



# One Voice

## Israel the Intern...

Hello, my name is Israel Ross, and I have been an intern with the Board of County Commissioners for the past eight weeks. I am a recent graduate of St. Edwards School and will be attending Indian River Community College this fall. I spent my summer attending different meetings, shadowing various department directors and learning the ins and outs of local government. I developed a particular interest in gang violence and graffiti and how these issues affect local youth. A lot of my time was spent bringing an idea to fruition that may help this issue. I wanted to organize a day where people from the community went out and painted over graffiti. You can read more about that idea in "Graffiti be Gone."



My favorite part of the internship has been the people. Everyone here has helped me fit in and understand their jobs. I enjoyed my afternoon chats with Michelle, the front desk receptionist, and my heart to hearts with Commissioner Smith's Aide Carin, who became a big sister to me over the last eight weeks. Commissioner Smith is a very busy man; and does a good job giving his best to everything he does. I had the pleasure of working with Christine Epps, Executive Director of the Executive Roundtable and Wendy Wolff, the consultant currently working on a gang survey and action plan. They are two amazing women who I feel anyone can learn from...whether it's juggling a million things or breaking down a problem, I don't think that there is one thing that these two women can't handle.

From my experience here I have learned a lot...from how to conduct business to how to be sarcastic but serious at the same time, (thanks to Commissioner Craft.) The lessons that I have learned I will always remember. I am very pleased that I was able to spend my summer with the St. Lucie County Board of Commissioners. I thank all of the Commissioners, especially Commissioner Smith, and County Administrator Doug Anderson for affording me this great opportunity.



## Lincoln Park Main Street Summer Camp

The summer months can prove to be a challenging time for students who have nothing to do. But several hundred kids in St. Lucie County didn't have to worry about how to spend their summer break thanks to the Lincoln Park Main Street's Summer Experience Revelation program.

Lincoln Park Main Street (LPMS) was established in August 2006 when it was named a Main Street Community by the State of Florida. Commissioner Smith is Vice-Chair of the organization, whose mission is to restore a sense of community and pride in one of the county's most historically rich areas. One way they are reaching out to the community is by providing youth programs such as the Summer Experience Revelation. The organization sponsored the program in hopes of providing a safe, fun and rewarding summer experience for students. The summer camp also provides parents with piece of mind knowing that their children are in a safe environment during the summer months.

More than three hundred students participated in the camp, which included cultural, educational, sports and entrepreneurial activities. One of the activities students could take part in was a theater program—where students were cast to play roles in two different original plays. The student actors will be performing the two shows for the public on August 24th at 7p at the Fort Pierce Community Center on Indian River Drive. For more information on the upcoming show, you can call (772) 462-2481.



## Graffiti be GONE!

If you drive around St. Lucie County, you may notice more and more graffiti popping up lately. Did you know that graffiti is the most common way for gangs to communicate? It is also one of the first signs that gangs are taking hold in a community. This is an issue that has become a hot topic for Commissioner Smith. In an effort to combat the issue, he tasked summer intern, Israel, and his Executive Aide, Carin with devising a plan to fight fire with fire...or more appropriately, paint with paint.

Graffiti has been called the newspaper of gangs because it is used to communicate messages such as warnings and challenges. Research shows that graffiti results in more graffiti, vandalism, and crimes in communities. Ideally graffiti should be removed or painted over after it has been documented and investigated by the police.

Graffiti clean ups can cost cities thousands of dollars each year. We want to send a message as a community that gangs cannot use our buildings and light poles as a way to talk to each other. We also hope to educate everyone about the consequences of graffiti in the community.

In conjunction with the Fort Pierce Police Department and city and county leaders, on September 8, there will be a community-wide graffiti removal event in Fort Pierce. Anyone and everyone is invited to come out and help us paint over graffiti. Local businesses have donated paint and supplies, now all we need is some elbow grease to get the graffiti gone! Our goal with this program is to gather volunteers to work together to eradicate this problem from our community.

For more information on the event, contact Carin at 772 462-1410.

