



THE LINK

to the Florida United Methodist Children's Home

Vol 29 . No. 5

May 2020

New Fifth Sunday Video: The Mission Continues at the Children's Home

For more than a century, the Florida United Methodist Children's Home has cared for children and youth who have experienced varying levels of trauma. It is a privilege to care for them like our own. We have a new Fifth Sunday video available at <https://youtu.be/yRfNnmOnYM4>, and ask that you please share it with your church and use it in your virtual services. In the video, our President & CEO Kitwana McTyer shares how our mission continues to guide the Children's Home in its ministry. This mission doesn't stop, regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We serve an awesome God!

May has a fifth Sunday, which means we will be celebrating the Fifth Sunday Offering. This Offering is one of the best ways to ensure the Children's Home can continue to provide the vital support to those we serve. We know that there are some who are unable to support the Children's Home at this time, due to the financial effects of the pandemic. However, for those who are able to give to this offering, please do so by going to our website at www.fumch.org and clicking the "DONATE" button. You can also text "spark" to 50155. The Fifth Sunday supplies are also available electronically on our website.

A Word to Our Volunteers: We Miss You!

During the pandemic, the Florida United Methodist Children's Home – like churches and other organizations around the world – has instituted various precautionary measures to ensure the safety of our children and staff. One of them is the current suspension of volunteers at this time. In the midst of this season of social distancing, we wanted to take a moment and let our volunteers know that we miss you all so much!

Because of the vast scope of the Children's Home's services, we regularly have a large amount of tasks and responsibilities that need to be fulfilled. Volunteers play a vital role in the ministry of the Children's Home, from those who volunteer on a regular basis to those who come as a part of a mission group. These wonderful servants carry out a variety of tasks, from serving in our Resale Shop and helping prepare mailings in our Development Department to assisting our Maintenance team and volunteering at the Madison Youth Ranch. Last year alone, the Children's Home utilized nearly 16,000 hours of volunteer service. Lynn Bellomy, Volunteer Manager at the Children's Home, spoke of the powerful effects our volunteers have on both the children we serve and on our staff. "We miss all of our volunteers so much! Sometimes people don't realize that one kind word or action can make a difference in a child's life," Bellomy said. "So, when people come out to serve our children, they have no idea the effects they have on their lives." We couldn't do what we do without these selfless individuals.

While we are not currently utilizing volunteers, we are eager to get them back on campus as soon as it is safe to do so! In the meantime, we want to encourage our volunteers and other supporters and friends to check out the Needs List section of the Link to learn how you can currently support the Children's Home through donations. For any questions about volunteering, please contact Lynn Bellomy at 386.668.4774 ext. 2321 or lynn.bellomy@fumch.org. Thanks for all of your support!

(More on back...)

Easter at the Children's Home

Members of the Florida United Methodist Children's Home were privileged to join with Christians around the world in celebrating Easter. We proclaimed the life-giving truth that Jesus rose from the dead, a tenet that has guided the work of the Children's Home since its inception. While this Easter certainly felt different from others, the powerful hope of Jesus Christ was incredibly palpable amongst both of our campuses.

Since mid-March, our Spiritual Life Department has been holding worship services outside in an on-campus field. Not only has it provided a place to practice safe social distancing practices (as the cottage groups have maintained a six-foot distance from one another), but it has also allowed the congregation to experience a new perspective of worship. For Holy Week, the children participated in stations that allowed them to walk through the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. One of the stations involved the children placing their painted hands on a taped banner. On Easter Sunday, the banner was displayed with a tape removed, revealing a cross in the midst of the mess. There was also a socially distant Easter egg hunt and cookout on Saturday. At our Madison Youth Ranch, they also participated socially-distant Easter egg hunt with flashlights. They "attended" Sunday service online, and then enjoyed a traditional Easter lunch that our Ranch Administrator Mica Renfroe prepared. The children reminisced about the various recipes within their family for Easter dishes. They spent the remainder of the afternoon playing various themed games.

"We want our young people to understand that, especially in these times, the church isn't the building," said Rev. Madeline Luzinski, the Director of Pastoral Care. While things definitely felt different this year, Pastor Madeline shared that this Easter actually allowed her team to help the children draw parallels to the first Easter. In that first Resurrection Day, there was a lot of grief and confusion. She said it allowed the team to drive home the point that Easter comes to us in many forms, and it is not always controlled and expected. "As we've been worshipping outside and doing other different things, it is our intention to worship God that makes us the church. Even when things look different, Easter still happens and God is still present." From all of us at your Children's Home, we pray that the hope of Easter sustains you today and always.

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 your 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.

TESTIMONIAL FROM AN ALUMNUS

"I got taken away from my mom because she had some family problems and she needed to be alone and get everything going smoothly again. So I first went to a foster home. Then, my sister and I went to a place called the Florida United Methodist Children's Home. When I moved to the Children's Home, they taught me a lot of helpful things. They taught me how to have good table manners and they also taught me how to respect my peers and elders. During my time at the Children's Home, my behavior changed big time. My brother and sister lived there too. At the Children's Home, we had a big swimming pool and a recreation department. My mom did much better, and afterward I went home to live like a normal kid."

Current Resident Needs

Note: We are once again able to receive in-person donations

- Toothpaste
- Plastic clothes hangers (no metal)
- Male deodorant
- Bath towels
- Plastic cereal bowls
- Washcloths
- Lotion