

SAINT FRANCIS MINISTRIES

# Hi Lite

75TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

FALL 2020



ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION | 1945-2020

## Our Mission

Saint Francis, providing healing and hope to children and families.

## Our Vision

Saint Francis will be recognized nationally and internationally for transforming lives and systems in ways others believe impossible.

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# A Message From Fr. Bobby

## WHERE IS GOD CALLING US?



**The Very Reverend  
Robert Nelson Smith**

*Dean, President, and CEO*

Each morning I am humbled by the notion that I serve as custodian of a vessel sanctified by the spirit – and sweat – of thousands who preceded me and with whom I continue to work alongside. Some, like Fr. Bob and my four other predecessors, are familiar at least in name. Many others are less well known. Some have been a part of Saint Francis for most of their adult lives. Others labored a while and then moved on. Each contributed a part of themselves to this ministry. They all have given, in portions great and small, healing and hope to persons in need of a lifeline. They have all supported and strengthened the dignity and worth of the human person.

As Saint Francis Ministries celebrates the 75th anniversary of our founding, it's important to honor the past. Yet, it's also necessary to both examine the present and imagine the future, asking, "Where is Saint Francis now, and where is God calling us?" In this special issue of Hi-Lites, we share stories addressing all three. We visit with board members, foster families, donors, and employees (current and former) to reminisce about the past and to express our hopes for the future. We also discuss the current state of this life-affirming ministry and how Saint Francis intends to respond

to the injustices and challenges of our time.

Saint Francis has come a long way since those early days in Ellsworth, Kansas. We still have so far to go. If the last 75 years have taught us anything, it is that this work is inter-generational. Those who have served with Saint Francis for decades also know it as the work of a lifetime.

Finally, as we celebrate Saint Francis, it's essential that we remember the thousands of children and families this ministry has served and continues to serve. Their struggles to heal themselves and to regain hope and wholeness for their families are the real story of Saint Francis. We simply support them, giving them the tools and the unconditional affirmation of their worth they need to succeed.

Thank you for walking with Saint Francis, whether you've been alongside us for decades or only recently joined us on the way. Your friendship makes everything possible.

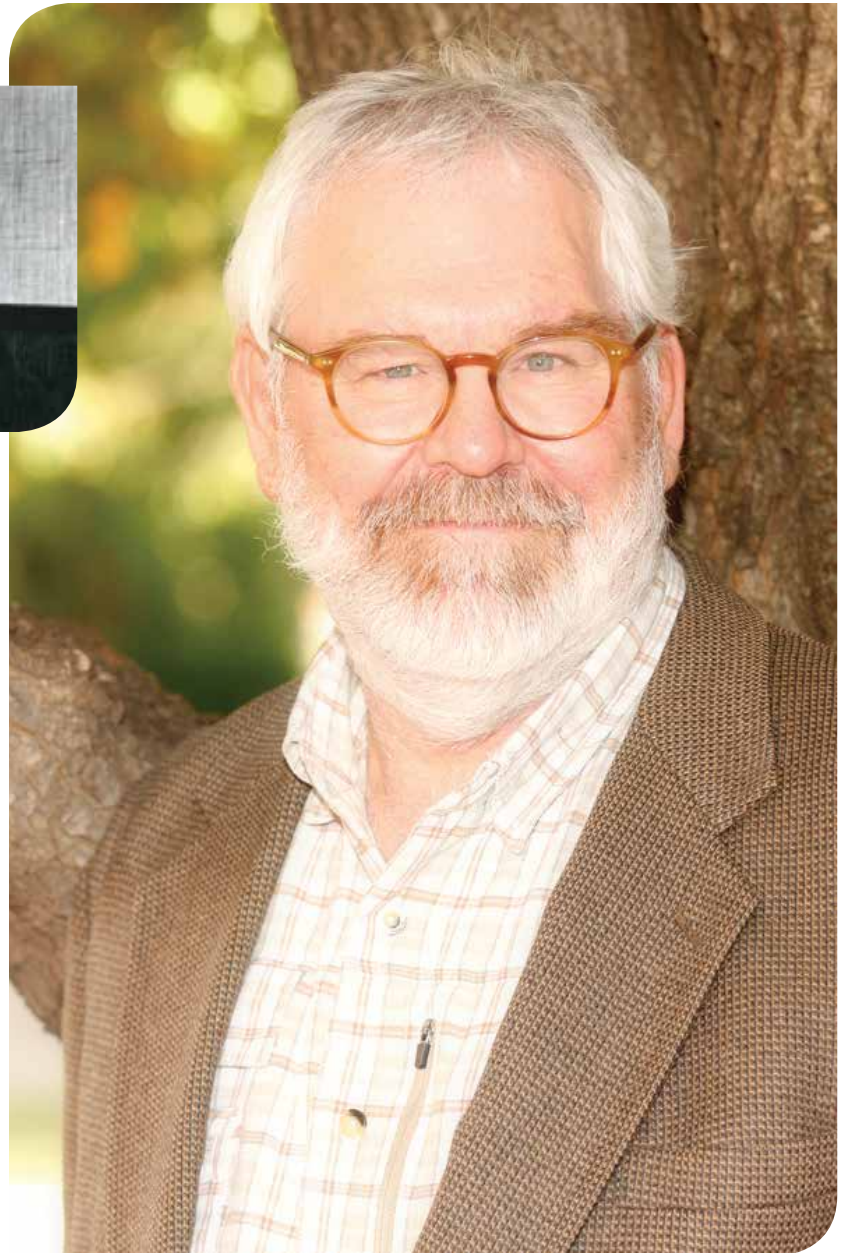
*You remain ever in my prayers,*



# Board Member Has Nearly 50-year Connection to Saint Francis



*Dr. Greg Meissen's connection with Saint Francis extends almost 50 years, from volunteering in the early 1970s to serving on the Board of Directors.*



"On a personal level, it really formed my thinking as a young adult. I came to understand the power of a great faith-based organization."

The way Dr. Greg Meissen figures it, he's been connected to Saint Francis most of his adult life. They've grown-up together – and although he'd no doubt be humble about his own contributions, the truth is Saint Francis and Dr. Meissen have influenced each other in ways both subtle and fundamental for nearly two thirds of the ministry's 75-year history.

"On a personal level, it really formed my thinking as a young adult. I came to understand the power of a great faith-based organization and the notion that staff could rally around a common cause, what even then we called 'Therapy in Christ.'"

As a community psychologist, Dr. Meissen has always understood the necessity of community-based programs for youth. That's why, after recently retiring from 40 years of teaching psychology at Wichita State University, he continues to serve on the Board of Directors of Saint Francis, where he's also been active for nearly four decades. But his relationship with Saint Francis extends even further back.

He first volunteered in 1972. Then, in 1973 and shortly after his 21st birthday, he took a two-year hiatus from his undergraduate studies at Wichita State to join the Saint Francis staff, working with Passport for Adventure, an outward-bound type of program serving at-risk and troubled youth. His own mother had died when he was young, so he grew up in a single-parent household. Through that experience, he felt an affinity with the kids he served and found meaning in the mission of Saint Francis.

"Even after I did those two years, I kept coming back for different things, and when I went off to graduate school at the University of Tennessee, I chose to study community psychology. My connection to Saint Francis influenced that decision. I had learned the importance of community-based programs for youth. So, it wasn't long after I'd returned to Kansas to join the faculty at Wichita State that I also joined the Board of Directors of Saint Francis."

His position on the board and as a community psychologist have provided him with a perspective that highlights the uniqueness of Saint Francis as a social service organization.

"I think, beyond the faith-based approach, there's a dedication to doing work of the highest quality, which can be really hard. There's an attention to what the latest research and best practices tell us. Lately, I've seen a hunger in Saint Francis that demands again and again, 'How can we be better at what we do?' I think that's what's enabled us to grow in the last few years and extend services into other states. It's been remarkable. It's about taking that quality of service and sharing it in places beyond Kansas, wherever it's needed."

