



Immediate Need: The medical needs of the children in Guatemala are rising! Help us raise the \$2,000 a month needed. (See page 7.)

Charity & Children

And now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina



@bchfamily

June 2021

Issue 6

Volume 134

God works to help Maria

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

The farm is a safe place for Maria to run and play. The white and red peonies are blooming and the nearby field is aglow with buttercups. The six-year-old's menagerie of friends include three dogs, a goat, the farm's alpaca and horse, a lizard named "Freckles," and the hedgehog "Reggie."

Tucked around the corner of the house is Maria's favorite: her swing. She opens the palm of one hand, and using two fingers from her other hand makes an inverted "v." She moves the fingers across her palm signing "swing" and off she goes.

Maria came to North Carolina from

Guatemala two years ago. She was born to an alcoholic mom and suffered fetal alcohol syndrome. Rescued from the streets, the malnourished child was taken to the Good Shepherd Children's Home in Xela, Guatemala—an affiliate of Baptist Children's Homes. Under the watchful care of the ministry's directors, Roger and Vickie Grossman, it was determined Maria's developmental and medical needs could not be met in Guatemala. They recommended she come to the United States.

Three thousand miles away, empty-nesters Karen and Sean had no idea how God was preparing to use them in Maria's life or how they would face the God-sized challenges ahead.

Continued on page 7



Remember graduates, growing is for always

By Michael C. Blackwell, President/CEO

To the class of 2021:

First of all, let me add my words of congratulation to you for completing what has at times seemed like an impossible task: You have hung in there—even in a year like no other—and I commend you for it.

Graduation is one of these significant and pivotal events. Believe it or not, you will one day look back on these years with a great deal of appreciation. Your time in school (and much of it learning remotely from your homes) has been marked with victory and joy, sadness and frustration, conflict and certainly growth. You have met a number of obstacles and have overcome them. Again, I say that it is a real accomplishment just to have *stuck with it* and seen a unit of study through to completion.

Graduation is just a phase of the learning process. It is not an end unto itself. It is a ritual of transition, not a ritual of termination. The challenge of learning goes on forever. It is altogether fitting that the graduation program be called “commencement” and not “terminus.”

“Commencement” signifies the beginning. And that is what graduation is—about beginnings not endings. Some of you may be facing graduation without the traditional Graduation Ceremony that goes along with it as much of the class of 2020 experienced. If this is the case, I implore you to hold a ceremony on your own with close family and the important people in your life. This rite of passage is important.

A couple of generations ago, George Bernard Shaw observed “most people died at thirty and are buried at sixty.” This is a tragedy—a living death. And it’s happening to people all around us. In his autobiography, Nikos Kazantakis recalls his childhood in a village in Crete where he shared an intensely idealistic relationship with two other lads. They wrote poetry, read avidly in many fields, and shared their dreams of what they wanted to become.

When he graduated from high school, Kazantakis received a scholarship for two years to study in Athens. When he returned to Crete two years later, he sought out his companions only to discover they had both married, settled into jobs they hated, and had begun to think only of security. Their dreams, their idealism, their hopes, had all faded. They had stopped growing. Or, to put it in another way, they had found a comfortable way to die.

This had a profound effect on Kazantakis, for all through his books there are warnings against stopping too soon in the pilgrimage of growth.

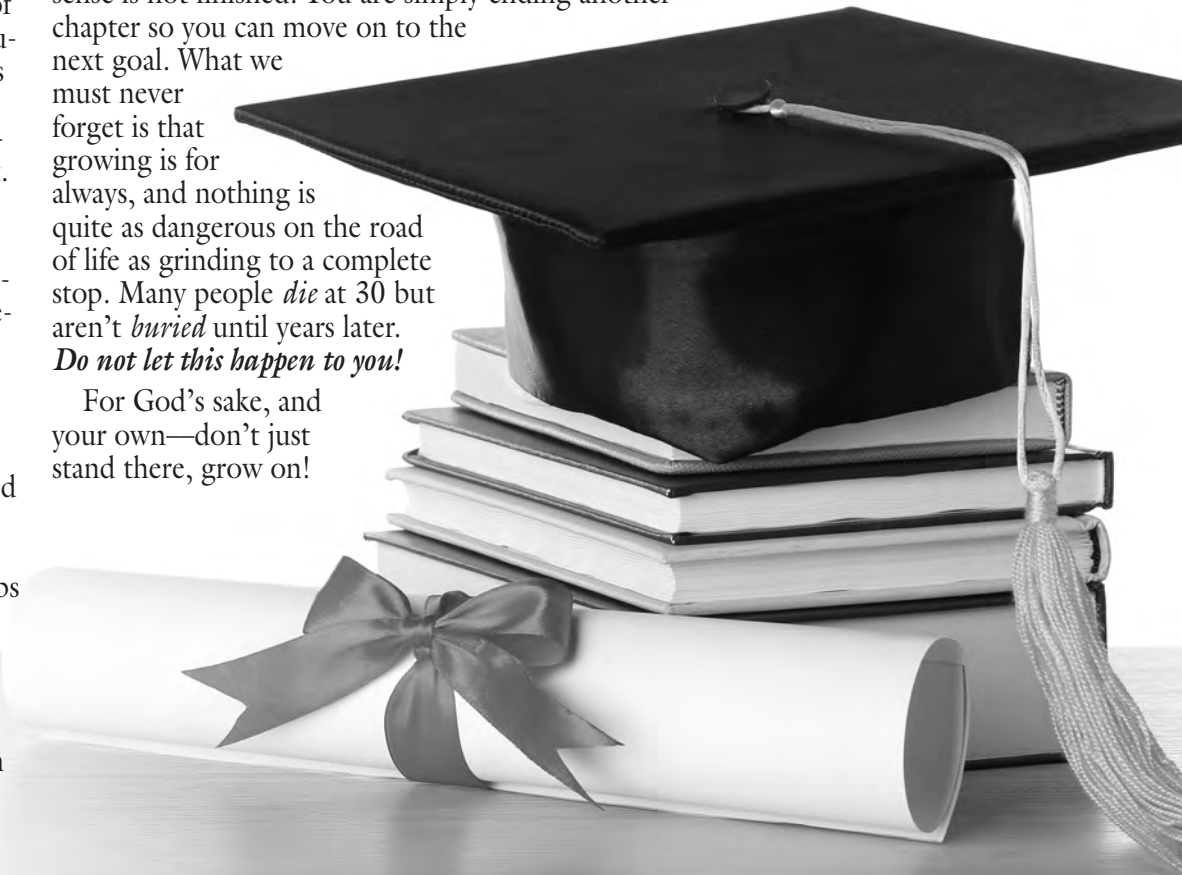
People have always had a horror of being buried alive. But what about the waste of a dead mind, a lifeless spirit, or a spoiled dream? To think of someone dying at 30 but not being buried until 60 makes me cry. The worst possible thing that could happen to you is to stop growing.

