



Presbyterian Children's<sup>SM</sup>  
Homes and Services  
of Texas and Louisiana



Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services

# A PLACE TO GROW

2012 Annual Report

# Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services

## A PLACE TO GROW

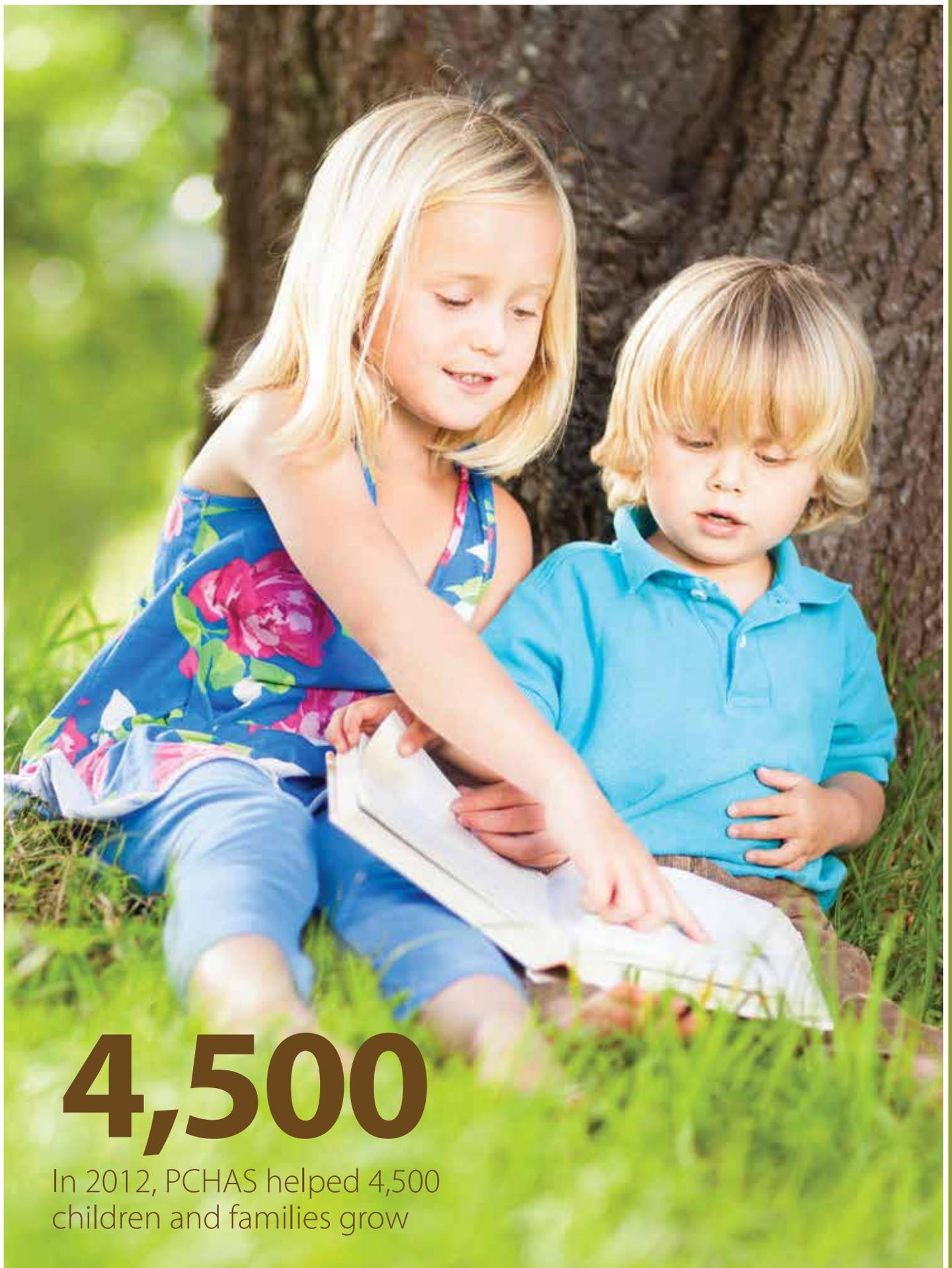
Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services traces its roots to 1903, when a mother who was dying from tuberculosis asked her minister to help her find someone to care for her four young children. The First Presbyterian Church of Dallas provided a loving home for these children, and over the past 110 years, our ministry has grown to meet the needs of today's children and families. We serve children who have suffered from abuse, neglect, abandonment or other crises, such as the death of a parent. Many times these children are homeless and literally living on the street.

