



MEDIA ADVISORY

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

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2016 Memorial Weekend Summary of Interviews

(MIAMI, FL) – The Miami-Dade County Office of Community Advocacy's Goodwill Ambassador Kathryn Perez Interview with City of Miami Beach Officer Edward Harris.

On Saturday, May 28, 2016, I had the opportunity to interview Officer Edward Harris on his opinion regarding Miami-Dade County's GWA program. My questions to him were as follows:

- 1.) How long has been a participant in the GWA program;
- 2.) What were his thoughts on the GWA program;
- 3.) Are there any recommendations that he might have on improving the program;
- 4.) What is his opinion on the interaction among the Goodwill Ambassadors and the participants of the event, the visitors and our community?

He has been part of the GWA program since its inception ten (10) years ago representing the City of Miami Beach. His thoughts on the GWA program was that it is a wonderful addition to help support the City and the County, "You need an intermediary that would work as a buffer between the law enforcement and the community." He continues on to say that so far the program is working and therefore no changes are necessary. His motto on the GWA program is "If it is not broken, don't fix it." His suggestions for improvement are to have more resources for the Goodwill Ambassadors which in turn would provide us with the ability to recruit more Goodwill Ambassadors.

The interaction of the Goodwill Ambassadors are, "Here to be just that Goodwill Ambassadors, to support and give direction to empower folks in giving them an understanding of why we are here, so for people who are City and County employees that give up their weekend to walk amongst the crowd of 200,000 folks, What does that tell you?" He continues on to state, "They are committed in ensuring that tourists and local citizens alike are able and aware that they can come to Miami Beach to have a good time, to come on vacation and not leave on probation." He says, "Remember that they are Goodwill Ambassadors."