

THE CHILDREN'S CENTER, INC.

SPRING NEWSLETTER

International Impact: Successful TCCI Intervention in a Child Abduction Case



The Hague Convention in the Netherlands

In January of 2021, The Children's Center, Inc. was contacted by the managing partner of a major national law firm with offices in Houston, Texas. The firm is vetted by the United States Department of State for consultation on international parental child abduction cases. The firm was providing pro bono legal counsel to a parent from Central America, seeking return of their children who had been illegally removed. The case was filed in U. S. Federal Court under the Hague Convention, an international agreement to which the U. S. is a party. The Children's Center, Inc. is known within the Houston area legal community for its work with runaway and homeless children, including unaccompanied minors from other countries.

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction is the main international agreement that covers international parental child abduction. It provides a process through which a parent can seek to have their child returned to their home country. The United States was one of the first nations to sign the Convention in 1981. The Convention did not enter into force for the United States until 1988 with the ratification of the treaty and enactment by Congress of the International Child Abduction Remedies Act which translated the Convention into US law.

The federal court ordered removal of the children from the abductor and return to the parent in the home country. U. S. Marshals removed the two young siblings and on behalf of the parent in Central America, placed them into The Children's Center's Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, host home on January 15. There were no family members available in the U.S., creating temporary homelessness. The parent, in an agreement with the host home family and in consultation with Children's Center staff, determined that a Host Home was in the best interest of the children to facilitate timely family reunification.

Support for the runaway and homeless youth and the family on the part of Host Home and Children's Center's staff included temporary care of the children, case management, counseling and coordination with the children, host home, parent in Central America and their legal counsel. It also included coordination of appointments for the youth with physicians for COVID pre-flight screening, with the foreign consulate of the parent in Central America to obtain travel documents, and transfer of the children to an authorized representative of the parent, who then transported the children back to their home country from Houston on January 26. The children were in the Host Home for a total of 11 days.

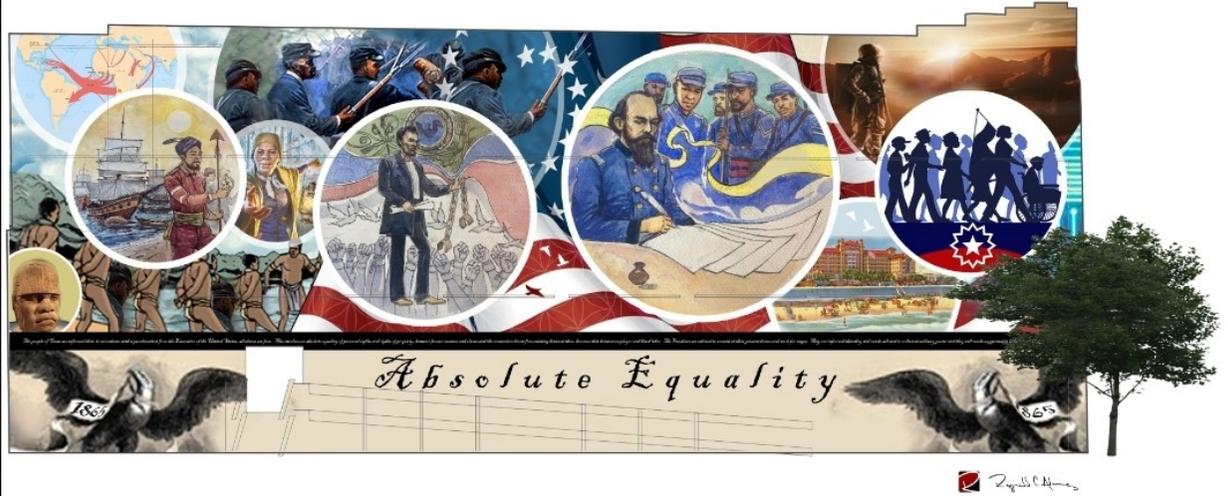
Your food and clothing gifts will support the family crisis center, the youth crisis center and runaway and homeless youth programs and services in the Beaumont Golden Triangle area, the Houston Metro area, the Galveston Bay area, the Victoria Golden Crescent area, the Corpus Christi Coastal Bend area, the Rio Grande Valley area and for outreach in Mexico and Honduras.

Please go to our website, <http://www.thechildrenscenterinc.org> and on the menu at the top of the homepage go to Friends of The Children's Center, then to drop down buttons under goods and services and enter your information. We will contact you and provide drop off locations for your support.



