It is hard to believe that this is my last Sunshine column as president of Methodist Children’s Home (MCH). It seems it was only yesterday, but in reality it has been 10 years packed with amazing growth, change and wonderful things for our children, youth and staff. In my first column for Sunshine magazine after I became president in 2010, I wrote the following statement as a pledge that we would carry on with our tradition of excellence:

“My desire is that transformational experiences will occur for each staff member, child and parent through their interactions with Methodist Children’s Home. My hope is that they can, and will, identify those events as positive and defining moments in their lives. We can never be comfortable or complacent in our compassionate efforts. We must seek to do the right thing, not the easy thing, while stretching the limits of our resources in all situations where grace can be offered and a life of promise redeemed.”

Looking back on the years since I wrote those words, I am grateful to the Lord for the many transformational experiences I can identify at MCH. Children have experienced hope and healing, families have been strengthened through assistance and gained confidence through specialized training, and MCH as an organization is stronger than ever and positioned to help even more children, youth and families.

Let me name a few of these highlights. In May, we graduated another group of seniors from our charter school along with a few students from local public and private schools. In the last 15 years we have graduated 333 students from our UF-UCS charter school located on our Waco campus. Beyond high school, we have been averaging between 80 and 100 college and vocational students annually on our scholarship rolls. Our graduates of college and vocational school have received certificates in vocational fields, associate’s degrees, bachelor’s degrees, master’s degrees, and one even graduated last year with dual doctorates. We are so proud of our students who have excelled and continue to do well academically, in addition to their progress socially, emotionally and vocationally.

In the past 10 years, with your support and prayers, we have also expanded our transition services for students who are working toward emancipation following high school and those needing some work experience, additional support and maturity prior to moving forward with their independence.

We have been able to make dual-credit options available to our students, and a few have graduated from high school with a significant number of college credit hours toward a degree or certification in a vocational field.

We have expanded MCH Family Outreach to 13 offices across Texas and New Mexico. We added several services for children and families drawn from evidence-based practices proven to be effective in helping them to resolve problems, gain necessary life skills and heal from past traumatic events or experiences. Recently we implemented foster-to-adopt services to further assist children who need new families. We have grown from reaching 1,200 children and families to serving more than 5,000 children and families annually across all our programs.

We have made a conscious effort to increase “normalcy” for our students and are involving and exposing our youth to more community involvement and volunteer opportunities and events. Many are working after school and summer jobs off and on campus. Parenting classes have increased with more emphasis added to the teaching of parenting skills, life skills and independent living skills in addition to trauma-informed counseling and therapy services. Our Vocational Agriculture program, centered at the MCH Boys Ranch, is available to boys and girls on the Waco campus. I wish you could see the impact that this popular educational option has for many of our students.

Our Building Hope capital campaign to replace homes on our Waco campus with homes that offer better safety and security continues to gain momentum. The new homes have brought outside attention from other childcare organizations that have noticed the wonderful innovation and growth at MCH.

Amazingly, all of these necessary and beneficial services and amenities and more have been added without increasing our annual operating budget in the same time period.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of leadership and for continually supporting our staff as they serve as “boots on the ground” in working with our students and families. You are making a significant positive difference in the lives of our students and families through your ongoing support and prayers. Many tears of joy, relief and accomplishment are shed at MCH as we continue to witness God’s healing hand and the power of this ministry offering hope to children, youth and families.

I am confident great things will continue after I retire on June 30. I hope you will join me in praying for and supporting Trey Oakley and the MCH family as they continue to serve through this transformational ministry. Best wishes and God’s blessing.
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– From Brown’s first President’s Column, Sunshine magazine, Fall 2010
innovation that has been realized during his tenure at the 129-year-old ministry.

“When you talk about change at Methodist Children’s Home, it’s constant,” Brown said. “One thing I have thoroughly enjoyed at MCH is its propensity to continue to celebrate the past, and yet a willingness to change when times dictated that changes be made. I was part of that change. It was an awesome experience, it was a learning experience, and it was a feeling of satisfaction that we are doing the right things for kids.”

Brown provided leadership during several important achievements for the agency. One of the most notable is his leadership in a strategic planning process that resulted in important outcomes such as the implementation of evidence-based practices and trauma-informed care in residential and MCH Family Outreach programs. The strategic plan also led to the development of a master plan for 11 new residential homes on the historic Waco campus, with the first new home on the campus in five decades opening its doors in 2016. These homes incorporate a design that was a result of research gained through a partnership with the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University and recently earned the “Innovation Award” from the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries.

During Brown’s tenure, MCH also earned national reaccreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA) in 2010, 2014 and 2018. MCH is a national leader in the childcare field, and Brown is quick to give credit to the dedicated staff who work day in and day out to reach out and build relationships in order to make a positive impact on the children and families served.

