

Newsletter

Center for Family & Child Enrichment, Inc.
Pediatric & Family Health & Wellness Center



**HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE
CENTER FOR FAMILY AND CHILD ENRICHMENT!**

A Message from the CEO

Greetings on behalf of our Board of Directors, staff, and consumers. We hope you had a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, or whatever special occasion you celebrated during the holiday season. We are grateful for the support that you gave us throughout 2022 and we look forward to working with you in the new year. In this, our 45th year of existence as an organization, we are humbled by the knowledge that so many families and children depend upon us for services. We are thankful to the numerous companies and individuals that came forward to provide holiday gifts for the children and families in need who come to us for support. We want to give special thanks to our loyal supporters, such as the Batchelor Foundation, Larry Little, and William Van Scoyoc who always assist us with buying gifts for the children in our programs...

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A JACK & JILL CHRISTMAS

Mrs. Claus and her elves arrived early to prepare for the day's festivities. Twenty families were invited to join them for treats, gifts, and a photo op with Mrs. Claus so there was much to do and everything had to be just right! Okay, so the elves were actually Jack and Jill moms in Santa hats. But they came with the spirit and joy of Christmas to be a blessing to CFCE's children and families in care, and a great time was had by all!

DJ Ray played holiday beats as the elves served light refreshments and presented each family with gift cards and Christmas presents for the children. The Miami Chapter of Jack & Jill of America has supported CFCE's children and families for many years and we appreciate their faithfulness. This year's holiday event was held on December 17, 2022 at CFCE's Main Office in Miami Gardens, Florida. Special thanks to J&J Miami Chapter President Julie Harris Nelson (aka Miami Dade County Court Judge in her day job), J&J Program Director Lindsay Hopkins, and everyone else at J&J who gave of their time, talents, and treasure to brighten the holidays for families in care.



A Message from the CEO (continued)

As a community, we have been transported to a much brighter place than in the past couple of years. We were able to have a few happy gatherings, such as our inaugural City of Miami Gardens Mayor's Ball in November, and most recently our Holiday Party and Toy Distribution for children in care. We also had a beautiful and historic in person Annual Meeting Brunch in May commemorating our Agency's 45th anniversary. It is our fondest hope that we are able to continue to remain healthy and harmonious in the weeks and months to come.

Please remember that you may obtain your COVID and flu shots in our clinic five days a week.

From all of us at CFCE, we wish you a safe, joyous, and productive New Year!

T. Delores Dunn, President & Chief Executive Officer

Let's Get Vaccinated



WMBM Flu Vaccine Event

ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 2022

CFCE's Pediatric & Family Health & Wellness Center (PFHWC) partnered with local radio station WMBM AM 1490 on their holiday event "For the Love of Christmas Toy Drive". The Center conducted a pop-up clinic and provided COVID and flu vaccines for the community. It's important to get vaccinated in general, but especially before gathering with friends and family.

For more information, visit us at www.cfcewellness.org or call us at 305.474.1800.

EVENT CALENDAR

**17th Annual Regional
Conference for Child
Welfare**

**Univ. of Miami - 1/19/23,
9 am - 4 pm**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/17th-annual-regional-child-welfare-tickets-444182340337>

**Lunch and Learn: Common
Barriers to Communicating
with Today's Youth
- Via Zoom on 1/25/23,
12 noon - 1 pm**

**Human Trafficking
Symposium & Resource Fair
By: DCAC Delta Sigma
Theta Sorority, Inc.
Florida Memorial Univ.,
1/28/23, 2 - 5 pm**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dcac-in-our-own-backyard-human-trafficking-symposium-and-resource-fair-tickets-487579141337>



National Influenza Week

Monday, December 5, 2022 marked the start of National Influenza Week. CFCE's Pediatric & Family Health & Wellness Center (PFHWC) held events throughout the week to promote wellness in our community. In partnership with **Live Healthy Miami Gardens**, we held a flu vaccination day at the clinic and our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Michelle Kirwan, gave a live broadcast where she shared important information about this year's flu season. Our clinic is open for walk-ins every Wednesday and Friday for those interested in receiving the flu vaccine.

