



AUSTIN CHILDREN'S SHELTER



2009 ANNUAL REPORT

“

This is my first successful placement. I've learned to walk away from arguments and come back to discuss things when we have cooled down. I am grateful God gave me ACS.
– Felicia, 16 years old

”



Dear Friend,

In many ways, 2009 stands as the most remarkable year in the history of the Austin Children's Shelter. We commemorated 25 years of service to vulnerable children and expanded our facilities and services exponentially. It was a year of momentous accomplishments and change.

We completed construction of our beautiful 13-acre campus; successfully concluded our \$14.5 million Capital Campaign; and ended the year on solid financial footing.

The first children receiving emergency shelter care moved into the new cottages in October 2009. The new facilities have also enabled us to offer critical new programs, including long-term care; special placement for teen mothers and their children; a child development program for teens; and programs that offer a continuum of care for youth aging out of foster care.

National changes in child welfare resulted in a shift to provide long-term care for older youth. This trend is our opportunity as we may be their last chance of hope for a better future. And by offering long-term care, we have more time with youth to make a deeper impact on their lives.

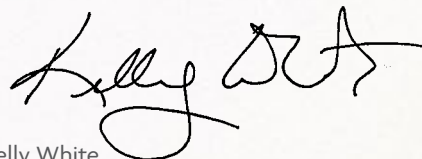
Early in 2010, we said goodbye and thank you to our CEO, Gena VanOsselaer. Now, the Board of Directors and staff are delighted to welcome our new CEO, Kelly White.

We are so grateful for your support, which has made all of this possible, and we invite you to continue our journey as we impact the lives of children in new and expanded ways.

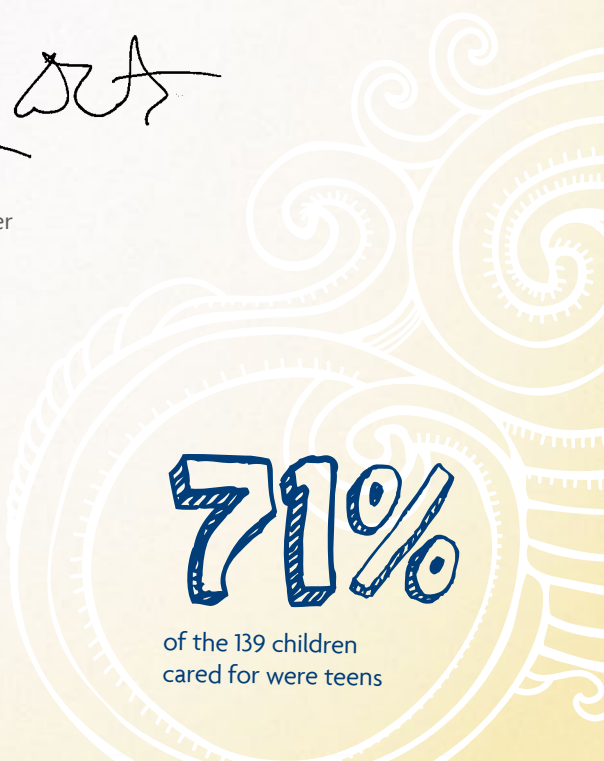
Sincerely,



Ann Benolken
Chair, Board of Directors



Kelly White
Chief Executive Officer



71%

of the 139 children
cared for were teens

“

The shelter has helped keep me on my toes and not letting me give up on things or myself.

– Danielle, 19 years old

”

A Year of Transition

Welcome to the Austin Children's Shelter 2009 Annual Report. This was truly a historic year and one that will have a profound impact on the future of children and youth in Central Texas. As we commemorated 25 years of service, we looked back at our humble roots and marveled at what we have become today.

We began in 1984. We were just a small group of individuals who saw a need to provide emergency housing for children removed from their homes but with no place to go. As the Austin-Travis County Shelter for Infants and Children, we served six young children at a time. Today, we have a new facility with five cottages and three program support buildings where we will be able to serve up to 78 teens, adolescents, and teen mothers with their young children.

In some ways, the challenges we face today are bigger than we've ever encountered with a greatly expanded campus and additional services. But we also have many more opportunities to make a meaningful impact on the lives of these children. Because we can now serve more teens, our move may be the most important thing we've done in our 25-year history. For the teenagers, there are few opportunities left to change their lives for the better, but now we can help more of them transition to life on their own with more tools to help them succeed.

Although we are bigger, we have not changed in the fundamental ways. We are still committed to giving children of all ages the best possible care to help reduce the emotional trauma they have experienced.

We now have the space to do so much more.

