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## Best Foot Forward volunteer helps build students' self-esteem



**CAPTION** Debbie Sandberg: Best Foot Forward  
Gina Fontana

Debbie Sandberg became involved in Best Foot Forward when the organization started an elementary school division of their tutoring program for foster children.

August 26, 2015. Foster children have always held a soft spot in Debbie Sandberg's heart. Her brother was adopted, and all of her cousins were foster children.

So it only seemed fitting that she become involved when Best Foot Forward announced they were starting an elementary school division of their tutoring program for foster children.

"Being a mother and a teacher, I had a desire to give back to our community in a way that was natural and familiar to me, and [Best Foot Forward] was a perfect fit," she said.

Sandberg has been involved in the organization for two years. The first year, she helped with office work while the elementary school program was getting started. Last school year, she worked with two children.

She works one-on-one with the students, tutoring them in subjects in which they are struggling. She affirms the things they do positively and never looks at the negatives.

"I always go for a standard of improving them and building their self-esteem," Sandberg said. "Sometimes foster parents will do that, but [the children] are shuffled around so much they don't get the consistency."

Sandberg was also asked to mentor an FAU student last school year. She went over the student's schedule, checked in on her studying and made sure she was adapting well to college life.

"I've had children who went to college, and I knew the first year is pretty rough," she said.

Whether it's with her younger clients or the college student, Sandberg's favorite part of volunteering with Best Foot Forward remains the same.

"Seeing the kids change and gain that self-esteem and seeing that they have hope for the future is my favorite part," she said. "I love being part of an organization where people really care."