



The Sanctuary Foster Care Services

"We don't ever give up; it doesn't matter what a child throws at us, it doesn't matter how entrenched their behaviors are, we just don't give up on kids. It's not what we do." These are the words of Amanda Boyd, founder and executive director of the grassroots organization, The Sanctuary Foster Care Services, in Texas.

The organization provides essential mental and physical support to foster children and families who would otherwise be left to fend for themselves throughout the fostering process. The Sanctuary Foster Care Services is committed to understanding why the fostering process was failing so many children.

Amanda and her team found that many foster children in the United States were heading down negative paths, such as homelessness and drug use, because they'd aged out of the foster care system and were left to figure things out on their own.

"There are all kinds of reclamation organizations out there that work in prison ministry, sex trafficking, or with addicted populations, and we were like, 'OK, but how do we prevent this from happening in the first place?'"

This research, combined with her own experience, led Amanda to discover significant gaps in the foster care system... the very system that her children grew up in. "My husband and I have adopted six children from foster care. Each one of those children showed me a different issue with the broken system," she said.

In less than five years since its inception, The Sanctuary Foster Care Services has grown to a team of 44 across two offices and has served over 400 children. A true testament to the severe need for their unique services, which Amanda hopes will become the new norm for foster care. The Sanctuary Foster Care Services offers support in four main areas:

- **Mental Health Therapy:** Not only for foster children but also for foster families. Many foster families come from traumatic backgrounds, and when dealing with a foster child with a similar history, difficult feelings can come up, and foster families may need help in navigating them.

- **In-home Therapy:** Sometimes, in-office visits aren't enough. A clinician assesses the at-home situation to provide tailored guidance, helping the family and child move forward together.

- **24/7 Crisis Intervention:** A clinician responds to any location at any time of day, assisting the foster family and child in working through the issue together and teaching them valuable skills to bring into their relationship going forward.

- **Community Support:** The organization enlists members of the community to help provide physical assistance, such as meal trains, clothes, etc., taking these burdens off the shoulders of the foster families.

Amanda's hope is that these services will no longer be 'unique' and will become commonplace for foster care services nationwide. "We could see the entire landscape of society change- we could see the prison population actually go down, we could see the homeless population go down, the addicted population go down, the sex trafficking go down... because now you have healthy kids growing up and becoming productive members of society."

The Sanctuary Foster Care Services continues to support foster children and families in ways they have never been supported before, even dipping their toes into the advocacy side of foster care by researching the legislature around it. They hope to start speaking with those who make decisions about the foster care system in the near future.

For more information on The Sanctuary Foster Care Services, visit www.thesanctuaryhouston.tx.com.

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