



# The Family Beacon

[www.amikids.org](http://www.amikids.org)

WE ARE AMIKIDS. WE ARE FAMILY.

## BREAKING BARRIERS

In 2017, we started the **Breaking Barriers Initiative**, which connected our kids with local law enforcement, helping build relationships between these two groups.

This year, we are working on expanding the initiative to include developing curricula on social justice and civic engagement for our kids.

While still in development, this renewed initiative has been awarded grants from the **Tampa Bay Super Bowl Host**

**Committee** and the **Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office**.

Mike Thornton, AMIKids President & CEO, presented at a recent meeting of the FBI National Academy Association in Virginia recently.

The goal of the Breaking Barriers Initiative is to empower our kids, help them become more engaged in their communities, and teach them positive ways to address social justice issues.

## TAMPA BAY SUPER BOWL HOST COMMITTEE AWARDS AMIKIDS WITH MICROGRANT



The Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee announced that it selected 28 local nonprofits to receive microgrants through its Forever 55 Legacy Microgrant Program.

The grants, which total nearly \$280,000, are part of a \$2 million commitment by the NFL through the NFL Foundation and the Host Committee alongside community and civic partners collaboration to create, support and implement long-lasting initiatives throughout Tampa Bay.

The legacy grant program was created to provide additional opportunities to deserving local nonprofit organizations that have missions, goals and programs that align with Forever 55's six pillars: Early Childhood Education, Food Insecurity, Families, Health & Wellness, Sustainability, and Systemic Justice. The AMIKids Breaking Barriers Program was one of the grant recipients.



Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Sheriff Chad Chronister contributed \$10,000 to the Breaking Barriers initiative in February 2021.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BRIDGE



**Mike Thornton**

President and CEO  
AMIkids, Inc.

It's hard to believe we have been dealing with restrictions due to Covid-19 for over a year. Now that vaccines are being distributed and restrictions are being lifted, we are optimistic that we will resume our **Challenge Events** in person for our kids beginning next fiscal year.

We have missed providing these events for our kids, as it is an integral part of The AMIkids Way. Program participation will be based on individual state and school districts' approval.

We have been able to host virtual Challenge Events during the Pandemic, with the most recent one this past February. Fifteen programs competed in the event.

We have also had tremendous participation from our corporate partners: **Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Advent Health, and M.E. Wilson**. The volunteers and the kids had a great experience.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we've introduced **Virtual Tours** for our programs to showcase facilities and spotlight our youth in place of traditional in-person tours. This effort has expanded to our yacht donors and lessees as well, and the potential is very promising. We found that this is an effective way to connect potential donors to our programs. We encourage anyone interested in learning more about our programs to schedule a virtual tour.

Resource Development is one of the four AMIkids Board roles. It continues to be an area of improvement for us as an organization. As a non-profit organization, we must raise funds in our communities

to support our mission and address budget deficits. To bolster our programs' effectiveness, we have contracted with a consultant to provide "**Fundraising 101**" training for our program executive directors and their board members. This training started in March with a pilot group of executive directors. We will also provide an overview of the activity during the Chair Council meeting in May. We will offer fundraising workshops during the Board of Trustee's conference in October.

Our Annual Family Giving campaign launches this month. Our goal is to have **100% board member and team member participation** during this year's campaign, which ends June 30, 2021.

This year we have added the "**AMIkids Executive Team Member Camp Outdoors**" challenge. All AMIkids family members who contribute to the Family Giving Campaign get one vote and can purchase additional ones.

The Executive Team Member with the most ballots will have to spend one night in a tent! All Family members are encouraged to invite friends and colleagues to participate in the Family Giving campaign.

Please help us meet this year's goal to have 100% board members and team members giving. I'm voting for Heyward Golden, our VP of Operations.

Thank you for your support of our mission.

### IN THIS EDITION:

Relaunching **Breaking Barriers** through community support.

**New Grants** from the South Carolina Department of Public Safety and the Florida Blue Foundation.

**New AMIkids Programs** in two states.

AMIkids designated official apprenticeship provider by **Florida Department of Education**.

**Lennar Foundation Expands AMIkids partnership** to four key Florida markets.

\$1 Million Dollar **Anonymous Match Challenge**.

Virtual spaces help sustain **AMIkids Challenge** Events.

**Annie E. Casey Foundation** chooses AMIkids as "Reimaging Juvenile Justice" Curriculum Participant.

AMIkids Executive Director awarded the 2021 **Florida Juvenile Justice Association** Service Excellence Award.

### IN THE MEDIA:

Michael Thornton sat down with Tampa Bay Business Journal Managing Editor, Pam Huff, to discuss the efforts of AMIkids to prepare youth for the workforce and to place them into jobs.



## NEW GRANTS & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**South Carolina Department of Public Safety** awarded AMIkids with a grant for Covid-19 related expenses at our South Carolina residential programs.

The grant funds the purchase of PPE and cleaning supplies, a campus-wide professional deep cleaning and sanitizing four times per year, and overtime expense related to staff and youth needing to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure or positive test.

The **Florida Blue Foundation** awarded AMIkids \$299,390 to use over 3 years to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings to our program staff in Florida as well as free outreach trainings to community partners such as the school districts we work with.

The Youth Mental Health First Aid training is an 8-hour course that helps non-clinical staff to correctly identify when a youth has an unmet mental health need and to refer them to mental health services.

