



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
HUD: WORKING WITH YOU TO CHANGE THE FACE OF TAMPA BAY

Tampa Field Office

*Serving 12 counties in West Central Florida:
Citrus; DeSoto; Hardee; Hernando; Highlands; Hillsborough; Manatee;
Pasco; Polk; Pinellas; Sarasota; and Sumter*

***Holiday Message from
Karen Jackson Sims, Field Office Director***

Happy Holidays! What a wonderful time of the year – we can actually feel the excitement in the air. My wish for each of you is for a peaceful and joyous holiday season. We have all been so very blessed and you all are doing tremendous work blessing others. This month, with our December newsletter, we are sharing with you the 2006 Best Practice Award Winners. Please join me in congratulating our HUD Partners, highlighted in the following pages, on the special recognition awards they received.

The **2006 Partnership Awards** recognized organizations that demonstrated outstanding community commitment in the areas of increasing homeownership, affordable housing, strengthening communities, ensuring fair housing and equal opportunity, and furthering faith-based and community initiatives. Most importantly, these awards recognized local organizations that made a difference in the lives of the residents in our HUD service area. They also demonstrated exceptional work leading to measurable and/or replicable outcomes. Last, but not least, these awards recognized entities that accomplished the following objectives: *a)* provided outstanding and/or innovative services to the less advantaged; *b)* worked closely with the community to identify and to address local needs; *c)* undertook opportunities for improvement, and/or *d)* implemented activities to increase or improve the quality and availability of affordable housing for individuals and families.

Congratulations again to the award winners for their outstanding service and assistance provided to our constituents. As we experience this Holiday Season, let's make a special effort to continue to remember those that depend upon us every day.

Blessings to you all –

Karen

Award Categories

The Tampa Field Office Award categories are based on HUD's major strategic goal categories: **1) Increasing Homeownership Opportunities; 2) Promoting Decent Affordable Housing; 3) Strengthening Communities; 4) Ensuring Equal Opportunity In Housing; and 5) Promoting Participation of Faith-Based and Community Organizations.**

HUD's 1st Annual "Arnold Andrews Recognition Award"

As part of this program, HUD Tampa wanted to provide extra recognition for an overall exceptional achievement, which also furthered the remembrance of the work and legacy of a long-time Tampa Bay leader, Mr. Arnold Andrews. Mr. Andrews will be long remembered for his service to others. He worked tirelessly over several decades improving and changing the lives of the less advantaged, and especially the homeless and persons with special needs and disabilities. He also graciously and generously helped many other organizations across the country by sharing his knowledge, practices, and experiences with them as they undertook similar work for the less advantaged. Mr. Andrew, who died in a plane crash in 2006, truly left a legacy of greatly improved lives and communities through his dedicated service to others. Thus, the Tampa Field Office established a new award category, known as HUD's **First Annual Arnold Andrews Recognition Award**. As it was this year, it will continue to be presented to an organization or person, from among the nominations received, who best exemplifies a sustained, outstanding commitment to helping less advantaged individuals and communities. *The recipient of the 2006 Arnold Andrews Award was the **Homeless Emergency Project, Inc. (HEP)**, in Clearwater, Florida (as further described below).*

Goal: Strengthening Communities

Ends chronic homelessness and moves homeless families and individuals to permanent housing; provides capital and resources to improve economic conditions in distressed communities

Homeless Emergency Project, Inc. (HEP) Clearwater, FL



The ***Homeless Emergency Project, Inc. (HEP)*** is a HUD-assisted non-profit organization that was founded in 1986, and is supported by private companies, the City of Clearwater and Pinellas County. It is a multi-dimensional organization that provides homelessness and supportive services (through 240 beds for emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing). It has also continued to improve the lives, housing stock, and economic conditions of a major, distressed neighborhood in Clearwater. *Each year HEP stabilizes over 600 adults & children who were once impoverished. Most significantly, since the inception of HEP, 78% of its residents have secured permanent housing.* A survey demonstrated that respondents believe HEP is the most successful and largest shelter in Pinellas County, serving as a role model for other organizations addressing homelessness.

