



# THE BRIDGE

BRIDGING GENERATIONS WITH AGELESS FRIENDSHIP

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

Vol. 7 No. 3 Summer 2009



JON SHINN

## President's Message

My parents have a small poster hanging in their house that reads "The most important things in life aren't things." Most of us would agree with the sentiment expressed: that people and relationships give our life meaning more than anything else.

As Friends volunteers, we have the opportunity to build relationships with people who may have few if any friends and family. The value of this extends beyond the time that we spend with the residents each week, because we are helping to create meaning in their lives through that relationship.

At the same time, we are adding meaning to our own lives. This happens directly through the relationships with our nursing home friends, and indirectly through the skills that we are developing. Relating to someone that comes from a different generation, has a different background, and lives in a very different situation challenges our ability to find common ground and to build meaning at the deeper level of our shared humanity. By overcoming these challenges we are expanding our ability to relate to anyone who is different from us, and this will help us create more meaningful relationships throughout our lives.

## 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF FRIENDS ACROSS THE AGES

To commemorate the 10th Anniversary of *Friends Across the Ages* we wanted to thank the two groups that allow our organization to run on a day-to-day basis---our nursing home residents and our generous volunteers. To honor each of them, we planned a series of events April 2-4th that would convey our thanks. We sponsored reggae singer, Rickey Starr (shown at right with his wife and their new Friends shirts) to come sing at four of the nursing homes we visit--- Signature Healthcare, Park Meadows, Parklands and North Florida Rehab & Specialty Care. As you can see from the photos, Rickey has a way of bringing smiles and laughs to all his performances. To thank our wonderful volunteers

we had a beautiful picnic at Barr Systems and each volunteer received



a special gift. Thanks again to all our residents, volunteers and donors - we couldn't do it without you!

## Welcome New Volunteers

ERICA RUDOLPH, *Palm Garden*

RASHIDA BASRAWALA, *Parklands*

MICHAEL WOODMAN, *Palm Garden*

STEPHANIE CARRASCO, *Signature*

HASSAN BABER, *Parklands*

JUDY WIBBELSMAN, *Park Meadows*

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# Resident Spotlight ... Bernice Robinson

By ROBBIE CURRY

If we peek in before she sees us, we might suspect Bernice is deep in thought, perhaps thinking about her days growing up in Cairo, Georgia. She is very proud of her birthplace which is nicknamed the "syrup city" (not after the Karo brand), and also boasts of it being the hometown of many notables, including Jackie Robinson. Once she sees us, her face opens up to the grandest smile. We know that during our visit we will be treated to her laughter and a song or two.

Bernice Robinson was born in Cairo on October 22, 1947. She moved to Florida on several different occasions and it was during one of these moves that she was accidentally shot when a gun her cousin was holding went off. It was as a result of this that she came to know



the personnel at Alachua General Hospital. She was so appreciative of their help that she returned there and worked for 20 years in the central supply department. When she left, we know they must have missed her smile and congenial personality.

Bernice was married for a short time and was unable to have children because of her gunshot wound. Her husband passed away, but she has family in Gainesville and a sister in Jacksonville. Bernice hopes to have a church wedding to her longtime boyfriend Jimmy who keeps in touch with her by phone.

Bernice has the kind of attitude about life we all should strive for. She encourages us to keep singing Gospel songs and be happy for each day we are given.

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## Memorial Donations

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In Memory of OONAGH KATER by ANNE & WILLIS BODINE. Anne and Willis would like to thank *Friends* volunteer GRETCHEN GRIGSBY for visiting Oonagh in her final days.

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