

justdream

e-news from your Children's Board

Jan. 20, 2011

KEEP KIDS IN STATE BUDGET!



In this edition:

- Legislative Breakfast is Feb. 2
- Coffee for a Cause
- Florida Schools Rank No. 5

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Cover Story:

RSVP for Annual Legislative Breakfast at CBHC on Feb. 2



You are invited to the **Children's Board of Hillsborough County** for the annual Legislative Breakfast with the Hillsborough County State Legislative Delegation at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 2.

Community members will share with the Legislative Delegation advocacy priorities in 11 areas affecting children, families and communities. With a very tight state budget year expected, advocates for children and families are asking legislators to keep kids a priority.

The cost is \$5 – cash or check – payable at the door for food and materials. Breakfast is at 8:30 a.m. and the program begins at 9 a.m. The breakfast is sponsored by United Way of Tampa Bay.

To RSVP and to view the 11 Advocacy priorities, go to www.childrensboard.org.

The **Children's Board** is located at 1002 East Palm Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33605.



Achieve the Dream Stories

Now Serving Coffee at Mercedes-Benz: 'Art for Autism' Young Adults

Customers at Mercedes-Benz of Tampa's new location can not only enjoy a cup of complimentary gourmet coffee but help promote employment of young adults with autism at the same time. It began when a small non-profit foundation, Art for Autism, started by Pier and Vicky Westra, worked with the **Children's Board** to learn how to write a business plan. The plan aimed at their dream to help children with autism spectrum disorder, like their own daughter.

They completed a class presented annually by the **Children's Board** and Art for Autism became a finalist and award recipient of the board's 2010 Innovative Business Plan competition. The Art for Autism Foundation used the award and the encouragement of **Children's Board** chair Valerie Hubbard-Goddard to team up with Mercedes-Benz and open a coffee bar staffed by young adults with autism at the dealership, located at 4400.N. Dale Mabry Highway. The coffee bar, known as Artistas Café, also offers tea, cocoa and snacks. Non-customers pay affordable prices for the items.

"The Westras are an example of what can happen when citizens reach out to make a difference to our community's most vulnerable children. Their commitment and dedication to children with autism, which started as a dream, is now evidenced in a new business," said Hubbard-Goddard.

To learn more about the Autism program and the Children's Board's Innovative Business Plan and get contact information, see the full story at <http://www.childrensboard.org/documents/DAN%20Docs/Childrens%20Board%20Awardee%20Opens%20Coffee%20Shop%20to%20Aid%20Kids%20with%20Autism.pdf>.

(Pictured: Children's Board chair Valerie Hubbard-Goddard, at far right, orders gourmet coffee at the Art for Autism's Artistas Café at Mercedes-Benz during its grand opening on Jan. 13.)



Children's Board-Funded Agency and Program Win WEDU 'Be More' Awards

A **Children's Board**-funded agency and a funded program -- the Child Abuse Council and Powerstories Theater -- were winners of this year's WEDU Public Media Be More Awards. The Child Abuse Council won in the categories of "Entertaining" and "Humble," and Powerstories Theatre won in the category of "Enriched."

See more at <http://www.examiner.com/cats-in-tampa-bay/big-cat-rescue-named-most-relevant-by-wedu-s-be-more-awards> and <http://www.facebook.com/MyCBHC>.

Businessman's Buddy Baseball Lets Special Needs Kids Participate

There's a bit of irony when you find out where Russ Oberbroeckling was raised. Oberbroeckling, a financial adviser for The American Financial Group and past president of The Greater Temple Terrace Chamber of Commerce, is originally from Dyersville, Iowa, where the motion picture "Field of Dreams" was filmed. Considering the joy Oberbroeckling, 48, has brought to dozens of families in the Tampa Bay area, it's only fitting he's managed to create his own field of dreams through his program, Buddy Baseball.

Buddy Baseball is a league for boys and girls age 7 to 18 with special needs. While batting, running the base paths and playing defense, the player is assisted by a buddy, who is a volunteer typically about the same age. The program was brought to the Tampa Bay area by Oberbroeckling in 2009 after he called his sister, Sheri White, who brought the program to families in Rockford, Ill. "I was just so impressed by the league," said Oberbroeckling, who moved to Tampa 26 years ago. "I was reading the e-mails of parents' gratitude who were touched by it and I go: This needs to be all over the place."