HEP has achieved its success through the dedication and commitment of its founding leaders, the Late Rev. Otis C. Green, Executive Director, Barbara Green, staff, and the commitment of many local public and private sector partners. Its hallmark activities are: housing improvements; the development of a large, well-known community center; a retail and job training center; dental clinic; and family learning center. HEP has proven itself to be an efficiently operated organization, with *administrative costs at a low level of 13%*. In-kind contributions from community partners such as Morton Plant Hospital, St. Petersburg College, and the Upper Pinellas Dental Association, comprise 41% of the annual operating budget for HEP.

Through its human services work, HEP has also made a major difference in the costs of medical care to other private and public entities. *For example, last year, through crisis intervention and stabilization services between the HEP Emergency Programs and Clearwater's Morton Plant Hospital, there were 266 avoided hospitalizations documented at a cost savings of over \$1 million in hospital costs.*



HEP has continued to improve lives, and blighted neighborhood conditions, while increasing the housing stock in the City of Clearwater's most distressed neighborhood (Greenwood). It has done this by creating a variety of housing units of different types, sizes, and densities. *HEP is responsible for over \$6 million in redevelopment projects, including 32 single family apartments, and the redevelopment of 30 single family homes.* Garages that were once unusable have been converted to dormitory-style housing. They serve as emergency shelter to help move people to permanent housing. In partnership with the Eckerd Family Foundation and Pinellas County Schools, HEP also provides a ***"KEY to SUCCEED"*** after-school educational program at its Learning Center for disadvantaged youth.

Nominated by: City of Clearwater

Contact HEP at: 727.442.9041 x-110

Address: 1120 North Betty Lane, Clearwater, FL 33755

Web Site: www.ethep.org

***Goal: Strengthening Communities
Mitigates housing conditions that threaten health***

***Rosalie Center – Created by Alpha House of Tampa, Inc.
Tampa, FL***



The ***Rosalie Center***, created by Alpha House in 2001, provides safe housing and services for homeless pregnant women (1,400 since 1981 – and 104 in Rosalie Center since 2001). Rosalie Center was a staged development that includes a 3-story building containing eight 2 bedroom efficiency apartments. Alpha House and Rosalie Center provide safety for homeless women/babies. Promising new lives are created through education, counseling, parenting and life skills, case management, and vocational assistance - while mothers finish their education, learn parenting skills, and find meaningful employment. Over 85% left Alpha House for safe, appropriate housing. A total of 47% left for permanent housing with a lease or mortgage, and a total of 38% returned to live with families.

This development was funded through the following sources: HUD's \$400,000 and Continuum of Care (COC) support, a gift of the 1/2 acre vacant land to Alpha House in 1997 (adjacent to the original 20 bed pregnancy center), and a \$2 Million Capital Campaign in 1999 (with a lead gift of \$250,000 from the local Conn Memorial Foundation). As a result of these resources, homeless pregnant women did not remain on the streets, and their babies were born healthy, free of drugs, and of normal weight and gestational age. Also, cycles of poverty and abuse were broken, and promising lives were made possible.

Nominated by: City of Tampa

***Contact Alpha House at: 813.875.2024 (Bonnie Christiano)
Address: 201 S Tampania Avenue, Tampa, FL 33609
Web Site: www.alphahouseoftampa.org***

Goal: Strengthening Communities
***Ends chronic homelessness and moves homeless families
and individuals to permanent housing***

Bethany Family Apartments
Permanent Supported Housing - Catholic Charities
Pasco County, FL



Bethany Family Apartments is a faith-based, permanent supportive housing development in Pasco County, made possible by Catholic Charities to assist homeless families with disabilities. Since opening on September 14, 2005, it has continued to provide personalized supportive services through 4 full-time staff members, one of whom is available 24/7. The resident families are currently composed of 13 adults and 15 children who came from

locations unsuitable for stable family living. In one year, they have already moved from chaos to a nurturing environment, with Life Coaching that is allowing them to grow and develop skills for increased self-sufficiency (as their various disabilities allow). Children are healthy and doing well in school. Education is paramount for all, with the program experiencing long-term residents and many who will eventually find the means and ability to live independent and self-sufficient lives in the larger community. Bethany Family Apartments teaches them how to do so successfully. A total of 10 families have already been able to learn how to adjust to community living through constant involvement with on-site staff and the coaching, mental health and social services counseling provided by the staff.

