



HOPE, HEART & HOME

4th Quarter 2023

NEWSLETTER



Every child deserves a family

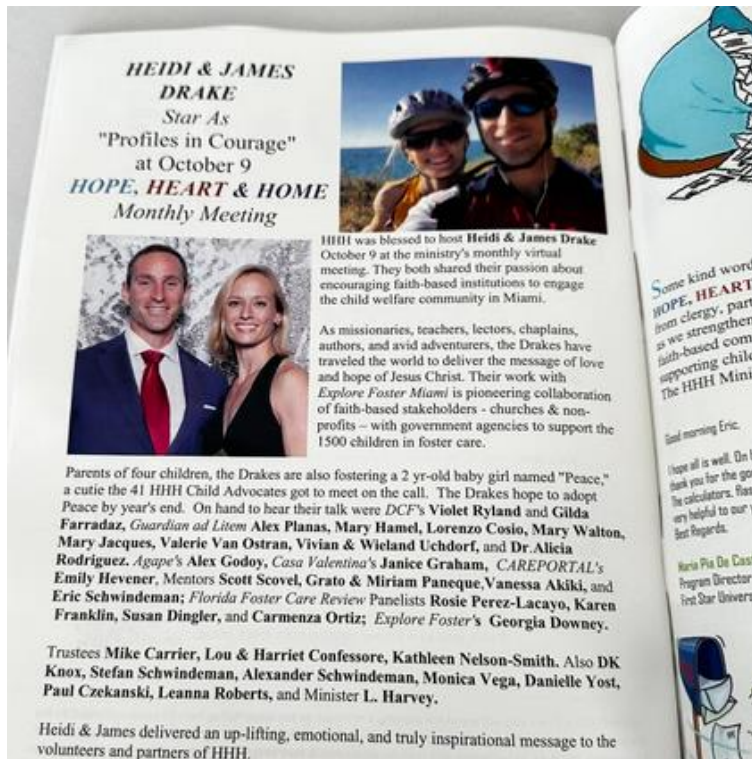


Fostering is not about us. It never was and never will be. Foster care is about serving, loving on others, and being the one constant in a child's life when they are going through a really hard time." **We do not need to know the beginning of a child's story to change the ending.** "You might be temporary in their lives; they might be temporary in yours. But there is nothing temporary about the love or the lesson." **We need to share responsibility. It's easy to say 'It's not my child, not my community, not my problem.'** Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people **my heroes.** **Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story.** "If you can help a child, you don't have to spend years repairing an adult." **Parenthood requires love, not DNA.**

Be a champion for a child!

Every child needs a champion to love them, support them and encourage them to pursue their dreams. You can be that champion. Whether you want to open your home to a child or support families who do, we want to hear from you. Visit www.hopehearthomeministry.com for more information.





HOPE, HEART & HOME

featured child activists, James & Heide Drake in the Third Quarter 2023 publication of the HHH Newsletter. Their appearance as guest speakers on October 9 and their relentless efforts to promote non-profit, government agency, and church collaboration supporting children in foster care (seen below with Fr. Kevin McGrady of *Holy Rosary-St. Richard*), will continue to be an inspiration to all of us!



The Drakes spent the last days of 2023 competing in an Ironman Triathlon in California, chairing a conference for married couples in Colorado, and finalizing the adoption of their two-year-old daughter, Peace, here in Florida! Just a walk in the park for this couple!

Happy New Year to the Drake Family!





HOPE, HEART & HOME is thrilled to receive a generous sponsorship for CITRUS FCN's "Hoops4Unity" Basketball Tournament (October 14 at Hadley Park) from the **MIAMI KIWANIS YOUTH FOUNDATION.**



The Kiwanis Board of Directors voted unanimously to support this event that brings teens aging out of foster care together with law enforcement & first responders on the basketball courts! The Kiwanis are also sponsoring a Fishing Tournament for boys & girls in foster care, ages 10 thru 16, on Saturday, October 28 at Black Point Marina.

HHH's **Dr. Alecia Rodriguez** (GAL, Mentor, Foster Mom) and **Eric Schwindeman** (GAL, Mentor) were proud to officially join this 100-year-old club supporting children in the Miami community and serve as liaisons to HHH.



