

Devereux

COMMUNITY BASED CARE OF OKEECHOBEE & THE TREASURE COAST

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News & Media

Communities Rally for Foster Parent Recruitment: Okeechobee

It was a full house at Nutmeg's May 7th as residents throughout Okeechobee County and the Treasure Coast joined Devereux CBC to kick off this year's 25 by 25 campaign to recruit 25 new foster homes by December 25.

Guests were treated to a free breakfast provided by Nutmeg's Cafe and a host of speakers who shared their stories of foster care.

The day's message: Everyone is a recruiter.

"Not everyone can be a foster parent, but every single one of us can help recruit foster parents" Cheri Sheffer, Devereux CBC Chief Operating Officer told the crowd of 50. "Talk to your church, talk to your PTO, talk to you neighbors...just keep talking."

Sheffer emphasized the importance of a diverse placement network for children in foster care. That network includes both foster homes and group care.

"One size doesn't fit all when it comes to kids in foster care," said Rebecca Morgan, who spent several years in foster care and is now a specialist in a Devereux CBC program that prepares teens for independence after foster care. "We should send children into group care because that's what's best for them, not because that's all we have for them."

Unfortunately, many abused and neglected children from Okeechobee, where there are only two foster homes, live in residential group care because that's the only option for them.

Friday's breakfast rally was the beginning of an eight-month public relations campaign to turn that around.

"We have a very strong core of local foster parents," said Christina Kaiser, Devereux CBC director of community relations. "But we need more - we need to build on that and keep building."

All three of Devereux CBC's child-placing agencies - organizations contracted to recruit, train and license foster homes - were present at the breakfast and talked to several guests interested in learning more about becoming foster parents.

And all guests left the event with a packet of information they can use to help spread the word about foster-parent recruitment.

Materials include a series of "birth announcements" that describe how to become more involved as well as flyers and a "ways to help" card. If you are interested in receiving these materials, email christina.kaiser@devereuxcbc.org.

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