

THE SENIOR SLANT



SENIOR COLLABORATIVE
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

The Newsletter of the Senior Collaborative of Indian River County

Third Quarter 2020
Issue #6



Karen Deigl

Thank You Karen!

Four years ago when discussions began about creating a collaborative organization to connect seniors to service, Karen Deigl was one of the guiding lights. Those engaged in early meetings gave a resounding yes, and in January 2018, the Senior Collaborative was created in the United Way Incubation Center. Karen Deigl was a consistent advocate in meetings during those two years and the Senior Resource Association became one of the earliest funders, along with John's Island Strategic Alliance, and Indian River County Hospital District. Although she had a full schedule as CEO of Senior Resource Association and board membership on local and state organizations, Karen joined the Steering Committee for the new collaborative, and in September 2018 was elected Chair of the Board.

With her leadership, the Senior Collaborative became a non-profit organization, with all the challenges of establishing membership, creating logos, writing grants and newsletters as well as filing for 501c3 status. In addition, with her support and education, the County Commission accepted the Senior Collaborative as liaison for membership in the age-friendly network, AARP certified the designation and Livable Indian River launched in February 2020.

Karen never lost the vision that the Collaborative would inform older adults and their loved ones about where to get help in the community. Software was researched, purchased and with the help of new staff, Elizabeth, the database is online.

Karen, of course, did not do all the work on the Senior Collaborative. The Executive Committee feels gratitude for the dedication and amazing work of Randy Riley as Executive Director. We all also know the importance of a bright leader, one committed to older adults with years of skill, knowledge and thank heavens, a sense of humor. She believes in the Collaborative and the membership, in the vision and the importance of everyone working together. Only by working together, will we be able to offer information to the ever-growing number of elders in our County. This is Karen's last quarter as Chair of the Board of Directors for the inaugural years. We have had many successes in the past 4 years, and the Board wants to thank her for being a very bright guiding light.

In This Issue

- Thank you to our Guiding Light.
- Executive Director's Notes
- Livable Indian River Update
- Recent Scam
- Equality Statement

Facts About Seniors in Indian River County:

- There are currently 48,428 65+ residents
- In 2040 65+ population is projected to be 70,800
- 38% of the County population is 60+
- 32% of males and 68% of females live alone
- 52% are registered voters
- 12% are employed
- 49% age 65-84 are veterans
- 20% of seniors over 65 are under the 125% poverty level

Covid-19 & Isolation

Research conducted through a national poll of more than 2000 adults aged 50-80 shows a marked increase in loneliness:

2018	2020
34% felt lack of companionship	41%
27% felt isolated from others	56%
28% infrequent social contact	46%

Those who interacted with neighbors at least once weekly were less likely to express loneliness, as were those able to connect by video or social media .

Did you know that being isolated is equivalent to smoking fifteen cigarettes per day?

Executive Director's Notes



Randy Riley

CDC Guidelines for Covid-19

- Wash your hands often or if soap and water are not available use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Avoid Close Contact in your home with people that are sick or maintain a 6 foot distance between yourself and people you do not live with.
- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth when around others.
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Monitor your health daily.

Older adults and people with underlying conditions are at increased risk.



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Dear Members & Friends,

What a difference a few months make. When we published our first 2020 quarterly newsletter, things were normal and we were progressing with our programs. The launch for Livable Indian River occurred in February, with 81 community leaders attending. Jeff Johnson, AARP Florida Vice-President, presented an Age Friendly designation plaque to Susan Adams, Indian River County Commission Chair. Livable Indian River Core Team was off and running to develop a community assessment. Please review the separate article about Livable Indian River.

Then March came and the world changed for all of us due to Covid-19. The launch was the last live event or meeting we held. We worked from home for three months during the shutdown and learned how to operate in a virtual world, while serving members and clients and moving forward with our vision and goals. The Executive Committee, Board and Livable IR Core Team have all become proficient in meeting by Zoom. We have also recently done presentations to community groups using this vehicle.

Our member providers and funders have done some great work during the pandemic. Some of the examples include: United Way with their Covid-19 fundraising and distribution of \$1.4 million for needed services. Senior Resource Association providing meals to more seniors and continuing to offer free transportation to the community. Indian River County Health Department and Treasure Coast Community Health have been on the front line of the pandemic since March. Each provider has adapted their programs to continue serving. We thank and commend all providers.

We have looked internally at our organization regarding diversity. You will find our diversity statement on page 4 of this newsletter. This is an endeavor we take seriously. We will strive to listen and be part of the solution to create equality.

We welcome Elizabeth Gerrald, Administrative Associate to the team. We want to add your business to our database if you provide a service for seniors in Indian River County. To gather the most information to assist Indian River County Seniors, basic membership in the collaborative, and a listing on our website is complimentary. The information from our website database is used for telephone support and referral. The website and the phone service together provide a means to navigate seniors, family members and caregivers to appropriate service providers. If you want to add your service, contact Elizabeth at 772-469-2270, Ext.103, or by email to egerrald@ircsc.org.

