

## The many faces of volunteers in Pinellas County government

April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month and our volunteers are public service partners in the truest sense of the word. In FY2014 Pinellas County volunteers donated 285,329 hours; however, there is no way we can truly measure their value to our citizens.

Over 3,000 individuals donate their time and talents on a regular basis, and several hundred more sign up to help out for special events like the clean up at Joe's Creek. Our volunteers are making a difference in 41 departments of seven Appointing Authorities including the Board of County Commissioners, Business Technology Services, the Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Construction Licensing Board, the Office of Human Rights, the Supervisor of Elections, and Human Resources.

They range in age from Bright Future students and college interns to seasoned veterans with 30 years of service to Pinellas County government. They enhance service delivery to our citizens in a wide range of duties. They are dog socializers at Animal Services, radio operators at Emergency Management, construction and civil engineering interns, museum docents, Hyperion report developers, mediators, advisory board members, campground hosts, auxiliary rangers on the Pinellas Trail, and so much more.

You will find volunteers at nearly every County location from the campgrounds

at Fort De Soto Park to the Emergency Operations Center in Largo to the Education Center at Brooker Creek Preserve in Tarpon Springs.

The County also partners with external agencies such as PTEC and AARP to place volunteers. A recently launched partnership is with Florida's Division of Blind Services (DBS). Individuals who are visually impaired can provide valuable service for the County and gain recent work experience, which then helps them get jobs and become self-sufficient, contributing members of the community.

Please be sure to express your appreciation to our volunteer colleagues who do so much for us, and consider how you can volunteer and make a difference in our community.

We thank our volunteers in many small ways throughout the year, and last week, Volunteer Services hosted a special event to give our volunteers a well-deserved treat. Nearly 250 volunteers enjoyed a 2½ hour dinner cruise on Clearwater Bay. On hand to thank them for their public service from the Board of County Commissioners were Commissioners Dave Eggers, Charlie Justice, Janet Long, Karen Seel; and Peggy Rowe, Director of Human Resources; among others.

Here are a few photos of the evening courtesy of Pinellas County Communications.

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To view more photos of the event, click [HERE](#).

# Employee Spotlight

## Lindsey Marshall

Scalehouse Services Specialist Sr  
Recycling and System Management Division  
Solid Waste



*What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most? Why?*

I have a great sense of pride to be a part of such a unified team consisting of amazing coworkers. The individuals that surround me every day are truly an inspiration to me. I feel I can lend my voice and the team appreciates my contribution. There is always something new and exciting to learn at the Solid Waste Facility and I am grateful that I am a part of such a meaningful organization.

*How has the County helped in your career development?*

My coworkers teach me something new each and every day. I can honestly say I can take a tad bit of information home with me on a daily basis. Pinellas County has given me the opportunity to grow as an individual and as a supervisor. The amount of effort and dedication provided to me, through engaging instructors and coworkers alike is astounding and will always be appreciated. Between the classes, time, support, and guidance I am where I am today.

*How do you help make Pinellas a great place to live, work, and play?*

I enjoy the work I do at the Solid Waste Facility knowing my contributions are a part of something bigger than “just garbage.” People throw away just about anything like furniture, art, food, and even valuable trophies! Our state-of-the-art facility generates power from our everyday household waste. How cool is that? I like to sit on the ocean front and look around at those big blue recycling cans and know that I had a part in implementing that very program. It is a constant reminder that in fact, little old me is accomplishing something for everybody to enjoy.

*What piece of advice would you give to a new employee?*

Stick with it! It is a great place to work and you have tremendous opportunities all within reach. The potential lies within you. Regardless of what department, unit or division that you currently work in or will be in, you play a powerful role in the success of Pinellas County.

*If you could take a vacation anywhere, where would you go?*

There is nothing like a good ole “staycation” sometimes. I admit I enjoy the place I call home. I was just discussing the fact that there is a world of people that pay a ton of money to come and visit the place where we call home: the amenities, the scenery, the weather, not to mention the diversity of people and abundance of delicious food. With that being said I would also like to see the Carnival in Brazil, go snorkeling in Mexico, view the northern lights in Alaska, go camping in the Redwood Forest, maybe even zip line in the rainforest, just to name a few.

*The Employee Spotlight is a new feature focusing on you. If you would like to nominate a fellow employee, please send his or her name, position, and why you are nominating them to [employee.communications@pinellascounty.org](mailto:employee.communications@pinellascounty.org).*

The Pen

## OurSpace

Don't forget to check the employee blog – [Our Space](#) – regularly.

