



# 2021 IMPACT REPORT



## LETTER FROM THE PORTERS

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Greetings, Friends!

2021 was a year of growth for Backyard Orphans. God brought growth in our team, in the amount of churches we serve, and even in fundraising. Ten years ago, God placed a vision in our hearts to help one church at a time develop an orphan care ministry. In 2021, He brought us networks, which include anywhere from 100 to 400 churches. Numbers can be numbing, but remember that on average, a church will have five to seven families foster. And that number could represent 10 to 20 children! The way that God is multiplying our efforts is just astounding and humbling! We are so thankful to Him, and in 2022, we want to steward all the growth He has given us. We are entering the year with great anticipation and expectation, remembering Ephesians 3:20-21, “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”

Eric & Trisha Porter



**OVER 340 KIDS** Found healing homes



**176**

Licensed families in our churches



**505**

Volunteers serving in church-based orphan care



**135,350**

Minutes spent on ZOOM calls



**24**

States impacted



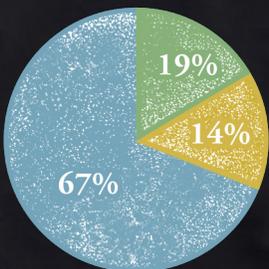
**41,256**

Total miles traveled



**19,822**

Ounces of caffeine consumed



<b>PROGRAM</b>	\$249,520
<b>FUNDRAISING</b>	\$71,572
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	\$50,780
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$371,872</b>



**4408**

Number of people engaged

# LOOK AT THE LILIES

“In Matthew 6:28-29, Jesus is looking out among a field of wheat, and He sees lily flowers sprouting up among the grain. In seeing this He says, ‘Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all of his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are’ (NLT).” (thelilyinitiative.org)

This Biblical passage provides the foundation for the Lily Initiative, a brand new foster care, adoption, and support ministry whose vision is that every child has a family and a place to call home. At Backyard Orphans, we were honored to play a part in its inception, but what is now a blooming ministry, was once just a seed in the heart of Pastor Josh Skjoldal.

Pastor Josh and his wife, Jenaye, had already walked the adoption journey on a personal level. In fact, their daughter, Lily, is the eponym for the ministry. However, they didn’t know where to start in getting orphan care launched at Evangel Church. “How do we tangibly make a difference?” they pondered. When they were introduced to Backyard Orphans, they knew they had found the guidance they needed.

On May 15, 2021, our team had the privilege of leading a workshop for the Evangel staff on their campus in Bismarck, ND. The customized training helped them move the ball forward with a ministry structure and an action plan. Their staff and volunteers came alive during the building process. “We watched our church become more and more excited and passionate about caring for the kids and families in our community,” explained Annika Hapip, Evangel Church’s Community Life Coordinator and Orphan Care Point Person.



As the team brainstormed, a plethora of support ministries began to take shape.

- The **Meals + Errands Team** provides practical support to families through the delivery of meals/supplies or running of errands.
- The **Childcare Team** builds a relationship with foster kids while giving parents much needed time off.
- The **Family Advocate Team** encourages and connects families to resources and support within the church and community.
- The **Prayer Team** offers regular or on-call prayer for families and the kids in their care.
- The **Grandparents Team** builds relationships with foster kids to encourage and invest in their lives.



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**Orphan care support teams around the nation**

“We watched as a tear streamed down the face of a man who has fostered for over 30 years.” Annika relayed. “That day we were bringing solutions to the table where foster and biological families would feel seen and known not just by the church, but by a God who loves them.”

- **24 new families** expressed interest in becoming foster parents, 12 of whom have already begun the paperwork process!
- **133 individuals** signed up to become support team members on one of the five teams!
- The **financial response** to the Lily Initiative enabled the church to begin a reimbursement process for Evangel foster families!

“Our encouragement to other churches is this,” Annika shared, “Jesus has already given us the command to care for orphans and widows, so we know that because He is for them, He will not fail them. He will provide for your church in the process, He will bring people out of the woodwork to colobar with you to support kids and families, and He is already stirring hearts within your church to foster and adopt.”

