



# THE PARTNER TIMES

January - March 2019

Congratulations **NICE GOING!**  
**GREAT!** Way to Go!  
Yea! **FELICITATIONS**  
**CHEERS** Take A **BEST**  
**BOW!** **WISHES!**

**Amanda Williams-Cruce**



**Beverly Pope**



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## PARTNER FAMILIES ON PSF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Partnership for Strong Families' Board of Directors is elated to have filled two of its current seats with Partner Families. We would like to congratulate Amanda Williams-Cruce and Beverly Pope on their approved nomination to serve on the Board of Directors. Partnership's Board of Directors includes committee participation which consists of the executive committee, finance committee, community and government relations committee and the quality management committee. The Board of Directors is responsible for PSF's policy making, monitoring and oversight of finances, and engaging in the community to improve the child welfare delivery system.

The Board wanted to provide Partner Families with a more formal vehicle for input in governing of the agency. Foster parents have a valuable perspective which will allow them to inform other board members as well as advocate for all foster parents on direct issues that impact you. The board sought to retain members from a diverse geographic area to serve on the board. One seat was filled from the eighth circuit and one from the third circuit.

Both women come to us with extensive fostering experience. Amanda's experience stems from her passion for advocacy as well as being one of the founding members of the Birth and Foster Parent Alliance. Amanda Cruce has also served as President of the Alachua County Foster Adoptive Association and is now the Statewide Foster Adoptive Parent Association President.

Beverly Pope has served as a foster parent for five years and non-relative caregiver for one year. She has also served as the Lake City Foster Adoptive Parent Association President for the past four years. Through her role as a board member, Mrs. Pope aspires to, be the change. Beverly is passionate and eager to bring ideas concerning resources for Partner Families and children. In her spare time, Mrs. Pope serves as President for the Women's Missionary Society. We are excited to have these two women represent the two circuits and would like to wish them a warm welcome in their new roles.

Know someone who is interested in learning more about becoming a Partner Family? Contact **Nicole** at **352.244.1684** or **Nicole.Hernandez@psf.org**.

*Don't forget - Partner Families are eligible to receive a \$125 incentive for referring families who become licensed!*

## PSF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Ed Peddie  
*Chair*

Dr. Michael Bowie  
*Chair Emeritus*

Ms. Ester Tibbs  
*Vice Chair*

Dr. Thomas Hawkins  
*Treasurer*

Ms. Kitty McElhaney  
*Secretary*

Ms. Diana McPherson

Dr. Muthusami Kumaran

Mr. Donovan Arnold

Ms. Barbara Locke

Ms. Roberta Getzan

Mr. William Halvosa

Ms. Linda Tatum

Ms. Elizabeth Mitchell

Ms. Amanda Cruce

Ms. Beverly Pope

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Stephen Pennypacker  
President/CEO

Dear esteemed community members, partners and friends,

Another new year is upon us, which gives us time to reflect on what we hope to accomplish this year. I look ahead to the rest of the year and see nothing but unlocked potential for our organization.

The election of Governor Ron DeSantis back in November brings the appointment of a new secretary to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Chad Poppell. Secretary Poppell previously served as the Chief of Staff of Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity and as Governor Rick Scott's Secretary of the Department of Management Services, which oversees state-government issues like human resource and real estate. I am optimistic about Secretary Poppell's appointment and the fresh perspective he will bring to DCF.

I am pleased to report that the addition of the Regional Integrated Training for our child protective investigators (CPIs) and case managers has proven successful. The training has built comradery between case managers and investigators early in their careers and teaches them the same core content from the beginning. One of the trainers from DCF even mentioned she can already see a difference in the first two classes of CPIs that have come into the work force. Our trainers have just started their third class, and I look forward to learning about even more positive trends in the future.

After a rather successful National Adoption Month back in November, I am happy to announce that our agency finalized 157 adoptions between July 1 and December 31. In November, we finalized 27 in Alachua County alone. By the end of the fiscal year on June 30, we expect to finalize at least 100 more. Numbers like these would not be possible without the tremendous effort of our recruitment and adoptions teams and the loving adoptive parents who made their homes forever homes.

Lastly, please join me in welcoming two new members to the PSF board: Amanda Williams and Beverly Pope. Ms. Williams goes above and beyond in her role as a foster parent and also advocates for collaboration between biological and foster parents. Ms. Pope works as an administrator at the VA in Lake City and adopted three of her children from PSF. I look forward to working with these experienced professionals and will value their input at future meetings.

