



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

ST. JOHNS COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

LEADING AND ADVOCATING FOR THE DIGNITY, INDEPENDENCE,
HEALTH, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OF OLDER
ST. JOHNS COUNTY RESIDENTS SINCE 1973.



904-209-3700

WWW.COASJC.ORG



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Life as we knew it changed in 2020. One year ago in March, Council on Aging made the decision to temporarily close our Senior Centers and suspend all congregate programs until further notice in response to the pandemic.

Even though our operations took on a new look throughout the last year, we didn't miss a single day of continuing to provide home-delivered meals, case management, and transportation services to our seniors. We went on to adapt many of our lifelong learning, memory care, and caregiver programs to the "new normal" of virtual, online delivery to offer connection, activity, and engagement to those isolated at home.

In the face of change, thankfully, we grow. I am so proud of our COA team for facing these challenges and pivoting from their regular duties to ensure that seniors received the programs and services they need and deserve.

I am also extremely grateful and proud of our community. Continuing Council on Aging's mission through these challenging times was made possible by the support of our trusted and generous partners, donors, and volunteers. We cannot thank you enough.

Now that a successful vaccination effort is under way in our county, we are moving forward with a gradual, careful "live" reopening of our programs. This includes an exciting new COA senior center in Nocatee in northeastern St. Johns County that opened this spring.

We could not be more thrilled to welcome back the folks we have missed and welcome in new friends to the COA family!

BECKY YANNI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



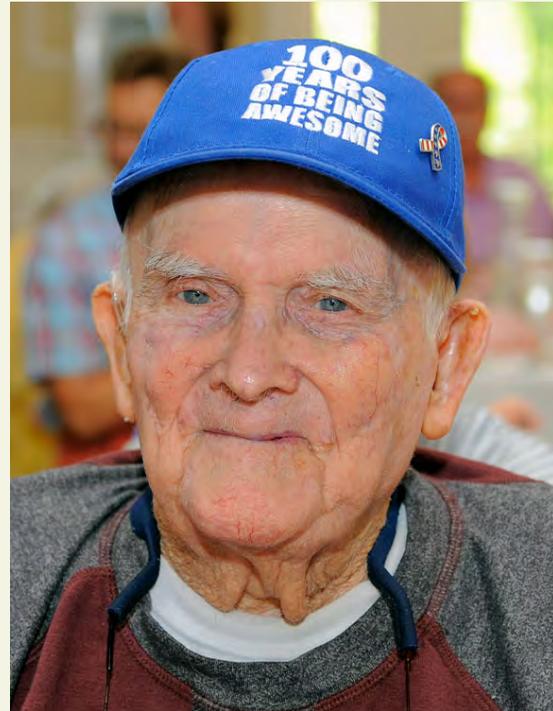
COA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- PRESIDENT,**
- JOSEPH BOLES, JR.**
- TODD BATENHORST**
- MICHELE CARMINES**
- STEVE HARRISON**
- BRUCE JONES**
- ART MOORE**
- LT. JIM PRIESTER**
- LEN TUCKER**
- CATHY WHITE**

OUR MISSION

Council on Aging (COA) has been dedicated to serving St. Johns County's older adults, their families, and caregivers since 1973.

During that first year, COA served a daily congregate meal at the old Flagler Hospital to 60 participants and delivered Meals on Wheels to just five homebound elders. Today, we deliver over 120,000 meals per year and operate six senior centers, including a lifelong learning center - and this just barely scratches the surface of the services we provide.



COA offers a comprehensive array of services that help older adults maintain their independence and dignity, remain in their homes where they are most comfortable for as long as possible, and enjoy quality of life at every age. Our programs and services are available to anyone in St. Johns County. They can be paid for privately, or if you are over 60 and qualify, they may be subsidized.

In these pages you will see the many ways in which COA, together with our dedicated donors, volunteers and partners, serves our community. We offer a wealth of resources and information for seniors and their caregivers, and we provide solutions to fill gaps in unfunded services.



As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we are able to accomplish our mission through the generous financial support of donors and with the dedicated commitment of local volunteers.

Along with our partners in the community, we are dedicated to being there for older adults and caregivers and supporting them in living their best lives at every age.



ORGANIZATION HIGHLIGHTS

Our Mission: To lead and advocate for the dignity, health, and community involvement of older St. Johns County residents.

