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Fun, treats and help abound at Tri-County Community Resource Center's second birthday party



Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum shows his fun side at the event as he demonstrates that he can milk a cow. The cow is a UF/IFAS Food and Nutrition Program tool used to help children understand the source of milk. Sheriff McCallum was at the event with his wife Kandy McCallum.

Story, Photos and Videos By Jeff M. Hardison © April 22, 2017 at 7:47 p.m.

CHIEFLAND -- Scores of people came to enjoy fun, treats and access to a wide range of helpful organizations at the Tri-County Community Resource Center's second birthday celebration on Saturday (April 22).

The Tri-County Community Resource Center is located at 15 N. Main St. in Chiefland, and the party was in the northern adjacent field.



Tri-County Community Resource Center Manager Beverly Goodman (left) and President and Chief Executive Officer of Partnership for Strong Families Stephen Pennypacker, Esq., pause for

a photo opportunity minutes after the start of the three-hour scheduled event.

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President and Chief Executive Officer of Partnership for Strong Families Stephen Pennypacker, Esq., came to see how the event unfolded under the leadership of Tri-County Community Resource Center Manager Beverly Goodman.

The Partnership for Strong Families helps provide for many of the resource center's needs, although there are other donating entities and individuals.

The resource center is a central focal point for the complete spectrum of human services for people of all ages who may be helped in Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties with everything from guidance to hands-on care – and more.

Cookies and cupcakes were plentiful at this second birthday celebration. Popcorn, snow cones and other treats were available as well.



Tiffany Gundrum stands near a bounce house at the event. She is one of the many people who enjoyed the celebration of the Tri-County Community Resource Center celebrating its second year.

A bounce house, face-painting and other enjoyable activities helped entertain children throughout the event from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

K-9 SHOWS



Chiefland Police Officer Pete Barnes stands with his CPD K-9 Bruno. In the video, Barnes and Bruno showed onlookers how the dog can detect drugs as the officer released the certified law-enforcement canine. Bruno found the marijuana that was hidden in a container.

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Levy County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Kevin Kinik and LCSO K-9 Zombie prepare to demonstrate how Zombie captures a suspect (with CPD Officer Pete Barnes {at left in photo} playing that part as he wears a protective sleeve).

VIDEOS ARE LINKED AT THE TOP OF THE APRIL PAGE

In the video, after the certified law-enforcement canine helps Sgt. Kinik capture the (pretend) suspect and as the LCSO sergeant is frisking Barnes, Barnes makes a threatening move on Kinik and Zombie stops that action.

CABANAS

Cabanas might be a fancy name, but there were open tent-like structures providing shade for vendors and visitors.

Following is a brief breakdown of most of the action on Saturday in beautiful downtown Chiefland.

CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion



Earl Beegle, a mobile customer service representative with CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion, stand next to the van he uses to help future employees find jobs and current employers post jobs. Beegle is among the people who operate the fleet of these mobile stations to help more people

have access to finding jobs in the Citrus, Levy and Marion counties' region.

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Central Florida Electric Cooperative

Central Florida Electric Cooperative sent a customer service representative to share information about this rural electric cooperative.

CFEC also gave away thin plastic “hardhats” for children. There were free cloth bags with the CFEC logo, and free CFL-low energy lightbulbs given away.

Clyatt House Learning Center



(from left) Grace Pitts, 6, teacher and body art painter Nichole Sandquist, Patricia Gundrum and Santasia Whitson enjoy some of the fun offered at the Clyatt House Learning Center area of the event. There were at least eight teachers who came from Clyatt House Learning Center to participate in the event on Saturday. Clyatt House Learning Center of Chiefland offers Head Start, Early Head Start (birth through age 4) and afterschool programs. Clyatt House Director Vicky Pitts was present and helping visitors feel welcome to learn about the center. To find out more about how to enroll in Head Start or Early Head Start, please call the Clyatt House Learning Center at 352-493-7304 or send an email to info@chlc.us.

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College Of Central Florida



College of Central Florida Levy Center Manager Holly McGlashan stands near the table where CF gave away items and provided opportunities for people to register. The Jack Wilkinson Levy Campus is slated to be open in August, and McGlashan mentioned how people are still able to qualify for one of the 100 \$500 scholarships. (For more information on that, just click on the CF ad on any of the seven pages, including The [HOME PAGE](#).)

