



EMBRACE

FLORIDA KIDS

HOMES, HEALING & HOPE

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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United Methodist Children's Home Unveils New Name for Florida Ministry; Calls on Community to Take Action

Unveiling a new name for its Northwest Florida ministry, the United Methodist Children's Home, is calling on the community to get involved in embracing vulnerable children. Having cared for children in the state of Florida since 1974 as "the United Methodist Children's Home," the foster care and family services 501(c)(3) non-profit has determined it's only appropriate that the bold call-to-action be its new name — Embrace Florida Kids.

The name change is timely for the nonprofit, who has recently become more equipped to meet a growing need in Northwest Florida where the demand for foster and family preservation services has doubled. Since January of 2018, the organization has hired seven new staff members. The organization's new name is accompanied by a new brand, including visual brand, website, collateral materials, and an awareness campaign.

United Methodist Children's Home (UMCH), the founding ministry of Embrace Florida Kids, is headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama. The organization will continue operations in the state of Alabama as UMCH.

"As our ministry grew in the state of Florida, we aimed to address not only the increased need for foster care and family preservation services for vulnerable children and families, but also the concern that our donors' contributions would benefit programs in their local area," says Blake Horne, President and CEO of United Methodist Children's Home. "Our new name allows our supporters to clearly designate and understand where their contributions are directly going, while maintaining confidence in the standard of excellence that United Methodist Children's Home continues to provide."

The nonprofit has roots in the South since 1890, where it was established as an orphanage in Summerfield, Alabama. As the needs of children and families changed, the United Methodist Children's Home evolved to become much more than an orphanage, growing to offer a variety of programs and services for thousands of children and families spanning 30 counties in Alabama and Northwest Florida.

Embrace Florida Kids will continue to provide programs and services including foster care, a residential group home for girls in Milton, a teen center in Crestview and an intensive in-home family preservation program. Aside from the teen center, each program serves a four-county area in Northwest Florida.

"We are an organization that is on the move, working diligently to provide safety and support for the many kids we serve. This new name more accurately reflects and communicates how we are actively embracing vulnerable children and inviting others to get involved," says Kristin Alberda, Executive Director.

To learn more, get involved or apply to become a foster parent, visit EmbraceFLKids.org.

About Embrace Florida Kids

Embrace Florida Kids is a 501(c)(3) faith-based agency offering foster care, residential care and family preservation services to vulnerable children and families in Northwest Florida. Embrace Florida Kids is a ministry of the United Methodist Children's home headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama, which was established in 1890. The organization provides homes, healing and hope to hundreds of children and families yearly, spanning Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties. Visit EmbraceFLKids.org



We are Embrace Florida Kids

Homes, Healing & Hope

Helping children thrive. Giving families hope.

We're fiercely passionate about serving and advocating for vulnerable children and families in crisis. We do more than provide housing for children, we embrace them into environments in which they can live, learn and thrive.

WHO WE ARE

We're a faith-based agency who is passionately focused on providing homes, healing and hope to vulnerable children who come from families in crisis, placed in foster care at no fault of their own.

With children as our first priority, we help broken families in crisis address harmful behavior, giving them a second chance at becoming whole again.

- » Accredited by the Council of Accreditation (COA)
- » A national member of the Foster Family Treatment Association (FFTA)
- » An agency member of the Florida Coalition for Children (FCC)
- » Licensed by the Department of Children and Family (DCF) as a Child Placing Agency and Child Caring Agency
- » Contracted for services through Families First Network (FFN)

WHERE WE SUCCEEDED

- » **95% SUCCESS RATE** in our family preservation program—keeping families together instead of entering the foster care system
- » **100% HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE** for girls in our residential program
- » Added support for foster families resulting in **LOWER TURNOVER RATES** for foster parents
- » **LONGER, MORE STABLE** foster home placements for children

ADDRESSING A GROWING CONCERN

Our foster care system is struggling to keep up.

