

Podcast features HOMEBASE

Listen to Dr. Blackwell interview HOMEBASE director Jim Dean as he recalls stories of WCU students succeeding and thriving. (www.bchfamily.org/podcast)

Charity & Children

The historic publication of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, first to tell the story for 135 years.

     @bchfamily

July 2022

Issue 7

Volume 135

Shaeley works hard for her and son Isaiah's future

By Jim Edminson, Editor

Shaeley knew she could never go back. She no longer had custody of her son Isaiah and was at risk of losing him forever. There was too much at stake if she didn't look forward into the future.

"I made the decision to commit," Shaeley recalls. "I knew in my heart that I wanted to be Isaiah's mom more than I wanted anything, especially drugs. I remember thinking, 'I've got to do this.'"

The 18-year-old grew up in the far mountains of western North Carolina and readily admits she was raised in "a rough situation." She and her siblings would go to a neighbor's house with running water for showers. There were times when there was little to no food because the family's money went to buying drugs. She says she was never physically abused by her mom and stepfather, but that drugs were pervasive.

"I was smoking cigarettes as a child, and by the time I was 12, I was smoking weed," she says. "The week before I turned 14, I began using meth."

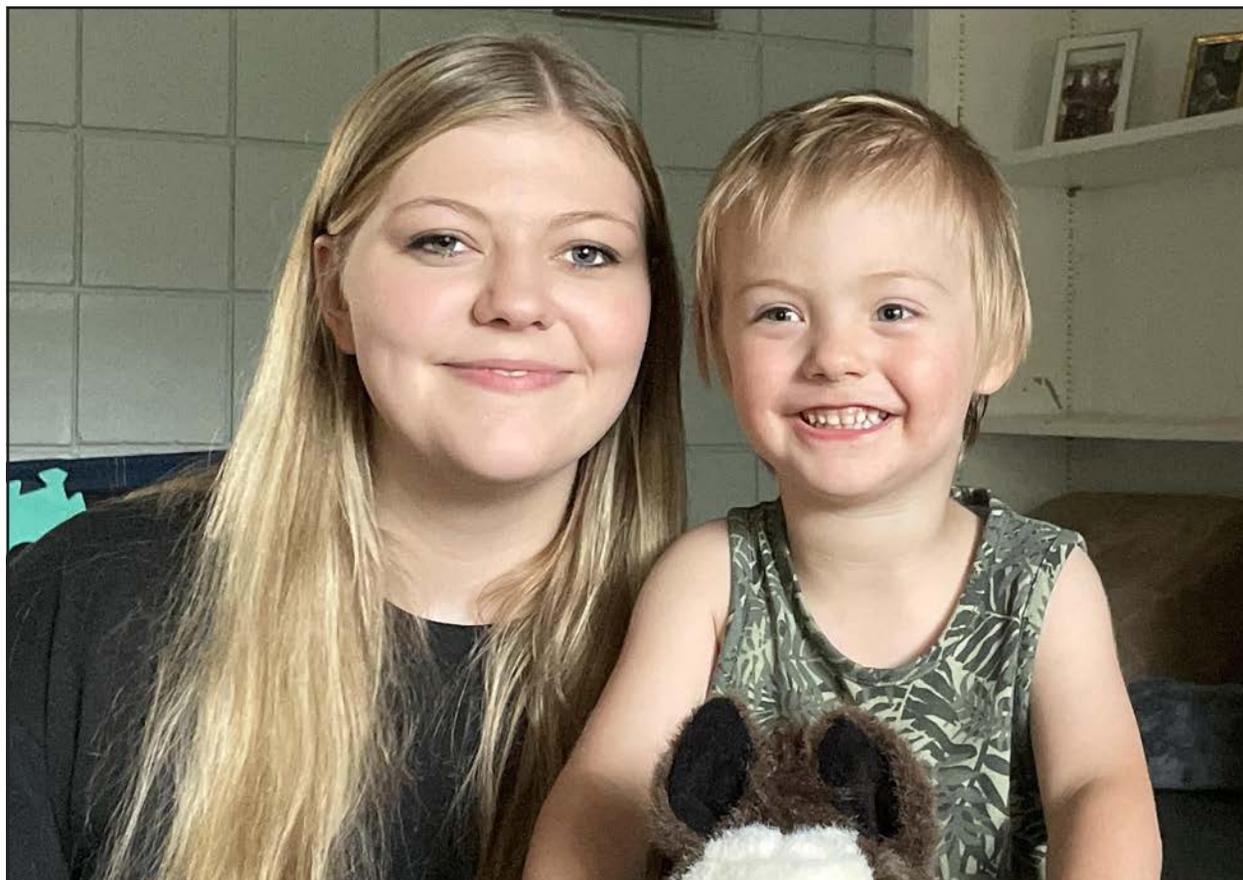
That year Shaeley met Isaiah's birth father. She was 17 and her life became one big party: "It was all about me."

A year later at 15, she was living in a detention-type group home and was pregnant. Her step-father and mom divorced, and he was working to have Shaeley released to him.

"It was like living in a fog," she says. "I wasn't using drugs and was sober, but I wanted out."

She was clean for a year and Isaiah was five months old when she was released and went to live with her step-father.

"I picked up right where I left off with the drugs and my boyfriend," she says. "This time he was abusive. It was the first time I got a black eye."



Shaeley and two-year-old Isaiah are thriving. Isaiah is full of energy, attends day school, and is quick to grab a book for someone to read to him. The single mom is working to complete high school graduation requirements so she can attend Western Carolina University to become a nurse.

Now authorities were watching out for Isaiah's welfare. A state social worker outlined Shaeley's options. She would go with Isaiah into Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) care, or she would lose her son. The next day, she came into care.

"I shut down, pulling back from everyone the first few weeks in care," she says. "Being off drugs and going through withdrawals went from hard to harder. I remember nights when I sobbed in the darkness. It was like being really hungry, having a big appetite, and not being able to eat anything.

I longed for the drugs, but I didn't give up."

During the day as the effects of the drugs wore off, Shaeley began to realize how much she had missed. Isaiah was crawling and lifting himself up to stand.

"I couldn't remember any of it," she says. "It was like waking up from a sleep, looking around, and realizing I missed a lot of stuff—I had missed too much of Isaiah's life. And it wasn't worth it."

With renewed strength, she began to work harder. (Continued on page 3.)

Determine the legacy you leave behind

By **Michael C. Blackwell**, President/CEO
(Chief Encouragement Officer)

My parents cared enough to teach me principles that kept me from getting into trouble, like an electric-shock collar keeps a dog in his own yard. This upbringing provided a moral compass that says, “It is not honorable to go beyond this point.” I always felt that I didn’t want to do anything that would spoil my parents’ confidence in me.

