



2020

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020





MISSION

Impacting the lives of **children, youth, and families** by offering innovative, trauma-sensitive programs rooted in faith to **inspire positive change**.



VISION

Leading the change for a healthy child, family, and community.



VALUES

- **Accountability** – Achieve agency outcomes efficiently with fiscal responsibility and sustainability.
- **Cultural Sensitivity** – Recognize and integrate cultural differences.
- **Excellence** – Perform all work and services with exceptional standards.
- **Faith** – Commitment to nurturing the heart and soul of others.
- **Integrity** – Maintain high ethical standards with honesty and reliability.
- **Respect** – Honor the dignity and basic rights of all people.
- **Trauma-Sensitive** – Commitment to support and acknowledge how trauma affects self and others.



Dear Friends,

This year demonstrated the best in people. During the most challenging of times, it was the people who made the difference. We shared strength and discovered appreciation for our collective safety and well-being. Praise God.

In January, the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership organized the agency's strategic focus on legislative advocacy, assembling at the State Capitol for strategic planning and approval of new Mission and Vision statements and the addition of two agency values – Faith and Trauma-Sensitive. We felt these changes were timely and necessary to fully encompass the scope of the work being done in today's world. You will see those changes highlighted in this report.

The pandemic shutdown in March had a significant impact on our agency, as it did all agencies, businesses, and individuals. But I am thankful to say it did not interrupt our service delivery. Our Newton, Kansas campus closed immediately for the safety of youth and direct care staff, who diligently continued to provide on-site 24-hour services despite COVID19 conditions. Home-based visits, licensing and training shifted to a virtual work environment and all non-essential administrative staff worked remotely. The new business model brought challenges and opportunities. Resiliency, perseverance, and your support were essential and allowed us to continue to inspire positive change throughout the pandemic and today.

We do have "superheroes," as do the organizations we work alongside, who have made a commitment to supporting and serving others. I honor every EmberHope Youthville staff member, volunteer, board of director, donor, and friend who demonstrated dedication and commitment to impacting the lives of children and families during 2020.

I am deeply grateful for those who continue to express passion for the mission with charitable gifts, and those who step forward for the first time to join our efforts to lead change for children, families, and communities.



Nickaila Sandate
President and CEO
EmberHope Youthville



EmberHope
YOUTHVILLE



CALLED TO SERVE

Local churches are a huge part of EmberHope Youthville's mission to inspire change and impact lives, and the blessings are mutual for both our organization and the churches involved. One such church, First United Methodist Church (UMC) in Dodge City, has partnered with EmberHope Youthville for more than 80 years.

Reverend Jerre Nolte, who's served the congregation since 2015, tells us his personal experience began when church members created over 150 prayer cards that year for the children at EmberHope Youthville. "We went out to see the cards stapled to the bulletin board at EmberHope Youthville, and the students would look for their names to see if someone was praying for them," he says. Although the campus is now closed, we have found new ways the church can stay connected with EmberHope Youthville's mission by providing office space to their Functional Family Therapist program serving families in the Dodge City area.

"Christmas is also a special time to connect with foster families," Rev. Nolte says. "We have a tree in the narthex of the church with the names of eight to ten foster children, which provides a really strong connection." In addition, First UMC continues to brainstorm new ideas for ongoing support. "We'd like to utilize space in the church for collecting donated items," Rev. Nolte says.

Serving EmberHope Youthville has been a blessing to the congregation as well, Rev. Nolte tells us. "We've had several church members serve on the board of EmberHope Youthville," he says. "They always come back energized and full of ideas for how the church can be more engaged and involved." He encourages any interested church to be creative and look for ways to connect. "It can be as simple as providing a room for a therapist to use or giving gifts at Christmas time. There's always something a church can do to help."

SCRIPTURE



Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." – 1 Peter 4:10

STATEMENT OF FAITH

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe through open hearts, open minds, and open doors, active engagement is carried out in our thoughts, our words, and our deeds.
- We believe in placing our emphasis on Christian living, on putting faith and love into action.
- We believe in modeling faithful steps to live more fully what it means to be a Christian and commit to the inclusion of all.
- We believe in supporting the accountability in relationships, responsibilities, and spiritual partnerships.
- We believe with God's grace; we joyfully live out our connection to our mission by serving those in need.

