

July 2026



THE MCS INSIDER

Manatee Children's Services' Monthly Newsletter



Our History and Mission

Preventing child abuse, restoring healing, and strengthening all children and their families through advocacy, treatment, and shelter.

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.

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CHRISTMAS IN JULY: GIVING HOPE WHEN IT MATTERS MOST



At Manatee Children's Services, we meet children during some of the most difficult moments of their lives: when safety feels uncertain and hope can seem out of reach.

That's why Christmas in July is so important. While the holiday season is still months away, the children in our care need comfort, stability, and support *right now*.

For nearly 50 years, MCS has provided safety, healing, and hope to children impacted by abuse and neglect. We give hope and change these children's lives by helping them rebuild their lives and envision brighter futures.

This July, we invite you to make an even greater impact:

- Increase your annual or monthly gift to help us reach more children in crisis.
- Become a monthly donor and provide reliable support all year long.
- Maximize your generosity through the Flanzer Philanthropic Trust, which can match gifts up to \$1,000 per household annually.

Giving monthly helps daily. Here are ways you can change lives through monthly support:

<p>\$10</p> <p>SUPPORTS A BIRTHDAY GIFT FOR A CHILD</p>	<p>\$50</p> <p>FUNDS COMMUNITY PREVENTION EDUCATION</p>
<p>\$100</p> <p>PROVIDES THERAPY SUPPLIES FOR VICTIMS</p>	<p>\$300</p> <p>FEEDS A FOSTER CHILD FOR ONE YEAR</p>

Every gift brings hope, and every act of generosity reminds a child they are not alone.

Will you help make this Christmas in July a season of hope for the children who need it most?



Increase your support now!
www.mcsfl.com/donate

Double your gift through Flanzer: (terms and conditions apply)





IMPACT IN ACTION



MCS staff Britney Guerra, Hannah Sarmiento, Kimberly Griffin, and Krista Post traveled to Washington, DC, to attend the National Children’s Alliance Leadership Conference, joining Child Advocacy Center professionals from across the country who are united in their commitment to protecting children and strengthening families.

The conference provided valuable opportunities for learning, collaboration, and sharing best practices that help CACs deliver the highest level of care and support to children and families. Through educational sessions and networking with peers nationwide, our team gained insights that will strengthen our programs and services here in Manatee County.

As part of the conference, the MCS team also participated in Hill Day, where CAC leaders meet directly with members of Congress to discuss issues affecting children, families, and victim services programs across the nation. These conversations help ensure that the voices and needs of the children we serve are represented at the federal level. Our team had the opportunity to meet with Congressman Greg Steube and Congressman Vern Buchanan to express our gratitude for their support of Child Advocacy Centers and for sponsoring H.R. 909, legislation designed to strengthen funding for the Crime Victims Fund, which supports critical victim service programs nationwide.

These meaningful conversations reinforced the importance of collaboration between community organizations, advocates, and policymakers. By working together, we can secure resources, strengthen systems of care, and create brighter futures for children and families. Together, we are building stronger teams, stronger communities, and stronger futures for the children we serve.



A NIGHT OF COMMUNITY WITH SARASOTA PARADISE



MCS was honored to be the beneficiary of Sarasota Paradise's Charity Night. We are incredibly grateful to the organization, players, and fans who came together to support our mission and the children and families we serve throughout Manatee County.

The evening was a wonderful celebration of community, generosity, and shared purpose. Support from events like this helps us continue providing safety, care, and hope to children and families who are at risk of or have experienced abuse.

Seeing so many community members rally around our mission was a powerful reminder of the impact we can make when we work together. The enthusiasm and support shown throughout the evening reflected the compassion that makes our community so special.

We extend our sincere thanks to Sarasota Paradise and their dedicated fans for making this event such a success. Your partnership helps strengthen our ability to serve local children and families and creates brighter opportunities for the future.

Together, we are making a difference in the lives of Manatee County children.

MCS IN THE COMMUNITY



Last month, MCS joined the Safe Children's Coalition's 6th Annual Family Reunification Celebration where families enjoyed a day filled with fun activities, special guests, and meaningful moments together. Freckles the Clown kept children smiling while Mr. Pickles, the therapy mini horse, quickly became a crowd favorite!

Our Parenting Program team was proud to participate alongside Safe Children's Coalition as part of our reunification efforts, supporting families as they build stronger connections and brighter futures.

