



Mended
Little
Hearts

Finally Meeting Face-to-Face

by Jon Caswell

Mended *Little Hearts* is growing. Just a couple of years ago, there were only 12 groups; today there are 24 — enough to have their own meeting at this year’s convention in San Antonio. Nineteen coordinators from across the country got together on Friday night followed by an all-day workshop on Saturday.

“It was the first time many of us had met face-to-face,” said Amanda Eason, Mended *Little Hearts* National Committee Chair. “Although we have ongoing email contact, this was the first time to put a face with the name. We started bonding right away.”

Four of the coordinators brought their husbands to the conference, mostly to babysit.

After dinner on Friday night and all day Saturday, they went through the visiting, coordinator’s and treasurer’s manuals — a bit more, perhaps, than the standard Mended Hearts workshop.

“It was the first unified training these coordinators had received,” Amanda said. “We also had a roundtable discussion of best practices. Several coordinators brought collateral material, like different marketing materials, so

others could see what they were doing.” Items included canvas tote bags to hold “care packages”; ribbon car magnets that said Mended *Little Hearts*; also bears and T-shirts for members.

The Executive Committee also spent part of Saturday with the coordinators.

That evening the coordinators sat together at the Mended Hearts kick-off fiesta dinner. “Because MLH is a program of MHI, I think it’s important that we connect with them, and this was a good opportunity for that. Sometimes it’s difficult to feel connected,” Amanda said. “I also think it’s good for the MHI members to see what we are all about. Several of our coordinators had brought their families, and there were six little boys there, and six boys can make a big presence.”

The next morning, which was the start of the MHI convention, coordinators went to their regional meetings, and all the families left on Sunday.

Wendy Meyer is the Iowa coordinator, and San Antonio was her first time to meet with other coordinators. “The conference was a wonderful time of getting together and sharing ideas,” she said. “It was very helpful to see what the other groups are doing for meetings and activities, and especially fundraising. And building relationships — we have so many special people involved in MLH! It was great to meet some of them.”



Some MLH coordinators met for the first time



19 coordinators enjoyed time with President Elbert



First-ever children’s table at the welcome dinner

“Although we have ongoing email contact, this was the first time to put a face with the name. We started bonding right away.”

~ Amanda Eason



Carlie McCorvey coordinates the Fresno, California group. “We’ve had a group for four years, and I still learned a lot about how to set up an efficient group. The manuals were exceptionally helpful, and I know our group will be implementing some of the ideas we got. Not only did we all bond as heart moms, we also shared tips on how to improve our groups. There were so many great ideas and inspirational people. It was great to feel part of a larger family.”

Jodi Lemacks, National Program Coordinator, also attended and helped to plan the conference. She has big plans: “I see MLH doing many things this year. First, we are growing; people contact me every week about starting groups. Second, we are working hard to provide more national resources and support for the groups and the coordinators. Included in this is updating/revamping our brochure, flyer and our website. Third, we are working to raise funds for MLH on a national level so that we have the resources to do the things that our groups need. Fourth, we are working on better communication with our groups so that we know what they need, and they know what we are doing. Fifth, we are working to raise awareness and to provide good services to the groups that will help create awareness. For example, MLH will have its own branded CarePage as of the end of October, and American Medical ID is working with us to provide discounted medical IDs and to help us raise money.” ❤️



Creative fundraising



Mike Eason with sons Jacob (l) and Noah (r)

Little Singer, Big Heart

At this year’s convention in the heart of Texas, MHI members got a rare treat — one of their own singing “Deep in the Heart of Texas.”

Andrew Adams may only be six years old, but he is an honorary member of Chapter 245 in Conroe, Texas.

When Andrew was born in June 2001, he weighed 1½ lbs. and had several medical problems. “I spent my first four months in the hospital,” he said, “and when I was released, I weighed 4 lbs. and went to live with my grandfather and great aunt.”

Andrew’s grandfather is Richard Chelton, president of Chapter 245.

“The first two years of my life I had a big challenge with lung, stomach and heart problems. First I had to strengthen my lungs with breathing treatments and oxygen; next I had to try to control a severe reflux problem with medication.”



Andrew won everyone’s heart when he sang “Deep in the Heart of Texas” at the convention.

Before his first birthday, doctors discovered he had only one upper chamber in his heart. The surgery to correct that, when he was 17 months old, involved taking his heart out of his chest and fashioning a wall out of other heart tissue to divide the upper

chamber into two. It was only the second time such an operation had ever been performed. Since then he’s had five other surgeries, but nothing else involving his heart.

Andrew started singing when he was only three years old, learning nursery rhymes at first. “He was only three when he asked our preacher if he could sing ‘The Battle Hymn of the Republic’ in church on the 4th of July,” said grandfather Richard, age 70, who had a triple bypass in 1999. “He had learned the song off a tape we had.”

Since then he’s sung at church several more times and at the Houston Heart Ball for the past three years. Just recently he asked his “Poppy” for the words to the “Star Spangled Banner.”

Andrew is a first grader this year and brought home all 99s or 100s on his first report card. Although he’s about 10 lbs. underweight, Richard says he’s full of vim and vigor, is always happy and wants to be a pediatrician when he grows up. “I’m sure he’ll make it,” Richard said. “He’s always asking doctors and nurses medical questions.”