

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, STATE OF FLORIDA
FAMILY LAW DIVISION

IN RE: THE FORMER MARRIAGE OF:

[REDACTED]
Petitioner/Former Wife,

and

CASE NUMBER: 2008-DR-011422
DIVISION: F

[REDACTED],
Respondent/Former Husband.

**ORDER ON FORMER HUSBAND'S MOTION TO ORDER ALTERNATIVE
REUNIFICATION THERAPY,**

THIS CAUSE came on for hearing on July 18, 2017 and September 19, 2017, on following motions filed by the Former Husband, **[REDACTED]** (1) Former Husband's Fifth (Emergency and/or Expedited) Motion for Contempt Against Former Wife for Violation of April 12, 2017 Order and Previous Order of Court, Motion to Compel Providers List for Therapy for Minor Children & Motion to Sanction **[REDACTED]**, (2) Former Husband's Amended Emergency and or Expedited Sixth Motion for Contempt Against Former Wife for Continued Alienation of Minor Children, and Failure to Cooperate with the Reunification Process and for Violations of Previous Court Orders Related to Reunification & Motion to Order Alternative Reunification Therapy and Sequestration of Minor Children and Motion to Sanction Former Wife and Emergency/Expedited Motion to Temporarily Remove Minor Children from Mother's Custody (collectively the "**the Former Husband's Motion to Order Alternative Reunification Therapy**"). Present before the Court were the Former Husband, **[REDACTED]**, and his

counsel, [REDACTED] Esq; Former Wife, [REDACTED] and her
counsel, [REDACTED]

The Court has reviewed the Court file, prior rulings, and heard testimony from Former Wife, expert witness, Dr. Robert Evans, the Court Appointed Reunification Therapist, Steve Steiner, and Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Lina Gottlieb who runs the Turning Points for Families Program. The Court having considered the argument of counsel and evidence presented at the above two proceedings, and being otherwise fully advised in the premises,

HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Despite the placement of a parenting coordinator, multiple therapists who were charged with the duty of conducting outpatient reunification therapy, and multiple Orders entered mandating and requiring the cooperation and facilitation of the reunification therapy, the Former Husband has not been reunified with the [REDACTED] [born 2001] ([REDACTED]) and [REDACTED] [born 2005] ([REDACTED]) and collectively as the "Minor Children". As of the date of the hearings, Former Husband has not had any timesharing with the Minor Children for the past two and ½ years despite the inclusion of a timesharing schedule in the Final Judgment of Dissolution of Marriage..

2. Mr. Steiner testified that while he is making slow progress in *outpatient* reunification therapy he was doubtful of success without a more intensive intervention program for reunification than he is able to provide through his office.

3. Mr. Steiner recommended that the Court consider use of the Turning Points 4 Families program as the more intensive reunification therapy program to facilitate the reunification with the Minor Children.

4. Based on the history of this case the Court finds that reunification between Former Husband and the Minor Children is unlikely to succeed without the use of a more aggressive

approach such as is offered by the Turning Points 4 Families program. The Court affirmatively finds that the best interests of the Minor Children require that they attend and participate in the Turning Points 4 Families program with the goal and objective of restoring the parent/child relationship between Former Husband and the Minor Children.

5. Dr. Evans and Linda Gottlieb both testified that the normal protocol for these types of programs involve some form of sequestration, i.e. the temporary suspension of contact between Former Wife and the Minor Children after the completion of the intensive reunification program. Both testified that the greater the prior estrangement the more necessary the need for a post-therapy sequestration between the children and the favored parent so that the children have uninterrupted time to bond and connect with the previously disfavored parent.

6. The Court finds that a sequestration period after completion of the intensive reunification therapy program is in the best interests of the Minor Children. The duration of that sequestration period in which the Minor Children will not have contact with Former Wife is

_____.

OR:

The Court will schedule a status conference to occur shortly after completion of the intensive reunification program to receive testimony from Ms. Gottlieb concerning the outcome of the intensive reunification program and determine the length of time for the cessation of contact between Former Wife and the Minor Children.

