



THE BRIDGE

BRIDGING GENERATIONS WITH AGELESS FRIENDSHIP

Friends Across the Ages • Nursing Home Outreach in Gainesville, Florida

Vol. 5 No. 2 Spring 2007



STEVE & ALLISON BLAY Directors' Message

The Language of Friendship

Some of the nursing home residents we meet are not originally from the United States. It can be so enjoyable for them to speak to someone in their native language. But who can be found to speak with them? Lately we've discovered that several Friends volunteers have been filling that role.

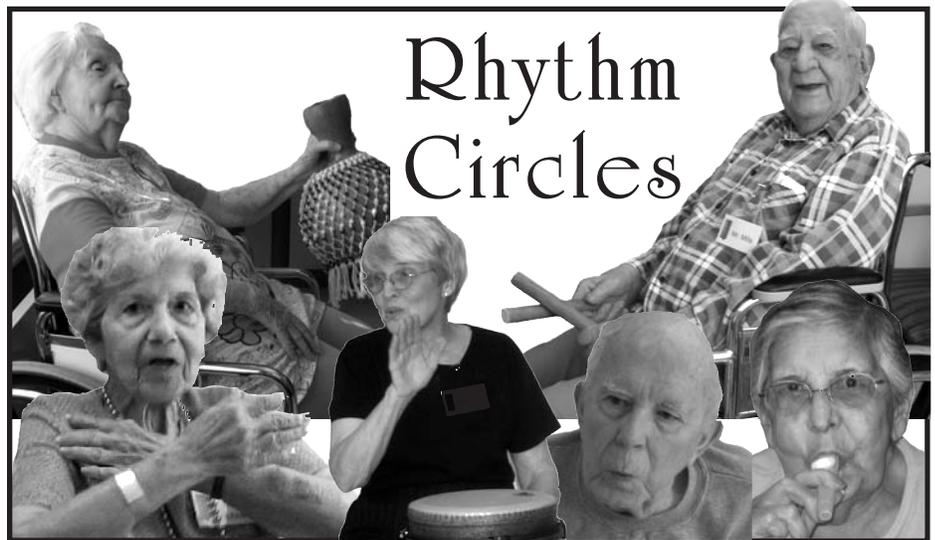
Volunteer Maria 'Pili' Paz, originally from Honduras, speaks Spanish with Leonila at University Place. Also at that same nursing home, volunteer Cindy Perez speaks French with resident Genevieve (pronounced the French way, SHON-UH-VYEV). And although volunteer Alex Young doesn't speak German, she is trying her best to learn some German from resident Hildegard at Gainesville Health Care Center. So, whether you speak English, Español, Français, or Deutsch, you may find a Friend to chat with at the nursing home!

On an unrelated note, we'd like to welcome two new Board of Directors members: Sandy Johnson, recently retired activity director at Gainesville Health Care Center, and Maria "Pili" Paz (mentioned above).

Memorial Donations

CHARLES BLAY, by Dennis and Joan Blay

DON WALSH, by C.D. Walsh & Robert Kain



For the past eight Sundays at 2:30PM, several of us have been meeting with a small group of residents at Palm Garden nursing home in an experimental musical group called Rhythm Circles. We have been doing this as *Friends Across the Ages* volunteers, with the cooperation of Activity Director Luanne Chewning. We have begun first with the most basic vocabulary and exercises, with the hope that we will progress into a real musical group called Drum Circles.

Friends Across the Ages has supplied three drums and a cowbell, and we added chiquitas, claves, kazoos, plastic plates, chopsticks and more to help make the group even more interesting and fun. Our only problem has been getting and retaining the same residents each week. As new people join we must "bring them up to snuff," but the review has been good for all involved. Probably our most successful achievement is the fun we all have had. Come and join us any time - we will be continuing Sundays at 2:30 until April 1, after which date we will be considering what direction to progress in the future. BY GRETCHEN GRIGSBY



Top Picture:
Betty Edenfield,
Filomena
Troutwein,
Gretchen Grigsby,
Charlie Goetiel,
Alice Quaresma,
and Oscar Mills

Bottom Picture: Dolores Cohen, Filomena Trautwein, Charlie Goetiel, Oscar Mills
Participants not shown: Roy Hill, Edie Gatsche, Rosina Banks, and Sissy Tillery

Resident Memorial... BY ALEX YOUNG, *Marjorie's Friend Across the Ages*

Marjorie lived at Gainesville Health Care Center for several years before she passed away last January. She was confined to her bed and saw little of the other residents. Her daughter would come to see her as much as possible and she talked to her family on the telephone quite regularly.

