

## Treasure Coast moms team up to help homeless mothers and children

By Hillary Copsey

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PORT ST. LUCIE — Put a couple kids on a playground, and chances are good their moms will start talking.

And once those women start talking, another mom will join.

And then another.

And another.

Using the mommy network, a local group is making playtime more productive.

Moms of the Treasure Coast, a playgroup started last September by Port St. Lucie mother Jill Provino-Hurewitz, is launching a donation drive for another group of moms; women being helped by Mothers and Infants Striving for Success, a Martin County-based homeless shelter.

"We wanted to start showing our kids how to be thankful and grateful and give back to the community," said Provino Hurewitz, mother of 22-month-old Dylan.

What began as a vague goal to do some charity work took shape after one mom introduced the group to Krista Cromwell, outreach coordinator for Mothers and Infants Striving for Success.

MISS Inc.'s mission; helping homeless mothers and children; pulled at the hearts of Provino-Hurewitz and the other moms, including Adell Daly. Daly, like many of the moms, moved to the Treasure Coast with her husband, Rick, and son, Deegan, just a few years ago and doesn't have a support network in the area.

The housing bust and rising foreclosures mean more women and children are left without a home, Cromwell said.

"It could be any of us, especially now, with so much going on," Cromwell said. "We have women calling every day looking for someplace to stay."

Last year, the organization provided housing for 52 people and had a 137-person waiting list for Butterfly Gardens.

The new shelter will allow MISS Inc. to provide temporary housing for 105 people and provide five permanent apartments for homeless people with disabilities.

Government cash has paid for part of Butterfly Gardens, but MISS Inc. will rely heavily on donations to stock and staff the shelter. That's where community groups like Moms of the Treasure Coast come in, collecting toiletries and other supplies.

Like the group itself, which began with just a couple mothers and their children and now includes 20 moms and about 30 kids, the charity effort has snowballed. The moms also are working with Cromwell to host a fund-raising BBQ and walk over the Roosevelt Bridge on May 31.

"Everyone right now is financially in a tight spot," said Jodi Weinstein, mother of 19-month-old Lindsey. "(But) it's little things that don't cost much. And it'll make a big difference."

### **MOMS OF THE TREASURE COAST**

Port St. Lucie mom Jill Provino-Hurewitz founded the playgroup in September 2007. About 20 women regularly attend meetings.

The moms are coordinating charity drives each month. Their first project will benefit Mothers and Infants Striving for Success.

To meet the moms and learn more about MISS Inc., come 10 a.m. Tuesday to the group's meeting at the Port St. Lucie Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso Blvd.

### **MOTHERS AND INFANTS STRIVING FOR SUCCESS**

MISS Inc. is a Martin County-based homeless shelter serving Treasure Coast families.

Homeless women with children are given priority. Women can stay for six months to two years at the organizations shelter.

While at the shelter, women must work or attend school.

The organization plans to open Butterfly Gardens, a larger shelter in Stuart, this year. It also is working on a shelter in Port St. Lucie.

For more information, visit [www.missinc.org](http://www.missinc.org).

### **HOW TO HELP**

Moms of the Treasure Coast will collect donations for MISS Inc. at several locations, including:

• Port St. Lucie Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso Blvd., during the following times • 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday and Wednesday; 5:45 to 6:45 p.m. Wednesday; 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Friday.

• Hungry Howie's, 222 SW Port St. Lucie Blvd., any time.

• Or set up an alternate pick-up time and location by e-mailing Moms of the Treasure Coast at [mtcgiveback@comcast.net](mailto:mtcgiveback@comcast.net).

• The group also is hosting a BBQ and Walk over the Roosevelt Bridge from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 31. Participants should meet at Flagler Park in downtown Stuart.

#### WHAT MISS INC. NEEDS

To open its new shelter in Stuart, Mothers and Infants Striving for Success needs a variety of household items such as:

• Nonperishable food

• Powdered infant formula

• Toiletries, including shampoo, toilet paper and feminine products

• Diapers and wipes

• Kitchen items, including paper towels, cutlery, paper plates, small appliances, and pots and pans

• Cleaning supplies, including laundry detergent

• Bath and hand towels

• Twin and toddler bedding

