

August 2017

ACH 
est 1924

AMARILLO CHILDREN'S HOME



He knows community is  (*greater than*) going it alone
BECAUSE OF YOU.

AmarilloChildrensHome.org

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

In 1923, Presbyterian minister Dr. R. Thomsen and some friends, including civic leaders Guy C. Saunders and Allen Early, Sr., were meeting for coffee at the Amarillo Hotel when they saw three children crying outside, orphaned and hungry. At this critical point, these men chose to act: to feed and clothe the children and find them proper care. As a result of the events on that fateful day, Amarillo Children's Home officially opened in March, 1924.

WHO WE ARE

- **WE SERVE** primarily children in the foster care and juvenile systems
- **AGES 5** through aftercare (college/young work force)
- **IN 7** family-style homes of up to 8 children with a set of houseparents
- **COMMUNITY** is at the heart of Amarillo Children's Home – from the beginning a product of this community, through our 93 years: you have poured in your time, heart, gifts and funds.
- **OUR FUNDING** comes primarily through community donations
2016 FISCAL YEAR: 81% community, 19% state
- **YOUR GIFTS ALLOW US TO BATTLE FOR OUR KIDS,** giving them much more than food and shelter
- **OUR SUCCESS** shows itself over time:
 - IN THE SHORT-TERM** as our kids realize their own worth and the value of others, they become leaders in their areas of influence and a blessing to the world around them
 - IN THE LONG TERM** as they form their own families and carry the values and truths they learned at Amarillo Children's Home into adulthood, creating generational change
- **WE ARE GRATEFUL** as we look to the future, knowing we can continue to trust you, our community, to include us in your story



Our self-assigned hydration specialist at Mission Week kept everyone's thirst at bay.

OUR MISSION

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

INFO & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mark Your Calendars for
Concert on the Court!
Thursday, September 21, 6:30-8
featuring the music of
Insufficient Funds

URGENT Prayer Request
Back to school can be a difficult time for our kids. Please pray peace and grace over our homes, our kids and our campus during this transition.

Be in the Know!
We always have a lot going on – and we'd like you to be a part! Follow us on Facebook to stay up to date on our events and happenings.



The Woods visiting us at Family Camp at El Porvenir.

A PROFILE OF GIVING.

Joe & Sandy Wood

A divine encounter. A blessed leap into awkwardness. A purpose that is > (greater than) as a result.

A BLESSED LEAP OF FAITH

In 2014, an impactful encounter with a couple of our kids caused Joe and Sandy Wood to decide they wanted to be a part of Amarillo Children's Home.

To learn the intriguing and heart-touching story of the encounter, visit bit.ly/blessedleap to read the extended version of this article.

Joe and Sandy Wood have spent the past three years growing into a relationship with ACH – attending events, visiting homes, serving on the board, even visiting us at camp. They represent a much needed demographic on campus – that of “grandparent.” The Woods don't have any grandchildren, but as Sandy exclaimed, “We do now! Forty or so!”

It hasn't been an easy venture. Both Joe and Sandy are most comfortable living quiet lives. Joe said, “One struggle has been simply the leap to get involved.” He also admitted, “It's rather awkward. We don't know how to handle them.” And Sandy confessed she almost dreaded the first time entering an ACH event. “I didn't know what to do or say, but the more you attend, the more you get familiar. The only way you can really get invested is to go to the

functions. The more you go, the more kids recognize you and say, ‘Hi.’ It doesn't happen overnight – you can't just pop in and immediately be involved. It takes time.”

Joe and Sandy have continued to walk into that awkwardness and bring to our kids the comfort and stability that people of their generation offer. “I'm convinced the whole thing was not a coincidence. The Holy Spirit gave us a shove and said, ‘Get out there and do something.’ When you get to our point in life, you realize there's got to be more than satisfying your own self and desires. There's no satisfaction in the latest ‘stuff’ – it's empty. But the kids aren't. It gives meaning to our lives – it's selfish in a way. We benefit more than the kids do... It's been very fulfilling.”

**WE
DO.**

Since 1924, we have been comprised of an amazing community of people who do. People like you, who see the need and give of their resources so this vital work can be accomplished.

