



9/23/2010



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CIRCUIT 15 - PALM BEACH COUNTY


Perry Borman
DCF Southeast Regional Director
September 28, 2010



DEPARTMENT MISSION


Protect the vulnerable,
promote strong and
economically self-sufficient families,
and advance personal and family
recovery and resiliency

9/23/2010



SERVICES & PROGRAMS

- ⊙ Family Safety
 - Child Abuse Investigations
 - Family Preservation
 - Foster Care
 - Adoptions
- ⊙ Adult Protective Services
- ⊙ Public Assistance Benefits
- ⊙ Substance Abuse and Mental Health
- ⊙ Refugee Services



FAMILY SAFETY

(CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS, FAMILY PRESERVATION, FOSTER CARE, ADOPTIONS)

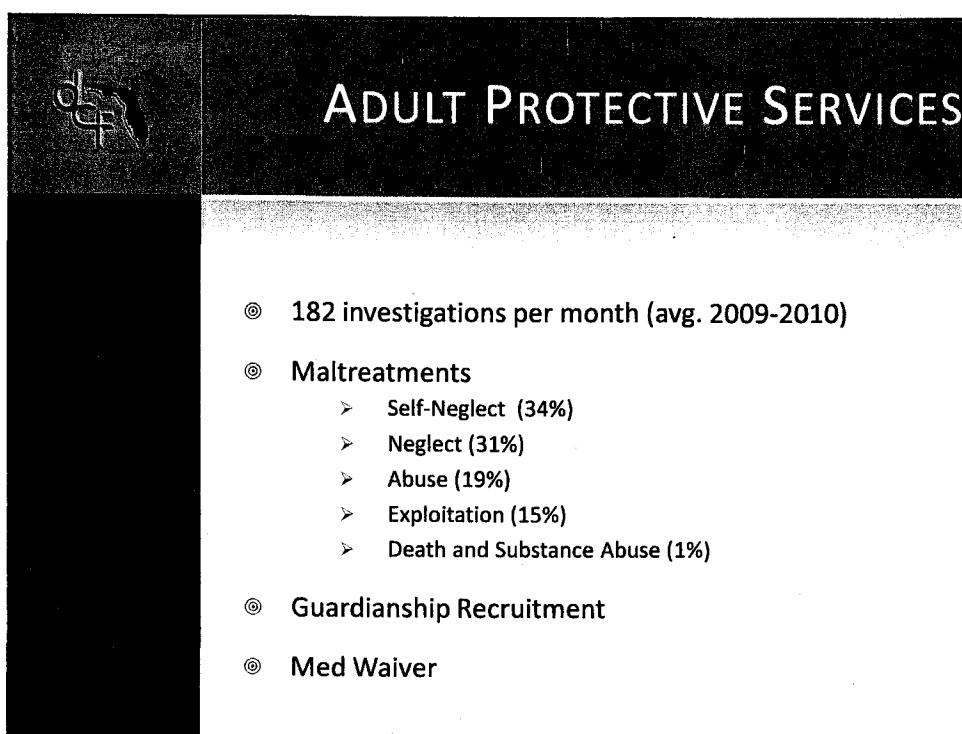
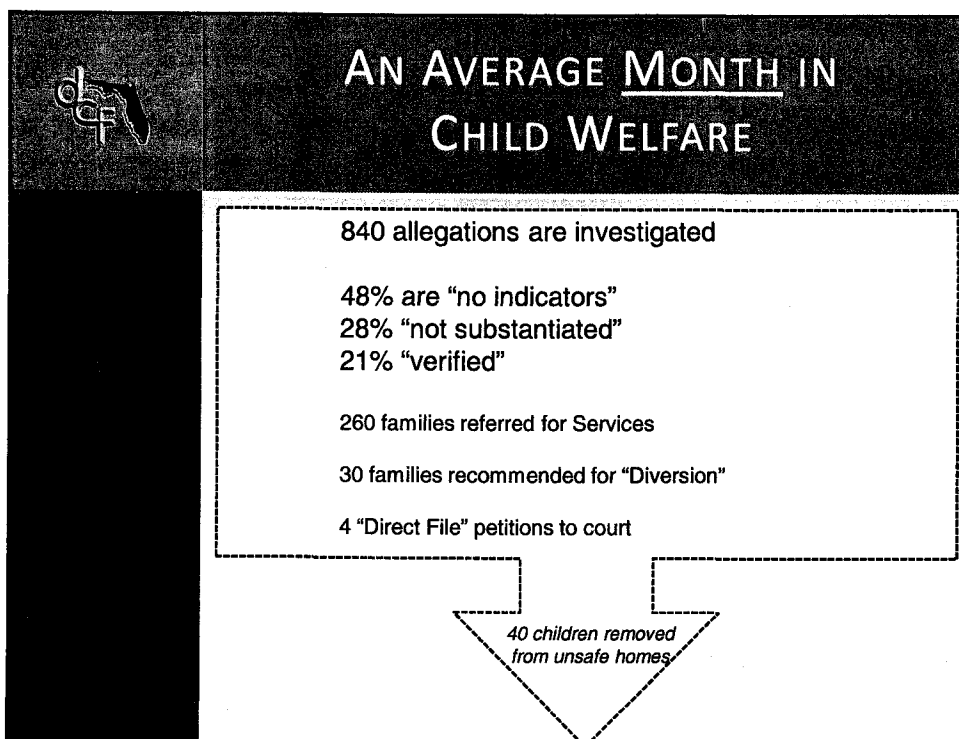
- ⊙ 12,000+ investigations in 2009-2010
 - Child Abuse Protocol
- ⊙ 868 children in out-of-home care
- ⊙ 139 adoptions

Child and Family Connections is our "lead agency"



KEY INITIATIVES

- ⊙ Diversion
- ⊙ Healthy Beginnings
- ⊙ Referrals to Community Services
- ⊙ Independent Living

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**AUTOMATED
COMMUNITY
CONNECTION
TO
ECONOMIC
SELF-
SUFFICIENCY**

Public Benefits

- ⊙ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - “Food stamps”
- ⊙ Medicaid
- ⊙ Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
 - “Cash Assistance”

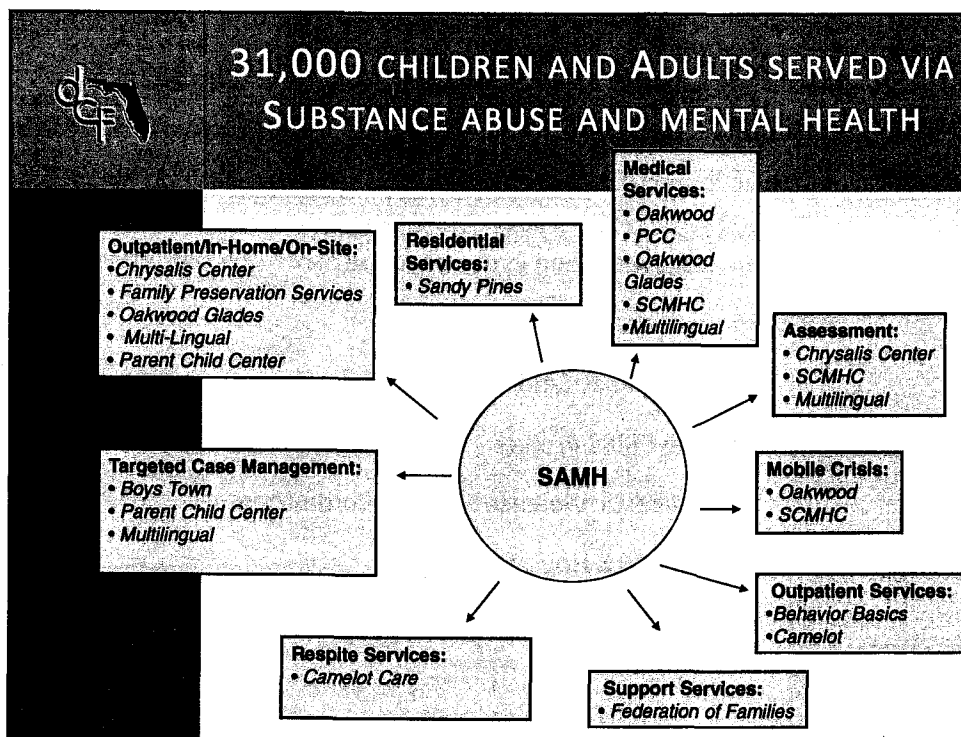


Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
food stamps

In Palm Beach County

- ⊙ 48.4% increase in food stamp households
- ⊙ \$19.4 million in benefits issued in August 2010
- ⊙ 139,261 clients
- ⊙ 75,981 households
- ⊙ \$139.27 avg. per client; \$255.26 avg. per household


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REFUGEE SERVICES


- ◎ Refugee Arrivals:
 - FFY 2009: 2,258 in Southeast Region
 - 997 in Palm Beach County
 - FFY 2005-2009: 12, 663 in Southeast Region
 - 6,230 in Palm Beach County
- ◎ Budget for Region FFY 2009: \$9.5 million
- ◎ Total Number of Clients Served in FFY 2009: 5,627
- ◎ 739 receiving services in Palm Beach County (Oct 2009-July 2010)

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SOME HIGHLIGHTS IN PALM BEACH COUNTY




- ⊙ 45% reduction in out-of-home care since Dec. 2006
- ⊙ Vulnerable Adult Protocol
- ⊙ Haiti repatriation efforts
- ⊙ The CRIBS Project
- ⊙ Domestic Violence Steering Committee
- ⊙ Section 8 Housing Vouchers











COLLABORATION IN THE COUNTY

- ⊙ 202  Community Partners
- ⊙ 29 Child Welfare Providers
- ⊙ 216 foster homes
- ⊙ 29 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Providers

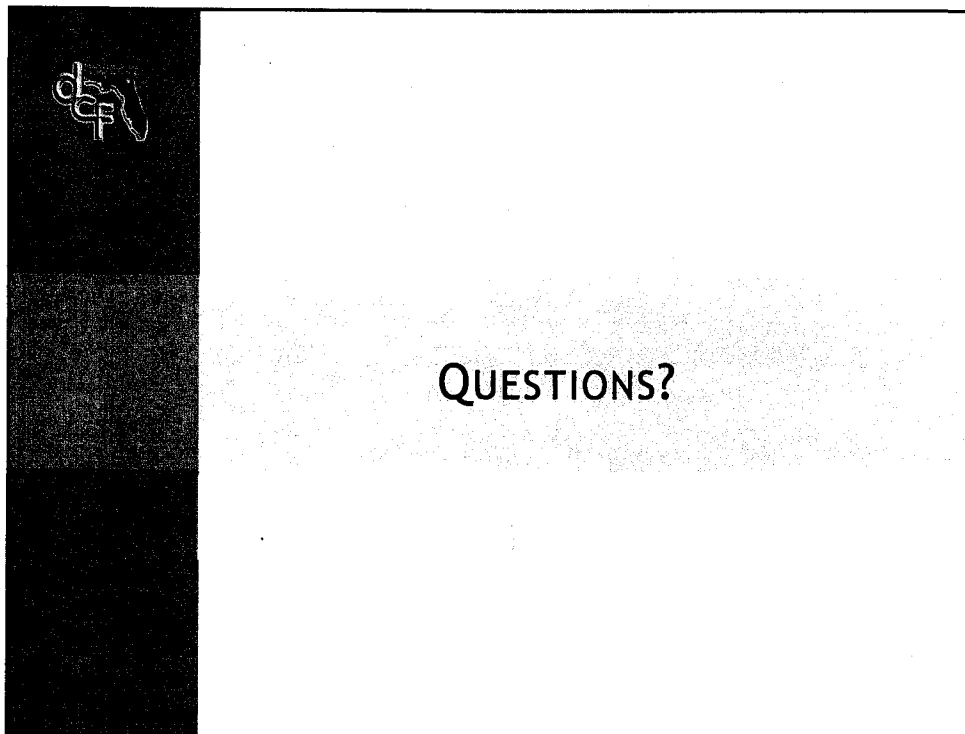


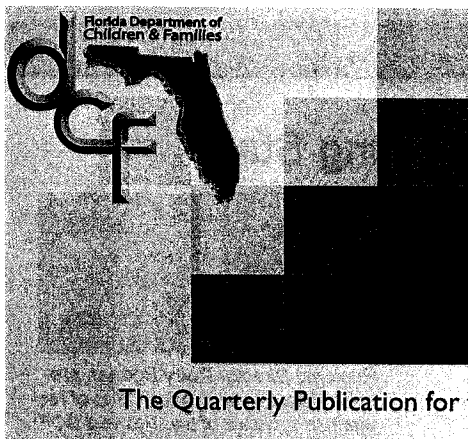






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Fall 2010

Circuit 15 Update

The Quarterly Publication for the Florida Department of Children and Families in Palm Beach County

DCF prepped to serve residents after hurricane

For state and local agencies providing critical life, health and safety services, annual preparation for Hurricane Season begins long before the first tropical storm is named.