Growing is for always. If you realize this as you graduate, you will be far ahead in the game of life. If you refuse to realize this, then you would be better off having your diploma mailed to you, and then not opening it after it arrived. Grow for your job, grow for a hobby, grow for your family, but most importantly, grow for yourself.

Some may be surprised that though I am known for my speaking and communication skills, I never miss a chance to learn more about the craft. My father started me early on the road to developing this talent; he recorded me on a Wallen-sack tape recorder and would play it back and coach me. I took jobs during junior high, high school, and college that would further hone this skill. I still practice verbal drills daily and challenge myself to step out of my comfort zone. Just ask many of the employees and interns that have had a chuckle and been delighted at a rap that I penned and performed on their special occasion day. I tell my employees that school is never out. Times keep changing, learn and grow or be left behind.

I come back to my word of congratulations that is also a word of challenge. The event of graduation is a significant rite of passage and an achievement in itself. But remember it is a ritual of transition, not termination. Nothing is over yet, unless you will it to be so. Your education in the broader sense is not finished. You are simply ending another chapter so you can move on to the next goal. What we must never forget is that growing is for always, and nothing is quite as dangerous on the road of life as grinding to a complete stop. Many people *die* at 30 but aren’t *buried* until years later. ***Do not let this happen to you!***

For God’s sake, and your own—don’t just stand there, grow on!



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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Blackwell and EDT Todd Unzicker share vision for children

By Jim Edminson, Editor

The new executive director/treasurer (EDT) of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Todd Unzicker was hosted by BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell and BCH executive team members at Mills Home in Thomasville on May 6. While visiting, Blackwell invited Unzicker to be his guest on his podcast *It's a family matter*. The podcast went live on May 24, two days after Unzicker was elected as EDT by the messengers attending a special called meeting of the state convention gathered at Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem on May 22. Unzicker succeeded Milton A. Hollifield Jr. who retired February 28 of this year.

"It is an honor to be here on this podcast," Unzicker tells Blackwell as they began recording. "I am thrilled about this new assignment and look forward to working with you."

Unzicker tells listeners that he and wife Ashley have a heart for children. Ashley has served as a children's minister, and her husband affirms, "She's great with kids."

During the podcast interview, Unzicker shared the couple's passion. "One of the visions that I believe that God gave Ashley and me was that how can we be a state that eradicates child homelessness, where tonight there isn't one child who doesn't have a safe, loving Christian home to go to?"

Approximately 16,000 children are

in the state foster care system. They have been removed from a family home and are in a state of flux, seeking a permanent caring home.

"I don't know how we're going to get there, Dr. Blackwell, but I really know after meeting with your staff, that it was a heartbeat and a purpose of the staff long before I ever met them," Unzicker says. "And so, I really see the Holy Spirit already giving us those dreams and desires together."

Blackwell assures Unzicker that BCH wants "to do everything that we can to work in tandem" with him and NC Baptists.

Unzicker's vision for the state convention is clear, "We're going to be a convention of churches that are on a mission together."

The Unzicker episode of *It's a family matter* can be listened to at www.bchblog/podcast or on a favorite podast platform.



Dr. Michael C. Blackwell hosted Todd Unzicker on the *It's a family matter* podcast which streamed on May 24. Unzicker, the new executive director of the Baptist State Convention of NC, shares his vision for the convention and affirms the partnership between BCH and NC Baptist churches. He most recently served at The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham and has served as a director of missions in Florida and as a missionary in Central America.

To access the podcast, scan the QR code with a smartphone.



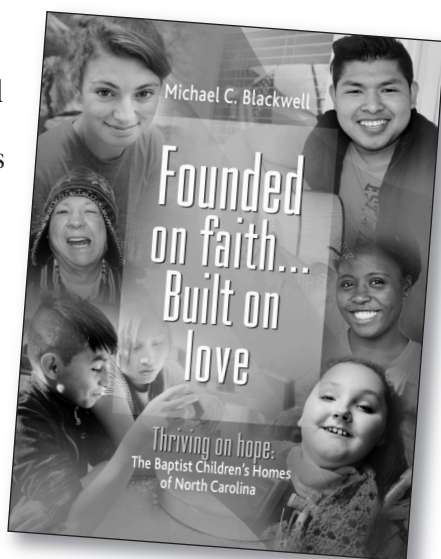
New BCH history book arrives

Nearly two years in the making, the new BCH history book written by Dr. Michael C. Blackwell has arrived. The 8 1/2 by 11 inch, full-color, 150-page book captures the real stories of young people overcoming seemingly impossible odds.

Subtitled "thriving on hope," this new history book focuses on the last 20 years while summarizing the entire spectrum of BCH's history from 1885 through 2020—135 years of many ministries, beating with one heart.

This "book for the ages" can be yours.

Order a signed copy for only \$20.00. Mail your check made to Baptist Children's Homes for \$20.00 to Pam Burgess at P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361. Be sure to include your return address. If you have questions, call Pam at 336-474-1286. Allow three weeks for delivery.



River Hill Refuge takes another step forward

Baptist Children's Homes' trustee Jay Westmoreland and BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell sign papers that move the new Foster Family Home project in Cleveland County forward. Jay Westmoreland and his brother Wes donated the land and made a lead gift toward the construction of the three homes. The gifts were made in memory of their father, veterinarian Dr. Ted G. Westmoreland.

Help feed the lambs, both their tummies and souls

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

It has been a difficult year, but also a year filled with hope and promise amidst difficult and messy circumstances. Everyday, individuals enter our doors desperately in need of refuge.

In Psalm 46:1, the writer proclaims: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Over the past year we have held onto this message of hope and proclamation over our lives. He has indeed been our refuge and strength. He has indeed been our ready help in time of trouble. Because of God’s impact on our lives, we stand ready to share this hope, this promise with those whom God entrusts to us each day.

