

sun-sentinel.com/news/broward/fort-lauderdale/fl-esb-reward-0422-20100422,0,6805199.story

South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com

City's recycling program earns timely cash for neighborhoods

DON CRINKLAW Forum Publishing Group

2:08 PM EDT, April 22, 2010

Last Tuesday's agenda for the regular Fort Lauderdale City Commission meeting began with a formal recognition of 22 neighborhoods that participated in the 2009 Recycling Incentive Grant Program. But in the end, there was a bit more than just recognition involved.

The city then handed out more than \$20,475 to those 22 neighborhoods who have learned they can do well by doing good. Even better, they can make money by helping keep the city litter-free.

The big winner in 2009, taking in \$2,535, was the Harbordale Civic Association. The funds come from the city's 21-year-old RecycleWorks program, which is sponsored by the Public Works Department's sanitation division.

"It's a great program," said Harbordale board member Donna Mergenhagen. "It gets citizens involved, it cleans up public areas, and the neighborhoods get money for things that will benefit them."

Each year for the program, the city determines specific activities that neighborhoods can volunteer for, according to Monique Damiano, public information specialist for the city, such as the city's St. Patrick's Day Parade, Sun Trust Jazz Brunch, Starlight Concerts and the Planet Fair. The information is passed on to neighborhood

At Bill Seidle's For Your Money!
GET MORE MILES
0% APR FINANCING!
AVAILABLE ON ALL NEW MITSUBISHIS
CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION AND DETAILS
Bill Seidler's
MITSUBISHI OF DAVIE
MITSUBISHI MOTORS

associations, and members that turn up help keep the hosting facility free of litter.

"Each of the activities is worth a set amount of points to the association," Damiano said, and the value of the points may change from year to year.

"One point is usually around \$60," said JoAnn Smith, head of South Middle River Community Association. Her group, which has led the field in the past, came in third in 2009 earning \$1,820. "Sometimes one event is one point; some events are three points.

"There are no matching funds," Smith said. "The money comes from the recycling grant, and we can spend it any way we want. All our money goes to the infrastructure, or the functions we run. Or to get matching grants from the city."

The city wins too, she said. "This saves them on staff. They don't have to pay their own people to do pickups."

Moving through public grounds carrying bags and loading them with recyclable items is "hard, physical work," Mergenhagen said. "[It is] sweat equity."

Damiano said the bags of recyclables produced at events are eventually collected by the city's recycling contractor. The materials are delivered to Recycle America and the city receives revenue for the tonnage collected.

"It's these funds that help offset the cost of recycling and support programs like the Recycling Incentive Grant Program," Damiano said.

A neighborhood association can be part of this — and the payoff — by simply attending an introductory meeting held the second Monday of every other month at the Fort Lauderdale Sanitation Administration building.

The money is stretched a bit this year, Damiano said. The 2008 awards handed out more than \$30,000.

"If you promote an event in your newsletter," she said, "you get points. And if you print it on 100 percent chlorine-free paper you get points for that, too."

RecycleWorks volunteer meetings are held on the second Monday every other month at the Fort Lauderdale Sanitation Administration building, 220 SW 14th Ave. The next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. May 10.

Copyright © 2010, [South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#)