



**ADOPT-A-FAMILY**  
OF THE PALM BEACHES

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Adopt-A-Family is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization established in 1983. Our mission is to strengthen families with children in their efforts to achieve stability and self-sufficiency by providing access to all-encompassing services.



# Newsletter

SPRING 2026

## 41st Annual Tree Lighting Celebration



**Chair Heather Ferguson and Honorary Chair Lisa Swift**

On December 2, agency friends gathered for the 41st Annual Tree Lighting Celebration – an evening rich in tradition, holiday spirit, and philanthropic impact. Thanks to the extraordinary kindness of our guests, sponsors, and donors, the event raised over \$1.2 million to support the agency’s work.

The celebration was chaired by Heather Ferguson, a longstanding board member, volunteer, supporter, and the 1995 Tree Lighting Committee Chair. Lisa Swift, one of the agency’s early leaders and board members, was the Honorary Chair. Heather and Lisa’s enduring connection to

the event and our mission ensured its overwhelming success.

The Tree Lighting Committee worked all year to plan this cherished affair, and their hard work was evident in every detail. Our new Young Friends Committee lent their support, infusing the event with additional excitement, new faces, and a signature live auction item.

As always, The King’s Academy Choir lined the entrance to welcome guests with holiday classics. Cocktail hour included an expansive silent auction, the always-popular orchid display, the Fifth Annual Wine Pull, and Gifts from the Heart (*more on page 2*). During dinner, CEO Matt Constantine shared words of gratitude and set the stage for a powerful testimonial from a young man who grew up in agency housing and is now preparing for college and a future as a motivational speaker. The live auction ignited good-natured bidding wars on unique items including a Porsche e-bike, VIP Ariana Grande tickets, and a New Jersey beachfront condo stay.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our chairs, committees, benefactors, and attendees whose generosity strengthens our ability to accomplish our mission.



**Centerpieces created and donated by Lewis Miller Design**

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
The 42nd Annual Tree Lighting Celebration will take place on December 1, 2026

## 2025 Tree Lighting Committee

Heather B. Ferguson, *Chair*  
Lisa Swift, *Honorary Chair*  
Patricia Anathan  
Judy Backstrom  
Elizabeth Baldwin  
Judy Coran  
Lori Corrigan  
Kristine Cruikshank  
Cheryl Culp  
Elizabeth DeBrule  
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Karen Fischer  
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Ann Hamrock  
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Penny Heller

Beth Hennessy  
Carol Jeney  
Nancy Kalaher  
Nancy J. Kyle  
Brenda McGarrity  
Marietta McNulty  
Paula Michel  
Bel Miller  
Rita Nowak  
Chris Oberlink  
Debby Parr  
Kathy Peterson  
Jeanette Ristau  
Julie Rudolph  
Susan Spera  
Alice Tarone  
Jennifer Trainor

### Young Friends Committee

Victoria Racanati Feinberg, *Co-Chair*  
Jessica Swift, *Co-Chair*  
Savannah Bennett  
Dusty Dodge  
Arsine Kaloustian  
Cara Mantovani  
Marissa Murphy-Adriaanse  
Ashley Kepping Pearson  
Lindsay Slifer  
Jaclyn Torey

## Tree Lighting Highlight: Gifts from the Heart



In 2023, the Tree Lighting Committee introduced a heartfelt new idea: reserving a special section of the silent auction for *Baskets from the Heart*. Purchased by attendees, these items were gifted directly to families served by the agency. The feature was offered again in 2024, and once again, the baskets sold out quickly, demonstrating the deep desire of our community to provide tangible support to our clients.

Fueled by that momentum, the 2025 Tree Lighting Committee significantly expanded the initiative. Renamed *Gifts from the Heart*, the display grew to more

than 20 thoughtfully selected items and gift baskets, each chosen with our client families in mind. Children's gifts included art- and sports-themed baskets, musical instruments, and a giant teddy bear (pictured above with its grateful new owner). There were also items for the moms and dads, the selfless adults who rarely get the appreciation they deserve. Attendees embraced the expanded *Gifts from the Heart* collection, and each purchased item embodied the unmistakable kindness of our community.

