We reached our goal because of your generosity! Each gift given during our online giving day will be used to meet the daily needs of children in residential and family outreach programs. On a daily basis, your gifts are positively impacting families and communities.

Thank you for making a difference!

ON THE COVER

With warm summer days come fun team-building activities put together by the MCH recreation staff that help youth in our care have positive interactions and make meaningful connections. In all of our programs, MCH focuses on relationships as fundamental to the well-being of the children, youth and families we serve.

PRESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE

While we can blame a variety of issues for the ills we see in society and the struggles that plague young people today, a report from the Commission on Children at Risk says that the “crisis of American childhood is a lack of connectedness.”

This is not an oversimplification; there is quite a lot packed into that brief statement. The “connectedness” inferred in the article, titled “Hardwired to Connect,” is actually twofold: close connections with other people and deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning. The report states that this connectedness comes from social institutions in our society that, regrettably, have become significantly weaker over time. A second cause is found in the profuse use of electronic communications which has drastically cut down on face-to-face human interactions, a basic necessity for proper brain and relational development.

As the title of the article surmises, children are born hardwired to connect. From the Christian perspective, this should come as no surprise. God is a relational God; humankind was created for community and relationships. He created us to be a relational people. Relationships are how attachments are formed experientially over time. Without relationships there are no attachments and our society is at risk; not just the childhoods of our children, but foundations of entire societies. At Methodist Children’s Home, we emphasize relationships as essential to all that we do in our approach to “offer hope to children, youth and families through a nurturing, Christian community.” Morality, communication, play, teamwork, social interactions, conducting business, building trust and safety, marriage, friendships, employment, government … I could go on and on. Without relationships, every nation, society, family, and individual is at risk.

In this issue of Sunshine magazine you will read more about our emphasis on relationships and how we make that an intentional part of our ministry. This is seen in our childcare programming and also in the way we connect with those who generously support this great work. We are who we are today because of relationships with individuals who believe in the difference MCH is making in the lives of children and youth.

On behalf of the children, staff and leadership of Methodist Children’s Home, thank you for walking alongside us and supporting our work.

Tim Brown, President & CEO
Judy Broadway, Vice President for Human Resources
Moe Dozier, Vice President for Programs
Julie Mitchell, Vice President for Finance
Bryan Mize, Vice President for Quality Improvement
Trey Oakley, Vice President for Development
Russell Rankin, Director of Public Relations
Lindsay Blagg, Publications Manager
Karleigh Conway, Public Relations Officer
Nathanael Mosher, Graphic Designer

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

EDITORIAL STAFF

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MCH.org
Healthy Relationships Play Crucial Role in the MCH Mission

People need connection. We are born with the desire to connect. We find meaning and purpose through our relationships with others.

So what happens when you don’t feel that connection? According to scientific research from “Hardwired to Connect,” a report from the Commission on Children at Risk, the effects on children can be detrimental.

“The latest research indicates that children are born ‘hardwired to connect’ to others and when that does not happen or those needs go unmet, we have a rising level of mental health issues, aggression, suicides, crime, and a compromised conscience,” explained Tim Brown, president and CEO of Methodist Children’s Home.

The philosophy of care at Methodist Children’s Home (MCH) is largely based on the evidence described in this research, Brown explained. The ministry recognizes the importance of relationships for human development, as well as the impact it could have on our society, and made it an essential element in our programs and services.

“Relationships” is even included as one of six core values of the ministry, described as to “build healthy relationships through communication, respect, trust and love.”

“Teaching how to build, maintain and how to appropriately use relationships are at the center of all we do and is critical to our effectiveness as an organization,” Brown said. “Relationships are a core building block as we restore and promote wholeness and potential for success in the children and families we serve.

“Many of our children come to us with broken relationships, misusing and misunderstanding relationships, without significant relationships, or having been involved in inappropriate relationships,” he continued. “And just as these circumstances are the results of bad relationships that inflict pain and suffering, we utilize healthy relationships to heal and restore those who have been wounded and injured by them.”

MCH staff can become role models and mentors to children, youth and families as they work to overcome their challenges. They walk alongside them in their journey to healing and find ways to connect, whether through a common interest, lending a nonjudgmental ear, or by showing compassion and care.

“We believe we are giving an invaluable gift to every individual child, youth, family, and our society in general, as we are successful in helping our young people build, understand and utilize appropriate relationships,” Brown said.

MCH is blessed with staff who are motivated to have a lasting impact on our children, youth and families by providing them with opportunities to grow and connect. Several staff shared insight into how they have been successful in building relationships with those we serve.

Relationships are a core building block as we restore and promote wholeness and potential for success in the children and families we serve. — Tim Brown, MCH President & CEO
A Friend in the Community — Family Outreach

Cindy Miller’s family was in crisis. She received custody of her grandchildren Kylee, now age 14, Riley, 12, and Ryder, 11, in 2008 when they had experienced neglect due to their mother’s drug addiction. After their mother was incarcerated, her parental rights were terminated and Miller adopted the three children as her own.

The children were showing the effects of trauma through their behaviors and Cindy didn’t know where to turn. Kylee was depressed and felt angry with her mother. Riley had trouble controlling his emotions and the children were fighting a lot. The family needed help.

After a referral from the children’s school, the family went before the Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG) in Taylor County where they met Jo Ann Evans, a case manager at MCH Family Outreach in Abilene, who received the MCH Core Value Award for Relationships in the spring.

