



ST. JOHNS COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO SENIORS & CAREGIVERS



Make History With Us

St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.

180 Marine Street

St. Augustine, FL 32084

904-209-3700

WWW.COASJC.ORG





FROM OUR DIRECTOR

For 50 years, Council on Aging has been on a journey to empower our community's elders to live their best lives at every age. Since serving our first congregate meals and delivering our first home-delivered meals in 1974, our focus has been on providing essential nutrition, transportation, and independent living services for our community's elders. Now with six senior centers and lifelong learning centers, four memory care locations, and transportation to all 600 square miles of our county, we are able to offer older residents a much wider array of life enhancing opportunities than at our founding.

As we have throughout our history, we continue to pursue opportunities to provide greater dignity, independence, social inclusion, and well-being for those we serve. Whether it is a meal prepared with love, a strong hand to help with tasks around the house, or an engaging program to stay active, healthy, and connected, we are dedicated to supporting quality of life and independence for seniors and caregivers in St. Johns County.

We would not be where we are today without your support. Thank you to all of our champions - our donors, funders, volunteers, staff, and community partners - for supporting our important mission. Together, the future for seniors and caregivers - our future - will grow ever brighter into the next 50 years and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky Yanni". The script is elegant and cursive.

BECKY YANNI
Executive Director

COA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

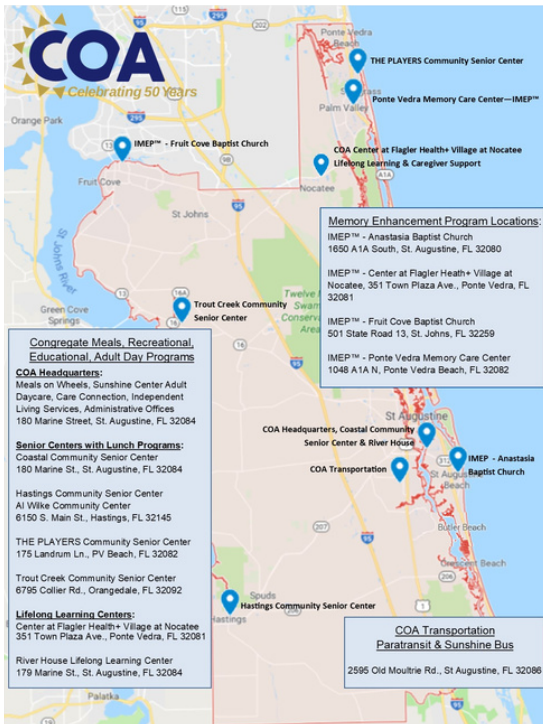
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OUR MISSION

St. Johns County Council on Aging (COA) has been dedicated to serving St. Johns County's older adults, their families, and caregivers since 1974.

During that first year, COA served a daily congregate meal at the original Flagler Hospital to 60 participants and delivered Meals on Wheels to just six homebound elders. Today, we serve nearly 79,000 meals per year and operate six senior centers and lifelong learning centers. 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, remain in the comfort of their homes 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.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we are able to accomplish our expansive mission through the generous financial support of funders and donors and the caring 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.

In these pages you will see the many ways in which COA serves our community. Together, we serve by:

- Creating Community
- Sustaining Nutrition
- Fostering Independence
- Providing Mobility
- Strengthening Memory
- Supporting Dementia
- Caring for Caregivers
- Serving Together
- Creating Our Future



VISIONARY BEGINNINGS

Council on Aging began with a vision - to be there for our community's elders and those who care for them, and to empower older adults to enjoy independence and dignity in the comfort of home for as long as possible.

This vision was accomplished through the unwavering dedication of many St. Johns County residents committed to serving our community's elders. While their names are too numerous to list in full, we acknowledge some of our visionary first leaders here:

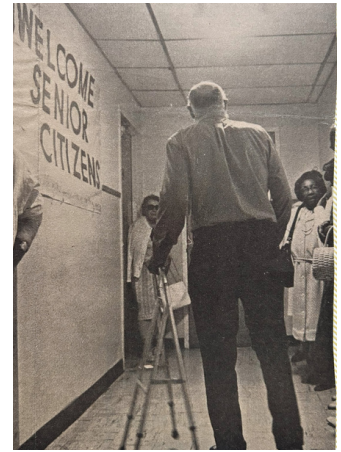


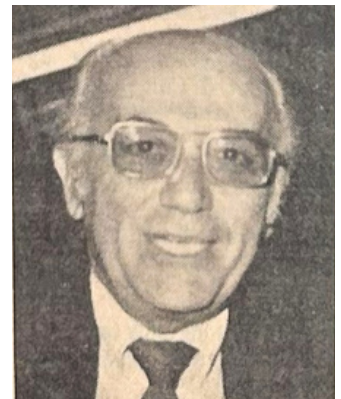
Photo: St. Augustine Record



Dan Mickler at the opening of the Mickler-O'Connell FL-312 Bridge in 1976; Photo: St. Augustine Record

