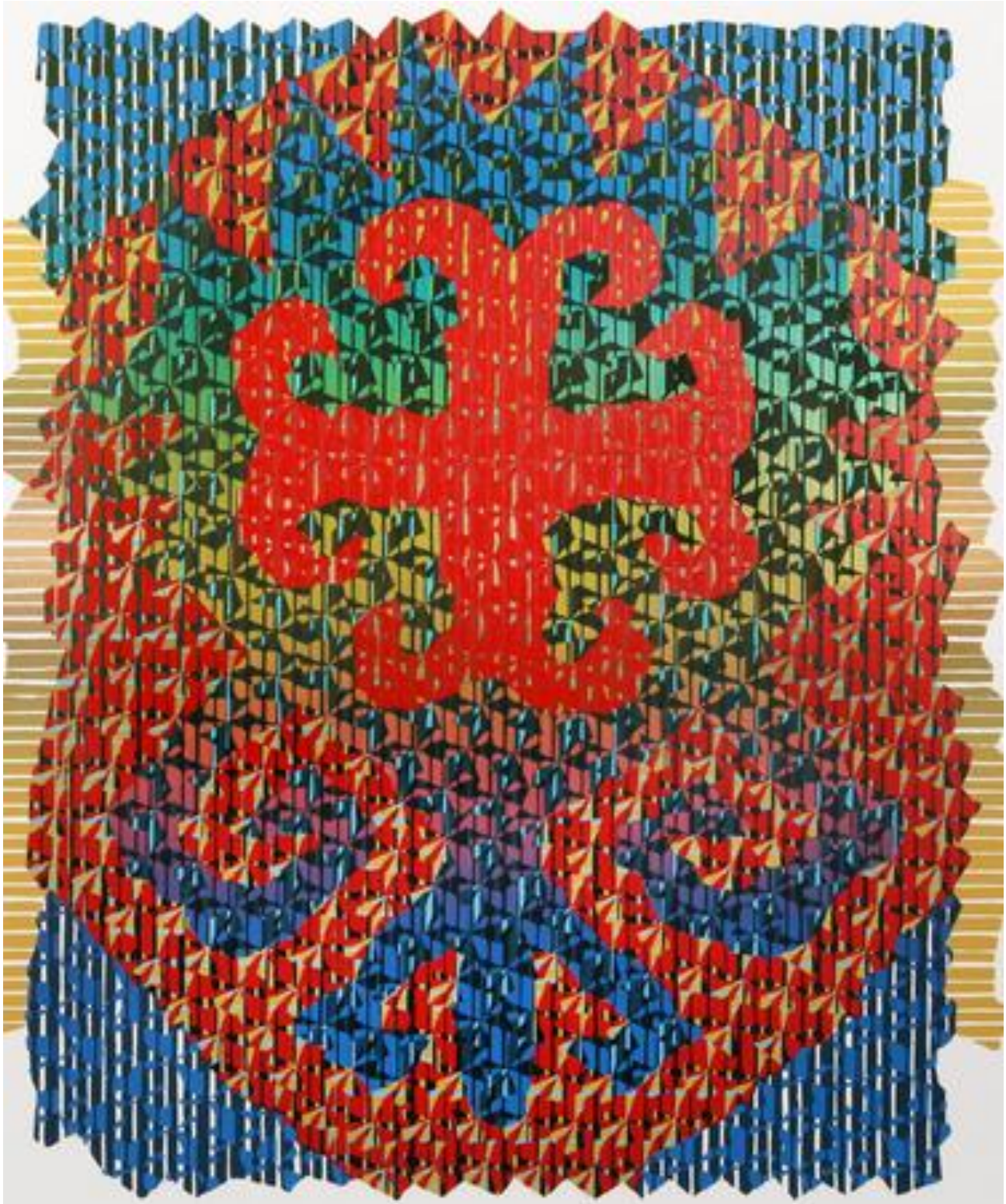


*HOPE, HEART & HOME*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2023  
NEWSLETTER



Are you passionate  
about foster care?  
Are you in search of  
real information on  
fostering? Foster  
care is full of joys ...

**BECOME**

**A Foster Parent**

**A Respite Parent**

**A Guardian ad Litem**

**A Mentor, Individually**

**or as a Couple**

**A Roundtable Panelist**

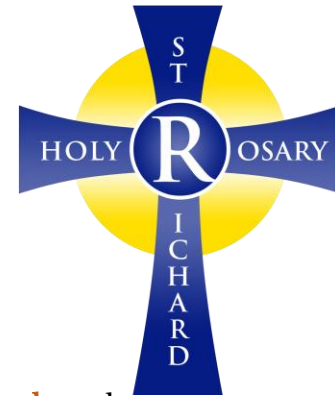
**Or a CAREPORTAL**

**First Responder**

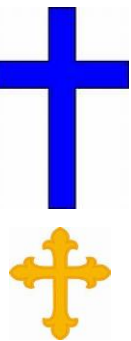


Interested? Contact Eric Schwindeman at [eschwindeman@yahoo.com](mailto:eschwindeman@yahoo.com) to find out how!





