



Methodist Children's Home

Offering Hope Since 1890

# MYTHS vs. FACTS

The truth behind 11 common myths about  
Methodist Children's Home



## MYTH 1 MCH is an orphanage.

**FACTS** MCH is not an orphanage, although it was founded as the Northwest Texas Conference Orphans Home in 1890 to provide shelter, food and safety for homeless children. The name of the organization has been changed four times, becoming Methodist Children's Home in 1996. In each case, the name was changed to more accurately communicate the mission of this ministry.

In its early years as an orphanage, the children who came into care often had experienced the death of both parents and did not have relatives who could

afford to care for them. In some cases, fathers brought their children to the Home following the death of their spouse so they could continue to work during times of financial hardship.

MCH provided custodial care for orphans during its first three decades. From the 1930s to 1960s, MCH experienced growth that began its transition from an orphanage to a nationally respected childcare agency providing a comprehensive program of care.

MCH began to see a decrease in the number of orphans by the 1950s, in large part due to medical advances that led to cures

for life-threatening diseases or illnesses. During this time, MCH transitioned from an orphanage to a multiservice agency concentrating on meeting the physical, emotional, educational, and spiritual needs of children.

While a few youth who have lived at MCH in recent years have faced the challenges of dealing with the death of both parents, the majority of youth at MCH are placed in our program by parents or a managing conservator. Although it was common for MCH to take custody of children during its days as an orphanage, MCH no longer takes custody of children or youth.

Methodist Children's Home is proud of its rich history of serving children, youth and families. This historical marker is located on the Waco campus.



## MYTH 2 MCH only provides services in Waco.

**FACTS** While MCH was established in Waco, we have extended the impact of our ministry far beyond Central Texas. MCH has been blessed with a strong heritage of providing quality residential group care, foster care and other family services, and we serve more than 5,000 children, youth and families across Texas and New Mexico each year.

MCH currently serves up to 140 youth, ages 10-18, through our two residential campuses. The Waco campus where MCH was established in 1890 has grown from an original 10-acre site to 130 acres. The 500-acre Boys Ranch, located 10 miles northeast of Waco,

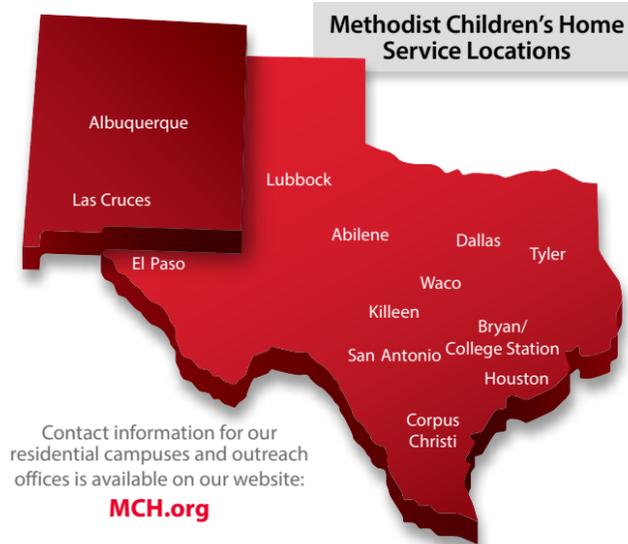
was established in 1971.

MCH began offering foster care in 1968 and since that time we have developed a variety of family preservation services through our MCH Family Outreach program. Realizing the need to serve children and families closer to their communities, we began increasing the number of outreach offices in Texas and New Mexico in the 1990s.

Today, more than 1,000 children each month benefit from services through Outreach offices in Abilene, Bryan/College Station, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, Killeen, Lubbock, San Antonio, Tyler, and Waco, Texas; and Albuquerque

and Las Cruces, N.M. Our prevention and early intervention services are designed to strengthen families and offer support to prevent the trauma caused by abuse/neglect and family separation.

In addition, through our Gap Program, MCH supports grandparents and other relatives who serve as the primary caregiver for children in the absence of parents.



## MYTH 3 MCH only admits "troubled kids" and those who have legal problems.

**FACTS** Less than 10 percent of youth placed in our residential programs have minor legal issues or come to MCH through a juvenile probation placement.

