



FOSTERING LOVE

A COMMUNITY CLOSET FOR
FOSTER, ADOPTIVE, AND KINSHIP FAMILIES

Funding Initiative



THE PROBLEM

- Nationwide, there are over 670,000 children in foster care.
- The median age that a child enters foster care is 6 years old.
- In Alabama, 9175 children were served by the foster care system in 2020..
- Children can enter the system right after birth if they are born with drugs in their system.
- Most children come to the attention of DHR due to abuse, neglect, or mistreatment. The large majority have been abused by parents or a family member.
- Alabama is 5% above the national average in grandparents raising their grandchildren, with about 35% of grandparents actively raising one ore more grandkids.
- Every year, hundreds of children age out of the foster care system in Alabama, which means that they turn 18 and reach adulthood without a parent or guardian to guide them. Nationwide, this happens to over 23,000 children per year.
- Jackson County is in the top three counties in Alabama in terms of the number of foster homes. However, most homes stay full.
- While may individuals finish the certification process, over 50% quit fostering within the first year.

FOSTER CLOSET'S SOLUTION



We are the Shortt family. We are a foster family licensed in Jackson County. After many years of ignoring it, Doug and I answered the call to foster in February of 2018. We currently have 8 children ranging in age from 24 down to 2 years old. Our 4 youngest children are adopted out of foster care. Since we became licensed foster parents, we have welcomed 16 children into our home with some staying days and others staying forever.

As we have welcomed new children into our home, we have seen that they usually don't come with any of the basic necessities. Immediately we have to start gathering the items they need. Usually a new placement means a hefty trip to Wal-Mart for all the odds and ends that are required to care for our new little love.

More recently, we have been blessed to be able to reach out to the Fostering Love Community Closet for help with the material needs. They have everything from diapers and bottles to Halloween costumes, holiday clothes, and toys. If we need it, they probably have it. The ladies have spent endless hours and have everything organized and easy to access and they love for us to use it. This fall I got some nice name brand church clothes and some athletic pants for our three little boys. I also found several items that I will be using as Christmas gifts for the children. We consider it a privilege to be able to use the foster closet to help meet the material needs of our children. I try to encourage every foster parent I meet to check it out.

Foster care life is not easy. Within one year of being licensed half of all foster homes close. Foster parents need emotional support from others who have chosen to walk this path. We need our village of like minded people to hear us and encourage us. Doug and I have found that support through our monthly Foster and Adoptive Parent meetings at Agape Baptist Church. Our monthly meetings keep us in touch with other foster parents. We eat together and laugh together. We share each others' burdens and cheer each other on. Our children play together and get to be with other children whose lives are also touched by foster care. The church has been gracious enough to allow us to use their facilities for our meetings. More foster families have been coming since we started meeting at Agape.

In my opinion, there are two major needs that foster families have. The first is more of a physical need for material items for the children that are in their care. The second and probably even more important need is emotional support. I know personally we would not have made it almost 6 years if we didn't have our Lord, our foster parent friends, and the many prayers lifted on our behalf. Agape Baptist Church is helping to meet those needs. The church as a whole truly has a heart for foster children and the families that take them in. We saw that the first time we stepped in the door. They are following God's example and walking in love.

'Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.' -Ephesians 5:1-2

Fostering Love Community Closet currently serves approximately 5-10 families per week. That number has been steadily increasing.

On average, each individual aided by Foster Care Closet receives anywhere from 5-10 outfits. At this time, we do not put a limit on the amount of clothing they receive. They may also receive shoes, diapers, formula, baby equipment, bedding, school supplies, etc.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