“It takes a great bit of courage and tenacity to be a staff member,” Brown said. “The people that work here have difficult jobs every day. You don’t get a lot of credit and you don’t get a whole lot of thanks up front. I want to encourage the staff to stay the course, to continue to do what they do and continue to do it consistently because over time it makes a difference in the lives of our children and families.”

Brown said he has many fond memories of his time at MCH, such as the privilege of standing in for deceased or absent fathers for six brides – MCH alumni – on their wedding days. He also enjoyed witnessing young people who never thought they

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– Tim Brown, MCH President/CEO

A Career of Serving Children and Families
would earn a high school diploma walk the stage during graduation. 

"Seeing kids change their perspective on life, being able to form friendships and reach out to others, go on mission trips and find the blessing that comes from giving rather than receiving, there’s just too many experiences to name," Brown said. "But all of them are good." After he announced his retirement, Brown said he felt encouraged when several former residents reached out to him to express their gratitude.

"I can tell you that the best memories I have are from some of the most difficult kids that I worked with," he said. "Those will probably sustain me in my old age when I’m sitting around rocking on the front porch wondering what to say or do with the rest of what I have left, and I wouldn’t trade it for anything." Brown is passionate about the mission of Methodist Children’s Home because he has witnessed miraculous transformations of children who came from difficult circumstances.

“Here, kids have an opportunity to be children and have childhood memories," Brown said. "They have an opportunity to make mistakes and it not be devastating. They have an opportunity to watch and observe, and listen and hear a lot of different perspectives. But the main perspective they hear is that they have worth, they have value and they have opportunity. And I think that can make a tremendous amount of difference." Brown’s desire to serve has reached beyond MCH as he has been a strong advocate of services to children in Waco and throughout the state. He is part of numerous local, state and national organizations including the board of the Texas Coalition of Homes for Children, Public Private Partnership with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, and the McLennan County and Heart of Texas regional child fatality review teams. He plans to continue to advocate for children and MCH beyond his retirement. 

On June 30, 2019, Brown’s tenure as president will come to a close; however, his influence, dedication, and honorable legacy will forever be part of MCH history. "I hope one of the things I’m remembered for is my compassion," Brown said. "I hope people will remember me for constantly striving to do the right thing and for being willing to take risks to try and find ways for everyone to be able to contribute, participate and build a team that works together for the good of all. My hope for Methodist Children’s Home is that it will continue to evolve and grow and that people will do even better things than we’ve done, and that kids will continue to get better.”

– Hank Coleman
MCH Board of Directors, 2010-2019
Chairperson, 2015-2019

In 2010, I was honored to join the Board of MCH. Little did I imagine that I was doubly blessed, because that brought Tim Brown into my life. Although my prior experience had exposed me to many executives in leadership positions, it became clear to me that Tim has very special gifts of vision and commitment. Tim, like all coming into executive leadership, had more experience in some areas than others. I have been so proud of Tim as I watched him repeatedly roll up his sleeves and provide first-rate leadership in areas like finance, accounting and auditing outside his background of working with kids.

During my tenure as Board Chair, I have had even closer contact with Tim on all kinds of matters affecting MCH. How wonderful it has been to see the remarkable leadership Tim provides. Always cool under pressure, always looking for what is best for MCH, but most of all, always seeking what is best for the kids!

Most wonderful of all, Tim has followed the path shown by our Savior in providing true servant leadership. Unlike so many leaders in corporations (both for-profit and nonprofit), Tim has his priorities straight: it is not about him, but the mission of MCH and the best interests of its kids.”

– Margarita Limon Ordonez
MCH resident, 1984-1986

As a resident at Methodist’s Children’s Home from 1984 to 1986, I came to know Tim as not only someone who worked for MCH, but as a mentor and confidant that offered and provided support to me and my sisters. The most memorable and probably the best personification of his generosity is when he did me the honor of walking me down the aisle along with my eldest brother.

My sisters and I lost both our parents at a very young age. It was not until I was getting married that I realized how the absence of my parents would impact even the most joyous of occasions. I decided to ask Tim and my eldest brother to walk me down the aisle. I found peace and joy knowing that someone I respected and cared for was being incredibly generous with his time, love and friendship. His presence, along with my brother’s, allowed me to have my father’s presence spiritually as I embarked on my new life with my husband. My brother held the memories of the past and Tim’s presence provided the love that a father would provide his daughter as she embarked on her new life with her husband. There are not enough words to express how deeply the graciousness of this act was in my life.”
Trey Oakley was elected president/CEO of Methodist Children’s Home in a special called meeting of the MCH Board of Directors on Thursday, May 16, 2019.

