



Child's watercolor

HOPE, HEART & HOME

2nd Quarter 2021

NEWSLETTER

INSIDE: *Hope, Heart & Home* Community Initiatives

April Second Quarter Speakers; *One More Child's* HHH **Impact Report**; HHH Joins *Teen Task Force*; HHH Salutes **Catholic Charities** on 90 Years of Community Service; April Guest Speaker: **Alan Abramowitz** *Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program* - Legislative Overview; HHH Letters to Tallahassee; HHH Partners with **Catholic Charities' Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program**.

May HHH, *Citrus*, *Catholic Charities* kick off **National Foster Care Month** at *Holy Rosary - St. Richards*. HHH Helps **Defeat** Senate Bill 1920; **Romanek's** Foster Their Third Child - Featured in HRSR bulletin; HHH Sends Six Delegates to Ground-Breaking *Explore Foster Miami Summit*; May's Guest Speaker **Erik Dellenback** praises Faith-Based Institutions; HHH celebrates Archbishop's Fund-Raiser: *Havana Nights* for the benefit of **Catholic Charities**; HHH celebrates *Child Welfare Professionals*

June June's Guest Panelists update HHH on new platforms: **My Family My Florida** and **Care Portal**. *Casa Valentino's* Executive Director, Janice Graham and HHH Mentoring Program Summer Line-Up Announced!

HOPE, HEART & HOME

SECOND QUARTER

2021

SPEAKER SERIES



Monday, April 12

ALAN ABRAMOWITZ

Executive Director of the
*Statewide Guardian ad Litem
Office*

Monday, May 10

ERIC DELLENBACK

*Faith and Community Based
Initiatives
State of Florida*

Monday, June 14

GILDA FERRADEZ

BEATRIZ LOPEZ

*My Florida My Family
Southern Florida*



Hope, Heart & Home

IMPACT REPORT – SPRING 2021

FOOD DRIVE FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Open Letter from **Panos Kourtesis**, *One More Child*, Regional Director of South Florida

Since 1904, Florida Baptist Children's Homes and *One More Child* has been transforming the lives of children and families in need, all because of partners like you. We celebrate the impact you make for hungry children, foster children, trafficked children, single moms and struggling families both locally and globally. Last year alone we impacted 324,409 individuals and children and provided more than 1 million meals to hungry children and struggling families.

Alexis lives in a motel that is located in a food desert, meaning her mom needs to walk miles to access food. Her family does not have a car, and the nearest grocery is very expensive. Her mother sells flowers for a living and business has not been doing well during the pandemic. Two weeks ago, Alexis and her family received 2 boxes full of food delivered right to her motel door. Each box contained more than 38 pounds of food: pre-cooked chicken (helpful since they only have a microwave), milk, yogurt, oranges, cheese, and hotdogs.

One More Child serves alongside churches and volunteers to make sure children like Alexis receive help, right up to their doorstep. *One More Child* partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture, Freedom Fresh, Citrus, *Hope, Heart & Home*, the Florida Department of Children and Families, and multiple churches across Miami to distribute food out to children and families in need. Your support makes a difference for Alexis and her family and countless others who are in similar situations.

Together we can feed children and families all across the Miami Dade and South Florida area. Your support allowed *One More Child* to acquire food from GA Foods and coordinate a county wide distribution to a network of partners across South Florida. Each box of food distributed contained 38 pounds of food: precooked chicken, milk, butter, fruits, vegetables, and cheese.

The *Hope, Heart & Home* organization made the following possible:

- Distribution of 8,482 meals
- Distribution of 7,068 pounds of food

Thank you for your support of this program for children in need. We are so grateful you are part of the *One More Child* family! *One More Child* is grateful for your generous donations in helping fund the distribution of food to children and families across South Florida. Your event helped bring the warm, loving, and **ever-present love of Christ** to children in need. We are grateful for your friendship and **for the chance to serve the Lord alongside you in Miami!**



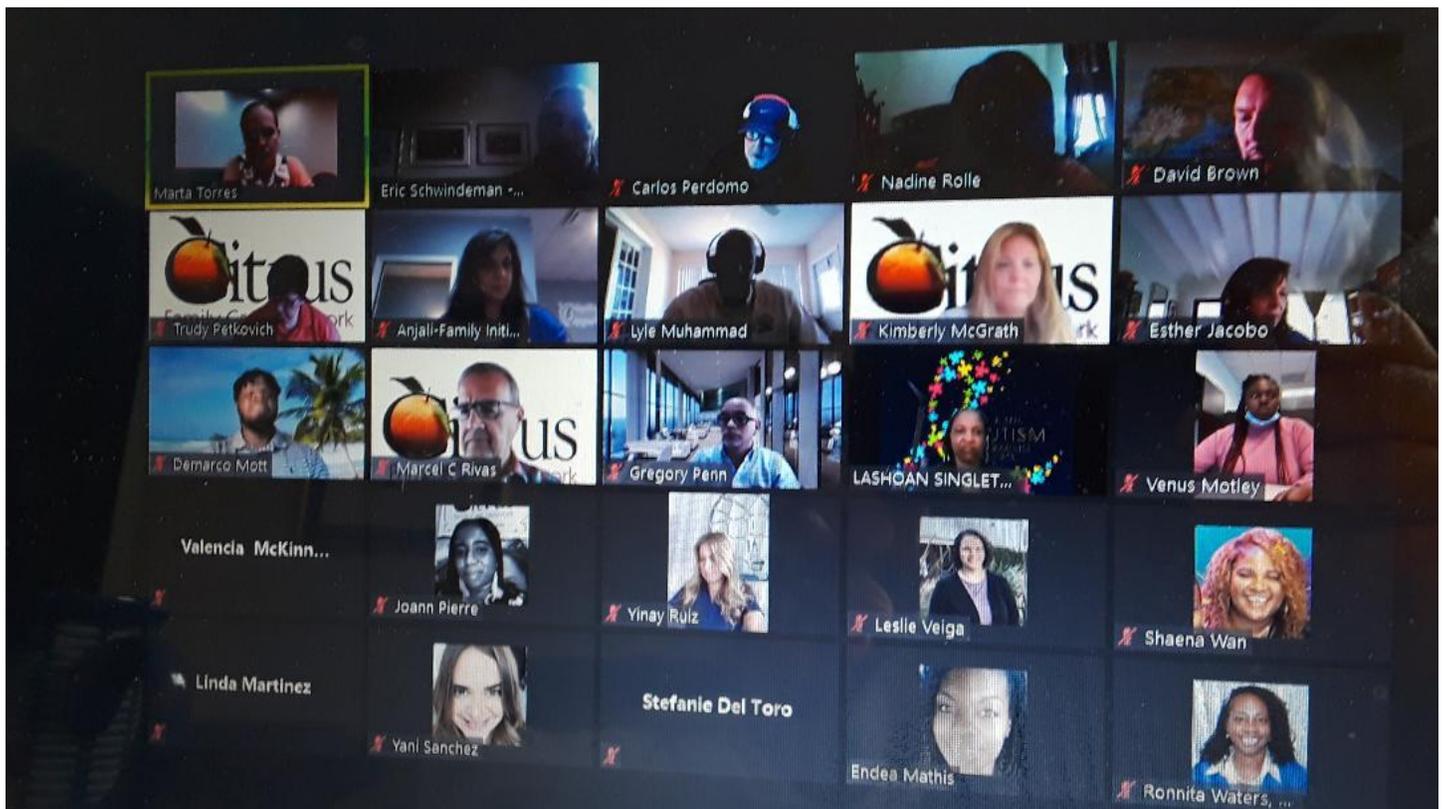
*“God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.”*