**HOPE, HEART & HOME** and local parishes join **Citrus Family Care Network** and the **CBC Alliance** in recognizing April as **National Child Abuse Prevention Month** by displaying blue pinwheels to heighten awareness. Thank you, **Leslie Veiga (Citrus FCN)** for organizing this !







**HOPE, HEART & HOME** monthly virtual meeting.

**Marcel** has 28 years of experience in the Miami child welfare world and for the last 8 years he has overseen the adoption, transitioning youth services, youth programming, educational, and housing departments at our partner, *Citrus Family Care Network*.

**Marcel's** transitional youth services program serves the largest population of youth, age 15 to 23, in Florida (350 active youth on any given day) and through his collaborative partnerships that include *DCF, Guardian ad Litem, Educate Tomorrow, Voices For Children* – and HHH – has become a leader in the state!

**Marcel** also helped create our joint mentoring program and has been instrumental in forging our technical school scholarship program with the *LA6 Alvarez Foundation*. More importantly, he has been a good friend and avid supporter of HHH, providing years of wise counsel to our growing ministry. We are blessed to have him lead our efforts!

**Scott Scovel**, a father and local business entrepreneur, has been mentoring a MDC student from our foster care program for 2 years and shared his insights on his successful approach to mentoring youth here in Miami. Scott has mentoring down to a science!

# **HOPE, HEART & HOME**

*Hosts Citrus Family Care Network  
Director of Youth Services &  
Adoption Operations*

## **MARCEL RIVAS**

**F**orty HHH Child Advocates enjoyed comprehensive presentations by **Marcel Rivas** of *Citrus FCN* and HHH's veteran Mentor **Scott Scovel** at the April 10



Thanks also to *Citrus'* **Dayorsha Attis & Leslie Veiga**, and HHH Mentors **Melbelina Lagos-Torres & Jay Pierce**, for highlighting the joint Mentoring program with *Genesis Hopeful Haven & Casa Valentina*.

Attending Child Advocates included **Lorenzo Cosio** (GAL – St. Louis), **John Sennetti** (St. Augustine), **Rosemarie Merino** (St. Agatha), **Mike Carrier** (St. John Neumann), **Carmenza Ortiz** (Good Shepherd), **Rosie Perez Lacayo** (FFCR Panelist - Holy Rosary– St. Richard), **Lou & Harriet Confessore** (St. Catherine’s), **DK Knox** (Little Flower).

Also **Paul Czekowski** (St. Louis), **Valerie Van Ostran** (GAL- CarePortal - St. John Neumann), **Maria Jacques** (GAL -St. John Neumann), **Jay & Ana Pierce** (Mentors – St. Louis), **Bill VanderWyden** (St. John Neumann), **Rosalyn Hagley** (St. Louis) **Alex Planas** (GAL – St. Louis), **Mary Hamel** (GAL- St. Louis), **Mary Walton** (GAL).

Also **Gilda Ferradaz** (DCF), **Juliana Albino** (Safe Families), **Angie Fernandez** (AG Office), **Fritzie Saintoiry** (Genesis Hopeful Haven), **Joann Pierre** (GAL), **Dayorsha Attis** (Citrus), **Alejandra Godoy** (Agape), **Kim Grabert** (Citrus), **Alexander Paz**, **Danielle Yost** (SJM), **Stefan Schwindeman** (SJM), **Monica Vega** (SJM), **Melbelena Lagos-Torres** (Mentor), **Scott Scovel** (Mentor), **Patti Wasserman** (Foster Parent), **Leslie Veiga** (Citrus), **Alexander Schwindeman** (SJM), and **Eric Schwindeman** (GAL – Mentor).  
Thanks to everyone for an educational and enjoyable overview!



April 28 - 29

# *HOPE, HEART & HOME*

Co-Sponsors

*Hope for the Journey Conference*



## **Introduction to TBRI®**

Trust-Based Relational Intervention® for parents, caregivers, teachers, foster parents, children and youth leaders, counselors, GALs

A care model designed to help understand the specific needs of the whole child; the principles of Connecting, Empowering, Correcting; and practical steps that can help children and youth thrive, specially those impacted by trauma.

