



MOUNT DORA CHILDREN'S HOME

— Est 1945 —



WHERE A *Loving Future* BEGINS

2025 ANNUAL REPORT | MDCHOME.ORG

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SOCIAL SERVICES

Garrett Schwarz
Vice President of Social Services

Zack & Amanda Crotty
Houseparents

Elly Murfin
Social Services Specialist/Case Manager/
Relief Parent

Tonja Rambow
Social Worker

Kristina Scherer
Mental Health Therapist

DEVELOPMENT & CHURCH RELATIONS

Dr. Tony Kinkel
Vice President of Development

Ashley Blanchard
(2009-2014 resident at MDCH)
Administrative Assistant

Andy Bonner (part time)
Church Relations Coordinator for Central and
South Florida

Tim Deem (part time)
Grant Writer

Heather Hartmann
Office Manager

Dave Hogan, CFP (part time)
Planned Giving Specialist and Church Relations
Coordinator for Northeast Florida

Sam Long (part time)
Church Relations Coordinator for the Florida
Panhandle, Alabama, and Georgia

Chuck Shepherd (part time)
Church Relations Coordinator for Tennessee



From the Vice President of Social Services

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter, I am two weeks into my role as Vice President of Social Services, and I can already tell you that God is at work at Mount Dora Christian Academy & Children's Home. The faculty

and staff here live out Christ daily, not only through their words but more importantly, through their actions.

Chuck Shepherd, who is retiring after 37 years of directing the Children's Home, and his team have done a phenomenal job walking alongside, educating, equipping, and empowering families at MDCH. I am blessed by this opportunity and believe wholeheartedly in the mission of MDCA&CH. I am excited to build upon the strong foundation already in place.

In John 4, Jesus tells His disciples, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work. Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest."* Florida is among the top five states in America for single-parent homes, and that percentage continues to grow. The need for a Christian agency like MDCH to serve these single-parent families and other children is great.

Jesus surrounded Himself with people who were broken, lost, and hopeless – and He educated, equipped, and empowered them to spread the Gospel to all nations. At Mount Dora Children's Home, we follow His example by meeting our group home girls and single parents with their children right where they are. We show them a Christ-centered, loving community and prepare them to make a difference in their homes, their communities, and the church.

I am truly humbled by the financial sacrifices so many of you make to support MDCH. Your generosity – along with that of the many churches who consistently give – sustains this ministry. We are deeply grateful to all who contribute regularly and to those who have courageously included us in their wills, trusts, or estates, ensuring their legacy will impact future generations.

At MDCH, we know the mission. Our eyes are open, and we are ready to plant, water, and harvest seeds for the Kingdom.

The following report outlines how your gifts continue to support our ministry and how we carefully steward these resources to further God's work here at MDCH.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Garrett Schwarz'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Garrett Schwarz, Vice President of Social Services
Mount Dora Christian Academy & Children's Home

Please see page 5 to learn more about former VP Chuck Shepherd's new role with Mount Dora Children's Home!

80 Years

OF EDUCATION & MINISTRY

This is our 80th year providing Christ-centered education and ministry to children and families. While our mission hasn't changed, our programs over the decades have adapted to best meet the personal and societal challenges our residents face.



Today, Mount Dora Children's Home's ministries include on-campus programs for single-parent families and residential services for girls. We also provide off-campus assistance to recent graduates as they transition through post-secondary education and training and into the adult world.

We strive to be a faith-focused haven where hope-filled futures begin despite the hardships and traumas faced by many of those we serve. Thank you to all of you who have faithfully supported this ministry with your prayers, volunteer help, and financial contributions.



MDCH strives to reflect the love of Christ in word and deed to these single parents and children in their time of greatest need.



Kristina Scherer



Elly Murfin



Sean Algaier

Staff Grows to Meet New Challenges

Those we serve often come to us with deep traumas, and in response Mount Dora Children’s Home expanded its capabilities this year to better meet these needs.

