

Senior News

Georgia

Providing Helpful Information for Mature Adults in GEORGIA!

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**December 2022
Vol. 36, No. 12**

Dublin VA celebrates National Hospice and Palliative Care Month

Special to *SeniorNewsGeorgia*
Submitted by James W. Huckfeldt
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DUBLIN, GA.

In recognition of National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, Hospice Care staff at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center in Dublin, Georgia recently planted a rose bush in front of their building and passed out mums to honor their female Veterans. In a ceremony at the Hospice Care Unit on Nov. 16 attended by patients, families, and staff, social worker and U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Greg Senters emceed a program honoring female veterans and highlighting the service of U.S. Navy veteran Rose Schrader, a resident of the unit. Chaplain Carl Bryant helped lead the ceremony with a heartfelt invocation.

After playing “Bring My Flowers” by Tanya Tucker to remind attendees to waste no time expressing their affection for their loved ones, Schrader, with her family by her side, was presented with a bouquet of mums and a remembrance pin. During the program, Medical Center Director Manuel Davila spoke about the unique – and too often unacknowledged – contributions of

America’s female Veterans, acknowledging that, while VA had not historically been prepared to meet the needs of its women veterans, times had changed for the better.

“Women Veterans represent a significant and continually growing proportion of America’s heroes, and our improvements here at Carl Vinson VAMC reflect that fact. Each project and process now include the needs of female Veterans as an indispensable part of our decision-making. Programs like the one today affirms our commitment to our women Veterans, now and always,” Davila said.

Davila also said that the new Outpatient and Women’s Health Clinic under construction at the medical center and expected to open in April 2023 would offer significant enhancements for the care that middle Georgia’s women Veterans experience. The new free-standing facility will include a significant space expansion, new equipment, greater privacy, and more ease of access for Women’s Health Clinic patients.

“We are very excited about the new building and will be inviting our friends in the community to join us for the official opening,” Davila said.

As part of the ceremony, Senters discussed cultural aversions to death and dying that many experience and how those affected tend to avoid addressing the final act of life.

He noted that the purpose of hospice services is to encourage the emotional embrace of the transition that death brings to all and that embracing those feelings allows for emotional growth and a more peaceful passing for loved ones.

“Too many people think that hospice care is about dying, but that’s a serious misconception. Hospice is about celebrating life and extending quality of life as long as possible. It’s not about giving up, it’s about looking up,” Senters said.

Schrader’s family praised the Dublin VA and its Hospice team for the superior health-

care that Rose receives in an atmosphere of dignity and respect, saying that at the Dublin VA, Rose is “part of a family.”

Hospice RN Lisa Andreen, a nurse of over 20 years, said that serving on the Dublin Hospice team has been one of the most gratifying experiences of her life.

“Being here for Veterans like Ms. Rose and her family at this point of life is something we take very seriously at VA, and it motivates us to do our best for them every day. Caring for Veterans is a tremendous honor. I can’t imagine doing anything else.”



Davila and Dr. Iheuwa Ezech present Schrader with a pin honoring her service.



Dublin VA staff honor women veterans in Hospice ceremony.

Let Us Entertain You

by CLAIR HOUSER-DODD

We have been bragging here a lot lately: got through Covid without a hitch, got through a hip replacement and arthritic chipping with flying colors! Real happy about all of that. Still singing praises for Dr. Dustin Hoffman, feeling great, walking perfectly, even got taller! However, we took the Flu Shot and came down with a pretty bad case of it – TWICE. Unforgivable.

After two doses of heavy meds, we're halfway up to writing this article. Well, maybe a fourth of the way! Anyway, here we go.

Lots of small towns have been going through some spruce-up periods. Fort Valley has just had a bit of a face lift. The Magnolia Garden Club of Fort Valley has planted 26 baskets of flowers from Ware's Green House and The Barnyard Nursery and the City has hung them downtown and has promised to keep them watered. Kinda like children, "It takes a village to make a garden." Almost everything in the World takes people working together, and cooperation – though necessary – is not always available.

