



## Aging in the Right Place: Sarasota is a great place to grow older



### MOST POPULAR

- 1 Fourth annual Sarasota Women's March draws hundreds to 'dump Trump'  
Jan 18 at 12:09 PM
- 2 Top 5 Things To Do This Week in Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice: Jan. 20-23



Article by **Michael Moore Jr.**  
Staff Writer, **Herald-Tribune**  
Monday, January 20, 2020

Barbara Cogswell, owner of A Better Solution Home Care and Chair of the Sarasota Senior Advisory Council, is confident that there have been great steps and initiatives taken over the last several years to make Sarasota County a great place to age. [PHOTO PROVIDED BY BARBARA COGSWELL.]

**Over the next 30 years, the fastest-growing demographic in Sarasota County will be people 80 and older, with their numbers expected to double, according to the Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2019. By 2045, one in every five Sarasota County residents will be 80 and older.**

There are a lot of challenges that come with aging.

But it's helpful to remember that while it's OK to feel anxious or uncertain about your journey to Age in the Right Place, there are also plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the future.

This is especially true in Sarasota. After all, Sarasota County was the first county in Florida to be designated as "Age Friendly" by the World Health Organization, in 2015. It was also the first county in the United States to host an Age-Friendly festival, which had more than 4,000 attendees and 125 participating organizations.

But what does that mean, exactly?

The Age Friendly movement means a lot of things. It means having a community with policies, services and structures that are designed to support and enable older adults to age actively and enjoy security and good health while still participating in society. It means having public and commercial settings and services that are accessible and accommodate varying levels of ability. And it means recognizing that diversity is a good thing, inclusion is important, and that we need to continue to push for the positive representation of older adults in our communities.

"Sarasota is a great place to age. We've really taken the bull by the horns here when it comes to making this an accommodating environment. We have a lot to offer," said Barbara Cogswell, owner of A Better Solution Home Care, at a recent Aging in the Right Place forum held at Broadway Promenade.

In addition to owning a home care company, Cogswell is also chair of the Sarasota Senior Advisory Council, which is another helpful initiative when it comes to improving quality of life for older adults in the area. She said that the community has made great progress over the last several years when it comes to accommodating the growing needs of older adults in the area.

The Sarasota Senior Advisory Council, which meets monthly on the first Thursday at 3 p.m. at the William L. Little Health and Human Services Center, acts as a springboard for citizen input regarding older adults. Then the council makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on issues and conditions that impact Sarasota County's older adult community.

Cogswell also cited the hiring of Sue Firestone as County Aging System Policy Coordinator as a monumental step in the right direction when it comes to supporting older adults within the community.

But that's not even the tip of the iceberg when it comes to resources for older adults in Sarasota County. There are places like the Senior Friendship Centers, Jewish Family and Children's Services of the Suncoast, ITN Suncoast, and so much more.

No community is perfect, but in Sarasota we have people here striving every single day to make this a great place to age.

Find more Aging in the Right Place stories online at [heraldtribune.com/aging-in-place](http://heraldtribune.com/aging-in-place). If there are aspects of aging in the right place you would like us to explore, send ideas to [mmoore@heraldtribune.com](mailto:mmoore@heraldtribune.com).

This story comes from Aspirations Journalism, an initiative of The Patterson Foundation and Sarasota Herald-Tribune to inform, inspire and engage the community to take action on issues related to Age-Friendly Sarasota, Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, National Council on Aging's 100 Million Healthier Lives and the Suncoast Nursing Action Coalition.