



# Pace Center for Girls Palm Beach Visits the Florida Capitol

*Pace Palm Beach girls and staff members traveled to Tallahassee for Pace Day at the Capitol, including a college tour and meetings with legislators.*

TALLAHASSEE, FL, UNITED STATES, May 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Pace Center for Girls, Palm Beach, visited the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee, FL, on Wednesday, April 2 and Thursday, April 3 to learn more about the importance of advocacy and share the many ways Pace Palm Beach is creating a lasting impact on our future by empowering girls to reach their full potential.

Pace Palm Beach provides academic and behavioral support to middle and high school girls ages 11-17 across Palm Beach County School Districts. Pace is a safe and supportive environment for the over 150 girls served annually in Palm Beach County. The girls and young women Pace Palm Beach supports receive academic instruction and work closely with counselors and therapists trained in trauma-based therapy. They also receive life coaching to learn essential life skills, such as personal hygiene, grocery shopping, and landing their first job. These resources are made available to girls at no cost.

Throughout the two-day event, Pace girls engaged in policy discussions, advocacy training, and hands-on legislative experiences. Girls heard from Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Eric Hall and other key leaders, gaining strategies for effective self-advocacy.

A highlight of the event was the Women in Politics panel, featuring members of the Pace Board of Trustees and partners. Panelists shared their journeys into leadership and encouraged Pace girls to set ambitious goals and explore diverse career paths. The panel included:

- Marva Johnson, Chair of Pace's Board of Trustees and Group Vice President, State Government Affairs for Charter Communications
- Stephanie Smith, Vice Chair of Pace's Board of Trustees and Vice President, State and Regional Affairs, TECO
- Senator Anitere Flores, Secretary of Pace's Board of Trustees and Director of Development, ACE Foundation
- Kathy Mears, Assistant Commissioner, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Tracy Mayernick, The Mayernick Group (moderator)

On the second day, Pace Palm Beach met with Palm Beach County legislators, such as Senator

Tina Polsky, Senator Mack Bernard, Senator Lori Berman, Representative Mike Caruso, Representative Debra Tendrich, Representative Anne Gerwig, and Legislative Aide for Representative Kelly Skidmore. During each meeting, the high school girls shared why they came to Pace Center for Girls and the positive impact Pace has had on their academics and mental health. Mindy Hanken, Executive Director of Pace Palm Beach, thanked each legislator for their ongoing support of Pace and shared additional success stories from Pace alumni.

“During our 2-day trip to the State Capitol, Pace girls toured Florida A&M University and Florida State University, with generous support from State Farm Insurance,” said Mindy Hanken, Executive Director of Pace Palm Beach. “We are deeply grateful to Verizon for sponsoring Pace Day at the Capitol and to the State of Florida and Palm Beach County Legislators for taking time to meet with us,” added Mindy Hanken, Executive Director of Pace Palm Beach. “Our visit to Tallahassee allowed the girls to not only meet with elected officials but also demonstrate the resilience and growth that define the Pace Center for Girls. This experience was a powerful reminder of the lasting impact Pace has on young lives, fostering life skills and empowering the next generation of leaders.”

Through its comprehensive services, Pace helps reduce juvenile justice involvement, increases high school graduation rates, and fosters long-term success for girls and their families. By creating a ripple effect of positive change, Pace strengthens the community by cultivating confident, educated, and engaged young women who are ready to contribute meaningfully to society.

Since its founding in 1996, Pace Palm Beach has successfully grown its program and impact on girls and the local community. More than 3,048 girls in Palm Beach County have been served, with 9 out of 10 girls having experienced overall academic improvement and 8 out of 10 girls reporting improved healthy social relationships with peers and family members.

This year, the National Pace Center for Girls organization, based in Jacksonville, FL, is celebrating its 40th year of service, marking four decades of supporting over 40,000 girls and young women across Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

Enrollment is now open at Pace Palm Beach. To learn more about how Pace is finding the great in every girl, visit [www.pacecenter.org](http://www.pacecenter.org).

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