

COUNTING BLESSINGS & KEEPING FAITH





1,798

**BABIES, CHILDREN,
TEENS,
YOUNG ADULTS &
PARENTS SERVED**



199

**CHILDREN & TEENS
SERVED
THROUGH RESIDENTIAL
HOMES**



111

**HOMELESS MOTHERS &
CHILDREN
TRANSITIONED TO
INDEPENDENCE**



51

**STUDENTS IN HIGHER
ED PROGRAM
(5-YEAR TOTAL)**

28,865

**DAYS OF CARE DELIVERED TO
199 YOUTH IN RESIDENTIAL
HOMES, PROVIDING FOOD,
CLOTHING, COUNSELING,
NURTURING & GUIDANCE**

18,233

**DAYS OF FOSTER CARE
PROVIDED FOR 163
CHILDREN & YOUTH
WHILE TRAINING &
SUPPORTING 108 FOSTER
FAMILIES**

1,024

**INDIVIDUALS IN 264
FAMILIES
SERVED THROUGH OUR
FAMILY PRESERVATION
PROGRAM**

7,437

**DAYS OF CARE
PROVIDED
FOR YOUTH IN HIGHER
EDUCATION**

HELPING KIDS & FAMILIES IN 2022

PRESERVING FAMILIES

For years, Craig and his two children were virtual prisoners in their home. Both kids have special needs, and his youngest son's behavioral issues were so severe they could not go out in public. Craig felt hopeless.

Then he made a spur-of-the-moment phone call that led to a meeting with Laura Wilkinson, a parent educator with Embrace Alabama Kids. That meeting changed daily life for the single father and his children. "It's been amazing to see the progression," Wilkinson said. "Their life is still hard, but it is so much better than it was."

Craig's story is a testament to the positive impact Embrace Alabama Kids has made in countless lives while fulfilling its mission of providing homes, healing, and hope for children and families in crisis. The Family Preservation program aims to keep at-risk families together by providing intensive support, community resources, parenting classes, and other tools to enable parents to provide a safe, loving, healthy environment for their children.

Craig's greatest desire was to provide that environment for his kids, but he faced an uphill battle. His youngest son, David, faced a myriad of challenges. At 4, he was nonverbal and still in diapers. He had violent outbursts, threw food, destroyed things, bit his father and brother, and ran from Craig at every turn. "He clearly had

developmental issues, but there was no diagnosis," Wilkinson said. "His pediatrician never even recommended he get tested. He had completely fallen through the cracks."

As a result, the family never left home, and Craig was overwhelmed. He listened to a weekly church service on the radio and called the preacher to thank him. As they talked, Craig shared his troubles, and the pastor – Wilkinson's husband – said, "I think I know someone who can help you."

Wilkinson immediately knew addressing David's sensory issues would be essential.

"It was not unusual for me to go through a visit with the dad bleeding the whole time because David hit him with something or bit him," she said. "Truly, he has to be watched every waking moment. It's exhausting."

Wilkinson helped Craig find a new pediatrician, and David was diagnosed with autism and sensory processing disorder. To help David cope better with sounds, lights, and other stimuli, Embrace Alabama Kids provided him with a ball pit, a miniature trampoline with an enclosure, a sensory swing, and other soothing toys. "It has resulted in a much calmer child," Wilkinson said.

Wilkinson, who has worked with the family for 18 months, also arranged for David to receive therapy through Children's Rehabilitation Services. In addition, he now attends school and receives therapy and other services there.

"They taught him to eat with a spoon and to walk down the hallway without running away," Wilkinson said. "Now the family can



go to the store, and they can go to the park. That is huge."

In addition, David is beginning to communicate in his own way. He recently sat in his father's lap, and Craig told David he loved him. David grabbed the phone, found a video of one of his favorite cartoons, and fast-forwarded to a certain point. He hit "play," and the character said, "Love." "He played it over and over. Love, love, love," Wilkinson said. "To say that meant everything to Craig does not even begin to describe it."

David now knows about five words, and he is learning sign language. Embrace Alabama Kids will soon provide him with a communication device. Craig gets a much-needed break while David is at school.

