

Commentary: The Rio Grande Valley needs families for children

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There is a crisis for Texas' most vulnerable children, and it's time to do something about it. The Texas foster care system endures a huge strain because there are too many abused and neglected children and not enough places where these children can recover and heal from the trauma they have gone through at the hands of a loved one.

When we talk about abuse and trauma, we have to consider what the child has gone through and for how long. Once the abuse has been reported and investigated, it is up to the state to decide what they will do with the child or children.

Read related *Baptist Standard* articles about foster care:

[Christian foster parents needed acutely, advocates insist](#)
[Christian foster parents needed acutely, advocates insist](#)

[East Texas family onboard the 'foster care love train'](#)
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[First Person: God made a way](#)
[First Person: God made a way](#)

For more information, visit:

<http://www.buckner.org/foster-care-adoption>

<http://www.childrenatheartministries.org/STARRY-Foster-Care>

<http://discoverbcfs.net/FosterCare>

In the Rio Grande Valley last year, there were 1,191 confirmed cases of abuse and neglect in Hidalgo County alone. There were 199 children placed in foster care in Hidalgo County, and 120 others were placed out of the county due to the shortage of foster homes. In Cameron County, 109 children were placed in the county, and 46 were placed out of county. In Starr County, a mere three children were placed in the county, and 30 were placed out of the county. And in Willacy County, there were six children placed outside of county.

First, children endure the trauma of abuse. Next, imagine being removed from the only family you know, love and care about. Their world consists of family, friends and school. It's the only life they know and understand.

Here in the Valley, many children are removed from their homes with their siblings. Unlike other foster cases in Texas, sibling groups from the Valley tend to be much larger. The children endure even more trauma when they are removed, split up from their siblings and placed into separate foster homes.

The shortage of foster homes in our area means placing these children outside the Valley just to ensure siblings stay together. Living out of the area also places a financial burden on parents who are trying to rehabilitate with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and still maintain visits with their children.

Our mission and ministry here at Buckner Children and Family Services is centered around transforming the lives of vulnerable children and building strong families. We are people who are compelled by our faith. We have a

network of expertise and professional excellence. When you choose to be a Buckner family, you are becoming part of a family much larger than yourself, a family that has a heritage of caring for children and families more than 135 years.

Scripture commands us in James 1:27, "... look after orphans and widows in their distress." Children in our community desperately need strong, loving families willing to live out the James 1:27 call to open their homes for hope and healing.

Let's keep children in their home counties to lessen the trauma involved with removal. Let's be people who live out their faith in action every day by caring for children in distress.

If you are interested in joining Buckner to shine hope into the lives of hurting children in the Rio Grande Valley, contact us at (855-) 264-8783.

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