

# TCPALM

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## Place of Hope Luncheon Celebrates 3 years of serving local foster children

Jamie Bond, For Luminaries



(Photo: Liz McKinley/For Luminaries)

At the third annual Sea of Hope Luncheon, four local heroes were honored for their devotion to foster children.

On March 29 at Willoughby Golf Club, guests witnessed volunteer Jennifer Burrage receive Volunteer of the Year, while local foster family Richard and Erica Brinson received Foster Family of the Year. Rep. MaryLynn Magar accepted a Legislator of the Year award, and Place of Hope's second annual Hero of Hope award was given to Rani Mathura.

"Place of Hope has done so much for our community and children. I'm blessed to be able to help foster families in our area because what they do truly matters," said Burrage. "They are impacting the future of these children by being the hands and feet of Jesus."

Co-chaired by Caye Johnson, Cristy Brown and Deana Peterson, this annual signature luncheon raised money to sustain and grow its programs, as well as the recruitment and licensing of more loving foster families.

More than three years ago, Place of Hope was invited to expand into the Treasure Coast to respond to the need for foster families. Since February 2015, Place of Hope has cared for more than 209 children, licensed 80 foster families and witnessed 21 adoptions.



Place of Hope's Jamie Bond, left, Volunteer of the Year recipient Jennifer Burrage and luncheon co-chair Caye Johnson. (Photo: Robert Perez/For Luminaries)



Place of Hope's Foster Family of the Year recipients Richard and Ericah Brinson, left, and event co-chair Deana Peterson. (Photo: Robert Perez/For Luminaries)

"There is a great need in the Treasure Coast communities. We are excited to be here serving alongside our foster families, volunteers and supporters," said founding CEO Charles L. Bender III. "In just three years we have seen incredible success. Together, we are providing hope in the lives of abused children and trafficking victims."

Foster Family of the Year recipients Richard and Ericah Brinson said, "There are so many amazing ways that fostering has changed our lives. Being able to provide a safe, stable and loving home to vulnerable children who are alone, is so rewarding. Seeing their growth and watching them blossom is beautiful. The support from Place of Hope and its volunteers enable us to keep fighting the good fight!"

Sea of Hope luncheon sponsors included Guardian Sponsor – Waterblasting Technologies; Table Sponsors – St. Lucie Pump & Water, The Palmer Realty Group, Medalist Building Group, Apple Tree Academy, Healthy Keane, Deana Peterson of Re/Max Stuart, Cummings & Lockwood LLC, The Brunk Family, Ron and JC Brown, Espinal, Stern & Whittington at Morgan Stanley, and Wiglesworth-Rindom Insurance Agency; Advocate Sponsors – Wallace Volvo and Back in Action Medical Center; Hope Sponsors – Sarah Pietkivitch of Re/Max Stuart/Palm City, Peggy Hornick of East Coast Mortgage, Starfish Title Agency LLC, Melanie Fenner, Cotleur & Hearing, Hooks Construction, Carr, Riggs & Ingram and State Insurance.

## About Place of Hope

Celebrating 17 years of serving Florida's children in 2018, Place of Hope was ranked the No. 1 nonprofit for Youth Development, Shelter, and Crisis Services in the Nation by Charity Navigator and one of the "11 Top-Rated Charities That Changed The World In 2014" by The Huffington Post. Place of Hope is a unique, faith-based, state-licensed children's organization providing family-style foster care (emergency and long-term); family outreach and intervention; maternity care; safety for victims of domestic minor sex trafficking; transitional housing and support services for youth aging out of foster care; housing and support services for homeless families; foster care recruitment and support; hope and healing opportunities for children and families who have been traumatized by abuse and neglect through our region. For more information, visit [www.placeofhope.com](http://www.placeofhope.com).



Bonney Johnson, left, Rosemary Crandall, and Deb Duvall at the Sea of Hope Luncheon March 29 at Willoughby Golf Club. (Photo: Liz McKinley/For Luminaries)