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Home

2026 ANNUAL
REPORT



MOUNT DORA
CHILDREN'S HOME
— Est 1945 —

MDCHOME.ORG

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SOCIAL SERVICES

Garrett Schwarz
Vice President of Social Services

Emmanuel and Caroline Akrong
Houseparents

Darcy Bensinger
Family Support Specialist

Elly Murfin
Family Support Specialist

Kristina Scherer
Mental Health Therapist

DEVELOPMENT & CHURCH RELATIONS

Keith O'Neal
Vice President of Development

Ashley Blanchard
Administrative Assistant

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 have now been in my role at Mount Dora Christian Academy & Children's Home for a full year, and I can truly see how God has blessed my time here. My passion and purpose have always been to help those in need, but more importantly, to use those opportunities to point people toward our Father in Heaven.

Life inevitably brings both hills and valleys, and this past year has certainly had its share of both. When you truly do life alongside people, you have the privilege of celebrating victories, watching growth take place, and rejoicing in successes. But you also walk beside people through struggles, disappointments, and heartache—and those moments can weigh heavily on your heart.

Through every high and every low, one thing has remained constant: our focus, our mission, and our prayers have remained centered on our Father in Heaven. He is the reason we do what we do, and we continue to trust Him to guide this ministry and use us to make a difference in the lives of the children and families He has placed in our care.

We are especially excited about changes coming to our Single Parent Program this year. We are expanding our training to provide more in-depth and practical opportunities for our parents to grow and prepare for the future. Last year, Sean, our Campus Minister, began community gatherings that allowed our families to build relationships, encourage one another, and simply do life together. This year, we plan to expand those gatherings while also adding a bi-weekly Bible study. Our desire is to help families grow personally, become more stable and independent, build lasting relationships, and most importantly, grow in their relationship with Christ.

I continue to be humbled by the generosity of those who believe in the work God is doing at MDCH. Whether you give individually, through one of the many churches that faithfully support us, or have chosen to include MDCH in your will, trust, or estate, please know how deeply grateful we are. Your generosity allows this ministry to serve families today while helping ensure lives will continue to be impacted for generations to come.

The following report provides a glimpse of how your generosity strengthens our ministry and how we strive to faithfully steward every resource entrusted to us as we carry out God's work at MDCH.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Garrett Schwarz', written over a white background.

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

Single-Parent Program Helps Mom and Her Kids See a Brighter Future Ahead

Her dad tried to bring her down, making her feel worthless and good for nothing. Then, at age 21, Elizabeth Steele turned to alcohol and wound up in an abusive relationship.

“Drinking was the answer to everything back then,” Elizabeth said.

Today, all of that is in the past. **With help from the Single-Parent Program at Mount Dora Children’s Home, both Elizabeth and her children are on the path toward a more successful future.**

“Most places you go to for help, it’s just a nine to five thing for them. They just want to get you in and out and push you out the door, but this program, it’s been very supportive. Everyone really, truly cares. They want to see you succeed and they have definitely done that and they’re still doing that and it’s just been amazing.”

Since joining the Single-Parent Program, Elizabeth has completed training to become an orthodontic dental assistant and is now employed at Escott Orthodontics in Mount Dora.

“That would have never been possible without this program and their support.”

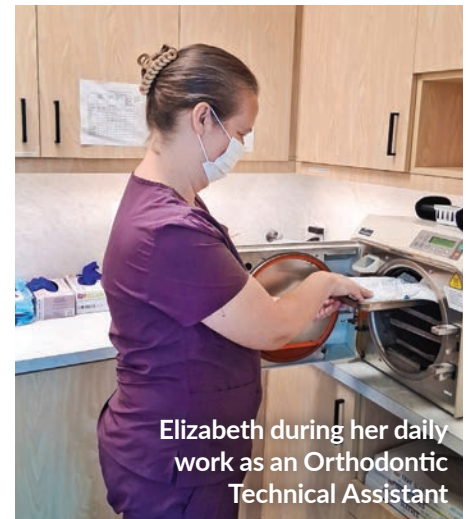
Elizabeth said her children, Ethan and Aubrey, have also benefited from their time at the Children’s Home and as students at Mount Dora Christian Academy.

“They have grown so much, not just academically, but spiritually and just to see the growth in them and to know that it’s because of this program that has helped my kids get there has just been amazing and so appreciated.”

