

COMING *of* AGE

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR SENIORS

FALL 2024

Fostering Felines


Strength, Balance
and Stability

Spare Moments

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH

**DAN
SHUGART**

PRESENTED BY COUNCIL ON AGING OF WEST FLORIDA

A photograph of an elderly couple smiling and embracing each other on a wooden deck railing. The man is wearing a light blue button-down shirt, and the woman is wearing a light purple button-down shirt. They are both looking towards the camera with joyful expressions. The background is a soft-focus view of green foliage.

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6 Vaccines Recommended for Adults Age 65 And Older

Vaccines are an essential preventative measure to protect yourself and those around you. Vaccinations are particularly important for older adults. This is because as we get older, it becomes harder and harder for our immune system to fight off diseases. By getting vaccinated, you're not preventing yourself from getting the disease, but you're building up your immunity, so if you do become infected, you have a decreased risk of suffering from severe complications, such as hospitalization or long-term illness.

There are six vaccines adults age 65 and older should consider to prevent certain diseases:

- Influenza (flu) vaccine
- Pneumonia vaccine
- Shingles vaccine
- Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine
- COVID-19 vaccine
- RSV

Influenza (Flu)

The flu shot is recommended for everyone six months or older. This is one of the more important vaccines for older adults. They usually become available in September, so you're protected during the critical months, typically Fall and Winter, when influenza is common and highly contagious. Influenza is a respiratory virus. For adults over the age of 65, a high-dose flu vaccine is available, which helps create a strong immune response.

Pneumonia

The CDC recommends pneumococcal vaccination for all adults 65 years or older. The pneumonia vaccine is a one-time vaccine that offers protection against over 15 types of pneumococcal bacteria that commonly cause severe infections in adults. The vaccine is 60 percent to 70 percent effective in preventing serious disease complications and should last throughout your lifetime.

Shingles

Older adults should receive two doses of the shingles vaccine, two to six months apart, to help protect against the viral infection. Shingles is a reactivation of the chickenpox that develops on the body as a painful rash with blisters. The shingles vaccine is the only way to protect yourself against shingles and postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), the most common complication of shingles.

Tetanus, Diphtheria, And Pertussis

The Tdap vaccine can prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Tetanus enters the body through cuts and wounds, and diphtheria and pertussis spread from person to person. These three diseases can lead to very serious health problems and can even become life-threatening.

Tetanus causes stiffening in the muscles and can result in difficulty swallowing or breathing. Diphtheria can also cause trouble breathing, in addition to heart failure and paralysis. Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, can cause uncontrollable, violent coughing that makes it hard to breathe, eat, or drink. Adults should receive a booster Tdap vaccine every ten years.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of vaccines in disease control and prevention. COVID-19 vaccines have proven to be effective in reducing the severity of the disease and preventing hospitalizations and deaths. Seniors who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should ensure they are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines, including booster doses, as recommended by the CDC. Staying current with COVID-19 vaccinations is a crucial step in protecting oneself and the community.

RSV

RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, is a common respiratory virus that can affect people of all ages. However, older adults, particularly those aged 65 and above, are at a higher risk of severe complications, including pneumonia and bronchiolitis. RSV is highly contagious and spreads through respiratory droplets, making it crucial for older individuals to consider preventative measures. The RSV vaccination helps the immune system mount a robust defense against the virus, reducing the likelihood of severe illness.

The Importance of Vaccination For Seniors

The importance of vaccination cannot be overstated. Vaccines are one of the most effective tools we have in preventing diseases that can cause significant morbidity and mortality. For seniors, staying up to date with vaccinations is a key component of healthy aging. Vaccines not only protect the individual receiving them but also help protect the broader community by preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

Maintain Your Health With Vaccines

Take a proactive role in your health and get the necessary vaccines to ensure your safety. Vaccines are a small price to pay for Better Health. It's important to discuss your vaccine options with your healthcare provider. At VIPcare, we offer all recommended vaccines for adults 65 and older. Your health and safety are important to us. Learn more about vaccines and what preventative measures you can take by scheduling an appointment with one of our providers today.

[FROM THE EDITOR]



Emily Echevarria

Marketing
Communications
Director and
Editor-in-Chief

Council on Aging recently had the pleasure of co-hosting a film premiere with local filmmakers Mike Cotton and Dave Barnes. The film *Senior Xtremers* delved into the stories of older adults who continue to seek thrills and defy stereotypes in their active lifestyles through hot air ballooning, skydiving, sailing, horseback riding, ziplining and bodybuilding, to name a few. The tagline and ethos of the film is that “age does not define you” with the call to action to get out there, find an activity you enjoy and not to settle into the expected trappings of older age and inactivity.

While many older adults may not have access to Xtremers-level pursuits, I applaud this message—aging does not have to look one certain way. Maintaining some movement and at least a little sense of adventure adds greatly to our golden years. For the average person our agency serves, that could mean simply adding some physical activity like a daily walk to explore a new area or a chair yoga YouTube video to start off a new morning routine.

In this issue, we’ve got some moves from local trainer and owner of Fitness Impact Training that can be done at home and are perfect for maintaining balance and strength in older age.

Additionally, we have a story featuring a local caregiver support group in which members are navigating the earlier stages of their partners’ dementia diagnoses. We may think of a dementia diagnosis as halting all the normal activities of life, but as we saw at their weekly bowling meetup, everyone involved is keeping it moving, learning together, and sharing the struggles and joys of their journeys. They even shared some tips and resources that any caregiver can use.

We’ve also got details of some choice fall festivals and events – this time of year is ripe for arts, culture, and the outdoors on the Gulf Coast. I’d encourage anyone to pick a few to check out. For our interview this edition, Kelly Oden spoke with local sportscaster icon Dan Shugart about his long career in broadcasting, what’s next for him and how he became Pensacola’s number one sports fan.

I hope this edition inspires you to stay active and embrace adventure, and it doesn’t have to be by any means “extreme.” Try a new exercise, attend a local event, or simply enjoy a brisk stroll with a loved one this fall. And if you’re struggling, it’s OK to acknowledge that too. Give us a call and let us know how we can help.

