

# STOP TOUCHING YOUR FACE!

LIFE WITH 41 KIDS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

April 2020



AMARILLO CHILDREN'S HOME



## OUR FAMILIES LOOK LIKE YOUR FAMILY!

OK, there are more kids and less wondering about who looks the most like grandma... but our cottages have a houseparent couple living family-style with 6-8 children plus an assistant.



In spite of the difficulties of the COVID-19 crisis, we have treasured the increased time together - visiting, playing and learning as a family.

**DISCLAIMER!** Don't worry! All hands were thoroughly washed and sanitized prior to and throughout all photoshoots.

The good thing is, we're all in this together... because  
Together, we are > (*greater than*).

**AMARILLO CHILDREN'S HOME** began out of a single decisive moment.

In 1923, Dr. R. Thomsen, *minister for today's First Presbyterian Church*, and some friends were meeting for coffee. They saw 3 children crying outside, orphaned and hungry. At this critical point, these men chose to act: **to feed and clothe the little ones and find them proper care.** As a result of that event, Amarillo Children's Home officially opened in March 1924.

**OUR MISSION**

TO RESTORE THE IDENTITY OF CHILDREN  
SO THEY CAN REALIZE THEIR GREAT VALUE AND BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS.

**WHO WE SERVE**



primarily children removed from their homes by the foster care and judicial systems, ages 5 - 18+



young people from difficult, traumatic, often impoverished situations with a history of abuse and neglect



our speciality is kids who are difficult to find a home for, including sibling groups and older teens



the length of stay is based on a child's needs: a few months to many years

**HOW WE SERVE**

we intentionally seek out each child's needs, gifts and passions to provide opportunities for growth and a new identity to cling to



we are highly adaptable: quick to respond and swift to implement new methods to best serve each young person who comes to us



our unique after-care program gives guidance and assistance to post-high school kids as they grow into adulthood



WE HOPE YOU'LL **PARTNER** WITH US.

**STUFF WE WANT YOU TO KNOW**

**1 WELCOME TO OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Way back in February (it seems so long ago), we were blessed to welcome Belinda Creliia-Palacios as our new Executive Director. Please take the time to read her letter to you on the back and get to know her a little more. We are thankful for the experience and wisdom she brings to ACH!

**2 THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING ROOTS & WINGS**

Did you know 70% of our funding comes from community donations? Roots & Wings is our major fundraising venue each year, but another highly impactful way to invest in ACH is through monthly giving - check out the insert to see how you can help provide stability for ACH and for Panhandle kids!

**3 WATCH THE VIDEO FROM THE 2020 ROOTS & WINGS**

Did you miss the event? Do you need a little refresher on who we are and what we do? You can watch the video from the most recent event on our website: [AmarilloChildrensHome.org](http://AmarilloChildrensHome.org). Take 12 minutes to be inspired and encouraged! It's worth it!

[AmarilloChildrensHome.org](http://AmarilloChildrensHome.org)



**A PROFILE OF GIVING.**

**Honoring YOU, OUR DONORS:** our helpers & our heroes  
Your consistent investment creates generational change through children. Lives redeemed. The future transformed.

*the* **WORK DOES NOT END**

**W**e stand at a confusing, difficult point in history – a deeply dark time for many, and we just don't know how it will all pan out.

**Still, there is good news: we know that in the end grace wins, light wins, love wins.**

Grace shows up in the helpers, as Mr. Rogers' mother used to tell him. As for the light... Anne Lamott reminds us, "light always overcomes darkness—always, historically. But, not necessarily later the same day, or tomorrow, after lunch." Wendell Berry spoke of Advent, the darkest shortest days of winter, "It gets darker and darker and darker, and then Jesus is born."

Christ appears at the darkest time, in the midst of the fear-producing news, and He says, "Fear not," because He is in us and among us and He is the Light, and He is Love, and no matter how it does pan out – He is here with us.

For 96 years, Amarillo Children's Home has pressed on in our mission "to restore the identity

*of children so they can realize their great value and be a blessing to others."* ACH has endured the darkness before because of helpers like you and the Light in whose name we serve.

