

# Good News

*from our funded partners*

**Regular Board Meeting  
March 1 2024**



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**Children's Board**  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

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[www.ChildrensBoard.org](http://www.ChildrensBoard.org)

# Hispanic Services Council

## La Red De Padres/Network of Active Parents



On February 8<sup>th</sup> our Hispanic Services Council (HSC) community of Wimauma celebrated the month of love with a Valentine's Day Party for the families of the Groves. Each family was given a small gift along with an array of pastries and sweets to enjoy for an after-dinner dessert. Coordinator Jessliam Cortes organized this event for the members of her community and went all out for the holiday to make this a special day for each family.

On February 19<sup>th</sup> we started the 2024 Spring session of Escalando Nuestro Futuro, this program is put on by HSC and the Children's Board and is a mentorship program meant to show young Hispanic students in grades sixth, seventh, and eighth a pathway to higher education. For this session there are 11 students who are participating. Mentors come from the University of South Florida and the University of Central Florida, and attend the School of Health, School of Education, and School of Communication. HSC students participating in the program come from the communities of Plant City, Brandon, North Tampa, and Drew Park.

On February 22<sup>nd</sup> the community of North Tampa was able to give four families a gift card for \$25 each for the month of love. This was made possible by a donation from Fresco y Mas grocers. Coordinators Anny Portillo and Bertha Bello distributed the cards to families in their HSC Middle and Elementary School Programs of La Red de Padres Activos. We Thank Fresco y Mas for their donation and hope this small gift of love brings joy to the families who received them.

On February 22<sup>nd</sup> HSC Volunteer Resources Liaison Luis Salazar was invited to speak at the Carrollwood Day School Career Day about how HSC benefits our community with resources and programs like La Red De Padres Activos and Escalando Nuestro Futuro, his role at HSC, and how their students can participate by volunteering in one of HSC communities and programs. Carrollwood Day School has proven to be a great partner for our communities. With the help of Professor Margarita Garcia and the Spanish Club, La Conexión, we have been able to provide our communities with food and toy drives organized by the young students at the Carrollwood Day School.

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# Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

## Girl Scout Troop Program



Girl Scouts of West Central Florida's Children's Board funded Troops #96045 & #96080 gathered at Rowlett Activity Center and Wellswood Park to launch cookie season with a booth event held on February 19<sup>th</sup> and February 20<sup>th</sup>. Comprised of girls from kindergarten to fifth grade residing in the 33604 and 33603 zip codes. The Kenly Park and Wellswood Girl Scouts were very successful, using their newly

learned skills to sell over 200 boxes of cookies. In preparation for their booth, the troop engaged in learning sessions where they engaged in money management, entrepreneurship, goal setting, customer service, and proper booth conduct. Each girl also practiced taking orders at a mock cookie booth and creating posters for the event. Throughout the event, the girls took turns managing orders, attracting patrons, and distributing thank-you cards. The troop's goals for their cookie proceeds include a makeover party with pizza and soda or a field trip! Additionally, the girls earned the cookie entrepreneur badge and a special cookie patch with our cookie mascot, the axolotl, which is a form of salamander. These will be added to the front and back of their uniform to signify their accomplishments of this cookie season.



# Preserve Vision Florida

## Children's Vision Health and Safety Services



Preserve Vision Florida hosted our 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Persons of Vision dinner on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, honoring Richard Gonzmart and Andrea Gonzmart Williams of the 1905 Family of Restaurants.

We were honored to have the Children's Board of Hillsborough County's Executive Director Rebecca Bacon endorse our long working relationship. PVF's contract to provide Children's Vision Health & Safety Services was established in 2015 and over the years we have been able to increase our reach for vision services across Hillsborough County, with a goal of screening 8,000 children in FY24. For many years, PVF has also been a sub-contractor for children's developmental screenings. Rebecca highlighted an expansion to the grant that has

given PVF the opportunity to screen and educate 1800 parents and caregivers of the children we serve. Aside from giving these adults access to the vision care they may need; the assistance has a ripple effect on the children. Parents are better able to help with their children's homework if they can see clearly, they may be able to get jobs with the necessary vision care, and they are able to model the good behavior of wearing their glasses to help encourage children to do the same.

Rebecca and CBHC Contract Manager Lorena Garrido met one of the families featured in PVF's visual presentation of the evening. The family has received vision services through our CBHC contract. The children are learning English along with their other subjects. When they visited the Children's Board Family Resource Center in Town 'N Country, mom and dad were also screened. Everyone in the family was referred to an eye doctor for a full eye exam, where they received glasses for their vision issues. For Dad, this made a big difference at his job in a popular downtown restaurant where he works in the kitchen. With his new glasses, he can easily cut the vegetables into the necessary small pieces to make chimichurri.

The opportunity to care for the entire family is one of the highlights of screening at the family resource centers. Preserve Vision Florida is interested in partnering with other organizations that cater to the entire family to offer our services at potential family-centered meetings or gatherings.

