



MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item 15(C)(1)

TO: Honorable Chairman Jean Monestime and
Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: May 19, 2020

FROM: Honorable Harvey Ruvin, Clerk
Circuit and County Courts

SUBJECT: Recommendations for
Gubernatorial Appointments to
Children's Trust

Melissa Adames, Acting Director
Clerk of the Board Division

The Board is requested to consider and recommend at least three of the following candidates for the gubernatorial appointment to The Children's Trust to fill one vacancy resulting from the expired term of Marissa Leichter, Esq.

Section 2-1521 of the Code of Miami-Dade County, Florida (the "Code") provides for the creation of The Children's Trust for the purpose of funding improvements for the children of Miami-Dade County in the areas of health, development, safety, parental responsibility, community responsibility and other necessary and important children's services. The Children's Trust consists of 33 members.

Further, section 2-1522 of the Code stipulates that seven members of The Children's Trust be appointed by the Governor from a list of candidates recommended by the Board. Section 2-1522 also requires the Board submit the names of at least three persons for each gubernatorial vacancy.

The Clerk's Office has received applications from the following individuals seeking to serve as a member of The Children's Trust:

- Marissa Leichter, Esq. (Incumbent)
- Brandy A. Ramirez
- Benjamin A. Taormina
- Aileen Vega
- Jeanine Verde, Ed.D.

You are requested to recommend at least three of the applicants listed above. The names of the candidates recommended by the Board will be forwarded to the Governor for further consideration. Attached for your information and review are copies of the resumes and/or letters of recommendation for each nominee.

MA/lrs
Attachments

Marissa Joy Leichter, Esq.

7933 West Drive, Apt. 404, North Bay Village, FL 33141 • (305) 878-1781 • mleichter@gmail.com

Miami-Dade County, Board of County Commissioners
Office of the Chairwoman, Audrey M. Edmonson
111 NW First Street, Suite 220
Miami, FL 33128

March 27, 2020

Re: Reappointment to The Children's Trust of Miami-Dade County Governing Board

Dear Chairwoman Edmonson:

I would first like to thank the County Commissioners for your prior selections in recommending my appointment to The Children's Trust of Miami-Dade County's Governing Board in 2012 and again in 2018. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve the community in this capacity for eight years.

During my tenure on the Governing Board, I have been appointed by the Chair of the Board to serve on several committees. Included in those committees are the Program Services Committee, the Nominating Committee and the Ad-hoc Bylaws Committee. Furthermore, I was humbled by my appointment as Chair of the Human Resources Committee, which oversees the evaluation of the Trust's CEO, and automatically qualifies me as a member of the Executive Committee.

My term on the Board commenced when, for the first time in Trust history, a new CEO was introduced. At that time, I envisioned, participated, and created the new strategic plan. Subsequently, a few years later, the Board united again to secure a smooth transition of yet another new CEO. We ensured that there was no lapse in the delivery of the highest standard of services to the children and families residing in Miami-Dade.

Today, I very much desire the opportunity to continue utilizing the knowledge learned from these experiences, and it is my strong desire to be reappointed to the Governing Board. I am respectfully requesting for the vote of the Commissioners to support my continued advocacy for our community's most vulnerable voices.

I am truly thankful for the opportunity and am very proud to serve on The Children's Trust of Miami-Dade County's Governing Board. If I you have any questions or require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Marissa Joy Leichter, Esq.

cc: Muriel Jeanty, Clerk of the Board, The Children's Trust

MARISSA JOY LEICHTER, ESQ.

mleichter@gmail.com • (305) 878-1781

7933 West Drive, # 404, North Bay Village, FL 33141

4323 Reno Road N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FLORIDA FOSTER CARE REVIEW (FFCR), Miami, FL 2015-present ***Training & Engagement Manager (May 2018 - present)***

- Serve as conduit between FFCR's programs, our stakeholders and the community
- Lead recruitment, training and retention of volunteers
- Administer annual feedback surveys from volunteers and community stakeholders and partners
- Connect and engage child welfare and community partners
- Develop, create, coordinate and deliver trainings to volunteers, community stakeholders, and partners
- Complete monthly quality assurance to ensure compliance with contract agreements
- Carry out special projects for the Citizen Review Panel and Permanency Roundtable Programs as assigned
- Remain current on child welfare law, policy, and practice
- Oversee FFCR led events and meetings with existing and potential community partners and stakeholders to engage, support, promote and strengthen FFCR's services and programs

Program Manager, Citizen Review Panel (CRP) (June 2015 - April 2018)

- Supervise the CRP Program employees
- Review and approve all CRP legal Findings and Recommended Orders to the court
- Monitor timeliness of report submission to judiciary and CRP Program staff workload
- Complete monthly quality assurance to ensure compliance with contract agreements
- Ensure all panels are operating in accordance with state statutes, program policies and stakeholder agreements
- Serve as the primary point of contact for child welfare community partners and the judiciary who interact with the CRP
- Manage a multitude of logistical and coordination issues related to review hearings
- Remain current on child welfare law, policy, and practice
- Identify and develop volunteer and staff training
- Lead the recruitment, recognition and retention of volunteers

EDUCATE TOMORROW, Miami, FL 2014-2015 ***Director of Community & Legal Affairs***

- Build and maintain collaborations and relationships with community partners, political leaders, and the judiciary
- Communicate with statewide initiatives and national movements affecting policy and outcomes
- Compose Memos of Understanding to solidify partnerships with institutions, agencies, and organizations
- Meet with legislators in Tallahassee to advocate for bills affecting foster youth
- Advise former foster youth on legal issues and find pro bono attorneys for representation
- Train staff and present to Board of Directors on new laws affecting foster youth
- Recruit mentees and mentors
- Manage caseload of mentee and mentor relationships
- Oversee and develop all programs including summer camps, independent living life skills workshops, and educational support services
- Assist in grant writing and fundraising efforts

GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM, (aka National CASA for Children), Miami, FL 2004-2014 ***Senior Program Attorney, State of Florida***

- Appear in Juvenile Dependency Court, Unified Family Court, Dependency Drug Court, and Dependency/Delinquency Crossover Pilot Project representing the best interests of dependent children
- Manage 80 cases and appear in court daily to litigate an average of 10 cases
- Write and argue motions, attend depositions and mediations, and litigate termination of parental rights trials
- Supervise legal clerical staff
- Collaborate with the Guardian ad Litem volunteers to prepare them for trial testimony and various court hearings
- Liaise with community based care agencies, Department of Children and Families, mental health therapists, educational supports, drug treatment facilities, medical professionals, and family members to promote best interests of children

DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING, Oakland, CA 2003-2004 ***Consultant, State of California***

- Wrote and investigated housing discrimination complaints under California's Fair Employment and Housing Act
- Analyzed issues, designed strategies for investigation, and interviewed witnesses
- Facilitated and authored conciliation agreements between complainant and respondent
- Recommended case for closure or issued allegation

THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO, San Francisco, CA 2001 ***Law Clerk, Homeless Advocacy Project (HAP)***

- Managed 20 cases across disability, immigration, landlord-tenant and tax law
- Conducted in-depth client intake and made recommendation regarding representation

- HASTINGS CIVIL JUSTICE CLINIC**, Hastings College of the Law, San Francisco, CA **2001**
Certified Law Student
- Represented client in his administrative hearing for SSI benefits
- CHILD CARE LAW CENTER**, San Francisco, CA **2000**
Law Clerk
- Published pamphlets on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the CalWORKs appeals process
 - Prepared legal memos for the Inclusion Project, a project to educate parents of children with disabilities
 - Gained experience in landlord-tenant, contract, family, employment, administrative and tax law
- SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC DEFENDERS' OFFICE**, San Francisco, CA **1998**
Intern
- Shadowed a Deputy Public Defender assigned to misdemeanor cases

EDUCATION

- FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**, Miami, FL **April 2009**
 Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs
Master of Public Administration
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, HASTINGS COLLEGE OF THE LAW**, San Francisco, CA **May 2002**
Juris Doctor, (Public Interest Law Scholar)
 Eugene D. Bennett Memorial Scholarship Recipient; Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Summer Corps Fellow; Hastings Public Interest Law Foundation (HPILF), President, 2000-2001, Public Law Institute, Researcher, 2001; Study Abroad, May/June 2000: The Aegean Institute of the Law and the Sea and Maritime Law; Rhodes, Greece – Tulane University Law School
- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**, Ann Arbor, MI **May 1999**
Bachelor of Arts in American Culture and Afroamerican/African Studies (CAAS)
Study Abroad, Jan. - May 1998: University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa

CIVIC ACTIVITIES & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- THE CHILDREN'S TRUST**, Miami- Dade County, FL
Gubernatorial Appointee, The Board of Directors, July 2013 – present
- 33-member board of Miami-Dade County's children's council committed to funding programs that offer the highest possible quality services with the goals of implementing best practices and improving the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County
 - Disseminate more than \$140 million in funding to benefit Miami-Dade County's children and families
 - *Chair*: Human Resources Committee; *Member*: Executive Committee, Program Services Committee, Nominating Committee, Ad-hoc Bylaws Committee
- FLORIDA CHILDREN'S FIRST**, Florida Youth SHINE
Mentor, Miami-Dade Chapter, April 2015 – present
- Serve as advisor to a youth-run, peer-driven organization that is comprised of 13-24 year olds who have been affected by the child welfare system
 - Identify and advocate child welfare issues locally and statewide through legislative advocacy, communication with DCF and Community Based Care agencies, media advocacy, and education
 - Travel to Tallahassee annually for Children's Week to meet with legislators and other key state officials advocating for child welfare legislation
- ROTARY FOUNDATION**
Group Study Exchange (GSE) Program, Team Member, Chandigarh, India, Feb. - March 2013
- Selected by Rotary International to participate in its 2012 – 2013 international exchange program for young professionals
 - Served as an international ambassador representing Rotary District 6990 for one month in Northern India
 - Presented at over 30 clubs in Northern India's Rotary District 3080 lecturing on my occupation, family, and life in Miami
 - Visited District 3080 Rotary clubs' service projects at hospitals, schools, farms, villages and other venues
 - Collaborated and exchanged ideas with other attorneys and judges while visiting India's District and High Courts
 - Lived with 10 different Rotarian families over the course of exchange program
 - Toured many cultural, religious, and historic sites in Northern India

