

Man dies in Christmas crash

A one-vehicle crash early Christmas morning left an Immokalee man dead. According to the Florida Highway Patrol, passenger Ivan Zapata Cruz, 19, of Immokalee was transported to Naples Community Hospital in serious condition after the accident. The driver, 19-year-old Edgar Retana of Le-High Acres, was pronounced dead at the scene.

The FHP report states Mr. Retana was driving south on SR 29 north of CR 858 at 4:30 that morning when he failed to maintain control of the 2003 Dodge Ram he was driving. The Dodge drifted southeasterly across the northbound lane and entered the grassy east shoulder. The driver over corrected, steering in a southwesterly direction, across both lanes of SR 29 while rotating clockwise. The truck entered the west shoulder and hit a tree with its left front, overturned while continuing to travel southwesterly. As it was overturning, the truck's right side struck a second tree and came to a final rest on its right side, facing northwest against the second tree.

Homeless Count

The annual Point In Time (PIT) homeless count is coming up in late January. There will be a training in Immokalee on January 15 for volunteers. For more information or to volunteer, contact Hunger & Homeless Coalition of Collier County executivedirector@collierhomelesscoalition.org.

See Page 2 for information about how to contact the newspaper.

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Teachers of Distinction honored

The Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program's 2012-13 Teachers of Distinction were announced in surprise classroom visits to their schools. These teachers will continue in the Golden Apple Selection process and from this group, six (6) teachers will be selected to receive a Golden Apple. Three are from Immokalee schools.

The Golden Apple teachers along with the Teachers of Distinction will be honored at the 23rd Annual Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers presented by Suncoast Schools Federal Credit Union Foundation on May 10, 2013. This year's celebration is a dinner, hosted by The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club.

Golden Apple continues to be one of those ways Champions For Learning fulfills its mission by bringing our community together around the value we collectively place on the impact that teachers have on student learning.

Media partners WINK-TV and Naples Daily News have supported this teacher recognition program since its inception and thanks to their support, Champions For Learning will be able to share this story of the impact of teachers. Additional support for the teachers is provided by the Mary Ingram Fund of the Columbus Foundation.

Suncoast Schools Federal Credit Union Foundation, presenting sponsor of Golden Apple, is funded entirely by the Suncoast Schools Federal Credit Union, and 100 percent of funds are contributed to organizations and initiatives that assist children in the communities Suncoast Schools FCU serves.

On January 23rd, the new Teachers of Distinction will be recognized at the McDonald's Breakfast sponsored by Adams & O'Reilly.

TOP Teacher of Distinction Donna Cornwell of Lake Trafford Elementary with her students.

CENTER Students of Teacher of Distinction Cindy Sans Pinecrest shared in her success.

Bottom: Teacher of Distinction Yudeika Ramirez of Eden Park Elementary smiles along with her whole class.



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A Look Back at 2012

April 5, 2012

Detectives believe a man suspected of killing a 24-year-old man in Immokalee on Monday may have fled to Mexico.

Immokalee Recovery Coordinating Cen-

ter, a group of committed local individuals doing their best to see that when the next natural disaster hits, people will be ready for it. Leading the IRCC was Ron Mosher, of the Collier County Sheriff's Office. The

IRCC partners with the Collier County Public Schools by using the iTECH as their place to meet. Should a disaster strike, the IRCC will spring into operation with headquarters at the iTECH.

iHOPE originally provided the funding to start the IRCC under grants provided through the Community Foundation of Collier County. They also provided the funding for iHOPE to put together a mobile trailer equipped with a 35kw diesel generator that can operate a large office if the community loses power during and after a severe storm. The IRCC is the "Immokalee connection" to the Emergency Operations Center in Naples.

April 12, 2012

Plans were solidified for the upcoming Balloons Over Paradise, by the Seminole Casino at the Immokalee Airport. More than 30 custom hot air balloons were to fill the skies, participate in fun activities and compete in races on April 14 and April 15. The inaugural festival was free to the public.

Thanks to a massive \$3.4 million grant from the USDA, plus an additional loan of \$5 million, and \$800,000 of local funds, Immokalee Water & Sewer District held a groundbreaking ceremony for the WWTP Expansion and Force Main Extension project. IWSD planned to expand and improve its wastewater facilities and service to the community, but also provide an additional 122 jobs for workers in Immokalee.