"As the saying goes," said Circuit 15 Director of Administrative Services Stephen Faroni, "we hope for the best and prepare for the worst."

Months of planning prior to and during Hurricane Season are designed to ensure that DCF employees in Palm Beach County are able to conduct crucial child protective investigations, refer vulnerable adults and seniors to needed caregiving services, sustain access to substance abuse and mental health services, and quickly issue emergency food stamps to tens of thousands of residents.

Teams of child protective investigators and adult protective investigators, for example, are

stationed with Palm Beach County sheriff's deputies before, during and immediately after a storm.

Employees in the Department's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Office maintain close contact with local clinics, recovery centers and shelters, enabling treatment and counseling services to indigent residents, children in foster homes and others.

And in the event that Palm Beach County is declared a Disaster Area by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, scores of ACCESS employees and other DCF staff are slated to set up tents at four local parks to issue emergency food benefits.

The "Food For Florida" program provides food assistance to families and individuals af-

ected by a disaster. The emergency food stamp program was enacted after Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne in 2004 and Wilma in 2005. After Frances and Jeanne, DCF issued - in a matter of five days - more than \$37 million in disaster food stamp benefits for more than 380,000 Palm Beach County residents.

After Wilma, the Department issued more than \$49 million in disaster food stamp benefits for more than 422,000 Palm Beach County residents.

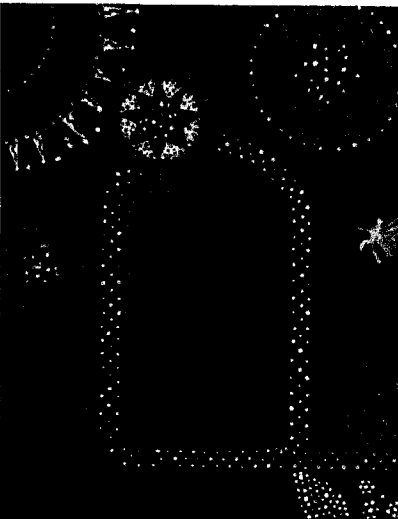
Several changes are being planned to the Food For Florida program, if needed this year:

- Residents will be able to pre-register for food assistance by going to www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/fff/
- Eligible residents will be able to leave the site with

an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, used to purchase food. (After previous storms, residents had to wait to receive the card in the mail.)

- A fourth park has been added to serve Palm Beach County residents. If needed and accessible after a storm, Dyer Park in West Palm Beach, John Prince Memorial Park in Lake Worth, Lake Ida Park in Delray Beach and Airport Park in Belle Glade will be used to distribute emergency food stamps.

In the event of a hurricane, DCF staff may get information about the status of specific offices and service centers by calling the Employee Emergency Information Line at 1-866-315-9538. (The line will be activated only in the event of a storm or other disaster.)



Artwork by Debra Williams

DCF strives to treat 'foster kids' as 'normal kids'

In a Sept. 3 memo, DCF Secretary George Sheldon reiterated his desire for the Department and its partners to make normalcy for children who have been removed from unsafe homes a priority. Here are excerpts from that memo:

Recently, a young person told me: "Stop calling us foster kids! We're just kids." It's great advice, but it's not just about what we call these young people...it's how we treat them. So I am calling on everyone in the

child-welfare community to make it a consistent and high priority in the months ahead to assess every decision and action by the standard of whether it treats children in foster care like every other child.

Youth in foster care should be able to do things that any other child does, within the limits of their abilities, their foster parents' own attitudes, and common sense. Their families experienced some-

thing severe enough to warrant the child's removal, and some of them need special care. Instead of continually reminding them and all their friends of this one feature of their lives, we need to focus on all the opportunities open to them. We need to think of them as the normal kids they are.



DCF Secretary George Sheldon



DCF employee award ceremony celebrates "Shining Stars"

Children's Legal Services Attorney Daniel Lieberman helped to simplify the paternity testing for prospective fathers, enabling immediate results during dependency hearings at the courthouse. Child Protective Investigator Vivian Mullins, a DCF veteran of more than 20 years, has shown compassion and concern for the families she's working with and has been a team player who has worked to improve production. Maureen Pollard, an Economic Self-Sufficiency Supervisor at the Lake Worth Service Center, has mentored young adults in the Independent Living program, teaching them clerical and other skills as new Department employees. And a team of ACCESS employees significantly reduced the wait time for clients

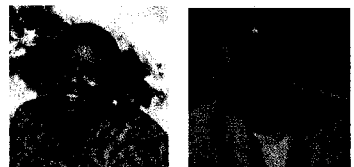
with little or no income.

Those are the "Shining Stars" of Circuit 15, employees who were recognized Aug. 13 at an awards ceremony hosted by the Southeast Region Employee Recognition Committee.

A total of 203 Circuit 15, Circuit 17 and Southeast Region employees were nominated for awards this summer.

At ceremonies in Palm Beach and Broward counties, all nominees received certificates and goody bags, while winners also received a white DCF golf shirt embroidered with the committee's Shining Star logo.

To nominate a co-worker for an award, go to: http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/ser/ser_employee_recognition.shtml



Regional Director Perry Borman presented posthumous certificates of recognition in honor of two beloved DCF employees, Ms. Onetta Willis (above left) and Mr. Gilberto Perez (above right). Ms. Willis, who died in July 2009, worked in the ACCESS Program as an Economic Self-Sufficiency Specialist II in the Belle Glade Service Center. She had worked for the Department for more than 25 years beginning in Hendry County, later transferring to Palm Beach County. Mr. Perez, who died in June 2009, worked as a paralegal specialist, effectively the office manager for Children's Legal Services. He had started working for the Department in 1995, left in 1997 and returned in 2000.

The winners of the Galaxy Award for Team Work are (left to right): Stephanie Mims-Lane, Stanley Jean, Samara Marcinkoski, Rekha Vyas, HoYee "Cindy" Fung, Jamekia Howard and (not

pictured) Patricia Rodriguez, Anne Batchler, Michael Lynch, Stella Visacki, Ana Costa, Dotlin Williamson, Rosa Alvarez-Casado, George Lopez, Melody Wright, Joan Garden, Bethania Guzman and Hermanise Benoit. Also not pictured is Maureen Pollard, who won the Shooting Star Award for Leadership.



Photos by Richard Sprague

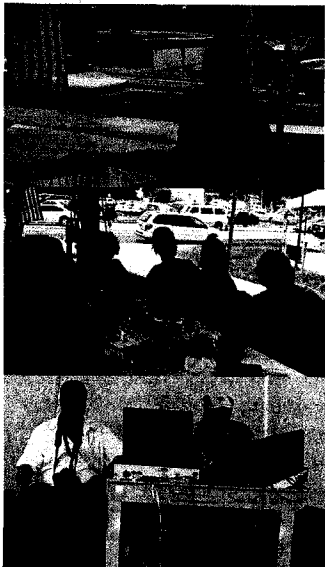
(Above) Daniel Lieberman accepts the Luminous Award for Innovation, and Vivian Mullins (above right) accepts the Super Nova Award for High Performance.



Photo by Patricia Rodriguez

It was HOT...HOT...HOT!

Regional Director hosts sizzling 4th of July BBQ



Photos by Richard Sprague and Elisa Cramer

At a cookout July 2, Circuit 15 employees headed to the parking lot outside the Sapodilla Avenue offices and enjoyed a summer feast.

Employees took their appetites...

The food, cooked by grillmasters Perry Borman, Jonathan Hackley and Joseph Martin, was *hot!*

Employees took their dancing shoes...

The music by "Calypso Ken" Yorke was *hot!*

And they gladly used fans handmade by Cynthia Lawlor...

Because, yes, the midday summer temperature was *hot!*



Circuit 15 Update is a quarterly publication designed to inform employees and community partners about the Florida Department of Children and Families in Palm Beach County. To conserve paper, and printing and postage costs, this newsletter is distributed electronically. Please forward comments, submissions to be considered for the next publication, or any other inquiries to:

Elisa Cramer
Director of Communications
FL Dept. of Children and Families
Circuit 15 - Palm Beach County
111 S. Sapodilla Ave. 301 D
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
OFFICE: (561) 837-5686
FAX: (561) 837-5106
elisa.cramer@dcf.state.fl.us

New law requires electronic fingerprinting prior to hiring

Beginning Aug. 1, 2010, Florida enacted "important changes to ensure the safety of Floridians who are so dependent on the quality of the people caring for them," DCF Secretary George Sheldon said, referring to House Bill 7069, which changed critical aspects of the background screening process.

"This new law will require background screening of job applicants, employees and volunteers who come in contact with children, the developmentally disabled and vulnerable adults."

The most significant change to the Department of Children and Families' providers is that employers will not be able to employ applicants for positions

of special trust or responsibility until the applicants are cleared by a complete background screen. That background screen must include a fingerprint-based search of criminal records in Florida and nationally.

In order to timely meet the needs of our partners, the Department is requesting that providers ask applicants to submit fingerprints using electronic LiveScan through private vendors.

LiveScan results can be received by the Department in as little as 24 to 48 hours. This is in contrast to hard copy fingerprint submission results being received and processed by the Depart-



Background Screening Process

ment anywhere from 4 to 6 weeks.

A listing of LiveScan vendors in your area is provided by accessing the "LiveScan Locations" link on the left hand side of the webpage:

www.dcfbackgroundscreening.com

There are many other changes that took effect on Aug. 1, changing the background screening process.

The Department encourages everyone to review a summary of all the changes to the background screening process by visiting:

www.dcfbackgroundscreening.com



DCF ensures access for deaf, hard-of-hearing, limited-English speakers and others with disabilities

The Department and its contracted providers of client services want to ensure persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, have Limited-English Proficiency and other disabilities have access to all programs, benefits and services.

The Department and its contracted providers of client services will provide, at no cost to the client or companion, appropriate auxiliary aids, including qualified/certified American Sign Language interpret-

ers and qualified foreign-language interpreters where necessary to afford persons an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the Department of Children and Families' programs and services.

Auxiliary aids include, but are not limited to, Braille and taped materials, qualified interpreters, readers, assistive listening devices and systems, television decoders, visual fire alarms using strobe lights, captioned films and other assistive devices.

Auxiliary aids or language interpreters will be available for use by customers and

potential customers with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills in each phase of the service delivery process (e.g. telephone inquiries, requests, intake interviews, service delivery, counseling, complaints, testing, treatment, training, etc.).

For more information, DCF employees can read the Southeast Region Auxiliary Aids Plan at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/~ser/HR/SoutheastRegionAuxiliaryAidsPlan2010.pdf>

A list of interpreters begins on page 43 of the Auxiliary Aids & Services Plan, and Single Points of Contact throughout the Region are found on page 20.

DCF honors Youth Leadership Academy grad, CEO of foster care agency

During the 2010 Dependency Summit in August, DCF Secretary George Sheldon honored 17-year-old Prosiser Walker, a graduate of the Florida Youth Leadership Academy, and Judith Warren, the CEO of Child and Family Connections.

Judith received the Judicial Circuit Award, which celebrates an individual within each judicial circuit from whom others seek advice on how to solve problems and best help

families within their community. Judith was nominated in Circuit 15 (Palm Beach County) for leading the child welfare community in building relationships with the Department, the judiciary and community providers.

"She was central to the enhancement of Family Preservation service delivery and incorporated prevention services for young children into all aspects of case management, including a specialized team for the new Family Drug Court," her nomination said.

A former child protective investigator, Judith now serves on both the statewide Independent Living Services Advisory Council and the Road to Independence Redesign Committee. "Her leadership has not only built local partnerships, but has developed statewide collaboration as well," the nomination said. "She is always the first to step forward to work to remove obstacles and build partnerships. Her expertise has been



a valuable and critical part of our successes in Circuit 15."

Prosiser joined graduates from each circuit in the state. "He is an excellent student. He was a joy to mentor," said DCF Licensing/Adoption Specialist Roz Davis.



DCF, community to 'Harvest the Voices of Recovery'

There will be a Chili Cook Off contest. And Cupcake Wars will yield scrumptious treats. And you won't want to miss *Recovery's Got Talent!*

But the real star of the Sept. 25 event at the South Florida Fairgrounds will be you!

This year's "Harvesting the Voices of Recovery, Now More Than Ever" will draw dozens of local substance abuse and mental health treatment programs and an internationally known therapist, author and researcher to focus on...YOU.

The free resource fair, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sept. 25, is being hosted by the Circuit 15 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Office, in collaboration with the Palm Beach County Substance Abuse Coalition and community-based substance abuse and mental health pro-

grams.

Michael Counes will invite attendees to join Floridians for Recovery, a private, not-for-profit coalition of advocates and consumers advocating for substance abuse education, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services.

