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## FLORIDA ELKS CHILDREN'S THERAPY SERVICES

# SSW Elks Therapy News

~ Collier, Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Glades & Lee Counties ~

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Creek, Punta Gorda, Sarasota

## Therapy News

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way people do just about everything. There were, and still are, overwhelming daily concerns and changes that many of us have never faced before. We as FECTS therapists needed to think outside the box to meet the needs of the families on our caseloads. Therapy was no longer just focusing on goals we had created when we initially evaluated these children, instead, encouragement, words of wisdom or just simply listening became the greater focus.

On the other end of us providing support and therapy to our families was the "therapy" we received from FECTS. Our supervisors, Yvette Lambert, Tressy Guadagno, and Val Edmond, along with our director, Colleen Gallant, took the time to call, text, e-mail and see us on live internet chats to provide supportive and encouraging words during this chaotic time. There was concern for our worries and frustrations as well as guidance to help us see peace and understanding.

Many therapists have only heard the names of the members that serve on the board; some of us have had the pleasure to meet them. Either way, it is understood that the FECTS staff worked as a team to make decisions during these unprecedented times. We, the FECTS therapists, wanted to share our thoughts to let you know how grateful we are for the dedication and support received from FECTS staff and members. We want to convey what a blessing it is to work for such a wonderful organization, and would like you to know how special each and every one of you are.

## Special Messages of Gratitude

Thank you so much for all that you do not only for us the therapists, but for the children and families of the state of Florida. Without your support we would not be able to provide the helping services that we do to the hundreds of children and families that need our attention. Thank you!  
Pearl Johnson-Central, North Central Regions, Ocala



I would like to send a little note of sincere gratitude of thanks to the Elks family. Thank you for the continued support through these difficulty times. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and felt here in the South Florida region. Donna Rivera-Southeast District, West Palm Beach



Thank-you all very much for all the wonderful support through the years and especially during these uncertain times dealing with COVID-19 Pandemic. Wishing everyone good health and safety.  
Elizabeth Maina, OTR/L Northwest District





*Don't forget to check out our Elks Therapy website:*

<https://elkstherapy.com/>

**PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL THERAPIST IF YOU KNOW OF A CHILD WHO IS IN NEED OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES.**

*Do you want your regional therapist to represent the FECTS program at your next event? Please visit*

<https://elkstherapy.com/event-request>

*to complete the Therapist's Participation Request form.*

I am continually thankful to work for the Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services. Even during a pandemic, the Elks do not let us down. I appreciate having been allowed to work with my families via video telehealth during these unprecedented times, keeping my family and the families receiving services safe. The Stuart-Jensen Lodge Exalted Ruler, Barbara Hartrick, recently contacted me with ideas of how the lodge wants to provide Christmas to our families while maintaining social distancing. We are excited to provide the first "Drive By Santa" party, complete with chicken dinners to go for each family member, gifts for the children, crafts, and games. I love the creative thinking that Elks do when the times get tough! Thanks again Elks for helping change children's lives.  
Diane Corson-South East Central, Southeast Region



To all the Lodge members; your kindness and generous hearts have helped the therapy services take off and become a successful program. We (therapists) would not be here if it weren't for all your hard work and dedication. Thank you! And, what a blessing FSEA and FECTS have been to me, my family and to the families I have served over the past 21 years. I am so very grateful to Carl and Colleen and to the board of directors for allowing us (therapists) to work from home and maintain contact, provide support and/or provide virtual services for the children and families we service. Upon this unusual and uncertain time, I know the families were stressed and having the therapists available to support them, as little or as much as they needed, meant a lot to them. Also, your support during the past 6 months have allowed me and my family to strengthen our bonds and has provided me with unprecedented and well appreciated time to organize files and office materials from the past 21 years with FECTS. I'd like to convey to you, a huge thank you from the bottom of my heart for making our safety and financial security your priorities.  
Jeanne Martin, OTR/L South Southwest District



To: FSEA and FECTS Administrators, Directors, Board members, and Supporters of our state projects;

I want to share my deepest gratitude for the support and job security given to all of us therapists during this national crisis that hit our nation last March. As a single female with no other income other than my staff therapy position with FECTS, it would have been very stressful and financially devastating to me personally if I did not continue to receive my salary through the COVID-19 pandemic. I have been with the program for over 20 years and have loved every minute. I share my love and appreciation for the program to everyone I meet. I feel very blessed and honored to work and represent such a great and generous organization. I actually became an Elk member of the Lakeland Lodge this year! Servicing and helping the children of SWC district, has been very rewarding and a great honor to represent the BPOE! I started working with a few families this past week and the look of pure joy on the children's faces when they see their therapist in person again, just melts my heart! Thank you,  
Paula Tarver, OTR/L Southwest Central District



Administration and Board:

During this unprecedented time, I am so thankful that the safety of our therapists, staff, patients, and families was regarded with the upmost priority. I continue to be grateful to be a FECTS Occupational Therapist.  
Chrissy Nathan, OT Southeast Central, Southeast





Dear Members of the Southwest District Elks Lodges. I wanted to send you all a huge heartfelt "Thank You" and lots of hugs for all your support you have given me and the children I serve over the last 21 years. I have been providing individual OT in the homes of many wonderful children and their families over this time. Your very generous giving to the Harry Anna Fund has allowed me to do this. And you all also have given with great generosity for 2 special programs in the past; where each Lodge contributed an amount for special therapy equipment. One was a hydraulic stander for a very special boy that allowed him to partially feed herself and be able to see his world from an upright position. The other project you contributed to was for a very specialized music listening system, which I take into homes with children who need it most. This helps most children to have positive changes in their behavior, attention span, motor coordination and reduce anxiety. I love working with the parents to empower them to do a home program with their child during the week and see progress occur faster and be long-lasting. You all are wonderful. Cheers from my heart to yours in the Southwest District.



Margot Baker, OTR/L South Southwest, Southwest

As a FECTS therapist, I have always greatly appreciated the professional opportunities available and the support provided. During this time of covid-19, when everything was uncertain, I received professional and personal reassurance, guidance and understanding. The thought of treating children, going home to home, when this pandemic began was very overwhelming to me. With this stress removed, I spent my time organizing and updating FECTS materials, that I have accumulated since my hire 15 years ago, as well as reconnecting with my family. This time spent working from home during covid-19 has helped me to have a deeper appreciation for the things I have and look at how overscheduled and unconnected with the basics we were as a family. I feel my stress levels would have been far greater than they were if it were not for continued pay, support and guidance from my supervisor and my director, and for the support and connections with my fellow FECTS therapists. Thank you FECTS family.



Christina Walker, OTR/L South Southwest, Southwest Central

I wanted to say thank you to the Florida Elks organization who realized the significance of this unprecedented Pandemic and allowed me to safely support and work with my families through video therapy. While I did not provide in-person therapy, I was able to provide child-centered treatment with family education as our mission states. As you might imagine, stress levels increased in the children and the parents so the home programs were revised to promote physical and mental well-being through exercises and activities that positively impacted the lives of my patients and their families. My relationships were enhanced because of the support I was able to offer them in a safe and effective way. They are thankful for the FL Elks. Maria Enlow, OT Southeast and South Southeast Region



I would like to express my gratitude to The Florida Elks and FECTS for their on-going support through these unprecedented times. The stress imposed by COVID 19 was not compounded by loss of employment for us. Our patients benefited from having access to continuous availability of our services. Throughout my 21-year career with FECTS the therapists' health and safety have always been a priority. I'm honored to represent and work for such an exemplary program and organization. Thank you Colleen for your leadership and nurturing a sense of "family" for FECTS. Chantal V Salnave PT, South District





The NE district would like to express our personal gratitude to the Elks. Thank you for allowing us to continue to support our families by staying in contact with them during the disruption of home services. It has meant a lot to our families. They have appreciated the encouragement and the time that we spent with them on the phone and also the use of available technology. Many daily routines changed during this challenging pandemic. We are grateful for your confidence in us and allowing us the flexibility to continue to look after our families.  
Melanie Sarris, OT and Rae Montgomery, PT, Northeast District



What a year 2020 has been! COVID-19 has loomed over us since March making us see the world from a different perspective. I have seen high levels of anxiety with our families with the fear of the unknown treated with love and respect from our fellow Elks. FECTS and FSEA have kept us reassured that safety for our families and therapists are their top priority. I appreciated how Colleen and Carl along with their staff have lead us and continue to lead us through the ever changing unprecedented times. To the Lodges, I have watched you all spread your compassion through creative fundraising activities while maintaining safety. Awesome job! I am so appreciative to work with this amazing organization!  
With Kind Regards, Christina Paul, Occupational Therapist, North District



Hi, my name is Nikki and I'm the newest hire to the FECTS team! I'm an occupational therapist serving the North Central and West Central districts. Thank you to the FECTS administration, board members and all the Elks Lodges for their continued support of this therapy program. I am so grateful to be a part of this team and ready to serve Florida's children and their families. Thank you!  
Nicole Guarino, OTR/L, North Central, West Central Districts



Dear Florida Elks, I don't even know how to even convey all my gratitude to the Florida Elks during these Covid times. I am so thankful to work for the FECTS and your love and support means everything to our therapists! I thank you from the bottom of my heart! Tressy Guadagno, OTR/L, West Central District



I am thankful for my job with FECTS. I am thankful for my colleagues, my regional coordinators, and the administration. Every day, I am truly appreciative of the support that I receive from FECTS and the Florida Elks, and especially during this time of uncertainty in the world around us.  
Tina Morris, RPT, South, Southwest Districts