We, the Church, know that God has called us to care for the fatherless. The question then remains, how is your local church fulfilling that calling? Perhaps you can relate to Pastor Josh. You know what you need to do, you simply aren’t sure how or where to start. That’s where we come in! Just as we were for Evangel Church in Bismarck, ND, we are here to guide you.



“Look at the lilies,” Jesus said in Matthew 6:28. “These lilies are just like children today who are experiencing the physical or emotional loss of a loving parent. Society may see their trauma as an inconvenience, but God sees them and calls them beautiful. The name “Lily” signifies purity and innocence, and there’s nothing more innocent or pure than children. The Lily Initiative was named to remind us to consider the lilies—to consider the children—and call them beautiful.” (thelilyinitiative.org). For more information check out [nextsteps.backyardorphans.org](https://nextsteps.backyardorphans.org)

# MINISTRY MULTIPLIED

I remember like it was yesterday. I was sitting in my Bible college class when God revealed to me a nugget of wisdom that I have practiced in every leadership role that God has called me to. It's the principle of multiplication.

My professor was teaching from Exodus chapter 18. The story picked up after the freedom of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery,

the miraculous parting of the sea, and the provision of water, manna, and quail. Of course, there are great principles in those classic stories, but what the professor wanted to draw our attention to were a few profound words spoken by Jethro to his son-in-law, Moses.

Each day, Moses took his rightful seat as the judge before the Israelites. People surrounded him from dawn until dusk to seek God's will regarding their problems and situations. Jethro asked Moses, "Why do you alone sit as judge?" He went on to advise, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone." (Exodus 18:17-18 NIV) He went on to encourage Moses to continue serving the people, but also to raise up God-fearing, trustworthy men to serve as officials over smaller groups of Israelites. "That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this...you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." (Exodus 18:23 NIV)

## If you want to reach more people, multiply yourself.

It has taken a lot of work and prayer to fine tune what multiplying leaders in orphan care looks like. There were no manuals or handbooks to guide our small team when we first began. We simply followed God's lead every step of the way; and like the faithful God that He is, He illuminated the path at each turn.



Ten years ago, Assemblies of God pastor and network leader, Rick Dubose, invited us to equip the 600+ churches of the North Texas District. As we often refer to that season, we were building the plane as we flew it. Yet, God was faithful with our obedience; we saw hundreds of North Texas churches say "yes" to orphan care during that adventure! Now, God has asked us to multiply ourselves. Instead of equipping individual churches only, we have the opportunity to equip entire networks of churches!

We have seen great success in this network model throughout the country and beyond. We've had the privilege to serve networks of churches in Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Michigan, Ohio, Florida, New Mexico, Alaska, Indiana, New York, North Dakota, Southern New England, Northern New England, and even Guatemala!

What we're finding is that regional, state, and national network leaders desire to lead their churches in orphan care. They feel the burden of the Biblical mandate, but are often overwhelmed by the process. Perhaps they don't know where to start, how to form the critical partnerships necessary, or what the best practices are. It can be intimidating, but our team is ready to help!

Could your network be next? If you are a network leader or know one who might be interested in orphan care, visit [network.backyardorphans.org](http://network.backyardorphans.org) for more information.



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**Networks Engaged**

# BOOTS ON THE GROUND

*“Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’” Matthew 9:37*

In the world of foster care and adoption, these words of Jesus could not be more true. **“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”** There are children in need of families, families in need of their church’s support, and churches in need of guidance. In an attempt to raise up and send out more “laborers into his harvest,” we launched the Trainer Summit in 2020.



Since that time, our team has multiplied like never before! **This year alone, we added 7 new trainers to our team!** Seven may not seem like a huge number, but with God’s help, one trainer in one year is able to impact 170 kids’ lives!

At Trainer Summit, we equip leaders to train churches in developing a foster care, adoption, and support ministry. **We were thrilled to offer two summits in 2021**, one in January and one in November. Our new trainers came to Dallas from New Mexico, Alaska, Indiana, Oklahoma, and throughout Texas to spend three full days with Eric Porter (Founder and CEO), Trisha Porter (Chief Engagement Officer), and Shauna Whidden (Program Director). The intensive summit included the how-tos of church training, from the very first info meeting to the final launch day!

