



PARTNERSHIP FOR
**STRONG
FAMILIES**

Partnership Connection

OCTOBER-DECEMBER
2021

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Featured Story

View our
Homework Help
update on page 6!



Back to School 2021

Each year, Partnership for Strong Families hosts a Back to School drive with the goal of supporting local youth in foster care and supplying them with the tools they will need for the upcoming school year. We rely on support from the community to be able to send our youth to school prepared and do our best to help our families who may not be able to afford supplies for their children.

Here are some highlights from our 2021 Back to School Drive:

We received \$4,675 in financial donations, which was enough to sponsor 187 youth! With these donations, we were able to keep our packing room stocked with supplies as needed.

over **530**
local youth in foster care
received new backpacks
and school supplies this year



THANK YOU

to all of our incredible supporters for making this year's Back to School Drive a success. If you'd like to learn more about the impact you can have on a local youth in foster care, visit our website at pfsf.org.



PSF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Chair

Ms. Ester Tibbs
Chair Emeritus

Ms. Kay Ayers
Chair Elect

Ms. Barbara Locke
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Dr. DeAnna Beverly
Secretary

Mr. Edward C. Peddie

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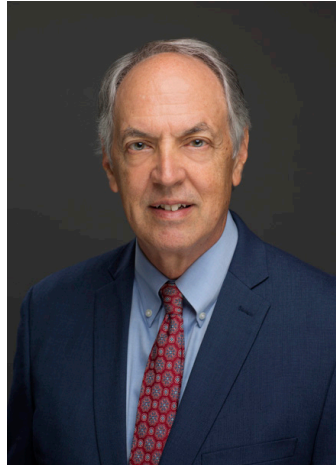
Mr. Patrick Allen

Ms. Jenna Hewett

**November is
National
Adoption
Month!**

**Celebrate
with us on
page 5**

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Dear esteemed community members, partners, and friends,

The last three months of the calendar year typically bring with them a rush of activity and this year is no exception. While our system of care is anticipating policy changes at both the federal and state level, we are also advocating for our case management staff and recognizing the hard work of all of our staff.

Partnership for Strong Families prepared heavily for the implementation of both the federal Families First Prevention and Services Act and state Senate Bills 80 and 96. Starting October 1st, The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) will make funding available for time-limited prevention services for mental health, substance abuse, and in-home parent skill-based programs for youth who are candidates for foster care, pregnant or parenting youth in foster care, and the parents or kin caregivers of those youth.

Meanwhile, Senate Bills 80 and 96 will result in a significant increase in staffings for cases and will include additional stakeholders such as the child and the caregiver. There will also now be a specific statutory placement priority and new elements to be considered in keeping siblings together.

Also on the legislative front, we are encouraged by the Florida Coalition for Children and their advocacy efforts to increase the salaries of our dedicated Family Care Counselors (FCCs). As our FCCs face increased challenges heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, we believe they deserve to be compensated for their extraordinary efforts. Back here at PSF, we had our virtual employee Recognition Event in September to honor the incredible work of our team and case management partners. While we were disappointed to not be able to hold the event in person due to the COVID-19 delta variant, we still presented awards for our staff and gifted all staff members with \$10 gift cards. I could not be more proud of the incredible team of dedicated staff who serve our children and families every day.

On a bittersweet note, one of our board members, Barabra Locke, recently stepped down from her place on the board to take care of family. Ms. Locke, who also served as treasurer, took her role seriously and had a huge heart for local children and their families. We thank her for her years of service in her leadership role and wish her all the best as she prioritizes her family. Elsewhere on the board, we will also be appointing a new foster parent board member for the Eighth Circuit. As an organization serving a foster parent population, it's important we allow their voices to be heard in our leadership capacity.

As the year inches to a close, I'd like to wish everyone a bright holiday season and healthy and happy new year. We are looking forward to great things in 2022!

A stylized, handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Pennypacker'.

Stephen Pennypacker
President/CEO

Heart Gallery Spotlight



Chasity, 11 years old

Chasity is an adorable child who is ready to be part of a loving and active family. Chasity is a “girly-girl” who loves pink and describes herself as being pretty and funny. She is full of energy and is looking forward to being part of a family who shares her active lifestyle and spirited humor. Chasity needs a patient family - one who has the capability to assist her daily and work closely with her professional team to guide her in being able to reach her full potential in life.

