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# Brevard Family Partnership

*A Community Based Care Agency*

## Board Report



May 25, 2017

Patricia Nellius-Guthrie, CEO

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## **Narrative Report**

April was Child Abuse Prevention Awareness month. BFP and C.A.R.E.S. along with our community partners, DCF and the Child Abuse Prevention Task Force hosted a series of events throughout the month to raise awareness of child abuse in Brevard. On April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Task Force hosted the Annual Child Abuse Prevention Recognition Banquet with over 200 in attendance. I am pleased to report BFP Foster Parents, Mr. Kenz and Mrs. Marlene Baptiste were recipients of the Foster Parent of the Year award. Their dedication and commitment is a testament to the extraordinary families in our community who partner with us to care for and protect Brevard's vulnerable children. Below please find their nomination below:

Mr. and Mrs. Baptiste have been foster parents in Brevard County since 2013. Not only are they a traditional foster home, Mrs. Baptiste has been trained to care for medically fragile children. The Baptiste family knows the true meaning of partnership and maintaining connections while the children are in their home and once they are reunified. They have taken siblings sets over the past couple years and enjoy keeping siblings together to maintain their connection and bond. They also have a history of working with biological family's to keep the connection and bond intact while the children are in their care. They accept kids that most other foster parents are unwilling to take because of their complex behavioral or medical needs. They meet all the needs of the children placed in their home and go above and beyond. They previously had a sibling set of four that they planned to take to Haiti with them if they were not able to be reunified prior to the trip as they do not like to leave the children and treat them just like family. These same siblings were reunified and remain a constant within the Baptiste family. Mrs. Baptiste supports the mother and speaks with her multiple times a week. Mrs. Baptiste expressed they are there whenever the mother needs them. They drive to Cocoa from Palm Bay at least once a month to pick the children up to take them to church and spend time with them. They have taken the mother places if she needs a ride and provided her with any needed necessities to assist her in meeting the needs of her children. They currently have children in their home that are of elementary age that have delays due to neglect and medical needs outside of most people's comfort zone for their age group. They have made a commitment to help these children learn to be potty trained and catch up academically with their age group. They don't ever complain about the numerous doctor appointments, tremendous amounts of therapy and services these children have had in the handful of months they have been in foster care. The Baptistes have always maintained that positive attitude of "whatever it takes". Mr. and Mrs. Baptiste have expressed their motivation to continue being foster parents is their love and compassion to help. They expressed their love for children and having their home full of them.

Additionally, I am pleased to report the C.A.R.E.S. Safety Management Services Team were the recipients of the Social Services Group/Team award. Below is their nomination for their outstanding commitment for the safety of our children and families:

Each Team member has their own unique talent that they bring to the table. Each Team member uses that talent along with the other Team member's talents, to assist these families to self-sufficiency. Our Team members plan the week so, that we are with each of these families 3-5 days per week. The Team consists of a North Team and a South Team and has up to ten families on each of these Teams. The Team works with the families on many areas of their everyday lives. The Team goes in and assesses the situation first and takes it from there. It could be working on emergencies that arise. It could be working on a families' substance abuse, it could be working on a families' homelessness, it could be working on a families' Domestic violence situation. Whatever their need maybe. The Team looks for resourcing for the families in whatever they need it for. The Team provides nurturing parenting classes and some Team members provide the family therapy sessions. The Team also provides transportation for the family to and from appointments, and the number one thing that we all provide, is support. Something some of these families do not have. The Team could also be on the phone late at night, or early in the morning trying to calm a family member down, we have dealt with many meltdowns as well. Whatever it is, the Team is there for the family. The Team does make a difference. The Team wants the family to succeed. Working alongside Dept. Children and Families, many calls come in and some of the Team members have to be available to meet up with them, no matter if they already have a full schedule. Some weekends are also part of the working environment all depends on the needs of the family. This Team works tirelessly to make things happen for the families. This Team has the best Boss who helps guide us and support us through it all. I couldn't ask for a better Team to work with and to see the family succeed is what we strive for and even though a few did not make it, this Team has made a huge difference in these Families' lives. A big pat on the back for us all! :)

The Team has saved many children from going into Foster Care! The numbers will show that!

