



## **CIRCUIT 10**

Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties



### ***Florida's Five Year Prevention and Permanency Plan State Fiscal Year 2013 – 2014 Progress***

#### **Highlights and Accomplishments**

In the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year, Circuit 10 re-designed and re-configured the local planning team. Circuit 10 now has three Local Planning Teams that function on a county/local community level where issues and solutions can be addressed with the most involvement and workable solutions. The data and information from each Local Planning Team is then pulled together by the Circuit Chairperson.

Circuit 10 saw a continued decrease in its maltreatment rate for the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The Circuit Maltreatment Rate of 9.43 was also below the statewide rate of 11.42 and the state target of 10.94. Each individual county within the Circuit also reported individual county level decreases in maltreatment rates. Hardee County decreased from a rate of 8.42 in 2012-2013 to 7.81 in 2013-2014. Highlands County decreased from a rate of 11.58 in 2012-2013 to 9.57 in 2013-2014. Polk County decreased from a rate of 10.73 in 2012-2013 to 9.50 in 2013-2014.

During the reporting period, Circuit 10 also embarked on a new venture led by Heartland for Children to implement a web-based resource database, Aunt Bertha. Agency providers and community members took part in focus groups where information on existing services in each county was shared in order to populate the resource database. Information on each of the resources was entered into Aunt Bertha which was officially launched in the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year.

Prevention Services continued to be offered to families outside of the Child Welfare System of Care in an effort to provide help before harm occurs. Families that reached out for assistance (those not currently active with the Child Welfare System) were linked to resources and supports in the community.

April Child Abuse Prevention Month saw continued success thanks to the circuit-wide support of the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign. Over 90 businesses/community partners and 35 schools participated in the Circuit 10 Campaign in April 2014.

The local Domestic Violence provider, Peace River Center added two positions to focus on domestic violence within the child welfare system. These Domestic Violence Child Welfare Advocate and Outreach Specialists are co-located with the Department of Children and Families and they work with families experiencing all types of DV, including situations between parent/child.

In October 2013, Circuit 10 partnered with ABC Action News for their primetime Domestic Violence special which highlighted the work being done in the Circuit with the Yellow Dress to prevent teen dating violence.

Circuit 10's Faith Based Initiative continued to gain support with Project 111. The 111 project exists to engage the local church in creating awareness of the need for quality local foster and adoptive homes in our community. The 111 project stands for 1 Church, 1 Family, 1 Purpose with a goal that if every church committed one family towards the purpose of providing a foster care home for a child, the need for the children living in foster care would be met. Three successful 111 Project events were hosted by faith community partners during Fiscal Year 2013-2014.

## Child Maltreatment Prevention

Circuit 10 exceeded its adoption target for the Fiscal Year 2013-2014. Adoption target of 140 was exceeded with 156 adoptions finalized locally.

Adoption Support was a strength of the system this past year. Resources and supports continued to be provided to adoptive families regardless of whether the adoption was completed through the state dependency system.

Crossover Youth Model between Child Welfare and DJJ continues to be in place, offering Multi-disciplinary staffings for children who are involved with both systems. The goals of the model include:

- Reduction in the number of youth placed in out-of-home care
- Reduction in the use of congregate care
- Reduction in the disproportionate representation of children of color
- Reduction in the number of youth becoming dually-adjudicated

### Hardee

Teen Pregnancy Prevention outreach program for Hardee County – provide 8<sup>th</sup> grade students with the tools needed to identify healthy relationships with a goal of preventing teen pregnancy. This is a collaborative effort between Hardee ASAPP, YMCA, Health Department, School Board, Mental Health Providers, and the Drug Free Communities grant.

### Highlands

CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) training started in 2014 for Highlands County – helping law enforcement better understand how to work directly with citizens with mental health issues, de-escalate and handle as a mental health issue rather than a criminal infraction.

### Polk

START Program - The START Program was created in 2013 as a service delivery model to integrate Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment using a team approach model. The purposes of the START program are to keep children safe; to develop a safe, nurturing, and stable living situation for them as rapidly and responsibly as possible; and to help their parents overcome their drug problems. The model is unique in that it utilizes mentors as team member of the treatment team to help support parents. These mentors themselves have experienced success with substance abuse treatment and have been substance free for at least three years. The mentors play a vital role on the team providing guidance, support and a timely response to parents who are working on their addictions and healing from the trauma they have experienced. The START grant ended in June 2014, however, additional funding was obtained by working in partnership with the local Substance Abuse and Mental Health programs and a grant was optioned under the Managing Entity (Central Florida Behavioral Health) and DCF to keep the local model. It is now referred to as the FIT (Family Intervention Team model).

