



Dear Community Partners,

*It's impossible to overlook the current environment underscoring life in Palm Beach County, Florida, the United States and the world. We are all feeling sad, frustrated, and angry as we mourn the senseless deaths of so many Black men and women. In addition, we are still reeling from the impact COVID-19 has had, and is having, on life as we knew it. However, we also know that it's deeply affecting Black and Brown communities in ways that will reverberate for generations to come. The Birth to 22 Alliance has always had equity at its core and now, more than ever before, we have to commit to being a catalyst for change. We must name the racism that we see, identify systemic racism that persists today and work to dismantle it. We must do better, work harder and work together if we are going to change our community so all of our children have real opportunity to thrive.*

*To start this process, the Birth to 22 Alliance recognized the extraordinary stressors that COVID-19 has placed on our families and has created a special committee to examine how the pandemic is affecting our children and families – especially our communities of color now, as well as in the future. This crisis has deepened long-standing inequities, so we are employing an equity lens to reveal and address new and persistent disparities. The impact thus far has been nothing short of devastating: limited access to distance learning is leaving some children behind academically; the closure of most child care centers, schools and camps has left working parents overwhelmed and children unprepared for kindergarten. To make matters worse, too many families are struggling to pay the rent and put food on the table.*

*Our communities are in pain. While the recent deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor were not local, they are a constant reminder of the racism that affects our children and families every day. To get through this, we must continue to work collaboratively and commit to making a change. Our children deserve nothing less from us.*

*Sincerely,*

Dr. Lisa Williams-Taylor  
CEO, Children's Services Council

Tammy K. Fields  
Director, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department



# Birth to 22 United for Brighter Futures NEWSLETTER

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## COVID-19 Response

In response to the novel coronavirus pandemic the Birth to 22 Alliance enacted a short-term ad hoc committee of its Steering Committee to serve as the Birth to 22 COVID-19 Gaps Response Group.

## Alliance Spotlights

Since its inception, Birth to 22 and its community alliances, have been working towards providing youth and young adults resources to reach their fullest potential.

## Scholarship Recipients Announced

Friends of Youth Services and Palm Beach County, Inc. has announced this year's Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship recipients.

## Share Feedback & Stories!

Do you have feedback or have an inspiring story to share? We'd love to hear from you!

Contact us at, [pbcbirthto22@pbcbgov.org](mailto:pbcbirthto22@pbcbgov.org)

# Birth to 22: Accomplishing its Mission



Children's Services Council and Palm Beach County Youth Services are spearheading the Birth to 22 campaign, an alliance of more than 300 organizations working to better the lives of our children from the cradle to when they are ready to start their careers.

[Watch](#) CEO Lisa Williams-Taylor discuss the innovative work of Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County and its partners.

To learn more about Birth to 22, go to [www.pbcbirthto22.com](http://www.pbcbirthto22.com).

## COVID-19 Response



In response to the novel coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) the Birth to 22 Alliance enacted a short-term ad hoc committee of its Steering Committee to serve as the Birth to 22 COVID-19 Gaps Response Group. The group in collaboration with the alliance's Racial Equity Core Team is focused on identifying, developing and implementing where necessary an equitable rapid response strategy to address concerns, gaps and opportunities surfaced in Palm Beach County as a result of COVID-19. The ad hoc committee comprised of leaders of key sectors and institutions (government, education, philanthropy, nonprofit and community) has been meeting weekly since early April to plan for how the Birth to 22 Alliance can best support the COVID-19 community response efforts.

Specifically, the group seeks to develop response

mechanisms using a racial equity lens in an effort to activate support to systems/sectors where inequities may be further deepened because of the coronavirus pandemic. To date the groups work has primarily focused on elevating concerns around educational, economic and social equity issues. More specifically digital divide, access concerns for child care and summer camp and the rising need for behavioral health supports due to the coronavirus. The group is working to prioritize identified gaps, align its support and advocacy to Birth to 22's Stair Step to Success. Efforts are being made to focus on areas of greatest of disparities, where a current community response may be lagging and/or lacking.

Overall, Birth to 22 United for Brighter Futures is committed to marshaling its resources into collective action to ensure our community has access to the needed health and human services supports to navigate this pandemic safely and equitably.



# COVID-19 Relief Funds

The Palm Beach County COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Grant Fund distributed more than \$3.7 million by early May to 100-plus non-profit organizations providing food, shelter and other basic needs as well as expanded services.

