



PARTNERSHIP FOR
STRONG
FAMILIES

PARTNERSHIP CONNECTION

JANUARY - MARCH 2017



Foster A CHILD.
Foster A DREAM.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Message from our CEO	2
National Adoption Month Recap	3
Wish Upon a Star Recap	4
Guardian ad Litem Feature	4
Wish Upon a Star Donor Spotlight	5
Resource Center Updates	6
CPC Updates	7
Advocacy Updates	7
Save the Date: Amazing Give	7
Board of Directors Introductions	8

OFFICE LOCATION

PSF Headquarters
5950 NW 1st Place
Suite A
Gainesville, FL 32607
P: 352.244.1500
F: 352.244.1647
www.pfsf.org

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES UPDATE

By Michelle Giordano, Recruitment Specialist

The success of PSF's mission hinges on partnering with quality Adoptive and Partner Families to provide safe and loving homes to the children in our care. As the number of children in out-of-home care continues to increase, PSF has to think outside of the box on our recruitment efforts. Over the past six months, our Community and Government Relations team has implemented several new recruitment strategies to increase our reach to potential new families.

Since launching our online recruitment strategy in late 2015, our community recognition has grown, and we continue to see great responses from our social media ads. Our most recent holiday-themed ad was shared more than 84 times and reached 20,301 people, which resulted in six adoptive and fostering inquiries.

Along with our online recruitment presence, PSF has started a robust school and faith-based recruitment strategy. Since November, PSF's recruitment specialists have spoken at 14 schools and churches. Recruitment staff shared PSF's mission and the need for quality Adoptive and Partner Families. The messages were well received and have resulted in groups continuing the conversation about how they can get more involved in serving the children in our care.

Word of mouth recruitment is also key to our recruitment strategy. PSF could not achieve our mission without those individuals who have helped us make connections at schools and churches. Thank you to those special individuals. If you are interested in having a member of our recruitment team speak at your organization, church or school, please let us know!

Finally, in order to ensure there is a P.R.I.D.E. class to meet all of our potential families' schedules, the licensing team has scheduled more classes throughout our catchment area, as well as more Saturday classes. Upcoming classes will be held in Gainesville, Trenton, Lake City, Live Oak, Perry and Lake Butler. For more information or to obtain a class schedule, please contact Michelle at 352-213-7219 or Michelle.Giordano@pfsf.org.

PSF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Michael Bowie
Chair

Mr. Jim Stringfellow
Chair Emeritus

Ms. Jo Haley
Vice Chair

Mr. Ed Peddie
Treasurer

Mr. Joe Dunlap
Secretary

Mr. Don Caldwell
Chief Tony Jones

Dr. Thomas Hawkins

Ms. Diana McPhearson

Ms. Kitty McElhaney

Ms. Ester Tibbs

Dr. Muthusami Kumaran

Mr. Donovan Arnold

Reverend Dan Johnson

Mr. Jose Del Cueto

Advisory Board Members

Chief Argatha Gilmore

Sheriff Robert Schultz

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Stephen Pennypacker
President/CEO

Esteemed Community Partners and Friends,

As we welcome in the New Year, I want to wish you all a happy and healthy 2017. At PSF, we are moving forward with several new initiatives and developments to better serve our community's youth.

As 2016 drew to a close, we were fortunate to welcome two new leaders to our board of directors, Jose Del Cueto and Dan Johnson. Mr. Del Cueto brings to our board his expertise in marketing and communications and is currently leading a team of interns as they help to increase knowledge of our agency's mission in the community. Reverend Dan Johnson joined our board after more than 22 years serving as the lead pastor at Trinity United Methodist Church in Gainesville. He is already hard at work to increase our connections for Partner and Adoptive Family Recruitment, especially in the faith-based community. You can read more about our new board members and the great things they are bringing to the table on page 8 of this newsletter.

On the legislative front, from January 9-11, I had the opportunity to attend the Florida Coalition for Children's Rally in Tally event. Working with representatives from our lobbyist firm, Gray Robinson, Patty Carroll and I were able to meet with several legislators from across the state to talk about the success of community-based care and our Resource Center Model for child abuse prevention. We are looking forward to continuing these conversations during the upcoming legislative session.