Drop by to visit us on either day or call us at 305.474.1800 to schedule an appointment on a day that better suits your schedule.

For more information on clinic services, visit us at www.cfcewellness.org.



National Adoption Day 2022



CFCE Adoption Unit

After a two-year hiatus necessitated by the COVID pandemic, families and child welfare professionals alike were excited to gather again to celebrate one of the most anticipated events of the year. As in years past, the Miami Children's Museum hosted Miami Dade County's 2022 National Adoption Day event. This year's theme was all about snowflakes because snowflakes are unique, just like each of our forever families! More than 30 adoptions were finalized at this year's National Adoption Day.

"It's not easy, but it's rewarding" said one mother who was there with her husband to finalize the adoption of her fifth child from the same biological mother. All of her children are under the age of six. "I just don't want to see them grow up wondering or worrying about each other," she said. Fighting back tears, she gave an inspirational message for us all, "[y]ou know, sometimes people think that the kids need you, but in the process, you realize that you need the kids".

Having met its adoption goal of 54 children for the 2021-22 fiscal year, the Center for Family and Child Enrichment is on track to meet its FY 2022-23 goal of 55 adoptions. For information on how you can become a foster parent or to learn more about adoption, visit www.citrusfcn.org or call Bree Bofill at 305.455.6000.

Truly Making A Difference

Hello CFCE Partners,

I wanted to share some of the positive feedback shared by one of the Transitional Trauma Therapists (TTT) who had the privilege to work with a child who was placed at the CFCE shelter. This teenager is part of a sibling group of three, all of whom fled their hometown in South America to seek refuge here in the United States. After crossing the border in New York, they decided to relocate to Miami where they were arrested for “loitering and trespassing”. The youngest sibling was initially scared, sad, and severely depressed. In addition to being isolated from his family - mom resides in their birth country and one of the brothers was placed on a deportation hold - no one around him spoke Spanish.



Our TTT was providing overlay services pending assignment of a therapist to address the depressive symptoms he displayed at the Children's Reception and Intake Base (CRIB). However, during a short period of time at the CFCE shelter, this child's presentation changed from being severely depressed (initial suicidal ideation) to being stable, and overall euthymic and hopeful. We truly believe that this change was due in great part to the actions of the staff at CFCE's shelter who (despite the language barrier) provided this child with the care and support he needed. The CFCE staff even embraced a practice that the child shared with them from his country where they would safely light a candle in front of the home to invite hope and good wishes in the new season.

We are grateful for the care and attention demonstrated by your staff and would like to thank them and your team for truly making a difference in the lives of our children.

Please share our gratitude with them!

Thank you!

Beverly Jean Jacques, Ph.D. (Dr. JJ)

Director of Prevention

Citrus Family Care Network

CFCE Hosts Florida Network Youth and Family Services Motivational Interviewing Training

For anyone new to Motivational Interviewing (MI), it is an evidence-based approach to interviewing that focuses on exploring and resolving a person's ambivalence to sharing. Ambivalence could be mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about a topic, person, object, or place. On December 6 and 7, 2022, the Center for Family and Child Enrichment (CFCE) was pleased to host the Motivational Interviewing Training presented by the Florida Network Youth and Family Services Department. In this two-day training, participants learned important techniques to help them make client conversations more productive.



SPECIAL THANKS TO CONTRIBUTORS MARY WILLIAMS, TERNEKA GIBSON AND ROBYN MILLER.

Attendees especially enjoyed the interactive parts of the training and role playing on topics that were discussed. "Interviewing someone can be intimidating, . . ." said CINS/FINS Case Manager Robyn Miller, "the most useful advice I received is providing a menu of options when talking with your client. It is best to give them control of their situation, so they can choose which option works best for them." SNAP Site Coordinator Terneka Gibson shared, "the trainers were incredible, the information was very informative, engaging and useful, and the group as a whole was great. I definitely left this training with new motivational interviewing information and tools in my tool box." CFCE thanks the Florida Network YFS Department and its trainers, Wendy Pierre-McNealy, CPM Project Coordinator and Brandi Hudson, MBA Program Coordinator, for providing such valuable information and for the opportunity to serve as the MI Training host site.

