



FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST
CHILDREN'S HOME®

ESTABLISHED 1908

THE HERALD

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Empower children and families to experience the transforming love of Christ through evidence-based care and holistic services.



A *word* FROM THE PRESIDENT

Reflecting over the past year, most things have gotten back to normal in terms of dealing with the pandemic. We have continued to be mindful of the safety of the children and staff as COVID related issues have continued to decline. The children are back in school and able to take day trips off campus. They have also been able to participate in their Day of Service where they go out into the community and perform volunteer work for charitable organizations. Perhaps the most disruptive event this year has been Hurricane Ian, requiring additional preparation ahead of the storm and a good deal of clean up afterwards. Though we were blessed not to suffer any significant damage to our buildings, there were some downed trees, minor roof damage, and considerable flooding to the area.

In terms of services on our Enterprise campus, we have continued to grow our Family Foster Care program. This requires the renovation of specific group care cottages on our campus for use as foster homes. We place our licensed and trained foster parents in those cottages with foster children under their care. The Family Foster Care program is in addition to the Foster Care services we currently provide, and represents an increased emphasis on foster care as one of our services. The children in the Family Foster Care program, like the other children on campus, benefit from the full range of services including our Legacy Scholars Academy, Recreation, Spiritual Life, as well as therapeutic support. Two cottages have been renovated and occupied so far by foster families, while a third is under way. There remains at least two additional cottages slated for renovation next year.

You may also be aware of the dynamics occurring inside the Methodist church at this time. At the Children's Home, we remain laser focused on staying true to our mission. Since 1908, this has been a place of hope, healing, and refuge for hurting children. While it started out as an orphanage, it has now transformed into a multi-faceted organization today serving over 200 children and families each week. Our mission is to empower children and families to experience the transforming love of Christ through trauma-informed care and holistic services. While the Children's Home is a Methodist ministry, it is not an apportionment ministry. Through your generosity and that of those who came before you, we have been able to fulfill that mission each and every day by seeking God's wisdom and direction in our ministry.

Kitwana McTyer
President & CEO
Florida United Methodist Children's Home

ON THE COVER:

One of our youth assisting a resident at a local nursing home on Day of Service

Blended Gifts

THE ULTIMATE GIVING EXPERIENCE



So many times in life, you might think that you have to choose between two alternatives, like two different cups of coffee. When making a gift to support the causes you care about, you might believe that you either have to choose between making a sizable gift today, so you can receive any up-front tax benefits and see firsthand the result of your gift, or holding off on making your intended gift until much later when you know you won't need that particular asset.

There is actually a way to receive the advantages of both kinds of gifts—we call these blended gifts.

With the first option, you would receive up-front tax benefits and see your gift at work. With the second, you maintain the flexibility in the event of unanticipated needs. Similar to finding your perfect coffee blend, there is a way to blend your personal philanthropy that is right for you.

The idea is that you make a starting gift with a current gift of cash, securities or real estate. Then you find the planned gift method, maybe a bequest or a charitable trust, that works best for your situation. With the planned gift, you set it up now and enjoy the benefits and security during your lifetime, and you get the satisfaction of knowing your planned gift will make a big difference by adding to the gift you already started.

For information about blended gifts or estate planning, contact

ELISABETH GADD

Chief Development Officer
386.753.2066

plannedgiving@fumch.org
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PUTTING

Weeding and landscaping



Organizing donated items



Visiting with nursing home residents

OTHERS FIRST

Most youth look forward to a teacher workday as a day off from school and a time when they can play video games or sleep late. The youth at the Children's Home have a different idea for how to spend these free days. They see it as an opportunity to serve others and give back to the community. During a recent day off from school they did just that, along with their house parents, our Spiritual Life team, and two members of our Board of Trustees who spent the day working alongside our youth.

The youth were organized into teams and sent off to various locations:

- **All Saints Episcopal Church** (Enterprise) – Youth went to this historic local church to assist with hurricane cleanup and some landscape work.
- **Enterprise Elementary** (Enterprise) – The school was also in need of some hurricane cleanup which included a lot of raking.
- **First United Methodist Church** (Sanford) – There was lots of window cleaning that needed to be done, as well as moving and organizing some items that had been donated to the church to benefit needy families.
- **Lakeside United Methodist Church** (Sanford) – The church was actively preparing for trunk-or-treat and other fall activities for local children. Our youth assisted by packing candy bags and setting up some of the games and activities.
- **Orange City Nursing & Rehab Center** (Orange City) – Our youth performed some cleaning tasks, but mostly they spent time with the residents.