Bookmark it. There is news every day!

YOU can post to the blog. It's easier than you might think – give it a try! Share your photos, celebrations, upcoming events and check for the latest news from the County.

If you have questions, please contact Mary Sault at 464-5098 or [employee.communications@pinellascounty.org](mailto:employee.communications@pinellascounty.org).

## The Pen

PUBLISHER: Peggy Rowe

EDITOR: Laura Berkowitz

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Mary L. Sault

A monthly publication by the Pinellas County Human Resources Department

### How to Participate:

It's easy to get involved in *The Pen*. You can contribute by informing us of noteworthy news or sending us story ideas.

You can also ask about writing a guest column or submit photos of co-workers at work in your department.

PHONE: (727) 464-5098

FAX: (727) 453-3660

E-mail: [employee.communications@pinellascounty.org](mailto:employee.communications@pinellascounty.org)



## BLOOD DRIVE

**Every donor is  
three more lives  
saved!**

## Mark Your Calendars

Clearwater Courthouse  
315 Court Street  
West Parking Lot  
Thursday, June 4, 2015  
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

# ASK PEGGY



Peggy Rowe  
Director of Human Resources

The Pen

**Q.** I would like to know when the flu season ends, more specifically when absences for flu are no longer considered scheduled absences.

**A.** Thank you for this question. As you know employees can contract the flu at any time during the year, and when ill (flu or otherwise) you are encouraged to stay home and recover. However, the Appointing Authorities have agreed that during periods of heightened flu activity it is in the best interest of County operations, your colleagues, and the citizens that employees stay home to lessen the possibility of mass illness and absences. During these periods absences for flu and flu like symptoms are considered scheduled. The HR

Department monitors the federal Centers for Disease Control website to determine when heightened flu activity exists in our area. As of March 28 our region had returned to a normal activity level, and at this time our normal policy would apply. Absences due to illness which do not qualify for FMLA should be considered unscheduled.

**Q.** I elected last year to get cash instead of reward points. I don't have to do that every year, do I?

**A.** There is no carry over of cash elections from 2014. You have the option again in 2015 to elect cash instead of Pinellas County Rewards for wellness incentives. If you would like to do that, use the [cash election tool](#) for 2015. An election of cash will be effective for the quarter in which it is made and the subsequent quarters in the year. There will be no retroactive elections honored.

**Q.** From those who work 10 hour days: Is anything in the works so that they don't have to take annual leave on holidays or personal days?

**A.** The Appointing Authorities have visited this issue many times. Holiday pay is eight hours based on a 40 hour work week. We offer

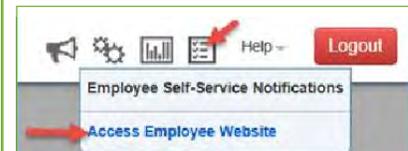
three Floating Holidays which can be used in 2 hour increments for the purpose you mention.

*Peggy*



Supervisors: Are you having problems viewing *your* Performance Review? In the technology that supports FACE, you will need to switch your view to see your Quarterly Summary from your supervisor.

Always log in as a manager. You can switch your view once you log in. Once you are in the system, find the icon in the upper right corner and select *Access Employee Website* (see the image below). You will see a pop-up window. Confirm you want to access the Employee Website.



For more quick tips, see the [Supervisor Quick Reference Guide](#).

## Benefits U Vision Benefits Made Clear

Regular eye exams are important in keeping everyone in your family productive and well. Not only are comprehensive eye exams necessary for the prescription of corrective lenses but they can sometimes reveal signs of certain undiagnosed health conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.

For individuals enrolled in either the Choice Plus HSA and POS medical plans, your EyeMed

coverage is included with no additional premium charged. The plan provides for an eye exam once per 12 months for a \$10 co-pay when you see an in-network provider. If it is deemed corrective lenses are required, your plan has benefits for glasses and contact lenses as well as Lasik.

Not sure when you are eligible for your next eye exam? Contact Eye Med at (866) 723-0513 or visit [www.eyemedvisioncare.com](http://www.eyemedvisioncare.com).



Don't miss a **Two-Minute Tuesday** video. Subscribe by going to [www.pinellascounty.org/hr/two](http://www.pinellascounty.org/hr/two) and click on "Subscribe to Two-Minute Tuesday."

## Training & Development Upcoming Classes

Some classes fill up quickly so request enrollment early through [OPUS Learning Management \(OLM\)](#).

