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PREPARING FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

By Aldreka Everett, Community Relations Assistant



As our second largest donation drive of the year, PSF's Back to School drive helps ensure that every child in our care with a need receives a brand new backpack and supplies for the upcoming school term. It is our goal that these children receive comprehensive care and are given the opportunity for academic success. This kind of care includes, for some, the provision of supplies as going back to school can be an exciting, yet costly time for our families across North Central Florida.

Each year, we partner with several community organizations, business partners and individuals to collect backpacks and school supplies. Because of the incredible support shown by our community, last year more than 410 children were able to receive supplies and begin their school terms fully equipped for academic success. With an increasing need, we are expecting to far exceed that number this year and have already covered the needs of more than 470 youth. Donations from individuals, organizations and employees are vital to the success of this drive, but more importantly, to the success of our children.

While this year's drive is quickly wrapping up, we can always use support for next year's initiative. School supplies can be purchased and shipped to our office via our Amazon Wishlist, the link to which can be found by visiting www.partnerfamily.org. Don't have time to shop? Make a monetary contribution and we will do the shopping for you! A donation of just \$25 is all we need to make sure each child has all they need for academic success. Checks can be mailed to PSF's Gainesville office. For more information on ways to get involved, contact Aldreka at Aldreka.Everett@pfsf.org. Check out page 7 for a full list of this year's amazing donors.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Stephen Pennypacker
President/CEO

Esteemed Community Partners and Friends,

It is with mixed feelings that I announce our Board of Directors' Chairman, Dr. Michael Bowie, has stepped down from his position after four years of exemplary service. He will now serve as our Chair Emeritus and remain an advisory Board member. Dr. Bowie's joviality and tireless dedication to our agency, children and community have made him a true asset to our agency, and we are grateful for his contributions. Replacing him as Chair is Ed Peddie, with Jo Haley continuing in the Vice Chair position. Other changes in leadership include Tom Hawkins' appointment to Treasurer and Ester Tibbs' to Secretary of the Board.

Meanwhile, we are increasing our efforts to recruit and retain quality foster homes throughout our 13 counties. I have set a goal of personally visiting every one of our Partner Families to thank them for their dedication and continued care of our children. So far, I have visited 53 families and learned a great deal about the rewards and challenges they experience as well as ways we can continue to support them. Opportunities we have already identified include improving early and ongoing communication regarding children when they are placed with a Partner Family, supplying concrete needs such as clothing, assisting with day care enrollment, identifying medical care and improving transition planning. I am grateful to each Partner Family for their input and look forward to bringing my findings back to our leadership and front-line staff to ensure we are offering the highest quality service to our dedicated Partner Families.

Finally, as we have begun a new fiscal year, our allocated funds from DCF are slightly lower than what we received last year due to the elimination of non-recurring funds. However, we made excellent use of last year's funds and expect to operate with our approved budget for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. We continue to work on reducing the cost of out of home care and have created a Family Placement Specialist position to identify relatives and non-relatives that may not have been considered at the time of removal.

It is my continued honor to work with our board members, staff and partners like you to improve outcomes for North Central Florida's abused and neglected children.

Stephen Pennypacker
President/CEO

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



As you receive this newsletter about a month late, it's a great time to announce that I am back from maternity leave! Thanks to the support of this great agency, I was able to spend 12 wonderful weeks at home with our son, Joshua James. While I loved every minute of it, I am glad to be back.

While on maternity leave, I received a lot of similar questions: "Aren't you sad to go back to work?" "Don't you wish you could stay home longer?" Yes, the first couple of weeks have certainly been hard being apart from my son, but my love for him makes my passion for our important work even stronger. It is this love that drives me to keep advocating for our youth.

As I come to work every day, I know I am working with an amazing team, dedicated partners and a strong community to

build a brighter future for the children and families we serve. It is an honor and privilege to work with such committed advocates. To each of you, I say "thanks" for making this transition all the easier.

Upon returning, I was excited to find that, thanks to the support of our community, we're sending more than 460 youth to school this year with backpacks full of supplies. The thousands of items ready to be packed was quite the overwhelming sight, but thanks to some hardworking volunteers and staff, we were able to send out all of our backpacks in time for the first day of school.

