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# Charity & Children

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



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November 2020

Issue 11

Volume 133

By Jim Edminson, Editor

## God can change your life!

It is amazing to look into 15-year-old Megan's eyes as they light up when she tells about the changes in her life.

"My story is real," she says. "There are people dealing with many of the same things I dealt with, and I want them to know there is hope. I want people to know God can change your life."

Nineteen months ago, March 4, 2019, Megan's mom picked her daughter up from the hospital where she was being treated for suicidal ideation. Mother and daughter had reached a dark place which neither had ever imagined.

While attending a job fair,

Megan's mom met a recruiter from Camp Duncan for Girls and knew she needed to act. The next stop for her daughter was the residential wilder-

ness program Baptist Children's Homes operates in Moore County.

"I could not see how bad things had become," Megan recalls. "I could not understand why I was going to be left by my mom at Camp Duncan. But there were few options. So, I decided to play the game until I was able to leave."

Megan says her troubles began when she was seven and her parents divorced. She was watching cartoons when she learned her father would be leaving. She says the memory is vivid in her mind.

Her father's addiction played havoc with her and her brother's lives. There were canceled visits because he was drunk or high. On one visit, she remembers coming into his apartment's living room after waking in the morning to find bottles on the floor and her dad passed out.

"This was not what I wanted for my dad or my family," she recalls. "I felt somehow to blame for the brokenness in my parents' lives. It all became too much."

*(Continued on page 3.)*

[ MY THOUGHTS ]

# Enjoy life or endure it

By Michael C. Blackwell, President/CEO

Some people refuse to embrace the future, a sad, regrettable choice. I still remember reading about a woman who lived destitute, picking up clothes at a clothes closet, begging for food, and finally wasting away alone at a nursing home. But after her death, authorities discovered she had left behind more than a million dollars, including \$800,000 in cash and several hundred shares of valuable stock, stored away in two safety deposit boxes.

Another example of failing to live with an eye on the future comes from a bequest made to BCH. It involved the estate of John Duncan, a man who did not trust banks. When he could not persuade his friend, Bob Lotz, to take \$8,000 of the cash he had accumulated, he declared he would bury the money and did not care if it was ever found.

When Duncan, who never married, died, he left us all his possessions. Appointed the estate's executor, Lotz spent more than a year looking for buried and tucked away money. True to his word, Duncan had squirreled away his cash. The only easy find was \$46.45, which Lotz located the day of his friend's death. From there he started removing doors, window trim, and electrical wall outlet plates, searching every nook imaginable. Three days later he found more than \$2,000 beneath a potato bin. He returned to search a few days a week for months.

Finally, frustrated that he had not located the main cache, Lotz prayed, "Look, God, you know I'm honest. I tried looking and I'm tired. Please let me find it. You know I'll turn every cent in; it's for a good cause."

On his next excursion into a woodshed, he noticed a plastic medicine tube against the foundation and a Wheaties box containing \$1,580. He returned to the pump house, studying the thick concrete walls and removed the roof. This time he found four plastic bags with a total of \$7,000. A couple of months later, he found

eighteen \$100 bills in a peanut butter jar in a hog house. In the rafters above was a tobacco tin with seven more. Total cash discoveries came to just over \$13,000.

These are extreme examples, and it is too easy to cluck, "What fools!" while overlooking the ways in which we cling to fear. Is choosing "stability" actually casting a vote for boredom? Or "prudently" piling up ever-larger retirement accounts in reality dreading that some old-age disease will suck away our life savings? Is a refusal to share with those who are less fortunate a reflection that we do not think there will be any more to replace what we give away? Only you can answer these questions.

Fortunately, we have two precious resources to help guide our steps. The first is experience. We do not have to plow fresh ground constantly. We can stand on our predecessors' shoulders. Each generation does not have to discover anew the law of gravity, invent the light bulb, or design engines from scratch although we can improve on them as is with the case of LED bulbs and Tesla electric cars. In a broader sense, the lessons of history are there to speak to us, to learn from, and to get right what others got wrong—if we will listen.

