



this little
light



Alabama Baptist
CHILDREN'S HOMES
& Family Ministries

Annual Report 2015

contents

- 1** FROM OUR PRESIDENT
This Little Light
- 2** BIRMINGHAM
My Itty-Bitty Journey
- 4** DECATUR
Caring in Crisis:
Illuminating Lives
- 6** MOBILE
Twon's Story:
Shining in the Concrete Jungle
- 8** OXFORD
From Oxford to Birmingham:
Blazing Trails and Rails
- 10** DOTHAN
A Light Unto Our Paths:
The Journey to Home
- 12** PATHWAYS
Jesus Loves the Little Children
- 14** CAMP OF CHAMPIONS
Summer Rays of Fun!
- 16** EVENTS // VOLUNTEERS
Sparking Hope for Children & Families
- 18** FINANCIAL INFORMATION
A Bright Future
- 20** LEADERSHIP
Lighting the Way



FROM OUR PRESIDENT



DEAR friends of ABCH

In a culture that values the large—jumbo popcorn at the movies, value-sized meals, big houses, and big sports arenas to name a few—somewhere along the line, we decided that if average is good, then big must be great! But what about the importance of the little?

In Mark 12:41–44, Jesus praises the **small gift** of a widow who gave sacrificially. In Mark 6:41, Jesus feeds thousands with the **small gift** of a little boy who had two fish and five loaves. In Matthew 5:14–16, Jesus tells us to “let our lights shine” so that our **little light** may be seen like a city on a hilltop.

Amidst the tyranny of the large, perhaps the sweetest truth lies in the small. Have you ever seen a really big man holding a newborn baby? The big man may be impressive, but the baby will capture all of your attention! Many times, we need to make sure the large does not distract our attention, causing us to miss the miracles of small things.

This Annual Report is special. On February 14, 2016, the Children’s Homes officially celebrated its 125th anniversary. That is **BIG!** We estimate that we have served over 30,000 children in the last 125 years. Many have gone on to accomplish great things. Pastors, doctors, pharmacists, educators, great parents and spectacular grandparents are among the many roles of our alumni. But, I would suggest that like the newborn baby in the hands of the giant, it is the little things that should capture our attention.

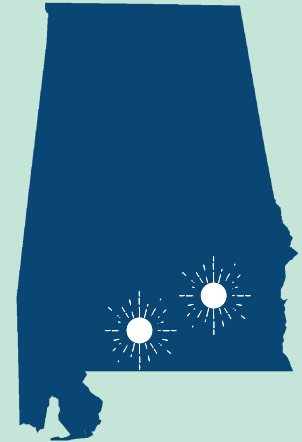
Between the big things that your support helps us do for our kids in efforts to make their childhoods as rich as possible—trips to the beach or to the mountains, international and domestic mission trips, academic and extracurricular activities that at one time would have been out of reach, but are now woven into the fabric of their lives—lies the small. And it’s in these everyday, small things that we often see the most precious miracles . . . consistent schedules, assigned chores, warm and nutritious meals, bedtime stories, family devotionals, driving lessons, inside jokes, the routines of being in a family . . . all working together to create a blank canvas upon which the miraculous can be displayed.

As you read through our Annual Report, read between the lines. See the small hiding out right beside the extraordinary and you may discover that many times, it is in the ordinary that an extraordinary God shows us all He is able to do. Be encouraged to let *your* little light shine in all you do!

Sincerely,

ROD MARSHALL
President/CEO

ABCH
littlelights



3 ORPHANS are taken into our care in 1893

FROM THESE THREE LITTLE LIGHTS that first walked into our doors in EVERGREEN, Alabama, the Lord has grown our ministry to provide care to over 30,000 children and families.

PART OF THAT GROWTH involved moving the ministry to TROY, Alabama, where we served children and families for 74 years. Today, our statewide ministries allow us to impact even more families for His sake.

THIS IS JUST A SNIPPET of how our ministry started. In the years that followed these early establishments, much growth would take place across the state, as you’ll see illustrated by the little lights added in the following pages, in the order they came.

THESE PAGES ALSO INCLUDE highlights from this past year about the children in our care and other notable things that have happened on our campuses that we’re just excited to share!



my itty-bitty
Journey

Marissa is an ABCH foster mom who experienced a rare, and truly life-changing event. Her “itty-bitty,” as she often refers to her infant, stopped breathing while in her care, but was quickly resuscitated. We hope you will be encouraged by this story of sacrifice, love, commitment, and trust, from Marissa . . .

I got the call about Baby Girl from my social worker on the last day of teaching school this past May, "I'm calling to see if you're interested in taking care of a two-month old," she said. At first, I thought two months sounded just right for me, until I heard she had never left the hospital because she was a preemie. I thought it over and determined that yes, I would like to take this one! This wasn't my first foster care placement, but it was the first baby I'd have in my home.

When I walked in her room, I saw this tiny little bundle all alone in a dark, quiet hospital room, and my heart melted. She was miniature-sized perfection. She was only 4 pounds and had her feeding tube removed just two days before. Over the course of the next five days, I visited often and fed her bottles. Since bottles were new to her, it was a difficult task!

I also noticed several times that her monitors would scream at me and the nurse would come in and pat her back. I wasn't sure what was happening, but found out, she was desating, often shortened to DSAT (her oxygen saturation was dropping below normal levels because she was not breathing regularly). I learned about the reflex most babies develop called "suck, swallow, breathe." Baby Girl hadn't quite mastered that! By Thursday, she was no longer desating and so they let me take her home.

For those reading who don't know me, I am a single girl with MUCH babysitting and nannying experience, but taking care of a preemie was new. Getting home, I took comfort in the fact that I'm never totally alone with Christ at my side and with the amazing people and resources He has placed in my life! I remember feeling so thankful for my foster care training with ABCH and for the support of friends!

The day after we got home, things were going good until I was feeding her the afternoon bottle. She quit sucking and dropped her head slightly

(which I recognized as a sign of DSAT). I immediately did the things the nurses had done to get her breathing again when I noticed she was turning blue around the mouth.

