



**COMMUNITY HEALTH  
of SOUTH FLORIDA, INC.**

*"Patient Care Comes First"*

July 2014

# HEALTHY BITS

Healthy Bits — A Newsletter Published by Community Health of South Florida Inc.

## CHI is first community teaching health center in state

Community Health of South Florida Inc. (CHI) is now the first federally-funded community health center to officially become a teaching health center in the state of Florida. The Brodes H. Hartley Jr. Teaching Health Center at CHI welcomed its first class of 13 medical residents on June 16.

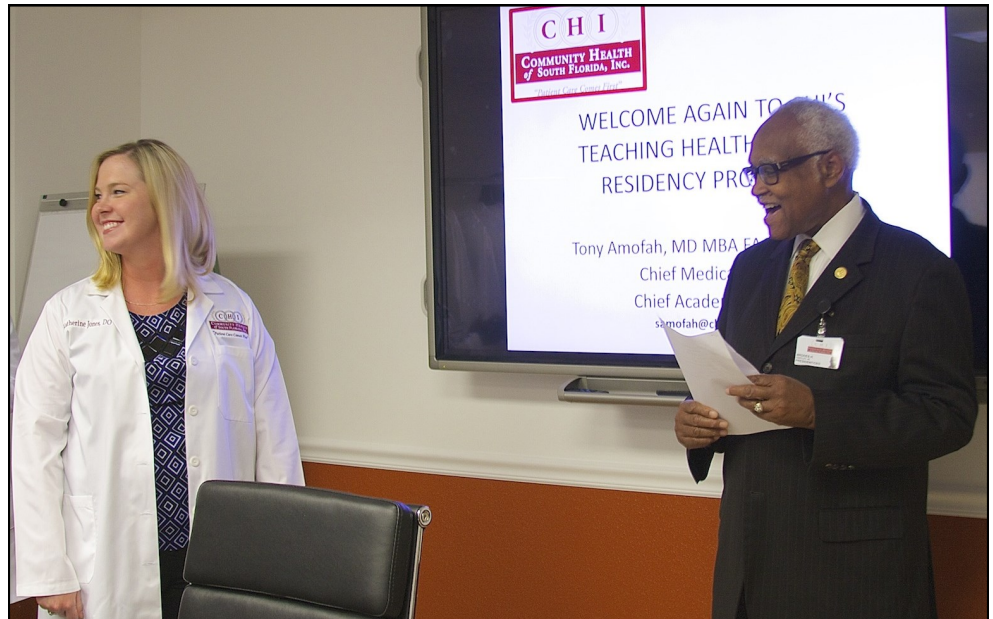
"For CHI, this means our patients will have more choices of doctors with an increased level of excellence and knowledge," said Dr. Saint Anthony Amofah, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Academic Officer at CHI.

The first class includes four residents in family medicine, five in psychiatry and four in obstetrics and gynecology. In a ceremony on June 17, residents received the long, white coat that identifies them as caregivers. The event is considered a landmark in a medical student's studies.

Psychiatry resident Dr. Amy Bebawi has traded in her waitress apron for her doctor's white coat. She believes that waitressing for 20 years will help her relate to her patients.

"I hope to become an outstanding doctor, but more importantly, a humble person," she said. "I want to live up to the responsibility of the white coat. I want to earn the respect of the patients."

The teaching health center is made possible because of a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to help develop the nation's physicians who work in diverse areas of great need.



*Dr. Katherine Jones, a resident in the OB/GYN program, is all smiles after receiving her white coat during the White Coat Ceremony on June 17. Col. Brodes H. Hartley Jr., for whom the Teaching Health Center is named, looks on.*

"CHI will be contributing to the national effort to train primary care clinicians to meet the needs of the many newly insured from the Affordable Care Act. It also brings a higher level of quality to the organization," said Col. Brodes Hartley Jr., President and CEO at CHI.

Dr. Raina Armbuster, a resident in the OB/GYN program, said she's glad to return to her home state of Florida, where she was raised by a single mother of four children.

"CHI comes from humble beginnings. I come from humble beginnings. My family used a lot of the services that CHI offers," she said. "It's nice to come back to the community that helped me, so now I can help my community in return."

The program is intensive and competitive. While residents will graduate with CHI as their official training site, they will also rotate through local hospitals including Jackson South Community Hospital and Larkin Community Hospital.

"This will increase CHI's visibility in the health care community and improve our ability to recruit primary care clinicians over the next decade," Dr. Amofah said.

The residents in the inaugural class are trailblazers; paving the way for future residents.

"Being a part of something new is exciting. It gives me the opportunity to lead the way for those coming after me," Dr. Armbuster said.

# A Message from the President

Community Health of South Florida Inc. (CHI) now has the distinction of being a center for educational excellence. Our new teaching health center will help curb the nation's pending shortage of doctors by producing high-quality physicians who are versatile and understanding of community health needs. The 13 residents are here and now practicing throughout the CHI system. They are enthusiastic, bright and eager to be the best doctors that they can be. If you are working alongside them, please help to get them acclimated to CHI. It was an honor and a pleasure to take part in the white coat ceremony for our inaugural class. This is the beginning of something very great and history in the making.

CHI has been racking up the accolades. We recently received the Sterling Navigator Award. From there our goal is to shoot for the Governor's Sterling Award and I am confident our hard work and diligence will get us there. CHI also accepted the Synergy Award from American Medical Depot.

We are also very proud of our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Saint Anthony Amofah. He received an award from the Florida Association of Community Health Centers Inc. It is the Jessie Trice Award for a distinguished clinician who has done a tremendous amount to care for the underserved community.



August is fast approaching and that means a kickoff to our grand community health center week festivities! We will have seven days of celebration to highlight all the valuable resources that community health centers bring everyone. Community health centers like CHI have been the gateway to increasing access to affordable, cost-effective, high-quality medical care for all. It's critical to the lives of millions of Americans, including some of the nation's most vulnerable populations. Community Health Centers like us have played a major role in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. That law has brought health insurance to those who never imagined it was possible to get coverage.

So, take a look at our rundown of FREE events below. I encourage you to participate and spread the word to friends and family.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brodes H. Hartley Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brodes H. Hartley Jr.

**HENRY SCHEIN HEALTH FAIR** — Saturday, Aug. 9 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Doris Ison Health Center, 10300 SW 216th St., Miami FL 33190. Free health screenings, entertainment, live music, food, backpacks and educational resources for the family.

**HEALTH CARE FORUM** — Tuesday, Aug. 12 from 6:30-9 p.m. at the South Miami Dade Cultural Arts Center, 10950 SW 211th St., Miami, FL 33189. Keynote speaker is National Association of Community Health Centers President and CEO Tom Van Coverden.

State and federal legislators will join CHI health care experts to host a free informative forum on the advancements in community health care and the Affordable Care Act. Dinner will be served at the forum.

**MIGRANT HEALTH FAIR** — Wednesday, Aug. 13 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Everglades Health Center, 19300 SW 376th St., Florida City, FL 33034. Free health care screenings, dental screenings, educational resources, food and fun for the whole family, geared to our seasonal farm workers and migrants.

**SCHOOL PHYSICAL AND IMMUNIZATIONS DAY** — Saturday, Aug. 16 from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at all 10 CHI health centers. School physicals for just \$30 and free immunizations.

**BACK TO SCHOOL HEALTH FAIR** — Saturday, Aug. 16 from 12-4 p.m. at Southland Mall, 20505 S. Dixie Highway, Cutler Bay, FL 33189. Free health screenings, entertainment, live music and kid-friendly shows, backpacks and educational resources for the entire family.

# CHI Board approves naming rights for new ventures

The Community Health of South Florida Board voted to approve a series of name distinctions at its June board meeting. The new teaching health center will be called The Brodes H. Hartley Jr. Teaching Health Center at CHI.

“The vision of this man, Col. Hartley, who has been a pillar in the community for so long and has done so much for our organization would take a book to describe,” said Dr. Saint Anthony Amofah, CHI’s Chief Medical Officer.

Oftentimes, buildings and programs are named after leaders who have made significant impacts, but only after their passing. When the board looked at naming the teaching health center, Dr. Amofah said the board was easily convinced to name it after Col. Hartley now.

“Why do we wait to celebrate someone when they’re not there anymore? That’s not fair,” he said. “We’re proud to name the teaching health center as



*The Dr. Jacquelyn Hartley Children's Crisis Center will be on the Doris Ison campus.*

The Brodes H. Hartley Jr. Teaching Health Center at CHI so Col. Hartley can enjoy the recognition and appreciation that he has so rightfully earned.”

In addition, the board approved a motion to name the Children’s Crisis Center project in honor of Hartley’s late wife. The project is slated to be built next to the Doris Ison Health Center

and will hold the name of The Dr. Jacquelyn Hartley Children’s Crisis Center.

Finally, the board approved the naming of an access road that is slated to be built coming off of SW 102nd Avenue and leading into the Doris Ison Health Center. It will be called Colonel Brodes H. Hartley Jr. Way.

# Doctors receive promotions to chiefs of department

Congratulations to Dr. Elizabeth Philippe and Dr. Nicole Fields for the new appointments they have been awarded. Both are outstanding physicians who have shown tremendous skills, passion and expertise.

Dr. Philippe has been named Chief of Family Medicine and Associate Director for Graduate Medical Education. She joined CHI in 2005 as an attending physician and as Medical Director of the school-based health program. Dr. Philippe will no doubt embrace this new appointment with confidence, enthusiasm and professionalism.

The new assignment for Dr. Fields as Chief of Pediatrics is a perfect fit for her unmatched dedication to providing excellent healthcare to all children, especially those with a lower income



*Dr. Elizabeth Philippe has been named Chief of Family Medicine and Associate Director for Graduate Medical Education.*



*Dr. Nicole Fields has been named Chief of Pediatrics.*

status. Dr. Fields specializes in adolescent health, ADHD and children with complicated medical needs.

They exemplify the true definition of leadership and commitment and look forward to these new responsibilities and the challenges they will bring.

# Top physician retires after 10 years of service

After nearly 10 years of service at Community Health of South Florida Inc., Dr. James Jones has retired. The Deputy Chief Medical Officer left after an emotional sendoff last month from his colleagues at CHI. When Jones walked into the packed boardroom, co-workers greeted him with cheers and tears.

“Wow!” said Dr. Jones looking surprised. “It’s been great. We’ve done a lot. I’ve seen a lot ... a lot of people right on the edge of their health, on the edge of the economy and we pull them back from the edge.”

Dr. Jones has been practicing medicine since 1972. During his tenure at CHI, he has usually been the first physician to arrive on the scene during a code blue and has worked tirelessly in the background evaluating data and creating solutions for difficult issues.

Dr. Arnold Oper credits Dr. Jones with helping to turn around the HIV program and make it a success in saving more lives.

“He is a true patient provider,” said Dr. Oper. “He’s never reluctant to see another patient. He is never reluctant to see a patient no matter where they are. He knows his medicine extremely well and he is a fantastic diagnostician.”

Dr. Jones said he will spend most of his time in retirement fishing and of course enjoying life with his wife, Diane. But Dr. Oper is not buying it and even betting that Dr. Jones won’t be able to stay retired for long. Even Chief Medical



*Dr. Jones and his wife, Diane Jones, cut the cake at his retirement celebration.*

Officer Dr. Saint Anthony Amofah said a heartfelt goodbye to Jones at the send-off event.

“He has been one of our top producing clinicians,” said Amofah. “The level of care he gives to our patients and the intensity of care is the best. He has kept a lot of us in the unit going throughout the day with his own personal stories about his travel, his puns, stories about his wife and his artwork. But for me, as a friend, Dr. Jones and Dr. Oper have always been mentors.”

# 40-year employee retires to a full life of foster kids

CHI will feel a loss with the retirement of a big personality. Leona Johnson, a 40-year employee, retired June 27.

Johnson began her lifetime career with CHI in 1974. She started as a Patient Care Technician when trailers were the only offices available. After about 20 years, she moved to patient registration. She finished her time as a Patient Financial Services Specialist.

“I gave my whole life to CHI and it has been worth every day of it,” Johnson said. “I will dearly miss working with this community and the wonderful people who live in it.”



*Leona Johnson retires after 40 years at CHI.*

Johnson does not plan to let her golden years pass quietly. For the last 20 years, she has served as a foster mom to more than 75 children ages 4-7. She currently cares for four challenging boys.

“I adore my responsibilities as a foster mom. These kids need me. They come from abused, neglected and drug-filled homes,” she said. “Just because I’m retiring from CHI does not mean I will give up this part of my life.”

In addition to fostering, Johnson plans to continue her other passions including floral design and as a makeup artist for the deceased. She also wants to train to become an embalmer’s assistant.

# MERS is low risk in U.S., but take precautions

Turn on any news show today and no doubt you will hear about MERS. This viral respiratory illness first appeared in Saudi Arabia in 2012. All cases, to date, can be traced back to Middle Eastern countries, hence the name, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

“MERS is a flu-like illness with signs and symptoms of pneumonia. Most people infected with MERS will develop a severe respiratory illness with symptoms of cough, fever and shortness of breath,” said Dr. Arnold Oper, CHI Family Medicine.

MERS has been shown to spread between people who are in close contact, such as infected patients to health care workers. To protect yourself, wash your hands frequently. Avoid close contact with those infected, such as kissing and sharing eating utensils.

As of May, 2014, two cases have been reported in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Both patients were healthcare workers living in Saudi Arabia and visiting family in the United States.

The most vulnerable to the disease are the elderly people with weak immune systems, those with chronic diseases and organ donor recipients.

There are currently two ways to verify the illness. One is a

respiratory sample for testing. The other is a blood test that looks for antibodies indicating if a person had been previously infected with the virus.

The source of MERS, according to the Centers for Disease Control, is unknown. However, it is believed that mammals play a role in the transmission of the virus, in particular, bats and camels.

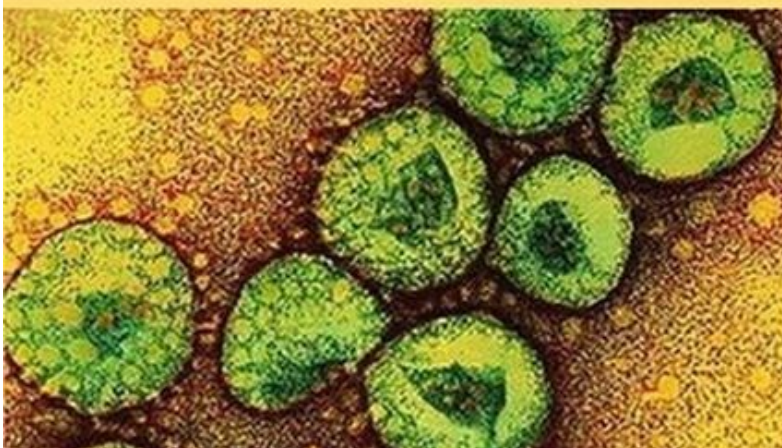
“There is no vaccine or specific way to treat the MERS virus. Unfortunately, as a result, about 30 percent of victims die,” Dr. Oper added.

The Centers for Disease Control reports that currently, in the United States, MERS presents a very low risk to the public.

*“There is no vaccine or specific way to treat the MERS virus. Unfortunately, as a result, about 30 percent of victims die.”*

*– Dr. Arnold Oper, CHI Family Medicine*

BEWARE OF  
**MERS-CoV**  
MIDDLE EAST RESPIRATORY  
SYNDROME CORONAVIRUS



## Common symptoms:

- Acute, serious respiratory illness with fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties
- Pneumonia
- Gastrointestinal symptoms, including diarrhea

## Measures to prevent respiratory illness:

- Avoid close contact with anyone who shows symptoms of illness (coughing and sneezing).
- Maintain good hand hygiene.
- Good preventive measures include: avoid uncooked or undercooked meats, unwashed fruits or vegetables, and drinks made without sterilized water.
- If you become sick while traveling, avoid close contact with other people while you are symptomatic.
- Use good respiratory hygiene: cough or sneeze into a sleeve, flexed elbow, medical mask or tissue, and then throw used tissues into a closed trash can immediately after use.

# Chikungunya spreading north from Caribbean

Chikungunya (pronounced chik-en-gun-ye) sounds like the letters in one of those unscramble word games, or perhaps the unfortunate letters you picked in a game of Scrabble. But in reality, it is a painful mosquito-borne virus that is spreading quickly throughout the Caribbean and Haiti.



The virus has spread from island to island sending health officials scrambling in response to a surge of new patients. This raises an alarm for the many South Florida residents who travel frequently to these locations.

To date, only a few cases have been reported in the United States. There is a risk that the virus will spread further to the United States by infected travelers.

Some health experts predict the virus will be prevalent in the United States in less than two years.

The virus is carried by the Yellow Fever mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*. In the United States, that mosquito's habitat is the southeastern part of the country, with major cities such as Miami included in that zone.

Symptoms of chikungunya include severe pain in the joints, high fever, muscle pain and rash. It is normally not deadly and most symptoms dissipate usually within a week. However, about 10 percent of patients who recover will still have pain three to five years after their infection.

"There is currently no vaccine or treatment that can cure the virus. An over-the-counter painkiller is used to treat high fevers," said Nancy Foust, an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner at CHI.

The World Health Organization reports that chikungunya will continue to spread due to mosquitos breeding in standing water and open containers used in many Haitian homes that lack running water. Thirty-five percent of the population is expected to contract the virus.

"Travelers can best protect themselves by preventing mosquito bites," advised Jose Penas, Physician's Assistant at CHI.

"When traveling to these countries where chikungunya is spreading, use insect repellent, wear long sleeves and pants, and stay in places with air conditioning or that have window and door screens," Penas added.

## DEADLY STING

First detected in a fever patient in Tanzania in 1952, the virus has now spread to Asia. No vaccine is available for the chikungunya

### What is chikungunya?

It is a non-fatal viral illness in which patients are afflicted with fever and severe joint pain. Chikungunya shares certain symptoms with dengue and can be misdiagnosed in areas where dengue is common

### How does it spread?

From the bite of an infected *Aedes Aegypti* or *Aedes Albopictus* mosquito. The mosquito usually bites at dawn and dusk but may bite at any time during the day, especially indoors. The incubation period (time from infection to illness) can be two to 12 days



### Symptoms

Fever which can reach 104°F, painful joints, rashes, acute headache, vomiting, fatigue, nausea, conjunctivitis and partial loss of taste. Typically, the fever lasts two days. The other symptoms last longer. Most patients recover fully but in some cases joint pain may persist for months or even years

### Prevention

- Use mosquito repellents
- Clean garbage around the house
- Keep water containers covered
- Remove stagnant water from coolers, old tyres, pools, buckets, containers etc
- Remove unwanted items from living area such as old cans and bottles
- Children should wear protective clothing
- Keep windows closed at dawn and dusk



### Tips during treatment

- Take adequate rest
- Keep body hydrated by drinking juice, soups and coconut water
- Maintain good personal hygiene
- Sponge-bathe in lukewarm water

### WATCH OUT FOR

● Fever ranging from three days to more than a week



● Severe joint pain



● Headache



● Rashes



# Unity Community Day brings together resources

Teenager James Israel is just two credits shy of earning his high school diploma. But, he's encouraged to finish so he can reach his long-term goal of becoming a physical therapist. Miami-Dade Parks & Recreation Enforcement Officer Jolanda Robinson-Chresfield told Israel about park jobs and offered encouragement while at the first-ever CHI Annual Unity Community Day. The event, held on June 6 at CHI's Martin Luther King Jr. Clinica Campesina Health Center Campus, brought together organizations to inform residents of important community resources.

"Today, I learned to never give up and always look for opportunities to achieve more in life," said Israel, whose main sport is track and loves sports medicine.

His mother, Tyeishala Smith, brought her kids to the event that was on the first day of summer vacation. "It gets them out of the house and gives them something to do today," she said. Smith added she got her 7-year-old daughter enrolled at CHI's Naranja location that's "right down the street from us."

Children learned safety tips from police officers and firefighters. They learned if there's a fire to stop, drop and roll, explained 7-year-old Symone.

Her mother, Amelia Major, said she came because the kids wanted to come, but that she also learned about different resources in this area.

Cousins Richard Walters and Antoine White, both 6, tried on goggles that simulate vision impaired by drugs and alcohol. This was at the booth of Hope for Miami. One of its 10 programs is a substance abuse prevention program called Compass.

Marquia Maycock, program coordinator for Compass, later handed out giveaways for correct answers during a presentation that included several speakers and a cheerleading demonstration. Attendees also enjoyed popcorn, cotton candy and snow cones refreshments as well as face painting and balloons.

David Dukes, community liaison of Abstinence Between Strong Teens International Inc., was at the event to network with other organizations in Miami-Dade County.

"It's a massive job. We need everyone on board. All hands on deck," he said.

The free event encourages just that, said Celia Mion, CHI's Specialized Children's Program coordinator.



*Cousins Richard Walters and Antoine White, both 6, try on goggles that simulate vision impaired by drugs and alcohol.*

"We're bringing different organizations together so we can form a partnership to service the local community so there are no gaps. It's a one-door approach," she said.

There are plans for more Unity Community Days to support the grant-funded Service Partnership program at CHI, said the event's organizer, Valerie Congote, who is the program's outreach specialist for the Florida City/Homestead area.

The free program connects families with support to decrease behavior problems in children up to age 18, or age 22 for those with a disability. It is designed to curb chronic absenteeism, youth violence, and help those who are at risk for child maltreatment. The program helps improve school performance and reduces stress in the entire family.

"There's help and I will search under every rock to make sure I find something useful for you," Congote said. "We'll bring agencies out into the light and get assistance that's there for you."

To see if you qualify, contact Celia Mion by calling 786-293-5509 or by emailing [cmaraoz@chisouthfl.org](mailto:cmaraoz@chisouthfl.org).



*James Israel and his mother, Amelia Major, learn about opportunities with the Miami-Dade Parks & Recreation Department from Park Enforcement Officer Jolanda Robinson-Chresfield.*

# Health Expo encourages men to take care of their health

Men attending the Men's Health Expo were encouraged to take care of their health just like they take care of their car. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Men's Health Expo was held June 11 at Community Health of South Florida Inc.

"Taking care of your health is like getting your car tuned up," said Dr. Charles Ross. "Because if you wait until your brakes fail, just like if you wait until you're sick, it might be too late."

He asked the men in the crowd how many saw their doctor in the last year or even in the last three years? Not many hands went up. Dr. Ross, a provider in CHI's Urgent Care Center, stressed that men should get a check-up once a year and make sure their doctor orders appropriate testing for their age range.

Dr. Ross spoke on "Dispelling the Myths of Prostrate Cancer," which is one of the top causes of death in men, followed by heart disease and lung cancer. Much to many men's relief, he explained that blood tests are now used to screen for prostate cancer.

"We don't do the finger anymore," Dr. Ross added.

Andrew Roberts of Cutler Bay got his



*Dr. Charles Ross stresses that men should get a checkup once a year.*



*Miami Inferno football players, coaches and cheerleaders encourage fairgoers to stay healthy by exercising, eating right, getting checkups and keeping a positive attitude.*

cholesterol checked at the event, even though he's afraid of needles. He recognized it's important to take his health seriously. "Men tend to wait until the last minute," said Roberts, suggesting that men shouldn't delay.

CHI President and CEO Col. Brodes H. Hartley Jr. reinforced that idea. "Your health is important not only to you personally but to the women and families who love you," he said.

Exercising, stretching and eating right are the keys to staying healthy, said Miami Inferno Coach Pete Taylor in his speech "How to Train Like a Pro Without Being One."

"Your health is your wealth. Take care of your health and your health will take care of you," he said. "Be the best person you can be. Life is a journey full of twists and turns. When you look at yourself and say, 'I can do what I need to do, to accomplish my dreams. I can do everything possible to make tomorrow possible.'"

Having a positive attitude and taking care of your mental health is a key component to one's health, said Lance

Jackson, a licensed mental health counselor in CHI's Behavioral Health Department.

"Just like how you need rest after exercising to replenish your muscles to come back stronger, you need to release your emotions and rest," he said in his speech "Are You Too Macho for Mental Health?"

It's crucial to break down the stigma that only those who are weak need mental health help. "We have to reduce the stigma for ourselves and for the youth, our future generations," Jackson said.

Just like the strength of a pack is the wolf and the strength of the wolf is the pack, humans must make themselves strong, both physically and mentally, with a strong support network.

"We have to choose our team to back us up. Recruit effective team members. CHI wants to be part of your team, but you have to select us," Jackson said.

To make an appointment for Family Medicine, call 305-252-4820. and for Behavioral Health, call 305-252-4840.



# CHI staff member coaches Miami Inferno

Miami Inferno Coach Luther Johnson sported a confident smile as the stadium erupted into a thunderous roar. Touchdown! The Miami Inferno scored another win adding to their hope for a successful season.

By day, Luther Johnson is an Environmental/Maintenance Supervisor at CHI. He can be seen bouncing from the Naranja Health Center to the Martin Luther King location and all over the place troubleshooting maintenance issues and emergencies. But by night, he dons a Miami Inferno uniform when he serves as the defensive coordinator for the popular football team.

Johnson has a long history in football. He played from the ages of 6-22. Years later when became a dad, his young son had the same inclination, so Johnson became a coach himself.

"I started this because I witnessed my young son being mistreated by coaches for years," Johnson recalled.

Fed up with the aggressive behavior and foul talk of the coaches toward the young players, Johnson developed a kinder approach.

"I don't like cursing. It's not necessary. There are a limited number of curse words. But there are so many other words that can be just as effective in getting results," he said. "That kind of talk can have a negative effect on morale and attitude. So, I decided to coach and prove that a gentler approach would boost morale and team spirit."

When Johnson first coached young boys, his son was hesitant about having his dad as the coach. He eventually saw how this style motivated and encouraged the team. This motivation actually resulted in more wins than losses.

"The boys began to see me as a role model and the parents did too. They were also fed up with the harsh treatment of



*Luther Johnson, an Environmental/Maintenance Supervisor at CHI, is the defensive coordinator for The Miami Inferno.*

the coaches toward their boys," Johnson said.

Eventually, coaching children advanced to coaching adults. This is Johnson's freshman year with the Miami Inferno. He coaches with his cousin, Pete Taylor. They bring Johnson's same style of coaching youth to this adult team.

The Miami Inferno players are ages 19-40. Some might think a group of burly football players would not embrace the softer approach of the new coaches, but that is not true.

"These guys are totally accepting of our coaching style. There is enough roughness on the field, no need for it at practice or in the locker room, too," Johnson said.

Johnson and the entire Miami Inferno team are grateful to Col. Brodes Hartley, Jr., CHI President and CEO, who sponsors the team. His voice welled up when speaking of his gratitude to the Colonel.

"Every ball we use in the game is imprinted with the CHI name and logo. Every time a fan catches an errant ball, their keepsake bears the CHI name," Johnson said.

The Miami Inferno home is at The Bank United Center on the campus of The University of Miami. To show your support, contact 305-433-8585 for ticket information.



*Miami Inferno Coach Pete Taylor, left, and Owner Chad Dittman give CHI President and CEO Col. Brodes H. Hartley Jr. one of the footballs imprinted with the CHI name and logo used in every game.*

# CHI Mental Health Specialist paints away the stress

The brush's bold sweeping strokes of brilliant colors glide across the canvas: shades of orange, blue, green and gold. With each stroke of the brush, a little piece of the day's stress fades away for Fred Thomas.

By day, Thomas works as a Mental Health Specialist at Community Health of South Florida Inc. He can be found teaching psychoeducation or helping a patient battling substance abuse. These responsibilities can be daunting.

"After a long exhaustive day I use art to calm me, to take away the stresses of the day," Thomas said. "It's a way of venting my frustrations. Art is very therapeutic for me."

Thomas' earliest memories include his love of art.

"When my dad helped me with my homework, he would doodle all over my papers. If he drew a palm tree, I would add a coconut. If he drew a bird, I would add feathers," Thomas recalled. "I guess that's where it started."

As Thomas grew older, his simple coconuts and bird feathers developed into a wider range of artistic interests. His style turned more abstract.

"I like painting abstracts. A free form forces the viewer to make their own interpretation of my work. I like them to get involved," he said. "Some people will point out things they see in my art that I never noticed, or intended. It makes me look at my own art in a new way. I love that."



CHI Mental Health Specialist Fred Thomas is a painter.



Thomas also likes to employ objects into his art. Collages are another favorite style. On the weekends he can be found rummaging through yard sales searching for those little gems to add to his pieces.

"It's fun to take a little piece of junk and make it a central feature in a piece of art. It can be a small scrap of metal, an old earring, even a pair of eyeglasses. Just about any little piece of junk can be turned into a unique focal point of my art."

Although he has a master's degree in psychology, Thomas said art is his real passion.

"When I'm in front of my easel is when I'm the happiest," he said.

He is very meticulous in his work.

"Detail is everything. I have pieces I started years ago that still aren't finished. They just aren't quite right. I'll keep changing them until I'm happy."

Since Thomas' artistic career began, he has participated in countless art exhibitions throughout the United States. His works belong to numerous prestigious collections around the world.

"Art allows me to transcend reality," he said. "We all need a little escape once in awhile. Art does that for me."

