



Senior Advocacy

By Joe Steckler, *President, Helping Seniors of Brevard County*

After months of anticipation, it is now official – Helping Seniors will sponsor a new Senior Advocacy Group at Zon assisted living facility, located at 1894 South Patrick Drive in Indian Harbor Beach. Join us the first Tuesday of each month from 10:00 AM until noon. The first meeting will be March 3, 2020. To make your reservation, please call Kim at 321-473-7770.

It is imperative that seniors unite to determine their own future. We have seen state and local elected officials vote to eliminate or transfer funds intended to help seniors. For the past decade Florida legislators have been raiding the Sadowski Fund, moving \$1 billion in funds meant to build affordable housing over to the general revenue portion of the state budget. Will we continue to let those we elect make decisions that adversely affect seniors?

Speaking of the state budget, I call your attention to the recent State of the State address by our Governor; if there was a mention of seniors anywhere in his talk, I failed to hear it. I have to admit that I am hard of hearing, but for that talk I had my hearing aids in and the TV turned up to hear any mention of seniors – which I did not.

You have read my comments about our County Commissioners defunding local nonprofits. Nonprofit funding in Brevard was once \$1 million annually, but times change and so do Commissioners. Although seniors are a rapidly growing segment of our population, programs and funding to assist seniors are not in place.

I do not think that our state or county is working to address problems caused by a rapid growth of seniors, problems that will only intensify as the population increases. Would it surprise you to know that we have more than 50,000 people on Medicaid waiting lists in Florida? Neither national nor state resources can resolve the issue without local support.

In 2015, Helping Seniors joined forces with community volunteers to survey thousands of seniors



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in Brevard County. Based on the results of that survey, we compiled a paper and presented it to the County Commissioners for action. Nothing was heard from that effort, but now we intend to pick up where we left off. Our goal is to spearhead work with the County Commissioners to develop a senior plan for Brevard County.

Sixty years ago I never envisioned writing columns like this. I was young, and what happened to seniors was not a concern to me. Now I can see that thinking about seniors is critical in places like Brevard where seniors make up almost half the population. We can and should do

better for those who need affordable housing, assistance with prescription drugs, ramps, and other things affecting an older population.

Call 321-473-7770 and reserve your spot for the first meeting of the Senior Advocacy Group.

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at www.HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org, or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 329 