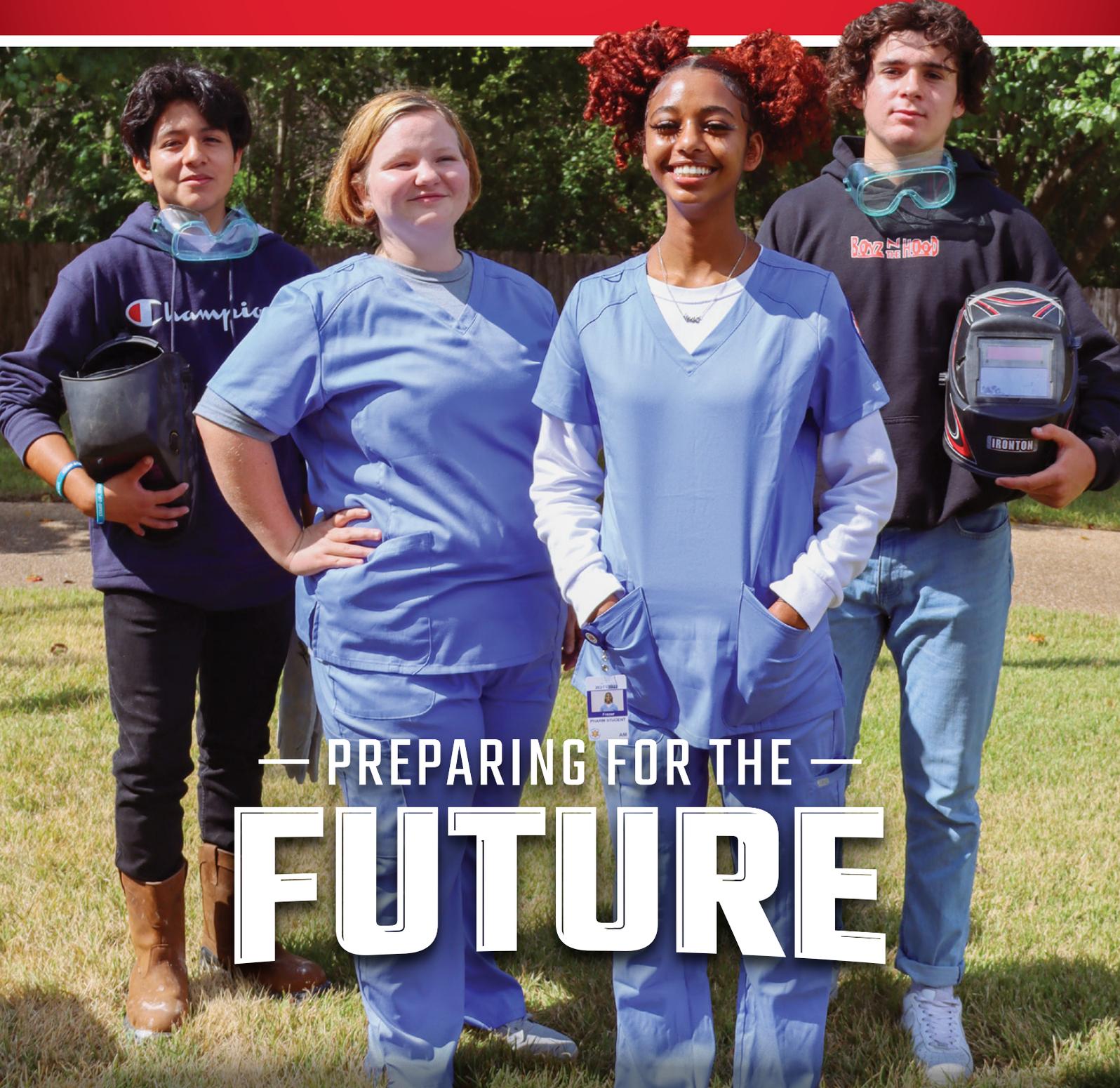


SUNSHINE

THE MAGAZINE OF METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME | FALL 2021



— PREPARING FOR THE —
FUTURE



Methodist Children's Home
Offering Hope Since 1890

A SEASON OF JOY



**Thank You for Supporting Our Children,
Youth and Families this Christmas!**

Methodist Children's Home is grateful for our faithful friends who contribute to a season of joy for our children and families. We are honored to have your support as we celebrate the birth of our Savior and create special memories for our children. Your gifts bless those we serve not only during the Christmas season, but throughout the year.

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE



Trey Oakley
President and CEO

Your support of Methodist Children's Home (MCH) enables children, youth and families across Texas and New Mexico to have life-changing experiences every day. These opportunities allow those in our care to flourish and live life to the fullest. As you read this issue of Sunshine magazine, I hope you will see that as a recurring theme.

I recently heard from a staff member who shared how she witnessed God work through her peers at MCH. She saw staff take small opportunities to meet the needs of our children at the highest level in everything from coordinating transportation to designing personalized gifts for youth to have at our homecoming events. This staff member wrote:

"The demands may stretch our teams, but they never stop us from doing what it takes."

These words are an encouragement and source of pride for me. We have many mission-minded individuals connected to this ministry who work behind the scenes every day to turn otherwise routine events into special memories for those we serve. Their service is deeply meaningful and important as they give MCH their time, energy and effort to provide those in our care with experiences they will carry for a lifetime. Their selfless work is difficult and often emotionally taxing, but is making a difference in the lives of children and families.

While you may never know all of the names and faces of the children, youth, families and staff you impact through your prayers and gifts, I hope this magazine is a reminder of the miraculous ways God works through your heart and treasures to bless Methodist Children's Home and all we serve.

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— PREPARING FOR THE — FUTURE

BY RUSSELL RANKIN

Students attending the University of Texas—University Charter School on the Waco campus of Methodist Children’s Home have numerous opportunities to prepare for the future at a two-year community college, four-year university, vocational school, or the workforce.

Two such opportunities for youth to learn workplace preparedness and receive actual job certifications are the Greater Waco Advanced Manufacturing Academy (GWAMA) and the Greater Waco Advanced Health Care Academy (GWAHCA). Both academies launched in 2015 and are facilitated by the Waco Independent School District.

GWAMA is a collaboration with the Waco Business League, Greater Waco Chamber and Texas State Technical College. The academy offers students advanced technical and manufacturing training in areas such as welding, construction science, electronics and robotics, and architecture. The program is open to high school sophomores, juniors and seniors. Students enrolled in GWAMA can earn advanced workforce certificates and have opportunities for jobs with area businesses after high school.

Daniel and Cesar, residents at the MCH Boys Ranch, are enrolled in GWAMA this year.

GWAHCA is a unique and innovative collaboration between the local healthcare community and Waco area schools. GWAHCA is a challenging learning environment for juniors and seniors that encourages high expectations for student success in the healthcare field. The academy empowers students to be competitive and prepared to enter and contribute to the workforce.

Students participating in GWAHCA earn science and math credits and receive hands-on experience through classes such as medical microbiology, anatomy and physiology, world health research, and pharmacology, among others.

Frezer and Lacey live on the MCH Waco campus and are enrolled in the healthcare academy.

According to Amy Grisham, director of school support at the charter school, 13 MCH students have gone through GWAMA and GWAHCA since the two academies opened.

“Our youth work incredibly hard in these programs on various projects, skills and activities,” Grisham said. “It is a pleasure for MCH to be a partner with GWAMA and GWAHCA and share in these experiences.

“Being able to learn a skill or a trade is so beneficial for their future success, and I love seeing our students being open to these opportunities and excelling in both programs,” she added. “These challenging work environments encourage high expectations for student success which prepares them all the more for their future in life and in the workforce.”

Students attend the academies each day from 9 a.m. to noon then return to the charter school for afternoon classes.

CESAR

Cesar, a sophomore, is enrolled in a GWAMA certification program for construction.

"I wanted to do this because it will give me the ability to get a job in construction and already be certified, while other workers have to get certified while on the job," he said. "GWAMA helps me get ahead."

Cesar said he enjoys the classes because they give hands-on experience in a variety of skills.

"We do a lot in the classes every day," he said. "Not only do we learn about the job, we also learn about tool safety and things like that."

Receiving a broad exposure to carpentry, masonry and even electronics gives GWAMA students the opportunity to find which profession could be ideal for their future.

"Being in GWAMA gives me more options later on when considering what career path I want to take," Cesar said. "I think it would be interesting to work in mechanical engineering and do something with machines. But if that doesn't happen, it will be good to have experience and certifications in construction to fall back on."



"Being in GWAMA gives me more options later on when considering what career path I want to take."

– Cesar

DANIEL

Daniel, a senior, is graduating in May 2022. Since being a part of GWAMA, he has found he particularly enjoys construction and feels the academy has equipped him well to step into a job should he decide to go down that path.

"I've really enjoyed learning the basics of construction," he said. "It's not just building something, it's learning how to measure correctly, how to cut wood and do it well."

Daniel said he aspires to go to college and study engineering.

"This program has been really good because it has shown me all the things I could do professionally," he said. "It gives me hands-on experience and a head start by earning certifications. I think this will help me a lot in the future."

Shawna Damiani, case manager at the Boys Ranch, said it is impressive to see Daniel and Cesar apply themselves to the GWAMA program and represent MCH well in the process.



"This program has been really good because it has shown me all the things I can do professionally... I think this will help me a lot in the future."

– Daniel

“The GWAMA program is helping them learn marketable skills they will be able to use after graduation if they choose that direction,” she said.

“While it is great to see them apply themselves, another awesome thing is the feedback we continue to get from the instructors at the academy about how well liked the guys are. They have really found an encouraging atmosphere there, which is just as important as the training – even if the boys don’t recognize that at this point in time.”

FREZER

Frezer, a junior, is participating in the healthcare academy and is pursuing a certification in pharmacology. With the certification, she will qualify to gain employment as a pharmacy technician.

“I have always wanted to be a doctor,” Frezer said. “When Ms. Amy [Grisham] came to talk to us about GWAHCA, I was immediately interested and I wanted to find out more about it. She told me about the medical work and training and I knew that was something I wanted to do.

“Since I want to be a doctor I thought this would be a great way to start off,” she added. “When I go to college and study medicine, this will help me be ahead, especially with people who haven’t had any hands-on experience yet.”

In the pharmacy track, Frezer learns about pharmaceutical drugs and industry standards and guidelines. For fun, students compete against one another to match medications with their prescribed uses. Ultimately, Frezer still holds out on her dream to be a doctor.

“I want to save peoples’ lives, but,” – she said, laughing – “I don’t know if my hands will be too shaky to be a surgeon, so having a second plan as a pharmacist is what I’m doing.”

“Frezer has made such a great effort to do well in school and I’m so proud of her accomplishments,” said Suzanne Frerich, Frezer’s case manager. “She decided to participate in the GWAHCA program to learn new skills and to enhance her career field knowledge for her future. She continues to work hard daily to complete the program so that she can have more opportunities in the medical field she chooses.”

“Since I want to be a doctor I thought this would be a great way to start off. When I go to college and study medicine, this will help me be ahead, especially with people who haven’t had any hands-on experience yet.”

– Frezer



“I think I’ve grown a lot and matured since I came to MCH, especially since I began this professional type of work at GWAHCA. Early on, I knew how to get by, but now I am working to set up a suitable life for myself.”

– Lacey



LACEY

Lacey, a junior, is on track to earn a certification as a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) through GWAHCA.

“I know my involvement in GWAHCA and any certification I earn will be helpful, especially as I think about applying for colleges,” she said. “Colleges will look at my work ethic and what I’ve done to put myself ahead, so being a part of GWAHCA will definitely benefit my future.”

Clinicals for the CNA certification at GWAHCA teach many of the practices students will follow in real-life healthcare scenarios – gathering samples, learning to identify infections, CPR for adults and infants, taking blood pressure measurements, and relevant exercises such as identifying COVID-19 pathogens, Lacey described.

Lacey said she ultimately wants to attend veterinarian school and knows everything she learns in GWAHCA will help her.

“I’ve always had a heart for animals and I want to help the community,” she said. “I considered being a medical doctor, but animals tend to behave better and don’t talk back as much as people do,” she added with a laugh.

Frerich, Lacey’s case manager, said her enthusiasm for participating in the academy is making a positive impact.

“She was excited and eager to participate in the GWAHCA program because she knew she could learn new skills, meet new people and it would give her opportunities that could shape her future in a positive way,” Frerich said. “I’m so proud of Lacey and how the program helps her strive to better herself in all that she does.”

“I think I’ve grown a lot and matured since I came to MCH, especially since I began this professional type of work at GWAHCA,” Lacey said. “Early on, I knew how to get by, but now I am working to set up a suitable life for myself.”

Grisham said the theme at the charter school this year is: “What starts here, changes the world, one student at a time.”

“We always encourage our students to think big and dream big because we know they are our future and have the capability to do amazing things,” she said. “The GWAMA and GWAHCA programs empower our youth and prepare them for great things.”

WORTH *the* SACRIFICE

BY RUSSELL RANKIN

Not long after Andrew and Lindsay Hanks had their second child, Lindsay brought up the idea of becoming foster parents.

“He did laugh,” Lindsay said. “He definitely was not there. But Andrew did say he’d be open to it down the road if God led us in that direction.”

Just a few months later, the Hanks’ pastor included in his message one Sunday a plea for families to foster and adopt.

“It felt like we were the only people in the room,” Andrew said. He told Lindsay he was ready.

The Hanks received plenty of cautionary words from friends and family, telling them they should wait until their two young boys were older before entertaining the idea of becoming foster parents. Nevertheless, the couple moved forward with certification and opened their home to children in need. They imagined they would fall in love with a foster child and proceed to adoption.

“In our first placement I met the child’s bio mom and heard her story; how hard she was working to improve,” Lindsay said. “I realized then that it wasn’t my job to take her kids from her [through adoption]. It was my job to bring her kids back to her once she was healthy and stable. Our mindset shifted from the foster-to-adopt track to saying if adoption ever happens, OK; but if not, we’re OK, too, because that’s not our focus.”

The Hanks have had five placements in their home, located outside Tyler, Texas. As they serve as foster parents through MCH Family Outreach, their desire is also to introduce and make foster care accessible and understandable for other families.

“Some people have thought about it but have never had a conversation with a family involved in foster care to understand what it takes and what it’s all about,” Andrew said. “We’ve had plenty of opportunities for those interactions.”

Lindsay said anyone with an open and willing heart can be a foster parent.

“In our progression, we’ve seen how it becomes not about us, but the children and their needs,” she said. “Selfishness gets stripped away. Anything worth doing takes sacrifice.”

Because of their commitment to children and healthy family reunification, the Hanks were recently honored as Foster Parents of the Year for Region 4.

“A big reason Lindsay and Andrew received this honor is because of the way they advocate for foster care and family reunification,” said Amy Bobbitt, foster care developer for MCH Family Outreach in Tyler. “We need more foster homes; families like the Hanks who are willing to foster and maybe not adopt, so more children can be cared for.”



Andrew and Lindsay Hanks are Foster Parents of the Year for Region 4, an area that encompasses Tyler.



Andrew and Lindsay Hanks serve as foster parents with the commitment and goal of healthy family reunification.



FOSTER CARE PROGRAM



MCH Family Outreach offers foster care and foster-to-adopt services in four locations in Texas. While under the same ministry umbrella, the needs and challenges of each location are unique.

Foster care enables families to open their hearts and homes to children who cannot live with their parents due to a variety of circumstances. Foster families make a positive, lifelong impact on children as they help them grow physically, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually. Foster care provides a temporary living arrangement – typically ranging from 6 to 18 months – until the parents are able to resume parenting. Children in care range from birth through 17 years of age.



Foster families are licensed through Methodist Children's Home, which is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).

ABILENE

Alanna Brennan, director of Family Outreach in Abilene, said the region has transitioned from CPS to community-based care, which has changed the processes for foster care placement and case management.

Brennan said the Abilene staff also looks for opportunities to serve foster families and biological families through other MCH programs.

"We find that there are some gaps in services for biological parents who are working towards reunification," Brennan described, adding that MCH works to fill the need through Caregiver Empowerment Groups, case management and other programs. "We recently celebrated the reunification of a child in our foster care program with their biological mother. The mother subsequently enrolled in our Family Solutions program for continued support."

"We encourage our current foster families to bring interested families to our MCH family events," Brennan said. "We host a 'Coffee and Talk' meeting twice a year at a local church that has a foster care ministry. It's a casual discussion about fostering and the process to become licensed with MCH."

The office also hosts other opportunities for foster families to build relationships and support systems, such as Caregiver Empowerment groups, sharing babysitting and respite needs, paperwork submission competitions, and a monthly foster parent newsletter.

DALLAS

The MCH Family Outreach office in Dallas finds community collaborations are the best ways to raise awareness and recruit families to serve as foster parents.

"There are numerous agencies for prospective foster families to choose from," said Elizabeth Moore, director of MCH Family Outreach in Dallas. "We participate in joint information meetings with the North Texas Collaboration – a group of child-placing agencies. In these meetings we discuss the many facets of foster care and recruitment and how to reach more families." The MCH team also works closely with Tapestry, a foster care/adoption organization that focuses on training and recruiting prospective and licensed families.

A pressing need in the Dallas area is for more families willing to foster sibling groups and children older than age 9, Moore added. Additionally, there is a need for foster families for bilingual or Spanish-speaking children.

HOUSTON

Foster care is challenging in a large metropolitan area like Houston, said Nicole Washington, director of MCH Family Outreach in Houston, but MCH is equipped to stand out from the crowd.

"There are many foster care agencies in the area," Washington explained. "We want to be known for offering high quality, nurturing services that set us apart. Foster care through MCH Family Outreach in Houston is unique because we serve foster families, foster children and their families of origin in specialized ways through our trauma-informed programs."

The COVID-19 pandemic affected foster care across the United States and left many agencies working to rebuild their census of families available to foster. Washington said an ongoing focus of Family Outreach in Houston is to recruit more foster families.

"Right now we get a lot of requests to place teens, so we are looking for families open to fostering older children," she said. "The best way we have found to recruit more families is by word of mouth – our current foster parents and staff are committed to nurturing relationships in the community and sharing about the privilege of helping support or directly serve as foster parents.

"We know there is a high need for safe and nurturing foster homes and we are committed to recruiting, walking alongside families offering support and training to help meet this need," she added.

TYLER

Kristy George, director of Family Outreach in Tyler, said East Texas is not immune to the foster care crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to an over-burdened foster care system and not enough foster homes.

"There is a need for more foster homes in the Tyler area, especially homes willing to take older children," she said. In addition, George said it can be challenging to find therapists and medical providers for initial checkups.

"Right here in East Texas, children are spending the night with CPS workers in residential settings, hotels and churches because there are not enough foster families," George said. "I encourage anyone who has ever thought of being a foster family to reach out and see if they would be a good fit with MCH, because we are in desperate need for more homes."

In Tyler, MCH is part of a foster care collective – a group of like-minded organizations that collaborate to advocate for foster care and serve families.

"We have a great support system for foster parents," she said. "We partner with the collective to hold informal meetings several times a year, and they help get the word out about foster care and the need for others to become involved. Sometimes it is hard to get people to understand what foster care really is and that it is not a scary thing as it is sometimes portrayed."

From left: Andrew and Lindsay Hanks visit with Amy Bobbitt, foster home developer with the MCH Family Outreach office in Tyler.



MCH

HOME



Congratulations to our 2021 homecoming queen and king, Zaniya and Robert!



Daniel rushes for yardage during the Bulldogs' homecoming game.



From left: Christina, an MCH senior; Amy Grisham, director of school support; and Rachel Swain, school support specialist, celebrate Spirit Day.

CELEBRATING HOMECOMING AND SPIRIT WEEK

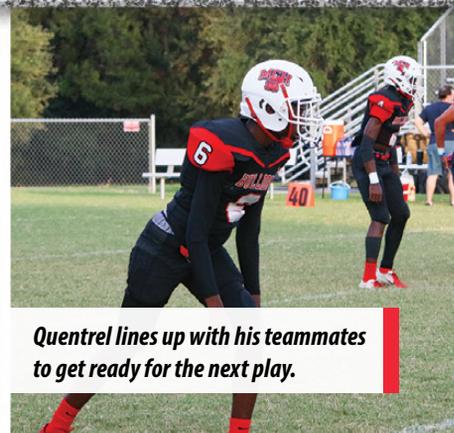
Students and staff at the University of Texas—University Charter School on the Waco campus celebrated homecoming the last week of September with themed costume days, a junior/senior dance and homecoming court during the Friday night football game.

Students, from athletics to the cheer squad and drumline, expressed their Bulldog Pride all week long. MCH residents Robert and Zaniya, both seniors, were crowned homecoming king and queen. The Bulldogs claimed victory in their Friday night football game against Legacy Classical 49-0.

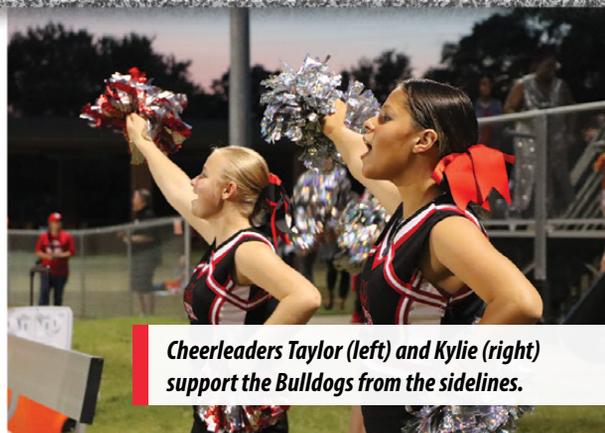
COMING '21



From left: Ashley Kendrick, student events coordinator; Amy Grisham; and Tyrone Robinson, school support specialist, dress up for Nerd Day at the charter school.



Quentrel lines up with his teammates to get ready for the next play.



Cheerleaders Taylor (left) and Kylie (right) support the Bulldogs from the sidelines.



Taylor (left) and Sterling (right) show off their MCH school spirit on Spirit Day at school.



Kamille (left) and Kaylenn (right) enjoy each other's company while cheering on the Bulldogs.

Associate Athletic Director Jayson Mitchell visits with Frezer and other MCH youth before kickoff.



From left: Ismael, Amy Grisham, Bryce, and Tanner dress the part for "Nerd Day" at school.

Making a Community Impact

BY RUSSELL RANKIN

Methodist Children's Home is committed to fostering a culture of learning and growth in a way that affects clients, employees and even other ministries and organizations. In the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, an action step reveals the intention to "collaborate with churches, providers and other community partners to host, lead or sponsor workshops, trainings and conferences."

"In our planning, we received input from all areas of our ministry agreeing with the need to repurpose our talents and resources to be who our communities are calling us to be," said Trey Oakley, president and CEO of MCH. "Fostering a culture of learning is one of our strategic commitments at MCH. When we are serving, we are also learning."

In the summer of 2021, Oakley announced a restructuring that included the new role of a community engagement and training specialist and an expanded Outdoor Education and Recreation program. The defined purpose is to offer specialized resources and training to like-minded organizations and groups.

"We look for areas where we can share from our abundance – be it training or other collaboration – by mobilizing staff that can go out into the community and collaborate with other organizations," Oakley said. "We are blessed at MCH with great training opportunities, and know that training would be a huge gift for other nonprofits and ministries, whether it is First Aid or Trust-Based Relational Intervention®."

Traci Wagner, vice president for programs, added "the collective impact being made by MCH in our MCH Family Outreach offices and through other areas like the Outdoor Education program gives us opportunities to set criteria around what we consider strategic investments." Wagner said MCH staff have trained organizations in Texas and New Mexico, other parts of the United States and even internationally – conducting TBRI® training with a social service organization in the Ukraine.

"This is just another layer of our commitment not only to our own clients but to the communities in which we live and work," she said. •



Marissa Smith (top), MCH Family Outreach program administrator for the Central region; John Warren (left), community engagement and training specialist; and Hannah Osborne, case manager with MCH Family Outreach, co-lead a Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) training class at the MCH Family Outreach Center for a Waco-area nonprofit. TBRI® is one of many training opportunities offered by MCH to organizations and ministries.



Tim Price, director of outdoor education and recreation, leads a class of educators from the Waco Center for Youth at the MCH Boys Ranch. The group participated in physical activities that encouraged team-building, trust and communication skills that are transferable to working with youth.



OUR COMMITMENT TO A CULTURE OF LEARNING

We commit to being relevant as we continually learn and collaborate to meet unique needs and challenges of families and communities in Texas and New Mexico. We seek diverse insights and opportunities to grow in our mission. There is no chain of command on ideas at MCH in order to create a free flow of learning.

DALTON

IN LOVE WITH THE OUTDOORS

BY SARAH BEY

Dalton, 16, is the true definition of a Texas country boy. He grew up hunting, fishing and learning the lay of God's land with his older brothers, parents and grandparents.

"I grew up in love with being outside all of the time," he said.

There is plenty of space for him to do what he loves on the 500-acre MCH Boys Ranch where he lives. Dalton is a tough young man, but those closest to him agree he has a gentle soul.

"Dalton has a big heart and cares deeply for others," said LeAnn Cumby, Dalton's home parent.

Now a sophomore at the charter school on the Waco campus, Dalton came to MCH in early 2020.

"I was really shy and didn't talk to many people at first," Dalton said. "I would stay in my room for days at a time. I have definitely made friends since then."

LeAnn Cumby and her husband, Dennis, have watched Dalton grow into a responsible and respectful young man.

"Dalton always asks us if we need help with anything and sometimes he will just do things for us around the house without being asked," LeAnn said.

"I would take a house full of kids like Dalton any day," Dennis added.

Dalton's work ethic and impressive knowledge of the outdoors help him excel in the Outdoor Education and Ag Sciences programs at MCH and the charter school. Dalton even serves as an employed student worker in the Outdoor Education program.

"Most of us seek approval from our peers, but Dalton is not like that," said Tim Price, director of outdoor education and recreation. "His self-worth stems from the good, hard work he does."

When Dalton is finished with his schoolwork or work at the Ranch, he takes every opportunity to share what he knows with other youth.

"I'll help anyone with anything – they just have to be willing to learn," Dalton explained.

"I call him my junior Ag teacher," Steve Kruse, the Ag teacher at the charter school, said with a laugh.

Dalton met Kruse at the McLennan County Junior Livestock Show in 2020 before he became a resident

at MCH. Dalton and his family were supporting his older brother, who lived at the Boys Ranch at the time, as he presented at his final livestock show before graduating.

"When I met Dalton for the first time, he had a big ol' cowboy hat on and he was gung-ho and ready to come to MCH to be part of the Ag program," Kruse said.

Dalton expressed an interest in steers and told Kruse he wanted to raise one himself to present at his first stock show. First-year students do not typically show steers, but Kruse believed in Dalton's motivated spirit. Dalton went on to win the Steer Crew Champion belt buckle for 2021.

"He's like a sponge," Kruse said. "Dalton absorbs everything you tell him and he puts in extra time to learn."

At MCH Dalton learned to weld and helped create the aquaponics lab at the Boys Ranch, an agricultural cycle where fish and plants are fed and fertilized by each other. He enjoys tending to a variety of livestock and has become a skilled horseman. Dalton's care for animals has helped him develop a special bond with his horse, Heather, and his next show pig.

"I put myself in their pen," Dalton said. "If I were an animal, I would want someone to care for me every day. They know they can trust me and I trust them."

Dalton applies the same interpersonal skills with other people.

"Dalton's ability to recognize that kind of correlation at his age is such a big lesson as he grows into a man," said Shawna Damiani, his case manager. "It is great to see Dalton flourish in his interests and learn how to work with others."

Dalton's greatest aspiration after graduation is to become a Texas game warden.

"I want to protect wild game," he said. "I know how to hunt the right way. I have witnessed poachers and I want to help eliminate that problem."

Dalton and his mentors know the invaluable lessons learned at MCH will help him continue to experience life to the fullest.

"The people working at MCH are more than just a staff," Dalton said. "I know I can go to them any time and for that I am grateful." •

YAMILEX

MAKING CONNECTIONS

BY SARAH BEY



“Yamilex never meets a stranger,” Clarence Degrade, coordinator of the Methodist Children’s Home Day Student program, said with a smile. “She wants to connect with you. It is nice to have that bright light at the charter school every day.”

Connecting is something Yamilex, affectionately known as “Yami,” has learned to do well. The 17-year-old admitted her journey has not been easy, but she is motivated to reach her goals.

Yamilex, a junior at the University of Texas—University Charter School on the MCH Waco campus, lost her grandfather when she was a freshman attending a public school in Waco.

“School was my escape from that sadness,” Yamilex shared, tearing up at the memory. “School helped me get through that hard time. It reminded me that my education would help me be somebody.”

A few months later, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted Yamilex’s high school experience. With school going virtual, Yamilex found herself losing connection to her educational community and fell behind.

“I almost lost a year’s worth of credits because I got so behind,” Yamilex said. Rebecca, her mother, remembers her daughter struggling.

“She was exhausted after school every day because she was not receiving the one-on-one support she needed,” Rebecca said.

One day Yamilex overheard a co-worker – an alumna of the MCH Day Student program – talking on the phone with Amy Grisham, director of school support at MCH.

“When I heard how caring Ms. Amy was during that phone call, I knew I had to call her myself,” Yamilex recalled. “Our first conversation went really well. I knew immediately I wanted to sign up for the Day Student program.”

MCH launched the Day Student program at the charter school in 2012 for students in the Waco community needing a smaller academic environment. Since its inception, the program has served 52 students in grades 6-12, with 20 spots available each year.

“Yami has been a go-getter since she walked through our doors,” Grisham said. “She has really embraced the program and has such a good attitude. Yami is so resilient and is making things happen for herself.”

At the charter school, Yamilex caught up on her coursework and enrolled in dual credit courses through the University of Texas. Beyond the educational support, Yamilex said Degrade and the Day Student program have been there for her entire family through car rides home after school and even sending food from the cafeteria for Yamilex to share with her family.

“Mr. Clarence is like my grandpa,” Yamilex laughed. “Every teacher and staff member really care about all of us students. I know I can always call anyone at the charter school, even after I graduate.”

Yamilex will graduate in 2023 and hopes to pursue a career in cosmetology, nursing or law. Her mother has complete confidence in her ability to succeed.

“Like any other parent, my dream for my daughter is for her to graduate high school and pursue whatever she wants in college,” Rebecca said. “What Yamilex is learning and doing now in the Day Student program is going to help her in the long run. I know she is going places.”

Yamilex is grateful for the support she has found in the Day Student program and said she would encourage any student who is struggling to consider the charter school at MCH.

“It is hard to open up to people sometimes, but it is so easy to here,” she said. “These are people who really care. You just need to make those connections.”

Day Students are eligible to participate in all MCH extracurricular activities such as athletics, summer camp, homecoming, and prom. Day Student graduates also have access to Transition Services and Independent Living resources, including scholarships for college or vocational school. The program maintains a 100 percent graduation rate.

For more information about the Day Student program at MCH, call the school office at (254) 750-2600 to speak with Clarence Degrade, Day Student program coordinator, or Allyson Welch, Day Student case manager.

WACO OUTREACH HOSTS ADOPTION SUPPORT GROUP

MCH Family Outreach in Waco hosts a biweekly adoption support group for mothers. The group setting is in a public, casual space and allows participants to share their experiences, learn from others and receive support and resources. Children are welcome to the gatherings and there are occasional events planned for whole families.

“As we strive to support families in their walk toward hope and healing, we have had the wonderful honor of creating a space for adoptive moms to join together and spend time with others on similar journeys,” said Hannah Osborne, case manager at MCH Family Outreach in Waco.



▲ *The outdoor setting provides space for families to play and fellowship.*



▲ *Parents receive encouragement from MCH Family Outreach staff and build new connections with other families.*

“Building relationships with other adoptive parents and having others to celebrate life moments with, ask questions of and walk with in the more challenging times is incredibly valuable,” she added. “Seeing these families do this in community is a beautiful thing.” •

For more information, contact Hannah Osborne at: HOsborne@MCH.org or (254) 750-1263.

YOUTH PARTICIPATE IN WORSHIP PLANNING



◀ *Far left: SD Ministers Jill Sims and Ron Britton lead the Worship Planning Team's first meeting.*

Left: The MCH Worship Planning Team consists of (from left) Nikkie, Destinee, Ki'Yona and Landen.

The Worship Planning Team gives youth the opportunity to share Christ with their peers in their own way. Five residents are part of this year's team. To serve on the team, youth are interviewed and selected based on leadership qualities and

previous meaningful participation in Spiritual Development (SD) programs. The team meets monthly and helps SD ministers plan Sunday morning worship, lead Bible studies and assists in other roles related to spiritual formation on campus.

“We equip the Worship Planning Team to use their gifts to express who they are as children of God,” said Ron Britton, spiritual development minister. •



■ COMMISSIONERS ADVANCE MCH MISSION

▲ *Lyle Mason, vice president for development, leads a virtual meeting with MCH Commissioners.*

MCH Commissioners gathered virtually for their annual meeting in October to hear reports from the Development team and receive encouragement in their efforts to advocate for MCH.

Commissioners are volunteer ambassadors from churches across Texas and New Mexico who raise awareness for MCH in their communities. The tradition of Commissioners began in 1940 when a group of clergy and lay members were assembled to act as volunteer fundraisers and advocates for MCH. Over time, the role and expectations expanded

and Commissioners gather annually to receive training and education about the programs and services MCH offers and to share insight that helps MCH reach more children and families.

“Our Commissioners are a vital part of our ministry and mission at MCH,” said Kelly Lawson, director of annual giving. “In all our efforts to advance this transformational work, it is such an encouragement knowing this group of co-laborers are supporting us and shining a light on this ministry from their own communities and churches.”

The mission of a Commissioner is explained by the acronym H.O.P.E.:

H: Help us fulfill our mission with your gifts of time, talent and treasure.

O: Organize a special event for MCH at your church or in your community.

P: Provide insight on ways we can partner with you to serve families in your community.

E: Enlist others as benefactors and friends to support the mission of MCH. •

To learn more about serving as a Commissioner for MCH, contact Kelly Lawson at KLawson@MCH.org or (800) 853-1272.

YOUR SAVINGS YOUR LEGACY

Use your individual retirement account (IRA) to support MCH!

You have saved and saved, now use your savings to create your legacy.

You can support MCH through your year-end IRA Distribution! For specific guidelines for qualified charitable distributions, talk to your tax professional or account administrator.

Learn more about how your gift makes a difference by visiting MCH.org.

Ready to talk now? Give us a call.

LYLE MASON, Vice President for Development
800-853-1272 • LMason@MCH.org



Avoid taxes on transfers up to \$100,000 (\$200,000 for married couples) from your IRA to support our cause.



Satisfy some or all of your required minimum distribution for the year.



Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions.



Make a gift that is not subject to the 50% deduction limits on charitable gifts.



Use your rollover to make payments on an existing pledge to us.



