



2026 Teens Day at the Capitol
Amplified Student Voice Program & the Pace Center for Girls

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Executive Director Self-Evaluation
FY 2025 – 2026



CHILDREN'S TRUST
OF ALACHUA COUNTY

I. Essential Functions:

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- 1. Engages with the stakeholder community to promote CTAC's mission and vision and recruit supporters and strategic partners.*
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Throughout the year, my team and I continued to actively work with community stakeholders, service providers, elected officials, funders, and strategic partners to advance the mission and vision of The Children's Trust of Alachua County. Building and maintaining these relationships is an essential part of my role, but it is also a reflection of the work of the entire CTAC team as we continue to expand our reach and strengthen our role in the community.

I attended more **than 220 meetings and events** throughout the year representing CTAC, building relationships and helping others better understand the Trust's role and impact. As a team, we strengthened existing partnerships while creating opportunities to connect with new stakeholders. I joined representatives from the University of Florida and other community leaders in discussions about the Florida Chamber's Prosperity Initiative to address poverty in Alachua County. We also met with Alachua County Public Schools staff to better understand gaps and needs, which led to an initiative to increase the number of volunteers in county schools. Through community meetings, events, presentations, collaborative initiatives, and individual conversations, my staff and I stayed connected to the organizations and leaders working directly with children and families throughout Alachua County.

A significant focus this year was positioning CTAC as more than a funder, but as a **strategic partner and convener**. My team and I worked with local government, municipalities, schools, nonprofit providers, and other community partners to identify gaps, respond to emerging challenges, and find ways to better coordinate resources and services. From working with Bread of the Mighty to ensure SNAP recipients could access food through our Family Resource Centers, to developing a new partnership with Family Promise to increase the number of case managers available to homeless families, CTAC responded to the ever-changing needs of our community. We also hosted convenings of funded partners, including afterschool,

summer camp, Family Resource Centers (FRCs), and enrichment providers, while bringing community partners together around issues such as evictions and homelessness, literacy, and early learning. We expanded our visibility and cross-sector engagement by laying the groundwork for collaboration with new partners such as the Bright Community Trust, ProTech, and Community Springs while continuing to strengthen system-wide coordination through community engagement presentations with the County Property Appraisers Office, the Alachua County Community Citizen Committee, and the Homeless Education Committee. These efforts allowed us to bring people to the table and identify opportunities where CTAC could add value as a trusted resource while supporting solutions that addressed community needs.

I also continued to represent the Trust at the local and state levels, while my team supported our broader advocacy efforts. I remained engaged with our state organization, the Florida Alliance of Children's Councils and Trusts (FACCT), completing a term as Board Secretary and becoming elected as Vice Chair. I also participated in weekly executive meetings alongside our sister organizations to share best practices, to scale solutions that are working in our communities, and to use our collective voice to advocate for children and families across Florida. Additionally, through meetings with elected officials, legislative staff, statewide partners, and community leaders, we increased the understanding of the important role Children's Trusts and Children's Services Councils play in strengthening communities and advocated for policies and investments that support children and families. I presented before and met with members of the Alachua County Legislative Delegation more than six times during the year, both in district and at the State Capitol in Tallahassee. During the Special Legislative Session on Property Taxes, I again met with members of our delegation to discuss the potential impact of the proposed legislation on CTAC and the children and families we serve. Although the advocacy effort did not result in the outcome we had hoped for, I believe these conversations gave our elected leaders a deeper understanding of CTAC's impact and the value we bring to the community. Building stronger relationships with our elected leaders and increasing their understanding of CTAC was a goal for this year, and I believe we made meaningful progress in both areas.

Overall, my goal, and the commitment of my team, was to ensure that CTAC remained **visible, accessible, and connected** to the community. We did more than share the work and impact of the Trust. We listened to our partners, learned from

families and organizations, and looked for opportunities to bring people together around shared needs and solutions.

That work strengthened CTAC's relationships throughout the community and helped position the Trust as a partner invested not only in funding solutions, but in helping our community create them.

2. Establishes credibility within CTAC and with the Board as an effective developer of solutions to business challenges.

Throughout the year, I worked to strengthen my role as a trusted leader and problem-solver for both the Board and the CTAC team. As the organization continues to grow and the environment in which we operate becomes increasingly complex, my focus has been on identifying challenges early, bringing forward thoughtful solutions, and working collaboratively with the Board and staff to determine the best path forward.

A significant part of this work involved helping the organization navigate new and emerging challenges while continuing to move forward on our existing priorities. Whether addressing operational needs, evaluating internal processes, responding to community concerns, or preparing for potential changes that could impact the Trust's future, I worked to ensure that the Board had the information, context, and recommendations necessary to make informed decisions.

Following an extensive review (including board and staff workshops) and realignment of the CTAC Strategic Plan, the team and I conducted a strategic review of all funded programs evaluated performance, community need, fiscal stewardship, organizational capacity, and alignment with strategic priorities. Although needed, this was a very difficult endeavor due to the nature of the programs and those they serve. Eliminating or sunseting programs must be a thoughtful process using data, performance measures, and feedback from participants and the provider. This information was synthesized and provided to the Board with budget recommendations for the new fiscal year ensuring the CTAC investment dollars would be aligned with the updated goals and the desired program impacts and outcomes in the new **Strategic Plan**.



Staff working on a new Strategic Plan for the Children's Trust of Alachua County.

This year also reinforced the importance of being able to adapt and pivot when circumstances change. My team and I continued to look for ways to improve how we work, strengthen our systems, and respond to opportunities and challenges as they arose. Rather than simply identifying issues, we focused on developing practical solutions that considered both the immediate needs of the organization and the long-term impact on CTAC's ability to fulfill its mission. We implemented weekly check-in meetings with summer providers to mitigate invoicing and deliverable issues, added FindHelp and 211 navigation resources within the SAMIS LMS to help providers locate additional services and resources, added a new funding option to address cash-flow needs of summer providers, and recommended a new RFP approach for maximum funding amounts for organizations seeking funding from CTAC in the future.

I also continued to work closely with the Board to foster open communication and trust. My goal has been to provide timely, transparent, and thoughtful information while ensuring that Board members have the opportunity to ask questions, engage in meaningful discussions, and participate in decisions that shape the direction of the Trust. I believe this approach has continued to strengthen my credibility as a resource to the Board and as a leader who is willing to address difficult issues directly while remaining focused on solutions. This year, more than any before, it was imperative that we intentionally focused on our sustainability as well as the funding impact our programs have community wide.

Internally, I have worked to create an environment where staff feel empowered to identify challenges, bring forward ideas, and participate in developing solutions. Many of the improvements and accomplishments we achieved this year were the result of collaboration, honest conversations, and a willingness to rethink how we approach our work. We implemented staff workshops to discuss new funding opportunities and initiatives. All staff provide input and feedback. When team members made suggestions, the leadership vetted it and acted on it. Staff recommended establishing a cohort of providers to complete capacity building through the Nonprofit Life Cycle framework. We kicked off the afterschool cohort over the summer. Staff recommended alternative options for summer providers to help address cashflow needs, understanding not all providers are the same. I believe that my role is not simply to have all the answers, but to bring the right people together, ask the right questions, and help move the organization toward solutions that strengthen The Children's Trust and aid those we serve.

Overall, this year provided numerous opportunities to demonstrate the importance of thoughtful leadership, sound judgment, and adaptability. I remain committed to helping the Board and staff navigate challenges with transparency and purpose while continuing to identify solutions that position CTAC for long-term success.



3. Collaborates to develop and implement systems, processes, procedures, and personnel designed to achieve the objectives of the Trust.

Throughout the year, my team and I continued to focus on strengthening the internal systems, processes, and structure needed to support the Trust's growing responsibilities and long-term objectives. As CTAC has evolved, it has become increasingly important to regularly assess not only what we do, but how we do it. This year provided an opportunity to look closely at several areas of the organization and identify ways to improve efficiency, strengthen accountability, and better align our operations with the needs of the organization and the community we serve. A significant part of this work involved reviewing and improving internal processes and systems. My team and I continued working to streamline operations, clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify opportunities to reduce inefficiencies. We also continued moving forward with improvements to our management and administrative systems, recognizing that strong infrastructure is essential to supporting our staff, managing our investments, and ensuring that we can effectively track and communicate the impact of our work.

Through our enhanced Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process which aids in the review of goals, expectations, evaluation of providers and helps identify ways to improve, we codified how we will address underperformance. Now there are targeted interventions for providers and CTAC staff to deploy before contract termination or phase-out. Essentially, all parties are on the same page when challenges arise to ensure every effort is made to strengthen capacity and improve understanding of requirements and related systems. Additionally, our CFO led the review of all recurring operating commitments eliminating unnecessary budgetary items, reducing costs by seeking alternative vendors, and requiring each department to assess their needs. Through this review, we recommended an update

to our Reserve Policy to increase our operating reserve from two months to three. Another improvement on the horizon is through our joint work with our SAMIS Collaborative, made up of other FACCT members. CTAC joined the Collaborative to add the SAMIS-FLEX Enterprise system to enhance grants management through the ability to create unlimited custom modules for our needs.

Personnel and professional development also remained an important focus. As the needs of the organization changed, I worked with staff to identify opportunities for growth, clarify expectations, and ensure that team members had the support and resources needed to be successful in their roles. This included continuing to evaluate our organizational structure and staffing needs to ensure that CTAC has the right people and capacity to meet both its current responsibilities and future goals. We reclassified a full-time position to part-time through our organizational capacity reassessment. We also implemented mid-year evaluations to assess all staff, discuss their performance, and address challenges prior to the end of the year evaluation. Our CFO has begun a departmental realignment and restructure to ensure greater capacity, standardized practices, and enhanced accountability. All department leaders selected LinkedIn Learning modules for their team targeting training relevant for each employee.