One more thing is happening in our little town. Blight and Code Enforcement. Police Chief, Anson Evans, has made the announcement and the FVPD will be working with the City Marshall to address enforcement of the blight condition. It is easily understood that cities with less blight have less crime; and, this allows the citizens to live in cleanliness and enjoy the quality of life they deserve.

This is known in criminology as the Broken Window Theory. It states that visible signs of crime, anti-social behavior and civil disorder create an urban environment that encourages further crime and disorder, including serious crimes.

We in the historical section really try to keep our homes as they are supposed to be, have a Neighborhood Watch, and really look out for each other. The upkeep not only helps the beauty of the neighborhood, but also helps real estate value hold its own.

Violators can be charged \$144-\$500 daily after the police have made an attempt to remedy the issue. This is enough to make us pick weeds with

tweezers!

If you are anywhere close to the Macon, Georgia area, and want a fun place to visit, please go to 502 Cherry Street and visit with Scott Mitchell at the Bohemian Den. Number one, you'll love the happy, friendly Scott... what a perk he is! Then look around this arty and well stocked layout. You'll find everything from toe rings to ear rings; not to mention wonderful art and most everything creative. My friend Annette King makes the most beautifully creative cards for every season. There are cards you will keep for life. No comparison to anything for the personal

greetings. This can be at least a half a day of entertainment.

Matthew, our great grandson, bemoaned the fact that he is too young to vote. We told him, "If you can't vote, pray." He is so thankful for that suggestion!

Let's hope it works again. We have another chance to put Herschel Walker in the Senate. Dr. Dodd used to live in Wrightsville, was Herschel's mother's doctor and the football team's doctor. He admired Herschel so much he often said, "I wish I had a son only half as good as Herschel." Get out and vote. Nov.28 to Dec. 6!





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Senior News & Views of Georgia

Taking Care Handling the holidays when you're hurting!

by LISA M. PETSCHE
lmpetsche@gmail.com

Many people are filled with joyful anticipation and festive good cheer at this time of the year. But some are filled with anxiety and dread, and wish to get the holidays over with as quickly and uneventfully as possible.



Lisa Petsche

They may have lost a loved one or experienced some other upheaval, such as physical or mental illness, unemployment or financial problems, involuntary relocation or the breakdown of an important relationship.

Their emotions put them completely out of step with those around them, further intensifying their sense of grief and isolation.

More than any other time of the year, the holiday season embodies family togetherness and is steeped in ritual and tradition. It's a time of reaching out to others in a spirit of caring and generosity. But how can you embrace this spirit when you are hurting or feel empty inside?

Coping skills

The following is some advice.

Acknowledge that this year is different; don't try to act as if nothing has changed. Be prepared to lower your expectations.

Accept your feelings, including ups and downs from one moment or day to the next. Face your heartache and allow the tears to come, knowing they are a necessary part of healing.

Resist the urge to isolate yourself. It's important to stay connected to people who care. But do let loved ones know your limitations.

Evaluate the meaning of the season in your life. Decide what is most important to you, focus on it and forget the rest this year. Some people find it comforting to continue with familiar traditions, while others prefer to start new ones or mix old and new. Do what feels right for you.

Keep in mind that traditions are especially important to children during times of upset, providing them with much needed comfort and security. So although certain practices might now be a source of discomfort or hold little meaning for some of the adults in your family, they may still be worth continuing, perhaps with modifications.

Plan ahead to help reduce anxiety and

stay focused. Whatever holiday-related tasks you decide to take on, ask for help and delegate responsibilities. Make lists to keep organized. Grief saps energy and affects concentration, and you don't want to create more stress for yourself.

Set aside quiet time each day. Nurturing your spirituality in this way will help keep you grounded.

One day at a time

If you accept an invitation, do so on the condition that you may back out at the last minute if you don't feel up to the occasion. Since it's impossible to predict how much energy you will have, be flexible and give yourself an out. Take things one day, and one event, at a time.

