



Winter to Spring Edition

January-March Newsletter

A Season of **Growth,** **Hope,** and **Impact.**

Stories, milestones,
and moments
from our programs
and community.



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Welcome Letter

Welcome Letter

Welcome to our January–March newsletter. As we move from winter into spring, we want to take a moment to reflect on the growth, connection, and progress happening across our programs. This season has been filled with meaningful moments, dedicated teamwork, and continued commitment to the children and families we serve. We are grateful for each foster parent, staff member, and supporter who plays a role in creating stability, care, and hope every day.

Welcome

New Foster Parents

We are grateful for every foster family who continues to open their hearts and homes.

Angela Living
Angelica & Miguel Barrera
Veronica & Gilberto Casas
Erica Garcia & David Dana
Eva Silva & Ben Rodriguez
Debra Nash
Tiffany Love



HR BUZZZZ



The heart of a positive workplace is simple, treat others the way you want to be treated.

Small acts of courtesy can brighten a day.

So... always offer the same grace you hope to receive.



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 is

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.

Integrity:

We uphold the highest ethical standards, maintaining transparency and honesty in all our endeavors, earning the trust and respect of the community we serve.

Compassion:

We believe in approaching all individuals with empathy, kindness, and understanding, fostering a culture of care and support for those in need.

Accountability:

We take responsibility for our actions and decisions, ensuring accountability at all levels of the organization to maintain the highest standards of performance and service delivery.

Respect:

We treat everyone with dignity, valuing the perspectives, contributions, and inherent worth of each individual, and honoring their rights, choices, and autonomy.

Excellence:

We are committed to delivering the highest quality of care and support, continuously striving for excellence in our services, programs, and initiatives.

Equality:

We are dedicated to ensuring fairness and equality in all our practices, providing equitable access to resources, opportunities, and care for all individuals, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances.

COO Letter

Hello Hands of Healing Family,

I hope this year has begun with purpose, positivity, and renewed motivation for each of you. And if those New Year's resolutions have slipped a bit, there is no better moment to begin again than right now. Every new day gives us another chance to grow.

This year has already brought beautiful moments to our Hands of Healing community. From honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to celebrating love on Valentine's Day, to embracing the vibrant traditions of Charro Days, each event has reflected the extraordinary diversity and unity that make our organization so special. Seeing people from all walks of life come together reminds me just how strong and beautiful our collective story truly is.

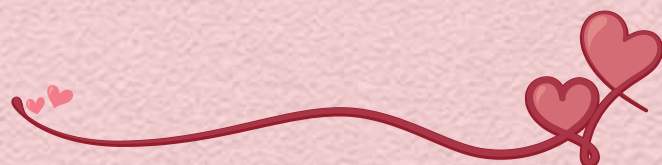
It's incredible to think that Hands of Healing has been transforming the lives of children for nearly 19 years. Through every season, challenge, and milestone, we have held ourselves to the highest standard—continually raising the bar in how we serve, how we operate, and how we show up for those who depend on us. Because you are a part of this mission, that commitment extends to you as well.

I understand that the current political landscape can be complicated, and at times, it may feel like the pressures from outside stakeholders are overwhelming. But my heartfelt ask to each of you is simple: continue doing what is right. Continue leading with integrity, compassion, accountability, respect, and excellence/equity. If we remain steadfast in prioritizing children and standing by our values, I have no doubt that Hands of Healing will flourish for another 19 years and beyond.

I also want to share a deeply meaningful milestone. As of October 2025, Hands of Healing is officially an accredited organization. This accreditation reflects rigorous evaluation of our policies, procedures, and programs—and it affirms that we operate with excellence, professionalism, and best practices recognized across our field. This achievement represents all of us. It is a symbol of your hard work, your dedication, and the heart you bring to this organization every single day. Congratulations on this major accomplishment.

As I close this letter, I want to express my sincere gratitude to each of you. Hands of Healing would not be the organization it is today without the commitment of our Staff, Foster Families, and all our extended partners and supporters. You are the heartbeat of our mission. Please know how truly appreciated you are, and how much I look forward to seeing you all soon.

**Blessings today and always,
Sheila Weetly - Chief Operating Officer**





January



National Holidays

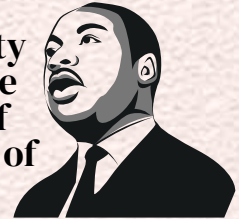
New Year's Day (Jan. 1st):

New Year's Day is one of the most celebrated holidays worldwide, marking the beginning of a new calendar year.



