

Devereux

COMMUNITY BASED CARE OF OKEECHOBEE & THE TREASURE COAST

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News & Media

Special dinner draws more than 100 caregivers

Port St. Lucie – More than 100 local caregivers from foster homes throughout Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast came together last Friday for a rare child-free evening of dinner, dance and high-flying entertainment.

The 11th annual event was located at the Santa Lucia River Club at Ballentrae and hosted by Devereux Community Based Care, which oversees the child-welfare community in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties.

A photo booth complete with giant sunglasses and an assortment of fun props greeted foster parents as they entered the venue, while the scent of roast beef wafted in from a dining room elegantly draped in black and silver linens and swathed in purple light.

And waiting for them in a special surprise appearance was Rep. Gayle Harrell, who thanked caregivers for their service and shared information about newly passed child-welfare legislation. The representative from Stuart is a powerful champion for children's issues in Florida and often spends time with foster parents.

"It's so important that we show appreciation," said Jill Poole, caregiver and adoption support supervisor for Devereux Community Based Care.

"Foster parents spend so much time making sure our children are loved and cared for - I'm not sure how you adequately thank someone for that, but we can start with a good meal and a fun evening."



Foster Parents enjoying a dance together

Part of the fun was a special performance by Kristen Smoyer, the Ladies' World Champion Fly Boarder, who donated her time to honor caregivers at the event. Rigged to her lighted flyboard - something like a snowboard propelled into the sky by pressurized streams of water - Smoyer flipped and twirled 30 feet above the St. Lucie River, where caregivers gathered for the performance. A live video of Smoyer's act is archived on the Devereux CBC Facebook page.

The dinner was part of an ongoing celebration of foster parent appreciation.

Activities began early in the month with a Port St. Lucie Rocks event, where families were invited to paint rocks with foster parent messaging and then hide them in local parks.

The month also saw the official kick off of the One School One Child campaign, a peer-recruitment initiative that uses foster parents who work in the schools to raise awareness among educators for the need for more foster parents.

And later this summer, Devereux Community Based Care will bring its appreciation activities to an official close with its annual Foster Family Picnic and Pool Party.



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May 19, 2017

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