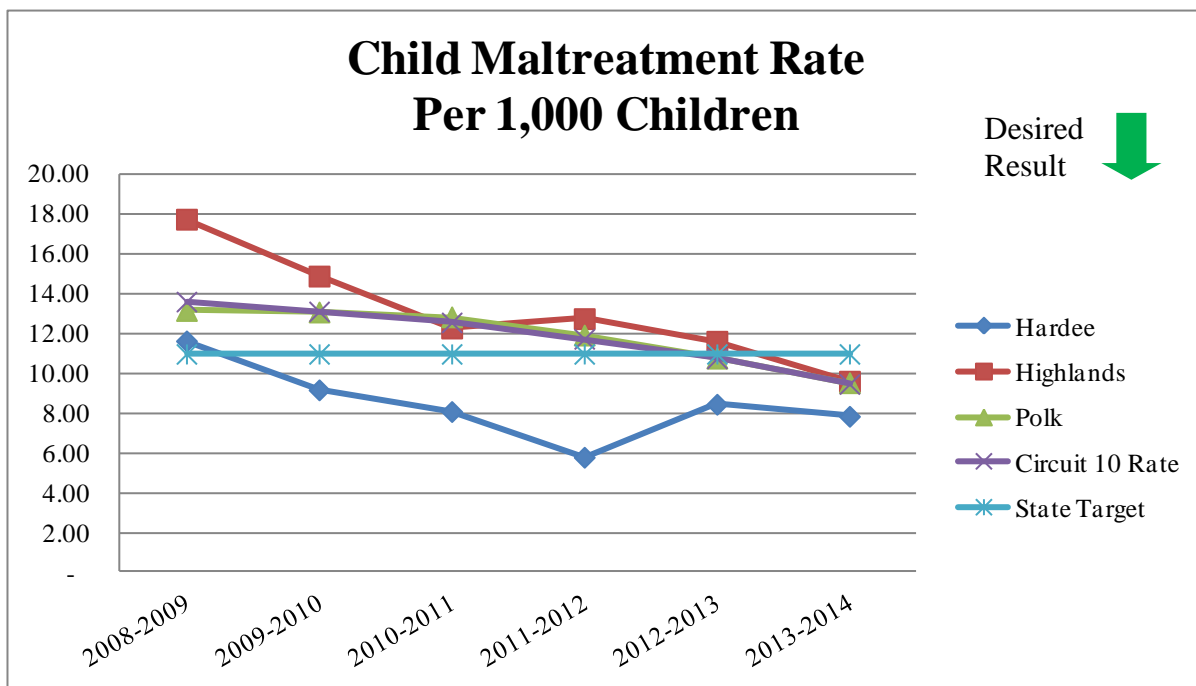
## Child Maltreatment Prevention

### Desired Population Level Results

- Child Maltreatment Prevention** – By June 30, 2015, the verified findings of child abuse rate will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008 – 2009 statewide rate of 10.94 per 1,000 children.

Child Maltreatment Rates						
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Hardee	11.59	9.14	8.05	5.76	8.42	7.81
Highlands	17.70	14.85	12.24	12.71	11.58	9.57
Polk	13.12	13.04	12.80	11.89	10.73	9.50
<b>Circuit Rate</b>	<b>13.57</b>	<b>13.07</b>	<b>12.52</b>	<b>11.69</b>	<b>10.71</b>	<b>9.43</b>
<b>State Target</b>	<b>10.94</b>	<b>10.94</b>	<b>10.94</b>	<b>10.94</b>	<b>10.94</b>	<b>10.94</b>
<b>State Rate</b>	<b>10.94</b>	<b>12.06</b>	<b>12.51</b>	<b>13.23</b>	<b>12.27</b>	<b>11.42</b>

*\*The current Five-Year Prevention and Permanency Plan started on July 1, 2010.*



**Child Maltreatment Prevention  
Status of Strategies and Objectives**

**Strategy 1:**

By 30 June 2015, Circuit 10 will have implemented a faith-based prevention initiative that would provide for both universal and targeted efforts in which the faith community is engaged to increase awareness of a faith based initiative, develop prevention champions, and identify family and community supports that would build the protective factors for families within the identified communities.

Objective	Status	Summary/Action Needed
<p>Objective 1.1</p> <p>Engage faith communities from each county in child abuse prevention efforts focusing on increasing awareness of a faith-based initiative building relationships to increase application of protective factors amongst families in our community by 30 June 2015.</p>	<p>Local faith communities continue to step forward and work to increase protective factors in families.</p> <p>Fiscal Year 2013-2014 brought 20 new faith relationships bringing the total to 63.</p>	<p>Local Faith Communities offer many services and supports that strengthen families within Hardee, Highlands and Polk counties. Some of these services and supports include food pantries, parent’s night out, clothing, financial supports, substance abuse recovery, pastoral care and counseling, after school care and daycare programs.</p>

The Faith Community continues to be engaged in helping with child abuse prevention as well as foster and adoptive family recruitment. Faith communities, primarily churches, of varying denominations have been engaged throughout Hardee, Highlands, and Polk counties in an effort to develop relationships within the faith community and engage them to partner with the local faith based initiative supporting children and families. A targeted effort was initiated to increase awareness and understanding within the faith community of Heartland for Children’s faith based initiative and the need for partnership from the faith community. During Fiscal Year 2013-2014, the redesign of Heartland for Children’s website as well as communications through the use of social media have been intentionally developed to further engage the faith based community and provide a visual point of connection to the faith based initiative.

The goal of this partnership has been to increase awareness of the existence of an active faith based initiative throughout our Circuit, to develop prevention champions within the faith based community, and to identify family and community supports that will build protective factors for families within the community. As of the end of Fiscal Year 2013-2014, active relationships exist with 63 faith based communities through Hardee, Highlands, and Polk counties. These relationships include faith based communities who have active involvement with Heartland for Children in the areas of: prevention awareness and education, supporting foster/adoptive home recruitment, resource support, holiday gift giving, on-site training support and foster/adoptive family support.

Specific supports and/or programs that have been developed as a result of faith based partnerships during the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year include:

- 111Project – The 111 project exists to engage the local church in creating awareness of the need for quality local foster and adoptive homes in our community. The 111 project stands for 1 Church, 1 Family, 1 Purpose with a goal that if every church committed one family towards the purpose of

### **Child Maltreatment Prevention**

providing a foster care home for a child, the need for the children living in foster care would be met. Three successful 111 Project events were hosted by faith community partners during Fiscal Year 2013-2014.

- ECHO – ECHO Orphan Ministry seeks to assist caregivers with the physical needs of children residing in foster care, in relative and non-relative care, and adoptive families through the development and ongoing maintenance of donation closets. Additionally, ECHO seeks to provide information to individuals about how to become a foster parent and linking them to the Foster Care Program through Heartland for Children.
- Bethany Christian Services – faith based services serving children and families in need through their Safe Families ministry, a network of host families helping parents who, on a voluntary basis, need to temporarily place their children due to unmanageable or critical circumstances. The goal of the Safe Families ministry is to offer support in a time of need and reunite children with their families in a stronger home environment.
- Joy FM - The JOY FM is a listener supported Christian radio station serving North, Central and Southwest Florida for over 26 years. Heartland for Children and the Joy FM have partnered together for the purpose of creating awareness of the need for foster and adoptive homes and recruitment, the 111 Project, and Child Abuse Prevention awareness.
- Protective Factors – Education on the Protective Factors and child abuse prevention presented to Pastors, church staff, congregation members and Southeastern University social work students.
- Faith Based Symposium – Circuit staff from Case Management Organizations and Heartland for Children participated in the DCF/DJJ Faith Based Symposium
- Christian Alliance for Orphans – staff, foster parents and adoptive parent attended the Christian Alliance for Orphans Conference
- Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast – Prevention and Foster Care Recruitment staff members participated in the City of Lakeland and City of Bartow annual Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast.

Ongoing partnerships with two faith based ministries, the Bag Ladies and Pedal Power, provide supports to identified children and families in need. The Bag Ladies provide suitcases for children residing in the foster care system and the Pedal Power ministry provides refurbished bicycles to children and adults engaged in the local child welfare system. Additionally, twenty-one faith communities supported Heartland for Children’s 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Rudolph Round-Up Toy Drive, providing holiday wishes for local children residing in the foster care system.