Nominated by: Catholic Charities, Diocese of St. Petersburg

Contact Bethany Apartments at: 727.893.1314 x-202

Address: 201 S Tampania Avenue, Tampa, FL 33609

Web Site: www.ccdosp.com

***Goal: Strengthening Communities
Ends chronic homelessness and moves families
and individuals to permanent housing***

***Gulf Coast – Tampa Bay AIDS Network (TBAN)
Tampa Bay Area, FL***

Gulf Coast – Tampa Bay AIDS Network (TBAN) is new to the Tampa Bay region, and was funded by HUD. It benefits ex-offenders and their families, by maintaining housing and utilities for ex-offenders who are living with HIV and/or AIDS and are at risk of becoming homeless due to issues of health and/or employability. Ex-offenders face tremendous challenges in their re-entry into the community and maintaining stability, due to limitations of income, CORE records and bad credit histories. TBAN provides housing services to persons with HIV who are ex-offenders and newly released from jail, homeless, or at risk of homelessness. Assistance is in form of short-term rental assistance, mortgage and utility assistance, and/or tenant-based rental assistance. Gulf Coast TBAN leases apartments from landlords who are partners in this effort, and then subleases the units to ex-offenders who qualify, and then helps the clients to establish their own new credit record while the ex-offender also receives other supportive services and linkages to community resources, such as medical care, medication, case management, transportation, nutritional services, employment services, substance abuse and mental health treatment, food, budgeting and crisis intervention. Results are: healthier clients, strong prevention support, better local community involvement, and a positive impact in the community.



Nominated by: Tampa Bay AIDS Network

Contact TBAN at: 727.479.1800 (Vivian Candelaria)

Address: 14141 Icot Boulevard, Clearwater, FL 33760

Web Site: www.tampam4m.com/tan.html

Goal: Strengthening Communities

Provides capital and resources to improve economic conditions in distressed communities; ends chronic homelessness and moves families and individuals to permanent housing

Highlands County, Florida

Heartland Rural Consortia for the Homeless (FHRCH)
Homeless Continuum of Care (COC) – Six County Consortia
Based in Sebring, FL



Highlands County's Homeless Continuum of Care (COC) Consortia is a unique achievement made possible through the dedicated efforts of Highlands County and its neighboring 5 counties. It is a HUD-supported agency, under the State of Florida's HUD Programs. To better address homelessness needs in the heartland of rural Florida, and to increase its competitiveness for limited homelessness funding, the Highlands

County Housing Coordinator identified an opportunity to undertake the establishment of an effective, collaborative and cooperative effort, known as the FHRCH Continuum of Care (COC), that is composed of six rural counties. It functions as one effective entity for planning and coordinating housing services for the homeless populations within the six counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee. This unique, first of its kind effort will at long last provide these rural counties with an opportunity to tap into the resources that have historically been utilized in "urban" counties. Highlands County serves as the lead, coordinating entity. It pulled together sparse service providers in the 6-county area, coordinated existing shelter and support programs, and provided for HUD training for members. It also helped the counties become active members of the COC for partnership development and planning, developing applications for funding, conducting homelessness surveys, and educating their respective communities about homelessness. This new COC already received its first HUD Award of \$284,960 in SHP funds, and over \$80,000 in State of Florida Homeless funds.

Nominated by: Highlands County Government

Contact Heartland Consortia at: 863.402.6795 (Penny Phillippi)

Address: 501 S. Commerce Avenue, Sebring, FL 33870

Web Site: www.fhrch.org

Goal: Strengthening Communities
Provide capital and resources to improve economic conditions in distressed communities

Hillsborough County: Affordable Housing Task Force
Tampa, FL

The ***Hillsborough County Affordable Housing Task Force*** is composed of a HUD-funded County and HUD-supported Affordable Housing Task Force. It was created in response to the Hillsborough County Commission's specific request to address the challenges facing its citizenry in their pursuit of safe, decent and affordable housing. Through a series of community meetings, the task force successfully completed its charge to draft a multifaceted strategic plan designed to increase and maintain Hillsborough County's affordable housing stock. Thus, this task force is fostering efforts to increase the development of new affordable



housing units. The strategic plan is also being used in follow-up forums throughout Hillsborough County to reduce possible barriers to affordable housing development, such as through the consideration of inclusionary zoning to facilitate the development of new housing. HUD customers have already benefited from this diverse consortium in the following ways:

- *Approval of a Down Payment Assistance Program for Homeownership (up to \$5,000)*
- *Interdepartmental Coordination / Inter-governmental Coordination Initiatives*
- *New Partnering efforts (non-profit agencies and for-profit developers)*
- *The Fostering of Affordable Rental Housing*

