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# United for Families Connector

January-March 2008

Volume 2, Issue 1

## United for Families Hosts 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual 5K Run and 1 Mile Walk

United for Families' campaign to increase awareness of child abuse prevention gears up March 15 with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Stop the Tears 5K Run and 1 Mile Walk.

The event, which features a festival of live entertainment, vendors and a bounce house, is scheduled from 5-9 p.m. in Tradition.

United for Families is the lead child-welfare agency serving every known abused and neglected child on the Treasure Coast and Okeechobee County. The event is part of the agency's Stop the Tears campaign, which kicks off National Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month and runs through April. The campaign serves

as a reminder that child abuse is prevalent throughout our community.

The first 125 entries will receive a free event T-shirt and goodie bag. Event sponsors include Tropicana, Little Caesar's Pizza, Cost Cutters and Home-Crete Homes.



More than 150 runners and walkers participated in the 2007 Stop the Tears 5K.

Schedule

Registration: 4-5 p.m.

Run: 5 p.m.

Awards: 5:45 p.m.

Walk: 6 p.m.

Kids Races: 6:30 p.m.

Proceeds from the event will help fund programs that support foster parents, send children to camp, provide child safety seats and support grandparents and other relatives who care for children in the court dependency system. For more information, call Leslie Haviland-Smith at 398-2920 Ext. 292 or register online at [www.unitedforfamilies.org](http://www.unitedforfamilies.org).

## Year-end should not be a taxing situation

*Contributed by the Portfolio Management Group*

Did you know that the Supreme Court ruled the income tax unconstitutional? That's right. The highest court in the land said that you could hold on to every cent of the money you earned. No questions asked.

Don't pull a muscle jumping for joy just yet, however, because the court's decision to end the income tax was rendered back in 1895, and the income tax was re-enacted in 1913.

That year, Congress, authorized by the 16th Amendment, issued the first 1040 form to collect the 1 percent levied on net personal incomes above \$3,000 with a 6 percent surtax on incomes above \$500,000.

**Year-end Tax Planning Checklist**

Consider funding retirement plans that allow pretax contributions.

*Determine if you're subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax.*

Consider funding your flexible spending accounts.

*Talk to your financial adviser about giving appreciated to charity.*

Ask about a tax-advantaged 529 College Savings Plan.

*Consider losses on securities you may want to sell. Your adviser can guide you through the process of avoiding potential "wash sale" violations.*

If you're 70 1/2 or older, ask your adviser about taking a required minimum distribution from your Traditional, SEP or Simple IRA.

*Ask your adviser about transferring Traditional IRA withdrawals tax-free to your favorite charity.*

If you expect a tax bill in 2008, ask your financial adviser about paying it without liquidating assets.

In 1918, the income tax rose as high as 77 percent to help fund World War I and was later expanded to include payroll withholding and quarterly tax payments.

Today, the Internal Revenue Service processes more than 200 million tax returns and collects trillions of dollars in revenue. It enforces hundreds of tax codes and can elicit sweaty palms for individuals and professional tax preparers. Albert Einstein once said, "The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax."

To help ease you into tax season, the Portfolio Management Group of Citi Smith Barney offers the following year-end tax planning checklist to consider and discuss with your tax professional.



Above are a collection of pictures from the 2007 holiday season. Top: Santa makes a visit to the St. Lucie County Foster Family Christmas Party; Pictures 2-3: UFF honors more than 30 holiday sponsors at its Jan. 10 holiday appreciation breakfast; Pictures 4-5: United for Families' smallest volunteers, including Emily Batton and Brittany Krumme, participated in the holiday parades.

## Holiday shines on kids in foster care

More than 100 local businesses, individuals and organizations joined forces this holiday season to provide nearly 4,000 gifts to children under the protective services of United for Families.

"This project impacts children on a very personal level, and we're thrilled that our community is able to be a part of that," said Lea Ely, United for Families Community Resource Coordinator. "We couldn't do any of this without the help of the community."

United for Families serves 1,380 children in both in-home and out-of-home care.

That includes children in foster care, those living with relatives and neighbors and children who still live at home but whose families receive services because they are at risk of abuse or neglect. A total of 125 organizations, mostly corporations and small businesses, participated in United for Families' holiday programs. That's up from 120 organizations in

2006. Together, they donated \$100,000 worth of gifts and financial contributions. United for Families engages community participation through two holiday programs. Making Christmas Bright targets large local corporations. Participating businesses organize employee toy drives or sponsor entire caseloads, usually 30 children. Adopt a Family is a direct sponsorship of local foster homes. Participating businesses and individuals "adopt" the foster children in individual foster homes for the holiday season.