You are all just amazing people and can never be thanked enough for your kindness and love for others and everything you’ve done.” ❖



Ethan, Elizabeth & Aubrey
MDCH Single-Parent
Program Residents



Elizabeth during her daily
work as an Orthodontic
Technical Assistant





Darcy
Bensinger

MDCH Announces Staff Changes

In addition to new houseparents in the Thompson House (see story on page 5), the following staff changes have occurred this year at Mount Dora Children's Home:

- ◆ **Darcy Bensinger** joined the Social Services Department as a **Family Support Specialist**. A 2025 Harding University graduate with majors in social work and missions, Darcy's focus will be working with the Single-Parent Program. She previously worked for Sparrow's Promise, a children's social services agency in Searcy, Arkansas. Darcy's husband, Luke, is teaching secondary math at Mount Dora Christian Academy.
- ◆ **Tonja Rambow** has retired to spend more time with her family. She served for seven years as a social worker.
- ◆ **Keith O'Neal** transitioned from Head of School at Mount Dora Christian Academy to **Vice President of Development**. Keith has degrees from Lipscomb University and Ashland University, with experience in youth ministry and K-12 and higher education.
- ◆ **Dr. Tony Kinkel**, the former Vice President of Development, accepted a new position as Senior Vice President of Enterprise Relations at NorthWest Arkansas Community College.



Keith
O'Neal

Garrett Schwarz, Vice President of Social Services, commented on the changes in his department:

"From the moment I interviewed Darcy, I knew she needed to be a part of our team. She brings a great energy, fresh ideas, and a genuine passion for serving others. Darcy is excited to build upon the strong foundation of our Single Parent Program and help us continue finding new ways to support, encourage, and equip the families we serve. We are truly excited to have her on our team and look forward to seeing the impact she will make.

"Tonja has given many years of faithful service and devotion to Mount Dora Children's Home. Her wealth of experience and knowledge has been invaluable, but what stands out most is her reliability and the genuine care she has shown to our children and families. She has made a lasting impact on this ministry, and we are incredibly grateful for the many years she has dedicated to serving others." ❖

*"He defends the cause of the
fatherless and the widow ..."*

DEUTERONOMY 10:18



New Houseparents Bring Unique Backgrounds and Experiences

The lyrics of the old church hymn that says how God moves in mysterious ways might help explain how a young couple who met half way around the world are now serving as the new houseparents for the girls at the Thompson House at Mount Dora Children's Home.



New Houseparents Emmanuel ("Ema") and Caroline Akrong with their three children

Emmanuel ("Ema") and Caroline Akrong joined the team at MDCH this summer, along with their three young children, who are now enrolled at Mount Dora Christian Academy.

Their story is a fascinating one of how they met and how God has uniquely prepared them through their life experiences for this new position at MDCH.

Emmanuel grew up at the Village of Hope, a Christian children's home in Ghana, West Africa. He later attended the University of Ghana, where he majored in theater arts. Meanwhile, Caroline grew up 5,800 miles away in Middle Tennessee, just outside Nashville, and graduated from Lipscomb University. While at Lipscomb, Caroline served as a resident advisor in a large girls' dormitory. They met at the

Village of Hope where Caroline did successive mission trips while in college and Emmanuel was living on campus as a college student. A friendship turned into romance. After marrying but before leaving Ghana, Emmanuel and Caroline worked together at another Christian children's home for girls, the Pearl House.

"I grew up in one (a children's home) and now I'm able to make an impact," Emmanuel said. "I'm able to give back what I was given."

"I am thankful for my husband and his story and how our stories join," said Caroline. "I'm excited for our kids, for our family to be in this life together with each and every one of these girls who comes through these doors." ❖

Church Volunteers Provide Shoes for Children

We love it when individuals and churches come up with their own creative new ways to support our children and single parents. The Mandarin Church of Christ in Jacksonville hosts an annual shoe drive to make sure our students have nice new shoes to start each new school year.

"Kids like shoes and especially the right shoes," said Becky Fields, who along with her husband Terry help spearhead the shoe drive at the Mandarin congregation. "It's a win-win for everybody. The people at church feel good about helping."

If you or your church, club, or organization has an idea for a creative way to bless our children or to raise funds for the Children's Home, please contact Garrett Schwarz, Vice President of Social Services, at 352-383-9906.