I knew I had to take action quickly. I flipped her on her back and began administering CPR. My training received during the foster care approval process came back crystal clear and with two rounds of CPR, she took a big breath in and coughed! She cried for a minute and settled down!

I took her to the ER where we were re-admitted to the NICU and received extensive training on how to best feed her. We learned that even though we were using preemie bottles and nipples, she was still taking in too much and getting overwhelmed at the flow. They sent us home with bottles made for ultra-preemies, which was great!

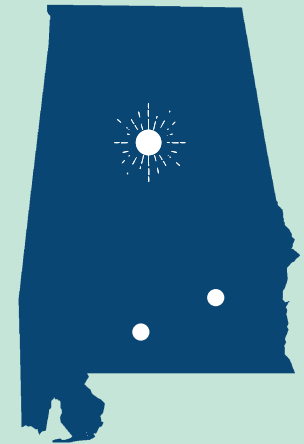
The next months were long and a little nerve-racking, but were also such a blessing. Trauma will bond people if they make it out to the other side together, and this girl and I . . . we are bonded! She is mine as long as the Lord wills, but as we often must in foster care, I know I have to hold her in an open hand, trusting God for her future . . . and for mine too.

Edited for space. Read the full story on alabamachild.org/marissa.



Marissa and her "itty-bitty"

BIRMINGHAM highlights



- 1 of our boys who is 15 years old was struggling in school but has now made the A/B HONOR ROLL
- 2 foster children took their first plane rides for various FOSTER FAMILY TRIPS
- 1 girl takes GYMNASTICS on a weekly basis
- 1 family finalized their THIRD ADOPTION through ABCH
- 1 NEW EVENT for our families and community was held in the spring, Party at the Parks
- 7 moms graduated from our FAMILY CARE PROGRAM

A sibling group of 3 was REUNITED in one of our foster homes after being separated for a year.

Two of our children have been DISCHARGED FROM EARLY INTERVENTION programs because they have done so well catching up developmentally, that services are no longer needed to help them.

SERVICES at a glance

- Foster Care*
- Family Care
- Pathways Professional Counseling*
- College/Transitional Care
- Educational seminars on Child & Family issues*

*These services are also provided through our nearby Montgomery office.



CARING IN CRISIS:

Illuminating

Lives

It's hard to imagine. It's 2:30 a.m. You're seven years old, and it's suddenly not safe for you to be with your own family. There is nowhere familiar for you to go. You find yourself perhaps with only a toothbrush and pajamas, or maybe with a small bag of clothes. You've likely been driven from place to place, and finally find yourself at a home with people you have never met . . .

That may sound like something that happens in another country or some place far off. But it is happening to children right here in our state.

At ABCH, we have two Shelter Care homes for just this kind of situation, with amazing house parents whose lights shine brightly as they welcome these children in as their own.

Daniel and Melanie Lee have been the house parents of this home in Decatur for about two years. They have embraced the calling to step into a role that allows for kids in these circumstances to experience stability and structure within their home until a more permanent solution can be found. Their life as parents may have its differences from that of a conventional household, but in a lot of ways, it's really pretty similar.

"While there are certain things we have to get done, certain ways we have to conduct ourselves, we do fun things too. We go out to eat, we goof off in the living room, we have family devotions, and we play outside. We are like every family. We just drive a bigger vehicle, and we have more kids," Daniel said with a laugh. "There are problems too, just like in any other family. We're trying to grow children in the Lord, trying to grow children in the knowledge of Jesus, but also grow children in society. We worry about children's futures and what to have for supper. We run just like every other family, just on a bigger scale."

But while they do run like every other family, Daniel sheds light on the unique parts of being a parent in a house like this. "We have counseling appointments, phone calls to birth parents, visits with birth parents. We probably have a lot more structure, especially during the school year, than your average family. But that's because we HAVE to have it to get those check marks marked. You have to (allow for structure), or it will get crazy quickly."

The stability and structure can be a big adjustment for many of the kids. It was even an adjustment for Daniel when he started parenting kids in crisis situations. But investing in lives in this way is reaping great joy for many. Children come in with trust issues because they didn't have time to develop that when they were younger, even as babies. They leave the Lee home though, knowing they were cared for.

As Daniel says, "It's all about showing Jesus. Of course we want to keep them safe as well. But it's all about showing Jesus. We desperately need prayers. We covet your prayers," Daniel said. "This is your ministry," he added, referring to the people and churches that support ABCH. "We're just the carpenters, the workmen. You give us the tools to tear down the walls, through prayer and giving and clothes. It's a great ministry. It's the best thing I've ever been a part of."

Read this story in full at alabamachild.org/caringincrisis.



The Lee family

DECATUR highlights



- 17** children won **ACADEMIC AWARDS**
- 9** children participated in varsity and/or freshmen **ATHLETICS**
- 1** senior led as a peer instructor at his **CHURCH**
- 64** **CHURCHES AND GROUPS** our team spoke to or directly engaged
- 4** **RENOVATIONS** completed of all cottage kitchens and the staff house kitchen, largely through donated labor and materials
- 1** college student made the **DEAN'S LIST**
- 5** students were enrolled in **COLLEGE OR TRADE SCHOOL**
- 2,000** attendees at **OPEN HOUSE** (approximately)
- 1** senior won a **SCHOLARSHIP** for "Character, Commitment, and Class" from his high school

SERVICES at a glance

- Campus Care
- Shelter Care
- Foster Care
- College/Transitional Care
- Pathways Professional Counseling
- Educational seminars on Child & Family issues



Twon's Story

shining in the
concrete jungle

Twon Mai was a neglected 9-year old when the Lord directed his path to the Children's Homes. He came from a broken home with a mentally unstable mother who separated from his dad before Twon ever had any real memories of him. His mother moved them from California to Mobile on a Greyhound bus, where they first found shelter in a motel for a few days.

From Twon's perspective, he thought his life was pretty normal . . .

