



**THE FLORIDA CENTER**  
FOR CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

## Healthy Children & Families... Healthy Community

Winter 2008-2009

### THE FLORIDA CENTER PROVIDES STATE'S ONLY FETAL ALCOHOL CLINIC, TACKLES 100% PREVENTABLE DISORDER THAT CAUSES MENTAL RETARDATION



**S**eth Shea-Winners spent the first four months of his life in a Harlem hospital, the innocent victim of an alcoholic mother. "In New York City in 1989, 150 babies were born every day testing positive to crack cocaine or diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome, or both," says Kathryn E. Shea, MSW, LCSW, president and CEO of The Florida Center.

The child welfare workers in New York couldn't find homes for all of them. Some of the infants were placed in

*Adoption and a caring home have brought stability to 19-year-old Seth Shea-Winners, who was diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome at birth, resulting in permanent brain damage. Here he plays with Riley, his niece-by-adoption.*

foster homes in other areas of the state including Albany, where Kathryn and her family resided. Kathryn and her husband, Stephen Winners, felt a responsibility to become foster parents in order to assist with the New York City crisis.

When Seth was ready for discharge from the hospital, the case manager called Kathryn and asked if the family would take a special needs infant. "I knew nothing about fetal alcohol syndrome at that time, but as a social worker, I believed that a loving home, stability, and a good emotional environment could overcome any disorder," Kathryn states.

By the time Seth was age three he was totally out of control. All of the therapeutic interventions that had worked for many of the children Kathryn had worked with did not work with him. In addition, Kathryn says, "I already had my own child, who was 14 at the time. We weren't planning to increase our family." But Seth needed them and they adopted him at age four.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### THE FLORIDA CENTER AT 34: A SMOOTH TRANSITION INTO THE FUTURE, A STRONG FISCAL AND PROGRAMMATIC POSITION TO CARRY OUT ITS MISSION

**P**eter D. Howard, LCSW, resigned as president and CEO of The Florida Center on October 31. The Center's chief operating officer, Kathryn E. Shea, MSW, LCSW, has replaced him, according to Barbara Brown.

Brown is the newly elected chair of The Center's operating board, replacing Jan Miller. Jan is the new board chair of the Fund for The Florida Center for Child and Family Development, a permanent endowment to meet The Center's future needs.

Most significant about the changes is that all positions are being filled by personnel who have a long history with this not-for-profit organization, which was founded in 1974.

Peter Howard came to The Florida Center—then the Child Development Center—in 1998. He had been President and CEO of the Sarasota-based Family Counseling Center. That social services organization, founded in 1964, merged with the Child Development Center in July 2003 to form The Florida Center. Howard oversaw the merger, seamlessly integrating financial and program aspects of the two.

"I am leaving this organization in a strong fiscal and programmatic position, with solid reserves and over 1 million dollars in endowment in The Fund for The Florida Center," he says.

"Ten years is a long time. I am ready to move on to something new," Howard adds, noting that he will be relocating his family north of Tampa Bay.

"I have loved every minute of my time with The Florida Center and absolutely believe in its



Peter D. Howard

Kathryn E. Shea



Barbara Brown

Jan Miller

*(Continued on page 2)*

# THE FLORIDA CENTER AT 34: A SMOOTH TRANSITION INTO THE FUTURE

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mission. I am very pleased with Kathryn's selection. I know she will carry this important work forward."

"I am very proud of our staff and board of directors, and I am most proud of the agency's growth in the area of early childhood prevention and intervention services," he says. "We have raised awareness, at both a state and national level, on the importance of the first five years of a child's life." Under Peter's management, the organization:



- was Florida's first provider of child welfare services for young children, developing a model that was duplicated in other parts of the state.
- received legislative funding in 2005 to open Florida's first Fetal Alcohol Diagnostic Clinic, providing statewide services for children and public awareness activities.
- served as lead agency from 2005-2007 in the Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health, funded by the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Kathryn Shea says, "I am so grateful to Peter for grooming me for this position. He has taught me well and I feel confident in my new role. I am excited to work with such a dedicated staff and passionate and committed Board of Directors in moving this agency forward in its mission."



Kathryn was recently the recipient of The Lawton Chiles Award, which is presented by the Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota to an individual whose contributions to prenatal and early child health in Sarasota county are characterized by exceptional commitment, wisdom, leadership, and vision. Shea joined The Center in March 2000 as

therapist/program coordinator. By the end of that year, she was named vice president of community-based services. She retained that position until June 2004, when she was promoted to executive vice president. In July 2005, she was named chief operating officer.

Kathryn earned both a BA and MSW in social work from the University of Kentucky, with a dual track as clinician/administrator. She became a certified social worker in New York, beginning her career in 1981 at St. Catherine's Center for Children in Albany. Initially a school-based intervention counselor, she advanced to clinical director of the day treatment program, focusing on children from 2 to 12 with serious emotional disturbances. She served as clinical director for 18 years before moving to the Child Development Center in Sarasota—now The Florida Center.



Her work here has drawn extensively on her expertise in infant mental health, emotional and behavioral disturbances in children, and the effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and drugs. (See related story on page 1.) She has also expanded agency services and budget through her extensive work with local and state

government and private foundations, building sustainable systems of care for young children with mental health and fetal alcohol related problems.

To learn more, please call 941.371.8820.



## THE FLORIDA CENTER FOR CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT OPERATING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*The Florida Center for Child and Family Development, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Our Federal I.D. Number is 59-1947024. The Florida Center for Child and Family Development's registration number with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is CH3203. The Florida Center for Child and Family Development employs no contracted solicitors and receives 100% of all contributions. A copy of this official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free 1-800-435-7372 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.*

# SPECIAL EVENTS, DONATIONS PROVIDE FUNDS TO UNDERWRITE OUR PROGRAMS

## JULY: 24TH ANNUAL SUNCOAST OFFSHORE GRAND PRIX FESTIVAL MAKES A BIG SPLASH

The 24th Annual Suncoast Offshore Grand Prix Festival netted just over \$100,000 for its beneficiaries, the Suncoast Foundation for the Handicapped and The Florida Center. It also generated an estimated \$9,611,298 in revenues for the community. Race proceeds will go directly towards the completion of The Florida Center's John T. Stafford Campus & Kevin Brown Building in North Port, a "Green" building.

Special guests donating their time as participants included NASCAR Driver Robby Gordon; Captains Keith & Monte Colburn and crew member Travis Lofland of the fishing vessel Wizard, featured on Discovery Channel's "Deadliest Catch" television series; and Chef Marc Cummings of Wealth TV.



Considered the Indy 500 of Offshore Powerboat Racing, the Suncoast Offshore Grand Prix is the longest continuous running race site in the country. Festival proceeds to date have provided construction of over \$14 million in facilities for physically and mentally challenged persons in our community.



## SEPTEMBER: TAMPA BAY RAYS HONOR THE FLORIDA CENTER



The Tampa Bay Rays, American League Division Champions, selected The Florida Center for their "Community Corner" at a Tampa Bay Rays-Boston Red Sox game, providing nationwide visibility and awareness for the Center, both prior to and during the game. Pictured as they plan are Lucy Nicandri, Vice President of Marketing & Special Events/The Florida Center; Leslie Tieszen, Senior Manager Community Relations/ Tampa Bay Rays; and Bonnie Jackson, Administrative Assistant, Marketing & Special Events/The Florida Center.

# SPECIAL THANKS TO RECENT DONORS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGH SEPTEMBER

All-Star Children's Foundation  
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Bailey  
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Senator Mike & Dee Bennett  
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In honor of our precious godchild,  
Eric Robinson, Jr.  
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## MORE SPECIAL EVENTS TO HELP SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES

### NOVEMBER: CARLTON & LINDA FISK CO-CHAIR CELEBRITY GOLF CLASSIC

**B**aseball Hall of Famer Carlton Fisk and his wife Linda co-chaired the first annual “Fisk and Friends” Celebrity Golf Classic to benefit The Florida Center. The event, held on Saturday, November 8, at The Founders Golf Club, consisted of a day of golf followed by a banquet.

Among the Who’s Who of sports celebrities who participated were John Havlicek, Goose Gosage, Phil Niekro, Johnny Bench, Ivan Lendl, Dwight Evans, and Phil Esposito. A pre-tournament reception was held on Friday, November 7, at the Hyatt Regency Sarasota.

Fisk’s career—including what some call one of baseball’s greatest moments—has been immortalized with a life-sized bronze statue at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago, and Fenway Park’s left foul pole was named after him.

“I’ve been so fortunate all my life,” Fisk said. “It gives me great pleasure to give back to my community.” The Golf Classic is the most recent of his activities in support of The Center. “I am thrilled to be working with the Florida Center, and to create awareness for this great organization that has helped so many children and families over the years.”



**Special Events Hotline:  
941.371.8820, Extension 1800**

## WE INVITE YOUR SUPPORT FOR OUR FUNDRAISING EVENTS

### 2008

#### 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF TREES, LIGHTS, AND HOLIDAY GIFTS



Fri., Dec. 5 • 6:30 p.m.  
Michael's On East Ballroom  
Fabulous Silent Auction & Dancing  
\$175/person.  
Group Tables Available • Black Tie Optional  
Honorary Co-Chairs:  
State Senator Mike & Dee Bennett  
Auction Chair: Dede Curran  
Info: [www.thefloridacenter.org](http://www.thefloridacenter.org)

#### 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL BOAT PARADE OF LIGHTS

Sat., Dec. 13  
Sarasota Bayfront Park Free  
Chair: Nichole Double  
Info: [www.sarasotachristmasboatparade.com](http://www.sarasotachristmasboatparade.com)



### 2009

#### 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL THUNDER BY THE BAY MOTORCYCLE FESTIVAL



January 9–11, 2009  
Location & Ticket Prices Vary  
Info: [www.thunderbythebay.org](http://www.thunderbythebay.org)

#### WSLR 96.5 CONCERT EVENT

Fri., Feb. 6, 2009 • Details to be announced  
Info: [www.thefloridacenter.org](http://www.thefloridacenter.org)

#### 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SUNCOAST OFFSHORE GRAND PRIX FESTIVAL

June 27–July 5, 2009  
Locations & Ticket Prices Vary  
Info: [www.suncoastoffshore.org](http://www.suncoastoffshore.org)



To sponsor or volunteer for any of our events, please call (941) 371-8820, ext. 1123 or email [bonnie.jackson@thefloridacenter.org](mailto:bonnie.jackson@thefloridacenter.org).

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The prognosis by a pediatric neurologist was shocking. She advised against adoption because "his brain damage is so severe that he'll need to be institutionalized by age 7."

Kathryn has since learned that of all the other legal and illegal drugs combined, alcohol has the most devastating, long-term developmental impact, which can result in permanent brain damage.

"Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders" is a term that covers a broad range of permanent problems that can include mental retardation, facial deformity, growth deficiencies and central nervous system dysfunction, the most severe resulting in fetal alcohol syndrome.

"Our family simply refused to believe that we could do nothing to impact the severity of the brain damage. We explored every conceivable intervention that might improve his level of functioning, the most important being occupational therapy to treat his severe sensory processing problems," Kathryn says.

Seth's family is delighted with how much progress he has made. Now 19, he attends Oak Park School, which accommodates children and young adults who have severe challenges. He works in the community three days a week.

Kathryn says Seth is so proud of himself, but his greatest challenge is his cognitive limitations. "He has made so much progress in behavioral, social, and emotional areas, but his IQ remains in the mildly mentally retarded range. He will always need supervision, but he can live in the community."



Seth is one of the lucky ones. In Florida alone, an estimated 2,040 infants are born each year with effects that can be attributed to prenatal alcohol exposure—all for just one reason: their mothers drank alcohol while pregnant. "There is no safe limit," Shea says. "Every woman and every fetus metabolizes alcohol differently."

FAS is one of the leading known causes of mental retardation and birth defects, and the disorder is 100% preventable if a woman does not drink alcohol while she is pregnant.

The Florida Center opened the first FASD Clinic in the state in 2005 and provides statewide FASD training. Locally, it provides services for children in Sarasota, Manatee and DeSoto Counties. Counselors support families and connect children with special education and other developmental services.



"We did 82 four-hour diagnostic assessments last year," Shea says. She wants to do more, including education and prevention. The Center works constantly to secure funding and offset budget cuts from government agencies. "We have received matching funds from several sources, along with three grants from the All-Star Children's Foundation. We have the knowledge and staff. If we had additional funding, we could do so much more."



## SETH'S BENCH: A REST, A FUNDRAISER

**S**eth Shea-Winners grew tired one day while shopping at the Garden Argosy on St. Armands Circle. The fatigue is one result of his Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). He needed a place to rest. His mother, Kathryn Shea, an expert on FASD and president of The Florida Center for Child & Family Development, mentioned this to a judge, who was inspired to create the Seth's Bench™ concept. If you would like to provide a bench—a very special place for others like Seth—please contact The Florida Center at 941.371.8820. All proceeds support The Florida Center's Fetal Alcohol Diagnostic Assessment & Intervention Clinic.