I WILL RISE *story taken from an interview with one of our girls*

A LIFE-STEALING DISABLING FEAR OF HEIGHTS AND OF FAILURE THAT AFFLICTS HER WHOLE FAMILY.

8 YEARS OF LIVING AT ACH. 7 YEARS OF CLINGING TO FEAR.

“I couldn’t even get on top of a bunk bed... I got stuck on a rock during a hike... I was so scared, I was frozen. I tried the high ropes course once, but gave up. I never tried the climbing wall or the zip line. I thought I’d never overcome this fear. It was way too hard. It was way too strong.”

TIME AFTER TIME OF CONSISTENT ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FROM LOVING ADULTS, A SUMMER OF **STIR*** LEARNING ABOUT FREEDOM IN CHRIST AND HOW TO CONQUER DESTRUCTIVE THOUGHT PATTERNS, AND FINALLY REACHING THE POINT WHERE THE PIECES ALL FALL TOGETHER.

A DECISION:

“I prayed about why I had this fear and why I kept holding onto it. Deep in my heart I wanted to let it go... I decided I was going to try new things and get fear out of the way so I can work on other stuff I need to work on.”

A HIKE SHE NEVER WOULD HAVE TRIED BEFORE

She made it nearly to the top of the mountain accompanied and cheered on by several staff.

“I just kept pushing myself (*she never would have pushed herself before*). Darrin said, “Don’t look at the ground - look up and see all of God’s beauty. I did that, and I saw all of God’s creation.”

A CLIMBING WALL

She made it up 5 hand-holds! She kept going back and trying again and again, the adults and kids around her cheering every try and every inch of progress:

“I really wanted to conquer something, to be proud of myself. I realized as I start trying new things, I’ll try more. If I can’t conquer them, I’ll just keep trying. Before I was afraid to try because I might not succeed. Now I know that doesn’t mean I can’t try.”

A CAMP THEME TO COMPLEMENT STIR

“The KAA Camp theme really hit me: Phil 3:13, about not looking back, leaving the past behind and moving forward - praying to God because he’s with you the whole way and will guide you.”

A TRIP ON THE ZIP-LINE

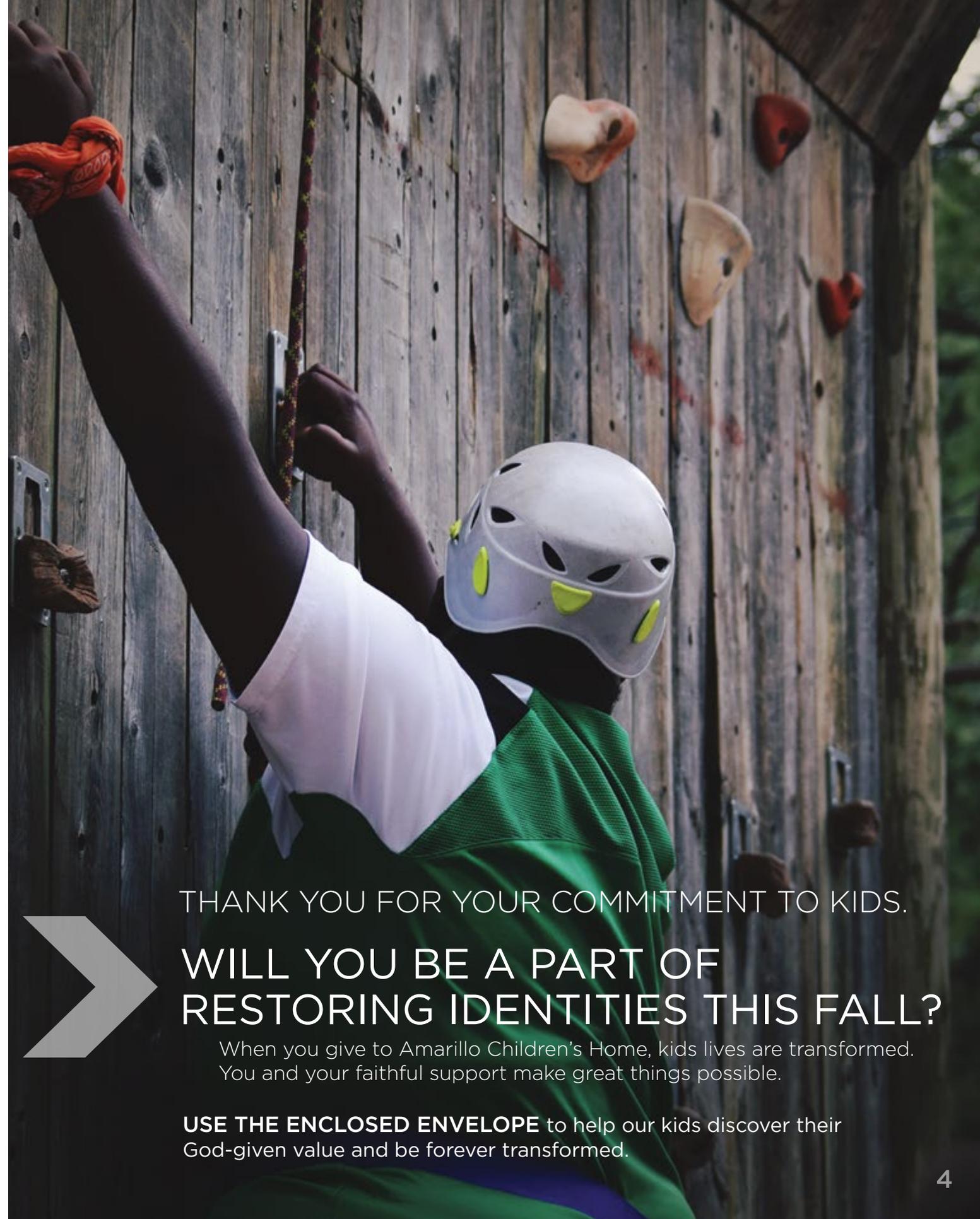
... followed by another and a complete traverse of the high ropes course!

