



HOPE, HEART & HOME

1st Quarter 2026

NEWSLETTER



WHO WE ARE !

HOPE, **H**EART & **H**OME IS A FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY COALITION RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS FROM OUR CATHOLIC AND INTER-FAITH COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT FOSTER CHILDREN IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

WE **SUSTAIN AND RETAIN FOSTER FAMILIES** BY PARTNERING IN LOCAL EVENTS AND BY SERVING AS **FOSTER PARENTS,**



RESPITE PARENTS, MENTORS, GUARDIAN AD LITEM, PANELISTS, AND CAREPORTAL FIRST RESPONDERS.

WE HOST MONTHLY VIRTUAL MEETINGS ON THE **SECOND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH** WITH EDUCATIONAL GUEST SPEAKERS THAT INTRODUCE OUR CHILD ADVOCATES TO EVERY FACET OF **OUR CHILD WELFARE COMMUNITY.**

Visit us at www.hopeheartthomeministry.com



HOPE
HEART
HOME



Hope, Heart & Home Meets With Casa V.



The January 7 meeting with [Janice Graham](#) and the staff of [Casa Valentina](#) was truly inspiring, as they provide vital support to our foster care population transitioning into adulthood. [Hope Heart & Home](#) Ministry looks forward to future collaboration with Casa Valentina on mentorship programs, life skills training, and joint initiatives, while synchronizing our Random Acts of Kindness with their identified needs, anticipating a fruitful 2026.



HHH HOSTS LA6

Exceptional presentation by **Hope Heart & Home Ministry** partner, **Lucas Alvarez LA6 Foundation's** Liz & Alex Alvarez at the January 12 virtual meeting.

This dynamic St. Louis couple outlined the creation and implementation of their scholarship program to assist teens aging out of foster care pursue careers as trade technicians.

HHH thanks partners His House Children's Home (Liz Anon), **Casa Valentina** (Alexis Adams & Janice Graham), Explore Foster Miami (Panos Kourtesis), Citrus FCN (Marta Torres & Nadine Rolle), **CarePortal Florida** (Jovan & C.J.), and DCF (Gilda Ferradaz).



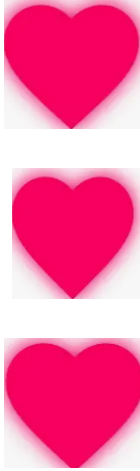




In 2026, Hope Heart & Home Ministry's **Random Acts of Kindness Campaign**, in collaboration with **BDW & More**, teams under **Bernadett Horvath** and **Mary Walton** initiated its mission to provide relief to bio and foster families in Miami-Dade through the delivery of essential items, marking the the start of a supportive journey for these families. These four pages highlight their first-quarter efforts.









CBC ANNUAL CHILD



The **2026 CBC Annual Regional Child Welfare Conference** held on January 29 commemorated two decades of collaborative efforts. Panel discussions by Hope, Heart & Home Ministry partners provided valuable insights into fatherhood, youth voices, and parent's rights. HHH's **Dr. Alecia Rodriguez, Paul Czekanski, Bernadett Horvath, Panos Kourtesis, Liz Anon, and Eric Schwindeman** attended the sessions.

Congratulations to Chair Janice Graham, Vice Chair Natalia Giordano, and Executive Director Bryttany Stringer on organizing an exceptional educational conference.

WELFARE CONFERENCE



Conference



#Kids Need Kiwanis

KIWANIS CLUB OF MIAMI TEAMS WITH HHH



The **Kiwanis Club of Miami** inducted two child activists from **Hope Heart & Home**, **Maria Romanek** and **Onetha Gilliard**, during its monthly Board Meeting on February 2. Both received their Kiwanis pins and joined HHH's Dr **Alecia Rodriguez**, **Paul Czekanski**, **Mary Walton**, **Valerie Van Ostran**, **Maria Rey**, **Peter Calhoun**, **Kevin Ballard**, **Ron Tookes**, **Bernadett Horvath**, and **Eric Schwindeman** in the club. The meeting also welcomed HHH partner **Panagiotis Kourtesis** for the first time.





