

entertaining *great* **EXPECTATIONS**  
at the Presbyterian **HOME** *for* Children



*and* ANTICIPATING

**JOY**



vol.09

**roots** *and* **wings**

{ brought to you through the generous contribution of CHANCY & STUART WEST } [myrootsandwings.org](http://myrootsandwings.org)

**ROOTS** and **WINGS** was chosen as the name of this publication because we have a deep desire to give both of these to each child that comes to us:  
**ROOTS** to nourish and establish them, to ground them in who God says they are and to give them room to grow with a place and people who embody home;  
**WINGS** that they may soar beyond whatever hinders them and achieve much more than they have planned for themselves.



# from all of us

We expect great things at The Children's Home. We expect to see God move in the lives of our kids and to see them respond with acceptance and joy. We expect God's direction, provision, power and a plan that is much more than we can accomplish on our own.

Psalm 62:5 says, "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him." We can have these expectations, because the One in whom we hope is big enough to fulfill them – in His timing, in His way and according to His plan. He knew from before the beginning of time that we would need a rescuer, and He had a plan to send His son as a baby who would become our savior. In the very same way, He knows the needs of each of the children He has placed in our care, and He has a plan to meet those needs. Our response must simply be obedience.

"Expectation" comes from the word anticipation, from the latin anticipatio meaning a preconceived notion, or what we would call a belief. We are full of expectation because we believe.

We invite you to page 5 – read about a young boy who needed something to believe in, and someone to be there for him. He was able to make great strides when he found both of these at The Children's Home. Then turn to page 17 to read about Nikki who has great vision for her future, but needs encouragement of that vision and confirmation that she is worth those dreams.

One of the most touching stories is about our girls softball team on page 9. The encouragement and support that has come from you, has transformed these girls and given them value and a sense of belonging, all because someone believed in them. After that, you'll want to read on page 11 about Tracy's journey from bitterness to joy, and how The Children's Home has taught her to rest in the hope of God at work in her.

You won't want to miss the q&a on page 14 with Brad Bonzer - a story of how he saw God closing a door, but believed He would open another, which led him to The Children's Home.

As always, as you're reading, don't miss our announcements on page 4, story bites on page 7 and our new faces on page 15 - we have lots of exciting things to share with you!

It is a season filled with expectation, with anticipation, with belief. May it also be filled with rest for our souls, because our hope is in the Lord.

**ALWAYS GROWING,**  
the Staff of The Children's Home

## BOARD of TRUSTEES

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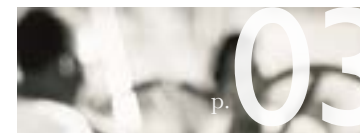
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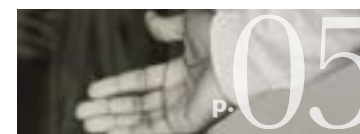
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information  
and announcements



choosing **life**



mini <sup>story</sup> bites



chasing dreams



the gift of a **smile**




q <sup>and</sup> a: with Brad Bonzer



friendly <sup>new</sup> faces



don't walk, **dance**

**JOIN the FUN!** Somewhere in this newsletter, this symbol  is hidden. You'll win a pizza and wii party with the kids on campus when you're the first to contact us with its location. *Remember, it could be any size!*

**TO WIN** call 806.352.5771 or email [mroberson@amarillochildrenshome.org](mailto:mroberson@amarillochildrenshome.org)

photography provided at discount by **ASHLYN MANNIS**, [boutiquephotographybyashlyn.com](http://boutiquephotographybyashlyn.com)



## a side <sup>note</sup>

with Business Manager, Dianne Hill

It is the privilege of every team-leader, boss, parent and teacher to expect great things from those in their realm of influence, and to guide others to reach their potential. *Goals that are worthwhile aren't quick and easy to achieve.* Pursuing them challenges us and may bring out our weaknesses, but fearing failure shouldn't keep us from aiming high.

