

Irene M. Toto  
CEO



Don Martin  
Board Chair

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## NEWSLETTER

December 2017

### Message from the CEO

Greetings. It's hard to believe that it's already December and that the end of 2017 is in sight. What a year it's been around the KFF offices. We've served many children and families; we've seen a lot of hard work from parents as they've made positive changes and committed to learning new skills. We've witnessed countless successes. We've expanded our community partners and have added many new quality foster homes. It's been a record year for adoptions and we couldn't be happier about all the new forever families. It's been a year of changes as well. We said goodbye to some long-term members of our team as they moved onto retirement and to other opportunities. We said hello to some new team members who have brought additional talents and ideas to the KFF team. Sadly, we lost one of our own, Regina Hollaman, in a tragic accident and we gathered together to celebrate her life and to recognize her many contributions to our agency.

Throughout the year we've continued to grow and develop and we've learned so much along the way. We've attended trainings, conferences and other opportunities for professional development. We recognized Child Abuse Prevention Month, National Adoption Month, Foster Care Appreciation Month, National Mental Health Month and Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. We are so grateful for each of you and for all the members of our community; the businesses, individuals, faith based organizations, civic groups, neighborhood associations, law enforcement agencies, service providers, local and state government officials and many others, who add so much to our system of care. Much progress has been made towards our vision of building a healthier community, one family at a time and yet much remains to be done.

As we prepare for the upcoming holiday we are excited to make it a special time for the children in our care. We know that this time of year can be especially busy and often stressful for families. While you shop, travel, juggle events and schedule activities, we remind you to focus on what really matters, try to set some down time aside for yourself. Maintaining a routine and setting reasonable expectations for yourself and your children may help you enjoy the season more. We wish you and your family a safe and joyful holiday season and much happiness in the New Year. Take good care. *Irene*

### **Alert: Foster Homes Needed for Teenagers and Large Sibling Groups**

#### **Interested in Becoming a Foster Parent?**

**There is an urgent need for foster homes that can accommodate teenagers and sibling groups so that teenagers do not have to be placed in group homes and siblings do not have to be separated.**

**Please contact Diahann Sutton for more information at 904.278.5644 ext. 2100**



Did you know? November was National Adoption Month and November 18<sup>th</sup> was National Adoption Day. National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the more than 110,000 children in U.S. foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families. This annual, one-day event has made the dreams of thousands of children come true by working with policymakers, practitioners and advocates to finalize adoptions and create and celebrate adoptive families.

In total, National Adoption Day helped nearly 65,000 children move from foster care to a forever family. Communities across the county celebrate the Saturday before every Thanksgiving. In 2016, approximately 4,700 children were adopted by their forever families during the 17th annual National Adoption Day celebration in more than 400 cities across the United States.

Visit [www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org) for more information

Source: <https://davethomasfoundation.org/adopt/national-adoption-day/>

### National Adoption Month Proclamation

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the Clay County Board of County Commissioners declared November National Adoption Month. Ryan and Stacie Smith, accompanied by their seven children, accepted the Proclamation. The Smiths were first licensed as foster parents in 2011 and adopted two siblings in September 2012. In 2015, they adopted another sibling group of two. Also, in that year, they adopted a seventeen-year-old boy that they had been mentoring. When the Smiths learned that another sibling of the first two children that they had adopted was in foster care, they wanted to keep the three siblings together and, in November, they adopted that sibling.

Between July 2016 and June 2017, 54 children in Clay County were adopted through KFF. Many more children are awaiting adoption. KFF is committed to helping older youth find a permanent, loving home through adoption as well. If you are interested in adopting an older child or teen, please call Joan Underwood at 904.278.5644 ext. 2075 or [Joan.Underwood@firstinclay.org](mailto:Joan.Underwood@firstinclay.org).

### Christmas Gift Sponsors

**KFF would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for sponsoring Christmas gifts for children in foster care:**

**Adams and Harper, P.A., Certified Public Accountants**  
**Mother of Christina Junn**  
**Eagle Harbor Golf Club**  
**Fit of Orange Park**  
**Grace Episcopal Church, Orange Park**  
**Kirkwood Presbyterian Church**  
**Life Care Center of Orange Park**  
**Kristen Meyers**

**Orange Park United Methodist Church**  
**Raven Transport, Jacksonville Corporate Office**  
**Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, Orange Park**  
**Saint Luke Catholic Church, Middleburg**  
**Sam and Bobbie Sprout**  
**Sprint of Orange Park**  
**Teased Hair Salon**

## Post-Adoption Support Group

The Post Adoption Support Group is a great way to meet new people, exchange information and link into a support system. Meetings are held monthly at the KFF office on Kingsley Avenue. Feel free to submit a topic of interest for those meetings. Child Care may be available by calling in advance and refreshments are provided.

