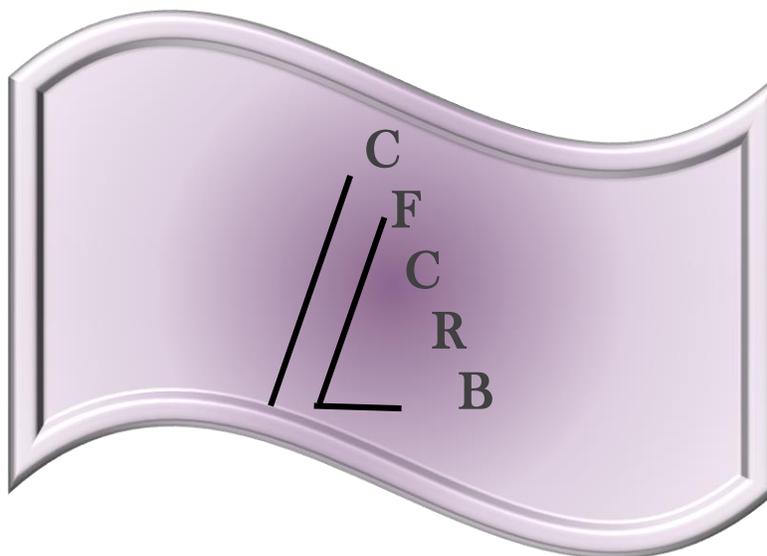
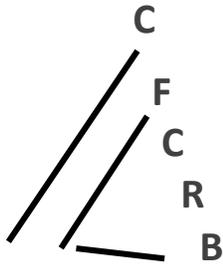


# CITIZEN'S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD INC. COLLIER COUNTY 2020 ANNUAL REPORT





## Citizen's Foster Care Review Board Inc.

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CFCRB Inc.  
P.O. Box 10746  
Naples FL 34101  
CFCRBCollier@gmail.com  
www.CFCRBCollier.org

### 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

July 8, 2021

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. The CFCRB directly assisted over 294 children that were being monitored by the Department of Children and Families in 2020. *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.

***2020 presented extraordinary challenges with the advent of COVID-19. At the Court's direction and request, the Panels pivoted to conducting Judicial Review Hearings via Zoom. CFCRB rose to the challenge and conducted all Hearings as requested utilizing this new technology.***

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 generous grant in 2020. 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.

It is truly an honor and a privilege to represent such a dedicated and determined group of volunteers devoted to a most valuable mission.

Thank you so much for your continued support and friendship.

With sincere gratitude,

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

## 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.

## 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

CITIZEN’S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD INC			
2020 FINANCIAL STATEMENT			
<b>INCOME</b>			
Donations		991	
Grants		25,000	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>			<b>25,991</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Administrative		5,522	
Program:		446	
In-Service Trainings/Volunteer Appreciation	251		
Program Development	195		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>			<b>5,968</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>			<b>20,023</b>

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As stakeholders in the dependency court system we share a common goal---to preserve families and protect children, even during the COVID-19 pandemic! 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 192 judicial reviews: 47 in the courtroom and 145 by zoom, involving 294 children in Collier County. The number of Cases decreased by 22% and children served decreased by 25% over 2019. Marking our 28<sup>th</sup> 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, followed closely by domestic violence. Children aged 0-2 and 6-10 years old are the predominate age range of children served by the CFCRB. In-Home placements and placement of children with relatives continued being the preferred placement.

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 close to 2,000 volunteer hours in 2020,

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.

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 are entitled to be heard by the panel. The children who are the subject of the proceeding are required by law to be present, unless otherwise excused by the Court. They are offered the opportunity to speak with the panel, 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.

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.*

## 2020 DATA REVIEW

- ❖ The CFCRB supports the Collier County Dependency Court by conducting Judicial Reviews on a rotational basis with the Judges.
- ❖ To accomplish this task, our Panel Volunteers contributed close to 2,000 volunteer hours in 2020. Marking **our 28th** year, we look forward to continued service to the community and the court.
- ❖ The Panel conducted **192** judicial reviews involving **294** children in 2020. **47** Cases were heard in the Courtroom. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the balance of **145** cases were conducted on Zoom.
- ❖ The number of Cases heard in 2020 decreased by **22%** and children served decreased by **25%** over 2019 figures.
- ❖ The primary cause of entry into the system remains substance abuse (**44%**), with the secondary reason being domestic violence (**35%**).
- ❖ **184** Children (**63%**) attended their Hearings. The Panel spoke privately with **28** children who were accompanied by their Guardian ad Litem.
- ❖ Children ages **0-2 (28%)** and **6-10 (27%)** were the largest groupings by age served by the Panels, followed by children aged **3-5 (23%)**, **11-15 (18%)** and **16-17 (4%)**.
- ❖ In-Home placements and placing children with relatives were the predominant placements in 2020.
- ❖ **63%** of identified barriers to obtaining permanency for children are associated 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 can achieve permanency quickly.
- ❖ The most frequent recommended goal in 2020 was Adoption followed by a Concurrent Goal (Reunification with a secondary goal of Adoption or Maintain and Strengthen Placement (MASP)).

*The CFCRB gives special thanks and  
acknowledgement to . . .*

**20<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT UNIFIED FAMILY COURT COLLIER COUNTY JUDGE:**

We are grateful to The Honorable Shannon McFee for his support and guidance during a challenging year.

**20<sup>TH</sup> 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.

**2020 INDIVIDUAL DONORS**

Ann Campbell, Willie West, Carmen Wise

**2020 CORPORATE DONORS**

Ray Foundation Inc



*Thank you for your generous donations and your continued philanthropic support.*

# 2020 VOLUNTEERS

TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS, WHO CONTRIBUTED CLOSE TO 2,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS IN 2020, *THANK YOU* FOR YOUR PASSION, TIME, HARD WORK AND FOR CARING ABOUT OUR COLLIER COUNTY CHILDREN.

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## 2020 PANEL MEMBERS

Terry Abraham-Whalley	Jennifer DeVries	Claire O'Keefe
Michael Baumohl	Lynn Drexler	David Pfaff
Larry Birt	Raymond Hrovat	Don Rauch
Steve Brazina	Joe Jaffe	Jim Schoenwetter
Sandy Bruce	Cheri Kooiker	Ira Schwartz
Ann Campbell *	Caren Langevin	Ken Shevin *
Doug Campbell *	Roger Mann	Fran Shipman
Lori Cohen *	DeAnne Miller	Elli Taylor
John D'Alimonte	Elaine Moorin	Harold Weeks
Lois D'Alimonte	Susan Mullin	Willie West
		Carmen Wise

*\* Board Member*

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### STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ann Campbell (Chair)  
Doug Campbell  
Michael Baumohl  
Don Rauch  
Fran Shipman  
Harold Weeks

### VOLUNTEER TRAINERS

Joe Jaffe  
Fran Shipman  
Harold Weeks  
Willie Wiltrud-West

### ADMIN. ASSISTANT

Claire O'Sullivan

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*If you can help a child, you won't have to spend years repairing an adult.*

## **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 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court and rely on contributions and grants from the community and businesses.

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**YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US TO CONTINUE OUR WORK. PLEASE LOG INTO  
OUR WEBSITE [WWW.CFCRBCOLLIER.ORG](http://WWW.CFCRBCOLLIER.ORG) TO DONATE  
OR MAIL YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO:**

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

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