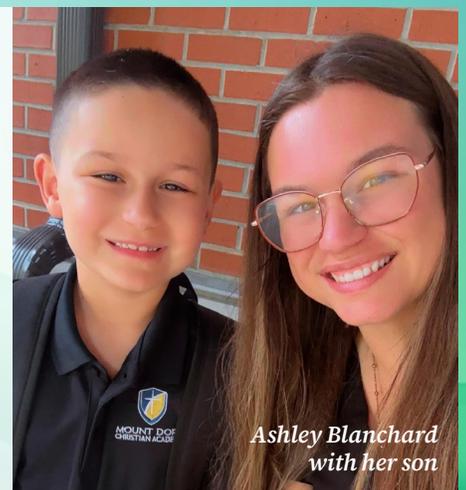
- **Kristina Scherer** recently joined the Social Services team as the Home’s first **in-house mental health therapist**. With a master’s degree in clinical mental health counseling and experience at other nonprofits, Kristina offers counseling to help children and families process trauma, build resilience, and develop healthy relationships.
- **Elly Murfin**, a case manager who joined MDCH in 2022, recently earned a degree in **Christian counseling** from Liberty University, adding to an existing degree in addiction counseling.
- Our number one priority is spiritual growth for the children and families we serve. As a result, MDCA&CH recently hired **Sean Algaier** as the first **Campus Minister/Vice President of Spiritual Life**. He previously served as campus minister for York University and has a background in youth ministry, worship leadership, and Christian media production.

From Resident to Employee: Ashley’s Road to Success

Ashley Blanchard knows firsthand the power of hope and the impact of community. From 2008 to 2014, Mount Dora Children’s Home was her refuge—a safe haven that gave her both shelter and the foundation to grow into the confident, compassionate woman she is today. Now, years later, she has returned not as a resident, but as a valued employee.

“It’s a blessing to be back,” Ashley said. **“Mount Dora Children’s Home truly saved my life. I wouldn’t be the person I am, or have the success and happiness I do, if it weren’t for everything this place gave me.”**

Ashley serves as the Administrative Assistant for the Development Office, contributing her time and talents to help the Children’s Home continue its mission of changing lives. She also assists Social Services in professional development and Christmas activities, coaches middle school cheerleading, using the sport to teach teamwork, confidence, and belonging. She has been happily married for seven years and is a proud mother to a spirited six-year-old boy, who is enrolled in kindergarten at MDCA.



*Ashley Blanchard
with her son*

Chuck Shepherd Assumes New Role with MDCH

After 37 years of leadership and service at Mount Dora Children's Home, **Chuck Shepherd** is assuming a new role as Church Relations Coordinator for Tennessee. In his new part-time position, Shepherd will oversee the Home's annual Nashville Benefit Dinner and represent MDCH at supporting churches throughout the state.

Shepherd retired this fall as Vice President of Social Services. Since joining MDCH in 1984, Shepherd successfully led the Children's Home programs, including establishing the innovative Single-Parent Program in 2013. He has blessed countless lives over the years, giving hope and faith to residents in their greatest times of need. We wish Chuck and his wife Joy well on their retirement to Tennessee to be near grandchildren and family.



Chuck Shepherd

Garrett Schwarz has joined MDCH as the new Vice President of Social Services! Please see his letter on the inside front cover.



“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.”

JEREMIAH 29:11

Helping Single Parents and Children This Past Fiscal Year

(July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)



