

# Partnerships In Parenting

The Children's Network of Southwest Florida is committed to working with the community in building and maintaining a child protective system that promotes safety and stability for children and their families.

Summer '07

## Foster Parent Appreciation Month



NADEREH SALIM, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER INTERACTS WITH FOSTER PARENTS AT LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA'S MONTHLY SUPPORT MEETING.

Dear Foster Families:

In May, we celebrated Foster Parent Appreciation Month and The Children's Network of Southwest Florida would now like to take this opportunity to recognize all of our wonderful foster parents. Being a foster family is not easy: it takes patience, kindness, dedication and the desire to help children who are in need of a place to call home. It takes special people, who often disrupt their own lives and families, to take a child that has suffered abuse and neglect into their homes, offering love and security that is so important to the child's survival. We realize that you are these special people.

This year we have partnered with the Florida Firecats to offer you a small token of appreciation for your dedication to the children. We were pleased to be able to offer you and your family two tickets to the Florida Firecats game, on June 16th at Germain Arena. We hope that you were able to enjoy a night out as parents to celebrate all that you do for children in need.

You have been constant in your commitment and given so much. We want you to know that we will continue to work hard for you and support you in every way. Thank you for opening your hearts and your homes to the abused and neglected children in Southwest Florida.

Warmest regards,  
Nadereh Salim, CEO

### Parent Planner

June-July 2007	August 2007	September 2007
See scheduled trainings within newsletter.	1 <sup>st</sup> week Back to School Campaign, Separate flyer will be sent home.	29 <sup>th</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Walk to Prevent Child Abuse at Pelican Preserve in Fort Myers

A Publication of the Children's Network of Southwest Florida

[www.childnetwfl.org](http://www.childnetwfl.org)

# Welcome New Foster Parents

The Children's Network of Southwest Florida would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to the 22 families who were newly licensed between March 2007 and June 1, 2007. In addition, we would like to continue to recognize Lutheran Services Florida, Family Preservation Services of Florida, and Florida Baptist Children's Home who worked hard to complete this challenging task. Great job everyone. We look forward to continued success!

## ***Lutheran Services Florida***

Anthony and Victoria Miller  
Abraham and Janet Batista  
Matthew and Suzane Rizzo  
Selma Bailey  
Magda Matheus  
Brian and Francis Cassatt  
Robert and Brenda White  
John and Carmen West  
Daniel and Liza Robinson  
Constance Knight  
Dee Hardin  
Tim and Beth Cherry

## ***Florida Baptist Children's Home***

Michael and Lynn Dimoff  
Rick and Christine Jacobs  
Bernd and Diane Lierow

## ***Family Preservation Services of FL, Inc.***

Ruben and Delia Alviar  
Mary C. Peters  
Todd and Francie Van Buskirk  
Adrian and Delia Gonzalez/Canete  
Kathleen Johnson  
Randall and Mary Thomas  
Edward and Nicole Tregoe

## Recognizing Excellence: Meet Cathy

I have had the pleasure of working with Cathy Crowley for the past 14 months. She is a therapeutic foster parent who is affiliated with the Florida Mentor program. She has two teenagers (who are sisters) placed in her home. Cathy is a teacher, a skill and ability that has definitely contributed to her abilities and parenting skills in the home. Cathy deserves a great deal of praise as she continues to devote her life to giving these two children a sense of pride and accomplishment. Cathy has taken these two children to a camp in New York the past two summers, to work with mentally handicapped children. She is teaching these children to help others also!

I believe she has earned the honor of being recognized for her amazing abilities with the children in her home. Cathy is giving these children the ability to see that they can have and attain in their life. I would like to personally thank her for all the dedication she puts into her relationship with these two children in need.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Myers

Adoption Child Welfare Case Manager

## Your Thoughts Matter

A team is always better than one player in any area of life. Here at the Children's Network of Southwest Florida, we recognize that our foster parents are one of the most important parts of the team that advocates for abused and neglected children. Because of this, The Children's Network of Southwest Florida conducts monthly telephone surveys of foster parents. We want to better understand the needs of our most valuable partners. The surveys include general questions to determine the areas where our providers are excelling, and those areas where there is room for growth. We then utilize this data to recognize the great work being done and to develop strategies for continual improvement. We encourage you to participate by being objective and honest with your feedback during these surveys. Thank you in advance for a few moments of your time because your thoughts matter to us!

## Johnny Won't Sit Still and Do What He's Told: The ADHD Child and YOU



ANTHONY STOVER, BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES PROGRAM

Does this sound familiar? Recent studies have suggested a growing rate of children diagnosed with psychological disorders in and out of the child welfare system. We often ask ourselves how we help the children that are in our care if they are placed in our home and have been diagnosed with ADHD or other disorders. The first thing that we need to do as parents is to understand the disorder, which will then allow us to work with them and provide the most successful lives for the children in our homes. To do that we need to know what it means to be ADHD!

**What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** The core signs of ADHD include a lack of attention and concentration, hyperactivity, distractibility, and impulsivity.

