

St. Lucie County Fire District News Release

Contact: Catherine W. Chaney
St. Lucie County Fire District
772-621-3333
cchaney@slcfd.org

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Firefighter/Scout Leader helps Ft. Pierce Youth

St. Lucie County, FL – Saving the world is pretty impossible, but saving a piece of it is the goal of the troop leaders for Treasure Coast Boy Scout Troop #772.

For Firefighter/Paramedic William “Rusty” Hines, the Troop Leader, it is something he knows needs to happen for the scouts in this troop. The boys attend Dan McCarty Middle School at Delaware Avenue and 13th Street in Ft. Pierce. They live in neighborhoods where gangs are common and where gun violence happens all too often.

Born in Ft. Pierce, Hines has been a firefighter with St. Lucie County Fire District since 1992. He has seen firsthand the human injury and loss due to gang violence.

The idea of the troop came from Scott Van Duzer, founder of the Van Duzer Foundation. The Foundation has helped many families as they face traumatic medical issues. Van Duzer’s idea was to help these middle school students steer away from gangs.

“I fully believed in Scott’s vision,” explained Hines. “If we can catch one or two of them and help them turnaround, then we can draw others into the group to get more and more of the youth away from gangs and violence.”

Troop #772 was launched this past December and has a membership of 20-26 scouts. They range in age from 12-14 years old. The troop meets every Wednesday at the school.

The troop has been to City Hall and the County Commission to receive recognition during Boy Scout Week. They have travelled to Tallahassee, Miami and Orlando. This past April they spent time on a remote island in the Indian River Lagoon, which is just 3-4 miles from their homes but a world of difference. They built two picnic tables, cleared brush, and poured cement to build a fire pit.

“They are talented and it is amazing to see them experience some of these things,” said Hines. “It is eye opening to them and to me because I realize there are a lot of people who have not done some of these things. We take so much for granted.”

Upcoming plans include camping and a trip of Washington D.C. Many of the scouts have never been on a plane. The trip to Tallahassee was the first trip out of Ft. Pierce for some of them.

Other SLCFD firefighters involved as Assistant Scoutmasters include Remi Dieujuste, Duane Fenn, and Dorian Jackson, as well as Mario Henderson who is an Indian River County Firefighter/Paramedic and lives in Port Saint Lucie.

Other volunteer assistant scoutmasters include: Frank Watkins Jr., an assistant professor at Indian River State College, Ed Dobin, a retiree from Hutchinson Island, and Jeff McDonald, an employee with the St. Lucie County Road and Bridge Department.

All of the scoutmasters believe this will be the best way to save a little bit of the world!