### Emotional Intelligence – 4/23

Most of us were taught to leave our emotions at home when we go to work. But in reality, that's impossible. Learn the basics of the Emotional Intelligence competencies, how to build on your existing strengths and develop key leadership skills. Learn to identify and practice a step-by-step approach to developing the emotional competencies you need to improve and bring more satisfaction and success to your work and your personal life as well.

### Workplace Diversity: Beyond Race, Religion & Gender – 4/29

Diversity is more than race, religion and gender. True diversity is appreciating all that makes us different from one another. In a diverse work environment, it is important to know not only what the differences are but how our behavior, sometimes unconscious or unintended, can impact our relationships with others. This interactive workshop guides participants through identifying the many facets of diversity, how to translate an organizational commitment to diversity into behavioral terms, handling difficult or unexpected diversity situations at work, and recognizing how diversity is cultivated from both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

To view a complete list of all courses, along with descriptions, go to the [Consortium Training Catalog](#). Need assistance? Contact Training and Development at 464-3796 or email them at [training@pinellascounty.org](mailto:training@pinellascounty.org).

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## BREAKFAST BYTES

The Breakfast Bytes series presented by Business Technology Services (BTS) completed its last session on March 24th. The series, which focused on enhancing user productivity through the use of technology, was an enormous success with an average of 29 employees per session and many who attended all eight sessions.

The BTS Technical Training team is using feedback from session attendees to create a summer Lunch 'n' Learn series starting in late May.

BTS would like to thank all of the session attendees; especially their supervisors, managers, and co-workers for allowing them to attend.

Documentation regarding each session and other technical training resources can be found on the [BTS Enterprise Technical Training Share-Point site](#). Additional Instructor-Led courses offered by the BTS Technical Training team can be found in OPUS.

### PARTICIPANT REACTIONS:

*"It is so much fun going to these classes first thing in the morning ... short & sweet. One hour is perfect."*

*"Instruction was great as was the timeframe. Very helpful tips on the changing internet environment. Instructors are awesome: they know how to deliver and keep the class engaged and interested."*

*"The instructors cracked me up. Very entertaining AND we learned something."*

*"More of the Kevin & Kat experience. Thank you."*

## In case you missed it!

April is National Stress Awareness Month. In April's [To Your Health](#) newsletter, you will find links to resources to help you with relieving stress, links to *Wellness in the Community* resources, the April class schedule at the Clearwater campus, info on local Farmers Markets, an invitation to register for the May 2 *Spring Scramble Golf Tournament* (**deadline is April 17**), and more.

*Management & Supervisory Notes* is changing its name to [Leadership Notes](#) as of the May edition. If you'd like to receive it, we now offer the opportunity for you to subscribe. Just click [HERE](#) to subscribe. Meanwhile April's topic is "No Surprises."

Fleet Management reminds our customers of the **T.W.O. Program** and of our **Customer Satisfaction Survey**.



T.W.O. stands for tires, water, and oil. Launched last year, the emphasis of the program is to enlist you, our customers, in helping to maintain our vehicles between scheduled services. Information about the T.W.O. Program and a video can be found on the division's [intranet page](#).

The **Customer Satisfaction Survey** takes only a few minutes to complete and gauges satisfaction based on customer input in five categories. Customer satisfaction is one of the division's key performance indicators. Therefore, participation in the survey by our customers is encouraged and appreciated.



Registration is now open! Click [HERE](#) to enter your works of art in the *2015 Colors of Pinellas Art Show*. The juried art show is open to Pinellas County employees, their immediate family members, retirees, and active volunteers.

Here are the important dates:

May 29	Registration Deadline
June 12	Artwork Drop-off Day
June 18	Artwork Judging
June 29	Awards Ceremony
June 29-July 28	Artwork Exhibition Dates

# SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

## 35 YEARS



Diana Hunt,  
*Property Appraiser's Office*  
Jon Morris,  
*Development Review Services*

## 30 YEARS



Diana Caldwell  
*Property Appraiser's Office*

## 25 YEARS



Jeff Pearson, *Regional 911*  
Cindy Redmond, *Public Works*  
Damon Hostetler, *Real Estate Management*