Guard your health. Overindulging in food or alcohol or getting insufficient sleep will only make you feel worse. Regular exercise, on the other hand, will help you feel better.

Express your emotions. Find someone who will listen and empathize, or write down your thoughts and feelings in a journal.

If applicable, turn to your religious faith for comfort, whether it's through private prayer, reflective reading, listening to hymns, attending worship or talking with a spiritual leader.

Try to focus on the spiritual aspects of the season rather than those you find stressful or can't relate to.

Consider doing something nice for someone. Many people find it helps take their mind off their own situation for a while.

Take responsibility for your well-being by doing something nice for yourself.

Look for moments of joy and laughter, and relish them. Don't allow feelings of self-pity, bitterness or guilt to get the upper hand and rob you of the ability to feel pleasure. It's okay to experience enjoyment.

If you take time now to anticipate events and your reaction to them, and plan some coping strategies, you will make it through the holiday season — perhaps even better than you expected. Just remember that there is no right or wrong way to do things.

Since everyone responds differently to loss and stress, be gentle with those around you who may also be hurting.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and a freelance writer specializing in boomer and senior health and wellness.

OPINION Making A Difference

by Daniel W. Gatlyn USN Ret, Minister/Journalist

Alright! I confess! My thoughts have invaded the script of another! But I will also add that the borrowed phrase is an item that I have wrestled with for a lengthy period. My "perfect" Christian friends may level an indictment upon me for watching MASH... an embattled sitcom nestled within the true to life ventures of the Korean War! But since I was an active ingredient of this dastardly conflict; I have eagerly become attached to the many scenes (and scandalous terminology) that are accurately depicted. Listening to the desperate reflection of Father Mulcahy, his words hit my personal sore spot. "I seriously don't know that I am making a difference," was his confession. Over a half century of columns are behind me; and, I have often wondered if even a few have made an impact. The response has been minimal and I console myself with the reminder that accolades (or comments) are not important; and, that the number might be about average for writers. With all conviction, I still believe that the world is better (or worse) for those who have come this way. Since there is nothing new under the sun, it is probable that such an oration has made the page many times.

It is not unusual that all humans occasionally feel left out, ignored, discredited, unworthy, unwise, ignorant; or, perhaps, just "patrons of pathetics," and especially those who labor for years! Everyone of common decency strives to "make a difference!" Some are more successful than others, but even those who render an impact once over extended periods are important. Every person is special, and all have a point to make. Obviously, there are voices in deficit; but, do remember; some of the more popular entries are derived from extremely humble settings. A perfect example is the Song "Amazing Grace" authored by slave trader John Newton. For over three hundred years, that song has remained honorable among all men.

The matter of "making a difference" is not predicated upon the chatter of vast majorities; or the impressionable entry on the marquee; but, rather, the impact made upon the "flesh and future" of living souls. Though fortunes or possessions are occasionally peripheral items, those who resolve to make a difference in matters of importance are generally

unconcerned over materials. To make a mark is a profitable entry for the archives; but, to "make a difference," should be the goal of global inhabitants. That is the imperative which drives me forward.

Publisher's Note: Based upon more than fifty years of experience in news media work, I can confirm that "good contributions" generate very few public response confirmations. However, to the contrast, make a mistake in your public comments and a "flood" of condemnations will follow! However, my friend, the Word says that our "works" follow after. From personal knowledge, I can attest that you have had a positive touch on, not hundreds, but thousands of lives.

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On the Cover

December is the best time to visit the Okefenokee Swamp!

By Carolyn Brenneman

Cover: A visit to Pioneer Island!

