



20
Years
Nurturing
Greatness



Special Edition of Miami's Community Newspapers



Miami Lighthouse for the Blind
 congratulates The Children's Trust
 on 20 years of service
 and for the support of
 Miami Lighthouse Programming



Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI)
 Collaborative Center



Miami Lighthouse Music Summer Camp



Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program

"Together we can do so much." *Helen Keller*



Miami Lighthouse Academy



Miami Lighthouse Blind Babies Program



Miami Lighthouse STAR Summer Camp



Dear Miami-Dade County Residents,

On September 10, 2022, The Children's Trust commemorated its 20th anniversary, setting off a year-long celebration of everything that the organization has achieved on behalf of children and families in Miami-Dade County. We are incredibly proud of what has been accomplished and humbled that the residents of our community have entrusted us to lead in this tremendous responsibility of serving children and families.

This is an incredibly exciting time in the history of The Trust as we embark on new initiatives and programs, while remaining committed to investing in programs and resources that we know better the lives of children and families and help them reach their full potential.

In partnership with Miami's Community Newspapers, The Trust is releasing this Special Edition *The Children's Trust: 20 Years Nurturing Greatness* publication to reflect on the two decades of service and commitment. On the following pages, you will read about how The Trust came into being and its positive impact. We mention a few stories of children who have thrived thanks to our funded programs and partners and how The Trust's past and present will set the stage for an even brighter future.

As we look forward to another 20 years and beyond, it is important to reflect on how The Trust became the organization it is today. As a celebration of accomplishments and context for approaching and overcoming challenges the community faces today and tomorrow, The Children's Trust is proud to look back at its community history as it crosses the 20th Anniversary milestone. Thank you for your continued support.

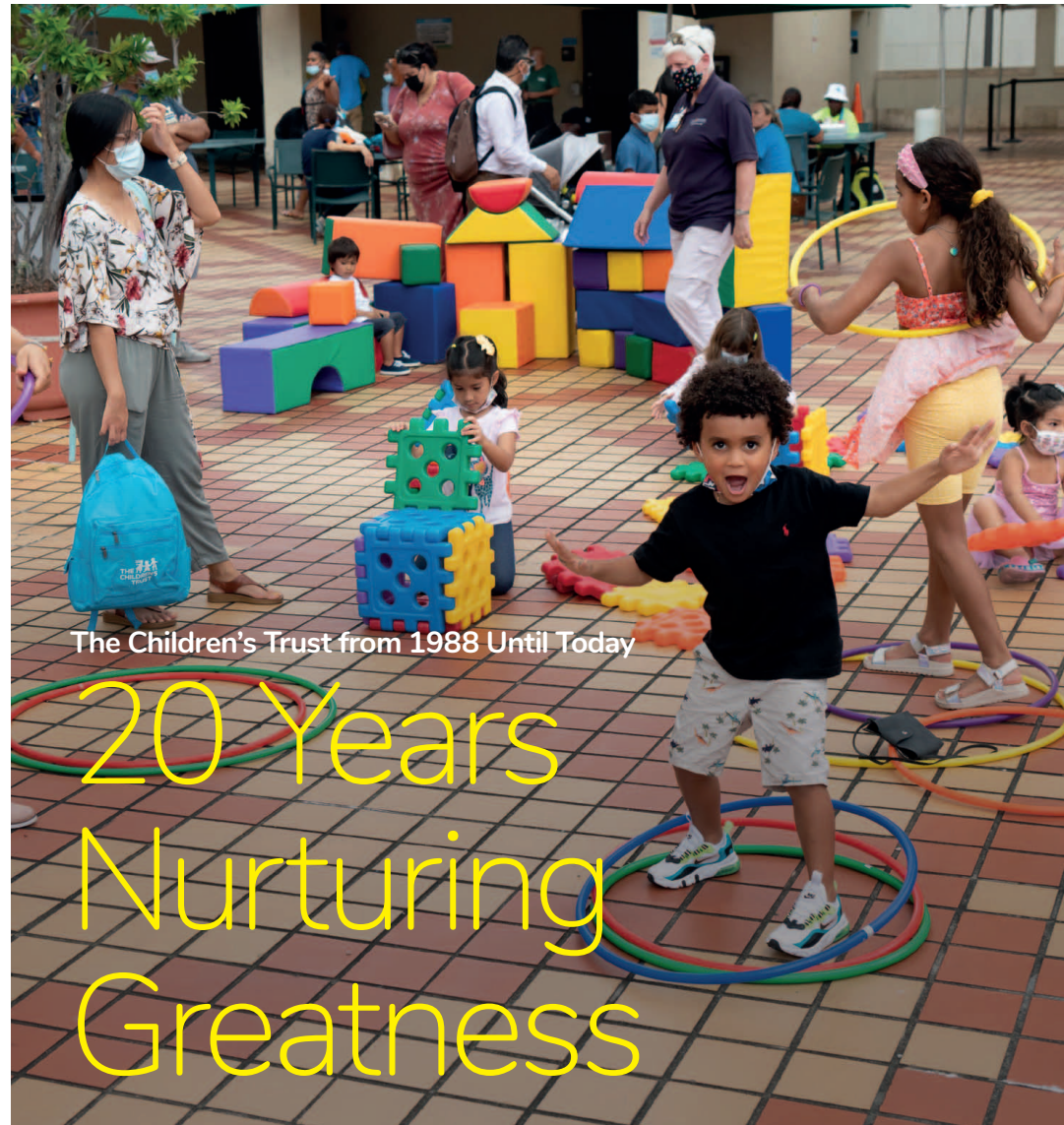
Thank you,

James R. Haj
President & CEO

Kenneth C. Hoffman
Chairperson, Board of Directors



This Special Edition was made possible by: The Children's Trust Board, Board Chair Kenneth C. Hoffman, President & CEO James R. Haj. The Children's Trust Communications Team: Chief Public Policy and Engagement Officer Natalia Zea, Director of Communications Ximena Nunez, Communications Manager Felix Becerra, Content Manager Sebastian Del Marmol, Media Manager Michelle Lopez, Communications Coordinator Tiffany Singh, Digital Media Specialist Lindsay Francois. TheChildrensTrust.org, 305.571.5700. Design & Layout ACentral.co.



