



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

Looking Ahead to the New Year

STEVE and ALLISON BLAY

Friends Across the Ages, Inc.



To our volunteers and supporters,

It's that time of year again.... a time to look back on all of our blessings and joys from the past year, and to look forward to a new and exciting year filled with hopes, dreams and plans. We greatly appreciate all that you have done to make 2004 a successful year for *Friends Across the Ages*. We've had so many wonderful volunteers come our way, who have given so generously of themselves. We have also been blessed with some very generous supporters (many of which are named on page two) who have made it possible for us to continue our efforts to reach out to Gainesville area nursing home residents .

As we look ahead to 2005, we are excited about carrying forward many things from the past year, such as our group training sessions and expanding service area, and we have many new ideas and plans as well. We ask all of you to continue to help us to "bridge generations with ageless friendship" by sharing your time and your love, and continuing to financially support the efforts of *Friends Across the Ages*.



Volunteers and residents are all smiles after singing their favorite carols at our holiday party held at Palm Garden nursing home on Saturday, December 4th.

In The Holiday Spirit

Friends does its part to add some holiday cheer

The holidays are a special time to spend with family and friends. For some nursing home residents, however, the holidays can be an especially lonely time. As always, *Friends Across the Ages* is doing what it can to brighten this holiday season for Gainesville area nursing home residents.

On Saturday December 4th, *Friends* hosted a holiday party at **Palm Garden** nursing home which doubled as an appreciation party for all *Friends* volunteers and a holiday caroling event for the residents of Palm Garden. Volunteer **Mai Nguyen**, who is moving to Tampa, was given a special recognition for her service. The *Friends Across the Ages Interfaith Coalition* organized the caroling, and residents were encouraged to request their favorite holiday tunes. The singing was helped along especially by volunteer pianist **Carlos Beltran**. A wonderful time was had by all.

On Saturday December 11th, a "Holiday Bingo" event will be held at **The Manor at Gainesville** from 2:30 to 3:30pm. Special holiday prizes and candy will be given to every resident who participates. The residents at The Manor are really looking forward to this event because they know *Friends* always has helpful and friendly volunteers as well as great prizes. Some of the prizes are handmade items from our faithful friend **Leticia Ewbank!**

On Saturday December 18th, the flute students from the studio of **Christine Alicot** will be performing a recital for the residents of **University Place** at 2pm. Ms. Alicot is a Gainesville area flute teacher, and a long-time supporter of *Friends Across the Ages*. She believes it is important for her students to bring their music to those who may not have the opportunity to get out and hear music otherwise. The event will also include some holiday caroling.

In addition to group events like these, one-to-one *Friends* volunteers are also (Please see "Holiday Events", pg. 2)



The *Friends Interfaith Coalition* recently held an Arts and Crafts event at **North Florida Rehab and Specialty Care Center**. Volunteers helped residents create a wooden door hanger object that they could give away to a friend, family member, or staff member. Shown above are Keri Shinn (left) and Amany Shalaby (right) with resident Hilda Nelson.

(Holiday Events from page 1)

doing what they can to brighten the holidays for their “friends across the ages.” For example some have brought flowers or little gifts for the residents, and others have even invited friends to sing holiday tunes to their special friend at the nursing home. And most volunteers find that their holidays are brightened in return by the nursing home residents. Volunteer Stacey Chan says “The residents have always brightened my day. They each have a story and I am lucky to have them shared with me, page by page. They never fail to amaze me.”



**Resident
Spotlight:
Florence Fisher**
by Jean Lansford,
Florence’s Friend Across the Ages.

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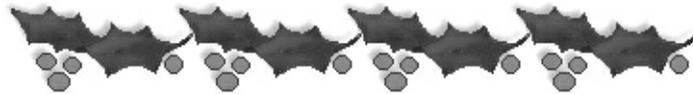
Back in May, Steve Blay invited me to participate in the multi-site Bingo-A-Thon event. I have to admit that I was a little nervous about attending my first *Friends* event, but one of the residents at University Place who played bingo at my table made me feel so comfortable that at the end of the event, I signed up on the spot to volunteer at University Place.

The special person who made me feel so welcome was Florence Fisher. She is truly one of the most charming women I have ever met. She is gracious and warm; she is also upbeat, even at times when others might not be. I look forward to each visit because she has the unique ability to make me feel welcome, and she makes me want to be more like her as I admire her qualities so very much.

Life for Florence has not always been easy but she concentrates on the positives.

She talks very fondly of her husband, George, who died after only a few years of marriage. While many of us would focus on the sadness and loneliness, she mentions how glad she was to have had such a wonderful husband. She was left to bring up 2 young children by herself and speaks proudly of their accomplishments in life. Now 92, she loves to share photos of her granddaughter and great-granddaughter.

Florence grew up as the oldest child in a farming family in Pennsylvania. This meant that she learned responsibility early in her life. After her husband’s death, she returned to live on the farm. One of the interests we share is the enjoyment of gardens. She conjures up wonderful descriptions of the flower borders around the farmhouse and I find myself imagining them filled with beauty while a young Florence tends them with care.



Friends Across the Ages Donors

Friends Across the Ages would like to thank and recognize these special “Friends of *Friends*” who made donations of \$25 or more over the past year. Please let us know if we forgot anyone! “Benefactors” gave \$500 or more, “Supporters” gave \$100 or more, and “Donors” gave \$25 or more.

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