

## **Administrator's Update for 5/8/13**

### **By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator**

Charlotte County libraries consistently rank high in community surveys as being important. Not only does the community say that libraries are important, members of the community volunteer to help make the library system great. One very effective way the community does this is through "Friends of the Library" organizations. These organizations are made up of community volunteers that help support, advocate and raise money for the libraries. Charlotte County is extremely honored to have a "Friends of the Library" organization at each of our four libraries.

Here in Charlotte County the Friends of Punta Gorda Library group were recently recognized by the State of Florida's Library Friends, Foundations and Boards organization. The group won top prize in the "newsletter" category in a statewide competition. Their newsletter, called "Bookmark," is a way to communicate important information about the Punta Gorda Library and the Friends organization to the community. It includes information about upcoming activities, articles, and descriptions of fundraising opportunities.

Join me in congratulating the Friends of Punta Gorda library for their award and thank them and all the Friends groups for the hard work they do to support the Charlotte County libraries.

### **Helping others**

Recently a staff member in the human services department received a phone call from a homeless woman veteran that was looking for a job and a place to live. Staff used resources through the Charlotte County Veteran Services Office, Vietnam Veterans of America group, our human services food pantry, and others to help her. The veteran now has a place to live at the Stillwater Veterans House and is the first female at the home. Staff assisted her with food, gas money, VA health care enrollment and helped her successfully find a job. I'd like to commend staff for all of their hard work and attention that has made a difference in someone's life.

### **Cleaning the beach**

To celebrate Earth Day last month, Charlotte County community services held a Community Beach Cleanup at Englewood Beach. The cleanup started at 9:00 a.m. with approximately 35 people volunteering. Each participant was given a cleanup bag donated by the Englewood Sherwin Williams Paint store or a bucket donated by the Englewood Home Depot. Participants were also treated to a hot dog lunch sponsored by the Englewood Winn Dixie. Many hands make small work—with a clean beach as the result for residents and visitors to enjoy. Another beach cleanup is scheduled for this fall on Saturday, Sept. 21.

### **Extension service**

Our University of Florida/IFAS Charlotte County Extension Service division recently held an Arbor Day Expo at the East Port Environmental Campus in Port Charlotte. Workshops included topics such as pruning trees and shrubs, mounting staghorn ferns, and growing backyard citrus. Participants received a free cypress tree. Horticulture information, 4-H, and other topics can be found at the county extension service website [charlotte.ifas.ufl.edu](http://charlotte.ifas.ufl.edu). The county extension service division also offers the Florida Master Gardeners program, which trains volunteers to assist in horticultural outreach.