

2013 ANNUAL REPORT



**ADOPT-A-FAMILY**  
OF THE PALM BEACHES, INC.

*Leaders in helping families help themselves*

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## Our Mission

*Adopt-A-Family is dedicated to restoring families in crisis to stability and self-sufficiency by providing access to all-encompassing services to families and their children.*

*Adopt-A-Family is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization established in 1983 by three Palm Beach County women who recognized the need to help families who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless due to a financial hardship, illness, divorce, death or other extenuating circumstances.*

*The agency's mission and core activities center on the belief that a family's basic needs must be met before systemic change can occur within the family or individual. To achieve this we provide physical housing units, rental assistance, and supportive services to families in crisis.*

*The generosity of funders, foundations, businesses and individuals, allows us to be a local leader in helping families help themselves.*

## Who does Adopt-A-Family serve?

- Homeless families with children
- Income-challenged, working families at risk of homelessness or in search of affordable housing opportunities in Palm Beach County
- Families in crisis, putting them at risk of homelessness

## Why support Adopt-A-Family?

Adopt-A-Family offers a holistic approach by providing all-inclusive programs that empower families and offers solutions for self-sufficiency. Families are carefully screened and work with a family advocate on a Family Action Plan until the family reaches self-sufficiency.





For six consecutive years, Adopt-A-Family was awarded a four-star rating by Charity Navigator. Only three percent of the charities Charity Navigator rates have received at least six consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Adopt-A-Family outperforms most other charities in America.

This “exceptional” designation from Charity Navigator differentiates Adopt-A-Family from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust.

According to Charity Navigator, *“Receiving four out of a possible four stars indicates that your organization adheres to good governance and other best practices that minimize the chance of unethical activities and consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way.”*

Like us on  and follow us on  at AAFPBC

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# HOPE BEGINS WITH A HOME

## Thoughts from a client...

**T**rials, hardships, and calamities... life does not discriminate based on race, age, gender, level of education, or social or economic status. I consider myself to be, not perfect, but somewhat of a stellar individual. I've made many mistakes in my life, but I have always managed to redeem myself by not repeating them.

I am educated (and still continuing my education), had good and stable employment, and provided a more than decent life for my kids. Education nor past experiences could have not prepared me for the situation I found myself in and without a clue as to how I got there.

I won't write about the physical, emotional, and verbal abuse I endured while married to my abuser; it would take too long to re-live those past events. However, I was not prepared, nor was I aware, that leaving an abusive marriage would be equally devastating.

Beginning my life over at the age 40, letting of go of what I had worked so hard to attain, to save not only my life, but the lives of my kids, was

## WHEN A FAMILY IN CRISIS KNOCKS . . .

**Family is homeless. Through The Lewis Center, they receive:**

- Housing
- Comprehensive Assessment
- Diversion Services
- Mainstream Benefits
- Health Clinic
- Ancillary Services

**Family has a place to live, but needs supportive services.**

- Homeless Prevention
- Comprehensive Case Management

**PBC  
Homeless  
Families  
Come  
Through  
Here**

Adopt-A-Family

The Philip D. Lewis  
Homeless Resource Center



**Family is homeless.  
Through AAF,  
they find a home.**

- Project S.A.F.E.
- A Place Called Home
- Wiley Reynolds Garden Apartments
- Bridges To Success
- NSP2 (Rentals)

**Project Grow**

An afterschool & out-of-school program customized to meet the unique needs of formerly homeless children ages 5 to 12.

*\*This program is open to all AAF families*

**Family has gained self-sufficiency,  
and is ready to be homeowners.**

- Service Enriched Housing
- NSP2 Program
  - For Sale Units
  - Affordable Rentals

*something that life had not prepared me for. This is why Adopt-A-Family will never begin to understand my gratitude toward them for the help and kindness they have extended to my kids and me.*

*Adopt-A-Family has given us back the security we once knew, but relinquished in order to leave an abusive situation. Never in my life have I hurt so bad or shed so many tears. At the point of hopelessness, Adopt-A-Family helped my kids and me by picking us up when we were at our lowest point in life.*

*Thank you!*

## HOUSING STABILIZATION PROGRAM (HSP) - HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

Our Housing Stabilization Program (HSP) assists families in crisis that are in imminent danger of becoming homeless. The program provides supportive services and financial assistance to help families remain in their home.



*HSP assisted 158 families obtain/maintain stable housing this year.*

Amy is a 21-year-old single mother raising a one-year-old boy. She was staying with relatives in a home that was unsafe and not meant for habitation. She had never lived on her own, and needed assistance in acquiring the tools necessary for self-sufficiency. With the help of her Family Advocate, Amy was able to locate affordable housing, and she and her son moved into their new home within two weeks of coming to Adopt-A-Family. The agency assisted in paying the security deposit, first month's rent, and utility deposit. Amy's Family Advocate assisted in acquiring furniture donations for the family. After obtaining stable housing, Amy was able to return to school and obtained her CNA license. Amy has remained stably housed, and has stated that she is "eternally grateful" for the assistance and support that she has received from Adopt-A-Family.