Now that we have an idea of what the characteristics of an ADHD child may look like, we can now focus on what to do about them.

There are many techniques that can be used to assist in the normal development of a child with ADHD. A few areas that we will teach you are:

- Strengthening the bond between the caregiver and the ADHD child
- Specifically identifying the desirable behaviors we want to see more often in and out of the home
- Creating organization and scheduled tasks for the ADHD child
- Behavioral contracting and its impact on dealing with common distractions

Our focus in District 8 has always been to reduce placement disruptions by giving foster parents the skills necessary to create and maintain appropriate behavior in every area possible. The Children's Network of Southwest Florida has kindly offered an incentive of \$180.00 per individual to attend these classes to help our children achieve healthy and successful lives! For information regarding our upcoming classes, please call Anthony Stover at 239-338-1347.

**From Your Friends at the The Behavior Analysis Services Program.**

### Cook's Corner

Submitted by Christine Antoine

Christine Antoine is a Licensing Counselor at Lutheran Services Florida. She has been working in the child welfare field for 6 years. Christine is a dedicated employee and truly keeps the best interests of the children in everything she does. Please enjoy her recipe!

#### EASY PEACH COBLER

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 18oz can peaches (drained)
- 1 stick butter melted

Combine flour, sugar and milk together. Add the melted butter and then mix well.

Place peaches in a Pyrex dishes then pour flour mixture into the peaches. Bake at 375 for one hour or until golden brown. You can add cinnamon or cream cheese to this recipe for more flavor.

### ASK THE EXPERTS...

The Children's Network of Southwest Florida is excited to unveil our new parent help corner! In this spot, we invite our wonderful caregivers to bring their questions about raising and caring for children. We know that we are fortunate enough to have the best foster families ever and know that they are all very capable. But, once in a while, we can all use the help and advice of those "in the know." Our network is comprised of some of the most knowledgeable and well-regarded experts in their fields and they are here for us. Why not take advantage of this wealth of knowledge and bring us your questions? If you have a question, please email us at [info@childnetswfl.org](mailto:info@childnetswfl.org) and we'll ask the experts, and then publish these helpful responses in future issues.

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

We need your help!! Can you help out or do you know anyone who can? We try to keep abreast of our volunteer base and like to keep those resources fresh and current. If you are aware of any groups, clubs or individuals who would be willing to lend a hand occasionally to help us at events, to sponsor events or even help out by giving a few hours to help out with clerical/logistic functions, TELL US!! We have many opportunities in many areas and would love to tell them about us.

Please call (239) 226-1524 for more information.

## SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL WALK TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE



Save the date for the Children's Network of Southwest Florida's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual *Walk to Prevent Child Abuse*, scheduled for September 29, 2007 at Pelican Preserve in Ft. Myers. Once again this event is dedicated to promoting awareness and creating services to prevent the abuse and neglect of children right here in our own neighborhoods.

Last year, over \$40,000 was raised to support child abuse prevention efforts in our area. As a result, two new prevention programs have been implemented and are effectively being accessed to identify "at-risk" situations and deal with them before problems start.

All funds received from this year's *Walk to Prevent Child Abuse* will again remain in our community and directly benefit local children who may be at risk for abuse and neglect. Our goal is to double last year's efforts and raise

**\$100,000.** With the help of community partners, we know the goal can be reached!

Please join us as we work together to build awareness and strive to insure that every child in Southwest Florida is safe from abuse and neglect. To become a sponsor or walk for this event, please call Aimee McLaughlin or Marie Olsen at (239) 226-1524.

### Service Helps Prevent with Medical Needs

Island Coast Primary Care has been providing medical case management for children in foster care and under supervision of the Children's Network of Southwest Florida for several years. They fulfill a critical function for the 671 children they serve by assuring that children, for whom they have consents for service, have current, up-to-date immunizations. They coordinate medical services by obtaining medical records and assuring that needed services are not duplicated.

The nurses that work in this program are housed in Fort Myers but are responsible for all the children in five counties under supervision by our case management organizations. They also help in the transition when children are reunified with their parents for the first thirty days the children are home.

Their efforts ensure that children entering the system have an initial child checkup as well as track the children to see that any recommended follow-up appointments are made. By locating a medical home for the children, this service minimizes the need to use emergency rooms for non-emergency care.

Kathy Simonson is responsible for Collier, Hendry and Glades counties. Marian Lopez covers Lee County and Candi Boyd can be contacted for North Lee County and Charlotte County. The nurses are available to discuss medical issues with foster parents and can be reached at 239-461-7633 to answer questions and make referrals.

