

# Quarterly Report of the HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTEGRITY    QUALITY SERVICE    PROFESSIONALISM

Sheriff Susan Benton



2015 April-June 1st Qrt

## VISION

Our vision is a safer Highlands County where citizens and law enforcement are joined together; the rights of all persons are respected; and community values are reflected.

## MISSION

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office is committed to protecting life, property, and individual rights while maintaining peace and order.

### Goal 1:

Create safer neighborhoods by reducing criminal activity and conditions that foster crime and fear within the community.

### Goal 2:

Enhance vehicular and pedestrian safety of Highlands County roadways through education and enforcement.

### Goal 3:

Assure accountability by effective and efficient use of personnel, equipment, and technology.

### Goal 4:

Provide a professional work environment that attracts and retains a diverse group of quality applicants, rewards employee excellence, and promotes leadership through education and training.

### Goal 5:

Assure effective Judicial and Detention processes and services.

## Day of Caring



Christine Kolhoff from IT and  
Mellanie Williams from Dispatch

On Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> several members of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office converged on the Hansen House, 4300 Sparta Road, Sebring, to participate in the annual United Way Day of Caring. Organized by Becky Tyson, General Services Manager,

members from law enforcement, corrections and administration took on major cleaning and sprucing up of the facility. From deep cleaning the kitchen and community rooms to revitalizing the exterior landscape, members did everything from scrubbing to planting! Cleaning crews worked diligently on pots, sinks, stove and other surface areas of the kitchen while others took on cob web duty on the screened in porch. Outside, other members were hard at work putting colorful, blooming plants into permanent spots around the entrance. In addition, landscape stones around the traffic circle that had become uneven were re-set and looking great! "We really appreciate our members taking their time to participate in this Day of Caring each year," Becky said, "We couldn't do it without them!" Thanks to everyone who participated in this worthy undertaking.

## Lake Placid Elementary Safety Day

Highlands County Sheriff's Office Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team members visited Lake Placid Elementary School on May 11th to participate in the annual Safety Day. Organized by SWAT Team member and School Resource Officer Austin Garza, the day featured demonstrations by the SWAT Team along with an up close and personal introduction to the new Robot, "Ranger", as named by Lake Placid Elementary second grade student Brandon Pratts. Detective Stuart Troutman of the Lake Placid Police Department also participated in the Safety Day presenting information on personal safety and bullying prevention to students gathered in the cafeteria. Assistant Principal Michael Halpern was excited about having the law enforcement presentation for his students. "This is great and the kids are really enjoying learning about safety. Oh and they especially like the robot!!"

The day culminated with a K-9 demonstration featuring Sergeant Kyle Albritton with Mico, Deputy Steve Worley with Ozzie, Deputy Wayne Gunn with Bud and Deputy Dusty McGee with Billy. Thanks to all these deputies for their dedication to our young people, and for making Safety Day a day to remember!



Lake Placid Elementary Students

### Operation Medicine Cabinet

On April 25th, members of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office, Sebring Police Department and Lake Placid Department in cooperation with Drug Free Highlands participated in Operation Medicine Cabinet. Outdated, unwanted or unused prescription medication was collected at four locations around the county for safe disposal. The event resulted in a total of 60 boxes weighing a total of 1,163.6 pounds of medication being collected from the four sites, as follows:

**Sebring Police Department:**

30 boxes 586.5 pounds

**Highlands County Sheriff's Office:**

15 boxes 256.9 pounds

**Lake Placid Police Department:**

15 boxes 320.2 pounds

The total amount of medications collected is the second highest in the past four years. Lt. Manny Gonzalez, who as the lieutenant over the Evidence Unit and is responsible for holding these items for safe disposal, was appreciative of the cooperation of Highlands County residents in this event. "This is a safe, legal way to dispose of medications so they don't harm the environment or cause a child or pet to become sick or even die," said the Lieutenant. "We appreciate Drug Free Highlands' partnership in this project to make this yet another successful event." Anyone who missed this event but has prescription medications to dispose of can go to the Lake Placid Police Department, 8 N. Oak Ave., Sebring Police Department, 207 N. Ridgewood Dr., or the Highlands County Sheriff's Office North District, 304 W. Pleasant St., Avon Park and drop the medications in the permanent drop boxes located there during normal business hours.



