



## *HOPE, HEART & HOME*

# 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2020

# NEWSLETTER

### **INSIDE:**     *Hope, Heart & Home* Community Initiatives

October 12	<b>Lorenzo Cosio:</b> HHH's "Servant Leader" inspires Child Advocates
October 13	<b>Voyage MIA Magazine:</b> HHH as "one of Miami's inspiring stories!"
October 16	<b>Guardian ad Litem</b> Unveil New <a href="#">Specialty License Plate</a>
October 26	<b>FLORIDA CATHOLIC:</b> Two Year Retrospective on HHH
November 9	Monthly Meeting is "All Business" planning a " <a href="#">December to Remember</a> "
November 20	<b>Explore Foster Miami</b> films <i>St. John Neumann's Monsignor Pablo Navarro</i>
November 2020	<b>Florida Catholic</b> hard-copy edition on <a href="#">Hope, Heart &amp; Home</a> on stands!
December 12	<b>Featured Community Event:</b> HHH in Annual <a href="#">Christmas Toy Drive-By</a>
December 14	<b>Deborah Billings</b> introduces New Partner: <a href="#">Kristi House</a>
December 2020	HHH gifts to Citrus FCN " <a href="#">Giving Tree</a> "
December 15	Social Media Team adopts new <b>Facebook Home Page</b>
December 19	Progress on <a href="#">Mentoring Program:</a> HHH and YAC
December 21	Back Page: <b>Wanted in 2021</b>

## HOPE, HEART & HOME -



## OCTOBER MEETING

**Thirty-one** HHH Child Advocates heard *St. Louis* Activist and *Guardian ad Litem*, **Lorenzo Cosio** give his witness as a ministry volunteer and expound on his philosophy of being a “servant leader” in support of children in foster care.

Lorenzo began with *Hope, Heart & Home* in 2018 as one of the original founders from *St. Louis*. He entered the *Guardian ad Litem* training program in May of 2019. His GAL instructor, **Karen Kerr**, was impressed with Lo’s passion and energy, and teamed-up on Lo’s first case. Both were instrumental in Children’s Court in securing a final “family reunification.” To this day, Lo remains close to that little girl and her family.

On Sunday, October 11, Lorenzo and one of his *St. Louis* recruits, **Jose Umana**, answered an “altar call” and appeared at the 11 AM mass to make an appeal for

joining the virtual ministry meeting Monday, October 12.

Twelve new volunteers answered the call and signed up to explore different ways to help children in foster care. “I always wanted to help these children,” **Mary Hamel** recounted. “Now I can actually do something.” Mary is currently enrolled in the HHH Guardian ad Litem training. **Roxanna Afkham**, another *St. Louis* parishioner, signed up to train to become a Mentor saying, “I wish I had a Mentor when I was in college. I just want to give back!”

Lorenzo and his family - wife **Pam**, daughters **Olivia** and **Mia** - continue to lead by example. All four took part in the *Back to School Backpack Giveaway* last August and have volunteered to distribute Christmas gifts to children in a *Christmas Toy Drive-By* event on December 12, and plan to give out boxes of food in a future *Truck-to-Trunk Feeding Foster Families* event to be held at St. John Neumann early in 2021.

Lo is putting his faith into action: As he tells his Emmaus brothers: “What you do can make a difference. But *you* have to decide what kind of difference you are going to make!”

The **Cosio’s** are making a huge difference with children in foster care. HHH is blessed to have them.

Lorenzo Cosio and Jose Umana  
gather volunteer signatures at *St. Louis*



October Virtual Meeting



Sunbeam focus on *Hope, Heart & Home* announcement at *St. Louis Catholic Church*

-photographer Pam Cosio

Trending

MIAMI'S MOST INSPIRING STORIES

ARTIST OF THE WEEK: HELEN KAGAN, PHD &

VOYAGEMIA BOUNCE BACK STRONG CAMPAIGN



MIAMI'S MOST INSPIRING STORIES



THE TRUE RENEGADES



SEASONS OF LOVE



THE NON-SNOBBY MIAMI DINING GUIDE



17 POSITIVELY BRILLIANT MINI RECIPE VIDEOS

OCTOBER 13, 2020

# Meet Eric Schwindeman of Hope, Heart & Home in Dade County



LOCAL STORIES

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Today we'd like to introduce you to Eric Schwindeman.

Eric was adopted out of foster care and enjoyed a safe, loving, and secure childhood. In 2018, he devised a way he could give back to his community. In the course of his research, he learned that various agencies were finding it difficult to recruit volunteers from the local Catholic parishes to support foster children. Eric decided to create a faith-based community coalition, called Hope, Heart and Home, that would make it possible to successfully engage these parishes.

With the support of local child welfare agencies – including Voices For Children, Citrus Family Care Network, Educate Tomorrow, the Guardian ad Litem Program, Florida Foster Care Review, The Youth Advisory Council, The Children's Trust, and His House – Eric assembled a team of "Child Advocates" to approach the priests and parishioners in the 11 parishes of the South Dade Deanery of the Archdiocese of Miami.

They scheduled meetings and appearances at the churches to recruit volunteers for five vocations: Guardian ad Litem, Foster Parents, Respite Parents, Panelists for Case Review Boards, and Mentors for college students aging out of foster care. Organizational meetings are held monthly (in person and now virtually) the second Monday of every month. Guest speakers were invited to talk to the volunteers and the meetings provided the venue and camaraderie to grow the effort. Volunteers were trained to step into these roles. Hope, Heart & Home (HHH) partners with the agencies to hold events (Food Drive, Toy Drive, Back-to-School. Backpacks) that encourages participation from the parishioners to support children in foster care.