— Psalms 46-1





HOPE, HEART & HOME JOINS *TEEN TASK FORCE*



Marta Torres and her *Citrus FCN* team have assembled an impressive cross section of Miami-Dade teen advocates to form a new task force - committed to building connections for our foster youth and dedicated to **COLLABORATION!**

Joining the *Citrus* nucleus (**Esther Jacobo, Marcel Rivas, Trudy Petrovich, Carlos Perdomo, Leslie Veiga, Kimberly McGrath, Joann Pierre, Nadine Rolle, Sheena Wan, Yinay Ruiz, Ronnita Waters**) were youth leaders **Venus Motley** and **DeMarco Mott**, foster & adoptive parents **Lashoan Singleton** and **Quortney Richards**, **Brother Lyle Grandinson** (*Circle of Brotherhood*), **Greg Penn** (*Georgetown Staffing*), **David Brown & Anjali Van Drie** (*Family Initiative*), **Linda Martinez, Yani Sanchez, Stefanie Del Toro**, and **Endea Mathis**.

Recognizing that the pandemic is hindering educational opportunities for the most vulnerable students, **Hope, Heart & Home** launched a mentoring program in March 2021 for teens aging out of foster care. HHH partners with *Citrus Family Care Network* (**Marcel Rivas**) and the *CFN Youth Advisory Council* (**DeMarco Mott** and **Venus Motley**) to match HHH Mentors with student Mentees.

HHH has been asked to serve side by side on the **Teen Task Force** with these activists. This new team will continue to meet regularly to brainstorm on ways to collaborate and coordinate support for our youth. Congratulations to **Marta Torres** on the inauguration of this historic initiative!

* * *

HHH recruits volunteers from 11 Catholic parishes in the *South Dade Deanery of the Archdiocese of Miami*. Candidates must complete a rigorous qualification and training regimen before certification as a Mentor. Anyone interested in becoming a HHH Mentor, please contact Eric Schwindeman at eschwindeman@yahoo.com.

We are accepting applications now!
YOU can make a difference in a teen's life!



k50319268 www.fotosearch.com



*HOPE, HEART & HOME
SALUTES*

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

ON THEIR

90TH ANNIVERSARY



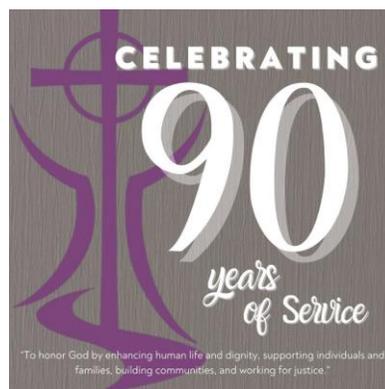
*"We serve people not because **THEY** are Catholic;
we serve people because **WE** are Catholic!"*

HOPE, HEART & HOME joined Archbishop Thomas Wenski and other dignitaries to pay tribute to **Catholic Charities** at a ceremony and mass held at *St. Joachim Catholic Church*. **Catholic Charities** was honored on its 90th Anniversary of service to the communities of Broward, Dade, and Monroe counties.

Founded in March of 1931, services for children and families remain the bedrock of Catholic Charities programs, with six sites offering *Head Start* programs. They are the largest provider of *Head Start* in Miami after Miami-Dade County public schools. Catholic Charities has been responsible for introducing numerous social services in South Florida, including the first to offer professional welfare services to children, the first in Broward to develop adult day care services, and they pioneered refugee services.

Starting with a single funding stream of under \$8,000 - today Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami, Inc. is now a multi-funded organization with revenues of \$30 million.

Joining the tribute were **Peter Routsis-Arroyo**, CEO of *Catholic Charities* (who helped launch *HHH* in 2018), **Monsignor Roberto Garza**, chair of the Board of Directors, Fr. **Reggie Jean-Mary** of *Notre Dame*, Fr. **Alex Ekechukwu** of *Holy Redeemer*, **Sister Elizabeth Worley**, Chancellor of the Archdiocese; **Katie Blanco**, Director of Archdiocese Development (*St. Louis*), and Board Members, including **Tom Comerford** (*St. John Neumann*), and Staff (some 14 who were honored for 25 to 40 years of service). **Lucy Delvalle** (*Catholic Charities*) and **Eric Schwindeman** (*HHH*) were also in attendance.



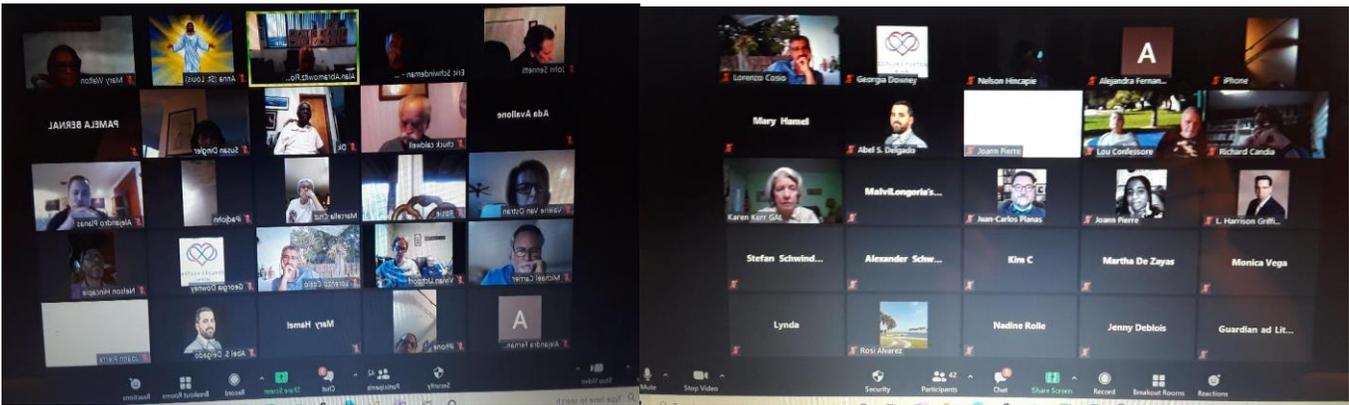


ABRAMOWITZ TAKES *HOPE, HEART & HOME*
TO TALLAHASSEE !

Tells HHH Child Advocates the "*Good and Not-So-Good*"
Child Welfare Discussions Underway In Our State Capitol.