A LIFE FOREVER CHANGED

While most people think of babies and toddlers when the words "foster child" come to mind, many older children and teens need care. And as Sheli, an EmberHope Youthville foster parent, and her former foster son, Derrick, can prove, even a short time with a loving foster family can greatly impact youth in crisis.

"Derrick came to us when he was seventeen and a half," Sheli tells us. His upbringing had been riddled with difficulty, as both parents were incarcerated. "We provided a safe environment, established boundaries, and set him up for success," Sheli says. "Like any teenager, he tested those boundaries from time to time, but he was very respectful and funny. There were issues along the way, but we worked through them together." Sheli says the whole extended family got involved with his care.

"Being a foster parent is not always easy; however, I can say with certainty that it has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had," said Sheli. "I've gained just as much from the foster kids I've had in my home as what I've provided them." Sheli continued saying how foster parenting provided her daughter with exposure to sharing, problem-solving, discipline, honesty, and learning about new cultures.

Derrick, determined for a better future, joined the United States Coast Guard (USCG), and Sheli and her sister were thrilled to travel to New Jersey for his graduation ceremony.



When I landed in Sheli's foster home, it allowed me the opportunity to be a kid and not worry about the pressure of where I would live or how I would continue high school," said Derrick.

Now married and with three children of his own, Derrick served in the Coast Guard for eleven years and is currently pursuing a career in Physical Therapy. "We try to connect around birthdays or when we're close by," said Derrick. "I am so thankful for the care and support of Sheli and her family. Life would look much different if I didn't have their guidance and support."

As the child welfare system bursts at the seams with a record-breaking number of children, the need for foster parents like Sheli is more significant than ever before. At EmberHope Youthville, we are grateful for all of our foster parents, who play a critical role in providing the care and support for youth like Derrick, so they can create a brighter future.



INSPIRING STUDENT GROWTH & BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE



Education is a powerful way to impact lives and inspire positive change, but a traditional school model doesn't always meet the needs of children and youth in crisis. That's where Opportunity Academy comes in. Its unique setting and individualized approach are helping kids accomplish their goals and equipping them for healthy, productive adult lives.

Comprised of students in grades 7-12 from the EmberHope Youthville residential campus and the Newton USD 373 community, Opportunity Academy serves kids through a trauma-informed environment centered around positive reinforcement rather than punitive consequences.

As we build toward the future, we recognize that we have an educational team that provides innovative learning experiences for some of the most challenging youth to teach, and it is time for an updated facility for this program.

"Our focus is on growth, improvement, and substitution of positive behaviors for negative ones," says Opportunity Academy principal Tyler Swalley. "This helps us send off the kids in a better place than they were when they came in, and with an enhanced facility, we could do even more."

Opportunity Academy's current innovation extends to the classroom itself, where the school offers flexible seating. Instead of a traditional desks-in-rows model, students have the freedom to stand, sit in a variety of arrangements, or even lie on the ground. Also, rather than changing classes and teachers throughout the day, students at Opportunity Academy remain in the same room with the same

teacher. "We've found this consistency allows the kids to bond to the teacher and each other, becoming a small family group," Swalley tells us. "Rather than having to recalibrate between subjects, the students receive consistent expectations, which helps reduce their anxiety."

Swalley has just completed his second year as principal of Opportunity Academy and is looking forward to updating the school for the students. He previously taught at Newton High School, but he found Opportunity Academy a perfect fit for his interests in both education and fostering upon finishing his administration degree. He and his wife, Jessica, have three children who were adopted through foster care. "We became licensed foster parents in 2018, and when we heard EmberHope Youthville was partnering with Opportunity Academy, it was the perfect fit," Swalley says. "Our staff is dedicated to showing every student that they can learn and be successful and helping each find that avenue for growth."

"We are thrilled by the positive results the Opportunity Academy is having on at-risk youth in our community," said Lisa Capps, Chief Advancement Officer. "You can inspire change and create a different future for underserved youth with your financial support of this innovative program."

For more information on how you can help, connect with our development team at info@emberhope.org or call us at 1.855.260.hope.

A LEGACY OF FAITHFUL GIVING

At EmberHope Youthville, we always love hearing stories of how our partners discover our mission. For one donor, Karen Buhler, her mother's connection with EmberHope Youthville (then known as Youthville) inspired Karen to become involved.

"My parents were married in 1937, and my mother, Wynona Turner Grizzell, went from a small town with electricity and running water to a farm with neither," Karen explains. Farm life proved difficult and finances unpredictable, but Wynona still contributed to Claflin United Methodist Church and Youthville as frequently as possible. Wynona's faithful support inspired Karen. "Because of my mother's respect for and trust in Youthville, I became interested in it," she says.