## Child Maltreatment Prevention

### Strategy 2:

By 30 June 2015, Circuit 10 will have implemented a local initiative that would provide targeted efforts by which community members are exposed to and educated on the importance of protective factors in building strong families and neighborhoods.

Objective	Status	Summary/Action Needed
Objective 2.1  Develop circuit-level strategies to develop and implement a Protective Factor Education and Awareness Initiative by 30 June 2015	Protective factor education and awareness continued through the 2013-2014 fiscal year.	Through a combination of live presentations, training and social media, information on protective factors was provided throughout the tri-county area. During the month of April for Child Abuse Prevention Month, a flyer describing protective factors was distributed out at local community events and included as a part of the bulletin board kit for community partners and schools. Blogs and information on the importance of building protective factors was promoted on Heartland for Children’s website and social media accounts.

The Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Pinwheels for Prevention campaign was implemented throughout the three counties in Circuit 10: Hardee, Highlands, and Polk with an emphasis on educating the community regarding Protective Factors. Over the last 10 years the strength of our campaign has been the result of successful community partnerships with local businesses, schools, faith based organizations, Case Management agencies, the Circuit Court and many others residing throughout our community.

Once again this year, community partners, agencies and individuals partnered to help spread awareness and share the message of prevention. The call to action was communicated and opportunities to help educate, participate, advocate, and donate were presented. Our community proudly embraced displaying pinwheels in the form of pinwheel gardens, pinwheel vase displays, and/or pinwheel themed bulletin boards, to serve as a reminder that we all have a responsibility to ensure children grow up healthy and safe in our community. During Fiscal Year 2013-2014, thirteen presentations occurred to create awareness and educate individuals and groups as to Protective Factors.

Several ways that partner agencies, businesses, schools and individuals were able to engage in the April Child Abuse Prevention - Pinwheels for Prevention campaign included:

- Plant a pinwheel garden, display a pinwheel vase display or pinwheel bulletin board
- Support a pinwheel garden at a school or in the community
- Wear a pinwheel lapel pin
- Share information with the families they serve
- Attend scheduled proclamations
- Attend community events
- Post a message on their Facebook page and like Heartland for Children’s Facebook Page (Pinwheels for Prevention-Hardee, Highlands, Polk)
- Participate in a pinwheels Facebook photo contest
- Post signage at their place of business or on their bulletin board
- Sharing an email blast within their agency and amongst their partners
- Encourage others to get involved

## Child Maltreatment Prevention

As a result of the community's response to engage in and support the Child Abuse & Neglect Pinwheels for Prevention campaign:

- 7,400 pinwheels planted or displayed throughout Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties
  - 90+ business/community partners
  - 35 schools
- 2,100 Family Resource Guides distributed
  - 1,000 English
  - 1,000 Spanish
  - 100 Creole
- 85 Family Advocacy Guide Packets distributed
- 380 Pinwheel Lapel Pins distributed and worn throughout April
- Nine Proclamations
  - Three County School Boards: Hardee, Highlands, Polk
  - Three Board of County Commissioners: Hardee, Highlands, Polk
  - Three Cities: Lakeland, Lake Wales, Winter Haven
- Community Events
  - Loop the Lake 5K Walk/Run
    - Loop the Lake 5K Race & Fun Walk sponsored by Kappa Delta Sorority raises funds to help support both national and local child abuse prevention efforts
  - Pinwheels in the Park – Lakeland Flying Tigers Season Opener
  - Healthy Families Pinwheels for Prevention Run
  - Law Day – 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit
  - Explorations V Children's Festival
  - Junior League World of Reading
  - Head Start Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Parent Presentations
- Radio & Media Coverage
  - JOY FM Radio Ads
    - JOY FM Live Broadcast at Pinwheels in the Park event
    - \$100 Gas Card Giveaway – random drawing
  - Press Releases
  - Polk Government TV Interview
  - Heartland Living Magazine Advertisement
  - Newspaper Articles
  - Newspaper Editorials
- Website
  - Link to the Family Development Guide
  - Downloadable April Calendar of Events
  - Downloadable Pinwheels for Prevention Resources
  - 30 Things to Do With Your Child/Teen
  - Coloring Pages
  - Protective Factors
  - How to Get Involved
  - Make Your Own Pinwheel Activity
  - Prevention Blog
- Social Media Engagement
  - Pinwheel Themed Cover Photo for Facebook Page
  - Ask others to change their cover photo
  - Prevention Specific Information Shared through Facebook and Twitter

## **Child Maltreatment Prevention**

- Event Reminders
- Event Photos
- Pinwheels Photo Contest
- Downloadable photo props
- Prize awarded for winning photo

Strengthening families and preventing harm to children is a priority for Circuit 10 each and every day of the year. Every child deserves to grow up in healthy, safe and nurturing environments. We all play a role in making sure this happens in our local communities through awareness, education, support and advocacy. Our continued goal is that the local community will continue to support child abuse and neglect prevention efforts and proudly display pinwheels year round as well as consider other ways they may support strengthening children and families.

Additionally, Heartland for Children engaged in partnering with local professionals and agencies to complete an asset mapping of the resources and supports that existed in Hardee, Highlands and Polk counties. As a result of this effort, an online resource website/database was developed to help professionals and community members identify resources in the areas of: emergency, food, housing, goods, transit, health, money, care, education, work, and legal.

The above activities help to support/promote all areas of the Protective Factors to include: parental emotional resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, nurturing and attachment, and social and emotional competence of children.



## **Child Maltreatment Prevention**

### **Additional Activities**

#### **CIRCUIT WIDE**

##### **Child Passenger Safety**

Circuit 10 is dedicated to ensuring the safety of all children that are being transported within the foster care system, as well as educating the community on child passenger safety. Between 85% and 90% of all child safety restraints are being used improperly within our circuit, and it is our goal to decrease this number well below the national average of 75%. We are committed to the training of every foster parent, child protective investigator, case manager, and internal employees that are involved in the transportation of children. Every caregiver receiving a child safety restraint receives a hands-on training by one of the Heartland for Children Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. Heartland for Children partners with the Safe Kids Coalition to offer training to any caregiver within the community who would like assistance with their child safety restraint. This is done through community seat check stations, private trainings, and classroom setting education given by a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician within the Safe Kids or Heartland for Children network.