A Basketball Tournament for law enforcement & first responders together.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 14TH, 2023 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Who Can Participate?
Boys and Girls in Foster Care and who have been Adopted, Ages 12-17
Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders.

For more info, contact:
Nadine Rolle at nrolle@citrusfcn.com
Eurika Managan at emanagan@citrusfcn.com

Located at:
Samuel K. Johnson at Charles Hadley
4900 NW 12th Ave
Miami, FL 33127

REGISTER AT: hoops4unity2023.eventbrite.com

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

The Kiwanis donated all the basketballs for the tourney and each youth went home with a new ball. HHH also funded play sets for the younger family members! Another excellent engagement event by Nadine Rolle and her Citrus FCN team!



MIAMI KIWANIS

Host Fishing Tournament

BBQ FOR KIDS

at Black Point Marina

October 28



While the wind and chop prevented our annual haul of fish, 60 of our intrepid young sailors and boat captains enjoyed a delicious BBQ luncheon hosted by the **MIAMI KIWANIS** at the Black Point Marina, Saturday Oct 28 at their yearly *Kids Fishing Tournament*.

HOPE, HEART & HOME'S Dr. Alecia Rodriguez led her family and a group of teens from HHH partner, **Citrus Family Care Network**, celebrating with the Kiwanis organizers.

Special thanks to Chair **Carole Johnson**, chefs **Chuck Little, Eric Carpenter, George Cadman, George Lucas, Valerie Daks** and all the volunteers that made the afternoon so enjoyable for these kids! May God continue to bless the work the Miami Kiwanis do in our community!





The Kiwanis Club of Miami, Tropical Anglers Club of Miami, The South Florida Sport Fisherman Club, Citrus Family Care Network, and Hope, Heart & Home are proud to present

2023 TAKE A KID FISHING EVENT

November 3
Saturday, October 28th 7:30 – 11:30 AM
Black Point Marina
24775 87th AVE, HOMESTEAD, FLA 33032
 THE KIWANIS CLUB OF MIAMI WILL PROVIDE FISHING RODS & REELS,







Happy Adoption Day



HOPE, HEART & HOME celebrates with 2 families who have gone from foster to ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

CONGRATULATIONS

to the **Fernandez and Drake Families!**



“Hi Eric. I wanted to share that this past Friday on National Adoption Day, we were blessed to be able to finalize Carl's adoption! After 3.5 years!”



“Forever, Forever, for Always” ...
PEACE MORIAH DRAKE!



CITRUS FAMILY CARE NETWORK'S
December 6 at 2:01 PM
NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY
Families are like snowflakes—all different, all beautiful.
Friday, November 17, 2023



HOPE, HEART & HOME

Board of Trustees

*Forge Strong Bond, Planning 2024
Kick Off Sixth Year of Supporting
Miami's Children in Foster Care*



Back row L to R: **Michael Carrier** (SJN - Operations Mgr), **Marta Torres** (Director of Licensing - Citrus FCN), **Susan Dinger** (SJN- Panelist Florida Foster Care Review), **Chuck Santa Claus Caldwell** - SJN Spiritual Director, **Maria Jacques** (SJN, GAL, Chair HHH Random Acts of Kindness) **Vanessa Akiki** (HHH Mentor), **Rosie Perez-Lacayo** (Holy Rosary - St. Richards, Panelist Florida Foster Care Review), **Carmenza Ortiz** (Good Shepherd, Panelist Florida Foster Care Review, **Kathleen Nelson- Smith** (Holy Rosary-St Richard, PR & Social Media).

Front Row L to R: **Alex Planas** (St. Louis, GAL Community Ambassador), **Lorenzo Cosio** (St. Louis, GAL HHH Marketing), **Mary K. Walton** (GAL, HHH Community Relations), **Valerie Van Ostran** (SJN, GAL Co-Chair HHH CarePortal Response Team), **Dr. Alecia Rodriguez** (GAL, Mentor, Foster Parent).

