

SPECIAL EDITION - AUGUST 2021

# FRESH START

The Official Newsletter of the Port Charlotte SDA Church

## FRESH START TO HOW WE SERVE

This special edition of the newsletter was created because we are excited to share with you how God has brought about a new way to serve our community. It's a miracle! Take a look! →

**Editor:**  
**Laura Dancek**



## FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

By Pastor Dustin Hall, Senior Pastor

The Port Charlotte SDA Church has a long history of being on the cutting edge of meeting needs in our community. In the 1980s the church was commended by officials as being the very first food pantry ministry in the entire area. For about thirty years Rainbows End Daycare was touted as one of the very best places for pre-school children in Charlotte County. We have worked together to operate a Christian school since 1971. Our church is no stranger to trying new things in order to meet specific needs and reach people for Jesus.

### "OUR CHURCH IS NO STRANGER TO TRYING NEW THINGS..."

Over the last year we have taken many important steps toward finding a new direction for community services and outreach to keep us on this front line. We have met numerous times with our entire church, elders, mission committees, and others to brainstorm where we think God is leading us. During these sessions a clear direction has become obvious to us. God was already moving in this direction for some time but He put all the pieces together for us to see in the last few weeks.



## HOW DID GOD LEAD?

Handful of our members worked with the health department



Gave love baskets for new mothers



Diaper drive



Book drive

Nutrition classes, Bible study



Neonatal intensive care hospital unit chaplaincy support

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Over the last several years a handful of our members have been working with the Health Department of Charlotte County to provide love baskets for new mothers and at-risk families. The ministry has been so well received we were asked to get more involved by providing valuable things that facilitate early positive intervention for young families. All of us responded eagerly by bringing diapers for our diaper drive, and books for our book drive that benefited families working with the Department of Health. This effort left such a great impression on the leadership there that they asked our church to be their spiritual advisor and the church they are connected with in their latest effort to make Charlotte County the healthiest county in Florida. We are the only church that has been asked to do this! We have been asked to host nutrition classes with a Bible study, to provide prayer support for their staff, and help the neonatal intensive care unit at the hospital with chaplaincy services.

**"WE ARE THE ONLY CHURCH THAT HAS BEEN ASKED TO DO THIS!"**

This relationship has gotten our creative juices flowing. Our various committees remembered the best things about Rainbows End, and Community Services. They remember the community connections, the positive influences on young children and families, the relationships formed through helping others and they decided on a new direction moving forward. They also realize the miraculous opportunities this new relationship with Charlotte County has offered us.

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Using extensive research, ideas from all of you, and by working in close connection with the Health Department, the church board has decided to open a Family Resource Center in the Community Services building. This model for ministry will combine the best parts of Rainbows End (positive early childhood and family intervention) with the best parts of Community Services (help, education, and relationships) into one dynamic place.

**"THIS IS THE VISION FOR THE NEW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER - IT WILL BE A SAFE PLACE FOR CHILDREN TO PLAY AND LEARN, AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO SUPPORT YOUNG FAMILIES IN THEIR JOURNEY."**

This ministry will provide a safe place for young children to learn and play while their parents stay with them. During this time caring members and volunteers will have the opportunity to get to know them, build relationships with them, show sympathy, love, and be able to offer support. This is the vision for the new Family Resource Center- it will be a safe place for children to play and learn, and an opportunity for us to support young families in their journey.

The other exciting part of this ministry will be the opportunity for all of us to use our gifts. Everything from photography, to chess, to cooking, to sewing and crafts, and much more can be used as a way to bring kids and parents together. Think about using your hobby or interest to host a small group or provide a training. All of these have potential to provide education or show love to people we meet at the Center.

Family Resource Center -  
A safe place to play and the  
best place to find caring people.



Getting this off the ground will take a church-wide effort. We will need able hands in construction, design, programming, and toy assembly. When the Center is running we will need people who are good listeners and mentors who can connect with young parents. Organization and management in staffing will be vital. If your gift is more hands on we can use you. If your gift is relational- we can use you.

**"THE OTHER EXCITING PART OF THIS MINISTRY WILL BE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL OF US TO USE OUR GIFTS."**

Port Charlotte SDA Church is getting back where it belongs- on the cutting edge of community service in Charlotte County. We will return to our place of filling a desperate need that no one else is filling. It is an exciting time to be a member here at PCSDA. Please pray right now for God's guidance as we move forward. There is a lot of work to do, but we are capable and we will work hard with the joy of the future in Jesus on our hearts.



"This is the danger of nostalgia:

In the comfort of a safe and warm time-place, we become blind not only to the real world we are called to engage but also to the movement of God's Spirit in our day. If we don't see the present for what it is, we'll miss the God moment."



Erwin Raphael McManus,  
An Unstoppable Force:

Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind, p. 93



## WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY NEED?

We need families with strong emotional, physical, and mental health because...



2X

Our county has the TWICE the rate of child abuse making us the



WORST COUNTY IN FLORIDA FOR CHILD ABUSE

52% of children tested were NOT READY for kindergarten



The statistics for Charlotte County's children are sadly startling. We can only highlight just a few here. If you would like to know more, [click here.](#)

22%

of babies in the Bayfront Hospital neonatal intensive care unit have had substance exposure



3 x higher than the state rate for childhood emotional and behavioral disabilities

Now that we know more about our community, how can we say "no" to the opportunity God has created to make a difference in the lives of children?

"If we wish our children to possess the tender spirit of Jesus, and the sympathy that angels manifest for us, we must encourage the generous, loving impulses of childhood.

*Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, p. 516*

**1** They identify needs of their communities and start ministries or programs to meet those needs.

**2** They partner with existing ministries or human-service agencies that are already accomplishing a shared mission in the community.

**Two strategies of externally focused churches**

..... Rick Rusaw & Eric Swanson, *The Externally Focused Church*, pp. 29-30



If God has given us this new way to serve, He has also put the gifts, talents and abilities in our church family to make it happen. Tell us how you would like to help.



# What Could a Family Resource Center Look Like?