## Resident Success Story

Even with a master's degree and a full-time job as a school counselor, Erin found herself struggling to make ends meet as a single mom. An unexpected rent increase threatened the family's housing, but an opening in the Service Enriched Housing program gave them a chance to start a new chapter.

While in the program, Erin embraced every enrichment opportunity available to her. Thanks to the program's unique affordable rent model, she was able to eliminate debt and save more than \$10,000. She also changed jobs to advance her career and earned her 200-hour and 300-hour yoga teacher training certificates, which will allow her to use her passion to earn additional income.

Today, Erin's son is thriving in middle school, excelling academically and as a member of the band at his arts-focused school. In late 2025, Erin reached another major milestone when she was accepted into Habitat for Humanity of Greater Palm Beach County's homeownership program – bringing her closer to her dream of owning a home and achieving long-term stability for her family.

"I truly cannot say enough about the support from Adopt-A-Family and now, of course, Habitat for Humanity," Erin shared. "I am incredibly grateful, inspired, and excited for the future we are building."



## The Jim Moran Foundation Grant Establishes Housing Endowment

Adopt-A-Family is honored to announce that the agency received a \$1 million grant from The Jim Moran Foundation, awarded as part of the Foundation's 25th Anniversary grantmaking. This monumental investment will establish the agency's first endowment, a significant milestone for Adopt-A-Family.



The Jim Moran Foundation Endowment Fund is designated exclusively to offset the ongoing maintenance and renovation expenses for the agency's 112 units of affordable housing for formerly homeless and low-income families. For the first time in agency history, Adopt-A-Family will have a

permanent funding stream dedicated to preserving the quality and long-term affordability of the homes it owns and operates.

This legacy gift ensures that Palm Beach County families will live in safe, stable homes they can truly afford. The endowment is both practical and transformative, strengthening the sustainability of Adopt-A-Family's housing communities and positioning the organization to build upon the momentum generously ignited by The Jim Moran Foundation.

At Adopt-A-Family, more than four decades of service have reinforced a core principle: families need a safe, affordable place to call home before they can fully benefit from support

services. The housing sustained through The Jim Moran Foundation Endowment Fund will enable families to engage more effectively in Adopt-A-Family's finance, education, mental health, and workforce development services, fostering long-term stability and self-sufficiency. The 25th Anniversary grant was awarded in addition to The Jim Moran Foundation's ongoing support of the agency's programs, a partnership dating back to 2013. Adopt-A-Family is grateful for the Foundation's generous support and investment in the community at large.

To recognize its anniversary, The Jim Moran Foundation awarded special grants currently totaling more than \$20 million. Final anniversary grants will be announced in early 2026.



### About The Jim Moran Foundation

Founded by automotive pioneer Jim Moran, the mission of The Jim Moran Foundation is to improve the quality of life for the youth and families of Florida through the support of innovative programs and opportunities that meet the ever-changing needs of the community. Since its inception in 2000, The Foundation has invested more than \$325 million in education, elder care, family strengthening and transitional living initiatives. Learn more at [www.jimmoranfoundation.org](http://www.jimmoranfoundation.org).

## Donation from 2TON



**2TON staff members with donations**

Adopt-A-Family extends our gratitude to 2TON, a local creative agency, for being an excellent vendor and a valued partner. 2TON led Adopt-A-Family's brand and website redesign and currently hosts our website, providing expertise that strengthens our work and impact.

Ahead of the 2025 holiday season, 2TON thoughtfully requested a list of items most needed by the families we serve but least frequently donated. On behalf of their clients, 2TON made a sizable donation of household goods, bathroom accessories, cleaning supplies, and baby food.

These essential items were given to families in the Program REACH shelter, those receiving services at the Homeless Resource Center, and in the form of Welcome Baskets for clients moving into agency housing, ensuring families transitioning from homelessness were equipped for a fresh start.

## Activity Fund for Resident Families



In 2023, a generous friend of the agency established a fund to cover the cost of afterschool sports and arts programs for children served by our residential and educational programs. Registration fees for recreational programs are often unaffordable for our client families. By removing this financial barrier, the fund has opened doors to meaningful enrichment opportunities for children across our programs.