Why live in the messiness of this work?

Why live in the hurt, pain, and trauma caused by the darkness and lostness all around us?

Why minister to a hurting desperate world?

We minister because God rescued us! Because God saved us, it is our desire to see the gospel shared with everyone who turns to us in search of help and hope. After all, it is God’s unconditional love that mends the most broken of hearts.

We do not do this alone. **You make a difference. Baptists across North Carolina make this ministry possible.** Over this past year we have not slowed down. In fact, we stepped out in faith to include a new adoption program and an expanded foster care program—more children to care for with the love and grace of God!

God has called us to be light, to impact the darkness and the lostness around us. Recently, we witnessed light arriving on our campuses by the truckful. Yes, **trucks of food** arrived on our campuses from all over the state with **hundreds of thousands of pounds of hope and love.**

Every day, children come to us hungry. Some need their bellies filled, but all need their souls filled. *“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’”*

Suzie came into care at age 14. She moved from home to home because her parents were on drugs. She witnessed the drug abuse and had to call 911 because both parents overdosed. When she came to us, she had “no one.” She was angry and very hostile. The houseparents were patient and kind. They gave her the space and ability to grieve over her situation. Once trust was

developed, she said to the houseparents, “I have no one in my life now, everyone is gone.” The houseparents opened their arms saying, “If you will let us, we want to be a part of your life.” She no longer worries about having “no one.”

“If you love me, feed my lambs...”

Trey came from a very traumatic situation. He had been abused by his father—whipped and deprived of food. He was greeted by his houseparents and for the first three days he was a happy eight-year-old little boy. One day, his houseparent came into the room and the boy looked at him and started screaming and running the halls. He hid in the closet and screamed “No! No! No!” The next day he was fine. But the following day it occurred again. He was finally able to share with his case worker that he had been beaten with a belt that had brads in it, and it hurt so bad, and that was what his houseparent wore on occasion. Unknowingly, his houseparent was triggering a flashback to the trauma Trey had experienced—being beaten with the bradded belt his father wore. The houseparent took the child aside and together they threw the belt away. This is an example of light illuminating the dark trauma in this child’s life through caring Christian houseparents. The little boy never had another incident while he lived in a cottage. Today, he is in a loving BCH foster home.

“If you love me, feed my lambs...”

Three-year-old Ana arrived at our orphanage in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, beaten and bruised so severely by her family that her skull was shattered in pieces. Many surgeries,

numerous painful nights, and countless prayers later, Ana is now a precious little girl who loves to run, play, and dream of her future.

“If you love me, feed my lambs...”

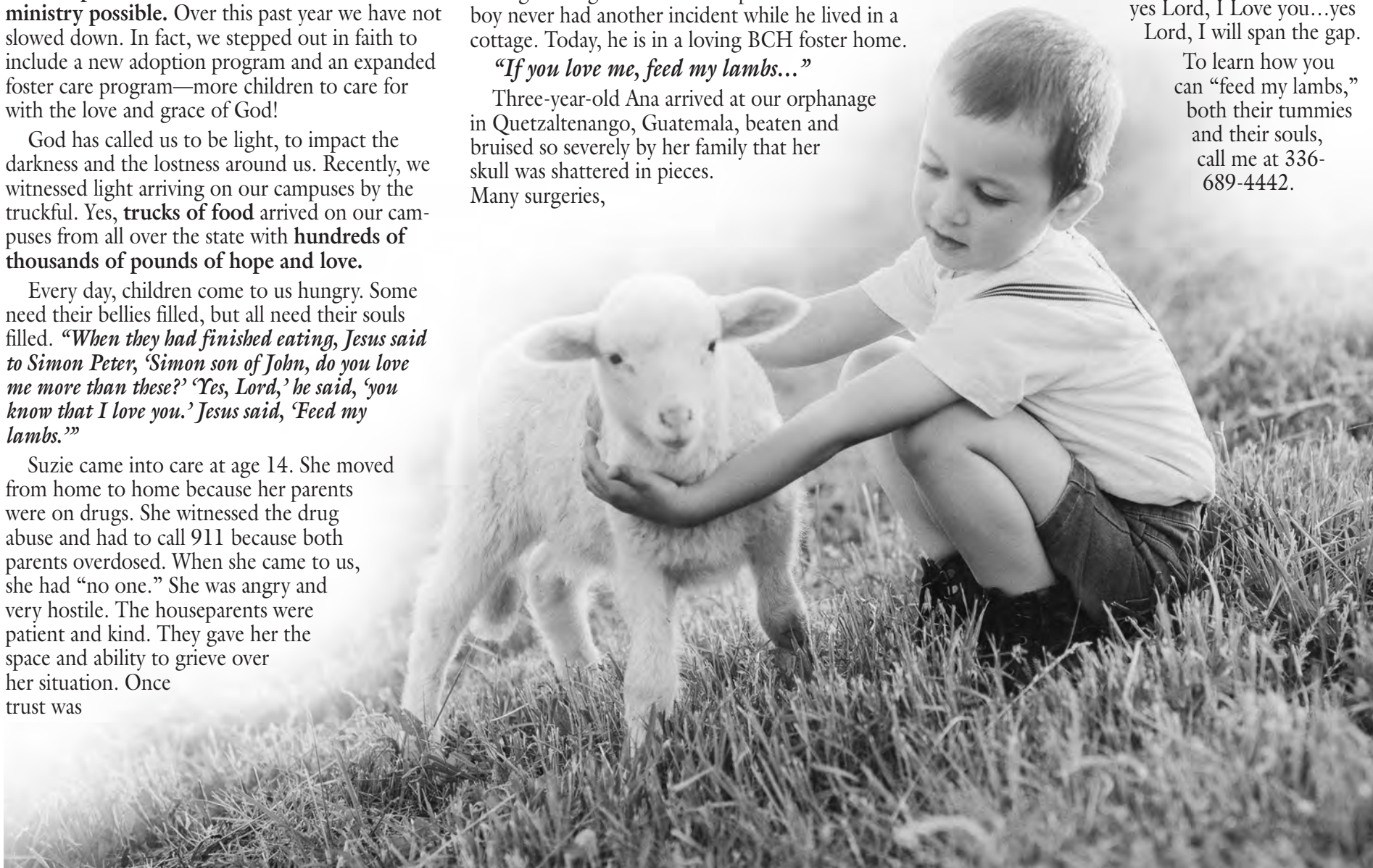
In the dead of night the alarm sounded. The home for sailors was on fire. On the upper stories of the home men were crying for help. A long ladder was placed on the home, but it was too short. A sailor on the ground climbs the ladder placing his feet securely on the top rung of the ladder with his fingers grasping the window sill. “Quickly, men,” he says. They climb over his body to the ladder and down to safety. The ladder was essential to saving the lives of many men that night. However, it was short the length of one man’s body.

