

March 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.

In this edition:

- February recap
- New board member spotlight
- March fundraisers
- Upcoming events: Child Abuse Prevention Month
- Community spotlight
- Save the Date: 2026 Giving Challenge

Thank You

FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We extend our heartfelt thanks to these incredible community partners for their generous support of MCS. The Cresswind Pickleball Team raised an impressive \$6,500 for our programs through their recent charity tournaments, even while competing on a blustery day! We are also grateful to Comida, whose restaurant giveback event brought in more than \$500 to support the children and families we serve. We are so thankful for community members who turn their passion and generosity into meaningful impact.



Welcome to our team

MCS Board of Directors



MCS is pleased to welcome Brandy Britton to our Board of Directors. Brandy is Co-Owner and Director of Community Engagement at Bringman Roofing, a trusted Florida roofing company that has served residential and commercial clients since 1974. She plays a key part in strengthening client relationships, building strategic partnerships, and leading community outreach efforts across Manatee and Sarasota counties.

Brandy brings a strong background in nonprofit support and advocacy, and she is passionate about initiatives that uplift children and families. She is actively involved in local chambers, business organizations, and charitable events, helping connect businesses with opportunities to create meaningful community impact.

Her commitment to service extends beyond her professional work. Brandy's desire to serve on the MCS Board is rooted in her previous nonprofit experience in Kentucky, where she worked in fund development supporting efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. She is driven by the belief that every child deserves the opportunity to grow up healthy, safe, and free from the trauma of abuse.

"Every child deserves to grow up healthy and happy without the trauma of abuse," Brandy shared. "We need to educate our communities that not all children have the same start in life, and it takes all of us to advocate for and love them where they are."

Brandy was born and raised in Ohio and spent 38 years living in Kentucky before relocating to Bradenton three years ago. She holds a bachelor's degree in Public Relations. She and her husband are proud parents of two sons, and she describes her greatest joys as being a wife and mother. Known for her leadership, integrity, and heart for service, Brandy is committed to protecting what matters most – both through quality roofing solutions and through investing in the community she now proudly calls home.

Heroic Flags were a highlight at our gala, and they sold fast! Now, you have another chance to bring one home while supporting children and families in Manatee County.

MCS has partnered again with Heroic Flags, a local, family-owned business that hand-carves each flag to honor service, sacrifice, and community. 15% of every purchase made by selecting MCS at checkout goes directly to support our child abuse prevention programs.

Don't miss out! These one-of-a-kind flags are more than art: they're a symbol of hope and impact. Order yours today at <https://www.heroicflags.com/>.

FUNDRAISER



15%
TO MCS



**GET A BEAUTIFUL
HAND CRAFTED
FLAG!**

PROMO CODE: MCS

**SUPPORT HEROIC FLAGS MISSION
TO HONOR THOSE WHO SERVE**

WWW.HEROICFLAGS.COM

DECLUTTER FOR A CAUSE



FUNDRAISER FOR MANATEE CHILDREN'S SERVICES

COLLECT ITEMS

Gather clothing, shoes, linens, towels, bags, and textiles.

SCHEDULE

Bag items and schedule your FREE porch pickup at JustPorchIt.com/MCS

WAIT FOR PICKUP

Place bags on your porch on pickup day

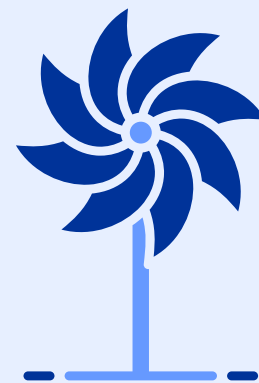


Select Manatee Children's Services when booking.

Each scheduled pickup generates donations that support MCS intervention, shelter, treatment, and prevention programs for children and families affected by or at risk of child abuse.



JOIN US THIS APRIL FOR NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



Since 1983, April has been dedicated to raising awareness and preventing child abuse. The national Pinwheels for Prevention campaign encourages businesses and individuals to show their support for child abuse prevention and healthy child development by displaying pinwheels in their lawns. Led by Prevent Child Abuse Florida, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, and the Florida Department of Children and Families, this campaign highlights programs that strengthen and support children and families. Pinwheels displayed across the state serve as powerful reminders of the safe, happy childhoods every child deserves.

Throughout the month, we encourage community members, partners, and supporters to join us in spreading awareness, supporting families in need, and learning how we can all play a role in protecting children. Please be sure to check the following pages for Save the Date information about upcoming events and ways to get involved during National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Prevention begins with strong families, supportive neighbors, and communities that are willing to step in and help. Together, we can help create safer, healthier futures for children in our community.



Click QR code to make a gift for
National Child Abuse Prevention
Month at MCS



Bradenton: Come Walk with Us to Prevent Abuse & Protect Childhood!

