



# 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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**Spring 2005**

## Directors' Message

### Chili Cook-off a huge success!

STEVE and ALLISON BLAY

*Friends Across the Ages, Inc.*



To our volunteers and supporters,

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to S.P.I.C.E. (Special Projects Interagency Council for the Elderly) for so generously donating the proceeds from their "Chili Cook-off" event to *Friends Across the Ages*. *Friends* has recently become a member of S.P.I.C.E., which is a co-op of various organizations, businesses and agencies that serve the elderly in the Gainesville community. This was their third annual chili cook-off and it was a huge success! It was held at Hospice of North Central Florida, and approximately 30 different kinds of chili were entered in 3 categories -- Traditional, Healthy, and Exotic. Local celebrities judged the chili, including Paige Beck from TV- 20 news, and Storm Roberts from 98.5 KTK radio. The committee who organized this chili cook-off put a lot of hard work into it and we sincerely appreciate all they did.

On the subject on thank-you's, you will find a list of our new volunteers and new board members on page two. We are very grateful to all who continue to support the efforts of *Friends!*



Alfonso Lesesne made this Valentine's day card for his granddaughter Madeline. He was assisted by volunteer Vi Asmuth and her granddaughter Carli Sue.

## Love is in the air

### Home-made Valentines express love and thanks

On Saturday, February 12, the *Friends Across the Ages* Interfaith Coalition hosted a Valentine craft event at *The Manor at Gainesville*. Approximately 20 volunteers and as many residents participated in this event. They worked together to make valentines for the residents' family and friends as well as the nursing home staff.

Those who participated in the event said that it was a lot of fun, and residents especially seemed to enjoy the chance to give their loved ones something special. Alfonso Lesesne, pictured above, made a valentine for his granddaughter. "I appreciated the help because it's good for her to know her grandfather was thinking about her," he says with a smile.

Recipients of the homemade valentines were greatly touched. Rezella Howard, who faithfully visits her uncle Annias Gaskin, received a valentine made for her by Mr. Gaskin with the assistance of volunteer Alex Brody. She said that it made both her and her uncle smile when he gave it to her. "It was very nice, to know that someone helped him make it, and that he thought to give it to me."

Board member and volunteer Vi Asmuth, who holds a Ph.D. in communication, thinks simple things like Valentines can make a significant contribution to a positive atmosphere at the nursing home.

She recently completed a study on the relationships between C.N.A.s (nurses aides) and residents of care facilities. She says that many C.N.A.s expressed to her what a difference it makes to feel appreciated by the residents. As one C.N.A. put it: "I really appreciate them saying thank you. It means more to me than anything else."

The *Friends* Interfaith coalition sponsors events like this every other month. The idea is to give volunteers from many different faiths a chance to work together in doing something special with nursing home residents. For their next project, they are going to assist with the *Friends Across the Ages* 2nd annual Bingo-A-Thon! (Details of Bingo-a-thon on page 2.)



On Thursday, February 17, TV-20 news aired a story about *Friends Across the Ages*. Featured in the story were interviews with volunteer Jon Shinn and resident Connie Kolvas, pictured above. Connie's poignant remarks included: "Everyone needs a friend," and "It helps us to feel connected to the world out there when something like this happens."

## Bingo-a-thon: April 2, 2005!

*Friends Across the Ages* will be having its second annual "Bingo-A-Thon" on Saturday, April 2nd. The event will be held at 5 local nursing homes, and more than 50 volunteers will be needed to help play bingo games with nursing home residents. Also needed are donations to make this fundraiser a success! All proceeds benefit *Friends*. For more information on volunteering at the Bingo-A-Thon, or to make a donation, call 381-1117 or email us at [info@acrosstheages.org](mailto:info@acrosstheages.org). You can also sign up to volunteer or make a donation online at [www.bingoathon.com](http://www.bingoathon.com).

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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](http://www.acrosstheages.org).

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This year my friend Dianne and I  
Joined Friends Across the Ages  
It's run by Steve and Allison  
But for youth, they could be sages

Matching up the residents  
With Volunteers who care,  
FATA creates new friends  
True happiness is there.

Once a week like clockwork,  
We climb into our car  
And drive out to Palm Garden,  
Which isn't very far

There we visit 107  
To chat with our new friends;  
We speak of many things we share,  
Too soon our chatter ends.

Our friends are Ruth and Betty,  
Two very different gals.  
They fit together very well  
In fact, I'd say they're pals.

Betty is now 84  
St. Augustine was home;

## Resident Spotlight: Betty Edenfield and Ruth Hovland

by Gretchen Grigsby

Gretchen and her friend Dianne Walsh  
are Betty and Ruth's  
Friends Across the Ages

(pictured from left to right, Dianne,  
Betty, Ruth, and Gretchen)

She loved her little house so much  
She never thought to roam.

A fall, however, made it clear  
That she would need more aid,  
So with her cheerful attitude  
A change of place was made.

Ruth was from Wisconsin  
She is 92.

She has a lovely daughter,  
And a handsome grandson too!!

She's quiet but quite friendly  
At first she was quite still.  
And we, two noisy, chatty girls  
Feared that she might be ill.

But soon we grew to know her,  
She speaks of family dear.  
So many things she grew to share  
She learned she need not fear.

So Dianne and I feel happy  
As Wednesday rolls around;  
To spend an hour with Betty and Ruth  
Two fine, new friends we've found.

## Friends Across the Ages New Volunteers and New Board Members

We would like to recognize and thank the following people who have become *Friends Across the Ages* one-on-one volunteers in the new year:

### The Manor at Gainesville

Stephanie Briefman

Alex Brody

Deirdre Fitzwilliam

Nettie Van Wjyen

### Park Meadows

Vi Asmuth

Eric Dorman

### North Florida Rehab and Spec Care

Erica Cook

Melissa Harris

Laura DiAlberto

### Univeristy Place

Maria "Pili" Paz

Colleen Schenker

Theresa Toby

### Palm Garden

Catherine Alford

Alexandra Lester

Jennifer Pitts

Erica Ross

We would also like to welcome three new members to our Board of Directors. **Karen Epple** is a social worker with much experience working with the elderly. **Jean Lansford** is a local business woman and a dedicated *Friends* volunteer who has recently taken on the coordination of our program at University Place nursing home. **Angela Monroe** is a native of Gainesville and a Senior Advertising Sales Rep. for the Gainesville Sun. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to our outgoing board members, **Ann Doak** and **Doris Whittaker**. Ann is leaving after one year of excellent and generous service to the board. She is moving to St. Augustine. We will miss you, Ann! Doris is retiring from the Board of Directors after many years of dedicated service to this organization. She will still continue to be involved in many other ways however!