

## **Black Diamond Foundation Funds YMCA Teen Summer Camp Activities**

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**Lecanto, FL, August 1, 2013** – It's another "warm" Citrus County summer! How are your contributions to Black Diamond Foundation making a difference in the local community this month? Look no further than YMCA Summer Camp activities at Lecanto Middle School.

YMCA of the Suncoast – Citrus County Branch, (hereafter referred to as YMCA – Citrus County), focuses its programs on the organizational pillars of: youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Its youth programs have increased three-fold over the past year, from 300 to over 1,000 children served.

One of the key components of the YMCA – Citrus County youth program is its Summer Camp. In 2012, 244 boys and girls participated. Along with partners including Black Diamond Foundation, YMCA – Citrus County provided \$35,000 in financial aid to allow 140 children from low-income families to participate in a wide variety of camp activities.

In early 2013, YMCA – Citrus County CEO, Mrs. Joanna Castle, offered the Foundation a unique partnership opportunity focused on Citrus County teens. YMCA – Citrus County was planning a new 10-week Summer Camp program focused on Citrus County youth between the ages of 12 and 14. The Teen Summer Camp was designed to include field trips, guest speakers, child care certification classes, water safety training, and a financial responsibility seminar. Participants would also give back to the community by developing individual service projects, and performing community service activities.

The Foundation Board agreed that helping low-income youth in this age group stay engaged in healthy, safe summer activities was a worthy cause. We were proud to partner again with the YMCA – Citrus County, and provided \$11,600 in financial aid assistance for the 2013 Teen Summer Camp initiative. Our community grant provided up to 290 weeks of Summer Camp experiences for low-income Citrus County youth.

Mrs. Castle graciously accompanied me when I spent time with the youth and counselors participating in the Teen Summer Camp program in early-June. The program has a different theme each week. I witnessed “Top Chef” Week, which included the construction of solar ovens made out of shoe boxes, tin foil, and black construction paper. And yes, the solar ovens did effectively bake cookies when the teens placed their creations directly in the “warm” Florida sun. The teens also prepared a “no-bake” recipe: applesauce in a pressure cooker, from fruit in the bag to food on the table in six hours.

Other theme weeks in June included “Fine Arts” week, an innovative arts and crafts program where tie-dyed T-shirts were back in style. “Future Professionals” week incorporated presentations from guest speakers in different career fields, brainstorming to create elements of an individual small business plan, and preparing a budget. Daily outdoor activities and weekly field trips were built into the schedule. The young adults coordinating and supervising daily activities (both elementary educators), and the focus and energy of the teens themselves were really quite impressive.

Your contributions to Black Diamond Foundation helped “Make a Difference” for at least 42 Citrus County teens from low-income families who were enrolled in various weeks of the YMCA Summer

Camp program this year. For more on YMCA of the Suncoast – Citrus County Branch, you may visit their website at [www.ymcasuncoast.org](http://www.ymcasuncoast.org).

Have a safe and productive summer!