Every child deserves a home that provides safety, health, permanence and hope.
Mission
Casa de Esperanza de los Niños strives to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect for at-risk infants, children and their families by providing comprehensive residential and family support programs that transform people and communities.

Vision
Every child deserves a home that provides safety, health, permanence, and hope.

Core Values
BELONGING: Few things are more damaging to a child than not being wanted. It is important for children to know they belong.

SAFETY: We establish and sustain safety through a positive environment, which is vital to a child’s mental, physical, and emotional health, development and education.

RELATIONSHIPS: By forming strong relationships, generational change and healing are possible.

PERMANENCE: Children who have been abused, neglected, traumatized, homeless, hungry or affected by HIV reach their fullest potential when they are part of a stable and supportive family.

COMMUNITY: Casa de Esperanza’s greatest resources are our relationships with volunteers, donors, volunteer foster families, adoptive families, Hands of Hope interns, and staff who open their hearts and change their lives to support the children and families we serve.

EDUCATION: We are committed to inspire and teach our community and future generations the value of protecting the most vulnerable.

SUPPORT: Services are provided at no cost to our families, through the generosity of our supporters, and without government funding.

What does it take to change a child’s life?
Dear Friends and Supporters

At Casa de Esperanza, we confront child abuse and neglect, which are inseparable from the poverty and lack of safety that often exists across generations. Poverty and lack of safety are multi-generational, as reflected by the fact that the parents of children we admit suffer from mental illness (48%), substance abuse (91%), criminal history (71%), homelessness (80%) and histories of foster care placement (52%).

Casa de Esperanza is a crisis shelter, in part, because poverty means never having a safety net. With no margins for even the smallest error, life for the poor consists of making it from one crisis to the next. The families we serve are driven by chronic fear, sadness and hopelessness. Through our Residential Program and our Family Support Services Program, we immediately begin to address the extreme isolation that living in poverty and fear creates by establishing personal relationships with everyone we serve.

There are many definitions offered for poverty but at Casa de Esperanza we have come to understand that living in poverty means having nothing and no one to depend on.

- A four-year old child who has never had an address because he has been homeless his entire life and feels he is unsafe and doesn’t belong anywhere;
- Aged out of care foster children seeking comfort living in abandoned buildings with no water, sewage or utilities and their only source of food is what they can find in dumpsters;
- Young children in continuous discomfort because they have never had access to a dentist;
- Families who, on cold nights, risk trespassing charges to warm their children in building lobbies because all the community shelters are full. And the list goes on and on.

When a family reaches out to Casa de Esperanza for support, we provide immediate physical and emotional safety for the infants and children in our Residential Program. Our staff, Hands of Hope Interns, weekly volunteers and volunteer community foster families work together to provide safety, love and care to the children.

Simultaneously, we provide care to the birth parents through our Birth Parent Support Program. This program is our first step in helping the parent to address their personal needs, including mental health, substance abuse, parenting skills, job skills and housing. Often the parents do not have a positive role model in their life, and we work to provide the support they need.

When a family is reunited, we continue to provide services through the Aftercare and Outreach Program. We keep the safety of the children at the forefront of all our services. And, we are there for the bumps in the road and help to solidify the family during the tough times.

We are thankful to you, our supporters and volunteers. We are appreciative of your commitment to the children and families we serve. Your care and your support allows us to provide safety and hope. We invite you to visit and bring a friend to learn more about Casa de Esperanza.

With sincere appreciation,

SHELLEY M. STARR  THOMAS W. MCGEE
Executive Director  Governing Board President
The Residential Program is the heart of Casa de Esperanza and is the entry point for abused, neglected and HIV exposed children ages birth to six. Families from one of the ten neighborhood or numerous Volunteer Community Foster Homes open their hearts to children who may have never known that it is possible to live without hunger, fear or feeling unwanted. The safety and welcome children and families find at Casa de Esperanza can begin healing physical and emotional injuries, enrich developmental potential previously overpowered by deprivation or neglect, and support the long-term goal of instilling in each child a sense of belonging, value and hope.

The Parent Support Services Program provides case management for birth parents to access needed treatment and services that will allow them to provide a safe home for their children. Abuse and neglect cross generations, and many of the families we serve aged out of foster care, never knowing safety and stability for themselves. The relationships we form with families through our case management addressing physical and mental health needs, substance abuse, criminal behaviors, domestic violence, homelessness, etc., help the parent to understand and provide safety for themselves and their children.

The Children’s Developmental Program is tasked with identifying each child’s needs while helping staff, Volunteer Community Foster Families, birth families, courts, schools and other agencies best meet those needs.