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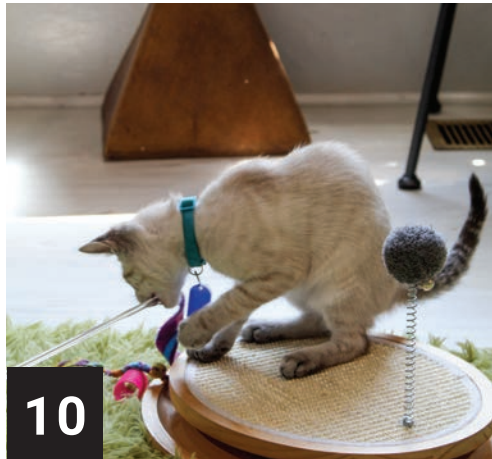


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LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR SENIORS
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On the Cover: Dan Shugart

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Advocacy

Talkin' Bout My Generation

by Josh Newby

HAPPY FALL TO YOU! While spring is often lauded as the season to start anew or discard old ways of thinking, I've often thought that fall falls (forgive me) into a similar category. The crisp weather makes me feel alive again after mostly sweating out any ambition I had during the cruelly humid and brutal summer. I recently returned from a Florida Conference on Aging gathering, and one of the presentations encouraged me to freshly assess our perceived judgments and stereotypes of the generations.

I'm sure you've heard that Gen Z is identity-obsessed and lazy toward work, Millennials are too tech-dependent and entitled, Gen X is cynical and can't emotionally engage, Baby Boomers are stuck in the old ways, and the Greatest Generation is judgmental of all generations younger than them. For the first time in history, we have five generations all active in society, and even sharing the workplace. For that reason, I have sought to challenge the clichés and check my own biases. Now, some of the generalizations are largely true. To wit, I'm fascinated by the communication preferences across all these cohorts; for example, Millennials like myself hate talking on the phone because it necessitates extemporaneous conversation; I'd rather pre-formulate my responses via email or texting. I'm definitely funnier that way.

However, what the aforementioned presentation argued for, and what I have myself witnessed, is the beautiful individuality glossed over by these populational preconceptions. Working under assumptions disadvantages both the assumer and the assumed. Values can differ and desires evolve, but attempts to connect with people will always feel inauthentic and forced if we only operate based on those assumptions. What if we instead treated people like people? I promise you that there is more to Gen Z than their attitudes toward work would suggest, just like there is more to your token Baby Boomer than their likely belief about society. We are complex animals and generally arrive at our behavior and our beliefs honestly—by our experiences, our upbringing, what media we happen to consume and so on.

If we treat each other like the assumptions we make about them, we rob ourselves of deeper meaning. It's also just plain ineffective, because our counterpart feels condescended to. I will admit that prior to working at Council on Aging of West Florida, I assumed that elders were slow, change-resistant and tech-averse. And sure, some are, but some seniors know more about computers than I do. Treating each person with flexibility and curiosity creates a fuller experience and helps us understand more about the world. Our survival-distracted brains prefer quick judgments, because those deductions helped our hunter-gatherer ancestors reach the top of the food chain. But we are better than that now. We must therefore be intentional about seeing not just the generalizations, but the good, the counterintuitive, the destructive, the creative in all of us.

If we meet people where they stand we will learn that Gen Z isn't lazy about work; they just want a satisfying life outside of it. Baby Boomers aren't resistant to change; they are scared of the biggest change of all and want to hold on to what they understand. That is the same approach our wonderful case managers take when interacting with clients and caregivers. We strive to understand them in their "onlyness," a term coined by generational business scholar Nilofer Merchant. We cannot provide adequate and holistic care otherwise. We cannot know the world otherwise.

So my challenge to you is to pick one person: a teenager, an artist, a CEO, a Jew, an atheist, a MAGA Republican or a bleeding heart liberal. Ask them about themselves and challenge yourself to only ask genuine questions. You'll surprise yourself, and you'll delight them! Then, do it again, then again, then a hundred more times. Suddenly, you're not dealing with stereotypes; you're dealing with people. By learning more about a person's onlyness, you are discovering a rich and complicated world, and only when we explore the world is the world truly ours.



Fostering Felines

at Pensacola's Cozy Coastal Cat Cafe

By Darien Hardy

As the sole cat cafe in the Pensacola area, Coastal Cat Cafe, located at 1508 W. Garden St., remains the premier destination for "purr-fect" play dates with our locally adoptable feline friends.

With routinely high appointment bookings, this coastal-themed cat lounge and cafe boasts a cozy vibe. It features numerous cats to mingle with, various tasty self-serve coffee beverages and other locally sourced refreshments.

Coastal Cat Cafe was established by local Adrienne Brynteson, who initially funded her unique business concept from her personal savings. After Brynteson signed her lease and the business was underway, she gathered additional funding from Kickstarter as an added bonus onto the extremely large investment already placed in the business.

Coastal Cat Cafe opened in partnership with Panhandle Animal Welfare Society and Pensacola Foster Kittens and houses around 12 to 18 adoptable cats and kittens. These nonprofit organizations are dedicated to the welfare of animals and provide specific programs and resources throughout the community.

Pensacola Foster Kittens specializes in rescuing and rehoming cats and also helps to organize low-cost transports to spay and neuter clinics. All proceeds from adoptions go directly to benefit these local organizations.



Photo by Darien Hardy



"You can only do so much fostering in your house, so this was kind of like a huge scale of fostering," Brynteson said. "Essentially, we are a foster home for all these cats. Right now, we have 17, so I could never do something like that in my own home. So, this is a way to be able to do more and be able to help more cats."

Not only are there sweet, purring cats and kittens to play with but there are also numerous coffee beverages and delectable treats to indulge in. The cat lounge is separated from the cafe to ensure that each cat has a safe and stress-free environment.

The cat lounge has a \$15 entry fee for a 45-minute play session, and reservations are encouraged as the space has a maximum capacity of 10 reserved spots, with two spots left open for walk-ins. Groups of seven or more are required to reserve a private party. The cafe portion has no paid entry and offers plenty of seating for studying or relaxing. Complimentary WiFi is available for customers at the cafe.

The cafe menu consists of numerous feline-themed espresso-based drinks from local roaster Fix Coffee. They also have a few non-coffee beverages available, such as hot chocolate, tea and locally made Big Jerk Soda.

The cafe also serves multiple finger foods to choose from. A variety of baked goods are provided by Craft Bakery. Many locally made sweet treats—including cake pops, cookies and marshmallow fluff—are from Sweet Sarah, Itsacookie and WonderWisp, respectively. Organic hummus and crackers in an assortment of flavors are offered from The Hummus Lady.

While the cafe is always open during regular business hours, the cat lounge may be closed for private parties, paint classes or yoga sessions. More information on future events can be found on the Coastal Cat Cafe website and social media pages. Volunteer opportunities are also available and can be found on the cafe's website, along with kitty wishlists and donation information at coastalcatpcola.com.

Coastal Cat Cafe presents the paw-mazing opportunity to relax with a "catpuccino" and a purring resident cat on your lap, or if you prefer your cats with the zoomies, plenty of string toys are also available to play with. If you find a feline friend you just can't live without, be sure to tell a cat lounge attendant so you can fill out an adoption application form.