CFCE Congratulates Wall of Honor Recipients for 2022

Miami-Dade County Children's Courthouse

Every year Miami Dade County judges and child welfare professionals gather to celebrate two individuals who are chosen by their peers to honor for their professionalism and excellence in juvenile advocacy. The annual Wall of Honor ceremony is a time-honored tradition that gives us an opportunity to publicly recognize staff, volunteers, and others who work passionately to improve the lives of the children we serve. This year, the Center for Family and Child Enrichment (CFCE) congratulates Andrea (Andi) Steinacker, Guardian Ad Litem Volunteer and Donna Fields, Esq., Assistant Public Defender (Children's Defense Division) as the 2022 recipients of the Wall of Honor and John F. Balikes awards, respectively.



Depicted in the photo from left to right are 1) Andi Steinacker, Wall of Honor Award Recipient 2022; 2) Orlando A. Prescott, UCC Administrative Judge; 3) Donna Fields, Esq., John F. Balikes Award Recipient 2023; and 4) Marcia Caballero, UCC Associate Administrative Judge.

Andi Steinacker is a Vice President and Financial Adviser at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management where she helps her clients meet their long-term financial goals. In her spare time, she volunteers with the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Program for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida. As a GAL, Andi advocates for children in foster care by providing the court with critical information in abuse, abandonment, and neglect cases. She also mentors new GALs and motivates others to join her in supporting children in the foster care system.

One of the ways she does this is by spearheading Morgan Stanley's annual back-to-school drive to ensure that foster children have bookbags and essential school supplies that they need to succeed academically!

Attorney Donna Fields has dedicated much of her legal career to defending children in the juvenile delinquency system. As an Assistant Public Defender in Miami Dade County, Donna represents youth who have been charged with a myriad of misdemeanor and felony offenses. But her passion has been to advocate for children whose offenses are driven by addiction to controlled substances. As a defense attorney in Juvenile Drug Court, Donna represents her young clients as they fight to overcome serious addictions. She knows that a finding of guilt in juvenile court may result in long-term consequences for a minor and his/her family, including loss of educational opportunities, scholarship disqualification, and loss of access to public housing. With this in mind, Donna aggressively advocates for her young clients knowing that successful completion of Juvenile Drug Court can result in abandonment of the charges for a first-time offender and for others dismissal of the case or a withhold of adjudication.

CHILD WELFARE SUPERSTARS

OCTOBER

BIANA LOUIS

was recognized by a foster parent for, among other things, "helping to build the bridge between the bio mother and the foster parent".



NOVEMBER

NATALIA SMALLS

was announced Florida Foster Care Review's October 2022 Child Welfare Professional of the Month

ADOPTION UNIT

Gina Johnson, Amelia Young, Alicia Graham, and George Joseph - recognized by Citrus for their preparation for National Adoption Day. The team finalized 10 adoptions on NAD.

(cont'd p. 9)



DECEMBER

KENDIA AIKENS

was recognized by Citrus for being knowledgeable of case and fully prepared for Case Transfer Staffing.



Making Affordable Healthcare Accessible for All

A person's income, health status, or a pre-existing condition should not determine their ability to receive high quality healthcare coverage at an affordable price. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) was designed to ensure that every American has access to quality

healthcare even if it's not through their job or a government program like Medicare. The Center for Family and Child Enrichment (CFCE) is proud to be one of the ACA healthcare access points for our community. As an ACA access point, we work to link the uninsured to affordable health insurance plans during the open enrollment period. CFCE's community health worker, Elidreanna Williams, participated in various outreach efforts to raise awareness among Miami Gardens community residents about the health insurance marketplace. Our enrollment campaign took place during the week of



December 12, 2022 at partnering locations including Miami Gardens Job Corps and the North Dade Regional Library. We encouraged individuals to complete an application on the spot and to select healthcare plans unique to each person. January 15, 2023 was the last day to enroll in or change a 2023 health plan. After this date, you can enroll in or change plans only if you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period. Stop by and visit our office anytime on Mondays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at 1825 NW 167th Street, Suite 102, Miami Gardens FL. Elidreanna will be here to help you apply for a healthcare plan that works for you. For more information, contact: ewilliams@cfceinc.org.



