



Celebrating 30 Years

Of Building A Home Within

A CELEBRATION OF OUR COMMUNITY OF COMMITMENT

As we honor 30 years of A Home Within,

- ▶ we have the opportunity to celebrate the legacy of our founding principles. Around a kitchen table in San Francisco in 1994, our founders imagined a world where children could heal from the complex trauma of foster care through a therapeutic relationship unencumbered by financial and administrative barriers.

The idea of a single, lasting relationship between a client and therapist became the centerpiece of A Home Within's mission: to identify, recruit, train, and support a network of licensed therapists who each provide free, weekly, one-to-one therapy to a single child, teen, or adult.

We asked ourselves, "What would it look like to hold and support a network of volunteer therapists as they commit to the healing of their clients 'for as long as it takes'"?

Today, we know the answer. To date, nearly 2,000 volunteers across the nation have embraced our mission by providing pro bono individual therapy to current and former foster youth. This very week, young people from San Francisco to New Jersey will meet with their A Home Within therapist for the first time or the hundredth time. Based on current hourly rates, our network has collectively donated more than \$2.5 million in therapy sessions. Our clinicians volunteer their time—which makes them **priceless**.

In 2024, our vision remains bright and clear: that all individuals who've experienced foster care,



regardless of their current life stage, are matched with a therapist who is willing to “walk the distance” with them to support the varied responses to trauma and hold hope during their healing journey. As we’ve grown in size and resources, we have learned what is required to sustain therapists as they show up year after year, session after session, while balancing the dynamics of their own life journeys.

Let’s be clear. Providing therapy during a pandemic, transitioning to teletherapy, managing caregiving shortages, experiencing personal loss, and contending with an exponential increase in the need for mental health services have all diminished available providers in the field. And yet here at A Home Within, things are different.

Following the pandemic, we gathered and stood on the foundation that our home was built on: relationships. Week after week, we joined in community to strengthen our commitment to those in need while offering comfort and support to each other. Together, we leveraged new resources to provide more consultation, more continuing education, and on-demand, one-on-one mentoring for all volunteer clinicians, thereby bolstering their resilience. The results are extraordinary.

Our 30th anniversary year is not just about reflecting on the past—**it’s about embracing our future.**

We have exciting, ambitious plans to scale our program to serve thousands of young people, build diversity and excellence in our field, and cultivate new knowledge through research.

We hope these pages inspire you to engage with our community of commitment and help us build the future of A Home Within for all individuals who have experienced foster care.

“Volunteering at A Home Within selfishly feels like I’m giving back to myself because I’ve been in the system and I know what it feels like to not have a space to share what I’m going through with someone who’s consistently there to support me. **This has felt like an opportunity for me to become the person I wish I had all those years ago, for someone else.**”

– AHW Therapist



“I have had one of the best therapy experiences working with my AHW therapist. From day one, I felt like my therapist and I were a great match and felt respected as an individual. I really appreciate the flexibility of being able to meet with my therapist remotely once per week. My therapist is extremely skilled in creating an environment where I feel **comfortable being vulnerable**; they have provided me with a nonjudgmental space where I don’t need to be concerned about being unapologetically myself.”

– AHW Client



Leadership Voices



REED CONNELL
Executive Director

- ◀ A Home Within's founding vision has become our proven strength: committed relationships between volunteer therapists and young people who have experienced foster care, held in community, creates healing and hope.

This very week, young people around the country will meet with their A Home Within therapist for the first or hundredth time. Freed from the constraints of payment structures and expertly sustained by our staff, our volunteer therapists focus on developing a long-term therapeutic relationship with a young person who has experienced foster care —which they have committed to continuing for “as long as it takes.”

We hope you'll join us in 2024 and beyond as we celebrate together the healing and transformation of thousands of young people, and as we build the future of our extraordinary community of commitment.



