



The Weekly Connection

Match making comes to the world of adoption



The Selfless Love Foundation, a Florida-based nonprofit whose mission is to transform and enrich the lives of current and former foster youth, has partnered with Adoption-Share to launch the Family-Match pilot in Florida. A data-driven technology, Family-Match uses predictive models to assist adoption staff with adoptive family matches. With a compatibility assessment developed by the former lead researchers from eHarmony, this solution seeks to decrease time to adoption placement, and match children to families where they will flourish.

Fort Pierce resident Ashley Brown founded the Selfless Love Foundation in 2015 to help meet the needs of Florida's adoptive families and waiting children. She then teamed up with Adoption-Share, a non profit that had recently launched its Family-Match program in Virginia, and Brown immediately recognized the opportunity the program could bring Florida's waiting kids and families.

Adopted as a child, Brown said she wanted to make an impact on the adoption process and transform the system.

"I wanted to help children in foster care who are waiting to be adopted, so we went in search of a strategic partner," Brown said.

That partner ended up being Thea Ramirez, founder of Adoption-Share, which leverages technology to bring reform, efficiency and innovation to the private and public adoption arena.

Ramirez, a social worker by training, had a vision for how the matching process could be improved in child welfare and set course to pursue leaders in the technology and research space to bring her vision to life. Among the experts sought out by Ramirez were the former lead researchers at eHarmony, who when approached by Ramirez, jumped at the opportunity to help.

The result was Family-Match, a data-driven application designed to promote permanency for children in foster care through compatibility matching, which was offered free to child-welfare organizations throughout Florida this year, Brown said.

“This technology opens the door to endless possibilities,” she said. “It creates a statewide pool of all available children and approved families and it creates efficiencies for case workers by identifying families that are the best fit for children.”

More than 90 percent of the state’s Community Based Care Lead Agencies, including Circuit 19’s Devereux Community Based Care, are on board with the project, said Elizabeth Wynter, executive director for the Selfless Love Foundation. And the program is expanding into Virginia and Tennessee.

“Family-Match flips the adoption process on its head,” Wynter said. “This is going to transform the future of adoptions forever.”



Shop with a Cop!

Earlier this summer, members from Lil' Feet,



Sign up to Stuff the Bus!

All the cool kids stuff the bus - and we need your help! We still have spots left in our morning

the Fire District and the Fort Pierce Police Department met children identified through the department's Courageous Kid program and shopped for new shoes. Payless is a partner of Lil' Feet, which raised more than \$30,000 at its annual event recently. Pictured here are Lil' Feet Committee Members Christina Kaiser and Sue Dannahower.

shifts. Please [sign up](#) for a shift at our location at the U.S.1 Port St. Lucie Wal-Mart location. This project is a significant part of our Tools for Schools program, a partnership led by the United Way of St. Lucie County that makes school supplies available to our system of care.

