



# Indiantown Nonprofit Receives First Place in National Competition

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The partnership between Indiantown Non-Profit Housing, Inc. and the Martin County Sheriff's Office has been selected as a First Place Winner for the Metlife Community-Police Partnership Award. We still can't believe that our partnership was selected as the #1 application out of 520 other worthy communities nationwide to receive a \$25,000 award. It is a huge honor and we were particularly pleased to receive the award at the Florida Housing Coalitions' statewide annual conference. We would not be in this position had it not been for all the help we have received from the Florida Housing Coalition as a key partner in all that we have accomplished at Indiantown Nonprofit, including the revitalization of the Booker Park neighborhood and the development of Heritage Park.



Board. This allows each agency to have input at the earliest stages of one another's projects and provide insight as to how their programs can work together to achieve intended results.

## CRIME REDUCTION

One of the primary components of the plan to reduce crime in Indiantown is the emphasis on outreach to residents on how to prevent crime. To this end, the Sheriff's Department has made a concerted effort to have a presence at every meeting of local citizens' organizations representing the varied populations of Indiantown. These meetings serve as a way for citizens and the MCSO to determine the needs and concerns of the community. One of the needs identified by the community was a way for residents who for various reasons were uncomfortable contacting the police station to report crime. INPHI offered office space to the Sheriff's Office in its Community Service Center which is centrally located in the community to meet this need.

As a direct result of the partners' involvement in the Citizens Advisory Board, a Citizens Police Academy was convened to teach local residents more about what the police do and how they can help the MCSO reduce crime in the community.

## THE PARTNERSHIP

INPHI serves as the lead community development agency in Indiantown and lead long-term recovery agency in Martin County, providing residents the opportunity for safe, decent, and sanitary housing through federally funded rental properties, single-family homeownership, and property repair. INPHI also operates the Indiantown Community Service Center which provides below market office space to non-profit and community organizations that provide services to low-income residents of Indiantown.

The Martin County Sheriff's Office provides services to the communities developed and/or revitalized by INPHI through public meetings with residents, helping clean up the crime in neighborhoods prior to the start of physical redevelopment, and being the lead agency in the Citizens Advisory Board which listen to residents concerns and provide them the information needed to make the situations improve.

A representative from the Sheriff's Department sits on the Board of Directors of Indiantown Non-Profit, and the Executive Director of INPHI sits on the Citizens Advisory



*Bi-Lingual Citizens Academy. By teaching these 44 people Sheriff's Office policies, programs and services, they have been able to pass this information on to the public who may not be able to communicate with deputies due to the language barrier.*



*Citizens Academy graduating class. Also in picture is Sheriff Robert Crowder, Captain Lloyd Jones, Lieutenant Forrest Yingling, Sergeant James White and Community Programs Laura Passanesi of the Martin County Sheriff's Department.*

Graduates of the academy serve as volunteers in the community and staff the office at the Community Service Center.

Indiantown has a large Hispanic population of 3,838 residents, comprising 42.7 percent of the population, which creates challenges for the Sheriff's Department in overcoming the population's fear of the police based on the abuses found in their country of origin, as well as fears translated to any public officials as it relates to their immigration status. To counteract these fears, organizations in Indiantown make special efforts to outreach to this population to ensure that crimes committed against them are reported and prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Included in this effort was the first Bi-Lingual Citizens Academy to teach local Hispanic residents about the Sheriff's Office policies, programs, and services to pass on to other residents of the Hispanic Community.

When tenants at the INPHI rental properties started voicing concerns about increased crime in the area, INPHI invited the Sheriff's office to attend all tenant meetings. Prior to these meetings, the organizations review statistics in the areas of concern to see which crimes are most

prevalent so that residents can be informed on how to prevent those crimes and what to look for when reporting criminal activity. As a result of these meetings, a Sheriff's substation was created at the site, a Crime Watch was organized for all the properties, and crime has gone down.

These efforts have helped increase community awareness, provided greater code compliance by property owners, reduced trespassing and loitering which has hindered the sale of drugs on the streets, increased security measures taken by local business to reduce theft, and provided crime victims with more options in moving forward with their lives

through the various individual funding opportunities available through INPHI and the agencies housed in the Community Service Center. Crime is down and residents feel safer. Residents are more likely to call the police and report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods (156 percent increase). Residents now know that they have a voice in the future of their community.

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Due to the limited activities available for young people of our community, youth crime was rising. To combat this, Indiantown Non-Profit Housing, Inc. offered free space for the Boys and Girls Club of Martin County (BGC MC) to move into the community center at their rental property New Hope I. They provide a comprehensive youth development curriculum when school is not in session. Using scientifically proven programs, trained and dedicated professionals focus on five core areas: Education and Career Development, Health and Life Skills, Leadership and Character Development, the Creative Arts and Sports and Fitness.

With the office space at New Hope Community I, the Community Police Officer is located in the same building as the Boys and Girls Club and the children who use that program have the opportunity to see law enforcement as a positive contributor to their future through various partnership programs like the National Night Out and the Bike Rodeo.



*Boys and Girls Club at New Hope I, a rental community of Indiantown Non-Profit Housing, Inc. on the National Night Out Campaign.*



*Captain Lloyd Jones reads to children at Perkins Day Care in Booker Park on Dr. Seuss Day.*

## THE FUTURE

Community revitalization requires a full community effort. Reducing crime is impacted by reducing the number of vacant and abandoned buildings conducive to criminal activity. Keeping rental projects as a place to call home requires extra efforts to keep crime at a minimum. The future of our town is dependent upon giving young people opportunity for a future and a desire to create that future here as leaders of the community. The partnership works together to create a community that all citizens can be proud to call home.

