

# from the *Heart*



## *Council Members*

Judith J. Weber  
*Council Chair*

Elmira R. Gainey  
*Vice-Chair*

Cheri Sheffer  
*Treasurer*

Hon. Sherwood Bauer, Jr.

Michael Busha

Anthony D. George, Jr.

Nancy Kline

Robert Ranieri

Doug Smith

## *Welcome* **New Officers**



**From left, Cheri Sheffer, treasurer; Rob Ranieri, immediate past chair; Judith Weber, chair; and Elmira Gainey, vice-chair.**

At the January meeting, the Children's Services Council of Martin County elected the new Council officers, and former Chair Rob Ranieri welcomed them in their roles.

Judith Weber, who held clinical and administrative positions in the field of child abuse, mental health and substance abuse for more than 20 years, was named Chair. Fellow governor appointee Elmira R. Gainey, a retired educator who taught in the Martin County School District for 32 years, was named Vice-Chair. Cheri Sheffer, the Circuit Community Development Administrator for the Florida Department of Children and Families in Circuit 19, was named Treasurer. Cheri serves on the Council by virtue of her position.

We are grateful to have such wonderful advocates for children as officers!

## *The Need:* **Improved FCAT Scores**

At the end of this month, the Martin County School District will begin administering the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests, or the FCATs, which are used to determine a student's comprehension of the state's new Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. Our county's students far exceeded state score averages last year—and it's no accident. School readiness preparation begins when children enter child care as toddlers and continues beyond the regular school day with after-school programs that provide tutoring and preparation classes. FCAT scores do more than ensure students are performing at grade level. Research shows that children who are not reading on grade level in the 3rd grade are less likely to graduate from high school—and in turn more likely to be making significantly less money while working in the local economy. Strong FCAT scores are good for students AND our community.



The Children's Services Council of Martin County is an independent district, approved by voters by referendum in 1988, to enhance the lives of the children of Martin County and to enable them to attain their full potential by supporting 34 impactful programs for youth in our community. Learn more about your agency at: [www.cscmc.org](http://www.cscmc.org) and [www.facebook.com/cscmc](http://www.facebook.com/cscmc).

# The Response:

## Early Learning and After-School Tutoring



**Early Learning Coalition**  
Of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee Counties, Inc.

### Early Learning Coalition: Subsidized Child Care

Studies show that academic struggles early in school can be a reason to drop out—so it's a priority to start teaching children early so they never feel behind. Thanks to the Early Learning Coalition, which contracts with 21 School Readiness Child Care facilities in Martin County, even children of families who could not afford child care will be able to have the same foundation as those in families who can. For families whose total income is 150% below the federal poverty level, the Council helps to fund child care for children ages birth to 5, ensuring they are ready for school and ready to learn.

With the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program, 50% of children matched with mentors for one year show an increase in their reading and/or math FCAT scores. This is impressive because many of these "Littles" would otherwise be struggling not only academically but also with other difficult life decisions, like avoiding alcohol use or negative peer situations. Spending quality time with "Bigs" lets children know there's an adult mentor who cares and is rooting for their success everyday.

### Big Brothers Big Sisters: Start Something



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
of Palm Beach and Martin Counties, Inc.



*YMCA:*

**YReads**

The YReads program is geared toward students in grades kindergarden to third who are struggling academically but whose parents would not be able to afford after-school care or intensive tutoring. During the after-school hours, students receive individualized help (with a 2:1 ratio) from tutors offering intensive reading and vocabulary sessions twice a week for 45 minutes. But it's not all work—there's fun, too! Participating students also enjoy arts and recreational activities, as well as daily homework help with the goal of improving their FCAT scores.

### GREAT FUTURES START HERE.



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF MARTIN COUNTY

### Boys & Girls Clubs of Martin County: High-Yield Learning

The very first thing that members do when they come from school to their Club is homework. With a program called "Power Hour," children learn to prioritize their school work and receive individualized tutoring when needed. This—along with offering enriching programs and adult mentors—keeps kids focused on performing well in school and looking toward a future of success.



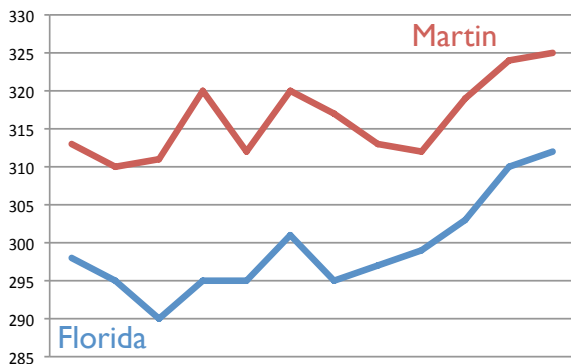
*2 City of Stuart:*

**East Stuart Youth Initiative**

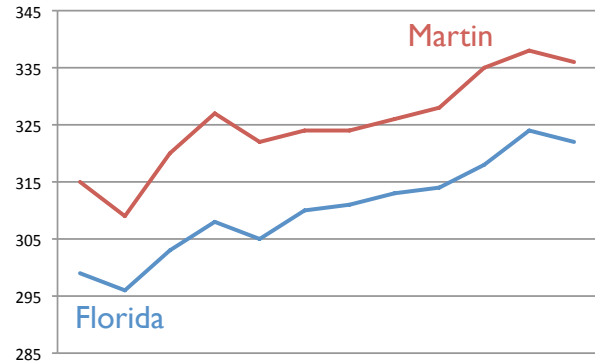
This collaboration keeps students performing at grade level in a variety of ways. First, Tykes & Teens' Alternative to Out-Of-School Suspension (ALTOSS) program prevents troubled kids from falling further behind in school when they're being punished. Second, after-school programs run by the city and the Boys & Girls Clubs include tutoring and homework help every day. In fact, certified teachers volunteer from nearby J.D. Parker Elementary to provide extra help to those students who need it the most. Finally, supportive adult role models and positive activities encourage kids to stay on the right path and do well in school.

