



THE BRIDGE

BRIDGING GENERATIONS WITH AGELESS FRIENDSHIP

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

Vol. 7 No. 1 Winter 2010

President's Message



JONATHAN SHINN

For our holiday newsletter this year, we are featuring some portraits from an inspiring project taken on by Donna Mitchell, one of our board members. Donna uses her many years of professional photography experience to capture unique portraits of our nursing home friends, then supplements each of them with a quote from the subject. They are then printed in a large size, framed beautifully, and hung in the halls of the nursing home for all to see.

The first time I saw a collection of these portraits on the wall at Parklands, I was transfixed. Each one is like a window into the soul of a person who is largely forgotten by society. They remind us to cherish our nursing home friends for their inner beauty and the common humanity that they share with us.

We hope you will enjoy reading about this project in our interview with Donna to the right, and then viewing a sampling of the portraits on the inside of this newsletter.

We will also be posting some at our website in the near future, and you can see them in person by visiting Parklands Nursing & Rehab (directions at www.acrosstheages.org).

PORTRAIT PROJECT AN INTERVIEW WITH DONNA MITCHELL BY SARAH SCALES

Over the past year, *Friends Across the Ages* has been honored to be a part of a photo project created by one of our board members, Donna Mitchell, for Parklands Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. So far, Donna has photographed 35 residents at Parklands and displayed their photos in their hallways. Here is our Q&A with Donna:

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO CREATE THE PORTRAIT PROJECT?

Thinking how even though it's great to have a volunteer visit, a nursing home resident still has lots of hours in a day and a week, and wouldn't it be good if there were a way to familiarize residents with each other's names and important things to know about each other, so it would perhaps be easier to strike up conversations and friendships that would be available on a more around-the-clock basis. After 15 years, I was getting ready to close my portrait business here in town, and I was looking for a way to get back to photographing for the love of it and in service to an idea that might do some good in the world and also broaden my own outlook.

WHAT WAS THE MOST SURPRISING THING YOU LEARNED ABOUT A RESIDENT?

The surprise has come from many residents, and it has to do with how often I see people whose futures are likely to be forever in the nursing home and yet they don't show a single trace of self-pity or anger or bitterness or resentment. Instead, they talk about their spiritual or philosophical efforts and what they care about in the world. The only word I think comes close to describing this phenomenon is grace.



WOULD YOU LIKE FOR THIS PROJECT TO EXPAND TO OTHER NURSING HOMES?

I think it would be fantastic to have photographers all over the country doing their own variations on this project -- it would be fun to see all the different approaches, and also to see what the common threads are. If enough photographers would do this kind of project, we could put together a big show and travel it around the country, and maybe it would get Americans to start thinking deeply about our long-term care system and all the people who need it and will need it.

Note: The Resident Portrait Project is supported by a 2009 Carter Williams grant from the PIONEER NETWORK (pioneeretwork.org) and by FRIENDS ACROSS THE AGES through a bequest from ANNIE MAE TOWNSEND and her family. PARKLANDS REHABILITATION & NURSING CENTER hosts the project and has hired Donna to be their Community Liaison to work on various projects to support residents' quality of life.

PORTRAIT PROJECT AT PARKLANDS

By Donna Mitchell

**CALL ME
ART**

I love to garden & grow vegetables, flowers, anything.

I had a big garden behind my house.

Once I dug 2 deep trenches & filled them with cowpies & chicken dew then planted seeds of yellow squash.

Not long after, I'd come home from work & I could hear that squash -- it was crackin' & poppin' it was growing so fast.



Call me
Doris

I love my family dearly. They have made my life complete.

I try to smile and be happy as much as possible.

Call me
Eula

I'm nice to people who are nice to me & also to people who aren't nice to me.

I have to be.

It's hard.

We have to have the help of Jesus in our lives. Philippians 4:13

I also want to say that I received a Shering Bright Star from my church group for my retirement.



Call me
Rhunette.

I'm a farm girl from Macon GA I've picked cotton & peas, pulled corn, watered cows & horses and plowed fields.

I like to sing & sew and go to church.



Call me Jon.

I am a student of Building Construction Management at the University of Florida. During the week, I focus on school work and on the weekends, I indulge my love of motor sports. I look forward to living independently.

My name is **Izell Gatson;**

I was born in Newberry, Florida and later

I like to **dance** in ch



Call me
SAM
I don't like talking about myself but I do like talking about Jesus.
Jesus loves me.