I am very proud of the work we did as staff to continue our development and growth. Through our bimonthly staff meetings, we brought in community organizations and facilitators to share information and introduce programs and resources. CDS Behavioral Services and Family Promise of Gainesville are two of the organizations who presented. Staff also received Safe Place Training and Trauma Informed Care/Adverse Childhood Experiences. One of the most meaningful outcomes of this year was our focus on who we, as a staff wanted to be. The creation of CTAC's Culture Statement developed with staff, and not simply for staff, was one of our biggest accomplishments. Team members shared their ideas, perspectives, and expectations for the culture they wanted to create and experience at CTAC. The resulting statement, built through staff input and consensus, now serves as a foundation for how we work, make decisions, and support one another.

Children's Trust Culture Statement

“We put children first in every decision, ensuring supports that are universal, targeted, and community based. We invest in innovative, collaborative solutions that strengthen families and deliver lasting impact. Guided by integrity, respect, and inclusivity - we foster a positive culture where people and communities thrive together.”

One of the most important lessons reinforced this year is that systems and processes must continue to evolve as an organization grows. My role has been to encourage my team to question what is working, identify where improvements are needed, and be open to trying new approaches. Many of the changes and improvements we implemented came directly from staff members who recognized opportunities to make our work more effective. Through our Organizational Culture Committee (OCC), I’ve encouraged the staff to share their ideas and help build a stronger organizational culture. They make recommendations to the leadership team, they plan lunch-and-learns for staff professional development, they provide feedback on new initiatives ensuring that staff is a part of, and provided opportunities for, input and engagement. I believe creating an environment where staff feel comfortable raising concerns, offering ideas, and helping develop solutions is critical to building a strong organization.

Moving forward, I remain committed to working with the Board and my team to continue strengthening the systems, processes, procedures, and personnel that support the Trust's mission. Our goal is to build an organization that is not only responsive to today's needs, but also prepared to grow, adapt, and meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

4. Plans, prioritizes, and organizes the work of the Trust.

Throughout the year, I continued to balance the many responsibilities that come with leading the Trust while remaining responsive to the day-to-day needs of the organization. My role requires me to move between long-term planning, Board

responsibilities, staff leadership, community engagement, financial and operational oversight, partnership development, communications, and legislative advocacy, often all within the same week.

This year in particular required flexibility and the ability to continually reassess priorities. While it is important to have a plan and stay focused on our larger goals, the nature of this work means that unexpected challenges and opportunities will arise. Whether responding to an emerging community need, preparing for a Board decision, addressing an organizational issue, or navigating legislative developments that could significantly impact the future of the Trust, I had to determine what requires immediate attention and where my time can have the greatest impact. This was demonstrated in November when the emergency food crisis caused by the SNAP benefits pause arose and we convened our Family Resource Centers to determine how best to ensure they could aid families. The special legislative session on property taxes was another example of pivoting to an emergent issue as I traveled to Tallahassee within 48 hours of notification of the legislature's meetings.

I have also continued to rely on my leadership team and staff to help keep the work moving forward. I cannot—and should not—be involved in every detail. By delegating responsibilities, maintaining regular communication, and trusting staff to lead in their respective areas, we have been able to manage a demanding workload while continuing to move important initiatives forward. The leadership team meets weekly for the team to share updates, challenges, and receive feedback. Last fall as we began working through the updated Strategic Plan, the Director of Programs worked with her team to create the program evaluation tool used to review and evaluate all CTAC programs for realignment and discontinuation. The Plan update was a clear example of long-term planning in practice requiring us to step back from day-to-day operations to reassess where the organization stands, where our community is headed, and where the Trust can have the greatest impact. The CFO led the reassessment of all operating commitments and brought recommendations to me for the FY 26-27 budget. The COO led potential partner connections through meetings with community organizations about collaboration opportunities and through serving on statewide committees to ensure CTAC was compliant and engaged on statewide systems work.

One of the things I believe I have continued to strengthen is my ability to balance the immediate with the important. Not everything requires the same level of attention, and I have learned to step back, assess what is in front of me, and determine what

needs to be addressed now, what can be delegated, and what can wait. This has allowed me to remain flexible without losing sight of the larger goals we are working towards. Taking a call from a provider is just as important as meeting with an elected leader. Walking the halls of the Capitol during special session to remind legislators of the importance of the programs and resources we provide was critical. The timing was at a critical juncture as well. It was our last opportunity to review our tentative budget before we published it. I met with staff in between legislative visits and approved the board agenda items from my hotel. Although not ideal, we made it happen.

Overall, this year reinforced the importance of being organized, adaptable, and willing to shift when circumstances require it. With the support of my team, I believe we have been able to respond to the demands in front of us while continuing to make progress toward the Trust's larger goals.

5. Principal Spokesperson of CTAC and Primary Point of Contact for Stakeholder Inquiries

Throughout the year, I continued to serve as one of the primary voices for The Children's Trust of Alachua County, representing the organization with community partners, elected officials, service providers, funders, families, and other stakeholders. Whether through presentations, meetings, community events, media opportunities, or one-on-one conversations, my goal has been to clearly communicate who we are, the work we do, and the impact we are making on behalf of children and families. My meetings with our legislative delegation and their staff provided me with multiple opportunities to represent CTAC and share our impact. From speaking to business leaders at Chamber of Commerce events to presenting at the Center for Nonprofit Excellence's Open House, I have been able to help tell our story. Through our convenings such as the "Community Conversation on Investing in Infrastructure: The Child Economy" to our Community Literacy Townhalls, I have been using my voice to share our story and the story of our partners.

As CTAC continues to grow and take on an increasingly visible role in the community, communication has become an important part of ensuring that our stakeholders understand not only what we fund, but why our work matters. My team

and I have continued to reframe how we share the Trust's story, highlight the work of our funded partners, and demonstrate the collective impact of our investments throughout Alachua County. We started with a more focused approach to our newsletters and our Morning Show and Podcast on Tu Fiesta. We've been more intentional about highlighting how CTAC's investment is making a difference throughout the community while providing a platform for our providers to share their stories.

This year also required me to serve as a point of contact and resource for a wide range of stakeholder questions and concerns. Whether the issue involved funding, programs, community needs, organizational priorities, or emerging challenges, I worked to ensure that people received timely and thoughtful responses. When appropriate, I also relied on members of my team to provide their expertise and follow up in their respective areas. Once the special legislative session ended, I scheduled meetings with our provider leadership to share the impact of the potential ballot amendment on CTAC. Additionally, our realignment of the Strategic Plan and subsequent decision to not offer any funding opportunities for the remainder of the calendar year, required me to answer questions from providers and others who were anticipating those opportunities.

A significant part of my role has also been representing CTAC beyond Alachua County. Through engagement with statewide partners, legislative staff and elected officials, I continued to advocate for the importance of Children's Trusts and the role prevention-focused investments play in strengthening children, families, and communities. This became particularly important during the special legislative session on property taxes as policy discussions emerged that could have a significant impact on the Trust and its future.

I believe being an effective spokesperson is about more than speaking on behalf of the organization. It is also about listening. Throughout the year, I worked to remain accessible to our partners and responsive to the community, using those conversations to better understand concerns, identify opportunities, and help inform the work and direction of the Trust. The CFO and I met with one of our providers earlier in the year to hear about the struggles of smaller organizations whom we fund. The provider shared concerns about falling behind on payroll and not having enough funding to ensure all program needs were met. The leadership team and I continued listening to providers and meeting with them to hear their suggestions on how we could mitigate some of their issues. **These discussions**

resulted in CTAC piloting a new method of payment for a small cohort of providers. This pilot model will provide assistance upfront with specific deliverables to determine if this new model should be implemented more broadly.

With the support of my team, we have continued to strengthen CTAC's presence and visibility throughout the community. Together, we are working to ensure that The Children's Trust of Alachua County continues to be recognized as a trusted partner, deeply committed to children and families throughout our community.

II. PLANNING

The planning work this year built upon the foundation established through CTAC's current Strategic Plan while also creating an opportunity to step back, evaluate our progress, and prepare for the next phase of the organization's work. My team and I worked closely with the Board, community partners, providers, and other stakeholders to ensure that our planning efforts remained grounded in both the priorities of the Trust and the evolving needs of children and families throughout Alachua County.

1. Collaborate with the Board to develop a Strategic Plan and update as appropriate.

The current CTAC Strategic Plan 2023–2026 continued to guide our work and funding decisions throughout the year. The Plan established clear priorities, and it recognized the importance of building the capacity of organizations we work with. Last summer and fall, we held a Board retreat and workshop to review the priorities, re-evaluate progress, and we began discussions about where CTAC should focus its efforts moving forward. These conversations provided an opportunity to look not only at what we accomplished, but also at the changing needs of our community and the areas where the Trust could have the greatest impact. After much discussion, we agreed to add a new fourth goal with two focus areas of equal importance. One is to focus on ensuring CTAC's Capacity continues to grow through regular evaluation and feedback. The second is to ensure that the organizations with whom we partner are building their capacity by strengthening their programs and collaborating with others.

