



Father's Day

Take time to honor your father on the third Sunday, June 13. Be inspired by the stories on pages 4 and 6.

Charity & Children

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



@bchfamily

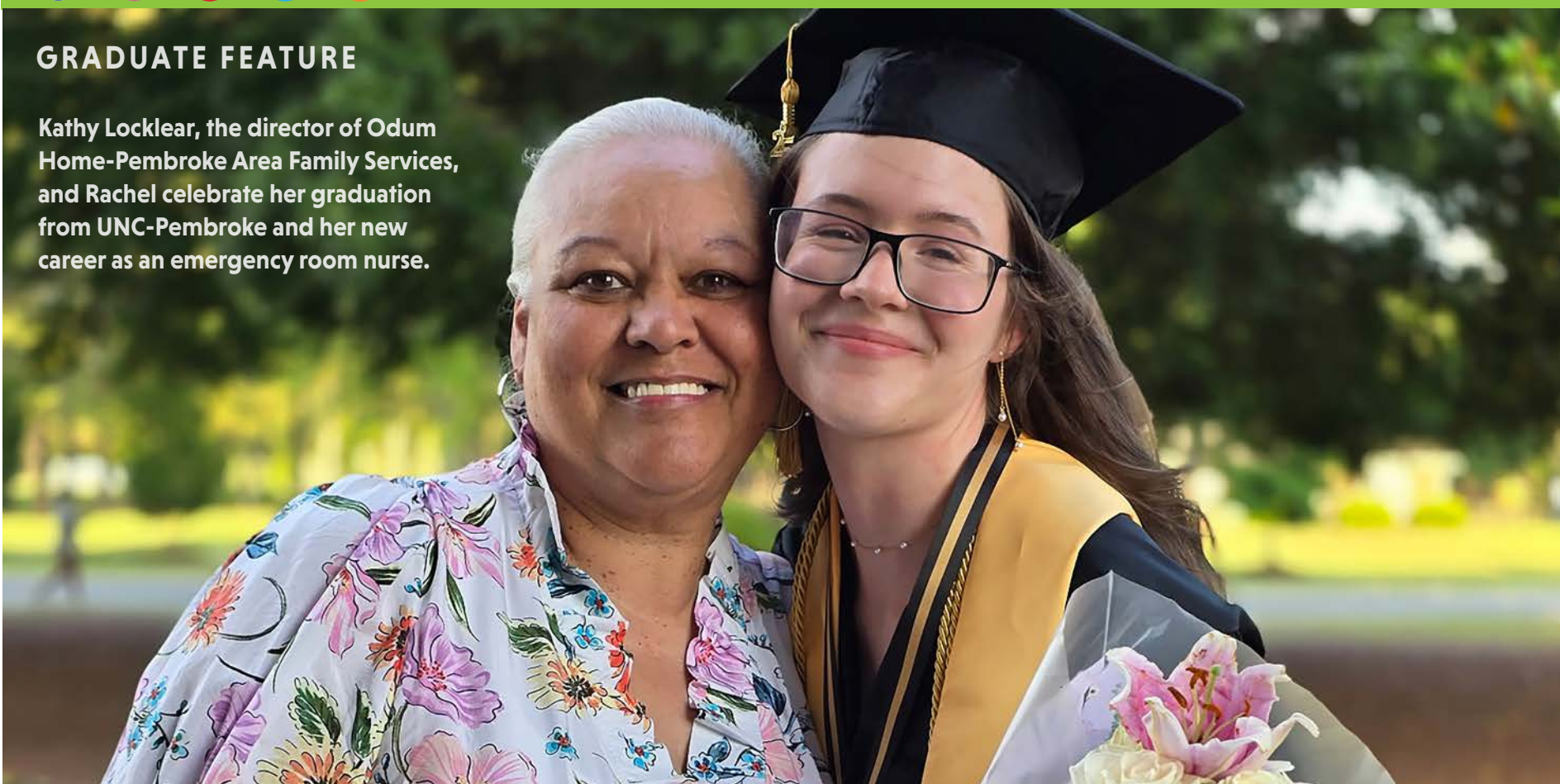
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Issue 5

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GRADUATE FEATURE

Kathy Locklear, the director of Odum Home-Pembroke Area Family Services, and Rachel celebrate her graduation from UNC-Pembroke and her new career as an emergency room nurse.



Rachel becomes a nurse, fulfilling a cherished dream

By Jim Edminson, Editor

Rachel was silent—her phone remained in her bag. There was no music playing. She was lost in her thoughts, feeling numb after the day's long shift. The hum of her wheels and the headlights of passing cars distracted her deep thoughts. Arriving home, she sat in the car until finally having the energy to go inside.

Her shift began like other days. She spoke to colleagues and signed in. She attended to duties. The emergency room was always a buzz. Rachel went from one task to another.

It was sometimes hard to imagine that she was training to be a nurse. She was tops in her class and her nursing preceptor was second to none.

Then the deafening noise came. In seconds, she rushed with the other nurses to the side of a patient who had gone into cardiac arrest. Their focus immediately turned to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). It was Rachel's first live experience. For two hours, she joined in with continuous chest compressions. It was all done with precision. She did her best—like she had

been trained. But the patient didn't make it.

"You feel like you're in a haze," Rachel remembers. "But you can't stop. Your attention goes to what is happening next, to the next crisis, to the next patient to help—you must push on, but you never forget."

Rachel knows how important it is to have help. At sixteen, she came to live at Odum Home when living at home became her biggest challenge. Improving grades, entering college, working hard to fulfill her dreams were goals she reached with the loving help of others. *(Continued on page 7)*

Serving like Jesus: Meeting needs, changing lives

By **Kristyn Butts**, BCH Director of Volunteer Engagement

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus models a life of compassionate service—constantly seeking out the vulnerable, meeting their needs, and transforming lives. Hundreds of believers across North Carolina followed His example by partnering with Baptist Children's Homes (BCH), and serving at this year's Spring Friends of Children (FOC) events. More than 500 individuals from churches, small groups, and families stepped up—completing vital projects, donating needed goods, and pouring hours of hands-on love into the lives of BCH's children, adults, and families.

One church in particular has taken their commitment to a deeper level. First Baptist Church of Richlands has long been a faithful presence at Kennedy Home's (KH) FOC events, but recently felt God calling them to something more.

Pastors Mike Johnston and Stephen Budd began asking behind-the-scenes questions: Who gets everything ready at an FOC event? Who cleans up after the crowds are gone? They discovered a mountain of invisible work—logistics, prep, cleanup—all necessary for a successful FOC. Their response was simple, yet powerful: "How can we help?"



For the last four FOC weekends, FBC Richlands has served as lead volunteers—handling set-up, tear-down, and everything in between. But their service hasn't stopped at logistics. The team has become a spiritual support system for the KH staff. They've brought meals, gifted staff with tokens of appreciation, and—most meaningfully—offered intentional prayer over every staff member.

On the Friday before each event, FBC Richlands arrives to prepare for the 200+ volunteers

who will serve the next day, setting up tables and staging tools. They return early Saturday morning with breakfast in hand, ready to check-in volunteers, fire up grills, serve lunch, and, when the crowd disperses, clean and reset the campus.

Pastor Stephen Budd reflected on the impact: "It's a blessing to come and be intentional and get to know those who are serving at Kennedy Home. We don't do anything giant, but it's the simple acts of caring, loving, and serving that hopefully make an impact. Every time we come, it's a different cross section of our church people. It has really opened our eyes to the need for foster parents and cottage parents because people are seeing the needs firsthand. Moving forward, we're looking for ways to also come alongside and support foster families in our own community. We recognize not everyone is called to foster, but there's something we can all do."

The tireless work of FBC Richlands allows KH staff to focus on what matters most: caring for residents and connecting with volunteers. Each task completed—whether raking leaves or serving hot-dogs—frees up resources that can be reinvested in programs that directly impact lives. Yet, the true power of FOC isn't just the projects—it's



Above, lead volunteers Isaiah Rowe, Dorie Rivest, Norma Lou Savage, and Pastor Stephen Budd from FBC Richlands prepares lunch for more than 200 volunteers. Left, Alicia Rowe serves as a lead volunteer and helps check-in and oversee volunteers at Kennedy Home. Below, Rowe helps unload "Do Good, Bring Goods" challenge donations.

the relationships formed and the message of worth communicated through the loving presence of volunteers.