As The Children's Trust celebrates its 20th anniversary, the impact it has today is greater than ever before. While the organization looks forward to another 20 years and beyond, it is important to reflect on how it came to be the organization it is today.

Former *Miami Herald* Publisher David Lawrence Jr. is the individual most often credited with catapulting The Children's Trust into existence and shepherding it through its initial years. Still among the most active child advocates in the community, Lawrence remembers the challenges in getting the special taxing district that would become The Children's Trust approved in the face of a skeptical public, even when the need for a dedicated source of funding for children's services and resources was obvious.

In 1988, a group of committed child advocates recognized that the needs of children in Miami-Dade County far exceeded the resources and support systems available to them. These advocates, which included elected officials, educators, community activities and others spearheaded a drive to address the problem through the creation of a special

taxing district. The group was successful in bringing a referendum to the ballot, but voters failed to pass it.

"Is the lesson that people didn't love children in 1988, but now love children?" asks Lawrence, "I don't think so." He broadly likens the movement to create The Children's Trust to the civil rights movement decades earlier. "Civil rights are a matter of equity for all Americans. You cannot build a movement based on *those* people – whomever those people are. It needs to be about us. And the exact same principles that raised my five children and my seven grandchildren are the exact same principle every child needs. The right blend of health and education and nurturing and love."

What Lawrence understood early on was that the entire community needed to get behind what would go on to become The Children's Trust, no matter what level of need their own children had. "The problem (wasn't) that we don't have enough money. The problem was priorities," he explained. "What is this country all about? It's about everyone. And so that is how The Children's Trust came to be."

Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine

Camp Sol Taplin at the Michael-Ann Russell JCC congratulates The Children's Trust on celebrating 20 years of serving children and families in Miami-Dade County.



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CHI Celebrates the Children's Trust 20th Anniversary

CHI is a proud partner of the Children's Trust as we ensure that our children have access to primary care and mental health services in our schools, health centers, and communities.

We are thankful to the Children's Trust for its ongoing dedication to improving the lives of children in South Florida.

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Congratulations to **David Lawrence Jr.** on the 20th anniversary of The Children's Trust



David Lawrence is a visionary whose advocacy has impacted children and families throughout the United States. Like a tree that grows stronger with a deep and expansive root system, we will reap the benefits of his work for generations.

Thank you, Dave.



Medical

Providing care to infants, children and moms since 1988

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Cava was among those initial child advocates who fought for the establishment of The Trust and credits Lawrence for distilling the idea so that all county residents could get behind it.

"The incredible foresight (was) for Dave to talk about universal services for children. The Trust is about all of our children," said Mayor Levine Cava, who came up with The Trust motto: "Because All Children Our Are Children."

Longtime former Trust Board Member and former Miami-Dade County Commissioner Barbara Jordan highlights the collective impact that The Trust embodies. "When you look at how it is funded, it is not just funded by one group of people, it's funded through tax dollars that people pay at large; so naturally the services should be provided at large."

When Lawrence and other child advocates went back to voters to implore them to pass The Trust and its taxing authority, they made sure to bring home the point that it was for the future of all children. Twenty years ago, on September 10, 2002, Miami-Dade County voters approved the referendum 2-1.

Five years after their initiative approval, voters reauthorized The Children's Trust in perpetuity in 2008 by an even larger margin, with 85 percent of the vote. "It was an easy sell," said Mayor Levine Cava, of the reauthorization vote. "Because everybody could see all the tremendous good that was being done."

Two decades later, The Children's Trust is an essential organization for children and families in Miami-Dade County. Like the children served over the years, The Children's Trust has grown and its growth and has been shaped by learning, research, challenges and successes that have led to a direct impact on millions of lives.

Even if the mission of The Trust is beyond reproach, Lawrence says the everyday work of the organization over time has continued

to demonstrate to the community that it is effectively making a significant and positive difference. "I think it's all about trust. Extraordinary work has been done; wonderful people have been involved. There has not been one whiff of a scandal at The Children's Trust - that is not always the case in our community."

Modesto "Mo" Abety was also among the child advocates who led the initial and subsequent efforts to create The Children's Trust and was integral in guiding Lawrence's efforts. Abety served as the first president and CEO of The Trust and guided it through its first decade of existence. He oversaw its initial community investments and significant growth in its number of programs, initiatives and services. Abety firmly believes The Trust remains critical to the wellbeing of all children and families in the county. "The Children's Trust is this community's greatest expression of its love of children. It embodies the belief that all children are our children," he said.

The mayor agrees. "Now we have this incredible organization, which is a model for this country and the world. What has happened in the last 20 years is truly a miracle. "The Trust will go down for me personally as one of the greatest achievements of my life of having been a part in making this great organization come to be," she added.

"I think it is the privilege of our lives to be able to witness this, to play a part in this," Lawrence said. "To know that we have a lot more to do but we are off to an extraordinary start."

The Special Edition, *The Children's Trust: 20 Years Nurturing Greatness*, in collaboration with Miami's Community Newspapers, is a look back at its first two decades of service, its impact, some of those lives it has helped shape and how its past and present will shape the future.

Leaders in the History of The Trust

Chairpersons of Board of Directors

Dave Lawrence Jr.,
Founding Board Chairperson,
served from **2002-2009**

Maria Alonso,
served as chairperson from **2009-2015**

Laurie W. Nuell,
served as chairperson from **2015-2018**

Kenneth C. Hoffman,
chairperson from **2018-Present**

President & CEOs

Modesto E. Abety,
served from **2003-2013**

Charles M. Auslander,
served from **2013-2015**

Imran Ali,
served as interim from **2015-2016**

James R. Haj,
served from **2016-Present**



To learn more about the history of The Children's Trust and watch the documentary *The Children's Trust - 20 Years Nurturing Greatness*, visit TheChildrensTrust.org/20Anniversary

NUMBERS
THAT
MATTER!