April 19, 2012

Seventeen young ladies competed for the two Queen titles at the Harvest Festival. Competing for Jr. Miss Harvest Queen were: Josselyn Solorzano, Maria Ramirez, Jennifer Villa, Cartaya Billie, Natalie Garcia, Kyra Stewart, Azariah Howard, Biank Guadian, Lauren Posada, Jaylen Carroll, Ariana Martinez & Carica Astrel. Azariah Howard was selected as the new Jr. Miss Queen. First runner-up was Carica Astrel. Talent winner was Azariah Howard.

Five young ladies competed for Miss Harvest Festival Queen. They were Alex Romero, Alexis Aquilar, Kritina Contreras, Diana Sanon, and Yecenia Solorzano. Diana Sanon was chosen the new Miss Harvest Festival. First runner-up was Alex Romero.

iHOPE was presented with a donation from the Betsy McCormack Fund to assist the local ministry to poor families in Immokalee with a warehouse-The I D C-I HOPE Distribution Center. In early 2011, the McCormack Fund generously donated \$10,000 to help I HOPE establish and open its warehouse at the Tradeport Technology Park in southeast Immokalee.

April 26, 2012

Under the Athletic Direction of Mr. Tony Allen, and the Coaching Staff of Ariza Reyes (Head Coach), Jamie Flatley (Assistant Coach), and Christopher Reyes (Volunteer Coach) of Immokalee High School, the Lady Indians Lacross team earned a District Title as District Runner-ups, a second place standing to the Gulf Coast Sharks. They went into Districts as the second ranked team.

May 3, 2012

Last January the Naples Vet Center opened - a focal point for those who continue to feel the effects of their military service. As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs

the organization reaches out to veterans who need a hand returning to their normal life after serving in the military.

Thanks to the EdOptions program some 29 students, who were previously unable to graduate, would cross the stage with the IHS Indians Class of 2012 in June.

EdOptions is an accredited online high school that offers customized educational solutions. One benefit is that students at risk of not graduating with their class can earn the credits they need to catch up with their cohorts. The program also has translation options for English Language Learners.

May 10, 2012

Aaron Henry was the latest of Immokalee's favorite sons to make the world sit up and take notice, after signing on with the Oakland Raiders as a free agent. Pro football had been Aaron's dream since he was small, but that dream didn't come easily.

The former Immokalee High School Indian, BETA Clubber and top safety on the gridiron graduated from the University of Wisconsin on December 18, 2011.

May 17, 2012

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) planted more than 25,000 aquatic grass plants in Lake Trafford on May 8. Biologists designed this project to provide better habitat for fish and wildlife that live in and around the lake. Lake Trafford, in Collier County, is the largest lake south of Lake Okeechobee.

An endangered Florida panther kitten rescued after an apparent vehicle strike in Southwest Florida would likely be unable to return to the wild. The kitten was transferred to Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo for further rehabilitation. It was the third kitten and seventh panther overall to receive rehabilitation at the zoo. The kitten's prognosis was guarded.

A male panther kitten, believed to be this kitten's brother, died April 7 from injuries also consistent with a vehicle strike.

May 24, 2012

The Collier County Housing Authority (CCHA) awarded a one-year \$5,000 grant for the implementation of a health literacy program to benefit its Adult ESOL and family literacy students.

This grant, awarded by Florida Blue and the Florida Literacy Coalition, would integrate health and nutrition into the adult ESOL curriculum offered to residents of Farm Worker Village and at Collier Village. The focus was to help students acquire information and resources that will help them navigate the medical system and make informed health decisions.

IFD received the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant, which provided funding to increase the number of trained, "front line" firefighters in local communities. Assistant Chief Mike Jenson said, with this grant, IFD will again have a full compliment of firefighters - 21 - and be able to reopen the Carson Road station. That station had been closed as uninhabitable, refurbished by a host of volunteers, and has been open only as volunteers were available to man it.

Welcome new year with great music

First Baptist Church will host The Naples Philharmonic Brass Quintet January 6, 2013 at 3 p.m. in the auditorium. The brass quintet is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Prior to the 20th century, chamber music for brass alone was exceedingly rare and was primarily associated with military bands.

By the middle of the 20th century, there were a handful of professional quintets, most notably the New York Brass Quintet and Chicago Brass Quintet, who made substantial efforts to commission composers and build the repertoire with original works.

A broad array of musical genres is at the center of this concert.

The first half will feature works by traditional classical composers while the sec-

ond half will feature music not originally conceived for brass quintets. Fats Waller, W.C. Handy and Duke Ellington are just three of the most significant figures in early jazz history that will be showcased.

