



**City of Coral Gables
COMMISSION MEETING
August 25, 2009**

ITEM TITLE:

Congratulations to Kattia Castellanos, Police Department, recipient of the City of Coral Gables Employee of the Month Award, for the month of August 2009.

BRIEF HISTORY:

The nomination was given by Idalia Budihas, Resident, who had this to say about Kattia:

"Kattia has served our city since 1998, when as a recipient of a VOCA grant, she joined the Coral Gables Police Department where she created the Victim Witness Unit. On call 24/7, she assists an average of 500 crime victims each year, evaluating their needs, providing for protective services, and walking the victim through the judicial process. She is very well known throughout the community and beyond. Kattia is a true Ambassador for the City Beautiful and is known among those she has served as the "Angel of Coral Gables"....Along with the responding officer, she is the first person that a visitor, resident, or tourist encounters after being victimized in our city....For many, Kattia is the face of our city in the midst of crisis. Mrs. Castellanos, has been able to truly advocate for victims within the law enforcement community, and organizations she collaborates with, assisting other agencies in creating efficient programs and participating in local efforts, to uniformly respond to victims of Domestic abuse....From a burglary, to a homicide, Kattia has a genuine gift for listening to survivors and hearing their concerns. Mrs. Castellanos has accompanied survivors of homicide walk through a crime scene, arranged crime scene clean up, and provided referral, comfort and assistance to many survivors of crime, from parents who lost a child, domestic and rape victims, to an elderly survivor....Kattia has created awareness through the arts, with projects such as the donation of the "The Stop the Violence Sculpture" which is permanently displayed in the lobby of the State Attorneys Office, and the "New Beginnings Quilt" made in its entirety by child survivors, among many others....Mrs. Castellanos created a Victim Witness Assistance Website, within the City of Coral Gables police site, to provide key information to the citizens. She spearheaded the Teddy Bear Project, with the collaboration of a local school, providing officers with a stuffed animal, in case they go to a scene where children are present, and runs an ongoing cell phone collection for the benefit of crime victims and the elderly, that she started in 2002. Each year, with family, friends (me included) and other local organizations, she coordinates the collection and distribution of toys, and clothing, as well as school supplies, for around 100 children, making sure no child is left behind during the holidays. She coordinates summer field trips to the Police and Fire Departments for the Children at the Local DV shelter as well. Her car is always full of donations that she collects all year long, and there is always Kleenex, water and a teddy bear incase she needs to respond."

ATTACHMENT(S):

Employee of the Month Notification Letter