



Our Families. Our Future.

**HILLSBOROUGH KIDS  
2009 - 2010 ANNUAL REPORT**

## Chairman of the Board's Letter



Dear Community Friends,

As board chair, I am proud of the successful initiatives Hillsborough Kids continues to display in our community as we keep kids safe and work towards strengthening families. Throughout my board tenure, I have monitored the steady decrease of total children in care from 4,863 in June 2006 to 2,582 in 2010. This decrease means that we are keeping more kids safe through diversion programs and we are helping to keep more families together, which is good news for every child and demonstrates the commitment of our community partners.

As I look back on our accomplishments, I remember with particular fondness the opportunities I had to connect directly with our children and their caregivers.

Each November, Hillsborough Kids celebrates National Adoption Day. At the Hillsborough County Courthouse, dozens of families gather to finalize the adoptions of their sons or daughters, sometimes going from a family of two or three to a family of five or six. Wow! I was fortunate to witness the emotion of these moms, dads and kids as the judge officially makes them a family. It's a heart-warming experience I will never forget.

In March, Hillsborough Kids held our community-based care conference. We convened local, state and national expert speakers on best practices and presented workshops to more than 300 child welfare professionals and foster parents over two days. Spending time learning with folks on the front-line was a great way to better understand the challenges and opportunities in our community.

Also in March, I spent two wonderful afternoons of family fun with our children and their caregivers. On a beautiful Sunday afternoon in Plant City, I attended the annual Lupton's Picnic at Boggy Bottom Ranch generously sponsored by the Lupton family for over 1,000 kids and adults, ate some delicious barbecue and enjoyed all kinds of family-friendly activities. On a Saturday afternoon a week later, I arrived at Circle "C" Ranch in South Tampa for some Easter fun sponsored by the Hillsborough County Foster Parent Association – complete with barbecue and Egg Hunts for all ages. Both events were as much fun for me as they were for our kids!

In April, I was pleased to travel to Tallahassee with over 100 foster parents, children and Hillsborough Kids staff to participate in the annual Children's Advocacy Week which, among other things, encourages our state legislators to put children first as they make laws and allocate state dollars. With our ocean-blue Hillsborough Kids t-shirts, we flooded the Capitol buildings with joyful children and determined foster and adoptive parents, giving legislators the opportunity to see first-hand the people who depend on their wise stewardship of our state's resources.

In addition to these opportunities to connect with the children and families we serve, I have been blessed to work with a fabulous group of dedicated community leaders who comprise our board of directors. With their volunteer leadership and the tireless work of our Hillsborough Kids staff and numerous partner agencies, our community has truly answered the call to make our child welfare system work better for kids. Thank you to my board colleagues, Hillsborough Kids staff, the entire system of care and everyone who cares about kids for their continued commitment to helping our community's children and families thrive.

Mindy Murphy



# Message from Hillsborough Kids President/CEO

Dear Friends,

Hillsborough Kids has experienced a positive year, achieving great outcomes for the kids and the families we serve. Busy schedules, deadlines, meetings, etc., keep us focused on the moment and it is very easy for us to overlook the daily impact we have on our community's kids.

The annual report allows me to step out of the moment and reflect over the years and highlight a few of our accomplishments. In 2010, like previous years, we did some amazing work. I am particularly proud to let you know Hillsborough Kids successfully achieved the arduous task of becoming accredited by the Council on Accreditation. We are one of the first community-based care lead agencies to become accredited as a Network.

Our system is committed to the practice of engaging family and bringing family members to the table to make decisions for children. Family Group Decision Making entails the practice of engaging family and utilizing the strengths of the family as part of the case plan. In the spring of 2010, we were fortunate to host Justice Max Baer of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and his team as they presented practice ideas on Family Group Decision Making from the Pennsylvania child dependency system.

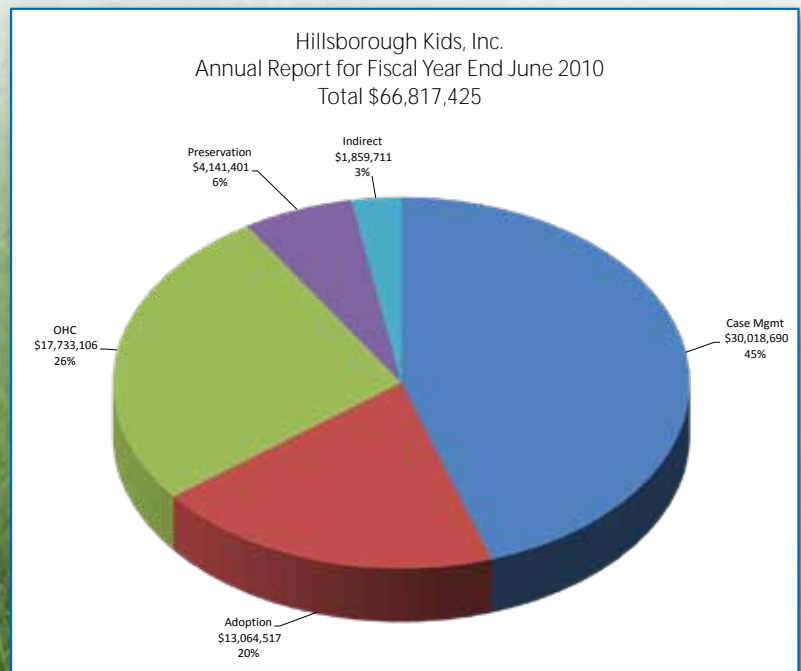
With the collaboration of numerous community partners and dependency courts, Hillsborough Kids supported the implementation of a pilot Infant Mental Health court. The Administrative Office of the Court assisted in creating a unique court division to handle intensive judicial cases of young children with families who experience serious mental health or emotional issues. The pilot is based on a national model that has a track record of very positive outcomes for families with young children.

Finally, without the commitment and dedication of our case managers and direct service providers, many of our successes would not have happened. I want to personally thank every direct service staff that is a part of our great system of care. We all must recognize that you change lives every day and too often your hard work goes unnoticed. I know that the internal satisfaction and gratification for what you do is a part of what drives you to great things. However, it is important that you hear it from the outside, as well. On behalf of our system of care, thank you.

Let's have another great year!



Jeff Rainey  
President/CEO



## Who We Are

Hillsborough Kids is a private, non-profit organization created to manage the child welfare system for Hillsborough County, Florida. Founded in 2001, and funded primarily through the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families, Hillsborough Kids currently oversees the care of approximately 2,500 children and teens in Hillsborough County due to abuse or neglect. Hillsborough Kids mission is to ensure the safety and permanency of abused and neglected children in Hillsborough County by providing comprehensive services that promote strong families.

## Hillsborough Kids' Community Based Care Network of Partner Agencies Provide:

- ▶ Child abuse prevention
- ▶ Family crisis intervention and preservation—providing short-term services for families to assist with keeping families intact.
- ▶ Diversion services – in coordination with Hillsborough County Sheriff's Child Protection Investigation Department—to avoid removing children from their home and help preserve families.
- ▶ Independent living guidance for teens in foster care and those aging-out of child welfare.
- ▶ Supervision, keeping children in a safe and stable environment.
- ▶ Case management—Dependency court supervision.
- ▶ Foster and residential care management.
- ▶ Adoption placement.
- ▶ Foster parent and adoption recruitment and training.



## 2009 -2010 Hillsborough Kids Board Roster

### Officers

Mindy Murphy, Chairman  
Mary Ellen Gillette, Vice Chair  
Constance Trojanowski, Treasurer  
Reynolds Allen, Secretary

### Directors

Dr. Steve Freedman  
Monica Rosenthal Sams, DO  
Carolyn Bricklemeyer  
Melanie Hall  
Liz Kennedy  
Charlie Ketchey  
Sandy Murman  
Al Oddis  
Shawn Robinson  
Tammy Bracewell  
Ryan Weeks  
Kenya Reddy

## 2009-2010 Hillsborough Kids Accomplishments

Over the last five years  
Hillsborough Kids has

- ▶ Kept 30% more siblings together in care
- ▶ Provided connections for 268 children to over 5000 family connections through our family finding grant
- ▶ Reduced the number of children in care by 47% through working with community partnerships
- ▶ Safely reunited over 3,000 children with their families
- ▶ Found "forever families" or adoptive homes for over 2,000 children