Community Engagement

Cultural Enrichment for Youth



Youth in transition at TCCI are painting as artists apprentices with Reginald Adams, the primary creator of the historic mural due to be unveiled on June 19, 2021, with the support of The Texas Commission on the Arts.

TCCI Youth Involved in Creation of Historic Juneteenth Mural

The Children's Center, Inc. is providing a creative opportunity for several youth in transition in a major art and historic project in Galveston. TCCI was awarded a Designated Funding/Commission Initiatives Program Grant from The Texas Commission on the Arts that helps to support the project and provides "hands-on" work for youth as artist apprentices.

The work entitled "Absolute Equality" chronicles the history of Juneteenth and features historic figures from Galveston's past. The site is next door to the parking lot where the Osterman Building once stood. The Osterman Building was used as the Union Headquarters when Maj. General Gordon Granger issued General Order No. 3 on Galveston Island freeing the enslaved people of Texas on June 19, 1865. His mural will help to expand the narrative of the journey of freedom from 1528 with the arrival of Esteban/Estevanico on the island to a society with absolute equality.

The massive mural will cover approximately 5,000 square feet and will be located on the east side of the Old Galveston Square building located at 2211 Strand. The project is spearheaded by Sam Collins, III and Sheridan Mitchell Lorenz of the Juneteenth Mural Committee.

The artist Reginald Adams is a Juneteenth renown Texas artist who designed and created more than 200 public art pieces in the Houston area. His designs include "Elements of Change" Four Corners Public Arts Project which feature brilliant historic mosaic portraits in Emancipation Park in Houston, Texas. His studio, Reginald C. Adams, LLC, is an award-winning public art and design firm that specializes in community engagement as an integral part of the artistic process.

Samuel Collins, III is a historian and a frequent guest speaker at The Bryan Museum who uncovers the "hidden history" of Black achievement in Galveston. His historic narrative will be physically part of installation and also part of the "high tech" component of the piece. The mural will also feature augmented reality and smartphones. Visitors will be able to point their smartphones at the mural and learn the history of images in the mural. The mural project is scheduled to be completed by June 19, 2021. The project, which has already garnered a great deal of media attention is expected to become a national focal point due to the interest in the Juneteenth Holiday by other states.

"The Texas Commission on the Arts is proud to support this project, which involves young people in marking an important and resonating part of our nation's history, where it actually happened,"

**Gary Gibbs, Executive Director
The Texas Commission on the Arts**





How We Serve The Community

Supporting Families in Crisis

Letter from Our Chairman



March 15, 2021

Dear Friends,

During 2020 and 2021 to the present time, the board of directors, management and staff of The Children's Center, Inc., have continued our work during the COVID 19 Pandemic. We have cared for among the most vulnerable persons in our society, homeless families, children and youth. Many became infected and we established quarantine locations to care for them. Some have required hospitalization, fortunately all have survived so far.

While caring for many lives, we like others, have experienced significant loss of income from the Pandemic. In our case, historic fundraising sources, derived from special events have stopped. This loss of funding is impacting our ability to provide necessary resources for children, youth and families.

While battling the Pandemic, The Children's Center was recently impacted by the "freeze event" in February. Pipes froze and ruptured in the ground that connect the buildings within our Galveston Island Family Crisis Center and Support buildings. With loss of water for bathing, drinking and toileting, it was necessary to quickly move over 40 family members into our Bernardo de Galvez and Albertine Yeager Children's Home buildings. Red Cross support helped us with needed supplies for that transition.

We are exploring all options to replace pipes with preliminary estimates of approximately \$30,000. This will not happen quickly. Insurance claims have been denied and waivers are being explored. Meetings have occurred with local government and FEMA options will be explored.

None of this will happen fast and meantime we are struggling to serve children and families. We are reaching out to you for any financial support you can provide at this time. Your contributions will provide homeless families, children and youth with shelter, food, clothing, counseling and ongoing care. Your contributions will be directed to the greatest needs of these deserving people.

Thanks for your consideration during these difficult times.

Sincerely,

David Holmen

Chairman of the Board
The Children's Center, Inc.

Donate Online at:

<https://www.thechildrenscenterinc.org/donations-tcci/>

How We Serve The Community

Our New Social Enterprise



Sources of Our Gourmet Coffee Brand

One farm is located in the Copan Region, which is known for a grade of "high-grown" gourmet coffee grown at an elevation between 3,280 and 4,920 feet and is located near San Marcos, Honduras. The second farm, producing "strictly high grown" grade coffee is located in the Opacala, at an elevation of 5003 ft -5396 ft and is located near La Esperanza.