As we wrap up the Back to School Drive, we want everyone to know that there are still several ways to support the kids in our care. We invite you to come race for a cause at our 3rd Annual Superhero 5K on November 11. And don't forget to become a Wish Upon a Star donor in September, and help make a child's wishes come true.

NON-GALA EXTRAVAGANZA

By Aldreka Everett, Community Relations Assistant

National Foster Care Month is celebrated annually each May. To commemorate, PSF cordially invited members of our community to our 2nd Annual, Non-Gala Extravaganza. This celebration is a unique one as all of our guests were invited not to attend, but rather, stay home with their families. Guests were also asked to not spend money on buying a dress, renting a tux or paying a babysitter. Instead, we invited them to make a contribution to support the children in our care.

Through the generosity of several donors, we collected \$2,500, far exceeding last year's contributions. These funds will directly support children in out-of-home care and aid in the recruitment of Partner Families to provide safe homes for these children as their families work toward reunification.



Partnership for Strong Families logo: A stylized tree with a person inside the canopy, next to the text "PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG FAMILIES".

cordially invites you to *not* attend our second annual

Non ^ Gala Extravaganza

This event will *not* be held
some Saturday night in May
to raise awareness for
National Foster Care Month
Drinks will not be served at 6 p.m.
Dinner will not follow at 7 p.m.




Kindly RSVP by June 5, 2017

M

☒ will not attend and will gladly donate the following amount:

Little Black Dress - \$500
Tuxedo - \$350
Limo Rental - \$250
Pearl Necklace - \$100
Babysitter - \$50
Bow Tie - \$25
Pocket Change (any amount welcome) - _____

Please make checks payable to
Partnership for Strong Families
5950 NW 1st Place, Suite A
Gainesville, FL 32607
Memo: Non-Event Gala



Wouldn't it be wonderful if...

You needn't rent a tuxedo
or
Buy a new dress, shoes and purse
or
Arrange a limo and a babysitter.

There's no need to take your jewels from the vault
or
Book an appointment for nails, hair or make-up.

You needn't spend hours coming and going
or
Need a nap the next day!

Instead, we kindly ask for a donation to benefit more than 900 children and teens currently in out-of-home care within our system, and invite you to enjoy an evening at home with your family.

Besides, we'd rather you just contribute the money you would've spent getting dressed up to go straight to our foster kids' needs!

A special thank you to our "guests" for supporting this year's Non-Gala Extravaganza!
Sheriff Sadie Darnell, Creative Counseling Services of Gainesville,
Rembert Family Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Doug Bagby,
Wilson Brothers, Mrs. Janice Garry, Dr. Kim Kazimour,
State Attorney William Cervone, Mrs. Jo Haley, Mr. Howell and Judge Sheree Lancaster,
and Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Tibbs

*Haven't had a chance to show your support?
Don't worry you can always come late to the party!*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Back to School Drive

June - August 2017

PSF's Back to School Drive ensures every child in our care has the tools they need for academic success. Email Aldreka.Everett@pfsf.org for more information.

DCF Child Protection Summit

August 29 - 31, 2017

DCF's Annual Child Protection Summit will be held in Orlando this year. Several PSF staff will attend to learn best practices, network with leaders throughout the state and present some of the unique strengths of our agency.

PSF Superhero 5K

November 11, 2017

Join us at Westside Park as we race to ensure every child in our system knows the stability of permanency. Visit PSFSuperhero5k.org for more information.

Wish Upon a Star 2017

September - December, 2017

PSF gets into the Holiday Spirit early! Consider helping us make a child's Christmas merry this year. Call Aldreka at 352-244-1629 for more information.

FCC's ANNUAL CONFERENCE INSPIRES, MOTIVATES

By Hannah Green, Adoptions Recruitment Specialist

As a recruiter, it can be easy to stay in your comfort zone and struggle to find creativity for new and innovative ideas. Recruiting prospective adoptive and foster parents is a tall order, because being a foster and/or adoptive parent is a full-time job and it completely changes the familial dynamic. One of the big questions I had at the start of summer was, "How can I improve sharing the message and heartbeat of Partnership in various recruitment initiatives?" At the end of July, I had the opportunity to attend the Florida Coalition for Children Conference. The conference gave me multiple answers to my overwhelming question and helped fuel additional motivation. It was also an absolute joy to meet other passionate people who want to improve the child welfare system and advocate for our youth.