CRCG is a group of local partners that hear about family situations and develop a service plan for people who are having trouble finding organizations that match their needs. Miller said during the meeting when Evans spoke, it was like she already knew her children. The family began working with Evans through the Family Solutions program in May 2016. Through the program, families meet weekly with a case manager to assess their strengths, set goals and work toward achieving those goals. Evans worked with Miller and the children in coping with their emotions, understanding and controlling their behaviors and creating more structure in the home in order to grow closer as a family. Kylee spent six months in a residential care facility for youth to work through her personal issues and is making improvements.

“I’m not as depressed and I’ve learned to accept who I am a lot better and accept who my mother was and to not hate her,” she said. “That is my biggest change.”

Riley has also learned to understand his anger and said, “I can control myself a lot more than I used to.”

Throughout the process, the family valued Evans’ support and grew close with their case manager.

“She made it easy to talk and I knew that she wasn’t going to lie or be ugly to you,” Miller said. “She’s tactful. She knows how to tell you when you are wrong and not make you feel bad. You don’t feel judged.”

“The thing about Jo Ann is she can understand you,” Riley said. “I don’t know if it is because she has met people like us, but she can understand how you feel. Also, I am able to understand her and what she is saying.”

Jo Ann said even though their case was concluded in December 2016, she has still checked in on the Miller family and will continue the relationship as the children grow up. She said she sees the love the family has for each other and is proud of their progress.

“The neat thing about it is that if we don’t talk to each other or see each other very often, it is still right back like where we left off,” Evans said. “I’ll know all of them until the kids have kids. They will always have a way to find me and I will be checking in on them. This is a special relationship.”

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A Home Away from Home — Residential Services

Leaving home and coming into a residential program to live in a house with other young people can be a scary experience. But at Methodist Children’s Home, direct care staff are able to ease the transition and provide a stable and loving home for children and youth.

After retiring, Max and Lou Larseingue felt the desire to give back and they became home parents at the MCH Boys Ranch in February 2014. In their position at MCH, the couple recognizes the importance of establishing a relationship with each boy as they manage their household.

“It is all about relationships,” Max said. “It is like a bank account – you have to make deposits first before you expect something from the boys. It is all about taking care of their needs and being in tune with what those needs are and reading their moods.”

“It’s important for Max and me to be open and direct with these boys in a kind manner,” Lou added. “Understanding that we have standards, we expect them to meet that standard to some measure of their ability and we’ll help them get there. Trust is huge. They need honest, straightforward people who know who they are and what’s best for them and will teach them how to make the best choices in their lives.”

The couple said they do their best to create a safe environment for the boys that will help them feel like a family unit by checking in on them, asking about their lives and planning activities together. They also understand that part of creating that environment is to let the boys know they will not be judged.

“We all have a past,” Lou said. “We’ve all done things we’re not proud of but we rise above that and move forward. That’s what we try to teach the boys.”

Galen, a resident at the Boys Ranch, has been in their home for a year and a half.

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They will always have a way to find me and I will be checking in on them. This is a special relationship.

— Jo Ann Evans,
MCH Case Manager

After receiving support from MCH Family Outreach, Cindy Miller and her grandchildren continue to hold a special place in their hearts for their case manager, Jo Ann Evans.

“I don’t know if it is because she has met people like us, but she can understand how you feel. Also, I am able to understand her and what she is saying.”

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Unit manager Monica Rose (left) and house parents Dewayne and Paula Cady play important roles in creating a stable and nurturing environment for their girls.

“You start to see that the home parents are the cornerstones in these young men’s lives and their life does depend a lot on them and there’s a deep connection between the guys and the home parents — and it becomes a lot like a family,” he said.

On the Waaco campus, home parents Dewayne and Paula Cady work alongside unit manager Monica Rose to oversee a household of girls. The Cadys began working at MCH in July 2016 and Paula is a former resident herself. The couple succeed in their role by trying to create a family-like environment with a good balance of nurture and structure.

“I want them to understand there are rules, but we can have fun,” Paula said. “I want them to know it is OK to make a mistake and help them learn life skills and things they are going to need to know when they walk out these doors.”

The Cadys make an effort to be active with the girls by taking walks with them, playing tether ball or giving them experiences in the real world. Dewayne said he recently took the girls to the park where they saw families cooking out and playing games together. He said initially many didn’t want to go but on the way home, several asked when they could come back to do their own cookout and games.

“This is what we want to show them — that this is what families do,” he said.

Rose, who came to MCH in 2014, leads the staff in the home and said she treats every child as she would treat her own. She has been successful in resolving conflicts and building solid relationships with the girls.

“Accept them for who they are and what they do,” she said. “Even in a situation that is challenging, I always tell them that their emotions are OK. I just help them try to find a way to express that emotion appropriately. I keep it real and help them prepare for life outside of MCH. Here, like the real world, we deal with things and keep on moving.”

Rose said she has been blessed with strong staff who all have been able to connect with the girls in their home.
Yesenia lived at Methodist Children’s Home as a teenager from 2009 until she graduated from high school in 2013. During her time on campus, she became close with her staff and at the end of her junior year she was assigned a Transition Services (TS) coordinator to help her settle into a new home. Anthony has been a tremendous support to Yesenia as she prepared to leave MCH for college. “They have a servant’s heart, the people who work here. I don’t know if you could work here if you didn’t have that.”

Yesenia said she appreciates the way Anthony and other TS coordinators work with MCH graduates as they prepare for life after graduation. “I like that whenever you graduate from MCH, you don’t have to lose contact with everybody,” she said. “I still say that MCH is home.”