*Seth presents the first Seth's Bench™ to Kathi Hermann, owner of Garden Argosy. (Photo by KSC Advertising and Public Relations.)*

## CAN YOU HELP OUR CHILDREN? SCHOLARSHIP MATCHING GRANT

**W**e are all experiencing the economic crunch these days. The families we serve are no exception, and **our need for scholarship funding has doubled this year.** We need your support.

We have a unique opportunity to help our children and families. **The Bank of America Client Foundation has awarded us a \$25,000 matching grant for scholarships for our students. They will match every dollar you contribute, up to \$25,000.** Can you help? Please give serious thought to our appeal. The need is great.

You can use the enclosed envelope to send your gift. We deeply appreciate any amount, and we assure you we will use it wisely.

The Florida Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent permitted by law.

## VENICE GONDOLIER INTERVIEWS PARENTS FROM THE FLORIDA CENTER'S VENICE FACILITY

*(Excerpted from an article appearing in the Venice Gondolier on October 12, 2008; written by Kim Cool, Features Editor. Reprinted with permission.)*

Children with developmental problems are a fact of life. Helping them and their families is the mission of The Florida Center for Child and Family Development, which has a facility in Venice. Developmental problems can happen to anyone. Children do not all adjust to socialization at the same pace or in the same way. "Our child was biting other children in preschool," Melissa Caldwell said. "Nobody has answers for things like that. As a parent you aren't sure. You have nowhere to turn. The teachers (in many preschools) are not educated to deal with these problems and then one day I was told he (her son) couldn't come back."



Caldwell is a Realtor with the Richard Bradway firm. Her husband, Kelly Caldwell, CEO of Caldwell Trust, is on the board of the Florida Center. Despite his board position at the center, neither parent

thought of going there with their child until it was suggested to them by Dick Aubrey at the Venice YMCA.

Caldwell said the problem is traumatic for the child too because the other children tended to ostracize him and "you don't want your child to be the bully of the school."

When the Caldwells turned to the Florida Center, they found the help they needed, someone to "socially coach" their son and also help them. "She gave me little story books to read to him," Melissa said. "It was a reward system. It could have been a more serious problem and she would have detected that too."

The Florida Center deals with a multitude of child development problems, including autism and fetal alcohol diagnosis. Its programs include. . . occupational and speech therapy plus a variety of services to help parents and children adjust and deal with their problems.

The Caldwells' son has been working with the therapist for more than two months. He goes to the center Monday, Wednesday and

Friday for classes and the therapist attends class with him once a week for 90 minutes each time. She calls Melissa after class to discuss the boy and his progress. "She observes the whole class," Caldwell said. "It is a great experience."



"There are kids who have been kicked out of two and three preschools and they are just 3 years old," Center director Jennifer Horton-Clarke said. "We see it all the time."

EJ Robinson, then 2 1/2, was diagnosed with pervasive developmental disorder, which is similar to autism, attorney Christine Robinson said. The child was behind in speech and had a sensory disorder that manifested itself like a 2-year-old's temper tantrum.

"His senses were over stimulated and sometimes under stimulated," she said. "He was behind in both gross and fine motor skills." The diagnosis was made by a pediatrician. "We came to the Florida Center for occupational therapy."

EJ has three sessions of speech therapy and two sessions of occupational therapy each week. Clare Smith is the therapist who is working to bring him up to normal. They worked together for more than 10 months.

At home, the family has a homemade balance beam, a trampoline and a coffee can filled with poker chips. "She is teaching us how to give him therapy," Robinson said. "We caught him in that window so he was able to overcome obstacles. She has given our child the life of a child." . . .

"The Florida Center is a good resource with good successes," Robinson said. "It doesn't compete with other agencies but collaborates with them."

*The Florida Center serves more than 6,000 children and families throughout Sarasota County each year from its facilities at 800 Gulf Coast Blvd., Venice; 6929 Outreach Way, North Port; and 4620 17th St., Sarasota. To learn more or to schedule an appointment, please visit [www.thefloridacenter.org](http://www.thefloridacenter.org) or call 941.371.8820.*



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FOR CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

*supports  
healthy development and  
strengthens relationships within  
families and  
communities.*

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