

The VHA VOICE

The Villages Homeowners Advocates

The VHA FOUNDATION

The VHA

The VHA HELPING HANDS

MISSION

The Villages Homeowners Advocates (The VHA) is a lifestyle organization committed to championing the needs of Villagers through:

- Positive, constructive dialogue
- Problem solving • Education
- Philanthropic efforts

VALUES

- Integrity • Honesty • Accountability
- Independence

WHERE YOUR VOICE MATTERS



VHA TOWN HALL - JULY 2023

The VHA wants to thank the following people for participating in this VHA Town Hall meeting and providing information to VHA members and Villages residents. Dr. Gary Lester – Vice President Community Relations; Carrie Duckett – Deputy District Manager; Pat Breeden – Undersheriff Sumter County Sheriff's Department; Capt. Robert Siemer – Villages District Supervisor Sumter County Sheriff's Department; Ofc. Garth Layne and Ofc. Kaitlyn Lemonanwicz – Wildwood Police; Interim Chief Steven Hunt – Lady Lake Police.

VHA President Peter Russell welcomed all and explained the new format of this quarterly meeting. Previously, questions from VHA members collected during a three-month period received responses during the VHA Town Hall. A VHA Issues Team is now in place to respond to members' questions as soon as they are received. Rich Cole will respond to North region questions, Phil Walker for Central and Roger Kass will respond to South questions. The VHA Issues Team will then select one or two common topics / concerns to address at the Town Hall meeting to provide in depth information the VHA will bring to members and Villages residents.

Introducing this meeting's topic, Peter reported that during a panel of District Supervisors July 17, 2023 he announced the VHA partnership with Florida Department of Transportation's program Safe Mobility for Life. A program focused on reducing fatalities and bodily injuries. The VHA will be presenting programs to help educate VHA members and Villages residents. The question for this meeting's discussion: How do you see this initiative moving forward and making an impact on the community?

Dr. Gary Lester: Safety in our community begins with safe transportation and strong law enforcement. The Villages' transportation plan, including our golf car accessibility, is the Gold Standard in terms of people being able to move about their community conveniently and safely. That safety and convenience is the result of a master plan, which continues to be executed throughout the community. The Villages has the opportunity to design from a clean slate, which enable the creation of features like roundabouts, golf car trails and curved roadways designed to slow traffic. Roundabouts also calm traffic and when accidents do occur, they are typically less serious than at normal, four way, signaled intersections. Walls, fences and gates all mark entry into the community and they also slow traffic and act as a deterrent to criminals. Law enforcement provided by Sumter, Lake and Marion

counties along with the police departments in Wildwood and Lady Lake patrol and respond throughout The Villages. The number one deterrent to crime within our residential areas is the social connectivity in the neighborhoods. Villagers are typically good neighbors who recognize who belongs and send alerts when suspicious people or situations appear.

Undersheriff Pat Breeden: We push the phrase "See Something, Say Something." We encourage people to report when issues occur. We promote the "9:00 pm Routine" to develop the habit of checking that cars and doors are locked and make safety checks. Perpetrators look for unlocked vehicles and houses. Follow the Sumter Sheriff website and Facebook for information and safety.

Capt. Robert Siemer: Driving is safer with roundabouts which slow traffic and injuries are less serious when accidents occur. Side-impact / "t-bone" crashes occur at intersections but do not happen in roundabouts. When you follow the 9:00 pm Routine, be sure to check that the garage door is closed. Watch that items are stored away. A cell phone in a cup holder may attract a parked car break-in. Put cell phones away while driving and please watch for all vehicles, golf cart and bicycles.

Ofc. Garth Layne: We have increased Wildwood Police presence to watch for speeders as we patrol through the community.

Carrie Duckett: The master plan for this community is certainly designed for safety. The District government oversees maintenance of this property to maintain high standards. In the audience, there are AAC members and thirteen (13) district representatives. As you hold each other accountable, we are all working together. Those who attended yesterday's (July 17th) meeting and today's meeting can bring this information out to others. If residents see anything that needs attention, we urge them to contact us immediately through the District website www.districtgov.org or call Customer Service 352-753-4508.

Interim Chief Steve Hunt: We ask that you have reasonable expectations of the police department. We are working to fill positions for officers. There are 30 positions allocated with 23 filled. We work with residents and encourage civil discourse when you come to speak to us. We try to solve hard problems. Peter closed this portion of the meeting thanking the Partners as we all work together for VHA members and Villages residents. The VHA prides itself in working with a positive, productive dialogue to provide education and philanthropy.

The VHA RESIDENT NIGHT

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2023 • 7:00 p.m.

EZELL REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER
769 MARILEE PL, THE VILLAGES 32163

PRESENTERS MAY INCLUDE, AND INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM:

- Sumter County Sheriff's Office
- Other Local Law Enforcement
- Sumter County Judge Honorable Paul Militello
- Sumter County Property Appraiser
- Sumter County Tax Collector
- The Villages District Government
- Veteran Services
- Seniors vs. Crime
- UF Health The Villages Regional Hospital Auxiliary
- Supervisor of Elections
- Bike Friendly Advocacy Council
- Friends of the Library
- SHINE Medicare Counseling
- Friends of the Library
- The Enrichment Academy
- Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches
- The VHA – The Villages Homeowners Advocates
- The VHA Helping Hands Durable Medical Equipment Loan Program
- CERT Community Emergency Response Team

HOW TO STAY IN TOUCH



SCAN THE QR CODE TO GO TO OUR WEBSITE:
www.thevha.net

On it you will find Member Benefits, Events, Ways to Volunteer and Donate, Current News, Leadership Bios, and more.

PROVIDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO GET OUR INFORMATIVE EMAIL "BLASTS":

Send us an email with your name and email address to: vhaoffice@thevha.net

"LIKE" OUR FACEBOOK PAGE: [thevha4you](https://www.facebook.com/thevha4you)

You can find a full report of The VHA Town Hall Meeting and more news on our website thevha.net.



HELPING HANDS

Hello Villagers!!

I'm happy to tell you that the VHA Helping Hands Program is alive and well. To date this year, we've had over 5000 contacts, surpassing where we were last year by over 1000. It's encouraging to know that our program is assisting so many Villagers.

If you know someone who needs durable medical equipment or has a friend/relative visiting that will need some equipment, please tell them about us. It's surprising that when we ask folks if they've heard about our program, many folks say no. So please tell everyone about us.

What is durable medical equipment (DME) you ask? Well, it includes things such as wheelchairs, rollators, walkers, shower chairs, crutches, etc. The full list of what we provide is on our website: <https://www.thevha.net/helping-hands/>. And we offer free temporary loans to all Villages residents.

Just a note to let you know if an organization like a nursing home, rotary, etc. would like to donate more than 3 pieces of equipment you need to call first. We will then have one of our board members or repair volunteers call you back and let you know if we will take them and how many. From time to time, we have an excess of some equipment. If you just show up with more than 3 items, without getting an okay, you will not be able to drop them off. Please call our main number (352-973-2284) to discuss the donation.

Regarding excess equipment we may have, we're very happy to tell you we have just partnered with American Legion Post 347 to provide some of our excess equipment to them. As you may know, they also have a program to provide DME to folks who need it.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, we operate solely on donations. If you'd like to donate, you can do so in one of 2 easy ways:

1. Go to our website (www.thevha.net), hover over the top line that says Donate. Select Helping Hands for a credit card Donation Form. Simply fill out the form and press Submit.
2. Stop by our office (1104 Main Street, The Villages, FL 32159) in Spanish Springs or mail a cash or check donation. Our office is open between 11 am and 1 pm, Monday through Friday.

Al Arnold
President, VHA Helping Hands



DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM

Visit our website at www.thevha.net to view our current inventory, then call us at 352-973-2284 between 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. to request or donate equipment.

We will schedule your pick-up from: THE VHA OFFICE
1104 Main St., Spanish Springs/The Villages
Monday – Friday: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

"ACHIEVING SAFE MOBILITY FOR LIFE: A COMMITMENT TO FLORIDA'S AGING POPULATION"

The Safe Mobility for Life Coalition is steadfastly committed to reducing serious injuries and eliminating fatalities among Florida's older road users. This pledge is increasingly vital as today's Americans are driving longer into their later years than ever before.