We have served through nearly a century of feast and famine. We have survived the Great Depression and World War II, the oil crisis of the 70's, the ups and downs of the 80's and 90's, September 11 and the Great Recession. We have stood the test of time because, even in the darkest hours, people like you continue to "remember the orphan in their distress."

**You, our helpers, are our heroes** in the best as well as the worst of times.

**We thank you, that you have not forgotten us. We need you now more than ever.**

This pandemic will be hard, but hard is what we do. **The work does not end.** We will continue in it, and we will not be afraid because *Love is sovereign here.*

**WE RISK.**

Because what is gained is > (greater than) the cost.  
 Your support allows us to orchestrate intentional moments and to be present and prepared to fulfill our shared mission of restoring kids.

- Not everything is canceled.
- Birds are not canceled.
- Cloud watching is not canceled.
- Buds & flowers – not canceled.
- Spring is not canceled.
- Relationships are not canceled.
- Conversation is not canceled.
- Grace & mercy – not canceled.
- Joy is not canceled.
- Reading is not canceled.
- Curiosity is not canceled.
- Music & dancing – not canceled
- Imagination is not canceled.
- Blessing others is not canceled.
- Generosity is not canceled.
- Prayer & devotion - not canceled
- Gratitude is not canceled.
- Kindness is not canceled.
- Consideration is not canceled.
- Love & Respect – not canceled.
- HOPE** is not canceled.

...to not run out of TP



...to not cause an explosion



...to celebrate birthdays in isolation



...to be a blessing to others

I know what it's like to be afraid.  
Can I pray for you?



Hosanna! Hosanna!  
Happy Palm Sunday!

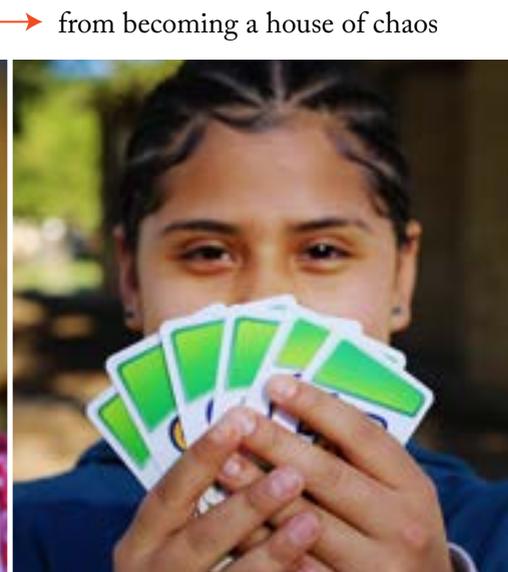
in many different ways

# THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IS ON LOCKDOWN, *and* WE'RE OVER HERE ON 34TH STREET TRYING OUR BEST...

...to keep up with our kids' educations



...to keep a house of kids from becoming a house of chaos



...to get some fresh air and sunshine



...to kill all. the. germs

**IN JUST 1 day** at ACH  
 (Typical Allergy Season)  
**179 SNEEZES, 265 COUGHS, 3722 DIRTY TISSUES** per home  
 (these numbers may be *slightly* exaggerated)

NOT a professional teacher

**WE  
DO.**

Since 1924, we have been comprised of an amazing community of people who do. People like you, who see the need and give of their resources so this vital work can be accomplished.

## OUR FRONTLINE

This is hard. Let's just put that particular truth out there right now. We can make cute jokes and try to keep things light, but the reality is, life just got messier.

Our houseparents juggle multiple balls on a typical day, and COVID-19 just added a few bowling pins to the mix. The purposeful manner in which they are dealing with this crisis is a perfect illustration of why we are so grateful for our people and their heart for Panhandle kids and the ACH mission.

Just like many of you, our houseparents are tackling homeschooling head-on. These not-professional-teachers are teaching 4...6...8 kids spanning several grades, many with learning disabilities, most with gaps in their education, all dealing with trauma.

Like many of you, our houseparents are working to overcome their own anxiety – about the future, about illness, for loved ones – while also helping the children in their care manage fear – children for whom everything in life has already come crashing down and for whom trust and peace are hard-earned.

