

## COMMUNITY IN THE KNOW

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### Bahamian pets need adoption following Hurricane Dorian

The Animal Welfare League of Charlotte County is a local animal rescue organization that is committed to providing relief services to animals in the Bahamas affected by Hurricane Dorian. With relief efforts now underway in Nassau, the Bahamas Humane Society is in desperate need to empty its shelter to make way for those animals requiring immediate assistance on their devastated islands.

AWL is working collaboratively with twelve other member organizations of the Florida Association of Animal Welfare Organizations to facilitate the transport of nearly 100 dogs and 70 cats from the storm-ravaged areas. The Bahamas Humane Society is currently preparing animals for transport to various animal shelters and rescue organizations throughout the state of Florida, with up to 60 dogs and cats scheduled to arrive in Charlotte, Sarasota and Manatee counties.

Per guidelines and best practices set by the University of Florida's Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, all animals entering their respective shelter will be quarantined for a minimum of two weeks, as many of the island animals could have illnesses contagious to other animals or humans. Once released from quarantine, the rescued dogs and cats will be available for adoption. At this time, little is known about the age, demeanor or health of the animals to be received.

Community members interested in adopting a Hurricane Dorian relief animal are asked to keep an eye on [www.awlshelter.org](http://www.awlshelter.org) or [www.facebook.com/awlshelter](https://www.facebook.com/awlshelter) for updates.

### FEMA gives Punta Gorda \$4.2 million for Irma

15% for the citywide seawall project, previously awarded at 75 percent of eligible costs.

Funding for this Public Assistance project is authorized under Sections 403 of the Robert T. Stafford Act, reimbursing eligible applicants for the cost of debris removal; life-saving emergency protective measures; and the repair, replacement or restoration of disaster-damaged facilities like buildings, roads and utilities.

However, according to Punta Gorda Mayor Nancy Prafke's weekly e-newsletter: "What isn't mentioned is that the state of Florida's share will be reduced from 12.5% to 5%. This will be a \$2.1 million decrease on the state side. The net amount the city will expect to receive due to this change is approximately \$2.1 million. The good news is that the city portion is also reduced to 5%."

FEMA's PA grant program is an essential source of funding for communities recovering from a federally declared disaster or emergency. Florida Division of Emergency Management works with FEMA during all phases of the PA program and conducts final reviews of FEMA-approved projects. Applicants work directly with FEMA to develop project worksheets and scopes of work. Following approvals by FEMA and the FDEM, FEMA obligates funding for the project.

FEMA's Public Assistance program provides grants to state, tribal, and local governments, and certain types of private non-profit organizations including some houses of worship, so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies.

The federal share for Public Assistance projects is not less than 75% of the eligible cost. The state determines how the non-federal share of the cost of a project (up to 25%) is split with the sub-recipients such as local and county governments.

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters kicks off campaign**

Big Brothers Big Sisters — serving Charlotte, Sarasota, Manatee, DeSoto, Highlands, Hardee, Lee, Hendry and Collier counties — launches its “100 Men in 100 Days” campaign to encourage men to become a Big Brother and volunteer with the organization. The recruitment campaign comes at a good time, as there are 125 boys waiting to be matched with a positive male role model.

One-to-one matches between Bigs and Littles truly empower youth and strengthen communities. Professional staff from Big Brothers Big Sisters carefully build and support each match, and ensure it meets the strictest standards.

While Big Brothers Big Sisters accepts volunteers from all walks of life, there is a greater need for male mentors. Currently, 51% of the youth in the program are boys and 40% of the volunteers are men.

Research shows that having the positive influence of a “Big” makes a real difference in the life of a child. “Littles” experience improvements in academic performance, behavior and relationships at home and elsewhere, according to independent studies.

Mentoring is one of the most rewarding, enjoyable and simple things a volunteer can do. For as little as one hour a week, volunteers can add joy to the life of a child and, ultimately, contribute greatly to his or her potential.

For more than 50 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast has been matching youth in meaningful, enduring, professionally supported mentoring relationships with adult volunteers who defend their potential and help them achieve their biggest possible futures. Big Brothers Big Sisters’ evidence-based approach is designed to create positive youth outcomes, including educational success, avoidance of risky behaviors, higher aspirations, greater confidence and improved relationships. This past year, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast has served more than 1,800 youth across a 10-county footprint. To become a Big or for more information: 855-501- 2447 or [www.bbbssun.org](http://www.bbbssun.org).

### **Englewood gets beach cam**

The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau — in partnership with VISIT FLORIDA, the state’s official tourism organization — has announced the installation of a live beach camera located at Englewood Beach. As part of a statewide grant to support areas affected by red tide in 2018, the Englewood Beach Live Beach Cam brings the destination’s pure Florida sandy shores directly to the consumer while allowing visitors the opportunity to view and enjoy the beaches in advance of their vacations.

Previously one of Southwest Florida’s best-kept secrets, the new live beach cam is putting Englewood Beach on the map and propelling awareness of the destination. Initially starting as an effort to highlight the destinations’ pristine coastline in real-time, the project has shown many added benefits for the area’s tourism initiatives.

“We are thrilled to announce the installation of this interactive addition to our beaches,” says Wendie Vestfall, tourism director at the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau. “With the support of this beach camera, people will have 24-hour live streaming, high-definition access to Englewood Beach, offering a doorway into current beach conditions such as weather, wind speeds, tide levels and more — allowing for beachgoers to effortlessly plan their perfect day at the beach.”

This newest addition to Englewood Beach was made possible through a partnership with [EarthCam](http://EarthCam.com), the global leader in webcam content, technology and services. Interested parties can view the live feed on the destination website at [www.pureflorida.com/beachcam](http://www.pureflorida.com/beachcam).