

Summer 2023



**Children's
Home Network®**

IMPROVING LIVES AND CHANGING LIFE STORIES®

VOICE

**Your Impact in Action: How Love, Support, and Access to Education
Transformed the Lives of Maddie and Nicole**

Learn more about their foster care journeys



Dearest Friends,

I hope you and your families are having an enjoyable summer. Here at the Children's Home Network, our Kids Village campus is vibrant with the joy of our annual Murphey Games and summer activities aplenty! As back-to-school season falls upon us, the CHN staff are busy preparing the campus and children for the new school year.

I would like to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation for those who attended our second annual Captain Mike Anderson Fishing Tournament and 29th Annual Memorial Sporting Clays Classic this past spring. It was heartwarming to see so many friendly faces come together to show their commitment to our cause. Your participation and enthusiasm added an extra layer of joy and camaraderie to these events, making them an enormous success. I hope to see many of you again at the annual Children's Home Network Golf Classic this October.

Within this edition of The Voice, you will find the inspiring stories of Nicole and Maddie, two girls who faced a tough start to life but were able to heal from their childhood traumas under the care of the CHN team and our wonderful network of foster families. Through our dedicated programs and services, we have been able to offer therapeutic interventions, educational support, and wraparound services that empower children to overcome adversity and build a brighter future.

None of this would have happened without you, our valued community partners, and tremendously caring and dedicated staff and volunteers. I invite you to peruse this report with a sense of pride, knowing that your contribution has played a significant role in shaping the lives of the children we serve. Your generosity has not only offered hope and stability but has also inspired countless others to join us in our mission.

We are incredibly proud of the milestones we have achieved, but we recognize that our work is far from over. The challenges that vulnerable children face are complex and multifaceted, requiring ongoing support and collaboration. Thank you once again for being a beacon of hope and joining us on this incredible journey. Your belief in our mission fuels our determination to make a lasting difference.

Irene K. Rickus, MS, LMHC
President/CEO

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Back to school Supply Drive

Children's Home Network
CORPORATE GIVES AND ENDOWS OUR FUTURE

See details on page 11

Join us for the 41st Annual



GOLF CLASSIC & AUCTION

Monday, October 16th, 2023 (Rain or Shine)

Presented by



**Carrollwood Golf &
Country Club**

13903 Clubhouse Dr | Tampa, FL, 33618

10:30am - Registration Opens

12:00pm - Shotgun Start

Catered Awards Ceremony to Follow

Let's tee it up for a good cause! This fun and festive event, presented by Advanced Drying Systems and Robinson Roofing & Restoration, is one of the longest-running golf tournaments in the Tampa Bay area and has raised over \$4 million since its inception. Golfers will receive complimentary range balls, boxed lunch, giveaways, on-course beverages and a catered awards ceremony. An online auction will include a variety of items available for bidding.

Team entry - \$1000 includes two golf carts for up to four golfers.
Sponsorship opportunities are available! Contact Lauren Miller at
LMiller@childrenshomenetwork.org for more information.

childrenshomenetwork.org/golf



Impact Story: Maddie and Her Foster Care Journey to Healing

Maddie's Story: A Young Girl With a Rough Start

Every child has basic needs to be loved, nurtured and to live in a household that is stable and dependable with responsible parents or caregivers. Unfortunately, at age seven Maddie did not have the stable family life that all children need and crave in order to thrive.

Maddie's home life included domestic violence, parental incarceration, and substance and alcohol abuse. Instead of receiving consistent care from her parents, Maddie lived in

constant chaos and, like many young trauma survivors, her coping skills were significantly impaired. Maddie was surrounded by verbal and physical violence which became her learned behavior and method for coping. At school, Maddie could not concentrate and lashed out at teachers and other students almost daily due to her frustration with learning and emotional discomfort. Maddie was held back in 2nd grade and soon after the start of the school year, Child Protective Services were contacted after Maddie reported that her mother was arrested for "attacking her father." Shortly thereafter, Maddie was placed into foster care.