I was raised up to be a missionary, and my story is not over. The legacy ABCH passed on to me, I want to pass on to other people.

I didn't think anything of it. After the motel, we ended up in a small shed in the Alabama Village. I didn't know how to shower. I never brushed my teeth. I never took care of myself. I was always out on my bike and am surprised I didn't get killed or involved with drugs.

I guess people started to take notice of my condition because one day I got home from riding my bike to find a cop car waiting to take me and my brother and sister from our home. I didn't understand. I loved my mom dearly. I was bawling. I don't know that I even believed in God back then, but I remember praying, 'Why? Why me? Why is this going on?'

I remember stopping at this house, the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes. I met Mr. JR and Ms. Diane—the Robinsons, and it was the first time I felt the tangible love of Christ. They gave me new clothes and taught me how to take care of myself for the first time. On that first day, I learned how to shower and brush my teeth. I realized that what I had thought was normal, was not.

They made me feel welcome and part of the family right away. There were challenges of course, but through that hard time, they loved me. They made me smile and laugh through the pain, and I needed that. At ABCH, they always did the best they could to give you the best life possible. And it was there that I first heard the Gospel and eventually accepted Christ.

Living at ABCH influenced my passion for building relationships and made me more extroverted. It helped me

to understand no one is perfect and to believe in people. The Children's Home was vital in my life because I'm definitely not a self-made man—I'm a God-made man. He provided to me the Children's Home, his church to really pour into me, and a great city like Mobile to be involved in and serve.

I went on to graduate from the University of Mobile with a degree in theology, and this year, I'm transitioning to New York City to do church planting with the Dream Center. They're going to train me in how to be an urban missionary. If it wasn't for the Children's Homes providing me with a stable home and a college education, I know nothing about this move would be happening. But now I'm going to share the Gospel with the nations because all the nations are in New York City!

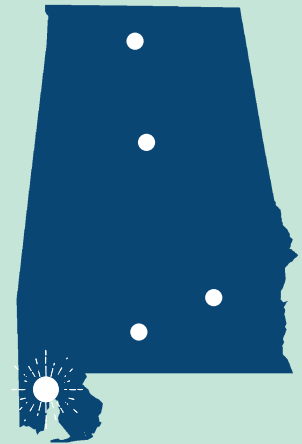
I was raised up to be a missionary, and my story is not over. The legacy ABCH passed onto me, I want to pass to other people. God's done a lot of great things in my life, but I'm believing even greater things in the next chapter."

To hear more of Twon's story, view his video at alabamachild125.org/videos.



Filming Twon's video in Mobile

MOBILE highlights



- 2** boys are regularly on the A/B HONOR ROLL
- 2** students made the all A HONOR ROLL
- 4** girls are provided WEEKLY LESSONS in ballet, tap, and jazz from a local dance school
- 2** boys participated in STUDENT COUNCIL, RUNNING CLUB, and GARDEN CLUB
- 2** students are in COLLEGE at the University of South Alabama
- 1** girl, age 14, is very vocal about her FAITH in God and SHARES the Gospel openly
- 16** NEW FOSTER CARE HOMES were added

Land for our Family Care program was cleared for purchase and it is expected that we'll close and break ground in 2016.

SERVICES at a glance

- Campus Care
- Foster Care
- Family Care
- College/Transitional Care
- Pathways Professional Counseling
- Educational seminars on Child & Family issues

On the morning of May 1, 2015, little boys at the Friendship House in Oxford were up bright and early making “choo-choo” sounds (complete with the up-and-down arm motion), in anticipation of a daylong adventure waiting to unfold!

FROM OXFORD TO BIRMINGHAM

Blazing trails and rails



W

With a desire to love on our kids in a really fun and creative way, ABCH Area Director of Northeast Alabama Ted Embry shared an idea with members of the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama to help our children in Oxford. Ted shared with them about a new ABCH event being hosted in Birmingham, Party at the Parks, and a way he hoped to build on that event to create a wonderfully unforgettable day for these children who have endured so much pain in their short lives.

To get to the event, Ted suggested they start by rail, by taking an Amtrak train into Birmingham. To add an educational component to the day, the next stop would be at the McWane Science Center. Afterwards, the group would head to Railroad Park for outdoor fun, then end the day at Regions Field watching the home team hopefully end *their* day with as big a victory as the one he hoped this day would be for these kids.

Upon hearing Ted's vision and passion, board members were immediately excited to help, with one exclaiming, "Yes! I really like that!"

After all was approved and shared with staff, the children learned about it, and as the anticipation built, they got more and more excited.

Ted shares, "There was so much rolled into that day, it's hard to imagine that so much could be accomplished in just one day. The McWane Center is rich with mystery, learning, technology, excitement, and challenge, so our children got to test their strengths or agility. They explored worlds that they may or may not have imagined before, all with the security of being surrounded by Christian parents who love, care, and nurture them.

When we got to Railroad Park, our children shrieked with joy, running from one place to another. It captures the imagination of every child, to have the opportunity to just play and have fun at the park with nothing to

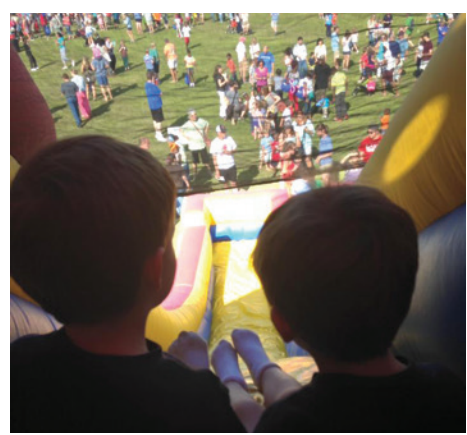
do except enjoy it! And then to end that day seated in the bleachers of the stadium and watch the Barons play . . . it just felt like we were tying a bow on top of a perfect day."

When these children made it back home, their sweet faces were dotted with red and blue circles from snow cones enjoyed at Railroad Park, proudly wearing the proof of their grand adventure.

