As we move into a new year and the last of the 2000’s, Community and Human Services is looking forward to the future. We all know the saying “there are only two things certain in life: death and taxes”, per Benjamin Franklin, yet, we believe there are three things that are certain: new community projects, development and a bright future for Collier County Community and Human Services. And with that comes the opportunity for us to capitalize on developing our community from housing, to impacting the lives of our residents.

Our future has many bright spots on the horizon, such as the future of affordable housing. With the implementation of twenty recommendations from the Housing Plan, Commissioners agreed in November to move forward on the Bembridge PUD Project, and this year we will be conducting an Invitation to Negotiate for the possibility of a future housing development. This year will see the development of the Community Land Trust as well as the sales tax that will further promote affordable housing in our community.

Community and Human Services is entering our annual application cycle. This year nearly four million dollars will be available for HOME, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). This available funding has the potential to impact our community from the creation of new sidewalks, additional housing units, infrastructure improvements and services to some of our most vulnerable citizens. This funding represents an important milestone in the future of Collier County. These community development activities will have an impact for years and decades to come.

With our recent three-year award of $233,664 for our Retired Senior Volunteer Program, CHS will assist in the support and placement of over 140 volunteers who will provide over 22,000 hours of volunteer service. CHS also recently secured over $1.3 million in annual funding for the next 6 years to benefit our most at risk senior citizens. This funding will allow us to serve 200 seniors through case management and in-home services annually and provide meals to over 120 seniors through our in-home delivered meals program. In addition, 200 seniors will have the opportunity to have a hot meal at one of our four meal site locations throughout the County. We have also secured an award for the Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program that will benefit a minimum of 60 low income individuals with their heating and cooling expenses.

The future is bright, the future is ever changing, but here at Community and Human Services we look forward to the future and making our community better and even brighter in the year to come. I hope that you enjoy this edition of our newsletter focusing on the year to come.

Kristi Sonntag, Director
Money, Money, Money, Money, MONEY!🎵

The Community and Human Services Division is excited to announce the new grant cycle that began on January 4, 2019 and will remain open until 2-11-19 at noon. Once the application submission period ends, a committee, selected by the County Manager, will review and hear presentations on each application submitted. Funds are dispersed to winning grant applicants each spring after a rigorous grant review process. This year the application cycle will include ESG, CDBG, HOME and SHIP funds.

Collier County’s 5-Year Consolidated Plan’s highest priorities are activities that will be considered for funding with CDBG, HOME, and ESG. Current priorities focus first on housing affordability, public services, and infrastructure improvements. Funds can be used to support new construction, rehabilitation or acquisition of affordable housing for homeownership or rental, as well as, aid and education to homebuyers. Also, projects that provide supportive services to low/moderate income households, special needs persons with disabilities, senior and youth services, legal services and other allowable public services. Funding can also be requested for non-housing community development that eliminate blight and improve safety.

Although not considered a high priority in the 5-Year Consolidated Plan, funds may also be requested for public facility improvements that benefit low/moderate income households and persons with special needs to include but not limited to: community centers, health care facilities, park and public safety stations/offices. ESG funding applications will be prioritized for homelessness and prevention activities. These would be activities to assist persons who are homeless through emergency, transitional and permanent housing and supportive services and to assist households at risk of homelessness with short-term rental payment and other assistance. SHIP funds can be used for any approved LHAP strategy. Some of these strategies include: down payment, rehabilitation, and new construction. HOME funding is prioritized to focus on the development of housing units and the provision of rental assistance.

Examples of prior years winning projects include:

- **HOME**

  Hatchers Preserve, a new affordable housing complex in Immokalee consists of 18 two and three-bedroom rental homes for the area’s low-income residents. Hatchers Preserve was partially funded through CHS using funds from HUD.

- **CDBG**

  The Immokalee CRA was able to improve and install new sidewalks on 5th Street South and West Eustis Avenue in Immokalee. The new sidewalks serve to increase pedestrian safety and improve the appearance of the area.

- **ESG**

  Pam Baker, of NAMI stated “the ESG grant provides individuals with the stability necessary to start the recovery process; ultimately, resulting in their leading productive and meaningful lives within our community.”