In addition to the work of the Board, staff held several workshops to determine the new focus areas and impact measures we would use moving forward. Staff worked with consultants to develop a framework and roadmap that would better align our programs, funding opportunities, and future investments within the revised strategic goals. This framework was recommended to the Board and approved. The updated plan includes Indicators, Rationale, Objectives, Strategies, Implementation or Actionable Steps, Key Partnerships, and Results. Staff used the updated Plan and realignment of priorities to help guide the FY26/27 budget process and recommendations presented to the Board in the Proposed FY26/27 Budget. The Proposed Budget realigned program funding to preserve existing commitments, support strategic new initiatives, and it maintained capacity to ensure CTAC remains responsive to any emerging community needs.



CHILDREN'S TRUST
OF ALACHUA COUNTY

STRATEGIC PLAN FY 2027 - FY 2030



FY 2027-2030 Strategic Plan

2. Direct the activities of CTAC based on the Strategic Plan.

While preparing for the updated Strategic Plan, CTAC continued to move forward with the priorities and commitments already established under the 2023 -2026 Plan.

My team and I followed the implementation timeline developed in FY23/24 and continued to align funding investments, initiatives, and organizational activities with the goals approved by the Board.

The Plan provided an important framework for helping us determine where to focus our resources and how to connect individual programs and funding opportunities to broader outcomes for children and families. As new needs and opportunities emerged, we continued to evaluate them through the lens of the Plan while remaining flexible enough to respond to the realities facing our community. CTAC met an emergent need by partnering with Bread of the Mighty to deploy our Resource Centers during the SNAP food crisis, ensuring families had access to food and resources during a critical time.

3. Institute mechanisms to ensure community involvement in planning processes.

Community input continued to be an important part of how CTAC plans and develops new initiatives. For each new initiative and renewed funding opportunity, my team and I engaged providers, community stakeholders, and others with knowledge and experience in the areas we were exploring. We surveyed parents and youth in programs, requested feedback from providers, and used data collected throughout the year to inform our understanding. We also met with partners to gather additional feedback, which was synthesized and shared with the Board to help inform all planning.

I also continued to spend time in the community, meeting with nonprofit leaders, civic leaders, state and local leaders, community organizations, and residents. These conversations allowed me to share information about the work of the Trust while also listening to what people were seeing and experiencing in their communities. Throughout the year, this included participation in League of Cities meetings and visits and conversations with leaders in all the municipalities. I engaged in more than 220 meetings throughout the year, using those opportunities to build relationships, advance priorities, address challenges, and strengthen partnerships across our community.

CTAC established three new Family Resource Centers this year due in large part to feedback from community leaders and others of needed resources (Hawthorne, High Springs, and Newberry). These opportunities to listen are critical to the planning process. They help ensure that our work is not developed in isolation and that the Board and staff remain aware of emerging needs, gaps in services, and opportunities for collaboration. I continued to share information with the Board regarding my community engagement activities each month through my Executive Director Board Report at each meeting.

4. Work with other local planning bodies to ensure coordination and consistency of efforts.

Coordination with other local and statewide planning efforts continued to be an important part of CTAC's work. I believe the Trust is most effective when we understand what others are doing, participate in conversations that impact children and families, and look for opportunities to align our efforts rather than duplicate them.

The Team and I were engaged on more than 25 boards and committees throughout the year. I served on the Board of the Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County. My participation has enhanced our partnership and ensured we are coordinating efforts where we can. We remained the fiscal agent and ex officio member of the Alachua County Opioid Task Force (HOPE Alachua) ensuring CTAC's seat at the table as a partner in the prevention of opioid use by county youth. We supported the Gainesville Housing Authority's Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant which focused on the revitalization and redesign of East University Avenue and surrounding communities. The CTAC team participated in and served on a variety of local, state, and national committees and workgroups, including the Florida Grade-Level Reading Advisory Committee, National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers, Safety Net Collaborative, Gainesville Women's Forum, Food Insecurity Advisory Group, New Worlds Reading Books and Cooks Steering Committee, Florida Government Finance Officer's Association Technical and Legislative Resource Committee, Housing First for Kids, Healthy Communities Committee, and the SWAG Board.

These relationships continue to provide valuable opportunities to share information, learn from others, and ensure CTAC remains connected to broader planning efforts affecting children and families throughout our community and state.

Hawthorne Family Resource Center Groundbreaking



HARC Board and Volunteers break ground on Hawthorne's new Family Resource Center.

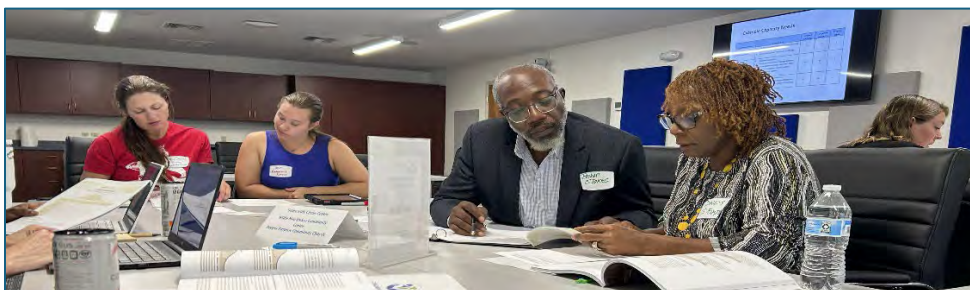
5. Develop benchmarks to track progress toward strategic goals.

My team and I continued to focus on how we measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of our investments. For each funding initiative, staff provided the Board with an assessment and overview of program performance measures, outcomes, and engagement.

We also continued our **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)** process with providers. This process gave providers and CTAC staff an opportunity to look more closely at fiscal management, operations, population focus, service delivery, performance measures, and data quality. **Eighty-one programmatic contracts** received a summary report that included a program scorecard, feedback from CTAC staff, and the provider's own reflections on their work. More importantly, the CQI process created a space for meaningful conversation. It allowed us to identify what was working, discuss lessons learned, and recognize opportunities for improvement. Providers were also able to share feedback with CTAC, making the process a two-way conversation and strengthening our commitment to accountability, learning, and continuous improvement. By highlighting the historical overview of the CQI program since 2022, we have been able to show collective improvement. Each year, we intentionally enhance the process by gleaning more from the providers, listening to the Board, and fine-tuning how we communicate and support our providers.

Overall, this year's planning work allowed us to continue implementing the current Strategic Plan while preparing thoughtfully for what comes next. With input from the Board, our staff, providers, community partners, and the youth we serve, we are building a clearer understanding of where CTAC has been, where we are now, and how we can best position the Trust for the future.

Nonprofit Lifecycle Training



III. FINANCIAL AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

1. Preparation, management, and oversight of annual budget and funding recommendations for Board approval.

The new CFO and I worked closely throughout the year to prepare, manage, and oversee the Trust's annual budget and funding recommendations. This work requires balancing the financial resources available to CTAC with the significant and growing needs of children, youth, and families throughout Alachua County. Our goal has been to provide the Board with the information necessary to make thoughtful funding decisions while maintaining strong financial stewardship of the public resources entrusted to us.

The development of the annual budget and funding recommendations is a collaborative process. My team and I review current investments, program performance, community needs, and new opportunities while ensuring that our recommendations remain aligned with the Strategic Plan and the priorities established by the Board. Throughout the year, we also monitored expenditures and funding commitments and made adjustments as needed to respond to changing circumstances. This oversight included several standing practices:

- *Completing an annual independent audit*
- *Providing monthly financial reports to leadership and the Board*
- *Conducting mid-year reviews of programs and their expenditures*



This year, our CFO also strengthened how the Board understands the Trust's financial position:

- *Improved the distinction between money we can count on year to year, one-time funding, funds already committed to existing obligations, and what remains available for the Board to allocate toward new priorities.*
- *Shifted Finance Committee reporting away from simply summarizing what had already happened toward helping the Committee look ahead and engage in more strategic financial oversight.*

Together, these efforts reflect a shared commitment to sound financial stewardship. It's not just about balancing the budget each year but building the systems and transparency that support the Trust's long-term stability.

2. Preparation and oversight of budget model forecast for planning purposes.

Long-term financial planning also remained an important focus. In addition to managing the current budget, my team and I continued to look ahead at projected revenues, expenditures, and future funding commitments to better understand the Trust's financial position and prepare for upcoming decisions.

This work became especially important as potential changes in property tax policy created uncertainty around future revenues. We worked to evaluate various scenarios and better understand how changes could affect the Trust's ability to continue funding programs and services at current levels. My role has been to ensure that the Board has a clear picture of both our current financial position and the potential challenges ahead so that we can plan proactively rather than reactively.

In May, we presented the Programmatic and Funding Realignment Framework to the Board, and it was approved. This process required the full team's review and assessment of every program, both fiscally and programmatically, and resulted in **more than \$1 million being moved to unassigned fund balance**, giving the Board additional flexibility to respond to future needs and opportunities.

Our CFO also began developing a recurring financial dashboard for leadership tracking:

- *Payment turnaround*
- *Timeliness of our monthly close*
- *Cash reserves*
- *Provider reimbursement timelines*
- *Early indicators of financial risk*

This gives the Board and leadership team an ongoing, real-time view of the Trust's financial health, rather than relying solely on periodic reports. Thanks to the team's efforts, we will enter the new fiscal year stronger, more focused, and better positioned to serve our community's needs.

3. Establishment of policies and procedures related to the evaluation of funding requests.

My team and I continued to strengthen the processes used to evaluate funding requests as approved by the Board last year. Following the Unplanned Funding Requests Policy, we brought recommendations to the Board when circumstances warranted. Additionally, the policy provides for the convening of stakeholders to coordinate a response or to utilize targeted contracting. We held a Family Eviction and Housing Stability Convening to learn more about the evictions process and how families navigate it in the county. This convening and subsequent meetings resulted in a recommendation to fund two case managers for Family Promise, which was approved.