Total
Lives
Impacted

2.2M

More than 2.2 million children, parents and caregivers have been engaged over the past 20 years.

The Children's Trust Over the Years

1988

In the late 1980s, recognizing that the needs of children in Miami-Dade County far exceeded the resources and support systems available, a group of child advocates attempt to address the problem through the creation of a special taxing district. Using a Florida statute that allowed for such an initiative, the group was successful in bringing a referendum to ballot in 1988, but voters failed to pass it.



59.2% of Floridians vote in favor of state-paid voluntary pre-K education beginning 2005.

2002

Sept. 10, 2002
After restarting the effort for a special taxing district with some notable differences - most notably an emphasis on providing resources and programming for ALL children and families and building in a 5-year sunset provision - Miami-Dade voters approve creation of The Children's Trust by a 2:1 vote, officially establishing The Children's Trust.

2004

The Trust funds its first 64 organizations to provide programs services and initiatives for children and families. Policy is established that all funding will be fully inclusive of children with disabilities. The first funded Request for Proposals (RFP) was titled Times of Their Lives, which funded 39 programs to deliver summer programming.

Summer camps and after-school program funding are launched through Youth Experiencing Success Through Out of School RFP to help children succeed academically and minimize risky behaviors. Also, the Promotion & Prevention initiative begins to fund parenting, early childhood and youth development, health, and community awareness/advocacy programs.

The Trust first joins the Florida Children's Council (renamed the Florida Association of Children's Councils and Trusts, or FACCT, in 2022)

NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Trust-Funded Program Growth

300%

Over 300% increase in funded programs (from 71 to 313) since first year of investment.



What is The Children's Trust and What Does it Do?

Even with an impactful 20 years in the books, some may not know exactly what The Children's Trust is and what it does. Parents and other caregivers whose children benefit from Trust-funded programming and initiatives might recognize the name of the organization or may have seen the logo but may not know exactly how it impacts their lives.

The Children's Trust plans, advocates for and funds strategic investments (programs and services) to improve the lives of all children and families in Miami-Dade County.

"The Children's Trust is a funder of organizations. We support organizations who impact the lives of children and families," says James R. Haj, president and CEO of The Trust. "And we cover a large footprint. From Florida City to the Broward County line, and from birth until they are 18 years old (and beyond 18 for children in the dependency system and those with disabilities). We are here to change the trajectory of their lives – to support families, parents and most importantly to support children who need us the most."

2.1.1

MIAMI

Funding begins to support 211 Helpline for families to access health and human services information and referrals.

The inaugural Family Expo takes place and quickly becomes the largest countywide gathering for family-friendly resources and Trust provider information. Over time, the event would draw more than 15,000 children and families annually and is now held at several locations throughout the county.

Quality Counts is created to improve child care quality in partnership with the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe.



More than 85% of voters overwhelmingly reauthorize The Children's Trust, establishing it in perpetuity.

2005

As a way to honor individuals and programs devoted to children and families, The Trust hosts its first Champions for Children Award Ceremony, an annual tradition that continues today.

2006

Family & Neighborhood Support Partnerships are created to provide integrated services to children and families with the highest needs in communities impacted by poverty, violence and trauma. Originally known as service partnerships, the program eventually transitioned to a new name.

2007

The Trust provides dedicated funding to 91 small community organizations to build organizational and program management capacity to deliver quality programming.

The HealthConnect initiative is created to improve access to quality health care in public schools and connections to resources. The Youth Violence Prevention initiative is also initially established and later integrated within other initiatives.

2008

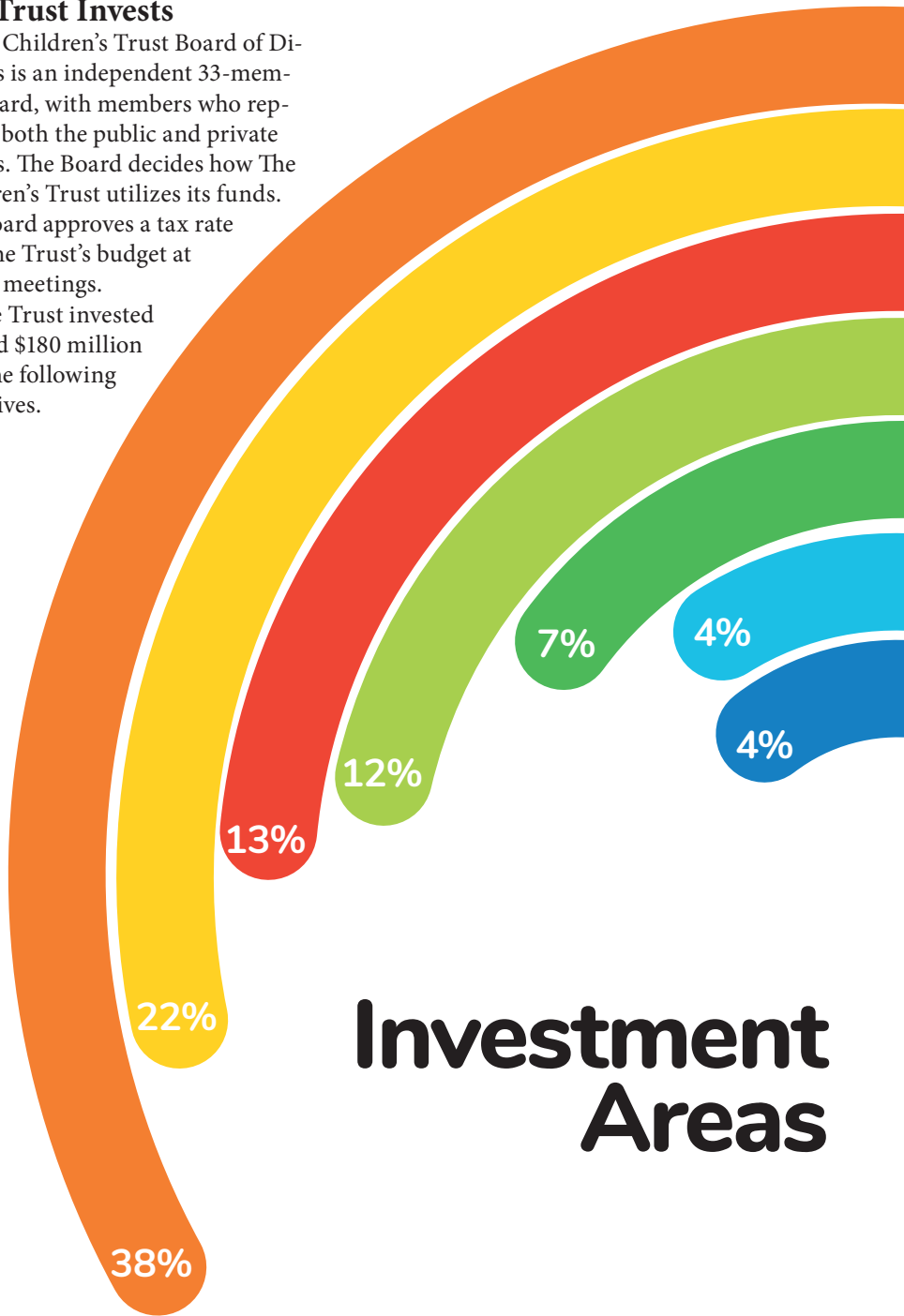
Transition to Adulthood program funding is established to support system-involved youth from 13-22 years of age.

