Celebrating 20 Years of Sibling Foster Care!

Saving thousands of abused children from more trauma by keeping siblings together in one foster home, and by reuniting families or establishing permanency through adoption.

“Neighbor To Family works. It’s cost-effective, it’s better for the families, and the children spend far less time in the system compared to the national average.”

The late Gordon Johnson, Founder of Neighbor To Family, with his wife, Deloris.

2018 ANNUAL REPORT
The recent passing of my dear friend and mentor, Ackneil (Neil) M. Muldrow, II (previous Board Chair) was difficult. I will always remember his warm smile and being amazed by the number of people he knew and the stories he would tell. Neil was passionate about a number of organizations. However, he was most passionate about Neighbor To Family and he inspired that same passion in me. So, when Neil asked if I was willing to serve on the Board of Neighbor To Family, I knew that I had to be a part of an organization that was having such a positive impact on the lives of children. Ever since the very first meeting, I have tried to use my professional knowledge and expertise to further the mission of this great organization and will continue to do so.

I also remember my first discussion with our founder, the late Gordon Johnson, who saw the suffering experienced by siblings who had been separated while in foster care. Gordon had the vision to develop a model that would prevent this unnecessary and often detrimental severance of family ties. The model is one that remains successful twenty years later and is one that I am proud to stand behind as Board Chair. I look forward to witnessing the dynamic impact of the NTF model on the lives of children and families we serve. My vision is that someday the NTF model will be used across the globe, as an alternative to the current system of separation, while moving siblings from foster home to foster home as their family ties disintegrate.

I am humbled to have the confidence of my fellow Board members as I move forward as Chair. I find renewed encouragement whenever I hear the success stories of the families and see the high level of dedication from a staff of individuals who are truly committed to this work. I sincerely believe I was meant to be at least a small part of something so good. As for my dear friend and mentor Neil, I thank him for helping me to become a part of the Neighbor To Family, family. I miss him greatly, but I know he stands beside me and continues to guide me.
Amazing people make amazing things happen at Neighbor To Family and 2018 was no exception. On September 29, 2018 we celebrated our 20\(^{th}\) year anniversary gala at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Daytona Beach, Florida. This milestone occasion highlighted our achievement of serving children and families under the model our founder Gordon Johnson created. Over the span of our 20 years of service in child welfare, NTF has assisted over 14,000 children through the provision of professional sibling foster care, family preservation services, and adoptions. I was humbled by the outpouring support of our celebration.

The event had over 150 attendees and for many this was their first time really understanding what NTF strives to do each and every day by keeping siblings together. We were honored to have 29 sponsors that ranged from Benefactors to Friends. We also had over 75 silent auction items that sold. This event could not have been possible without our community partners and gala committee members. This was a memorable night that the community will not forget and raised over $30,000 for the children and families we serve.

We were also blessed throughout the year with many donations ranging from 17,000 diapers for the children of Georgia, backpack drives across the agency and children’s Christmas present donations totaling over $72,000 agency wide.

Finally, I want to extend my deep appreciation to the Board of Directors for their constant support of the agency. Their wise counsel is instrumental in bringing us to new heights as we continue to fight to keep siblings together and return them to permanency as soon as possible.

Here’s to an even more fruitful 2019!
Neighbor To Family celebrates 20 years of the sibling foster care revolution

The sibling foster care movement marked a major milestone in 2018 as 150 people took part in Neighbor To Family’s 20th Anniversary Gala Celebration, held Sept. 29 at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Daytona Beach.

The event highlighted NTF’s achievement of serving children and families under the model developed by founder Gordon Johnson, who passed away in November, 2015 at the age of 82.

Ashley Rhodes-Courter, MSW, (pictured at right) a guest speaker at the gala, told the audience she was placed in foster care at the age of three along with her little brother, who was a year-old infant.

Ashley would spend nearly 10 years in foster care, separated from her brother more often than not. Ashley said her brother never recovered from the separation and feelings of abandonment.