We're actively looking for churches who are willing to step into the role of lead volunteers—just like FBC Richlands—for the upcoming fall events. Your leadership can make a tremendous difference in creating a smooth, welcoming, and

Christ-centered experience for all who serve. Contact me, if you'd like to take the next step in serving. While BCH looks forward to another impactful Fall Friends of Children, you don't have to wait until then to get involved.

Will you commit to being a Prayer Partner today?

Your prayers are one of the most powerful gifts you offer. By signing up, you'll receive a monthly email from BCH CEO David Melber with specific ways to pray



for the children, adults, and families in care. Visit bchfamily.org/prayer to sign up.

Let's serve the vulnerable—just like Jesus—by actively seeking needs, stepping into the messy, and sharing the hope of Christ. Visit bchfamily.org/volunteer to "Find Your Spot" to serve.

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

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An invitation to something sacred: Partnering in prayer for BCH

By **David Melber**, Chief Executive Officer

Who doesn't love an invitation to something special? On behalf of both Tera and me, we want to express how much we've loved becoming part of North Carolina! We are especially grateful for the family of Christ-followers here who have faithfully and consistently prayed for the BCH family over the years. This state is filled with people who truly live out what it means to be *On Mission Together*. It's inspiring to know that across North Carolina, we are surrounded by believers who long to know Jesus more deeply and make Him known in every community and family.

In nearly six months of traveling across the state, we have been overwhelmed and



David Melber

humbled by the number of faithful prayer partners interceding for God's provision for BCH and those we serve. It's clear that people deeply love their Children's Home. As we celebrate our 140th year, we recognize that our ministry has been and continues to be sustained by faithful prayer.

And now, we're inviting you to join us in something new. This past month, we launched *Prayer Partners*. When you sign up, you'll receive regular updates on specific ways to intercede for BCH to help us become even more Gospel-centered and Kingdom-impacting in every area of our ministry. Throughout history, every great movement of God has been preceded by His people praying with focus and persistence for Him to move.

We need you.

We are facing extraordinary needs across every area of service. Each month, we receive hundreds of requests for people to step into the messy, beautiful work of reaching broken families with the

hope and healing of the Gospel.

In Mark 9, Jesus heals a boy tormented by an unclean spirit. He begins with a rebuke:

"O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me."

After healing the boy, Jesus tells His disciples,

"This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

Let's take His words to heart.

If we are to bring hope and healing to hurting children and families,

prayer must be at the very center of all we do.

We joyfully invite you to join us in this sacred work. BCH is a 140-year-old ministry with a legacy of serving the vulnerable—and you can be part of what God is doing today. No matter your age, location, or abilities, you can pray. And as we journey together in this effort, let's move forward with joyful expectation, watching as God answers in specific ways that lead to life change, deeper faith, and greater worship of King Jesus.

No matter your age, location, or abilities, you can pray.

See page 10 to join David and others in becoming a monthly Prayer Partner.

Remember fathers by throwing lifeline to a child

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

I remember Dad's encouraging words throughout my life. "You can do this. Keep trying."

He would come home from work, tired, but that did not stop him. We would make our way to the basketball goal located in the back yard. He encouraged me as I practiced for hours, hoping to make the basketball team. I remember the excitement when I made the team, but the excitement of running into the house that evening and sharing with my dad I had made the team made the experience truly memorable. His encouragement had given me the courage to believe I could put the ball in the basket and make the team. I am grateful for a loving encouraging father!

One of my favorite memories of my dad is our Thursday night church visitations. A group would gather at the church for prayer and would go visit those they felt God had put on their heart. This was typically a group of men that would gather in the upper room of the church. I am so grateful my dad realized God's call on my heart and would bring me along for many gospel teaching moments. That was when I learned from my earthly father the importance of crying out to my heavenly father on behalf of others.

Dad was a fixer. He could fix anything that had a motor. He would tinker for hours on one of the old tractors.

He taught me how to drive one of those tractors. All was good until the day I hit the house coming around the corner a little too fast. Obviously, he was better at fixing the tractor than teaching me how to drive it. Dad instilled within me the need to be a fixer, whatever the problem—however not motors or technology.

Dad was a builder. He and my uncle built the house my family lived in for more than 65 years. He taught me the importance of building, not houses, but building up people. He was an encourager to all who knew him. I remember at his funeral people kept coming up to me telling me about how Mom and Dad had been a friend to them and helped them.

Dad was

a teacher. I remember sitting at the dining room table the night before my first job. I would be running the cash register the next morning. I knew that if I did not count the money back to the customer correctly that the cash register would not balance at end of the day. I was nervous to say the least. Mom and Dad sat with me for over an hour learning to make change (now it is all done electronically). Dad taught me to teach by example—no matter what the lesson.

Dad was a musician. He had a song in his sweet heart and shared it through his gift of music. He was so very gifted. He played the guitar, the bass, and the piano. He had a beautiful voice. I remember whenever we would travel in the car, we would sing. My mother also has a beautiful voice. When I was a young child, I sang loud and terribly off key. As I listened and learned from my Dad and Mom, my voice changed. I was taught a new song. I was given a new voice—one of joy and hope. Today, I still sing loud—however hopefully in key.

When learning to swim Dad was there holding me up. I remember every time he would let go, I would feel like I was sinking. My dad was my lifeguard, often times my lifeline, not just when I was learning to swim but throughout my life.

As summer approaches, many of our children will make their way to the pool. I can almost hear their giggles as they splash around in the water. I see our lifeguard there to keep watch over them. For our children, the pool water is cool, refreshing, and lots of fun—but we know there are dangers.

Too many of our children have experienced the dangerous side of life.

No one has

watched over them or protected them. There were no "lifeguards" against the physical and sexual abuse, neglect, or the perils of the opioid epidemic. There were no "lifeguards" to keep them off the street. There were no "lifeguards" to encourage them to keep swimming or to throw them a lifeline.

Many of our children have not known their fathers. They have not protected them or cared for them. Their earthly fathers have not been a spiritual guide, a fixer, a builder, a teacher, a song of hope, or lifeline to them.

Father's Day is June 15. In honor or in memory of your dad, you have an opportunity this Father's Day to remember him in a way that provides a lifeline to a child in need. All honor and memorial gifts given between April 1 and July 1 will be listed in our August issue of *Charity & Children*. We are printing the names of those honored and of those who gave. This is a wonderful opportunity to honor your father.

For those who have been builders, teachers, fixers, a song of hope, and lifeguards, thank you! For those who have loved, prayed, nurtured, mentored, and supported, thank you! When our children are struggling to stay afloat, when they feel as if they are swimming against the current of despair and hopelessness, you are there. Thank you for helping us throw out the lifeline of Christ's love to children and families.

In James 1:27, we read, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." In Psalm 68:5, we read, "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling." Thank you for helping us to be fathers to the fatherless and defenders of widows by pointing them to our heavenly father.

I would love to hear how you celebrated Father's Day. Email or text me your Father's Day celebration ideas and or pictures. Again, thank you for living out God's calling on your hearts to be a father to the fatherless and a defender of widows. We love you and appreciate you so very much.

Happy Father's Day!



