

Guest commentary: "Get into the Act" for Older Americans Month

BY: Dr. Jaclynn Faffer

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Older adults are a vital part of our society. Since 1963, communities across the country have shown their gratitude by celebrating Older Americans Month each May.

The theme of this year's celebration is "Get into the Act," to focus on how older adults are taking charge of their health, getting engaged in their communities, and making a positive impact in the lives of others.

The theme also reflects on the 50th anniversary of the Older Americans Act. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Older Americans Act into law in July 1965. Since that time, the act has provided a nationwide aging services network and funding that helps older adults live with dignity in the communities of their choice for as long as possible.

These services include home-delivered and congregate meals, caregiver support, community-based assistance, preventive health services, elder abuse prevention and much more.

By promoting and engaging in activity, wellness and inclusivity, more Americans than ever before can "Get into the Act."

While JFCS of Southwest Florida provides mental health counseling, geriatric case management, dementia respite programs, caregiver and bereavement support and The Naples Senior Center programs to older adults year-round, Older Americans Month offers an opportunity to emphasize how older adults can access the home- and community-based services they need to live independently in their communities.

The Naples Senior Center has numerous programs planned during Older Americans Month that build bridges to community-based services. Community partners, such as Area Agency on Aging, the Alzheimer's Support Network, Collier County Community and Human Services,

Collier Area Transit and representatives from the State Attorney General's special project "Seniors versus Crime" will be available to share their information and expertise with our members.

As part of our celebration of Older Americans Month, members of the Naples Senior Center art class will be taking a private tour of The Baker Museum.

The Naples Senior Center will celebrate Older Americans Month by continuing to provide programs and services to more than 600 older adult members with the goal of engaging them fully to enjoy more productive and fulfilling lives.

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