DR. TONI HEINEMAN
Founder

- ◀ 30 years ago, Dr. Heineman dared to “match” her clinical expertise to meet the needs of foster youth in her community. In addition to her work with A Home Within, she has worked with a number of Bay Area training programs as well as individual mental health professionals. Her current practice has two primary focuses: working with adult families to help them navigate the many transitions that the movement through adulthood brings to family life; and working with separating and divorced parents, helping them to develop and maintain strategies for working together to raise healthy children. In both areas, she endeavors to help people find creative ways of working together to the benefit of all family members. She is a leader, educator, and researcher whose impact can now be experienced across the country. Thank you Toni!

Building Relationships

The founders of A Home Within understood the profound impact a single, lasting relationship could have in the life of a young person who has experienced foster care. Today, we are carrying their vision forward with our nationwide network of over 500 volunteers around the country who each commit to building a relationship with one individual by providing free one-on-one mental health services for as long as it takes for them to heal from trauma, strengthen their inner resources, and live a full life. The unrestricted duration of the therapeutic relationship in our unique relational model empowers our clients and remains foundational to our success.



GRACE MANGER
MSW, CSWA

National Program Director

“As an associate clinical social worker nearing the end of my training (and also a proud 30-year old!) I’m thrilled to serve as National Program Director for an organization committed to removing all barriers that hinder individuals from healing from trauma.”

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



MAE HOWARD, LCSW
San Diego Chapter Volunteer
since 2021

“While working at Children’s Hospital, I observed gaps in care, youth feeling frustrated with having to retell their foster/trauma stories or having gaps in care due to funding issues. And on a personal note, in late 2016 I started looking into adopting and found a flier at Children’s Hospital from AHW. This flier addressed a need for me to get more information and created an opportunity for me to provide mental health services by counseling a youth aging out of foster care with multiple episodes in treatment. Since volunteering, A Home Within has touched my heart in a way that no other program has—I have never experienced this depth of connection to my community by serving one person.”

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



EILEEN KELLER, PhD, RPT
Alameda Chapter Volunteer
since 1997

Eileen Keller has been a consultation group leader for A Home Within for over 25 years. She shared: “I was completely won over by the premise: one child, one therapist, as long as it takes, and also felt the premise became so obvious once put into words, like a truth one feels one has known all along without knowing it till someone says it... I don’t think there’s anything like it... The therapist becomes part of the client’s network of relationships, which ordinary children in ordinary circumstances completely take for granted. It is just there for them. And that’s what we are trying to build for our AHW clients.”



Building the Field

Nearly 400,000 children and youth are currently in foster care in the U.S., and research shows that mental and behavioral health is their largest unmet need. In the past few years, a crisis has gripped the mental health field as providers experienced burnout, scaled back on completing training, or left the field entirely. And yet our nationwide network of volunteer therapists have answered the call to serve and found refuge in donating their time at A Home Within. AHW responds to our community by building the field we want to be available to our clients: all those who have experienced foster care. We are building practice in community!

16,000

hours of free therapy provided each year

Over

400,000

youth in foster care nationwide need access to mental healthcare

Over

500

therapists

in

20

chapters

across

10

states

Building Practice in Community

Our latest initiative aims to build the field we want to be available to our clients by responding to their persistent requests for culturally concordant mental health services.

Our Building Practice in Community Program (BPIC) is a structured professional development program that reflects our tradition of leveraging relationships to create a sense of belonging for both clients and providers. The goal of BPIC is to sustain the commitment to incorporate social justice across clinical interventions for the current and former foster youth AHW serves. BPIC supports the retention of early-career therapists from underrepresented backgrounds by providing continuing education, high-quality consultation, mentorship, assistance in obtaining licensure, peer resources, and professional development supports.



◀ **CANDICE SIMONDS**
Chief Program Officer

“As always, I’m in awe of the ways our volunteer community continually transforms ideas into action through creativity, commitment, and joy—with and for the communities we serve. The best is yet to come!”

