On September 10, 2017 Hurricane Irma rolled into Collier County with 140 MPH winds, leaving behind a path of destruction. Collier visitors and residents can still recall their own personal anticipation, preparation, survival, and recovery from the storm. As everyone prepared for the safety and wellbeing of their own families and property, they may not have realized the role that local government plays in that same mission. The amazing foresight, planning and actions of County leaders, and Collier County’s Emergency Management Division served to be instrumental in reducing the community’s risk of life and property during that disaster.

Now, here we are ten (10) months later. Look at how many blue tarps are still out there. How many people do you know of who are still waiting for repairs, or maybe have just recently had them completed? And, here we are, facing the 2018 hurricane season already, much affected by the events of last year. The new cycle begins: Anticipation. Preparation. Survival. Recovery.

The programs and services of CHS directly and positively impact the citizens of Collier. We are privileged to be able to offer grants programs that:

- Mitigated flooding from storms throughout the county by improving the storm water systems
- Provided generators for youth shelters, storm shelters and senior facilities
- Built new homes that are safe shelters
- Support volunteers conducting wellness checks, and distributing needed supplies
- Paid for insurance deductibles, and other storm related expenses
- Assured home bound seniors were properly placed for the duration
- Replaced substantially damaged manufactured homes
- Repaired homes damaged by the storm

This issue is dedicated to the impacts and response to Hurricane Irma, specifically, and to disasters, in general. In CHS we are honored to be in a position to provide public services that play some part in the resilience of our community. Stay safe.

Kim Grant, Director and Lisa Oien, Senior Grant Coordinator
Collier County Among Top Counties Impacted

State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery
Ranking of Collier County Impacts

The State of Florida Action Plan contains a significant amount of information concerning the impacts of the storm. This information helps us view the impact to our County against the others considered most impacted by Irma. Monroe County was the most impacted. From this summary, it is clear Collier ranks near the top of the 10 counties identified as most impacted.

Collier County ranks 1st in
• operating more shelters than any other county in response to Hurricane Irma and provided the 4th highest number of total sheltered
• experiencing the highest sustained winds of 99-142 mph, recorded during Hurricane Irma
• experiencing the highest maximum storm surge

Collier County ranks 2nd in
• total mobile home FEMA Real Property verified losses
• the number of parcels located in flood zones
• the number of applicants with losses in flood zones
• total housing assistance provided to those with flood losses

Collier County ranks 3rd in
• percentage of State Damaged Home Ownership & Rental Properties/Units with high Damage level impacted by Hurricane Irma
• number of insurance claims still open
• the number of residential structures in flood zones
• the number of applicants for FEMA Housing Assistance in flood zones
• FEMA estimated damage to homes in flood zones
• unmet estimated needs in flood zones
• the number of National Flood Insurance Program claims submitted

Collier County ranks 4th in
• insurance claims submitted due to Hurricane Irma
• total HO Units with property damage over $20,000
• total properties with high damage

• Collier County ranks 5th in the total NFIP paid

• Collier County was in the top 5 counties with total FEMA verified losses exceeding $10 million

• Collier County ranks 6th in number of both NFIP building and content payments

• Collier County ranks 7th in FEMA Amount Received by those making less than 50% low- to moderate-income

Naples/Collier County homeless population increased 29%. This was more than any other regional Continuum of Care (CoC) area impacted by Hurricane Irma.

Additional Impact Information
Excerpted from a memo developed by Lincoln Price

Collier County has 244 individuals that are under Group Flood Insurance, and is issued by the National Flood Insurance Program when an individual applies for FEMA’s Individual Assistance. Group Flood Insurance is not the same as a regular flood insurance policy, and the coverage amounts are not as high. Individuals who receive Group Flood Insurance are encouraged to purchase a regular flood insur-
ance policy before the Group Flood Insurance lapses. If a regular flood insurance policy is not pur- chased for the structure, then the structure (not the individual) will be ineligible for FEMA assistance in future which leads to economic and housing vulnerability during future natural disasters. (Data provided by the NFIP Headquarters, March 2018)

According to early estimates from First Data Corp., the Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island area suffered Hurricane Irma’s worst consumption decline statewide, with a 79 percent decrease from September 8 through Sept. 10, 2017. In comparison, Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach declined 43.5 percent, Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford dropped by 26.7 percent, and businesses statewide declined 45.6 percent. Collier County areas that were slower to recover were gasoline, groceries and restaurants. By Sept. 14, 2017, hotels and building materials establishments had recovered to their reported Aug. 25, 2017, consumption levels. As of Sept. 28, 2017, over 70 structures were destroyed and more than 1,000 reportedly incurred major damage from Hurricane Irma.

