



HEART (Housing, Empowerment, Achievement, Recovery, Triumph) Alliance for Sustainable Families

Broward County, Florida

Lead Organization: Kids In Distress, Inc. (KID, Inc.)

Partners: ChildNet; Broward County Sheriff's Office; Broward County Public Housing Authorities; HOPE South Florida; Urban League of Broward County; Legal Aid of Broward County; Broward Health; Memorial Healthcare System; Broward Addiction Recovery Center; Women in Distress; Broward County Homeless Initiative Partnership; Barry University; Group Victory, LLC.

Background

In Broward County, an average of 164 families each month are homeless and on waiting lists for shelter. Unfortunately, because they lack housing and access to the critical services they need, some of these families could face the risk of children ending up in foster care. HEART is a robust array of integrated services and affordable housing that reduces homelessness, child removals and foster care while increasing healthy parenting, employment, financial management skills and housing stability.

Overview of HEART Initiative and Services

HEART is 50+ scattered-site supportive housing with permanent rental subsidies provided by the five Broward County public housing authorities. HEART provides multiple services within their supportive housing, including evidence-based interventions, and intensive clinical case management. The services model focuses on:

- Strengthening families by providing positive family and parenting skills training
- Supporting healthy babies and children by providing pre and postnatal health and enhanced child health and development education
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) to help families build relationships, trust, protection and empowerment
- Promoting economic self-sufficiency, employment advancement, financial literacy, income enhancement, household budgeting and financial management coaching through the Center for Working Families

Rosa - Part of Our HEART Family

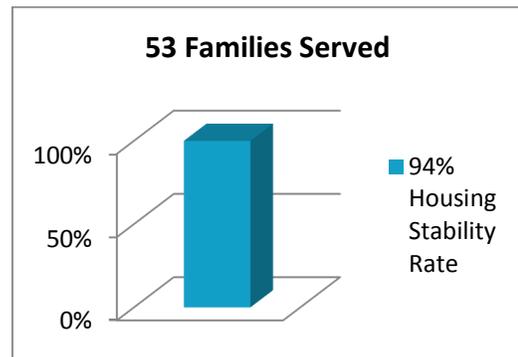
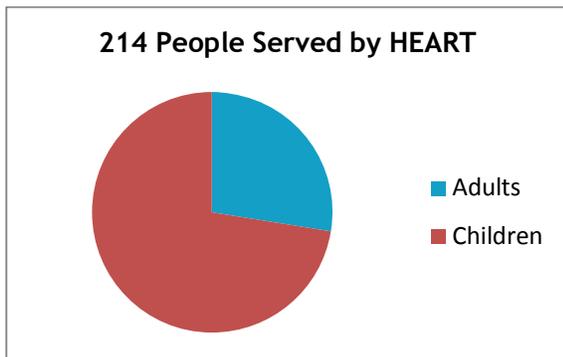


Rosa is a survivor of domestic violence and homelessness, but she refuses to let those traumas define her life or her future and that of her family. Rosa, a South Florida native, prefers to be known as a good mom to her two sons, 9 year old Martin and 3 year old James, with another child on the way. Rosa became part of the HEART initiative in October 2013, when the program was just beginning. She is a shining example of everything HEART stands for -- a hard-working, young parent with two jobs, striving to finish her education so that she can live her dream of one day becoming a school principal.

Why HEART is Working

- Interagency Collaboration - HEART is comprised of 15 diverse community partners that fully embrace the mission and goals of the program. Without such dedicated partnership, HEART's successes would not be possible. Staff presents as a unified team and introduces themselves as HEART, rather than identifying their respective agencies.
- Early Screening for Housing Needs - ChildNet and Broward Sheriff's Office participate in program triaging, training individuals within their organizations who are committed to HEART to effectively screen applicants for eligibility. Families are thoroughly reviewed against enrollment criteria to ensure an appropriate fit within the program. This gives both partner agencies extreme confidence that services are being received by the most vulnerable families and a strengthened sense of commitment to the program.
- Partnerships with the Public Housing Authority - Broward County Housing Authority saw the value in supportive services and took the lead in bringing others to the table. Each Housing Authority pledged what they were able to dedicate. BCHA has continued to be a champion in working through challenges. Without such dedication, the program would not be possible.

Promising Results for Families



Evaluation of Results

HEART is part of a larger national demonstration ([Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing for Families in the Child Welfare System](#)) designed to test supportive housing (affordable units + access to services) for families who have come to the attention of the child welfare system because of chronic or recurring homelessness and other serious, persistent issues such as mental illness, chemical abuse, and domestic violence. The specific HEART evaluation and cost study is being conducted by Barry University.

Five grantees representing over 65 public and private collaborations are part of the national [Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing for Families in the Child Welfare System](#) and are implementing family supportive housing in their communities. Visit the [Child Welfare and Supportive Housing Resource Center](#) online for more detailed information about the local demonstrations. The Resource Center provides expert technical assistance to the five sites and is managed by [CSH](#). The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children, & Families \(ACF\)](#), Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), and four national foundations developed the \$35 million public-private partnership designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of supportive housing for child welfare-involved families. Collaborating and funding foundations include the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) (RWJF), [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), [Casey Family Programs](#), and [Edna McConnell Clark Foundation](#).