As the Trust grows, we will continue to strengthen our funding processes to ensure they are clear, consistent, transparent, and aligned with community needs and CTAC priorities. My goal is to ensure funding recommendations are informed by community and provider input, program performance, organizational capacity, and measurable need, while maintaining clear expectations for performance, reporting, and accountability.

4. Oversight of programs and fiscal monitoring of funded programs.

CTAC's funded programs require ongoing oversight, and my team and I remained focused this year on monitoring performance, expenditures, and compliance while maintaining regular communication with providers about their successes and challenges. Meetings were held with providers to discuss budget amendments when funds could not be spent or challenges arose. These unforeseen issues provided opportunities for improved communication and capacity building. Many providers struggled to hire staff, which impacted their budgets. When possible, we worked with providers to reassign funds to address these gaps. We also met with providers who had not spent their funds down to determine if those funds could be shifted. Programs and Finance collaborated to ensure our stewardship over our investment funds while supporting our partners to ensure they could continue providing quality services to the children and families they serve.

We continue to focus on accountability while also recognizing the importance of partnership. This year, that included 82 site visits across our 80 funded programs, along with ongoing conversations and our Continuous Quality Improvement process, all aimed at helping staff and providers identify areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement. For example, smaller organizations shared that the reimbursement model was creating a fiscal bottleneck and that they lacked the capacity to fill the gaps. This feedback resulted in the development of a new reimbursement model pilot for the upcoming fiscal year. This model shifts away from full reimbursement to partial upfront disbursement on a quarterly basis. It reduces the burden on providers who previously had to spend funds in advance of reimbursement. We will monitor the pilot's impact closely and adjust as needed to ensure it is meeting providers' needs.

This year, our CFO also strengthened several key financial systems and processes:

- *Established a detailed, standardized 20-step monthly closing process, ensuring that every part of our finances (cash, accounts payable, payroll, grants, provider expenditures, and more) is reviewed consistently each month before being reported to the Board.*
- *Expanded our use of shared digital tools and standardized documentation to improve how we retain records, track approvals, and preserve institutional*

knowledge, reducing our reliance on any one person's memory of how things were done.

Fiscal monitoring remained equally central to this oversight work. Staff continued to review expenditures and financial documentation and work directly with providers when questions or concerns arose. Together, these efforts help ensure that CTAC is not simply making funding decisions but actively monitoring the investments we make on behalf of children and families. Oversight is not just compliance. It is listening and responding to unmet need while remaining accountable and collaborative. Moving forward, I will continue working with my team and the Board to strengthen our financial planning, funding processes, and program oversight so that our resources remain responsive, accountable, and focused on achieving meaningful outcomes for children and families throughout our community.

IV. OPERATION MANAGEMENT

Operational management is where much of the day-to-day work of leading the Trust comes together. Throughout the year, my focus has been on creating an environment where staff can be productive, responsive, and focused on the priorities of the organization while ensuring that our internal operations support the work we are trying to accomplish in the community. This requires attention to both the larger organizational picture and the many details that keep CTAC moving forward each day.

1. Foster high levels of customer service to ensure effectiveness and further development of customer-centered service delivery.

My team and I continued to emphasize the importance of being responsive, accessible, and helpful to the individuals and organizations we serve. Whether working with funded providers, community partners, families, Board members, or members of the public, we strive to ensure that people who interact with CTAC receive timely information and support.

As the Trust has continued to grow, we have also worked to improve how we communicate and connect with our stakeholders. This includes being responsive to questions and concerns, helping organizations navigate our processes, and ensuring that people know where to go when they need assistance. My goal is for

CTAC to be viewed not only as a funder, but as an approachable and supportive partner that people feel comfortable contacting when they need information, assistance, or guidance. We saw this commitment reflected in both the feedback and results this year.

- *CQI Provider Survey Feedback on CTAC – CTAC staff were recognized for being supportive and quick to respond. The relational improvement between CTAC and its providers was highlighted, and providers reported that the invoicing process became less intensive.*
- *Summer program providers provided feedback at their convening held earlier in the year and asked for more support. CTAC implemented weekly check-ins to ensure they didn't fall behind on invoicing or data reporting. This resulted in fewer provider payment challenges.*
- *The more than 200 meetings and events I attended representing CTAC and listening to feedback about community needs were often opportunities for providers, potential providers, and community stakeholders to ask questions, share their concerns, and hear updates on CTAC.*
- *The Trust published the Provider Newsletter as a resource for providers every other month. The newsletter shares best practice tips from the finance department, highlights funding opportunities, provides resource calendars from the community, and spotlights new initiatives.*



Tours and events led to increased communication and problem-solving.

2. Establish a work environment that fosters a productive work culture.

Creating and maintaining a positive and productive work environment continues to be an important part of my leadership. I believe the culture of an organization directly affects how well we work together and, ultimately, how effectively we serve our community. A significant part of this effort was the development of CTAC's Culture Statement created with staff, not simply for staff. Team members shared their ideas, perspectives, and expectations for the culture they want to experience at CTAC. The resulting statement, built through staff input and consensus, now serves as a foundation for how we work, make decisions, and support one another moving forward.



Researchers Amy Wagner and Bonnie Wagner receive MVP awards at staff retreat.

Throughout the year, I worked with my leadership team and staff to create an environment where people feel supported, valued, and comfortable sharing ideas and concerns. We continued to encourage open communication, collaboration, and problem-solving while also working to create greater clarity around expectations and responsibilities. This was demonstrated through some of the following activities:

- *Quarterly Staff Check-Ins – I continued individual meetings with all staff at least four times a year to receive feedback, hear issues of concern, and provide organizational updates.*
- *Staff Retreats – we held two retreats during the calendar year for all staff. This year’s theme centered CTAC’s Culture, and we created our Culture Statement. We also visited providers to allow all staff an opportunity to learn more about the partners we work with and the children they serve.*
- *The Trust holds bi-monthly Staff Meetings to share departmental and organizational updates, address issues of concern, and strengthen cross-team communication. Professional development was integrated into team meetings, and community resources were regularly highlighted to support both providers/partners and staff.*
- *Staff utilized LinkedIn Learning to increase skills and knowledge. In-person workshops were provided by the James Moore HR Consultant.*
- *Rock Star Recognition at all staff meetings, allowing employees to celebrate peers’ achievements. Pins were awarded to recognized staff, and the team members with the most pins each quarter received a gift card.*
- *I approved summer schedules for staff providing flexibility in work week and workdays to boost employee engagement, retention, and improve morale.*
- *Established the OCC – Staff members voluntarily joined to help facilitate organizational culture through team building activities and to provide leadership with feedback from the staff on issues of importance to the staff. Since the OCC was formed, we’ve held lunch-and-learns called “Chat & Chews”, Wellness Wednesdays, Popcorn Fridays, and they’ve provided feedback for the staff retreat.*

I also recognize that building a strong culture is an ongoing process. As staff and responsibilities change, we have to continue to pay attention to how we work together and where improvements are needed. My goal is to continue building a workplace where staff feel invested in the work of the Trust, understand how their individual roles contribute to our larger mission, and have opportunities to grow and contribute to the organization's success.



*Leadership and staff visit providers and tour resources during their
March 2026 retreat.*

3. Prioritize a dynamic workload.

The work of CTAC rarely follows a predictable schedule. Throughout the year, I have had to balance the ongoing responsibilities of managing the organization with new initiatives, emerging community needs, Board priorities, and unexpected challenges. Two major issues this year were the SNAP food crisis and the Property Tax Amendment. I traveled four times to Tallahassee to meet with our legislative delegation and additionally met with two members of the delegation in district.

The food crisis highlighted how we are able to convene our partners to hear their feedback as we designed and developed a community response. Working with county staff and the Family Resource Centers, we developed a coordinated plan with Bread of the Mighty to ensure an effective and feasible response. We also listened to providers as challenges and frustrations arose. Team members responded to concerns from frustrated providers and worked with Bread of the Mighty to ensure everyone's needs were being met.

Prioritizing workload requires flexibility and the ability to continually reassess what needs our immediate attention while ensuring that other important work continues moving forward. I have relied heavily on my leadership team and staff to help manage competing priorities, delegate responsibilities, and keep initiatives moving even when new issues require us to shift our focus. We were able to maintain our focus through:

- *Weekly leadership team meetings to discuss new initiatives and challenges and to receive and provide fiscal and programmatic updates. The leadership team consists of the Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Program Operations, Director of Communications & Marketing, and the Executive Director.*
- *CTAC Board Chair and Executive Director meetings to discuss emerging issues and challenges, provide updates, and receive feedback and guidance from Board leadership.*
- *CFO and DPO met regularly to review emerging issues and departmental priorities to ensure any emergent issues were addressed collaboratively*
- *CTAC staff proactively reached out to fellow Children's Service Councils and Trust for guidance, recommendations, and information as needed.*

Additionally, CTAC participates in FACCT Affinity Groups aligned with their work areas to share best practices and gain insights on workflows and workloads and organizational best practices.

We continue to work on finding the right balance between being responsive to what is happening in the moment and protecting time for the work that requires longer-term planning and attention. This remains particularly important as the scope of CTAC's work continues to expand.

