

Devereux

COMMUNITY BASED CARE OF OKEECHOBEE & THE TREASURE COAST

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News & Media

Renaissance Woman of Child Welfare Nominated for State Award

Port St. Lucie – Cheri Sheffer is the Renaissance woman of child welfare.

For more than 25 years, has served in direct services and management roles ranging from targeted case management to contracts and finance. And she has public relations experience that lends her a keen appreciation and talent for telling the stories of Judicial Circuit 19.

Now Sheffer – the chief operating officer for Devereux Community Based Care – is one of seven individuals nominated by the Florida Coalition for Children to receive its Lighting the Way Award next month during the group's annual conference.

Because of her broad skill base and previous experience, Sheffer has strategic vision and the ability to see the big picture, while also keeping a narrow eye on fiscal impact. Working closely with the local behavioral health system, she helped shift some financial burdens previously carried by the Devereux CBC, freeing resources for other services and building stable ground for the local child-welfare system.

“She approaches everything she does from an outside-the-box perspective,” said Christina Kaiser, community relations director for Devereux CBC, which oversees child-welfare services in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties.



Cheri Sheffer is the Chief Operating Officer for Devereux Community Based Care, soon to be Communities Connected for Kids.

That was the case in a 2016 permanency review in which a decision was made to reunify a teenager with her mother whose parental rights had long ago been terminated.

“It just hadn’t been done before,” Sheffer said at the time. “But mom had gotten herself together and had established a support network, and the child was struggling emotionally and was alone in the world.

“It just made sense to try.”

That’s why Sheffer was nominated for this award, Kaiser said.

“She is not afraid to entertain revolutionary ideas, and she has a knack for collaboration, consensus building and problem solving.”

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