- **SHIP**

  SHIP demolition/replacement funds have allowed us to complete three homes, with 11 more assigned. Chris Lee of LeeCorp said “…so far, it’s been a great partnership and I’m really proud that we are able to help the people in this county that need it the most.”

We look forward to reviewing all applications. For more information on each program or grant application process please visit our web site at: https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/your-government/​divisions-a-e/​community-and-human-services

*Cormac Giblin, Housing and Grant Development Manager*
A Future Housing Development

The BCC has awarded $1M in HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for future affordable housing. The project outcome will be the purchase of a large tract of land to result in the construction of 51 homes.

This acquisition of land, upon which affordable housing will be developed, will primarily serve low-to-moderate income beneficiaries in owner-occupied affordable housing. This project will help the county achieve its stated goals and identified priority needs. A housing project like this will assist residents in achieving self-sufficiency through an improved quality of life and a suitable living environment, which is the county’s mission for the use of HUD grant funding. Habitat for Humanity, the awardee, has extensive experience in real property acquisition and new home construction.

In addition to CDBG funding, other funding sources to make this project a reality include Habitat for Humanity International, donations, gifts-in-kind, etc. The CDBG award will represent a fraction of the total cost of this development. All other costs of construction, marketing, and sale may be borne by Habitat for Humanity of Collier County.

Rosa Munoz, Grant Coordinator

Stepping into the Future: Making Land Available for Future Housing Developments

On November 13, 2018, the Board of County Commissioners agreed to take the first step to move forward on a plan to use county owned property for developing housing that will be affordable.

During the development of the Community Housing Plan in 2017, the Urban Land Institute recommended the county consider using county owned properties for the future development of housing that is affordable. The Board approved the Plan and agreed that the use of county property for the development of housing that is affordable should be considered going forward. After an exhaustive examination and a stringent vetting process of all county owned lands, two parcels rose to the top of the list.

Both identified parcels were deliberated in detail in October when a joint committee consisting of members from the Parks and Recreation and Affordable Housing Advisory Boards met to discuss the viability of both properties. After several hours of joint committee discussion followed by individual meetings, it was unanimously recommended by both Boards that the 5-acre site known as the Bembridge PUD be made available for the development of housing that is affordable through an official Invitation to Negotiate.

The Bembridge site, a nearly 5-acre lot, located on Santa Barbra Boulevard next to the EMS station...
Stepping into the Future: Making Land Available for Future Housing Developments, Cont’d

and adjacent to Calusa Park Elementary School, will be the focal point for a possible new development of housing that is affordable in Collier County.

Currently, the Invitation to Negotiate is being prepared to provide interested developers an opportunity to showcase their ideas and vision for the property. There is potential for up to 78 units to be constructed on the site. The county is hoping interested developers will provide innovative design concepts that welcome not only families but seniors, veterans, and special needs occupants, as well. It is anticipated that the official notice will be published shortly after the first of the year with developer submissions being presented to the BCC in early spring 2019.

Cormac Giblin, Housing and Grant Development Manager

Keeping Our Seniors Healthy, Happy and Well in the New Year

Collier County’s Services for Seniors program has been providing support services to Collier County’s frail elderly for the past 30 years through the Community Care for the Elderly (CCE), Home Care for the Elderly (HCE) and the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative (ADI) programs and Older American’s Act funding (OAA). The Collier County Services for Seniors Program is a comprehensive program offered to qualified seniors age 60 and older, who need services to prevent, decrease or delay premature or inappropriate expensive placement in nursing homes or other institutions. The goal of the program is to assist the elderly in living as independently as possible in their own homes, or in the homes of relatives or caregivers. As part of our $1.3M award, our Services for Seniors Program will engage with new vendors to deliver services.

Collier’s Board of County Commissioners approved new vendor agreements during their recent sessions. The vendors, listed to the left, include 9 Home Health Care Agencies who will provide in-home services, 1 Emergency Alert Response service, and a specialized medical equipment and supplies provider.

CHS will also be contracting for a licensed Dietitian to work with CHS’s nutrition program under our OAA grant for our four congregate meal sites and home delivered meals program. Janet Calderwood, our Dietitian will be working to ensure that all food menus meet nutritional standards and criteria required by the Department of Elderly Affairs (DOEA), “I’m looking forward to continuing to serve the seniors of our community. Remember— as another golden year unfolds, excellent nutrition never gets old”, says Janet. Additionally, she will monitor local meal sites and home delivered meal routes for compliance with food safety and sanitation requirements and develop nutrition education plans and training in areas of nutrition, food service management and food safety for staff and volunteers.

