

Friends of  
Children



# Friends of Children of North Central Florida

FOCNCF

P.O. Box 358502

Gainesville FL 32635-8502

Website: [www.focncf.org](http://www.focncf.org)

Email: [friendsofchildrenfl@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofchildrenfl@gmail.com)

Phone: 352.672.6112

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*Every child deserves a family*



## A Word from the President:

Greetings!!

I remember when we were ground breaking on the second set of homes at Lacrosse (the now Cellon-Thomas Campus) that I heard someone say, "Well, this project is done". Well, not exactly. While we had completed a very significant step, in many ways we were just getting started. Many charitable and religious organizations choose events or ministries that are short lived and are not recurring. They often choose to hand out jackets right before winter or do a Thanksgiving basket drive – all of which are exceptional efforts with great benefits and are indeed needed. But why? Because a long-term ministry requires so much discipline and faithfulness that is not easily found. I have also heard it said that, "real, on-going ministry is messy and tough".

So, where am I going with this? Friends of Children of North Central Florida (FOCNCF) embraces the mission of being a "A Christ centered support of foster, adoptive and in need families" organization. Unfortunately, in order to fulfill this mission, it requires that our efforts are recurring, sustaining, and simply put, on-going. That

is where you come in. Many of you have been with us the entire time. However, there are great opportunities arising for you to continue in your support efforts, jump back into helping again, or even experience what we do for the first time.

We continue to need funds to support our Cellon-Thomas Campus. We have added playground equipment, are currently building a pavilion for the kids and parents to enjoy, and the homes – as parents move out and we ready for the next sets – require refreshing with everything from new paint, replacing very worn out furniture and replacing worn equipment and appliances. We want to maintain these homes in such a way that honors God but also helps attract new parents and helps them accomplish the goals of ministering to sibling groups. Since our opening, we have ministered to 112 children (representing 38 sibling groups) and God, just because He often shows up and shows off, has orchestrated 17 adoptions to those families (an unexpected or planned Blessing).

We also, through our funding that we receive help support the local Florida Baptist Children's Home

(FBCH)/One More Child (OMC) Gainesville office that administers fostering support to now 25 homes in this general area. We also, as an organization minister to those families in the way of encouragement, gifts, and reimbursements to required classes and training.

And, now, we are getting ready to launch our Brave Moms Program. This program will house single moms with the goal of intervention long before the State of Florida may get involved. This early intervention allows moms (and maybe some dads) to meet the needs of their families, keep their children from experiencing some of life's harsher realities, and will minister to, "the least of these my brethren". We have a location picked out to purchase and will use this first location as a way of educating ourselves how it works and what works best with other locations to come.

So, what are the next steps? There is a Pastors/Business Luncheon to be held at Westside Baptist Church on May 14<sup>th</sup> at noon. Dr. Jerry Haag, President from OMC will be the key speaker, and he will share more about our ministries and next steps. Please speak with your pastor and encourage him to attend. You can reserve a spot by calling Donna at the North Central Florida Baptist Association, 352.373.5030. As well, on September 24<sup>th</sup> we will hold the Second Annual Denim and Diamonds fund raising event at the Santa Fe River Ranch. This will be the key fundraising opportunity of the year. Please begin to pray now about your church sponsoring a table, assisting us in getting the word out, or how you can specifically help us meet our financial – but more importantly – spiritual goals.

Blessings to you and hope to see you soon.

Denny George



...from the *Florida Baptist Children's Home/One More Child*

What a blessed spring we are enjoying. The Gainesville Office of One More Child is thriving. During recent events at local churches (booths, speaking engagements, and Information Meetings. We have been blessed to

encounter so many wonderful people interested in sharing their time, treasure, and talents.

If you were one who filled out One More Child cards that indicated your area of interest (volunteering, fostering, providing meals) we will be contacting you, if we haven't already!

### Will you help meet the needs of MORE CHILDREN in our Foster Family Homes?

Start your adventure today by fostering children in need in one of our Foster Family Homes! Take the next steps by calling 1.855.512.4453 or send us an email.

We currently have openings for 2019 in: Bradenton, Gainesville and Tallahassee. Benefits of Caring for Children in Foster Family Homes:



- Housing flexibility (no mortgage or rent payment)
- The homes are fully furnished
- Minimal utility expenses
- Opportunity to help children grow spiritually, socially, academically and emotionally
- Ability to care for larger sibling groups, which is crucial for the emotional wellbeing of many children

Come to one of our Information Meetings to find out more about becoming a One More Child Foster parent.

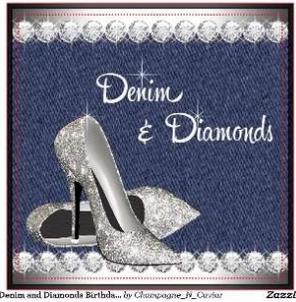
- ❖ **Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup>**
- ❖ **Monday, June 10<sup>th</sup>**
- ❖ **Monday, July 8<sup>th</sup>**
- ❖ **Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>**

All meetings will be held at the Gainesville Office. 3700 NW 91<sup>st</sup> Street, Ste. B-300, Gainesville, FL 32606 Please contact Jennifer Hewitt, Licensing Specialist for more information.

