

Mercy for teen parents

While **Acts of Love** takes care of the children, young parents stay in school

By Katie Evans
Director, Acts of Love

ACTS of Love Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) in Leander is a 2018-20 LWML Texas District mission grant recipient. ACTS of Love provides free childcare for children (ages 0-2) of teen-parents, helping the parents continue their education and build a positive foundation for their new family.

The members of ACTS Church Leander saw a need in their community. Teen parents in Leander and Liberty Hill had no access to free childcare, as is often provided by school districts. As a result, many teen-parents were forced to make the decision to drop out of high school and care for their baby or struggle to find affordable, quality care. Those choosing to drop out face the difficult task of finding employment that will keep them above the poverty level.

With help from ACTS of Love, these same students are now able to graduate high school and have more opportunities for higher education. ACTS of Love is currently in its fourth school year, having served more than 30 teen-parent families, helped 19 teen-parents graduate and witnessed six of those graduates pursue higher education.

Following is a testimony from a family that we have the privilege to work with:

“ACTS of Love has given me the opportunity to reach toward my dreams that seemed impossible when I first became a teen parent. With their help, I have been able to finish high school knowing Amberlynn is in a safe place with great people meeting her needs. ...[The staff] supports my natural way of raising Amberlynn, like breastfeeding and baby-led weaning. Not only are they there for my daughter, but for Aaron and I as well. They have given us so much support and knowledge.

“Katie guides us with parenting and higher education information that we need to better support our family. She has helped me gather college information and build rapport with the admissions team at the university that I am very interested in attending. She has also built my confidence in continuing my education, with a little one, after high school. ACTS of Love has made sure there are no needs left uncovered.”

While daily childcare is a much-needed blessing to our families, ACTS of Love is able to provide so much more. At ACTS of Love, we have created a place just for teen-parents. Our center is free of judgement and full of love. We are here to support teen-parent families in many ways as they work to build a positive future for their new family.

We provide access to food, clothing and other needed baby items, access to exclusive scholarships at Concordia University Texas, and loving support that families need to succeed.

ACTS of Love ECEC has a partnership with the local Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Once a family ages out of ACTS of Love, they are able to transition to these Head Start programs to continue care until the child enters kindergarten. The partnership between ACTS of Love and Head Start provides additional funding for teacher salaries and classroom supplies. ACTS of Love is grateful of the support of LWML Texas District as we provide opportunities to learn about and experience God's love daily with the families we serve.

If you would like more information about ACTS of Love ECEC, you can check out their websites:

- actsofloveecec.com
- facebook.com/ACTSofLoveECEC