**SCAN TO REGISTER**



2-Day Conference  
April 28th 6:30pm-9pm  
April 29th 9am-3pm

The Way Miami Church  
14105 SW 184th Street







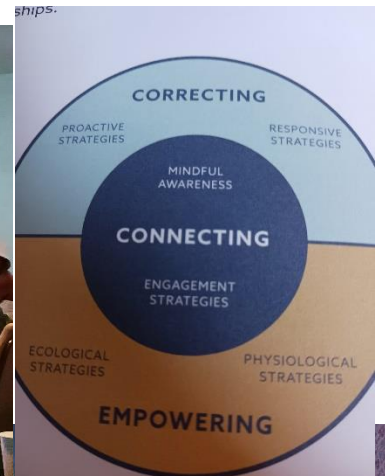
# HOPE, HEART & HOME

joined *Safe Families*. Citrus FCN, Family Initiatives, and Melody Caton in sponsoring "Hope for the Journey Conference- a training in "Trust-Based Relational Intervention" ( **TBRI**) for children impacted by trauma, hosted by the Way Miami Church, April 28-29.

HHH was represented by **Rosie Perez-Lacayo** ( *Holy Rosary-St. Richards* - Florida Foster Care Panelist) , **Maria A. Mejia Jacques** ( *St. John Neumann* - Guardian ad Litem) , and **Eric Schwindeman** ( *St. John Neumann* -GAL & Mentor).

Great to be joined by **Juliana Albino & Desiree Perez** (*Safe Families*), **Monica Farias** (*Catholic Charities*), **Marta Oliva Torres & Trudy Petkovich** (*Citrus Family Care Network*)), **Ana Palacios** ( *Family Initiative*), **Elizabeth Murialdo**, and 30 other child welfare advocates.

Two days of extraordinary insight & tools to build & maintain healthy relationships with our children!

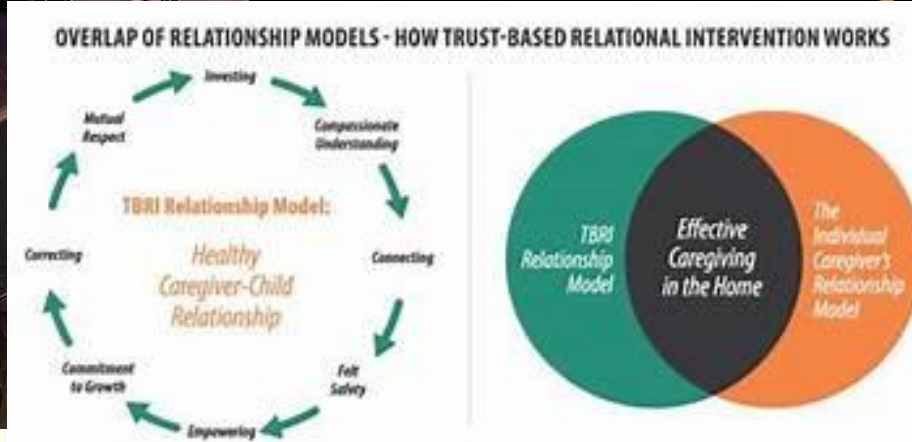






# TBRI®

## PRACTITIONER



TRUST-BASED RELATIONAL INTERVENTION® TRAINING



# COMMUNITY NEWS



Amazing April interview with our HHH partner, **Georgia Downey** of Explore Foster *Miami*. Get to know this "lady with the laugh" on Michelle Shirley's *Be Strong* podcast. (Don't offer Georgia any cauliflower). Watch the entire interview on "*Be Strong International*."

Congratulations to this year's **Florida's Children First** Award recipients! This year FCF recognized *Citrus FCN* Director **Esther Jacobo** as the Outstanding Champion for Children.



*Citrus FCN* Youth Advisory Council Member **Dominique Rosario** was honored as the Outstanding Youth Advocate and our friends at **Foster Care Review, Inc.** were named 2023 Outstanding Non-Profit Champion for Children.

Congratulations also to *Citrus FCN* Director of Youth Services and Adoption Operations **Marcel Rivas** who was recognized by **Magic Waste Youth Foundation** at their kick off for this year's efforts to raise funds for the Excalibur Youth Scholars Program which assists young adults who have aged out of foster care with housing and related expenses.





MAY is *National*  
**FOSTER CARE**  
MONTH

*HOPE, HEART & HOME*

*proudly hosts*

*JUDGE JASON DIMITRIS*

*on May 8 Virtual Meeting*

*with Special Guest*

*JUDGE STEVEN LIEBERMAN*

*“A wonderful informative evening with two great magistrates!”*

**H**onored to have **Judge Jason Dimitris** (and as a bonus, **Judge Steven Lieberman**) join our **HOPE, HEART & HOME** monthly virtual meeting, Monday, May 8.

