



Return of Senior Funding

By Joe Steckler, President, Helping Seniors of Brevard County

My first venture into nonprofit fundraising was in 1992, the year I went to work for the Alzheimer’s Association East Central Florida Chapter. It was also my first contact with the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners and the County Manager. At that time, there were 73,000 seniors in Brevard, about half of the 150,000 seniors we now have.

These numbers illustrate a relevant point: that seniors pay a large chunk of the county budget through their property taxes. In fact, studies show that 65- to 74-year-olds have the highest home ownership rate among all age groups. Why does this matter? Because fair play and equity do not always prevail in nonprofit funding.

When I became associated with nonprofit work, there were few organizations that served seniors. Mainly these organizations were left to their own devices to raise money to fund their work—free services to help the homeless, those who had outlived their resources, those who never managed to make enough to plan a retirement, and those who did not plan when they could have and became dependent on the goodwill of others.

Without reliable funding, nonprofits must turn to

fundraising if they are to keep their doors open serving people. Car raffles, golf tournaments, art auctions, and annual fund drives are all types of fundraising events that benefit charities. “Nonprofit” simply means that an organization seeking your help does not have to pay taxes on the money they collect to provide services. Remember that few things in life are truly free.

Now that you know more about nonprofits, I come to the real reason for my article. When I started in this arena, the Brevard County Commissioners set aside about \$1 million to serve all nonprofits in Brevard. When the money dropped to about \$750,000, I helped the Space Coast Early Intervention program bring several children in need to a county meeting. That made our point, and the money went back up. Over the years it was gradually reduced to \$550,000, then cut out altogether in 2022.

Today we fight for federal grants, but then deal with paperwork that diverts precious hours from already limited employee time, but a little does trickle into nonprofit coffers to help people in need. Remember, also, the huge debate over where to locate the new Daily Bread building

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Here is a list of some of the great Solo Travel Destinations that you can visit as a senior.

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For U.S.-based travelers, Ireland is kind of a no-brainer when it comes to solo travel, thanks to easy access and friendly locals. Travel to the Emerald Isle becomes even easier with great Ireland vendors. While they offer traditional group tours, solo travelers should try one of the “locally

hosted rail” options: These excursions will set you up with hotels, transports (including train rides and chauffeured drives), and one activity per day, but leave you with enough free time to explore on your own. Even better? You’ll be given a 24/7 emergency number and a local guide who will meet you in each city, ready to provide restaurant recommendations, insider tips, and more.

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When to go: Open all year

■ Set sail on a European river cruise

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Dr. Kimberly Turner CFP®
SRES® Broker Associate

One Sotheby’s International Realty
7025 N. Wickham Rd. #100
Melbourne, FL 32940

Cell 321.451.4988
info@doctorkimberlyturner.com
doctorkimberlyturner.com



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