In January, CHS will be seeking a vendor, through an RFP, to provide meals to Collier’s four meal sites and to provide home delivered meals for senior citizens. CHS’s meal program serves approximately 50,000 meals in a given year and we will continue to serve our senior citizen population as our OAA grant funding continues for 2019.

Maggie Lopez, Accounting Supervisor and Wendy Klopf, Grant Coordinator
Happy New Year from the Retired Senior Volunteer Program! This past summer the RSVP program conducted our annual participant and volunteer station surveys. The surveys were completed via mail and in person, using iPads. The results of the survey have helped us to refine our volunteer opportunities and improve our service. A total of 222 surveys were completed.

- 100% of the Veterans, 98% of the Bone Builders, 77% of the volunteer participants and 73% of the Volunteer Stations responded with “very likely” when asked, “how likely are you to recommend the RSVP Program to a friend or colleague?”
- 84% of our volunteers are satisfied with their current assignments
- 78% said they receive sufficient recognition for their work as an RSVP volunteer
- 77% are satisfied with their station supervisors

Some of the comments from the Bone Builders survey included:
- Requesting additional exercises for back and neck
- More classes offered and later starting dates
- More training opportunities
- Different exercise options

In response to the survey comments, beginning this January, RSVP will be offering Tai Chi for Arthritis for Falls Prevention. This eight-week course will help participants improve movement, balance, strength, flexibility and relaxation. In the coming months we will also be introducing “A Matter of Balance.” This program will reduce the fall risk and fear of falling, improve falls self-management and falls self-efficacy and promote physical activity.

It is our honor to provide opportunities in Collier County that not only benefit the volunteer, but all of our residents. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or a Tai Chi or Matter of Balance Instructor, please contact Dawn Whelan at Dawn.Whelan@colliercountyfl.gov or 239-252-4230.

Dawn Whelan, RSVP Project Director

Changes on the Horizon

Several years ago, the County, through the County Manager’s Office, Office of Internal Controls (OIC), began a process of developing formal internal controls for the various County divisions, using the COSO Framework model.

The OIC is currently working with CHS staff to structure the design, development, and operation of CHS’ internal controls. This will help our division meet the County’s objectives of identifying internal control weaknesses to reduce risk, implementing timely corrective measures to mitigate risk, and eliminating opportunities for fraud, waste, and abuse of County, State and Federal resources.

CHS is entering the final phase of implementation. One of the really great things that comes from an initiative like this is that it helps move the division toward using risk in its strategic decision-making process, which in turn improves productivity and overall performance. This integration of performance and risk will allow the County to embrace future opportunities with greater confidence.

Cynthia Kemner, Supervisor, Grants Compliance Unit
Employee Corner

Sharon Chronis, Grant Support Specialist, works in the Seniors Program. Sharon hails from Boston, MA and moved to Naples in 2016 with her husband, Stephen. She previously worked as an assistant program director at a group home with adults with forensic and mental health issues. Welcome, Sharon!

Nouchely Jeanlys is our new Meal Site Coordinator at Goodlette Arms. She is a student at FSW pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She wants to become a Family Nurse Practitioner, specializing in pediatrics. "NJ" loves to help others. Welcome, NJ!

Lori Blanco, Social Services Case Manager was previously working for Collier’s Communications & Customer Relations Division. Lori also previously worked at CHS in the Seniors Program and we are so happy she has returned "home". Lori will be assisting Collier County residents with prescriptions and medical specialties requests, and with the Eheap program helping seniors with their utility bills. She will be working in both Immokalee and Naples. Welcome Back, Lori!

Glenda Suter is our new Meal Site Coordinator at East Naples Community Park. She is originally from St. Louis, MO and has lived in Naples for over 20 years. Glenda is also an artist and coordinates all the fun events in her community! Welcome, Glenda!

Props to the Peeps!

Don Luciano, Grant Coordinator, received a thank you note from a client expressing his gratitude for assisting him on becoming a first time homeowner!