"Our children had an amazing time, and we are so grateful to help give them this wonderful memory that we hope they will never forget."

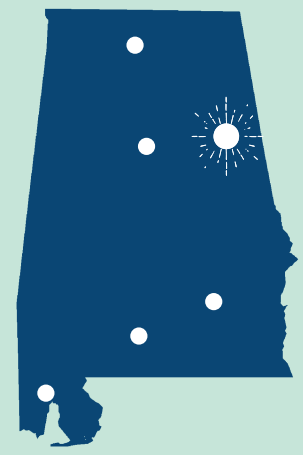
To think these activities would just be about having fun in the immediate present wouldn't be accurate. Ted thinks about the potential reach of all they do for their children and shares, "I love to do stuff with our children that may refresh the memory of being in our care. Years from now, stopping at a train track, some will remember this day. And it will be a good memory for them."

The funding to attend "Party at the Parks" for the Oxford campus of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes was made possible by a grant from a generous supporter of the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama who wishes to remain anonymous. Ted shares, on behalf of his team and children, how much they appreciate the goodness of that gesture. "They will never see these children or know them directly, but their kindness to them will long be felt."



Two children on the slide at Railroad Park

OXFORD highlights



- 1** mother graduated from the FAMILY CARE PROGRAM
- 1** FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT, Oxfordfest: staff and volunteers shared our work with the community amid thousands in attendance
- 2** girls got to "BUILD-A-BEAR" for the first time
- 1** BRIDGE BUILT: A missions team of men and boys built a bridge from our Administration Building to our Family Care home
- 2** SPECIAL DINNER GUESTS: After discovering some of our children felt a fear of policemen, relief house parents invited two officers over for dinner. Tentative at first, the children soon relaxed and began to ask the officers questions. After they left, the children's perspective had changed from fear and anxiety to, "They want to keep us safe."

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE
attendance was higher than ever!

SERVICES at a glance

- Family Care
- Shelter Care
- Foster Care
- Pathways Professional Counseling
- Educational seminars on Child & Family issues

A LIGHT UNTO
OUR PATHS

the journey to *home*

Every child deserves a place to call HOME. Sometimes, this journey takes both parents and children on paths they wouldn't have fathomed, or even desired. However, the Lord in His great love reveals His grace and sovereignty to us as we continue to follow and trust Him. All across the state, ABCH foster homes are filled daily with children in need of good homes. And while adoptions are rare through fostering, in Dothan this year, two of those foster families became forever families . . .



THE WILHOITS – by *Melissa Wilhoit*

My husband Josh and I were high school sweethearts. I remember when we were newly married, all I wanted was a house full of children, and I assumed it would happen easily and quickly. However, GOD had other plans. Though we eventually conceived and had biological children, we struggled with infertility, miscarriage, and the death of a baby born with an incurable syndrome. Her death wore on us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Josh and I both questioned God at times, and the death of a child really took a toll on our marriage.

BUT GOD, being rich in mercy and great in faithfulness, restored our marriage to even better than it was before. It wasn't until such a great loss that my (selfish) eyes were opened. I had been consumed with myself, MY family, and MY plans for children, but the Lord showed me a better way. I can honestly say that if it were not for Tori's life (our baby girl that passed away), my heart wouldn't have been opened to compassion for orphans and children in need of a loving home through foster care.

I can't explain what God has done in our family since fostering and adopting three precious children. My biological children opened their hearts and our home without holding back, and I have seen tremendous growth in each of them. I have also seen growth and positive changes in the three little children we welcomed into our home, that were with us for a year and a half before making our last name their own.

My fairytale dream of having a house full of children didn't happen in MY timing or in MY way, but then, God always knows best! If you want to help change lives forever through the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, then pray about serving through foster care. I can honestly say it's the best thing we've ever done! Soli Deo Gloria—to God alone be the Glory!

THE ROBISONS – by *Dan Robison*

Debbie and I celebrated 19 years of marriage this June, and since year two, we have wanted children in our home. As our journey to have a family progressed, we began to realize our dream would not happen as easily or quickly as we'd hoped. Even with surgeries and attempts at adoption, it never worked out.

Debbie and I have worked together with children, youth, and college students in our church over the years. It wasn't until we went with our college students to the ABCH campus in Dothan though, that we first saw the idea of foster care in action. But then we began to question ourselves . . . "Are we good enough to be foster parents?"

Well, one day my phone rang and a very nice social worker asked me if we would consider being foster parents with ABCH. My response was for her to call my wife and ask her because she probably would not believe that I did not call ABCH first! One prayer and conversation led to another, and soon we started our GPS training class and the licensing process.

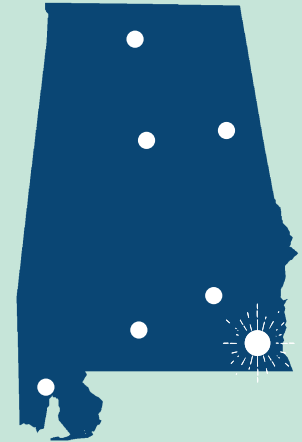
We were approved, and 16 years into marriage, it was decided that we were going to have kids! One month after our approval, our quiet little house was transformed into a hub of activity when a sibling group of three was placed with us. Three years later, Debbie and I are taking care of our third foster care placement, and we have recently adopted out of foster care, two of the most beautiful children we could have ever dreamed of.

When we started this season of life, we really did not go into fostering to be able to adopt. However, God had laid it on our hearts to be available to that possibility and this caring has filled our home with love and has met our hearts' desires.

Read both of these stories in full at: alabamachild.org/wilhoits and alabamachild.org/robisons.

DOTHAN

highlights



- 1** high school GRADUATE
- 4** students made HONOR ROLL
- 3** participated in BAND (one earning first chair in flute!)
- 1** child played on a SOCCER team
- 4** children participated in GYMNASTICS
- 2** children sang in their church CHRISTMAS MUSICAL
- 1** student was a member of ROTC and Future Farmers of America

Our campus care children gave back to the community by visiting residents at a local nursing home and providing care packages. They also supported Nathaniel Solomon, a local child with cancer, by making cookies, serving lemonade, and helping promote his fundraising and Bible drive event.