Thank you for your continued support in our mission to provide therapy services. Your confidence in my ability to ability to meet the needs of the children and their families of C, NC, WC and SWC districts is greatly appreciated I look forward to many years of serving the children of Florida and the Florida State Elks Association, Inc. Althea Montgomery, OTR/L, Central District



Hello, I am Jane and I work in the North Central District. Thank you all for the wonderful support you have been providing to all of us during the pandemic. Because of your support I have been able to maintain contact with my families and provide therapy virtually. I have also been able to provide therapy equipment for my families, and they are all thankful for your continued generosity. Take good care and stay safe. Jane Russo RPT, Central, Northcentral Districts





**Your  
South Southwest  
and Southwest  
Central  
Therapists**



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Estero, Lehigh Acres, Naples,  
Immokalee, Marco Island,  
Sanibel, LaBelle*



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Sebring, Lake Placid, Port  
Charlotte, Rotunda, Duette,  
Arcadia, Avon Park, Deep  
Creek, Punta Gorda*

2020 has certainly been a new decade! Little did we know it would be the year of so much uncertainty and perpetual change. However, my knowledge is greater and my heart is even more grateful than ever before! Thank you Florida State Elks for your continued support of all the therapists and the families we service through these unprecedented times. Thank you Ms. Colleen Gallant, Yvette Lambert, Tressy Guadagno, and Val Edmands for being our fearless leaders and guiding us through these uncharted territories. Thank you to all the therapists who participated in the, "Global Study of the Effect of the MNRI Reflex Neuromodulation Therapy Program on Acute and Post-Stress State/Recovery during and after the Coronavirus Pandemic". Thank you also to the incredible families who participated each week, on Zoom, to continue to help your child/children reach for the stars and achieve their therapy goals! We have all been in this together and are forever changed by this experience.



Argie Criner MOT, OTR/L, Central, Southwest Central Districts

Wow what a crazy time to be alive! I have never been so thankful for my FECTS family as I am this year. I have always known how lucky I am to work for such an incredible organization and just how fortunate all of our families are that benefit so greatly from this program. This year has reinforced and proven even more just how amazing this entire organization is. I am so very thankful that we were able to continue to service families in so many creative ways. Thank you for allowing us the opportunities to increase our knowledge through learning during this difficult time. Thank you for giving us access to such wonder tools to still help our families. Thank you for keeping patients and their families healthy and safe. Thank you for keeping all of us and our families healthy and safe. This year has been a wild ride but there is so much to be thankful for. Thank you to the entire Florida Elks organization from the bottom of my heart!

Nikki McAnary, OTR/L Central, Southeast Central Districts

Hello, Just a note of gratitude for all the effort time and dedication by our FECTS staff during the unprecedented time of Covid-19. Colleen has been a tireless leader providing support and guidance to us all. Yvette showed incredible vision for our team of therapists constantly reaching out in efforts to maintain our connection and interaction during lock down. What an example of our FECTS vision to provide a safe and highest quality therapy to the children of Florida. It provided a wonderful opportunity to significantly increase our therapy skills and knowledge by extensive continuing education and research. It also challenged us to technology and all different kinds of resources. During the lockdown some of our children not only were able to continue their connection with therapists, but were able to make extraordinary progress virtually. Our families were able to receive the support they needed to survive and some even thrive. Now more than EVER before the needs of our state are great. The emotional and physical ramifications of Covid-19 will be felt for years to come in our children and families. I am personally grateful to be able to be a part of such a wonderful organization which cares so deeply and is ready to help.



Deepest Gratitude, Heidi Pennella OTR/L, Central, North Central Districts

I would like to say thank you to all the Elks who have supported us through this very difficult time and I am very grateful to be able to see the kids again!



Yvette Lambert, PT, West Central, Southwest Districts



Thanks so much to the Florida Elks. This is Val Edmonds– Regional Coordinator for North Florida and Occupational therapist covering central Florida from the border down to Ocala. It has truly been a blessing to feel your support while we were unable to do face to face therapy with our clients since March. I have attempted to keep in touch with all my families and they are expressing that they are grateful that we are now resuming therapy. I and my husband both “worked from home” and it was great to not have to worry about how we would make ends meet. Thanks again for supporting FECTS and each therapist in these uncertain times.



Val Edmonds, OTR/L, North, North Central Districts

I am grateful for the love and support of the FECTS family and the Florida Elks. The Elks’ continued contributions make a huge difference in the lives of kids and their families. Thank You!!



Camille Arevalo, South District (Miami-Dade County, Upper and Middle Keys)



Therapy Vans make it possible to do in-home therapy all over Florida.



Elks Therapists gather here every year for their annual meeting.

