



CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA

Annual Report 2020



DEAR FRIENDS,

Pandemic, self-care, and social justice. When we reflect on the past year, these are the elements that stand out.

With our day-to-day lives changing dramatically during 2020, our entire staff shifted to working remotely. Programs, both here and abroad, saw impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. As some issues were resolved, new challenges presented themselves. Home visits, trainings and support groups were held virtually. More than ever, we relied on technology that eliminated geographical barriers.

We recognized the need to take extra care of ourselves, our families and our kids—especially those with trauma histories. I am incredibly proud of our families and staff for continuing to meet the needs of children during these challenging times.

George Floyd's death, along with incidents all across our country, sparked a renewed quest for social justice. As the President of Children's Home, a transracial adopted adult, and mother of three black children, I have had many conversations about racism.

Through these conversations, I've recognized that training pre-adoptive families is more critical today than ever, but it is no longer enough. We need our families to be strong and tireless allies for our kids of color. We need to demand change and no longer tolerate the framework that supports institutionalized racism and social injustice in our communities.

In this transformative year, I am incredibly grateful for the continued support of supporters like you. Children's Home has been around for more than 130 years, and throughout our history, we've always focused on the core belief that every child deserves a loving and stable home. The importance of family is truly amplified this year.

With gratitude,
Alexis



ALEXIS OBERDORFER

President, Children's Home

ENTHUSIASTICALLY ADOPTING FIVE SIBLINGS

Miranda and Brian planned to adopt internationally through Children's Home. Then they found out they were too young to fulfill the international program age requirement and decided to become foster parents until they turned 25.

Just after becoming licensed, they provided weekend respite care for a sibling group of four. The children were living with their aunt and uncle, who were planning to adopt them. A month later, they did respite care for the children again. After that, the county called to say the children needed emergency placement. If Miranda and Brian couldn't take them, the kids would be split up.

"We always thought it would be great to foster or adopt them, but we didn't think it was an option. Suddenly, it was, so we were excited to say yes!"

Knowing how well the children connected with Miranda and Brian, the county requested they consider adopting the siblings. "So here they came!" Miranda recalled. "Four kids under five and only one of them was out of diapers!" The couple later got a call from county services letting them know the children's birth mother had just delivered a baby—would they be willing to adopt the infant? "We didn't hesitate to say yes—even before we figured out how to get five car seats in the car!" Miranda said.



2020 BY THE NUMBERS

202

Placements



34

Children were adopted
through **open infant
adoption**

54

Children joined families
through **international
adoption**



"Children in foster care need you at
any age. They need understanding
and compassion."

-Heidi Wiste, Director of Social Work



79

Children found their
forever families through
foster care adoption



YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE



"My foster parents showed me love.
It made such a difference in my life."

-Karl Lane, Former Foster Youth/Adoptive Father

6,000+

Individuals received education
through our **webinars & classes**



78

Youth in foster care
were served through
**Child Specific
Recruitment Services**



1,500+

Individuals assisted through
Post Adoption Services



35

Children found safe,
nurturing homes
through **foster care**

MAKING NEW FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Profile | A Birth Father's Perspective

Our Adoption Support Fund is a critical resource that helps remove financial barriers for individuals using our Post Adoption Services. Recipients like Rick hope to make new family connections and find answers to unanswered questions. "I often thought of searching for the child when I was younger, but could never find the extra money to fund a search," says Rick. "Now that I'm 66, I realize I'm probably holding the short end of the rope. I don't know if there's anything I can contribute to her life at this point. Maybe one of life's questions might be answered."



A FRONT PORCH ADOPTION

Adopting During COVID-19 | chlss.org/blog

This is what adoption looks like in a time when a pandemic has forced justice systems to eliminate all but essential court appearances. For the Lanes, that meant completing adoption paperwork by mail and taking the final legal step from their porch. "We were asked if we were okay doing the adoption virtually," said Britni. "We were just ready for our boys to be ours forever." Britni says going from a family of six children to eight has been an easy transition. "Our entire routine was already disrupted because of COVID. We just rolled with it!"

A LEAP OF FAITH REUNITES FOUR SIBLINGS

Jamie Nobozny (Children's Home Board Member) and his husband are fathers of four energetic and loving boys, but their path to becoming parents wasn't always so clear. "I knew I wanted to be a father from as early as I can remember, but I was so afraid that being gay would mean I would not be able to fulfill that dream," says Jamie.

