

KIDSFIRST COOPERMAN-BOGUE AWARD PAST WINNERS

2022 Winners

Summer Kirk | Quarterly Winner



Summer Kirk is a Social Service Counselor with Pace Center for Girls of Pinellas, where she provides exceptional, heartfelt counseling to Pace girls, working with them on any number of risk factors that introduced them to the program.

Christina Mokhtar Hassan | Quarterly Winner



Christina Mokhtar Hassan is an Early Childhood Therapist with Suncoast Center, where she works extensively with very young children who have experienced significant trauma. She provides in-home and school-based mental health counseling to children, birth to six, and their families.

Johnareus Young | Quarterly Winner



Johnareus Young previously served as a Recreation Specialist for North Greenwood and Ross Norton, serving as a liaison between program youth and their schools, families, and communities. His passion for helping others is evident in how he cares about each child in the program.

Mary Wooding | Quarterly Winner



Mary Wooding is a Social Service Counselor with Healthy Families and has always put children and families first. Despite her consistently full caseload, she has always volunteered to support higher-risk families, precisely because she knows they face very difficult situations.

[Click here](#) to watch the 2022 Winners' video.

2021 Winners

Chynna Cade | Monthly Winner



Chynna Cade is an Integrated Decision Team Facilitator with Directions for Living and their Treatment Works Program, an intensive in-home service for students K-12 in partnership with Pinellas County Schools to help students resolve underlying trauma and create plans to reenter their educational environments.

[Click here](#) to watch Chynna's story.

Ernest Cross | Monthly Winner



Ernest Cross is a Foster Grandparent Volunteer with Seniors in Service of Tampa Bay. Ernest, or "Grandpa Cross" as he is affectionally called, tutors and mentors Pinellas County students to help build literacy and social-emotional skills.

[Click here](#) to watch Ernest's story.

Nhu Nguyen | Monthly Winner



Nhu Nguyen is a Youth Worker with the Lealman and Asian Neighborhood Family Center where he serves kids in after-school and summer programming. Nhu has grown up at the Center. He began as a Kindergarten student in the program, and now serves other youth who respect and look up to him.

[Click here](#) to watch Nhu's story.

Dena McKenna | Monthly Winner



Dena McKenna is a Pinellas County School Social Worker with the PATHS program, helping integrate children with anxiety and other mental health needs back into the school setting. Dena's primary focus is always the child. She advocates for their well-being on a daily basis and forms trusting relationships with their parents.

[Click here](#) to watch Dena's story.

Nanette Friend | Monthly Winner



Nanette Friend serves as a Youth and Family Support Specialist for the Family Center on Deafness, delivering academic and enrichment programs, and serving as a bridge between the schools and families. Not only has Nannette impacted the Center's 70-plus families through her one-on-one services, but she has also successfully written and secured nearly \$60,000 in grants and other funding for the Center to expand its reach.

[Click here](#) to watch Nannette's story.

Maura Keene | Monthly Winner



Maura Keane is the FSI Truancy Liaison with Gulf Coast Jewish and Family Services. Maura is a "resource guru" who empowers families to take accountability for their child's education and school attendance, and she's helped countless families achieve stability. During the pandemic, Maura was the lead FSI contact for JWB's Lealman and Asian Neighborhood Family Center (NFC), assisting families navigate the COVID Cares application process.

[Click here](#) to watch Maura's story.

Tiffany Brown | Monthly Winner



Tiffany Brown works with Pinellas County Multicultural Young Life mentoring, leading, and guiding Ridgcrest youth. Tiffany is a "kid magnet" who leads by example, forms strong relationships, and builds trust within her community and with her Pinellas County Schools partners. During COVID, she came up with unique ways to keep kids learning remotely and socially engaged.

[Click here](#) to watch Tiffany's story.

Michelle Schaefer | Monthly Winner



Michelle Schaefer, the Fetal Infant Mortality Review Coordinator with Healthy Start Coalition of Pinellas, is a passionate champion of JWB's Sleep Baby Safely campaign, responds at all hours to deliver free pack-n-plays through Healthy Start's Beds4Babies program, and leaves no stone unturned to ensure every baby has a healthy start!

[Click here](#) to watch Michelle's story.

Olivia Barclay | Monthly Winner



Olivia Barclay is a former PEMHS Navigator with the HOME Program who continues to passionately serve families in her new role with Feeding Tampa Bay. Olivia's ability to build on a family's strengths and gain their trust is unmatched, from juveniles in the program to the parents or grandparents raising them. She was particularly effective during the pandemic, helping dozens of families apply for federal funds to remain in their homes.

[Click here](#) to watch Olivia's story.

Cynthia Smith | Monthly Winner



Cynthia Smith is a Family Case Manager with Suncoast Center, working with families at United Way Suncoast Campbell Park Resource Center to rapidly assess, navigate, and prioritize their needs. Cynthia is exceptional in bringing about positive change for her families, but it is her CARING that really makes a difference for those she serves.

[Click here](#) to watch Cynthia's story.

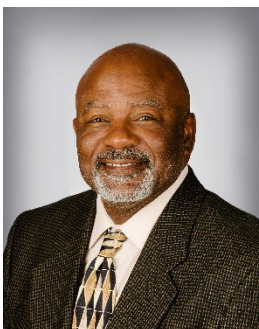
Freda Dixon | Monthly Winner



Freda Dixon, a Recreation Coordinator for City of Clearwater, oversees afterschool and summer programs at Ross Norton Recreation Center. Freda is the motivating force that keeps programs running smoothly at all times and worked tirelessly during COVID to make a difference in her community.

[Click here](#) to watch Freda's story.

Reggie Reynolds | Monthly Winner



Reginald "Reggie" Randolph, of the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County, is a Healthy Families Counselor who specializes in serving Pinellas County fathers and, more than 20 years ago, he started the first program focused on serving dads and their children. In fact, Reggie is known as the "Father of Father Services." Reggie also co-chairs JWB's Pinellas Fatherhood Collaborative.

[Click here](#) to watch Reggie's story.

