

CHRISTIAN FAMILY SERVICES FAMILY TIMES

VOLUME XLVII ISSUE: 3



AUTUMN 2025

From the desk of
Mandy Harrell
Executive Director



Christian Family Services recently held its first birth mother retreat, entitled Equip Her, at CampusView Church in Gainesville. The retreat was a one-day event facilitated by Kimberly Quinn, LMHC, MEd, EdS. It was a beautiful time of connection and healing for the women who attended. I personally was impacted by the bravery and compassion shown by the attendees, the efforts and skills of our facilitator, and the generosity and support of the volunteers who helped make the retreat possible. Kim interned with CFS while a student at the University of Florida and returned to lead the retreat. She faithfully and prayerfully prepared for many months. Throughout the day Kim guided discussions on grief and coping, led group mindfulness activities rooted in Scripture, encouraged creative expression and reflection, and utilized other evidence-based therapy practices. The attendees left with practical tools and coping strategies for their healing journeys, with emphasis placed on self-care, self-compassion, and self-reflection. At the end of the day, those who attended were asked to describe how they were leaving the retreat. The responses included: "encouraged," "hopeful," "lighter," and "less apprehensive." At CFS, we aim to support mothers beyond the decision to place their children for adoption. We recognize that it is a life-changing decision even if it is the right decision. We plan to hold more retreats in the future, and we believe that the opportunity for connection is important and meaningful for birth mothers. Thank you to all who prayed for and helped with our first retreat.

We have continued to support expectant mothers through our benevolence ministry. These women are referred to us by clinics and pregnancy centers and hotlines, and they have urgent social needs that provide opportunities for counseling on their options. Over the past few months, we have helped several expectant women experiencing food insecurity by providing grocery gift cards. We also helped keep utilities running for one woman who lost time at work due to a miscarriage. Many of these women are parenting other children, and social needs create stress in the already-challenging situation of unplanned pregnancy. We feel blessed to be able to meet some of these social needs and contribute to better outcomes for both mothers and babies. Your generous support makes this possible.

We also had the joy of finalizing an adoption last month. Finalizations are a particularly meaningful ceremony for me, because in my prior legal work I was trying to rescue children from dysfunctional and dangerous situations without a clear path to a stable future. Now my time in the courtroom is spent solidifying that stable future for children through adoption. While adoption continues to be our primary focus, we have learned that supporting women and their families through different stages of life (even decades after placing a child for adoption) is a meaningful and Christ-centered endeavor. Thank you for coming alongside us in this work.

Sincerely,

Mandy



GOODBYES AND WARM WELCOME

We wish you the best Angie

We thank Angie Smallwood for her work with Christian Family Services. During her 17 months of service, she worked directly with clients and attended 7 placements. Shown on her final day with CFS, she attended the finalization of Lucas Donald.

We wish Angie the best as she continues to serve children and families with Better Together in Columbia County.



Welcome Tammy

I am Tammy Nibert, the new caseworker at Christian Family Services. I began my journey with CFS in October and have been learning about the programs we offer. My previous social work experience includes working for the Guardian ad Litem Office in the Eighth Judicial Circuit in Florida, as a Community Corrections Worker in Kansas, and as an Employment Preparation Specialist in Kansas.

I have three adult children, Nicolette, Brandon and Chelsea, as well as two sons-in-law, Greg and Bob. My husband, Sean and I have resided in Gilchrist County for 20 years. I am excited to see how I can serve people through CFS.



Recent FINALIZATION



Lucas Donald received his new last name on October 9, 2025. Lucas joined his mom and dad, **Matthew & Erin**, and Judge Denise Ferrero for a photo following the finalization proceeding.



Matthew's excitement following Lucas' finalization could not be contained! The process of adoption is completed following months of paperwork, training, and other preparations to be qualified to adopt. This young family can now focus on being a family.



EQUIP HER

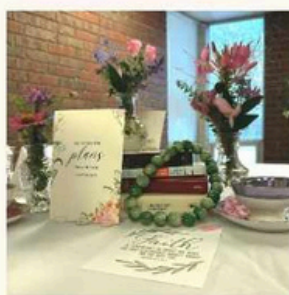
A Retreat for Birth Mothers



A group of birth mothers was provided a safe place to share, learn, and grow. Kimberly Quinn, LMHC, MEd, EdS, facilitated this faith-based event at CampusView Church. Kim created a workbook for participants to complete as they were guided through discussions on healing, mindfulness, emotional resilience, and coping strategies.

