



**THE FOR THE
CITY CENTER**

**SATURDAY
MARCH 2**

a future + a hope

Welcome!

Welcome to our 18th annual A Future & A Hope foster, adopt and kinship conference! We are so excited about this year's theme - "In This Together." In the journey of foster, adoptive and kinship care, the path can be both rewarding and challenging. It's imperative we recognize that we can't walk this road alone!

At the heart of our gathering lies the understanding that support, collaboration, and shared experiences are invaluable resources in shaping a brighter future for children in need of healing homes. Together, we can harness our collective wisdom, compassion, and resilience to tackle the obstacles and celebrate the victories along the way.

We are so glad you are here today and want to encourage you to lean in as we unite our voices, share our stories, and foster a community where every child finds healing, every caregiver finds support, and every participant finds clarity on their next steps. In this journey towards hope and an optimistic tomorrow, remember: we are not alone; we are in this together.



a future + a hope

SCHEDULE

8:15 AM	Check in begins	<i>Lobby</i>
9:00 AM	Welcome & Prayer - Josh Burke, Austin Stone	<i>Auditorium</i>
9:05 AM	Welcome from Lisa Ho, Fostering Hope Board	<i>Auditorium</i>
9:30 AM	General Session 1 - Teoahanna Mayo, DFPS	<i>Auditorium</i>
10:00 AM	Break	<i>Lobby</i>
10:15 AM	Breakout Session 1	
11:15 AM	Break	<i>Lobby</i>
11:25 AM	General Session 2 - Redefining Fatherhood Panel	<i>Auditorium</i>
12:15 PM	Lunch	<i>Auditorium</i>
1:00 PM	Breakout Session 2	
2:00 PM	Break	<i>Lobby</i>
2:10 PM	Breakout Session 3	
3:10 PM	Break	<i>Lobby</i>
3:20 PM	General Session 3 - Voices of Impact Panel	<i>Auditorium</i>
3:50 PM	Final Remarks & Give Aways	<i>Auditorium</i>
4:00 PM	Conclusion	<i>Auditorium</i>

The 5 Needs of Foster Care

fostering
HOPE



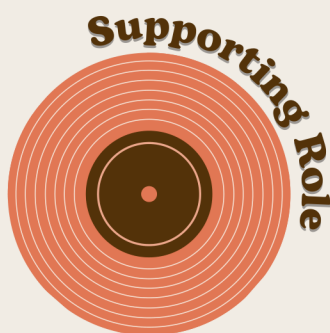
- Over 70% of children in care will return to their biological families.
- After ensuring safety, the State's top priority is to return children to their families.
- Biological families need more support than State requirements to break cycles of abuse, poverty, addiction, etc.
- Most children in foster care have parents who were also in foster care.



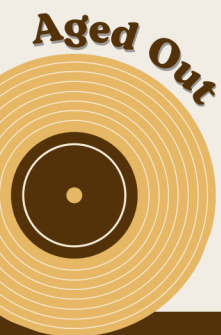
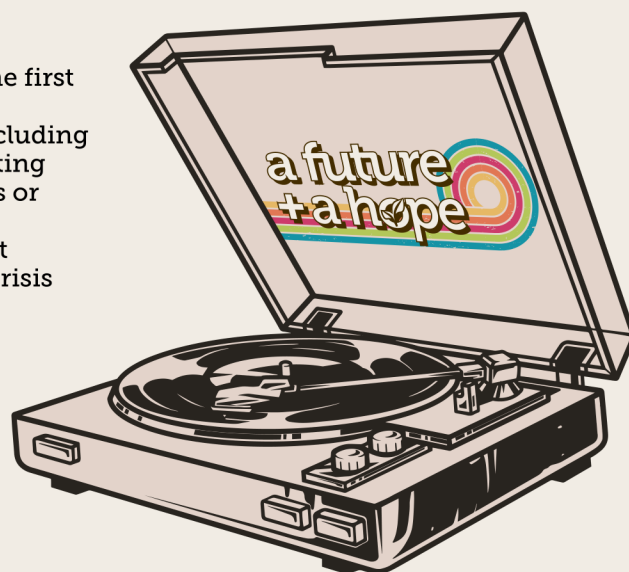
- There are 1400+ kids in foster care in Travis, Williamson, Hays Counties.
 - Foster homes are most needed for children age 6 and over.
 - Children in care can move on average 6 times not due to the system, but because the foster family is not prepared to care for the child.
- Moving and inconsistent care can cause more trauma in a child than the original abusive environment.



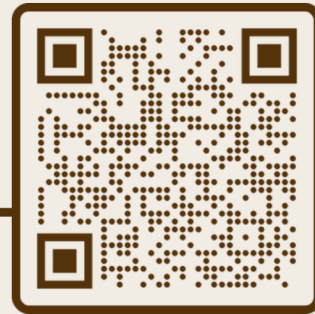
- Minority ethnic group children over 2 years old have a greater risk of aging out of the system than being adopted.
- An estimated 250 children are available for adoption– many are sibling groups or teens.
- Adoption from the foster care system costs little to nothing.
- All children will have trauma, but they can reach dramatic levels of healing with trauma-informed parenting.



- Over 50% of foster families quit within the first year. Most attribute lack of support.
- There are many opportunities to help including CASA, meals, mentoring, prayer, babysitting certification, financial support for camps or sports, backpack drives, etc.
- Isolation is often a family's first and most problematic response when they are in crisis with a child.



- Teens are given the choice at 18 to extend their time in foster care until 21 or they can leave the system.
- 40% of those who age-out are homeless within a year.
- 66% are incarcerated within a year of aging out.
- 70% of girls will be pregnant by their 21st birthday.



* **Community-Based Care: Building Stronger Foundations Together**

Teoahnna Mayo, Region 07 Faith Based and Community Engagement Specialist

Join Teoahnna Mayo, Region 07 Faith-Based and Community Engagement Specialist, for an empowering presentation that will ignite your passion and renew your commitment to making a difference. With nearly 17 years of dedicated service at the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Teoahnna brings a wealth of experience and a heartfelt dedication to her role. In her presentation, she will inspire and encourage conference attendees, whether they are foster/adopt/kinship families or in a supportive role, to keep "fighting the good fight" and remind them they are not alone. Teoahnna will share insights on community-based care, providing valuable knowledge and guidance on what to expect. Through her personal story and unwavering dedication, she will remind the audience of the profound impact their work has on the lives of others, even when the results may not be immediately visible.

* **Redefining Fatherhood: Insights from the Frontlines**

Joshua Banks, Derrick Bryant, Marcus Griggs, & Josh Owen

Joshua, Derrick, Marcus and Josh have been a part of A Future and a Hope in the past. Their insight will surely add value to everyone in the room. The speakers featured during Session 2 are extensively engaged in the child welfare system through their professional roles at TAGO, DFPS, The SAFE Alliance, and Fostering Hope. This distinguished panel will delve into crucial topics such as parenting, and diverse perspectives. They will share their personal journeys, fostering an insightful dialogue on the multifaceted aspects of fatherhood. Explore the vital role fathers play in shaping resilient families and communities, making this main stage panel an integral part of the conference's comprehensive discussions. These men walk the walk and we are glad they could be with us today to share their insight and wisdom.

* **Voices of Impact**

Beverly Morris, Holly Burk, Megan Zellner, Mandy Sheehan, & Marie Ezell

We are delighted to introduce the inspiring individuals from their own nonprofits who will be leading Main Session 3. We are in this together to solve child welfare issues, and these passionate advocates represent diverse areas within the foster care community, each bringing a unique perspective to the conversation.

