

# Hometown Civitan Celebrates Success With Adopt-a-Precinct

The club staffed an early voting site for 2020's elections, earning more than \$40,000 for charity.

By LEAH SCHWARTING  
Daily Sun Specialty Editor

Hometown Civitan members huddled in jackets and sweaters to ward off the chill Dec. 1 morning at Evans Prairie Country Club.

The sight of the check for \$43,154 that the group earned through Adopt-A-Precinct, however, was enough to get everyone excited.

Sumter County's Adopt-A-Precinct program allows groups to staff a voting site as a team, but they don't keep their wages. Instead, the money goes to the group and is given to charities.

"Honestly, he's (Sumter Elections Supervisor Bill Keen) a genius because all of the money we made goes back to the community," said Charter President Betty Rohan, of the Village of Collier.

This year, Adopt-A-Precinct accounted for the poll workers



Submitted photo

Sumter Elections Supervisor Bill Keen presents the check for the amount Hometown Civitan raised during the Adopt-A-Precinct program to, left to right, Club President Mary Anderson, of the Village of Collier, and Treasurer Karen Goodman, of the Village of Gilchrist.

for nine of Sumter's precincts and one early voting site, which was staffed by Hometown Civitan.

Hometown Civitan may be the only Adopt-A-Precinct participant in Florida that was allowed to tackle early voting, according to Keen.

The effort didn't happen overnight. The club was involved in

Adopt-A-Precinct since it began around 2018.

Laura McLaughlin, the early voting Adopt-A-Precinct chair, read about the program in the Daily Sun, and decided it sounded like a good fundraising opportunity.

When she heard that staffing an early voting site might be an option for 2020, she asked Keen

early voting site for 2020's three elections, a total of 28 days.

Kathy Hall, Florida Civitan director of Area One, the local branch's area, was one of the guests at Tuesday's meeting. When she took the microphone, she told the group that "you have made Area One look good."

Other guests included Cindy Brown, who was there representing Congressman Daniel Webster.

"We're just so pleased with what you've done at polling and with Sumter County," she said.

Keen, who attended with a few staff members, brought a giant check to present to Club President Mary Anderson, of the Village of Collier, and Treasurer

Karen Goodman, of the Village of Gilchrist. The money raised will go to several local charities, such as Center Hill Children's Mission, ARC Sunrise and the Humane Society of Sumter County.

"We look forward to 2022, and hopefully you'll take it on again," Keen told the club.

After the speeches, Sumter Commissioner Doug Gilpin, one of the other guests, said this doesn't happen everywhere. They were blessed, he said, to have The Villages in Sumter.

"This is an excellent example of public/private partnership, the community and government working together to have a positive outcome," he said.

about it, and more than once.

But when she got the green light, she began to worry.

"How is a club with less than 35 members going to pull this off?" said McLaughlin, of the Village of Collier.

But it did. Civitan members went to neighbors, friends and spouses, "whoever we could lasso," said McLaughlin, asked them to sign up. The resulting pool of volunteers worked an