The hurricane’s impact had a widespread effect on businesses, leading to 127 Collier County firms receiving approvals for $11.64 million in U.S. Small Business Administration Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) and Business Disaster Loans as of Dec. 14, in addition to 68 Collier County businesses receiving approval for $2,504,000 in state Emergency Disaster Loans through Florida Gulf Coast University’s Florida Small Business Development Center. (Countywide, there are 40,670 businesses.) The EIDL loan deadline is June 11, 2018, and numbers will continue to increase. The DEO’s Action Plan identifies significant unmet economic injury needs that Collier County communities are experiencing.

The latest state employment report showed that Collier County lost more than 5,000 jobs over the past year, and Christopher Westley, director of the Regional Economic Research Institute at FGCU, told the Naples Daily News, in a story published on March 12, 2018, that much of that could be linked to Hurricane Irma.

**General CHS Prep/Response**

CHS is responsible for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a storm or any other disaster event. One focus for us is our senior clients. The case managers (Debbi, Carlton and Ivonne) and the meal site team (Danielle and Bonnie Lee) contact every single one of our seniors in advance of an event. We know where they will be and that it is a safe location, how to reach them, and, if needed, we work with them to find a safe location to ride out the storm. As soon as the event is over, we contact all of them (driving out to their homes, if needed) to make sure they are ok, and get supplies and services to them.

Every staff member is assigned a pre – during – and post disaster duty. Some staff are assigned to the emergency operations center to coordinate activities as well as to staff the special needs and regular phone banks. Others are at shelters, distributing supplies, or responding to any other needs. Everyone pitches in, while also balancing the preparation and care of their own homes and families.

We also plan for recovery of our business operations by ensuring the facilities are secured, that all staff are ready, and that communication plans are in place. We determine a location where work can be conducted if our main location is damaged or otherwise uninhabitable. Our goal is to get back to the regular functions of government as quickly as possible, after ensuring the safety of our clients, and each other.

*Kim Grant, Director and Louise Pelletier, Manager, Senior Programs & Social Services*
SHIP Program Helps Collier Residents Rebuild and Repair After Irma

Our community is still suffering the effects of Hurricane Irma. After the storm, CHS shifted all unencumbered State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funds to provide greater assistance to homeowners in Collier. SHIP funds are distributed on a first-come, first-qualified basis, and are based on an extensive income qualification process. To ensure we reached those most in need, staff performed outreach in the hardest hit areas such as Everglades City, Chokoloskee, and Immokalee. Temporary offices were established to assist in the application processes, and coordinated with local organizations most familiar with the existing concerns and needs. The applicants were and are tremendously grateful for our efforts!

82-year-old Naples resident, Mr. B evacuated during Hurricane Irma. He returned home to find his roof and screen enclosures had been severally damaged by the storm. Mr. B did not have homeowner’s insurance, and did not receive assistance from FEMA or qualify for a Small Business Administration loan. Because of his modest monthly Social Security income, and a few investment assets, he qualified as a low-income applicant for SHIP Disaster Recovery Assistance. Mr. B wrote a letter to CHS expressing how thankful he was for our staff who helped secure the money needed to repair the damage, "I appreciate all the work all of you put in to get my application completed and paid. I received the check and put it in my bank. This has made a huge difference for my finances."

