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TAMPA’S OLDEST CHARITY
CELEBRATES 90TH ANNIVERSARY

Ninety years: It means more than just another anniversary for The Children’s Home, Inc.

It means 90 years of providing loving care for more than 12,000 troubled boys and girls. Ninety years of finding adoptive families for 5,000 homeless infants and youngsters.

No Tampa Bay area charity has been on the job longer. Since 1892, The Home, a private, non-profit agency, has done some of the most important work of the community by giving homeless, neglected and abused boys and girls a decent start in life.

THE CRY OF A BABY

Along with many Tampa "families," The Children’s Home has struggled, changed and grown during the past 90 years. One of its earliest recorded child care cases can be
found in an 1896 issue of the Tampa Weekly Tribune:

"At four o'clock in the morning the crying of a baby startled a Tampa household. It was wrapped in a brown bed quilt, and was dressed in a long white slip ... a girl baby, apparently about three weeks old. The little foundling was christened and placed in the orphan's home for future care."

Today, The Children's Home provides residential care, counseling, education, job training and supervised recreational activities for 70 children. These youngsters have emotional problems due to disruptive pasts and families that have broken down.

Keeping the doors open always has been a challenge. In the early 1900s, fire twice forced the relocation of the Home. Always, hard-working volunteers toiled to feed, clothe and care for the children.

**Tampa's First Families**

Among their ranks were many of Tampa's most distinguished families: The names Bentley, Booker, Brorein, Conn, Davis, Dekle, Diaz, Giddens, Henderson, Humphreys, Lesley, Lopez, Lowry, Lykes, Maas, Macfarlane, Parkhill, Vega, Wall, Wolfe and many others figure prominently in the Home's history of service.

Writes D. B. McKay, a long-time supporter and advocate of the Home:

"I give credit for the conception of The Children's Home to Miss Carrie Hammerly, one of the Lord's anointed."

She and other members of the Ladies Missionary Society of the First Methodist Church in Tampa founded the Home in the E. A. Clark residence (in what is now known as downtown Tampa). Mrs. A. C. Moore served as first president of the Home's Board of Lady Managers, predecessor to the Board of Directors.

**Disaster Strikes Again**

After a blaze ruined the Clark house, the Home relocated in another private residence on Florida Avenue, near Fortune Street. Then, in 1920, disaster struck again.

"A terrible fire has destroyed our cherished Home," said Mrs. Abe Maas, president of the Board of Lady Managers for 25 years. The Home temporarily was moved to a
building donated by Robert Mugge as its supporters faced the task of rebuilding.

The redoubtable Mrs. Maas was angered further when she found that tattered, useless bits of clothing were all some people saw fit to donate. "Our tots are not ragamuffins, even if they are homeless," she declared.

**A NEW BUILDING**

But it wasn't long before the Home was back in business. Col. Hugh C. Macfarlane and Dr. E. S. Crill donated two acres, at 3302 N. Florida Ave., and an intensive building drive to erect a fireproof structure was headed by D. B. McKay. The Tampa Lodge of the B.P.O.E., the YMCA and many others worked hard to find $112,000 in funds, and in 1922 the Home moved to its new quarters - its fourth location in three decades.

Many Tampa Bay area residents still recall the Florida Avenue facility, which housed the agency for 45 years.

During that span, thousands of homeless children received loving care and many were placed with adoptive families.

**PLACE OF LOVE, HOPE**

As the Suncoast's population boomed, more and more children were taken in by the agency. By the mid-Sixties, the crowded Home needed a more spacious facility and yard. Sam Davis headed the drive to raise $394,000 for a new administration building and six cottages. The City of Tampa donated a large tract in northwest Tampa at the end of Memorial Highway, and in 1967 the oldest charitable institution on the west coast moved to its present campus.

Through the decades the goal of the Home has broadened. It's grown from a 19th Century "orphan's home" to a residential center that provides care and counseling for 70 children with emotional problems and special needs.

And as always, The Children’s Home seeks to achieve its ideal - "What the wisest and best parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children."

The Children's Home: A place of love and hope since 1892.