## UFF volunteers roll united through parades

United for Families floated into the holiday season Dec. 2 and 7 with its Key West-themed entries in the Fort Pierce and Stuart Christmas parades.

The float, a 16-foot long trailer, featured a pink and yellow playhouse and a sand yard, sand castle, tropical Santa and sand man. It was crafted by several United for Families volunteers and Homecrete Homes.

More than 30 children and teenagers participated in the United for Families entry. The entry did not win any of the parade awards, but United for Families staff was proud of its accomplishments.

"Last year we just wanted to get our name out there, so we borrowed a truck from Toyota of Stuart, slapped



Rechtien Trucks International pulled the UFF holiday float.

some lights on it, dressed up a few kids and threw them in the back of the truck," said Christina Kaiser, Community Development Director for the agency. "This year we had a terrific float, created by an incredibly creative and hard-working committee."

Committee members include: Kelly Krumme, Jennifer Lipscomb and Katherine and Larry Fryer.

The house used on the float was built by HomeCrete Homes and was later raffled off by United for Families. The estimated value of the donation was \$8,000. Yvonne Escobar was the lucky winner.



Robert Cenk, Kelly Krumme and Patricia Ostrander, of HomeCrete Homes, helped organize the project.

## Mother of three wins raffled playhouse

United for Families raffled a custom-made playhouse Dec. 11 during the Stuart/Martin County Chamber of Commerce breakfast. Yvonne Escobar, a UFF contract manager, won the raffle.

“This came at a great time of the year,” Escobar said. “My 17 month old son and my 8 year twins will be so excited, they’ll want to play in it immediately.”

HomeCrete Homes, in coordination with Green Block Worldwide and Insulated Concrete Walls, will custom build an 8-foot by 8-foot playhouse for Escobar’s three children. HomeCrete also will pull the necessary permits and pour a slab of concrete.

The playhouse, which raised \$1,000 for United for Families, will be designed with the same storm-proof

features that go into all of HomeCrete’s single-family homes, said Kelly Krumme, the HomeCrete representative who helped coordinate the project.

“United for Families builds strong families and HomeCrete Homes builds strong homes,” Krumme said. “It was just a natural fit for us, and we had a lot of fun doing it.”

## United for Families hosts holiday book fair

Celebrated children's wildlife author and photographer Michael Patrick O'Neill signed books Dec. 9 at Barnes and Nobles Booksellers during a children's book fair hosted by United for Families.

The book fair, one of two United for Families hosts annually, sold more than \$2,000 in books and raised about \$220 in store credit for the agency's Bookworm Babies Birthday Club. The program mails new books to foster children during their birthday month.

O'Neill, winner of the 2002 BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, is a renowned wildlife and underwater photographer. His children's books include, *Fishy Friends*, *All About Sea Life*, *Shark Encounters* and *Ocean Magic*.

The Dec. 9 event was the second United for Families book fair to be hosted at the Jensen Beach bookstore. The next scheduled book fair is March 8. Please join us. Any purchases you make during our fair will count toward our program.

The birthday program, which began three years ago, ensures that every child in foster care receives a new book during his or her birthday month, said Lea Ely, United for Families Community Resource Coordinator.

United for Families' March book fair will feature children's activities, book read-



Jennifer Lipscomb, a UFF volunteer and mother of two, reads to children during the book fair.

ings and a wish list of books United for Families would like to give foster children.

Volunteers from RV Johnson Insurance will help organize the project on behalf of United for Families.

RV Johnson has been a long-time United for Families supporter. In 2006, the Stuart-based business financed and helped create the first of five United for Families' donations closets, which provide clothing, shoes, toys, diapers, baby equipment and other essential items to children and families in care.

Visit the United for Families table to receive your free voucher or visit the events page later this month at [www.unitedforfamilies.org](http://www.unitedforfamilies.org) to print additional vouchers.

## Book Fair Pictures



Angela Rowe helps children make bookmarks during the book fair.



Jennifer Lipscomb assembles the United for Families information table at the Dec. 9 event.