Damage caused by Hurricane Irma

Mr. W, a 59-year-old Naples resident, owned a manufactured home that was destroyed by Hurricane Irma. Mr. W’s only source of income is SSI therefore, he falls in the very low income category. His home was “Red Tagged” by the county immediately after the disaster. Since he doesn’t have the repayment capacity to get a loan to replace his home, the SHIP program will help him. LeeCorp will provide the site evaluation and demolition to his property. To assist as many SHIP grant households as possible, LeeCorp and Prestige have lowered their prices and profit margins. Christopher Lee, President of LeeCorp said, “I live in Naples. Collier County is my home, so we are happy to do whatever we can to help the people in our community recover from this disaster.”

In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, CHS conducted a complete review of the following SHIP Disaster Applications:

- 61 Disaster Mitigation
- 34 Demo and Replacement
- 44 Owner Occupied Rehab

Lisa Carr, Senior Grant Coordinator, Don Luciano, Grant Coordinator, Elizabeth Hernandez, Grant Support Specialist, Leslie Davis, Accountant

Before and after of damaged roof and porch
Mitigation Diminishes Disastrous Impacts

According to the National Institute of Building Sciences, $6 can be saved in future disaster costs for every $1 spent on hazard mitigation.

The management of emergencies is a four-phase year-round process of preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. A combination of local government outreach and local media serve to inform the public of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. The lesser recognized phase of emergency management is mitigation.

Effective mitigation efforts can break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction and repeated damage.

Examples of Mitigation activities include:

- Public Education to reduce loss of life and property
- Enforcing stringent building codes
- Improvements to Critical infrastructure
- Protection of resources
- Relocate homes or businesses in flood-prone areas
- Identify, utilize and harden Shelters and safe rooms
- Facilitate Intelligence sharing
- Harden power distributions systems
- Emergency power availability
- Identifying and mapping hazard zones
- Floodplain management plan
- Development of hazard specific evacuation routes
- Management of data regarding incidents to support strategic planning and analysis

Collier County has a multi-jurisdictional Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS). The strategy serves as a tool to direct the County in their ongoing efforts to reduce vulnerability to the impacts produced by both natural and man-made hazards. The Collier County LMS can be viewed at: https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/your-government/divisions-a-e/emergency-management/library-cmte-reference/local-mitigation-strategy-2015

The Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group (LMSWG) serves as the policy development body of the Local Mitigation Strategy Program. The purpose of the group is to examine proposed mitigation projects and prioritize each in accordance with the strategy. The scored projects are placed on the LMS list. This is important as certain Federal grants require that projects be on the list to be eligible for funding. Since Hurricane Irma, the LMSWG has met multiple times to score an influx of project submittals for the list. The list currently has 62 prioritized projects. Project activities include: generator installations, stormwater improvements, flood control and wind retrofitting. A project to provide generator power to lift stations throughout the County currently holds the highest priority on the list.

On August 6th applications are due to the Florida Division of Emergency Management for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds. Jurisdictions that have projects on the LMS project list will be applying for the HMGP funds. The amount of $24,000,000 of HMGP funds are allocated for Collier County.

Karen Drive, Naples, Florida

When given the opportunity, Community and Human Services (CHS,) has assisted with mitigation projects using either CDBG funds or CDBG Disaster Recovery funds. Last summer, a mitigation project was completed for Karen Drive in Naples which had a long history of flooding. CHS awarded the Bayshore Community Redevelopment Agency $330,000 in CDBG funds to improve the stormwater drainage on Karen Drive.

The Bayshore CRA used MSTU funds for the design, CDBG funds for the construction, and Bayshore’s project management skills of Tami Scott to carry out the project. The project was a success. The properties on Karen Drive now have a decreased risk of damage from flooding, and residents
Mitigation Diminishes Disastrous Impacts, Cont’d

Mitigation activities performed before a natural disaster occurs can reduce human and financial consequences later. Whenever you see a construction project going on in Collier County keep in mind it may be a long planned out mitigation project designed to protect the people and property of our Community.

Lisa Oien, Senior Grant Coordinator

A Visit from D.C. in Aftermath of Hurricane Irma

On October 4, 2017, Collier County Community and Human Services staff hosted a team from Washington, D.C in Immokalee including a round table discussion in Naples. The Washington delegation consisted of President Trump’s Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) appointee, Deborah Cox-Roush, Senior Corps Director, Chester Spellman, AmeriCorps Director, Gina Cross, Acting AmeriCorps NCCC Director and staff representatives from Senator Rubio and Senator Nelson’s offices along with Betshell Louis, State of Florida CNCS Program Director.