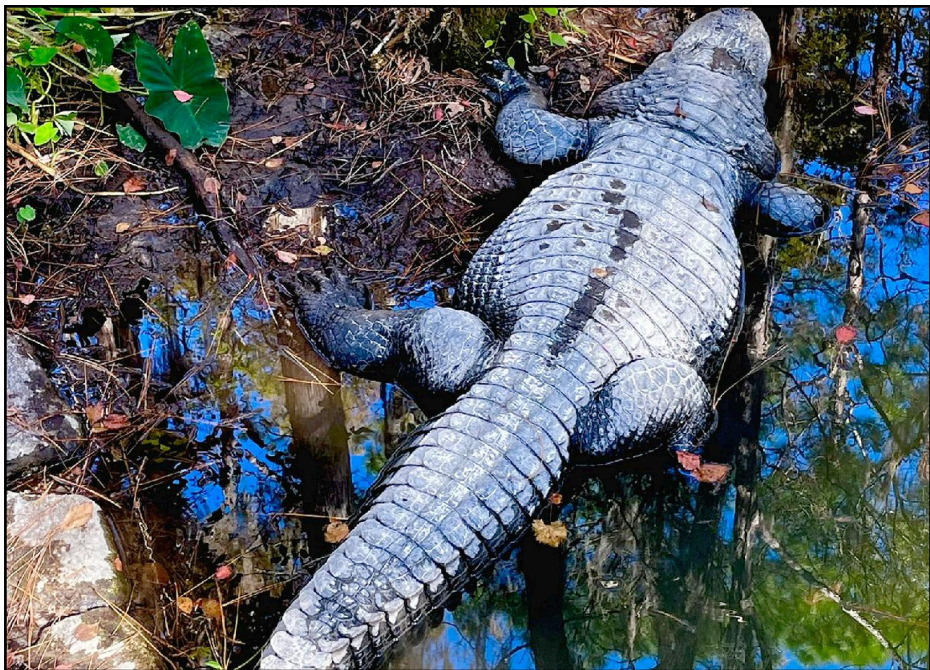
Let’s be sure to visit the Georgia Okefenokee Swamp with family and friends this December. Yes, there is a beautiful body of water filled with flowers, birds, turtles, and alligators in South Georgia. This December, the Okefenokee Swamp Park in Waycross will have their annual Christmas tour with a

beautiful Christmas train ride and beautiful Christmas decorations all around the area. Every Christmas season, the Okefenokee Swamp Park has their annual Light Show, filled with thousands of colorful lights and decorations. This time of the year is a very popular time to visit and take the 2-mile Christmas train ride around the swamp. The Okefenokee railroad tour is so popular that they have two trains running every 30 minutes. Bring some blankets and

continued on page 7



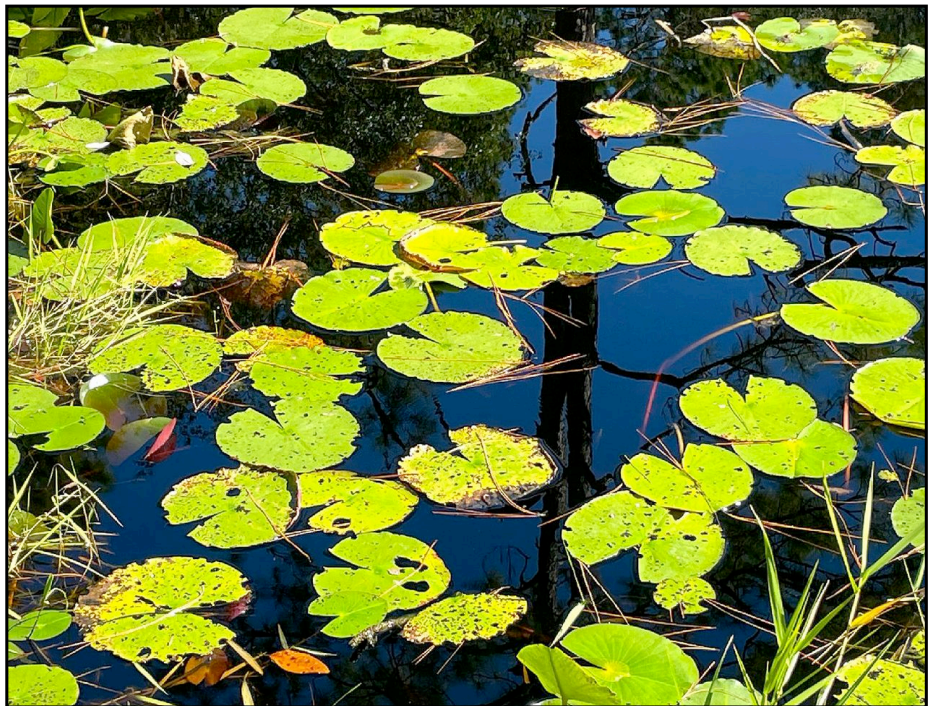
Small alligator swimming in the swamp.



An adult alligator.



Beautiful view of the area.



Green water lilies leaves.



Ready for the Christmas season.

OKEFENOKEE SWAMP from page 6

enjoy the ride along the wetlands.

After the ride or even before the ride, there is Pioneer Island to visit, and a beautiful nature center full of interesting artifacts and exhibits, including snake skin.

Also, we will not want to miss the Pogo and Walt Kelly Exhibit and take a look at this cartoonist and his wild characters.

Then there is the World Honey Market and Swamp Creation.

And of course, we will want to walk the Boardwalk where we can see live adult alligators up close! This adventure is one of a kind.

Okefenokee Swamp is a

438,000-acre peat filled wetland in Georgia which extends into Florida.

Although most of the swamp is now protected by the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the Okefenokee Swamp we will visit is in Waycross, Georgia and is a private non-profit facility. Let's make a plan to visit during one of the December dates as it is definitely a must-see trip!

Now, the swamp is open every day beginning at 9:00 a.m.; however, the Christmas Railroad Tour only operates on the following days in December: December 2-4, 8-11, 16-18, 20-23 and 26-27... from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Cost is only \$14!

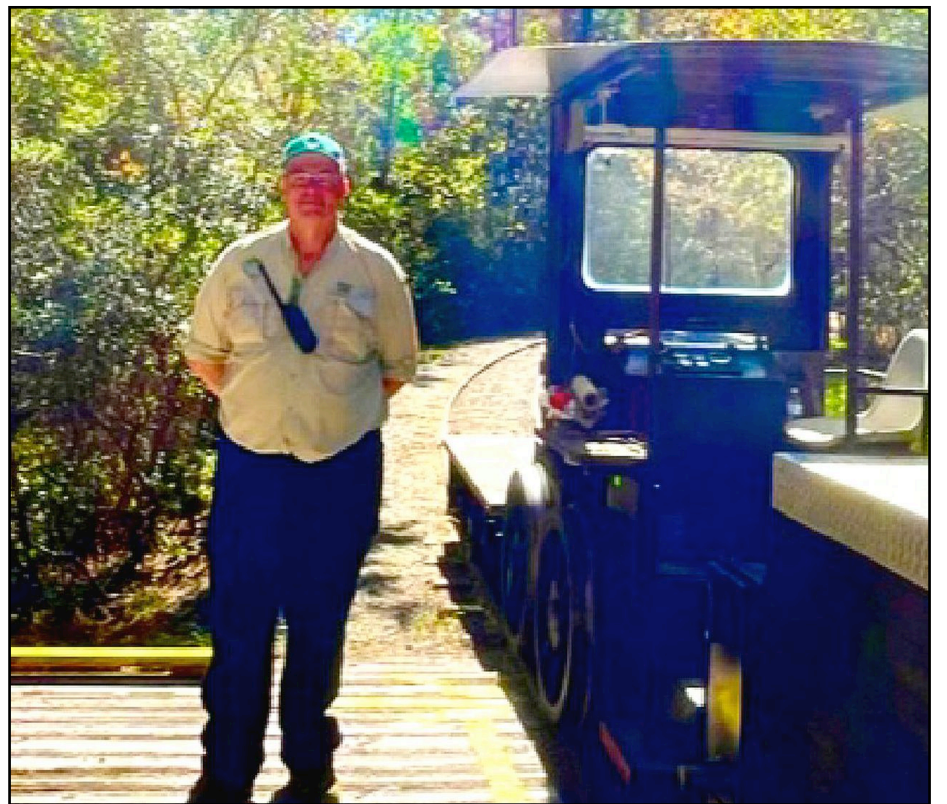
The park is located at 5700 Okefenokee Swamp

Park Road, Waycross, GA 31503.

