



Connections - June 19, 2020

Keeping us connected during the shutdown and beyond



Got masks? These ladies have you covered.



Fort Pierce- Communities Connected for Kids would like to thank the Ocean Village Sewing Circle for its very generous donation of 200 hand-crafted cloth masks.

The Fort Pierce group has been making masks for health care professionals and other groups throughout the community during the state's COVID-19

state of emergency and recently reached out to CCKids to see if there was a need for masks among local child-welfare professionals.

Social workers and other child-welfare professionals have been deemed

essential workers by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, and, despite most work being adapted to video conferencing, many of them - especially case managers - must sometimes interact in person with the families and children on their caseloads.

The cloth masks are particularly helpful as a supplement to one-use-only disposable masks that will be needed by front-line workers.

"We can give these to our administrative staff and save more of the disposable masks for case managers and others who may have more interaction with the community," said Christina Kaiser, CCKids community relations director.

Pictured above is the Ocean Village Sewing Circle, taken during a meeting earlier in the year.

Campaign offers opportunities to support healing families

June is National Reunification Month, and CCKids and its partners in the community are celebrating the hard work of families and professionals dedicated to returning children to their homes.

Now, the community can also participate by sending notes of support and encouragement to the men and women responsible for reunifying families - case managers, clinicians, guardians ad litem, children's legal service, parent attorneys and, of course, parents working hard to create a strong and healthy environment for their children.

"We created a calendar with different actions that people can take throughout the month to help encourage families working toward reunification, as well as nurture the relationships that support the reunification process," said Jerra Wisecup, CCKids licensing and caregiver support specialist.

The calendar, included below, offers a range of activities. One example is, "send a hand-written thank you note to a guardian ad litem."

Of course, not everyone in the community has easy access to a child-welfare professional or a family in care. That's why CCKids set up a special form on its website where people can leave notes to be forwarded on to the appropriate individuals.

Notes have been coming in since the form was made available June 1:

"Your daily struggles behind the scenes do not go unnoticed," reads one note sent to case managers. "You are valued, and you are seen working hard."

Another reads: "The job you are doing couldn't be done by most! Please keep moving forward and advocating for the children of our community. We see



you, and we thank you for your service."

Other notes are parent-to-parent, expressing hope for a better future:

"Please know there are many people to support you and want to see you succeed."

To leave your own note of encouragement, visit cckids.net.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Send a birth parent artwork (drawing, painting, poem) completed by his/her child. 	2 Send an incarcerated parent a photo of his/her child(ren). 	3 Spread the word about Reunification Month by posting on your social media pages. #LiftingFamiliesTogether #ReunificationMonth	4  Call a birth parent and offer words of encouragement!	5 Text a birth parent, highlighting some of the ways you have seen them change that are not necessarily case plan tasks.	6 Encourage a birth parent to record themselves reading a book for their child(ren) and play it for the child(ren) to watch.
7 Send a GAL or CLS attorney a picture of a family they helped reunify. 	8 Reach out to a Caregiver and ask what you can do to help him/her today. 	9 Help encourage a new coparenting relationship by facilitating a caregiver and birth parent meeting on Zoom or FaceTime.	10  Send a hand written "Thank You" note to a Guardian Ad Litem.	11 Text your favorite motivational quote/poem to a Child Protective Investigator or Case Manager. 	12 Text a transporter, "Thank you for making sure our kids can maintain important relationships." 	13 Email a supervisor thanking them for what they do. 
14 Identify one reason you are willing to help reunify families and post to your social media. #LiftingFamiliesTogether #ReunificationMonth	15 Ask a birth parent to send a family photo for their child(ren) to see whenever feeling homesick. 	16 Text a case manager, "Thank you for the late nights and long hours that you put in for our kids!" 	17 Make a birth parent smile! Send a funny quote or joke. 	18 Reach out to a teen in foster care and compliment them on one of the things he/she does best. 	19 Reach out to a Case Manager and ask what you can do to help him/her today. 	20 Text a Child Protective Investigator, "Thank you for being working hard to keep our children safe."
21 Father's Day! Send a birth father a photo of his child(ren). 	22 Text a smiley face emoticon to a Case Manager (no extra words needed). 	23 Call a GAL, tell them how much you appreciate his/her partnership!	24 Make a caregiver smile! Send a funny photo or meme. 	25 Email a Supervisor, Program Director, and/or County Manager about the GREAT job one of their staff is doing.	26 Text a birth parent a smiley or silly face photo of his/her child(ren). 	27 Email an electronic thank you card to a therapist, or other service provider.
28 Text a caregiver, "Thank you for the many daily sacrifices that you make for our kids every day."	29 Email a Placement or Licensing Specialist and let them know they are appreciated.	30 Reach out to a Birth Parent and ask what you can do to help him/her today. 				

Stuff the Bus goes virtual this year

Fort Pierce- Stuff the Bus - the school-supplies drive that ensures children in foster care return to school with the proper tools - is back again this summer.

But unlike past years spent under the hot summer sun collecting supplies from the front doors of St. Lucie County Wal-Mart stores, this year's campaign will take place from comfortably



climate-controlled homes everywhere.

The [United Way of St. Lucie County](#) kicked off its virtual adaptation of the decades-long project June 1, and will take donations through July 24. The change was made as part of the COVID-19 response.

Donors can contribute school supplies online by purchasing items from an Amazon wish list. Supplies will be delivered directly to the United Way and then distributed to schools and to Communities Connected for Kids, a longtime Stuff the Bus partner. Click [here](#) to purchase supplies

on Amazon.

"We'll miss the collection this year and the opportunity to interact with shoppers and donors, but we're thankful that the United Way was able to come up with an alternative that would keep everyone safe from possible exposure to the coronavirus and still get supplies to children in foster care," said Christina Kaiser, CCKids community relations director.