



Highlands County Health Department—Environmental Health Division—PACE-EH Publication FEBRUARY, 2007

Highlands County PACE-EH Project in Full Swing

In 2006, the Highlands County Health Department, Environmental Health Division introduced the PACE-EH project to the Highway Park Community. The initial efforts were accepted with enthusiasm and interest. A significant number of residents were ready and prepared to take on the responsibility and the challenge to manage the process of community improvement.

The PACE-EH (Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health) is a process designed to help communities conduct and act on an assessment of environmental status in their localities.

Through this process the Highway Park PACE-EH project volunteers will be given the necessary knowledge and opportunities to develop the skills needed to address the identified community challenges.

As a result of the PACE-EH initiative, the Highway Park community is expecting to have key volunteer members having the readiness, skills and urgent sense of responsibility to act collectively as a team working in collaboration with existing organizations within the community and in coordination with key government agencies in addressing issues and concerns.

A number of residents have shown a significant level of enthusiasm and involvement within the first month of implementation. This positive attitude made possible fast and smooth start. Further, within the second month of implementation, the Baseline Assessment was completed with community response level of 30%, a relatively high return for a public survey.

On February 22, 2007 the Team of volunteers are scheduled to go through the next process, which is to validate and clarify the Survey Results.

Continuing Increase in Volunteer Involvement ...

The first volunteers of the PACE-EH project were from the officers and members of the Highway Park Neighborhood Preservation and Enhancement District Council. During their meeting January 11, the CHD Environmental Services Division announced the PACE-EH project re-launch and formally extended the invitation and encouragement to meeting attendees to become volunteers.

There were 12 volunteers who accepted the invitation during the meeting. Most of these early volunteers worked hard to influence neighbors and friends to join the PACE-EH Team.

Since then the number of volunteers has gradually increased each week. There are now 27 resident volunteers participating in the PACE-EH project.

The key to a successful implementation of PACE-EH rests on the number and level of participation of community residents.

The invitation to join the PACE-EH Team is still open and will remain open to all residents. This is a continuing call for involvement of residents for common good.

HEALTH

Florida Department of Health
PACE EH Project

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Know the Highway Park PACE-EH Volunteers, What made them decide to volunteer



I want to see a positive change and strengthen what already exist. I want to make a difference.

..... Evan Portee



I was born and raised in this community and have always wanted to make a difference here. I am grateful for this opportunity

..... Walter Sholtz



My community is important to me. I would like to do my part in making it a clean and safe place to live, and set an example for children to see that it is important to give to the community.

.....Karen Springfield



I have my roots here in Highway Park and have lived here for 40 years. I want this place to look great.

..... Mike Callahan



I am always willing to help and make a positive difference in my community... I am concerned for the future of my kids.

..... Leslie Portee



I have been a part of this community for some 40 years. Our younger generation needs to see leaders from their community and families.

.....Cornelius Manning



To help our community, and to provide our elderly citizens and young people a safe and healthy environment to live work and grow in.

..... Brenda Smith



Highway Park had a unique and proud African American neighborhood that must be preserved and returned to the together of the past. PACE-EH is a vehicle that can assist us.

.....Vince Hill

Look forward to meeting the rest of the volunteers in the succeeding issues!

Building a Collaboration for Improvement

In order to be effective and successful in installing the PACE-EH as a community process there is a need to establish collaboration with existing organizations in the community. While it is true that PACE-EH depends on resident volunteers to come up with actions plans on how to address identified needs, the relationships with established organizations that could possibly carry on and lead in implementing the plans is equally important and critical.

PACE-EH has extended invitations to most of the organized groups within Highway Park to volunteer as a group in anticipation of the programs that could already be in place, or programs that perhaps might just need minor changes in order to be responsive and effective and/or new programs that might be related to their specific focus of operation.



Vince Hill (left of picture), current President of the Highway Park Neighborhood Preservation and Enhancement District Council and Frank Kruppa, Environmental Health Director of the Highlands County Health Department seals by handshake the commitment of the Council to support the PACE-EH initiatives.

The first organized group to respond to this invitation for collaboration is the Highway Park Neighborhood Preservation and Enhancement District Council under the leadership of Vince Hill.

The Highway Park Neighborhood Preservation and Enhancement District Council has been helping the community in their own way, even long before the PACE-EH offer of help came along. They had been coordinating with different local government agencies to bring in the needed help to Highway Park.

The Council had been doing cleanliness and beautification projects, assistance to minor home improvements and recreation.

The established relationship between the District Council and the PACE-EH project is expected to bring excellent results. Other organized groups have accepted the PACE-EH invitation for collaboration.

The next issue will carry details on RCMA under the leadership of Evan Portee. RCMA has been extending assistance to the project as a point of coordination and place for small group meetings.

Eye Opener



The above photo was taken from the lakeside end of Anderson St. one late afternoon. This is the panoramic view of Lake Huntley from the boat ramp..... breathtaking sight of clear blue water meeting the sky in the horizon, a sight many would pay so much to have... and Highway Park has it!!

PACE-EH Q & A

1. What does PACE-EH mean?

PACE-EH is an acronym for Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health.

2. Is PACE-EH an organization?

No, PACE-EH is not an organization. PACE-EH is a process, a way of doing things to get results.

3. What is the PACE-EH process?

PACE-EH is a community-based way of identifying and defining environmental health issues and concerns, collectively as a team the residents will prioritize and plan for the resolution of the issues and concerns using what is available in the community in terms of resources as well as in coordination with local governmental agencies.

4. Why is the PACE-EH referred to as a project?

Because it is the effort or activity that promotes and installs the PACE-EH process in the community. This project is being undertaken by the County Health

Department, Environmental Services Division. A project has a beginning and an end. By the end of this project, PACE-EH is expected to become an established approach or a way of dealing with environmental issues and concerns.

5. Considering that the PACE-EH project is not an organization, how will the project work?

It will work with resident volunteers and existing organized groups within the community. The volunteers will be trained on the approach and the needed skills as we go through the different stages of the PACE-EH process.

6. What are the requirements to become a PACE-EH volunteer?

The volunteer must be either be: a resident of Highway Park, have rental property in Highway Park, and/or have a business/congregation based in Highway Park.

The volunteer must have a genuine desire to help others in the community and a dream to continuously improve existing environmental health situations, plus the willingness to spare some one or two hours each week to help

and get involved when needed.

7. Will volunteers be given an allowance while working on PACE-EH activities?

No, but there will be a definite return. The “direct return” will be in terms of knowledge and skills gained from being involved in the project. The “indirect return” will be in terms improvements in the community living conditions (of which you are a part of) that would result from the PACE-EH efforts.

8. What are the expectations from existing organized group volunteers?

There are no set expectations, they will be asked for assistance.

The organized group volunteers are regarded as partners of the project. The helping relation can come in many ways like: providing use of a space for big and small meetings; leading a project that is related to the focus of their current operations; providing set of information that they already have; encouraging their respective members to become individual volunteers.

This is a monthly publication of the Highlands County Health Department, Environmental Health Division.

MISSION

"To promote and protect the health & safety of all of the residents of Highlands County through the provision of high quality public and personal health services and the promotion of healthy lifestyles."