Of course, people sometimes get off track. But you have to come back, commit to doing right, and to being the person you intend to be. If you wonder whether an action or opportunity is right or wrong, it’s probably wrong. I intentionally avoid like the plague any hint of scandal. I don’t even know how to get into our company’s post office box or the safe in the business office. I have no need to know.

I am uncomfortable when people hand me cash money they are gifting for Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH). One time a guy shoved four one-hundred dollar bills into my hand after I’d spoken in his church. Those bills weighed heavy in my pocket all the way home until I could get them processed through our accounting department.

To claim any such gifts for myself has never been a temptation. I never had the internal conversation that “no one will know if I just use that money for myself.” It would haunt me. You just can’t yield.

Once you start down that slippery slope, it’s easy to justify doing it again, and operating that way could work itself into your mind and taint your legacy.

I’ve continued the vision that our founder John Mills cast. He left an incredible legacy and I’ve treated it as a precious jewel, polishing it, and keeping it safe. To that end, I’ve been asking myself certain questions to focus on in my remaining career years.

- Did I put into place a method of operation that will endure and continue to give opportunity to all to achieve their dreams?

- Will I leave behind an institution that has moved beyond custodial care to tap the creative genius that lies at the heart of every child?

- Have I inspired other people to dedicate themselves to achieving things of lasting value that will live into succeeding generations?

- Have I put into place a “culture of excellence” rooted deeply enough that new staff and new leadership will be committed to replicate and expand its successes?

- Have I cultivated new donors and secured their commitment to BCH’s ongoing success and financial vitality?

- Have I built a legacy worth remembering?

People tend to think about legacy in the final years of their career. That’s too late because you started laying bricks on your legacy years ago. You started building that legacy when you started your career.

I know that is true; however, I just started considering this legacy in the past few years. Until then, I just worked at the task before me, doing my job, giving it my best shot, remaining open to the Spirit, willing to take risks, seeking to be creative, measuring the costs. Then, at a certain point, I realized that my stamp is going to be on BCH for a good while.

You need to ask yourselves now: “What do I want to build?” Don’t let your legacy be built on the random accumulation of acts and facts, plum and glum jobs, successes and digresses that your career will naturally take.

What do you want to do with yourself?
What do you want to accomplish?
What dried foot-print in the

muddy bottom of time do you want to leave? Yes, when all is said and done, how do you want to be remembered?

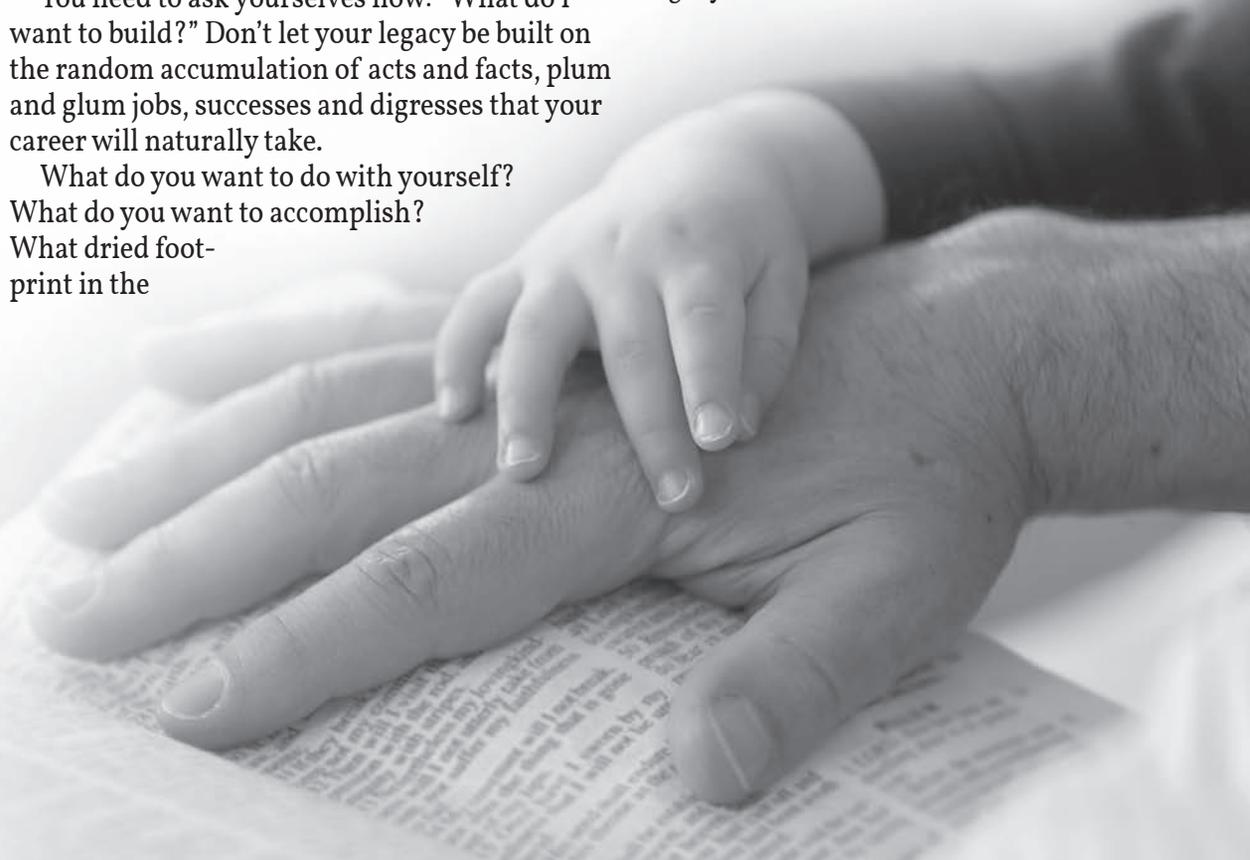
One Sunday, I was part of a large BCH group presenting at a local Baptist church. I emceed the program, and that calls me to be attentive to the moment. I recall one little five-year-old boy in our care who never took his eyes off me. I asked him to come across the platform and give me a high five and he came running. His name was Ethan and he looks just like Ralphie from the perennial “A Christmas Story” movie. I began to interview him and he was like a 35-year-old.

“What do you want to be when you grow up?”
“I want to be a weatherman,” he replied.

That’s all it took, he captivated the entire congregation. The Spirit led and those attending were enthralled, and Ethan ate it up, responding to their vocal encouragement with growing confidence and cuter responses. I stepped back and let a child lead.

When church members recall this incident, what they are going to remember is that Ethan stole the show. These children are my legacy. I can lay my head down at night and sleep blissfully.

Your legacy is built like success is built—by doing the next thing well with passion and inspired creativity. Determine how you will impact others today. What will your legacy be?



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. Michael C. Blackwell, publisher; 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 11 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 four 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.

