

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Lee gets federal grant to help the homeless

Lee County agencies will receive \$2.2 million this year to provide housing and supportive services to homeless families and individuals – part of a record \$1.5 billion in grants announced last month by the Bush Administration and U.S. Housing and Urban Development Deputy Secretary Roy A. Bernardi.

The grants, part of HUD's Continuum of Care and Emergency Shelter Grant programs, will help 168,000 homeless individuals and families nationwide find emergency shelter, transitional housing, and a permanent home.

The local grants – part of \$69.7 million distributed in Florida – will go to Southwest Florida Addiction Services (\$212,325), the Salvation Army (\$1,286,206), Renaissance Manor (\$192,010), Ruth Cooper Center (\$98,736), Lee County Human Services (\$300,232), and

Emergency Shelter Grant funds (\$93,910) to fill critical needs for permanent supportive housing and continue programs that deliver a broad range of health, housing, and employment services for Lee County's homeless residents.

The Lee County 2008 Homeless Continuum of Care submission covered all local jurisdictions. Lee County's Department of Human Services is responsible for the planning, application, and administration of the grant funds. Local partnering agencies, which are members of the Lee County Coalition for the Homeless, implement Lee County's Continuum of Care activities. Continuum activities focus on restoring homeless families, individuals, and children to housing and self-sufficient lives. ■

### Conference participants volunteer to improve local wetlands

Nearly 400 HSBC North-America executives who are visiting Lee County for a conference are partnering with Lee County Parks & Recreation and Conservation 20/20 staff. Volunteers will remove the non-native invasive tree called melaleuca from the wetland areas of a recently acquired Lee County preserve on Friday Jan. 11 from 1 to 5 p.m.

HSBC North-America is one of the Top 10 financial services companies in the U.S.

Volunteers will work on the Imperial Marsh Preserve (Galloway Tract). The site is roughly seven miles east of Interstate 75 on Corkscrew Road (exit No. 123).

Melaleuca was introduced to Florida about 150 years ago as a method of draining land so it could better be used for agriculture and development. Not only was it exceedingly effective at lowering the water table, it was ex-

tremely invasive and took over many areas of South Florida, replacing natural vegetation and destroying wildlife habitat. The removal of melaleuca and initial restoration of the Galloway Tract of the Imperial Marsh will benefit the preserve and surrounding area by allowing the natural plant communities to flourish, ultimately improving the ecosystem processes that affect Lee County's water and air quality.

As part of its long-standing green commitment and community engagement, HSBC partners with local organizations on environmental and educational projects for executives at conferences so they can experience first hand the rewards of making a difference in the communities they serve or visit.

For information call Betsy Clayton, (239) 826-4606 or Kathy Cahill, (239) 707-0876 or go to [www.leeparks.org](http://www.leeparks.org) ■

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