## PROJECT GROW

This after-school and out-of-school program is for children ages 5-12 who are residing in Adopt-A-Family's housing programs and the Lake Worth community at large. The program is customized to meet the unique needs



of homeless and formerly homeless children. Project Grow focuses on building the children's social, emotional and educational skills to not only address their specific needs, but also instill the self-confidence necessary for a healthy childhood.



*Project Grow had an unprecedented number of 4th/5th graders make the Safety Patrol. They all received sponsorship to be able to go to the earned trip to Washington, D.C.*



## PROJECT SAFE (STABLE ABLE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT)

The oldest housing program of Adopt-A-Family, Project SAFE provides homeless families the opportunity to reside in safe, permanent, affordable housing. Residents are referred to Project SAFE from Palm Beach County's Homeless Resource Center. The head of household must have a disability which impedes



the ability to live independently. To address the barriers and challenges families are encountering, intensive support services are offered – including case management, advocacy, budgeting, mental health counseling, access to education and job training, financial literacy, and childcare – all designed to help clients become self-sufficient. All families must either be attending school and/or working while in the program.

*98% of households remained in or exited to permanent housing.*

## SERVICE ENRICHED HOUSING

Adopt-A-Family's Service Enriched Housing (SEH) is a residential program serving families who earn less than 200% of the federal poverty level and are on the path to homeownership. The program consists of 28 two-bedroom apartment units located adjacent to the agency's Family Resource Center in Lake Worth. Rent is calculated at 30% of gross income, but families residing in SEH pay a base rent of \$500, while depositing the remainder of the 30% into an escrow account. The residents then use their escrow account to clean up their credit or save for a down payment for a home.

*SEH had 10 clients who were enrolled in college while working full time.*

## WILEY REYNOLDS GARDENS APARTMENTS

Wiley Reynolds Gardens Apartments is our nine-unit housing project with two and three bedroom apartments. Eligible homeless families have the opportunity to live in safe, quality affordable housing, while also being able to access supportive services that will help them reach self-sufficiency. Rent for these families is limited to 30 percent of their gross income. The coordination of social services for these nine families is provided through Project Connect – a collaboration between Adopt-A-Family and Families First of Palm Beach County.

*89% of families residing in Wiley are employed.*



## NSP2 PROGRAM

Our Community Land Trust Program, in partnership with the Lake Worth Community Redevelopment Agency, was one of only 56 awardees of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (NSP2) national grant competition.

Over the last two years, Adopt-A-Family purchased and rehabilitated 41 units of foreclosed properties within Lake Worth, and rented/sold the homes to income-qualified households.

The NSP2 program has enhanced Adopt-A-Family's housing stock significantly, and increased the total number of affordable rental units operated by the agency to 115.

*42 low-income working families obtained affordable housing through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2.*

## A PLACE CALLED HOME & BRIDGES TO SUCCESS

A Place Called Home is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded program that is in its second year of existence. It is a permanent housing program for persons with disabilities. Families are placed in houses or apartments located in Lake Worth. The program enables special needs families to live as independently as possible. Families receive intensive in-home case management and supportive services. There are eight families being served by the program. Bridges To Success is a HUD-funded program located in Belle Glade. Adopt-A-Family collaborates with Families First of Palm Beach County to administer this housing program.



*A Place Called Home collaborated with three new landlords in the community, which assisted in efforts to keep housed, the eight families in the program.*

*Jessica, 25, is a single mother residing in Project SAFE. Jessica and her son, Justin age 5, were referred to our program from a transitional housing program for teen mothers.*

*Jessica, who was neglected as child, left home at the age of 14, became addicted to drugs, and found herself pregnant at the age of 19. Fortunately, she has been able to overcome these obstacles, and has made significant improvements in her life during her stay at Project SAFE – despite the fact she has no family or close network of friends. Jessica is a devoted and loving mother. She has maintained employment at a local restaurant for more than four years. Jessica takes great pride in her home and her family, and continues to work hard as she establishes her self-sufficiency.*

# TREE LIGHTING CELEBRATION

## 28TH ANNUAL EVENT

Congratulations to chairmen Sherry Hay and Marietta Muina McNulty and their dedicated committee on a fabulous and very successful Tree Lighting Celebration. More than 230 guests kicked off the holidays by attending the evening on December 4.

Guests were serenaded with holiday songs performed by The King's Academy Choir as they arrived for the evening cocktail reception and silent auction, featuring one of the area's largest selections of live orchids and holiday gifts. A performance by the children in Project Grow,



a gourmet dinner and live auction followed. More than \$330,000 was raised that evening to support programs that help families in crisis get back to stability and self-sufficiency.