GIFT ANNUITY PROGRAM

A charitable gift annuity provides a way to benefit future generations while also increasing your income and decreasing your tax bill. Our charitable gift annuity program was created as a service to our many friends who have expressed a desire to make a gift of significance, while still retaining income from the gift property during their lives. A charitable gift annuity is a contract in which you exchange a gift of cash or securities for a guaranteed, fixed income each year for the rest of your life.

Your gift annuity offers five distinct advantages:

- 1 INCOME FOR LIFE**
Attractive payout rates for one or two lives
- 2 TAX DEDUCTION SAVINGS**
A large part of what you transfer is a deductible charitable gift
- 3 TAX-FREE INCOME**
A large part of your annual payment is tax-free return of principal
- 4 CAPITAL GAINS TAX SAVINGS**
When you contribute securities for a gift annuity, you minimize any taxes on your "paper profit"
- 5 PERSONAL SATISFACTION**
From making a gift of lasting significance

Payments are made quarterly; one-life or two-life annuities; cash or securities to fund your gift. Cash gifts allow maximum tax-free income; gifts of securities allow you to minimize capital gains taxes. Methodist Children's Home Board policy states that an individual wanting to participate in the gift annuity program must be at least 55 years of age and make a minimum donation of \$5,000. MCH does not accept real estate or property to fund a gift annuity.

To receive your personalized proposal, please contact Lyle Mason, vice president for development, at 800-853-1272, or by email at LMason@MCH.org.

ASHLEY

THANKFUL FOR OPEN DOORS

BY LINDY DEHM



Ashley has a bright smile, a twinkle in her eye, self-confidence about her future, and a heart filled with gratitude.

She remembers the day she came to Methodist Children's Home with precision.

"I was 13 years old when I arrived at the Perkins Home," she said. "All the girls were at Wednesday night church, so it was quiet in the house. When the girls returned, several made their way to my room and helped me unpack and get settled.

"It was hard at first," Ashley said. "I was used to doing adult things. I helped take care of my grandmother and ran the house. My father was absent and my mother was dealing with addiction issues. But, after a few months my outlook started to change."

Ashley is quick to talk about her growth while at MCH and how staff built relationships with her and nurtured her.

"I remember as a little girl standing outside my mother's door crying because she would not open the door for me," Ashley said. "It felt like MCH opened a door for me. Staff gave me space to be vulnerable, to cry and grow emotionally.

"Staff challenged me to have goals, try new things and get involved," she continued. "They helped me realize college was a realistic goal and that they were there to help me make it happen – not just financially but by staying connected with me while I am at college."

Ashley will graduate from Tarleton State University in May 2022 with a degree in education. She receives

the prestigious MCH Albaugh Scholarship, awarded to a small number of alumni each year through a committee selection process. She is completing her residency with the Waco Independent School District, teaching fourth and fifth grades at Providence Heights Elementary. Her dream job is to teach first grade and model how to build healthy connections with others.

Ashley said the relationships she built with staff at MCH helped her realize she could break the negative cycles of her past and that she could have a brighter future. Ashley also said her mother has been clean for six years and their relationship has improved.

"When I lived at MCH, my case manager helped me understand that my mom was helping me by placing me at MCH, even though I felt like she was leaving me," Ashley said. "I know now my mom did the best she could."

Ashley enjoys sharing with others about her experiences at MCH. She even helped two young people find a place at MCH.

"MCH allowed me to excel as a person," she said. "As a resident I went on mission trips, attended leadership camps, participated in cheer and dance and had an on-campus job. All these opportunities helped prepare me to transition on my own. I will graduate from college debt free because of the MCH scholarship assistance. I learned that what happened in my earlier life is not my whole life and for that I am grateful." •

GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORIAL GIFTS

GIFTS MADE UP TO \$499 FROM JULY THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2021

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Ami Cecil

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Peaches Conway
Nolan and Miles Summers

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Father's Day
First UMC, Carthage, TX

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First UMC, Carthage, TX

Linda Garrison's Birthday
Marty Vaughan

The Birth of Violet Sage Green
Alice Sappington

Ashley Hamm
Kallie Barley

Howard Home Legacy
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Kids in Christ Staff and Volunteers, First UMC, Center, TX
Mary Lynn Tinkle

Susie A. Knust's Birthday
Sue H. Humphreys

Stephen Kruse
Danny Webb

Mrs. Sandy Lewis
Mrs. Jami Lovelady

Methodist Children's Home
Mary Lynn and Steve Tinkle

James and Laura Milam
Wesleyan Workers Chapel Class
First UMC, Waco, TX

Mary A. Morehead's 100th Birthday
Brian H. Morehead

Cyndy Morris
Kallie Barley

Kevin A. Reed
Mother and Dad

Velva and Ken Riddle's 59th Wedding Anniversary
Kelly E. Lawson

Tyler and Wendi Summers Family
Steve and Mary Lynn Tinkle

Sandra Wallace's Birthday
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Jeremy Webb
Frances R. Wheat

Mary Jo Helm
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Kendall Barnett
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Rex and Carol Drennan

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Cham and Stephanie King
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In honor of
Methodist Children's Home
Alumni Association members
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Nelda Fae (Latty) Hazlewood
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*Congratulations
to our student
athletes on a
great fall
season!*



MCH