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A MESSAGE
FROM
OUR CEO

Mental Health America of Southeast Florida is pleased to welcome one of our most cherished partners to join the MHA Family. As of December 2020, Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention has agreed to join forces with MHA to continue to provide much needed suicide prevention services to our community. Jackie Rosen the former CEO of FISP has retired but has agreed to stay on in a consultant capacity to ensure that FISP continues its fine work. We happily welcome Joel Smith and Mayra Del Toro to MHA from FISP.

I am also pleased that we have continued to provide services primarily through a virtual format to the people we serve. We also successfully completed our most recent CARF Audit in December and passed with flying colors. The surveyors were very impressed with how our agency not only survived the epidemic but thrived during it. It is a testament to our staff who are so dedicated and committed to providing services to our community. They were also impressed with even though MHA is considered a small agency it wields a large influence within the community and ensures that the people we serve are always a priority and connected to any services that they may need.

I am grateful to our board for their support and guidance throughout the pandemic and even before the crisis. They are engaged and committed to the services we provide and our board membership has actually increased over the past year. That is a remarkable achievement for our board.

Finally, I thank our team whom day in and day out step up and pitch in and do their work. The people we serve are better served because our staff is so committed to the provision of services. I particularly want to thank the management team of Daniella, Liz, Helen, and Chris for all their hard work and support. Our new website is thanks in large part to Chris and his team who have been working nearly around the clock to get it to the point that it is largely updated and improved.

Thank you to the people we serve for your ability to work with us as we maneuvered around this crisis. Keep it up and remember we always seek to achieve good mental health!

Paul F. Jaquith, LCSW, CAP
President/CEO
MHA/FISP



MEET THE HONOREES



KAREN STRAUSS, LCSW
Coordinator of Prevention Services
Henderson Behavioral Health

REPRESENTATIVE EMILY SLOSBERG
Florida House of Representatives, District 91



KIM SAISWICK

Vice President, Community Health & Well Being
Holy Cross Health



RENEESE L. McNEAL, CBHCM

Program Manager-Substance Use Disorder Case
Management, Program Coordinator of Prevention
Services
SunServe



TIMOTHY G. CURTIN, MBA, MSW, CAP

Executive Director, Community Services
Memorial Healthcare System



ROB CERAVOLO

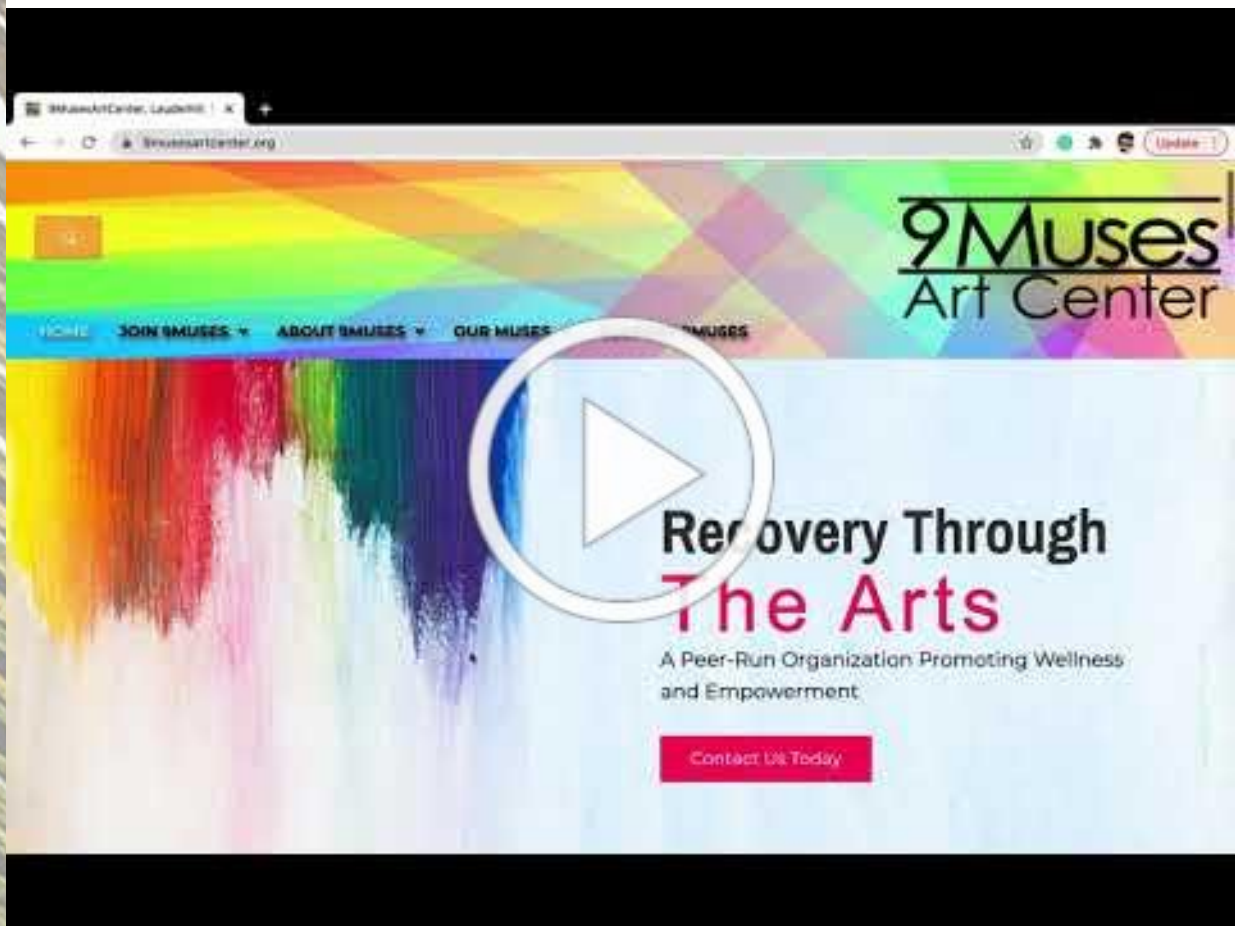
CEO, Tropic Ocean Airways



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OPPORTUNITIES**

We Have A New Website!

