



Dear Child Advocates,

*It is with mixed feelings of both happiness and sadness that I wish Tammy Fields, my Birth to 22 Alliance co-chair, farewell and well wishes on her promotion to Assistant County Administrator. I have been honored to work side by side with Tammy for nine years. Our community has changed significantly over that time, and it was with her leadership that we have accomplished great things through these years – while working alongside so many of you. I am happy to say that Tammy will remain connected and involved with our work.*

*Thank you, Tammy, for your dedication and passion to this Alliance.*

*I also would like to welcome my new B-22 co-chair, Elisa Cramer. Many of you know her from her years of service at the Department of Children and Families. Elisa is committed to community engagement, accountability, and serving our communities' children and families so that ALL children thrive. I have had the chance to work with Elisa on various projects over many years, and she will be a great asset to our mission moving forward. Welcome aboard, Elisa. I am excited to continue our work together.*

*Lastly, Elisa and I are thrilled to launch the upcoming Youth Master Plan! The planning team is in the process of organizing various events in which to share it with the community. We hope all of you will be available to attend at least one of the upcoming events. It will be a time to celebrate all the accomplishments thus far, which means celebrating all your efforts and dedication to the Alliance, and thanking the community for their time and engagement in creating this new Youth Master Plan.*

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

**Elisa Cramer**  
**Interim Director, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department**



# Birth to 22 United for Brighter Futures NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 | Issue 1 | April 2024

Birth to 22 Annual  
Taskforce Meeting

Upcoming Birth to 22  
Celebrations

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.

Share Feedback & Stories!

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

Contact us at, [psc-birthto22@psbcgov.org](mailto:psc-birthto22@psbcgov.org)

## Birth to 22 Hosts Annual Task Force Meeting

The Seventh Annual Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures Task Force meeting was held at the Clayton E. Hutcheson Agricultural Center on January 16, 2024. After being held virtually for several years, this in-person event hosted over 100 participants, including parents, family members, school representatives, students, community members, and agency representatives. The meeting was split into two sessions: a review of the previous year and an interactive discussion about the Youth Master Plan 2.0 draft.

As Birth to 22 enters its 10th year as a collective impact, Tammy K. Fields, Palm Beach County Assistant County Administrator, and Lisa Williams-Taylor, CEO of the Children’s Services Council (CSC) of Palm Beach County, highlighted the 2023 accomplishments as well as the major milestones achieved over the last 10 years. The task force meeting was also a transitional moment as Tammy accepted a promotional opportunity within the county. She was thanked for her contributions and passion towards Birth to 22 and introduced the new Birth to 22 Steering Committee Co-Chair, Elisa Cramer, who is Interim Director of the Youth Services Department (YSD).

The task force meeting showcased two youth-led workgroups, Future Leaders: United for Change and the Girls Voice Task Force, which have hosted community service

projects, engaged youth in skill-building and leadership initiatives, and planned events throughout 2024.

The Youth Master Plan (YMP) serves as the blueprint for setting priorities and taking action to improve the lives of children and youth in Palm Beach County. Before the Task Force meeting, the registered participants were provided a draft of the “YMP 2.0,” an update of the plan based on community input and data. During the second session of the Task Force meeting, Jeanette Gordon, an independent consultant, facilitated discussions to gather feedback on the draft, including the strengths, gaps, and overall comprehensiveness of the proposed plan.

The new YMP focuses on youth transitioning to adulthood with strategic priority areas of mental health, economic access, and education while highlighting safety. Once finalized, this plan will guide the next three years of services and funding opportunities for the Birth to 22 Alliance.

Learn more about the Birth to 22 Alliance at:

<http://pbcbirthto22.com/>.

To stay connected with Birth to 22 and upcoming events and initiatives, follow Birth to 22 on Facebook and Instagram @Birthto22.