THE MIAMI FOUNDATION, Miami, FL
Miami Fellow, Class VI, 2011-2012

- The Miami Foundation's esteemed 15-month fellowship founded in 1999 that engages a new generation of leaders to build a Greater Miami
- Highly competitive selection process consisting of lengthy written application and interviews with community leaders
- Foundation selected people who are inspired by Miami's potential, have demonstrated leadership and have the dedication to do more
- Fellows develop a deeper understanding of personal leadership styles while learning about the important issues facing Miami
- Fellows connect with the heads of Miami's most influential organizations and create lasting relationships
- Fellows pursue civic, public service or elected positions; work for better policies or practices to solve community problems; or speak out on issues and mobilize others
- Funded with assistance from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

QUALIFICATIONS & SKILLS

- **Admitted to the Florida Bar**
- Expertise in advocacy, child welfare, community building, mediations/negotiations, public/private partnerships, public speaking, volunteerism, and civic engagement
- Proficient in Windows, Microsoft Office, Westlaw, and social media
- Traveled throughout Asia, Africa, South America, Europe, and the Middle East

Brandy Amanda Ramirez
2231 S.E. 1st Street
Homestead, FL 33033
305-965-5315
brandyaramirez@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE to join the board of The Children's Trust and continue working hard to advocate for the children and their families of Miami-Dade County. Support and lead the efforts together with the CEO & board to improve the lives of children and families in the Miami-Dade County.

SKILLS

Passion for and pride in delivering exceptional Community Service
Strong Ability to manage a high volume of work and responsibilities
Attention to detail, Excellent computer skills and Bilingual

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Homestead Housing Authority

October 2011 - Current

Executive Assistant, H.R. & Property Manager of South Dade Center

Operates digital and audio communications. Oversee all aspects of general office coordination. Maintain office calendar to coordinate work flow and meetings. Maintain confidentiality in all aspects of clients, staff and agency information. Interact with clients, vendors and visitors. Open, sort and distribute incoming correspondence, including faxes and email. Perform general clerical duties to include, but not limited to, bookkeeping, copying, faxing, mailing and filing. File and retrieve organizational documents, records and reports. Coordinate and maintain records for staff, office space, telephones, parking, company debit card and office keys. Create and modify documents such as invoices, reports, memos, letter and financial statements using word processing, spreadsheet, database and/or other presentation software such as Microsoft Office, or other programs. May conduct research, compile data and prepare papers for consideration and presentation to the Executive Director, staff and Board. Set up and coordinate meetings and conferences. Prepare agendas and make arrangements for committee, Board of Directors or other meetings. Interact with the organization's Board of Directors. Attend Board, committee meetings or other meetings as requested in order to record minutes. Compile, transcribe and distribute minutes of meetings. Make travel arrangements for staff, board and volunteers. Collect and maintain inventory of office equipment and supplies. Research, price and purchase office furniture, equipment and supplies. Support staff in assigned project-based work. May supervise volunteers and other support personnel. Assist with overall maintenance of organization and its offices. Other duties as assigned by Executive Director. Review work order response time. Follow up with residents to see if the work orders were done to their satisfaction. Check important audit issues daily – key boxes, staff appearance, job postings, etc. Handle all details of move-in and move-outs, giving special attention to unit inspection checklists. Review Move Out charges to maximize charge-backs and compare this to the "Move-Out" checklist. Approve new resident files in accordance with screening results. Report accidents and emergency situations that develop immediately, and prepare proper reports. Maintain and/or document all community records, files and reports. Act as a liaison between HHA Admin. staff

and on-site management and/or maintenance personnel. Meet with your staff daily to go over all relevant business, including discussion of occupancy goals, renewals and projections.

City of Homestead Police Department

May 2008 - May 2011

Police Dispatcher II

Receives telephone calls from citizens requesting emergency assistance; screens the calls and initiates appropriate action. Operates digital and audio communications equipment to dispatch law enforcement assistance, emergency vehicles or fire units ; coordinates multiple tasks simultaneously, using judgment to make operational decisions based on information regarding available units and calls holding within policy and procedural guidelines while utilizing specialized formats to integrate and prioritize information from all three systems into a coordinated dispatch service for optimal efficiency. Reviews pages of various data based documentation to determine the existence of outstanding pick-up orders, misdemeanor and felony warrants, validity of driver licenses, and the status of stolen vehicles and vessels, vehicle and vessel registrations, firearm permits, occupational licenses, and criminal backgrounds to relay to field units. Maintains detailed knowledge and records of BOLO (Be On the Lookout For) information, and the diversified configurations of daily personnel line-ups, work schedules, court times, assigned areas of patrol, specialized patrol responsibilities. Performs minor maintenance tasks associated with the position, for example, resetting computerized dispatch systems, preparing malfunction reports for radio frequency or equipment repairs, and related work as required. Assist the public at walk-up window needing police assistance.

Tampa Airport Police Department

July 2007 - May 2008

Digital Communication Dispatcher

Receives telephone calls from citizens requesting emergency assistance; screens the calls and initiates appropriate action. Operates digital and audio communications equipment to dispatch law enforcement assistance, emergency vehicles or fire units. Maintains records such as shift reports, operational logs and equipment availability. Assist the public at walk-up window needing police assistance. Performs other related duties as required.