Detention Deputy Jayme Keefe

### Ms. Clarice Carter and K9 Billy

Clarice Carter is a longstanding, proud supporter of our K-9's and their Deputies. Better known as "Miss Clarice", she has lived for many years in Lake Placid and as far as I can remember, even before I was



Sheriff, Miss Clarice would donate regularly towards the special needs of the K-9's. These funds have been used for various dog supplies and even for bullet proof vests over the years. Clarice is home-bound and as special thanks and recognition for her continuing love and concern for these unique service animals, they visit her. Pictured is Miss Clarice and Billy. For some reason it seems that she really prefers these friendly, slobbery, smelly, bloodhound dogs! Did you know that bloodhounds have a very, very good sense of smell. Researchers estimate that their sense of smell is at least 1,000 times stronger than a human's. Law enforcement around the world has learned to use this special power to their advantage. Ever wonder what

happens when deputies use a bloodhound to help find a missing person? When a bloodhound gets a scent, air rushes through the dog's nasal cavity. The scent of the person creates an odor image, a sort of smell photograph in the dog's brain. Although the world is full of smells, a bloodhound's sense of smell is so powerful that it can use the odor image to pick out the exact scent trail it needs. Once the bloodhound finds a scent trail matching the odor image, it can follow that specific smell despite all the other odors in the environment. Bloodhounds have been known to follow a scent trail for more than 130 miles! The nose isn't the only part of bloodhounds well-suited for tracking. Their signature wrinkly skin helps trap scents, too. Their long, droopy ears also act as scent sweepers, dragging the ground and sweeping scents toward their noses. As you can see, Billy is always happy and proud to pay a visit to Miss Clarice. We thank you and love you very much, Miss Clarice.

*Sheriff Susan Benton and K-9 TEAM!*

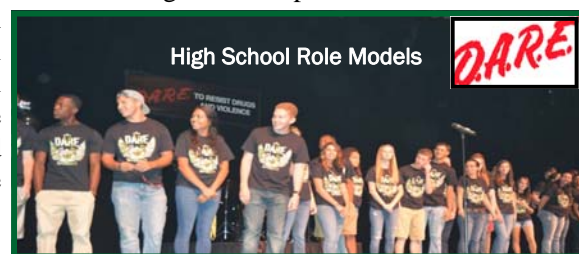


### D.A.R.E.

#### (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)

Approximately 1000 5<sup>th</sup> graders from 11 Highlands County Schools gathered on April 9<sup>th</sup> for the annual D.A.R.E. Graduation. The graduation celebrates these students' decision to be drug, alcohol and violence free during their lives. The program opened with the California Toe Jam Band performing hits from old time rock and roll. Once everyone arrived, 27 bus loads of children, kids were dancing in the aisles. The presentation of colors by performed by Lake Placid High School Junior ROTC cadets. Throughout the program, D.A.R.E. role models, high school students representing all three Highlands County High Schools, gave public service announcements highlighting a drug or alcohol free message to the students. Highlands County's own Nala Price, just a kid herself, performed two inspirational songs to the delight of the audience. The Sebring High School Cheerleaders put on a spectacular demonstration of athleticism and grace. Dustin Woods, Youth Pastor at Grace Bible Church, challenged the students to be all they can be and encouraged them to gain strength from each other. As he

chose particular students from the audience to share what they wanted to be when they grew up, the audience acknowledged with "We Believe In You!" Always a highlight of the day, Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations and Special Operations Unit members put on a skit of a drug deal gone wrong, complete with take down and apprehension of the bad guys. Closing the show, as he has done for many years, retired School Resource Deputy Andy Spires sang a beautiful rendition of several patriotic songs. This was a touching and appropriate end to a great day for the kids. Thank you to School Resource Sergeant Mike Delaney and all the School Resource Deputies, Ross Porter, DeWayne Proctor, Juan Delgado, David Lightsey, Shannon Purvis, Mike Helms, Austin Garza and Officer Wilma Tindell of the Sebring Police Department. *You're the best!*



High School Role Models



# Highlands County Sheriff's Office CRIME PREVENTION



## Neighborhood Watch Crime Reports



**M**any of you attended the Highlands County Neighborhood Watch meeting last fall where our Communications Training Officer Josh Cordero presented an animated program on when to call 911. Following the meeting, this presentation was by far the most requested topic for the remainder of the season. Josh made every effort to accommodate those neighborhood requests and was a hit wherever he went! During these presentations, he made everyone aware of the situations during which one should call 911 as opposed to calling the non-emergency number, which is 863-402-7200. As emphasized during the programs, 911 is reserved for medical emergencies and crimes in progress. All other calls should be utilizing the non-emergency, 863-402-7200 number.