I am also excited to share that our modular home at our headquarters office in Gainesville will soon be up and running. Once open, the modular home will serve as a new, more welcoming environment for supervised visitations to occur. It will also bring the capability of offering telemedicine as an option for our families who would otherwise have to travel long distances for appointments. As an added benefit, the home will increase the storage space available to our staff, which due to the generosity and support of the community, has become a much-needed space for donations that continue to flood in.

As we continue into 2017, I look forward to new partnerships and collaborations that will help bring about positive change for the children and families we serve.

Stephen Pennypacker
President/CEO

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE



First off, I would like to start by wishing all of our readers, partners and friends a very Happy New Year! It is hard to believe that 2017 is already upon us.

PSF ended 2016 on a great note with the closeout of our 2016 Wish Upon a Star Holiday Toy Drive. Although our need this year was greater than we have seen in the past five years, our community stepped up to make sure that every child in our care had the Christmas they so deserved. To each and every donor who helped to make the holidays of more than 1,300 youth merry, we cannot thank you enough.

2017 is already bringing with it many exciting changes and opportunities. In February, our agency will honor our Partner Families during the first annual Foster Family Appreciation Week from February 6 - 10. Our Partner Families should be on the

lookout for a special thank you to arrive in their mailboxes, and we encourage everyone to join our conversation on Facebook to help us thank each and every one of the amazing Partner Families who open their hearts and homes to children in our care.

On a personal note, 2017 is also bringing major change to the Carroll family as my husband and I prepare to welcome our first child, a son, who is set to arrive in May! We feel very fortunate to get to raise him in such a strong and family-focused community.

As you begin plans for your 2017, I encourage you all to ask what you can do for the children and families in our care. Maybe you have some extra time to volunteer at one of our Resource Centers or would like to get involved in one of our donation drives. Perhaps you're even ready to explore fostering or adopting. No matter the avenue, we invite you to partner with us to help us bring hope to our community's most vulnerable youth.

PSF'S SUPERHERO 5K SUCCESS

By Hannah Green, Adoption Recruitment Specialist

On November 5, PSF held its second annual Superhero 5K to support our Adoptive Family recruitment efforts. Each year, we race to raise awareness of the children in our area who are in out-of-home care because of abuse or neglect, and especially for the 40-50 youth who need loving forever families.

Westside Park was bustling with plenty of excitement and energy, even at 8:00 in the morning. About 350 participants attended and helped to raise more than \$7,500. People of all ages definitely showed their dedication; whether that was dressing up as Batman or running at full speed with a red cape trailing behind them.

While Florida usually does not embrace the cooler seasons, it was a beautiful, cool fall morning - the perfect weather for a 5K and to take photos with life-sized superheroes! We would like to sincerely thank James Coats and Phalanx Defense Systems for bringing to life our favorite superheroes. The 9-foot Hulk was certainly the crowd favorite.



After the race, prizes and awards were given out to the top runners in several categories. As a special part of the presentation, one of our recruit youth, Collin, was able to auction the rocking chair that he crafted by hand. Collin has a natural gift and talent for woodworking and dedicated several weeks of hard work to refurbish the rocking chair. After a heated bidding war, it was sold for \$200 to Jose Del Cueto, pictured left. Collin was able to see firsthand the importance of a strong work ethic and was encouraged that the fruits of his labor were recognized and rewarded.

It was inspiring to see so many wonderful people in our community come together as advocates for our children. Great memories were created that day, and we are already looking forward to our next 5K! Stay tuned for more information on our 3rd annual Superhero 5K in November 2017. We would like to thank the volunteers who made this day possible, especially those staff who donated their time to ensure the event ran smoothly. Finally, we are incredibly grateful for our generous sponsors, all of which are listed to the right.



Special Thanks to Our Event Sponsors!



simply comfortable
 LuLaRoe Christy Conner
 LuLaRoe Martie & Mike Gillen



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Foster Family Appreciation Week

February 6 - 10, 2017

Join PSF in thanking our amazing Partner Families who open their hearts and homes to the children in our care. Check out our social media pages for updates!