In 2015, while Jamie and his husband were on vacation discussing their family plans, a friendly woman offered some sage advice, "One day you may regret not having children, but you will never regret having them." Right then and there they decided they were ready to take a leap of faith and start the adoption process.

"Life doesn't always go as planned, but in our situation, it worked out exactly the way it was supposed to."

"We went home and signed up for an adoption information session with CH/LSS immediately." By June of 2016, Jamie and his husband were matched with two boys from our foster care adoption program. "We kept in contact with their older brothers and one year later decided to adopt them as well." The family of four was now a family of six. "If we had been presented with a sibling group of four right away, we would have probably said no immediately, but life doesn't always go as planned. In our situation, it worked out exactly the way it was supposed to."



CHILD SPECIFIC RECRUITERS

An Inside Look | chlss.org/blog

As we reflect on a year unlike any other, we are especially thankful for our team of Child Specific Recruiters. Their work often happens behind-the-scenes, but they are an integral part of how we help place youth in safe, loving homes.

Our Child Specific Recruiters are caring and compassionate individuals who spend countless hours getting to know the youth they support, their unique personalities, life stories and dreams for the future. This year they supported 78 youth!



BEHIND THE DESK WITH SUE ORBAN

Profile | Outreach & Adoption Specialist

"I just celebrated my 13th year with Children's Home!" says Sue. "I have worked in many roles here, but I have most enjoyed roles where I am working with agencies around the country, talking with families who are just starting to consider adoption and teaching the pre-adoption class. Much has changed in the three decades that I have worked in this field, but I am always honored to help children and families."



ADOPTION SUPPORT FUND



\$134,547

Granted during FY20

23

Adoption
Grants

**"Thank you for
providing me
with a life
changing
experience."**

-Grant Recipient



110

Total Grants Awarded

22

Grants Awarded to Birth Parents
Using Post Adoption Services





A BOARD MEMBER GIVES BACK

Since 2014, Lance has served on the Children's Home board of directors. He was recently invited to be the board chair. "There was no doubt in my mind that I would serve," said Lance. "Children's Home helped us create our family. I appreciate the chance to give back."

He has learned how Children's Home has adapted to changes in the adoption landscape, including the reduction in international adoptions and an increased focus on foster care adoption for children who can't live with their birth parents.

"These are critical issues," Lance said. "Finding and supporting foster parents and adoptive

families has changed where we put our attention and resources, but the focus of this organization hasn't changed. My passion is to make sure we always remember that the children come first."

Lance and his wife, Lisa, give not only their time, but their financial resources as well. They say it's easy to be generous when they remember all the children that Children's Home touches.

"That's the legacy of Children's Home. We give our time and money to make sure this will be here for generations to come. Every child deserves a family, and every gift helps make that happen."

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This list reflects gifts of cash, stock or pledges totaling \$1,000 or more that were received during FY2020 from July 1, 2019 – June 20, 2020.

\$25,000 +

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\$10,000 - \$24,999

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\$5,000 - \$9,999

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\$2,500 - \$4,999

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\$1,000 - \$2,499

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**"Giving is not just
about making a
donation. It's
about making a
difference."**

-Kathy Calvin



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**deceased*

**THANK YOUR FOR YOUR
GENEROUS SUPPORT IN 2020!**

*If we made an error in this listing we apologize.
Please let us know: 651.603.8726*

A LEGACY BUILT ON COMPASSION & COMMON SENSE

It seems appropriate that a man named Roger Toogood believes that life is filled with opportunities “to do good.” As executive director of Children’s Home for almost 30 years, Roger was a visionary who was passionate about improving children’s lives.

When he became the executive director in 1969, Roger brought more than 10 years of experience in child welfare and a commitment to expanding our services beyond adoption.

"I never saw my tenure at Children's Home as a job. It was a passion and a privilege."

Roger’s common-sense leadership keenly served Children’s Home for many years. The culture he established of adaptability and action still runs deep in the organization.

When Roger retired, the board of directors established the Toogood Endowment Fund for Children to honor the legacy of his years of service. Roger personally supports the Fund with regular contributions and is pleased to know the Fund will support the ongoing work of Children’s Home for years to come.



CONTACT US

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