The possibility of taking Saint Francis' expertise, innovation, and vision into previously underserved areas of human need excites him most as a board member. As the nation grapples with issues of racial justice, Dr. Meissen sees Saint Francis playing an important, contributive role within the intersection of social justice and

healthy children and families.

"I think, five years from now, Saint Francis will be doing a number of things that are more nested within the community, with the hope that there will be fewer kids entering the foster care and criminal justice systems. The opportunity is in front of us - to figure out how to reach a higher level of equality in this country, and for Saint Francis to become a national model for how to work with children and families."

And where does Dr. Meissen see Saint Francis in 25 years, when the ministry will celebrate a full century of service?

"I'd like to see a Saint Francis that is not only recognized on a national level but is an innovative international ministry. We're already doing some incredible things in Central America that we can't yet do in the United States. We're creating settings where children and families can grow in healthy conditions and where communities can find their way out of poverty by becoming economically empowered. So, when it comes to prevention, we can start thinking about going upstream, if you will, and figuring out how all these kids are winding up in the river that Saint Francis is fishing out and trying to help downstream.

"It's part of my hope for this ministry's future, one in which Saint Francis is a sophisticated organization in terms of how it operates, yet is still a faith-based, down-to-earth ministry that works with people right within their own communities. That's darned exciting to me."

# Forward in Hope: A Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Understanding the impact of racial injustice and changing systems to address inequities is a long overdue and much-needed action in the United States. Saint Francis Ministries is not shying away from the work that must be done to bring about positive change and the understanding needed to move from “good intentions to precise actions.”

## The Rev. Dr. Michael Battle

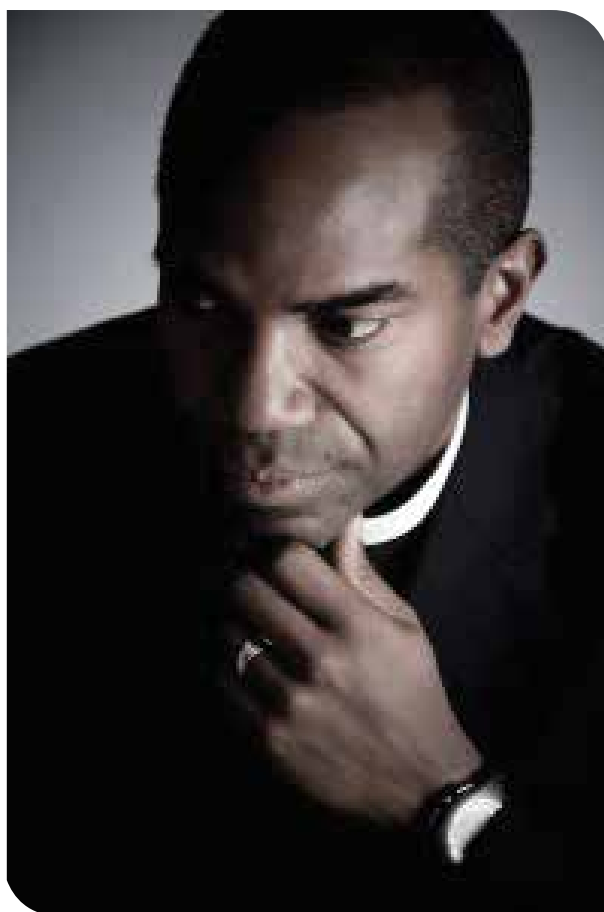
Those words from Fr. Michael Battle, who began working with Saint Francis Ministries leadership in the fall of 2019 on issues of diversity and inclusion, encompass the work he will do as a consultant with Saint Francis.

Fr. Michael currently teaches at the General Theological Seminary in New York City where he is the Herbert Thompson Professor of Church and Society and Director of the Desmond Tutu Center. He will continue that work as he takes on the role of Senior Advisor of Reconciliation and Inclusion for Saint Francis.

Fr. Bobby Smith, dean, president, and CEO at Saint Francis, first met Fr. Michael in 2016. As their relationship deepened, Fr. Bobby was motivated to seek Fr. Michael’s guidance.

“Over the years, Michael’s commitment to peace and reconciliation has inspired me and the work of Saint Francis has become important to him,” Fr. Bobby said. “In October 2019, I asked Michael if he would provide Saint Francis with a review of internal policies and practices regarding how Saint Francis embraces and strengthens our commitment to diversity. This work is now being studied by our leadership team and will be a major focus of our next board of directors meeting.”

“Fr. Michael’s belief in the Saint Francis mission and the ‘great, necessary reckoning that is occurring in the United States over questions of racial equality and justice,’” Fr. Bobby said, “led to discussions on how Saint Francis can best meet needs of the increasingly diverse communities we serve and people we employ.”



“We cannot deny there are injustices heaped upon members of our communities who are in greater danger than other members,” Fr. Bobby said. “To contribute to the ever-improving embrace of diversity at Saint Francis, and to contribute to the national dialogue occurring about racial equality, Michael’s appointment as a senior advisor is a tangible example of our missional commitment to respecting the dignity of every human being.”

While Fr. Michael will continue to teach at General Theological Seminary (and other institutions of higher learning around the globe) and live in New York City, he is committing significant time and energies to support Saint Francis’ work.

## In this role, Fr. Michael will, among other things:

- Regularly convene with the Saint Francis Ministries Board of Directors, members of our leadership team, and staff.
- Publish writings throughout the year, on behalf of Saint Francis, on matters of reconciliation and inclusion, emphasizing the core mission of Saint Francis to offer healing and hope to children and families.
- As Senior Advisor of Reconciliation and Inclusion, hold Saint Francis, and Fr. Bobby, as dean, president and CEO, accountable for those items in the report that he wrote regarding diversity at Saint Francis, with recommendations that Saint Francis has committed to carry forward.
- Use Saint Francis’ increasing scope of service to highlight the work of reconciliation to which Fr. Michael has dedicated his life. For example, in communities where Saint Francis has operations and/or where Saint Francis and Michael have relationships that overlap, we intend to host conversations on reconciliation and other topics at the root of our ministry.

As his vocation and ministry are founded upon matters of reconciliation, it is possible that with combined effort, Michael and our Saint Francis advocacy team can create opportunities to highlight how his scholarship and ministry might influence public policy.

Learn more about Fr. Michael at  
[www.michaelbattle.com](http://www.michaelbattle.com).



# Fostering is a Life's Work

What moves a person to open their door and welcome into their home a perfect stranger? From where arises the motivation to create physical and emotional space for a child from a background completely alien from one's own? Why would they love that child as their own – and why would they do it over and over again, sometimes for decades. On this occasion of Saint Francis' 75th anniversary, we look at three such families - people who consider foster parenting a calling, a vocation of service to children.



**Tamara Wallace (Garden City, KS)**

Tammy Wallace wasn't sure if she'd ever marry, but she loved kids and she wanted them to fill her home. Twenty-two years ago, she started fostering a 7-year-old girl. Then, she married Terry. He liked kids too. He moved into the house, and when that little girl turned 10, they adopted her.

"He was on board right away," said

Tammy. "He'd been a bit of a family friend all along since his sister and I were best friends. So, their whole family was fully aware that kids and fostering were a part of me."

Terry and Tammy fostered together for about 15 years before he died five years ago. Tammy estimates that in that time, they took care of around 200 children. They even adopted three of them. Tammy also gave birth to two boys, which means she still has five children at home under the age of 16. That first girl they adopted? She's 28 now and has five children of her own.

It would have been easy for Tammy to call it good and quit fostering after Terry died. No one would blame her. Some of her family members even encouraged her to quit. She couldn't do it, though.