Kenneth Paxson  
*Public Works*

### Unavailable for Photo

#### 30 YEARS

Sheryl Hopkins, *Clerk of the Circuit Court*

#### 25 YEARS

William Heintz, *Public Works*  
Gail Hutcherson, *Clerk of the Circuit Court*

#### 20 YEARS

Jodie Sechler, *Ambulance Billing & Finance Services*



Ken Jacobs, *Public Works*  
Gina Harvey, *Public Works*



Eric Fontaine  
*Utilities*

## 20 YEARS



Patricia Cannon, *Parks & Conservation Resources*,  
Sue Steele, *Purchasing*



Donald Davis  
*Clerk of the Circuit Court*

### 15 YEARS

Kathryn Barile ..... Parks & Conservation Resources  
James Devine ..... Communications  
John Graham ..... Public Works  
Kelli Hammer Levy ..... Public Works  
Matthew Kowalchuk ..... Solid Waste  
Maryann Londo ..... Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Ann Milner ..... Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Karen Pape ..... Business Technology Services  
Nikki Vasquez ..... Development Review Services  
Melanie Weed ..... Public Works  
Kim Westerfield ..... Clerk of the Circuit Court

### 10 YEARS

William Berger ..... Office of Management and Budget  
Jennifer Craig ..... Property Appraiser's Office  
Zoe Frey ..... Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Rafil Hughes ..... Utilities  
Daniel Little ..... Public Works  
John Pratt ..... Business Technology Services  
Candice Roth-Grigsby ..... Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Suzanne Scully ..... Convention & Visitors Bureau

### 5 YEARS

Bernie Young ..... Clerk of the Circuit Court

## Promotions

Promotions listed are for March 2015.

### Board of County Commissioners

#### Building Services

Perry Crosson ..... Div Mgr DRS

#### Convention & Visitors Bureau

Katie Marvin ..... Sr CVB Sales Rep

#### Public Works

Vincent Carboni ..... Craftwkr 1

Dennis McDuffy ..... Fld Opns Supv

Robert Rubin ..... Traf Sig Tech

Billy Russ ..... Craftwkr 1

Tre Sanders ..... Craftwkr 1

Aaron Swartzbeck ..... Traf Sig Tech

Joey Thames ..... NPDES Coord

Deontay Voss ..... Crew Chf 2

#### Purchasing

Suzanne Otocky-Pascarella ..... Proc Analyst Asst

#### Utilities

Charles Hoffman ..... Wtr/Wstwtr Fac Maint Supv

Sheri Lovely ..... Proj Coord-Tech

### Business Technology Services

Karen Davis ..... Mgr BTS

Daxa Joshi ..... Info Tech Analyst Sr

Chris White ..... Info Tech Analyst Sr

### Clerk of the Circuit Court

Chris Bartlett ..... Board Reporter

Ana Caraballo ..... Fis Rec Spec

Debra Prior ..... Rec Spec Supv

Christine Sickles ..... Fin Opns Analyst

### Property Appraiser

Gwendolyn Brooks ..... Prop Rclds Supv

Joey Clayton ..... Prop Rclds Supv

### Tax Collector

Brian Peckham ..... Tax Spec Ld

## RETIREMENTS

### 30 YEARS



Christine Butts  
Property and Stores Clerk 2  
Parks & Conservation  
Resources

### 25 YEARS



Shirley Wood  
Fiscal Records Specialist  
Clerk of the Circuit Court

### 16 YEARS



J. Thomas Baynard  
Val Analysis & Lit Supt Appr  
Property Appraiser's Office

### UNAVAILABLE FOR PHOTO

- 35 YEARS** Stephen Robinson, *Environmental Specialist Sr, Public Works/Transportation & Stormwater*
- OVER 15 YEARS** Janice Corcoran, *Accounting and Finance Technician, Building Services*
- OVER 13 YEARS** Marcia Routenberg, *Customer Service Technician 1, Tax Collector's Office*
- 9 YEARS** Deborah Kuhlman, *BTS Technologist 2, Business Technology Services*
- OVER 8 YEARS** Artis Rice, *Utilities Maintenance Specialist 1, Utilities*

The Pen

## REPCO News

**REPCO's April meeting will be held at 12:00 noon on May 11** at Applebee's, 5110 East Bay Drive, Clearwater. The speaker will be Bert Valery with Valery Insurance. He will speak on "Long-term Care Insurance" options. For more information contact Rudy at (813) 855-3466 or [rdgarcia@verizon.net](mailto:rdgarcia@verizon.net).

You don't have to be a Pinellas County retiree to attend. Current employees and family members are also welcome.