Oakley, vice president for development at MCH, will succeed Tim Brown on July 1, following Brown’s retirement. Brown has served as president/CEO of MCH since 2010 as part of a 36-year career with the 129-year-old social service organization based in Waco.

MCH Board Chair Hank Coleman of Houston made the announcement to the Board and MCH staff.

Coleman said: “In our national search we encountered many talented candidates seeking the position of president/CEO at MCH. Trey was our choice because of his experiences, passion for the mission at MCH and relationships with supporters, churches, staff and those we serve. We are excited about his vision for continuing the great work of our ministry and are ready to partner with him in fulfilling our mission to the children, youth and families in our communities throughout Texas and New Mexico.”

Oakley has served MCH since 1999, first in the religious education department before transitioning into the development department in 2001. He became the vice president for development in 2006. In this role he leads a team of professionals who influence the organization in the areas of fundraising, public relations, spiritual development, donor information management, and alumini relations.

“I am excited and honored by this opportunity to build on the strong foundation of ministry at Methodist Children’s Home,” Oakley said. “I am confident great things are ahead for the children, youth and families we serve because of our talented staff, faithful supporters and innovative approach to fulfilling our mission.”

Oakley received a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies from Howard Payne University in 1999, a Master of Arts in Philanthropy and Development in 2006 from Saint Mary’s University – Minnesota and a Master of Arts in Christian Ministry from Baylor University’s George W. Truett Theological Seminary in 2013.

A resident of China Spring, Oakley is a member of the school board of China Spring Independent School District and is active in leadership of youth athletics. He and his wife, Karen, have two children: Abby, 16, and Brady, 12. They are members of China Spring United Methodist Church.

More details on Oakley’s family, experience and vision for MCH will appear in the next issue of Sunshine magazine.
Better TOGETHER

CHRISTINA’S STORY

“It was really all God,” said Christina, recounting her journey out of bondage and into freedom and growth.

“I was in prison for the second time when I gave birth to Elly,” said Christina. “During the end of my pregnancy I was in the medical unit where there was a chapel. On Wednesdays there was a program that was offered; it ended up changing my life.”

Right before the birth of her daughter, Christina’s plans for Elly fell through.

“When I was desperate and did not know what I was going to do, but I cried out to God and God answered. I reached out to the chaplain about my situation and in two days they had worked with MCH and found a good family for my baby.”

THE KELLY FAMILY STORY

“We said yes to meeting with an MCH director, we said yes to a class, we said yes to a fireman making sure our house was safe, we said yes to keeping our first foster daughter for six months, and we said yes to keeping Elly for two years,” said Kristen Kelly. “Saying yes to being a foster parent seems like an overwhelming responsibility, so saying yes to the little things is how we talk about our journey and tell our story.”

It has been nearly four years since Kristen and Mike Kelly and their two young children stepped into the calling of foster care.

“At the time I was in children’s ministry at a church in Houston,” said Kristen. “I was planning a VBS Christmas in July event and I was trying to find a population of kids to invite for our party. I was having a hard time finding a group that was able to come to us at the church. After little success, I went to our sanctuary and prayed, ‘Lord, help me figure this out!’

Upon returning to her office, Kristen opened her church mailbox. There, she found an MCH Sunshine magazine with a centerfold article and photos about a Christmas program.

“I stepped in my tracks with full body chills,” said Kristen. “Right there in the centerfold of the magazine were photos of children at a Christmas party – everything I was praying for. I researched the organization and emailed the MCH Family Outreach office director for Houston, where we live, knowing that MCH was on my heart for a reason.”

After meeting with MCH, the Kelly family started to engage with the organization. Their family continued to pray about MCH and saw clear and miraculous signs to continue moving towards fostering.

“We tried to find ways to engage with MCH that seemed comfortable, but things like volunteering our time or money did not feel like enough,” said Kristen. “We eventually decided to meet with MCH about fostering, and then attended a class, then another class and so on.”

“Deciding to be foster parents was gradual,” said Mike. “It kind of hit us at 8 p.m. on a Thursday when we researched the organization and emailed the MCH Family Outreach office director for Houston, where we live, knowing that MCH was on my heart for a reason.”

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“Deciding to be foster parents was gradual,” said Mike. “It kind of hit us at 8 p.m. on a Thursday when we received the call that our first foster child would arrive at our house within the hour. Then, a few months after that child left our home, Elly came to us days after she was born.”

Elly spent nearly two years with the Kellys. During that time the Kellys and Christina exchanged letters and MCH worked to provide Christina with visitation with her daughter.

After her release, Christina pursued a voluntary transitional program in Abilene, Texas, for women coming out of incarceration.