"I love kids. They're just a part of my world," she said. "I figure that if I have the space and the energy to take care of them and give them help, then that's what God wants me to do. So, I talked with my foster care worker and said, 'I'd love to continue doing this, but I'm going to need help with appointments and all those things,' and they've been awesome about helping me get these kids where they need to go."

A full-time teacher, Tammy admits it's harder to foster without Terry. But she has a good support network, and she's a strong person. Right now, she's fostering a 3-year-old girl who Tammy's cared for since the child was seven months old. As soon as coronavirus clears enough to safely enter the courthouse, Tammy will adopt her too.

"All it takes to be a good foster parent is to be loving, caring, kind, and patient," said Tammy. "Be organized and have big faith in God. That's a big one. Without God, I would never have gotten through all the stuff I've experienced."



**Lillian Baker (Wichita, KS)**

Lillian Baker also knows the challenges of fostering alone, especially as a widow. Her own beloved Robert died five years ago. The couple began fostering in 1998, when they received custody and then adopted their young grandson. Before that, he'd been in the foster care system, and it was his stories about that experience that inspired Lillian and Robert to give back.

"We wanted to help children," she said. "We decided then to be the best we could be and to try to understand how a child feels to be taken from their home and placed in a home where they know nothing about the people."

They started with taking care of both boys and girls, then just girls. Neither seemed a good fit, so they switched to teenaged boys, most often troubled ones. With their three biological children grown and gone, they usually kept four boys at a time, along with their grandson. Lillian figures they fostered hundreds of young men over the decades. Over time, they began



asking to go to the Baker home, where they were always treated with love and respect.

"Most often, kids just want a good ear, someone who will listen," Lillian said. "They don't need our opinion on everything; they just want someone they can talk to and who will understand what they're saying."

Still, Robert's passing made a big difference. Suddenly a single parent, Lillian had to make some adjustments. Robert had provided a strong male figure in the house, something teenaged boys often need. But Lillian was up to the task.

"One rule I've always tried to follow is to 'say what you mean and mean what you say – and stand on it,'" she said.

"When a kid walks through my door, I introduce myself. I tell them they can call me 'Miss Lillian' or 'Miss Baker,' what I call 'putting a handle on it.' It's a measure of respect. If you give respect to kids, most of the time, you'll get it back. I've been blessed and fortunate that I've had no problems with any of the boys I've taken care of since Robert's death."

At 65, Lillian can't keep up with those boys as well as she used to, so now she primarily takes emergency placements.

"When you're a permanent home, you have to go to doctor appointments and such, and it's hard right now for me to meet those needs," she said. "But I will continue to give back as long as I can. I've learned over the years that it doesn't take much to make a child happy. He just needs to feel that you care about him and that you understand him. So, Robert and I always tried to listen hard and to remember what it was like to be a child."



#### **Don and Brenda Stovall (Halstead, KS)**

The few details Don Stovall shared with his wife broke her heart. Twenty years ago, as a Newton police officer, Don occasionally saw bad things happen to children. Usually, he kept it to himself, but after a friend brought a foster child to Brenda's daycare, he began to share more. One incident, in which a 3-month-old baby died, affected him especially. Shortly afterward, the

Halstead, Kansas, couple began discussing the idea of becoming foster parents.

"Brenda thought maybe we could give them a safe place to be while their parents got the help they needed. I wasn't sure at first, but she was persuasive," said Don.

"My heart was with these kids – and with the parents," said Brenda. "I thought we could help them. So, once we made the decision, we were both on board. We did the training and never looked back. We've enjoyed every single year."

Somewhere along the way, they began caring for medically fragile children, which included shaken babies and children born of drug- or alcohol-addicted mothers. Their three biological children now live on their own, and of the Stovalls' four adopted children, two still live at home. One of them, Oscar, was a shaken baby.

"Medically fragile babies are challenging because of their medical needs. They have lots of doctor appointments," said Don. "But the hardest part is getting attached to them. It's hard to let them go."

Brenda agreed.

"Yes, I think it's because we already worry so much about them that it's even easier to get attached. Don't get me wrong, we love the reintegration process; it's a joy when a child gets to go home. But it's hard, especially when you've had them for two years."

Even so, Brenda and Don are right now fostering three children, a couple of boys, both under the age of two, and a medically fragile 10-year-old girl. They insist the rewards outweigh the difficulties, even when it comes to sending a child back home.

"From the beginning, my heart went out to these mothers," said Brenda. "You realize that anyone could be one mistake away from getting their kids taken away. So, we have to look at it from the angle that these parents need help too. They're broken as much or more. I've always told my moms, 'I'm here to help you with your baby. I'm not a threat to you, and I'm not trying to take your child. I'm working alongside you.'"

"The biggest reward is seeing these little ones heal, and their families get better. That's amazing."

# Reflections with Fr. Bobby

Six years ago, The Very Rev. Robert N. Smith arrived in Salina, Kansas, with his family, stepping into his role as the 6th dean, president, and CEO of Saint Francis Ministries.

He brought with him a lifetime of experiences grounded in his faith and ministry as a priest, the belief in the importance of reconciliation and restorative justice for healing, and a desire that drew him to the same mission that reverberates in Saint Francis: to work together to bring healing and hope to children and families.

"There's a dichotomy to this role," Fr. Bobby said. "I seek to live into the expectation to be the spiritual leader of a very diverse community of people. The role of the CEO, also, is to help set the course far downstream, allowing others in the organization to be able to focus on things that are closer at hand. I'm looking past my own tenure here. It is an exceptional responsibility and a privilege."

As Fr. Bobby built his relationships with the organization's board of directors, he eagerly asked the difficult questions, seeking to put words to Saint Francis's mission and vision.

"The first months I was here, I would ask people what it is that Saint Francis does," Fr. Bobby said. "There were the literalists, who said, 'Well, we do case management, we help build foster care homes, we provide therapy,' and that's all very true – we do a lot, residential care for youth and adults, family strengthening programs, and

so much more. The list is long and impressive. But most often people would say, 'We give people hope.'

"It was that refrain that started us down the path of looking at the way we understand ourselves by creating shared outcome expectations based around the word 'hope,'" he said.

As the board members and Fr. Bobby grew together, they began to talk about the organization's core, fundamental reason for being. It was through these discussions that they were able to find the words that would allow all those at the organization to articulate the deep reason why Saint Francis exists.

## Respect & Dignity

The idea of providing hope and healing is not easily defined, and it looks different in all of the work that Saint Francis does. In El Salvador, where the HOPES project is supporting the reshaping of community and offering economic possibilities, hope is tied to "the dignity that comes with respectful work," Fr. Bobby said.

"In our work to help young people or parents with substance use issues, helping them find their way to reconciliation on their healing journey provides hope.

"It goes back to my deep belief that we're called to respect the dignity of every human being," Fr. Bobby said. "What does that mean in an individual context? It means valuing the life experiences that we all have. Knowing that my life experience is no better or worse than anyone else's.

It's in part a willingness to walk with people on their journey through life, to respect the dignity that they are born with.

"We honor people's dignity and from there, hope can grow from any circumstance," he added. "It's the ministry of showing up, the power of presence. I deeply believe that is what Fr. Bob Mize set out to do 75 years ago, and I think that is what we have been committing ourselves to ever since.

"Also important to the foundational structure of Saint Francis is the presence of God in all that we do," Fr. Bobby said. "Saint Francis has unapologetically maintained and honored its faith-based roots, and that's increasingly unique," he said.

Saint Francis has grown in the way it shows up for children and families, adding services to new regions, working internationally, always researching and expanding knowledge to show up in the most effective, compassionate way possible.