COA's Umbrella of Caring



Transportation

Memory Support

Nutritional Services

Caregiver Support

Independent Living

Senior Centers



St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.

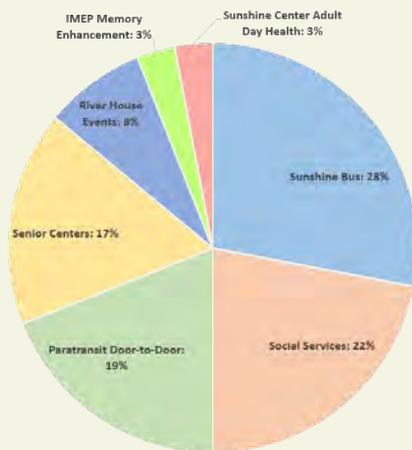
180 Marine Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084 904-209-3700



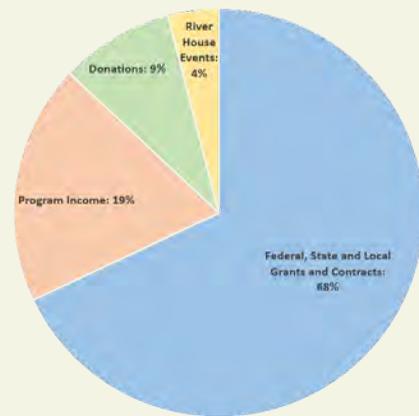
RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Our Vision: To provide the opportunity for every person in St. Johns County to enjoy wellness, longevity, and quality of life choices within a strong, healthy community.

2020 EXPENDITURES



2020 REVENUE



COA EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP:

Becky Yanni, Executive Director
 Sharon Gesek, Program Director
 Matt McCord, Transportation Director
 Patty Solano, Finance Director
 Tom Torretta, Development Director



ESSENTIAL NUTRITION

MEALS ON WHEELS

Every day, COA and a dedicated group of caring volunteers work diligently to provide nutritious meals to homebound older adults in the St. Augustine/St. Johns County community. The meals are freshly prepared daily, well-balanced, approved by a registered dietician, and hand-delivered. In addition to daily meals, volunteers share friendly visits, daily newspapers, and nutrition education.

COA provides access to subsidized meals and private-pay options, accommodating both long-term and short-term meal arrangements. COA also provides monthly pet food deliveries to Meals on Wheels recipients who are pet owners.



In the past year, COA's small kitchen staff and volunteers prepared 121,259 meals - an increase of over 30,000 meals from the previous year. This is a 33% increase from the previous year, due to the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on seniors in the community. The meals were delivered to homebound seniors and senior centers by 200 dedicated volunteers.

"These meals are very important to us. The delivery volunteers are very kind, helpful, and cheerful, and we are very blessed to have them." - Meals on Wheels Participant



THOSE WHO SERVE

There are caring people behind the work we do every day at COA. Get to know two of the dedicated, mission-driven individuals who serve seniors and caregivers in our community.

NELSON WILEY

Road Supervisor, COA Paratransit and Sunshine Bus divisions

Nelson Wiley is one of the dedicated, important “essential workers” our community relies upon through COA. He has been working for COA’s Transportation department for the past eight years.

“I love it - COA is a great organization, and I’m a ‘people person’ anyway,” he explained. “After a 20 or 30-minute ride, passengers feel comfortable sharing their lives with you. Once they get to know you, they warm up, and those relationships grow.”

SUE SPRADLING

COA Meals on Wheels Coordinator

For the past 15 years, Sue Spradling has led the team of staff members and volunteers who prepare nutritious meals for delivery to homebound elders in St. Johns County. Before that, she served as a COA volunteer.

“Our clients become part of an extended family,” Sue explained. “Our COA volunteer drivers are so dedicated and attentive. They check on the clients on their routes with such caring and concern.”





INDEPENDENT LIVING

COA's Independent Living Services provide fee-based and subsidized programs that facilitate at-home, independent living for older adults (60-plus). Subsidized services are accessible through a variety of federal, state, county, and community-based contracts or programs, contingent upon availability and eligibility.

Both our fee-based and subsidized services include care management, assistance with daily household chores, emergency home energy assistance, emergency alert response systems, homemaking, personal care, respite care, information, and referral.



"In-home services have allowed me to work for some hours several days a week. As a caregiver, it allows me to come back to the home feeling refreshed and ready for caregiving again."

