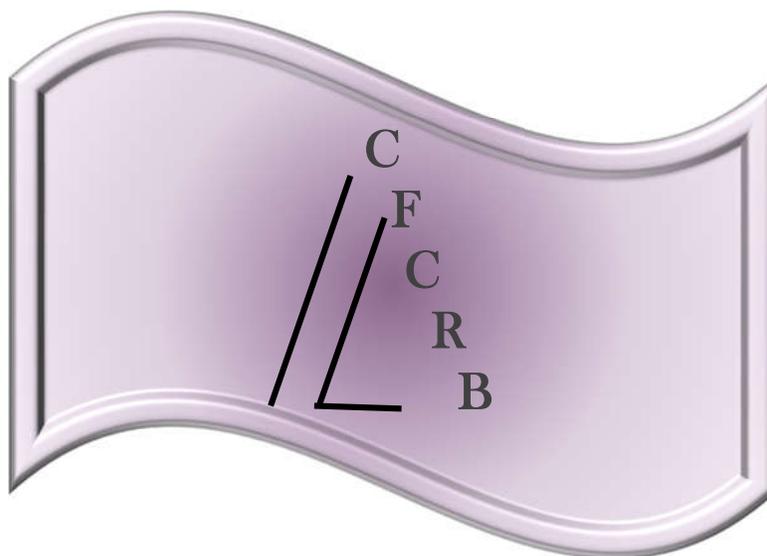
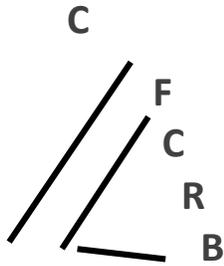


CITIZEN'S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD INC. COLLIER COUNTY 2019 ANNUAL REPORT





Citizen's Foster Care Review Board Inc.

CFCRB Inc.
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Board of Directors

Officers

Thomas J. Wedlock
President
Lori Cohen
Vice President
Fernand Billon
Secretary
Robert Nossen
Treasurer

Directors

Ann Campbell
Honorable Ted Brousseau
Kenneth I. Shevin
Doug Campbell

May 29, 2020

Dear Friends:

The Citizen's Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB) was founded in 1992 as a non-profit 501c3 organization. It was based on a belief that Panels of trained, involved, inquisitive and diverse citizens could provide the extra time and attention needed to support children who are in the foster care or dependency systems. This year the CFCRB directly assisted over 390 children that are being monitored by the Department of Children and Families. *Yes, even in "Paradise", there are children in peril and in harm's way.*

Collier County has an ever-expanding Dependency Court docket and that's where the CFCRB comes in. The CFCRB supports the Court by conducting Judicial Reviews on a rotational basis with the Judges. Cases often include issues of neglect, substance abuse, mental illness, and domestic violence. Our Panels hold parents, caregivers and agencies accountable to correct the problems affecting these families or pursue other permanent options for the children.

The CFCRB receives no governmental funding and must rely on fundraising and grants to support our mission. We are excited to report that the Ray Foundation believes in the work we do and offered us a matching grant in 2019. Donations to the CFCRB help us protect and advance the interests of abused and neglected children who come under the jurisdiction of Collier County's Dependency Court.

We understand you get many requests for donations, but we hope that these children are at the top on your list! *We simply can't do it without you.* Your support will make a real, lasting impact on the lives of those who are in need. Please, make your donation now. Go to <http://www.cfcrbcollier.org/> and click the "Donate" button.

Thank you so much for your continued support and friendship.

With sincere gratitude,

Thomas J. Wedlock
President
Citizen's Foster Care Review Board Inc.

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MISSION STATEMENT

THE CITIZEN'S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD'S (THE "CFCRB) MISSION IS TO PROTECT AND ADVANCE THE INTERESTS OF ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS IN COLLIER COUNTY WHO COME UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE DEPENDENCY COURT BY PROVIDING WELL-TRAINED VOLUNTEERS TO OVERSEE THEIR SAFETY, STABILITY AND WELL-BEING.