SENATE BILL # 1920: "*NOW IS NOT THE TIME
TO TRY TO FIX A NON-EXISTENT PROBLEM!*"





After a review of recent legislative successes, Executive Director of the *Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program*, **Alan Abramowitz**, delivered a frank assessment of pending Senate Bill #1920. When questioned by one of the 46 Child Advocates on the April 12 virtual call, he bristled at the proposal to replace volunteer GALs with salaried attorneys.

"It's an unnecessary, inefficient budget hit. These lawyers will never establish the relationships our GALs have with our children or uncover the depth of information GALs provide our Courts." Abramowitz pointed to Florida's GAL program, assisting 77% of the 23,000 children in the system, as one of best in the country. "In fact, the 11th District (Miami) is now helping 1306 of the 1400 identified cases or a 93% assignment record.

After receiving a virtual "standing ovation," he urged the audience to make their views known to their legislators in Tallahassee. "This bill deserves the state-wide discussion that should ensue in the months ahead and for the facts to be known about its impact, expense, and administration."

Attendees on the call included **Rosi Alvarez**, **Anna**, **Lynda Arostegui**, **Jenny Arvila**, **Ada Avallone (GAL)**, **Pam Bernal (GAL)**, **Richard Candia**, **Mike Carrier**, **Kim C.**, **Chuck Caldwell**, **Lou Confessore**, **Harriet Confessore**, **Lorenzo Cosio (GAL)**, **Marcella Cruz**, **Martha DeZayas**, **Susan Dingler**, **Jenny DeBlois (GAL)**, **Alejandra Fernandez**, **John Gentile (GAL)**, **Harrison Griffis**, **Rosalyn Hagley**, **Mary Hamel (GAL)**, **Karen Kerr (GAL)**, **D.K. Knox**, **Malvina Longoria (GAL)**, **Rosie Perez Lacayo**, **Melissa Martinez-Estevé**, **Joann Pierre (GAL)**, **Alex Planas (GAL)**, **JC Planas (GAL)**, **Nadine Rolle**, **Maria Romanek** and **Baby Jionxel**, **Alex Schwindeman**, **Stefan Schwindeman**, **Eric Schwindeman (GAL)**, **John Sennetti (GAL)**, **Valerie Van Ostran (GAL)**, **Monica Vega**, **Mary K. Walton (GAL)**, **Vivian Uchdorf (GAL)**, and **Wieland Uchdorf (GAL)**. CEO and President of *Voices For Children*, **Nelson Hincapie**; Executive Director of *Explore Foster Miami*, **Georgia Downey**; and *Florida Foster Care Review* Attorney, **Abel Delgado** also joined the conversation.

HHH Advocates responded to Abramowitz's clarion call. Below are 4 sample letters sent to state representatives from HHH GALs:

FOUR LETTERS from HHH Child Advocates to Tallahassee:

I would like to address the proposal that children over the age of 10 be appointed client directed attorneys instead of GALs.

I have been a Guardian ad Litem in Miami Dade since 2015. During that time I have advocated for 44 children, some of whom had attorneys due to their special needs. In every one of those cases the children benefited from having a GAL. Although the attorneys have more training in legal matters, the GALs have more time to build a relationship with the children, a relationship that is crucial to truly advocating for them.

These relationships are built by sitting on the floor and playing a game with them, taking them out for a milk shake, or taking a walk in a park. By gaining their trust we are able to find out if parents are truly complying with the case plan, if care-givers are seeing to their needs and if they have concerns or wishes that need to be communicated to the court. In order to advocate effectively, the advocate must truly know the child, this is true regardless of his or her age. For this reason, I believe every child should have a GAL.

As a GAL I was able to work in partnership with some of the attorneys of my children. If children over the age of 10 are to have attorneys, they would benefit from having a GAL as well. If there are some problems with GAL representation, then those problems should be addressed, but children should not lose their GALs.

Respectfully,

***Karen Kerr**, Guardian ad Litem*

** * **

I am writing to ask you to oppose Senate Bill 1920 affecting the Guardian Ad Litem program. This bill would do a few negative things. It would be costly in that it would replace volunteers with paid attorneys. GAL's have a unique and caring relationship with their children and this would be affected. GAL volunteers are responsible for a handful of cases where attorneys would be assigned at least 60 cases, making it difficult to deliver quality service.

Across the state there are over 10,000 GAL volunteers that assist 23,000 children. There are simply not enough attorneys available to replace the GAL's And finally, the GAL program in Florida is considered the gold standard and the envy of other states.

Thank you,

Dr. John Gentile

* * *

***M**y name is **Maria Jacques**, I am a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist And have been in the Mental Health field for over 30 years. I have had the wonderful opportunity to be a GAL and part of the **Hope Heart & Home** ministry for the last two years. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for all that you do and ask that you take into consideration the future consequences should this bill be passed.*

*Removing GAL's from the **VOLUNTEER** position and assigning that responsibility to attorneys seems to be a decision going in the wrong direction. The GAL program was initiated to alleviate that same problem from over-worked attorneys who do not have the time to attend to each case in their caseload. We are the eyes and the ears of the needs of these kids in foster care. We interact on all aspects of the Child's life to ensure that their best interests are met. I recently worked on a reunification case that took many, many hours of **volunteer** work. I doubt that a paid attorney on that case would have had the time to dedicate to what was needed.*

We have just experienced a pandemic in which the mental health effects on children and foster parents are just starting to be recognized. And this is the time that we should be looking at decreasing the quality of care that our foster kids receive?

GAL's volunteer because we care about what happens to our foster kids. Now that is not to say that an attorney assigned to the case does not care, but a Gal who maybe has 1 or 2 cases as compared to possibly 60 cases for an attorney doe not sound like a reasonable equation to know every child's best interest on their caseload. Across the state of Florida, over 10,000 GAL volunteers have assisted with the needs of 23,000 children in the system.

We need to change this system that is working? I would hope not. So please reconsider this bill and not approve the changes that have been suggested.

* * *

I am a Guardian ad Litem. I'm urging you to vote against the proposed Senate Bill #1920. If attorneys are to replace us, I can guarantee the affected children will not have the individual care they get from a GAL. Why would a volunteer be replaced with a paid attorney?

I am the voice of one child (An attorney will have at least 60 children!). My foster child has retinoblastoma (eye cancer). I know my child well and I meet or speak with him regularly. I know his foster parents and I am alert to any red flags in the home. I know if he is happy and doing well in school and if not I will visit his school either personally or by FaceTime. I regularly speak with his occupational, speech, ABA and physical therapist. I know when he has missed any medical appointments because I always call the Doctor's office and the FP to follow his progress.

As his GAL I am the one that informed FRC and both the GAL and FRC attorneys when there have been issues with his care. An attorney does not have the time to devote to the individual care needed by these vulnerable children. My relationship with my little child is personal. Why are we changing a program that works so well? Please speak up for our foster children and do not make my child a number.

Thank you,

Valerie Van Ostran
Guardian ad Litem

Hope, Heart & Home recruit *Guardian ad Litem* from the Catholic Parishes of the *South Dade Deanery of the Archdiocese of Miami*. The GAL program of the 11th Circuit Court completes all interviews, background checks, training, court observation, and placement of certified Candidates. In 2018 -2020 (pre-covid), **HHH** provided 47 volunteers for the program now working with over 250 children.