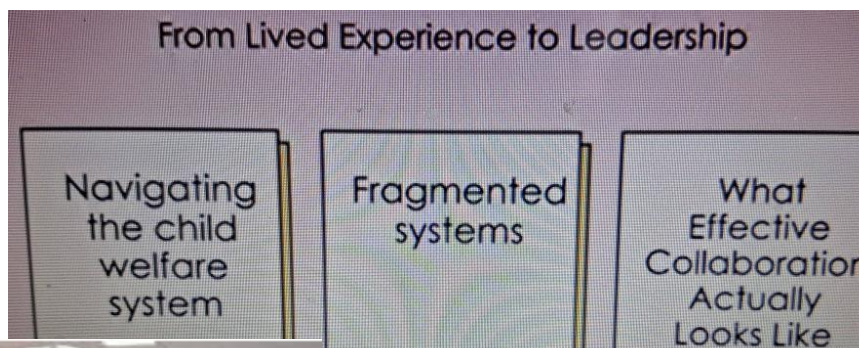
DR. ALECIA RODRIGUEZ

*Child Advocate Extraordinaire
Shares A Night of Hope
With Our HHH Community*

Hope Heart & Home Ministry's **Dr. Alecia Rodriguez** provided a thought-provoking presentation during February 9 virtual meeting.

An audience of twenty-eight child advocates followed Dr. Rodriguez's transformative journey, marked by navigating bureaucratic systems, motherhood, academic achievement, and professional growth as a therapist, foster parent, mentor, philanthropist, and author.

Dr. Rodriguez emphasized that her success is largely due to the collaborative environment and open communication promoted by organizations like Citrus Family Care Network, Explore Foster Miami, the CBC Alliance, and the Kiwanis Club of Miami within the child welfare sector.



HOPE, HEART & HOME SUPPORTS



This story illustrates why [Hope Heart & Home Ministry](#) has teamed up with [The Lucas Alvarez LA6 Foundation](#), [Citrus Family Care Network](#), and [Kevin Ballard's Tradewinds Technical Academy](#) to offer encouragement and scholarships to teens who want to pursue technical careers. Take a minute to read it!



The man in the three-thousand-dollar suit glanced at my hands before he even looked at my face. “Maintenance is down the hall,” he said politely. “Air conditioning issue?” I knew exactly what he saw. Knuckles scarred from decades of wrench work.

Hands thick from turning bolts in freezing truck stops. A permanent line of grease beneath my nails that even my best

scrubbing can’t erase. I looked at his hands—smooth, manicured, topped off with a heavy gold watch. “No, sir,” I said, my voice a little too loud for the pristine high-school library. “I’m here for Career Day. I’m Jason’s father.” He blinked, gave a stiff smile, but his eyes said what he didn’t: You? Really?

My name is Mike Riley. I’m 58 years old. I’ve been a long-haul truck driver for thirty years. I’m a widower, a veteran, and a dad who tries his best. My son Jason attends this polished suburban school where everything smells like new textbooks and wealth. This was Sarah’s school—my late wife. She taught here, loved here, lived here. After she passed, the school created a scholarship in her name.

So when Jason told his teacher I was a “logistics and supply chain specialist” and should speak at Career Day, I felt like saying yes was a way of honoring her. I parked my old F-150 between a luxury SUV and a spotless German sedan. I walked in wearing my best jeans, a fresh flannel, and boots I’d shined twice.

Inside the library, the lineup of presenters read like a magazine cover. Dr. Chen, neurosurgeon, opened with a futuristic video on brain mapping. Mr. Davies, the finance dad with the gold watch, followed with stock charts and phrases like “leveraging capital” and “Q4 positioning.” Jason sat in the back row, shoulders hunched, wishing he could disappear. Then the principal touched my arm. “Mr. Riley? You’re next.”