300+ youth and children perform at the inaugural Growing Up with the Arts showcase at the Adrienne Arsht Center.

Governance and Where The Trust Invests

The Children's Trust Board of Directors is an independent 33-member board, with members who represent both the public and private sectors. The Board decides how The Children's Trust utilizes its funds. The board approves a tax rate and The Trust's budget at public meetings.

The Trust invested around \$180 million into the following initiatives.



Investment Areas

Youth Development

Includes after-school and summer programming, and other youth enrichment programs

Thrive by 5 Early Childhood Development

Includes high-quality child care supports and programming, developmental screening, assessment and early intervention, and research

Health & Wellness

Includes school-based health clinics, vision and oral health services, mobile units offering health services, food and nutrition services

Parenting

Includes group and individual services, family strengthening focused on families with children and youth experiencing challenges, as well as free parent workshops

Family & Neighborhood Supports

Includes community partnerships, comprehensive care and wraparound services, 211 Helpline, and stabilization supports for families in crisis

Community Awareness & Advocacy

Includes outreach efforts, public awareness, grassroots engagement and leadership development for youth, and promoting public policy priorities benefitting children and families at the local, state and federal level

Program & Professional Development

Program evaluation, continuing education supports and an Innovation Fund to support new and unique child and family-focused initiatives

Special Populations

Across all of its initiatives, The Children's Trust maintains a commitment to supporting special populations. All Trust-funded programs are expected to include children and youth with disabilities, children and youth in the dependency and delinquency systems, those experiencing homelessness, and those living in high-poverty neighborhoods.

As well as investing in programming by Trust-funded providers, The Trust has its own programs and services. Among those are The Parent Club (free parenting workshops in three languages), The Book Club (which offers free monthly books and custom family reading guides mailed to children from birth to 5 years), as well as organized or funded beneficial community events like its Family Expo, held across the county.



The Miami Heart Gallery is created as a partnership between The Trust and child welfare agencies to encourage adoption and foster care.

The Trust funds the Young Talent Big Dreams competition for the first time. It would go on to become county's largest youth talent competition.



The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is launched as a leadership development program with a focus on youth service and advocacy.



The Trust joins a collaborative to fund a five-week, paid summer internship for thousands of high school students at organizations throughout the county that would become known as the Summer Youth Internship Program (SYIP).

2009

The first Spooky Symphony is held, a free family-friendly Halloween concert sponsored by The Trust and featuring two Trust-funded providers, The Greater Miami Youth Symphony and the Alhambra Orchestra.

2010

The Trust releases funding for Community Partnership for Local Haitian Relief Efforts, following earthquake in Haiti.

2011

Read to Learn is established to increase the number of 3rd graders who read at or above grade level. A year later, the Read to Learn Book Club launches, offering free monthly books for 3-year-olds.

2012

At 10 years, 315,000 children, youth, parents and caregivers benefited from Trust-funded programs; there were 1.2 million visits to health clinics in schools, and more than 67,000 children were part of our child care quality improvement initiative.



Early Learning Opportunities

41,000 full-time early child care education opportunities for children under 5.

41K

Over 150% increase in the number of funded organizations (from 64 to 163) over the past 20 years.

150%

Nearly 5,300 total annual contracts for program services finalized over 20 years.

5,300

50%

Focus on Early Learning and Literacy

3.4 million children's books distributed.

3.4M

150%



2016

The Trust creates the Innovation Fund to test new ideas that could lead to solutions for community problems.



2017

The Trust establishes the Family Strengthening initiative to offer individualized parenting and clinical intervention services, and adds 40 mental health professionals to current school health nursing and social work staff.



2018

The Trust forms the Thrive by 5 initiative to expand investment in children's early physical, cognitive, social and emotional readiness for starting school.



The Children's Trust helps create the Miami-Dade Grade Level Reading (MDGLR) campaign, a coalition of entities that focus on elevating literacy in the county.



2019

The Children's Trust Book Club is expanded to include children from birth until 5 years old. The Trust also begins funding community-based oral health prevention services.

The Children's Trust Parent Club is launched to offer free workshops that increase awareness and engagement in effective parenting strategies to support child development.