Chasity has a bright future ahead of her! If you desire additional joy, laughter, and excitement in your life, please do not hesitate to contact Seanetta Robinson at Seanetta.Robinson@pfsf.org or 386-243-8812.



Coyoete, 16 years old

Coyoete is a special teen with unique experiences, and her heart’s desire is to be a part of a special family. She is very easy to engage and has a likeable personality. Coyoete is friendly and outgoing and makes friends easily. As most teen girls, she enjoys listening to music, and interacting with friends. She also enjoys moderate physical activities outdoors, animals, and drawing and coloring. Due to Coyoete’s unique experiences and needs, it is important that her forever family also have experience working with teen girls. Coyoete would thrive best in a single female or two parent family that can offer her safety, structure, and unconditional love. She is also in need of a forever family that can advocate for her educational needs and help her transition successfully into adulthood. My Adoption ID is 100298733.

To learn more, please contact Seanetta Robinson at Seanetta.Robinson@pfsf.org or call 386-853-5996.

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK: Community Relations and Recruitment Update

During the past few months, I have been able to see the Partnership for Strong Families' Community come together and support our Back to School Drive, fulfill numerous normalcy requests, and begin to support our Wish Upon a Star efforts. We would not be able to support our youth without the incredible community that wraps around PSF and for that I am so grateful.

The Community Relations Team has been hard at work planning for our upcoming recruitment year as well as hoping to host in-person info nights and events again. We continue to have the goal in mind of recruiting the best foster and adoptive families and additional supporters to add to PSF's network of incredible resources. As we approach the Holiday season, I hope you consider supporting us through our Wish Upon a Star efforts to make an impact on the Holiday season of the youth we serve. May your Holidays be restful and filled with your family and lots of love this year.



Stevie Doyle
Director of Communications
and Engagement

Wish Upon a Star 2021



Partnership for Strong Families' team of elves is busy preparing for our biggest donation drive of the year, the Wish Upon a Star (WUAS) holiday toy drive benefiting local youth in foster care. More than half of our 1,400 youth in care will not be home for the holidays this year, which is why we believe that they all deserve to have their wishes granted this year! If you are interested in supporting us or finding out more information, please email us at GetEngaged@pfsf.org

JOIN US AS WE WELCOME OUR NEW BOARD CHAIR!



Kathryn (Kitty) McElhaney,
Board Chair

Kitty McElhaney obtained her Specialist in Education from Nova University and also holds a Master's in Business Management from Central Michigan University and a Bachelor's in Mathematics Education from Ohio Dominican College. She has received numerous honors and recognitions including Teacher of the Year and Assistant Principal of the Year. Ms. McElhaney has more than 40 years of experience in the school system serving in both teacher and administrative roles.

Ms. McElhaney is a member of Delta Kappa Gamma Society and currently sits on the Board of Take Stock in Children. She is also a member of Altrusa International, sitting on the Board for four years including the Immediate Past President for the Southern Region. She has taken an active role in her community and provides a keen insight into the needs of residents of Columbia County to PSF's Board of Directors. Her experience in the education system helps to guide PSF's Board in making important decisions to ensure children in our care have their academic needs and goals supported.

2021-2022

National Adoption Month

By Jenna Rowland, Community Relations Assistant

November is National Adoption Month, and we are hosting an annual celebration to honor our amazing adoptive families. This year, partners will safely gather to cheer on our adoptive families as they drive through our 2021 red carpet.

Each family will have the opportunity to enjoy a professional family photo session, so we hope to see everyone dressed in their best red carpet attire!

The event will be held on November 19th from 4:00-6:00 PM at the Partnership for Strong Families Headquarters office. We hope to share this celebration with all of our amazing adoptive families and our wonderful partners!

