

Children's Home Society of Florida Pathway to Health and Success

As the Children's Home Society of Florida's mission states, it is dedicated to building bridges to success for children. A method for achieving this is through its Community Partnership Schools (CPS), which are proven to improve student behavior, increase academic gains and graduation rates, and enhance parental involvement. Children's Home Society of Florida (CHS) currently manages 31 CPSs around the state and has documented accomplishment of outcomes.

The ***Pathway to Health and Success*** initiative proposed by CHS will provide nutrition and other educational classes as well as access to meat, dairy and fresh produce for 600 area families by expanding Food Pantry and Parent Resource Center services to Manatee and Daughtry Elementary Schools in Manatee County as Community Partnership Schools. These CPSs are supported by a 25-year committed partnership between Children's Home Society, the Manatee School District, University of South Florida Sarasota/Manatee, and MCR Health, Inc. The \$109,500 total initiative budget includes \$55,000 for a Feeding Tampa Bay Food Pantry Sponsorship, \$30,000 for furniture and technology, and \$24,500 for parent workshops.

The Manatee County School District has donated one portable unit for a Parent Resource Center at Manatee Elementary School and two portables for a Parent Resource Center and a Food Pantry at Daughtry Elementary School. The Food Pantry will serve both school families (90%) and the community at large (10%). In addition to food for 30,000 – 45,000 meals per year, the Feeding Tampa Bay sponsorship funded by the Impact100 SRQ grant includes two commercial refrigerators, a commercial freezer, and 8 shelving units for that Food Pantry. These items will become the property of CHS.

The Parent Resource Centers provide additional support for families, including nutrition, cooking and other educational classes, clothing, and the Very Involved Parent Program. Because these resources are located at the schools, the transportation barrier for access is reduced.

To sustain this initiative, CHS is conducting a targeted statewide campaign to raise \$5 million to sustain all Community Partnership Schools and the services provided. CHS will also continue and expand community partnerships that provide resources to reduce expenses and increase available funds.

Instead of waiting for families to reach a crisis point, CHS focuses on preventing food insecurity by ensuring consistent access to culturally relevant food and other supportive resources. The program aims not only to provide immediate relief but also to foster long-term community stability and empower families, ultimately working towards a healthier and more resilient community.