



## **Police Foundation: Youth Programs and Community Outreach**

by Tom Murphy

The primary mission of the Police Foundation is to provide additional funding for vital equipment, training and technology for our Palm Beach Gardens Police Department. However, the Police Foundation is also very active in both youth programs and community outreach that contribute to the overall goal of a safer Palm Beach Gardens.

In terms of youth programs, the Police Foundation, through its Annual Golf Tournament, is the major supporter of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Explorer Post. Police Explorers are young men and women with an interest in learning more about a career in the field of Law Enforcement. The program provides them educational training programs on the purpose, mission, and objectives of law enforcement. We also support the Florida Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics. Palm Beach Gardens Police personnel participate in a state-wide run where over 5,000 officers carry the Special Olympics Torch on a 1500-mile relay through all 66 of Florida's counties. The Palm Beach County run ends at the School District's *Exceptional Student Education Center* and the Foundation provides gifts for the students who attend this special education facility. We also donate to the Palm Beach Gardens Youth Athletic Association which provides for more than 1500 kids playing in eight recreation leagues within the City. They, along with the Police Foundation, believe that the safety and welfare of our children is of primary concern and that today's Palm Beach Gardens youth are tomorrow's world leaders.

In the realm of community outreach, the Foundation sponsors the annual Palm Beach Gardens Police and Fire Holiday Joy Drive. Each year the program provides toys, clothing, food and gift-cards for some 1500 children and families in our community who are less fortunate due to circumstance beyond their control. In appreciation of the assistance provided to our Police Officers when they are dispatched to calls involving sick, injured or rabid animals, the Foundation makes an annual donation to the Busch Wildlife Sanctuary. Busch Wildlife's dedicated and hardworking volunteers are quick to respond to our Department's calls for assistance. The Foundation also reaffirmed its commitment to supporting education in Palm Beach Gardens by once again offering two \$1500 scholarships to students based on their academic achievement, community service, written essays, transcripts and personal references. And in 2013, the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation partnered with the City of Palm Beach Gardens and co-sponsored the Mayor's Veterans Golf Classic. This annual event, held at the Palm Beach Gardens Golf Course, donates funds to support our local veterans. Over the last seven years the Classic has raised over \$153,000 which was then donated to the VA Medical Center in West Palm Beach.

None of this would be possible of course without the support and contributions from our residents and local businesses. Thanks to your generous donations, these and many more

programs aimed at making Palm Beach Gardens one of the safest and most desirable areas to live, work, shop and celebrate quality-of-life would not be possible. As we move into 2014 we say "Thank You" to all those who have in the past, and who will in the future, support the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation.

Tom Murphy has been president of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation, Inc. since its inception in 2007. Before helping to form the foundation he was a marketing executive with the IBM Corporation and earlier a member of the Nassau County (NY) Police Department.