This year, the conference had multiple opportunities to learn key ideas for the marketing and public relations aspect of Community-Based Care agencies. The keynote speaker was Ilsa Flanagan, Director of the National Reframing Initiative. She explained the importance of telling our story. Her three main takeaways were: you are not your audience, be the voice of reason, and lead with human potential. Ilsa encouraged agencies to speak with positivity instead of constant negativity. It is vital that we celebrate the victories and triumphs. We also need to remember that the child welfare language is confusing and it is essential we communicate on a more relatable level.

All of the workshops I attended reiterated Ilsa's ideology. In the adoption workshop, An Integrative Approach to Serving Adoptive Families, speakers addressed the importance of telling the child's story. At Partnership, we strive to be honest and transparent. We want to honor our children, but also give our caretakers a realistic picture of what our children have experienced in their past. We are excited to implement all the practices we learned at the conference and strive to tell our story and our children's story in a different light.



Pictured above are the conference attendees Pebbles Edelman, Shinlay Rivera and Patty Carroll.

CELEBRATING AND REMEMBERING 2016-2017 FISCAL YEAR

Michelle Giordano, Recruitment Specialist

It is hard to believe that another fiscal year is coming to a close at PSF. Each year, PSF sets tremendous organizational goals with the hopes of meeting and exceeding them. The heartbeat of our agency is keeping local children safe. This is done through several methods including placing children with relatives, non-relatives, Partner Families and when necessary adoption. In addition, our Resource Centers are providing vital resources and services to our community's children and families.

To help diversify our Partner and Adoptive Family recruitment efforts, PSF ramped up our faith and school based recruitment. Our recruitment staff presented to more than 100 businesses, schools and churches across our catchment area.

Our Licensing and Retention department worked diligently to train and license homes quickly. This hardworking team surpassed their goal and licensed 32 Partner Families this fiscal year. In addition, eight of those homes were licensed specifically for teens, which is one of PSF's greatest needs.

The transition of adoptions coming in-house last year has been seamless. Our Adoptions Team surpassed their goal of 134 and finalized a record 180 adoptions this Fiscal Year! Even more exciting, this number includes the finalization of 23 children and teens who were in need of recruited adoptive families, many of whom were matched out of group care or therapeutic foster care settings and placed into their permanent homes.

PSF's nationally recognized Resource Center Model continues to garner support among child welfare professionals. Most recently, the Resource Centers were featured as one of two Communities of Hope by Casey Family Programs. To read more about this recognition, check out the Resource Center Spotlight on page 6.

As we close the books on this fiscal year, we must recognize our amazing staff and caseworkers who work countless hours to support the children and families in care. We are looking forward to another successful year!

ADVOCACY UPDATE

By Patty Carroll, Director of Community Relations and Recruitment

With this past legislative session being my very first in this role, I was sad to miss the end of session, or “Sine Die” as it is called, while out on maternity leave. While we had been hopeful to secure some funding to expand and enhance our Resource Center Model, funding cuts across the board made this year a particularly difficult one to ask for additional funding. We are, however, prepared to continue our education surrounding our Resource Centers and the positive impact they are creating in the communities they serve. Dollar-for-dollar, we know that it costs far less to work with a family before they enter the state child welfare system, and we are proving that this model is effective in doing just that.

Florida’s Title IV-E Waiver is also set to expire next year, with a possible extension into 2019. This waiver allows for vital dollars to be spent on prevention work, and it is where we get the bulk of our Resource Center funding. With this in mind, we are committed to continuing these conversations with our legislators next year.

Thanks to the support and strength of our child welfare advocates from throughout the state, and in partnership with the Florida Coalition for Children, the Community-Based Care system garners additional support and positive attention during each session. Despite these results, our system continues to remain underfunded for the number of children coming into care. We are ready to begin to turn the curve on these outcomes by strengthening our relationships with local legislators and working to educate new legislators about the needs of Florida’s deserving youth.

Looking to next year, we are already keeping a close eye on possible legislation pertaining to quality foster homes, human trafficking, insurance liability and adoption intervention, among other issues. As always, we appreciate your continued advocacy and will keep you updated about legislation that may affect our local youth.

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.

Thank you, Dr. Bowie, for your service!

