



About The Home

The Home for Little Wanderers is a nationally renowned, private, non-profit child and family service agency. It has been part of the Massachusetts landscape for over 200 years, making it the oldest agency of its kind in the nation and one of the largest in New England. Originally founded as a orphanage in 1799 (see [history](#) for more details), The Home today plays a leadership role in delivering services to thousands of children and families each year through a system of residential, community-based and prevention [programs](#), direct care services, and [advocacy](#).

Our mission is to ensure the healthy behavioral, emotional, social and educational development of children and families living in at-risk circumstances. The Home's work is guided by a belief in the right of all children to be safe, nurtured and developed to reach their full potential. Although seemingly insurmountable obstacles are sometimes placed in their way, children's resilience combined with the support of caring adults can make anything possible.

New England Home for Little Wanderers (NEHLW)

NEHLW was founded in 1865 by 10 Boston area businessmen with an original goal of caring for children who had been orphaned and left homeless by the Civil War. NEHLW was not meant to become a permanent residence for these children, but rather to serve as a way station where they could prepare for a new life.

Sometimes that new life was found in families outside of the Boston area - even as far removed as the Midwest.

Using trains to transport the children to their new homes, the NEHLW thus became a part of the famous [Orphan Train](#) movement.



The imposing facade of the New England Home for Little Wanderers in 1914.

WISH LIST for shoebox care packages:

I hope the kids enjoy putting together the care packages! Below is a list of items that we recommend:

- Hygienic products (deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hair brushes, body wash, etc.)
- Stickers
- Journals or notepads
- Small arts/crafts
- Crossword puzzles, Sudoku pads, etc.
- Colored pencils, crayons, markers