Karen was soon asked to become an EmberHope Youthville Ambassador, and she quickly agreed. "It was a chance for me to learn more about EmberHope Youthville, and a trip with a church group to the Newton campus made it all come alive," she says. "We visited the school that was in session that day and heard from some of the older students about their experiences, hopes, and dreams."

Seeing the campus for the first time changed Karen's life. "I think we all came back with admiration and respect for the personnel who were leading and guiding the children," she says. "One member of our group got home and started making lap robes from jeans. She and I took a group of them to the campus when she had several completed."

Karen's legacy of faithful giving has benefited not only the children and families of EmberHope Youthville but she's reaped the rewards as well. Probably the gift I give with the most pride is when I send honorariums in the name of somebody I think will appreciate it," she says. "Even



more exciting for me is when I hear that somebody I know has given an honorarium in my name!"

Our team at EmberHope Youthville is so grateful for Wynona's and Karen's faithful support, and we are honored by their legacy that will have ripple effects for generations to come.

FY20: BY THE NUMBERS

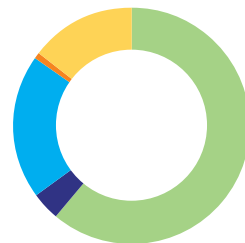
DEMOGRAPHICS

Race

Texas Foster Care



Kansas Foster Care



Gender

Texas Foster Care



Female: 19 Male: 16 Transgender: 0 Total: 35

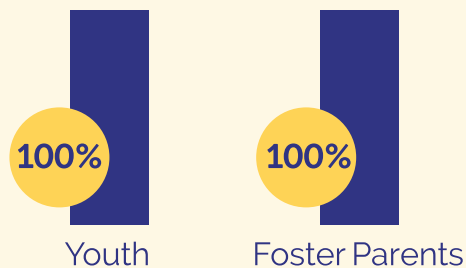
Kansas Foster Care



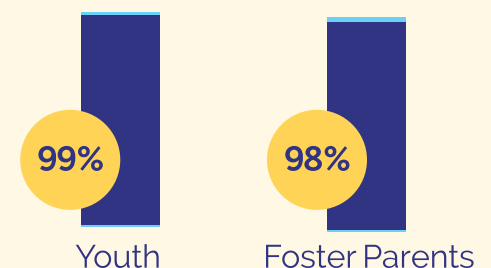
Female: 308 Male: 272 Transgender: 5 Total: 585

SERVICE SATISFACTION

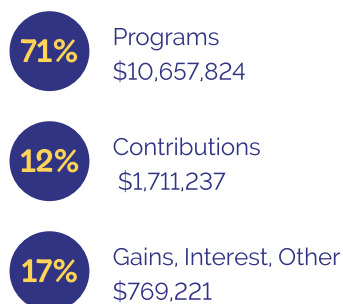
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Kansas Foster Care

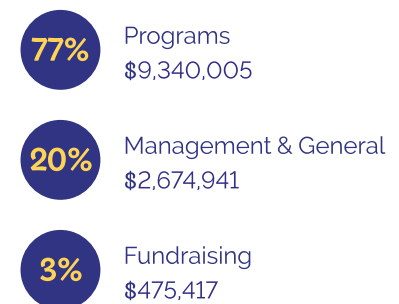


REVENUE



Total Revenue: \$13,138,282

EXPENSES



Total Expenses: \$12,490,363

Visit emberhope.org to download a full version of our 990 tax form.

PROGRAM & PERSON-CENTERED PHILOSOPHY



The foundation of our service is trauma informed care designed to meet every client at their level of need. Persons served will provide the primary direction in guiding their services and developing their plan of care. Service is founded on the following principles:

- Services must be driven by the client.
- Services are individualized based on strengths and vulnerabilities.
- Services are delivered in a manner that reflects personal preferences and choices.
- Services are provided within the context of nurturing relationships.
- Services includes parents, caregivers, and other significant adults in a child's life,
- Services are developmentally, culturally, and spiritually relevant to the child and their family.

EmberHope Youthville respects the youth we serve and their families and caregivers. Our goal is to protect the rights of our clients. We will provide care in a manner respectful of personal values and beliefs and sensitive to cultural, racial, religious and other differences. We will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.



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