



FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST  
CHILDREN'S HOME®

ESTABLISHED 1908

# THE HERALD

FEBRUARY 2016

VOLUME 26/NO. 1



To empower children and families to experience  
God's love as revealed in the ministry of Jesus Christ.



## A *word* FROM OUR PRESIDENT

**Becky Dotson**  
President & CEO  
Florida United Methodist Children's Home



## ALWAYS READY TO SERVE

*"You can't be too careful what you tell a child because you never know what he'll take hold of and spend the rest of his life remembering you by."*  
—Frederick Buechner

As we move into 2016, we embark on 108 years of ministry at the Florida United Methodist Children's Home. It's amazing to think that we have been offering continuous and constant care for all those years. The doors of the Children's Home have not even closed for one hour.

The Children's Home is a part of your family as a United Methodist Church institution. What began as the Florida Methodist Orphanage in 1908 has grown into a diverse and complex ministry offering residential care on two campuses, therapeutic group care, emergency shelter care, foster care services, independent living assistance, a community child care center, and our on-campus school known as Legacy Scholars Academy. We typically touch the lives of well over 400 children each and every day.

As a testament to all those years of ministry, we hear every day from our precious alumni and families who contact us to say, "thank you". Following are just a few examples:

"I would like to thank you all for all you have done for me. You all played a very important part in my life. You taught me how to love and how to rejoice in the Lord and also be a big, big family."

"We cannot begin to express the gratitude we feel towards the Home and the people that were there every day working with our son."

"I miss everything and everyone very much. All I remember from there is happiness, joyful times and wonderful, caring and loving people. I owe you so much. I just hope someday I may be able to give back even just a little of everything: love, care and appreciation. You don't know how much the Children's Home means to me!"

"Thank you so much for all you do for young children. My dad was a resident for many years and recently passed away. Some of the former friends came to the funeral service and it really made me feel so good to know he had friends and fond memories. You provide a wonderful service to these children and I am so thankful you rescued my dad and gave him the love and support as well as a spiritual foundation which he has passed on to his children. I can never thank you enough."

The foundation of all we do is the love of Jesus Christ made real through His Church. Thank you for reaching out in Christian compassion to partner with us to make a difference. We can rejoice with St. Paul when he writes to the Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Together, we can accomplish great things for children, youth and families.



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

**DAY ON CAMPUS – APRIL 9, 2016**

SPECIALLY INVITED DISTRICTS: East Central & South West

For more information, please contact your Local Church Representative or call our Development Office at 386.688.5088. You can also visit our website at [www.fumch.org](http://www.fumch.org).



Our annual Santa's Workshop event on both the Enterprise and Madison campuses was a huge success. Groups from all over the state came out to provide crafts that our children could make and then give to loved ones as gifts. A special thank you to all those who attended and gave of their time and resources to provide our residents an opportunity to create and give something special to those they love.

*Creating a special Christmas gift.*

- Bristol West Insurance Company
- Community of Hope UMC, Loxahatchee
- Community UMC, Casselberry
- Diane and Jon Donahue
- First UMC, High Springs
- First UMC, Lakeland
- First UMC, Oviedo
- Florida Fish Memorial Hospital, Orange City
- GFWC Apopka Woman's Club
- Mary Kistler
- Lyle and Carol Griffin
- Lee UMC
- Miccosukee UMC
- New Life Church, Ocala
- Sudden Life/Florida Hospital, Orlando
- The Hartford Insurance Company
- Venice Nokomis UMC



## **EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY COMES TO MADISON**

Madison Youth Ranch has launched its Equine Assisted Therapy program with the addition of Pinky and Sugar to their staff. Studies have shown the benefits of this type of therapy, particularly for children suffering emotional or behavioral issues that stem from previous abuse. Because the horses often perceive and mirror human emotion, they will help the therapist to identify underlying issues in the child and build a bond with the horse. Pinky and Sugar are residing in the Stickney Stable, completed this past summer.