“When we received the call that Christina was going to be released and was pursuing a program we wanted to support her and Elly the best way that we could,” said Kristen.

After discussions with MCH and considering all options to support Christina’s family, it was decided that it would be best to transfer Elly to a new home in Abilene, to live in the same city as her mom.

“The distance between Houston and Abilene is about six hours,” said Kristen. “When considering the thought of Elly staying with us and having to be transported 12 hours once a month to see her mother with the hope of bonding, it became clear that finding Elly a new safe home through MCH Family Outreach in Abilene was the best way we could love her. Our hearts were breaking and we could not believe Elly was leaving our care, but MCH accommodated what our hearts needed.”

Kristen connected with Rosie Hollingsworth, Elly’s new soon-to-be foster mother in Abilene, and through their mutual love for the MCH organization and heart for serving children and families, the two bonded and started the process to have Elly move.
“I have always wanted to have a big family and have been called to serve kids,” said Rosie Hollingsworth. “Fostering was a clear path for my family.”

After having two children, Rosie returned to school as a nontraditional student.

“My education led me to work at the Regional Victim Crisis Center, which is where I saw the great need for people to care for kids when parents are going through a hard time,” she said.

In November 2015 Rosie’s husband, Chris, approached their family about fostering. A short time later, Chris, Rosie and their two teenage children embraced the call to serve families through foster care.

“I reached out to three organizations in our area and MCH was the first to respond,” Rosie said. “We started with this organization and we believe that MCH is the way to go.”

Elly joined the Hollingsworth family as their second placement.

“Everyone involved understood that the mom was coming and that we needed to be able to accommodate visits and have Elly in a home that fully supported doing all they could to best support mom and baby in hopes of reunification,” said Rosie. “Kristen and I had an immediate connection and our hearts were linked by what we wanted for Elly and Christina.

“After Elly was placed, MCH continued to empower and enable us to best care for Elly and

Christina as they were both transitioning and working on bonding,” she said. “There was no judgment; there was full trust.”

THE REUNIFICATION STORY

“I was hesitant to move away from Elly when I was in Houston since I wanted to be near my daughter,” Christina said. “But I felt like God was telling me to go into this program and that He would take care of Elly. Eventually everything fell into place the way I had prayed.”

As Christina has progressed through her program, Elly has been returned to her care full time.

“The support we could provide to Christina and Elly did not stop at foster care,” said Megan Harbin, director of MCH Family Outreach in Abilene. “We are now working with Christina, putting parenting work in through our Family Solutions program in Abilene. We want to be extra supportive as she continues to navigate changes in life.”

Christina is also an advocate for other women who she recognizes are in hard places with their children. “I have a good view of MCH and I want to encourage people in a similar situation,” she said. “I tell the women that these people are going to help them. It is different with MCH.”

“I want girls to know that there is hope and that there is a way out of addiction but that it is only through God,” she added. “God will line up everything you need in His time, like how He did with MCH. This is a God thing. This is not something I did. You have to surrender completely and trust Him. I surrendered and God brought MCH into my life and has given me a second chance to be a mom.”

Christina said she is harnessing all the love she has for all three of her children, two of which she no longer has custody of, to now focus on being the parent she needs to be.

“I am using all of my love that I have for my boys and daughter in this moment,” she said.

Since Elly and Christina’s move, not only did Rosie and Kristen connect, but the two women and their families also fully embraced Christina and developed a relationship with her.

“We all talk to each other weekly, sometimes daily,” Christina said. “I know I can reach out to Kristen and Rosie. They give me support that I haven’t had in other areas of my life.”

Rosie, echoing Christina’s sentiment, said everyone involved has been impacted for the better.

“It is not us pouring into Christina; it is Christina pouring into all of us,” Rosie said. “She cares for us and connects with us. We wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“I could not be more proud of Christina,” Kristen said. “We absolutely call her a friend and it has been a blessing to see how Christina and the Hollingsworths do life together as well as how MCH still supports her and Elly.”

Veronica Whalon-Peters, director of MCH Family Outreach in Houston, said it was gratifying to see everyone willing to do what needed to be done for the sake of unity and healing.

“This is a beautiful example of how everybody knew what they needed to do and were willing to put in the work for the best interest of the children, youth and families we serve,” she said. “Christina has lifelong people who will support her. She has wonderful people in her corner.”

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Congratulations to our MCH students who earned their high school diplomas this year! We had two students graduate from public school, and 25 from the MCH charter school located on the Waco campus and operated in partnership with The University of Texas – University Charter School system.

Special thanks to First United Methodist Church of Waco for hosting our charter school graduation ceremony again this year!