The event also included interviews with AJ and Nathaniel Seifert (pictured lower right), who were also placed in foster care, but with Neighbor To Family. The two brothers were able to stay together, in one home, while in NTF care.

The stories of Ashley, AJ and Nathaniel, as detailed below, gave the gala audience a rare, first-hand look into the foster care system and how it can sometimes cause children further trauma, or protect and heal them.

The event received an incredible outpouring of support from business sponsors, individual donors, and silent auction participants, said NTF President and CEO Tony Everett (see his column on page 3).

Thanks to Meredith McDonough, Orlando WESH-TV News Anchor; Ashley Rhodes-Courter, child welfare advocate; and Derrick Henry, Mayor of Daytona Beach.

Jennifer Stearns is named Foster Caregiver of the Year

When Jennifer Stearns joined Neighbor To Family as a Professional Foster Caregiver, her first group of siblings – five in all – had previously unknown behavioral problems and cognitive deficits, which included learning disabilities.

But through it all, Stearns was an example of, “grace under pressure,” and was named Foster Caregiver of the Year for the Georgia East programs.

“Ms. Stearns handled the case, as well as all subsequent placements, with patience, kindness and grace,” said Monique Brabham, Executive Director, Georgia East. “She goes above and beyond in ensuring the children are welcomed and feel like they are a part of her family.”

Currently, Jennifer and her husband are taking care of two siblings, and are in the process of adopting them.

Pictured above: Jamila Hankins (left), Vice President of Georgia and Maryland Programs, presents the Foster Caregiver of the Year Award to Jennifer Stearns.

Ashley spent 10 years in foster care, usually without her brother

Ashley Rhodes-Courter, MSW, a former foster child who became a foster parent and a leading child welfare advocate, was the guest speaker at Neighbor To Family’s 20th Anniversary Gala.

The author of two best-selling memoirs, “Three Little Words” and “Three More Words,” Ashley (pictured above) shared her story of being placed in Florida’s foster care system at the age of three, where she spent 10 years being bounced around to 14 foster homes, 44 case workers and a group home before she was adopted at the age of 12.

Her little brother, who was an infant when he was placed in foster care, was moved even more often due to his behavior problems. In some homes they were together, but she said most of the time they were separated.

Ashley eventually earned a master’s degree in social work, became a social worker, motivational speaker and advocate for foster children nationwide. She said her brother tried to dull his memories of abuse by using opioids and other drugs. In October, 2017, at the age of 29, he died of an overdose.

Ashley and her husband have two biological children, and also became foster parents to more than 20 children, eventually adopting one of them.

She had praise for the work Neighbor To Family does every day, preventing the trauma she and her brother experienced throughout much of their childhood.

Guest speakers at gala event share far different stories of life as a foster child

AJ and Nathaniel stayed together with NTF

The 20th Anniversary Gala included a special visit with former Neighbor To Family foster children AJ and Nathaniel Seifert (pictured), and their adoptive parents, Brian and Tracy.

The two brothers were placed into foster care with NTF in 2006. Their birth mother suffered from mental health and substance abuse issues, and was not able to do what was necessary to be reunited with her sons. AJ and Nathaniel were adopted by Brian and Tracy Seifert in 2008.

“The boys are both involved in the debate club, and have won awards, so they do a great job telling their story and why it’s important to keep siblings together,” said James Akins, Chief of Staff, who was their Case Manager at the time and helped arrange their adoption.

At the gala, the family was interviewed by emcee Meredith McDonough, WESH-2 News Anchor. The Seifert family also spoke to the NTF Board of Directors at their annual meeting in January. Their support of NTF includes serving as major sponsors through their company, B&B Business Services.

Thanks to our 20th Anniversary Gala sponsors for enhancing the lives of NTF foster children

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Sheilah Davenport is named NTF Board Chair

Sheilah Davenport J.D., M.S, RN, a compliance professional and legal/medical consultant with extensive experience as a hospital executive, has been named Board Chair for Neighbor To Family, Inc. She is the third Board Chair in NTF’s 20-year history (see her column on page 2).