During these presentations we took one thing for granted; that was that people who were victims of crime would actually report it! Unfortunately, we are not psychic! We don't know that you have had something stolen unless you call 863-402-7200 and have a deputy come out and take a report. You cannot call the Neighborhood Watch chairperson or the park owner or manager and have them make that report. We must hear from the victim—that's you—unless you are watching a property for an absentee owner. In that case yes, you may make the initial report, after which we will follow up with the actual owner of the property where the crime occurred.

Recently there have been several occasions that have come to my attention where property crimes have been reported only to the Neighborhood Watch chairpersons and not called in to the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Related to these events, I have received requests for extra patrol in these areas. Extra patrol is a directed patrol function that is conducted as time permits, in response to documented criminal events, in a particular area, at the discretion of the watch commander, supervisor or deputy. In addition, according to agency policy, "...Each deputy is expected to have knowledge of situations which have occurred or are occurring in their (assigned) locations..." As you can see, both of these functions are based on YOUR REPORTS. If you have been the victim of a crime, park owners or management, the Neighborhood Watch chairperson or anyone else is not able to make this report for you; nor are they able to investigate your crime or make an arrest.

Please take the responsibility to report crime seriously. You don't know how your incident might play into a bigger investigation, or be part of a sequence of events that we are trying to solve. We want to be of service to you, but we have to know what's occurring in order to respond. Thank you in advance for your attention to this. Remember—911 is reserved for medical emergencies and crimes in progress. All other calls should go to 863-402-7200, and we're there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—even on holidays!

## NATIONAL NIGHT OUT and Those Great Hot Dogs!!

**N**ational Night Out will be here before you know it! Please start planning now! If your Neighborhood Watch group would like to host our cooks and partake of our famous, quarter pound hot dogs on Tuesday, August 4th, please contact Nell Hays at 863-402-7369. We can handle about 8 groups, depending on the size. At this time we have Hickory Ridge, Leisure Lakes, Buttonwood Bay, Tanglewood, Veranda Breeze and Tropical Harbor confirmed. There is room for one or two more groups.

As in the past, we will provide hot dogs, buns, the cooks and the K-9 units for demonstrations. In addition we will update your attendees on crimes in your neighborhood, if any. This event is to reward those of you that keep the home fires burning while your neighbors go up north for the summer, so let us hear from you!



POLICE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Associa

Nextdoor



## D.A.R.E. Essay Contest Winners

**E**ach year students enrolled in the D.A.R.E. program at each school participate in a voluntary essay contest. This contest entails writing about what the D.A.R.E. program meant to you and how it will positively effect your life and the lives of others. Of course, D.A.R. E. stands for Drugs and Alcohol Resistance



*Memorial Elementary School Resource Deputy Mike Helms congratulates D.A.R.E. Essay winners Aalexis Knight and Trey Rowe on their First and Third Place winning essays during the end of year awards ceremony in May.*

Education and is taught in all elementary schools in Highlands County during the 5th grade curriculum. Selected teachers, aides, and

interested parties read these essays and rank them. Each school then announces a first, second and third place winner. Prizes include 12 Hours Of Sebring Race Tickets, D.A.R.E. merchandise prizes and other fun certificates. This year Highlands County Sheriff's Office member Katrina Thomas's daughter, Aalexis Knight was the First Place winner at her school, Memorial Elementary. Second Place at Memorial Elementary was Quinn Owen and Third Place was captured by Trey Rowe. Sun 'N Lake Elementary winners were Nathan Andrews in First, Brian Dean in Second and Diya Udadhyya took Third. Fred Wild Elementary winners included Makayla Powell in First Place, Joshua Spurlock took Second with Jailene Flores in Third. Lake Placid Elementary crowned Evan Hutzenlaub the overall winner with Beatriz Cruz as Runner-Up. Results from other schools were not available at press time.