##### **Infant Massage**

Infant Massage has been found to benefit both parent and child by increasing parent/child bonding and reducing stress responses in infants and parents as well as decreasing post partum depression. Heartland for Children is working to build capacity within the tri-county area in regards to infant massage so that it is a service that is accessible to all families. Heartland for Children offers periodic infant massage educator courses to individuals in the community who are willing to commit to offering the service within the community. Through infant massage parents/caregivers learn how their infants communicate, creating a better bonding or closeness to the infant. Parents/caregivers can gain confidence in parenting skills through this bonding. Infant massage also helps parents/caregivers to relax and spend quality time with the infants and facilitates a time for fathers to interact with the infant. The parents/caregivers also have an opportunity to create a social network with other parents, thus alleviating the feeling of isolation reducing a risk for child abuse. The infant benefits from massage by relieving discomfort from gas, colic and constipation. Massage also helps reduce stress in infants as well as aides with better sleeping.

##### **Yellow Dress - Teen Dating Violence Prevention**

The Yellow Dress is a one-woman play that is focused on teen dating violence prevention. It is a program from Deana's Educational Theater group and Heartland for Children has purchased limited production rights to implement the program locally. The Yellow Dress was developed as an educational tool to illustrate the seriousness of violence in dating relationships, and offers a platform from which discussion can begin around healthy dating relationships. During the performance, the actress tells the story of how a relationship that started as friendship blossomed into love and then became violent. The audience participates in a discussion after the performance to reinforce knowledge of four primary lessons relating to domestic violence:

1. Early warning signs of an abusive relationship
2. Why victims stay in abusive relationships; why it is hard to break up
3. How to help a friend who is a victim of abuse or a perpetrator (abuser)
4. How to access local resources for help

The Yellow Dress program is currently being implemented in local high schools and other community groups that work with local teens. A survey instrument is being utilized to track the number of participants and their learning gains on the four primary lessons covered during the program.

## **Child Maltreatment Prevention**

### HARDEE COUNTY

Teen outreach program (TOP Program) – federally funded state initiative for teen pregnancy prevention provided in local schools in Hardee and Highlands Counties.

Baby think it over groups – focus on teen pregnancy prevention, Shaken Baby, etc.

Parenting Education through Healthy Start and Healthy Families Programs offering home visiting and Safe Baby (shaken baby, safe sleep and how to choose a caregiver).

Health Department education in schools – in junior high/middle school on risky behaviors for teens, 6 hour class

YMCA has a Youth House for 12-17 year olds (non-day care ages) – after school care program that provides education and tools for the youth on various topics.

SWAT (students working against tobacco) includes both middle and high school groups, while KNOT (kids not on tobacco) includes 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Both programs are provided by the Health Department to educate on the dangers of tobacco.

### HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Champion for Children Foundation – Raises funds and provides financial support to programs serving children and families in Highlands County with a goal of providing the best possible environment where each child can develop to his or her greatest potential.

Blissful Doula Project - Free Doula services through Choices Pregnancy Care Center and Healthy Start. Services are free for prenatal and postnatal moms. Project open to any parent but targeted toward lower income parents.

Choices Pregnancy Care Center – Provides all resources and supports for pregnant women, with the exception of cribs and car seats. (Also offered in Hardee County)

Supper Feeding Program – offered through the Boys and Girls Club and feeds children in the program supper before they go home for the evening.

Church Service Center provides transitional housing for emergency services as a residence prior to an available spot with the housing authority. Offered to people who are eligible to go to housing authority but there is no vacancy. They also provide wrap-around services.

Healthy Start Coalition in Highlands County – Working with local medical providers to help provide resources and supports to expectant moms.

## **Child Maltreatment Prevention**

### POLK COUNTY

Abby Grace's Hope – Promoting Survival Swim, Supervision - including clear communication, Barriers and First Aid. Providing a supportive hand to families devastated by a drowning loss. Working together to spread awareness and support initiatives for survival swim and first aid training.

CAT teams – operated through Peace River Center. Provides intensive mental health services and supports for children in hopes of stabilizing the child's symptoms and preventing residential treatment placement for a child. Multi-disciplinary team works with the child and family to accomplish this goal.

Healthy Start Coalition Beds for Babies Program – provides free pack n plays to families in need to help prevent co-sleeping and child deaths related to co-sleeping.

Federally Qualified Health Care and Tri-county Human Services partnership to increase access to primary health care with a focus on whole health.

Prevention Services through Peace River Center – presentations provided to children in schools on domestic violence.

Trauma Informed Care workgroup – collaborative effort to promote trauma informed care concept, provide training and link others to training.

Community Training offered on Trauma informed care, understanding emotional regulatory healing and how to work with children who have experienced trauma by Trainers Juli Alvarado and Dr. Bruce Perry.

### Interagency Collaboration

#### HARDEE COUNTY

ASAPP (Alliance for Substance Abuse and Teen Pregnancy) Coalition Meeting – Involves every agency that provides services to youth, families, participate. Goal is to reduce substance use and abuse as well as teen pregnancy.

Hardee/Highlands DV taskforce

Hardee Interagency Group – Local Agencies meet monthly. Traditionally the focus has been on elder care, but group is in the process of becoming more inclusive of all populations. These meetings are a forum to share information and educate each other about what is going on in the local community.

#### HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Champion for Children Advocacy Center – Minimizing the trauma of child abuse victims and providing prevention support to families needing assistance in keeping them intact. Collaboratively coordinates all disciplines in the abuse field and brings them together at the center to interview, evaluate and collectively make decisions. The Champion for Children Advocacy Center also provides Active Parenting classes on a regular basis by age level of the child/children.

## **Child Maltreatment Prevention**

Highlands County – collaborative effort between Drug Free Highlands, Tri-County and the Tobacco Prevention Partnership, and the schools to have programming for middle school students on topics of substance abuse and bullying and leadership & life skills.

Highlands Sheriff's Office offered the DARE program to local 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

Mother daughter celebration in Highlands County – Healthy Start, Drug Free Highlands and Tri-County Human Services collaborated to provide education and information on dating violence, health and wellness and etiquette.

A collaborative effort between many different agencies ensued to present information to all 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls in Highlands County on teen dating violence, teen health, pregnancy prevention and substance abuse prevention. Participating agencies included the YMCA, Heartland Rural Health Network, Drug Free Highlands, Tri-County Human Services, the Health Department, Healthy Start Coalition, the school system, and the faith based community (churches provide lunches, place to meet).

## **POLK COUNTY**

### **Inneract Alliance**

Offers programs to reduce the abuse and underage use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs through: Community Awareness and Involvement; Prevention Education; Economic Support; and Leadership Development. Prevention Education Programs & Services are available free of charge to groups, businesses, schools, churches, and organizations. InnerAct Alliance, formerly the Drug Prevention Resource Center has provided substance abuse prevention to the Hardee, Highlands and Polk County communities in Central Florida since 1985 with services including science-based education in elementary, middle and high schools, teen-driven social norming campaigns, as well as informative presentations and family-oriented awareness events that touch the lives of youth, parents, families, businesses, faith-based organizations, community groups and others in need with an important anti-substance abuse and anti-bullying message.

