



The C.C.Kids Connector



Communities Connected for Kids celebrated its ribbon-cutting finale September 13 at its downtown Vero Beach location. More than 150 total people attended the launch series, which included ceremonies in Okeechobee and Port St. Lucie and were co-hosted by the local chambers of commerce.

Making Christmas Bright needs extra sparkle

Port St. Lucie - Imagine you're 5 years old. You wake up one morning in a strange home because your mom and dad can't take care of you anymore.

Now imagine it is Christmas morning. Did Santa find you?

The Making Christmas Bright project needs some community stars to make sure the answer is, "yes."



"We're looking for businesses, social groups and churches to coordinate toy drives on our behalf," said Christina Kaiser, Communities Connected for Kids community relations director and project manager for Making Christmas Bright, a local gift drive first organized in 1999 to ensure children in foster care receive presents during the holidays.

The project, now in its 19th year, provides gifts to more than 1,000 children in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties who have been abused, abandoned or neglected and who are currently receiving services through the child-welfare system.

Participation is simple:

- Ask for a list of children's names and gift wishes by contacting the project coordinator at Christina.Kaiser@cckids.net
- Organize a toy drive with your employees or members
- Call us when you're ready for a pick up - we'll come to you! Pickup this year is scheduled for the week of December 10

Making Christmas Bright is jointly coordinated by Communities Connected for Kids and Guardians for New Futures, a nonprofit organization that helps meet the unfunded needs of children in foster care.

For more information about the project, including flyers and brochures that can be downloaded and shared, please call Kaiser at (772) 528-0362 or visit www.cckids.net.





In the clinic with nurse Pam

Fire Safety Week begins October 7, offering us a valuable opportunity to pause and review our own home safety plans.

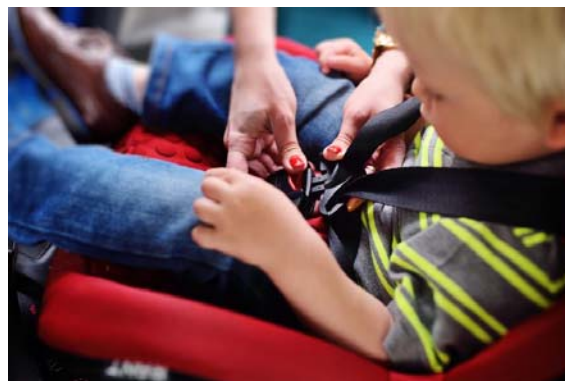
The most important rule for fire safety is to keep a cool head - don't panic, in other words.

Make sure you know where the fire extinguisher is and ensure it is up to date. If you don't have one, this might be a good week to do it.

And constantly review and update your fire safety plan. Here are a few tips to consider while reviewing and updating your plan:

- Have a family meeting and plan multiple escape routes
- Designate a specific place to meet outside, such as your neighbor's front door, so that you know everyone in your family is safe
- Perform a home fire drill to see if your family can get out of the house within three minutes
- To make these drills less scary for young children, try adding fun challenges, like overcoming obstacles and barriers to the door
- Finally, make sure your children understand that they should never hide in a closet or under a bed

Originally from Canada, Pam became a nurse in 2011 after graduating from York University in Toronto. Her clinical experience includes emergency medicine, community nursing and sexual assault care. Pam moved to Florida with her husband (and IT wizard) Jody Boyer in 2014 and began work with Communities Connected for Kids the next year. She coordinates, assists and monitors the medical needs of children served by C.C.Kids.



Meet Lily in this week's

Forever Family

Lily is a sweet little girl hoping for a church-going family who will adopt her with her three sisters, who range in age from 2 to 9.

Did you miss her story on CBS 12 News with Liz Quirantes Tuesday evening? No problem - you can catch this week's Forever Family segment again on Sunday at 6, 7 and 8 a.m.

And if you're in Broward this weekend, you can see it at 6 p.m. Saturday on NBC 6.

Tune in [here](#) and see if you might be Lily's Forever Family, or learn more by visiting ForeverFamily.Org.

Car Seat Safety Check coming to Okeechobee

Installing a car seat for younger children and babies can be a challenge, but it's essential to get it right.

Okeechobee County Fire Rescue invites you to a Car Seat Safety Check from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. October 13 at 501 NW 6th St.

Nationally certified child safety technicians will be on hand to help you with the selection, direction, location, installation and proper fit of a child safety seat.

Not going to be in Okeechobee that day? Child safety seat experts [Safe Kids](#) can help you find a certified technician in your area.