CAS members welcomed, spend day with "Dr. B"

The team members of Christian Adoption Services (CAS) have been a part of Baptist Children's Home (BCH) ministries since an official partnership between the two entities was established in July 2019. (The official merger took place October 1, 2020.) Many of the CAS team had not met BCH's longest tenured president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell because of pandemic restrictions and because CAS offices are located throughout North and South Carolina.

"I was just waiting until it was safe for me to call them together," Blackwell said. "It was important for me to welcome these dedicated staff members into the BCH family. I wanted to look them in their eyes and share my deep appreciation for all they do for women in un-

expected pregnancies, for the work they do with Christian families in the Carolinas who desire to adopt, and for helping families with placing international children and sibling groups here at home."

Blackwell set May 31 for an event he dubbed "Java Jubilee with Dr. B." The day-long gathering was held at Mills Home in Thomasville, BCH's oldest, flagship campus. The event began with the CAS team enjoying coffee and a meeting with only "Dr. B." After introductions



Christian Adoption Services team members, above with Dr. Blackwell, from locations across the Carolinas gathered on May 31 for a day-long event at Mills Home in Thomasville. "Java Jubilee with Dr. B" was set aside as a time for the group to be welcomed to BCH and to meet personally with Dr. Blackwell.

and Blackwell highlighting each staff member, he discussed the CAS and BCH merger and BCH's 137-year history, giving those attending a copy of the new BCH history book he wrote, *Founded on faith...Built on love*.

An outdoor lunch with Mills Home, NCBAM, and State Administration staff

members followed. After lunch, the CAS team were treated to a bus tour of the campus led by Blackwell. Stops included the Mitchell Museum, the first cottage constructed in 1885, and Emmanuel Home which is being renovated and opens in autumn as a short-term residence for birth moms.

Shaeley and Isaiah depend on God's perfect timing

(Continued from page 1.)

Shaeley knows that reaching six months clean was a big turning point. "It's a long time for a drug addict. Most never make it that long."

When teen moms like Shaeley come into BCH's care, they are provided a supportive cottage home at Mills Home in Thomasville in which mother and child can live. Caring staff help single mothers learn parenting, vocational and educational skills while caring for their babies.

"The staff have made the difference, especially Tanya and Jim," she says of her cottage parents. "I'm learning what a family is supposed to be like. I have a new family."

Shaeley felt shame as she began to realize what her life had become, how much she had risked losing Isaiah.

"I began to talk to Tanya and she told me there was no need to feel shame," Shaeley says. "She showed me so much love and she supported me. She told me that my past was just that, my past."

On October 28, 2020, Shaeley accepted Christ as her personal Savior. Time spent with Tanya and Jim in prayer and cottage Bible study began to impact her life.

"I would go back to my room and think 'I need what they have,'" she says. "It was not long before I was with Tanya telling her I wanted to be saved."

Now on track to achieving the requirements

to graduate high school, Shaeley is looking ahead, planning to begin Western Carolina University in January 2023. She hopes to become a traveling nurse.

Recently, Shaeley achieved her biggest success to date, an answered prayer, she says. The day arrived when she would learn if Isaiah would return to her sole custody.

"I was holding my breath, and I looked up and the judge was crying," she says. "I couldn't hold back my tears as she gave Isaiah back to me. She told me that I had done what most parents couldn't do in ten years."

Shaeley knows God answers her prayers. She says it can take longer than she might want, but that the answer comes in God's perfect timing.

Hands are reaching out for hope and healing

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

It was time for the evening meal. The mission team met at an outdoor restaurant. There were guards with guns all around the premises. A hedge of shrubs was all that blocked their table from the street. After sitting down to order, they began to talk about the events of the day. As they toured the city that day, they had encountered beggars on the street who were hungry. Young street children are a common sight, selling items to support their families who have little, begging you to buy a bookmark or another souvenir. As they begin to eat their food, a small outstretched hand comes through the bushes. The hand then disappears. About halfway through the meal the soiled hand reappears, only to quickly disappear again. After eating, the team begins cutting their left-over food into small bites. They place the food in a napkin, and when the hand appears once more, they place the napkin into the child's hand. They hear the feet of the child running away.

If you have ever been on an international mission trip you know all too well that this is not an unusual experience. However, it is becoming an all too familiar need around us. Food insufficiency is something we see on a regular basis as children and families enter into care. It does not matter if you have seen the face of hunger, fear, loneliness, abandonment, and abuse many times, it still cuts to your very core.

I ask God each day to help you see through His compassionate eyes, and He answers through your giving hearts. Thank you for your loving heart and your obedience to care for the "least of these."

Now imagine with me the hand of an 11-year-old girl, her four-year-old sister, and her two-year-old brother. They came to us late one day just before dinner. The older sister had been their protector. She does not let the two younger children out of her site. They are victims of the opioid crisis in our state. The four-year-old jumps in my lap. She is a bundle of energy and loves to talk. The two-year-old boy clings to the cottage parent. And the 11-year-old just sits, protectively watching.

The cottage parents call the kids to the kitchen to eat. They have their blessing, thankful for the food before them. The kids in the cottage then grab their plates and fill them with food. In the dining room, they enjoy talking about the events of their day. The cottage father feeds the two-year-old while the 11-year-old continues to watch closely. She helps her little sister with her food and then fills her plate. You can tell they are still apprehensive about their new surroundings.

A few weeks later, the cottage is with me for a church presentation. The church prepared a big covered dish luncheon for us all after worship time. As I watch these children, I have to turn away, as my eyes begin to fill with tears. The little two-year-old boy is once again in the arms of the cottage father, but not clinging with fear. He is laughing with joy. The 11-year-old has new friends and is enjoying being a child again. She proudly shows me her new shoes that one of you bought for her. The precocious four-year-old is enjoying all the attention she is getting from several of the church members—she is entertaining! It is such a glorious blessing to watch the healing take place. I wipe the tears and my heart screams silently, "Thank you God!"

Imagine the hand of a senior adult reaching out for help as she sits in a sweltering apartment. Just last week, a housing complex near one of our campuses lost their air conditioning during one of the hottest weeks since the beginning of summer. Our NCBAM ministry sent out an "SOS" for fans and water and you once again cared for the "least of these." (See the story on page 8.)

Imagine the hand of a month-old baby, abandoned to die, fighting for his life. On my last mission trip to our orphanage in Guatemala, I held this precious little one. His tiny little fingers wrapped around my finger and he held on tightly. Thank

God for the opportunity to love and care for this child. Because of you, he lives and has a future.

Imagine the hand of a precious six-year-old boy reaching out and asking you to pray for his momma who is in jail for the second time. He misses her so very much. Imagine the thousands of hands reaching out for

hope and healing. Now imagine the thousands who join you by reaching out to offer hope and healing. I love the amazing opportunity to be on this journey of transformation with you. Being on mission together is such an honor and blessing.

