

July 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:

- **Save the Date for Christmas in July**
- **MCS in the Community**
- **Community Spotlight of the Month**
- **Program Spotlight and Success Story**

IT'S CHRISTMAS IN JULY AT MANATEE CHILDREN'S SERVICES

As we await our beloved Holiday Project in December, the children we serve have crucial needs in the summertime. Please consider a midyear gift of \$50 or more to support our most vulnerable populations.

We also invite you to join our giving community by becoming part of our Pinwheel Pals monthly giving program and making a difference year-round.



\$50 or more supports:

- ✓ Birthdays
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Experiences
- ✓ Sports
- ✓ Arts and Music
- ✓ Back-to-School

Giving Period:

July 1 through July 31, 2023

Payment via cash, check,
or PayPal



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MCS IN THE COMMUNITY



MCS staff and two of our Grandparents as Parents caregivers were proud to support the Early Learning Coalition on June 1st at their annual Stand for Children Day luncheon. Stand for Children Day raises awareness of critical issues faced by many children in the U.S., including quality education and childcare, access to health insurance and medical services, appropriate public school and program funding, and teacher education.



Thank you 

Thank you to Sisterhood for Good for awarding MCS with \$2,500 to provide food for the foster children in our residential program. Your gift helps ensure the most basic and essential needs for the children we serve. We appreciate all of you so much!

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH: THE BRANTLEY FAMILY

Manatee Children's Services would like to recognize the Brantley family, who are longtime MCS supporters in honor of our late KIDS Personal Safety Coordinator, Carren Burnell.

Carren's mother, Mary Jane, taught music at Gocio Elementary in Sarasota County for 33 years before retiring. Through Carren's support and encouragement, Mary Jane now teaches piano lessons to all ages from kindergarten to retired adults.



Mary Jane felt drawn to Carren's work at MCS after seeing the hardships of at-risk children through her work in the school system, so she helped through volunteering, Holiday Project sponsorships, and donations. Carren's sister, Leigh, and her two children have followed in Mary Jane's footsteps by giving to MCS through holiday gifts, school projects, and donation drives. The family has grown to include 10-month-old Watson, Mary Jane's first great-grandson, who was born to Carren's daughter, Rachel. Mary Jane said her family continues to support MCS not only for the good we do in the community, but also for the compassion that CEO Melinda Thompson and staff showed Carren during her illness.

"Our whole family appreciates so much the support MCS gave Carren on her journey," Mary Jane said. "MCS was like a family to her. I think they felt the same empathy for her as they would for children who are in unfair situations, and I think everyone who works there seems to share the same compassion and understanding more than other folks of the difficulties others go through."

Carren, known in Manatee County schools as the "Safety Lady," was a pioneer in child abuse prevention, empowering children to Recognize, Resist, and Report abuse. Carren's work led to over 5,000 children requesting immediate help and over 500 cases of suspected child abuse reports. The Board of County Commissioners Manatee County Florida, proclaimed April 22nd, 2014 as "Carren Burnell Day" for her tenacious efforts to protect the children in our community.

"Carren treated the children she served at MCS the same way she treated her own child," Mary Jane said. "She treated them with kindness and caring and as nothing but equals."



JULY PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT



Because of community supporters like you, our programs are able to continue breaking the cycle of child abuse for victims and families.

TRUTH Family Advocates at MCS change lives for youth ages 10-17 by providing education on pregnancy prevention, healthy relationships, social media and personal safety, self-esteem, human trafficking awareness, and much more. TRUTH Advocates also offer advocacy and a compassionate ear for these youth during the most challenging adolescent hardships.

"Laura" had witnessed domestic violence between her mother and stepfather, as well as physical, emotional, and verbal abuse from her stepfather. When she began working with TRUTH Advocate Janie Garza, she was unable to smile at her peers, look others in the eye when speaking to them, or make friends at school. Janie started with small steps by teaching Laura peer communication skills and having her practice each one slowly. She also helped enroll Laura and her family into therapy to help them heal their relationship from the wounds of abuse. Through Janie's help, Laura learned to socialize with others, make personal connections through eye contact, and gain new friendships. Janie's advocacy also enabled the family move away from the stepfather and into their own place without dependence and fear.

Thank you to our hardworking TRUTH Advocates for breaking the cycle of abuse through prevention every day!

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