

On the Scene

# Try a little tenderness - Broward's abused children receive teddy bears

Local children in foster care received a special gift on October 9, 2009, when representatives from the Neptune Society, the nation's largest cremation company, donated 150 cuddly teddy bears to Broward

County's Community Based Care lead agency, graciously accepted the donation at the Teddy Bear Exchange, which took place at the agency's headquarters in Plantation.

The Teddy Bear Exchange was

attended by ChildNet case workers, local foster care County's Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, and staff from SafePlace, the intake center for children when they are removed from their homes due

to abuse, abandonment or neglect. ChildNet's Vice President of Client Services, Silvia Smith-Torres, who also attended the event, expressed her appreciation to Albert Guerra, Neptune Society's Area Manager,

and George N. Scott, Funeral Director, for the company's generosity.

"When these children are removed from their homes, they are afraid, anxious and experiencing mixed emotions,"

said Smith-Torres. "A teddy bear is a small gesture that can instantly calm and comfort children whose home life has been disrupted."

The Neptune Society's Teddy Bear Program names a teddy bear in honor of every person whose death care is handled by Neptune on the 90-day anniversary of their death. This year the company will be donating bears across the state and nation in hopes of bringing needed comfort and relief.

Dion Joannou, chief executive officer of Neptune Society said, "The Neptune Teddy Bear Program provides a unique way for us to give something back in the communities where we do business while keeping people's memories alive in a special way that promotes goodwill." For more information about ChildNet, call 954-414-6000 or visit [www.childnet.us](http://www.childnet.us)

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Wendy Happ, ChildNet, left; George N. Scott, Neptune Society; Silvia Smith-Torres, ChildNet; Albert Guerra, Neptune Society; and Denise Voyik, Devereux