One of the girls here gave me a decorative ceramic tile for Christmas a few years ago. I have it sitting on my shelf, front and center, in my office. I cannot miss seeing it every day. It says, "In Christ we are freed to serve others." This July 4th, as we remember the sacrifice so many made so we have the privilege to celebrate freedom, let us not forget the most important sacrifice, for it is in Christ that we are truly free!

When those tiny hands reach through the hedges of trauma in search of hope and healing, thank you for reaching back. Your hands touch those who are hurting with the love of God, offering hope and healing.

I would love to hear from you, my friends. Call me at 336-689-4442, email me at bbgray@bchfamily.org, or write me at P. O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27360. I so enjoy receiving your notes, calls, and emails.



M

acy and her two sisters arrived after the other girls in the cottage had gone to bed. The siblings needed a safe place to live immediately, and the decision was made to remove them from the stench-filled place where they lived.

That night, the girls were given good, warm food to eat. They were shown their rooms where beds waited with clean sheets and new pillows. The next day, the girls were given new, clean clothes and school supplies. Breakfast was waiting for them and they were off to begin a new year of school.

After only a couple of weeks, there were concerns about Macy's grades and unfinished assignments. Macy became frustrated in the cottage when she unsuccessfully attempted to do her chores. Her cottage mom, Sonya, thought she was having difficulty seeing and needed glasses. After an appointment with the optometrist, Macy was fitted for her first pair of glasses. She was amazed: "Everything is so much brighter, clearer, and not blurry!" Soon Macy was experiencing success!

As a back-to-school sponsor, your gift does more than you can imagine! It goes beyond ensuring that children have safe, caring homes. It goes beyond providing new clothes, school supplies, covering lab fees, and extracurricular activities. Your sponsorship can mean helping a child like Macy literally see a brighter world by providing her the glasses she has needed for so long.

Please make your back-to-school gift today! There are children counting on you.



Scan to make a gift on our mobile giving page.

I want to make a child's future brighter!

\$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$2,500 \$ _____ Any size gift!

To make a gift by check: Print your information below and mail this form with your check.

Name _____ Email _____

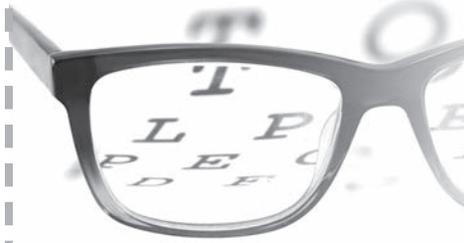
Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

You can make your gift by credit card at www.bchfamily.org/backtoschool or phone Faith Frazier at 336-474-1312.

Yes, I would like to receive email updates. Contact me with information on how to prepare a Christian Will.

I have included Baptist Children's Homes in my estate.



Friend-raiser team share BCH story across state

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

Development directors do more than raise needed monies for Baptist Children's Homes (BCH): They minister, make friends, and care for the many people they reach every week. Those they meet become friends, and many become part of the BCH family through their love and support. If you would like to learn more about BCH's "many ministries beating with one heart," call a development director in your area. They are available to answer questions about how you can make a gift to BCH, how you can include BCH in your will, and how you can schedule a director to visit your church to give a BCH report. Read below how these servants are passionate about the needs of children and families:



Danny Hawkins
910-352-9070
 Director of Development
 Southeast-South Central Area

"When I was a pastor, I learned that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. It has been my joy and honor to bring my passion, commitment, and knowledge regarding the mission and ministries of BCH to homes and churches throughout my region. Call me. I look forward to serving you in the days ahead."



Karen Slate
336-307-9464
 Director of Development
 Greater Triad Area

"I'm humbled and blessed to be a part of the BCH ministry, working alongside donors and churches across the Greater Triad area, who bring hope and healing to hurting children and families. On this journey together, we've developed some amazing relationships! Together, we are stronger. Together, we can make a difference. Together, we give God the honor and the glory in all that we do. We are on mission together!"



Lewis Smith
828-421-9300
 Director of Development
 Western Area

"It has been my privilege to travel Western North Carolina representing BCH for almost 18 years. It is a joy to partner with people and churches to make such a wonderful difference in the lives of children and families across

these mountains. It would be an honor to come to your church to share an update on this wonderful, worthy ministry."



Wade Parker
336-407-3231
 Director of Development
 Triangle-Northeastern Area

"My love for BCH began when my wife and I adopted our oldest daughter Abigail.

As we began to find out more and more of BCH's great reach to children and families that need Jesus, we wanted to do anything we can to be a part of that. BCH is one of the greatest hands and feet of Jesus ministries we have ever seen. I am blessed to share with people and churches how they can minister to the least of these."



Jody Yopp
704-314-5291
 Director of Development
 Metrolina-West Central Area

"My love for BCH began about eight years ago when 'Ride to Clyde' started as an opportunity for men and women who love to ride motorcycles can help hurting children. Each year, the group travel across North Carolina to visit BCH campuses and share with children. At the same time, I was serving on the Board of Directors of the Baptist State Convention and closely worked for three years with BCH through my committee assignments. My family and I are so glad God

placed this ministry in our path."



Mike Blackwood
864-256-7674
 CAS Director of Development
 South Carolina Division

"I consider it a great honor to carry the banner for Christian Adoption Services (CAS) in South Carolina. My passion is to spread the word about this incredible ministry, sharing with churches and individuals about how they can make a difference in the lives of children in need of a home. When a child is adopted, many lives are forever impacted. My prayer is that through each encounter, the message of Christ will impact hearts and change lives for eternity."



Kevin Qualls
704-609-4312
 Director of Development
 Christian Adoption Services and
 Young Leader Relations

"Serving as the Director of Development for CAS and Young Leader Relations, I am passionate about all of BCH's ministries and how these ministries impact and reach people from birth through senior adults. It is my joy to preach in churches across the Carolinas and share the many stories that challenge all of us to pray and support what God is doing right now as BCH touches thousands of lives each year for all of eternity."

Rob and Alex bring home silver medals

Alverta Bolick Home residents, Rob and Alex, participated at the Special Olympics U.S. Games in Orlando on June 5-12. The duo were part of the Special Olympics North Carolina soccer team who won silver.

"We are so proud of these men and their accomplishments," president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell said. "They not only exemplify the residents in BCH's intellectual and developmental disabilities ministry, but they exemplify that one's abilities will always outweigh one's disabilities."



BCH's Stefanie Effler greets Rob, center, and Alex upon their return to North Carolina. The duo sport the silver medals they won as part of the Special Olympics North Carolina soccer team. Rob and Alex are featured in a recent Dr. Blackwell podcast: www.bchfamily.org/podcast.

Birth moms gather for annual retreat, eight saved

By Sheryl Naylor, Executive Director of Domestic Adoptions, CAS

Connection. When facing a difficult time, we all desire to feel connected to people who understand our experience, who have shared in our struggle and empathize with our pain. For birth mothers, women who have chosen adoption for their babies, the only people who truly understand what they have gone through in making this decision is another birth mother. This is why Christian Adoption Services (CAS) makes this connection through the annual “Birth Mothers Retreat.”