Nominated by: Hillsborough County Government

Contact Affordable Housing Task Force at: 813.274.6600
(Dexter Barge, Lucia Garsys or Howie Carroll)

Address: County Center, 601 E Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33602

Web Site: www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hcce

Goal: Strengthening Communities
Help organizations access the resources they need to make their communities more livable

Lakeland Housing Authority – “Building Bridges After-School” Program
Attracts Non-Low-Income Families Interested in
FCAT Score Achievements
Lakeland, FL



The ***Lakeland Housing Authority's “Building Bridges After-School” Program*** seeks to improve FCAT test scores for children who reside in Public Housing Sites (at West Lake and the Paul Colton Villas). The ***Building Bridges After-School Program*** targets students testing at a certain level FCAT score and living in low-income census tracts. This Program is supported by a number of public and private sector community partners. Also, since these after-school program sites in Lakeland achieved the highest scores of any entity in Polk County, the Lakeland PHA applied independently from the School Board and received Supplemental Funding in the amount of \$2.5 million from the Florida Department of Education for this successful program. As a result, this HUD supported public housing agency was able to increase services from 80 to 150 children, and to serve children from both public housing units and surrounding neighborhoods and schools. To demonstrate the success and quality of this after-school program, some children are ***not*** from low-income households, since their parents are very happy with this program and the resulting high achievements in school FCAT scores.

Nominated by: Lakeland Housing Authority

Contact After School Program at: 863.687.2911 (Rodney Ford)

Address: 430 Hartsell Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33813

Web Site: www.lakelandhousing.org

Goal: Increasing Homeownership Opportunities
Expanding homeownership opportunities

Tampa Bay CDC – A Portfolio of Success and Growing Role
Tampa Bay Area – FL



Tampa Bay CDC is a HUD-supported non-profit organization and a HUD-accredited Housing Counseling Agency. It was also designated in 2005 as an *Instrumentality of Government* by HUD's Homeownership Center (HOC) in Atlanta (to provide secondary financing assistance and liens in conjunction with FHA mortgages). It promotes and provides homeownership opportunities for low and moderate-income households in the Tampa Bay area, and it affects the living environment by improving properties for sale to low-income or first-time buyers. This CDC started out by acquiring foreclosed HUD/FHA properties, and rehabilitating them for sale to eligible low-income homebuyers. As of June 30, 2006, it has assisted 3,178 households in a tri-county area with loan closings (including 1,040 in Pinellas County, 553 in Hillsborough County, and 701 in Pasco County). These closings represented \$195.2 million of real estate sold, and \$177.5 million in first mortgages. Most significantly, a total of \$17.3 million in down payment assistance was distributed. The economic impact of the CDC's work and activities, made possible in partnership with HUD and other non-profit agencies, is estimated at over \$25 million.

Another cornerstone of the Tampa Bay CDC's success has been its *"Dream of Homeownership" Education Programs*. Over 16,000 persons have been educated about homeownership, and its many dimensions, since 1994. Over 829 persons have been saved from foreclosure action since the inception of their Foreclosure Prevention Program.

Initially established in 1982, the Tampa Bay CDC got its start through its service to a targeted Clearwater neighborhood. It is also unique because it has a Mortgage Brokers Business License, currently effective until 2008. Since 1982, another noteworthy achievement is the Tampa Bay CDC's ability to obtain \$3 million in public funding from HUD's HOME, HOPE 3, and CDBG Programs, and the State's SHIP funds. This CDC also operates a successful Down Payment /Closing Cost Assistance Program, along with its acquisition /rehabilitation/resale programs.

Nominated by: Market Street Mortgage Company

Contact Tampa Bay CDC at: 727.442.7075 (Carrie Vitale)

Address: 2139 NE Coachman Road, Clearwater, FL 33765

Web Site: www.tampabaycdc.org

Goal: Increasing Homeownership Opportunities
Expanding homeownership opportunities

Lakeland Housing Authority – “Homes at Lake Ridge”
Lakeland, FL



The ***Lakeland Housing Authority’s “Homes at Lake Ridge”*** was developed through a partnership with the Lakeland / Polk Housing Corporation, a 501c(3) (CHDO), local FDIC member banks, and the Keystone Challenge Fund (another Polk County CHDO). This unique partnership helped to build, sell and provide mortgages for seven of 40 new homes built in the ***Homes at Lake Ridge*** subdivision, which is also a former public housing site in the Paul A. Diggs neighborhood. The sales prices are approximately \$140,000 with about \$60,000 coming from the first mortgage, \$70,000 from second and third mortgages provided by the Florida HOME program and the Lakeland SHIP program, and \$10,000 from the buyer (or from down payment assistance provided to the buyer).