I walked to the front with nothing but my own voice. No slides. No videos. Just the truth. “Good morning,” I began. “My name is Mike Riley. I’m not a doctor or an investor. I didn’t finish college. I’m a truck driver.” Murmurs. Curious glances. A few raised eyebrows. “My son calls me a logistics expert. Which I guess means I drive a very big truck a very long way. And I figure I’m here to explain why that matters.”



I turned to Dr. Chen. “What you do saves lives. But the tools you use—every circuit, every wire, every plastic casing—those didn’t appear out of thin air. Someone packed them in a crate. Someone loaded that crate on a truck. Someone drove it across the country.”

Then I nodded toward the finance dad. “And sir, those numbers you showed? They represent real things—food, medicine, steel, supplies. This country doesn’t run on unlimited Wi-Fi and spreadsheets. It runs on wheels. On people willing to travel thousands of miles so shelves stay full and hospitals stay stocked.” The room grew still.

“In March 2020,” I said, “when everything shut down, you stayed home. You did puzzles. You baked bread. But drivers were told to keep going. It felt like I was the only person on the highway some days. I delivered 40,000 pounds of toilet paper once. My dispatcher cried on the phone because her own mom couldn’t find any. You can’t Zoom a bag of flour. You can’t download hand soap.” Students leaned forward. Teachers nodded.

“Two winters ago, I was hauling insulin across Wyoming. A blizzard shut the interstate. I sat in that cab for three days—twenty below zero—listening to the hum of the refrigeration unit. If that unit died, so did the medicine. I wasn’t thinking about the cost. I was thinking about the family waiting for it.” I scanned the room. Jason was sitting up straight now.

A student in a “Future CEO” shirt raised his hand. “Sir... don’t you regret not going to college? My dad says jobs like yours mean people didn’t have other choices.” The room froze. I smiled gently. “Son, when the lights go out, you call a lineman, not a business professor. When the pipes burst, you don’t reach for a textbook—you call a plumber. And when you walk into a store expecting food on the shelf, you’re relying on farmers, factory workers, warehouse crews, dispatchers, and drivers like me.”

I paused. “Those careers aren’t fallbacks. They’re foundations.” A voice spoke from the back. Quiet at first. “My mom’s a dispatcher.” A skinny kid stood up, eyes shining. “She works nights. Holidays. She’s the one who finds drivers when hospitals need supplies. People yell at her all the time when packages are late, but she keeps going. She isn’t less important than anyone else.” He looked at the CEO shirt kid. “She’s a hero. And so is he.” He pointed at me.

The room fell silent. Then applause. Real, heartfelt applause. Jason walked up and stood beside me. He didn’t speak—he just put his arm around me. And that was enough. Later, on the drive home, he finally said, “Dad... I had no idea about what you’ve done out there.” “It’s just the job,” I said. “No,” he whispered. “It’s so much more.”



Here’s the truth: This country isn’t held up by titles or corner offices.

It’s held up by callused hands, tired feet, and people who show up in storms, in shutdowns, in the middle of the night when no one else can.

