

**Friends of
Children**



Friends of Children of North Central Florida

FOCNCF

P.O. Box 358502

Gainesville FL 32635-8502

Website: www.focncf.org

Email: friendsofchildrenfl@gmail.com

Phone: 352.672.6112

June 2020



Every child deserves a family



A Word from the President:

Greetings!!

Well friends, to say things have been a little crazy would be the understatement of a lifetime! While the COVID-19 Pandemic has been swirling, and we have been quarantined with very limited mobility, the need for foster homes, assistance to those that need help, and the efforts required of One More Child (OMC) continues to grow. I have read that calls to the Florida Abuse Hotline have grown roughly 30% during this time. As you can only imagine, those homes without strong foundations have been heavily impacted during this time through possible job losses, increased stresses, and home schooling of children. So, with no delay, we must continue our efforts to be the church.

You will recall that we have an event planned at the Santa Fe River Ranch on September 29, 2020. At this point, we are planning to have the event. While it may feel a bit different, we are hopeful the circumstances will improve enough to allow us to do something. We might need to host fewer people, plan to space attendees out more, and likely we could all be wearing masks. Regardless, we press ahead. Our backup plan would be to hold the event "electronically" – a last resort.

In the last seven months, we purchased a Gainesville home. We have been busy cleaning the inside and outside of the home and making adjustments to fit more than one family. While some of this has been delayed during this trying time, we are still moving ahead with adding a few doors, installing new counter tops where needed, securing a washer and dryer, and doing other minor tasks such as painting. We will host additional workdays once the "stay" order is lifted and we are able to move about more freely.

Additionally, we are pursuing a location in the Tri-County area (Dixie, Levy, Gilchrist) that would either be a Brave Mom's location or a traditional foster home – a way for churches closer to the country to band together with a common cause and location. You will also recall we have an option to purchase another home in Gainesville (adjacent to the one FOC recently purchased) and we are considering possible solutions that would complement our financial situation.

So, as you get this letter we need you to do a few things: 1) use this upcoming event as a way to help get your company, organization or church focused on a tremendous opportunity to begin to look and act normal – save the date, and, 2) remember that while we have gone through likely the oddest, most

financially damaging world event, we are still required to be the church – especially in a time where the need has increased so greatly.

Feel free to respond to us with a cell number and/or an email, with your confirmation that your business, church, or organization “is in” for the event. More details will follow!

Blessings,

Denny George

President

Our Brave Moms Home...



Even though Covid-19 has interfered with life in general, volunteers and board members have been busy getting the home ready. We have had a few workdays as a group and then individuals continue to work on renovations, debris removal, painting, and general cleanup. We have been blessed with many who have donated, given time and actively support this endeavor. We look

to complete the home in the next couple months and prepare for the single moms whom we can serve. This is an exciting time for Friends of Children!!



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

Dear Friends,

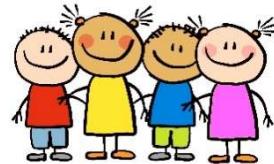
Whether remotely, or in person (dependent on COVID 19 quarantine) our next foster parent training class for the Gainesville area is scheduled for the following five Saturdays: June 20 & 27, July 11 & 25, and August 1, 2020. These classes will cover two sessions each Saturday and are 6 hours long (9:30 am-3:30 PM). We anticipate these classes once the quarantine lifts. One More Child plans to conduct foster parent training classes live and in person. We would love to hold a class in your church. If your church would consider holding a nine session PRIDE foster parent training class,



please contact one of our Licensing Specialists (Jennifer Hewitt or Mary Griffis) whose contact information is listed below.

To learn about becoming a foster parent or to RSVP to attend our next Information Meeting, please contact us at 352-672-6112 or Jennifer.Hewitt@OneMoreChild.org or Mary.Griffis@onemorechild.org.

As always, there are opportunities to serve other than fostering. We need churches/individuals willing to provide wrap-around support for our foster families. There are many volunteer opportunities as well. To learn more, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Damaris Arroyo at 352-672-6112 or Damaris.Arroy@onemorechild.org.



O: [352.672.6112](tel:352.672.6112) C: [352.281.1052](tel:352.281.1052) F: [352.505.6196](tel:352.505.6196)
3700 NW 91st Street Suite B-300
Gainesville, Florida 32606

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Spotlight on our families...