Thank you to all our D.A.R.E. Officers who teach these classes year round at our elementary schools. They do a great job educating our youth on the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse!



## LPHS Student Government Donates to SWAT Team

**T**hey've done it again! Last year the Student Government Association at Lake Placid High School donated bicycles to go to the Florida Sheriff's Youth Camp. This year the group decided to go on a fund raising initiative to benefit the Highlands County Special Weapons and Tactics (S.W.A.T.) team.

The association decided on a Dodgeball Tournament to raise the funds with the winner playing the S.W.A.T. team in a championship match. The championship match was played in April and S.W.A.T. was defeated in a double elimination match! Way to go SGA!!

The LPHS Student Government Association was able to raise \$500 to be used toward the purchase of specialized equipment to keep our officers safe during S.W.A.T. deployments. Pictured above is student Louie Canevari, presenting the check to Lake Placid High's School Resource Deputy Austin Garza while S.W.A.T. team member Sergeant Mike Delaney and S.W.A.T. supervisor Captain Jeff Barfield look on.



School Resource Deputy Austin Garza accepts a \$500 donation from LPHS Student Government Association representation Louie Canevari as SWAT Team members Sergeant Mike Delaney and Captain Jeff Barfield look on.

**Thank you, LPHS Student Government Association, for your donation!**



1-800-226-TIPS (8477)

HOTLINE

Webtips

Submit a tip On-Line



**QUARTERLY INFORMATION—ADMINISTRATION & COURT**

**Gaming**



|                                |       |   |        |
|--------------------------------|-------|---|--------|
| <b>New Member Hires:</b>       |       | <b>Court Related Services:</b>          |        |
| Civilian                       | 15    | Cases In Court                          | 7,769  |
| Sworn                          | 4     | Inmates Taken to Court                  | 1,204  |
| PT Sworn                       | 0     | Arrests by Bailiffs                     | 116    |
| Applications Received          | 42    | Persons thru Security Station           | 26,384 |
| Applications Processed         | 36    | <b>Judicial/Civil Process Services:</b> |        |
| Payroll Transactions Processed | 2,295 | Received/Processed                      | 1,789  |
| Payable Checks Processed       | 529   | Served                                  | 1,643  |
| P-Card Purchases               | 545   | Active                                  | 146    |
| Citizens Fingerprinted         | 276   |   |        |
| Information Services Requests  | 391   |   |        |

Some parents and guardians think that online games are simply a form of entertainment. However, exercise important life skills while gaming. They may use their imaginations and employ problem solving strategies to overcome obstacles. They may also practice their social skills through online interactions with other gamers.

Using instant chat features, forums and voice-enabled interactions, children can communicate and collaborate with gamers all over the world. Unfortunately, these features can also expose children to people who may not have their best interests in mind.

**Risks of Gaming**

Many online games have communication features which allow their users to interact anonymously. Some people may take advantage of this anonymity to target children. For example, predators may send inappropriate content or use a game's communication functions to arrange in-person meetings. Cyberbullies may harass fellow gamers and online scam artists may promise virtual goods in an effort to get credit card information.

Some game consoles allow Internet access as well, so it is important to be aware of their communication features. Predators have sent children inappropriate content through games consoles in attempts to coax them into reciprocating or meeting offline.

[www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)