The adoption process can take one to two weeks and involves a meet-

and-greet with your prospective adoptee, a light background check and a \$150 adoption fee. All cats and kittens come spayed or neutered, vaccinated, microchipped and treated with flea prevention and dewormer. To ensure that the adopter and cat are well matched, the adoption process can take up to 10 days. Each adoption includes a free vet visit with a local full-service vet, Safe Harbor Animal Hospital.

Brynteson said that her goal for the cat cafe is to serve as a platform for giving back and empowering our local community. She hopes to adopt out 100 cats within the cafe's first year. After only nine months since its opening in December 2023, Coastal Cat Cafe has already achieved more than 93 adoptions.

Make an appointment today to play with some feisty felines and possibly find your "forever" friend. The cat cafe is closed on Mondays, and its operating hours are available on its website at coastalcatpcola.com. Find out more about Coastal Cat Cafe's private events and more information about adoptions on their website and Instagram page [@coastalcatpcola](https://www.instagram.com/coastalcatpcola).



Spare Moments

Coping with Young-Onset Dementia

By Lauren Watkins

Every other Saturday, the WeCare Support Group gathers at Holy Cross Episcopal Church, located on N. Ninth Avenue in Pensacola. This two-hour group support session is specifically designed for those who care for loved ones with dementia, Alzheimer's or elderly family members to meet, socialize and learn with one another.

Becky and Benny Luntsford, a local married couple, have made this trip a part of their routine for about two years. Since Benny's diagnosis of young-onset Alzheimer's, they've found multiple avenues for support and dedicate a large amount of their time to advocacy. The diagnosis came as an upheaval to their retirement plans, and now they're readjusting their lives together.



They still find time to bowl, though.

The “De-Mens” bowling team—named because each of the bowlers have a dementia diagnosis—meets every Wednesday at a local bowling alley, with their wives as the cheerleaders (also known as the “De-Babes”). They hang out, play a few games and enjoy lunch together; it’s become a staple in everyone’s weekly routine. The group, consisting of couples Becky and Benny, Barbara and Chris, Karen and Bill, and Sharon and Jim met at WeCare. Uniquely, these women have bonded over being caretakers for their husbands.

“Other support groups are geared toward caregivers alone,” WeCare founder and facilitator Barbara Coats said. “It’s never for a full group like us.”

What started as a support group of three to six people now boasts over 20 caregivers and their loved ones. WeCare welcomes those with mild cognitive impairment to join.

The “De-Mens” established their team after searching for an energizing activity the group could do together. Many groups and adult daycare centers focus on adults with more advanced cognitive impairments, and activities may not be as enjoyable for those earlier in their dementia journey. On a whim, the friends decided to hit the lanes. The group found a perfect balance of familiarity, activity and fun. Now, it’s a weekly tradition to meet up for a few games, adorned with their very own team shirts.



Day-to-day, the “De-Babes” dedicate their time to Alzheimer’s and dementia advocacy. Becky serves as a Dementia Care and Cure Initiative Task Force member, an Alzheimer’s Association advocate and a Walk to End Alzheimer’s committee member. She emphasizes the importance of advocacy and finding a proper support system. She and Benny were advocates chosen to share their story at the Rally in Tally, an advocacy event in Tallahassee for critical legislation and fundraising to support those living with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers. Most recently, the full group assisted as members of the Planning Committee in bringing a new program to Pensacola—The Respite for All Foundation (RFA).

In November 2024, First United Methodist Church of Pensacola will be opening a new ministry designed

to support individuals living with dementia and their caregivers, promoted by the RFA. Like the goals of the bowling league, the First Church Respite Ministry prioritizes socialization and relational activities. It’s a program geared for those with mild or early dementia who can participate in group settings, are able to feed themselves and move around. Often, other respite services are geared toward those with severe cognitive disabilities. Here, the volunteer-based model allows caregivers for those with more mild progressions to take a much-needed break. The program will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 10 am to 2 pm, with meaningful activities and lunch included.

Alongside their hard work, committing themselves to the cause, and supporting one another, the De-Mens and De-Babes have fun. Their lane at the alley is filled with celebratory cheers, laughter, and love. Staff recognize them every week. They order lunch together in between games. The work is never over, but having support and connection with one another makes it all easier.



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For more information about Day of Caring visit uwwf.org/dayofcaring.



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Visit uwwf.org/rsvp-events for more information and new member orientation dates.

Strength, Balance and Stability

for Overall Wellness

Photos by Josh Newby

Staying active is key to maintaining health and longevity as we age, and there are plenty of ways to work on strength and stability without even leaving your home. Trainer and owner of Fitness Impact Training Lorenzo Aguilar recommends these simple, effective exercises that older adults can do from the comfort of home to support balance, mobility, and overall wellness. Maintaining balance and stability is especially important for fall prevention, which can significantly impact health and independence. As always, before beginning any new exercise routine, be sure to consult with your physician to ensure it's right for you.

Don't forget to warm up! Start with some gentle stretching, focusing on arms, shoulders, and back to improve flexibility and reduce injury risk. Get your circulation up by walking for a few minutes or marching in place.

Incline Push-Up

- Stand facing a sturdy countertop or table.
- Place your hands on the edge, shoulder-width apart.
- Step back slightly to create a straight line from head to heels.
- Inhale as you lower your chest towards the countertop by bending your elbows, then exhale as you push back up.

Tips for Success

- Keep your body straight and engage your core.
- Avoid arching your back or sagging your hips.

Progress Gradually

- Increase Repetitions: Start with 1 to 5 repetitions and gradually increase as strength improves.
- Add Variations: Once comfortable, try other modifications or lower surfaces.



Loaded Carry/Suitcase Carry

- Choose a weight. Use a light dumbbell, kettlebell, or a bottle with a handle filled with water. Start with a weight that feels manageable.
- In a clear area, start by standing tall with feet shoulder-width apart, with chosen weight in one hand. Engage abdominal muscles to stay balanced.
- Maintain good posture with shoulders back and head up as you take small, controlled steps forward, keeping the weight close to the body.
- Try to balance and avoid leaning to one side as you walk for about 10 to 20 feet, then turn around and return.
- Repeat holding weight on the opposite side.



Step Up

- Choose a safe step. Find a sturdy, non-slip step that is about 6 to 8 inches high. Make sure it's secure and won't move during the exercise.
- Stand tall in front of the step with your feet about hip-width apart, keeping your posture straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Step up with your right foot. Place your right foot firmly on the step. Push through your heel to lift your body up, bringing your left foot to meet your right foot on top of the step.
- Step down with your right foot. Step back down with your right foot first, followed by your left foot, returning to the starting position.
- Repeat: Perform 10 to 15 step-ups with the right foot leading, then switch to your left foot for another 10 to 15 repetitions.