Transitioning into Foster Care

Maddie did not understand what was happening and why she was being taken away from her family. She tried to run away from the Child Protective Investigator, and was understandably inconsolable and angry. Maddie's emotional outbursts continued after she arrived at her foster home and despite the family's best efforts to help console and calm her, Maddie remained aggressive, particularly towards her two new foster siblings. The family eventually requested that she transition to a different foster home that could better meet her needs. CHN's Placement Team worked diligently to identify a family that had the skills and experience to care for Maddie and to provide her with the love, stability, structure, and quality time she so desperately needed.

A Nurturing Approach Tailored to the Needs of Each and Every Child

A Children's Home Network foster family known for having the strengths Maddie needed was contacted and they quickly accepted the opportunity to care for Maddie. Maddie immediately struggled with the transition and living with another family she did not know. Using the skills and practices they learned through the CHN licensing process as well as their previous foster experience, the family did not give up. The foster parents gave Maddie the nurturing environment that she needed to begin her healing journey, allowing her to begin to find calm and rest. Maddie was enrolled into school and the family worked closely with her teachers to support Maddie and manage her behaviors.

Because she was behind a grade, Maddie needed additional help to succeed and feel a sense of accomplishment in school. CHN assisted with setting up tutoring to assist Maddie with her learning and grades. While she was beginning to trust her foster family, Maddie still struggled with managing her emotions and continued having periodic outbursts at home, school, with peers, and towards her foster sibling. CHN began providing intensive in-home counseling to help Maddie manage her emotions and behaviors, and provided guidance to the foster parents to help her heal.

Maddie's Pathway Forward Thanks to the Love and Care of Her Foster Family

Maddie has lived with her foster family since September of 2022 and has made remarkable progress. She is learning to live outside the chaos and have nurturing relationships with her foster family, including becoming an excellent big sister to her younger foster sibling. Maddie will now use constructive tools that she learned through therapy, rather than losing control or becoming aggressive. Maddie's foster parents provide regular positive reports regarding Maddie's education and her overall wellbeing. Maddie is a remarkable and resilient little girl who needed the love, care and supports that any child needs to thrive. In caring for Maddie's needs, her foster family continues to receive supportive services and guidance from our foster care team – services that your generous gifts help to provide.



Foster families consistently provide for the children entrusted into their care, but sometimes they need additional help. Your donations allow CHN to recruit and provide training to new foster parents and on-going support for existing foster parents so that they can provide the best care to vulnerable children. Thank you for helping CHN create a **safety net of love** and care for our children and caregivers through your generosity.



WHAT A CATCH!



Thank you to all of our sponsors, participants, and supporters of Captain Mike Anderson's Second Annual Reel Animals Classic Fishing Tournament on April 21st. It was a beautiful and fun day on the water supporting the children and families we serve. A HUGE thank you to Absolutely Amazing Refinishing, Inc., PulteGroup, Inc., and Ring Power CAT for their Tarpon Sponsorships!

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THANK YOU



Thank you to our sponsors, participants, vendors, and volunteers for making the 29th Annual General Schwarzkopf Memorial Sporting Clays Classic a success! The weather was beautiful and over 200 attendees enjoyed a great day on the course! Congratulations to Team Fourqorean on winning the Schwarzkopf Cup! Mrs. Brenda Schwarzkopf was on hand to congratulate this year's winners. Our special thanks to the Schwarzkopf family, the dedicated volunteers from Aetna, Wharton High School's ROTC color guard, and our friends at Tampa Bay Sporting Clays & Archery for their continued support. We are also grateful to the event committee for all their hard work behind the scenes: Sandy Sebes, John Mungenast, Jay Ellison, and Andy Gerth. Save the date for next year's 30th-anniversary event, on March 23rd, 2024!

THANK YOU EVENT SPONSORS



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Supporter Spotlight

Recognizing the incredible community partners who have donated their time and resources in support of Children's Home Network



Sunshine Health's Executive team assembled Valentine's Day goodie bags for our foster youth. They included sweets, treats, and handwritten messages. The Sunshine Health Team also donated bikes for the boys and girls living at Kids Village.