*Pinky and Sugar join the staff at Madison Youth Ranch.*



# *The Children's Home Takes A* **HOLISTIC APPROACH**

**T**he children who come to us do so from a variety of backgrounds and family situations. Some are living in homes where the parents or other adults are substance abusers. Some of the children are victims of physical or sexual abuse themselves, and still others have been neglected. Whatever the cause of the trauma or dysfunction, we have found that it is most effective to address each child's needs in a holistic manner and provide for their mind, body and soul.

We provide our children with a home setting in one of three ways. The first is our Residential Care program that include residential group care, therapeutic group care, and emergency shelter services. Secondly,

our Independent Living program assists those who are aging out of our residential group care programs to make the transition to supporting themselves. In the past twelve months, we have cared for more than 180 children at our Enterprise and Madison Youth Ranch campuses. In addition to our Residential Care programs, the third way we provide a loving home setting is through foster care. More than 500 children have been placed with caring foster parents in the past year.

The specific needs of the child dictates the therapy that is provided, which will then guide the other activities and programs the child is involved with at the Children's Home. Depending on their needs, the children may be placed

in a residential group setting at either the Enterprise campus or the Madison Youth Ranch, which also offers Equine Assisted Psychotherapy. There are other specialized programs and home settings available on the Enterprise campus, including one for boys who have suffered from sexual trauma and an Emergency Shelter program for those removed from their home due to abuse or neglect.

In every case, a master's level, licensed therapist provides individual, group, and family therapy. Recognizing that each resident is unique, an individualized treatment plan is developed for each resident. The components of that plan will help the residents to improve their interpersonal relationship skills;



*The high ropes course can really build self-confidence.*

Children’s Home has access to a broad range of resources including academic specialists, Volusia Virtual School, dual enrollment, and the ability to attain a high school diploma. Children at our Madison Youth Ranch campus attend the local public schools in Madison County.



## **RECREATION** STRENGTHENING THE BODY

The Children’s Home provides our residents with a recreational environment that is accepting and welcoming to our diverse population. The purpose of our recreational program is to provide our children with activities that encourage physical activity while building self-esteem and character. We also strive to develop and enhance their team building skills, which will serve them well in their personal and professional lives. We provide a wide range of activity options including our gym, fields and playgrounds, pool, and even a high ropes course.



## **SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE** FEEDING THE SOUL

Our Spiritual Life program is an essential component of the holistic care that we provide at the Children’s Home. We strive to offer our children the opportunity to explore their relationships with God and their identities as spiritual beings through a variety of weekly activities. On Sundays, children across our Enterprise campus gather for worship in the Chapel. Older children who are nearing their eighteenth birthdays observe worship off campus in order to build connections to a faith community where they can continue their worship after leaving our care. On our Madison Youth Ranch campus, all children worship and attend youth activities at a local United

Methodist church. These community faith activities offer opportunities for socialization for the youth at Madison.

Each cottage participates in weekly Bible study, tailored to the spiritual and developmental needs of the children in that cottage. We encourage the children to explore their leadership skills and God-given gifts through optional activities such as choir, sacred dance, guitar and drum lessons, and participate in worship services as musicians, speakers and helpers.

## **IT’S ALL ABOUT THE CHILDREN**

This is just an overview of the programs and services that you help us provide to the children. In fact, there are many more moving parts that are required to allow us to tailor the care necessary for our children to grow, thrive, and become independent adults. You have made all of this possible, and it shows every day in the growth and accomplishments of our children.

develop pro-social attitudes and behaviors while strengthening their self-confidence.