For more information, please call 904.278.5644 ext. 2083 or email [Latoia.Dantzler@Firstinclay.org](mailto:Latoia.Dantzler@Firstinclay.org).

## Post-Adoption Services Available to Clay County Residents

KFF provides services to families in Clay County who are in the process of or have adopted children, including children adopted by relatives/non-relatives, foster parents, through the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) and private adoptions. Pre- and post-adoption services consist of case management, including referrals to community resources, crisis intervention and counseling. For those in the process of adopting, "Core Adoption" classes are also provided. These classes offer an overview of the adoption process. For those who have already adopted, post adoption support group meetings are held monthly at the KFF office.

To access these services, or to obtain more information, please call 904.278.5644 ext. 2083 or email [Latoia.Dantzler@Firstinclay.org](mailto:Latoia.Dantzler@Firstinclay.org).

## Caregiver Support Group

**Foster Parents, Adoptive Parents, Relative Caregivers, this group is for YOU!**

Monthly meetings will be held the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month from 6:30pm – 8:30pm at Russell Baptist Church, 2299 Sandridge Road, Green Cove Springs, Florida.

This is a great opportunity to network, receive important updates and get your training hours.

**Please contact Tracy Watford for more information:** [watfordtracy@yahoo.com](mailto:watfordtracy@yahoo.com)

## Help a Child and Earn a Little Extra Spending Money

Current KFF Foster Parents, Refer a Friend!

**That's right current KFF foster parents, refer a friend to be a quality foster parent with KFF and you will receive \$100 after they are licensed.**

Call 904.278.5644 ext. 2016

## Don't Miss the Signs

**All Floridians are legally obligated to report suspected child abuse or neglect.**

Child abuse or neglect includes actions or omissions that result in imminent threat of serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, or death of a child under age 18 by a parent or other caregiver. To report abuse call 800.962.2873/TDD: 800.453.5145 or visit <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/> for instructions on how to report child abuse or neglect online or by fax.

**Main Office:**  
1726 Kingsley Avenue  
Suite 2

Orange Park, Florida  
32073

Phone 904.278.5644

Fax 904.278.5654

**Because every child  
deserves a loving home!**

### **KFF Contacts**

Main Office: 904.278.5644

Irene M. Toto, CEO, ext. 2013

Kevin Davidson, CFO  
Ext. 2006

Joanne Robertson, COO  
Ext. 2007

Jennifer Clark

Program Director, ext. 2080

Robin Briseno

Program Director, ext. 2019

Willie Davis

Foster Parent Payments

Ext. 2091

Diahann Sutton

Licensing, ext. 2100

Isaac Fuller

Licensing, ext. 2066

Alyson Durant

Placement, ext. 2072

Eric Wetzel

Independent Living, ext. 2047



CREDIBILITY • INTEGRITY • ACHIEVEMENT

**Did You Know?  
You Can Apply for Public Assistance  
On-Line at:**

<http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>

Or at the KFF Office by Contacting  
Tanya Miller at 904.278.5644 ext. 2040

**Florida Kinship Center Warmline  
800.640.6444**

A toll-free listening line for grandparents and other relatives raising children in Florida. The Warmline provides caregivers with emotional support and informational services.

### **Online In-Service Training Hours**

As a licensed foster parent, you are required to receive 8 hours of ongoing training per year to be eligible for re-licensure. Free training opportunities can be found at:

<http://www.qpiflorida.org/justintime/pages/training.html>

### **Dental Provider in Clay County**



The Baker County Health Department, in cooperation with the Clay County Health Department and the Clay County School District, provides dental treatments to local children and young adults ages 3-20. For an appointment, call 1.866.617.8708 ext. 2283 or 2311. Children can be seen at the Green Cove Springs office or on the dental van which serves 4 schools in Clay County. The program serves children who have Medicaid, Access Health Solutions, or KidsCare Atlantic Dental Insurance. If a child in your care, who is served by Kids First of Florida, does not have the above-mentioned insurance and needs dental treatment, please contact Mary Elwood at 904.278.5644, ext. 2043.

### **Preventive Health Care Periodicity Schedule**



**Physical Exam:** 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months, 3 years of age and annually thereafter

**Dental Exam:** every 6 months, beginning at age 3

**Vision Screening:** 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 15 years of age

### **Prevention in Florida**

For more information about:

**SAFE SLEEP  
HOT CAR SAFETY  
WHO IS REALLY WATCHING YOUR CHILD?  
WATER SAFETY**

Visit: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childfatality/prevention.shtml>.

### **Free Food Distribution**

Food is available for foster and adoptive families and families of children in relative and non-relative care. Waste Not, Want Not is a great program. Each month, food is distributed and available for pick-up from foster/adoptive parent, Tracy Watford. Items often include white & wheat bread, specialty breads, bagels, cakes, cookies, donuts. Sometimes they have juices, salads, sodas, etc. Please call Tracy Watford at 904.704.6012 for more information and to get on the distribution list.