



IMPACT REPORT

2024



Carrying Hope



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A Message from our Executive Director

Dear friends and valued supporters,

When co-founder Mauri Elbel and I created Carrying Hope in 2016, our mission was simple -- to provide comfort items and essentials to children and youth in foster care. But as we began to better understand the complicated and broken foster care system, we also uncovered holes that needed to be filled in order to ensure that Texas foster youth receive the comprehensive care and attention they deserve.

Almost a decade later, Carrying Hope is proud to offer three distinct programs that directly benefit youth in foster care: Hope Packs, which contain comfort items and essentials for youth who are entering the foster care system; Hair + Hope, which pairs talented hairstylists with foster youth who desperately need their services; and Hope's Home, our transitional housing project for young adults who are aging out of foster care.

Through these three programs and thanks to you, Carrying Hope is transforming the trajectories of babies, children, teenagers, and young adults who are experiencing various facets of the foster care system.

For a young boy spending his first night in a new foster home, a Hope Pack brimming with goodies that range from a soft stuffed animal to a comforting night light sends the message that darkness cannot stay forever. For a teenager who is part of our Hair + Hope program, looking in the mirror and seeing her dream hairstyle perfectly executed can give her the confidence to apply for a new job, take high school graduation photos, or tell a judge what she wants to happen in her own life. And for a young woman at Hope's Home, having a team of people who serve as both case managers and a safety net can be the reason she decides to apply, and start, college classes.

The work we do at Carrying Hope -- and the hope that results from it -- forever changes lives.

Both as the executive director of Carrying Hope and as a foster and adoptive parent, I am so grateful to our community for showing up and spreading hope, day after day, year after year.

Thank you for supporting us. Thank you for growing with us. Thank you for Carrying Hope with us.

With gratitude,



Kristin Finan



Carrying Hope



Scan to visit our website: www.carryinghope.org
Connect with us at info@carryinghope.org

Our Mission

Carrying Hope's mission is to improve the lives of youth and families who have been impacted by the foster care system through resources, support services, housing, and enrichment opportunities.

“Every child who enters our shelter receives a Hope Pack—a small but significant gesture that provides immediate comfort and care during one of the most challenging moments of their lives. Families arriving at our shelter often have little time to prepare, leaving behind cherished belongings as they flee unsafe situations in search of safety. Carrying Hope’s Hope Packs, thoughtfully filled with basic necessities, pajamas or clothing, toys, and other comforting items, are so much more than supplies. For a child who has had to leave everything familiar behind, the Hope Pack offers a sense of normalcy and reassurance. It tells them they are seen, cared for, and not alone. The impact of these Hope Packs extends far beyond their contents—they provide a moment of comfort and connection, helping families begin their journey toward safety, healing, and hope. They are a reflection of our mission to Stop Abuse For Everyone, offering tangible support and compassion to those rebuilding their lives.”

— Felicia Harris, Director of Basic Needs at SAFE



Our Programs

Founded in 2016 by foster parents and advocates who watched, time and time again, as children arrived at their doorsteps with absolutely nothing, Carrying Hope has remained dedicated to having the backs of foster children and youth in need through our three distinct and essential programs.

Hope Packs

Every year, more than 22,000 children are removed from their homes by CPS in Texas. Most of these children are leaving a crisis situation and arriving to a new home with nothing. Carrying Hope offers hope at the beginning, easing the transition for children during a moment of crisis. We distribute our Hope Packs--backpacks filled with new, age-appropriate comfort items and essentials--directly to CPS and foster care agencies across Texas. Our goal is to offer items that babies, children and teens entering foster care would need and could find comfort in during those first 48 hours in care while allowing caregivers to focus solely on the new child in their home instead of rushing out to the store.

Hope's Home

Did you know that more than half of youth who age out of the foster care system become homeless within two years? Hope's Home, our transitional housing project for youth who are aging out of the foster care system, combats this devastating scenario by providing young people ages 18-22 with housing, support, and wrap-around case management services, allowing them not only to have a place to sleep but also gain access to jobs, school, medical care, and more.

Hair + Hope

Our Hair + Hope program started because we watched firsthand as children with textured hair at local shelters failed to receive the haircare they desperately needed and deserved. While their roommates received haircuts, blowouts and bang trims from visiting stylists, African American and biracial youth were completely and wholly left out of the conversation. Our Hair + Hope program partners and fully compensates local stylists who are experts in textured hair with youth in the foster care system in need of hair care services.

Our Impact

WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT, CARRYING HOPE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE THE IMPACT WE DID IN 2024.

Hope Packs

We regularly distribute Hope Packs from our Austin, Houston and San Antonio offices directly to CPS caseworkers, foster care agencies, child advocacy specialists, shelters, RTCs, and group homes throughout DFPS Regions across Texas. Since our founding in 2016, our Hope Packs and programs have impacted the lives of more than 40,000 youth and families in the Texas foster care system, transforming a once heartbreaking situation into a transition that begins with hope and healing. In 2024, we distributed more Hope Packs than ever before, impacting 11,568 foster youth and the families caring for them all across Texas.

Hope's Home

Situated on 5 bucolic acres just outside of Austin in Bastrop, Hope's Home is a place where young adults who have been impacted by foster care learn to thrive as they become more independent and self-sufficient. Hope's Home welcomed its first residents in Fall 2023 and housed residents throughout 2024. Our young female residents were facing homelessness upon entering our program. Through weekly case management, these young women got steady jobs, drivers licenses, learned to budget, and gained access to medical care and transportation. One resident was a full-time college student, worked part-time in Bastrop, and was also a partner stylist in our Hair + Hope program. Another resident held a management position at her full-time Bastrop job and will become a first-generation college student in Spring 2025.

