



Covenant House Florida Newsletter

March 2025

As we welcome the month of March, we're excited to bring you the latest updates, upcoming events and new opportunities for the young people, families and community partners we serve at Covenant House Florida.

Covenant House Florida is dedicated to providing shelter, support and a path forward for young people experiencing homelessness. We are committed to empowering these young individuals with the resources, care and opportunities they need to thrive.



Covenant House Florida
Fort Lauderdale

Event Recap

Cooking with Confidence:

Collaborative Event with Leadership Broward and Covenant House Fort Lauderdale

The Leadership Broward Foundation recently partnered with Covenant House Fort Lauderdale to present the Cooking with Confidence series aimed at empowering young people with essential life skills.

As part of their 2024 service projects, Leadership Broward selected Covenant House as one of 12 organizations in Broward County to benefit from their efforts. This initiative focuses on equipping young individuals with skills such as budgeting, nutrition and cooking.



The most recent event, held at Memorial Hospital, was a dynamic collaboration with Leadership Broward's Spice Squad. The Spice Squad is an inspiring group of women leaders from various community organizations. The event kicked off with a hands-on cooking demonstration led by chefs and dietitians that focused on introducing participants to different types of seasonings, food safety and nutrition. The young people then engaged in a Q&A session where they asked questions about cooking techniques and healthy food choices.

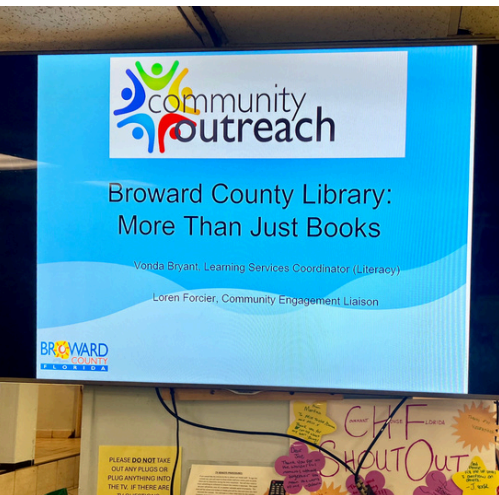
Afterward, participants tested their knowledge with a fun pop quiz and were gifted spice racks to encourage them to continue exploring new flavors and cooking at home. A total of eight young adults participated, including five from the ROPAL program and three from the Safe Haven program where two young adults are in the process of transitioning to permanent housing.



The event was a success with pre- and post-surveys showing a marked increase in the participants' confidence and knowledge of food safety. This series runs twice a month. It provides invaluable skills that will not only help the current participants but also positively impact future generations of young people at Covenant House Florida. By teaching vital cooking and food safety skills, the "Cooking with Confidence" series empowers young people to make healthier and more cost-effective food choices. Which will ultimately allow them to understand and work towards their long-term well-being and independence.



Broward County Library: More Than Just Books



On Tuesday, March 4th, 2025, Vonda Bryant, Learning Services Coordinator, and Loren Forcier, Community Engagement Liaison, from Broward County Library, hosted the "More Than Just Books" event for our young people at Covenant House Fort Lauderdale.

The session highlighted the library's diverse resources beyond books, including educational programs, career development workshops, community engagement opportunities and digital access to test prep support. It was an engaging and informative event aimed at empowering youth and expanding their access to valuable library services.



Empowering Young Adults Through Financial Literacy – Hands On Banking Workshop

On March 18th, Covenant House Florida partnered with Wells Fargo to host the Hands On Banking workshop. This workshop provided our young people with essential financial knowledge. The interactive session covered key topics such as budgeting, credit management, smart spending and protecting against identity theft.



Covenant House Florida team members, including Peter Ramos-Johnson, Tara Rayner and Kate Wilson joined the young adults in engaging discussions and hands-on activities. Participants actively shared experiences asked questions and worked through practical exercises to strengthen their financial literacy.

Participants who complete the full workshop series will receive a \$100 iTunes gift card and a Bose portable speaker, courtesy of Wells Fargo.

The next Hands On Banking session will be held on April 15th, 2025. This will allow the Covenant House Florida young adults another opportunity to gain valuable financial skills and exciting rewards!

A Heartfelt Thank You to Space to Grow for Their Generous Donation!



We want to extend a huge thank you to Space to Grow for their incredible generosity in donating a deep freezer to Covenant House Florida. Space to Grow is an innovative public-private partnership in Chicago that continues to make a lasting impact on our ability to support young people in need.

After touring our food pantry and donating food items earlier this year, Space to Grow wanted to do more to help. They recognized the need for more storage to provide frozen meals for our young people, especially for breakfast and lunch. Our current refrigerator had limited space, so the deep freezer will play a vital role in helping us store bulk items and feed even more young people in need.

This donation is essential for supporting our drop-in individuals ensuring they have access to nutritious meals. By providing the ability to store larger quantities of frozen food, the deep freezer enhances our capacity to serve our young people effectively by offering them the meals they need to thrive.

