

# Oklahoma group building homes so siblings in foster care can stay together

“Your sibling relationship is your closest bond and the bond is the longest you’ll have in your life.”

By Christine Stanwood



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## OKLAHOMA CITY —

It’s an amazing gift for area foster children on Christmas Eve. Circle of Care and the Avedis Foundation are building homes specifically for sibling sets in foster care.

“Your sibling relationship is your closest bond and the bond is the longest you’ll have in your life,” said Keith Howard, President and CEO of Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care.



Imagine being separated from your brother or sister. That’s the reality for many children in Oklahoma.

“We’re adding another trauma into their lives when we can’t keep them together,” Howard said.

In our state, a sibling group of three has a 65 percent chance of being placed together in foster care. That number drops significantly the more siblings that live together.

Sibling groups of five or more do have a chance to be placed together, but it is slim and not seen often, Howard said. That chance for a group of six or more is even slimmer.

“A lot of families just don’t have the space or the resources to take those kids in,” Howard said.

A solution: homes built to keep siblings together.

“We began the plan of determining how we would build eight homes around the state with the specific focus on bringing in sibling groups,” Howard said.

It’s a solution Howard knows all too well.

“I know what it means to keep siblings together,” Howard said. “As a dad, I’m an adoptive dad of a sibling group of four as well as having two biological daughters.”

Homes are already being built in Woodward, Elk City, Enid, Alva and Shawnee.

“This is just the beginning phase, where we do need the resources and the people who want to donate and adopt rooms,” Howard said.

A plan is in place, so brothers and sisters don’t have to be broken apart.

<https://www.koco.com/article/oklahoma-group-building-homes-so-siblings-in-foster-care-can-stay-together/25673537>