“I went on the zip line backwards and upside down! I prayed first - I don’t even know what I said - probably just ‘God help me! God help me!’ The girl next to me was scared, **but I told her she could do it, that I was scared too.** Then I counted down and jumped. It was fun, so I went again! Since I conquered that - I went on the high ropes course.”

BEAUTIFULLY VICTORIOUS

*Our hearts are overflowing with pride over this girl. She is living more fully, not allowing fear to cause her to miss out on life. **BUT IT WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT YOU.***

With your help, she went to Family Camp and KAA, places of quick growth where these events occurred. Even more vital, **with your help,** she has been poured into by loving, committed adults who consistently work out our mission statement in the lives of our kids and set the stage for victory. **THANK YOU.**



THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO KIDS.

WILL YOU BE A PART OF RESTORING IDENTITIES THIS FALL?

When you give to Amarillo Children’s Home, kids lives are transformed. You and your faithful support make great things possible.

USE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE to help our kids discover their God-given value and be forever transformed.

You're shattered
Like you've never been before
The life you knew
In a thousand pieces on the floor
And words fall short in times like these
When this world drives you to your knees
You think you're never gonna get back
To the you that used to be.
Tell your heart to beat again
Close your eyes and breathe it in
Let the shadows fall away
Step into the light of grace
Yesterday's a closing door
You don't live there anymore
Say goodbye to where you've been
And tell your heart to beat again

“Tell Your Heart to Beat Again”

Danny Gokey

WE
BELIEVE.

Restoring a child's identity makes their story > their past.
Because of *your support*, we have the staff we need to teach our kids who they are and remind them when they forget.

“STEP INTO THE LIGHT OF GRACE”

To love a person is to see all of their magic and to remind them of it when they have forgotten.

- Unknown

She has lost all faith - the struggles of life make her angry and confused. Why is everything so hard? Why is her mother making bad decisions, and why is her brother following in the same footsteps? Why did her grandma have to die? Life is overwhelming, and she is drowning in depression.

She is listening to the radio, flipping through the stations, commercials on all of her favorites. She lands with a sigh on KLOVE, the only one with music, and begrudgingly lets it play. After a minute, she reaches to change the channel, but is stopped cold by the song that comes on, “Tell Your Heart to Beat Again”. It speaks her own story right to her.

