

EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY

What makes a good community?

Creating stronger communities is an ideal many people from civic leaders to parents strive to achieve. What makes a community stronger? How can it become a better place for the people who live in it? One way to create a good community is to foster an environment where neighbors help each other in times of need and look out for another in all situations and circumstances.

If we care about the welfare about our neighbors as much as our own, we will *sow the seeds* for a *high quality of life* in our community. What does having a high quality of life entail? Simply put, it means that our communities are a safe place where we can raise our children and educate them. Fostering a high quality of life also means making sure our communities are clean sparkling jewels where everyone from the homeowner to the apartment dweller takes pride in how their neighborhood looks. They put in the time and energy to make their property look clean. They work with their neighbors to eradicate crime, drug use and poverty within their community. They do whatever is necessary to make the place where they live the sort of place where people would give

Make a Difference

You are invited to attend the next Lehigh Acres Community Initiative meeting on April 12 at 6 p.m. to start making some of these changes in our community! Meeting will be held at 1301 Homestead Road. Please park at the rear of the building and enter through the glass door.

anything to live in it. Building a good community means taking action to get results.

You can't reach such a lofty goal by simply sitting on the sidelines. To be a builder requires active leadership. If you see a need in your community, then be the one to step forward and do something about it. Organize food clothing or monetary donations for someone in need. Help clean up a local park by removing litter and planting trees. Be a mentor to at-risk children. There are many ways to reach out and build a good community. The first step starts on an individual level. Great things sometimes result from small things added together.



SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEW

*Law Enforcement***Bullies get the message: Don't hate**

The best way to stop bullying is to tell someone it's happening. That's why Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers is partnering with the Collier County Sheriff's Office and Collier County Public Schools to provide the community with a text-messaging line to report bullying and remain anonymous.

According to the Pew Internet Research Center, 33 percent of teenagers who own a cell phone text more than 100 messages per day, and 11 percent send more than 200 texts per day. "We recognize that texting is a method of communication that young people are comfortable with," said Collier County Sheriff Kevin Rambosk. "This tool allows us to communicate with them on a platform with which they identify."

Using the keyword DNTH8 (don't hate), anyone wishing to report bullying can text a tip to 274637 (c-r-i-m-e-s). The software provider, TipSoft, encrypts text message and routes it through several secure servers, protecting the tipster's identity.

The tip will come in through Crime Stoppers, whose hotline is monitored around the clock, and then be sent immediately to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Once law enforcement receives the tip, it will be evaluated to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Potential actions include everything from contacting the alleged bully and victim and their respective parents, to informing the school guidance counselor, principal and School Resource Officers if the alleged bullying is taking place at school.

The system also allows a deputy to respond by text message to the originating cell phone without ever knowing the identity of the person who left the tip. The user's information is always assigned an alias and a unique ID before being sent. This secure application allows the tipster and the investigator to have two-way dialog while keeping the user's identity anonymous.

**Text message a complaint**

Students outside of Collier County also can text to report bullying to law enforcement agencies in Lee, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades Counties through Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers.

The service is not for acts of bullying in progress, which should be reported by calling 911, depending on the seriousness of the act.

The Collier County Sheriff's Office paid for the cost of adding the DNTH8 keyword to the existing TipSoft account of Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers. This approach saves tax dollars because it is less expensive than creating a new account.

"Teens who are being bullied may be hesitant to tell a trusted adult, or even a friend, that they're being antagonized," said Crime Stoppers Coordinator Trish Route. "

Our goal is to provide a safe and secure outlet for students to share that information so that law enforcement can intervene and protect them – all while keeping their identity anonymous."

School resource officers are assigned to middle

Continued on Page 3

County Commissioners Recognize NSP Success



The Lee County Commission paid tribute to Neighborhood Stabilization Program staff in February for the success of the NSP Program. A County Resolution praised the NSP team for creating affordable homeownership and rental opportunities in areas of Lee County that were hardest hit by foreclosures and creating job opportunities for local contractors.

Commissioner Frank Mann, whose district includes Lehigh Acres, one of the NSP target areas, noted that he is particularly pleased with the leadership of the Lee County NSP team. "They

had to develop this program because nothing like it had been done before," said Mann. "Now I am delighted to see many other counties asking our staff how we have been so successful."

Lee County has acquired over 166 single family homes so far and recently celebrated the resale of the 100th single family home. This program remains active, with new homes being purchased and rehabilitated on a regular basis.

Visit the SSP website at www.nsp.leegov.com to view current listings, sold homes and NSP application guidelines.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

and high schools, serving as a law enforcement presence to mentor students and deter crime, including bullying. In addition, teachers and deputies undergo training to recognize and address instances of bullying.

