

# An effective senior advocacy program

We have long neglected developing a plan to build affordable housing for current and future residents of Brevard County. No one is really certain of the number that are homeless or the number that need affordable housing. One of the earliest documented needs for affordable housing occurred 2,000 years ago when a young couple used a manger to bring a child into the world. Fast forward to today--we do not have stables and straw available or we might have more housing for those with limited or no funds.

Single people and families are often priced out of the market because they cannot afford \$1,500 a month or more for housing where they can raise a family. When I was young I lived in what was referred to in my town as a Housing Project. The homes were built out of cinder block in the early 40s and still exist today. Back then they were not considered a choice place to live, but I was able to walk to school with my brothers and had a



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

small but great home in which to live and celebrate the holidays. It was crowded, but we were happy.

I would imagine that many, including that young couple of 2,000 years ago, would like to have a similar place to live today, but I am not aware of such in Brevard County. I would further imagine that local government was somehow involved in the construction and management of the housing in which I lived as a child. The same could be accomplished today if we had County leadership involved, but that will only occur if we have a strong advocacy program.

The Senior Resource Center, located in the new Zon Beachside Assisted Living facility, has seven programs that can assist seniors. Helping Seniors, one of the organizations located there, is a small non-profit dedicated to linking seniors to the many wonderful resources available in Brevard to help them. In 2020, Helping Seniors will be committed to developing an effective senior advocacy program.

Five years ago Helping Seniors started the first senior advocacy program in Brevard, conducted a lengthy survey to identify senior needs, and submitted the results to the County Commissioners with recommendations for developing a county aging plan. In our first effort to alert the commissioners to a need that is now unmanageable, no answer was forthcoming. However, we will continue the work started by that advocacy group, augmented by those who care about correcting a neglected need in a county of almost 700,000 people.

This is not a new message. Hopefully some of you reading this will be as concerned as I and will commit to being a member of the new advocacy group. It is unconscionable to condone people living in the woods, knowing that homelessness continues to increase because families do not make enough to pay the rising cost of housing. We can and should do better. I honestly believe the place to start is a good look at the County budget. Let's see what can be eliminated or reduced, then partner with private money to make housing available for the homeless and those who can pay reasonable prices for a place to live. It can be done with the backing of a true advocacy program. Have we come far enough in 2,000 years?

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at [www.HelpingSeniorsOfBrevard.org](http://www.HelpingSeniorsOfBrevard.org), or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.

## Calendar

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Annual Holiday Bicycle Parade will take place on Friday, December 20 in historic downtown Cocoa Village. The parade will start at Cocoa Riverfront Park at 6:30pm and ride through the tree-lit streets of Cocoa Village twice, ending back at Riv-

erfront Park. Awards will be given to the best holiday decorated bicycles in 4 different categories. Entertainment and Food Vendors will add to the festivities. Bring your family (including your pets) to the Village for this free event! Registration is free. If you wish to participate, you can register at [www.VisitCocoaVillage.com](http://www.VisitCocoaVillage.com).

**Cocoa Beach Main Street Festival:**

Join the locals in Downtown Cocoa Beach on the third Friday of every month. There will be live music, food, vendors and family fun. The festival will take place on Friday, Dec. 20 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Main Street is located at 163 Minuteman Causeway, Cocoa Beach. For more information, visit [www.Visitspacecoast.com](http://www.Visitspacecoast.com)

**Tuba Christmas:** On Friday, December 20, Rockledge Presbyterian Church Sanctuary, located at 921 Rockledge Drive in

Rockledge. Created by Harvey Phillips, "Merry Tuba Christmas" 2019 concerts will be presented in over 300 cities throughout the U.S. and in several foreign countries. Every Christmas season, tuba and euphonium players of all ages (from 8 to 90), from specific geographic areas, gather to pay respect to all the great artists/teachers who represent their heritage. This year, the Rockledge "Merry Tuba See CALENDAR, page 9

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