Class of 2019

Lesli Adams
graduated with a bachelor’s in nursing from Texas Tech Health Sciences Center.

David Enright
graduated from the University of North Texas with a bachelor’s degree in art.

Bemelekot Kebebe
graduated from The University of Texas-Dallas with a bachelor’s degree in information technology.

Latisha Knight
graduated from Tarleton State University with a bachelor’s degree in business for applied science.

Phillip Ludvigon
graduated from Oklahoma State University with a bachelor’s degree in political science and minor in philosophy.

Aman Meerza
graduated with honors from The University of Texas with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. He plans to attend graduate school in the fall 2019 at UT.

Bianka Thomas
graduated from Volunteer State Community College with an associate’s degree in art. She has been accepted to Tennessee State University and plans to major in animal science.

Leona Wilfred
graduated from University of Houston with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. She plans to work as an assistant at a law firm and apply to law school for fall 2020.

Seleehom (Sally) Yisihak
graduated from The University of Texas at San Antonio with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a minor in sociology. The School of Business has accepted Seleehom for the graduate program.

Samrawit Gebrehiwot
graduated from The University of Texas at Arlington with a bachelor’s degree in business marketing.

Tenika Howard
will graduate from The University of Texas at Arlington with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Not pictured: Kristina

*Graduated December 2018
New Homes at MCH Receive National Award for Innovation

Methodist Children's Home received the "2019 Innovation Award" from the United Methodist Association of Health & Welfare Ministries (UMA) during the organization's annual meeting on May 7 in Ft. Meyers, Fla. The award is in recognition of the state-of-the-art residential homes being built on the Waco campus of MCH to meet the needs of children and youth today and in the future.

The Innovation Award is presented to the UMA member organization that has demonstrated a creative and unique approach to ministry. In 2015, MCH launched the Building Hope capital campaign which will ultimately lead to 11 new homes being built on the Waco campus, a location where MCH has cared for children and youth since 1890. The decision was the result of a strategic initiative that challenged MCH to develop an innovative new home design that considers the needs of our current and future population, modern innovation and efficiencies, and current licensing standards. The first home opened in 2016 and was followed by two more in 2017. The fourth and fifth homes are nearing completion and funds are currently being raised for the remaining six homes.

"We are proud and honored to receive this recognition from UMA," said MCH President Tim Brown. "Since its founding 129 years ago, MCH has offered hope to children, youth and families through a nurturing, Christian community. At times in our history, MCH has prudently changed to meet the evolving needs of society, and these new homes are yet another example of that evolution."

The design and furnishings of the new homes are a direct result of trauma-informed findings learned through expertise MCH has gained in Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) practices and through a longtime partnership with the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University.

These innovative homes have drawn interest and attention from other like-minded residential childcare organizations around the nation, Brown noted, and have already yielded positive results among the children served by MCH.

"Our new homes create an even stronger atmosphere where children feel safe and loved and have the opportunity to foster healthy, nurturing relationships in an environment utilizing cutting-edge research in the field of childcare and trauma recovery," Brown said. "Since the opening of the new homes, the percentage of children avoiding high-risk behaviors, the percentage of students completing the program as planned, and the percentage of students making educational gains have all increased."

The mission of UMA is to promote, inspire, recognize, and empower excellence in human service ministries.

"UMA strives to foster best practices to improve care and services among ministries throughout the country," said UMA President Mary Kemper. "This distinguished honor was bestowed upon Methodist Children's Home by its peers to recognize its impressive, creative approach to ministry."
**Methodist Children’s Home Receives 2019 Guidestar Gold Seal**

Methodist Children’s Home again received the Gold Seal of Transparency designation from GuideStar, the world’s largest source of information on nonprofit organizations. The website GuideStar.com receives more than 10 million visitors each year looking for information on nonprofit organizations for the purpose of research, community collaboration and charitable giving. MCH President Tim Brown noted that less than 1 percent of nonprofits listed on GuideStar have achieved the Gold level.

“Receiving the Gold Seal designation from GuideStar shows that Methodist Children’s Home is committed to integrity and transparency as a top-rated nonprofit organization through the way we share our goals, strategies, capabilities, and vision,” Brown said.

“As we carry out our very important work of offering hope to children, youth and families across Texas and New Mexico, this designation is another assurance to our supporters, benefactors and the public that MCH is worthy of their support and trust,” he said. MCH is also rated as a four-star charity by Charity Navigator, the highest rating available from the nation’s largest charity evaluator.

