

Celebrate Safe Communities tonight

The public is invited to join the Collier County Sheriff's Office for free, family-friendly events promoting community safety.

"Celebrating Safe Communities" is designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness; generate support for, and participation in, local anti-crime efforts; strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships.

Throughout October CCSO is celebrating the fight against crime

See **Safety** — Page 3

Halloween fun



Saturday, Oct. 26, 5:00-8:00 p.m. come to Halloween Family Fun Safe, non-scary Halloween fun for families. Win prizes, create arts and crafts, face painting, bounce house, music, prizes, and more. Immokalee Community Park, 321 N. 1st Street, Immokalee. The event is free.

For more information, call (239) 657-4449.

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



Fair Food Program earns global recognition

by J Buckley

On Wednesday, in the historic, two-century-old St. James Episcopal Church in New York City, the one-time parish of Eleanor and Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Institute named for them and charged with carrying forth their legacy awarded the Coalition of Immokalee Workers the Four Freedoms Medal.

The prestigious award comes in recognition of the success of the CIW's Fair Food Program, a collaboration with tomato industry leaders and major retailers to ensure respect for human rights in the fields.

The Roosevelt Institute's accolade has previously been given to Nelson Mandela, The Dalai Lama, Carlos Fuentes, and a handful of U.S. presidents.

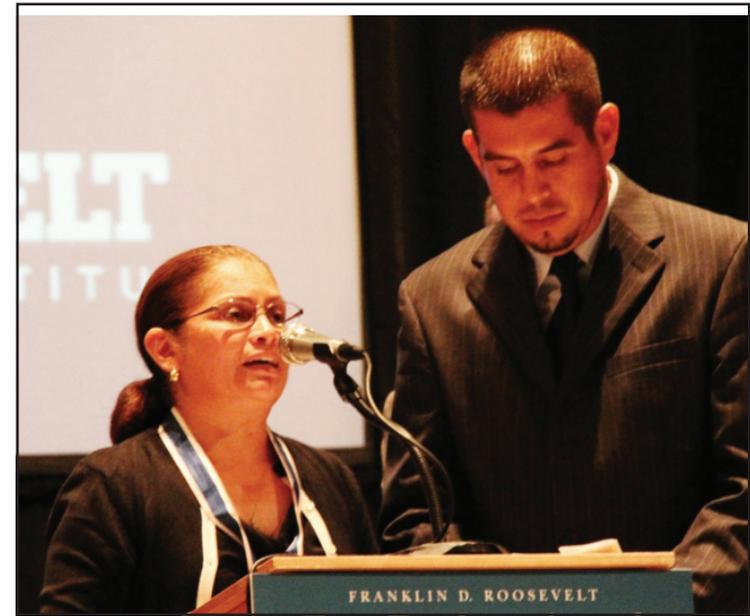
On Sunday, October 27, CIW supporters are invited to gather to celebrate the Four Freedoms Medal with an Ice Cream Social

at St. Monica's Episcopal Church (7070 Immokalee Rd., just east of I-75) at 2:30 p.m. Desserts, coffee and tea will be offered with some words from CIW.

Ice Cream Social attendees are invited to make a tax-deductible donation of \$15 at the door, or a multiple thereof if desired, in honor of Interfaith Action's 15-year anniversary of advancing faith-based support for the CIW's justice campaigns. Please RSVP to Claire@InterfaithAct.org or at (239) 313-1081.

Nely Rodriguez, a deejay at Radio Conciencia, 107.9 FM, and member of the CIW staff, was among those representing the organization at the ceremony. With a regal blue and white ribbon bearing the Four Freedom Medal looped around her shoulders, Nely told the several hundred peo-

See **CIW** — Page 2



Submitted photo/Marley Moynahan
Nely Rodriguez and Gerardo Reyes Chavez of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

Residents protest oil drilling

by J. Buckley

In the wake of revelations that the Immokalee Airport is among several sites in Collier County where interest has emerged for oil exploration, dozens of concerned residents protested in downtown Naples on Saturday.

This summer, the Director of Collier County airports Chris Curry told the Naples Daily News that he had been approached by a company "interested in leasing land on the airport to explore all gas

and mineral rights opportunities."

At the weekend picket, nearly 50 people gathered outside Naples City Hall where speakers took turns denouncing the threats posed on the environment, water, air, wildlife and community health if hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," is to occur in Collier County.