Legislative Session Begins

March 7, 2017

The Legislative Session begins in March and runs through May 5. PSF will keep you updated throughout the session on any important changes that take effect.

Children's Day at the Capitol

March 28, 2017

Each year, PSF travels to the Capitol with a group of our staff, Partner Families and board members to speak with legislators about the policies that will impact our system.

Child Abuse Prevention Month

April 2017

PSF plans to celebrate Child Abuse Prevention Month with a large social media campaign, by giving out informational and safety materials at our Resource Centers and by participating in events throughout the community.

A YEAR OF UNPRECEDENTED JOY

By Aldreka Everett, Community Relations Assistant

As one would imagine, Wish Upon a Star (WUAS) is a tremendous task that requires not only skill and strategy, but also compassion for the children we serve. Eagerly, we spent approximately three months preparing for our annual holiday toy drive and found ourselves astounded by the generosity of each individual who partnered with us to fulfill the wishes of every child in our care.



This year, 222 donors provided presents for 1,332 individual children (82 more than last year), which is WUAS's greatest number of cases covered in recent years. In total, donors brought in more than \$96,570 of in-kind donations for the children in our care. We are in awe of the kindness shown by every donor and volunteer (listed to the right) who helped to ensure a merry Christmas for the children in our care.

To meet this volume of children, we always need a large space to sort, wrap and distribute presents as they pour in. This year, both Northwest Baptist Church and the Florida Farm Bureau generously opened their doors to us as we set up our version of Santa's Workshop for three weeks, and we are so appreciative of their help. We would also like to recognize the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce for donating toys to PSF for the second consecutive year after collecting them during their "Business After Hours" event. Special thanks also go to A Very Good Deed, a Greenhouse Church small group, Enterprise Holdings, Inc. employees and several individuals who stopped by to help wrap thousands of gifts. Thanks to their help, we were able to deliver presents to caseworkers in plenty of time to get to our kids by Christmas morning. In total, volunteers donated more than 317 hours of their time to help make sure that no child went without a special Christmas.

While many of the children in our care could not be home for the holidays, we rested assured knowing they felt loved and cared for by the many individuals in our communities and abroad (yes, we even had a donor from Australia!). PSF would like to thank every individual, group, business and fellow employee who felt compelled to bring extraordinary joy to the children in our care. We could not have done it without all of you!

GAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

By Paul Crawford, Guardian ad Litem Northwest Regional Director

I hope everyone is having a great start to the New Year 2017! Over the last several months, I had the privilege to spend some extra time with a few of the amazing volunteers and staff from the Guardian ad Litem Program. During this past holiday season, I was blown away to see how much extra effort and attention that our team, fellow child welfare professionals and community partners put forth to make it the best holiday possible for the children. I can only imagine how difficult it was for some of the children who are dealing with the trauma that comes with abuse and being away from the home and family that they know. I thank everyone for all that you were able to do to make these children's lives a little brighter during these difficult times. It is my hope that each of these children will not have to spend another holiday season without a permanent, safe and loving home. It is so important that we all continue to work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for them.

We have continued to see the number of children coming into the dependency system and into out-of-home care rise. In some areas of the circuits, we have had a greater increase in children than volunteer Guardians ad Litem to assign to them. In the months ahead, we are working very hard to recruit and train the best possible volunteers to advocate on behalf of the children. You may know of someone who you feel would be a good fit as a child advocate, or your situation may allow you to become a volunteer yourself. Please help spread the word that we need GAL advocates, Partner Families and continued community support to meet these needs as we move ahead in 2017. Anyone interested can obtain additional information at www.guardianadlitem.org.

I'm very optimistic and excited about the year ahead and hope you are too. My wish is that each of you will experience great success and happiness both personally and professionally in 2017. Again, thank you for all you do day in and day out to work to get the best possible outcomes for the children.



Thank You!