**Top 20 Churches for Direct Gifts and Total Giving for 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECT GIFTS</th>
<th>Offerings and donations received directly from churches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mayafield UMC</td>
<td>11. Coker UMC</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. First UMC Rockwall</td>
<td>13. University Park UMC Dallas</td>
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<td>5. First UMC Center</td>
<td>15. First UMC Coppell</td>
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<td>6. First UMC Grapevine</td>
<td>16. Matador UMC</td>
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<td>7. First UMC Fort Worth</td>
<td>17. The Woodlands UMC</td>
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<td>8. First UMC Corsicana</td>
<td>18. White’s Chapel UMC</td>
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<td>9. First UMC Gonzales</td>
<td>19. Petersburg UMC</td>
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<td>10. First UMC Mansfield</td>
<td>20. Christ UMC College Station</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>TOTAL GIVING</th>
<th>Direct gifts from churches plus church credit requests from individual’s donations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. First UMC Olney</td>
<td>11. First UMC Fort Worth</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Mayafield UMC</td>
<td>12. First UMC Richardson</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Marvin UMC Tyler</td>
<td>15. Memorial Drive UMC</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. First UMC Big Spring</td>
<td>16. Christ Church UMC</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. First UMC Waco</td>
<td>17. Highland Park UMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. First UMC Center</td>
<td>18. Salado UMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. First UMC Grapevine</td>
<td>20. Kingwood UMC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Building Hope Capital Campaign Update: Bowen and Greathouse Homes Will Soon Open**

The Nancy J. Bowen Home and the B.R. and Helen Greathouse Home will open their doors to residents and staff this summer. These homes will be the fourth and fifth with a new design built on the Waco campus. The homes are a part of the Building Hope capital campaign MCH launched in 2015 which will ultimately lead to 11 new homes being built on the Waco campus. If you are interested in making a gift over your faithful annual support, please contact Trey Oakley at 1-800-853-1272 or TOakley@MCH.org.

**MCH Golf Classic 2019**

Our 2019 MCH Golf Classic was a great success thanks to all of those who participated and sponsored this event at Cottonwood Creek Golf Course in Waco. Your gifts and participation truly make all the difference!
The Howard Home is soon to be a reality. Just what this means now to our home and what it will mean for the future cannot be measured in words. On average these children will find their home for approximately three years and then as others are added and they go out it will mean that as children will have received the special blessings of this shelter each year and as the years come and go it will be but a short time until in the Big World hundreds of men and women will be looking back to the Howard Home.

ISN’T THIS A WONDERFUL INVESTMENT?

An excerpt from the September 1925 issue of Sunshine Monthly

This prediction from the 1925 Sunshine Monthly was correct – the Howard Home has made a difference in the lives of countless children, youth and families.

The Howard Home first opened its doors on October 10, 1925, and served as a haven of shelter and an environment to foster growth and renewal for hundreds of young people. As MCH strives to better meet the needs of children, youth and families today and in the future through the construction of the new state-of-the-art homes and outreach centers, staff and alumni fondly remember the legacy of care the Howard Home provided for 94 years.

The Howard Home first opened on campus. The home held a reception hall, living room, sun parlor, dining room, kitchen, and accommodations for 24 boys. Mrs. Howard was a frequent visitor and was said to have shared her life story with the children of the home during her visits.

The Howard Home has been an integral part of the organization’s legacy of giving. Beyond serving as a home for boys, it has also acted as the Howard Emergency Shelter, Howard Family Care Center and most recently as the Waco MCH Family Outreach office.

Texas. The home was given in memory of her friend of MCH, Mrs. Florence C. Howard of Moody, the Howard Home provided for 94 years.

Staff and alumni fondly remember the legacy of care new state-of-the-art homes and outreach centers, and in the future through the construction of the Home for Boys. It was the first cottage established by an individual patron.

It was said that each of Mrs. Howard’s children collaborated in the creation of the home for boys and that it was one of the most homelike places on campus. The home held a reception hall, living room, sun parlor, dining room, kitchen, and accommodations for 24 boys. Mrs. Howard was a frequent visitor and was said to have shared her life story with the children of the home during her visits.

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A little more than two years ago, Roger got a second chance to make his father proud.

He had gotten into some trouble that led him to juvenile detention. However, instead of giving him his sentence, the judge told Roger to turn around and look at his father, who was sitting behind him in the courtroom. The judge gave him a choice: go to prison for six months, or try something new by going to Methodist Children’s Home where he could build a new life.

“I had never seen him cry before and I thought, ‘OK, this is something I’ve got to try to do,’ Roger said.

Roger came to the MCH Boys Ranch in October 2016. At first, he said he continued to act up and make bad choices, but soon decided he needed to change his ways. He began socializing with his peers and connecting with staff members. He realized the people at MCH cared about him and wanted to help him.