Anthony said TS is a vital part of MCH because they are able to convey life lessons to young adults as they pursue their dreams in a realistic way. She is proud of Yesenia’s accomplishments.

“I could see her in 10 years coming back to MCH to work,” Anthony said. “She is passionate about MCH and understands how MCH has made a difference in her life. Even if she doesn’t work at MCH, it would be something similar – Yesenia would want to give back.”

A Higher Purpose – Spiritual Development

Ahmad Washington, spiritual development minister who has served in several roles at MCH for the past 17 years, added, “When we engage on a natural level, events and other life issues going on, we are also in tune with God, trying to walk how He wants us to walk here, and the spiritual core of who we are manifests itself in how we talk about those issues or listen.”

The Spiritual Development team also utilizes their own talents to connect with the youth through groups for art, praise dance and praise team. Britton leads art sessions on an individual basis and said conversations come about organically through these lessons. Washington works weekly with praise team and praise dance as they prepare for performances.

“We want to figure out ways to allow them to share their gifts in a way that helps them develop a sense of connectedness and belonging here so that through that connection, they can encounter Christ,” Washington said.

My hope is that these kids will ultimately find a foundation in Christ.

-RON BRITTON, Spiritual Development Minister

In addition to her involvement in the praise team, Raina is active in FFA where she finds encouragement from Spiritual Development ministers like Ahmad Washington.

Youth find support systems among peers and the Spiritual Development staff while also expressing emotions or insecurities through music. Iona said music is an outlet for her and said the praise team “is a place to forget about things for a while.”

“Pastor Ahmad told me God has a plan for me,” she said. “God helped me reach my goals that I didn’t think could happen. It helped bring me closer to God knowing there is a purpose for me.”

Although their role can be trying, the Spiritual Development team all say they feel called to serve this special congregation and hope they can help them see God’s love for them.

“My hope is that these kids will ultimately find a foundation in Christ.” Britton said. “So many of them often have zero foundation – they don’t know who they are or what they want and are chameleons trying on every identity they can. Ultimately I want them to leave here with a strong foundation and strong identity in regards to who they are.”

Washington added, “I want them to also have an honest look and view of their scars, whether it be from their past or family issues. Through that honest look, they can begin or enter the process of healing through Christ and faith in Jesus by allowing Him to bring the assistance and the help they need.”
Linda Rodriguez is getting by through her strength and love for her family. She became the primary caregiver for her grandchildren after tragedy struck her family not just once, but twice. Through the support of MCH Family Outreach, she has found a way to keep her family strong.

A three-bedroom home in San Antonio is refuge to Rodriguez, her eight grandchildren, and daughter Janie. The grandchildren range in age from 5 to 13.

Rodriguez raised four daughters – Anna, Petra, Janie, and Melinda – and when they had children, she was a constant in their lives, even caring for two of her granddaughters from the time they were 6 months old. She helps care for her daughter Petra’s two daughters, one of which lives in the home permanently due to their mother’s disability.

In 2012, her oldest daughter Anna died, leaving behind a daughter whom Rodriguez adopted as her own. Then in October 2016 her daughter Melinda and Melinda’s daughter Alizae were killed in a tragic car accident. Rodriguez stepped up and took in Melinda’s surviving four children. She said she wants people to know that grandparents are fully capable of caring for their grandchildren if needed.

“The whole family works together. I tell them when you set your mind to something and keep it there, you will accomplish it.”

-LINDA RODRIGUEZ, Gap Program Client
Danielle Flores (right), MCH case manager in San Antonio, is proud of the resilience Rodriguez has shown throughout her journey.

“I didn’t have a perfect childhood myself but I learned from that,” she said. “I took on two jobs to support my kids and I kept working and working until I couldn’t any more. Not only for my daughters but now for my grandkids.” She said she never thought twice about taking in her grandchildren and loves having them in her home.

“These are my kids,” she said. “I see a lot of grandparents who couldn’t care less [about helping their children]. But for me as their grandmother, I have a responsibility too.”

Rodriguez heard about MCH Family Outreach through the children’s school and reached out for support even before Melinda’s death. She was matched with Melissa Arroyo, then case manager and now director of MCH Family Outreach in San Antonio. Together they developed goals to get food assistance for the family, assistance with utilities, referrals for therapists and psychologists, and low income legal assistance. MCH also helped the children enroll in an afterschool program and receive benefits through Medicaid. The case was successfully closed and the family was in good shape.

But after Melinda’s accident, it was simply too much for Rodriguez and she needed some guidance to help her and her family through the trauma.

“It has been really hard for me,” she said. “I needed that support. I needed somebody to talk to. I wound up in the hospital and I’ve been having a lot of problems. I keep it all inside of me. And it still hurts. I can’t seem to let it go and I need that one person to talk to, to help me through that.”

MCH case manager Danielle Flores took on Rodriguez’s case in January 2017 and has provided her with emotional support. She has walked alongside her as she has met challenges. MCH referred Rodriguez to an “Ask a Lawyer” event where she was able to get legal assistance to help solidify her rights to her grandchildren.

“We talked about what the needs were for this household,” Flores said. “It’s more for support so that we can communicate and so she has someone to talk to if she needs any resources. She does a great job of managing this household and keeping everything in line.”

Rodriguez has been able to work alongside Flores to assess her and her grandchildren’s needs and develop goals in order to strengthen her family. With the support she has received, Rodriguez is continuing to work through her grief and found a great partner in her daughter Janie, who has recently moved into the home with her own daughter.