A very productive morning of team-building and "forward-thinking" was enjoyed at the 2nd **HOPE, HEART & HOME** Board of Trustees meeting, held November 4 at Holy Rosary-St. Richard Catholic Church. Fifteen Trustees celebrated HHH's 5th anniversary as a faith-based community collaborator with an anniversary cake.





HHH was joined by *Citrus Family Care Network's* Director of Licensing, **Marta Torres**, who shared her vision for joint efforts in 2024. "It is a great pleasure working with HHH. We cannot do this work alone and it is important to lock arms with those responding to the call to serve." She added, "We do our best and HE takes care of the rest!"



The Board reviewed upcoming events in 2023 and planned to strengthen partnerships with the **Miami Kiwanis Foundation, Explore Foster Miami, First Star Academy, His House, Genesis Hopeful Haven, Casa Valentina, Safe Families, and Lucas Alvarez LA6 Foundation**, among many others, in the coming year. They also plan to "open up" and recruit volunteers at three new churches to become foster parents, Guardian ad Litem, mentors, panelists, and CarePortal responders.



THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

THANKSGIVING 2023



saw HOPE, HEART & HOME partner on community food drives in four parts. The first event took place at **SOLO PRINTING**. Congrats to HHH GAL **Lorenzo Cosio** and SOLO PRINTING employees for their generous holiday gifts to Citrus Family Care Network (**Kimberly Lopez**) for children in their foster care. Thank you, Lo, for your kind initiative!

Secondly, HHH was honored to partner once again with the generous parishioners of **Holy Rosary-St. Richard's Catholic Church** (Palmetto Bay) in their Annual **Thanksgiving Basket Food Drive** on Saturday, November 18.

Join us helping community in need!

Let's Share & Care

Thanksgiving Food Drive

Collection of Decorated Food Baskets

Every basket must contain:

- \$20 Supermarket Gift Card
- 1 small bag of rice
- 2 cans of green beans
- 1 box instant mashed potatoes
- 2 cans of corn
- 1 packet of gravy mix
- 1 box of macaroni and cheese
- stuffing
- cranberry sauce
- Thanksgiving card or drawing

Drop off:
Saturday, November 18
10:00 am to 1:00 pm
at Holy Rosary - St. Richard Church Parish Hall
7500 SW 152nd St.
Palmetto Bay, FL 33157

6 Community Service Hours per basket maximum 3 baskets per student

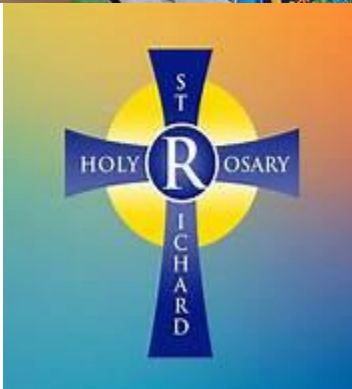
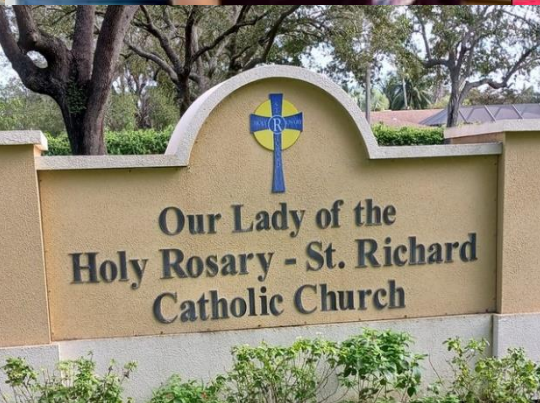
For more information visit www.braves.org or call 305-233-8711 ext. 100



DROP - OFF

They donated hundreds of baskets to foster families with Thanksgiving staples & gift cards. Special thanks to HHH trustees **Kathleen Nelson-Smith, Rosie Perez-Lacayo, Mary Hamel, and Valerie Van Ostran** for receiving and sorting the generous donations and to HRSR's Father Kevin for blessing this joyous event!





