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## **Public Service Announcement:** Older Americans Month – Communities of Strength

For Use: May 2021

In tough times, communities find strength in people—and people find strength in their communities. In the past year, we've seen this time and again in SWFL as friends, neighbors, and businesses have found new ways to support each other.

In our community, older adults are a key source of this strength. Through their experiences, successes, and difficulties, they have built resilience that helps them to face new challenges. When communities tap into this, they become stronger too.

Each May, the Administration for Community Living leads the celebration of Older Americans Month (OAM). This year's theme is *Communities of Strength*, recognizing the important role older adults play in fostering the connection and engagement that build strong, resilient communities.

Strength is built and shown not only by bold acts, but also small ones of day-to-day life—a conversation shared with a friend, working in the garden, trying a new recipe, or taking time for a cup of tea on a busy day. And when we share these activities with others—even virtually or by telling about the experience later—we help them build resilience too.

This year, the [Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida](https://www.aaswfl.org/) will celebrate OAM by encouraging community members to share their experiences. Together, we can find strength—and create a stronger future.

Here are some ways to share and connect:

- **Look for joy in the everyday:** Celebrate small moments and ordinary pleasures by taking time to recognize them. Start a gratitude journal and share it with others via social media or call a friend or family member to share a happy moment or to say thank you.
- **Reach out to neighbors:** Even if you can't get together in person right now, you can still connect with your neighbors. Leave a small gift on their doorstep, offer to help with outdoor chores, or deliver a homecooked meal.
- **Build new skills:** Learning something new allows us to practice overcoming

challenges. Take an art course online or try a socially distanced outdoor movement class to enjoy learning with others in your community. Have a skill to share? Find an opportunity to teach someone, even casually.

- **Share your story:** There's a reason storytelling is a time-honored activity. Hearing how others experience the world helps us grow. Interviewing family, friends, and neighbors can open up new conversations and strengthen our connections.

When people of different ages, backgrounds, abilities, and talents share experiences—through action, story, or service—we help build strong communities. And that's something to celebrate! Please join Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida in strengthening our community – during the month of May, share a selfie with your neighbor or a picture of a random act of kindness. Don't forget to tag us AAASWFL on your social media and use the hashtag #OAM2021 and #CommunityofStrength.

If you know someone who is an older adult (age 60-up) and/or an adult with disabilities needing assistance or resources, they can call the Elder Helpline toll-free at 1-866-413-5337.

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For more resources, visit the official [OAM website](#), follow ACL on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), and join the conversation via #OlderAmericansMonth.