2018 Winners

Lucille Plummer | Quarterly Winner



Lucille Plummer has been assisting classroom teachers at Douglas Jamerson Elementary for the past 10 years as a Foster Grandparent with Seniors in Service. Miss Lucille works with scholars academically, teaches them how to be outstanding citizens, and encourages them by being their “home-away-from-home grandma.”

[Click here](#) to watch Lucille’s story.

Courtney Hendrickson | Quarterly Winner



Courtney Hendrickson is a Children’s Therapist with Directions for Living, where she embodies the principles of Trauma-Informed Care and offers every youth a safe, supportive space free of judgement. An incredibly effective therapist, Courtney has changed the lives of countless children and teens, helping break the cycle of trauma and abuse.

[Click here](#) to watch Courtney’s story.

Franklin Smith | Quarterly Winner



Franklin Smith works with deaf and hard of hearing teenagers and their families, serving as case manager, youth leader, and role model in his position as Youth and Family Support Specialist at the Family Center on Deafness. Franklin builds trust with his students, as they struggle with their deaf identity and where they fit in a hearing world.

[Click here](#) to watch Franklin’s story.

Laurel Kosharsky | Quarterly Winner



Laurel Kosharsky is a Youth Development Worker with the High Point Neighborhood Family Center; she provides direct supervision, oversees activities, and assists with homework assignments. Laurel is a role model for children and families alike, exhibits a “can do” attitude in all she does, and is especially effective with children who are being bullied.

[Click here](#) to watch Laurel’s story.

2017 Winners

Brandice Almeida | Annual Winner



Brandice Almeida is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with Sustainable Family Services who specializes in play, aroma, and animal-assisted therapy, and serves children of trauma and those with intensive behavioral issues. Using creative treatment modalities to engage and connect, Brandice gives her families the tools they need for long-lasting change.

[Click here](#) to watch Brandice's story.

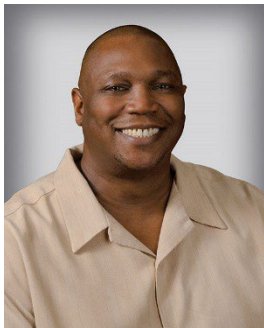
Nekeemah Woodard | Quarterly Winner



In her role as a Human Services Counselor for Healthy Families Pinellas, a program of the Florida Department of Health, Nekeemah Woodard makes home visits with families to help ensure the safety and well-being of their young children. She also gives back countless hours of service in her community to strengthen children and their families.

[Click here](#) to watch Nekeemah's story.

Ron Bell | Quarterly Winner



Ron Bell is a School-Based Therapist with Suncoast Center assigned to Melrose Elementary School. As an integral part of the school's support team, Ron works with students experiencing educational or behavioral challenges and has been described as a giant of a man with an even bigger heart.

[Click here](#) to watch Ron's story.

Jessie Rivera | Quarterly Winner



Jessie Rivera is a PEMHS Family Connection Navigator at Sandy Lane Elementary School where she engages parents and students to improve attendance, school performance, and behavior. Serving as a liaison between families and the school, this dynamic navigator goes the extra mile to identify and fill service gaps.

[Click here](#) to watch Jessie's story.

2016 Winners

Martha Kamagwera | Annual Winner



A Program Specialist for the Florida Center for Survivors of Torture with Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services, Martha Kamagwera provides intensive case management for torture survivors, helping them become self-sufficient.

[Click here](#) to watch Martha's story.

Trudy Burch | Quarterly Winner



Trudy Burch is a Child & Family Consultant with R'Club Child Care, Inc. She was nominated by a mother who represents one of the many families she has helped. Burch listens to the concerns of parents and young children up to five years old and helps find appropriate high-quality childcare settings for them. Thanks to Trudy Burch's work, more children in Pinellas County are getting the early childhood education and care they need as they prepare for school.

[Click here](#) to watch Trudy's story.

Heather O'Keefe | Quarterly Winner



In her role as a Family Services Homeless Specialist with 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Heather O'Keefe screened families for homeless placement assistance and for federal, state, and local resources to meet the families' needs. She is recognized by her colleagues for her expertise, and they reach out to her because of her extensive understanding of the homeless system and resources available for families.

[Click here](#) to watch Heather's story.

Latoya Jordan | Quarterly Winner



Latoya Jordan is a Human Services Counselor with Healthy Families Pinellas, a program of the Florida Department of Health, where she provides home visiting services for families at-risk of child abuse and neglect and offers parenting and basic care education.

[Click here](#) to watch Latoya's story.

2015 Winners

Adrienne Butler | Annual Winner



Adrienne Butler is a Child Safety Family Specialist with Directions for Living where she provides assistance, intervention and education to children and families with the goal of resolving situations of abuse or neglect. She provides services to the child, siblings, birth parents and foster parents as appropriate. On more than one occasion she has been the person providing emotional support to help clients through extremely difficult times. Butler steps up for challenging assignments and trains new staff on effective procedures.

[Click here](#) to watch Adrienne's story.

Michael Putzulu | Quarterly Winner



Michael Putzulu is a Total Family Strategy Therapist with Suncoast Center, Inc. where he provides therapeutic and case management services including weekly in-home therapy sessions and crisis counseling for families. He is known for his willingness to meet clients where and when they need him to provide hope and inspiration. He has a knack for successfully engaging challenging adolescent male clients and goes to great lengths to keep all families engaged with the program.

[Click here](#) to watch Michael's story.

Ann Miller | Quarterly Winner



Ann Miller recently retired as a Human Services Counselor with the Healthy Families Pinellas program, but not before she shaped the lives of hundreds of youth during her 20 years as a home visitor. She worked with families as early as the prenatal stage up to the child's fifth birthday sharing parenting strategies, making sure children were up to date on vaccinations, and making sure they were on track with their development. She has been a stable, motivational influence for hundreds of young mothers helping them achieve educational and other personal goals that help them better provide for their children over the long run.

[Click here](#) to watch Ann's story.

Eric Harvey | Quarterly Winner



Eric Harvey is a System Navigator with PEMHS specializing in helping homeless families through the Family Services Initiative. He helps families craft a partnered family support plan centered on the goal to become a stable family in the community. In his role he helps connect families with available resources that will help them toward achieving their goals. Each family has a different set of strengths and challenges, so creativity, resourcefulness, and knowledge of the community are keys to Harvey's success with clients. He brings hope and understanding in a time of confusion to families in need.