THE DELIVERY



HOPE, HEART & HOME

Thanksgiving Drive



2023 Part 3:

HHH partnering with Fr. Houde's Holy Rosary - St. Richard's Parish delivered **196 food baskets** and gift cards this year to needy families, including foster children at **Citrus FCN, Genesis Hopeful Haven, Casa Valentina, and His House**. Special thanks to **Kathleen Nelson-Smith, Rosie Perez-Lacayo, and Eric Schwindeman** who coordinated pick-ups and deliveries to our foster families! These families also received over \$1200 in gift cards, as well. God bless HRSR!



HOPE, HEART & HOME - Thanksgiving Drive Part 4.

HHH partnered with the **Knights of Columbus Council 13369** at St. John Neumann to deliver hot gourmet feasts to 3 foster families Thanksgiving Day morning. Special thanks to HHH's **Michael Carrier** who helped prepare the turkeys, **Maria A. Mejia Jacques** who administers our *Random Acts of Kindness Program*, **Dr. John. Gentile** who co-chairs our *CAREPORTAL Program*, and **Eric Schwindeman** (Executive Director) & Family for delivering the meals right to the families' front doors! Thanks to the Knights of Columbus Council 13369 and HHH volunteers, these families enjoyed a bountiful, delicious Thanksgiving meal!



Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh
Council 13369
at St. John Neumann Catholic Church

HOPE, HEART & HOME

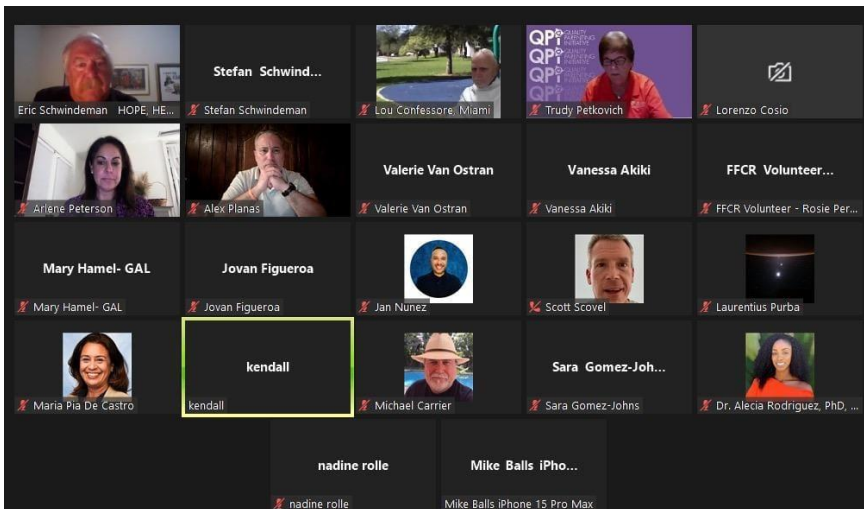
hosts

ARLENE PETERSON

Executive Director, WOW Center



HOPE, HEART & HOME was blessed to host **Arlene Peterson** at our November virtual meeting. Twenty-six Child Advocates got to hear from the new Executive Director of the **WOW Center** in Miami and her journey as a foster parent raising 3 adopted children! Arlene also shared information about the WOW Center's programs that serve 200 adults with developmental disabilities, ages 21 to 83.



Attendees included *Citrus FCN's* **Trudy Petkovich & Nadine Rolle**; *CarePortal's* new So. Florida community ambassadors **Jovan Figueroa & Jan Nunez**; HHH Mentors **Scott Scovel, Vanessa Akiki, Alecia Rodriguez (GAL)** and **Eric Schwindeman (GAL)**; *Guardian ad Litem* Community Ambassador **Alex Planas**; GALs **Maria Jacques,**

Lorenzo Cosio, and **Mary Hamel**; *WOW Center's* **Sara Gomez-Johns**; Florida FCR Panelist **Rosie Perez-Lacayo**; HHH Web Site Mgr **Lauren Purba**; HHH Ops Mgr **Mike Carrier (SJN)** *First Star Academy's* **Maria Pia Del Castro**; **Kendall Peterson** (St. Louis), **Lou & Harriet Confessore** (St. Catherine's); HHH CAREPORTAL Administrator **Valerie Van Ostran (GAL - SJN)**; **Alexander Schwindeman (SJN)**, **Danielle Yost (SJN)**, and joining us all the way from the United Kingdom, **Mick Ball**.