David Lawrence Jr. Champion for Children Award Winners

The David Lawrence Jr. Champion for Children award is the Trust's signature award, honoring a lifetime of service to children and families.



2005
Bernard Perlmutter



2006
William E. Gladstone



2007
Alonzo Mourning



2007
Tracy Wilson Mourning



2008
Lilia Garcia



2009
Helene Good



2010
Jean Caceres-Gonzales



2010
Sister Lucia Ceccotti



2011
Robert Nolan



2012
Dr. Michael Alessandri



2013
Cheryl Little



2015
Dr. Eduardo Bancalaria



2016
Dr. Michael Duchowny



2017
Congresswoman
Frederica S. Wilson



2018
Judge Cindy S. Lederman



2019
Judge Jeri Beth Cohen



2020
Morris Copeland



2022
Gale Nelson



2023
Evelio C. Torres

**NUMBERS
THAT
MATTER!**

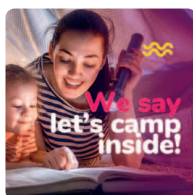
**Providing
Nutrition
for
Children**

14.6M

More than
14.6 million
snacks
and meals
distributed
in programs
and in the
community.

The Trust holds first ever Social Equity Day to build awareness about the foundations of social equity and the impact it has on education and all of their different daily practices.

2020



The Trust invests \$3.3M in emergency funds for families to help combat COVID-19 pandemic, while launching the StayHome.Miami website and Ready, Set, Go! initiative to assist with learning in a remote environment.



The Trust partners with the United States Department of Defense to offer high-quality child care through its Thrive by 5 initiative as part of the Military Child Care In Your Neighborhood-PLUS (MCCYN+) program.

The Trust plays a fundamental role in Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava's Summit for Children, co-organizing and hosting the event and having Trust board members and staff serving on several subcommittees born out of the summit.

Sept. 10, 2022
The Trust's celebrates 20 Year Anniversary. Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava and the Board of County Commissioners proclaim September 10 as "The Children's Trust Day."

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From all of us, we would like to wish a Happy 20th Anniversary to The Children's Trust

Destiny

Dancing Your Way to the Big Time



The journey to becoming a professional dancer can be a challenging one. There must be talent, of course, but that talent must be matched with hard work and dedication. And that hard work and dedication needs to be guided and developed by those with expertise to ensure you keep improving.

Underneath it all, there must be support from family, friends or entities that make sure that all that training you need – and everything that comes with it, from tuition to dance schools to transportation to those schools – is available and attainable.

When 6-year-old Destiny Delancy first walked into Armour Dance Theatre Program at Morningside K-8 school in Miami, she didn't realize it would inspire her dreams. Destiny was a shy child and the prospect of performing in front of an audience was as unlikely

as her going on to become a professional dancer. But more than 16 years later, she would be graduating from prestigious New York University's Department of Dance at Tisch, with some considerable self-discovery and growth along the way.

"I grew up in Little Haiti. I was a pretty shy kid, like you wouldn't find me playing with all the other children, I was very much to myself," explained Destiny. "At the time, I wasn't believing (in) myself. (But) the more I danced, the more I felt like I've been able to come out of my shell (and) find my personality. It helped me to really be open and to talk to people."

Destiny's life would come to be built around dance as she crafted an education and career ambitions, while learning to express herself and find out more about who she was.

Armour Dance Theatre (ADT) has been a renowned dance school in South Florida for decades, and their Morningside program was one of ADT's first Community Programs, with the goal of reaching children and families far beyond the main site in South Miami. The Children's Trust has funded ADT since 2011 and the program has enriched the lives of so many children like Destiny, whose self-discovery and success is born of dance and the performing arts.

"When I'm in the zone, it's like nothing is there. Like everyone is gone. Teachers aren't there. Peers aren't there. And it's just me and dance.

The confidence dance gave her allowed her to let her talent loose and the world noticed. "It's been 16 years since I've been in connection with Armour Dance Studio. I was introduced to so many genres. I've done ballet, tap, jazz, modern, hip hop, Graham, Horton, Limon, West African."

Destiny steadily progressed as a dancer and would eventually become part of the Next Steps program, which provided transportation for her and her grandmother to travel by bus to South Miami for advanced training and preparation for the high school audition process. Her hard work earned its reward as she landed a coveted place at New World School of the Arts. Then the work really started.

She got up every morning at 5 a.m. to be in school by 7:15 a.m., took a full academic course load that included honors and AP courses, took three hours of dance classes, followed by rehearsals and homework until late into the night. On weekends, she attended Breakthrough Miami, another Trust-funded program, and rehearsed with the Armour Dance Theatre Tap team, while also taking time to perform at community events and festivals.

For two summers, Destiny went to New York City to study with The Dance Theatre of Harlem and The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre under ADT's Summer in New York program. She would graduate from New World cum laude, with a GPA of 4.3, and earn a full scholarship to New York University.

After four more years of rigorous and dedicated work and raising her dance level to even greater heights – including major performances – Destiny graduated from NYU in 2022 as a Dean's Scholar. At the age of 22, she aspires to start her own dance company to teach and give back to students.

Destiny says she found herself when she found dance. The programs funded by The Children's Trust helped her start a journey of discovery and nurtured her along the way from a shy child to a confident, supremely talented young woman who continues to pursue her dreams.

“The Children's Trust was very important to my personal career because I wouldn't have been able to afford a dance career had it not been for them. They really helped me to follow my dream.”