“She is so incredibly strong and an amazing mother and grandmother. She’s come a long way from what she’s been through.”

-DANIELLE FLORES, MCH Case Manager

Rodriguez’s grandchildren are doing well in school and thriving in their home.

“Linda is an inspiration to others,” said Arroyo. “At a time of grief and loss, she has placed her grandchildren first, which has been an amazing strength in helping her family heal.”

“She is so incredibly strong and an amazing mother and grandmother,” Flores said. “She’s worked really hard for everything that she has and she’s come a long way from what she’s been through. She’s an amazing person and I feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to work with her and serve her and get to know her as a person.”

Rodriguez is grateful for the way MCH has walked alongside her in her mission to preserve and stabilize her family. She said the children have been able to get involved in extracurricular activities and also help around the house doing chores to earn money for items they want to purchase. They have also improved their grades.

“The whole family works together,” Rodriguez said. “I tell them when you set your mind to something and keep it there, you will accomplish it.”

About the Gap Program

Rodriguez was served through the Gap Program, formerly called the Grandparents As Parents Program, which assists second-generation caregivers. MCH has recently redesigned the program in order to meet the needs of more people in the community while also adding more structure and evidence-based practices into the program.

“The MCH Grandparents as Parents Program (GAPP) has served families well for many years,” explained Traci Wagner, MCH Family Outreach administrator for the Eastern region. “Our team wanted a way to meet the changing needs of families in Texas and New Mexico. We have developed a program to further support grandparents and other caregivers that is in line with our organizational strategy for offering hope to and impacting children and families. We have incorporated a comprehensive assessment of the family in order to enlist the best resources and to help them set goals. We hope to equip families with tools and resources that will promote healthy caregiving and interactions.”

The new program will offer in-home and support services to relative and kinship caregivers, not just grandparents, and will be fully transitioned into all MCH Family Outreach offices by Sept. 1.

“This continuum of in-home and support services to grandparents and other caregivers provides strength-based services to clients,” Wagner said. “We are able to support the kinship triad, which includes the child, parents (when safe and appropriate) and the caregiver. The new Gap Program is informed by industry best practices, theories and perspectives including trauma theory, empowerment approach and attachment theory.”

Rodriguez received her support through the GAP Program and was matched with Janie, her daughter. Janie is very helpful and a great supporter for Rodriguez.

She's still young and has all this responsibility. She chooses to be here and I just love her for that.”

With Janie able to care for their physical needs that Rodriguez’s health will not allow, the family’s situation is improving.

“The kids come first,” Rodriguez said. “We have it pretty much taken care of. We don’t live in luxury but we have what the kids need.”

Even though the case has come to a close, Rodriguez has a strong bond with MCH that will continue.

“It means a lot to have Janie here,” Rodriguez said. “She’s a great help and I just love her for that.”

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Our youth in the residential program enjoy the summer months with friends, staff and new experiences. From ropes courses to horseback riding, water sports to games at the park, youth at MCH make summer memories that will last a lifetime.
Galen feels at home in a country environment. Originally from Canada, he lived on a farm for six years before moving to Stephenville, Texas, with his mother and father where he spent two years learning to rope and ride horses. But after his parents separated, he started to have a tough time adjusting to the situation. His father moved to another town and his relationship with his mother began to decline. They decided the best thing for Galen’s future was for him to live at Methodist Children’s Home. A resident since January 2015, the MCH Boys Ranch was a good fit for Galen’s background. He joined FFA, cares for steer every day and worked in the horse barn last year. He also spends a lot of time fishing and being outside. However, it took him some time to adjust to living with new people and said he was pretty antisocial toward everyone at first. But being in a home with, at times, nine other young men helped him learn to be more patient and tolerant. “It has put me into positions where I’ve had to keep a level head or else it would affect not only my standing here at MCH, but also my standing in life,” Galen said. “Everyone comes here with different backgrounds so you have to understand that to live here.” Galen was met with another challenge when his father passed away in January of this year. Although his relationship with his mother has improved greatly during his time at MCH, he said the process of coping with the loss ended up bringing them even closer together. “I go on a lot of home visits,” he said. “I spend a lot of time at home. I have built a strong relationship with my mother through MCH and through their help.” Galen was on the academic honor roll last school year and will be a senior in the fall at the MCH charter school. School is important to him, he said. He will attend dual-credit courses as a senior and hopes to attend Texas State Technical College after graduation to study biomechanics. His father was a mechanic, and Galen has fond memories of learning from him. He said through a trade in biomechanics, he can work on machines in hospitals anywhere in the world. He dreams of moving to the Bahamas to work at a hospital within walking distance to the beach. Maegan Molnar, his unit manager at the Boys Ranch, is proud of the progress that Galen has made during his time at MCH. “Through hard work and patience, Galen has overcome many obstacles which have granted him maturity and great leadership skills,” Molnar said. “Galen has built trusting relationships with the adults he works with on a daily basis and has become closer with family which was one of his goals upon admission. It’s been a joy to see Galen transform into a dependable, hardworking and driven young man.”

