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Recoveryforkids.org Helps Turn Lives Around of Former Foster Children

Vero Beach, FL – Without a transitional program to assist the 1,800 young adults that age out of foster care at age of 18 each year in Florida, over half will never earn a high school education, within three years 62% will be unemployed, 60% will become pregnant and 33% will become homeless.

The Children’s Home Society of Florida, Treasure Coast Division’s Transitional Living Program (TLP), helps turn these lives around. The TLP provides a safety-net of support for these at-risk youth, between the ages of 18 and 23, so they can earn a higher education, find stable jobs and safe housing, learn life skills, establish life goals and achieve their dreams.

The TLP is currently funded through donations from individuals and grants. However, CHS is currently working on many initiatives to achieve self-sustainability for the program by establishing revenue-generating businesses and collaborations that can provide the necessary funding to fully support the program.

“The bottom line is that when these kids turn 18 they no longer qualify for most state assistance and find themselves homeless. The TLP fills a gap in our community that provides them with the resources they need during a difficult time when they don’t have the resources that a family can provide,” explains Tim Cheney, co-founder of ChoopersGuilde.com – A Treatment Resource Directory for Addicts and Alcoholics, and member of the CHS Indian River Advisory Board of Directors. “Without the interventional services that the TLP provides, we know that the outlook for these youth is bleak.”

As an active member of the CHS board of directors, Cheney focuses much of his effort on developing collaborative partnerships that generate funding to support the TLP. In 2010 he was instrumental in establishing a partnership with Vero Beach-based [WAVES Auto Spa](http://WAVESAutoSpa.com), in which a portion of all proceeds from their consignment shop are donated to the TLP.

Most recently, Cheney has been working with recovery centers to form collaborations through “The Vero Beach Alliance – Addicts and Alcoholics Helping Kids Aging out of Foster Care”. A portion of the enrollment fees generated via referrals from the website “recoveryforkids.org” to recovery centers is donated to the TLP to ensure that young adults aging out of foster care have an opportunity to reach their full potential as adults.

An example of one such collaboration is with two local entrepreneurs, Boris Gonzales, owner of Caribbean Court and Elizabeth Kennedy, owner of Elizabeth Kennedy & Co. and also a member of CHS Indian River County Advisory Board of Directors. The two have been instrumental in launching and operating Gonzales Recovery Residences with operations in Vero Beach and Alexandria, VA.

“Elizabeth and I have been supporters of CHS for many years and when we began talking to Tim about this collaboration we immediately jumped on board,” explained Gonzales. “Our goal for the residents of the Gonzales Recovery Residences is to provide support through their journey that ensures that each person finds success and sobriety in their lives. Through this collaboration with CHS we can pay this forward and help our community’s most vulnerable youth find success as well.”

The Gonzales Recovery Residences has established one of the most successful long-term rehabilitation programs available for chemical dependency, utilizing time tested principles and guidelines to help individuals successfully obtain and secure sobriety.

The Transitional Living Program provides young adults, ages 18-23, with a continuum of care after they age out of the foster care system with financial assistance, job training and mentoring to prevent homelessness and break the cycle of abuse and neglect that have been part of their lives. The Youth Transition Center, located on the Vero Beach Campus is a residential component of this program.

The Children’s Home Society of Florida Treasure Coast Division, which is one of 14 divisions in Florida, serves more than 9,000 children and their families each year in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties. Children’s Home Society is not a government agency and must rely on the support of individuals, civic groups, foundations and businesses for the funds to give children and young adults the opportunity to be safe, healthy and prepared for life. For more information, visit www.chsfl.org or call 772-344-4020.

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Caption: (left to right) [Tim Cheney](#), Partner and co-founder of Choopersguide.com and member of CHS Indian River County Board of Directors; Marta Schneider, chairman of CHS Indian River County Board of Directors, Boris Gonzales, owner of Caribbean Court and founder of Gonzales Recovery Residences; Elizabeth Kennedy, owner of Elizabeth Kennedy & Co. and member of CHS Indian River County Board of Directors.