

## **SCDAA ST. PETERSBURG FLORIDA CELEBRATES 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**



Mary F. B. Murph has been an advocate for sickle cell disease for 50 years. Simultaneously, while being wife, mother of two daughters, and working full time, she became a trail blazer, torch bearer, town crier, and a champion for sickle cell disease.

Mary's work began humbly when she founded the first sickle cell disease foundation in the state of Florida April 5, 1972, and began operating the first business office out of her home. It has now grown into a full business operation, serving more than 135 families, with one paid employee and an impressive Board of Directors. Currently, the sickle

cell office is located at the Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center in Midtown St. Petersburg.

For 50 years, Mary has supervised, trained, motivated, educated, inspired, and positively impacted the St. Petersburg community through her efforts and underlying passion for sickle cell disease. She works in a volunteer position as the President/CEO of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, St. Petersburg Chapter. After 32 years, Mary retired from the Pinellas County School System as an educator and a school guidance counselor. She is well acquainted with the daily task of operating a minority business with little funding. Mary has served as president intermittently for 43 of the organization's 50 year existence.

Mary is a courageous advocate who makes sure that sickle cell patients are treated fairly at the hospitals. She is very passionate about the business of sickle cell disease. She knows that to accomplish these goals, you have to be very well-organized, educated, relentless, and creative. She believes in providing the best in services and support to their clients.

Mary's ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life and obtain optimal healthcare for those with sickle cell disease. She is humble in spirit, but mighty in heart. She said, "It has been a long journey, but it has been a labor of love." She feels that volunteering is the rent she pays for living here on earth.