The majority of youth who come to MCH have suffered from neglect, abuse, poverty, school failure, or broken relationships in their family. Some youth at MCH were raised in safe and nurturing home environments, yet made choices that led them to seek assistance through MCH. More than half the youth in our care have family-child

conflict or behavioral issues.

Youth make positive contributions to MCH, their schools and the community. Each year, we graduate an average of 25 high school seniors, many of whom become the first in their family to pursue advanced education through college or vocational training. Many of our students also receive academic recognition and perform above average in state-mandated tests.

MCH youth participate in leadership activities at school such as UIL academic contests and Student Council. Youth in our

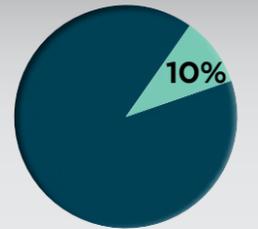
residential programs provide nearly 4,000 hours of volunteer community service annually and often receive recognition for leadership, volunteer service and other contributions to MCH and their community.

Youth also volunteer for summer missions and participate in the Perkins Youth School of Theology at Southern Methodist University and a national summer youth leadership program in Arkansas.

MCH students have consistently received recognition from the Coalition of Residential

Excellence (CORE), a national organization supporting children's homes and other similar agencies.

### A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS



Percentage of youth in residential care who have minor legal issues.

### TOP REASONS FOR PLACEMENT

SCHOOL ISSUES: 8%  
CAREGIVER UNABLE TO PROVIDE CARE: 26%

FAMILY-CHILD CONFLICT: 18%  
BEHAVIORAL ISSUES: 36%

## MYTH 4 MCH is like a juvenile corrections facility.

**FACTS** Youth are placed in our residential program voluntarily by their parents or managing conservator. Our residential campuses are not "lock-down" facilities and families are strongly encouraged to remain involved in their child's care.

MCH offers a relationship-based model of care that provides a wealth of opportunities for youth to discover and develop their talents and skills in a nurturing, Christian community. MCH provides a place of safety where professional childcare staff work to prepare youth for successful adult living. A plan of development identifies strategies to meet the needs of every youth.

Youth also have many opportunities to develop their faith and understanding of God's love through relationships with staff, devotionals in their homes on campus, worship services, youth groups, mission trips, and special events. In addition, MCH offers quality education through an on-campus charter school and a variety of activities such as FFA, athletics, music lessons, off-campus employment, summer camps, and community service opportunities. Youth often enjoy outings to sporting events, movies, theme parks, and shopping.



Staff members at MCH help youth discover and develop their strengths and talents through a variety of activities, such as horseback riding and FFA.

## MYTH 5 MCH only admits youth who are Methodist.

**FACTS** MCH admits youth regardless of religious beliefs or backgrounds.

Multiple religions and denominations are represented among youth in our residential programs, as well as youth who identify themselves as agnostic or atheist. Thirty-nine percent of youth identify their

religious background as nondenominational, followed by 26 percent who are Baptist and 10 percent who identify as United Methodist.

While growth and participation in worship services and spiritual development activities are integral parts of our residential program, youth are not coerced

into making personal faith decisions.

All worship services are led by our ministers and conducted in accordance with the principles and practices of the United Methodist Church. Youth on the Waco campus and Boys Ranch attend worship services in Harrell Memorial Chapel located on the Waco campus.



## MYTH 6 Children can be placed at MCH from any state.

**FACTS** MCH is affiliated with the six United Methodist annual conferences in Texas and New Mexico. As a result of this relationship, all youth placed at MCH must have parents or a managing conservator who live in Texas or New Mexico.

Although most services are provided at no cost to families, all youth must go through an admissions process for our residential program. This process begins with a phone interview with the family. If our admissions staff determines that MCH can potentially meet the needs of the youth, they will schedule on-campus interviews and work with the family to complete the application requirements.

Once the family submits all admissions materials, the information is presented to the Intake Screening Committee, which consists of administrators, admissions staff and school

staff. The Intake Committee considers many factors when determining if MCH can meet the needs of a child. The final decision is often based on multiple factors and can include several visits with the child and family before a decision is made.

Intake Committee members work together closely and weigh all options to make the best decision for every child. If the child is accepted for placement and an opening is available, a placement date is set. If an opening is not available at that time, the child is placed on a waiting list. The time it takes for a student to be placed at MCH varies. MCH is also equipped to receive emergency placements when necessary. The admissions policy and details regarding emergency placements are located on our website, [MCH.org](http://MCH.org).