The group was able to see firsthand the work that has been done by volunteers and the aftermath in the Immokalee area. Community and Human Services showcased the community service performed by the volunteers of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) during and after Hurricane Irma. Eleven RSVP members volunteered a total of **198 hours** in hurricane response activities including: conducting wellness checks, distributing ice, water and food, assisting in shelter operations, and providing Meals on Wheels—all while dealing with their own personal, property damage.

The purpose of Cox-Roush’s visit was to better understand the challenges that face Collier’s RSVP program, as well as the program’s achievements. She complimented our program's RSVP Recruitment Video and uses it around the Nation. The tour also included Habitat for Humanity in Immokalee, followed by a roundtable discussion with County staff, local RSVP volunteers who assisted during Hurricane Irma and members of Senator Nelson’s office.

In April, RSVP Program Director, Dawn Whelan went to a seminar entitled “Engaging National Service in Recovery after Hurricanes Irma and Maria”. During the conference elements of a disaster and organizational relationships were discussed, as well as how national service volunteers played a key role in the planning, response, recovery and mitigation. We are thankful for all our volunteers and their willingness to help our residents in times of need.

Dawn Whelan, RSVP Project Director

Karen Drive passed the Irma test by having no flooding during the storm! Have safe access to and from their homes during times of heavy rainfall. Karen Drive project completion

Members of CNCS meet with RSVP Volunteers
Housing is an Essential Part of Response

For several years, CHS, in cooperation with many community stakeholders, and input from the Urban Land Institute, have worked to develop a forward thinking and inclusive Community Housing Plan. In October of last year, the BCC accepted the plan and began moving forward with the implementation process for the roughly 30 or so ULI recommended action items and/or activities necessary to put the wheels of the Housing Plan in motion.

To allow the BCC and public adequate opportunity to vet each recommendation, CHS has presented blocks of 5 to 6 action items/activities in regular intervals at BCC meetings beginning in December 2017. Several of the recommended activities dealing with similar subjects have been combined. For example, the Marketing, Public Relations & Communication plan consists of 7 specific activities originally identified by the ULI.

To date, all but one action item has been approved. Once fully operational, these action items will go a long way to make housing affordability more realistic for the community. With the official Collier County housing affordability definition and demand model in place, the community can now see clearly what the goals and objectives are moving forward. In addition, the amended Affordable Housing Density Program now provides more incentive to developers by allowing the development of housing that is affordable to be built at the same densities that other residential uses are currently allowed. That, coupled with the Impact Fee Deferral Program, and an expedited permitting and approval process, serve to encourage developers to create more housing affordability opportunities by allowing them to defer certain impact fees for a longer period, and finish construction sooner, ultimately making it less expensive to build housing in Collier County.

With the reinstatement of the Housing Trust Fund the County now has a mechanism in place that will allow for local control over allocations of the funds to match with the goals of the County’s Plan. Although funding sources for the trust have not yet been determined it could be a repository for all voluntary donations or other revenue generated for affordable housing within the county.

In addition, with the approval to create the Community Land Trust the county can now either select or establish a non-profit to manage any real property or land donations received and to hold these assets in perpetuity for the development and preservation of housing stock that is affordable for years to come.

Although much headway has been made, several major hurdles remain. One of the biggest topics yet to be presented to the BCC is the concept of a Mixed Income Housing Incentive. This program is the catalyst that would encourage diverse development of housing that is affordable throughout Collier. Although this program is complicated, it gives developers thresholds to address housing, and many options, all of which address affordability in all areas of the County.

As the report from the ULI confirmed, Collier County is facing a paradigm shift. With anticipated continued population increases along with severe affordable housing shortages, it will become more difficult for the necessary workforce to live in the community they serve and eventually the positions may become more difficult to fill. Only time will tell which direction the BCC will move on the remaining items to be implemented. It is clear the BCC has made housing affordability a high priority. The positive and encouraging momentum exhibited to date along with the Board’s thoughtful consideration of action items yet to be considered have already moved Collier County in the right direction for the future.