Our six programs in Texas and Louisiana, which provided hope and healing to 4,500 children and families in 2012, are comprised of the following:

- Group Homes
- Single Parent Residential
- Foster Care
- Adoption
- Education
- Child and Family, a unique family preservation program

We are proud to hold the highest possible ranking bestowed by Charity Navigator and commit ourselves to continued excellence as responsible stewards of all gifts entrusted to our care.





# 4,500

In 2012, PCHAS helped 4,500 children and families grow

## a message from **OUR PRESIDENT**

Dear Friends:

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services is a place for children and families to grow—and our organization continues to grow right along with them. This year, Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services expanded our services; we now provide hope and healing to at-risk children and families in three states – Texas, Missouri and Louisiana.



*Ed Knight with children from PCHAS' Group Homes*

In January 2013, Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (of Texas and Louisiana) and Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (of Missouri), formed a two-agency network to serve 6,700 at-risk children and families.

A new Group Home for children, the Bradley Home, was dedicated on the Itasca campus in the spring. This state-of-the-art 6,000 square foot Group Home includes four bedrooms for eight children, guest quarters for visitors, and a three-bedroom apartment for the Home Parents. In addition, a guest house in Itasca is now available for church volunteers.

Plans are currently underway to expand our Single Parent Residential program to Houston in 2014. We've joined forces with HomeAid Houston, St. John's Presbyterian Church, Ryland Homes and Masa Studio to construct four duplexes which will provide residences for seven single mothers, their children, and a live-in case manager. Sadly, 25 percent of Harris County's children—nearly half of whom are under the age of five—live in households that are below the poverty line. Our program will provide a much-needed safety net for these struggling single mothers and their children.

These are just a few of Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services' latest initiatives that allow us to provide hope and healing to Texas, Missouri, and Louisiana's most vulnerable. None of this would be possible without generous donors like you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Knight". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed Knight, President



## a message from **OUR BOARD CHAIR**



*Bob Heselmeyer*

As you read through this annual report I hope you get a sense of the life-changing impact that Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services has on so many children and families. It is a joy and a blessing to see God at work through this organization.

The need is great. In 2012 there were 64,366 confirmed cases of child abuse in Texas. Sadly, these and countless other children and their families do not see themselves with a future of hope. Included in this annual report are success stories from clients and former clients in our six programs as well as donor and volunteer profiles that speak to the continued importance of our collective efforts to provide Christ-centered services.

Your involvement enables the caring and dedicated PCHAS staff to make a real difference in the lives of at-risk children and families. The Board of Trustees sincerely thanks you for your prayers, your time and your financial support.

*Robert Heselmeyer*

Robert Heselmeyer, Chair, Board of Trustees



# group homes

## A PLACE TO GROW UP

Providing residential, social, academic, and spiritual care for children in loving, family-style Group Homes

A juvenile probation officer reached out to Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services for help with a 13-year-old girl, Lucy, who simply refused to go to school. Lucy's mother's untreated mental illness made life very difficult for Lucy and her four younger siblings. When the school bus arrived to pick up the children, Lucy's mother would come out of the house and scream as the bus was leaving—with all the other students watching. At home, Lucy bore the brunt of her mother's verbal and physical abuse. Lucy attempted suicide five times. When she moved into one of our Group Homes, slowly but surely, Lucy began to heal, to open up and to grow more confident. At age 14, Lucy's Group Home family threw her a party—the first birthday party she'd had in her entire life. Sometimes the simplest expressions of love can make a big difference in a child's life.

**134** children were provided loving homes through our Group Homes in 2012.





# foster care

## **A PLACE TO GROW A FAMILY**

Carefully placing children and sibling groups into loving homes

Ten-month-old Linda came to her foster parents, Luke and Amanda, as an “emergency placement” from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Luke and Amanda were shocked when they met Linda for the first time. Linda was de-toxing from drugs in her system and was suffering from a series of medical problems, including yellowing eyes and a serious case of diaper rash. Linda is recovering quickly under the watchful eyes of Luke and Amanda, who love her very much; and Luke and Amanda are grateful to the Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services’ foster care team who they say provided excellent advice and emotional support.



**284** children found loving homes through our Foster Care program in 2012.





# adoption

## A PLACE TO GROW A “FOREVER FAMILY”

Carefully placing children into “forever homes”

After enduring four years of unsuccessful attempts at pregnancy, Chuck and Misty Williston had given up. As they began exploring the possibility of adoption, a family friend told them about Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services. When Chuck and Misty received a phone call from our ministry regarding a newborn baby boy in need of a “forever home,” they were thrilled. The moment they met him, they fell in love. One week later, they took their new son, Levi, home. Chuck and Misty are grateful for their Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services’ Adoption Services social worker who they say is “the biggest blessing.”

**17** children found “forever families” through our Adoption program in 2012.

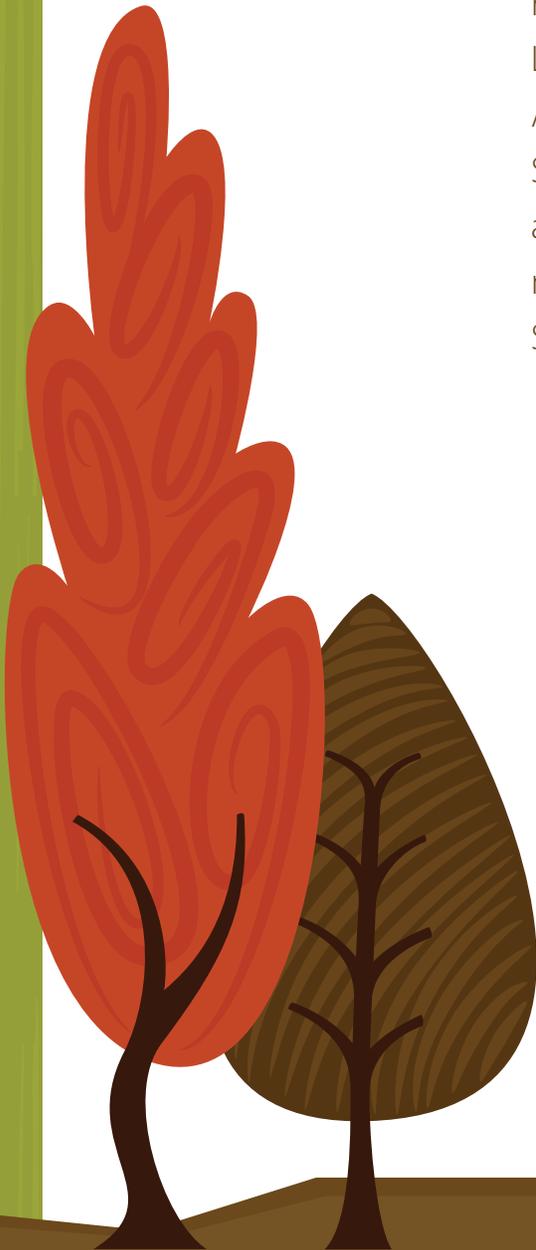


# child and family

## **A PLACE TO GROW HOPEFUL**

Preserving struggling families during times of crisis and long-term challenges

After their mother passed away, 22-year-old Meredith and her 18-year-old sister, Samantha, were forced to face yet another hardship: finding a way to support themselves and stay together as a family. Meredith had the added responsibility of serving as a mother figure to Samantha. Luckily, they were referred to our Child and Family program. A Child and Family Specialist helped Meredith get a job. Samantha enrolled in college, and the two of them were able to find a place to live and a car to get them where they needed to go. Above all, Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services gave Meredith and Samantha hope.



# 2,321

children and families were helped through our Child and Family program in 2012.