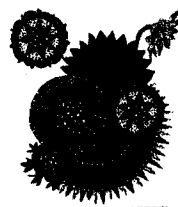
Dr. Barry Duncan, author of *What's Right With You* and 14 other books, also is scheduled to attend. Dr. Duncan is the co-developer of the Outcome Rating Scale (ORS), Session Rating Scale (SRS), Child ORS, and Child SRS measures "designed to give clients the voice they deserve as well as provide clients, clinicians, administrators and payers with feedback about the client's response to services, thus enabling more effective care tailored to client preferences." Because of his self-

help books, he has appeared on *Oprah*, *The View* and several other national TV programs.

"His latest self-help book, *What's Right With You*, challenges the business-as-usual mentality of 'What's wrong with you' and instead demonstrates how to rally natural resources and resiliencies to overcome life challenges."

For more information about Dr. Duncan, go to www.whatsrightwithyou.com or www.heartandsoulofchange.com. And plan to attend "Harvesting the Voices of Recovery" on Sept. 25, from 2 to 6 p.m., at the South Florida Fairgrounds!

Call (561) 650-6860 for more information.



Leadership Palm Beach County teams with DCF to boost food stamp access



Members of the Leadership Palm Beach County Class of 2010 joined DCF Circuit 15 executives after the class presented their Civic Engagement Project.

Ever wish you could draw upon free, skilled and talented consultants to give you a fresh perspective on a challenging situation?

The Florida Department of Children and Families in Palm Beach County got just such an opportunity when the Class of 2010 of Leadership

Palm Beach County sought a Civic Engagement Proposal.

Selected by class members for their eight-month project, the DCF proposal – "Feeding

Families Pays" – was an effort to help Palm Beach County realize the nutritional and economic benefits of a fully utilized food stamp program.

At the time the project was proposed in the fall of 2009, fewer than half of the county's residents eligible for food

stamps were believed to be receiving them. That was a loss of nutritional value and an estimated \$153.1 million loss of local revenue.

In June, a team of the Class of 2010 project members presented to the Department improvement possibilities to "get more qualified applicants to and thru the SNAP Application Process." The team had studied the application process, having visited the service centers in Palm Beach County, the Call Center in Miami and the intake unit in West Palm Beach. The team also compared Florida's process to the other states. Ultimately, the team provided recommendations and observations about the Web site,

the application, internal processing procedures, the workplace, employee motivation, the phone system and Community Partner support.

"It's always positive to get feedback that is designed to improve the operations," DCF Southeast Regional Director Perry Borman said. "The class showed a sincere interest in our proposal and in wanting to assist the community."

The team's suggestions and recommendations are being reviewed by the Department in Palm Beach County and in Tallahassee for potential statewide improvements. For more information about Leadership Palm Beach County, go to www.leadershippbc.org

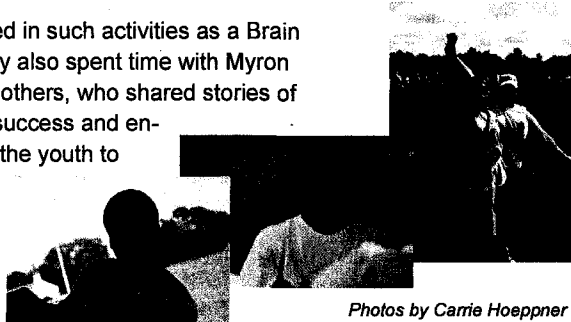
Palm Beach County youth catch spirit of Myron Rolle Academy

Six Palm Beach County youth in foster care attended the Myron Rolle Leadership and Wellness Academy at Camp Blanding Florida National Guard base in July. The camp is named for former Florida State University football

player and Rhodes Scholar Myron Rolle, who now plays in the NFL for the Tennessee Titans.

DCF Southeast Region Director of Support Services Dennis Miles for the second year in a row mentored the youth, who conquered a climbing wall and

participated in such activities as a Brain Bowl. They also spent time with Myron Rolle and others, who shared stories of personal success and encouraged the youth to work hard and pursue their dreams.



Photos by Carrie Hoepfner

Marvin Howard, 13, Teko Chatman, 12, and Stephanie Pericles, pictured with a mentor, enjoy the Myron Rolle Academy.



Palm Beach County honors refugees for perseverance

Florida welcomes about 25,000 new refugees every year – people who have fled their home country because of fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group, or political opinion. The Department of Children and Families' Office of Refugee Services helps refugees gain economic self-sufficiency and social adjustment within the shortest time following their arrival into the United States.

"It's not easy," Hiram Ruiz, DCF's Director of Refugee Services, told 80 new American citizens at a June 16 naturalization ceremony in Royal Palm Beach, "and a lot of people struggle. But, hopefully, with our help and their own resiliency, they

do make it."

The special naturalization ceremony was in honor of World Refugee Day, celebrated worldwide on June 20. For the second year, Palm Beach County joined in

the annual World Refugee Day celebration, recognizing the plight of more than 43 million who have fled their home country or have been internally displaced.

"Sadly, persecution continues around the world, as we speak. These are mothers, fathers and children...persecuted because of their ethnicity," Mr. Ruiz said to the new citizens and their families at the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services office in Royal Palm Beach. "Today, you are no longer a refugee. Today, you are a U.S. citizen. You have a new permanent home."

Throughout the month of June, local libraries displayed books about refugees and posted a bibliography of such stories on their Web sites. On June 25, the West Boynton Branch hosted a film screening and discussion of the award-winning movie *God Grew Tired of Us*, a story that follows the "Lost Boys" of Sudan through adversity and triumph in their relocation to the United States. Aimee Cernicharo, an attorney specializing in

immigration issues at St. Thomas University Human Rights Institute, led the talk.

On June 14, Refugee Task Forces of Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties hosted a movie screening at the IMPROV at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood.

Florida's Refugee Services Program (www.dcf.state.fl.us/refugee/)

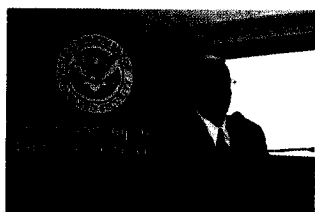
partners with several agencies and organizations to provide adult education, case management, child care, youth and family services, job skills training, employment, health services, employment-related immigration services, interpretation and integration assistance. Call Miriam Bracero-Rosario, Community Liaison in Palm Beach County, at (561) 837-5022.

WXEL's weekly radio talk show, "Florida Forum," on Aug. 22-23 featured a **Special Panel on Refugee Services and Human Trafficking** in Florida.

Missed it? Go to this link:

www.publicbroadcasting.net/wxel/jukebox?action=viewMedia&mediald=920996

The panel featured DCF Director of Refugee Services Hiram Ruiz; DCF Statewide Human Trafficking Coordinator Regina Bernadin; Brandy Macaluso, former chair of the Human Trafficking Coalition Palm Beach; and Genevieve Cousminer, executive director of the Coalition for Independent Living Options, Inc.



DCF Director of Refugee Services Hiram Ruiz welcomes new U.S. citizens.

Youth in foster homes no different than other children

Continued from page 1

Florida law requires rules "balancing the goals of normalcy and safety for the youth and providing the caregivers with as much flexibility as possible to enable the youth to participate in normal life experiences."

In other words, we need to act like good parents.

All good parents worry about the safety of their children, but they know that children have to face the risks of daily life if they are to build confidence and character, gain life experience, and, ultimately, achieve happiness. So we let them drive, play sports, go on field trips, visit friends, have friends over, go on dates, and face new challenges every day.

Our challenge is to give them the tools for making good decisions and acting responsibly. All children are entitled to the most normal lives we can offer

them.

Our policy is this: Every child in our care is entitled to participate in age-appropriate enrichment, extracurricular and social activities. Caregivers should assess the appropriateness of the activity based upon the child's age, maturity, abilities and interests, but the assessment should be reasonable and avoid intrusive or bureaucratic actions such as "background screenings" unless there is a reasonable basis for doing so. Caregivers should know who their kids will be with and make provisions for their safety, but exclusion from an activity should occur only after consideration of less stringent alternatives.

The decision is up to the foster parent. We have licensed them for this responsibility. We need to treat them like parents, with the same authority to make decisions in the best interests of their children. Case

managers may need to be involved on some issues of expense, and they, along with the rest of us, are there to provide counsel, support and oversight. We need to consult biological parents whenever it's reasonable, unless parental rights have been terminated. With reunification as our goal, we need to ask biological parents about their views on activities for their children and make a determination that takes their preferences into account.

We will promptly review any state or local rule, operating procedure, policy or custom that prevents or creates barriers to normalcy, including the use of terms that reflect bureaucracy rather than normal language. We invite anyone to tell us where we can improve and urge each Community Based-Care agency to review its own rules and practices using this guideline.

Finally, we have to stop refer-

ring to these young people as just "foster kids," and refer to them as kids or children or teenagers. They are simply children in foster care - and not for long, if we are doing our jobs well. A kid's job is to be in school, to learn from teachers, and to develop relationships through friends, peers, clubs, sports and activities, since it's these skills that lay the foundation for successful lives as adults. It's what many of us experienced as we grew up and what we want for not just our own children, but for all children. Youth in care are no different.

Our decisions will not always turn out perfectly, as so many parents find with their own children, but our decisions have to be continually focused on the overall well-being of our children, not just a bureaucratic requirement or a "safe" decision. It is the right thing for our kids.



Boys & Girls Club co-op accepts EBT cards for fresh fruits, veggies

Several teens at the Boys & Girls Club of Palm Beach County have sacrificed cheerleading, summer field trips, dance practice and other activities to work after school and on the week-ends. But surrounded by a garden of fresh pineapples, papayas, lavender, rosemary, aloe, mint, lemongrass, peppers, tomatoes and eggplants, these young entrepreneurs were not complaining.

In fact, as 17-year-old LaPorsha Lewis said of the fresh food market that requires her and her club members to rise and shine at 7 a.m. every other Saturday: "It's fun."

"You can sit back and say, 'At least that family has something to help them.'"

The Rise & Shine Food Co-Op sprouted from a business class taught by Leadership Palm Beach County's Class of 2009 and a survey the teens conducted of the families attending the Boys & Girls Club.

"Their needs were being able to put food on the table," said 15-year-old Brianna

Hollins, "and spend time together."

So, the teens decided on their core values and selected a name that reflected them – Respect, Integrity, Service excellence and Enduring relationships. With mentors, sponsorships and community partners, 12 teens are employed to run the Rise & Shine Food Co-Op. They developed the budget, marketing plan and materials to solicit memberships.

The teens have been recognized by local and national media (http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032619/ns/nightly_news_with_brian_williams#32500185) and have received grants and awards.

"Random people come up to us and say, 'We saw you on TV,' " beamed 15-year-old Taylor Ambrose.

The co-op has brought not only recognition; it's meant travel and experiences beyond what the teens imagined. Brianna and 16-year-old Clynisha Clark cite an especially memorable highlight – traveling to New York to present the project to all Boys & Girls Clubs in the nation.

The Rise & Shine Co-Op is open at three locations:

- 10 a.m. – noon: Boys & Girls Teen Center, 350 S.W. 10th St., Belle Glade – 561-992-5399
- 8 a.m. – 10 a.m.: Florence De George Boys & Girls Club, 4105 Pinewood Ave., West Palm Beach – 561-881-0593 or 561-881-9565
- 8 a.m. – 10 a.m.: The Naoma Donnelley Haggin Boys & Girls Club, 1451 S.W. 7th St., Delray Beach – 561-279-0251.

A one-time membership fee is \$10. Each distribution is \$30 (meat, fruit, vegetables, bread and nonperishable items) or \$15 (which includes a hefty supply of fresh fruits and vegetables, minus meat). The Rise & Shine Co-Op accepts Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards from food stamp customers.

For more information, visit www.bgcpcb.org/riseandshine



Hotline serves homeless veterans

NATIONAL CALL CENTER
for Homeless Veterans

1-877-4AID-VET
1-877-424-3838

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has established a toll-free hotline to serve homeless veterans and those veterans at risk of becoming homeless.

To reach the 24/7 hotline, call **1-877-424-3838**.

In addition to the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, the VA has established an online veterans chat site, which also provides 24-hour-a-day, 7-days-a-week counseling services for homeless veterans. For more information, go to www.va.gov/homeless/



BEFORE

Never leave your child alone in a car

Safe Kids Palm Beach County, 407-641-3300

Check backseat before leaving car

The Department and the Palm Beach County Safe Kids Coalition remind parents, relatives, professional caregivers - anyone driving young children - to look in the backseat before locking their cars and walking away.

The Coalition in July launched the "Look Before You Lock" campaign to help remind drivers that children can suffer severe injury and die if left in hot cars. Banner ads have been posted on Palm Tran buses. Window shade decals and door hangers are available.

Call Safe Kids at (561) 841-3500 for more information.

Price of bus passes to increase Oct. 1

Effective Oct. 1, 2010, Palm Tran Connection will make some changes to the existing Bus Pass Program.

The price of the 31-Day Bus Pass will increase to either \$10 or \$15, depending on each client's income level. For example: Clients with income levels equal to or less than 100% (\$10,830) of the Federal Poverty Level, with a family size of one, will now be required to pay \$10 for each 31-day bus pass purchased. Clients with income levels in excess of 100% but not greater

than 150% (\$16,245) of the Federal Poverty Level, with a family size of one, will be required to pay \$15 for each 31-day bus pass purchased.