Navigate to 9MusesArtCenter.org and you will find a whole different experience waiting for you! Our hope is the community will find the new format more organized and easily accessible. One of the major additions to our website is everyone now has the ability to fill out their Membership Application online. Our calendar is presented in an updated format that corresponds directly to the online classes we are currently teaching via Skype. Take some extra time and explore the never-before-seen components, like our Featured Artist Gallery page and Support The Muses page to name a few. We want to thank you so much for your patience with us during the transition between old and new and if you'd like to keep up with our programs in real-time, make sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). More to come!



The **Power of Peers** program would like to welcome its newest full-time Peer Specialist, Darius Fair! Darius has worked with the department since 2019 as part-time peer-support having previously volunteered on the Sethline. He is currently completing his



certification and has a number of close peers he works with. Darius has a degree from the University of South Florida and attended Florida A&M. He loves dance, including Hip Hop, Jazz, and Modern dance. His other interests include writing, in particular poetry, cinema reviews, and is working on a novel.

When asked about his work as a specialist, he says, "I love that I can pay it forward, helping people with the tools and skills I would have needed when going through a mental health crisis."

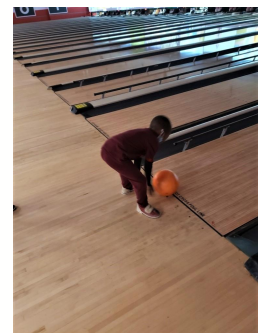
Welcome, Darius!

MIAA NEWS

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Kinship Cares continues to reach out and engage Kinship families virtually and in-person. We have found several venues that support safe practices and social distancing. This has enabled us to go bowling, skating, enjoy outdoor movies, etc. We have also taken advantage of the many drive-by events offered in the county like the Tradewinds Festival of Lights and The Calvary Chapel Celebration of Peace Event in



December. One of the most memorable events was the Jungle Queen boat ride and lunch. It was a first for many of the children (and caregivers) to see Fort Lauderdale from the water and they expressed their gratitude.



Lion Country Safari is a well-known drive-thru activity. This wildlife park is home to over 1000 WILD animals and 90

species including lions, giraffe, zebras, rhinos, chimpanzees. It was a new experience for many of the children to see wild animals up close, and social distancing was easily followed.



In lieu of our usual Holiday Family Event, we had our



first ever Holiday Drive-By! Toys were donated by [The Silver Liners](#) who have been a wonderful support to our department for several



years. We supplemented with gift cards for the teens and treated each family to dinner at Boston Market. Families drove up, got to greet one another with waves and honks, and received bags full of goodies including PPE to take home. They loved the interaction with our team and expressed their gratitude for the presents they received for their children.



[Harvest Drive Florida](#), another community partner we continue to develop a relationship with, has helped provide food and other necessities to Kinship Cares Families who are in need. Morningstar Thrift Store is a vendor that caters specifically to Non-Profits. They have been a wonderful resource to provide household items, gifts for prizes and holidays, school supplies, and gently used clothing to our Families.

Zoom Teen is a new group that has been added to our online services. The group was co-created and is co-facilitated by Kinship Cares teen alumni specifically for Kinship Teens. There are many activities we plan on integrating into the weekly meetings like games, challenges, and discussions. Participating in groups and activities like this one with the **Kinship Cares** program is easy. If you are the caretaker for your grandchild, niece, nephew, or sibling you are eligible to receive services. Support such as respite care, family events, Emergency Financial Assistance, navigating the school system and assisting with IEP meetings, and more is available to all Kinship Cares Families. The program is FREE and there is no referral necessary. For more information please contact us!

Liz Myers
PEPS Program Director
954-746-2055 X105
Liz@MHASEFL.org



In case you were wondering (and of course you were) whether there is anything you can do to make lives better for children, let me tell you what we are doing today. Despite many challenges with scheduling and technology, we continue to offer **Listen to Children (LTC)** on

a virtual platform. Fourteen elementary schools and 27 Listeners have been meeting online with 38 students. Everyone is looking forward to the time when meetings can be 'in person' again! We also offered LTC to the children in MHA's Kinship Program. One Listener has been meeting with a 14-year-old since August. In mid-February, the Listener stated, "(Child) wanted to talk to me on her way to her dance tryout at Dillard. She was nervous and thought I could help." This was not the regular weekly meeting; the teen reached out to her Listener spontaneously when she needed encouragement. That demonstrates the success of the program in Kinship.

The city of Pompano Beach has provided funding MHA for the Thumbody Programs, we have developed virtual programs so that Pompano students can participate in the programs. We are not permitted in schools at this time so we have developed scripts and will soon record both the second grade ***I'm Thumbody*** and Kindergarten ***Thumbody, Too*** Programs. We are quite excited about this new opportunity and remain hopeful that schools will want to participate.

Thank you for being a part of making all this happen. It's readers like you that support the children's services at MHA and your support provides the tools and resources which strengthen the resiliency in our kids.

MHASEFL Partners:



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