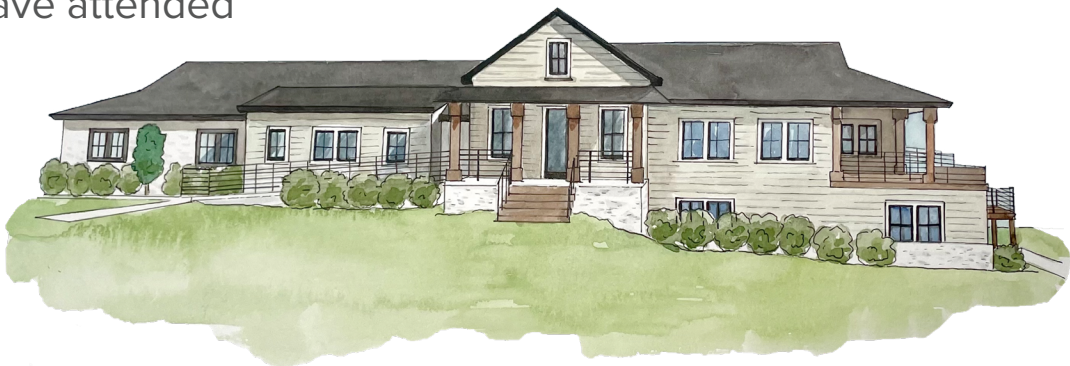
"For the first time in his life, David is making progress," Wilkinson said. "I knew there were a lot of possibilities for him, but I never dreamed that in this short amount of time there would be this much improvement. The quality of life for David and his family has changed drastically in so many ways, and I'm just proud to have been a part of it."

PROVIDING HOMES FOR ALABAMA KIDS

The transition from high school to college can be both difficult and overwhelming. For a student who has experienced challenges in the formative and teen years, college may seem impossible.

In Matthew 19:26, Jesus said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Young people are finding college to be both possible and enjoyable with the support of the Embrace Higher Ed Homes in Tuscaloosa and Florence. Since 2013, young men in the Tuscaloosa area have lived in the Higher Ed Home and have attended the University of Alabama, Shelton State Community College, or Stillman College, while young women in the Florence home have attended the University of North Alabama (UNA) or Northwest-Shoals Community College.

With the support of UNA and dedicated individuals and churches in the Florence community, Embrace Alabama Kids will soon begin construction on a new home that will house up to 12 students. “This new home will expand our ministry by opening doors for young adults, involving members of this caring community, and providing a safe, secure, and stable environment that both encourages and models a successful household for each of our residents,” said Blake Horne, Ph.D., president and CEO. “These Higher Ed Homes move the new high school graduate into a place where intellectual, emotional, and spiritual life can mature, helping these students to thrive.”



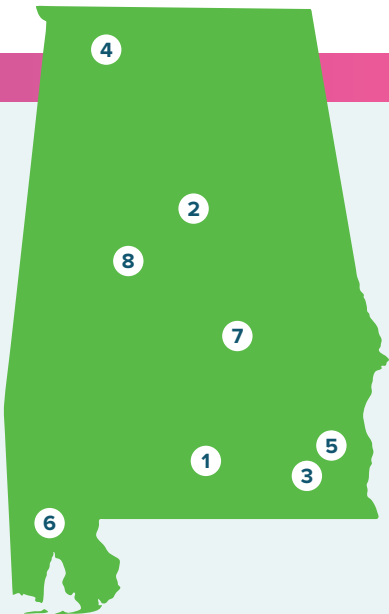
SCAN TO
DONATE



For more information, contact Rebecca Morris at 205.837.0141.

EMBRACE ALABAMA KIDS PROGRAM MAP

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. Andalusia, AL | Family Preservation Program, Foster Care Program, Parents as Teachers Program |
| 2. Birmingham, AL | Overton Home, External Affairs Office |
| 3. Dothan, AL | Family Preservation Program, Foster Care Program, Parents as Teachers Program |
| 4. Florence, AL | Higher Education Home |
| 5. Headland, AL | Settlement Youth Boys Home, Transitional Living Program |
| 6. Mobile, AL | Babies First Home, Parenting Support Program (in partnership with the Children’s Trust Fund) |
| 7. Montgomery, AL | Mary Ellen’s Hearth, Headquarters Office |
| 8. Tuscaloosa, AL | Higher Education Home, Foster Care Program, Independent Living Program |



REMOVING BARRIERS FOR FLORIDA KIDS

Young adults who have experienced foster care or other nontraditional care face numerous challenges. College is often impossible, even with a scholarship, because of the costs of books, labs, food, housing, and transportation. One of the greatest barriers for these young adults is a lack of consistent guidance and support from a caring adult.

In response, the new Embrace Florida Kids Higher Ed Home will provide a debt-free college education at the University of West Florida or Pensacola State College for area students. Through an Impact 100 grant and other funding, including a generous church donation for furnishings, Embrace has opened its new Higher Ed Home with the goal of helping these students overcome barriers and succeed in college. Students will live as a family with a

resident advisor who is pursuing a master’s degree.

As students thrive, Embrace plans to expand. “We are excited to be offering the first ministry of this kind to students in northwest Florida,” said Ramsey Lawrence, director of development and community relations. “We are able to offer stability and opportunity for vulnerable students because of the support and engagement of this caring community.” The Higher Ed Home will expand the mission of Embrace Florida Kids to provide homes, healing, and hope.



SCAN TO
DONATE



For more information, contact Ramsey Lawrence at 850.533.9968.

EMBRACE FLORIDA KIDS PROGRAM MAP

Embrace Florida Kids accepts referrals for children and families throughout the four-county area for all programs listed.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. Pensacola, FL | Higher Education Home* |
| 2. Crestview, FL | Family Preservation Program |
| 3. Milton, FL | Milton Girls Home |
| 4. Pace, FL | Foster Care Program,
Family Preservation Program,
External Affairs Office |

**Purchased in 2022 and began operations in 2023*

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FROM THE CEO LEADING TOGETHER WITH HOPE & EXPECTATION



When you lead an organization with a mission like ours for 11 years, you get a front-row seat to watch God work on a regular basis. You witness firsthand that faith is greater than fear, hope is stronger than despair, and the love of God triumphs over all manner of childhood hardships. I stand amazed each day by the resilience of the children and young people who come to share their lives with us at Embrace Alabama Kids and Embrace Florida Kids. Many of them have been abused, abandoned, and neglected. They have every reason to expect nothing better from life.

But with time and the calling of a dedicated staff, we teach our young people that life expects something from them. How do we do that? Like any parent, we provide love, structure, and consistency. We create the kind of predictable environments that all children need to grow and thrive. In addition to this, we show them a better path by providing life-changing experiences many of these young people could only dream of before – regular worship, service-learning opportunities, and life

experiences. They eventually learn to trust and, predictably, want to return a measure of the grace that they have experienced during their time with us to the world.

Your gifts are more essential now than ever to ensure that we can continue watching God work through the lives of these young people. My great hope is that the denominational troubles we have witnessed these last few years will in no way inhibit our ability to offer Christ to those we serve. We know that the love of Christ extends beyond these struggles to reach the precious children He created and entrusted to all of us.

My hope is that Embrace Alabama Kids and Embrace Florida Kids will remain the ministry of choice by all those called Methodists in Alabama and Northwest Florida, as well as all those who wish to minister to vulnerable children and families, regardless of denominational affiliation. John Wesley encouraged people of Christian faith to “do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.” You, as a donor and believer, have found purpose and joy in



this Wesleyan principle, which multiplies the good in the children and families we serve.

As you review this annual report, I hope you will see and realize the impact you are helping us make. As you read about these children, young people, and families, I hope you will immerse yourself for a moment in their stories. Marvel at their courage. Applaud their determination. Imagine a wonderful future for all of them.

I pray for God to lead you to be a part of the healing our ministry facilitates and let your focus be hope, not discouragement. Let us do good together by joining to stand in an ever-widening gap that affects the most vulnerable in our communities.



To God be the glory,

K. Blake Horne, Ph.D.

EMBRACING KIDS & METHODIST TRADITION

Embrace Alabama Kids and Embrace Florida Kids have evolved and changed throughout history. Founded by two Methodist pastors in 1890 as the Alabama Methodist Orphanage, Embrace remains rooted in Wesleyan values of grace and compassion. Our efforts to care for children and families extend to all. We remain proudly rooted in Methodist tradition, and we serve as a ministry extension for churches from all Methodist expressions as well as other partner churches, denominations, and individuals.

As we served families and children, not just orphans, our name changed to the Methodist Children's Home and later to the United Methodist Children's Home. The name changed again in 2021 to Embrace Alabama Kids and Embrace Florida Kids to better reflect who we are and what we do. We serve as a lifeline for kids from birth through college and work to reunify families whenever possible.

