



For Immediate Release

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## HEART Transforms Lives of 50 Families

(Fort Lauderdale, FL - January 28, 2016) . Through collaboration among 15 local child welfare, housing, health, legal, and social service providers, the [HEART \(Housing, Empowerment, Achievement, Recovery, and Triumph\) Alliance for Sustainable Families](#) has housed and stabilized 50 families involved in the child welfare system and also at risk of/or experiencing homelessness.

HEART is a community-based partnership created to assist 50 high-risk families in Broward County, Florida, achieve family strengthening as well as housing and economic stability. Administered by [Kids In Distress](#), HEART employs a supportive housing model, including a housing first approach coupled with evidence-based interventions. HEART provides clinical case management, subsidized housing, economic self-sufficiency, life coaching, legal counsel, medical/behavioral health support, and domestic violence prevention to participating families.

We gathered today at Wilton Manors campus for a community celebration because HEART has reached a major milestone by housing these vulnerable families, connecting them with stable, affordable housing and supportive services to keep them healthy, safe and *together*,+said Andria Dewson, HEART Project Director. %Because of housing insecurity and other obstacles, the families prioritized by HEART face the very real possibility of separation so keeping them together or reunifying them is a major focus.+

HEART is one of five national demonstration sites funded by the [Children's Bureau of the Administration of Children and Families](#), within the United States Department of Health and Human Services, to help vulnerable families realize permanent affordable housing and self-sufficiency. The other sites in the demonstration are: [Partners United for Supportive Housing in Cedar Rapids - Cedar Rapids, Iowa](#); [Memphis Strong Families Initiative - Memphis, Tennessee](#); [Families Moving Forward - San Francisco, California](#); and [Intensive Supportive Housing for Families - State of Connecticut](#).



These sites, including HEART, have succeeded in housing 300 families nationally and are addressing some of the most difficult challenges facing parents and children while keeping them together.

Research tells us separating families and placing the children in foster care, could create a host of life-long challenges and setbacks for every member of the family. Data indicates as many as 40% of homeless adults have a history in foster care, said Alison Harte of the [Child Welfare and Supportive Housing Resource Center](#), which is providing expertise and guidance to sites in the demonstration. Because of the valuable work of HEART and the cooperation of child welfare and housing agencies, we are seeing supportive housing as a very promising approach for these families—one that has the potential to end the tragic cycles of poverty and maltreatment, while keeping children safe in stable homes.

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### **ABOUT Kids In Distress**

For the past 36 years, Kids In Distress has been a leader in child development and family strengthening services. Kids In Distress is a nationally accredited agency dedicated to the prevention of child abuse, the preservation of the family, and the care and treatment of abused children. Visit us at <http://www.kidinc.org>\*

### **ABOUT The Child Welfare and Supportive Housing Resource Center**

The Child Welfare & Supportive Housing Resource Center provides technical assistance to five sites taking part in *Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing for Families in the Child Welfare System*. The Resource Center coordinates tailored, one-on-one expertise and services to help meet each site's needs. In addition, the Resource Center encourages and supports peer learning among the five sites, building on local capacity and the experience of people working in the field. Visit the Center's Website [by clicking here](#).

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