Platinum (100+)

Greenhouse Church

Gold (50-100)

James Moore & Co.
Malcolm Randall Veterans Affairs
Medical Center
North Florida Regional Medical
Center
Santa Fe College
The Upper Room Ministries

Silver (20-49)

Alachua County Sheriff's Office
CH2M Hill
College of Veterinary Medicine
Gainesville Seventh Day Adventist
Church
Gator City Motors
Johanna Tjeenk-Willink
Leadership Gainesville
Naylor Association Solutions
St. John the Evangelist Catholic
Church
The Bartram
The Vineyard
UBS Financial Services, Inc.
UF Self-Insurance Program
University of Florida Department of
Emergency Medicine

Bronze (1-19)

Adam & Liz Howell
Alachua County Growth Management
Allison C. Coates
Amanda Spurlin
Amy Wielgos
Andrea & Travis Wood
Anita Zucker Center at UF
Anne Banks
Anne Conklin
Art Alton
Audra Moraski
Audrey Waid
Austin & Sara King
Austin Forbrick
Barbara Giordano
Bernice McCooy
Beth & Ted Braitsch
Bettianne Ford
Beverly Swanson
Beverly Wonders
Bill Hutchinson
Black Nurses Rock - Gainesville
Palatka Florida Chapter
Bobby & Ester Tibbs
Bobby Sue Sapp
Bonnie Glotfelty
Brian & Lark Noll
Britney Ladd
Brittany Phillips
Brook Journey
Brynn Huysman
CareerSource
Carol Delany
Carol West
Cassidy Clare
Catherine & Jeff Drake

Catherine & Bill Rice
Cathy Novaro
Charity Provancal-Black
Cheryl & John Tyrone
Cheyanne Baker
Chi Chi Keen
Chip & Pamela Gonzales
Chris Carmody
Chris Perez
Cody & Heather Douglas
Crom Corp, LLC
Crystal Sheffield
Daniel & Dawn Taylor
Daniela Bursian
Danielle Brehm
Danielle Kolb
David & Lark Noll
Deirdre Ivey
Della Stewart
Deon Chapman
Diana B. McPherson
Diana Handros
Dominick & Michelle Giordano
Donavan & Katy Arnold
Donna Lamb
Donovan & Carol Shaw
Dr. Linda Abeles & Dr. Peter
Bensen
Dr. & Mrs. John Nuebert
Dr. Barbara Buys
Emily Crawford
Encell Technology
Fast Frontier
Florence Ramdahin-Hale
Florida Public Relations Association
- Gainesville Chapter
Francys Martin
Gabi & Brian Miller
Gainesville High School
George & Kathleen Kelly
Gina Murray
Glenna & Alanna Campbell
Gordon Green
Gulf Coast Florida LEO Wives
Gwyn Littell
Hannah & Anthony Frei
Hannah Dantzler
Hannah Green
Stephen Pennypacker
Herb Jones
Hope, Emily & Mason Kawaja
Jackie Tucker
Jaime Arledge
James Fryer
Jim Stringfellow
Janice Cartwright
Janna Cervantes
Jason & Heather Whitfield
Jennifer Bolton
Jennifer Deane
Jennifer Ferguson
Jeremia Holt
Jerome Santos
Jessica McDaniel
Joanna Dogo
Joe & Loral Dunlap
John Wiseheart
Josh & Samantha Tracy

Julianne Browning
Julie Brems
Julie Szydowski
Justin & Nicole Depew
Kaitlyn Spears
Karen Weinstein
Kate Hisey
Katherin Flury
Kathryn McElhaney
Kathy Bolick
Kathy Wheeler
Katie Blackburn
Katy McCrary
Kelly Mena
Kiarra Pena
Kimball Wiles Elementary
Kimi Hamashi-Lee
Kristina McMican
Laura Cain
Lauren Belgrade
Leah Cobb-Lee
Leslie Harris
Letitia McCrary
Lindsay Hanson
Lisa Vickery
Luisa Pena
Luke Thornton
Lymaris Barger
Lynn Pattishall
Marcia Swoope
Marcia Wiesel-Leary
Marisa Stucky
Mark K. Ellis
Mary & Russell Rice
Mary Elizay
McNeal Legal, LLC
Melissa Mills
Michael Sainato
Michelle Belcher
Montia Morris
Morgan & Colby Donovan
Muna Abraham
N&D Holding, Inc.
Nancy, Nance & Arden
Lempinen-Leedy
Naomi Sherill-Brown
NCSAI Team
Nooriel Nolan
Norton Elementary School
Oak Hall Middle School
Olga Garcia
Pamela Whitehead
Pauline Mills
Pebbles & Robert Edelman
Penny Hilgoss
Quincy & Tracy Westberry
Rachael Smith
Rachel Coleman
Rachel Foreman
Rebecca Chalusain
Robert Holowiak
Robyn Lane
Ruth Vallese
Sachi Pena
Saint Leo University
Sarah Cook
Sarah Dean
Scott & Audrey Cooper

