

Request from Methodist Children's Home Society

The Methodist Children's Home Society (MCHS) Long-Term Foster Care Program is intended for Unaccompanied Children (UCs) who arrive in the United States without parents, guardians, or adult figures. These children are all under 18, have no legal status, and most likely have suffered trauma in their home countries. Many of the UCs come from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, countries that are rife with violence. However, we welcome any unaccompanied child who meets the ORR criteria, regardless of their country of origin.

The goal of the LTFC Program is to reunite the UCs with their parents, family members, and/or sponsors who can help them navigate the immigration process to obtain U.S. citizenship. While the children wait to rejoin their own family members, they need a foster parent or parents who are willing to provide them with a home and enroll them in school, activities, healthcare, etc. Families who take in UCs need to be foster care certified with the State of Michigan as well as with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at the federal level.

As recruitment coordinator, I ensure families receive the proper training materials and walk them through the federal and state training, which can be completed online. I keep track of families' progress and ascertain they meet the criteria to accept the UCs. I work with a team that oversees the UC cases at the local, state, and federal levels.

MCHS and the Board of Child Care (BCC), our partner organization, support individuals and families during the entire time they foster UCs. We make sure the families and children get the resources they need during the foster period and address any concerns/issues that arise. Families receive monthly stipends and a bi-annual clothing allowance for each child in their care. We assist in scheduling medical and health-related appointments, school enrollment, and acculturation/acclimation. We also offer support groups for families in which they can discuss their experiences and share their milestones and challenges.

If you or someone you know might be interested in fostering a UC, contact Pilar Barreto at pbarreto@mchsmi.org or 787-565-3034. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

We are looking forward to working with you!

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