The support to non-profits is critical because the effects of COVID-19 are felt strongly among children and young adults. With schools closed, learning is disrupted and, for many children and families, food and daily nutrition has become a bigger struggle. For some teens and young adults, business closures have reduced or eliminated their income, particularly in face-to-face customer service roles such as restaurants and retail.

The grant funding process is modeled on a hurricane-relief plan used in Palm Beach County since 2004. Using a single application form, non-profits can request dollars from multiple funders, who work together to respond in their areas of service.

The ten grant partners are Admirals Cove Foundation, Allegany Franciscan Ministries, Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County, Lost Tree Foundation, Mary and Robert Pew Public Education Foundation, Quantum Foundation, United Way of Palm Beach County and Ventus Charitable Foundation.

Funding priorities include: Emergency food, shelter and other basic needs; expansion of service capacity related to increased demand for direct services; access to health care services for uninsured and underinsured clients; technology and other resources to allow the non-profits to continue to provide services; and reimbursement of lost

revenue for the organization.

Among the grants so far are:

- Support for college students who recently aged out of the foster care system.
- A "Farm to Family" initiative through Boys & Girls Clubs that distributes fresh, organic produce to about 1,000 families each week.
- Telehealth medicine platform with volunteers in medicine to serve residents remotely.
- Support for COVID-19 testing access through Genesis Community Health.
- Emergency utility and rental assistance through the Community Land Trust of Palm Beach County.
- Child reunifications supervised visits through the Toby Center for Family Transitions.
- Delivery of grow-at-home food/garden kits to middle-school students by Wise Tribe.
- A "Fiesta Fitness" program through Digital Vibez to combat childhood obesity.
- Therapeutic counseling services by Pace Center for Girls.

Applications, submitted through Google Forms, are limited to nonprofit organizations that provide services to Palm Beach and/or Martin County residents. By the end of April, nearly 450 agencies applied, with more than \$23.5 million in requests.

Click [here](#) to learn more or submit an application.

## Future Leaders Virtual Meetings



In an effort to maintain physical distancing, Future Leaders monthly meetings are currently being held virtually via Zoom Video on the last Tuesday of each month. Meetings will remain virtual through August. Future leaders is the voice for the youth of Palm Beach County creating leaders through self-motivation, determination, and education. Click [here](#) for more information about Future Leaders United for Change.

# Alliance Spotlights



How can we ensure we are meeting community needs and supporting everyone the way they want to be supported?

**By listening to community and supporting their solutions.**

In the last few weeks, Palm Health Foundation, BeWellPBC and the Healthier Together communities have partnered to collect resident stories through Resident SenseMaker, an online storytelling collection tool with robust analytics. Expressing how COVID-19 has impacted their lives, the community has already shared more than 500 stories of struggle and worry, perseverance and hope.

Teams of resident leaders have then come together in “sensemaking” meetings to identify emerging themes and community ideas for addressing needs highlighted in the stories.

A rapid response team has been established to outreach to residents providing particularly distressing stories and link them to a cadre of community supports for those who provided permission for contact.

If you are a resident of Palm Beach County, we would like to hear from you. Share your story by clicking [here](#).

**By asking professionals what they are experiencing during COVID-19 and how their ability to offer help has been affected.**

BeWellPBC has just released the Systems SenseMaker tool to capture the perspective of staff from direct line to administrators. Professionals across the county will be prompted to tell a story of how coronavirus has influenced their ability to meet the needs of the community they serve.

Please consider participating in this story collection tool and encouraging staff across your organization and provider networks to do the same. Click [here](#) to share.

The tool can be accessed and shared through the Systems Sensemaker.

Whether a resident sharing the impacts you’ve experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic or a professional providing resources to the community, The tool is anonymous and should only take 5-7 minutes to complete.



The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is working with state and community partners to serve Floridians during the current public health emergency.

For more information and updates regarding DCF’s economic self-sufficiency programs—such as the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) – mental health treatment facilities, and more, visit [www.myflfamilies.com/covid19](http://www.myflfamilies.com/covid19).

In this time of stress and uncertainty, DCF would also like to share a few important reminders and resources:

- With children being home from school and spending most of their time inside, mandatory child abuse

reporters, like teachers, are not seeing them on a regular basis. If you know or suspect that a child is being abused, please do your part and contact the Florida Abuse Hotline immediately at 1-800-962-2873.

- If you find yourself in a domestic violence situation, you can call the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-500-119. There are agencies and organizations throughout the state are actively working and ready to support survivors and their families.
- The United Way has 2-1-1 community helplines throughout Florida, with agents taking calls 24/7. They are available to talk to people in crisis – including those having suicidal thoughts. They also have access to a directory of local services, ranging from emergency shelters to counseling.