For many of the precious lambs who come to us, the house is on fire and the ladder is too short. Each year between 16,000 and 17,000 children in North Carolina are removed from their homes due to unsafe conditions. Like Suzie, Trey, and Ana, they are hungry, abused, lost. BCH is their ladder. Through your faithful support you become the man on the ladder. You span the gap.

“If you love me, feed my lambs...”

Thank you for saying,
yes Lord, I Love you...yes
Lord, I will span the gap.

To learn how you
can “feed my lambs,”
both their tummies
and their souls,
call me at 336-
689-4442.



Don't leave me!

Jenny clung to her cottage mother as she cried out these words while the other children swung on the playground swings.

Jenny came to live at Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) only a few days earlier. She was making friends and growing close to her cottage parents. However, anytime they went outdoors, Jenny did not want to play. She followed her cottage parents closely, refusing to leave their sides. They were puzzled because they could tell she wanted to join the other boys and girls, but something held her back.

One day, while the children were on the playground, Jenny bravely told her cottage mother, *"My momma left me at the playground and never came back."*


Jenny cried as her cottage mother hugged her tightly. She assured Jenny that she never had to worry about being abandoned again. A few days later, Jenny began to take small steps towards the playground. Her cottage mother smiled widely as Jenny suddenly burst onto the playground and climbed on the nearest swing with the other children. *Her fear was gone!*

Jenny experienced her first summer filled with laughter and joy because of friends like you! As a summer sponsor, this is the gift you provide for boys and girls, like Jenny, whose lives have been marked by heartache. At BCH, their cottage parents ensure they feel safe, loved and that their summers are filled with warm-weather activities that replace painful memories with happy ones.

Please be a summer sponsor and help hundreds of boys and girls who count on your faithful support. We are still navigating restrictions because of COVID-19, but our cottage parents are committed to giving children, like Jenny, a summer filled with safe activities that will bring joy to their hearts. It's only through your gift that we can care for boys and girls and bring them joy.

Thank you for making summer unforgettable for North Carolina children!





I want to give a child JOYFUL Summer memories

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

To make a gift by check, please print your information below and mail this form with your check.

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

To make a gift by credit card: 1) Go online at www.bchfamily.org/summer 2) Or make your gift by calling Faith Frazier at 336-474-1312

☐ Yes, I would like to receive email updates from Baptist Children's Homes.

☐ Contact me with information on how to prepare a Christian Will. ☐ I have included Baptist Children's Homes in my estate plans.

Seniors look toward future

BCH RESIDENTS

Meg Barton, a resident at Truett Home in Hayesville, graduated from Hayesville High School. She will attend Appalachian State University in Boone where she plans to major in English.



Barton

Thomas Boyce graduated from Thomasville High School in Thomasville. The resident at Mills Home in Thomasville will attend Davidson-Davie Community College in Lexington this where he plans to major in zoology.



Boyce

University of North Carolina at Pembroke to study nursing.

Bikash Darjee graduated from Thomasville High School. A resident of Mills Home, he will major in culinary arts at Guilford Technical



Byrd



Darjee

Community College in Asheboro.

Joann Pelzer graduated from Purnell Swett High School. The Odum Home resident is attending the University of North Carolina at Pembroke where she plans to pursue a career in nursing.



Pelzer

Odum Home resident Rachel Smith graduated from Purnell Swett High School. She will study nursing at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and is interested in working in women's health or pediatrics.



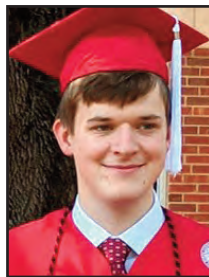
McMillan



Smith

STAFF CHILDREN

Benjamin Adamcik graduated from North Carolina State University in Raleigh. He received his Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering. Benjamin will pursue his Master's of Science in Aerospace Engineering program at NC State. He is the son of



Adamcik

John Adamcik, BCH Director of Human Resources.



Burgess

Morgan Burgess is the daughter of Pam Burgess, administrative associate in the Office of the President. Morgan graduated from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte where she received her Bachelor

of Science in Psychology. She will continue her studies to pursue a career in occupational therapy.

Laura Burns graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Political Science. She desires to impact healthcare reform through new policies and legislation. Laura is the daughter of NCBAM administrative assistant Amy Burns.



Burns



Combs

Michael Edwards, son of Fancy Finds director Charlotte Edwards, graduated from Southwest Guilford High School. He is an employee of Outdoor Mart in Colfax and is determining his plans for the future.



Edwards



Frazier

Cassie Frazier graduated from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Theater Design and Technology. Cassie will attend the University of Arizona to obtain a Master's in

Raleigh Combs graduated from Watauga High School in Boone and is the son of Laura Combs, administrative professional at Lindsay Home in Zionville. Raleigh plans to attend Caldwell Community

Fine Arts in Costume Design for Theatre, Film and Television. She is the daughter of Faith Frazier, an accounts receivable clerk at the BCH business office.



Fuller

BCH development director Patrick Fuller. Luke will study business administration at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Connor Haggist, son of Alicia Rosser, ranch manager at Oak Ranch in Broadway, graduated from Green Hope High School in Cary. He will attend Martin Community College in Williamston where he will pursue an asso-



Haggist

ciates in equine training.



McLamb

Jake McLamb graduated from The Way in Thomasville. He will attend Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, GA where he will study illustration and design. Jake is the son of Teresa

Leatherwood, Supervisor of Residential Services at Mills Home in Thomasville.

Emma Qualls graduated from NC State in Raleigh with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. She has accepted a position with West Cabarrus Church in Concord. Emma is the daughter of Kevin Qualls, Senior Director of Christian Adoption Services.



