

**Graduation Rate Committee** implemented Communities in Schools of Hernando County, a nationally recognized evidence- and research-based dropout prevention program focused on decreasing the dropout rate/increasing the graduation rate and helping youth to succeed in life. For more information contact Tracy Echols at EcholsT@cishernando.org www.communitiesinschools.org

**The Life Center (TLC)** has created a residential home, "The Little House", where they can help provide a safe haven for the mom and her child to "stop the cycle" of teen parenting. For more information, contact Barbara Lemoine at Barb\_Lemoine@yahoo.com www.the-life-center.org

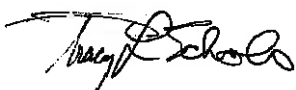
**Junior Achievement** helps 8th grade students to learn the importance of staying in school and the basic financial concepts needed in real life. For more information contact Kym McGee at Kym.McGee@ja.org

**The Chamber's Student Recognition Banquet** celebrates the educational and service achievements of Hernando County students, future community and business leaders. For more information contact Linda Campo, Chair, at linda.campo@tampabay.rr.com.

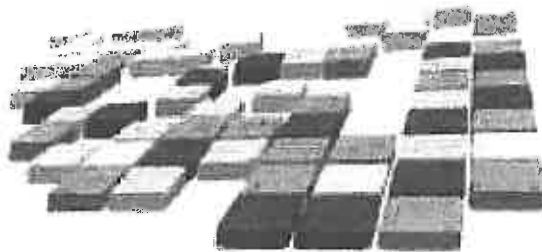
Your support of these community-changing efforts is greatly appreciated!

*Together we can make a difference!*

Sincerely,



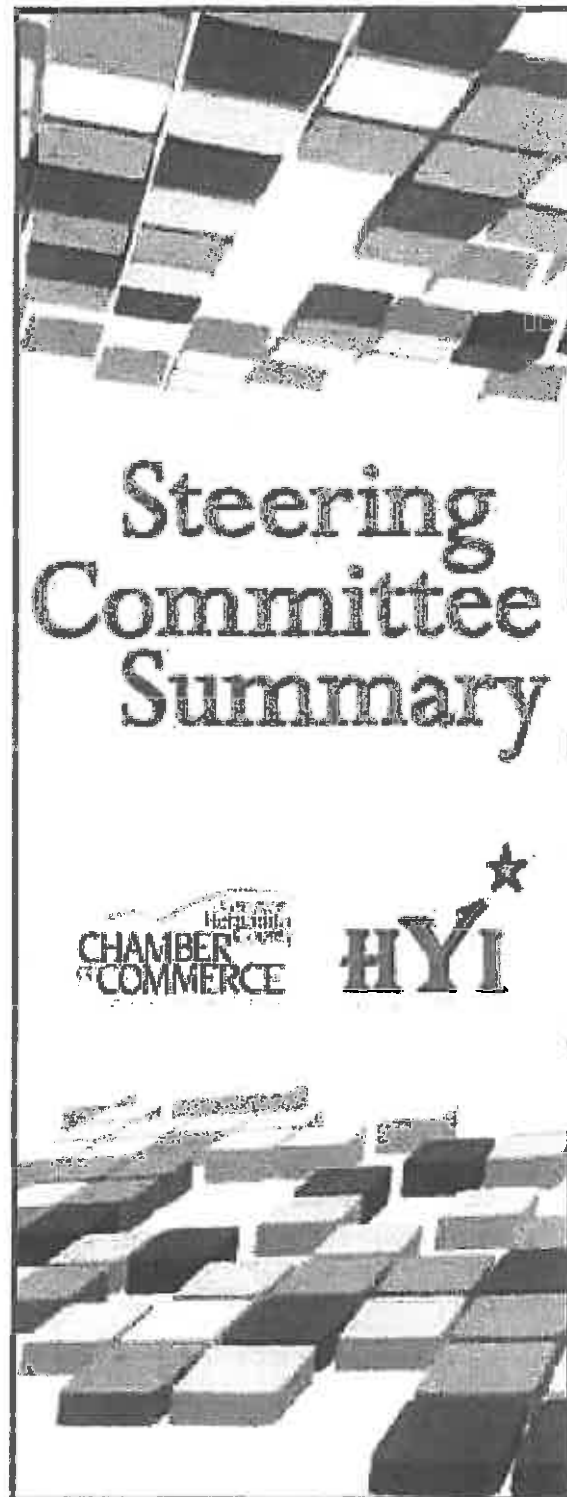
Tracy Echols,  
Executive Director & President of Communities  
In Schools of Hernando County and HYI Education  
Chair of the Hernando Youth Initiative for the  
Greater Hernando County Chamber of Commerce





**The Hernando Youth Initiative is supported by C.E.T.A. (Chamber Education and Training Association, the Chamber of Commerce's 501c3, non-profit organization). C.E.T.A.'s mission statement is "To solicit, collect, receive, administer and disburse funds in such a manner as will, in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors, most effectively operate to further the Economic Development, Education and Business Training of individuals in Hernando County and surrounding areas."**

**CETA**

Chamber Education Training Association



# Steering Committee Summary



To get more information email  
[HernandoYouthInitiative@gmail.com](mailto:HernandoYouthInitiative@gmail.com)  
or call 352-277-3322.