See <http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/st-josephs-childrens-hospital-honors-heroic-kids/1140129>

Local News

Children's Board Participates in Black Heritage Festival in Tampa



The **Children's Board** sponsored and was an active participant in WTBN radio's live remote broadcast at the annual Black Heritage Festival on Saturday, Jan. 15 at Curtis Hixon Park in downtown Tampa..

The **Children's Board** had informational giveaways at WTBN's booth near the main stage. Two of the live interviews on WTBN that day featured the **Children's Board's** Amy Petrla, director of programs and advocacy, and Dr. Arlinda Amos, ombudsman. **Children's Board** chair Valerie Hubbard-Goddard interviewed Petrla for WTBN.

(Pictured: Children's Board member Pete Edwards stopped by WTBN with his grandson. See more pictures at http://www.childrensboard.org/press_releases.aspx.)

Children's Board Posts RFQ for Opinion Polling, ITN for Information Systems

the **Children's Board** is offering vendors an opportunity to conduct public opinion research for the organization. In addition, the **Children's Board** is identifying qualified organizations through an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) to assist in improving our current network infrastructure and propose creative solutions for a more efficient and robust system.

See the website at www.childrensboard.org for a link to more information about both the public opinion research and the ITN.

CBHC Radio Now Posts Programming Schedule On the Web

Check out the CBHC Radio programming on the Children's Board website. It's a new feature that will be updated weekly.

Programming runs on the hour six hours at a time, and is repeated four times a day for one week.

See http://www.childrensboard.org/cbhc_radio.aspx.



Children's Playground at Downtown Park to Be Named After MacKinnon

The playground at Tampa's downtown park has a new name. It's now the Dottie Berger MacKinnon Children's Playground at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park in honor of the well-known advocate who is battling cancer. MacKinnon helped start the Joshua House shelter and created Kids Charity of Tampa Bay to fund it and similar residences for abuse, abandoned and neglected children. A naming ceremony will take place a future date to be determined.

-- MacKinnon Profiled in Full-Page Tampa Tribune Article --

Dottie Berger MacKinnon had a full-page profile in the Tampa Tribune about her work on behalf of abused and neglected children, her founding of Joshua House, Friends of Joshua House, Kids Charity of Tampa Bay and A Kid's Place, and her battle with cancer.

See the full article at <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2011/jan/16/VWNEWSO1-it-seems-like-my-life-has-been-an-adventu/>.

DCF's Nick Cox Named a Statewide Prosecutor, Will Head 8 Regional Offices

Attorney General Pam Bondi named Nick Cox a new statewide prosecutor, plucking Cox from an administrative post at the Department of Children and Families and returning him to a career in law. Cox, 47, will oversee eight regional agencies of the Office of Statewide Prosecution, which tackles multi-circuit organized crime. Cox has nine years of experience working as an assistant state attorney in Hillsborough County and six years in the Office of the Attorney General. He has tried about 150 criminal jury cases including homicides and capital cases. In 2007, Cox took over as DCF director for an 11-county region that includes Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco. He supervised more than 1,700 employees and managed operations with a budget of more than \$450 million. As a regional director for DCF, he served on the **Children's Board**. Until the DCF post is filled, regional program director Mike Carroll will take over as acting regional director.

See <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/dcf-regional-director-named-statewide-prosecutor/1142283>

Columnist Names Stacie Blake One of '10 Most Intriguing' of 2010

St. Petersburg Times columnist Ernest Hooper named Community Tampa Bay Executive Director Stacie Blake one of his 10 Most Intriguing People of 2010. The **Children's Board** funds the Hillsborough Youth Collaborative, a program of Community Tampa Bay.

See <http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/tampa-bays-10-most-intriguing-of-2010/1142788>.

Children's Board Facebook, Twitter Numbers Are Rising

The Children's Board is now up to 712 active monthly users on Facebook and has 483 followers on Twitter - Go to www.facebook.com/MyCBHC to see the latest Facebook postings. Follow the Children's Board on Twitter at www.twitter.com/MyCBHC.

Jobs & Volunteer Opportunities - Go to http://www.childrensboard.org/jobs_volunteer_opportunities.aspx and click on the top link for updated postings in Hillsborough County.

Calendar - Go to <http://www.childrensboard.org/calendar.aspx> to access the upcoming community and provider calendar. Click on the top link for the latest events, in chronological order.