A Board Member since 2013, Ms. Davenport’s promotion was announced at the 2018 Annual Meeting in January. She took over the position from Ackneil (Neil) M. Muldrow II, who had served for two years as Board Chair, and who remained on the Board as Finance Chair. Unfortunately, he passed away in October, 2018 (see article below).

Ms. Davenport is the CEO of Health Care Systems and Solutions Consulting in Baltimore. She has worked with the Office of the Inspector General for the Maryland Department of Health, and served as CEO for two behavioral health hospitals operated by the state of Maryland.

Ms. Davenport holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of Maryland School of Law, a Master’s of Science degree and a Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing from the University of Maryland School of Nursing.

Remembering the life of Ackneil M. Muldrow II

Ackneil (Neil) M. Muldrow II, past Board Chair and longtime Board Member for Neighbor To Family, passed away on Oct. 25, 2018 of heart failure. He was 80 years old.

A one-time civil rights activist, he began his career as a high-school teacher and then became a banker, starting a unique, public-private lending fund that provided financing as well as mentoring for minority business owners in the Baltimore area.

“A lot of people owe their successful careers to him,” said former Baltimore Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke, now president of the University of Baltimore, in a Baltimore Sun article. “You could say he was a financial godfather in the minority business community. His style was low-profile, but he was well known in his field.”

NTF President and CEO Tony Everett said he was touched to see how many community members attended his memorial service and were also supporters of NTF. Ackneil served on the NTF Board since 2005 and was Board Chair for two years, before handing the gavel over to Sheilah Davenport in January, 2018.

“Ackneil oversaw significant growth and the maturation of NTF, as well as guiding the Board through challenging times,” Everett said. “He was a mentor and leader that will not be forgotten.”

380 backpacks, supplies donated to NTF programs in Florida and Georgia

The Neighbor To Family programs in Jacksonville, Daytona Beach and Augusta were given generous donations of a combined 380 backpacks and school supplies for NTF foster children.

Our thanks to the sponsors: Merrill Edge in Jacksonville, O’Reilly Auto Parts in Daytona Beach and the Oasis Church in Augusta, Georgia.

Neighbor To Family 2018 Performance:

Median Length of Stay (in months)
- Florida: 13.7
- Georgia: 4.5
- Maryland: 7.6
- Total NTF: 5.3
- US Average: 22.0

Number of Placements While in Care
- Florida: 2.2
- Georgia: 1.0
- Maryland: 1.0
- Total NTF: 1.1
- US Average: 4.1

Percentage of Sibling Groups Kept Intact
- Florida: 90%
- Georgia: 99%
- Maryland: 100%
- Total NTF: 93.2%
- US Average: 50%

Everett honored for leadership

Congratulations to Tony Everett, Neighbor To Family President and CEO, who received the 2018 Georgia Conference on Children & Families Leadership Award (pictured).

This award is provided to individuals who have made outstanding contributions by supporting and leading their staff and agency in the state of Georgia.
2018 Funding Partners and Major Donors

Funding Partners
Georgia Department of Human Services
Maryland Department of Human Resources
Community Partnership for Children, Daytona Beach, FL
Heartland for Children, Bartow, FL
Neviser Charitable Foundation, Inc.
Family Support Services of North Florida, Jacksonville

