



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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Inside this issue:

Local heroes soak up the chance to help children

JT's Seafood Shack of Palm Coast is hosting its second annual "Soak A Server Charity Fundraiser". This year's event proceeds will benefit Community Partnership for Children and will specifically support adoption efforts toward finding loving homes for local children.

Volusia and Flagler Counties had 169 adoptions during fiscal year 2007-2008, up from 156 the year before.

"Much of our success relies on help from the community. The more people who help us create awareness about the need, the sooner these children will have a place to call home," said Ron Zychowski, chief executive officer for Community Partnership for Children.

The event has been organized by John Doering, Brandy Shirley and Susan Hiltz, of JT's Seafood Shack. The team has been pounding the pavement in an effort

to make a difference for those children awaiting a forever home and they have secured over 60 sponsorships. Susan is an adoptive parent of a special needs child. Susan's seven year old son has made his own special contribution of \$10 toward the effort.

The goal for JT's is to raise \$10,000 in support of adoption efforts. The event includes a silent auction with unbelievable prizes. There will also be a dunking booth, where restaurant servers along with local business owners, community figures, and members of the Community Partnership for Children team will sit for a chance to be dunked. J.W. Gilmore and the A1A Blues Band have generously donated their talents and will provide musical entertainment.

Join in the fun on Sunday, August 17 from noon to close at JT's Seafood Shack.

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Community Partnership for Children takes over as lead agency for Putnam County



Community Partnership for Children has provided case management services to Putnam County since July

2007 and was recently awarded the contract to take over as the lead agency for the county effective July 1, 2008. This transition expands the service area to include Putnam County along with Volusia and Flagler. The total number of children in care for the region is now 1,460.

Immediately upon entering the Putnam community as a subcontracted provider, Community Partnership for Children continued to effectively execute its

mission of excellence in child welfare service delivery. A focus on performance and results has lead to a significant decrease in the total number of children in foster care in Putnam County. The transition has also brought badly needed mental health and parent support services to the community.

An open house for the Putnam office is being planned for November.

Dear Friends,

Our fiscal year ended on June 30 and my team and I continue to focus on safely reuniting children with their families. Our Annual Report will soon follow with details of our progress.

This month I received an email of a video depicting foster care from the child's perspective. I was reminded once again how devastating foster care is for children. All the fear, uncertainty, and loss that accompanies the experience is unimaginable to those of us who were blessed with a loving family.

I was also reminded that our work, our focus, and our commitment truly matters to these children. They are counting on all of us to help them. Please consider exploring ways to join our mission.

Sincerely,

Ron Zychowski, CEO

By The Numbers

Child Abuse

Volusia, Flagler & Putnam Counties

196

Abuse Reports Every Week

13

Children Removed From Families Every Week

15

Children Reunited With Families Every Week

1,460

Abused Children Being Helped Today

My day with parents "in training"

The *My Day With* column gives me the opportunity to spend a day in another's shoes and gives you the opportunity to learn about the many vital roles at Community Partnership for Children.

As we finished our fiscal year with a record number of adoptions at 169, I decided to spend time with prospective adoptive parents. To do this, I enrolled in the Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) class, a preparatory class required for all foster and adoptive parents. I've spent several weeks in training with prospective adoptive parents.

As the mother of a 17 year old son, I have parented primarily using on-the-job training. Much to my dismay, by the third session of my parenting classes I realized that I have made at least 9 of the 10 most common parenting mistakes. The class has also taught me that I really have no concept of what it is like to be in foster care, to have your life disrupted indescribably.

To help parents even remotely imagine the trauma, they are asked to partici-

pate in an exercise called Guided Imagery. You begin by closing your eyes and thinking of your home. Recall the smells and sounds of family dinner. Recall your absolute favorite room in your home, the place where you unwind and hang out. Imagine being in that room playing a card game. It's late Saturday night.

You are pulled from your thoughts by an abrupt, official-sounding knock on your front door. You peek through the curtains and see a police car and men of authority standing on your doorstep. Your parents open the door. It sounds like they might be arguing although you are not sure. You are told that it is necessary for you to leave your home. You have to hurry. You are handed a garbage bag and are told to gather as many items as you can and put them in the bag. You can't bring your pet, friends, or neighbors.

You run to your room and begin to put clothes into the bag. You worry because you are not sure how many outfits you will need. Do you need school clothes? What about church

clothes? You urgently inventory and prioritize your possessions.

You suddenly lose your concentration for a moment because you hear your mother and father arguing. Are they crying too? You wonder if you are allowed out of your room to check on your parents. You decide not to chance it because you don't want to get into any more trouble than you are already in. Where in the world are they going to take you?

