

G. Mission Statement:

It is the mission of Anderson-Burriss Funeral Home to provide professional care to the families we serve offering guidance and loving support to assist them in creating a meaningful memorialization for their loved one, as well as being an educational resource to the local community reinforcing the value of funeral service.

H. Innovative program, service or activity

May is National Foster Care Month - “Backpacks of Blessings”

Anderson-Burriss Funeral Home and Crematory is located in Enid, a somewhat rural area of Oklahoma with a large farming community. Enid is the county seat and the largest city in Garfield County, with a population of about 48,000. It is also the home of Vance Air Force Base. So we have a lot of families that retire back to Enid after their military service, as well as people who were born in Enid and have lived here their entire life. This diversity in our population allows us to offer traditional as well as unique services.

May has been designated as “Foster Care” month. Garfield County has a great need for foster parents and foster homes. Over 1200 children in Oklahoma are in the foster care system at any given time. Our daughter, who also works with us here at Anderson Burriss Funeral Home, is a foster parent along with her husband Wade. They have three biological children, boys ranging in age from 11 to 16. They have been doing foster parenting for about three years, and have cared for over twenty children during that time. They have actually adopted two siblings, a girl that they have had since she was born, and her brother that came to them later at the age of two.

Even now as a family of seven, they continue to accept foster children into their home. Often they are notified late in the evening or even nighttime that DHS will be bringing a child to them. The children most usually come with nothing except the clothes they are wearing, sometimes they don't even have shoes. Babies do not come with diapers, baby formula, or even a blanket. They are often removed from their homes quickly and without time to gather supplies. Or sometimes their personal belongings have bugs, germs, or are so dirty that the caseworkers do not want to take them.

So Anderson-Burriss Funeral Home along with our daughter Amanda, have come up with the idea of furnishing an emergency bag of supplies that is age-appropriate for that particular foster child. The foster parent can notify Amanda, and she will assemble a backpack of supplies for them and deliver it to the foster home. This will help the parents not have to make an emergency trip to the store to get the things they need for the child.

We have purchased the bright green cloth backpacks to collect the necessary supplies, and then the child can have the backpack to take with them when they leave the foster home. We are calling the project “Backpacks of Blessings”. Amanda says the children never have a suitcase or anything to carry their belongings in. We have purchased a lot of the supplies and many others in the community have wanted to become involved in the project and made donations. We have a designated room at our event center to house this project. (See picture below)

The foster parents in our county have a designated facebook page that only they have access to, and this is how we are getting the word out to them, so they are aware that this is a resource that is available to them. Also there is an annual “Foster Parent Appreciation” dinner that was held in June, where this was announced to the foster parent community.

We feel that this is just one small way we can offer support to those families who are willing to open up their homes. The need is so great here in Garfield County, so we hope to assist the foster parents and make their lives a little easier. As we move forward with this project, we hope to continue to make the public aware of both the need for foster parents as well as the support we offer to them. This is a way of giving back to the community.