Similarly to you, many of our houseparents are struggling in social isolation. They regularly work with kids through big feelings or poor choices, but on a “normal” day, they have multiple in-person human resources to help them help kids – support staff, church staff, tutors, counselors... They also invest in each other and help each other as houseparents. Without that person-to-person contact, it is easy for them to feel like they are an island.

Throughout all of this disruption, our amazingly committed houseparents have been mindful of our mission. They are restoring identity – celebrating birthdays, encouraging talents and speaking life into kids who are struggling. They are showing kids their great value – spending quality time, building relational bonds and exploring new hobbies together. They are opening doors for our kids to be a blessing to others – leading through example in praying for others, delivering surprise gifts and sending encouraging messages.

We are exceptionally proud of our houseparents. They are struggling with the same things we all are, and they need prayer. Even so, they are selflessly dedicated and intentionally engaged. Whatever crises may arise, our commitment to our mission remains strong – in our leadership and in *our frontline*.

7-year-old Boy  
Showing Me the  
Life Cycle of a  
Caterpillar

7-YEAR-OLD:  
Here is the caterpillar.  
Here is the caterpillar  
in menopause.

Here's the caterpillar  
as a butterfly.

ME:  
Don't you mean  
metamorphosis?

7-YEAR-OLD:  
Yes, that's what I said  
menopause.

ME:  
Well, they *are* both  
extreme changes...

*...such is the life of a  
quarantined houseparent-  
turned-teacher*

NOT created to  
be an island!



**WOULD YOU CONSIDER GIVING MONTHLY TO SUPPORT THIS GREAT MISSION?**

Give online at [amarillochildrenshome.org/give](https://amarillochildrenshome.org/give), or use the enclosed envelope to help provide a safe place for kids to call home.

## A WORD from OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Viktor Frankl wrote in his book, Man's Search for Meaning, that during crisis and hardship a person's belief in their own purpose is key to how that person will handle their circumstances.

These are indeed strange days. When I became Executive Director of Amarillo Children's Home, I never dreamed something like COVID-19 would transpire so shortly into my tenure. As we have heard many times in the past weeks, this crisis is truly unprecedented. Now, more than ever, is the time to stand firm. Now, more than ever, is the time to persevere in the mission that is so vital: to restore the identity of children so they can realize their great value and be a blessing to others.

We hear a lot about the resilience of children. I believe resilience is a by-product of purpose. Every child, every human, has a God-given purpose. Now, more than ever, it is our job to help each child understand this concept and to open the doors for that purpose to flourish.

During this time of shelter in place, we will still be a blessing to others. Even though things are immensely different right now and movements are restricted, we can still be of service. Our kids at ACH are making an effort to bless others even now – through phone calls to pray for friends, through delivering palm plants to porches for Palm Sunday, through making postcards for the elderly, through prayers for the sick, for health professionals, for our country and for our world.

I pray you and yours are safe and healthy during this crisis. I am reminded of Romans 5:3, how suffering can produce in us perseverance, character and hope, and hope in God will never fail us. Thank you for your prayers and support. Without you, we could not continue to provide children a safe place to call home. As we discover again and again, **Together**, we are > (greater than).

Again, thank you and God bless,

*Belinda Crelia-Palacios*

Belinda Crelia-Palacios,  
Executive Director, Amarillo Children's Home

**BE A VOICE!** Tell others about us – friend us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram – learn all you can and share what you learn.

# BODY

THE VERY BASICS

- 1 home for 1 year: **\$24,492**
- 1 month of utilities for 1 home: **\$700**

**SHELTER SHELTER SHELTER SHELTER**  
*utilities, maintenance, repairs, supplies and furnishings (etc.)*

We are committed to the restoration of the whole child – body, mind, soul, family & community.

*Here are a few ways your investment can be used to provide a safe home for kids at ACH.*

**FOOD**  1 home for 1 year: **\$16,740**  
1 home for 1 month: **\$1,395**  
1 person for 1 month: **\$155**

**HYGIENE**  Campus per year: **\$12,348**  
1 home per year: **\$1,764**  
1 child per year: **\$252**