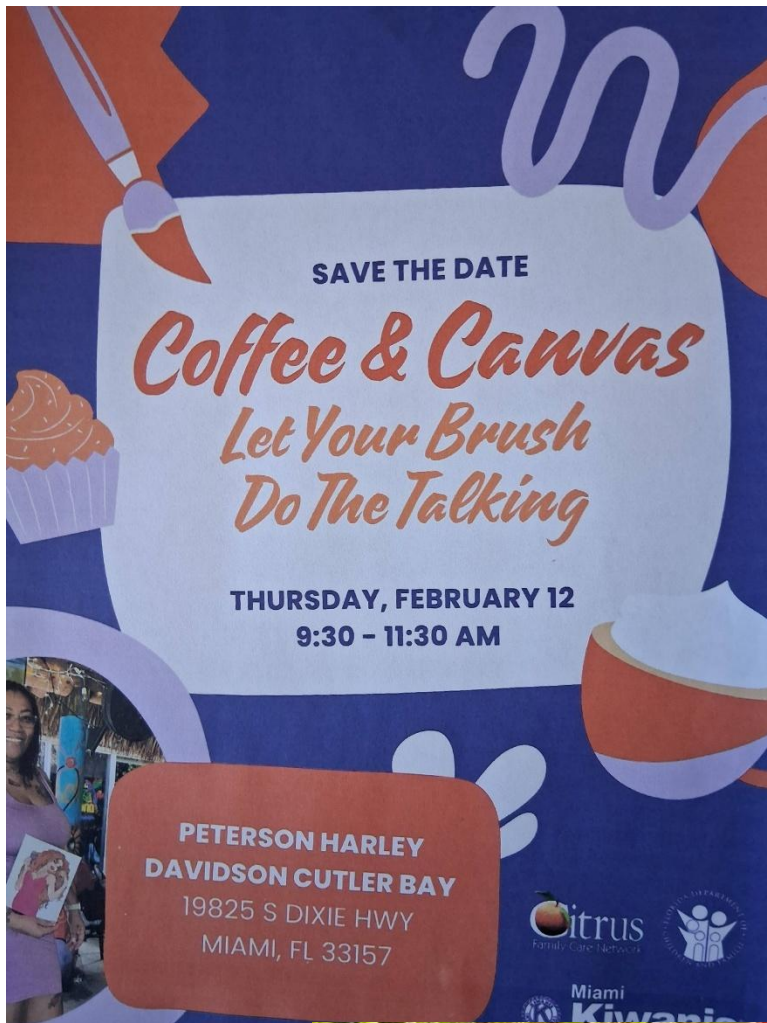


We are not the backup plan. We are the backbone. So next time you ask a young person what they want to be, don’t just say, “Where are you going to college?” Try asking, “What do you want to build? What do you want to keep running? What will you help carry?” And if that kid says, “I want to weld,” “I want to fix engines,” “I want to deliver supplies,” “I want to drive trucks like my dad,” look them in the eye and say: “This country needs you. We’re counting on you.”

HHH APPRECIATES FOSTER PARENTS!



PARENTS!



Citrus Family Care Network marked the end of their foster family appreciation month with a 'Coffee & Canvas' brunch, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Miami and Hope, Heart & Home, where Marta Oliva Torres and Nadine Rolle extended their thanks for the organizations' generosity towards foster parents.

This morning of artistic creativity for foster parents was also facilitated by collaboration with new partner, Kookies for Kids!

Notable attendees at this event, held at the Harley Davidson pavilion in Cutler Bay on February 12, also included Kimberly Lopez, Eric Schwindeman, Lorenzo Cosio, Mary Walton, Ron Wasserman, and Nikki Mendoza. What a blast!



Baking hope,
one kookie at a time





HHH ACTIVIST HONORED AS "HERO FOR HOPE"

Bernadett Horvath, a committed Hope, Heart & Home Child Advocate and Kiwanis Club of Miami activist, was presented with the **"Hero For Hope" Award** at the **2026 Friendship Games** in recognition of her exceptional community service with bio and foster families.



HHH Teams Up with 26B Key Clubs



HHH's Bernadett Horvath was welcomed by Miami Senior High Division 26 B Key Club, where her Random Acts / BDW & More team interacted with 60 teens who selflessly donated bottles, diapers, and wipes, while crafting heartfelt Mother's Day cards for an upcoming event in May. A huge thank you to Stephanie Dominguez for her tireless dedication - her collaborative spirit serves as a beacon of hope in our community. Since last year, the partnership with her Division has continued to spread joy and support to hundreds of our children and families in Miami-Dade.



HHH HOSTS CITRUS FCN'S DRS. MCGRATH & MARTINEZ



On March 9, Hope Heart & Home Ministry hosted a virtual meeting with **Dr. Kim McGrath Johnson**, Director of Programs at Citrus Family Care Network, and **Dr. Linda Martinez**, Director of Placement & Behavioral Health, where child advocates and professionals from DCF, His House, Kiwanis Club of Miami, Florida Explore Foster Miami, CarePortal Florida, BDW & More, Voices For Children, and Kookies-4Kids gathered to learn about a new case management pilot and placement challenges.



