

January 2023



THE MCS INSIDER

The official newsletter of
Manatee Children's Services, Inc.



Our History and Mission

"To advocate for and provide the resources, skills, and shelter to alleviate abuse through prevention and intervention for all children and their families."

Manatee Children's Services was founded in 1977 by Carol Chamberlain: a librarian, teacher, and social worker with a passion for child advocacy. Through her work in social services, Carol learned that Manatee County had a dire need for shelter to house abused children removed from their homes. She rallied a group of citizens to make the shelter a reality and, to this day, MCS continues to operate as Manatee County's only emergency shelter for child victims of abuse and the county's only Child Advocacy Center.

We provide a full spectrum of programs serving over 12,000 children and families annually. We offer programs in treatment, prevention, intervention, and residential services. Such programs include an emergency shelter, long-term group homes, mental health services, parenting education and training, forensic medical and specialized child victim interview services, support services for relative caregivers, teen pregnancy prevention, and children's personal safety. Visit our [website](http://www.MCSFL.com) to learn more.

In this edition:

- **New Year, New Faces!**
- **Kinship caregiver holiday celebration**
- **"Cruisin for Charity" Spring Fundraiser**
- **"Pinwheel Pals" Monthly Giving program**
- **Community Spotlight of the Month**

W E L C O M E

TO OUR TEAM

*Quendi
Baloney*



Our new Child Protection Team Advocate, Quendi Baloney, brings lots of expertise to the table. Quendi has held careers as a schoolteacher, Child Protective Investigator/Domestic Violence Advocate, community outreach coordinator/representative at the Louisiana Department of Juvenile Justice, and fighting housing discrimination as a Civil Rights Team member at the U.S. Department of Justice.

"I'm so excited to utilize my skills to actively further the mission and purpose of MCS in our community," Quendi said. "I'm proud to contribute to our community and our children and hope to give as much as I receive in fulfillment!"

Our most recent Parenting Coach, Nadine Knapp, graduated from USF with her degree in Professional and Technical Writing. She is blessed with five adult children and one amazing granddaughter. Being a Parenting Coach is a passion project for Nadine. She left her office job and launched her own parent coaching business, Parent Rescue, in 2017. She received her Parent Coaching Certification from the John Rosemond Leadership Parenting Institute. Nothing makes Nadine smile more than watching a parent have an "aha" moment during a session. Nadine's hobbies include biking, kayaking, and laying in her hammock every Sunday. She hates cooking, but loves baking. Nadine is happy to join the MCS family.



"CAREGIVING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS"

Grandparents as Parents families were so excited to attend our first in-person "Caregiving Through the Holidays" celebration since before the pandemic. Families enjoyed a holiday meal, games, and a visit from Santa! Thank you to everyone in our generous community who made this event possible.



SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR SPRING FUNDRAISER

MANATEE CHILDREN'S SERVICES **CRUISIN' FOR CHARITY**

A CAR SHOW FUNDRAISER TO HELP BREAK
THE CYCLE OF CHILD ABUSE

MARCH
11
2023

RSVP AT
[HTTPS://FB.ME/E/4AXPVD2R8](https://fb.me/E/4AXPVD2R8)

FREE
ADMISSION



BUBBAQUE'S BBQ

6581 STATE ROAD 70 E, BRADENTON FL 34203

11:00 AM TO 3:00 PM

50/50 RAFFLE

FOOD & BEER

BEST CAR AWARDS



MAKE GIVING SEASON LAST ALL YEAR WITH MONTHLY GIFTS

MANATEE CHILDREN'S SERVICES



"PINWHEEL PALS" MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM

GIVING MONTHLY HELPS DAILY

EACH YEAR, WE GIVE SHELTER TO OVER 80 ABUSED CHILDREN. WE STRIVE TO MAINTAIN A SENSE OF NORMALCY FOR THEM DURING THIS MOST TRAUMATIC TIME BY CREATING POSITIVE MEMORIES DURING BIRTHDAYS, HOLIDAYS, AND SCHOOL BREAKS. FOR ONLY \$10 A MONTH, YOU CAN CHANGE THE LIFE OF ONE CHILD.