**Great, so let's dig a little deeper into the story – has it been an easy path overall and if not, what were the challenges you've had to overcome?**

We learned the recruiting process was a slow, step-by-step process. Parishioners needed time to decipher how they could help. Not all priests were receptive at first to the idea of a multi-parish "ministry" recruiting on their campus. It would take months of persistent contact to see the first volunteers step forward. By cultivating the relationships with local contacts, trust was built and the interest grew. Today we get 10 to 15 new faces at our monthly meetings.

**Hope, Heart & Home – what should we know? What do you guys do best? What sets you apart from the competition?**

Hope, Heart & Home is the only entity of its kind in the Archdiocese. We have been successful because we are a faith-based organization made up of volunteers who care about foster children. As such, we are much more likely to attract parishioners at these various parishes. By offering a variety of vocations for volunteers to explore – Guardian ad Litem, Foster Parents, Respite Parents, Panelists, and Mentors – we can tell parishes, "we have something for everyone from 19 to 90!"

**What moment in your career do you look back most fondly on?**

I became a Guardian ad Litem in 2018 and as a representative of Hope, Heart & Home, I was recognized by the Guardians for the work I did with a seven-year girl, reuniting her with her grandmother. I'm particularly proud of the number of Guardians we trained at St. John Neumann: 47 in 2018-19. I'm excited about the potential of the mentoring program we started with the Youth Advisory Council, pairing up 10 of our Volunteers with college students.

Our Foster and Respite Parent program was the most challenging – becoming a foster parent is a HUGE commitment. But we now have six families in the program. Our Leadership Team of 12 Child Advocates from seven different churches has built a long-lasting relationship in the community and with our agency

POPULAR



VOYAGEMIA BOUNCE BACK STRONG CAMPAIGN



MIAMI'S MOST INSPIRING STORIES



ARTIST OF THE WEEK: HELEN KAGAN, PHD & HEALINGARTS



5 DELICIOUS AND HEALTHY PLANT-BASED RECIPES TO HELP YOU BOOST YOUR MOOD



**GUARDIAN AD LITEM introduces new license plate in the State of Florida.  
Active GALs can order on-line or visit any tag agency. New plates cost \$30.00.**

Since 2009, *New York Times* columnist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Nicholas Kristof has written an annual “holiday gift guide” column to bridge a philanthropic gap: readers who wanted to help but didn’t know how, and heroic individuals and organizations who desperately needed resources but were off donors’ radar. The column has helped raise the profiles of organizations that work on the very issues he covers in his journalism—health, education, human rights and women’s rights, both domestically and abroad.

This year the National CASA/**GAL** Association for Children was highlighted in his 2020 column as one of the two organizations that he is encouraging folks to volunteer with. His column advises that there is a need for CASA/**GAL** advocacy across the nation. It is a tremendous honor to be featured as one of the volunteer opportunities in Nicholas Kristof’s 2020 Holiday Gift Guide Column. We are hoping that this exposure will bring us an increase in volunteer inquiries.

# Foster Care ministry 'Zooms' ahead despite pandemic

St. John Neumann's *Hope, Heart & Home* group expands coalition to uplift, advocate for foster children

Monday, October 26, 2020

Priscilla A. Greear - *Florida Catholic*

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Photographer: John Hoffman

From left: **Ada Avallone**, Hope, Heart & Home's liaison at *Our Lady of Lourdes* Parish, **Pam Cosio**, of *St. Louis* Parish, and **Eric Schwindeman**, who founded the ministry at *St. John Neumann* Parish in 2018. **Hope, Heart & Home** is now active in all 11 parishes of the South Dade Deanery.

PALMETTO BAY | Thirty-six volunteers Zoomed in for the September monthly meeting of [Hope, Heart & Home ministry](#), which has persevered online through the pandemic in its efforts to uplift suffering foster care children in Miami-Dade County.



Photographer: John Hoffman

Two of the 175 recipients show off the backpacks they got at **Hope, Heart & Home** ministry's Aug. 8, 2020 giveaway at *St. John Neumann Church* in Miami.

On the Zoom, one Homestead teacher checked in with her first three foster children. A founding volunteer reported on a new project to mentor foster youths through college. And all participants drew inspiration for their advocacy for the county's 2,000 to 3,000 foster children from James Haj, CEO of The Children's Trust, the HHH ministry's newest community partner.

"The people here are doing God's work," affirmed Haj, the meeting's guest speaker and a parishioner at [St. John Neumann Church](#) in Miami. "We fund over 200 providers and over 2,000 sites so there's a lot going on," he said, adding that he hoped partnering with the group would enable the Trust to "get feedback on what are the needs that you see in the community."

The Trust is the largest funder of after school, youth enrichment and summer camp programs in Miami-Dade County. This fall, HHH will support its Miami Heart Gallery online exhibit of children eligible for adoption.

"There's a great need for foster care parents so we're looking in our communications team at how do we do a media blitz in November, which is National Adoption Month, to really push and get people to volunteer, to do foster care, respite care," Haj said.

St. John Neumann parishioner Eric Schwindeman, adopted himself, conceived HHH in 2018 after hearing a talk by Nelson Hincapie of Voices for Children Foundation. The first meeting attracted 50 volunteers from St. John Neumann, St. Louis and St. Catherine of Siena parishes. The ministry has since expanded to all 11 parishes of the South Dade Deanery.



*Photographer: John Hoffman*

Young adult volunteers are ready to help **Hope, Heart & Home** load backpacks into cars at the ministry's August giveaway at *St. John Neumann* Parish in Miami.

