

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

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‘Heart Gallery of South Texas’ Showcases Foster Children and Siblings in Need of Loving Families and Permanent Homes University students donate time to take photographs and write biographies

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – With eyes and smiles bright, children showcased in the “Heart Gallery of South Texas” still hope that they will one day find permanent adoptive homes.

Photos of 62 foster children will be on display at the fourth annual “Heart Gallery of South Texas” opening reception Wednesday, Nov. 5, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Antonio E. Garcia Arts & Education Center, 2021 Agnes St. The exhibit, which will remain on display through Wednesday, Dec. 31, is free and open to the public. The community is invited to view the pictures and learn about the children through brief biographies written by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students.

The exhibition, which coincides with National Adoption Month, is a collaborative project between the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Region 11, and Texas A&M-Corpus Christi’s Community Outreach and College of Liberal Arts.

“This is truly a life-changing project for the children who are featured in the Heart Gallery and those of us who are involved in producing the exhibit,” said Carole Peterson, director of Workforce Development at A&M-Corpus Christi. “I am amazed at the talent and dedication of the photographers and writers from our College of Liberal Arts who have put their hearts and souls into this project.”

The photos were taken by students Kristi Beach and Millie Harrison in photography classes at A&M-Corpus Christi and other volunteer photographers.

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Page 2, Heart Gallery

“Photographing these children is probably the most fulfilling and educational process I’ve ever been through,” said Kristi Beach, who is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in fine art. “It was very emotional for me. I hope these heartfelt images will attract interested families in adopting harder-to-place large sibling groups.”

Technical and professional writing students assisted with interviewing the children and writing biographies to accompany the portraits. Writing student Martina “Marty” Turrubiates is considering future foster adoption.

“A lot of these kids have been through rough times,” said Turrubiates, a criminal justice major who plans to work with juveniles. “By writing the biographies, I am sending a message about each child’s uniqueness and drawing in interested adoptive families.”

The “Heart Gallery” highlights children who are considered more challenging to place because of their age or because they are part of a sibling group that wants to stay together. After viewing framed 12” by 16” photos and reading a short biography of each child, prospective families can learn more by contacting Foster Adoptive Recruiters Deborah Stine 361.878.3513 or Doug Williams 361.878.3560.

The Heart Gallery exhibit was founded by the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department in 2001 as a way to call attention to foster children in protective custody, who are awaiting adoptive families. This year, there are galleries being held in cities across the country, including Houston, Dallas and Austin.

Participating child placement agencies include A World for Children, the Children’s Shelter, Spaulding for Children and Pathway Youth and Family Services.

