

# Reflecting on seven years of making history

Celebrating Thanksgiving always gives me reason to reflect about what I appreciate in my life that makes a difference. It isn't about the little stuff that is truly inconsequential. It's about those things that stand out when you close your eyes and visualize a mental movie of accomplishments.

Team Punta Gorda was just seven years old this month. It's been an exciting ride; one filled with vision, devotion, frustration, elation, creation, and camaraderie – all to make our community a better place to live, work, and play. Looking back, we're thankful for:

Citizens — from those who had the courage and conviction to want to rebuild their community and make it a place that was better than they had before Charley's visit to those who join the effort to continue the journey. These volunteers contribute an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 hours annually in a variety



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of ways, worth up to \$460,000 (at \$18.40 per hour as documented by the National Corporation for Community Service).

Donors and corporate sponsors — from those who made an initial investment so necessary to develop a Citizens' Master Plan to those who contribute to provide the funding that enables projects to keep producing results. Check out our website at [www.team-puntagorda.org](http://www.team-puntagorda.org) for a complete sponsor listing.

Collaborative partners — those who come together in a common cause to create new venues and complete projects that benefit our community like the Arts & Humanities Council of Charlotte County, Charlotte County, Char-

lotte County Chamber of Commerce, City of Punta Gorda, Main Street Punta Gorda, Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, Punta Gorda Downtown Merchant Association, Punta Gorda Historical Society, Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society, South County Regional Park, and Visual Arts Center.

Grantors — that fund projects benefiting our community like the Charlotte Community Foundation and Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program.

Committees — from those who continually work to establish relationships with governmental and civic partners to those whose mission is to fulfill the goals of a strategic project like:

Artisans' Atelier that features local artists in a workshop in Herald Court Centre.

Beautification that enhances our community and adds poinsettias at Christmas and celebrates with children in Herald Court Plaza on December 15 at 5 p.m.

Community Garden that will host a ribbon-cutting for its first project at South County Regional Park on December 8 at 4 p.m.

Free Bicycle Loaner Program with six host locations (Charlotte Regional Medical Center — Wellness Center, Fishermen's Village Marina, Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Isles Yacht Club, Lashley Park Marina, and Wyvern Hotel) and 33 bicycles/tricycles donated to the program for visitors and residents to enjoy.

Punta Gorda History Center, Inc. that started as a committee and is now officially a separate non-profit organization that will protect, provide research of, and showcase historic artifacts about Punta Gorda's rich and engaging history.

Successful fundraisers — to support both Team Punta Gorda and important community projects like:

An annual golf tournament at St. Andrews South Golf Club (save

March 24, 2012).

Pedal and Play in Paradise Bicycle Tour that showcases the progress made in becoming a bicycle-friendly community while raising funds for bicycle-friendly programs and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society as a part of Isles Yacht Club's Leukemia Cup (save March 31, 2012).

Media partners — that help us share the news and engage others in this exciting journey.

Other inspired citizen groups like Team Port Charlotte who are energized and making a difference in another part of our community.

Twin Isles Country Club that maintains Herald Court Plaza and PGI Mariners boat club that maintains the Gilchrist Park Beach.

As we reflect, we're thankful that we live in this unique community that has the courage to embark on this very unique journey. We welcome you to join in the fun! From office volunteers to committee

members, we'll find a rewarding opportunity just for you. You can contact Team Punta Gorda at [team@teampuntagorda.org](mailto:team@teampuntagorda.org) or 941-637-TEAM. We're also on Facebook. Keep tabs on Team Punta Gorda through Team Talk, our monthly e-newsletter, by signing up on our website.

Make a commemorative paver at the Lashley Park interactive fountain a gift that will become a part of our community's history. At only \$100 for one, \$250 for three, or \$400 for five, you will be giving a lasting memory and help to fund our community's beautification. To order or get more information, go to [www.teampuntagorda.org](http://www.teampuntagorda.org). We're also closing out of the Destination Punta Gorda coffee table book at \$10 per copy. It's on sale at both the Punta Gorda and Charlotte County Chambers of Commerce.

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