One spirited picketer performed a rap into a megaphone that was critical of drilling; her

See **Fracking** — Page 2



Submitted photo
Protesters challenge fracking plans at Immokalee Airport.

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Students First

by Maribel De Armas

“What are you going to do after high school?” This is a question that most high school seniors get pretty used to answering on a regular basis. Some have known the answer since their younger years based on their answer to the similar childhood question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Others know the direction they’re headed, but still have some exploring to do. Yet others might struggle with an answer. And that’s okay...there is still time in the school year for decisions to be made. So I want to take this opportunity to point out some post-graduation resources available that can provide some helpful information to students and parents.



selors are a wealth of information and they are ready to help students prepare to take their next steps, be it college, a technical education, the military, or straight into a job. We encourage all of our students, but especially our high school seniors, to take time to sit and talk with their school counselor.

Our school district website (www.collierschools.com) is your next stop for a whole lot of college and career readiness information, including financial aid options. The student portion of the website – you can get to it by clicking the blue “students” circle icon on the top of the school district website – is where you’ll easily find all of these great resources. You’ll see some icons under the bulletin board that will guide you to the various topic areas. “Scholarship Information” will lead you to financial aid tutorials and information, including a place to search for current scholarships available to students. The “Career and Technical Education” icon will take you to a page with information on college and career planning, our high school career academies, and industry certifica-

tions. And, the “College Information” icon is the place to find even more great resources.

So, we’ve got school counselors ready to help, a website full of information, and now we also have two upcoming events that you’ll want to make sure to put on your calendars. The first is the Infinite Scholars Program Scholarship Fair and it will be held from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. on November 12th and 13th at Germain Arena (11000 Everblades Parkway, in Estero). All high school seniors are invited to this free event where more than 30 universities and educational providers will be on-hand to offer college admissions guidance and potential scholarships to qualified students. Immokalee High School seniors...talk to your school counselor to find out more and register to attend. There are some documents, like transcripts

and such, that you’ll need your school counselor’s help with, as well. You can also visit www.collierschools.com and click on the Infinite Scholars icon in the “What’s New” section on the right of the home page for a flyer with more information and the list of schools/organizations attending.

Finally...and this one is a few months down the road...Immokalee High School will be hosting a Financial Aid Information Night from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. on January 27, 2014. We’ll share some more details on this event as we get a bit closer, but know that it will provide information on federal grants, student loans and scholarships, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The future can be a little scary for soon-to-be graduates, but we’re here to help in any way we can.

CIW

Continued From Page 1

ple gathered about the difference made in the lives of female farmworkers under the Fair Food Program, whereby major retailers agree to stop buying from tomato operations where severe violations occur.

“With this program, the women who pick tomatoes to support their families no longer have to leave their dignity in the fields. Women now have a voice and a way to stop the harassment and abuse that happened for too long.”

Under the Fair Food Program, which began in 2010 with participation from a majority of Florida’s tomato farms, four crew leaders with long histories of sexual harassment or labor abuse have been terminated. Supervisors at those companies attended training to address sexual harassment and ensure general compliance with Fair Food Program requirements to protect workers’ dignity and rights.

In the group’s early days, in the mid-1990s, CIW members met weekly at a room in Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, where they would talk about, and distribute to fellow farmworkers, copies of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Strikingly, among its preamble is, in fact, the essential Four Freedoms envisioned by Franklin D. Roosevelt -- freedom of speech and worship, freedom from want and fear -- for which the award recently bestowed on the CIW is named.

Gerardo Reyes Chavez, a longtime CIW member and La Tuya deejay also present at the ceremony, said: “We hope that one day every farm worker in this nation is treated with respect and paid in a fair way for the heavy work that they do every day. We hope that the buyers of tomatoes continue to work with us to improve conditions even more. For the first time, we have been able to have a voice at the table through our Fair Food Program, which consists of a wage increase for workers and a human-rights-based code of conduct, applicable throughout the Florida tomato industry. We have agreements with 11 corporations who buy tomatoes in Florida, including McDonald’s, Burger King and Subway. Now we have a voice at the table and can talk about eliminating the roots of the problems that we face, not only in economic terms but also in terms of the balance of power.”