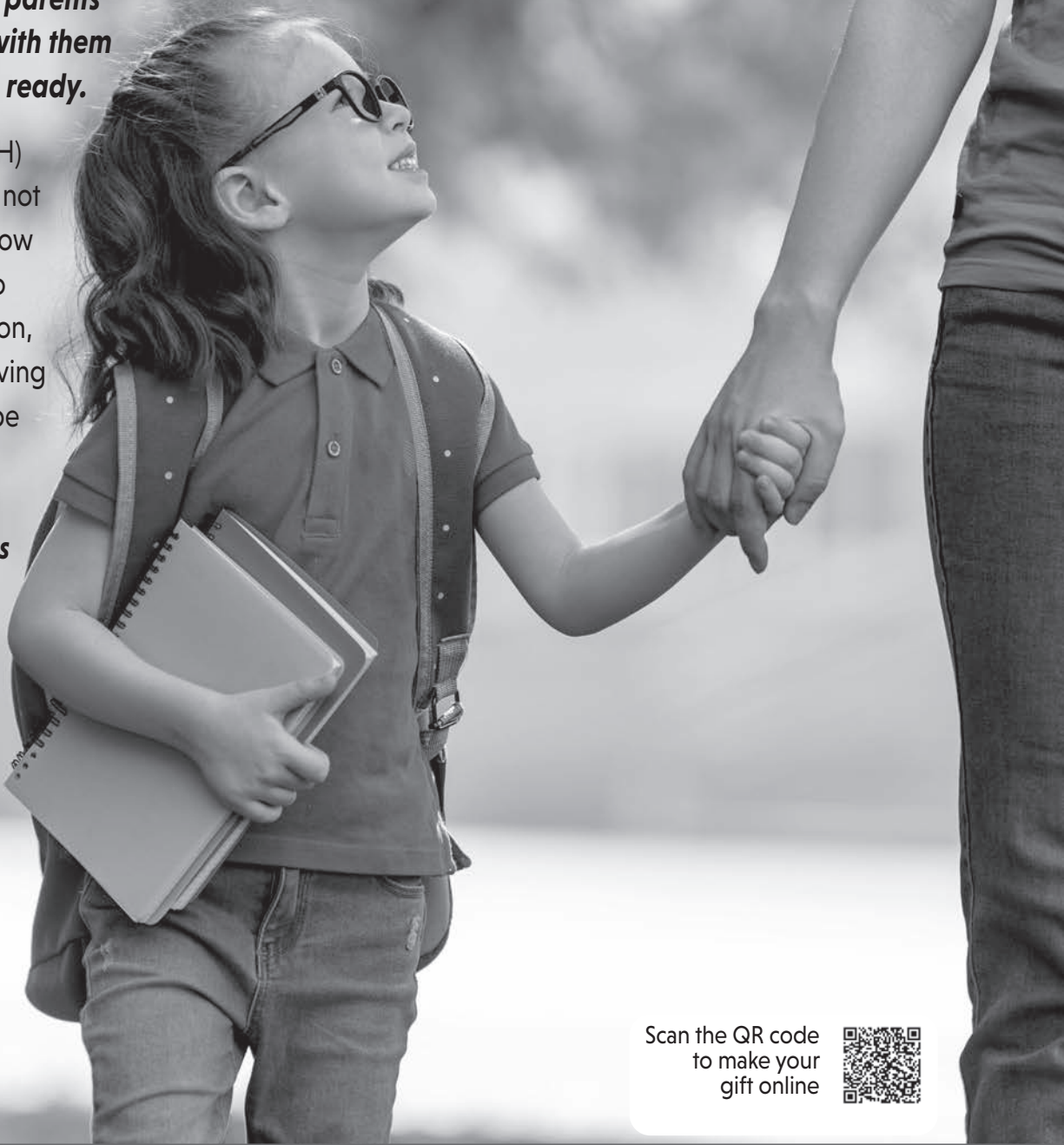
Together, hand in hand, getting ready for school begins now.

Weeks before foster parents and cottage parents take the hands of our children and walk with them on that first day of school, we are getting ready.

While some of Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) boys and girls are already with us, others will not arrive until mid-summer. While we do not know the names and faces of those children, we do know they will need extra comfort, compassion, and the helping hands of a friend like you. Living in our cottages and family foster homes will be new to them and we know change isn't easy. They are starting over at a new home, a new school, and making new friends. **So how does your Back-to-School gift help?** First, you help ensure every child has a safe home. Second, you provide them the new clothes and school supplies they need to feel confident on their first day of school. Most importantly, because of you, the love of Jesus is able to be shared with them.

Please give so that, hand in hand, we may share HOPE with vulnerable children.

Thank you for giving,
David Melber, BCH CEO



Scan the QR code
to make your
gift online





Use my back-to-school gift to bring help & hope!

☐ \$75 ☐ \$150 ☐ \$300 ☐ \$600 ☐ \$ _____ Any size gift!

Print your information below and mail this form with your check. You can also use the enclosed envelope.

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Make a credit card gift at bchfamily.org/backtoschool or scan the QR code. You can also phone **Faith Frazier at 336-474-1312.**

☐ Yes, I would like to receive email updates. ☐ Contact me about how to prepare a Christian Will. ☐ I have included Baptist Children's Homes in my estate.

A dad's greatest legacy is a life rooted in the Word

By Isaac Melber

The greatest legacy a father can leave isn't wealth, fame, or success—it's a life rooted in the Word of God. That's what I have experienced firsthand through the life of my dad.

When I say, "a father of the Word," I mean a man whose life is grounded in Scripture. Biblically, fathers are not called to be rich, popular, or successful by worldly standards. They are called to be fathers of the Word. From that, everything else flows: spiritual richness, dedication, and love from those around them as they reflect the nature of the ultimate Father—God.

Our model for fatherhood is not Abraham, Jacob, or even King David. It's God the Father. As Jesus prepared for the cross, He prayed in Mark 14:36: "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." That intimate moment gives us a glimpse into the closeness of their relationship—a bond rooted in trust, submission, and love. That's what a godly father-son relationship should look like. A father of the Word recognizes that he can't attain the perfection of God, but he lives in pursuit of Him, shaped by Scripture, and dependent on grace. My dad is that kind of man.

Growing up, my dad taught us three truths as a father of the Word; to lead, provide, and protect. These truths came straight from Scripture. He was never afraid to admit his shortcomings. In fact, he made it clear to my five siblings and me that he falls short daily. But he also made it clear that his standard wasn't himself—it was the Word.

My story with him began the day I met him as a five year old in Ethiopia. When I first saw him, I remember thinking this white man looked funny. But I also knew I was going home with him. From the very beginning, he cared for me not just physically, but spiritually. He nurtured me with the Word of God. He didn't build his parenting around his own strengths, personality, or accomplishments—he built it around Scripture.

It wasn't until I gave my life to Jesus at the age of six that I began to understand the depth of what



Nineteen-year-old Isaac and his father, Baptist Children's Homes' CEO David Melber, enjoy time together. Isaac is the youngest of the six Melber children and was adopted by David and Tera Melber.

he had done for me. As I grew up, I began to notice that many of my friends either didn't have dads or had fathers who weren't present. That made me realize just how much of a gift I had been given.

Much of our early bonding happened through hunting. We spent hours together in the blinds, and he was right there when I got my first deer. I have a decade and a half's worth of memories—some fun, some challenging—but all shaped by his consistent presence and faithfulness.

In eighth grade, I was struggling with a sin and finally opened up to him. I was scared, but he didn't respond with judgment or shame. He responded with love and pointed me back to Scripture. That moment wasn't just emotional—it was spiritual provision. He gave me something far greater than advice. He gave me truth. That conversation brought us closer together.

Another defining season came when we moved towns before my freshman year of high school. My aspiration at the time was to be a stud football player as I was in a top-notch school in the state of Georgia. However, as the new kid trying to live by Biblical values, I faced isolation in a lost world. Our commute to school was 40 minutes each morning. Every single morning, before I got out of the car, my dad prayed over me: "Lord, show Isaac favor at this school—not just for athletic purposes, but for

the advancement of Your Kingdom." He continued to remind me of my identity in Jesus. He never missed a day until I began driving myself. That daily prayer shaped my view of success, identity, and calling. He wasn't just trying to protect me with his words. He was using the Word to protect my heart and grow my faith. Those rides were some of the most formative moments of my life. It was during that time that I began to feel God calling me to pastoral ministry.

Looking back now, I see how the home I was raised in—and the dad who led it—

cultivated my love for God's Word and His church. After that season, I started an in-home Bible study with a few friends. My dad and I led it together. Three young men gave their lives to Jesus through that small gathering in our living room.

So, I end this the same way I began: My dad is a Father of the Word.

He doesn't just tell me to love the Word, he lives it. He doesn't just encourage me to be godly, he models it. The greatest thing a son can witness is a father who is present and who lives out the very truth he teaches. One day, I want to lead, provide, and protect my future family the way he did ours.

And yet, he always reminds us: the standard is not him. The standard is God the Father. My dad's greatest hope is that his sons and daughters surpass him in Christlikeness, not for pride, but for Kingdom impact. And he always says reminds me that we will never outdo our Heavenly Father, but that should make us strive to be more like Him every day.

That's what it means to be a Father of the Word. And I'm forever thankful that I've known one in real life.