Miami-Dade County Police Communications Department

September 2005 - June 2007

Police Dispatcher

Receives calls for service from 9-1-1 Police Complaint Officers (Call Takers), via the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and from field units via radio; utilizes acquired skills, abilities, and judgment to coordinate the direction and placement of field units to strategic locations for critical incidents; prioritizes calls for service; selectively assigning and dispatching of police emergency and non-emergency calls via radio communication technology to Miami-Dade County, municipal, inter-county and federal personnel using the assigned talk groups while monitoring the safety status of all field units. Coordinates the movement of multiple law enforcement units engaged in pursuit tactics or responding to life or death situations. Operates a computer based 800 MHz trunked radio system console to control talk groups and or conventional channels, a dual screen Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) console, and a FCIC (Florida Crime Information

Center) system terminal; coordinates multiple tasks simultaneously, using judgment to make operational decisions based on information regarding available units and calls holding within policy and procedural guidelines while utilizing specialized formats to integrate and prioritize information from all three systems into a coordinated dispatch service for optimal efficiency. Reviews pages of various data based documentation to determine the existence of outstanding pick-up orders, misdemeanor and felony warrants, validity of driver licenses, and the status of stolen vehicles and vessels, vehicle and vessel registrations, firearm permits, occupational licenses, and criminal backgrounds to relay to field units. Maintains detailed knowledge and records of BOLO (Be On the Lookout For) information, and the diversified configurations of daily personnel line-ups, work schedules, court times, assigned areas of patrol, specialized patrol responsibilities, and procedural differentiation's for each district. Performs minor maintenance tasks associated with the position, for example, resetting computerized dispatch systems, preparing malfunction reports for radio frequency or equipment repairs, and related work as required.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

September 1995 - September 2005

Data Input Specialist II

Data entry work transcribing data into a form suitable for computer processing. Work normally involves operating a keyboard-controlled data entry device to enter, maintain, or retrieve data. The work is performed under the supervision of an administrative superior or higher level clerical personnel and according to established methods, procedures and practices. Operates keyboard controlled data entry device to enter, maintain, and/or retrieve information managed through the MSA on-line Information Management System. Accesses the appropriate MSA subsystem (Payroll/Personnel, ISIS, Budget/Finance, Purchasing, VARS, etc.) or other information system, executing such sign-on procedures as authorized for specific users. Enters alpha and numeric information to MSA subsystem using a variety of source documents. Maintains and retrieves information contained in the data files; may generate and print reports from data files. Maintains records of data management activities and work documents and performs such clerical support work as may be necessary to support the activities of the work unit to which assigned. Performs related work as required or as assigned.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- | | |
|--|--|
| President – Woman’s Club of Homestead | Board member - MUJER Inc. |
| President – Association Ventanas Del Sol | Board member - HIPPY Board - MDCPS Title I Migrant Education Program |
| Board member – Planning & Zoning City of Homestead | Board member - Together For Children |
| Board member – Education Committee City of Homestead | |

EDUCATION

- Miami-Dade Community College-Kendall Campus
- AA Business Administration 2000
- Homestead Senior High School 1995

(References available upon request)

March 19th, 2020

Miami-Dade County, Board of County Commissioners
Office of the **Chairwoman, Audrey M. Edmonson**
111 NW First Street, Suite 220
Miami, FL 33128

Subject: Interest to serve on the board of The Children's Trust

I would like take the opportunity to declare my interest in serving the children and their families of Miami-Dade county by being considered to fill the vacant position on the board for The Children's Trust.

I feel confident my work experience and my outstanding community leadership is the right fit for this board position, please see my resume attached showing I meet the following requirements, knowledge, abilities and skills:

- An awareness of the needs of children and families in Miami-Dade County
- Extensive professional experience with executive leadership accomplishments
- A dedication to the mission of improving the lives of children and families
- The ability to work collaboratively and savvy diplomatic skills
- Demonstrated cultural competence
- A record of effective advocacy for children
- A record of service on volunteer and/or public boards

I am a resident of Miami-Dade County for 43 years. (27 years in community service) I will make it my priority to attend all the monthly meetings of the board, and I will actively participate as a member of at least one or more board committees on a monthly bases, in addition to the monthly meeting of the board as a whole. I would be happy to file financial disclosure statements as required and abide by the Florida Code of Ethics.

I have no conflict of interest and meet the requirements set fourth in the by-laws of the board. Please review my attached resume and if you have any questions please feel free to contact me at phone: 305-965-5315. (If need be that I resign from any of my current boards I sit on at this current time to be able to be considered for this board please advise for I am very interested to be part of The Children's Trust Board.).

Thank you for your careful consideration of my letter of interest. I look forward to hearing from you.

Brandy Ramirez

Brandy A. Ramirez

2231 SE 1st Street, Homestead, FL 33033

Holland & Knight

701 Brickell Avenue, Suite 3300 | Miami, FL 33131 | T | F 305.789.7799
Holland & Knight LLP | www.hklaw.com

Benjamin A. Taormina
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Home: 902 NE 111th St.
Biscayne Park, FL 33161

March 26, 2020

Sent via Email: district3@miamidae.gov

Miami-Dade County, Board of County
Commissioners
Office of the Chairwoman, Audrey M. Edmonson
111 NW First Street, Suite 220
Miami, FL 33128

Dear Chairwoman Edmonson:

My name is Benjamin Taormina, and I am interested in the vacancy on The Children's Trust Board of Directors. Please accept this letter and attached resume as my application.

I still remember the moment I realized the true impact a single person can have on a child, and with the right support and mentorship, the great things any child can achieve, all in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. I was in college at Michigan State University, and I had the opportunity to intern for the summer at the Big Four accounting firm Ernst & Young. At the end of the summer, the entire firm had a retreat in Orlando, Florida, and during presentations one night, an executive in the firm spoke about the importance of mentoring children. This executive detailed the story about a young man who grew up in inner-city Chicago, who did not have any support at home, and who faced a daily life of uncertainty and easy opportunities to make life-altering decisions. But, the young man made a decision to join Big Brothers Big Sisters and was lucky enough to be assigned to a great mentor. Throughout the years, the mentor helped the young man get through many challenges, and at the end of the executive's presentation—with the entire crowd captivated—the executive revealed that he was that young boy. The message was unmistakable: mentoring can make a difference; every child deserves a chance; and, every child can succeed with the right support. I knew I needed to help.

When I arrived home from my trip to Orlando, I became a Big Brother at the Big Brothers Big Sisters Chapter in Lansing, Michigan. I was able to mentor a young man in middle school for my entire senior year at Michigan State University, and I will be forever grateful for the times I had with my mentee and the opportunities we had to learn from one another.

March 26, 2020

Page 2

I moved to Miami, Florida, after graduating from Michigan State University with my degree in Accounting, and I attended the University of Miami School of Law. Moving from a small town in Michigan to the sprawling, diverse city of Miami was the best decision I ever made, and it changed my life in so many ways, some of which I'm still learning to this day. I am very grateful for the numerous opportunities that I have had to grow as a person, both professionally and culturally, since moving to Miami. I have strived throughout my 9+ years in Miami to fully immerse myself in the unique culture of Miami. Whether its dancing with the Haitian community in North Miami at the Museum of Contemporary Art or reflecting with the Jewish community in Miami Beach at the Holocaust Memorial or learning about the history of Little Havana on a walking tour with Dr. Paul George during Viernes Culturales, Miami has taught me so much and provided me with an incredible opportunity to learn from different cultures. While impossible to detail every way that I have grown with the diverse culture that is Miami, I will be forever grateful to Miami for presenting me with so many unique opportunities to be different and embrace everyone's differences.

After law school, I began working at Holland & Knight LLP, and I have been an associate in the Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice group for the past 6 years. While most of my practice revolves around commercial litigation matters, I have had the opportunity to engage in pro bono matters, some of which assist children. I have been involved in several pro bono matters involving child abduction cases pursuant to the Hague Convention. Generally in these types of cases, a parent flees a jurisdiction with a minor child against the wishes of the other parent. The cases can be very sensitive due to the involvement of children, and it is a very interesting and rewarding experience to be able to interact with the children and assist in determining the right professionals, if needed, to also evaluate the child to determine the child's needs and preferences, competence level, and recollection of certain events. In all of the cases that I've been involved with, learning how children interact in different situations, including how children are impacted by the choices that adults make, has been both eye-opening and rewarding. My involvement in these cases has further solidified the notion that all children deserve decision-makers who are cautiously and thoughtfully considering the needs and bests interests of the children. And, one adult's miscalculated decision can have long-lasting implications on a child.

In addition to my experience with Hague Convention cases involving children, I also have experience with several children's charities throughout South Florida. I have volunteered at Children's Harbor and the Covenant House in Broward County as well as Habitat for Humanity in Miami-Dade, and I have attended events at the Overtown Youth Center. Furthermore, my involvement in both Leadership Fort Lauderdale, and the Miami Dade Legal Aid Leadership Academy have exposed me to several of the children's charities, programs, and medical centers throughout South Florida. I have had incredible experiences at the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital as well as banquets for Take Stock in Children in Miami. Some of the most important learning experiences for me have been getting to know the entire South Florida community and understanding the incredible resources and the incredible people who are trying to make a difference for so many children who are facing many diverse issues.

March 26, 2020

Page 3

I have also attended training with Lawyers for Children America to better understand the needs of children in the dependency system, and I hope to, in the near future, begin a pro bono representation of a child in the dependency system. I'm certain this will again give me a greater understanding of the needs of children throughout Miami through the lens of the dependency system.

I believe my knowledge, abilities, and skills all align with the guiding principles of The Children's Trust Board of Directors. But at the most fundamental level, I am a proud member of the South Florida community, and I care about improving the lives of children and families, mainly because they are my neighbors and peers. The current pandemic has reminded us that it takes everyone—no matter what background, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or otherwise—working together to build a healthy community where every child, and adult, can thrive.

In addition to hard work, I believe my greatest assets are positivity and working well with others. I have had many great opportunities to work with many lawyers throughout my entire firm as well as many clients. The most consistent feedback that I receive is that people enjoy working with me because I am always prepared with a positive attitude and ready to find a solution for any challenge. Notably, because of my background with a degree in Accounting, I am routinely asked to assist with accounting-related projects, which I know would translate to being able to provide value-added input with any and all budget related issues.

I would be very grateful for the opportunity to join The Children's Trust Board of Directors, work with the many selfless people already on the team and assist with the mission of The Children's Trust. I have no doubt that I will be able to attend the monthly meetings and go above and beyond to satisfy any other requirements as well as to chip in when necessary to further goals of The Children's Trust.

It would be my honor to be selected as a director for the board of The Children's Trust. I'm happy to answer any questions or provide additional information as necessary. My contact information is listed below.