Qualls



Robinson

Simone Robinson, daughter of IDDM program coordinator Shannon Fulp, graduated from Winston-Salem State University. She completed a double major in Criminal Justice and Political Science. Simone plans to pursue

a Master's in Social Work or attend law school.

Joshua Theriault graduated from Metrolina Christian Academy in Indian Trail. He is the son of Christian Adoption Services office manager Amy Theriault. Joshua will attend South Piedmont Community College in Polkton and then Wingate University in Charlotte to pursue a bachelor's in business.



Theriault

Brantley Walker graduated from Thomasville Senior High School. He wants to be a teacher and will attend Appalachian State University to major in history. Brantley is the son of Andrea Walker, Director of Family Work for Mills Home.

STAFF MEMBER

Julieta Santillan graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where she received her Bachelor of Social Work. She is a part-time accounting assistant in BCH's business office.



Santillan

Couple's plans change to meet little girl's needs

By Jim Edminson, Editor

Continued from page 1.

Even before Sean and Karen had ever heard of Maria, God was at work in their lives preparing her a home.

"Everything has been God orchestrated," Karen asserts.

The couple celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary June 2. The two met at a military training event between their junior and senior years of high school. Sean went on to attend West Point.

A day after his graduation, the couple wed in the Cadet Chapel in 1991 with an "arch of sabers ceremony" and Karen receiving a gentle swat from the saber bearer who announced: "Welcome to the Army, Ma'am."

After raising two daughters and "living" life together, their journey brought them to the 20-acre farm they now call home. Plans were in the works to replace the existing house with a newly-constructed home and they talked about retirement.

"We had plans," Sean recalls, "and it did not include a small child in our lives."

But the tragic loss of their oldest daughter turned their world upside down. The grief became a daily struggle. Karen turned to Scripture with questions on her heart. Sitting in silence one day, she asked, "God, what purpose do you have for me now?"

The couple were members of a North Carolina Baptist church. It was almost a surprise to Karen when she signed up for the next mission trip. Her first trip was to Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina, and her first foreign excursion was to Panama.

"It was on my third trip—the trip to the Good Shepherd Children's Home in Guatemala, that I met Maria," Karen recalls.

When Maria first arrived at the home, she could not walk. She scooted on the floor, her legs too weak to support her. She did not speak and could not chew or eat solid food.

Karen saw her need, her heart enfolded the little girl, and she could not wait to get home to tell Sean.

"I remember saying, 'Let me tell you who I met,'" Karen chuckles. "We began to pray for Maria and send financial support. Sean and I kept putting her name before the Lord."

Karen knew she needed to do more. On her second trip to Guatemala, she and the Grossmans began to talk about Maria coming to the States.

"My husband listens to God," Karen says. "He heard my need and heard Maria's

need. And our life plans changed."

The couple flew to Guatemala.

"God worked in my heart," Sean confesses. "There is no such thing as retirement from the gospel."

Fifty-one-year-old Sean says the notion of early retirement went out the window and the construction of a new home was placed on the back burner. There was a little girl who needed them, and they were committed to helping her.

The couple saw God move in mighty ways. Karen recounts going to the consulate in Guatemala. "I knew a six-month medical visa was not going to be enough. Maria's needs were great—we believed they were even greater than what we knew at the time. I walked up and told the person that we needed a ten-year visa. He told me to come back."

The next day, Maria was given a 10-year visa.

"God announced in some very big ways that this was on His time" Karen says. "Over and over again, He worked mightily to bring Maria to live on the farm. All we had to do was allow Him to work."

Two years have flown by since Maria came to live in North Carolina. She can walk with just a slight step to her gait. She fully understands English, and she and Karen are learning sign language.

She attends their church's preschool and enjoys interacting with the other children.

She has grown six inches and gained almost seven pounds.

Karen sends reports back to Guatemala regularly on Maria's ongoing medical challenges. She also reports on her many successes. "God knew what He was doing when He brought Maria into our lives."

Maria interrupts and signs banana and peanut butter. Karen asks if she wants a sandwich. She shakes her head "yes" and then signs, "Thank you." Karen responds, signing "You're welcome."

The two embrace in silence, Karen makes Maria's sandwich, and the two agree, Maria can swing when Sean returns home from work.

URGENT NEED: The medical needs of children at the Good Shepherd Ministries in Guatemala are now costing approximately \$2000 a month (\$24,000 a year). This rising cost was not budgeted. There is also the need to raise \$31,000 between June and September to meet budget needs for the two orphanages. To help with these critical needs, please call Brenda Gray at 336-689-4442 or go give online at www.bcb-family.org/givenow and choose "Guatemala Orphanage" from Gift Designation drop down menu.



EDITOR'S NOTE: The child's name and identifying locations have been changed to protect her privacy.

NC Baptist bikers bring in record amount for BCH ride

North Carolina Baptist bikers have once again exceeded their goal for the sixth annual “Ride to Clyde.” More than 100 riders raised almost \$145,000 for Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) going well above their \$100,000 mark.

“What God has done through the efforts of these passionate riders is beyond remarkable,” said BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell. “What is more incredible is this accomplishment was achieved while still navigating COVID-19.”

Despite the pandemic, riders raised more than a quarter of a million dollars in the past two years. The funding helps BCH provide safe homes for abused and neglected children and gives their caregivers the opportunity to share with them the hope of Jesus Christ.

For many bikers, the ride is their introduction to BCH’s many ministries. The route takes them to several locations as they travel from the east coast to Clyde during the four-day event. A number of participants, many who are pastors, return every year.

“At every location we visited, we saw excellence,” said Jody Yopp, senior pastor at Kellum Baptist in Jacksonville. “As a pastor, I’m proud to be associated with a group that not only does this ministry, but does it good.”



Top, riders pray at Cameron Boys Camp. Far left, children cheer as bikers roar past cottages at Broyhill Home in Clyde. Left, BCH’s Linda Morgan receives the check by ride coordinator Brian Davis totaling \$116,905.21. Since then, the amount has grown to almost \$145,000. Watch the *Ride to Clyde* video at vimeo.com/bchfamily/rtc21 or scan the QR code with a smartphone to watch.



BCH communicators recognized with 13 national awards

Michael C. Blackwell and Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) staff members received awards from the Baptist Communicators Association (BCA) during a virtual presentation on April 20. The national competition is designed to encourage and recognize professional excellence among Baptist communicators.