It must have been difficult for her, however, to have so little company, seeing how much she cared for other people. She feared putting any imposition on others whether it was buying her something from the store or even for spending too much time with her. She seemed to delight in the smallest pleasures and took great interest in hearing about what was happening in the lives of her visitors. The conversation hardly ever lulled in her presence as she had opinions and thoughts on nearly everything she encountered. Marjorie knew what she did and did not like.

Her walls were covered with pictures of family, posters of animals, and other such things that delighted her. Above her bed,

one of her friends had taped several pictures of dachshunds, one kind of dog she particularly loved. Her walls were so filled that it was difficult finding places for new keepsakes that she wanted to see every day. On one occasion her son sent her a rather large card that we had a hard time getting to stay on the wall. We also had a little orchid that we tended and hoped would bloom again. Marjorie also liked to keep everything, so she had boxes and containers stacked beside her bed. She was always trying to find something that she had put away. When I would get there she would ask me to look for this or that and would say that all she did was to make me work when I came to see her. So I would laugh and tell her that I did not mind.

Pictures, boxes, smiles, stories—these are just a few memories I have of her. These are the thoughts that she has given to keep me company now that she is gone. I loved her and she loved me. Marjorie was a beautiful friend.



Welcome New Volunteers

- ✿ KATHLEEN ENDORF at *Gainesville Health Care Center*
- ✿ CRISTIANE MACHADO and IRFAN JINDANI at *Palm Garden*
- ✿ LAUREN KELLEY and REBECCA WARD at *Park Meadows*
- ✿ CANDACE STEPHENSON and ROBIN BAXLEY at *Parklands*
- ✿ AMANDA CRUM and KATIE APPOLD at *University Place*

The Bridge

Published quarterly by *Friends Across the Ages, Inc.*

JEAN LANSFORD, *President*
JON SHINN, *Vice President*
IRENE DOYLE, *Secretary*
STEVE BLAY, *Treasurer, Executive Co-Director*
ALLISON BLAY, *Executive Co-Director*
M. VIOLET ASMUTH
GRETCHEN GRIGSBY
GEORGE HAMILTON
RUTH HAZEN, *Honorary Lifetime Board Member*
SANDY JOHNSON
LEANNE MOHLER
MARIA DEL PILAR PAZ
KERI SHINN
DIANNE WALSH

Please consider *Friends Across the Ages* in your charitable giving priorities. Your tax deductible donation can be sent to PO Box 14698, Gainesville, FL 32604-4698, or made by credit card at www.acrosstheages.org.

Award Winning Volunteers

Two *Friends Across the Ages* volunteers have recently won awards, although for slightly different reasons. Jean Lansford, who coordinates *Friends* one-to-one volunteers at University Place, and who also has recently been elected president of the *Friends* Board of Directors, won "The Albert 'Ray' Massey Citizen Volunteer of the Year" award from the city of Gainesville recreation department. She was presented with the award and a proclamation was read in her honor by Gainesville Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan at a city commission meeting in February (see picture). Besides her efforts with the one-to-one program, Jean has contributed to many other *Friends* projects, including starting a garden at one nursing home, and organizing a letter-writing project at another. This award is very special for *Friends Across the Ages* because it is a recognition that the people living in the nursing home are still citizens of Gainesville, and they still matter.

Keri Shinn, who is also a *Friends* board member and long-time volunteer, was the other recent award recipient. She made "Chipotle Kissed Sweet Potato Chili" to represent *Friends* in the recent S.P.I.C.E. chili cook-off, held every year at Haven Hospice in February. She won first prize in the vegetarian category!