Fracking

Continued From Page 1

chorus proclaimed, “What the frack is going on with all this fracking going on? I think we need some facts to come to light. I know we want our energy, but nothing ever comes for free, I think my water’s on fire tonight.”

The last line refers to a phenomenon experienced in communities across the U.S. where fracking has been practiced, as powerfully captured in the documentary “Gasland,” which is available for free in the Collier County Library system. In the expose film, faucet water in homes throughout the country is so contaminated that when residents put lit matches to the water stream from their kitchen sink, time and again they horrifyingly watch as the running water literally ignites.

Opponents to a plan proposed in nearby Golden Gate Estates argue that there has never been a Collier County wildcat drilling operation this close to a large residential area and that despite advances in oil drilling technology – or perhaps because oil drilling has become so much more complex – accidents do happen.

The company’s permit safety plan identifies 31 residences within 3,000 feet of the proposed wellhead.

Dr. Karen Dwyer is a retired Naples high school teacher who helped to organize the rally and the march of protestors afterward down ritzy 5th Avenue. Dwyer, a member of the Stone Crab Alliance, decried the current proposal to drill in the Big Cypress

Swamp watershed and in Immokalee. She said, “his is about more than just one oil well. This is about the cumulative effect of hundreds of wells that will follow. New oil drilling will contribute to climate change and endanger water, wetlands, wildlife, and communities.”

She also spoke of a local initiative to urge county officials to forbid fracking. “The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Collier Enterprises, and Hughes Oil tell us they don’t plan to frack. Now is the time to hold them to their promise -- with an Oil Drilling Ordinance. We’re calling on Commissioners Hiller, Henning, Fiala, Coyle, and Nance to adopt the following Ordinance: ‘Collier County shall protect the health, safety, and welfare of citizens by banning hydraulic fracturing,’ she said.

Activists point out that in the event of an oil leak, spill, blowout or truck accident, local well water and/or public water supplies would become contaminated. According to Preserve Our Paradise, a grassroots advocacy group that opposes planned drilling, “The public may not get timely notice of a leak because Collier County does not test water. In addition, drilling and production will generate waste waters containing salt water and other chemicals which could compromise our water supplies.”

Preserve Our Paradise’s website is chock full of information about proposed drilling in Collier County: PreserveOurParadise.org

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To Submit News

The Immokalee Bulletin welcomes submissions from its readers. Opinions, calendar items, story ideas and photographs are welcome. Call (239) 657-6000 to reach our newsroom. The deadline for all news items is 11 a.m. on Monday prior to the following Thursday’s publication.
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Our Purpose...

The Immokalee Bulletin is published by Independent Newspapers of Florida. Independent is owned by a unique trust that enables this newspaper to pursue a mission of journalistic service to the citizens of the community. Since no dividends are paid, the company is able to thrive on profit margins below industry standards. All after-tax surpluses are reinvested in Independent’s mission of journalistic service, commitment to the ideals of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and support of the community’s deliberation of public issues.

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- To use our opinion pages to facilitate community debate, not to dominate it with our own opinions.
- To disclose our own conflicts of interest or potential conflicts to our readers.
- 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.

Increased demand for Salvation Army services

(October 10, 2013 - Naples, Fla.) The Salvation Army in Collier County has experienced a significant increase in the number of people coming to their Naples and Immokalee offices for food and financial assistance.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are weeks away, yet their Food Pantry shelves are already bare..

"We have already seen a 15 percent spike in requests for food and assistance with utility bills since October 1 compared to the same time last year," said Major Dan Proctor, Naples Regional Coordinator.

"The Salvation Army will be prepared to help even more people, not just during this temporary government shutdown, but during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays through generous community support."

The Salvation Army in Collier County served nearly 48,000 residents last year.

To make a donation today that will help someone tomorrow, visit www.Salvation-ArmyNaples.org and click on the "Donate Now" button or send check payable to The Salvation Army Naples, Memo Line: Social Services to P.O. Box 8209, Naples, Florida 34101.

Learn about The Salvation Army's programs at www.SalvationArmyNaples.org, on Facebook search for SalvationArmyNaples, and follow them on Twitter: @SalArmyNaples.

