



# Florida's Goodwill Emissary *plenty of reason to give thanks*

This month we give thanks by feasting, gathering with family and friends and counting our blessings.

I hope, knock wood, one of the things we'll be thankful for is making it through another hurricane season relatively unscathed. We're certainly very, very thankful Dorian didn't do to us what it did to our neighbors in the Bahamas. And it's hard to believe that just a year ago, our fellow Floridians in the Panhandle were still digging out from under the devastation of Hurricane Michael.

Which leads me to a major reason CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion is particularly thankful this year: an Aussie named Kevin Harrison.

Kevin is a retired 24-year Navy veteran (Australia), originally from New South Wales, who subsequently built a career as a trainer and human resources generalist in the manufacturing industry before joining our staff in 2010.

As one of our mobile career development representatives, Kevin excels at providing mobile services to job candidates and businesses in remote areas of our region. You may have seen his "office" around Marion County: a 40-foot Winnebago tricked out with 10 computer stations and everything a job candidate or business may need. Moby1, as it is affectionately called, is regularly stationed at the Belleview Library, Dunnellon Library, Freedom Library, Marion Oaks Library and Silver Springs Shores Community Center.

Terrific as that is – bringing our free services to areas of the county that might not be as accessible to our brick and mortar career center in Ocala – that's not the only reason we're thankful Kevin is on our team.

It was in the wake of Hurricane Michael when Kevin – with go-bag at the ready – quickly volunteered to be part of a team of CareerSource CLM staff sent to the Mexico Beach area where the Category 5 monster made landfall.

You see, time was of the essence in helping survivors file disaster unemployment assistance claims, find work or apply for help rebuilding their businesses. Part of the problem was that the offices and staff of the CareerSource Gulf Coast region which serves Bay, Franklin and Gulf counties – the very area hardest hit by Michael -- were themselves very nearly out of commission due to storm damage.

Kevin helped set up mobile centers, working six days a week, week after week. CareerSource CLM mobile resource units became such a fixture that residents expected to see them pretty much any time. I remember I was on the road to New Orleans to celebrate Thanksgiving with my family when I got a call from a job seeker wondering if the team would be available to meet with him on Thanksgiving Day.

We had more than a dozen staff rotate to Carrabelle and Callaway; earlier this year they were honored by CareerSource Gulf Coast as "Hurricane Michael Heroes." But like I said, Kevin made the trek time and time again, working Monday through Saturday, returning Sunday to head back with a fresh crew and supplies.

"I immediately responded ... I didn't even ask my wife because I wanted to help out and I knew the mobile units had to be taken up there," he told me.

In all, Kevin spent four weeks in the hurricane ravaged area, proving to be what our Executive Vice President Kathleen Woodring described as a "natural leader, whose sense of humor and calm demeanor can smooth out any stressful situation."

She added that what particularly stood out is that Kevin knew what actions could make a difference. "The sweetest note was his call back to the home office for crayons and coloring books. Staff responded with donations; children's pictures were hung on the walls as parents tried to find a job and secure benefits after such destruction."

Kevin said that families were coming with children in tow, and they needed a way to make them feel comfortable. "I'm not a psychologist, but to look at some of those images they drew of what they went through ... it's something I'll never forget. We wanted the kids to realize, hey, it's okay ..."

For his pivotal role, Kevin was recently recognized as one of the state's 26 Workforce Champions at the annual Florida Workforce Professional Development Summit and was named Florida's Workforce Goodwill Emissary of the Year.

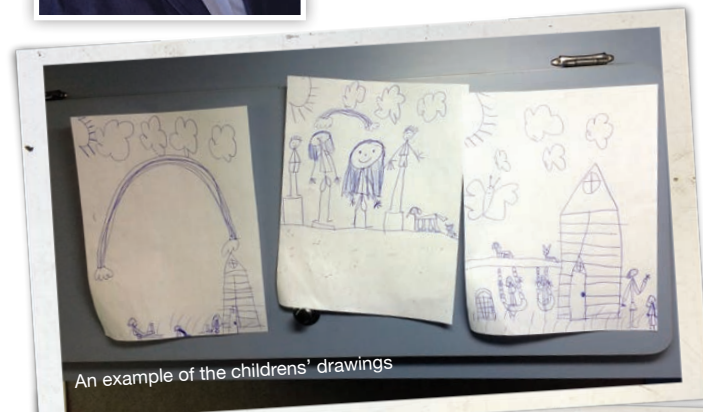
This is indeed a big deal. The summit is a three-day educational and training conference attended by more than 800 direct service and leadership staff from Florida's workforce system. Kevin's Goodwill Emissary award was presented by the Florida Workforce Development Association "in recognition and appreciation of (Kevin's) commitment to strengthening Florida's workforce and for making a difference through his dedication to excellence."

Kevin said the honor was "unreal."

"We all do what we do for our customers and I just enjoy what I do. It just feels great. The best part of my job is helping people."

And for that, you can believe we are more than just a little thankful. Oh, and that "go bag" I mentioned earlier? It is repacked and at the ready, once again.

Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC, communications manager at CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion, is Accredited in Public Relations, a Certified Public Relations Counselor and a Florida Certified Workforce Professional. She would love to hear from you and learn what kind of information you'd like to see each month. Please contact her at (352) 291-9559, (800) 434-5627, ext. 1234 or lbyrnes@careersourceclm.com.



An example of the children's drawings



The 40-foot mobile resource unit set up next to FEMA trailer.



Kevin's reaction on receiving Florida's Goodwill Emissary award



Kevin Harrison wearing the green t-shirt volunteers wore who were deployed to the Gulf Region to assist in the wake of Hurricane Michael



## CAREER FAIR



**DETAILS**  
**THURSDAY, NOV. 7, 2019**  
**From 1 – 3:30 P.M.**

Marion County Public Library  
2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala

**VETERANS** This is your chance to connect with employers dedicated to assisting veterans and their families find careers that match your skills and aspirations. Can't attend the career fair? Visit one of our Career Centers any time to receive priority of service.

**BUSINESSES** When you hire a hero, you hire someone who leads with integrity, knows the meaning of hard work and performs well under pressure. Don't miss this recruiting opportunity.

**NO CHARGE TO PARTICIPATE!**  
**CALL 800-434-JOBS, EXT. 2205**



An equal opportunity employer/program. Services available in Spanish and to those with disabilities. For accommodations, call 800-434-5627, ext. 7878. Numbers may be reached using TTY/TDD equipment via Florida Relay at 711. A proud partner of the American Job Center network and member of CareerSource Florida.