



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**| Opinion**BY HERALD READERS  
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Miami should seize the opportunity to bring [Friends of the Children](#), the professional youth mentoring organization supported by [world champion gymnast Simone Biles](#), to our community. The organization empowers youth through long-term relationships with professional mentors (called “Friends”), starting in kindergarten and lasting through high school.

For more than 30 years, the organization has created proven, transformative change in the lives of thousands of youths across the country — increasing graduation rates and reducing entry into the foster care and justice systems.

Since late 2023, by local invitation, Friends of the Children has been exploring whether there is a desire for their program to help meet the needs of children and families in Miami-Dade County. The answer should be a resounding “Yes!”

Every year, about 170 children in Miami aged 4-6 enter the foster care system. Many of them are served by [Florida Foster Care Review \(FFCR\)](#), a local organization that helps children and young adults impacted by the foster care system. Long-term mentoring is often a critical service and one of the most challenging for FFCR to deliver.

What if every one of those children had a “Friend” to help them dream big and succeed? Even better, what if we gave them a Friend before they enter the system, keeping them safe, stable and at home with family?

We need more local champions to help make it happen. Will you join us?

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