

# Devereux

COMMUNITY BASED CARE OF OKEECHOBEE & THE TREASURE COAST

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## News & Media

### Devereux CBC welcomes its newest provider - Mount Bethel

**Port St. Lucie** - Devereux CBC welcomes Mount Bethel to its child-welfare system this November, when it becomes the fourth child-placing agency to start recruiting, training and licensing foster families in the area.

"Foster-home recruitment is a priority for us," said Christina Kaiser, director of community relations for Devereux CBC. "Each of our licensing agencies brings something unique to the table, which is important when you're trying to engage families from all cultures and communities."

Two of Devereux CBC's child-placing agencies are faith-based and recruit from churches, while a third recruits from the general community.

Mount Bethel has ties to Fort Pierce and the African American community.

That's an important feature for a child-welfare system where 33 percent of all children are black but only 12 percent of existing foster homes are African American.

"Our greatest priority is to put children in stable, loving homes - regardless of race, ethnic background or religious beliefs," Kaiser said. "But ideally, the homes we have should mirror the cultural makeup of the children and families we serve."

Devereux CBC, which coordinates and oversees the child-welfare system in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties, recently was recognized by the state of Florida for its work in increasing the number of local foster homes.

Those efforts led to a 45 percent increase in the number of homes licensed during the past year - a number that made up more than 20 percent of the total number of new homes recruited throughout the state.

"We realized that we had some of the lowest numbers in the state in regard to foster homes, and we've working very hard to change that," Devereux CEO Carol Deloach said. "We now have three child-placing agencies working with us and a fourth ready to start in the next week."

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