

November 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:

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SAVE THE DATE



# GIVING TUESDAY

**NOVEMBER 28, 2023**

Giving Tuesday, held annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, is a global generosity movement that unleashes the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world. We need your help this year in meeting our \$50,000 goal to support the “Welcome to Our House” initiative. Please see our Facebook event in the link below and join our fundraiser, <https://www.facebook.com/donate/652159000361774/> for Giving Tuesday updates and more information on our project.



[HTTPS://FB.ME/E/1MKYXZ6TO](https://fb.me/e/1mkyxz6to)

# Welcome to our team



Aron Petricelli

**Crisis Intervention Specialist**



MCS would like to welcome our newest Crisis Intervention Specialist (CIS), Aron Petricelli. As the CIS, Aron conducts mental health assessments with foster children entering the MCS Emergency Shelter, group and individual therapy sessions, on-call intervention for children experiencing mental health crises, and advocacy between children and case managers.

Aron holds a bachelor's degree in Pastoral Leadership from Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, and is working to complete his master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

Aron loves spending time with his fiancée', Madison; his dachshund, Maci; and his pitbull mix, Chloe.

"I look forward to working for MCS to help change the lives of individuals, and to show the (foster) kids that they are loved and valued every day," Aron said.



# Holiday Project

Dear Friends,

We need YOUR help to make holiday dreams come true at MCS by sponsoring one or more children through the annual Holiday Project. Your gift will support children who have suffered from or are at risk of abuse or neglect.

To sponsor a child, please download and return the sponsorship form included in the email link or visit our homepage at [www.mcsfl.com](http://www.mcsfl.com). Sponsorships are \$100 per child and may include monetary gifts, gift cards, new store-bought items per your sponsored child's wish list, or items on the MCS Amazon wish list found at [www.mcsfl.com](http://www.mcsfl.com). NOTE: please ensure all gift cards are active and validated.

**PLEASE TURN IN ALL GIFT CARDS AND WISH LIST ITEMS BY 12/15/23.**

For questions, contact us at (941) 345-1200 or [HolidayProject@mcsfl.com](mailto:HolidayProject@mcsfl.com). Thank you in advance for giving our children a holiday experience they'll cherish forever.

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Facebook fundraiser:

<https://www.facebook.com/donate/2705083242980333/>

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MCS Amazon wish list:

[https://www.amazon.com/h3/wishlist/ls/20DI8JZW6AVZR/ref=h3\\_ls\\_biz\\_ex](https://www.amazon.com/h3/wishlist/ls/20DI8JZW6AVZR/ref=h3_ls_biz_ex)

# Our Community



Last month, we were honored to attend Manatee Community Foundation's Open House to welcome new Executive Director, Veronica Thames. We know she will do great things at the Foundation! We also had the pleasure of attending the Women's Action Committee Breast Cancer Awareness luncheon, where we collected much needed items for our residential programs and engaged in important awareness education about breast cancer.

The good times continued with the Longboat Key Club Resort staff's costume contest fundraiser to benefit MCS. Staff also donated their award-winning painted pumpkins, including a Slinky Dog and Kool-Aid Man, to the children in our residential program.

Lastly, we'd like to give special thanks to the Wawa Foundation for their grant award to support food in our residential program.





Happy HALLOWEEN

From MCS Foster Children

# COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH



## REALTOR ASSOCIATION OF SARASOTA AND MANATEE (RASM) CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



The RASM REALTORS® Charitable Foundation (RRCF) emerged from a commitment to expand on the Association's philanthropic efforts already in place, including a scholarship fund for local students and various fundraising events benefiting housing-related charities. By establishing the RRCF as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, complete with a Board of Directors, fundraising committee, and grants task force, they unlocked the potential to increase their community impact.

In 2023, they doubled their annual college scholarship awards to twenty \$2,000 scholarships, and annual contributions to housing-related charities surged from \$10,000-\$20,000 to \$50,000-\$60,000 per year, providing substantial support for those in need. The foundation has even been able to expand philanthropic initiatives directly to members by providing financial assistance to those who have suffered from challenges caused by medical emergencies or hurricanes.

RASM recently awarded Manatee Children's Services with a generous \$5,000 grant to support essential upgrades and beautification to the front of our Emergency Shelter.

"We recognize the mission of MCS and how it aligns with our organization and the work we do to open new doors for individuals and families in our communities," said Gina McCarthy, RASM Vice President of Communications and Engagement. "We were inspired by MCS's dedication to providing shelter to those in crisis and supporting the needs of foster children with the important resources they need during difficult times."

Gina also said housing continues to be a significant concern in our community with uncertainties in the job market, along with the challenges of inflation, rising interest rates, and escalating insurance costs.

"We are honored to help support the cost of the important repairs and upgrades to a longstanding community shelter so that it can continue to meet the needs of children.



# MCS FEATURED SUCCESS STORY



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

The MCS Child Protection Team is the first stop for families after allegations of abuse: a place where families in crisis receive care and compassion during critical medical exams and non-leading interviews that help determine the next steps after reporting. CPT also works in a multidisciplinary approach to facilitate interagency and external referrals that will help prevent future instances of abuse and keep families stable.

“The amount of gratitude I receive from families for just reaching out with a listening ear and encouragement in reaching their goals is overwhelming,” MCS Advocate Lucille Eisenhard said. “There can be a lot of chaos during this time in their lives. Some clients have told me they would have no idea where to start in helping their child if we hadn’t been there to make sense of it all with them.”

CPT also works closely with the Manatee County Sheriff’s Office and other community entities to provide education on topics such as recognizing abuse, abusive vs. non-abusive injuries, and how to respond to abuse. We are so grateful for all the hard work this team does in responding to crises and helping break the cycle of child abuse for our most vulnerable populations.

**Manatee Children's Services, Inc.**  
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Click on links below to view our website and follow us on social media:

