



\$300,000
MATCHING GIFT
CHALLENGE

DOUBLE YOUR GIFT
 Your gift is matched dollar for dollar
 between now and January 31, 2025.



Charity & Children

The historic publication of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina—first to tell the story since 1887.

     @bchfamily

October 2024

Issue 8

Volume 137

Family gives brothers hope

Couple brings faith, fostering,
 and family together



Chris and Lindsay Ciufo (pronounced Chew-fo) always planned for their home to be filled with children. It is appropriate that their recent professional photos were taken against the Western North Carolina skyline where they live as the vastness of the mountains echoes both the size of the eight-member family as well as the hearts of Chris and Lindsay.

The couple have four biological children and two brothers that they fostered and have now adopted through the ministry of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) and the support of Cowee Baptist, their home church in Franklin, NC.

"God has blessed us mightily with six children," shares Chris, "and two of them in a way that we never saw coming." *(Continued on page 5.)*

You can **SHARE HOPE THIS CHRISTMAS** by making purchases from our

GIFT CATALOG INSERT



See inside to shop from 25+ gifts that will make a difference in the lives of Baptist Children's Homes' boys and girls, special needs adults, mothers and all those we serve. Use the included order form or scan the QR code to shop online.



Kathy Blackwell remembered for generous spirit

By Jim Edminson, Editor

Mary Catherine (Kathy) Kanipe Blackwell, wife of Dr. Michael C. Blackwell, Sr., died Wednesday, September 18 at age 78. A devoted wife, mother, and grandmother, Blackwell was fiercely loyal to family and friends and was an advocate for those struggling beneath the weight of hardship and despair. Her faith guided a life-long commitment to partnering in ministry with her husband who served Baptists in multiple church ministries and as president of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) for 40 years.

Kathy Blackwell was born on Monday, November 5, 1945 in Winston-Salem to Mildred and Jack Kanipe. She met the love of her life, Michael, in the summer of 1965 while both worked at Charlotte radio station Big WAYS. She often recalled, "Michael and I met over the Xerox machine."

The couple married on Saturday, August 12, 1967, and recently celebrated 57 years together. The inscription in their wedding bands reads: "Each for the other and both for God."

Blackwell is the mother of their children, Julie and Michael, Jr., and the proud grandmother of Gabriella Curtis and Sam Curtis. She was a passionate educator and learner, receiving a two-year secretarial science degree from Brevard College and a degree in psychology from High Point University.

After moving to Thomasville in 1983, Kathy Blackwell's attention turned to undergirding her husband's work on behalf of children and families. She often expressed her love for the children, families, and residents BCH serves and for the staff who give of themselves in ministry. This generous spirit was indicative of her life well lived.

Blackwell passed away peacefully with her husband and family by her side.

ENHANCING VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Thank you for serving like Jesus

By Kristyn Butts, BCH Director of Volunteer Engagement

Jesus speaks in Mark 3:10 his mission: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." This fall churches, families, and individuals converged on Kennedy Home in Kinston, Odum Home in Pembroke, Mills Home in Thomasville, Camp Duncan in Aberdeen, Cameron Boys Camp, and Oak Ranch in Broadway to go on mission together, *sharing hope and changing lives*.

Through the time and service of volunteers' of all ages, the children, adults, and families entrusted to the care of Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) have a safe place to call home for this season of their lives. During Friends of Children events held around the state, cottages that children and single moms call home have been deep cleaned and refreshed to provide an inviting and more comfortable living space. Office buildings and food lockers have been organized and cleaned to ensure easy access. Trails have been groomed and wood has been chopped for our wilderness camps, assuring campers have ample wood for cooking and heating this winter. Paint has been retouched and cosmetic repairs have been made to the facilities at BCH locations which serve as a temporary safe haven to those in need.



Friends of Children events kicked off at Kennedy Home in Kinston, Odum Home in Pembroke, and Mills Home in Thomasville. Above, Jonah and Noah Meadows from Kellum Baptist Church tackle KH cottage window cleaning. Bottom left, youth from Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Cero-Gordo clean around the OH cottages. Bottom right, children from Bethel Baptist in Yadkinville lend a hand landscaping at Mills Home.

Through the many people who have come together to serve, hope has been shared and love displayed. We are grateful for the many projects that were completed, but most importantly, we are thankful for the sacrificial display of love through service. You can continue to give the gift of service throughout the year. Please visit bchfamily.org/volunteer to find your spot to volunteer. New opportunities are posted weekly online.



Mission:
sharing hope . . . changing lives

Vision:
To provide the highest quality of Christian services to children, adults and families in a caring culture of measurable excellence

Charity & Children—Established in 1887 as the official publication of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, Inc., 204 Idol St., PO Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361-0338. Jim Edminson, editor (wjedminson@bchfamily.org); Blake Ragsdale, managing editor (jbragsdale@bchfamily.org); Marcia Housand, account clerk. **Charity & Children** (ISSN 0009-1723-09 USPS 100-460) is published 10 times a year for friends and supporters by Triangle Web Printing, Durham, NC and mailed by Excalibur, Winston-Salem, NC. Circulation: 62,000 seven times a year, 30,000 three times a year. Periodicals postage paid at Thomasville, NC, and at additional mailing offices. For free subscription or to be removed from the mailing list or make address correction or change, use the above address and write to Attn: Circulation Manager, send an email to address@bchfamily.org or call at 336-474-1209. Subscribe online at bchfamily.org/charityandchildren. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to **Charity & Children**, PO Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361-0338.

Pridgens inspire grands with legacy from the heart

By Jim Edminson, Editor

The gravel crunches beneath tires as the car passes through the front gate and drives up to the barn. Pat Pridgen rises from her chair, declaring Kalyn has arrived. Warren joins her at the rear screen door that opens onto the porte cochere. Their granddaughter greets them with a smile and the three hug as she enters.

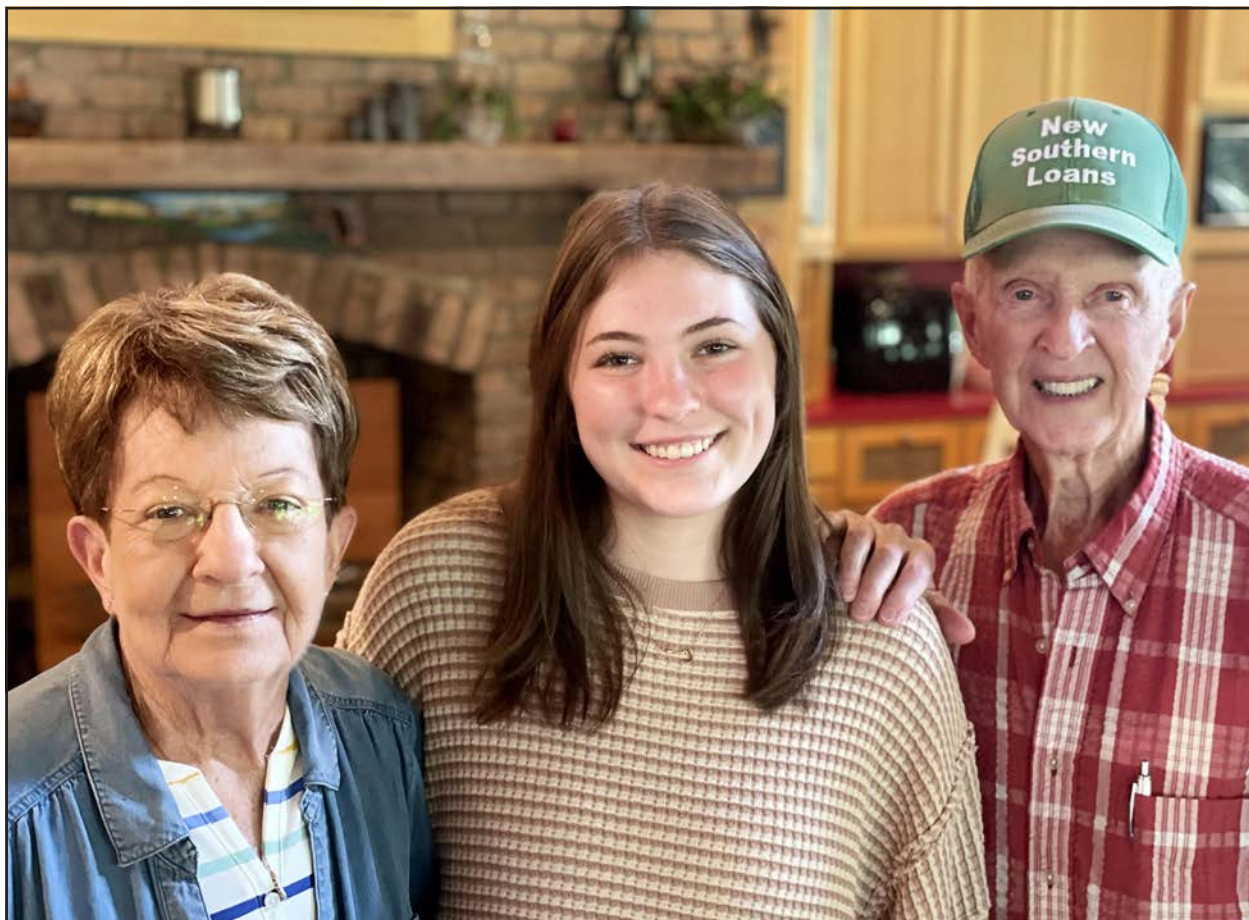
Kalyn is a senior in high school and dreams of college. She is one of the Pridgen's son Michael's three daughters: Haley, Kalyn, and Rylee. The number of their grandchildren adds up to five with their daughter Lisa's son Joshua and daughter Phebe.

Like most grandparents, "Mimi and Papa" Pridgen cherish their grands. They constantly look for ways to spend time with them: Sleepovers and movie nights with popcorn, trips to the beach, and making them a part of the Pridgen's annual cookout at the barn for Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH).

The Pridgens have embraced the ministry for years, learning about BCH when groups visited their church, by touring BCH facilities, and attending BCH events. The grandchildren learned about the ministry from them. At early ages, they helped host the Pridgen's annual BCH cookout, Warren calling on each one over the years to offer the blessing before the meal.

Every year since 2015, except for the two COVID years, Pat has picked up the phone and called her fellow church members, community partners, and friends young and old into action to begin preparations to host as many as 100 of BCH's children and staff. Food is donated and the tri-counties' best cakes and pies are recruited. The highway patrol and sheriff departments send patrol cars and officers. The drug detection dog is a regular and a favorite of the children. The local rescue squad uses their stethoscopes for the children to listen to their heartbeats and the fire departments draw lots of attention with their shiny red trucks. The children wear firefighter jackets and helmets and they learn how to escape fires by crawling through a mobile "smoke house."

Faith, family, and community are important to Pat and Warren Pridgen. Married 55 years, the couple began their life together attending Sharpsburg Baptist Church. Sharpsburg is a town that sits in three counties, Edgecomb,



Pat and Warren Pridgen live in Sharpsburg, North Carolina where they married 55 years ago. The couple have two children and five grandchildren. Granddaughter Kalyn, above, was inspired by the Pridgens to collect needed items for BCH. Below, she and Warren deliver a truckload of paper products and nonperishable food items to Mills Home in Thomasville. Kalyn collected two truckloads and raised \$10,000 before completing the project.

Nash, and Wilson, a stones throw from Rocky Mount. The town of 2,000 has need of only one stop light but has everything required to be a caring community. It is a small place with a big heart. Sharpsburg folks have been inspired by the Pridgens' love for BCH's children.

Plans for the barn came out of necessity.

Warren loved hosting cookouts under the carport of their home. When it rained, everyone crowded into Pat's kitchen—to her chagrin. The couple decided they needed more space.

"With paper and a pencil, I began to draw up the plans," Pat says. "The plans went from a build-

ing to a barn to what it is today—a place to host family, friends, and community events."

Besides the BCH cookout in the fall, the Pridgens host area widows to an annual ice cream social in July. The barn is used for church events,

birthday and graduation parties, wedding receptions, and Christmas parties are all hosted at the barn. The Pridgen's generosity is driven by a desire to serve the Lord.

Kalyn has been inspired by her grandparents to serve others. When she needed a service project to include as part of her application to Eastern Carolina University's Honors College, they encouraged Kalyn to contact BCH. She decided she would collect nonperishable food items and paper products for the children she has come to love. She promoted her project on social media, appealed to the Pridgens' church, Memorial Baptist Church, and partnered with a community nonprofit. By the end of her collection drive in July, she had gathered two pickup truck loads of donated items, made two trips to Mills Home in Thomasville with Warren, and raised \$10,000 for BCH. She completed the project by sending thank you letters to all who had given and supported.

"When you are younger, you do things because you are expected to," Kalyn says. "We help now because we want to help. We want to serve and we are able to serve with our grandparents—all of us together."

It is a legacy from the heart.



God answers prayers, touching hurting lives with love

By **Brenda B. Gray**, Executive Vice President, Development & Communications

There is a beautiful story of transformation in Doug Lawson's book *Give to Live* which exemplifies the true meaning of giving. William's story vividly reminds me of our ministry at Baptist Children's Homes (BCH).

When William (Willie) was five, he developed Von-Recklinhausen's disease. Tumors soon covered his small body. At twelve, his parents died and he was alone with his physical nightmare. He faced cruel rejection as a teen. He turned to alcohol and then drugs to numb his misery. His anger and desperation led him into crime. By the time he was 21, Willie had been sentenced to prison. He was rejected by the inmates and spent his time in solitary confinement.

Dr. Darrell Davis heard of Willie's predicament and was eager to experiment with a new surgery that held hope for Von-Recklinhausen's disease victims. Dr. Davis performed 16 operations on Willie. He worked at no charge to liberate the boy from his personal prison.

On Willie's birthday, Dr. Davis came to Willie's cell with a brightly wrapped gift. When the paper was torn away, Willie found himself looking in a mirror. He saw a normal face. He cried. He laughed. He hugged his benefactor.

The change in his life was immediate. Willie returned to society and began a new life. From then until his death, Willie was known as an outstanding citizen, always reaching out to help others.

Many of the children in our care are like Willie. Their scars are not as visible but they are just as real. They know rejection and despair all too well. They bury their hurt, pain, and grief deep inside and become trapped in darkness. Sometimes, like Willie, they try to escape through alcohol, drugs, and suicide attempts. Just as Dr. Davis was there to offer *hope* to Willie, we are here to offer hope to these boys and girls. At BCH, children and families find healing. Through your faithful and prayerful support, the bondage of anger and hopelessness felt by the boys and girls is broken and replaced with Christ's love.

I recently sent out a request to our staff to share payer requests that I would then pass on to you—our wonderful supporters and prayer warriors. These are just a few of the requests I received. I will be sharing more in my November column.

Pray for each of these children and families—that their scars will be healed.

- Pray for the sisters who had to be removed from their home which had been a drug house.
- Pray for the eight-year-old boy who carries significant trauma from the beatings he

received from his family.

- Pray for the children who were moved from one house to another by families who were evading the authorities.

- Pray for children who have always lived in depravity.

- Pray for a sibling group who is currently in care and continue to grieve the loss of their father who was the primary breadwinner of the family. Pray for the mom of the children that she would come to know God, break her addiction, and be able to provide for her children.

- Pray that our children in care know they are loved dearly and that what happened in their lives is not their fault.

- Pray for the families we serve. Some are dealing with marital issues, some have lost their jobs, and some have just lost hope.

- Pray for our campers at Cameron Boys Camp and Camp Duncan for Girls. Pray for those dealing with the loss of their biological parents—whether it is because of drug issues, death, the loss of parental rights, or those who have just chosen to not be a part of their child's life.—more than half of our campers are dealing with this kind of loss.

- Pray for the young girl who came into care with horrible cigarette burns on her body.

- Pray for our amazing foster parents who are offering hope to the children in their home.

- Pray for our birth mothers, the families that will be formed, and the precious babies who will be placed in their forever homes.

- Pray for the precious 3-year-old foster child in our care fighting cancer.

- Pray for the family of Brian, one of our IDD residents, who just made his journey home to be with his Lord and Savior.

- Pray for our staff as they share the love of God with each child and family that walks through our doors.

Please pray!