HHH has trained 55 Guardians ad Litem who advocate on behalf of individual foster children in the 11th Judicial Circuit. They also support the young people through abuse, neglect or abandonment, doing so virtually amid the pandemic. Schwindeman's cases have included a boy abandoned and beaten at a crack house.

"We provide the hope and vital Catholics give their hearts and open their homes to these children," Schwindeman said. "It's been a real story of resilience as far as what's going on and the challenges we face with the COVID crisis and being able to maintain the communication and relationships with all our partners, in all our parishes."

The HHH ministry also recruited six foster families in partnership with Citrus Family Care Network. Among them was Yohandra Acosta, who moved out of her mother's house during the pandemic and felt isolated in her apartment. She contacted Schwindeman after meeting him at a retreat, and learned about HHH.

"I had read this consecration to St. Joseph. St. Joseph was like a foster parent to Jesus. That made me think about fostering," she said. "I was feeling very lonely and thought, why not have children in the house, since I'm a teacher and I love children and I've never had children."



*Photographer: Alexander Schwindeman*

Carmenza Ortiz is a Leader with the **Hope, Heart & Home** ministry at *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary-St. Richard* Parish in Cutler Bay.

In June, after a month of online training, she received a baby, a 4-year-old and 10-year-old.

“It hasn’t been that difficult and they are very well behaved. And the mom is very nice. She’s working on getting clean and they’ll be going back with her soon. I take them to church on Sundays and I read the Bible before they go to sleep,” said Acosta. “I want them to know that God is with them and they’re not alone,” she added. “It’s a ministry.”

HHH also recruits respite parents to relieve foster parents and panelists for the Florida Foster Care Review boards. Dr. John Gentile and attorney Harrison Griffis are developing the mentor initiative in partnership with Citrus’ Youth Advisory Council, to support youth aging out of foster care. In the August Zoom, council head and former foster child DeMarco Mott said that for young people shuffled between homes and starved for connection, “working with a mentor from a faith-based organization like yours would make a world of difference.”

Gentile first served as a Big Brother to a fatherless 10-year-old through his graduation from Cornell — and remains friends with the now-50-year-old. “What I helped with was just providing the male influence in his life that he didn’t have and could talk to and be with,” he said. “I saw the value of being a mentor.”

He’s now excited to support Miami foster youths into adulthood. “It’s the purest form of giving back, helping a child, a young adult, helping with their way through life, through issues,” he said. “This is so Christ-like, what we are supposed to do.”



*Photographer: John Hoffman*

Lorenzo Cosio, Jr., and his wife, Pam, pause for a photo during the backpack giveaway at *St. John Neumann Church* in August 2020. Lo is the **Hope, Heart & Home** ministry's marketing director and liaison to *St. Louis Church* in Pinecrest.

In August, HHH teamed with Citrus and the South Florida Foster & Adoptive Parent Association to hand out 175 backpacks at St. John Neumann. Over 30 volunteers donning HHH masks and “child advocate” T-shirts guided parents through the drive-thru pick-up line.

This fall, Schwindeman and HHH team members hope to welcome more volunteers ages “19 to 90,” he said. HHH will also host virtual Guardian trainings, as the need has increased due to state Guardian ad Litem budget cuts.

“It’s been a great couple of years as far as getting this off the ground. And we have a lot of work to do, a lot of participation we want to get from all these parishes,” he said.

Due to COVID, “a lot of abuse at home is probably flying under the radar,” he noted, so now that kids are going back to school “they expect an increase in the number of cases.”

A former marketing executive, Schwindeman embraces his new mission. “We believe more Catholics need to put their faith into action, to do what is morally right, to love mercy, extend kindness to strangers, and walk with a powerful God,” he said. “We have thrown ourselves into forging this faith-based community coalition into a force where none existed before. This is truly a pilot program for the Archdiocese of Miami. And we refuse to let this COVID crisis deter us.”

## FIND OUT MORE

- For volunteer and event information on the Hope, Heart & Home Ministry contact Eric Schwindeman at [eschwindeman@yahoo.com](mailto:eschwindeman@yahoo.com) or [www.facebook.com/ministryHHH/](http://www.facebook.com/ministryHHH/).
- People interested in becoming Guardian ad Litem volunteers can send contact information to Malvi Longoria at [Malvinalongoria@gmail.com](mailto:Malvinalongoria@gmail.com) or go to <https://guardianadlitem.org/become-gal/gal-volunteer-application/> to complete a form. A Guardian ad Litem volunteer or staff person will contact you.



Photographer: John Hoffman

**Hope, Heart & Home** ministry's banner hangs at the entrance to St. John Neumann Church in Miami during the backpack giveaway in August.

## • Comments from readers

- **Karen Kerr** - 10/29/2020 01:32 PM
- *What a wonderful organization! It is so important for churches to encourage their parishioners to get involved and to reach out to these children. The Church can, and should, become a dynamic force for children in need throughout the diocese. Thank you to Mr. Schwindeman and all of the members of Hope, Heart and Home! May other parishes follow your lead.*

# **H**OPE, *HEART* & *HOME* NOVEMBER MEETING IS ALL BUSINESS!

*Hope, Heart & Home* Child Advocate Attendees Require 2 Screens



*Hope, Heart & Home* welcomed 35 Child Advocates to their November 9 virtual meeting. In the absence of the scheduled Guest Speaker (called away by flood emergency), the group devoted their attention to the following key agenda items and updates:

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- (1) December 12 Christmas Toy Drive: Mike Carrier's Sign-Up Matrix Sheet
- (2) 2021 Parish Outreach: Recruiting at one Deanery Parish A Month in 2021
- (3) Citrus Holiday Giving Tree: HHH to appeal to Gift-Givers to sign-up. (More to come!)
- (4) "Adopt A Foster Family:" Identifying a new nearby foster families to support in 2021.