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Letter to the Editor

Goodbye to Immokalee

After almost 10 years in Immokalee I would like to say good bye to all the organizations, friends and people of Immokalee. My husband Richard Rice and I will be moving to Kansas City Missouri. We have wonderful memories of Immokalee and we feel that we have put our efforts and time to be part of good changes in the community. We will miss you all. Our children and grandchildren are waiting for us. My last day with the University of Florida (IFAS) will be October 31st, 2013. Richard is waiting in Missouri.

We love you,
Richard and Marcela Rice

Safety

Continued From Page 1

by hosting events and activities that bring neighborhoods, communities, businesses, and law enforcement together.

Festivities include cookouts, refreshments, pony rides, bounce houses, face painting and rock wall climbing.

All of the events are free and open to the public.

In Immokalee the event takes place Thursday, October 24, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Crestview Park Apartments, 715 Crestview Drive.

Crime Prevention deputies and McGruff the Crime Dog will be on hand to talk to parents and youngsters about Neighborhood Watch, stranger danger and gun safety.

Deputies will host a bicycle safety course and offer pedestrian safety tips. Food and refreshments will be provided.

Obituaries

Maria L. Jaques, 63

IMMOKALEE — Maria L. Jaques, after a brief illness, left us to be with the Lord, Oct. 6, 2013 with her family by her side. She was born Aug. 25, 1950.

She leaves behind her husband, Alberto Jaques; three sons, Alberto Jaques Jr., Juan and Jose Jaques; three daughters, Maria T. Jaques, Griselda and Angie Jaques, 21 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by son, Demetrio Jaques in 2009.

A viewing was held on Tue., Oct. 22, 2013, at Brister Funeral Home Chapel, 6 - 8 p.m.

A graveside service was held Wed., Oct. 23, 2013 at Lake Trafford Memorial Gardens.

Register now for RCMA Head Start

The Migrant Head Start Program will begin taking registration applications October 29 and October 31 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays the staff will be available until 6 p.m.

Accepting children ages six weeks to five years. RCMA offers social, dental and health services as well as language, vision and hearing screenings available for eligible children and specializes in working with children with disabilities and their families.

RCMA encourages and loves parent participation. The program participates in the USDA food program and provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack.

Requirements: state regulated immunization record; most recent child physical exam (within the past 12 months); proof of income and proof of migrant mobility within the past 12 months.

For more information call or come by: Diana, Lourdes or Blanca at Rollason Infant CDC, 402 W. Main Street, 658-3597 or 658-3598;

Sanada, Hilda or Florencia at ICCDC, 123 N. 4th Street, 658-3537 or 658-3538;

Gabby, Kristina or Marisol at Farm Worker Village C. 2225 Chadwick Circle, 658-3625 or 658-3696;

Lupe or Thelma at Farmworker Village B, 2134 Bell Circle, 658-3620 or 658-3621.

Alico sells controlling interest

734 Agriculture, a private investment company owned and controlled by Remy W. Trafelet and George R. Brokaw, in partnership with Arlon Group, a global food and agriculture investment firm founded by Continental Grain Company, have entered into definitive agreements under which an affiliate of 734 Agriculture will acquire approximately 50.5 percent of Alico's outstanding voting stock from Atlantic Blue Group, a family owned holding company.

This all cash transaction values the majority stake in Alico at \$37 per share, for a

total purchase price of \$137.8 million. The transaction should close by the end of the year.

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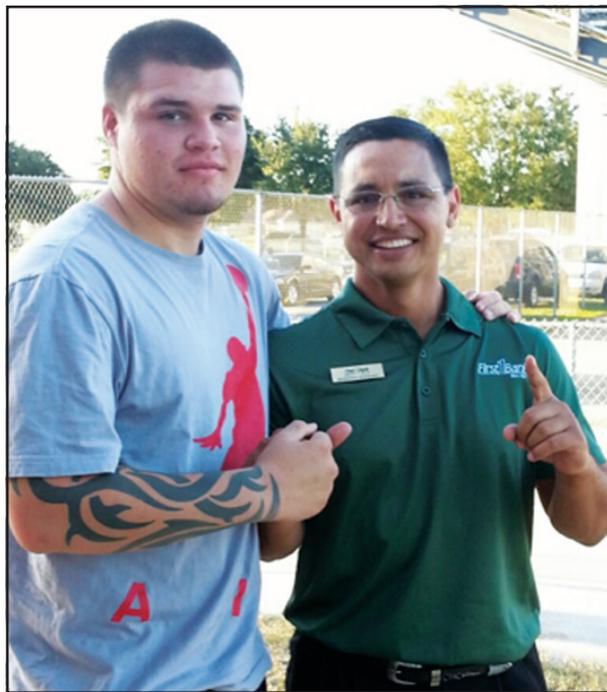
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Chamber recognition

The Immokalee Chamber and First Bank, would like to recognize Aaron Contreras for his hard work and dedication on and off the football field. Mr. Contreras has been volunteering and helping the youth of Immokalee. (left) Aaron Contreras, (right) Bernardo Barnhart, President of Immokalee Chamber/First Bank.