That growth is an important part of the organization's mission not just to serve children and families wherever possible, but to provide stability and security for the 1,600-plus employees who work here.

"An exceptionally important part of the growth is my belief that in this life we should willingly share our gifts and expertise in support of the common good. Growth and change are also valuable as we diversify our revenue streams so we're not

economically vulnerable to any one system in which we exist,” Fr. Bobby said.

Growth also means looking at ways Saint Francis can further support communities, building partnerships and finding innovative ways of meeting needs that delve into the deeper conditions occurring in communities.

“When I ask people why Saint Francis is necessary, the consistent answer has always been because of the scourge of poverty and drugs,” Fr. Bobby said. “If a family has no economic hope, if a community says there’s no economic hope or viability, from that begins the spread of community violence; including the use of substances that can lead to familial and community neglect and other forms of abuse and violence. We must look at being part of the conversation about what economics mean in the life of a family, and that’s the conversation that ultimately drives family stability and system changes.”

*The Very Rev. Robert N. Smith, dean, president, and CEO, preaches the sermon at Christ Cathedral in Salina, Kansas, during Martin Luther King Jr. Day observances on January 17, 2016.*



**“We are called to be a community together.”**

# From Fr. Bob to Fr. Bobby:

## Six Presidents Have Guided Saint Francis Through the Years

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Six presidents, all of them Episcopal priests, have led Saint Francis over the 75 years of our existence. Inspired by the charism of founder “Fr. Bob” Mize Jr., each subsequent president has helped navigate the ministry through challenging times and into wider areas of service. Guided by Fr. Bob’s Therapy in Christ, each has sought ways to translate that concept into providing healing and hope to children and families wherever they are in need.



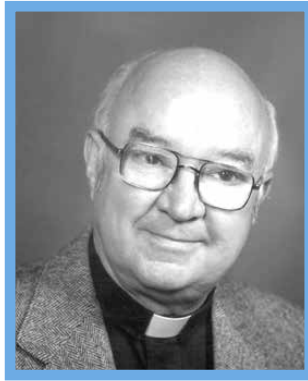


## PRESIDENTS 1945-1990



**The Rev. Robert Mize Jr.**  
(1945-1960)

We don't have the space to list all of Fr. Bob's accomplishments. Let's just say, he started it all. Motivated by a desire to help boys written off and tossed into the juvenile justice system, he opened Saint Francis Boys' Home in Ellsworth, Kansas, against the advice of nearly everyone. Later, he opened a second home west of Salina, Kansas, the site of the current residential treatment facility. Father Bob fervently believed that unconditional love, forgiveness, and structure would enable the boys to regain their self-worth and live accordingly. By all accounts a saintly man, Fr. Bob led Saint Francis for 15 years before heading to South Africa, where he served as bishop until his anti-apartheid stance got him kicked out of the country. At his death in 2000, he was a retired assisting bishop in San Joaquin, California. In 1963, author Emily Gardiner Neal published "Father Bob and His Boys," which provides a wealth of information about this extraordinary person.



**The Rev. Dr. William E. Craig**  
(1960-1980)

Fr. Craig served in Los Angeles and Nebraska before coming to Saint Francis in 1956 to serve under Fr. Bob as assistant director. Upon Fr. Bob's departure, he became executive director/president. At that time, Saint Francis had logged 400 admissions. In 1962, Fr. Craig grew concerned about Saint Francis' limited ability to serve more children with just two facilities. As a result, he hired The Rev. N. Kenneth Yates to serve as assistant director and to expand services to help more youth, including adolescent girls. Under Fr. Craig's leadership, the 1960s and 1970s were years of expansion. He died in 2007.



**The Rev. Canon N. Kenneth Yates**  
(1981-1990)

A former parish priest and missionary, Fr. Yates first joined Saint Francis in 1963 to serve as assistant director of development. He left in 1975 to join the faculty of Nashotah House Seminary, but returned following the retirement of Dr. Craig to serve as president. During the first couple years of Fr. Yates' tenure, Saint Francis made progress in expanding its accreditation with the Joint Commission and finalized plans to enlarge and renovate the Ellsworth facility. As he prepared to retire in 1990, he encouraged the board to seek the best possible candidates for resident directors, regardless of whether they were Episcopalian or clergy, unless a clergyperson had dual qualifications. For Fr. Yates, the most important thing was to remain committed to Therapy in Christ as Saint Francis' guide star for healing service. He died in a car accident in 1997.

# 75 YEARS DEDICATED TO HELPING FAMILIES & CHILDREN

The Reverend Robert Mize Jr., mission priest and son of a bishop, founded Saint Francis Ministries 75 years ago when he opened St. Francis Boys' Home in the dilapidated former "Old People's Home" in Ellsworth, Kansas. Virtually everyone thought he was making a mistake. Father Bob, however, believed in redemption. He believed that through daily prayer, accepting responsibility for one's actions, unconditional love, and forgiveness – what he called Therapy in Christ – anyone could regain their self-worth. Hundreds of Fr. Bob's boys have attested to this truth by going on to live lives of purpose and wholeness after leaving Saint Francis.

This ethos, that no one is beyond redemption and that everyone deserves healing and hope, has guided Saint Francis and its people since Fr. Bob's departure in 1960. Much has changed. Some of its work resembles that of other agencies and nonprofit organizations. Yet, unlike them, Saint Francis has always been first and foremost a ministry. Over the years, Saint Francis programs in New York, New Mexico, California, and other places have come and gone. Many others remain. Each was a response to an identified need in a certain time



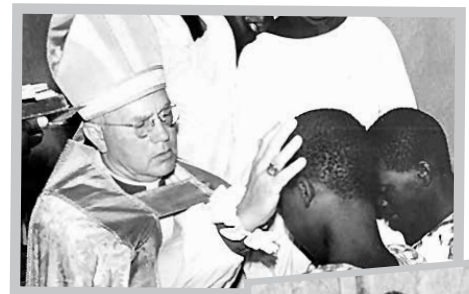
Opened St. Francis Boys' Home in the dilapidated former "Old People's Home" in Ellsworth, Kansas.



Fr. Bob opened another home near Salina, Kansas.



Saint Francis purchased the former Dunbar School at 509 E. Elm Street in Salina, to serve as its corporate offices.



Saint Francis operated residential treatment centers for both boys and girls in New York state, while also establishing Passport for Adventure, a wilderness therapy program near Salina.

Kansas Licensed Child Placing Agency

1945

1948

1959

1965

1970

# 1974 | 1992 | 1997 | 2000 | 2005

Saint Francis Academy received accreditation from The Joint Commission and has retained that accreditation every year since Equestrian Program

The ministry opened several programs in Mississippi in 1992

Foster Care Homes Program established in Kansas

Reintegration/Foster Care Program Provider in western Kansas

Added Adoption Services in Kansas



**Saint Francis**  
Community Services®  
*Serving Children and Families Since 1945*



**Saint Francis**  
Community Services  
**Fostering in Faith**



and place. Saint Francis has always been good at that — seeing a need and then moving in to minister to those most at risk. Saint Francis serves wherever called by God.

What follows are a few of the milestones marking the path of Saint Francis over the last 75 years:

Three years after founding Saint Francis' Boys' in Ellsworth, Fr. Bob opened another home near Salina, Kansas. Eventually, this second site would become Salina West, home of Saint Francis' residential treatment facility. In 1959, Saint Francis purchased the former Dunbar School at 509 E. Elm Street in Salina, to serve as its corporate offices. The move came with a name change — Saint Francis Academy — to reflect the ministry's increasing emphasis on learning and treatment programs. The site would remain the headquarters of Saint Francis for more than 60 years.

From 1965-1973, Saint Francis operated residential treatment centers for both boys and girls in New York

state, while also establishing Passport for Adventure, a wilderness therapy program near Salina. Although none of these programs remain, former staff and youth who were served by them still remember them fondly.