Although the United



Methodist Church has experienced divisive change, the needs of the children and families we serve remain ever present. The individuals in our care need the healing ministry of Embrace more than ever. Church giving to Embrace has decreased by 22 percent, and unanticipated changes to Medicaid resulted in a loss to Embrace of \$800,000 in 2021 and 2022. History has shown our ability to adapt to change by focusing on caring for the most vulnerable of children, and our growth and success have been through partnership with faithful, compassionate givers.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we are supported by

individuals, state contracts, investment returns, and grants. We do not receive apportioned funds from the Methodist conferences. Churches, individuals, and grants provide 49 percent of our funding. Another 29 percent comes from state contracts, while 22 percent comes from investment returns from our endowment.

Our greatest need is your financial gift. As we meet the current needs of those we serve and work to project future needs, we require support more than ever from churches and individuals of all faiths and backgrounds. Every child we serve is precious, and every gift we receive advances our life-changing work.

BUILDING TRUST & RESTORING FUTURES

Restoration results from a sustained loving effort, often requiring the skills and patience of many caring individuals. We marvel at the change when a table, car, or home can be restored to its intended beauty and purpose as the result of the time and love invested. How much more beautiful it is when lives can be restored.

The Milton Girls Home, one of the many life-changing programs of Embrace Florida Kids, provides a safe and stable home where teen girls who have experienced significant life challenges can receive mentoring, academic accountability, and spiritual care. Through the loving efforts of qualified caregivers, these girls are becoming the amazing, self-reliant, competent women God created them to be.

Ramsey Lawrence, director of development and community relations at Embrace, tells the story of Sarah, a young girl who came to the Milton Girls Home after being left in the care of a man who was abusing her sexually, physically, and emotionally. Sarah was reluctant to speak or make eye contact, isolating herself from others. Sarah noticed that Lawrence was moving slowly and asked what was wrong. Lawrence replied that her foot was broken in three places, so the doctor required her to wear a boot. Sarah replied, “Nobody ever took me to the doctor when they broke my bones.”

“While Sarah was with us, we witnessed her blossom into a confident young woman who welcomed self-discovery and authenticity,” said Amanda, a youth care worker at the home. “Her individual personality, confidence, and trust grew exponentially.” Because staff members create an individualized plan of care for each resident, Sarah received targeted nurturing activities, which in her case included equine therapy and special education classes while living in a safe home where she could study, play, and grow in comfort and security.

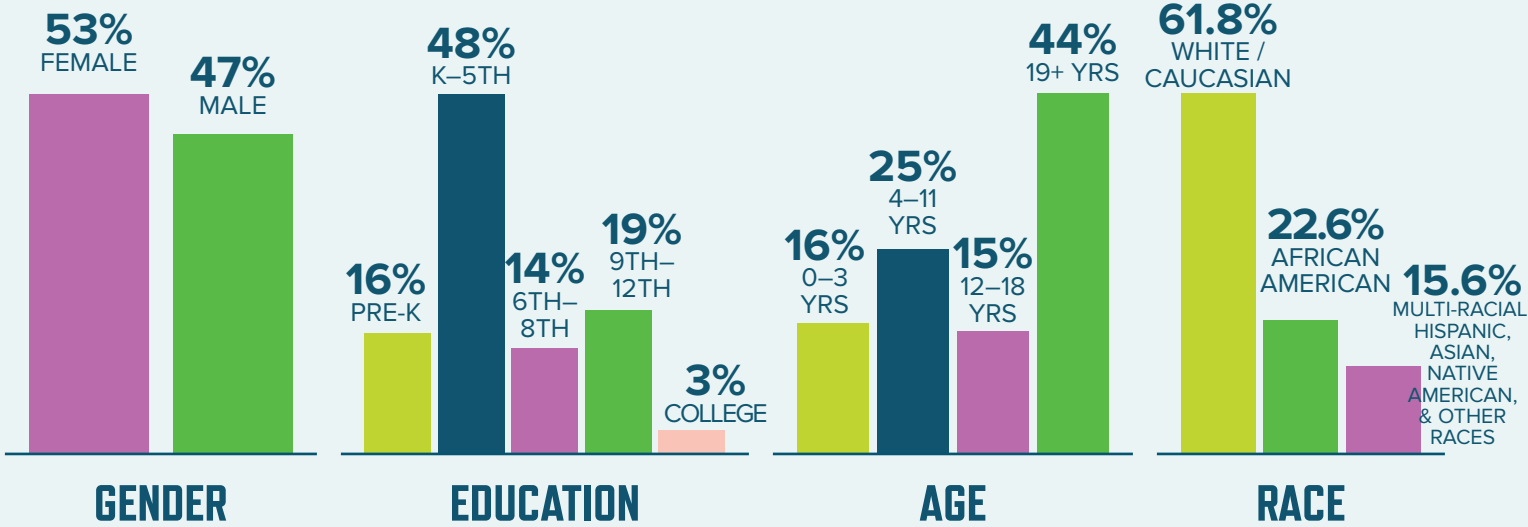
Once visits between Sarah and a family member were approved, Embrace provided support and guidance to Sarah and her family to build and strengthen their connection. The family member eventually adopted Sarah. She has learned to drive, is pursuing her GED with aspirations of joining the military, and maintains a job while living independently with a roommate.