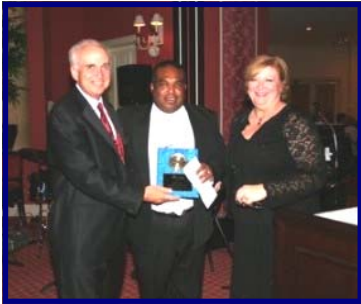


UFF Community Resource Coordinator Lea Ely organizes the book fair, which will be repeated March 8.

# Second annual gala experienced swell in attendance



From left, Matt and Kelly Krumme and Christina and Michael Kaiser don masks at the 2007 Toyota of Stuart Le Bal Masque.



Barry Grant, left, and Christine Demetriades present the Case Manager of the Year Award to Andrew Givans.



From left, Rep. Gayle Harrell, Steve Doyle and Sylvie Kramer at the gala.

Mystery lurked around every black-and-silver-draped corner Oct. 27, when United for Families unveiled the Second Annual Toyota of Stuart Le Bal Masque at Willoughby Golf Club.

More than 140 guests, including Rep. Gayle Harrell, attended the fundraiser, which drew nearly \$18,000 for the non-profit agency. That was a 40 percent increase in attendance from 2006's 100 guests.

The event featured an award ceremony for the agency's Case Manager of the Year. St. Lucie County Dependency Case Manager Andrew Givans was awarded the honor for his exemplary work with children and families.

"If we are serious about improving the lives of children who enter the dependency system, then we must work hard to improve the workplace for those who are responsible for them," UFF Chief Executive Officer Christine Demetriades said of the award.

Givans' employer, Family Preservation Services, is part of United for Families' network of providers. UFF created the award as a way to recognize the efforts of case managers, who coordinate services for children in the court system.

"We thought it was time they were rewarded for the hard work they do," Demetriades said. "They are an essential piece of the child-welfare system."

**Phantom Sponsor**  
Toyota of Stuart

**Diva Sponsors**  
East Coast Paving  
Rosenthal, Levy & Simon  
Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers

Global Safety LLC  
Providence Service Corp  
Cloudspace  
Riverside National Bank

Treasure Coast Square  
The Sade Group at citi smith barney  
House Wall Garage System  
Culpepper & Terpening Inc.



Top from left, Denise Rivan, Stacey Howe and Miguel Rivan don masks for a picture during the Toyota of Stuart Le Bal Masque. Bottom, Rene Proulx wins a second case manager of the quarter award Jan. 17.



**Case Manager of the Quarter**  
**Rene Proulx**

Rene Proulx, a dependency case manager for Children's Home Society, was awarded the United for Families Case Manager of the Quarter Award Jan. 17 at a drug trends in-service training.

United for Families created the award as a way to recognize and better support the efforts of dependency case managers, who coordinate services for children in the dependency court system.

It was the second time Proulx won the award, which has become the centerpiece of United for Families' program to train and retain quality social workers and stabilize the child-welfare system for children.

"Rene is really level-headed; he doesn't let things get to him," said Rob Stewart, Proulx's supervisor. "He just does his work, and he does it very well - not just because it's a job, but because he really cares."

**United for Families Wish List**

Diapers	Event Sponsors
Baby Wipes	School Supplies
New Cribs	Back Packs
Twin Beds	Parade Float
New Car Seats	Refrigerator

Truck or Van to pick up donations  
Medicaid Dental Providers  
Rubbermaid Shelving Units  
Plastic Storage Bins  
Full Size Toiletries—soap, shampoo, deodorant, shaving gel, facial soap  
School uniforms—Collared Polo Shirts, khaki and navy blue pants, shorts, skirts  
Teen Boys and Girls Clothing

For more information, contact Lea Ely, (772) 398-2920, Ext. 297

## Volunteer Spotlight

### Kristi Lewallen

By Linda Smith, volunteer coordinator —

From volunteering in our office to helping set up our booth at festivals to packing toys in a truck for the Making Christmas Bright Toy Drive, Kristi Lewallen has been there - greeting us with a smile.



“There is no task too large for Kristi,” Community Resource Coordinator Lea Ely said. “If it needs to be done, she does it.”

Kristi joined the United for Families volunteer program in 2007 with her family, David and Debbie Lewallen and brother Nicholas. She is active with Grapevine Community Methodist Church, and is always dependable.



Above — United for Families Systems Administrator Tammy Tappan and Case Manager Supervisor Elizabeth Holzapfel. Below— case managers browse the picnic buffet under a UFF sign. Right—Case Manager Supervisor Rob Stewart stops for a picture.



Case managers closed many cases in 2007, bringing the average caseload districtwide to just more than 1300. United for Families celebrated this achievement with a picnic last November.

### 1300 Club Case Manager Picnic



## Volunteer Corner—Orientation & Opportunities

The year 2007 was a busy time for the United for Families volunteer program. We saw a 300 percent increase in volunteers, from 50 to 150! These volunteers helped with an assortment of projects, from building a parade float and coordinating raffles to stuffing envelopes and scrap-booking event mementoes. Our volunteer base allows us greater visibility in the community. Thanks to you, we were present at more than 200 community events!

We are most excited about the impact that vol-

unteers are having in our Independent Living Program. This program uses mentors to teach the ABCs of adulthood to children aging out of the foster-care system. The next Volunteer Life Coach training session is set for 9:30– 11 a.m., Feb.16 at 10570 S. Federal Hwy., third floor board room.

If you are interested in becoming a life coach, please contact Linda Smith at 398-2920 Ext. 207. Volunteers are required to attend an orientation session prior to volunteering.

**Orientation Sessions**

- Feb. 11, 6-8 p.m.
- Feb. 28, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- Mar. 10, 6-8 p.m.
- Apr. 14, 6-8 p.m.
- Apr. 24, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**Volunteer Opportunities**

- St. Lucie County Fair**  
Feb. 22 – March 2
- Stop the Tears 5K Run & Family Festival**  
March 15, Tradition
- Downtown Vero Beach**  
March 22
- Sandy Shoes Festival**  
March 22-23



## Stop the Tears Campaign 2008

United for Families will celebrate National Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month with a series of activities and events designed to **stop the tears** in our community.

Although National Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month is April, United for Families will kick the campaign off March 15 with the Stop the Tears 5K Run and 1 Mile Walk, which will include children's races and a family festival in Tradition.

A solemn ribbon-tying ceremony will follow at 9 a.m. March 27 at United for Families' headquarters building in Port St. Lucie. Volunteers, supporters and community members are encouraged to attend this very moving ceremony. Guests will pin blue ribbons to a tree for each child in local foster care.

Next, look and listen for United for Families ads and information in print, radio and television throughout the month of April.

Finally, United for Families, in partnership with Cost Cutters and more than 10 women-owned businesses in Martin County, will bring the Stop the Tears campaign to a close at 5:30 p.m. April 24 with a Mothers Day benefit at Indian Riverside Park in Jensen Beach. Proceeds from the event will benefit United for Families.

For information, please call Leslie Haviland-Smith at 398-2920 Ext. 292.



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www.unitedforfamilies.org

*Our Mission:  
To break the cycle of child  
abuse through a diverse  
network of  
community partners and  
innovative services.*

## Caregiver Support

### *A look at where your money goes*

The Caregiver Support Program aims to increase the stability of children in the local child welfare system by making it easier for caregivers to care for them.

It does this by improving the retention rate of all out-of-home caregivers. This is achieved by providing peer mentors to both licensed foster parents and to relative and non-relative caregivers (a non-relative caregiver is a caregiver is not related to the child but is not a licensed foster parent — usually a neighbor or family friend.)

The program is locally supported by the children's services councils of Martin, Indian River and Okeechobee counties and the United Way of St. Lucie County.

Now in its third year, the program is showing remarkable success. Since the program was created, placement disruptions — or the number of times children bounce from home to home — have decreased by more than 30 percent. In fact, 94 percent of children in the program in 2006-2007 did not experience disruptions. Furthermore, the number of active foster homes has increased dramatically. For example, only 52 percent of foster homes in Martin County actively took children in 2006-2007. Currently, 95 percent of homes have children.



*Registration is now available online for  
**Stop the Tears 5K Run/1 Mile Walk***

*Please visit us at [www.unitedforfamilies.org](http://www.unitedforfamilies.org)*