**J**udge Dimitris is known to many of our HHH volunteers as he presides over the “Complex Trial Division” of Unified Family Court, which includes Family, Dependency, Delinquency, and Domestic Violence cases. He is also an Adjunct Professor at the *University of Miami School of Law* and as you can see from these photos, Judge Dimitris is an avid outdoorsman. He enjoys health & wellness, completing 3 ironman triathlons, 20 marathons, and *has even summited Mt. Rainier!* The man exudes energy on and off the bench.



**IRONMAN**





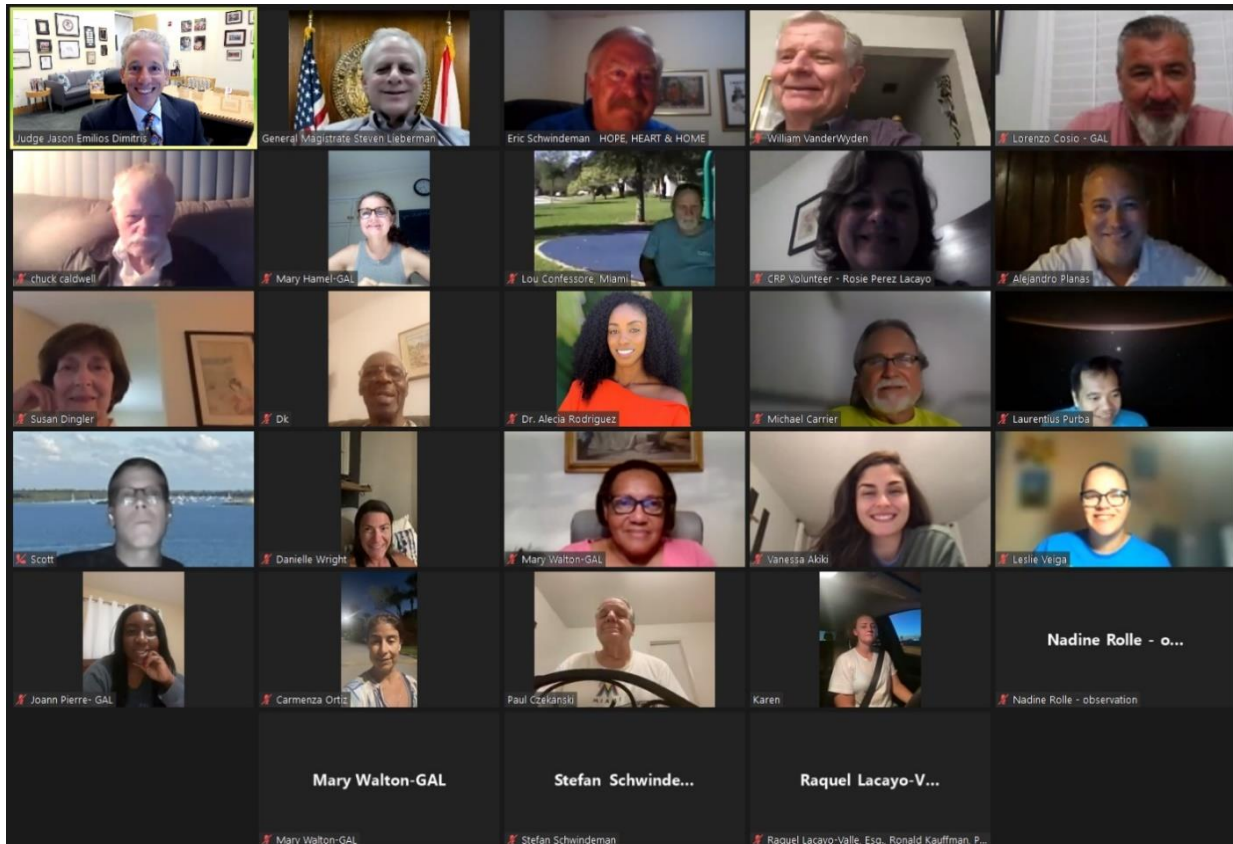


The Judges shared their perspective on hybrid court hearings (they're for them), parental bias (they want only the facts), Guardian ad Litem ("essential"), and the role of the *Citizen Review Boards* (they're huge supporters). All music to the ears of the 37 HHH child advocates, that included GALs, attorneys, FFCR panelists, foster parents, and Mentors in their audience.

Child Advocates on the call included *Guardian ad Litem* and Attorney **Raquel Lacayo-Valle** (GAL), **Joanne Pierre** (GAL), **Maria Jacques** (GAL), **Mary Hamel** (GAL), **Mary J. Walton** (GAL), **Alex Planas** (GAL), and **Lorenzo Cosio** (GAL).