PARTNERSHIPS

JOIN US

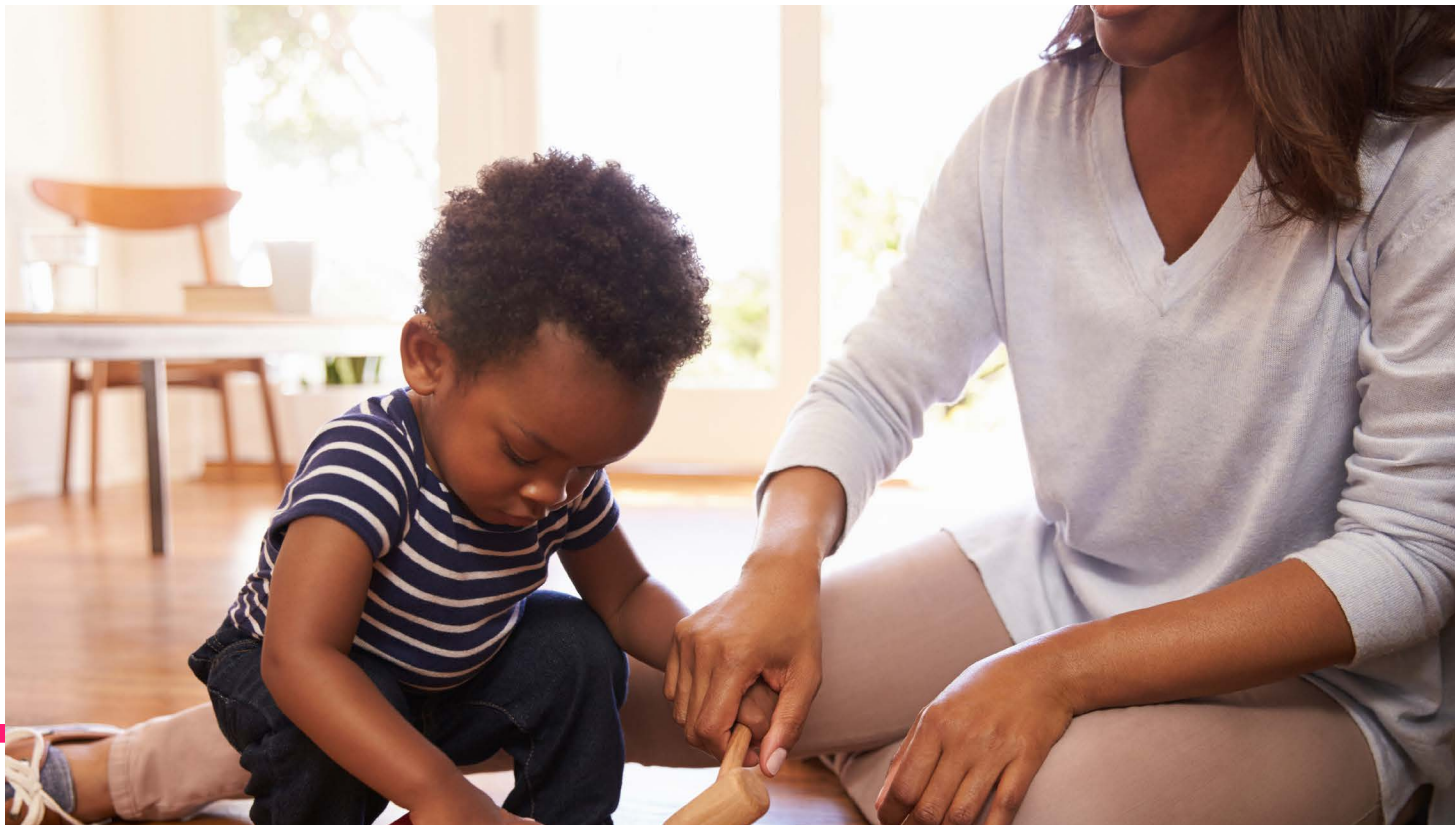
WHO WE ARE

Our Organization

The Fostering Love Community Closet is a compassionate haven for foster, adoptive, and kinship families in Jackson County. We are dedicated to providing both emotional and material support, ensuring that every child's journey into a loving home is marked by comfort and care. Our mission is to ease the burdens these families may face, offering essentials like diapers, wipes, car seats, cribs, and clothing -- all for free. As a collaborative partnership between the Community Care Village, Agape Baptist Church, and the Jackson County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, Fostering Love stands as a beacon of hope, nurturing relationships and facilitating a network of support for those who open their hearts and homes to vulnerable children. Together, we create a community rooted in love and compassion, enriching the lives of our littlest members and fortifying our area families.

Our Values

- ✔ **Compassion:** We are driven by an unwavering commitment to compassion, ensuring that every child, foster, adoptive, or kinship, feels loved, supported, and valued.
- ✔ **Love:** We are rooted in love, with a deep belief that love is the foundation of a strong and supportive community.
- ✔ **Empathy:** We embrace the challenges faced by families on their foster and adoption journeys, offering a listening ear and understanding heart.
- ✔ **Collaboration:** We thrive on collaborative partnerships, working closely with the Community Care Village, Agape Baptist Church, and the Jackson County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association to create a unified support system.
- ✔ **Community Enrichment:** We strive to strengthen our community by nurturing relationships, facilitating a network of support, and fostering a sense of togetherness.