Family Support & Resource Center Events - Go to www.familysupporthc.org to access all of the Children's Board-funded Family Support & Resource Center calendars.

Children's Board Heart Gallery of Tampa on Facebook - Go to www.facebook.com/HeartGalleryTampaBay and see the latest postings.

Buccaneers 'Road to Success' Program Accepting Nominations

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers are currently accepting nominations for the second-annual "Road to Success" program, a team community initiative that will provide one underprivileged individual with the keys to a new car.

If you have a friend, coworker or family member who would truly benefit from a new vehicle, the Buccaneers want to know. All applications must be received by 5 p.m. on January 31. Only complete applications will be considered and only one entry per person is allowed.



Following an initial screening process of all nominations, a panel will select finalists for in-person interviews to determine the car recipient. Visit www.buccaneers.com for a complete list of details and requirements to help one lucky person get back on the road to success. Nominee must be 18 years old at the time of nomination to be entered. Void where prohibited

Couple's Project Provides Mentors for Homeless High Schoolers -

See <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/dec/30/PMENEWSO1-homeless-have-haven-in-her-heart/>

Patel Conservatory Reaches Out to Homeless Teens at Metro Ministries -

See <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2011/jan/16/theater-program-builds-confidence/>

Neighborhood News

Retired FAMU President Creates Library for West Tampa Kids, Neighborhood

Children who come to the Walter L. Smith Library learn about black history not only from book – like Theresa Manuel, Florida's first female Olympian. And Minnie Wharton, who taught at the Harlem Academy, Tampa's first black public school, before becoming a principal for the school district.

And the library's namesake, Walter Smith Sr. The retired Florida A&M University president came home to West Tampa a decade ago and set about renovating an old house on Albany Avenue. He filled it with his worldly collection of books, videos, photographs, art, proclamations and awards, all with one purpose in mind. To set an example.

He opened the nonprofit library in 2004 and has steadily added to it ever since with books about nutrition, cooking and literature. Local chapters of the National Black Nurses Association and the Veterans of Foreign Wars meet there regularly.

With the help of one of his three sons, Walt Jr., Smith is fulfilling his mother's dream of expanding the library by turning her house into a STEM center for science, technology, engineering and math studies.

Students from the nearby Mount Pleasant Standard Based Charter Middle School come weekly to use the library's computers, watch videos and read magazines.

Father and son also want to use the library to help make documentaries about the people in their neighborhood, the community and Tampa who made history in their own quiet way.

Advocacy

Children's Campaign Releases 2011 Legislative Platform

The Children's Campaign recently released its 2011 Legislative Platform, outlining specific policies and promoting what it calls "fiscally smart" appropriations that would measurably improve the health and well-being of children. It provides information for strategic investments generating short- and long-term benefits. A summary of the platform was recently handed out to legislators and can be found at http://www.iamforkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/2011_LegislativePlatform_FL-NAL.pdf. Read the entire document at <http://www.iamforkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/LegHandout2011.pdf>.

Commentary: Help Vulnerable Kids Succeed with Mentoring

Stephen Koch, CEO of Big Brothers big Sisters of Tampa Bay (Hillsborough, Pasco and Polk Counties) and Susan Rolston, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pinellas County (serving Pinellas, Citrus and Hernando Counties), wrote in a commentary published in the Tampa Tribune that independent studies show children enrolled in Big Brothers Big Sisters' long-term mentoring programs are more likely than their peers to earn higher grades and less likely to skip classes and school days, factors linked to high school graduation. In other words, mentoring helps vulnerable kids succeed.

The same studies find children in these long-term quality mentoring programs also are more likely than their peers to avoid violent and unhealthy behaviors and more likely to have positive relationships with their parents and others. Most children enrolled in Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pinellas County or Tampa Bay are those of single, low-income and incarcerated parents.

See <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2011/jan/07/PMEOPINO2-to-help-vulnerable-kids-succeed-lets-sta/>.

State News

'Quality Counts' Report Ranks Florida Schools Number 5 in Nation

Two months before the start of the next legislative session, new Florida Gov. Rick Scott and Republican lawmakers have been handed a gift in their bid to continue an aggressive makeover of state schools: a Top 5 ranking for those schools from a credible, independent, closely watched source. Florida's education system is No. 5 in the country, according to the latest annual "Quality Counts" report, released recently by *Education Week*, the newspaper of record for American education news.