Donors over $1000
Adams Cameron & Co., Realtors
Administrators Advisory Group
Ashley Home Stores
Augusta ENT
B&B Mechanical Services
Backyard BBQ Boys
Biscottis
Black Sheep
Monique Bookr
Bradford Renaissance Portraits Corp.
Bread & Board
Wayne & Louise Cantrell
Carrabba’s Italian Grill
Cason Photography
Vernon Davis
Daytona Proto Karts
Designs for Health
Lisa Di Capria
Doubletree Hotel & Restaurant
Eagle Property Management Co.
Ed Block Courage Award Foundation
Elite Edge Fitness
Fast Enterprises
Feeding Northeast Florida
Fields of Daytona, LLC
Florida Community Bank
Gregory Gibson
Rodney Hammond
Jackson Lewis, PC
Jaguars Foundation
Jon Hall / Ritchey Automotive
Kares 4 Kids
Keller Williams Realty
Linda Lyons
Manifest Distilling
Margarita Ball / Capital Partners
Mary Ellen Willis Foundation
Mitch Mentor
Merrill Edge
Mark & Susan Moor
Moore Fine Foods
Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida, Inc.
One Simple Wish
PNC Financial Services Group
Radiology Imaging Associates, PA
Red Lobster #1
Ryan Cameron Foundation
Safe Kids Worldwide
SB & Company, LLC
Benjamin D. Sharkey
Sol Holland Co., Inc.
Stars and Strikes State Farm
Streamline Hotel of Daytona Beach, LLC
Katie Tatro
Three Oaks Law
Tickets for Kids
Toys for Tots
Volusia County Sheriff’s Office

2018 Board of Directors
Sheilah Davenport
Board Chair
Mekeshia Bates
Father George Clements
Jennifer Dangar
Tony Everett
Rodney Hammond
Senator Anthony C. Hill
Ackneil M. Muldrow II
James G. Patterson
Benjamin Sharkey

Management
Tony Everett
President and CEO
James Akins
Chief of Staff
Chris Gurley
Director of MIS
Jamila Hanks
V.P. of Georgia and Maryland Programs
Gaye James
V.P. of CQI and Training
Deborah MacGilvary
V.P. of Human Resources
Mark Moor
V.P. / Chief Financial Officer
Kelly Morgan
Assistant to the President
Tony Wilson
V.P. of Florida Programs

Executive Directors
Oliver Harper
Atlanta Area
Monique Brabham
Augusta, GA
Keita Evans
Stone Mountain, GA
Heather Monteath
Bartow, FL
Myraida Davison
Daytona Beach, FL
Aida Seeraj
Jacksonville, FL
Donna McCarter
Baltimore, MD

Statement of Financial Position
As of June 30, 2018

ASSETS
Cash and cash equivalents
$40,513
Program services receivable
1,008,025
Prepaid expenses and deposits
206,023
Property & Equipment
30,251
Total Assets
$1,284,812

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
Liabilities
Accounts payable and accrued expenses
$419,864
Accrued compensation
344,599
Loans payable
132,230
Deferred revenue
12,864
Total Liabilities
$909,557

Net Assets
Unrestricted
$347,900
Temporarily restricted
27,355
Total Net Assets
375,255
Total Liabilities and Net Assets
$1,284,812
Program Locations

Florida
Bartow Office
1350 E. Main St.
Bartow, FL 33830
Phone: 863-537-7712

Daytona Beach Office
122 S. Segrave Street
401 W. Int’l Speedway Blvd.
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Phone: 386-248-0712

Jacksonville Office
4057 Carmichael Ave.
Suite 101, Building 3000
Jacksonville, FL 32207
Phone: 904-996-9119

Georgia
Atlanta Area Office
2075 West Park Place Blvd.
Suite E-F
Stone Mountain, GA 30087
Phone: 404-315-0100

Augusta Office
1226 Augusta West Parkway
Augusta, GA 30909
Phone: 706-396-2180

Stone Mountain Office
2075 West Park Place Blvd.
Suite D
Stone Mountain, GA 30087
Phone: 770-465-5170

Maryland
Baltimore Office
5750 Executive Drive,
Suite 107
Catonsville, MD 21228
Phone: 410-496-8151

Corporate Office
200 S. Ridgewood Ave.
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
Phone: 386-523-1440

Our Mission:
Revolutionize foster care by keeping siblings together while building healthier families and stronger communities.

www.neighbortofamily.org