

Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council Members



Thomas “Tom” Lukasik – 4KIDS of South Florida and Chairman, Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council
Governor’s Appointee

Tom has a BS in Business Administration and over 30 years of management and leadership experience. He has been involved in foster care and adoption since 1994. He and his wife Linda have fostered more than 50 children over the last 19+ years.

Tom was a founding member of Churches United for Foster Care; he served on the inaugural Board of Directors for the Heart Gallery of Broward County. He was appointed Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council and now serves as the Chairman of that council. Tom is also a member of the Christian Alliance for Orphans’ – National Church Orphan Ministry Council and Tom and his wife, Linda were selected as 2013 Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute’s (CCAI) Angel in Adoption™ Additionally, Tom has spoken at churches throughout the state of Florida and across the country, as well as at the White House on bringing the Church and the State together to take care of the Modern Day Orphan (the foster child) in our own backyard. One of Tom’s life-long goals is to bring the Faith Community together to take care of all of the children in the foster care system.

Years of experience in business, secular and Christian Not-for-profit communities have uniquely equipped Tom for the roles he currently holds. He is a husband, father, grandfather, advocate and board member. Tom is known for his good sense of humor and hard work ethic, but more importantly, is noted for his love of God and his desire to help the least of these.

Serves on the following workgroups: Child Welfare and Family Initiatives

Can assist others with: Adoption, child abuse prevention, foster care/aging out, prevention/diversion, and independent living

Email: toml@4kidsofsfl.org



Dr. Gretchen Kerr – Northland, A Church Distributed and Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council Vice Chairman

Governor's Appointee

Dr. Gretchen Kerr helps Northland build collaborative relationships within the community and among government, nonprofits and other churches. Gretchen helped to develop Resource Point (www.resourcepoint.org), a collaborative for case management, data collection and community collaboration, and provides the knowledge of resources within the community. Social justice issues are at the heart of Gretchen's ministry activities, most recently anti-human trafficking endeavors and serving orphans through foster care and adoption opportunities.

Gretchen has a bachelor's degree in public administration, a master's degree in nonprofit management and received her Doctorate of Ministry at Bakke Graduate University in the Spring of 2012. Originally from Scituate, Mass., Gretchen and her husband, Greg, have three children, Tiffany, Trevor and Justin.

Serves on the following workgroups: Criminal Justice (Chair) and Disaster Planning

Email: gretchen.kerr@northlandchurch.net



Richard Albertson – Live the Life

Governor's Appointee

Richard Albertson is the Founding President and CEO of Live the Life, a statewide, faith based 501c3 organization dedicated to strengthening marriages and families. Founded in 1998 and headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida, Live the Life has regional offices in Jacksonville, Lakeland and Bradenton with plans to expand in the Ft. Lauderdale area.

Serves on the following workgroups: Family Initiatives (Chair) and Annual Conference

Can assist others with: Corrections/DJJ reentry, fatherhood, mentoring, youth in DJJ, Marriage Education, Relationship Education, and Sexual Risk Avoidance for Youth

Email: richard@livethelife.org



Pastor Kirt Anderson – Naples Community Church
Governor's Appointee

Pastor Anderson is the pastor of Naples Community Church in Naples, Florida. He brings over thirty years of ministry experience to the leadership team at NCC. Kirt played varsity basketball at UCSB, went on to Princeton Seminary, and earned his doctorate from Fuller Seminary. He is the disgustingly proud father of three, father in law of two, and grandfather of Owen Christopher and Ellery Rose.

Serves on the following workgroups: Family Initiatives and Legislative

Can assist others with: Educational tutoring, food services, homelessness, human trafficking, legislative/policy, mentoring, and substance abuse

Email: kirtea@naplescommunitychurch.org



Reverend James "Perry" Davis – Christ to Inmates, Inc.
Speaker of the House Appointee

President and Founder of Christ to Inmates, Inc. and a chaplain at the Tomoka Correctional Institution in Daytona Beach. He has received numerous honors from the State of Florida, Florida Baptist Convention, Volusia County Department of Corrections and the Rotary for his volunteer services and ministry.