Each one of these children and families need your prayers. Each day they walk through our doors bruised and scarred by the life they have known. They come seeking a safe place and a loving environment where they can experience hope and healing. They need to know and understand they are loved by God and that he has a plan for each of them. They need to know God's blessing is on them. BCH is the place where they can once again hope. BCH is the place where they will find large doses of encouragement and love—YOUR encouragement, YOUR love.

I enjoy putting together puzzles. I get really upset when it is almost finished and I realize there is a missing piece. Our children's lives are made up of many separated, broken, and missing pieces. YOU have become the piece to fill those spaces. YOUR prayers and support mean so much. Please continue to help us fill in the missing pieces with peace, hope, love, and the message of an eternal relationship with a Father who loves each one.

FYI—We recently hosted the Liberty Baptist Association Bible Drill at Mills Home. Our children and youth won second prize. They missed first prize by only one question. The significance is that most of these children have not been in church prior to coming to BCH. They were competing with children and youth who have been in Sunday school and church for some time. The significance is that they are learning so much about God's plan for their lives through the leadership of Mills Home Baptist Church Pastor Luis and our amazing cottage parents who are pouring God's truth into them every day. The most significant thing that happened was not the Bible Drill, which was awesome, but one of our boys accepted Jesus into his heart after the

event. ***Praise God for this beyond wonderful blessing!***



NC Baptists empower foster-to-adopt family

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

(Continued from page 1.)

Chris and Lindsay were at a crossroads after the birth of their fourth child. They desired more but unforeseen medical challenges would create risk with future pregnancies.

“God opened up some doors in a different way—that was through foster care,” explains Chris.

Like many couples, the Ciufos naturally had some hesitation about fostering.

“I thought, ‘Oh, I could never do that. I could never love a child and have them taken from me,’” divulges Lindsay. Her concern was in reference to the NC Department of Social Service’s (DSS) priority on reunifying a foster child with his or her family. The state-governed agency serves as the foster child’s custodian.

“I remember feeling convicted one day that this isn’t really about me—it’s about these kids,” continues Lindsay. “If you can offer your home for six months and share the love of Christ with these kids then it’s all worth it.”

Cowee Baptist, where Chris serves as Associate Pastor/Minister of Students, invited Baptist Children’s Homes to hold an EVERY CHILD interest meeting for any couples in the congregation praying about becoming a foster family.

The EVERY CHILD Foster & Adopt initiative is a partnership between BCH and NC Baptists. BCH team members train and license couples as well as provide ongoing support to them.

Several couples attended the meeting and went through the licensing process including the Ciufos. One

day, they received a call about a three-month-old foster child named Liam.

“We were told we would have him for the weekend -- it’s been a really long weekend,” Lindsay laughs.

About a week after meeting Liam, the couple invited

Tyler, his 14-year-old brother, to church. Liam and Tyler have the same mother and different fathers.

“We wanted to get to know him and keep the brothers connected,” says Chris. “There was



Scan the QR code to watch the Offering Video and see the Ciufo family’s story.

Above, Tyler placed his faith in Christ during a worship service at Cowee Baptist Church, the Ciufo’s home church in Franklin. Chris Ciufo (right), Tyler’s foster-to-adopt father and Associate Pastor at Cowee, was able to join Senior Pastor Jason Smith in the pool and baptize the teen after they prayed at the altar. Below, Tyler is with his brother, Liam, before heading to high school prom. Liam and Tyler were adopted in February 2024 by Baptist Children’s Homes foster-to-adopt couple Chris and Lindsay Ciufo.

another licensed family in our church, and they ended up bringing Tyler into their home.”

This made it possible for the siblings to build a relationship through the community surrounding them at Cowee Baptist. After a period of time, the two families agreed for Tyler to come into the Ciufo’s home so the brothers could live together.

During a church service in 2023, Chris and Cowee’s Senior Pastor Jason Smith were standing at the front of the room for the closing invitation. Suddenly, Tyler rose from his seat and came to Chris telling him he wanted to follow Jesus. They knelt at the altar and, at that moment, Tyler accepted Christ. Immediately afterward, Tyler, Chris and Jason entered the baptismal where an emotional Chris baptized his foster son.

“It’s been our prayer since the moment we received him into our family that he would be our son, but also our brother in Christ,” Chris tearfully shared with the congregation just before immersing Tyler underneath the water.

“I’m overwhelmed by God’s goodness in those moments,” says Pastor Jason. “We’re expecting one day Liam too will place his faith in trust in Christ and be adopted into God’s forever family.”

In February 2024, with members of the Cowee Baptist family surrounding them, Tyler and Liam were adopted by Chris and Lindsay. The home brimming over with children that they always dreamed about was now complete.

“I know I wouldn’t be where I’m at today if it wasn’t for foster care and these adoption families that do these miraculous works,” Tyler reveals. “That love that these families have to take in these random kids off the streets or of these different living situations—it’s made a big impact on me.”

“It’s overwhelming the support of the church, not just at Cowee but the local church and Baptist Children’s Homes,” Chris concludes. “Through the support of Baptist Children’s Homes and through giving and through praying—I can’t thank them enough. I know it’s impacted our lives.”

ANNUAL OFFERING
bchoffering.org | Week of prayer: Nov. 3-10 | 336.474.1218

You become a part of the stories that God is writing in the hearts and lives of families like the Ciufos when you support Baptist Children’s Homes’ Annual Offering. Give through your church or go online. Churches, it’s not too late to participate in the offering. Scan the QR code or go to bchoffering.org for resources and the Leaders Guide.



Baptists celebrate ministry to children and families

By Jim Edminson, Editor

A coolness, abating summer, creeps down from the mountain ridges surrounding Broyhill Home in Clyde as North Carolina Baptists from Western Carolina churches gather on Thursday, September 5 for the 63rd Annual Western Area Conference (WAC). Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) staff and residents welcome guests to campus for cottage tours and a barbecue dinner. Worship in song and a program featuring children in care and testimonies to God's greatness is cause for lifted voices in song, loud "amens," and occasional tears rolling down cheeks.

This year also included three presentations for faithful service to the Lord. The presentation of the Western Area "Friends of Children" Award was made to the Catawba River Baptist Association (CRBA) for their "cakes for kids" program initiated three years ago. The first year, members from CRBA churches baked, decorated, and delivered 179 cakes to be frozen and used throughout the year to celebrate children's birthdays. This year, the group delivered nearly 300 cakes. The award was received by CRBA Director of Missions Robby Smith.

"I was so surprised," BCH's Western Area Director of Development Lewis Smith said. "It wasn't on the program. When Brenda stepped to the podium and called my name, I didn't know what was up."

Smith was presented the Sharing Hope Legacy Award by BCH's Executive Vice President for Development and Communication Brenda Gray.

"To feel the love and appreciation for the years of partnership with so many people and churches across western North Carolina was amazing," Smith said. "It took my breath away."



I couldn't find words to say and, for me, that is saying something. It is a blessing to know my service has been God honoring."



Above, Brenda Gray stands with her mother Barbara Barrett and her brother and sister-in-law, Michael and Teresa Barrett, after receiving BCH's rarely given Founders Award. Below left, BCH's Lewis Smith is joined by his wife Sherry. Smith was presented the Sharing Hope Legacy Award for his distinguished service. Below, BCH's Vice President, Children and Family Services Linda Morgan congratulates CRBE Director of Missions Robby Smith after the Association received this year's Friends of Children Award.

Another surprise presentation was made by BCH Trustee Mike Leslie and BCH's Chief Operating Officer Keith Henry. This time, Brenda Gray was left speechless when her name was called. Henry presented Gray BCH's Founder Award for Distinguished Service—an award rarely given.

"Your dedication has never wavered, even in the most challenging of times," Henry said of Gray. "When others might have grown weary, you found new reserves of strength, always putting the needs of others before your own. And what makes you truly exceptional is that you do it all with such humility and grace. You never seek the spotlight, but today, we shine it brightly on you because you deserve every bit of this recognition."



Gray has served BCH since 1999, leading the charge to raise millions of dollars and befriending countless North Carolina Baptists and other friends while serving as BCH's "chief ambassador" for hurting children and families.

"I am deeply honored," Gray said. "My desire is always that the Lord is lifted up and that He is the one who receives all glory. My heart is filled with appreciation to those I serve with and for those who sacrificially give of their resources and pray for this ministry that I love so much."

