



Daily Topics

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Heard on The Beat

NEWS FROM KEY COVERAGE AREAS IN OUR COMMUNITY



TODAY'S TOPIC

HEALTH EDUCATION

START MOVING AND GROOVING TO THE MUSIC AT NELLY SALAZAR'S WEEKLY ZUMBA CLASS

Dancing offers a variety of physical and mental benefits, and those looking for a way to get moving to all kinds of music, including some reggaeton and other international beats, are welcome to check out Nelly Salazar's Zumba class that meets at 1 p.m. Mondays at Everglades Recreation. (Joseph Francis, Daily Sun)

BRING YOUR QUESTIONS ON HEARING AIDS TO SEMINAR

At 3:30 p.m. today at the Lake Deaton Care Center, Dr. Al Turri will host Hearing Aids 101: Everything You Wanted You Knew Before You Bought Hearing Aids. The seminar is for those considering hearing aids. To register, call 352-674-6051. For information on classes and programs at The Villages Health, go to the villageshealth.com. (Joseph Francis, Daily Sun)

The Villages Health and The Villages Grown are collaborating to provide tips for picking produce with the Shop with a Registered Dietitian event, which requires sign ups.

By JOSEPH FRANCIS
Daily Sun Staff Writer

When describing the ongoing relationship between The Villages Health and The Villages Grown, one would be hard pressed to find a better word than organic.

At 10 a.m. May 11, the two will join forces at The Market at Sawgrass Grove for an event titled Shop with a Registered Dietitian. Registration is required at thevillageshealth.com/learning-center/.

It is offered through The Villages Health's learning center, and attendees who register for the event will have licensed nutrition professionals available to answer questions and provide tips on healthy eating, potential recipes and how to stick with a nutrition plan.

"My goal for this event is to inspire people to find new and exciting ways to incorporate diverse types of fresh produce into their meals," said Kristen Hubbard, registered dietitian with The Villages Health. "I hope to get attendees excited to try items outside of their comfort zone."

The event will take part

across four 30-minute sessions of five individuals each, formatted to be able to provide personalized attention for everyone.

"Our registered dietitians are educators by nature, so they're looking forward to working in small groups with interested folks to find nutrition options that make their daily habits that much healthier," said Amy Wixted, population health manager for The Villages Health.

It is by no means the first collaboration between the The Villages Grown and The Villages Health.

"The Villages Grown has hosted tours of their facilities for our team members before, and we've worked together on cooking demonstrations," Wixted said.

By virtue of closely aligned missions to educate on and create opportunities for healthy, sustainable lifestyles, their continued partnership has been nothing short of natural.

"Our vision is to make The Villages and surrounding community America's healthiest hometown, which we achieve by providing comprehensive services that keep people healthy and heal them quickly,"

Bling Fling Benefits the Alzheimers Association

Trinity Springs partnered with Your Key to Senior Living Options to raise money during event.

By JOSEPH FRANCIS
Daily Sun Staff Writer

Trinity Springs held a jewelry and accessory sale dubbed The Bling Fling on Wednesday in collaboration with Your Key to Senior Living Options to benefit the Alzheimer's Association.

Lisa Honka, owner of Your Key to Senior Living Options and one of the architects for the event, recognized not just an opportunity to raise funds for a cause relevant to her field but also a way to give back to the communities that make her work possible.

Your Key to Senior Living Options helps people find a senior living community that's right for them. "Nothing gets unused," she said of the event. "I put an ad in the paper for people to donate their old and unused items, and afterward I went around collecting it all to be sold here today."

Anything left unsold Honka planned to donate to Trinity Springs so it could

still find new life as a part of their programming.

"People walk away with some treasure at a cheap price, and we raise money for Alzheimer's research," she said. "Items we don't sell go back into the community and can be used for crafts and events down the road. It's a win-win all around."

Residents also decided to get in on the philanthropy, donating their excess to Nancy Powell, Trinity Springs' sales and marketing manager, who oversaw the event from the senior living community side.

"We had one resident who handed us his wife's jewelry box," she said. "She had recently moved to memory care and he was downsizing his apartment. We made sure to go through it and give some of the items back to their children, but there were some wonderful pieces we were able to give new life."

For Honka, this was her sixth time putting together the fundraiser. She has held the event annually since starting Your Key to Senior Living Options six years ago.