### HURRICANE AWARENESS

As foster parents, please remember that your disaster plan needs to be updated yearly. If a disaster strikes, these plans are critical in coordinating the location of our children. Foster parents are required to follow all mandatory evacuations made by county officials. The following items are important for your survival kit:

- Bottled water (1 GALLON PER PERSON, PER DAY)
- Important Documents
- Insurance papers
- Heavy duty garbage bags
- Latex/heavy duty gloves
- Personal hygiene products
- Manual can opener
- Baby necessities
- Disposable dust masks
- Insect repellent
- Tarp/plastic cover
- Liquid soap
- Medications
- Canned food
- Flashlights
- Rubbing alcohol
- Scissors
- Camping knife
- Hand wipes
- Grill
- Sunscreen
- Vice grips
- Propane gas
- Radio
- Batteries
- Paper towels
- Bleach
- Tweezers
- First Aid Kit
- Tool box
- Duct tape

You may also visit the following website for a complete list of hurricane resources:

<http://www.nbc-2.com/HurricaneGuide/resources.shtml>

## A LIFEBOOK IS A TREASURE

One of the most important parts of the adoptive process is the creation and maintenance of a Life Book. Although it is a requirement for adopting a child through the foster care system, it is an area that is frequently overlooked. When asked why, most would say, "Not enough time, there are just so many other demands" or "It's not necessary, I know everything that there is to know about this child".

We would like to ask you to consider the following perspective: The Life Book is more for the benefit of the child than it is for the adoptive parent.

What is its purpose?

- ♥ It improves self-esteem I know where I came from and I have tangible proof.
- ♥ It teaches the child the truth about himself.
- ♥ It provides the child with knowledge about his biological, cultural, and racial identity.
- ♥ It reduces the fantasy of what his life would have been like had they remained with their natural parents.
- ♥ It lessens the pressure of divided loyalties between biological and adoptive parents.
- ♥ It provides memories of the past, becoming even more significant when the child becomes an adult.
- ♥ It makes the adoption an accepted part of the family's life.

What is included?

Report cards, awards, locks of hair from a first haircut, birth records minus biological parents' information, a list of the natural parents' talents/skills, letters from the natural parents or siblings, (adoptive parents must use their judgment as to whether correspondence should be withheld until the child is older), pictures places they have lived, schools they have attended.

No matter what you include, remember that you are giving your child a gift, because "a Life Book is really a treasure".

## MEET MALAKAI



MEET MALAKAI: A CHILD WAITING FOR A FAMILY TO CALL HIS OWN.

Malakai, born October 2001, is a beautiful child with a heart of gold. Although he cannot effectively communicate verbally, his smile speaks for him; it tells how much he enjoys life. Even though he has verbal limitations, one will find that his vocal cords are well developed and that he even possesses a limited vocabulary.

Malakai is alert, but is visually restricted; because of this, his hearing is especially developed and attuned to everything within listening range. He responds to auditory stimuli with curiosity and wonder. Malakai also reacts to touch in a positive manner.

To assist with his special needs, Malakai is seen by a very supportive, multi-disciplinary team whose positive impact can be seen in the enthusiastic progress that he has made through their provision of speech, physical and occupational therapy.

Despite his difficult start in life, Malakai has made great strides and will continue to do so, with the right family. Whoever chooses him will need to consciously make a life-long commitment. With lots of love and patience, Malakai will be a special blessing to the appropriate family.

## Children Continue to Find Permanency

The Children's Network of Southwest Florida would like to offer a huge congratulations and thank you to our newest adoptive families from February 2007 through May 2007. These families have made the ultimate commitment: providing a safe, loving and permanent home for children that might never have had a family to call their own. We would also like to once again thank the adoptive Child Welfare Case Managers who work long hours to help these families be successful and reach their goals. Listed below are our newest families:

- Mari Murray
- Sanjoy Ani Mullick
- Troy and Kristin Plummer
- Helen Wilson
- Patrick and Kelly Smith
- Daniel and Nicole Bartley
- Douglas and Ina Korinke
- Lou Pietrangelo
- Jacqueline & Eric Hoegler
- Kirk & Beth Adams
- Barry & Judy Pitt
- Ken & Susan Nees
- Michael & Debbie Wilson
- Lula McMiller
- Arthur & Joan Willis
- Michael & Dorothy DeRhodes
- Acmer & Cathleen Gonzalez
- John & Joyce Niblick
- Helen & Nick Hawryliak
- Harvey & Karen Ayers
- Tim and Jill Jelen
- Melinda Farri
- Michael & Diana Houser
- Rogerio & Starla Rangel
- Tim & Carla Jacobson
- Kaisha Holder
- Robert & Tamera Stetson

## HURRICANE RESOURCE PHONE NUMBERS

Lee County Emergency Management 239-477-3600

Lee County American Red Cross 239-278-3401

Collier County Emergency Management 239-774-8000

Collier County American Red Cross 239-596-6868

Charlotte County Emergency Management 941-505-4620

Charlotte County American Red Cross 941-629-4345

Hendry County Emergency Management 863-675-5255

Hendry County American Red Cross 561-992-9703

Glades County Emergency Management 863-946-6020

Glades County American Red Cross 561-833-7711

**Become A Foster or Adoptive Parent**  
**Call - 1-800-89 FAMILY**  
Visit our Website at [www.childnetswfl.org](http://www.childnetswfl.org)

“The Children’s Network of Southwest Florida is  
sponsored in part by the State of Florida  
Department of Children & Families”



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**CHILDREN'S NETWORK**  
OF SOUTHWEST  
FLORIDA, LLC