Serves on the following workgroup: Criminal Justice

Email: christtoinmates@cfl.rr.com



Alan Dimmitt – Liberty Youth Ranch
Governor's Appointee

Email: Alan@LibertyYouthRanch.org



Dr. Jerry Haag, CFP – Florida Baptist Children’s Home
Governor’s Appointee

Dr. Jerry Haag serves as president of Florida Baptist Children’s Homes and Orphan’s Heart. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Baylor University and earned a Ph.D. in finance and real estate in 1995 from the University of Texas at Arlington. He served from 1995 to 1997 as an assistant professor at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kan., where he was named the Mortar Board Top Professor in 1995 and 1996. From 1997 to 1998, he taught at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., before joining Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham as administrative pastor from 1998-2000. He also has corporate work experience with AT&T and is a Certified Financial Planner. From 2000-2007, Dr. Haag served as president and CEO of the South Texas Children’s Home in Beeville.

In 2007, Dr. Haag joined the staff at Florida Baptist Children’s Homes as the ninth president in the 109-year history of the Homes. During his tenure as president, he has led efforts that expanded the number of ministry sites from nine to 18 locations across Florida, launched a successful international childcare ministry to help children in countries around the world and established numerous partnerships with churches and nonprofit organizations. These efforts have increased the number of children and families served by more than 900 percent.

In summer 2009, Dr. Haag was selected to participate in a special summer seminar in Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy, sponsored by the Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs at Boston University. The seminar focused on how beliefs, values and lifestyles affect economic and political developments worldwide, with special attention paid to the role of religion in world affairs. Participants for the seminar were selected from leaders in academia, government, religious institutions, media and nongovernmental organizations, both from the United States and foreign countries.

Dr. Haag has led and participated in humanitarian aid, emergency relief, child care and ministry to children and families in countries around the world. He has preached in churches across Florida and Texas. He and his wife, Christi, also speak at marriage and family seminars.

Additionally, he has authored, presented and published academic articles relating to his business expertise and has been honored several times for his business, professional and civic achievements. He was named an Outstanding Young Alumnus by the Baylor Alumni Association in 2005. He was named Baylor University’s Vice-President for University Development in 2011 where he served before returning as President of Florida Baptist Children’s Homes.

Dr. Haag and his wife live in Lakeland, Florida, where Christi is a popular speaker with “Women of Purpose Speak.” They have two sons, Ben (Sophomore at Baylor) and Brady (High School Senior). They are members of First Baptist Church at the Mall in Lakeland.

Serves on the following workgroups: Child Welfare (Chair), Annual Conference and Legislative

Email: jerry.haag@fbchomes.org



Pastor Stephen “Spike” Hogan – Chets Creek Church

Governor’s Appointee

Spike attended college earning a degree in church music and met his wife, Kitty. He later earned his Master’s Degree from Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Texas. Spike has served at several churches as well as on the staff of the Florida Baptist Convention. In 1998 he began working with the Core Team that would launch Chets Creek Church. During the last 13 years serving as the Lead Pastor, he has experienced some of the greatest ministry days of his life. Spike continues to lead Chets to passionately pursue the vision that birthed the church: “To be a church for the unchurched, here and around the world.”

Serves on the following workgroups: Annual Conference, Disaster Planning, and Family Initiatives

Can assist others with: Corrections/DJJ reentry, leadership strategy, military/veterans, and substance abuse

Email: spike@chetscreek.com



Carolyn Ketchel, LCSW, MSW – Private Practitioner

Senate President Appointee

Carolyn has been a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and in private practice for many years. She graduated from the University of Maryland School of Social Work in 1979 and has worked in a variety of settings with families and individuals. She currently has a radio program on WPSM 91.1 FM during the weekdays, called “A Christian Perspective with Carolyn Ketchel.” Her areas of expertise include relationships, Parent/child issues, marriage, marriage preparation, divorce recovery, adoption, PTSD from abortion, anxiety, depression, grief reaction, women’s issues and faith issues.