The 2025 WAC is slated for September 4.

BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES

bchfamily.org/gift-catalog



GIFT CATALOG

2024

**SHOP 25+
GIFT IDEAS**

**WE HAVE PACKAGED
OUR ITEMS TO
ALLOW FOR EASIER
HOLIDAY SHOPPING**

**WRAP A GIFT WITH
ETERNAL IMPACT**

**SHINE JESUS'
LIGHT WITH
A GIFT THAT
REALLY
MATTERS**

**JESSIE'S STORY:
READ ABOUT HER ON PAGE 2**



Shop our selection of gifts that impact the lives of children and families across NC, SC & internationally through our many ministries that share hope...change lives.



SHARING HOPE...CHANGING LIVES

Baptist Children's Homes
of NORTH CAROLINA

FOR JESSIE, IT WAS MORE THAN A SHIRT.

Making Memories

ITEM	PRICE	CODE
Birthday Sponsorship	\$50	GC001
Fun Care Package	\$50	GC002
Christmas Sponsorship	\$50	GC003
Christmas Meal	\$25	GC004
Fishing Pole	\$25	GC005
Sports Scholarship	\$100	GC006
Campership	\$250	GC007
MAKING MEMORIES PACKAGE	\$550	GC008

Basic Needs

ITEM	PRICE	CODE
Welcome Care Package	\$35	GC009
Winter Coat	\$50	GC010
Shoes	\$75	GC011
Clothing Wardrobe	\$400	GC012
Bedding Basics	\$100	GC013
School Supplies	\$50	GC014
Medical Needs	\$50	GC015
BASIC NEEDS PACKAGE	\$760	GC016

Help a Mom in Need

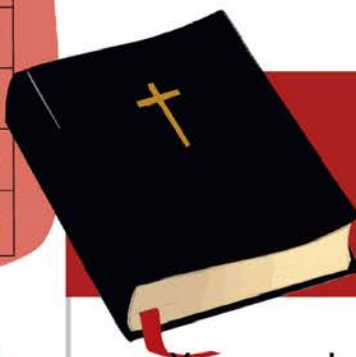
ITEM	PRICE	CODE
Family Start Up Package	\$300	GC017
Night of Safety	\$200	GC018
Car Seat / Booster Seat	\$150	GC019
Diapers & Wipes	\$100	GC020
Formula	\$200	GC021
MOTHER'S PACKAGE	\$950	GC022

Boys and the girls, like Jessie, who come into Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) care are often from traumatic circumstances. They arrive at our foster care homes and cottages located across NC bearing scars. Those scars can be emotional but sometimes they are physical as well. Jessie came into her BCH cottage with both.

Jessie's family was abusive and immersed in a lifestyle of drugs. The house they lived in more closely resembled a meth lab than a home. One day, the family's life literally went up in flames when the meth lab caught fire. The blaze not only burned the house to the ground, but it badly burned both of Jessie's arms leaving them scarred.

Jessie found comfort and safety with her BCH cottage parents and the other girls in the cottage where she now lived. As Christmas approached, she asked her cottage mother to put long-sleeve shirts on her wish list to cover up her scars. While healing from physical and emotional scars takes time, Jessie is learning day by day that there is now hope for her. ***Through her cottage parents, churches, and friends like you, she is being pointed to a Heavenly Father who loves her unconditionally. Jessie's healing has begun.***

You share hope with a child, like Jessie, when you select a gift from this year's Christmas catalog.



BIBLES

You can help share God's Word with a child or individual who has never had his or her own bible.

\$10/CHILD OR \$25/ADULT

NEW TO THIS YEAR: GIFT PACKAGES

You can purchase individual items or, as seen to the left, purchase a package of items to bless those we serve in NC, SC and internationally.

MAKING MEMORIES

Birthday Sponsorship \$50

Provide a gift & decorations for a child in care to celebrate them on their birthday.

Fishing Pole \$25

Purchase a fishing pole for a child in care so they can experience the joy of learning a new skill and being in nature.

Christmas Sponsorship \$50

Purchase a Christmas gift and help bring the joy of the season to a child in our care.

Campership \$250

Give a child in care the opportunity to experience the joy of a week at summer camp.

Sports Scholarship \$100

Provide the opportunity for a child to participate in youth community sports.

Fun Care Package \$50

Send a care package to a child in care or to a student who has aged out of the foster system to help them feel loved.

Christmas Meal \$25

Provide a special Christmas meal for a child in care.



INTERNATIONAL NEEDS

Chicken & Feed \$50

Purchase a chicken & feed for our Guatemala orphanage -- provides a renewable food source for our children & caregivers.

Goat & Feed \$100

Purchase a goat & feed to help with the ministry's spacious yard. Plus, boys & girls learn responsibility as they care for the animals' daily needs.

\$550

Give a child the gift of sweet MEMORIES for an entire year - many boys and girls are overcoming years of difficult memories.

This package includes all items on the top half of this page for one child.

MAKING MEMORIES PACKAGE



BASIC NEEDS

Welcome Care Package \$35

Provide necessities such as toiletries & towels for a child when they enter into care.

Winter Coat \$50

Give the gift of warmth to a child in care or adult in our IDD ministry.

Shoes \$75

Send a child to school with a new pair of sneakers showing them someone cares.

Clothing Wardrobe \$400

Provide a child or adult in care with the opportunity to select new clothing when they arrive. (Many arrive with no belongings)

Bedding Basics \$100

Provide new bedding for a child in our cottage homes or special needs adult.

School Supplies \$50

Purchase school supplies & cover costs for fees & field trips for a child in care.

Medical Needs \$50

Help cover the cost of medical needs such as glasses, speech therapy, etc. for children and adults in our care.

\$760

Provide for a child's BASIC NEEDS for an entire year - you show them the love of Christ by giving this special package.

This package includes all the items on the bottom half of this page for one child.

BASIC NEEDS PACKAGE



HELP A MOM IN NEED

Family Start Up Package

\$300

Provide a mom & her children with the necessary items to stock their kitchen/bath/bedroom (including pots & pans, utensils, towels, dishes, bedding, etc.).

Night of Safety

\$200

Provide one night of safety (hotel & meal) for a single mom and her children or for an expectant mom in a crisis situation.

Car Seat/Booster Seat

\$150

Provide a child (ages 0-5) a safe way to travel.

Diapers & Wipes

\$100

Purchase diapers & wipes for one month for a single mom.

Formula

\$200

Provide nourishment for a baby by purchasing formula for a month.



\$500

BIRTH MOM RETREAT
Sponsor a birth mom to experience hope & healing at the annual birth mothers retreat.

MOM IN NEED PACKAGE

MOST NEEDED

Not sure what to give? You can give an amount of your choosing to go towards where it is needed most.

\$ _____

\$950

Give a mom the gift of SAFETY & PEACE OF MIND -- show her God's love by providing for mom & child's basic needs.

This package includes all the items on the top half of this page for one mom. (DOES NOT INCLUDE RETREAT)

HOW TO ORDER WITH A CHECK:

1) Find your item(s) on the form below. 2) Write the quantity in the space provided beside each item(s) you are choosing. 3) Total your purchases and make your check payable to "Baptist Children's Homes" for the total amount. 4) Detach the order form. Place the form and check in the enclosed pre-paid postage envelope. Please fill out the information on the envelope. If using your own envelope, mail to: BCH, P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361.

MAKE YOUR GIFT ONLINE: Go to bchfamily.org/gift-catalog or scan the QR code on the catalog cover to make your gift online.