- Beverly Morris, from Tx Grandparents Raising Grandkids, will speak on behalf of family preservation, emphasizing how grandparents are crucial contributors to our shared mission.
- Holly Burk, from Foster Village, will share insights on foster care, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility.
- Megan Zellner, from Settlement Home, will discuss adoption, showcasing the collaborative spirit needed to ensure every child finds a loving and permanent home.
- Mandy Sheehan, the founder of Teaghlach Ranch, will represent Supporting Roles, highlighting the collaborative efforts required to provide comprehensive support throughout the foster care journey.
- Marie Ezell, representing Aged-out youth through Angel in Me, will shed light on the challenges faced by young individuals transitioning from foster care to adulthood.

*** INDICATES A SESSION IS AVAILABLE FOR SOCIAL WORK CEU CREDIT**

*** Debunking the Myths + Stigma of Foster Care: Real-Life Stories & Tools for Your Foster/Adoption Journey**

Karen Goldapp, LCSW, Lakeway EMDR · Highland (1st Floor) Room #: 1.810

Spend time with veteran foster/adoptive parents as we debunk adoption myths, share real-life triumphs and relatable struggles, and equip you with practical tips and resources. Discover anxiety-busting strategies and tools to understand "behind-the-behavior" needs, book recommendations, effective therapies, and ways to create lasting belonging. We'll also unveil resources we wish we'd known about sooner, all while dismantling foster care stigma and empowering you to build a healing, therapeutic environment for your family.

Faith In Action: Building a Foster and Adopt Ministry at Your Church

Mandy Ryniker, FAM Coordinator for Hope Chapel · Coronado Hills (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.100

We know that ministry matters! Imagine a church community where foster/adoptive families find unconditional love, practical support, and a sense of belonging. Join us as we explore the vital role dedicated ministries play in these families' lives. Discover heartfelt testimonies showcasing the impact of such support, and explore practical steps your church can take to build a thriving foster/adoptive family ministry.

Recharge + Refuel: A Guide to Epic Foster Parent Night Outs (FPNO)

Lonnie & Cindy Wendling, Journey Bible Fellowship · Brentwood (1st Floor) Room #: 1.100

Feeling burnt out, but unsure how to prioritize self-care amidst the demands of foster parenting? You're not alone! Join us for an interactive session exploring the importance of foster parent night outs and how to host successful events that truly refuel your spirit and re-energize your commitment. Hear about why these FPNO matter, planning pro-tips and the importance of building partnerships in the community.

*** I Said Yes! Finding Your Place in the 5 Needs of Foster Care**

Danny Cook, Fostering Hope Board, Pastor at Legacy Church · The Lounge (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.440

You've said yes to helping children and families ... Now what? The needs are many in and around the foster care system. We believe everyone has a part to play. In this session, you will hear some of the many ways that YOU can get involved in our community.

*** Eighteen is Not the End: What Former Foster Youth (FFY) Want You To Know**

Jordan Hope Vera, Parent Development Manager at Fostering Hope · The Attic (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.480

Join a powerful panel discussion featuring former foster youth who've navigated the challenges and triumphs of aging out of care. They'll share their unfiltered perspectives on what truly matters in supporting young adults transitioning into independence. Discover the critical gap in post-emancipation support and explore actionable strategies to build a lasting village for youth leaving the system. This session will ignite your compassion, equip you with practical tools, and inspire you to be a part of the movement ensuring no young person falls through the cracks.

Beyond "Happily Ever After"

Adapting Parenting + Prayer for Adopted Adolescents

Dr. Brooke Wagen, Fostering Hope Board · Heritage Hills (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.600

Opening your heart and home to foster or adopted children is an act of incredible love, but the journey doesn't end at "happily ever after." As these children blossom into teenagers, they naturally push towards independence, often leaving parents navigating complex emotions alongside the joy of watching them grow. This panel discussion brings together experienced foster and adoptive parents to openly share their experiences, challenges, and triumphs in supporting their teens' journeys toward independence.