## UPDATES

- (1) HHH / YAC Mentoring Program: Dr. John Sennetti covered Mentor training requirements: Application, interview, paperwork, fingerprinting, drug test home-study on-line modules.
- (2) Marketing Tools: Lo Cosio reviewed Third QTR Magazine, *Florida Catholic* articles, New flyers, remaining shirts/masks.

## MEET YOUR **HHH LEADERSHIP TEAM:**

**Ada Avallone:** Attorney; *Guardian ad Litem*; HHH Liaison to *Our Lady of Lourdes*;  
HHH Liaison to *Florida Foster Care Review*.  
Contact: [adaavallone@bellsouth.net](mailto:adaavallone@bellsouth.net)

**Chuck Caldwell:** IT Specialist; HHH Spiritual Advisor; *St. John Neumann* Activist;  
HHH Christmas Santa Claus.  
Contact: [chuppcaldwell@gmail.com](mailto:chuppcaldwell@gmail.com)

**Michael Carrier:** Realtor, HHH Operations Manager, HHH Chairman, *Back-to-School Backpack Drive-By* and HHH Chairman, *Christmas 2020 Toy Drive*  
Contact: mcarrier55@gmail.com

**Lorenzo Cosio:** *SOLO Printing* Executive; *Guardian ad Litem*; HHH Marketing Manager; HHH Liaison to *St. Louis Parish*.  
Contact: lcosio@bellsouth.net

**Dr. John Gentile:** Chiropractor; HHH Liaison to *Educate Tomorrow*;  
Contact: drjohngentile71@gmail.com

**Harrison Griffis:** Attorney; HHH Liaison to *Educate Tomorrow*;  
Mentor, HHH *Mentoring Program*.  
Contact: harrisongriffis@gmail.com

**Maria Jacques:** Marriage and Family Counselor; *Guardian ad Litem*;  
HHH Liaison to *Holy Rosary - St. Richards*.  
Contact: majacques@bellsouth.net

**Malvina Longoria:** Attorney; *Guardian ad Litem*; HHH Liaison to *Christ the King*;  
HHH Liaison to the *Guardian ad Litem Program*;  
Co-Chairman, HHH Social Media Team.

**Carmenza Ortiz:** Land Surveyer, Co-Chairman, HHH Social Media Team; HHH Co-Chair, *Christmas Toy Drive-By*.  
Mentor, HHH Mentoring Program  
Contact: ortiz.carmenza@yahoo.com

**Joann Pierre:** Foster Care Recruitment Specialist at *Citrus Family Care Network*; *Guardian ad Litem*; HHH Liaison to *Citrus FCN*; HHH Liaison to *Sacred Heart, St. Martin De Porres, and St Joachim*.  
Contact: jpierre@citrusfcn.com

**Dr. John Sennetti,** Forensic Accountant; *Guardian ad Litem*; HHH Liaison to *Citrus FCN Youth Advisory Council*; Mentor, HHH Mentoring Program; HHH Technical Advisor for Virtual Meetings.  
Contact: sennetti@nova.edu

**Eric Schwindeman,** Founder, Executive Director, *Hope, Heart & Home*; *Guardian ad Litem*, HHH Liaison to *South Dade Deanery of the Archdiocese of Miami*; Liaison to *St. John Neumann*; Mentor, HHH Mentoring Program.  
Contact: eschwindeman@yahoo.com



**ADDITIONAL NOVEMBER VIRTUAL MEETING ATTENDEES:**

**Roxanna Afkhaam, Lou Confessore, Richard Candia, Susan Dingler, Ana Gispert, Priscilla Greear, Mary Hamill, DK Knox, DeMarco Mott, Alex Planas, Nadine Rolle, Elizabeth Romanek, Fred Romanek, Maria Romanek, Stefan Schwindeman, Alexander Schwindeman, Vivian Uchdorf, Wieland Uchdorf, Jose Umana, Valerie Van Ostran, Giancarlo Zambrano, Cami Zambrano.**



For All Prospective Child Advocates:  
**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT *HOPE*, *HEART* & *HOME*:**

**Origin of HHH:**

[https://www.miamiarch.org/CatholicDiocese.php?op=Article\\_154965686811176](https://www.miamiarch.org/CatholicDiocese.php?op=Article_154965686811176)

**Two Year Anniversary:**

[\*ADOM :: Foster care ministry 'Zooms' ahead despite pandemic\*](#)

**HHH Facebook Page**

<https://www.facebook.com/ministryHHH>

**NEXT EVENT:**

**SAT. DECEMBER 12 1 PM -3:30 PM**  
**CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE-BY**

**Partnering with**

***South Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent Association***  
***& Citrus Family Care Network***

**Christmas Toy Drive-By @ St John Neumann Church**

**Volunteers: Contact Mike Carrier at mcarrier55@gmail.com**

**NEXT HHH Virtual Meeting:** Second Monday of Every Month

Monday, December 14 at 7 PM  
Guest Speaker: **Deborah Billings**, *Kristi House*



## **HOPE, HEART & HOME**

### TEAMS UP WITH

## **EXPLORE FOSTER MIAMI**

November 20, 2020

*Saint John Neumann* Pastor, Dean of the *South Dade Deanery of the Archdiocese of Miami*, and the inspiration behind the *Hope, Heart & Home* pilot program, **Monsignor Pablo Navarro**, was interviewed on camera Friday for a new video on Miami's children in foster care.