## NEW BUSINESS & GROWING THE FAMILY

The **South Carolina** Department of Juvenile Justice has awarded AMIkids with a five-year contract for a new program.

Located in Columbia, this new 12-bed facility is in the startup phase and will serve youth with intensive mental health needs.

**AMIkids Columbia** will provide a higher level of treatment and more one-on-one services than any other residential in South Carolina.

AMIkids continues to expand programming in the state of **New Mexico**.

We recently launched two new programs in **Farmington and Bernardillo** and continue to assess several opportunities to grow within the state.

Special thanks to Tom Swistack and the AMIkids Sandoval Board for their support and leadership in this promising expansion.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The **Florida Department of Education** has officially designated AMIkids as a participant of the state's apprenticeship system.

22 AMIkids programs in Florida can now partner with local industry associations to offer industry-certified pre-apprenticeship programming.

Specialties include carpentry, electrical, HVAC, piping/plumbing, and sheet metal work.

AMIkids directly operates a Pre-Apprenticeship program in Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Fort Myers, and Pinellas Park.

**Lennar Foundation** Expands Pre-Apprenticeship Program with AMIkids to four key Florida markets.

Now operating in Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, and Fort Myers, the AMIkids / Lennar Foundation partnership allows free access for youth 16-to-24 years old to nationally accredited training in construction.

The partnership also provides free job readiness, mentoring, and academic support. Once participants complete the program, they are also eligible for stipends and job placements with employers in the construction field.

## FUNDING UPDATES

**\$1 Million Dollar Anonymous Match Challenge!** We are currently focusing on the following priorities:

- **IT Initiative:** An innovative system that uses real-time data analytics to track, report, and improve outcomes.
- **Infrastructure:** To ensure that building maintenance and upgrades are completed so that we can continue to safely welcome youth into our family.
- **Teacher Retention & Training:** Allows us to provide professional development and training, recruit quality teachers, and increase education performance.
- **Vocational Education:** To help our youth explore and prepare for careers by teaching them workplace readiness skills, vocational certification and providing job placement.:

## FAMILY GIVING CAMPAIGN ENDS JUNE 30TH!

Our goal - 100% board & staff participation in an effort to show support for our mission through not only our time, but our financial commitment!

## MATCHING GRANT OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR PROGRAMS

The Foundation Board has introduced a new Matching Grant to our programs.

Up to \$5,000 can be matched to our programs in support of our mission this fiscal year!

Support our mission, visit

[give.amikids.org](http://give.amikids.org)

# REIMAGING JUVENILE JUSTICE



The Annie E. Casey Foundation has chosen AMIkids Baton Rouge as “Reimagining Juvenile Justice” Curriculum Participant, one of only 16 sites identified nationwide.

Reimagining Juvenile Justice is a program designed for professionals working with youth involved in the juvenile justice system and their families. The training curriculum aims at developing capacities in support professionals to divert and redirect youth to appropriate and fair justice options, including those requiring a high degree of cross-system collaboration and coordination.

The training is research-based and aims at showing adolescents how to thrive in a positive environment with the support of caring adults. RJJ equips agencies and organizations to take the concepts, curriculum, and instructional approach back to their home jurisdictions.

“We are pleased that AMIkids is partnering with local juvenile justice system stakeholders to bring the Reimagining Juvenile Justice curriculum and training to East Baton Rouge Parish,” said David E. Brown, a senior associate at the Foundation.

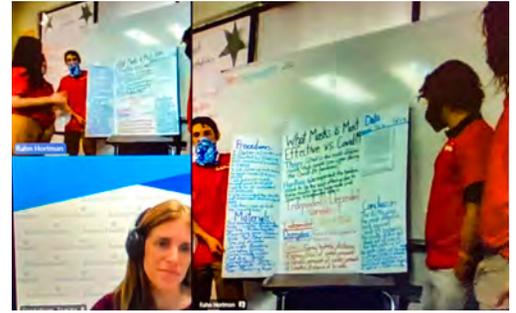
AMIkids Baton Rouge, in partnership with local law enforcement, district attorney’s office, mayor’s office, local foundations, and others, plans to utilize the RJJ training model to support the launch of the Breaking Barriers program.

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

We hosted (again) a very successful **Virtual Challenge Event** with more than 15 programs in several states.

Event participants competed in creative writing challenges, a quiz bowl, and mock interviews.

Several of our corporate partners participated as judges for the events, and the kids had a blast!



Special Thanks to **AdventHealth, M.E. Wilson, and Enterprise** for volunteering their time to support this event!



AMIkids recently hosted a virtual tour and live Q&A with **Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium**.

More than 400 attendees of the virtual event got a VIP tour of the facilities and learned about the mission at Mote Marine.

The youth asked dozens of live questions, such as “how many teeth do sharks have?” and “how long can loggerhead turtles live?”

As a result of the Pandemic, the partnership with Mote Marine, borne out of the AMIkids Floating Classroom, has also evolved to include virtual learning experiences.

## OUR STAFF = OUR SUCCESS



Carlos Valdes, Executive Director at AMIkids Tampa, earned the 2021 **FJJA Service Excellence Award**. Christian Minor, Executive Director of the Florida Juvenile Justice Association, presented him with a plaque.

Carlos is an experienced Executive Director with a demonstrated history of working in the non-profit organization management industry. In 2016 he completed a Master’s focused in Counseling Psychology from Nova Southeastern University.



#WeAreAMIkids | 813.887.3300 | AMIkids.org

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