[Click here](#) to watch Eric's story.

2014 Winners

Patti Nickol - Annual Winner



Patti Nickol is an Infant Toddler Specialist with Florida First Start and a child Enrichment Specialist for United Methodist Cooperative Ministries. For Florida First Start she helps families prepare their children to start school ready to learn. She adapts curriculum and learning materials for her families and serves as a home visitor helping parents in the role as their child's first teacher. For United Methodist Cooperative Ministries, Patti helps children in school with homework and encourages reading while helping parents support success in school.

[Click here](#) to watch Patti's story.

Carole Bolden | Quarterly Winner



Carole Bolden is Program Director at [Clothes To Kids, Inc.](#), a Pinellas County not-for-profit that provides new and quality used clothing to low-income or in crisis school-age children free of charge. Bolden coordinates the shopping experience for more than 4,000 children every year and recruits, trains and supervises the organization's volunteers. She goes above and beyond to treat families with the dignity and respect they need to overcome the challenges they are facing. Carole's work helps children go to school comfortable and confident so that they can focus on learning and succeeding.

[Click here](#) to watch Carole's story.

Jennifer Agisotelis | Quarterly Winner



Jennifer Agisotelis is Family Works Care Manager for Directions for Living. She helps prevent children from entering the child welfare system by providing case management, while ensuring that children are safe and well cared for. She makes sure children in the program are visited on a regular basis, working with parents on parenting skills and ensuring that basic needs are being met. Her work can mean the difference between a family staying together or being torn apart. Her nominator describes her as the "best mix of advisor, advocate and coach that her families need."

[Click here](#) to watch Jennifer's story.

Jamelle Dennis | Quarterly Winner



Jamelle Dennis is a school-based clinician with the Suncoast Center, Inc. Total Family Strategies program. She works at Fairmount Park Elementary School providing counseling services and support services to families of students. She provides parenting skills education and activities to increase parental engagement with a strength-based approach that empowers parents and builds their confidence. Jamelle has been known to accompany families to provide support and advocacy on medical or psychiatric evaluations and went above and beyond this year to make sure students had the school supplies they needed.

[Click here](#) to watch Jamelle's story.

2013 Winners

Scott Smith | Annual Winner



Scott Smith, a housing system navigator with Personal Enrichment Through Mental Health Services (PEMHS), is the Annual Winner of the 2013 Cooperman-Bogue KidsFirst Award. He works with families who are either homeless or in jeopardy of losing their housing. Smith creates a support plan for each family and helps them find sustainable employment and housing, register for benefits and develop a solid support system for the future. He helps families identify and build upon their unique strengths while assisting them with immediate needs.

[Click here](#) to watch Scott's story.

Lindsay Parete | Quarterly Winner



Lindsay Parete is a truancy navigator with Person Enrichment Through Mental Health Services (PEMHS). She helps families identify causes for truancy and find solutions so that children can go to school and succeed. She has been known to go out of her way to help families through crises outside of her usual responsibilities.

[Click here](#) to watch Lindsay's story.

Lucie Malinski | Quarterly Winner



Lucie Malinski is an Early Childhood Consultant with Directions for Living. Over her 26-year career, she developed the curriculum for in-home parenting and is a highly sought after trainer for groups and workshops related to the social/emotional/behavioral development of young children. She is a parent educator and group trainer for family services organizations throughout Pinellas County. Lucie's nominator said, "Lucie's vigor and passion for her work is so contagious, it infects colleagues and clients alike. She is not only an idol of hard work and leadership but is also proof positive that the work we do, though trying at times, can lead to the most profound and satisfying results."

[Click here](#) to watch Lucie's story.

Summer Perez | Quarterly Winner



As program manager of Early Childhood Services, Summer Perez manages a department of eight master's level therapists. She continues to go above and beyond to work collaboratively with her staff and our community to provide services when needed. She completed training for a pilot project called Incredible Years and has become a facilitator working alongside staff weekly. Summer also provides trainings on children's exposure to violence, child development, trauma and evidenced-based interventions in addition to conducting workshops for parents and children on exposure to violence and trauma.

[Click here](#) to watch Summer's story.

2012 Winners

Michelle Dublin | Annual Winner

Michelle Dublin is a family support worker with the Pinellas County Health Department's Healthy Families program. She makes home visits with expectant mothers – or families with young children – offering education on child development, parent-child bonding and other lessons that can help parents be the best they can be. Children can remain in the program until they reach age five and a higher-than-average number of Dublin's families do remain with the program for the duration. [Click here](#) to watch Michelle's story.

Alma Taylor | Quarterly Winner

Alma Taylor is a social worker with Suncoast Center's Medical Foster Care program. Her dedication and compassion help ensure the safety of foster kids with special needs, and she has helped reunify many families. Her duties include conducting assessments; making referrals to appropriate services; advocating on behalf of children and families and assisting parents and caregivers toward achieving reunification with foster children who have special medical needs. [Click here](#) to watch Alma's story.

Carlos Childs | Quarterly Winner

Carlos Childs is a youth care worker 2 at the Family Resources Safe Place 2B residential youth shelter. He supervises youth who are staying at the shelter and serves as a mentor and role model. He is known for finding strengths in every young person he meets and helping them build from those strengths. He finds ways to include the youth in life-skill-building activities like shopping for groceries and preparing meals. Childs often plans community activities for the kids at Safe Place 2B, such as feeding the homeless. [Click here](#) to watch Carlos' story.

Sheryl Allen-Golden | Quarterly Winner

Sheryl Allen-Golden is an adoption specialist with Directions for Living. She works to find forever homes for children – many of whom have special therapeutic needs. She works closely with youth while recruiting adoptive parents and ensuring that they are prepared to meet a particular child's needs. [Click here](#) to watch Sheryl's story.

2011 Winners

Caroline Brown | Annual Winner

Caroline Brown is a Program Coordinator/Youth Worker at the High Point Neighborhood Family Center. Her creativity, imagination and hard work have resulted in several enriching programs for the children and families in the High Point area including a Seeds 2 Soup community farm where families grow food and attend cooking classes and a Day of Design where high school students learn about careers in fashion and design. [Click here](#) to watch Caroline's story.