HHH Panelists on the *Florida Foster Care Review Boards* included **Rosie Perez-Lacayo** (HRSR), **Susan Dingler** (St. John Neumann), and **Karen Franklin** (SJN). *CarePortal Responders* included **Dr. John Gentile** and Regional Director **Danielle Wright**. HHH Mentors included **Alecia Rodriguez** (GAL), **Scott Scovel**, and **Eric Schwindeman** (GAL). Also joining us was *Citrus Family Care Network's* **Leslie Veiga** and **Nadine Rolle**.

**Chuck Caldwell**, **Lauren Purba**, **Bill VandrWyden**, **Stefan Schwindeman**, **Monica Vega**, **Mike Carrier**, **Vanessa Akiki**, **Dk Knox**, **John Sennetti**, **Danielle Yost**, **Marilyn Marasigan**, **Paul Czekanski**, **Nadine Rolle**, **Carmenza Ortiz**, **Alexander Schwindeman**, and **Lou & Harriet Confessore** were also on this informative call.





**HOPE, HEART & HOME**  
JOINS  
**ARCHBISHOP WENSKI**  
**UNDER THE STARS!**



Wonderful evening for **HOPE, HEART & HOME** under the stars (and on the domino table) with Archbishop Thomas Wenski at the annual "Havana Nights" fundraiser for the *Unaccompanied Minors Program* within **Catholic Charities**.

Great to enjoy a mojito and a cigar with old ADOM friends **Monica Farias, Tom Comerford, Peter Roustis-Arroyo, Katie Blanco Bourdeau, and Martha Velasquez**. HHH's **Victor Jacques** took

**Maria Jacques and Eric Schwindeman** to the cleaners in dominos!

Many thanks to *Our Lady of Charity* for hosting this event! Everything was festive & fun!



**HAVANA** Nights

QUESTIONS? EMAIL [EVENTS@THEADOM.ORG](mailto:EVENTS@THEADOM.ORG)  
CALL 305.762.1051

OUR LADY of CHARITY

PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT  
THE UNACCOMPANIED MINORS PROGRAM  
WITHIN CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI.  
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI IS A 501 (C)(3) ORGANIZATION









# CASA VALENTINA

## CASA VALENTINA

### HOSTS

## HOPE, HEART & HOME

May 23. **HOPE, HEART & HOME** and *Explore Foster Miami* enjoyed meeting the wonderful staff of child welfare partner, **Casa Vallentina**, at a "lunch & orientation" event at their Mundy Street center.



**Casa Vallentina's** mission is to provide at-risk & former foster care youth with safe affordable housing, life skills, and continued support so they can achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. HHH is currently mentoring male and female residents of their homes.

**Executive Director Janice Graham**, Program Director **Alexis Adams**, and Program Coordinators **Ashley Allen & Jasmine Miles** hosted HHH's **Eric Schwindeman** and *Explore Foster's* **Georgia Downey** for an informative and fun discussion over lunch. We were also joined by CV student resident (and HHH Mentee) **Chris Delimond**.

Thank you CV for a great afternoon! We look forward to more collaboration in the future!



*" Casa Valentina is unique in Florida and around the country, providing wraparound mentoring and coaching services tailored to each resident, as well as safe, affordable housing to help them reach their goals."*





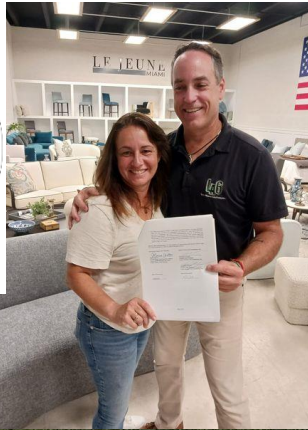


# TECHNICAL SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP: **A REALITY!**

**HOPE, HEART & HOME** is honored to bring Lucas Alvarez LA6 Foundation and Citrus FCN together on May 30 to officially sign a "Memorandum of Understanding" to fund and manage \$10,000 of annual scholarships to allow teens aging out of foster care to attend technical schools.

The signing ceremony took place at Alvarez's **LeJeune Upholstery** showroom where the signers met to celebrate this landmark achievement. Many thanks for the patience and tenacity of **Liz & Alex Alvarez**, Citrus' **Marcel Rivas & Leslie Veiga**, and HHH's **Lorenzo Cosio & Eric Schwindeman** to make this dream a reality!

