

On other occasions, the home serves as a place to stay for a child whose family is going through a difficult time, anything from a parent with an addiction to parents and children who just can't get along. There are roughly 180 youth at the Waco campus of Methodist Children's Home. The average length of stay is 18 months.

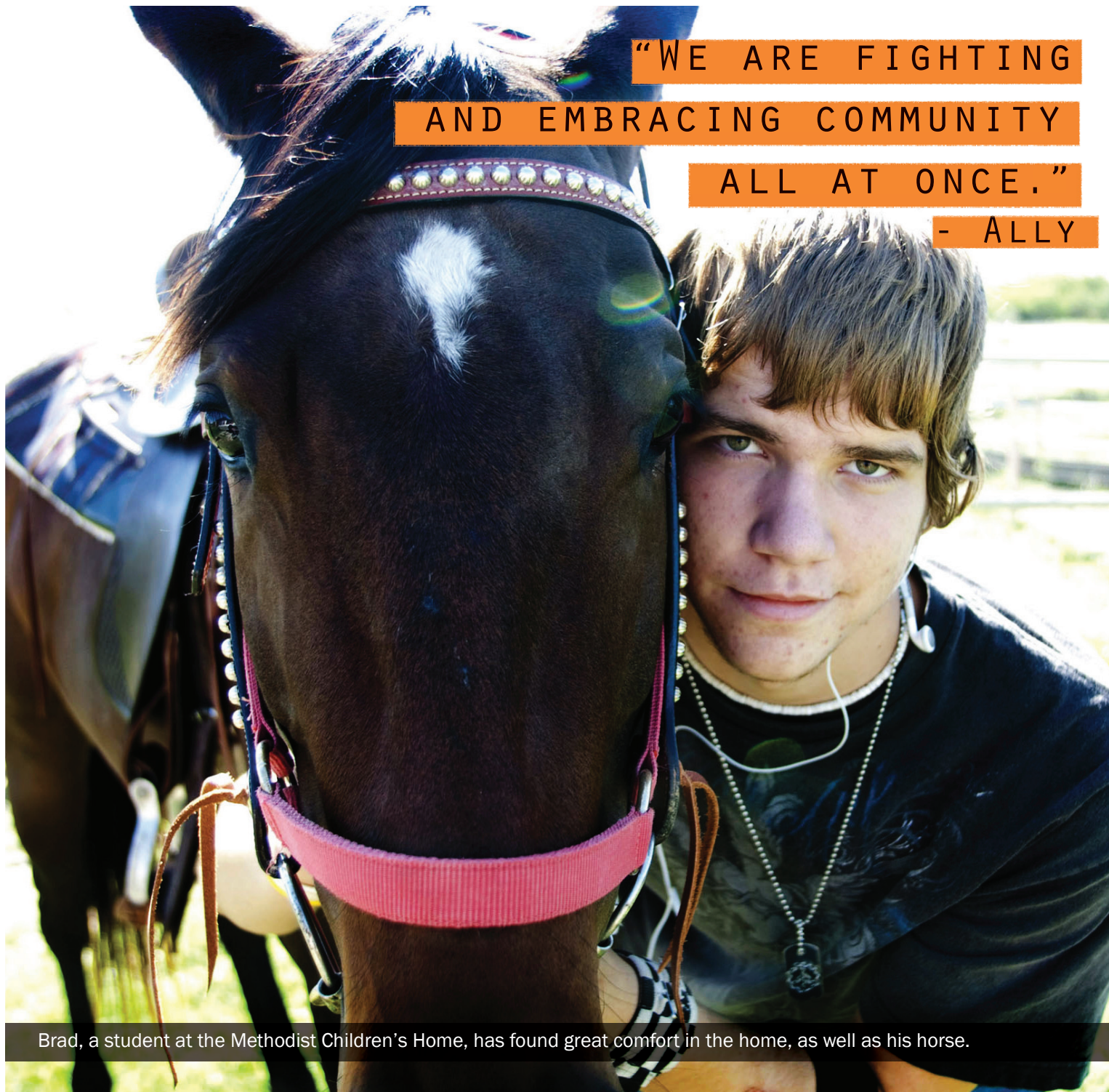
Carrie Anderson, the community relations officer, explained a bit about how the home works with families, and with the children as individuals.

"If there's hope for redemption in the family unit, we

strive for that. But we also recognize that there are healthy relationships and there are unhealthy relationships," she said. "A big part of what we do is helping the children realize what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like."

The youth at MCH are all a bit like the small group of teens learning to ride that day. Some have conquered their obstacles and eagerly await their chance to climb back on the horse. Others have reservations, unsure of how to approach things that are unfamiliar. In time, they may grow and gain the confidence they need to ride, too.

"WE ARE FIGHTING  
AND EMBRACING COMMUNITY  
ALL AT ONCE."  
- ALLY



Brad, a student at the Methodist Children's Home, has found great comfort in the home, as well as his horse.

poor on  
purpose



/ STORY BY CHAD SHANKS  
/ PHOTOS BY SHANNA TAYLOR

Six friends sit together outside of Common Grounds on a damp and drizzly evening. The table's overhead umbrella keeps them dry as they discuss theology and the true meaning of Christian community, conversation foreign to most university coffee shops, but typical at Baylor.

A woman emerges from the darkness to briefly interrupt them, her black hair matted to her head, her deep wrinkles evidence she has seen better days. Her plea begins like most, with a tearful tale of misfortune followed by a passionate request for the funds to get her wherever she happened to be going.

The six friends, mostly 2009 Baylor graduates, appear to be stereotypical college students with their parents' money to burn and a strong sense of sympathy.

She moves on without receiving any money, only the names of multiple Waco organizations that could provide her assistance.

Would she have saved her breath if she had known the six she solicited were intentionally living well below the poverty line?

/ PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN GREEN & CASSIE MILLS