Gloria's Closet

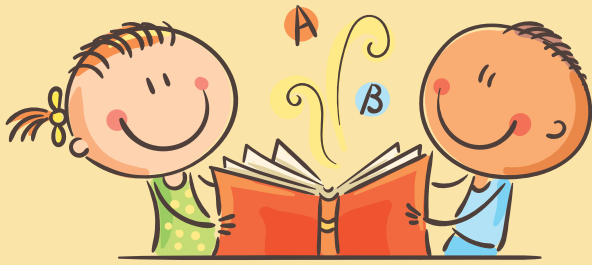
It's an old cliché, one we've all heard before, but Gloria Medina actually puts it into action... "One person can make a difference". Ms. Gloria, as she is affectionately known around the office, decided that she could make things a little bit easier for children in foster care by setting up what we at CFCE now call "Gloria's Closet". When children have to be removed from their homes, it is a stressful time for all. The need to remove is usually urgent leaving no time to prepare or pack. Children often enter care with little more than the clothes on their backs. That's when Ms. Gloria steps in.

Ms. Gloria's closet contains donated clothes, toys, car seats and just about any other important item that a child might need. She works without favor or fanfare, meticulously sorting staff and outside donations. Once sorted, she then labels and stores each donation according to age, size, and gender so that she can quickly meet the needs as they arise.

"Ms. Gloria has been a life saver" said Shurnett Samuels, CFCE Program Operations Administrator. "Sometimes children soil their clothes during supervised visits and Ms. Gloria is always there to provide a change of clothes for them as well as toys." The need is even greater when there are sibling groups involved. CFCE Behavioral Health Case Manager Ellieton Lewis knows firsthand how challenging it can be. Ellieton helps to connect behavioral health clients with other non-profits that can meet their needs. After learning that his "go to" organization did not make it through the pandemic, Ellieton searched to find another resource to help one of his clients clothe her four daughters. Once again, Ms. Gloria came through. It did not matter that this family was outside of the foster care system, for Ms. Gloria what mattered is that they were in need. In addition to clothes, she provided shoes and bookbags for the girls which was a tremendous blessing to the family.

Gloria's Closet grew out of the heart of a woman who saw a need and stepped up to meet it. It is this spirit of giving that we hope inspires you this holiday season and always. Gloria Medina is a Unit Secretary in Child Welfare Programs. To donate to Gloria's Closet, email info@cfceinc.org or call 305.624.7450.

CFCE IN THE NEWS



Miami Herald Wish Book

Grant A Wish.

Make A Difference.

Rosa Castellanos knew she had to leave her toxic boyfriend in Detroit when he threatened her and their daughter, Emily, who was 11 at the time. So, when Castellanos and Emily traveled to Miami to visit her family in 2021, they decided to stay.

Castellanos had contemplated leaving him several times before. She was exhausted from constant drama — not physical abuse, but threats to leave and mental abuse.

“One time, I told him I’ll call the cops,” she recalls. “He told me if I do, then nobody will come back out alive.”

Life has been difficult for them. They have dealt with illness and poverty since arriving in Florida.

Rosa Castellanos was born in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, to a family of four children. She immigrated to New Jersey in 1985 and finished high school there. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in visual communications at Kean University in 2000 and started working as a graphic designer at the Detroit Free Press in 2002.

BY FATIMA BELAGAM AND CINDY CLAROS LEE CAPLIN
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA

Published in the Miami Herald on December 15, 2022

Castellanos met her now ex-partner in 2008 and moved in with him. She had problems conceiving, but in 2009, she discovered that she was pregnant. Emily was born the next year.