- Client's Daughter/Caregiver



PRESCRIPTION ASSISTANCE

COA's Prescription Assistance program helps eligible seniors qualify for free or reduced medication costs through pharmaceutical company Patient Assistance Programs. If you are eligible, COA will help you navigate the application process. In 2020, we saved St. Johns County seniors over \$3,000,000!



CARE CONNECTION

COA's Care Connection program helps independent, older adults meet and manage the more challenging demands of everyday life. The program is 100% donor-funded and volunteer-powered and fills the gaps in providing services for which there are no government funding sources. These services are necessary for seniors to be able to safely remain happy, healthy, and independent in their own homes, where they are most comfortable.

Care Connection volunteers provide services including:

- minor home repairs
- basic lawn maintenance
- providing assistive devices
- installation of safety devices such as grab bars
- monthly budgeting assistance
- assistance applying for and obtaining critical resources such as food stamps and emergency home energy assistance
- providing pet food for pet companions
- building custom wheelchair ramps that restore independence and freedom of mobility for those in need

A true community effort, all of the resources necessary to finance these crucial services are provided by generous donors from the community.





ESSENTIAL TRANSPORTATION

SUNSHINE BUS COMPANY

Over twenty years ago, COA began working with the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners to provide increased community transportation options beyond the paratransit, door-to-door service COA already provided. This led to the creation of the Sunshine Bus Company in 2000 to provide public transportation to a wide range of known origins/destinations necessary for everyday living. A deviated, fixed-route system initially operated two bus routes on a shoestring budget. This combined system of paratransit and deviated fixed-route bus service throughout St. Johns County has continued to expand as demand and funding have become available.

This year, the Sunshine Bus Company has implemented a new program in partnership with the St. Johns County Library System that invites travelers to ride the bus for free with their library card the first Wednesday of each month.

"Our goal has always been to provide easier access for all by removing the transportation barrier," explained COA Transportation Director Matt McCord.

For Sunshine Bus information and routes, please visit www.sunshinebus.net or call 904-209-3716.

ESSENTIAL TRANSPORTATION

PARATRANSIT

COA's Paratransit service provides door-to-door transportation for ambulatory, wheelchair and door-through-door stretcher, non-emergency medical, and other related transportation services. Subsidized funding sponsorships are available for the general public, the elderly, individuals who are disadvantaged, and those with chronic or temporary disabilities.

"The transportation team is amazing - so natural and so good at their jobs. They are always concerned with my well-being. I am so appreciative of everything COA does."

- Paratransit Client

"Thank you very much for such outstanding folks - they each had a smile and love their jobs. They are the finest."

For Paratransit information, please call 904-209-3716 or visit www.coasjc.org/paratransit.

COASTAL TRANSPORTATION

COA's Coastal Transportation provides private charter bus service for small groups, clubs, and shuttle services. Travel in comfort and safety to any destination in Florida while supporting our charity.

For more information, contact Coastal Transportation at 904-209-3700.





DEMENTIA SUPPORT

SUNSHINE CENTER

Sunshine Center, licensed by AHCA #9081, is COA's adult day health care center. Designed as a therapeutic activity center for adults with special needs, the Sunshine Center offers nursing care and specialized activities to adult individuals requiring guidance and personal assistance. The center also provides crucial respite time for caregivers. Participants enjoy supportive services, social interaction, and cognitively stimulating activities in a safe and secured environment.



VIRTUAL SUNSHINE

Since COVID-19 required the temporary closure of in-person dementia services, COA has been offering support programs via Zoom. The Sunshine Activity Time & Caregiver Café is a virtual program designed not only for older adults in all stages of dementia, but for any senior interested in expanding their socialization and mind/body stimulation. Each program is based on a new theme for the day, and activities are based around that theme. Activities include chair exercise, virtual field trips, "Getting to know you" socialization, cognitive stimulating trivia, as well as art and music therapy. For those needing assistance, their caregiver is invited to join in with their loved one.



CAREGIVER SUPPORT

As a caregiver in St. Johns County, you are not alone! COA's Community Care-Giving program provides valuable tools that promote and empower a positive and successful caregiving experience. Whether new to caregiving, new to the area, or just in need of some assistance, support, or information during these COVID times, COA can help. We can provide you and your family with a free needs evaluation, education, virtual support groups, community assistance information, and more.

For information, contact COA's Paulette Kozlowski at caregiving@coasjc.org or 904-209-3700.