Tips for Success

- Hold onto a railing or wall for support if needed.
- Take your time and avoid rushing the movement to maintain balance.



Plank

- Begin on your hands and knees on a mat or soft surface, with hands directly under your shoulders.
- Step your feet back, keeping your body in a straight line from head to heels.
- Tighten your abdominal muscles and avoid letting your back sag or arch.

Modified Incline Plank

- Stand facing a sturdy countertop or table.
- Place your hands on the edge, shoulder-width apart.
- Step back slightly to create a straight line from head to heels.
- Tighten your abdominal muscles and avoid letting your back sag or arch.
- Hold the position. Aim to hold the position for 10 to 30 seconds, breathing steadily.
- Release by gently lowering yourself back to your hands and knees after holding, or stepping forward to standing position from the incline plank.

Chair Stand

- Start by sitting on a sturdy chair with feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Your back should be straight and your arms at your sides.
- Lean slightly forward and place your hands on the armrests or on your thighs for support.
- Push through heels to stand up, using your legs rather than your arms if possible. Keep your core engaged.
- Return to chair: Slowly lower yourself back into the chair, maintaining control.
- Aim for 8 to 12 repetitions, resting between movements if needed.

Tips for Success

- If needed, have someone nearby for support.
- Modify by using armrests for assistance or performing the exercise with a partner.



Pro Tips:

- **Listen to Your Body:** Stop if you feel pain or discomfort.

- **Consistency is Key:** Aim for 2 to 3 sessions per week.
- **Consider a Buddy:** Exercising with a partner can provide motivation and support.

Don't forget the cool down! Gently stretch arms and shoulders to relax the muscles and drink water to hydrate.

Call for Submissions!



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CULTURE + LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE
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Fall Fun For Everyone

Foo Foo Festival & Beaches to Woodlands Event Series Return

by Morgan Cole



As the summer season comes to an end and the crisp air of fall takes center stage, Northwest Florida comes alive with a bounty of festive fall events and performances for the entire family to enjoy.

Each year, Santa Rosa and Escambia counties host a series of fall events, providing a taste of all that our region has to offer. With both Santa Rosa County's Beaches to Woodlands event series and Pensacola's Foo Foo Festival beginning to unfold, there's no shortage of fun events and activities happening across Northwest Florida this fall.

Returning October 31 through November 11, Pensacola's annual Foo Foo Festival will deliver an exciting lineup of both new and

returning events and performances. For complete details and to view the full lineup of scheduled events, visit foofoofest.com.

Santa Rosa County's 21st annual Beaches to Woodlands event series also kicks off in September and runs through November. From live concerts and pumpkin patches to the ever-popular Sweet Season Farms Corn Maze, this self-guided fall festival offers a spectacular slate of family-friendly events and activities occurring throughout Santa Rosa County.

From the stunning visual and performing arts of Foo Foo Fest to exploring the great outdoors and cultural attractions of Santa Rosa County, here's a look at some of the most anticipated events of the season.

Holland Farms Pumpkin Patch & Maze

Sept. 28 - Nov. 2

Sun. to Sat., 8 am - 6 pm

2055 Homer Holland Rd., Milton

Enjoy a farm hayride that will take you around the farm and to the pumpkin patch to pick a pumpkin of your choice. New activities for this year include a quarter-mile train ride around the farm and a new innertube hill slide! Other activities include corn box, horse and regular swings, spider web, pirate ship, zip lines, pedal tractor cart racing, hill slides, an eight-acre corn maze with kiddie maze and more! Every visitor receives a free cup of homegrown boiled peanuts. Sit back and relax on the farm market porch. For hours and complete details, visit hollandfarmsonline.com.

16th Annual Sweet Season Farms Corn Maze and U-Pick Pumpkins and Sunflowers

Sept. 28 - Nov. 3 | Sat., 9 am - 5 pm, Sun., 11 am - 5 pm

2260 Horn Rd., Milton

Visitors can spend time this fall season navigating their way through this fun and unique corn maze with plenty of room to spread out on the farm! U-pick sunflowers will be blooming in October along with the pumpkin patch. More than 25 fun farm-themed activities, include a cow train, beeline zipline corn popper jumping pillow, barnyard ball, playground and more! Plenty of food will be available for sale onsite, like farm bakery fresh squeezed lemonade, homemade caramel apples, roasted sweet corn, sno-cones, kettle corn and more. For hours and complete details, visit sweetseasonfarms.com.

Gulf Coast Kiln Walk Society

Sept. - Nov. | Saturdays, 10 am - 4 pm
7507 Buckeye Dr., Navarre

The Gulf Coast Kiln Walk Society has the largest historical 32-foot wood-fueled Anagama and the only reconstructed wood-fueled Southern Altered Groundhog kiln from the 1940s in the State of Florida. Both of these unique historical kilns are open for viewing. For complete event details, visit holleyhillpottery.com.

Highway 87 Outdoor Market at Pik-itz

Sept. - Nov. | First & Third Saturdays, 9 am - 1 pm
1922 Hwy. 87, Navarre

Stop by Pik-itz every first and third Saturday of each month to browse from a variety of local goods. This outdoor market features farm-to-table vendors, various arts and crafts vendors and more. For complete details, visit pikitz.com.

Pensacola Museum of Art 70th Anniversary

Oct. 31- Nov. 10 | Times vary
Pensacola Museum of Art
400 S. Jefferson St., Pensacola

The Pensacola Museum of Art (PMA) is celebrating its 70th anniversary through a series of events designed to engage art lovers of all ages. Multiple programs centered around the museum's permanent collection will commemorate seven decades of cultural history and connections. The *Celebrate 70: A History of Collecting* exhibition will highlight the PMA's permanent collection of international, national and regionally acclaimed artists. For exhibition details and to view the complete lineup of scheduled events, visit pensacolamuseum.org.



Great Gulfcoast Arts Festival

November 1 - 3
Fri. & Sat. 9 am - 5 pm,
Sun. 9 am - 4 pm
Seville Square
311 E. Government St., Pensacola

The Great Gulfcoast Arts Festival is among the best-regarded, most popular arts festivals in the United States. The three-day, juried art show draws over 200 of the nation's best painters, potters, sculptors, jewelers, graphic artists, artisans and other artists. Admission is free and pets are not allowed to enter the festival. Children can also become artists at the Children's Arts Festival, featuring numerous hands-on art activities and a Student Art Show showcasing more than 2,000 art pieces from local elementary, middle and high school students. Numerous food vendors will also be on-site dishing up a variety of delicious food for attendees to enjoy. For complete details, visit ggaf.org.

