

June 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:

- **"Groovin' for Good" Gala Save the Date**
- **May events and announcements**
- **Christmas in July 2025**
- **Community spotlight**
- **Success stories**

Save
The
Date

GROOVIN' FOR GOOD



MCS Child
Advocacy Center



A 70S GALA FOR CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2026

Palmetto Marriott Resort & Spa

600 US-41, Palmetto, FL 34221

6:00 to 10:00 pm

VIP Cocktail Hour: 5:00 pm

\$150 per person

Contact Krista P. or Hannah S. for sponsorships:

kristap@mcsfl.com

hannahs@mcsfl.com



MARRIOTT RESORT
PALMETTO

Premier event sponsor

MCS Inservice Day

Last month, agency staff came together for a special In-Service Day designed to strengthen the heart of our organization: our team. Across departments and programs, we paused our usual daily routines to reconnect, recharge, and refocus on what brings us all together: breaking the cycle of abuse for all children and families.

The day was filled with teambuilding activities, interactive learning, and plenty of laughter as staff members got to know one another outside of their regular roles. From clinical services to prevention education, case management to shelter care, every team had a chance to share what they do, how they do it, and, most importantly, why they do it. Staff left the day with a deeper understanding of each other's roles and a renewed appreciation for how each program plays a vital part in our mission.

Thank you to everyone who made this day possible. The energy, connection, and commitment shown on In-Service Day will carry us forward and help us serve our community even better.



MCS in the Community

This May, we celebrated a month of generosity that's bringing meaningful change to the children and families we serve every day.

We're thrilled to share that the Bishop-Parker Foundation has awarded us \$60,000 to purchase a dual-purpose vehicle for our residential campus. This hardworking addition will help our maintenance team keep our facilities safe and sound and transport foster children to school, appointments, and more. It's more than a vehicle: it's a bridge to stability, support, and daily care.

Thanks to the Service Club of Manatee County, a generous gift of \$12,500 will provide three months of meals for all 12 children living in our Emergency Shelter. That's breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks served with love, and the security that comes with knowing every child will be nourished and cared for.

With a \$2,500 grant from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, we'll be partnering with fundraising consultant Tracy Vanderneck of Phil-Com LLC to create a fundraising plan and strengthen our long-term development program. This investment will help us grow our impact and connect with even more compassionate supporters.

Together, these gifts are helping us create a stronger, more sustainable future for Manatee's most vulnerable children. We are truly grateful.



IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS IN JULY!

While the magic of our Holiday Project is still months away, the children we serve need your help now. A midyear gift of \$50 or more can provide critical support for Back-to-School supplies, birthday celebrations, and summer enrichment.

Want to make a lasting difference? Now is the perfect time to join our "Pinwheel Pals" monthly giving program. Just \$10 a month can change a child's life forever.



\$50 or more supports:

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

Giving Period:

July 1 through July 31, 2025

**Payment via cash, check,
or card**



Manatee Children's Services
1227 9th Avenue West
Bradenton, FL 34205
(941) 345-1200
www.mcsfl.com



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



WILLIAM G. & MARIE
SELBY FOUNDATION

Est. 1955



Since 1955, the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation has been a beacon of opportunity and quiet generosity in our region. Founded by Bill Selby and guided by the humble, philanthropic spirit he and his wife Marie embodied, the Foundation remains committed to improving lives, especially through access to education and vital community resources. The Selbys lived modestly and gave generously without seeking recognition: a legacy of humility that continues to inspire their work today.

The Selby Foundation has a unique focus: supporting nonprofits' tangible needs such as buildings, vehicles, equipment, and technology. These essentials often fall outside the reach of typical fundraising, yet they are critical to sustaining life-changing programs. In addition, the Foundation invests heavily in renewable college scholarships for high school seniors in our region, creating long-term pathways for success. Their commitment to Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties ensures local dollars have a local impact.

This past year, the Selby Foundation awarded a generous grant to MCS, recognizing the vital role we play in protecting and empowering the most vulnerable children in our community. "Investments in children are directly tied to the quality of our future," says President and CEO, Susie Bowie. "We hope this grant inspires others to support MCS — whether through a major gift, planned giving, or annual donations."

What stands out most about the Selby Foundation is its unwavering commitment to its core values. The staff and board do not seek awards or formal accolades, instead shifting the spotlight to the nonprofits and scholars doing the real work. "This keeps us grounded in the good we can be part of," Susie shared, "while recognizing the incredible efforts across our region."

We are grateful for the Selby Foundation's partnership and for their vision of a resilient, compassionate community. Together, we can continue to create hope and healing for every child we serve.



MCS SUCCESS STORIES



At MCS, we know change takes time, trust, and support. BRIC program Parenting Specialist, Becky Blanco, recently shared a powerful success story that reminds us why this work matters so deeply.

Becky worked closely with a mom and dad who were struggling with emotional regulation, communication, and empathy, especially when it came to supporting their child’s mental health and unique identity. At the beginning of the parenting program, both parents were guarded and resistant, firmly rooted in their own beliefs and unsure of how to connect with their child in meaningful ways. But by the fifth session, something remarkable began to happen.

The parents started opening up and began to share their own emotions and challenges, not only with Becky but with each other. They practiced using the tools and strategies discussed in sessions: tools focused on empathy, communication, and healthy emotional responses. Dad, once quick to yell in frustration, started to reflect before reacting. By the end of the program, he proudly shared that he no longer resorted to yelling; instead, he approached his children with calm and patience, meeting them where they were emotionally. Mom, too, learned to connect with her child through effective, compassionate communication. Together, they built a new foundation for their family: one rooted in respect, empathy, and genuine connection.

“This was a big win for the family,” Becky shared. “The transformation in both parents was profound. They went from being stuck in their ways to becoming thoughtful, engaged, and emotionally available to their children.”

Successes like these are at the heart of our mission to empower families with the tools they need to grow, heal, and thrive.

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