The Aftercare and Outreach Program provides case management services to families after discharge, typically for one year. Successful discharge does not mean our family’s return to a world still overshadowed by poverty is without risk. Our continued case management helps families solve problems and face challenges while reminding them they are not alone. Our ability to offer tangible support such as groceries, diapers or formula when needed reinforces our hope that everyone served by Casa de Esperanza knows us as a place still working to keep them safe.

Adoption Services are available when reunification with the biological family is not possible, or a parent voluntarily relinquishes parental rights of a child in our care. It is our hope that if a parent places their child for adoption that decision comes from their own personal experience of being well-cared for here at Casa de Esperanza. Casa de Esperanza facilitates adoption at no cost to the adopting family, allowing everyone to focus on the more critical factors of the heart in making these most difficult decisions. To help assure that adoptions are not disrupted, Casa de Esperanza assists by providing ongoing POST-ADOPTION support including parent training, referrals for services and assistance with education and school issues.

WHO WE SERVED IN 2019

Birth Parent Characteristics

Characteristics of the Children

Children’s Ages at Admission

Gender
Hands of Hope Interns
While in the Casa de Esperanza’s neighborhood, children are cared for by Hands of Hope Interns (HOH). This unique group of individuals is recruited from across the country. They are typically recent college graduates who commit to a year of service before pursuing further programs of study or a career. HOH Interns undergo 80 hours of training on basic childcare, childhood development, childhood trauma, foster care standards, and more before caring for children. They receive ongoing training and support from the Casa staff.

In 2019, 53 Hands of Hope Interns from 41 colleges and 23 states provided service.

Hands of Hope Intern Home States

Monique came to Casa de Esperanza’s after earning her master’s degree in Social Work from the University of Maryland. She saw the position as a Hands of Hope Intern as an opportunity to get first-hand experience in what her future clients might be dealing with on a daily basis. She felt that it would be a great way to learn more about the realities of parenthood.

Of her time at Casa de Esperanza Monique says, “I knew that being a parent would be hard work. This job is not easy. It can be draining, and emotionally taxing. However, it is also one of the best and most important things I’ve done in my life so far. It has helped me to solidify my goals to work with children and their families in the future, and it has caused me to strengthen the skills I have and to grow the ones I am working on. This is a life-changing experience and I would recommend it to anyone looking to make a difference in the world of children who need help the most.”

Volunteer Community Foster Homes
Casa de Esperanza’s Volunteer Community Foster Families provide a high level of family-based care for our children. Families participating in this program provide a stable and loving home where children can build social and developmental skills. As volunteers, Casa de Esperanza foster families agree to provide for the children’s needs without financial compensation.

In 2019, 44 Volunteer Community Foster Families from 34 homes provided care, including 11 newly licensed homes.
The thought of children going to bed hungry, scared, and unloved breaks my heart. When I mentioned to my husband that we could play a small role in helping these children, he was willing to take it one step at a time. We found Casa de Esperanza and attended an informational meeting. We were so impressed by what this organization was doing in our community, that we knew we wanted to be a part of the mission of Casa de Esperanza.

We have two biological children of our own, and at the time they were three and one. We knew adding another child to our chaos of raising small children would be overwhelming. We decided to provide respite foster care, so that even though we were helping children only on a short-term basis, we knew it was making a difference. What we didn’t expect was to instantly fall in love with each and every child that came into our home as if they were our own. One child, 3-month old Jesse, was only happy being held in the football hold. Like any parents would, we spent two weeks taking turns constantly soothing him in this manner. It was hilarious and exhausting at the same time, and it is memories like these that we cherish.

Over the past three years we have cared for five children. Our daughters are now six and four, and they only know life as a volunteer foster family. They constantly ask us, “When will we get to take care of another baby?” I love that we’re raising girls who understand the importance of helping those who are less fortunate. Knowing that for just a few days, or a few weeks, or a few months that an infant or toddler in our care is fed, held and loved, makes the sadness of them leaving a little easier. We look forward to the impact we get to make in our community and in the lives of children who deserve nothing less than to know their worth and how much they are loved.

Thank you, Casa de Esperanza, for letting us be a small part of their stories!

– A VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY FOSTER PARENT
Residential Program:
- In addition to the children in our care, 208 other family members received services through the Residential Program.
- The average length of stay for children was 7.4 months.
- Within one year of placement, 86% of children were no longer in foster care.
- 100% of the children were provided with health-care services, including immunizations.

Parent Support Services Program:
- 37 parents initiated mental health treatment.
- 19 parents initiated treatment for substance abuse.
- 3 parents obtained their high school diploma while their child was in placement.
- 33 parents enrolled in parenting classes.

Children’s Developmental Program:
- 87 developmental evaluations were completed.
- 29 children received physical, occupational or speech therapy.
- All children aged 2 or older participated in school-readiness activities to support cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. All children, regardless of age, participated in a weekly music class that also supported their developmental growth.