Dan Mickler, COA's first Board President from 1972 -1973, was a building contractor who served as a St. Johns County Commissioner for 24 years. Known as 'Mr. St. Johns County,' he was also instrumental in the construction of the FL-312 intracoastal bridge which was co-named for him.

Theodore Karam, Board President from 1973 - 1975, was a WWII veteran officer who retired to St. Augustine after a career with the U.S. Veterans Administration. An accomplished sculptor, he taught art at local colleges and founded the St. Augustine Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.



Theodore Karam; Photo: St. Augustine Record



Rev. Thomas DeSue; Photo: Florida Times Union

Reverend Thomas B. DeSue, Board President 1975 - 1978, was the pastor of St. Paul AME Church of St. Augustine from 1968 until 1981. In addition to his leadership role in the church and with COA, Reverend DeSue was a diligent activist and NAACP chapter president.

Rosalie Gordon-Mills, Board President 1981-1985, Vice President 1974-1981, was an educator and counselor with the St. Johns County school district, a business owner, and founder of Echo House community center in Lincolville.

A leader in COA's successful effort to establish the first senior center in St. Johns County, Ms. Gordon-Mills received the presidential award from President Reagan's Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives in 1983 in recognition of her important contributions to our community.



Rosalie Gordon-Mills receiving Presidential Award; Photo: Jim Lane, St. Augustine Record; provided by the Lincolville Museum & Cultural Center and the St. Augustine Historical Society

50 YEARS OF SERVICE & INNOVATION

- 1974:** **Meals on Wheels** program begins and first **congregate meals** are served. **Independent Living Services** program begins offering information and referral services to the community.
First COA **transportation vehicle** is purchased, a 12-person Ford Minibus.
- 1976:** Council on Aging's name is changed to **St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.**
- 1980:** COA opens the **first senior center in St. Johns County** at 11 Old Mission Avenue in St. Augustine.
- 1985:** **Caregiver Support & Respite Care** program is created.
- 1999:** **Prescription Assistance Program** is created.
- 2000:** **Trout Creek Community Senior Center** opens in Orangedale.
Sunshine Bus system is established and contracted by the St. Johns County Government to provide public transportation throughout St. Johns County.
- 2001:** **Coastal Community Senior Center** moves to 180 Marine Street in St. Augustine.
- 2003:** **Sunshine Center**, COA's therapeutic adult day care center, opens in St. Augustine.
- 2004:** **Care Connection** program is launched, offering services that support seniors in maintaining their independence and safety at home.
- 2007:** **THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center** opens in Ponte Vedra Beach.
- 2010:** **River House**, COA's lifelong learning center and events venue, opens in St. Augustine.
IMEP™, COA's original **Integrative Memory Enhancement Program**, is created to mitigate the progression of memory loss and dementia in a relaxed classroom setting.
New **Transportation Headquarters** opens on Old Moultrie Road in St. Augustine.
- 2012:** **Community Care-Giving** program expands caregiver support and education services to all areas of St. Johns County.
- 2015:** **Ponte Vedra Memory Care Center** opens in Ponte Vedra Beach offering **IMEP™**.
Coastal Transportation begins providing private shuttle transportation services.
Hastings Community Senior Center opens in Hastings.
Integrative Memory Enhancement Program is trademarked and copyrighted.
IMEP™ is leased to outside agencies and facilities that serve seniors throughout Florida and the U.S.
- 2020:** **Online learning** and **support programs** are developed in response to COVID-19 closures.
- 2021:** **COA Center at UF Health Nocatee** opens in Ponte Vedra.
- 2022:** New **Hastings Community Senior Center** opens in Hastings.
- 2024:** **Council on Aging celebrates 50 years of service in St. Johns County, Florida.**



CREATING COMMUNITY

Council On Aging welcomes adults in St. Johns County to participate in a wide range of programs at COA's six **senior centers and lifelong learning centers**. Programs are specifically designed for self-managing adults who enjoy socializing, staying active, and living a healthy lifestyle.