Join the Lauren's Kids Foundation, Manatee Children's Services, Centerstone, and thousands of walkers across the state for the **2026 Walk in My Shoes** 1,500-mile trek across Florida. April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month and National Child Abuse Prevention Month — every step counts in the fight to prevent child sexual abuse and help survivors heal.



Date:
Wednesday,
April 8, 2026

Time:
Registration Begins: 2:30 PM
Walk Starts: 3:30 PM

Starting Location:
Manatee Children's Services
1227 9th Ave W • Bradenton, FL 34205

Walk Information: Join us for a 4-mile walk to the 13th Avenue Dream Center (922 24th St E Bradenton, FL 34208)! An UBER code will be provided to walkers to cover the cost of a ride back from the walk.

Visit LaurensKidsWalk.org to register & learn more! LAUREN'S KIDS



ZUMBA

DANCE for CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION



With Krista, Nina,
& special guest
instructors



Wear blue and join us for our 4th annual Zumbathon to benefit Child Abuse Prevention Month. Open to the public: no membership required!

Sunday, April 12th, 9:30 - 10:45 a.m.

Crunch Fitness at University
8440 Lockwood Ridge Rd, Sarasota, FL 34243

REGISTER HERE >

\$20 suggested donation

mcszumba2026.auctria.events



PIZZA WITH A PURPOSE



A Fundraiser for



Join us for a fun-filled event featuring delicious food and drinks from Mellow Mushroom, exciting prizes, and a special auction showcasing original artwork by a talented local artist, JLu Watercolors, all in support of a great cause.

\$35 ticket includes food, open bar, and a chance to win prizes

*When: April 15th
Where: Mellow Mushroom,
6727 S Tamiami Trl,
Sarasota, FL 34231
Time: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM*

SCAN FOR TICKETS



Mellow MUSHROOM.
PIZZA BAKERS | SARASOTA, FL



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



Since 1953, Icard Merrill has been delivering innovative and effective legal solutions through a team of dedicated and caring professionals. With comprehensive legal experience across multiple practice areas, the firm is committed not only to serving clients, but also to strengthening the communities where they live and work.

Icard Merrill's guiding philosophy is captured in their tagline: "Caring. Innovative. Professional." More than just a positioning statement, this philosophy reflects how the firm approaches both legal service and community engagement. Caring for communities is a core value that naturally extends into supporting nonprofit organizations throughout Sarasota, Manatee, and surrounding counties. The firm is especially passionate about supporting charities that create meaningful, lasting impact for children, families, and individuals in need. Many of the organizations Icard Merrill supports have served the region for decades, helping provide stability, opportunity, and essential services to local residents.

Icard Merrill's connection to MCS grew from its long history of involvement within Manatee County and our desire to deepen community relationships.

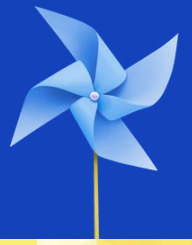
"MCS provides critical, life-changing services for children and families navigating difficult and complex circumstances," Beth Douglas, Marketing Director, shared. "The organization's mission to protect children, support healing, and help families overcome trauma is one that strongly aligns with Icard Merrill's values, inspiring the firm's support of MCS's annual gala and programs."

Beth observed that there is growing demand in our community for services that provide emotional support, crisis intervention, and educational assistance for children and youth, particularly those facing economic or social challenges. She stated that organizations like MCS play a vital role in meeting these needs by providing safety, stability, and opportunities for healing.

Through partnership, generosity, and shared community values, Icard Merrill continues to help build a stronger future for local families and children. Please visit www.icardmerrill.com for more information.



GIVING CHALLENGE 2026: SAVE THE DATE



We're excited to participate in the 10th annual Giving Challenge, a 24-hour online giving event hosted by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County from noon on April 15 to noon on April 16, 2026. The Giving Challenge brings together neighbors across Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties to support local nonprofits and strengthen our community.

One of the most powerful parts of the Giving Challenge is the matching gifts from The Patterson Foundation. For every unique donation of \$25 to \$100 made online during the 24-hour period, the foundation will match it 1:1, with no limit on the number of matches our organization can receive, meaning your gift can go twice as far!

Mark your calendar, invite your friends, and get ready to double your impact. Every contribution helps fuel essential services and community support right here at home.

MANATEE CHILDREN'S SERVICES
A Nonprofit Child Advocacy Center

2026 GIVING CHALLENGE
Be The One

Presented by the
Community Foundation of Sarasota County

**CONNECT, COLLABORATE,
COME TOGETHER!**

NOON TO NOON • APRIL 15 – 16

VISIT GIVINGCHALLENGE.ORG

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

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



Happy Birthday

Frankie Duffy	Aryana Lloyd
Chrislande Charles	Celeste Martens
Ashlee Elling	Leslie Waiters
Celia Gomez-Colon	