*"Not all who wander are lost!"*





# June is National Reunification Month.

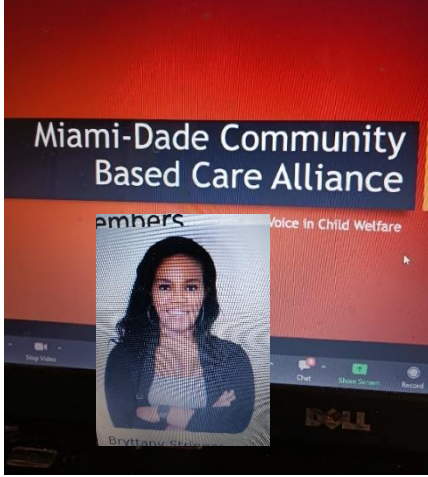
We celebrate the accomplishments and hard work of families who overcame difficulties, to reunify with their children. We recognize the vital role of other family members, social workers, foster parents, mentors, civilian review panelists, attorneys, Guardians ad Litem, and courts who help reunify, strengthen, and support families. We hope to inspire other parents that it is possible to address and resolve the issues that led to their separation and to reunify with their children.

Foster care is supposed to be a temporary situation, and the primary goal for children is reunification with their biological family. Yet, the exact path to that result is unclear, and reunification is a process. When the judge rules that way, there is much work from all parties leading up to the event. Although reunification days are a joyous occasion, the path to reunification takes work, commitment, and investment of time and resources not only by the parents but everyone involved with the case. It truly takes a village to bring families back together.

You can make a difference in a child's life, visit <https://www.facebook.com/ministryHHH> and <https://www.hopehearthomeministry.com/>







# HOPE, HEART & HOME

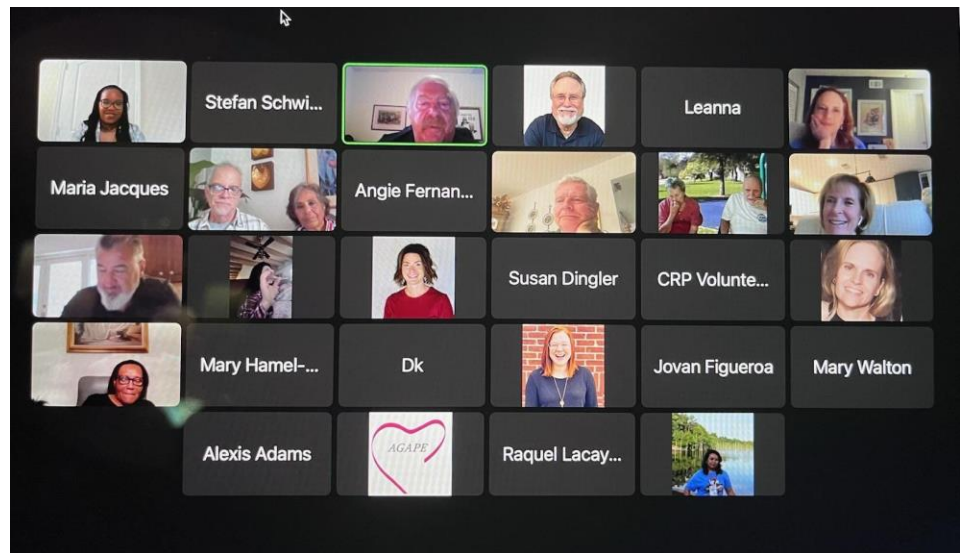
## Introduces Miami's CBC

### at June Monthly Meeting



**HOPE. HEART & HOME** welcomed **Bryttany Stringer**, Executive Director of Miami-Dade's **Community Based Care Alliance (CBC)** to their June 12 virtual monthly meeting. **44** Child Advocates heard her outline the role of the CBC as a forum to address the many issues challenging the foster care system in Miami.

Attending this symposium were HHH partners **Liz Anon & David Castrillon** (His House), **Danielle Wright & Emily Hevener** (CarePortal), **Alejandra Godoy** (Agape Network), **Georgia Downey** (Explore Foster Miami), **Marta Torres** (Citrus FCN), **Angie Fernandez** (Attorney General's Office), **Sharon Langer & Alexis Adams** (Casa Vallentina), and **Jovan Figueroa** (One More Child).



Also Guardian ad Litem **Mary Hamel, Lo Cosio, Eric Schwindeman, Maria Jacques, Raquel Lacayo Valle, Valerie Van Ostran, Joann Pierre, and Mary Walton**; Florida Foster Care Review Panelists

**Rosie Perez-Lacayo & Susan Dingle**; Foster Parents **Caroline Hazelton** (Catholic Charities) and **Patti Wasserman** (Citrus FCN); and Mentors **Ana & Jay Pierce** (St. Louis), **Grato & Miriam Paneque** (Our Lady of Lourdes), and **Scott Scovell**; CarePortal Response Team **Dr. John Gentile**.

Child Advocates included **Chuck Caldwell** (SJN), **Bill Vander Wyden** (SJN), **Leanna Roberts** (Hawaii), **Lou & Harriet Confessore** (St. Catherine's), **DK Knox** (Little Flower), **Stefan Schwindeman & Monica Vega** (SJN), **Danielle Yost & Alexander Schwindeman** (SJN), **Marilyn Marasignan** (HRSR), and **Michael Carrier** (SJN). Thank you, Brittany, for your overview and for raising HHH volunteers' awareness of CBC's regional initiatives.