Congratulations to our students who earned their high school diplomas this year! MCH had 17 students graduate from the MCH charter school. A special thanks to First United Methodist Church of Waco for again hosting our graduation ceremony.
TLETICIA  
CREATING A BRIGHT FUTURE

Achievement in education is a strong value young people receive at Methodist Children’s Home. Through scholarship opportunities available to MCH graduates to continue their education after high school, youth who previously might not have considered attending college find the support and motivation to create a bright future. Leticia Allionwu came to MCH when she was 12 years old and stayed until she graduated from high school. Many of her memorable experiences at MCH involved having her eyes opened to the world around her. “I had experiences at MCH that were a lot of firsts for me, such as my first plane ride, my first trip to other Texas cities, my first trip to New Mexico, and my first summer camp experience,” she said.

After graduating from high school, Allionwu took advantage of MCH scholarship opportunities and attended the University of Texas at Austin. After UT she found employment in the field of education. It was there that she realized she had a passion, instilled through her experience at MCH, to help young people succeed in education. “I had been working in K-12 education for a few years and realized that the toughest transition for at-risk students is the transition from K-12 into higher education, that is their path,” she said. “There is a high level of support for high school and applying to schools, but there are other issues such as student matriculation that are important to me and important in the higher education arena. It’s important to me that more students of color, especially, not only go to college, but finish it.

“MCH provided a lot of exposure and awareness for me,” she explained. “It’s very likely that I wouldn’t have had a clear vision about my future before finding education.” Currently pursuing a master’s degree in higher education administration, Allionwu has had the opportunity to work with government officials and influencers and attend important meetings, such as an assembly at the French Embassy related to international student mobility in France and hearing Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and French Embassy related to international student mobility in France and hearing Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta speak about initiatives required the work of many people, including three members of our public relations staff – Lindsay Blagg, Lindy Dehm and Nathanael Mosher – who made significant contributions through their time and talents.

“God called upon people to serve and not everyone who has given themselves for the ministry. ‘God called upon people to serve at a certain time and work together,’ he writes. ‘We are all part of the Legacy of Hope, regardless of our role.’”

For information about ordering your limited edition copy of Legacy of Hope for $30.00, email us at Development@MCH.org or call us at 1-800-853-1272.
Steve Kruse demonstrates how to use several of the items generously donated by Mr. Theo Embry.

Mr. Theo Embry

RELATIONSHIPS CRAFTED THROUGH GENEROSITY

Generosity is demonstrated in a variety of ways. Some people, like Theo Embry, seem to have covered them all. According to his daughter, Elaine Embry-Mullins, her father lives his life generously through his relationships, gifts, talents, and actions. “My father did so many things – he worked with his hands as a builder, sold insurance and real estate – but he would also always teach people skills along the way,” she said. “When he built a house for someone who might have a hard time making ends meet, he’d have them work alongside him in the building process and count it towards their down payment.”

Embry-Mullins said her father has always been very community oriented, “looking out for the betterment of his fellowman. To his children, he gave us the understanding of valuing what was important, which was using what we had to help others,” she said.

That is one reason Embry, a longtime member of St. Mark United Methodist Church in Cleburne, first became involved with Methodist Children’s Home. “He believes in what MCH was doing,” she said. “He knew they helped kids get a better start in life.”

Embry, who has been a benefactor and participant of the MCH gift annuity program for more than 30 years, recently donated the contents of his two large hobby workshops to the MCH Boys Ranch when he and his wife downsized to move into an assisted living facility near their daughter in Robinson, Texas.

Embry’s collection included many woodworking tools, a welding rig on a trailer, impact wrenches, lifts, pulleys, many trays of tools, and machines to bend and cut metal.

Allison Crawford, director of benefactor relations at MCH, said it took multiple trips by a moving company to transport all the items to the Boys Ranch. She recalled how proudly Embry was of his workshops.

“When we would pay visits to Mr. Embry, he used to take us through his shops and show us projects he’d completed,” Crawford said. “Mr. Embry seemed to have every tool imaginable. He was very proud of his tools and kept everything in immaculate condition.”

“Because of the quality, it was like receiving brand-new tools,” Crawford said of the donated items. “Many of the tools and machines were actually on the wish list of our teachers who lead our vocational program.”

According to Trey Oakley, MCH vice president for development, Embry’s heart for helping others, especially those served by MCH, has always been evident. “The Embrys have been faithful benefactors for many years,” Oakley said. “This generous gift further affirms their support for our mission and will help transform our vocational/ag program at the Boys Ranch. As a result, countless lives will be positively impacted. Like so many of our benefactors who believe in the life-changing work we do, I know that is what the Embrys care about very deeply.”

One of Embry’s projects, a large mirror in a handmade wood frame, now hangs in the Perkins Heritage Home and Visitors Center on the MCH Waco campus. Embry-Mullins said the heavy piece is characteristic of her father’s projects, just as it mirrors his generosity to MCH.

“That’s how he did it – it had to be big and it had to last,” she said, laughing.

LEGACY LUNCHEON CELEBRATES ESTATE GIFTS

Methodist Children’s Home showed its gratitude for estate gifts during the 2017 Legacy Luncheon held on June 16 at the Johnson Student Center. Four families were honored during the ceremony and received bronze plaques that will be placed in the Mulkey Memorial Heritage Garden.

The garden, located next to the Administration building on the Waco campus, honors those who have contributed to MCH through estate gifts with plaques commemorating gifts of $125,000 or more. The garden is named in memory of Abe and Louisa Mulkey, evangelists who were instrumental in keeping the doors of MCH open during its early years.