Barry Greer | Quarterly Winner

Barry Greer is a Family Specialist with PEMHS (Personal Enrichment through Mental Health Services). Greer works with the Emergency Response and Family Reunification Teams, helping keep children safe and families together. [Click here](#) to watch Barry's story.

Rosalyn Connelly | Quarterly Winner

Rosalyn Connelly, an academic instructor and counselor at the Harbordale YMCA, helps 5th graders in the Y-Achievers after-school program with their reading, math and study skills. She even helps them build confidence in their public speaking and etiquette. [Click here](#) to watch Rosalyn's story.

Brandon Mai | Quarterly Winner

Brandon Mai, recreation leader with the City of Largo works at the after-school program at Mildred Helms Elementary School and directs the KidCity summer camp. His nominator describes him as a "friend, leader and role model" to children who grew up in rec programs and "knows what it's like to be the first kid dropped off in the morning and the last kid to get picked up in the afternoon. [Click here](#) to watch Brandon's story.

2010 Winners

Jennifer Fawcett | Annual Winner

Jennifer Fawcett is a childcare specialist with the City of Largo. She oversees the after-school program at Mildred Helms Elementary school. In addition to her regular duties, she organizes donations of food and toys for families in need, volunteers her services as a sign language interpreter and teaches children in her program to sign. Fawcett has also recently become a foster parent. [Click here](#) to watch Jennifer's story.

Carletha Hill | Quarterly Winner

Carletha Hill is a Family Support Worker II with the Pinellas County Health Department's Healthy Families program. She visits parents in their homes providing parenting education and case management in order to provide security for the children in the home. She helps families set goals and connects them with community resources that help them achieve. Carletha is noted for lifting the morale of co-workers and inspiring clients. [Click here](#) to watch Carletha's story.

Deputy Cheko Carter | Quarterly Winner

Deputy Cheko Carter is a Community Policing Officer with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office based at the High Point Neighborhood Family Center. Deputy Carter was lauded by his nominator for serving as a mentor and role model to the youth who come to the center. He organizes Friday night movie nights where teens come to watch a film and then discuss issues presented by the movie. Deputy Carter has been instrumental in securing bicycles for children from low-income families and helping families with housing. During the unusually cold winter of 09-10, he helped deliver coats and blankets to the area's homeless residents. [Click here](#) to watch Cheko's story.

Sareda Thornton | Quarterly Winner

Sareda Thornton is a BNet Targeted Case Manager with PEMHS (Personal Enrichment through Mental Health Services). She conducts case management assessments to determine which services can enhance the mental, behavioral or medical health of clients ranging from five to nineteen years old. She consistently offers help to co-workers and the Program Manager improving the program as well as the outcomes of clients' treatment. Thornton is flexible and available to meet her clients' needs whenever and wherever help is needed. Her nominator describes her as having an undying compassion for children suffering from mental illness and says that she is one of the primary reasons the BNet program is successful.

2009 Winners

Cyndie Campbell | Annual Winner

Cyndie Campbell is a Total Family Strategy Therapist with the Suncoast Center. She conducts in-home family therapy for families who are at risk of involvement in the economic dependency, child welfare, substance abuse or mental health systems. She is especially active in the Greater Ridgecrest area where she has organized parenting classes, art activities for troubled youth and countless community events.

Jonathan Wade, LCSW, CAP | Quarterly Winner

Jonathan Wade, LCSW, CAP helps clients of A Spiritual Change, Inc. find gainful employment; conducts parenting and substance-abuse classes; and helps with computer classes, mentoring projects and kinship care projects. He recently developed a mentoring program where young men can talk with peers or adults about the pressures they face.

Fredericka Willis | Quarterly Winner

Fredericka Willis is a Family Therapist III with the Emergency Response Team. Her responsibility is to help families who are experiencing mental health, substance abuse and/or family violence issues that may affect the safety of a child in the home. She goes above and beyond to help families remain together and live a healthier lifestyle. In particular, over the past year she helped two families cope with the mother's diagnoses of AIDS.

Mary Bronk, R.N. | Quarterly Winner

Mary Bronk, R.N. is a School Nurse with Pinellas County Schools overseeing the health of children at four different schools. She is responsible for creating care plans for students with special needs, immunizations, vision screenings and maintaining clinics at each school. She also works with the Student Success Teams and joins social workers for home visits as needed. She makes sure that all of the children she meets throughout the day receive some sort of encouragement.

2008 Winners

Jessica Colon | Annual Winner

Jessica Colon working for Gulf Coast Community Care in partnership with Eckerd Community Alternatives, touched the lives of many children and families involved in the community-based care system. She served as a Team Leader and pioneered a program for runaway youth. Jessica was a leading advocate for one of the children on her caseload who needed lifesaving surgery and stayed by the child's side in Miami through the whole process.

Carol Johnson | Quarterly Winner

Carol Johnson is a School Psychologist at Bauder and Seminole Elementary Schools. She consults with teachers about strategies for dealing with educational, social and emotional issues that students may be encountering. Carol works closely with students and their parents to identify concerns and advocates for services that students need.

Margianna Speights | Quarterly Winner

Margianna Speights is a Family Support Worker for the Family Service Centers/Childnet Program. She visits families in their homes to teach parenting skills, homemaking skills, budgeting and nutrition. Margianna also provides referrals to other services that may be needed. She is a mentor to the parents she serves as well as her co-workers.

Anja Smulders | Quarterly Winner

Anja Smulders, a Family Support Coordinator for Children's Home, Inc., serves as a member of the Pinellas School Support Team and provides case management to elementary school age students and their families. Anja built an English for Speakers of Other Languages adult class at High Point Elementary School for the parents of many immigrant families.

2007 Winners

Angela Pulsifer | Annual Winner

Angela Pulsifer was recognized for her work as a Youth Development Worker at the City of St. Petersburg's Rio Vista Playcamp. Her responsibilities included maintaining a safe, nurturing environment for twenty kindergartners daily. Pulsifer developed ways to get the male relatives of the Playcamp's students more involved through a popular "Dad & Me" kickball tournament and put her creativity to work to help staff and families get to know each other.