Helping Single Parents and Children This Past Fiscal Year

(July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026)



50

Children

22

Single Parents

SERVED BY THE SOCIAL SERVICES DEPT

\$213,986

COST FOR DAYCARE, AFTER-SCHOOL CARE, SUMMER CARE, TUITION, & LUNCH





661

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING HOURS PROVIDED

7

CHILDREN'S HOME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO RECEIVED COLLEGE SUPPORT & SCHOLARSHIPS





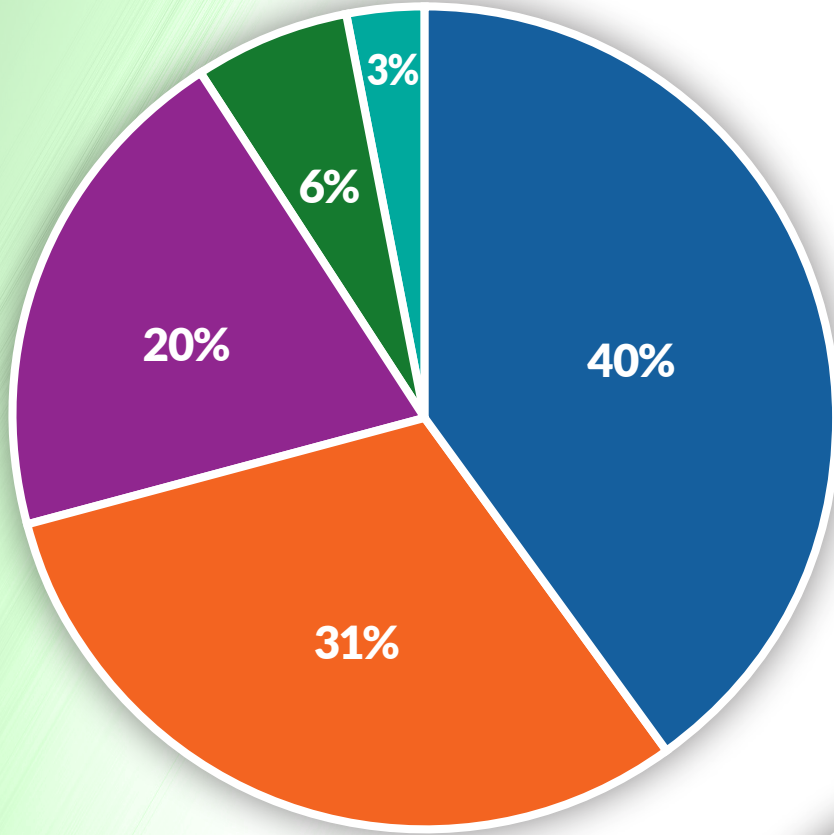
\$65,000

AVERAGE COST PER YEAR TO SUPPORT ONE SINGLE PARENT FAMILY

By the Numbers

Mount Dora Children's Home
Average Annual Expenditures:
\$2.1 Million*

*Financial data based on 3-year average for period ending June 30, 2026

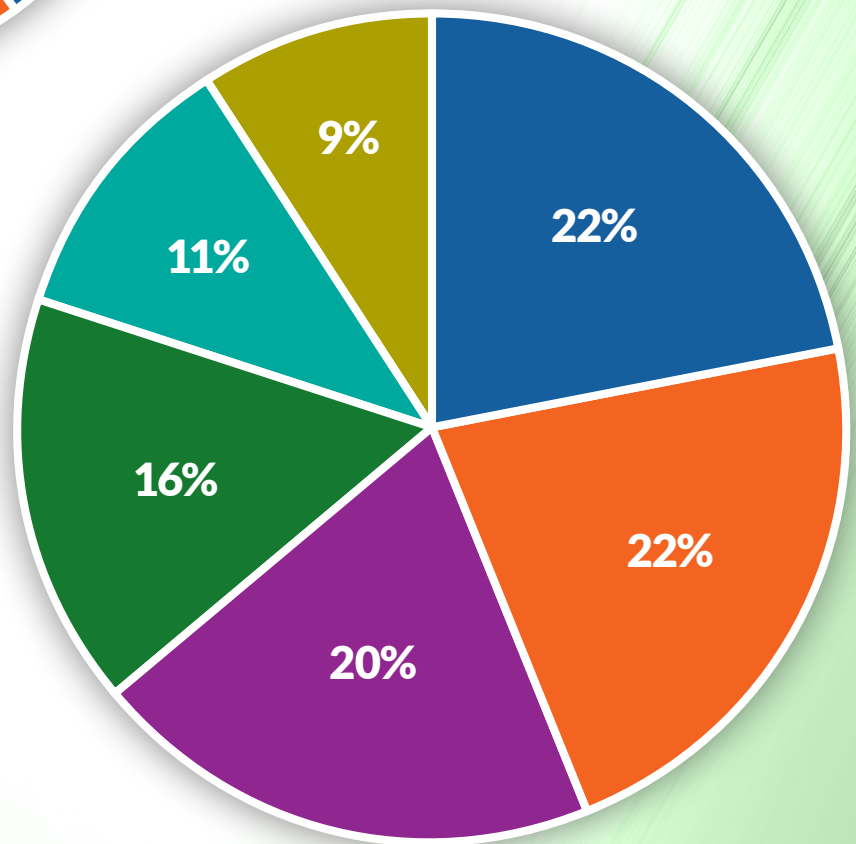


Where Donations Come From*

- Estates/Wills/Trusts: **40%**
- Individuals: **31%**
- Churches: **20%**
- Corporate/Business: **6%**
- Foundations & Grants: **3%**

How Donations Are Spent at MDCH*

- Direct Care for Children & Families: **22%**
- Office of Development: **22%**
- Capital Campaign: **20%**
(Future Housing - coming 2028)
- Housing & Property: **16%**
- General & Administrative: **11%**
- Education: **9%**





MDCH Bridge Program student Caelyn is now a successful sophomore at MDCA

Bridge Program Helps MDCH Students Thrive in the Academy

Like many of the young people when they first come to Mount Dora Children's Home, Caelyn was behind academically. She wasn't ready to fully participate as a high school student at Mount Dora Christian Academy.

Now, a year later, thanks to an innovative new program called the Bridge Program, Caelyn is enrolled as a sophomore at MDCA and doing much better.

The Bridge Program is designed to help Children's Home students like Caelyn make a successful transition into the Academy. Before coming to MDCH, some of these students faced traumas and disruptions in their lives that made it hard for them to focus on their academic work. The Bridge Program provides individualized academic support and helps equip these students for success and confidence. It works in close partnership with MDCH's skilled

and caring team of social workers and therapists to address all of the student's needs in a holistic way.

"Bridge has been amazing because it's given us the opportunity to accept students into the Academy who wouldn't be able to go there otherwise," said Megan Munoz, Director of the Bridge Program. ❖

Bible Studies, Small Groups Foster Deeper Spiritual Growth