Success is much more reachable when we're surrounded by people who boost our spirits, guide us, encourage us and catch us when we fall. *To spur others to success,* it is important to *help them believe* they are worthy of greatness, and that their dreams can be achieved.

When we take notice of the talents God has given others, name those talents and celebrate them, we inspire growth. At The Children's Home, we gather regularly to recognize staff members who were voted to best exemplify certain character traits, like "Honor," "Integrity," and "Resourcefulness," and to celebrate the academic successes of our kids. *These activities revitalize our campus!*

One of our most often-cited Bible verses is Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." This is true for the kids at The Children's Home, and it's true for those under your influence as well.



# who *we* are

*We have all heard the quote by Edmund Burke: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." But what about when good people act, resolutely, with Godly wisdom and good planning for the benefit of others? That is when doors are opened for those who see to answer their own God-given call, flinging wide floodgates of provision, kindness and caring for one's fellow man. That is when God builds His kingdom on earth.*

For over 88 years, the Presbyterian Home for Children has witnessed the truth of the above declaration. Through the decades, innovative decisions, strategic planning and timely action have impacted generations of young people in need of life change.

The Children's Home began out of a single decisive moment. In 1923, Dr. R. Thomsen, minister for what is today's First Presbyterian Church, did not look the other way. You see, Dr. Thomsen and some friends were meeting for coffee at the Amarillo Hotel when they saw three children standing outside, crying. The children were orphaned, hungry and in need of clean clothing. Dr. Thomsen and his friends chose to act: to feed and clothe the children and find them proper care.

That step opened eyes and hearts to the needs of children and led, thirteen months later on March 1, 1924, to the opening of the Presbyterian Home for Children. Life after beautiful life has been redeemed as those connected with The Children's Home have continued to be inspired by the opportunity and responsibility to be a child's home and a child's family.

The late 1940's ushered in a new era for The Children's Home as Mr. Charles Wolflin generously sold the land at 3400 S. Bowie to



The Children's Home for the purposes of relocating the campus. Deliberately stepping outside the mold, family-style homes were constructed rather than dormitories which were the standard at the time. This cutting-edge move has allowed The Children's Home to focus intentionally on creating successful families, both in our homes on campus and in the homes of those who graduate and go on from here

Over 5 years ago, The Children's Home formed the Transitional Living Concepts Program, a progressive approach to better prepare our youth for the trials of adulthood. This program is not only of benefit to our graduates, but will impact countless youth as our "Going Places" curriculum is marketed nation-wide.

Through the leadership of our board, the dedication of our staff and the involvement of each and every one of you, God is building His kingdom here at The Children's Home. As such, the Presbyterian Home for Children will continue to respond to the needs of its children with Godly wisdom and timely action.

*Please check out past issues of our newsletter in the "Info Vault" at [myrootsandwings.org](http://myrootsandwings.org) to see more stories of changed lives.*

**IMPORTANT STUFF** *we want you to know*

# information *and* announcements

## wish *list*

### **THANK YOU's** *from Becky Johnson*

*Thank you* to Kat Gray, a weekly volunteer in Neiman Marcus who regularly blesses The Children's Home with her willingness to do whatever needs to be done, and with her contributions to Neiman Marcus.

*And thank you* to those who worked on the fall clean-up of Neiman Marcus: Melanie and Avery Thompson, Chad and Kerry Martindale with their daughter Grace and her friend, Karen Kennedy, Beth Risley, Dianne Hill, and Makayla Peterson along with one of our wonderful seventh-grade girls.

*Thank you* as well to Beth Risley who responds to special Neiman Marcus needs by shopping for and preparing items and bringing them over ready to use.

### **AVID PROGRAM**

One of our girls at Thomsen Cottage has been accepted into the **AVID** Program at Richard Milburn Academy. **AVID** is a college preparatory program which places students in a rigorous curriculum with academic support.

