



ABIGAIL E. KELLER  
FOUNDATION

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Abigail E. Keller Foundation Expands Access to Pediatric Respite and Hospice Care in Central Texas

**AUSTIN, Texas, January 20, 2025** –The [Abigail E. Keller Foundation](#) (AEKF) is advancing its mission to support medically fragile and terminally ill children and their families with the launch of a Management Services Organization (MSO). With the guidance and direction from [Husch Blackwell](#) and funding from the [Michael & Susan Dell Foundation](#), the MSO will provide non-clinical management and administrative services to providers caring for these vulnerable populations. It will also help to accelerate the development of the future Abbey House, the first dedicated pediatric respite and hospice facility in Texas.

“This support brings us one step closer to making Abbey House a reality,” said [Melissa Keller](#), co-founder of the Abigail E. Keller Foundation. “It lays the foundation we need to build infrastructure and drive our mission forward, providing hope and healing for families across Texas.”

The Abbey House will serve as a stand-alone facility that delivers pediatric respite and hospice services with compassionate, skilled care, ensuring that families in Texas receive the support they desperately need. Texas currently lacks a dedicated, non-hospital pediatric respite and hospice facility, leaving families with very limited options for their children’s complex medical needs and end-of-life care. The Abbey House will address this critical gap, offering essential relief for families navigating these challenges.

Currently, the AEKF supports a very vulnerable population that has been historically overlooked by offering financial grants and holistic support throughout their journey.

An MSO will help establish an official collaboration between the AEKF and Dell Children's Medical Center, support current hospice needs, and test operational effectiveness, prior to the launch of the larger Abbey House project.

"We are hopeful that the AEKF's MSO will be the catalyst that we need to facilitate providing these needed community services," says Deb Brown, MHA, BSN, RN, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Dell Children's Medical Center.

## **Impact and Urgency**

Since its founding in 2019, the Abigail E. Keller Foundation has provided more than \$400,000 in grants and direct support to 165 families in Central Texas. With more than 85,000 children in Texas living with life-limiting illnesses, the need for a dedicated respite and hospice center is urgent. Currently, only seven pediatric respite and hospice homes exist in the United States, according to [Children's Respite Homes in America](#). By comparison, the United Kingdom, with one-fifth of the U.S. population, operates more than 54 such facilities.

### Fast Facts About Pediatric Respite and Hospice Care:

- **Big Picture:** The concept of pediatric respite and hospice care began in the UK in the early 1980s. While the UK now has over 54 such homes, the U.S. only has seven, despite having a population five times larger. That means we should have at least **266 homes already** – yet there are **only a handful**.
- **National Gap:** Approximately 1 million children in the United States have chronic, complex medical conditions, yet the number of facilities providing pediatric respite and hospice care is drastically inadequate.
- **State Need:** In Texas, approximately 85,000 children have life-limiting conditions. *Central Texas alone has over 7,000 qualifying children, which translates to the need for over a 100-bed center.*

*(ref. National Center for Pediatric Palliative Care Homes)*

### **About the Abigail E. Keller Foundation:**

Founded in 2019 in memory of Abigail E. Keller, the Abigail E. Keller Foundation supports families of medically fragile and terminally ill children. The organization provides financial assistance, emotional support, and advocacy to help families navigate the complexities of caregiving. The foundation is spearheading the design and development of Abbey House, Texas's first non-hospital pediatric respite and hospice home. For more information, visit [www.aekellerfoundation.org](http://www.aekellerfoundation.org).