



THE LINK

to the Florida United Methodist Children's Home

Vol 29 . No. 6

June 2020

Children's Home Students Finish School Year Strong!

As our nation implemented safeguards to fight the spread of COVID-19, the needs of everyday life continued to press on all of us. This was especially evident in the field of education, where countless teachers and administrators grappled with the need for continued quality teaching in a time where we can't gather together. Here at the Florida United Methodist Children's Home, we are proud to say that our students finished out the 2019-2020 school year strong. In response to the pandemic, our elementary school-aged children, along with our other children who attend off-campus schools, shifted to a completely online-based program. This was also true of our children at the Madison Youth Ranch. For our Legacy Scholars Academy (LSA) students, they were given work packets and specific times to work with our on-campus staff to complete their assignments.

In addition to students completing the school year requirements, the Children's Home is very proud that we have five students who have finished their high school studies and are set to graduate. Of these five, three are currently studying at Daytona State College and the other two are in our Independent Living Program. We will be having a virtual graduation ceremony on July 16, where a very limited number of students and staff will gather in our gym. We will share more about this in an upcoming Link. Trevis Bright, our Director of Education, spoke about the tension of graduation in a pandemic. "I wish we could have had a traditional ceremony, so that the children's families could have been here to celebrate in person," he said. "However, this will give them an opportunity to see the students and celebrate with them, even from a distance."

Bright said that the students and staff have done an incredible job in adapting to the new realities around them. "We have all learned the importance of flexibility from this situation," he said. "While we plan and prepare ahead of time, times like these remind us that not everything is set in stone." We are hoping to move forward with on-campus school in the fall, depending on the guidance we receive from Volusia County Public Schools. In the meantime, we want to thank everyone who continues to hold our children and staff in your prayers, and we hope to be able to see you all soon!

Back To School Donation Drive

As the Florida United Methodist Children's Home enjoys the beginning of summer and our students have begun their participation in our annual Summer Fun program, preparations are already being made for the 2020-2021 school year. While the landscape for this school year still remains to be seen, we know that providing our children with the high quality education they desperately need will continue to be one of our highest priorities.

A substantial way we meet this need is to ensure we have the supplies required to make this a reality. The Children's Home has been blessed by countless individuals, churches, and groups who continue to support us in so many ways. Donations are a vital part of our ministry, as they enable us to better serve the children. We have put together a list of our school needs, and ask that you and your church take up a back-to-school drive to help as we prepare to serve our students' educational needs for the 2020-2021 school year. For any questions, please contact our Volunteer Manager Lynn Bellomy at lynn.bellomy@fumch.org or 386-668-4774 ext. 2321. Thanks for the many ways you continue to support the children.

(More on back...)

Foster Care Celebrates In May And June

Foster Care Services is a vital part of the ministry of the Florida United Methodist Children's Home. With offices in four counties, and the recently secured contract to provide therapeutic foster care in Hillsborough County, our Foster Care Services program helps ensure the Children's Home is reaching more children. May and June were designated as Foster Parent Appreciation Month and National Reunification Month, respectively, and we are incredibly proud to be a part of this important ministry to the community.

This May, through personalized efforts, we were still able to lift up the vital work of our foster families. While Foster Parent Appreciation Month celebrates the ways that foster parents support children and families, National Reunification Month is an opportunity to rejoice with families who "have overcome obstacles to providing their child a safe and nurturing home environment and are able to successfully reunify after their child was placed in the state child welfare system," (Florida Coalition for Children press release). Having a focus both on foster parents and reunification celebrates the necessary work of foster care in repairing family structures.

"There are a lot of pieces to the child welfare puzzle," said Cedric Davis, Director of Foster Care at the Children's Home. "Without foster parents, we would be missing a huge piece of this puzzle." Currently, the Children's Home has 66 licensed foster families serving in four counties across the state. Additionally, we were recently awarded a contract to provide therapeutic foster services in Hillsborough County, which will allow us to serve foster children in need of a higher level of care. Davis named three things that he expects from our foster families, which are: safety, permanency, and well-being. "This is what we're trying to accomplish in the lives of our children," said Davis, "and our foster families do these three things incredibly well."

The Foster Care program allows the Children's Home to serve more children in more places, also enabling us to support other communities by keeping their children safe. If you would like to learn more about Foster Care Services at the Children's Home or how you can partner with us, please contact Cedric Davis at cedric.davis@fumch.org or 813.240.9980.

Have You Considered a Charitable Gift Annuity?

When you fund a charitable gift annuity with the Children's Home, we send you cash back every year for as long as you live. The payments we send to you are at fixed, attractive rates based on your age at the time you fund your gift annuity. The rates never change, no matter how long you live or what the economy may do.

A gift annuity also provides you with income tax and capital gains benefits. After a lifetime of payments to you, the remaining funds in the gift annuity support the Children's Home. If you would like more information about gift annuities, contact Elisabeth Gadd, Chief Development Officer, at 386.753.2066, or at plannedgiving@fumch.org.

FATHER'S DAY TESTIMONIAL FROM ALUMNUS

"I lift up a man who gives much, much more than he takes. A man that shows loyalty and is a great inspiration. A man who is an ideal role model. A man who devotes his time to children. A man who has accomplished practically every goal he set for himself. A man that should be represented as a great leader. Thanks for being there for me. Happy Father's Day to a great man!"

Current Resident Needs

- Sunscreen (SPF 50, in particular)
- Socks (adult size, particularly)
- Boxer shorts (sizes S and M)
- Toothpaste
- Plastic clothes hangers (no metal)
- Male deodorant
- Bath towels
- Plastic cereal bowls
- Washcloths
- Lotion