

Administrator's Update for 10/7/15

Customer kiosks coming to county recreation centers

By Tommy Scott, Charlotte County Community Services Director

The Community Services Department plays a significant role in the quality of life here in Charlotte County. We are committed to providing excellent customer service and delivering quality programs, events and facilities.

In an effort for Community Services to gain greater insight about the programs, activities, services and events offered at our facilities, we will be installing customer service kiosks in our recreation centers. The first kiosk will be installed at South County Regional Park and serve as our "pilot program" for the next several months. The kiosk uses an iPad to gather input and essential information from the patrons. In the future, kiosks will have the potential to allow for program registration, access to calendars of activities, a card swipe system for membership check-ins, interactive maps of the county park system, and employment applications. Harold Avenue and Tringali recreation centers will have a customer service kiosk in operation at their facility by summer 2016 and the aquatic facilities will have customer service kiosks installed in their locations by fall 2016.

Mud Run

Time to get muddy! The fourth annual Tippecanoe Trail and Mud Run will be held on Nov. 14 at Tippecanoe Environmental Park. The Tippecanoe Trail and Mud Run course is constructed within the environmental park with no permanent effects to the natural habitats. Runners can choose a 5K or double up with a 10K trail run with at least 12 obstacles, including a 10-foot wall, slip and slide, and cargo net climb, with mud and muck throughout. There also is a one-mile Fun Run course for younger participants and those wishing to have a fun walk with scaled-down obstacles. Participants are provided lunch and refreshments after the race, with free beer for participants over 21 provided by New Belgium Beer along with water and Gatorade provided by 7-11. Register online at Active.com or call 941-613-3220 for information. Participants registered by Nov. 5 will receive a goodie bag that includes Dry-Fit race shirt.

Awards for participants in their age groups include medals for the top three finishers in each age group, and separate awards for the overall male and female winners. Participants will also receive customized participant race dog tags. Sponsorship of the event came from Port Charlotte Auto Mall, 7-11, Charlotte County Solid Waste, Fit2Run, The Parrot Magazine, New Belgium, Kix 92.9 Country, Total Nutrition and Johnson Engineering. Come and join Community Services and get muddy.

Fishing workshop

We recently held a one-day for-hire fishing workshop developed by Florida Sea Grant Agent Betty Staugler to educate guides about topics important to their industry. The workshop included a morning session on

business-related subjects such as social media marketing and developing a business plan. The afternoon was devoted to fisheries and law enforcement topics. All workshop participants indicated they planned to use information learned during the workshop with specific examples to include updating social media accounts, working with the Visitors Bureau, setting goals, and managing money wisely.

School gardens

A school garden workshop sponsored by the Charlotte County UF/IFAS Extension Service this summer engaged 15 local elementary school teachers. Extension staff and master gardener volunteers presented sessions including soil, vegetables, edible ornamentals, beneficial organisms, composting and vermicomposting. Practical information and resources allowed the teachers to explore and discover opportunities for their own school gardens. Extension-sponsored training such as this provide Charlotte County schools with STEM opportunities pertinent to classroom instruction and practical life skills.

Animal science

A week-long animal science program was recently held for Charlotte County youth who are interested in a career in the veterinary science area. Charlotte County 4-H alumni with animal science and veterinary medicine degrees presented the program with guest speakers from Charlotte County Animal Control, local humane societies, local breeders and veterinary clinics. Topics for the week included animal health and care for large and small animals, veterinary school requirements and other occupations related to the animal science field. Participants increased their knowledge of veterinary science, and learned about opportunities to volunteer with local animal shelters.

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