*Marietta Muina McNulty & Sherry Hay*

Project Safe client, Christine, told her story of how she and her young son went from homeless to having a safe place to live and on their way to a better life, thanks to the support and services provided by Adopt-A-Family.



A special THANK YOU to the event's Grand Benefactor, the Lawrence J. and Florence A. De George Charitable Trust and our Benefactor, The Edward L. Hennessey and Ruth S. Hennessey Foundation. We would also like to recognize all the companies, businesses

and individuals that supported the event through underwriting, sponsorships and contributions to the auctions.



# PLAYERS TEE OFF TO HELP FAMILIES



*Nick LaRocca & Andy McDermott*

In May, 80 golfers played in the Second Annual Sandhill Crane Invitational which took place at a new location, the exclusive Pine Tree Golf Club in Boynton Beach. Special thanks to the golf committee

comprised of Sean Bresnan, Tom Frankel, Gary Pohrer, Frank Bresnan, Joe LaRocca, Jr. and Joe Caron, for planning another fabulous tournament. Adopt-A-Family also recognizes the many sponsors whose support helped make the day a success: *Frankel Realty Group; F X Bresnan Shipping, Inc; David Lambert; Sean Bresnan; Gary Pohrer – K2 Realty; Stuart & Shelby Development, Inc.; Sabadell*



*Golf committee*

*Bank Miami Foundation; Miles Nadal & MDC Partners, Inc.; Burke Ross, Jr.; Celedinas Insurance Group; Club Colette: Dan Stanton; Dolente Family Foundation; Dom Telesco; Jack Feyrer & Holcim Trading; Jay Marcus & GE Foundation; Jim Brecker; Kim Raich & Sotheby's; LaRocca & Associates; LKD Certified Public Accountants; Lincoln Financial Group; List Industries; Mike & Mary Policano; Parrot Heads for the Palm Beaches; Peter Garvy; Ronald & Debra Parr; Steve Duncker; and Toshiba Business Systems.*

## DUCKY DERBY A SWIMMING SUCCESS!

On St. Patrick's Day, 6,000 rubber ducks in their own special duck pond filled the street near Dave's Last Resort, a popular establishment in downtown Lake Worth. The ducks were part of our 1st Annual Ducky Derby. The sea of yellow ducks was a sight to see.



For \$5, anyone could "adopt a duck" for a chance at the \$5,000 grand prize. \$25,000 was raised from the Derby to help us continue to provide programs and

services for families in crisis here in Palm Beach County.

*Special thanks to our Ducky Derby emcee, Greg Rice and to our sponsors: Dave's Last Resort; Edgewater Enterprises, LLC; Stuart & Shelby Development; Northwestern Mutual-Jim Larschan; PNC Bank; PBC Credit Union; Tauber Real Estate Services, LLC; Bee Unique; LKD Certified Public Accountants; The Lake Worth Herald; Lake Worth Community Redevelopment Agency; Debby and Ron Parr; Joseph McHale, and Suzanne Frisbie.*





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Lynda M. Murphy, Esq.*

I am honored to serve as the President and Chair of the Board of Directors of Adopt-A-Family for 2013-2014, and privileged to serve with a talented group of professionals on our Board who are committed and passionate about helping the homeless families in our community. The mission of Adopt-A-Family is to restore families in crisis to stability and self-sufficiency by providing these families a complete and comprehensive overlay of social services to help them back along the road to stability. Despite the recent economic crisis, Adopt-A-Family and its dedicated staff have continued to provide these critically needed services to homeless families.

In furtherance of our mission, Adopt-A-Family manages and executes many ongoing programs to assist homeless families back to stability. Two examples include the Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 and Palm Beach County Homeless Recourse Center. Through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2, Adopt-A-Family successfully constructed and rehabilitated 41 homes in our community for rental and sale to low and moderate income families. Adopt-A-Family is also the lead agency working with the family division at the Senator Philip D. Lewis Homeless Resource Center which Palm Beach County opened in July 2012. In this last year, the Resource Center, through

Adopt-A-Family's guidance, assessed 893 families in crisis.

Although Adopt-A-Family has received accolades for its work, including four-star ratings from Charity Navigator and the prestigious "Promising Practices" from the United States Department and Housing and Urban Development, awards and recognition is not what drives our committed professionals. Our team is driven by results, by witnessing the family who once lived in a car or under a bridge transformed to a family lead by a mother who is now working and jointly earning her college degree. We are driven by the children, who looked at the ground and did not smile when we met them, but who now laughs, do well in school, look you in the eye and are happy. Children who are part of a family that now has a promising future. It is these "success" stories that reward the staff, the board, our donors and funders, volunteers and community partners.

