

United Way Life: Act 2

United Way provides leadership, resources and focus to change lives in our community by creating sustainable improvements in education, income and health. United Way of Northeast Florida is a leader in ensuring:

- *Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed and students stay in school through graduation*
- *Individuals and families have the opportunity to achieve financial stability*
- *People have the opportunity to lead healthy and engaged lives*

In addition, United Way ensures that families in need have accurate, helpful information about social services through United Way 2-1-1.

WHAT: Life: Act 2 is a community collaboration, led by United Way, that focuses on encouraging greater independence for seniors in Northeast Florida

WHY: One of the most common times that an elder needs help is when he or she is recovering from an illness. Often our frail elderly do not have enough resources, friends and family members, to help them get back on their feet after an extended stay in the hospital. Research shows that the first two weeks is crucial to a frail elder's successful recovery.

- In May of 2007 at Baptist Health, the "Elder Care Advocate Program" was launched to coordinate care to older patients. The program expanded to SHANDS Jacksonville in September of 2007.
- The Elder Care Advocate works with hospital discharge planners to arrange appropriate in-home care for seniors, as well as purchasing short-term services for seniors to aid in the transition home including: **home-delivered meals, emergency response systems, and other relevant help.**

RESULTS:

- Over the last 36 months, more than 1000 vulnerable patients in Duval County have been connected to community resources, promoting better outcomes for seniors
- Baptist Medical Center chose to sustain and expand the Elder Care Advocate program. Baptist has established an Elder Care office, hired a full-time Elder Care Advocate, created a transitional services funding pool, and employed a part-time Elder Care Consultant.
- Our second hospital partner, SHANDS Jacksonville chose to sustain the Elder Care Advocate in January 2011.

SUCCESS STORY: Thomas Cunningham is a 66-year-old male with a heart condition who required daily trips to the hospital for a series of tests. In addition, Mr. Cunningham is a single parent with young children. Although Mr. Cunningham had a specific time to be at the hospital for certain tests, he would often find himself waiting hours before the start of a rigorous six hour test and had to spend the night at the hospital because he had no transportation. The Elder Care Advocate (ECA) provided transportation to and from the hospital, as well as completed a JTA transportation application and scheduled visits for Mr. Cunningham. In addition, the ECA arranged to have a room blocked for Mr. Cunningham so he could receive his testing in a timely manner and return home to his children as scheduled.