Sincerely yours,

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP

Benjamin Taormina

Benjamin A. Taormina

Email: Benjamin.Taormina@hkllaw.com

Telephone: 248-396-7540

Enclosure

Benjamin A. Taormina
902 NE 111th St., Biscayne Park, Florida 33161
248.396.7540 - bataormina@gmail.com

Education

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, Coral Gables, Florida

Juris Doctor, *Summa Cum Laude*, May 2013

GPA: 3.811/4.00 **Class Rank:** 13/381 **Law Review:** University of Miami Law Review

Honors: Dean's List

Dean's Certificate of Achievement Award for Legal Communication and Research II;
Legal Writing Skills; Winning Federal Motion Practice I; Criminal Procedure

The CALI Excellence for the Future Award for Legal Communication and Research II
Honors Award in Litigation Skills (Pretrial and Trial)

Dean's Merit Scholarship

James L. Ferraro Scholarship

Litigation Skills Faculty Donor Scholarship

Activities: Charles C. Papy, Jr. Moot Court Board

2013 Dubai Legal Scholars Program

2012 Judge John R. Brown Admiralty Moot Court Competition in New Orleans, Louisiana

2011 Summer Study Abroad

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, East Lansing, Michigan

Bachelor of Arts in Accounting, *with Honor*, May 2010

GPA: 3.75/4.00

Honors: Dean's List

Activities: Eli Broad College of Business Ambassador; Teacher's Assistant Business 101

Experience

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Associate, October 2013 – Present

Summer Associate, Summer 2012

- Lead associate in five-week jury trial stemming from partnership dispute of the development of 27,000+ acres into an eco-friendly city, including prosecuting claims of \$40+ million and defending claims of \$20 billion.
- Lead associate in six-day jury trial defending a major cruise line and a former CEO from tort claims, defamation claims, and breach of contract claims with alleged damages of \$90 million.
- Lead associate in a five-day bench trial defending a major cruise line from breach of contract claims and tort claims of fraud and misappropriation of trade secrets.
- Conduct three evidentiary hearings in federal courts in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and West Palm Beach.
- Conduct five evidentiary hearings in state courts in Miami and Fort Lauderdale.
- Assist in conducting two mock jury exercises for two high-value jury trials.
- Aid in selecting three jury panels for three separate multi-week jury trials.
- Attend depositions, both taking and defending, of at least 15 deponents.
- Participate and lead numerous mediations and settlement conferences involving various commercial disputes, probate disputes, as well as plea negotiations with the Department of Justice and interviews with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- Draft pleadings, dispositive motions, discovery motions, including conducting legal research on various issues of both federal and state law.

- Lead or assist with hundreds of non-evidentiary hearings in various state courts throughout Florida.
- Routinely interact, communicate, and strategize with clients regarding status of case and litigation plan going forward.
- Strategize with supervising partners, expert witnesses, and private investigators regarding fact finding and case strategy.
- Manage junior associates and paralegals throughout various stages of litigation.
- Oversee eDiscovery projects with in-house eDiscovery professionals and external vendors related to diverse discovery productions as well as discovery disputes.

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, Miami, Florida

Certified Legal Intern in Economic and Environmental Crimes, January 2013 – April 2013

- Research and draft motions regarding issues of federal law concerning economic and environmental crimes.
- Observe federal trial advocacy encompassing a wide range of issues.

ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA, Miami, Florida

Judicial Intern to the Honorable Milton Hirsch, May 2011 - June 2011

- Observe daily criminal litigation of motion calendar, evidentiary hearings, and trials.

ERNST & YOUNG, Detroit, Michigan

Tax Intern, Summer 2009

- Research client issues and interact with clients for preparation of tax memoranda.

Community Involvement

- Leadership Fort Lauderdale, Class XXIII
- Dade County Legal Aid Leadership Academy, Class IV
- Asst. Coach for University of Miami Moot Court Board - Kaufman Securities Competition (2016-2018)

Aileen Vega

CONTACT



786-282-5146



220 Lawn Way
Miami, FL 33166



Avega3@dadeschools.net



AileenVega123



linkedin.com/in/draileenvega

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education in Organizational and Instructional Leadership, September 2017
Nova Southeastern University
Miami, Florida

Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership, Spring 2000
Nova Southeastern University
Miami, Florida

Master's Degree in Elementary Education with Concentration in Early Childhood Education, Spring 1996
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, Spring 1994
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

Associate of Arts Degree, Spring 1992
Miami Dade College
Miami, Florida

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

State Certification from Florida Department of Education

(June 2016-June 2021) in:

- Educational Leadership All Levels
- Elementary Education (1-6)
- Primary K-3

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Presenter at Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Conferences on Turnaround School Strategies April 2014 & April 2018

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Principal, Coral Park Elementary School

