



For Immediate Release

Contact: Sarah Steffes  
Telephone: 405-530-2081  
Cell: 405-215-1400  
Email: sarah.steffes@circleofcare.org

## WOODWARD ICON RALLIES LOCAL SUPPORT FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

Bob Jones was born in early summer of 1948 to a family in north central Oklahoma. At approximately two years of age, both of his parents died. Bob and his older sibling were placed in state custody, in separate orphanages. He and his sister were eventually adopted by separate families. Bob was six when he was chosen by Cecil and Mildred Jones to be their only son. He was separated from his sister at such a young age, he did not know she existed. Cecil and Mildred also did not know about Bob's sibling. He was not made aware of his sister until he was 18. They eventually met, but have never bonded in the way siblings should.

Currently in Oklahoma only 65% of sibling groups of 3 or more are able to stay together in foster care. Lack of space and other resources prevent otherwise willing foster parents from accepting more than 1 or 2 children at a time.

When it was announced at Woodward First United Methodist Church that the Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care wanted to do something about keeping more siblings together in foster care, Bob felt compelled to get involved.

Circle of Care is a statewide foster care agency contracted by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to increase the number of foster parents. The agency has embarked upon a campaign to build 8 large custom single family foster homes across the state for this purpose. Woodward First UMC has generously donated three acres of land adjacent to their church to accommodate two homes and clubhouse. First United Methodist Church in Alva is also raising funds to build one home for children in Woods County. Up to six children can live in each home with foster parents. The clubhouse will be used for recruiting, training and supporting foster parents, not only for that site, but throughout Western Oklahoma.

Bob grew up on his adopted family's farm near Hollis, Oklahoma, and eventually went to butchering school and then served in the United States Air Force. Upon returning from service in North Africa, he was stationed at Altus Air Force Base and began his career with United Supermarkets as a butcher. He quickly moved up the ladder at United to department manager. He worked for United for 43 years, before retiring in 2013. While at United, Bob developed a recipe for a seasoning blend used on steaks, burgers, chicken and pork. Soon, he had customers specifically requesting the blend on the meats, wanting to buy it in bulk.



Bob with his wife, Ronda, developed the recipe to be sold in bottles in bulk for use in meat markets and restaurants. Bob's Gourmet Spice Company was born in 2013. They started with Bob's Gourmet Spice and Hunter's Cajun Seasoning. Beginning November, 2017, there will be an additional four blends. United and Homeland stores throughout Western Oklahoma currently carry the product and with the new blends, they are hoping to be in many other locations. Bob's Gourmet Spice Co. is very grateful to United/HAC, Inc. for allowing this small company to be a part of their line-up of grocery items.

In looking back, Bob knows and appreciates how lucky he was to have been placed with Cecil and Mildred. He stated, "They reared me to be an honorable and god-fearing man. They loved me beyond measure." Even so, his personal loss of sibling connection inspires him to take action to protect other children from the additional, and unnecessary, trauma of losing a sibling bond.

The goal is to raise \$400,000 to match Circle of Care's investment in the Woodward site. Bob has made a \$1,000 commitment. He is challenging other local businesses and community members to match his \$1,000 gift with one of their own to make this vision a reality. Bob emphasized, "Quality foster care is imperative, and it is essential to keep brothers and sisters together."

*Circle of Care's mission is to provide help, healing and hope to children and families in crisis to ensure a safe, healthy and spiritual future. For more information or to make a donation, contact Sarah Steffes at [sarah.steffes@circleofcare.org](mailto:sarah.steffes@circleofcare.org) or visit [legacy.circleofcare.org](http://legacy.circleofcare.org).*



**Bob Jones and Rev. Shannon Davis of Woodward 1st UMC**