

Joy Closet Impact Statement

The mission of Joy Closet is to help foster children, kinship children, and children in crisis feel special, valued, and loved by giving of tangible items and providing support as they navigate childhood into adulthood. We also seek ways to provide support to foster, kinship, and birth parents through providing activities throughout the year and assisting with the tangible items needed for reunification. All tangible items and events are always completely free to our families. Joy Closet goes above and beyond for the nine counties in the Pennyriple Region (Christian, Todd, Muhlenberg, Hopkins, Trigg, Caldwell, Lyon, Crittenden, Livingston) as well as Montgomery County in Tennessee. However, we will serve anyone who is willing to travel to us (and has proper documentation).

Joy Closet Inc. was founded in September 2021. Our “closet” is full to the brim with any and every tangible item a family would need as they take children into their home, from beds (bassinets, cribs, twin, full, bunks) to car seats to clothes to formula and everything in between. Our communities have wrapped around us and continue to support us through volunteering and giving. As we are continually working with foster families and DCBS/DCS workers in our area, we are constantly seeing areas that are lacking in the foster care system. We search for ways to fill in the gaps and find solutions to these problems. This led us to establish the Eagle Fly Program. This is a mentorship program for teens aging out of the foster care system which matches trained and vetted adults with these vulnerable teens. The services we have been able to provide these teens thus far have been needed in our area for so long.

We have done extensive research to determine where the largest needs are for the children within our region. We have ongoing communication with State, Regional, and Local DCBS/DCS workers to help us identify the greatest needs, beyond just giving the basic needed tangible items. Through this research, we have determined that one of the areas of greatest need is for workers to have a place to take children as they search to find placement for them (besides a sterile office). We have also been in contact with our local school system and local and district judges and have learned that there is a great need for a safe house for children who are in crisis or are homeless and do not meet the qualifications for foster care.

Our solution to the first need is the Hope House. This house will give immediate love and safety to children on the day they are removed from their homes. It will be a safe, secure, and comfortable location for social workers and children. Volunteers will be on hand to meet the immediate emotional and physical needs of the children and an office space will be provided for social workers. The Hope House will provide children with clothing, warm food of their choice, a place to sleep, toys to play with, and volunteers to love on them while the social workers search for placement. The Hope House will take some of the burden off of the social workers and they will be able to do their job while knowing the children are being well taken care of and getting everything they need.

Our response to the second need is a Safe House. We have also been in contact with our local school system and local and district judges and have learned that there is a great need for a safe house in our area for children who are in crisis or are homeless and do not meet the qualifications for foster care. This will be a safe, comfortable location equipped with house parents that will meet the physical and emotional needs of the children housed there. The safe house will provide more than just shelter, it will provide a variety of supportive resources for children in need.

Our goal at Joy Closet in general and through these projects specifically, is to reduce the amount of trauma and bridge the gap for children in crisis.