"A friend told me about your Caregivers Support group and offered to stay with my husband so I could attend. This changed my life! In that support group I learned I'm not alone. Others were suffering the tragedy of their loved one's decline, and we were not at fault. The relief of guilt I was carrying was immediate. As I listened and learned, I was able to keep a peaceful atmosphere in our home. Your teaching helped my husband keep his dignity as a person of value in the last years of his life. I want to thank you in deep appreciation, Paulette, for all you have contributed to me and so many others. I keep you in my prayers for continued blessings in your work, a true ministry of love and healing." - Caregiver Participant



**Community
Care  Giving**



MEMORY ENHANCEMENT

INTEGRATIVE MEMORY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

IMEP™ is COA's original, groundbreaking **Integrative Memory Enhancement Program**. IMEP is a structured, research-based program that integrates mind, body, and brain connections to boost cognitive reserve and minimize the progression of memory loss or dementia. Presented by trained facilitators in a light-hearted atmosphere, each class includes mental agility activities that highlight flexible thinking, problem solving and reasoning, among other brain topics. Small group classes provide humor, peer interaction and authentic dialogue, allowing participants to feel connected and accepted while building self-esteem.



IMEP has been serving participants in St. Johns County for over 10 years, and the program is also being successfully licensed and implemented at other agencies and facilities throughout the southeast.



"It's a totally relaxed and non-threatening environment. It's very comfortable - one of the most comfortable I've experienced. That's just as important as the educational aspect- the experience of being in a supportive and caring environment."

- IMEP Participant



MISSION BRAIN BOOST!

“Use it – don’t lose it” is a truism to which most people can relate – and when it comes to our brains, these words ring equally true. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, COA has dedicated resources to creating online options for seniors and caregivers to continue to stay connected, engaged, and active in mind and body.

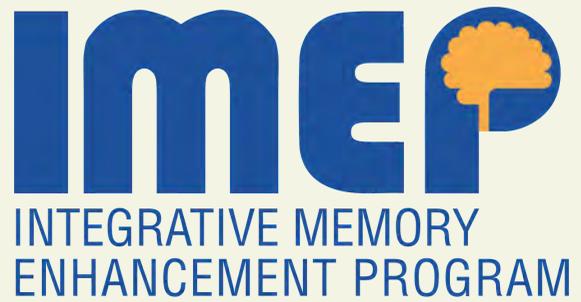
MISSION BRAIN BOOST! is an IMEP™ program created in an effort to alleviate the negative impacts created by the pandemic. The virtual program is an innovative campaign to promote brain health and well-being with an expansion of live, interactive, brain-boosting classes. There are several ways to participate in this original program which addresses memory health, early memory loss and dementia:

IMEP Weekly Zoom Classes – Online, live group classes that meet for one hour via Zoom

IMEP at Home – Weekly IMEP workbook materials delivered via email to your inbox

Personal Cognition Coaching – COA certified IMEP facilitators provide all aspects of the IMEP program in a one-on-one, one-hour online session. Coaches address individual issues for those who would like personalized, in-depth attention in a more private setting.

To learn more and to try a free class, contact COA’s Michele Sanchez at 904-209-3700 or msanchez@coasjc.org.





ESSENTIAL CONNECTIONS

SENIOR CENTERS

Council On Aging welcomes St. Johns County residents who are over the age of 60 to participate in a wide variety of programs at COA's six senior centers. Programs are specifically designed for self-managing adults who enjoy socializing, staying active, and living a healthy lifestyle. Our centers offer a wide variety of activities such as Tai Chi, gentle exercise, aging support groups, arts and craft classes, Wii bowling, bunco, trivia, bingo, word games, and fun, themed celebrations. A selection of courses are also available online. It's your life - live it up with COA!

COA SENIOR CENTERS:

Coastal Community Senior Center

180 Marine Street, St. Augustine, FL

Hastings Community Senior Center

Lord's Temple City of Refuge

140 Gilmore Street, Hastings, FL

NEW! COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee

351 Town Plaza Avenue, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

River House - Lifelong Learning Center

179 Marine Street, St. Augustine, FL

THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center

175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

Trout Creek Community Senior Center

6795 Collier Road, St. Augustine FL

LIFELONG LEARNING

RIVER HOUSE

River House is COA's lifelong learning senior center, offering classes, events, interest clubs, and activities for adults 18 years of age and older. Set on the waterfront of the Matanzas River in downtown St. Augustine, River House offers something for everyone to stay active in mind, body and spirit.

