

Charlotte County update for 10/14/20

Caring for our community in pandemic crisis

By Hector Flores

It was fitting that a day after county staff provided the County Commission an update on financial assistance to residents during the new coronavirus pandemic that the board broke ground Wednesday on Phase I of the new Family Services Center.

Human Services Director Carrie Walsh told the board the county, in partnership with the Community Organizations Active in a Disaster, had provided \$3.2 million to help 3,482 people in 1,233 households pay rent, mortgages, utilities, and care for children and dependent adults. Applications are being accepted through Oct. 31 and we expect to provide millions of dollars in additional assistance through the end of the year.

The connection to the new Family Service Center jumps out of the spreadsheets Walsh presented. In the 33952 ZIP code where the existing (and new) facility is located on Gibraltar Drive, nearly \$1 million has been provided to families in need. Credit also goes to voters who approved the 1% local option sales tax in 2014, which provided the money for the new facility, recognizing how important its programs and services are in that neighborhood and across the county.

In addition to the individual assistance, the county has distributed \$1.1 million of federal CARES Act funding to nine non-for-profit organizations serving our community with programs including health care, food distribution, child care and homeless sheltering.

We've worked hard for many years to build an organizational culture of delivering exceptional service to our community. I'm so proud of my colleagues and our not-for-profit partners who have gone over and above their usual commitment to service during the pandemic.

For information about financial assistance, visit COADFL.org or call 2-1-1 (941-205-2161 for Englewood and out-of-area cell phone users).

Well-Being Award

Cigna has selected Charlotte County as a recipient of the annual Cigna Well-Being Award for demonstrating a strong commitment to improving the health and well-being of its employees through its workplace wellness program.

Our employee health is our top priority and we are honored to be selected as a recipient of the Cigna Well-Being Award. We know healthy employees are happier, more productive and better engaged with their work, which is good for the entire organization and our community.

The county's Wellness at Work program provides resources ranging from healthy lifestyle, weight management, tobacco cessation, healthy nutrition, mental health awareness, and more. The Wellness Committee helps generate program ideas, spreads the word about resources throughout the organization, and implements healthy lifestyle change in their own day-to-day lives.

Promoting employee health is not only the right thing to do, it's good management. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. employers lose more than \$225 billion each year in productivity due to employee health problems.

Cigna Well-Being Award applicants were evaluated based on the core components of their wellness program, including leadership engagement, company culture, strategy and goals, implementation, and employee engagement. All applications are scored and reviewed by a panel of Cigna health promotion experts.

Congratulations to Wellness Coordinator Stephanie Phillips, members of our wellness committee and all our employees for embracing our efforts to promote good physical and mental health in our organization.

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