River House - Lifelong Learning for Ages 18+

179 Marine St., St. Augustine, FL 32084 (904) 209-3655

COA Center at UF Health Nocatee

Lifelong Learning and Caregiver Support for Ages 18+

351 Town Plaza Ave., Ste. 205, Ponte Vedra, FL 32081 (904) 819-3234

THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center - Ages 60+

175 Landrum Ln., Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082 (904) 209-3659

Coastal Community Center - Ages 60+

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

Hastings Community Senior Center - Ages 60+

6150 S. Main St., Hastings, FL 32145 (904) 209-3694

Trout Creek Community Senior Center - Ages 60+

6795 Collier Rd., St. Augustine, FL 32092 (904) 209-3658



SUSTAINING NUTRITION

Every day, COA and a group of caring volunteers work diligently to provide nutritious meals to older adults in the St. Johns County community through our **Meals on Wheels** and **Congregate Meals** programs. The meals are freshly-prepared daily, well-balanced, approved by a registered dietician, and hand-delivered. In addition to daily meals, Meals on Wheels volunteers share friendly visits 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 own pets.

In the past year, COA's small kitchen staff and dedicated volunteers prepared 78,962 meals.

The meals were served at COA senior centers and delivered to homebound elders by 214 volunteers.



FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

COA's **Independent Living Services** program coordinates access to subsidized services that facilitate at-home, independent living for adults age 60+ (and adults 18+ with specific cognitive diagnoses.) Subsidized services are accessible through a variety of federal, state, county, and community-based contracts and programs, contingent upon availability and eligibility.



COA's **Care Connection** program helps independent, older adults meet and manage the more challenging demands of everyday life. 100% donor-funded and volunteer-powered, the program fills the gaps in providing services for which there are no government funding sources. These services help seniors safely remain happy, healthy, and independent in their own homes where they are most comfortable. Services include minor home repairs, basic lawn care, wheelchair ramp construction, providing assistive devices, food for pets, and help applying for outside assistance programs.



COA's **Prescription Assistance** program helps eligible seniors apply and 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 2023, we saved 262 St. Johns County seniors over \$3.17 million!

PROVIDING MOBILITY

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.



For over 20 years, COA's **Sunshine Bus Company** has been the St. Johns County contracted provider of public transportation to and from a wide range of origins and destinations necessary for everyday living. The combined system of public bus and paratransit service has continued to expand as demand and funding have become available.

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 COA's charitable work.





STRENGTHENING MEMORY



IMEP™ is COA's groundbreaking **Integrative Memory Enhancement Program**, an original, research-based program that integrates mind, body, and brain connections to boost cognitive reserve and minimize the progression of memory loss and dementia. Presented by trained facilitators in a light-hearted atmosphere, each class includes mental agility activities that support flexible thinking, problem solving, memory, and reasoning, among other brain functions. 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 fourteen years. The unique program is also being successfully licensed and implemented at other agencies and senior facilities throughout the United States.



SUPPORTING DEMENTIA



The **Sunshine Center**, licensed by AHCA #9081, celebrated 20 years of service in 2023 as 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 adults 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, including:



- Person-centered care and activities for individuals dealing with Alzheimer's Disease, dementia, or other brain disorders
- Cognitive and sensory stimulation
- Socialization and activities
- Music, art, and pet therapy
- Trained nursing staff
- Caregiver respite
- Daily lunch served

CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

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, COA is here to help. Our Community Care-Giving program can provide you and your family with a free needs evaluation, education, support groups, community assistance information, and more. We offer:

- Invaluable services to those on the caregiving journey
- Educational programs with strategies for dealing with new challenges in your caregiving



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 and skills in support of Council on Aging's mission.

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 volunteer coordinator at 904-209-3700 or volunteer@coasjc.org.



Community Care Giving

- Free, one-on-one needs assessments
- Local support group meetings with caregivers from your community
- Self-care activities to help reduce stress
- Information on community assistance programs
- Phone call support

SERVING TOGETHER

COA offers more than just services for seniors and caregivers. **We also offer the chance to make an important difference in the world.** Our over 550 dedicated volunteers put their skills and talents into action to help older adults and caregivers every day.





CREATING OUR FUTURE

Council on Aging began our mission 50 years ago through the vision and commitment of members of the St. Johns County community. Just as at our founding, our future depends upon the participation of the entire community to be there for our elders and those who care for them.

As we embark upon the next 50 years, we are committed to continuing our strong history of innovation and responsiveness to the changing needs of those we serve.