Now we can give special attention to teen mothers and their little ones, which can help to break the cycle of abuse by positively impacting the next generation. By offering long-term care, we will have more time to work with teens and have a positive, life-long effect. The education and recreation building provides much needed space for exercise, creativity and learning. And we've expanded counseling to include the whole family.

Thanks to you, the future for children and youth in foster care offers so much more promise.




52
DAYS

Average length of stay



“

The people at the shelter really care about me and have given me the opportunity to try so many new things.

– Robert, 15 years old

”



25 YEARS OF SERVICE

1984

WELLINGTON ST.

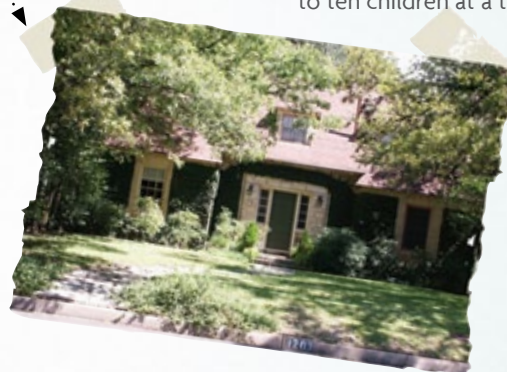
The Austin-Travis County Shelter for Infants and Children opens. Known as the Peggy Seale First House, this home housed up to six children who were cared for by house parents.



1986

LORRAINE ST.

A new location in West Austin becomes our home where we are able to care for up to ten children at a time.



1989

ENFIELD RD.

We move to a new home and are renamed the Children's Shelter & Assessment Center of Texas. We care for 15 children from newborns up to 17-year-olds.



1998

ENFIELD RD.

A second home opens adjacent to the existing shelter home and expands our services to a total of 30 children and youth. We change our name to Austin Children's Shelter.



683

medical, dental & vision
appointments



2009

4800 MANOR ROAD
Austin Children's Shelter opens a new
eight building campus with the capacity
to serve up to 78 children and teens.

5,484

Shelter days provided

The Dream Becomes Reality

On October 7, 2009, we held our Grand Opening Celebration. Donors, volunteers, staff and the public came together to celebrate this milestone event. Through years of planning and exceptional support from the community, the dream had finally become a reality.



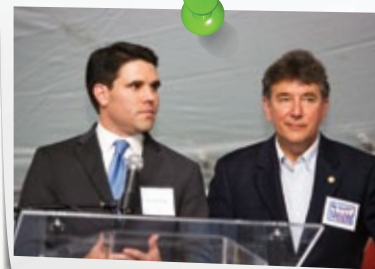
Front row from left: Beth Stabile, Chris Busse, Margaret Shaw, Chas Studor, Gena VanOsselaer, Dick Rathgeber, Pat Munday, Sara Rathgeber
Back row: Wes Peoples, Susan Farmer, Gary Farmer, Frank Newton, Dr. Kathryn Kotrla, Deanna & Jeff Serra, Bill Munday



2009 Board Chair
Chas Studor and Abe Studor



Faith Cooper listening
to The Biscuit Brothers



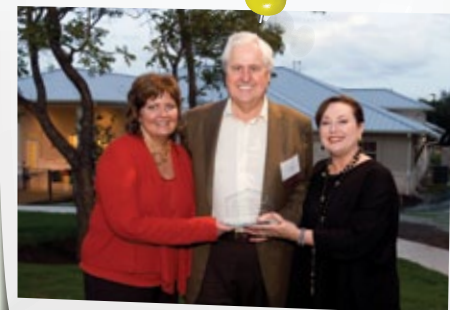
Representatives Patrick Rose & Elliott Naishtat



Jennifer Emelogou & Caroline Bogues,
Former ACS Clients



Commissioner Anne Heiligenstein,
Texas Department of Family
and Protective Services



Former CEO Gena VanOsselaer
and Bill & Pat Munday



397

on-site therapy sessions

Our Programs

building tomorrows

Educational development is the foundation for building a better tomorrow. We help children develop skills needed for academic success through tutoring, homework assistance, pre-school activities, careful skills assessment and case management to remove obstacles to success. In addition, youth have access to an on-site library and computer lab.

connections to emotional well-being

The emotional well-being of each child is vital to healing and moving past trauma. Through therapy, children learn to cope with depression and anger, to communicate more effectively, build self-reliance and trust, and how to avoid future incidents of abuse and neglect.

healthy kids

Through our partnership with People's Community Clinic, we provide medical care on-site including thorough examinations, lab testing, nutritional analysis, immunizations and any necessary treatments. These medical reports go with each child to their permanent placement, laying a medical foundation for a healthier life.

horizons

The right activities can open new worlds for some children, help manage fear or stress, and build self-esteem. Children participate in sports, cultural events and creative endeavors that broaden their horizons and instill ambition for success.

parenting essentials

Parenting education can be a powerful tool to help break the cycle of abuse. Teens learn about childhood development, nutrition, positive discipline, paternal rights and parental responsibilities. Teen mothers work one-on-one with our early childhood educator to learn basic child care as well as age appropriate play to nurture and create healthy bonds.

s.a.f.e.