7. During the sequestration period, EITHER (A) the Minor Child [REDACTED] shall continue to attend his regular classes at the Pine View School located at 1 Python Path, Osprey, Florida 34229. Former Husband shall be responsible for transporting the Minor Child [REDACTED] to and from school.; or (B) the Minor Child [REDACTED] shall be disenrolled from the Pine View School and

temporarily enrolled at the zoned school in the Hillsborough County School District based upon Former Husband's current residential address 103 W. Plymouth Street, Tampa, Florida 33603. The Court will reserve jurisdiction to determine whether to return the Minor Child [REDACTED] to the Pine View School

8. The Court further finds based on the testimony of Dr. Evans, Ms. Gottlieb and other considerations based upon the past rulings in this case that Former Wife should be required to bear the cost of the intensive reunification therapy program. This financial obligation is imposed on Former Wife to incentivize her and ensure that she has some "skin in the game" as to the Minor Children's successful reunification with Former Husband.

ACCORDINGLY it is ORDERED that:

(A) The Former Husband's Motion to Order Alternative Reunification Therapy is hereby GRANTED.

(B) The Minor Children shall attend intensive reunification therapy with Linda Gottlieb, Licensed Clinical Social Worker at Turning Points for Families in New York State from October 14, 2017 to October 18, 2017.

(C) The parties shall comply with the directives of Linda Gottlieb with regard to the protocols and requirements of the Turning Points 4 Families program for the intensive reunification therapy session occurring from October 14, 2017 through October 18, 2017.

(D) During the sequestration period, EITHER (A) the Minor Child [REDACTED] shall continue to attend his regular classes at the Pine View School located at 1 Python Path, Osprey, Florida 34229. Former Husband shall be responsible for transporting the Minor Child [REDACTED] to and from school; or (B) the Minor Child [REDACTED] shall be disenrolled from the Pine View School and temporarily enrolled at the zoned school in the Hillsborough County School District based upon

Former Husband's current residential address 103 W. Plymouth Street, Tampa, Florida 33603. The Court reserves jurisdiction to determine whether to return the Minor Child [REDACTED] to the Pine View School.

(E) Following the completion of the Turning Points 4 Families program, there shall be a sequestration period in which Former Wife shall not have any contact with the Minor Children for a period of _____.

OR:

A status conference is scheduled for October 19, 2017 at 9:00 ^{XXX} am./pm to receive testimony from Ms. Gottlieb concerning the outcome of the intensive reunification program and determine the length of time for the cessation of contact between Former Wife and the Minor Children.

(F) The Court shall hold an evidentiary hearing at least ___ days prior to the conclusion of the sequestration period to determine whether the sequestration period should be extended. If the Court determines that the sequestration period should be ended, the Court will determine at that time the manner of Former Wife's reintroduction to the Minor Children and the structure for timesharing on an interim basis.

(G) Former Wife shall be solely responsible for the cost of the Turning Points 4 Families program; exclusive of the transportation and lodging costs. Former Husband shall bear his own transportation and lodging costs. The parties shall share equally the cost of the Minor Children's travel to and from the Turning Points 4 Families program.

(H) Upon the completion of the Turning Points 4 Families program, the Minor Children will continue in reunification therapy with Mr. Steiner.

(I) Mr. Steiner is directed and ordered to work in conjunction with Ms. Gottlieb to ensure that his post-intensive reunification therapy sessions are consistent with and supportive of the work performed during the Turning Points 4 Families program.

(J) The Court reserves jurisdiction on Former Husband's request for attorneys' fees.

(K) The Court reserves jurisdiction to modify and enforce the terms of this Order.

DONE AND ORDERED, in chambers, at Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida, this
29th day of September, 2017.

Electronically Conformed 9/29/2017

The Honorable Wesley Tibbals
13th Judicial Circuit

cc: Shazia N. Sparkman, Esquire
Matthew E. Thatcher, Esquire
Steve Steiner, LCSW
Linda Gottlieb, LCSW