Interested Candidates should contact **Malvina Longoria** (GAL) at malvalongoria@gmail.com or **Eric Schwindeman** (GAL) at eschwindeman@yahoo.com

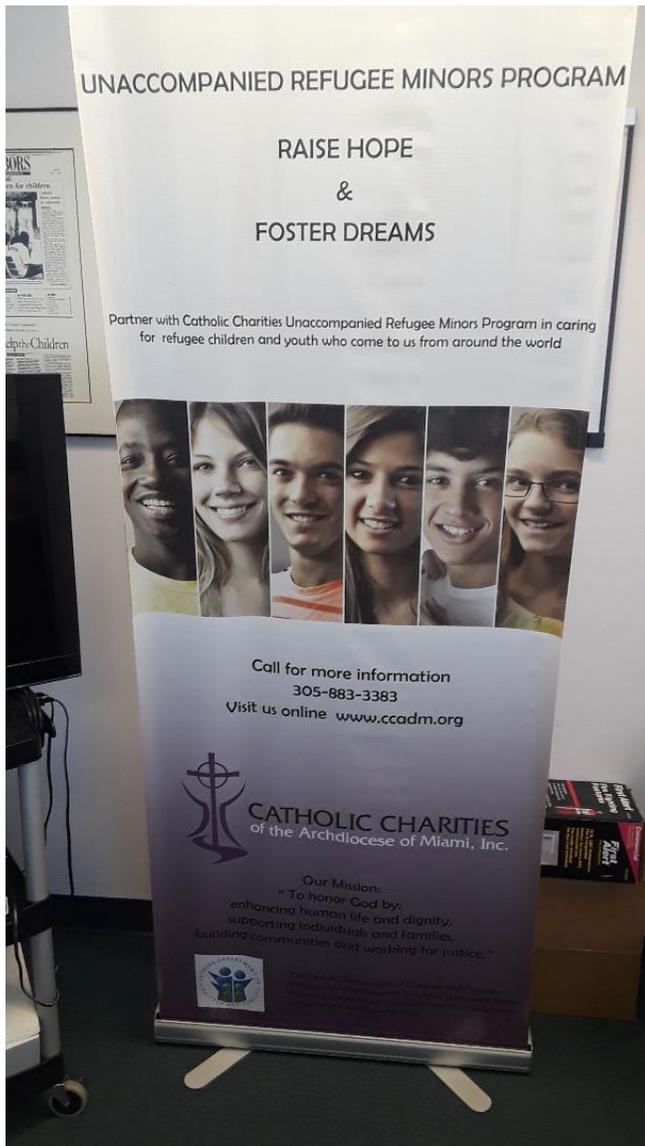


HOPE, HEART & HOME

PARTNERS WITH



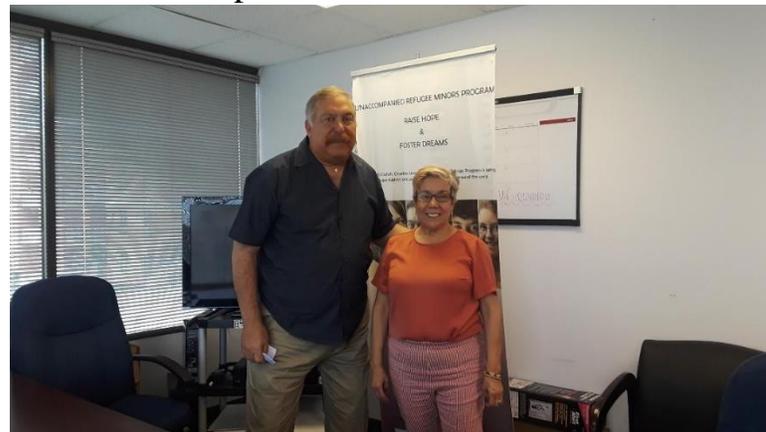
UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS PROGRAM



"There is so much we can do together!"

These are the pronouncements of Program Director **Monica Farias** to *Hope, Heart & Home's* **Eric Schwindeman** at the conclusion of talks held at the *Catholic Charities* office in Kendall on April 19.

Both advocates are optimistic that their



organizations can collaborate on foster parent recruitment, mentoring teens who age out of child welfare, and serving together on research project panels studying needs of refugee teens in foster care. *Catholic Charities' "The Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program"* works with some 40 teens who fled persecution, poverty, and whose parents were killed. These children are brought to this program by the US State Department. They have fled from Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Most do not speak English.

Future meetings are planned between HHH and *Catholic Charities'* Licensing Manager, **Adriana Molina**, Counselor **Alberto Garcia**, and Program Coordinator **Lucy DelValle** to pinpoint where HHH can be most effective. Earlier this month Schwindeman met with *Catholic Charities* CEO **Peter Routsis-Arroyo** and **Archbishop Thomas Wenski**.

HOPE, HEART & HOME holds ministry meetings on the second Monday of every month.

Note from Monica below:

Dear Eric,

Thank you for spending this morning with us at the program, I am very impressed with *Hope, Heart & Home's* mission, and collaboration with the foster care system. I appreciate your recommendations about recruitment strategies and a possible collaboration with our program.

I hope to hear from you and your team soon to start working on many projects to recruit families and mentors.

"

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

HEBREWS 13:2

Monica Farias, Program Director
Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami, Inc.



May is National Foster Care Month

Foster Care Supports Families & Builds Positive Connections for Children.

Foster Hope.
Foster Love.
Foster Family.



@citrusfcn

#FosterHopeAndLove

www.citrusfcn.com

One good deed can change everything.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
of the Archdiocese of Miami, Inc.

Hope, Heart & Home



Partners in prayer, collaborators in charity

DONATION DRIVE FOR REFUGEE MINORS & CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

MAY 3, 2021-JUNE 17, 2021

8 COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS FOR

EVERY 6 ITEMS DONATED

NO LIMIT



Visit [DreamList](#) and have items delivered to the Church office,
or purchase toiletries and items on the list and drop them in
the Church office Monday - Thursday 9 am- 4 pm

[DreamList.com/for/8wzumrr0zr](https://www.dreamlist.com/for/8wzumrr0zr)

Donate your old laptop too!

HRSR Church
7500 SW 152nd St
Palmetto Bay FL
33157
(305) 233-8711



In celebration of **National Foster Care Month, HOPE, HEART & HOME** is partnering with Alicia Mendes and *Holy Rosary-St. Richard's Catholic Church* to hold a **Donation Drive** to benefit **Catholic Charities' Unaccompanied Minors** and **Citrus's** foster care families. Parishioners are urged to purchase items off the *Dreamlist* and either send them to the Church or hand-deliver them to *Holy Rosary- St. Richards*. This drive will run through May until June 17. Thank you, Alicia for these great flyers and giving us the opportunity to come together to help these children.



Catholic Charities' "The Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program" works with some 40 teens who fled persecution, poverty, and whose parents were killed. These children are brought to this program by the US State Department. They have fled from Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Most do not speak English.