As a result, children have participated in swimming lessons, martial arts, gymnastics, soccer, dance, football, and more. Research shows that participation in afterschool sports and the arts improves academic outcomes, strengthens social-emotional skills, and supports overall well-being. We are deeply grateful to have supporters who believe the children we serve deserve every opportunity to thrive.

## Communi-Trees at the Maltz

In December, Adopt-A-Family participated in the Maltz Jupiter Theatre's annual Communi-Trees event, which invites local nonprofits to decorate holiday trees that are put on display in the theatre's lobby. Visitors are encouraged to view the trees and vote for their favorite, with the winning nonprofit receiving a grand prize.

Adopt-A-Family's tree was designed by students ages 5 to 18 from Project Grow and the Youth Success Program. Titled *Home Sweet Home*, the tree featured sugary treats and whimsical details that reminded guests that there is truly nothing sweeter than having a place to call home.

We are grateful to the Maltz Jupiter Theatre for featuring the creativity of our students and including our agency in this special holiday tradition.

**Daron Morse, Director of Youth Educational Programs and Shacunya McFadden, Assistant Director of Youth Educational Programs**



## Staff Sidebar

This recurring column allows our community to gain insight into agency operations through the unique perspective of agency staff members.



### Sydney Parmet

Development Coordinator

Serving as Adopt-A-Family's Development Coordinator affords me the unique opportunity to work with our incredible volunteers and supporters as well as the families and children we serve.

I have the privilege of working alongside our community of supporters to bring a wide range of special events to life. Whether we are hosting a resident activity, celebrating student milestones, honoring longtime supporters, or gathering to fundraise, I am continually inspired by seeing our mission in action.

One of my most meaningful responsibilities is supporting the Tree Lighting Committee as they plan the agency's largest annual fundraiser. I've had the opportunity to work on Tree Lighting for three years, and in this short time, I've witnessed the direct impact the event has on our agency. Being involved from start to finish fills me with deep admiration for the Committee. The group radiates authenticity and genuinely cares about our mission and the families we serve. I watch these incredible women spend hours perfecting auction baskets, setting up the venue late at night, and answering calls at all hours to ensure everything runs smoothly. It's these behind-the-scenes moments that are most special to me.

I see the same selfless spirit reflected at all of our events, including the Wiley Reynolds Society Awards Ceremony, Project Grow Graduation, the annual golf tournament, and family movie nights. The support of the wonderful community organizations, schools, and individuals that continually show up for our agency and the families we serve make it all possible – it truly takes a village.

I feel grateful for the personal and professional growth that Adopt-A-Family has provided. I am continually inspired by staff members (turned friends) who have made it their life's mission to make a positive impact on families in Palm Beach County. I'm lucky to witness the way our services change lives through the tireless efforts of donors and volunteers and the perseverance of the families we serve. To our supporters, thank you for making so much possible.

# Holiday Program Highlights

Every holiday season, our community of supporters demonstrates extraordinary generosity. Thanks to your kindness, the agency hosted our three signature holiday initiatives designed to bring warmth and joy to the families we serve: Santa Shoppe, the Holiday Adopter Program, and the Gift Giving Event at the Homeless Resource Center. Through these programs, children from over 200 families received gifts from their wish lists and the chance to create happy memories at festive family events.

For families struggling to make ends meet, the holidays can be especially stressful. Our holiday programs ease that burden, allowing parents and children to focus on what matters most – celebrating together.

We are continuously thankful for the volunteers, donors, and supporters whose generosity makes these moments of joy possible.



**“Thank you so much for having a heart big enough to love on my family. We greatly, greatly appreciate the special gifts. The kids are ecstatic over what ‘Santa’ brought, but I’ll always know it was you.”**

– Project SAFE resident

## YES!

*I would like to make a difference in the lives of families who are experiencing homelessness by contributing the following:*

\$25    \$50    \$100    \$500    Donor’s Choice \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Checks can be sent to Adopt-A-Family in the enclosed envelope or you can give online by visiting [www.aafpb.org/donate](http://www.aafpb.org/donate) or by scanning the QR code.

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SPRING 2026

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