



## 2024 Annual Report

### Helping Seniors of Brevard



In 2011, when Joe Steckler, who many know from his pivotal role in establishing the Brevard Alzheimer's Foundation, and "Joe's Clubs", as they are known to this day, established the Helping Seniors of Brevard 501(c)(3) non-profit, the need for Helping Seniors was already well established along the Space Coast of Florida.

In his work with Seniors, he discovered many families are challenged with cognitive issues related to Aging, but all families find themselves dealing with issues of Aging – Financial, Legal, Medical, Housing, Care Giving, Transportation, and so many more. Accordingly, he established our 100% local-to-Brevard Charity to operate the County's Senior Information Helpline – 321-473-7770 – as a free-of-charge resource to Seniors and those who love and care for them.

Since then, Helping Seniors has answered the call, tens of thousands of times, providing Senior Navigation services to the growing number of Seniors who call Brevard home. In 2024, we again answered more than 4,000 phone calls, providing each and every caller with personalized and caring Senior Navigation information and services.

When Joe established this organization, the need for Seniors services was already important – and that need has only increased for three reasons – (1) More are turning 65+ than ever before in history; (2) people are living longer than ever before in history; and (3) more and more Seniors are choosing to move to Florida.

In fact, according to USAFacts.org, the share of population that is 65 and older increased from 20.4% in 2010 to **24.7%** in 2022. Contrast that, during the same period, school-age children share of the population actually decreased from 17.3% to 15.5% - meaning that there are many more Seniors 65+ than school-age children in our County.



The population of Brevard County, Florida in 2022 was 630,693, 15.9% up from the 544,000 who lived there in 2010. For comparison, the US population grew 7.7%

In Brevard County, 1 in 4 is a Senior 65+ and, by the AARP definition of Senior as 50+, nearly 1 in 2 is a Senior!

Our County is clearly getting older – and Helping Seniors exists to provide expertise and guidance for all who are serious about developing an “Aging Plan” – we call it “Getting Your Ducks in a Row” – similar to how all of us in Florida understand a “Hurricane Plan.” We don’t want the storm, we want solutions to prepare and keep us safe from the storm!



## Helping Seniors 2024 Highlights

## Key Programs



**Helping Seniors Senior Information Helpline** - Has already answered the phone more than 4000 times in 2024 - assisting Seniors and their families free of charge with all issues of Senior Navigation from Housing, Medical, Legal, Financial, Transportation, Care Giving, and more.

**Our Media:  
To Educate and  
Empower.**





Helping Seniors  
SENIOR RESOURCE CENTER OF BREVARD

Omni Healthcare Professional Tower  
1344 S Apollo Dr - Ste 2C  
Melbourne FL 32901  
(321) 473-7770

## The Senior Information Helpline - (321) 473-7770

Doing our best to make life better for  
Seniors & their families since 2011.

**HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org**



**Joe's Senior Resource Center of Brevard** - With the generous help of Omni Healthcare, Joe's Senior Resource Center operates in the Omni Healthcare building on the downtown Melbourne medical campus. It serves as center for all Helping Seniors efforts, including housing our Helpline, Education Programs, and a fully stocked Resource Center with information and resources for those who visit the center, call the center and/or inquire online. The 5,600 square foot Resource Center also is home of the Helping Seniors TV Studio where TV, Radio and Podcast education efforts can originate.

In addition, the Senior Resource Center is the hub for Helping Seniors and the volunteer staff has grown to 10 since inception on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, starting with 4 volunteers. Already, close to 500 volunteer hours have made an impact at the Center and in the community.

**Helping Seniors Senior Education Programs** - Both directly through its own free Consumer Senior Education programs and through associated programs, Helping Seniors has provided dozens of education outreach workshops and seminars to help attendees successfully navigate Senior living. These include:



Jital Patel (Coastal Occupation Therapy) presents "No (Broken!) Bones About It"  
Staying Safe from Falls at the Helping Seniors Wellness Series

**The Helping Seniors Wellness Series** - These workshops offer participants access to expert professionals, in the medical and wellness arenas, who help reinforce the

concept that the #1 Building Block on each person's Aging Plan should be maximizing Health and Wellness.

More than a dozen full-length seminars featured topics in 2024 included wide-ranging topics from "Heart Smart" to "Advances in Memory Care" and "Technology & Wellness" to "Diet/Nutrition - Fun & Tasty." Series programs are also recorded for Broadcast on SCG-TV and On Demand channels online.

**The Helping Seniors Knowledge College Series** - These workshops are directly intended to help guide participants in the principles of developing a personal Aging Plan - for maximum success in aging well.

The program, launched in 2024, has already covered a wide-range of topics from "Legal Matters", featuring Board Certified Elder Law Attorneys, to "Medicare/Medicaid" as well as from "Getting Organized" to "Long-Term Care Insurance." Series programs are also recorded for Broadcast on SCG-TV and On Demand channels online.





Vicki Moore (Moore Insurance Solutions) presents Medicare 101 at Annual Enrollment Period - How the Inflation Reduction Act impacts 2025 choices at Helping Seniors Knowledge College.

**The 55+ Renters Workshop Series** - Presented in cooperation with Palm Bay City CDBG funding, this program features free expert presentation from a qualified Florida Attorney who presents the Florida Bar Eviction Prevention Program as well as direct education and, free-of-charge, individual counseling, from a HUD-certified counselor.



Attorney Frank Scaglione leads one the 55+ Renters Workshop session from the Florida Bar Eviction Prevention Program as part of the Helping Seniors Palm Bay CDBG Program.

