

Administrator's Update for 11/5/14
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Our own world-class Charlotte Harbor will welcome more than 60 boats from around the world next year when Charlotte County hosts the 2015 F18 Americas Championship Regatta in October 2015. The announcement was made during the class's national championship regatta in Corpus Christi, Texas, on Oct. 22. The event marks the second international sailing competition to be awarded to Charlotte Harbor Regatta Inc. (CHR) in recent years. The non-profit organization, which was formed in 2009 to promote sailing on Charlotte Harbor, also ran the 2012 International Association for Disabled Sailing World Championships. The Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau assisted with the bid proposal and provided the CHR a travel grant to attend this year's event and present our official bid to the F18 board and membership. The Bureau will work with CHR and other entities to host the 2015 sailing competition.

Stand Down

This past Saturday the tenth annual "Stand Down" for homeless Veterans was held at the American Legion post 110 in Port Charlotte. Charlotte County Veteran services division and local county Veteran organizations gathered resources and volunteers for the event. "Stand Down" is a military term for the brief time when a soldier leaves an active combat area to rest and regain strength before returning to battle. The Stand Down seeks to increase the community's awareness of the plight of the homeless American Veteran, and bring a variety of social service providers together to meet with, inform and assist the Veterans of help that is available.

SHIP

Charlotte County housing services division has received the first installment of SHIP (State Housing Initiatives Partnership) funds: \$426,040. Staff is beginning to sort through the current waiting list that consists of 58 households.

The SHIP program provides Charlotte County with state funds to expand or preserve affordable housing to income-eligible households and other special needs groups. The housing division is responsible for coordinating the Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) describing how funds from the SHIP Program will be used within the framework established by the Florida Legislature. Find more information on the SHIP program and eligibility in the Human Services department's housing division web pages at www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

Supporting Area Caregivers

Charlotte County senior services division administers funding for the National Family Caregiver Program for our area. National Family Caregiver grandparents enjoyed the annual caregiver's cruise out of Fisherman's Village aboard a boat owned by Kingfisher Fleet. Each year, OCEAN (Our Charlotte Elder Affairs Network) partners with area businesses to make this cruise happen. Area caregivers are encouraged to participate at no cost to them. Caregivers are provided lunch, enjoy music, take in the sights around Charlotte Harbor, and win door prizes. Additionally, caregivers are provided with respite service (also at no cost to them) to cover their absence from their daily duties if needed. Older caregivers are encouraged to participate to just get away if only for a short time. An added bonus to this outing is caregivers meeting other caregivers—sharing ideas and becoming a source of support to each other. Over 90 caregivers made their reservations.

This year, Mr. and Mrs. B boarded the boat at Fisherman's Village for their first cruise. Mr. & Mrs. B are caregivers although not the traditional caregivers we think of when it comes to our elders. Mr. B is in his mid 70s, Mrs. B is in her late 60s—while they have health issues of their own, they share the fulltime responsibility of caring for their two grandchildren, 7 and 2 years old. They have custody of the children and are raising them. The National Family Caregiver Program, part of the Older Americans Act, recognizes that families are less traditional than ever and that grandparents are raising grandchildren for many reasons all over the country. In Charlotte County, this program, attempts to help children and their grandparents each year.