Destiny Delancy is featured in The Children's Trust
20 Years of Nurturing Greatness campaign.
Learn more about her journey at
TheChildrensTrust.org/20Anniversary.



ree Eva Anna Nora Bentley Xavier Christian Robert Faith Penelope Savannah Maya Lincoln
 nor Henry Austin Kayla Alyssa Camila Madelyn Blake Charles Wyatt Grayson Piper Bella Allison
 enity Easton Thomas Jonathan Josiah Stella Gabriella Caroline Nathaniel Evan Landon Brandon
 a Ariana Ruby Madeline Liam Taylor Jeremiah Hunter Jack Amelia Colton Isaiah Skylar Tristan
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 ayla Sydney Levi Sadie Brody Bryson Aria Chase Aaron Julia Alexis Ian Eli Mackenzie Alexa
 n Brayden Khloe Arianna Ayden Dylan Noah Emma Fredy Elijah Isabella Lucas Sophia Oliver
 Luna Sebastian Charlotte Ethan Mila **Everyone in Miami-Dade County** Carmen Jennifer Nicole
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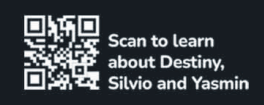
We are celebrating our 20th Anniversary. That's two decades of serving the children and families of Miami-Dade County and helping them grow to their fullest potential.

We could not have done any of this without you, our partners, providers and the community.

Thank you for joining us on this amazing journey of service and we look forward to our next 20 years.



20 Years Nurturing Greatness





Be Strong
INTERNATIONAL

Healthy Relationships. Thriving Families. Stronger Communities.

Congratulations to

The Children's Trust
on it's 20th Anniversary



20 Years Nurturing Greatness

Thank you for supporting our community for 20 years and for sharing our common goal to help youth, parents and families move from brokenness to wholeness.

BE STRONG INTERNATIONAL IS GRATEFUL TO THE CHILDREN'S TRUST FOR SUPPORTING THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS::

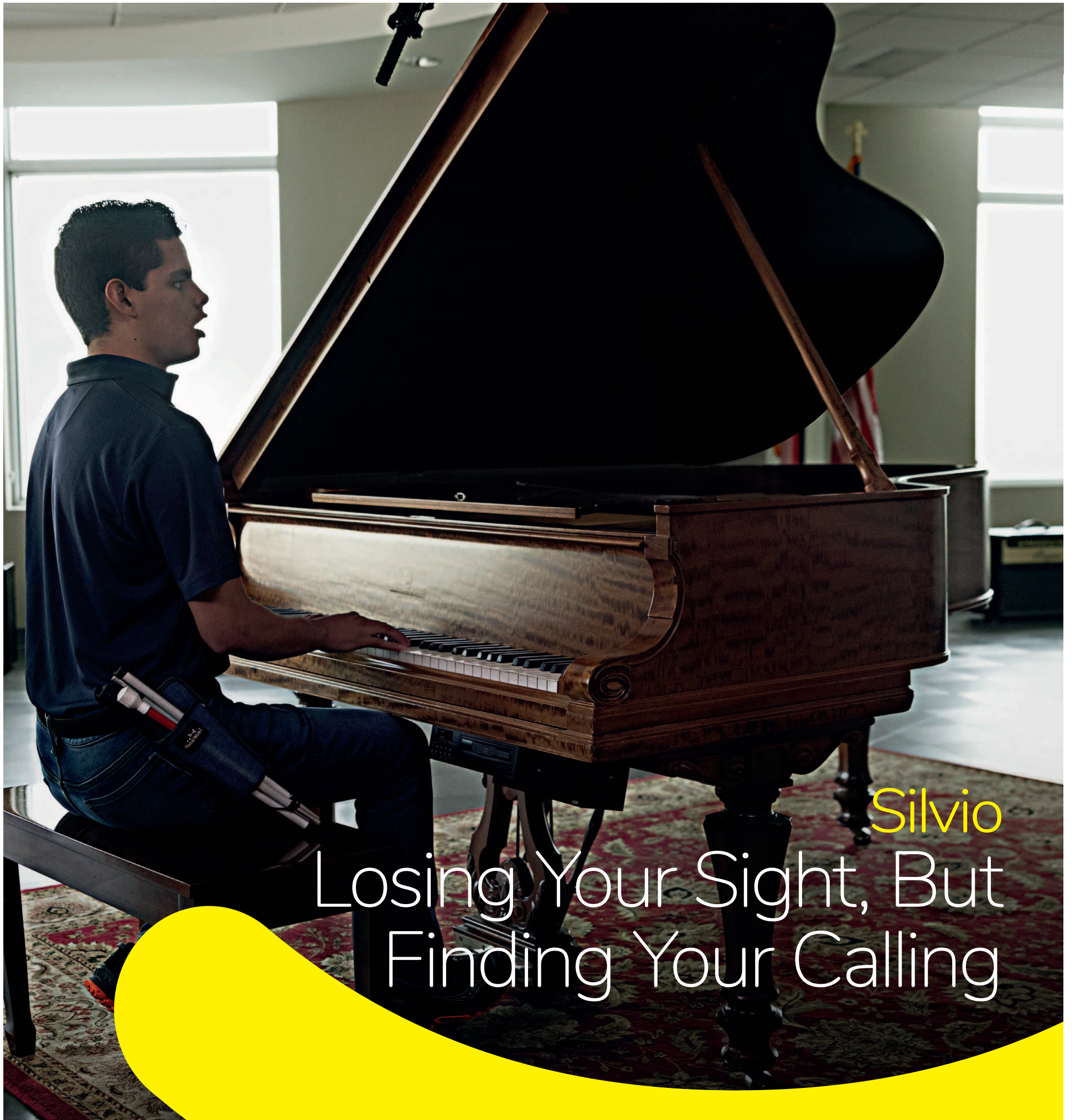
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Silvio

Losing Your Sight, But
Finding Your Calling

Silvio Plata moved to the United States with his family soon after he was born in Nicaragua in the early 2000s. Before he turned 2, he was diagnosed with cancer and lost his sight in both eyes, casting his future and that of his parents into considerable doubt.

“My parents were very lost, very confused as to how I was going to get an education, how I was going to grow up and just do simple daily tasks like mobility, walking, getting from one place to another,” said Plata.

In the midst of all the insecurity over his future appeared The Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Funded by The Children’s Trust since 2004, Miami Lighthouse provided the support and guidance that Silvio and his family would need when the journey ahead seemed most precarious.