30 Children &
9 Single Parents
Served



1,143
Hours of Chapel &
1,935
Hours of Bible Class
Offered to Children



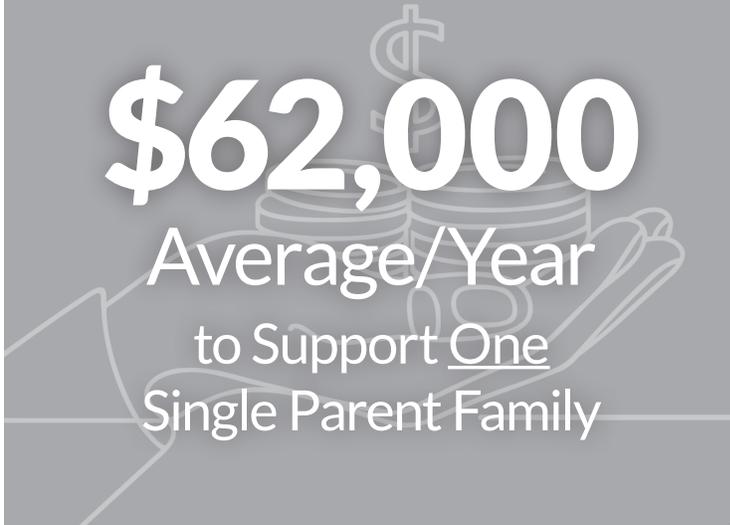
2817
Hours of Daycare,
After School,
& Summer Care



351
Professional
Counseling
Sessions Provided



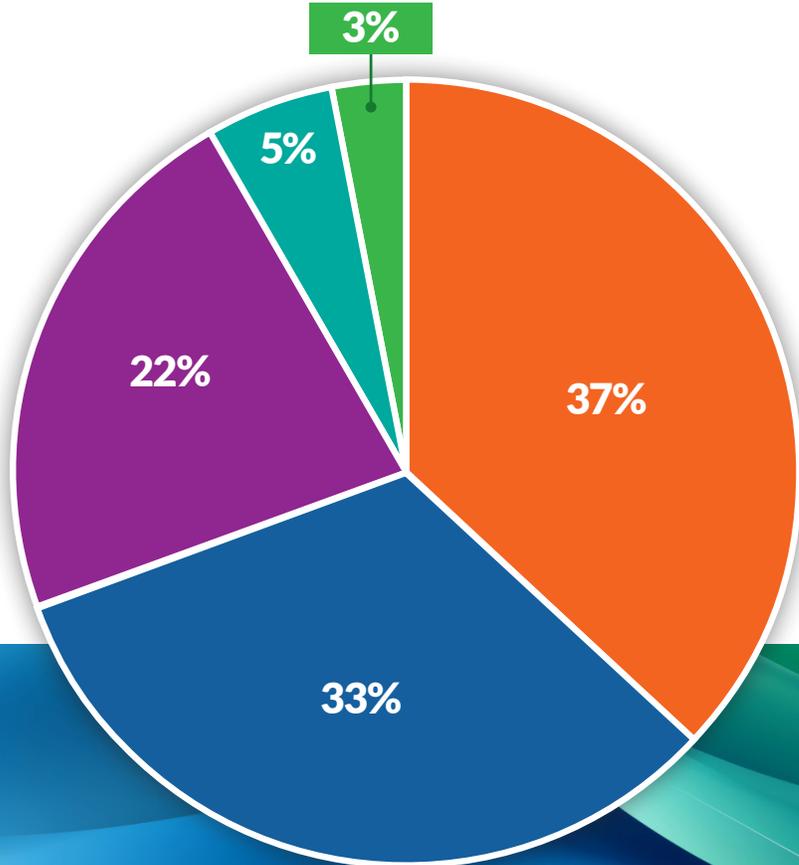
5
Children's Home
High School Graduates
Who Received College
Support & Scholarships