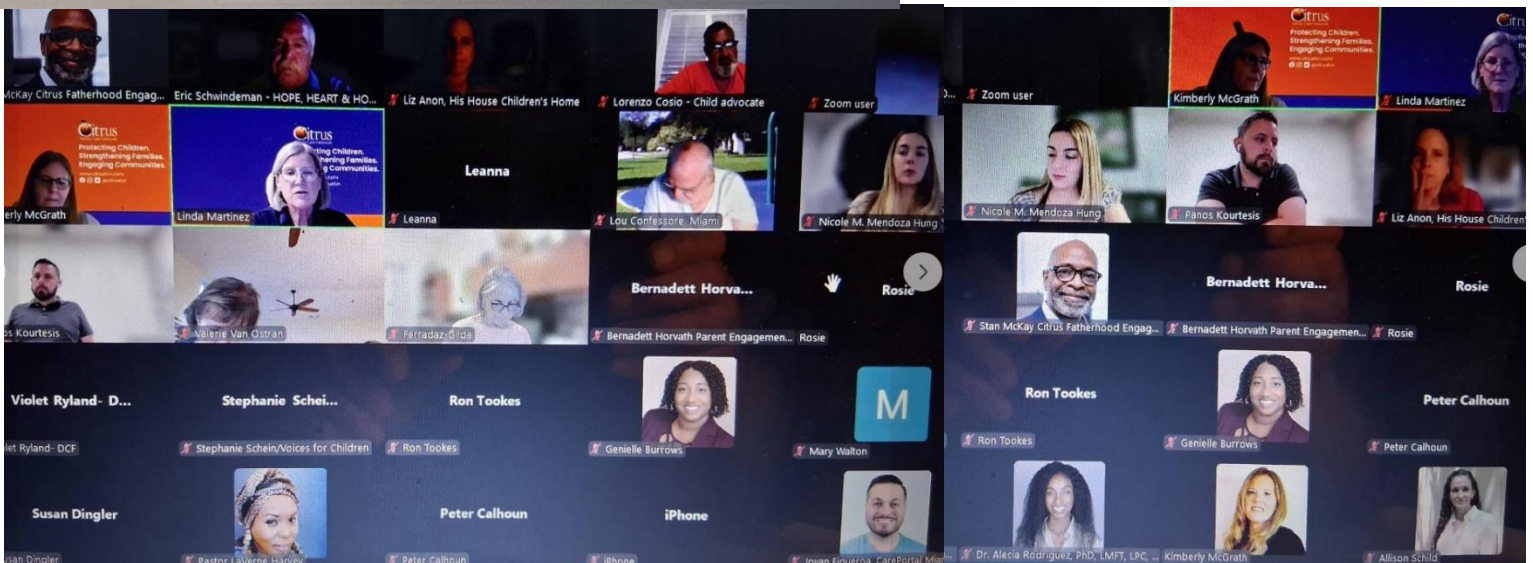
Citrus
Family Care Network
Protecting Children.
Strengthening Families.
Engaging Communities.