Our Mission

The mission of the Fostering Love Community Closet is to provide unwavering emotional and material support, offering essentials for free, to foster, adoptive, and kinship families in Jackson County

Our Vision

The Fostering Love Community Closet exists to ensure every child's journey into a loving home is a path paved with comfort, care, and unwavering support, fostering a compassionate community for foster, adoptive, and kinship families in Jackson County.

Our Identity

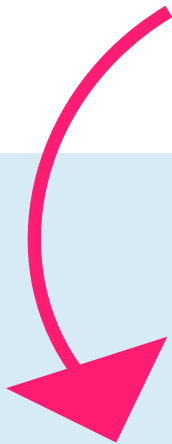
We are followers of Jesus Christ who respond to His call to love and serve the poor while trusting the Holy Spirit to do His transformative work. We seek to emulate the Good Samaritan whose compassion crossed ethnicities and religions. We serve all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.



AGAPE BAPTIST CHURCH

Agape Baptist Church is a Christ-centered church family located in Scottsboro, Alabama. We exist to worship God, love people, and make disciples of Jesus Christ in our community and throughout the world.

The mission of Agape Baptist Church is the same mission Jesus gave his followers: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The vision of Agape Baptist Church is create a community of authentic believers and to witness a city transformed by the life changing reality of the gospel, as people come to know Jesus as their lord and savior.



WORSHIP GOD.
LOVE PEOPLE.
MAKE DISCIPLES.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



The Community Care Village is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in the state of Alabama, with a dedicated mission to act as an a dynamic network of non-profits that serve the diverse and critical community needs of Jackson County. As a nurturing and collaborative hub, the Community Care Village facilitates local non-profits to better address the multifaceted challenges faced by our community. With a shared commitment to enhancing the well-being and quality of life for Jackson County residents, the Community Care Village strives to create a stronger, more resilient community where every individual's needs are met, and every voice is heard.

In the future, the Community Care Village envisions expanding its compassionate outreach by establishing a shelter for women who are victims of domestic abuse and human trafficking. Additionally, we aim to develop a men's drug rehabilitation program to provide support and resources for those battling addiction. Furthermore, our long-term goals include the creation of affordable housing options for senior adults in Jackson County. These initiatives represent our unwavering commitment to addressing a broader spectrum of community needs, building a stronger, more resilient Jackson County where individuals of all backgrounds find the support and care they deserve.

The Community Care Village is the non-profit, local missions arm of Agape Baptist Church. Agape is a dynamic, growing church family that exists to worship God, love people, make disciples, and make a difference.

THE PROBLEM +
OUR SOLUTION

WHO WE ARE

THE BIG THREE



THE CONNECTION TO THE FOSTERING LOVE COMMUNITY CLOSET

The Fostering Love Community Closet, staffed by dedicated volunteers from Agape Baptist Church and our local community, operates with the financial backing of the Agape Community Care Village and donations from generous families around Jackson County. This collaboration exemplifies a harmonious union of community spirit and generosity, where volunteers are bolstered on Agape's campus, supported by the non-profit's financial contributions. Together, they create a robust support system for foster and adoptive families, providing necessary resources and embodying the ethos of communal care and shared responsibility.

[WHAT WE PROVIDE](#)

[PARTNERSHIPS](#)

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WHAT WE PROVIDE



CLOTHING

The Fostering Love Community Closet significantly aids foster and adoptive families by offering seasonal clothing for children of all ages. This vital service ensures that no child goes without appropriate attire, regardless of the season. By supplying a diverse range of sizes and styles, the closet caters to the ever-changing needs of growing children, thereby relieving parents of the financial and logistical stress of outfitting their kids as they grow and the seasons change.

BABY NEEDS

The Fostering Love Community Closet is an essential resource for foster and adoptive parents, offering vital baby items like car seats, cribs, and toys. This initiative eases the financial burden on new families by providing necessary supplies such as diapers, formula, and more — all for free.