2024 GIFT CATALOG ORDER FORM (Detach form below and mail with check using the enclosed envelope.)

Item	Qty	Amount	Gift Code
MAKING MEMORIES			
Birthday Sponsorship		\$50	GC001
Fun Care Package		\$50	GC002
Christmas Sponsorship		\$50	GC003
Christmas Meal		\$25	GC004
Fishing Pole		\$25	GC005
Sports Scholarship		\$100	GC006
Campership		\$250	GC007
Making Memories Package		\$550	GC008
INTERNATIONAL			
Chicken & Feed		\$50	GC024
Goat & Feed		\$100	GC025

Item	Qty	Amount	Gift Code
BASIC NEEDS			
Welcome Care Package		\$35	GC009
Winter Coat		\$50	GC010
Shoes		\$75	GC011
Clothing Wardrobe		\$400	GC012
Bedding Basics		\$100	GC013
School Supplies		\$50	GC014
Medical Needs		\$50	GC015
Basic Needs Package		\$760	GC016
BIBLES			
Bible for Child		\$10	GC026
Bible for Adult		\$25	GC027

Item	Qty	Amount	Gift Code
HELP A MOM IN NEED			
Family Start Up Package		\$300	GC017
Night of Safety		\$200	GC018
Car Seat / Booster Seat		\$150	GC019
Diapers & Wipes		\$100	GC020
Formula		\$200	GC021
Mom in Need Package		\$950	GC022
Birth Mom Retreat		\$500	GC023
WHERE NEEDED MOST		\$	GC028
TOTAL DONATION AMOUNT		\$	

Inspiring Legacy: Make your money work with a mission

By Jay D. Westmoreland, CFP®, CAP®

John Haymes Mills saw the plight of indigent children in the aftermath of the Civil War and wanted to provide appropriate support. With a devout faith in the value of each soul, his compassion for orphaned children was unwavering. John channeled his concern into action by founding Mills Home in Thomasville (later known as Baptist Children's Homes) as a haven for those in need and welcomed Mary Presson, the first child in care, in 1885. His story remains inspirational after more than 125 years!



Jay D. Westmoreland

Today, Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) ministers to children, adults and families in more than three-dozen communities across NC and SC, and Guatemala and the Philippines. John's dedication to use his resources to serve the Lord has helped change the lives of tens of thousands of children and families. This is a shining example of how one person can make a profound difference in the lives of others. *Following in his footsteps, you too can make money work with a mission!*

BCH supporters can seek to maximize their kingdom giving by utilizing their non-cash assets and using tax-efficient contribution methods.

Take steps now to reflect on how best to utilize the finances you steward and evaluate these seven helpful strategies with your financial advisor and/or BCH Development Officer.

1. Donating Appreciated Securities: Giving long-term, appreciated securities rather than cash can avoid potential capital gains taxes, allowing you to give more at the same net cost. With certain limitations, donors may receive a fair-market-value tax deduction on securities donated to a beloved charitable organization.

2. Bunching Contributions to Itemize: Few taxpayers

currently benefit from itemizing because of the sizable standard deduction increase from the Tax Cut & Jobs Act of 2017.

However, by "bunching" larger-than-normal charitable contributions into a single year, a taxpayer may benefit from itemizing that year, before returning to the standard deduction in a subsequent year when the threshold is not exceeded.

3. Utilizing a Donor-Advised

Fund: Consider establishing a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) to streamline your charitable giving. Grants may be recommended to specific charities over time. Donor-advised funds may be particularly appealing to investors who seek to "bunch" larger than normal deductions in a particular year, and desire to make future grants to favorite nonprofits.

4. Making Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs): For individuals aged 70½ or older, making direct transfers from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a qualified charity can satisfy Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) up to \$105,000 without incurring taxable income.

5. Funding a Charitable Gift Annuity from your IRA: The passage of the SECURE Act 2.0 enables those over age 70 ½ to make a one-time QCD from an IRA to fund a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA). Individuals may transfer up to \$53,000 and potentially combine their own CGA with one established by their spouse. Although IRA assets are not subject to tax when properly transferred to the CGA, the annual payments to the donor will be taxed as ordinary income.

6. Gifting Real Estate: Donating real estate unhindered by debt can yield tax advantages. Donors can potentially receive a charitable deduction based on the property's fair market value while avoiding capital gains taxes.

7. Legacy Giving: Gifts of bequests, trusts, or endowments to charity can provide a lasting impact on your most treasured causes and reduce your taxable estate. Establishing a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) allows donors to receive an income stream from the trust for a period of time (potentially over a lifetime), with the remainder going to a beloved charitable organization. A CRT may provide immediate tax benefits while supporting your philanthropic goals and providing supplemental income. Imagine the joy

of knowing your philanthropic vision can continue beyond your lifetime!

One reminder: many income tax and estate tax provisions are expected to be negatively affected at the end of 2025 due to the planned "sunset" of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA).

Planned changes could have adverse implications for your personal finances and will likely bring increased demand for planning. Take time to make your money work with a mission!

About the author:

Jay D. Westmoreland, CFP®, CAP® serves as Executive Director of Wealth Management, Senior Portfolio Management Director, and Financial Advisor at Morgan Stanley in Charlotte.

He is a leader in the firm's Christian Focus Group and a past Chair of the BCH Board of Trustees. He was instrumental in founding the newly dedicated River Hill Refuge foster care program in Shelby, NC.

The views expressed herein are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC, Member SIPC www.sipc.org. Jay D. Westmoreland may only transact business in states where he is registered or excluded or exempted from registration.

Transacting business, follow-up and individualized responses involving either effecting or attempting to effect transactions in securities, or the rendering of personalized investment advice for compensation, will not be made to persons in states where Jay D. Westmoreland is not registered or excluded or exempt from registration. For more information, please visit his website <https://advisor.morganstanley.com/jay.westmoreland>.



Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC ("Morgan Stanley"), its affiliates and Morgan Stanley Financial Advisors or Private Wealth Advisors do not provide tax or legal advice. Individuals should consult their tax advisor for matters involving taxation and tax planning and their attorney for matters involving trusts, estate planning, charitable giving, philanthropic planning or other legal matters.

Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC. Member SIPC, CRC # 6682681 6/24



Red Bags, Big Hearts: Berea Baptist's Outreach

By **Matt Martin**, Northeast Regional Director, NCBAM

On a hot Tuesday morning in August, members from Berea Baptist Church of Elizabeth City set up a table outside a local pharmacy to distribute Red Bags to aging adults picking up their prescriptions. You may ask: "What is a Red Bag?" "How could that help aging adults?"

Because medication mismanagement is the number one health risk to individuals 65+, Red Bags are part of NCBAM's "Priority #1: Prevention" outreach. Red Bags safely store all medications in one place and are insulated to keep temperature-sensitive medications chilled during short trips. Red Bags are wonderful tools to help aging adults safely manage their medications.



Matt Martin

Not only are Red Bags a great way to meet a physical need of aging adults, they are a great way to share the love of Christ. Each bag includes a leaflet that gives instructions for using the Red Bag and shares a simple gospel message. The church chose to include a soap gift bag along with information about their church and how to have a relationship with Jesus.

NCBAM partnered with Berea Baptist Church on their Red Bag outreach, initiated by Pastor



Jan Sawyer from Berea Baptist Church shares a Red Bag outside a local pharmacy, part of a ServeNC outreach to help aging adults safely manage medications while sharing the love of Christ.

Jason Wise and Senior Adult Ministry leader Pam Price as a ServeNC project. They believed it would serve their community and invigorate their Senior Adult ministry—post-COVID. I shared several outreach ideas with them and they chose Red Bags. Pam Price said, "This gave us an opportunity to reach our homebound members as well as the Meals on Wheels clients we serve."

Berea Baptist Church saw the Red Bag distribution as a way to serve aging adults in their community that might be unchurched. Price told me, "We met a great cross-section of the community during the ServeNC project—from seniors to young mothers with babies. There were great conversations with people who visited our table outside the pharmacy."

The Red Bag outreach during ServeNC involved 35 of Berea's senior adults, reaching other aging adults in their community. One member exclaimed, "It was a rewarding project from start to finish!"

Contact Matt at mmartin@bchfamily.org.

Divine Appointment: The Story of Shirley's Chair

By **Ronnie Beane**, Call Center Specialist, NCBAM

I serve as a call center specialist for NCBAM. In July, I received a call from Kim Hall in Kannapolis who wanted to donate a very nice lift chair to NCBAM's durable medical equipment ministry. I told Kim we would love to have it. We are always grateful when people drop off donated equipment, but we didn't have a way to pick up the chair in Kannapolis.

Kim said she first wanted to have the chair cleaned and that she and her husband Joe could deliver it to the NCBAM office in Thomasville on Saturday. The weather didn't cooperate and we had to postpone delivery until the last Saturday of the month.