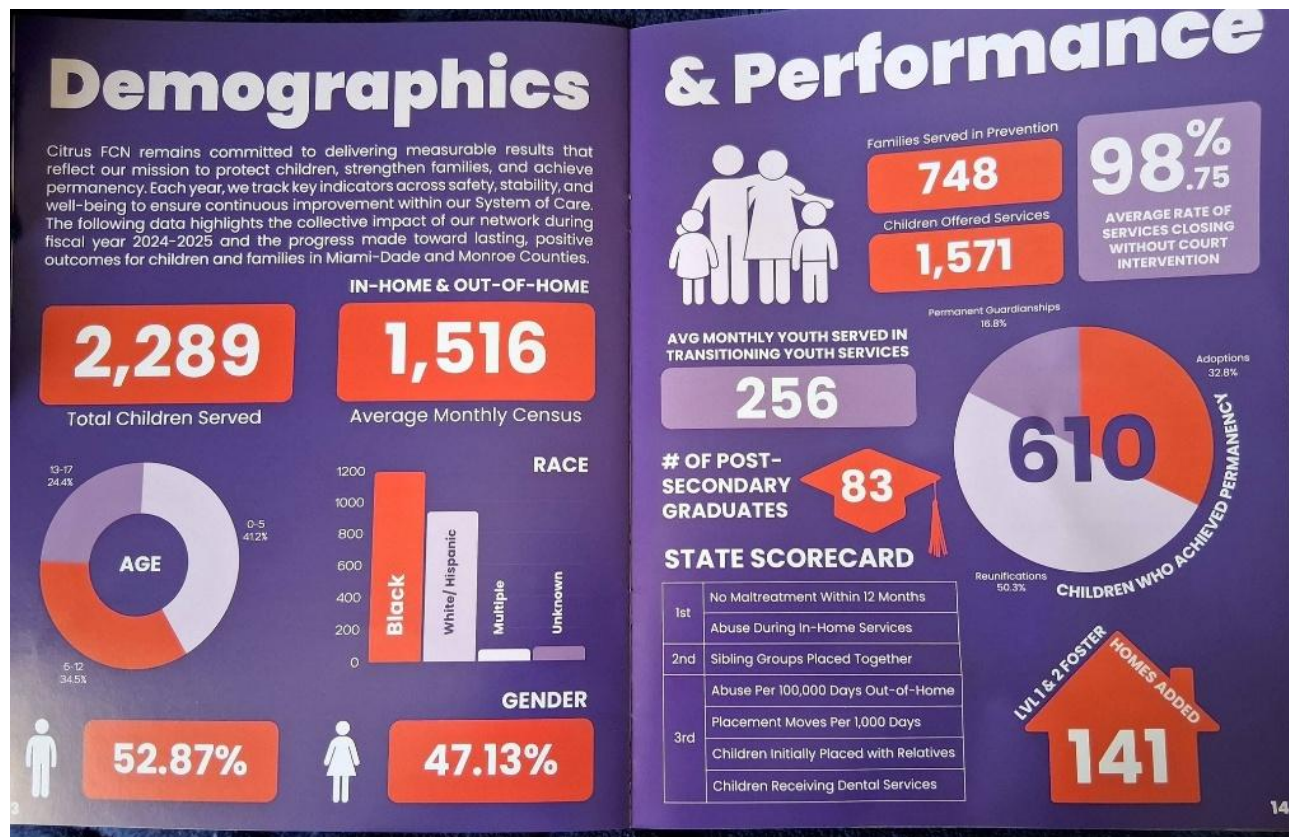


Delinquency-Dependency Case Management Pilot

- This innovative program is specific to Miami-Dade County youth dually involved in the delinquency and dependency systems.
- Establishes a team of dually certified professionals (child welfare case management & juvenile probation officer) supported by a comprehensive treatment team for the most complex youth in Florida's juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

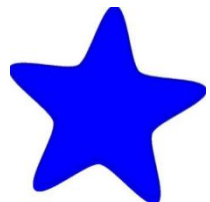
Ask yourself if you feel called to open your heart and home. You can make a profound impact in a relatively short time.





HHH MEETS WITH ESTHER JACOBO

Hope, Heart & Home had the pleasure of meeting with **Esther Jacobo**, Executive Director of **Citrus Family Care Network**, over lunch on March 16, where we discussed our partnership goals in 2026. HHH and the Kiwanis Club of Miami is proud to support the April 11 **Hoops4Unity** event for children in foster care, and we were happy to present Esther with a check for this event. We look forward to working with this wonderful lady and her team on many more initiatives to benefit children in foster care!



BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

A basketball tournament presented by Citrus Family Care Network to bring youth in foster care, law enforcement & first responders together!

