



Presented by



CHILDREN'S WEEK
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2010

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Kinship Services Network of Pinellas to receive the 2010 Community Innovation Award in Tallahassee

Tallahassee, FL – The collaborative partners of the Kinship Service Network of Pinellas, including The Children's Home, Inc., Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pinellas County and the Juvenile Welfare Board Children's Services Council of Pinellas County will be recognized in Tallahassee next week and awarded the 2010 Children's Week Community Innovation Award. The event is hosted by the United Way of Florida and The Lawton Chiles Foundation and is co-chaired by U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, U.S. Senator George LeMieux, and former U.S. Senator Bob Graham.

These wonderful local organizations and individuals will be recognized for working together to provide a coordinated network of services for relative caregiver families to achieve self-sufficiency and stability and make a difference in the lives of children and families.

The United Way of Florida and The Lawton Chiles Foundation designed this new awards program and luncheon at the Capitol to recognize the collaborative work that is being done in communities across the state. "I've traveled all over the state, and it is amazing to see how communities and people join together to solve problems" said Bud Chiles, President of The Lawton Chiles Foundation.

Four collaborative projects were reviewed and selected by the independent Southeast Evaluation Association from a statewide pool of applicants. The award winners consist of 4 or more organizations who worked together to address and solve specific problems in their communities. On April 12 in Tallahassee the Kinship Service Network of Pinellas will have their awards presented to them at the Children's Week Community Innovation Awards Luncheon presented by the United Way of Florida and The Lawton Chiles Foundation.

"We want to provide policy makers in Tallahassee with a glimpse of the innovation that is taking place in neighborhoods and communities statewide, so hopefully they can replicate these innovate ideas in other communities across Florida." said Ted Granger, President of United Way of Florida

In our community, The Kinship Services Network mission is to provide a coordinated network of services for relative caregiver families to achieve self-sufficiency and stability. The four partners comprise the leadership team for a collaboration of 33 social service organizations, governmental agencies, funders, and local businesses to create a family-driven, community-based system of support for relative caregivers in Pinellas County.

It is estimated that 15,000 children are raised by kinship caregivers in Pinellas county, most of whom are grandparents. The best placement for a child when his/her home is no longer a safe place is with a relative. More relatives would assume care for their kin if they knew there were services available to help them navigate the legal, educational, child care, healthcare and social service systems that make accepting responsibility as a kinship caregiver so challenging. The KSN program helps to keep children, especially siblings, together with biological families in order to maintain a sense of

identity and cultural diversity. KSN collaborative partners provide children and families with mental health counseling, mentors and academic tutors, and free recreational activities.

KSN uses the Goal Attainment Scaling Tool (GAS) to evaluate specific goals set jointly between children, families and care managers as part of an individualized case management plan for a given timeframe. Last year, KSN assisted 417 children and 251 adults from kinship families to help navigate the legal, educational, child care, healthcare and social service systems that make accepting responsibility as a kinship caregiver so challenging.

The Children's Week is the largest statewide civic education event for children and families in Florida. For more information about the awards, or Children's Week, please visit www.childrensweek.org or e-mail info@childrensweek.org

About The Children's Home, Inc.

The Children's Home, Inc. is an accredited, community supported, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that has operated child and family-centered programs in the Tampa Bay area for 118 years. The Children's Home seeks to create a community where children and families feel loved, nurtured, and safe through a variety of programs that help nearly 8,000 children and adults annually. Each year, our services *heal the trauma of abuse and neglect* for 120 children in residence at our Memorial Hwy campus, help *find and support forever families* through therapeutic and traditional foster homes, adoptive services, community based care, and kinship services, and *strengthens families* at four locations providing family support, outreach, and prevention services throughout the Tampa Bay area. It also operates Charlie's Treasures Thrift Store which 100% of the proceeds raised benefit The Children's Home. www.childrenshome.org

About Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg

Catholic Charities was created as a nonprofit corporation in June 1968 when the Diocese of St. Petersburg was established. From 1945 to 1968, services were provided in the area under the auspices of the Diocese of St. Augustine as the Tampa Office for Charity. Over the past 65 years, Catholic Charities has provided strategic alliances; advocacy and a broad array of social services designed to support and preserve families, and promote self-sufficiency and social justice. The agency focuses its work under two "Ministries of Mercy": Life Ministry and Shelter Ministry. Life and Shelter Ministries serve all residents of Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas Counties regardless of race, creed, gender, national origin, handicapping condition or socio-economic status. Catholic Charities has consistently developed effective and successful partnerships with other nonprofits, local, state and federal government, community groups, faith-based organizations and corporations. These relationships include providing direct service delivery, client referral, volunteering, mentoring for increased organizational capacity, advocacy and direct funding.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters serving Pinellas, Hernando & Citrus Counties

Big Brothers Big Sisters helps vulnerable children beat the odds. The organization depends on donations to help recruit volunteers and reach more children. Funding is used to conduct background checks on volunteers to ensure child safety; and provide ongoing support for children, families and volunteers to build and sustain long-lasting relationships. Big Brothers Big Sisters is proven to improve children's odds for succeeding in school, behaving nonviolently, avoiding drugs and alcohol, and breaking negative cycles. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pinellas County serves Pinellas, Hernando, and Citrus Counties. For more information, visit www.bbbspc.org.

About Juvenile Welfare Board Children's Services Council of Pinellas County

The Juvenile Welfare Board supports the healthy development of all children and their families in Pinellas County through advocacy, research, planning, training, communications, coordination of resources and funding. In 1944, JWB was conceived by a Juvenile Court Judge, an attorney, and a concerned group of professionals as well as private citizens who were unhappy with the lack of resources and services being provided to at-risk youth and families. Established by statute in 1945 and approved overwhelmingly by voters in a referendum in 1946, JWB was created with a mission to provide needed services to children throughout Pinellas County. JWB is the first [Children's Services Council](#) in Florida – and has been a model for the other 10 CSCs throughout the state. CSCs now fund services to more than 60% of Florida's most vulnerable children. At JWB, we want to connect with community partners to build better communities. JWB ensures positive development and well-being of all children and families in Pinellas County through the prudent investment in solutions that work - ensuring the positive development of children is the greatest investment we can make in building a better community.