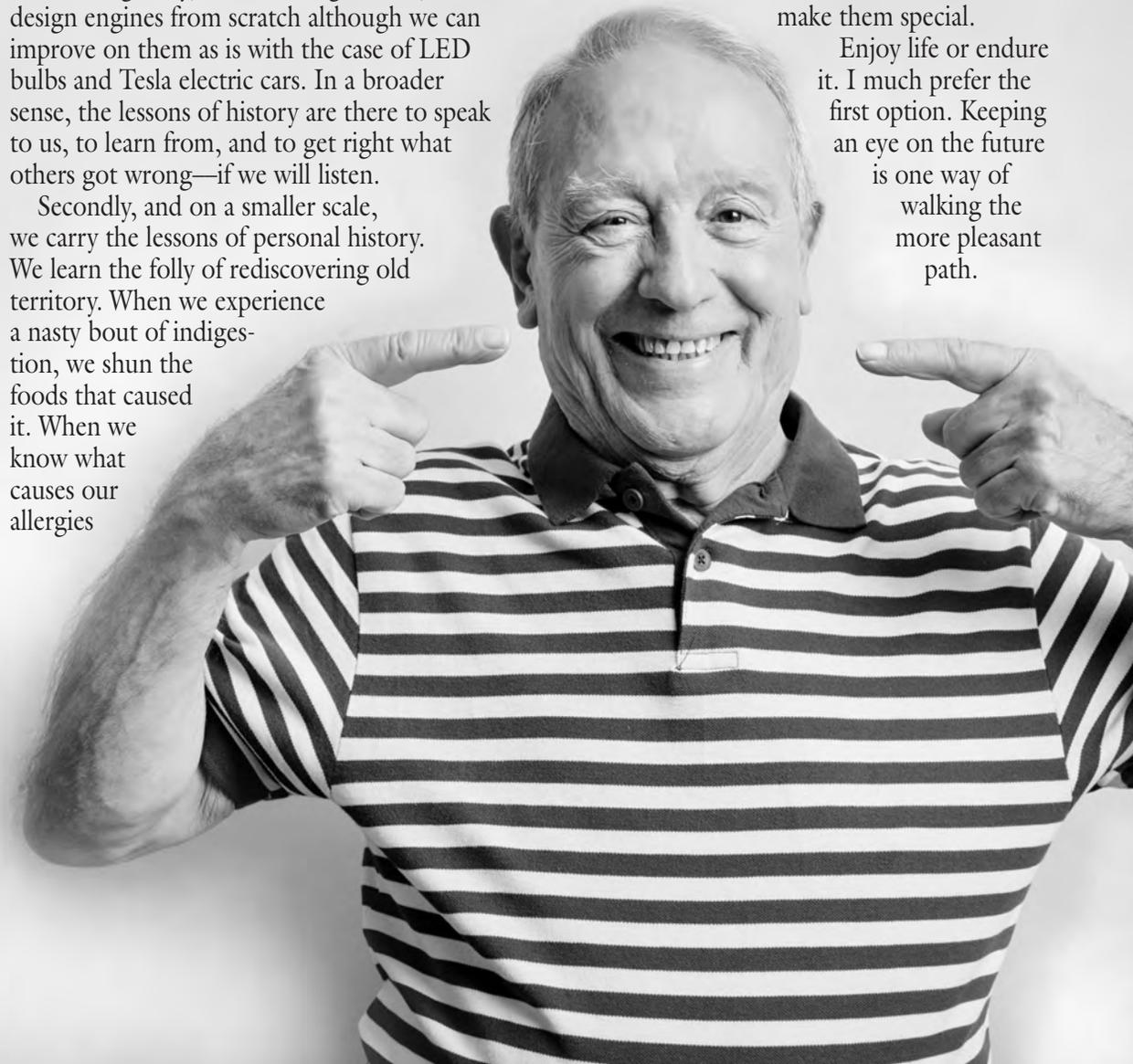
Secondly, and on a smaller scale, we carry the lessons of personal history. We learn the folly of rediscovering old territory. When we experience a nasty bout of indigestion, we shun the foods that caused it. When we know what causes our allergies

to flare up, we stay away from the source of swelling and sneezing. Remembering the times when we lost our temper should help us develop a more patient nature as we mature.

But experience is not enough. We also need expectation. Although we can recall the past, we must be able to anticipate the future. We spend numerous years being educated in hope of finding a good job. We follow a diet for weeks or months, keeping our eye on a trimmer figure. We spend hours at the keyboard, harvesting excellence at the piano. The effort is worth it because of expectation.

Everyone needs to find something in life to look forward to—to anticipate. We make a mistake if we think it has to be a trip to the Bahamas or a vacation to Hawaii. It could be welcoming home a child from college or watching your grandchild march in the homecoming parade. We all need to learn to find value in anticipating small events and learn how to make them special.