Hair + Hope

Our Hair + Hope program helps to fulfill the frequently neglected basic needs of African-American and biracial youths in foster care while also supporting and fully compensating stylists from predominately Black-, woman-owned salons who share their time and talent to support youths in care. Since launching in Summer 2022, our Hair + Hope program has directly impacted the lives of more than 150 foster youth in Texas. Our program has expanded rapidly across the state. In February 2024, we formed a partnership with the Travis County CPS Board, which has charged us with serving all foster youth with Travis County cases while funding these services.

By the Numbers

YEAR OVER YEAR IMPACT

Hope Packs Distributed Year Over Year

550 Hope Packs in 2016

1,200 Hope Packs in 2017

1,563 Hope Packs in 2018

2,700 Hope Packs in 2019

4,010 Hope Packs in 2020

5,000 Hope Packs in 2021

6,000 Hope Packs in 2022

8,238 Hope Packs in 2023

11,568 Hope Packs in 2024

40,000

Since our founding in 2016, our Hope Packs and programs have impacted the lives of more than 40,000 youth and families in the Texas foster care system, transforming a once heartbreaking situation into a transition that begins with hope and healing.

In 2024, Carrying Hope:

- Distributed more Hope Packs than ever before, positively impacting 11,568 foster youth and the families caring for them in Texas.
- Donated \$15,000 toward activities, special events, and gift cards for more than 200 foster youth living in local shelters and group homes.
- Provided more than 70 foster youth with hair care services they desperately deserved.
- Supported Hope's Home residents in a variety of ways, including: providing affordable housing, securing reliable transportation, obtaining driver's licenses, applying to college, and more.

Changing Lives at Hope's Home



Hope's Home Key Facts & Stats

- 100 percent of Hope's Home residents were facing homelessness when they entered our program.
- Our wrap-around case management services have allowed program participants to get driver's licenses, obtain reliable transportation, gain access to medical care, learn to budget and pay off outstanding debt, apply for and attend college and more.
- 100 percent of our Hope's Home graduates are currently enrolled in college and have stable housing.

“Carrying Hope gave me the foundation to push through the hardest moments of being a young adult, showing me that my circumstances didn't define my future. Being the first in my family to attend college, there were many hurdles I had to hop in order to get where I am. Application fees, finding housing, figuring out tuition, and navigating paperwork are all steps I was able to accomplish with the help of Hope's Home and Carrying Hope. They opened so many doors for me to be able to walk into being a self-sufficient adult and college student. From mentorship to resources and accountability, I can't imagine where I'd be now without them. But I am proud of who I have grown to be.”
– Dulce, Hope's Home resident, age 20





HAIR + HOPE PROGRAM



Through our partnership with Travis County CPS Board, Carrying Hope's Hair + Hope program funds hair styles up to \$350 once per quarter for youth with active Travis County DFPS cases.

Carrying Hope also funds a limited number of styles for foster youth with non-Travis County cases per month on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Learn more at www.carryinghope.org

In **2024**, our Hair + Hope program served **75** foster youth across the state of Texas.

SAMPLE OF PLACEMENT CITIES WHERE YOUTH WERE SERVED:

Austin, Canyon Lake, Richmond, Houston, Buda, Bulverde, Waco, Brownwood, Seguin, Temple, Kyle, Marshall, Cedar Park, Pflugerville, Round Rock, Georgetown, Dallas, Denton, San Antonio, Galveston, and Gonzales

TYPES OF PLACEMENTS SERVED:
Kinship, foster home, group home, RTC, emergency shelter

COST AND FREQUENCY OF SERVICES:
Services may cost up to \$350 and can be provided on a quarterly basis. Stylists are fully compensated. In 2024, the average hairstyle cost was \$210 (this average includes male services, which are typically around \$50).

NUMBER OF STYLISTS WHO ARE PART OF OUR HAIR + HOPE PROGRAM:

51



WE



OUR

VOLUNTEERS!

14,889

Total
Community Volunteer
Hours in 2024

1,547

In-office
Volunteer
Hours

4,788

Off-site
Community
Volunteer Hours

50

Corporate and
Community
Volunteer
Events in 2024

Our Volunteers



Whether it's a child making a Hope Pack for another child their same age, a youth group or charity organization volunteering in our office, or a 1,000+ employee corporate volunteer event, our nonprofit couldn't exist without the support of our wonderful and kind-hearted volunteers. Thank you!



Get Involved



Make a Hope Pack with your child for another child in foster care.



No time to shop? Purchase a Hope Pack directly from our website.



Partner with Carrying Hope for a corporate team building event supporting foster youth.



Sponsor a hairstyle for a child or teen in foster care in need of textured hair care services.



Attend or become a sponsor at our annual fundraising events in Austin and Houston.



Donate. Every donation helps positively impact the lives of foster youth across Texas.



Volunteer at Carrying Hope's Austin and Houston offices.



Find more ways to get involved at
www.carryinghope.org



Connect with Us!



Carrying Hope
HOUSTON

CARRYING HOPE

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Austin, TX 78757

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Austin Mailing Address:

9600 Escarpment Blvd., Ste. 745-239

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Houston, TX 77024

Hours: Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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