



Left: Team members arrive in a dedicated Citizens Patrol car, bringing welcomed help and friendship to program participants.

Top right: **Mary Maitland** and her granddaughter **Colleen Perle** share laughter and gardening tips with team members **Michele Klemfuss**, **Phyllis Principe** and **Sam Attard**.

Right: Spirits are lifted as longtime city resident and volunteer **Jimmy Fayed** enjoys a visit from team members **Sally McAllister** and **Mike Rozos**.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CITY OF SATELLITE BEACH

SMALL CITY

Satellite Beach's Community for a Lifetime

Keeping elderly residents engaged

by **Lorraine Gott and Linda Harlow**
City of Satellite Beach



SATELLITE BEACH
Brevard County
Pop. 10,290

In 1999, the State of Florida initiated “Communities for a Lifetime” to help elderly residents remain in their own homes and live independently as they age. Under the leadership of **Vice Mayor Mark Brimer**, who was then serving as mayor, and the eager participation of the Fire and Police departments, the **City of Satellite Beach** jumped at the chance to make this idea a reality.

As a **Community for a Lifetime (CFAL)**, Satellite Beach has implemented several programs to address the most common serious problems of elderly residents and enhance their well-being and longevity. Programs created by Satellite Beach’s Fire Department include:

- » **Senior Fall Prevention Program** – eliminates trip hazards in the home and reduces the occurrence of falls, serious injuries and hospitalizations.
- » **Community Paramedic Program** – provides in-home health monitoring and home health-care coordination for seniors with chronic health conditions and inadequate insurance.
- » **Senior Care Network** – provides coordinated services to needy CFAL participants from an array of social, medical, religious, governmental and educational entities.

Stop By & Say Hi

One of the most appreciated parts of the Satellite Beach CFAL, **Stop By & Say Hi**, was created in January 2009.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

While elderly residents have traditionally benefited from this program, Stop By & Say Hi is available to any resident, regardless of age or circumstance, whose well-being could be improved by companionship from weekly visits. Participants can refer themselves or be referred by others, including the community paramedic. Referrals provide brief background information to ensure that participants’ needs are properly addressed.

PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Stop By & Say Hi is conducted by volunteer teams who are carefully screened and trained. They are provided with department uniforms and a dedicated “Citizens Patrol” car. Currently, there are five two-person teams consisting of three men and seven women. They are from 51 to 86 years of age. Team members are trained to avoid abusive or threatening situations.

PROGRAM DESIGN

As soon as participants sign up, the date and time of weekly Stop By & Say Hi social visits are scheduled. To foster the special bond that inevitably develops, each participant is assigned a specific team for all visits.

Each team goes out for two to five hours once a week. Police Department personnel keep track of weekly visits to make sure that participants' needs are being met. Everything is confidential, and nothing is done without the participant's permission.

Participants decide how long visits last and when visits are no longer desired. If they are not interested in a particular visit, team members don't intrude.

Since elderly residents are easy prey when they are lonely for someone to talk to, visiting team members provide information on current scams to help the participants avoid becoming a victim. If they want a police officer to visit them to answer their questions, team members make that happen.

This program also coordinates with Satellite Beach Fire Department's Community Paramedic Program, Brevard County's Project Lifesaver, and the Space Coast Area Transit's Volunteers in Motion, which will soon provide free van rides for program participants lacking transportation for essential trips.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

The program's focus on regular socialization creates important benefits for participants and team members. The program:

- » Ends isolation and loneliness often felt by seniors living alone, separated from family by death or distance, or dealing with serious disease or illness.
- » Creates strong and unique friendships built on conversation, companionship, support, shared emotions, laughter, love and kindness.
- » Builds a sense of purpose and connection; assures elderly residents that there is always someone they can call and that, in Satellite Beach, they are not alone.
- » Avoids potential crises by discovering and correcting undesirable situations in residents' homes.
- » Secures help for minor household repairs.
- » Helps prevent victimization from scams and other crimes.
- » Helps bereaved spouses find a new beginning.

And, circumstances can change. If it's a team member who needs help, grateful program participants are quick to return the caring support.

Lorraine Gott is a councilmember for the City of Satellite Beach. Linda Harlow, who created the Stop By & Say Hi program, is administrative assistant to Satellite Beach Police Chief Jeff M. Pearson and volunteer coordinator. 



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