



The Helping Hand

The voice of Community Partnership for Children

We restore families, support caring relatives, connect children with loving homes and prepare adolescents for adulthood.

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Jack and Jill of America hosting children's fashion show and luncheon March 21



The local chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. is hosting a children's fashion show and luncheon on Sunday, March 21. A few tickets are still available for the event which will be held at the Sunset Harbor Yacht Club in Daytona Beach at 1pm.

Founded in 1938, Jack and Jill of America is an African-American organization of mothers who nurture future leaders by strengthening children through chapter programming, community service, legislative advocacy and philanthropic giving. The members believe every child, with proper guidance and opportunity, can be a leader. Staying true to this vision, the chapter is designating a portion of the event's proceeds to support the

Community Partnership for Children Mentor Program.

Ms. Ybeth Bruzual of Central Florida News 13 has volunteered to serve as mistress of ceremonies. She calls herself an "endless prisoner of hope" and demonstrates that by her many community activities.

Fashion show models include about 20 boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 17 who have volunteered to model for the show. But don't be fooled by the mention of fundraising and volunteer models. There are choreographed steps to the program much like that of a designer show. The models are taking the event very seriously and have been practicing every Saturday for two to three hours for several weeks. The Ormond Beach Bealls Department Store on Granada Avenue is generously providing the wardrobe for the models.

To join in on the fun, please contact Jo Lynn Deal at (386) 944-4709 for details or visit communitypartnershipforchildren.org.



Volunteer Jennifer Ferguson honored as Distinguished Friend of Children, page 2.

UCF students coordinate Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament to support Community Partnership for Children

A team of business students from the University of Central Florida Cornerstone class have decided to help Community Partnership for Children as part of a semester project. They are coordinating a Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament for April 18 at the Daytona Beach Kennel Club and Poker Room.

"We wanted to do something different as a fundraiser," said student member Oscar Ruiz. "We think this is a great cause and this will be a fun event."

The tournament includes a \$65 buy in with options to re-buy and purchase charity or dealer add-ons. The winner of the tournament takes home the grand prize pot plus a two-day stay at an oceanfront resort in Daytona Beach.

The team developed an event sponsorship package giving local businesses the opportunity to support the cause. Many sponsorship levels include seats at the tournament and

promotional exposure leading up to the event.

For more information, contact Jo Lynn Deal at (386) 944-4709.



Volunteer Jennifer Ferguson to be honored as Distinguished Friend of Children

By day she's a certified financial planner with her own Raymond James Financial Services office in Port Orange. By night and day, she's superwoman. She's Jennifer Ferguson and she has been selected as this year's Distinguished Friend of Children for Community Partnership for Children. The award is presented annually at the Friends of Children Breakfast event and was created to honor a local resident who has made a tremendous commitment to local children and children's efforts.

"We selected Jennifer for many, many reasons," said CEO Bill Babiez. "She has been helping children for over a decade through her work with the Port Orange Rotary and her personal involvement with our agency. We could never thank her enough for all

that she does for children."

All while being a wife, mother of two, and business owner, Jennifer leads the annual holiday toy drive with her Rotary friends and helps hundreds of children each year under this initiative.

In 2007, Jennifer completed the Mentor Program training with Community Partnership for Children and was matched as a Mentor to Stacy, a teen in foster care. After serving as Stacy's mentor for two years, Jennifer eventually became Stacy's non-relative caregiver.

"I don't know where I would be without the kindness she so warmly offers," said Stacy.

Jennifer is a living testimony as to how



Jennifer Ferguson with son Evan.

important community involvement is and the difference one person can make. Her involvement has encouraged local businesses to become event sponsors and residents to step up for children. She lives the mission and her commitment is inspiring others to do the same.

Fifth Annual Friends of Children Breakfast, April 28

Longtime supporters Riverside Bank and Burgoyne Properties, Limited are again stepping up as the presenting sponsors for the fifth annual Friends of Children Breakfast. The signature event is slated for Wednesday, April 28 at 8:30am. Attended by an average of 200 child advocates, the event showcases a year of progress and promise for local children. This year's event will be held at the Sunset Harbor Yacht Club in Daytona Beach.

The event planning committee is working on several keynote speaker ideas. The mission of the speaker is to offer guests a glimpse of the work the agency does through testimony from someone who is actively involved. Past event speakers have included a former foster child, a foster mother and biological mother, an adoptive mother, and last year's event with a volunteer mentor.

"We could never do this work alone. Our success relies on the partnerships we have within the community. Whether with our providers, or local businesses, or individuals," said Bill Babiez, chief executive officer for Community Partnership for Children. "When you hear the experiences of those working directly with children, it really hits home and shows the tremendous impact even just one person can make in a child's life. There's room for everyone to be involved in this mission."

The Friends of Children event is the signature fundraising event for Community Partnership for Children. In the wake of federal funding cuts, much needed donations and sponsorships from the event provide an average of \$45,000 to support children's programs.