Martin Luther King's Day (Jan. 19th):

King's legacy continues to inspire movements for social justice and equality worldwide, emphasizing the importance of nonviolent protest and the pursuit of civil rights for all individuals, regardless of race or background.



National Imagination Day (Jan. 19th):



National Hugging Day (Jan. 21st):



Celebration of Life Day (Jan. 22nd):

January Awareness'

National Human Trafficking Prevention Month

January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Every year since 2010, the President has dedicated the month to raise awareness about human trafficking and to educate the public about how to identify and prevent this crime. During this month, we celebrate the efforts of foreign governments, international organizations, anti-trafficking entities, law enforcement officials, survivor advocates, communities of faith, businesses, and private citizens all around the world to raise awareness about human trafficking.



Mental Wellness Month

It's a time to bring awareness to mental health disorders, break the stigma, and encourage anyone to seek help. Mental illness refers to behavioral, emotional, and psychological disorders ranging from mild to severe. Mental illness is much more common than you may think. One person can make a difference. Your words and actions are powerful, and if they reach even one person who struggles with mental illness, you've won.

National Blood Donor Month



is celebrated every January to honor blood donors and raise awareness about the critical need for blood donations, especially during winter months.

Soup Night Just Got Better!

Lasagna Soup



Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 tbsp. ground oregano
- 32 ounces of chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 pound protein of your choice (mild Italian sausage, ground turkey or beef, impossible or beyond meat)
- 30 ounces diced tomatoes with juice
- 8 uncooked lasagna noodles, broken into bite-sized pieces
- 2-3 tbsp. chopped basil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 6 ounce tomato paste
- ½ tsp. Italian seasoning
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese



Directions:

1. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add 1 cup onion and cook for 2-3 minutes. Stir in 2 teaspoons garlic and cook an additional minute. Add one pound of your protein of choice (break up with a cooking utensil) and cook until browned. Any excess grease can be drained.
2. Add 32 ounces of stock, 30 ounces tomatoes and 6 ounces tomato paste. Stir until combined and then add 1 teaspoon oregano, 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning and 2-3 Tablespoons basil. Bring to a light boil and then add in 8 broken lasagna noodles. Cook for 8-10 minutes, or until the noodles are tender.
3. Stir in 1/2 cup parmesan cheese, 1 cup mozzarella cheese and salt and pepper to taste. Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish with a spoonful of ricotta cheese and more basil.



Tips:

You can also sneak in a cup of shredded carrots or zucchini for added veggies. If you'd like the soup thinner, add more stock or broth.

All Things February

Black History Month:

2026 marks the 100th anniversary of Black History Month. Historian and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson pioneered this movement, launching Negro History Week in 1926 to celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans and to confront the historical erasure that denied them recognition and humanity. Over time, it expanded into a broader cultural observance, now commemorated throughout the month of February as Black History Month.



Valentine's Day (Feb. 14th):

Roses, chocolates, and Cupid are often linked to Valentine's Day, however its origins trace back to the ancient Roman festival Lupercalia (February 13–15), which celebrated fertility and the changing seasons. Later associated with Saint Valentine, the day became centered around romantic love by the Middle Ages, evolving into the modern celebration we know today.



International Child Cancer Day (Feb. 15th):

International Childhood Cancer Day is a global campaign aimed at raising awareness about childhood cancer and advocating for improved treatment and care for affected children. The day serves to express supports for affected children, their families, and survivors, emphasizing the need for equitable access to care worldwide.

President's Day (Feb. 16th):

President's Day was established as a federal holiday in the United States during the late 1800s to honor George Washington's Birthday, later including Abraham Lincoln. The holiday became recognized on the third Monday in February as a result of the Monday Holiday Act of 1968, which aimed to create more three-day weekends for American workers. Today, Presidents' Day serves as both a time to reflect on the contributions of U.S. presidents and as an occasion for community events.

February: Moments That Matter

Lunar New Year (Feb. 17th):

Lunar New Year, or Chinese New Year, marks the start of a new zodiac cycle and symbolizes renewal, hope, and fresh beginnings. Families reunite, traditions come alive, each passing year is represented by a zodiac animal chosen according to a legendary race organized by the Jade Emperor. 2026 marks the Year of the Horse, symbolizing enthusiasm, speed, and bold energy for the year ahead.



