

Devereux

COMMUNITY BASED CARE OF OKEECHOBEE & THE TREASURE COAST

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News & Media

Fiscal year ends, reveals improvement for kids

Port Saint Lucie – More than 170 local children were adopted last year- a nearly 40 percent increase over expectations and one of many improvements to the safety, permanency and well-being of children served by the Devereux Community Based Care child welfare system.

Devereux CBC, the non-profit agency responsible for child-welfare services in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties, closed out its 2016 fiscal year June 30.

Improvements for the year include a 26 percent reduction in the total number of children in the system, a decrease in caseloads and in the number of children removed from their homes, a decrease in the number of children living in group care and an increase in foster homes.

"We have very good, very talented people working throughout the system to make this child-welfare experience as safe, as efficient and as least traumatic for families as possible," said Carol Deloach, Devereux CBC Chief Executive Officer. "Whether they work directly for us or for one of our providers, we are all on the same team and working toward a common goal. I think this year's numbers bear that out."



One of those providers is Children's Home Society, the organization that provides adoption services to Devereux CBC's system of care.

This year's adoption goal was 123, and the organization exceeded it by 49 children for a total of 172 local adoptions. And that number grows to 199 when the number of children whose adoptions were finalized in other parts of the state are considered.

The increase is due in large part to the talent and dedication of the local Children's Home Society adoptions team.

"Children's Home Society of Florida was able to exceed its 2015-2016 adoption goal along the Treasure Coast due to the exemplary efforts of its adoptions team who ensured each task - from recruitment to finalization - was done well," said Melissa Neeley, program director. "Every time a child finds love and support in the arms of their forever family, we find success."

Other reasons for the increase include procedural changes made a year ago that streamlined the adoption process and a renewed focus on inter-agency cooperation among the various parts of the dependency system, Deloach said.

"We worked hard, and we worked together," she said.

A graph showing the year's improvements is included below:

	Jul-15	Jul-16
Adoptions	142	172
Children Served Out-of-Circuit	124	83
Total Number of Children in Care	1284	947
Average Number of Children on a Caseload	17	15
Number of Children Served Out of Home	748	680
Number of Children Living in Residential Care	128	109
Number of Foster Homes	126	160

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