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**USFSP TRAINING ON RESTORATIVE, TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES**

*Participants and trainers from the two-day intensive training on Restorative Trauma-Informed Practices at USF St. Petersburg. From left: Gina Gibbs, Pinellas County Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative; John Mavros, Pinellas Ex-Offender Re-Entry Coalition; Millie Burns, Center for Restorative Solutions; Dr. Allison Pinto, USFSP Family Study Center; Michael Jalazo, Pinellas Ex-Offender Re-Entry Coalition; Cindy Hill-Ford, Center for Restorative Solutions; Monica Davis-Griffin, Pinellas County Government; and Rico Green, Pinellas County Ex-Offender Re-Entry Coalition.*

The **Family Study Center** at USF St. Petersburg and the Pinellas Ex-Offender Re-Entry Coalition (PERC) co-hosted a three-day training institute on Restorative Trauma-Informed Practices (RTIPS) April 18-20. The training was provided by Millie Burns, Cindy Hill-Ford and Ixayanne Baez from the Center for Restorative Solutions in Oakland, Calif., and they are leaders in the fields of restorative justice and child/family mental health. The institute was hosted in partnership with the Pinellas County Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.

"This training was designed to introduce the theory and methods of Restorative Trauma-Informed Practices, and to begin cultivating a network of local changemakers to develop and promote restorative approaches in St. Petersburg," said Dr. Allison Pinto, who is responsible for family and community partnership initiatives at the USFSP Family Study Center.

The training started with two community sessions, hosted at the Thomas Jet Jackson Recreation Center and the James Weldon Johnson Library in the Midtown community of South St. Petersburg. The sessions – The Pursuit of Justice for Children and Youth, and An Introduction to Restorative & Trauma-Informed Practices – were attended by more than 100 people who live and/or work in the local community. Participants included parents, grandparents, and professionals from various agencies and sectors, including Pinellas County Schools, the Department of Juvenile Justice, social service agencies, advocacy groups, and faith-based organizations.

The first session discussed key ways to promote the strengths of children, to enhance understanding of the impacts of disconnected communities, and strategies for addressing the ways that systems do harm to children and families. The second session discussed a restorative approach to justice, as well as ways to deepen understanding of trauma and trauma-informed practices.

A small group of 17 individuals from various organizations then participated in a two-day intensive training to begin developing the skills needed to implement and promote Restorative Practices in the local community. This training took place at USFSP and the group included individuals from the PERC Evening Reporting Center, Gibbs High School, Mt. Zion Human Services, Pinellas County Urban League, Dream Defenders, and the USFSP Family Study Center.

RTIPS are a relational approach to promoting justice and restoring well-being, with a focus on establishing a safe, supportive, and nurturing community that encourages relationships based on trust and mutual respect. Nationally and internationally, Restorative Practices have been highly effective in eliminating the excessive use of referrals, suspensions and expulsions in schools, and improving emotional/behavioral well-being and academic performance, especially when they are trauma-informed. Communities who are using Restorative Practices are also seeing significant reductions in incarceration, youth crime, and recidivism, and in associated racial disparities.

"Families and neighbors of South St. Petersburg have been striving for social justice and respect for human dignity for generations," said Pinto. "This is an opportunity for local institutions to join in the struggle, with humility, by developing the skills and capacities needed to be more attuned and responsive to the experience of everyone in the local community."

# USFSP Training on Restorative, Trauma-Informed Practices

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