In 1974, Saint Francis Academy received accreditation from The Joint Commission and has retained that accreditation every year since. The ministry opened several programs in Mississippi in 1992 and in 1996, Saint Francis became a family preservation and foster care/reintegration provider in Kansas. During this time, the ministry changed its name to Saint Francis Community Services to reflect its expanded role as a child and family social services provider. In 2008 and 2012, Saint Francis began providing those services in Oklahoma and Nebraska before moving into Texas and Arkansas in 2018-2019. With a significant portion of Saint Francis' revenue now coming from state contracts, leadership determined that the ministry needed to diversify. In 2016, The Saint Francis Foundation was

incorporated to re-engage with philanthropy and build relationships within the wider Episcopal Church.

Over the last several years, Saint Francis has worked to form partnerships, create new programs to serve new areas of need, and add to the ministry's facilities.

In 2015, Saint Francis dedicated its new state-of-the-art residential treatment facility on the campus of Salina West, and in 2018, it partnered with the Roman Catholic Congregation of St. Joseph to renovate and lease Mount St. Mary's, the order's former convent. Serving at-risk children and families in Wichita and Sedgwick County, the building houses administrative offices, mental health services, and the new Saint Francis Migration Ministries, a refugee resettlement program affiliated with Episcopal Migration Ministries. In 2018, Saint Francis also established

an office in Washington, D.C., to support its advocacy efforts, and in 2019 received a civil society organization designation by the United Nations.

In 2016, Saint Francis International Ministries began work in Central America, partnering with International Social Service USA and organizations in Honduras and El Salvador. In 2019, it launched the HOPES Project, a justice enterprise initiative to fund social programs in the Salvadoran community of San José Obrero.

What had begun 75 years ago as a home for boys has become a ministry providing programs and services to boys and girls, adults with intellectual disabilities, survivors of sex trafficking, refugees from oppression and violence, and at-risk families in six U.S. states and Central America. In 2018, Saint Francis realized a new name was needed to





# 2015

Nebraska Adoption Services  
PRTF facility opened in Salina

# 2016

El Salvador began work with the Episcopal Dignity and Justice program  
Clover House opens  
U.S. Dept. of State's Professional Fellow Program for China & Mongolia

# 2017

Partnership with International Social Service – U.S.A.  
The Saint Francis Foundation Started  
Offices open in Nebraska

# 2018

Migration Ministries Honduras:  
Partnership with Familias Solidarias  
Texas Foster Care Homes Program established  
New branding and name

# 2019

Serving Arkansas  
Launched the HOPES Project in the Salvadoran community of San José Obrero



better reflect this new sense of mission and changed its name to Saint Francis Ministries.

In 2020, Saint Francis embarked on a new collaboration, merging with St. John's Military School in Salina to house residential/outpatient substance abuse treatment programs, education and job training programs, and administrative offices on its 40-acre campus. After 60 years on East Elm Street, Saint Francis Ministries' corporate headquarters are now located on the St. John's campus.

The Very Rev. Robert N. Smith, current president, dean, and CEO, says growth is both natural and necessary for a ministry dedicated to the premise that every human person has dignity and worth. It's what has led and continues to guide Saint Francis into new areas of service.

"We honor people's dignity and from there, hope can grow from any circumstance," he says. "It's the ministry of showing up, the power of presence. I deeply believe that is what Fr. Bob Mize set out to do 75 years ago, and I think that is what we have been committing ourselves to ever since."



"It's the ministry of showing up"

Fr. Bobby

# 2020

## PRESIDENTS 1990-PRESENT



**The Rev. Canon Phillip J. Rapp  
(1990-2002)**

Ordained in 1961, Fr. Rapp had served in a variety of youth-oriented and community programs, as well as administrator of St. John's Home for Girls in Ohio and as chief of chaplaincy services for the Army National Guard in Washington, D.C. At the time of his appointment as president of Saint Francis, he was resident director of Saint Francis' Camelot residential program in Lake Placid, New York. Under Fr. Rapp's leadership, Saint Francis worked to keep pace with changes in Kansas healthcare that included the privatization of foster care in 1996. Community outreach, case management, and family mediation programs were established as the state awarded Saint Francis the family preservation contract in 1996 and the foster care/reintegration services contract in 2000. Fr. Rapp's vision for Saint Francis was always to be free of financial restrictions so the ministry could fulfill its mission, a living testament to the healing power of Christ.



**The Very Reverend Edward Fellhauer  
(2002-2014)**

Prior to joining Saint Francis, Fr. Fellhauer had served in several parishes in Texas and Oklahoma, as well as a variety of agencies dedicated to child welfare. While in Woodward, Oklahoma, he created a child abuse prevention program that was later adapted by the Episcopal Church. In 1993, Fr. Fellhauer joined Saint Francis as the ministry's chaplain for the Salina West and Ellsworth facilities, and then became the executive director of Saint Francis programs in Mississippi. In 2002, he became president, CEO, and dean of what by now was called Saint Francis Community Services. During Fr. Fellhauer's presidency, Saint Francis added the Wichita Region to its contract with the State of Kansas and expanded services into Oklahoma and Nebraska. Just before his retirement, Fr. Fellhauer helped break ground on a new state-of-the-art psychiatric residential treatment facility at Salina West.



**The Very Rev. Robert N. Smith  
(2014-present)**

Fr. Smith came to Saint Francis from the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, where he served as a parish priest while working full-time as a healthcare executive in hospital systems in Wisconsin and Illinois. Through his leadership, Saint Francis has expanded its services and reach, supporting more than 31,000 families in Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and Central America with a \$250 million operating budget and nearing 1,800 employees. Saint Francis also has advocacy operations in Washington, D.C., and within the United Nations in New York City. In all, Saint Francis crosses 16 Episcopal diocesan borders and is clinically engaged with children and families in 36 U.S. states and 21 other nations. Under Fr. Smith's guidance, Saint Francis began the process of implementing the Malcom Baldrige National Quality framework in 2015. In 2017, the organization was recognized at the state level with the Missouri/Kansas Quality Award by the Midwest Excellence Institute. In 2018, Saint Francis Community Services changed its name to Saint Francis Ministries to more accurately reflect the expanded mission and vision of the organization founded by Fr. Bob three-quarters of a century ago.

Saint Francis Ministries has grown in programs, number of states where we serve children and families, and in number of employees. We take seriously the impact we have through job creation and in offering stable employment that draws people who find joy in making a difference.