Space to Grow's commitment to supporting healthy lifestyles, physical education, and community engagement aligns with our mission to provide care, shelter and hope for young people facing homelessness. We are so grateful for their partnership and support. Thank you once again to Space to Grow for making a difference in the lives of our young people. Together, we're building a brighter future!

Youth Milestones:

A Look at Recent Achievements

At Covenant House Florida, we love celebrating the incredible progress and accomplishments of our young people. This month, we have the privilege of witnessing the hard work, growth and resilience of two young adults from the ROPAL (Rights of Passage Apartment Living) program as they take significant steps toward independence and brighter futures.

We are excited to shine a special spotlight on two remarkable young individuals, whose progress has been nothing short of inspiring. Their dedication and perseverance are truly motivating and we are proud to share their achievements with you.



One young adult from the ROPAL program has just reached a huge milestone—purchasing his very first car! This achievement represents his dedication and hard work and marks an important step toward his independence and future success.



One young adult recently transitioned, moved into his new home, and participated in a cooking class led by Manuel, Housing Supervisor at Covenant House Florida. This class helped him learn essential skills, such as preparing meals which are crucial for his independence and self-sufficiency.



Covenant
House
Florida

Volunteer

... Highlight ...



Meet Stuart Elliott

At Covenant House Florida, we are proud to have a dedicated group of volunteers who make a lasting impact on the lives of our residents. This month, we would like to highlight one of our volunteers, Stuart Elliott, who has been sharing his love for music and chess with our young people every Thursday at 11:40 AM. But Stuart's journey to becoming a mentor is as fascinating as the lessons he imparts.

Stuart's passion for music began long before he became a volunteer. His musical journey started in the eighth grade when he teamed up with a fellow student to form a rock band. Playing rhythm guitar at first, Stuart soon switched to the Hammond organ, drawn to its soulful and powerful sound. His musical influences were legends like the Temptations, James Brown and Jimmy Smith. Stuart's unique style was inspired by Smith's funky and jazzy Hammond organ playing style.

As a teenager growing up in Southeast Nebraska, Stuart and his band, "The Prophets," took the local music scene by storm. The band played all over Southeast Nebraska, including Lincoln Public School and community-sponsored parties. Their big break came when they won the City-sponsored "Combo Combat a Go-Go" contest two years in a row, with thousands of attendees at the Lincoln Auditorium. These accomplishments only deepened Stuart's love for music, but it also fueled his growing interest in the piano and its role in shaping the sound of rock, soul and R&B.



After retiring from a distinguished career in information systems, where he helped develop and integrate complex public health systems across the country, Stuart found himself drawn back to his first love—music. His early experiences in music, from rock band days to his admiration for artists like Jimmy Smith, had left a lasting impact. When Stuart and his wife, Sandy, moved on from their nine years of living on a sailboat and traveling the high seas, Stuart felt a strong desire to give back to the community through volunteering.

It was at this point that Stuart began his journey at Covenant House Florida, offering his time and expertise as a Music and Chess Mentor. His love for music, combined with his desire to mentor young people, made this the perfect outlet for Stuart to share his knowledge, passion, and life experiences with the next generation. Every Thursday, he brings his energy and enthusiasm to the Covenant House Florida, where he teaches young people to explore their creativity through music and develop their strategic thinking through chess. Stuart's approach to mentoring goes beyond just teaching skills—he connects with the young people at Covenant House Florida on a personal level. Whether playing a song on the piano, teaching a young resident how to play an instrument, or guiding a chess match, Stuart fosters an environment of support and growth. His goal is to build confidence, cultivate critical thinking, and inspire a love for music and learning.



Through his volunteer work, Stuart has truly become an inspiration at Covenant House Florida. His unique combination of a rock-n-roll past, technical career and dedication to helping others has made him a valued mentor and a beloved presence.

We are incredibly grateful for Stuart's contributions to our community and organization. His story is a testament to the transformative power of mentorship and the lasting impact one person can have on others. Thank you, Stuart for sharing your talents, wisdom and heart with the young people of Covenant House Florida!

How To Get Involved



Upcoming Events



Cocktails for a Cause - Bootleggers & Blackjack

Join us for Bootleggers & Blackjack, an exclusive 1920s-themed casino night (1920s attire is encouraged, but not required to attend) benefiting Covenant House Florida's mission to end young adult homelessness.

Why Attend?

100% of the evening's proceeds support Covenant House Florida's crucial programs, providing shelter, care and opportunities to homeless young people in our community.

Date: Thursday, April 17th, 2025

Time: 5:30 PM (High Stakes early entry), 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

Location: Funky Buddha – Barrel Room, Oakland Park, FL 33334

Covenant House Florida welcomes all young adults 18-24 experiencing homelessness or who are unstably housed regardless of their race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity or sexual orientation), disability, or prior involvement with the criminal justice system.

We rely on the generosity of community members to sustain life-changing programs for our young people. Won't you consider a gift to Covenant House Florida today?

Ways To Give



Thank You for Supporting Covenant House Florida!



**Covenant
House
Florida**

Covenant House Florida provides shelter, food, education and support to unhoused young people. Your generosity makes our mission possible and transforms lives every day.

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