Blackwell



Ragsdale

telling award with BCH director of communications Blake Ragsdale. Blackwell was also recognized for his podcast, “It’s a Family Matter.” He received 2nd place award for overall broadcast/podcast and 3rd place for the individual episode, “Small Enough for God: Part 2.”

Ragsdale and Randy Durham of Credence Pictures picked up 1st and 3rd place awards for “CHOSEN,” the 2020 Annual Offering video, in two different categories. Ragsdale received a 3rd place in feature writing less than 750 words for “Family’s Dream Comes True.”



Layton



Edminson

Carol Layton, NCBAM director of communications and Administration, and Jim Edminson, assistant to the president and editor of *Charity & Children*, received 1st place for the audio version of “One Hope” daily devotional.

Layton received 2nd place in overall book publication for the devotional’s print version. For print advertising or promotion, Layton received 1st place for the “Rev Up for Rampin’ Up!” rack card and 2nd place for the “NCBAM Foster Grandparents” pamphlet. She was also awarded 2nd place for “2020 Ministry Highlights” print piece in the print publication/other category.

Homecoming is a “go” for July 30, 31, and August 1 — Alumni can expect pre-registration packets in June

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

Fantastic news, we are having Homecoming this year! The dates are July 30, 31, and August 1. The Alumni Council worked tirelessly on May 16 for what purports to be one of the best Homecomings ever. Please plan now to come and *urge old friends* to meet you there. The theme is “We Are Family!” All we do during the weekend will be reminders of our special Mills Home (MH) family ties: the food we eat, the songs we sing, the way we worship, the entertainment we enjoy, and the “tall” tales we tell. Please be there with us.

When your Homecoming letter from **President Jane Helms Brown** arrives in late June, be sure to keep it handy with all the important forms: the pre-registration form which lets you make your meal reservations, the weekend schedule of events, the update sheet for the Alumni Column, and other information. Jane is hopeful that we will have a great number of people to register before or at Homecoming and pay their dues. But she also feels that if you simply do not have the money for dues, please do fill out the registration form anyway. That is our best way of keeping accurate records of alumni whereabouts.

Early Homecomers will begin the weekend on Friday evening with a cook-out at the picnic area across the street from the gym. Items served will be grilled hamburgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings, beverages, and dessert. You can make a reservation for that meal (and the other two meals) on the pre-registration form that comes with Jane’s letter. On Saturday morning, we will have a big breakfast at 9:00 a.m. in the Teen Room located in the gym. On Saturday evening, we will have the Associational Meeting at 5:00 also in the Teen Room. The meeting is followed by the delicious home cooked meal prepared by **Jane and Danny Brown, Jimmy and Linda Rochelle** and the crew of helpers. You must make reservations for breakfast and both evening meals on the pre-regis-

tration form. You can look forward also to the barbecue and hot dog lunch on Sunday in the gym provided by MH. You do not have to register for that.

Please continue to update us with any new addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. The information must reach **Jimmy Rochelle** by June 15, 2021. His address is 105 Jasmine Place, Durham, NC 27712.

As we usually do, we ask that folks begin looking for items you can donate to the Silent Auction. Items should be worth an opening bid of \$10.00. The Auction is such a popular event of Homecoming Weekend and is a great fundraiser for our Association. For the entire weekend we will also have our usual array of items for sale at the check-in desk. The new address book will be among those items. This is just a pre-view of a great Homecoming. You will learn a lot more through all the information sent with the Homecoming letter.

We were saddened to hear that **Helen McGee James** passed away on April 22. Helen came to Mills Home in 1950 with siblings **James and Jane**. She was very active in church activities and popular about campus, graduating in 1960. She especially loved **Tom and Chris Marlowe**, houseparents at the Huffman Cottage. She also loved returning for Homecomings and was known by many to be the life of the party. Consequently, we were not surprised when she presented a most enjoyable Homecoming address in 2019. She also always brought quilts for us to auction off in the Silent Auction.

Helen lived in Reidsville for most of her adult life and was a tax preparer for more than 26 years for H&R Block. She was a faithful member of Burton Memorial Baptist Church where she was a member of the choir, the WMU, the Hostess Committee, and the Senior Sunday School Class. She was preceded in death by two husbands: **Arthur A. Williams and Pete James**, two sons, a granddaughter, a sister, and three brothers that included James. Condolences may be sent to **Jane Chap-**

pell, 6028 King George Dr., Charlotte, NC 28213.

Thanks to **Steve Hooks** for his up-date sheet. Steve and his wife **Linda** are still enjoying life in their beautiful new home. They have lived in Kannapolis for most of their 58 years together. They have two offspring, seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren. He enjoys Homecoming and is there nearly every year. He and Linda love traveling and especially enjoyed their trip to Hawaii. They also enjoy going to Las Vegas for the country and western shows. Life at MH for Steve included little league sports, RAs at church, duty at the farm, house duty, and print shop duty—his favorite. His chosen vocation was auto-mechanics. After finishing high school, he earned a degree in master mechanics and gave many years of service to Ryder Trucking Company as the service manager.

Clifton Lambreth, with his twin Charles and sister Yvonne, entered MH in 1966. In 1978, he graduated from Thomasville High School where he had participated in cross country, track and field, and basketball. He went on to excel at Western Carolina University and earned his BS degree in business administration and his MBA there as well. He was a regular on the dean’s list. He is grateful to **Dr. W.R. Wagoner, Dr. Michael Blackwell, and Mr. Thurston Bowman** for their advice and assistance for college.

Clifton’s career included almost 27 years at the Ford Motor Company where he held various positions throughout the US. Afterwards, he was chief operating officer for a jewelry company in New York City and then created DBM, a business consulting firm. He produced a movie, *I am Not Ashamed*. It is the story of Rachel Scott, a student from Columbine High School. He has written three books: *Ford and the American Dream*, *The Return to Greatness*, and *The Ad Man*. In more recent years, he produced two network shows: “Music and Motors” on RFD Network and “A Prescription for Healthy Living” on

Family Net TV. Currently, he is coordinating with Epikah Studios to produce a VR (virtual reality) Bible which allows people anywhere to experience the Bible in a whole new way. It will include a creative way of utilizing the Oculus Quest 2 headsets. Learn more about Clifton at www.cliftonlambreth.com.

