

Criminal Justice Commission Programs

January 2010
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Re-Entry Employer Reception

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Criminal Justice Commission Chair Barbara Cheives, Criminal Justice Commission Executive Director Michael Rodriguez, and County Commissioner Priscilla A. Taylor

The Re-Entry Employer Reception was held on Monday, November 23, 2009 at the West Palm Beach City Hall from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The Reception was hosted by County Commissioner Priscilla A. Taylor and the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission's Weed and Seed Program and was sponsored by Andrew Luchey of A & Associates. After responses from 600 participants at the Re-Entry Transition Fair in September, it was recognized that there was a need to get more employers involved. The goal of the Employer Re-Entry Reception was to educate local businesses and employers of the federal and local benefits to hiring ex-offenders. Business owners from throughout Palm Beach County were invited to come out and listen to guest speakers such as Dr. Gary Dennis and Chief Judge Peter Blanc as they identified the benefits of hiring previously incarcerated individuals. *Continue on page 2*



State Rep Mackenson Bernard, Senior Policy Advisor for Corrections Gary L. Dennis, Ph.D., and Florida DOC Circuit Administrator Rosalyn Baker



Prince Charles Arafat and Gary Hawkins, Workforce Alliance

Re-Entry Employer Reception

The evening began with a warm welcome from Commissioner Priscilla A. Taylor who showed her true passion for the reentry effort. Commissioner Taylor was followed by Palm Beach County Public Defender Carey Haughwout and Chief Judge Peter Blanc who spoke on the local benefits of helping ex-offenders find employment. Key note speaker Dr. Gary L. Dennis, Senior Policy Advisor for Corrections Department of Justice, came from Washington D.C. to speak with the local business owners regarding benefits on the federal level as well as the Second Chance Act. Gary Hawkins and Dough Saenz from Workforce Alliance spoke about the Federal Bonding Program and WOTC funding. At the end of the reception, Palm Beach County Weed and Seed Coordinator Rosalind Murray gave the closing remarks emphasizing the importance of the reentry issue. This event was an effort to promote employer participation in the next Re-Entry Transition Fair as well as increasing awareness of reentry. If you have any questions regarding Palm Beach County's reentry efforts, call Rosalind Murray at 561-355-2332.

Graffiti Mural Project

Lead artist Peter Agardy helped youth at the Boynton Beach Youth Empowerment Center (YEC) express their artistic abilities in a creative way. Agardy was exposed to graffiti at a young age and soon expressed his talent while attending the Dreyfoos School of the Arts in West Palm Beach. His passions for graffiti lead him to projects such as The Graffiti Mural Project. The Graffiti Mural Project which started in September took place at the Sara Sims Racquet Ball Court in Boynton Beach. The goal of the project was to steer youth away from illegal graffiti, while allowing them to participate in art. Peter Agardy, alongside other artist(Doug Hoekzema, John Griffin, Jermaine Johnson, Angel Mir, and Chan Shepard), helped five youth create a 15'x60' wall which represents the progression of African American music from the blues to R&B, including modern day music styles such as scratching. The artists decided to use bright colors such as blues and yellows to capture Florida's sunsets and oceans. The unveiling of the wall took place on Thursday, December 17, 2009 and included entertainment and light refreshments. Agardy quotes, "I think everyone involved in this project learned a lot, from the kids involved in the painting sessions, to the community's passerby's, to us the artists and everyone in between." If you have any question, call Vickie Henderson at 742-6647.



Boynton Beach YEC youth gather to help paint mural at the Sara Sims Racquet Ball Court



Artists: Peter Agardy, Douglas Hoekzema, John Griffin, Jermaine Johnson, Angel Mir, and Chan Shepard

Citizens Criminal Justice Academy Graduation



The 22nd Criminal Justice Academy Graduation took place 6:00 pm on December 17, 2009 at the Palm Beach County's Sheriff's Office. A total of 48 graduates were presented with a Certificate of Recognition for their participation in the Academy. The keynote speaker and presenter of certificates was Barbara Cheives, Chair of the Criminal Justice Commission. Barbara Cheives was first introduced to the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) through the Citizens Criminal Justice Academy. Katherine Hatos, CJC staff, coordinated the classes and expressed that the highlight of the course was the CERT's (Corrections Emergency Response Team) and the

tour of the Medical Examiner's Office. Carol Trebatch a graduate of the Academy said that her most highlighted moments were the prison tour, the basement of the court house, and the 911 call center. In order to sign up for the Citizens Criminal Justice Academy, participants must register online at the Criminal Justice Commission's website, and must be at least 18 years old to enroll. This experience provides citizens of the county with general knowledge of how the criminal justice system works. The course covers subjects such as law enforcement at the local, state and federal levels, criminal courts, corrections, and juvenile justice. Aside from the classroom atmosphere, attendees will be able to participate in educational tours of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office 911 Center, main courthouse, Palm Beach County Jail, Juvenile Assessment Center, Eagle Academy, and the Medical Examiner's office.