Tamika Coley | Quarterly Winner

Tamika Coley was chosen as First Quarterly Winner for her work as Assistant Director of Housing and Support Services at the YWCA of Tampa Bay. She administers all program services and activities to over 135 adults and 240 children who reside at the YWCA/USF Family Village emergency shelter and transitional housing programs. Coley has helped hundreds of families find employment, housing, and childcare while they learn and grow despite the traumatic experience of being homeless.

Julie Schletter | Quarterly Winner

Julie Schletter, a Guidance Coordinator and Counselor at Lealman Intermediate School, is the Second Quarterly Winner. She works with students and parents on choosing a high school, along with a major field of study, and serves on several teams within the school dealing with topics ranging from character education to student recognition and several others. Schletter initiated a program at Lealman Intermediate School called "Beat for Peace" that combines percussion training with character education and group counseling.

Carol Freeman | Quarterly Winner

Carol Freeman earned the Fourth Quarterly Award for her service to families as a Family Support Worker for Healthy Families. She provides child development and parenting education to families with newborns up until the child turns five years old. Freeman has even helped mothers overcome homelessness to provide stability for their families while developing strong parent-child bonds that prepare children for a lifetime of learning. She was instrumental in developing popular Healthy Families activities like "adventure boxes" and "birthday-in-a-bag" that parents and children do together.

2006 Winners

Florene Baker | Annual Winner

Florene Baker is a Foster Parent with the Salvation Army Children's Village. She is responsible for parenting six foster children. Florene's nominator for the Cooperman-Bogue Awards describes her as a "Wonder Woman" who is a parent, counselor, coach, nurse, pastor, teacher, taxi driver, mediator, cook, and housekeeper to her foster family. She has a gift for recognizing the uniqueness of each child and meeting their individual needs.

Robert Boyd, M.S. | Quarterly Winner

Robert Boyd, M.S., is a Focused Outreach Therapist with Suncoast Center for Community Mental Health, Inc. He works with people who face substance-abuse and mental health challenges. Since most of Robert's clients are "involuntary" participants sent to him by the court, his first challenge is to get them invested in their recovery for their own sake. He believes in empowering his clients to gain the skills necessary to put their lives back together.

Iris Williams | Quarterly Winner

Iris Williams is a School Social Worker with Pinellas County Schools. She works at Baypoint Middle School and Gibbs High School, but never hesitates to take on assignments beyond those two schools. She coordinated the Give Kids a Smile Program this year for the entire school district, which helps underprivileged children receive dental care. Anytime there is a crisis, whether it's at her assigned school or not, Iris is there to help.

Sharon Reid-Kane | Quarterly Winner

Sharon Reid-Kane is the Family and Community Relations Liaison at Cypress Woods Elementary School. She coordinates the work of more than four-hundred volunteers serving more than twenty-thousand hours at the school annually. Sharon also publishes the monthly school newsletter and keeps local media informed of exciting things happening at her school. In addition to coordinating volunteers, Sharon serves as a volunteer herself during many lunch hours and after school.

2005 Winners

Aneesah Abdur-Rahim | Annual Winner

Aneesah Abdur-Rahim is a Certified Family Support Worker II with Family Service Centers/Healthy Families Pinellas. She has been with the agency for nine years. Where barriers previously have prevented families from achieving them, Aneesah works with families to recognize their own strengths, promote healthy developmental and emotional growth, and develop the skills and self-esteem to achieve success. While it might take a year for a family to overcome just one obstacle, she will stick with a challenge to result in a positive outcome. Because of her dedication to her job and peers, Aneesah is an inspiration to all.

Cynthia Tomlin | Quarterly Winner

Cynthia Tomlin is a Social Service Counselor for the Pinellas County Health Department, where she has worked for eight years. When there was a need for a Case Manager to work with Somalian clients, she did not give a second thought to take on the task, even with the added challenge of the language barriers this presented. Although much of Cynthia's time was devoted to helping this African population, she continued to carry a regular case load and remain active in the community. With more than 30 years of experience in her profession, it is evident that hers is not a career but a calling.

Melanie Goheen | Quarterly Winner

Melanie Goheen is a Teen Parent Health Services Teacher with the Pinellas County Schools T.I.P.S. With more than 25 years of experience in the school system, she is the only R.N. in the Teen Parent Program. She is depended upon by other staff to provide accurate and current medical diagnoses and advice. Going to the hospital when a teen parent needs her, transporting students and their children to and from clinics, or soliciting donations for needy students is not unusual. Melanie personifies the way that people should all treat each other: with respect, sensitivity, and caring.

Christine Linnell | Quarterly Winner

Christine Linnell is a Child and Family Consultant with Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, where she has been employed for more than three years. In order to accommodate client schedules, she works several nights a week and is available at all times to help them. She has purchased Christmas gifts on her own for children who were not chosen by agencies that distribute holiday presents. Christine is a role model to co-workers because of her commitment, sincerity, and strong work ethic. She will continue to pursue solutions even when it looks like there are none, just as she will ask questions until she finds answers.

2004 Winners

Vonnie Klein | Annual Winner

Vonnie Klein has been a Para Professional with Florida First Start, Pinellas County Schools for almost 13 years. She provides home visits to low-income families with children birth-to-five who are at risk of future school failure. Vonnie believes that every person is important and that self-esteem of parents and their children is important. She answers the phone 24/7 to help a family who is frustrated or in need, and regularly works with families after the workday and on weekends. What Vonnie does will have a life-long benefit for the children and families of Pinellas County.

Kelly Ogles | Quarterly Winner

Kelly Ogles is a Teen Parent Social Worker with Pinellas County Schools at PTEC, and has been with the School System for 13 years. Kelly is responsible for providing support, counseling, and referrals to outside resources to the students who are in the teen parent program. She models behaviors and decision-making processes that students need to learn. Kelly is warm and caring; makes students feel unique and valuable; and keeps them motivated toward high school graduation. She does not work to make students dependent on her, but rather to help them be self-sufficient and learn to expect success.