7th Annual Superhero 5k

By Tricia Braitsch, Post-Adoption Liaison



A black poster with yellow stars at the top corners. The text 'PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG FAMILIES' is at the top center. Below it, in red, is 'WE REQUEST THE HONOR OF YOUR PRESENCE AT THE'. The main title '2021 Adoption Superstars Celebration' is in large, white, cursive font. Below the title, a paragraph of text reads: 'The Year 2021 will be remembered for many reasons, but perhaps some of the brightest are the many new forever families created. Thanks to them, we've had the opportunity to continue to believe that no matter what the years bring, family is what matters most! In honor of National Adoption Month, we request the honor of your presence at our 2021 Adoption Superstars Drive Thru celebration to celebrate these families and to cheer for the stars!'. Another paragraph follows: 'This will be a drive thru event for the families promoting safe distancing and requiring masks. Partners and supporters are encouraged to come line up and light up the runway with your cheers and applause as the families drive through.' Below this, in red, is 'Although not required, RSVPs are appreciated by October 29, 2021. Email Kim.Johnson@psfsf.org to RSVP.' The date and time 'NOVEMBER 19, 2021 4-6 PM' are in white. The location 'Partnership for Strong Families Headquarters 5950 NW 1st Place, Gainesville, FL 32607' is at the bottom. A photo of a young boy in a white shirt and bow tie is on the right side, and a red carpet with stanchions is at the bottom.

PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG FAMILIES

WE REQUEST THE HONOR OF YOUR PRESENCE AT THE

2021 Adoption Superstars Celebration

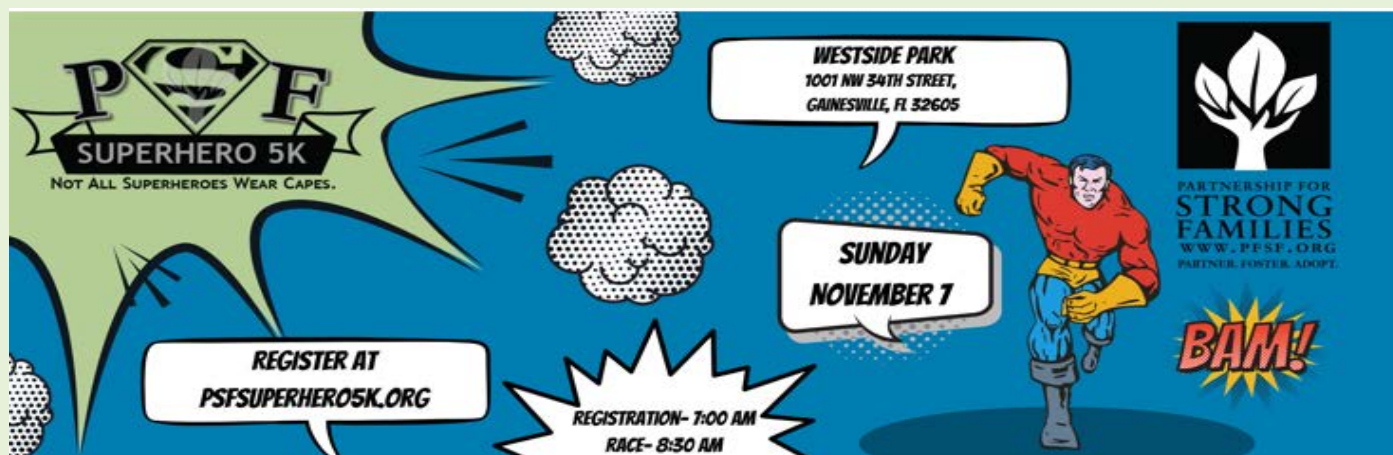
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NOVEMBER 19, 2021 4-6 PM

Partnership for Strong Families Headquarters
5950 NW 1st Place, Gainesville, FL 32607



A colorful poster for the 7th Annual Superhero 5K. It features a blue background with comic book style elements like speech bubbles and a superhero character. The text 'PSF SUPERHERO 5K' is at the top left, with 'NOT ALL SUPERHEROES WEAR CAPES.' below it. A speech bubble says 'REGISTER AT PSFSUPERHERO5K.ORG'. Another speech bubble says 'WESTSIDE PARK 1001 NW 34TH STREET, GAINESVILLE, FL 32605'. A third speech bubble says 'SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7'. At the bottom, it says 'REGISTRATION- 7:00 AM RACE- 8:30 AM'. The Partnership for Strong Families logo is on the right, with the website 'WWW.PFSF.ORG' and the tagline 'PARTNER. FOSTER. ADOPT.' Below the logo is a 'BAM!' sound effect graphic.

