

Devereux

COMMUNITY BASED CARE OF OKEECHOBEE & THE TREASURE COAST

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News & Media

Fostering Hope Awards Inspired by Local Recruitment Efforts

Fostering Hope awards for extraordinary work in foster-parent recruitment were announced this spring during a series of rallies designed to focus attention on the issues of child abuse, neglect and abandonment.

Devereux Community Based Care, the non-profit organization that leads the child-welfare system in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties gave the awards in three categories, including individual, group and foster parent.

“Foster parents make the best recruiters because they have stories and experiences to share that no one else can tell,” said Christina Kaiser, community relations director for Devereux CBC.

A total of 12 recipients were recognized this year, the first time the awards were given. They include: In Indian River County, Sebastian City Councilman Bob McPartlan, King’s Baptist Church and foster parents Seth and Christa Goldsmith; in Martin County, JC Brown, Covenant Baptist Church and foster parents Shaun and Marilyn Southwick; in Okeechobee County, Dowling Watford, Methodist Men’s Group and foster parents Vincent and Ada Morris; and in St. Lucie County, Eric Seibenick, Vineyard Church and foster parents Joey and Amanda Gooch.

“Covenant Baptist Church has been involved in child welfare for many years,” said representatives for Camelot Community Care, the Devereux CBC licensing provider that nominated the church for the Fostering Hope Award. “The church has actively recruited foster parents, and we have licensed many other foster families through their recruitment efforts.”

Awards were also given to local groups who hosted the organization’s rallies, a series of community breakfasts that kicked off an eight-month recruitment campaign. Those groups included the Junior League of Martin County, the Exchange Club of the Treasure Coast, Nutmeg’s Café and Guardians for New Futures.

“We can’t do this work alone – that was exactly the point of this year’s breakfasts,” Kaiser said. “Not everyone can be a foster parent, but anyone with a voice and breath in their lungs can help us spread the word about foster care and our needs for more foster parents.”

Indeed, about half of all local children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect live in residential facilities or as far away as Jacksonville because there aren’t enough foster homes in the four-county area.

“Residential facilities are an essential part of any child-welfare system, but they should never be a child’s only option – especially young children who would thrive in a home-based environment,” Kaiser said.

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, or if you would like to receive public-relations materials to help Devereux CBC recruit, please contact Kaiser at christina.kaiser@devereuxcbc.org or call (772) 873-7800.

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