



THE BRIDGE

Bridging Generations with Ageless Friendship

Faith in Action Friends Across the Ages is a Nursing Home Outreach in Gainesville, Florida

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Directors' Message

A Guide for the Future: New "How-to" Manual for Friends

STEVE and
ALLISON
BLAY

*Friends Across
the Ages, Inc.*



To our volunteers and supporters,

A new project is in the works for *Friends Across the Ages*: a starter manual for those who may be interested in beginning a program like *Friends* in other communities. The board and other supporters have realized that there is a need for programs like *Friends* in areas other than Gainesville, but they feel it would be better to spread the idea of *Friends Across the Ages*, rather than the corporate structure. They suggested a guide be made available to anyone interested in starting such a program. This guide would share the spirit of what *Friends Across the Ages* is about, as well as plenty of practical advice on how to start up and maintain such a program.

Over this past summer we completed a draft of the manual. It is currently being revised with the help of the board of directors. We hope that this manual will be printed and ready to go by November or December. The board is very excited about this project. They feel it will be a real legacy to pass on to other communities, and a great tool to encourage nursing home volunteerism across the nation.



At the Ice Cream Social, student volunteers Marissa Makritis and Sonja Rodgers pose with their new friend, resident Irene Monts.

Summer Fun and Fall Volunteers

This past summer *Friends Across the Ages* had several exciting events, including an ice cream social in July with a high school service camp, and the sixth annual "World Championship of Bingo" in August.

The ice cream social was held at **Park Meadows Health and Rehab** with high school students who were attending a five-day long service camp at St. Augustine Church. Some of the students were part of the St. Augustine youth group; others came from around the state and the southeast. Approximately twenty-five students attended, and they made the residents' day as they sang silly songs for them and passed around ice cream bars to beat the summer heat.

The "World Championship of Bingo" was sponsored by our interfaith coalition and was held at **The Manor at Gainesville** on August 27. Last year's champion, **Annie Mae Townsend**, attempted to defend her title, but she tied for runner up with three other residents as **Arnold Beuthin** sailed away with the title. Volunteers helped the residents play Bingo, called numbers, passed out prizes and candy, and just generally helped the residents have a good time and cheer each other on in a spirit of good sportsmanship.

So far this fall, we have already held a sing-a-long at **Woodlands Care Center**, our very first event there. We have also been helping Woodlands connect with various student volunteers. This means that we have established some kind of volunteer presence

at all seven Gainesville area nursing homes!

We also have many new one-to-one volunteers who have been getting started over the past several weeks, and we plan to continue to add to their ranks as the fall progresses. We'd like to thank and welcome the following new volunteers:

Gainesville Health Care Center:

Ingrid Paredes Jessica Savas
Alex Young

The Manor at Gainesville:

Jessica DaSilva Colleen Flynn
Hannah Kaufman

North Florida Rehab and Spec. Care:

Zachary Stashis Justine Witzke

Park Meadows Health and Rehab:

Faye Coopender Rachel Fisher

University Place:

Mary Kaye Carrao Patricia Meng



Arnold Beuthin is declared the 2005 "World Champion of Bingo"!

In Memory of Lilian Mac Bean Houghton

Donations to *Friends Across the Ages* were made in memory of:

*Lilian Mac Bean Houghton
of Leicester, England
deceased Sunday May 8, 2005
mother of Jean Lansford,
Friends Across the Ages volunteer
and board member*

by: Mr. and Mrs. E.H. Lansford of St. Petersburg, FL, and Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Harrison of Winter Haven, FL.

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Please consider Friends Across the Ages in your charitable giving priorities. Your tax deductible donation can be sent to the address below, or made by credit card at www.acrosstheages.org.

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Claude was one of the few residents at North Florida Rehab who had a private room. Many would think that because he had his own room that he liked to keep to himself or was a grouchy old man who didn't want any company, but with Claude this image couldn't be farther from the truth. Even the first time we came to visit him, we felt like a family member or close friend was welcoming us into their home as he greeted us with a handshake and a big smile. The fact that we were in a nursing home was quickly erased from our minds the moment we saw his cheery face. We were very surprised by his quick humor, expansive knowledge, and the many life lessons that he was eager to pass onto us.

Claude was a fascinating man and the three of us got to know each other very well. Claude reminded me (Laura) of my grandfather who died in 2001. He was always upbeat and he brought smiles to our faces the moment we walked into his room. We didn't stop laughing or smiling until we left. Claude brightened our days with his love of life. One of our favorite things about him was when he told a story that was going to be funny he would snicker to himself, then he would proceed to tell the story to us; in the end we were all laughing and having a good time. We never thought that we could have so much fun in a nursing home.

Every week we would come and sit with him at his cluttered table that was covered in books. We would talk about the book he was reading that week, and each time we came it was a new book since he went through them so

Resident Memorial: Claude S. Michael, Jr.

Mr. Michael died on Sept. 17, 2005. His *Friends* Laura DiAlberto and Erica Cook (pictured at left) reflect on their fond memories of Claude in the article below.

quickly. Claude had a sharp memory with numerous stories about his travels and life experiences. Each week he entertained us with real-life tales about hunting, working as a Highway Patrolman, or his time in the U.S. Army Air Corps. We would also casually discuss politics or current events; he was always up to speed on the latest news and had lively opinions and insights. He was vibrant when telling his stories and we sometimes thought that he was a younger man stuck in an adult body.

Claude's sense of humor was one of our favorite characteristics about him. When he was talking to us for a long time and his mouth would get dry he would say things like, "My mouth is as dry as a pancake." He was very amusing, and he enjoyed making others laugh. Making light of his illness, he was able to transcend it, and this served as a great and admirable example that he set for us. Claude was in a wheelchair but he didn't let that get him down. When he needed help he didn't pity himself; instead he got to know the people who helped him and kindly asked for assistance when he needed it. He could tell you a little bit about each of his nurses.

We thank Friends Across the Ages for not only letting us help make his stay at the nursing home better but also for helping us find a friend in someone who we wouldn't have met otherwise. We are both glad to be a part of Friends Across the Ages because it allowed us to meet this amazing man. Claude passed away on September 17, 2005 and he will truly be missed by both of us.

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