Palm Tran Connection no longer will accept the food stamp benefit letter for eligibility. Recipients who used their Food Stamp letter to qualify will need to be recertified, under the new eligibility guidelines.

For more information, call the Bus Pass desk at (561) 649-9848.



Palm Tran

Source: Palm Tran Connection
Bus Pass Department



Florida receives \$11.5 million bonus for food stamp accuracy

Florida was again named the best in the nation for food stamp payment accuracy and also earned the distinction for the most improved in correctly handling benefit denials and closures.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced in June that the diligent work of Florida Department of Children and Families employees has earned the state a bonus of more than \$11.5 million.

Florida's bonus was the highest of any state, accounting for 39 percent of the awards nationally. It is the largest bonus ever awarded to a state for such excellence since the USDA bonus program began in 2003.

The bonus, DCF Secretary George Sheldon said, "recognizes the meaningful and significant efforts our Department is making to ensure Floridians are provided the service and attention they deserve. It is a tremendous honor to hold the No. 1 spot two years in a row in such

a complex program, and it is a true reflection of the tireless efforts of our employees."

Florida's Food Assistance Program (also known as SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is the fourth largest in the country, providing more than \$4 billion worth of benefits to more than 3.5 million people in the past year.

In Palm Beach County, more than \$167 million in benefits were awarded to more than 1.3 million clients from July 2009-June 2010.

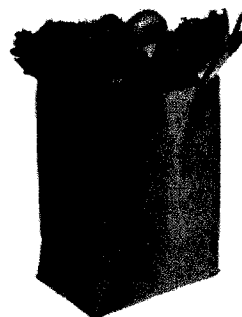
Last year, the state earned a \$7.1 million performance bonus for best accuracy, and in 2008 the state was awarded \$5.5 million for most improvement in that category.

This year, for the work done in fiscal year 2009, Florida received \$7,754,744 in the best payment accuracy category and \$3,797,503 for the most improvement in correct processing of denials

and closures.

Just four years ago, Florida's error rate of 8.59 percent in food stamp processing was one of the highest in the nation. The bonus award is for an error rate of 0.70 percent.

**Food stamps
can help fill your
grocery bag.**



*It's easier than ever to...
See if you're eligible.
Apply for benefits.
Check your existing case.*

***No waiting in line!
No busy signal!***

**Go online
anywhere
anytime**



www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

New income limits aim to reach more in need

Starting July 1, 2010, the gross monthly income limits increased for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Florida. That means that families earning slightly more than previously allowed may now be eligible for food stamps.

How much can you earn and possibly still be eligible for food stamps? As of July 1, here are the Federal Gross Income Limits by household size:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | \$1,805 (up from \$1,174) |
| 2 | \$2,429 (up from \$1,579) |
| 3 | \$3,052 (up from \$1,984) |
| 4 | \$3,675 (up from \$2,389) |
| 5 | \$4,299 (up from \$2,794) |
| 6 | \$4,922 (up from \$3,200) |
| 7 | \$5,545 (up from \$3,605) |
| 8 | \$6,169 (up from \$4,019) |

Also effective July 1, 2010, there is no asset test for food stamp eligibility for most households.

To find out more about the requirements and benefits available, visit:
www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/docs/fafactsheet.pdf

To apply for food assistance, go to:
www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

If you already receive food stamps and need to update information or check the status of your account, create a MyACCESS Account at:
www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

The Department of Children and Families complies with state and federal nondiscrimination laws and policies that prohibit discrimination based on age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, or sex. It is unlawful to retaliate against individuals or groups on the basis of their participation in a complaint of discrimination or on the basis of their opposition to discriminatory practices.

If you require Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, please notify Michelle Bergen at michelle_bergen@dcf.state.fl.us or (561) 837-5078.



Wallet-sized resource card to help survivors of domestic violence

DCF child protective investigators and case managers with Child and Family Connections, Inc., are now distributing wallet-sized cards that refer domestic violence survivors to community resources.



The cards were created by a local Domestic Violence Steering Council, in response to feedback from victims. The group is working with law enforcement to begin providing the cards to victims when responding to Domestic Calls.



The committee also has completed a map of the system leading to an advocate. The goal was for all agencies that

work with a survivor of domestic violence to know how to connect that survivor to an advocate.

If you have been hurt or are afraid, help is just a phone call away. For safe housing, access to counseling for you and your children, or help with moving expenses, call 1-800-355-8547 or 1-800-973-9922. If you need a restraining order, help with medical expenses or other services, call 1-866-891-7273. If you need a divorce, custody/visitation help, immigration help, legal representation at restraining order hearings or other legal services, call 561-655-8944.

Save the Date

- Sept. 23, 6-7 p.m. "Milk Party" sponsored by The Children's Movement of Florida at The Harriet Himmel Theater at CityPlace; contact: kerline.boursiquot@childrensmovementflorida.org
- Sept. 25, 2-6 p.m. "Harvesting the Voices of Recovery, Now More Than Ever," South Florida Fairgrounds in West Palm Beach, (561) 650-6860
- Sept. 30, 9 a.m. -5p.m. "Spotlight on Sickle Cell: Medical Challenges and Resolutions" Professional Development Program, Doubletree Hotel, 4431 PGA Blvd., Palm Beach Gardens; registration is \$60. Call (561) 833-3113
- Oct. 1, 8:30 -11 a.m. Domestic Violence Awareness Month Opening Ceremony and Breakfast, Guest Speaker: Judge Sheree Davis Cunningham, RSVP by Sept. 24, (561) 624-6648
- Oct. 7, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Faith-Based Summit on Human Trafficking, Clayton Hutcheson Agriculture Center, 559 N. Military Trail, West Palm Beach; Free; Continental breakfast begins at 8 a.m.; Pre-register: (561) 265-3797 ext. 106 or jescalante@avda-fl.com
- Oct. 14, 8 a.m.-4p.m. Domestic Violence Summit (8-hour training event), Crowne Plaza, 1601 Belvedere Road, West Palm Beach; CEU and CLU Hours Available; sponsored by the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence; (561) 624-6648
- Oct. 16, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., West Palm Beach VA Medical Center 2010 Open House, VA Medical Center - Main Atrium, 7305 N. Military Trail, West Palm Beach
- Oct. 28, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Faith-Based Summit on Human Trafficking, West County Senior Center, 2916 State Road 15, Belle Glade; Free; Continental breakfast begins at 8 a.m.; Pre-register: (561) 265-3797 ext. 106 or jescalante@avda-fl.com
- Oct. 29, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., "Rx for Change...Targeting Prescription Drug Abuse" Conference, Palm Beach County Convention Center; (561) 833-1234
- November is National Adoption Month
- Nov. 14-20 is National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week



Demystifying DCF

What does the Department of Children and Families do in Palm Beach County?

- Family Safety
 - Child Abuse Investigations
 - Foster Care
 - Adoptions
- Adult Protective Services
- Food Stamps
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Mental Health Treatment
- Refugee Services

Call 561-837-5686
To learn more about DCF or schedule a presentation

Our Mission

Protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency.

Our Vision

We will be recognized as a world class social services system, delivering valued services to our customers. We are committed to providing a level and quality of service we would want for our own families.



DCF greets Haiti earthquake survivors with smiles, hugs, help

Survivors helped
by DCF aid others



Two earthquake survivors pose with three volunteers (In blue shirts: DCF Program Operations Administrator Sonia De Escobar, Benefit Recovery Staff Assistant Tangelia Miles and Woodler Bazalais)

The elderly woman arrived wearing a pretty blue hat. After she completed the immigration processing, she walked to the waiting area. Department employees were assisting an unaccompanied minor who was going to be picked up by his father. They began to talk to the elderly woman in the pretty blue hat. They found out that she was staying in Miami but had no one to pick her up.

All of a sudden, the young boy who was being helped by the Department announced, "No worry. Now she has a ride."

As soon as his father arrived, he agreed to give the woman a ride.

More than two weeks after an earthquake left Haiti in ruins, Department employees are assisting those who have suffered tremendously. At around-the-clock operations at airports in Miami, Sanford, Homestead and Fort Lauderdale, and on-call in West Palm Beach and Port St. Lucie, the Department has welcomed more than 15,000 survivors.

The tireless efforts of our employees, many working through the week-ends and into the wee hours of the morning, cannot be applauded enough. Your service and commitment to our daily mission of helping the state's most vulnerable are a credit to our Department and the state.

More than 6,000 of those arriving from Haiti have received direct assistance from the Department. With financial aid that will be reimbursed by the federal government, the Department has provided essential immediate help, including food and water.

We also have provided short-term loans to individuals for travel to a final destination with family or friends, and lodging for those who need an overnight stay.

Beyond the numbers, there are hundreds of touching tales that highlight

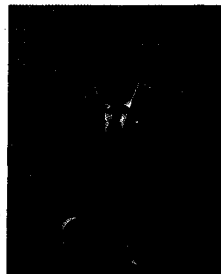
the value of our work. We are sharing some of them here.

Department employees have offered their own clothing to those in need. We also have provided teddy bears, toys and a warm smile for children who have suffered in ways most of us cannot imagine.

Stark reminders of the tragedy's toll come with the relief we provide. In Miami, I met a 28-year-old man, carrying a 2-month-old infant, who had lost his wife and three children in the earthquake.

The trauma we are seeing on our TVs and in person as earthquake survivors arrive from Haiti is difficult. But we can all be proud to have been there to help, and we will continue to help in any way we can for as long as it takes.

Our employees around the state have always shown a commitment to protecting the state's most vulnerable. Thank you, again, on behalf of all Floridians, for the work you are doing not only during this tragedy, but every day.



Department of Children and Families Secretary George Sheldon



Photo by Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel

DCF Child Protective Investigator Valery Dambreville interprets for Gov. Charlie Crist.

DCF volunteer finds lost aunt who fled Haiti

Child Protective Investigator Valery Dambreville was the first to volunteer in his area for the Department's efforts. He had not spoken to family members in Haiti and feared for their safety.

Volunteering as a

translator, he worked around the clock during initial flights into Orlando-Sanford. To his surprise, his aunt, whom he had not heard from, stepped off an evacuation flight and into his arms.

Val's story inspired oth-

ers and encouraged hope. He was interviewed by the *Orlando Sentinel* and *People* magazine. When Governor Charlie Crist and Secretary Sheldon hosted a news conference on-site, Val was a guest speaker.



DCF investigator, teddy bears comfort 6-year-old

A complete list of services offered by the Department for those affected by the earthquake is available at:
www.dcf.state.fl.us/Haiti.shtml

For information on the U.S. Government's relief efforts, please visit:
www.whitehouse.gov/haiti/earthquake_embed

To find and share information about missing persons in Haiti, use the "Person Finder" tool:
www.state.gov/haitiquake

Child Protective Investigator Lisa Sarkees arrived for the morning shift at Orlando-Sanford International Airport to relieve her supervisor, Kristen Smoyer. Kristen had been working with Oliver, a 6-year-old who had arrived with a woman on an airplane from Haiti. The woman had coached Oliver to say that she was his aunt, but Kristen learned the woman was not Oliver's aunt. Using Oliver's passport, Kristen was able to locate Oliver's true aunt in New York.

Lisa called Oliver's aunt, but she was unable to come to Florida immediately to pick him up. She wondered if a friend in West Palm Beach could care for Oliver until she arrived about a week later.

Instead, Lisa accompanied Oliver on a flight to New York's JFK Airport to meet his aunt.

With two hours before the 10:30 a.m. flight, another investigator, Missy Creeger, drove Lisa and Oliver to Orlando International Airport. Oliver spoke a limited amount of English, but he and Lisa were able to communicate. After passing the security checkpoints, Lisa bought Oliver some breakfast – his choice: a Sprite, a hashbrown, and a sausage, egg and cheese McMuffin.

They boarded the plane and were on their way. But when the flight hit some turbulence and the plane

began to shake, tears began flowing from Oliver's eyes. Lisa assumed the shaking frightened Oliver, and he nodded his head yes when she asked him. She then held him until the plane landed, trying to comfort him, reassuring him that he would soon be safe with his aunt.

When they arrived at the airport, Lisa let Oliver listen to a few songs on her iPod while they were waiting for his aunt to arrive. Oliver clutched two teddy bears that had been given to him when he arrived from Haiti. When he saw his aunt, he ran to her. The aunt began to cry, and so did Lisa. "It was wonderful to see them reunite," she said.



Alone with passport and phone number, 12-year-old survivor joins grateful father

The father had been waiting at Miami International Airport for several hours, anticipating his 12-year-old son's return. When the child arrived, Chief Southern Regional Legal Counsel Javier A. Ley-Soto escorted him to

the terminal.

When Javier asked the boy if he had any luggage, he pulled his hands out of his pockets and showed his passport in one hand and an Oreo cookie packet and piece of paper with his father's number on it. "He

told me that was all he had," Javier said.