Miami Dade County Public Schools

June 2016 – Present

- Serves primarily to provide leadership, in a multicultural elementary school environment, comprised of a total of 1,100 students and 140 staff members which have included Instructional, Non-Instructional, Facilities/Custodial, Clerical and Food Service staff by motivating all personnel to strive for superior performance while providing the best possible opportunities for student growth and development, both educationally and personally. Initially responsible for establishing an environment and culture of respect, collaboration and a positive mind-set with staff, students and parents through the development and implementation of school-wide action plans that create a climate of high expectations and social-emotional well-being for students and staff through rigor, innovation and professional development.
- Over the last 4 years, the following are notable responsibilities/accomplishments:
 - Maintained an audit-free and effective alignment of sound fiscal records to include managing general funds, Title I & III, Afterschool Care Program as well as in order to leverage resources to maximize student outcomes.
 - Increase security measures to include personnel and restructured the safety protocols and procedures within the school community to ensure a smooth transition and alignment with district and state expectations.
 - Maintained grade of "A" for 4 consecutive years while significantly raising the learning gains in accountability in ELA (gr 3-5) subgroups by 9 percentage points.
 - Achieved Passing Sanitation Audits for 4 consecutive years
 - Developed the #ESESquad/Cohort to better reach and address the needs of our growing population of students with disabilities and specials needs to include coaching cycles, mentoring and Professional Development.
 - Expanded the Extended Foreign Language (EFL) Program to include 2 more classes.
 - Achieved GOLD designation in S.T.E.A.M. by developing a team approach and a variety of science-related activities to enhance the program
 - Expanded use of Title I & Title III budget to enhance tutorial programs to include a focused and data/student-needs driven Saturday Academy for Tier 1 & 3 students
 - Created, maintained and encourage/promoted marketing thru social media platforms to increase school visibility
 - Initiated school-wide participation in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) to increase inclusive practices in positive recognition and discipline.

RELATED EXPERIENCE con'd

Presenter for Principal Panel at the East Coast Tech. Assistance Center (ECTAC) Exceeding Expectations Conference, October 2019

Elected Board Director of the Dade Association of School Administrators (DASA), July 2018, Member since 2010

Presenter for MDCPS Summer School Leadership Institute SYNERGY on School Culture and Leadership

Lead Principal for 2018-2019 Coral Park Feeder Pattern and 2019-2020 Cohort 4 Central Region

Served as Lead Principal for Central Region -3rd Grade Portfolio Review Committee both 2017-18 and 2018-19

-Asst. Principal of the Year Committee 2018-19
-Fiscal Audit Review Committee 2019-2020

Appointed by M-DCPS/UTD to Special Education Task Force, October 2019-2020

Chairperson of the Miami Springs Educational Advisory Board, June 2018 to present

AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recognized by M-DCPS School Board for GOLD STEAM Designation, October 2019

Recognized by M-DCPS School Board for 2018-2019 Five Star School Distinction Award

Recognized by the FL Dept. of Education for Title I School High Performance Ranking in Achievement Scores 2017-2018

Recognized by the FL Dept. of Education as a Schools of Excellence in Consistent Academic Achievement Scores 2017-2018

Recognized by the East Coast Tech. Assistance Center (ECTAC) for Exceeding Expectations in criteria for 2018 FSA scores and Parental Engagement on October 2019

Recognized by M-DCPS School Board for High School-Wide Participation in Values Matter Program, 2016

Recognized by M-DCPS School Board for High Parental Engagement in our Early Childhood Programs, April 2017

Recognized as a "Race to the Top" Turnaround Leader in Program from FLDOE in conjunction with M-DCPS 2014

Recognized as the Coral Park Feeder Pattern Assistant Principal of the Year, M-DCPS, 2005-2006 & Feeder Pattern Finalist in 2011-2012

Recognized as the Coral Park Feeder Pattern Principal of the Year, M-DCPS, 2019-2020

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE cont'd

- Inaugurate the addition of a new state of the art building to house our growing Early Childhood program comprised of 7 Prekindergarten classes, 4 which are VPK as well as our expanding Intellectually Disability (IND) classes.
- Expanded Before and Afterschool Care Program as an extended day concept with additional Academic Excellence Programs in the arts, tutoring by certified classroom teacher, as well as Broadcast Journalism, Drama classes, Coding and Robotics.

Principal, Flagami Elementary School

Miami Dade County Public Schools

June 2014 - June 2016

- All functions of a school Principals and;
- *During the 2 years as Principal, the following are notable accomplishments:*
 - o Rebranding of the school logo, mascot and visibility to include a social media platform where school was marketed which, in turn, helped to increase the school population (FTE).
 - o Increased learning gains significantly during second year in an already high performing school that earned Flagami its first Exceeding Expectations (ECTAC) Recognition award.
 - o Facilitated the GOB process to improve the quality of the school safety environment thru addition of cameras, hardware and protocols as well as provide a new electronic marquee and appearance to the façade of the school.
 - o Maintained an audit-free and effective alignment of sound fiscal records to include managing general funds, Title I & III and Sanitation Audit for 2 consecutive years.

Assistant Principal, E.W.F. Stirrup Elementary School

Miami Dade County Public Schools

June 2004 - June 2014

Assistant Principal, Dr. Henry Mack/West Little River Elementary School

Miami Dade County Public Schools

June 2000 - June 2004

Lead and Classroom Teacher, John I. Smith Elementary School

Miami Dade County Public Schools

June 1996- June 2000

Science Teacher, Riverside Elementary School

Miami Dade County Public Schools

August 1994- June 1996

HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Online Instructor, Grand Canyon University

Phoenix, Arizona

April 2018 – Present

Adjunct Instructor, Miami Dade College

Miami, Florida

October 2012 – December 2013

References available upon request

Aileen Vega, Ed.D.
220 Lawn Way
Miami Springs, FL, 33166
(786) 282-5146
aileenvega2014@gmail.com

March 10, 2020

To the esteemed Miami-Dade County, Board of County Commissioners,

I am eagerly interested in furthering my scope of reach and impact within and for our community by applying to be an active and participating member of The Children's Trust Board of Directors. I humbly, yet fervently believe that I can share my practical experiences, theoretical knowledge, proven achievements and success along with my passion and exuberant drive to initiate and be a catalyst of change and growth for a broader scope of population in Miami-Dade County. My proven record of service to the community through my roles as an employee of the Miami-Dade Public School system supports and upholds the vision of The Children Trust. My dedication and contributions have always been focused and geared to improving the lives of the community and families that I have serviced through collaboration and partnerships so that our students are able to achieve their fullest potential.