One foster child nominated her foster parent for a "good citizen" award, and she gave a speech at her school when her foster parent won.

SERVICES

at a glance

- Foster Care
- Campus Care
- Pathways Professional Counseling
- Educational seminars on Child & Family issues

jesus loves the little

Children

Chinese, American,
Brazilian, Australian, Korean
. . . these nationalities are
representative of just some of
the children and families we
have been able to minister to
this year through Pathways
Professional Counseling.

Helping children and families is what Pathways counselor and social worker, Kristin Lowrey, does every day. What she doesn't do every day, however, is work with children and families in China. But in the fall of 2015, Pathways, our counseling ministry, sent her to provide some much needed therapeutic resources to families overseas, spreading the light of that ministry to the Far East corner of the world.

Kristin is one of a handful of counselors on our staff who specialize in attachment therapy, and she leads these efforts in our ministry. Oftentimes, children who come into foster care have experienced early traumas that cause them to develop trust issues. At times, they actually reject parental relationships by trying to adapt to their new environments in negative ways (often seen through bad behavior). Attachment therapy involves helping children develop healthy relationships with adults, building, over time, an understanding and trust that their new parents will meet their needs and truly love and take care of them.

In America, we have counseling and community resources that many families outside the US only dream of having. Families overseas are often left to fend for themselves as they navigate a unique set of challenges that come with international adoptions and life in a foreign culture. Many of these families who have contacted us are missionaries who learned of our ministry while being home on furlough.

Just this year, one such missionary was in our office receiving counseling while stateside. Upon learning of a previous trip Kristin had made to Ethiopia to help families there, this mom broke down in tears and shared, "I have been looking for help for so long—the Lord led me to you. On the way over here, I was praying God would not only help me, but also the families we work with back in China. I

believe God is showing me that this is something you can potentially do for us too!"

Plans soon came together for us to partner with a like-minded organization in China. In two different cities, Tianjin and Beijing, Kristin was able to work with teachers and parents to help them understand adoption-related behavioral counseling techniques. After one day of counseling, Kristin said parents came back the next day after trying these techniques and expressed they could already tell a difference! "They really were like sponges. They don't have the people or community we have here for help and support. There are counselors in their schools, but they're not trained for adoption-related issues."

One father Kristin described as "seemingly disengaged" during a session, all of sudden broke down and began crying. She said he spoke to her afterwards, sharing, "We have needed you for so long. With my 15 year-old son, I have needed you for years. Where have you been?" She went on to summarize, "They just don't have help." Kristin says of her experience, "It's clearly worth it to be there. Their children look the same as ours. They struggle with connection, trust, having a positive self-image, and feeling worthless. In the end, it kind of looks the same across continents because these children from hard places are not getting the kind of beginning God intended them to have. But there is hope, and we see that every day. That's why I continue to do what I do. If I can help that one kid and family get to a place that's better, then that's one less child that's struggling."

Be a part of our international outreach by praying for these children and parents across the world. Pray for families to show the love of Jesus and for children to heal.

PATHWAYS highlights



Pathways Direct Hours

14,087

Clients Served

2,618

Number of Counselors

22

Number of Locations

41

Our counselors led seminars at the local, state, national, and international levels, speaking with school children and school leaders, community groups, church staffs, and parents.

We continued and grew our partnership with Samford University: We co-hosted a continuing education conference for counseling and social work professionals, led an 8-week online course in Pastoral Counseling, and facilitated mock counseling sessions for students in the Samford MSW program.

A series of articles written by our clinical staff, in partnership with *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper, won first place in its category at the national Baptist Communicators Association annual meeting.

CAMP OF *Champions* summer rays of fun!

Camp is such a wonderful time in the life of the Children's Homes. From specialized training for our foster parents and house parents, to age appropriate classes and activities for the children in our care, we are resolved to provide the best possible memories for the children we serve. Our summer 2015 Camp was no exception!

It's become a yearly summer tradition for foster children and their foster parents and an experience they can't find anywhere else—Camp of Champions. Sponsored by Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH), Camp of Champions has welcomed hundreds of children and parents to camp for more than 20 years to "enable parents to be better foster parents during the year" and allow children to enjoy a fun camp experience while making relationships with other children.

Riley Green, Vice President of Administration for ABCH and known as "Ranger Riley" at camp, has directed Camp of Champions at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega for 16 years. "It's one of the most fun things I get to do and be a part of," Riley said. "Many of the campers (both children and adults) would not have this opportunity without us providing it."

For both foster parents and ABCH house parents, different tracks of training are offered each year. This year's camp, held June 14–16, included sessions like "Everything You Wanted to Know about Foster Care in Alabama," led by Nancy Buckner, commissioner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR); Trey Woodrow, Shelby County DHR attorney; and Patti Tanner, counselor for Hoover City Schools. Other training sessions were: "Shifting Our Paradigms to Help the Least of These," "Nonviolent Crisis Intervention," "Trust-Based Relationship Intervention," "Sibling Attachment Issues," and more.

Riley said he has heard a similar comment from parents every year—"Where would we get this type of training if you didn't provide it?"

"I don't know the answer to that," Riley told *The Alabama Baptist*, "so I'm thankful we get to provide that incredible training."

While the adults receive valuable training, the children, from infants to high schoolers, get to play, swim, hike, and enjoy camp. This year, for first through eighth grade campers, a special Bible curriculum was created by Chris Kinsley, Communications Director for The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham. The children studied the Bible together, and the rest of the day's activities then revolved around that lesson. A worship rally just for the kids also was held daily, something that hasn't been done in several years, Riley said.

The 2015 Camp of Champions hosted 213 families (which included 349 children, 152 foster parents and 26 house parents). For Michelle Drashman, Director of Communications at ABCH, this was her first Camp of Champions experience. "There are a lot of moving parts and a lot of people that make camp happen," she said. More than 50 volunteers from Alabama Baptist churches and associations helped make this year's camp a success by serving snacks, building campfires and visiting with families.

