



The CCKids Connector



Pictured from left are, foster caregiver Kate Crain, Project LIFT Chief Operating Officer Chris Jackson, CCKids' Road to Success Supervisor Chris Martinez, Vehicle Scholarship Recipient Taina, Road to Success Specialist Litty Summers, 4Kids Licensing Specialist Josh Waiter and Project LIFT staffer Autumn Thomas. Story below.

Second Road to Success youth receives car from community vehicle scholarship program

PALM CITY— Communities Connected for Kids presented the latest award in a community Vehicle Scholarship Program during an informal key ceremony Sept. 18.

Taina, 18, and a senior at Sebastian River High School, was the second young person in the CCKids' Road to Success program to be awarded a car for her perseverance, hard work and dedication to her own future.

Project LIFT (Life Initiatives For Teens) donated the 2007 Subaru Outback to the program, which awards reliable cars to young people transitioning out of the local foster-care system.

Taina's host parent, licensing specialist and mentors were there to watch her take the keys to her "new-to-her" vehicle.

"I'm really excited to be one of the first in this program," said Taina, a student-council member at her school who volunteers in the Exceptional Student Education program and sees a future for herself in social work.

"I keep thinking someone else is going to feel the same way I do right now, and that means a lot," she said. "Having my own transportation will be easier on me, and easier on my family."

Vero Beach resident and aspiring Registered Nurse Alejandro Munoz became the first recipient in the program in January, when Infiniti of Stuart donated to him a 2013 Nissan Altima.

The idea for the Vehicle Scholarship Program grew from discussions last year among members of a multi-agency task force that addresses and responds to key risk factors among children.

Pictured above are Taina, right, and her foster caregiver, Kate Crain. Crain is a host parent in the Extended Foster Care program, which allows young people to stay in foster care after turning 18. If you are interested in being a host parent, please call (772) 873-7800 for more information.



Local program celebrates 20 years of Making Christmas Bright; sponsors needed for collection



ST. LUCIE WEST – Communities Connected for Kids is looking for businesses, social groups and churches to participate in this year's Making Christmas Bright gift collection for children in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties.

The project, now in its 20th year, provides gifts to more than 1,000 local children who have been abused, abandoned or neglected and who are currently receiving services through CCKids' child-welfare system of care.

More than 63,000 gifts have been collected since the program began in 1999. This year's

goal is to provide three presents for each child served by the local dependency 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!
- This year's pick up is Dec. 9-13.

Making Christmas Bright is jointly coordinated by CCKids 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 that can be downloaded and shared, please call Christina Kaiser at (772) 528-0362 or www.cckids.net.

** Due to the sheer volume of gifts collected during the month of December, we cannot pick up individual items; if you or your family want to contribute, please drop off your gifts to our St. Lucie West location at 1860 SW Fountainview Blvd.*

Headlines & Other News of Note

New Prevention Program Provides Parenting Education
[ICPalm Day - Sept. 18, 2019](#)

SafeCare, a partnership between Hibiscus Children's Center and Behavior Basics Inc., is a new prevention program that started serving St. Lucie and Indian River County families earlier this year. The program, which is focused on providing parenting education through home visits, is welcoming new clients and the services are free. SafeCare is funded, in part, by Children's Services Council of St. Lucie County and Communities Connected for Kids. [Read more.](#)

[Child Summit Kicks Off Today](#) [TCPalm Day - Sept. 4, 2019](#)

Every year, Guardians for New Futures, a small, grassroots nonprofit organization in St. Lucie County, coordinates and hosts a two-day Child Summit at Indian River State College's Treasure Coast Public Safety Training Complex in Fort Pierce. This year's summit, which is free and open to all who are concerned about children, is slated for Sept. 25-26. [Read more.](#)
