

May 30, 2008

Sarasota County is 2008 All-America City finalist

Sarasota County has been named one of 17 finalist communities for the 2008 All-America City Award program by the National Civic League. The All-America City Award final judging will occur in Tampa on June 4, 5 and 6.

The All-America City Award program is the nation's oldest community recognition effort. It recognizes communities of all sizes, including neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties and regions that have made major progress in meeting their most important needs. Sarasota County first won the award in 2006.

The All-America City application focuses on identifying and addressing three community challenges, one of which must document how the lives of children and youth have been tangibly improved. The application focused on the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP), the Coalition for Inclusion and Diversity (CID), and the Grassroots Leadership Initiative (GLI).

- CHIP is a partnership bringing together hundreds of community volunteers with dozens of public, private and government organizations across three counties to focus on improving the health and well-being of residents. CHIP engages residents in taking responsibility for their personal health and the health of their communities. Community Health Action Teams (CHATs) of residents meet monthly to study and solve local health issues.
- The Youth Initiative of the Coalition for Inclusion and Diversity is a collaboration between youth, adult volunteers and local organizations that provide learning and leadership opportunities to the community on diversity and inclusion. A spectrum of community partners have worked alongside youth since 2006 to promote respect for differences and a more inclusive community.
- The Grassroots Leadership Initiative is a leadership development program that identifies and cultivates grassroots community leaders to work for positive social change. Graduates of this grassroots program are equipped with new skills and contacts to help them help all of us make better community decisions. GLI brings a diverse group of emerging community leaders to the table to connect community needs to meaningful solutions.

Sarasota County has applied for this award in three prior years, and was awarded the "All-America" designation in 2006. Kissimmee/Osceola County is the only other Florida community finalist.

The National Civic League is one of the leading proponents of citizen democracy. Founded in 1894 by Theodore Roosevelt and other government reformers, it is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to building community and promoting political reform at the local level.