There are more children in foster care than there are available licensed foster homes to care for these children in Northwest Florida. We're working to fill the need by recruiting, training, licensing and supporting potential foster parents in NWFL to take on the growing need in our community.

IT'S NOT JUST WHAT WE DO, IT'S WHO WE ARE.

While faith serves as the pillar of our mission, we're driven by care, compassion and a desire to nurture, support and prepare kids for a productive future.

We're on a mission to change the trajectory of lives for at-risk kids and families by providing them with a sense of security:

♥ ENSURING SAFETY

We work with foster families, biological families, state agencies and community partners to provide safe environments for kids.

♥ ACHIEVING STABILITY

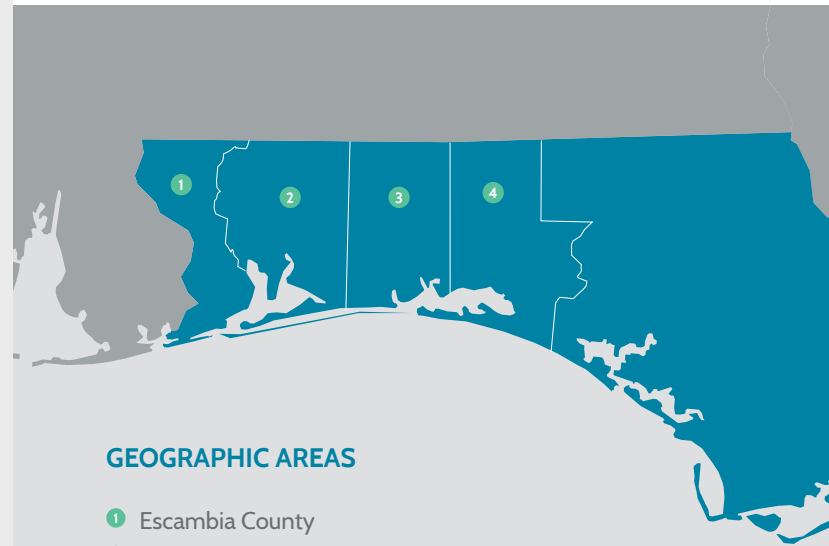
We work tirelessly to ensure a sense of stability for children and families by assessing their needs and connecting them with those who can help meet those needs.

♥ STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

We work with both biological and foster families to equip them with the resources for success.

WHO WE SERVE

- » Teens & Young Adults
- » Biological Parents
- » Foster Parents
- » Children & Youth in the Foster Care System
- » Government/Reporting Agencies



GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

- 1 Escambia County
- 2 Santa Rosa County
- 3 Okaloosa County
- 4 Walton County



CONTACT INFO

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LEADERSHIP BIO



Kristin Alberda, MSW, LICSW
Embrace Florida Kids Executive Director

Kristin Alberda is the Executive Director for Embrace Florida Kids. Kristin is tasked with ensuring that the babies, children and youth in the faith-based agency's care have safe, loving, secure homes. The daughter of a Methodist minister, she has always loved and supported UMCH, the organization's founding ministry, in which she also serves as Senior Vice President of Programs. She developed a deep professional respect for UMCH while working as an adoption counselor and foster care counselor before joining its staff in 2006. She has been a child welfare advocate for 21 years, Kristin earned her bachelor's degree at the University of West Florida and her master's degree in social work from Florida State University. She is a licensed and independent clinical social worker and maintains her child welfare supervisor and child welfare licensing professional certifications.

Charlotte Thomas
Embrace Florida Kids Director of Programs

Charlotte Thomas is the Director of Programs for Embrace Florida Kids. Responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations of the ministry, she loves helping to provide nurturing environments for children and youth experiencing a chaotic time in their lives. After earning a master's degree in counseling and human development, she has enjoyed a 25-year career in the child welfare field. Charlotte's penchant for problem-solving comes in handy while overseeing the ministry's foster care program, residential group home, teen resource center, and family preservation and reunification services. She maintains her child welfare protection certification.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jerry L. Maygarden
President, Board of Directors

The Honorable Jerry Louis Maygarden is the Board President of Embrace Florida Kids. He is a community activist with a long and distinguished career in public service. As a lifelong parishioner and servant-leader in the United Methodist Church, he felt called to serve on the board of Embrace Florida Kids. Jerry is a former city councilman and mayor of Pensacola, Florida. He served as a state legislator and majority leader in the Florida House of Representatives. He also served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce.