2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

President	Sgt. Tom Wedlock
Vice President	Lori Cohen
Secretary	Fernand Billon
Treasurer	Robert Nossen
Director	The Honorable Judge Ted Brousseau
Director	Kenneth I. Shevin
Director	Ann Campbell

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As stakeholders in the dependency court system we share a common goal---to preserve families and protect children. Guided by core values of impartiality, fairness and integrity, the thirty-one volunteer panel members of the Citizen's Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB), conducted 248 judicial reviews involving 392 children in Collier County. The number of Cases and children served increased by 3% over 2018. Marking our 27th year, we look forward to continued service to the community and the court.

Pursuant to Florida Statute 39.702, the CFCRB submits its annual report to the 20th Judicial Circuit Chief Judge, Michael McHugh. It is also shared with our Dependency Judges, State and local child welfare agencies and related stakeholders within the community.

This annual report summarizes the data collected by the CFCRB panel members during judicial reviews in a single year and compares it to previous years. The primary cause of entry into the system remains substance abuse. In-Home placements and placement of children with relatives increased slightly in 2019, while licensed foster care placements decreased.

As changes and improvements in programs are made over the years, challenges remain. Stakeholders and the community must continue to work together to find solutions. This is where the CFCRB is in a unique position to serve as a link and voice to the community.

THE WORK OF THE CFCRB

We were established in 1992 under Florida law through the efforts of Dependency Judge Ted Brousseau. Citizen panels were established to allow more time for review of dependency cases, thus allowing judges to focus on more complex cases. Since 1992, the Board has been an important and valued community partner with the Collier County Dependency Court by providing these panels of trained volunteers to perform Judicial Reviews.

Acting under the authority of the Dependency Court, panels of 5 well-trained volunteers conduct judicial hearings to evaluate the parent's progress towards fulfilling the tasks required for resolution of their case, and the return of the children to their home, or another permanent placement. To accomplish this task, our Panel Volunteers contributed over 2,500 volunteer hours in 2019.

Based on the information received at these hearings and calling upon their backgrounds and experiences, the panels make recommendations to the Dependency Court Judge regarding the safety of the children and the progress of the family toward case resolution. Upon acceptance by the Judge, the recommendations become fully enforceable court orders.

Pursuant to Florida law, a judicial hearing in a dependency case must be held at 3-to-6 month intervals to determine whether it is advancing in an expeditious and appropriate fashion. At the discretion of the Dependency Court, this hearing may be held before a CFCRB panel. Panels hear cases at least every six (6) months and again at around nine (9) months. This allows for greater continuity and familiarity with the cases. At 12 months, the case goes to the Dependency Judge for a permanency hearing. Hearings are held in the Collier County Courthouse in a judicial setting with the panel acting as "eyes-and ears" of the court.

Prior to each hearing, panel members review the case documents provided by the Court. The parents, the Department of Children and Families, the case manager, caregivers, Guardian ad Litem, the children, and the attorneys representing the parties to the case attend the hearing. Each person present is questioned by, and entitled to be heard by the panel. The children who are the subject of the proceeding are required by law to be present. They are offered the opportunity to speak with the panel, out of the presence of the other parties, thus encouraging open communication.

The panel examines the safety, education, enrichment activities, physical (medical/dental), psychological and emotional needs of the children. When a need is identified (for example, medical treatment, tutoring or counseling), the panel, working with the other parties, seeks to identify a potential remedy, which is then included in its recommendations to the court. The goal of the panel is to reduce the instability that dependency instills in the children and their families by encouraging the team of people involved to move effectively and efficiently to create a permanent solution for the children so their lives can move forward in a safe and stable environment.

At the end of the hearing, the panel makes recommendations to the Court. Once reviewed and approved by the Court, those recommendations become an order of the Court that must be complied with by all parties.