Serves on the following workgroups: Annual Conference and Family Initiatives

Can assist others with: Adoption, disaster relief, food services, health initiatives, homelessness, mental health, military/veterans, and single mothers

Email: cnknewcomer@cox.net



Rabbi Jeffrey Kurtz-Lendner – Temple Solel

Senate President Appointee

Rabbi Jeffrey Kurtz-Lendner is the rabbi of Temple Solel in Hollywood, Florida. Previously he served as the rabbi of the Northshore Jewish Congregation in New Orleans suburb, Mandeville, Louisiana. While in Mandeville he oversaw the congregation's recovery efforts during Hurricane Katrina. Rabbi Kurtz-Lendner, a native of Buffalo, New York, attended Brandeis University, and was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

Rabbi Kurtz-Lendner, a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and serves on the board of the southeast region of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He served as the President of the Broward County Board of Rabbis as well as on the boards of the Jewish Federation of Broward and the David Posnack Jewish Community Center. He is also a member of the steering committee of the Jewish Outreach Institute's Big Tent Judaism initiative and is on the Rabbinic Cabinet of United Jewish Communities.

Previously he served as Chair of the Broward County Jewish Federation's Synagogue-Federation Relations Committee, president of the Greater New Orleans Rabbinic Council, the chair of the Religious Life Staff at Tulane University and president of the Hillel Professionals' Association. He also served as the rabbinic advisor to Touro Infirmary Hospital in New Orleans. He served on the Ethics Committee of Lakeview Regional Medical Center in Covington, Louisiana, and on the Institutional Review Board of Tulane University. He was recognized in the "Forty under Forty" issue of the New Orleans *Gambit Weekly* and has written several articles for *Smartphone Magazine*.

Rabbi Kurtz-Lendner was invited to the 2011 White House Hanukkah party, delivered and invocation at an event featuring First Lady Michelle Obama and another invocation at an event featuring President Barack Obama in Hollywood, Florida.

Rabbi Kurtz-Lendner's wife, Robin, a native of Opelousas, Louisiana is a graduate of Boston University Law School. They live with their daughters, Leah [pronounced "Lay -uh"] and Abby, in Cooper City, Florida.

Serves on the following workgroup: Child Welfare

Email: rabbijkl@templesolel.com



Dr. Leonel “Leo” Mesa, LMHC – New Day Center
Governor’s Appointee

Dr. Mesa is the President/CEO of Reflections Wellness Center and Chairman of the Florida Commission on Marriage and Family Support Initiatives. He is a licensed mental health counselor and is active in the American Association of Christian Counselors, Latino Alliance Against Domestic Violence and the Miami-Dade Critical Incident Stress Management Team.

Serves on the following workgroups: Annual Conference and Child Welfare

Can assist others with: Domestic violence, elderly, fatherhood, mental health, persons with disabilities, substance abuse, family preservation, kinship care, and parenting

Email: drmesa@newdaycenters.com



Cherron “CC” Newby – Community Member
Governor’s Appointee

Cherron Newby moved to Florida from Georgia in June of 1998. Born and raised in Washington, D.C., she started a construction final cleaning business that hired the homeless and ex-offenders. She also provided transportation and a meal to her employees. Cherron has employed as many as 45 individuals. Prior to starting her business, she worked as an Administrative Assistant for a former Congressman, at the Pentagon and with the Department of Defense. Cherron is an authorized OSHA trainer and she coaches small businesses. She also volunteers and does fundraising for various organizations. She is a mother of three daughters, two of whom are veterans, a goddaughter, three grandsons and two granddaughters.

Serves on the following workgroups: Criminal Justice and Legislative

Can assist others with: Corrections/DJJ reentry, disaster relief, educational tutoring, elderly populations, family preservation, fatherhood, food services, foster care/aging out, homelessness, independent living, kinship care, single mothers, workforce/employment, and parenting

Email: cctrain-consult@live.com



Rabbi Sholom Ciment – Chabad Lubavitch of Greater Boynton Beach
Governor's Appointee

Rabbi Sholom Ciment a native of Brookline, Mass. attended the New England Hebrew Academy, a private day school and High School in Brookline. Post High School, he attended two years at The Oholei Torah Seminary, and another 6 years at The Central Yeshiva of Tomchei Tmimim in Brooklyn, NY where he received his Rabbinical Ordination.

He has served in Rabbinical internship positions throughout North America. One such internship took him to for one summer to Hong Kong and China. He was Director of The Machne Israel Development Fund, The social Services arm of The International Chabad-Lubavitch Jewish Movement from 1990-1994.

