

WE **BELIEVE** in GENERATIONAL CHANGE  
*through children.*

Fall 2022


**ACH**   
est.1924

**AMARILLO CHILDREN'S HOME**



**OUR MISSION:** To restore the identity of children so they can realize their great value and be a blessing to others.

She is learning to open her heart to love... because of you!

Together, we are  (*greater than*).

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

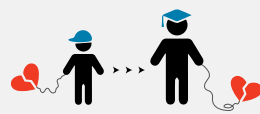
**AMARILLO CHILDREN'S HOME** began out of a single decisive moment.

In 1923, Dr. R. Thomsen, *minister for today's First Presbyterian Church*, and some friends were meeting for coffee. They saw 3 children crying outside, orphaned and hungry. At this critical point, these men chose to act: **to feed and clothe the little ones and find them proper care.** As a result of that event, Amarillo Children's Home officially opened in March 1924.

**OUR MISSION**

TO RESTORE THE IDENTITY OF **CHILDREN**  
SO THEY CAN REALIZE THEIR **GREAT VALUE** AND **BE A BLESSING** TO OTHERS.

**WHO WE SERVE**



primarily children removed from their homes by the foster care and judicial systems, ages 5 - 18+



young people from difficult, traumatic, often impoverished situations with a history of abuse and neglect



our specialty is kids who are more challenging to find a home for, such as sibling groups and older teens



the length of stay is based on a child's needs: a few months to many years

**HOW WE SERVE**

we intentionally seek out each child's needs, gifts and passions to provide opportunities for growth and a new identity to cling to



we are highly adaptable: quick to respond and swift to implement new methods to best serve each young person who comes to us



our unique after-care program gives guidance and assistance to post-high school kids as they grow into adulthood



WE HOPE YOU'LL **PARTNER** WITH US.

A VERY HEARTFELT **to**  
**THANK YOU**



for a generous grant providing each of our kids with funds to shop for new clothing in the fall and the spring



We are blessed by the many who give to our clothing boutique throughout the year. These donations amazingly provide the bulk of our kids' wardrobe needs. Knowing foster children already face a number of hurdles, we're careful to ensure our kids are well dressed so they can feel a sense of pride and belonging in often-uncomfortable environments.

Still, the joy of going shopping to pick out a new outfit for school is priceless. It's the chance to feel "normal" and to enter the first day of school with confidence and pride.



Emmy & Wade Mitchell



Emmy with co-workers and co-volunteers Adrian & Edalia

**A PROFILE OF GIVING.**

**Emmy Mitchell (& co)**

A passionate do-er who invites others to come alongside. Donor. Volunteer. Understanding encourager and vocal advocate.

**SHARING the MISSION**

I had to overcome so much from my childhood, so I know it's easy for the ACH kids to believe lies. But I want to encourage them. I want to be an example to them that they don't have to be limited because of their beginnings.

-Emmy Mitchell

Emmy Mitchell is no stranger to the pain of a fraught childhood. Raised by a single mom who did her best, Emmy experienced minor CPS involvement along with the insecurity and instability that accompanies poverty.

"We were very poor. I was that super poor kid who thought everyone was rich besides me. So... I can relate, and I have a heart for the girls at Amarillo Children's Home."

In 2018, Emmy was shopping at United and had two separate carts of groceries - one for her own family and one for a family in need. As the baggers helped her load her car, one teenage boy asked, "Why do you have two grocery carts?" When she explained, he responded, "So, cool, you should help Amarillo Children's Home." He went on to tell her he lived here.

Emmy was often in the Wolflin neighborhood and drove by campus regularly. Not a person who typically experiences such things, she kept

hearing what she believes was God's voice telling her, "You need to go inside. You need to stop by." So, she did.

Walking into the administration building to get information on volunteering, Emmy was told, "Perfect! We're hosting a lunch & learn today, and you're right on time!"

Impressed by the mission, she and her husband, Wade, became regular donors, and Emmy went through the process to become a volunteer. In 2019, she brought several co-workers to our Christmas party, and colleagues Adrian and Edalia started volunteering with her.

Time spent in one of the cottages has made a strong impression on Emmy. She loves the structure in the home and how the house parents call out the best in the kids. One of her favorite things is how ACH makes kids feel wanted. "I struggled as a kid to feel wanted. If you can feel really wanted, you can heal."