When a birth mother entrusts CAS to help her identify the couple to become the permanent family for her baby, the journey with this remarkable woman is only beginning. Each birth mother, for brave and selfless reasons, has made this choice for her child—and it is indescribably hard. That is why CAS staff members walk hand-in-hand with these birth mothers, women who come from all walks of life, all socio-economic standings, all geographic locations, and all races. The annual retreat is not only a vital way for us to minister to them but an opportunity for the birth moms to connect and support each other.

This year’s “Birth Mothers Retreat,” held on April 22-24 at Hyatt Place in Durham, marked the 25th anniversary of CAS hosting this no-cost weekend for participants. Thirty-eight birth mothers from across the Carolinas and beyond gathered to be honored and celebrated for the incredible decision to make an adoption plan for their child. CAS founder Doris Woodward pioneered what it means to care for birth mothers beyond a child’s placement and committed long ago to “love and support them for a lifetime.” Her legacy thrives as CAS’s superior support for birth mothers grows each year.

Attendees come together and celebrate motherhood in a place free from judgment. Many mothers keep their adoption story secret. Others are open about their decision and are supported by family and friends. Several mothers have been coming for more than 20 years, but most fall somewhere in between. The newest participant this year placed her baby just two months ago.

In the years I have worked at CAS, I have watched these birth mothers, out of love for their children, place them into the hands of adoptive parents who commit to raising the children in Christian homes. While their bravery should be commendable, we live in a culture where birth mothers are often stigmatized and shamed for “giving her child away.” But adoption is a choice that requires an act of extreme sacrifice, where birth parents place the needs of their children above the desires of their own hearts.

The years of secrecy, shame, and unresolved



The “Birth Mothers Retreat” celebrated its 25th anniversary at the annual event on April 22-24 in Durham. Thirty-eight birth mothers, coming from across the Carolinas, gathered to be honored and celebrated. Several of the women have been coming for more than 20 years. CAS is committed to providing birth moms lifetime support.

grief some birth mothers experience begin to minimize each year as they attend “Birth Mothers Retreat” and find hope and healing. We are excited about the sacred space this weekend provides and fully believe that God uses our efforts in mighty ways. Women come to know the Lord during the retreat each year. And generous people who understand how great this ministry opportunity is fund and support the retreat.

This year, I am humbled to share that eight of the women shared their decision to accept Christ! We are able to continue to support our new sisters in Christ by connecting them with local churches who will disciple them further as they continue their walk with the Lord.

The “Birth Mothers Retreat” is truly life changing for the mothers, staff, and speakers. It has taken years for some of the mothers to find the courage to attend, but once they do they commit to never missing another retreat. As one of our sweet birth mothers shared, “This weekend has been such an emotional, beautiful, therapeutic experience. I have to thank all of you for welcoming me with open arms and thank you to all the staff for all of the gifts and opportunities to find support for us! I feel like I let go of so much of my shame and guilt by having this experience and I feel intense relief! I’m so glad I decided to come and I will definitely see your beautiful faces

next time!”

Another said, “I heal more and more every time I’m around you all! I am beyond grateful for this tribe.” And that is what the CAS birth mothers are—a group of women who share a connection and support each other in ways no one else can.

All of us experience struggles and grief. Although different, we still empathize with these women, knowing that Christ heals all wounds through the endless grace and love He lavishes on us. The Psalmist writes: “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!” (Ps 30: 11-12). I cannot wait to see what great things will happen at next year’s “Birth Mothers Retreat!”

Christian Adoption Services is the newest ministry of Baptist Children’s Homes. The domestic program provides options for women in unexpected pregnancies while an international component focuses on finding homes for children and sibling groups abroad. To learn more, go online at www.christianadopt.org or call 704-847-0038.

Sheryl Naylor has been privy to this sacred sisterhood of birth mothers for more than 22 years.

Baptist response reaches beyond local community

By Carol Layton, NCBAM Director of Communications and Administration

When a severe storm passed through Lexington, North Carolina in late May, lightning struck the AC system serving 50 apartment units at The Arbor at Cotton Grove. Supply chain issues with repair parts and temperatures approaching 90 degrees meant the low-income seniors living there would suffer and possibly be at risk of heat stroke.

First Baptist Church in Lexington learned of the problem through member Whitney Brooks. After addressing the need with her pastor, Dr. Ray Howell, an urgent request was sent to the congregation asking for fans, donations to buy fans, and volunteers to help meet the needs of the apartment residents.

Brooks is a member of the Advisory Team for North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM), a ministry of Baptist Children's Homes (BCH). She reached out to NCBAM for additional help. The ministry put the word out by contacting local Baptist churches in the Liberty Baptist Association and doing a mailing to explain the urgent need.

"The response has been overwhelming," says NCBAM director Dr. Sandy Gregory. "Sunday school classes, individuals, and churches responded quickly and generously, so much so that we were able to help the seniors in Lexington and have additional funds for fans to help more seniors as needs arise this summer."

On Tuesday night at 9:00pm, June 7, volunteers from FBC Lexington picked up the last of the fans needed from Lowes. On Wednesday morning, June 8, 12 volunteers from FBC Lexington and one NCBAM team member deliv-



Baptist churches helped First Baptist Church in Lexington gather fans to help seniors sweltering in the summer heat after the cooling system to 50 apartments was struck by lightning. The response was so great, NCBAM is ready to help other seniors as needs arise later this summer.

ered two fans each to the 50 units affected.

Brooks felt amazed and grateful that people all over the state responded to the need of aging adults in Lexington. "This along with FBC's own outpouring of donations, uplifting phone calls and emails, and volunteers to help make the delivery is all about spreading God's love. As our choir sang so beautifully this past Sunday, 'They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love!'"

"The church family at FBC Lexington never hesitate to step up to serve those in need," BCH President/CEO Michael C. Blackwell said. "The church has a long history of support for all the ministries of Baptist Children's Homes and Ray and Whitney are invaluable members of BCH's Council of Advisors."

For more information on how you can help meet the needs of aging adults, visit www.ncbam.org or call 877-506-2226.

**E
V
E
N
T
S**

Discover hands-on ministry opportunities available this Fall for you and your church!

Friends of Children Saturday Missions

One-day projects for all ages & free meal.

Register at bchfamily.org/foc

- Sept 10 - Cameron Boys Camp in Cameron
- Sept 17 - Odum Home, Pembroke Kennedy Home, Kinston Camp Duncan, Aberdeen
- Sept 24 - Mills Home, Thomasville

Western Area Conference at Broyhill Home in Clyde | Sept. 8

Register: bchfamily.org/wac or call 828.627.9254

Bring your church group and enjoy live gospel music, a free meal, and hear from the children.