Ramadan (Feb. 18th):

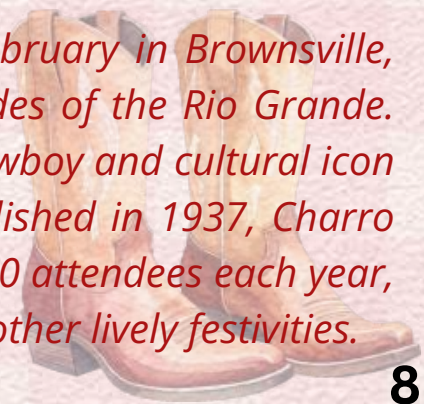
Ramadan is the holy month of fasting, prayer, and spiritual reflection observed by Muslims worldwide. During this time, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, refraining from food, drink, and other physical needs as an act of devotion to Allah. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, making it a fundamental part of a Muslim's faith and practice. This year, Ramadan is expected to run from February 18 to March 19.

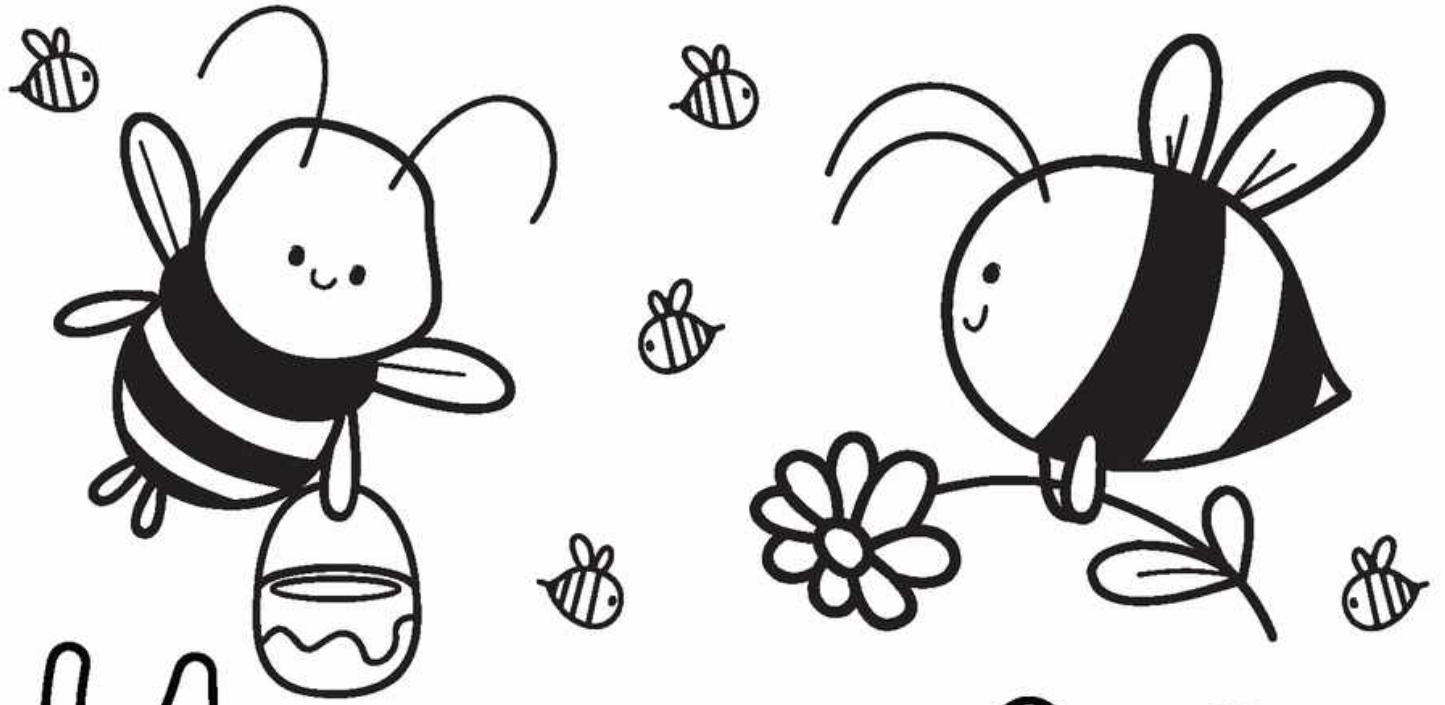
Ash Wednesday (Feb. 18th):

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, taking place 46 days before Easter Sunday, and recognized as a period of repentance, reflective of the temptation Christ faced in the wilderness. During Ash Wednesday services, many churches place ashes—made from burned and blessed palm branches—in the shape of a cross on participants' foreheads, serving as a visible profession of faith and repentance.