By offering Shelter, Apparel, Food and a secure Environment, we enable children to begin to feel safe and to heal. These most basic needs include accommodations in a homelike facility and 24-hour supervised care, balanced meals, healthy snacks and nutritional supplements.

Ramona and Baby Veronica

A tearful fifteen-year-old girl and her five-month-old baby arrived at the Austin Children's Shelter on a rainy evening. Ramona's new reality hit her hard. She was now alone in Child Protective Services with a young child, and she cried for the first few weeks at the Shelter.

Ramona was proud of Veronica, her beautiful baby girl, but had limited resources during her pregnancy. Her own mother was homeless; her father lost parental rights due to drug and alcohol abuse; and her grandparents were unable to care for a pregnant and angry teenager who was out of their control. Ramona was good about taking care of her baby's needs but didn't understand that it took more than feeding and changing diapers. Working with our early childhood educator, Ramona learned how to interact with Veronica and about age-appropriate play to nurture her child. She also attended the Shelter's child development classes to learn about developmental milestones, best sleep practices, safety and early brain development. Baby Veronica thrived with her mom's attention and staff interaction.

In the midst of learning how to be a good parent to her baby, Ramona began skipping school and her grades fell. Feeling that what she needed was encouragement, Ramona's therapist here at the Shelter decided to make a deal. If Ramona went to school for 30 days without missing and brought her grades up, she would take her to out to dinner – just the two of them. The plan worked. Not only did Ramona do better in school, but she also began attending our Life Skills* program and decided she wanted to someday work in a medical office to support herself and her little girl. She also decided she did not want more children until she was married.

While still a teen with teen behaviors, Ramona became a more educated and confident mom who did not want to drop out of school now that she had developed career goals.

After a successful two-week visit with her grandparents, she and Veronica were permanently returned to their custody. Ramona grew up a lot in our care.

But now, she has learned to become a better parent and fulfill her responsibilities and obligations to her family.

*The Life Skills program is a project of The Junior League of Austin.

27,383

healthy meals and snacks served





David's Smile Returns

Six-year-old David arrived at the Shelter with his three siblings. They had suffered repeated sexual abuse—horrors no child should ever have to face. Each child reacted differently. For David, he would explode with anger. He expressed his fury with a string of cussing and through sexually acting out by touching himself in front of the staff and other kids. He was desperate for a reaction. Any reaction. But he also had a deep distrust of adults and would not let them close to him.

Our direct care staff knew they had to help David learn to express his anger and frustration in a healthier and more appropriate manner. They also knew that he needed to feel safe, so that he could learn to trust. It's a slow process and requires a great deal of calm, persistent patience. When David would explode, rather than reacting to his behaviors, the nearest staff member would calmly take him aside and explain why the specific thing he had done was inappropriate and give him an example of what he could do instead. Then they would ask David to repeat what they had said to be sure he had understood.

Day after day, the same process would take place. In the meantime, David, who was underweight and mal-nourished when he arrived, received three healthy meals and snacks every day. Staff and volunteers played with him, cared for him, and redirected his behaviors when needed. They never reacted to his outbursts with anger, nor did they ignore him. Through this consistent care, David slowly began to trust them. And sometimes, he would even smile.

Staff knew David had finally turned a corner one day when they could see his frustration building, but they could also see that he was stopping himself and thinking. He looked up and said, "That's inappropriate, isn't it?" "What were you going to do, David?" "I was going to touch myself." "Yes, David, that would be inappropriate."

Then he said, "I'm mad. Can I have a hug?"

David had finally begun to make the vital transition that could allow him to be successfully placed in a loving foster home. Without the ability to trust and the change in behavior, few foster parents would be able to cope for long and likely David would spend years bouncing through the system. Now, there was hope for David to begin a new life without fear.

THEN DAVID SAID,

**"I'M MAD.
CAN I
HAVE A
HUG?"**

Building Bonds Beyond the Anger

On-going abuse and neglect causes a great deal of emotional pain for children. For many, once they grow into the adolescent and teen years, their pain turns into very understandable anger. Without adult support and the tools to deal with that kind of anger, it often gets expressed through temperamental and sometimes violent behavior. Such was the case with Max.