# single parent residential

## **A PLACE TO GROW SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

Providing residential care, parenting classes, and counseling to struggling single mothers and their children

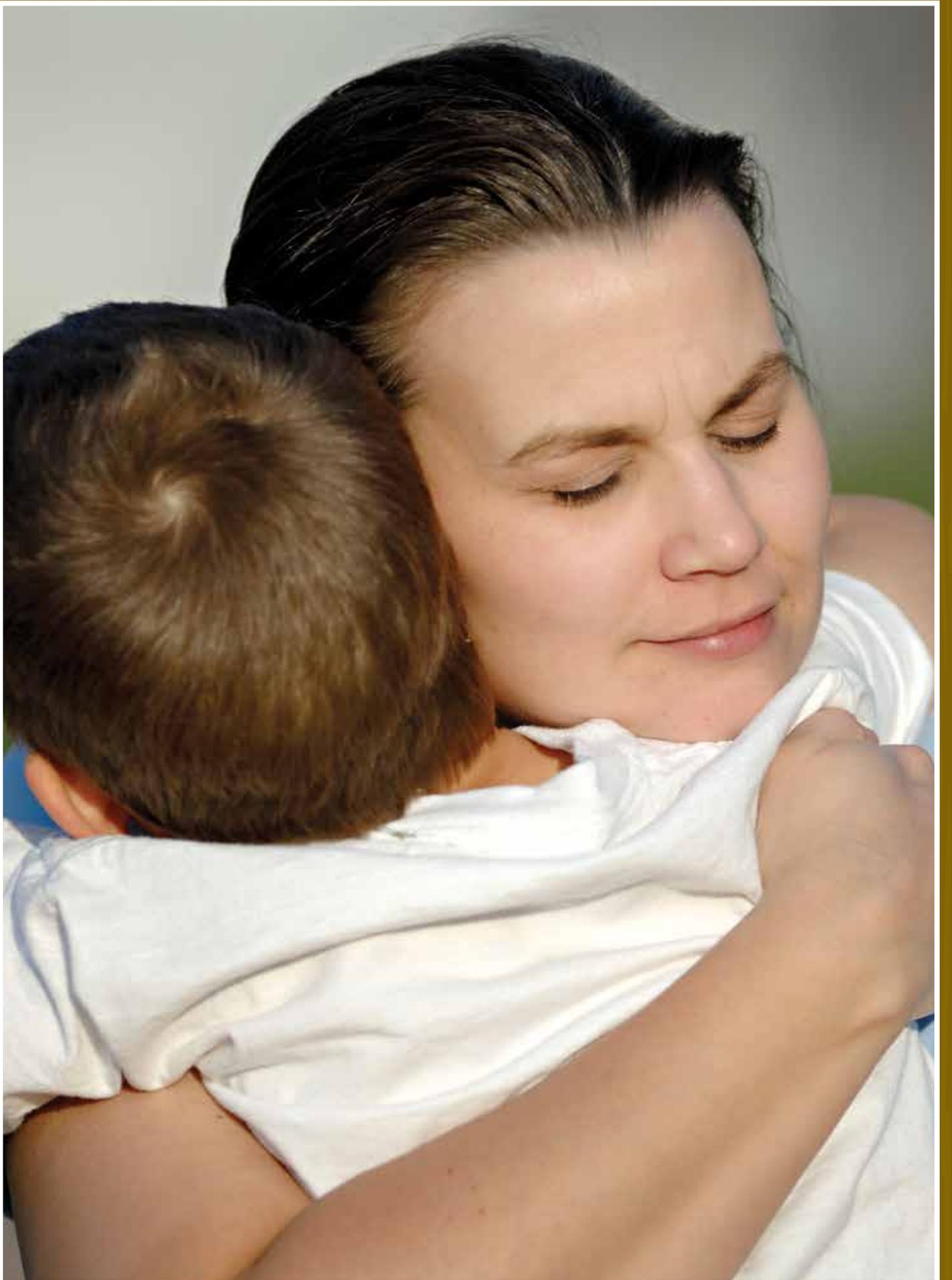
Throughout her young life, Nicole experienced abuse and battled depression, which resulted in frequent trips to her counselor. Thanks to Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services' Single Parent Residential program, she found a safe place for her and her son, Josh, to live. After several months in the PCHAS program, Nicole found a job. She is no longer depressed, and has grown as a young woman and mother.

She aspires to have a home of her own one day, with a backyard in which Josh can play. Nicole is well on her way to a life of independence and self-sufficiency.