*** The Loneliest Generation: Addressing Social Isolation in Gen Z to Keep Kids out of Foster Care**

Cheyenne Erickson, Director of SAFE Families Austin · Georgian Acres (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.840

Gen Z is reportedly the "loneliest generation" and they are now becoming parents. How will the loneliness epidemic impact this new generation of parents? Can the family preservation space be effective in preventing child abuse and neglect by working to help solve the problem of loneliness? Come learn about how our community can wrap around families to prevent them entering the child welfare system.

*** From Hospital to Home: Fostering Connection & Hope for Families Caring for Medically Complex Children**

Dr. Katie Rose & Hallie Graves, The Well: Foster Advocacy Ministry · Crestview (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.860

Opening your heart and home to a child in foster care is an act of immense love and compassion. When that child also has complex medical needs, the journey can feel overwhelming. This session empowers parents and professionals with the knowledge, resources, and support they need to confidently care for these children.



Exploring



Foster Care



Supporting Roles



Family Preservation



Adoption



Aged Out

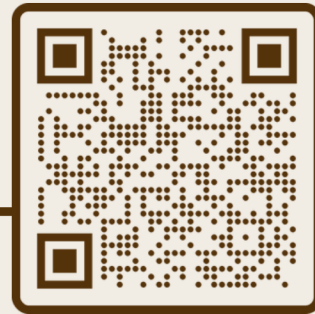


Church Ministry



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BREAKOUT SESSION 2 | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM



*** Web Wisdom: Keeping Kids Safe Online**

Dr. Season Mussey, UnboundNow Austin · Brentwood (1st Floor) Room #: 1.100

The statistics are alarming surrounding vulnerable children and their involvement in exploitation and human trafficking. Some studies estimate that upwards of 80% of identified trafficking victims have reported some involvement in the child welfare system. As parents, we have the ability to change these numbers. In this session, families will learn to identify potential risk factors, early signs of trafficking, and be given tools on how to respond in a trauma-informed approach.

*** The Unspoken Language of Trauma: Recognizing Grief Behaviors in Children & How to Support Them**

Megan Zellner, The Settlement Home for Children · Highland (1st Floor) Room #: 1.810

Does your child's behavior leave you feeling lost and disconnected? Are you yearning for a deeper connection, but logic seems to fall short? If so, you're not alone. Many parents of children who have experienced trauma face this challenge. This session will help you decode the language of grief, bridge the disconnect and stock your parental toolbox.

*** Healing Kid's Brains, Emotions and Behaviors: An Introduction to TBRI®**

Amanda Herron, LMSW, TBRI®, Educator Nurturing Change · Coronado Hills (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.100

Learn about trauma's impact on the brain and how parents can use Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) to parent the children in their home. Get an intro to the Connecting, Empowering and Correcting principles that make up TBRI® and learn about resources and additional support.

*** The Theology of Adoption: Applying Biblical Adoption to the Modern Child Welfare Crisis**

Joshua Owen, Director of Ministry Development & Programs at Fostering Hope · The Lounge (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.440

This captivating session delves into the powerful theme of adoption within the Bible, revealing profound truths about God's character, our own identity, and the inherent value of every individual. Together, we'll embark on a journey of ways to apply the adoption theology compassionately to the current child welfare crisis.

*** Out of the System, Not Out of Mind: Successfully Supporting Youth Transition out of Foster Care**

Marie Ezell, Founder of Angel in Me, Inc. · Heritage Hills (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.600

While foster care ends, the need for love, support, and guidance doesn't. This session explores how we can bridge the gap, providing essential, lifelong resources and skills for young adults leaving the system. Discover how collaboration across organizations and individuals can pave the way for successful transitions, equipping youth with the confidence and tools they need to thrive. Marie brings her own lived experience to the table as we discuss how to best support this aging out demographic.

*** Partners In Permanency: How Foster Parents Can Support Family Reunification**

Chrystal Smith & Aimee Hill, Foster Village · Crestview (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.860

"It takes a village." Just as there is a need to come alongside children in foster care and their foster families, the same need exists to come alongside their first caregivers - their birth parents. When foster parents and community members walk alongside reunifying families, isolation ends, families are supported and critical gaps are bridged. Hear from some of the "Partner Parents" who have participated in reunification after foster care and some of the lessons they have learned along the way.