Studies show that the sooner children are returned to a secure and stable living environment with adequate support services, preferably with their families, the better they fare.

The negative impact of a dependency proceeding on children and, indeed, the entire family is undeniable. The longer the proceeding and the related instability, the greater the negative impact. It is widely acknowledged that children who linger in dependency situations suffer short and long-term detrimental effects, which may be demonstrated in psychological, social, physical, emotional and/or educational behaviors.

By helping to avoid unnecessary delays in the dependency process, the panels help to ensure the safety and well-being of the children while expediting permanent placements. The panels bring the objective voice of the community to the dependency process. In addition, by bringing the experience, thought processes and intellectual efforts of five trained members of the community to bear on each hearing, a comprehensive analysis of each case will result. At the same time, the panels ensure the accountability of all participants in the proceedings, and afford all parties - but, particularly the children - the opportunity to be heard.

Finally, by assuming part of the burden of the Dependency Court, the panel's work provides the judicial process the ability to focus more time and attention on each case in pursuit of an optimal outcome.

Our vision remains steadfast in its commitment to children, young adults and their families in the Dependency system---*That every child has the most meaningful possible outcomes; that the court reach timely resolutions; that every child and young adult lives in a safe, secure, healthy and permanent home and that families are reunified whenever possible.*

2019 STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

The CFCRB is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization administered by its Board of Directors with the assistance of a Steering Committee. It is the responsibility of the BOD to administer the panels that perform the judicial reviews.

The following objectives were met in 2019:

- ◆ Six in-service programs provided for panel members and other stakeholders
- ◆ Added three new Panel Members
- ◆ Panel members and Panel Chairpersons participated in on-going training
- ◆ Meetings with stakeholders; Camelot Community Care (CMO), Dependency Court attorneys and judiciary



FINANCIAL REPORT AND SUMMARY

CITIZEN'S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD INC			
2019 FINANCIAL STATEMENT			
INCOME			
Donations		5,779	
Grants		5,350	
TOTAL INCOME			11,129
EXPENSES			
Administrative		4,872	
Program:		3,268	
In-Service Trainings/Volunteer Appreciation	2,572		
Program Development	696		
TOTAL EXPENSES			8,140
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)			
			2,990



2019 DATA REVIEW

248 Judicial Reviews were conducted by CFCRB involving 392 children

Ages of Children in Judicial Reviews

Age Groups	No. of Children	% of Children
0 – 2	121	31%
3 – 5	95	24%
6 – 10	91	23%
11 – 15	62	16%
16 – 17	22	6%
18 +	1	0%
Total	392	100%

Types of Dependency Placements

Placement Type	No. of Children	% of Children
Relative Care	182	46%
In-Home Care	108	28%
Non-Relative Care	57	15%
Licensed Foster Care – Single Family Home	35	9%
Licensed Foster Care – Group Home	10	2%
Total	392	100%

REASONS FOR JUDICIAL INVOLVEMENT

Cause	2018 *Children Affected	2019 *Children Affected	Change
Substance Abuse/Parent	254	242	-13
Domestic Violence	141	181	39
Neglect	80	104	24
Mental Health/Parent	60	70	10
Incarcerated Parent	38	35	-2
Physical Abuse	28	34	7
Abandonment	26	27	1
Sexual Abuse	16	13	-3
Child Behavior	9	3	-6
Deceased Parent	8	5	-3
	660	714	54

* Cases can involve multiple reasons for Judicial involvement.

Children ages 0-2 continue to be the largest grouping by age involved in the judicial system. The 3-5 and 6-10 age groups share the second highest grouping. 72% of children were placed in Out of Home care, compared to 84% in 2018. Substance abuse and domestic violence in the home remain the primary reasons for judicial involvement. With substance abuse at epidemic proportions, the parent's case plan tasks are carefully reviewed to ensure that the appropriate support services are being provided and that all "reasonable and appropriate efforts" are made to reunify the family.