Below are the 2017 honorees:

John E. Hilliard

Colonel John Edward Hilliard was born in a small town in East Texas and joined the Air Force after law school. He lived in many places both in the United States and abroad. After his retirement he taught government and history at a Christian school in Houston where he was beloved by his students for his fairness, sense of humor and dedication to his craft. After his selected retirement, he traveled to 67 countries, some of which were mission trips with his church. He adopted a young boy from Siberia at the age of 60 and raised him to a good life as an American citizen. His life was a beacon of loving and giving, which will continue to shine in his gift to Methodist Children’s Home.

Hancel C. and Veneta Kyle Light

Veneta Light was born on Aug. 17, 1915, in Ambe, Oklahoma. She was 99 years old when she passed in Chickasha, Oklahoma, on Sept. 12, 2014. After graduating from Oklahoma College for Women in 1937, she worked at Middleburg School in Blanchard, Oklahoma. While there, she met her husband Hancel C. Light, and the couple were married in 1938 at her parents’ home. Hancel and Veneta, both teachers, worked in many places before eventually making their home in Wichita Falls. After Hancel passed in 1986, Veneta returned to Chickasha and became involved in the community as a member of Epworth United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women and the Texas Teachers Association.

Following the Legacy Luncheon, Larry and Belinda Stanley, representatives of the Hilliard estate, shared blessings and prayers on the walls of the new home being built on the Waco campus. This home will bear John E. Hilliard’s name. Construction is expected to be completed on the Hilliard home as well as the Margaret Ann Ashcraft home by the start of 2018.

H.E. and Annette N. Nicholson

H. Earl and Annette N. Nicholson established a trust in 1951 while they were still living in Wheeler County, Texas. After the trust had cared for their grandson Nick, the Shriners in Amarillo and the Methodist Orphanage at Waco became beneficiaries. The Nicholsons first lived in the Panhandle before owning property in Krugerville near Denton. They followed the plan to take care of their family first and then included MCH as part of their family through this special gift.

Helen Reid Yarbrough

Helen Reid Yarbrough was born in Fort Worth on June 25, 1922, and lived in Junction for most of her life. Her devotion to Junction and Kimble County were represented by her support of causes she thought were important to the area. The land for Kimble Hospital was a donation from her parents’ property, and she also donated the land for a new hospital. She supported the Kimble County Library, Kimble County Historic Museum, and other local causes. She was a strong Methodist and lifelong member of the First United Methodist Church of Junction.
MCH STUDENT AWARDS 2017

Methodist Children’s Home celebrated student achievements for the 2016-17 school year during an awards ceremony on May 22 at the Johnson Student Center. During the ceremony, students from the MCH charter school, operated in partnership with the University of Texas – University Charter School system, were recognized for academic honors and extracurricular activities. Students received certificates, plaques, letter jackets and patches based on their individual achievements.

Below is a list of awards:

CHARTER SCHOOL AWARDS

Academic Honor Roll:
Noah, Xavier, Iona, Selena, Rainn, Jaelyne, Marisa, Galen, Dina, Stephen, Ladarrian, Ladarius, Athina, Soleana, Jakenzie, Arianna

Bulldog Pride:
Nikkie, Iona, Emily, Faith, Lucas, Selena, Dathan, Marisa, Galen, Dina, Quentarrell, Kaiflyn, Stephen, Benjamyn, Alexis, Athina, Soleana, Christma, Arianna

Art Awards:
Edvina, Jaelyne, Daniel, Joshua

RECREATION/AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Choir/Vocal Performance:
Most Improved – Luther, Kiayan
Most Outstanding – Layla, Iona

Drumline:
Most Outstanding – Faith

Cheerleading:
Most Improved – Tremya
Most Outstanding – Adrianna

Theatre:
Benjamin, Nicole
Dance: Rainn, Marisa

ATHLETICS

Volleyball:
Most Improved Player (MIP) – Soleana
Most Valuable Player (MVP) – Arnashia

Football:
MVP – Daniel
MVP – Dremon

Varsity Basketball:
MIP – Reggie
MVP – Xavier

Girls Basketball:
MIP – Justine
MVP – Jamion

JV Boys Basketball:
MIP – Johnathan

Varsity Boys Basketball:
MIP – Eli
MVP – Jakenzie

Girls Track:
MIP – Alexiix; MVP – Justine

Boys Track:
MIP – Christian
MVP – SirDautel
Golf: MIP – Dina; MVP – Emily

Bobby Gilliam Leadership through Athletics Award: Justine, Stephen

TWO MOMS FORM SPECIAL BOND WHILE FOSTERING THROUGH MCH

Denise Davis and Bethany Falls lived in the same city, but their paths had never crossed before. Then in 2013, both women and their husbands embarked on an emotional journey to become foster parents through MCH Family Outreach in Tyler.

They became acquainted in weekly trainings as they pursued licensing for foster care. Then both received placements within one week of each other of boys who were born only one day apart. Evan was placed with Falls and her husband, David. Jacob was placed with Davis and husband, Keith.

Evan’s case was a voluntary placement and the family thought he would go back to his mother after a few months. However, she relinquished her rights and they thought at that point he was theirs to adopt. Jacob came into Davis’s family with expectations that his case could turn into an adoption. But the roller coasters for both cases had just begun.

Evan’s biological father unexpectedly came into the picture when he was 1 year old, leading to visitations and court appearances. Even though their situations were unstable, Jacob’s biological mother and father each fought for custody which led to two separate jury trials. During the trials, the biological parents’ rights were terminated but then appeals and more legal issues followed.

Throughout the journey, Falls and Davis grew closer as they were experiencing the same emotions and challenges.

