



Board of Directors Meeting

June 10, 2010

Child Welfare Advocacy Report

Item VI.E.

Recommended Action:	Information Only
Issue:	Child Welfare System Report
Program:	Child Welfare Advocacy
Budget Impact:	NA
Strategic Plan Goal:	Child Maltreatment

Adoption Partnership

Eckerd Community Alternatives, Clearwater Marine Aquarium and Progress Energy Heart Gallery have partnered to launch a unique adoption awareness campaign which is hoping to “turn the tide on special needs adoptions.” The campaign titled “Winter’s Dream” focuses on the famous dolphin Winter as the ambassador of special needs adoptions for Florida’s foster children. Winter was rehabilitated at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium after losing her tail. An article in *Fostering Families Today* (May/June 2010) highlights the partnership. “Winter’s story is a true adoption success story. Winter lost her family, overcame physical challenges and was adopted by the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, where she eventually learned to swim with a new prosthetic tail.”

Heart Gallery of Pinellas & Pasco

The mission of the Heart Gallery of Pinellas & Pasco is to provide an emotionally safe way to promote adoptions. The Heart Gallery features the photos and stories of local foster children ready for forever families. The Progress Energy Heart Gallery of Pinellas & Pasco was launched in June of 2006. They will be celebrating their 4th anniversary with a Dreams Really Do Come True event scheduled on Thursday, June 10th @ 5:30 at Progress Energy Center for the Arts - Mahaffey Theatre. The main Heart Gallery was currently on display through June 2, 2010 at Tyrone Square mall. The Progress Energy Center for the Arts will be hosting the gallery from June 8, 2010- July 12, 2010.

Ready For Life

Ready for Life, Inc. and Family Resources' Second Image Thrift Shop have entered into a partnership. On the first Monday of every month the thrift shop will bring a truck to the parking lot of Ready for Life (2731 13th Ave. North, St. Petersburg). Donations of clothes, sheets, towels, furniture, electronics, dishes, pots, pans, purses, etc. will be collected. In addition, donations designated for ready for Life can be dropped off anytime at the store. Ready for Life will be provided with vouchers to give to the youth aging out of foster care so they can go and shop at Second Image and purchase what they need.

Ready for Life (RFL) is convening meetings with community partners to brainstorm ideas for services/resources for the Children's Home Society (CHS) facility to assist youth in foster care as well as those that have aged out. Ideas for the CHS Family Visitation House Community Partnership - Teen Center include:

- Assistance for teens on the run - get a shower, something to eat and provide a safe environment to meet with their case manager.
- Laundry facility for those that are on the run or who may need a place to go to wash clothes.
- Tutoring - individual tutoring for high school, GED, SAT, etc. To include computers to use for homework, research, apply for services or to apply for employment. Possibly a NOVA site for night school.
- Socials - have socials such as a movie night or game night for the youth. Also, will include a recreational room with pool table, ping pong, wii, etc.
- Monthly seminars / sessions- For example: A nurse will be available for questions or concerns, informational sessions on car insurance, defensive driving course, assistance with employment, other topics as the youth request.
- Outside area - basketball, picnic tables, grill, etc.
- Case Managers / Independent Living Specialists - a place they can meet with youth and do work. Reportedly a large percentage of youth are in St. Pete and South St. Pete

Next Steps:

- Explore what community partners may be able to provide/contribute
- Develop "Partnership Agreements"
- Explore potential funding for renovations
- Determine staffing needs
- Involve civic organizations to become sponsors and/or assist through volunteer work.

Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Task Force

A Child-On-Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Task Force is being formed in Pinellas County. The mission of the task force is to reduce the incidence of child-on-child sexual abuse through community prevention, training, and intervention. A training and development session for the task force has been scheduled for June 23, 2010 @ 10:30 at Suncoast Center's Family Service Centers location. The Guest Speaker will be Robert Edelman, CEO/President Village Counseling Center in Gainesville, Florida. A Suncoast Region tab has been added to the Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse Prevention website. http://cocsaptaskforce.org/suncoast_region