



Friends of  
**JOSHUA**  
**HOUSE**  
Foundation, Inc.

# Joshua House CONNECTION

[WWW.FRIENDSOFJOSHUAHOUSE.ORG](http://WWW.FRIENDSOFJOSHUAHOUSE.ORG)

SUMMER 2024

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# FOJH – FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reflecting on our journey with Joshua House and its profound impact on foster children's lives, it's crucial to chart a path forward. We've been a refuge, offering safety, compassion, and healing, but our work relies on ongoing support. As I approach a milestone birthday, I'm acutely aware of the next decade's significance, particularly for Joshua House.

Looking ahead, we've identified six key objectives:

- 1. Expanding Outreach and Services:** We aim to extend our reach beyond our gates, partnering with local agencies, schools, and communities to support vulnerable children who may be overlooked.
- 2. Holistic Programs:** Recognizing that healing requires comprehensive care, we'll enhance our programs to address various needs, including counseling, education, recreation, and vocational training.
- 3. Embracing Technology for a Positive Impact:** Realizing one of the most serious issues facing parenting and caretaking of foster teens is technology and social media. Yet - Leveraging technology to improve opportunities for the youth we serve and enhance service delivery is the cornerstone of our future endeavors. We will do this by prioritizing thoughtful and strategic approaches.
- 4. Community Engagement and Growth:** Building strong community ties is vital for fostering a supportive environment. We'll collaborate with local leaders and stakeholders to advocate for policies protecting children from abuse.
- 5. Sustainability and Growth:** To ensure our long-term sustainability, we'll diversify funding sources, forge strategic partnerships, and explore growth opportunities, including facility expansions and staff training.
- 6. Empowering Survivors:** Our mission is to empower foster children to break the cycle of abuse. Through ongoing support and advocacy, we'll equip them with the tools needed to thrive and advocate for change.

In envisioning this future, I am filled with hope and determination, but Joshua House will need your continued support. Together, we can be a beacon of light, offering safety, support, and the chance for abused children to reclaim their childhoods. Thank you for your unwavering dedication. Let's work tirelessly towards a future where every child feels safe, loved, and empowered.

Warm Regards,



DeDe Grundel



**DeDe Grundel**  
*Executive Director*



# FOJH – FROM THE CHAIR



**Tracy Falkowitz**  
*Chair*

Summer is finally approaching! As we wind down the school year, many of us will plan vacations, bike ride with our children, visit theme parks or spend days in the outdoors with family to herald this arrival. When I reflect on my childhood summers, I am reminded of relaxing, carefree days.

However, for the children of Joshua House, relaxing, "carefree" is not a familiar concept. The children of Joshua House did not have a loving, supportive and safe environment until arriving at Joshua House. Days were spent in fear, pain and worry. Now, this summer provides an opportunity to allow them to be children and experience the joys and pleasures of

summer while continuing to work on life and job skills to prepare for life after foster care.

Our campus will, once again, be filled with foster children in search of hope and healing. On campus therapists will guide their healing journey. Joshua House staff will provide activities and services to fill the long, warm days with fun, adventure and new experiences to discover themselves and the joy of childhood.

None of these experiences can happen without you, our valuable donors. Your generosity has allowed us to purchase and restore the beautiful Joshua House campus. Our needs are great to continue to help children as we have since 1992. These children are worth it. Unfortunately, most of these children need to learn self esteem and love of self. For many, these activities are the first display of caring that they have ever known and the first time that people care about how they feel. Please assist us in providing much needed joy and childhood adventures for the children during this time and for the future.

*Tracy M. Falkowitz*

## HONOR

### • GIVEN BY

Jay Cullinane

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- Lysette & Mark Ketterer

In honor of our friends

- The DeBartolo Family

Diana Zubrowski

- Joanne Sullivan

## MEMORY

### • GIVEN BY

Alberto Alejo

- DeDe Grundel
- Christopher C. Lykes

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Robert LaFave

- Chris LaFave Painting LLC.