Submitted photo



Submitted photo

Sweet Surprise

The Immokalee Indians football team got a huge boost when, just before the game with Naples October 11 was to begin, they had to make a last minute wardrobe change. They swapped their traditional red and white jerseys for black ones, a wish from the seniors on the team. The wish was made known to Bernardo Barnhardt, who wasted no time in getting down to business. He contacted Jaime Weisinger of Lipman Produce, who immediately agreed to make the donation for the jerseys. Coach Dombrowski and Athletics Director Tony Allen supplied the pants to complete the uniform, which will be worn once a year - choice of the senior team members.

Supporting our Indians

The Immokalee Chamber of Commerce would like to recognize the Immokalee Warriors for their hard work and dedication to Immokalee Football program. Left to right, President Rick Contreras, Bernardo Barnhart Vice President at First Bank, and Chairman Andrew Perez. The club was founded by Mr. Contreras, class of 83, and Perez, class of 87, to help with anything that is needed for the Football team. If anybody would like to help these fine gentlemen and join the Warriors, please contact Tony Allen at the High School at 239-377-1818.

Sport Shorts

Immokalee Little League Umpire Clinic

Little League is starting the season on a good note. If you are interested in being a umpire this season, there will two umpire clinics held in Immokalee at the Little League park. First clinic will be held on Saturday, October, 26, 2013 between the hours of 8 a.m.- 3 p.m. with a break for lunch. The second clinic will on November 16, 2013 same time and place. There will be no charge for the clinic and will be available from the age of 16 years old and up. If you are interested please give us a call at the numbers provided. This year will be a very good year and with your help, Immokalee Little League and our youth will shine. If you are interested in volunteering, please give us a call at the numbers provided. Thank You for your support.

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Submitted photo

Members of the Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida Project Hope Sewing Circle display some of the bags they recently made in their sewing bee.

Sewing Circle brings hope to breast cancer patients

Amid the steady hum of sewing machines and the buzz of friendly chatter, members of the Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida Project Hope Sewing Circle enjoyed an old-time sewing bee for a great cause, Oct. 5.

The women first learned about Project Hope through the Healthcare Network's affiliation with Susan G. Komen for the Cure Southwest Florida. The project provides volunteers with the materials to create hand-crafted inspirational tote bags for women newly-diagnosed with breast cancer. Once completed, the bags are filled with information and comforting items to let recipients know they are not alone in their new journey.

According to Karen Smith, Healthcare Network Naples Medical Operations Manager, Project Hope volunteers can create the bags at home, but the group decided to have an old-fashioned sewing bee.

"One of our volunteers is a breast cancer survivor so this project was especially close to her heart," said Smith, "It's more fun to do things together and since sewing machines aren't as common as they used to be, this was an opportunity for those of us who have them to share our skills with others."

Veteran seamstress and breast cancer survivor Mary Ann Sloan acted as group instructor, navigating the sewing pattern instructions to ensure all the bags were put together correctly. Shirley Garypie provided volunteers with an amazing luncheon in a flourish of pink.

"The bags turned out beautifully and the messages on them are so inspirational," said

Smith. "Being diagnosed with breast cancer is debilitating for any woman, but it is especially difficult for our patients, most of whom are already struggling with financial and social issues. When mom is sick, it affects the whole family."

Annually, the Healthcare Network provides primary care for 36,000 people in Southwest Florida (25,000 are children) at 13 medical and dental service locations throughout Collier County, including the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile®.

For more information on the Healthcare Network go to www.healthcareswfl.org or contact Kaydee Tuff at (239) 658-3116, ktuff@healthcareswfl.org.