SAVE THE DATE

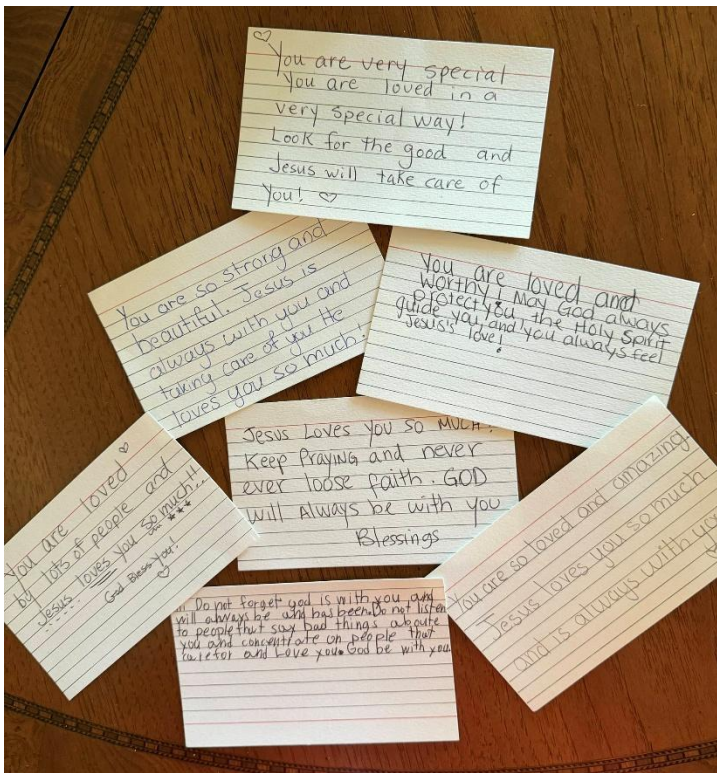
SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2026
9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

JL (Joe) and Enid W. Demps Park (aka Goulds Park)
11350 SW 216th St, Miami, FL 33170

MORE DETAILS & FORMAL INVITATION TO FOLLOW GAME ON!

Calling All Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, Corrections Officers, Schools Security Guards & First Responders To Join Us!

To participate, or for more information, contact Nadine Rolle at nrolle@citrusfcn.com



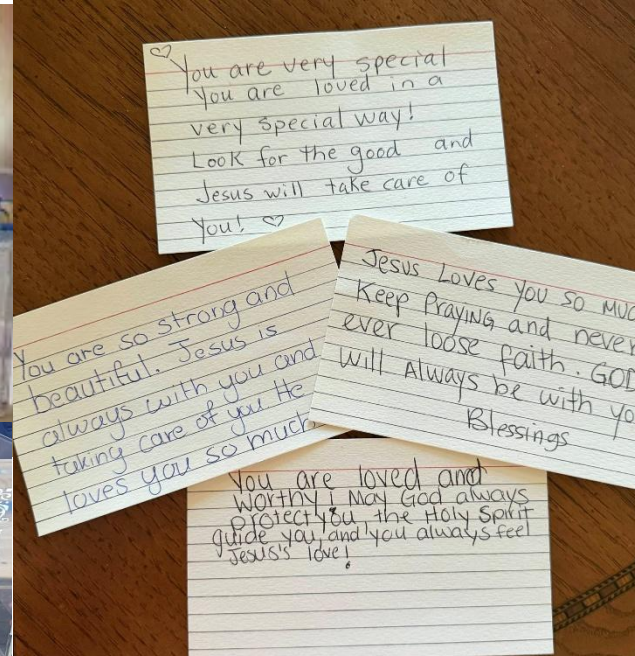
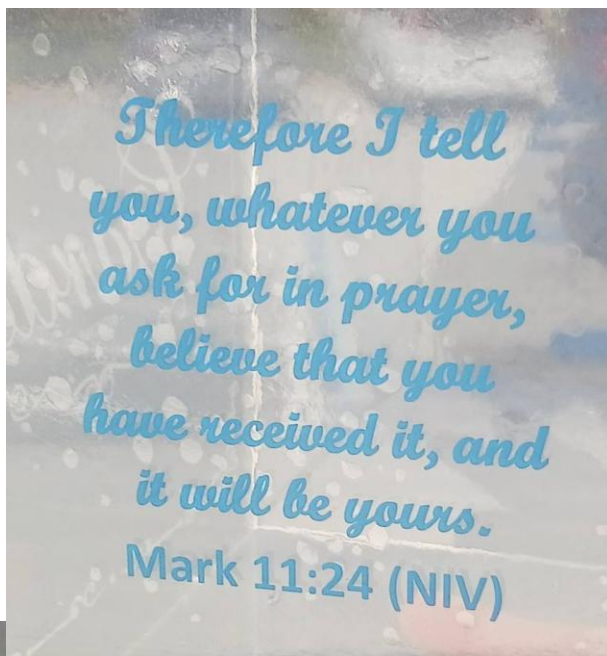
PRAYERS