Clifton and his wife **Susan** live in Brentwood, TN and have three sons: **Bradley, Daniel, and Matthew**. The whole family is a regular sight at almost every homecoming where he thoroughly enjoys visiting with his Mills Home family. He is extremely grateful for all the BCH staff who taught him the true meaning of love, service, and leadership and provided for him a strong biblical foundation.

Many folks noticed in the January issue of *Charity & Children* an order form for a “book for the ages.” The book is *Founded on Faith...Built on Love* by Dr. Michael Blackwell. Many folks ordered one and are now receiving their books. If you happen to be looking for a single, all inclusive BCH history book, this is the one to own. It summarizes BCH’s history using beautifully hand-tinted old photos. A large part of the book documents history from the last 20 years and is jam packed full-color photos from this time. The book gives honor through recognition of outstanding leaders and outlines the rapid developments in childcare that have taken place in the last two decades. The subtitle “thriving on hope” not only captures BCH’s mission but casts a vision for the future. The beautiful color throughout and the readable text make reading a pleasure. To order a copy, send your check made to Baptist Children’s Homes for \$20. Mail to Pam Burgess at P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361. Be sure to include your return address. Direct questions to Pam at 336-474-1286.



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

Food Roundup 2021

Baptists come through big!

Throughout the state, North Carolina Baptists and other friends have donated incredible amounts of food, supplies, gift cards, and funds for the "Food Roundup." Through the efforts of churches and associations, who play a key leadership roll, children, special needs adults, and families BCH serves not only have plenty of eat, but they have seen the love of Jesus in action. Thank you!



Kellum Baptist Church in Jacksonville.



Center Hill Baptist Church in Lexington.



Metrolina Association in Charlotte.



Green Level Baptist Church in Apex.



Tuckaseegee Association in Sylva.



Caldwell Baptist Association.



First Baptist Church in King.



First Baptist Church in Smithfield.



Berea Baptist Church in Pembroke

The church, which is located right beside Odum Home, has long provided support to BCH.



West End Baptist Church of Henderson

Members collected 72 boxes of food, several gift cards, and \$2,600 in cash donations.



Polk Baptist Association in Columbus

This association of only 24 churches has collected more than \$12,500 in gift cards and funds.

Can we help? Many ministries beating with one heart.

1. Western Area Family Services
Linda Morgan, Lead Dir., 828-627-9254
2. Central Area Family Services
Regina Keener, Dir., 336-474-1200
3. Eastern Area Family Services
Christopher Allabaugh, Dir., 252-522-0811
www.kennedyhome.org
4. Odum Home
Kathy Locklear, Res. Mgr., 910-521-3433
www.odumhome.org
5. Cameron Boys Camp
Drew Scott, Dir., 910-245-4034
www.cameronboyscamp.org

6. Camp Duncan for Girls
Brad Gearhart, Dir., 910-944-3077
www.campduncanNC.org
7. Family Foster Care
Bob McCleary, 828-627-9254
www.bchfostercare.org
8. Christian Adoption Services
Kevin Qualls, Dir., 704-847-0038
www.christianadopt.org
9. Weekday Education
Brooke Child, Dir., 336-474-1201
10. Tucker Greater Vision Ministry
Sara Becker, Mgr., 336-687.6384

11. HOMEBASE at W. Carolina University
Jim Dean, Dir., 828-293-4660
12. Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
Tara Sessoms, Dir., 336-474-1259
www.hereismyhome.org
13. NC Baptist Aging Ministry
Sandy Gregory, Dir., 336-474-1221
www.ncbam.org
14. Good Shepherd Children's Home in Guatemala
Keith Henry, COO, 336-474-1215

one



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Alumni hopeful next year's Homecoming will be a go!

Memories of life and cottage mates 40 years after

By **John Thompson**, 110 Lee K. Allen Drive, Havelock, NC 28532 (252)671-3515 jthompson117@ec.rr.com

Well, Homecoming time has come and gone for another year. This has been very sad for all of us. Homecoming is usually the first weekend in June every year. Because of pandemic and COVID-19 restrictions this year and last year, we were not able to celebrate on the Kennedy Home (KH) campus. This has been necessary as we all worked to keep our children in care safe. Let's all pray as we look to 2022 and make preparations to have the *best* Homecoming next June. Let's make every effort to attend and celebrate together. I look forward to seeing you there.

As you know, each year many churches participate in the April Food Roundup for Baptist Children's Homes. This is always helpful. The church that I am a member, Cherry Point Baptist Church in Havelock, collects paper products during the month of May for me to take to KH. This is something your church might want to consider doing. For the whole month of May, our folks bring paper products to the church and pack the choir loft from the floor almost up to the ceiling. It is loaded with paper towels, lots and lots of napkins, toilet paper, paper cups, paper plates, etc. Last year, we were able to fill two truck loads. As you are reading this article, we'll be loading trucks to deliver all that was collected. Let me encourage some of our other Baptist churches to do the same thing during the year.

Thomas Koblinsky, a former houseparent at Biggs Cottage in the '70s, writes that he has a "busy" retired life. He states that he is thankful and grateful that God is still using him in His service. His church's pastor keeps the retired folks of the church busy with mission work. He writes: "Of course, being a houseparent at Biggs will always be a high point of my life. Watching those in our care, play, grow, and

become receptive to our care, as well as God's love, brought great joy to our hearts. As you know, **Sally** and I did not want to leave, but being in the military means going when they say "go." Thankfully, while in Tennessee, Sally and I were blessed to serve alongside many great people at the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home for 20 years before her passing in 2018. I am extremely blessed to have now found—rather God found her (as I wasn't looking)—a wonderful Christian second wife, named **Lana**. She, like Sally, loves the Lord, has a servant's heart, and is a delight to my heart. We have five great-grandsons with another due in November. They all live nearby and visit with us regularly. Needless to say, we love our time with them and take every opportunity to share God's Word.

"I want to share a story with you. **Mr. Moore**, a houseparent in Canady Cottage, and I loved to go fishing at the River Neuse. One day while fishing, we heard a crack behind us. A tree branch had broken off and landed a few feet away from us. There was a *big* cotton mouth snake wrapped around it. I'm sure I don't have to explain why I high-tailed it up the trail and headed home. But, not Mr. Moore. There he was, casting away, when suddenly, with the tip of his rod, he flipped that evil, slippery creature out in the river. God bless that man! I'll share more stories at a later time.

