# Punta Gorda Newsletter

***Thursday, June 11, 2026***

The Punta Gorda Kiwanis Club met at Beef o' Bradys at 12pm on Thursday, June 4. We had 15 members in attendance (Ray Anderson, Frank Desguin, Bob Falce, Jim Finch, Lisa Lusby, Bill Martin, Mary Kay Mechlin, Gene Murtha, Jennifer Rivera, Mike Rooney, Richard Schnur, Whitney Stout, Sam Summers, Lee Swift, Eddie Webb) and 3 guests – Sue Rooney, Teresa Murtha and speaker Barbara Lockhart.

Barbara Lockhart, President of The Environmental Conservancy of North Port And Surrounding Areas spoke to us. Their mission is to save neighborhood nature. They acquire and permanently conserve neighborhood land for preservation of and education and research about neighborhood wildlife, native plants and soil. They are a 501c3 that serves both Sarasota and Charlotte Counties. Their staff are trained through the University of Florida Master Naturalist Program.

As of 2/28/26, the organization has obtained 57 parcels through donation or purchase from Sarasota to Gulf Cove and Englewood to Harbor Heights.

The benefits of small areas of natural; green space to wildlife/nature include:

- Act as rest stops and transitional areas for roaming animals
- Provide a safe place for wildlife to nest and raise young
- Help maintain biodiversity
- Counteract the effects of habitat loss

Human health benefits from natural green space amidst development:

- Green can feel calm and quiet
- Green space absorbs noise
- Fosters a sense of pride, ownership and involvement among residents
- Lack of it can hurt mental health
- Help reduce flooding
- Helps filter water and improve water quality
- Maintains tree canopy and air filtration
- Increase property values
- Encourages bird watching, wildflower appreciation

- The board received a request to assist Aiden Flavin with additional technical schooling. He is the son of former members Sheryl and Chris Flavin. Support will be determined after the Board receives a written request from Mr. Flavin.
- We received a request for support from Kiwanian Junior Pierre Louis. A letter and request from a young Kiwanian from Cape Coral is included with this newsletter. He has set up a “Go Fund Me”. We are providing this in case any members want to make a contribution for his situation.
- Whitney Stout was accepted as a new member at the board meeting this week. President Debbie will welcome her officially into the club next week.
- Frank Desguin acted as sheriff. Lee Swift won $20.00 with the 50/50 but did not pull the right card – 16 cards next week – big pot is up to $239.00.
- Welcome backs were made for Frank Desguin, Richard Schnur and Gene Murtha.
- Jim Finch is selling raffle tickets for the Florida Kiwanis Foundation. $20.00 for 5 tickets. Prizes are $1,000, $750, $500 and $250 and will be drawn at DCON in early August.
- There will be a Division Council Meeting/Social at Beef O’Brady’s on Monday, June 29 at 4pm. The Charlotte Local Foundation will have Florida Lottery representatives come speak to us about educational opportunity. This is a great chance for all of us to get together, learn, ask questions, come away with information that may help our clubs and have some fun. Kiwanis After Hours member and CLEF Executive Director Daniel Washington arranged for this event and for free food to be available. This is considered an inner club if we have four or more members attending.