

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Schonna Green

Long-time Florida Housing Coalition member Schonna Green has served as the founder and Executive Director of Mothers and Infants Striving for Success (M.I.S.S.) for over 21 years. As she transitions from her role with M.I.S.S., she begins her work as the Director of Homeless Initiatives for the City of Manchester, New Hampshire. Schonna's tireless work to end homelessness through access to affordable housing and social support systems has significantly impacted Florida. She is passionate about encouraging solution-driven conversations that lead to positive outcomes.



**New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu with Schonna Green on June 13th, 2022. Schonna's Faith-Based Affordable Housing Cooperative work in the City of Manchester has garnered support from the private and public sectors.**

## 1. Why did you start M.I.S.S., and what did you accomplish?

I believe in humanity, love, and compassion. I was taught from an early age always to care for my fellow man. You don't have to be indigent to understand suffering. The idea that only people that have experienced being underserved or underprivileged understand the plight is wrong. To be human is to have compassion.

M.I.S.S. is committed to helping disadvantaged families by empowering single mothers to gain self-sufficiency. As a grassroots initiative in 1999, M.I.S.S. successfully secured funding to operate the First Official Homeless Transitional Living Facility in Martin County, FL, "Hope Park." M.I.S.S. then provided housing and support services to 20 families per year over ten years.

In 2009-2013, M.I.S.S. constructed Butterfly Gardens, a Multifamily housing complex in Martin County, FL; Sammy's Landing, a Multifamily housing complex in Port St. Lucie, FL; and acquired Success House, a single-family home in Port St. Lucie, FL. In 2016, M.I.S.S. created Helen's Place, housing units dedicated to single senior females. In 2018, M.I.S.S. established Sunshine Place, housing units for single female heads of households experiencing Mental Health issues, which supports District #15 Mental Health Court.

## 2. What pleases you the most about your accomplishments in Florida?

Many M.I.S.S. residents became self-sufficient and now have productive lives. M.I.S.S. children went to college and became nurses, engineers, social workers, military service, etc. These accomplishments were made possible only through stable housing with support services, not a handout but a hand-up. Housing is a critical component and essential to the personal pursuit of happiness! Many families that came through M.I.S.S. are still in touch with us today!

### 3. You took a newly created position in Manchester, New Hampshire. How are you managing this?

I am currently in my five-year transition plan with the M.I.S.S. Inc. of the Treasure Coast and working with our new Program Director/Successor. An inspiring time for me, I now use my expertise to continue my work and mission of assisting others in building capacity to provide services for the homeless population and create affordable housing through collaborative partnerships. Presently, I am working with the City of Manchester, NH, as the Director of Homelessness Initiatives. My new role supports homeless initiatives and assists in creating affordable housing for 0% to 50% of area median income by nurturing relationships with for-profit and not-for-profit agencies. In this role, I have created HOPE (Housing Options Promote Empowerment) housing for all people and all incomes of the Queen City. Another exciting project is the Faith-Based Cooperative Housing Initiative. This initiative will include a diverse faith-based leadership group to support expanding affordable housing. Currently, there is an opportunity to purchase a renovated hotel to provide 80 studio units, six one-bedroom units, and four two-bedroom units.

### 4. What is the importance of partnerships in your work?

In all endeavors, partnerships are crucial. I learned very early in my career that relationship building is fundamental in advocating for any mission/cause. It is like a puzzle; you place the pieces accordingly to ensure participation, communication, and, most importantly, information sharing

about successes and/or failures. Doors open and close according to the goals and objectives, and I call this process "The Seasons." Seasons come in many forms and levels, and sometimes those seasons are temporary. However, all seasons are essential; collectively, they sustain the mission/cause and move it forward.

### 5. What has contributed to your success?

I appreciate and respect diversity, and I believe that the spaces that divide us are where the beauty of life lies. If we humans could master the areas that often divide us, this would be a beautiful world. The commonality is the key; it is imperative to seek out and understand the common denominator that can bring people together as opposed to driving them apart. Sometimes the ugliest parts of commonality could be the tool, if modified and reshaped, that fosters a better understanding of relationships; this, however, requires brutal honesty and the ability to criticize oneself. Remember that all people are equal and have a voice capable of creating harmony in unlikely spaces. When forming relationships for the common good, integrity must be the priority. "These are the most important ingredients in the success of a project." The networking opportunities, technical assistance, and empowerment provided by the Florida Housing Coalition to



*"Schonna has been instrumental in the City of Manchester's efforts to reduce homelessness and increase affordable housing options. She's a problem-solver who approaches complex issues with purpose and compassion, and we're already seeing the positive impact she's having on our community. I'm grateful for her energy, collaboration, and sense of hope that she provides in all that she does."*

**Manchester Mayor  
Joyce Craig**

not-for-profit organizations, developers, and statewide governmental agencies have sustained many lives. I'm grateful to the Coalition for all you have done and continue to do.