



Connections - February 9, 2022



*From left, Rose Bailey, Caryn Toole, Elise Bailey, Rep. Dana Trabulsy, and Jerra Wisecup meet during the 2022 legislative session to discuss increased funding to the foster-care community.*

## Caregivers & Youth Rally at Children's Week for Improvements to Foster-Care System

**By Margie Dotson, *Road to Success Specialist*,  
and Christina Kaiser, *Community Relations Director***

**Tallahassee-** Recently, I was honored to witness



advocacy at its best when I spent a few days at Children's Week with Florida Youth Shine, a youth-driven advocacy group, and Tyler Wrenn of the Treasure Coast Dream Catchers Chapter.

Youth Shine spent the past week working hard to make change in the state's child-welfare system by advocating for a senate and house Bill of Rights for children in foster care. The bill will provide youth in foster care with, among other things, the freedom to choose where to live, worship, and attend school.

Tyler and his Youth-Shine peers also advocated for bills that will ensure a smooth transition from care for young adults and give them greater access to affordable housing and educational supports and services.

Also advocating for improvements to child welfare were Rose Bailey, an adoptive mother and former foster parent from Port St. Lucie, and her daughter, Elise.

The Bailey's, along with CCKids' Caregiver Support Specialist Jerra Wisecup and Indian River County Manager Caryn Toole, visited legislative delegates from Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast to support a \$40 million workplace development request that will raise the salaries of dependency case managers.

Child welfare leaders believe that critical turnover among case managers threatens decades of improvements to Florida's dependency system and that more competitive salaries will help preserve the workforce.

"We can't afford to have our case workers get overwhelmed or leave the job," Bailey said. "It has a rippling effect to both the foster parent and the child."

Florida Tax Watch has called the request a good investment.

"This is all about good public policy and doing what's right," said Dominic Calabro, CEO and president of the group. "We have a good system, but it costs money to do it right."

To contact your local legislator, please click one of the links below and tell them you support competitive salaries for case managers.

[Sen. Gayle Harrell](#) [Sen. Debbie Mayfield](#) [Rep. Toby Overdorf](#)  
[Rep. Dana Trabulsy](#) [Rep. Kaylee Tuck](#) [Rep. John Snyder](#)



*Congratulations - once again - to Aaron and Jackie Johnson. These Martin County foster parents are among 14 families selected throughout Florida to be honored February 18 at the Foster Family Breakfast of Champions, made possible through Family First/All Pro Dad and the Florida Department of Children and Families. The Johnsons recently received CCKid's Going the Extra Mile Award for excellence in foster care after arranging for their foster children's mother to spend Christmas with them.*

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## Free Tutoring Resource in Martin County

**Stuart** – Students in Martin County now have online tutoring access 24-hours a day, throughout the year.

The program, provided by a Canadian-based company called Paper, features access to a live teacher and is available for over 200 subjects. It is free to students in grades K-12.

Students will also be able to submit papers, including those for college entrance applications, and receive feedback within 24 hours.

The program, funded locally through the federal government's American Rescue Plan, also is available to students in Palm Beach County and is quickly growing in use throughout the state.

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