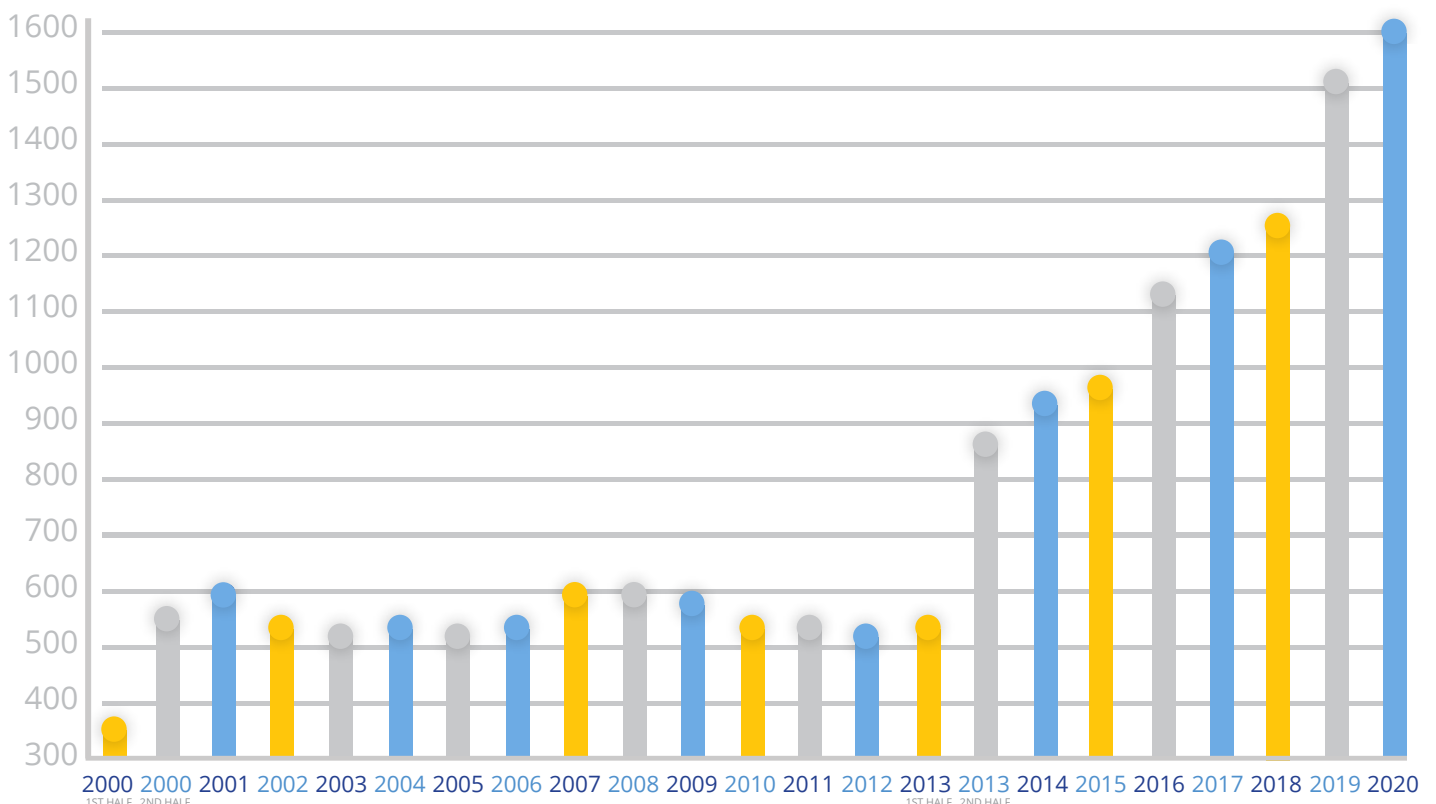
**31,000**  
**CHILDREN**  
**& FAMILIES**

**8**  
**U.S. STATES**

**5**  
**COUNTRIES**

## EMPLOYEE GROWTH OVER THE YEARS

AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES



# Cutting-Edge Research for Innovative, Effective Care

At Saint Francis, staff are encouraged to explore new opportunities, innovative treatments and services, and are challenged to always be learning.

Cheryl Rathbun, corporate vice president of clinical services, remembers well many of the research projects she was involved with during her 42-year career at Saint Francis. Multiple projects offered her the chance to explore new ways to meet the needs of children and families, and to grow throughout her career.

"You need to know that what you're doing works," she said. "You want to make sure you're using tools that are proven."



Cheryl Rathbun

Using evidence-based practices, or EBPs, that have been well-researched has always

been a critical part of the organization's work. The passage in 2019 of the Family First Prevention Services Act, which attached federal dollars to the use of EBPs, added increased emphasis to what Saint Francis staff already knew was important.

"For many years, Saint Francis maintained a research department, where well-known psychologists, like Ron Force and Gordon Gardiner, delved into ways to better care for

children and teens and to confirm that the methods staff were using were working," Cheryl said.

She remembers well that Ron's Behavioral Personality Inventory was an instrument he constantly revalidated through data tracked for years after the clients left Saint Francis. It focused on determining a young person's amenability to change and their drug proclivity (how likely they were to use drugs at some point).

Some of the research from the 1980s and 1990s still informs the work Cheryl leads today in the clinical department. The primary counselor model, which Cheryl encourages at the residential programs, showed that the most compelling predictor of a young person's successful treatment was in the relationships they built.

"While the relationship didn't have to be with a counselor, it most often was," Cheryl said. "Other research, which was done before the study of trauma-informed care that is used today was in place, helped to look at the young person's perception of the world.

"For instance, if five teens stole items, each might have a different reason. One stole because he wanted money and took the item. Another wanted to feed her sister. Yet another stole because her parents were getting divorced and she was angry and felt guilty. Looking at those different world perceptions would inform the treatment staff offered," Cheryl said.

Today, research is still an important element of the work Saint Francis does, along with continuing education. Pam Cornwell, clinical director, gives as an example how important it is to understand the relationship of trauma to behaviors, and then to determine the best treatment possible. "In working with young people, we often are dealing with generations of trauma," she said.

"Traumatized children cannot develop



Pam Cornwell

and function as they need to successfully. The presentation of trauma-related behavior has many faces,

but at the core of the behavior is the reflex to fight, flee, or freeze," Pam said. "Only services that provide attuned care, that ability to be emotionally responsive to the emotional struggle of the child or parent, demonstrate lasting effectiveness. Trauma-informed care means an approach that restores relationships that expand how the children understand themselves."

"Saint Francis partners with university researchers to explore better ways to work and support not just children and families, but staff. A recent project with Wichita State University focused on staff and resiliency, taking a look at secondary trauma associated with the challenging work Saint Francis does," Cheryl said.



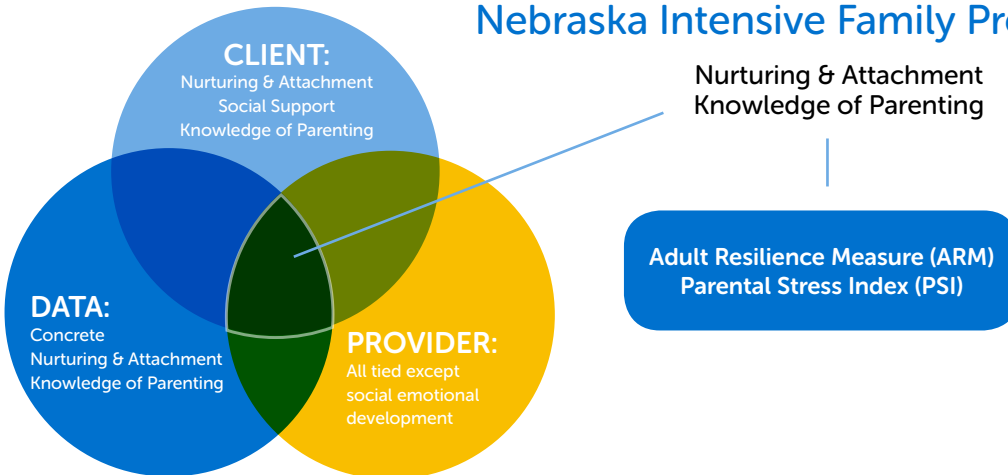
Currently, Saint Francis is working with University of Kansas researchers to measure organization-wide impact of services on clients using protective factors as a framework to measure impact. "Protective factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk

in families and communities, thereby increasing the health and well-being of children and families. That project has just moved into the full implementation stage," Cheryl said.