We have also been an advocate for mandatory face coverings and added our support of the Indian River County Hospital District's resolution. We work to increase community leader's understanding of the need to protect the 48,400 adults over 65, who are the most vulnerable.

We are currently preparing for the end of our fiscal year. The Board Development Committee works diligently on filling board vacancies. I want to thank Darlene Forage, Louie Hoblitzell and John Porta, Jr. for their service on the Collaborative Board of Directors. You have all made us a better organization with your involvement. We will announce the 2020 -2021 board members at our annual meeting on October 15. The annual meeting is planned to be conducted over Zoom. We continue to adapt and do our work on behalf of elders in our County. My thanks go out to all of you for all your endeavors, support and involvement.

Livable Indian River



Abby Walters
Core Team Chair

The goal of a Livable Community is for people of all ages to...

1. Feel safe in the community
2. Participate in community activities.
3. Be treated with respect
4. Have access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing and transportation
5. Have access to recreational opportunities and health services
6. Know what services and activities are available and have access to information by a means they prefer
7. Be active, vital contributors to the economic, civic and social life of the community
8. Receive appropriate support if they can no longer look after themselves



We are Listening

Thirty-eight percent of the residents of Indian River County are 60 years old or older. In July 2019 our County joined the Age-Friendly Network, an association of more than 450 communities nationwide, and 35 in Florida. On February 19, 81 community leaders joined the Senior Collaborative to launch *Livable Indian River* and receive recognition as a newly designated community. AARP Florida State Director Jeff Johnson presented the certificate to Indian River County Commission Chair, Susan Adams. Adams indicated that our community is an “amazing place,” and being welcoming and livable for all ages is an economic driver for the area.

Karen Diegl, Chair of Senior Collaborative and CEO of Senior Resource Association, said joining the Network,” means our County leaders are committed to creating a change that makes our community safer, more accessible, more supportive and more livable for people of all ages, especially of older adults.”

Johnson discussed 8 different features of livable communities: building and outdoor spaces, transportation, housing, social participation, communication/information, community and health services, work and civic engagement, respect and social inclusion. He also indicated a 5-year implementation process to make changes.

Livable Indian River’s first year involves getting feedback about the features residents consider most important, as well as areas where changes are most needed. A core team of advocates and professionals from different organizations are working to get input from all over the County. A survey is currently electronically available in English and Spanish. You can find the surveys on the Senior Collaborative website <https://www.ircsc.org>. United Against Poverty has also made their computer labs available for those individuals who do not have access to a computer or wifi. Paper surveys will be available for groups at several locations around the county. We are still establishing the feasibility of drop boxes. Listening sessions allow for input outside the scope of the survey by obtaining active input from residents. COVID-19 has made doing listening sessions more challenging but we are exploring ways, including Zoom to obtain this information.

We ask that you let us know what you and your team can do to help get feedback. If you have a FB page – please post the link:

<http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eh31t5kzka1glgxv/start>

If you have a newsletter, please include the link or survey. If you meet with individuals, please share the link or let us send you paper surveys. We want to be sure to reach residents and groups throughout the County, and you can help us. As newly designated to the Age Friendly Network, now it is time for us to listen – to you and others in the community. Let us hear from you!

Scams on Seniors:

Watch out for these common stranger scams. Some financial scams are easy to identify, but many are not quite so easy to spot. Here are a few of the most common scams strangers may use to trick elderly individuals into giving up money, personal information, or property.



- Government scams (IRS/Medicare)—Scammers pose as government officials requiring their victims to wire cash or use prepaid debit or gift cards to pay a bogus tax bill. Or they may provide sham Medicare services at makeshift mobile clinics in order to bill the insurance and pocket the money.
- Granny scam—Fraudsters play to the emotions of grandparents by identifying themselves as grandchildren calling or emailing about an emergency situation. They may say, “I’ve been arrested and need money wired quickly,” or “I need cash cards for bail.”
- Prize and sweepstakes fraud—Under the guise of a telemarketing call to notify the winner of a lottery or sweepstakes, the victim is told they must pay taxes on the jackpot via mail or wire before they can claim their prize.
- Sweetheart fraud—With the false promise of love and companionship, elders are conned into trusting a new “friend” that they meet in person or through social media. The romantic partner then swindles them out of money and/or property before disappearing.

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The Senior Collaborative of Indian River County is devoted to improving the quality of life of older adults through a collaboration of service providers, professionals, funders and advocates. Our mission is founded on respect for, and appreciation of diverse elders, their friends, caregivers and other loved ones, as well as their contributions to our area. We seek input that allows us to anticipate, understand and prioritize new and better ways to meet the changing needs of members and those we serve. Feedback from all elders and those who care about them, increases our sensitivity to their needs and helps us create positive change in the community. Critical to the success of the Senior Collaborative is the ability to respect, listen to, and value older adults, regardless of race, gender, citizenship, sexuality, income, spiritual beliefs or functional limitation.

Funding Partners

We are proud to be supported by the following Partners:

