Kids' Minds Matter®

Advocates for Mental Health

2021 IMPACT REPORT

We Are Advocates

FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Over the past five years, we have made great strides to support the mental well-being of children and families in our region. With generous supporters, passionate advocates and collaboration with other mental health providers, we have created a strategic roadmap to caring for our community in order to keep up with the growing demand to help our children.

OUR VISION

To ensure children receive the right care at the right place and right time, making the full continuum of services available in our region.

OUR MISSION

As an initiative of Lee Health, Kids' Minds Matter is dedicated to raising awareness and funds that will drive and support opportunities for increased access to pediatric mental and behavioral health care in a five-county region of Florida including Lee, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Charlotte counties.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

- IMPROVING ACCESS TO CARE
- BUILDING CAPACITY IN THE REGION
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP

Impactful Approach

YOUR GENEROSITY IN ACTION

FINANCIAL SUPPORT HAS ALLOWED US TO:

- Add two full-time social workers for 24/7 support in the Emergency Department
- Implement public safety rounds and patient safety plan development
- Align compensation benefits packages for psychologists to aid in recruitment and retention
- Add a psychologist providing behavioral health services in pediatric endocrinology
- Provide comprehensive psychological evaluations for children and adolescents with psychiatric or developmental difficulties
- Add an inpatient care navigator for patients with multiple Baker Act emergency visits
- Add a special kid-friendly, but safe vehicle to transport children under Baker Act, instead of using a squad car

OUR TEAM HAS GROWN

500

SINCE 2016, INCLUDING:

- 7 PSYCHOLOGISTS
- 7 MENTAL HEALTH NAVIGATORS
- 5 DEVELOPMENTAL PEDIATRICIANS
- 4 CHILD ADVOCATES
- 4 PEDIATRIC PSYCHIATRISTS
- 3 AUTISM NAVIGATORS
- 2 LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS
- 2 MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS
- 1 DEVELOPMENTAL APRN
- 1 MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR
- 1 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

Impactful Programs

EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITY

Proactive mental health programs are critically important to ensure challenges are addressed before a crisis occurs. We have made it our mission to train and educate caregivers and leaders in our community.

490+

LEE HEALTH LEADERS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT STAFF

trained in Mental Health Awareness

190+

EXTERNAL COMMUNITY LEADERS

trained in Mental Health First Aid (Youth & Adult)

160+

LEE HEALTH EMPLOYEES

trained in Mental Health First Aid (Youth & Adult)

60+

CAREGIVERS

trained through programs like Dignified Discipline, Parenting the Exceptional Child and Exceptional Student Education

We are providing the most at-risk children and families in Southwest Florida with a haven for them to learn to accept, advocate for, and receive support for themselves and their children. We are helping them realize that progress is possible, and hope is real.

Richard Keelan
Child Advocacy Manager

Peggy, you truly have been a blessing to this family. There was light when times were dark, and most of all hope when there were times of despair.

Kimberly Alphonse
Derron Smith's sister

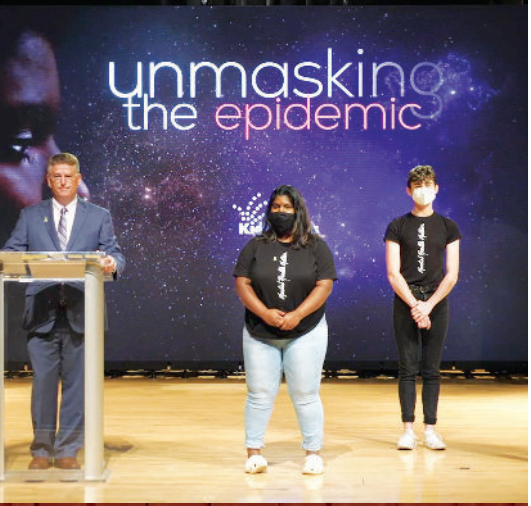
Navigating the Need

Started as a pilot program in Lee and Collier County schools, the Mental Health Navigator program exists to provide peer mentoring and support for families whose children face mental health challenges. Funded fully by philanthropy, each navigator has his/her own experience with mental health challenges with a family member or child and may have already gone through bureaucratic obstacles. They help families deal with challenges they might experience finding and receiving appropriate resources for their children and family.

120+ FAMILIES SERVED

ONE FAMILY'S STORY

Usually upbeat and smiling, Inae'Zha, 16, became blind and paralyzed in 2020 from complications from COVID. Her condition and isolation from school and social engagement put her on the road to depression. It also forced her father to miss work for her care. The single parent and his three teenagers became homeless, splitting up to stay with relatives. Inae'Zha was referred to Mental Health Navigator Peggy Jugmahansingh, who in collaboration with NAMI Collier County's Supportive Housing Program, Collier County Public Schools and the Hunger and Homeless Coalition of Collier County, worked to get Inae'Zha back in school near the family's new home.



Impactful Events

UNMASKING THE EPIDEMIC

On March 18, 2021, we held a free virtual event to educate the Southwest Florida community of the alarming pediatric mental health crises facing children and families. The event featured personal stories from parents and child advocates, testimonials from local healthcare leaders, resources for those seeking help and strategic plans for improving access. The event inspired donations of more than $1 million to support our mission.

NORMAL IS OVERRATED

Founded and led entirely by students, Normal is Overrated is a community event intended to reduce stigma and create awareness surrounding mental and behavioral health challenges faced by youth. Held on September 18, 2021, the third annual event featured four local speakers who shared their personal mental health journeys. The event also featured eight panelists, including mental health professionals who could provide context and answer questions. 120+ people attended the hybrid event either in person or virtually. 24 behavioral health vendors were also onsite sharing available resources and services. Kids' Minds Matter is proud to be the annual presenting sponsor and work with these students to put on the event each year.

Our Work Continues

MEETING THE NEED

While we have grown our services, programs and support, the need continues to surpass available resources. With ongoing awareness and work to reduce the stigma associated with mental health, more families are calling us to help their children in need.

+1,300

IN PEDIATRIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH VISITS OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS

+494

IN BAKER ACTS IN THE FIRST 8 MONTHS OF 2021

THE GROWING DEMAND

Additional providers and resources have reduced the wait time for help, but pediatric behavioral health appointment wait times still exist. The pediatric psychology department receives 13 to 15 referrals daily, with a waitlist of 275 patients.

As of late 2021, new pediatric patients' average wait for appointments is:

- Two months for neuro-developmental conditions and autism spectrum
- Two weeks for mood, anxiety or behavioral disorders, learning disabilities, PTSD and ADHD

Looking to the Future

With the support and strength of our community, we can continue bridging these gaps and transforming lives by improving access to care by:

- Expanding Golisano Children's Hospital clinics, including adding satellite clinics
- Increasing the number of providers
- Adding additional care navigators in the school districts
- Establishing an Adolescent Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) & Autism testing center

BECOME AN ADVOCATE

DONATE what you can

PURCHASE a Kids' Minds Matter t-shirt

HOST or attend a community education course

SUBSCRIBE to our eNewsletter

TUNE IN to Mental Health Mondays

SHARE mental health resources

BECOME a corporate partner

CONTACT your local legislators

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