Events Webpage

Christian Adoption Services (CAS)

Golf Tourney | Sept 12

Cedar Wood Country Club in Charlotte Sign up & play! Funds support adoption. Register at christianadopt.org/events

NCBAM Field of Makers | Sept. 23-24 at Denton Farm Park in Denton

Register: ncbam.org/field-of-makers A fundraiser benefiting seniors served by NCBAM featuring live music, craftsmen, food vendors and the Country Train.

Founders Day, Camp Duncan | Sept. 24

Register: bchfamily.org/founders-day or 336.474.1209

Tour campsites, hear testimonies from the girls, enjoy lunch and camp-style songs.

CAS Rocky Mount Banquet | Oct 20

Rose Hill Estate in Rocky Mount Dinner and inspirational testimonies from adoptive families benefiting from our adoption services. Register at christianadopt.org/events

CAS Spartanburg, SC Banquet | Nov 3

Boiling Springs First Baptist Church in Boiling Springs, SC Dinner and inspirational testimonies from adoptive families benefiting from our adoption services. Register at christianadopt.org/events

Annual Offering | Goal \$1.5 million

Order materials & invite a speaker. Visit bchoffering.org

Plan to attend Homecoming on August 5, 6, and 7

New columbarium dedication set for June 6

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

Please give your attention again to August 5, 6, & 7 and our long-awaited 2022 Homecoming. We can't repeat too many times that we hope to see you there. We hope that each person who plans to be there will take the time to encourage at least a couple of others to attend also. The alumnus/a who persuades the most other alumni to be at Homecoming will be awarded a prize in the business meeting! All you have to do when you arrive on campus is find the tallest woman in the gym, **Flora Patton**, and tell her the names of the people you persuaded to come to Homecoming, then be sure to be at the business meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday to receive your prize.

We remind you again to be expecting the annual Homecoming letter in the packet of information with all the pertinent details regarding the events of Homecoming. The packet includes: President **Jane Brown's** letter, the pre-registration form, the schedule for the weekend, and the information sheet to fill out for the alumni column. Please use that packet of information to keep yourself abreast of the weekend's time and place of each activity. Besides the opportunity to visit with "brothers and sisters," you'll find fun and interesting activities in which to get involved: bingo and corn-hole games, a watermelon feast, visiting Mitchell Cottage, catching a snack at the concession stand, scanning and bidding on the items in the Silent Auction, making purchases at the sign-in desk, attending the dedication of the columbarium, and winning tantalizing desserts in the cake walk. And don't forget to get into the annual Homecoming photo to be taken in the gym on Saturday. Yes, there will be plenty to do.

Pete Knight, as first vice-president, has arranged another interesting Homecoming program with

the patriotic theme of "Love of God, Family, and Country." The Sunday morning worship service will feature **Randy Stewart** playing the organ, the alumni choir singing joyfully with leader **Sharon Stiles**, and **Geneva Martinez Bourgeois** delivering the Homecoming message—all reminders of Sunday mornings of long ago. After that, you can meet more friends at the gym for the traditional Homecoming lunch.

Friday evening activities will be in honor of Randy and the late Diane Stewart's 30 years of service to Baptist Children's Homes, Mills Home, and to alumni. There will be a table set up for cards and gifts and we will enjoy a delicious spaghetti dinner in the gym at 6:30 p.m. You can pay for your reservation for this meal and the Saturday evening meal using your pre-registration form. Cost for adult on Friday is \$7.00; cost for adult on Saturday is \$9.00; cost for a child under 12 on Friday and Saturday is \$5.00.

Everyone knows Homecoming features the wonderful Silent Auction that helps us raise money each year. Please take time to look around your home to locate nice items you no longer want. Donate them to the Silent Auction. Any such item needs to be of \$10.00 value or more for the auction. Bring the item/s to the gym Friday evening or Saturday where **Ceceilia and Mark Wilkerson** will receive and set them up for display. The council has planned a new, hopefully more efficient, "check-out procedure" to end the auction.

Homecoming's Saturday morning begins with a FREE, delicious breakfast served at 9:00 a.m. in the teen room. It is a special breakfast because it has been graciously donated by two generous alumni. Although the breakfast is free, we need for you to make reservations and indicate the type biscuit you prefer so that we will order appropriately—bacon and egg or sausage

and egg. Those still wishing to make donations toward the breakfast are welcome to do that. Later on Saturday, snacks ONLY will be available at the concession stand.

Something else different for our enjoyment this year on Saturday of Homecoming is the Cakewalk to be held at 2:00 p.m. It will be a great deal of fun competing with friends to see if you can win. But before that, we will need for several people who like to cook to prepare the treats we need to give as prizes: cakes, cupcakes, pies, cookies, fudge, or other treats. Please let us know if you will bring some sort of dessert for this event. Contact **Lib at 336-299-7412 or libsjohnson@triad.rr.com**. You will definitely love being one of the winners of a special dessert. How does that happen? All you have to do is walk around the big circle and stop when the music stops. You will be one of the winners if you are standing on top of one of the lucky numbers. Bring your delicious creations to the gym Friday evening or Saturday morning. You will find a table in the gym to display the sweets.

Please be aware that we again will hold the annual business meeting in the teen-age room at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 6. During that meeting of usual business matters, the By-Laws Committee will make motions on two items for your consideration. One motion will be that we make the Columbarium Committee a "standing committee" of our governing body, the Alumni Council, with the chairperson having the option of holding that position as long as he or she wishes in order to ensure faithful adherence to the rules and regulations set up for use and maintenance of the columbarium. The second motion will be to make the "God's Acre" Committee a "Standing Committee" also because of frequent desires of alumni to assist in its beautification and upkeep. The chairperson of that committee

will have one regular two-year term of service. Be aware also that the dedication of the columbarium will take place at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday at God's Acre.

Sharon DeHart Stiles, who is presently the chairperson for the Columbarium Committee, wishes to thank the many people who have contributed toward the cost of the columbarium voted on last Homecoming. As reported earlier, we have fully paid for the columbarium and its installation and are working toward landscaping around it to make it blend suitably with the rest of God's Acre. Several people have looked ahead to the possible costs of this last procedure and contributed funds to that end. Sharon wants everyone to be aware that there is still this opportunity to contribute to something worthwhile and beautiful. If you desire to make a donation toward this beautification, make your check payable to the Mills Home Alumni Association and mail it to treasurer **Flora Hicks Patton**, 6428 Sisk Carter Rd., Rockwell, NC, 28138. Make a note that it is for the columbarium beautification (landscaping, etc). Or you can add it to the check you send for dues and other items.

The business meeting will be followed by the Saturday evening delicious home cooked meal at 6:15 p.m. Again, please use the pre-registration form to make your reservation. Use the registration form also if you wish to sponsor one of the tables to honor or memorialize a loved one. This person can be a former Mills Home resident or Mills Home worker, former or present. Be sure to give the name of the person you wish to honor or memorialize.

We look forward to seeing you at Homecoming 2022.



