



Cue the music...
dim the lights...

Here she comes...
**Ms. Senior
America!**

Collin College professor of real estate—and Ms. Plano Senior America 2008—Charlene Mary Dattoli, in her classroom. Profile photo

DAZZLING DAMES 60 “YEARS YOUNG” and over will compete for the crown in the 2009 **Ms. Plano Senior America Pageant** on Saturday, June 13. The winner will be awarded \$500 and the entry fee to participate in the Ms. Texas Senior America pageant in August.

“Contestants will be judged in an evening gown competition, as well as on poise and confidence, talent, philosophy of life, and volunteerism,” said **Charlene Mary Dattoli**, Ms. Plano Senior America 2008 and current chair of the pageant. “We look at the whole package.”

Senior women are a dynamic force of volunteers in the community (and let’s not forget in the home as “Me Maw,” “Nanna,” or “Grammie”). Many volunteer at church, hospitals, the Plano Senior Center, or at Plano’s numerous assisted living facilities.

“The pageant demonstrates that volunteerism is alive and well,” said Charlene. “We need to be good role models by giving back our service, time, talent, and dollars.”

Charlene sits on the board of directors for the Turning Point, volunteers for the Christ Anglican Church in Plano, builds homes for Habitat for Humanity, and participates in Komen for the Cure, the North Texas Food Bank, and other charities. “I enjoy being able to give back to people who may be less fortunate,” she said. “It gives me a good feeling to touch another’s life. I feel blessed every day.”

When she’s not volunteering in the community, Charlene is a professor of real estate at Collin College, where she has taught for 10 years. She is also the vice president of marketing and sales for Lonnie Gray Luxury Homes and received her Master of Business Administration two years ago.

“Growing older isn’t a bad thing; it’s a good thing because you mature,” she said. “Senior women



are healthy, happy, productive, mentally sharp, and emotionally fit.”

Who knew that seniors at the Plano Senior Center take belly dancing and hula lessons? They also partake in health and wellness programs, art and computer classes, and trips to the theater, to Choctaw, and to east Texas to enjoy the wildflowers.

“Seniors know how to have fun all year long,” said Charlene, who regularly volunteers at the Plano Senior Center. “I love to see their eyes sparkle when they realize no matter how much, or little, they do, everybody is important.”

For more than 15 years, the Ms. Plano Senior America Pageant has promoted the health, well-being and inner beauty of senior women. The pageant is organized by an all-volunteer committee, chaired by Charlene and cochaired by **Mona Kelly** and **Genny Berkhalter**, that donate a portion of the proceeds to the senior center.

Just over 10 contestants will perform in this year’s pageant including **Hazel Edwards, Elaine Jenkins, Verna Story, Doris Falk, Betty Blanchard, Barbara Whitt, Minnie Hawthorn, Barbara Pierce, Jacqueline Bosler, Sandi Halsey, and Elizabeth Kincaid.**

Elizabeth Kincaid, a Plano resident for 20 years, is participating on behalf of the Plano Newcomers Women’s Club. “I have never done anything like this but I think it’s going to be fun,” she said. “They’re will be a lot of nice women participating.”

Aside from the Plano Newcomers Women’s Club and the Newcomer Friends of Greater Plano—yes, Elizabeth is in both and has been for 18 years!—she dons a red hat in the Red Hats Society and actively participates in community outreach programs through her church, Holy Nativity.

Don’t let her doctorate in educational psychology fool you—Elizabeth knows how to entertain a crowd. Her talent for the pageant will be playing the piano and singing. “I’ve done it all my life,” she said. “I’m used to being in front of the public. I enjoy being on stage!”

Charlene Mary Dattoli in full Ms. Plano Senior America 2008 regalia. Isaac Photography

Pageant judges this year will include civic and business leaders such as former Plano mayor Pat Evans; past president of the Plano Community Forum Dr. Myrtle Hightower; Plano Fire Chief Hugo Esparza; Executive Director for Plano Community Homes, Lee Ann Hubanks; Plano Police Chief Greg Rushin; Ms. Senior America 2002 Mary Virginia Tunistra; Carolyn Rice, Executive Director of the Geriatric Wellness Center of Collin County; and Sr. Public Information Coordinator Phyllis Reese.

Attendees will include the reigning Ms. Texas Senior America, Dr. Syntha West; Ms. Texas Senior America 2006, Pat Housel; Ms. Texas Senior America 1997, Mary Frances Hansen; Ms. Texas Senior America 2007, Mary Zumwalt, and other queens from across Texas. Ms. Arlington contestant and talented singer Lilly Madison will perform.

“They’ll all be coming to support the inner beauty of women and the spirit of giving,” said Charlene.

The Waterford of Plano, presenting sponsor for the event, hosted two Queen Teas in May where contestants mixed and mingled and practiced for the contest. Other pageant sponsors include Paul D. Lee, Lasting M Pressions; Isaac Photography, 2008 official photographer; Brandon Smith, RR Screen Graphics; First Choice Realtors, Jeri Gilbert; Romeo Music; Kathleen York, 2009 official photographer; American Bank and Commerce of Plano; Residential Realty; Franklin Park; Paula Lee, Stylist; Karizmah Dance Store; Plano Volunteer Council; Senior Recreation Council; and Jalin Jewelers.

The Ms. Plano Senior America pageant is Saturday, June 13 from 1–4 p.m. at the Plano Senior Center, located at 401 W. 16th St. in Plano. Admission is \$3 and includes food, prizes, and a 50/50 drawing. For more information, visit msplanosenioramerica.com. ■

other senior center events

Golden Serenaders Concert

► **Thursday, June 4, 1 p.m.**

A free, fun-filled concert. Refreshments will be served. *There will be no Kings of Swing because of the concert.*

Country Breakfast

► **Friday, June 12, 8:30 a.m.**

Enjoy a \$4 old-fashioned country breakfast. *Registration is required.*

SKIP-BO Competition

► **Tuesday, June 16, 12:15–2:45 p.m.**

Shuffle the cards, it’s time to play SKIP-BO! Ribbons and a medal will be awarded. *Registration is required.*

Father’s Day Special

► **Friday, June 19, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.**

Men are encouraged to stop by the front desk for a piece of pie!

Free Fitness Week

► **Monday–Friday, June 22–26**

Try out any regularly scheduled fitness activity for free. *Registration is required for participation and door prize entry. The more classes you attend, the better your chances to win prizes.*

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