

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why are the children residing at the home and where do they come from?

The children we serve come from all over South Carolina and are placed in our care by such agencies as SC Dept of Social Service (DSS), SC Dept of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Continuum of Care (COC) and SC Dept of Mental Health (DMH). Most of our children have been abused (sexually and physically, both males and females), abandoned and neglected regardless of which agency placed them with LCH so just because a child tells you he/she was placed by Dept of Juvenile Justice, that does not mean he/she is a "delinquent". The majority of the time our DJJ children were using the only survival skills they knew when they got into trouble with the law. Our home is usually the first time these children have ever had someone to care for them, have had any structure and have had any stability.

We receive children from all over the state because it is common practice to place a child that has been physically and sexually abused away from the county in which they previously resided. This protects the child from discrimination and possible further abuse.

2. Are you a state agency or state affiliated?

The Lancaster Children's Home, Inc is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that was established in 1963. Since we are private non-profit, we are not considered a state agency or affiliation. We must constantly rely on the public's generosity to sustain the high level of care for our children.

We are licensed and audited by the state to remain in business and must adhere to all state standards in the care of our children. We pride ourselves in providing more than what the state requires in our care such as counseling for the children and their families. We offer individual and group counseling as well as parenting classes for the families. When there is a possibility of reunification with a child's family, we believe that we must help the families as a whole in order to be of service to the individual child.

3. How are you funded?

We receive nominal funding from DSS, DJJ, COC and DMH. Due to state budget cuts, the amounts received has had a steady decrease over the past four years (sometimes as much as 18% at the time).

We rely on outside sources such as fundraising events, grants, and private donations to provide food, special recreational activities, clothing, educational field trips, school supplies and other expenses such as cold medicine, first aid supplies, personal hygiene products, etc.

4. Do you use the children to promote your organization?

It is LCH's policy not to exploit our children to promote the organization. We gladly allow the children to attend any function we/they are invited to as long as they are not used to promote the home in any way. It is our #1 priority to protect the children's confidentiality and to protect the children from further abuse. We do believe that allowing the children to attend different functions allows us to better help them become more social and productive members of society.

5. Can I photograph the children?

You may not photograph or video the children due to confidentiality or any other laws that we are governed.

6. What are your requirements of the volunteers? Is there a minimum amount of time I am required to serve?

The only requirements we ask of our volunteers is, of course, to have clean background checks and to agree with the confidentiality statement, discipline agreements and all other policies and procedures of the home. Patience and understanding is a must in order to gain the trust of the children we serve. Once that trust is gained, this can be the most rewarding experience you've ever had.

We do not require a minimum amount of time or money to spend, but we will keep you posted of our needs and may ask if you are available from time to time to help. We completely understand if you are unable to help when asked. Just keep us posted on the activities you would most likely want to learn about.

7. What are the top needs of the home that I as a volunteer can provide?

Mentoring a child or two works wonders! Assisting with fundraising events (not just monetarily, we need man power and word of mouth), assisting our staff with chaperoned activities and helping prepare for special functions and other events.

8. What other needs?

We keep a current "list of needs" on file.

Beautification of the homes is important so helping to plant flowers for the spring or donating mums and other seasonal decorations is necessary in keeping our homes feeling like "homes." Sometimes our Christmas tree is the only one they have ever had.

We always need funding for recreational activities and field trips. If we are able to keep the children active and able to participate in community activities, they feel a part of something and strive harder to do better in school and in their personal lives.

Providing birthday cards and Wal-Mart gift cards in \$10.00 denominations to acknowledge a child's birthday. Every child should feel special, especially on their birthday. By providing birthday cards and gift cards (we also make sure they have a cake), we can make sure every child is given something just for them on their special day. Oftentimes, what we provide is the only acknowledgement they receive.

Supporting the home in an active, positive manner in the community promotes LCH to others. As you well know, we cannot do this alone!

9. What age children do you serve?

Currently, we have elementary through high school aged children (we house up to 14 boys and up to 18 girls). We are licensed to serve ages 8 through 21 as long as the child is in school.

10. How are clothing and supplies provided?

Only the children in our care from DSS receive a clothing allowance of \$100.00 per quarter. Those monies usually do not arrive right when needed nor does it cover the cost of clothing growing children from season to season. For that reason, we accept the responsibility of making sure the children have enough clothes, uniforms, shoes, and undergarments for school. We will also purchase coats and other winter supplies (gloves, hats, scarves, toboggans, etc.) as that time approaches if we do not receive enough donations to cover each child.

11. What are the children's sizes?

The children's sizes vary depending on our census at any given date. Please call a few days ahead of time in order for us to gather the information regarding needed sizes.

12. What schools do your children attend?

Our children attend Lancaster County Public Schools, Adult Education and USC-L while some are considered homebound and receive tutors from LCSD.

13. Are the children allowed to participate in extracurricular activities?

If any of our children demonstrate interest in extracurricular activities, they are allowed to do so as long as they have good behaviors at the home and at school.

14. What activities are provided and how are they funded?

The children like to play any kind of ball and go to local school sporting events. Outings such as bowling, skating and movies (dollar movies) are usually inexpensive and are done once a month or so, but real treats like ice skating, Carowinds, Scarowinds and other sporting events are expensive and we must rely on donations and fundraising events to cover those expenses.

A few area churches have invited and allowed some of our residents to play basketball and softball on their teams.

Treats like Carowinds and Scarowinds are given to those children meeting behavioral requirements and gives them a goal to strive.

15. Can I take a child home with me or out for the day?

Only approved volunteers with proper advanced scheduling, are allowed to take a child or two off campus for a visit or to activities. This must be scheduled in advance with the child's case manager.

16. Can I request a child spend the night with me?

No, a child cannot spend the night or go on vacation with any volunteer. Only those state approved foster or therapeutic foster homes are allowed overnight visits. Contact SC DSS for more information.