### **ABOVE AND BEYOND**

Thank you to our many staff members who put a lot of effort into putting together an incredibly special birthday party for one of our 15-year-old girls. This was the first birthday party she had ever had, and they made sure it was one she'll never forget!

The **GOING PLACES CURRICULUM**, designed to help any teen make the transition into adulthood, is on sale now! Visit [goingplacesroadmap.org](http://goingplacesroadmap.org) to learn more or to place an order.



*In-kind contributions allow you to participate in the ministry of The Children's Home through the provision of tax deductible goods, skills or services.*

- Beef & Chicken
- Digital Camera  
*Cannon EOS Rebel T3 12.2 MP with 18-55 mm Lens (or comparable)*
- Large Capacity Washer & Dryer
- Snow Blower
- Christmas Decorations
  - trees (2)
  - outdoor lights (C7s or C9s)
- Biking Equipment
  - bicycles and helmets (all sizes)
  - chains and padlocks
- Camper (16'x20' bumper pull that sleeps 4-6)
- Wallets (*for our young men*)
- New Bath Towels
- Extension Cords

*Thank you to everyone who had a part in fulfilling so many of the items on our previous wish list! May the Lord bless you as you have blessed us!*

### **DRIVING MENTOR**

Nikki\* (p 17) earned her driver's permit and is one step closer to independence! *Please contact us if you would like to be a Driving Mentor and help our kids learn how to drive.*

**OPEN** *the eyes of my heart*, **LORD**. Open the eyes of **MY HEART**. I want to **SEE YOU**, *I want to see you*. To see you high and lifted up *shining in the light of your glory*. Pour out your **POWER** and **LOVE** as we sing **HOLY**, HOLY, *holy*...



# *choosing* life

by Marcy McKay

**JOY**, *it's*  
always a function of  
**GRATITUDE**  
*— and gratitude is always a function of*  
**PERSPECTIVE.**

If we're going to change our lives  
*what we're going to have to change*  
**is the way we SEE.**

-Ann Voskamp

When Sam\* arrived at The Children's Home over a year ago, three words described him: angry, defiant, nervous. Sam's childhood was such a blur, he doesn't remember many details. He just felt passed around.

It was an exhausting and emotionally draining lifestyle, but it was the only one he knew. Moving into The Children's Home was difficult. Sam pushed the limits at every turn. If he got mad, which happened often, he'd slap on his headphones to listen to his music and shut everyone out. Or worse, he'd ride off on his bike. He had no interest in hearing what anyone had to say. Because he refused help, the staff began to question if they could reach him. They struggled to show him his God-given value and worth, but he would repeatedly make the heartbreaking comment that he was just going to be homeless the rest of his life.

One day, he got into an argument with another boy and went off by himself again. Clinical Specialist Samantha Hites sat with him. She didn't try to preach to him, she just sat. "To me, that was a turning point for Sam. It's like he was doing everything he could to push us away, so we'd leave him, just like everyone else. But when he saw we weren't going anywhere, he began to open up... just a little."

Sam transformed even more on the annual mission trip to Belize. One of the hardest workers helping to build a home for a family from the ground up, he could always be found up on the roof, nailing away. He rarely took a break. The one day that he didn't want to do anything, he prayed, "God, help me work hard even when I don't want to."

Three words that describe Sam today: joyful, sincere, motivated. He's a greeter at First Presbyterian Church and is known to go around singing *Open the Eyes of My Heart*. He turned 18 in October and signed himself over to The Children's Home to stay in care. He plans to graduate from high school and get a job or some type of training. His favorite class is culinary arts, so he's considering a career in that.

"I don't want to be one of those people on the streets. I want to do something when I grow up. I want to be something."

