

Protect your ability to age

It is no secret that we are a rapidly aging community. What is not so well known is how local nonprofits assist the senior population here in Brevard. There are many wonderful organizations in our community that work daily to help those in need, but if the public does not know about them or what they do, we are guilty of a great disservice.

For example, the Veteran's Administration recently published new criteria for Vietnam veterans who served in country and have gotten cancer from Agent Orange exposure. New guidelines have been established for ships that were conducting operations within the 12-mile limit. In addition, it has been acknowledged that soldiers exposed to the "Burn Pits" in Iraq and Afghanistan may carry a higher cancer risk. These are important things for our servicemen and servicewomen to understand if they become ill.

I know one man who served a tour in



HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD
JOE STECKLER

the Air Force in Vietnam. Since he was not a retiree, he did not qualify for medical, dental, commissary, or exchange privileges. However, after he developed cancer due to Agent Orange exposure and became 100% disabled, he was eligible for these privileges. Had this man not known people who were able to assist him, he could not have accessed the medical care and other benefits to which he was entitled.

Our veterans have voluntarily placed their lives on the line at the request of our government. What happens to them when they do not know where to go for

help? Consider the many men (and a few women) you see on our street corners holding signs saying, "I am a Vet and I am hungry". Some may be panhandlers, but many are genuinely homeless Vets who seek our services. I know because I have listened to their stories and helped them find the care they needed to get back on their feet.

Finally, I want to address the financial support nonprofits must develop to remain solvent so that they can serve our Vets and other elderly and frail homeless. If you need convincing, I can provide you with case studies right here in Brevard that demonstrate the need. We attract seniors to our community and reap the benefits of their tax dollars, but then take away \$500,000 in nonprofit funding that aids them and others. This is a drop in the bucket out of a billion dollar plus County budget. Where is the help for our Vets, homeless, and elderly?

We can and should do more to help those who serve others, thereby protecting our ability to age as we choose. If you want to support your favorite nonprofit serving those in need, mail a check or use PayPal to contribute to their annual fund drive. We have 75,000 plus Vets in Brevard, only a few of whom are homeless. Of those 75,000, about 50% are over 65. Imagine what a difference it would make if everyone who could donated just \$20 to their select charity.

I have learned that once a person realizes the good that many nonprofits accomplish, they become more willing to donate. Should you want to make a significant donation to a nonprofit of your choice, I would gladly assist you and do appreciate your help!

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at www.HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org, or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.

Alzheimer's

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save ourselves, our children, friends and anyone who could possibly develop Alzheimer's."

Held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide, the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzhei-

mer's is the world's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support and research.

"We encourage locals to participate in Walk, as the fundraising dollars fuel the Association's mission and having participation in the event helps to change the level of Alzheimer's awareness in the Space Coast community," says Amanda Harris, Space Coast Walk

Manager for the Alzheimer's Association. "While there is no fee to register, the Alzheimer's Association encourage participants to fund raise in order to contribute to the cause and raise awareness. This inspiring event calls on participants of all ages and abilities to join the fight against the disease!"

More than five million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease -

the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States. Additionally, more than 16 million family members and friends provide care to people with Alzheimer's and other dementias. In Florida alone, there are more than 560,000 people living with the disease.

Participants can join a team or register to walk as an individual at www.alz.org/walk.

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