



## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

As we face this national pandemic together, Forty Carrots Family Center is doing everything possible to ensure the safety of our children, families, staff, supporters, and volunteers. For the latest information, please visit our website at [fortycarrots.org](http://fortycarrots.org).

## MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Friends,

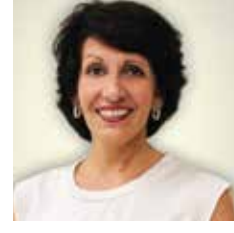
When we began working on this newsletter, our students were happily learning together; families were attending library classes - for many it was the only time they were around other children and parents; our therapy office was bustling with families and children receiving help for mental health concerns; development staff were deep into the last-minute details of Firefly Gala.

Since then, life as we knew it has stopped, and a new reality has set in.

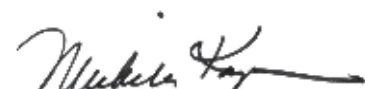
We are grateful that **because of you**, our faithful supporters, Forty Carrots' vital work continues on. Although our physical facility is closed through April 15th, it has not stopped our commitment to the well-being of children and families in our community. We have moved to technologically based modes of service delivery wherever possible. Here is a summary list of what is happening now:

- Mental health programs and therapy sessions continue, using telephone and video-conferencing platforms.
- Individual Parent Consultations are available to assist parents who suddenly have children home 24/7.
- Parenting Education groups for newborns and toddlers will move to online discussion-based groups.
- Preschool is conducting virtual class time allowing children and families to stay connected to their teachers and classmates. A popular drive-through area allows parents to pick up activities for children.
- Administration and Development staff are busy working from the safety of their homes.

Our newsletter stories are ones filled with hope, and regardless of how the world is operating, our Forty Carrots team will be continuing to keep our children at the forefront. It is even more important now that we provide families with the support and tools they need to keep their children safe and well.



Warmest regards, and please stay safe and healthy.



Michelle Kapreilian  
CEO - Forty Carrots Family Center

## AGENCY

### THE GRAVEL ROAD



His name is Cole, and he is an adorable, precocious, 3 1/2-year-old little boy who has faced a lifetime of challenges in his three short years.

His mom, Brooke Baker, says Cole's challenges began before he was born. Brooke and her husband, Matt Baker, a local orthodontist, wanted to start a family. Unfortunately, it did not come easily and after several years of medical treatments, they were overjoyed to learn that Brooke was expecting.

Her pregnancy was gravely difficult, and when Cole was born many weeks early, "we expected to have some issues," Brooke said. She should know. Brooke had earned her doctorate in early childhood psychology. From birth, Cole had a hard time eating, wasn't gaining weight and continued to backslide. In textbooks, it is called failure to thrive. And while Brooke understood that as a researcher, when it was her own child, she said, "It was a very different story."

[READ MORE](#)

## CHILD + FAMILY THERAPY

### FORTY CARROTS COLLABORATES WITH CENTERPLACE HEALTH



Forty Carrots Family Center is partnering with CenterPlace Health to provide mental health services for children and families. CenterPlace Health is a federally qualified health center and has taken over primary care medical services that were previously offered through the Sarasota Department of Health. CenterPlace Health offers caring, affordable health care for residents of Sarasota County. It assures that all patients have access to primary health care regardless of their ability to pay by offering discounted sliding scale rates and accepting many insurance plans. They work with a host of community partners to ensure integrated care that addresses the physical and mental health concerns of each patient.

[READ MORE](#)

## PRESCHOOL

### CELEBRATING GRANDPARENTS ON THEIR SPECIAL DAY

"Grandparents are both our past and our future. In some ways, they are what has gone before, and in others, they are what we will become." - Fred Rogers

Grandparents offer young children the support and love of an adult, other than their parents. It's a relationship different in tone and texture from that of their parents. Grandparents don't set limits, create rules, or offer consequences. Grandparents enjoy the fact that they can "just love" their grandchildren - a sentiment that grandchildren share.


[READ MORE](#)

## PARENTING EDUCATION

### GRANDPARENT GRATEFUL FOR PARTNERS IN PLAY®

According to a 2018 article in The Atlantic, the proportion of children living in 'grandfamilies' has doubled in the United States since 1970. In that same article, according to the Centers for Disease Control, about 3 percent of children nationwide live apart from their parents, with nearly two-thirds of those being raised by grandparents.



"Some 2.6 million grandparents are raising their grandchildren, either because of a temporary change in circumstance for the parents, such as military deployment or joblessness; or something more long-lasting, such as mental illness, divorce, incarceration, substance abuse, or a death in the family," the article said.