Sean Algaier, now in his second year as our first-ever campus minister, realized that the single parents at Mount Dora Children's Home needed something more than their regularly attended church services for spiritual growth. They needed a venue where they could talk freely about their lives and faith together in a more personal setting. They needed a sense of community.

To fill that need for the single parents, Sean and his wife Misty are hosting a dinner and devotional in their home on campus every other Monday night for the single moms and children from the Single-Parent Program. "We get together, we eat together, and then we spend time praying for each other, and we do a small devotional," Sean said. "We get to say real things and do real life with them, and it has really fostered this openness of doing life together."

In addition to these weekly meetings for the single parents, Emmanuel and Caroline Akrong, houseparents at the Thompson House, are hosting evening devotionals for the girls who live there. Several teachers at the Academy have also engaged in personal Bible studies with students.

Those efforts are showing real results – this past year, **14 students were baptized, higher than any other year in recent memory.** They included Mikey Trumpo, son of single parent Amie Trumpo. To put even greater emphasis on baptizing students in the future, an outdoor baptistry is being built on campus.

Since we first opened our doors in 1945, Academy students at all grade levels attend daily chapel and take bible classes. Helping our children and single parents discover Jesus and grow in their Christian faith has always been the number one priority at Mount Dora Children's Home. Thanks to the dedication of our staff and teachers like Sean, that focus has taken a renewed emphasis – and the spiritual well being of our residents and students is flourishing. ❖



MDCH Resident Mikey Trumpo's baptism with youth minister Chase Allen

New Program Offers Support for Young Adults as They Transition into Adulthood

For more than eight decades, Mount Dora Children's Home has been committed to serving children and families through some of life's most meaningful and challenging moments.

Growing into adulthood is a process, not a single milestone. True independence is built over time through encouragement, guidance, experience, and opportunity.

That is why we established the Independent Living Program, which serves young adults from MDCH in the years after they have graduated from high school. We believe every young adult deserves more than simply reaching adulthood; they deserve the support and resources to build a successful future.