"I first heard about the SHIP program through a co-worker, and we did some research and found the information on the county website. When I decided to pursue it I contacted the county and was put in contact with Don Luciano and scheduled a meeting to talk about my situation and to see if the program was right for me. After our talk I decided to proceed with the process. The application process was extensive and I was expecting that, Don was there to help me at every step of the way and answered all of my questions promptly and it was obvious to me that he cared about helping me which was very nice. There were a lot of ups and downs throughout the process due to this being a "short sale", Don helped me through and met with me many times over the course of about a year to keep the process going. I put an offer in on a property in May and it did not close until December. The approval with the sellers banks/mortgage companies took so long that we thought it may never happen, every other week we received news that disheartened us from the sellers. Finally everything was approved and we had all of our ducks in a row to close and Don followed through and was able to get me the check. This was an emotional marathon of a sale, mostly due to the banks of the previous owners, and Don not only did a great job on helping us, he also did so with a pleasant and can-do attitude, even while I was panicking every other week and sending COUNTLESS emails and phone calls. I cannot thank Don and the team in his office enough for the work that they have done on my behalf. I am finally a homeowner for the first time in my life!! It is rare to encounter people that take such pride and ownership over what they do and I am truly grateful. Happy Holidays to you all, I get to spend Christmas in my new home and I couldn't ask for a better gift." - Stephen Ray, Naples Resident

Congratulations to Carlton Bronson, Debbi Maxon, Ivonne Garcia, Wendy Klopf, Danielle Mordaunt, Louise Pelletier, Maggie Lopez, Dory Carrillo and Sharon Chronis on receiving ZERO findings during a recent AAA monitoring!
Barbetta Hutchinson, Don Luciano and Lisa Carr received a note thanking them for assisting a client after Hurricane Irma:

"After Hurricane Irma in September 2017 my mobile home was condemned and red tagged. I felt a sense of desperation as the insurance I had once had, had been canceled years ago due to the age of the 1973 mobile home. FEMA paid me only $1000 which doesn't go far in complete home replacement.

I had local family that offered me a fold-out bed in their den and I was grateful for that. But there is nothing better than ones own place especially after living independently for over 40 years. I am disabled and on a very limited budget of $1176 a month. Hotels or apartment rentals are ruled out on such a small budget. It was a very stressful time in my life.

When I read in the newspaper about the SHIP program I went to the Community & Human Services office as soon as I could. I met Barbetta Hutchinson at the front desk and she went out of her way to explain the papers and documents I would need to initiate the process. I managed to track down the documents and hoped that I might be considered as an applicant.

I met Don Luciano and Lisa Carr during the following days and they reviewed my records and said I would likely qualify as a participant in the SHIP program. Everyone was very friendly, professional, positive and well informed of the procedure. This lifted my spirits out of despair.

As the days progressed I became more and more positive about my outcome. Don kept in great touch with me and he was very encouraging and knowledgeable.

Then one day my condemned home was demolished and soon I was handed the keys to my new home by Chris Lee of Leecorp Homes.

Barbetta, Don and Lisa, this would not have been possible without you. Your dedication to others turns a bumpy road into a smooth ride. I don't know how many people have been helped by SHIP but I consider myself both blessed and forever in gratitude for your professional and selfless commitment to those in less desirable and even dire circumstances.

What comes around goes around and I only hope I can repay others in some way. I hope that you are repaid in some way. Perhaps you have already been repaid by the gratitude of others."- WW, Naples Resident

Cormac Giblin, Housing and Grant Development Manager received a note of thanks on an Affordable Housing presentation he provided:

"Thank you for giving an enlightening and informative presentation to the Greater Naples Leadership Master’s Program yesterday. The feedback from the class was extremely positive. They appreciated the insights into the difficult issue of affordable housing, especially for essential employees and professionals. Your slides with the salary numbers and housing prices really focused attention on the “cost-burden” challenge. Thank you again for your valuable participation."- Lynn Martin, Greater Naples Leadership

Congratulations to Elizabeth Hernandez on her promotion to Operation Analyst in the Grants Compliance Unit!

Cormac Giblin, Housing and Grant Development Manager was interviewed by NBC and WINK news on affordable housing. Below are the links to each news story: