



HEALTHY BITS

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

CHI Celebrates 50 Years of Service in South Florida By Recognizing Patients and Donors

On May 12th, excitement buzzed at the Doris Ison Health Center. As the Happy Birthday song played, CHI staff prepared for a day they would never forget: CHI's 50th anniversary. In celebration of 50 years of service to the South Florida community, CHI held its Patient Loyalty Awards in the morning, which honored 15 families who have been patients for generations; 25, 30 and 50 years.

"It is a very emotional day for all of us when we look back at the five decades, a legacy of excellence in caring for the South Florida community and to think how far we have come, and the privilege you have given us to care for you and your families, some from birth well into old age," said Tiffani Helberg, Vice President for Communications.

At the end of the ceremony, CHI presented the families with special gifts. On the count of three, each family opened their box, releasing paper butterflies into the air. President, Blake Hall, then gave his closing remarks, and the lively Junkanoo band took center stage to finish off a vibrant celebration.

In the evening, CHI's virtual birthday party and donor recognition event celebrated the first annual induction of donors into the Giving Societies. Barry Johnson, Chair of the Children's Crisis Center capital campaign, served as emcee for the ceremony. Attendees included Miami-Dade County

Commissioner Kionne McGhee and State Representative Kevin Chambliss. Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava also made a special appearance via a video birthday message for CHI.

To open the event, CEO Brodes H. Hartley, Jr. recounted CHI's rich history, from two trailers to 11 health centers, 35 school-based programs, mobile medical and dental units, and a teaching health center.

The ceremony not only celebrated the organization's milestones, but also created a new milestone along the way as more than 80 donors were inducted into CHI's Giving Societies. Every single contribution has brought CHI closer to realizing the first Children's Crisis Center in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

"Thanks to the immense support from the public and private donors, we are less than \$1.2 million away from reaching the \$5.5 million needed for construction," said Anthony Acevedo, Chairman of the CHI Foundation. "The finish line for this campaign is clearly visible, and together we will cross it in the name of the thousands of children in our community suffering with severe mental illness."

Chairman of the Board, Arjun Saluja and Director of Development Victoria Castro ended the night with a few heartfelt words of gratitude for the people who make everything possible: CHI's dedicated leaders and donors.

If you would like to support our Children's Crisis Center, please visit chisouthfl.org/give.



CHI patients are surprised as they open their gifts at the 50th anniversary birthday celebration to release butterflies.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



A year of celebrations continues! CHI officially turned 50 years old on May 12th, and I want to give a special thanks to those who joined us for our birthday festivities. We couldn't think of a better way to celebrate 50 years of service than with our patients

and donors. If you missed our Patient Loyalty Awards or 50th Birthday and Donor Recognition event, please visit our YouTube channel to watch them at your convenience.

Of course, the celebrations don't end here. In honor of Men's Health Month this June, we are hosting a webinar called "Cooking & Conversation with Marine Larry Wilson." Marine veteran Larry Wilson will speak along with CHI doctors and a group of men about physical, mental, and spiritual health, the importance of getting annual check-ups, and the challenges he experienced during his time in Afghanistan. This will be recorded and released on the CHI website.

In addition, we will begin preparing for National Health Center Week in August. This week focuses on the critical role Community Health Centers play in bringing hope and healthcare services to communities across the country. And, given that it is our 50th anniversary, we want to go even bigger than last year with new giveaways, outreach events, and special activities.

Stay tuned for more information by following us on social media!

I take great pride in telling you that our board recently adopted a resolution for diversity and inclusion. The resolution says CHI will continue to work to foster an environment of health equity, diversity and inclusion. We are committed to leading efforts that create and nurture an anti-racist environment where every person, patient, and team member feels welcomed, respected, supported and valued.

Lastly, I am happy to announce that we are now offering passport photos at our Doris Ison Health Center Security Department for only \$10. No appointments are required – just walk in and get your photos taken. To learn more about our new service, please visit chisouthfl.org/passportphotos.

Regards,

Brodes H. Hartley, Jr.

CHI at Your Fingertips

With the simple press of a button, you can:

- Request an appointment at the CHI health center of your choice
- Enter your patient portal anytime, anywhere
- Access our pharmacy app, PocketRx, and request a prescription refill
- See your doctor via our telehealth services
- Receive alerts and information about CHI, COVID-19, and other health-related news
- Make a payment, fast and easy
- Donate to our CHI Foundation
- Connect with us on social media and much more!

To download the CHI App, scan here or search "Community Health of South Florida" on the App Store or Google Play



CHI Shows Appreciation for Foster Parents with a Drive-Through Celebration

On May 4th, therapeutic foster mom Maureen Lewis was welcomed by honks, cheers, and applause as she drove into the Doris Ison Health Center with her two foster children. After a difficult year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she smiled at the familiar faces waving back at her.

In honor of Foster Parent Appreciation Month, the staff at Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI) gathered in the parking lot with a tent full of self-care gifts for Lewis and the other 27 families served by the Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care Program. Typically an in-person luncheon, this year's Foster Parent Appreciation event was held via a drive-through format to express gratitude and appreciation for CHI's therapeutic foster parents, while complying with CDC guidelines.

"Some days are rough, and that day I felt appreciated so much," Lewis said. "The cheering and clapping were very special for

me. It showed me that I'm not working alone. CHI put a lot of effort into making sure that we understood that we are appreciated."

Parents of the Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care Program, like Lewis, foster children with behavioral health issues and are trained to handle severe outbursts and trauma every day. What is already a challenging task was further amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lewis did not have the option to work from home during lockdown. With the shortage of day care access for foster children, she had to use her vacation days in order to stay home with the kids. Many outdoor activities were also cancelled, and most therapeutic services that would normally be in-home were moved to telehealth.

"Being a foster parent is a 24/7 job, and many of these kids have been with five or more families,"

said Maria Zuniga, head of the Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care Program.

Zuniga, who works with these foster parents day in and day out, was also at the Foster Appreciation Drive-Through. She said the impact that foster parents have is life-changing.

"The parents in our program are making sure that these kids don't end up homeless or in the prison system. They are helping to break the cycle," Zuniga said. "Our hope is that these kids can go to school, make a career, and create families of their own one day."

Despite the challenges they faced, CHI's therapeutic foster parents persevered – a true testament to their dedication and unwavering love for the children they foster.



Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care Team



Specialized Therapeutic foster care program gives a gift to a foster parent.

CHI Receives a \$52,000 Grant to Help End the HIV Pandemic in South Florida

Florida remains among the top five states with the highest rates of HIV diagnoses, according to Becker's Hospital Review. In South Florida, individuals are faced with stigmas that stem in part from cultural diversity. Many Hispanics, Haitians, and African-Americans have certain biases toward HIV, which pose a challenge to individuals who may be seeking testing or treatment.

"Individuals with HIV have, what we call, a social death before they have a physical death," said Tabitha Hunter, the C.A.R.E.S. (Comprehensive AIDS Resources and Education Services) Manager at CHI. "The social death causes them to go into hiding or become secretive about their diagnosis. Therefore, they don't tell their partners, and people get infected because they know if they tell someone, everyone is going to look at them the wrong way."

In addition to the stigma and secrecy, delivering services to individuals at risk of HIV or with HIV became even more difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic. The C.A.R.E.S. department at CHI provides prevention and intervention services to HIV patients. During the pandemic, outreach was very challenging as most people were in quarantine and social events were cancelled. People were asked to come in-person to CHI's health centers, as long as they weren't COVID-19 positive.

This year, just in time for HIV Awareness Day, the department

received a \$52,000 grant from the Miami-Dade County Health Department to be used over a five-month period. This grant is part of an initiative with the Department of Health and Human Services (HRSA) to end the HIV epidemic in the community. Now, CHI can continue bringing awareness to HIV, transmission, testing, and treatment.

Through this grant, the C.A.R.E.S. team is focused on community events, both virtual and in-person, as well as outreach in high-risk and low-income areas. They will distribute condoms and administer HIV testing via drive-throughs and CHI's mobile medical vans. The team will also educate the community on a new prevention initiative: PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis). It is a medicine that at-risk individuals who do not have HIV can take in order to prevent infection.

Furthermore, the C.A.R.E.S. department is changing the way it reaches out to individuals. Rather than going door-to-door, the team will be using social media to connect with a wider audience, in hopes of opening up conversations about HIV and expanding access to services.

"Just because they are HIV positive doesn't mean that they are not a human being," said Hunter. "They still have feelings. They still have emotional needs, physical needs, and sexual needs, so people are not going to stop having sex because they're HIV positive. We need to get the word out about the services available to them."



(Left to right) C.A.R.E.S. team members Tabitha Hunter, Charles Garcia and Joann Montalvo stand together ready to serve the South Florida community.

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