

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lakeview Center Receives \$90,000 Grant to Help Traumatized Children

Pensacola, Fla. (Feb. 12, 2018) – FamiliesFirst Network (FFN) of Lakeview Center recently was awarded a grant totaling just over \$90,000 from the Child Welfare Specialty Plan Reinvestment Fund operated by the Community Based Care Foundation. The expansion in funding will help Lakeview’s child protective services division recruit therapeutic foster parents for children with behavioral health needs who have experienced the trauma of abuse or neglect.

Currently, FFN serves more than 520 children in foster care, and provides behavioral health services to around 600 children each year. The child welfare system has seen more youth entering foster care having experienced severe trauma and creating more of a need for therapeutic, medically complex and behavioral foster care. Therapeutic foster parents receive extensive evidence-based training, weekly in-home therapist appointments, 24/7 on-call support, monthly reimbursements and 10 paid respite days each year.

FFN is part of the largest comprehensive social services organization in the southeast with more than 60 programs and services to meet a variety of needs. The organization embraces a Trauma-Informed Care approach to all services.

“Our foremost responsibility is the safety of children,” said Michelle Giordano, therapeutic foster home recruitment specialist. “We also help the entire family overcome challenges such as mental illness, addiction or vocational needs with the hope that they can reunify in a safe environment. Our foster parents provide that critical safety net for the child while the family is receiving services.”

If a judge deems that it’s not safe for a child to return home, FFN will seek a permanent, adoptive home with a relative, close friend or adoptive family.

Fast Fact: In 2017, the Florida Abuse Hotline referred 11,000 calls from the four-county area to the Department of Children and Families for investigation to determine if children could safely remain in their homes.

Community members interested in becoming a therapeutic foster parent should contact the team at 850.860.4259.

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For more information about this press release or to schedule an interview, please contact Tish Pennewill at 850.469.3621 or Tish.Pennewill@bhcpns.org, or Lori Zavada at 850.469.3508 or Lori.Zavada@bhcpns.org.

About FamiliesFirst Network of Lakeview Center, Inc.

Under a contract with the state of Florida, FamiliesFirst Network is responsible for the safety, stability and well-being of abused and neglected children in northern Florida’s four westernmost counties: Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton. Our Mission is to help people throughout life’s journey. Our services include protective supervision, foster parent recruitment, adoptive parent recruitment, and specialized help for teens and young adults preparing to leave the foster care system. A program of Lakeview Center, FamiliesFirst Network served more than 3,100 children in 2017 alone. To learn more, go to FamiliesFirstNetwork.org.

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