*** Finding Your Own Village: How to Seek Community + Discover Resources that Support Your Foster Care Journey**

Lisa Ho, Fostering Hope Board Member & Sharon Johnson · Georgian Acres (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.840

Feeling like a solo superhero in the foster care world? You're not alone! Join us for an empowering session led by seasoned foster parents on building community and uncovering hidden resources. We'll explore practical strategies for connecting with other foster families, navigating the support system, and accessing essential tools to thrive in your journey. Leave feeling equipped, connected, and inspired to create a village that sustains both you and your family.

*** INDICATES A SESSION IS AVAILABLE FOR SOCIAL WORK CEU CREDIT**

BREAKOUT SESSION 3 | 2:10 PM - 3:10 PM
*** I Said Yes! Finding Your Place in the 5 Needs of Foster Care**

Kim Holtzclaw, Regional Consultant at Fostering Hope · The Lounge (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.440

You've said yes to helping children and families ... Now what? The needs are many in and around the foster care system. We believe everyone has a part to play. In this session, you will hear some of the many ways that YOU can get involved in our community.

*** Mentors Matter: Why Supporting Youth in Care Goes Beyond Fostering**

Mike Jones, Austin Angels · Heritage Hills (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.600

Aging out of foster care can feel like jumping off a cliff without a parachute. Mentors become that safety net, providing crucial support, guidance, and hope as youth navigate independence. This session will dive into the tangible impact mentors have on their emotional well-being, stability and success. Explore practical ways to become a mentor, and leave empowered to make a life-changing difference for a young person in or newly-out of care.

*** Fighting For Families: A Holistic Approach to Wrapping Around Families Reunifying after Removal**

Judge Ryan Larson, Family Recovery Court (FRC) · Ridgeway (1st Floor) Room #: 1.820

What does it look like to serve families in the courtroom? Successful reunification is possible with wrap-around support that includes the professionals involved in their case. The Family Recovery Court of Williamson County provides that support for parents who are working towards reunification after removal. Judge Larson and members of the FRC team will share some of the wins and challenges of working to fight for families upstream.

Helping All Children Feel Safe: Using TBRI® in Your Children's Ministry

Lynn Floyd, Executive Director of Fostering Hope · Brentwood (1st Floor) Room #: 1.100

Discover how Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) can transform your church's children's ministry! This session equips pastors, leaders, and volunteers to create safe, secure spaces where all children feel seen, heard, and understood. Learn practical TBRI tools to de-escalate challenging behaviors, build connections, and foster genuine learning and growth. Leave empowered to nurture resilient, thriving young hearts and unlock the full potential of your church's ministry.

*** Embracing the Imperfection: Reframing our Expectations in Foster Care and Adoption**

Stephanie Acker, Foster & Adoptive Mama and Advocate, The Dwelling Place · Georgian Acres (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.840
& Amber Chesser, MS, LPC, NCC, STARRY Family Engagement Specialist Supervisor

As foster, adoptive and kinship families, we know expectations rarely match reality. Join us in exploring how to embrace the unexpected! This session equips you with tools to navigate shifting expectations calmly, build respectful partnerships, and mitigate power struggles with your kiddos and co-parents. Discover how, even when plans change, you can achieve your shared goals and nurture deeper connection within your family. Leave feeling empowered to tackle challenges and thrive in the beautiful chaos of fostering and adoption.

*** Beyond the Labels; Beyond the Stories: A Panel Celebrating the Strengths and Resilience of Adoptees**

June Waters, Adoptee + Adoption Recruiter; Katrina Torres, Adoptee; West Kouri, Adoptee · The Attic (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.480

Hear directly from adoptees about their unique journeys, navigating identity, and forging connections. This panel discussion will unveil the realities of adoption, challenge perspectives, and empower you to advocate for a more inclusive world. Leave inspired by their resilience, strength, and the hope they bring to the adoption community.