Arlene's background, achievements, and deep passion for uplifting children in foster care and at-risk community members deeply impressed our HHH family! Thank you, Arlene, for all you do!

HOPE, HEART & HOME



Joins Child Welfare Stakeholders

*At **Explore Foster Miami** Event*

HHH Sends 11 Delegates including HRSR's

Fr. Kevin McGrady to Kendall Inter-faith Conference



November 28 *Hope, Heart & Home's* 11 Child Advocates attended the **EXPLORE FOSTER MIAMI'S STAKEHOLDER'S BREAKFAST**, held at the Lexus Tower Room, overlooking downtown Kendall.

Hostess, **Georgia Downing** welcomed a new addition to the 100 faith-based attendees -a *Catholic* presence - **Father Kevin McGrady** of *Holy Rosary- St. Richard's Catholic Church*. Father made the meeting truly ecumenical as churches of all faiths, non-profits, and government agencies came together to find better ways to support Miami's children in foster care.

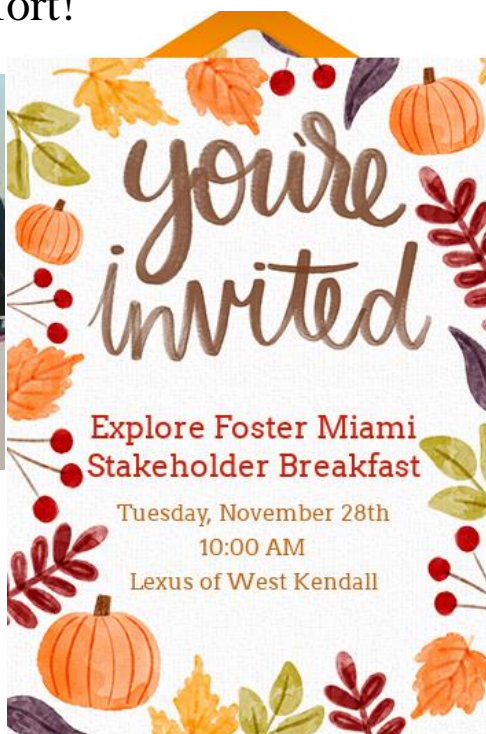


HHH participants included **Mike Carrier** (Operations SJN), **Dr. Alicia Rodriguez** (GAL, Mentor, Foster Parent), **Lorenzo Cosio** (GAL- St. Louis), **Carmenza Ortiz** (Panelist-Good Shepherd),

Mary Walton (GAL), **Maria Jacques** (GAL - St. John Neumann), **Rosie Perez-Lacayo** (Panelist - Holy Rosary-St. Richards), **Rosemarie Merino** (Foster Parent - St. Agatha), **Valerie Van Ostran** (GAL, Careportal - SJN), and **Eric Schwindeman** (GAL, Mentor - SJN).

Congratulations to **Georgia Downey** for another informative meeting for the 100 church, non-profit, and agency stakeholders in support of Miami's children in foster care!

Great to see so many new and old faces at this event and we look forward to a 2024 full of collaborative effort!

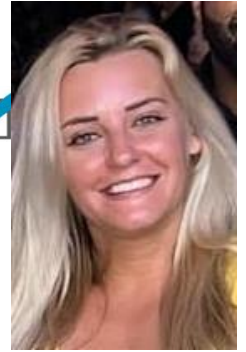






HOPE, HEART & HOME

Honors Child Advocates and Partners:



KAREN FRANKLIN (HHH Panelist on Florida Foster Care Review) has been promoted to **Panel Chair** overseeing monthly Roundtable case reviews.

ALEX PLANAS (GAL- HHH Trustee) was selected as a Guardian ad Litem **“Community Ambassador”** to help recruit more GALS in 2024.

DR. ALECIA RODRIQUEZ (HHH Mentor, Guardian ad Litem; Liaison to HHH partners Kiwanis Club of Miami & Salvation Army; Foster Mother. Model, HHH Board of Trustees) - has her fourth children's book published this quarter.



