

Exercising our core and our core values

One ... two ... three
... "Go harder or go home."

Four ... five ... six ... "Slow progress is better than no progress."

Seven ... eight ... nine ...
"Your desire to change must be greater than your desire to stay the same."

And 10 – woohoo!

DVD – done.

Sweating and heart-pounding – done.

Tony Horton and I are done.

Chanting "Who's bad? I'm bad. Who's bad? I'm bad," as I Snoopy dance around the living room, I am tickled as punch that I have been able to get my exercise in and am ready for whatever the rest of the day brings.

Exercise has come a long way from the days when my grandmother and I would exercise with "the godfather of fitness" Jack LaLanne on channel 9, WPIX, in New Jersey.

Exercise philosophy today is all about "the core" – strengthening those core muscles in the stomach area that all others are framed around.

If your core is strong, chances are everything else will be protected – your posture will be better, your hips will be stronger, your back will feel great – all of which will allow you more enjoyment in movement.

More mobility gives you the ability to keep doing and trying new things, or at least those things you love best. More tennis. More golf. More bowling. More travel.

Our District government not only has a mission statement:



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"To provide and preserve the lifestyle of Florida's Friendliest Hometown," and a vision, "To be respected as the most responsive and responsible community development district," we also have core values – hard work, hospitality, stewardship and creativity.

Core can be defined as the central, innermost or most essential part of anything. For the 900-plus staff that makes up the District Team, those core values inspire us.

They give us purpose. For us, they are the qualities of behavior that the District would not change, no matter what, and embody how we – our team – strives to conduct our business.

They are the same qualities that we require from our vendors and subcontractors, and what we hope our residents and guests also believe in.

• **Hard work:** We are committed to excellence in all that we do, and our work ethic reflects personal pride in our work and in our community.

Did you know that more than 82 percent of our staff members also are residents? How impressive that those who live here not only want to enjoy the lifestyle here, but also wish to add value by helping to maintain and improve the services offered in their community.

In comparison to the cities and counties that we came from, where else have we experienced a staff that works so hard to exceed expectations – not just meet them?

• **Hospitality:** Ben Franklin said: "The taste of the roast is determined by the handshake of the host." Our goal is to create a high quality atmosphere like our home – warm, comfortable, clean and honest.

We take pride in being able to "take that frown and turn it upside down" for the most part, or at least turn it into a small grimace.

While there are some things that the District cannot change, or does not have the power or ability to change, staff always will do our best to seek a workable resolution, or if not possible, at least explain alternate solutions or identify the appropriate responsible party.

• **Stewardship:** Each employee is a steward of The Villages' resources, making prudent decisions and being held accountable for every penny in our board-approved budget.

We treat The Villages as "ours" to nourish and protect, and have had some phenomenal examples of cost savings, efficiencies and economies of scale that allow us to grow and maintain in ways that most governmental agencies should seek to model.

• **Creativity:** Regardless of what a staff member was prior to working here – be it head of a Fortune 500 company, clerical worker, entrepreneur, military officer, teacher, police officer, etc. – we provide for

them not only the ability to learn new ways to apply prior knowledge, skills and abilities, but also the opportunity to learn, grow and change.

We embrace innovative thinking, and recognize risk taking and “out of the box” thinking. How better to stay ahead of the curve and be

prepared for growth and future needs?

So what does all this mean to you?

Embrace not just the fact that you live in Florida’s Friendliest Hometown, but also the core values that embody the spirit behind the phrase.

Whether you realize it or not, you are part of a team, and we need you to be an active member. Much like

the results of sit ups and leg lifts, working together, collaboratively, strengthens our “core” and yields phenomenal accomplishments.

OK – maybe we won’t get six-pack abs immediately – but we can strive for them. So plan on getting not only physically fit, but “civic-ly” fit (yes, new word).

Join the team and be creative and suggest new ideas. Strengthen those “hospitality”

muscles by helping those in need. And smile more – be kind, because your kindness may be the only nice thing that happens to someone that day.

Be a fellow steward and report problems and things that need to be fixed by calling Customer Service. And after you are all done – sit back for a moment and enjoy the results – and then start again, because you only can stay fit

by keeping fit.

On that note, I am grabbing an apple and heading out for a walk down Springdale Trail – if I don’t see you there, I’ll see you again at Our Place. Don’t forget your water bottle when you head out – it’s hot out there.

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