# Tackling Tax Reform



If you own a home most anywhere in Florida, chances are you've seen your property values soar in recent years. But higher values bring higher taxes—a fact many Florida taxpayers are not happy to face. After receiving public input, the Florida Legislature chose to step in and impose an immediate 5-10% tax reduction in counties throughout the state. In St. Lucie County, the state mandated a 9% reduction in the budget.

More cuts could follow—that decision will be made by the voters in January 2008. On that ballot, voters will have to decide whether or not to approve a constitutional amendment that could potentially lower property taxes by \$16 billion over the next five years.

*So what does this mean to you? Here are some facts:*

\* Some homeowners can currently obtain a homestead exemption under the “Save our Homes” system. The current homestead caps the yearly property tax increase at 3%. Only permanent residents can claim the exemption—it does not apply to second homes, rental-owners, commercial or industrial properties.

\* Under the proposed legislation, each homeowner would have to choose between the current exemption or a new super exemption. The current system saves homeowners money over time, while the super exemption would provide immediate relief with uncertain long term results.

\* The tax cuts will continue to have adverse effects on county services and resources.

Before you vote in January, make sure you educate yourself on the issue. For more information on Florida tax reform, visit [www.fairtaxflorida.org/](http://www.fairtaxflorida.org/)

## Important Numbers

### Commissioner Joe Smith

(772) 462-1410

[carins@stlucieco.gov](mailto:carins@stlucieco.gov)

### Ft. Pierce City Hall

(772) 460-2200

### Port St. Lucie City Hall

(772) 871-5159

### SLC School Board Office

(772) 429-3600

### State Representative

#### Richard Machek

(772) 595-1391

### State Senator

#### Ken Pruitt

(772) 344-1140

### Governor Charlie Crist

(850) 488-7146

### US Representative

#### Alcee Hastings

(202) 225-1313

### US Senator

#### Bill Nelson

(202) 224-5274

### US Senator

#### Mel Martinez

(202) 224-3041

### The White House

(202) 456-1414



## SLC Has Basketball COVERED!

Soon, “ballers” will be able to enjoy taking it to hoop in the shade. Work is scheduled to begin soon on a much-needed basketball court cover at Open Space Park. Once construction begins, it will take approximately 180 days to complete.

## Should Schools “Get REAL about AIDS”



When it comes to teaching kids life lessons, who is responsible...parents, teachers, or partnerships between the two? That is a question that St. Lucie County leaders are attempting answer with regard to HIV and AIDS Education.

Historically, students in the county have learned about sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS, through a Health class curriculum that promotes abstinence only. With the rise we've seen in recent years of HIV cases in St. Lucie County, some community leaders challenge how effective this format really is in preventing the spread of the disease. Members of the Executive Roundtable of St. Lucie County (ERT), a group comprised of local leaders dedicated to youth issues, is asking the School Board to consider changing their teaching tactics.

The ERT commissioned a subcommittee to research various HIV/AIDS curriculums. The group is endorsing “Get Real About AIDS”, a program that teaches abstinence as part of a comprehensive health and wellness program. The St. Lucie County School Board is currently reviewing the information, but has not yet made a decision on implementing any changes for the upcoming school year.

## Meeting Schedules

### County Commission:

6p - 1st/3rd Tues of every month  
9a - 2nd/4th Tues of every month  
Administration Bldg.  
3rd Floor  
2300 Virginia Ave  
(Comcast Cable Channel 21)

### Ft. Pierce City Commission:

7p - 1st/3rd Mon of every month  
City Hall  
100 North US 1  
(Comcast Cable Channel 27)

### School Board:

6p - 2nd/4th Tues of every month  
School Board Office  
4204 Okeechobee Rd.

### Lincoln Park Business Assoc.:

7p - 2nd Wed of every month  
Willie B. Ellis Police Substation  
1220 Avenue D

## Questions or comments about our newsletter?

Do you have an issue you'd like for us to discuss in the next newsletter?

Maybe an event you would like announced to the community?

Call or email Carin:

462-1410 / [carins@stlucieco.gov](mailto:carins@stlucieco.gov)