**W**onderful graduation ceremony for Citrus Family Care Network Class of 2023 and the formal introduction of the generous **Lucas Alvarez LA6 Foundation Scholarships** on June 8 at the MDC Wolfson campus. Congratulations to **Alex Alvarez, Esther Jacobo, Marcel Rivas, and Demarco Mott** for their inspirational messages to all the 2023 graduates



**HOPE, HEART & HOME'S** Lorenzo Cosio & Eric Schwindeman, Citrus' Leslie Veiga & Marcel Rivas celebrated with **Alex & Liz Alvarez** as these scholarships will now be awarded in the fall of 2023 to teens aging out of foster care to attend technical schools.

Great to share the festivities with partners **Kadie Black** (Voices For Children), **Rudy Bustamante** (Magic Waste Foundation), **Fritzie Saintoiry** (Genesis Hopeful Haven), **Gilda Ferradaz** (DCF), **Dayorsha Attis** (Citrus FCN), and **Kim McGrath** (MDCPS).







Class of  2023  Congratulations!





# HOPE, HEART & HOME Networks at EXPLORE FOSTER MIAMI



## B R E A K F A S T



Another enlightening **EXPLORE FOSTER MIAMI** breakfast on June 14, bringing together faith-based non-profits, government agencies, and churches to support children in foster care.

**HOPE, HEART & HOME** sent 5 delegates: Alecia Rodriguez (GAL CAM, Mentor, Foster Parent), Mary Walton (GAL CAM), Lorenzo Cosio (GAL), Maria Jacques (GAL) and Eric Schwindeman (GAL, Mentor)- to the event.

Outstanding organizational job by **Georgia Downey**, Executive Director of Explore

Foster. Great to see HHH partners, including **Marta Oliva Torres** (Citrus FCN), **Alejandra Godoy** (Agape Network), **Monica Farias** (Catholic Charities), **Kadie Black**, (Voices For Children), **Bertha Pino** (Explore Foster), **Danielle Wright & Emily Hevener** (CAREPORTAL), **Liz Anon** (His House), **Freddie Gonzalez** (Hope4Kids), **Kele Stewart** First

Star Academy), **Juliana Albino & Desiree M. Perez** (Safe Families), **Chris Lane & Jessica Lancaster** (National Christian Foundation), **Roxy Llarena & Jorge Ardura** (Peer Parent-3<sup>rd</sup> Region Counsel), and **Julia Bruce** (One More Child).





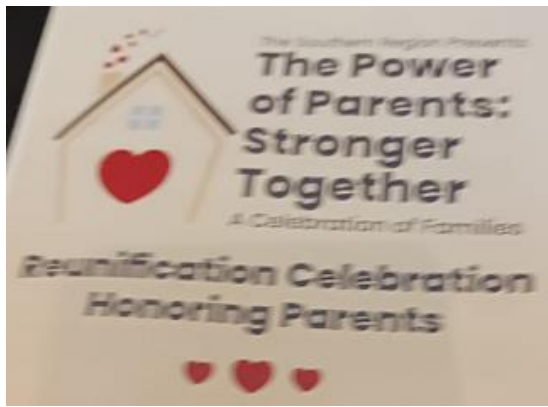
# EXPLORE FOSTER MIAMI

**OUR MISSION:** Inspire, convene, educate and serve our local church champions and community to be a bridge of support in our city!

**OUR VISION:** Bringing together local churches and community organizations to create a thriving ecosystem of support surrounding foster care.







**H**OPE, **H**EART & **H**OME honored to join the festivities Saturday morning (June 24) at the

## *2023 Reunification Celebration Honoring Bio Parents!*

**Citrus Family Care Network** recognized the biological parents who fulfilled their mission to be re-united with their children out of foster care. What a joyous morning!

Special thanks to all our partners who made this possible, including **Leslie Veiga, Marcel Rivas, Gilda Ferradaz, Bryttany Springer, Margaret Julien, Judge Jason Dimitris, Roxy Llarena, Allison Schild, and Jorge Arduro.**

**Congratulations** to all our parents!









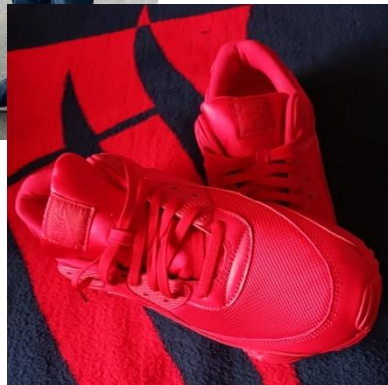


**HOPE. HEART & HOME** proud to support the **Annual Black Tie & Sneakers Ball** for teens in foster care, June 24 at the *Renaissance at the Gables*. Over 100 teens and distinguished guests enjoyed a prom night of food, music, and dancing with a robot!