The Team worked tirelessly to make a difference in these families' lives. Many hours were spent and, no one gave up. The Team did what they had to do to help keep these children in the homes with their parents; Long hours, knowledge, tools and commitment. The Team does it all and all guided by our Boss Heather Howlett! :)

I am nominating all of us, because I see the hard work first hand, that we all put into this Team to be able to make a difference in these families, and keep their children from going into dependency! This is a 24 hour, sometimes 7 days a week job!

May is National Foster Parent Recognition Month. On Saturday May 6th the Suntree United Methodist Church (SUMC) hosted the annual Foster Parent Appreciation Picnic with over 200 in attendance. Valerie Holmes and LaChrista Jones did an outstanding job coordinating the celebration along with their team and a host of volunteers.

On April 24<sup>th</sup> Valerie Homes and I had the privilege of meeting with 2 representatives of the Suntree United Methodist Church who were interested in learning more about our mission and vision and ways in which they can support our work. Over the past 18 months we have made a concerted effort to engage and expand our Faith Based Partnerships. Below is a list of efforts and partnerships to date:

- CenterPoint Church-Host Monthly Foster Parent Support Groups
- Holy Trinity – Identified partner with the Excelerate Initiative;
- Suntree United Methodist Church-Hosted Foster Parent Appreciation Event on Saturday;
- Calvary Chapel Surfside-Hosts Foster Parent Recruitment Events;
- The House Church Christmas Extravaganza-Hosted Foster Parent Christmas Party;
- Trinity Wellsprings Church-Hosts Foster Parent Recruitment Event;
- Ascension Catholic Church-Hosts Foster Parent Recruitment Event and Foster Parent Thanksgiving Luncheon;
- Family Promise (CARES)-Affiliation of multiple churches to support homeless families and
- First Baptist Church of Melbourne-Annual Breakfast with Santa.

I am pleased to report that LaChrista Jones was the recipient of the 2017 Brevard's outstanding mother by the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. LaChrista is a great asset to BFP and an inspiration to us all. Please join me in congratulating LaChrista.

The new 2017-18 Leadership Team nominations and selection has occurred and they will begin their 18 months of service in June 2017. The new LT will be introduced to the Board in August. The charge assigned by the outgoing LT is to, improve collaboration in the community of practice and identify and execute strategies to increase resources and support for at-risk foster and adoptive families and their children.

In addition to Cassie Bennett and Patrice Grier who will continue in their service as Chair and Vice Chair for the next 6 months the new membership includes:

- Ayala, Jessica
- Breckenridge, Melissa
- Coyle, April
- Eady, Melissa
- Faenza-Seward, Staci
- Foley, Katie
- Hernandez, Cyndi

- Jackson, Shan
- Kelly, LaShica
- Laye, Ellen
- Martin, Monica
- Missick, Aisha
- Mitchell, Melvin
- Williams, Mable
- Jenkins, Sheralyn

Congratulations to the outgoing LT members for their outstanding service. The 2016-17 Team was charged with increasing community awareness. Some of their accomplishments include:

- Hosting a Legislative breakfast which was a great success
- Holding over 9 community outreach education sessions, with 292 face to face contacts and 48 registered to receive the BFP newsletter.
- Improving the look and feel of the Care Center facilities
- Analyzing and reporting on the staff satisfaction survey
- Hosting the United Way Campaign
- Hosting the employee appreciation week events

On May 5th a team from BFP and C.A.R.E.S participated in the GAL Disabilities Conference to share how Wraparound has advanced over the past 25 years.

As you are aware Judge McKibben's term as Dependency Court Judge comes to an end July 1, 2017. We are grateful to Judge McKibben for her dedication and commitment to Brevard's vulnerable children and families and for her outstanding service. Judge McKibben will be present at the June Board meeting to address the Board as she departs. Judge Crawford will take over Dependency Court on July 1. Judge Crawford was extended an invitation to address the Board in June and sends his regrets that he is unable to attend as he has a trial docket that day. Please mark your calendars for 2 very special events: the Reunification Celebration to be held at the Courthouse in Viera; courtroom 4-D on June 2, 2017 and our final Mass Adoption Ceremony with Judge McKibben presiding over the events to be held on June 16, 2017 at the Courthouse in Viera; courtroom 4-D.