# 91%

of the single mothers  
in our Single Parent  
Residential Program  
moved into their own  
apartments



# education

## A PLACE TO GROW BRIGHT FUTURES

Supporting the academic growth of children in our care

When they were children, Sarah and her twin brother suffered from abuse and neglect, but eventually found refuge at one of our PCHAS Group Homes. When she went to college, PCHAS paid her student loans. Later, when she needed another loan in order to complete her teacher certification coursework, PCHAS helped her again. Today, Sarah is an elementary school teacher and a Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services tutor. A gifted educator who relates well to students of all ages, Sarah says she is blessed to be able to share her knowledge as well as her life experiences with the children who need her most. She also says she is grateful for the opportunity to give back to PCHAS.

# 97

In 2012, the PCHAS education team served 97 students in PCHAS Group Homes. In addition, the team served 57 PCHAS Group Home "alumni" – students who are in college or trade school or who have returned for additional help and advice from the PCHAS team.







## learn more about our **GROUP HOMES**

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services operates 17 Group Homes throughout the state of Texas: in Austin, Itasca, San Antonio, and Waxahachie. Trained and caring staff members function as Home Parents who provide a nurturing environment for children to practice positive behaviors and healthy family relationships. Each family-style home serves up to eight children between the ages of five and 17.



Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services provides the children in its care with counseling to help them overcome the emotional trauma they have faced during their young lives. Our philosophy of care is guided by a family-centered, strength-focused and goal-driven approach that involves creating a unique life plan for (and in conjunction with) each child. Whenever possible, we involve each child's family in this process, and are sometimes able to reunite children with their families.



Children receive spiritual guidance and Christian nurture through prayer, Bible study and participation in the worship and life of local church congregations. They attend area schools and benefit from daily supervised study time and specialized tutoring as needed. Some of the children hold part-time jobs, others participate in extracurricular activities and many attend church camp.

We help them realize that with support and guidance they are capable of building brighter futures.

# learn more about our **FOSTER CARE PROGRAM**

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services' Foster Care program serves children in need of short-term or long-term placement outside of their birth families. These children reside in the private neighborhood homes of our trained and certified foster parents. They attend public school, receive spiritual guidance and Christian nurture, and benefit from individual and family counseling.

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services carefully screens, trains, and supports foster families. We closely match foster family characteristics with the unique needs of each child, giving placements a strong opportunity to be successful.

In Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services' foster-to-adopt program, a family is approved to be both a foster and adoptive family in the event that the birth parents' rights are terminated. Through our Fostering Connections program, we assist grandparents and other family members who find it necessary to become "parents" of their relatives, thereby helping these kinship families and the children receive state assistance.

Because some of our foster children experience social and emotional difficulties, developmental delays, learning problems, and behavioral challenges, our organization's multidisciplinary team of professionals creates an Individual Service Plan for each child. All plans incorporate input from the child, the child's managing conservator, the foster family, PCHAS staff, and others with responsibility for the child's development.





## learn more about our **ADOPTION PROGRAM**

From women experiencing unplanned pregnancies who may be considering creating an adoption plan for their child to families wishing to adopt a child of their own, Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services makes the adoption process easier for everyone involved. As part of our infant adoption program, PCHAS staff guide adoptive parents through a home study, the legal process, and train them so that they are prepared to bring a child into their homes and lives. PCHAS also provides counseling for birth mothers both during and after pregnancy as well as housing, medical care and food. Birth mothers who may require additional resources are referred to one of our Child and Family Specialists.



Although most of the adoptions we facilitate are open, in the past, the records were usually sealed. Fortunately, open adoptions allow adopted children to remain in contact with their birth parents and learn more about their family history, which is part of their overall identity. Adults who were adopted as children often seek our assistance in searching for and being reunited with their birth parents. Not only do we help locate birth parents, but we also provide counseling for all parties. Reunions can be a joyful experience, but they are fraught with emotion, so our caring social workers lend their support and help guide parents and children along the way.



Like the PCHAS Foster Care program, the PCHAS Adoption program team offers foster-to-adopt and Fostering Connections services. For more about foster-to-adopt and Fostering Connections, see the Foster Care program description, page 19.

# learn more about our **CHILD AND FAMILY PROGRAM**

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services' compassionate, skilled Child and Family Specialists serve parents seeking to better their lives and the lives of their children through comprehensive services that offer a continuum of care, including case management, crisis intervention, emotional support, and family therapy. The purpose of this unique family preservation program is to address issues before a crisis —such as the death of a parent, divorce, illness, homelessness— leads to a child's out-of-home placement. We work to keep children safe (our paramount concern), and keep families together whenever possible. We provide the preventative, in-home services and the support they need.

