

# Rome News-Tribune

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Weather: Partly sunny. High near 72. C6

## Restoration Rome promotes foster care

● Bishop Aaron Blake says the organization could become a national model on how to curb the foster care crisis.

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A Texas-based church leader encouraged locals in their plan to combat systemic issues which have resulted in a foster care crisis in this county.

Bishop Aaron Blake told the Rome Rotary Club he applauds Restoration Rome's efforts to build a national model to change the plight of half a million children in foster care



Doug Walker / RN-T

Bishop Aaron Blake tells Rome Rotary Club members something magical is happening in Rome with respect to the efforts of Restoration Rome in combating the foster care crisis.

across the U.S. Building that plan is the focus of the Homes of Hope program at the Forum River Center on Thursday. Prior to speaking at that

event, Blake told Rotary members of the Stand Sunday movement to provide homes and hope to children in the foster care system.

Stand Sunday started with his Dallas suburban church 17 years ago when he and his wife Mary took six boys into their home.

"I stood up on the second Sunday in November and asked our church if they would stand with me on behalf of the children that have been abused, abandoned and neglected in the foster care system," Blake said.

The program grew so that within a few short years he had more families waiting for children than children waiting for families.

Please see **CARE A2**

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Restoration Rome co-founder Jeff Mauer says the organization based at the old Southeast Elementary School is bringing a gold standard of collaborative efforts to Rome in terms of dealing with the crisis in foster care.

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"But with intervention, when a community steps up, that is a break in the cycle perpetuated in our communities for those who suffer from abuse and neglect," said Blake. He said he expects great things to come out of the Homes for Hope conference.

"From now on, all roads are going

to lead to Rome. What is happening here, guys, I have not seen anywhere," Blake said. "I haven't seen such a comprehensive program, the vision that they have here."

"We are serious about what we're doing. This comprehensive model is new. We are bringing a gold standard to Rome," Restoration Rome's Jeff Mauer told Rotary. "We haven't even built it yet. But we cannot do it without y'all's support."