"I thank God there is such a place where children can come and be loved, receive healing, and be free from their troubled lives. Thank you, John, and all who have served so faithfully over the years. And, God bless the children—one and all! Love your column!"

I would hope other houseparents would share some things with me to use in my column. I'm looking forward to other articles from you all.

David Bradley, who was at KH in the '60s and '70s and was one

of my youngins, writes: "Let's go way back to the middle of August, 1966—about a week before school started. My father had bought me a battery-operated airplane. Well, the boys gathered in the middle of the street between Hardee and Spillman Cottages. **Ronnie Matthews** began spinning my new airplane around in a circle real fast. Sadly, it broke. Ronnie and I became good friends over the years and then came along **Gary Caulder**. Gary and Ronnie taught me how to play basketball which was one of the best times at KH for me. In the old gym, just before the new gym was built, Gary chose me to be on his team. That was the night I made the big play and blocked **Poncho's (Jerry Jackson)** shot. Besides Gary, Ronnie, and Poncho, I want to thank **Stanley Matthews and Dickie and Davie Maynor** for being good teammates and brothers."

David, thanks for sharing. Now, I would like to hear from some more of the alumni.

Debbie McCormick Caudle shared information about the passing of **Frank Linwood Laney** on April 8. Let's all remember his family in our prayers.

Debbie Lassiter shared about the passing **Barbara Jean Wortham Baird**, age 61 of Virginia. She died on April 4. Let's also remember her family in our prayers. **Barabara, Rusty, Jo Ann, and Scott Wortham** were at KH in the '70s. Keep all these "youngins" in your thoughts and prayers.

Judith Stewart, of Cedar Point near the beach cottage, writes a note of interest, concern and thanks to NC Baptists. She writes: "Hello, Mr. John. I have just finished reading your column in the latest *Charity & Children* and enjoyed it as usual. I have seen the gate open at the beach cottage and I hope everything is going well there. I imagine KH has had to make a lot of repairs since our big storms. I read in *C&C* that different events at the cottage had to

be canceled. Our little Chapel By the Sea has been open for services since last May. We decided that if other places were essential, then surely worship was essential. We have truly been blessed with our worship services. Some of our folks did get COVID-19, but they were all light cases—we are thankful to God and His loving care. Many, many people have come to the island from up north and have moved here. I wonder how many the Bogue Banks can hold without sinking! I more than appreciate the work of BCH and know God has certainly blessed BCH. Be well and continue your writing, John. I enjoy reading it. Judy Stewart, Cedar Point, North Carolina."

Louis McAllister, Jr. wrote to share this: "I am just reflecting today on how it has been almost 40 years ago that I was at the AD Cottage with the **Beachams** as well as all my cottage mates. I just want to say 'hello' to everyone and say it is nice to be able to keep up with most everyone I met there."

Bill and Betty Beacham were great houseparents. They are now with the Lord in heaven looking at us all. They were very good friends for Becky and me.

Donna Duty is having the time of her life in retirement from a regular job—she will never stop working to help others. She wrote right before she retired: "I look forward with excitement towards this next chapter in my life. My desire is that God will continue to use me in Christian counseling through my church and the community. Dave and I have plans to move to a beach in about a year.

Always remember that **Becky and I** love you all. Feel free to drop by and visit with us at any time. Continue to remember Becky and her health in your prayers.—jt



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

Don't stress, set your clock on God's time

By Jim Edminson, Editor

The youngest moaned, "How much longer? We've been driving forever!"

"The trip takes 17 hours. We've been on the road five." Her oldest sister used her patient voice, but she rolled her eyes.

The third sister chimed in, encouraging. "Hey! In two more hours, we will gain an hour." She paused. "Or lose an hour?"

"What does that mean?" Baby sister moaned again. "Will the trip be finished sooner or do we have to be in here longer?"

My daughters in the two rear seats had read their books, played their games, eaten their snacks, and taken naps. They wanted the journey to be over. Time weighed heavy, and I had no magic way of fixing it.

I glanced at Kathy. She looked up from her book. "I thought the trip was going quickly." I began looking for a roadside park, pondering time.

Twice a year, most people in the United States turn their attention collectively to setting their clocks. Whether we spring forward or fall back, there is a frantic upheaval across the amber waves of grain, purple mountain majesties, and the fruited plains to move our clocks so we remain in sync.

Being on time is an obsession. The die-hard time enthusiast and legendary football coach Vince Lombardi insisted, "If you are

five minutes early, you are already ten minutes late."

I had planned to arrive at Mom and Dad's in time for dinner, which they eat at 5:30. I calculated we were within my comfort zone but just barely. Hopefully, Alabama would not be under construction this trip.

At the park, we took walks before spreading blankets on the grass to stretch out. Our pup joined in, jumping over the girls and making them laugh. Someone snapped pictures. Before we knew it, an hour passed, taking away the one we would gain (or lose?) in a few miles. We loaded up, refreshed.

The first time the family undertook this same trip from North Carolina, my daughters were much younger. We left in the middle of the night and traveled most of the way before they woke to begin their day. The journey seemed to go faster then.

"How many years have we been doing this now?" I asked. My wife smiled. "Seems like just yesterday, huh?"

Not on this trip, I sighed. It felt like I had been driving for decades.

There are times in our lives when the years run ahead of us lost in the distant mist, and we think we will never catch up. Ironically, time can also stand still and force us to wait. A career window closes as one yearns to grasp the "brass ring," a biological clock ticks faster and faster as a bundle of joy remains a twinkle in an eye,

and good health wanes while illness shrinks one's world.

Unpredictable and yet regulated. How is that even possible?

Scripture reminds us in 2 Peter: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day..." Time, then, is a human construct.

We not only mark time by our watches, calendar pages flip one after another as days turn into months and months into years. The sands of time are fleeting, and there is so much pressure to do things at the right time. Time can seem more foe than friend.

And yet, it is not supposed to be that way. These days, I am journeying through the wisdom books in my personal Bible time, and today I read the familiar line in Ecclesiastes, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." The wisdom, then, is to align my sense of time to the Lord's teachings about time. I am reminded that it is with His time I need to concern myself, setting my clock by Him.

Meanwhile, the discussion in the back seat resumed. One of the sisters set her watch to Central Time, and the others asked why. She explained that while in Louisiana, she wanted to know the "right" time. Her youngest sister, greatly distressed, spoke up, "Oh no! We don't have the right time at home?"

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