But the boy's face lit up with a big smile when Javier spotted the father walking down the hall. The little boy ran up behind his father and surprised him.

After a very joyous em-

brace, however, the reunion turned bittersweet as the son told his father that his mother had died when their house collapsed.

The father thanked Javier and the Department for bringing him his son.

Haitian couple celebrate 45th anniversary with DCF volunteers

After going through the immigration process, a couple sat down in the waiting area at Homestead Air Force Base, and Department employees began

talking to them. The man said he was happy to be alive and that it was his birthday. When asked how old he was, he said, "Today, I am 72 years old."

He then grinned and added that he and his wife had been married to each other for 45 years! The staff did not have a cake, but they did



have Oreo cookies. They sang *Happy Birthday*, and all of the volunteers gathered around to wish the couple "*Joyeux Anniversaire!*"



Three sisters prepare for a new beginning



Child Protective Investigator Supervisor Jenny Soriano-Priestly (right) helped a woman find her three nieces.

When a social worker at a Veterans Administration Hospital in New York found out about the devastating earthquake in Haiti, all she

wanted to do was get to Haiti and "find my girls" – her nieces... three beautiful sisters whose mother's whereabouts were unknown.

The social worker's brother – the girls' father – had died several years ago. Although she knew that becoming a mother of three growing girls would not be easy, their aunt began trying to adopt them in 2004. They were in the final steps of completing that adoption when the earthquake hit. She frantically

made last-minute preparations and returned to chaos in Haiti.

Their aunt knew where the house used to be and thought she could still find it when she arrived in Haiti. As she made her way through the wrecked city, she wondered what had become of her girls. Like many others, she was not prepared for the level of devastation she saw.

She finally found the three girls simply sitting in front of what used to be their home. Everyone there, she told DCF volun-

teers, was doing the same thing - their houses had fallen, they had nowhere to go, and they simply sat waiting for help. The aunt stayed on the street with the girls for two days until they finally made it to the U.S. Embassy with the necessary papers in hand.

When they arrived at Homestead Air Reserve Base, they were grateful to be alive. As the girls enjoyed their boxed lunch and cold soda, they began to share their story...and the plans for their new beginning.

Newborns bring hope amid despair

The plane landed with little notice and urgent medical needs.

Twenty-one injured earthquake survivors were taken to hospitals in Broward County and throughout South Florida. Another 18 survivors, including a pregnant woman, were escorted to awaiting Department of Children and Families employees at Fort Lauderdale International Airport.

Teamwork and compassion combined to help the

survivors, including a 2-year-old.

Community agencies stepped in to find emergency shelter, even keeping the women together so they could support each other.

"The look in their eyes was just haunting when they got there," said Circuit 17 Operations Administrator Kim Gorsuch. "But when they left, they all gave us big hugs, so we made some headway."

The pregnant woman

was taken by ambulance to a local hospital, where she gave birth the next morning. The mother and baby are doing well.

Two days later, another pregnant earthquake survivor who came into the United States from Haiti via the Dominican Republic was staying in a hotel with her toddler son when she went into labor. She delivered a baby boy.

Plantation General Hospital was kind enough to put them all in a large pri-

vate room so the toddler could remain with his mother.

The Department helped the woman apply for services for her newborn and arranged for car seats to be delivered to the hospital for the baby and the toddler to travel to Tampa, where they will live with the woman's sister.



DCF team helps reunite 16-year-old with mother

Sixteen-year-old "Giana" moved to Haiti from New Jersey three months ago. She was living with her aunt and her adult brother when the earthquake struck, killing her aunt.

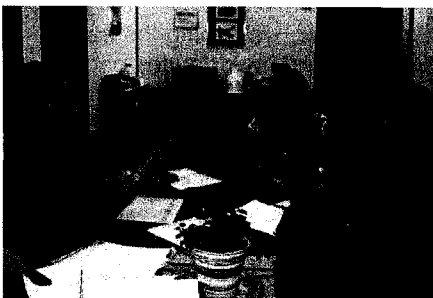
Giana had attempted to save her aunt's life and was grieving the loss. She also had to leave behind her brother, who is not a United States citizen.

She returned to the United States. Because Giana has an estranged relationship with her father and stepmother, the Department worked hard to find her mother.

Mental health counselors on-site at Orlando-Sanford International Airport assisted Giana, who was at times inconsolable. With law enforcement, the Department found the child's mother and reunited them.



Team effort by 3 DCF Regions unites family of 6



ACCESS specialist Claire Howzell explains the application process to quake survivor Gina Theodore (center) and her cousin, Myrlene Legroue (right).

Gina Latour Theodore could not help but weep as she sat in the Department's administrative offices in West Palm Beach. She was asleep inside her home in Port-au-Prince when the earthquake hit. Her five children – ages

7, 8, 11, 16 and 18 – had just returned home from school and were able to escape. But Gina could not open the door to the house. "The house cracked," said her cousin, Myrlene Legroue of Wellington, Fla., "but it did not fall."

Gina's children watched as most of the homes surrounding theirs fell. They slept outside, then traveled for hours on a bus, past miles of destruction. "They're traumatized," Myrlene said. "There were bodies everywhere. They have many friends that died."

Gina's husband and sev-

eral relatives stayed in Haiti, but three of their children are American. Gina and three children arrived at Orlando-Sanford International Airport. Her eldest daughter and another of her children flew into Homestead. When Gina and the children arrived in Orlando, Department employees there helped them with bus transportation to Palm Beach County, where Myrlene works in the emergency room of a local hospital. When the rest of the family arrived in Homestead, Department employees there helped them get to a friend's house. In Palm Beach County,

Department employees helped Gina apply for assistance for her American-born children.

Inside the DCF building, Gina feared there would be trembling aftershocks. But she managed to smile with gratitude for those who have helped her and her family.



Earthquake survivor Gina Theodore (left) reflects on the devastation in her homeland as her cousin helps her complete an application for benefits.

Helping others eases DCF employee's personal worry

Like many other Department of Children and Families employees on Jan. 12, 2010, Jean Lacroix came to work with a heavy heart. He shared his disbelief. He shared his worry. But he dared not share his fear...He simply could not consider the unthinkable about his mother. He had many friends and relatives in Haiti, but his primary concern was for his mother.

Days went by, filled with the frenzy of hearing bits and pieces in the news, vigilantly waiting by the phone, sleepless nights,

wishful thinking of hearing something, anything at all, about his mom. The weight of not knowing was starting to take its toll. At work, fellow Child Protective Investigators noticed that Jean had become more quiet, and although they were giving him their support and he continued to come to work, it was obvious that he was becoming even more frightened.

Then the e-mails started to flow – a call for volunteers, especially those employees who speak Creole. The flights were starting to come in, and the Depart-

ment was seeking volunteers to greet people, to help feed them, to transport, to console...to help! Jean was one of the first Creole-speaking Family Safety Child Protective Investigators in the Southern Region to answer the call. "If I am going to worry," he figured, "I might as well worry while helping others..."

Jean, a native of Haiti who has worked at the Department for the past nine years, finally received the much-awaited call. His mother had been found, and she was safe!

All of his colleagues celebrated the news and surrounded him with hugs of support. Although he still has not heard directly from his mom and is still worried, he has the bright light of hope!

Jean continues to work at the Homestead Air Reserve Base, greeting the young and the old in Creole, helping them understand what is going on and showing support. He continues to do so while waiting to hear his mother's voice, hoping to soon hold her in his arms.



DCF volunteers comfort survivors, go extra mile

Child protection employees were called to assist a father and son who survived the earthquake in Haiti. The toddler's mother died in the quake, and his father was transported with severe trauma, including a broken back and hip fractures. He was taken to a local hospital while Department volunteers cared for his 3-year-old son.

Department staff were able to find relatives in Miami and connect the young boy with family — allowing his dad to focus on his recovery.

A 17-year-old girl and her 3-month-old sibling arrived in Sanford without their parents. The teen said that their mother and father had not returned from the market the day of the quake. She feared they had been killed. The two siblings boarded a plane together. The Department was able to provide interim care for both and find relatives in

New York where they safely traveled on to family.

With much emphasis on children, Sanford operations quickly identified another very special population — senior citizens. These seniors were ages 90 and up. They were frail and wheelchair-stricken. Some suffered from dementia. Others had not had critical medications in days. Many provided contact information to loved ones, but often those contacts were either unsuccessful or incorrect.

DCF volunteer Ila Napier worked tirelessly, using any tool to track down potential family of those without identified loved ones. Ila treated the passengers with respect and dignity.

When two unaccompanied teens arrived from Haiti, they were able to provide child protection employees with information about loved ones in Lake

Worth, several hours away. Without hesitation, Child Protective Investigator Martin Pertosa drove the teens down south to unite the family as quickly as possible.

When an 11-year-old boy arrived in the country unaccompanied, he was granted a six-month temporary stay through customs. To enable the boy to stay with a particular adult, child protective workers expedited a home study, which prevented the child from entering foster care.

When an adult passenger missed her bus to Miami, the mistake was overwhelming for an already exhausted evacuee. Mental health counselors feared that waiting longer for the next bus would only exacerbate the situation. Roxanne Coon, who works in Human Resources, drove the stranded woman

to loved ones waiting in Miami, rather than making her wait again for the next bus.

An elderly man arrived weak in a wheelchair and waited quietly. He had severe cataracts that greatly impaired his vision. His daughter, who was traveling with two, young twin boys, was overwhelmed caring for the family and their arrangements.

Not having eaten well in days and tired of the snacks and candy provided by the Red Cross, he asked Central Region Communications Director Carrie Hoepfner for a sandwich. With no sandwich in sight, Carrie tracked down a can of tuna and a fork. Worried that he would decline the tuna, she made a deal: She'd sit with him and peel him an orange if he would eat the tuna. He agreed, and the two shared dinner on the floor of Gate 6.

DCF investigator helps tearful teen find family, reach new home

Thirteen-year-old "Mia," a United States citizen, was living in Haiti with her mother, father and 15-year-old brother when the earthquake destroyed their home. Her parents sent her to the United States to live in New York with her uncle. When Child Protective Investigations Supervisor Jenifer Hofferberth met

her, she was all alone in the airport. She had her school yearbook and began quietly flipping through the pages. As time passed, she began to point to the pictures in the yearbook and tell Jenifer who was alive, missing or deceased. As tears trickled down her cheeks, she said that when the earthquake hit, she

was in a friend's house and the home began to shake violently. As it shook harder and harder, they tried to escape, clinging to each other and to anything that was affixed to the walls. Eventually, they all made it out of the home safely.

Mia has no idea where her family is in Haiti now. She has no means to lo-

cate them. She was taken to the U.S. Embassy, then directly to the airport. Her brother will be going to the Dominican Republic, and her parents will do the best they can to survive.

Mia's uncle was contacted in New York, and she was safely delivered to the only family she has in the United States.

Florida Department of Children and Families
Circuit 15 – Palm Beach County



*Do you have constituent who's having problems
getting **food stamps**?*

Call
Michelle Bergen
(561) 837-5548
or e-mail
michelle_bergen@dcf.state.fl.us

*Do you have a constituent who has a question about
a **child abuse investigation**?*

Call
Cynthia Lawlor
(561) 837-5527
or e-mail
cindy_lawlor@dcf.state.fl.us

Here to help you...

United Way of Palm Beach County

Food banks; utilities and rent assistance; clothing;
shelters; parenting; job training; adult daycare;
counseling; mental health services; domestic violence
2-1-1

**Human Services Division of
Palm Beach County**

Payment of delinquent utilities, rent or mortgage;
food vouchers; transportation; emergency shelter for
adults; transitional housing; indigent burial/cremation
services; summer lunch for children
(561) 355-4775

Florida Department of Health

Health clinics; Social Security Disability; HIV/AIDS
Programs; Children's Medical Services
(561) 840-4500

**Agency for Health Care
Administration (AHCA)**

Medicaid, participating physicians
(561) 712-4400
(800) 226-5082

**Health Care District of
Palm Beach County**

Florida KidCare health insurance program; health
care access for the indigent/working poor
(866) 930-0035

Partnership for Prescription Assistance

Low or no-cost prescription aid
www.pparx.org
(888) 477-2669

Child Support Enforcement

(800) 622-5437 or (561) 355-2937

Social Security Office

1645 N. Congress Avenue, West Palm Beach
(800) 772-1213

We wish every family
success and happiness.

We want to help you
keep your family
HEALTHY and SAFE.

Our Mission

Protect the vulnerable,
promote strong and
economically self-sufficient
families, and advance personal
and family recovery
and resiliency.

www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

Food

Health Care

We're here
to help.

Housing



Safety

Clothing



To apply for food stamps, cash benefits or Medicaid, go to www.myflorida.com/accessflorida from any computer.

CHILD CARE

Family Central, Inc., provides resource and referral services for daycare and pre-K. Call (561) 514-3300. The Palm Beach County Health Department licenses and inspects child care facilities, as well as family home daycare. www.myflorida.com/childcare

Dear Neighbor:

Many times, a family might need a service and yet be unsure where to look for that service. Here is some information about programs and services that may benefit you or someone you love.