The **Davis*** family has a long history of fostering and have specialized in taking older children and sibling groups. When they initially moved onto one of our campuses last year, they took placement of a sibling group of 4, the oldest two being school aged. The children were very behind in school and the oldest boy challenged authority and would frequently get in trouble at school. He was barely passing and was several grade levels behind.

Over the past year, the kids have made great progress academically and behaviorally. The Davis family worked very hard to establish a positive relationship with the biological parents and would even schedule visitation in a way so that the family could come to church. When the crisis with Corona happened, the Davis' were not just caring for a total of 7 children in the home but were also plunged into homeschooling all of them. Of course, they willingly accepted the added responsibility to meet the specific needs of the children in their home, and a lot of progress was made during this time. In particular, the young man who was several grade levels behind during this school year progressed from being a "C/D" student to a straight "A's."

A few weeks ago, the sibling group was reunified with their biological parents. However, without access to internet and computers in their parents' home, they were going to have a tough time finishing the school year. Not wanting the kids to lose any of the progress they had made, the Davis' decided to volunteer to finish the school year homeschooling these kids.

For several weeks, Mr. Davis would go pick the kids up in the morning and bring them to their home to do schoolwork. He would then run them back home in the afternoon after school. Mrs. Davis recently said, that while working with older children can be very challenging, the reward of seeing them make such progress makes it all worth it. These kids are completing this school year successfully due to the efforts of the Davis foster family who were willing to go the extra mile to make a difference for one (four) more child(ren).

*Name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.

WWJD... What would Jesus do?

During this time of uncertainties people ponder "Should I go out"? "Should I commit"? "Do we dare get together"? What if...? And the list goes on...

Well, as the Friends of Children Board members, we have those same thoughts and quandaries. Our Annual Denim & Diamonds Event is such a great time and our largest source of funding for the year; however, we are at a loss what is the best thing to do. What is safe for our sponsors/patrons? How are our sponsors doing financially? Are they able and ready to support the Brave Moms Program and Friends of Children? How can we distance and still have a successful event? So many things must be considered.



However, the one thing that is a certainty is that Florida, specifically, North Central Florida continue to have children and single moms who need the help of One More Child: Friends of Children. Children are still abused and neglected by their parents/guardians and need our foster families and Brave Moms Program to provide physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. They need a safe shelter. They need a caring and loving environment. They need nurturing. Single moms need the environment to learn how to properly parent, obtain employment, manage their household, and get on their feet. These children and moms need our support. It is through One More Child and Friends of Children that a Christian home environment can provide what is needed.

SO...with that being said. Denim & Diamonds 2020; we will see you in September!!

2020



Save the Date!!!

**3rd Annual Denim & Diamonds Event
Tuesday, September 29th, 2020**

Friends of Children is happy to announce we ARE going to celebrate and proceed with our annual event. It might be



“slightly” different than the past couple years, but we believe we must continue to raise funds to protect those children who need a good Christian

environment to thrive in this world.

We are looking for table sponsors at this point. This can be a church, individuals, groups of friends, businesses, etc. A donation of \$5000 will get you seating for 20, \$3000 will get you 10 and \$1000 will handle 8 of your closest pals!! Your sponsorship will be highlighted in our event program and on FOC’s website.

Pray for our event as we continue to plan and provide the safest and successful event for our very special guests. YOU are the key to our success!!! Thank you.

Friends of Children Mission:

To be a Christ centered support of foster, adoptive and in need families.



Who is Friends of Children ?

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 in Gainesville and OMC Gainesville ministries. Friends of Children Board of Directors:

- Denny George, President, Trenton
- Bobby Davis, VP, Worthington Springs
- Mary Lynne Moore, Secretary, Gainesville
- Gaye Cellon, Treasurer, Gainesville
- Kim Baxley, Archer
- Donna Jordan, Melrose
- Ron Locke, Gainesville
- Faye Zuidema, Alachua



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 gift to:

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

Or online at: <https://www.focncf.org/how-to-help/>



If you wish to learn more about the Brave Moms home, please contact the Friends of Children at: friendsofchildrenfl@gmail.com. We still have several items needed for our Brave Moms Home. For a complete list of needs for the Brave Moms Home go to our website at www.focncf.org or go to www.walmart.com, Event Registries, Friends of Children.