

Group's Mission: Keep Siblings Together In Oklahoma Foster Care

Wednesday, December 26th 2018, 5:03 PM CST

By Ali Brooks

More than 700 children in the Oklahoma foster care system are currently separated from their siblings. One group in Oklahoma City is on a mission to raise \$5 million to keep separations from happening. Circle of Care is working on creating foster homes to accommodate larger sibling sets.

"It's important to keep siblings together, especially in foster care. When they enter the system, it's a traumatic experience because they're separated from the people that they know and that they love, and from their homes, communities and schools," said Sarah Steffes, Vice President of Development for Circle of Care.

Also, more trauma is added when siblings can't be homed together.

"One solution is to have large enough homes to be able to accommodate large sibling sets. And these homes that we're building can accommodate up to six children at one time," said Steffes.



Circle of Care kicked off a capital campaign in 2017, to raise \$5 million to build eight homes and some clubhouses around the state, to serve sibling sets in foster care.

"We only have \$1.2 million left to raise. So, we're very optimistic that we will be able to complete the campaign by the spring," said Steffes.

In Oklahoma, a sibling group of three has a 65% chance of being placed together in a foster home. That number drops significantly the more siblings there are.

"If we can keep the sibling sets together, then we know that they have a stronger resilience to all the other things that are going on in their lives. And so, we want to keep them together," said Steffes.

Houses are being built in Woodward, Enid, Elk City, and Shawnee. One in Alva has already been completed.

If you'd like to know more about the homes, or to get involved yourself,

<http://www.news9.com/story/39698694/group-works-to-keep-siblings-in-oklahoma-foster-care-system-together>