30 Years of Research

From the very beginning, A Home Within has committed to documenting the impact of our therapeutic model through research. We’ve come a long way from the kitchen table conversations of AHW founders Toni Heineman and June Clausen nearly 30 years ago, and research has remained a pillar of our community. Our 23-year partnership with the Foster Care Research Group at the University of San Francisco has engaged the community through focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and longitudinal studies that investigate the power of understanding and reducing barriers to high quality mental health services. Today, as we celebrate our 30th Anniversary, we are accepting clients to participate in a Randomized Controlled Trial (the “gold standard” of research), which will evaluate the impact of AHW’s service delivery model compared to peer support groups. We’re eager to invite you to join in this exciting phase of our research timeline — this is an opportunity to extend our tradition of centering our research on the voices and ideas of those with a history of foster care.



Research Timeline:



1994

Research begins! AHW's founding members, including Toni Heineman and June Clausen, commit to building the model through an empirical lens.



2000

AHW develops a partnership with the Foster Care Research Group (FCRG) at the University of San Francisco. The FCRG evaluates therapist reports of long-term, pro-bono mental health interventions with foster youth provided through AHW.

2006

AHW is published! Toni Heineman et. al. publish their pioneering book *Building A Home Within: Meeting The Emotional Needs Of Children And Youth In Foster Care*, which the American Psychological Association cites as a "wise and compelling book."

2013

More off the press! Toni Heineman, June Clausen, and USF Research Partner Saralyn Ruff publish *Treating Trauma: Relationship-Based Psychotherapy with Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults*, which offers case studies of A Home Within to illustrate the vital role that relationships play in helping overcome the trauma of chronic, unexpected, and unexplained losses.

2021

Research in a pandemic! As our volunteer therapists rapidly transition to teletherapy, AHW acquires funding to launch two new projects with FCRG and the University of Oregon's Associate Research Professor Deanna Linville. Experiences of young adults with a history of foster care during COVID-19 (Ruff & Linville, 2020) is also published.

2022

Looking inside our "home": Saralyn Ruff, Deanna Linville, and June Clausen publish the article "Preliminary evaluation of A Home Within psychotherapy with clients with a history of foster care," which examines changes in psychosocial well-being of current and former foster youth clients of AHW.

2023

Hot off the press! Ruff et. al.'s "Resilience as defined by foster youth and key stakeholders" utilizes qualitative interviews to inform an understanding of resiliency that is inclusive and culturally responsive to current and former foster youth.



The Future of AHW Research:

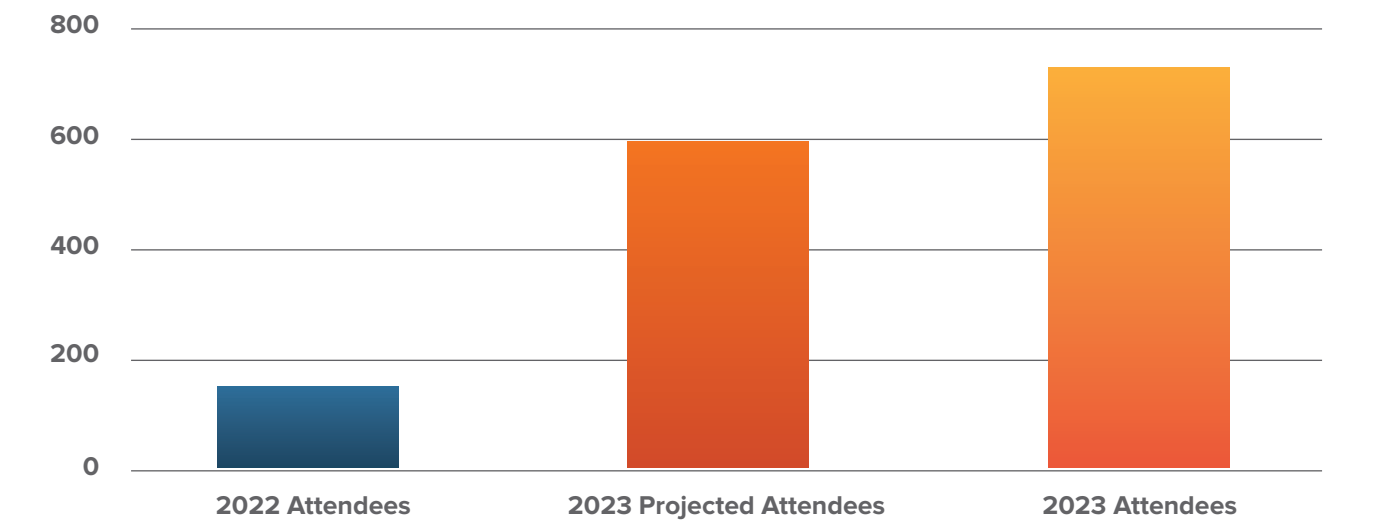
The Future of AHW Research: Our research partners have embarked on a multiyear research project that utilizes focus groups of volunteers and clients alike, as well as a randomized controlled trial.



