

2021 Impact Report





FULFILLING FAMILIES

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A Letter From The President and CEO

Dear Arms Wide Adoption Services family and friends,

This year marks 45 years since Arms Wide Adoption Services began serving children and families! I am so grateful to be part of this amazing organization. Thanks to our dedicated team of professionals and generous supporters, we experienced growth in both our Foster Care Adoption and Post Adoption/Post Permanency Programs over this past year. Even with this growth, we know there is more work to be done to address urgent issues in child welfare.

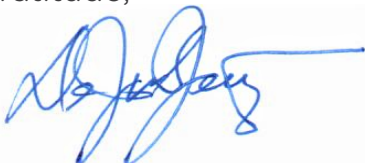
Texas is experiencing a foster care capacity crisis, meaning there are not enough families for the children being cared for in the foster care system. The number of children who were labeled as “Children Without Placement (CWOP)” ranged from 165 in January 2021 to a high of 416 in July 2021, which meant they slept in offices and hotels instead of loving home environments. Most of these children were older youth with significant treatment needs. Additionally, there is a staggering occurrence of disproportionality in our child welfare system, where Black children are overrepresented in foster care. While Black children enter foster care at a rate of twice that of their peers, they often do not end up with a family who is equipped to support their cultural identities.

While these statistics are disheartening, I am proud of our team at Arms Wide for boldly addressing these issues. Because of the team’s efforts and your partnership, we finished 2021 serving nearly double the number of children in foster care as the previous year. In May 2021, we launched a unique initiative called *It Takes a Village* to disrupt the disproportionate representation of Black children in foster care. This initiative focuses on family preservation and kinship support, recruiting foster and adoptive families to care for Black children, and community outreach and engagement to create a village for families caring for these children. As a result of this program, more children we supported in foster care are being matched with permanent, culturally supportive families, meaning fewer Black youth are lingering in the foster care system.

And as the sole provider of Post Adoption Services for the regions we serve, we provided 33% more case management hours to families, resulting in 99% of children in our post adoption program successfully remaining with their adoptive families.

Since we began this transformational work in 1977, we have matched over 2,250 children with their forever families and helped countless families thrive through post adoption and guardianship support services. Your dedication to our children, families and mission makes this work possible. On behalf of our children, families and staff, I say THANK YOU! Together, we can continue celebrating families fulfilled for another 45 years and beyond.

With gratitude,



DeJuana S. Jernigan, MSW

Celebrating Families Fulfilled



January 2021



March 2021



July 2021



August 2021

The Bradford Family

“This family is forever.”



Emily and Trey Bradford have several family members who were adopted, so the idea of adoption has always been in the back of their minds. When they struggled to have biological children, they started to consider adoption seriously as a way of growing their own forever family. “I was tired of wanting to be a mom and not doing anything about it,” Emily said.

“I thought it was going to be so difficult,” Emily said. “Arms Wide made it as easy as it could be. They hold your hand, so getting through home study was a breeze.”

Emily and Trey received their license to adopt in the spring of 2020, right as the pandemic was beginning to wreak havoc on Houston. With all the economic uncertainty, they decided to put their process on hold. By June 2020, they felt ready; within a month, they were matched with a sibling

group of five. However, soon after being chosen, the court decided the siblings would remain where they were for adoption. Although disappointed, Emily and Trey moved forward committed to finding their forever family.

They met with their Arms Wide adoption coordinator, Roderick Martin, to start the matching process again. Soon after that meeting, a caseworker called: two boys desperately needed a home. “We saw a picture of them, and we fell in love,” Emily recalled. Three weeks later, they went to Dallas to meet the boys for the first time.

“We saw a picture of them, and we fell in love,” Emily said.