Aftercare and Outreach Program:
- 83 families with 171 children and 101 adults received Aftercare services.
- 647 home visits were made to Aftercare families.
- 61 families were assisted with basic needs including food, clothing and diapers.
- Ten parents received assistance managing parole, probation or other legal matters.

Adoption and Post-Adoption Program:
- 120 families with 154 adopted children received services and support through the Post-Adoption Program.
- 9 adoptees received post-secondary support through Casa de Esperanza Scholarship Program.
- Casa de Esperanza has a combined adoption disruption rate of less than 1%.

2019 IMPACT

- 92 children received 10,776 Days of Care, including 66 new intakes
- The parents of 47 children were able to establish safe, stable homes – no longer homeless or staying in overnight shelters
- 100% of the children made progress toward meeting age-appropriate developmental milestones
- 83% of Aftercare Program families maintained stable housing within the first year of discharge from the Residential Program
- 11 children were adopted into loving homes. 36% were older than age two at the time of their adoption
Claudia and Mya

Claudia was 31 years old and incarcerated when she gave birth to Mya. Upon Mya’s discharge from the hospital, Claudia voluntarily placed her with Casa de Esperanza. During the intake process, Claudia revealed that Mya’s father was also incarcerated for an unknown period of time.

Mya was initially placed in an intake home in the Casa de Esperanza residential neighborhood. Because of her parents’ incarceration and her anticipated long-term foster care placement needs, Mya was moved to a volunteer community foster home two weeks later, where she remained until her mother was released seven months later.

While Claudia was still incarcerated, she successfully completed a parenting course, received exposure to various vocational skills (i.e.; job interviewing), and participated in a preventative substance abuse treatment program. Through letters and pictures, Claudia also maintained contact with her Casa de Esperanza caseworker regarding her court/criminal proceedings and how Mya was progressing within her foster home. While Claudia addressed her immediate needs and complied with her plan of service, Mya thrived from being placed in a stable, loving environment where she could receive the essential care that is necessary in a child’s early years of life.

After serving her sentence, Claudia was released from jail and, with the help of Casa de Esperanza’s birth parent support program, checked into a transitional residential program where she could safely reside with Mya while completing the terms of her probation. Currently, Claudia continues to be successful with her transitional program and is actively parenting 10-month old Mya. Claudia expresses that she is very thankful for Casa de Esperanza and especially her caseworkers who helped her through such a difficult time in her life. She remains grateful for the peace of mind she consistently received in knowing that Mya was placed in a loving home.

Mya thrived from being placed in a stable, loving environment where she could receive the essential care that is necessary in a child’s early years of life.
$50,000 OR MORE
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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize for any errors or omissions.
Casa de Esperanza

Contributions: $2,560,300
Event Revenue, Net: $811,600
Investment & Other Income: 13,400
Casa de Esperanza Foundation Funding: 250,000
Operating Expenses: (3,815,800)
Change in Net Assets: (180,500)

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Casa de Esperanza Foundation

Total Assets: $13,727,000

Casa de Esperanza does not accept government funding and does not charge for services.

Operating Expenses

- 81% Programs
- 8% Administration
- 11% Fundraising and Development

2019 Revenue Sources

- 25% Foundations/Grants
- 22% Events
- 17% Individuals
- 15% Corporations
- 11% Governing Board
- 7% Endowment
- 3% Churches/Religious Organizations
- 6% Casa de Esperanza Neighborhood Residential Program
- 6% Children’s Developmental Program
- 5% Adoption Services
- 5% Parent Support Services Program
- 4% Aftercare and Outreach Program
- 2% Post Adoption Services
- 10% Community Foster Care Program

“I really want to thank you for never giving up on me... I wouldn’t have made it this far without Casa de Esperanza. I am a success story and I plan on keeping it that way.”

– Aftercare Parent
Thank you to our 2019 Volunteers, Boards, Trustees, and Young Professionals

Volunteer Stats:
- 928 Volunteers gave 120,829 hours of service valued at over $3,200,000.
- 760 volunteers from 41 community and corporate groups gave 1,651 hours of service.

“Being a constant support in the lives of the children at Casa de Esperanza is the most important work I feel I can do. There is no greater reward I will reflect on in my life than easing the difficulty a child experiences in their developmental years. I’m so lucky to be raising two beautiful young children myself, who grew my heart exponentially. Through motherhood, I found that love is limitless, and where better than Casa de Esperanza to share it. Through my volunteer placement with The Junior League of Houston, I can help build a better community, starting with those most vulnerable. Cleaning, cooking and playing with the children in the Casa de Esperanza neighborhood brings me a deep and lasting joy, and is far more rewarding than the heart can fathom.”

– SARAH
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