Editor's Note: Isaac Melber, 19, is a student at Carson-Newman University in Jefferson City, Tennessee where he is pursuing a call to pastoral ministry. With a heart for orphans and widows, Isaac is passionate about preaching the gospel and plans to attend seminary after college. His life's mission is simple: to know Jesus and make Him



Odum Home becomes Rachel's safe place to grow

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

(Continued from page 1)

It was an important day when Rachel realized she wanted to be a nurse. She could see it in herself. She knew there would be good days and days when she wished she could have done more. But she also knew she would always put her patients' needs first and do her very best to help them.

On May 10, twenty-one-year-old Rachel walked across the stage to receive her degree in nursing from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Only days earlier she participated in the McKenzie-Elliott School of Nursing pinning ceremony, welcoming graduating nursing students into the profession. The ceremony recognized the graduates' hard work and marked their transitions to professional nursing careers.

"It was a bit surreal," Rachel says. "I don't know if I would have even gone to college if I had not come to Odum Home. I began my journey of becoming a nurse here."

Before coming to live at Odum Home, Rachel's relationship with her parents had deteriorated. They were at an impasse, the hurt ran deep. She spent most of her time hiding in her room, sequestered as things grew worse.

"I felt I had become a disappointment at home," she confides. "I didn't want to be away from my family, but it was better here. I was able to be me and speak my mind. I felt safe."

Her houseparents gave Rachel space to heal. She transitioned well. She felt respect from the staff and in turn respected them. "They gave me room to be myself." She built relationships with the other girls in the cottage, and she met her best friend Joann. At Odum Home, she began her junior year of high school.

Rachel lived at Elmore Cottage and entered the transitional living program. The program offers a living environment that undergirds learning the life skills needed to be a successful, independent young adult.

Up until that time, Rachel had done nothing to prepare for college. Her grades were poor and didn't reflect her aptitude. Deadlines for stan-



Rachel graduated with a degree in nursing from University of North Carolina at Pembroke on May 10 and will be an ER nurse at Cape Fear Valley Hoke Hospital in Raeford. She came to live at Odum Home at sixteen and worked hard in high school and college pursuing her dream of nursing. Below, childcare worker Pam Hailey, Rachel, and Joann.

dardized tests passed. She feared she wouldn't be accepted into college if she applied. Rachel knew it was time to start over. She began the hard work to improve her grade point average, earning straight "A's" her last two years of high school. She was focused on who she was and what she wanted. She determined not to let anything stand in her way.

Joann was the spark plug Rachel needed as she took steps to attend college. The friends determined they would do it together. They completed college applications and admission essays. The

girls submitted FAFSA to begin their financial aid process.

"Joann was so helpful," Rachel says. "She was key to me going to college. When we were accepted to UNCP and set out to both become nurses, we became each other's biggest supporter. If she had not been part of my life, I'm not

sure I would be where I am today."

Although college was hard, Rachel was determined to do her best to become a nurse. She realigned her priorities and how she spent her days. She dedicated hours to study. She gave up much of her social life. The commitment led to straight "A's", Dean's Lists, and Chancellor's Honors Lists.

"You figure out what you must sacrifice," Rachel confides. "You have to remember, it's not about doing well this semester or that semester. It's about doing well throughout the program."

The Odum Home staff members live their Christianity, and it has been life changing for Rachel to witness. Seeing them live out their beliefs has been cause for her to step back, be open to God, and reflect on her personal faith walk.

"I believe God has put me here and put these people in my life," Rachel asserts. "I see how He has lined things up that would never have happened without Him being involved in my life and without me coming to live at Odum Home."

Rachel will be an ER nurse at Cape Fear Valley Hoke Hospital in Raeford. She returns to Odum Home when she can, a place she calls home, in hopes of inspiring residents to dream, work hard, and go for it. Just as others believed in her, she believes in them.



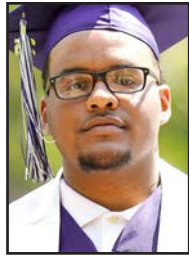
Celebrating Achievements

BCH RESIDENTS

Rachel Smith graduated from UNC-Pembroke and will be working at Cape Fear Hoke County Emergency Department. Rachel plans are to work towards obtaining her SANE nursing license to help victims of sexual assault and child abuse.



Smith



Dillard

Omar Dillard graduated from Purnell Swett High School in Pembroke NC. He plans to work at Campbell Soup in Maxton and then attend Robeson Community College in Lumberton to become a Lines Man.

STAFF CHILDREN

Ella Kiser graduated from Ronald Wilson Reagan High School in May and will be attending Appalachian State University in the fall. She plans to pursue a career in Theater with a minor in American Sign Language. Ella is the daughter of Bond Kiser, VP of Staff Engagement and Compliance.



Kiser



Johnston

Shelby Caroline Johnston graduated from Georgia Southern University in May with a BS in Human Development and Family Studies. She plans to enter the Human Services field as her career path. Shelby is the daughter of Kelly Johnston, Eastern Foster Care Supervisor.

Brilyn Roberts graduated from Lake Academy of Kernersville and will begin her Internship with Elevation Church Ballantyne. She is the daughter of Brian Roberts, NCBAM Call Center Director.



Roberts

Mackenzie Snovak graduated from East Davidson High School and will continue to serve as an assistant manager at Maurice's department store. She is the daughter of Andy Snovak, Mills Home Foster Care Case Manager.



Snovak

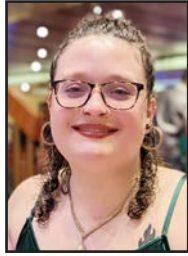
Elijah Cherbony graduated from a dual program at Rivers Academy and Haywood Community College receiving his



Cherbony

high school diploma and certificate in Automotive Technology, respectively. After graduation he is pursuing specialized training in automobile mechanics. Elijah is the son of Herman and Amy Cherbony, Haywood Cottage parents at Broyhill Campus.

Beth Cherbony graduated in May from Liberty University with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with an emphasis on adolescent therapy. She is now pursuing her Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology. Beth is the daughter of Herman and Amy Cherbony, Haywood Cottage parents at Broyhill Campus.



Cherbony



McKinney

Takeba McKinney of Kinston NC graduated from Lenoir Community College with a degree in Certified Billing and Coding Specialist. She will be working with different healthcare facilities as a CBCS. Takeba is

the daughter of La Toya Carlton, Kennedy Home/Williams Cottage Family Care Worker.

Michaela Grace Pratt graduated from Liberty University with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work. Her plans for the future are to serve people within the social work field. Michaela is the daughter of Rick Norman, Family Services/Foster Care & Adoption Church Liaison.



Pratt



Turner

Alaina Grace Turner graduated from East Davidson High School and will be attending High Point University in the fall pursuing a degree in Social Media & Digital Communications with a Minor in Media Production. She is the daughter of Ashley Turner, Development & Communications Associate.

Kaitlyn Marie Townsley graduated from High Point University with a BA in Special Education and will be pursuing a master's degree at Appalachian State University for Speech-Language Pathology after graduation. She is the daughter of Courtney Townsley of Emmanuel Home.



Townsley



Martin

Isaac Watson Martin graduated from Liberty University in December of 2024, receiving a BS in Digital Media and Journalism with a minor in Graphic Design. After graduating he will be the manager of Creative Video at Campbell University

Athletics. Isaac is the son of Matt Martin, North East Regional Director of NCBAM.



Smith

Asher Chilson graduated from The Oaks Private School in Jasper, FL and plans to attend Lenoir Community College. He is the son of Matt and Jessie Chilson of Kennedy Home.



Chilson



Chilson

Joshua Chilson graduated from Lenoir Community College in May and plans to attend Appalachian State after graduation. He is the son of Matt and Jessie Chilson of Kennedy Home.



Nash

Judah Nash graduated from Rock Hill High School in South Carolina and plans to attend Bob Jones University as a member of the Cross Country and Track & Field teams while pursuing a degree in Engineering. He is the son of Meredith Nash, Christian Adoption Services.



Surratt

Holden Garrett Surratt received his Masters in Accounting from University of North Carolina at Greensboro this May. He will continue his career at Ballard Surratt CPA, PA. He is the son of Martha Surratt, Senior Director of Special Ministries on Mills Home Campus.

Walker Grayson Surratt received his Associates in Arts from Davidson-Davie Community College and will be transferring to a four year college to pursue a Bachelors Degree. He is the son of Martha Surratt, Senior Director of Special Ministries on Mills Home Campus.



Surratt

STAFF MEMBER

Audrey Luther, Asheboro Home innovations support



Luther

professional, graduated from Fayetteville State University this May with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology.

