

# Rowing club comes to Lee County

## Cape Harbour will host organization

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

One of the original sports in the modern Olympic Games finally has a home in Lee County, at The Marina at Cape Harbour.

There are 2,000 rowing clubs worldwide and approximately 40 active Youth Rowing programs in Florida, but none in our area, until now. The Cape Coral Rowing Club recently announced their formation and partnership with Cape Harbour.

"The Spreader Canal is one of the best places in the world to row; we want to enable more people to take advantage of it," said CCRC President John Bell. "Rowing is a total body workout, and for teenagers it opens up a world of college scholarship opportunities as most ivy-league schools offer rowing scholarships."

With the help of local business leaders, the CCRC Board of Directors plans to launch the organization this fall, consisting of two primary programs: a high school program open to all students, and a Masters/Recreational program for ages 27 to 107.

Currently the CCRC is extending a Corporate Rowing Challenge to all Lee County businesses and individuals who would like to support this important community organization. The Challenge includes three levels of participation ranging from \$35 to \$10,000. All inaugural corporate teams will compete in the Grand Regatta at The Marina at Cape Harbour in the Spring.



Funds raised through the challenge will play a vital role in purchasing the necessary equipment for the Youth and Masters Rowing programs. Sponsorships qualify for tax deduction under the provisions of 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Rowing Club is thrilled by the support already received from Cape Harbour developer Realmark, the merchants at Cape Harbour and community residents including, SIM Gallery of Fine Arts, It's All About Jewels, Bradford Design and Company, Rumrunners as well as The Joint and Run Agrounds, who have donated generously to the club. Two world-class rowing coaches are signed up as well: Jerry Allway and Jim Heneghan, both of Cape Coral, with 30-years experience in the sport each.

The CCRC's mission is "to have the best youth and masters programs in the state." Individual and family memberships are available as well. For more information on becoming a member or sponsor, contact the CCRC at 334-4186 or [alisjordan@earthlink.net](mailto:alisjordan@earthlink.net). ■

# Guardian ad Litem selects new director

## Advocates for abused kids

Frank Prado has been selected to direct the Twentieth Judicial Circuit's Guardian ad Litem program for Southwest Florida.

The Guardian ad Litem Program advocates for the best interest of children who are alleged to be abused, neglected, or abandoned and who are involved in court proceedings.

Prado has been on the frontline, leading child abuse investigators. Now, he says, he wants to double child advocate volunteers in Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades counties to enable 100 percent of abused children to have their voices heard in court and the community.

"Every day our Guardian ad Litem volunteers and program staff work to provide competent and proactive representation for abused children with the goal of moving a child out of a kind of 'personal limbo' in foster care and into a permanent family—as quickly as possible," Prado said.

Program representatives, including program staff, certified lay volunteers and pro bono attorneys, work as a team becoming familiar with the child and the child's case and making recommendations to the court to help ensure a safe, caring, stable and permanent environment for the child. Guardian ad Litem volunteers work with various community partners to ensure that the child is receiving the assistance and support needed to succeed.

"During the past year, we've doubled our Lee County volunteer child advocates," says Prado, married and father of two. "It's a start, but it's not enough. We still need to once again double our current volunteer numbers to serve 100 percent of abused children. But, while we're getting the word out that we need many volunteers, I am working to build an even stronger support staff for volunteers and better tools to help them be more effective."