Continuing Education

A Home Within is committed to providing the highest quality training, support, and continuing education to volunteer therapists, prospective volunteers, and community stakeholders concerned with the holistic care of those impacted by foster care. We provide continuing education events grounded in contemporary research, social justice, local and national foster care policies, and clinical interventions pursuant to the regulations of our sponsoring bodies.

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM GROWTH 2022-2023



Building the Future

Today's A Home Within is humming with momentum and brimming with potential: we're serving more young people than ever before, cultivating excellence through expanded clinical supports and continuing education, and manifesting our values and commitments to the future through our professional development and research programs. Our community is alive with positivity, energy, hope, and optimism. It's clear that as much as ever, we share a sense of purpose, a commitment to the future, and the confidence that together, in community, we can facilitate tremendous, courageous acts of healing and growth.

We're inspired and have an ambitious vision of the future. In the next several years, we'll match thousands of young people with an A Home Within therapist. We'll lead and build the field with our Continuing Education, professional development, and research programs. And we'll live our values by centering young people's voices and choices, and elevating clients and volunteers to positions of leadership within the community. Ultimately, our vision is that a high-quality healing relationship is available to everyone who has experienced foster care.



Community Partners





A Home Within is especially grateful to **Gwen Johnson** (left), and **Melinda Clemmons Blackorby** (right) who have devoted countless hours of hard work to support A Home Within's vast initiatives. Thank you, Gwen and Melinda—we couldn't do it without you both!

We'd like to extend another special thanks to our longest serving staff member, **Edith Vargas**, who has handled our books with care and diligence since 2013. Edith's commitment to A Home Within inspires us all!



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- Glass Half Full Fund
- Mental Insight Foundation
- Aviv Foundation
- The Louis and Harold Price Foundation
- CASA Organizations Throughout California
- Foster Care Research Group at the University of San Francisco
- Pritzker Foster Care Initiative
- American Psychiatric Association Foundation
- The Walter S. Johnson Foundation
- WoodNext Foundation
- 11 California Family Foundations
- Over 350 Individual Donors





Board Members

Reed Connell

President and Executive Director

Through over 15 years working in foster care, mental health, housing, and special education settings, Reed Connell has developed a sophisticated knowledge of children's policy development at all levels of government. For the past several years, Reed has worked with statewide and national coalitions to design, pass, and implement a range of important children's legislation, including AB12, California's implementation of the federal Fostering Connections to Success Act. From 2009 to 2013, Reed served as the Executive Director of the Alameda County Foster Youth Alliance, an effective and highly visible local advocacy agency. Reed has worked with advocates, providers, and coalitions around the state on issues related to local control and flexible financing in child welfare, the impacts of Realignment and Health Care Reform on child and adolescent mental health systems, and the development of accountability infrastructure. Reed holds an MSW degree from UC Berkeley with a concentration in Management and Planning.

Linda Fitzpatrick, Secretary

Chief People and Communications Officer, Sutro Biopharma, Inc.

