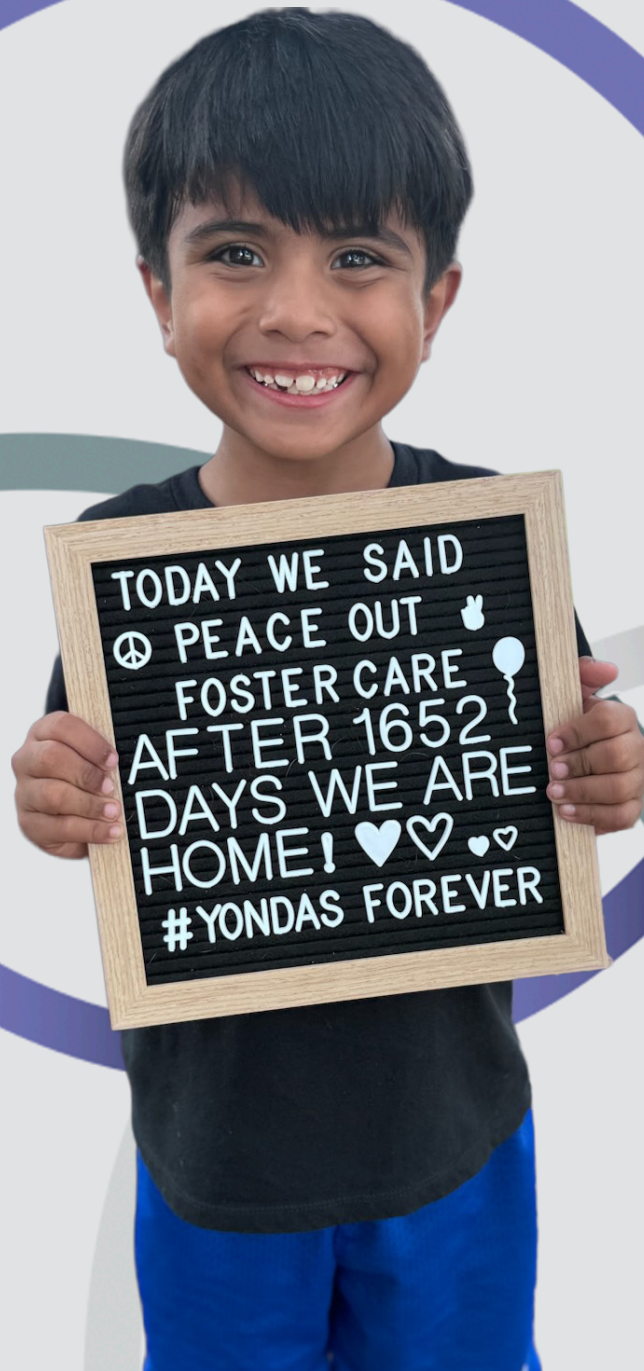




ARMS WIDE

PRESERVING & FULFILLING FAMILIES

2024 Impact Report



*Kevin Yonda, adopted
with his sister Genesis on
September 12, 2024*



PRESERVING & FULFILLING FAMILIES

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A Letter From The President and CEO

Dear Arms Wide family and friends,

It's hard to believe it's been five years since I began my journey at Arms Wide. In that time, we've witnessed sweeping changes in the child welfare landscape - some of the most transformational our state has ever seen.

Texas has adopted a new, more personalized approach to foster care called the **Texas Child-Centered Care Model**, or **T3C**. This model centers on the well-being of each child and recognizes that every child's journey is unique. It prioritizes trauma-informed practices, individualized care plans, and better long-term outcomes.

At the same time, Texas has embraced a significant shift toward **kinship care** - joining children with relatives or trusted adults they already know when they cannot safely remain with their parents. This approach recognizes what we've always known: that children thrive when they maintain connections to their family, culture, and community. The research is clear - children in kinship placements experience more stability, stronger identities, and better long-term outcomes.

Perhaps most significantly, Texas is advancing its shift to **Community Based Care** - shifting responsibility for services from the state to local networks of private providers who understand the communities they serve.

This approach allows for more responsive services tailored to each region's unique needs. It's a promising change, but one that requires infrastructure, collaboration, and resources.

Through it all, Arms Wide has stayed true to our mission: connecting children in foster care with safe, nurturing families. But we know that our work cannot end when permanency is achieved. This is why our Permanency Support Programs are so critical. These programs provide ongoing support to families long after court decrees and orders have been signed, because permanency isn't the end of the story, it's the beginning of a new chapter.

As we navigate these transformative shifts in child welfare, I must emphasize that our work would be impossible without your support. In this Impact Report, you will see how your support - whether through donating, volunteering, or becoming a foster or adoptive parent - continues to improve the lives of the children we serve. I am so grateful to know that we have a community of supporters that not only empower us to respond to changes in the child welfare system - they help to shape a future where every child knows the security of a permanent, loving family, and every family has the resources they need to thrive.