**Golden Providers Business-to-Business Network** - Helping Seniors has also taken a leadership position in the Golden Providers 501(c)(3) non-profit. Golden Providers is dedicated to connecting those Businesses and Organizations who serve Brevard County Seniors and work with them in the spirit of excellence. Golden Providers does this through monthly meetings that offer training and education to the individuals who attend meetings as well as affording an opportunity to network

for business development among those who are dedicated to being top-quality providers of Senior Services.



Golden Providers Group "Selfie" at a recent Networking Lunch Meeting  
Held at Glenbrooke Senior Living in Palm Bay FL



Senior Santa Director Program Director Jennifer Barton (on right) with  
Karen Wernlund Helping Seniors Center Director (on left)

**Senior Santa Program** - This long running program has made a difference for Seniors by delivering holiday gifts to Seniors at local nursing homes who have no family to give them gifts for the holidays. When Brevard County TRIAD disbanded at end of 2023, Helping Seniors adopted this worthy program and via leadership of Jennifer Barton, of Seniors Helping Seniors, and with the help of One Senior Place and Brevard Alzheimer's Foundation and dozens of volunteers, they collected and wrapped gifts and goodies, tagged for the right person, and made sure that the hundreds of gifts reached their intended recipients.



Karen Wernlund - Helping Seniors Board Member at a recent Senior Expo

**Helping Seniors Community Involvement & Participation** - As part of “Stay Connected” effort to keep Seniors connected and involved - as well as those who care for them, a major part of Helping Seniors outreach effort is to be present at many community events and senior events where the Helping Seniors team is able to meet face-to-face with Seniors and those who love and care for them at various venues county-wide.

2024 saw Helping Seniors at nearly 100 Community Events including AARP Activities and Chapter Meetings (10 events); Senior Expos & Related (17 events); Church & Related (26 events) and Automotive & Related (26 events). Additionally Helping Seniors participated in several high profile events including Fearless Caregiver Conference, the Brevard County Medical Directors Association LTC Conference; World End Elder Abuse Day; the Seniors Helping Seniors Living History program and the Brevard Recovery Fest, to name a few.

Helping Seniors retains a seat on the Brevard Commission on Aging, a Brevard County Commission sanctioned advisory Board and, in May 2024, the Brevard County Commission selected and acknowledged Helping Seniors Founder Joe Steckler with its 2024 Older Americans Month Proclamation.

## Helping Seniors Behind-the-Scenes

**Helping Seniors Fundraiser and Fun** - As a non-profit, fundraising in an integral requirement of continued ability to provide services to the community. From the Helping Seniors Car Raffle (the major fundraiser) to supplemental fundraisers such as the Helping Seniors Travel Club Foundation Cruise and the Choose Your Flavor Adventure efforts, everything contributes to the ability to serve Seniors.



**Helping Seniors Car Raffle** - The 8th Annual Helping Seniors Car Raffle featured the winner's pick of 7 brand new cars - and, on October 27th 2024, at the American Muscle Car Museum, Jim Neumann's winning ticket was drawn and today he is driving his new 2024 Chevrolet Colorado pickup. Both Boniface Hiers Automotive and American Muscle Museum have already pledged to assist in the 9th Annual Car Raffle - date set for October 26th 2025.



American Muscle Car Museum Owner Mark Pieloch readies the crowd for the 8th Annual Helping Seniors Car Raffle Grand Drawing.

**Helping Seniors Foundation Cruise** - Cruises in January 2024 and June 2024 brought dozens of Seniors (and their families) from all over Brevard County to sail together on the luxurious MSC Seashore from Port Canaveral Florida. Special Needs Certified Travel Advisors Chris Morse and Betty Powers sailed on board with group and Helping Seniors Executive Director Kerry Fink joined some of the sailings as well. MSC Cruises directly donates to Helping Seniors from their proceeds of those who sail in the group and 2025/2026 dates are already established.



**Helping Seniors “Choose Your Flavor Adventure”** - featuring Gourmet Tastings presented by Chef Jillian Zebris, of Chefs for Seniors, and her executive chefs took center stage at a festive Saturday Afternoon event, July 27th 2024, at the Senior Resource Center of Brevard. More than a hundred attendees, who each went home with their own Helping Seniors Chef’s apron, enjoyed fun, food and music entertainment while helping the Helping Seniors overall budget. The event is returning in 2025.



**The Helping Seniors Board** - The Board, which meets monthly, is composed of Business Leaders in the community - almost all of which have extensive experience

in Senior Care and Elder Matters. At the August 30, 2024 meeting, President/Founder and Chair of Helping Seniors, Joe Steckler stepped aside from day-to-day to become Chair Emeritus, and, subsequently, Joe, and his wife Terry, have relocated to Maryland where they could be close to their family there.

The updated Executive Board now consists of John Harper (long time Helping Seniors Vice President) who elevates to President, Kerry Fink (long time Helping Seniors Media Manager and now Executive Director) joins as Vice President, as well as Tisha Hill as Treasurer and Dr. Shelly Horne as Secretary.

### **Helping Seniors - The Road Ahead**

Closing out 2024, Helping Seniors is on good financial ground to enter 2025 with an ambitious slate of continuing services as well as some innovative expansions in the Education and Media outreach areas. As a registered 501(c)(3), Helping Seniors is good selection for your donations to support the 100% local-to-Brevard work on serving the fast growing population of Seniors and Soon-to-be-Seniors who call the Space Coast Home.