Blake Horne, Ph.D., LMFT
Member, Board of Directors; UMCH President & CEO

Dr. Blake Horne is President and CEO of the United Methodist Children's Home (UMCH), the founding ministry of Embrace Florida Kids. After earning his doctorate in marriage and family therapy from Florida State University and becoming a licensed therapist, he completed three years of post-doctoral study at the Georgetown Family Center in Washington, D.C. and served as Executive Director of The Samaritan Counseling Center in Montgomery, Alabama for 12 years. Once Dr. Horne realized he had become more passionate about leading an organization than providing direct delivery of clinical services, he joined UMCH in 2012. In his leadership role, Blake enjoys overseeing the growth and success of UMCH and Embrace Florida Kids.



Board Members



Lisa Ausley
*Associate Pastor
Crosspoint UMC*



Greg Crouch
*President/CEO, Pepsi-Cola
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Jeff Dannelly
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Emerald Coast/Bay Private Wealth
Management, Hancock Whitney*



Kim Stagner
*CFO and Co-Owner
Global Military Marketing*



Kirby Williams
*Attorney
Barker Williams, PLLC &
Owner at Shoreline Title, LLC*



Our Programs

Safe and Supportive Homes for Kids

Our caring and compassionate staff provide stability, support and education for a wide variety of people across a spectrum of ages and life stages: from infant to teen; college student to young adult; and beyond for biological and foster parents.

Full Spectrum Services

Our licensed and accredited programs begin with family preservation to prevent kids from entering the foster care system.

But if preservation isn't possible, our caring staff work to place vulnerable kids in loving foster care homes that can provide them safety and support.

Embrace Family Preservation

With over a 95% success rate, our family preservation and reunification program works to keep families together through education and skill-building. Utilizing an evidence-based practice model, we cover topics that include parenting, housekeeping, child development, budgeting, accessing resources, building support systems and more.

Embrace Foster Care

Our foster care program recruits, trains and licenses foster parents in Northwest Florida in addition to continually providing support and resources that position foster families for success.



2018 Community Impact Northwest Florida

EMBRACE FAMILY PRESERVATION

Providing in-home prevention and reunification treatment to **389 FAMILY MEMBERS (92 FAMILIES)**

EMBRACE FOSTER CARE

15,121 DAYS OF CARE for **116 CHILDREN** from Pensacola to Destin & Santa Rosa Beach

Embrace Milton Girls Home

SERVING ESCAMBIA, SANTA ROSA, OKALOOSA AND WALTON COUNTIES

A nurturing home setting established to break the cycle of abuse and trauma for young women. Young women in the Embrace Home program have a 100% high school graduation rate; are encouraged to further their education; have access to consistent, healthy meals; participate in extracurricular activities such as basketball, chorus, volleyball and art; and benefit from increased exposure to professional, personal, and spiritual development opportunities.

Embrace Teen Center

SERVING OKALOOSA COUNTY

A supportive teen center that empowers teens, provides them with tutoring after school or during the summer, independent living skills development, group counseling and mentoring, social and cultural activities, as well as volunteering and employment assistance.

2018 Community Impact Northwest Florida

EMBRACE MILTON GIRLS HOME

2,469 DAYS OF CARE for 18 TEEN GIRLS

EMBRACE TEEN CENTER

Provided after-school and summer care empowerment to 29 TEENAGERS



EMBRACE
FLORIDA KIDS

HOMES, HEALING & HOPE

Brand Assets

[Download our brand assets at:
embraceflkids.org/media](https://embraceflkids.org/media)

All downloads must be used according to the standards as outlined in the media page.