Erma Campbell | Quarterly Winner

Erma Campbell is a Match Manager for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pinellas County, where she has been employed for 4½ years. Erma screens, interviews, and matches big brothers/sisters with little brothers/sisters. She is consistently the highest performing team member in the agency in number of interviews and matches, and often meets with volunteers, parents, and children on her own time. The numerous children Erma has matched experience the benefits of a relationship with a caring adult, including improved and enhanced self-esteem, and personal growth.

Deborah Dodson | Quarterly Winner

Deborah Dodson is a Therapeutic Family Child Care Provider providing care to special needs children in her home. Debbie never gives up on a child, even difficult children with behavior problems. When she sees a need, like a child growing out of shoes when the parents are financially stressed, she supplies the shoes. Debbie attended a sign language class to communicate with one child in her care, and is teaching all of the children signs for better communication with that one child. She is an inspiration to others by being positive about childcare challenges. To Debbie, the glass is always half full.

2003 Winners

Mary Baker | Annual Winner

Mary Baker has worked as a Women's Intervention Specialist for Operation PAR for the past ten years. Baker works primarily with expectant mothers who have a history of substance abuse. She has gone above and beyond the call of duty to assist in finding emergency shelter and detoxification services for expectant mothers. Her goal is to show the women she assesses that there are other options than substance abuse and that there are people who care enough to help them be a better parent to their children.

Anne Young | Quarterly Winner

Anne Young has been a Case Manager with the Sixth Judicial Circuit's Unified Family Court for two years. Young provides information and referrals about community resources to families appearing before the court in dependency, delinquency, domestic violence, and Unified Family Court hearings. Judges and court staff appreciate her thoroughness. She helps counter-act a parent's feeling that they are caught in a "faceless system." Her warm, but professional, nature puts people at ease and quickly builds trust and confidence.

Rafael Ramirez | Quarterly Winner

Rafael Ramirez, Computer Technology Instructor, has worked for Watson Center for the Blind for eight years. Ramirez was instrumental in developing the computer classroom at the Watson Center and instructs children as well as adults in computer skills and adaptive software. His communication skills, patience, and empathy are assets that help him get through to his students. He gives vision-impaired children the start that they need and provides an example of the success they can achieve.

Kim Mann | Quarterly Winner

Kim Mann, Therapeutic Preschool Therapist, has been with Suncoast Center for Community Mental Health for two years. Mann works with children with moderate behavioral and emotional problems to prepare them for school. She works extra hours and takes on children beyond her caseload. Mann spends extra time helping classroom teachers find effective techniques for addressing each child's specific needs, and offers trainings to after-school providers. She brings hope to the families of the children she serves, and delivers results with the children.

2002 Winners

Duane Kinnison | Annual Winner

Duane Kinnison, Resource Teacher with the Homeless Education Assistance Team, has been with Pinellas County Schools/Dropout Prevention for seven years. He not only ensures that homeless children have the educational services needed, but that they receive any material needs as well. On a two-week winter school break, he used his own truck to pick up items to distribute to homeless shelter residents. Duane is an inspiration to co-workers, helping them in any way to reach their full potential.

Joan Reed | Quarterly Winner

Joan Reed, Family Support Worker, has worked for Pinellas County Health Department STOP (Special Teen Outreach Program) for ten years. She meets with clients at their chosen location to achieve the program's goal: prevent pregnancy and ensure clients graduate from high school. She helps students get out of inappropriate environments and into counseling, and helps them graduate from high school and go to college. The word *can't* is not in Joan's vocabulary; can, will, and how are.

Francesca Lorenzen | Quarterly Winner

Francesca Lorenzen, Social Worker, has worked with the Pinellas County Schools Homeless Project for four years. She coordinates back-to-school shopping trips for homeless families, and assists them in finding housing, medical, and dental assistance. She developed and maintains the Homeless Project website, which gives information about the project and resources available. One co-worker says that Francesca "makes me work harder because she is an inspiration to all of us."

Lillie McFarley | Quarterly Winner

Lillie McFarley, Child and Family Consultant, has worked with Coordinated Child Care's Project Challenge Program for one-and-a-half years, and the agency more than ten years. She assists countless children with behavioral challenges, along with their parents, in maintaining child care placements that maximize the children's success while there, and improve behavior at home. Lillie routinely volunteers for several additional agency and collaborative workgroups, including the holiday Adopt-a-Family Committee and Project Safe Start.

2001 Winners

Margaret “Peggy” Roche | Annual Winner

Margaret “Peggy” Roche, Outreach Coordinator, has worked at Foundation Village Neighborhood Family Center for five years. She is persistent in finding what clients need, whether it be housing, furniture, bedding, or personal items. During the holiday season, she organizes and operates a neighborhood food and gift drive, reaching more families every year. Her nurturing way is the basis for developing strong, solid client relationships built upon trust and mutual respect.

Christopher Lampley | Quarterly Winner

Christopher Lampley, Teen Supervisor I at Campbell Park Center, has worked for the City of St. Petersburg Recreation Department for two years. He frequently stays after work hours or comes to Campbell Park on his own time to work with teens on fundraisers, field trips, or community service projects. Chris empowers teens, letting them “run the show.” Under his guidance and support, they truly have become youth driven and youth led.

Jennifer Redfering | Quarterly Winner

Jennifer Redfering, Impact Coordinator, has worked at Big Brothers Big Sister of Pinellas for six years. She is constantly linking families with resources available to them, and on her days off, can be found finding furniture for families needing it. Her success with clients is attributed to setting goals for them to achieve and celebrating when those goals are reached, resulting in families having a renewed sense of self-reliance and self-confidence.

Albert Mayes | Quarterly Winner

Albert Mayes, Program Director (youth), has worked at the Boys and Girls Club of the Suncoast for seven years. He wears many hats and willingly gives up weekends to help with youth-related activities and projects. He makes youth feel welcome and motivates and inspires them to be all that they can be. Albert has dedicated most of his life to helping youth and families to ensure their well-being. He is a giver, not a taker.

