

January 2025

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.

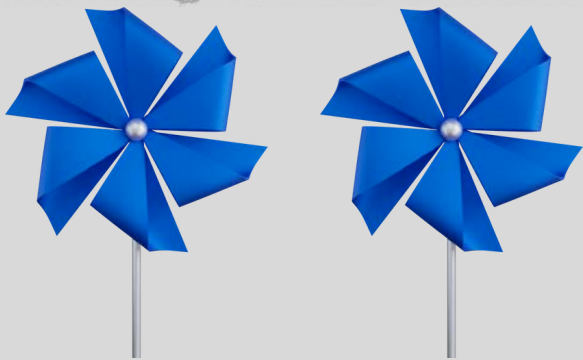
We provide a full spectrum of programs serving over 12,000 children and families annually. We offer programs in treatment, prevention, intervention, and residential services. Such programs include an emergency shelter, long-term group homes, mental health services, parenting education and training, forensic 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 employee spotlight
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Welcome to our team

Child Protection Team Case Coordinator



Amanda Jordan

We're thrilled to introduce Amanda Jordan, our newest Child Protection Team Case Coordinator!

Amanda graduated from the University of South Florida in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in criminology and is currently pursuing a Master of Social Work (MSW) at Florida State University. Her passion for social work and child welfare shines through her commitment to learning and growing in her field.

In 2019, during a pre-service class for child dependency case management, Amanda witnessed a forensic interview for the first time. That moment sparked her interest in forensic interviewing, and she knew she wanted to be a part of MCS. Today, as she works toward her MSW, Amanda looks forward to collaborating with and learning from staff members who hold MSW and LCSW credentials.

Amanda isn't just passionate about her work – she's also a black belt in karate and has trained in boxing, jiu-jitsu, and muay thai. Her discipline and dedication extend beyond her career, making her an all-around powerhouse! And let's not forget her life as a proud dog mom to her rottweiler, Jedi, who undoubtedly keeps her on her toes.

We're so lucky to have Amanda as part of the MCS family. Her drive, compassion, and expertise make her an invaluable asset to our team and the community we serve.

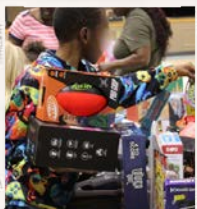
Thank you to our 2024 Holiday Project sponsors!



JUST A FEW OF OUR MANY COMMUNITY SPONSORS FROM OUR 2024 HOLIDAY PROJECT. THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF OUR SPONSORS, WE RAISED NEARLY \$29,000 IN GIFTS AND DONATIONS FOR THE CHILDREN WE SERVE. THANK YOU FOR GIVING THEM A REASON TO SMILE THIS SEASON!

Holiday Cheer

FROM MCS
"GRANDPARENTS
AS PARENTS"



A heartfelt thank you to the Hyatt Regency Sarasota for hosting a magical Breakfast with Santa for the foster children in our residential program! The joy, laughter, and holiday spirit you created made the season extra special for our young people.



AGENCY NEWS

Thank you to the Walmart Foundation for your generous grant award of \$2,000 to support food for foster children in our residential program. We'd also like to thank the Community Foundation of Sarasota for their Hurricane Milton relief funding of \$40,292 to support repair and beautification of our campus grounds to restore its safety for the children and families we serve.

We are so grateful to the Lakewood Ranch Community Foundation for their grant award of \$4,000 to support a part-time transporter in our residential program. Transporters are essential for ensuring our foster children can remain in their originating schools, helping them maintain a sense of normalcy during an uncertain time in their lives.



The team at U.S. Health Advisors raised \$8,000 in donations to benefit MCS children and families. The team's motto, "H.O.P.E." (Helping Other People Every day), reflects their compassion and generosity — not only toward their clients but also toward their community.



Med G Classic also helped support our essential services by raising \$10,000 in November's golf tournament. We were so happy to spend a beautiful day with fantastic people!



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



The Rosedale community is home to two thriving women's golf leagues, each offering members an opportunity to connect through their shared love of the game. The Rosedale Ladies Golf Association (RLGA, pictured above left) is an 18-hole league with approximately 80 members, while the Rosedale Niners Golf Association (RNGA, pictures above right) is a 9-hole league with around 60 members. Both leagues are nonprofit organizations dedicated to fostering sportsmanship, fellowship, and friendly competition among their members. Each league operates under its own constitution and bylaws, offering weekly competitive golf events, special tournaments, and social gatherings. They also promote the knowledge and application of the United States Golf Association (USGA) Rules of Golf, ensuring members grow in their understanding and enjoyment of the sport.

Beyond the fairways and greens, these leagues have made a meaningful impact in the community through their long-standing commitment to helping children in need during the holiday season. Over a decade ago, RLGA and RNGA came together to form a joint "Project Outreach" committee, uniting their efforts to sponsor and support local children in the MCS Holiday Project.

In the project's early years, members organized gifts for children and invited them to the Rosedale golf course for a special day where the children enjoyed lunch, golf cart rides, and putting on the practice green. Each child was paired with a league member who presented them with gifts from their holiday wish list. Many members still cherish these heartwarming memories of bringing joy to the children. Today, the tradition continues with a slightly updated format. Members receive a list of children in need from MCS, choose a child, and contribute gift cards. These cards are then given to the children's caregivers, allowing them to shop for personalized holiday gifts.

The RLGA and RNGA's dedication to spreading holiday cheer exemplifies the spirit of generosity and community. Their ongoing support of MCS reflects their belief that giving back is as integral to their mission as the game of golf itself. We celebrate and thank the women of RLGA and RNGA for their incredible commitment to making the holidays brighter for children in need. They are true role models for the power of community and the joy of giving.



DECEMBER MEMORABLE MOMENTS



Many people understand how life-changing the Holiday Project can be for MCS foster children, but they may not realize how meaningful it is for the children we serve through our other programs as well. This holiday season, a grandmother in our Grandparents as Parents program suffered severe injuries after being hit and run over by a pickup truck, and grandpa's health has been declining significantly. Despite these hardships, the grandparents continue to care for their four grandchildren.

Recognizing their struggles, GAP Coordinator Kathy Bartz, her daughter Zoey, and retired fire captain John Ashcraft worked tirelessly to bring joy and hope to the family. Thanks to their efforts, two full carloads of presents were delivered to the family, filling their home with holiday cheer during a difficult time. This act of generosity and compassion not only provided much-needed support but also reminded the family that they are not alone in their journey.



Manatee Children's Services, Inc.
A Child Advocacy Center
1227 9th Avenue West
Bradenton, FL 34205
(941) 345-1200
info@mcsfl.com

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