

Hands of Healing Newsletter

A SPECIAL KIND OF CHRISTMAS STORY

Eleven-year-old Ella never truly liked Christmas. While other children enjoyed cookies, carols, and family, the holidays reminded Ella of what she lacked. She learned to keep her hopes small and her wishes quiet. In July, Ella entered foster care, arriving shy and guarded, uncertain of her future.

Over time, under the care of her foster mom and new siblings, Ella began to open up. She learned to trust, to smile, and to believe that a loving family could be hers. For the first time in years, she enjoyed a full Thanksgiving spread and approached Christmas with hope, decorating the tree, admiring neighborhood lights, and finding joy in simple moments.

In these moments – the first laugh, the first hug, that first night spent feeling safe and loved – that we see what new beginnings all are about. Families who open their hearts to these children lay the foundation for their flourishing, offering the love, support, and patience needed for healing. As we step into the new season, we invite you to join us on this journey. Whether you're a new foster parent, a seasoned caregiver, or part of our incredible staff, we're all growing together and striving to create a world where every child has a place to belong.



A Year to Remember: Highlights Ahead

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- ** Who Are We
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YEAR IN REVIEW

LOOKING AHEAD



There's a special kind of magic in the way new beginnings unfold. It's the excitement of fresh starts, the courage to step into the unknown, and the beauty of growing together.

At Hands of Healing, we've witnessed this transformation countless times — from the very first day a child enters a foster home to the moment a family feels whole again.



SPECIAL MESSAGE

The Power of Family

Healing begins with the love of a family - where hearts are open, hands are extended, and every moment together is a step toward wholeness.



Welcome Hands of Healing

A MESSAGE FROM OUR VICE PRESIDENT

H.R. Corner

Celebrate each day as though it is a holiday, offering **HOPE**, **JOY**, and **LOVE**, because then you have truly given a priceless gift to this world!

As we come to the close of another year, I find myself deeply grateful for the community that surrounds and sustains our mission. This year has held moments of challenge, growth, and profound hope—and through it all, our shared commitment to children and families has never wavered.

At the heart of everything we do is **GRACE**.

G.R.A.C.E.- Granting Respect and Courtesy/Consideration Equally is more than a word to be arbitrarily utilized, but for us should be a daily practice and a guiding principle. It shapes how we serve children who have experienced loss, how we walk alongside foster families with compassion, and how we support one another as a community bound by purpose.

This year, we witnessed **GRACE** in action, in the patience shown during difficult transitions, in the respect given to every child's story, and in the courtesy extended to families navigating complex systems.

Because of your dedication, children were reminded they are seen. Families were reminded they are not alone. Hope was restored in moments where it mattered most. As we step into a new year, may we continue to lead with **GRACE**—choosing empathy over assumption, kindness over convenience, and love over fear. The impact you make reaches far beyond what can be measured, and I am honored to serve alongside each of you.

Thank you for your time, your heart, and your unwavering belief in the power of compassion to change lives.

With sincere gratitude and hope for the year ahead,

Sheila Weetly - Vice President

WELCOME TO OUR NEW FOSTER PARENTS

Aida Martinez
Aurelia Jimenez & Isai Bulnes
Bailey & Austin Milum
Deysi & Oziel Elizondo
Domeka & Timothy Phynon
Dora Alicia Govea
Ernestina Weaver
Esmeralda & Jorge Barrientos
Griselda & David Calderon
Henrietta Mercer
Ivette Mata
Laura Jimenez

Magarita Butron
Maria & Zachary Nerio
Maria Mayela Fernandez
Marianela & Sergio Salinas
Melissa & Jesus Lopez
Michael Wilson
Norma & Justo Duran
Sheila Edwards
Sheree Tompkins
TaMiracle Evans
Zoraya Ramirez



SPECIAL MESSAGE

Christmas is not as
much about opening
presents as it is about
opening our hearts



WHO WE ARE



Mission Statement

Our mission is to deposit seeds of balanced mental health, happiness, and hope into the hearts and minds of Youth and Families, by creating a nurturing, supportive, and structured environment that will instill in them tools, principles, and values that will empower them to become productive members of society and fulfill their purpose and destiny.



Our Why

W- Who we are as an organization and what we stand for.

H- How we show up in the lives of the children and families that we serve.

Y- Our yearning to be impactful in everything that we do.