**\$10/
MONTH**

A BIRTHDAY
FOR A CHILD

**\$50/
MONTH**

SUMMER CAMP
FOR A CHILD

**\$100/
MONTH**

ANNUAL MOVIE
PASS FOR 5
CHILDREN

**\$300/
MONTH**

BIRTHDAYS FOR
30 CHILDREN

FOR OTHER SPONSORSHIP LEVELS, CALL OR EMAIL US



(941) 345-1200

info@mcsfl.com

<https://www.manateechildrengsservices.com/donate/>

WINTER BREAK BRINGS FUN FOR FOSTER CHILDREN AND STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



2022 Residential Program Employee of the Year: Anita Wilson



Crisis Intervention Specialist, Brandon Haynes, graduated from the University of South Florida with his Master of Social Work. MCS Intern, Crystal Alvarez, graduated with her Bachelor of Social Work from Troy University and has been hired as our newest clinical therapist.



2022 Child Advocacy Center Employee of the Year: Kelli Geary, Training & Quality Assurance Coordinator (left)



Outing to Myakka Elephant Ranch for our foster children. They loved engaging in elephant therapy!

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH



Sherri Mills: Live2Give Foundation

Sherri Mills, Michael Saunders & Company Realtor, decided to make a difference in a big way after recovering from debilitating pain and being given a second chance at life. In 2019, she created the "Live2Give" Facebook group for creating kindness and sharing ideas on how to give back to the community. What Sherri envisioned as a small group of people with a common vision turned into something much more: there are now hundreds of Live2Givers with members from all over the world.



When COVID struck, members noticed some dire community needs as a result of the pandemic and asked Sherri to transform Live2Give into a nonprofit so they could collect donations and give tax-deductible receipts. Since then, Sherri said Live2Givers fill in the gap when nonprofits have short-term emergency needs. Sherri's personal commitment to giving back is to donate a portion of her commission from each real estate transaction to a charity that focuses on trauma and abuse, one of which is MCS. Since 2020, she has given about \$225,000 to three charities focused on helping others overcome trauma and abuse.

"I believe that, in general, hurt people hurt others and that the key to having a kinder, gentler world is to help people over the trauma and abuse they have experienced," Sherri said.

Sherri discovered MCS through the Longboat Key Chamber and soon thereafter, met our "dynamic, passionate, and impressive" CEO, Melinda Thompson. After witnessing the consequences of child abuse as a former special education teacher and parenting educator, she felt especially compelled to help.

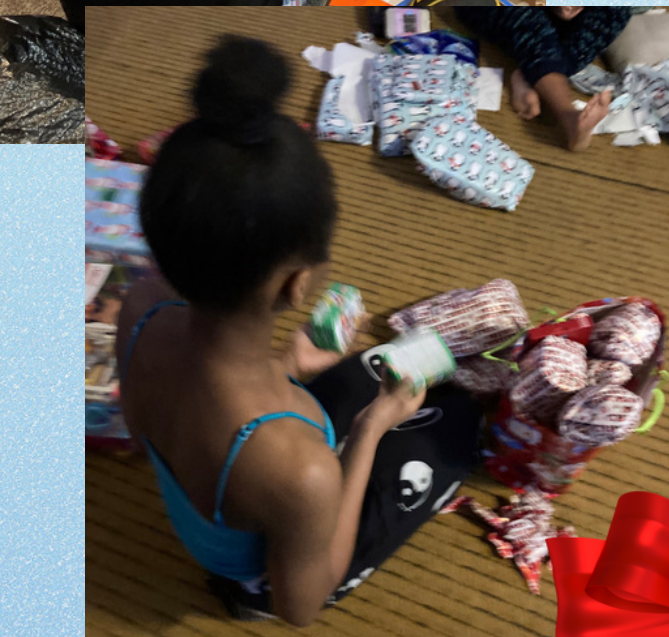
"MCS's mission resonates to me deeply as a survivor and as a mother," Sherri said. "No child should experience child abuse but unfortunately, it happens. And when it does, MCS is there to provide alternatives for children to be in a safe environment. To me, they are at ground zero for saving children and I can't think of a higher calling. It is an honor to be one of their many, devoted supporters."



THANK YOU FROM OUR MCS FAMILY



Thank you to everyone who made the 2022 MCS Holiday Project a success. Because of our generous community, we were able to raise almost \$15,000 in gift cards, presents, and donations for the children we serve. The smiles on children's faces and the outpouring of love they felt was priceless and is a gift they will always remember.



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Click on links below to view our website and follow us on social media:

