

## **Circuit 9 2013 Annual Report**

### ***Orange County Children's Cabinet***

On Friday, November 8, 400 people representing a cross section of our community gathered for the Florida Children's Summit 2013. Heart of Florida United Way partnering with the Children's Cabinet of Orange County, the Children's Leadership Alliance of Orange County, and presenting sponsors Florida Hospital for Children, and Walt Disney World convened the Summit to build a roadmap for our community that aligns children's services with common goals and metrics, also known as Collective Impact.

Florida Children's Summit 2013 was punctuated by three national keynote speakers:

- Jeff Edmondson of the Strive Initiative, who shared the story of communities across the nation who have used the framework of Collective Impact to create population level change for children's outcomes.
- Retired Lieutenant General Mark Hertling, of Florida Hospital, provided his unique perspective from his days with the US Army where he was responsible for the physical health and well-being of the young Army recruits.
- Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-Departmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development Linda Smith, from the Department of Health and Human Services, shared the national perspective on the importance of early childhood and early learning.
- Children's Summit participants worked to identify innovations and key action steps for reaching four key community population results:
  - Every child in this community will be successful cradle to career
  - Every child in this community will have the opportunities and access to be more financially secure during their lifetime
  - Every child in this community will live longer than their parents
  - Every child in this community will grow up in a safe and nurturing neighborhood

The Children's Cabinet of Orange County has adopted the Cradle to Career framework as its organizing principle. Cradle to Career is a framework that connects all segments of the educational continuum – early childhood, K-12, college/technical training, careers – with broad community support to improve educational, economic, and health outcomes. Research demonstrates that in order to succeed, every child needs an education and a broad nurturing support network. The Cabinet recognizes that ultimately, education and income are two of the key social determinants of health and well-being. The Cradle to Career framework helps the Cabinet to harness the synergy that only comes from leaving politics and individual organizational agendas at the door. The Children's Cabinet of Orange County is using this framework to help its member organizations move from achieving individual success to having a collective positive impact.

The Children's Cabinet of Orange County collective efforts work to “move the needle” on key milestones impacting child success. Among those:

- 1 out of 10 Orange County children are born dangerously underweight
- 1 out of 3 Orange County Children are unprepared when they enter kindergarten
- Nearly 4 out of 10 Orange County 3rd graders are not proficient in basic reading skills
- Nearly 1 out of 2 Orange County 8th graders are not competitive in math
- 2 out of 10 Orange County kids will never see a High School diploma
- And over half of those who do graduate will need remediation when they enter college.

### ***Osceola County Children's Cabinet***

According to a recent release from The School District of Osceola County, Osceola ranks 57th out of 67 counties in Florida in the number of students who enroll in a public postsecondary institution after graduating from high school. Since 2004, Osceola County's college-going rate has been about 10% below the state average.

The College Bound Project has worked to address this issue since 2011. The College Bound Project, a program of The Grove Counseling Center, was founded for the purpose of helping deserving, young people prepare for and earn admission to college. The mission of The College Bound Project is to provide limited-income, first generation and underrepresented students with the academic enrichment, social supports and life skills necessary to enroll, excel and graduate from a four-year college. Our goal is to ensure that every student, regardless of background, is afforded the opportunity to make informed decisions about their college and career goals.

In the past year, The College Bound Project has provided free college preparatory programming to more than 100 middle and high school students through our after-school, summer enrichment and college programs. A predominance of our participants reside in the 34741 and 34744 area codes. We have conducted workshops at Poinciana Boys & Girls Club, Mavericks High School and Created Families in St. Cloud. Currently, we conduct monthly workshops-at-large and weekly individual counseling sessions at Hart Memorial Library (the Main Branch of the Osceola County Library System). Students who attend our workshops come from Osceola, Gateway, Liberty and Poinciana High Schools, respectively.

### **Girl Scouts Promotes Bully Prevention for Middle School Girls**

With incidents of bullying reaching almost epidemic proportions and, in some local recent events, ending in tragedy, Girl Scouts of Citrus is launching an innovative anti-bullying experience for middle school girls throughout Lake, Orange, and Osceola counties.

With a successful bullying prevention program taking place in Osceola County for forty 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls during a Peer Leadership class at Neptune Middle School in Kissimmee, this Girl Scouts of Citrus program is receiving an additional boost with support from the Met Life Foundation's Hispanic Leadership Fund, which allows Girl Scouts of Citrus to get more involved in the Hispanic Community. BFF (Be a Friend First)—a name selected by girls—is based on Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) national leadership curriculum aMAZE! and sets itself apart from other anti-bullying efforts in five key ways:

1. BFF helps prevent bully behavior before it happens. Rather than addressing or punishing bullying behavior after it happens, BFF gives girls the social and leadership skills necessary to prevent it in the first place.
2. BFF was created with girls in mind. While boys tend to use physical aggression when they bully, girls are more likely to engage in relationally aggressive behavior: teasing, forming cliques, excluding others, and using social media in negative ways, such as spreading rumors.
3. Girls shaped the BFF experience. GSUSA listened to girls who said they seek a place where they can openly share their feelings. BFF provides a safe, all-girl environment where girls interact through skill-building games, creative exercises, and role-playing activities, led by trained community and school volunteers. Girls learn how to resolve conflict, deal with peer pressure, and understand the pitfalls of stereotyping.

4. BFF helps girls “lead with friendship.” This means that girls define and strengthen qualities that contribute to a healthy relationship, and develop the leadership skills to stand up for their peers and themselves, or disarm a bully when a situation arises.

5. Girls become peacemakers and impact change. BFF inspires girls to develop a project to educate and lead others in their schools and communities to prevent bully behavior. Research shows that bully behavior peaks in middle school when social acceptance is also becoming increasingly important. Middle school girls need the support, information, and strategies to help navigate relationships and to know that they are not alone when confronted with bully behavior. For more information contact Melba Rubera, Recruitment Manager, Girl Scouts of Citrus, 407-608-9437.

#### Center for Compassion

Victor Salgado, Osceola Children's Cabinet Chair representing the Guardian ad Litem Program assisted with this event, representing the Guardian ad Litem program.

#### Sharing the Harvest Food Drive

The Center for Compassion in partnership with Osceola County and the Osceola Council on Aging held a Sharing The Harvest Food Drive. On November 6, 2013, all the food collected was dropped off at the Osceola County Historic Courthouse lawn. All donations will be distributed to needy families in Osceola County. Chairman Frank Attkisson and Commissioner John Quiñones were on hand to help accept food, celebrate and applaud those who chose to give food to those who are less fortunate.