Enjoy life or endure it. I much prefer the first option. Keeping an eye on the future is one way of walking the more pleasant path.



**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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# Virtual session discusses foster/adopt opportunities

By Blake Ragsdale, Managing Editor

**B**aptist Children’s Homes (BCH) is leading a virtual breakout session about foster care and adoption and the integral role the church can play.

Entitled *Building God’s Kingdom by Connecting Vulnerable Children with Christian Families*, the breakout session goes live on **Monday, November 9 at [www.ncannualmeeting.org/breakouts](http://www.ncannualmeeting.org/breakouts) beginning at 9:00 a.m.** It shares partnership opportunities and ways for churches to be involved in ministering to children in North Carolina’s foster care system.

The session is a part of the Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) that takes place in November. Because of the pandemic, the Annual Meeting, like similar gatherings, has become largely virtual. BCH quickly shifted its plans to creating a video version of its session on foster care and adoption.

“We will definitely miss the live interaction, but this has allowed us to come away with a multifaceted presentation that can reach a pastor or church leader regardless of whether they could have attended an in-person meeting or not,” said Keith Henry, BCH Chief Operating Officer.

Henry is one of the three people leading the breakout session. He is joined by David Powell, Senior Pastor of Salem Baptist Church in Dobson, and Kevin Qualls, Senior Director of Christian Adoption Services (CAS). BCH acquired Christian Adoption Services, and CAS became an offi-

cial ministry of BCH beginning October 1.

All three leaders have seen the needs of North Carolina children up close. There are approximately 16,000 children in the state’s foster care system who have been removed from their families’ custody for their well-being and safety. They see the church as the answer for ministering to these boys and girls and ensuring they receive the caring families and homes they deserve.

“We see in scripture that God has called the church to invest in children,” Powell said. “And we’re part of the solution of the heart of Jesus that wants children to be up in His lap to bless. We are to be part of that.”

Powell’s church began partnering with BCH almost two years ago to begin a foster care and adoption ministry that has seen couples in his congregation step forward and become foster and adoptive families. BCH’s staff provided the training and licensing classes the couples needed and

assisted with child placements. In one case, six siblings were able to be placed with three different foster care couples in the church in order for the children to have contact with one another.

A couple in the church also took in an international child with very specific medical needs.

Christian Adoption Services helped make the placement possible.

In the breakout session, the partnership between Salem Baptist and BCH highlights how North Carolina Baptists are stronger when

working together to minister to the needs of children.

“I believe what BCH is doing is helping us as a church do what we are already called to do, but helping us get there,” Powell explained.

Visit [www.bchfosteradopt.org](http://www.bchfosteradopt.org) (goes live Nov. 9) to access information and resources for your church.



## Megan has turned her worries and burdens over to God

(Continued from page 1.)

When Megan entered her teen years, she began to act out. She had always been called the “tough cookie” in the family, but now she was crumbling inside. The trouble erupting in her life caused her heart to harden more and more. It came to a point that she began cutting herself “to *feel* something—anything.”

“I totally disconnected,” Megan says. “I became mean, and I was rude to adults. I thought it was cool to be on the edge—to make everything a drama. It was all a big joke to me.”

At the same time, her dad was losing his struggle with his addictions. Her mother began dating, and Megan thought none of the men were good enough for her mom: “I hated all of them.”

Her mother struggled to cope. She remembers thinking everything was okay—“It wasn’t that bad.”

Megan packs all her things from the tent she has called home at Camp Duncan. Her father, who has just completed a rehab program, her mother, and younger brother are coming for her graduation—she will be leaving with them.

“I can hardly remember the girl I was when



Camp Duncan recent graduate Megan and Chief Danielle have shared many experiences together. Megan, her fellow campers and chiefs make up the Pathfinders group at the girls’ wilderness camp.

I first arrived months ago,” Megan says. “The big turning point for me was when I accepted Christ and God became a part of my life. Just as amazing, my mom’s life has changed, too—she has opened her heart to Christ.”

Megan says things improved when she “gave up

on the pity party.” Today, she is determined to make good choices and “do something good” in her life. Things are better with her parents and brother. Megan’s mom says the changes in her daughter’s life have impacted them all and “put Christ at the center” of their family.