2000 Winners

Leesther Williams | Annual Winner

Leesther Williams, Community Resource Team Educator, has worked at Family Service Centers for nine years. She received two Cooperman-Bogue Awards nominations. Leesther is an inspiration to both children and adults. She is dedicated to children's rights and exudes both a positive attitude and an abundance of energy. She has responded in the middle of the night to give emotional support to distraught rape victims. Co-workers know they can count on Leesther for help when needed.

Ann Phillips | Quarterly Winner

Ann Phillips, Family Support Specialist, has worked at Personal Enrichment through Mental Health Services for 15 years. She makes sure all children have holiday gifts, clothing, and food. She does not hesitate to work as late as necessary to help children in foster care keep their placement. Ann also has worked to set up a pantry to meet immediate client needs. She always maintains a positive attitude and puts children first.

Leland Wheeler | Quarterly Winner

Leland Wheeler, Adolescent Day Treatment Therapist, has worked at Suncoast Center for Community Mental Health's Adolescent Treatment Program since February of 1999. He is known for his willingness to help fellow staffers. He once assisted a co-worker having difficulty with a case, while also helping the client get through a difficult time. Leland turned the personal loss of one of his family members into a learning experience on loss and grief for adolescents in his care. He is willing to take on tough cases.

Jennifer Saulpaugh | Quarterly Winner

Jennifer Saulpaugh, Youth Advocate for The Haven of Religious Community Services, has been with the agency for three years. She willingly stays late to see a child or parent unable to meet her during normal working hours. Her soft, gentle approach reflects a sense of genuine care and concern. Parents look to Jennifer for support in dealing with unruly children. Her co-workers look to her as a mentor.

1999 Winners

Elaine Torosian | Annual Winner

Elaine Torosian has been with the Department of Veterans Affairs since 1986, working in a variety of settings including the delivery of direct patient care in psychiatric, geriatric, and substance abuse areas. With little more than administrative encouragement, Elaine made application to the state to establish a Domestic Violence Intervention Program. Hours of training, paperwork, and dealing with the process were mostly done on Elaine's own time in addition to her regular duties. Because of the nature of the subject, the population Elaine serves is often hostile, unreceptive - and being court ordered for treatment - not always motivated. Yet, she has received testimonials from couples regarding the positive impact her program has had on them and their children's lives.

Barbara Cook | Quarterly Winner

Barbara Cook has been a daycare home provider for more than 17 years. Nominated by a mother of one of the children in her care, she frequently serves as a mentor to other daycare providers who call her for support and guidance. Barbara recognizes the importance of developing self-esteem in children, and uses every opportunity to praise, encourage, and motivate a child. Several years ago, a young boy was under her care from age 2 to age 5. His family life was not the happiest, and he had few positive people around him. Barbara nurtured him and made him feel special. She worked with him a lot to prepare him for school. Because of this one special person, that little boy was much happier and ready to meet the challenge of entering kindergarten.

Kim Edelson | Quarterly Winner

Kim Edelson has been a Child Protection Investigator for more than seven years. She frequently carries a caseload of at least twice the recommended amount, and no matter how late in the day a case is assigned her, she always follows through in making certain that a child's safety is not compromised. Kim consistently tries to identify the strengths of a family, and empowers them to use those strengths to improve their family relationships. Once, she allowed the press to shadow her for a week. In doing so, she made the community more aware of the difficulties of conducting child abuse investigations.

Joan Miller | Quarterly Winner

Joan Miller has been a Social Service Counselor with the Pinellas County Health Department for six years. Working at the Northeast High School Health Clinic, she provides emotional support and guidance to students, frequently sacrificing her own lunch period to counsel students who come to the clinic with crisis situations. Education is a high priority on Joan's list. She likes to see her students' progress reports and encourages school completion. Her professionalism applies to all races, religions, and genders. Says school psychologist, Dr. Fran Mabee: "Mrs. Miller works to bring about positive change while enhancing personal growth."

1998 Winners

Amy Chessari | Annual Winner

Amy Chessari, a Family Support Worker, has worked at Healthy Families Pinellas for more than five years. Her position requires that she is flexible to meet the needs of families, but she has taken this to a whole new level. She meets with families at all hours of the day, including weekends and evenings, even once attending the birth of a baby in the middle of the night. Amy volunteers throughout the community, and has returned to school to continue her education. She does all of this as a single parent, working two jobs.

Emily Schrader | Quarterly Winner

Emily Schrader, a Family Support Worker, has been with Healthy Families Pinellas for more than three years. Her work with families in North Pinellas County has resulted in measurable positive outcomes for families, including improvement in parenting skills, and families being able to access resources to meet their needs. She not only meets the needs of families, but assists her co-workers in sharing her knowledge of community resources with them. Emily strives to improve her skill level, and is working toward a bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

Karen Butler | Quarterly Winner

Karen Butler, a Family Support Worker, has been on the staff of Healthy Start Drug Free Families since 1992. While she only is required to serve the target child in a family, she also ensures the health and safety of other siblings in the household. Her friendly personality puts families at ease, and she makes sure that she gives them the tools to be better parents. Karen was honored as the Goodwill International Student of the Year in 1997, and appeared in two of their educational videos shown throughout the country.

Vadie Armour | Quarterly Winner

Vadie Armour, a Senior Youth Worker, has worked at Foundation Village Neighborhood Family Center for three years. A resident of the center herself, Vadie assists other center members at all hours of the day and night. She excels at listening and providing much needed support and encouragement to folks, never being judgmental. Vadie supervises children at a variety of activities. Parents know that their children are safe and loved when they are with her, giving parents needed time to take care of matters with peace of mind.

1997 Winners

Johnnie Green | Annual Winner

Johnnie Green, a Childnet family Support Worker, has been on the staff of Family Service Centers for more than 11. She consistently goes out of her way to help her clients improve themselves, as she did with the mother of six, whom Johnnie encouraged to get her G.E.D. and then go on to become a licensed practical nurse. Johnnie's nominator says that her enthusiasm is contagious, and she constantly looks for resources for clients available in the county, sharing this information with her co-workers. Johnnie is a valuable team player to the agency.