Produced by a new unifying force in the child welfare arena, **EXPLORE FOSTER MIAMI**, the video features prominent civic and religious leaders in the field including **Esther Jacobo** (*CEO Citrus Family Care Network*), **Nelson Hincapie** (*CEO Voices For Children*), and Monsignor Navarro.

Georgia Downey, Director of *Explore Foster Miami* and her crew (left), filmed Monsignor Navarro in his office and in the stain-glass sunlight of St. John Neumann's circular chapel. In his on-screen appearance, Monsignor related how the *South Dade Deanery* got involved through HHH in the foster care arena and emphasized the importance of caring for children and families in need.

*Explore Foster Miami's* report and video will be featured on a new web site which will showcase organizations in Miami-Dade foster

care with the hope of encouraging future collaborative efforts. The site should be activated this December. (See letter next page).

**HOPE, HEART & HOME** recruits parishioners from the *South Dade Deanery* to become Foster Parents, Respite Parents, Guardian ad Litem, Mentors for Teenagers Aging Out of Foster Care, and Panelists for case review boards. HHH partners include *Citrus FCN*, *South Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent Association*, *Educate Tomorrow*, the *11th Circuit Court Guardian ad Litem Program*, *Youth Advisory Council (YAC)* *His House*, *Kristi House*, *The Children's Trust*, *Florida Foster Care Review*, and *Voices For Children*.

Many thanks to Monsignor and Georgia Downey for allowing *Hope, Heart & Home* to bring these child advocates together!

# Explore Foster Miami

Dear Eric and *Hope, Heart & Home*,

Great things are ahead for foster care in the city of Miami because you dedicated your time and valuable insight to this report and city-wide movement. We thank you and appreciate each and every team member of every organization that we spoke with.

We will have the city-wide website up and running soon which will showcase organizations with the goal of having this site as a connector of information for Miami-Dade Foster Care. The hub will not only have inspiring stats and stories, but also will present a very simple and clear plan for anyone who would like to take next steps. We welcome all information and contributions to this website as we are here to serve you and our amazing city.

Social Media will be vital as well. We would like to invite you to future collaborative round table conversations to help spread awareness of not only who you are and what you do, but how anyone watching can make an impact in the foster care arena. We hope to be the bridge between you and other stakeholders in an effort to collectively make a stronger impact for our children.

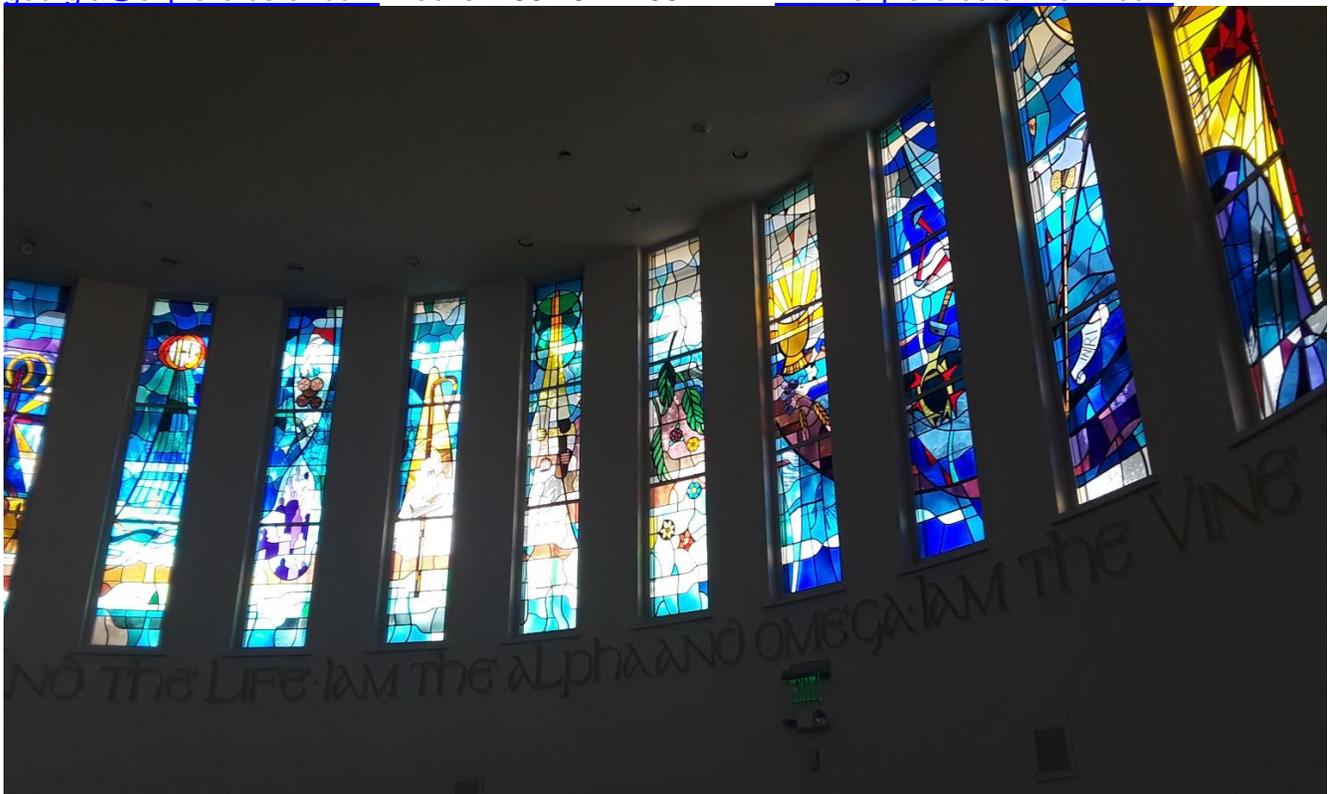
We look forward to sending you our next update and we thank you again for your continued fight for our kids in this great city.

