

With the trash and debris they tossed in the dumpster, Take a Bite out of Grime participants simultaneously disposed of community stigma and Safe Harbor residents' inhibitions.

Several months before the event, which takes place annually the last Saturday in February, Safe Harbor Community Policing deputies begin planning the High Point cleanup, involving residents as much as their "transient" nature allows.

As deputies schedule the specifics, like feeding participants and disposing of the trash, they enlist residents' help identifying potential clean-up sites, stuffing "giveaway" bags with toiletries, food, and other essentials, and finally, setting up the day of the event.

"It helps instill pride and dignity into the hearts and minds of residents who are trying to turn their lives around," said Safe Harbor **Corporal Mike Anthony**.

A similar message was echoed in the opening ceremony addresses.

After Pastor Karen Hanson asked for protection over event volunteers in her invocation, retired Navy Seal Kory Knowles encouraged residents to be persistent, stay on top of things, and take life one day at a time.

Keep Pinellas Beautiful Director Pat Deplasco closed the ceremony, emphasizing the importance of taking control of the overabundance of trash affecting our environment.

If Safe Harbor's first and second cleanups took "a bite" out of grime, this year's event devoured it.

A Community CLEANSE



On February 27th, 105 Safe Harbor residents joined PCSO employees, Keep Pinellas Beautiful, and other community volunteers to collect more than 14,000 pounds of trash, greater than the past two cleanups' totals combined.

"Each year since the start of this event, we have learned something new that helps us with the following year's event," **Corporal Anthony** said.

This year, each of the nine clean-up locations were assigned a deputy "site captain" to supervise and support volunteers, monitor supplies, communicate from site to site, and distribute volunteers where necessary.

"The cleanup allows the residents of Pinellas Safe Harbor, PCSO, the community, and businesses to come together in a unique way," **Corporal Anthony** said. "It solves numerous problems and helps to build bridges between each of these groups. It gives the community an inside look at how grateful people are at the opportunity to turn their lives around."

