

## Foundation to help kids with addicted parents



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MANATEE — Based on their philanthropic record, Charles and Margery Barancik of Sarasota have a heart for children.

The Sarasota couple started a foundation in 2014 to award grants in education, humanitarian causes, arts and culture, the environment and medicine. And they are putting some more of their money where their heart is.

The Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation has awarded a grant of \$7,160 to Manatee Community Foundation to form an action team comprised of members of the community and local government to help children in Manatee County requiring foster care after their parents and guardians have become addicted to heroin and other opioids, Susie Bowie, executive director of the Manatee Community Foundation, announced Monday.

From Jan. 1 through Oct. 31, 2016, 439 children in Manatee County were removed from their homes, overwhelming the social service agencies trying to keep pace, Bowie said. Not all removals were due to drug addiction.

“We are thrilled we are involved,” Cheri Coryea, director of neighborhood and community services for Manatee County Government, said Monday.

“Child removals are such a hard issue,” Coryea added. “I am excited this group is not just government, but also community and together we can all drill down and look at this from the child’s aspect.”

Those invited so far include representatives from Centerstone of Florida, Children’s Guardian Fund, Everyday Blessing, Family Partnership Center, Florida Department of Children & Families, Guardian Angels of Southwest Florida, Manatee Children’s Services, Manatee Community Action Agency, Manatee County Government, The Florida Center and YMCA of Sarasota’s Safe Children’s Coalition, Bowie said.

“We encourage others who are familiar with foster care issues to reach out and contact us about participating,” said Bowie, whose phone number is 941-556-5444.

The action team will meet at MCF six times over the next two months, with the first meeting at 9 a.m. Wednesday at MCF, 2820 Manatee Ave. W., Bradenton, Bowie said.

“We want to try to include all the organizations who work with children,” Bowie said. “This will be a very structured process. No one will arrive with the answer. It’s all about coming together and working through the issues and coming up with proposed solutions.”

The Barancik Foundation made the first move, believing an action plan could be developed based on input from the nonprofit agencies that serve children in foster care.

“We heard about the foster care situation in Manatee County and called Manatee Community Foundation to ask how we could partner to lend support,” said Teri A. Hansen, president and chief executive officer of the Barancik Foundation.

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