



**For the September 29, 2018 Charlotte Sun:**

## **TEAM GEARS UP FOR FALL**

By Nancy Johnson, CEO

It's been a sleepy, wet, summer but fall is in the air and it's time for TEAM Punta Gorda to get to work again! It's all about collaboration with our many great partners as we continue with projects in the works.

Our Community Garden at the History Park is greening up, thanks to the City's Public Works Department. Despite the rain and soggy ground, they installed 10 new raised wooden beds, complete with irrigation and filled with soil. These beds were built last spring by our small army of tool-welding volunteers. Their installation will allow 20 more gardeners to participate, for a total of 92 fully-subscribed plots. The garden is managed by a committee composed of the gardeners.

Last week the Punta Gorda City Council swapped lots with Charlotte Habitat for Humanity, providing the City with a needed drainage site and Habitat with a buildable lot. The lot on Virginia Street will become the site of our next collaborative project, TEAM Builds. TEAM Volunteers will work with Habitat staff to build a Habitat house on the lot in January of 2019.

Our yellow bike program took possession of twenty newly purchased bikes last week. The old bikes will be stripped of usable parts, or recycled into the painted bike program, or donated to St. Vincent DePaul's bicycle refurbishing program. This happy situation created an urgent need for work-space for our volunteers. Our usual spot, at the City's Public Works facility is currently occupied with new garbage cans waiting to be deployed to homeowners. Fortunately, Patti Allen, General Manager of Fisherman's Village came through and loaned us the use of the vacant garage in their recently-purchased Impac University campus for a workspace. Many thanks!

TEAM volunteers also supported the United Way's Day of Caring. Despite the heat, a hardy crew cleaned up the grounds and restored a playground for the Homeless Coalition.

Another innovative collaborative project was proposed to us by the Punta Gorda Civic Association to which we enthusiastically signed on. Their goal is to reduce our plastic footprint by using biodegradable straws and coffee stirrers. Did you know that five million plastic straws are thrown away every day in the United States and they are the 11<sup>th</sup> most frequently found form of ocean trash as of 2017? Together we hope to convince our local restaurants and event planners to make the switch. Get green now!

Coming up soon is our annual kayaking event, Paddle Punta Gorda, featuring naturalist guided tours of local waterways. Participants can choose from seven kayak trails. The event features an after-paddle party at Laishley Marina with lunch, a speaker and more. The event, on November 17<sup>th</sup>, coincides with the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary's Nature Festival at Laishley Park. Consider a day enjoying the outdoors and learning about our very special eco-system.

Please join us for our kick-off Mixer at 5:30 on October 24<sup>th</sup> at Saint Andrews Golf Club in Punta Gorda. Come and meet TEAM Punta Gorda volunteers and have an enjoyable evening. If you are thinking about volunteering, our New Volunteer Breakfast will be on October 30<sup>th</sup> in the TEAM Punta Gorda office on Sullivan Street.

As the November 6<sup>th</sup> election nears, don't forget to register to vote! October 9<sup>th</sup> is the deadline, and you can also register to vote by mail. TEAM Punta Gorda is a non-partisan organization and does not support any candidates or political positions. We encourage citizens to get the facts on the issues that you care about and to support the candidates of your choice.

TEAM Punta Gorda is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Nancy Johnson is the CEO of TEAM Punta Gorda. Ideas or questions can be addressed to [team@teampuntagorda.org](mailto:team@teampuntagorda.org). Or, call 941-637-TEAM (8326). Find a complete schedule of all upcoming activities, as well as more information about TEAM Punta Gorda, membership, or to volunteer, visit our website, [www.teampuntagorda.org](http://www.teampuntagorda.org).