Since the majority of the applicants are outside of the financial mainstream, programs were developed to address their credit and security issues. These programs are known as the Homebuying Clubs I and II, and the Mortgage Default Prevention Program. As a HUD supported development, a total of seven of the 40 homes in this subdivision were sold to a diverse group of low-income, public housing-eligible families from Polk County, who received mortgage assistance from this Lakeland Housing Authority partnership.



Nominated by: Lakeland Housing Authority

Contact Homes at Lake Ridge at: 863.687.2911 (Dayen Valentine)

Address: 430 Hartsell Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33813

Web Site: www.lakelandhousing.org

Goal: Increasing Homeownership Opportunities
Increasing homeownership opportunities

Manatee County's Affordable/Workforce Housing -
Rapid Response Program
Bradenton, FL



Manatee County's Affordable/Workforce Housing – Rapid Response Program was developed in response to the County's recognition that the workforce and affordable housing are the new infrastructure for a community's success. The County created a new, public-private partnership to evaluate and refine its incentives program, which was lead by County Commissioner Ron Getman. The new Rapid Response Program facilitates a program for developing affordable housing and to reducing impact fees for lower income households. Working in conjunction with its Housing-Rapid Response Team (composed of other State and local reviewing agencies), this program assists housing developers to participate in the County's affordable/workforce housing programs through financial incentives and expedited development and permitting processes. For example, new SF houses in 2005 would be assessed \$11,553 in impact fees. However, with the new ordinance, the developer is only charged \$4,495 – and his permit is expedited - if he/she builds a minimum of 10% of units as affordable workforce housing. Since its adoption, the number of affordable housing units produced has jumped dramatically in the past 2 years – from 90 units in 2004 to 1,028 units in 2005 – thereby increasing housing choices for lower income families.

Manatee County, FL is a HUD-funded entity which uses HUD funds to develop affordable housing. This Rapid Response Program initiative includes regulatory and financial incentives to encourage the developers and builders to produce affordable/workforce housing. It is an effective tool to generate affordable housing, since increased housing prices and growth have created a crisis for local governments.

Nominated by: Manatee County Government

Contact Manatee Workforce Housing at: 941.749.3030 (Cheri Coryea)

Address: 1112 Manatee Avenue West, Suite 303, Bradenton, FL

Web Site: <http://www.co.manatee.fl.us>

Goal H: Increasing Homeownership Opportunities
Increasing homeownership opportunities and
Making the homebuying process less complicated and less expensive

Highlands County –
Impact Fees and Workforce Housing Trust Fund
Sebring, FL



The ***Highlands County Impact Fee Waivers and Workforce Housing Trust Fund***, as approved by County Commissioners, instituted housing development Impact Fees, for the first time, on September 5, 2006. The Commission also recognized that these fees are a barrier to affordable and workforce housing, so they designed the new fee structure to reduce the negative effects of them. This is accomplished through a tiered fee schedule, and by *waiving fees* for new homebuyers whose

income is at or below 80% of the median family income. The Commissioners also established a new *Affordable and Workforce Housing Trust Fund* with the support of the County's ad valorem funds to pay the impact fees for households between 80 and 140% of median income. It also pays for future affordable housing initiatives within the County. Highlands County is a HUD-supported entity, under the State of Florida's HUD Programs.

Nominated by: Highlands County Government

Contact Housing Trust Fund at: 863.402.6795 (Penny Phillippi)
Address: 501 S Commerce Avenue, Sebring, FL 33870
Web Site: <http://www.highlands-county.com>

Goal: Promote Decent Affordable Housing
Increasing housing opportunities for the elderly and persons with disabilities

**Boley Centers: Affordable Housing for People with Severe
and Persistent Mental Illness**
St. Petersburg, FL



Boley Centers is a HUD-supported organization that increases housing opportunities for persons with disabilities, and was designated as a “one-of-a-kind” administrator for HUD’s Section 8 rental vouchers. Boley has worked in partnership with HUD, the City of St. Petersburg’s Department of Housing and Community Development, the Bessie Boley Foundation, and the Federal Home Loan Bank (via Synovus Bank) to develop 62 units of affordable rental housing for people with severe and persistent mental illness. The quality of housing is exceptional, with extra design features and landscaping to make the developments some of the nicest in the neighborhoods. This has resulted in neighborhoods welcoming the developments rather than rejecting their presence.