Haven Hospice

Haven Hospice sent people to the event to share with them about the services provided by this hospice.

There are two hospice entities in the area. The other one did not send anyone to the event.

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Levy County Prevention Coalition

Representing the Levy County Prevention Coalition at the event was LCPC Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Lewis and LCPC Project Coordinator Rose Wilder.

They provided visitors with information about LCPC, including the about the “No One’s House” program, where underage drinking is not allowed at private residences.

Levy, Dixie, Hernando and Lake counties have formed a partnership. Lewis has said, to help parents understand the importance of not allowing underage drinking at anyone’s house.

One key source for alcoholic beverages, Lewis said, is from residences.

“This is a message that no one’s house is a safe place for teen drinking,” Lewis said.

This program to inform everyone is through print media, daily news websites and social media, he said.

Lewis said parents will sign a pledge card. There will be a place where parents can check to see if the house their child is visiting is noted as one where the parent does not allow teenagers to drink alcohol. The online place for a parent to sign the pledge is

<http://nooneshouse.com/>.

QuitDoc, Tobacco Free Partnership For Levy County

Tobacco Prevention Specialist Katrina Zachry and members of the area’s Students Working Against Tobacco were at the event.

They helped anyone who was interested in getting off of tobacco.

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System

Representatives from Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) were at the event.

FDLRS provides diagnostic, instructional, and technology support services to district exceptional education programs and families of students with disabilities.

Service centers include 19 centers that directly serve school districts in the areas of Child Find, Parent Services, Human Resources Development, and Technology. In addition, the FDLRS Network also includes five multi-disciplinary centers that focus on in-depth evaluations and several statewide projects offering specialized services.

Healthy Start of North Central Florida

The goal of Healthy Start is to reduce infant mortality, reduce the number of low birth weight babies, and improve health and developmental outcomes.

Representatives from Healthy Start were ready, willing and able to provide people with information to help in this regard.

Florida Department of Health for Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties

Wesley Asbell of the Florida Department of Health for Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties was present to help people know what the health department can do for them in the three counties.

To see a recently published article from the HardisonInk.com archives regarding the Health Department, click [HERE](#).

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House of the Happy Cats and Dogs

Sarah Hamilton holds Pattycake, a cat that was blind since birth. Robin Lynn (not pictured) is the owner of House of the Happy Cats and Dogs. She wants people to understand that disabled (or differently-abled) cats and dogs are great to adopt too.



Janet Hudor (left) holds Elsa the cat as Sarah Hamilton holds Pattycake the cat. Elsa and Pattycake are the best of feline friends, because Elsa has served as 'eyes' for the blind cat Pattycake. Another person (not pictured) who was at the event Saturday is Shawn Royce. She is known to help animals find new homes too. Another project these and other volunteers endorse is the Levy County Snip and Assist Program to spay and neuter cats and dogs.



Natasha Allen, Esq.

An attorney in the area who was present is Natasha Allen. She was providing children (and adults) with opportunities to color their hair with spray on color.

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Three Rivers Legal Services

Three Rivers Legal Services Inc. -- a non-profit law firm dedicated to the provision of quality legal assistance to the poor, abused, disabled and neglected, and to empowerment through preventive legal education sent representatives.

Three Rivers Legal Services was established in November of 1977 after the merger of Storefront Legal Aid in Gainesville, and a legal aid component of Suwannee River Economic Council in Live Oak.

This group serves people in Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Nassau, St. Johns, Suwannee, Taylor and Union counties.

Florida Department of Children and Families

Millie Petrie and her 6-month-old baby girl Sandy Petrie decorate a cookie at one the Florida Department of Children and Families booth. The DCF had a strong presence at the celebration of the Tri-County Community Resource Center, with several fun activities and many brochures with information. Among the DCF leaders who came to the event was DCF Regional Managing Director Patricia Medlock, who drove from Jacksonville to help celebrate the second birthday for this center.



This is the final artistic cookie made by Millie Petrie. Children, parents, grandparents, guardians, vendors, guests and visitors all seemed to enjoy the fun, food, camaraderie and kindness shared at this event.