If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected by a parent or caregiver, please call the Florida Abuse Hotline.

1-800-96-ABUSE

You also may make a report online at www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report. For emergencies and immediate assistance, please call 911.

If you are a victim of **domestic violence** and need confidential counseling and legal assistance, please call **(800) 500-1119**.

If you have an emergency with family violence, please dial 911.

IN CRISIS?
Dial 2-1-1

HELP FOR PARENTS

Child and Family Connections is our contracted community agency working in partnership to provide services such as *emergency shelter care*, *foster care* and *adoption services* to children identified as "at-risk" for further abuse or neglect. This agency also is responsible for the recruitment and licensing of foster and adoptive parents. Call (561) 352-2500. The **Children's Home Society** offers a family program for *ungovernable teens*. Call (561) 868-4470, and a counselor will contact you within 24 hours.

Babies, Toddlers,
Preschoolers,
Pregnant Women

Healthy Beginnings can help all who need or want services to assure a healthy birth. For prenatal care, education, support and optional home visits for pregnant teens, please call (888) 634-7900.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE and MENTAL HEALTH

(561) 650-6858
www.dcf.state.fl.us/mentalhealth/sa/

Economic Self-Sufficiency

ACCESS Florida (Automated Community Connection to Economic Self-Sufficiency) provides easy access to food stamps, Medicaid, cash benefits and Refugee Assistance.

IT'S EASIER THAN EVER!

Apply from any computer!

You can apply online

anywhere,

anytime:



www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

By using the "My ACCESS Account" system, you can check your case status, report a change or complete a review of benefits online.



You also may visit a DCF Customer Service Center in Lake Worth or Belle Glade, or visit one of the many community agencies that are part of the DCF ACCESS Network. To find the one nearest you, call 211.

The Department of Children and Families complies with state and federal nondiscrimination laws and policies that prohibit discrimination based on age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, or sex. It is unlawful to retaliate against individuals or groups on the basis of their participation in a complaint of discrimination or on the basis of their opposition to discriminatory practices.

If you require Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, please notify

Michelle Bergen at michelle_bergen@dcf.state.fl.us or (561) 837-5078.

INTERNET LINKS

ACCESS FLORIDA

www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

CHILD or ELDER ABUSE

www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/

SUBSTANCE ABUSE/MENTAL HEALTH

www.dcf.state.fl.us/samh

REFUGEE SERVICES

www.dcf.state.fl.us/refugee

FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS

Adoption or Foster Care

1-561-352-2500

Adult and Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-962-2873

Agency for Health Care Administration

1-561-496-5900

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

1-561-837-5564

Child and Family Connections

1-561-352-2500

Child Care Licensing

1-561-840-4500

Child Support Enforcement

1-800-622-5437

Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-500-1119

Food Stamp Fraud Hotline

1-866-762-2237



Palm Beach County Circuit 15

A guide to DCF Programs serving the people of Palm Beach County

MISSION:

The Florida Department of Children and Families shall protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency.

Circuit 15 Headquarters
111 South Sapodilla Avenue
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
(561) 837-5078

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

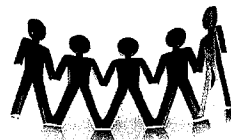
(561) 837-5410

Services are provided for frail, elderly and disabled adults who are or are at risk of becoming victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and vulnerable adults who need assistance to remain in their own homes.

To report abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation of an elderly or disabled adult, call:

**1-800-96-ABUSE
1-800-962-2873**

Adult Protective Investigators respond to all calls accepted by the hotline. Law enforcement also gets involved when reports allege a criminal act has been committed against a vulnerable adult. In-home supportive services, community-based services and state programs are available. These programs may include: homemaker helpers, personal care, counseling, companionship, transportation, legal assistance and home-delivered meals.



FAMILY SAFETY

To report abuse, neglect or abandonment of a child, call the 24-hour, toll-free hotline or go online:

**1-800-96-ABUSE
1-800-962-2873**



www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/

All reports to the Florida Abuse Hotline are confidential.

All child abuse investigations are investigated jointly with law enforcement within 24 hours after a report is accepted at the hotline. The Department recognizes the importance of family and will provide an array of services to help keep children safe in their own homes.

We recognize that most families want to be competent caregivers and providers for their children. Children may be removed from parental custody only when the child's welfare cannot be adequately safeguarded without such removal. The Department also has partnerships with local community child safety agencies to assist with relative care and to provide foster care, independent living and adoption services.

**Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-500-1119**

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH

(561) 650-6860

This program helps individuals at risk of substance abuse and/or mental health-related issues to live, work, learn and participate fully in their community. We do this by building resilience, aiding personal recovery and promoting self-sufficiency.

The Department contracts with agencies throughout Palm Beach County to provide an array of crisis and treatment services. If you or someone you know is in need of substance abuse or mental health services, please call the local SAMH Program Office at (561) 650-6860 or call 211 for Information and Referral. For emergency services:

Mobile Crisis
(Northern County) (561) 383-5777
(South County) (561) 637-2105
(Western County) (561) 992-8707

www.dcf.state.fl.us/samh

REFUGEE SERVICES

This program offers a variety of services to refugees, asylees, Cuban/Haitian entrants and victims of human trafficking.

www.dcf.state.fl.us/refugee

Do you qualify for food stamps?

Find out by completing the
prescreening tool at
www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

Apply online
for



food stamps

cash assistance



Medicaid

www.myflorida.com/accessflorida



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If you require Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, please notify Michelle Bergen at michelle_bergen@dcf.state.fl.us or (561) 837-5078.

Already receiving food stamps?
You can now set up your own



and see detailed information about your
Public Assistance case.

You can see:

- ✓ Your current benefit amount
- ✓ Date benefits will be available
- ✓ Date your next review is due
- ✓ Date of next appointment
- ✓ What verification is needed
and
Print a Temporary Medicaid Card.

Just go to:
myflorida.com/accessflorida

Click on **My ACCESS Account**
(Check Case Status
or Benefit Information)

**If you need help
setting up your account
for the first time, go to:**

www.dcf.state.fl.us/admin/training.shtml

and click on:
"My ACCESS Account Status Training"

Food stamps
can help fill your
grocery bag.



It's *easier than ever* to...
See if you're eligible.
Apply for benefits.
Check your existing case.

No waiting in line!
No busy signal!

**Go online
anywhere
anytime**



www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

These Community Partners can help you complete an application for benefits.

Southern Palm Beach County

Guatemalan Maya Center
110 North "F" Street, Lake Worth
Spanish spoken (561) 547-0085

Coalition for Independent Living Options
6800 Forest Hill Boulevard
West Palm Beach *Any disability*
(561) 966-4288 *By appointment*

Community Caring Center
145 NE 4th Avenue, Boynton Beach
Spanish spoken (561) 364-9501 *M, W, F 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

Marie Louise Cancer Foundation
112 SE 23rd Avenue, Boynton Beach
Creole spoken (561) 752-2122 *M-F 9 a.m.-6 p.m.*
By appointment

Lantana Elementary Beacon Center
710 W. Ocean Avenue, Lantana
(561) 202-0337 *By appointment*

Mt. Olive Baptist Church
40 NW 4th Avenue, Delray Beach
(561) 276-5196 *By appointment*

Palm Beach County Division of Human Services
225 S. Congress Avenue, Delray Beach
(561) 274-3130 *M-F 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.*
Appointment suggested

American Care
818 S. Dixie Highway, Lake Worth
(561) 296-4400 *M-F 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.*

Bridges Beacon Center at Highland Elementary
500 Highland Avenue, Lake Worth (561) 202-0509
Spanish spoken M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m. By appointment

Adopt-A-Family
1712 Second Avenue North, Lake Worth
(561) 253-1361 *Wed., Thurs. 9 a.m.-6 p.m.*

Oasis Compassion Agency
4888 10th Ave., Greenacres (561) 967-4066
Spanish spoken M-Th 9 a.m.-1 p.m., after 1 p.m. by appt.; Sat. 9-12



Christians Reaching Out to Society (CROS) at Pompey Park
141 S.W. 12th Ave., Delray Beach
(561) 308-7980 *By appointment only*

Delray Beach Prosperity Center
141 S.W. 12th Street, Delray Beach
(561) 243-7633 *M-Th 9 a.m.-5 p.m. By appointment*

Central Palm Beach County

Christian Caring Center
1119 S. Flagler Drive, West Palm Beach
(561) 650-7400

Family Central
3111 S. Dixie Highway, Suite 222, West Palm Beach
(561) 514-3315 *M-F By appointment*

Esereh Youth & Family Center
2200 N. Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach
Creole spoken (561) 357-5630 *By appointment*

Interamerican Community Action, Inc.
2393 S. Congress Ave., West Palm Beach
Spanish and Creole spoken M-F 2 p.m.-7 p.m.

Mangonia Residence
2210 N. Australian Avenue, West Palm Beach
(561) 651-7050 *M-F 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*

Northmore Elementary Beacon Center
4111 N. Terrace Dr., Portable 9, West Palm Beach
(561) 840-3106 *M-F 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. By appointment*

Vickers House South - City of West Palm Beach
3801 Georgia Avenue, West Palm Beach
(561) 804-4975 *M-F 1 p.m.-5 p.m.*

Vickers House - City of West Palm Beach
811 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd., West Palm Beach
Spanish spoken (561) 804-4970 *M-W 9 a.m.-12 p.m.*

Community Justice Service Center
2107 Tamarind Avenue, West Palm Beach
(561) 659-4054 *M-Th 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Fri. 12-4:30 p.m.*

Westgate Beacon Center
1545 Loxahatchee Drive, West Palm Beach
(561) 684-7139 *By appointment*

Public Defenders Office
421 3rd Avenue, West Palm Beach
(561) 355-7531 *M-F 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. By appointment*

Pleasant City Multicultural Center
501 21st Street, West Palm Beach
(561) 655-7581 *Tues. only, by appointment*

Palm Beach County Division of Human Services
810 Datura Street, Ste 300, West Palm Beach
(561) 355-4777 *M-F 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.*

Northern Palm Beach County

Appointment suggested
Florida Resource Center for Women
1923 Broadway, Riviera Beach
(561) 848-8383 *By appointment only*

Riviera Beach Family Resource Center
1901 Broadway, Riviera Beach
(561) 840-1888 *M, Th, F 9 a.m.-1 p.m. By appointment*

West Riviera Elementary Beacon Center
1057 W. 6th Street, Riviera Beach
(561) 494-1934

M-F, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. By appointment

City of Riviera Beach Drug Court
2051 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Ste 116, Riviera Beach (561) 840-4824
M-F, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Appointment suggested

Christians Reaching Out to Society (CROS) Food Pantry
2001 W. Blue Heron Blvd. Riviera Beach (561) 312-8445
M,W,F 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. By appt.

Knowledge Is Power
4401 Garden Avenue, West Palm Beach (561) 249-1023
By appointment

Town of Jupiter
210 Military Trail, Jupiter (561) 741-2278 *By appointment*

Western Palm Beach County

Glades Initiative
141 SE Ave. C, Belle Glade (561) 996-3310
Spanish and Creole spoken M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

American Care
1301 South Main Street, Belle Glade (561) 992-4357
Spanish Spoken M-F 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Pahokee Elementary Beacon Center
560 E. Main Place, Bldg. 7, Pahokee (561) 924-3008
M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Lighthouse Cafe
401 S.W. "B" Place, Belle Glade (561) 993-3435
By appointment





Throughout Palm Beach County, Substance Abuse and Mental Health services are available for *all* income levels.

The Circuit 15 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Office contracts with the following organizations to provide services to the community at little or no cost to those who meet the financial criteria:

Substance Abuse Services for ADULTS

- Center for Family Services
(561) 616-1222
- Comprehensive Alcoholism Rehabilitation Programs
(561) 848-1578
- Drug Abuse Foundation of Palm Beach County
(561) 278-0000
- Gratitude House
(561) 833-6826
- Housing Partnership
(561) 841-3500
- Oakwood Center
(561) 993-8080
- Wayside House
(561) 278-0055

Substance Abuse Services for CHILDREN

- Comprehensive Alcoholism Rehabilitation Programs
(561) 848-1578
- Drug Abuse Foundation of Palm Beach County
(561) 278-0000
- Drug Abuse Treatment Association
(561) 743-1034
- Oakwood Center
(561) 993-8080

Help is available.

8.3 million children
live with
at least one parent
who is in need of treatment for alcohol- or drug-
dependency.



1 in 4 children
under the age of 18
is living in a home where
alcoholism or alcohol
abuse is a
fact of daily life.

Call 211 for immediate referral!



For information on
available programs,
call the
Substance Abuse
and
Mental Health Program Office
at (561) 650-6860.

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If you require Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations,
please notify

Cathy Claud at cathy_claud@dcf.state.fl.us or (561) 650-6831.