The Blue Trees: Environmental Installation

Nov. 1- 9 | Times vary
Zaragoza Street, Pensacola

The University of West Florida Historic Trust is excited to bring environmental installation artist Konstantin Dimopolous to Pensacola to install his environmental call to action, The Blue Trees: Environmental Installation. The trees along Zaragoza Street between Tarragona and Jefferson Streets and in Museum Plaza will be transformed into a striking blue forest for this environmental art installation. You're invited to take part in the action with artist Konstantin Dimopolous November 1 through 5 by helping participate in the environmental transformation. To learn more about the installation or scheduled participation day sign-ups, visit historicpensacola.org.

Pensacola Opera presents *Carmen: The Traveler*

Nov. 7 | 5:30 pm

130 E. Government St., Pensacola

Pensacola Opera presents the world premiere of *Carmen: The Traveler*, a newly adapted, abridged and re-orchestrated version of Bizet's monumental masterpiece. Audience members will be immersed in the Spanish atmosphere of Seville Quarter, while also enjoying a selection of Spanish tapas, wine pairings and other exciting surprises. For tickets and complete show details, visit pensacolaopera.com.



The Living Museum: A Trip through Pensacola's History presented by Fiesta Pensacola

Nov. 7 | 5 - 7 pm

Pensacola Museum of History
300 S. Jefferson St., Pensacola

Step back in time with *The Living Museum*, an interactive experience at the Pensacola Museum of History. Taking place from 1559 onwards, actors in period costumes will bring to life diverse figures from Pensacola's past. Using museum artifacts as props, the actors will perform scenes and answer questions, offering a deeper insight into the city's multicultural history. This unique timeline spans beyond the well-known stories, shedding light on minority groups and key events often overlooked.



Jazz for Justice

Nov. 10 | 1 - 5 pm

Museum Plaza
300 S. Tarragona St., Pensacola

Legal Services of North Florida (LSNF) is bringing back a lineup of high-caliber music and intricate rhythms to downtown Pensacola with its annual Jazz for Justice music event. This year's event is free and will be held at Museum Plaza in downtown Pensacola from 1 to 5 pm. Live music, food, vendors and family-friendly activities will also be held throughout the afternoon. VIP Experiences are also available. For complete event details, visit jazz.lsnf.org.



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A portrait of Dan Shugart, a middle-aged man with brown hair and a mustache, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a blue patterned tie. The background is a plain, light color.

Dan Shugart

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

BY KELLY ODEN

Dan Shugart, a sports journalist and longtime news anchor and sports director at WEAR-TV, has had an incredible career spanning over four decades. Born into a Navy family, Shugart's early years took him across the country before eventually settling in California for college, where he discovered his passion for sports journalism.

Shugart found his way to Pensacola where his mother and father, a Navy Admiral, were stationed. After a brief time in local radio, he joined WEAR-TV in 1981, where he became an integral part of the local sports scene, known for his ability to tell compelling stories about both star athletes and unsung heroes.

Known for his professionalism, warmth and deep knowledge of the sports world, Shugart has become a trusted voice along the Gulf Coast, covering everything from high school football championships to national-level sports events.

Shugart is known for building lasting relationships with coaches, players and fans alike, earning the trust of the community through his genuine passion for sports and people. His work has earned him numerous awards, including multiple honors from the Associated Press, the Southern League and the Special Olympics.

Coming of Age had the pleasure of speaking with Shugart about his life, his career in the changing world of sports media, his recent retirement and his deep love of Pensacola.



Dan at 5 years old in San Jose, California.
"I'm sure I had just been in trouble."



Interviewing the great Gary Player to preview the Emerald Coast Classic at the Moors Golf Club in 1998.

COA: Let's start with your personal background. Where did you grow up and what was your childhood like?

DS: Well, I'm a Navy kid—about as Navy as you can get. I was born at the Naval Academy Hospital in Annapolis, Maryland. We moved around every couple of years as a kid, mostly California, Hawaii, Rhode Island and Virginia. I spent my first three high school years in Alexandria, Virginia and then we went back to San Diego for my senior year. I went to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for college and stayed in Los Angeles until I moved to Pensacola..

COA: Speaking of college, how did you go from studying history to having a career in radio and broadcast?

DS: Well, that's what I wanted to do, I wanted to go into sportscasting. They did not offer a journalism degree at UCLA, so I had to find another major. I think it was Howard K. Smith, the great ABC News anchor and reporter, who said that the best thing that ever happened to him was that he didn't major in journalism. I think he majored in political science or economics. But I like the idea that it's great to get an education in something else

that gives you a different worldview, or expands your worldview. So, they had a journalism department at UCLA, but not a major. I took some excellent journalism classes from some good professors, but I wandered around in classes that interested me until I settled on history. I also worked for the radio station on campus.

COA: What drew you to sports journalism?

DS: I was a sports nut growing up. My dad was an all-American basketball player at the Naval Academy, so we had that connection. I loved playing baseball and basketball. I loved sports. Then the age of reason hit, and I realized I wasn't going to play sports for a living. I still wanted to stay involved in sports more than anything else, and I was a good writer. So, that was the best way for me to stay in sports.

COA: I understand that your father was in the Navy and he lived in the Admiral's Quarters on NAS. Tell me about that.

DS: He was. Dad was a Navy pilot and earned his wings in Pensacola in 1950, five years before I was born. We never lived here growing up, but they were

here when I moved here after college. I worked my first job in radio for \$34 a week, and I lived with mom and dad in the Quarters A while dad was Chief of Naval Education Training. That was from 1980 to 1983. He retired in January of 1983 and then I went out on my own.

COA: Tell me about your radio job when you moved to Pensacola.