For Children,

Georgia Downey, Director *Explore Foster Miami*

[georgia@explorefoster.com](mailto:georgia@explorefoster.com) Mobile: 786.267.1150

[www.explorefostermiami.com](http://www.explorefostermiami.com)



## Parish's foster care ministry 'Zooms' ahead despite pandemic

Hope, Heart & Home group expands coalition to uplift, advocate for foster children

**PRISCILLA GREEAR**  
Florida Catholic correspondent

**PALMETTO BAY** | Thirty-six volunteers Zoomed in for the September monthly meeting of Hope, Heart & Home ministry, which has persevered online through the pandemic in its efforts to uplift suffering foster care children in Miami-Dade County.

On the Zoom, one Homestead teacher checked in with her first three foster children. A founding volunteer reported on a new project to mentor foster youths through college. And all participants drew inspiration for their advocacy for the county's 2,000 to 3,000 foster children from James Haj, CEO of The Children's Trust, the HHH ministry's newest community partner.

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### FOSTER PARENTS

The HHH ministry also recruited six foster families in partnership with Citrus Family Care Network. Among them was Yohandra Acosta, who moved out of her mother's house during the pandemic and felt isolated in her apartment. She contacted Schwindeman after meeting him at a retreat, and learned about HHH.

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### FIND OUT MORE

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People interested in becoming Guardian ad Litem volunteers can send contact information to Malvi Longoria at [Malvinalongoria@gmail.com](mailto:Malvinalongoria@gmail.com) or go to <https://guardianadlitem.org/become-gal/gal-volunteer-application/> to complete a form. A Guardian ad Litem volunteer or staff person will contact you.

4-year-old and 10-year-old.

"It hasn't been that difficult and they are very well behaved. And the mom is very nice. She's working on getting clean and they'll be going back with her soon. I take them to church on Sundays and I read the Bible before they go to sleep," said Acosta. "I want them

PLEASE SEE FOSTER, 21

Award-winning journalist, **Priscilla Greear**, completed her two-year retrospective on *Hope, Heart & Home's* rise from a fledgling ministry in 2018 to a multi-faceted faith-based coalition with 11 parishes and 10 child welfare partners in 2020 - despite this year's horrific covid pandemic! Her piece (above) appeared in the hard-copy edition of the November 2020 **FLORIDA CATHOLIC**. *On newsstands NOW!*

## Comments from readers

**Karen Kerr** - 10/29/2020 01:32 PM

*What a wonderful organization! It is so important for churches to encourage their parishioners to get involved and to reach out to these children. The Church can, and should, become a dynamic force for children in need throughout the diocese. Thank you to Mr. Schwindeman and all of the members of Hope, Heart and Home! May other parishes follow your lead.*



***FEATURED COMMUNITY EVENT***



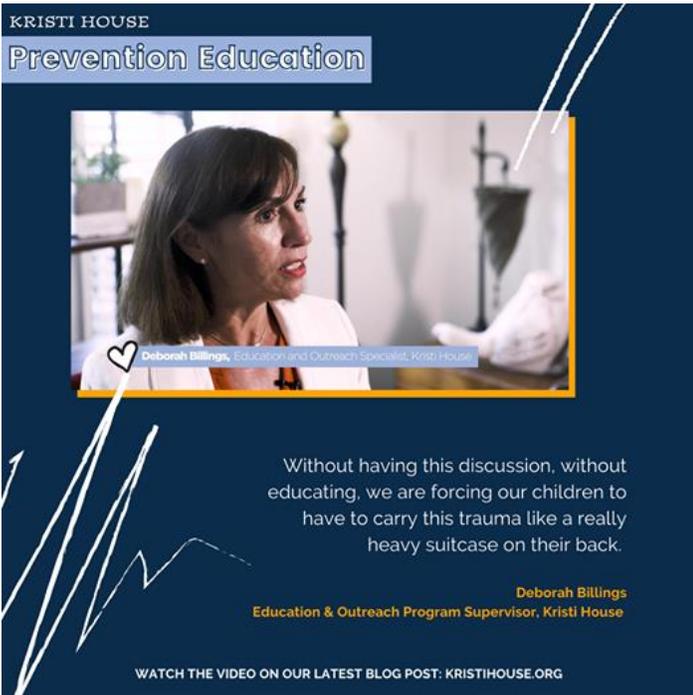
**HOPE, HEART & HOME** joins forces with *South Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent Association* and *Citrus Family Care Network* to bring a **CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE-BY** to St. John Neumann for 300 foster and adoptive children, December 12. Forty teenagers created a *Grinch's Whoville Experience*, dressing up to play various characters and serenade the children. Under the leadership of HHH Operations Manager, Mike Carrier, 30 Child Advocates worked the event: **Roxanna Afkham, Mary & Luis Andujas, Richard Candia, Lorenzo Cosio, John Gentile, Ana Sofia & Harrison Griffis, Mary & David Hamel, Maria Jacques, Loegan Jarro, Joann Pierre, Stefan, Alexander & Eric Schwindeman, John Sennetti, Vivian and Wieland Uchdorf, Valerie and Colin Van Ostran, Jose Umana, and John Hoffman.** *SFFAPA's* Minette **Rivero** and **Maddy Amador** were amazing!