### **Stand up Polk Coalition**

StandUP Polk is a group of concerned citizens, key community and business leaders working as the Coalition for a Drug-Free Polk to take a stand against drugs and bring about positive changes for Polk County. Concerned citizens are invited to take an active part in month planning sessions.

### **Domestic Violence Taskforce**

Taskforce is made up of advocates and agency representatives who meet regularly to address domestic violence issues in the community and annually put on a Domestic Violence Summit for the public to help educate others on the importance of Domestic Violence prevention, resources and support.

### **Proposed Activities for 2014-2015**

The Early Learning Coalition of Polk County has lost funding resulting in the 2014-2015 goal to help identify additional sources of dollars that will support low income families and at-risk families with child care needs. Families below the 200% poverty level will specifically be targeted.

Expansion of Pre-Arrest Diversion program – providing a comprehensive GAP analysis of services to identify need and work collaboratively on behalf of children with first time misdemeanor offenses to identify additional programming to assist.

## **Child Maltreatment Prevention**

Continue to emphasize child passenger safety in the Circuit.

Work toward the recognition of Child Abuse Prevention year-round rather than annually in April.

Plan to advertise Aunt Bertha locally to assure that citizens are aware of the additional resource to get help.

Continue to promote swimming classes through the Champion for Children Foundation in Highlands County.

Highlands County will be implementing a Poverty prevention project.

A Positive Community Norms approach to Child Abuse Prevention messaging will be implemented using survey data from local parents/caregivers on their perceptions about parenting norms for themselves as well as their community.

Neighbor to Family will take over providing prevention services and supports to local families not involved in the child welfare system as Heartland for Children transitions these services over to them assuring no gaps in service delivery.

Increased dollars are available for Highlands County services through Tri-County Human Services – 24/7 emergency services for parents and children with substance abuse (\$167,000) for 2014-2015. Funding should be reoccurring

## **Child Maltreatment Prevention** **Human Trafficking Activities**

### *Summary of Human Trafficking Activities*

Circuit 10 has a Human Trafficking Task Force covering all three counties in the circuit (Polk, Highlands and Hardee Counties). The primary function of the Task Force has been to provide community awareness of the issues of Human Trafficking. The Task Force also has a speakers' bureau for providing training when requests come in for speakers on Human Trafficking. Current membership includes members from the faith community, community providers, law enforcement, Department of Children and Families and advocates. Our biggest increase in involvement in the past year has been from the faith community. The Task Force meets quarterly and the subcommittees meet during the quarter and report out at the Task Force meeting.

The subcommittees are:

Faith Alliance

Law Enforcement (only for Law Enforcement)

Advocacy

Training/Awareness

### *Proposed Human Trafficking Activities for 2014-2015*

Florida Baptist Children's Home will open its Porch Light program locally to rescue and restore victims of domestic sex trafficking.

The Circuit Taskforce will continue to meet and provide awareness and advocacy on the topic of Human Trafficking.

Highlands - Human Trafficking – Jaycees and Unicef will be hosting a forum/town hall meeting for the general community to learn about the issue of human trafficking. It will be held the November 1, 2014.

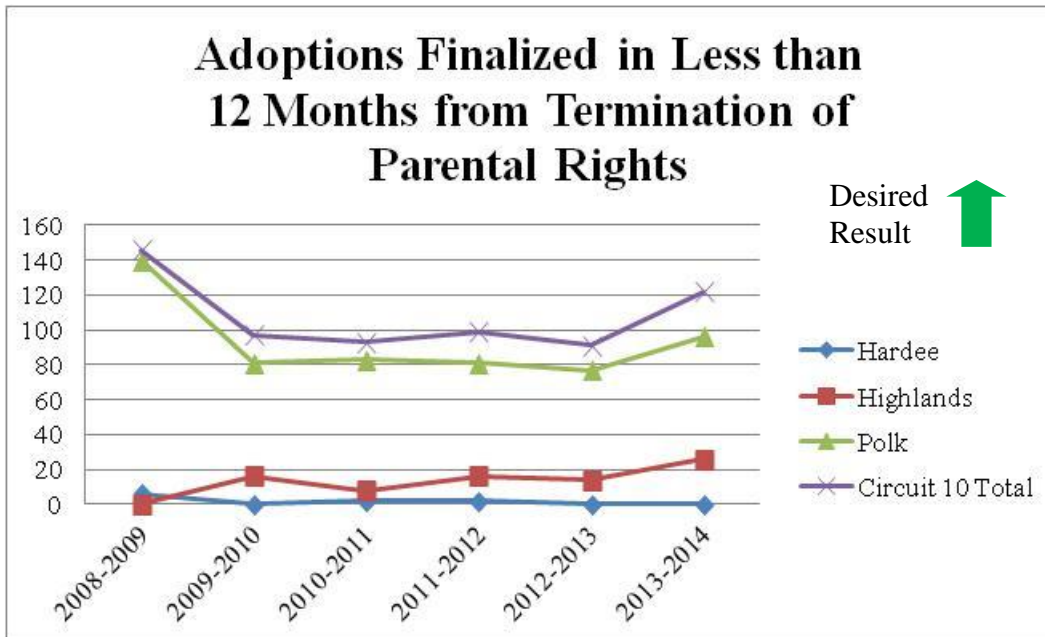
**Promotion of Adoption  
Desired Population Level Results**

**2. Promotion of Adoption –**

- a. By June 30, 2015, the percent of children adopted **within 12 months** of becoming legally free for adoption will increase from the State Fiscal Year 2008 – 2009 rate of 66.4 percent.

