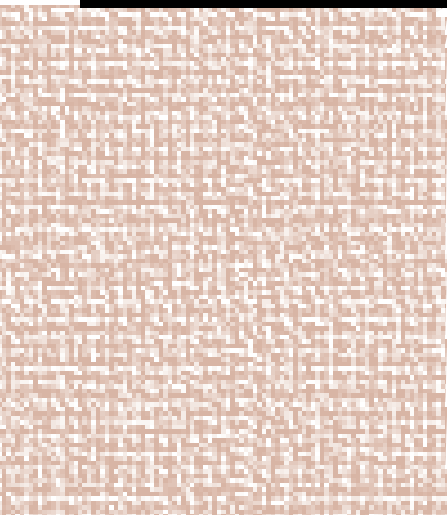


BECAUSE
these
children have
love, care, and
understanding,
they have
futures they can
call their own.



Looking to the Future

In the coming year, PRS will try several initiatives to improve the way it provides services:

■ Thanks to a significant amount of new funding by the Texas Legislature, PRS will hire additional frontline staff to meet the needs of children and vulnerable adults. By the beginning of Fiscal Year 1998, about 300 staff will have been hired and placed in parts of the state where their assistance is needed.

■ In 1997, the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission recommended to the Texas Legislature that PRS measure the quality

of care provided to foster children. The recommendation also stated that the agency should implement a competitive procurement pilot for foster care services to see if private sector oversight can result in better care of children at less cost.

■ During the 1997 session, the Texas Legislature passed a comprehensive change to the Texas Family Code that will reduce barriers to adoption and expedite the process for finding permanent homes for children who need loving families. Beginning in January 1998, the agency will lead an initiative that will resolve cases of children who come into the state's care within 12

months with the possibility of one court-ordered six-month extension. The agency will also work to increase the number of children who are safe from abuse and neglect and can remain in their homes.

■ With the implementation of its new automation system, the agency has examined the way in which information and data has been collected and measured over the years. The agency has put a lot of effort into establishing data definitions, and improving the data's consistency, accuracy, and accessibility. During the next year, PRS will further refine and expand these efforts to better measure performance and budget needs.

■ Increased demand for funding in recent years has forced the State of Texas to require all state agencies to develop strategic budgeting plans that include missions, goals, and objectives that could be evaluated by outcome, output, and efficiency performance measures. The agency's executive director invited the State Auditor's Office to assist PRS in 1997. During the next year, the agency will implement recommendations for improvement made by the State Auditor's Office. ■