Riley said Alabama Baptists are vital to Camp of Champions. Many donate their time or money or collect and deliver items like snacks, bug spray, sunscreen, or diapers. "If it were not for the Church and volunteers, Camp of Champions would not be possible."

This story, written by Neisha Roberts, was originally published in The Alabama Baptist.



Enjoying a snack break at Camp



706

ATTENDEES
Largest Camp ever!

213 FAMILIES

349 CAMPER
(children)

152 FOSTER
PARENTS

26 HOUSE
PARENTS

23 ABCH
AMBASSADORS

72 ABCH
STAFF

72 VOLUNTEERS &
HOSPITALITY CREW


9 SPECIAL GUESTS
(speakers or trainers)


3 TRUSTEES


4 CHURCH & BUSINESS
Volunteer Teams

1 Big campfire 

4 Recreation
breaks for kids 

3 Bible study
times for kids 

6 Learning tracks
for parents 

48 Hours of fun
& learning 

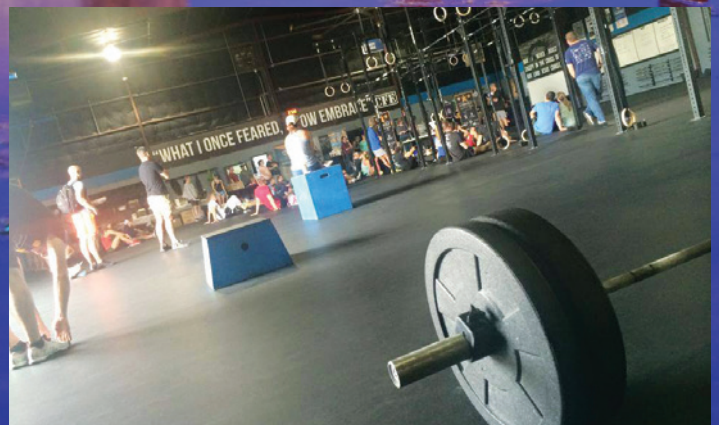
EVENTS & VOLUNTEERS

Sparkling hope

for children
and families

Embrace the Fatherless // DOTHAN

Our Dothan Regional Advisory Board was up bright and early on a rainy Saturday morning to hold their first event in April, "Embrace the Fatherless." This CrossFit event and fundraiser raised awareness for children in need and raised over \$9,500 to help children in our care! We are grateful to our volunteer board members, our friends at Crossfit Embrace for hosting this event, and to all of the participants and sponsors for making this possible!



Party at the Parks // BIRMINGHAM

Railroad Park and Regions Field were the sites for our first-ever “Party at the Parks” event. Created by the Birmingham Regional Advisory Board, the goal was to treat our families to a day of fun while raising awareness for children and families in need. An estimated 2,000 attended and enjoyed snacks, face painting, inflatables, live music, and more. Hundreds more stayed that evening for a Barons baseball game. This day was a wonderful memory for so many of our children in care, and we are excited to do it again in 2016!

Heritage Farm Day & Trail Ride // DOTHAN

This 10th annual event, full of activities like horse-drawn wagon rides, games, inflatables, BBQ, and much more, not only helps the children in our care, but it also provides them the opportunity to know there are people in the community who care deeply for them. Dr. Jay Paul Maddox holds a very special place in his heart for our children. “My wife grew up in a children’s home in Oklahoma,” Dr. Maddox shared. “Every time I see the children here, I see her.”



In addition to these events, ABCH representatives were able to take part in regional and national events like the Unfailing Love conference for foster and adoptive moms, kNOW More Orphans conference, Christian Alliance for Orphans Summit, the Alabama Baptist Convention, the State Evangelism Conference, and multiple missions conferences, events, and speaking engagements.



Kris Banister Memorial Golf Tournament // DECATUR

Graciously sponsored by First Baptist Church Fairview Brotherhood, this tournament, held annually for 11 years now in Cullman, benefits the children in care on our Decatur campus. This year, a new record of \$12,000 was raised! Sandra Banister facilitates the tournament in memory of her husband Kris—an avid golfer, but a far more passionate Christ-follower, husband, and father who also loved the work of ABCH.

Mission Trips // DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Partnering with Orphan’s Heart, an international ministry of Florida Baptist Children’s Homes, we sent two missions teams in July to continue work in a community development project, primarily building homes for local residents. In addition, teams were able to lead Bible studies for children. One participant shared, “We focused on the armor of God in Ephesians 6. The time each day in the Word and craft time was a highlight of my trip. We not only were meeting a physical need in homes; we were meeting a spiritual need in hearts.”

Christmas Open House // STATEWIDE

In 2015, our campuses hosted their largest Open House events to-date! In Decatur, Dothan, Mobile, and Oxford, guests enjoyed festive decorations, holiday foods, and guided tours, many from our children. Sally Schneider, an ABCH supporter, attended her first Open House this year in Mobile. “I was expecting something completely different,” Sally shared with us. “It really looks like home here, with each room personalized by each child, with a living room, den, and more. If it looks so much like home, I can only imagine how much it *feels* like a home to the children.”



A Christmas Experience with TobyMac & Franklin Graham // MOBILE

Our friends at Realife Ministries, along with their sponsors, held a “Christmas Experience” Concert in December with TobyMac and Franklin Graham. We were invited to share a video about our ministry during the concert and were given the opportunity to display and share resources with attendees. Proceeds from the love offering were donated to select charities, and we were fortunate enough to be one of them! We are so thankful for the wonderful people at Realife and for their hearts in serving the Kingdom.