Before coming to Austin's Children Shelter, Max had been in a residential treatment center (RTC) that suddenly shut down. He required a structured, safe place to stay where he could continue to receive services. Max had been in treatment where he was dealing with issues such as aggression and depression, and working in therapy with his family. He came to us with a storied history of physical and sexual abuse and neglectful supervision. While at the RTC, Max struggled with his anger and coping skills. He brought these same challenges with him to the ACS, often throwing things or destroying property when he would get angry.

Max soon began to realize we were here to help him. We would listen to him when times were tough, understand without judgment and offer constant support. He began to use services such as individual and group therapy, our Life Skills* program, and to ask staff for help when he needed extra support. Max also began to identify goals and make choices that helped him achieve them. For Max, his top priority was to learn to handle his anger when he received disappointing and often sad news. Through one-on-one therapy that focused on what Max could do, he achieved his goal.

While transforming how he dealt with his problems, Max formed several meaningful relationships with staff members at ACS and even his peers. With the progress he made here and with staff support, Max made a successful transition to a caring foster home. And he occasionally returns to the Austin Children's Shelter to visit the people with whom he formed strong bonds.

*The Life Skills program is a project of The Junior League of Austin.

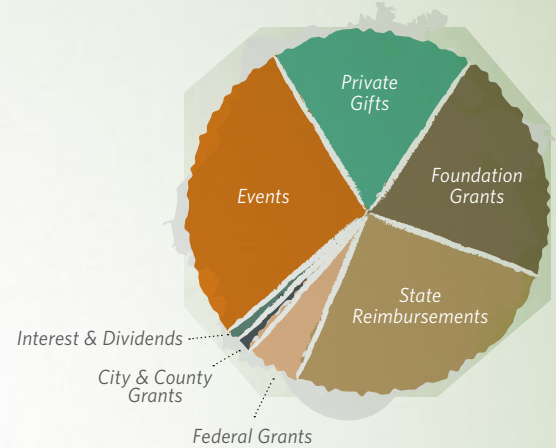


Financials

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, 2009 was a successful year for the Austin Children's Shelter.

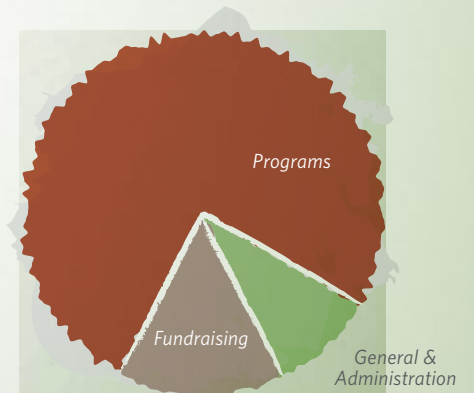
REVENUE

Private Gifts	\$972,861	28%
State Reimbursements	\$604,123	18%
Events	\$718,154	21%
Foundation Grants	\$906,014	26%
City of Austin/Travis County Grants	\$155,489	5%
Federal Grants	\$49,800	1%
Interest/Dividends	\$ 9,950	1%
Total	\$3,416,391	



EXPENSES

General and Administration	\$310,628	9.6%
Fundraising	\$472,414	14.6%
Programs	\$2,452,670	75.6%
Total	\$3,235,712	



Thank you for giving

Thank you for helping us to continue providing a safe and homelike environment for children and youth in crisis. Your investment in the Austin Children's Shelter gives us the ability to provide meaningful, quality services to the children in our care. We have made every effort to list our donors accurately. If your name is misspelled, displayed incorrectly or have been inadvertently excluded, please accept our apologies.

We are deeply grateful to all donors, including donors of in-kind gifts.

We regret that our space is too limited to list everyone.

2009 Donors

\$50,000+

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City of Austin Health and Human Services Dept.
Dell Foundation
IBM
Michael & Susan Dell Foundation
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The Kresge Foundation
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Travis County Health & Human Services

\$25,000-\$49,999

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Still Water Foundation
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\$10,000-\$24,999

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\$2,500-\$4,999

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Every child deserves a safe haven where they can learn to trust, manage their feelings, build bonds and have a chance to grow into healthier adults.

The trauma many of the children are dealing with when they come to the Austin Children's Shelter is beyond imagination. The challenge seems almost insurmountable. But if we can meet their critical emotional, behavioral, academic and medical needs while they are young, we can help make a lasting difference. We can replace tragedy with hope and bring a promise of future success to their young lives.

With your continued support, we can help them overcome.

We invite you to stay involved and be part of the future.

Visit www.austinchildrenshelter.org to learn how.

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