## Upcoming Birth to 22 Celebrations

The Birth to 22 Youth Master Plan is being updated and will be introduced to the community through a series of Community Celebrations, starting in April. The first event to include a Birth to 22 showcase is the Black Gold Jubilee on April 13, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Torry Island Campground, 5000 W Canal St. N, Belle Glade. A presentation about Birth to 22 and the priorities noted in the updated Youth Master Plan will feature youth at the Palm Beach County Youth Summit on April 27, 2024 at Palm Beach Lakes Community High School. For more information and to register for the Palm Beach County Youth Summit, go to: <https://www.pbcgov.org/pbcyouthsummit/>.

## Future Leaders and Girls Coordinating Council Season to Give

Birth to 22: Future Leaders and Girls Coordinating Council (GCC) kicked off the holiday season by collecting over 100 donated gifts in partnership with Digital Vibez and their annual Jingle Jamz, where Digital Vibez distributes gifts to youth in underserved communities within Palm Beach County. In addition, the team collected over \$150 in gift cards to distribute to teens in Palm Beach County; these gift cards are to teen-friendly stores such as Five Below, Target, Amazon, and more. Teens are sometimes overlooked when it comes to toy drives, so this made way for GCC and Future Leaders to give back to all youth in Palm Beach County.

On December 8, 2023, Future Leaders gathered at Youth Services to wrap the gifts donated while enjoying a hot cocoa bar and holiday tunes provided by Digital Vibez. The youth

who participated received community service work hours to report to their schools. Future Leaders is a youth council in Palm Beach County that provides a platform for the voice of the youth of Palm Beach County, creating leaders through self-motivation, determination, and education.

As the group focuses on high school students to age 22, they provide a place and a space for these young adults to connect, engage, and inspire bi-monthly on the third Thursday at 50 S. Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL 33415.

Stay connected with Future Leaders on Instagram @futureleadersunited for meeting updates and community service opportunities. For more information, please contact JaVona Wilson at 561-242-5705 or [jwilson@pbcgov.org](mailto:jwilson@pbcgov.org).



## Tribute to Edna Runner



Article and Photo Credits:

<https://www.palmbeachpost.com/story/news/local/jupiter/2023/11/17/edna-runner-dies-at-age-72-led-jupiter-area-tutorial-center-limestone-creek-at-risk-students/71625281007/>

The Edna W. Runner Tutorial Center in Jupiter’s Limestone Creek neighborhood has helped thousands of students since its founding in 1986.

JUPITER — Edna Runner, a longtime Jupiter-area resident who ran a nonprofit education center that bears her name, died Friday at age 72.

“We are thankful to God that (Edna) was full of laughter and was showered with love by hundreds of the people whose lives she has impacted,” the Edna W. Runner Tutorial Center

said in a prepared statement posted on its social-media pages. “Edna was a community trailblazer who believed the children of West Jupiter deserved an opportunity to live the American dream.”

“While we are shocked and saddened by this devastating news, we know that it is our responsibility to continue her legacy and make sure that the Edna W. Runner Tutorial Center flourishes and is accessible for generations to come.”

Edna Runner’s tutorial centers helped thousands of kids in Limestone Creek area. Runner provided after-school care to thousands of at-risk students in Limestone Creek for 37 years. She said some of her favorite moments were her reunions with former students later in their lives. Runner served as executive director of the center since 2002, but her ties date back further to the Limestone Creek neighborhood north of Indiantown Road that the center calls home.

## Rippel Podcast Features Unsung Steward Tammy Fields

Tammy K. Fields, Assistant County Administrator, was recently a guest on The Rippel Foundation’s Unsung Stewards podcast where she discussed the Palm Beach County Youth Services Department and Birth to 22’s work with youth. The conversation explored how trauma-informed services, centering youth voices, and encouraging individualism and creativity are ways to build resilience and belonging.



