



Connections - October 7, 2020

Keeping us connected in this temporarily remote world



Teens in Foster Care Aren't Scary Monsters. They are Kids Who Need Homes.

By Carol Deloach
Communities Connected for Kids CEO

Port St. Lucie - For many who enter Florida's foster care system, life has been far from easy. It begins with the trauma of being removed from their family. Some experience multiple placement changes as maintaining connections can be very challenging.



Yet despite these setbacks, teens and young adults in foster care remain resilient. Communities Connected for Kids, together with its statewide membership organization – the Florida Coalition for Children – sees firsthand how young people battle issues that most adults have not experienced. These

lived experiences have equipped them with skills and ways of coping that they have used to succeed.

Living during the COVID pandemic has brought a new set of challenges. While some might be tempted to just give up, our youth have not. They have adapted to online classes, navigated peer support networks virtually and remained flexible as therapy and other services have been limited.

They have found healthy ways to cope with their anxiety or depression by running, getting outdoors, journaling and listening to music. While some outside our organization may look at our youth and label them based on their past experiences, we see them for their future potential. The COVID pandemic has taught us many things and has been a good reminder that while our job is to teach our youth, we also have much to learn from them.

Despite this, there remains a mystique about teenagers that often prevents – or at least makes it much more difficult – to find foster homes or adoptive placements for them. During this month of Halloween, we want to remind everyone that teens are not scary. They are not monsters. They are children with the same needs and desires for home shared by younger brothers and sisters.

We are all wearing masks these days. While they can be decorative and reveal bits and pieces of an individual's personality, we have to take extra care to get to know the person behind the mask. If you are interested in fostering or adopting, especially an older child, please call (772) 873-7800 and ask for Jerra Wisecup. We'll get you started on the treat of a lifetime.



Self Care for Sanity

In this month's In the Clinic

**By Lisa McBride, RN, BSN
CCKids Nurse Care Coordinator**

I was recently in a training - virtual of course - when the topic of boundaries, stress and anxiety came up. Because of the pandemic,

our houses are now playing double duty as home and office, and we are sharing living space all day long with families reeling from canceled outings and extracurricular activities. It was comforting to hear that I was not the only one experiencing these things, but what to do?

Over the next few months, we will explore a few easy and free ways to nourish our souls. Do you remember the phrase, "Dance like no one is watching?" Music and dance are great ways to break the boredom, stress and anxiety of our times by stimulating the neuro-hormonal system and releasing "feel good" hormones called endorphins.

So take a few minutes, put on that favorite song of yours and dance your way to feeling better. Added bonus: You'll burn a few calories! For those who prefer a class-like setting, go to [305 Fitness](#) on YouTube, where you will find an assortment of easy cardio-dance sessions to try.

Let go, have fun, and check back throughout the next few months for more stress and boredom-beating tips.

Partner Improves Access to COVID Testing for Kids with Urgent Placement Needs

It may be the month of Halloween, but CCKids is feeling the spirit of Thanksgiving thanks to the incredible generosity of Whole Family Health Center.

Thanks to the center's Director of Administration Carly Pye, children in care who need immediate COVID results as a condition of placement are now able to be tested Monday through Friday during business hours at both Vero Beach and Fort Pierce locations.

This service is available to children receiving foster-care services in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties who need an immediate test in order to be placed in a safe setting. We are excited and grateful for this new partnership.

