

As we begin the fall season, I wanted to talk a little bit about some opportunities for our citizens to get involved in their City and community. While we all have different views on politics, I am hopeful that we can all agree that we need to work together to keep our City and our neighborhoods great places to live, work and raise a family.

Many of you may have heard me say that cities are different; they were created to give citizens a chance to truly get involved in their government. Orlando and District 3 are blessed with many residents who, every day, make a commitment to get involved in their community and make it better in some way. From neighborhood and neighborhood watch leaders to those who mentor at a school, work with a PTA, volunteer through their church or log hours at a local non-profit, we should all take a moment to recognize those who make a positive difference in our neighborhoods every day.

If you know one of these people, please consider nominating them for the Neighborhood Champion Award, which will be presented at the Mayor's Annual Neighborhood and Community Summit held in the spring of each year. For more information on the nominating process, please contact the City's Office of Communication and Neighborhood Relations at 407-246-2169.

Back in June, the City of Orlando was fortunate to receive a Cities of Service Leadership Grant in the amount of \$200,000. The grants were awarded to only 20 cities in the U.S. through the Rockefeller Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies. It will allow Orlando to develop a targeted plan to increase volunteerism and community involvement. The City has initially partnered with UCF, the United Way, the Orlando Magic, Orange County Public Schools and the Community Foundation and will focus its efforts on youth education and youth crime prevention.

I had the pleasure of meeting with the Executive Director of one of the first organizations that will be supported by the grant, Real Men Outdoors. Real Men Outdoors is a unique program that gives at-risk, urban youth an opportunity to gain self-confidence, leadership skills and character development through a structured outdoor survival-training curriculum. For more information about this innovative program, check out their website at www.realmenoutdoors.com.

September is a month to get involved in some other great outdoor volunteer opportunities through the City. First, please join our Keep Orlando Beautiful and Stormwater divisions for the 25th annual International Coastal Clean-up on Saturday, September 25th from 9 – 11 a.m. The City will be focusing on four of our beautiful urban lakes—Lake Lawne, Lake Orlando, Lake Ivanhoe and Lake Lorna Doone. For more information, please visit the City's website or call Katie Kulbaba at 407-246-2257.

Also on September 25th, our Families, Parks and Recreation Department will be celebrating National Public Lands Day at Bill Frederick Park at Turkey Lake from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This event will serve to educate the public on all of the ways residents can volunteer in our local parks while also celebrating the many types of recreation our City parks have to offer. For more information on this event, please call our parks department at 407-246-4300.

If you are looking for another kind of volunteer opportunity in our City, please consider our City's Adopt-a-Street program through Keep Orlando Beautiful. Last month, I had the opportunity to accompany our KOB staff on a litter index of District 3 and was proud of the work that many of our residents do to keep our community aesthetically pleasing. Groups like Maury Road Neighborhood Watch, which adopted Maury Road, are doing their part to keep College Park clean. For more information about this and other beautification programs, check out the programs section on the KOB website, located at www.cityoforlando.net/kob.

It is also time for KOB's annual beautification award nominations. If you know of a business in College Park or around the City that either has enhanced or continued to maintain a well-manicured property this past year, please consider nominating them for the District 3 award. Nomination forms can also be found under the programs section of the KOB website. This year's District 3 winner was New Traditions Bank located at Orange Avenue and Wilkinson Street.

And speaking of events, please join Mayor Dyer and me on October 1st at 10 a.m. for the Mayor's annual State of Downtown address, being held this year in conjunction with the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Amway Center. This year's address is free and open to the public and will give our entire community an opportunity to experience the Amway Center without attending a ticketed event. For more information, visit the City's website and for updates on the new Amway Center, including events and a virtual tour of the new facility, visit www.amwaycenter.com.

Even though we are all busy with the day-to-day responsibilities of life, let us all remember the words of Dr. Seuss in his book, *The Lorax*, "Unless someone like you cares a whole, awful lot, things aren't going to get better, they're not!"

As always, thank you for your support of our Great City and I look forward to seeing you around the District this fall.