4. Develop and provide oversight to organizational plans and procedures necessary for effective operations.

As CTAC continues to grow and evolve, my team and I have continued to review the systems, processes, and procedures that support our daily operations. Throughout the year, we identified areas where additional structure, clarification, or updated procedures were needed and worked collaboratively to strengthen those areas.

This includes looking at how work flows through the organization, how information is communicated, and whether our existing processes continue to meet the needs of staff, providers, and the Board. I encouraged staff to identify inefficiencies and bring forward ideas for improvement, rather than assuming processes should remain in place simply because things have always been done a certain way. The CFO facilitated Town Halls with providers to share changes, offer site visits, and ensure that providers understand the department is a partner, not an adversary. One example of this work was the development of a new reimbursement model pilot, created in direct response to provider feedback that our monthly reimbursement structure was creating fiscal strain for smaller organizations. The new model shifts to partial upfront disbursement on a quarterly basis, reducing the burden on providers who previously had to spend funds in advance of reimbursement.

Additionally, I met with the HR Consultant from James Moore and the Krizner Group for the annual employment audit and review of all CTAC policies for recommended updates and additions. All supervisors attended the annual supervisor training facilitated by Krizner. Our goal is to continue developing systems and procedures

that create consistency and accountability while remaining practical enough to support the changing needs of the organization.

5. Manage and direct the activities of staff to ensure programs are properly executed and CTAC's priority objectives are achieved.

Throughout the year, I met weekly with my leadership team to monitor organizational priorities, address challenges, and ensure that programs and initiatives continued moving forward. For example, a Board member alerted us to a serious concern involving one of our providers. My team and I gathered additional information and met with the organization's leadership to understand the situation. The team assessed information from site visits and data reports, and we thoroughly reviewed everything gathered before making our recommendation. Ultimately our recommendation to the Board was to terminate CTAC's contracts with that agency.

I believe effective leadership requires a balance between providing direction and allowing people to take ownership of their work. My role is not to manage every detail, but to ensure that staff understand the larger goals, have clear expectations, and are empowered to lead within their areas of responsibility. The DPO worked with her team to develop the Programmatic & Funding Realignment Framework to aid in determining which programs had the greatest impact under the new Strategic Plan. Her team took the lead on this project, developed the rationale which we thoroughly discussed before presenting it to the Board, where it was approved.

We also held five convenings this year led by our programs staff. The DPO and the Research and Evaluation team prepared the agenda, selected facilitators, coordinated with providers, and created resources. They solicited my feedback and approval prior to each session, but they organized and led them. Similarly, the COO and DCM led the preparations for our legislative meetings and developed the collateral materials and highlights for each meeting with the legislative delegation. I reviewed the information and goals of the meetings prior to the visits. We published two editions of our Parenting Playbook Resource Magazine, which highlights resources for parents and youth, with the COO and DCM coordinating content and publication. They regularly met with me to share ideas, review content and concepts, and receive my feedback and approval throughout the process.

This year, thanks to the joint efforts of the CFO and DPO, the CQI process worked much more seamlessly. Programs and Finance worked together to ensure provider feedback was useful, actionable, and could be used both to strengthen provider engagement with CTAC and support successful program outcomes.

Regular communication and collaboration with my leadership team have been essential in keeping the organization aligned and identifying issues before they become larger challenges. As the Trust continues to take on new initiatives and responsibilities, I will continue to evaluate staffing needs, organizational structure, and opportunities for professional growth to ensure that we have the capacity needed to accomplish our goals.

6. Lead and ensure the effective management of the Council in meeting the statutory functions relevant to CTAC.

Throughout the year, I worked closely with the Board to ensure that CTAC continued to meet its statutory responsibilities while carrying out the mission and priorities established for the Trust. This includes providing the Board with the information, recommendations, and support necessary to carry out its responsibilities related to governance, funding, financial oversight, and organizational direction.

My role is to help ensure that the Board has the information it needs to make informed decisions while also ensuring that those decisions are implemented effectively by staff. This requires ongoing communication between the Board and staff and a clear understanding of our respective roles and responsibilities. This included meeting CTAC's core statutory obligations throughout the year as well.

- *Held monthly Board meetings and published Board agendas*
- *Provided a new member orientation and overview of CTAC to new Board members (two new members)*
- *Completed an annual Audit*
- *Published an Annual Report and distributed it to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) by December 31*
- *Developed and published a Proposed Budget*
- *Provided Quarterly Financial Reports to the BoCC*
- *Held TRIM Hearings for public input and certified our approved millage to the Alachua County Property Appraiser and the State Department of Revenue*

- *Held an Annual Meeting and elected officers*

As CTAC continues to grow, maintaining strong governance and ensuring compliance with our statutory responsibilities will remain essential to the effective operation and credibility of the Trust.



7. Participate in and oversee emergency planning and responses to emergency situations when required.

While much of our work is focused on long-term planning, CTAC must also be prepared to respond when unexpected circumstances affect children and families in our community. My team and I continued to work with community partners to remain aware of emerging needs and consider how the Trust can be responsive during times of crisis. This was demonstrated this year through CTAC's response to the SNAP food crisis when reductions in federal food assistance created urgent, unplanned needs for families across the county. We convened with county staff and all CTAC's Family Resource Centers and worked with Bread of the Mighty to design a feasible response to ensure resources reached families quickly. When challenges and frustrations arose during implementation, our team worked directly with partners to resolve them. CTAC follows a formal emergency closer policy to guide decision-making during severe weather or other crises. We also participate in and follow all emergency news through the Alachua County Emergency Management Group to stay informed of and coordinated with countywide emergency response efforts.

These situations reinforced the importance of flexibility, clear communication, and strong community relationships. They also highlighted the need to respond quickly while ensuring that decisions are thoughtful, coordinated, aligned with the Trust's mission, and mindful of available resources.

8. Other administrative duties as required.

The role of Executive Director often requires addressing responsibilities that do not fit neatly into one category. Throughout the year, I continued to respond to the many administrative, operational, and organizational needs that arose while ensuring that the overall work of CTAC continued moving forward.

Some of the most important work happens in these moments addressing an unexpected issue, helping a staff member work through a challenge, responding to a community concern, or stepping into a new initiative that requires leadership and direction. I have learned that flexibility is essential to this role and that no two days

are exactly alike. This might mean taking an evening call from several providers frustrated with another organization's role in a community initiative, reaching out to a key stakeholder to build buy-in on a project central to both of our missions, or serving as a peacekeeper when tensions arise around a community issue.

Overall, my goal throughout the year has been to ensure that CTAC operates as a strong, responsive, and well-managed organization. With the support of my leadership team and staff, we have continued to strengthen our culture, support our staff, and create an environment where people can do their best work. This allows us to remain responsive to the needs of our community while keeping our focus on what matters most, ensuring children and families across Alachua County have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

V. COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND ADVOCACY

Community relations and advocacy remain central to the work of The Children's Trust. Throughout the year, my team and I continued to focus on ensuring that CTAC is visible, accessible, and actively engaged in the community. This work goes beyond simply sharing information about what we fund. It is about building relationships, listening to the people and organizations closest to the issues, communicating the impact of our work, and using our voice to advocate for children and families.

1. Establishment and oversight of mechanisms to communicate the activities of CTAC to the community.

Throughout the year, my team and I continued to strengthen the ways we communicate CTAC's work, priorities, and impact to the community. Through community presentations, meetings, newsletters, social media, media opportunities, publications, events, and direct engagement with stakeholders, we worked to ensure that people understood not only what the Trust does, but why our work matters. This included:

- *Publishing two editions of our Parenting Playbook Resource Magazine, which shares practical resources and information for families alongside stories highlighting the work of CTAC and our funded partners.*
- *Publishing our Program Guide*
- *Publishing a monthly newsletter, "Tidbits"*
- *Publishing our Summer Camps Guide*
- *Publishing our Annual Report and distributing it to stakeholders county-wide*
- *Social Media Accounts: Facebook (250,000 views), Instagram (38,300 views), and an increased LinkedIn presence*
- *Community Conversations monthly Podcast (YouTube, RSS, Website) and the CTAC Morning Show on Tu Fiesta*
- *Press Releases on major initiatives resulting in positive news coverage*
- *Key Presentations: Alachua County Property Appraiser's Office, Alachua County Community Citizen Committee, Leadership Gainesville, Homeless Education Committee, League of Cities Meeting, and Alachua County Legislative Delegation Meetings*
- *Teens Day at the Capitol during Children's Week: In partnership with Alachua County Public Schools' Amplify Student Voice Program and the PACE Center for Girls, CTAC sponsored 60 youth from Alachua County to meet with legislative members, share their stories, and speak about the CTAC-funded programs they participated in.*



We also continued to look for new and improved ways to tell the story of CTAC and the organizations and programs we support. This included our CFO's efforts to increase the visibility and accessibility of CTAC's financial leadership by building relationships with providers, public sector partners, financial institutions, business leaders, and community. All of it works together to highlight the collective impact of our investments, build trust in how we manage public resources, and help the community better understand how CTAC works alongside providers and partners to support children and families throughout Alachua County.



CTAC Morning Show segment on Tu Fiesta.

2. Develop and foster effective and collaborative external working relationships with community stakeholders to address key strategic issues facing the community.

Building strong relationships continues to be one of the most important parts of my role. Throughout the year, my team and I worked closely with nonprofit providers, local governments, schools, funders, civic organizations, state and local leaders, and other community stakeholders to address issues affecting children and families.