Megan has learned many coping and life skills at Camp. She says the chiefs/counselors and other staff members have been an inspiration. “Everyone has been a blessing and brought joy into my life.”

This year at Thanksgiving, Megan and her family will have much for which to be thankful. She hopes to use her new cooking skills learned at Camp Duncan to impress her grandparents, aunts and uncles.

She plans to use a couple of dessert recipes that are favorites for her Pathfinder group.

“I’m trusting God,” Megan asserts. “I give Him my worries and burdens and rest knowing He has a plan for my life.”

# A little child inspires others to give

By **Brenda B. Gray**, Executive Vice President, Dev. & Com.

In recent months, we have seen so much tragedy played out before our eyes. A pandemic, forest fires, hurricanes, and violence have been a part of our daily news. We hear a lot of bad, but I want to remind you of some good—the good that we at Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) have seen shared over and over again. Amidst these challenging times, there have been so many acts of courage and kindness.

When BCH needed food, you sent food. When we needed funds to keep our doors open, you sent gifts—and they made the difference. When we needed a building that was destroyed by fire torn down and a new foundation laid, God sent the right team. When we needed protective pandemic masks, God used you, His church, to provide them. When we needed encouragement, God placed it on your hearts to send hundreds of encouraging cards.

In the spring, we canceled BCH’s “Ride to Clyde” event—but the riders did not give up. On a rainy day in October, approximately 40 riders made their way to Thomasville to deliver some good news—they had raised a record donation of more than \$90,000. Last week, we received 70 bushels of potatoes raised by Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Hughes—a precious couple from the west. This past week, trucks bearing thousands of pounds of food, cleaning supplies, and paper products arrived on our campuses at just the right time. Each and every gift was good news and so incredibly appreciated.

God raised up so many to be His light in this darkness. To each of you who were able and willing to answer His call, *thank you!* We have witnessed countless examples of extraordinary commitment and courage. *Thank you!*

On November 11, Baptist Children’s Homes celebrates 135 years of caring for the “least of these.” Through the years, there have been times of tragedy—the polio epidemics, the flu pandemic of 1918, and the Great Depression. There were times of scarcity and questions of whether there would be enough food to feed the children. In recent years, hurricanes caused flooding and ice storms wreaked havoc on our campuses. The sustaining constant through these times has been God’s people. In times of need, God used people like you to sustain us.

In a few weeks, churches across North Carolina will be gathering the annual Thanksgiving Offering for Baptist Children’s Homes. Through these gifts, God’s people will once again sustain us and enable us to continue to open the doors of hope to those who have only known hopelessness.

Because of you, the door of hope was opened to Jennie

whose mother abandoned her when she was two years old.

Jacob and Jesse lived in a car. Their dad spent what little money he had on drugs and alcohol. For the brothers, hope came by way of loving houseparents.

Because of you, hope came to a fourteen-year-old and her precious baby.

You opened the door of hope to two sisters who had been physically and sexually abused since age five.

Hope is being offered to a precious little girl as she cries for her mother who is in prison.

Because of you, these children found security, a warm bed, clean clothes, food, and lots of love on their journey to hope and healing. In the midst of a pandemic, you offered hope to more than 107,000 individuals who were impacted through BCH.

As we come asking you to once again sustain us through our annual offering, I am reminded of a letter I received several years ago from a pastor. He wrote telling of three boys who had given to that year’s Thanksgiving Offering. The boys were ages 4, 8, and 9 and lived with step-grandparents. He wrote how the boys anxiously waited for the church van every Sunday—they loved coming to church. Each Sunday, the pastor talked about the Thanksgiving Offering and enthusiastically challenged the congregation to meet their offering

goal. The boys understood broken homes and the lack of food and clothing. They knew heartache—witnessing their daddy being killed during a family quarrel.

The letter told that when the offering envelopes were distributed, each of the boys took one. The next Sunday, the church van stopped for the boys, but they were not there. The church offering that Sunday of \$246 was quickly mailed to the Baptist Children’s Homes.

The following Sunday, the boys were waiting for the van—ready for church. As the pastor opened the van doors, he recalled that the boys were carrying their offering envelopes. Two had envelopes containing one dollar each. The third had two worn one dollar bills. The oldest boy, with tears in his eyes, placed his two dollars in the offering plate and told the pastor, “We wanted to help the children.” Another child who had witnessed what the boys had done, left his seat to place a gift in the offering plate. And then an adult and another adult came forward and another. Their offering grew. The letter closed with these words penned by the pastor: “The offering of these boys is the epitome of what Jesus meant about the widow’s mite in Mark 12:42-44.”