Sincerely,  
Stephen Pennypacker

President/CEO

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By: Patty Carroll, Director of Community Relations and Recruitment



Legislative Session is almost upon us, and staff at PSF are busy forming our priorities for 2019 and beyond. Our partners at the Florida Coalition for Children hosted another informative and interactive Rally in Tally on February 4-5 that welcomed CEOs, executives, foster parents and advocates from across the state to meet with their local legislators to talk about issues impacting child welfare this session. Our CEO, Stephen Pennypacker, and I enjoyed attending this event with Amanda Williams Cruce, Deena Cruce and their children. It was a great two days to network and learn from leaders across the state as we all advocate on behalf of Florida's youth.

There are several key initiatives and bills that we are excited to share with you. Under the Path Forward initiative, we support policy changes that will enhance Florida's capacity to implement

the new Guardianship Assistance Program that passed into law last year. We are also supporting a new bill, Jordan's Law (HB 315 and SB 634) that will significantly expand the services available to children in care, allowing for screening of developmental, mental health, and medical issues. Jordan's Law would also allow law enforcement to receive any active child protective investigation information about a home before entering it. Finally, we support the security of all foster families and staff by fixing a statute glitch that currently makes their information available as public record.



Pictured above: Partnership for Strong Families CEO, Stephen Pennypacker, and Patty Carroll at Rally in Tally.

## CONTACT US

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\*follow prompts\*  
Toll-Free: 866-888-6548

## Welcome New Partner Families!

Please help us welcome aboard the families who were licensed last quarter.

Katie Osteen & Francisco Zambrano, Joy Powell, Jennifer Lavin, Matthew & Heather Lucher, Paul & Christine Landry, David & Jamie Bell, Jay & Suzanne Strength, David & Jessica Stirrat, Burnette Williams, Jerrod Pfeffer, Leondrae & Maya James, Cheryl Dawson, Wayne Raulerson & Natasha Sedwick, Christina & Bethany Esford, Tamara & William Katsacos, Stephanie Rodriquez, Deborah Passino, Kerri Southhall, Kristie Turner, Valua Linton, Marcella Mayo



### Changes to Foster Care Board Payments

Please be aware that the Partnership payment system has moved to a paperless process, which will affect you if you currently receive board payments via paper check. If this applies to you, please contact Lakeysha Allen at 352-244-1521 to request a direct deposit form. Return the completed form back to us with a voided check or bank document verifying your name, address, account and routing number. That information can be submitted to: [Lisa.Vickery@pfsf.org](mailto:Lisa.Vickery@pfsf.org).

Beginning January 2019, board payments will be processed on the 5th of each month. This means that you can expect to receive your payments 3-5 days later than you normally receive them, depending on your financial institution.

### PSF room and board rate paid to foster parents



	<u>0-5 Age Range</u>	<u>6-12 Age Range</u>	<u>13-17 Age Range</u>	<u>EFC: 18-21</u>
	\$466.65/month	\$478.60/month	\$616.21/month	\$560.19/month
	\$15.34/day	\$15.73/day	\$20.26/day	\$18.42/day
	\$15.34 respite day	\$15.73/respite day	\$18.42/respite day	None/respite

PSF would like to remind you that all foster children should be receiving a monthly allowance as mandated by the Department of Children and Families. Allowances cannot be withheld as a form of discipline. For Board Rate and financial questions, please contact Lisa Vickery, Fiscal Specialist, at 352-244-1560 or [lisa.vickery@pfsf.org](mailto:lisa.vickery@pfsf.org).

## I HAVE A QUESTION! WHO DO I CONTACT ABOUT:

CLIENT TRUST FUNDS:  
Florence Hale at 352-244-1562.

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT:  
Lakeysha at 352 244-1548.

CHILD DOCUMENTS:  
FCC or Placement Specialist



PARTNERSHIP FOR  
**STRONG  
FAMILIES**

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Visit us at  
[partnerfamily.org](http://partnerfamily.org)



**THANK YOU**

We are grateful for our Partner Families and our partnership with community and faith partners. We had the opportunity to celebrate the holidays with our partner families in three different areas. We would like to thank the Gainesville University City Church of Christ, the Fountain of Life church in Tri-county and the First Baptist Church of Lake Butler for hosting our holiday parties. Your partnership and continued collaboration allow us to come together and reflect on why we do what we do and celebrate with one