Copan and Opacala are two of the six coffee growing regions in Honduras that produce five major arabica bean varieties that include: Bourbon, Caturra, Typica, Catuai and Pacas.

CAFE - Coffee Artisan Friendship Exchange



Inversiones Fiallos – Montoya Coffee Producing Company in Marcala, Honduras



Coffee Farmer Lopez on his farm among his coffee beans



Jose Adonay Gonzalez



Adonay Gonzalez Coffee Farm

Cultivation and harvesting includes and benefits youth in Honduras.

In the summer of 2020, The Children's Center Board of Directors and Management recognized the danger posed by the COVID 19 Pandemic to the survival of non-profit organizations. The special events benefitting The Children's Center, Inc. through United Way, golf tournaments and fishing tournaments have been reduced and or eliminated by the Pandemic.

The board in revising its strategic planning because of this funding threat, approved development of a social-entrepreneurial enterprise, Coffee Artisan Friendship Exchange, to establish a coffee import and food manufacturing company to produce gourmet coffee. In Honduras, the enterprise will benefit the small coffee farmer, runaway and homeless youth and the farming communities. In Mexico, it will benefit runaway and homeless youth seeking refuge on the border. In the United States it will benefit runaway and homeless youth in communities along the Texas Gulf Coast from the Louisiana-Texas border to the Texas-Mexico Border.

Coffee is enjoyed by over 60 percent of the American public. In Honduras, it is the largest agricultural export. Fine coffee is grown in the Western Coffee Region of Honduras. This includes the Copan and Opalaca Coffee Regions. The source of Coffee Artisan Friendship Exchange is there, on small family operated farms located in the Honduran Departments of Intibuca (Opalaca coffee region) and Ocotepeque (Copan region). The Adonay-Gonzalez and Lopez-Maldonado farm family members include children who were served by The Children's Center, Inc. Because of this relationship, families have agreed to partner and serve runaway and homeless youth in Honduras who may seek refuge, and work toward independence as an alternative to fleeing the country for safety and survival. Coffee Artisan Friendship Exchange will partner to harvest coffee, process and export it to the Galveston Bay area, where our youth will roast and distribute the coffee to subscribers. DeDonato Enterprises is providing marketing and sales support for the venture. Coffee is scheduled to begin arriving by May for roasting and distribution.

BUY COFFEE ONLINE:

<https://www.thechildrenscenterinc.org/buy-coffe-form/>



How We Serve The Community

Our New Social Enterprise

Coffee Artisan Friendship Exchange is a program of The Children's Center, Inc.

Coffee is cultivated and produced to support positive youth development in Honduras, Mexico and the United States.

Crafting, roasting and packaging includes and benefits youth in Mexico and the United States.

Production



Roasted, Bagged and Ready to Ship



CAFE - Coffee Artisan Friendship Exchange



Coffee Processing and Sorting

Bags of Green Coffee Beans



Beans Being Roasted



Distribution

- Economic Stabilization
- Nonprofit Support
- Community Enhancement



Former TCCI client Jhonys Martinez and his family with James Keel in Villanueva area of San Pedro Sula, Honduras

CAFE - Coffee Artisan Friendship Exchange



Exoticos Café- Coffee tasting lab in Marcala, Honduras.

Anna Ayala Acosta and James Keel tasting coffee.



Gutierrez brothers in La Sorto, Honduras



La Sorto Children visiting Mr. and Mrs. Lopez at their farm in San Marcos, Honduras



Coffee Farmer Gonzalez, James Keel, Will Fiallos, Coffee Producer and Attorney Ann Ayala Acosta at the processing Company in Marcala, Honduras

All proceeds of this Social Enterprise supports nonprofit programming. Coffee Is Roasted And Distributed From The Galveston Bay Area Of Texas.

BUY COFFEE ONLINE:

**[https://
www.thechildrenscenter
inc.org/buy-coffe-form/](https://www.thechildrenscenterinc.org/buy-coffe-form/)**



How We Serve The Community

Welcoming New Staff and New Programs

Youth in Transition Get New Homes



Ms. Jessica Corona, M. S. W.

The Children's Center was awarded a grant to serve homeless youth through rapid rehousing and transitional housing by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development that began services in December of 2020. The grant was one of only two, awarded in Texas for youth. It resulted from a grant application completed through collaboration of the Texas Homeless Network, the Texas Network of Youth Services and The Children's Center, Inc.