Our Core Values

Integrity: We act with honesty, transparency, and strong ethical standards, earning the trust of those we serve.

Compassion: We lead with empathy, kindness, and understanding, creating a culture of care and support.

Accountability: We take responsibility for our actions and decisions. We take responsibility for our actions and uphold high standards at every level of our work.

Respect: We honor the dignity, rights, and unique perspectives of every individual.

Excellence: We strive for the highest quality in our care, services, and programs.

Equality: We promote fairness and equitable access to care, resources, and opportunities for all.



A YEAR IN REVIEW: A LOOK BACK AT 2025

Making a Difference at CASA Harlingen



Shining Moments from CASA Sunshine



RGV CPA: A Year of Impact



Impact in Action: Sunshine Foster



START



Hope in Action: House of Hope Events



Houston CPA: A Year to Remember



Ending On a Sweet Note

No-Bake Biscoff Cheesecake

Ingredients:

- 2 Cups of crushed Biscoff cookies and an additional 6 to 8 cookies to garnish
- cup of melted butter
- 12 ounces of softened cream cheese
- 4 ounces of mascarpone cheese
- 1/2 cup plus 3/4 cup of Biscoff creamy cookie spread divided
- 1 cup of heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons of vanilla extract



Directions:

1. In a small bowl, mix the crushed Biscoff cookies and melted butter, then press the mixture onto the bottom of an ungreased springform pan or pie pan. Freeze for 30 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese, mascarpone, and 1/2 cup of Biscoff spread. Gradually add cream and vanilla; beat until stiff peaks form. Transfer half to the prepared crust, then layer with 6-8 crushed Biscoff cookies. Top with the remaining filling.
3. Freeze for one hour or refrigerate, covered, overnight.
4. With a knife, loosen the side of the cheesecake from the pan; remove the rim. Microwave the remaining 3/4 cup of Biscoff spread until thin for about 45 seconds. Pour over cheesecake and smooth as needed with a spatula.
5. Serve cheesecake with whipped cream and additional Biscoff cookies.

Snickerdoodle Cookies



Ingredients:

- 2 3/4 cups of flour
- 2 teaspoons of cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon of baking soda
- 1 3/4 cups of granulated sugar, divided
- 1/2 cup of softened butter
- 1/2 cup of shortening
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon



Directions:

1. Mix flour, cream of tartar, and baking soda in a medium bowl. Set aside. Beat 1 1/2 cups of the sugar, butter, and shortening in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs and vanilla; mix well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well blended. Cover. Refrigerate 1 hour.
2. Preheat oven to 400°F. Mix the remaining 1/4 cup of sugar and cinnamon, then shape the dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in the cinnamon sugar mixture to coat. Place 2 inches apart on parchment-lined baking sheets.
3. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on baking sheets for 1 minute. Remove to wire racks; cool completely.

Hands of Healing Leadership Retreat 2025

Earning and Building Trust Within Our Team

MY PIECE IS



YOUR PEACE

In October our Leadership Team was given the opportunity to engage in a week of team building in Miami Florida. During this time, they participated in trainings that strengthened their management and communication skills, deepened their bonds and made memories to last a lifetime. This retreat highlighted the importance of valuing staff, and how doing so empowers them so that they are better equipped to show up for themselves and the children.



YOUR PIECE



IS MY PEACE

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS:
JOYFUL MOMENTS TOGETHER

CHRISTMAS IN THE VALLEY



2025



HOUSTON CPA

ALL WE WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS... A PARTY!



HOUSE OF HOPE

MERRY CHRISTMAS





A Note from Your Year!

As we close out 2025, here's what this year hopes you'll remember:

What 2025 Taught You

- You handled more than you expected, and did it with resilience.
- Boundaries, balance, and asking for help are strengths, not shortcomings.
- Small, steady progress matters just as much as big wins.

What 2025 Wants You to Release

- The pressure to be perfect
- Old worries that didn't serve you
- The belief that you have to carry everything alone

What 2025 Hopes You Carry Forward

- Clarity about what matters
- Confidence in your abilities
- A commitment to rest, recharge, and take care of yourself
- The courage to grow at your own pace

1-MINUTE RESOLUTIONS

1. Take 10 deep breaths every morning.
2. Send one Encouraging text a week
3. Drink Water Before Coffee

UN-RESOLUTIONS

(THINGS YOU **STOP** DOING)

1. Stop Overscheduling
2. Stop comparing timelines
3. Stop Apologizing for having needs

FAITH RESOLUTIONS

1. Set aside a few quiet minutes each day to pause, pray, and reflect.
2. Make a small gratitude list, one blessing, moment, or answered prayer.
3. Choose one scripture each week.
4. Give yourself GRACE.

