

August 2025



Tee Up for a Cause: Three Months to Go!

The countdown is on—just three months until our *Driving Futures Golf Tournament* tees off on Tuesday, October 28th at Highland Pines!

We're swinging into high gear and calling on golfers, sponsors, and supporters to join us in changing lives—one shot at a time.

This isn't just a round of golf. It's your chance to be part of a mission that transforms futures for young adults aging out of foster care.

Spots are filling fast—
don't miss your shot to make a difference!



**Sign up to Sponsor or Play
Here**

Petra Cares Board Retreat: Vision, Purpose, and the Road Ahead

On July 26–27, the Petra Cares Board of Directors gathered at Lost Pines in Bastrop, Texas for a powerful weekend of reflection, planning, and bold vision casting. United by our mission to serve vulnerable young adults aging out of the foster care system, we spent intentional time creating a roadmap for the future of Petra Cares—not just in Greater Houston, but across the country.

Led by Petra Cares Board Vice President Sam Diaz, the team worked through the Vision and Traction Organizer (VTO), a dynamic strategic planning tool that helped us define and refine key elements of our growth:

- Our Core Values
- Our unwavering Core Focus
- Our 10-Year Target
- A bold and actionable 3-Year Picture
- And a fresh, strategic approach to Marketing and Outreach

Together, we asked the big questions:

Who do we serve? How can we serve more? How do we ensure that every young person leaving the foster care system has access to the opportunity, purpose, and support they deserve?

We left with clear direction and renewed energy—and a shared belief that with God's guidance and the support of our community, Petra Cares will expand its impact and unlock purpose for even more young lives, both in Texas and beyond.

This retreat wasn't just about planning—it was about faith, vision,

and the conviction that every life matters. The future is bright, and we're just getting started.

Thank you to our Board of Directors for their time, treasure and talent!





Petra Cares Board of Directors from L to R, Vice President -Sam Diaz, Brady Schmidt, Secretary - JoVonna Hill, Founder and Board President Arnold Gacita, Executive Director Brian Meza, Treasurer- Ken Ballard and Eric Merchant.

Tool Time: Delivering the Tools for Success

We love celebrating milestones—and few are as meaningful as Tool Time! This month, we had the joy of delivering full toolkits to three graduates at their new places of employment. These tools are more than just equipment—they're a symbol of the hard work, growth, and bright future ahead for our students.

Congratulations to Ryan Perez at Mac Haik Toyota, Jefferson Washington at Mac Haik Ford and Desmond Parnell at Mac Haik CDJR on beginning your careers with confidence and the tools to succeed!

A heartfelt thank you to one of our Drivers, Roberto Olivares for taking the time to drive and personally deliver these toolkits. Your commitment helps make moments like these possible—and memorable.







Cohort #12 Begins August 25: Ten More Lives, Ten New Journeys

We're thrilled to announce that Cohort #12 of the Petra Cares Automotive Training Program begins on August 25th and will run through October 16th. This fall, we'll welcome ten new students— young adults who are ready to take the first step toward a stable career, supportive community, and a future full of possibility.

Each new cohort brings a wave of hope and energy to our mission. These ten students are not just joining a program; they are stepping into a network of wraparound support, mentorship, and opportunity. At Petra Cares, we believe in unlocking purpose for young people who have faced some of life's most difficult challenges—many of whom have experienced the foster care system, homelessness, or economic hardship.

The need is urgent. Every year in Texas alone, nearly 1,200 youth age out of the foster care system. Nationwide, less than 3% of youth who age out of care will earn a college degree. Without intervention, too many fall through the cracks.

That's why this work matters. Cohort #12 represents ten lives we can help change—and ten families we can help prevent from repeating cycles of instability. With your support, we continue to build futures filled with dignity, purpose, and stability.

Stay tuned for introductions to our new students later this month, and follow their journey as they train, grow, and prepare to launch careers in the automotive industry. The impact of this work reaches far beyond the classroom—it changes generations to come.



Your Impact in Action

Total Students Served:
115

Graduation Rate:
72%

Placement Rate:
78%



Petra Cares Staff

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