The Legislative session ended on Monday May 8, 2017. It was a very busy session with several changes and laws affecting child welfare that have passed. We are waiting on the Governor to review and approve the budget. At this juncture we project a \$400,000-600,000 increase in funding. Key Legislation that passed includes:

- SB 60: Keys to Independence
- HB 151: Permitting Therapy Dogs use in Court Proceedings
- HB 185: Reducing State Park Fees for Foster Families
- HB 1121: Affecting Residential Placement, Paternity, Diligent Search, Family Functioning Assessment, Conditions for Return, Placement Assessment, Pilot of a Shared Family Residential, CBC CEO Salary Cap of 150% of the Secretary's annual salary, Group Care and Residential Quality standards, Foster Home Quality standards

The final phase and draft of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan should be available to the Board for review at the May Board meeting.

Growing Tree Solutions and their partners have filed the required legal documentation to form a separate entity to proceed as directed by the Board in establishing a partnership with the NCFIE to develop the UM platform. Kelly Sweat Darnell and Marc Slager will be present at the June meeting to meet with members to update you on the status of the legal entity and answer any questions you may have.

On April 11, 2017 BFP received a Public Records Request from IMPOWER'S Law firm. BFP acknowledged receipt of the request on April 12, 2017 and has been working to compile the documents that are responsive to the request. Dean Mead is in possession of the documentation for the PRR and has issued a letter requesting payment to the IMPOWER Attorney.

I am pleased to report that 100% of the Case Management staff have submitted their application packets to join Family Allies on June 26<sup>th</sup>. This is a great accomplishment and Kudos to Bill Bucher for his diligence in setting the goal and reaching it.

Since the Board's decision to localize control of Case Management BFP has received verbal support and letters from the GAL, Eckerd, the Haven, 211, Brevard Behavioral Consultants and an affirmative email from Jack Levine, CSSP, Mary Anne Sterling with GRG, Crosswinds and Alan Abramowitz.

The Dependency Court Summit is scheduled to occur on August 29th at the JW Marriot in Orlando. Members who are interested in attending should inform Laurie Anna ASAP to ensure hotel accommodations can be secured on site.

Congratulations to Stockton Whitten for his new appointment as Associate Vice President of Facilities and Special Projects at Eastern Florida State College (EFSU). I am pleased to report that Stockton Whitten has been appointed by the County Commission as a County appointee to the Board.

Mark Peterson has sent a written request to the Board for an attendance waiver as he will be traveling for 3 months over the summer. Mark would like to remain on the Board but requires an exception to the attendance policy which is customary practice for members who are unable to fulfil the requirement due to an extended leave period.

I would like to congratulate and thank our Board members who have anniversaries of service and recognize:

Stockton Whitten on his 14 year Anniversary  
Eric Smith on his 5 year Anniversary  
Kathleen Rich-New on her 5 year Anniversary  
Barb Loftus on her 1 year Anniversary

I would also like to thank Dr. Howes for his generous donation to purchase a table for our youth at the 2017 GALA.

May marks my 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as the CEO of BFP. It is hard to believe 13 years have passed since my arrival in 2004. A lot has changed over the years and much progress has been made in spite of the obstacles we have faced with funding and AO reductions, an increase in the number of children entering out of home care and the overall change in landscape. We have accomplished a great deal as a local SOC. Some of the highlights of our success include:

- Attainment of National Accreditation of BFP and C.A.R.E.S.
- The formation of Brevard C.A.R.E.S and attainment of the intent to divert children from entry with a viable alternative, diversify and appeal to donors
- The formation of the NCFIE and establishment of a National Board of Experts in Wraparound
- The launch of the National Wraparound Certification Institute
- Attainment of the \$2.7 million risk pool funding request
- Assuming the CPA function, Mobile Response and
- The formation of the Safety Management Services Team
- Partnership with the CSSP and the formation of Brevard Youth Thrive
- The capacity to bill Medicaid for TCM to offset the C.A.R.E.S. budget
- The establishment of Brevard's first Child Welfare Endowment that currently has \$70,000 in funding

- The annual Gala as a signature fund raising event
- The attainment of over \$3 million in grants and diversified funding
- Recruitment and retention of exemplary personnel, executives and Board members
- Coordination and securing adoptions for over 800 children
- Successfully advocating for a \$1.5 million dollar special appropriation
- Successfully advocating for C.A.R.E.S. clients to be included in the Equity Allocation Formula
- The formation of our newest venture: Family Allies

It has been an honor to serve as the CEO of the BFP Family of Agencies. Thank you for your support, leadership, guidance and direction as we seek to improve the quality of life of those entrusted to our care.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Nellius  
Chief Executive Officer