

# Charlotte County Weekly Department Highlights

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## Human Services

Human Services staff made the final program inspection on the last residential property in the Parkside area that was constructed with grant funds from the federal Neighborhood Stabilization III Program. The Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is expected the second week of January 2014. As required by the grant, this property will house four individuals with special needs. The residence has been modeled to meet Americans with Disability Acts (ADA) standards to accommodate the special needs of its occupants.

Human Services has received notification that Charlotte County has been awarded \$76,598 in grant funds from the Florida Department of Children and Families Office of Homelessness to provide homeless prevention and rapid re-housing services to families with children attending school who have been identified as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Funds will provide transitional housing services to eligible households with the goal of getting families into the County's Self-Sufficiency Program. The grant award will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners in late February or March for consideration and approval.

## Tourism

A freelance travel writer on assignment for VISIT FLORIDA and the Boston Globe visited Charlotte County last month (Dec. 20 – 23) to research the area for upcoming articles. In November this writer published a post on the New York Times In Transit: A Guide to Intelligent Travel ([http://intransit.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/27/calendar-coming-events-in-florida-and-australia/?\\_r=0](http://intransit.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/27/calendar-coming-events-in-florida-and-australia/?_r=0)) blog that included the Christmas Light Canal Cruise. The Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau assisted in some of her itinerary planning to highlight the destination and the visit's success was dependent on cooperation from various tourism industry members which helps stretch the Bureau's marketing dollars. She was specifically interested in Placida, Punta Gorda's biking trails, Christmas Canal Cruise, and the City's recovery 10 years after Hurricane Charley. Earned editorial coverage promoting Charlotte County as a vacation destination provides a trusted third-party endorsement for potential visitors.