

Greetings Mending Hearts Foster Families & Friends!

Since July, 2015 Mending Hearts has been successfully providing safe, loving, faith-based foster families for vulnerable children who are in the care and custody of the Arizona Department of Child Safety. I sincerely appreciate your hearts and your efforts to care for these children who come from hurtful pasts. **A hardy thank you is in order!**

Every three to four years, the State accepts bids to provide contracts to foster care providers in the community.

Recently, DCS issued a new proposal for Foster Care Supports. The proposal has some significant changes when compared to the current contract.

With that being said, we have come to the prayerful decision to **NOT** renew our contract with the State this year as a foster care provider. We have not made this decision lightly. As you can imagine, there has been much discussion around this very complex situation. The Lord has clearly called us to care for vulnerable children. While the challenges are great, God has continued to affirm the following in our hearts:

- **The need has not changed. There are just as many vulnerable children in our state that need caring and safe families to live with.**
- **The reason our Agency exists has not changed. We exist to bring glory to God through compassionate service and loving care to the traumatized and vulnerable in our community.**
- **God's heart for these children has not changed, and He is still in the business of creating families.**
- **His call to His people, you and I, to care for others has not changed.**

God has placed us right where He wanted us – open to His will, and His way, for His purposes and glory.

The proposed contract requires more out-of-pocket expenses, paperwork, and duties for our staff for less money. Ultimately, the costs to run the program will outweigh the income generated at Mending Hearts.

We believe that God has provided wisdom to us as to what our next steps should be. As you know, every season in life has periods of pruning, growth and harvest. We feel strongly that we are entering into a season of pruning. I am confident that God is working in our Agency now to position us to be in a better place in the future to continue to bear healthy and lasting fruit for His kingdom. It is my belief that as we embrace this season of pruning and all that God is doing in our Agency, He will direct us in how and where we will serve more vulnerable children, adults and families.

In the meantime, our contract with the State will end on June 30, 2019.

We will have all cases transferred to other foster care agencies no later than Friday, June 14, 2019.

From July onwards, we will be focused on expanding and strengthening our Agency's counseling department and general structure. We need the right people in the right roles with the right skills. We will focus on expanding our clinical practice in the community and being able to serve more families in

the Valley, especially those with health insurance. This will strengthen our core infrastructure and position us to expand our services as God directs us in the future.

So by now you must be wondering, what does this mean for me?

Elena and Kelley will be in touch early next week to arrange a time to visit your home over the next three weeks and answer questions you might have about the transition process more fully. We will provide you with our suggestions of agencies that share our values and with whom we have a strong, working relationship with. We will facilitate the transfer of your file to the new Agency. We are committed to providing assistance to you in connecting with the best agency for you and your family.

Our desire is for this transition to be as smooth as possible.

Staff will complete final visits with your family at home by the end of May.

Your case file will be released by Mending Hearts to your new Agency by Friday, June 14, 2019*.

We absolutely could not be where we are as an Agency without YOU! You have invested valuable time and effort into becoming trained and competent foster parents. You have welcomed children into your home, cared for them, nurtured them, and provided structure. You have attended many meetings and advocated for each child. You enrolled children in school and sorted out daycare. You have dealt with children being dropped off late on a Friday night with no paperwork. You have been asked to provide short-term placements which lasted much longer. Some of you even adopted your foster children, providing a permanent loving, stable home.

Mending Hearts would like an opportunity to celebrate and honor you for all that you have done and provided for children in the Valley. **Please join us on Saturday, May 4th, from 1-3pm for an Ice Cream Social** to recognize the selfless service you have given.

In the interim, we will continue to offer you the same personalized support and service you have come to expect. We need your prayers in this transition and we will be praying for each of you.

Mending Hearts is grateful to have walked alongside you through your foster care journey. May the Lord Bless and Keep each of you!

Questions

Please contact Elena Jensen (elena.jensen@mendingheartsfs.org) or Kelley Hollie (Kelley.hollie@mendingheartsfs.org) by phone or email with further questions. We are happy to provide further clarity to you at this time.

Together in Christ,

Sharon Carl,

President/CEO
Mending Hearts

**Consideration will be given to the release of case files and official transfer at an earlier date to families with extenuating circumstances.*