Dr. Michael Bowie is a pillar in the Alachua County and Gainesville communities, particularly where vulnerable children are concerned. Dr. Bowie has served on PSF’s Board of Directors for nine years, with that last four years as the chair of the board. Not only did Dr. Bowie serve on the board, he regularly engaged with the children in care, our staff and our Partner Families. In true Hollywood style, he also hosted our Partner Family banquet and our staff recognition events this year. While we will miss having him serve on our board, we look forward to his continued advocacy to support the children and families in our community.



Thank you, Dr. Bowie, for your years of service and enthusiastic involvement in all of our endeavors!

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for PSF’s Third Annual Superhero 5K to raise support for the children in our care who are in need of a forever family. Be sure to follow up on social media for more announcements regarding the 5K!

A colorful poster for the PSF Superhero 5K. At the top left, it says "11 NOV" and "PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG FAMILIES" with a tree logo. The main title is "PSF SUPERHERO 5K" with a large Superman logo. Below the title is the slogan "BECAUSE EVERY CHILD DESERVES A HERO". The center features four cartoon superheroes: Batman, a girl in a pink cape, a boy in a red suit, and a boy in a green suit. At the bottom, it provides the location "WESTSIDE PARK 1001 NW 34th Street Gainesville, FL 32605" and the date "SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11" with times for registration (7:00 a.m.), the race (8:30 a.m.), and the superhero after party (10:00 a.m.). A banner at the very bottom says "Register at PSFSuperHero5K.org". A small speech bubble on the right says "COSTUMES ARE ENCOURAGED!".

FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS SERIES: KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, AND NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT

By Stacy Merritt, Director of Resource Centers



There is cause for celebration! Tri-County Community Resource Center (TCCRC) turned two in April, celebrating with a community-wide event. This carnival-themed celebration included participation from more than 30 community partners

who showcased booths with resource materials along with fun activities for families and children. Also donated for the event were a bounce house and carnival-themed food such as popcorn, hot dogs and snow cones.

In June, the SWAG Family Resource Center hit the milestone age of five, celebrating along with the local community. This event was made possible through collaboration with several community partners, including the Southwest Advocacy Group, O2B Kids and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office. The festivities included face painting and games, and a community cook-out. And what party would be complete without birthday cake? Both of these celebrations were great examples of partner collaboration and community engagement!



SWAG FRC's Birthday festivities were also an opportunity to celebrate volunteers with five years of service. These amazing

individuals have dedicated themselves to promoting the success of the Resource Center and improving the lives of local community members. Those recognized at the event were: Joan Canton, Dorothy Benson, Eloise Edwards, and Bob Harrell (pictured above), along with Alison Law and Jackie Raes, who were not able to attend in-person. On this same note, we would also like to recognize Phyllis Benjamin who has been serving as a volunteer at the Library Partnership since 2011 – thank you for all you do!

The Protective Factors Framework

In continuation of our series related to the Protective Factors Framework, this quarter's focus is the significance of promoting both Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development and Nurturing and Attachment as a means of strengthening local families.

Caregivers with protective capacities related to Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development demonstrate positive parenting techniques and have age-appropriate expectations of their children. As such, activities related to this protective factor include those designed to increase positive parenting skills using either classroom-style or interactive coaching techniques and also include opportunities for parents to network with one another. Beginning in 2017,



two of our locations are offering on-site parenting classes. Cone Park is partnering with A Mother's Hope to provide sessions specifically for female caregivers. Similarly, TCCRC has partnered with the Hanley Foundation to provide quarterly sessions for targeted populations (e.g., elementary-age children, teens, grandparents as caregivers). Additionally, summer and after-school programming facilitated at the Resource Centers provide educational and enrichment activities for the children involved, and also encourage parental involvement in their children's education. This summer, approximately 70 students were served through Summer Programs at our three Gainesville locations, with an additional 10-20 students participating in reading and arts and crafts activities at TCCRC.

Additional research has shown that infants and children who have a strong bond with a parent or caregiver have increased brain development and more positive behavioral outcomes as they become older. As such, outdoor festivals, community dinners and other special events are often used at the Resource Centers as a way to promote positive parent-child interactions, modeling opportunities and information sharing. Two of our Gainesville locations

also partner with the Cultural Arts Coalition to provide the very popular "Science Club." This program provides learning opportunities for elementary-age children and encourages parent participation in the sessions and off-site



field trips. In recent months, TCCRC was also able to offer a parent-child cooking class thanks to a local chef, Laura Fowler Goss.