# AchieveGlobal® comes to the Tax Collector's Office

Contributed by the Tax Collector's Office



## The Graduates

- Melissa Beem
- Amber Bradley
- Belinda Brown
- Dakesia Campbell
- Patti Carlson
- Richard Carvale
- Alisande Davis
- Claudine Dreux
- Linda Franklin
- Keisha Freeman
- Elizabeth Giaquinto
- Geoff Giaquinto
- Mark Gundel
- Vickie Havelka
- Doug Katez
- John Lemonias
- Sone Lo
- Catherine McCarthy
- Marcy McCraney
- Alex Moore
- Ken Rowe
- Sherry Staley
- Jackie Ware

The Pinellas County Tax Collector began a formal Leadership Development program in 2013. Two Tax Collector employees, **Cathy Bailey Noble** and **Tara Broadus**, were trained by Human Resources' Master Certified Achieve Global® trainer **Joanie Read** and certified as instructors of the AchieveGlobal® curriculum. Joanie said she "is very pleased the Tax Collector is taking advantage of this internationally recognized leadership program."

In early 2014, candidates of the Leadership Development Program (LDP) began a series of classes using AchieveGlobal® curriculum, and were trained by our in-house AchieveGlobal® instructors. Additionally, we began a Management Development Program (MDP) and a group of current managers and supervisors attended a series of classes using the same curriculum.

We are pleased to announce that these two groups of employees who began the LDP and MDP classes in January of 2014 have successfully completed the classes and have graduated. CONGRATULATIONS!

The AchieveGlobal® principles of the program focus on learning and putting into practice Genuine Leadership, Developing Others, Team Pride and Problem Solving, and more. The two groups were able to break into smaller groups, which created teams of employees who usually don't have the opportunity to work together. During the classes they were able to identify, create, and implement solutions to challenges that were affecting all Tax Collector offices, and to put the principles learned into practice. In fact, several of the 2014 LDP and MDP candidates have already been promoted.

The 2015 LDP and MDP classes have begun, and it is proving to be another exciting year.

Here is what a few of our employees thought of the class:

*Taking this class, I have noticed an improvement in my leadership skills. Learning how to properly give constructive feedback and the importance of giving recognition hit home for me. I would recommend this class to anyone interested in developing themselves. This class is designed to develop ourselves to be a better leader, no matter what department you are in or what position you are in. EG*

*Being a part of the Achieve Global Leadership Series has been a very valuable experience. The knowledge and skills obtained in this series will help me throughout all my future endeavors. AB*

*I have really enjoyed the camaraderie that developed within the group. Every relationship has grown as a result of this experience. That is something we aren't afforded in the everyday workplace ... the opportunity to mingle with other departments and open our mind to the struggles they face and the strengths they bring to the organization. MM*

*One of my favorite areas of the class was sharing stories with the other employees. It makes you realize that you are not alone and other people have bigger issues than you have. It was nice to get ideas on how others approach and resolve issues. BB*

The Pen



Keisha Campbell, Claudine Dreux, and Doug Katez presenting their findings to the group.



John Boscarino, Sherry Staley, and Sone Lo trying to convince Rose DiGennaro that their idea will work.

## Employee Suggestion Awards Program

Congratulations to **Gary Dempsey** at Emergency Communications. He was awarded \$2,500 for his cost-saving suggestion. Gary came up with a plan to purchase transfer switches for radio control stations at the Regional Communications Center. His suggestion saved the County \$184,000 and was implemented in December 2014. Well done Gary!

Gary Dempsey  
Radio & Data Systems Coordinator  
SES - Emergency Communications



# Welcome Aboard!

## Board of County Commissioners

### Airport

Yvette Aehle .....Dep Dir Airpt Fin & Admin

### Animal Services

Brittany Christopher ..... Ani Svcs Rep  
David Mitchell ..... Ani Svcs Rep  
Juli Radloff ..... Ani Svcs Rep

### Building Services

Samuel Barker ..... Plumbing Insp

### Office of Business Support

Susan Koehler ..... Office Spec, Sr  
Ashley Long ..... Office Spec, Sr  
Erin Thames ..... Dept Admin Mgr

### Communications

Vanessa Quintana ..... Admin Supt Spec

### Engineering & Technical Support

Gary Gray ..... Fld Insp 1

### Human Services

Vivian Padron ..... Sect Mgr 1

### Justice & Consumer Services

Shawn Meeks ..... Cons Prot Inv

### Parks & Conservation Resources

Ajaya Satyal ..... Env Dir Mgr

### Planning

Christopher Moore ..... Principal Plan

### Public Works

Lance Becker ..... Prop Stores Clk 3  
Garth Carson ..... Spray Tech  
Andrew Tingling ..... Prop Stores Clk 3  
Ronald Weeden ..... Spray Tech