Aidan and Le’Derion, ages 7 and 8, met Emily and Trey in a park with their caseworker. Everyone was nervous and unsure about how the meeting would go. Emily remembers one of Aidan’s first timid questions: “Do y’all like to do fun things?” Leading up to Christmas, Emily asked the boys to write their wish list for Santa. This was an adjustment for the boys as well: one said to the other, “you’re only going to get one Christmas gift anyway, so just pick one and tell her.” The feeling of family hit them all on Christmas morning when the boys ran down the stairs and exclaimed, “Santa really did come!” That beautiful morning, it was not only about the gifts piled high around the Christmas tree.

Leading up to the finalization on June 9, the boys were excited but had lots of questions. Slowly, they were learning that Emily and Trey weren’t going to give up on them. They started to understand that it was safe to talk about their feelings and ask, “Is this forever?”

As Emily said, “We realized we’re a family: that they have us and we have them.”

Emily acknowledges that the adoption process can seem daunting. Patience is key, and everything will work out in the end. To Emily, adoption has two sides: “one is the comfort of knowing this is forever, the other is grief of the loss of the children’s first family. It’s wonderful and really hard at the same time.” Emily encourages future adoptive parents to “take the leap of faith because there are kids out there who need parents.” For the Bradfords, this was the hardest and best thing they have ever done. But it was all worth it to have their forever family.

If you are interested in learning how you can become a foster or adoptive parent, please call 713-681-6991 for more information.

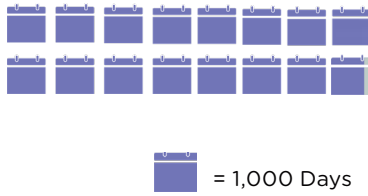


2021 Program Outcomes



Foster Care

15,745



= 1,000 Days

Days of care provided for 111 children (a 41% increase from 2020)

7

7 children adopted by their foster parents

100%

Maintained superior success rating in which 100% of children were in safe care

About the Children

4

Largest placement: 4 siblings

3

Age of youngest child: 3 days

17

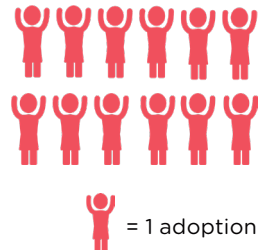
Age of oldest child: 17 years



Adoption

12

Finalized adoptions
• 83% special needs adoptions



= 1 adoption

19

19 children placed with permanent families

100%

Maintained superior success rating in which 100% of placements became legal finalizations

About the Children

3

Largest placement: 3 siblings

16

Age of youngest child: 16 months

15

Age of oldest child: 15 years



Post Adoption



Post Permanency

709

Services to 709 children,




 = 50 children

1,413

1,413 hours of case management services



 = 100 hours

6,751

6,751 hours of case management services

157

157 children served

1,004

1,004 hours of therapy

305

305 hours of therapy

1,283

1,283 days of respite service

175

175 days of respite service

449

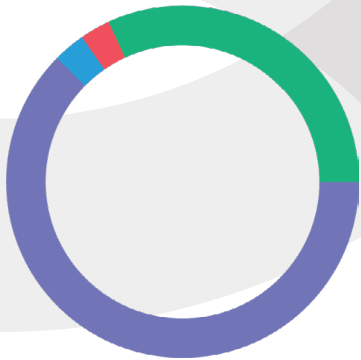
449 days in residential treatment centers

99%

Support for 99% of children to remain with their adoptive parents

2021

Revenue & Expenses



Revenue

66%	Government Service Fees	\$2,405,244
28%	Contributions	1,026,892
3%	Investment Income	113,590
3%	United Way	93,688
Total Support and Revenue		\$3,639,414



Expenses

45%	Post Adoption / Post Permanency	\$1,572,591
29%	Foster Care	1,030,482
16%	Adoption	542,512
10%	Management and General Costs	330,644
Total Expenses		\$3,476,229

Our heartfelt thanks to the following donors who made gifts between January 1 and December 31, 2021:

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Thank you for your tremendous support. We could not match our children with forever families without you.



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“We found that Arms Wide Adoption Services was a small group of people that were willing to help families like ourselves who were wanting to grow.”

*—RaKeesha Reeves-Pelt, Arms Wide Adoption Services Adoptive Mom
Finalized July 2021*