Our Child and Family program serves families requiring emotional support and guidance, single parents who need help raising their children on their own, grandparents raising grandchildren, families struggling with a child's difficult behavior, and anyone else who may benefit from the program. Our 21 master's-degree-level Child and Family Specialists (in 17 cities throughout Texas and in Shreveport, Louisiana) focus on each family's strengths while addressing their physical, emotional, social, educational, spiritual, and financial needs.





## learn more about our **SINGLE PARENT RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM**

Our Single Parent Residential program lends a helping hand to single mothers and their children who are homeless, or are at risk of becoming homeless, for a variety of reasons, including poverty, spousal abuse, divorce and abandonment. Each family's unique concerns and needs are addressed, with the ultimate goal that all families will become self-sufficient upon "graduating" from the program.

Employment assistance, child care and after-school care, individual counseling, and family therapy are provided. Single mothers can expect to learn about parenting, personal finance, nutrition, time management, and other important life skills.

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services operates two Single Parent Residential programs in North Texas. Plans are underway to expand the program in 2014 by building four duplexes in Houston which will provide residences for seven single mothers, their children, and a live-in case manager. We've joined forces with Houston's St. John's Presbyterian Church, HomeAid Houston, Ryland Homes, Masa Studio, and numerous donors to provide this much-needed safety net for struggling single mothers and their children.

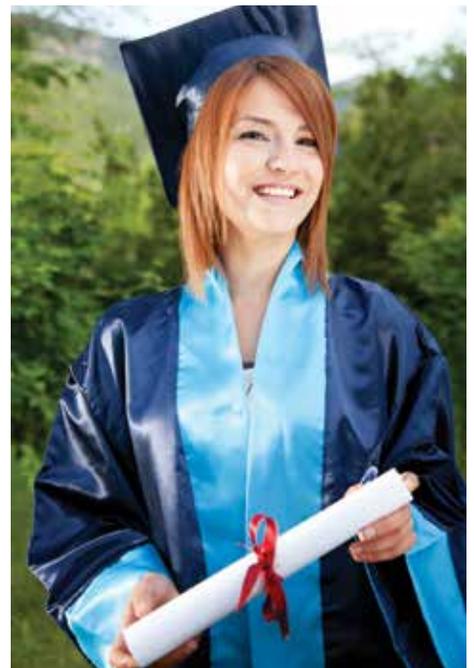
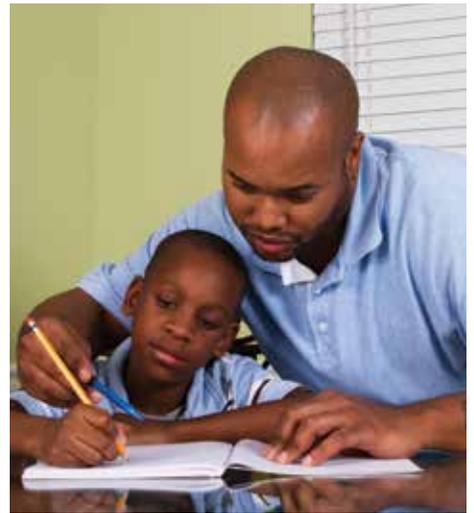


# learn more about our **EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Because most of the children who come to us have experienced some sort of trauma at home, many have also fallen through the cracks at school. In what we call an “intentional community of learning,” with a focus on each child’s unique needs and individual potential, our Education program team prepares them for continued success in college, careers, and life.

Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services offers tutoring, consultations, and service learning project opportunities for children and young adults served by our Group Homes, Foster Care, and Child and Family programs. The Education team also advocates for our children within the public school system—working with their schools’ teachers, counselors and principals to ensure that the children are provided with every opportunity to succeed.

Once children reach the age of 18, they “age out” of our Group Home and Foster Care programs. Our education program continues to embrace them as they seek admission to colleges and trade schools, apply for financial aid and scholarships and find housing. Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services supports the students financially as well. We pay for their room and board, tuition, textbooks and other school-related expenses.



“This is the day that the Lord  
has made; Let us **REJOICE**  
**AND BE GLAD IN IT**”

Psalm 118:24





Presbyterian Children's<sup>SM</sup>  
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