Omar overcomes challenges to celebrate the possible

By Jim Edminson, Editor

Omar is graduating high school. It is something he never thought would be possible.

Before coming to live at Odum Home in Pembroke, life was chaotic. His mom's life choices made day-to-day living difficult. Omar and his two younger siblings were moved from place to place and from school to school. The children slept on sofas and on make-shift beds on the floor. Nights were noisy and long and Omar would sleep into the day. Going to school was not a priority. Planning for a future was something other teens did, not Omar.

When Omar first walked into Latta Cottage four years ago, he weighed 340 pounds and was pre-diabetic. He never had an option to eat healthy food. There were no nights sitting around a dining table and eating a good meal. Fast food, highly processed food, and food picked up on the go and eaten at all times, added on the pounds. Omar was trapped in his own body.

When houseparent Pam Hailey first met Omar, she was a "bit" intimidated. He towered over her. But instead of a growl, she was greeted with a wide grin. The two gravitated to each other.

Life at Odum Home would be a challenge at first. He had to go to bed at a certain time to be up and ready for school. Meals were at set times and there was no more "junk" food. And there were no more hours spent watching television. Omar began to exercise.

"Everything was clean," Omar recounts. "We had beds with pillows and sheets. There were clean bathrooms and daily chores. You couldn't just sit around. Everyone worked together to make the cottage nice."

Omar's high school freshman year was difficult. Regularly attending school and doing homework was alien. Attending Saturday school and summer school that year helped put him on the right track. Turning a "D" average to an "A"- "B" average took a lot of work. The help of volunteer tutor Robert Bass and Hailey was invaluable.

"Just getting into tenth grade was an accomplishment," Omar asserts. "Everything improved. Before my dad died, he told me that he wanted me to graduate. My parents never



Nineteen-year-old Omar and his two siblings came to Odum Home four years ago. Since then, he has achieved goals he never thought possible. On June 13, Omar graduated high school and looks forward to a bright future with aspirations of becoming a licensed electrician or plumber. He has been helped by Odum Home staff members like Pam Hailey (below) and credits volunteer tutor Robert Bass with his academic achievement.

graduated high school and he wanted me to do better than he was able to do. He motivated me. I was ready to push on."

Omar was surprised that he would like school. His world opened up. He began working a part time job, earned a driver's license, and opened a bank account.

"Omar feels good about himself," Hailey says. "He works hard and is looking forward to getting a good job after graduation."

Omar has set his sights on a job, working at a large food manufacturer in Robeson County near Odum Home. He wants to become

a licensed electrician or plumber.

"My goal is to be financially stable," he says. "It's amazing to even think about. I don't know where I would be if it were not for the love and care I've gotten at Odum Home. I don't even like thinking about it."

Now seventy pounds lighter and stepping

into a brighter future, Omar has become a better version of himself. His tall frame and size, once intimidating, is endearing. He is polite and his warm smiles are welcoming.

"I'm big but I don't want to scare anyone," 19-year-old Omar says. "I'm a gentle giant and have a kind heart. I want people to see a good person who is making good decisions."

Hailey is proud of Omar. He has learned to focus on what he wants, to set goals, and work to reach them. "Omar is determined to not let his past distract him from his future."

Omar is determined to be a role model for his 15-year-old sister and 17-year-old brother. He has learned to stay away from wrong things and the wrong people. Since accepting Jesus into his life, Omar puts God first, determined to not fall to the wayside.

"I talk to God," he says. "The Lord put me here. Living here at Odum Home has made all the difference. I trust Him and thank Him every day."

Hailey and the other staff members at Odum Home are anchors, helping Omar and supporting him as he continues to grow as a young person. He is a part of them and will always be welcome.

Omar graduated high school on June 13 and celebrated the possible, excited by his future.



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Signing up to be a Prayer Partner simply means that you will receive a monthly email with an overall prayer focus from myself along with several additional prayer prompts to guide your time with the Lord on behalf of the children, families, and adults in our care. The goal is that we would be prayerfully united in seeking His kingdom here on Earth and that God will work through all of Baptist Children's Homes' efforts so that those we serve come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for your love of the Lord and the BCH ministry." – **DAVID MELBER, CEO**

Signing up to be a prayer partner is easy.

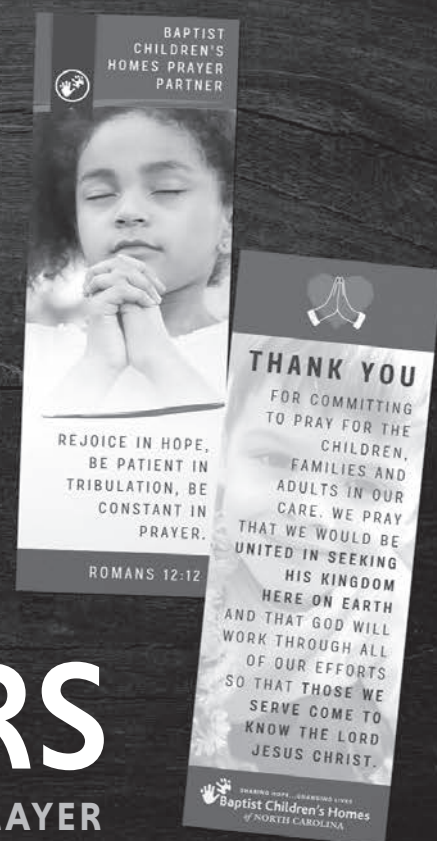
Scan the QR code below to go to the sign up page. You can also access the form by going to **BCHFAMILY.ORG/PRAYER** or choose "Prayer Partners" under the "Get Involved" section on our website.

As a thank you for partnering with Baptist Children's Homes in prayer, we are offering a **BOOKMARK DOWNLOAD** to all of our prayer partners. You will receive a welcome email from David with the download once you sign up.



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Sharing the Gospel with everyone you encounter

By **Rev. Luis Quintanar**, Pastor, Mills Home Baptist Church

If you have children at home, if you are a grandparent, an aunt, or an uncle, or a member of a church, and you are wondering, “How do I share the Gospel with a child?” Allow me to share my experience as pastor of Mills Home Baptist Church located on the Mills Home campus in Thomasville.

I am in a unique position. I am beyond blessed to have children sitting in the pews with our adults every Sunday morning. I look out into the congregation and know first and foremost that I am presenting the Gospel to everyone—we worship together. The morning’s message isn’t two sermons—one for children and one for adults. The positive results are evident through the children. Since God has called me to be the pastor, I have seen children from the ages of seven to eighteen place their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the work of the Spirit. It is the harvest from seeds planted.



Rev. Luis Quintanar

is also a lesson about how you and I should share the Gospel. It is our role, as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, to share the Gospel with everyone. So instead of asking, “How do I share the Gospel with a child?” We can ask ourselves, “How do I share the Gospel with anyone?”

I reframe the question from what I have learned as Mills Home pastor. For nearly 140 years, we have been the church for children in our care—as well as the adults attending. We do not separate the two. Not because children are unimportant, but because the question of how to share the Gospel is the same. I have found sitting side by side with adults encourages our children’s spiritual development.

Consider Jesus preaching from a boat off the shore of the Lake in Galilee: Were children

Jesus shares with His followers the Parable of the Sower. He recounts the story of a man who spreads the seed of the Gospel everywhere he goes. How the seed grows depends on how the soil receives it. The parable is clearly about Jesus and how the good news is for everyone. It



Mills Home Baptist Church Pastor Luis Quintanar presents the gospel to seven-year-old Angel, daughter of BCH staff members Sheila and Frank Hood, using NAMB’s “Three Circles,” featured on the “Life on Mission” app. Below, Angel was baptized on Sunday, April 27.

present? You better believe it! What happened in Mark 19 when children were in the presence of our Lord? The disciples rebuked the ones who brought children and Jesus was not having any of that. Something incredible happens when our children are in the same room the Gospel is being preached.

Our children are present during the Sunday morning service, or at any time our families come together during the week as the church. There are moments when small children can’t handle being in the service. We encourage our parents and cottage parents to step out for a moment with the child. It is okay to give children a moment to reset and retry. We have learned that children respond very well to consistently communicated expectations. Despite the challenges, I welcome our church pews being filled with children full of energy and wonder—children whose lives are being impacted daily by the cottage parents and the ministry.

