



BETTER LIVING FOR SENIORS (BLS) INITIATIVE

www.blspinellas.org

In 1988, there was a statewide mandate issued by the governor and the State of Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services to create what is now known as the Better Living for Seniors Initiative to address the needs of our senior population. The initiative included the following:

- 1) Coalition and/or Consortiums
- 2) Information and Referral (I&R) Helpline for Seniors
- 3) Short Term Case Management

Under the guidance of the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc. in PSA 5, the Better Living for Seniors (BLS) Consortium was organized in Pinellas County. The BLS Consortium that meets quarterly has identified core areas which deal with both the needs of service providers as well as those of seniors. Each committee hosts a quarterly meeting. The Area Agency on Aging and the BLS Consortium work hard to integrate and strengthen existing programs to meet the needs of the senior population.

In 1998, the very first Board of Directors for BLS took office. The Board of Directors is the policy-making body for BLS. The Board is composed of the Officers, Chairs of the standing committees, two At-Large members and an AAA liaison. The newsletter editor is also a non-voting member of the board. Officers for **2008** are Shelly Ballard, President; Kim Linder, Vice-President; and Marsha Wilson, Secretary. The At-Large members are Kirsten Ireson and Lory Smeltzer.

The committees that have evolved under the BLS Consortium are outlined below together with their respective contact person(s).

Membership: Responsible for identifying and integrating new members within the Consortium and its committees. Contact person: Lory Smeltzer, 443-2273.

Public Advocacy and Networking Committee (PAN): This committee promotes a networking system among private and public senior service providers and acts as sponsor for the Chomp & Chats, training, and the dissemination of information on issues impacting the service system. Contact person: Janis Hagerdon 415-9855.

Information and Assistance Committee (I&A): This committee serves to increase the visibility of the Senior Helpline (727-217-8111) and its resources. It fosters awareness of service changes occurring in the community, assists in coordinating services and promotes cooperation with other I&A providers. Contact persons: Carol Radin, 893-7102.

COECHA/Partners in Care Committee: This committee, formerly known as the “Private Sector” Committee works to provide needed services to the aging population by developing relationships between private sector and public sector organizations in Pinellas County. Contact persons: LaNona Robinson, 341-4452 and Sister Carol Stovall, 568-1052.

Public Relations/Publications Committee: This committee oversees the **BLS Bugle** newsletter, advertising support and news releases for BLS events. Contact person: Candy Goodwin, 490-7370. The Bugle Editor is Shelly Ballard, 394-2566.