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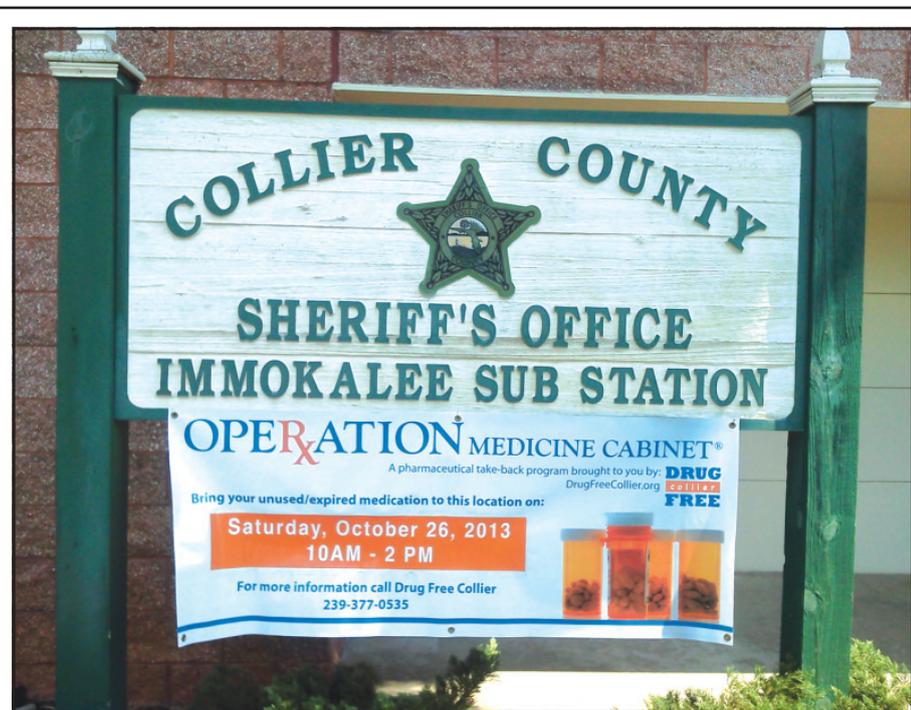
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Operation Medicine Cabinet Offers Safe Disposal Of Unwanted Drugs

The Collier County Sheriff's Office, in partnership with Drug Free Collier, will hold a countywide Operation Medicine Cabinet initiative Saturday, Oct. 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Eleven drop-off sites throughout Collier County will provide residents the opportunity to easily dispose of unwanted medications. You can dispose of your unwanted prescription drugs, at the Collier County Sheriff's Office Immokalee Substation, 112 S. First St. For more information, contact Drug Free Collier at 239.377.0535, or visit www.drugfreecollier.org.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Tuesday, November 26, 2013 has been set as the date for the Collier County State Legislative Delegation's public hearing for local bills. All proposals for the local bills are expected to be presented at the hearing and must be drafted in bill form. Ten (10) copies (NO staples) of the local bill should be submitted to the office of Representative Matt Hudson no later than noon on Tuesday, November 12, 2013. If you have any questions or would like to be placed on the agenda for the delegation hearings, please contact Representative Hudson at (239) 417-6270 or email sheila.jackson@myfloridahouse.gov. 455275 TB 10/24/2013

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Community Briefs

Thanksgiving food giveaway

Allen Chapel AMC Church is planning its second annual Thanksgiving Giveaway and Outreach Ministry for Sunday, November 24. Last year 120 turkeys were distributed along with over 200 bags of rice and beans.

The church needs the community's support. This year their goal is to give 150 turkeys away. Please send your donations to 208 S. 3rd Street, PO Box 477, Immokalee Florida 33413. "The Church that is intentional about ministry." Pastor Lori Snell.

Public invited to iGeneration board meeting

The public is invited to the Board Meeting for iGeneration Empowerment of Collier at Immokalee. Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. Community members, current students' families and families who are considering advancing the education of their students are welcome. There is open enrollment for all Immokalee transfer or new students. iGeneration Empowerment Academy of Collier at Immokalee: 1411 Lake Trafford Road (corner of 29 & Lake Trafford Road, next to the First Baptist Church).

