



2023 IMPACT REPORT



4 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.



RAISE UP LEADERS

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



EQUIP NETWORKS

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



2023 IMPACT OVERVIEW



OVER 360 KIDS Found Healing Homes



16,484
People Engaged



112,098
Total Miles Traveled



110,189
Minutes on Zoom Calls



108
Orphan Care
Support Teams



29,318
Ounces of Caffeine
Consumed



\$12,300
Given To Other
Orphan Care Needs



\$3,422,952
Value of Volunteer Hours

2023 EXPENSES



PROGRAM	\$233,305
ADMINISTRATION	\$158,301
FUNDRAISING	\$41,197
TOTAL	\$432,803

A COVID BLESSING

“Thank God for COVID!” That’s not a phrase most of us have uttered. We are four years post-pandemic and the majority feeling is gratitude toward seeing those uncertain times in the rearview mirror. Yet, leave it to our incredible, sovereign God to birth beautiful blessings amid the COVID chaos. While I’m confident the Fauss family doesn’t count COVID itself in the pros column, they sure took advantage of the extra time that stay-at-home orders gave them to reflect and hear the voice of God on an important next step for their family: foster care and adoption.

The Fausses always felt called to foster, but it wasn’t until the peak of the COVID pandemic that God prompted them to begin the process. They attended a foster care interest meeting hosted by Church of Living Hope in Tyler, TX, an active partner of Backyard Orphans. With the support of their friends and family, they began the process of becoming licensed foster parents. The season of preparation was filled with prayer, counsel, and training.

Once they were prayed up, trained up, and licensed, the Fausses excitedly awaited their first placement. Finally, the call came and they welcomed home two under two—a one-year old boy and two-year old girl. What a whirlwind this was! Adjusting to life with kids brings unique challenges, especially with little ones who struggle to sleep through the night or battle physical and emotional challenges. But, as all first-time parents do, they learned as they went and adapted quickly to their new lifestyle. They sought to help the children feel as safe as possible and accepted them fully as part of their family.

After 13 months of living together, the children were reunited with their biological parents. As it can be assumed, this wasn’t an easy goodbye for the Fausses. There is both joy and heartbreak felt when children in foster care return home. The best-case scenario is always for families to be restored, but that truth doesn’t take away the sting of separation for a foster family.

When they were ready, they spoke with their child-placing agency about opening their home again. This time, however, they expressed interest in welcoming children who were awaiting adoption. The circumstances that followed were God-ordained and orchestrated in His timing. After several visits and meetings, and lots of prayer, they received five—yes, FIVE—children into their home. The kids had been living separately, and the Fausses were their last chance of being adopted into a forever family together. What a miracle!

The road to adoption isn’t easy! For this family, in particular, adjustment was the biggest hurdle. Not only did the kids have to adjust to new foster parents, but they also had to reacclimate



396 Licensed Families



to one another after living separately for so long. And parents, you know the hustle that is school, church, appointments, and extracurriculars? Well, top that off with court dates and regular visits from child welfare and life gets even busier!

The Fausses leaned on their church family for support and encouragement every step of the way. As they showered their kids with unconditional love, so did their church! Now, every week, their five kids are developing positive relationships with adults and peers as they learn about Jesus! Additionally, the church has been a refuge for them as parents. It’s a place where they can share struggles and receive encouragement along the journey. “Healing takes time,” they shared, “and these kids have a lot to heal from. Sometimes our patience runs thin, but our church and family are always there to support, listen, and pray. This journey has made us look to God for His grace and love. He has helped us see our kids through His eyes.”

Foster care and adoption are full of beauty and brokenness, joy and heartache. But when we surrender the journey to God, He grants us stamina for every wind in the road. Siblings once living in separate foster homes are now reunited and thriving. While the path wasn’t easy, God provided everything they needed. It takes a village and they had a great one through the local church. The Fauss family now claims Psalm 126:3 as a life verse, “The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.”



GIVE

LIFE CHURCH PDX

Situated just 10 miles west of downtown Portland is the community of Aloha, Oregon. Aloha is home to Oregon's Roadside Attraction: Harvey the Rabbit, a 26-foot, 2,500-pound fiberglass statue. Additionally, it is home to Life Church PDX, a welcoming family of Christ followers serving God and the community around them. At Life Church, there is a place for everyone, and this motto was boldly demonstrated when their congregation took a stand for kids in foster care last year.

In March of 2023, our team visited Life Church. Pastor Matt and Sarah Blankenship had been serving as the lead pastors for only 6 months when they invited us to share about Backyard Orphans and the opportunity the Church has to be the solution to the foster care crisis. Let's just say, God moved beyond our expectations! In a congregation of 200 people, 9 families said they were interested in fostering and/or adopting! Matt and Sarah had known they eventually wanted to start an orphan care ministry, but God was saying, "Now."

