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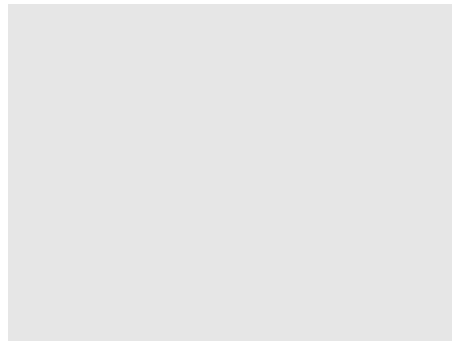
SENIORS

Funding for nonprofits is still necessary

Unrestricted funds needed to pay operational costs

By Joe Steckler For Hometown News

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Believe it or not, there might be as many as 4,000 nonprofits in Brevard County. Are all necessary? Well, that is a matter of opinion. What you should know is how a nonprofit uses your donation.

I have always tried to educate donors to the Alzheimer's program and Helping Seniors about what those organizations did to help people. This task is now easier with the opening of our Senior Resource Center at 1344 S. Apollo Boulevard, Suite 2-C in Melbourne.

Remember, nonprofit just means that an organization operates tax free. It is still subject to the same costs that businesses pay. Since many donations are restricted to a specific use, the problem most nonprofits have is developing unrestricted funding to pay general expenses such

as payroll, rent, electricity, and marketing. Payroll, the most expensive operational cost, is the one most difficult to meet and controls staff size.



Brevard is home to several well-established and vital nonprofits like the Women's Center, Crosswinds, Aging Matters, Helping Seniors, the Brevard Alzheimer's Foundation, and the Sharing Centers, which help people daily and require paid staff to continue their services. These organizations all run close to a financial margin but must still pay bills, the majority of which are paid from unrestricted funds.

This underscores the importance of the \$1 million line item in the Brevard County budget that was removed by the County Commissioners in 2020.

This single act put what is commonly known as the "hurt locker" on many nonprofits serving the senior population in Brevard because this money was UNRESTRICTED money and could be used to pay operational bills.

Seniors and those who care for seniors can make their County Commissioner aware that senior support of the County budget is vital to meeting increased costs. It would also appear logical that the Commissioners would be more attentive to the growing needs of a greatly expanded number of those who pay taxes. Here I might add that Commissioners will never know your needs unless you tell them.

When I was a small boy, many towns had an insane asylum—what is known today as an adult daycare or locked-down assisted living facility for those with dementia. The cost of the asylum was borne by the local government. Today, many such expenses are assumed by nonprofits. For

example, we know that many Brevard seniors have outlived their resources and are at risk of homelessness. Why not return the one million dollars to the organizations that work tirelessly to prevent much of this unnecessary hurt by addressing these issues?



We have a County Commission on Aging, unfunded, that has some beautiful words written about planning. However, there is no aging plan or funding for it, much less any funding for nonprofits that do the work that could be accomplished by the Brevard Housing and Human Services Department. Perhaps one million of the millions they receive could be designated for nonprofit funding. It would be a start on a problem that has been ignored for many years in our County.

Seniors – talk to your commissioners.

Joe Steckler is president of Helping Seniors of Brevard. Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at www.HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org, or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.