



## Message from our CEO

We closed January here at ACTS with a Town Hall meeting for the workforce. It is always a pleasure to engage directly with our most valuable asset, our amazing front line staff. I am happy to report that we are about to start the construction phase for the first psychosocial clubhouse in Hillsborough County. We hope to begin member pre-registration in March. Leadership and the Board of Directors are fully supportive to seeing this project through which has been several years in the making. To learn more about the Clubhouse, check out this short video [here](#). In the next few months, our Adult Addictions Receiving Facility will be moving back to its previous location on 50th Street – more details will be announced in the spring. ACTS remains committed to providing the best treatment care to the most vulnerable individuals in the communities we serve, now more than ever. There was a [recent news story](#) about an opioid 20 times stronger than fentanyl in our area. We know that it is very important to keep our doors open and throughout the pandemic we have done just that. With the increased number of overdose cases, we remind you to be aware of the signs of overdose including blue/purple fingernails, blue/purple lips, difficult breathing, unconsciousness, clammy skin, vomiting, pinpoint pupils, and drowsiness. If you need to pick up a naloxone kit in Florida, visit this website <https://isavefl.com/> to find a location where you can get a box that will possibly save the life of someone overdosing on opioids. Please continue to stay safe and well.



Asha Pereyra  
ACTS CEO

## ACTS Receives Donations from HCSO Homeless Outreach



Special thanks to the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Homeless Outreach team for their donations of much needed appliances to the Hillsborough County Housing Program. "Dep. Krager called and offered washers, dryers and refrigerators to our permanent housing clients in Hillsborough County," said Hayward Davis, Program Administrator for Housing. "Our clients go through large appliances quickly, so this generous donation will be a big savings for ACTS!"

Thank you again, HCSO and Deputy Krager for your donation.

## Meet Giffe' Gill

Giffe' Gill started at ACTS in May 2006 as a case manager in Polk County Housing Program, and now serves as the Polk Housing Supervisor. In this program, there are three different programs – Polk HEART, Polk Scattered Sites and Winter Haven Scattered Sites – which is 37 units in Polk County. To be part of the Polk Housing program, residents must be considered homeless, have a disability and be referred by the Homeless Coalition of Polk County. “When a client enters our program, we understand that the transition from homelessness can be difficult, so we encourage them to try and remain in housing for at least one year – but there is no time limit,” said Giffe. “Our goal is for residents to become independent and maintain their home on their own without assistance.” While in the ACTS Polk Housing Programs, clients receive case management from staff including peer support, life skills training, counseling and incidental support. Giffe' spends most of her time out in the field meeting with clients, as well as her team and landlords. One of Giffe's favorite client stories involves a family that was able to “graduate” from the program. “We had a client who had been with the Polk Housing program have a family member and grandchild move in with them to help each other as a family unit,” said Giffe. “The family member got a job and moved up quickly at it and the three of them were able to stay in their unit and take over the lease. That's how the program is meant to work – ACTS helps get the family stabilized financially before phasing them out.” Giffe' sees that the Polk Housing program is an asset for Polk County. “I think for our county, our program is needed, and I don't know what our clients would do if ACTS wasn't here to help.” Thank you Giffe' for all that you do to help reduce homelessness in Polk County!



## Heart Health and Effects of Illegal Drugs

February is National Heart Month, so we want to highlight some adverse cardiovascular effects from using illegal drugs, ranging from abnormal heart rate to heart attacks. Injecting illegal drugs also can lead to cardiovascular problems, such as collapsed veins and bacterial infections of the blood vessels and heart valves. Many drugs, such as cocaine, heroin and various forms of amphetamine, affect the central nervous system and can alter a user's consciousness. In addition to addiction, the side effects and risks associated with use of these drugs include:

- changes in body temperature, heart rate and blood pressure
- headaches, abdominal pain and nausea
- impaired judgment and greater risk of some sexually transmitted infections
- the possibility of added substances (such as talc, poisons, herbicides or other particles) which may cause a toxic reaction
- heart attacks, seizures and respiratory arrest

If you or a loved one need help with illegal drugs, call ACTS at 813.246.4899.

## For More Information

ACTS, Agency for Community Treatment Services, Inc., is a non-profit serving the Tampa Bay area since 1978. As a comprehensive, community-based behavioral health organization, ACTS mission is to apply the best of contemporary physical and behavioral health interventions and social support services available to assist individuals and families to engage and succeed in recovery. Call us today to find out how we can help you - 813.246.4899 or visit us online at [www.actsfl.org](http://www.actsfl.org).