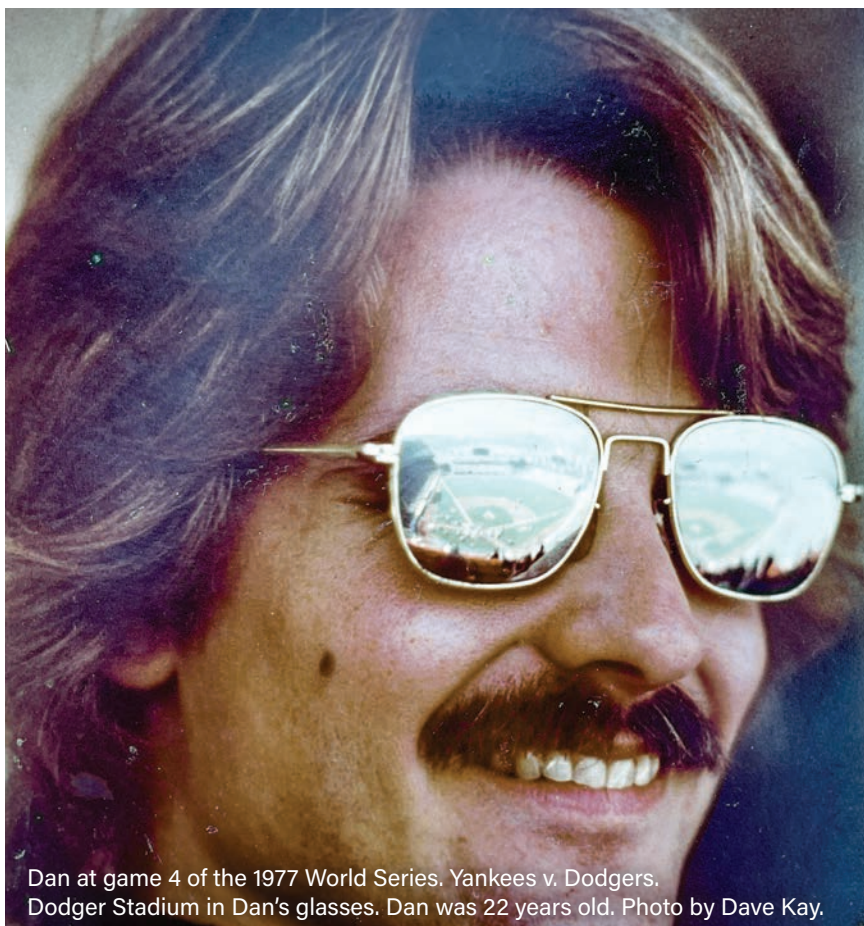
DS: I worked at WBSR Radio as a top-of-the-hour anchor from April of 1980 until August of 1981. It was in March of 1981 that Channel 3 hired me as a part-time weekend sports anchor, so there was some overlap of the radio job and the TV job. I was part-time at both.

COA: You later went to WEAR-TV full-time, and you worked there for more than four decades, correct?

DS: Yes, 43 years. I started as a weekend sports guy. They didn't have one, and they didn't want to pay for a real one. I had no commercial television experience, but when I was at WBSR, they did the play-by-play of a semi-pro football team we had here for a couple of years called the Pensacola Wings. That was the only year that we broadcasted those games, so the dominoes that had to fall for me were just pure luck. But they did. So, I got



Dan's brother Ken presenting the birthday cake for Dan's 35th birthday, 1990.



Dan at game 4 of the 1977 World Series. Yankees v. Dodgers. Dodger Stadium in Dan's glasses. Dan was 22 years old. Photo by Dave Kay.

an opportunity to do the play-by-play for them, and Dennis Quinn, my predecessor at Channel 3, was a sports director there. He wanted a number two sports guy, a weekend sports guy. And again, they weren't going to pay for a real one. They brought me in to audition and they put me on the weekend. It was March 14, 1981, when I made my TV debut. Eventually, they brought me in full-time as a news reporter during the week and as a sports anchor on the weekend. I became sports director in December of 1982.

COA: What are some of the most memorable sports stories that you covered during your time at WEAR-TV?

DS: It's funny, I've heard that question a lot since I announced my retirement. And, well, there were a bunch. I've covered the Super Bowl in San Diego, which is cool for many reasons. I went back and saw some people I knew from high school. I loved San Diego, so it was cool

to go back and see things I hadn't seen in a long time. My sister was in Los Angeles, as well. I was also covering the Super Bowl in which Derrick Brooks was playing. It was nice to see someone you covered in high school and then see them in that setting and be able to visit with him. So, that Super Bowl was cool for a lot of different reasons. But what I remember is not so much an event or a game—what really jumps out at me are the people I've gotten to know over the years. Many of them have become good friends and are just exceptional people. It's one thing to cover exceptional athletes, but so many of them are exceptional people who do wonderful things for their communities. It's been remarkable and a great blessing to be exposed to that and to have been a passenger and an observer of that over the years. So many incredible athletes and people came through Pensacola or grew up here and went on to do great things.

COA: That's got to be so moving to report on these high school and college kids, and then see them make it big. Is there somebody you've been particularly proud to have covered and known?

DS: There were a few. Derrick Brooks jumps out at me because we have stayed close over the years. He recently had his charity golf tournament here, and I was the auctioneer and emcee for that. Here's a guy who has done more for charity than anybody I know. I interviewed him when he was a junior at Booker T. Washington high school. He won a national academic award. I went and did a quick interview for that, and it's funny—Derrick Brooks, Hall of Fame NFL linebacker—and the first story I ever did was for his academic pursuits. I did that his junior year and then he went on to Florida State University and was the best defensive player in the country. At Florida State, he was a first-round draft pick, a college football Hall of Famer and later, an NFL



Interviewing Mia Manganello from Crestview, FL after she won a bronze medal in the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea. Mia won in Team Pursuits Speed Skating.

Hall of Famer and best defensive player of the year in the NFL as well. But I think it was his first or second year with the NFL, and he came home at Christmas. Sue Straughn does the Community Caring at Christmas charity event, and Derrick's mother was involved in it. A lot of people who have found success will support a charity. If the charity is buying Christmas presents, they will write a significant check, but Derrick took it so much further than that. Derrick went to pick out the presents at the store. He was the one who did the shopping. Then, he went to the school they had picked out and he sat there while every single kid in the school came by. One-by-one, he personally handed the presents to each kid. He's done that for years. When he first did it, I wanted to do a story on it—Derrick Brooks comes home and is playing Santa to an entire elementary school. He initially resisted the story because he didn't want to do it for publicity. Sue and Derrick's mom had to talk him into letting us do the story, which told me more about Derrick Brooks than anything. He was not doing this to get credit for it. He was doing it because he thought it should be done. He's done remarkable things, and he has been a good friend for the 30-plus years I've known him.

The other one that jumps out at me is Joe Durant, the pro golfer. We went over and covered him when he won his first significant professional tournament in Mississippi. We followed his career from very early on and then all the way through him winning four PGA tour events and a bunch on the senior tour. We became good friends. Joe and his wife, Tracey, introduced me to my wife, Beth. Tracey and Beth had worked together, and Tracey had vowed one day, 'I'm going to find somebody for you.' And doggone it if she didn't do it. We were all hanging out at a Blue Wahoos baseball game in 2012, and Beth came over and talked to her and Joe and Tracey introduced Beth to me. It was the best thing that ever happened to me.

COA: What has changed in journalism in the four decades you have been working in the field—both in general and in terms of technology?

