

The Miami Herald

NEIGHBORS

February 27, 2011

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

• FAMILIES

ADOPTIVE FATHER, OTHERS HONORED

A Fort Lauderdale single father and his family have been named the Broward Foster/Adoptive Family of the Year by Florida's Children First organization, a statewide child advocacy organization.

Michael Gagne first became a parent in 2002, adopting then-10-year-old David. It took him three years to adopt David, who is now 18. Since then, he adopted Joshua, 5, and Yulian, 4.

Christopher Bahamundi was named Foster Care "graduate" of the year. Bahamundi is one of five siblings who entered foster care when their mother died six years ago. He grew up at SOS Children's Village, excelled in sports and academics and is now attending the University of South Florida.

Other child advocates who were set to be honored Feb. 24 at Fort Lauderdale's Tower Club include George Sheldon, secretary of the Florida Department of Children & Families, who was to receive the Children's Ad-

vocate Award; WPLG-ABC 10 anchor Kristi Krueger, the Junior League of Fort Lauderdale and Walter Honaman.

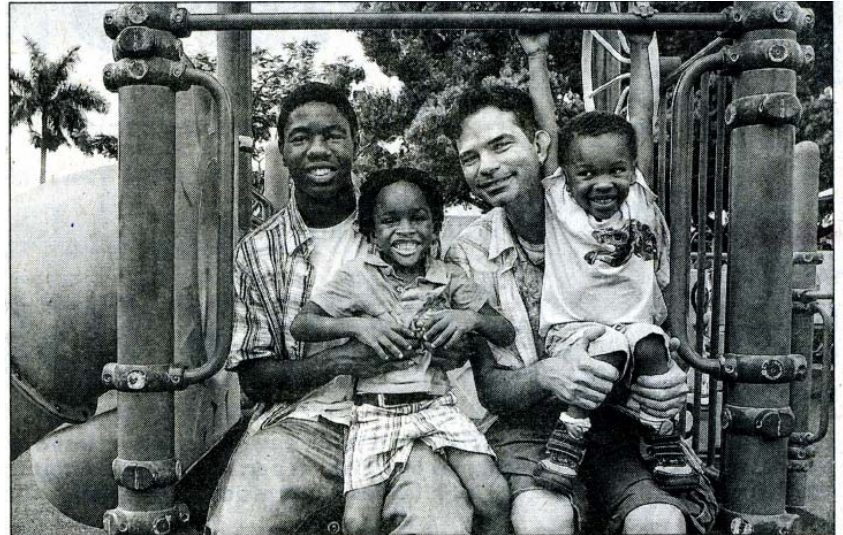
• RELIGION PANTHERS OFFER EARLY PURIM FUN

The Florida Panthers will host an early Purim Party on March 6, right before the team takes on the Washington Capitals at the BankAtlantic Center in Sunrise. The holiday, which is celebrated March 19 and 20, commemorates a time when the Jewish people living in Persia were saved from extermination.

The fun begins at the Panthers game with free pregame festivities like inflatable bounce houses. Children and adults are encouraged to attend in costume. Awards for the best and most original costumes will be selected between the first and second periods of the game.

Tickets start at \$15. For more information, call 954-840-6660 or visit www.Primetimestubs.com or www.chabadtodayflorida.com

JULIE LEVIN



EILEEN SOLER/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

ADOPTIVE FAMILY OF THE YEAR: The Gagne family: David, 18; Joshua, 5, dad Michael and Yulian, 4, in June at Bayview Park in Fort Lauderdale.