### Regional 911

Elyssa Haskins ..... Law Enf Telecomm  
Cameron Moeller ..... Law Enf Telecomm  
Kenneth Smith ..... Law Enf Telecomm  
Jasara Vetter ..... Law Enf Telecomm

### Solid Waste

Catherine Peery ..... Scalhs Svc Spec  
Jessica Smith ..... Scalhs Svc Spec

### Utilities

Michael Smith ..... Prop Stores Clk 3

## County Attorney

Melissa Hansen ..... Legal Sec

## Clerk of the Circuit Court

Brian Borzelliere ..... Fin Opns Clk  
Matthew Higgins ..... Info Tech Sol Dev Spec  
Kimberly Jacobson ..... Crt Rec Spec 1  
Allyson Klimpel ..... Crt Rec Spec 1  
Helena McMillon ..... Fis Rec Spec

## Property Appraiser's Office

Ashley Flaherty ..... Prop Rclds Asst

## Tax Collector's Office

Dianna Demyan ..... Cust Svc Tech 1  
Tanesha Johnson ..... Cust Svc Tech 1



New employee orientation class on March 23, 2015.

## Refer Friends and Family

Pinellas County is a great place to work! Did you know that classified employees can earn up to one day paid time off for referring a friend or family member? Learn about the *Employee Referral Program* at [www.pinellascounty.org/hr/referral](http://www.pinellascounty.org/hr/referral).

Check out the new *What We Offer* page at [www.pinellascounty.org/hr/whatweoffer](http://www.pinellascounty.org/hr/whatweoffer) which provides a summary of our benefits that you can share with interested friends or family members. One way that your contacts can keep up-to-date on the daily job postings is by signing up for [Job Alert](#) emails or the [RSS Job Feed](#).





**Create Sustainable Solutions**  
Vision • Innovation • Collaboration

April is Earth Month  
it's the 45th anniversary!

- [Sustainable Solutions for Your Life](#)
- [Calculate your Carbon Footprint](#)
- [Facebook Page](#)



**Want more information?**

**Upcoming classes**

- [Tiny – A Story About Living Small](#)
- [Keep Cooling Costs Low](#)



**Meet Your Extension Agent**  
Ramona Madhosingh-Hector  
Urban Sustainability Agent  
[ramona.m.hector@ufl.edu](mailto:ramona.m.hector@ufl.edu)



**FROM THE RECORD KEEPER**

**Records Management: Why It Matters**

Records & Information Management offers annual Records Management refresher training for all departments. In this 1 ½ hour session, employees receive an overview of the Florida Public Records Laws and learn about their responsibilities to ensure compliance. To support the county's increased focus on sustainability, this training also includes a broad overview of sustainable government practices provided in partnership with University of Florida/IFAS Pinellas County Extension. All of our training class dates can be found [here](#), and sign-up is through OPUS.

If you have any questions about or need additional information, please contact Michele Koehler in Records & Information Management at (727) 453-3038.

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**Consumer Corner**



Connie Consumer wants everyone to know that the month of April is National Financial Literacy month. Financial Literacy is important for all ages, whether you're saving your allowance to buy a video game, putting away money for college or planning for retirement.

The first step toward taking control of your financial life is to evaluate how much money you take in and how much money you spend. Start by developing a budget. With a budget you can identify your spending habits. Next, prioritize your wants and needs. By limiting your wants you can better save for future goals.

All of us have some amount of debt. When setting your goals, make paying off your debt first on the list. The more you know about financial literacy the better understanding you'll have of your finances, credit and debt management. Practicing financial literacy will give you the knowledge you need to make wiser financial decisions and to help ensure a financially stable future.

For more information on budgeting and saving or to file a complaint, contact Pinellas County Consumer Protection at (727) 464-6200 or visit [www.pinellascounty.org/consumer/connie.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/consumer/connie.htm).



Connie Consumer

**PET OF THE MONTH**



**Sasha** is a playful 1 year old pit bull mix who loves water!

Take advantage of the reduced adoption rates during Spring Specials at Pinellas County Animal Services. The adoption fee is \$25 for large dogs, \$7 for cats and \$75 for puppies and small breeds through Friday, May 1. Every one of the pets offered for adoption at Animal Services are spayed or neutered and have all of their required shots. Visit Sasha and the other cats and dogs up for adoption at 12450 Ulmerton Road in Largo, or see them online at [www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices/petfind.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices/petfind.htm). To learn more about Animal Services, stop by the shelter, call (727) 582-2600 or visit [www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices](http://www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices).