



*You're Building
Brighter Tomorrows*

reACH

**SUMMER
2024 ISSUE**



ACH child and family services
protecting children. preserving families. since 1915.

Our Mission

PROTECTING CHILDREN.
PRESERVING FAMILIES.
SINCE 1915.

Dear Friend,

**Support for children, parents,
guardians and families alike.**

That's what your partnership makes possible. Thank you.

Because you give so generously, ACH Child and Family Services can provide specialized services for children healing from trauma, families weathering challenges and any caregiver who's ready to open their door to a child in need, whether that's a distant relative, a grandparent, a family friend or a foster parent.

This support is essential to protecting children and preserving families, especially on the heels of Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. This work continues all year long, and it wouldn't be possible without you.

Because of your support, we are able to operate programs like Kinship Connections, which connects staff specialists with guardians like Arquilla, who you'll meet on page 3.

"There are more than 10,000 children in North Texas in need of foster care."

-WAYNE CARSON, CEO

Kinship Connections is just one of many resources available to ensure our most vulnerable children have the safety and love needed to thrive.

In this summer edition of *reACH*, I hope you'll enjoy reading about even more families who have been impacted by your choice to support ACH.

Thank you again. Every gift you make is treasured and truly makes a profound impact on the lives of children, youth and families across our community.



Sincerely,

Wayne

Wayne Carson, Ph.D.

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Arquilla's Family THRIVES THANKS TO YOU

Over the past 44 years, Arquilla has opened her loving home to nine children. Eight of the kids are from her brother-in-law's family, and not one of them is related to her by blood.

"If the biological parent can't do it, and I can do it, why wouldn't I?" she asks.

The challenge of caring for children with trauma is no small task, and Arquilla was often without help in raising them.

It wasn't until Arquilla heard of ACH that she realized resources are available for caretakers of vulnerable children. Now, Arquilla has a network of support — from ACH Child and Family Services, and friends like you.

"Until ACH, I'd never had anyone say, 'I'm here for you. I'm supportive of you,'" she says tearfully. She adds that, before ACH, "I never thought about what I needed — I only thought in terms of what they needed."

Through ACH's Kinship Connections, Arquilla receives many different kinds of support, from financial assistance to a listening ear to critical support during crises. She recalls an occasion when Allen*, experienced a trauma episode. The kinship specialist from ACH arrived within minutes and helped both Allen and Arquilla through the situation.

"I can't stress enough how much this is needed," Arquilla shares with gratitude for ACH's Kinship Program and partners like you.

Full story featured on ACH's award-winning podcast, *Counting On Us*. Listen on your favorite podcast app!

**Name changed to protect privacy.*



Reliant powers more than homes and businesses in Texas. The local electricity company brings hope

and care to the children and families of ACH Child and Family Services through hands-on volunteer service and financial support.

Since 2018, Reliant has been consistently involved in ACH's

THIS HIGH-ENERGY PARTNER HELPS **Serve Our Community**

community engagement programs and events. They've helped decorate our campus during holidays, participated in our annual Trunk or Treat event, donated school supplies, supported our holiday toy drive and provided arts, crafts and games for summer enrichment.

Most recently, Reliant was the presenting sponsor of both Child Abuse Prevention Month and our annual Lend a Hand event this April. The event saw more than 200 attendees and was a great success.

Reliant's generosity provides clothing, meals and a safe place to sleep for any children or teens who need it, as well as treatment,

counseling and direction for a stronger future.

"Reliant is committed to supporting the communities where we live and work, and that includes stepping up for children and families who need additional support in times of need," says Andrea Russell, senior vice president of Reliant. "We were honored to help bring awareness and resources for our community's most vulnerable, abused and neglected children."

ACH extends a huge thank you to Reliant for its generosity and support, which helps protect children and preserve families!



"Don't be afraid to ask for help. Everybody needs help."

You Helped

JEREMIAH FIND STABILITY

By the time he was 16, Jeremiah had moved countless times with his mother. Wanting more stability while he finished high school, he left home and tried to take charge of his own future.

But the stability he craved seemed impossible to find while he was homeless. Still just a teenager trying to learn how the world works, he says, "I was very, very depressed. . . I didn't know how it was going to turn out."

Jeremiah's future was one big question mark — until he heard about ACH Child and Family Services. He applied to join The LIFE (Learning Independence From Experience) Project, a supervised independent living program for homeless young adults and those aging out of foster care. There he soon realized just how much hope his future could hold with a helping hand from friends like you.

At first, he says, "I was just happy to have a room." As he decompressed in a safe environment, he learned how much more support there was to come.

Mentors in the program helped Jeremiah navigate the challenges of adulthood and learn essential skills like budgeting, cooking and coping with stress in a healthy way.

Through The LIFE Project, Jeremiah also learned one of the most important lessons in life — it's okay to trust, and it's okay to ask for support. "Don't be afraid to ask for help. Everybody needs help," Jeremiah says.

Your generosity has truly provided so much hope and opportunity for youth like Jeremiah! Thank you.

Full story featured on ACH's award-winning podcast, *Counting On Us*. Listen on your favorite podcast app or visit ACHservices.org/CountingOnUs! Listen on your favorite podcast app!

The Trauma of Child Abuse



As more youth face mental health issues, the community comes together

April was Child Abuse Prevention Month. Along with Presenting Sponsor Reliant, ACH held our annual Lend a Hand luncheon to help raise awareness and inspire advocacy for children who have been abused and/or neglected.

During 2023, North Texas had over 16,000 cases of confirmed child abuse or neglect. 5,332 of those children were from Tarrant County. Still worse is the fact that the number of children and youth suffering from extreme aggression or complex developmental needs — and even at risk of suicide — has tripled in the last decade.

That's why this year's discussion on child abuse focused on victims who are experiencing higher levels of mental health and behavioral issues. Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker moderated a panel of experts in the field, including Susan Garnett, CEO of MHMR of Tarrant County, Christina Judge, Executive Director of Mental Health Connection, and Wayne Carson, CEO of ACH.

We are grateful for the more than 200 people who joined the movement to help bring awareness to this critical situation. For more information, visit ACHservices.org/child-abuse-prevention.