



Communities
Connected
for Kids

Connections - November 7, 2019



November is National Adoption Month. We are proud to kick off the celebrations with this picture of one of our communities' newest adoptive families. Ashley Erickson's mission is to keep siblings together. Already an adoptive mother, Ashley recently adopted a group of six children after seeing their story on a [News Channel 12 Forever Family](#) segment.

They hoped someone would adopt them, and keep them together. Someone did.

FORT PIERCE - One is gentle and small, always ready to grab the closest hand. Another is more wary, watchful over her younger brothers and sisters.

They read. They laugh. They play games. And they hope someone will adopt them and keep them together.

November is National Adoption Month, a time when organizations like ours celebrate adoption successes and focus on raising awareness for children in foster care still awaiting a “forever family”.



Thanks to hardy recruitment efforts, steadfast commitment of local adoptions staff and partnerships with the local media, we are finding loving homes for children like the ones featured above.

In fact, those children – all six of them – are among the 167 Okeechobee and Treasure Coast children who will spend Thanksgiving this year with new adoptive families. This is the fourth year in a row that our community has exceeded its adoption goal.

The first major effort to promote adoption awareness came in 1976, when Massachusetts governor Mike Dukakis initiated Adoption Week. President Gerald Ford later made the first National Adoption Week proclamation, and in 1990, the week was expanded to a month due to the number of events celebrating and promoting adoption.

We encourage you find one of these events near you. Help us celebrate local adoptive families, and learn more about adoption efforts in your community. You also can hear the stories of individual children awaiting adoption by watching our Forever Family segments during the 5 p.m. Tuesday news segments on [News Channel 12 with Liz Quirantes](#). To watch a news story about how one local adoptive mother opened her home even wider for six siblings, click [here](#).

Finally, you can learn more about adoption – and all the parts of the CCKids system of care – by visiting us at www.ckkids.net.

The mission of Communities Connected for Kids is to enhance the safety, permanency and well-being of all children in Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast through a community network of family support services. We are responsible for every abused, abandoned and neglected child in the four-county area, and we

meet this duty through a carefully designed array of services that follow our children and their families from the time they enter the system until they are returned home or placed with a new "forever family."

Biological, foster families come together for a very special Thanksgiving meal



ST. LUCIE WEST - What began as one woman's vision to bring together biological and foster families to celebrate Thanksgiving is now a local community effort to celebrate the power of co-parenting.

Biological families will join their children and the foster families caring for them for a very special Thanksgiving dinner November 23 at the Sunlight Community Church, in Port St. Lucie.

The Albert Wilson Foundation will supply the turkeys, and a committee composed of QPI (Quality Parenting Initiative) members and CCKids' Caregiver Support staff will provide all the trimmings.

"It's an opportunity for children in foster care to celebrate the holiday with their families while also demonstrating the power of co-parenting," said Jerra Wisecup, who coordinated a similar project many years ago in Georgia.

Co-parenting is a best practice championed in recent years by QPI that encourages partnership between families while children are in foster care. Research shows that co-parenting creates better transitions for children returning home and provides on-going supports to vulnerable families.

"I am honored to be a part of such an awesome event," said Rose Bailey, an adoptive mom and former foster parent who also serves on the QPI committee.

"We hope everyone will see how sharing a holiday meal can create beautiful memories and forge lasting relationships, because we're all in this together."