At Mills Home Baptist Church, this one thing has proven beneficial when sharing the Gospel with our children. We share the Gospel with the same intention as you would speaking to an adult. This does not mean I use big seminary

third is used to outline the “Gospel.” The circles illustrate the transformative power of the Gospel. This tool has been incredibly useful to me. Finally, I intentionally point children to Jesus through every story of the Bible. It can be tempting to point our children to David as the main character of the story of David and Goliath. But the true meaning behind that story is how



by the Philistines, but we are oppressed by sin until Jesus saves us. I carefully and intentionally engage with our Lord Jesus as we open the Word with our children. I believe it is vitally important for children, youth, and adults to experience the full truth of Jesus through the Scriptures.

My prayer for you is that God will empower you to faithfully share the Gospel with everyone you encounter.

words, but I also do not talk down to them, respecting them, never underestimating the Spirit’s way in reaching their hearts. The children that we love deserve to know the truth. It is the blood of Jesus that saves. In more one-on-one settings, I use a method of sharing the Gospel called “Three Circles.”

The North American Mission Board’s “Life on Mission” app is great. It helps you walk through the gospel using three simple circles. The first circle represents “God’s Design.” The second is used to have a conversation about “Brokenness,” and the

Jesus is going to slay sin one day for all humanity in the same way that David defeated Goliath. Thanks to Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross, you and I are allowed to live like the Israelites: free from our oppressors. The Israelites were oppressed

Riders celebrate ten years with record amount

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor/Vice President, Communications

It's been more than a decade since Rit Varriale and Brian Davis first discussed the possibility of organizing a motorcycle ride that would benefit Baptist Children's Homes (BCH). Today, what has become known as "Ride to Clyde" has grown from a \$19,000 charity ride in 2016 to an initiative that raised a record \$261,367 in 2025, the ride's 10th anniversary.

"Looking back over the last 10 years, we knew there was a lot of potential, however, God has proven Himself year after year with how He has blessed 'Ride to Clyde,'" says Varriale, Lead Pastor at Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shelby and member of the BCH Board of Trustees. "We've never had a year that we've gone backwards with what's been raised. To God be the glory for how He puts it in the riders' hearts to be a part of 'Ride to Clyde' and to raise the funds."

For all ten years, the ride has been produced in partnership with NC Baptists. The event has now reached a lifetime fundraising total of \$1,292,367.15.

"We rejoice for the generosity of those who support the ride, but a price tag cannot be placed on the impact the ministries of BCH has on the children, teens, adults in care and even the riders themselves," says Davis, Volunteer Coordinator for "Ride to Clyde" and Director of Faith Partnerships and Programs for Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist. "God has changed our lives in the process."

The motorcycle event was christened "Ride to Clyde" because BCH's Broyhill Home in the community of Clyde is where the ride ends. Riders stop at BCH locations along the state-wide routes to share God's love with the children, special needs adults and staff. Riders are encouraged to share their faith as they travel and several people have come to know Christ as Savior throughout the years.

Additionally, when the motorcyclists arrive in Clyde, the ride dovetails into another important event: The Broyhill Home BBQ Festival. The community event is driven by volunteers from Ridgeway Baptist Church in Canton and Ninevah Baptist Church in Waynesville. Between delicious BBQ, Gospel music, and activities like the 3D Bow Shoot, organized by Believers Archery, and the Motor Show.

"At the end of the day, the festival is all about the children," says Mike Leslie, BCH Trustee and Pastor at Ridgeway Baptist. "We are blessed with volunteers from other area churches and Pastor Keith Morris at Ninevah has been so supportive. We praise the Lord for all He is doing."

Go to broyhillbbq.org and ridetoclyde.com for more information.



"Ride to Clyde", in partnership with NC Baptists, marked its 10th anniversary as riders raised a record amount to benefit Baptist Children's Homes (BCH). Above, girls from BCH's 24/7 wilderness ministry marvel at the bikers' motorcycles. Clockwise below, Mike Leslie, BCH Trustee and Ridgeway Baptist Church Pastor, and David Melber, BCH CEO, receive the oversized check. Volunteers for the Broyhill BBQ Festival serve guests attending the community event. Children at Broyhill Home in Clyde greet riders. Billy, resident at Stegall Home, poses on Paul Lingle's bike.



David Melber to present Homecoming message — Beloved alum Phil Christman passes on May 5

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

Many Mills Home (MH) Alumni like to visit the various Alumni Facebook pages to learn what is going on with MH alumni. Those pages are very interesting to me so I was delighted to learn there are five different ones that a person can visit. Here's a list of them all for your convenience: *Mills Home Baptist Children's Home; My Mills Home Family; Mills Home Orphanage Memories; Mills Home, Thomasville, NC; and Mills Home Memories.*

On April 27, the Alumni Council met at the Mills Home Baptist Church to put the finishing touches on the work already done for Homecoming 2025—August 1, 2, and 3. It was pleasant once again to have the Baptist Children's Homes new CEO, **David Melber**, and his wife **Tera** drop by to chat for a few minutes. Melber is looking forward to getting to meet more alumni on Homecoming weekend this year, and he is also looking forward to delivering the Sunday morning worship message. We can all look forward to that.

In the course of the day's meeting, we explained participation in the Alumni Association to our new member **Sherrie Townsend Alexander** because she has lived so far from MH since her leaving in 1976. She left at such a young age, she had not had a chance to learn about the Association and attending Homecoming. We explained how the Alumni Council over many years has met with MH prospective graduates their senior year to make them familiar with the group. They were also told they would receive automatic membership in the Alumni Association, and it would be free as long as they were in college. But after that they would have the opportunity to pay a small amount of dues and be an active member of the association

and maybe even be part of the Alumni Council. But we also let her know that if a person wanted to be a member and could not afford to pay dues, we want him/her to still register for Homecoming and still come to celebrate with their old friends. In saying that, we are reminding our readers it is still true today. So when you receive your Homecoming letter from our president, **Jackie Elliott Walker**, with all the annual event's information included in late June, please sign up soon (paid dues or not) so we can look forward to seeing you at Homecoming.

Some people make Homecoming a long weekend, possibly because of the delicious food they are served on Friday and Saturday evenings. But we understand when others opt for coming a much shorter part of the weekend such as the Saturday evening meal or Sunday lunch in the gym. **Jane and Danny Brown** have demonstrated their cooking skills that have brought forth marvelously delicious food. Never tried it? You should. You can pay ahead as you fill out your registration forms. As you go over the purchase sheet part of registration, keep your eyes peeled, because "sometimes" the Friday evening meal is free!

We want to remind you again, that it is very critical to the success of our Homecoming Silent Auction that you look around your home to find items (at least \$10.00 value) you have enjoyed owning but would now like to contribute to the auction, items that someone else could appreciate. And you know the alumni working the Silent Auction would really appreciate any and all items you would be willing to contribute. All that being the case, pack up those items and bring them on to the gym as soon as you arrive at Homecoming. Help us reach that tidy sum of \$2,799 we raised last year. Auction managers **Mark and**

Cecelia Wilkerson would love you for that.

And that takes us to another Homecoming topic. **Cecelia**, our Homecoming program chair is hereby announcing a costume contest. The best square dancing outfit for the day will be picked and the winner will be awarded a prize. Everybody loves a prize, large or small, so plan a great outfit. Now, the other side of that story is some people do not like costumes. That is perfectly all right. You are still welcome to get in on the *Do-Si-Do* square dancing fun. Just wear something comfortable and be ready to *Do-Si-Do on Home* with **Steve Anderson** leading the way, the dance caller will there to meet ya!

Phil Christman, American Artist: I read a notice on Facebook from **Joan Christman Ferrante** lamenting the May 5 death of her brother Phil Christman. Phil entered MH in 1957 with siblings, **Pete, Joan, Bennie, and Butch** and he graduated in 1968. After leaving MH, he married **Brenda Johnson**, his MH sweetheart, and they had two children, **Dana and Scott**. We were all fond of Phil and Phil was fond of everybody. He embraced all folks who came his way and he always exuded a pleasant personality. We were always thrilled to see any of his new paintings to marvel at his God given talent of portraying life and nature. At Thomasville High School he was voted "most talented" superlative for the class of 1968 (painter and drummer). Over the years, he traveled and lived in several places, one being the Hollywood area where he painted scenes for movies. In other places he painted wall murals and scenes on rooftops for advertising. For a time, he lived in Thomasville and painted MH scenes and Thomasville scenes which he refurbished over the years. Once he moved to the beach (Topsail, NC) in his latest years, he painted a lot of beach

scenes and sea animals. Everywhere he went, people loved and respected him.