Plan to arrive early to enjoy the park's treasures,

and then take the train tour.

Call 912-283-0583 for more information and reservations.



George is the train conductor.



Inside the main room of a home.



Part of a boardwalk.



The homestead of a pioneer in the 19th century.



Jeff walking along the old ruins.

On the Cover

***Beth Lanyon Clark...
No Slowing Down!***

by **CLAIR HOUSER-DODD**
COVER: Beth Lanyon Clark

Beth Lanyon Clark is one of the fortunate people who have been born and raised in Fort Valley, been away for 36 years, and has returned home to friends and family who love her.

Beth was married to David Clark, had two

children, Adam and Kathleen, has taught school for years and was the First Methodist Church of Fayetteville “Children Ministry” Director for many years. Beth says, “I was in charge of the children from birth to the 5th grade. I had the nursery and took care of “Moms’ Day out,” “Summer Fun Days,”

continued on page 9



Beth, son Adam, and daughter Kathleen, swimming with the dolphins.



Beth and her son, Adam



The Beach Babes: Beth, Claire Houser-Dodd and Kathy Young!

BETH LANYON

from page 8

“Bible School,” “Fall Festival,” “Easter Activities,” “Children’s Activities” and much more.

Sorta feeling retired, she rented a double booth at the Peach Antique Mall in Byron and loves trips all over to collect special items for resale. “One thing we hear a lot about is Blue China. It seems to sell almost before she can get it marked ‘For Sale,’” Beth shared.

Beth loves seeking and searching of artifacts which range from earrings and jewelry to China and furniture.

Sometimes she buys old stuff and changes it, works on it, paints it, and turns it into something wonderful and sellable!

One day she got a call from an acquaintance to teach her class at school. Beth did! She has her degree in Elementary Education and has substituted many times. Now she has been hired as a permanent Substitute at Hunt Elementary School in Fort Valley.

Beth graduated from Valdosta State University in Valdosta in Early Childhood Education and has a couple of related certificates. She is well qualified to take over and hold the interest of any age child.

By the way, her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lanyon, were in the business of demanding atten-

tion, too. He was a lawyer and she was a teacher!

We are so proud of Beth for accepting the full-time job. It is important to keep busy. Especially after ending a relationship and being away for 36 years. It is important to return home and be among those who knew you growing up. Beth was extremely well known, as was her family. She babysat for almost everybody in town; and, was the life-guard at the Country Club swimming pool in the Summer. One way or another, she was known by most everyone.

And, with her outstanding personality, voice and diction, we are all so proud to have her home and teaching.

We especially enjoy her now as one of the Beach Babes. We go together to Amelia Island, St. Simons Island, and Jekyll Island as often as possible!



Beth and Kathy with country music signer Matt Rodgers.



Peach Antique Mall!

BBB Tip: Shop safe and shop smart this holiday season!

Special to SeniorNewsGeorgia

by KELVIN COLLINS, President/CEO, BBB of Central Georgia & the CSRA, Inc.

The 2022 holiday shopping season promises to be an unpredictable one. High inflation rates and increased prices of consumer goods are already throwing a wrench into holiday shopping. Electronics, toys, and other products will be (or already are) in short supply, and retailers are struggling to staff up as the shopping season nears.

Just like in 2021, people are planning to start their holiday shopping early. Watch out for deals well before Black Friday sales. Retailers are also expecting to see even more people shopping online.

