



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AREA AGENCY ON AGING FOR SOUTHWEST FLORIDA, INC. OFFERS
RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SENIORS' MENTAL HEALTH THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**
*In Partnership with Department of Elder Affairs, Together Apart: Holidays at Heart Aims
to Limit Loneliness for Seniors*

FORT MYERS, Fla. (November 19, 2020) – Across the state, local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are working together to promote mental health resources and programs for seniors through the ***Together Apart: Holidays at Heart*** campaign. While many older adults choose to stay safer at home and isolate themselves to prevent exposure to the coronavirus, Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida, Inc. (AAASWFL), in partnership with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA), are ensuring that no senior feels alone during the holiday season.

From November through January, AAASWFL will be reaching out to local seniors in the Southwest Florida area to conduct mental health checks and ensure they are aware of the resources available to them.

“Although we provide these services to our seniors year-round, it feels especially important to connect with them during the holidays,” said AAASWFL CEO Norma Adorno. “We must do our part as a community to protect the physical and mental health of our most vulnerable population by spreading holiday joy and cheer in the safest ways possible.”

Resources offered locally include:

- Programs to cope with mental health issues and feelings of depression
- Magic and Mindfulness – virtual magic shows for seniors featuring magicians on Zoom
- Magical Winter Wonderland – magician shows for seniors taking place in November and December

“This year has presented numerous challenges for everyone, but we know Florida’s older population has been disproportionately affected,” said DOEA Secretary Richard Prudom. “We want to make sure the holidays remain a time of joy and connection for our seniors by reminding them that even though they might be apart from loved ones, there are many ways to reach out and stay connected. The services provided through local AAAs give individuals a way to identify and meet these needs.”

For more information about ***Together Apart: Holidays at Heart***, visit www.holidaysatheart.org, and to learn more about AAASWFL, visit www.aaaswfl.org. If

you or a loved one are living with feelings of depression and loneliness this holiday season, please call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96 ELDER (1-800-963-5337).

About Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida, Inc.

The Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida is a nonprofit organization with the mission of connecting older adults and adults with disabilities to resources and assistance for living safely with independence and dignity. The agency is the state's designated Aging and Disability Resource Center for Southwest Florida. For more information, please visit www.aaaswfl.org.

About the Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the State Unit on Aging, helps Florida's elders to remain healthy, safe, and independent. The Department provides most direct services through its Division of Statewide Community-Based Services, which works through the state's eleven Area Agencies on Aging and local service providers to deliver essential services to a vital segment of the population. For more information, please visit www.elderaffairs.org.