Payton Marie Lyle

- A friend of the family

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- Linda Heatherly

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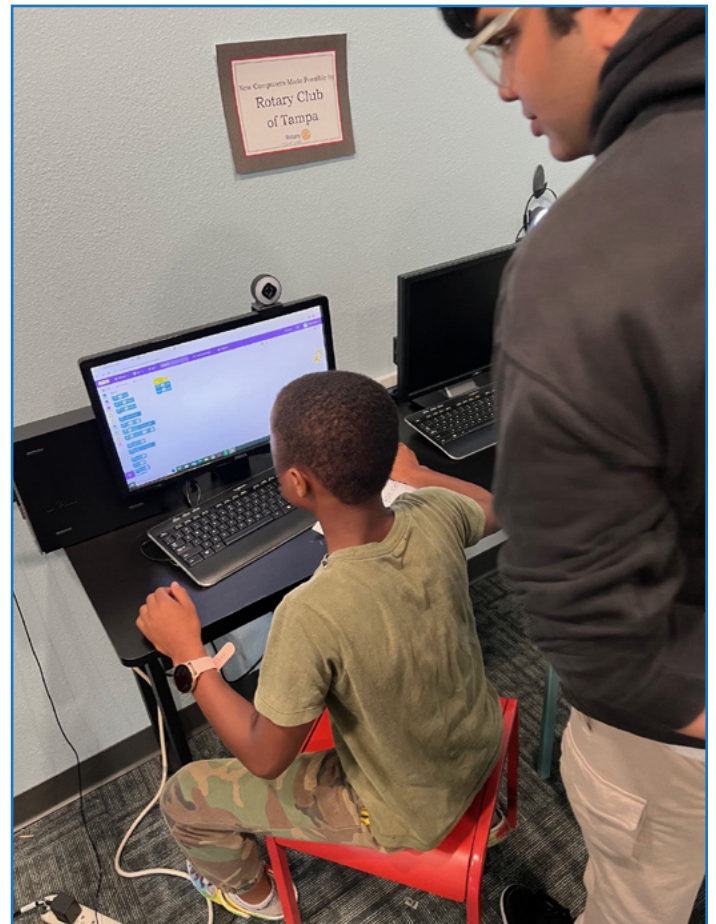
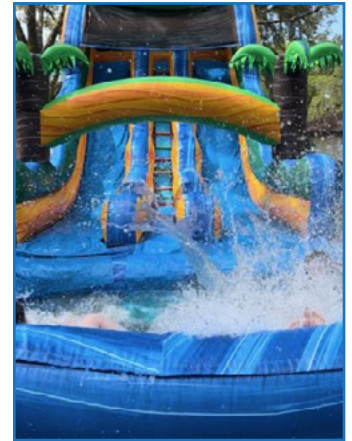
October 1, 2023 through May 1, 2024

# LIFE ENRICHMENT

by LAURA CALCO

As the school year winds down and summer approaches, our Life Enrichment Program at Joshua House continues to foster personal growth for the children in our care. Through diverse activities, we aim to create a positive and fun environment while helping them expand their horizons and approach life meaningfully. Our goal is to empower them to explore their identities, dream big, engage in new experiences, and thrive in a supportive environment.

Many of our children are at the age where they are privileged to decide who they will become, and which values will serve them best on their journey through life. Because of our collaboration with numerous community members and organizations, our children have become better versions of themselves, which is a remarkable testament to our mission.



Collaborating with the community, we've seen remarkable transformations in our children, thanks to activities like technology workshops, Chain Breakers with Grace Family Church, and animal therapy sessions with Paws for Friendship, Highland Canine Connects, and Honey's Mini Therapy Adventures. The Rotary Satellite Club of New Tampa After Hours in conjunction with The New Tampa Rotary Club and USF Rotaract's hosted an amazing Field Day, complete with a climbing wall and ice cream truck for our children. And what would we do without our USF Tutors and Reading Buddies? We're grateful for the support of our community partners and look forward to further enriching the lives of our children this Summer. If you're interested in hosting an activity, please contact Laura Calco, our Life Enrichment Program Manager, at [LCalco@joshuahousetampa.org](mailto:LCalco@joshuahousetampa.org) or (813) 723-0945.