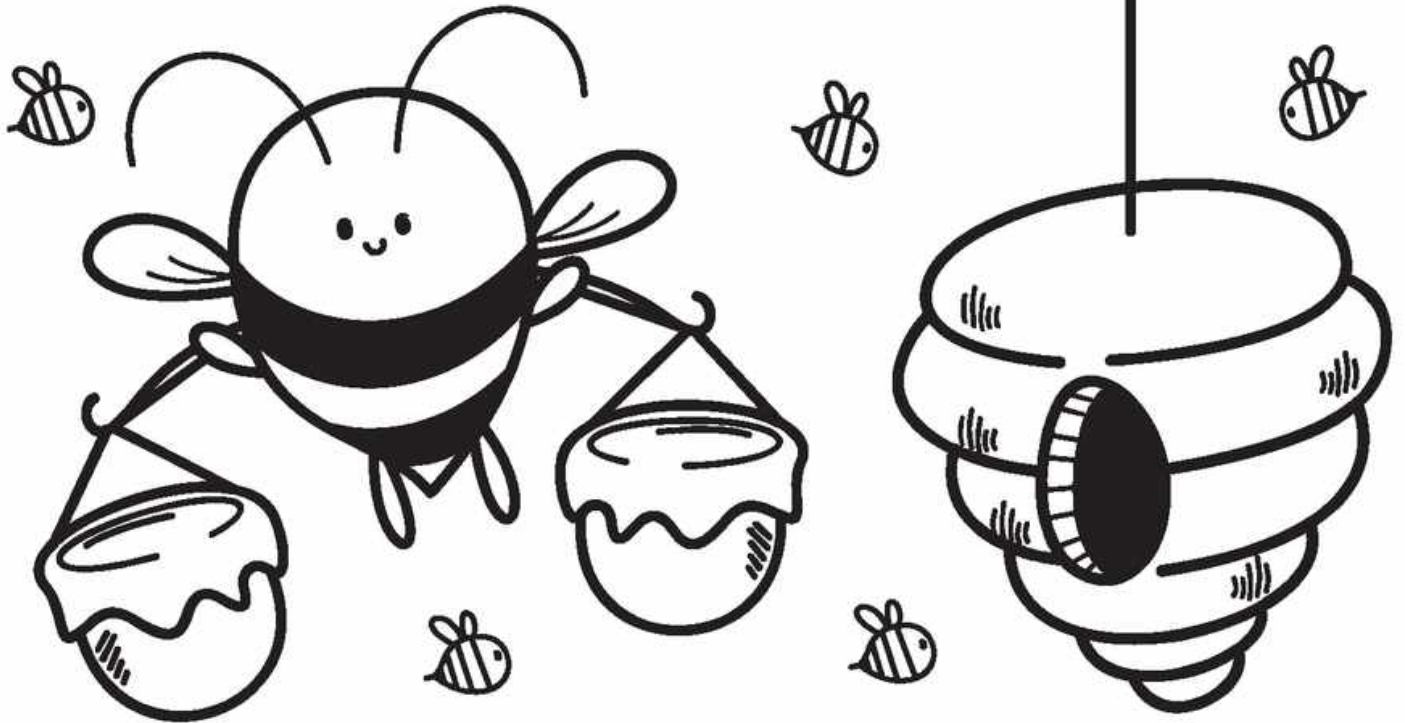
Charro Days (Feb. 26th - 28th)

Charro Days are an annual festive celebration held in late February in Brownsville, Texas, honoring the region's rich Mexican heritage on both sides of the Rio Grande. The holiday is named after the charro, a traditional Mexican cowboy and cultural icon known for his vibrant attire and deep-rooted traditions. Established in 1937, Charro Days has grown into a beloved event that attracts around 50,000 attendees each year, who gather to enjoy concerts, parades, carnivals, dancing, and other lively festivities.





You are
BEE-UTIFUL!



All Things MARCH

National Holidays & Awareness

National Social Work Month

observed throughout March, recognizes the dedication of social workers who support and advocate for individuals, families, children, and communities in need. Social workers help people navigate difficult life situations such as poverty, trauma, mental health challenges, and family crises. This month celebrates their commitment to helping others access resources, build stability, and improve their quality of life.

St. Patrick's Day

is celebrated each year on **March 17th** and honors Irish culture and traditions. The holiday began as a religious feast day recognizing Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. Today it is widely celebrated around the world with parades, music, traditional Irish food, and lots of green clothing. Many communities also host cultural festivals that highlight Irish history, dance, and heritage.

