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## **PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERSHIP: ONLY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN COUNTRY PARTNERING TO PREVENT SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST IN YOUTH**



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**St. Lucie County, FL** – The Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County (DOH-St. Lucie) has developed a national model to increase access to health care services through partnership with the Jessica Clinton MVP Foundation, a powerful advocate for preventing sudden cardiac arrest in children and young athletes. On Saturday, November 3, 2018, is the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual *Know Your Heart Screening* from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Larry J. Lee Public Health Building (health department) located at 5150 NW Milner Drive, Port St. Lucie, FL 34983.

“This model links DOH-St. Lucie infrastructure with the passion of a non-profit foundation to benefit the community. It advances 2 of the 10-public health essential services - **Mobilizing community partnerships** to identify and solve health problems, **linking people to services** and assuring health care, and we are the only county health department in the country that offers a “Free” one-stop shop for children to receive a complete healthy heart checkup,” said Clint Sperber, Health Officer and Administrator of the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County.

“450 to 500 children are registered, and will be screened on Saturday. This is a mega undertaking with six pediatric cardiologists along with one adult cardiologist all providing hands on services; eight echo techs each with their own machine; twelve EKG machines going at the same time; 12 to 15 resident doctors; 20 volunteers from Indian River State College nursing program and more than fifteen volunteers. This will be the largest youth cardiac screening on the Treasure Coast ever. Plus, the biggest collaboration of doctors from different groups working together for the benefit of our children,” said Ray and Cheryl Lalloo, the parents of Jessica Clinton.

The Jessica Clinton MVP Foundation single focus is preventing sudden cardiac arrest in children and young athletes. Jessica died at her school following a cheerleading practice in 2003. It was determined that her cause of death was from a condition known as Mitral Valve Prolapse. Although this condition rarely leads to sudden death, Jessica’s degree was severe. Her condition was not detected in routine physicals during her time as a cheerleader and her school did not have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on site.

Jessica's parent's promised to keep her memory forever alive and to prevent similar tragedies from occurring by holding *Know Your Heart Screenings* and advocating for AEDs at all schools and parks.

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