*Want to sponsor? Contact Leslie (772) 398-2920*

## United for Families thanks its October-December 2007 contributors

Toyota of Stuart	Lauren Primato	Nicholas Lewallen	Bunnie Chamberlain	Erma Durcan
Nancy Willmore	Nancy Neeley	Mr. and Mrs. Phillip	Joseph Rios	Sally Vosatka
Sparemakers Bowling	Deborah Reyner	Harvey	Carol Ryan	Vanessa Paladino
Lisa Ewell	Waterblasting Tech- nologies	Mr. and Mrs. Mel De- metriades	Liz Velez	Lara Derasmo
Michelle Franklin	Pat Decambre	Mr. and Mrs. Michael	Moe's Southwest Grill	Breonna Dowdy
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Rosalind's Downtown Fitness	Noslyn Andino	Jill Feaster-Poole	The Fryer Family	Anthony Pieri Family
The Sade Group at citi	Pro Mortgage Re- sources	Sarah Schwartz	Stacy Shearer	Wilfredo Irizarry
Smith Barney	Marjorie Skillman	Sally Savage	Jennifer Lipscomb	Danielle Hunter Family
Buford Construction	Debbie Lewallen	Katharine Caplinger	Jensen Beach Chamber	Michael Bradley
Bank of America	Emily Kaiser	Bruce Roder	Pauline McIntosh	Nita Denton
Coca Cola Bottling Co.	Delores Laderer	Grace Alleshouse	Lauren Gawel	Harry Daye Family
The Grace Place	Emily Kaiser	Sweet Smiles	Cheryl Sands	Dominick Paolucci
Premier Lab Supply	Nicole Edwards	Children's Services	Faith's House of Or- chids	Marvin Clark Family
So. Fl Orthopaedics	Global Safety	Council of St. Lucie County	Healthy Pet Net	Albert Delmaestro
Crown Trophy	Carla McHale	Brownie Troop 175	Dillard's	Dominos Pizza
HomeCrete Homes	Gary Vernon	Jeremy Kitchen	Lauren Rowe	Crislip Glass Inc.
The Kaiser Family	Kay Williams	Savannah Kitchen	Red Lobster	Riverside National Bank
The Rees Family	Anacleto Paras	Gail Neward	Eiise Marie Raffa	Stephanie Liscio
Rinker Materials	Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Smith	Jennifer Corkern	Kelsey White	Verlie Reese
Donna Eprifania	TooJay's	Betsy Grana	Shawnell Johnson	Corey Jacobson
Miami Dolphins	Big Boy Subs	Margo Keane	Danielle Gray	Rick Rosemont
Wannado City	Entertainment Connec- tions	Erika Platock	Amber Lyn Pitcher	Martin County High School
Willoughby Golf Club	Lisa Thornton	Veronica Gutierrez	Lauren Kanzler	Maria D'Amato-Schwab
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The Sleigh Family	Linda Seraphin	Samantha Ann Diaz	Megan McSherry	QVC
Serendipity	Mr. and Mrs. Jorge	Corey Alloe	Katie Goode	TIC
Therapeutic Massage	Rivera	Judy Wallace	Erma Durcan	Pursuit Boats
Stuart Yacht Club	Sandra Miller	Hoskins and Turco	Electrolysis and Laser Center	St. Andrews Episcopal Manatee Floors
Treasure Coast Radia- tion and Oncology	Seacoast National Bank	Katherine Baker	Church Women United	St. Josephs Catholic Church
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La Buona Vita	Kaitlyn Neeley	Lori Troup	Church of Stuart	Oxford Academy
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Violet Smith	Boy Scout Troop 475	Love Doctors Charities	Solange Prado	Pinewood Elementary K- Kids Club
American Legion SLC	Nisair Air Conditioning	Gerelco Electrical Con- tractors	Venture Auto Sales	Love Lifted Me Inc.
Treasure Coast Coat- ings Inc.	Girl Scout Troop 127	Boys and Girls Club of SLC	Apple Tree Academy	Shaffer Automotive
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Tree Planters of So. Fla	A Visiting Redi Nurse	Girl Scout Troop 385	Palm City Law	Southeastern Printing
Eckerd Leadership Program	Moose Lodge 513	Post Insurance & Finan- cial	Lenco Marine	Mercy Christian Fellow- ship
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St. Lucie Restaurant Equipment	Brownie Troop 175	PSL Police Explorers	Hayden Professional Services	Crystal Lake Elementary
Amarillas Ent. Inc.	Condo Monitoring	Children's Emporium	A Brighter Future Pre- school	RV Johnson Insurance
Los Cocos	Wemmer Family	Physical Therapy of Okeechobee	Brown Family Chiro- practic Center	Stuart Alliance Church
	Orthodontics	Live Oak Endoscopy Center	Exit Reality Associates	Sun Coast Silk Screening
	Treasure Coast Sprinklers		Girl Scout Troop 710	Massey, Clark & Fischer