"I started this company because I looked around and saw the larger senior care referral services missing," she said. "Those who people spoke with often never walked any of the buildings, learned about the teams or the level of care they provide."

Donating to an organization focused on the care and support of those with Alzheimer's was a natural

extension of Honka's work, which shares similar goals.

"What I do is like case management," she said. "I listen to people's stories and come to understand what they need. We talk about what their wishes are, how to keep them safe medically, financially and emotionally, and what resources are available to them."

Honka said she recognized a resident she helped to find placement at Trinity Springs.

"I ran into her and asked if she recognized me," Honka said. "She said they did, and I asked her if she was happy. She told me 'I'm extraordinarily happy.' That's the best thing you can hear from someone — knowing their quality of life is better now than it was before."

Trinity Springs hopes to continue its philanthropic initiatives throughout the year, and Powell said they plan to raise funds for something new every month.

"On May 25th we have a wine walk coming up, and our super creative managers have some ideas for the events after that," she said.

Those looking to connect with Your Key to Senior Living Options can do so by contacting Lisa Honka at 352-446-5749 or by email at lisa@yourkeytoseniorlivingoptions.com.

Staff writer Joseph Francis can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5414, or joseph.francis@thevillagesmedia.com.



Dave Zupek, of the Village of Hawkins, shops for vegetables at The Villages Grown, in The Market at Sawgrass Grove.

Rachel Stuart | Daily Sun

Hubbard said. "The Villages Grown cultivates a vibrant community by providing farm to table in two to 48 hours. These missions are exceptionally cohesive, combining education with service and local resources."

The Villages Health has done tours in the past at local grocers such as Publix, Winn Dixie, Aldi, and The Fresh Market.

Lessons learned from these experiences mean dietitians are more than prepared to work with the local producer and distributor.

"Dietitians will be visiting the market closer to the day of the event to familiarize themselves with the products available," Hubbard said. "The Villages Grown is an operation unlike anything

I have ever seen. The quality and variety of items they provide is exceptional."

Wixted, who frequents the Market at Sawgrass Grove, said she was a fan of their tomatoes, basil, bibb lettuce, and arugula microgreens.

Microgreens, which are young vegetables picked early, are densely packed with nutrients and flavor. They often are put in salads, smoothies, or as a topping for flatbreads, soups and stir fries.

"I love that I can pick them up at Publix or Winn Dixie as well, when I'm not close to Sawgrass Market," Wixted said, referring to the fact that The Villages Grown distributes their produce to nearby grocers.

Holly Firoozi, assistant manager of business development for The Villages Grown, said while both The Villages Grown and The Villages Health are looking forward to the upcoming event, neither plans to stop here.

"The event is the first of

many things we're planning," she said. "There will be a lot to look out for. No pun intended, but The Villages Grown is growing."

Since it first began in 2019, The Villages Grown has been on a mission to provide local, healthy food to residents.

The system that was developed for The Villages Grown is based on a philosophy of food as medicine. Produce holds its highest nutrient value shortly after harvest, so locally grown food consumed in a short time frame has the highest nutrient value.

The past few years have seen the pioneering food system, well, grow, to have partners throughout the state of Florida.

The Villages Grown also has expanded quickly in terms of what it grows and where its products are sold.

It now grows about 80 unique crops, and supplies 17 local sit down restaurants, including Harvest, Fenney Grill, Lazy Mac's, and the Belle Glade, Tierra Del Sol and Evan's Prairie country clubs.

You can check out The Villages Grown at The Market at Sawgrass Grove on its website at thevillagesgrown.com.

For more information and to sign up for Shop with a Registered Dietitian, check out the learning center on The Villages Health's website at thevillageshealth.com/learning-center/. under the nutrition tab. Registration is required.

Staff writer Joseph Francis can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5414, or joseph.francis@thevillagesmedia.com.

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Tuesday, May 23rd - 11:00 AM

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3830 Wedgewood Drive

The Villages, FL 32162

Wednesday, May 10th - 11:15 AM

Wednesday, May 17th - 11:15 AM

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Tuesday, May 16th - 11:00 AM

Tuesday, May 23rd - 11:00 AM

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The Villages, FL 32162

Wednesday, May 10th - 10:30 AM

Wednesday, May 17th - 10:30 AM

Wednesday, May 24th - 10:30 AM

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