Linda Fitzpatrick is a senior advisor to biotechnology companies in the areas of Human Resources and Corporate Communications. Equipped with a BA in Sociology and Psychology, she has graciously served on several boards benefiting youth development, including the Northern California Boys and Girls Club. Linda spent her career as a leading national figure in biotechnology while sharpening her expertise in additional areas of investor and corporate relations for several firms such as Nuvelo and Gilead Sciences.

BOARD MEMBERS CONTINUED ►



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Suha Jhaveri, Treasurer

Chief Operating Officer, OBmedical company

Suha Jhaveri is a Harvard Business School graduate who has held many leadership roles in the corporate world, including Global Marketing Director at Chiron Corporation, Director of Business Development and Strategy at KaloBios Pharmaceuticals, and Vice President at Vertical Markets Operations Pty Limited. For the past three years, she has been the Chief Operating Officer at OBmedical Company. In her free time, Suha participates in triathlons.



Anthony Pico

Consultant/Advocate; Former Client

Anthony is a longtime friend and client of A Home Within. He grew up in San Francisco and used his experiences in foster care to become a nationally recognized keynote speaker and expert in the field of child welfare. He has received Congressional recognition for his work, served on California's Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care, and was profiled by NPR's This American Life (at the tender age of 18). After aging out of foster care, Anthony obtained his GED and began working for the California State Assembly for then Majority Whip Fiona Ma (now Treasurer of the State of California). He worked full time while attending community college full time and graduated from Sacramento City College with honors and transferred to Loyola Marymount University, where he completed his Bachelor's degree in Philosophy. He is currently participating in new depression and PTSD treatments which aim to continue the work he has done with his A Home Within Therapist. He is eager to continue his work in a helping profession.

Barker Carlock

Senior Technical Program Manager, Tesla

Barker currently works for Tesla's Energy Engineering team and helps lead their Energy Storage Program. He was led to his current role at Tesla because of his passion to better leverage and scale technology that improves people's lives and prioritizes the communities that need it most. In following this passion, he's dedicated to seeing A Home Within's mission flourish in providing a critical anchor to the beautiful lives in foster care. When not working, you might find Barker spending quality time with friends in the great outdoors, working with his hands to create something new, or enjoying a meal with his patient, loving partner.

Karen Moon

Venture Advisor, Springboard Growth Capital, Venture Partner, Elizabeth Street Ventures

Karen is an investor and entrepreneur with a data-driven approach to analyzing consumer insights and shifts in market trends. She is a Venture Advisor at Springboard Growth Capital and Venture Partner at Elizabeth Street Ventures. She is an active advisor to mission-driven technology start ups. Previously, Karen co-founded and scaled a predictive analytics software startup with industry-leading clients, which was a Google Machine Learning Competition Finalist. She started her career at Goldman Sachs TMT investment banking. Karen holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and a B.A. from UCLA.

Beth Kuenstler

Beth brings over 25 years of marketing, communications and management experience spanning the private and public sectors. For the past 10 years Beth has consulted with foundations, government agencies and community-based organizations with a focus on child welfare and youth social and emotional well-being. Prior to that, Beth held executive director and marketing positions at national and international nonprofits, and started her career with a decade of work in consumer and high-tech marketing. In addition to her professional experience, Beth brings over 20 years of hands-on knowledge of the foster care system—from CASA, to foster parent, to foster-adopt parent. Her personal passion to understand and improve the lives of youth who have experienced foster care has driven her to greater levels of involvement with youth, birth parents, and social workers. Beth earned her MBA from the Krannert School of Business at Purdue University.

Support the next 30 years of A Home Within by donating today!

We turn every \$1 donated into \$5 of professional mental health care for clients in need across the country.

Donate online via
Give Lively by scanning
the QR Code here:



Or donate by check, made out to:

A Home Within
195 41st Street #11172
Oakland, CA 94611

*A Home Within is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization and your donation is tax-deductible within the guidelines of U.S. law.



**a home
within**

Celebrating **30** Years

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