The Hope, Heart, & Home Ministry works to support the needs of children in foster care in South Florida.

HRSR Church is hosting a donation drive from May 3 - June 17, 2021 to benefit refugee minors and children in foster care.

Drop off the following items at the Church office Monday - Thursday between 9 am - 4 pm.

Donate the following items and earn 8 service hours for every 6 items donated. **NO LIMIT.**

Walmart, Target, or Publix gift cards, blankets, towels, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, conditioner, soap, deodorant (male & female), socks. Donate your gently used laptop.

HRSR Church
7500 SW 152nd St
Palmetto Bay, FL
33157
(305) 233-8711

OR VISIT
DREAMLIST.COM/FOR/8WZUMRR0ZR



To promote the HRSR Drive, HHH displayed banners at *St. Louis* (above with Lo Cosio) and at *Holy Rosary - St. Richards* throughout the months of May and June.

HOPE, HEART & HOME CHILD ADVOCATES: **MAY 1st**



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FROM TALLAHASSEE



TEAM GAL,

The 2021 legislative session officially came to a close April 30th and we wanted to provide an update. As you know, we spent much of the session monitoring and providing information on Senate Bill 1920 because of the significant and consequential ways it would have changed Florida's long standing best interest representation policy.

This bill, proposing that children in licensed out of home care be represented by client-directed attorneys instead of GALs, was never heard for a final committee vote in the Senate Appropriations Committee and was not amended to other pending legislation,

so SB 1920 will not become law.

We share in your concerns and truly believe *your advocacy on these issues made a difference!* We believe it will be important to continue this dialogue with legislators when they return to their districts and over the summer. Thank you again for the time and effort you give on behalf of children.

Sincerely,

Alan Abramowitz
Executive Director
Guardian ad Litem Program



Hope, Heart & Home Foster Parents, Fred & Maria Romanek (and their daughter Lizzy), were featured in Holy Rosary-St. Richards Parish Bulletin to promote Foster Parent Appreciation Month. Their example has sparked interest in the entire South Dade Deanery!



FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION MONTH

HOPE, HEART & HOME



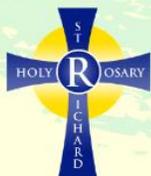
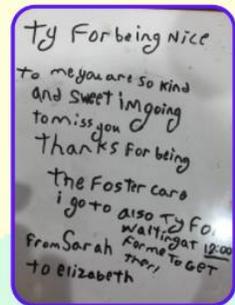
<https://www.facebook.com/ministryHHH/>

Every child deserves a family

Featuring Fred & Maria Romanek

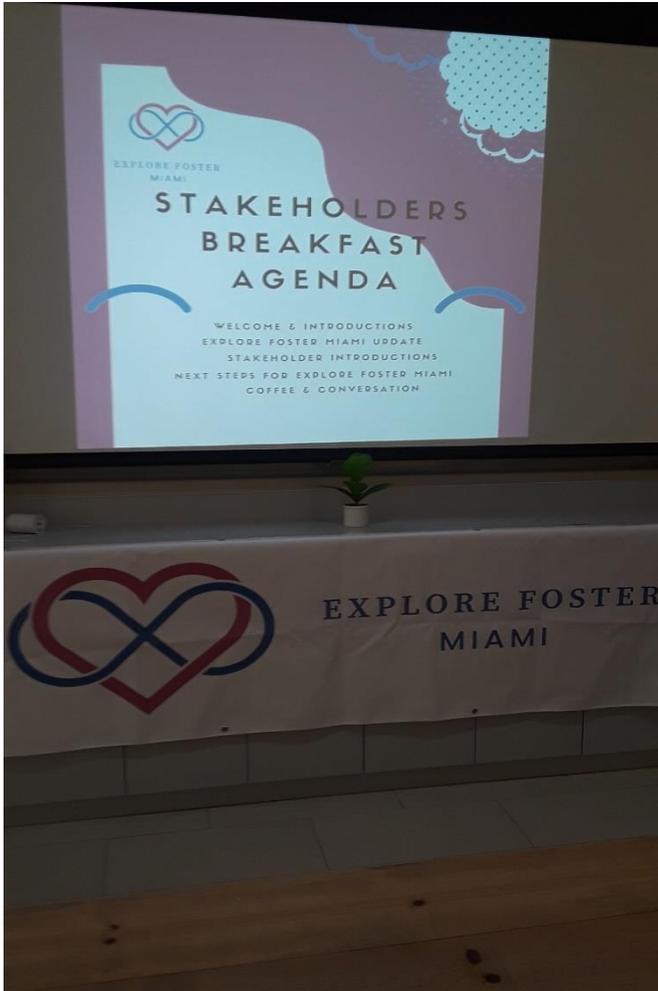
Fred and Maria Romanek, parishioners at Our Lady of the Holy Rosary - St. Richard Church, along with their daughter Elizabeth, have opened their home and hearts to two children in foster care so far. Although both children were temporary guests, Elizabeth has told her classmates that she wants to see more children fostered and adopted, and living in happy homes.

Congratulations and thank you to Fred and Maria Romanek for opening their home and hearts, and giving hope to children in need. And to Elizabeth, keep up the good work!



HOPE, HEART & HOME

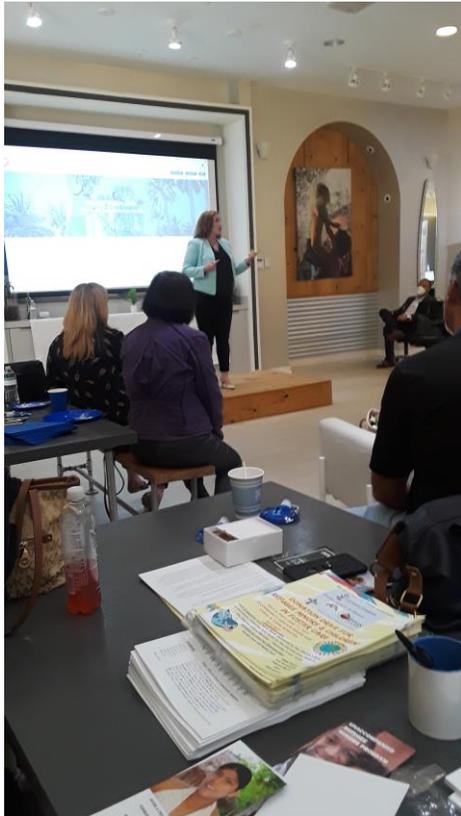
Sends 6 Child Advocates to EXPLORE FOSTER MIAMI SUMMIT



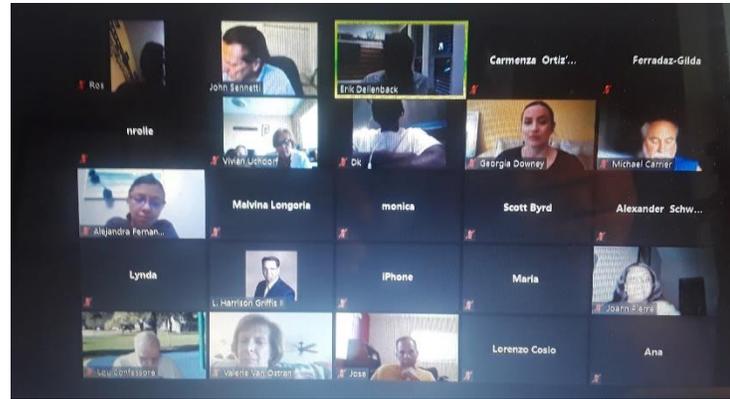
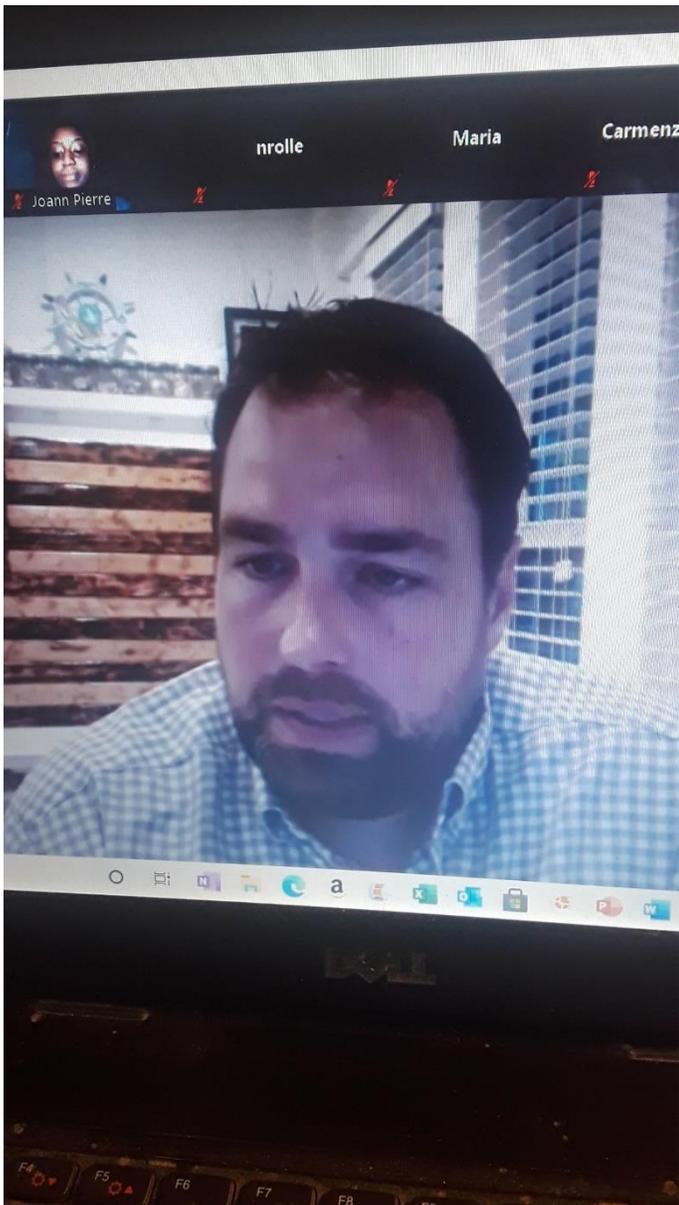
Last March, **Georgia Downey**, Director of newly formed *Explore Foster Miami*, pledged to bring together the "movers and shakers" in the Miami's child welfare universe to "explore, connect, and mobilize for children and families" so that every child and family "has the support to flourish." May 5th's inaugural breakfast was a giant leap forward!

For the first time in recent history, *Explore Foster Miami* was able to draw together **51** key players in the community to help transform the city. Luminaries included many former *HHH* meeting speakers- **Nelson Hincapie** (*Voices For Child Foundation*), **Esther Jacobo** (*Citrus FCN*), **Patricia Abaroa** (*Guardian ad Litem*), **Dr. Steve Rios** (*Positive Pathways*), **Amy Rubinson** (*Educate Tomorrow*), **Panos Kourtesis** (*One More Child*), and **Georgia Downey** herself. Old friends included *Citrus*' **Marcel Rivas**, **Nadine Rolle**, **Alicia Curtis** (formerly of *His House*, now a Recruiter at *Citrus*), **Chris Lane** (*National Christian Foundation*) and **Sam McKinnon** (*The*

Children's Trust). Upcoming *HHH* speakers included **Lourdes Pons** (*Children's Home Society*), **Monica Farias** (*Catholic Charities*), **Gilda Ferradaz** and **Beatriz Lopez** (DCF's *My Family, My Florida* - both speaking at *HHH*'s June 14 meeting), and the **Honorable Judge Marcia B Cabellero**. A second summit is scheduled this fall. Congratulations, Georgia on a phenomenally successful meeting! Collaboration is the wave of the future!



Clockwise: Four HHH Leaders- Lorenzo Cosio (GAL), Ada Avallone (GAL) standing, Valerie Van Ostran (GAL), Maria Jacques (GAL). Not pictured: John Sennetti (GAL); Esther Jacobo (Citrus) and Nelson Hincapie (Voices For Children); Nadine Rolle (Citrus); Judge Marcia Cabellero; Explore Foster Miami Executive Director, Georgia Downey; and Chris Lane (NCF).



DELLENBACK'S Message:

***“FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS
ARE THE FUTURE OF
FOSTER CARE!”***

Liaison to the Governor's *Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiatives*, **Erik Dellenback**, made an impassioned appeal to 38 *Hope, Heart & Home* (April 12) child advocates to join his crusade to harness the 20,000 Floridian faith institutions and churches into a new force supporting children in foster care.

Launched in September of 2020, *My Florida My Family* was born out of conversations Dellenback had with faith institutions across the state. Many in the faith community wanted to serve but were not sure how. *My Florida My Family* now brings together resources and tools for them to support vulnerable children in their area.

Dellenback told *HHH* that his team had to address four critical state-wide challenges:

- (1) A dysfunctional system of recruiting foster and adoptive families, where 47% of inquiries were never answered. **Solution:** the *Florida Foster Information Center* (FFIC), open from 8 AM to 6 PM, manned with "live" responders, all former foster or adoptive parents who can walk a caller through the process.
- 2) A lengthy, tedious bureaucratic process to get licensed as a foster or adoptive family. **Solution:** Bringing best practices from around the country to shorten, simplify, and streamline the process. Securing more R & D funding.