## **EDUCATION** ENHANCING THE MIND

Our Enterprise campus school, Legacy Scholars Academy, is a partner of the Volusia County School district and provides education for residents in grades K-12. The classroom ratio remains low with eight students to each teacher, allowing us to give the children the attention and direction they need for academic success. Many of our middle and high school students go off campus to attend local public schools. By partnering with Volusia County Schools, the



*One of our seniors, Diontay, heading out for a job interview.*

# WHAT A *Difference* YOU HAVE MADE!

Your support makes it possible for us to care for our children in a holistic way, providing for their basic needs, education, therapy and spiritual growth. The previous article in this issue outlines the impact that you are making in their care, and these testimonials show you just how much of a difference you're making in their lives. The first is a letter from one of our children to their house parents, and it really shows the importance of a secure and loving home.

*"I am writing this letter in an effort to let you know that in my past, lonely, hard times how much your assistance was appreciated. I would like to first thank you for having faith in me. This gave me the motivation to want to make everyone proud of me. Secondly, you gave me a lovely home that I could call my own. This gave me a sense of security and comfort knowing that I could sleep safely and not have to worry where my next meal was coming from. And last but not least, you gave me love. There are many things on this earth that can be appraised, but love is simply not one of them. It is wonderful to know you're loved. I can gladly say that I felt loved."*

Here's a note with holiday wishes from one of our alumni, talking about the wonderful experience here, and the memories that you helped to make possible. It also reflects the difference that spiritual and emotional support can have on a child.

*"I want to say that I learned how to love and how to be strong by living at the Florida United Methodist Children's Home. I appreciate the experiences I had because without them I would not be the woman I am now. I want to thank the house parents and the ones I lived with for teaching me the lessons I've gone through. I love you all and hope everyone has a Very Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year."*

Your support not only helps to provide for children now, but it continues to show positive effects for years to come. Here's a note from one of our alumni that we cared for a few years ago.

*"It's really hard to believe that I came to live at the Children's Home when I was only 13 years old. This year I will be turning 24 years old. Wow! How time flies. I have a family of my own now. I have one daughter and another daughter on the way. There are days I sit back and just think about the times I had during my stay at the Home. Its true what was said, 'Once you leave, a part of you stays at the Home.' I was there from age 13 to 16, some of the most important years in a young man's life. I learned a lot from you guys. Please give everyone my deepest love and tell them all I never once forgot about them and I never will."*

As you can see, your support has helped our children to flourish. But more importantly, your support has made them your children as well. And that's something of which you can be very proud.

# HAVE YOU PREPARED YOUR WILL?

There are few things in life we can do so easily that make such a big difference. Having a well thought out estate plan is one of them. Those who complete a plan are almost always amazed at how quickly and easily it can be accomplished. Those who include a charity or nonprofit organization in their plans are among the happiest. It's easy to see why. Without the worries of day-to-day living, we are free to do so much more in our will than we can do while we're alive.

If you do not have a will or have not included a cause like the Florida United Methodist Children's Home in it, why not create one or amend it to include your gift? You can be among the elite philanthropists by including as little as 1% or 2% of your estate. If you think on a grander scale, you can leave a fixed dollar amount, or a greater percentage of the residual of your estate. The flexibility and choice rests entirely with you.

Remember that when you include a qualified charity in your will or plan, your estate is reduced by that amount, which means that much less is subject to estate taxes. The money that would have gone to the government can be strategically used to help your family and loved ones as well as the causes you cherish.

Writing a will is so simple, there is no reason not to have one. Just as your gift is limited only by your imagination, your possibilities for making it a reality are also almost endless.



*A well thought out estate plan can eliminate a lot of worry.*

For more information visit [www.fumchlegacy.org](http://www.fumchlegacy.org) or email [plannedgiving@FUMCH.org](mailto:plannedgiving@FUMCH.org) or contact Jeanne Griffith, Director Strategic Partnerships at 386-668-4774 ext. 2234.

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# THE HERALD

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## FIFTH SUNDAY OFFERING 2016

May 29 | July 31  
 October 30 | December 25

*Please remember the  
 Children's Home!*



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The Florida United Methodist Children's Home does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, veteran status, marital status, or any other status protected by law except where such protected category is a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ), to the extent that someone's needs can be addressed and cared for within the scope of program services with the financial resources of the agency.

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