These relationships have positioned CTAC to be part of important conversations around literacy, early learning, afterschool and summer programming, family stability, food insecurity, housing, community safety, workforce development, and other issues affecting children and families. More than half of the 220 meetings I attended this year focused on opportunities for CTAC to collaborate with other organizations and agencies.

This included serving on planning committees, meeting with strategic planners, and supporting the Gainesville Housing Authority's Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant. It also included participating in the City of Gainesville and Alachua County's Community Gun Violence Prevention Alliance Stakeholders and Strategic Planning Meetings, as well as Anchor Institution meetings focused on the Florida Chamber's Prosperity Initiative. Through this work, CTAC has been at the table, building relationships, contributing to important conversations, and identifying opportunities to strengthen our community.

Collaboration continues to be one of the most important ways CTAC advances its mission. Bringing the right people together, listening to different perspectives, and identifying where we can collectively make a difference is central to what we do daily. Throughout the year, we strengthened existing partnerships while developing new relationships to address both current and emerging needs.

For example, our work with Bread of the Mighty and County partners during the SNAP food crisis helped address an immediate need, while our continued involvement with the Early Learning Collaborative and Alachua County Reads reflects longer-term collaboration around early learning and literacy. Similarly, the Family Eviction and Housing Stability Convening brought partners together to

address housing instability and ultimately led to both CTAC and the County funding expanded case management capacity at Family Promise. These relationships reflect what collaboration at CTAC looks like in practice. We turn conversations into coordinated action and measurable outcomes for the children and families who need it most.



CTAC helps support Alachua County families during SNAP Benefit crisis.

Early Learning Coalition Community Collaborative



Special Convening on Family Homelessness



3. Build and foster effective relations among a diverse array of individuals.

CTAC's work brings us together with people from different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives across our community. Throughout the year, we continued to build relationships with providers, families, elected officials, business and civic leaders, educators, funders, and community members. For example, we convened literacy partners to hear from the Helios Education Foundation on key insights and lessons learned from two major literacy initiatives in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. We also invited the Florida Chamber to present at our Early Learning Community Conversation to highlight how early learning supports both businesses and the economy, a correlation many business leaders may not have made previously.

I believe that effective relationships begin with being willing to listen. Even when people have different perspectives or priorities, there is often common ground when the conversation remains focused on what is best for children and families. Because we heard the outcomes from the Helios initiative, we were able to pivot and expand the scope of our local community literacy initiative. Changing direction from our original plan wasn't an easy decision. However, through discussions with partners and seeing the results of a more inclusive plan connecting early learning and K-12, we were able to adapt and lean into the new direction. My goal has been to remain approachable, open to feedback, and willing to have honest conversations, even when those conversations are difficult.

Youth voice was also central to this work this year. This included listening to and learning from our 10th grade 3DE program students at Eastside High School, whose input on how to develop a county-wide youth/teen center was invaluable as we researched this initiative. We were intentional about creating opportunities for people and organizations that may not typically work together to come to the table, share their perspectives, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

CTAC funds and takes part in Eastside High School's 3DE program.



4. Representation of CTAC to the community.

I continued to serve as a primary representative of CTAC throughout the community, sharing information about our mission, priorities, funding opportunities, and the impact of our investments. Whether speaking at community meetings, attending events, participating in collaborative discussions, or meeting individually with stakeholders (reflected in the more than 220 meetings and presentations detailed earlier in this evaluation), I worked to ensure that the Trust remained connected to the community we serve.

However, I am not the only representative for CTAC. Our team, specifically our Community Engagement Coordinator, was everywhere in Alachua County this year. Here are a few highlights:

- *CTAC sponsored more than 45 events county-wide*
- *CTAC tabled and provided resources at 142 events*
- *CTAC had more than 8,852 touchpoints with the community countywide*
- ***Produced 10 Podcasts and 10 Morning Shows***
- *Hosted our annual Lights on Afterschool event, which celebrates the importance of afterschool programs, in partnership with the Gainesville Circus Center*
- ***Sponsored ads on 98.9 JAMZ, Kiss 105.3, and WUFT***
- ***Published 2 editions of the Parenting Playbook, distributed more than 7,000 copies throughout the county.***

Being visible in the community is about more than raising awareness of CTAC. It's about making sure people know who we are, understand what we do, and feel comfortable sharing their ideas, questions, and perspectives with us.

CTAC TeensWork Alachua County interns helping to produce our monthly podcast.



5. Representation of CTAC at various local and state events addressing issues related to the interests and mission of CTAC.

Throughout the year, I represented CTAC at numerous local, regional, and state meetings, events, and discussions focused on issues impacting children and families. These opportunities allowed me to share the work of the Trust, learn from others, and ensure that CTAC remained connected to broader conversations affecting our community.

My participation at the state level also continued to strengthen relationships with other Children's Trusts and Children's Services Councils, statewide partners, legislative staff, and policymakers. I served as the Secretary of FACCT Board and was elected Vice Chair. CTAC staff attended the FACCT Legislative Fly-In in January, Children's Week in February, and the FACCT Annual Meeting in July. These relationships are particularly important as decisions made at the state level can have a direct impact on our ability to continue serving children and families locally. A few other opportunities included:

- *Alachua County Legislative Delegation Meeting*
- *Florida Prosperity & Economic Opportunity Solution Summit*
- *Florida Grade Level Reading Campaign Symposium*
- *North Central Florida Summit on Family Homelessness*
- *National AfterSchool Association Convention*
- *Special Legislative Session on Property Tax Relief*



Rep. Yvonne
Hinson-Hayes



Rep. Chuck
Brannan

Staff also represented CTAC across the county, serving on workgroups and committees including the Florida Grade-Level Reading Advisory Committee, the Safety Net Collaborative, and the Alachua County Child Abuse Prevention Task Force to name a few. Their continued involvement ensured that CTAC's voice and perspective were included in conversations taking place throughout our community, even when I could not be there personally.



Leadership and staff representing CTAC at Children's Week.

6. Work with the local legislative delegation and elected officials to advance the interests of children and families.

Advocacy became an increasingly important part of my work this year. I continued to build and maintain relationships with members of our local legislative delegation, elected officials, legislative staff, and statewide partners to share information about the work of CTAC and advocate for policies that support children and families. Because of those relationships, I was able to provide legislators with information about CTAC-funded programs and specific details on how pending legislation might impact our community. Moving forward, I will meet with our delegation more in-district prior to legislative session to ensure they are aware of our services and impact in advance.

This work became particularly significant as discussions surrounding property tax reform and its potential impact on Children's Trusts and Children's Services Councils moved forward. My team and I worked to ensure that our delegation understood the potential impact of the proposed changes on CTAC, the programs we fund, and, most importantly, the children and families who rely on those services.

This year alone, I traveled to Tallahassee four times and met with members of our delegation an additional time in district, sharing data, program outcomes, and the real impact of CTAC's work on children and families throughout Alachua County. While the outcome of this legislative session did not fully reflect what we had hoped for, these conversations reinforced something important: the relationships that matter most in moments of crisis are the ones built long before the crisis arrives.

7. Communicate CTAC's positions to providers and the community.

Throughout the year, my team and I worked to communicate clearly and consistently with providers, partners, and the community about CTAC's priorities, funding decisions, positions, and areas of focus. This included sharing information directly with providers through newsletters and emails, presenting information at meetings and events, and responding to questions and concerns as they arose. For example, after hearing from smaller providers that our reimbursement structure was

creating fiscal strain, we began developing a potential solution. This fall, we will launch a reimbursement model pilot with a small group of providers. Our CFO also led Town Halls with providers to communicate changes to our fiscal guidelines. These changes were shaped directly by feedback gathered through one-on-one sessions with providers, and the Town Halls gave providers a chance to ask questions and raise concerns in person.



We also held leadership meetings with provider Executive Directors and CEOs to strengthen direct lines of communication at the leadership level. These meetings included updates on the proposed property tax amendment's potential impact, along with other CTAC news. When summer providers told us during our Summer Convening that they needed more support, we implemented weekly check-ins to help them stay on track with invoicing and data reporting. This change directly reduced provider payment challenges.

I believe communication is especially important when decisions may directly affect the organizations and individuals we serve. My goal has been to provide as much context as possible, explain the reasoning behind decisions, and create opportunities for questions and discussion.

As CTAC continues to grow and take on new initiatives, clear communication will remain essential. We will continue working to ensure that our providers and community partners understand where the Trust is headed, how they can engage with us, and the role we all play in creating stronger outcomes for children and families.

Overall, community relations and advocacy this year were about more than representing CTAC at meetings and events. They were about strengthening relationships, listening to the community, sharing our story, and making sure that the voices and needs of children and families remain part of the conversations and decisions shaping our community. With the support of my team, I believe we have continued to strengthen CTAC's role as a trusted partner committed to children and families throughout this community.

VI. BOARD RELATIONS

A strong and productive relationship with the Board is essential to the success of The Children's Trust of Alachua County. Throughout the year, I continued to work closely with the Board to provide leadership, information, and support while ensuring that members had the resources necessary to carry out their responsibilities. My goal has been to maintain an open and collaborative relationship that allows the Board to provide direction and oversight while giving staff the ability to effectively carry out the day-to-day work of the Trust.

1. Provide directional leadership and sound, imaginative advice to the Board on all matters relating to CTAC.

Throughout the year, we provided the Board with thoughtful recommendations, relevant information, and context on the issues relevant to CTAC. Whether related to strategic planning, funding, finances, operations, community needs, or emerging legislative issues, my responsibility has been to help the Board understand the

opportunities and challenges in front of us and provide recommendations for consideration.