The Community Housing Plan can be found in its entirety at: https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/home/showdocument?id=74936

Cormac Giblin, Housing and Grant Development Manager
Hurricane Preparedness

Collier County Community and Human Services is focused on all aspects of safety. Each month our team is educated on a new safety topic by Risk Management. We would like to pay it forward.

Hurricane Season is here. Is your family ready?

Hurricane Season runs from June 1 to November 30th; making a plan for your family is important. Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you’ll contact one another and reconnect if separated. Establish a family meeting place that’s familiar and easy to find.

Hurricane Preparedness Week is recognized in May, however it is not too late to use the following guideline to prepare yourself and your family for the 2018 Hurricane Season.

Know Your Hurricane Risk
• Check with local officials to understand your risk.
• Search online to find your local emergency management agency to learn more.
• Sign up for local alerts or download the FEMA app.

Know Your Evacuation Zone
• Learn your evacuation zone, route, and an alternate location to stay.
• Include pets when planning to evacuate.
• Practice your plan.

Assemble Disaster Supplies
• Gather needed supplies for at least 10 days.
• Don’t forget your specific needs like meds, powered devices, pets etc.
• Keep cash in your emergency kit.

Prepare Financially
• Start an emergency savings fund.
• Check your insurance coverage to make sure you have enough coverage.

Strengthen Your Home
• Make sure your home is in good repair and meets local hurricane building codes.
• Declutter drains and gutters, trim trees, secure loose outdoor items & secure doors.
• Know a safe location to move your car during a hurricane.

Help Your Neighbors
• Get to know your neighbors before an emergency strikes.
• Make sure they have a plan before and after a hurricane.
• Exchange contact information

Make an Emergency Plan
• Write down your hurricane plan & share it.
• Make a plan of how you will get in touch with others before, during, and after.
• Take photos of important documents and store them in a secure place.

Employee Corner

Wendy Klopf, Grant Coordinator was recently recognized as Collier County’s Employee of the Month! Wendy has been with CHS since 2001, having worked as an Operations Coordinator and recently promoted to Grants Coordinator. For over two years, Wend- dy completed a review of over 5,000 properties under various grant programs for homestead compliance, analyzing each noncompliant property and contacting owners to recapture funds. Her efforts have yielded positive compliance results and a substantial amount being returned to the county.

Wendy’s work also led to the development of a new Lien Compliance Policy. This policy updates and expands a mechanism to ensure liens remain in compliance with county and program regulations, and will ultimately lead to significant savings in staff time; more funds being returned to the county; and the expansion of the housing affordability goals of the county.

Congratulations, Wendy!
On May 8, 2018, Jason Rummer celebrated 5 years of service to the citizens of Collier County. During his time with the county, Jason has worked for a few departments including Public Services and the Museum. Jason is currently an Operations Analyst for CHS, supporting the AHAC with research and data collection while also working part-time with Tourism on the Naming Rights and Sponsorship Project for the new Amateur Sports Complex. “I enjoy a very wide range of divisional projects for the Public Services Department and Tourism Division and enjoy the teamwork and comrades of the county employees I have had the pleasure to work with.” Congratulations on five years, Jason!

Carolyn Noble is our new Grant Coordinator for the HOME and ESG grants. Carolyn previously worked for Kitson & Partners/Babcock Ranch as the Contracts Manager. Prior to that, she was with Lee County School System as a Procurement Agent. Carolyn and her husband, Howie, of 35 years, have three children, and welcomed their first grandson last year. Carolyn is a HUGE New England Patriots fan and an avid boater. Welcome, Carolyn!

Collier County Senior Nutrition Program welcomed Bonnie Lee Evans to our team in March as a part time Meal Site Coordinator. Bonnie was promoted to full time Case Manager Assistant in May. Bonnie has over 20 years experience in Social Services throughout Collier County. She worked at The Shelter for Abused Women & Children as a Shelter Advocate, Youth Haven as a Youth Care Worker and at David Lawrence Center as a Technician. Bonnie has her Associates Degree in business. Welcome, Bonnie!