The podcast also highlighted how critical it is for young people to be included in the process of designing solutions to end youth homelessness. The podcast was truly a youth and young adults discussion, including Northwest Youth Services. The podcast started streaming on December 7, 2023. Stream the episode here: <https://rippel.org/podcasts/> [rippel.org]

## Birth to 22 at National Mentoring Summit

### Birth to 22 Ensuring Safety & Justice Mentoring Subcommittee joins National Mentoring Summit

On January 24th, Palm Beach County mentoring advocates took on Capitol Hill Day 2024 bringing the spirit of mentorship to the forefront during National Mentoring Month. These advocates took the opportunity to talk about the impact of mentoring on America’s youth, engaging in discussions with policymakers to support bills, policies, and funding crucial for the mentoring cause. Some told heartfelt personal stories of how mentoring positively impacted their life and stories of the youth in our county who are thriving because of mentorship. The day was full of connection, inspiration, and learning.

Curious to join the movement and be a part of shaping the future of mentorship? You can plan to attend the next year’s Capitol Hill Day and Mentor National Summit! Visit [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org) [mentoring.org] to learn more about how you can get involved and make a difference in the lives of young people across the nation.



# Mentor Mile Walk

Credit:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile/100068839542909/search/?q=mentor%20mile>

On December 10, 2023, United Way of Palm Beach County hosted its Mentor Center's First Annual 1-mile Walk/5K Run at John Prince Park. This family-oriented event was filled with fun activities, including a bounce house, fire truck, vendors, music, food, and much more.

The United Way was grateful for every volunteer and guest who helped make the Mentor Center's First Annual 1-mile

Walk/5K Run such a memorable event! So many participants went the extra mile for mentoring by engaging in several fun family friendly activities and visiting partner agency tables to learn how they can change a life by becoming a mentor.

Shoutout to Palm Beach County Food Bank, Wawa, Digital Vibez Inc., Ruth & Norman Rales Jewish Family Services, Young Men of Distinction, Fuller Center, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc., Rob Auguste, PT, DPT, Community Partners of SFL, and Palm Beach County Fire Rescue for partnering with United Way for this amazing event!



# Unlocking the Potential of AI

Team members from Palm Beach County Community Services and other representatives from various organizations attended the Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to Transform Health and Human Services workshop at Keiser University on January 5, 2024. This workshop provided insight into the importance and benefits of AI in the health and human services fields and into the implementation of AI technologies in call centers, case management, and more!

County Commissioner Gregg Weiss and Palm Beach County Mayor Maria Sachs provided brief remarks on the implementation of AI in Palm Beach County.

Naman Chaurasia, Senior Manager of Deloitte Consulting

LLP; Mohammad H. Fasihi, Managing Director of Deloitte Digital; Archie Satchell, Chief Information Officer for Palm Beach County; and Taruna Malhotra, Deputy Director for Palm Beach County Community Services, were panelists for this discussion. They discussed in detail the possible implications of the implementation of AI in the health and human services fields. There also was time set aside for questions.

Dr. James Green, Director of Palm Beach County Community Services, provided remarks on the benefits of artificial intelligence and the impact of federal government regulations and policies on artificial intelligence.

**UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL:  
HARNESSING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO  
TRANSFORM HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Jan. 5th, 2024  
1 PM to 4 PM

Keiser University  
2085 Vista Parkway  
West Palm Beach, FL

**PANELISTS**

**Archie Satchell**  
Chief Information Officer (CIO), Palm Beach County

**Mohammad H Fasihi**  
Managing Director, Deloitte Digital

**Naman Chaurasia**  
AI Nerve Center Leader, Deloitte Digital

**Taruna Malhotra**  
Deputy Director, PBC Community Services Department

**INFORMATION GATHERING TOPICS:**

- Understand the key applications and benefits of AI in health and human services.
- Gain insights into the practical implementation of AI technologies in call centers, application processing, case management, and client life skills.
- Network and exchange knowledge with industry experts and peers in the field of AI and health and human services.
- Explore strategies to overcome challenges and ethical considerations when integrating AI.

