



Every year, about 1 in 110 births are affected by Congenital Heart Defects (CHDs), or structural abnormalities of the heart, most of which will benefit from heart surgery at some point. CHDs are responsible for 1/3 of all birth defect-related deaths, more than any other birth defect, and sadly 20% of children who make it through birth will not survive past their first birthday. Needless to say, when a child with a CHD is born, their families' lives change forever.

Mended **Little** Hearts is a program of Mended Hearts, Inc., and has been offering the gift of hope to heart patients, their families and caregivers for more than 50 years. It is the second oldest national support organization in the United States. Seeing the need in 2004, now more than 90 Mended **Little** Hearts groups nationwide meet together to share experiences and emotions so that they can work towards healing. They also have educational speakers so that members can understand how to best care for their child and the best treatment options available for him or her.

Mended **Little** Hearts of Amarillo is a network of heart families in the Texas, New Mexico & Oklahoma Panhandle that understand and support each other while raising children with heart defects. We provide resources to help families work through overwhelming emotions and move forward to find hope, healing, and laughter.

We were locally chartered in 2009 within the national Mended **Little** Hearts organization and have been substantially growing our membership since then. Mended **Little** Hearts of Amarillo has generated great support from our local pediatricians and obstetricians, pediatric cardiologists that care for our children in Amarillo and the DFW area, along with past and present Mayors of Amarillo and the City Commissioners. The national organization does not financially support the groups, so it is up to us to raise money locally to meet our needs and goals. We have several different programs that are in place to help assist families affected by CHD.

**-Hospital, Social Media, and Telephone Visiting**

\*when a family receives a diagnosis of a Congenital Heart Defect, it can often times be overwhelming and scary. We provide a sense of hope in a sometimes hopeful situation. We have nationally trained and certified Bi-Lingual Visiting Coordinators that visit with the families face-to-face, over the phone and via internet. We are hoping to establish visiting rights within Children's Medical Center of Dallas and Cooks Ft. Worth.

**-Bravery Bags**

\*all children requiring surgery are transported, oftentimes an emergency flight is required, to other facilities outside of Amarillo and have nothing more than the clothes on their backs when they travel with their children hundreds of miles away, most times to Dallas or Ft. Worth. Bravery Bags have informational brochures and basic necessities for the families (basic toiletries snacks, gift cards, comfort items for the children such as bright pillow cases, socks and stuffed animals) We work closely with Mended **Little** Hearts of Dallas to help provide necessary items to the families that are from the Panhandle.

**-Group Meetings**

\*with educational speakers as well as representatives from other organizations

**-Social Events**

\*picnics, parties and cook-outs so that our children are able to interact with others that are like them and have had open-heart surgeries

**-Promote Awareness**

\*National CHD Awareness Week is February 7-14<sup>th</sup> of each year and our Amarillo City Commissioners issue a Proclamation declaring that week as CHD Awareness Week in Amarillo. Members of our group attend the City Commissioners meeting where the Proclamation is read. We also participate as a group in the national awareness campaign "Rock Your Scar" and the "Roar and Run Virtual Race".

**-Community Events**

\*Members of our group have attended and participated in the American Heart

Association Heart Walk, Jump Rope for Heart & Go Red for Women, Boots N Badges, Hearts & Hogs, Home is Where the Heart Is, Make-A-Wish Chili Cook-off and Car Show. We also sponsor 2 blood drives each year with Coffee Memorial Blood Center, one in February for CHD Awareness Week and in May for the week leading up to our Heart Glo. We also sponsor the Ronald McDonald House annual Golf Tournament each year and in 2016 will be representing Mended Little Hearts at the Children's Miracle Network's Radiothon.

**-Provide meals and support** to families staying at the Ronald McDonald House Amarillo

**-Leadership Training** with other group coordinators and national leaders at the Annual Leadership Conference. We also have members that are on the Parent Advisory Board of Children's Medical Center of Dallas and the Board of Directors of the Ronald McDonald House.

As Mended Little Hearts of Amarillo membership grows, we face the reality that most non-profits do as well. In order to meet the needs and demands of reaching out to families in our area, we realize that it takes financial sponsorship and private donations from companies and individuals to help our organization operate at it's full potential. On Friday, May 6th, alongside the Lone Star Runner's Club, we will be having our 5th Annual 5K, the Heart GLO, "Glowing 1 Heartbeat at a Time" at John Stiff Memorial Park. It's going to be a fun filled glow-in-the-dark evening with a family 2.5k Walk and 5K Race!

We are asking that, as a community supporter, that you please consider making a tax deductible donation to Mended Little Hearts of Amarillo. Please see the enclosed form for the levels of commitment offered.

Dealing with all the aspects of having a child with a CHD is overwhelming. We are a network of families, trying to help one another and make sure families do not feel alone in this journey. We know that this outpouring of love will help lift up these families coping with the effect of CHDs and help them to feel hope in their situation. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Libby Bunn  
Fundraising Coordinator  
Mended Little Hearts of Amarillo

**Little hearts hold big hopes.**

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