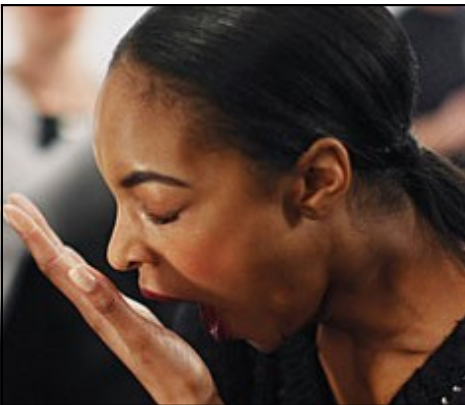
# WARNING: This Story May Make You Yawn!

Yawning is somewhat of a medical mystery; an enigma. There are many theories as to why we yawn, but there is little proof of any of them.

Some believe that yawning began with our ancestors who used yawning to show their teeth and intimidate others. Another theory is we tend to yawn when bored or tired.

Others suggest that yawning exists to cool down the brain. The yawning motion causes sinus walls to expand which pumps air into the brain.

People are more likely to yawn during the winter months when the outside air is cooler. This brings cool air to the brain and lowers the brain temperature. At cooler temperatures the brain thinks more clearly, which suggests yawning might have been developed to keep us alert.



“Though there are many theories as to why we yawn, the biggest curiosity about yawning is why it seems to be contagious. And it is indeed contagious,” said Dr. Charles Ross from CHI’s Urgent Care Center. “We know yawning is due to suggestibility. You don’t even need to actually see someone yawn to yawn yourself. And just hearing someone yawn or reading about yawning can cause this involuntary reaction.”

Yawning is commonly associated with sleepiness. Heart rates can rise as much as 30 percent during a yawn. Yawning is also a sign of sexual arousal.



All vertebrates, including fish, yawn. But only humans, chimps and possibly dogs are prone to contagious yawning.

“Even fetuses are known to yawn” said Dr. Ross. “Once born, a child is not susceptible to yawns until about the age of 4. This is because contagious yawning might be linked to one’s capacity for empathy, the ability to understand and connect with others’ emotional states. At age 4, a child begins to learn empathy.”

Yawning when others yawn is a sign of social bonding. It is a primal instinct that binds us together. This behavior continues throughout life.

The next time you are in a meeting or other group of people, try this. Make a big yawn and see how many people follow suit. There’s a good chance you’ll set off a chain reaction.

And, there’s a good chance before you finish reading this article, you will yawn at least once.



# CHI radio program educates Haitian community

Every Thursday evening Community Health of South Florida Inc. (CHI) can be heard dispensing valuable medical advice to the South Florida Haitian community on a local radio program.

CHI Health Educator, Lourdes Exume, hosts the show along with weekly guests who bring important health topics to the program.

“This is a great opportunity to educate the Haitian community and bring them

information that they may not otherwise be able to receive,” she said.

Creole-speaking physicians and nurses from CHI teach about what’s new in medicine, how-to tips and prevention advice.

Some recent topics included family planning, hypertension and strokes, and medication advice. Future subjects will include cervical cancer, HIV and foster care.

Tune in to this informative half-hour program at 7:30 p.m. every Thursday on Radio Community Haitian at 107.3 FM.



## CHI's Locations from North to South

Coconut Grove Health Center  
3831 Grand Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33133  
(786) 245-2700

South Miami Health Center  
6350 Sunset Drive  
South Miami, Florida 33143  
(786) 293-5500

West Perrine Health Center  
18255 Homestead Avenue  
Perrine, Florida 33157  
(305) 234-7676

Doris Ison Health Center  
10300 SW 216th Street  
Miami, Florida 33190  
(305) 253-5100

Naranja Health Center  
13805 SW 264th Street  
Naranja, Florida 33032  
(305) 258-6813

South Dade Health Center  
13600 SW 312th Street  
Homestead, Florida 33033  
(305) 242-6069

MLK Clinica Campesina  
810 W. Mowry Drive  
Homestead, Florida 33030  
(305) 248-4334

Everglades Health Center  
19300 SW 376th Street  
Florida City, Florida 33034  
(305) 246-4607

Tavernier Health Center  
91200 Overseas Highway, #17  
Tavernier, Florida 33070  
(305) 743-0383

Marathon Health Center  
2855 Overseas Hwy, MM 48.5  
Marathon, Florida 33050  
(305) 743-4000

