

GOOD NEWS

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 2026

from our funded partners



Children's Board
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

www.ChildrensBoard.org

Gulf Coast JFCS

PADRES DE CRIANZA PROGRAM



Holiday Event: ***They hosted a Holiday Event & a Toy Drive!***

Thanks to the generosity of the Children's Board of Hillsborough County, as well as donations from Simply Healthcare Plan and Duke Energy, the Padres de Crianza Program successfully hosted a Holiday Day Event and Toy Drive. A total of 55 people attended, and 70 children received holiday gifts. Additionally, ten families received grocery boxes, thanks to the generosity of The Community Food Pantry at Village Presbyterian Church, ensuring they can enjoy a Christmas dinner.

The Padres de Crianza team provided childcare for the children in attendance, offering a variety of games and activities. They also supplied food, desserts, and drinks for everyone.



University of South Florida Board of Trustees

THE DOCS PARENTING PROGRAMS

Then & Now

An Interview with a Family Who’s Grown with Us



Looking back over the past four years, you’ve participated in HOT DOCS and just recently DOCS K–5. What originally motivated you to enroll, and how have your reasons evolved over time?

“Through our daily routine, we observed certain behaviors in our daughter that concerned us and prompted us to enroll in the DOCS programs. Since then, she no longer experiences tantrums or meltdowns.”

Both programs focus on building strong, positive parent–child relationships. In what ways have you seen your connection with your child grow through your involvement?

“As parents, it’s easy to fall into an automatic routine, but it’s important to remember how to reconnect with our children on their level. Both programs encourage us to dedicate at least five minutes of playtime each day—and those moments create wonderful memories for both parent and child. During play, you can be silly, laugh, and disconnect from daily stress, while your child experiences pure happiness. This simple practice strengthens the bond and builds a lasting connection.”

What is a moment with your child that made you think, “Wow, the things I’ve learned in these programs are really working”?

“While completing the HOT DOCS course, I created a video on my phone using pictures to illustrate the routine after Alice returned from Pre-K and prepared for gymnastics and dance. At the time, she was at risk of being dropped from these classes due to her behavior. The video helped her understand the importance of staying positive and enjoying these activities. From then on, every time we had gymnastics or dance, instead of resisting, she was excited to get ready and even wanted to arrive early. We reinforced this progress with praise, and the most rewarding moment was when her coaches congratulated her as well.”

Is there a memorable “win” or funny moment that still makes you smile today?

“One of the most memorable and enjoyable moments with Alice was the ‘Play with Bubbles’ exercise. Every time we do this activity, we have an absolute blast! We even added music to make it more fun. We started this when Alice was four years old, and now at eight, she still loves it just as much.”

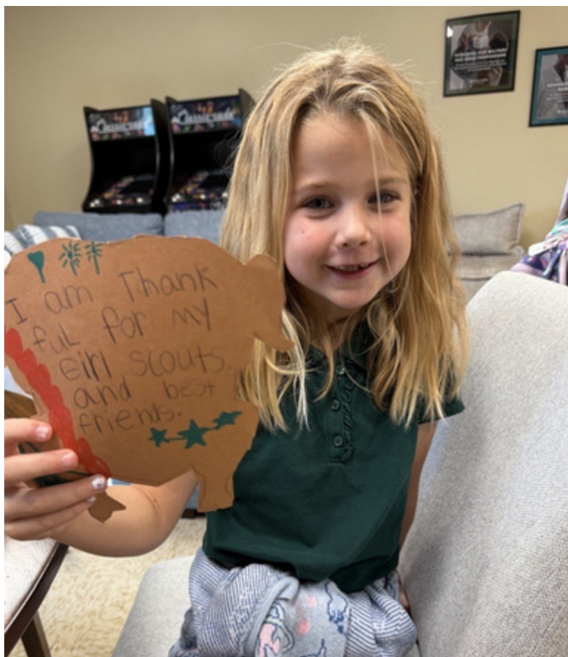
Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

G I R L S C O U T S T R O O P P R O G R A M

Fall Activity Highlight *Community gatherings, connections, or art*

During our Girl Scouts troop meetings, we invited the girls to reflect on the question, **“What are you thankful for?”**, creating a safe and supportive space where they could share openly, listen to one another, and build confidence in using their voices. In Troop #96021 with the Police Athletic League, the girls paired their conversations with a fun fall craft by decorating leaves or a turkey and writing what they were thankful for, allowing them to express gratitude through both creativity and discussion.

Similarly, at Troop #96053 with Community Steppingstones, the girls jumped into the activity with enthusiasm, collaborating by sharing ideas, materials, and encouragement as they created and proudly presented everything they are thankful for.



Their thoughtful examples included:

- enjoying meals with family and friends
- playing board games together
- giving back to the community by helping neighbors in need or inviting them to share a meal.

Through these meaningful moments of sharing and art, the girls demonstrated growth in confidence, communication, teamwork, and creativity—beautifully reflecting the heart of the Girl Scout mission by fostering friendship, leadership, and ensuring every girl feels valued along the way.

Champions for Children

G R E A T W E G R O W P R O G R A M

Winter Activity Highlight

Community celebration, connection, and learning

Great We Grow (GWG) creates opportunities for families to come together in welcoming, developmentally supportive environments that foster connection, learning, and joy. On Tuesday, December 23, 2025, Great We Grow hosted its Winter Celebration, the “Sips & Snacks Social,” a cozy cookies and cocoa gathering designed to celebrate the season and provide families with a meaningful shared experience before the holiday break.

Families were welcomed with a festive cookies and cocoa bar, where caregivers and children could enjoy warm treats while connecting with GWG staff and one another. The relaxed, social atmosphere encouraged conversation, relationship-building, and a sense of community among participating families.



In addition to the refreshments, the event featured multiple child-friendly play areas intentionally designed to promote learning through exploration. Children were invited to move freely between play stations, engaging in hands-on activities that supported fine motor skills, sensory exploration, creativity, and social interaction. In addition to the refreshments, the event featured

multiple child-friendly play areas intentionally designed to promote learning through exploration. Children were invited to move freely between play stations, engaging in hands-on activities that supported fine motor skills, sensory exploration, creativity, and social interaction. Open-ended materials allowed children to make choices based on their interests, fostering independence, curiosity, and confidence while learning through play.

The Sips & Snacks Social served not only as a seasonal celebration, but also as a meaningful opportunity for families to connect, reflect, and end the year feeling supported, welcomed, and valued within the Great We Grow community.

Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA

SULPHUR SPRINGS YMCA OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAM

End of the Year Highlights



It's the holiday season and we are so grateful for the opportunity to engage families and celebrate student growth and achievement in Sulphur Springs.

In preparation for Thanksgiving, students participated in a collaborative, STEM-focused project in which they designed and constructed mini paper turkeys. Through this activity, students used key STEM concepts such as planning, testing, and problem-solving.

They engaged in the engineering design process by developing a plan, building their turkey using provided materials, and observing the results of their design choices. The project also reinforced foundational math skills as students measured, counted, and arranged paper components, often exploring patterns and symmetry. This hands-on experience fostered curiosity, creativity, and resilience, while reinforcing the idea that problem-solving is a key skill and learning often occurs through trial and reflection.

We also hosted a Thanksgiving dinner where parents were welcomed to campus for a shared meal and a celebration of their children. During the event, each student was recognized with a superlative award, creating a meaningful opportunity for families to celebrate student character and growth together.



Throughout the month of December, academic curriculum was delivered through seasonal, hands-on activities aligned with core subject areas. Students built gingerbread houses to apply STEM concepts such as planning, problem-solving, and structural design. Creating Santa and Elf hats using measurements reinforced math skills, while writing Christmas cards, developing holiday stories, and reflecting on the meaning of Christmas supported literacy development through writing, vocabulary, and self-expression.

To close out the year, we hosted our first Positive Behavior Support (PBS) celebration, recognizing students who earned all 4s and 5s—the highest ratings—on their daily behavior sheets throughout the first quarter. These students demonstrated responsibility, respect, and a consistent commitment to doing their best. This celebration reinforced the importance of positive behavior and allowed students to serve as role models for their peers.

Rooted in Play

POPUP ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND PROJECT

End of the Year Highlights



At every Popup Adventure Playground, we place a whiteboard in the play space, and playworkers document what we hear in real time. Children narrate their thinking out loud: “I have an idea,” “I’m gonna make something happen,” “It didn’t work, so I rebuilt it,” and “I did it!” Others reflect on process and persistence: “Wow, it actually works,” “We figured it out,” and “It’s okay. I can rebuild

it.” These moments are not prompted or coached. They emerge when children are given time, space, materials, and permission to play their way.

The whiteboard also captures how play supports creativity, problem-solving, and connection across ages. Children explain their thinking: “It’s not just a walking stick. It’s a sword, bat, fishing pole,” and “I built a stage for Santa because Christmas is about color too.” They invite others in, “Do you want to play with me?” and stay engaged long enough to revise ideas, celebrate success, and start again. Adults notice the difference. Parents say things like “This is what school should be like,” and “There are engineers here.” One caregiver shared, “I came to the last popup and smiled the whole way home.”



Children’s Board funding is what makes it possible for these moments to happen at scale and with consistency. Rooted in Play served 244 parents and 323 children through Popup Adventure Playgrounds across 2025. That investment supports trained playworkers, time for observation and documentation, and environments where children can stay long enough to say, “I’m going to make something happen,” “It didn’t work, so I rebuilt it,” and eventually, “I did it!” At our most recent popup, 168 children and 120 adults attended, our highest attendance to date. The whiteboard filled quickly, with “I’m using my brain here,” “There’s so much JUNK that I can build with!” and “I have an idea if you guys want to try it?” showing that as access expands, the depth and quality of play remain intact.

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay-HIPPY

S U C C E S S F U L F A M I L I E S A N D H I P P Y P R O G R A M

Holiday Event Highlights



Every year, our agency has the tremendous honor of serving families through our holiday gift programs—witnessing parents breathe easier and children light up with joy. This past season, however, one family’s story stood out in a truly remarkable way.

A single mother of ten children and a dedicated participant in the USF HIPPY program approached the holidays with both deep love and significant worry. With very limited financial resources, providing meaningful gifts for each of her children felt overwhelming. Without her connection to our program and the support of our community, she would not have known where to turn.

Through our holiday gift drive, this family was matched with an extraordinarily generous donor who went far beyond expectations. What made this moment especially meaningful was the coordinated effort of our entire holiday team. The family’s HIPPY Family Support Coordinator identified and enrolled the family, maintained communication with mom, and ensured she felt supported throughout the process. Staff and volunteers picked up gifts directly from the donor’s home, wrapped every present the morning of the event, and helped load them into mom’s car—demonstrating community care at its very best.

Because of this collective effort, each child received five to ten gifts, including clothing, sneakers, toys, two televisions, multiple Kindle devices, and even a Tampa Bay Buccaneers football jersey.

On Christmas morning, mom stood overwhelmed with gratitude as she watched her children open their gifts. The moment was so emotional that she was unable to capture all their reactions on camera. What could have been a morning filled with stress and disappointment became one of laughter, joyful chaos, and lasting memories.



Tampa Housing Authority

BUILDING HOPE PROGRAM

Holiday Event Highlights

Spreading Joy on Two Wheels! 🚴♀️



Thanks to the incredible generosity of Tampa's Mayor Jane Castor and the team at Onbikes. On December 19th the youth at MLK received a special Christmas gift: brand new bikes, helmets, pads, and training wheels if needed! 🌟 Our amazing staff was honored to be a part of this heartwarming event, helping assemble the bikes and ensure every kid felt safe and ready to ride.

A huge shoutout to Mayor Castor and everyone involved in making this happen! Events like these embody the spirit of community and hope. 🙌

ReDefiners World Languages

Impact Spotlight:

Reflect on how the funding you've received has impacted your program.



As we close the year with gratitude, we reflect on the impact made possible through the continued support of the Children's Board of Hillsborough County.

Thanks to this partnership, 2025 was a year of meaningful growth and connection

- 2.1K students completed classes,
- more than 2.8K tutoring hours were delivered,
- 3.1K students were actively engaged across our programs.

From joyful moments at Family Reading Time—like our December 16 gathering centered on My Eyes That Kiss in the Corners, celebrating identity and heritage—to vibrant multicultural festivals and a powerful end-of-year gathering that brought together staff, Board, and partners, every moment reflected a shared commitment to learning and community.

As we look ahead, we do so with deep gratitude and pride as ReDefiners approaches a major milestone: on February 3, 2026, we will celebrate 10 years of service to our community. Over the past decade, thousands of children, families, and adults have found not only language education, but confidence, belonging, and opportunity through our programs. This impact would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the Children's Board of Hillsborough County and the trust of the community we serve. Together, we have built spaces where cultures are honored, voices are empowered, and learning creates lasting change. This anniversary is a moment to honor that shared journey—to thank CBHC for believing in our mission and to celebrate a community that continues to grow stronger through connection, education, and giving back.





TAKING A LOOK BACK
FALL HIGHLIGHT
from our funded partners



Seniors in Service of Tampa Bay, Inc.

READERS IN MOTION

Holiday Event Highlights

Staff holiday traditions or community service from holiday events



Readers in Motion was honored to participate in Booker T. Washington Elementary’s annual Truck-or-Treat event on October 30th, bringing literacy, creativity, and community spirit together for a fun-filled holiday celebration. This year, our team embraced a theme inspired by KPOP Demon Hunters, transforming the Seniors in Service van and trailer into the movie’s beloved Derpy Tiger. The display featured a life-size, hand-painted cut out created by our very own Jessica Porras and quickly became a favorite stop for students and families.

The entire Readers in Motion team joined in the festivities by dressing as characters from the film and engaging with students throughout the event. Our dedicated Education Advocates — Grandmas Susan Norton, Trenichia Engram, and Gwendolyn James — were also present, celebrating alongside the students and teachers they work with daily. Their strong relationships with the school community were on full display, highlighting the meaningful connections that make Booker T. Washington Elementary feel like a second home.

Our booth blended holiday fun with learning, offering students the chance to win prizes such as books, backpacks, STEM kits, bubble wands, and more. Before spinning the prize wheel, each child selected a book to take home and enjoy with their family — reinforcing our commitment to literacy beyond the classroom. This holiday event was a joyful reminder of how giving back through creativity, service, and connection can make a lasting impact on the communities we serve.

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

G I R L S C O U T S T R O O P P R O G R A M

Fall Activity Highlight

Community gatherings, connections, or art

Leap Bot Adventure: Creativity that Blends Art and STEM.



During this engaging session, Girl Scouts from Girl Scouts of West Central Florida’s Troop 33412 at Friendship Christian Academy and Troop 96021 at Police Athletic League completed the Leap Bot art and engineering activity — a fun hands-on project where they designed and built their own Leap Bots. Girls used creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving while helping each other assemble and test their designs.

Girls connected with each other as they shared ideas and materials, building friendships through play and positive communication. The activity also helped girls to strengthen their fine motor skills,

build confidence, and improve their collaboration as they proudly showcased their unique creations.

The Leap Bot activity helped every girl feel included, valued, and connected with each other and as part of the Girl Scout sisterhood — supporting our mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character as they developed friendships, learned teamwork, and improved their leadership skills through creativity.



University of South Florida Board of Trustees, THE PROGRAM - WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

Fall Activity Highlight

Program-Wide Positive Behavior Support at USF (PWPBS) helped to support Metropolitan Ministries’ Fall Festival that included games, food, music, trunk-or-treat stations, face painting, and prizes. With our focus being on the healthy social-emotional development of young children, among these wonderful activities for children, PWPBS provided a calming space where children could regulate their emotions if needed to step away for a while.

Children were invited to engage in coloring pumpkin feelings, express emotions through puppets, and enjoy reading social-emotional books. Meanwhile, parents received effective ideas for calming techniques to help support their children's emotional regulation at home. The space created an opportunity for families, children and staff to discuss emotions and practice emotional regulation skills. The event was well-received with parents, staff and children fully engaged and providing positive feedback. Even Raymond from the Tampa Rays made a special appearance in the calming space.