# University of South Florida Board of Trustees.

## Helping our Toddlers, Developing our Children's Skills (HOTDOCS) & Developing Our Children's Skills K-5 (DOCS K-5).

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Ryo Horita to our DOCS Parenting Programs this month! Dr. Horita visited our HOT DOCS program from Gifu, Japan. He is a Clinical Psychologist, Associate Professor, and Student Counselor of the Health Administration Center at Gifu University. His main work and research include examining the factors that influence the mental health of university students. In his current role, he counsels students with mental health concerns at the student university counseling center. As a principal investigator, he has also established the Japanese version of Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS-Japanese). Dr. Horita is very interested in learning more about Behavioral Parent Training and would like to create and offer a program like HOT DOCS to families in his community!

### Cross-Cultural Collaboration in the USF DOCS Parenting Programs!



# Metropolitan Ministries

## First Hug

Family Advocate Karin Keating Black recently worked with a family who made tremendous strides while working with the First Hug program. This family consisted of a single mother, Ms. T, and her five children. When Ms. T started the First Hug program, she had challenges that included having minimal personal income, conflict within her personal relationships, lack of support, and history of trauma. Additionally, she had just moved into a home which she could not maintain independently, causing the family's housing to be reliant on outside sources.

During her time in First Hug, the financial support she had been receiving abruptly ended. This resulted in Ms. T being without transportation, the ability to pay for basic expenses, and even acquire food for her children and self.

Throughout her time in the program, Ms. T often spoke of her desire to set a positive example for her children, and to provide them with a foundation that will allow them to thrive. Ms. T never seemed to give up hope. Even when visibly upset, she demonstrated the ability to maintain at least a fraction of optimism. She maintained her focus on her goals and remained in the action stage of change.

As a participant in the Metropolitan Ministries' First Hug program, Ms. T received case management services, aid from the Employment Team, and added support from the Counseling Team. She was assisted with obtaining after-school care for her children, to include a portion of the enrollment fees being paid through the Children's Board ASO funding.

As a result of tenacious efforts and the added support from the program, Ms. T secured her "dream job", earning \$44,000+/year. This allowed her to increase self-sufficiency and minimize the risk of returning to her previous situation. She also maintained housing and consistency in the children's educational settings. Ms. T should be a reminder to all to maintain hope and strength through all trials.

# Seniors in Service of Tampa Bay

## Readers in Motion

The excitement never ends with Readers in Motion! Each year, we host electrifying Parent Engagement Events in collaboration with STEM partners to bring learning to life for our children and families. Events with our partner, Mad Science, are a favorite among students from Kindergarten to Second Grade at Oak Grove Elementary. Mad Science isn't just another event - it's an explosion of wonder and discovery! This year, Mad Scientist, Mr. Jeff wowed families with his mind-blowing experiments showcasing the power of air and its endless possibilities. As students received their lab coats, the stage was set for an unforgettable journey into the world of science.

At Readers in Motion, we know that learning should be as exhilarating as it is educational. That's why we are dedicated to creating experiences that inspire curiosity and spark a love for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) in learners of all ages. We make sure our Parent Engagement Events are more than just fun; they are a gateway to a world of innovation and exploration. Bringing unique learning experiences to children and families is one of our specialties! From our monthly Reading Challenges, Winter Break Activity Books, fabulous Parent Engagement Events, and dedicated in-class Education Advocate volunteer, Readers in Motion is on a mission to ignite support around children to help them learn and succeed. Bringing families together to learn and have a blast while doing so is what makes Readers in Motion's Parent Engagement Events truly magical! Readers in Motion can provide these unforgettable experiences for students and families because of the ongoing support from the Children's Board of Hillsborough County!





# Tampa Metropolitan Area YMC

## Sulphur Springs YMCA Out of School Time

You can't go wrong with a Pokémon and Hello Kitty-themed party! Thanks to our dedicated staff and Positive Behavior Support (PBS) initiatives, the Out of School Time Program at the Sulphur Springs YMCA has made great strides with improved student behavior. Special gratitude to the Children's Board for their support in funding programs that foster positive behavior, literacy, and educational skills development. Students eagerly anticipate our quarterly celebrations and work hard to get the chance to participate in these exclusive activities.

This month, a variety of engaging STEM projects were completed across different clubs and grades. In one of our STEM clubs, students delved into the intricacies of anatomy and nerve function by constructing robotic hands using simple material like paper, string, and straws. This "hands-on" activity not only provided insight into the mechanics of the human body but also honed students' problem-solving and engineering skills.

Our staff have been diligently working to elevate reading proficiency across all grade levels. Their tutoring sessions have proven highly effective with students exhibiting tangible growth in comprehension and fluency in just a few months. This concerted effort has yielded great results, evidenced by a notable surge in the test scores of numerous students this month, underscoring the impact of personalized instruction and targeted support on academic achievement.