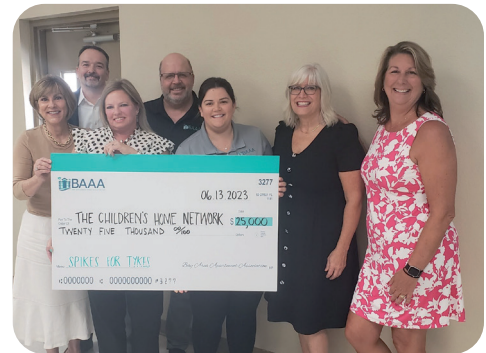
David A Straz Jr Foundation



Thanks to a generous donation from the David A Straz Jr Foundation and the hard work of volunteers from Tampa Connection, the boys and girls living at Kids Village have a new volleyball court! The volunteers visited the Kids Village campus to lay out the sand and new court boundaries.



Board Members from the Bay Area Apartment Association stopped by to present the proceeds from their 10th annual Spikes for Tykes beach volleyball tournament.



Employees from the Tampa Bay Rays and Rowdies spent a day on campus organizing donations and assembling furniture.



Thank you!



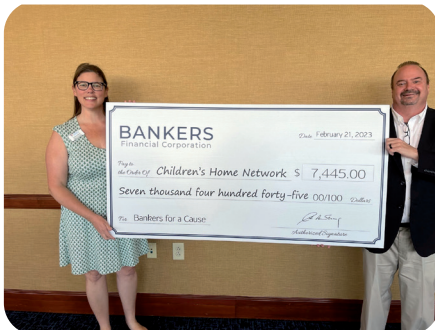
Kiwanis Club of St Petersburg donated \$1000 to Children's Home Network to help with stocking the new donation center.



Volunteers from several Mattress Firm locations worked hard to reorganize our luggage and backpack storage room.



In honor of Women's History Month, local branches of Bank United hosted a donation drive to collect hygiene products throughout March.



CHN was invited to attend Bankers Financial Corporation's annual meeting to receive a generous donation of \$7445, which was donated by BFC employees during 2022.



United Way Suncoast



Volunteers from Bausch & Lomb came to campus as part of United Way Suncoast's Week of Caring. The volunteers spread mulch in front of the administration buildings, five residential cottages, and the campus playground!



Punjabi Association of Tampa

The Punjabi Association held it's Baisakhi celebration this spring. CHN is so grateful for Dr. Sanjay Madan and A+ Medical for inviting CHN to attend and raise awareness along with presenting a donation to help foster children in our community.

Impact Story:

Nicole's Inspirational Journey through Young Motherhood

How the life of a young mother living at CHN was transformed thanks to care, support and access to education

At the Children's Home Network, our children are counting on us to shape their todays, tomorrows, and futures. We believe education plays a crucial role in ensuring that every child can succeed and heal from their traumas. Education opens the door to jobs, resources, and skills that help a person become independent and not just survive but thrive.

Currently, only about 50% of boys and girls in foster care will graduate from high school and only 4% will obtain a college degree. Trauma can create significant mental health issues that impact every aspect of a child's life, including school. Sadly, it is not surprising that 85% of children at CHN require educational support accommodations as they are below their grade levels.



Nicole's Story

Such was the case for Nicole, a young mother with her infant son who resided in CHN's Adolescents in Motherhood (AIM) program for the past year and a half. Nicole had an unstable childhood due to her parent's complex issues related to addiction, frequent homelessness, incarceration, and domestic violence. Nicole learned at an early age to fend for herself and to meet her own needs, often in unhealthy ways. Nicole dropped out of school and became pregnant when she was only 15.

During a prenatal care visit, Nicole disclosed her abusive home life to her doctor. Child Protective Investigators were sent to her home and determined that Nicole and her unborn child were at imminent risk of harm. Nicole, who was then 7 months pregnant, was removed from her home and welcomed into CHN's Adolescents in Motherhood (AIM) program later that day.

