putting the cart before the horse if we decide this issue in a primary election, ensuring a result without a workable plan to solve a problem that affects all.

We can and should do better. Brevard County citizens should have a say in what our government is designed to do. I think that continued failure to ignore unification of children and senior causes will be detrimental to each segment of our population.

Joe Steckler is president of Helping Seniors of Brevard, a nonprofit organization designed to advocate, educate, and fundraise on behalf of Brevard's senior citizens. Contact the group at [info@helpingseniorsobrevard.org](mailto:info@helpingseniorsobrevard.org) or call (321) 473-7770.

## Calendar

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rentals or scheduled activities, call (321) 768-1744.

### WEDNESDAY, AUG. 15

**Job fair:** CareerSource Brevard and the Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce are hosting "Job Fair at The Avenue Viera on Wednesday, Aug. 15, at 2261 Towne Center Avenue, Suite 103, Viera.

There will be a special early job fair entry from 9 to 10 a.m. for AARP, veterans, active duty and military families.

The event is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Meet dozens of local employers who are hiring now.

Pre-register for faster entry.

1) Create your account in Employ

Florida, [www.employflorida.com](http://www.employflorida.com).

2) Once registered (or if already registered in Employ Florida) login to your account and from your main screen, and go to "Current Events"

3) Select "Job Fair Events"

4) Select "Yes" under "Include State-wide Shared Events outside of my region?" Then select "Filter"

5) Select "Aug. 15 Job Fair" on the events calendar

6) Scroll to bottom of page and select "Register"

Please note, you may be contacted by CareerSource Brevard staff to collect additional information if needed to complete your registration.

For more information, call John Berardi at (321) 394-0598.

**Sea glass club meets:** Florida's East Coast Sea Glass Club hosts its monthly meeting from 1 to 3 p.m. the third

Wednesday (Aug. 15) of the month at the South Melbourne Beach Public Library, 324 Ocean Ave, Melbourne Beach.

The event is free and open to everyone. For more, email [Bchshells@yahoo.com](mailto:Bchshells@yahoo.com).

### THURSDAY, AUG. 16

**All fun and games:** The City of Melbourne's Parks and Recreation Department hosts Youth Game Night from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursdays at Lipscomb Community Center, 3316 Monroe St., Melbourne.

Admission is free and kids ages 6 to 11 can take part in board games and Xbox video games.

For more information, call (321) 608-7450.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tour a garden:** Florida's Tropicals is hosting its annual Garden Tour & Plant