

## ANOTHER WONDERFUL YEAR FOR THE CHILDREN

Kids Count in Alachua County strives to help transform children's futures through individualized academic support, social skill development, and inspiring enrichment. Our positive impact is the result of caring and committed people - the staff, tutors, volunteers, UF faculty, retired teachers, community partners, and supporters – and each are essential in helping every child reach his or her full potential!

## THE STUDENTS HARD WORK PAYS OFF AGAIN



One-on-one tutoring, in collaboration with UF's College of Education, is provided twice weekly for each student. Homework help and additional academic support is provided daily by our staff and volunteers. The results at the end of the school year?

- 30 of 44 students advanced one or more grade levels in reading comprehension
- 10 additional students were reading at grade level relative to the start of the year
- 89% of children were promoted to the next grade

## SMILING FACES

- Five Kids Count students were students of the month at their schools this semester!
- A kindergartner, very insecure at the beginning of the year, is now doing her homework confidently and independently!
- A 2nd grader who was easily frustrated at the start of the school year has made great strides in learning to express his feelings and respond instead of react!
- A 1st grader who initially struggled mightily with homework and tutoring, over time and with strong encouragement from tutors, volunteers and staff, became one of our most attentive students!

## MEETING EACH CHILD'S NEEDS

Kids Count's goal is to support the development of each child individually. This year encouragement and a nurturing environment had positive impacts for specific students that included

- Being able to focus on school work and activities,
- Working and playing cooperatively with others,
- Persevering on challenging school work, and
- Learning new ways to manage anger.



## ... Site Locations ...

### Faith United Methodist Church

*Serving Rawlings Elementary Students*

3701 NE 15th St., Gainesville, FL 32609

(352) 372-0038

Program Director

Keri O'Neal

Keri.kidscount@gmail.com

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 2:45-5:45

Fridays: 1:30-5:00

### The Rotary Boys & Girls Club Mentor Center

*Serving Williams Elementary Students*

1100 SE 17th Dr., Gainesville, FL 32641

(352) 372-1485

Program Director

Kristan Kolb-Ellison

Kristan.kidscount@gmail.com

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays &

Fridays: 1:45-5:00

Wednesdays: 12:30-4:00

# BIG THANK YOU'S!

Our transformative programs for elementary students who need extra support are made possible by the wonderful generosity of individuals and families in the Gainesville area community. This year individual and family contributions combined for 67% of all donations, and we are very appreciative of your support.

In addition, the following organizations provided financial support and we would like to say Thank You very much to them as well: United Way of North Central Florida, Akroyd Foundation and the Community Foundation of Central Florida, TB Goods, Kiwanis Club of Gainesville, Pamphalon Foundation, Jordan Giving Hope Foundation, and Trinity UMC.

We would also like to thank our media sponsors for their help in spreading the Kids Count message.



## CHARACTER TRAITS

This past year, the students focused on the following character traits: Respect, Responsibility, Trust & Friendship, Caring "Crafts for a cause," Caring & Acceptance, Honesty & Integrity, Compassion & Kindness, Citizenship, Determination, and Perseverance & Celebration.

## *A Message from the President*

This has been a big year at Kids Count and the success of our students is due to the contributions of our wonderful staff, board, UF partners and volunteers. We are sad to see our 14 third graders leave the program but excited for them as they move on. Thirteen of these students have been promoted to fourth grade! We are especially fortunate to have on-going and outstanding leadership from Bill Hutchinson, our Executive Director, and Kristan Kolb-Ellison, the Director of the Mentor Center site. There are so many Kids Count accomplishments to note, and I highlight just a few to help you see how busy this spring has been:

- All the students at the Mentor Center collaborated with their UF tutors and students from a UF technology class to create stop motion videos and participated in an inquiry showcase at UF in April!
- Spencer Douglas led a group of his peers and family in creating a playground space for our students at the Faith United site as his Eagle Scout project—an amazing contribution!
- All Kids Count students have participated in tennis lessons with Aces in Motion (AiM) this spring.
- A garden project "sprung up" at the Faith site and there will be more gardening in our future at both sites thanks to collaborations with community partners.
- Collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club has been firmly established and we are pleased this will continue to grow over the next year.

As the year ends we are sad to say farewell to Cat Demps who has provided fantastic leadership as Director of the Faith United site but we wish her well as she dedicates her time to mentoring work that is her passion. As the new Director at the Faith site we are pleased to welcome Keri O'Neal, who comes to us with great experience in after school programs at the YMCA and strong connections to East Gainesville families and community. We are excited to welcome her to the Kids Count family. Thanks to all of you who have played a role in this year's successes whether as staff, volunteer, intern, funder, community partner or board member. Kids Count depends on all of you and we cannot thank you enough!

*Dorene Ross, Ed.D*

Board President,  
Kids Count in Alachua  
County

Helping children reach their full potential by supporting their success in school and life with after school programs that focus on literacy, social skills, and a love of learning.



## UF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECT & SHOWCASE

On April 25 at the UF College of Education's Norman Hall, Kids Count students showcased their work with Stop Motion video, Kids' Stories Count. The event was the culmination of a UF/Kids Count collaboration that combines touch screen technology using iPads, stop motion animation software, and the wonderful creativity of the Kids Count students to tell stories in unique ways. The Kids Count kindergarten through 3rd grade students debuted their movies and were recognized for their creative work. ●



## GRADUATION@KC!!



We're so excited that this academic year our program successfully graduated twelve 3rd graders. Meeting criteria for both academic improvement and character traits, we are so proud of these children for their accomplishments. ●

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

What a great year we had at Kids Count. The volunteers have worked extremely hard to keep the program running smoothly and getting home work completed. For this, we thank you all.

We would like to send out a special "Thank You!" to Ms. Uneeda Buchanan, our very special Kids Count bus driver. She volunteered to drive every day, shuttling students from Williams Elementary to the Mentor Center. She also agreed to drive for several very special enrichment trips for both sites. By her willingness to help with the transportation needs of Kids Count, we were able to save on higher costs for hiring buses from the County. ●

## TUTOR CORNER

One of our tutors wrote about the impact her student has had on her. This note highlighted the fact that as much as we try to change the lives of our students through positive influences, the students continue to touch our hearts through the work they do and the accomplishments they make. It reminds us of the importance of our work.

"Today I was greatly impacted by the turn around my student made. I do not know what this program was meant to teach all of us but I have become very personally attached to my time with him and have grown to care for him as an individual. As I told you earlier, everyday up until today he has expressed discouragement and lack of motivation. I felt as though we were just going through the steps but I was not having an impact. This discouraged me as well. We have been learning in class that students with lack of self-motivation and confidence often need constant praise for effort and encouragement so I have been trying my best to do this. Today he finally showed change. Although I have not seen a huge improvement in his reading, I believe his change in attitude towards learning is the first step. I want to really praise him on the attitude he had this last session so he understands that it is the right attitude to have." "I am just very excited about the tutoring session I had today and I want to leave him with the level of motivation he had today."

Thank you Taylor G. for reminding us to appreciate the small steps the students make. These small steps lead to giant leaps. ●





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www.KidsCountAlachuaCounty.org

### Board of Directors

Dorene Ross, Ph.D., *President*  
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Ward Simonton, Ph.D.  
Dick Hughes  
Tricia Garzon  
Brian Myers

### Education Staff

Kristan Kolb-Ellison  
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Keri O'Neal  
*Director, Faith UMC Program*  
Keri.kidscount@gmail.com  
Bill Hutchinson  
*Executive Director*  
Bill.kidscount@gmail.com

## How can YOU make a difference?

### Your Tax-Deductible Donation Counts for Kids!

Kids Count's priority academic enhancement for the coming school year is to incorporate math tutoring. Will you consider financially supporting this initiative? Your support will help ensure the launch of math tutoring will be wonderfully successful for the 50 kindergarten through 3rd grade students who will be starting in August!

- \$150** | all cardstock needed
- \$200** | lamination of all special card sets
- \$300** | 25 sets of "elementary" sized dry erase boards
- \$300** | 1 iPad (and we need 10 to get started!)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(as you wish it to appear in print)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

See our website [www.KidsCountAlachuaCounty.org](http://www.KidsCountAlachuaCounty.org) for more giving levels. Consider using the PayPal feature to pay with your debit or credit card or return this coupon with your check made payable to Kids Count (P.O. Box 358272, Gainesville, FL 32635-8272).

☐ I would like to make even monthly payments

Donating **MONTHLY** is a wonderful way to contribute. Spread any of these commitment levels over the year with a monthly contribution - for example, you can sponsor an iPad for only \$25/month!

## Would you like to volunteer?

We'd love to have you! Orientations are scheduled twice a month. Contact Bill at [bill.kidscount@gmail.com](mailto:bill.kidscount@gmail.com).



More news and updates available at our website!

Download a QR code reader to your smartphone to scan the kids count QR code!



If you would like to receive future newsletters by email, please email us at: [bill.kidscount@gmail.com](mailto:bill.kidscount@gmail.com)

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