“With the consistency, stability, and nurturing that she needed, Sarah has built and sustained trusting relationships that continue to guide her into adulthood,” Amanda said. “She continues to discover who she is as she strives to achieve her own version of success.”

Sarah’s sense of self has, in fact, lovingly been restored.

2022 | BY THE NUMBERS

INDIVIDUALS SERVED BY EMBRACE

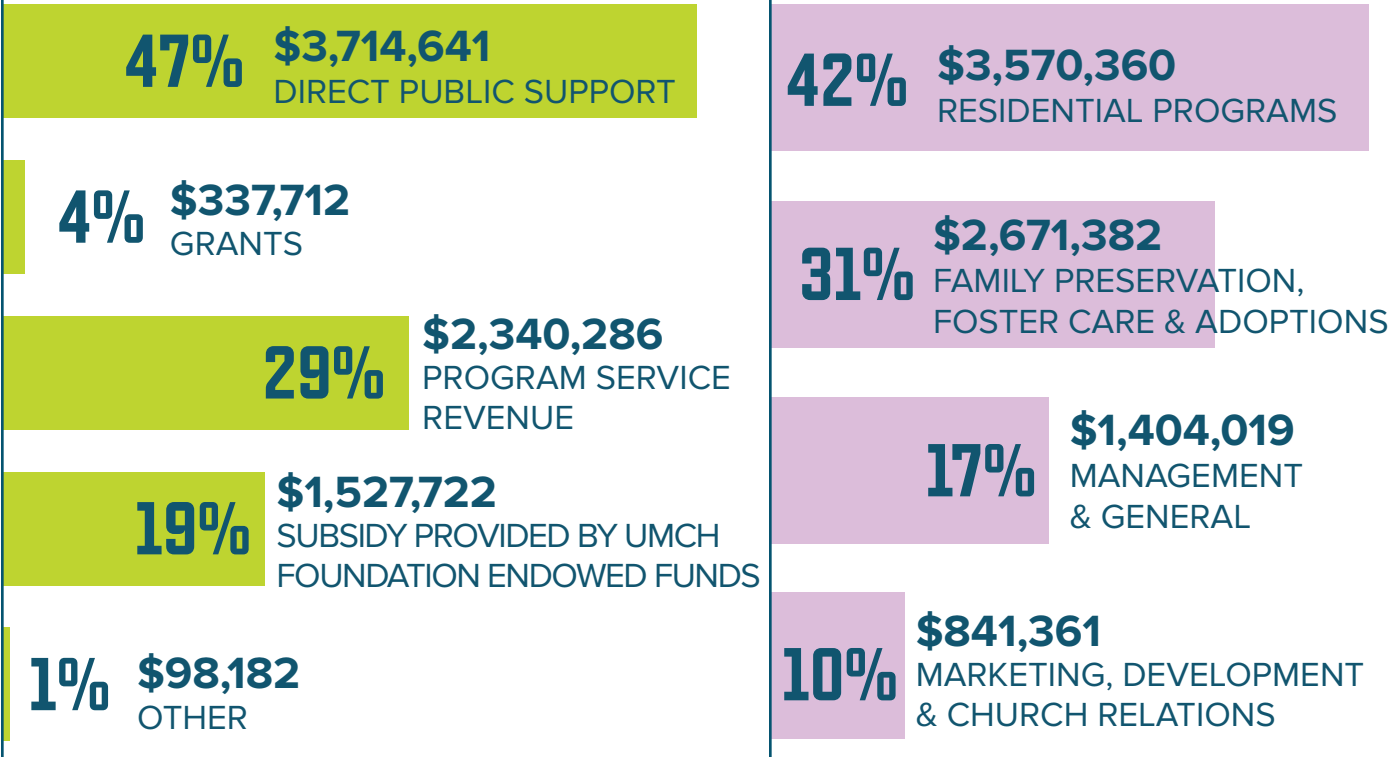


2022

REVIEWING THE NUMBERS

TOTAL REVENUE, SUPPORT & GAINS \$8,018,543

TOTAL EXPENSES \$8,487,122



Unrealized loss on perpetual trusts held by other entities totaled \$707,341. Expenses continue and often increase in a challenging economic climate, and the people we serve were blessed to receive uninterrupted services in 2022 because of our long-term commitment to conservative financial management. However, this revenue-to-expense ratio is not sustainable for the long-term growth and commitment we have made to those we serve, making every gift even more precious and necessary.