For more information call Synthia LaFontaine, Campus Director, at 239-658-0690.

iTECH class open

Machining class, 1500 hours, Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-2:15 p.m. Class begins on or around December 2, 2013 at the Immokalee Technical Center, 508 North 9th Street, (239) 377-9900. Program supported by: Arthrex, US Sugar, Haynes Corporation, Shaw Development. For more information about our graduation rates, costs and other important information, please visit our website at http://www.itech.edu/gainful_employment.html

After school Nutrition Program

After school Nutrition Program

The Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board, Inc. announces the sponsorship of the Afterschool Nutrition Program, a subcomponent of the Child Care Food Program. This program is designed primarily to provide nutritious snacks and suppers to children in afterschool programs. Snacks and suppers are available at no separate charge to the children at the sites listed below:

iGeneration Charter School 1411 Lake Trafford Rd, Immokalee.

Community Center 321 North 1st Street,

School Briefs

Comment on educational standards

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) recently held three public meetings regarding Florida mathematics and English language arts Standards. In addition to the meetings, the FLDOE is providing other opportunities for input via a Website: www.flstandards.org and Email: flstandards@fldoe.org.

Immokalee. Sports Complex 505 Escambia St, Immokalee.

Running Club Comes to Immokalee

The Gulf Coast Runners Youth Team is creating a running branch in Immokalee. The GCR youth team is open to all young runners 7-17. Most of our members are in elementary or middle school. We train for both fitness and competition year round. Runners have to learn skills such as self-discipline, motivation, and setting and achieving goals. The GCR youth team wants to give every young athlete who has the desire to run, the opportunity to run. If you are interested in joining the running club- there are practices are twice a week, Monday and Wednesday, located at the Immokalee High School Track at 5:00pm. There is no cost to join-get involved! If you have any questions Hugo Gijon (239) 273-3171.

Parks and Rec launches web site

Collier County Parks and Recreation recently launched its mobile web site.

Access www.collierparks.com on your smart phone or tablet to view the mobile device-friendly site. Add the Collier County Parks and Recreation icon to your home screen to access quickly the information you need to enjoy all the recreational amenities offered by Collier County Parks and Recreation.

For more information, contact Parks and Recreation Administration at (239) 252-4000.

Childcare available

A Step Up Immokalee, operated by Collier Child Care Resources, Inc., provides childcare for teen parents, school district teachers and staff, county workers. They care for infants to four years of age Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. with extended hours till 3 p.m. There is a warm and inviting atmosphere with nurturing childcare providers, free childcare tuition to members of the Teenage parenting Program. Located at 701 Immokalee Drive. Phone 239-377-1172; cell 239-980-9021 or go to www.collierchildcare.org.

South Park closed for construction

Immokalee South Park, located at 418

School Drive, is closed. A new community park building will be under construction throughout this summer and fall. Construction is expected to be complete by January 2014.

The new building will house programs such as voluntary pre-kindergarten, after school programs, summer camp, senior programs, arts and crafts, and special events. The building will have classrooms and a community room for residents to enjoy. For more information, contact Annie Alvarez at (239) 867-4121 ext 206, or (239) 252-4449.

Breastfeeding mothers group

Learn about the many benefits of breastfeeding, get advice and tips, speak with

breast-feeding peer counselors Myda and Noemi, meet and share experiences with other breastfeeding mothers. Pregnant women welcome.

Come to the Collier County Department of Health Room 133 every Tuesday from 10-11:30 a.m. For additional information call 239-252-7347 or 239-252-7312.

Commissioner Nance office open

Collier Commissioner Tim Nance opened his new office in the Immokalee Government Center, 106 South First Street. Regular office hours for Nance at the government center will be established soon.



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Pathways to Success: Bernard Barnhardt's enthusiasm and style are hard to miss

by **Patty Brant**
Immokalee Bulletin

This series of articles will be dedicated to recognizing the courage, foresight and entrepreneurship many local residents have shown in their success stories. It is also hoped that their stories will serve as beacons for those still plotting their course in life, especially the young people.

You can't be in Immokalee very long without knowing who Bernardo Barnhardt is. From adults to small children, his enthusiasm and energetic style is hard to miss.

Raised in Immokalee, Bernardo's parents were farmworkers and during his early years Bernardo also worked in the fields picking tomatoes and pulling plastic during school breaks.

The experience taught him about hard work; it taught him to treat people right; taught him that there are all kinds of different people on the farm and in the larger world.

He learned to appreciate people. He learned that everybody has something to "bring to the table."