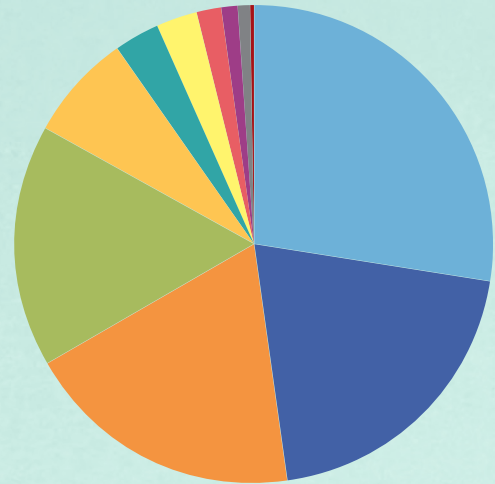
2015 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A Bright Future

2015 INCOME

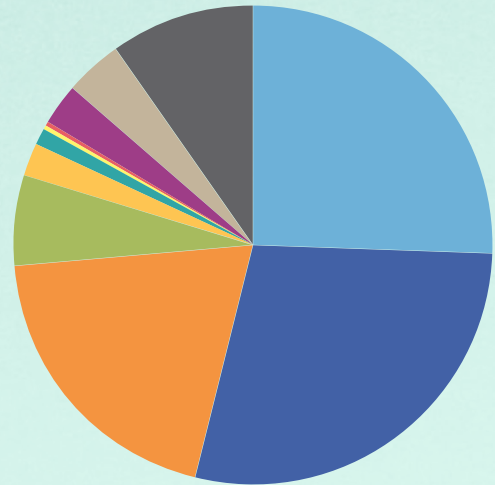
(listed from largest to smallest \$ amount)

Legacy Gifts	\$3,560,871	27.8%
Churches	\$2,572,514	20.1%
Investment Income	\$2,427,844	19.0%
Individuals	\$2,109,321	16.5%
Foster Care & Campus Care Income	\$901,912	7.0%
Pathways Professional Counseling	\$392,983	3.1%
Foundations & Grants	\$352,111	2.7%
Alabama Baptist Cooperative Program	\$245,347	1.9%
Businesses	\$113,990	0.9%
Events & Fundraisers	\$99,530	0.8%
Other Income	\$22,213	0.2%
2015 TOTAL INCOME	\$12,798,636	100.0%



2015 EXPENDITURES

Campus Care	\$2,480,595	25.8%
Foster Care	\$2,700,944	28.1%
Pathways Professional Counseling	\$1,900,161	19.8%
Family Care	\$583,469	6.1%
College Care	\$233,513	2.4%
Family Aid	\$103,278	1.1%
International	\$22,630	0.2%
Outreach	\$36,370	0.3%
ADMINISTRATION THAT MAXIMIZES RESOURCES		
Administration	\$268,379	2.8%
Communications	\$356,327	3.7%
Development	\$928,722	9.7%
2015 TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$9,614,388	100.0%



EVANGELICAL
COUNCIL FOR
FINANCIAL
ACCOUNTABILITY

The numbers reported above use the unaudited totals for 2015 and generally reflect cash received and cash spent during the year. This financial information is not GAAP-based as it does not include revenues and expenses which do not impact annual operations, such as investment gains/losses, depreciation and gifts-in-kind. A copy of the complete 2015 Independent Audit is available through alabamachild.org.

#GivingTuesday Gave

Bias

We were in AWE of the collective generosity the Lord put in the hearts of nearly 300 donors to support ABCH on #GivingTuesday, an international day designated for supporting non-profits! It is truly a wondrous thing when the body of Christ comes together to help one another with their needs. To say we were blown away with the response to help children and families in our care is an understatement.

Our goal was \$24,000 in 24 hours. When all was said and done however, almost \$90,000 was received in our second year's efforts for #GivingTuesday. Amazing!

We are thankful for our donors who sponsored \$24,000 in matching gifts, for every donor who gave, and for the extra support of "houses on hands" to help spread the word across social media!

2015 RESULTS

\$89,594 received

321 total gifts

137 first-time donors

76 gifts made via text (new in 2015!)



On #GivingTuesday, friends of all ages showed their support for ABCH by drawing a house on their hand and sharing on their social networks to help spread the word!

Top 25 Churches Giving Total

(Based on total giving)

CHURCH NAME // ASSOCIATION

1. Evergreen Baptist Church // Conecuh
2. Tuscaloosa First Baptist Church // Tuscaloosa
3. Shades Crest Baptist Church // Birmingham
4. Hunter Street Baptist Church // Birmingham
5. Lisman Baptist Church // Choctaw
6. Henagar Baptist Church // Sand Mountain
7. Prattmont Baptist Church // Autauga
8. Shades Mountain Baptist Church // Birmingham
9. The Church at Brook Hills // Birmingham
10. Huntsville First Baptist Church // Madison
11. Brookwood Baptist Church // Birmingham
12. Pell City First Baptist Church // St. Clair
13. Maytown Baptist Church // Bessemer
14. Winfield First Baptist Church // Marion
15. Eastern Shore Baptist Church // Baldwin
16. Fairview First Baptist Church // East Cullman
17. Crawford Baptist Church // Mobile
18. Liberty Baptist Church // Shelby
19. Tuscumbia First Baptist Church // Colbert-Lauderdale
20. Montgomery First Baptist Church // Montgomery
21. Mt. Olive Baptist Church // Tuscaloosa
22. Oak Mountain Baptist Church // Shelby
23. Mt. Sterling Baptist Church // Choctaw
24. Athens First Baptist Church // Limestone
25. Whitesburg Baptist Church // Madison

donor Testimony

Why do I give to Alabama Baptist Children's Homes?

I give to ABCH because I have seen firsthand how they help so many people. As a child, I lived in the Gardendale home for four years. ABCH took me in when I had nowhere else to go. I give all the credit to the Lord and to ABCH for the way my life has turned out. I can remember like it was yesterday, my house parent, Gail Griffin, telling me to get anywhere in the world you have to work hard. I believe that has helped me become a successful Alfa Insurance agent. The Lord has blessed me in so many ways. I will always give to ABCH. I know my donations will help someone.