To see more of what is happening at our Resource Centers, please check out each locations' monthly calendar at www.pfsf.org/resource-centers. We hope you will also read next quarter's newsletter article, which will focus on the fifth and final protective factor of Family Functioning and Resilience.

CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL UPDATE

By Samantha Tracy, Senior Community Relations Professional

PSF's Children's Partnership Councils (CPCs) have wrapped up their fiscal years and are looking forward to the next. Councils allocated and spent funds to purchase safety items for families with young children, pack and plays for caregivers lacking safe sleep environments for their infants and clothing for youth identified as homeless. They also provided utility and rent assistance to families who experienced times of crises as well as vouchers for financially disadvantaged families. These vouchers helped provide resources such as travel, car seats, GED testing and CPR certificates for parents seeking to improve their employability. Councils also sponsored voluntary pre-kindergarten (VPK) (pictured right) backpacks for students in several counties through the Early Learning Coalition and assisted families affected by Hurricane Hermine.

Looking forward to next year, the Columbia County Council is preparing for its annual Back to School Bash in Fort White. Local agencies, including the Columbia County School District, will participate to help provide backpacks filled with school supplies for students in this historically underserved area, as well as offer information to parents on services available to them and their families. Several Councils have also purchased child safety items to keep on-hand for families seeking concrete supports.

Throughout the twelve counties the Councils serve, a total of \$22,289.49 was utilized to provide concrete supports in times of need and assistance with family functioning and resiliency. During Child Abuse Prevention Month, Council members participated in several community events that allowed them to offer caregivers knowledge of parenting and child development as well as build social connections. Councils also helped facilitate opportunities for PSF to identify and recruit new Partner and Adoptive Families throughout our catchment area.

Thanks to the committed Council members in each community, children and families across North Central Florida have received support critical to keeping children safe and thriving. We are grateful for their efforts, compassion for serving our shared communities and for their innovative thinking strategies. We look forward to what the next year will bring!



A VERY GOOD DEED
ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
ALETHEIA CHURCH GAINESVILLE
AUTO PLAZA OF GAINESVILLE
CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL
GREENHOUSE CHURCH
CANDICE KING
DANIELLE BREHM
DEBBIE POWELL
ERIN MONTGOMERY
GEORGE AND MARIE BARNES
GEORGIA KELLY
GLENNA CAMPBELL
GOODKNIGHT FAMILY
GRACE AT FORT CLARKE UMC
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JULIE SZYDLOWSKI
KAREN MOORE
KIRK AND KATHY RUTH
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PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG FAMILIES STAFF
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QVANTAGE FITNESS
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SALLY SCOTT
SIDNEY STARR
SIVA SRINIVASAN
SUNSHINE HEALTH
TERESA DRAKE
THE CROM CORPORATION
THE VISIONARIES
UDV OF FLORIDA
UF SELF-INSURANCE PROGRAM
UNITED WAY OF NORTH CENTRAL
FLORIDA
VINEYARD CHURCH
WALMART STORE #538

2017 BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE DONORS

Thank you!



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**STRONG
FAMILIES**

PSF Headquarters
5950 NW 1st Place
Suite A
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352.244.1500

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



COMMUNITIES OF HOPE

By Aldreka Everett, Community Relations Assistant

Creating Communities of Hope takes collaboration, innovation and strength among partners to improve outcomes for our community's families. It is our goal at PSF to provide the necessary care on the front-end to help prevent abuse within the communities we serve. One way we do this is through our three Gainesville Resource Centers, and people are taking notice.

Our partners at Casey Family Programs have released their annual Signature Report featuring these centers, along with a documentary that demonstrates the work being done at our Gainesville Resource Centers. Along with local footage, the video shares input from several local leaders, some very familiar, who explain how Partnership for Strong Families' place-based resource centers came about and how collaboration is the key to the amazing, positive results we're seeing in the surrounding communities.

We firmly believe that child abuse can be preventable if we can offer the support and resources to families in need before neglect begins; this belief is the foundation of our prevention model. If we can address that need to avoid the cycle of what turns into more serious maltreatment, then we've done our job. We take pride in the work we do and believe that what we do truly can change these communities, one family at a time. To see the footage and annual Signature Report, visit Casey.org/Hope2017.