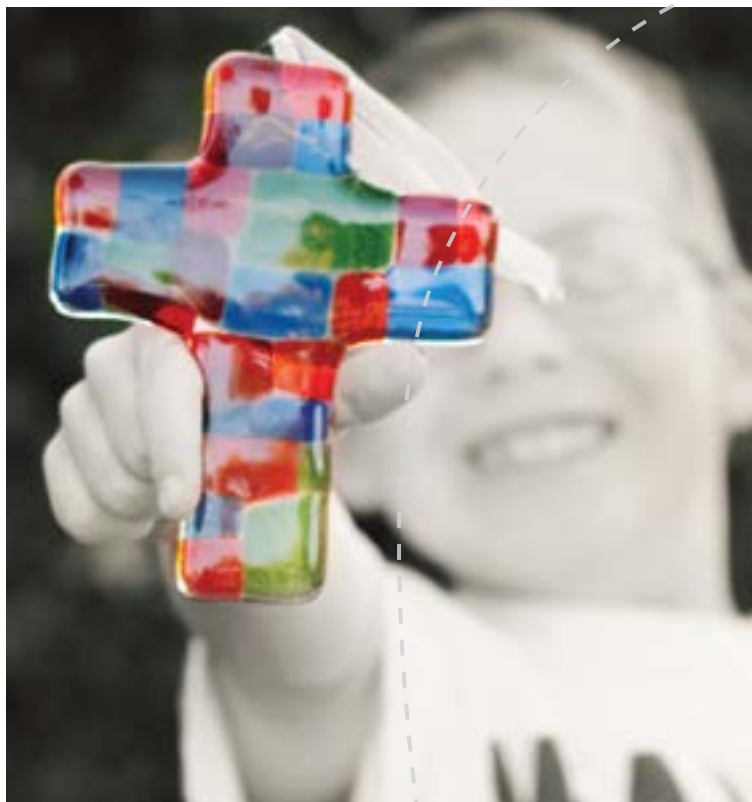


\* names have been changed



{ as **CHILDREN** see it } "If I was on Dora, I'd be Swiper...  
But, I wouldn't steal anything... because I'm a Christian, of course."

p.



## the blessing of **trust**

The Children's Home strives to provide the kids with a variety of unique opportunities. This fall almost a dozen of them acted as judges for the Panhandle Council of Car Clubs (PCCC).

This incredible experience teaches valuable life-skills: teamwork, compromise, patience and public speaking. Bill McWeeney, PCCC past-president, commented, "The kids judge the cars very professionally and are a big hit. They're definitely in demand."

It means a lot to our kids to have confidence placed in them and to be able to rise to that trust.

## the blessing of **work**

Each year, the children at Union Cottage work with their family teachers, Doug and Sue Vermeulen, to raise vegetables and make crafts for the Tri-State fair. Crafts this year included sewing, leatherwork, glass fusing, wood-working and ceramics (in which Combs-Worley Cottage joined them). Together, the two cottages brought home a whopping 85 ribbons!

There are wonderful life-lessons to be learned. The kids work with their hands and reap the rewards of their labor. The money that they earn from ribbons goes into their personal savings accounts, while proceeds from the sale of the pumpkins pays for a special trip to Carlsbad Caverns.

## the blessing of **service**

For the past 11 years, kids from the Presbyterian Home for Children have had the opportunity to go on a mission trip to Belize with the local organization The Word at Work.

This year, our kids worked alongside teens from a Belizean children's home, and together, they showed the love of Christ by building a home for a family from the ground up.

This project also served the beautiful purpose of reuniting a family. It allowed children, who had been in the care of social services, to come home to live with their mother.

## win a **new** car (and bless three area non-profits)!

**Don't forget!** Pete Vaughan of Pete's Car Smart Kia has donated a 2012 Kia Optima Hybrid to be raffled off to benefit High Plains Food Bank, Kid's Inc, and The Children's Home! 100% of the ticket sales will benefit these three area non-profits. (**WOW!**)

Raffle tickets are priced at \$10 each, 6 tickets for \$50 and 12 tickets for \$100. *The date for the drawing is December 7, 2012. Don't miss your chance!*

**To order tickets**, please call The Children's Home main number, **(806)352-5771**, or stop by our office between the hours of 8 and 5, Monday-Thursday and 8 and 4 on Friday.



WE'D like to give a **HEARTFELT THANKS** to Roger Castleberry for outfitting our girls softball team in a **MANNER** fit for a traveling team. The high-quality uniforms contributed greatly to a sense of self-worth, pride in the team and excitement for the season that could not have been accomplished otherwise. *Your thoughtful support has blessed us greatly!*

# chasing dreams

*This softball team is in many ways a microcosm of The Children's Home. Because of your support, we are able to, with consistency, provide for the physical needs and teach the basic skills that so many of these kids have lacked. We practice steps over and over, and finally, when the kids put what they have learned into practice, we praise the small accomplishments that, in time, grow to become huge achievements. We provide life-giving experience after life-giving experience because these turn into skills, that turn into successes, that turn into life change... and we cheer our lungs out along the way.*

It tells like a Disney movie. The plot: 14 young girls thrown together into an unlikely team. Their lack of experience dramatized as, at the first practice, one girl holds up a mitt on her throwing hand and asks, "So, how do I throw?"

Practices, hard work, willing attitudes and even more hard work, and slowly a real team is forged. At long last, the games begin. Only what is at stake is much more than a winning season. These girls are sweating and striving for something vastly bigger than a championship trophy.

The crowd goes wild, cheering and stamping and calling out the girls names - and here is where our story line departs from the made-for-screen version. This excitement is not for home runs and triple plays, but for hits and near-hits, catches and base-runs - triumphs in the little things that most teams take for granted.

What has been accomplished in this season that most would not consider successful? Courage. Teamwork. Sportsmanship. Trust, being trusted in return, and working hard to deserve and keep that trust. Confidence. Strength. Relationship. Each forming an invisible medal hanging from the girls' necks.

These girls have struggled and fought for these, and they have earned them rightly. Such qualities will serve them much better than a fading championship or tarnishing trophy.

And the crowd goes wild!

Thank you to coaches Clay Thomas, Phil Anderson, Dick Doyle and Samantha Hites for your patience, encouragement and commitment.





THE **THIRD ANNUAL** banquet to benefit the Presbyterian Home for Children

**SAVE** *the* **DATE:** Tuesday, **MARCH 5,** 2013

# roots *and* wings

## {banquet}



7 pm at the Amarillo Civic Center Heritage Ballroom

**HONOR** *your friends and family* with a gift to *The Children's Home* this season,

and we will send a card letting them know  
of your kind donation.\*

Cards will be sent out in December, *but*  
**GET YOUR "SHOPPING" DONE EARLY.**

*Send in your list today!*

*For your convenience, use the enclosed reply envelope.*

*\* minimum gift of \$20 per card requested*

MERRY CHRISTMAS

*Do not grieve, for the JOY of the LORD is your strength.* Nehemiah 8:10b



## *the gift of a* **smile** by Marcy McKay

Tracy\* grew up in chaos with an alcoholic mom. When she was six, her dad and step-mom took Tracy and her older brother, Tim\*, to live with them. Neither adult drank, but they beat them. After three years, her step-mom's parents took the kids to their home in Germany.

"It was good the first few months, then they started beating us, too." At ten, Tracy started smoking and drinking to ease the pain. "I did it because my brother did. Plus, I just needed to escape."

Two years later, Tracy and Tim ran away, staying gone a few days before turning for help to the German version of Child Protective Services who returned them to the U.S.

Things worsened for Tracy. Back in Texas, she and Tim were separated. He went to a facility in Amarillo; she went to one in Lubbock. "I was very sad and very angry about not having my brother anymore. I got into so much trouble that they kicked me out after a few months."

After living at an extremely restrictive Residential Treatment center in Houston, Tracy arrived at The Children's Home expecting more disappointment. She'd fallen out of contact with Tim, who'd been adopted, and her mom and dad had their parental rights terminated. In a lot of emotional pain, she started acting out again and was given one final chance last year. Tracy did not want to get shipped off again.

"They said if I started doing good I could talk to my mom and I really wanted that, so I tried. I realized I loved the people around me and I couldn't leave them."

She began to realize that not all change is bad - slowly transforming from a girl whose constant expression was a scowl, to one who can't frown without breaking into a laugh. Her entire demeanor is different. "I changed myself, but I only did it with God's help. That's what The Children's Home taught me."

*the Presbyterian Home for Children*

[myrootsandwings.org](http://myrootsandwings.org)

\* names have been changed



The LORD had **SAID** to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household, and go to the land I WILL SHOW YOU.” Genesis 12:1

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I’m a **jokester**. I like to see the funny side of things. *But the best joke I’ve played since I’ve been here* has to have been when Jan Edwards was the business manager. I had kids working with me that summer, and we bought a new copy machine that was identical to the old one. The kids and I staged it so that they were ripping the old copy machine to pieces while I convinced Jan that I had confused two machines - so she thought the kids were accidentally tearing into the new one!

# Q and a:

with Brad Bonzer,  
Campus Manager



*Since June of 2001, Brad has used his skills as a jack-of-all-trades to make sure that the maintenance end of the campus runs smoothly. He fixes or out sources the fixing of items needing repair, maintains the vans, repairs damage to the cottages, oversees and maintains the landscaping, builds floats and plays practical jokes in his spare time, along with a multitude of other duties.*

- Q:** How did you gain the landscape of knowledge that it takes to be Campus Manager?
- a:** I grew up on a farm in northeastern South Dakota and worked the farm for quite a few years - I was a fifth-generation farmer on the family farm. I learned all of my maintenance skills there. We were 10 minutes from a small town and 40 minutes from a big city, so we had to do things on our own. My Dad was a licensed electrician, farmer and a carpenter, and my Father-in-law did plumbing, drywall and carpentry. They both taught me everything they knew.
- Q:** How did you get to Amarillo?
- a:** My wife was working for the airlines in South Dakota, and they were closing down her station. They gave her a choice of Amarillo, Tx or Wyoming. She said, “I’m tired of freezing to death in winter. Let’s go someplace warm!” Ironically, the first winter we were in Amarillo, it snowed 13 inches!
- I’m a firm believer that God doesn’t close a door without opening another, and that everything happens for a reason. My wife was living and working here, and I was still in South Dakota. Then the company I was with went bankrupt and everything seemed to be going wrong. I came here to join my wife, and, meanwhile, she saw an ad in the paper for a campus manager. I came in and they hired me. Of all the jobs I’ve had, I love this one the most.
- The first thing we really noticed immediately is how friendly everyone in Amarillo is. That really made a big impression. It’s home - I have no wants to ever move back to South Dakota.
- Q:** What keeps you here?
- a:** I love what The Children’s Home is all about. I’ve seen a lot of kids come and go, and I’ve seen the changes. I believe 100% in what the Presbyterian Home for Children does. I tell people, “It’s a shame that The Children’s Home has to exist, but it’s a fantastic thing that we do.” I want these kids to have as normal a life as possible. I like to think that what I do on this campus gives them a nice warm place to stay and... it’s the most rewarding job I’ve ever had. These kids just need a chance.

- Q:** How did you get started building the float for the the Center City Electric Light Parade?
- a:** I’ve always liked to do floats - I’m from a small town that does a homecoming parade, and I always liked to mess with floats. We had been going to the parade - it’s so neat and the festivities are so cool, I thought it would be kinda neat to have The Children’s Home do something – I thought it would be good exposure. So about four years ago, I took it on myself and did most of it myself and... we won a prize! The next year, people were jumping on board, and excited, and it just snowballed from there. Every year we’ve won a better prize – last year we won *1st Place for a Non-Profit*. The kids get involved. It’s so cool to see the smiles on people’s faces when they see the float. It’s been fun.



Therefore, *my dear brothers*, **STAND firm**. Let nothing move you. Always **GIVE YOURSELVES FULLY** to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord *is not in vain*. I Corinthians 15:58

p.

# friendly *new* faces

friendly *new* faces



Jason & Shawna Brown  
Family Teachers - Hardin Cottage



Amie Purcell & Jara Simonson  
PRN Assistant Family Teachers



Barbara Howard  
receptionist

We want to introduce to you the newest members of our team and invite you to pray with us for them, as well as for the rest of the staff at the Presbyterian Home for Children.

In Mark 18:5, Jesus said, “whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.” The beauty and significance of our mission is realized even more so when we remember this. These are no “mere mortals” that we are raising, but immortal souls who each bear the image of Christ Jesus. What a sacred task.

# anniversaries

AUGUST *through* OCTOBER

CELEBRATING



Dianne Hill  
1 year



Samantha Hites  
1 year



Clay Thomas  
2 years



Mindy Roberson  
3 years



Jose Baron  
5 years

*significant* milestones

FOLLOWERS of **CHRIST** take the *inconveniences of LIFE* and make them into instruments to love...  
She spreads her wings and finds out that He is the air of this world and she is meant to soar.

-Ann Voskamp

## *don't* walk, **dance** by Marcy McKay



Few sixteen-year-olds work thirty hours a week while maintaining academic success. Fewer still graduate early with ambition and plan to use their career to help others. Even more rare is a child that rises to this occasion from the ashes of tragedy, and who blazes this path as the first in her family.

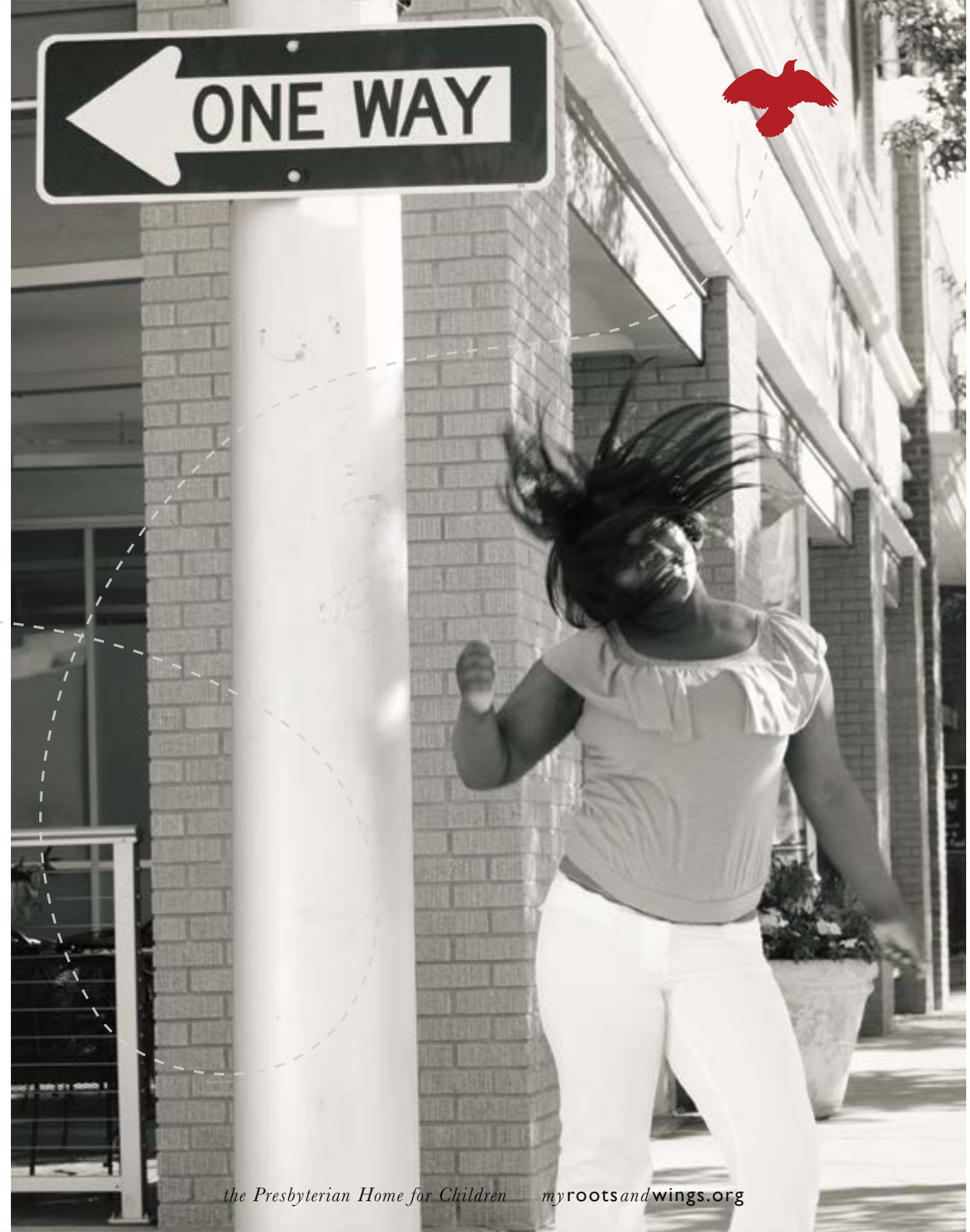
Nikki\* is such a singular individual. Strong and determined, this amazing girl plans to attend South Plains College in the spring, then, after two years, move on to Texas Tech University with the long term goal of opening a teen pregnancy center. "I love helping kids my age and I love babies, so I thought I could put the two together."

Her future looks bright today, but that wasn't the case when she arrived at The Children's Home in April of 2011. Her own choices brought her here – Nikki, by her own description, was mad at the world, kept to herself and didn't care too much for people. "If you weren't like me, then I didn't like you."

Her time here didn't go as she planned and life threw her some gut-wrenching curve-balls along the way as both her cousin and her brother died within a short span of time. Nikki had to learn and adjust, grow and move forward in order to succeed. "I started letting the negative go. I didn't want to live in anger anymore... I changed my attitude and how I saw things." She also made the choice to become attached to other people at The Children's Home and discovered she liked to help others with their problems.

Today, Nikki is more outgoing and caring as well as keenly focused on her life and career. She takes joy in sharing her hard-earned wisdom and in helping others move forward on their journey. Who would know better than this girl: "You have a right to be mad, but don't let that get in the way of living."

\* name has been changed



the Presbyterian Home for Children [myrootsandwings.org](http://myrootsandwings.org)





The Children's Home  
*Presbyterian Home for Children*

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## a **WORD** from the PRESIDENT

As we enter into the holiday season I'm looking forward to so many things: the leaves changing and the temperature falling, the smell of turkey roasting in the oven, and the joy of time with family. I love the process of putting up Christmas lights and decorating the tree, and I eagerly anticipate an impacting time of worship at church as our hearts yearn for the glorious advent of Christ.

I am most excited to watch these expectations be met for the boys and girls of the Presbyterian Home for Children. For many, it will be the first time they experience the holiday season in a fashion that is often assumed. I am learning that the experience has little to do with the "stuff" and more to do with the presence of family. Consistency, care, laughing around the table, taking part in family traditions, recognizing God's precious gifts and giving to others – this is what makes the holiday season an imprint in our mind.

I am astounded at the impact of The Children's Home as the staff, volunteers and supporters do not merely provide for kids, rather they lavish them with a richness and depth that speaks to and plays out the extravagance of God's grace and gift to us all. And I am thankful that God gives us this chance to be a part of His story in the lives of each one of these boys and girls.

We look with a sense of expectancy and excitement to 2013, encouraged by and thankful for those of you who have been involved with us this past year. God wants to do great things. Pray with us that we will hear His voice with clarity and follow where He leads. May the Lord richly bless you and yours.

With a grateful heart,