Growing With Our Community

The population of older adults in St. Johns County continues to increase each year. We are committed to meeting their growing needs for services, support, and programming with your help.

Bridging The Gap

We will expand our partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and individuals who share our commitment to bridging the significant gap between available government funding and the help that seniors urgently need.



Reimagining Aging

The creative possibilities inherent in maturing and aging are numerous and frequently underestimated. We will continue to create new opportunities to encourage those we serve to live to their greatest potential and continue to grow and make new connections within our community at every age.

COA EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

- Becky Yanni, Executive Director
- Matt McCord, Transportation Director
- Brian Robinson, Program Director
- Patty Solano, Finance Director
- Amy Robinson, Development Manager

Make History With Us!

Council on Aging exists because of a long line of heroic individuals who were willing to create the future they envisioned. **Please join us today in creating an ever brighter future for seniors and caregivers in our community.**

2023 IMPACT

Year-Over-Year Impact

Council on Aging’s impact in the St. Johns County community increased significantly in 2023, with increases in individuals served and programs and services provided.



2023 Increases in Services:

Congregate & Home Delivered Meals **+16%**

River House Lifelong Learning Participation **+76%**

Senior Center Participation **+32%:**

Independent Living Services Clients **+7%**

- Coastal Community Center **+53%**
- Hastings Senior Center **+41%**
- THE PLAYERS Senior Center **+20%**
- Trout Creek Senior Center **+17%**
- COA Center at Nocatee **+13%**

Care Connection Clients **+36%**

Sunshine Center Participation **+11%**

IMEP™ In-person Participation **+60%**

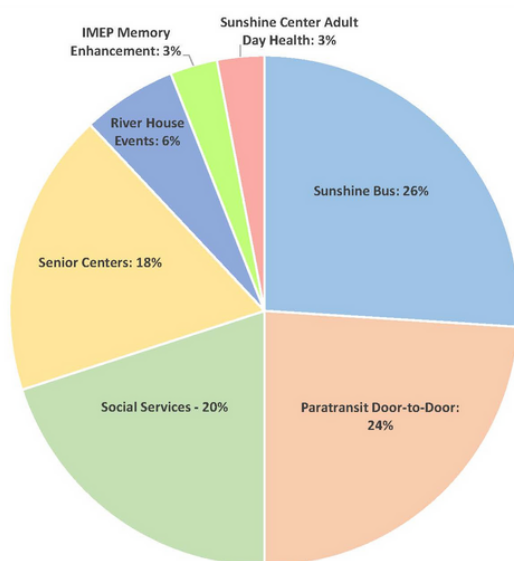
IMEP™@HOME Participation **+167%**

Paratransit Services **+7%**

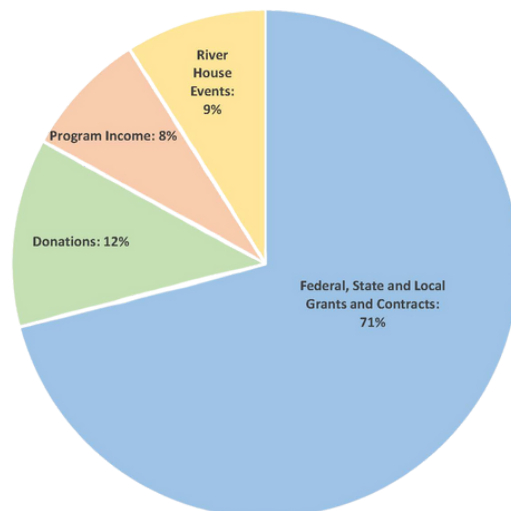
Community Care-Giving Participation **+80%**

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

2023 EXPENDITURES



2023 REVENUE





We are privileged and honored to serve our community's elders



JOIN US!

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

Thankfully, caring and generous St. Johns County community members stand with us. Please join us!

Founded in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 crisis, 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 contribute the resources necessary for COA to deliver the essential services and programs seniors need. Their generous support also allows COA to create programs that provide older adults with opportunities to continue to grow, discover new interests, make new connections, and enjoy their 'golden years' to the very fullest.

"We cannot accomplish our mission without our trusted partners in the community," COA executive director Becky Yanni explains. **"Our Elder Guard members continue to create a brighter future for seniors and caregivers in St. Johns County,"**

Please join other community members and businesses as an Elder Guard member today, and help COA meet the needs of St. Johns County seniors for generations to come.



For more information, please visit www.coajsc.org/donate or contact COA's Amy Robinson at arobinson@coajsc.org or 904-209-3700.