Children Adopted within 12 months of Termination of Parental Rights							
County	Numbers and Percentages	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Hardee	Adoptions Finalized within 12 Months	6	0	2	2	0	0
	Percentage of Adoptions Finalized within 12 Months	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%
Highlands	Adoptions Finalized within 12 Months	0	16	8	16	14	26
	Percentage of Adoptions Finalized within 12 Months	0%	57%	38%	41%	67%	63%
Polk	Adoptions Finalized within 12 Months	140	81	83	81	77	96
	Percentage of Adoptions Finalized within 12 Months	77%	57%	31%	71%	71%	80%
Circuit Total	Adoptions Finalized within 12 Months	146	97	93	99	91	122
	Percentage of Adoptions Finalized within 12 Months	77%	68%	68%	64%	71%	76%

*\*The current Five-Year Prevention and Permanency Plan started on July 1, 2010.*

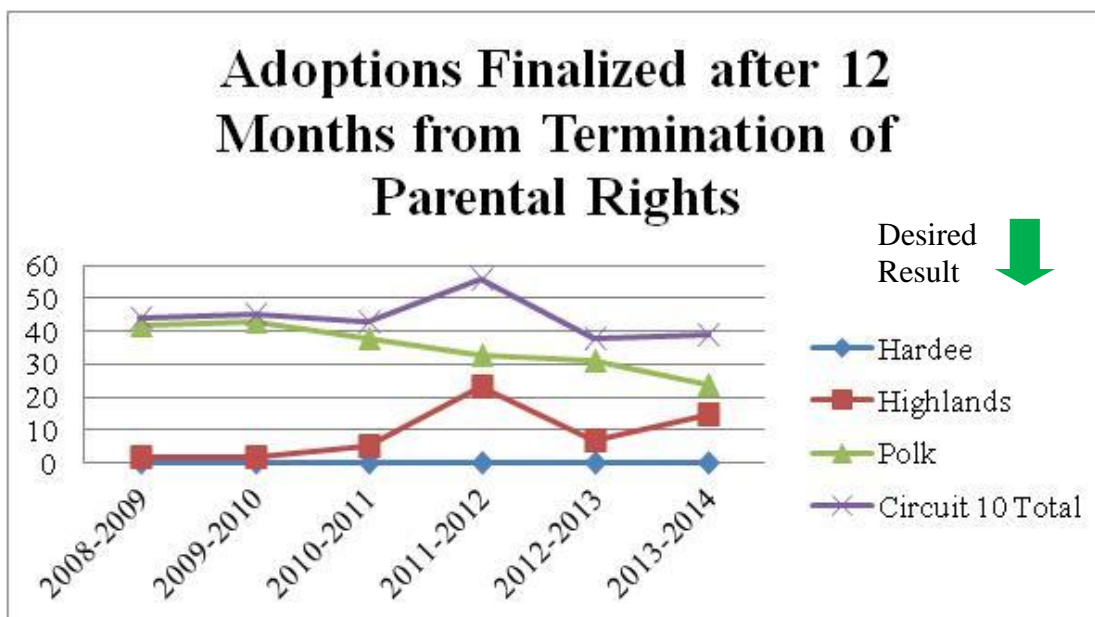


## Promotion of Adoption

- b. By June 30, 2015, the percent of children legally free for adoption who have been waiting for adoption since the date of termination of parental rights (TPR) for **more than 12 months** will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008 – 2009 rate of 53.19 percent.

Children Adopted after 12 months of Termination of Parental Rights							
County	Numbers and Percentages	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Hardee</b>	Adoptions Finalized over 12 Months	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Percentage of Adoptions Finalized over 12 Months	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Highlands</b>	Adoptions Finalized over 12 Months	2	2	5	23	7	15
	Percentage of Adoptions Finalized over 12 Months	100%	11%	38%	59%	33%	37%
<b>Polk</b>	Adoptions Finalized over 12 Months	42	43	38	33	31	24
	Percentage of Adoptions Finalized over 12 Months	23%	35%	31%	29%	29%	20%
<b>Circuit Total</b>	Adoptions Finalized over 12 Months	44	45	43	56	38	39
	Percentage of Adoptions Finalized over 12 Months	23%	32%	32%	36%	29%	24%

*\*The current Five-Year Prevention and Permanency Plan started on July 1, 2010.*





**Promotion of Adoption**  
**Status of Strategies and Objectives**

**Strategy 1:** By June 30, 2015, Circuit 10 will use Faith Based Community Partners to help promote Adoption Awareness Opportunities.

Objective	Status	Summary/Action Needed
Objective 1.1 By fiscal year 2014-2015, 25 percent of all public adoption inquiries will be from the Faith Based Adoption Initiative.	Messages about foster care, adoption, and prevention of child abuse have been communicated within faith-based groups, through the Florida 111 Project. 9 of the adoption inquiries resulted from the Florida 111 Project/Faith Based Organizations.	<p>The 111 Project events were held on November 2013, January 2014, March 2014.</p> <p>Continue to contact faith-based organizations and provide adoption promotion information.</p> <p>The Florida 111 Project will continue to plan large events to spread the word about foster care, adoption, and prevention of child abuse. This event is planned to invite members of community churches and will have guest speakers and professional videos of actual foster and adoptive families.</p>

**Summary:**

The Florida 111 Project is a faith based partnership model that HFC was implemented in Polk, Highlands and Hardee Counties. The 111 Project represents one church, one family, one purpose. The 111 Project is a recruitment model that originated in Tulsa, Oklahoma in response to their placement crisis for young children. In conjunction with a local pastor and a team from his church, Heartland for Children staff visited Oklahoma, learned about the model, and worked in partnership with the local pastor and a community volunteer to replicate the model here locally. The model calls for pastors to communicate with other pastors about our local need which is quality foster and adoptive families. Through this engagement pastors bring their congregations forward to get involved and become educated on our local need for foster and adoptive parents. The Florida 111 Project events were held on November 2013, January 2014, and March 2014.

## Promotion of Adoption

**Strategy 2:** By June 30, 2015, Circuit 10 will use the local Heart Gallery as a component for targeted recruitment strategies.

Objective	Status	Summary/Action Needed
Objective 2.1 30 percent of all inquiries about public adoption in fiscal year 2014 – 2015 are a result of the Adoption Gallery.	67% of the inquiries for adoption are a result of the Adoption Gallery.	Continue to get updated photos and videos of children on an as needed basis. Have siblings photographed together to promote keeping siblings together. Another photo event is being planned on November 22, 2014.  Keep Heart Gallery updated and current.

### Summary:

The online Heart Gallery continues to be up and running. The Heart Gallery brings in many inquiries and seems to be an effective tool for adoption recruitment. There is a link of the Heartland Heart Gallery on the Heart Gallery page of [www.adoptflorida.org](http://www.adoptflorida.org). In addition, Heartland for Children launched a new website which is an interactive up to date adoption gallery. The Heart Gallery is accessible and user friendly. The main adoption display continues to be stationed at Eagle Ridge Mall in Lake Wales. We are continuing our efforts to establish connections within the community for venues to display the adoption gallery and pop-up displays. Pop up adoption displays and/or adoption photos have been out in the community at special events and in local businesses.

