



Connections - July 27, 2022



We caught up with Haleigh at Jupiter's Busch Wildlife Sanctuary recently so that [CBS News 12's Liz Quirantes](#) could interview the teen for an upcoming [Forever Family](#) segment. To date, the program has featured the adoption wishes of 40 children since the initiative began running local stories in 2018.

"I Won't Just Tell You, I'll Show You" GEM Recipients Model Behavior

PORT ST. LUCIE -Communities Connected for Kids congratulates Veronica White and Sara Topmiller for

winning this quarter's Going the Extra Mile – or GEM – Award.

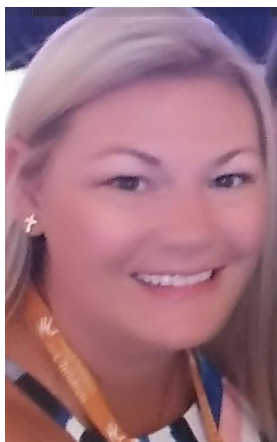
White and Topmiller won the award, an honor given to staff and caregivers for excellence in serving children and families in Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast, for the period spanning April through June.

White, a case manager supervisor in St. Lucie County, received the award in the Emerald Division, which covers case-management staff. She was nominated by fellow Case Manager Supervisor Mo Shihadeh.



“There are so many things I can say about Veronica, but the main thing that comes to mind is determined,” Shihadeh said. “She has, on multiple occasions, gone out in the field to assist her people and give them the guidance they need showing them on a daily, ‘I will not only tell you how to do things, but physically show you as well’.”

In a world that has changed so much since COVID, Shihadeh said it is refreshing to work with people who will genuinely look out for others and lead by example.



Sara Topmiller, quality management specialist, received her GEM award in the Ruby Division, which recognizes the work of administrative and program staff. She was nominated by St. Lucie County Director Lorrene Egan, who praised her for her work on multi-disciplinary team staffings.

"Multi-Disciplinary Team staffings were enacted through law in 2021, and CCKids had to use existing resources to meet the new requirements," Egan wrote in her nomination.

The call went out to staff, and Sara answered, she said.

“Sara Topmiller has been performing double duty for eight months, and still she is so professional and sensitive to the needs of children and families as they struggle through placement, education, and sibling separation issues.

“She shows excellent partnership in working with case management, the department, the [Guardian ad Litem](#) program and a multitude of families and providers. She just keeps pushing on with a positive attitude and outlook.”

CCKids’ Board of Directors will recognize White and Topmiller during its July Board meeting. Each employee will receive a \$100 bonus and a plaque.

If you know a CCKids employee who has gone above and beyond, let us know. Click the [link to the nomination form](#).



Healthy Eating Habits - In This Month's *In the Clinic*

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

Recent studies have noted that during the summer months, children have consistently gained weight at an increased rate. Research from 2020 shows that over 39 million children under 5 years of age were obese or overweight.

Here are some basic pointers that will help you keep your family healthy throughout the summer slump:

- Have a daily meal plan and try to keep to consistent times
- Keep healthy snacks on hand—cut up veggies and wash fruits—make it easy for the kids to grab & go
- Eat the rainbow in both fruits and veggies
- Drink plenty of water—up to 10 cups per day and more if you're out in the heat or playing sports
- Keep healthy options in your pantry and fridge—like yogurt, cheese, whole grain crackers
- The number one rule about junk food: You can't eat it, if it's not available in your home, so don't stock it!

Sunshine Health's covered benefit of weight loss/health coaching sessions are available for those age 10 and older. You will also receive money on a reward card for participating in sessions!

Call Sunshine member services for more information: 1-800-463-4100 if you're concerned that your child under 10 yrs of age is overweight or obese, call and discuss this with the child's pediatrician to establish a plan for healthy living.

Local Dermatologist Gets Under the Skin to Remove Visible Signs of Human Trafficking

STUART-Communities Connected for Kids thanks Elizabeth McKay and the staff at [McKay Dermatology and MedSpa](#) for their help with a recent teen who came into care as a victim of human trafficking.

Like many people who are trafficked, the child was tattooed and marked. Dr. McKay removed the marking for free.

The child "has completed all her visits with the dermatologist and is extremely pleased with the results," said Roxanne Bono, the child's case manager. "The scars are almost gone. The staff there was unbelievable - they went above and beyond and were so courteous."