Many of those grandparents, thinking their parenting days were long behind them, seek help wherever they can find it. Many in our area find their way to Forty Carrots and its Parenting Education programs, including Partners in Play, held at Sarasota and Manatee county libraries.

[READ MORE](#)

## THE FIREFLY GALA



Based on federal and state recommendations for COVID-19, The Firefly Gala is officially postponed. As soon as a new date can be confirmed, we will notify all sponsors, guests, and supporters.

As information about COVID-19 unfolds, we will continue to keep the health and safety of all our constituents at the forefront. Thank you for your patience while we work together through these ever-changing circumstances.

Our deepest appreciation to all of you for your support.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## CALENDAR

### APRIL 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

## EVENTS



### PERMISSION TO FEEL

Unlock the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society Thrive

#### FEATURING

**MARC BRACKETT, Ph.D.**

#### WEDNESDAY 9/23/20

Partnerships are now available to help make this high-quality educational experience free to parents, educators, and other professionals who care about children in our community.

[LEARN MORE](#)


PRESENTED BY VENUS MED SPA

### SAVE THE DATE!

**NOVEMBER 19-21, 2020**

WWS Sweet 16 Celebration!

[LEARN MORE](#)

## DOUBLE YOUR DONATION



In an effort to inspire the community to make a difference, The Louis & Gloria Flanzer Philanthropic Trust is holding an ongoing matching challenge!

ALL DONATIONS between \$5 and \$500 will be 100% matched, up to \$500,000!

Their generosity will enable us to serve more at-risk children and families - the need is great so we must act today!

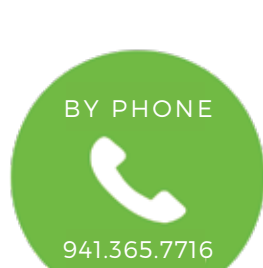

[DONATE](#)

## SUPPORT FORTY CARROTS



Investing in a young child's future pays dividends for life. Your tax-deductible donation today will have a lasting impact. Thank you!

## HOW TO DONATE



941.365.7716



[CLICK HERE](#)



[CLICK HERE](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)

# THE GRAVEL ROAD

The doctors told Brooke and Matt that Cole was just going to need more time, so they put him on an age-adjusted (three to four months) schedule, but as the months went by, Brooke began looking for other answers. She found a speech therapist, who recommended that in addition to speech and occupational therapy, Brooke and Cole should start attending Partners in Play®, a Forty Carrots Parenting Education program held at public libraries, where Cole would be able to put into practice what he was learning in therapy.

This would be Cole's first exposure to a world outside of his home. "Because he was a sick preemie, he was immuno-compromised, so he could not be in a daycare setting. He was, in essence, in 'baby jail' for the first two years of his life," Brooke said.

"These groups were a whole new world for Cole," she added. "And the educators were just wonderful. They met Cole where he was at, not where some book said that he should be." Brooke then started bringing Cole to the Partners in Play® group held at the Forty Carrots Family Center, where he was basically with the same group of kids every week. "That's when I really started to get connected with Forty Carrots and its staff," she said.



"The staff got to know Cole so well through that year of Partners in Play®, that when it came time to consider putting him in the Forty Carrots Preschool, it was the staff that suggested waiting until he turned 3, and then suggested having him go to school five days a week. As it turns out, by the time he started school, his speech therapist was working out of the Forty Carrots building, so she came and did his therapy in his classroom with his friends.

When he started Preschool last August, Cole had minimal ways to communicate. "And now, here we are in February," Brooke said, fighting back tears, "and he is speaking in sentences. Everything is connecting. His brain is working. His body is working. His teachers have created an environment for him that is so supportive, safe, welcoming, and warm that he is thriving."

Brooke drives almost an hour to get to Forty Carrots every day. "We live in northeast Manatee County, and that is how serious I am about Forty Carrots. When we pull off the interstate onto Fruitville Road every day, he says, 'Yeah, school ... Yeah, friends.'"

Today, Cole walks into his classroom and he waves to all his friends and hugs everybody. "As a researcher, I know that early intervention is everything. I mean everything. All of that foundational work that we did at home and through Partners in Play was paying off. He just needed the time and the right environment in order to put it all together.

"The way the doctors described his condition was like a gravel road that had never been driven down. So, you have to drive over that gravel road over and over again, in order to make the tracks that show Cole the way."

Brooke and Cole drove down that gravel road time and time again – first, coming to Partners in Play® in the Forty Carrots building, going down that same hallway to the same classroom at the end of the hall. They practiced washing his hands with his friends and sitting down at Circle Time. "Those were the baby steps that brought us to starting Preschool in August. We walked back into the building, and even though it was a different classroom, it was the same loving environment.