GOALS AT CONCLUSION OF JR – HISTORICAL DATA *

Goals at Conclusion	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change %
Reunification	76	42	114	110	113	78	127	144	
	17%	14%	26%	25%	31%	25%	35%	37%	2%
Adoption	82	91	78	99	85	106	64	72	
	19%	30%	18%	22%	23%	34%	18%	18%	0%
Concurrent	77	64	134	110	68	85	90	108	
	18%	21%	30%	25%	19%	27%	25%	27%	2%
MASP** (Never Removed)	91	38	58	12	46	20	20	14	
	21%	12%	13%	3%	13%	6%	5%	4%	-1%
MASP** (Post Placement)	90	51	45	81	34	12	32	43	
	21%	17%	10%	18%	9%	4%	9%	11%	2%
Perm. Guardianship	13	10	5	12	12	1	17	4	
	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	0%	5%	1%	-4%
Trans. To Ind. Living	0	0	3	19	4	2	6	3	
	0%	0%	1%	4%	1%	1%	2%	1%	-1%
APPLA***	10	10	7	4	3	8	5	4	
	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	0%
Yearly Totals	439	306	444	447	365	312	361	392	

* These figures are representative of each year's collection of data – not on the conclusion at the end of a Case.

** Maintain and Strengthen with Parent

Goals at the Onset and Conclusion of a Judicial Review *

2019 Goals	Onset Goal No. of Children	Conclusion Goal No. of Children	Change	% of Change
Reunification	166	144	-22	-13%
Adoption	70	72	2	3%
MASP (Never Removed)	13	14	1	8%
MASP (Post Placement)	43	43	0	0
Permanent Guardianship	1	4	3	300%
APPLA	3	4	1	33%
Transition to Ind. Living	1	3	2	200%
Concurrent	95	108	13	14%
Total	392	392		

* These figures are representative of 2019 data – not on the conclusion of the Cases

In 2019 the most frequently recommended goal was Reunification. The majority of the goal changes recommended by the Panel were from a sole goal of Reunification to a Concurrent Goal (Reunification with a secondary goal of Adoption or MASP). A parent's case plan is outlined at the beginning of the case. Sometimes the parent(s) do not comply with case plan tasks. In such a circumstance, a goal change may be necessary.

BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY

The chart below represents the number of instances a barrier was identified and to whom they were related. The primary barrier to obtaining permanency for children remains with the parents. Our goal in monitoring barriers to permanency is to identify ways in which, these barriers can be eliminated, so children do not linger in care, but achieve permanency quickly. Ensuring that appropriate support and services are provided to the parent is paramount to decreasing those barriers. Parents' non-compliance with case plan tasks -- *not taking ordered drug screens and not completing case plan tasks*, were the most frequently identified barriers. The panel works closely with all parties involved in a case to seek alternatives in eliminating barriers whenever possible.

Barriers	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Parents	306	180	276	328	339	298	285	227
	47%	28%	42%	50%	52%	46%	61%	58%
Children	99	105	130	143	94	47	29	21
	6%	6%	7%	8%	8%	6%	6%	5%
Legal	65	43	72	73	51	40	42	22
	10%	7%	11%	11%	8%	6%	9%	6%
GAL	44	19	29	27	50	27	54	40
	7%	3%	4%	4%	8%	4%	12%	10%
Caregiver	44	40	34	25	41	29	25	11
	7%	6%	5%	4%	6%	4%	5%	3%
Preparedness	40	19	56	51	29	29	12	19
	6%	3%	9%	8%	4%	4%	3%	5%
Placement	17	15	19	25	29	4	1	17
	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	1%	0	4%
Case Management	43	28	55	51	25	16	19	28
	7%	4%	8%	8%	4%	2%	4%	7%
Yearly Totals	694	489	715	775	710	526	467	385

GUARDIAN AD LITEM REPRESENTATION

The Guardian Ad Litem representation of our children is essential in the judicial review process. In 2019, 82% representation across the board has been reflective of the commitment of the Guardian Ad Litem office and their volunteers.