Meanwhile, I received a voicemail from Shirley Lindley who was in need of a lift chair. I noticed the call came from area code 704—the same as Kim's. I thought it would be awesome if I could somehow get the chair delivered directly to Shirley. I reached out to NCBAM team

member and retired pastor Robert Leonard who has contacts in Kannapolis. Robert recommended I contact Bennett Cook. Bennett graciously offered to coordinate all the logistics and recruit who he would need to pick up the chair from Kim and deliver it to Shirley!

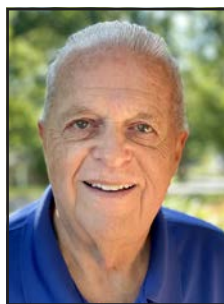
Kim was thrilled when I told her that a retired pastor in Kannapolis had found a volunteer who would pick up her chair and deliver it directly to Shirley. Kim asked, "Is this retired pastor Robert Leonard?" I said, "Why, yes, it is! Do you also happen to know Bennett Cook?" I was amazed when she answered, "Yes, I do. I used to go to church with Bennett."

Kim and Joe assisted Bennett in getting the chair from their home in Kannapolis to Shirley's den in Newton. I later received this message from Kim, "Shirley kept saying how much she appreciated us bringing this to her and how it

matched her den. Her couch had burgundy flowers and she had burgundy curtains up. God is so good! He knew it would match her other furniture. I prayed with Shirley and asked her if she knew Jesus and had Him in her heart and she said, 'yes!'"

We are blessed in the Call Center to see God working everyday through the kindness of His people. From Kim's willingness to donate the chair to the coordinated efforts of Robert and Bennett, each person played a role in blessing Shirley's life. We are constantly amazed how the Lord orchestrates these moments, bringing people together to serve those in need. Shirley's new chair wasn't just a piece of furniture; it was a tangible expression of God's provision and grace.

Ronnie has developed a robust durable medical equipment ministry that serves aging adults in Davidson and surrounding counties. Contact Ronnie at rbeane@bchfamily.org.



Ronnie Beane



New Mills Home alumni association officers elected – Athletic Hall of Fame announces 2025 MH inductees

By Lib Johnson (336) 299-7412 libsjohnson@triad.rr.com

One of the most important things we do at the Mills Home Alumni Association meeting each Homecoming is elect new officers. So if you have any good suggestions about the next Homecoming, please feel free to contact our new president, **Jackie Elliott Walker**, Class of 1961. (See her contact information at end of paragraph.) Next in line to her is the First Vice president-President Elect, **Cecelia Townsend Wilkerson**, Class of 1976. These two will serve in those positions from September 2024 until August 2026. The other officers are as follows: Treasurer, **Flora Hicks Patton**; 2nd VP, **Martha Berndt Fisher**; Secretary, **Lisa Carter Lancaster**. The Council Members who round out the Council are **Ruth Berndt Hodges**, **Keith Campbell**, **Johnny Shields**, **Jane Brown**, **Rich Lewis**, **Rusty Bunker**, Publicity Chairperson **Lib Johnson**, and Columbarium Manager, **Sharon DeHart Stiles**. You can reach President **Jackie Walker** at 910-606-6027, mail her at 1044 Jackie's Lane, Garner, NC, 27529, or email jhoneybeat108@nc.rr.com.

In Memoriam: Alumni and staff who passed away since Homecoming 2023 are as follows: **William N. "Bill" Bailey**, 1956-63, child of staff **Frank and Bonnie Bailey**; **Florence Breedlove Rollins**, 1937-44; **Charles Gary Bruin**, 1975-87, staff; **Patricia Canaday Pegram Sieg**, 1953-1960; **Teresa Anne Cooley Floyd**; **Cornell Jones**, 1979-85; **Ann Covington Turbyville**, 1948-54; **Dixie Fincannon**, 1948-61; **Jeff Griffin**, 1969-74; **Gene Hamby Harrold**, 1969-79, staff; **Martha Joyce Helms McCartney**, 1960-67; **Russell Hoffman**, 1951-62; **Marie Jacobs Stover**, 1955-64; **Elnora Johnson Dietz**, 1956-1958; **Kent Douglas Lightfoot**, 1963-65; **Joe Lindsey**, 1981-84; **Lovina Mayton Leslie**, 1961-63; **Grace Panther Willis**, 1946-1956; **Jimmy Rochelle**, 1956-67; **Deborah Lee Smith Ratliff**, 1959-60; **Pati Stroud England**, 1960-65; and **Eileen Williams Williams**, 1942-54.

Bob Mayton reported at the association meeting at Homecoming that another induction into the

Thomasville Athletic Hall of Fame will be held on March 22, 2025 at 4:00 pm. As mentioned before, it is not for just the outstanding athletes from Thomasville High School, it also includes outstanding athletes from Mills Home High School (MHHS) and the Church Street High School. Kudos to the Hall of Fame committee for being so inclusive in a wonderful Thomasville hometown project. **Vaughan Dagenhart** will be inducted for his wrestling and football records. **Bill Sisk** will be inducted for his being on the Allstate Football Team. The MHHS football team of 1942 will be inducted for winning the S. Piedmont Conference Championship. The 1995 Thomasville High School football team will be inducted for winning the State Championship that year. **Bob Mayton** will be inducted because he was an assistant coach of that team. **Charlie Kearns** will be inducted because he had been the girls' coach at Mills Home (MH). And **Charles and Clifton Lambreth** will be inducted for their Cross Country and Track winnings in 1977 and 1978 respectively. Congratulations to all these wonderful athletes.

Many alumni have already expressed sorrow on Facebook for the loss of **Charles Gary Bruin**. Sadly, he passed away April 11, 2024 and was interred at Georgetown Cemetery in Kentucky a week later. "Gary built a career of nearly 50 years as a tireless advocate for the most vulnerable of mankind—children, older adults, and adults with intellectual disabilities. For 22 years, he served as a houseparent at MH, later becoming a housing director/family counselor for teenagers. After retiring, he began a second career as a social worker in Kentucky." He is fondly remembered by many alumni as someone who always demonstrated respect for the children in his care. **Martha Berndt Fisher** remembers him respectfully as her "gym duty time" supervisor. She also cherishes her memory of Gary for including her in a canoeing trip he organized for a MH group. In all experiences with him, she learned

many valuable lessons.

We are sad to announce that **Patricia Stroud England** of Lexington, South Carolina passed away on July 13. Patti was the grandchild of **Mr. and Mrs. Tolbert Stroud** who served as houseparents at Watson Cottage and later Downing Cottage. She spent large amounts of time with them on the MH campus during summers and blended in beautifully with the MH youngsters. She was very faithful to attend Homecoming almost every year. She was predeceased by her brothers, **James Nixon Hill**, **Steve Michael Hill** and **John Wallace Beck**. She is survived by her husband **Glen England**; her three children and 12 grandchildren and her brothers **Ronald** and **Donald**. She was laid to rest on July 19 at Lexington Chapel in Lexington, SC.

The Alumni Council has had a standing Mitchell Museum Committee since around 1982 when the Mitchell Museum Project got a real start. The idea of using the Mitchell building as a museum had been tossed around for several years. When I went on the Council in 1971 as secretary, I was privileged to hear talk of museum dreams from council presidents **Mace Brown** and **George Bailey**, **Ted Chandler**, **Eric Hoyle**, **Keith Yow**, alumni columnist **C. Franklin Bailey**, alumni cottage building chairman/fund raiser **Tyson Kirk**, treasurer **Charlie Hawkins**, secretary **Nellie Hawkins**, and others. The Trustees agreed to that idea around 1979 and **Tyson Kirk** became the first Mitchell Committee Chairman. Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) CEO **Dr. Wagoner** had the BCH architect study the feasibility of such extended use of the old building and assisted in the planning of minimal renovation. The work began with just \$21,000 around 1982. We spent that and had to wait to save additional money for the next work phase. That established the work arrangement for the work done at the Mitchell over these many years. Since that time, the alumni have provided the money for almost all of the work that has been done at the Mitchell using our

"Spendable Account" held by BCH treasurer and based on earnings from the two endowment funds we placed under management of the BCH treasurer. Additional funds are contributed each year from generous donations, including a very substantial amount that comes to the Alumni Council from a deceased alumnus who asked to remain anonymous. The Alumni Council has not been responsible for the Mitchell's power and water service since those utilities were part of a "total campus utility bill."

