



Connections - January 27, 2020

The 2020 Annual Report is now available. Click [here](#) to view.



Miss us? We miss you! CCKids has been working remotely since March 2020, and we expect to remain remote at least through the end of winter. We still accept donations - just bring them to the second floor landing and leave them. The next team member who visits the office will bring them inside.

Serving Kids in Care an Act of Good Faith

**By Christina Kaiser,
Community Relations Director**

St. Lucie West – More than 120 child-welfare professionals and faith and community leaders assembled online Thursday, Jan. 21, for the local launch of An Act of Good Faith – a faith-based initiative championed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to bring more resources to families served by the child-welfare system.

The event featured appearances from Florida First Lady Casey DeSantis, Tony Dungy and Christian recording artist Chris Tomlin. Each spoke directly to the local faith community about the need to blend the needs of the dependency system with the resources of local churches, mosques and synagogues.

“The purpose of this meeting is to see how you, the community, can work with us in this initiative,” Ms. DeSantis said.

One by one, each guest shared their story of inspiration and encouraged those on the call to find their own way to help – through meal delivery, laundry service, or providing respite to foster families, for example.

An Act of Good Faith – and the smaller initiatives and projects that it umbrellas – makes it easy for local faith groups to “jump in.”

[CarePoral](#), for example, has already launched in St. Lucie and Martin counties, connecting the needs of local families with a growing network of churches. The project will launch in Okeechobee and Indian River counties once enough churches join the network.

“With your help, we will be able to reach families in an unprecedented way,” said CCKids CEO Carol Deloach. “CCKids will do all that we can to



Do you have any fun family pictures to share? Read the article below and [share them during Foster Family Appreciation Week](#). You don't have to be a foster parent to join the fun!

Campaign Reminds Us That Sometimes Laughter is the Best Medicine

Stuart - CCKids will celebrate Florida Foster Family Appreciation Week next month with a week of social media posts featuring the fun side of foster care.

Called, "Sometimes Laughter is the Best Medicine," the campaign will kick off Monday, Feb. 8, and end with a fun-photo challenge on Friday, Feb. 12.

On that day, families will be challenged to post their goofiest family pictures.

The campaign will coincide with a statewide campaign hosted by the [Florida Coalition of Children](#) that will highlight the everyday life of caregivers and their families.

make the vision a reality.”

Tomlin closed out the event with an acoustic version of his hit song, "[Good, Good Father.](#)"

To learn more about [CCKids](#) call Christina Kaiser at (772) 528-0362.

A monthlong campaign focused on recruitment and education will kickoff in May, during National Foster Family Appreciation Month.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for more stories about local families and to learn more about how you can become a caregiver in Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast.



Rota-What? Let's Talk About It. *In this week's, "In the Clinic"*

By Lisa McBride, *RN, BSN*

St. Lucie West - Rotavirus-rotavirus what?

For any of you with infants, you may have noticed a vaccination given for rotavirus during an earlier visit to the pediatrician. But what is rotavirus?

The rotavirus is a virus that can cause infants to become dehydrated quickly and can result in the need for hospitalization. Transmission is by fecal/oral route with symptoms of severe diarrhea, fever, vomiting and abdominal pain occurring two days after exposure and lasting for up to eight days.

Rotavirus vaccine is a two- or three-dose measure with all doses completed before the infant is 8 months old. I've included a link below for more information on rotavirus as well as the link for the approved immunizations schedules for birth through age 6 and adolescents:

[Rotavirus](#)

[Other Vaccines](#)

[Vaccine Schedules](#)



Pictured top is the Guardians for New Futures Board of Directors. From bottom left are Dependency Case Manager Linda Beland and Community Relations Director Christina Kaiser.

Trio of Christmas Partners Recognized for Going the Extra Mile

St. Lucie West - Communities Connected for Kids expanded its GEM - or Going the Extra Mile - award series to include community partners during the nonprofit organization's January Board of Directors meeting.

Guardians for New Futures, an organization that helps meet the unfunded needs of children in the dependency system, was the first community partner to receive the award. GEM awards previously were internal only, given to staff to recognize excellence.

CCKids awarded the group for its partnership during the 2020 holiday season. Together, the CCKids and the Guardians fulfilled the holiday wishes of nearly 2,000 children, including all children served by the child-welfare system in Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast.

"They have always been partners in our gift drive, but this year we completely merged into one project, and the results were incredible," said Christina Kaiser, CCKids' community relations director. "We had more sponsors, more volunteers and better coverage - and for more children."

Additionally, the Guardians are establishing the first Children's Advocacy Center for the area - a sort of one-stop, first stop for children removed from home due to abuse or neglect.

Kaiser and Dependency Case Manager Supervisor Linda Beland also received GEM awards for their parts in the toy drive. Both worked together closely to ensure a smooth transition with the Guardians' project despite pandemic restrictions.

Beland, a case-manager supervisor in St. Lucie County, received the award in the Emerald Division, which covers case-management staff.

She was nominated by County Director Lorrene Egan and Kaiser, who said Beland and her team of support specialists were responsible for scheduling pick ups, loading and delivering more than a 1,000 gifts to children in care and doing it safely during the pandemic.

"I have worked with Linda Beland for more than a decade on community projects that benefit our case management staff and the families they serve," Kaiser said. "To put it plainly, Linda makes my job easier, and when I work with her I truly feel like I am part of a team."

Kaiser was nominated by CCKids' Martin County Director Denise Natalizio for her part in the Christmas project, which, prior to the Guardians merger, served children in Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast for 20 years.

"The only thing I'll take credit for is knowing great people and being smart enough to work with them," Kaiser said. "But this was a terrific surprise, and I'm really happy to be recognized alongside Linda and the Guardians."