

A community partner that gets things done

TEAM Punta Gorda is indeed the trusted community partner that can get things done. That's how many in our community think of us.

When a Punta Gorda Historical Society volunteer and board member noticed the condition of the exterior paint on their little white cigar house, he called TEAM. He was concerned the historic structure, situated in the History Park on Shreve Street, would have a rough time getting through the coming rainy season without sustaining further damage unless someone put on a coat of paint.

We called on the chair of our Paint Your Heart Out program, who most recently was leading volunteers in painting affordable housing. He said, "sure, as long as we can get it done quickly before I leave to go north for the season." And in a flash, he organized the pressure washing and scraping, and gathered some volunteers. Another of our volunteer leaders managed the actual paint day. Up popped the Punta Gorda Rotary Club with more volunteers, and within two weeks the little Cigar House was sporting a fresh coat of white paint!

We're all so grateful to be able to get out a little more now that we are vaccinated! We find ourselves doing many of the things we wanted to do all winter but couldn't.

The downtown PGI in Bloom landscaping project spearheaded by the PGI Green Thumbs is coming along splendidly. The group, which includes Garden Club members as well as Master Gardeners, has been moving along rapidly. Taylor Street is complete and is now splendidly in bloom with colorful potted flowering plants.

TEAM Punta Gorda celebrated the completion of this phase of the downtown landscaping project with a ribbon cutting sponsored by the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce. Attending were city dignitaries, chamber representatives and TEAM volunteers. Following the ribbon cutting, TEAM volunteers hosted a reception in the nearby Charlotte Community Foundation courtyard to honor those who had worked so hard on the project. Thanks to F.M. Don's for providing a lovely spread.

To see what they accomplished, check out Taylor Street and the Historic County Courthouse or visit www.teampuntagorda.org. The results are really lovely.



Want to become involved? There is more planned for later this year. The team will start the next phase on Marion Avenue in the coming weeks. By fall, we should be just as noteworthy!

Another example of the perseverance of our volunteers during this challenging season was *Build a Bike, Win a Bike*. Unable to have our annual Spring bicycle event, *Pedal & Play in Paradise*, our volunteers got creative and designed a safe alternative.

Instead of gathering 700 bicyclists in one place, this event was meant to be done individually or with small groups of family and friends. Participants biked around Punta Gorda finding clues and solving the puzzle.

Those who participated in TEAM's *Build a Bike, Win a Bike* had a blast. "Fun, good exercise, and a nice way to explore different parts of Punta Gorda," commented one participant about the event. Said another rider, "the socially distanced event was a great alternative to Pedal and Play." Thanks to *Build a Bike, Win a Bike* riders for their good-natured participation.

The winner won a beautiful new Townie bike. We expect to be back with *Pedal & Play in Paradise* in March 2022.

While many of our volunteers go north or travel during the coming months resulting in a summer slowdown, there is little evidence of that happening this year. Our spring food drive for St. Vincent DePaul was a great success with four trucks of donations collected for the local food pantry. Our 92 community gardeners are solarizing their plots for the summer. Our free yellow loaner bikes are serving high numbers of visitors and residents once again. We know that the future is hard to predict these days, but we're planning a return to an activity packed schedule of volunteer activities this fall.

Please join us!

NANCY JOHNSON

TEAM Punta Gorda CEO