Gifts for the women and supplies for the event were provided by individual volunteers as well as Academy Certification Exams, LLC. Volunteers also provided an elegantly decorated room and food for the event.

This time together gave the women connections;
they exchanged contact information and desire to meet again!



GETTING THE WORD OUT About CFS

Mandy has been busy sharing about CFS with churches in Gainesville, Florida. *SonLife Church of Christ* and *CampusView Church* invited Mandy to speak at their Sunday morning services. *Creekside Community Church* hosted a women's brunch where Mandy was the speaker.

At each gathering, attendees learned about this ministry to women and their children, and about adoption as an option for women in Florida.



Mandy at SonLife



Mandy with CampusView's
Lead Evangelist, Cash McHargue

GRATEFUL



Each year, Christian Family Services depends on volunteers to help in a variety of ways.

This newsletter relies on volunteers to prepare it to be mailed out. Our bookkeeper is a volunteer, and several volunteers supported our recent Birth Mother Retreat. Our Game Day Parking fundraiser relies on many volunteers to serve during games. Last, but not least, members of the Board of Directors are also volunteers.



Thank you to our amazing volunteers!

MEMORIALS

July - October 2025

Vernon Hendricks

Thomas & Holly Amerson
Francis & Ellen Annunziata
Don & Donna Brooker
Curtis & Cynthia Davis
Donald & Lois Hendricks
John & Debra Hendricks
Leo & Beatrice Hines
James & Dolores Jenkins
Harriett Maines
Don Turk
Elyot Xia-Zhu
Ropes & Gray, LLC
University City Church of Christ, Gainesville, FL

Maria Napp

Linda Case

Fenter Northern

Martha & Ronald Honaker
Ray & Emily Sherer
University Church of Christ, Montgomery, AL

IN HONOR OF

July - October

Charlotte Bell

Rogers & Cherise Bartley

Jerry & Debbie Callens

Jannett Frison

Jacqueline Collins Birthday

Jimmie & Barbara Brunson

Richard & Martha Whitehead

Bob & Carolyn Harrell

Christian Family Services
SO VERY INCREDIBLY
thankful *grateful*
UNBELIEVABLY
blessed
because of donors like you!

Donate to CFS from the workplace, a giving platform, or an IRA qualified charitable distribution.



Merck Gives Back
Volunteer • Contribute • Connect

frontstream™



ebay FOR CHARITY



Staff

Mandy Harrell, Executive Director
Donna L. Brooker, Ministry Assistant
Tammy Nibert, Caseworker
Becky Barclift, Bookkeeper
Katy Horton, Social Media & Graphic Design



NETWORK 1:27
GENESIS • 1 SAMUEL • JAMES

Board of Directors

Jimmie Brunson
Jackie Collins
Sherri Daume
Holly Garvey
Ramon Osejo
Rick Worley

Christian Family Services • A Christian Alternative • 2720 S.W. 2nd Ave • Gainesville, FL 32607 • 352.378.6202

info@cfsfl.org | 352-378-6202 (Gainesville) | 850-893-9983 (Tallahassee) | 904-268-9670 (Jacksonville) | 352-351-9994 (Ocala)

www.cfsfl.org

Gratitude changes every Thing

Acknowledging the
good that you already
have in your life is the
foundation for all
abundance.

Eckhart Tolle

"What if, today,
we were grateful for
everything?"

Charlie Brown

*Thou hast, with ever watchful eye, looked
down on us with holy care,
and from thy storehouse in the sky, hast
scattered plenty everywhere.*

Paul Lawrence Dunbar

MY INVOLVEMENT

My Gift Today: to meet immediate needs. ☐ One Time ☐ Monthly

☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1000 ☐ Other _____

☐ Automatic Monthly Giving: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card ☐ Debit Card

☐ This donation is sent in memory or honor of: _____

City/State/Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____

☐ Check Included Signature _____ Date _____

☐ Credit Card: MasterCard/Visa Credit Card # _____

_____ CVV _____ Signature _____

Christian Family Services
SO VERY
thankful
INCREDIBLY
grateful
UNBELIEVABLY
blessed
because of donors like you!

Christian Family Services, Inc. is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit. All gifts are tax deductible.