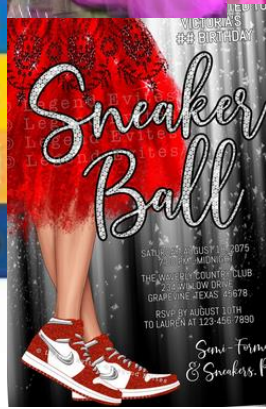
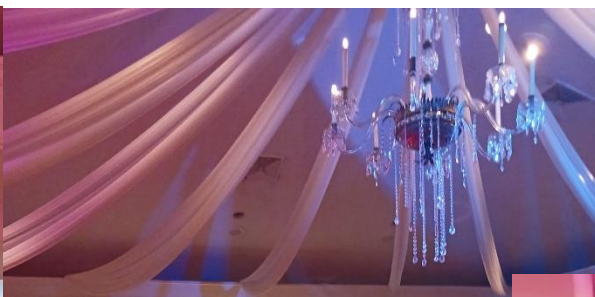
HHH volunteers contributed over 125 long stem roses (courtesy of **Fred Zinobile & Fresca Farms**), \$250.00 in gift cards (**Valerie Van Ostran & Mary K. Walton**), and a neon-red pair of **Air Jordan's** raffled to one lucky teen.

Wonderful to share the night with HHH partners including **Marta Oliva Torres, Leslie Veiga, Kadie Black, Fritzie Saintoiry, Nadine Rolle, Marcel Rivas, Karina Pavone, Gray Bean, Lynette Brooks, and David Brown.**

Congrats to everyone on the event planning team for a huge success. The kids loved it!











**EDITORIAL:** Sometimes you have to see first hand the work that goes into planning an event to really appreciate its success. *The Parent Reunification Ceremony* and the *Black Tie & Sneakers Ball* were classic planning examples for all of us. Both events held on the same day! Both planned down to the smallest details!

Hats off to **CITRUS FAMILY CARE NETWORK** for two incredibly- managed events! For the *Parent Appreciation Ceremony*, the nucleus of Citrus' **Leslie Veiga & Marcel Rivas** put together a team that included DCF, Circuit Judges, Guardian ad Litem, caseworkers, lawyers, caseworkers, non-profits, parents, and kids of all ages. The program - a mix of testimonials and videos - was powerful. And they pulled it off effortlessly!

*The Ball* was micro-managed by the Citrus team of **Leslie Veiga** (again!), **Marta Torres, Nadine Rolle, Trudy Petkovich, Gray Bean, and Lynette Brooks** - with help from **Fritzie Saintoiry** & her *Genesis Hopeful Haven* Staff and **David Brown!** It was like planning a wedding - even tougher! The venue, logistics, menu, decorations, program, raffle gifts, DJ, entertainment - all came together like a charm. The kids had a blast!

There is a saying: "Plans are of little importance, but **PLANNING** is essential!"  
Just wanted to say: "Well done, Citrus FCN, well done!"





**HOPE, HEART & HOME** continued their support of foster families this June with 3 outreach programs:

- (1) **"Random Acts of Kindness"** delivering food and Baskets to families' homes by **Maria A. Mejia Jacques** and her HHH team.
- (2) **CarePortal Response Team** under Dr. **John Gentile** and **Valerie Van Ostran**, meeting families' requests on the CarePortal platform with gift cards & specific items.
- (3) Ramping up a program this summer to train & employ more teens as age-group **soccer referees**, a program initiated by **Lou Confessore**, the **Kiwanas**, and the men from **St. Catherine of Siena**.

Next up: **Third Annual Holy Smoke BBQ for Foster Families** on Saturday, July 8 at *Holy Rosary- St. Richards!*







# Now and THEN By Tamekia Goodman June 20, 2023

There was once a heavy feeling in my chest  
Making it hard to breathe  
Sounds like you?  
Surrounding me with these monstrous emotions  
Like hurt and despair  
Sounds like you?  
Every movement felt like a waste  
The times I thought of being erased  
Sounds like you?  
Feeling tired and beaten down  
Never felt like they were listening  
Sound like you?  
Always doing what's told and expected of you  
Relying on those you thought were gonna be there forever  
But was that all a lie?  
Still sounds like you?  
Till you came into my life  
Uplifting me through the hardships  
Making me feel love  
Cared for  
Appreciated  
Surrounding me with new things I have never experienced  
Giving me hope  
The ability to be myself again  
Sounds like you?  
I can feel again  
I can see my future again  
I feel love  
I am so grateful for everything  
How about you???