The Naples Philharmonic Orchestra Brass Quintet was founded in 1990 and is starting its 23rd season. In 1992 the quintet won first prize at the prestigious Summit International Brass Competition and took second place honors at the 1996 Concours International de Quintettes de Cuivres in Narbonne, France.

This is a free concert for the community so come be a guest January 6, at 3 p.m. and enjoy.

First Baptist Church is located at 1411 Lake Trafford Road.



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- To correct our errors and to give each correction the prominence it deserves.
- To provide a right to reply to those we write about.
- To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.

Review

Continued From Page 2

May 31, 2012

The much discussed and, in some quarters, much maligned Immokalee Master Plan was still being molded, even though it was headed for a final vote next month by the county commission. A series of town hall type meetings were leading up to the June 18 commission meeting at IHS.

June 7, 2012

Collier County Housing Authority's Family Literacy Academy of Immokalee received a \$12,000 grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. The grant would be used to expand the Family Literacy Academy services 5 days a week for 30 families, hired 2 classroom assistants, purchased bus passes for families in need of transportation, and provide 2 field trips for Academy families.

94-year-old Brother Kenneth D. Glidden and his wife Betty hosted a delegation of Southwest Florida Masons to commemorate Brother Glidden's 70th year as a Mason. Appropriately, he was given a gold lapel pin by the Grand Lodge of Florida and a framed certificate. The presentation was made by R.W. Ed Lanham, II, District Deputy Grand Master of the 29th Masonic District.

June 14, 2012

The proposed amendment to the Immokalee Master Plan continued to develop twists and turns as it goes through the process of acceptance or rejection by the county. On June 7 a group of citizens met at Raynor's Restaurant to voice concerns about the proposed plan. Commissioner Coletta planned to include a straw ballot on the Immokalee Master Plan amendment on the August 14 Primary.

June 21, 2012

Immokaleeans learned of the Department of Homeland Security's decision to grant deferred action to certain undocumented youth living in the United States. If applicants are approved for deferred action, they could qualify for employment authorization and then social security and a drivers license.

The decision affected undocumented youth who were brought to the United States as children before age 16 and who have resided for at least five years as of June 15, 2012 and were living in the United States on June 15, 2012. Applicants need to be at least 15 and not more than 30 years old,

Legal Aid Service of Collier County was ready to help eligible Collier residents file

their immigration deferred action applications.

The White House honored Lourdes Villanueva as one of 11 individuals from Head Start programs across the country who have demonstrated a commitment to delivering on the promise of Head Start in their communities.

June 28, 2012

The Immokalee Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was a busy place. On June 20 the CRA officially opened its new computer room. The 12 computers are loaded with top of line Microsoft Business programs so Immokaleeans have access to the best technology available.

The computers were available for all business-related needs for people returning to the job market and needing computer skills. Anyone wishing to use the computers must make an appointment to make sure no classes are going on at the time. The computers were donated by Suncoast School Information Systems.

July 5, 2012

There were Elvis sightings in Immokalee as 12 Elvis tribute artists came to the casino to compete at the Seminole Casino Immokalee's Elvis Fest. Irv Cass of Fenton, Mich. was crowned "King." He received \$2,500. The newly crowned king sang "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," "Let It Be me," and "Suspicious Minds."

July 12, 2012

Parents were notified that all Collier County Public Schools in Immokalee would be changing student arrival and dismissal times beginning on the first day of school, Monday, August 20.

July 19, 2012

Immokalee native Myra Johnson was elected the first female commander of American Legion Post 130 in LaBelle. The US Navy veteran graduated from Immokalee High School in 1991. Her dad, Pedro Gonzalez, and grandmother, Aurelia Gonzalez (who would be 99 in September), were still here.

July 26, 2012

Career Development Representative Matt Kindermann described Southwest Florida Works as the "best kept secret in the labor market." He had been transferred from the LaBelle satellite office to Immokalee and was working strictly with unemployment, tracking local placements.

August 2, 2012

On July 30, the 856th Quartermaster Support Company, headquartered at Immokalee Airport Commerce Center, the soldiers and their families were honored in a de-

ployment ceremony. Before the end of the week, 40 of their number would be at Fort Dix, NJ. where they would continue training until leaving at the end of the month for Afghanistan.

Approximately 100 kids from the Guadalupe Center's Summer Tutoring and Recreation Program ventured into a world of imagination and wonder recently at C'mon, the Golisano Children's Museum of Naples. Thanks to a generous supporter of the Guadalupe Center, the children spent several hours exploring the museum,

August 9, 2012

Turbo Services, Inc. - an industrial gas turbine company headquartered in Margate that builds the engines that make the power to supply modern life - was the newest tenant at the airport. The company had just opened its new turbo jet test facility at Airport Park.