Out of obedience to God's prompting, they wasted no time! Pastor Matt and Sarah got the ball rolling immediately by connecting with local agencies that could license their families for foster care, getting volunteers in place to support the upcoming foster families, and inviting us back to conduct a workshop for their church leadership and volunteers.

When it comes to developing a church-based orphan care ministry, many churches are aware of the need but lack the know-how. That's where our workshop comes in. It meets the church's passion with a sustainable plan. For Pastor Matt and Sarah, the same was true. "The workshop gave us a level of understanding that we did not yet have regarding orphan and foster care ministry. Like many other churches, we knew we needed to get involved but didn't know where to start."

Once they were fully equipped, Life Church went all in! They took advantage of every tool offered through the partnership with Backyard Orphans. They became sponges, absorbing all the knowledge and experience they could from those who had gone before them in this ministry. "We were not only given tools, but access to a network of leaders; we are not alone in this," Pastor Matt and Sarah shared. "Everything we learned from the workshop gave us the confidence to move forward. We were given many good ideas for building relationships with local foster care agencies,



some of which have already yielded fruit!"

In only a year, God has done incredible things through the congregation at Life Church. The passion from the pastors has trickled down through the pews! We were thrilled to receive the following update early this year:

- God has spread enthusiasm throughout the church to get involved in orphan and foster care.
- The congregation has generously given toward the new ministry.
- Families are in the process of fostering and are waiting for placement.
- Teams have been recruited and trained to run two Teen Reach Adventure Camps (camps designed specifically for youth in foster care) this July 2024.
- The church is serving their community by sending teams to refresh and improve the local foster care agency building this August 2024!
- Local agencies are responding to the support and are excited to help place children in the homes and camps of Life Church! God is creating supernatural bonds between the State and the Church.
- Plans are set to expand the ministry globally as they head to Guatemala this June 2024 to serve the women and children of the James Project!

It is our greatest joy to celebrate with churches as they go all in for orphan care. The Bible gives each of us a mandate to care for the orphan (James 1:27). Some are called to foster and adopt; the rest are called to support. We aren't all called to do the same thing, but we are all called to do something. Pray, give, serve, love, support, or welcome home. No matter the role, God uses it to care for His children.

As God called Life Church to reach the children of Aloha and the Portland metro area, God is calling other local churches around the world to care for the hurting children in their backyard. This coming year, we look forward to reaching more churches, who will train up more families, who will welcome more children home.



828 Orphan Care Volunteers



CHURCH TRAINING

EXPANDING OUR REACH



9 New Trainers

As a team, we hold to the motto, “Find the activity of God and be a part of it.” And it was the activity of God that led us to a partnership with Identity Mission. Identity Mission supports vulnerable children by providing family-based care solutions alongside the local church in Honduras. Through a decade of diligent work, Tara Garcia and her team have created a booming network of over 130 churches! The only hurdle? They were in need of a systematic process to help these pastors move forward. I’m sure you can guess that our Backyard Orphans team was more than eager to serve them in this way!

After much prayer and preparation, our team took flight to Honduras to witness first-hand what God was doing there. We were given the opportunity to present at Identify Solutions, an annual conference where orphan care organizations gather to better their practices, encourage one another, and network. “This was critical!” emphasized Tara. “Having Backyard Orphans present at the conference helped set the foundation for our churches. In addition, our partnered NGOs began to grasp how the Honduran Church can be the solution to orphan care!”

God was so faithful to our team as we ministered to the Honduran pastors. Tara’s team was thrilled at the response as well! She shared, “We were at a loss for how to encourage the pastors to move forward. Receiving Backyard Orphans’ training was the key to breaking cycles and inspiring churches to be a solution to the orphan care crisis in their communities.”

Following the trip, we knew the cracked door of Backyard Orphans’ international ministry had been flung wide open! We could hardly wait to see what miracles God would do through the Honduran church orphan care ministries. The trip served as confirmation for Identity Mission as well. “The response we received from our churches solidified that we were heading in the right direction.” Tara explained, “A formal partnership with Backyard Orphans would take our program to the next level—to have an impact like never before!”



One of our initiatives as an organization is to raise up leaders. Adding trainers allows us to expand our reach; exponential growth can only happen when we multiply ourselves. This is why we were over the moon when five key leaders from Identity Mission chose to fly to Dallas for our 3-day Trainer Summit, a process by which Backyard Orphans equips leaders to train churches in developing a foster care, adoption, and support ministry. They took a deep dive into our process and walked away equipped with tools to train their pastors in the same way!

