



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. More than 80 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.

High Plains Mended *Little* Hearts 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. High Plains Mended *Little* Hearts 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 goals. Some of the immediate goals that we have are:

-Hospital, Social Media, and Telephone Visiting

-Care Packages

*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. Care Packages 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 High Plains area.

-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 February 7-14th of each year with the Proclamation from the Amarillo City Commissioners (This year our group will be presented the Proclamation at the City Commissioner's monthly meeting on February 5)

-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, Coffee Memorial Blood Drives & the annual Boots N Badges Competition, Hearts & Hogs, Home is Where the Heart Is, Make-A-Wish Chili Cook-off and Car Show

-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 High Plains Mended *Little* Hearts 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 16th, alongside the Lone Star Runner's Club, we will be having our 3rd Annual 5K, the Heart GL♥ , "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 5K Fun Run and Family Walk.

We are asking that, as a community supporter, that you please consider making a tax deductible donation to High Plains Mended *Little* Hearts. 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,

Jamie Snyder
Group Coordinator
High Plains Mended *Little* Hearts

Little hearts hold big hopes.

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