

# GOOD NEWS

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

MARCH 2026

*from our funded partners*



Children's Board  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

[www.ChildrensBoard.org](http://www.ChildrensBoard.org)

## Seniors in Service READERS IN MOTION

### What is the biggest difference you see in the children you serve?



One of the biggest differences we see in the children we serve is their growing confidence and sense of belonging. When returning Foster Grandparent volunteer Debra Epps walked into the classroom on her first day back, students immediately began excitedly arguing over who would get to work with her. That moment spoke volumes. It showed how deeply valued and trusted she is, and how meaningful consistent support can be for a child.

Over time, we see students become more engaged, more willing to participate, and more confident in their abilities when they know a caring adult is cheering them on. The one-on-one attention our foster grandparents provide helps children feel seen, heard, and supported. That sense of security often translates into stronger classroom participation, improved behavior, and a brighter outlook on learning.

When children feel connected, they thrive and seeing that transformation is one of the greatest rewards of our work.

## Hillsborough Education Foundation

### TECH CONNECT



A second-grade student at Roosevelt Elementary School was recently referred to the Hillsborough Education Foundation (HEF) Tech Connect program. Thanks to generous funding from the Children's Board of Hillsborough County, HEF met with the student and her family to provide a new computer to support her access to online learning platforms and help bridge the digital divide. In addition to assisting the student with her schoolwork, the computer enables her parents to communicate more easily with teachers and stay engaged with the school.

During visits, the HEF Tech Connect program also provides digital literacy support, educational materials, and connections to community resources, benefiting the entire family and expanding their access to essential technology tools.

Overall, the HEF Tech Connect program has made considerable efforts to ensure that both students and their parents are equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in today's digitally-centric educational landscape. This initiative marks a vital step in promoting access to technology and education for all community members and sets a precedent for future educational support programs.

### **Parent Testimonial:**

"I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness, support, and help to our family. We truly appreciate everything you have done for my daughter.

When we brought the laptop home, my daughter was very happy and excited. She now enjoys using it for reading, learning, and working with educational programs. The laptop has already become a very important part of her education and development.

As a family new to the country, this kind of support means so much to us. At this time, we would not have been able to purchase a laptop for our child on our own, so your help has truly made a big difference in her education and confidence.

Thank you not only for the laptop and school supplies, but also for the time you took to explain everything so patiently and kindly. It meant a lot to us to feel such care and support.

We are sincerely grateful to you and to the Hillsborough Education Foundation for helping families like ours. We wish you good health, happiness, and continued success in the wonderful work that you do with such care and dedication.

With sincere gratitude,  
Nurkama"

## Family Healthcare Foundation

### CONNECTING KIDS TO CARE

**How your program helps people feel more connected to each other, to resources, to a support system.**

From team member Karla Navas: "Our program strengthens community connection by ensuring that individuals and families never have to navigate complex systems alone. In one recent case, a mother came to us feeling overwhelmed and discouraged after experiencing repeated delays while applying for state health insurance coverage. She had submitted the required documents multiple times and still received conflicting information, leaving her isolated and uncertain about how to move forward. Through consistent follow-up, dedicated advocacy, and clear guidance, our team became a bridge to the critical resources her family urgently needed.

We helped her understand each step of the process, ensured all documentation was submitted accurately and completely, and remained actively engaged throughout the journey. By guiding her through a complex system, we connected her to essential resources, reduced barriers to healthcare access, and provided a stable pathway toward coverage. What had once felt inaccessible and frustrating became clear and manageable. When her children were ultimately approved for coverage, her oldest son was finally able to proceed with his long-delayed knee surgery. The community member expressed profound relief and gratitude, sharing that before our involvement, she felt lost and alone. With consistent communication and empowerment, she felt supported and confident knowing someone was walking alongside her.

This story speaks to the heart of our work and the real impact of our mission. We walk alongside families as they navigate complex systems, helping them access essential resources and breaking down barriers to coverage. In doing so, we create stability, open doors to care, and build trusted relationships through steady communication and advocacy. Most importantly, we remind families that they are not alone; we are there to support them every step of the way."



## Girl Scouts of West Central Florida

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

#### How have you been making a difference in your community?

The girls of Troop 96053 at Community Stepping Stones have been learning, planning, and growing together as they prepared for and run their cookie business. Each gathering is filled with teamwork and leadership opportunities as the girls set goals, work towards achieving them, and support one another.



The girls are doing more than selling treats. They are learning skills while building confidence and meaningful connections throughout their neighborhood. At our cookie booths, they take pride in greeting customers, explaining the different flavors of their product, and sharing how the proceeds support troop activities and service projects that the girls choose—projects which will impact their own neighborhood. To show their

appreciation for the support of their neighbors, the girls have also created colorful signs and thoughtful thank-you notes for their customers.

Behind the scenes, we are helping the girls practice their pitches, organize inventory and supplies, develop money management skills, and step into leadership roles. When challenges arise, the girls work together to solve problems, gaining lifelong skills and self-assurance through their collaboration.

This experience truly reflects the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. As the troop looks ahead to new initiatives, their impact continues to grow, reminding us that entire communities benefit when girls are given the opportunity to lead.



## Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA SULPHUR SPRINGS YMCA OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAM

### Spring Highlight – Fit Club

One of the things that makes the YMCA Out of School Time Program so engaging is the variety of clubs offered throughout the week. One favorite among students is **Fit Club**.

Fit Club is a hands-on program that teaches students about nutrition, gardening, and the importance of staying active. Through gardening, healthy snack demonstrations, and fun movement activities like sports and games, students learn where their food comes from and how healthy habits support long-term wellness.



Offered four times a year for small groups of 15 students, Fit Club allows for meaningful one-on-one learning. With our Learning Garden right on campus, students have the opportunity to explore healthy living in a fun and interactive way



# ReDefiners World Languages

## MULTILINGUAL CITIZENS PROGRAM

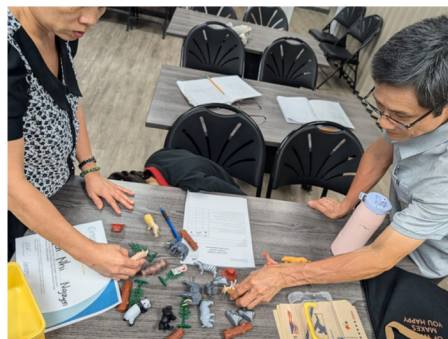
### Community Connections

At ReDefiners, building community is just as important as learning a language. Our Conversation Workshops for Adults, offered in Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, and English, bring people together in a relaxed and welcoming space where conversations happen naturally. Rather than focusing only on grammar or textbooks, the workshops encourage participants to talk about everyday life, helping them practice language in ways that feel practical, supportive, and engaging.



Along the way, something meaningful begins to take shape. Participants encourage each other, share stories, and often form friendships that extend beyond the workshop. The atmosphere is warm and judgment-free, which helps people feel comfortable trying new words, asking questions, and speaking without fear of making mistakes. That supportive environment helps students slowly build the confidence to express themselves.

The impact reaches far beyond the classroom. As participants grow more comfortable communicating, they feel better prepared to connect with neighbors, access local resources, and navigate daily life. What begins as a conversation workshop often becomes something deeper: a place where people feel supported, connected, and part of a stronger community.



## University of South Florida Board of Trustees

### THE DOCS PARENTING PROGRAMS

#### **Growing Voices - What's something you're better at because of this program?**

Before participating in the DOCS Parenting Program, we were becoming increasingly concerned about our boys' behavior. At ages five and three, their impulsiveness and high energy were sometimes putting themselves and others at risk, and they struggled to recognize when their emotions and energy levels were escalating. Through this program, we've become much better at understanding what is developmentally appropriate for their age and how to respond proactively rather than reactively. We've learned tools to help them pause, identify their feelings, and channel their energy in safer, more constructive ways.



Because of DOCS, my wife Nicole and I are better at staying calm, consistent, and intentional in our parenting. Our home feels more predictable and supportive, and our boys are beginning to recognize their own emotional cues and respond with the strategies we practice together. While parenting is still a journey with challenges, we feel more confident, patient, and connected as a family. We're proud of the progress our children are making and grateful for the guidance this program has provided in helping us build healthier routines and stronger and clearer lines of communication.

## Children's Home Network CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICES

### Community Connections:

The Caregiver Support Services program is built around helping people create a community of support for their family. This past month we have provided guided yoga classes for the adults and children. This group allows a stress-free environment for kids to be active, and the parents can receive respite and support during the group. We offer various support groups and events each month to foster connections with other families and resources in the community.



We had our first Bright Connections group for moms in collaboration with Rainbow Bright Circle Time. This group was created to provide parents and caregivers with a safe, welcoming, and structured space to connect, reflect and grow together. Topics included health and wellness, education to support the parents emotionally and practically are also offered in the group. This group encourages connections with other mom's going through similar situations and / or to create long lasting friendships.



## **Positive Spin**

### EMPOWERING A COMMUNITY WITH HOPE

#### **Success Story:**

"I would like to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the support and assistance you guys and my case manager provided to me during a very difficult time in my life. Your organization truly made a meaningful difference for me and my family. When I was facing challenges and uncertainty, Positive Spin stepped in and helped guide me toward stability. Through your support, I was able to secure a job, find an apartment, and receive assistance with childcare when I needed it most. These opportunities helped me get back on my feet and begin rebuilding my life.

I am incredibly thankful for the kindness, resources, and encouragement your team provided. Your dedication to helping others during hard times does not go unnoticed, and I am truly grateful for everything you have done for me."



## Gulf Coast JFCS PADRES DE CRIANZA

### Support Group and PDC Closet Grand Opening!

Thanks to the generosity of Kiwanis, the Padres de Crianza Program successfully inaugurated a resource closet for our clients and the community. This closet is highly significant and will have a profound impact, as it originated from a simple donation table. We identified the need, and today we have a dedicated space fully equipped to serve our families with dignity. Additionally, 20 families received food bags from The Community Food Pantry at Village Presbyterian Church, helping them meet their basic needs with respect. Armwood High School students were also present and volunteered their time to support our program by preparing bags of feminine hygiene products, fostering a sense of female solidarity.

The Padres de Crianza team provided a talk on stress management and offered a variety of games and activities. They also provided food, desserts, and beverages for everyone in attendance.