*** Be the Change: Unveiling the Transformative Power of Restorative Practices in Child Welfare**

Cortney Jones, Change1 · Crestview (2nd Floor) Room #: 2.860

Join us for a dynamic workshop exploring cutting-edge approaches to supporting children, families, and professionals within the child welfare system. Discover the power of restorative practices, fostering unshakeable resilience, and cultivating nurturing environments. Leave equipped with practical tools to build stronger, more connected communities. Be part of a movement redefining support and restoration for a brighter future for all. Don't miss this opportunity to ignite positive change!


Exploring

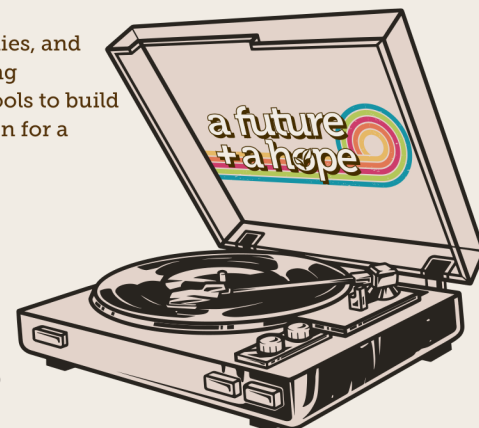
Foster Care

Supporting Roles

Family Preservation

Adoption

Aged Out

Church Ministry


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NEXT STEPS

Foster Care + Adoption

Make Ready!

Every Tuesday in April · Online

3-week virtual course by foster parents to help you discern fostering/adopting a child.

Second Mom's Bible Study

Every Wednesday, March-May · 1pm · Location TBD

Bible Study all about being a "second" mom.

Trauma Informed Dads

Saturday, April 20 @ 9-11am · Fostering Hope Family Center

Training for Dads to lead and love children confidently and compassionately.

Parenting With Resilience (PWR)

Every Wednesday · 10am · Online

Weekly Support Group to connect with fellow parents and gain practical tips.

Hope for the Journey

Friday, May 3 · 9am · TBD

Viewing of Show Hope's Hope for the Journey for a day of encouragement and equipping!

REST Conference

Friday, October 4 · 9am - 2:30pm · Location TBD

Day of holistic REST and connection for kinship, foster and adoptive parents.

Family Preservation

Safe Families Training 101

Thursday, March 21 · 6 - 9pm · Hope Chapel

Are you ready to be the hands and feet of Christ in our community? Join us for part 1 of 2 Safe Families Volunteer Trainings.

Supporting Roles

Foster Care Babysitting Certification Training

Saturday, April 6 · 9am - 3pm · Providence Church

Give foster families the support they need to build stronger families by becoming a certified caregiver with 15+ partnering agencies!

Ministry Interest Meeting

Thursday, April 18 · 11am - 12pm · Fostering Hope Family Center

Curious about how to start a foster/adopt/kinship ministry at your church? Let's talk next steps.



CEU'S & EVALUATION

Continuing Education Units

Get Your CEU Certification!

Scan the QR code now to claim your certificate instantly and securely delivered to your inbox.



Conference Evaluation

Get your voice heard!

Fill out our survey below + receive your foster parent CEU certificate automatically to your email.





ABOUT FOSTERING HOPE

Fostering Hope, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to strengthening foster and adoptive families by providing training, mentorship, and church ministry development opportunities.

Fostering Hope exists because we believe...

- God sees, understands, and redeems the pain and suffering experienced by those in the foster/adoption space.
- As human beings made in God's image, every child has the right to grow up in a loving, supportive, and healing home.
- Understanding trauma (and preventing re-traumatization) is imperative to caring for and promoting the healing of children from hard places.
- Every Christian has a God-given mandate to promote the welfare of children, even if they don't become foster/adoptive parents themselves.
- The Church is uniquely positioned to educate, equip, care for, and disciple families and children from hard places.
- A robust community network of churches, nonprofits, government agencies, and other community organizations is vital to growing and sustaining the resilience of foster, adoptive, and kinship families.

