NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

OUR COMMUNITY OUR KIDS PUTS FOSTER CARE IMPROVEMENTS IN MOTION FOR CHILDREN IN SEVEN NORTH TEXAS COUNTIES
Newly Created Division Offers Innovations and Resources to Improve Foster Care

FORT WORTH, Texas (September 9, 2014) – After more than three years of study and preparation, Our Community Our Kids, a division of ACH Child and Family Services, takes charge of the state’s Foster Care Redesign initiative this month, instituting significant innovations designed to improve the lives of children in need of foster care in seven North Texas counties.

As the regional contractor for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Our Community Our Kids will support the efforts of agencies that provide foster care services to nearly 2,400 area children each year.

“Our name reflects the value we as a community have placed on caring for our most vulnerable children,” said Gary Buff, chief operating officer for Our Community Our Kids. “By coordinating services and establishing efficiencies, our network can offer resources that have not been available to our community before.”

Those innovations include access to:

- Every Child A Priority, or ECAP, a system to improve placement stability by helping better match children to homes
- Quality Parenting Initiative, or QPI, designed to recruit more high-quality foster care parents by defining expectations and revamping the image of foster parenting
- Expanded mental health and crisis respite services
- myEvolv, a state-of-the-art client record system to manage clinical information
- Provider Information Exchange, or PIX, to connect agency software to other databases automatically uploading and downloading data securely and efficiently

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Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) standardized assessment tool to provide a common metric to inform planning and measure child well-being over time.

The new technologies and innovations to foster care that are being introduced to the network came about after two years of ACH research into Foster Care Redesign and how it might be implemented locally. The agency began benchmarking and collecting best practices from across the nation to create a unique plan specific to the needs of Texas children and families.

“Through the collaborative efforts of Our Community Our Kids, we can design a more consistent approach to the training and support of foster families. This will help us make better matches and placements for kids on the front end, and ultimately will lower the number of placement disruptions for children in foster care,” said Bill Lund, chief executive officer of Covenant Kids, an Arlington, Texas-based foster care provider agency that is part of the new network.

ACH and the Our Community Our Kids team are excited to bring real change that will improve the lives of children, said Wayne Carson, chief executive officer of ACH. “We are introducing innovations to a system that has been broken for a while. As a community, we can work toward solutions that provide our children with safety, hope, love and the capacity to thrive.”

**About ACH Child and Family Services and Our Community Our Kids**
Established in 1915, ACH Child and Family Services is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children and preserving families in North Texas through a broad range of services. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, the agency provides foster care services and therapeutic and prevention programs to over 3,000 children, youth and families each year. The agency also offers outreach services to more than 8,000 young people annually, through a variety of educational programs.

In 2013, as part of a statewide foster care redesign effort, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services selected ACH as a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) to oversee the delivery of foster care services in Texas Region 3b, which includes Tarrant, Palo Pinto, Parker, Johnson, Hood, Somervell and Erath counties. Oversight and accountability for foster care providers in that network is now managed by Our Community Our Kids, a newly formed division of ACH. For more information, go to [www.oc-ok.org](http://www.oc-ok.org).

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