Scott Gamble
Shannon Cooper
Shannon Moser
Sivagamasundari Srinivasan
Spring Babies Playgroup
St. Elizabeth's Greek Orthodox
Church
Stacey Starling
Stephen Foster Elementary
School
Susan Norberg
Susie Aguila
Tara Hollow
Tara Woodington
Tifani Knox
Tiffany Evans
Tosca Gourdeen
Tricia Braitsch
Truevine Baptist Church
UDV of Florida
UF - Off Campus Life
United Methodist Women
University of Florida
Department of Surgery
University of Florida School of
Special Education, School
Psychology & Early
Childhood Studies
Van Brown
Vince & Diane Butorac
Vlad & Jennifer Petrescu
William & Susan Arnold
Willis of Florida
Wilson Brothers

**... And a special thank you
to the volunteers who
helped to wrap and
package presents for our
kids!**

A Very Good Deed
Amanda Elliott
Amber Timmons
Audrey Merritt
Charity Provancal-Black
Debbie Simmons
Declan Carroll
Dominick Giordano
Enterprise Holdings, Inc.
Jen Searby
Lola Lin
Maxim White
Melinda Szczepanski
Morgan Donovan
Rachel Coleman
Sandra Benjamin
Sara King
Shinlay Rivera
Sophie Edelman
Susie Aguila
Taryn Hannah
The Kawaja Family

FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS SERIES: CONCRETE SUPPORTS

By Stacy Merritt, Director of Resource Centers



As we enter into 2017, our Resource Center team is taking the time to refocus and remind ourselves of our goals that fit into PSF's mission to enhance the community's ability to protect and nurture children by building, maintaining and constantly improving a network of family support services. One significant step in this process includes adherence to our Resource Center Model, which uses the Protective Factors Framework as the guiding principle behind the programs, services and supports offered at our locations.

While community needs are frequently assessed and taken into consideration, all programs, services and supports provided through the Resource Centers are strength-based and aligned with one or more of the five Protective Factors. These protective factors, when present in caregivers, have been shown to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect - a fact that has also been supported by local data.

In 2016, PSF's four Resource Center locations, the Library Partnership (LP); SWAG Family Resource Center (SWAG FRC), Cone Park Library Resource Center (CPLRC) and Tri-County Community Resource Center (TCCRC), had more than 32,000 visitors and provided nearly 43,000 services to individuals and families in need. Of these services, 55% were related to Concrete Supports, 19% to Social Supports, 12% to Knowledge of Parenting and Children Development, 10% Family Functioning and Resiliency and the remaining 4% to Nurturing and Attachment.

As the data demonstrates, concrete supports are consistently the most frequently requested services at each of our locations. This is to be expected based upon our framework, which recognizes that in many instances until basic needs are met, parents and caregivers are not able to concentrate on other areas of need for their family (e.g., physical health, mental health, children's education). It is also known that stress related to financial struggles, whether on-going or due to a crisis situation, increases the risk of potentially volatile situations that also place children at a higher risk of abuse or neglect. By providing concrete supports to individuals and families, the Resource Centers are helping not only to meet basic, immediate needs (e.g., food, shelter, clothing), but are also helping to reduce household stress, especially in times of crisis. For Resource Center staff, provision of concrete supports are also frequently used as a tool to develop relationships and build trust so that we may identify and address deeper issues with the family, promoting future self-sufficiency.