PSF SUPERHERO 5K
NOT ALL SUPERHEROES WEAR CAPES.

REGISTER AT
PSFSUPERHERO5K.ORG

WESTSIDE PARK
1001 NW 34TH STREET,
GAINESVILLE, FL 32605

SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 7

REGISTRATION- 7:00 AM
RACE- 8:30 AM

PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG FAMILIES
WWW.PFSF.ORG
PARTNER. FOSTER. ADOPT.

BAM!

As November is National Adoption Month, Partnership for Strong Families will hold our 7th annual Superhero 5K event at Westside Park in Gainesville! The Superhero 5K is a family-friendly event that invites superheroes of all ages and experience levels to dress as their favorite superhero and race to the finish. Funds raised from this event will go toward finding forever families for children awaiting their permanent homes. The 5K will be held on Sunday, November 7th, with the race starting at 8:30 am! Children 5 and under are FREE, children ages 6 to 15 are \$5 per child (children's T-shirts are available for an additional \$5), ages 16 and up will be \$20 per participant, which includes a race shirt. Registration for children who are in licensed foster care through PSF is FREE with a registered Partner Family. Also, anyone participating in the race who has been adopted is eligible for a FREE race. Register at PSFSUPERHERO5K.ORG



Homework Help

2021-2022



PARTNERSHIP FOR
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FAMILIES**



Homework Help

by Jenna Rowland, Community Relations Assistant

Our participating resource centers have kicked off their after-school Homework Help programs for the 2021-2022 school year! These are programs that offer assistance in topics such as reading, writing, and math for students who may need additional support outside of the classroom. Homework Help is offered in one session for grades 1 - 5 and another session for grades 6 - 12 at our NorthStar Family Resource Center, SWAG Family Resource Center, and Library Partnership Resource Center.

These programs are often led by our Family Support Facilitators, volunteer teachers, and resource center volunteers. These programs occur multiple times per week, and always include a healthy snack. As a former SWAG Family Resource Center Intern I had the opportunity to assist in the Spring 2021 Homework Help program. It was always so exciting to see the students make progress with their academics as the weeks went on. Homework Help is an important and heavily-utilized program that the resource centers offer, and the spots always fill up quickly!



THANK YOU

Thank you Ester Tibbs for serving as our Board Chair this past year. We are grateful for your service and support of Partnership for Strong Families.

Normalcy Spotlight

By Jenna Rowland, Community Relations Assistant

Memories Made :

Child receives a new bicycle

Donor support helped purchase a new bicycle for a child in our care!



#PartnerFosterAdopt

Fulfilling normalcy requests is a large part of what we do in the Community Relations department. Our normalcy efforts directly affect the youth in care.

For many of the youth that we serve, life has been traumatic, exhausting, and at times very different from another child they may encounter. Our normalcy funds are there to offer the opportunity to experience "normal" moments such as football camp, getting your learner's permit, receiving a bicycle, and so much more!

If you are interested in learning more about normalcy or donating to our normalcy fund please contact Jenna Rowland at Jenna.Rowland@pfsf.org. We also accept online or check donations to our normalcy fund through our website at pfsf.org/donate/.

Social Media

By Jenna Rowland, Community Relations Assistant

This month we celebrated our "One Size Does Not Fit All" campaign in order to bring awareness to the many types of individuals and lifestyles that can open their homes to fostering youth. We also raised awareness in honor of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month by sharing local partner agencies that can assist individuals experiencing domestic abuse.



@partnershipforstrongfamilies



Partnership for Strong Families



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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



Partnership for Strong Families is a community-based care lead agency contracted with the Department of Children and Families.

National Adoption Month Spotlight



The Bergman Family

Meet the Bergmans!

"We never try to push or help him forget his past- it's part of who he is and always will be, but we take the good and move forward as we make new memories and new traditions that join where he came from and where he is to a perfect celebration of who we have become and continue to evolve into as a family. "
- The Bergmans