A vast majority of the residents have incomes under 20% of area median income, and the majority receives SSI income of \$603/month. Also, due to HUD’s requirement that residents pay no more than 1/3 of income for rent, residents have the opportunity to live in decent, affordable housing not otherwise available to them. The supportive housing services provided by Boley Centers staff allow residents, all of whom have a severe and disabling condition, to live independently. It includes 62 units of affordable rental housing in 4 projects, comprised of five apartment complexes, at a total cost close to \$5 million – including \$3.9 million in HUD-Section 811 Program funds.

Nominated by: Boley Centers

Contact Boley Center at: 727.821.4819 (Jack Humburg)
Address: 445 31st Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33713
Web Site: www.boleycenters.org

Goal: Promote Decent Affordable Housing
Increasing housing opportunities for the elderly and persons with disabilities

Centro Place Apartment Homes
Tampa, FL

The ***Centro Place Apartment Homes*** is a \$16.1 million housing development created by the City of Tampa, the Banc of America CDC, and the Home Association, Inc. They worked together in partnership to develop a new 160-unit elderly apartment community (103 units for those at 60% or less and 26 units for those at 35% or less of median income). Centro Place is located in the East Tampa CRA/EC Area, and is next door to an assisted living facility for the elderly (HOME Association), that also continues to provide support services to the elderly tenants previously served. Many of the elderly have lived in East Tampa their entire lives, thereby allowing them to remain living in the same community with assisted living services. The development site includes the main building of the historic Asturiano Hospital, which now serves as the community facility for social activities.



Support came from HUD HOME funds (\$600,000 for 8 units = average of \$75,000/unit) and State SHIP funds (\$900,000 for 30 units = average of \$30,000/unit), and other public and private funds and Low Income Housing Tax Credits (\$9.6 million).

Nominated by: City of Tampa and Bank of America CDC

Contact Centro Place at: 813.247.7100 (Sharon West)
Address: 1302 East 21st Avenue, Tampa, FL 33602
Web Site: www.centroplace.com

***Goal: Ensuring Equal Opportunity in Housing:
Improving housing accessibility for persons with disabilities (with added
emphasis for disaster relief efforts); and
Improving public awareness of fair housing laws***

**Tampa Bay Fair Housing Partnership
Clearwater, FL**



The *Tampa Bay Fair Housing Partnership* developed a successful, innovative, two part seminar on the campus of the Stetson University College of Law in Tampa, as part of their 2006 Fair Housing Month Program. Special emphasis was on educating the community, housing advocates, and housing providers about accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities, and to help the agencies that have a responsibility for dealing with disaster relief efforts.

It attracted nearly 200 people the first day, and 105 people second day (including about 30 from the Gulf Coast region). Participants included: consumers; housing providers; code enforcement officials; emergency management personnel; architects; and developers. The Seminar was opened by HUD's Assistant Secretary for FHEO. The Department of Justice's Chief of Disability Rights Section served as the primary speaker for the second day. One benefit was that participants who are engaged in assisting persons with disabilities to obtain accessible housing were provided timely and accurate information on this topic. They also learned ways to provide reasonable accommodations and modifications in order to allow people with disabilities to enjoy the benefits of housing opportunities. The audience also learned how to respond to post-disaster housing needs of persons with disabilities.

The lead entity for this successful event was the Pinellas County Human Rights Office, which is a HUD-funded FHAP agency. It undertook this initiative to address the special needs of mutual clients, and especially persons with disabilities.



Partners included: Pinellas County's Human Rights and Community Development Offices; City of Clearwater - Housing/Equity; City of Largo's Housing Office; City of St. Petersburg's Housing and Community Development and Community Affairs Offices; Hillsborough County's Equal Opportunity Office; City of Tampa's Human Rights Office; Bay Area Apartments Association; Bay Area Legal Services; Gulf Coast Legal Services; Stetson University College of Law – Continuing Education Office; the Boley Centers for Behavioral Health; and Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST.