In 1994 he relocated to Boynton Beach, Florida where he has since served. Then undeveloped, The Rabbi and his wife Dina just celebrated the completion of their 18th year of pioneering Jewish community Building. His community is comprised of many hundreds of families, surrounding a five acre, multi-million dollar “Campus for Living Judaism” serving tens of thousands throughout the Palm Beach County region of South Florida.

Email: cimentsh@cs.com



Pam Olsen – International House of Prayer
Governor's Appointee

Pam began the International House of Prayer Tallahassee with her husband Tenney, and serves as its Executive Director. It is a house of prayer that unites and establishes individuals in intimacy with Christ through prayer and worship. We are committed to prayer, worship, fasting, healing and the Great Commission. The members intercede for God to move in lives, cities, states and nations.

Serves on the following workgroups: Child Welfare, Disaster Planning, and Legislative

Can assist others with: Adoption, human trafficking, and legislative/policy

Email: pam@ihoptallahassee.org



Pastor Carl E. Reeves – Greater Mount Lily Baptist Church
Governor’s Appointee

Carl is a graduate of Florida A&M University and an honorably discharged United States Air Force Veteran (1993). On the Second Sunday of May in 1996, at the Saint John Divine Missionary Baptist Church, Brother Reeves’ heart was pricked by the Spirit of God at which time Brother Reeves surrendered, repented of sin and received Jesus Christ as his “Lord and Savior”. Through the Church’s holistic Bible Study, the District Congress, the State Congress, the National Congress, Seminary and Theological Studies at the West Florida Baptist Institute,

Brother Reeves has matured as a Servant/Leader and Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Serves on the following workgroups: Annual Conference and Criminal Justice

Can assist others with: Homelessness and youth in DJJ

Email: greatermountlily@aol.com



Samuel “Sam” Sipes, LCSW, BCD – Lutheran Services Florida, Inc.
Speaker of the House Appointee

Sam Sipes has a background in leadership roles in nonprofit organizations, as well as experience in child welfare, social services and programs for senior citizens. Lutheran Services Florida is a statewide, nonprofit human services agency dedicated to helping all people in need regardless of religious affiliation, age or national origin. Headquartered in Tampa, the agency has more than 60 programs located throughout Florida. Since it was established in 1982, LSF has helped nearly 900,000 men, women and children. LSF’s mission is to bring God’s healing, hope

and help to people in need.

Serves on the following workgroups: Disaster Planning (Chair) and Child Welfare

Email: ssipes@lsfnet.org



Patricia “Pat” Smith – Department of Children and Families
Governor’s Appointee

Pat Smith is an executive with more than 15 years of progressive experience in Public Relations and Mass Communications. With a background in news reporting, production and media relations, she understands what it takes to create a successful, results-driven campaign and how to tell your story in a way that is compelling and enticing to the media.

Pat currently works for the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) in the Office of External Affairs as the Community Engagement Manager. Prior to assuming this position, she was appointed as the first African-American at DCF to serve as Press Secretary.

Pat is a motivational speaker and plays an active role in minority and women’s issues as she demonstrated while serving two years as the chair of the Tallahassee Chamber Professional Women’s Forum, taught women’s Bible study for five years in Tallahassee and was the former radio talk show host on WTAL 1450 AM for “The Woman In You” show.

In 2006, she was nominated as a finalist for the Distinguished Leadership Pacesetter Award and was the recipient of the 1999 NAACP Black Achiever Award. Other highlights include winning two Judges’ Image Awards from the Florida Public Relations Associations (FPRA), Capital Chapter in 2009 and 2011 for producing a 30-second Public Service Announcement (PSA) for television.

Pat is a true Public Servant in her community. She is a 2011 Certified Public Manager (CPM) and graduate from the Florida State Center for Public Management at Florida State University. Other honors and awards include being named by the Tallahassee Democrat as one of Tallahassee’s “25 Women You Need to Know” and was also appointed by the Leon County Commissioners to serve on the inaugural Leon County Status of Women and Girls Commission.