August 16, 2012

Immokalee voters cast their ballots in the August 14 Primary and District 5 would have a new commissioner. Political newcomer Tim Nance received almost twice the votes as did longtime Collier County Commissioner Jim Coletta for the Republican slot in the November General Election. The final tally was 2,679 for Nance to 1,448 for Coletta.

Mr. Nance will face off with Democrat John Lundin in November.

The Immokalee Area Master Plan straw ballot passed 279 to 137. The hotly contested new Immokalee Area Master Plan, which failed to achieve the required super majority vote by the Collier County Board of Commissioners last December, still had life.

August 23, 2012

Women were strong contributors to Immokalee's economy last year - witness some 20 local businesswomen at the Immokalee Chamber of Commerce networking meeting. The women- mostly owners and/or managers of varied local businesses - gathered to network.

August 30, 2012

In addition to the furious campaigning involved in the Presidential election, controversy over when people can cast their votes was also at the forefront, most dramatically in five South Florida counties: Hendry, Collier, Hillsborough, Hardee and Monroe.

Elections in these five counties have been under federal scrutiny since the 1965 Voter Rights Act, which seeks to protect minority voters from discrimination. No changes in the election process may be made in these counties without the prior approval of the

Department of Justice.

The controversy in this election swirled around the time period for Early Voting.

September 6, 2012

Six pedestrians were struck by a vehicle Sept. 3 in LeHigh Acres. All the injured were from Immokalee. FHP reported that the incident was alcohol-related.

September 13, 2012

Collier County commissioners kicked the Immokalee Master Plan can down the road one more time at their September 11 meeting. After four hours of talking, listening and quick attempts at reevaluating the plan, in the end the board voted 3-2 to continue the final vote until their September 25 meeting.

September 20, 2012

After many months of turmoil, Immokalee's Fire Department is on its way back to wholeness.

After receiving a two-year SAFER grant, IFD restored all operational employees, leaving only administrative positions still being shared with Big Corkscrew Fire Department. Chief Rita Greenberg, Assistant Chief and the training officer are still doing double duty, covering both departments.

Two Immokalee students who were declared winners in the national 2012 Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs' (AFOP) Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Children Essay and Art contest. Eduardo Hernandez - 8th grade student at Immokalee Middle School took third place - Essay (age category 10-13) and Efrén Varela - 11th grade student at Immokalee High School took third place - Art (age category 14-18).

September 27, 2012

A new Immokalee Master Plan still eluded members of the county commission. Proponents of the new plan were still unable to build a majority at the September 25 county commission meeting - supposedly the final opportunity to pass the overplan that would govern Immokalee's future layout. After another three hours of wrangling and going over details, District 5 Commissioner Jim Coletta unwrapped a surprise package - another chance at reviving the plan.

Rick Heers announced his upcoming retirement as the guiding force of iHOPE. Under his guidance, the organization had become one of Immokalee's best known agencies. Since its initial mission, providing decent housing for victims of Hurricane Wilma, the group expanded to supporting local distribution and collaborative leadership, planning, recovery and advocacy. He would still be on the board, however, helping to navigate what will surely still be difficult times ahead

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Submitted photos/Bill Coats RCMA

A very merry Christmas

IMMOKALEE - Some 40 low-income parents received free Christmas toys Wednesday night to give to their children, thanks to benefactors of Redlands Christian Migrant Association, where the children receive child care. Wells Fargo donated \$2,000 and Collier Enterprises donated 150 toys. The toy give-away is an annual tradition at most of the 71 centers operated by Immokalee-based RCMA, and often relies on community donors. This year, the Wells Fargo grant enabled RCMA to double the toy quota at two of its Immokalee centers to two gifts per child.

Above: Onesimo Cruz and Librada Venegas wrap a doll for their 2-year-old daughter Prisilla at an event organized by Redlands Christian Migrant Association for parents.



Submitted photos/Bill Coats RCMA

Eluvia Martin-Mejia wraps a bilingual learning toy for her children Sergio, 4, and Zady, 1. The toy, and more than 100 others, were provided by Redlands Christian Migrant Association through donations from Wells Fargo and Collier Enterprises.