Paying respect to the US flag, Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan, September 11, 2011



Jeromey and his son, Luke, February 2022

## WE FIGHT.

We see each child's value in Christ and we call out who they can become as loudly as we can to counteract the lies that bombard them. We won't give in, because every child has a battle > (greater than) they can face alone.

## FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE

At 9 years old, Jeromey was pretty much raising himself. After working long hours, his brain-injured single mother didn't have much time, energy or emotional fortitude left at the end of the day. When he was placed at Amarillo Children's Home with only 6 weeks left in the 1986-87 school year, Jeromey was primed to fail fourth grade. But after 6 weeks within the structure of family-life at ACH, Jeromey was on the honor roll, and he was able to move up with the rest of his class.

Jeromey learned more at ACH than simply how to succeed at school. He learned good hygiene. He learned how to be respectful, how to interact positively with others and how to speak correctly. He learned through experience that actions have consequences – doing right led to freedom while behaving poorly led to extra chores. Jeromey thrived on the structure provided.

He also flourished as a result of relationships he formed with caring adults who poured into his life – a set of House Parents he still considers family; an Activities Director and her husband who took him swimming, camping and horseback riding and who were a constant in his life when planned visits from his mother failed to materialize.

This same Activities Director, Dana, introduced Jeromey to gymnastics, and when Jeromey was excited to find something he loved and was particularly good at, Dana secured classes for him from several local gyms. Most importantly, ACH encouraged his relationship with God. Jeromey was saved and baptized when he was 12 years old at Coulter Road Baptist Church

Just barely into his 9th grade year, Jeromey's mother took him home to much the same situation he had left. Like many high schoolers, 14-year-old Jeromey did not have the self-discipline necessary to continue to do well in school without a home structure in place to support him. At 16, he dropped out, got a job and got his GED.

A brief stint at a community college introduced him to an acquaintance who inspired him to join the Air Force. Right away, Jeromey knew he had found his place and his passion. Jeromey had numerous assignments and several deployments during his 25 years as an Airman. He ended his career at the Air Force Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Academy. Incredibly, the high school dropout with only a GED taught courses worth college credit for his final three years in the military. Jeromey retired from the Air Force this summer and is now working as a civilian contractor at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama as a Language Development Coordinator for the Air Force Culture and Language Center.

Jeromey points to the stark difference between his life and the lives of his brothers who did not have the benefit of living at ACH, both of whom have been incarcerated, as proof that his life is on a different path because he lived here. But he is quick to point out it is up to each individual to take advantage of what is offered. We cannot give a child restoration, we can only lead them to it. Not everyone who lived at ACH at the same time as Jeromey went on to a full, healthy life. Some made grievous decisions which led to destruction. Jeromey uses their opposing stories as examples as he teaches his children that their choices ultimately shape their lives.

Many of the lessons Jeromey learned and internalized at ACH helped him succeed in the military, and he passed that wisdom on to his son, Luke, who is now in JROTC and plans to join the Air Force when he graduates high school in 2023. Luke is the highest ranking student in his outfit, Cadet Battalion Commander, and proof positive of the power of generational change. Amarillo Children's Home was not only a blessing to Jeromey, but to his children and their children and their children.

**YOUR INVESTMENT IN ACH REACHES INTO THE FUTURE TO IMPACT GENERATIONS.**

## WE RISK.

Because what is gained is > (greater than) the cost.  
Your support and your prayers free us to act with purpose and to focus on fulfilling our shared mission of restoring kids.

## TAKE HEART...

*taken from an interview with one of our girls after a visit with the horses from Choose Joy\**

ff

This is the best placement I've ever been at. After so many years of being bounced around from placement to placement, not knowing how long I would be there and worrying about what I would do that would make them want me to leave... I wish all kids who need a place to be could come to ACH.

**I recommend it.  
10/10.**

I was kinda scared when I first met the horses, Buddy and Little Bit.

*It's risky to love, to care, to open your heart.*

I've been around horses before, but not *these* horses, and I didn't know what to expect.

*Each child comes to Amarillo Children's Home with his or her own backstory, own open emotional wounds, own learned responses and own challenges.*

We had to be careful and gentle. Horses have to feel safe, or they'll just leave. We had to be respectful to the horses – to listen to what they were telling us with their behavior. And we had to be open and not closed off to them so they could build a bond with us.

*We risk rejection, we risk the strain of dealing with severe behaviors born of trauma, we risk the grief of loving kids who choose hard paths and working towards healing with those who will return to hurtful situations. It's hard. Pray for our people. In spite of the risk, we must remain vulnerable to effectively do the work we've been called to. We risk love every single day to fulfill the mission.*

Horses want to build a bond, but sometimes they've been hurt. Buddy had been through lots of owners, so he's nervous to trust new people. He wants to care and to be a companion, he's just scared. If I had been aggressive and tried to force him to like me, I would have frightened him away. I had to give him time and not push too hard. I had to be patient and respectful.

*There's no quick fix, no 3-step program to bonding and restoration. We, too, must be patient and respectful – we push for growth, but read our kids carefully lest our they retreat and regress.*

Before I could ride him, I brushed him and talked to him to reassure him. I layed my head on his side and breathed with him so he could learn I could be trusted. It was amazing.

*Not only do we risk, but we teach our kids to do the same. Risk-taking is vital to growth, to becoming a resilient human. It demands courage to leave a comfort zone, and it requires hope that the end result will be worth it. We provide opportunities for appropriate risk, and we cheer our kids on to pursue that which will lead them to a full and joy-filled life.*

When I first came to Amarillo Children's Home, I was not patient *or* respectful. Now, I think patience and respect are some of the most important skills in life. Impatience just brings frustration and anger. Patience can help you get through everything. Waiting in line for your favorite ice cream? Patience. Even a conversation is patience - listening to understand. That's respect, too. Respect helps you form relationships with others and treat others the way you want to be treated. I've learned all that here. I hope this place is around for another 100 years. I'm so thankful for ACH. This is the place I needed to be in order to become the person I'm supposed to become.

### WOULD YOU CONSIDER GIVING MONTHLY TO SUPPORT THIS GREAT MISSION?

Give online at [amarillochildrenshome.org/give](http://amarillochildrenshome.org/give), or use the enclosed envelope to help provide a safe place for kids to call home.



*\*Choose Joy is a book by Amarillo's own Jolena Watson about her beloved rescued horses Buddy and Little Bit. This book is included in the care package for all children who come to live with us.*

## A WORD *from* OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**F**all is just around the corner and a new school year has begun. Two of our high school graduates have begun their college careers. Several of our teens have entered high school as freshman, and each of our kids will be experiencing new classrooms, classmates and teachers. New beginnings are wonderful and exciting, but, at the same time, they are also scary – especially for the children in our care. Our kids can be very hesitant to believe in good change. In their experience, disappointment and heartbreak so often take the luster off that which is new.

Many of the activities we plan throughout the summer are designed to help our children overcome their fears and be open to life. We provide them with experiences which are challenging but which also bring joy so they can have the courage to take hold of their dreams. We take them through processes which help them move beyond fear. We strive for each child to know their past does not determine their future and their goals are within their grasp.

One of the sweetest ingredients for restoration is giving back to the local community. We dedicate a week each summer to making the world around us better. Our location in the heart of Amarillo provides our children the opportunity to be good neighbors, to go to school with other kids in the neighborhood and to develop a sense of community pride and responsibility.

We could not do any of this without all of you. Every victory we experience on our campus is a victory you participated in. Your gifts, time and service to Amarillo Children's Home make all of this happen. So, I thank you for helping our children have new beginnings, beginnings they can believe in and build upon for their future. And, oh, the places our kids will go.

*Belinda Creliia-Palacios*

Belinda Creliia-Palacios,  
Executive Director, Amarillo Children's Home

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to **change the world.**

-Harriet Tubman

**BE A VOICE!** Tell others about us – friend us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram – learn all you can and share what you learn.

# FUEL

## THE MISSION

Monthly giving drives Amarillo Children's Home, providing stability and enabling us to freely pursue our mission of restoring the identity of kids

- we **LOVE** monthly gifts!



**HIGHLY TRAINED PARENTS & MORE**



**THE VITAL BASICS**  
FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER,  
SAFETY & SECURITY



**OUR "CHAUFFEUR" SERVICE**  
VEHICLE FUEL &  
MAINTENANCE



**KEEPING UP WITH UPKEEP**



**A SELF-SUFFICIENT FUTURE**