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South Middle River sees progress in fight against crime

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DON CRINKLAW FPG

6:08 p.m. EDT, May 16, 2013

Three months ago **Fort Lauderdale's** South Middle River neighborhood entered into a relationship with City Hall and with a little-known British company called **SmartWaterCSI.**

The Brits came up with a crime-fighting tool called SmartWater, and if there's one thing South Middle River has plenty of, it's crime. Mayor Jack Seiler's administration, using money the police confiscated from criminals, brought the Brits to town, and the partnership handed out SmartWater kits to residents for free.

"We're happy with the way things are going," Brenda Stanley, SmartWater's business development manager, said at a neighborhood gathering last Saturday.

So are residents.

"The crime stats have gone way down," said Rob Smith, a member of the neighborhood association's board of directors. He noted that the **Fort Lauderdale Police Department** has put up a large sign in the booking area letting everyone know that the FLPD routinely scans for the presence of SmartWater.

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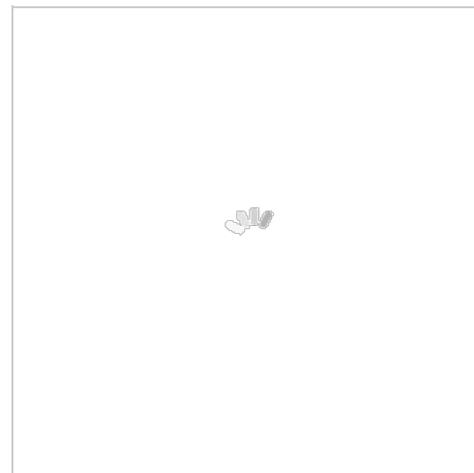


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thin little bottle with a dauber. A drop or two will mark your television or computer or whatever as yours alone. It can't be rubbed off. It's invisible except under a black light. Then it gives off a ghostly, greenish-yellow glow.

Three months ago a neighborhood association meeting was the site for distribution of the little kits to South Middle River residents. Free. Supply exceeded demand. Of 500 available, 100 were left behind.

"We want to get those 100 out there," Smith said. That's why tables were lined up on the eastern edge of the basketball court inside the Warfield Park Community Center from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. Eighty-five guests went in and out while neighbors and staffers, answered questions and gave out the little bottles. When they were done, 53 kits had been moved.

There was more going on.

"We wanted this to be a SmartWater event," Smith said, "but we knew we needed more. So we made it dual-purpose. We added medical as an attraction, to bring in more people."

In the shelter of the north side of the community center, Broward Health nurse Nornie Myers gave quick physical exams to anyone who stepped up. The numbers were the same as in other neighborhoods, Myers said. "Four out of 10 have **high blood pressure**. That's the norm."

A nearby step-up van provided by the **AIDS** Healthcare Foundation, gave "one-minute, rapid **HIV** tests, safe and confidential." The staffer would not be interviewed, but at the end of the session he revealed he'd administered 23 tests.

"The main issue with SmartWater is going to be the courts," said Seiler, who dropped in around noon. "We need the judges to address the evidence issue, to uphold SmartWater as part of the chain-of-custody. That will take this to the next level – when we can actually prosecute a defendant because of SmartWater.

"Next, there need to be laws in Tallahassee," Seiler added, "saying that if a pawnbroker is in possession of something with SmartWater on it, he has a duty to report it."

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