Deputies also make sure students are aware that they can report crime anonymously and be eligible for an award by calling the Student Crime Stoppers phone number, (800) 780-8477.

For additional information on the new DNTH8 (don't hate) anti-bullying text line, contact Trish Route, Crime Stoppers Coordinator, at (239) 477-1407 or Karie Partington, Public Affairs Manager at the Collier County Sheriff's Office, at (239) 252-0606.

CALENDAR

March 16-24

Lehigh Acres Spring Festival
See page 4 for events

Mar. 17

Teen Night Canceled Due to Spring Festival

April 12

Lehigh Acres Community Initiative meeting
6 p.m., 1301 Homestead Road, Lehigh Acres

April 13

Teen Night 7-10 p.m. (ages 12-17)
Veterans Park Recreation Center
55 Homestead Road, Lehigh Acres
Admission \$2

Please bring canned goods to donate!



the Lehigh Spring Festival

MARCH 16th-24th 2012
Veterans Park Lehigh Acres FL.

Friday March 16th *

6:00 PM: Opening Ceremonies, Introduction of Sponsors and Dignitaries
 6:30 PM: Footnotes Dance and Music
 7:15 PM: Bubble Gum Blowing Contest
 7:30 PM: Junior Spring Festival Idol Contest
 8:30 PM: Spring Festival Idol Contest

Saturday March 17th *

8:00 AM: Lehigh 4 Mile Road Race
 12:00PM: Pet Show Registration
 1:00 PM: Pet Show judging begins at Pavilion
 2:00 PM: Sound Check-Main stage
 2:00 PM: Shows on Midway Stage
 5:00 PM: LIVE & LEARN
 6:30 PM: NO Way Jose—Reggae
 8:00PM: * JT HODGES * National Country Star!

Sunday March 18th *

11:00 AM: Spring Festival Baby/Toddler Pageant
 12:15 PM: Spring Festival Diaper Derby
 1:00 PM: Spring Festival Prince and Princess Pageant
 3:00 PM: Miss Spring Festival Pageant
 5:00 PM: Junior Spring Festival Idol Contest
 6:30 PM: Spring Festival Idol Contest
 8:00 PM: BROOKE HUFFMASTER & MOCCASIN RIVER BAND

Monday March 19th *

6:00 PM: Footnotes Dance & Music Studio
 6:00 PM: Registration for Sewing, Needlework & Quilt // Crafts & Woodworking
 7:00 PM: Judging begins for Contests.
 7:00 PM: Junior Spring Festival Idol Contest
 8:30 PM: Spring Festival Idol Contest

Tuesday March 20th *

6:00 PM: Registration begins for Art contest.
 6:00 PM: THE GOLDEN ROAD QUARTET - Southern Gospel Music
 7:00 PM: Judging begins for Art Contest.
 7:00 PM: Junior Spring Festival Idol Contest
 8:30 PM: Spring Festival Idol Contest

Wednesday March 21st *

6:00 PM: Registration begins for Cakes Cookies & Chili contest.
 6:00 PM: Spring Festival Junior Idol Contest
 7:00 PM: Judging begins for Contests.
 7:00 PM: Susan Katz Dance Studio
 8:00 PM: Spring Festival Idol Contest

Thursday March 22nd * Pirate Day!

6:00 PM: E.L. SMITH PROJECT - Island Music
 6:00 PM: Registration begins for Flowers Fruits & Vegetables contest
 7:00 PM: Judging begins for Contests.
 7:00 PM: Junior Spring Festival Idol Semi-Finals Tonight
 8:30 PM: Spring Festival Idol Semi-Finals Tonight

Friday March 23rd *

6:00 PM: Junior Spring Festival Idol Finals Tonight!
 6:30 PM Lehigh Chamber After Hours - Contest Tent
 7:00 PM: Announce the winner of the Honorary Mayor Race
 7:15 PM: Spring Festival Idol Finals Tonight!
 8:00 PM: THE NOWHERE BAND - Beatles tribute band

Saturday March 24th *

8:00 AM: Shrine Club - Masonic Lodge PANCAKE BREAKFAST Behind SunTrust Bank
 11:00 AM: LEHIGH SPRING FESTIVAL GRAND PARADE: Homestead Rd.
 12:30 PM: ANNOUNCEMENTS & MUSIC - Festival Tradition
 2:00 PM: THE DETONATORS - Classic Rock
 3:30 PM: THE CERTIFIED BAND - R&B Blues Motown
 5:00 PM: GRUPO ESPALI - Salsa Band
 6:30 PM: CROSSFIRE - Southern Rock / Country
 8:00 PM: LIVE & LEARN - Rock Finale'