

Administrator's Update for 11/19/14
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Charlotte County community services partnered with Team Parkside to present the third annual Parkside Festival earlier this month. The theme of the festival was "A Salute to Veterans" and included a presentation honoring all of our veterans by Representative Ken Roberson and Commissioner Trisha Duffy. Other Charlotte County departments also participated in the festival, with Public Works running the Kids Zone and Fire/EMS providing equipment and vehicles for the Touch a Truck exhibit. Economic development and the Port Charlotte Library set up information booths. Four firefighters also added excitement to the event by participating in the World's Biggest Hot Dog Eating Contest, which required contestants to eat two fully loaded half pound hot dogs.

Veteran events and services

Over the Veterans Day holiday, Charlotte County community services and VFW Post 5690 held the fourth annual Veterans Day Memorial Program at North Charlotte Regional Park. Vietnam Veteran and businessman Gene Gorman and Iraq veteran specialist Jeremiah Card spoke. The event was attended by approximately 75 people.

Last week our Charlotte County Veteran services staff proudly participated in many of the numerous activities and events honoring our men and women of the Armed Forces. These activities included raising awareness of the movement to bring a replica of the Vietnam Wall to southwest Florida; marching in the Veterans' Appreciation Celebration Parade in Punta Gorda; attending the Remembrance Service held at Randy Spence Park in El Jobean; and participating in a salute to all branches of the Armed Forces at the North Charlotte Regional Park. Staff also helped in posting the colors with the Honor Guard and dedication of memorial bricks at the Purple Heart Monument Ceremony.

Aside from events, Charlotte County Veteran services staff is focused on helping individuals and families. Last month Veteran services had a near-homeless 86 year old veteran come into the office. He is living on a boat and the dock fees use almost all of his social security income. Veterans Services did a VA pension claim for the veteran and staff was notified that it was approved in just two weeks.

Child passenger safety

Two Fire and EMS staff members recently attended a one-day Florida Child Passenger Safety Technician Update. They completed 6 continuing education credits to maintain certification as a Child Passenger Safety (CPS) technician. Certification is through the Safe Kids Worldwide organization, a community of more than 36,000 technicians that teach child safety seat use and perform child safety seat checks. The Charlotte County Fire/EMS division offers a child passenger safety seat program as well as safety seat check point events. For more info please call Charlotte County Fire/EMS, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 941.833.5600.

Stuffed toys

Last week PetSmart began their annual donation collection that results in filling a Charlotte County Fire and EMS vehicle with hundreds of PetSmart's holiday "Chance the Dog & Lucky the Cat" stuffed toys. The stuffed toys help cheer children throughout the year. Charlotte County Fire and EMS keep a few on the emergency vehicles, so that they can be handed out to provide comfort to children during an emergency.

Some of the stuffed toys are also given as gifts at the annual pancake breakfast. The 2014 Public Safety Firehouse Pancake Breakfast Events will be held Dec. 22 at Station 12, 2001 Luther Road, Port Charlotte and Dec. 23 at Station 4, 13600 Marathon Blvd., Gulf Cove. All Charlotte County public safety divisions will be participating in the breakfast this year, including staff from animal control, emergency management and radio communications. Reservations should be made well in advance—call Charlotte County Fire/EMS, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 941.833.5600.