Some examples of how we are able to provide concrete supports include regular food distribution days, emergency food pantries, on-site clothing closets and referrals to other social service or community agencies that are able to assist, on an emergency basis, with rent, utilities or other needs. Another frequently accessed concrete support includes free faxing, a service designed to assist patrons with needs related to medical, legal and financial issues, among others. Taking into consideration the increased risk associated with infants and toddlers who are potty-training, the provision of diapers and child safety items are also a focus at the Centers.

With the holidays having just passed, many of our locations were also involved with providing holiday food baskets to families in need. SWAG FRC was the distribution site for more than 200 Thanksgiving baskets, the result of an annual effort by the Southwest Advocacy Group and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office. The LP and CPLRC also partnered with Alachua County Social Services and the Long Foundation to provide Thanksgiving baskets to approximately 75 families.

Additionally, the LP, CPLRC and TCCRC all participated in Toys for Tots, serving a combined 180 children. TCCRC took a lead role in the registration and distribution of toys to more than 800 children in Dixie, Levy and Gilchrist Counties. Our Alachua County locations also assisted an additional 30 families with obtaining Christmas gifts through Miracle on Main Street, sponsored by the Junior League of Gainesville.



Many of the concrete supports provided through our various locations are only available as a result of community donations of clothing, food and other items, along with a number of community partnerships. Some of our many 2016 partners included: Gainesville Harvest, Bread of the Mighty, Children's Table, The United Way of North Central Florida, Central Florida Community Action Agency, Junior League of Gainesville, Children's Home Society - Family Treasures Thrift Shop and the Haven Hospice Thrift Store in Chiefland. Our faith-based partners also played a significant role in meeting community needs through outreach efforts such as food banks, clothing donations and funding directed toward assisting with rent and utility payments. Additionally, our Resource Center volunteers played an essential role in collecting, sorting, organizing and distributing various concrete supports, helping to make these items readily available to those in need.

We hope you will also read next quarter's newsletter article, which will focus on the significance of promoting Social Supports and Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development as a means of strengthening local families!

CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL UPDATE

By Samantha Tracy, Senior Community Relations Professional

Throughout the fiscal year, the goals of each Children's Partnership Council (CPC) progress to help meet needs throughout the communities they serve. Each allocation reflects the over arching priority of keeping children safe by providing tangible safety items, helping stabilize families during financial crises and promoting educational and workforce advancement for parents. We are excited to take part in the collaboration of all of our community partners as they strive to meet some of the deepest needs of local families.

The Baker, Bradford, Union CPC has so far been able to help four families in emergency situations maintain safe housing and active utilities through their Individual Assistance Program. They also purchased 18 pack 'n plays to distribute to parents who do not have a safe sleep space for their infant children and would otherwise not be able to obtain one.

The Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy and the Suwannee, Lafayette, Hamilton Councils have both allocated resources to promote Child Abuse Prevention Month locally in their communities during April. This enables them to provide safety items such as cabinet locks, doorknob covers, safe sleep sacks and door alarms to families during community events while sharing information on how to keep children safe from common threats.

The Columbia County CPC has so far assisted two families using their Individual Assistance program in partnership with the United Way of the Suwannee Valley. This partnership allows families to receive assistance efficiently and helps the United Way serve even more families in that area. This Council also decided to participate in Child Abuse Prevention Month by participating in Children's Day on March 31, 2017, sponsored by the Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway. This will offer the Council an opportunity to share child safety tools and information with parents in the Lake City area.

The Suwannee, Lafayette, Hamilton CPC also chose to partner with the United Way of the Suwannee Valley to meet families' utility needs in their communities. Additionally, they purchased pack 'n plays to keep on-hand in each county for infants lacking safe sleep environments as well as warm winter clothing for students identified as homeless.

The Madison, Taylor CPC, in partnership with their local Shared Services Committees, has helped five families through their Individual Assistance Program, providing emergency needs such as rent and utility assistance to families in crisis. They also pioneered a transportation assistance program by purchasing transit vouchers through Big Bend Transit in Madison County, which will allow families without vehicles to ride the local bus system to necessary medical appointments, grocery stores and to services provided by the Council's participating organizations.