Welcome 2026

A new year brings fresh opportunities, new energy, and space to build on everything you learned. Here's to a year of purpose, progress, connection, and meaningful wins, big and small. May 2026 bring more clarity, more joy, and more moments that remind you of your strength. Let's step into the new year with optimism, intention, and a little excitement for what's ahead.

Books

FOR PARENTS



Foster the Family

Encouragement from a foster mom's journey.



The Forgotten Podcast

Space in Our Hears and in Our Homes.



Raising Resilient Children

Help kids thrive emotionally.



Coffee + Crumbs

Stories for the parenting heart.

FOR YOUTH



Wonder

A reminder that kindness changes everything.



Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls

Real stories of real heroes.



Roll with It

A story of courage and independence.



Meditation Minis

Quick calm when you need it the most.

Before You Step Into 2026... A Quick Heart Check

- What made you proud this year?
- What drained you so much that you don't want to carry it anymore?
- What did God walk you through?
- Who encouraged you when you needed it most?
- What's one thing you're ready to grow into?

FOSTER PARENT COMPENSATION

Basic Service Level

The Basic Service Level consists of a supportive setting, preferably in a family, that is designed to maintain or improve the child's functioning, including:

- Routine guidance and supervision to ensure the child's safety and sense of security;
- Affection, reassurance, and involvement in activities appropriate to the child's age and development to promote the child's well-being;
- Contact, in a manner that is deemed in the best interest of the child, with family members and other persons significant to the child to maintain a sense of identity and culture; and
- Access to therapeutic, habilitative, and medical intervention and guidance from professionals or paraprofessionals, on an as-needed basis, to help the child maintain functioning appropriate to the child's age and development.

Moderate Service Level

The Moderate Service Level consists of a structured, supportive setting, preferably in a family, in which most activities are to improve the child's functioning, including:

- Routine guidance and supervision to ensure the child's safety and sense of security;
- Affection, reassurance, and involvement in activities appropriate to the child's age and development to promote the child's well-being;
- Contact, in a manner that is deemed in the best interest of the child, with family members and other persons significant to the child to maintain a sense of identity and culture; and
- Access to therapeutic, habilitative, and medical intervention and guidance from professionals or paraprofessionals, on an as-needed basis, to help the child maintain functioning appropriate to the child's age and development.

Specialized Service Level

The Specialized Service Level consists of a treatment setting, preferably in a family, in which caregivers have specialized training to provide therapeutic, habilitative, and medical support and interventions including:

- 24-hour supervision to ensure the child's safety and sense of security, which includes close monitoring and increased limit setting;
- Affection, reassurance, and involvement in therapeutic activities appropriate to the child's age and development to promote the child's well-being;
- Contact, in a manner that is deemed in the best interest of the child, with family members and other persons significant to the child to maintain a sense of identity and culture; and
- Therapeutic, habilitative, and medical intervention and guidance that is regularly scheduled and professionally designed and supervised to help the child attain functioning appropriate to the child's age and development.
- In addition to the description above, a child with primary medical or habilitative needs may require intermittent interventions from a skilled caregiver who has demonstrated competence.

With all that you do, make sure that the compensation you are receiving is accurate. Take a look, and if you believe the children you serve require a review or if you would like to begin accepting children who require a higher level of care, don't hesitate to contact your Program Administrator or Case Manager to discuss possible changes.



SERVICE LEVEL COMPENSATION PER DAY

BASIC:

\$27.07

MODERATE:

\$47.37

SPECIALIZED:

\$57.86

STEPPING INTO A BLESSED NEW YEAR

As we close out this newsletter, we want to thank you for all that you do each day to support the mission and heart of Hands of Healing-your dedication, compassion, and willingness to serve truly make a difference. We are grateful to be part of a community that continues to grow, learn, and lead with purpose. As we step into the new year, we pray it brings renewal, clarity, and abundant blessings as we continue this journey together.

With Gratitude,



Lauryn
Weetly



Courtney
Harris



Yvette
Garza