## MYTH 7 MCH only serves children and youth placed by CPS.

**FACTS** While MCH serves children in conservatorship of the state, the majority of children and youth in our residential and foster care programs are placed voluntarily by parents or managing conservators.

Currently, 18 percent of youth in our residential programs and 55 percent of children in our foster care program are in

conservatorship of Child Protective Services (CPS). Those in CPS conservatorship participate in our full program of care.

In many cases, children and youth are referred to MCH by other agencies or individuals; however, MCH is not required to admit a child. Families or managing conservators go through an admissions process to

determine if MCH is able to effectively meet the specific needs of the child. Residential and foster care programs both have specific eligibility criteria for admission. When staff determines MCH cannot serve a child, they will refer the family to a possible placement.

### CPS PLACEMENTS

**18%**

The percentage of youth in residential care who were placed by CPS.

**55%**

The percentage of children in foster care who were placed by CPS.

MCH offers competitive sports for youth on the Waco campus and Boys Ranch.



MCH serves about 140 youth, ages 10-18, on two campuses through residential services and more than 5,000 annually through community and in-home services in cities throughout Texas and New Mexico.

## MYTH 8 MCH takes care of youth only until they turn 18.

**FACTS** Staff members in the Transition Services (TS) program support former MCH youth, ages 18 to 25, as some youth at that age may still be in high school and as they adjust to independent living and pursue advanced education, job training, employment or a career in the military.

All youth transitioning from MCH to independent living have a plan and available resources in place by the time they graduate.

Plans include aftercare services, educational plans, access to healthcare, and stable living arrangements. MCH provides the option of transitional housing and case management services for up to two years after graduation from high school.

For youth interested in pursuing a college degree or vocational training, staff members help youth determine the appropriate program based on their needs, strengths and interests. Staff members

support youth through the admissions process and maintain relationships with them throughout their studies.

All MCH alumni may apply for MCH scholarships through the Advanced Education program.

Additionally, TS coordinators provide case management, counseling, crisis intervention, independent living training and limited financial assistance to former MCH residents up to age 25.

### ADVANCED EDUCATION

85

The number of MCH youth who are currently pursuing advanced education in college or vocational training.

## MYTH 9 Children come to MCH when they're young and stay until they graduate.

**FACTS** Throughout the history of MCH, one of the highlights for our supporters was meeting young children during campus visits, and then following their progress as they grew older and graduated from high school. During the past decade, the demographics of

youth served through our residential program have changed significantly. Today, the average age of youth admitted on our residential campuses is 15.

In recent years, MCH increased the minimum age for admission for our residential program to 10 and began placing younger

children in our foster care program where they can benefit from living in a small family unit. However, MCH admits children close to the age of 10 in such cases as an emergency placement for safety reasons or if the child is part of a sibling group.

The average length of stay has also changed significantly, with youth living an average of 18 months in our residential program. Length of stay is based on the individual needs and goals of youth and their families. A shorter stay is primarily the result of older youth being admitted to MCH and our success in helping youth achieve a level of personal growth enabling them to

### GRADUATES

25

The average number of seniors across all MCH programs earning high school diplomas each year.

successfully return to their families, communities and schools. In some cases, it is in the best interest of youth to live at MCH until they graduate from high school. The number of graduates from our charter school continues to increase, with an average of 25 seniors in all of our programs earning a high school diploma each year.

**AVG. LENGTH OF STAY IN RESIDENTIAL CARE** 18 MONTHS

**AVG. AGE OF YOUTH AT ADMISSION** 15



Youth can experience personal growth through positive relationships with staff.

## MYTH 10 MCH has too much money.

**FACTS** MCH is blessed with a strong endowment, faithful and generous benefactors, and leadership and staff who take seriously their calling to steward MCH's resources.

When individuals mention our financial resources, they are often referring to our endowment fund. In 1942, Hubert Johnson, the administrator of MCH, identified the need to establish an endowment to give the struggling ministry the best opportunity to fulfill its mission to future generations. MCH is grateful for past administrators, leaders and benefactors who have ensured the endowment fund continues to grow. Today, the endowment is valued at more than \$400 million.

The endowment enables MCH to make program decisions on what is best for children, not swayed by external factors such as government funding or dramatic swings in the financial markets. Only subsidy from the

endowment is used to fund part of our \$27 million annual budget.