**Mission of Hernando Youth Initiative (HYI) is to promote and address the needs of children and families to assure the economic success of Hernando County's future workforce.**

HYI is a group of over 80 businesses, agencies, individuals, government and community organizations who convene annually to form action plans for improvement. HYI was inspired by the bi-annual Community Summit. Results-oriented efforts then originated out of the Education Committee of the Greater Hernando County Chamber of Commerce as it considered ways to increase the graduation rate for Hernando County students and remove barriers to children's, and our community's, success.

HYI adopted a vision of "Hernando 2030" which implements a proactive "pre-birth to success" model with focused goals for improvement by the year 2030. These efforts support action recommended by leading economists to remain a viable community, i.e., increase post-secondary attainment, increase the retention of the "creative class" (25-34 year olds), increase high-skill/high-wage jobs, create and attract diverse industry and create a varied income stream from sources other than social assistance (social security, disability, unemployment, and welfare).

As part of the Education Committee, the HYI Steering Committee holds an annual Summit for Youth & Families each Fall to report back to the community on the results they have achieved and their action plans for moving us forward. Community members and local business are implored to get involved – join a committee, sponsor the Summit, be a positive voice for children and help us to achieve a better outcome for all Hernando County's youth and their families.

***Be part of the solution!***

**Sixth Annual Summit for Youth & Families - "Becoming Our Community", Friday, November 1, 2013, 9:00 am- 3:00 pm. For more information contact [HernandoYouthInitiative@gmail.com](mailto:HernandoYouthInitiative@gmail.com).**

**HYI Education Committee** guides and directs the activities of HYI. Meets the first Tuesday of each month, at 9:00 a.m. at the Chamber of Commerce office in the airport industrial park), 15588 Aviation Loop Dr., Brooksville. For more information contact Tracy Echols, Chair, at [HernandoYouthInitiative@gmail.com](mailto:HernandoYouthInitiative@gmail.com).

**Parent Involvement Committee** fosters engagement and participation of parents and guardians in their student's education and in their community. For more information contact Ivette Mendoza, Chair, at [mendoza\\_i@hcsb.k12.fl.us](mailto:mendoza_i@hcsb.k12.fl.us).

**Childhood Obesity Task Team** addresses the health and risk factors associated with childhood obesity and encourages our parents and community to make healthier, affordable choices. The goal is to do our part to help reduce the national childhood obesity rate from 20% to 5% by 2030. For more information contact Penny Oliver, Chair, at [PennyO@co.hernando.fl.us](mailto:PennyO@co.hernando.fl.us).

**Anti-Violence Committee** works to address violence in all forms (domestic violence, sexual violence, teen dating violence, bullying, etc.) and the media influence that fosters it. For more information contact Heather Martin, Chair, at [hmartin@dawncenter.org](mailto:hmartin@dawncenter.org).

**Teen Pregnancy Prevention Committee's** goal is to empower parents/caregivers to be the change agents in the lives of their children and youth to make positive choices for themselves. For more information contact Sally Pebler and Tamara Stewart at [TStewart@hernandosheriff.org](mailto:TStewart@hernandosheriff.org) or [sally.pebler@suntrust.com](mailto:sally.pebler@suntrust.com).

**Transition to Workforce Committee** creates the "next step" for graduating teens which includes job creation, workforce development, apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, career/technical certification accomplishment and meeting the need for career-tech opportunities here in Hernando County. For more information contact Dawn Easter, Chair at [deaster@careercentral.jobs](mailto:deaster@careercentral.jobs).

**Transition to Post-Secondary Education Committee** helps create the "next step" for graduating teens toward post-secondary education and improves the process by which students can better accomplish a two year degree. Also focuses on the process of successful transition and achievement of high school requirements, scholarships, SAT/ACT prep and increase parental awareness of the options available to their student. For more information contact Sonia Rodriguez, Chair, at [rodrigs@phcc.edu](mailto:rodrigs@phcc.edu).

**Mental Health Committee** works to address mental wellness for children and their families in Hernando County, partnering with NAMI and other mental health organizations. For more information contact Dawn Bloxsom, Chair, [dawn.bloxsom@yahoo.com](mailto:dawn.bloxsom@yahoo.com).

**Teen Substance Use Committee** addresses issues related to teen drug use, tobacco, alcohol with a special emphasis on prescription drug epidemic. For more information contact Tresa Watson, Chair at [tresawatson@bellsouth.net](mailto:tresawatson@bellsouth.net).

**Child Wellbeing Committee** focuses on improving support systems for the overall wellbeing of children and works to address the special needs of foster children. Nicole Pulsini Mason, Chair. For more information contact [nicole.pulcinimason@kidscentralinc.org](mailto:nicole.pulcinimason@kidscentralinc.org).

**Early Childhood Learning Committee's** goal is to increase VPK enrollment, address deficiencies before children enter kindergarten and help provide educational resources to parents on the expected developmental stages of children. For more information contact Jim Farrelly, Chair at [j.farrelly@phelc.org](mailto:j.farrelly@phelc.org).

