

## Program in Indian River County wins Harvard University recognition for improving lives

By Brittany Llorente

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INDIAN RIVER COUNTY — After over \$2 million in capital improvements in Indian River County, the Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE EH) has received recognition from the Harvard “Bright Ideas” committee.

Julianne Price, the Statewide PACE EH Coordinator and Indian River County Environmental Health Specialist, said that the success in the program is by letting the communities have a hands-on approach to the issues.

“Instead of going in and doing enforcement with what the issues are, we let the community work with us to identify them and then tell us the problem.” Price said.

There are currently three programs in the county: West Wabasso, Hall Carter James in Fellesmere and Gifford.

After being sent the information on the Bright Ideas award, Price felt that PACE EH would be a good fit.

According to a press release from the Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, “Bright Ideas is an initiative of the Ash Center’s Innovations in Government Program, which spotlights exemplary models of government innovation and advances efforts to address the nation’s most pressing public concerns.”

PACE EH received the award on Sept. 29. Only 173 programs and innovations were chosen from a pool of 600 applicants.

"I feel very good about the award and I am excited." Said Detective Teddy Floyd, Indian River County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit. Floyd is also a board member of PACE EH.

"The award is for the people in the community who don't have a voice," said Floyd. "We want to make life a little better for them. With the economy being down were just trying to help out as many people as we can."

PACE EH has also helped the communities with park improvements, removing outmoded septic systems and dealing with crime and safety issues.

Thirty-five abandoned homes have been demolished with the help of PACE EH, local government and private businesses.

According to Price, the award helps build credibility for the program, but there is a greater reward out there.

"My award is to see the improvements realized," said Price. "This award is icing on the cake."

Bright Idea's committee chose 11 programs in Florida. Three are state programs: PACE EH, Communities for a Lifetime and Model Plan Review Program. The other programs are county specific, but no other were from Indian River County.

