



Connections - June 11, 2025



*More than 140 people registered for the 2025 1k for Kids and Story Stroll - a nearly 100 percent increase from the previous year. Pictured, from top left are: the Williams and Wisecup Families; CCKids Chief Executive Officer Carol Deloach and Christy Gillis, the Southeast Region Community Director for the Department of Children and Families; Leslie Pfeiffer, Christina Kaiser and Leslie Lutz tending registration; Jerra Wisecup getting a painted tattoo; the Lesa Sims Family; Camelot Community Care staff; volunteer Sara Staley and her children at the water station, and some children paying a visit to the registration booth (the faces of children are obscured to protect their privacy.)*

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# Steps Toward Change: CCKids' 1K Draws Crowd and Fosters New Hope

**Port St. Lucie** – More than 100 community members turned out for the 2025 CCKids 1K for Kids & Story Stroll on May 17, held for the first time at the scenic Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens and newly expanded Pioneer Park.

The event, now in its fifth year, continues to grow as both a celebration of local foster families and a powerful recruitment and awareness initiative. Attendees walked a winding 1K route through lush gardens, butterfly habitats and orchid displays, punctuated with story stations that shared real-life experiences from the foster care community.

“The support from the community was incredible,” said Jerra Wisecup, CCKids Licensing and Caregiver Support Specialist. “Hosting the event in such a beautiful space made it extra special, and we’re so thankful to the City of Port St. Lucie and the Friends of the Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens for partnering with us.”

As part of the agency’s *25in2025* campaign to recruit 25 new foster homes by year’s end, the event offered numerous opportunities for attendees to engage and learn more about becoming a foster parent—or how to support the foster care system in other meaningful ways.

One attendee was so inspired by the stories and mission of CCKids that she approached the team seeking information on how to become a foster parent—a testament to the power of connection the event aims to create.

“The heart of this event is about making connections,” Wisecup said. “Whether it’s deciding to foster or simply supporting foster families in your community, every action matters. One small act of kindness – one connection - can change a child’s life.”

Did you miss the event but want to get involved? Visit [www.cckids.net](http://www.cckids.net) or text (772) 528-0362 for more information on fostering or volunteering.

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## Backpacks, Pencils & Big Hearts: Join the Back-to-School Bash for Kids in Foster Care

**Port St. Lucie, FL** — Ready, set... shop! Communities Connected for Kids is kicking off summer with a pencil-sharp mission: making sure every child in foster care heads back to school with the tools they need to succeed—and a big smile on their face.



From June 1 through July 21, we're running our online Back-to-School Drive, and it couldn't be easier to help. For about \$30, you can purchase a backpack stuffed to the zippers with school supplies, and it will be delivered straight to us for assembly and distribution. No crowds, no traffic, no trying to remember which aisle the glue sticks are in—just a few clicks and you're a hero.

We're also proud to once again partner with our longtime friends at the [United Way of St. Lucie County](#), who have included us in their community school supply drive for more than 20 years. That means any donation to the United Way's school supply campaign also supports local children in foster care. Double win!

"Back to school is an exciting time for most kids," said Christina Kaiser, CCKids community relations director. "But for those in foster care, it can be a reminder of everything they've lost. A new backpack, filled with fresh supplies, sends a powerful message: You matter. We believe in you. We're rooting for your future."

So whether you're team purple pencil case or neon highlighter squad, every donation counts—and every backpack brings a little more joy, stability and confidence to a child who truly needs it.

How to Help:

- Visit [cckids.net](http://cckids.net) to purchase a pre-filled backpack.
- Donate school supplies directly to the United Way of St. Lucie County.
- Spread the word on social media using #BacktoSchool and tag us @cconnectedforkids!

Let's send these kids back to school with more than notebooks—we're packing them with hope. Click [here](#) to get started.

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## #25in2025 Recruitment Campaign Nears Goal with One Home to Go

**Port St. Lucie, Fla.** – A bold campaign to recruit 25 new foster homes is on the brink of success, thanks to a surge in community interest and commitment.

Launched in April 2024 by Communities Connected for Kids, the

foster-care recruitment campaign has inspired 39 inquiries and led to 10 newly licensed homes since the beginning of this year alone.

That brings the total number of new foster homes recruited since the campaign's start to 24—just one shy of the goal to welcome 25 new foster families within a 12-month window.

Originally called #25by2025, the initiative aimed to license 25 foster families by January 1, 2025. Coming short of the original goal—but still seeing strong momentum and a steady stream of interest—CCKids extended the campaign into the new year, rebranding it #25in2025 to reflect a full-year recruitment effort.

“We’ve seen firsthand how a single foster home can transform lives,” said Cheri Sheffer, CCKids Chief Operating Officer. “Reaching 24 new homes means more children staying in their communities, more siblings staying together, and more healing happening in loving, stable environments.”

With just one home left to reach the goal, CCKids is calling on caring adults across the Treasure Coast and Okeechobee County to consider becoming a foster parent.

“Every inquiry matters. Every conversation counts,” Sheffer added. “We’re inviting our neighbors to be the one that makes the difference.”

To learn more about becoming a foster parent, call (772) 873-7800, and ask for Jerra.



## Inside the Mission

### -Celebrating Reunited Families

We asked our staff to share stories of healing to honor and celebrate National Reunification Month. Here are two from our folks in Martin and St. Lucie counties:

*"We have a family that reunified in April. At the beginning of the case, they were resistant to sobriety and cooperating with case management. After much work with the parents and providers, the parents came around, and I am happy to say are three months into their reunification with their beautiful children. They are doing so well, and we are very proud of all their*

accomplishments." - Mary A., Stuart

*"One case manager had a father who was a very involved father but just needed additional support. The father wasted no time engaging in services and showing the necessary behavior change to be reunified with his children. He has stated multiple times he does not want to do anything to risk traumatizing his children again."*- Mo S. and Brittany W.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) this month to hear more stories like these!

Communities Connected for Kids | 549 NW Lake Whitney Pl. Ste. 204 | Port St. Lucie, FL  
34986 US

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