DS: Well, they're related, but they're two separate things. My first full year as sports director doing full-time sports was in 1983. ESPN was brand new, just a few years old. Cable penetration was around 35 percent, so most of your audience didn't even have access to a national sports outlet. So, if you

wanted to see the Atlanta Braves or any other national sports, you got it from your local station. It started to change in the 80s as more and more viewers who wanted to follow national sports had access to ESPN and the other channels that followed. Our niche was doing local sports. There were some people who complained that we didn't do more local sports earlier. They were probably right and I was wrong about that. I was figuring it out as I was going. I didn't know what the heck I was doing. I was learning it myself. But, you know, they were right. We did local sports, and there was a period where we were moving towards the local side of things, and people would call and complain, 'Hey, you didn't have anything on about such and such national event.' I'd say, 'Yeah, well, ESPN had that for 30 minutes while we were on the air.' I couldn't believe somebody who wanted to see national sports was watching my three minutes instead of their 30. It was a good thing, because there are a lot of local stories we got in the 90s and 2000s that, frankly, were probably the best things we ever did. Certainly more beneficial to the community and to local kids who were playing.

On the technology side, when I started we were shooting on three-quarter-inch tape. You had a camera on one shoulder and you had to hook it up to a tape deck that you carried over your other shoulder. There was no time code on the tape, so you had to guess where something was. The fastest you could shuttle the tape was double speed, so it took forever to find something. Technologically, it was really difficult to get on the air. Editing was just so much slower. If you made a bad edit or you got something in the wrong place, you couldn't just fly video like you can on a digital line now. You had to re-edit stuff. It was tough. That all changed. First the changes in videotape technology from three-quarter to beta to DVCPRO format made it easier. But it wasn't until the industry made the change over to digital video that it dramatically changed and allowed us to do so much more, and do it quicker. I mean, with videotape, there's no way we could do a high school football show and get as many games on the air. There's no way we could have done that in the old videotape days. It just takes too long to add that stuff.

COA: Do you have any advice for aspiring sports journalists today?

DS: I tell you, it's hard. The business has changed so dramatically with the de-emphasis of sports at the local level in a lot of places. They did not replace me at Channel 3 when I retired, and that was certainly not something that's isolated. It's happening at many stations. The emphasis on sports has just been cut back, which I think is a terrible mistake in some markets. I think the passion for sports is huge. But, you have to find a real niche. Identify your audience, find out what they want, and then determine the vehicle and send it to them. It could be traditional media, online or streaming. Become so skilled in the technology that you can make yourself valuable there. If I came out right now to try to go into this business knowing what I know, I'd be terrified. It's just so different now than it was even 10 years ago.



Dan at the Rose Bowl to cover Florida State v. Oregon game. New Years Day, 2015.

COA: Did you ever consider a different career path?

DS: A little bit. One real fork in the road was when I had to figure out whether I would stay on the television news side of things or whether I would go do play-by-play. I really wanted to do play-by-play. We had a pro basketball team in the 80s and early 90s, the Tornadoes. I did those games for five years while still working for Channel 3. The station was generous in allowing me to do both. I wanted to get a full-time play-by-play job, probably at a college. At some point, I had to determine how I was going to pay the bills. I did learn that the play-by-play jobs are not particularly plentiful. I had to decide between play-by-play or staying in the news. And frankly, I was making enough money on the news to live. If I'd had to rely on play-by-play at that point, then I wouldn't have made enough money. I didn't have the courage to go out and gamble on that. When I had to make that decision, I think I'd been here 10 or 12 years, and I had settled in. Pensacola was home.

COA: What do you love about Pensacola?

DS: What's not to love? You know, it's funny, I've told this story a lot. When I first moved here, I missed my friends in California. My hope was to get back to California as fast as I could. I was a bit of a punk, whining about it and feeling frustrated. My dad and I were having lunch after golf. I guess I'd been complaining more than usual, which was significant. Dad said, 'You know if you want to get back to California, that's great. Work as hard as you can. And when an opportunity presents itself, you'll be better prepared to make a run at it. But as long as you're here, it doesn't make much sense to me to make yourself miserable, and I might add, make everyone around you miserable. Take a look around. Just enjoy what you've got while you're here.' It stuck with me. I can remember the conversation almost verbatim. I started looking around. I've always loved the beach. I was able to play golf. I took the time to appreciate the friends

Dan with his brother Ken in Cologne, Germany. August, 2023.



I was making and the opportunity I had. It was a little bit of mindfulness training, I guess. So I looked around at everything this community had to offer. Probably at the heart of it all was that I knew how bad I was when I started, and people were so forgiving and so good to me. I'm eternally grateful for that. I probably didn't fully recognize it at the time. You look back from this perspective and you see that people were just unbelievably gracious, generous and kind to me. They forgave my mistakes more often than not. The community has been good to me.

COA: What are your favorite things to do in Pensacola these days?

DS: I'm figuring that out. You know, this sort of segues into retirement. I have historically loved to play golf, although I had some health issues that kept me off the golf course for three years. I had a knee replaced and some other stuff, but I'm anxious to get back to golf. I've lived on the beach out in Perdido Key for 18 years, and I do love the water and the beach. Beth and I've been married six years and been together for 12, and I love to do stuff with her. We enjoy the symphony. My mom was the president

of the symphony way back when and we still have mom and dad's season seats. So we are looking forward to doing that. I love going to the hockey games and baseball games. I'm excited to have some time to discover stuff. I love spending time with friends. I haven't gotten a chance to do nearly enough of that. I'm just anxious to find out what is out there for me to do with the time that I will have on my hands.

COA: I understand you are technically semi-retired, because you will still be doing some things for WEAR-TV. Tell me about that.

DS: Yes, we're still doing the high school football show on Friday nights.. I didn't feel right pulling the plug on that. I enjoy doing the show and it's been important to me to showcase the teams, players and coaches in the area. It's an important show. People ask what I will miss about the job. Well, it's not the job, it's the stories and the community. Sue Straughn, Bob Solarski and Allen Strum—everybody at Channel 3—we're part of the community and we are passionate about these stories. Bob's been there since 1994, Allen's been there since 1999 or 2000 and

Sue's been there longer than I have. The community means something to us far beyond just a place to do the news. I got a nice note from Doug Baldwin, the former Gulf Breeze star who played for 8 years with the Seattle Seahawks. My older daughter is in Seattle, and he said, 'Come out to Seattle, visit Danielle, give me a call and let's get together for dinner.' So, it's being able to reconnect on stuff like that. I enjoy the relationships I've developed over the years. My favorite part of the job was talking to coaches and players and learning about the teams. Frankly, I'd much rather watch a local team play than an NFL game.

COA: What do you hope that your professional legacy will be in terms of sports journalism in Pensacola?

DS: I'm always self-conscious about that because it seems a little self-serving. We work in a business that offers us this delusion that we're somehow responsible for our own success, but really, we're just telling other people's stories. So that's the legacy. That's a pretty good legacy. We were able to shine a spotlight on some remarkable stories, not just athletes, but great stories. And if people enjoyed that, if people got a kick out of that, then I guess that's what I had to offer.

COA: You mentioned your daughter. How many children do you have?

