



Communities Connected *for Kids*

Connections - Sept. 20, 2023

“Sometimes people get in your ear. Don’t let them. If you’re available and can give time and show love then you should go for it.”

*Ruth Wheeler,
Non-Relative
Caregiver*

Celebrate *Intergenerations*



Ruth Wheeler is one of CCKids' featured caregivers this month during our celebration of Intergeneration Month. Relatives and fictive kin who care for children in the dependency system can become licensed in the state of Florida.

Inter-generations Keep CCKids Caregiver Strong this September

Port St. Lucie – Ruth Wheeler is not only a caregiver to a 9-month-old little girl; she is helping to keep family connections, both by welcoming the baby's mother to events and by coordinating fun activities with the baby's siblings.

She is what we call a non-relative caregiver - a neighbor, teacher or family

friend who steps up to take care of a child to keep them out of the foster care system.

"At first, I wasn't going to do it," she said. "But I'm attached to the young lady and all her kids. I just didn't want the baby to fall into foster care."

Ruth says the baby's Guardian ad Litem - a child's representative in court - tells her that she is doing the work of a foster parent.

"I don't feel like a foster parent; I feel like I'm this baby's grandmother."

What's the difference between a licensed foster parent and a licensed relative or non-relative?" Foster parents are licensed to take in any child in the foster-care system, while licensed relatives and non-relatives are licensed for a particular child in order to keep them out of foster care.

Licensure, while not as stringent a process as it is for licensed foster parents, opens up a world of resources and financial and emotional support to grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers and neighbors (and the list goes on) who care for children in their families and communities.

Ruth encourages anyone who is asked to consider becoming a caregiver.

"If you're available and can give time and show love, then you should go for it."

Interested in becoming a caregiver? Call (772) 873-7800, and ask for Jerra.

CCKids Receives Critical Funding

The money is in the bank!

CCKids this week received its much-awaited allotment of funding from the Florida Department of Children and Families' Risk Pool, a store of money reserved for emergencies within the state's network of local child-welfare communities.



"We received \$2.05 million of the \$3.2 million requested," said Lauren Hahn, CCKids Chief Financial Officer.

The allotment, though short of what CCKids had requested, will be enough to make it through the calendar year, Hahn said.

CCKids will have another opportunity to request additional funds this winter.

It's necessary, Hahn said, because the organization's out-of-home expenses are increasing due to more children coming into care and with higher levels

Click to Sign
Up!

COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS
In Coordination with Guardians for New Futures & the Angel Tree Project

2023

Toy Drive

Be a Collection Site!
You collect the toys, we pick them up
(772) 528-0362

We're seeking companies, churches and social groups to coordinate individual toy drives for children in the foster care system.

Pick Up: The week of December 4

CCKids is community-based lead agency contracted by the Florida Department of Children & Families.

Click to Sign Up!

Watch for Us this Holiday Season

Whether you're at a parade, strolling through a festival of trees or taking the kiddies to a local trunk-or-treat event, you're likely to see Communities Connected for Kids this holiday season.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to know where we'll be next. For now, here are a few of our upcoming engagements:

- Trunk or Treat, Oct. 10, 4-6:30 p.m., Texas Roadhouse, 210 NW Peacock Blvd, Port St. Lucie.
- Trunk or Treat, Oct. 13, 6-9 p.m., Havert Fenn Center, Fort Pierce.
- [Trunk or Treat](#), Oct. 20, 1-4 p.m., Fort Pierce Women's Club, 2408 S. 29th St., Fort Pierce.
- [Tykes & Teens Festival of Trees and Lights](#), Nov. 14-18, The Flagler Center, 201 SW Flagler Ave., Stuart.
- [Vero Beach Christmas Parade](#), Dec. 2.
- [Okeechobee Christmas Festival and Parade](#), Dec. 9.

Our guests of honor at this year's parades will be our 2023 Volunteers of the Year. They will have a place of honor on our CCKids float.



Our entry for the Tykes and Teens Festival of Trees - an event in its 16th year - will be a wreath designed as an advent calendar, with each day revealing the granted wish of a child in foster care.

To make the wreath competitive in the event's silent auction, we also plan to include small-denomination gift cards in our entry. If you have a business and would like to contribute a gift card to our wreath, please email christina.kaiser@cckids.net.

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