SCAN ME [QR Code]

Register Here

For event information, please contact James Green 561-355-4702 jgreen1@pbcgov.org

Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners  
Maria Sachs, Wyatt, Mike G. Slatko, Mike Vayns, Gregg K. White, Michael A. Samit, Nani Woodard, Sara Sabin, Mark Samit

Palm Beach County COMMUNITY SERVICES  
Creating Possible. Better. Stronger. Together.



## County Declares Dr. Joaquín García Day at High School Dedication Ceremony

Dance, step, cheer, choral and band performances along with inspiring speeches from diverse student and community leaders, as well as a Palm Beach County proclamation designating January 12, 2024, as Dr. Joaquín García Day, made for a memorable official dedication of Dr. Joaquín García High School.

Principal Oscar Otero spoke about the community effort that went into bringing to fruition the newest high school in nearly 20 years, both in terms of the physical building and the overall school family. Students proudly spoke about the inclusive school culture and the excitement they have to be part of the first Palm Beach County high school to be named after a Hispanic community leader.

Dr. Xavier Garcia, husband of the late Dr. Joaquín García, was one of many District and community leaders who

spoke about how Dr. Joaquín García was a fierce advocate for education and equity for all children, especially those who are underserved. Palm Beach County Commissioner Gregg Weiss read the county proclamation of Dr. Joaquín García Day and presented copies of the proclamation to Dr. Joaquín García’s family, Principal Otero, and School District administrators.

School Board Chair Karen Brill, Board Vice Chair Barbara McQuinn, School Board members, the Hispanic Education Coalition, Greenacres Mayor Joel Flores, Congresswoman Lois Frankel’s office, and many more community leaders, staff, family members and friends took part in the ceremony. La Vuelta Palm Beach and the Hispanic Education Coalition presented a check to the Dr. Joaquín García High School Fund and announced there will be a second annual La Vuelta bicycle riding fundraiser event later this year.



## PIT Count

The Palm Beach County Youth Services Department joined several youth- and family-serving organizations to participate in the annual Point in Time Count, which was organized by the Palm Beach County Community Services Department in coordination with multiple departments. Stationed at Vita Nova during the evening, Assistant County Administrator Tammy Fields and Youth Services Department Interim Director Elisa Cramer helped organize Vita Nova’s clothing closet, which provides donated attire at no cost to teens and young adults served by Vita Nova. They also engaged in conversations with young adults who shared their personal experiences of housing insecurity and suggestions for capturing accurate counts of youth and young adults who are unsheltered.

The count occurred on Thursday, January 25, 2024, from 11 am-11 pm and Friday, January 26, 2024, from 4 am-12 pm.



An Annual Census To Collect Data On The Needs Of People Experiencing Homelessness In Our Community



# Alliance Spotlights

## Taxes Filed Free Campaign for households who had incomes of \$75,000 or less in 2023



**United Way  
of Palm Beach County**

United Way of Palm Beach County's Taxes Filed Free Campaign gives taxpayers with low-to-moderate incomes in-person and online options to prepare and e-file their tax return quickly, safely and for free.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is the in-person option. The program, which entered its 21st year on January 18, 2024, is an invaluable service to the community. All volunteer preparers are IRS trained and

certified. There are 16 VITA sites located throughout the county. No appointment is necessary.

The MyFreeTaxes program is the online option, allowing taxpayers to prepare and file their own return. If you have any questions while preparing your return, assistance is available from IRS-certified VITA volunteers via a toll-free helpline or web chat.

To learn more about these programs, the services offered, and where the sites are located throughout Palm Beach County, visit [www.TaxesFiledFree.org](http://www.TaxesFiledFree.org) [[taxesfiledfree.org](http://taxesfiledfree.org)] or the website at [www.unitedwaypbcc.org](http://www.unitedwaypbcc.org) [[unitedwaypbcc.org](http://unitedwaypbcc.org)] VITA site locations with days/times of operation can also be learned by calling 211 or using the QR code on all printed materials.