Janine Penland | Quarterly Winner

Janine Penland, a Case Manager with Action Youth Care of Florida for almost three years, was nominated by one of her clients, who says, "Janine is like a walking Rolodex with resources and solutions for every problem we have faced." Her nominator also mentions Janine's positive and upbeat attitude, never being one to make excuses. She is the one person who kept the family from falling through the cracks or giving up hope. Janine's supervisor ranks her near the top in regards to "heart" and true concern for family welfare.

Shelba Harris | Quarterly Winner

Shelba Harris, a Child Development Specialist with R'Club at Seventy-Fourth Street Elementary School, is known for bringing her own materials from home to enhance the center and the children's experiences. Shelba takes time to relate to children one-on-one and, most importantly, listens to what they have to say. She also makes herself available to parents who need someone to lend an ear. A seven year employee of R'Club, she always has been a strong supporter of the agency and shows a strong commitment to improving the lives of others through her work.

Rick Kravako | Quarterly Winner

Rick Kravako, a Case Manager with the ACP (AIDS Community Project of Tampa Bay), has the manner and style needed to put people's fears to rest, something very important when dealing with those who are HIV positive or have AIDS. He is dedicated to helping the public have a better understanding of AIDS and has changed attitudes from fear to compassion. In one instance he helped the young brother of an affected 16-year-old learn more about the disease. That young brother went on to become a teen peer educator and recognized spokesperson throughout the Tampa Bay area. Rick has been with ACP for more than three years.

1996 Winners

Bob Arnold, M.A. | Annual Winner

Bob Arnold, M.A. is a child and family support program community outreach counselor with The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast. Supervisor Stacy Orloff says that Bob has a way of comfortably showing and sharing his feelings with families, to let them know that it is okay to feel whatever they are feeling. He is truly non-judgmental. One of the family members he helped writes: "Bob was fantastic with my sons and grandsons. His help saved me from trying to explain what was happening when even I couldn't understand. He continued to call and keep in contact even when I had to draw inward."

Mary Spann | Quarterly Winner

Mary Spann is a family support worker with Healthy Families Pinellas. She helps parents to bond with their babies, and understands how children develop, the goal being the prevention of child abuse and neglect in the at-risk families she visits. Among the examples given by supervisor Pat Nolan exemplifying Mary's dedication is her advocacy for two teen parents, who had been expelled from school. While other professionals turned away, Mary pursued and was able to negotiate special placements for these teens. She tackles challenges, rather than giving up and walking away.

Pam and Tony Bryant | Quarterly Winner

Pam and Tony Bryant are therapeutic foster care parents with Suncoast Center for Community Mental Health. They work with special needs children...children considered difficult and possibly unreachable...children who have been in other homes with unsuccessful results. Mr. Bryant's philosophy is one of a continuous hands-on approach to child rearing. When they need help at school, he is there swiftly. When at home, a list of tasks awaits helping them reconsider their behavior. At the time of their nomination, the Bryants had "graduated" four boys. The boys had improved their reading skills, were successful at school, and had developed both a positive self-image and a need to do well in their lives.

Anita Antoichik, LCSW | Quarterly Winner

Anita Antoichik, LCSW, is a clinical social worker at Bayfront Medical Center. Her responsibilities revolve around advocacy, counseling, and discharge planning. On her own initiative, she developed two educational campaigns for hospital staff on child abuse and domestic violence. She has received letters from the St. Petersburg Police Department and patient family members regarding her professional and caring attitude. According to nominator, Mary Ann Wanucha, Anita has gained the respect of social work colleagues, emergency room physicians and nurses. "She is a champion for all!"

1995 Winners

Joseph Hornstein | Annual Winner

Joseph Hornstein, a Recreation Aide with the City of St. Petersburg, coordinates recreational activities for children at St. Petersburg's Willis S. John Center.

Kelly Twiss | Quarterly Winner

Kelly Twiss, Youth Services Coordinator with CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse) was recognized for her work coordinating CASA services for children in families affected by domestic violence.

Jeffrey Williams | Quarterly Winner

Jeffrey Williams was honored for his work as Delinquency Case Manager for the Department of Juvenile Justice, where he worked with children who have become involved in the justice system to help them rehabilitate and avoid further involvement with the law.

Ellie Fero | Quarterly Winner

Ellie Fero was selected as a Quarterly Winner for her work as Pediatric Social Worker for Morton Plant Mease Healthcare. She was responsible for early identification of new moms having babies and connecting them to needed services.

1994 Winners

Sgt. Ed Short | Annual Winner

Sgt. Ed Short works with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Juvenile Diversion and Investigation of Runaway and Missing Children "He does a wonderful job," says his supervisor, Sgt. John Davis. Det. Short has worked for the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office for 15 years. Three of which have been spent working with runaway and missing children, and working with juvenile offenders and their families to keep the youth from becoming adult offenders. Det. Short was nominated for the Cooperman-Bogue Award by Crystal Gildea, the mother of one of the youth with whom he has been working.

Peg Atamian | Quarterly Winner

Peg Atamian is the sole clinical social worker providing case management services for Children's Medical Services patients in Pinellas and food counties. Many of these children have severe handicapping conditions and complex social problems, and Ms. Atamian is exemplary in providing efficient, competent and caring services for these families. She also developed five support groups for families and children with specific disabilities. "She's one of those very energetic people, but also, she's a very exciting person," says Patricia Delaney, who nominated Ms. Atamian for the Cooperman-Bogue notice Award.

Lois Rubaii | Quarterly Winner

Lois Rubaii is a Children, Youth and Family Counselor with the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services District 5. She has been performing this job for "26 wonderful years," says her supervisor. Glendine Davis, Mrs. Rubaii started with HRS in Pinellas County in the Protective Services Division, and she has since worked in foster care, and custody studies. Presently, she works in adoptions and provides coming for prospective adoptive parents. Mrs. Rubaii was nominated for the Cooperman-Bogue Award by Donald C. Richards.

Carol Watson | Quarterly Winner

Carol Watson is an employee of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. She has been a Delinquency Case Manager for almost two years, and presently counsels almost 30 children on community control ground. Photon this, she worked for nearly 10 years with the school system in New York City as a counselor for inner-city, youth. "Carole consistently puts the needs of others above her own," according to Lucia Vinciguerra, who nominated Ms. Watson for the Cooperman-Bogue Award.