



Communities Connected *for Kids*

Connections - May 3, 2023



May is Foster Care Month, and we're celebrating by asking our caregivers to share their reasons and motivation for being foster parents. Pictured here is the family of Jackie Rahman. "I absolutely love being a foster family," says Jackie. "We love the idea of caring for a child in need and giving a temporary home to a child and just pouring our love into the child and the family. One of my favorite pieces of this process is connecting with the bio parents and working with them for the best interest of the child."

CCKids Honors Staff Who Go the Extra Mile

St. Lucie County – Communities Connected for Kids congratulates Rebecca Hull and Melanie Kranker for winning this quarter's Going the Extra Mile – or GEM – Award.

Hull and Kranker won the award, an honor given to



staff and caregivers for excellence in service to children and families in Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast, for the period spanning January through March.

Hull, a case manager in Martin County, received the award in the Emerald Division, which covers case-management staff. She was nominated by her supervisor, Mary Altiery, for her work in reunifying three siblings with their grandmother. The children were living in different homes and all moving toward separate adoptions.

“The grandmother is lower income, and we knew that it would take a lot of assistance and support to make this placement happen, especially due to the fact that the children have some significant behavioral issues,” Altiery said.

“Rebecca went above and beyond to assist this grandmother and these children to ensure that they had everything they needed to be successful.

“She reached out to our community partners to request bedding for the children and a new kitchen table as the grandmother only had a very small table in her home, and Rebecca understood the importance of family meals. When Rebecca placed the children in the home it was December, and we were in a cold snap in Florida, so she used her own money went out bought the kids gloves hats as well as groceries for the home so that they would be comfortable.

“The grandmother is now in the process of adopting her grandchildren, their behaviors have improved immensely, and they are finally all together.”



Kranker, CCKids’ Behavioral Health Supervisor, received her GEM award in the Ruby Division, which recognizes the work of administrative and program staff. She was nominated three time, by two co-workers and her supervisor, Josie Kirchner.

“Melanie is always going the extra mile, leading her team by example,” Kirchner said. “She can be counted on to volunteer when the call is made without a second thought and has become part of the usual group of employees who can be relied upon to do whatever is needed to ensure a successful event.”

For example, Kranker was part of the planning committee for the recent Prevention Expo, one of the company’s best attended events in recent history. She also has helped with parades, volunteer recruitment, hurricane relief and, most recently, secured an important donation to ensure that children waiting in offices have snacks to tide them over until mealtime.

CCKids’ Board of Directors will recognize Hull and Kranker during its June Board

meeting. Each employee will receive a \$100 bonus and a plaque.

Others nominated this quarter were Katie Vella, Eda Torres Caulderon, Mayra Medina Carrion, Joyce Edwards, Cori Degroat, Alexis Williams, Keri Williams and Linda Beland.

We are happy to take nominations from the community. If you know a CCKids employee who has gone above and beyond, let us know. Click the link to the nomination form.

WHAT'S YOUR why

God adopts us into His family as His own.
God calls us to love foster children and our recently adopted children as our own!

•••
Trevor & Melissa Raborn,
Foster and Adoptive Parents
2 Years



Foster Care Appreciation Month

May is #NationalFosterCareMonth, and we're celebrating our caregivers by sharing their Why - the reason they do what they do, and the reason they think others should try out foster care! We kick off our series today with these thoughts from one of our newer families: The Raborn Family.

CCKids: *What is one of your favorite memories of fostering?*

Melissa Raborn: *Just before we took them in as our foster kids, they were with another foster family for a few months. They came to our home for a few hours each weekend for a couple of weeks before they came into our home. I'll never forget how fun it was sitting on the dining room floor one of those weekends getting to know them, teaching them how to "cheers" with kids' teacups! It helped us get to know more of their personalities and was so sweet!*

Bring Your Dog. Bring Your Kids. Just Bring It.



Register Now for 1K for Kids

Help us celebrate our local foster-care heroes, from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, May 20, at Port St. Lucie's Hillmore Lake Park, during CCKids' Second Annual 1K for Kids Story Stroll.

Enjoy a leisurely 1K walk along a tree-lined trail dotted with the stories and videos of

children and families of the local foster-care community. Dogs on leashes are welcome!

It's all in celebration of National Foster Care Month, said Christina Kaiser, Community Relations Director for CCKids, the nonprofit organization that oversees the child-welfare community in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties.

"We want our community to know the children and families who make up foster care," Kaiser said. "Their stories are worth telling, and we think we've created the perfect interactive experience to share them."

The first 100 people to register for the walk will receive a free foster-care awareness tee-shirt the day of the event. And anyone who brings new and full-size toiletries in support of our Project Sparkle drive will be entered into a chance to win a \$50 gift card.

The 1K Story Stroll is a little more than half a mile, but the total trail is 1.27 miles for those who want to keep going. Hillmore Park also offers a passive fitness station and two observation/fishing decks extending out over the lake.

If you're interested in signing up, please register by clicking [here](#).
al snacks.

REGISTER

Toiletry Drive



Help us celebrate Foster Care Month all May; Collect toiletries at work, school or church, and we'll come pick up!

772-579-5090



Who Needs Braces?



By Lisa McBride, RN, BSN
CCKids Nurse Care Coordinator

The answer is, "a lot of people", especially children in the dependency system who often go their entire lives without routine dental services.

So this week, I'll share some information about the My Healthy Child Grant funding program that can assist in the cost of orthodontia care.

Sunshine Health and Community Based Care Integrated Health, partners in the Sunshine Health Child Welfare Specialty Plan (CWSP) help manage this privately-funded grant program that is intended to address gaps in healthcare available to post-adopt youth and youth in foster care. Specifically, these are

services that are not covered by Medicaid or determined to be not medically necessary.

This grant fund covers costs associated with **orthodontic care** that was deemed **not medically necessary** by Medicaid (i.e. orthodontic services for cosmetic purposes).

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Children or youth requiring orthodontic services must be **currently enrolled** in the Florida Medicaid Sunshine Health Child Welfare Specialty Plan (CWSP). If you are not sure what plan you have, you can call Sunshine member services at 1-855-463-4100 or ask your DCM-Dependency Case Manager.
- Orthodontic services must have been **recommended** by the enrollee's dental provider.
- Request for orthodontic services must have been submitted to a Medicaid dental plan with all of the required documentation within the last twelve months and **denied based on medical necessity** criteria.
- An Orthodontist must have provided a **written cost estimate** for orthodontic services.

If you have a child who may qualify for this grant, please let your case manager know and/or email me at lisa.mcbride@cckids.net.

Summertime is a great time to meet with an orthodontist, get the necessary exams and forms submitted to your Medicaid dental plan with denial letter returned so your packet is ready to go when the fall grant is released.