Mission

Fostering Hope exists to catalyze, empower, and partner with churches to support and advocate for foster/adoptive/kinship families.

Theory of Impact

We do this by providing comprehensive, faith-based, and trauma-informed resources and training to churches to help them create and grow their own high-quality and sustainable foster/adoption ministries. We also collaborate with churches and their partners to provide specialized training for foster/adoptive/kinship families and those who support them.

CONTACT US

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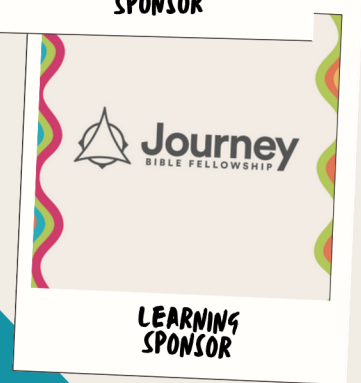
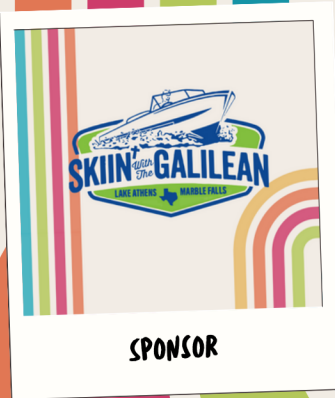
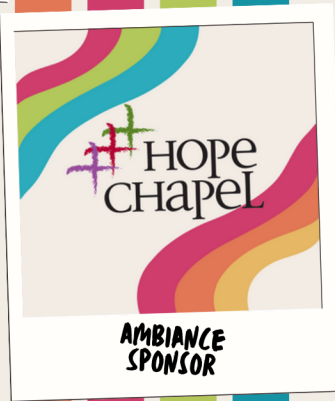
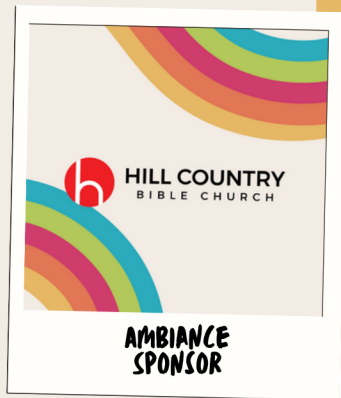
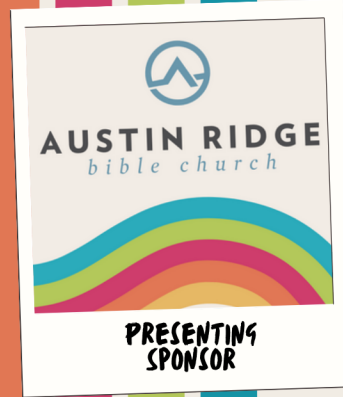
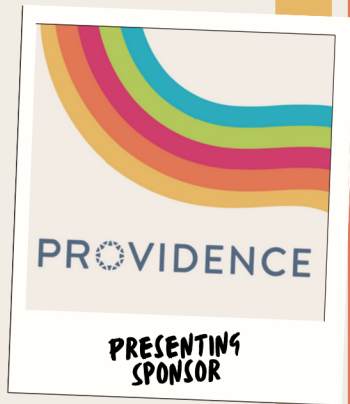
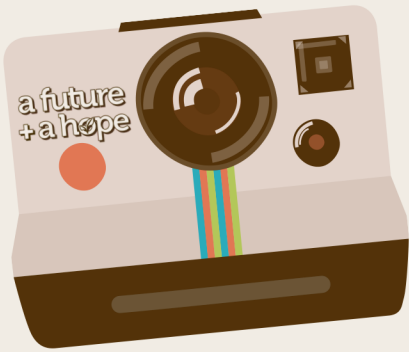
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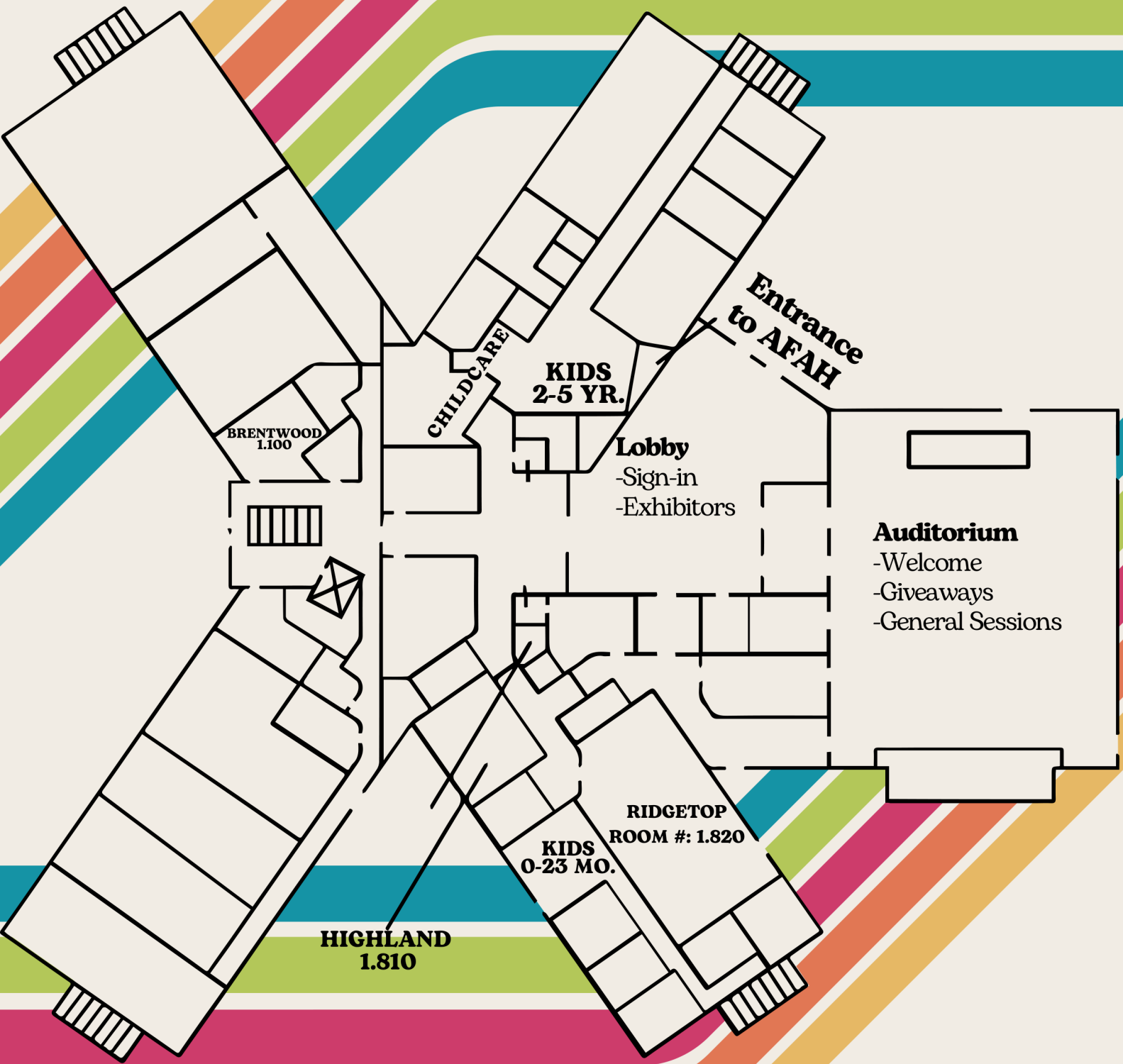


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Level 1



Level 2



**Thank you for
attending!**

