



# Communities Connected *for Kids*

Connections - March 22, 2023



*Sweets and Relishes judging begins at the St. Lucie County Fair earlier this month. CCKids Community Resource Coordinator Jordan Bebout, front left, was one of the judges. Several St. Lucie County elected officials were part of the fun, including CCKids Board Member and St. Lucie County Clerk of Courts Michelle Miller, standing, third from left.*

## **Foster Mom Keeps Families Engaged with Their Children While in Foster Care**

**Port St. Lucie** – Foster parent Ilena Hones is committed to helping families stay connected while their children are in foster care.

It's an important practice in the child-welfare community called co-parenting, and Hones excels at it by keeping families engaged in their children's

lives.

“Ilena promotes parent-child relationships and modeling, and she invites the parent to be part of the child’s life,” said Maria Gonzalez, a dependency case manager who nominated the caregiver.



Communities Connected for Kids is the organization that oversees and coordinates the child-welfare community in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties. Recently, it awarded Hones its quarterly Going the Extra Mile – or GEM – award for her dedication and advocacy for the children in her home, particularly in regard to co-parenting.

She won in the Topaz category, which is a special GEM award reserved for caregivers.

“Co-parenting reminds us that our children deserve quality parenting every day,” said Jerra Wisecup, CCKids Licensing and Caregiver Support Specialist, who also coordinates the area’s Quality Parenting Initiative. “To ensure this occurs, each member of a child’s team – especially family members – work to prioritize not just child safety but also child well-being.”

For Ilena, it’s about helping others.

“We choose this role because we care deeply for others and want the best outcome for them,” she said. “The award is very much appreciated, but the real award is getting to love these amazing children and their families.”

If you would like information about becoming a foster parent, please call (772) 873-7800, and ask for Jerra Wisecup, or visit our site at [cckids.net](http://cckids.net).

**The MANicure Movement®**  
*Polishing Off Child Abuse*



# JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

**ONE** fingernail painted blue starts...  
**ONE** conversation that moves us...  
**ONE** step closer to *polishing off child abuse*.

## One Nail Painted Blue Represents the One in Five Kids Who Experience Abuse

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and CCKids is celebrating by bringing the MANicure Movement back to Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast.

The movement is simple: We challenge members of our community to paint their index fingernails blue as a visual reminder that one in five children experience child abuse.

Men are especially encouraged to participate because the effect is more pronounced on people who don't ordinarily paint their nails.

Regardless of who you are or whether or not you usually wear nail polish, you too can take the challenge. Simply paint one fingernail. You can use any color; the point is to draw attention to the one in five. Blue is best because its the

color of child-abuse prevention month.

When someone asks you why you have one nail painted - tell them!

One finger nail painted blue also recognizes the impact that a single person can have in the life of a child. Whether you are a foster parent, a guardian to your grandchild or just someone there to listen, you can be that one person who makes a difference.

Want to take the challenge with us? Call (772) 873-7800 and ask for Jordan Bebout. She will provide a MANicure kit to you and explain how you can coordinate your own manicure event.

## Protect Those Tender Domes!

**By Lisa McBride, RN, BSN**  
CCKids Nurse Care Coordinator

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. With that in mind, I pose this question: What happens when we fall off a swing onto a hard surface, hit the windshield in a car accident, or get a hit to the head when playing sports?

The short answer is that our brain hits the surrounding skull bones and can become injured. You might be diagnosed with a mild traumatic brain injury, more commonly known as a concussion, or a more severe brain injury requiring hospitalization and/or surgery.

If you witness or suspect someone may have suffered a brain injury, please seek medical treatment as soon as possible. Time matters! Some symptoms that the person may experience include headache, blurred vision, balance problems, nausea, vomiting and feeling foggy. Don't wait, call your medical provider or head to the ER.

Here are some basic, but effective, ways to prevent trauma to the head:

- Always wear a helmet when participating in sports or riding a bike!
- Make sure that the helmet fits properly and has not been damaged from a previous fall.
- When at the playground, ensure that the surface is made of soft materials like sand or mulch to cushion a fall.
- Use a car seat that is properly fit to the child and installed correctly.
- Always wear a seatbelt when in a vehicle.
- Use stair gates to prevent a tumble for the little ones.

I've included some resources below for further information and reading:



Heads Up—includes links on how to choose a helmet  
[biausa.org](http://biausa.org)  
[cincinnatichildrens.org](http://cincinnatichildrens.org)