The scripture says, “and a little child shall lead them.” I continue to be moved by the example of these three boys who wanted to “help the children.” It is my hope that we will follow their example by giving our widow’s mite, whatever that may be.

We witness miracles every day. We feel so blessed to be a part of this ministry and are so grateful for those of you who give to make it possible. We do not take it for granted. We recognize your widow’s mite. We are grateful for every dollar, every penny you give to help those in our care. Thank you for making sure our doors of hope and healing stay open.

Have a blessed and meaningful Thanksgiving and know that we are giving thanks for **YOU!**



Brenda Gray serves BCH as the executive vice president, development & communications and directs fund-raising/friend-raising activities for the ministry.

# The Christmas season is a favorite time for many. Now, even for Josh.

When Josh first arrived, his hair hung down covering his eyes—the eyes of a boy who had lived a life of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. He trusted no one. But despite the failure of the other adults in his life, Josh was met with love! For the first time, he experienced the unconditional love of Jesus. His first Christmas with us, the dark shadows lifted as he heard about the birth of a Savior. Through the unconditional love he witnessed in his cottage, Josh gave his heart to Jesus. Through prayers and financial gifts, God has worked miracles in his life.

Please become a Christmas sponsor. Your Christmas gift helps children like Josh and ensures that Christmas, and every day of the year, is filled with happiness and hope for boys and girls. Thank you!



## Hurry! Give now and double your gift's impact

- \$50 *Christmas for one child!*
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- \$1,000 *A large gift for a cottage!*
- \$100 *Christmas for two siblings!*
- \$600 *Christmas for a cottage!*
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Any size gift!*

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- 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.



# Bikers raise record amount during pandemic — collect food and supplies to bolster Food Roundup

By Mike Creswell, Special to the BSCNC and Blake Ragsdale, Managing Editor

More than 30 motorcycle riders took part in the annual “Ride to Clyde” on October 10, raising just over \$90,000 for Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH). It is a record amount for the event celebrated its fifth anniversary.

The abbreviated ride, organized by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC), was held in Thomasville due to the pandemic. The event was forced to reschedule twice, at first because of COVID-19 restrictions earlier this year and later because the remnants of a tropical storm created treacherous riding conditions.

Cheers and shouts of delight broke out from the riders gathered outside Rich Fork Baptist Church in Thomasville when an original total of \$75,000 was announced. Later, after riders had departed, more contributions were tallied bringing the total to \$90,564. The Ride to Clyde has now generated in excess of \$275,000 for BCH through the event’s five years.

Davis, who previously served with BSCNC and is now a part of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center’s Faith Health Division, co-founded Ride to Clyde with Rit Varriale, Pastor of Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shelby.

“We would have been excited about any amount this year,” Davis said, “but we are very excited about this exceedingly

wonderful amount we have received.”

Davis explained that the majority of Ride to Clyde contributions are small from many people rather than large gifts from a few.

BCH honored Davis and Varriale with “Friends of Children” awards for their work in coordinating Ride to Clyde. Recipients of the award are chosen by Michael C. Blackwell, BCH President/CEO.

Normally, 150 or more motorcyclists ride hundreds of miles throughout three days beginning at BSCNC’s Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell, located on Oak Island, and ending in the western mountains at the BCH’s Broyhill Home in Clyde. Along the way, riders stop at several BCH locations to meet children in care and learn about the Children’s Homes’ ministries. However, pandemic restrictions made this plan impossible.

The decision was made to hold a one-day ride and have motorcyclists gather in the large parking area at Rich Fork. They then rode their motorcycles through BCH’s Mills Home campus where children stood in the yards of their cottages and cheered as they rode by them.

Despite restrictions and periodical rain, which saw a decrease in the number of riders attending, support was stronger than ever. Riders raise contributions throughout the year and many send in

donations even if they are unable to participate in person. This year, because BCH had to postpone its annual “Food Roundup” in April, bikers were asked to fill the saddlebags on their motorcycles with needed items for the rescheduled food drive.

Riders not only filled a van full of collected items, but several churches and riders brought truckloads of supplies on other dates.

The funds raised through Ride to Clyde are critical for helping BCH provide care and ministry throughout North Carolina and beyond. North Carolina Baptists primarily support BCH year-round through Cooperative Program giving and BCH’s Annual Offering.