DS: Two. They are Beth's two daughters, and they are both grown. I flatter myself to claim them as my own, but I'm not above that. I absolutely adore both of them. They're just spectacular.

COA: How do you stay, physically, mentally and emotionally happy as you age?

DS: Probably not enough. Beth is a nurse and was a Pilates instructor when I met her, and she's very physically fit. We do have exercise stuff around the house, which I probably should use more often. I exercise as



Carly, Dan, Beth, and Danielle in Lucerne, Switzerland. August, 2023.

regularly as I can. Mentally, one thing I am doing is reading the books I've been wanting to read. I read a lot of history, international news and foreign affairs. I stay pretty mentally active in that way. Emotionally, I just revel in following our daughters' lives. It's like everything else—I'm figuring it out as I go.

COA: How do you approach getting older?

DS: I don't feel old. I just turned 69. I had my knee replaced. That feels pretty good. But physically, I don't probably feel as healthy as I did 10 or 15 years ago. But I don't feel bad. I've been pretty immature all my life. That helps. I feel incredibly young. I have a fraternity brother, Dave Kay, and years ago when his wife was pregnant, I said, 'Dave, I can't believe you're going to be a dad.' He said, 'Dan-O, it's okay to become

responsible as long as you don't grow up.' We were probably in our late 20s, but that stuck with me. You take the serious stuff seriously, then you recognize that a lot of this stuff isn't all that serious. That's a big part of it.

COA: What charities do you like to support?

DS: I have done a bit with the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra in the past. I did some work with coaching kids, and I think that's one thing I want to get back into—maybe coaching basketball. I was talking to Marty Stanovich over at First Tee, and I thought maybe I'd help First Tee with coaching kids. You have a chance to share and instill the core values that are not unique to golf but are certainly fostered in golf maybe more than any other sport—responsibility, accountability, honesty, integrity.

COA: Is there anything else that we haven't discussed that you think is important for people to know?

DS: It's funny, I came across some stuff a few years ago when I had to fill out a questionnaire when I was being nominated for an award. They'd asked, 'What were your goals in your career?' And I had forgotten this until I saw this form. I remember when I got the job, I had two goals. The first one was never take this great blessing, this opportunity, you've been given for granted. The second one was, don't embarrass your father's good name. Both of them were important to me. So I guess that's what I hope. I hope dad would be proud of me.

What's The News?



Hunger Action Month Campaign

This September, we recognized Hunger Action Month by partnering with Gulf Winds Credit Union to take action on behalf of older adults facing food insecurity in our community. The campaign supported Council on Aging's Meals on Wheels program, which delivers meals to the homes of seniors. In order to double the impact, Gulf Winds matched every donation up to \$5,000! Thanks to their generosity and the overwhelming support of our donors, we raised a total of almost \$7,000. A very special supporter even stopped by to deliver a meal to one of our Meals on Wheels recipients, Karin!

The Cat Country Cat helped us deliver a meal—and a smile—to meal recipient Karin!



9/11 Day of Service

In honor of 9/11 Day of Service, our very own Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers went above and beyond to serve our community. Volunteers from multiple programs banded together to make donations in support of the Max-Well Respite Center—a transitional housing program designed to help families and individual facing homelessness transition back into society—and Gulf Coast Kid's House, an advocacy center serving child victims of abuse. We are so proud of our amazing volunteers and their commitment to serve.



Giving Tuesday

Every year, the Tuesday after the Thanksgiving holiday is internationally recognized as Giving Tuesday, a day where community members come together to support causes for good in their area. For Giving Tuesday 2024, Gulf Winds Credit Union has agreed to match donations received for Council on Aging's Meals on Wheels program, which assists seniors facing food insecurity. After gathering with family for food and togetherness on Thanksgiving, reach out to provide home-delivered meals, connection, and a smile to older adults this Giving Tuesday!

COA Accepting Christmas Donations

As we enjoy the lights, gifts, and holiday cheer of Christmas, we also recognize that the holidays can be a difficult or lonely time, especially for some of the older adults we serve. But this year you can brighten a senior's holiday through the donation of gift cards which demonstrate the goodwill and care of our community towards those who may otherwise be overlooked during the rush of the Christmas season. Although a gift card may seem like a small gesture, the love it communicates to our senior clients means all the more at this time of year. If you would like to donate gift cards to our seniors, you can bring them to our office at 875 Royce St.

Thank You.

Many thanks to our donors. We appreciate your generous support. Gifts received from July 8th - October 14, 2024

- Alesia Macklin

Alexandra Werkeiser

Anna Hubbard

Appleyard Family Foundation

Cathy Gibson

Charles Hicks

Cheryl Lilly

Cheryl Wasdin

Chip & Faye Merritt

Crosspoint Church, INC.

Denise Ard

Denise Rease

Donald Carunchio

Donald Hurst

Dr. Donna Jacobi

Ella Carter

Emily Echevarria

Gulf Winds Cares Foundation

Herman L. Franklin

Janice Weems

Jessica Ayers

Joe and Doretha Davison

John Clark

Josh and Caitlin

JT and Deidre Young
- Judy A. Kuhl

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Laura Garrett

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Robert Burge

Robert Fabbro

Rosa Sakalarios

Rozalyn Hawthorne

Sam & Priscilla Forester

Sandra Caviness

Stephanie Dickens

Stephanie Hogg

Terry and JoAnne D. Meyer

Tina Henson

Velma Franklin

Vickie Almond

Council on Aging of West Florida is a local independent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that has served seniors and their families since 1972. Council on Aging of West Florida helps seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties live healthy, safe and independent lives in their own familiar surroundings by providing community-based, in-home programs and services such as Meals on Wheels and Alzheimer's respite care. For more information, call 850-432-1475 or visit www.coawfla.org.

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the division of consumer services by calling 1-800-435-7532 toll free within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the state. The registration number assigned to Council on Aging of West Florida, inc by the florida department of agricultural and cosumer services is ch201. Council on Aging of West Florida does not use a professional solicitor or professional fund raising consultant for the purposes of soliciting funds. 100% of donations go to Council on Aging of West Florida, Inc.

Portraits of several of Council on Aging's Retreat participants by Blake Jones.



Your Primary Care Team is Here



Medicare's 2025 Annual Enrollment Period begins on October 15, 2024 and ends on December 7, 2024.* If you are eligible for Medicare, that's the time to compare benefit plans and choose the one that best meets your needs. With an Ochsner Novant Health 65 Plus accepted Medicare Advantage Plan, our providers will be in network, which means you'll have access to our expert team and comprehensive approach to care. **We currently accept Humana Medicare Advantage plans, as well as traditional Medicare.** For more information about Humana plans call **844-224-8993**.

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*This is for informational purposes only and is not intended to promote any specific health plans.