

2006 Florida Cities of Excellence Awards Program ▶

Category (Please check one) See Award Criteria for more information. Please print or type. One nomination per page.



Name of Municipality Nominated _____

Nominated by _____

City Spirit (Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Municipality Nominated City of Cape Coral
Parks & Recreation Department

Nominated Project Special Populations, POP'S Cafe

Nominated by City of Cape Coral

(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____

(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____

(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Title _____ Department _____

Nominated by _____

(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____

(Name of City/Town/Village)

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Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____

(Name of City/Town/Village)

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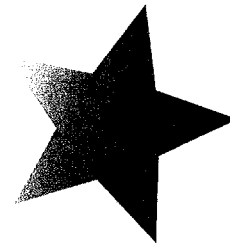
Please print or type.

Name Terry Stewart
Title City Manager
Government City of Cape Coral
Address P. O. Box 150027, Cape Coral, FL 33915-0027
Telephone Number (239) 574-0450 Fax (239) 574-0452
E-mail Address tstewart@capecoral.net

This nomination has been voted on and approved by a majority of the city council/commission.

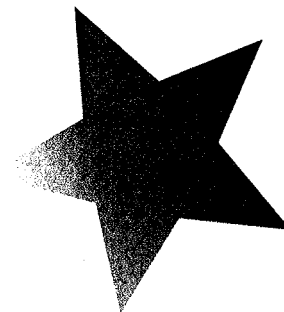
Signed 
City Clerk

The judges will use the narrative and supportive information to select the award winners. Nominators/nominees are asked not to contact the judges directly.



In the narrative, please be clear and concise, using the Award Criteria to support the selection of your nominee. Please type (or print in black ink), up to 1,200 words, double-spaced on white 8-1/2" x 11" paper.

Up to 10 pages of supportive information (newspaper clippings, photographs, letters from constituents, etc.), on 8-1/2" x 11" paper (single-sided) may be provided. Please do not include videotapes, DVDs, CDs or Power-Point presentations.



Submit nominations by **August 18, 2006**:
Florida League of Cities, Inc.
Attn: Florida Cities of Excellence
301 S. Bronough Street, Suite 300 (32301)
P.O. Box 1757
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1757



2006 Florida Cities of Excellence Awards Program Nominations

Category: City Spirit Award

Name of Municipality: City of Cape Coral, Florida

Nominated Project: City of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Dept.
Social Service Division/Special Populations
Pops Café

Project Description: The City of Cape Coral has developed programs for over 27 years that address the special needs of citizens with developmental disabilities. For the past 13 years the City has offered adult day training programs that provide opportunities for citizens with special needs to be employed by the City. As the need for this type of specialized training has grown, the City has researched and evaluated opportunities to expand adult day training employment opportunities. In June 2001, the City determined that providing a food service at City Hall would not only provide an excellent inclusion in a job training site for citizens with developmental disabilities, but it would provide the ideal setting for City staff, City officials, and the general public, to observe the contributions that these citizens can make. Of greatest importance has been the increased quality of life and independence that persons with developmental disabilities can achieve through this structured type of training in a public setting.

Timely: The City of Cape Coral Special Populations Program has consistently gained not only the support of City officials and administrators, but also a high-level presence in the community as an outstanding provider of services to meet the ongoing needs of citizens with developmental disabilities. In 2001, the City was ready to take this program to the

next level and dedicate a portion of the new Cape Coral City Hall to a food service program that was open to the community. Thus the inception of the Pops Café, operated by the City of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department, Social Service Division, Special Populations. The mission of Pops Café is as follows: "Pops Café is dedicated to providing our guests a variety of quality food and beverage products with prompt and friendly service. Adults with developmental disabilities, along with a job coach, are employed as enclave aides in a safe, caring and structured environment."

Two decades of dynamic programming by Special Populations helped to make this proposed venture well received and successful. The need for this program was demonstrated by a wait list of sometimes up to one hundred persons.

Innovative: The most outstanding and unique aspect of this project was the concept of the common shared space that would be the site of Pops Café, located in the high profile city government site in Cape Coral's City Hall. The dynamic impact of such a forward thinking decision on the City's part, can be better understood by the comprehension of the therapeutic concept in the field of Special Education, that of "Inclusion." Simply put, inclusion, when used in a therapeutic setting, is providing persons with developmental disabilities opportunities to be integrated into a broad scope of social interactions in various settings. This concept is crucial to the ongoing success of mainstreaming persons with developmental disabilities into the community and providing them with increased opportunities for exposure to the community at large. This presents opportunities for interaction with others and allows all parties to gain an understanding and acceptance of one and other. There was no doubt that the new Cape Coral City Hall provided all the

elements necessary to open new avenues of communication in the day-to-day social interactions that would occur. Even with the City's most optimistic projections for the positive outcome of such a venture, no one could have measured exactly how this project would touch the hearts and minds of everyone involved. It had appeared that the City had supported a project that became its own "Field of Dreams."

Effective: The most positive effects since the project's implementation can be seen in the following areas:

- Program participants' increased job knowledge
- Program participants' increased confidence and independence
- Increased quality of life experiences
- Community's increased awareness and sensitivity for persons with developmental disabilities
- Government employees ability to evaluate other areas that would be appropriate for employing persons with developmental disabilities

According to the National Recreation and Park Association Position Statement on Inclusion, as adopted by the NRPA Board of trustees as a policy, comprehensively defines the effectiveness of a project concept such as Pops Café. "Diversity is the cornerstone of our society and culture and thus should be celebrated. Including people with disabilities in the fabric of society strengthens the community and its individual members. The value of experiences enhancing the quality of life for all people, with and without disabilities, cannot be over stated. As we broaden our understanding and

acceptance of differences among people through experiences, we empower future generations to build a better place for all to live and thrive.”

It also provides an environment that promotes and fosters physical, social and psychological inclusion of people with diverse experiences and skill levels. Inclusion enhances individuals’ potential for full and active participation in activities and experiences.

Additionally, the benefits of this participation may include:

- Providing positive experiences which contribute to the physical, mental, social, emotional, spiritual growth and development of every individual;
- Fostering peer and intergenerational relationships allow one to share affection, support, companionship and assistance; and
- Developing community support and encouraging attitudinal changes to reflect dignity, self-respect and involvement with in the community.”

Successful: The success of this project has been measured by the following:

- Ongoing individual growth of the participants working at Pops Café
- Generated revenues meeting Pop’s Café operational costs
- Ongoing customer service surveys which exceed a 90% approval rating

The above indicators have allowed for the continuation of the project, which is presently in its' fifth year of operation.

Cost Effective: Pops Café has continually met the project's operational costs through a combination of generated revenues, donations, as well as State and Federal funding. The City has been able to provide a worthwhile training program for persons with developmental disabilities as well as provide a quality food service to the community, without the use of general revenues funds from the City.

Adaptable: The basic components to implement this program are as follows:

- Access to or development of a successful program for persons with developmental disabilities (functional status at a level qualifying them for this type of employment)
- Securing a city site that will provide the elements needed to provide a food service as well as the customer base to insure success
- Hiring staff not only proficient in food service management, but having training in the field of Special Education/ Recreation

Of course, these very broad components require research and evaluation of a community's need for food service. Cities that will diligently seek the support of residents, businesses, government agencies and non-profit organizations can make this type of rewarding project a reality in their community. Pops Café has helped define what a community can be when all of its citizens are considered in the short and long term quality of life planning processes.