You scan the room and grab your radio clock, your stuffed animal dog, two books and your half full soda bottle. You squeeze the bag and find a little more room for one more item. You quickly grab your favorite picture, the one of you and your little sister on Halloween dressed like ghosts. There are so many things left that won't fit in the bag. Can you come back for them? Where are you going? It's not *that* bad here.

So, how does this make you feel? It's only day one.

By Jo Lynn Deal

Look at the beauty the tide brought in

Burgers, hotdogs, sand sculpting, and awesome waves summed up a day at the beach for twenty five local teenagers. The teens joined a Christian surf group for a day of surfing and fun on July 12.

The special occasion was an adoption matching event where children eligible for adoption are brought together in an informal setting with parents seeking to adopt.

The event was sponsored by The Beachside Church in Ormond Beach.

For many of the children, this was their first experience surfing and one of a handful of days they've ever spent at the beach.



For sisters Destiny and Dawn, ages 12 and 13, days like these are important.

The girls desperately want to be adopted. When asked what they want from a prospective parent, Destiny said, "We just want someone who will be nice to us."



Area churches join effort to find foster and adoptive parents

Many area churches have joined in the mission of helping local children find a loving family and a place to call home.

Adoptive parents Steve and Sandra Hogue support and lead the efforts at Calvary Christian Center. Inspired by their own experience with adoption, Steve and Sandra dedicate an unbelievable amount of time to helping children.

"I never realized the void in my life until we brought kids into our home through adoption. Experiencing the joy they bring to our family is so rewarding," said Steve.

Calvary is offering the required MAPP classes as an alternate location for prospective parents. The classes have added more than 50 new foster homes to the area. Calvary has also spon-

sored a prayer vigil and community awareness events.

Most recently, the church is planning a **Question and Answer Night on Sunday, August 24 at 6 P.M.** The event is part of a newly launched Orphans Ministry in an effort to bring awareness to foster care and adoption. Special Guests from the Embraced by Grace Adoption Agency, Community Partnership for Children representatives, and a panel of foster/adoptive parents will be on hand to answer questions. There is no cost to attend, no strings attached, and childcare is provided.

The Beachside Church in Ormond Beach recently launched a foster/adoptive parent support group that meets monthly. The church has also sponsored a matching event and

readily opens its doors to any effort supporting children in need of families.

Riverbend Community Church in Ormond Beach is holding an adoption awareness seminar on **September 20 from 10:00 A.M. to noon.**

Embraced by Grace Adoption Agency and Community Partnership for Children have each launched separate speaking calendars extending through December 2008. Representatives from both agencies will be presenting to local area churches about the need for foster and adoptive parents. All churches in the community are invited to participate. Presentations can be as in depth or as brief as needed.

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



Take advantage of amazing travel deals while also turning your vacation or your business travel into a donation! visit www.communitypartnershipforchildren.org to learn more.



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Calendar of Events

Swing into the fall season 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.**

August 2008

- ✧ August 17: JT's Seafood Shack, Palm Coast
Soak A Server fundraiser event
- ✧ August 21: Adoption Support Group Meeting
- ✧ August 23: Putnam County Youth Explosion

November 2008

- ✧ November: National Adoption Awareness Month
- ✧ November 15: Adoption Event
- ✧ November 19-23: Glenn Wilkes Classic

January 2009

- ✧ January 7: 4th Annual Friends of Children Breakfast



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

Rebecca

Case manager Claudine Malfatti has been working with 17 year old Rebecca since the summer of 2006. After Rebecca was removed from her father's home, she moved in with her aunt. She was then later removed from her aunt's care and brought into foster care.

While in foster care, Rebecca has gone through a series of disrupted placements and has missed many days of school. She became pregnant and suffered the loss of her stillborn baby at four months.

Claudine vividly remembers one of the most difficult discussions she has had with Rebecca.

"I can still see Rebecca crying when she told me, *If I had known it was going to go this way, I would have never told on my Daddy,*" says Claudine.

"I tried to help Rebecca see that her decision to tell on her father and to ask for help showed that she cared about herself," explains Claudine. "It showed that she is an important and valuable person in this world, whose voice matters. The decision Rebecca made to tell on her father was also in many ways a decision Rebecca made for herself to survive."

Despite the very long and rough road Rebecca has traveled, she is now succeeding. Last year she was placed with a family friend in Ft. Lauderdale. She is due to graduate high school this year and will go onto college under the Independent Living Program. Rebecca has a true heart for children and plans to pursue a career in Pediatrics. She is anxious and excited about having her own place and living her life on her own.

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