



Connections - June 16, 2021

A billboard advertisement for foster parents. On the left is a photograph of a smiling family: a woman, a man, and two young children. On the right is a teal background with white and yellow text. The text reads: "BECOME A FOSTER PARENT", "150 CHILDREN NEED HOMES IN OUR COMMUNITY", and "(772) 873-7800". Below the text is the Communities Connected for Kids logo. At the bottom of the billboard are two banners: a yellow one for "Philip DeBerard INJURY ATTORNEY" and a dark blue one for "PhilWillHelp.com".

Local Law Firm Puts the Phil in Philanthropic

Vero Beach – CCKids thanks the Law Office of Philip DeBerard for donating space on its digital billboards in Vero Beach and Stuart. Billboard art like the one above ran the first two weeks in June, highlighting the community's need for foster parents.

The law office also featured CCKids as part of its Phil-Anthropic Friday social-media campaign, posting and sharing foster-parent recruitment information earlier in the month.

And while the free billboard space was for a two-week period only, DeBerard's office will continue to use the art as filler throughout the year.

"Philip and I are excited to schedule 2021 with out community partners and offer up space on our digital billboards, " said Michelle Miller, marketing manager for the office. "It's a pleasure to give back to our community here on the Treasure Coast."

It's one more tool in the recruitment toolbox, said Christina Kaiser, CCKids community relations director.

"We need this message everywhere - in the newspaper, in magazines, on social media and on the road, which, thanks to Philip DeBerard, we have now," Kaiser said.

Interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent? Call (772) 873-7800 and ask for Jerra.

We are Proud of Our Diverse Youth

By Margie Dotson, Road to Success Specialist

St. Lucie West - A growing body of research is showing that LGBTQ youth nationally are over-represented in foster care, possibly due to increased isolation and discrimination.



A [study](#) conducted in 2019 by the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) found that 30.4 percent of youth in foster care identify as LGBTQ, compared to 11.2 percent of all youth identifying as LGBTQ in a nationally representative sample reported in the same study.

Education and advocacy is paramount because these youth and young adults experience a greater degree of victimization and rejection than their non-LGBTQ counterparts ([Baams L, Wilson BDM, Russell](#)) and, as a result, are more likely to attempt suicide, according to a 2021 research brief by the [Trevor Project](#).

Here at Communities Connected for Kids, we take great PRIDE in celebrating the lives, voices and culture of our LGBTQ youth, and we are committed to providing a comprehensive network of services to ensure that they are supported and respected.

One young adult, in particular, comes to mind.

Our teams at CCKids advocated for her to live in an LGBTQ group home with specialized supports and, when she left the home to return to the Treasure Coast, we advocated for her to be allowed to continue expressing her gender identity.

Our placement team found a new group home for the youth and, through education and advocacy, worked hard for a better understanding of her needs to ensure the placement wouldn't break down.

For her graduation from high school, our Road to Success team arranged for professional makeup and hair installation at a salon. And, working together

with the courts, we made sure she received specialized therapy before receiving gender-reassignment surgery as an adult.

This young person, who we are so proud of, has now graduated with her Aesthetician Certification and is a certified makeup artist and model in New York.



<p>16 Make a birth parent smile! Send a funny quote or joke.</p> <p>Knock, knock! Who's there? Hatch. Hatch who? Bless you!</p>	<p>17 Send a birth parent artwork (drawing, painting, poem) completed by his/her child.</p> 	<p>18 Text a Child Protective Investigator, "Thank you for being working hard to keep our children safe."</p>	<p>19 Ask a birth parent to send a family photo for their child(ren) to see whenever feeling homesick.</p> 
<p>23 Make a caregiver smile! Send a funny photo or meme.</p> 	<p>24 Email a Supervisor, Program Director, and/or County Manager about the GREAT job one of their staff is doing.</p>	<p>25 Text a birth parent a smiley or silly face photo of his/her child(ren).</p> 	<p>26 Send a "Thank You" note, email, or ecard to a therapist, or other service provider.</p>
<p>30 Share our Moment of Cheer video from the CCKIDS Facebook page and CELEBRATE reunification with us!</p>		<p>Feel free to post your OWN moment of cheer on our CCKIDS Facebook page on June 30!</p>	

Calendar Shows Ways to Celebrate Family

St. Lucie West –Communities Connected for Kids is proud to share its 2021 Community Care Calendar, a 30-day activity and affirmation series designed to celebrate National Reunification Month and the hard work of getting children safely back home.

Returning children to healthier, stronger and stable families is the goal of our community of care and the result of hard work shared by birth families, social-work professionals and caregivers, alike.

Help us celebrate the 160 families who have been reunified this year by browsing the Care Calendar for suggested activities. Text an affirmation to a birth parent, email a dependency case manager or thank a therapist - just a few of the suggestions you'll find on the calendar.

Click the image above for a complete calendar, or follow us on social media for weekly suggestions.

And don't forget to check out our [Facebook](#) page on June 30, when we will post our "Moment of Cheer" video. Please share it to your own social-media platforms. It's just one more way to support our reunified families.