Thank you,  
**Jennifer Hewitt**  
**Licensing Specialist**  
**O:** 352.672.6112 **C:** 352.281.1052 **F:** 352.505.6196  
[3700 NW 91<sup>st</sup> Street, Ste. B-300](http://www.FBCHomes.org)  
Gainesville, FL 32606



Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>,



2019

Mark Your  
Calendars!!!

Last year on Tuesday, September 18<sup>th</sup> Friends of Children experienced an AMAZING evening!! Over 200 people attended the FIRST Denim & Diamonds Event. This event was to introduce and share information about the newest ministry of One More Child Brave Moms Program. Because of our friends, family and churches we were able to raise over \$85,000 to start moving forward in providing a facility to start this program in the Gainesville Area. As you read in our President's message we have found a residence that could be the beginning of this dream!

Once again, we want to share this amazing evening with friends, family, church families and our community leaders. **Mark your calendars for Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.** Consider a sponsorship of \$1000, \$3000 or even \$5000. Encourage your church to sponsor a table. Invite those with a heart and passion for caring and protecting God's children to come and share in this awesome opportunity. We are soliciting individuals and businesses for other sponsorship levels, program ads, and event tickets. We appreciate your support.

### Financial Update:

Thanks to the generous giving of our faithful donors, plus the excellent results of the 2018 Denim and Diamonds fundraiser, we have raised \$200,000 toward the purchase of housing for the Brave Moms ministry site.

Your continued prayers and monetary gifts can help us attain this goal in the 2019 year.



### Ways to continue to support FOC...

*The Friends of Children... are blessed to have the support of our local churches, pastors and those who serve in the community. If it weren't for the amazing volunteers and various ministries that provide supplies, meals, monetary gifts and personal time we would not be able to support One More Child ministries. YOUR gifts are most appreciated and needed. Your gift to FOC stays in our local area. If you wish to contribute and be a part of this amazing organization, you may send your financial donation using the envelope enclosed with this newsletter or you may send your gift to:*

**Friends of Children  
PO Box 358502  
Gainesville, Florida  
32635-8502**



*Spotlight on  
our families...*

This month we have two amazing stories about foster families who have opened their homes, their hearts and their faith to care for children in need. \*Name has been changed for confidentiality reasons.

The Miltons\* were newly licensed in September and have a placement of two siblings. Immediately upon placement, the Miltons started working to build a relationship with the biological parents of their two foster children, Donna and Bobby. The foster mother created a private FB messaging system to share photos and daily reports on the children and encouraged the young children to speak on the phone with their parents regularly.

The Miltons were thrilled when they shared with the biological family that they were Christians and wanted permission to take the children to church with them weekly. The biological father shared that he had been "feeling like (he) needed to 'get right with God'." As such, he stated the belief that the foster parents' request to take the children to church was another sign that God was trying to "send (him) a message."

## *Our Mission Statement*

# **"Christ-centered support for foster, adoptive and in need families."**



Donna and Bobby began learning Bible stories and heard daily of the Love that Jesus has for them. Recently, Donna, who is 5, was found sitting and staring at an image of Jesus the foster parent had in her home. Donna started asking questions, and the foster parent was able to share with Donna the process of Salvation, which she prefaced with "When you are ready, Jesus is waiting." Donna responded immediately, "Can I be ready right now?" And, Mrs. Milton was overjoyed to have the opportunity to lead Donna to accept Jesus.

The Miltons quickly called the biological parents to update them, and they both were very excited for Donna. They indicated the belief that Donna's profession of faith was "another sign that (they) need to continue working to get back on track."

The Miltons are very excited about Donna's profession of faith and are hopeful that they will have a continued opportunity to share Christ's love with the biological parents and Bobby, the younger sibling also placed in the home and that they will also choose to accept Christ as their Savior.



The Lincolns\* have been foster parents since May of 2018. While they were eager to foster, they also wanted to ensure that the child placed in their home would be a good fit for their family.

Late one evening, the Lincolns took a chance and decided to accept placement of a foster child, Lillian, a young teenage girl. Lillian has thrived since being placed in the Lincolns' home and is "on the right track to success. "

The Lincolns have ensured that she is regularly exposed to the Gospel by attending youth group, reading the Bible, and going on a family trip to Noah's Ark in Kentucky. And, on 11/4/2018, Lillian accepted Jesus as her Savior and was subsequently baptized.

In addition to meeting Lillian's spiritual needs, the Lincolns have also worked hard to help Lillian "catch up" with her education, as she missed a considerable amount of school prior to being placed with them. She is now attending a Christian School on a scholarship, and her teachers are working hard to help her get back on track. Additionally, in her free time, Lillian loves to read and play sports. And, although she has never played basketball or volleyball, she made both of the teams!

Lillian is a great example of the difference that the dedication of a foster parent and the exposure to the Gospel can make in the life of a teenager!

## *Who is FOC ?*

As you may know, this organization was created from a dream of more than fifteen years ago. Our purpose, to establish a Florida Baptist Children's Home campus in North Central Florida. This dream was fulfilled in June 2016. Friends of Children of North Central Florida is a nonprofit 501c3 organization that raises funds to support our local campus here in Gainesville.

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