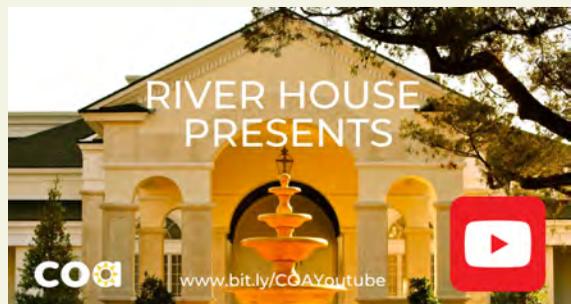
RIVER HOUSE PRESENTS

Since COVID-19 necessitated the temporary closure of COA's in-person programming, COA has created engaging online programs that can be accessed at home at any time through *River House Presents*. A wide variety of video courses are accessible through COA's YouTube channel, and other classes are offered live via Zoom.

RIVER HOUSE EVENTS

On weekends and evenings, River House serves as an extraordinary venue for weddings, celebrations, and corporate events. No other location in St. Augustine offers a spectacular five-star venue directly on the intracoastal waterway with ample, free parking.

For more information or to schedule a tour, please contact COA's Constance Wiecking at cwiecking@riverhouseevents.com or 904-826-6210.





OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

CHANGING LIVES FOR GENERATIONS

COA offers more than just services for seniors and caregivers. We also offer the chance to make a critical difference in the world. Our over 600 dedicated volunteers put their skills and talents into action to help older adults every day. There is nothing like the satisfaction of giving of oneself to help an elder in need.

COA provides a wide array of opportunities to meaningfully serve, from delivering meals and welcome visits, to helping with home repairs and lawn care, or building ramps so that homebound individuals may once again enjoy the freedom to interact independently with the world. Volunteers also contribute their varied areas of professional expertise in support of Council on Aging.

The opportunities to change lives for the better are as endless as the needs of our community's elders for assistance and kindness. No matter what your skills or talents, COA offers a way to serve and help others.

To learn more and to discuss the volunteer opportunity that is right for you, please contact COA's Amy Robinson at 904-209-3700 or arobinson@coasjc.org.



CREATING YOUR LEGACY

What will your legacy be? It is a lifetime's accomplishment, a chance to change the world, and a gift you get to choose. With COA, you can create a legacy that will change lives for seniors in our community for generations.

Planned giving allows individuals to allocate gifts to be given to charitable organizations such as COA in the future. Planned gifts have helped increase the level and number of quality programs and services COA offers. They have been transformative gifts - and there is so much more we hope to do for seniors and caregivers in St. Johns County.

Gifts to COA in your will or revocable trust are easy to arrange, will not alter your current lifestyle in any way, and can be easily modified to address your changing needs. In addition to tangible gifts such as real estate, automobiles, antiques, etc., there are many other options available for creating a lasting legacy through planned giving. Beneficiary designations, insurance policies, stocks, banking and retirement accounts, as well as mandatory distributions are some of the many ways to create a legacy and frequently create immediate tax benefits.

To find out how you can create a lasting legacy with COA, contact Tom Torretta at ttorretta@coasjc.org or 904-209-3700.





COMMUNITY PARTNERS

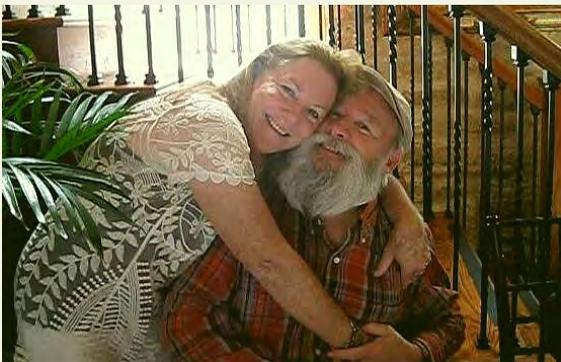
It takes an entire community to be there for our elders, and, along with its many other stellar qualities, St. Johns County has a heart for seniors and caregivers.

Our business, church, and organizational partners are integral allies in ensuring that COA is able to be there for those we serve in their times of need. We call on them to support our mission, and they respond with dedication and generosity.

Our partners support many of COA's programs directly and also participate in our annual fundraising events. These festive events are crucial to keeping our organization healthy and in close connection with the greater community.