A Celebration of Life Service was held for Phil on Sunday, May 11 with Visitation at 1:00 and Service at 2:00 at Jones Funeral Home in Holly Ridge, NC. Please remember his sister Joan Christman Ferrante; his son, Scott and his daughter, Dana; their grandchildren and his former wife Brenda, in your prayers. Phil's sister Joan sends a heartfelt thank you to everyone for all their kindness, love, prayers, and memories. They have meant so much to the family and surely confirm we really are a family with our MH brothers and sisters. Send condolences to Joan Ferrante and family at 190 Princess Ave. Ponte Vedra, FL 32081.

An update sheet from **Marcia Grant Morton** says that her family lived on the MH campus in the house beside of the Huffman building from 1949 to 1960. Her father, **Marse Grant**, was editor of the *Charity & Children* during that time and her mother **Marion** was his worthy assistant. The Grants had three daughters, **Marcia, Susan, and Carol Ann**. They were much loved on campus because they swam with us at the pool, went to church with us, and played in the valley with us. They were sorely missed when they moved to Raleigh when Mr. Grant became the editor of the *Biblical Recorder*. More on the Grant family next month.

Brief reminders: Last call for address changes! Send to florapatton@ctc.net. Printing of our directory is set for June 15. Questions about the Columbarium? Call



Sharon D. Stiles at 704-685-2443.

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



Mills Home celebrates four baptisms

Angel, pictured with Pastor Luis Quintanar, is one of four children who were recently baptized at Mills Home Baptist Church in Thomasville. Angel is the child of Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) staff members Frank and Sheila Hood. The other three children are in Mills Home's care. Luis stated, "It has been incredible to get a front-row seat to what God is doing. I am beyond grateful to be able to serve at Mills Home Baptist Church! Please continue to pray for our boys and girls as they walk with King Jesus."



Trustee delivers for Food Roundup

Ray Brickhouse, Green River Association-Mission Strategist and BCH Trustee, delivered food to Broyhill Home.



Ty thrills at Grandfather Mountain view

Ty, one of the adults in the program for intellectually/developmentally disabled adults stands on "mile-high bridge."



Rich Fork encourages foster care staff

Rich Fork Church sponsored lunch to show appreciation for foster care staff working at Mills Home in Thomasville.



Association delivers \$30,000 collection

Triangle East Association delivered a Food Roundup collection valued at \$30,000 in food, gift cards and cash.



Friends of Children gather at Odum

Church volunteers helped with a variety of projects at Odum Home in Pembroke during Friends of Children mission day.



"Cake crew" delivers 332 cakes

Known as the "cake crew," Catawba River Association brought cakes and \$2,300 in gift cards to Broyhill Home.



At 87, Dean Brown is oldest rider

Dean Brown is with BCH's Blake Ragsdale. At age 87, Dean is the oldest participant ever for the Ride to Clyde statewide ride.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out our Events Calendar for opportunities to serve and registration information. Visit bchfamily.org/events



JUNE

18-22: Camp BAM, NCBAM, ncbam.org

AUGUST

23: Hope in Style, hopeinstyle.org
Greensboro Country Club

SEPTEMBER

4: Western Area Conference
Broyhill Home, Clyde
8: NCBAM Field of Makers, ncbam.org
Mills Home, Thomasville

NOVEMBER

22: Thanksgiving Turkey in the Hole
Cameron Boys Camp, Cameron

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN

Saturday one-day missions for all ages--

- Sept 6: Oak Ranch, Broadway
- Sept 13: Kennedy Home, Kinston
- Sept 20: Mills Home, Thomasville
- Sept 20: Odum Home, Pembroke
- Oct 4: Cameron Boys Camp



Info and registration at bchfamily.org/foc

Annual Offering/Week of Prayer

November 9 - 16, 2025
Resources on the way - bchoffering.org



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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.



David Melber to speak at Homecoming on June 7 & 8 — Doris Russ to receive special alumni recognition

By **John Thompson**, 102 Maritime Court, Havelock, NC 28532 (252) 671-3515 jbthompson43@gmail.com

Doris Russ is 93 years of age and still going strong! When my wife and I served at Kennedy Home (KH), Doris and her family lived in the cottage right beside us. Her husband **Vance**, who has gone to be with the Lord, was the one who started the wilderness program at KH. Doris was an “unpaid” hero who helped her husband in all that he did. The couple had three very fine sons: **Tim, John, and Dan**. Dan became my third son and we are still in contact. Doris would fill in at a cottage when needed. She reared those three boys while Vance was back on the farm beginning the wilderness program. She played the piano every Sunday. I could go on and on about all the things she did to help. Doris lives alone and still drives where she needs to go. She is the organist/pianist at a local church in Kinston. She will be honored this year at Homecoming, receiving special recognition. Thank you Doris for all you did and are still doing for the Lord.

Phillip Dupree was a staff child back in the seventies. His father was in charge of campus beautification while his mom was the campus nurse. At one time they were houseparents at Biggs Cottage. They have both gone to be with the Lord now. Phillip writes on Facebook all the time about KH. I have already used some of his writing about the history. Here is a bit more: “William Lafayette Kennedy was a great fisherman. He was married to the daughter of Pickney Coatesworth Hardee, one of the most prominent men of Lenoir County. Mrs. Kennedy sold some of her jewels to build the Hardee Cottage. The home of the Kennedy family is a reminder of antebellum days. The house is patterned after some old aristocratic Philadelphia home. The land was used for growing livestock: the Berkshire pigs, rolling in fat, the flock of mammoth turkeys, the

covey of haughty peafowls, the herd of 50 sleek Jerseys, and the long row of stables housing a number of horses and mules.”

Leon Morgan was one of my 56 piano students. He was probably the most advanced student. Leon writes of one experience: “Often I am taken back to a simpler time and the memories of Kennedy Home. Even though many years have passed, those memories are as vivid as the days from which they were bred. I would like to share one of those memories.

“I arrived at KH in the summer 1967 and roomed with **Danny and Charles Butler**. These boys and **Stanley Mathews and Rudy Pierce** assisted with getting me acclimated to my strange new world. Danny’s passing brought back this memory of him. Though there are many, this one comes to mind. **Danny, Kenneth, Grant** and I worked at Vernon Park Mall at that time. I think **Wayne McDowell** also worked there, but I don’t recall his being there on this occasion. I don’t remember specifically where they worked. We entered at the main entrance on the left side-facing the mall from street and met there after work. I was employed at JC Penney’s which faced the highway. I had worked there since I was 15 years old. February 10, 1973 fell on a Saturday and we arrived at the mall around 8:30 in the morning. The smell of snow hung in the air. We parked a good bit away from the entrance—almost to the outer part of the lot near the motel. I would not see them again until 3:00 o’clock that afternoon. Around 10 a.m., I delivered a bike to the main floor and glanced at the front door. It had begun snowing and everyone was excited. That excitement would be replaced by muffled panic by mid-afternoon. I worked upstairs, assembling and repairing bicycles and would often get lost in my work. I enjoyed what I did and rarely had to interact with

people. At 2:30 that afternoon, I took a break and returned to the first floor to find the store all but abandoned. I looked out the front door and to my amazement, I saw that the snow had nearly buried the cars. I quickly made my way to the mall-side entrance only to find the gate had been locked by mall security. The Mall was closed.

“After some heart-pounding minutes, I found the manager in his office closing down operations. He let me out the front door. Neither of us knew just how dangerous the storm had become. I started walking into the blinding snow. The wind was howling and I leaned into it as I made my way to the main entrance. I had no idea if anyone would even be there. I had never felt that kind of fear and it tried to envelop me. The cars on that side of the building were all but buried in the drifting snow. I trudged on, just forcing myself to continue. It was the only option I had. My blind faith led the way. I didn’t see Danny and Kenny at first but they saw me. I heard them yelling, urging me on and Kenny came to help me the last bit. I was exhausted. Danny was manning the pay phone. And there we were, facing the elements. The Mall was locked. Those two guys waited for me. We were not especially tight but that is the brotherhood that was KMH boys. We still had a dilemma. We were all stuck.