The project is located at University Apartments on Pelican Island in collaboration with Lamson Nguyen, a Galveston businessman and owner of the complex. An office providing support services is located in proximity to the apartments which serve up to 20 youth.

The program is at full capacity, a testament to the need. Youth are engaged in a combination of work, school and/or volunteer activities in the community. They receive case management and counseling services along with contemporary housing. The goal of programming is to provide each youth with a path to successful independent living.

Ms. Jessica Corona, M. S. W. is program coordinator and supervises programs and services. Ms. Hilda Tobias, Executive Vice President of The Children's Center, Inc. supervises Interns from Graduate schools of Counseling and Social Work who participate on the team serving residents.



The Children's Center Inc. Welcomes Annette Gonzalez

The Children's Center, Inc. is pleased to announce that Annette Gonzalez has joined the staff as a Senior Case Manager for Corpus Christi, Victoria and the Rio Grande Valley. Ms. Gonzalez brings a depth of education and experience to the position. Gonzalez holds a Master of Social Work (MSW) and a Bachelor (BSW) of Social from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. She also earned an Associate of Arts in Social Work from South Texas College. An Honors graduate on the Dean's list, she earned the President's Award from Phi Delta Kappa, twice. She has a history of working intensively with families in the foster care system or those involved in adoptions.

How We Serve The Community

Dedicated Volunteers



Chicktime Volunteer Honored for Dedicated Service to TCCI

The Children's Center recently honored Chicktime volunteers at a ceremony held at one of the temporary locations for the Family Crisis Center. Chicktime was represented by Elvia Gomez-Whitlock, Chicktime's tireless leader. The Children's Center, Inc. Board Chairman, David Holmen presented Elvia and all Chicktime volunteers with a certificate of appreciation to commemorate recognition of Chicktime as The Children's Center, Inc. "Outstanding Volunteers of 2020". Elvia recognized co-leaders Ana Barron and Diana Garaza-Martinez. She gave special thanks to Chicktime Angels, Rosemary Jackson, Denise Turner, Vivian Glass, Renne Byrd, Kenia Latin, all who helped with activities and meals each month.

During 2020 Chicktime volunteers contributed significant time and resources to the families and children served at the Family Crisis Center. While COVID 19 limited "hands-on" activities, Chicktime volunteers continued to help children and families celebrate quality time. Chicktime placed a "theater style" popcorn machine at the Family Crisis Center to create daily snack routine enjoyed by all families (and staff). Since June Chicktime has been providing meals each week in collaboration with the "Meal Chain".

Over the year, volunteers have provided monthly support in the form of food, clothes and activities. In May - Cinco de Mayo activities, August - backpacks, October - Halloween treats, November and December - Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinners

Chairman David Holmen closed the ceremony with thanks, "Chicktime has been a critical resource in good times and in hard times. The Children's Center, Inc. is truly grateful".



Elvia Gomez-Whitlock was honored by James T. Keel, CEO/President on her left, David Holmen, Chairman of the Board on her right and Hilda Tobias, Executive Vice President/COO (far right).

Volunteer Online here: <https://www.thechildrenscenterinc.org/>

Donate Now!

Mailing Address:

The Children's Center, Inc.
CORPORATE OFFICE
PO BOX 58545
Houston, Texas 77258-8545

Call: (409) 765-5212

Donate on our website:



<http://www.thechildrenscenterinc.org>

Crisis Line: 1-844-763-8861



How We Serve The Community

Our Mission and Programs

Our Mission

The Children's Center, Inc. legacy of serving children began in 1878. It serves abandoned, abused, exploited, homeless and runaway youth. Programs span the Texas Gulf Coast, Mexican border and Central America. The Children's Center provides safety, housing, outreach and mentoring services that include Project Safe Place, Crisis Line/Crisis Response System, Host Homes, Outreach and Mentoring. Its corporate offices are located in Houston, Texas.

Do You Have Room in Your Heart and Home to provide a Host Home to a Child in Need?

Email: jkeel@tcc1878.org Call: (409)770-3540

Visit Our Website/Go to the Host Home Page to Apply: <http://www.thechildrenscenterinc.org>

THANK YOU!

To

**JOE COMPIAN, MAYOR PRO TEM, CITY COUNCILMAN OF LA MARQUE AND
LEADERSHIP VOLUNTEER OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS**

**RITA BOYER AND DONNIE VANACKEREN OF
THE GALVESTON COUNTY FOOD BANK**

**For Emergency Food and Water delivered to the Women, Men and
Children living at The Family Shelter during Winter Storm Uri 2021.**