Chris Warren
Gardendale, Alabama

Leadership

lighting the way

2015 ABCH LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENT/CEO

Rod Marshall, EdS, LPC

VICE PRESIDENTS

Dr. Robert L. Dewhurst, CCNL, CFRE
Vice President, Ministry Development

Dr. Louise Green, LCSW, ACSW, NBCC, RPT, PIP
Senior Regional Vice President, Central Alabama

Dr. Riley P. Green III, MTS
Vice President, Administration

Ross Hickman, LPC, RPT
Vice President, Counseling Ministries

Dr. Michael Smith, MSW, LCSW, PIP, MBA
Regional Vice President, North Alabama

Dana Watson, LGSW
Regional Vice President, South Alabama

AREA AND PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Sam Allison, CPA, MBA, CGMA
Director of Finance & Accounting

Michelle Drashman
Director of Communications

Ted Embry, LCSW, MSW, MDiv
Area Director, Northeastern Alabama

Lisa Edwards Keane, MAMFC, LPC-S, RPT, NCC
*Clinical Director
Pathways Professional Counseling*

Kim McGahey, LBSW, MA
Area Director, Southwestern Alabama

2015 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIRMAN

Dr. Ray Hammock, Fairhope

VICE CHAIRMAN

Ms. Lana Hawkins, Arab

SECRETARY

Mrs. Charolette S. Hamby, Vestavia

ELECTED MEMBERS

Mrs. Laura Graham, Tuscaloosa
Mrs. Bonnie B. Henderson, Opelika
Mr. Paul Huckeba, Hoover
Mr. Marc Ivey, Valley Grande
Mr. Reynard McMillian, Sr., Irondale
Mr. Les Myers, Vestavia
Mr. Allan Neill, Florence
Mr. Phillip A. Padgett, Cragford
Mrs. Leah Stephens, Montgomery
Rev. Jim Tate, Dothan
Mr. Winston Wilks, Henagar
Mr. Randy Winton, Brewton
Dr. Kurry Wyatt, Vinemont

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Dr. Rick Lance
*Executive Director
Alabama State Board of Missions
Montgomery*

Dr. Travis Coleman, Jr.
*President
Alabama Baptist State Convention
Prattville*

ABCH 2015

highlights

OVER

700

PARTICIPANTS AT
CAMP OF CHAMPIONS

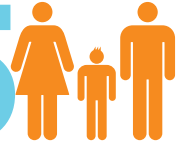


65%



INCREASE IN SOCIAL MEDIA

15



ADOPTIONS

\$2.8

MILLION
RECEIVED
FROM
PARTNERING CHURCHES

2

HOSTED

NEW
EVENTS IN
BIRMINGHAM
AND DOTHAN

472

CHILDREN

HELPED
THROUGH
FOSTER CARE AND
CAMPUS CARE

23



PROFESSIONS OF FAITH

2275

ATTENDEES AT
PATHWAYS EVENTS

12

WE HELPED



STUDENTS WHO GREW UP
IN OUR HOMES
ATTEND SCHOOL
THROUGH COLLEGE CARE

\$85K+

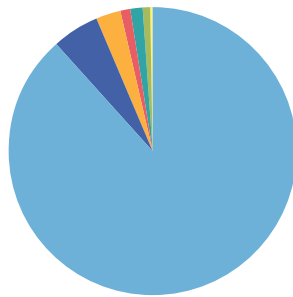
AN AMAZING

GIVEN IN 24 HOURS
ON #GivingTuesday

Children & Families Served

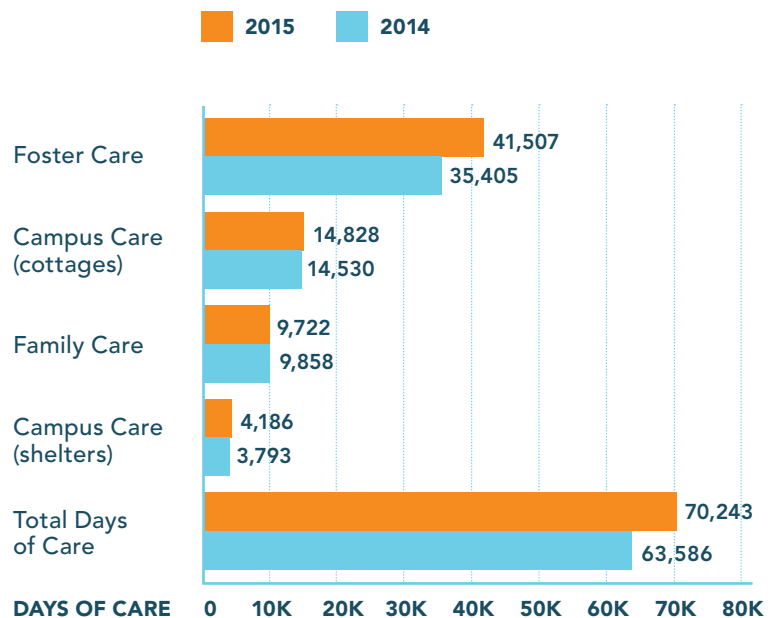
2015 TOTAL SERVED:

5,762



- Pathways Professional Counseling: **5,091**
- Foster Care: **312**
- Campus & Shelter Care: **160**
- Family Care (Mothers, Dependent Children): **70**
- Help to children when one or both parents die: **70**
- Family Aid: **47**
- College Care & Independent Living: **12**

Days of Care FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES SERVED





Alabama Baptist
CHILDREN'S HOMES
& Family Ministries

Why we exist: **OUR PURPOSE**

The purpose of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries is to protect, nurture, and restore children and families through Christ-centered services.

The result we hope to see: **OUR VISION**

Hope and wholeness for children and families through knowing God

PO Box 361767 | Birmingham, AL 35236 | (888) 720-8805

EMAIL: info@alabamachild.org | WEB: alabamachild.org

Our main ministry locations are in Birmingham, Decatur, Dothan, Mobile, Montgomery, and Oxford.
For a complete listing of services available at each, as well as counseling offices around the state,
please visit us online at alabamachild.org/locations.