[WHAT WE PROVIDE](#)

[PARTNERSHIPS](#)

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WHAT WE PROVIDE



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

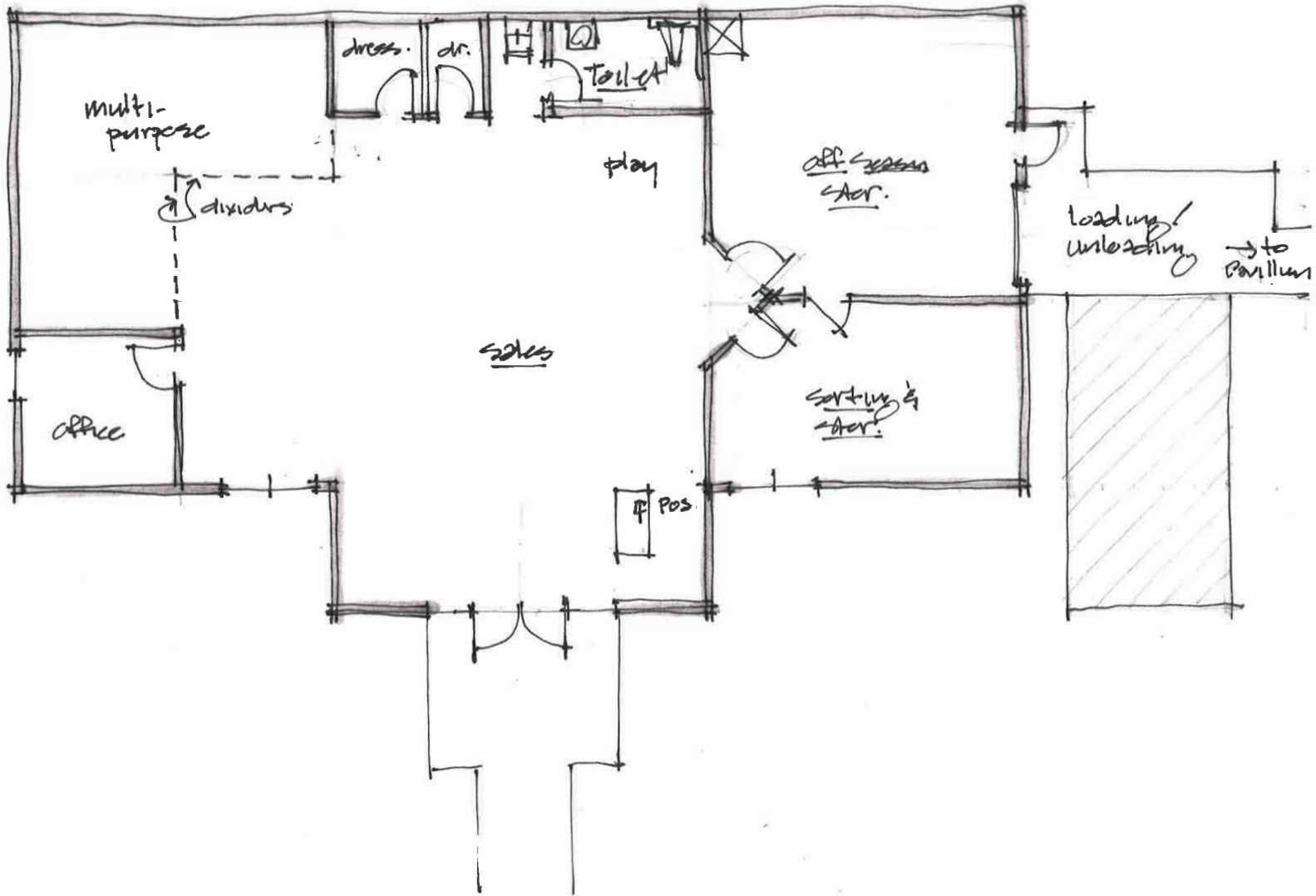
The Fostering Love Community Closet extends beyond material aid by offering emotional support to foster and adoptive parents by partnering with Agape Baptist Church and the Jackson County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association. This initiative includes regular training sessions and monthly meetings, creating a nurturing environment where parents can share experiences, gain insights, and build a supportive community. These gatherings not only empower parents with knowledge and skills but also foster a sense of belonging and mutual support within the foster and adoptive parent community.



COMMUNITY

The Fostering Love Community Closet fosters a sense of community for adoptive and foster parents by facilitating connections with church members, foster closet volunteers, and fellow foster families. This network provides a supportive environment where parents can exchange experiences, advice, and encouragement. By bridging the gap between families and the church community, the closet creates a strong support system, offering support that enriches the lives of foster and adoptive families with each visit.