This was reflected in this year's update to CTAC's Strategic Plan, which included selecting a consulting firm to work with the Board and developing a full framework to review all funded programs for alignment with the updated Plan. Similarly, during the ongoing legislative discussions around property tax reform, I met with our governmental relations team bi-monthly and had them present updates directly to the Board, ensuring members remained informed on this critical issue throughout the regular legislative session culminating in the special session. Once the special session ended, I worked with staff to ensure the Board and providers understood the impact the proposed legislation posed to CTAC's funding.

Another example was the recommendation to phase out one funded investment category. This was not an easy recommendation, but it was the right one based on the priorities and outcomes established in the updated Strategic Plan. Upholding CTAC's priorities and direction, even when that means making difficult calls, remains paramount to sound Board guidance.

Whenever possible, I try to bring potential solutions, options, and recommendations that allow the Board to engage in meaningful discussion and make informed decisions. This has been particularly important as CTAC continues to grow and navigate increasingly complex issues that may impact the organization and the children and families we serve.

2. Develop and maintain a positive and open relationship and communication with the Board.

I continued to prioritize open and honest communication with the Board. I met regularly with the Board Chair ahead of each Board meeting to review the agenda, discuss emerging issues, and ensure alignment before items came before the full Board. I also made it a priority to reach out to individual Board members, not just at meetings, to answer questions, provide updates, and keep them connected to the work of the Trust.

My goal is for Board members to feel comfortable reaching out to me when they have questions or concerns and to ensure that communication does not begin and end at the monthly Board meeting. Maintaining those relationships allows for more productive conversations and helps ensure that there are no surprises when important issues come before the Board. It also helps ensure that information the Board hears is shared with staff, and vice versa. For example, when a Board member learns that a provider is experiencing a challenge, my team and I can follow up quickly to determine how we can help. In one instance, a Board member alerted us to a potential legal dispute involving a provider's facility. The situation had become a community concern, raising questions about whether the organization's priorities aligned with serving children rather than financial gain. I met with the provider's CEO to understand the situation, and my team conducted additional research and gathered information which we reported back to the Board. In the end, we recommended terminating our contracts with that provider. The outcome wasn't what we wanted, but it was ultimately the right decision, and it started because a Board member was paying close attention and spoke up.

We also lean into Board members' expertise. Often a new initiative can be an opportunity to draw on a Board member's knowledge or network as we research and design our approach. Their varied experience and connections make the Board an active partner in determining where the Trust is headed, not simply where it's been.



3. Ensure the Board is kept informed of relevant policy issues and operational issues.

I worked to ensure the Board stayed informed of significant issues that could affect CTAC, including operational changes, community concerns, funding issues, and legislative developments. As new information became available, I worked to provide context and explain the potential impact on the Trust so that the Board could consider both immediate and long-term implications.

This was supported by several standing communication practices, including a monthly Executive Director's report, monthly financial reports, and monthly updates on departmental activities. I also met monthly with the Board Chair to provide updates and discuss emerging issues. Our Finance Committee met regularly to provide additional oversight and context on the Trust's financial position. Per statute, we published an Annual Report recapping CTAC's major accomplishments, ensuring the Board and broader community had a clear picture of the Trust's work and impact.

This regular sharing of information became particularly important as discussions around property tax reform created potential financial challenges for CTAC and other Children's Trusts and Children's Services Councils throughout the state. I worked to keep the Board informed of legislative developments, projected impacts, and advocacy efforts. Ultimately, keeping the Board informed isn't just about reporting. It's about collaboration and partnership and making sure we're navigating both the routine and the unexpected together.

Scorpio donates \$1,000 to the Children's Trust.



4. Preparation and oversight of agendas and supporting materials for Board Meetings.

My team and I continued to prepare and oversee the agendas and supporting materials necessary for effective Board meetings. This work involves more than simply preparing an agenda. We work to ensure that Board members receive the background information, data, recommendations, and supporting documentation needed to have meaningful discussions and make informed decisions.

I met with the Board Chair at least two weeks prior to each meeting to review the draft agenda and discuss any updates or emerging issues that needed to be included. All staff contribute to the Executive Director's Report each month, summarizing their work, meetings attended, and events represented, giving the Board a comprehensive view of organizational activity. I worked with the Clerk of the Trust to ensure Board materials were published at least one week prior to each meeting, and the Clerk distributed complete Board packets — including printed and mailed copies — within three days of publication.

This process ensures that Board members have adequate time to review agendas, reports, and supporting materials well in advance, allowing them to reach out with questions and engage in more informed discussion and decision-making at each meeting.

5. Preparation and oversight of recommendations as requested by the Board.

When the Board requests additional information, analysis, or recommendations, I work with staff and, when appropriate, outside partners or consultants to provide what is needed to support their decision-making. My team and I maintain a running list of Board requests from each meeting, and we provide updates at the next meeting, often through the "For Your Information" section of the Board agenda backup materials. When a request requires specific action or a formal recommendation, we bring it back to a future meeting under Old Business to ensure it receives the Board's full attention and consideration.

For example, after hearing presentations on homelessness and housing, a Board member requested that staff bring back a recommendation on what CTAC could recommend to the County regarding evictions and potential partnership opportunities with our Family Resource Centers. This required additional research and analysis, which led us to cohost a Family Eviction and Housing Stability Convening, bringing together experts to identify gaps in the eviction process and help staff narrow down a set of actionable recommendations. This work ultimately led CTAC to fund two additional case managers at Family Promise and to recommend that the County do the same. The County agreed, bringing Family Promise's total to four additional case managers dedicated to helping homeless families. We also sent letters to every municipality in the county, requesting that they join this collaborative effort by prioritizing families with children in local homelessness prevention and housing stabilization efforts, providing matching funding for case manager positions dedicated exclusively to families with children, and considering additional investment in Family Resource Centers to expand emergency assistance, including Emergency Rental Assistance, to help prevent evictions before families experience homelessness.

The goal has been to provide the Board with recommendations that are clear, well-informed, and practical, while also being honest about potential challenges or considerations that may need to be addressed.

6. Assist the Chair in matters relating to Board member participation and meetings.

I worked closely with the Board Chair to support effective Board participation and ensure that meetings were well organized and productive. This included providing the Chair with a Chair's Agenda detailing all items requiring approval in advance, helping keep meetings organized and effective. I also worked with the Chair to schedule Board workshops for new or major initiatives, as well as joint meetings with other community stakeholders, reviewing agendas in advance to ensure they met our goals and needs. Additionally, staff tracked Board members' attendance and followed up personally with members who anticipated missing a meeting, to keep them informed and engaged even when they couldn't attend.

For new Board members, I made myself available after meetings to answer questions and help ensure they understood CTAC's processes and Board procedures as they settled into their role. Equally important has been helping ensure continuity of Board leadership. I worked closely with the Chair each year to intentionally identify and prepare candidates for leadership positions ahead of elections at the Annual Meeting, so that CTAC's governance remains strong and well-supported as leadership transitions occur.

Overall, my approach to Board relations is grounded in communication, trust, preparation, and partnership. I believe that when the Board has the information it needs, feels comfortable asking questions, and understands both the opportunities and challenges facing the organization, it is better positioned to provide strong leadership and oversight.

VII. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Strategic leadership is, in many ways, about helping the organization keep its eyes on where it is going while still managing the work in front of us today. Throughout the year, I worked closely with the Board, my leadership team, staff, providers, and community partners to ensure that CTAC's direction remains connected to its mission, responsive to the needs of the community, and grounded in a clear understanding of both the opportunities and challenges ahead.

1. Assists the Trust Board in defining the organization's vision, mission, strategic direction, and policies.

My team and I worked closely with the Board to help guide conversations around CTAC's future direction and priorities. This included continuing the work of the current Strategic Plan while also creating space for the Board to evaluate our progress and consider how the organization should evolve moving forward. The Board retreat was an important part of this process. I selected the consultants who facilitated the retreat and provided them with direction to ensure the conversation addressed CTAC's priorities and the Board's needs. The retreat itself provided an opportunity to step back from day-to-day work and have broader conversations about the future of the Trust, the needs we are seeing throughout the community, and where CTAC can have the greatest impact. Board and staff worked together throughout to shape priorities and goals for the year ahead, and I'm proud

of how that collaboration reflected the genuine partnership between us. This included the development of a fourth strategic goal focused on capacity building, informed in part by nonprofit life cycle assessments of our funded providers. My role was to fully engage in those conversations alongside the Board, provide information and context where needed, and help translate our discussions into a clear direction for the next phase of our work.

This work also extended to organizational policy. Based on a recommendation from our CFO, the Board approved an update to CTAC's reserve policy, increasing the required reserve from two months to three months of operating expenses, to strengthen the Trust's financial stability and ensure we are well-positioned to weather unexpected challenges. This reflects the kind of collaboration that has shaped both our strategic planning and budgeting processes throughout the year. Staff identify opportunities for improvement, and the Board provides the direction and approval to move them forward.

As we continue implementing the updated Strategic Plan, my team and I will keep partnering with the Board to ensure that our vision, mission, priorities, and policies remain aligned and provide a meaningful framework as CTAC continues to grow and evolve.

2. Develops a comprehensive set of guiding principles and values that guide all considerations on how to achieve CTAC's vision, mission, and goals.

We continued to focus on ensuring that the way we operate is consistent with the values and principles that guide our work. While our Strategic Plan provides direction around what we want to accomplish, our values help guide how we accomplish it.

