

## County to spend last mental health funds in 32607 ZIP code

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Alachua County's remaining mental health funding for the year will go toward education and problem-prevention in areas where many residents live below the poverty level.

At the start of the fiscal year in October 2015, the county placed \$150,000 in a discretionary mental health funding pool. The board has since given \$50,000 to the Gainesville Peer Respite Center, spent \$50,000 on mental health training for county employees and \$25,000 to Meridian Behavioral Health Care.

The final \$25,000 will go to educate children and families about behavioral health and well being, an effort spearheaded by the Partnership for Strong Families. According to its website, PSF is contracted by the Florida Department of Children and Families to deliver child welfare services to children who experience neglect and abuse. Part of its work also includes preventing problems.

According to PSF's funding application, the 32607 ZIP code is the fifth most impoverished ZIP code in Alachua County. The ZIP code covers the area west of the University of Florida, ending at Parker Road. More than 36 percent of those residents live below the poverty level, the application said.

The program's goals include teaching effective decision-making skills, bolstering emotional and adaptive social skills and minimizing children's involvement in the criminal justice system.

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