

Fostering Hope Amarillo cares for children and families

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AMARILLO—Sydney and David Rieff know the Texas foster care system has great needs, and they choose to be part of the solution.

The Rieffs are directors of [Fostering Hope Amarillo](#), a ministry of First Baptist Church in Amarillo. The ministry seeks to help children, families and agencies in the Amarillo area involved in foster care or adoption.

As a guide to their life's work, the Rieffs have adopted as their own the proverb: "God doesn't call the equipped. God equips the called."

The [Texas Baptist Hunger Offering](#) helps Fostering Hope purchase and provide groceries to struggling families and youth who age out of the foster care system.

Funds made possible through the offering also provide meals for newly placed foster families, as well as refreshments for foster care agency events.

David Rieff recalled a grandmother who had to take in children and a newborn baby because the mother was on drugs. Diapers and food provided through the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering was a blessing to that grandmother, he noted.

Works with agencies to help families

Fostering Hope works in cooperation with Buckner Children and Family Services and other agencies not only to provide care for those already in the system, but also to work "upstream" to address factors that result in

children being placed in foster care.

“That is what Fostering Hope is about,” Rieff said. “We try to help and understand why more and more children are being placed in foster care.”

Fostering Hope works with agencies to help reunite families when possible. The requirement that each child have his or her own bed may create financial stress in households that lack space for individual beds.

So, volunteers seek out bunk beds at estate sales and purchase new mattresses. They provide all bedding, including sheets, pillows and blankets.

Variety of gifts benefit Fostering Hope

Volunteers have different gifts, and they share them with Fostering Hope Amarillo, Rieff noted.

About a dozen women at First Baptist who like to cook prepare meals in their homes and take them to foster families. Volunteers Beverly Adcock, Meredith Creighton and Joy Souther coordinate the grocery shopping and meal preparation.

They explain how to feed a family nutritious food on a tight budget by looking for sales and buying seasonal produce when it is less expensive. Sharing recipes written on notecards is another way of serving foster families.

“Volunteers number about 75 people in Amarillo” Rieff said, noting members of First Baptist Church comprise about 90 percent of the volunteer base.

“They pray for the individuals and families. In fact, they are the hands and feet of Jesus. They all have a specific niche to fill,” he said.

Sydney Rieff uses her background in banking, management and organization to handle much of the administration of Fostering Hope.

Care boxes for youth aging out of system

Any youth who was in foster care in Texas can go to a state university or trade school and receive a tuition waiver from the state. Fostering Hope and other partners provide care boxes for these students and other young adults who have aged out of the foster care program.



Teen volunteers write encouraging notes with Scripture verses to include in care boxes for youth aging out of foster care. (Courtesy Photo)

Once a month, volunteers Gaylia Polk and Laura Schelin make sure care boxes are filled with nutritious snacks and prepaid cards for laundry or other necessities.

The care package project was so successful, the program won the Community Resource of the Year Award from the Texas Council Welfare

Board for exceptional service on behalf of the State of Texas. Polk and Schelin were honored for their dedication to this endeavor.

Fostering Hope leaders continue praying to find the best way to use funds to help in foster care.

“Help may be needed by a woman who has escaped domestic violence, or a water pipe has burst, or a portable heater is needed to heat their home,” David Rieff said.

A Christmas party fed 100 students. During a COVID surge, a drive-through event attracted numerous students.

The Rieffs insist Fostering Hope Amarillo has changed their lives.

“We’re more aware and empathetic to people in need,” David Rieff said.

Carolyn Tomlin of Jackson, Tenn., writes for the Christian market and teaches the Boot Camp for Christian Writers.