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Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

FWC Officer Paul Schulz was available to share with listeners how the FWC serves the people of Florida while conserving fish and wildlife.

Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office

Capt. Sheryl Brown of the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office was present to assist her colleagues in law enforcement, and to answer any questions about the GCSO.

One upcoming event she spoke about is the program titled "Bridging The Divide, Re-imagining Police-Community Relations."

Gilchrist County Sheriff Robert D. "Bobby" Schutz III invites all interested people to meet at the Train Depot in Trenton. This event is a community walk. This will be a community discussion to engage law enforcement officers and the community leaders to devise new ways to reduce crime and build public trust.

One goal is to increase the safety and security of police officers and the people in the communities they serve. It is the goal of the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office to harvest and maintain a positive, ethical image while earning the trust of the people that the GCSO is sworn to protect and serve.

Community trust is the key to effective policing, Sheriff Schultz said, and the GCSO encourages participating in group discussion, training activities and community events. The GCSO contact for this event is Capt. Brown. Her email address is sbrown@gcso.us.

North Central Florida Alliance For the Homeless

The North Central Florida Alliance For the Homeless serves people in Alachua, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy and Putnam counties who are homeless.

Executive Director Theresa Lowe is working with Tri-County Community Resource Center Manager Goodman to help improve services for homeless people in Levy and Gilchrist counties through the Resource Center.

Lowe said the significant homeless problems in Gainesville are the main place currently for the North Central Florida Alliance For the Homeless' resources.

Alachua County Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Candi Morris of the Florida Department of Health's WIC program in Alachua County said WIC helps women, infants and children in Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties too.

The Tri-County Resource Center is an excellent starting point for any persons or families in need.

Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Inc.

– Supporting Services For Veteran Families

When people hear Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, they generally think of the mental health services or the drug rehabilitation services.

Another aspect of Meridian Behavioral Healthcare is one that finds houses for homeless veterans.

This particular part of the group has helped about 400 homeless veterans to find places to live in 11 counties – Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Putnam, Suwannee and Union.

The Tri-County Community Resource Center is a good starting point for homeless veterans in Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties to seek help.

University of Florida's

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Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Family Nutrition Program



Katie Trimm (left) and DeeDee Smith, both program assistants with University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Family Nutrition Program for Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy counties, help children make ice cream in a bag. Carol West of Dixie County said the UF/IFAS Family Nutrition Program is excellent, and that Trimm, Smith and others in this program are excellent teachers. West said she knows the Family Nutrition Program teaches parents and children about healthy eating, and to focus on fresh ingredients. West said Trimm and her colleagues are making a positive impact by teaching classes at the Resource Center. West said she is hoping to see a class like this for teenagers in the near future.

Florida Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation

Jacqueline Barber (left) and Kassi Knopp of the Florida Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation program were available to tell people about how they assist disabled individuals in finding and retaining employment.



Barber focuses on clients in Citrus, Levy and Marion counties and Knopp focuses on clients in Gilchrist and Dixie counties, although they work together across the invisible geographic boundaries in the area whenever that need arises.

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CDS Family & Behavioral Health Services Inc.

Representatives from CDS Family & Behavioral Health Services Inc. were available to speak with people.

CDS fulfills its mission by offering a wide variety of programs to the community. Most programs fall into one of three areas:
Youth Shelters, Counseling and Prevention.

CDS has been an excellent source of help the Levy County Prevention Coalition over the past several years.

Gateway College

Representatives from Gateway College were present.

Formerly named Lake City Community College, Florida Gateway has satellite campuses in Dixie and Gilchrist counties.

Birthday Celebrations Coming



This was a second birthday celebration for the Tri-County Community Resource Center. There is another birthday celebration planned. Bill Brown (left), the founder and leader of The Children's Table, is celebrating his 88th birthday with a fundraiser for The Children's Table's new building fund. Verna Brown, his wife of 37 years, said the group needs about \$100,000 more to construct what they want on the vacant land next to the current site in northeastern Bronson on Thrasher Lane (State Road 24). Verna Brown said the birthday party is set for April 29 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Bronson Elementary School Cafeteria. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children aged 10 years and younger. A cake auction, raffles and a country band are part of the planned activities.

For more information about the Tri-County Community Resource Center, please look at its webpage by clicking [HERE](#).