The Transformational Power of an Education

As with every one of the boys and girls in our care, CHN initiated trauma-informed assessments, evaluations and for Nicole, prenatal care. Even though she had never attended high school and was significantly behind for her age, CHN's educational team recognized that Nicole was a very capable young women who was determined to provide a better life for herself and her baby. Thanks to you and our partners at Pulte Homes, CHN's Pulte Promise Educational Center on campus offered all of the resources needed for Nicole to enroll in virtual school where she rapidly progressed with the help of our dedicated staff and tutors.

We are happy to share that Nicole gave birth to a beautiful and healthy son, and both mother and child are thriving physically and emotionally. Nicole successfully completed her GED and is now enrolled in college. She has learned to navigate daycare, pediatric care, WIC, and other community supports to help sustain her and her son. Empowered by education, love and support, Nicole now mentors other young mothers residing at CHN.

Through the generous support of our donors and partners, CHN is able to provide comprehensive educational support and wrap around care that is essential for healing from the trauma of abuse. Your donations help CHN to provide extracurricular activities, including field trips, sports, cheerleading, student government and clubs. Functioning as the child's caregiver, CHN ensures every child enters school with a new backpack, school supplies, uniforms, clothing, and shoes, and also provides for school pictures and personal care throughout the year. Because of you, CHN can provide all the essential things children need to feel and be successful. For our AIM teen mothers, pre-and post-natal care, parenting education, and support are vital care we could not provide without your partnership.

Your generosity has played a crucial role in enabling children like Nicole to overcome obstacles and create a brighter future for themselves and their families.



Making a Difference

Back to school Supply Drive

Children's Home Network
IMPROVING LIVES AND CHANGING LIFE STORIES

Check out our Amazon Wish List to see which school supplies are needed most!

Children's Home Network is privileged to provide robust and impactful care for all our children thanks to generous gifts from donors like you.

As we enter the Back to School season, please consider making a donation to help prepare the boys and girls for the new school year.

CHN is holding a school supply drive to provide the children with the necessary supplies, uniforms and equipment to set them up for success.

Visit childrenshomenetwork.org/donate-now to donate online, or scan the QR code to visit our Amazon shopping list for our current needs. For additional giving opportunities, contact Lauren Miller at LMiller@childrenshomenetwork.org

Thank you for making a difference!

CHN in the News

Children's Home Network Holds Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for New Donation Center Alongside County Commissioners

On March 27th, 2023, Hillsborough County Commissioners Gwen Myers and Harry Cohen joined the Children's Home Network Board of Directors, leadership, and staff for a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new donation center, security enhancements, and a maintenance building on CHN's campus. The Donation Center offers a space where the boys and girls can 'shop' for everything they need, whether it's clothes, sneakers, a prom dress, swimsuit, or a backpack for school. Being able to pick out their own belongings helps boost their self-confidence and growth.



Hillsborough County Donates More than 160 Bags and Essentials for Foster Children as part of their Duffels of Dignity Program

At a dedication event on May 25th, CHN's CEO, Irene Rickus and CHN staff team members were joined by Hillsborough County Commissioners Gwen Myers and Michael Owen to receive the donation of 160 new duffel bags and hundreds of personal care items to help stock CHN's new Donation Center. Thank you to all of the residents and businesses who donated to the program!



Larry Cooper, CHN's Vice President of Innovation, Named a Lightning Foundation Community Hero!

Children's Home Network is so proud to announce that our Executive Vice-President of Innovation, Larry Cooper, was presented with the Lightning Community Hero Award. The Lightning Foundation awarded \$50,000



to the Kinship Program on Larry's behalf for his incredible 22 years of service to children and leadership in developing our Kinship Program. These funds will provide services and support to vulnerable families across Tampa Bay. Larry was inspired to spearhead the Kinship Program when he realized his work could prevent children from entering the foster care system. He developed this innovative program to strengthen kinship arrangements, reducing the likelihood of children having to be separated from loved ones and placed in a traditional foster care setting. Congratulations, Larry, on this outstanding recognition from the Lightning Foundation!

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS, FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS | DONATIONS OF \$100 OR MORE

January 1, 2022 - June 30, 2022

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