

What we can do for nonprofits

I have been involved in grass roots nonprofit work since 1993. During this time the way nonprofits are funded has changed. Most who contact a nonprofit do so because they need information or some type of assistance. They may have an unexpected event they cannot afford. And, while there are those who simply work the system, the majority of calls are made by people who truly need some type of help.

Many communities have local chapters of national associations such as Alzheimer's, cancer, or heart disease. The money you give to these organizations is supposed to serve the cause advertised. Most donors never think about the staff needed to manage such charities. You can investigate the use of your donation by reviewing a nonprofit's 990 tax form. You might be surprised.

Since I am intimately involved with Helping Seniors, let's use them as an example. We have a small staff who answers the helpline, produces media programs, and does administrative work.



HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD
JOE STECKLER

Our revenue comes from media sponsors and local donors. United Way was approached, but their doors were closed to new services. Then the Commissioners decided that nonprofits did not need any tax dollar support and eliminated all Brevard County funding.

So we had to develop new income. Helping Seniors uses a business model to develop the resources necessary to pay daily operational costs. We started a directory of senior services, as well as a car raffle with help from an anonymous donor and A.J. Hiers of Boniface Hiers Automotive Group. This year A.J. is helping us with three raffle cars: a 2019 Dodge Challenger, Mazda convertible,

and Dodge truck. The winner will select one vehicle from the three.

Our clients are seniors who do not understand the paperwork they have received, where to go for services, or how they might get a light bulb changed because they can not get on a ladder. We direct these callers to service providers and other nonprofits. I had a call from a lady in south Miami who was told we could help her. Her son was in the hospital, she had no transportation or food, and could get no one to return her calls. A little time and a few phone calls later, I was able to get her help, and the service cost nothing.

We are entering new times for nonprofits. How will we respond? What do we want in our communities to help serve people in need? Will we plan for an aging community, recognizing the need to support organizations that serve seniors? Does the County have a responsibility to dedicate tax dollars to select organiza-

tions that serve seniors? Do seniors, who pay taxes, have the right to information and services not currently available through Country sources? Should the burden of such services be the burden of private funding sources?

Perhaps the answers to these questions should be based on a survey that actually informs the decision makers of needs perceived by the tax payers - a tremendous but necessary task. Above all, let's not eliminate public funding for nonprofits simply because the decision makers do not have the information required to make an accurate decision according to overall community need.

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@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org or call (321) 473-7770.

Calendar

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Beach. For more information, call 321-783-8991.

Valentine Luncheon: A special Valentine luncheon will be sponsored by South Brevard City Council of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority at the Yellow Dog Restaurant

located at 905 US Highway 1 in Palm Bay. The luncheon will take place on Saturday, Feb. 9 starting at 11:30 a.m. Cost is \$28.00 per person. For more information, call Jewell Patton at 321-723-2250.

American Muscle Car Show: On Feb. 9, The American Muscle Car Museum will take place at 3500 Sarno Road in Melbourne from 6-9 p.m. Enjoy a fun night of music, drinks and dancing.

Guests can stroll around the over 250+ automobiles in a 50's type atmosphere at the American Muscle Car Museum. Silent Auction sponsored by AmFund with #8 wonderful getaways. Enjoy the wonderful food from Red Robin and treats from Edible Arrangements of the Space Coat. Cost is \$75 per person. The St. Baldrick's Foundation is a volunteer-driven charity committed to funding the most promising

research to find cures for childhood cancers and give survivors long and healthy lives. For more information or to order tickets, call 321-802-4185 or email scottmmccarthy24@gmail.com

Lighthouse Gala: The 2019 Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation Gala will be held on Feb. 9 at the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse, located at Lighthouse

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