In addition to providing a strong financial foundation for this ministry, funding through the endowment and other appropriations ensures no child who meets our admissions criteria is ever denied admission

based on the family's inability to pay for services. Less than 1 percent of our annual funding comes from families, who are asked to provide financial support based on a sliding scale.

Even with a strong endowment, we must fund 17 percent of our budget through unrestricted

gifts to the Daily Needs Fund, church offerings, family support, or state and federal income. Only 6 percent of our annual budget comes from state and federal funding, the majority of which is USDA reimbursements to feed our children.

### FIVE YEAR AVERAGE OF FUNDING SOURCES FOR THE ANNUAL BUDGET

The annual budget of MCH is funded by four sources of income: endowment appropriations, other endowment appropriations, annual revenue, and third-party trusts. Below are the percentages over the past five years for the annual budget funded by each source of income:

55%  
ENDOWMENT  
APPROPRIATIONS

Appropriations from the permanent endowment that come through designated gifts from individuals and estates

20%  
OTHER ENDOWMENT  
APPROPRIATIONS

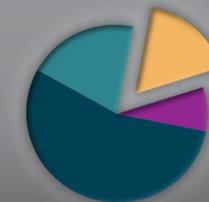
Other endowment appropriations, such as royalties from property and mineral rights, donated to MCH

17%  
ANNUAL REVENUE

Unrestricted gifts, offerings, family support or state and federal income

8%  
THIRD-PARTY TRUSTS

Revenue from trusts managed by a third party, such as a bank or foundation, where MCH is the beneficiary



#### Did You Know?

MCH must fund on average 17 percent of our annual budget through unrestricted gifts to the Daily Needs Fund, church offerings, family support, or state and federal income. Less than 6 percent of our annual budget comes from government funding or family support. Every dollar given to our Daily Needs Fund goes directly to childcare services, not to our endowment fund or administrative costs.

## MYTH 11 MCH receives UMC apportionments.

**FACTS** The United Methodist Church is a connectional church.

Apportionments enable congregations to share many things, including the ability to fund ministries and missions. Every United Methodist congregation in the United States receives an apportionment amount based on the financial needs of the global church and their annual conference

and district. Through apportionments, congregations support worthy ministries and causes around the world and in their local communities.

MCH voluntarily elects not to receive UMC apportionments. This decision was made early in MCH's history by visionary leaders who concluded that in order for this ministry to expand, MCH would need

to secure more funds than would be allotted through apportionments. The Board of Directors and leadership of MCH at that time took a risk in making this decision, but history has shown it was a wise decision thanks to our many faithful and generous friends.

In recent years, the overwhelming majority of donations to meet the annual budget come

from special offerings in local churches, donations from benefactors and grants from charitable foundations.

MCH fulfills its mission because of the generosity and support of benefactors, not apportionments or government funding.



TIM BROWN

## FROM OUR **PRESIDENT**

The mission of Methodist Children's Home is to offer hope to children, youth and families through a nurturing, Christian community, and this happens in many different ways. You can be of tremendous assistance to us by clarifying for others who we are and what we do. If you will read this publication cover-to-cover and share this information with friends, United Methodist congregations and local referral services, we can continue to expand our mission more effectively.

We are proud of the success we are having with children, youth and families, as they work hard and make tremendous sacrifices to reclaim hope in their lives and seize the opportunities for health, progress and optimistic futures. We hope that you, too, are comforted by our improving outcomes. Thank you for your continued investment of support and prayers.

## WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT MCH

- *Pray for our children and staff.*
- *Provide a financial gift to support the children.*
- *Schedule a tour of the Waco campus and Boys Ranch.*
- *Set up a speaking event for your church, class or program.*
- *Ask your church staff if they support MCH since we do not receive church apportionments.*
- *Tell others about the special work God is doing through this ministry.*
- *Consider remembering the children in your estate plans.*

## TOURS AND SPEAKING EVENTS

To learn more about our ministry, please contact our Development Department to schedule a tour or arrange for a guest speaker for your church, class or other group.

**Methodist Children's Home • 1111 Herring Ave. • Waco, TX 76708**



ADMISSIONS: 800-964-9226

MCH FAMILY OUTREACH: 800-853-1270

**MCH.org**

Want to know how you can help?  
DEVELOPMENT: 800-853-1272  
**DEVELOPMENT@MCH.org**