**If you earned \$75,000 or less in 2023**  
**You may be eligible for up to \$7,430 in Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

**TAXES FILED FREE**  
TaxesFiledFree.org

**United Way of Palm Beach County**

**FILED FOR YOU**  
Tax preparation provided at several county-wide sites. No appointment needed.

**FILED YOURSELF**  
MyFreeTaxes.com - It's simple, secure and support is available via a toll-free helpline or web chat.

All options are supported by IRS-certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteers.

Scan the QR code for a list of site locations, or call 2-1-1.

## Communities In Schools of Palm Beach County celebrated at the Bank of America Community Celebration

On January 31, 2024, Communities In Schools of Palm Beach County (CIS) was celebrated for its partnership at the Bank of America Community Celebration. CIS has hosted the Bank of America Student Leaders internship program for 15 years. The students hail from many diverse backgrounds. The paid internship provides real-world experience with nonprofits while learning valuable skills. Students: Aditya N. - Williams T. Dwyer High School, Jacob L. - A.W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts, Majorie J. - Atlantic Community High School, Ellis D. - Oxbridge Academy.





### Graduate Visits Communities In Schools of Palm Beach County

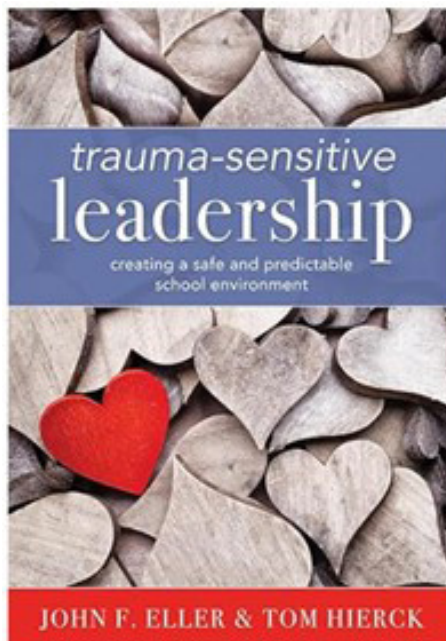
The Communities In Schools (CIS) of Palm Beach County model came full circle on January 19, 2024. A Lake Worth High School graduate (Jose O.) stopped by to visit his CIS graduation coach (Mr. Gomez) and thank him for his support after completing his military basic training. The Communities In Schools model: Assess individual needs, set goals for graduation, provide integrated student support, monitor and adjust as needed, evaluation to graduation.



### School District Emphasizes Trauma-Informed Care

The Department of Behavioral and Mental Health of the School District of Palm Beach County has taken the lead in the introduction and implementation of trauma informed care throughout the District in accordance with the Strategic Plan Initiative C.2b. Actions that have been initiated to move this work forward include a Leadership Book Study (*Trauma-Sensitive Leadership - Creating a Safe and Predictable School Environment* by John F. Eller and Tom Hierck), providing training and support in Reducing the Impact of Secondary Trauma for District Mental Health Professionals, School Police, and Educators, the creation of a Trauma Informed Educator Professional Development Badge, and a quarterly Trauma Informed Care District Collaborative that focuses on how trauma affects the brain, foundational aspects of trauma, and trauma informed practices and strategies in schools. Congratulations to the School District of Palm Beach County in pioneering this work in the state of Florida!

*Environment* by John F. Eller and Tom Hierck), providing training and support in Reducing the Impact of Secondary Trauma for District Mental Health Professionals, School Police, and Educators, the creation of a Trauma Informed Educator Professional Development Badge, and a quarterly Trauma Informed Care District Collaborative that focuses on how trauma affects the brain, foundational aspects of trauma, and trauma informed practices and strategies in schools. Congratulations to the School District of Palm Beach County in pioneering this work in the state of Florida!



### The Talented Teen Club



It is with immense joy and gratitude that we thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to attend our 18th Annual TTC Awards of Excellence Gala. We could not have done it without the support and hard work of both those who earned these special awards and those

who made this event possible.