“They were the first ones who got me started in the Blind Babies program, giving me therapy, getting my fingers sensitive. At the age of 5, I started learning my first letters, first numbers in Braille,” he said. The Miami Lighthouse became like a second home to Silvio and he was surrounded by individuals who became fixtures of support and guidance in his life till this day.

Not only did Silvio learn to use his other senses to help him develop as every child should, but he began to excel in numerous facets of his life. This included what would go on to become his foremost passion – music. He played the drums and guitar, became a virtuoso on the piano, but his favorite instrument was undeniably, his voice.

“In my opinion, music is another sense, another way of feeling things, another way of conveying emotions.”

Soon enough, Silvio was performing in front of



In my opinion, music is another sense, another way of feeling things, another way of conveying emotions.”

groups and his enrollment in other Trust-funded programs, including Arc of South Florida and The Doral Conservatory and School of the Arts, fine-tuned his musical talents bringing him to an even higher level of accomplishment.

Over the years, his talent and performances have seen him reach once unimaginable heights including singing alongside one of his idols, world renowned Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli when the latter visited the Miami Lighthouse for help learning to use a new Braille reading device. Silvio helped show his idol how to use the device and the two got together for an impromptu performance with Bocelli on the piano and Silvio singing alongside.

It was only one of numerous performing highlights that would make any musician proud. In recent years, Silvio has performed on bigger and bigger stages, including singing the national anthem at Miami Marlins and Miami Heat games. In October 2022, Silvio performed the National Anthem in front of more than 66,000 thousand fans at the NFL game between the Miami Dolphins at Pittsburgh Steelers at Hard Rock Stadium.

Despite his numerous accomplishments and performances, Silvio continues to push forward, always looking for new challenges to overcome. He learned to read Braille so well that he started competing and

eventually made it to the National Braille Challenge Finals in California in 2022.

Silvio’s parents, his faith and the programs for children with disabilities have all helped him develop from a baby to a young adult going to college. He was awarded a full scholarship to his dream school, the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music, and is currently in his first year of college. He plans to continue developing his operatic voice and other musical talents and eventually pursue a law degree.

“I strongly believe that the person I am today and how far I’ve come I greatly owe that to The Children’s Trust. They’ve funded a lot if not all of the summer camps and programs that I was a part of when I was developing as a musician and academically as well,” Silvio said.



Silvio Plata is featured in The Children’s Trust 20 Years of Nurturing Greatness campaign.

Learn more about his journey at TheChildrensTrust.org/20Anniversary.

Congratulations to The Children's Trust on their 20th Anniversary!



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Yasmin Snyder is featured in The Children's Trust 20 Years of Nurturing Greatness campaign. Scan the QR code to watch her story.



Yasmin

Finding Yourself When You Find Your Forever Family



Uncertainty is often a way of life for children in the foster care system and finding a family to care for them, provide for them, and, most importantly, love them is a goal that can heartbreakingly go unfulfilled. That makes the story of Yasmin Snyder all that more inspiring.

Yasmin entered the foster care system at the tender age of 5 when she was removed from her home as a result of physical abuse. Although she would be reunited with her birth mother briefly, she was again put in foster care for a second time soon after. And that was only the start.

As part of the foster care system, Yasmin was in line to be adopted three times. For a young child, the cycle of hope and despair she endured each time she learned of a potential adoption was a difficult reminder of the limitations of the system.

Yasmin could have let the disappointment get the best of her, especially since finding a loving family had become her most important goal so early in her life. She is honest about how important feeling love and security is to one's own self value. "When there's an adoption, there's an aspect that you are wanted and you are someone and you deserve love," she said. "I had three failed adoptions. I had a chance three times to fail and give up, but I didn't because I decided that I wanted a forever family, a healthy forever family at that."

"What I wanted in life was a loving family. And I got a loving family."

Thanks to the Trust-supported Miami Heart Gallery, a website currently managed by Citrus Family Network – the county's lead agency for child welfare services – Yasmin's story of perseverance and hope reached someone who could relate.

Michelle Snyder, Yasmin's adoptive mom, was once a child who also felt like she was without a place to call home and remembers the feelings of isolation and uncertainty it creates. "When I was young, I was moved around a lot. I wasn't with my biological family, and I experienced a lot of difficult things myself as far as just abandonment," said Michelle.

Though she was happily married and with two children, she felt something was still missing. So, when Michelle heard Yasmin's story, she immediately felt a connection. "I knew that if I could get out of it that I wanted to help other kids who were in that situation."

Yasmin felt the connection as well, and though the possibility of more heartbreak weighed on her, she knew what she wanted. "What I wanted in life was a loving family. And I got a loving family."

Yasmin immediately fell in love with the Snyders, and they fell in love with her. "Family is such an important thing to me, they're the ones who are going to help you through in life," she said. "Me and my siblings absolutely love each other, sometimes too much. I'm glad they love me, and I love them, like, I love hugging them and I love messing with them too."

Yasmin's connection with Michelle is just as strong. "When I speak to my mom, I feel like I can just tell her anything without getting judged. I can tell her my story. And I know she's not going to fake her feelings towards it because she understands where I'm coming from."

As a member of the Snyder family, Yasmin has excelled in high school, both academically and socially. She has a 3.86 GPA, including taking dual enrollment college classes. She is on a renowned varsity cheer team that won the state championship and finished third in the nation. She has also made new friends, while still finding time to volunteer at her church.

What the Snyders have given to Yasmin by welcoming her into their family is a blessing. And what she has returned is equally moving. "We are so thankful to get to be a part of her story. Really, the most amazing thing is the transformation from when we first met her, with her confidence, self-esteem, her school grades, and joy for life. It's a night and day difference!" Michelle said. "Yasmin is so inspiring. She's taught me so much and she reminds me to keep pushing forward and never give up."

"I'm so thankful for The Children's Trust and all the people that helped us along the way to make this possible. We have our ups and downs like any family, but it's just fun to do life together," said Michelle.