# *The Impact:* Great FCAT Scores

8th Grade FCAT Scores in Martin County have steadily increased from 1997 to 2009:

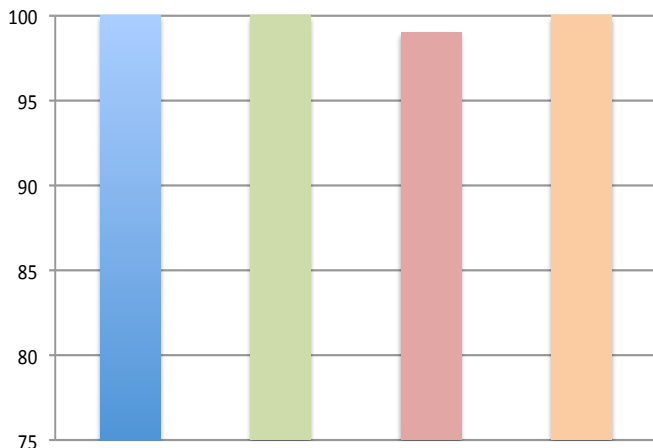


**8th Grade FCAT Reading Scores  
(500 Point Scale)**



**8th Grade FCAT Math Scores  
(500 Point Scale)**

**Participants in the YReads! Program show great improvement in literacy skills, reading grades, school behavior and school attendance:**



**Literacy Skills:**

100% of participants improved

**Reading grades:**

100% of participants improved

**School behavior:**

99% of participants improved

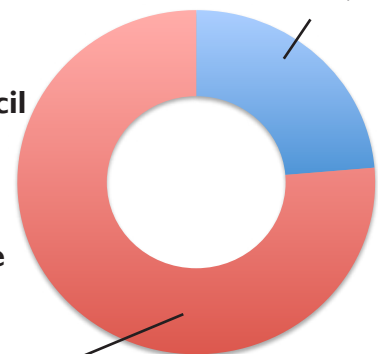
**School attendance:**

100% of participants improved



**The Early Learning Coalition substantially leverages the funding from Children's Services Council for child care programs to bring federal dollars into the community:**

Funding from the Children's Services Council in 2010-2011:  
**\$607,527**



Funding leveraged from federal and state sources in 2010-2011:  
**\$1,961,271**

\*This data comes from performance measures required of all funded agencies by the Children's Services Council to determine program impact.

# Success: Academic Success

## Success story

When Brianna\* was in third grade at Port Salerno Elementary, she was really struggling with her classwork and the FCATs—especially in reading. She was having trouble with her social skills and self-confidence, too. Since she lives with her grandparents and brother, Brianna's teacher recommended that she receive a match through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Palm Beach and Martin Counties. In 2009, she was matched with her "Big Sister," Jane\*.

Jane began mentoring Brianna weekly at her school. Each week, they worked on reading, homework and the Character Counts pillars. Their friendship grew and both wanted to continue seeing each other over the summer. They were both accepted into Big Brothers Big Sisters' Community-Based Mentoring Program, which then allowed them to attend community outings as well.

Today, Brianna has gone from a shy, quiet young girl who was receiving a D in reading to a girl who is now achieving mostly A's and B's. She has also gained confidence, knowing that she has a special friend to rely on. Her Big Sister Jane talks to Brianna about believing one day she will be able to go to college. The two love the outdoors, enjoy cooking and baking, making crafts and exploring our local museums.

Brianna has a special place in Jane's heart. She instills the concept that Brianna can be anything she wants to be and encourages her to always strive to do her best—on the FCATs and beyond.

\* Names changed to protect privacy

## Events & Meetings

**Feb. 10 - 18:** Martin County Fair  
-- look for the new Family Fun Corner!

**Feb. 13:** 2012-2013 Grant application due from provider agencies

**Feb. 27:** Council meeting

**Date To Be Announced:** State of the Martin County Child Symposium (stay tuned to learn more!)

Want to schedule a free Lunch and Learn?  
Contact Suzanne Wentley at [swentley@cscmc.org](mailto:swentley@cscmc.org)!

## Council News



**Commissioner Ed Ciampi, Children's Services Council Executive Director David Heaton, Jacki Jackson, Executive Director of the Early Learning Coalition, and Jacque Crighton, ELC Acting-Board Chair celebrate Children's Week with a proclamation from the Board of County Commissioners on Jan. 24.**

## Contact Us

**Children's Services Council of Martin County**  
2030 S.E. Ocean Boulevard  
Stuart, FL 34996  
(772) 288-5758 • [www.cscmc.org](http://www.cscmc.org)