“We were kind of thrown into it together but I am thankful for that,” Falls said. “I wouldn’t have been able to make it through as easily.”

“It was a Godsend,” Davis said. “God knew I needed that friend that could identify and be there right beside me.”

The mothers would call each other in the emotional times of waiting in the car as the biological parent was having a visitation. Or sending a hopeful text as they knew the other was waiting for news. During the trials, the mothers learned on each other for support as they wanted to learn the fate of their family.

“We could speak truth and speak Scripture to each other when we needed it most,” Falls said.

They also relied on each other for advice as they experienced new behaviors in the boys that their older children did not have.

“It felt like for the first time I didn’t know how to parent,” Davis said. “You have to parent so differently. Obviously, because you are a foster parent you also have to discipline differently. But their behaviors are so different and you have to figure out if it is a toddler thing or an emotional trauma issue. And you can feel isolated in that sometimes because your friends don’t understand the difference. You feel like an island on your own sometimes. We were able to talk about that.”

Both mothers’ journeys led to the adoption of the boys and their boys have now grown to be great friends. Looking back, the mothers are thankful to each other and for God’s role in their experience.

“I don’t know how people foster without being firm in their faith,” Falls said. “I can’t imagine going through this without God. To know that has been my back and is protecting these babies and knowing that no matter what the outcome, His Will will be done.”

“With Evan and Jacob, God chose them and plucked them out to give them a fresh start,” Davis said. “It is such an honor and a blessing. I’ve said to friends considering fostering (it) is going to be the hardest thing you’ve ever done, but it is so worth it. And I think as a family unit, it has been amazing to see my older kids know it is a ministry and see that they want to minister this child and get them through. They grow and the growth that comes from it, you are amazed by that.”

EMPOWERED TO CONNECT 2017

MCH Family Outreach in Waco brought together several members of the community for the Empowered to Connect conference simulcast April 7-8 on the Waco campus. The conference was hosted by The Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University and Show Hope, a nonprofit organization based in Franklin, Tennessee.

Methodist Children’s Home (MCH) has a partnership with the Purvis Institute in utilizing Trust-Based Relational Intervention techniques in its childcare practices. Show Hope is an international movement to care for orphans through adoption aid, care centers, adoption support and student initiatives. The two agencies joined together for the Empowered to Connect conference which is designed to give professionals and adoptive and foster parents insights into connecting better with children who have experienced emotional or physical trauma and help them to heal.

The conference was held in Tennessee, but many agencies, including MCH, hosted simulcasts in their communities. Around 40 people attended the MCH simulcast including foster and adoptive parents, social workers, school staff, counselors and local nonprofit case managers.

“We believe that the information provided in this training and other trauma-informed care trainings we offer at MCH have the power to offer hope and transformation to families,” said Brooke DeVilla, director of MCH Family Outreach in Waco. “We desire for everyone who is a caregiver or works with children to be exposed to this information and be equipped with practical tools which can assist them in their different roles with children.”

NEWS & NOTES

Congratulations to our students and staff on a successful school year!
MEMORIAL GIFTS AND GIFTS OF HONOR
GIFTS MADE FROM MARCH 2017 THROUGH MAY 2017

Elaine Eiland’s Birthday
Amy and Shelby Bailey
Reverend and Mrs. Lenier Emerson
Epworth Sunday School Class
First UMC – Big Spring, TX
AshLee Nicole Frazier & Aaron Caleb Williams
Melissa Bedre
Morgan Bourque
Anna and Steve Burtell
Brandon Cole
Cacher – Los Angeles, CA
Kelly and Garth Davis
Mr. and Mrs. James Hartsouk
Randi and Susan Hartsouk
The Hernandez Family
Sydney Hicks
Amber and Bryan Higgs
Dorothy Lipar
Eline Mosca and Peter Poarch
Benjamin and Stephanie Randall
Erica Rose
Samantha Samaraasinghe
Rosie Sanchez
Mr. and Mrs. Ryan Sheffer
Dr. and Mrs. Vadim Sherman
Mike Snider
Jason Spinella
John Sullivan
Jay and Bela Sutaria
James and Elizabeth Van Steenhouse
Jacqueline Wood
Abby Gage
Friendship Sunday School Class
First UMC – La Grange, TX
Sushil George, M.D. and Staff
Kim and Rick Anderson & Family
Warren G. Gibson
Bobby Vance
Linda Gilliam
Bobby Vance
Janet Golden’s Birthday
Harold and Carol Cain
Mrs. Harry A. Gump – Happy’s Mother’s Day
Robert M. Gump, C.P.A.
Jimmy Hammond
Bobby Vance
Ronnie Haynes
Mamie Lee Dodds
Nelda Hazlewood
Steven and Tere Garlington
Bobby Vance
Howard Home Legacy
Charles and Ann Carrrell
Royce Jones
Reverend Sheila and Mr. Pablo Castellano
Johnnie R. Keith for Mother’s Day
Blain and Debbie Keith
Methodist Children’s Home
Nelda Hazlewood
Methodist Children’s Home
Perkins Heritage Staff Center
Bobby Vance
James and Laura Milam
Mary Ellen Bryan
Mrs. Winnie Morris
Doris Taylor
Haley Muff’s Graduation
Carolyn Ferguson
Lane Jackson Odum
Amy and Shelby Bailey
Geraldine Orr
Gene and Betty Jo Wiley
Reverend Jenni Dick’s Ministry
Sandey Robinson
Judith Adams Pittman
Kathleen Pellegrino
Jim and Annette Powell’s 50th Anniversary
Lovelace Barbee
Tommye Jo Clark
Abe Barr
Charles Huffman
Dr. Roy T. Bassett
Mrs. Mary Cooper Bassett
Floyd and Johnny Beach
Jim and Sue Beach
Thelma Black
Ann Black
David Moreau
John Robert Blankenship
Ann Blankship
Irwin H. Blum
Sam D. Brown
Peggy Brasher
Catherine and Tom Drennan
Melvin and Cindy Trousdale
Bobby Vance
Laura Jean Greenwald
Tommye Jo Clark
James Andree
Wanda Caswell
Randy and Cheryle Simmans
W. Byron Caton
Barbara Caton
Ada R. Ceburn
Shirley A. Ceburn
Wade Chaste
Julie and Mark Johnson
Judi Churchill
George Roberson and Dr. Elaine Free- Roberson
Albert Pearl Cobbs
Johinda and Art Evans
Don and Dana Hardcastle
Bill J. Johnson
Ray and Rosemary Sanction
Dan Williams
Mildred Jane Cocke
Troy Scarlett, Jr.
Billy Mac Cockrell
Reverend and Mrs. John Aldrooms
Terry Cramer
Sam D. Brown and Family
Johnnye Crocker
W.C. (Bunkin) and Candy Bennett
Lera Crow
Linda Blips
Dora Margaret Crowell
Charles Huffman
Waymon D. Davis
Virginia and Tom Blaylock
Jackie Lee
Wanda Dawson
James and Mrs. John Clarrick
Mrs. Barbara Delass
Barbara Cole
Dan Devorsky
Ms. Watson and Conon
Mrs. Bess Duewale
Dan and Judy Philp
Doniion Russell Duncan
Lucillie
Jacque Elliott
Betty Jo Spencer
E. Jean English
Anonymous