Join us for the
5th Annual
Friends of Children
Breakfast

Wednesday, April 28

8:30 am

Sunset Harbor Yacht Club

861 Ballough Road

Daytona Beach

\$20 per ticket

RSVP by April 20

Jo Lynn Deal

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When I first learned of the teen mentor program with CPFC, I figured mentoring a teen in foster care would be like having the little sister that I always wanted. I imagined us going to the mall together, hanging out at the beach, talking about "boys", and just helping her out when she needed me. But what I never imagined was the change that took place in my life and my mentee's life from just a few casual hours of leisure time each week.

Having a sister who aged out of foster care, I was somewhat familiar with the foster system. I was only ten and able to stay home with my grandparents when she was placed in the custody of the state. I remember often feeling envious of all the things that my sister told me that she was doing while in foster care. I remember thinking, 'Wow, maybe life would have been way more fun if I went with my sister instead of staying with granny and poppy.' But what I didn't realize until later in life was that all of the "activities" and "programs" that my sister spoke about were actually structured, court ordered, or required as part of her state care. I was under the impression that kids in foster care got to do all sorts of fun stuff to try to

make up for not being home with a mom and dad. Although my sister later told me when we were adults how difficult it was to be under state care, it never really set in until a recent visit with Jessica, my mentee.

After about eight visits with my mentee, during an ordinary trip to the mall one Saturday, I realized that my new friend was in a really great mood. She was smiling as she sang and danced along to the music in the car. It was as if she was a completely different girl than the somewhat quiet and reserved kid I met just a few weeks past. When I asked her why she was in such a good mood, I wasn't prepared for the impact her simple response would have on me.

"Nothing, really," she said, "I just feel free with you."

It was at that very moment that I felt so guilty and foolish for thinking that my sister had it easy in foster care while I was home with old people and looking after an ill mother. I finally realized how badly I took for granted the simple freedoms of being a kid at home and not in foster care: freedom to travel to a relative's home without the need for

a court order; freedom to choose who I wanted to live with and not the other way around; freedom to choose who I confide in and not who was assigned to me as a counselor; and the freedom to make a typical teen's mistake without fear of being rejected by my foster parents.

After that simple trip to the mall that day with Jessica, I decided that my time with her would no longer be part of a "program." My time with Jess now is simply because I choose to spend time with a unique and terrific kid. I choose to see her on both her tough days and her great days when she's full of song and dance in the passenger seat of the little Mazda. And although there are still several other teens that need my attention as a caring mentor, I'll keep picking up Jessica each week because I know just how lucky I am that she chose me. And until she's full of confidence and making her own decisions in her life, she'll always have her little place to be free.

Tiffany Pryor, Jessica's Mentor



YOU can make a difference!

There are so many ways **YOU** can truly make a difference in the lives of local children in need. Read the stories of those who have already found their fit in a child's life and find your unique way to get involved.

Learn more about **Project YOU** by visiting our Web site:
communitypartnershipforchildren.org.



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Calendar of Events

Spring is for sharing. Share time with your family at an upcoming event to help support our programs and, most importantly, local children in need. Enjoy a great time networking with partners of Community Partnership for Children. **To get involved, please contact Jo Lynn Deal at 386-944-4709.**



March 2010

- ✧ March 18 - East Central Florida Foster-Adoptive Parent Association Meeting
- ✧ March 21 - Jack and Jill Fashion Show

April 2010

- ✧ April 18 - Charity Poker Tournament
- ✧ April 28 - Friends of Children Breakfast Event

For details on all events, please visit our Web site at communitypartnershipforchildren.org.

Lights, camera, action!



The circle of love image pictured above is one of many video sets designed and coordinated by volunteers Shane Harper and Sally Evans. The two are the creative artists behind a Community Partnership for Children video.

To be released in late March, the video shows how important community involvement is in the care of foster children. Following the theme 'Choose a different ending', the video presents the effects of a happy ending and how, by working together, everyone can make a difference.

Last year hundreds of children went through what most of us can never imagine: 506 children were removed from their homes; 145 children had their parent's rights terminated because of abuse, neglect or abandonment; and 59 children turned 18 leaving the extreme shelter of foster care to find their way on their own without the support of family.

The statistics are staggering but Community Partnership for Children is taking the steps to change the ending for these children. A family preservation program is placing services directly in the home so that children don't have to be removed. The adoptions team is working to find homes for children whose parent's rights have been terminated. A mentor program is matching older teens with a trusted friend who will be there in the long run.

Volunteers like Shane and Sally are helping to spread the word so that more people get involved. The message is simple; there is a place for everyone in the role of protecting children.

Join the mission... make a difference

Here are some ideas:

- Make a donation today.
- Sponsor an adoption matching event or sponsor one child to attend the event.
- Donate giveaway items for distribution at community events.
- Provide advertisement for our special events, foster & adoptive parent recruitment, and mentor recruitment.
- Hold a fundraising event.
- Volunteer.

Questions? Please call 386-944-4709