# PIN PARTY 2024

by DANNIELLE ROQUE



230 community members came together for a fantastic day of bowling at Pin Chasers, presented by Geopoint Surveying. Groups loading up all 40 lanes and boy, did we have a blast! With your incredible support, our community raised over \$15,000 to support the foster children at Joshua House and in the community.

## HERE'S A GLIMPSE OF THE FUN:

**Bowling Battles:** Strikes, spares, and gutter balls galore! With a mix of fierce competition and those using bumper gutters, the sounds of laughter and cheer floated across the alley.

**Toe-Tapping Tunes:** This year featured cosmic bowling. And after turning the lights down and lowering the iconic Pin Chasers disco balls, music filled the air, adding rhythm to our fundraising feat.

**Artistic Adventures:** Faces became canvases as our talented face painters at Strictly Entertainment transformed smiles into masterpieces allowing our kids to become their favorite hero, or most colorful butterfly!

**Tasty Treats:** Fun food fueled our fun-filled day, keeping us energized and ready for more. It's hard to beat cheese fries and pizza!

**Prizes to love:** Door prizes, lane prizes, silent auction items and more made it a day to be excited for! From tablets to gift cards to kids' art and zoo tickets, there was something for everyone at this year's Pin Party.

And let's not forget our star of the show, 8-year-old Maverick, who was not only celebrating his birthday, but stole hearts as our charming (and passionate) emcee, bringing laughter and joy. As the day drew to a close, we couldn't help but look ahead to next year's event. The Joshua House kids are already counting down the days.

Thanks to your unwavering support, and our incredible sponsors, we're making a real difference in the lives of foster children, one pin at a time.





# 2023-2024 BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE

Friends of  
**JOSHUA HOUSE**  
Foundation, Inc.

Our Back-to-School Drive aims to equip children with the tools they need for success in school and life. We need backpacks, folders, and all the “usual” school supplies, and funds for extracurricular activities like—field trips, football games, homecoming, proms, and our Earn<sup>2</sup>Learn program.

Sadly, over 50% of foster children don’t graduate high school, and foster teens are typically 2 years behind academically. We aim to change that at Joshua House!

Our Earn<sup>2</sup>Learn program motivates foster youth to stay in school and improve their grades with incentives. It’s not just about rewards; it’s about teaching the value of education for a better life.

The new school year begins August 12<sup>th</sup> in Hillsborough County—AND WE NEED YOUR HELP!



## How can you help?

On the back of this flyer is a list of school supplies and clothing that are needed the most.



## Our Amazon Wish List:

[www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3SUITQAJQ9NN3?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3SUITQAJQ9NN3?ref=wl_share)



## Want to help, BUT don't want to shop?

Make a donation to our Back to School Drive by scanning the QR code, or go to to: [bit.ly/2024BackToSchool](https://bit.ly/2024BackToSchool)

**\$300** buys school clothes, one pair of shoes and school supplies for one child.

**\$250** buys school clothes and one pair of shoes for one child.

**\$50** pays for a backpack and school supplies for one child.

Or host a Back-to-School Drive at your office or in your neighborhood!

Please deliver any donations by **Monday, August 5, 2024** to one of our Drop-off Locations.

**P.O. Box 2451, Lutz, FL 33548 | [www.friendsofjoshuahouse.org](https://www.friendsofjoshuahouse.org) | (813) 406-5694**

**For questions regarding the Back-to-School Drive: (813) 406-5694**

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR CHILDREN! FOJH, REGISTRATION #CH34145, IS REGISTERED WITH THE STATE UNDER THE SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS ACT. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. APPROVAL DOES NOT IMPLY RECOMMENDATION

## DROP-OFF LOCATIONS:

### FLORIDACENTRAL CREDIT UNION

All Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco Branch Locations  
[www.floridacentralcu.com/connect/locations-atms.html](https://www.floridacentralcu.com/connect/locations-atms.html)