\$62,000
Average/Year
to Support One
Single Parent Family

Children's Home Average Annual Expenditures: \$1.61 Million*

Where Donations Come From*

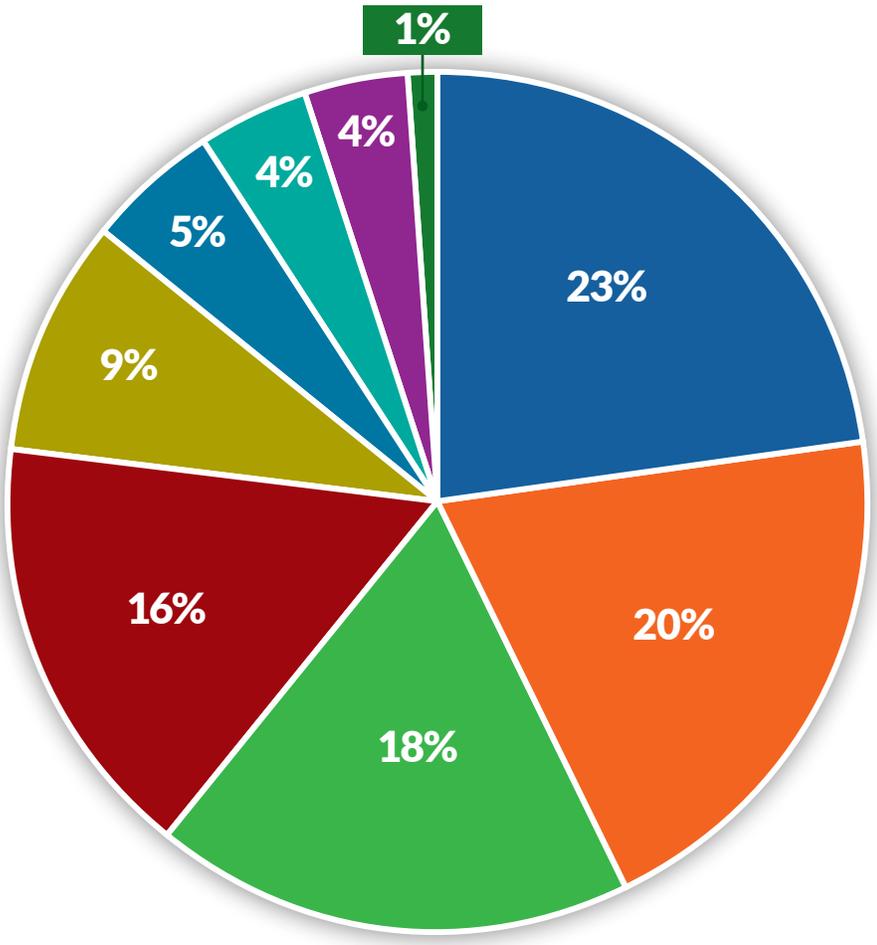


- Individuals: **37%**
- Estates/Wills/Trusts: **33%**
- Churches: **22%**
- Foundations & Grants: **5%**
- Corporate/Business: **3%**

Did You Know? At least 150 individuals have notified MDCA&CH that they have included us in their wills or other estate documents!

How Donations Are Spent at MDCH*

- MDCH Endowments & Strategic Reserves: **23%**
- Fundraising Expenses: **20%**
- Children's Home Staff Compensation & Benefits: **18%**
- Property & Housing: **16%**
- Education & Tuition: **9%**
- General & Administrative: **5%**
- Physical Needs & Furnishings: **4%**
- Therapy, Daycare, Activities & Allowances: **4%**
- Miscellaneous Costs: **1%**



*Financial data based on three-year average for period ending June 30, 2025



Green Hills Church of Christ hosted a special dinner for Danielle and her family. Joining Danielle is her daughter, Aliyana, and Deacons Ryan Sweeney and Cody Webb.



Single parent resident Danielle Aspinwall with her "adoptive" Green Hills Church family

Green Hills Church Becomes First to "Adopt" a Family

The Church of Christ at Green Hills in Nashville this year became the first church to “adopt” one of our single-parent families, **donating an incredible \$50,000 to support a single-parent family** at Mount Dora Children’s Home.



From left: Michelle Sweeney, Danielle and her daughter, and Linda Hudson

The Hudson and Sweeney families welcomed **Danielle** and her family to Nashville with a weekend full of joy and purpose. Highlights included a visit to the Nashville Zoo, a birthday celebration for **Aliyana** with bowling at the Franklin Family Entertainment Center, and swimming at the Wilson Home. On Sunday, Danielle and her daughter shared in breakfast, Bible class, and worship with the Green Hills Church of Christ.