Welcome, CHS Interns, Sherlay Cajuste, Anita Tomas-Cano, and Angel Vera!

Sherlay Cajuste is a senior at Golden Gate High School. She is helping the PSD Operations section with collecting data on County assets for the Enterprise Asset Management Initiative. Sherlay will also be conducting Mystery Shopping Events with the QA/QC Program. Anita Tomas-Cano is a junior at Golden Gate High School studying Hospitality and Tourism in the NAF Academy. She is assisting with RSVP surveys and gathering donations for the RSVP events. Angel Vera is a junior at Lely High School. Angel will be helping with the Community Development Manager database cleanup. One aspect in particular he will be working on is updating the information for the property liens related to the SHIP program.
Props to the Peeps!

Don Luciano, Grant Coordinator, received an e-mail thanking him for his assistance on a SHIP loan:

“I would like to thank you for your efforts on this file. Both my Loan Officer and Processor, said you were a pleasure to work with. We truly appreciate partners that understand the importance of communication and are mindful that what we do is life changing for so many our Borrowers. Thank you again and have a great weekend.” – Nigel Fullick, New Penn Financial

Elizabeth Hernandez, Grant Support Specialist, received a compliment on our customer service:

“Applicants state that the Collier County- SHIP Program Department has excellent customer service, and we agree!” – Maria Aldana, Habitat for Humanity

Ana Diaz, Accounting Technician, received an e-mail from Zena Sellers acknowledging Ana for her efficiency:

“I want to share with you a comment that was made to me at the Immokalee office: “Doctor’s offices take Social Services Vouchers because they pay their bills on time” As you know, I am very proud of this program as we do so much good in our community and so glad to be working with you. Your efficiency makes Marco and my jobs easier. Kudos!”

Elizabeth Hernandez, Grant Support Specialist, received a note of thanks from one of our partners

“Elizabeth, As usual, applicants were very happy and grateful for SHIP funds and for your help; now they know the generosity of our county and its amazing team. Thanks a lot for being part of the team, for your professionalism, and for your excellent customer service. Thank you also for empowering SHIP applicants!” – Maria Aldana, Habitat for Humanity

Congratulations to Dawn Whelan, Blanca Aquino-Luque, Kristi Sonntag & Maggie Lopez on a successful RSVP monitoring!

Congratulations to Dawn Whelan and Kristi Sonntag on successfully receiving the RSVP three year renewal grant.

Tomas Calderon and Cynthia Kemner recently attended Section 3 Training and became Level 100 certified!

Carolyn Noble recently achieved her HQS Certification! Congratulations, Carolyn!

Congratulations to Cormac Goblin, Susan Golden, Hilary Halford, Jason Rummer, Maggie Lopez, Leslie Davis, Kristi Sonntag, Jose Alvarado, Blanca Aquino-Luque, Rosa Munoz, Lisa Oien, and Carolyn Noble on the BCC approval of the Action Plan!

In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, CHS conducted a complete review of the following SHIP Disaster Applications: 61 Disaster Mitigation, 34 Demo and Replacement, 44 Owner Occupied Rehab. Great job, Lisa Carr, Don Luciano, Elizabeth Hernandez and Yasmith Yidi!

CHS received funding to administer the Emergency Home Energy Assistance for the Elderly Program. E HEAP is a program that provides assistance for home energy emergencies to qualified, low-income households with at least one person 60 years of age or older. Nice work, Louise Pelletier, Maggie Lopez, Dory Carrillo and Blanca Aquino-Luque.

Congratulations to Jose Alvarado, Lisa Oien, Rosa Munoz, Kristi Sonntag, Maggie Lopez, Margo Castorena and Cynthia Kenner on making CDBG Timeliness!

Kim Grant, CHS Director received an e-mail from Nick Casalanguida, Deputy County Manager, congratulating our team on making timeliness three months early “The housing department has made significant strides over the last several years. It doesn’t happen by accident. While you all are going through tremendous challenges with the future planning, your efforts to be compliant and timely has paid off tremendously.”