

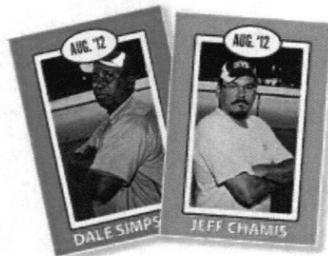
TEAM PORT ST. LUCIE MVP

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September 24, 2012

Teamwork, desire to help citizens lead to Player-of-the-Month distinction for two parks employees

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On the evening of Aug. 2, the two were going about their daily routine when a citizen told them of a suspicious person pulling door handles on parked cars, apparently seeking entry. Together Dale and Jeff quickly initiated an action plan which Dale had recently learned in training with the City's police department and taught to Jeff. The training was done as part of the City's new battle plan to reduce crime in parks and focused on preparing employees to properly and safely respond to suspicious incidents.

Upon spotting the suspect, Dale and Jeff immediately contacted park police officers Justin Kerns and Fred Knaggs. They relayed important information to the officers, who work with Dale and Jeff daily, and they described what they were watching without confronting the suspicious person.

As the suspect left the parking area and disappeared into the crowded park, Dale went on foot toward the general sports field while Jeff walked toward the baseball complex. Dale eventually spotted the suspect standing near an occupied vehicle and talking to the driver, so he used his radio to notify Jeff, who relayed the location to the officers. Officer Kerns soon approached, questioned the suspect and took him into custody without incident and without any property being stolen from any cars.

City Manager Greg Oravec believes the entire incident shows how employees can make a difference in the quality of life for citizens by knowing how their individual jobs relate to the bigger mission of the City.

He said the new park safety plan endeavors to put all the City's resources to work to face the challenge of keeping parks safe, clean and green.

"I couldn't ask for a better example of the value of prepared employees implementing proactive solutions, good training and teamwork, and it all resulting in a positive impact," Oravec said. "When I heard of Jeff and Dale's story, it screamed for Player-of-the-Month honors because, when you break it down, you can see many good things at work, and they provide us with a perfect example of our employees getting the big picture. Every one of us, regardless of specific job duties, is contributing to the vision for our community and our organizational goals. Once we are all dialed in like this, I truly believe the Team is going to take the City to new heights."

For Dale and Jeff, they are just happy that no one lost anything valuable from their cars. They want Whispering Pines Park to be a place where residents feel secure and welcome, and now they feel better-prepared to deal with problems since their training.

"We need to be on top of things and let people know we are doing our jobs," Dale said. "We want people to see we are safe, so we stay aware of every little thing that happens and we have a lot to do."

Jeff also makes park safety a priority and is extra aware of crime issues because his wife, Damaris, is a retired police officer, who coincidentally will begin working for the City as a police public service aide beginning today, Sept. 24.

Welcome aboard, Damaris, Jeff has set the bar high for you!

Jeff and Damaris moved from Connecticut to Port St. Lucie in February to be closer to Jeff's mother. He hopes to go full time with the City whenever an opportunity arises. He says Damaris loves the fishing here, and he loves meeting new people while on the job at the park.

Dale also loves meeting people every day and especially enjoys working with kids.

Originally from Jamaica, he has three sons and a daughter, and he is very proud of each of them. He also enjoys lots of sports and has two grandkids he dearly loves.

Congratulations to Dale and Jeff for being the Team Player of the Month for August 2012. Their extra efforts are truly helping "to make the world a better place, starting with Port St. Lucie."