After completing the summit, our new trainers were equipped to thoroughly train a church in orphan care and were immediately able to put their skills to use by engaging pastors across the nation. This came more naturally for some, as five of the seven new trainers are currently in pastoral roles in their local churches. However, they all stood confidently in their training and did a fantastic job!

We know that not everyone is called to foster or adopt, but according to James 1:27, we also know that God has called everyone to do something. For our new trainers, this is their “something,” and it is critical, important, harvest work!

What is God calling you to do? Is there a trainer in your state you feel nudged to connect with? Is your church ready for a workshop led by one of our amazing team members? Or, are you perhaps feeling tugged to become a harvester in your local community by joining our team of missionary trainers? Whatever your next step is, we are cheering you on, and we’re here to guide you!  
[nextsteps.backyardorphans.org](https://nextsteps.backyardorphans.org)



**SEVEN**  
Churches Trained



# HEART OF ABUNDANCE

What if you really believed in a God of abundance, not scarcity? I mean really believed it? Would you risk more? Would you dream bigger? Would you talk differently, pray differently, or lead differently? I'm guessing the answer would be yes. All too often, we allow limited resources to limit the vision, even before it begins. At least that's what I did—but then four years ago, all of that changed.

In January 2018, our leadership team was preparing to celebrate the 80th anniversary of our church. As anyone knows, a milestone this big definitely needs a theme (or at least that's what our creative team told us). So while searching for an appropriate Scripture verse, I somehow landed upon Haggai 2:6-9, "The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house." One word jumped off the page: GREATER. Sounds like an 80th anniversary theme, doesn't it? Done. Print the invitations. Order the banners.



**\$387,969.58**

**Donated by our  
financial partners**

Not so fast. As I kept reading, I noticed several other promises God spoke through Haggai. In addition to His glory, God promised to bring the desired people from all nations (v.7). He promised to grant peace (v.9). He promised to provide all the resources needed to accomplish the work (v.8). That last one really got me: "The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the Lord Almighty." Just think about it. If the same God who gives the vision can also give the provision, well...that's a game changer!

Michele and I took this Scripture to heart and immediately began looking for ways to apply it. Our first step as a church was to begin "tithing" to what we call our Kingdom Builders fund. This simple act of designating 10% of all income towards missions enabled us to say "YES" more often to missionaries, projects, and partnerships. The change was immediate. Instead of always "running in the red," our missions budget began to grow. When missionaries came to speak, instead of asking our church for an offering, we just handed them a generous check and prayed over them.

We added new missionaries and increased support for the ones we already had. One of those missionary partners was Backyard Orphans. We love partnering in the work they are doing, and we believe in the vision that one day there will be more families waiting for children than children waiting for families.

So this is our story, and it's not over yet. As we look into the future through eyes of faith, we see GREATER opportunities to make a difference around the block and around the world. No longer burdened by a scarcity mindset, we believe in the God of abundance who loves the lost more than we do. A God who cares about every tribe, nation, and tongue. A God who is looking for pastors and churches who are faithful in the little things, so that He can entrust them with more. Let's do this!



If you'd like to learn more about giving to Backyard Orphans, check out [donate.backyardorphans.org](https://donate.backyardorphans.org)



# INITIATIVES



## TELL THE STORY

With a strong internet presence, engagement on social media, and attendance at key events, we can bring awareness and voice to the over 400,000 children in U.S. foster care.



## TRAIN THE CHURCH

The best place to find families for kids is in the local church. The more churches we train, the more healing homes are found for hurting children.



## EQUIP NETWORKS

Networks are communities of churches working in collaboration together. To equip a network is to reach a multitude of churches.



## RAISE UP TRAINERS

Additional trainers allow us to expand our reach; exponential growth can only happen when we multiply ourselves.



## DEVELOP FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Financial partners fuel our mission by helping us reach more churches, who will recruit more families, who will welcome more hurting children home.



## ENGAGE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

By engaging university campuses, we can influence the next generation of orphan care leaders!



Let's stay in touch!



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