Submitted photos/Bill Coats RCMA

Crispina Garcia wraps a Puppy Learning Car for her 18-month-old daughter Evelyn. Next: a toy cash register for Garcia's 3-year-old Jocelyn. The gifts were provided by Redlands Christian Migrant Association, through donations from Wells Fargo and Collier Enterprises.

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Severe weather awareness week

The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) and the Florida Chapters of the American Red Cross announce the 2013 Severe Weather Awareness Week. This annual public awareness campaign provides an opportunity for teachers to educate students on the importance of being prepared in the event of severe weather. The 2013 Severe Weather Awareness Week in Florida will be Monday, February 11, through Friday, February 15, 2013.

"In the 13th year of the program, the Florida Severe Weather Awareness Week is a reminder of the importance of preparedness year-round for all Floridians," said FDEM Director Bryan W. Koon. "The partnership between the Division and the American Red Cross Chapters throughout Florida is the perfect opportunity to promote a culture of preparedness across Florida. When you educate students on preparedness they get excited and share with their families and they grow up to be prepared."

Severe Weather Awareness Week includes a poster contest for Florida's elementary school students and a video public service announcement (PSA) contest for Florida's middle and high school students. This year, the poster contest will include seven winners selected from across the state. One winner each from middle and high school will be selected for the video PSA contest.

Annual Poster Contest

The poster contest to open to all elementary school students in Florida's including private and charter schools and those enrolled in home-school programs. Post-

ers should feature what severe weather in Florida means to the student. Poster submissions must be postmarked by January 18, 2013 and sent to the Capitol Area Chapter of the Red Cross in Tallahassee. Winners for the contest will be announced Friday, February 1. Details on the contest can be found at www.FloridaDisaster.org/swaw.

Annual Video PSA Contest

The video PSA contest is open to all Florida middle and high school students, including private and charter schools and those enrolled in home-school programs. Entries should be a 30-second public service announcement (PSA) that incorporates a safety or preparedness message relating to the following "Know Your Zone" topics: Flood Zone, Evacuation Zone, or Storm Surge Zone. The winning video will be professionally re-produced for broadcast use by the Division of Emergency Management in their statewide public awareness campaign. Final digital videos should be submitted via the FDEM Video Portal at www.KidsGetAPlan.com. All entries must be uploaded by January 18, 2013. Winning entries will be announced Friday, February 1.

For complete poster and video PSA contest rules and topic information, go to www.FloridaDisaster.org/SWAW or www.KidsGetAPlan.com. As additional details become available regarding prizes and partners, information will be posted on the website.

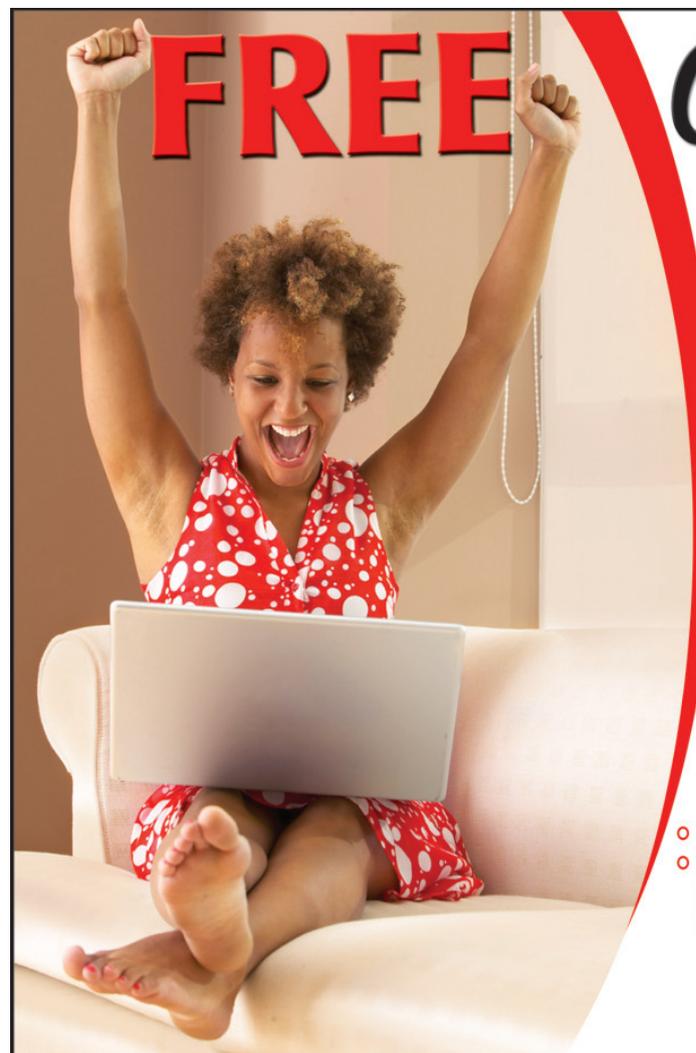
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Submitted photos/Karen Bartlett

Guadalupe Fun Day

Saturday, December 16, at the annual Christmas at Waterside party for Guadalupe kids Santa made an appearance - never too busy for Immokalee kids! The folks from the Guadalupe Center pitched in to make the day a special one with lots of activities and great fun!