### JOSHUA HOUSE DONATION CENTER

1515 Michelin Ct  
Lutz, FL 33548  
M-F: 10am – 4pm or by appointment  
(813) 406-5694

### HAND & STONE MASSAGE AND FACIAL SPA

13129 North Dale Mabry Highway Suite E  
Tampa, FL 33618  
M-F 9am – 10pm  
S/S 9am – 9pm  
(813) 425-1713

### HAND & STONE MASSAGE AND FACIAL SPA

1664 Bruce B Downs Boulevard  
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544  
M-F 9am – 10pm  
S/S 9am – 9pm  
(813) 229-8700

### SCRAPORIUM

16518 N Florida Avenue  
Lutz, FL 33549  
(813) 269-7946  
M/W/F: 10am – 3pm  
T/R: 10am – 6pm  
Saturday: 10am – 5pm





# SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

- **Backpacks** – large, sturdy backpacks for teens (*this is the most needed item*)
- **2-Pocket Folders with prongs** – plastic – variety of colors: purple/red/yellow/green
- **Spiral, 100-page notebooks:** Yellow/red/green/purple/blue/black (*wide and college ruled*)
- **3 and 5 subject Spiral Notebooks** – all colors
- **White-out tape**
- **Scotch tape**
- **Thumb drives** – Small GB
- **Copy paper**
- **Ear buds** (*for test taking – not wireless*)
- **Dry Erase Markers**
- **Red, black & blue pens**
- **Sticky-Notes**
- **3-ring binders** – heavy duty – 1 1/2" & 2" – white with clear pocket front
- **3-ring pencil pouches**
- **Highlighters** – variety of colors
- **Markers** – Crayola preferred
- **Calculators**
- **Pre-sharpened pencils**
- **Colored Pencils** – 12 packs
- **Filler Paper** – Wide & College Ruled
- **Graph paper** – notebooks & 3-hole punched
- **Glue sticks**
- **Index Cards**



## PERSONAL UNDERCLOTHES FOR TEENS:

### GIRLS:

- **Junior and ladies sized bikini, hipster or boy brief style underwear S–XL**
- **Bras/Sports Bras:** See Amazon Wish List for specific needs
- **Socks—ladies sizes, any color or style**

### BOYS:

- **Boxer or boxer briefs, Men's sizes: S, M, L & XL**
- **Black socks in men's sizes—any style—Nike or Adidas preferred**

## GIFT CARDS FOR TEENS TO SHOP!

Gift cards help teens make personal choices about their wardrobe. Gift cards for Ross, Marshalls, TJ Maxx or area malls are a huge help!



FRIENDSOFJOSHUAHOUSE.ORG





# HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE

by Nanci March



RIPA & Associates not only filled specific wishes for our kids, but also donated a storage unit for the holiday season to give our elves extra space to sort gifts!

Santa & his elves were thrilled with all the help that they received with holiday gifts this year! Over 400 Wish Lists were not only checked twice, but filled, because of the generosity of our wonderful community! Groups and individuals gave from the heart, shopped for the hard-to-find items, and made cash donations so our elves could shop and deliver gifts all season long! Thank you so much for making foster children in our community feel holiday joy!



Waste Connections ensured holidays smiles by donating over 40 bicycles for foster children - the specific size, style & color that each child requested!





# CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS BENEFIT SHINES LIGHT ON THE FUTURE OF JOSHUA HOUSE

by DINA BUSCIGLIO SHERIDAN,  
*Chairperson of the Child Abuse Awareness Benefit*

On April 11, 2024, nearly 400 guests gathered at Armature Works for a futuristic themed luncheon to support a community effort that is mission critical: the Future of Joshua House. Now in its 32nd year, the Child Abuse Awareness Benefit has inspired and moved guests every year, but this year was one of the most anticipated and well-received due in large part to two impactful speakers. Matthew Michini was honored with the prestigious Founders Starlight Award. His acts of service, including securing funding to replace HVACs on the entire property of Joshua House as well as connecting Joshua House with contractors to help with vital infrastructure repairs, reminded us all that every single one of us can make a small connection that can result in a big difference.