Education Week ranks states in six broad areas, looking at a comprehensive list of statistics and policies. It awards a grade and ranking for each. Florida earned a B- overall. No state earned higher than a B+. In K-12 achievement, Florida earned a C+. But that was higher than the national average of D+ and enough to put it at No. 6.

In most of the academic categories considered by *Education Week*, Florida students are in middle of the pack or worse when it comes to overall performance. In eighth-grade reading, they're No. 30. In graduation rates, they're No. 44. But *Education Week* gives points for progress, and between 2000 and 2007, only one state improved its graduation rate more than Florida (*Education Week* uses its own formula, not Florida's.) And between 2003 and 2009, no state made a bigger jump in eighth-grade reading (*Education Week* uses a highly regarded national test, not the FCAT.)

See <http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/florida-schools-ranked-no-5-in-us-according-to-education-week/1144718>.

Wilkins to Head Florida Department of Children and Families

Gov. Rick Scott named David Wilkins, a businessman, to head the state's Department of Children and Families. Wilkins is finance chairman of the Florida Baptist Children's Home, which provides residential care, adoption help, foster care, emergency services and adult developmental help for the needy. Wilkins succeeds George Sheldon as head of DCF, which has about 13,000 employees working in welfare and protective services.

See <http://www.floridatoday.com/article/CD/20110119/CAPITOLNEWS/101190315/Gov-Scott-taps-Accenture-executive-for-head-of-DCF>.

Scott Names First Woman to Head State Juvenile Justice Office

Gov. Rick Scott named Wansley Walters to lead the state's Department of Juvenile Justice, the first woman named to the post.

See <http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/the-buzz-florida-politics/content/miamis-wansley-walters-head-florida-department-juvenile-justice>.

Abramowitz Named Head of Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office -

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/news/local/east-volusia/2011/01/02/area-man-to-lead-statewide-guardian-group.html>.

Life After Foster Care is Challenging for the Unadopted

Tara Hormell, executive director of the Children's Home Society of Florida, said cutting foster kids off at 18 is setting them up for failure. "Know how to budget wisely, make sure you pay your rent on time, go to work, make sure you show up on time -- have all those skills that sometimes it takes even a normal youth to the age of way past 25 to learn," said Hormell. "They're expected to learn by 18, and it's not very realistic."

Here is the reality, according to the Children's Home Society:

- 33 percent of youth who age out of foster care will become homeless within three years.
- 60 percent will have a child within four years.
- 25 percent of men who age out of foster care will end up in jail or prison.

See <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/dec/21/PMENEWSO1-more-peas-please/>.

March of Dimes Florida Chapter to Give Grants for Community Programs

The March of Dimes Florida Chapter is seeking proposals for grant projects for community-based programs addressing the health concerns of pregnant women and infants in Florida. Forms and instructions for the 2011 community awards program are available on the website at marchofdimes.com/florida. Completed applications are due no later than February 15, 2011. Contact lreeves@marchofdimes.com for more information. Community awards are available in amounts of up to \$3,000.

National News

Study: Autism Risk Tied to Kids Born Less Than 2 Years After Siblings

Close birth spacing may put a second-born child at higher risk for autism, suggests a preliminary study based on more than a half-million California children. Children born less than two years after their siblings were considerably more likely to have an autism diagnosis compared to those born after at least three years.

The sooner the second child was conceived, the greater the likelihood of that child later being diagnosed with autism. The effect was found for parents of all ages, decreasing the chance that it was older parents and not the birth spacing behind the higher risk.

Closely spaced births are increasing in the United States because women are delaying childbirth and because of unplanned pregnancies. Government data show the number of closely spaced births — where babies are less than two years apart — is rising, from 11 percent of all births in 1995 to 18 percent in 2002.

See <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/dec/24/PMEOPINO2-grateful-for-the-gift-of-healthy-familie/>.

Program in St. Louis Matches Hard-to-Place Foster Kids with Adoptive Families

An innovative program in St. Louis, called Extreme Recruitment, is making big strides in matching hard-to-place kids with adoptive families, on a fast track. The program uses detectives to track down potential adoptive relatives for each child. Sometimes the first match doesn't work and additional matches need to be made. But the percentage of Extreme Recruitment children matched with families is 70 percent.

See <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2040212,00.html>.