Product shortages and increased online shopping are likely to result in even more online purchase scams this year. These scams accounted for nearly 40% of all scams reported to BBB Scam Tracker in 2021, according to the 2021 BBB Scam Tracker Risk Report. Shortages are likely to make purchase scams even more common as desperate shoppers turn to shady websites in hopes of finding this year’s must-have gift.

BBB recommends the following tips to “Shop Safe, Shop Smart” this holiday season:

- Research before you buy. Use BBB.org and shopper reviews to do your homework before paying. Also, read our tips for spotting phony reviews.
- If the deal looks too good to be true, it

probably is. The top motivating factor for people who made a purchase and lost money was the price. Don’t shop on price alone.

- Beware of fake websites: Check the URL, watch for bad grammar, research the age of the domain, and search for contact information. See BBB’s tips for identifying a fake website.
- Professional photos do not mean it’s a real offer. Respondents reported that website photos motivated them to engage with scammers, especially for pets/pet supplies, clothing/accessories, and vehicles.
- Make sure the website is secure. Look for the “HTTPS” in the URL (the extra s is for “secure”) and a small lock icon on the address bar. Never enter payment or personal information into a website with only “HTTP” – it is NOT secure.
- Be careful purchasing sought-after products, especially during the holiday season. The risk of online purchase scams rises during the holidays because more people are making online purchases, and scammers offer the most popular products for the season at great prices.
- Beware of making quick purchases while scrolling through social media. Scammers have access to tools they need to learn about your buying behaviors, offering exactly what you want at enticingly low prices.
- Look for the BBB seal. BBB Accredited Businesses pledge to uphold the BBB Standards for Trust and to deal fairly with consumers. If a business displays a BBB seal, verify it by going to BBB.org.
- Use secure and traceable transactions and payment methods. According to

BBB’s research, those who paid with a credit card were less likely to lose money. Be cautious when paying by digital wallet apps, prepaid money cards, or other non-traditional payment methods. Learn more about payment types and how to use each safely.

- Shipment tracking information can be faked. Look closely to make sure it is a legitimate business. Avoid clicking on the tracking link; go to the ‘shipper’s website and type in the code to see if it is real.
- Count on BBB to help you “Shop Safe, Shop Smart.” More tips are available at BBB.org/holiday-tips.
- Report unsatisfactory purchase experiences to BBB. If you are unhappy with a purchase, file a complaint at BBB.org/complaints. If you never got what you paid for, consider reporting it to BBB Scam Tracker to help other consumers avoid being scammed.

The holidays bring out a lot of cheer and goodwill, but they also bring out scams and schemes that tend to separate you from your hard-earned money. Take the time to check out anything that sounds too good to be true.

For more trustworthy tips, go to BBB.org and report scams at BBB.org/ScamTracker.

Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, serving 77 counties in East Alabama, West Georgia, Southwest Georgia, Central Georgia, East Georgia, and Western South Carolina. This tips column is provided through the local BBB and the International Association of Better Business Bureaus (IABBB). The Better Business Bureau sets standards for ethical business behavior, monitors compliance and helps consumers identify trustworthy businesses. Questions or complaints about a specific company or charity should be referred directly to the BBB at Phone: 1-800-763-4222, Web site: BBB.org or E-mail: info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org.

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Freedom's Path closes over \$16m in Financing for Historic Veteran Housing Development

Special to *SeniorNewsGeorgia*

Submitted by James W. Huckfeldt
Deputy Public Affairs Officer
Carl Vinson VA Medical Center
Dublin, GA 31021
James.Huckfeldt@va.gov

DUBLIN, GA. – October 12, 2022

Freedom's Path at Dublin, Georgia closes over \$16M in financing for historic veteran housing development.

Garrison For Veterans, Solutions For Veterans, The Dublin Housing Authority, Communities for Veterans, Wellington Development Company and the entire Freedom's Path Dublin Development Team are pleased to announce that Freedom's Path at Dublin, Georgia, a historic 50-unit, public-private Veteran housing development with the Department of Veterans Affairs, has closed on all financing.