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



Summerville Baptist Church
"Soul Patrol" delivers to Mills Home
 The "Soul Patrol," children and members of Summerville Baptist Church, delivered the food and supplies their church collected for this year's Food Roundup.



Broyhill Home in Clyde
Children slide into summertime
 The children at Broyhill Home celebrated the end of the school year with a day of outdoor fun. Per their annual tradition, caregivers set up a huge slip-n'-slide for boys and girls.



Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities
Lindsay Home ladies give back
 Adult residents at Lindsay Home in Zionville planted flowers at Sharpies Diner. The local diner assisted the residents during the pandemic by donating many meals to them.



Kennedy Home in Kinston
Alumni celebrate Homecoming
 Alumni who call Kennedy Home their "home" gathered the first weekend in June for their annual Homecoming. It is an opportunity to reconnect and reminisce with one another.



Emmanuel Home for Birth Mothers
Scout helps while earning top honor
 Clay Sarno (pictured with BCH's Keith Henry) constructed eight outdoor chairs for Emmanuel Home in Thomasville. He earned his Eagle Scout rank. The home will open late 2022.



Friends of Children
Canipe and friends donate supplies
 Longtime supporter Jeremy Canipe and donors he networks with collected supplies for Drake Cottage. Located in Franklin, cottage parents provide care for boys living at Drake.



Good Shepherd Ministries in Guatemala
Orphan and caregiver work together
 Elizabeth, left, a caregiver for the orphans at Good Shepherd Ministries, works alongside one of the children as they prepare soil on the property for planting.



Odum Home in Pembroke
Church brings food and gift cards
 Friends from First Baptist Church in Hamlet recently delivered the food and supplies the church collected along with gift cards. Their efforts are a part of the 2022 Food Roundup.



McNeill Home at Indian Beach
Beach trip creates summer memories
 Mills Home cottage parents Gene and Dayna Bird recently took the Johnson Cottage girls, ages 7-14, for a vacation at BCH's beach cottage. For some, it was a first trip to the ocean.

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 to serve children, families and/or adults are available for you or someone you know.

BCHCAREERS.ORG

DONATE YOUR VEHICLE
 and it becomes a part of the ministry. Doctor visits, rides to school, church activities — your vehicle helps!

Contact Sam Barefoot
 at svbarefoot@bchfamily.org
 or call him at 336-474-1224

SECC
 State Employees
 Combined Campaign

#3641

Can we help? Many ministries beating with one heart.

- Western Area Family Services**
Linda Morgan, Lead Dir., 828-627-9254
- Central Area Family Services**
Regina Keener, Dir., 336-474-1200
- Eastern Area Family Services**
Christopher Allabaugh, Dir., 252-522-0811
www.kennedyhome.org
- Odum Home**
Kathy Locklear, Res. Mgr., 910-521-3433
www.odumhome.org
- Cameron Boys Camp**
Drew Scott, Dir., 910-245-4034
www.cameronboyscamp.org
- Camp Duncan for Girls**
Brad Gearhart, Dir., 910-944-3077
www.campduncanNC.org
- Family Foster Care**
Bob McCleary, 828-627-9254
www.bchfostercare.org
- Christian Adoption Services**
Kevin Qualls, Dir., 704-847-0038
www.christianadopt.org
- Weekday Education**
Brooke Child, Dir., 336-474-1201
- Tucker Greater Vision Ministry**
Sara Becker, Mgr., 336-687-6384
- HOMEBASE** at W. Carolina University
Jim Dean, Dir., 828-293-4660
- Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities**
Tara Sessoms, Dir., 336-474-1259
www.hereismyhome.org
- NC Baptist Aging Ministry**
Sandy Gregory, Dir., 336-474-1221
www.ncbam.org
- Good Shepherd Children's Home** in Guatemala
Keith Henry, COO, 336-474-1215



Homecoming was a success with great turnout – Alumni Beach Retreat set for October 7, 8, and 9

By **JOHN THOMPSON**, 104 Village Court, Havelock, NC 28532 (252) 671-3515 jthompson117@ec.rr.com

Homecoming this year was a great success. We had the largest crowd in a long time. On Saturday, we had 60 alumni to register plus husbands, wives, and children. On Sunday, we had a total of 75 registrations plus their families. This was a great time of Christian fellowship for all of us. We started on Saturday with a great car show from 9:00 a.m. and lasting until 1:00 p.m. This was a show of “Show Class” and “Road Class” cars, trucks, and motorcycles. It is organized by our very own, **Clayton Pait** ('72). Clayton provided a delicious lunch for all who participated. Also, during the morning hours we had visiting, catching up, and yard games.

That afternoon, we had a great time of fellowship playing bingo led by **President Katie Parker, Avon Parker, and Joyce Surbaugh**. We had lots and lots of prizes.

Supper was at 5:00 p.m. with delicious chopped beef with gravy, chopped pork with gravy, string beans, potato salad, slaw and delicious desserts.

The business meeting started at 6:30 p.m. with **Katie Parker** leading. The alumni voted 100% to give \$3,000 to purchase a new couch and love sit for one of the cottages. Our slate of officers were re-elected to serve another year. They are: **Katie Parker**, president; **Clayton Pait**, vice president; **Dickie Maynor**, treasurer; **Joyce Surbaugh**, secretary; and **Barbara Smith**, recording secretary.

Karaoke followed the business meeting with **Donna Daniels Wade** along with her husband and daughter, leading this great time of singing, dancing, and carrying on by all present.

Sunday school started at 10:00 a.m. Sunday with **Larry E. Gilliam** ('71) teaching. This was followed by the Alumni Choir practice I led

and the worship service beginning at 11:00 with **Rev. Horace Hawes** bringing the message. **Mrs. Doris Russ** played the keyboard for the service with **Penny Maready Batten** planing the piano. **Robert Maready and Dan Russ** brought in the American and Christian flags as the choir sang “Onward, Christian Soliers.” We then gave our pledges to the flags. **Rev. John Russ** led us in the invocation. We then all sang “Happy Birthday” to his mother **Doris Russ** to celebrate turning 90 years old in May. **Christopher Allebaugh**, director of Kennedy Home, welcomed everyone to campus. This was followed by a response from **Katie Parker**, the alumni president. The choir sang a wonderful song written by **Donna Daniels Wade** entitled “Homecoming Day.” Military recognition was led by **Clayton Pate** with **Joyce Surbaugh** reporting on the alumni business meeting. **Katie Parker** presented the Golden Alumni Awards. I was thrilled to receive mine for coming to Kennedy Home (KH) 50 years ago. **Dan Medlin** led in a memorial service and prayer for the alumni who had gone on to be with the Lord during the past year. **Donna** sang a song she also wrote called “Home Grown Love.” She is also the author of a wonderful book entitled “Wisteria Trees and Honeybees” and was one of my 62 piano students I had way back when. You will need to get a copy of her book to add to your personal library. **Gary Caulder** led in the offertory prayer with the ushers collecting \$700.00 during the service. The choir then sang “Blessed Assurance” with the congregation helping out. **Rev. Hawes** served as our minister for the weekend. He was the director of social services at KH in the seventies. I remember that one of my choirs met on the porch of Cedar Dell way back then

and sang beautiful wedding music for Horace and his lovely wife Mary when they married on the steps of Cedar Dell. It is remembered by all who participated. After the morning invitation hymn, **Mr. Allabaugh** made closing remarks and invited all to the delicious meal provided by KH and Baptist Children’s Homes each year and served by his staff in the gym. I closed the service with the benediction and prayer for the meal to follow. Homecoming was one that will be remembered for many years.

