



*Touching Lives. Reaching Generations.*

***"We never had a Christmas because my mom couldn't give us a home." - Andrew***

Dear Friend,

It doesn't take much to impact a generation. One child filled with faith, hope and love has the potential to change his world. I know this to be true because every day I see children who come to Arms of Hope neglected, abused and labeled "HOPELESS" by our society. Yet, thanks to the faith and commitment of people like you, something miraculous happens to impact the lives of these wonderful children.

Two children who come to mind are Alex and Andrew who are brothers. They joined our Arms of Hope family at age 5 and 6, after being exposed to unimaginable circumstances. Things that a parent can't imagine happening to their own children had happened to them.

"We never had a Christmas because my mom couldn't give us a home. She was always broke and we moved from one dirty motel to another. I was scared all the time. Often I was so hungry and I couldn't sleep. I don't remember exactly what it was, but one night when I was five, something very bad happened. After that, my grandmother took us in, but she was old and couldn't take care of us."  
- Andrew, Age 11



Surrounded by drugs and strangers, the boys had experienced the horror of witnessing a family member being abused in an inconceivable way. Thank God that their grandmother did two things right by rescuing her grandsons from an almost certain future of poverty, abuse and neglect and by bringing them to Arms of Hope.

Today, seven years later, you wouldn't recognize these two brothers. They're healthy, happy, strapping young men who hold their heads up high and their dreams and goals even higher. Christmas now has a special meaning for these boys. After seven years, they can still describe in detail every single gift they received for their first "real" Christmas at their new home. They remember because it was the first time in their young lives that they truly had a home.

Our house parents work tirelessly to create a home where children know they're loved unconditionally. In such a place children thrive. They learn new values and find hope. You might wonder how it is that our house parents can do what they do year in and year out, patiently loving children and seeing them so damaged that it's actually hard for them to accept hugs. One

of our house parents was quick to tell me: "What keeps me going are all those firsts..."

... The first time I hear a child shout out, "Look what I can do, Dad!" At Arms of Hope there's actually a "Dad" who's there to show him how to ride a bike, or catch a fish, or throw a ball.

... The first time a child wakes up and knows she'll have a warm breakfast—served with a plentiful side order of hugs—so that she won't be forced to beg for food at school.

... The first time I see a child smile because one of our lambs trusts him enough to eat out of his hand. And the first time I see that same smile beaming up at me—a smile that tells me one of our "lambs" has finally learned to trust us because there really are adults in this world who won't harm or abandon him.



*Alex loves playing football on the Arms of Hope - Medina Campus.*

destructive cycles of homelessness, abuse and neglect by helping us provide a place for children like Alex and Andrew to call home.

I offer my very deepest wishes for a blessed Christmas and happy, healthy & prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

*Kevin McDonald*

Kevin M. McDonald  
President and Chief Executive Officer



*Alex and Andrew enjoy raising lambs for the Bandera County Jr. Livestock Show.*

Your year-end gift today can help create many more miracles this Christmas and throughout 2012 for the ever increasing number of homeless and abused children in Texas. The need is so great and getting greater with each passing day. A recent and shocking report on homelessness in America tells us that a total of 1.5 million children, the highest number since the Great Depression, are currently homeless. This year, countless children will be spending their Christmas either in a shelter or on the streets.

As you and your family gather together this joyous season to celebrate your abundant blessings, I invite you to reflect upon what home really means. Home is more than shelter and homelessness is far deeper than a loss of shelter. Our need for a place to call "home" is a critical part of having a hopeful future. This Christmas, please help us continue our efforts to break



*Andrew had fun escorting a classmate during the 2011 Medina Homecoming Ceremony.*



**ArmsOfHope.org**

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Medina Children's Home