# Family Healthcare Foundation

## Connecting Kids to Care

One of the most powerful components of the Connecting Kids to Care (CKC) Program is our ability to help families remove barriers to healthcare for their children.

Healthcare Navigator Specialist Karla shared the below story about helping a CKC Family.

“I assisted the CKC Family with an application for no-cost state health insurance for children. Unfortunately, the application determination letter showed that one out of the three children in the household did not qualify for the no-cost program and would be sent to subsidized coverage. The mother and I called to inquire as to why one child in the home would be in a different program than the other two siblings. According to the customer service representative, the income guidelines changed according to the age of the child. Based on my training and experience, this did not make sense. I provided the mother with the information on how to file an appeal with the agency responsible for benefits determinations. With my guidance, the mother submitted an appeal. As of a few moments ago, we learned that the appeal was approved, and all children in the home will now have no-cost health insurance!”



# Redefiners: World Languages

## Multilingual Citizens Program (MCP)

In the heart of ReDefiners World Languages and the Children's Board Family Resource Centers, the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes led by our dynamic instructor, Christy Williams, are not just about language acquisition; they're a journey of empowerment. Let's delve into the recent highlights from the English Work & Money and English Health & Safety classes, where students not only enhanced their language skills but also gained valuable knowledge on crucial life topics. In the English Work & Money class, the atmosphere buzzed with intellectual curiosity as students gathered for a session on a crucial aspect of life—taxes. Christy engaged her students in a communal reading of homework from the previous session.

Led by Jae Kyong, one of the students, they took turns pronouncing words, identifying errors, and untangling the complexities of language together. The class transitioned seamlessly to an informative video on taxes. As the room absorbed the knowledge, students paired off to delve into prompts in their workbooks, enhancing comprehension and application. Christy ensured that every new term related to taxes found its place on the whiteboard. The words came to life, defined and discussed in a way that transcended textbooks, fostering genuine understanding.

The English Health and Safety class was immersed in a dialogue on a topic that resonated deeply in today's world—pandemics. Christy, with the same dedication, unveiled the day's plan and guided her students through a collective review of the previous day's homework. The class, with workbooks in hand and overhead projections aiding their journey, engaged in a harmonious reading session, fostering camaraderie in tackling language nuances.

An enlightening video about future pandemics captured the attention of the class. The ensuing dialogue, skillfully led by Christy, transformed the room into a forum of shared insights and Perspectives. Breaking away from traditional teaching, students formed a circle, breathing life into prompts that initiated heartfelt discussions. As new words related to pandemics graced the whiteboard, Christy ensured they were not just words but keys to understanding a critical global issue.

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# Redefiners: World Languages

## Multilingual Citizens Program (MCP)

The class crescendoed with assessments and a graduation. It was not merely the end of a class but a celebration of knowledge gained and bonds formed. The genuine commitment of the instructor and the active participation of the students painted a portrait of ESOL classes at ReDefiners World Languages and the Children's Board—real, engaging, and transformative.

As the month transitioned, the echo of shared discussions, new words, and enlightened minds lingered in the air. Christy's classes were not just lessons; they were gateways to understanding, connecting, and navigating the complexities of the world. In the upcoming months, or even years, these empowered minds will carry the lessons of the ESOL classes into their daily lives, shaping a future where language is not just a tool but a bridge to comprehension and unity.



# Children's Home Network

## Supporting and Empowering Educational and Developmental Services (SEEDS)

Jayden was referred to the SEEDS program by the School Psychologist with concerns for his academics and behavior.

A Family Team Conference was held to discuss his strengths and areas of concern to formulate a plan to address mom's concerns for Jayden. Jayden has an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) with several accommodations.

According to the school team, Jayden was at kindergarten level in reading and math (two grade levels behind). He was aggressive and physical with others and struggled with self-control which impacted his learning. Jayden had a Functional Behavioral Assessment plan and attended a social skills group at school. The family was linked to the Tech Connect program by SEEDS and received a Microsoft Surface tablet and school supplies. Jayden is practicing iReady daily. Jayden was also linked and engaged in tutoring sessions. He received 17 tutoring sessions with the support of ASO funds. Mom reported the tutor is great and works well with Jayden. With the support from mom, SEEDS, his school, ASO, and the Tech Connect program, Jayden is reading four days a week. He became a reader by reading various kinds of chapter books from school, and the books provided by SEEDS.

Throughout SEEDS services, the family attended all scheduled home visits, meetings, and private tutoring sessions consistently. In addition, they fully participated in the Family Support Plan (FSP). At the end of the services, it was shared by the school team that Jayden has made huge improvements in reading, writing and math. Jayden's iReady reading score went up by 142 points. According to the testing score, Jayden is now on grade level. Jayden has met his goals at school. Mom and teachers expressed that Jayden has more self-control and confidence. The family is grateful for SEEDS services.



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