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- Wesley Britt

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- FLORIDA
- K. Blake Horne, Ph.D.

President/CEO
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Executive Director
- Ramsey Lawrence

Director of Development and
Community Relations
- Charlotte Thomas

Director of Programs

LEAVING A LEGACY

Embrace Alabama Kids and Embrace Florida Kids works to use every gift to impact the lives of children and families. Because we will always have vulnerable children in our communities, we encourage donors to leave a meaningful legacy that improves lives and changes generations. The 1890 Society, named for the year our ministry was founded, offers tremendous hope for present ministries and future growth because of those visionary individuals who embrace the kids of Alabama and Northwest Florida through planned giving.

Embrace offers many options that make

legacy giving possible. Individuals who desire to impact the lives of our children through a future gift can designate Embrace as the beneficiary of assets ranging from life insurance to investments. A gift of appreciated securities may allow the giver to avoid capital gains and diversify, yielding tax benefits and additional savings.

Since 1890, generous supporters have been compelled by God's grace to recognize the need for advocates for children served by this ministry. Through a legacy gift, you can join the important work of donors who have invested in children and families for more than 130 years by providing homes, healing, and hope.

If you have a desire to leave a gift that improves lives, we would love to talk with you about the many options available. Contact Rebecca Morris at rebecca.morris@letsembracekids.org or 205.837.0141 to explore how you can create a loving legacy. Your gift can be designated in a way that supports the programs or individuals that best reflect your giving priorities. We invite you to consider the opportunity to become a part of the 1890 Society and stand with previous generations whose gifts continue to make a lasting difference for children, families, and communities.



GATHERING FOR GOOD



More than 2,000 years after the formation of the church as detailed in Acts 2, fellowship remains at the center of life. At Embrace, we devote ourselves to the communities we serve because our board members, our staff, and most importantly, our children are part

of those communities. Fellowship allows us to grow in our common goal of changing lives.

Whether we gather after work to share food, beverages, and stories in Andalusia or come together at a meeting place for live music and great conversation in Santa Rosa Beach, much joy is found in breaking bread and sharing our lives with others. Our Gathering for Good events have become special moments during which we can celebrate all the good things that can happen when

we value families and children.

We would love to gather with people in your community. If you are interested in hosting a Gathering for Good event, contact Rebecca Morris (AL) at rebecca.morris@letsembracekids.org, 205.837.0141, or Ramsey Lawrence (FL) at ramsey.lawrence@embraceflkids.org, 850.533.9968. Let's gather for good!



**GATHERING
FOR GOOD**

GETTING INVOLVED & EMBRACING THE MISSION

Even the greatest efforts of the staff of Embrace Alabama Kids and Embrace Florida Kids cannot match the powerful impact of the loving support of those individuals and churches who embrace the mission of our organization. In 2022, Embrace served nearly 2,000 vulnerable children and families suffering from neglect, abuse, and abandonment throughout Alabama and Northwest Florida. This life-changing work happened as the result of the efforts of many caring people. We are thankful for all who choose to become foster parents, help us share our story by hosting a speaker or event, pray for the families and kids we serve as well as our staff, and provide much-needed financial support.

How can you get involved?

Giving

Every gift is valued. Whether you make a one-time, recurring, or legacy gift, your generosity ensures that the direct support of children and families that we have provided for more than 133 years continues. This impact is often felt for generations as cycles of abuse or hardship are ended.

Hosting

We want to share our message. Invite us to come share stories of our impact at your church or local gathering. Include a White Christmas offering at your church this holiday season, or host a Gathering for Good event in your community.

Joining

When you establish a legacy gift, you join the 1890 Society and stand with previous generations whose gifts continue to make a lasting difference. To learn more, reach out to us at rebecca.morris@letsembracekids.org or ramsey.lawrence@embraceflkids.org.



OUR MISSION

In response to God's Word, we embrace and nurture vulnerable children and families by providing homes, healing, and hope.