At the MCH charter school on the Waco campus he decided to enroll in the agricultural sciences classes where he learned to care for and show pigs and how to weld and create projects in the workshop. It was an experience that was totally new to him.

“I learned responsibility and how to use the equipment,” Roger said. “I think it taught me a little more about maturity, how to be responsible for what I’m working on.”

He said he also learned about hard work by seeing the example of his teachers and staff at the Boys Ranch. He now volunteers his time on the weekends to help out with feeding animals or finishing up projects in the shop when he is able.

Roger maintained an A and B average at the charter school and graduated in May. He also balanced his studies with a part-time job at a local restaurant. LaSonia King, Roger’s home life manager, said he has come a long way during his time at MCH.

“Roger has overcome many challenges while at MCH,” King said. “These challenges have inspired Roger to be the mature and motivated young man he is today. It’s been a joy to see him transform into a dependable, hardworking young adult. We are very proud of Roger’s achievements.”

Roger said he will continue to work and may attend Texas State Technical College to study carpentry or welding. He said he has been able to do more at MCH than he ever thought possible.

“Because of MCH I was able to get my first job and I’ve been able to keep it all this time, which to me is crazy because I never saw myself getting a job and doing something productive,” he said. “I never saw myself graduating and doing all this stuff I’ve been doing. The path I was going was jail or even worse. I got a second chance to change and go down the right path.

“I think I’ve made my dad proud of the person that I’ve become.”

The Howard family during a gathering at MCH.

The Howard family shares a picture with Trey Oakley at a recent event.

A SECOND CHANCE
**SUPPORTING THE FRANKLIN COMMUNITY**

Several youth and houseparents from MCH traveled to Franklin, Texas, to deliver toys and diapers collected through a donations drive for children and families in Robertson County affected by tornadoes that severely damaged the community on April 13. The group, along with MCH staff from MCH Family Outreach in Bryan and MCH Vice President for Programs Moe Dozier, delivered the goods to Franklin UMC. They were joined by U.S. Representative Bill Flores, who was there to lend a hand.

**MCH FAMILY OUTREACH OFFICES GET A NEW LOOK**

Staff from MCH Family Outreach in Houston have settled into their renovated office space after construction was completed at the end of 2018. Their location recently incorporated a new design to accommodate the growth of MCH Family Outreach programs.

The office transitioned from separate offices to collaborative workspaces, a larger conference room and a secure entrance that includes remote locks, keypads and a reinforced door. Case managers, who spend the majority of their time in the field, now have workstations and use “huddle rooms” as needed for private calls or visits with families. The Houston office also features a playroom for foster care visits.

“I think it is a great concept,” said Veronica Whalon-Peters, director of MCH Family Outreach in Houston. “Everyone is getting used to it and it is going well.”

MCH Family Outreach offices in Houston and Albuquerque are the latest locations to incorporate a similar new office design. The Dallas outreach office is scheduled to receive renovations next year.

Traci Wagner, program administrator for the Eastern region of MCH Family Outreach, said developing this new concept took a lot of thoughtful consideration.

“The open office can foster collaboration, promote shared learning, and nurture a strong culture,” Wagner said. “It also allows us to create consistency among our 13 locations.”

**SPiritual development weekend 2019**

Throughout the spring semester, youth at Methodist Children’s Home learned about dreamers from the Bible during Sunday worship services. The theme of pursuing dreams continued during Spiritual Development Weekend in March.

“We’ve been talking about what it looks like to pursue dreams even in the face of adversity,” said Kim Clark, director of spiritual development. “We’ve also talked about how our dreams can be vast and varied, change over time, be seemingly big or small, but God has created us for greatness. He has gifted us in ways that are designed to contribute to the Kingdom and not be self-serving.”

During a focus on dreamers in the Bible, Spiritual Development found a perfect fit to speak to students during a Friday night event at the chapel – the founders of Refit, a local fitness business that incorporates movement and music for workouts in an encouraging environment.

The staff said they felt their guests would offer youth a new way to worship and share an encouraging message due to their efforts to create a community of belonging, acceptance and forgiveness.

Emily Field, one of the Refit founders, spoke about overcoming fear to pursue her dream, facing obstacles, and her own personal faith. She answered questions and then led the group in exercise.

On Saturday, youth competed as homes during a “dreamers” scavenger hunt to visit local sites and businesses such as the Doris Miller monument and the Waco Hippodrome. Following the scavenger hunt, the Spiritual Development team hosted a senior lunch to spend time with those about to graduate as they reflected on their time at MCH.