"He has never felt scared at Forty Carrots – not once. And, despite the fact that he walked in here not knowing anyone, with no ability to communicate, they made him feel comfortable and filled him with confidence. That's why I drive an hour to come here because I know he is getting exactly what he needs every single day," Brooke said. They are so happy with his progress, Brooke added, that his speech therapist feels that soon they will begin phasing Cole out of that program.

"Hearing his voice is a small miracle for us. For a long time, the only way he could communicate with us was through a cough-like noise. We communicated with grunts and coughs," Brooke said. "I honestly didn't know if I would ever hear my little boy's voice. I treasure the first time he said 'Mommy,' and 'I love you,' and we have a video of practically every new word because it is such a big deal."

Brooke says she understood what was happening with Cole because of her background and research. "So many people in the community don't know when something is wrong or understand what is happening with their children. To have a Partners in Play® group available in our community is so very important. Parents can go into these groups and be around professionals who support and guide them and refer them to other resources. For some families that is their first exposure to early intervention or parenting information. Forty Carrots is literally changing the lives of families – one child at a time," Brooke said.

"The things that other people take for granted, we will never take for granted," Brooke said. At one point, Cole could not hold a paintbrush. Today the Baker home is decorated with his artwork. Last week, we noticed he said bye to his friends while also waving goodbye with his hand. That is a big deal that he could do those two things at the same time. It's that gravel road again. Show him the road, and Cole finds his way.

Cole's photo will appear on this year's Firefly Gala program cover. "What I see in that photograph is confidence, happiness, and a little boy who has grown into himself – just by being at Forty Carrots.

"We want to remember this year forever," Brooke said, adding, "It is special that Cole is on that cover because we don't ever want to forget what Forty Carrots did for our little boy this year."



## FORTY CARROTS COLLABORATES WITH CENTERPLACE HEALTH

In 2019, CenterPlace Health received a federal grant to implement behavioral health services for children and adolescents. They reached out to Forty Carrots to become the onsite therapy provider because of our organization's extensive knowledge and training in children and adolescent mental health. Forty Carrots Therapist Diana Dusenbury is providing therapy services and assessments to children, adolescents, and families identified by CenterPlace Health's medical staff. Diana works closely with the medical providers to ensure the most appropriate level of care for each individual client. This team-based healthcare model works to provide wrap-around services for clients in one centralized location, decreasing barriers to quality care and increasing the family's engagement with services.

Diana is on-site at CenterPlace Health working with families with children up to the age of 18, who are presenting with mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, behavioral challenges, and ADHD. Diana works closely with the psychiatrist to ensure that every child is receiving the most appropriate treatment. Dr. Sean Paul, a Forty Carrots board member, is the psychiatrist at CenterPlace Health, treating both children and adolescents.

The partnership between therapist, pediatrician, psychiatrist, and case manager ensures that this medical team is working together to find the best treatment options for each client. By working collaboratively, this team is able to individualize services for each child. Families feel secure knowing that they can receive services in one place and trust that these professionals are working together to come up with the best treatment options for their children.

# PRESCHOOL

## CELEBRATING GRANDPARENTS ON THEIR SPECIAL DAY

Every year at Forty Carrots Preschool, Grandparents Day is celebrated, with loved ones spending time at school doing special art activities, singing songs, reading books, and having lunch together.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the children to see the special adults in their lives in their own school environment and be proud to share what they do and learn every day. Grandparents build deeper relationships by meeting teachers, friends, and other family members.



## GRANDPARENT GRATEFUL FOR PARTNERS IN PLAY®

"I would like to take this opportunity to mention how GRATEFUL I am for the Forty Carrots' Partners in Play® programs at Sarasota County Libraries. What an amazing program and impact it has on these treasured little souls. Personally, this program has been a lifesaver. I attend, along with my granddaughter. The fun, learning activities, interaction with other children, and connecting with other parents/grandparents/families have been wonderful. I would like to take this time to recognize three educators, Kristy, Camille, and Leslee. There's always a smile and a warm welcome for each child who enters the classroom. These special ladies rotate each child's activities, and are always listening, and encouraging, not only with the children but with the adults, as well. We're very fortunate to have this program in our lives and to feel the compassion these three ladies bring to each class. I Just felt compelled to share my thoughts. Thanks."

This grateful grandmother also made a donation to Partners in Play® for group set-up. Congratulations to our staff, who are a testament to Forty Carrots Family Center's vision and mission. And thank you to all the grandparents in our community, for stepping up to provide a loving, caring environment for their grandchildren when the need arises.