

September 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](#) to learn more.

In this edition:

- **Agency news**
- **Staff celebrations**
- **Fun with foster kids in MCS residential program**
- **Upcoming events**
- **Community spotlight**
- **Program testimonials**

Community Highlights

Back to school is here and our prevention team made sure our Grandparents As Parents families are ready for a strong start! Thanks to the generosity of the Tiny Hands Foundation, we were able to hand out backpacks and essential school supplies to the children and families we serve. Every pencil, notebook, and backpack helps build confidence and sets kids up for success this school year.



We were honored to be selected as a finalist in the Manatee Chamber of Commerce Small Business and Non-Profit of the Year Awards for 2025! Being recognized among so many incredible organizations is a true privilege. Congratulations to all of this year's winners on their well-deserved recognition! A heartfelt thank you to Manatee Chamber of Commerce for hosting such a meaningful celebration, and to our compassionate community for supporting us and helping us reach the top 10 finalists. Your support makes it possible for us to continue our mission of serving children and families in need every day!

MCS Shining Stars

Masters in Social Work

September

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Stephanie Medrano

Katie Kelly

David Suares

Sheena Wilburn

Daina Mitchell

Debbie Ostrander

Colleen Cipriani



Ashley Elling

We're so proud to celebrate Ashlee Elling for recently earning her MSW from the University of South Florida! Her dedication to learning and growing in her field reflects the same commitment she brings to serving and supporting the children and families in our care every day. Congratulations, Ashlee!



Brandon Haynes

Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Congratulations to Brandon Haynes for earning his LCSW credential! As a therapist in our residential program, Brandon provides life-changing support and guidance to children in our care. His hard work, dedication, and passion for helping others continue to inspire us all.

Bonus celebration: Brandon and his wife, MCS Residential Advocate Hilary Haynes, are expecting their first baby in November! Congrats to Brandon on two very special life events!

Big Brothers Big Sisters Big Impact

Children in our Emergency Shelter and Group Homes had a reason to celebrate recently as they were paired with caring mentors through Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Suncoast. These new "Bigs" are providing friendship, guidance, and encouragement to our foster youth, helping them build confidence and create positive connections. The celebration was extra special as one of the mentors was our very own MCS staff member, Karla, whose dedication to children extends beyond her role at the agency. These new relationships mark the beginning of meaningful bonds that will support our kids as they grow, dream, and thrive.



J.MCLAUGHLIN

Sip, Shop and Celebrate SUMMER

Join us for a fun afternoon of sips and shopping with
Orenda Hunniford Independent Sr.Sales
Director,MaryKay Cosmetics

Saturday September 20 from 12-4

J.MCLAUGHLIN

Sarasota

1503 Main Street Sarasota fl 34236

10% of sales will benefit Manatee Childrens
Services

Save
The Date

GROOVIN' FOR GOOD



MCS Child
Advocacy Center



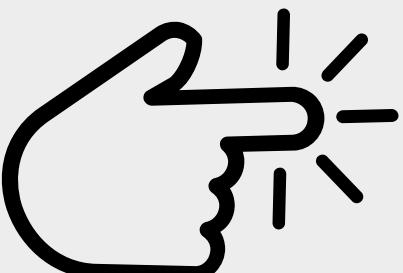
A 70S GALA FOR CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

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



Premier event sponsor

Click here for sponsorships,
tickets, and more event details

Manatee Children's
Services Annual Gala

Groovin' For Good

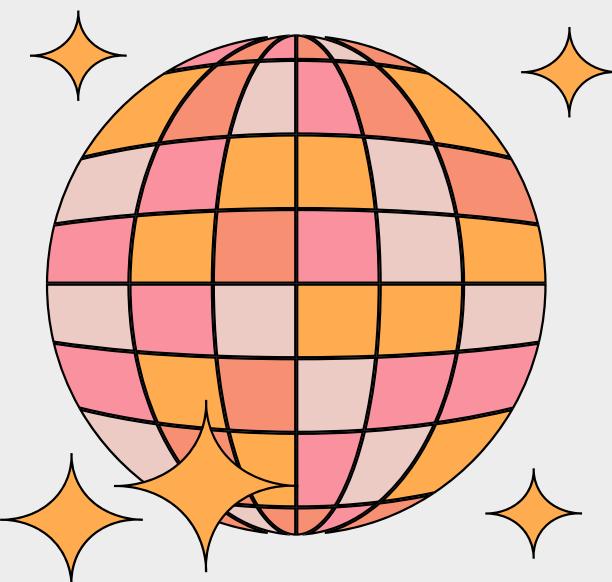
A 70s Gala for
Child Abuse Prevention

Table Sponsors

Stayin' Alive	\$12000
Boogie Wonderland	\$7500
Disco Inferno	\$5000
Saturday Night Fever	\$2500
Peace Love & Disco	\$1000
Disco Hero	\$500
Boogie Backer	\$250
Individual Tickets	\$150

The "Groovin' For Good" gala is more than just a night of disco and fun: it's a powerful opportunity to support child abuse prevention and help children in our community thrive.

Spots are filling quickly! Please see our website for details on each sponsorship type and what your dollars will support. Whether you're a business or an individual, your sponsorship makes a lasting, lifechanging impact.



Groovin' For Good

A 70s Gala for
Child Abuse Protection

Brand Sponsors

Happy Hour Hustle	\$9,000
Disco Memories	\$9,000
Boogie Nights	\$7,500
Solid Gold Gavel	\$6,000
Flower Power & Funk	\$5,000
Sweet Soul	\$4,000
Stationary Disco	\$3,000
Strike-a-Pose	\$3,000
Flashback Video	\$3,000
Cruisin' in Style	\$2,000
Jive Java	\$1,500
Ticket to Funky Town	\$1,000
In-Kind / Custom	\$7,000

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VIP Cocktail Hour: 5:00 pm
\$150 per person

Contact Krista P. or Hannah S. for sponsorships:
kristap@mcsfl.com • hannahs@mcsfl.com



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



KPMG Senior Manager and MCS Board Member, Nathalie Posthuma



This month, we are proud to feature KPMG, a global professional services firm that provides audit, tax, and advisory services to businesses, governments, and nonprofits. With a diverse team of professionals, KPMG is committed to collaboration, innovation, and delivering high-quality service across industries.

We are especially grateful for KPMG's support from their Senior Manager, Nathalie Posthuma, who joined our Board of Directors in February 2025. She shared: "I was inspired to join the board because I have a passion for advocating for the safety and well-being of children, especially those who feel voiceless. Supporting MCS allows me to be part of a mission that gives children the protection, care, and love they deserve."

KPMG also supports a wide range of charities focused on education, health, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, disaster relief, and humanitarian aid. A cornerstone of their community work is the KPMG Family for Literacy (KFL) program, launched in 2008, which has distributed more than 6.5 million books to children in need. Through partnerships with organizations like First Book, and through volunteer reading sessions, fundraisers, and donation drives, KPMG professionals are helping to eradicate childhood illiteracy and empower the next generation of leaders.

Additionally, KPMG sees a crucial need for restoring play and exploration in children's lives: "While our protective instincts are absolutely valid—especially in today's world where safety is a top concern—we've unintentionally created environments where children have fewer opportunities to explore, take risks, and simply be kids," Nathalie said. "Supporting safe, accessible spaces where kids can engage freely and creatively is essential."

Thank you to KPMG for being a trusted organization in our community and their dedication to enriching the lives of children and families.



AGENCY SUCCESS STORIES



Our Spanish-speaking Non-Offending Caregiver (NOC) group therapy sessions provide a safe and supportive space for caregivers of children who have experienced sexual abuse. These groups help families navigate the aftermath of abuse, strengthen their capacity to support their children, and create personalized safety plans to prevent future harm.

One caregiver reflected: “The NOC support group gave me the power to work with my children and be able to speak with them about the abuse. I want to practice all the learning to prevent future incidents. I advise other parents to be informed about those topics, not only when something like that happens. I think these classes must be part of our education as parents to prevent sexual abuse in our children.”

For many Hispanic and Latinx families, cultural and language barriers often make it difficult to access the help they need. By offering groups in Spanish and tailoring them to be culturally sensitive, we are breaking down barriers and ensuring every family has access to healing, education, and support. Testimonials like these remind us why expanding access to culturally responsive therapy is vital — because no family should ever have to walk this journey alone.



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