Dan Moody Cain
Dr. Kenneth Hamlett
In His Steps Class – Highland Park UMC
Dallas, TX
Amos L. Mazzant
Raymond Canion
Steve Canion
Lexi Cardwell
Andrew (Mac) McMahan
Randy Carter
Rebecca and Dub Narramore
Arthur C. Casey
George Roberson and Dr. Elaine Free- Roberson
Wanda Caswell
Randy and Cheryle Simmans
W. Byron Caton
Barbara Caton
Ada R. Ceburn
Shirley A. Ceburn
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Mrs. Bess Duewale
Dan and Judy Philp
Doniion Russell Duncan
Lucillie
Jacque Elliott
Betty Jo Spencer
E. Jean English
Anonymous

Wilma Louise Evarts
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Frietsch
Barbara Evart
George Roberson and Dr. Elaine Free- Roberson
George and Theo Forry
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Forry
Edith Fritsche
Mr. and Mrs. John Bryan
Sandy Smith Garner
Cres Lynne Smith
Bobby Gilliam
Bobby Vance
Joanna Givan
United Methodist Women
Seagraves UMC, TX
Bobby Williams
Anne Julian Goodroe
Dr. Rebecca Narramore
Laura Jean Greenwald
Gene and Mary Charness
Edward L. Gregurek, Sr.
Reverend and Mrs. Kenneth R. Byrd
Benjamin H. Griffin
Mary Anne Griffin
Don Hason
Kim and Rick Anderson & Family
Mrs. Welcome Harris
Anatra A. Ables
Joy Wingfield Hartrell
Hunter and Totsy Cunningham
Cliff Hazlewood
Nelda Hazlewood
Bobby Vance
Mr. Bob Heller
Mr. Frank Busch
Norman Hicks
Alice Sappington
David Louis Hill
Charles and Carol Brown
Reverend Bill Horick
Milton Wilson
Mark Howell
Jerry and Ann Gibson
Mr. Elroy Hupse
Bruce and Mary Jo Bates
Ruth and Buck Boettcher & Family
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Coffee
The Cunningshams, Idales, Smiths and Gaunts
Kenneth and Marjorie Dillon
Janet R. Epperson
Beatrice Scoones
Betty James
W.C. (Bunkin) and Candy Bennett
Bennie Jarratt
Ms. Virginia Avery
Evelyn Jeanes
Will and Monica Blackwell

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MEMORIAL GIFTS AND GIFTS OF HONOR ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR LEVEL OF SUPPORT

$500 - $999 GIFTS
Celebrating the marriage of AshLee Frazier & Aaron Caleb Williams by Nicole Westall, Williamstown, MA
In honor of Mrs. Nevelyn C. Alexander by First UMC

$1,000 - $2,000 GIFTS
Celebrating the marriage of AshLee Frazier & Aaron Caleb Williams by Mr. and Mrs. Eric Lipar, The Woodlands, TX
In memory of Murray Mathews by First UMC – Center, TX
In memory of Chloie Shofer by Anonymous Donor

$10,000 GIFT
In memory of Pearl Thornell by First UMC – Corsicana, TX
Twin Rivers Golf Club - Waco, TX

Join Methodist Children’s Home for an enjoyable day of golf and help support our mission to offer hope to children, youth and families through a nurturing, Christian community.

**PLAY WITH A PURPOSE**

Special pricing available for pastors.

**PREMIUM PACKAGE:**
$100 per person
- One player spot and gift bag
- 2 Mulligans
- 2 Tickets for the drawing

**SINGLE PLAYER:**
$80 per person
- One player spot and gift bag

Register at MCH.org!

Sponsorships are available. For more information, contact KLawson@MCH.org.