Substance Abuse

It's a Family Affair



For
immediate
help,
call 211



**Circuit 15
Palm Beach County**

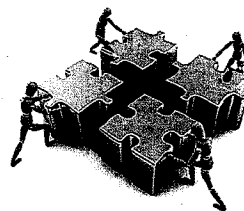
We're here to help you.

Alcoholism and drug addiction take a toll on everyone in the household.

Children of addiction are at significantly greater risk for mental illness or emotional problems, such as depression or anxiety; physical health problems; and learning problems, including difficulty with cognitive and verbal skills, conceptual reasoning and abstract thinking.

In addition, children whose parents abuse alcohol or drugs are almost three times more likely to be verbally, physically or sexually abused; and four times more likely than other children to be neglected.

Although some people are able to recover from alcoholism without help, most alcoholics need assistance. With treatment and support, many individuals are able to STOP DRINKING and REBUILD THEIR LIVES.



Alcoholism

Alcoholism, also known as "alcohol dependence," is a disease that includes four symptoms:

- Craving: a strong need, or compulsion, to drink. (This need can be as strong as the need for food or water.)
- Loss of control: the inability to limit one's drinking on any given occasion.
- Physical dependence: withdrawal symptoms (such as nausea, sweating, shakiness and anxiety) occur when alcohol use is stopped after a period of heavy drinking.
- Tolerance: the need to drink greater amounts of alcohol in order to "get high."



Prescription Drug Abuse

Prescription medications, such as pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants and sedatives, can be very useful treatment tools. But sometimes, people do not take them as directed and may become addicted.



Most people who take prescription medications use them responsibly. However, the inappropriate or nonmedical use of prescription medications can lead to addiction, characterized by compulsive drug-seeking and use.

Codependency

"Codependency" describes the responses and behaviors people develop from living with an alcoholic or substance abuser. Codependency

describes people who have a strong desire to control people around them, including spouses, children or co-workers. Codependents believe they are somehow more capable than others, that others need their direction or suggestions to fulfill tasks they are responsible for completing. They feel compassion for people who may be hurting and feel they should be the one to help. Codependent people give of their time, emotions, finances and other resources. They have a very difficult time saying "no" to any requests made of them.

Ask yourself:

Do you find yourself making decisions based on other people's opinions?

Is it important to you that people like you and want to be your friend?

Do you have a strong desire to help others, but deep down, you know you do it so that they will like or love you?

Do you seem to notice everyone else's problems and have a need to tell them what you think they should do to solve them?

Do you feel anxious, angry or upset when people don't do things you want them to do or don't do things the way you want them to do them?

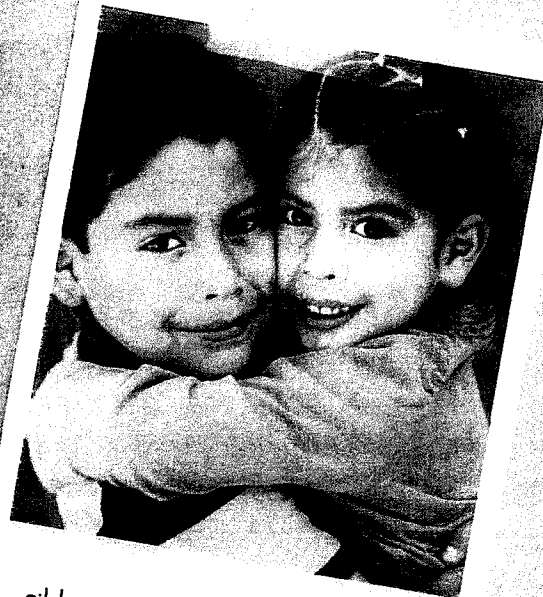
Do you find yourself in relationships where you do all of the giving and the other person does all of the taking?

Are you involved in activities that demand all of your time and energy, and you are neglecting your family or yourself?

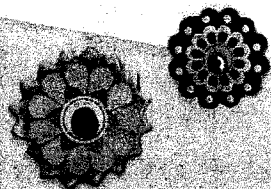
**Quick!
Confidential!**

If you have been referred to a Child Protection Agency, ask your caseworker for a referral to the Child Welfare Substance Abuse Network for quick, confidential access to substance abuse services.

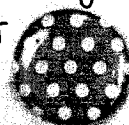
For immediate referral, call 211.
For more information on available programs.



siblings want to stay together



*visit www.adoptflorida.org
1-800-96-adopt*



CONTACT YOUR LOCAL ADOPTION RECRUITER:

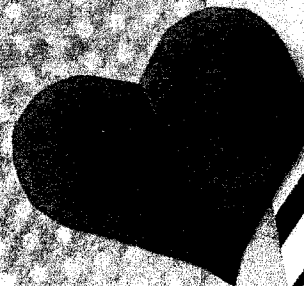
(561) 868-4300



EXPLORE 
ADOPTION
FINDING FAMILIES FOR FLORIDA'S KIDS



*the public
adoption option.*



We believe there are loving, caring families willing to open their homes and their hearts to Florida's children – enough for each and every child in state care to find a forever family.

Your family may be considering adoption for a number of reasons. Families without children may want to experience the joy of sharing life with a child. Some families with grown children find their homes empty and too quiet. Others want to help children in a meaningful way.

Once you meet the children and sibling groups available for adoption, your heart will be touched by their wish to experience love and permanency within a family.

Florida's public adoption system offers unique benefits, including a legally secure process, financial assistance and children waiting right now for homes.

Enjoy your journey – it may lead to a new life with a wonderful child, a new family and some very special memories.

ABOUT FLORIDA'S KIDS

On any given day, about 850 Florida children are looking for a family to love them and a permanent place to call home. They come from varied backgrounds, circumstances, races and ethnicities. While some have specific medical, physical or emotional issues requiring special care, many do not. Some are part of sibling groups that want very much to stay together as part of a new family. In all cases, these children's parental rights have been terminated, and they will not be returned to their birth parents.

BENEFITS OF ADOPTING FLORIDA'S KIDS

Adoption provides unique opportunities to change children's lives and enrich the life of the adoptive parent or family that welcomes them. Adopting one of Florida's children from community-based care offers special benefits that make the public adoption option worth considering.

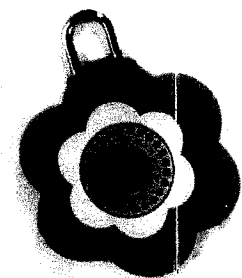
- **AFFORDABILITY.**
While private forms of adoption can cost upwards of \$30,000, adopting one of Florida's children through the public adoption system **costs little or nothing.**
- **LEGALLY SECURE.**
Because Florida's children are not eligible for adoption until a court has already terminated the parental rights of their birth parents, **this form of adoption is very secure.**
- **MONTHLY FINANCIAL SUPPORT.**
Families that adopt one of Florida's kids in care often receive a **monthly subsidy** to help offset ongoing costs.
- **HEALTH CARE.**
All of the children who receive a monthly subsidy are eligible to receive **health care** through the Medicaid program until age 18.
- **COLLEGE TUITION.**
Florida's children adopted from community-based care are eligible for **free tuition** at any state university, community college or vocational school in Florida.
- **A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT.**
Other parents who have adopted Florida's children offer a wealth of support and information for new adoptive parents, and some communities even maintain a 24-hour helpline.



SEARCH FOR A CHILD

Prospective adoptive parents are matched with children in care in a variety of ways. Local, community-based adoption organizations host special picnics, parties and events where prospective parents can meet these children. Once you have completed the required adoption training program and home study, you will be invited to attend these events.

In addition, you may search a statewide Web site of all the children available for adoption who haven't yet found a match. This search feature allows you to choose the characteristics of the child you're looking for and then explore the matches. Search now at **www.adoptflorida.org.**



THE ROAD TO ADOPTION

Although the process may vary slightly depending on where you live, the road to adoption normally includes an orientation session, an in-depth training program to help you decide if adoption is right for you and your family, a home study and a background check. This process usually can be completed **within nine months.**

- 1. CALL**
Florida's Adoption Information Center will put you in touch with the people in your area who will help you begin the adoption process. Call **1-800-96-ADOPT.**
- 2. ORIENTATION**
Orientation is a 1 to 2 hour session that will give you a chance to meet and talk with experienced adoptive parents and counselors who will provide an **overview of the entire adoption process** from start to finish.
- 3. PREPARATION COURSE**
Prospective parents must complete a 24 - 30 hour training and preparation course that provides an opportunity to assess yourself and your family and to **explore and learn** about adoption issues.
- 4. HOME STUDY**
The purpose of the home study is to make sure you can provide a child with a **safe and secure home.** Background checks will be conducted on all adults living in the household and you will be required to supply references.
- 5. APPROVAL**
All this information is gathered into a home study packet and sent for approval to an adoption specialist who will contact you.

ADOPTIVE PARENTS: DO I QUALIFY?

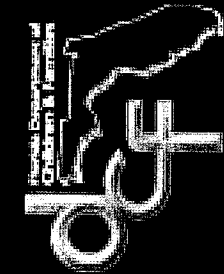
To be eligible to adopt one of Florida's children, you may be married or single, already a parent or never a parent, in your 60s or in your 20s, an apartment renter or a homeowner, a person of modest means or wealth. If you have the ability to love a child, to provide the basics for a child and to make a life-long commitment, you can be an adoptive parent.

HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE?

Call the Florida Adoption Information Center at **1-800-96-ADOPT** or **1-800-962-3678.** They will put you in touch with the local adoption experts who can help you start the process. Or visit **adoptflorida.org.** To see children awaiting adoption, visit the Heart Gallery display in your community or click the Heart Gallery link on **adoptflorida.org.**



it's never too late to find a forever family



Demystifying DCF

What does the Department of Children and Families do in Palm Beach County?

Family Safety

- Child Abuse Investigations
- Foster Care
- Adoptions

Adult Protective Services

Food Stamps

Substance Abuse Treatment

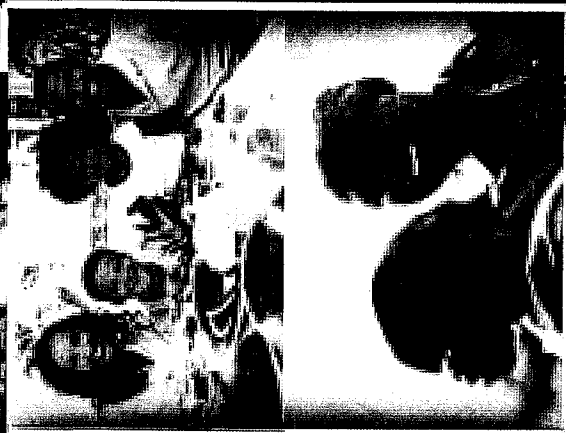
Mental Health Treatment

Refugee Services

Call 561-837-5686

To learn more about DCF
or schedule a presentation

COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS





Child Abuse

Look for the signs

The child may have unexplained:

- bruises, welts, cuts or other injuries
- broken bones
- burns

A child experiencing physical abuse may:

- seem withdrawn or depressed
- seem afraid to go home or may run away
- shy away from physical contact
- be aggressive
- wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries

The child may have:

- torn, stained or bloody underwear
- trouble walking or sitting
- pain or itching in genital area
- a sexually transmitted disease

A child experiencing sexual abuse may:

- have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively
- fear a particular person
- seem withdrawn or depressed
- gain or lose weight suddenly
- shy away from physical contact
- run away from home

The child may have:

- unattended medical needs
- little or no supervision at home
- poor hygiene
- appear underweight

A child experiencing neglect may:

- be frequently tired or hungry
- steal food
- appear overly needy for adult attention

Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

Show that you understand and believe what the child tells you. Encourage, but don't pressure him/her to talk. Ask open ended questions.

Tell the child he/she did the right thing by coming to you. Stress that he/she is not to blame. Let the child know that you want to help.

This can frighten the child or prevent him/her from telling you more. Do not talk negatively about the suspected abuser in front of the child.

Document your conversation as soon as you can. If possible, write down the child's exact words.

Never assume someone else will report the abuse. The sooner it's reported, the sooner the child and their family can be helped.

WHO MUST REPORT ABUSE?

Doctors	Police Officers
Nurses	Child Care Workers
Social Workers	Any Witnesses

Any/All School Personnel

Call or Report it online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>

The Power to Prevent Elder Abuse Is in Your Hands



Elder Abuse. Neglect. Exploitation.
It happens to **your** friends, neighbors and family.

To Learn More, Call:

1-800-96-ELDER
(1-800-963-5337)

To Report Abuse, Call:

1-800-96-ABUSE
(1-800-962-2873)

WHAT IS THE REFUGEE SERVICES PROGRAM?

Refugee Services is a state program that coordinates and oversees many of the services provided to refugees in Florida. Refugee Services is a program within Florida's **Department of Children and Families**. The mission of Refugee Services is to help refugees resettle effectively and achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible.

Florida's Refugee Services program is 100% federally funded. Local community-based and faith-based organizations, as well as governmental agencies, are awarded contract funds to provide services to refugees in local communities.