The highlight of the event was the impactful speech delivered by Dr. Terry Morris, a distinguished NASA engineer who we were honored to have as our keynote speaker. Dr. Morris' words resonated deeply with the audience as he shared his own personal life experience with devastating abuse, neglect, and abandonment by his biological family. He credited help and care from a group home very much like Joshua House to his ultimate success throughout high levels of schooling and into his career at NASA.

Executive Director for Friends of Joshua House, DeDe Grundel, in her heartfelt presentation, shed light on the stark realities faced by abused children in Hillsborough County and across Florida. Her words underscored the vital role that a special place like Joshua House plays in the lives of abused and neglected children, offering them not just shelter, but also healing, guidance, and the promise of a brighter future.

In the words of Dr. Terry Morris, "Only because there was a place for me to go, for people to show me kindness, that made the difference in my life. I was at the precipice. I could have chosen to go either way...it was that there was a place like Joshua House."

As we reflect on the success of this event, let us carry its spirit forward, continuing to shine a light on the darkness of child abuse and support the work of Joshua House to help create a world where every child is cherished, valued, and safe from harm. And let us remember that the future of Joshua House depends on the support of our own community to be able to continue the important mission of keeping safe the deserving children who need us the most.





# JOSHUA HOUSE GALA— NIGHT OF ESPIONAGE

**SUBJECT:** Joshua House Gala, Night of Espionage

**DATE:** 05.03.2024

**TIME:** 18:30

**LOCATION:** Private Collector Garage of Fred & Laura Lay

**OBJECTIVE:** Raise funds to support the foster children at Joshua House and in the community.

**MISSION OUTCOME:** Success!

**SPECIAL MEMO:** Thank you to our sponsors and guests.

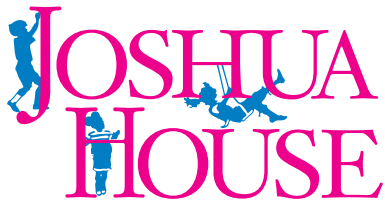
Over a hundred guests gathered inside the private garage of Fred and Laura Lay of Construction Services Inc. of Tampa to solve riddles, play casino game favorites, and raise funds for the children at Joshua House. Guests were decked out in sunglasses, top hats, special coats, and their Friday night best as we enjoyed music from the beloved crew, Jazz DaddyO's. From delightful hors d'oeuvres with international flare to vintage and luxury cars, including the infamous James Bond Aston Martin of course, guests enjoyed a night of intrigue. All while supporting the mission of Joshua House to increase opportunity and improve wrap around resources to help our children heal from experiences they never deserved.

A special thank you to this year's hosts and event committee: Fred and Laura Lay (Hosts), Marshall Slaton (Committee Chair), Vernon Ellinger, Connie Gage, Ashley Salabarria, Anita Shuler, Crystal Whitescarver.



Hillsborough  
County Florida





Published by Friends of Joshua House Foundation.  
A private, non-profit organization supporting  
Joshua House and abused, abandoned, and  
neglected children throughout Tampa Bay.

P.O. Box 2451  
Lutz, FL 33548



## SAVE THE DATES

**MONDAY JANUARY 20, 2025**

(Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

8:00 am - 5:00 pm

**MJH GOLF CLASSIC**

TPC TAMPA BAY

5300 W Lutz Lake Fern Rd, Lutz, FL 33558

**SUNDAY FEBRUARY 23, 2025**

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**PIN PARTY**

PIN CHASERS VETERANS

5555 W. Hillsborough Ave., Tampa, Florida

**THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2025**

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

**CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS BENEFIT**

THE GATHERING ARMATURE WORKS

1910 N Ola Ave, Tampa, FL 33602

Check our event website to see monthly added events [friendsofjoshuahouse.org/events](https://friendsofjoshuahouse.org/events)

➔ [FriendsofJoshuaHouse.org](https://FriendsofJoshuaHouse.org)

 **Friends of Joshua House Foundation, Inc.**

 **(813) 406-5694**

**HELP US GO GREEN!**

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please send your email address to: [nmarch@friendsofjoshuahouse.org](mailto:nmarch@friendsofjoshuahouse.org)