Palm Beach County Youth Services Department's Summer Food Service Program, in partnership with the Palm Beach County Library System, began pre-summer feeding at six sites throughout Palm Beach County on April 27. In addition to distribution sites in West Palm Beach, Greenacres, Belle Glade, Pahokee and South Bay, on May 12, meals distribution sites opened in Lake Worth and Boca Raton.

Pre-summer feeding served 16,674 meals to youth and families in throughout Palm Beach County and the western communities. In addition to receiving meal kits, families also received Youth Services coloring books, healthy coping skills brochures and age appropriate books provided by the Libraries.

"In a short period of time, our team was able to create

a menu, work with the food vendor, and obtain waivers that allowed us to open up eight food distribution sites. Youth Services and the Library staff sprang into action and distributed over 16,000 meals in only five weeks! It was a lot of work but the payoff was definitely worth it. We are looking forward to transitioning into Summer Feeding and opening more sites," said Valerie Messineo, senior program specialist.

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) ensures that school-aged children, 18 years and under, continue to receive nutritious meals beyond the school year and during the summer months (June - August) as well as times of emergency school closures.

Mental health services provided by the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department's Residential Treatment and Family Counseling (RTFC) Division are available to the public via telemental Health.

**Education & Training Center** – psychologists and doctoral trainees offer family therapy, individual therapy, and parent training services through Zoom Video telemental Health. Bilingual therapists (Spanish & Creole) are available. To schedule an intake appointment, please call 561-233-4460. The Education & Training Center also provides free weekly remote trainings on a variety of mental health topics.

**Highridge Family Center** – currently accepting applications for future residents. Intake appointments and weekly family counseling sessions, in addition to virtual individual therapy and parental support, are ongoing via telemental Health. To schedule an appointment, please call 561-625-2540.

**Family Violence Intervention (FVIP)** – court diversion program is accepting cases referred from the State Attorney's Office. FVIP team of master and bachelor-level staff provide case management, case planning, referral advocacy and mediation telehealth services via Zoom Video.

**Youth and Family Counseling (YFC)** – currently providing assessments, family and individual therapy, parent education and school-based behavioral health services via Zoom Video. Telemental Health services are offered in English, Spanish, French and Creole. To schedule an appointment, please call (561) 242-5714.





# Scholarship Recipients Announced



Friends of Youth Services and Palm Beach County, Inc. has announced this year's Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship recipients. The scholarship provides \$1,000 per year, distributed over two semesters to each recipient and is renewable for up to four years, depending on degree or certificate program.

The application process included 55 reviewable applications. Following an online application process, finalists were selected based on application submission, letters of recommendation and written essay. Scholarship eligibility was limited to residents of Palm Beach County.

During a virtual award ceremony held on April 30, recipients received formal recognition of scholarship in front of family and friends. Those who attended the virtual ceremony had the opportunity to celebrate this year's recipients by providing words of encouragement.

Congratulations to the 2020 Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship recipients:

Beatrice Mattison-Santos is a graduating senior at Palm Beach Gardens High School in the pre-med academy. She plans to attend Palm Beach State College majoring in biological science, and aspires to have a career in medical research. Beatrice is a mentor, tutor and has taken leadership roles in community organizations. Belief in herself includes a belief in giving to others.

Katia Mejia-Lagos, a graduate of John I. Leonard High School, is currently enrolled at Palm Beach Atlantic University, pursuing a bachelor of science in nursing. Katia is also an active member of Future Leaders United for Change.

Katia has been a reading mentor for second and third graders, tutored middle school students, and painted houses in neighborhoods in need. At the Nicklaus Children's Hospital where Katia volunteers, it was said that she "provided patients with unexpected joy during their hospital stay."

The scholarship is in memory of Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson. Alyssa was committed to living a self-sufficient life and discovering her passions. Her determination to pursue education, earning undergraduate and graduate degrees, enabled her to live consistent with those commitments. She hoped others could have support to achieve their goals. The Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship is dedicated to those who need a little extra assistance in achieving education goals.

## Collective Impact Pledge

Birth to 22 is committed to a common agenda, we are an alliance of community partners that engages and aligns existing coalitions, networks, systems and youth-serving organizations as well as connecting families, community members, and most importantly, young people.

Take the *Pledge*, be listed as a Collective Impact Partner

of the Birth to 22 Alliance to improve outcomes from cradle to career for all Palm Beach County children, youth and families, and will provide support as provided on the attached.

Click [here](#) to join us in envisioning and creating a culture that values our youth from cradle to career.



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