**Child Abuse prevention month**

Staff across Methodist Children’s Home joined together to show support for children during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. In Texas and around the nation, April 5 is designated as “Go Blue Day” to officially kick off the effort as thousands wear blue to raise awareness. MCH Family Outreach offices in Abilene, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Killeen, Lubbock, Tyler, Waco, and Las Cruces, New Mexico, also planted pinwheel gardens during April as part of the Pinwheels for Prevention initiative led by the national organization Prevent Child Abuse America.

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When Aman came to Methodist Children’s Home in 2010, he was only one year removed from living in India. American culture and language were still relatively new to him, and the only person he was close to was his mother. However when hard times led him to MCH, Aman showed his resilience by taking advantage of the opportunities provided to him, excelling both personally and academically.

Aman graduated from high school in 2015 and earned several scholarships to attend college. In May 2018, he graduated from high school, Aman said he would have a good work ethic to succeed.

"As a kid, I always liked looking at buildings in cities downtown," Aman said. "I always wanted to do this when I was little and I’ve stuck with it."

"Focus on bettering yourself, but also bettering yourself too. "

When asked if he had any advice for MCH youth and he continues to stay in contact with several staff members.

"Everyone at MCH was always nice, and I think being nice kind of rubbed off on me," he said. "I could’ve been angry, but that didn’t happen."

Although he has performed well academically, Aman said his success is due to more than just being good at math and science.

"People think I’m super smart," he said. "I am smart but I also have to work hard. You still have to have a good work ethic to succeed."

"Focus on bettering yourself, but also bettering other people around you," he said. "I think when you help make other people better, you are bettering yourself too."

Jhenisa Stegemoller
Ty-Bo Tysan
April Wetzig
Laura Wilson
First UMC Goldthwaite, TX
Shawna’s Birthday Fundraiser
Facebook.com donations
Shawna Graham
Charles Keller-Weaver
Cheri Swift
Charlie Taylor
Nelid Hazelwood
Mr. Jarrett Louder
Regina Henley
Pathfinders Sunday School Class
First UMC Childress, TX
April Higgins
Amy and Shelby Bailey
Brandy Hudson’s Birthday
Sandy Robinson
Tom and Susan Hughes
Karen Jackson’s Birthday
Alice Sappington
Brock and Shannon Jacobs
Anonymous
Mary Jones
Fidels Sunday School Class
St. Mark UMC Cleburne, TX
Tommie Kearney
Amy and Shelby Bailey
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Kennedy
Maggie Allison
Law’s Chapel UMC Choir Music
Program Director and Pianist
Rebecca Narramore
Mrs. Sandy Lewis
Joe and Jam Lovelady
Vernon and Jewel Lockridge
DeLeah Lockridge
Reverend Pat McCullough’s 90th Birthday
Covenant Trinity UMC
Doreen McCormack
Palmer, Jack and Ryder Grabner
Kyle and Karen McNeely
Don and Michelle McVoy
The Men’s Breakfast
First UMC Center, TX
Mike Terake
All children of Methodist Children’s Home
Betty Carole Edwards
Methodist Children’s Home
Dallas Outreach
J.C. and Brenda Dunn
Dena Miller
United Methodist Women
First UMC Brenham, TX
Ellen Miller
Joe and Belinda Faubion
Greg and A.J. Miller
Joe and Belinda Faubion
Jim and Rasie Miller
Joe and Belinda Faubion
Dan Moores’ Birthday
Jastr and Fann McDougal
Sandy and Mike Nix
Judy Morgan
Judith Adams Pittman
Kathleen Pellegrino
Dr. Levi Price
United Methodist Women
Magnolia UMC Magnolia, TX
Tim Price
United Methodist Women
Magnolia UMC Magnolia, TX
Sis Renshaw
Charles and Sue Heaberlin
Heath Robinson
Sandy Robinson
Beverly Rosenbaum
Reverend J. Byron Jarrett
Kevin and Mimi Savie
Ana C. Lewis
George and Jenny Schroeder
Joe and Belinda Faubion
Marené Shaff
Allison, Davenport, Jr.
Bob and Eileen Sidlo
John and Toni Daniels
Tod and Laura Swann
Frances D. Swann
Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Talbert
Wesley Talbert
Melodi and Lance Tripp
Mr. A.A. Schellenberg, Jr.
Roger Van Horn
Hunters and Cunningham
Dick, Lorraine and Eric Ware
Mary Carolyn Dye
John R. Warren’s Birthday
Becky and Quentin Warren
Ahmad Washington
Bryan Red
Larry Williams
Tom and Judy Morgan
Matt Willis
Sandy Robinson
Becky Willis’ Birthday
Sandy Robinson
Bob and Shirley Zimmerman
Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Zimmerman

Memorials
Virginia Abernathy
The Jackson Family
Virginia, Michael, Evelyn & Lauren
John Alcorn
Barbara Cole
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2019 GRADUATES!