“We contacted someone at KMH. My understanding is that **Bill Bea-cham** and some of the older boys were coming to fetch us in one of the old buses that had been outfitted with chains. That didn’t happen. The storm was too intense. We were advised to make our way to the motel. They were holding their last room for us. That too, was a long walk, trudging through snow drifts. We couldn’t even see the motel. They were holding their last room for us. It was a long walk, trudging through the snow drifts. We just

trusted our instincts and dead reckoning—skills we learned at KMH. I can tell you this, the journey was much easier to endure because we had each other. We made it.

“Danny and I were the same age and we stayed up late that night. We talked about our summer plans because as rising seniors we would be leaving for the summer to live with sponsors—usually in our hometowns. I remember we were both a bit concerned about that which awaited us, outside the protective boundaries of KMH. Danny and I were often among the very few that remained on campus when everyone left for home visits.

“We woke the next morning to a crowd of cheering KMH boys. Bill was driving the old 50s era bus. We loaded up and ventured over to Hwy 70 as news was reporting stranded drivers.

“We spent the day rescuing folks as was the nature of KMH staff and elder boys during a crisis. We returned to the campus to find a gathering of folks, eagerly awaiting the tale of our adventure. That is my last memory of Danny. My life took a different turn and I finished high school at our rival—South Lenoir. I have always held my memories of KMH in the recesses of my mind. I have always held the memories of the many friends I once knew safely tucked away in my heart. And today, my heart is with Danny, his family and his KMH family—the sisters, brothers, and memories that bind us all as one. Thank you for reading, Leon S. Morgan.”

Stay in touch in touch with me! You will find my mailing address at the top of this page: phone number and email address. Keep sending me



articles to use in my column. Love ya! — jt

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

We learn to love others from the One who is love

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

It is true that the Beatles' lyrics cannot be described as pillars of theology. But in the boys of Liverpool's pursuit to capture a place in pop culture history, they did compose a few songs with words that give pause and inspire thought. John Lennon penned "All You Need Is Love"—released by the band on July 7, 1967. The chorus goes "...All you need is love, love. Love is all you need." Simply stated and yet all can agree, theologian and music fan alike, that love is paramount. It is the greatest of all humankind's needs.

For some, love is easily conjured, like the lightning bug appearing with its light flashing, on and off, on and off, in May's rapidly descending twilight. It is something pursued, mapped out in a song, a poem, or found in a moment. Then again, love is fraught with paradoxes—while simple to understand, it is difficult to comprehend. It flits away as soon as one comes close to grasping the meaning. What is love, anyway?

The Apostle John does not waiver when answering life's most important question. He does not get lost in the high grass or water down his response. He states the answer, boldly declaring that love comes from the source, writing—to reverberate throughout all eternity—"God is love" (1 John 4:8). John asserts that love is not an attribute of God; rather, it is His very essence.

As a young man, 17-years-old, I was enamored by the sophomore girl who prayed at our school's student-led morning devotion as if Jesus stood beside her, two friends who cared for each other, catching up on their concerns. I had never heard anything like it. My interest turned into our friendship—walking to class together, eventually holding hands, and then a first kiss. Forty-four years of marriage later, Kathy and I remain enamored and committed, acknowledging the presence of our Savior in the midst

of all we are and do.

We love well when the One who is love, loves through us. For the friendship, marriage, and parenthood, it is the source where we find grace and help to love unconditionally, sacrificially, the way we love ourselves (Mark 12:31). We learn from Him to place the other's needs before our own.

Parents know the sacrifices love demands. As a parent, I live with my heart outside of my own body. What my child feels, I feel. Their joys and heartaches are my joys and heartaches. The only way I can comprehend the largeness of a parent's love for a child is to look to Scripture.

A favorite image of Jesus appears in Mark's gospel when He stops everything, even time itself it seems, to welcome the little ones who come into His presence (10:13-16). Everything fades into the background as He spends time with them, listening to them, blessing them—with His presence, yes, and with His whole heart. This picture of the Savior inspires parents and all those who welcome children into their worlds to understand the value of these precious lives, to sacrifice time and energy and resources for their good, to nurture those hearts by giving of our own hearts. Love is all we need.

Actually, as followers of Jesus, it is a commandment to love: "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you"

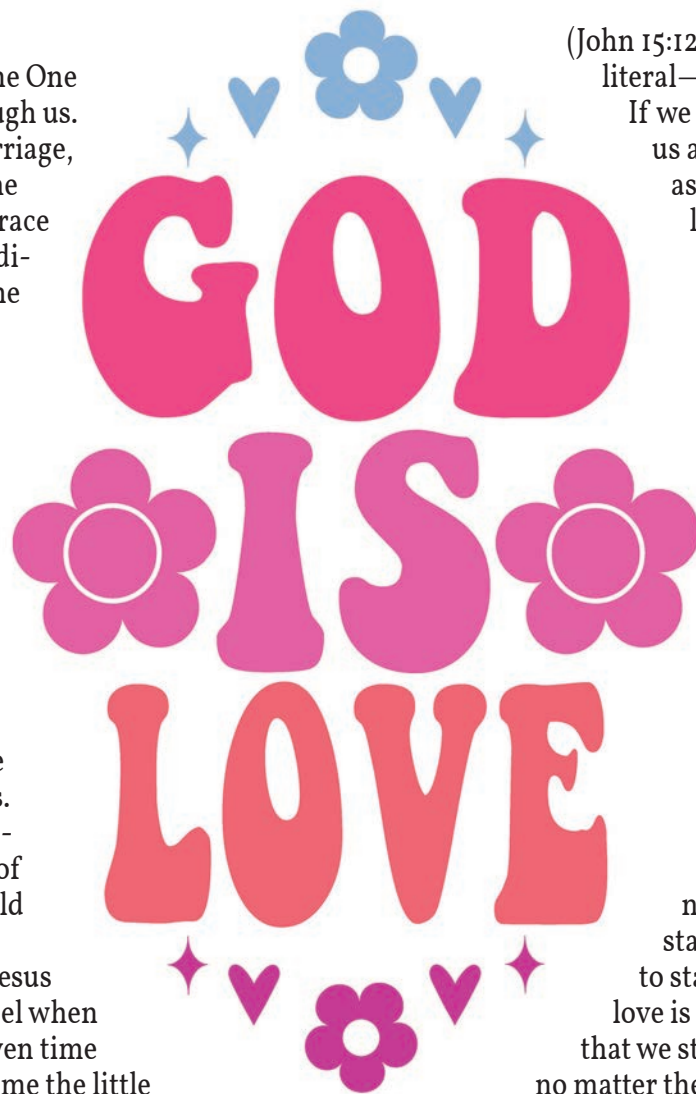
(John 15:12). That instruction is literal—love is not optional. If we put God's love for us and our love for Him as the foundation for loving every person who comes into our lives, then we can live out His desire for us to love others as ourselves.

Ron and I are friends and make time for each other. We share burdens and concerns. We encourage and pray for the other. We seek godly counsel because we are brothers in Christ.

In difficult days, I do not doubt that he will stand with me. I choose to stand with him. Our love is built on the trust that we stand firm together, no matter the circumstances.

When I read in scripture that "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13), I think of Ron.

"Love is all you (we) need." It is true. To the ones who follow the living Lord, the words brighten and include so much more than the human meaning the Beatles may have intended. We know, after all, the first and foremost definition of love is "God." He is love. It is His essence. In the truest sense, dear readers, we need Him. I pray for this love to be shared in our lives, with everyone we encounter.



SHARE

The Story!

3 WAYS A BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES (BCH) SPEAKER CAN SHARE AT YOUR CHURCH:

1

FULL SERMON

20-25 mins

A speaker will prepare a message for your worship service to edify the congregation, provide a BCH missions update, and share stories of lives that have been changed through your support.

2

MISSION MOMENT

2-5 mins

A speaker will share a BCH update and talk briefly how your missions dollars are impacting God's kingdom. The speaker can also set up a small display table to greet people.

3

SMALL GROUP/ SUNDAY SCHOOL

A speaker will share a BCH mission update and stories of lives changed. Your group will hear ways to pray, volunteer and support the ministry as a group or as a church.



TO INVITE A SPEAKER, GO TO [BCHFAMILY.ORG/](https://bchfamily.org/) SPEAKER OR SCAN THE CODE. CALL 336-474-1218.