

## **Teambuilding event strengthens community partnerships**

By Hector Flores

Charlotte County Human Services staff and partner agencies participated in a teambuilding event this week. More than 60 county and partner agency staffers worked in teams to solve mysteries as part of the Partners In Crime program. Exercises such as this strengthen relationships between partners, improve communications skills and develop skills needed to solve real world missions and problems for our residents in need.

The Family Services Center on Gibraltar Drive in Port Charlotte hosts 14 community non-profits and government agencies, including the United Way, Boys and Girls Club of Charlotte County, Drug-Free Charlotte County, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care and Florida Department of Health Charlotte. The center uses an integrated client service delivery system to provide health and human services to individuals and families.

Services provided include after-school and summer camp programs, mental health and substance abuse counseling, homeless prevention, community policing and neighborhood watch coordination, hearing or speech loss assistance, child nutrition funding and education, individual and family counseling, grief support groups and counseling and tax preparation.

For information, call 941-833-6500.

### **Back to school**

The yellow school buses rolling through our neighborhoods on Wednesday marked the first day back to school for students not attending year-round schools. That means two things. First, please take care on the roads in the mornings and afternoons as children head to and from school and heed school zone speed limits. Be aware, law enforcement is extra vigilant patrolling school zones when schools reopen.

Second, the start of school means the successful close of our summer camp and reading programs at recreation centers and libraries. More than 2,600 children participated in summer camps around the county. Our Kids Camp Connection program provided \$4,555 in scholarships for kids whose parents could not afford the fee. participated in summer reading programs, logging the books they read and the time spent reading.

Special thanks to all our camp staff and counselors, library staff for their efforts to make this summer a memorable one for everyone involved.

### **Tropical weather**

We're entering the peak of the hurricane season. Between mid-August and mid-October, there have been more tropical storms and hurricanes than the rest of the hurricane season combined. We just wrapped up three well-attended preparedness workshops this week, so I'm encouraged by our residents' continuing diligence to be storm ready.

The brief touchdown by a weak tornado near Interstate 75 on Monday was a reminder severe weather can occur at any time. This week alone, parts of Charlotte County were under severe

thunderstorm warnings three times. Stay informed by signing up for our Alert Charlotte emergency notification system [www.charlottecountyfl.gov/alertcharlotte](http://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/alertcharlotte).

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