Serves on the following workgroups: Annual Conference (Chair) and Child Welfare

Can assist others with: Adoption, mentoring, and single mothers

Email: pat_smith@dcf.state.fl.us



Pastor Blaine Whitt – Xtreme Solutions

Speaker of the House Appointee

Blaine has a passion, an Xtreme passion to help others. Thus, Xtreme Solutions. He knows all too well that it is in the “soul” of man, and the inner workings of the system where change needs to take place. He is the Founder and President of Xtreme Solutions and Senior Pastor and Founder of Christian Disciples International.

A native to Florida, Blaine Whitt has a passion for people and wealth of experience. Previously he was a business owner, training and empowering leaders for the past 20 years throughout the world. He mentors high school and college students, business owners, community leaders, as well as students and pastor in seven different countries. Currently, he preaches and mentors in Lowell Correctional Institution. Blaine has been married for 36 year, has two daughters, two son in laws, and six grandchildren. Blaine’s passions include: Loving and serving Jesus Christ, playing with his grandkids, watching them grow, and mentoring them.

Serves on the following workgroup: Criminal Justice

Email: bwhitt@xtremesolutions.com



Karim Veerjee – Florida Hospital

Governor’s Appointee

A local to Florida since 1982, Karim Veerjee completed his Bachelor’s Degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of South Florida in 1989. After spending a few years in the work force, Karim returned to school, and obtained a Master’s Degree in Health Services Management from the University of St. Francis in 1998. Karim is also fluent in two languages, English and Urdu.

Currently serving as the Director of Information Services at Florida Hospital in Tampa, Florida, Karim has spent the last 23 years leading technology implementation at the hospital. Beginning his career as a systems analyst, Karim’s dedication to achieving excellence quickly led him to progress to a Project Manager, Senior Project Manager, and then to the position he has held for the past 7 years, the Director of Information Services.

While Karim has undoubtedly achieved much success in his professional life, for the past 30 years, Karim has also contributed greatly to another part of his life that is close and dear to his heart, his service to the local community. His journey in community service began as early as his education and career, when from 1993 to 1996, he served a ministerial position in his prayer center, offering pastoral care to the local community. Karim’s journey continued forward when in 1999, he began a 6 year service as a Regional Member for the Council for Florida. Serving specifically as a Tampa Bay Management Committee Chair, he led an enthusiastic team that

prioritized and emphasized initiatives for education, a healthy lifestyle, and economic stability. At the end of his six year period in 2005, Karim then took on another 7 years as the Regional Florida Chairman for the Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Board, also known as ITREB, a board that promotes not only religious education, but emphasizes the daily practice of ethics and morals that stem from one's religious beliefs in one's daily life.

Currently, Karim serves as the Florida Chairman for Aga Khan Foundation. The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) focuses on a small number of specific development problems by forming intellectual and financial partnerships with organizations sharing its objectives. Most Foundation grants are made to grassroots organizations testing innovative approaches in the field. With a small staff, a host of cooperating agencies and thousands of volunteers, the Foundation reaches out to vulnerable populations on four continents, irrespective of their race, religion, political persuasion or gender. Karim is also a Regional member for Communications and Publications, dealing specifically with outreach and in-reach within the local communities. Last, Karim serves as a National Facilitator to conduct sessions with different age groups regarding the incorporation of Ethics in our daily lives.

Along with a successful career and unwavering dedication to community service, Karim holds his family as his utmost priority. Karim has been married for 22 years, and has three beautiful daughters with his lovely wife. In his spare time, which is available to Karim quite sparingly, he enjoys the outdoors while playing tennis or walking, and also aspires to learn to play Golf.

Serves on the following workgroup: Disaster Planning

Email: karimveerjee@gmail.com



Pastor Reno Zunz – Idlewild Baptist Church
Speaker of the House Appointee

Reno Zunz has been a Minister of Family Life at Idlewild Baptist Church in Lutz, Florida for 29 years. He received his Bachelor's of Science degree from Georgia Tech and Master's of Divinity from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been married to his wife Sherri for nearly thirty years. They have three adult children and are expecting their first grandchild in August.

Serves on the following workgroup: Child Welfare

Can assist others with: Adoption, disaster relief, and fatherhood

Email: rzunz@idlewild.org