GAL REPRESENTATION							
Years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total JR Cases	202	268	281	236	207	241	248
GAL Assigned	164	225	247	223	203	236	205
% of Assigned GAL	81%	84%	88%	94%	98%	98%	82%
GAL Reports	163	225	246	219	200	236	204
% of GAL Reports Submitted	99%	100%	100%	98%	99%	98%	99%
GAL Attendance	102	194	205	216	194	238	203
% of GAL Attended	62%	86%	83%	97%	96%	98%	99%

The decrease in GALs assigned to 2019 cases is attributed to the increase of In-Home placements.

The CFCRB gives special thanks and acknowledgement to . . .

20TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT UNIFIED FAMILY COURT COLLIER COUNTY JUDGE:

We are grateful to The Honorable Judge Christine H. Greider for her support and guidance in 2019. Judge Greider supported us in many ways - chairing meetings, attending in-service trainings/meetings, offering constructive criticism and her general encouragement. She was instrumental in assigning bailiffs and providing a deliberation room during our proceedings, which provides a safer and professional environment for panel deliberations. We wish Judge Greider well and congratulate her on her retirement.

20TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT DEPENDENCY COURT CASE MANAGER FOR COLLIER COUNTY:

Mrs. Judy Groos oversees the CFCRB scheduling of cases, distribution of court files and documents to panel members and communications liaison between the judges, the board and steering committee. She provides a vital link between the dependency court and the service the CFCRB provides. We thank her for her tireless support and dedication.

2019 DONORS

Tom Becker
Ann Campbell
Lori Cohen
John & Lois D'Alimonte

Jan Eustis
Joe Jaffe
Rob Nossen
Donald Rauch

David Pfaff
Jim Schoenwetter
Tom Wedlock
Willie West
Carmen Wise

RAY FOUNDATION INC

Thank you for presenting the CFCRB with a 2019 matching grant and your continued philanthropic support.

2019 VOLUNTEERS

TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS, WHO CONTRIBUTED IN EXCESS OF 2,500 VOLUNTEER HOURS IN 2019, *THANK YOU* FOR YOUR PASSION, TIME, HARD WORK AND FOR CARING ABOUT OUR COLLIER COUNTY CHILDREN.

PANEL MEMBERS

Terry Abraham-Whalley	Lynn Drexler	David Pfaff
Michael Baumohl	Newton Hoillette	Don Rauch
Larry Birt	Raymond Hrovat	Jim Schoenwetter
Steve Brazina	Joe Jaffe	Ira Schwartz
Sandy Bruce	Cheri Kooiker	Ken Shevin
Ann Campbell	Roger Mann	Fran Shipman
Lori Cohen	Elaine Moorin	Elli Taylor
John D'Alimonte	Judi Mudarri	Harold Weeks
Lois D'Alimonte	Pattye Ormsby	Willie West
Jennifer DeVries	Cheryl Payne	Charles White
		Carmen Wise

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ann Campbell (Chair)
Michael Baumohl
Elaine Moorin
Don Rauch
Fran Shipman

VOLUNTEER TRAINERS

Joe Jaffe
Willie Wiltrud-West

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Claire O'Sullivan



“You pay attention to us, hug us and ask how our day was. We’ve suffered a lot. You’ve given us everything. You deserve to be called mom”

Foster Child

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION

Give a contribution including, in honor or in memoriam of a child, friend or family member.

As a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization, we are independent of the 20th Judicial Circuit Court and rely on contributions and grants from the community and businesses.

YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US TO CONTINUE OUR WORK. PLEASE LOG INTO OUR WEBSITE WWW.CFCRBCOLLIER.ORG TO DONATE OR MAIL YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

**CFCRB INC.
P O BOX 10746
NAPLES, FL 34101**

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