On August 11, 2024, the Mitchell Committee comprised of chairman **Jackie Walker**, **Flora Hicks Patton**, **Lib Smathers Johnson**, **Keith Campbell**, and **Johnny Shields** met at the Mitchell with **Cyndie Truax**, BCH Vice-President of Strategy and Innovation, and BCH's new Mitchell Museum Curator **Marilyn Moore**. We learned that these two ladies are sincerely interested in doing what is necessary to further insure the quality of our memorabilia with procedures such as protecting them against mold and mildew and getting them transferred to their new home, the former Child Development Center established under the guidance of **Dr. Elizabeth Wagoner** around 1966. That building is connected by a breezeway directly behind Mills Home Baptist Church. More on progress with the Mitchell Museum in next month's column.

The rest of this year and part of 2025 will be spent updating the alumni Address Directory for the 2025 printing. Please contact **Flora Hicks Patton** (florapatton@ctc.net) or 704-791-7866 if you wish to add or correct an address for that directory. She is also happy to take any corrections for your **Charity & Children** subscription. Please contact **Sharon DeHart Stiles** if you wish to discuss use of the God's Acre Columbarium: 704-685-2443 or 1588 Elkhart Circle, Gastonia, NC, 28054.



Lib Johnson was a resident of Mills Home from 1946 to 1957. Johnson began writing the Mills Home alumni column in 1992.



Making News Every Day Around the State



Special adults light up conference

Residents from Zionville's homes had a great time visiting guests at Western Area Conference at Broyhill Home.



Hope in Style rallies the community

The back-to-school style show and silent auction brought together churches and community friends for the annual event. Boys and girls from Mills Home in Thomsville were able to shop for new outfits and model them for supporters. Hope in Style raises funds to benefit the children who've never shopped for new clothes.



Toddler's birthday honors children

The family of Coralyn, who attend Open Door Baptist, donated toiletries to BCH in honor of the two-year old's birthday.



HOMEBASE equips college students

HOMEBASE set up at an event for the first week of classes at Western Carolina University to help any student with supplies.



Guilford leads in time of worship

Christian band Guilford, led by Green Street Baptist worship leader Parker Webb, plays at Hope in Style.



Children make pillow cases for BCH

The GAs from Boiling Springs Baptist Church presented pillow cases they made for BCH's boys and girls.



Aquarium brings joy to residents

Men from Alverta Bolick, the Asheville home for special needs adults, learned about aquatic life at the NC Aquarium.



Pine Grove Church makes big impact

Debbie and Ervin Keener help lead BCH support at their church each year. They collected \$14,000 as a church.

every
CHILD
foster & adoption ministry

We equip your church to be a part of foster care & adoption so that every child receives the caring home he or she deserves.

Get connected at every-child.org

TURN YOUR CALLING INTO A CAREER

Statewide positions for serving children, families and special needs adults

BCHCAREERS.ORG

Giving your vehicle puts the ministry in

Motion!

Your donated vehicle helps with school, church activities, student drivers, doctor visits, family care mothers and more.

Call Sam Barefoot at 336.474.1224

UPCOMING EVENTS

JOIN US FOR FALL EVENTS/MISSION DAYS

NOVEMBER

3-10: Annual Offering Week of Prayer for Baptist Children's Homes | bchoffering.org

4-5: Annual Meeting of Baptist State Convention (NC Baptists) in Greensboro
ncbaptist.org/annual-meeting

09: Thanksgiving Dinner at Cameron Boys Camp in Cameron

23: Thanksgiving Dinner/Founders Day at Camp Duncan in Aberdeen

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN SATURDAY MISSIONS DAYS

- Oak Ranch, Broadway - Oct 26

For more details and registration information, visit the Events Calendar at bchfamily.com/events

SECC
State Employees
Combined Campaign

#3641

How can we help you? Contact 1.800.476.3669 or bchfamily.org/referral >>>

For each person's specific need, Baptist Children's Homes offers a unique ministry that is prepared to help. Reach out today.

Cottage parents' son remembers life at KH – Alumni encouraged to remember that “someone”

By JOHN THOMPSON, 102 Maritime Court, Havelock, NC 28532 (252) 671-3515 jbthompson43@gmail.com

Way back in the day when my family lived at Kennedy Home (KH), we always had a great time on Halloween night. We had a Halloween Party at the Skeeter Hut. It was a perfect place to make “spooky.” There was no electricity and plenty of unsettling sounds.

We would build a big fire in the fireplace, put black paper up everywhere, and hang dead tree limbs all over the porch and inside the building. We would hang moss all around inside and outside. I would make huge white ghosts out of sheets and hang them in the trees.

One of the fun parts about the night was riding on the back of a truck or wagon to get down to the hut. We all had a lot of fun. Every year my wife, **Becky**, would dress up and hide, only to suddenly appear and scar everyone. Early on Halloween night the younger children would come by our home and “trick or treat.”

The 2024 Coastal Fishing Tournament is sponsored by Parkview Baptist Church of Morehead City with **Rev. John Carswell** being the senior pastor. I wanted to share this idea with you because your church could do the same kind of thing. The tournament is now until the end of January. Folks can join in on the fun for \$40 a ticket. Categories include: Spanish mackerel, troupe, redfish, pompano, King mackerel, bluefish, and sheepshead. Last year this project raised more than \$4,000 for Kennedy Home. This is their second year doing this. I thought maybe other churches along the coast, by a river, or near a lake could do the same kind of thing. All of the profits go to KH. Parkview has a very active member named **Sean Bowen** who is in charge of this project. He gave me permission to give you his name and phone number so you could contact him if you want to buy a ticket or if you want to know all the details about having your own tournament. His phone number is

252-269-8783. Feel welcome to give him a call and talk to him about it. This looks like a great way to raise money for KH or any of Baptist Children’s Homes ministries all over the state.

Phillip Dupree wrote to tell me about when he lived at Kennedy. His parents are both gone to be with the Lord but many of you should remember them. Phillip writes: “My parents (**Frank and Julie**) and I lived at Kennedy Home from 1973-1978. We moved there during the summer right after I finished 4th grade. We moved into the Biggs Cottage with my parents serving as houseparents. We stayed in Biggs about six months and then moved into the clinic building after mama accepted the position of campus nurse. My daddy oversaw the ground maintenance the whole time we were there. We stayed at the clinic for the next six months and then moved into the house next to the sewing building where we remained until we left Kennedy Home in 1978. I did a lot of growing up during our time there. I went from having one brother to having 12 brothers and sisters. Now that’s a change. I can’t even begin to recall all the great memories I have but I will share a few: afternoons playing at the gym; bike riding all over campus; camping trips near the Skeeter Hut with **Mr. Thompson**; shooting pool with **Mr. More**; taking trips with the choir and singing at other churches; summer days at the beach cottage; hanging out with my best friend **Freddie Hines** and many others; spur of the moment night time trips to the Pizza Villa with the Thompson family, and last but certainly not least, all the great friendships I had with all my many brothers and sisters. If I could go back in time, I wouldn’t change a thing. KH held a special place in my parent’s hearts until they both passed in 2010 and it will always hold a special place in mine.”

It would be nice to hear from other staff youngins. Send me

something about your stay at KH and the memories you and your family created.

Here is a word from **Barbara Smith**: “I so enjoy my *Charity & Children* each month and appreciate the time and energy John Thompson puts into pulling his alumni column together. My sister **Penny** and I were there from 1967 to 1972. I sure did enjoy singing in the choir, although I had more spirit than talent. We shared both Ferebee and Pollock Cottages with **Donna Duty**. She was younger than us—sort of a little sister. I remember her as being a little shy. She also did a wonderful job as alumni columnist for a while. Through *Charity & Children*, I have read and enjoyed so many stories of those who lived at KH. What I haven’t read are stories about ‘what happened after leaving Kennedy Home.’ We probably all remember our senior year at North Lenoir High School. Mine was 1972. But then what? For me, and maybe some others, we left with the Senior Foot Locker. I can’t remember now what was in mine but I will tell you, I still have it. Yes, 50 or so years later.