With gratitude,



DeJuana S. Jernigan, MSW

Celebrating Families Fulfilled



March 2024



August 2024



September 2024



September 2024



December 2024

The Yonda Family

WORTH THE WAIT



For as long as she can remember, Amber Yonda imagined adopting. When Amber grew up and married Matthew, she was transparent about her desire to adopt, even if they initially had kids through pregnancy. When the biological path to parenthood didn't pan out for them, they moved forward with adoption.

They attended several informational sessions with child placing agencies around Houston, but Arms Wide stuck out for their small size and personal touch. "We could tell Arms Wide really wants to understand and take care of their families," Amber told us. The Yondas

went through all the steps to become foster parents, and then the real challenge began – the waiting game. The COVID-19 pandemic started right after their home study was approved, so it took 10 months for a child to be connected with their family.

At the time, Arms Wide needed an emergency family for a little girl with little advance notice. For Amber and Matthew, it was a sudden leap into parenthood. "I just remember going to bed that night thinking, 'We're parents, we're responsible for a human!'" Amber recollected. But she was ready. Her best friend Lydia has five kids, so Amber has taken on an aunt role in their lives, babysitting and hosting sleepovers often. After caring for the little girl for a short period of time, the Yondas helped her reunite with her biological family. Though this transition was hard for them, they still remained hopeful they would build their family through adoption.

One day, Arms Wide sent Amber and Matthew an email with images of two siblings attached - Kevin, age 6, and Genesis, age 4. "I remember opening the pictures and feeling this instant connection," said Amber. "These are my kids." Kevin and Genesis needed a stable and permanent loving home for most of their lives. After being separated from their biological families due to physical abuse and neglect, they were connected with a neighbor who used to babysit them. After three years, she could no longer take care of them, and they moved to several different homes before Arms Wide connected them with Amber and Matthew. When the kids walked up to them during their first visit, Kevin nervously asked Amber, "Are you our mom now?" Slightly startled, and understanding it was a little more complicated than that, she said, "Yes, we're going to do our best to be a permanent home for you."

In Amber's words, the kids fit right into their lives, "like a missing piece of a puzzle." They adjusted comfortably at home, and quickly befriended their "cousins," Lydia's five kids. Therapy continues to help them process their early experiences. Arms Wide's trauma-informed parent training as well as Amber's background in clinical mental health counseling has helped the new parents manage and navigate behavioral challenges that arise. However, it was hard for the newly expanded Yonda family to feel permanent while managing the routine paperwork and home visits that are required during the adoption process. They couldn't wait for adoption day and even had a whiteboard counting down to the big day. Kevin's teachers would tell Amber how excited he was for his adoption, and they even let him present to the class about what adoption is and what it means to him.

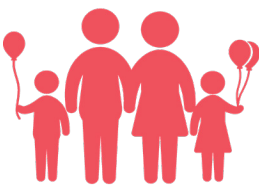
When the day finally came, it was a huge affair. Family and friends came over to the house, and they baked cakes for both children. After the judge spoke and confirmed the adoption of Kevin and Genesis Yonda, they had a full day of celebration with their loved ones. "The waiting is hard, the process is hard, but it's all worth it in the end," Amber told us.

"To see these kids go from hiding in their shell and traumatized, to thriving, enjoying life and being kids is amazing. Every kid deserves that."

2024 Program Outcomes



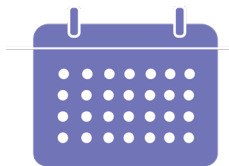
Foster Care



Foster Care Adoption

8,463

Days of foster
care provided



25

Finalized adoptions



60

Children supported in
foster care



19

19 children matched
with permanent
families

*"When you donate to
Arms Wide, you're not just
funding a program, you're
creating connections."*

– Michael Merlo, former foster youth

3

Largest sibling
group:
3 siblings

2

Age of
youngest child:
2 years

17

Age of
oldest child:
17 years



Permanency Support

671

Services to 671 children



6,259

6,259 hours of case management services



1,436

1,436 hours of therapy provided for children

1,690

1,690 days of respite provided for parents

1,828

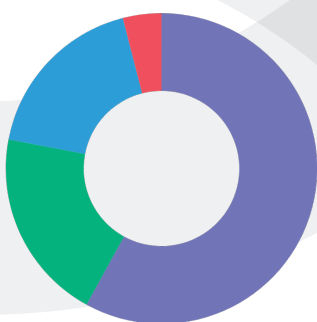
1,828 days of residential treatment care provided

352

352 hours of parent training provided

2024

Revenue & Expenses



Revenue

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 58% | Government Service Fees | \$2,674,731 |
| 20% | Contributions | 965,513 |
| 18% | Foundation Grants | 802,949 |
| 4% | Investment Income | 161,248 |
| Total Support and Revenue | | \$4,604,441 |



Expenses

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 48% | Permanency Support | \$1,894,520 |
| 29% | Foster Care | 1,123,397 |
| 13% | Foster Care Adoption | 494,829 |
| 10% | Management and General Costs | 404,754 |
| Total Expenses | | \$3,917,500 |

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Together We Rise
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“There are so many children who need a good home. If you have the means, take care of the children who need you.”

—Chantele Cameron
Arms Wide Adoptive Mom