For KIDS in FOSTER CARE

Hope Heart & Home was excited to partner again with **Citrus Family Care Network** to engage local churches during Foster Family Appreciation festivities to support children in foster care. Prayer Boxes were placed in church lobbies, including **Holy Rosary-St. Richards Catholic Church**, **Trinity Christian Fellowship**, and **Grace Miami Church** requesting



prayers and information is made available on how to foster! Thank you **Rosie Perez-Lacayo**, **Kimberly Lopez**, **Mary Walton**, and **LaVern Harvey** for introducing this way to put our faith in action!





NEW KIWANIS MEMBERS!

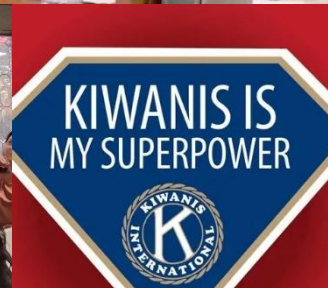
The **Kiwanis Club of Miami** is expanding rapidly, welcoming two new members, **Nikki Mendoza** and **Panos Kourtesis**, who were inducted as Child Advocates from **Hope Heart & Home** on March 30.



A total of 21 members attended the ceremony, which added to the club's esteemed roster that includes Eric Schwindeman, Dr. Alecia Rodriguez, Valerie Van Ostran, Bernadett Horvath, Paul Czekanski, Mary Walton, Maria Rey, Maria Romanek, Michelle Witherspoon, Peter Calhoun, Ron Tookes, Kevin Ballard, Pastor LaVern Harvey, and Onetha Guilliard.



Potential new members who attended include Pastor Donte and Keisha Palmer, Susan Dingler, Jackie Cerda, and Fadi Reyes. We look forward to their future membership.



7 TYPES OF KINDNESS

Kindness is the new **superpower**

INSPIRED BY VICTORIA REPA | CREATE BY NATAN MOHART

1. Emotional Kindness

Responding with care to how others feel.

- Acknowledge people's emotions.
- Be someone they can talk to during tough days.
- Give compliments that uplift and encourage.



2. Mental Kindness

Supporting mental clarity and well-being.

- Listen without jumping to conclusions.
- Offer help in solving challenges.
- Encourage short breaks during pressure moments.



3. Social Kindness

Building human connections.

- Invite someone for coffee or a walk.
- Create small rituals with friends or family.
- Regularly check in on loved ones.



4. Creative Kindness

Encouraging expression and imagination.

- Share creative tools or ideas.
- Support others' side projects or passions.
- Gift something made with care.



5. Spiritual Kindness

Helping others find meaning and purpose.

- Encourage people to follow their passions.
- Share inspiring ideas or stories.
- Respect different beliefs and worldviews.

6. Sensory Kindness

Creating a pleasant and calming environment.

- Use headphones in shared spaces.
- Keep your workspace distraction-free.
- Be mindful of noise and lighting.



7. Physical Kindness

Offering help with everyday physical needs.

- Help carry heavy items.
- Share healthy snacks or meals.
- Offer a supportive gesture, like a hand or hug.



HR & IR Academy

Follow

to Sleeping Lion Kind (Instrumental)

#kindness #superpower #Types #organization #company #business