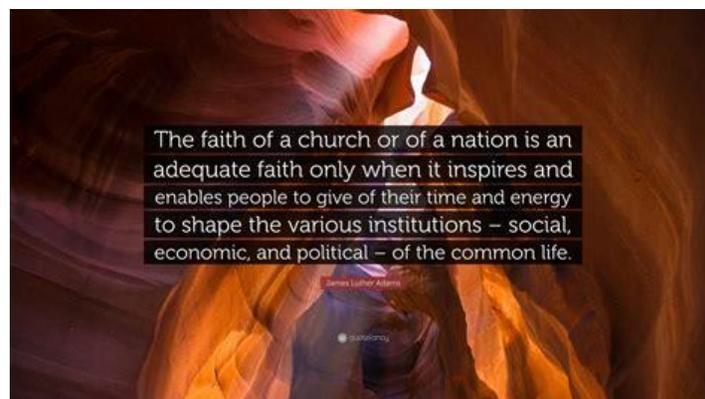
(3) An inefficient maze of 53 different locations to inquire about foster and adoptive services. **Solution:** A new website <http://www.MyFloridaMyFamily.com> created in coordination with the *Department of Children and Families*. It acts as a gateway to family support services to pair those in need of assistance with local faith institutions and community organizations eager to help. More importantly, it serves as a centralized landing site for foster and adoptive parent recruitment in the state of Florida.

(4) An uninformed populace, oblivious to the crisis facing children in foster care. **Solution:** A stepped up social media presence and the "*Act of Good Faith Tours*" that Dellenback's team launched in 2021.

While the "care portal" in **My Florida My Family** is not yet operational in South Florida, next month's speakers, **Gilda Ferradiz** and **Beatriz Lopez**, will address the roll-out in the coming weeks. *HHH* is excited about the potential this initiative represents for our local foster families!

Monday's participants included **Susan Dingler**, **John Sennetti** (GAL & Mentor), **Vivian Uchdorf** (GAL), **Wieland Uchdorf** (GAL), **Alejandra Fernandez** (Foster & Adoptive Mother and Mentor), **Lynda Arostegui** (Mentor), **DK Knox**, **Malvi Longoria** (GAL), **Harrison Griffis**, **Chuck Caldwell**, **Carmenza Ortiz** (Mentor), **Georgia Downey**, **Mike Carrier**, **Scott Byrd**, **Maria Jacques** (GAL), **Maria & Fred Romanek** (Foster Parents), **Ros Hagley**, **Nadine Rolle**, **Lorenzo Cosio** (GAL), **Alexander Schwindeman**, **Joann Pierre** (GAL), **Ana Gispert**, **Valerie Van Ostran** (GAL), **Jose DeValle**, **Lou Confessore**, **Stefan Schwindeman**, **Monica Vega**, **Alex Planas** (GAL), **Rosie Perez Lacayo**, **Ann Marie Robins** (Mentor) and **Eric Schwindeman** (GAL & Mentor).

Newcomers included **Janice and Phil Barnes** from OLOF (new Foster Parents), **Gilda Ferradiz** (*DSF- MyFamilyMyFlorida*), and **Monica Farias** (*Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program - Catholic Charities*.) We hope to see you regularly!



HOPE, HEART & HOME

JOINS ARCHBISHOP

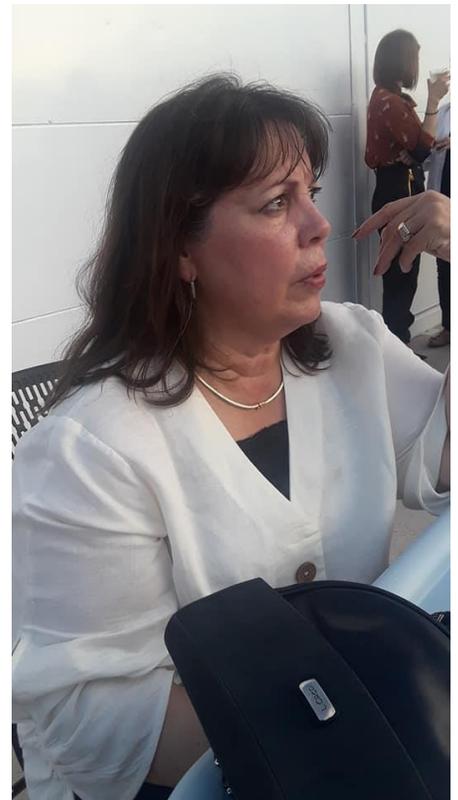
At Catholic Charities'

"HAVANA NIGHTS!"

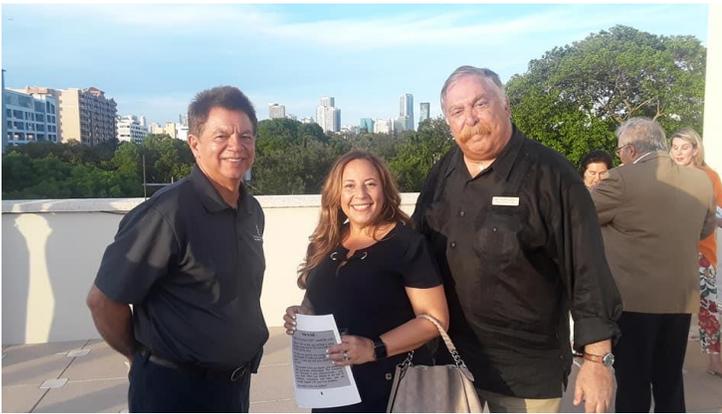




HHH's Eric Schwindeman, (GAL) Vivian & Wieland Uchdorf (GALs) with Archbishop Thomas Wenski



Lucy DeValle



Raising thousands of dollars for children in foster care – specifically **Catholic Charities'** *Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program* – was a mission **Hope, Heart & Home** was happy to help with! The sunset evening of dominos, cigars, and tropical fare was hosted by Archbishop **Thomas Wenski** for the benefit of *Catholic Charities* and CEO, **Peter Routsis-Arroyo** at the *American Museum of Cuban Diaspora* in Coral Gables.

Vivian & Wieland Uchdorf (GALs), **Maria Jacques** (GAL), and **Eric Schwindeman** (GAL) represented *HHH*. Joining the revelers in the rooftop festivities were **Lucy DeValle** and **Jackie Carrion** (*Catholic Charities*), **Rosemarie Banich** (Archdiocese Director of *Evangelization and Parish Life*), and the Editor of the *Florida Catholic*, **Ana Rodriguez-Soto**. A wonderful evening for a great cause! Many thanks to the patrons who generously supported this mission.

AS WE CELEBRATE

CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS RECOGNITION DAY



Child welfare professionals are unsung heroes who work tirelessly to ensure that our children are safe and secure.