Our youth have always enjoyed participating in the service days because they learn just how much they can give back. All of our youth come from a background of abuse, neglect, or abandonment, and often feel powerless as a result. When they help others and see that they can make an impact, it often leads them to have increased hope for their future. It's empowering to them, and



Brittany Sobering, Board of Trustees, lending a hand

does wonder for their self-worth. It also expands their horizons as they interact with individuals and learn about the experiences of others.

While visiting the Rehab Center, one young lady spent time with a gentleman who had worked with Elvis Presley and served as a gofer on his road crew. He regaled her with stories about life on the road with the King, and what it was like to work in the music and entertainment industries during the 1960s and 1970s. Another of our youth was introduced to an elderly lady who only spoke Creole. Being limited to that language, you can imagine that she didn't have a lot of opportunities for conversation on a daily basis. Coincidentally, the youth was fluent in Creole. They had a lengthy conversation where the woman told the youth all about her life growing up, her children, as well as her grandchildren. The woman was thrilled to have someone to talk to, and youth knew she had made the woman's day. Our youth realized that the simple act of having conversation can really bring a lot of joy to someone.

Your support is not only helping our youth directly, it is also helping others in the community as our youth learn about the positive impact they can have on others.

A CONVERSATION WITH NANCY MICHEL, LOCAL CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE

The Local Church Representative, or LCR, is the primary contact for the Children's Home with each Methodist Church in Florida. The LCR is responsible for funneling information from the Children's Home to the congregants about events, needs, and other happenings at our multiple locations. At College Heights UMC in Lakeland, the LCR duties are filled by Nancy Michel and her husband, Tony. We recently had the opportunity to speak with Nancy, and asked her about her passion for supporting the Children's Home.

When did you start supporting the Children's Home?

One of my earliest memories of being in church was sitting with Mom at Trinity UMC in Bradenton, FL, and watching her put the small envelope in the offering plate as it passed. I couldn't wait until I was old enough to have some of those envelopes, and be able to put them in the offering plate with my gift. Back then, my family would receive a box of offering envelopes with four specifically designated for the Children's Home on Fifth Sundays. While the Fifth Sunday offering was not required, I do remember putting my nickel or dime in each time. You see, my parents always tithed, and when we were old enough to have an allowance we were expected to tithe as well.

At that time, did you understand the importance of the Children's Home?

My parents explained the ministry of the Children's Home to me, but I'm not sure I really grasped the significance. But I knew it was important to my parents, so it was important to me as well. Giving to the Children's Home became part of my heritage.

What moved you and Tony to become the LCRs at College Heights UMC?

For me, it was more than just a way to keep the Children's Home ministry in the minds of the members of the congregation. It was a way to honor my grandparents for the example they set for my parents, as well as honoring my parents. Tony and I were not only supporting the Children's Home ourselves, but we were in a position to encourage others to support this valuable ministry – just like Mom and Dad. It became a way for me to carry on their tradition.



What have you found that works well at College Heights UMC in promoting the Children's Home?

When we became LCRs, the first step I took was to begin writing a monthly column about the Children's Home in our church newsletter, the Messenger. Every month I would present to the congregation some aspect of the Children's Home. I would pull information from the newsletters I received from the Children's Home, as well as their website. The Facebook and Instagram pages for the Children's Home are also good sources. I might write about a particular program like Foster Care, Independent Living, or Spiritual Life. I would also write about specific events such as the youth's Day of Service in the community.

I would also highlight a particular cottage on campus and the youth living there, and make it part of a prayer emphasis for the reader. I believe that this made for a more personal connection between the reader and the Children's Home.

The fundraising goal of the church for the Children's Home was also something I would highlight. In February I would explain the fundraising goal for the year and update the congregation along the way. College Heights is very proud to have a rich history of meeting or exceeding their annual goal for giving to the Children's Home.

What do you find is the most rewarding part about being an LCR?

Seeing the interest in the Children's Home grow into a commitment by more members of the congregation is always exciting. Several years ago we took a small group to the annual Day On Campus event at the Children's Home. One of the church members who rode with us was so excited afterwards that she couldn't stop talking about what she had seen during our drive back. Tony and I have also made donations to the Children's Home at Christmas in honor of some close friends instead of buying presents for them, and now they're starting to do the same.

What would you say to encourage others to support the Children's Home?

I think the Children's Home itself has said, "None ever stands so tall as when they stoop to help a child." When we support the Children's Home, we are providing a place where the neglected learn they are wanted, where abused children find healing, and where troubled and angry children find comfort. What better way to stand tall?

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