This work took clear shape this year in the development of CTAC's Culture Statement — created by staff to ensure we know who we are and how we want to work with one another and the community we serve. Staff shared their own ideas, perspectives, and expectations for the culture they want to experience at CTAC, and the resulting statement, built through consensus, now serves as a foundation for how we work, make decisions, and support one another.

These principles include a continued commitment to collaboration, accountability, responsiveness, partnership, and listening to the community. They influence how we work with providers, engage families and stakeholders, make funding decisions, respond to challenges, and interact with one another as a team.

I believe it is important that our values are reflected not just in written documents, but in our day-to-day decisions and relationships. Now that we've taken this first step in defining our culture together, I look forward to continuing to build on it as CTAC grows.

Children's Trust Culture Statement

"We put children first in every decision, ensuring supports that are universal, targeted, and community based. We invest in innovative, collaborative solutions that strengthen families and deliver lasting impact. Guided by integrity, respect, and inclusivity — we foster a positive culture where people and communities thrive together."

3. In concert with and after consultation with appropriate providers, community partners, community representatives, managers, and staff, sets the direction and focus of activity.

One of the things I value most about this work is that the direction of CTAC is not developed in isolation. Throughout the year, we continued to engage providers, community partners, local leaders, families, staff, and other stakeholders to better understand what is happening throughout the community and where the greatest needs and opportunities exist.

These conversations helped inform our funding priorities, new initiatives, and planning for the future. Whether through formal input sessions, community meetings, individual conversations, Board discussions, or collaborative planning efforts, we continued to gather information and perspectives from those closest to the work.

My role is often to take those different perspectives, identify common themes and opportunities, and work with the Board and staff to determine where CTAC can play the most meaningful role. Sometimes that means investing directly in a program or service. Other times, it means bringing partners together, supporting an existing effort, gathering additional information, or recognizing that another organization is better positioned to lead the work. This was true of the community's response to homelessness and housing affordability this year. CTAC was not positioned to lead those broader discussions, but we could support the effort through our Family Resource Centers and by convening community partners around the issue. Through that work, we were able to recommend funding additional staff support at Family Promise. This is how I believe the system should work: CTAC cannot do everything, but through collaboration, partnership, and the seat we hold at the table, we can support the organizations and efforts that can.

I believe that listening to the community and being willing to adjust our approach based on what we learn has been an important part of CTAC's growth and will continue to shape our work moving forward.

4. Oversees the development of a business plan for CTAC that anticipates, assesses, and shapes responses to both short-term issues and long-term opportunities and challenges.

Good planning means seeing beyond what's right in front of you. This year gave us real reasons to do exactly that. This required ongoing attention to our financial position, staffing and organizational needs, community priorities, program investments, legislative developments, and other factors that could affect the future of the Trust.

One of the most significant challenges this year has been the uncertainty surrounding potential property tax changes and the impact they could have on CTAC's future revenue. This required us to begin looking beyond the current budget and consider different financial scenarios, the potential impact on existing investments, and how the organization can remain sustainable if significant revenue reductions occur. This thinking also informed our decision to strengthen CTAC's reserve policy balance, increasing it from two to a minimum of three months of

operating expenses to build additional financial resilience against future uncertainty.

At the same time, we continued to look for opportunities to strengthen and expand our work. The development of the updated Strategic Plan was a significant part of this effort. It included a fourth new strategic priority focused on capacity building, aimed at strengthening both our funded providers and CTAC itself. We also continued our review of funding priorities, invested in organizational systems, and stayed engaged with the community, all to ensure that CTAC is prepared to respond to both challenges and opportunities.

My approach to strategic leadership is to remain focused on the future without losing sight of the work that needs to be done today. I believe we must be willing to anticipate challenges, ask difficult questions, and make adjustments, when necessary, but we also have to remain open to new opportunities and ideas. Uncertainty doesn't make me less willing to pursue new partnerships. If anything, it makes collaboration more important. Some of our best solutions have come from bringing the right people together at the right time.

Overall, this year reinforced the importance of thoughtful planning, flexibility, and a willingness to continually assess where we are and where we need to go. With the guidance of the Board and the support of my leadership team and staff, I believe we are continuing to build an organization that is prepared to respond to the changing needs of our community while remaining focused on our mission and our commitment to children and families throughout Alachua County.



CTAC in the news:

WUFT:

10/23/25 – [Alachua County celebrates after-school care programs circus-style](#)

10/24/25 – [Children's Trust rallies families around after-school safety and learning](#)

8/2/26 – [Dr. Heidi Keegan, Alachua County Reads](#)

TV20:

10/08/25 – [Children's Trust seek clarity on violence interruption program effectiveness in Gainesville](#)

2/22/26 - [TeensWork Alachua portal opens for summer 2026](#)

2/24/26 – [Alachua County commissioners discuss gun violence prevention five-year plan](#)

2/24/26 – [Alachua County Commission to hear presentation on 5-year strategic plan on gun violence prevention](#)

3/31/26 – [Gainesville gun violence prevention program expands with technology hub initiative](#)

4/18/26 – [Healthy Heroes Day returns to Gainesville to share child safety tips, car seat checks](#)

8/27/26 – [Family Promise seeks to revive Church shelter program for homeless families](#)

Mainstreet Daily News:

10/13/25 – [Children's Trust of Alachua County approves 6% raise for executive director](#)

10/24/25 – [Children's Trust hosts 'Lights on Afterschool' at Gainesville Circus Center](#)

11/11/25 – [Children's Trust of Alachua County reviews strategic plan](#)

11/20/25 – [October Citizens of the Month](#)

12/09/25 – [Children's Trust of Alachua County selects new leadership for 2026](#)

12/15/25 – [Children's Trust allocates \\$150K for food assistance amid SNAP benefits lapse](#)

1/16/26 – [Sunshine State book festival set to return Jan. 23-24](#)

1/23/26 – [December 2025 Citizens of the Month](#)

2/07/26 – [TeensWork program offers new 2026 summer internships](#)

2/26/26 – [Mainstreet to print 1,800 extra copies for classroom use](#)

3/03/26 – [Hawthorne celebrates groundbreaking for new food bank, resource center](#)

3/26/26 – [SPARC352 STEAM Activity Pop-Up event slated for Saturday](#)

3/27/26 – [Local agencies raise child abuse awareness with ‘Pinwheels of Possibility’ on April 1](#)

4/27/26 – [March 2026 Citizens of the Month](#)

6/09/26 – [GHA, UF Saving Smiles partner to provide free Dental Clinic Days event](#)

7/08/26 – [Children’s Trust of Alachua County awards \\$2M in summer camp scholarships](#)

7/16/26 – [Celebrate the Child event to connect Alachua County families with resources](#)

7/16/26 – [Alachua County Reads kicks off workgroup to enhance local literacy efforts](#)

Gainesville Sun:

1/05/26 – [Dolly Parton Imagination Library honors young readers in Gainesville](#)

2/12/26 – [Gainesville middle school makes attendance something to celebrate](#)

3/31/26 – [Elegance shines at Renaissance Beautillion-Cotillion in Gainesville](#)

5/18/26 – [County program trains postpartum doulas to fill gap in maternal support](#)

Alachua Chronicle:

1/27/26 – [Center for Nonprofit Excellence obtains independent 501\(c\)\(3\) status](#)

2/16/26 – [Gainesville City Commission hears Gun Violence Prevention Alliance strategic plan, expresses concerns about school closures in East Gainesville](#)

2/20/26 – [City of Gainesville invites families to 2026 Summer Blitz](#)

3/11/26 – [Joint Commissions hear update on Literacy Action Plan](#)

3/25/26 – [Safe Kids North Central Florida invites families to “Healthy Heroes Day” on April 18](#)

3/31/26 – [IMPACT GNV launches technology hubs with Children’s Trust of Alachua County grant](#)

5/06/26 – [Alachua County Commission asks school board to review underutilized and vacant facilities to address homelessness; SBAC Chair says he’s ‘against that completely’](#)

5/07/26 – [Alachua County Commission Chair Ken Cornell: Alachua County’s homeless children need us all at the same table](#)

5/25/26 – [Pastor Adam Joy announces grand reopening of Family Resource Center on May 27](#)

6/09/26 – [GHA and UF Saving Smiles partner to host free “Dental Clinic Days”](#)

6/10/26 – [June 11 Alachua County Commission and Children’s Trust Joint Meeting](#)

6/16/26 – [Children’s Trust provides over 1,000 summer camp scholarships for local children](#)

6/28/26 – [Doug Johnson: Why the sale of our Boys & Girls Club property should outrage this community](#)

7/07/26 – [Museum outreach soars to new heights across Alachua County](#)

7/15/26 – [Celebrate the Child event to be held on July 21](#)

8/3/26 – [County Commission and Children’s Trust pledge funds to family homelessness, hear literacy updates](#)

8/4/26 – [Gainesville Housing Authority to host annual Back-to-School BBQ this Saturday](#)

8/5/26 – [Alachua County Reads collaborative literacy initiative takes big steps forward](#)

8/26/26 - [Dream on Purpose to premiere student-created short film “Jelly Beans” at free community screening on Aug. 30](#)

City of Gainesville:

3/31/26 – [IMPACT GNV launches technology hubs with Children’s Trust of Alachua County grant](#)

Independent Florida Alligator:

2/27/26 – [From firefighting to baby-clothes sales, TeensWork program trains Alachua students](#)

4/13/26 – [Can AI teach kids to read? UF researchers create interactive literacy app](#)

352Today:

4/17/26 – [North Central Florida Kids’ Charity Receives Grant, Distributes Free Child Car Seats](#)