Barbara Cheives, Criminal Justice Commission Chair

Law Enforcement Report Lower Crime Rates in Weed and Seed Areas



John Green, Weed and Seed Committee Vice-President; Captain John Madden, Riviera Beach Police Department; Lt. Morris, Belle Glade Palm Beach County Sheriff Office

The Weed and Seed Committee met in September to discuss the crime rates in Weed and Seed's targeted neighborhoods. At this meeting Law Enforcement Officers and City Officials reported crime statistics in their assigned area. These areas include: Belle Glade, Riviera Beach, West Palm Beach, Gramercy Village and Delray Beach. Reports show that crime is being reduced and that the concerted efforts by law enforcement in these targeted areas are making an impact. Calls for service have been on the rise as community members get more involved and understand their role in reducing crime.

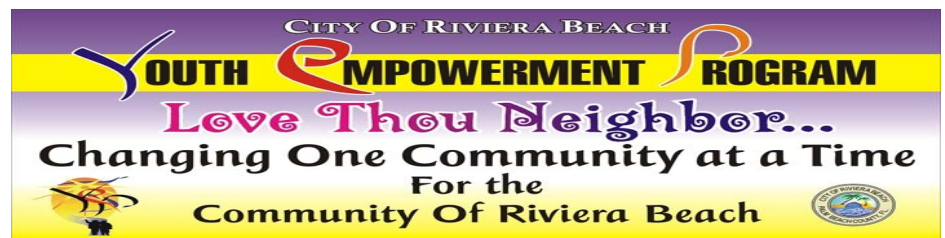
Youth Empowerment Centers Give Thanks



Valerie Grimsley, Riviera Beach YEC Coordinator and Riviera Beach Councilman Shelby Lowe

Youth from the Youth Empowerment Centers (YEC) celebrated Thanksgiving this year with friends and family from their communities. The Riviera Beach Youth Empowerment Center in collaboration with Operation Restore and Christian Community Fellowship Ministries hosted the “Love Thou Neighbor” Thanksgiving celebration on November 21, 2009, from 10 am to 4pm. Over 300 families participated in this event. Youth from the Riviera Beach YEC learned the true meaning of giving as they passed out 60 frozen turkeys to disabled residents from the city. Volunteers from various groups came out to help make the event possible. These groups included: Inlet Grove High School Key Club, YEC youth and parents, the City of Riviera Beach Public Works Department,

Palm Beach Lakes Basketball Coach, and Christian Community Fellowship members. Youth and parents from the community were able to enjoy a bounce house, snow cones, face painting, barbeque, and other activities. This event also shared resources with the community through vendors such as Teen Time, Legal Aid Society, Housing Partnership, and others. The Riviera Beach YEC Thanksgiving celebration was sponsored by Coca Cola, Special District, All Site Construction, Sysco, Winn Dixie, and many more. If you have any questions call Valerie Grimsley at 561-840-4802. The Northwood Youth Empowerment Center in West Palm Beach also celebrated Thanksgiving this year with the 3rd annual “Tradition of Giving Thanks” dinner. This event took place on November 24, 2009, from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm. It was a great opportunity for youth to spend time with friends and family, while learning how to “give thanks”. If you have any questions call Marvelous Washington at 561-804-5000.



Tis the Season

The Belle Glade Weed and Seed Christmas Extravaganza brought out over thirty residents and their children to celebrate the holiday season. This event was organized by Ms. McCall and took place on December 21, 2009 at the Weed and Seed site in Belle Glade. Plenty of toys were donated by Reverend Henry Fuse from the Urban League of Palm Beach County and an anonymous community philanthropist. The West Palm Beach Weed and Seed program also celebrated Christmas this year on December 19, 2009. The Police Athletic League Christmas Party took place at the Robinson Village and 7th Street Safe Havens. Over 100 kids received toys donated by Toys for Tots. These special occasions brought joy to those who could not afford Christmas gifts this year.





Programs

Criminal Justice Commission

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The Criminal Justice Commission was created by a Palm Beach County [ordinance](#) in 1988. It has 21 [public sector members](#) representing local, state, and federal criminal justice and governmental agencies, and 12 [private sector business leaders](#) representing the Economic Council of Palm Beach County. It has an established history of building strong partnerships to improve the criminal justice system in the County.

www.pbcgov.org/cjc

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