His family and working in the fields taught him to have respect for others. Working hard inspired motivation and drive in him. Bernardo said his parents consistently emphasized hard work and school - virtues that, at age 35, he still embraces.

He graduated from Immokalee High School in 1997. He had been a successful athlete (football and soccer), successful in the Drama Club and BETA.

He planned to go to college, but found he didn't have the grades for a serious scholarship.

He admits that he had a great time in high school - "I did it all. I was a good student, but didn't get good test grades." He had a low ACT, so no scholarships except \$100 Cinco de Mayo.

Depressed but determined, he wound up going to Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, taking remedial classes. It was a beginning and he was on his way! He was excited about life, but life was about to deal him a very rough hand.

That first semester he studied like crazy, relying on that steady work ethic of his family. He was working hard and soon started losing weight. He had scratches all over his body.

He was declining physically, but would not go to the doctor till he was satisfied he passed all his remedial courses. It was a personal victory and, he recalls, "It felt so good."

When he went home on break in December 1997 he went to the doctor and, age 20, was diagnosed with lymphoma.

The doctor told him he needed to stay home for care, but Bernardo was determined to go back to school.

He was adamant, "I'll come home when I flunk out."

His brother came up to Gainesville and

started school also, so he wasn't completely alone.

He lost weight (he was down to 129 pounds) and his hair from the effects of chemotherapy - six hours every Friday. That gave him the weekend to recover and hit the ground running again on Monday.

He found the scratching was due to the disease's effects on his immune system.

All that time, he never stopped attending classes.

When the chemo was over, radiation treatments began - every day at 7 a.m. He even had his treatments increased to twice a day to complete the cycle faster.

During that time Bernardo said he started praying and also learned "the positive of positive words."

Finally, on December 14, 2001, he called his mother to come pick him up at school. It wasn't till they arrived that he told them he was in remission and would be graduating in three days.

He earned his degree in finance at the University of Florida, with a minor in agribusiness.

Coming home to Immokalee, he got a banking job from Steve Price Sr. at Florida Community Bank.

He remains in banking, just recently moving to First Bank of Clewiston to set up its Immokalee Branch, a good fit with his core values - faith in God.

Bernardo continues to write his own story. Beginning with tough times and the hard, unappreciated work in the fields, through a personal and physical crisis that could have easily ended it all, to marrying his high school sweetheart and having a beautiful family, Bernardo said he has learned from it all.

Kids today are different, he points out, in that technology - social media - never stops 24/7. "It's like high school pressure is magnified through their whole life for all to see."

He said they are not exposed to a strong work ethic these days and want it all, easy.

He's trying to counteract today's culture with his own three small sons by immersing them in nature and sports, with a healthy dose of family love.

Technology is important, he knows, but it's more important for people - families especially - to get to know each other, to become a team and learn to pull their own weight. He believes in more religion, more family.

His philosophy is "You gotta live good. Wake up and be happy. It's a choice."

Look around Immokalee. You don't have to look far. You'll find Bernardo, just doing what he does.

He cooks spaghetti for the Indians on game night, as Steve Price and so many others used to for him when he was on the team. He announces at the Pop Warner football games.

He is president and chief cheerleader for the Chamber of Commerce. Promoting Immokalee is his oxygen.

He hopes that in the future today's kids

will get an education, come back as business people, teachers, bankers, firefighters, law enforcement officers living here. His desire is that they begin giving back with energy and kindness to the community that gave them their start.

Looking back at his growing years in Immokalee there are so many people Bernardo sees helping him through: Linda Ayers, Cecil Howard, Steve Price Sr., and many more.

These are the hometown people who invested in him.

As a banker, Bernardo understands the importance of investing.

He knows it's even more important to invest in people.

Today, when he's on the Indians football field, Bernardo said, "It takes me back to that kid I was before cancer, to a fresh beginning." In Immokalee you're always connected, he said, "I've been blessed with people."

The goal he reaches for every day is to impact somebody. Aware of his energetic style, he knows that others feed off his energy and that's okay with him. It's part of how he gives back.

"We're all a big team," he said, "Immokaleeans grow up with tough skins and drive."

Bernardo had the will, the drive to achieve

his goals - goals that are forever entwined with his home.

"Immokalee is my passion, my home," he says proudly.



Bernardo Barnhardt

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