This generous gift is providing nearly a full year of housing, education, spiritual guidance, and essential support for Danielle and her family. “Words cannot fully capture the depth of my gratitude for being chosen to travel to Nashville and share my story as part of the Single Parents Program at MDCA,” said Danielle. “It was truly an honor and a life-changing experience. Not only did my children and I enjoy our very first family trip together—creating memories that we will cherish forever—but I was also blessed with the gift of lasting friendships with some of the generous donors who made this possible. Their kindness and support have left an imprint on my heart.”

2025 Nashville Benefit Dinner was a Record-Breaking Success!

We want to say a big, heartfelt THANK YOU to all of our Nashville and Middle Tennessee friends of Mount Dora Children's Home. **This year's Nashville Benefit Dinner raised a record-breaking \$177,141**, making it the largest single fundraising event in the history of the Children's Home! Members from 23 local Churches of Christ attended this dinner, with attendance of nearly 300 - our largest turnout for this annual event since 2017.

This year’s success was fueled by **unprecedented support from 20 sponsors, the largest number ever, and \$70,000 in matching donations**. We also want to thank the **Hillsboro Church of Christ**, which provided the venue, and **Becky Daniel** of Burton Catering, who offered the meal at cost.

We hope you'll make plans to join us at an upcoming regional benefit dinner. For a full listing of dinners and registration details, please see the back cover of this annual report.



Buddy and Linda Williams and their friends from the Concord Road Church of Christ at the Nashville Benefit Dinner.

Top 5 SUPPORTING CHURCHES OF CHRIST BY STATE

Nearly 200 churches across several states help support Mount Dora Children's Home – and we are extremely thankful to all of them! If your church would like more information on how you can help MDCH, please call Dr. Tony Kinkel, Vice President of Development, at 352-729-9015.

Florida

Concord Street
Fernandina Beach
Jenks Avenue
Orange Avenue
Warrington

Alabama

Deerfoot
Eastern Meadows
Union Hill
University
Vaughn Park

Tennessee

Concord Road
Charlotte Heights
Green Hills
Winchester
Woodson Chapel

Georgia

Cedar Grove
Central Avenue
Ellabell
Lake Park
Richmond Hill

Did You Know? In the past five years, MDCH has received donations from nearly 200 churches!



Mandarin Church of Christ's annual shoe drive for MDCH children

Church Support: Creative Ways Churches Help MDCH and Our Families

Many of our supporting churches have their own unique and fun ways of helping us! For example, since 2013, the **Central Church of Christ in Altamonte Springs** has hosted an annual barbecue benefit, complete with games for the kids. Over the years, this event has raised more than \$42,000 for Mount Dora Children's Home. Central Church of Christ also **helps with birthday gifts** throughout the year. Other examples of churches with unique outreaches that benefit Mount Dora Children's Home include the following:

- **New Smyrna Beach Church of Christ**, which gives back-to-school supplies in the summer and turkeys and gift cards at Thanksgiving.
- **Fernandina Beach Church of Christ** bakes holiday cookies and brings gift cards.
- Both the **High Springs Church of Christ** and **North Brevard Church of Christ** host Christmas parties for our children that are a highlight each year.
- In Jacksonville, the **Mandarin Church of Christ** hosts an annual shoe drive for MDCH children.

We want to thank all of the churches that financially support this ministry. If your church (or family or civic club) would like to explore ideas for how you can help MDCH in a more hands-on way, please call Garrett Schwarz, Vice President of Social Services, at 352-729-9128.

Spiritual Development: Our #1 Priority

Our goal is that children and single parents in our programs will be introduced to faith in Jesus Christ and grow in their spiritual journey. Recently, **Kyra**, a resident at Thompson House, was baptized (shown on the right). Students at the Academy participate in daily chapel services and Bible classes, while many attend Christian summer camps or attend SonQuest, a popular Christian annual youth event in Orlando.



Thompson House Resident Kyra was recently baptized



Miya Prepares for Healthcare Career

In her freshman year of college at Albany State University, **Miya** excelled, earning a 3.5 GPA and being inducted into the honors society. Now, she's enrolled at Advent-Health University in Orlando to study sonography. Miya spent most of her middle and high school at Mount Dora Children's Home, where she participated in tennis, weightlifting, bowling, track and field, and The Way before graduating in May 2024 from Mount Dora Christian Academy. We are so proud of Miya and the progress she

has made; she is on her way to a bright future in healthcare!