The Board of Directors is committed to providing the leadership and guidance to the dedicated professionals at Adopt-A-Family to assist them in meeting the overwhelming needs of the homeless families in our community. We are grateful for the generous support of our funders, donors, volunteers, and community partners. To the families that we serve – thank you for allowing us to be part of your family.

## CEO MESSAGE

*Wendy Tippett, MNM, GPC*

*Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful."*

*- Joshua J. Marine*

The 2012-2013 year was a challenging one for Adopt-A-Family. Like many of the families that Adopt-A-Family has the opportunity to serve, we, the Adopt-A-Family family, were reminded that it takes resiliency, perseverance, determination, and the support of others to get through the challenges that we face.

This year we lost a dear and beloved member of our family, Gabriel (Gaby) Ferrarotti. Gaby's sudden and unexpected death left our hearts heavy. This loss, coupled with the complete flooding of our offices on Thanksgiving weekend, placed our staff in the unfamiliar position of needing a helping hand to get through tough times.

The support we received was overwhelming. Board members, community partners, and friends of Adopt-A-Family reached out and offered their unwavering support. Thanks to this support, Adopt-A-Family not only healed, but was able to help 1,534 families and produce amazing outcomes.

Last year, Adopt-A-Family completed the rehabilitation of 41 homes in Lake Worth. This provided 17 income-challenged families with the opportunity of the American Dream, homeownership. Along with that, 24 truly affordable rental units are now occupied by hard-working families

that are no longer unduly burdened by a typical \$1,300 monthly rent payment.

This year, we also partnered with our community partners and Palm Beach County to open the Senator Philip D. Lewis Homeless Resource Center (HRC). In the first year, the HRC family division received over 1,500 referrals for homeless families. This number far exceeded the original predictions. The staff of the HRC, in collaboration with our community partners, has done and continues to do, amazing work to meet the ever growing needs of homeless families in Palm Beach County.

Adopt-A-Family has many people to thank. Our work would not be possible without our dedicated and generous supporters and funders. Their support continues to change lives every day. A special thanks to our Board of Directors who has stood beside the staff through both the challenges and successes, continues to provide organizational governance, and has dedicated many, many hours to the organization and the families we serve. Thank you to my staff that never ceases to amaze me through their compassion, dedication and commitment to helping others. And lastly, thank you to the hundreds of families that provide us the opportunity to share their journey as they strive to become the best parents and citizens they can be.

The staff and I thank you for your continued support and unwavering dedication to Adopt-A-Family.



## Homeless Resource Center

Adopt-A-Family is proud to be a partner agency in the Senator Philip D. Lewis Homeless Resource Center that opened in July 2012. The 36,000 square-foot complex on 45th Street is part of the County's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness that was adopted in 2008.

The Center serves as the single point of access to connect homeless individuals and families to assessments, services, referrals and housing. It is open seven days a week, 365 days a year. Three key agencies are spearheading the work at the Center - Adopt-A-Family is working with families, Goodwill Industries is working with singles, and The Lord's Place is providing job placement and training. Many other local agencies and volunteers have also stepped up to help in providing services to the individuals and families coming to the Center for assistance.



Each family that meets program criteria will receive a comprehensive assessment by a licensed mental health practitioner who will identify supportive services appropriate for that case. A Family Action

Plan is developed jointly by the family and the case manager to guide them to housing stability. A safe, affordable rental unit will be secured, and a gradually declining rent subsidy program will be implemented. Safe, affordable rental units are inspected and approved by a Housing Specialist, a certified home inspector who can ensure that all units meet the requirements outlined in federal guidelines. Many families will be given the opportunity to be reunited with family who live out of state. Families with a head of household who has a



diagnosed disability will be referred for permanent supportive housing for the disabled.

All families will be provided with medical screens at the on-site clinic. Showers, washer/dryer, food, sundries, and computers are available for every family coming into the Center, whether they are enrolled in services or not.

In the first year the Center was open:

### *893 families completed full assessments*

- ★ *232 families were rapidly re-housed*
- ★ *12 families were diverted/relocated from ongoing shelter to living out of state with a family member*
- ★ *23 families were placed in permanent supportive housing for the disabled*

Judith is the grandmother of five teenagers. The children were removed from their mother's custody by DCF. Although Judith is retired and survives on a fixed income, she took the children in to prevent them from being sent to foster care. Judith owns a one bedroom condo in Broward County, but needed a bigger place to accommodate five teenagers and meet DCF mandates. In addition, the HOA in the 55+ community in which she lived would not allow the teens to reside on the property and the family would have faced eviction. Adopt-A-Family was able to pay the security deposit required for the family to move into a larger home in Palm Beach County. The agency was also able to assist with the family's first electric bill. The family received food and furniture donations. Judith's case worker worked with the Palm Beach County School Board to provide summer camp vouchers for the children.



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