The First Day of Spring

also called the Spring Equinox, usually occurs on **March 20th** in the Northern Hemisphere. On this day, the amount of daylight and nighttime hours are nearly equal. The Spring Equinox marks the official transition from winter to spring and symbolizes renewal, growth, and longer days ahead as nature begins to bloom again.

March welcomes
the start of spring
and a season of
renewal.

National Nutrition Month

takes place every March and focuses on encouraging people to make informed food choices and develop healthy eating and physical activity habits. The campaign promotes balanced diets, learning about nutritious foods, and understanding how proper nutrition supports overall health and well-being. Schools, health organizations, and communities often share tips and resources to help families build healthier lifestyles.

World Down Syndrome Day

is observed each year on **March 21st**. The date was chosen because people with Down syndrome have three copies of chromosome 21 instead of two. This day raises awareness about Down syndrome and celebrates the abilities, contributions, and rights of individuals with the condition. Around the world, people show support by participating in awareness campaigns and wearing brightly colored socks or mismatched socks.

Winter to Spring Trivia Challenge

Test your knowledge of holidays, awareness months, and meaningful moments from January through March!

The answers can all be found somewhere in this newsletter... happy hunting!

What holiday on January 1st marks the beginning of a new calendar year celebrated around the world?

What holiday celebrated on March 17th honors Irish culture and traditions?

Martin Luther King Jr. Day honors a leader known for promoting what philosophy of protest?

March is National Social Work Month, recognizing professionals who help support and advocate for which group of people?

January is recognized as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month. What is the main goal of this awareness month?

World Down Syndrome Day is observed on March 21st. Why was the date "3/21" chosen?

2026 marks the 100th anniversary of which important cultural observance is celebrated every February?

What spring flower is often used as a symbol of renewal and is commonly associated with March and early spring?

Which February holiday celebrates love and is traditionally associated with roses, chocolates, and cards?

Presidents' Day was originally established to honor which U.S. president's birthday?

Charro Days celebrates the rich heritage of what culture along the Texas-Mexico border?

**Ready to test
your
knowledge?
Click the link
below to join
the Trivia
Challenge**

[CLICK HERE](#)

RGV CPA Grand Opening

On February 11, 2026, the RGV CPA State Program celebrated the grand opening of their new facility. To mark the occasion, they hosted a Valentine's-themed event for foster parents and children.

During the celebration, each parent and child were invited to place their handprints on a wall that formed into a beautiful tree. Every handprint symbolizes a life touched, a family connected, and the growth of hope for the children we serve.

Together, these handprints remind us that every person who walks through our doors becomes part of something bigger — a growing family rooted in compassion and care.



Open Heart, Open Home, Open House



LOOKING BACK

JOIN US FOR A

Staff
Event

FEB 11
12 PM
Casa Sunshine

Let's celebrate
together!



RGV
EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY

Friday March 20, 2026

Please join us as we celebrate you at:

1759 N. Stuart Place Rd.

Hearlingen, TX 78552

You may select the best time slot for you

10 AM

1 PM

4 PM

We truly appreciate each of you and the
difference you make in the lives of those we
serve.

Thank You

GRACIAS



YOU'RE
Best



Easter Market
March 22, 2026
2PM to 5PM
Egg Hunt at 3:30PM!
Location:
Los Fresnos Memorial Park
500 N. Arroyo Blvd, Los Fresnos, TX 78564
Family Friendly! Local Vendors! Delicious Food!
Hosted by: Fe's Delights & Pop-Ups





House of Hope's Team Appreciation & Monthly Meeting

Each month, one of our departments has the honor of hosting the staff meeting and appreciation celebration. It's always something everyone looks forward to—a time to come together, recognize one another, and enjoy some well-deserved fun. During the meeting, an Employee of the Month is nominated and voted on by their peers, making it an especially meaningful recognition. Afterward, we celebrate with games, prizes, and a delicious lunch that brings lots of laughter and connection across the team.

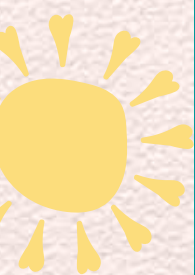
From January through March, we proudly recognized three outstanding team members as Employees of the Month, each making a meaningful impact in their role.