VANESSA AKIKI and **MELEBELENA LAGOS-TORRE** (HHH Mentors) are now working with *First Star Academy Scholar* mentees.



Meet our very own



Community Ambassadors Committee



HHH Trustees **VALERIE VAN OSTRAN** (GAL & Careportal Administrator) and **MARIA JACQUES** (GAL & *Random Acts of Kindness* Chair) are now partnering with CarePortal's **EMILY HEVENER, JOVAN FIGUEROA,** and **JAN NUNEZ** in Dade County.



National Christian Foundation's **JESSICA LANCASTER** awarded a grant through Hope4Kids to HHH to help a local foster family in need.

Thank you all for the work you continue to do for Miami's children in foster care! Your efforts and collaboration is making a difference in these children's lives!



HOPE, HEART & HOME



*Honor Their Volunteers!
Celebrate 5 Years of Service
to Children in Foster Care at
"Jingle & Mingle"
Christmas Celebration*



Christmas came early this year as *Hope, Heart & Home* Ministry celebrated its 5th Anniversary at their Annual "Jingle & Mingle" Holiday Party Saturday night (Dec 2). Thirty Child Advocates and Partners of all ages- Foster Parents, Guardian ad Litem, Mentors, Panelists & CarePortal Responders who support children in foster care- enjoyed the revelry under the stars at **Tap 42's** waterfront terrace.

Thank you **Maria A. Mejia Jacques** for chairing a lovely evening! And God bless these faith-based volunteers for their service to Miami's child welfare community!







Amazing night at **HOPE, HEART & HOME** partner's South Florida Foster & Adoptive Parent Association **Annual Christmas Party** celebrated at the Gold Coast Train Museum on December 8th.

Congratulations to **Minette Tosar Rivero, Denise Beeman Sasiain & Citrus FCN Nadine Rolle's** teams for a beautiful & festive night for 400 kids

in foster care. Great to see friends **Marta Oliva Torres, Dr. Steve Rios, Kimberly Lopez, & Natalie Rol.** Many thanks to the HHH team who worked this event: **Chuck Caldwell (Santa), Maria A. Mejia Jacques, Ron & Patricia Wasserman, Mary & David Hamel, and Michael Carrier.**







HOLY ROSARY –
ST. RICHARD
Overwhelms
Hope, Heart & Home
With A Superabundance
Of Christmas Generosity

Hope Heart & Home Ministry 's partner **HOLY ROSARY-ST RICHARD CATHOLIC CHURCH** surprised HHH and Citrus FCN this year with truckloads of toys, clothing, & gift cards donated by HRSR parishioners for children of all ages in foster care! These struggling families are deeply indebted to the love and generosity of HRSH families and the

organizational skills & tenacity of **Kathleen Nelson-Smith** for making this Christmas drive such a huge success.

Thank you, **Father Dan & Father Kevin**, for all that you do. Christmas is much brighter for the 1600 children in Miami's foster care system!







Honored to partake in partner **Miami Kiwanis'** Annual Christmas Dinner for **WOW Center** clients, held at the Sunset Corp of the Miami **Salvation Army** on December 7. (WOW's new Executive Director, **Arlene Peterson**, spoke at our November meeting.)

Forty men & women enjoyed a Christmas feast prepared and served by Kiwanis Chefs **Bruce Ross, George Cadman, Chuck Little, George Lucas**, and HHH's **Eric Schwindeman**. Each client received a gift bag lovingly assembled by **Valerie Daks, Carole Johnson, Jo Anna Smelser**, and Salvation Army's **Major Teresa Della Monica**. With his seasonal beard, Bruce made an excellent Santa!

On Saturday, December 16, the two newest Miami Kiwanis, Eric and **Dr. Alecia Rodriguez**, "rang the bell" for the Salvation Army's annual Holiday collection. Great teamwork for some wonderful causes!







PAID SOCCER REFEREE
Program is Back in 2024!

