

A Mother's Perseverance

"If you have the means, take care of the children who need you."

Page 4



INSIDE

2

Agency Updates

3

Holiday Recap

4

Family Spotlight

6

Helping the Whole Family

7

Fundraising

8

Fulfilling Families

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Take the First Step Attend an Orientation

Are you interested in learning more about how you can transform the lives of children in need through foster care or adoption? Take the first step and attend a monthly virtual orientation. You can meet our staff and learn about the process to become a foster and/or adoptive parent. Orientations are on the third Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. CST and open to anyone living in the Greater Houston or South Texas regions.

Have you adopted a child or assumed permanent managing conservatorship of a child formerly in Texas foster care? We can also provide support! Our permanency support team provides case management, respite care, support groups and more to help your family thrive.

Share and Connect Fuel Our Mission

Have a story to share? We are looking for foster and adoptive families to speak about their Arms Wide family and journey. We are always seeking new ways to share our mission and keep up with our families.

In addition to sharing your story with us, we also want to expand our connections in the community. Would you be willing to connect us with your workplace, place of worship, or another group? Invite one of our staff to come and speak with your network about how the work we do at Arms Wide transforms lives through foster care and adoption.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please contact our Communications and Development Specialist, Nikolai Robinson, at nrobinson@armswide.org.

Stay In The Loop Follow Us

Arms Wide posts updates regularly! Stay in the loop by following us on social media @ArmsWideTX, visiting our blog at armswide.org/category/blog, and registering to receive our online communications at armswide.org/get-our-news-letter.

Supporting Families with Fall Fun!

Balancing work, life and parenting during the holidays is a challenge for any parent! So, we make an extra effort during the holidays to let our parents and families know they are appreciated and loved by hosting our annual Boo Bash and Holiday Party.



A Mother's Perseverance

THE CAMERON FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

Chantele Cameron was called to be a mother. But after years of fertility treatments and procedures, her doctor told her it would be best to consider adoption.

“I always knew I wanted to be a mom, and I wanted the whole experience of pregnancy,” Chantele said. “When I accepted that I couldn’t do it this way, I prayed to God and told Him, ‘If I can’t have a baby through my body, let me do it your way.’”

So, Chantele and her husband Ewen decided to begin their adoption journey with another child-placing agency, but they ran into personal setbacks and their application was declined. Not long after, a colleague at Chantele’s job with Chevron told her that he had partnered with Arms Wide and successfully adopted a child from foster care. The Camerons then reached out to us and told the case worker about their struggles working with the foster care system, and the case worker pledged to argue their case so that they could move forward with the process.

They started the licensing process right before the pandemic hit in 2020, so they weren’t connected with a child until March 2021. It was a moment Chantele will never forget, and one that happened because they had agreed to accept children into their home on an emergency basis.



“I was in the Kroger parking lot when Arms Wide called to tell me they had a newborn baby that needed a home immediately,” she recalled. “I called my husband and he left work early so we could stock up on baby supplies.”

Later that night, Chantele and Ewen met newborn baby Allie (*pictured left*). Allie was the fourth child of a birth mother, who struggled with substance abuse. Throughout the next year as foster parents for Allie, the Camerons did Zoom visits with her birth mother and provided support for some of Allie’s needs, which included physical and behavioral therapy.

Meeting Allie's birth mother was hard for Chantele, who initially felt like she was taking someone's baby away. She desperately wanted her to know that her child was safe and loved in this home.



"I met Allie's birth mother in person once, and through getting to know me, I think she finally realized that I could give her child a better life," Chantele said. After twelve months of her legal case, the birth mother's parental rights were terminated, which meant that Allie needed a forever family. The Camerons adopted Allie on September 29, 2022, and the whole family was ecstatic. But that wasn't the end of their journey...

A few months later, Arms Wide called Chantele to inform her that Allie's birth mother had just had another child named Addison (pictured above and left with Arms Wide Placement and Permanency Coordinator Jackie Xu) and see if she would be interested in adopting her sister. Because they had already adopted Allie, the process to adopt Addie was expected to be quicker, but they experienced further setbacks due to personal life challenges and the birth family's legal challenges. Chantele remained steadfast for the sake of keeping the sisters together and officially adopted Addie on December 16, 2024.



Now, Chantele is relieved that all the paperwork, training and home visits are all behind her, and she can just be the mom she always knew she would be. She helps her daughters get to dance and swim lessons, tend to their garden in the backyard, and is always tripping over toys!

Despite all the challenges and setbacks, she strongly urges people to consider adopting from foster care. "There are so many children who need a good home," she says. "If you have the means, take care of the children who need you."



If you or a loved one is interested in helping children experiencing foster care, attend a monthly informational orientation to learn how it works and meet our team. Register today at www.armswide.org.

Helping the whole family

Even in families with minimal relational challenges before fostering or adopting, introducing a new child can disrupt the family dynamic and challenge existing relationships. Our **Permanency Support** team ensures the whole family has the tools and resources they need to grow and thrive together, including:

- **Birth children.** Children who have been separated from their birth families often carry trauma-related psychological, behavioral, and physical issues that foster and adoptive parents must navigate. While addressing these needs is essential, it can sometimes come at the expense of birth children's emotional and developmental well-being. Through focus groups, we are seeking to support and understand the experiences of birth children with foster and adoptive siblings.
- **Parents.** When caring for children, married parents can often push their own relationship to the backburner. We hosted a supportive marriage retreat for 11 couples participating in our Permanency Support Services in the South Texas region on Valentine's Day weekend.



Photos from our prom-themed marriage retreat in Corpus Christi.

Caring Community



MSR Charities' Drive for Kids raised more than \$20,000 in support of the children and families we serve.



Le Amiche Club continues to support our Angel Room, which provides much needed supplies for our families.



KPMG donated hundreds of toys, clothes and gift cards for foster and adoptive children at the holidays.

Help Advance Our Mission at These Upcoming Events

Celebrate National Foster Care Month at our 2025 Fulfilling Families Luncheon on Thursday, May 8 at The Briar Club.

The Fulfilling Families Luncheon will take place on Thursday, May 8, 2025 at The Briar Club to raise essential funds for our foster care, kinship care, foster care adoption, and permanency support programs. Co-chaired by Chea Kelly and Justine Klinke and hosted by Frank Billingsley, this luncheon will feature a moving client testimonial and a keynote address by foster care activist Jamerika Haynes-Lewis.



2025 Fulfilling Families Luncheon
Keynote Speaker
Jamerika Haynes-Lewis

Save the Date for **Thursday, November 20**, and join us at River Oaks Country Club for our annual **All In For Adoption Texas Hold ‘Em Tournament**.



2024 Tournament winners Steve Kennedy (3rd), Karl Brensike (2nd) and Austin Standley (1st)



Lillie Lambert, Jack Williams, Carson and Luke Cone, Zach Maxwell, Brittany Hildebrand, Chance Jones



Christopher Wan, Kathy Ko, Chris Hui, Marshall Holmes



Logan Dillon, Kris Dillon, Tony Nocella, Chris Dillon



Rachel Dash, Mariah Levin, Katherine Roozbeh, Mary Daniel Morgan



Cody Edgerton, Adin Nand, Adriana Byrum, Janine Matetich



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Arms Wide's mission is to transform the lives of children in need of safe and nurturing permanent families.
Arms Wide is funded by private donations and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Give While You Shop:



Preserving & Fulfilling Families

Over the last 48 years, Arms Wide has matched more than 2,300 children with their forever families. Meet a few of the newest Arms Wide families below:



The Bowers Family
September 2024



The Yonda Family
September 2024



The Cameron Family
December 2024