Our annual golf tournament and Christmas on the River events are well-loved traditions in the service of seniors and caregivers. Our community partners make our important mission possible.

"In this time of health and economic uncertainty, we are more appreciative than ever for the commitment of our dedicated sponsors and community partners," explained COA's Executive Director Becky Yanni. "We are deeply grateful for their generous support. They make St. Johns County a great place to be a senior."



ELDER GUARD

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, COA relies upon the financial support of the community to ensure that elders in St. Johns County are empowered to live their best lives at every age.

Founded in 2020, COA's **Elder Guard** is comprised of community members who are committed to supporting the important work COA does every day. Elder Guard members are financial supporters who provide the resources necessary for COA to deliver the services and programs seniors want and need. Their generous support also allows COA to produce online programs that are able to reach elders when circumstances prevent them from travelling on-site.

“Our Elder Guard members offer their generous support at a critical time for seniors and caregivers,” said COA Executive Director Becky Yanni. “They are helping us create a brighter future for seniors. We are extremely grateful for their support as we meet new challenges.”

Please join us as an Elder Guard member today and help COA meet the needs of St. Johns County seniors for generations to come. For more information, visit www.bit.ly/elderguard or contact COA's Tom Torretta at ttorretta@coasjc.org or 904-209-3700.





LIVES CHANGING LIVES

After months of social distancing due to COVID-19, local seniors and caregivers were in need of new forms of support as they endured challenging circumstances. Loneliness and isolation had become serious, growing threats to their health and well-being, and COA worked to create virtual supports to help them. Concerned members of the community also reached out to help by providing the additional financial resources necessary to create these new programs. Wanting to make a difference, they became founding members of COA's **Elder Guard**.



Ponte Vedra resident Karen Sanders is well aware of how important COA's services are for older adults and caregivers. Her husband, Norman, participated in the Integrative Memory Enhancement Program (IMEP) at COA's Ponte Vedra Memory Care Center. In addition to the many cognitive and social benefits her husband experienced, his participation afforded Karen valuable respite time as a caregiver. She recently made one of the first donations as a founding Elder Guard sponsor in support of COA's work.

"I know the many ways that Council on Aging is there for seniors," shared Elder Guard monthly supporter Pat Hall. "And I want to make sure they are always there, no matter what the crisis."

"COA was so caring for my dear husband, now deceased, who attended COA's memory enrichment classes," Karen shared. "I so believe it bought us more precious time together. We tried him attending tentatively the first day to see if he liked it. Full-time after that. Had to be with his buddies!"

SENIORS HELPING SENIORS

Bob and Fran German are COA supporters, volunteers and master Qigong instructors who have taught classes in healthy aging at River House, COA's lifelong learning center. They are also authors of the book *101 Ways To Be Young At Any Age!: Practical Wisdom to Reverse Your Aging, STARTING NOW!*

When COA called on River House instructors to volunteer their talents to create online content to reach seniors at home, Bob and Fran were among the first to answer the call. They have produced a collection of online videos for seniors to access through COA's **River House Presents** channel on YouTube.

"When the COVID-19 virus arrived, like everyone else, we were confined to our home," the couple shared. "In order to keep our minds occupied, our bodies strong, our attention off the news, and do good for other folks, we decided to make our healthy-aging videos."

Bob Clairmont has been attending and volunteering at COA's Coastal Community Senior Center in St. Augustine for the past six years. Bob fills a natural leadership role in the community, greeting everyone by name each day. He calls bingo and leads a popular chair exercise program three days a week. Each session ends with Bob asking a participant to lead the group in singing "God Bless America" and other songs. Since COVID-19 necessitated the temporary closure of the center, Bob has



BOB & FRAN GERMAN



BOB CLAIRMONT

kept up with the center's participants. Each week he calls all 65 members personally.

"I call to make certain they are okay, and to check on their attitudes - just to say a simple 'Hello' and see if they are feeling fine," he explained. "I think it makes them feel special - and it makes me feel good, also."



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR NORTHEAST FLORIDA



Don & Lavonne Blackburn



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A FORDABLE logo

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ST. JOHNS COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER Eddie Creamer



ST. AUGUSTINE DISTILLERY Co.

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ST. JOHNS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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BRADDOCK'S SMALL ENGINE REPAIR

Bartram Trail Veterinary Hospital

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Lord's Temple City of Refuge

St. Catherine's Guild, E.C.W.