### Additional Activities

Along with a new website, Heartland for Children has hired a Digital Media Recruitment Specialist, who optimize the website content to create traffic, increase interaction, and recruit new families interested in fostering and adopting. The Digital Media Recruitment specialist manages the website content, social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs, and seeks opportunities to link our website to other sites.

In addition to recruiting adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of our children through community events and faith-based relationships, HFC provides cultural competency training for all prospective adoptive families during the “Adoption 101” class. This pre-service class for potential adoptive families covers topics such as the differences between culture, race, and ethnicity and introduces them to an adoptive family who has experienced interracial adoptions. It is an opportunity for them to ask questions and further explore their openness to interracial adoption.

Children available for adoption continue to be presented at Adoption 101 meetings on a regular basis. Additionally, Pre-Adoption Meetings are held to clarify and answer questions related to the adoption process as well as to showcase children available for adoption. The Adoption Newsletters are sent to adoptive to approved adoptive families which includes information pertaining to adoption as well as showcasing an available child/sibling group that is available for adoption continues to be distributed every month/other every month since August 2011. The Adoption Newsletter is distributed to Adoption Case Managers which includes information relating to adoption and showcases a waiting approved Adoptive Family; this newsletter has been distributed monthly/every other month since July 2011. Adoption surveys were completed 2 times during this reporting period and resulted in an “A” rating for adoption promoting/supports.

2 photo shoots held 2/1/14 and 4/25/14 and videotaping was held during this reporting period in an effort to ensure that all children have up-to-date photos/videos on children available for adoption to place on the

## **Promotion of Adoption**

adoption websites and galleries. 2 adoptive families and a Heartland for Children employee who are photographers volunteered for 2 of the photo shoots and took amazing photos. Also, 1 photo shoot and videotaping was done by a professional photographer in the community.

Recruitment/Matching strategies include:

- Multi media campaigns are purchased within our local community (newspaper, buses and billboards) as well as on local radio stations which cross both the Tampa Bay and Orlando markets.
- Heartland for Children Heart Gallery is a traveling photographic and audio exhibit created to find forever families for children in foster care. It is affiliated with The Heart Gallery of America which is a collaborative project of over 120 Heart Galleries across the United States. Photographers and videographers are local professionals, many of whom donate their time to contribute to this project.

The local Bartow Rotary Club helped to coordinate another Adoption Matching Event that was held on May 17, 2014. The event was held at a local park in Bartow, Florida and the Bartow Rotary Club not only played an instrumental role in organizing the event, but donating food and prizes for the children and families in attendance. 10 children available for adoption attended the matching event and 16 available families attended the event. Many Bartow Rotary Club volunteers assisted as well as many volunteers from Heartland for Children and the Community Based Care Agencies. 5 children were matched as a result of this Adoption Matching Event.

156 Children adoption were finalized in the FY 2013-2014. For this reporting period; 46 Children had a finalized adoption. One Adoption Recruitment Event/ Picnic was held which resulted in approximately 2 adoptive families being matched with a child/sibling group.

In November 2014, the following events are scheduled or were held:

- National Adoption Day court Celebrations were held on November 5, 2014 and November 12, 2014. Celebrated the families who finalized their adoption on those days.
- An Adoption Matching Event will be held which will include children available for adoption and approved adoptive families.
- In recognition of National Adoption Month, Heartland for Children mailed formal invitations to families who finalized their adoptions from December 2013 to November 2014 to join us at an Adoption Celebration that will be held on November 22, 2014. This event will be held at Cypress Lanes Family Fun Center. We invited approximately 91 families to join this exciting and fun celebration.

## **Interagency Collaboration**

- HFC's adoption staff, in collaboration with the case management organization staff, conduct regularly scheduled reviews of all children who are free for adoption and not yet matched. Additional attention is given to those children who have been in care the longest, to identify barriers and areas for targeted recruitment. As of July 2014, Heartland finalized 49.6% of adoptions within 24 months of removal which is congruent with our continuously decreasing lengths of stay in care.

## Promotion of Adoption

### Proposed Activities for 2014-2015

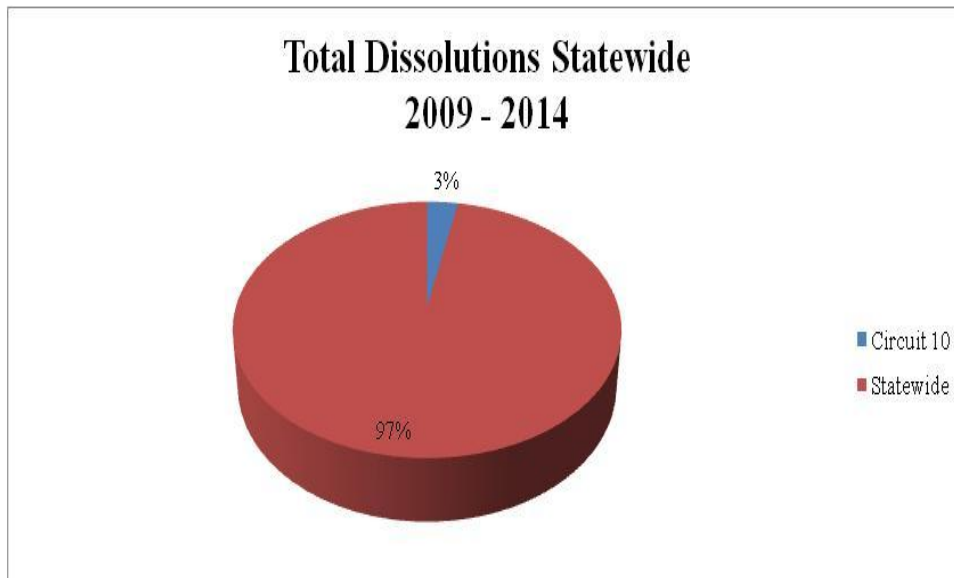
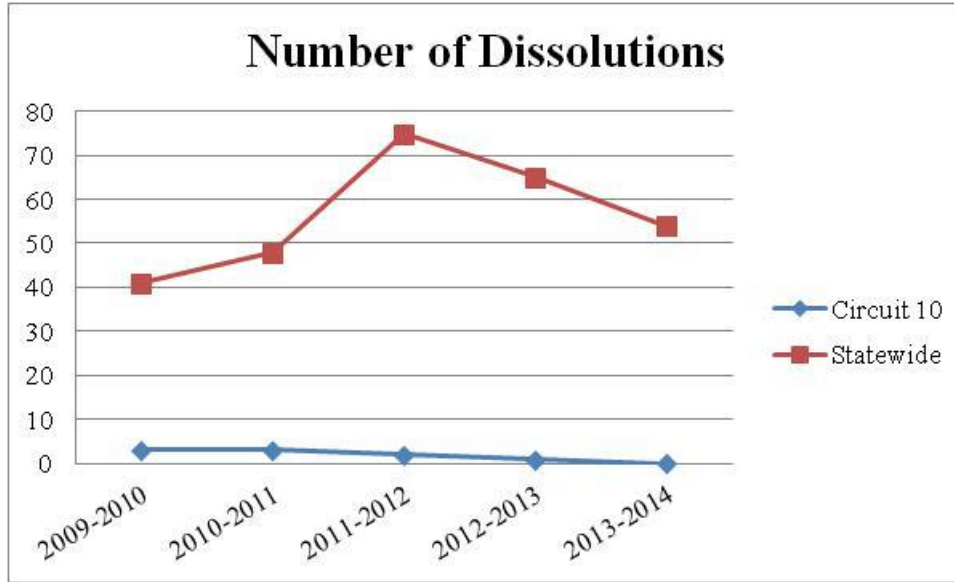
- HFC will strengthen this collaboration with the CMOs by enhancing adoption related services regarding recruitment and matching by adding an HFC adoption specialist as secondary in FSFN. We believe this will create increased efficiency and improved outcomes within the system of care. HFC will develop new Individualized Recruitment Plans (IRP) for each child awaiting adoption who does not have an identified adoptive placement. This plan will take into consideration the child's racial and ethnic background as well as any medical, behavioral or other special needs and be used in our efforts to identify an adoptive family for the child.
- Meet & Greet for the Adoption Case Managers to “put a face with a name” and meet the approved adoptive families in a casual atmosphere. The family will share information about their family, and the Adoption Case Manager will provide information about the children available for adoption.
- 2 Matching Events will be held
- 2 Photo Shoots/Videotaping will be held
- Adoption Displays at local venues including a local Mall within the Circuit
- Maintaining an up-to-date Adoption Gallery
- Participate in various community events to continue to promote adoption including the Florida 111 Project
- Providing literature and adoption related trainings to families who are interested in adoption including their support system.

**Support of Adoptive Families  
Desired Population Level Results**

3. **Support of Adoptive Families** – By June 30, 2015, the annual number of adopted children who are returned to foster care (regardless of when the adoption was finalized) will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008 – 2009 number of 98.

Number of Dissolutions					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Circuit Total	3	3	2	1	0
<b>State Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>54</b>

*\*The current Five-Year Prevention and Permanency Plan started on July 1, 2010.*



**Support of Adoptive Families**  
**Status of Strategies and Objectives**

**Strategy 1:**

By 30 June 2015, Circuit 10 will increase the number of adoptive parents who have received training and education so that they will have a better understanding of the impact of trauma, and emotional regulation.

Objective	Status	Summary/Action Needed
Objective 1.1 Increase the promotion of training and educational opportunities.	4 Adoption 101 Classes were held which included a Saturday Session and resulted in 47 families successfully completing Adoption 101 Classes. Presently, An Adoption 101 Class is being held which consist of 10 families.	Continue to promote and advertise adoption related training opportunities to adoptive families.
Objective 1.2 Increase the number and type of trainings available to adoptive families.	Emailed and notified adoptive families of adoption related training opportunities and events.	Work in partnership with the Adoption Competency Therapist who assist and/or facilitate monthly Adoption Support Groups in Highlands, Hardee, and Polk County in an effort to ensure that the adoptive families are provided adoption training opportunities locally.

**Summary 1:1:**

The adoptive parent pre-service training, Adoption 101 includes information pertaining to Emotional Regulatory Healing, Sexual Safety, and the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE Study). Additionally, several families with approved adoptive home studies or families already matched or have adopted participates in consultations with Juli Alvarado, an Emotional Regulatory & Healing (ERH) Coach/Consultant. Adoptive families continue to receive information regarding the support groups and adoption competent mental health providers.

Heartland for Children has provided post adoption supports to approximately 100 children per month, including referrals for In-Home Counseling/Services, Respite, Financial Assistance, Multi-Disciplinary Staffing, etc. Also, Monthly Adoption Support Groups are being held in Lakeland, Bartow, Davenport, and Lake Placid.

Post Adoption Surveys were completed 2 times during this reporting period with a rating of a “B+.”

**Strategy 2:**

### Support of Adoptive Families

By 30 June 2015, Circuit 10 will increase the number of adoption competent mental health providers and the opportunities for families to receive services through adoption competent providers.

Objective	Status	Summary/Action Needed
Objective 2.1 Increase the number of adoption competent trainings offered to mental health providers	Circuit 10 has at least 10 Adoption Competency Therapist. During this reporting period, 2 Adoption Competency Trainings were held.	Identify professionals to attend the Adoption Competency Trainings and increase the number of Adoption Competency Providers by providing 2 Adoption Competency Trainings.
Objective 2.2 Increase the awareness of these services	Refer the adoptive families to our website regarding relevant training opportunities & Monthly Adoption Newsletter is sent to Pre-Adoptive Families.	Continue to promote training opportunities to adoptive families.

### Additional Activities

#### Interagency Collaboration

- Focus Group was held on March 31, 2014 with the CEO, COO, Director of Operations, 3 Adoptive Families, Adoption Program Manager and Adoption Specialist in an effort to obtain feedback from adoptive families regarding their adoption journey including identifying areas that are in need of improvement.
- Work with local providers to coordinate needed services and supports for adoptive families, including working closely with the local school systems.

#### Proposed Activities for 2014-2015

- Continue to provide adoption support services to adoptive families within the Circuit.
- Providing literature and adoption related trainings to adoptive families including their support system.
- Increase the number of Adoption Support Groups in the Circuit.

## **Inventory of Faith-Based Partners**

Please provide information for all faith-based partners that have provided support to your Five-Year Prevention and Permanency Plan.

Circuit 10 has a strong Faith Based Initiative that includes working with local faith communities in relation to child abuse prevention, foster care recruitment and adoption recruitment efforts. The goal of this partnership has been to increase awareness of the existence of an active faith based initiative throughout our Circuit, to develop prevention champions within the faith based community, and to identify family and community supports that will build protective factors for families within the community. As of the end of Fiscal Year 2013-2014, active relationships exist with 63 faith based communities through Hardee, Highlands, and Polk counties. These relationships include faith based communities who have active involvement with Heartland for Children in the areas of: prevention awareness and education, supporting foster/adoptive home recruitment, resource support, holiday gift giving, on-site training support and foster/adoptive family support.