

*Where can high-needs youth in the foster care system get help?  
ACH, of course.*

# The Morris Program

## Helping youth transition to independent living.

The Morris program at the ACH Wedgwood Residential Campus provides 24-hour care for youth ages 14-17 who are difficult to place in a permanent family setting. These children have been traumatized to the extent that it is difficult for them to express their emotions appropriately, leading to behaviors like aggression, running away, emotional outbursts, drug experimentation and early pregnancy. This makes placement in homes — and the stability of these placements — incredibly challenging.

At the Wedgwood Transitional Living program, we focus on factors that have been proven to help youth be successful post-foster care. We aid in their academic achievement, vocational planning and by assisting them in finding gainful employment or volunteer experience. We also help the children in our care to attain a valid ID or driver's license, to improve their ability to manage their own behavior, to cope with stress, and to gain insight into their interests and strengths.

For those still not ready to be on their own when aging out of foster care at age 18, we can continue to help them transition to independent or supportive-independent living through age 21.

*ACH is committed to providing safe environments for youth to begin the healing process and develop coping skills that will support future success in placement through foster/adoption or independence.*





## Our outcomes have been very good.

- 100% of youth participate in educational/vocational programs.
- 100% also complete vocational and/or educational assessment.
- 100% complete the Casey Life Skills Assessment at admission and prior to discharge.
- 80% of discharged youth maintain a lower number or demonstrate a decrease in behavioral incidents than they did prior to intake.
- 80% are discharged to a less-restrictive environment

Recent outcomes have shown that with good assessment, a safe and structured environment, therapeutic services, skills training and continued advocacy, high-needs youth will be successful and thrive, even after leaving care. Many factors help them to be successful post foster-care: vocational exploration, counseling, as well as tutoring and skills development. The program activities at Morris support social-skills development, mental and physical well-being, age-appropriate independent living skills, school participation and a diligent search for permanency opportunities.

The following evaluation measures and tools help us assess outputs, outcomes and overall progress and improvement in the program.,

- School attendance is documented by school personnel.
- Incident report reviews are documented by direct-care staff
- Discharge is documented by the program case manager for each client.

At the Morris Program, we use clinical practices that have been proven successful. These include Harm Reduction, a set of practical strategies designed to reduce the negative consequences of risky behaviors. We also employ motivational Interviewing which recognizes and accepts that clients approach making changes at varying degrees of readiness.

Among our many key partners are Goodwill Industries GED program, Texas A&M AgriLife extension for nutrition and cooking classes, City Square TRAC program for housing, and others.

## 2021 Snapshot

### 14 Youth served in the Morris Program

In 2021, the Morris program served 14 females ages 13-18. Of these, one was of Asian descent, three were white, two were Hispanic, and four were African American. The other four were of undetermined origin.

Nearly 22% came from families making less than \$20,750 a year. The rest came from families with undetermined income.

#### 2022 Operating Expenses:

**\$837,019**

#### Projected Program Funding Gap:

**\$289,439**

#### Daily Cost per Youth:

**\$386**