Photos by John Hoffman and Alexander Schwindeman



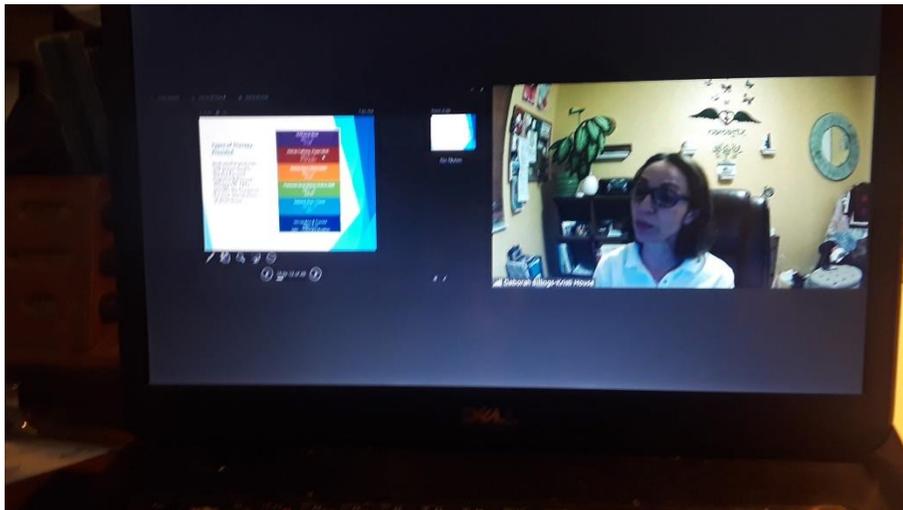




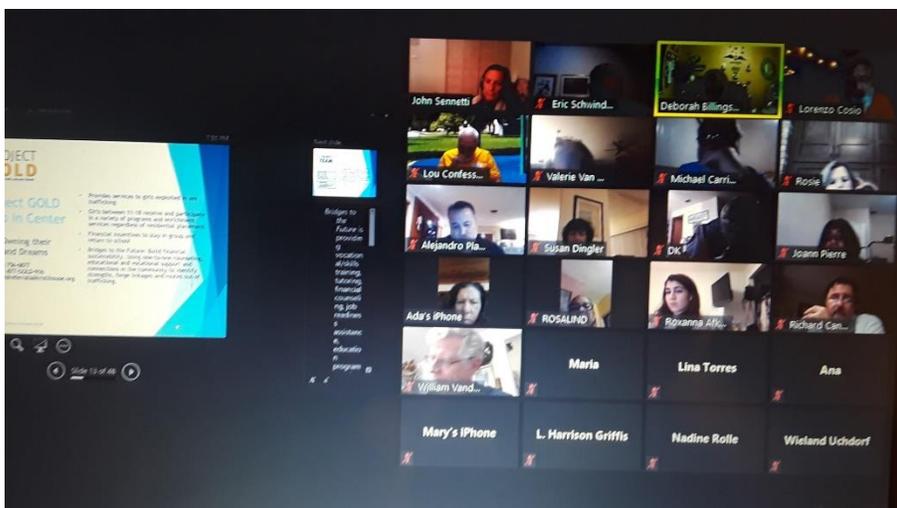
DECEMBER 14 VIRTUAL MEETING



DEBORAH BILLINGS Introduces  
Introduces **KRISTI HOUSE** to HHH  
As New Partner!



*HOPE, HEART & HOME* was introduced to a new child welfare partner Monday night (Dec.14) at their monthly virtual ministry meeting. Deborah Billings, Education & Outreach Program Supervisor presented **KRISTI HOUSE's** mission helping children to 30 HHH Child Advocates.



Kristi House is responsible for coordinating child victims' legal, medical, and social services in Dade County and they are nationally recognized for their evidence-based therapeutic expertise in treating child trauma. We look forward to working with Deborah in the new year!

Foster Hope, Love, & Joy  
this Holiday Season



Sponsor a Child from our  
Virtual Giving Tree

& bring holiday cheer to kids & teens  
in the foster care system in Miami-Dade & Monroe

To Sponsor a Child, Visit:  
[www.dreamlist.com/for/citrusfcn](http://www.dreamlist.com/for/citrusfcn)

Ship Gifts Directly to:  
Citrus Family Care Network  
Attn: Holiday Giving Tree,  
401 NW 2nd Ave, South Tower 10th Floor,  
Miami, FL 33128



in the foster and adoptive care system this Christmas. Great teamwork with Citrus' Leslie Viega and Nadine Rolle.

## *HOPE, HEART & HOME*

### *Sponsors 31 Children from The Citrus Virtual Giving Tree*

HHH had a wonderful "gifting" opportunity this year-  
*Citrus'* **VIRTUAL GIVING TREE**. HHH Child  
Advocates put their *faith in action* by purchasing 31  
specific toys requested by foster and adoptive children.

Special thanks to:

**John Sennetti** and **Lou Confessore** from the *St. Catherine's Men's Saturday Morning Prayer Breakfast*, got 8 men to gift presents as part of a group purchase. Congratulations and many thanks, John and Lou!