To our award recipients, your dedication, hard work, and passion serve as a beacon of inspiration for others, encouraging them to pursue their dreams with the same unwavering dedication and enthusiasm. You make us proud! How special is it that our own TTC Alumni were able to serve as our Emcee and presenters? A living testimony of how lives are changed because of TTC.

It is our goal to plant seeds of self-esteem in everyone who walks through the door because we believe that is the foundation upon which you can build a successful life. To our generous supporters, sponsors, and donors, your

commitment to providing us with the resources needed to nurture the talents of our young people is invaluable in helping us achieve the success of our mission and this event. Your support serves as a vital foundation for the growth and development of future leaders and achievers!

The Annual TTC Awards of Excellence Gala was a testament to the power of collaboration and community support, and we are truly grateful for the unity and enthusiasm that permeated the room. Now, let us carry that spirit of inspiration and encouragement forward. Together, we are planting seeds of self-esteem that will inevitably grow into a forest of empowered individuals ready to make a positive impact in the world because they believe they can!

As always, every year the counter goes back to zero on January 1 and we have to plant more seeds to keep the mission going. We ask if you have it in your budget to make a contribution at this time or whenever it suits you, it is so appreciated and so crucial for us to continue this important work. There is no gift too small whether it be time, talent or treasure.

<https://the-talented-teen-club.springly.org/collect/description/338943-o-give-the-gift-of-hope> [the-talented-teen-club.springly.org]



### Milagro Star Center



In 2024, Milagro Center's music programs have never been larger or livelier. At the STARS Center, which serves Kindergarten-5th grade, students can now take part in Milagro Center's Junior Drumline, led by Tim Jean.

Students have begun their sessions on performance, drumline basics and working together, all leading up to their performance at the 2024 Delray Beach 4th of July Parade.

At the JR Teen and Teen Leadership Programs, students are joined by country singer Tim Charron, hailing from

Nashville, Tennessee. Tim will guide students as they learn how to write their own lyrics, song composition and stage presence.

Both classes are a great benefit to students performing with Milagro Center's Teen Ensemble Band, which has had notable performances at Old School Square, Capital One Café, Goodstock Festival and others across South Florida with more coming in 2024.

Milagro Center continues to use the power of music and art to empower Delray Beach youth in after-school and summer camp programs. These, tied with a mix of academic support, mentoring and living values lessons, allow students to build a strong sense of self-worth and skills that set them on a path to a productive future.





### Community Partners of South Florida Mentoring Programs

Community Partners of South Florida (CPSFL) provides quality school-based mentoring programs for Palm Beach County youth. Mentoring connects youth with caring adults who are committed to their social and emotional development. The goal of the mentoring program is to build protective factors, foster a sense of connectedness, and support social-emotional learning through a supportive, positive adult mentor/mentee relationship. In January 2024, Mentoring Program Director, Tina McNutt, along with her team: Millie Rodriguez and Dolores Rodriguez, attended the National Mentor Summit in Washington, DC. Ike Powell, Director of Outreach & Community Programming at Palm Beach County Youth

Services Department, and long-time supporter of the mentoring programs at CPSFL, was in attendance as well. CPSFL’s mentoring team had the opportunity to attend evidence-based workshops, experience inspirational keynote speakers, and share about the great strides being made in Palm Beach County. The team also had a chance to meet with national elected officials, such as Senators Rick Scott and Marco Rubio, as well as Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick.

Community Partners’ programs are based on Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™, and mentors/mentees meet and participate in supervised, structured activities at school-based sites during traditional after-school hours. The programs are currently offered at four schools in Palm Beach County: Highland Elementary School, Lake Worth Middle School, Pioneer Park Elementary School, and Pahokee Elementary School. For more information on the mentoring programs at CPSFL, or to volunteer, please contact Tina McNutt at [tmcnutt@cpsfl.org](mailto:tmcnutt@cpsfl.org).

