Community Based Care of Central Florida awarded $8.6 Million to Help Kids & Families

Special to the Herald

Community Based Care of Central Florida (CBCCF) is the only organization in Florida, and along the East Coast, to be awarded an $8.6 million grant, which aims to create more stability for children in foster care before the critical adolescent years.

The money, which will be distributed over five years through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services’ Children’s Bureau, will support a new initiative for CBCCF, called Strong Foundations. The goal is to increase stability for children in foster care by offering strengths-based, family-centered coaching and offering behavioral support training to caregivers, including foster parents, relative caregivers and, as appropriate, reunified families.

“This approach will focus on an often overlooked population of 6- to 12-year-olds in licensed care,” said Glen Casel, president and CEO of Community Based Care of Central Florida. “Nearly 40 percent of teenagers currently in foster care have been removed from their homes at least twice. Our goal is to reduce that number by ensuring caregivers have the skills, resources and long term supports necessary to meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma as they approach their teenage years.”

Strong Foundations aims to accomplish the following goals over five years:

- Improve engagement between biological families and caregivers
- Increase the frequency of placements with relatives
- Train caregivers in supporting children who have experienced trauma
- Provide ongoing resources to meet specific behavioral health needs
- Enhance compliance and legal planning for permanent placements

Community Based Care of Central Florida will serve as the lead agency in administering the grant locally. They will work in partnership with the Florida Department of Children and Families, Positive Behavior Supports Corp., Children’s Home Network and UCF, which will evaluate the implementation of Strong Foundations.

The multi-million dollar award for Strong Foundations is the second federal grant secured by the Community Based Care of Central Florida family of companies in as many weeks. In September it was announced that Community Initiatives, Inc., an affiliated company that manages innovative programs designed to improve the well-being of vulnerable children and proactively prevent entry into the child welfare system, learned it would receive $125,000 a year for three years to improve mental health training and awareness in Central Florida. The federal grant will focus on training school resource officers and other community stakeholders on how to recognize and address signs of mental health issues before a crisis. Training will be offered in partnership with Aspire Health Partners, Wraparound Orange and the National Alliance on Mental Illness - Greater Orlando.