



**Wayne Carson:
Leading the Way for 25 years**

reACH

**SUMMER
2025 ISSUE**



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

REFLECTING ON MY 25 YEARS AS ACH'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Dear Friend,

It's hard to believe my first day as CEO of ACH began 25 years ago. It felt like I was coming home.

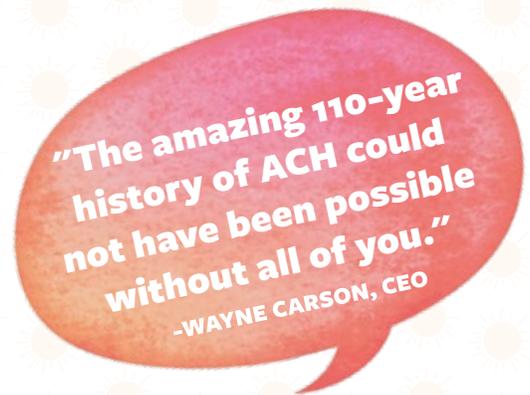
My 10 years of previous experience with ACH taught me what a great organization we were to truly help children. But returning after a brief hiatus doing consulting, it was clear that being CEO was different.

I knew the visionary group of women who founded ACH in 1915 had high expectations for being responsive to needs of children in this community. I also knew the needs were changing and the community was growing, so we had our work cut out to continue to honor the vision of our founders.

Little did I know how rewarding the next 25 years would be. The adventure included mergers, new buildings, relocations, new services and piloting a new model of child welfare for the entire state. In many ways, we are now a completely different organization than we were 25 years ago.

But we aren't. Despite the changes, our focus on protecting children and preserving families has remained constant. We are clear on our mission, and we know this community is counting on us to get it right.

Some think I'm crazy to have spent my career in child welfare. Yes, we see very sad stories every day, and it can be hard to witness what children have endured. But the joy of seeing what can



happen when the right help is available is incredibly rewarding. We witness this regularly at ACH.

I've also had the incredible fortune of working with the best humans ever: our staff, our board and our donors. I've met so many people who truly want their lives to matter and unselfishly want to make the world better for others. These angels among us have given me hope, encouragement and motivation to continue this wonderful work.

The amazing 110-year history of ACH could not have been possible without all of you. There is still much work to be done, and I look forward to continuing this journey with you.



Sincerely,

Wayne

Wayne Carson, Ph.D.

Chief Executive Officer

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YOU HELP ARCHIE THRIVE

Today, five-year-old Archie is thriving in a stable, loving home with his aunt Sarah.

But that wasn't always the case. Not long ago, Archie was removed from his mother's home and placed in the care of his aunt Sarah by Child Protective Services (CPS).

Suddenly in a new environment, Archie didn't know how to adapt, process or trust, which escalated his anxious behaviors. But Sarah was determined to create a caring home where Archie could feel safe.

So, Sarah reached out to Kinship Connections, where she was placed in contact with Andrea, an ACH Kinship Connections specialist. Together, they approached Archie's behavior in a trauma-informed, child-centered way.

To help Archie make sense of his world and regain a feeling of control, Andrea helped Sarah create a nurturing environment at home, with a dependable routine. They set up a "token economy," giving Archie the positive reinforcement he needed to feel safe and confident.

Andrea helped Archie thrive at school, too, ensuring he could overcome his language barrier with English as a Second Language (ESL) support, as well as a dedicated special education professional.

Thanks to your partnership with ACH, Sarah and Archie's kinship family is thriving. Archie is on a path to success that you helped make possible!

Names and photo have been changed for privacy.





“He is doing great — a complete turnaround!”

You Make

NEW BEGINNINGS POSSIBLE

Like many kids when their parents divorce, 15-year-old Blake struggled to navigate the change and communicate his feelings. Despite his parents’ loving attempts to help, Blake found an outlet in anger, which escalated even after Blake attended several other programs.

When Blake’s behavior took a turn for the worse, his dad, Adam, found ACH’s Turning Point program. So, Adam dropped off his son and two weeks later, when he returned to pick him up, everything was different.

Turning Point provides innovative, short-term intervention and stabilization for foster youth and their families to help prevent hospitalizations and placement disruptions.

Upon entering the program and receiving initial care from our staff, Blake soon learned his anger was keeping him from truly understanding and processing his emotions.

In Turning Point’s two-week respite program, Blake had the time, support and attention he needed to tackle the big feelings his parents’ divorce stirred up. He learned coping and life skills that will support him for many years to come.

“From the time Blake came into ACH’s program until the day he left, there was a significant difference in him,” Angela Macleod, Turning Point program supervisor, shares, adding, “When he left, he gave me a hug and said, ‘thank you.’”

A few days after Adam picked up Blake, he shared with us that “Blake is doing great — a complete turnaround!”

With your support, ACH can continue to provide the resources that help children and families thrive!

Blake and Adam’s names and photo have been changed for privacy.

Child Abuse Prevention



Doing Things Differently: Believing in Communities

That was the theme of National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. This year, our Lend a Hand luncheon not only helped to raise awareness and inspire advocacy for children who have experienced abuse and neglect, it also shed light on a better way to help children in crisis.

A panel of ACH experts and kinship caregivers discussed how when children cannot be with their parents safely, the next best option is a relative, such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling or even a close family friend. They also shared how our Kinship Navigator program helps caregivers find needed resources and helps our community’s children by keeping them out of the child welfare system and safe from abuse and neglect.

Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker and ACH CEO Dr. Wayne Carson led the discussion and also presented the state of child welfare in Fort Worth. Last year, there were 4,719 confirmed child abuse/neglect victims in Tarrant County.

Thank you to Reliant, our presenting sponsor for Lend a Hand, and their generous grant, which helped us spotlight National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

We are grateful for the 200+ people who learned about this vital community service that helps keep families together.

For more information, visit ACHservices.org/child-abuse-prevention.



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