“It was a miracle,” Castellanos says. “But her dad hesitated on the responsibilities as he was 50 years old at the time.”

As Emily grew up, she was exposed to her dad’s threatening, abusive and controlling behavior, her mom says. After the little girl dropped a glass of water, he yelled at her, Castellanos recalls.

“She cried as I took her to the bedroom and tried to console her,” Castellanos says.

Another time, after Castellanos’ beloved brother, Omar Castellanos, 41, was shot down in a restaurant in Honduras, the man made it impossible for her or Emily to attend the funeral.

“He never said I couldn’t go, but he said he wouldn’t take care of [Emily] when I went,” explained Castellanos. “He never let me get a passport for her either.”

There was “constant” yelling and fighting, she adds.

“By the time we were done [arguing],” Castellanos says, “I ended up thinking that it was my fault, that I had done something bad.”

Castellanos was her family’s sole income earner for the next 10 or 11 years.

Martha Thierry worked with Castellanos at the Free Press. She describes her friend as an extremely talented artist as well as a generous and wonderful mother.

"She has always made Emily her priority," Thierry said. "She's been there for others."

In October 2017, Castellanos was laid off when her department was shut down. Then she suffered a stroke, which left the right side of her body numb.

Soon after that, she fell and suffered a concussion. Doctors diagnosed her with cadasil, an inherited disease affecting blood flow to the brain.

After the diagnosis, in May 2021, she visited her mom at the home of her sister, Claudia Varela, in Miami Gardens. On the trip, Castellanos opened up about the relationship with her boyfriend.

"I felt ashamed to tell them about what was happening," she said. "[They] kept telling me that I didn't have to go back."

Soon she and Emily were living in Miami Gardens. A cousin sent along her 2005 Toyota and important documents. She hasn't been able to find work because of her medical condition.

The Crime Victims Advocacy Council, a nonprofit, helped her to rent her current apartment and this past August, United Way added a few months of aid. She has applied for Social Security disability benefits but so far has received no response.

Castellanos, now 55, relies on her dilapidated Toyota, which has 182,000 miles, to get around and drop her daughter off at school. Water leaks through the broken sunroof.

Through Wish Book, she hopes to get her sunroof fixed or perhaps get help obtaining a more reliable car.



The Center for Family and Child Enrichment nominated her for help from the Miami Herald/el Nuevo Herald Wish Book program. Elise Karnegis, a dietitian with the center who works with Emily, says that Castellanos has trouble driving to her appointments.

"She needs to drive to Gainesville [to see her neurologist] and to her many other doctors' appointments," explained Karnegis. "So she needs a reliable car."

Castellanos would also like some help for Emily, now 12, who has been accepted to art school but hasn't been able to attend due to her mom's health and car issues. Emily would like an iPad, a new computer, shoes and clothes.

"It's been difficult," she says, "impossible for me to keep above water."



A painting by Emily Castellanos. Emily, 12, has been accepted to art school but hasn't been able to attend due to her mom's health and car issues.



CFCE Dietitian Elise Karnegis and Rosa Castellanos holding Emily's new laptop that she received via the Wishbook Program.

City of Miami Gardens Inaugural Mayor's Ball

A Soirée to Remember

DEAREST READER,

Is there anything more exhilarating than a lavish affair where libations and festivities abound? The ton are abuzz with talk of last season's fête - the Inaugural City of Miami Gardens Mayors Ball! It was truly a soirée to remember. Even this author could not have predicted the flurry of excitement that enveloped the air as society's upper echelon partook of the evening's delights. Indeed, there is but one question that remains unanswered . . . are we to expect another such grand event this social season?

Well gentle reader, this author has been reliably informed that the City of Miami Gardens shall return for a second season of its annual Mayor's Ball! Lest this set the gossipers alight with requests for more sordid details, know that I am disinclined to report on the particulars at this time. Patience, after all, is a virtue. But fear not gentle reader, should there be any scandal afoot, this jaded author shall uncover it!