Nominated by: Pinellas County Office of Human Rights

***Contact Fair Housing Partnership at: 727.464.4880 (Leon Russell)
Address: 400 Fort Harrison Avenue, 5th Floor, Clearwater, FL 33756
Web Site: www.co.pinellas.fl.us/bcc/Humanrights***

**Goal: Promoting Participation of
Faith-Based and Community Organizations**
***Encourage partnerships between faith-based and community organizations
and HUD's traditional grantees***

Disaster Relief Center (DRC) for Hurricane Katrina and Rita Evacuees
***A Joint Effort of Catholic Charities, Diocese of St. Petersburg
and Hillsborough County***

The ***Disaster Relief Center (DRC)*** was a "One-Stop Center" housed in the Hillsborough County Government Center on Windhorst Road. It was established with HUD Tampa Field Office support, as a first of its kind center in September 2005, after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita of 2005. Most importantly, it was established to provide a one-stop assistance center for hurricane evacuees.



This unique concept was subsequently replicated in other cities following Hurricane Katrina. The DRC in Hillsborough County was a successful, collaborative effort of many agencies, with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Petersburg designated as the lead entity responsible for providing housing, utilities, furniture, and household goods to evacuees. Catholic Charities also provided gasoline cards and gift cards for food and clothing through funds received by the Diocese and other donations. THE DRC was designed as a one-stop center for evacuees to receive a variety of services, including those from FEMA, the Red Cross, the Hillsborough County Department of Social Services, the School System, Food Stamps, Economic Assistance, and the County's Head Start Program for Child Care, Transportation, and other entities.



Through HUD funding, a total of 476 evacuated families were provided assistance with rent, utilities, furniture, and/or household items. Thus, evacuees who lost their house, job, and all of their belongings, received a safe, furnished place to live with utilities and hope for the future. One evacuee wrote a note of appreciation that stated: ***"Keep up the good work, and God Bless everyone that is involved in helping people put their lives together."***

Contact: Sheila Lopez, Catholic Charities, 1213 16th Street, St. Petersburg, FL
Phone: 727.893.1314 (x202)
Web Site: www.ccdosp.com

or

Dexter Barge, Hillsborough County, 10119 Windhorst Road, Tampa, FL 33619
Phone: 813. 274.6600
Web Site: www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hcce

Will You Be Ready for Next Year?

A HUD recognized best practice is defined as a program or project, management tool, or technique, that fulfills at least two of the following characteristics:

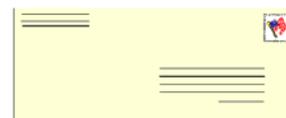
- 1) *generates a significant positive impact on those it is intended to serve or manage;*
- 2) *can be replicated in other areas of the country, region, or local jurisdiction;*
- 3) *demonstrates the effective use of partnerships among government agencies, non-profit organizations, or private businesses; and*
- 4) *displays creativity in addressing a problem, and demonstrates effective leveraging of resources.*

It is hoped that our HUD Partners will benefit from the best practice stories shared in this newsletter. We know you will continue to undertake new, HUD-assisted initiatives and related activities in your own communities or in partnership with your neighboring jurisdictions. We also look forward to receiving a new round of **Best Practice Nominations** in 2007, upon release of the Nomination Forms prior to the Tampa Field Office's next Partners Planning Meeting and Awards Program. Again, congratulations to the 2006 award recipients for their successful and dedicated work in assisting our mutual customers and in helping those seeking the American Dream of "homeownership."

If you have any questions about this newsletter and its contents, please do not hesitate to contact HUD's Tampa Field Office Director, Karen Jackson Sims, at (813) 228-2026, x2107.

ARE YOU ON OUR MAILING LISTS?

The HUD Tampa Field Office makes available the following publications to help keep you aware of new housing information:



Tampa Field Office Newsletter

If you need general information about programs, funding, public announcements and local activities, send your request via email to william.j.kalbas@hud.gov or call 813.228.2026 x-2112 to provide your email or postal address.

Atlanta Homeownership Center Internet News

Those interested in single family housing news may visit the following internet site <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/talk/atlfallnews.pdf> to register for receipt of this newsletter.

HUD's mission is to increase homeownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination.

www.hud.gov

espanol.hud.gov