(2) **TRAIN** to become a licensed SOCCER REFEREE and **EARN EXCELLENT** weekend income (\$20 -\$75 Cash / Game) at fields all over Dade County!
 Boy and Girl Graduates (Age 15 to 18) receive a complimentary uniform!



Contact **Pedro Vilallonga** (305) 978-0496 TODAY!



Hope, Heart & Home Ministry partners: **Kiwaniis Club of Florida** Youth Foundation and the **Coral Estates Soccer Club** have joined forces again to offer a paid soccer referee program to teens aging out of foster care in 2024.

These 3 girls (above left) are licensed graduates of the co-ed program and earn up to \$75/game refereeing age-group week-end soccer matches on fields all over Dade County. Graduates receive complimentary referee uniforms!

Below: **Lou Confessore** (HHH Trustee – St. Catherine’s) welcomes **Mariah Vargas** and teens from *Genesis Hopeful Haven* to a recent training. Don’t miss out! Interested teens, age 15 to 18 yrs old, should call **Pedro Vilallonga** (right) (305) 978-0496 to register today!

TEENS! Your job search is over! Call now!



Thank You!



Special thanks to St. Catherine's of Siena Men's Saturday Morning Prayer Breakfast, Coral Estates Soccer Club, and Leanna Roberts (HHH in Maui, Hawaii) for their gracious support in 2023 for Miami's children in foster care



HOPE, HEART & HOME
St. Louis Catholic Church
Make Plans for 2024



SAINT LOUIS
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Great summit meeting held December 21 in Pinecrest with **Hope Heart & Home** and **St. Louis Catholic Church**. Pastor, Father **Gabriel Vigues, Lorenzo Cosio** (GAL), and HHH Director Eric **Schwindeman** (GAL, Mentor) met to discuss new 2024 initiatives at St. Louis, including recruitment and support for Foster Parents, Guardian ad Litem, Mentors, Panelists, and CarePortal First Responders.



Lorenzo will spearhead HHH's efforts and continued collaboration with St. Louis' ministries including Men's Prayer Muffin, Men & Women's Emmaus, Knights of Columbus, Columbiettes, and "Festival For The Poor."

HHH Child Advocate Leaders at St. Louis include **Anna & Jay Pierce** (Mentor Couple), **David & Mary Hamel** (GAL), **Viviana & Alex Planas** (GAL Community Ambassador), **Pam & Lorenzo Cosio** (GAL), **Jose Umana, Viviana & JC Planas** (GAL Attorney), **Rosalin Hagley**, and **Liz & Alex Alvarez** (Lucas Alvarez LA6 Foundation).

Interested St. Louis parishioners should contact Lorenzo at lcosio@bellsouth.net and go to hopehearthomeministry.com

Put your faith in service! Miam's children in foster care need you!



SAINT LOUIS CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
Festival FOR THE POOR





HHH CONNECTS WITH CAREPORTAL



CAREPORTAL is a technology platform that connects vulnerable children and families to people who want to serve. Social workers and other frontline workers uncover the needs and CAREPORTAL makes local churches aware, giving them a real-time opportunity to respond. *St. John Neumann Catholic Church* was the first parish from the Archdiocese of Miami to sign up to serve vulnerable families.



Hope, Heart & Home's CAREPORTAL Response Team, led by **Dr. John Gentile** and **Valerie VanOstran**,

met requests throughout the quarter including this delivery of clothing for two children and formula, wipes, and diapers for an infant. Val was able to hand-deliver a \$100 gift card and 3 bags of clothing for a mother and teenage son right before Christmas!

John and Val are always looking for new pro-active Child Advocates to join their Response Team.

CarePortal has added two new coordinators to **Emily Hevener's** South Florida team: **Jovan Figueroa** and **Jan Nunez** who will be leading trainings in early 2024.



CAREPORTAL brings together families, churches, and community to care for children in foster care.

JOIN OUR TEAM!



THANK
YOU

ARCHBISHOP WENSKI
FOR YOUR SUPPORT
OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS!



HAPPY 5th ANNIVERSARY

to *HOPE, HEART & HOME*

October 2018 - October 2023

*A Faith-Based Community Coalition
Supporting Children in Foster Care*