Since the Trainer Summit, the Identity Mission team has implemented the strategies they received from Backyard Orphans. They are engaging more Honduran pastors and are in the process of translating the Backyard Orphans workbook into Spanish! They are elated with the training they received and would recommend it to others who are interested in helping churches take the next step in orphan care. “It is an amazing tool, fully complete and ready to be implemented. Any church can develop a foster care, adoption, and support ministry after receiving the training.”

It was an honor to raise up new trainers from Identity Mission. We look forward to seeing what God will do through their network in the months and years to come! God has given us the vision and opportunity to help the world reach the kids in their own backyard. We continue to pray for more partners like Identity Mission and more passionate people who want to reach churches for orphan care in the U.S. and around the world!




BECOME A TRAINER

OKLAHOMA NETWORK IS ALL IN

Adoption has been a part of Reverend Dr. Darryl Wootton's story from the beginning. His firsthand experience as an adoptee and an adoptive dad motivated him to reach more kids through the local church. He launched a foster care and adoption ministry at Spirit Church in Bartlesville, OK where every member of his church was involved in some way. Now, as the superintendent of the Oklahoma Assemblies of God (OKAG), his mission is to see every OKAG church develop a sustainable foster care and adoption ministry.

For Dr. Wootton, orphan care is much greater than a family calling rooted in personal experience. He sees orphan care as a spiritual calling rooted in God's word. He sees God's warning to the negligent in Exodus 22:22-24. He sees God's demand for justice in Isaiah 1:17. He sees God's heart for the marginalized in Deuteronomy 10:18. He sees God's plan for the lonely in Psalm 68:5-6. He sees God's mandate to care for the vulnerable in James 1:27.

His deep desire is for every church under his leadership to align with the Biblical mandate to care for orphans. "Practically, we saw a need that could be solved," Dr. Wootton shared. "There are currently 430 children in Oklahoma waiting for adoption. In OKAG alone, we have over 450 churches. To solve the problem, we only need one family in every church to say 'yes'. The question wasn't what but how. How to get churches on board, and how to implement a sustainable strategy for this ministry."

With Dr. Wootton's desire to lead OKAG in developing an orphan care ministry and Backyard Orphans' initiative to equip networks, collaboration began immediately. One month into Dr. Wootton's role as superintendent, he sat down with our founder and CEO, Eric Porter. Together, they determined the best next step was to appoint a Backyard Orphans missionary in Oklahoma.

Rebekah Howell joined the efforts as a U.S. orphan care missionary, commissioned by the Assemblies of God. She completed our Trainer Summit and began diligently serving the OKAG full-time. "Rebekah has been an amazing asset to OKAG!" Dr. Wootton shared. "She is always available to answer questions and provide resources to our network pastors. She represents the Biblical mandate of orphan care so well."



2,388 Churches
Engaged Globally



Once they had a leader in place, Dr. Wootton led his key leaders through our Network Workshop. "Backyard Orphans helped us develop plans, processes, strategies, and vision. The workshop set the atmosphere for our entire team and allowed our leaders to catch my vision for the ministry," he shared. The workshop also gave Rebekah a roadmap to follow. She implemented the infrastructure they designed and formed the necessary teams.

Following their Network Training, the OKAG orphan care ministry grew deep and wide! It didn't grow as a silo ministry but became integrated into every area of the network.

- Dr. Darryl and Faith Wootton continued to raise awareness by sharing the Godly value of foster care and adoption at each church they visited.
- They hosted two CarePortal kick-off events on each side of the state to recruit church leaders and their congregations' participation in the portal.
- They formalized a partnership with Compact as their child-placing agency and located office space for them.
- They promoted and attended the Assemblies of God Foster Care Network Conference.
- Their Women's Ministries department developed a fund to help any OKAG licensed ministers who personally begin the foster care or adoption process and need financial support.
- Their Next Gen (children's and youth) department began raising awareness by teaching all students to embrace kids in foster care who come to network camps and events.

"Backyard Orphans is a gift to the OKAG network," Dr. Wootton shared with our team. "Their encouragement and resources are valuable and practical. They are a catalyst to help church networks fulfill the biblical mandate for compassion."

We couldn't be more proud to see a network go all in for orphan care as the OKAG did. They are reaching the 450 churches in their network who, in turn, have begun to reach the hundreds of kids in Oklahoma foster care. Dr. Wootton believes God is raising an army of students from foster care to become the next generation of ministers and missionaries. Our team believes God could realize this vision not only in Oklahoma but in networks of churches worldwide!



**NETWORK
TRAINING**

12 YEARS OF IMPACT

Since 2012, we have seen...

3

Intl. Networks Engaged

2,010

Kids Found Healing Homes

38

States Impacted

174,346

Oz. of caffeine

220

Churches Trained

587,877

Miles Traveled

2,713

Churches served

600,000

Minutes on Zoom Calls



Let's stay in touch!



[BACKYARDORPHANS.ORG](https://www.backyardorphans.org)