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Nominations being accepted for Immigrant Youth Achievement Award

The American Immigration Council is now accepting nominations for their 2013 Immigrant Youth Achievement Award. Each year the Council receives hundreds of nominations from around the country lifting up exceptional young people whose accomplishments amaze us and whose dreams inspire us.

The Immigrant Youth Achievement Award celebrates high-achieving young immigrants, whose personal accomplishments and contributions demonstrate the important impact young immigrants are having on our nation every day. These nominations serve as a reminder that our country was built by hard-working, forward-thinking immigrants and in order for our country to continue to lead, we must invest in the future of today's immigrant youth.

The Immigrant Youth Achievement Award is presented to the winner at the American Immigration Council's annual Washington, DC Immigrant Achievement Awards in the Spring. Past nominees have emigrated from countries such as Ireland, India, Mexico, Cambodia, China, and Cuba and have made contributions in literature, journalism, music, and politics.



Eligibility:

- The honoree must be between the ages of 14 and 25 years of age on April 11, 2013 ;
- The honoree must be an immigrant to the United States, including those who have become naturalized citizens.

The accomplishments of the honoree must reflect more than personal success and should have evidence of a commitment to making a positive impact in their community or the world around them;

The honoree must be willing and available to travel (at the American Immigration Council's expense) to Washington, DC for the awards ceremony on Thursday, April 11, 2013. The American Immigration Council will cover the costs of travel and accommodations for the honoree, and for a parent or guardian if the honoree is a minor;

The honoree will receive a \$1,000 award.

You may attach up to 3 supporting documents, two pages max per document. Supporting documents include resumes, news articles, essays, or letters of recommendation. The winner will be notified and announced on this website by February 15, 2013.

To submit a nomination, please click here to download an application form. Please e-mail all documents to Anh Ngo at ango@immcouncil.org.

Deadline: February 1, 2013 at midnight EST

Community Briefs

Water park open for schools

Sun-N-Fun Lagoon Water Park is open for the Collier County schools' winter holiday break through Sunday, January 6, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The park is offering a special discount for the winter holiday break for Collier County residents. Residents with a Florida driver's license showing a Collier County address will receive \$2 off any entry for those 48-inches or taller (normally \$12). Individuals less than 48-inches tall enter for \$5.50: children three and under enter free. Sales tax added to all fees.

Sun-N-Fun Lagoon Water Park
Facility Attractions

- One waterslide drops into the 1,200 foot long Sunny's Lazy River
- Four water slides lead to a drop pool
- Heated family pool
- Tadpole Pool, a children's wading water area with a fish slide and more
- Turtle Cove, a pool for children ages 5 to 12 years of age with lily pads and ropes for climbing

Group rates, seasonal passes, and party packages are available. Call (239) 252-4073. For more information about Sun-N-Fun Lagoon visit www.napleswaterpark.com or call the Sun-N-Fun Lagoon at (239) 252-4021.

Business & Service Directory

AUCTION

Time for a new car? Check out this auction on January 14, 2013 at 9am

Keith's Towing

925 E. Delaware Ave. • Immokalee, FL
(239) 657-5741

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2MEFM74W3WX696237

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1B3HB48BX7D533259

1999 Toyota

JT3GM84R0X0050390

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Florida

Community Forums Latest Stories

Updated May 7, 2012 at 03:44PM
Area men face federal charges for illegal sale of turtles
Wifredo A. Ferrer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Jason Riley, Deputy Resident Agent in Charge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and Major Jeff Hubert, Regional Commander, South A Region, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC), announced the arrest of defendants James Cheung, 57, of Moore Haven, Florida, and Chris Craig, 36, of Okeechobee, Florida, ... [Read more](#)

Updated May 7, 2012 at 12:16PM
Grievances filed against Glades County Manager
MOORE HAVEN -- Grievances filed April 23 by two Glades County employees

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We look forward to
seeing you there!