“My story hop scotches from when **Sharon Terrill** helped me apply to UNC-Wilmington to another wonderful social worker, **Ann Wilkerson**, who made periodic visits to make sure I was on track. But there was also that ‘someone else’ outside of KH. I bet a lot of us had a ‘someone else’ who carried the torch and keep us on point. Maybe it was a relative, a member of the church you attended, or someone you worked with. My torch was held high by **Jean Piner**.

“While working at UNC-W on my student loan package, I worked in the Admissions and Registrar’s Office. Jean was more than a supervisor, she welcomed me into her family immediately. She didn’t really need me in her family. She already had a wonderful husband, Mike, and four boys, most were

older than me. Many times, I ate at their table.

Sometime between leaving KH and finding your own footing, there was a ‘someone’ or maybe a few ‘someones’ that helped you stay on track. I would like to hear from some of my Kennedy Home brothers and sisters as to who was the person or people who helped you.”

This is a wonderful idea. It would be very interesting if many of the alumni would write and tell me all about what happened after you left KH.

Donald Wetherington writes: “Going back in the day of precious memories! Let me tell you about my little eight transistor radio. As a little boy I was raised at Kennedy Home in Kinston. Somehow got me one of them little radios—they called it an eight transistor. I could only pick up one radio station WISP in Kinston. I can tell you that was the when I fell in love with music. It was about the time that the Beatles came out with the song “I Want To Hold Your Hand.” I spent all the money I could rake and scrap to buy batteries for that little radio. Care-free days, let the good times roll baby.”

Edward Gaston Pait responded: “Nice read Donald. I had a small transistor radio also—1960 in the Bunker Cottage. I would listen to WISI under the pillow so **Mrs. Young** wouldn’t hear me. Those were the days, my friend.”

Guess what? I’ll be 81 on September 17. Am I getting old yet? I’m still have a great time with my life. Some days are good and some aren’t so good, but I suppose everyone understands. Please write me good articles to use in *Charity & Children*. Send your stories right away about Thanksgiving and Christmas. Love to all my youngins.

— jt

John Thompson served at Kennedy Home from 1972-1977. At age 81, he continues to serve the Lord.



With every remembrance, thank God for the gift

By Jim Edminson, Editor

For all of my adult life, my happiness has been the blessing of family. It is where I place value and retreat to find the joy and purpose for my life. It is no wonder that it has been translated into my life's passion, becoming a ministry to children and families for more than 30 years.

In Mark's gospel, Jesus Himself affirms the incalculable value of children. He stops time in His very busy, very public, ministry to invite the little ones to come unto Him. He tells His disciples that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these as He takes them into His arms and blesses them. Jesus calls each of us to receive the kingdom of God just like a child does (Mark 10:13-16). What a beautiful picture of our Savior. Each time I proclaim this story, I feel its impact anew.

You see, in my small way, I have taken four little children into my arms, praying the Father's blessings upon them, being changed forever by their presence in my life. With every remembrance of my own little ones, I thank God for His incredible gift to me.

When Kyle came into our life, Kathy and I knew from the first meeting that there could be no child as perfect and beautiful as that little one.

We never

imagined loving another baby as much as we loved him—until Amie was born. She was amazing, filled with light. It is a powerful gift realizing love grows when that new baby comes into our lives. We found that parenting two children is doable. Even exhilarating. Two parents, two sets of arms, two laps, and two hearts overflowing. Bring it on!

With the birth of our third child, we experienced a stark realization: We are now outnumbered. Can we divide and conquer? How many times will we feel like retreating? Will we be able to meet those three daily needs? But Jenny abated our anxieties immediately. She was an amiable baby with a sweet disposition and a smile that she gave freely to family and strangers alike. Our fears subsided as we adapted our days to the nurturing of three. And then along came our Mary. More expanding, more revision. And lots more love. Mary was born after my cancer diagnosis, after we were told there could be no more children. Our fourth child was a miracle. Our fourth miracle, actually.

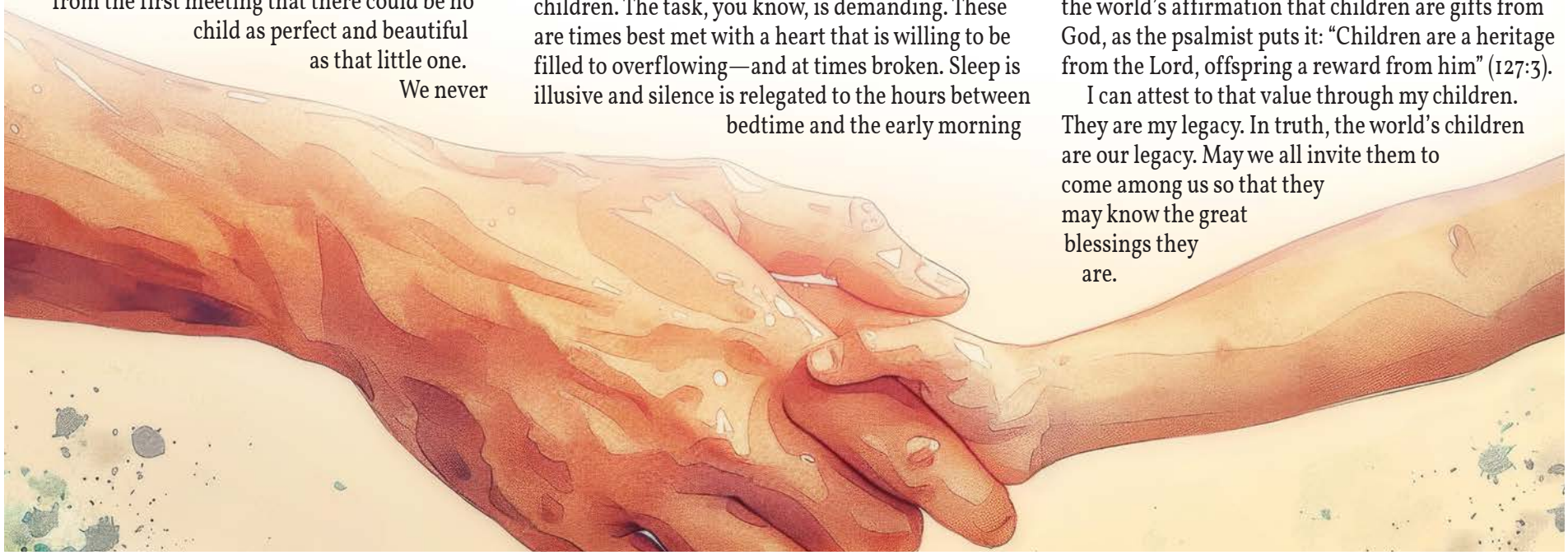
We both refused to see our family as anything less than a good and perfect gift from above. It is not easy, and we struggled in those days of young children. The task, you know, is demanding. These are times best met with a heart that is willing to be filled to overflowing—and at times broken. Sleep is illusive and silence is relegated to the hours between bedtime and the early morning

hours of the next day. But it is also a time of waking before daylight on Christmas morning to giggles that turn to joyful belly-roll laughter—one of every year's best memories. It is a time when prayers of safety for a child out late with friends turns to prayers of real thanksgiving upon their return. It is a time when I lift my baby, dedicating that life and entrusting the Father to keep that child for eternity. It is a time of celebration when each child comes forward to share that they have decided to follow Jesus and confess Him as Lord of their lives.

Sometimes, I relive these moments with those unbelievably perfect children, my memory crystal clear as I recall exact days with each of them. Sometimes, I am aided by snapshots, photographs taken from those growing years of children and family. I see my progression as a father, my own growth into the role for which God entrusted me.

These remembered experiences are my heart's beat as I open God's Word and repeat Jesus's words: "Let the little children come to me..." Our Savior, the mighty Word Incarnate, placed everything He was doing on hold as the children came. That is the picture of the inestimable worth of a child. That is the world's affirmation that children are gifts from God, as the psalmist puts it: "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him" (127:3).

I can attest to that value through my children. They are my legacy. In truth, the world's children are our legacy. May we all invite them to come among us so that they may know the great blessings they are.



JUST ANNOUNCED

\$300,000

MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE

YOUR GIFT IS DOUBLED!

EVERY gift you give between Oct. 1, 2024 and Jan. 31, 2025 will be **MATCHED** dollar for dollar up to the \$300,000 challenge goal! You can change a child's life by scanning the code or giving at bchfamily.org/givenow