**Lorenzo Cosio** secured funds from his fellow *St. Louis Men's Prayer Muffin* to purchase 6 gifts! Great job, Lo!

Many thanks to all the HHH Child Advocates and our community who brought a little holiday cheer to children

*HOPE, HEART & HOME's* **NEW FACEBOOK HOME PAGE!** - courtesy of our

social media coordinators

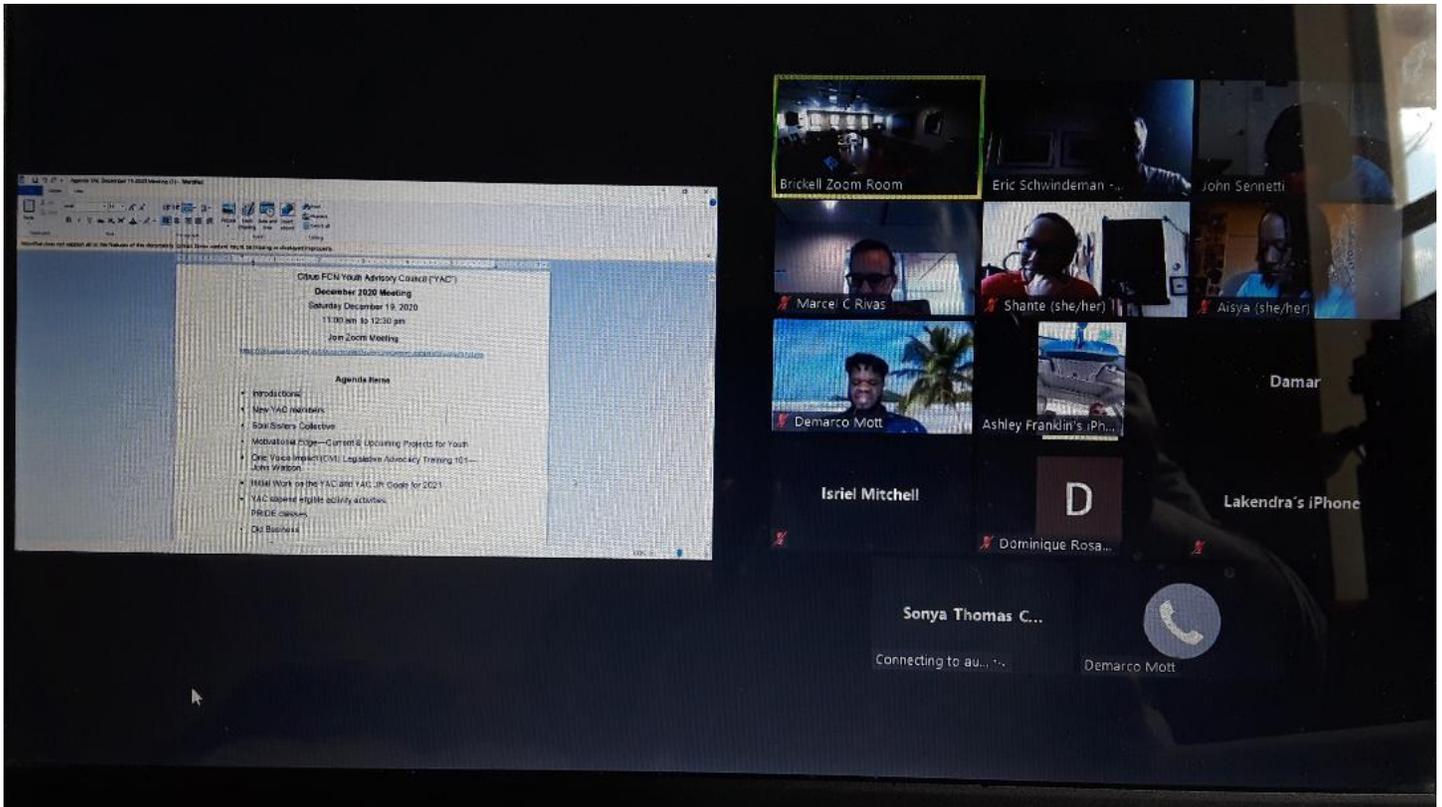
Carmenza Ortiz and Malvi Longoria.

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/ministryHHH>



# HOPE, HEART & HOME

## Joins Citrus Family Care Network YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (YAC) for December Virtual Meeting



(Dec 19) **HOPE, HEART & HOME** participates in the Citrus FCN Youth Advisory Council (YAC) at their December virtual meeting, hosted by Chairman **DeMarco Mott** and Citrus's **Marcel Rivas**. Eighteen youths heard featured speakers from the *Soul Sister Leadership Collective*. Representing the HHH Mentoring Program was Dr. **John Sennetti** and Executive Director **Eric Schwindeman**. Citrus CEO **Esther Jacobo** greeted all the representatives.

HHH, Citrus, and YAC have created a **Qualification Process** (application, interview, background check, fingerprinting, and lab test), **Training** (Guardian ad Litem on-line modules, podcasts, links), and **On-Boarding** (paperwork, orientation, and badge) that is rigorous and challenging but complies with all state requirements. Applicants for the HHH Mentoring Program will be assisted through the steps by Mentor Team John Sennetti, Karen Kerr, and Eric Schwindeman. Interested applicants are urged to contact [eschwindeman@yahoo.com](mailto:eschwindeman@yahoo.com)

# WANTED IN 2021: FOSTER FAMILIES

A foster child in Oklahoma was asked what they wanted in a family. This was their answer. We should all have our kids read this.

○ Things I want in  
my family.

I want food and water.

Don't hit on me.

A house with running water  
and lights. I want love.

Mom and dad don't fight.

I want no drugs.

Don't kill my pets.

Help with school.

Nice clean clothes.

No lice. No bug in house.

Clean house.

○ Clean bed with covers.

Don't sell my toys. Treated fair.

Don't get drunk. TV in house.

Let me keep my games. School  
stuff. Nice shoes. My own comb.

Soap. Nice house and safe. A card  
heater. Coat. Toothbrush.