My 25 years of professional and work experience in Education lends itself to providing me with background and knowledge necessary to support the mission of this board and organization. Earning a Doctorate Degree in Instructional and Organizational Leadership coupled with my time as a school administrator has exposed me to many opportunities that would be valuable tools and resources for this position. I would love to continue my involvement with our community of all children within this capacity where I can implement all my strengths along with a creative and innovative forward and progressive thinking approach to the growth of the programs initiated and funded through The Children's Trust.

Moreover, while my on-the-job experience has afforded me a well-rounded skill set which includes 21st century leadership awareness as well as dynamic interpersonal interactions, I have also been successful at/the:

- Development and/or Implementation of Diverse Innovative Programs that enrich the culture and achievement of students resulting in various recognitions and accolades from the M-DCPS School Board as well as the Florida Department of Education in the areas of Gifted Programs, Inclusion practices, S.T.E.A.M., School and Family Engagement, and Early Childhood Programs with proven and notable trends of increase percentage of learning gain from lowest performing students as well as overall proficiency.
- Sound fiscal management, knowledge of compliance policies and development of an audit-free school-based and federally-supported as well as Principal-led Afterschool care program budgets which collectively total over 5 million dollars.
- Successfully leading, supporting and effectively communicating with a diverse staff of over 125 employees while ensuring coordination of professional development opportunities that address student needs and achievement goals.
- Imparting, coordinating and sharing Best Practices in Leadership and needs through conferences, district events and school site by analyzing and collecting data on the performance and effectiveness of current practices and achievement patterns and trends.
- Maintaining a Florida Department of Education "A" rated school for over 15 years of school site administration through the evaluation of programs and teaching practices on student achievement to determine return on investment
- Engaging and creating partnerships within an inclusive environment where students, staff and community members alike feel welcomed and a part of the systematic growth and progress of a school site and programs.

In addition to my experience and leadership qualities, I have a solid educational background and a passion for serving students and their families as well as providing opportunities that match and address the needs of the students in our communities. I am extremely enthusiastic and hopeful of being considered to be a part of your Board as well as the chance to contribute to the continued success of The Children's Trust within this capacity. I hope to be able to secure an interview so that we may discuss and share these experiences and opportunities with more depth.

Thank you for your time and consideration in allowing me the opportunity to interview and possibly become a contributing member.

Respectfully yours,


Aileen Vega, Ed.D.

From: Aileen Vega <aileenvega2014@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 2:37 PM

To: District3 <District3@miamidade.gov>

Subject: APPLICATION FOR THE CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S

EMAIL RECEIVED FROM EXTERNAL SOURCE.

Good afternoon,

I recently read that The Children's Trust is seeking to fill a position on their Board of Directors. I am highly interested and am soliciting the opportunity for my resume to be considered and reviewed.

Attached you will find my cover letter and resume for your consideration and review. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Regards,
Aileen Vega Ed.D.
(786) 282-5146 cell

Jeanine Verde, Ed.D.
Jeanine Verde, P.A.
1805 Ponce de Leon Blvd. Suite 400,
Coral Gables, FL 33134
Tel. (305) 343-3653

Curriculum Vitae

Education

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Early Childhood Education, Nova Southeastern University
May 2019

M.A. (Master's Degree) Early Childhood Special Education/TESOL Endorsement,
University of Miami August 2001

B.S. (Bachelor of Science) Special Education, Specific Learning Disabilities K-12, Florida
International University September 1999

Honors/Awards/Certifications

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early
Childhood through Young Adulthood, November 2005.

Certified Communities of Practice Facilitator, University of Florida/ Miami Dade County
Public Schools, August 2015.

Professional Experience

Pre-Kindergarten Special Education Teacher, Miami Dade County Public Schools, Coral
Park Elementary, January 2004 to present. Everglades K-8 Center, January 2000-June 2004
Responsible for educating preschool age children with disabilities in a pre-k half day reverse
mainstream setting, preparing Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for pre-kindergarten students
with special needs and physical disabilities, member of school leadership team, grade level
chairperson managing a team of 14 faculty and staff and coordinating parental involvement
activities and quarterly parent workshops, Pre-Kindergarten Special Education district mentor,
intern clinical cooperating teacher, social media liaison and professional development liaison.

Adjunct Professor, Nova Southeastern University, Fischler School of Education, Davie,
FL. October 2011 to present.

Online and in-class professor for undergraduate level education students enrolled in the
Fischler School of Education, and educators practicing in the field through academic
enrichment and certificate programs offered by the Fischler School of Education.

3/11/20

To Whom it may concern,

I am submitting the enclosed resume for review and this letter to express my interest in serving on the board of The Children's Trust. My background has given me the knowledge and hands-on experience in all facets of special education and early childhood education

You will see after reviewing the enclosed resume, I have worked for over 20 years in the MDCPS classrooms as well as teaching at the university level. I have exceptional interpersonal skills and communication skills, strong attention to detail and work ethic.

I am enthusiastic about exploring the opportunity to serve on the board of The Children's Trust because I value the work that the organization is doing for our community and I would love to be given the opportunity to give back as well

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeanine Verde

305-343-3653