Initial services focus on employment, short-term cash and medical assistance, and adult education, including both English language training and vocational programs.

Additional support services include: Child care, Youth and Family Services, Employment Related Immigration Services, Interpretation and Integration Assistance.



WHO ARE THE REFUGEES IN FLORIDA?

Florida is the nation's largest refugee resettlement state.

Between 2004 and 2008, Florida became home to more than 140,000 refugees from many different countries, including Cuba, Haiti, Colombia, Burma, Iraq, Venezuela, Bhutan, Vietnam, Ukraine and Burundi.

During 2008, over 26,000 refugees settled in Florida.

More than **80%** of these refugees arrived to Florida from Cuba.

Children 18 years of age and younger comprise **25%** of refugee arrivals to Florida.

While a majority of the refugees who resettle in Florida live in Miami-Dade county, there are significant refugee populations in Broward, Palm Beach, Orange, Duval, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Collier and other counties in Florida.

WHO IS A REFUGEE?

A **Refugee** is someone who has fled his or her country because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion, and has been granted refugee status in a country of asylum. The United States offers resettlement to a limited number of refugees after all efforts to enable them to return home or settle permanently in the country of first asylum have failed. The United States extends eligibility for refugee services to:

Cuban and Haitian Entrants - Individuals from Cuba or Haiti who may have different immigration statuses.

Asylees - Individuals who leave their home country for reasons similar to those of refugees, but travel to the United States on their own and, once here, apply for asylum protection.

Victims of Human Trafficking - Victims of severe forms of human trafficking certified by the Department of Health and Human Services are eligible for benefits and services to the same extent as refugees.



WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

To learn more about **Refugee Services** in Florida:

- ⇒ Visit the web at: **www.dcf.state.fl.us/refugee/**
- ⇒ Contact your local **Refugee Services Community Liaison** at 561.837.5022
- ⇒ Contact the **Tallahassee office** at 850.488.3791
- ⇒ Attend a **Refugee Task Force** meeting in your area. These meetings bring together national, state and local agencies that provide direct services to refugees and other governmental and private agencies and individuals engaged with refugees. You may obtain information about the next meeting by contacting your local Community Liaison

**REFUGEE SERVICES & PROVIDER
INFORMATION FOR
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

ADULT EDUCATION

Palm Beach County Public Schools
C/O Gold Coast Community
High School
4260 Westgate Avenue, Room 209
West Palm Beach, Florida 33409
561.687.6371

CHILD CARE

Family Central, Inc.
3111 South Dixie Highway
Suite 222
West Palm Beach, Florida 33405
561.514.3332

**EMPLOYMENT RELATED
IMMIGRATION SERVICES**

St. Thomas University
Human Rights Institute
2112 South Congress Avenue
Palm Springs, Florida 33406
561.472.2346

EMPLOYMENT

Youth Co-Op, Inc.
2112 S. Congress Avenue
Suite 102
Palm Springs, Florida 33406
561.964.1693

HAITIAN FAMILY

Church World Service
220 Congress Park Drive
Suite 200
Delray Beach, Florida 33445
561.202.9027

YOUTH ands FAMILY

Gulf Coast Jewish
Family Services, Inc.
220 Congress Park Drive
Suite 200
Delray Beach, Florida 33445
561.266.6655



Making Progress in Child Safety and Permanency in Palm Beach County

- **Fewer children are being removed from their families**, with 2.35 removals per 1,000 children in April 2010, compared with 3.13 removals per 1,000 children in December 2006.
- **Fewer children are being placed into foster care**, with 836 children in foster care as of July 2010 compared with 1,509 in December 2006 – a 45 percent reduction.
- **75 percent of children are reunified with their families** within 12 months of their removal.
- **More children are being adopted from foster care**, over 480 children have been adopted in the last three years in Palm Beach County; since privatization of child welfare over 1,000 adoptive finalizations have occurred.
- Child protective investigators, quality assurance staff, Children's Legal Services attorneys and Child and Family Connections **collaborate**, reviewing the best **family-centered practices** in child welfare, assessing our decision-making and addressing possible gaps in services in our community.

Getting Involved in Addressing Child Abuse & Neglect in Your Community

You can help by becoming a foster parent or adoptive parent, if you have an open heart, patience and the willingness to parent a child who has experienced abuse or neglect and needs a safe, loving home. You will receive the training and support to prepare you for caring for a child experiencing the trauma of separation from family and friends. Foster and adoptive children are eligible for many services, including counseling and medical care. Or you may want to donate your time or services to help meet the other needs of children and families in your community. For more information, please contact:

Child and Family Connections, Inc., the community-based care lead agency, at 561-352-2500, <http://www.cfcpcb.org/>

or

Florida Department of Children and Families, 15th Circuit office, 561-837-5078, www.state.fl.us/cf_web/ or www.adoptflorida.com

Supporting Strong Families and Safe Children in Your Community



Every child in Florida needs and deserves a family that provides safety, permanence and the opportunity to participate in the normal activities of childhood. Your community and your state are investing in new strategies that protect children who are abused, neglected or at risk of abuse or neglect, and that strengthen and support families.

By providing individualized and immediate services to both children and parents, we are keeping more families together and safely reducing the number of children who enter, and remain in, foster care. Our caseworkers are using family-centered practice, which respects parents' love for and commitment to their children, and the strength and potential of families to confront and overcome challenges to provide safe homes for their children.

The number of children in foster care in Palm Beach County was safely reduced by 45 percent from December 2006 to July 2010. The number of children in foster care decreased from 1,509 to 836, which means 604 fewer children in your community experiencing multiple moves from foster home to foster home and school to school. Fewer children were separated from their parents, and more children exited foster care to be reunited with their parents. Additionally, more local children who were unable to remain safely at home joined permanent families through adoption or guardianship with relatives.

In Palm Beach County, Child and Family Connections, Inc., is the community-based care agency that serves children and families. Child and Family Connections works in partnership with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), the lawyers, guardians ad litem and judges, local law enforcement and providers of services including substance abuse and mental health treatment to improve child and family safety and well-being in your community.

From December 2006 to May 2010, Florida has safely reduced the number of children in foster care by 37 percent. As a result, nearly 11,000 fewer Florida children are in foster care. With assistance from Casey Family Programs, Florida's goal is to safely reduce the number of children in foster care by 50 percent by 2012. Reducing the number of children who enter, and remain in, foster care has lasting, positive effects on the lives of children and families in Palm Beach County. Research has shown that the majority of children and youth who grow up in foster care and do not achieve permanency with a family are more likely to experience homelessness, teenage pregnancy, unemployment and incarceration. When DCF leaders asked current and former foster youth for their advice, these young people overwhelmingly said they wished to remain, or be reunited, with their parents and siblings when that option was safe and available.



**We know it's not easy
keeping food on the table...
Food Stamps can help.**

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,805
2	\$2,429
3	\$3,052
4	\$3,675
5	\$4,299
6	\$4,922
7	\$5,545
8	\$6,169

What does a Food Stamp look like?

Like a Debit Card.



Customer benefits are
deposited into
personal accounts monthly.
When it's time to pay
for your groceries,
just swipe
and enter your
personal PIN code.
It's *that* easy.

How can I find out if I might be eligible for benefits?

Use the Department's quick and easy ***prescreening tool*** available at:
www.myflorida.com/accessflorida.

Then apply online at the same Web site, or
go to a Department of Children and Families Service Center or
an ACCESS Community Partner location listed on the back of this flier.



The Department of Children and Families complies with state and federal nondiscrimination laws and policies that prohibit discrimination based on age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, or sex. It is unlawful to retaliate against individuals or groups on the basis of their participation in a complaint of discrimination or on the basis of their opposition to discriminatory practices.

*If you require Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, please notify
Michelle Bergen at michelle_bergen@dcf.state.fl.us or (561) 837-5078.*



Community Partners

Southern Palm Beach County

Guatemalan Maya Center

110 North "F" Street, Lake Worth *Spanish spoken* (561) 547-0085

Coalition for Independent Living Options

6800 Forest Hill Boulevard West Palm Beach
Any disability (561) 966-4288 *By appointment*

Community Caring Center

145 NE 4th Avenue, Boynton Beach
Spanish spoken (561) 364-9501 *M, W, F 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

Marie Louise Cancer Foundation

112 SE 23rd Avenue, Boynton Beach
Creole spoken (561) 752-2122 *M-F 9 a.m.-6 p.m. By appointment*

Haitian Citizen United Task Force

1012 S. Dixie Highway, Lake Worth
Spanish spoken (561) 255-4445 *M-F 10 a.m.-5 p.m.*

Lantana Elementary Beacon Center

710 W. Ocean Avenue, Lantana (561) 202-0337 *By appointment*

Oasis Compassion Agency

4888 10th Ave., Greenacres (561) 967-4066 *Spanish spoken*
M-Th 9 a.m.-1 p.m., after 1 p.m. by appointment; Sat. 9-12

Mt. Olive Baptist Church

40 NW 4th Avenue, Delray Beach (561) 276-5196 *By appointment*

Palm Beach County Division of Human Services

225 S. Congress Avenue, Delray Beach
(561) 274-3130 *M-F 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Appointment suggested*

American Care

818 S. Dixie Highway, Lake Worth (561) 296-4400 *M-F 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.*

Bridges Beacon Center at Highland Elementary

500 Highland Avenue, Lake Worth
(561) 202-0558 *M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m. By appointment*

Adopt-A-Family

1712 Second Avenue North, Lake Worth
(561) 253-1361 *Wed., Thurs. 9 a.m.-6 p.m.*

Christians Reaching Out to Society (CROS) at Pompey Park

141 S.W. 12th Ave., Delray Beach
(561) 308-7980 *By appointment only*

Delray Beach Prosperity Center

141 S.W. 12th Street, Delray Beach
(561) 243-7633 *M-Th 9 a.m.-5 p.m. By appointment*

Central and Northern Palm Beach County

Christian Caring Center

1119 S. Flagler Drive, West Palm Beach (561) 650-7400

Family Central

3111 S. Dixie Highway, Suite 222, West Palm Beach
(561) 514-3315 *M-F By appointment*

Esereh Youth & Family Center

2200 N. Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach
Creole spoken (561) 357-5630 *By appointment*

Mangonia Residence

2210 N. Australian Avenue, West Palm Beach
(561) 651-7050 *M-F 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*

Northmore Elementary Beacon Center

4111 N. Terrace Dr., Portable 9, West Palm Beach
(561) 840-3106 *M-F 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. By appointment*

Vickers House South - City of West Palm Beach

3801 Georgia Avenue, West Palm Beach
(561) 804-4975 *M-F 1 p.m.-5 p.m.*

Vickers House - City of West Palm Beach

811 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd., West Palm Beach
Spanish spoken (561) 804-4970 *M-W 9 a.m.-12 p.m.*

Community Justice Service Center

2107 Tamarind Avenue, West Palm Beach
(561) 659-4054 *M-Th 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Fri. 12-4:30 p.m.*

Westgate Beacon Center

1545 Loxahatchee Drive, West Palm Beach
(561) 684-7139 *By appointment*

Public Defenders Office

421 3rd Avenue, West Palm Beach
(561) 355-7531 *M-F 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. By appointment*

Pleasant City Multicultural Center

501 21st Street, West Palm Beach
(561) 655-7581 *Tues. only, by appointment*

Palm Beach County Division of Human Services

810 Datura Street, Ste 300, West Palm Beach
(561) 355-4777 *M-F 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Appointment suggested*

Interamerican Community Action, Inc.

2393 S. Congress Ave., West Palm Beach
Spanish and Creole spoken M-F 2 p.m.—7 p.m.

Florida Resource Center for Women

1923 Broadway, Riviera Beach (561) 848-8383 *By appointment*

Riviera Beach Family Resource Center

1901 Broadway, Riviera Beach
(561) 840-1888 *M, Th, F 9 a.m.-1 p.m. By appointment*

West Riviera Elementary Beacon Center

1057 W. 6th Street, Riviera Beach (561) 494-1934
M-F, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. By appointment

City of Riviera Beach Drug Court

2051 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Ste 116, Riviera Beach
(561) 840-4824 *M-F, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Appointment suggested*

Christians Reaching Out to Society (CROS) Food Pantry

2001 W. Blue Heron Boulevard, Riviera Beach
(561) 312-8445 *M,W,F 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. By appointment*

Town of Jupiter

210 Military Trail, Jupiter (561) 741-2278 *By appointment*

Knowledge Is Power

4401 Garden Ave., West Palm Beach (561) 249-1023 *By appointment*

Western Palm Beach County

Glades Initiative

141 SE Ave. C, Belle Glade (561) 996-3310
Spanish and Creole spoken M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

American Care

1301 South Main St., Belle Glade (561) 992-4357
Spanish spoken M-F 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Pahokee Elementary Beacon Center

560 E. Main Place, Bldg. 7, Pahokee (561) 924-3008
M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Lighthouse Cafe

401 S.W. "B" Place, Belle Glade (561) 993-3435
By appointment