Left: Elly Murfin, Miya, Amanda, and her daughter celebrate Miya's accomplishments!



*"A father to the fatherless,
a defender of widows,
is God in his holy dwelling."*

PSALM 68:5



JJ Davenport: MDCH Volunteer Extraordinaire!

Year after year, so many caring volunteers step up to show love and support for Mount Dora Children’s Home. We sincerely value them all, but one individual who truly made a difference this past year is **JJ Davenport**, the Dean of Arts at Mars Hill Bible School (Florence, AL). She is the extraordinarily talented daughter of Sam Long, who works as the MDCH church relations coordinator for Alabama, Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle. She was the spark behind our decision to launch a new annual benefit dinner last year in Florence, Alabama. Both last year and again this year, JJ was instrumental in organizing, promoting, and financially underwriting this fundraising event. In addition, JJ promoted MDCH at the 2024 TLC Ladies Conference in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. **A total of \$18,000 in donations was raised at that conference for the Children’s Home. In 2025, the ladies conference raised an additional \$12,500 for the home.** Thank you, JJ, for truly making a difference!



Left: Volunteer JJ Davenport spoke about MDCH at the 2024 TLC Ladies Conference



1255

Children in our residency program since 1945

64

Single parents aided since 2013

139

Children of single parents aided since 2013



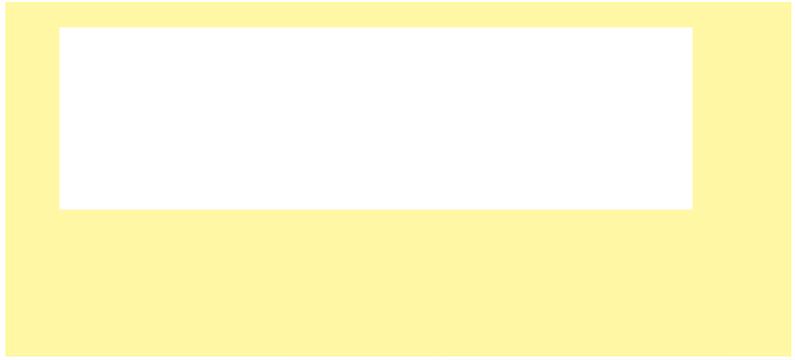
Scan the code or visit MDCHome.org/give

Mount Dora Christian Academy & Children's Home (formerly Christian Home & Bible School, Inc) is a private, 501c3 non-profit (EIN: 59-0855390).

Mount Dora Children's Home is licensed by the Florida Association of Christian Child Caring Agencies. It is an active member of Network 1:27. Since its founding in 1945, Mount Dora Christian Academy & Children's Home has been affiliated with the Churches of Christ.



301 W. 13th Ave
Mount Dora, FL 32757



Learn More About Our Mission

**JOIN US AT A FREE
BENEFIT DINNER NEAR YOU!**

Each year we host a series of regional benefit dinners. In addition to fundraising, the dinners give us a chance to connect with supporters and share the MDCH story with new audiences.

Here is a list of our benefit dinners for the 2025-2026 school year. You may register online using the QR code above. If you, your business, or your church would like to help underwrite dinner expenses as a sponsor, please contact the Development Office at 352-729-9086.

Nashville, Tennessee | August 16, 2025

Hillsboro Church of Christ

Thank You for a Record-Breaking Fundraising Event - See Page 8!

Pensacola, Florida

October 4, 2025

Warrington Church of Christ

Montgomery, Alabama

February 5, 2026

Faulkner University

Florence, Alabama

November 8, 2025

Highland Park Church of Christ

Jacksonville, Florida

April 11, 2026

University of North Florida

Sarasota, Florida

January 10, 2026

Carlisle Inn

Tampa, Florida

May 16, 2026

Location TBD