The Coalition is pioneering ways to ensure safe mobility for life, notably by promoting the importance of personalized transportation plans. The proactive development and adoption of these plans can ensure Floridians continue to travel safely and reliably as they age.

Given that research by AAA suggests that older adults are likely to outlive their ability to drive safely by 7 to 10 years, alternate transportation options become crucial. Understanding and planning for this can help seniors maintain independence and continue visiting the places they love.

With a new Strategic Action Plan (2022-2025), the Coalition aligns its efforts with major state initiatives like the Florida Strategic Highway Safety Plan. This comprehensive and data-driven approach guides their mission to improve road safety for aging Floridians. The Coalition is using baseline data to develop and evaluate resources that target key areas for improvement.

Partnerships with local agencies and organizations, such as the VHA, offer invaluable support. Programs ranging from VHA's monthly golf cart safety clinics to county "find a ride" services are making tangible differences. Educational initiatives, law enforcement collaboration, and access to medical equipment via organizations like Helping Hands further amplify these efforts.

In a nutshell, the Coalition's determination is to ensure that Florida's aging road users achieve safe mobility for life, in the true spirit of proactive safety, and robust community support.

Dan Kapellen
VHA Assistant VP, Central Area

VHA FOUNDATION COMMITTEE - REPORT FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 2023

On behalf of the VHA, Inc., the Foundation Committee distributes charitable funding to eligible organizations and lifestyle groups benefiting populations of The Villages and surrounding areas. In the first half of 2023, \$12,500 was distributed among the following groups: Best Buddies (mental health), New Horizons Service Dogs (persons with disabilities), Our Moment Cafe (dementia, caregiver resources), Tutors for Kids (youth, education), Angel Wigs of Hope (cancer), Girl Scouts of The Villages Book and Pajama Drive (children, poverty), and Operation Homebound (hunger, nutrition).

The VHA will continue to focus funding for the second half of 2023 to the needs of U.S. veterans and deployed troops, housing, and dementia/mental health programs and services.

To support these efforts, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution online at thevha.net/vha-donation. Checks should be made out to the VHA, Inc. and mailed to 1104 Main Street, Lady Lake, FL 32159.

Peg Fiore
Chair - VHA Foundation Committee

The VHA Events / Programs AUGUST 2023

August 8th - Resident Night

****Doors open at 6:30 p.m.****

Program 7:00 p.m.

Ezell Regional Recreation Center
769 Marilee PL, The Villages 32163

Aug 14 - Adult Family Feud

****Doors open at 6:00 p.m.****

Program 6:30 p.m.

Ezell Regional Recreation Center
769 Marilee PL, The Villages 32163
Emcee Tom Gourlay aka Mr. Trivia

The VHA Social Committee is once again offering a fun event for all Villagers. The event will be held at Ezell Rec Center on Monday, August 14 with the doors opening at 6:00 PM. No one will be permitted to enter before 6:00 with the festivities starting at 6:30.

Adult Family Feud will be emceed by Tom Gourlay (AKA Mr. Trivia) and will surely entertain. Cost to play is only \$5 per person and players are encouraged to form their own teams or come and join others. There will be a 50/50 raffle. The event is BYOB and players or groups may bring snacks.

Host for the night will be VHA Social Chairman Mike Burke and valuable prizes will once again be supplied by Charter Research.

August 15th - BINGO

****Doors open at 6:00 p.m.****

Program 7:00 p.m.

Eisenhower Recreation Center
3560 Buena Vista Blvd, The Villages, FL

August 16th Golf Cart Safety Clinic

9:00 a.m.

Eisenhower Recreation Center
3560 Buena Vista Blvd, The Villages, FL

August 28th Sumter County Overview

featuring Jeff Bogue Sumter County Commissioner District 4

****Doors open at 5:30 p.m.****

Program 6:00 p.m.

Ezell Regional Recreation Center
769 Marilee PL, The Villages 32163

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS: www.thevha.net