As our ministry continues to grow, we have seen firsthand that the years following high school often bring some of the greatest challenges. Many of the young women we serve have demonstrated incredible resilience in overcoming difficult circumstances, but they still benefit from continued support as they pursue college, careers, financial independence, and personal development.

The Independent Living Program is a natural extension of our mission. It offers a safe, structured, and encouraging environment where young adults can strengthen the skills, confidence, and character needed to

live independently. Through Christian mentoring, practical life-skills training, accountability, and ongoing guidance, we help ease the transition from residential care to self-sufficient adulthood.

Our desire extends far beyond helping young adults move out on their own. We want to see them flourish. By investing in this important stage of life, we are helping create brighter futures, breaking cycles of instability, and preparing the next generation to become responsible, financially independent, and Christ-centered adults.

The Independent Living Program reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting the young people we serve, not only during their childhood, but throughout the journey into adulthood as they build lives grounded in purpose, stability, and hope. ❖



"...For in you the fatherless find compassion."

HOSEA 14:3

High School Graduates Pursue College Degrees

We are proud of our three recent high school graduates from Mount Dora Children's Home, who are looking toward bright futures as they launch their college careers.

Michael Trumpo, who is the son of Single-Parent Program participant Amie, is enrolled at Southeastern University where he plans to pursue biblical studies and prepare for a career as a youth minister.

Another graduate, **Antrecia Harris**, also came to us through the Single-Parent Program, where her mom, Brittany, is enrolled. Antrecia attends Lake Technical College, and hopes to pursue a career in criminal justice.

Serenity Jordan Bell, who has been a resident of the Thompson House for the past three years, is playing collegiate soccer while attending Trinity Baptist College.

Please keep these young adults and their future plans in your prayers. ❖



Mikey Trumpo, center,
with mother Amie
and brother Micaiah



Antrecia
Harris



Serenity Jordan Bell
with Dr. Sam Smith,
President of MDCA&CH

Volunteer Couple Show the Love of Christ to Children

We love all the wonderful volunteers who do so many acts of kindness and generosity for the children and single parents at Mount Dora Children's Home, but one couple stands out as perhaps the longest-serving and best-known volunteers of all, and that is **Andy and Diane Limbrecht**.

It would be hard to overstate the positive impact Andy and Diane, from Brooksville, Florida, have had on our children over the years. They have bought birthday gifts, hosted cookouts, taken children shopping, served as relief houseparents, and much more. Most importantly, they have shown love and care for our children.



Ashley Blanchard and son William with Andy & Diane Limbrecht

"These kids did not ask to be put in the situation they're in," said Diane. "I love doing for the kids things that they can't do for themselves. If I'm going to support somebody, then I'm going to support somebody that didn't ask for it."

Andy and Diane have developed close relationships with several children over the years, one of the most special being with Ashley Blanchard, who was known as Taylor when she was a high school student at the Children's Home and is now married and a member of the MDCH staff.

"That's my granddaughter and that's how I introduce her," Diane said. "She's my granddaughter and William (Ashley's son) is my great-grandson."

While they have bought many gifts for the children over the years, Andy said they feel it's more important to give of themselves, to show the children that somebody cares about them and loves them.

"We don't donate a lot of money," Andy said. "We do personal stuff. We just put ourselves into it, so to speak."

Chuck Shepherd, who served for three decades as Vice President of Social Services and now represents MDCH as a Church Relations Coordinator in Tennessee, praised the Limbrechts for their selfless devotion as volunteers:

"Andy and Diane embody the love of Christ in action, lifting the spirit of the children at Mount Dora Children's Home by their unselfish acts of kindness. Through kind words, faithful presence, and generous hearts, they have given the children at Mount Dora encouragement and hope for a brighter future." ❖



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



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*and Learn More About
Mount Dora Children's Home!*

**Scan to Register Online
or visit MDCHome.org**

**Free to Attend,
but RSVP is Required**



Sarasota, Florida

January 9, 2027
Carlisle Inn

Montgomery, Alabama

February 4, 2027
Faulkner University

Mount Dora, Florida – President's Dinner

March 6, 2027
Mount Dora Christian Academy

Jacksonville, Florida

April 10, 2027
Lakeside Church of Christ

Tampa, Florida

May 22, 2027
Creekside Church of Christ

Nashville, Tennessee

Date TBD
Hillsboro Church of Christ

Social Services: 352-383-9906 ❖ Development and Church Relations: 352-383-0762 ❖ MDCHome.org

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