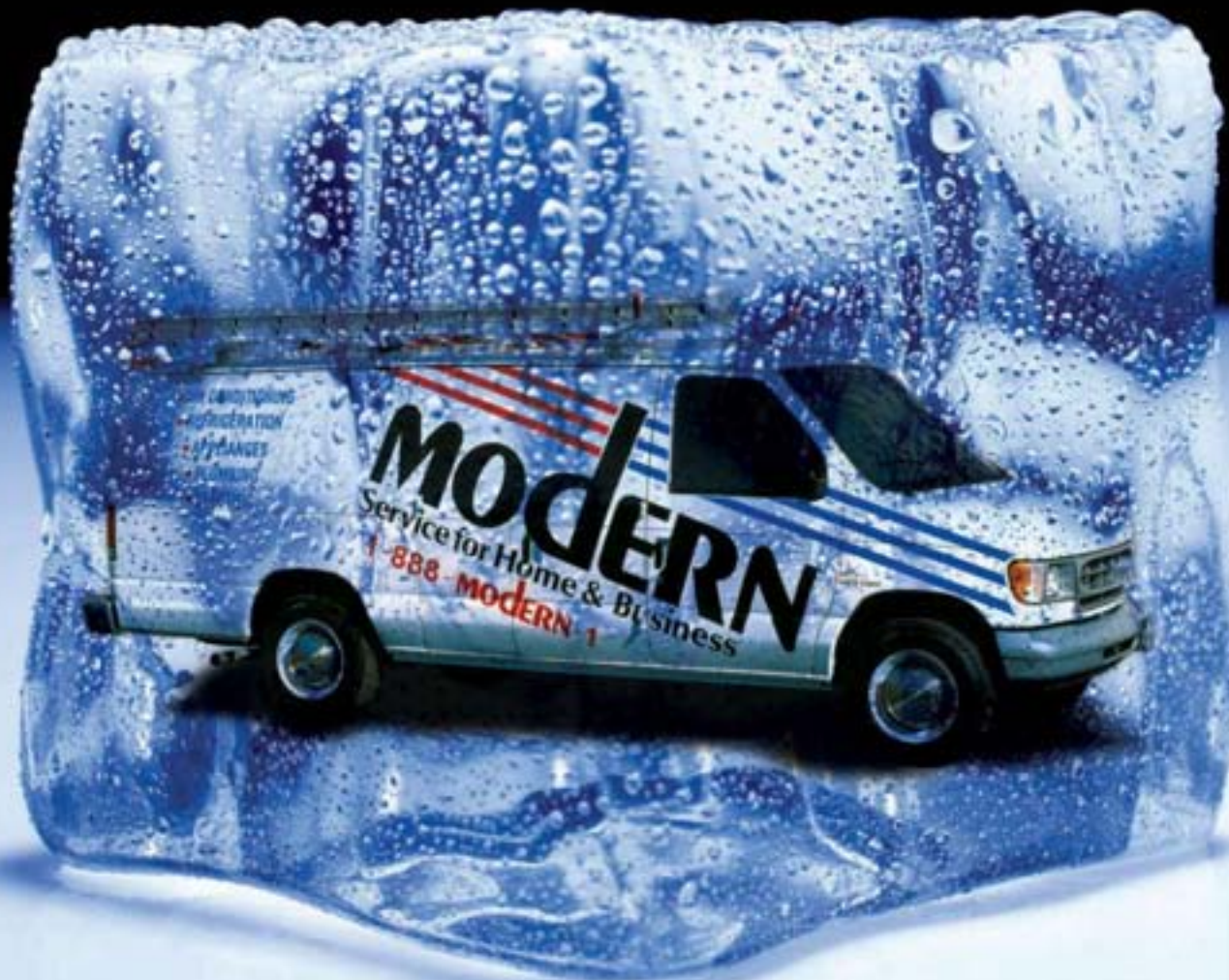
Last week Alicia Guerra became the Managing Attorney for the Guardian ad Litem Program. Guerra, known for her aggressive representation of children with the Guardian ad Litem Program in Charlotte and Volusia Counties, reflects the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program's call within its own attorney ranks to take an even more proactive stance in representing children—and to begin recruiting pro bono attorneys to join the team.

And, it's a big job. In June and July alone, 149 children came into care in Lee County. Without a Guardian ad Litem volunteer to represent their best interests, half of these children won't have their voice heard in court or the community.

Anyone interested in volunteering, or more information, to call toll-free, statewide 1-866-341-IGAL to reach their local Guardian ad Litem office. ■

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