For more information or to participate in your community's Council, email Samantha.Tracy@pfsf.org.

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**



Join us again this year for a community-wide giving challenge via social media. Follow us on Facebook to learn more about The Amazing Give!

ADVOCACY UPDATE

By Patty Carroll, Community and Government Relations Manager

The start of Legislative Session 2017 is right around the corner, and PSF has been preparing for this time by speaking with legislators from across the state about our community-based care system and our agency's unique prevention-focused Resource Center Model.

From January 9-11, we attended the Florida Coalition for Children's Rally in Tally to meet with legislators and advocates from across the state. This event was truly a great opportunity for us to have meaningful conversations with our legislators. We were especially grateful to get to share with all of them the great work our Resource Centers are doing in Alachua, Levy, Gilchrist and Dixie counties. We had lots of positive feedback from each legislator we met with, and many are interested in hearing more about this model for child abuse prevention.

As we look to the months ahead, several bills are coming up for discussion. We're keeping a close eye on SB60, which seeks to extend the three-year Keys to Independence pilot project. PSF supports this measure, but we seek to ensure that the program does not need to be funded through current community-based care dollars.

It is also widely understood that the House Appropriations committee will need to make drastic cuts this year to keep with their reduced budget. While we know these decisions will not be easy ones to make, we are urging legislators to consider the safety and well-being of Florida's children and youth when analyzing these budget decisions. We are fortunate to have been met with open minds when addressing our local needs with members of the senate and the house thus far.

We invite you to join our advocacy efforts in March to celebrate the annual Children's Day at the Capitol. We will again be traveling to Tallahassee with our board, staff and Partner Families to personally thank each of our legislators who work so hard on behalf of our children and families. More information will be available soon!

If you would like to become involved in advocating on behalf of our community's children, please contact the Community and Government Relations Department at 352-244-1561 to learn more.



PARTNERSHIP FOR
**STRONG
FAMILIES**

PSF Headquarters
5950 NW 1st Place
Suite A
Gainesville, FL 32607
352.244.1500

Learn more
about how
our innovative
services are
keeping our
community's
children safe.
Visit us at
www.pfsf.org



MEET PSF'S NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

By Samantha Tracy, Senior Community Relations Professional

PSF is excited to announce that we recently added two new members to our Board of Directors. Both carry records of success in their fields along with positive and proactive attitudes. We welcome their expertise and unique insight as they partner with us to improve the lives of children in our care.

Jose Del Cueto is the CEO of DMG Solutions, a media and marketing company that aided in establishing first-of-their-kind minority-focused media groups. Mr. Del Cueto is already hard at work with our Community and Government Relations Department to update our marketing strategies and website layout to help us better reach potential Partner and Adoptive families. A graduate of Santa Fe College, he has been in the marketing industry for more than 30 years, including more than a decade in network television sales and management and more than 20 years as an independent consultant. He previously served on the board of the One Grove Foundation and on the marketing committees of the Miami Chapter of Habitat for Humanity and Urban Promise Miami.

Reverend Dan Johnson served as the Senior Minister for Trinity United Methodist Church in Gainesville for 22 years. During that time, he led seven building projects at the church as well as the successful efforts to eliminate all previous debts. Reverend Johnson also spearheaded the church's community action efforts to benefit local residents, particularly addressing poverty. As a board member, he has enthusiastically begun utilizing his established connections and distinctive skills to strengthen our recruitment efforts for Partner and Adoptive families.

Reverend Johnson's past community engagement includes the United Methodist Board of Ordained Ministers, where he was President of the Council of Finance and Administration. He also served as Chaplain of the Gainesville Rotary for 22 years, as a member of the Advisory Board of the Village Retirement Community for six years and as a member of the Steering Team in the Gainesville Interfaith Forum.

We are honored to have Reverend Johnson and Mr. Del Cueto join our Board of Directors and look forward to see how their personal and professional experiences help guide us into better practices serving the children and families of our communities.