Freedom's Path Dublin is a public-private partnership through an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), located on the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center campus. This Veteran-centric, permanent-supportive housing community will bring jobs and over \$16 million of economic investment to the City of Dublin and Laurens County. VA's Enhanced-Use Lease (EUL) program allows VA to manage underutilized property through leasing arrangements with state or local governments or private sector organizations.

Financing consists of Historic Tax Credits, 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits, VA Contribution, and Project Based HUD-VASH vouchers. Special thanks to the City of Dublin and Laurens County, Georgia State Historic Preservation Office, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and the Department of Veterans Affairs for making this a



reality. Investors include the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), Regions Bank, and Cabretta Capital. Property management is provided by Cushman & Wakefield.

A Groundbreaking Ceremony was scheduled for Wednesday, November 9, 2022 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Freedom's Path at Dublin, Georgia, Carl Vinson VA Medical Center, 1826 Veterans Boulevard, Dublin, GA 31021 (Ceremony will start at 10:30 a.m.)

Garrison For Veterans, based in Atlanta, Georgia, is a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business specializing in real estate development for active and reserve military, Veterans and affiliated civilians such as military families and federal government employees.

Solutions For Veterans, an Atlanta, Georgia-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, serves as the lead service provider for Freedom's Path commu-

nities and augments the comprehensive array of medical and psychiatric services for Veterans provided by the VA Medical Centers where Freedom's Path developments are located.

The Dublin Housing Authority has been serving the needs of the low-income population in Dublin since 1949. DHA is a provider of affordable, low-income housing in the cities of Dublin and East Dublin, Georgia, and owns 540 apartment units consisting of efficiency to five-bedroom units.

Communities for Veterans has developed nine (9) similar Freedom's Path communities across the U.S., providing supportive housing for 451 formerly homeless, senior and disabled Veterans.

Wellington Development Company, based in Houston, Texas, provides full-service commercial real estate development in multiple asset classes.

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Flint Energies donates funds to benefit veterans

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Flint Energies donated \$5,000 to Operation Veteran Smiles (OVS) to provide care packages for veterans receiving long-term care at Veterans Administration hospitals around the Southeast. Flint made the contribution with monies generated through a matching grant. The donation will help create more than 1,200 care packages.

“Since our inception as a rural electric cooperative, Flint Energies has worked to improve the quality of life for our members. One way we can help is by assisting Operation Veteran Smiles with their initiative to bring smiles to injured or ill veterans,” says Flint Vice President of Cooperative Communications Marian McLemore. “Because our service territory is bookended by two military installations, veterans make up a significant portion of our membership. It is only right that we would support.”

A portion of the donated funds are the result of a matching grant by CoBank, one of Flint’s lenders. CoBank’s Sharing Success program doubles the contribution of its co-op customers to the charitable organization of their choice.

Operation Veteran Smiles was founded in 2012 by local resident and former Flint Energies’ Washington Youth Tour delegate Amelia Day. OVS’s mission is to bring smiles to veterans receiving long-term treatment at VA hospitals throughout the US. OVS exists to give back to those who have served our country through military service. Through regular visits to deliver cards, hygiene care packages, musical therapy and special events, OVS continues its mission to

brighten the lives of those who have selflessly served our country. To date, almost 20,000 veterans across 17 states have received cards and care packages through the organization. To donate, visit operationveteransmiles.com/donate.

About Flint Energies

Celebrating its 85th year of service in 2022, Flint Energies is a not-for-profit electric cooperative owned by its members in parts of 17 central Georgia counties. Flint employs 220 employees and serves

more than 90,000 electric meters. We are 100% locally-controlled and democratically governed by nine Directors elected from among the membership. In 1937, Flint Energies was created to bring people together to meet common needs like reliable electric energy, and our mission remains focused on improving the quality of life in Middle Georgia. Flint Energies is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Follow Flint on Twitter and Facebook.

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