MAY 11th

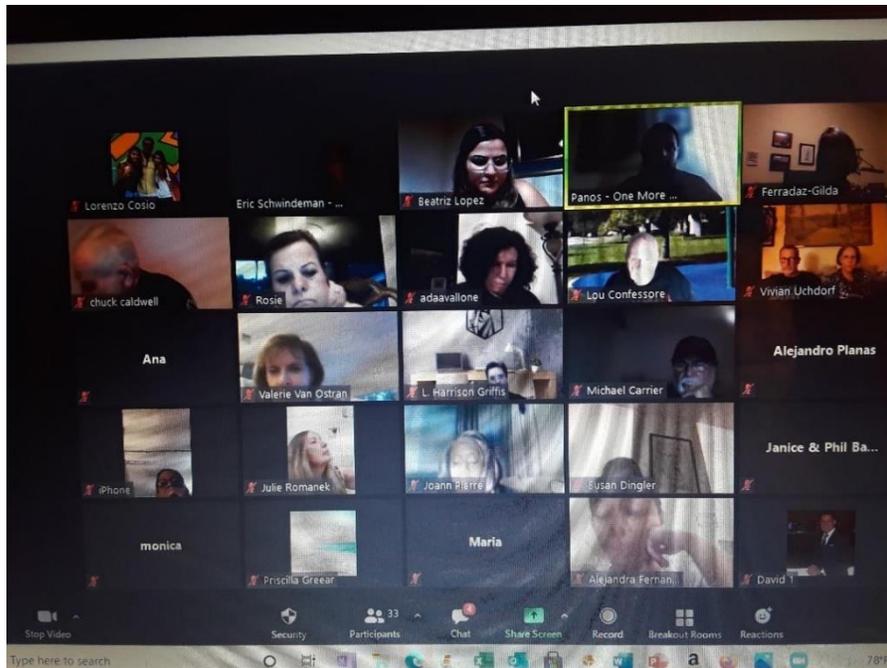
Hope, Heart & Home is blessed to work with the finest child welfare professionals in the nation! We team with *Citrus Family Care Network, Voices For Children, Guardian ad Litem, Educate Tomorrow, The Children's Trust, Florida Foster Care Review, One More Child, Explore Foster Miami, Catholic Charities, His House, Kristi House, Children's Home Society, Positive Pathways, Circle of Brotherhood, FCN Youth Advisory Council (YAC), Family Initiative, South Florida Foster and Adoptive Parents Association, My Florida-My Family* – and more!

Hope, Heart & Home recruits parishioners from the *South Dade Deanery of the Archdiocese of Miami* (11 Parishes) to serve as Foster Parents, Respite Parents, Mentors, Guardian ad Litem, and Case Review Panelists.

Contact Eric at eschwindeman@yahoo.com **TODAY!**

June 14

40 HOPE, HEART & HOME CHILD ADVOCATES **HEAR NEW PLATFORM PROGRESS REPORT** *Ferradaz, Lopez. and Kourtesis Take Attendees Through My Family My Florida Care Portal*



Administrators of two revolutionary platforms demonstrated how they were best designed to support real time needs of our local foster and adoptive families. DCF's **Gilda Ferradaz** and **Beatriz Lopez** opened the **MY FAMILY MY FLORIDA** web site and **Panos Kourtesis** of ONE MORE CHILD conducted a tutorial on the **CARE PORTAL**. Both platforms are designed to pair those in need with local churches eager to help. In the weeks ahead, Kourtesis will be introducing this technology to the Archdiocese of Miami and a select number of Catholic parishes in the South Dade Deanery. HHH will help Kourtesis with local presentations, recruiting foster parents, and facilitating trainings.

Monday's audience comprised a diverse group from our parishes and welfare Partners including **Ada Avallone** (GAL), **Lynda Arostequi** (Mentor - *Holy Rosary - St. Richard*), **Janice & Phil Barnes** (*Our Lady of Lourdes - Foster Parents*),

Mike Carrier (Operations), **Chuck Caldwell** (SJN), **David Castrillon** (*His House*), **Lou Confessore** (*St. Catherine*), **Lorenzo Cosio** (GAL - *St. Louis*), **Susan Dinger** (*St. Louis*), **Georgia Downey** (*Explore Foster Miami*), **Monica Farias** (*Catholic Charities*), **Alejandra Fernandez** (Mentor, Foster & Adoptive Parent -*Our Lady of Lourdes*), **Ana Gispert** (*St. Louis*), **Priscilla Greear**, award-winning journalist – *Florida Catholic*), **Harrison Griffis** (SJN), Ros Hagley (*St. Louis*), Mary Hamel (GAL - *St. Louis*), **Maria Jacques** (GAL - SJN), and **DK Knox** (*Little Flower*).

Also **Carmenza Ortiz** (Mentor, *Holy Rosary- St. Richard*), **Rosie Perez Lacayo** (Panelist - *Holy Rosary-SR*), **Joann Pierre** (GAL - *Citrus*), **Alex Planas** (GAL – *St. Louis*), **Maria Romanek** (Foster Parent - *Holy Rosary-SR*), **Nadine Rolle** (Recruiting Mgr - *Citrus*), **Alexander Schwindeman** (SJN), **Stefan Schwindeman** (SJN), **Eric Schwindeman** (GAL - HHH Executive Director), **Vivian Uchdorf** (GAL - *St. Augustine*), **Wieland Uchdorf** (GAL - *St. Augustine*), **Valerie Van Ostran** (GAL - SJN), **Monica Vega** - SJN), and **John Gentile** (SJN).

DID YOU KNOW?



100 percent of the proceeds of the GAL Tag will benefit the Florida Guardian ad Litem Program's mission - including recruiting, training, certifying, and retaining its volunteers.





June 17 HHH in Guardian ad Litem newsletter, *The Guardian Voice* 2021 Vol 3

Eric Schwindeman: Eric is a volunteer GAL that uses a platform from his church – Hope, Heart, and Home to seek out volunteer’s, foster parents, and funds to help our children. We all have to find our position-place to be of value. Eric has found his. Thanks you!

-Mary Walton

The hundred + *Hope, Heart & Home* volunteers: GALs, Foster Parents, Respite Parents, Mentors, Panelists, and Marketers who serve these children are the real heroes!

* * * * *

Care for EVERY child.

Care Portal creates connections within the Circles of Care around the isolated child.

Bringing together the family, church and community to create a holistic, healthy approach to caring for kids. Because every child matters.

If you are about to meet your first need through CarePortal, the odds are very high that it falls under one of the top 5 most commonly requested items below. These items help stabilize the environment of children and their caregivers. The **top 5** most commonly requested items are:

Beds: Cribs, toddler beds and bunk beds

Dressers

Living room furniture

Car seats

Seasonal items/services

All of these items help ensure safety, permanency and well-being for children and families involved with child welfare or prevent the need for child welfare involvement. Fulfilling common item requests like the top 5 listed above is a simple way to for HHH Child Advocates and new volunteers to truly empower the families we hope to serve and help them reach their goals!

HOPE, HEART & HOME to Partner with
CASA VALENTINA on **Mentoring!**



June 23 Three Members of the *HHH/ Citrus FCN Mentoring Program*, Executive Director **Eric Schwindeman** (GAL), **Dr. John Sennetti** (GAL), and **Valencia McKinney** met virtually with the Executive Director of *Casa Valentina*, **Janice Graham**, to explore ways the two organizations could collaborate on mentoring the 21 former foster care children in “**Casa V’s**” care as well as the hundreds who utilize their resources.

Casa Valentina provides life skill programming and affordable housing to former foster Care youth as they transition to independent living. Over 350 kids have benefited from their after care programs dealing with education, employment, literacy, and acts of everyday life.



COMING THIS SUMMER Don't Miss These Speakers!



JULY 10 BBQ @HRSR Contact Maria Jacques majaques@belsouth.net



SEPT 13 Janice Graham

CASA VALENTINA



AUGUST 9 Lourdes Pons *Children Home Society*