FLOOR PLAN



PARTNERSHIPS



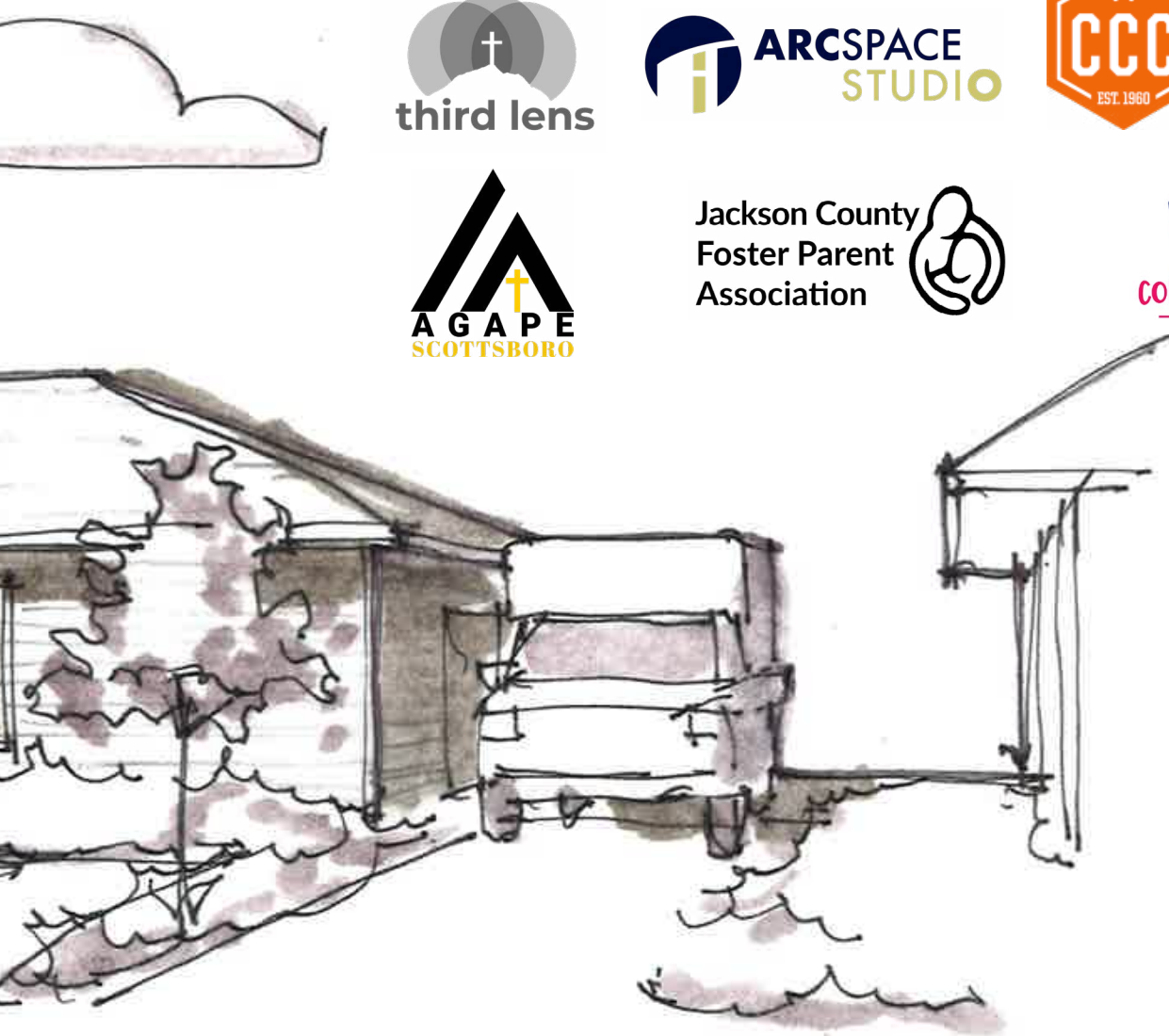
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Stewardship Through Partnership

Fostering Love Community Closet is working with Third Lens Ministries, a nonprofit organization which manages the design-build process in order to ensure a successful building project for ministries. Partners Jackson County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, Agape Baptist Church, Community Care Village, Consolidated Construction, and Arc Space Studio have provided essential services and support throughout this capital campaign.



JOIN US!



THE PROBLEM +
OUR SOLUTION

WHO WE ARE

THE BIG THREE

WE AIM TO IMPACT
OVER **5,000** INDIVIDUAL LIVES
THROUGHOUT THE NEXT **30** YEARS.



WHAT WE PROVIDE

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“Our ‘No’ will be much more difficult on the children than our ‘Yes’ will ever be on us.” -Jason Johnson