Susan Langston wrote me a letter informing us of her husband’s passing. **Ronnie D. Langston, Sr.** was from Princeton, NC. He was born February 24, 1949 and died this past February. He resided in the Brokenhurst Cottage from 1955-1958. His siblings **Guy Langston and Becky Langston Weaver** also lived at KH during that time. At the time of his passing, he resided in Fremont, NC with Susan.

The annual Fall Alumni Beach Retreat will be October 7, 8, and 9. The cost hasn’t been decided yet because we don’t have the head count. Please write me or **Debbie Caulder** and let us know if you plan to attend. You won’t be able to get the good price we offer anywhere on the coast. Our fee to use the cottage is \$300 so we have to cover that. We also provide all your meals for the weekend. The final cost may be about \$30 a person per night. You might even get some of that back. It really depends on the number of people attending. The house sleeps 60 folks. Contact us right away.

Debbie Lassiter sent me a letter about past alumni beach retreat times. She writes: “I am looking forward to KH’s Alumni Beach Retreat in October, as I always do. It is just a fun time to get together

and make some precious memories. I look forward to the retreat because it give us time to truly spend together, not for just a few hours but for a few days. We can really plan out things to do like eat at restaurants together if that’s what we choose to do or go to the beach. We can also plan to go shopping if we want. It just provides us more time to spend with each other and build our memories in a more meaningful way. We also occupy our time with games and karaoke. I look forward to our meals at the cottage with **Debbie Caulder and John Thompson** preparing them. John will usually make his delicious spaghetti. He will also provide us with some of his mouth watering pimento cheese. If you’re not aware, John Thompson is a very, good cook. He loves to cook! So let’s load up and go to the beach come October!”

Donna Duty writes: “I am very thankful that Baptist Children’s Homes supports the alumni coming back to the beach cottage each year. I’ve participated in several of those times of reuniting with my alumni friends there and enjoy the fellowship and fun times together. One of the fun things we do at the retreat is karaoke. Another fun thing we do is play dominoes. I love the BCH’s beach cottage and all the wonderful memories that I have from being there as a child and now as an adult. Thank you BCH for the memories!”

I had a great time at Kennedy Home Homecoming this year. My heart always grow full as we visit and love in each other. But I must confess, it wasn’t the same without my **Becky**. You helped though and I love you for it!
—JT



John Thompson served at Kennedy Home from 1972-1977. Today, he enjoys an active retirement.

For Stuart, adventure is always waiting

By Jim Edminson, Editor



mammoth Boy Scout trip to Colorado. The week-long excursion

takes Stuart 784 miles from his own stomping grounds in Rockwall, Texas, up to the 8,600-foot elevation of Camp Alexander. His first Smartphone had spotty coverage so Kyle and Susan sent photos and updates provided by the scout leader. In every snapshot, Stuart's smile is the biggest, and in those pictures he gave me all the information I needed: *I am having the grandest adventure, and life is great.*

Setting camp, eating at the chow wagon, napping in a hammock, hiking up huge mountains, and earning badges are just the start of his adventures. I also hear about horse riding, archery, and swimming in the short messages Stuart sends. Adventures galore, and memories aplenty. I live vicariously through this boy who takes life as it comes and tries anything.

On the way home, Stuart reports that temperatures are rising the closer the group gets back to Texas. Amarillo set records at 106 in the first week of June, so the troop opted for a hotel instead of camping out as planned. Alternative plan? No problem for Stuart. Being on an adventure needs no formal plan, and even detours are sought rather

than dreaded. So much to learn from my grand about his trip, but also about life and risks and striking a new path.

My newest t-shirt, a gift from Kathy after graduating from Moody Theological Seminary in May, reminds me: "Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way." I think it's Thoreau who captures the sentiment when he writes that we are "to live deliberately." The Good News puts it in different language and for eternal lessons, first in Matthew: "Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow" and again in John: "I came so that they could have life...to the fullest." Being an adventurer for

Jesus means living life to the fullest, each day, open to the God possibilities each hour holds.

Kyle and Susan report that Stuart greeted everyone, shared a few stories, and then fell asleep on the sofa almost mid-sentence. When Stuart came back down his mountain, there was nothing left—he gave it his all. What an attitude to have. What a lesson to share.

Stuart has lots of summer left, and he has many more mountains to climb before taking his first steps into the new halls of Utley Middle School. I wonder how he feels about all that's coming soon? Never mind, I will think like Stuart: Today is a grand adventure, and that is enough.



Colloquial wisdom says summer, the season for adventures, begins as soon as the doors close behind the last student on the last day of the school year. And for all of us, no matter the age, summer is still the time of freedom! Walking barefoot, taking trips, and letting hotdog mustard drip on our shirts during the seventh-inning stretch of an afternoon baseball game.

The Texas grands began summer way ahead of my NC grand. School endings being a matter of state legislation, Stuart, Roger, and Maggie took a first barefoot step into the season on May 26 while Emmalie had her first summertime pool party on June 9. All will make the most of the time between grades, and I hear about their adventures regularly. I hope summer is long enough to hold all the fun they have planned.

Stuart's school year ended with fanfare this time. He closed the doors on elementary school forever and is heading to middle school. Students moving on took a victory lap up and down the hallways of Virginia Reinhardt Elementary School in preparation for the big exit to the bigger halls of junior high. His entry to summer has special significance, but only the adults in his life pause to ponder the day. Stuart's mind is on adventure, and he will not waste one day of his freedom months considering the past nor the future. His world is the present.

The adventures begin with packing for a

Churches, it's time to prepare for this year's

ANNUAL OFFERING

ORDER MATERIALS ■ INVITE A SPEAKER

From posters to bulletin inserts to offering envelopes, we provide free resources to help your church

collect its best offering. Scan to order or go to bchoffering.org/order.



Invite a speaker to share with your congregation how lives are changed through their offering.

To invite a speaker, call 336.474.1209 or go to bchoffering.org/speaker.



The Cook family

Your offering made it possible for the Cooks to foster, adopt, and introduce their children to Jesus.

Baptist Children's Homes is accredited by the Council on Accreditation and is recognized as a certified CARE agency.