

Charlotte County administrator's update for 12/23/15

County staff gets into the spirit of giving

By Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County administrator

The Charlotte County Fiscal Services Division purchased and donated 35 bicycles for boys and girls of various ages to the Salvation Army. The bikes will be distributed to local families for Christmas. To raise the money, employees organized bake sales and a craft and resale bazaar. They also held raffles, collected cash donations and maintained a department "snack shack."

Financial Specialist Luis Rodriguez, who has been donating \$300 annually to the bike drive, was recognized for his generosity during an appearance on the Telemundo television show *Que Noche! con Angelica and Raul* (What a Night! with Angelica and Raul). The segment featured Rodriguez, who was born with multiple disabilities, playing pickleball, table tennis and softball and riding his bike and three-wheeled scooter. The video also showed him at work in the Fiscal Services Department. During the studio portion of the program, taped in Miami recently, the hosts surprised Rodriguez with a donation of five bikes and \$5,000, part of which he said would be used for future bike drives.

The Community Development Department held a bake sale earlier this month, raising more than \$350 to bring its overall fundraising for the year to more than \$1,000. The money raised will be used to purchase gifts for dozens of needy children and the elderly.

Charlotte County Transit turned its buses into Santa's Sleighs this month. Transit drivers dropped off passengers at area stores and collected gifts in lieu of the normal fare. Dozens of donated gifts will be delivered to residents of the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition's homeless shelter in Port Charlotte in time for Christmas.

Employees and customers of the Utilities Department will make the holiday brighter for three Charlotte County families. Staff at the East Port Environmental Campus collected toys, clothes and electronics plus full turkey dinners to provide to needy families.

Santa's Candy Land

The Community Services Department's Santa's Candy Land held Dec. 12 at Port Charlotte Beach Park was a big success. At least 650 people visited Santa and dropped their wish lists into Santa's mailbox. Participants played carnival games, read holiday stories and made Rudolph, snowman and snowflake ornaments.

Tourism marketing

The Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau recently selected Aqua Marketing & Communications for public relations services and Navigant Marketing for social media services. The agencies will develop strategic public relations and social media marketing campaigns, respectively, to generate national and international awareness for the destination. To familiarize themselves with our area in order to develop campaigns, representatives from both agencies participated in a four-day, three-night educational trip coordinated by the bureau. The trip included meetings with various tourism representatives and visits to area attractions, restaurants and outdoor amenities. Agency representatives will continue to visit the destination throughout the year.

Ray Sandrock is the Charlotte County administrator. Readers may reach him at raymond.sandrock@charlottecountyfl.gov.



From left, Daniel and Francine Lisby and their children Hudson and Ella, Doreen Stoquert, Brian Orlando-Reno and his children Christian, Dominic and Noah stand behind some of the 35 bikes purchased by Charlotte County Fiscal Services staff to be donated to the Salvation Army.