In January, Mr. Johnny Rochelle from our kitchen staff was honored for his reliability, positive attitude, and the care he brings to his work each day. In February, Staff Supervisor Elvis Potts was recognized for his strong leadership, dependability, and commitment to supporting his team. In March, our housekeeper, Francelia Salas, was selected for her hard work, attention to detail, and the pride she takes in creating a clean and welcoming environment.

We are grateful for each of them and the dedication they bring to our team every day.



*Executives &
Board of Directors*



Looking Forward

April

 National Child Abuse Prevention Month

 Viernes Santo

 Easter Sunday



MAY

 National Foster Care Month

 Mental Health Awareness Month

 Memorial Day

 Mother's Day



JUNE

 National Reunification Month

 Father's Day

 Juneteenth



Foster Parent Compensation

With all that you do, make sure that the compensation you are receiving is accurate.

Below are the "levels of care" descriptions for your review.

BASIC SERVICE LEVEL: \$27.07 Per Day

The Basic Service Level supports children in a safe, nurturing home environment. It is designed to help children feel secure, supported, and cared for in their daily lives. This level includes:

- Daily supervision and guidance to keep children safe and help them feel secure.
- Love, reassurance, and age-appropriate activities that support emotional well-being and healthy development.
- Appropriate contact with family and important people, when it is in the child's best interest, to support identity and cultural connections.
- Access to medical, therapeutic, or supportive services when needed to help children thrive at their developmental level.

MODERATE SERVICE LEVEL: \$47.37 Per Day

The Moderate Service Level is designed for children who need more structure and support in their daily routines. Care is typically provided in a family setting and focuses on helping the child grow, heal, and function at their developmental level. This level includes:

- Increased supervision and guidance beyond routine care to support safety, structure, and emotional security.
- Consistent affection, reassurance, and structured activities that support emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs.
- Appropriate contact with family members and important people, when in the child's best interest, to maintain identity and cultural connections.
- Regular access to therapeutic, medical, or habilitative services to help the child maintain or improve daily functioning.

Additional support may include:

- Intermittent care from a skilled caregiver for children with medical or specialized habilitative needs, provided by someone trained and competent in those areas.

SPECIALIZED SERVICE LEVEL: \$57.86 Per Day

The Specialized Service Level is designed for children who need intensive, consistent support due to medical, behavioral, or developmental needs. Care is typically provided in a family setting by caregivers who have specialized training to meet these needs. This level includes:

- 24-hour supervision and close monitoring to ensure safety, structure, and emotional security.
- Ongoing affection, reassurance, and therapeutic activities tailored to the child's age and developmental needs.
- Appropriate contact with family members and significant individuals, when it is in the child's best interest, to support identity and cultural connections.
- Regularly scheduled therapeutic, habilitative, and medical services that are professionally designed, supervised, and focused on improving the child's daily functioning.

Additional support may include:

- Regular hands-on care from a trained and competent caregiver for children with ongoing medical or specialized habilitative needs.

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.

References / Resources

- [January Holidays](#)
- [National Blood Donor Month](#)
- [National Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#)
- [Mental Wellness Month](#)
- [New Year's Day \(Jan. 1st\):](#)
- [Martin Luther King's Day \(Jan. 19th\):](#)
- [National Imagination Day \(Jan. 19th\):](#)
- [National Hugging Day \(Jan. 21st\):](#)
- [Celebration of Life Day \(Jan. 22nd\):](#)
- [February Holidays](#)
- [Black History Month:](#)
- [Valentine's Day \(Feb. 14th\):](#)
- [International Child Cancer Day \(Feb. 15th\):](#)
- [President's Day \(Feb. 16th\):](#)
- [Chinese New Year \(Feb. 17th\):](#)
- [Lunar New Year \(Feb. 17th\):](#)
- [Ash Wednesday \(Feb. 18th\):](#)
- [Ramadan \(Feb. 18th\):](#)
- [Charro Days \(Feb. 26th - 28th\):](#)
- [March Holidays](#)
- [National Nutrition Month](#)
- [National Social Work Month](#)
- [St. Patrick's Day \(Mar. 17th\):](#)
- [The First Day of Spring \(Mar. 20th\):](#)
- [World Down Syndrome Day \(Mar. 21st\):](#)
- [Easy Lasagna Soup Recipe](#)
- [Texas Housing Assistance](#)
- [FNS Nutrition Programs](#)
- [USDA Food and Nutrition Service](#)
- [DFPS Youth Helpline](#)
- [SNAP Program](#)
- [Foster Care Support Group Online](#)

Don't forget to go to our Website, Facebook, and Instagram!!



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