Call me
Mrs. Cooper

I'm a little temperamental but smiles from my friends make me happy.

I love Izell Gatson and I want him to know that.



Call me
Oliver or
Mr. Cross

(I'm tired of my first name, George.)

They used to make a tractor named Oliver and they were strong tractors.

Baseball is my favorite game and Heavenly Sunlight is my favorite song.

I love children. Be sure to put that down. I love children.

Call me
George

I'm from Chicago, Illinois and was a gunner and a dangerman under Gen. George Patton ("Old Blood Guts") in WW II.

I spent 8 years in the army and afterwards worked construction.

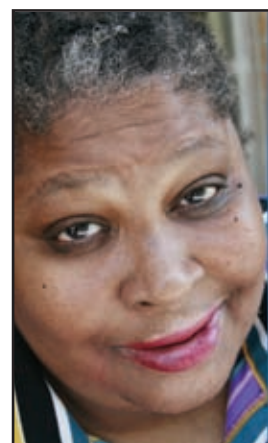
Four of my children became educators and the other one is a doctor.



Call me
MARSHALL

I love hunting & fishing.

I have built & repaired computers.



Call me
BRENDA

I like to listen to the rain.

When it's raining, I come out.

If I get wet, I don't care.

Call me Gat.



or I was sheriff there. church.



Call me

Virginia

I try to live for God.

I like eating junk food.



Call me
Jeanette

I sing good and I play the piano good. I love singing country & old school.

I'm a good friendly person to be around. I'm blind but I know what's going on around my environment.

That's about it for now.

Resident Spotlight ... Dolores Cohen

BY DIANNE WALSH AND GRETCHEN GRIGSBY

Each Monday at 10:30 a group of *Friends* volunteers meets in the small family dining room of Palm Garden for coffee, snacks and great conversations with a lovely group of residents. Dolores Cohen, has been a member of the coffee group for several years.

Dolores is sometimes a bit late, for she is involved in so many things! She participates in most of the activities of Palm Garden. She is often in exercise group or listening to the daily news articles read aloud by the staff. Sometimes she is found in one of the garden patio areas, appreciating the fresh air and flowers. Most often, she'll be discovered in the computer room playing a favorite computer game. She's full of interest and full of life!

Dolores was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1925. As a child, she remembers her favorite game was playing "house". She has a sister and a brother. Leaving Columbus, her family moved south to Jacksonville, Florida.

Dolores married William Cohen - "He was just the boy next door" - and she and William were married for 55 years. In later

years, they both moved to Palm Garden. William's occupation took them to many places, but she especially liked living in China. She recently told us, as we were discussing favorite recipes, that she enjoyed making Chinese food best of all.

She has always liked sports, especially tennis. She plays the piano and has a lovely voice, as we discovered when she participate in our rhythm group a couple of years ago. She taught music for many years and has always been an avid listener of classical music.

She is fond of reading, but she especially wants to be active. She once asked us to "break us out of here and take us to a 5¢ and Dime store!" Yes,

Dolores is always ready to go!

Dolores playing drums at our rhythm group.



Welcome New Volunteers

Fall and Winter 2009

- ✿ MONICA HURST, Parklands
- ✿ AMANDA BRINK, Park Meadows
- ✿ CHRIS CARTER, Gainesville Health Care Center
- ✿ CAROLYN SHAFFER, Palm Garden
- ✿ MEGAN DUNN, Signature Health Care
- ✿ SETH DORNISCH, Parklands

RESIDENT MEMORIAL

Bob O'Brien
Hilda Lynn
Lizzie Mae Hopkins
Moses McCrimmager

VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES

Vi Asmuth, 5 years
Karen Mentz, 4 years
Amy Joseph, 2 years
Kim & Andrew Mitchell,
2 years

We would like to thank and recognize these special "Friends of Friends." FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS 12/08 - 11/09

BENEFACTORS \$500 AND UP

Barr Systems
Dennis & Joan Blay
Francois & Susan Burianek
John & Anne Curtis
Dan & Gini Eckert
Exactech Corporation
Gainesville Prosthetics

PATRONS \$100 AND UP

Robert & M. Violet Asmuth
Allen & Kris Blay
Anne & Willis Bodine
Kathy Brill
Dave & Gloria Chynoweth
Exactech Corporation
Deirdre Fitz-William
David Grant
Marianne Hawkins
Robert Kain Family
Pat McNamara

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Ann & Bill Preston
Jason & Allison Shinn
Jerry & Marian Shinn
Dianne Walsh

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