She breaks down in tears knowing, KNOWING God is speaking to her in that song, and it is a statement of love. It gives her hope. She starts listening to KLOVE and singing along. She begins looking up verses from the songs and reads the Bible. *Singing connects her to God.*

Fast forward. She lives at ACH. *The rough times are not over.* Still, singing draws her deeper with God, lets out her emotions and makes her feel close to her family. It's a private, deeply personal activity.

She normally sings only in the bathroom or car, and those around her encourage her to sing more - she has a beautiful voice, they tell her. She has trouble believing it - people used to pick on her when she sang.

She is urged to join the worship team, but fear holds her back. She talks to several campus adults about her longing and her fear. Encouragement and expressions of value flow around her and wash over her.

Summer brings her first ACH Family Camp and talent night. She decides to perform the song God gave her. She's not singing for the audience, but to Him. When she's done, the crowd erupts, cheering. Her entire cottage practically tackles her on stage, so proud of her.

Talent night continues. During a technical difficulty, John, the MC, is floundering on stage - trying to sing “The Dock of the Bay” but only knowing one line. Classic Rock is her specialty, and she can't bear to see him struggle. When he asks her to join him, she doesn't hesitate. She can't leave him up there, all alone, fumbling through the song.

At camp, she decides to give her life to Christ. She confesses she no longer wants to hold on to pain and to things out of her control.

A week later, she auditions for the worship team, and will soon be singing before a larger audience, *for an audience of One.*

She's still struggling. She often feels... wrecked. *The rough times are not over.* Even so, she has hope, an outlet for her emotions, adults and kids who lift her up and faith in a God who demonstrates He cares. She keeps singing.



Want to hear this lovely girl sing the song God used to speak to her heart?
Go online to bit.ly/lightofgrace

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



This summer was full of kids bravely stepping out of their comfort to think about how their future can be different.

- Darrin Murphy

There is amazing power in the word “try”. The world focuses on and celebrates success and achievement; but its precursor is that chasm in our mind to move from can’t to the risk of initial effort. Trying begins with vision of what could be, and then requires facing the fears of what might happen, to finally the brave act of stepping out in faith hoping for a positive future outcome. It could be that this process of risk is more important than the result.

I am continually amazed at the try and “can do spirit” of our community. For 93 years our community has done what ever it takes to make sure the kids at the Amarillo Children’s Home are given the opportunity to try. This summer was full of kids bravely stepping out of their comfort to think about how their futures can be different. We have experienced lots of break-through moments and successes this summer, but more importantly we have had a summer of ordained efforts that will change the way kids engage their world forever.

These divine moments were due in part to the meaningful journey of lessons and events we took our kids on this summer – vital for the actual steps of change. But the foundation for risk has been laid all year long by the caring, consistent adults who have steadily poured into our kids and daily lived out our mission.

Thank you for being a vital part of both processes. Your “what-ever-it-takes spirit” and commitment is a great example to the kids of Amarillo Children's Home. You are helping *restore the identity of kids so they can realize their great value and become a blessing to others.*

Thanks for loving kids,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Darrin Murphy M.A.B.C.,
President of Amarillo Children’s Home

LIVES YOU HAVE TOUCHED

I had the great joy at Family Camp of hiking down the mountain with our victorious girl on page 3. As we walked, she shared with me her story – she has been at ACH over half of her life. She told about the anger she had dealt with, about adults who were influential in her life, about her interests and life goals. When we arrived back at camp, she said,

“THANK YOU FOR WALKING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WITH ME.”

In those words, I perceived more – in that moment of thanking me, she realized she had accomplished something big.

Her statement was really,

“THANK YOU FOR ENCOURAGING ME THROUGH THAT DIFFICULT EXPERIENCE AND HELPING ME PUSH MYSELF BEYOND WHAT I THOUGHT I COULD DO.”

I got to watch as the understanding dawned on her that she was changing and becoming more the person God made her. That’s what you do when you give to Amarillo Children’s Home: **YOU HELP KIDS GROW INTO WHO THEY WERE CREATED TO BE.** You change lives and transform futures. **THANK YOU.**