As for Yasmin, she found what she was looking for. "I have arrived at my destination, absolutely. There's no more looking for me. And there's no more wondering and there's no more worrying about where I'm going to end up next. No, because I have my loving family here to support me and to love me and I love them."

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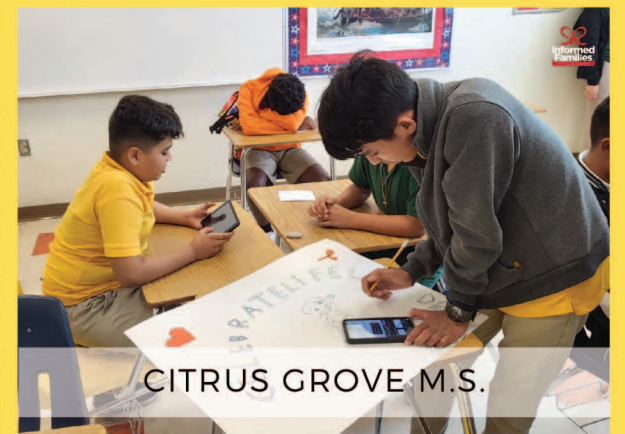
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Proclamation



The Miami-Dade County Office of the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners

Whereas: As a diverse and growing metropolis, Miami-Dade County takes great pride in applauding institutions whose commitment, initiatives, as well as hard work enhance the well-being of those that reside in our midst; and

Whereas: The Children's Trust is a dedicated source of revenue derived from property taxes, established by voter referendum in 2002, with a mission to partner with the community to plan, advocate for and fund strategic investments that improve the lives of all children and families in Miami-Dade County; and

Whereas: Since its inception, the Children's Trust has spent two decades investing in child and family providers to support, nurture and advocate for all children in our society; and

Whereas: The Children's Trust has served multiple generations of children - from the youngest county residents to young adults, as well as their families, always honoring its original mission and striving to create a community that puts the welfare of its children first; and

Whereas: Today, it is only fitting to recognize the achievements of the Children's Trust, its past and present members, as well as all the young people it has helped throughout the years;

Now Therefore: BE IT RESOLVED, THAT I, DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA, MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, CHAIRMAN JOSE "PEPE" DIAZ AND THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, ON BEHALF OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND THIS COMMUNITY, do hereby proclaim Saturday, September 10, 2022, as

The Children's Trust Day

In Observance I call upon the good people of Miami-Dade County to join me in praising the efforts of this outstanding organization as it commemorates 20 years of support, investment and advocacy.

Thereof:

 Oliver G. Gilbert III, District 1 Vice Chairman	 José "Pepe" Diaz, District 12 Chairman	 Raquel A. Regalado District 7
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MATTER!

Community
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Nearly 800,000 calls were answered by the Trust-funded 211 Helpline.

In honor of The Children's Trust 20th Anniversary and as a recognition for its work serving children and families, Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava and the Board of County Commissioners issued a proclamation declaring September 10, 2022 as "The Children's Trust Day."

! NUMBERS
THAT
MATTER

150%

Over 150% increase in the number of funded organizations (from 64 to 163) over the past 20 years.



Building Upon What Has Been Accomplished for Our Children's Futures

Early education initiatives, community partnerships and youth development solicitation already in motion

Thanks to the support of the community, there is no question that in The Children's Trust, children and families in Miami-Dade County have an organization with the resources, dedication and established track record of supporting them. And after two decades of service so far, The Trust is prepared to take on future challenges.

That means that the next 20 years and beyond promise to be filled with even more accomplishments and wide-reaching positive effects. As always, The Trust will identify and carry out those priorities through research of evidence-based models and with the guidance of its Board of Directors and the community as a whole.

The Trust's 5-year grant cycle starts again

The work of The Trust is continuous and it is currently in the midst of its latest round of grant solicitations for another five-year investment cycle. In 2022, The Trust released its Family & Neighborhood Support Partnerships, Trust Academy, Youth Development and Innovation Fund grants, with Parenting and others set for release this fiscal year. Projected funding for the year is upwards of \$180 million on programs and initiatives on behalf of children and families in our community.

Our Thrive by 5 early learning initiatives continues to be one of the organization's top priorities and this fiscal year

we are focused on extending the gains we've already made during what is the most crucial time in the development of our children. "The science is clear on the matter – supporting quality early childhood development transforms the lives of children and their families, which ultimately benefits our entire community," said President and CEO James R. Haj.

The Trust invests over 20 percent of its budget on early learning initiatives but is determined to do even more. Because there is a large waiting list for our child scholarship program which funds high quality early learning child care slots in low-income neighborhoods, The Trust is

partnering with public and private entities to ensure that all families can access the best child care for their children. We recently launched our new salary supplement program, ASCEND, to help early learning educators reach a living wage. Late last year, The Trust also announced a partnership with the United States Department of Defense to provide high-quality child care options for military families in Miami-Dade County.

Partnerships for the future of children

Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, a two-time board member and one of the original Trust advocates and founders, has also helped usher in a new era of collaboration with The Trust. She included several members of The Trust's staff and board members as part of her Blue-Ribbon Commission for Children, which also planned her recent Children's Summit 2022: A Roadmap to Child Success event. Much of the work and information going into this roadmap and collaborative discussion is based upon years of The Trust's leadership in the area of early childhood development and education.

These initiatives and programs, as well as The Trust's continued community engagement and outreach efforts ensure that The Trust will continue to be the foremost advocate for children and families in our community.

"There are very few communities in this nation that support children and families like Miami-Dade does. The Trust is here to help support families raise their children," said Haj, president and CEO of The Trust. "Down the road, we will continue looking back and saying, 'How did we ever not have The Trust.' We change lives and we change families' lives."

To learn more about The Children's Trust, visit [TheChildrensTrust.org](https://www.TheChildrensTrust.org).

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From your partners at United Way Miami.