**QUARTERLY INFORMATION—LAW ENFORCEMENT**

|                             |        |                                       |       |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Administrative Calls        | 54,259 | Items into Evidence                   | 2,797 |
| 911 Calls                   | 14,014 | Evidence Items Disposed               | 2,216 |
| Computer Aided Dispatch     | 33,270 | Crime Scene Lab Cases                 | 145   |
| <b>HCSO (59%)</b>           | 19,680 | Crime Scene Call Outs                 | 101   |
| <b>SPD (15%)</b>            | 5,144  | Criminal Investigation Unit Cases     | 151   |
| <b>LPPD (7%)</b>            | 2,487  | Investigations Open (Total)           | 118   |
| <b>FIRE (6%)</b>            | 2,116  | SOU Cases                             | 50    |
| <b>EMS (13%)</b>            | 3,843  | SOU Narcotics Arrests                 | 24    |
| Offense Reports             | 2,621  | CST Arrests                           | 98    |
| Traffic Citations Issued    | 809    | SVU Cases Received from DCF           | 352   |
| K-9 Searches                | 179    | SVU Cases Open                        | 72    |
| <b>Warrant Numbers:</b>     |        | Business Security Surveys/residential | 0/1   |
| Received/Processed          | 637    | Neighborhood Watch Presentations      | 28    |
| Served                      | 541    | Crime Victims Served                  | 176   |
| Active                      | 2,741  | Victim Advocate Services              | 761   |
| Number of Arrests By Patrol | 798    |                                       |       |
| Number of DUI's             | 15     |                                       |       |

**QUARTERLY INFORMATION—DETENTION**

|                                  |            |                               |              |
|----------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Inmates Booked into Jail         | 899        | Average Daily Population      | 381          |
| Inmates Released from Jail       | 811        | Net Commissary Earnings       | \$17,124.71  |
| Instructional Program Hours      | 1,479      | Medical Fees Charged          | \$372,113.96 |
| Inmate Transport Miles           | 25,987     | Medical Fees Collected        | \$4,677.43   |
| Transports to State Prison       | 74         | Subsistence Fees Charged      | \$46,282.00  |
| ICE Picked Up                    | 1          | Subsistence Fees Collected    | \$9,763.40   |
| Detainer's Placed                | 2          | Inmate Per-Diem Charged       | \$17,900.00  |
| CMP Participants                 | 13         | Inmate Per-Diem Collected     | \$8,270.39   |
| Dollars Saved in Labor           | \$13,717.2 | Labor Hours by Inmates S/O    | 46,696       |
| Dollars Collected in Fees        | \$1,065    | Labor Hours by Inmates -Other | 2,880        |
| Inmate Meals Served              | 103,923    | Dollars Saved in Labor        | \$399,086.80 |
| Avg Food Cost per Day Per Inmate | \$1.88     |                               |              |
| Alcohol Breath Tests             | 39         |                               |              |

## Florida Sheriff's Association Commanders Academy

Lt. Jack Bailey graduates from the Florida Sheriff's Commanders Academy. Lt. Bailey is the third member of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office to attend this specialized training. Both Captains James P. Fane and Paul Blackman attended the inaugural class, Paul was President of the first class. This program was developed when, as President of the Florida Sheriff's Association, Sheriff Benton and other Sheriffs identified that although there is training available for preparing personnel for executive leadership, there was no specific training for the unique requirements of the Office of Sheriff. Following initial discussions, the staff at the Florida Sheriff's Association reached out to training expert Dr. James Sewell and developed the Commanders Academy. This course is unique to the duties of the Sheriff in Florida. When folks think of law enforcement we typically think of the functions involved in that discipline, like a police department. Sheriffs are tasked with many more responsibilities than a local police department; like the Executive Officer of the Courts, Jail Management, independent risk management outside of the local governmental entity such as the county commission, multi-million dollar independent budgets, and serve at the pleasure of the people, not a city council. With those additional duties comes tremendous responsibility, therefore, this course includes curriculum on the courts and the service of the wide variety of orders. There are sessions on risk management, the insuring of such risks and more importantly the mitigation and management of those the inherent risks in the business of the Office of Sheriff. There is great emphasis on ethics and discipline, moreover the basics of

leadership, the importance of strategic planning, and accreditation as tools to drive your office, increase professionalism and mitigate risks. Each graduate is required to write a summary of their experience to the Sheriff. Lt. Bailey wrote, "during the introduction of presentations in the class, it was very reassuring to realize that our agency has implemented many of these successful strategies being taught in modern policing. Comparing our practices with those of others around the state, I was proud of what we have accomplished."



Lt. Jack Bailey and Sheriff Susan Benton



## HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**Susan Benton, Sheriff**

434 FERNLEAF AVENUE  
SEBRING, FL 33870  
OFFICE: (863) 402-7200

For tips on how to keep our kids safe see the Florida Sheriffs Association Child Safety Page  
@ [www.flsheriffs.org/child-safety](http://www.flsheriffs.org/child-safety)