Family reunification is a reminder that with support, resources, and encouragement, families can grow, heal, and thrive together.



SUMMER SPORTS, LIFELONG MEMORIES



At MCS, we know meaningful experiences can have a lasting impact on the children in our residential program. Thanks to the generosity of community partners and supporters, our youth recently enjoyed unforgettable moments through two local sports experiences.

One highlight was a visit to a Tampa Bay Rays game, where one of our teens experienced a moment they will never forget when a Rays player tossed them a baseball. The excitement, surprise, and joy on their face was priceless. Simple moments like these create positive memories and remind our children that they are seen, valued, and supported.



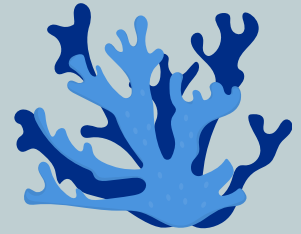
Our youth also had the opportunity to attend Sarasota Paradise Charity Night, where they had the chance to meet players, collect autographs, and interact with team members after the game. For the children we serve, these personal interactions create lasting memories and reinforce a sense of belonging.

We are incredibly grateful to Sarasota Paradise, the Tampa Bay Rays, our staff, and all of the supporters who help make opportunities like these possible. Community experiences allow foster youth to explore new interests, build positive relationships, and create joyful memories that last a lifetime.



BE PART OF A MILESTONE CELEBRATION

For nearly five decades, Manatee Children's Services has been a source of safety, healing, and hope for children and families affected by or at risk of experiencing abuse. In February 2027, we will celebrate this extraordinary legacy at Mote SEA with a gala honoring 50 years of protecting children, strengthening families, and building hope in Manatee County.



Waves of Hope
Cheers to 50 Years!

A gala celebrating 50 years of impact at Manatee Children's Services with an evening of hope, community, and support for child abuse prevention.

February 20, 2027
6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Mote SEA
225 University Town Center Dr., Sarasota, FL 34243

\$175 per ticket, \$325 per couple
Early bird pricing until December 1st

\$200 per ticket, \$375 per couple
After December 1st

Visit www.auctria.events/mcsgala2027
or email kristap@mcsfl.com
for more information
Dress code: Cocktail Attire

MANATEE CHILDREN'S SERVICES

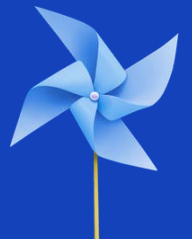
As the home of Manatee County's only Child Advocacy Center, MCS is a safe, compassionate place where children who have experienced abuse or are at risk can receive critical support, advocacy, and healing services. This milestone event will shine a spotlight on our important work and the community partners whose dedication has made it possible for the past 50 years.

As an early sponsor, you'll help ensure the success of this historic celebration while demonstrating your commitment to protecting children and strengthening families in our community.

Contact kristap@mcsfl.com to secure your sponsorship that supports creating a memorable evening and a brighter future for Manatee County's children and families.



THROUGH THE EYES OF AN MCS THERAPIST



As a trauma-focused therapist working with children and families in our community, I have the privilege of witnessing not only the pain that young people carry, but also their incredible capacity to heal when they're given the right support.

One youth I worked with came to services as a survivor of significant trauma. When we first met, they were guarded, withdrawn, and made it very clear that therapy was not something they believed in. The only agreement we could reach was that they would attend six sessions, and then they were done.

Trust did not come easily, nor was it expected to. Healing rarely begins with confidence; it begins with showing up. But over time, something shifted.

Instead of walking away, this young person made a different choice: they chose to stay and chose to keep going.

Session by session, they began to realize that what had happened to them did not define who they were. As trust grew, so did their confidence, resilience, and belief in their own future. By the end of therapy, success was not about completing a program; it was about reclaiming a sense of control, self-worth, and hope.

This is the impact your support makes possible. It supports the moments that often go unseen: the quiet breakthroughs, the trust that takes time to build, and the healing that happens when specialized, consistent, and accessible services are available to those who need them most.

Without these resources, many young people may never stay long enough to experience that transformation. Because of your generosity, they can. And that makes all the difference.

-Britney Guerra
MCS Child and Family Therapist

Caradine Allen
Crystal Alvarez
Kathleen Bartz
Rebecca Blanco
Allison Bloski
Katearia Butler
Courtney Cox
Pamela Nelson

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