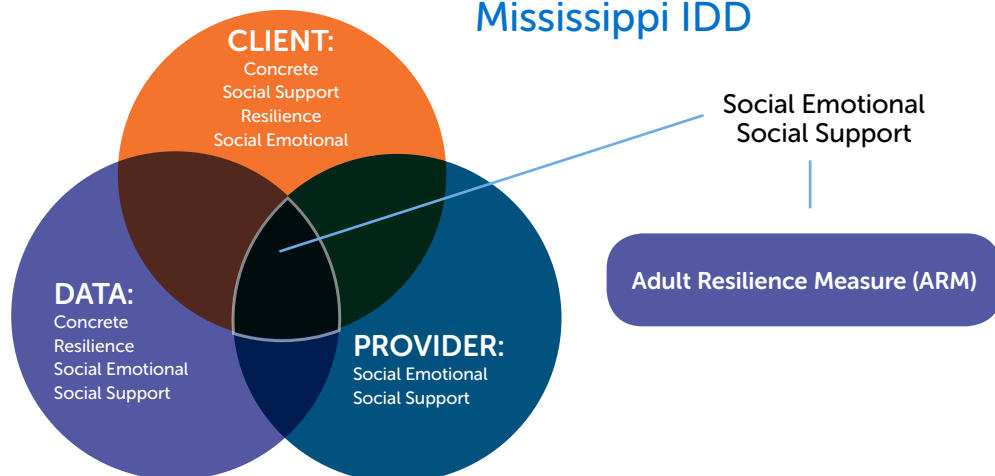
Pushing to learn more, to explore new and possible better options for treatment, touches the core values of Saint Francis Ministries.

"We focus on meeting needs, and the needs we see through the many kinds of work we do are complex and varied," Cheryl said. "We never stop holding ourselves to high standards and striving to, as our value statement says, transform lives in ways others believe impossible."

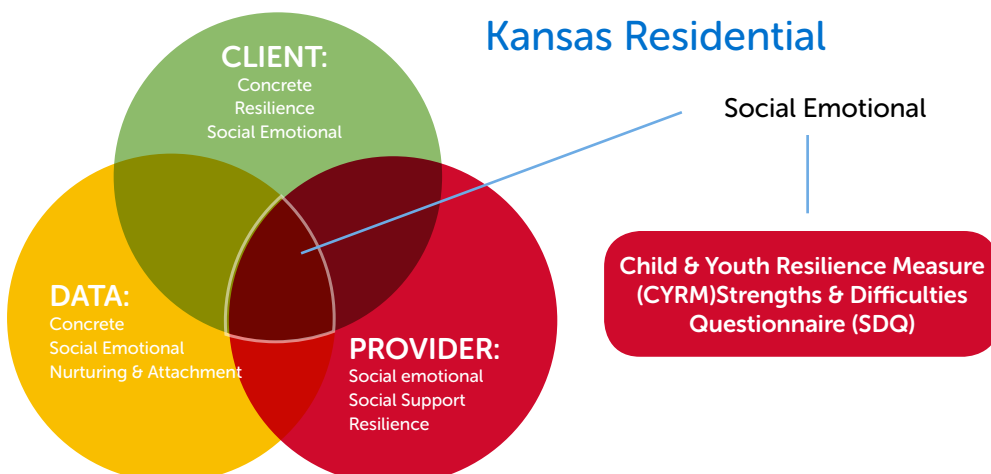
## Nebraska Intensive Family Preservation



## Mississippi IDD



## Kansas Residential



### Ongoing use of these new measures will:

- Allow Saint Francis to track and talk about client impact across all Saint Francis Ministries programs,
- Provide the data to evaluate which areas individual programs are (or are not) impacting,
- Enable access to data on how clients are doing throughout services so that we can track progress and make changes to services if needed.

# A Career Noted for Learning, Sharing, Growth, and Community

Cory Rathbun graduated from college in 1977. Within weeks of taking off his graduation cap, he began work as a counselor at what was then St. Francis Boys' Home in his hometown of Ellsworth, Kansas.

When the 22-year-old started work as a relief counselor, he was barely older than some of the boys living in the home. It didn't occur to him that he would retire from Saint Francis Ministries 43 years later.

Cory was inundated in those early days with learning about the boys and their oftentimes heartbreaking

in charge of the Boys' Home equine program.

"I was very active," Cory said. "I like to do a lot of outside things and sports, so the kids gravitated toward me to some degree. I'd come in and they'd want to go fishing. Some of the kids didn't want to sit in a room and do counseling. They wanted to do things so you could go out and maybe go fishing or camping, and they would really, really share with you. We always tried to find something that every one of the kids would excel at to build self-esteem. Many of them hadn't had a lot of successes throughout their lives."

One of Fr. Mize's philosophies was that it was important for the boys to become part of the community.

"If we were going to make changes, they needed to go to a local school, they needed to date local girls when they got an opportunity, they needed to go to church in the community," Cory recalled. "They shouldn't be separated away, isolated, because it is impossible to grow like that."

Many of the founding principles of Saint Francis Ministries – including Therapy in Christ and beginning and ending each day with a prayer – spoke to Cory's own belief system. It was part of the reason he stayed for four decades.

Saint Francis also offered him the opportunity to continue to grow in his career and as a person. The organization encouraged and supported him in getting a master's degree in health administration. He

worked at the Boys Home for about eight years before taking a position as assistant director at the Boys' Home residential facility in Bavaria, Kansas, near Salina, that Fr. Mize opened in the late 1940s.

Over the years, Cory held many positions, ending his career as a Vice President. He helped start various programs outside of Kansas and was proud to see Saint Francis grow. In 40-plus years, Cory led the Salina West residential facility as it became the first "Level VI" program in the state — as all the state hospitals were closing. He added another residential facility in Salina, and started the first partial-day hospital program and output substance use program for adolescents in Salina.

Cory worked closely with Betty Rush, who today is Regional Vice President of Child and Family Services, and started Foster Care Homes as a needed service for the youth discharging from Salina West. When Kansas began the process of privatizing child welfare, it was under Cory's leadership that Saint Francis received the first round of Family Preservation contracts in western Kansas, and in 2000, received out-of-home work as well. He started programs for Saint Francis in Oklahoma and later in Nebraska.

To Cory, who hesitates to talk about his accomplishments, the focus has always been about staying true to the mission that Fr. Bob Mize set in place.

"When Fr. Bob started the program,

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**"It's incredible what has happened from Fr. Bob's thought of opening a boys' home to what the organization is today," Cory said.**

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life stories, and in learning about the founder Rev. Robert Mize Jr.'s philosophies around caring for youth.

"I probably learned more from them than they learned from me," Cory said. "We had 26 boys, and we had about seven counselors who actually worked with the kids, in addition to the support staff and a director. Each counselor would carry a caseload of about four to six kids."

Along with writing treatment plans and doing counseling, Cory and the other counselors would do chores with the youth and participate in activities. Cory, who grew up on a farm, was almost immediately put



*Cory Rathbun*

he went around to a lot of the adult prisons, or county jails, and picked kids up out of there. Most of those kids were offenders to some degree," Cory said. "With the Therapy in Christ, and the forgiveness, it was like, when kids came in, they started over and no matter what they had done or what had been done to them, they were starting over, and nobody held that against them."

The core of supporting youth based out of love and forgiveness may not have changed much over the years, but Cory was proud of the fact that Saint Francis staff constantly were learning and challenging themselves to change and grow as the world's understanding of trauma and treatment changed.

"The residential programs were always on the cutting edge, even when I started," Cory said. "We were the only residential program in Kansas that was accredited by The Joint Commission at the time, and we just had an outstanding research department. Saint Francis was very hard to get into because we were always full, always had a waiting list, and we would take



*Counterclockwise from bottom right: Cory Rathbun, Fr. Bob Mize, Elizabeth Campbell, Fr. Rick Simpson, Fr. Bob's driver, and Eric Muehleissen July 1995.*

kids from all over the United States at that point."

Cory said fewer than 30 to 40% of youth in the residential were from Kansas early in his career. Today, most of the youth in the residential facilities are from Kansas.

Much has changed for the positive over the years, as more was learned about how to be effective in caring for children. "Knowledge about treating trauma, about the importance of treating not just the child but the family, and about the importance of getting youth into a homelike setting, rather than a residential setting, all grew in recent decades," Cory said.

For Cory, the work remained about doing what is best for children and

families. It never really occurred to him to leave this field and seek employment elsewhere.

"It's helping people," he said of his motivation. "I think that's just kind of what I was wired to do, to be in this field someplace. I'm glad I ended up at Saint Francis.

"It's incredible what has happened from Fr. Bob's thought of opening a boys' home to what the organization is today," Cory added. "Fr. Bobby (Smith) has done a fantastic job of continuing with the mission of Saint Francis. I think Saint Francis is in a very good position, and I'm looking forward to seeing its continued growth."

# The Saint Francis Foundation Marks its Own Anniversary

The Very Reverend Robert N. Smith realized early into his tenure that if Saint Francis hoped to continue the legacy of Fr. Bob Mize Jr., let alone grow into being a leader in transforming lives and systems, then the ministry would have to get serious about fundraising. As dean, president, and CEO, he not only led a venerable and long-lived Episcopal ministry but also a modern child and family services nonprofit contracted by the State of Kansas, from which a significant portion of the organization's revenue originated. If Saint Francis hoped to serve more people, provide more programs, and share its abundant expertise with national and international partners, then it would have to diversify its revenue streams and build more relationships.

"In conversations Fr. Bobby had with the Board of Directors about ways to diversify revenue, one of the decisions made was to become more involved with philanthropy," said The Very Reverend David Hodges, Foundation president. "Saint Francis needed a structure through which to re-engage with longtime donors and cultivate relationships with new donors. We also wanted to re-establish our historic connection with the Episcopal Church. So, I was asked to come to Saint Francis and put together The Foundation."

As an Episcopal priest, Fr. David had served as rector of two large



**Fr. David Hodges**  
Chief Development Officer  
President of The Saint  
Francis Foundation

congregations in North Carolina and had also worked in fundraising and external affairs. He brought ample leadership and experience to the task of building a Foundation capable of supporting the Saint Francis mission.

"When I arrived, there were limited fundraising activities going on," said Fr. David. "There were direct mail appeals and some work being done in planned giving, but not the type of fundraising we do now."

Incorporated on Sept. 27, 2016, The Saint Francis Foundation currently operates as a separate 501(3)(b), and is staffed by Fr. David, who serves as chief development officer for Saint Francis Ministries and as president of The Foundation; Director of Development Marty Kramer; Associate Director of Development Michelle Peck; Senior Advisor for Church Relations The Very Reverend Chas Marks; and additional support staff. In addition to fundraising and church relations, Fr. David also considers



**Martin Kramer**  
Director of Development



**Michelle Peck**  
Associate Director of  
Development

community relations as vital to the work of The Foundation, especially as Saint Francis expands services in states like Texas, Nebraska, and Arkansas.

"Our work makes it essential that we engage with the community, whether through civic organizations, businesses, churches, or individuals, so they can get to know who we are and learn about the work and ministry of Saint Francis," he said.

Just as essential is church relations, and the reason is two-fold.

"One of the things I learned when I came to Saint Francis — and that our fundraisers discovered when they began re-establishing contacts with former donors — was that one of the reasons people began making gifts was because a priest from Saint Francis had come to their parish and talked about Saint Francis," Fr. David said. "That's how they heard about Saint Francis. That told us that there was an opportunity to make connections with people within the



Episcopal Church and even within other churches.”

According to Fr. David, the ministry’s connection to the Episcopal Church also creates a unique opportunity for Saint Francis to serve as a resource for the wider church.

“Because of our size, our scope, our people, and our expertise, we feel we have something to offer. It also enables us to form partnerships with other organizations that have a natural connection to the Episcopal Church. We can support the Church in its mission, while serving our own.”

This connection makes it possible for both Saint Francis Ministries and the Foundation to live into being “the Church in the world,” something Fr. David finds especially appealing.

“When we say we provide healing and hope to children and families, I really believe that,” he said. “We are living the Gospel imperative of hope. When we talk about the transformation of lives and systems, we are doing things that are unique, cutting edge, and impactful. The Foundation gives us the opportunity to engage with people, to share our mission with them, and to give them an opportunity to participate in ways that are meaningful and helpful to people.”



Learn more about the Saint Francis Foundation and ways you can support the Saint Francis mission by visiting [SaintFrancisMinistries.org/foundation](http://SaintFrancisMinistries.org/foundation).

## “Helping one kid get well is priceless.”

Black Chaffe, a retired businessman in Louisiana, was hesitant to talk about why he has supported the work and mission of Saint Francis Ministries for 36 years. Not because he doesn’t believe in his decision to give, but because he felt as if there was no unique story behind his gifts.

“Black’s simple statement incorporates all that Saint Francis Ministries sets out to do,” said Fr. David.



Nancy and Black Chaffe

“We are here to provide services to children and families who are struggling, to meet them wherever they are, to make every effort to keep families together and make systemic changes,” he said.

Black shares a personal story from his family, of two young people who lost their way in substance use and died much too soon. With that in his background, he became familiar with the important work Saint Francis was doing through its Home for Boys.

Throughout the years, he’s watched the organization expand, keeping up through mailed communications and an occasional opportunity to talk with Foundation staff.

“I liked what I saw. I like that we would take care of kids,” Black said. “My affiliation with Saint Francis is really understanding the work that you do for young men and now young women, who have troubles in their lives that they need to work through. You have a dedicated staff that seems to get good results from that, and it has grown a great deal.

“We are proud to support Saint Francis,” Black said.

Just as helping one child is a priceless gift, so is the opportunity to meet people like Black and Nancy who give not just dollars, but prayers and caring.

“Support for Saint Francis Ministries comes in many ways, through prayer, generous hearts, and a focus on healing,” Fr. David said. “Just as our message for our 75th anniversary says, we were founded on the principles of healing and we move forward every single day by offering hope. We are grateful for those who support our national and international work.”

During this time of celebration, we want to recognize those donors who have supported Saint Francis over the long haul, our "Legacy Society":



## 50 YEARS

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Col. Joseph Brown  
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The Muchnic Foundation - Atchison, KS

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 The Rt. Rev. and Mrs. R. Stewart Wood, Jr.  
 Mr. Roger and Mrs. Gwendolyn Wood †  
 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Woodford  
 Mr. Frederick and Mrs. Susette Wortmann  
 Mr. William and Mrs. Mary Young

## CHURCHES

Christ Episcopal Church - Yankton, SD  
 Episcopal Diocese of Western Kansas  
 St. Francis Episcopal Church -  
 Menomonee Falls, WI  
 St. Peter's Episcopal Church - Sheridan, WY  
 Trinity Episcopal Church - Norfolk, NE  
 Trinity on the Hill Episcopal Church -  
 Los Alamos, NM  
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church - Marshalltown, IA

## BUSINESSES & FOUNDATIONS

Frisbie Construction Co Inc - Gypsum, KS  
 Helen Adams Hamilton Endowment Fund -  
 Hutchinson, KS  
 Margaret Marie Graf Foundation



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## Saint Francis Introduces 75th Anniversary Website

As Saint Francis celebrates 75 years of healing and hope, there is so much more we want to share. With that in mind we unveiled ForwardInHope.org, a new website full of the history of Saint Francis, extensive biographical information about Fr. Bob, a deeper look at our past presidents, interviews with long-term employees, and so much more!

What began more than seven decades ago as a home for troubled boys has become a ministry providing programs and services to boys and girls, adults with intellectual disabilities, survivors of sex trafficking, refugees from violence and oppression, and at-risk families in six U.S. states and four Central American countries.

Visitors to the new website will see more information and topics explored throughout the year – and beyond!

Please visit [www.ForwardInHope.org](http://www.ForwardInHope.org) and help us celebrate!