Blackwell, praised Ride to Clyde participants for “stepping up once again.”

“They understand that there is no way BCH can provide safe, Christian homes for children without their support,” Blackwell said. “This is an incredible way to celebrate Ride to Clyde’s fifth anniversary especially in the midst of this challenging year.”

Motorcycles have become an integral part of North Carolina Baptist life, with dozens of church-related rider groups and churches planted especially to reach people who are part of the motorcycle lifestyle. Many Ride to Clyde participants are pastors and most others are church members.

Buddy Harris, 73, rode his motorcycle more than 200 miles from Wilmington to Thomasville, with stops in Lumberton and Fayetteville. It was

his third Ride to Clyde.

Harris was one of five Carolina Faith Riders who came from Wrightsboro Baptist Church in Wilmington. The church sponsored a golf tournament, which had to be rescheduled several times, to help raise Ride to Clyde contributions.

Harris invited Paul Stanley, 63, who rode his Harley-Davidson from Bladenboro where he is a member of Hickory Grove Baptist Church. Stanley said it was the first time he participated in Ride to Clyde and knew Baptist Children’s Homes is a great cause to support.



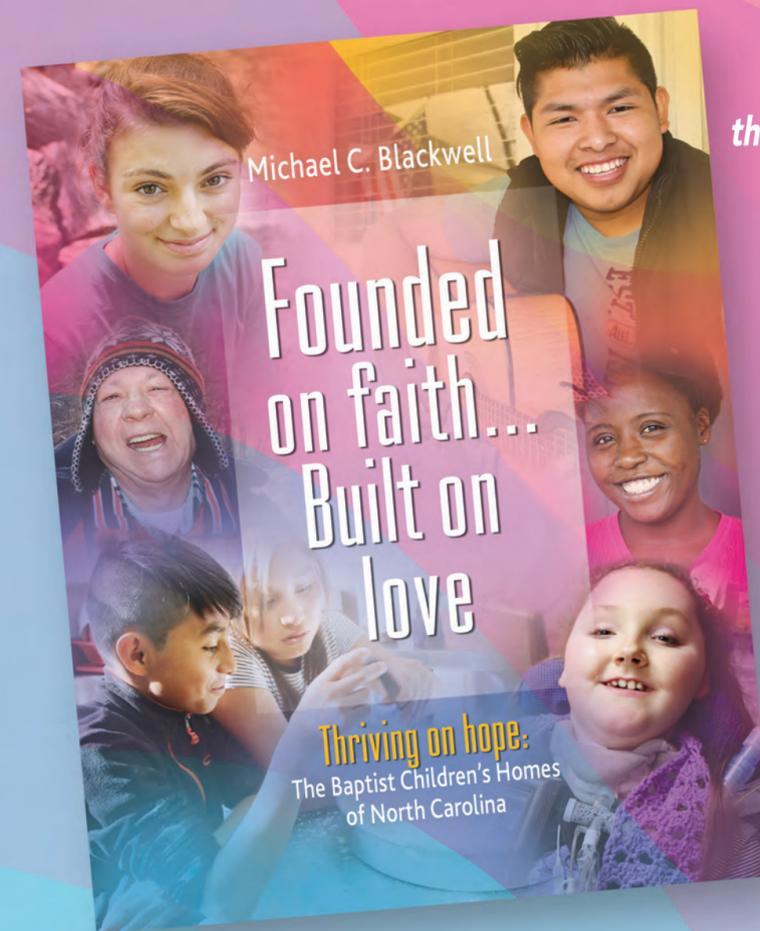
Brian Davis, right, co-founder of Ride to Clyde, presents an oversized check in the amount originally announced to Blake Ragsdale, left, Baptist Children’s Homes Director of Communications. Other donations were added later bringing the amount raised through this year’s Ride to Clyde to \$90,564—the most raised in a single year.

As he received the plaque from BCH, Brian Davis recalled he and Rit Varriale worked with Baptist State Convention staffer John Jones and others for two years to plan the first Ride to Clyde in 2016.

“I feared at first we would lose money rather than raise money,” he confessed. But that first ride brought in \$20,000—and totals increased over time. The five Ride to Clyde events from 2016 to 2020 have raised more than \$250,000 for BCH.

“Christ brings His people together as His family to impact and support those who often don’t have a family,” Davis said.

For more information about the annual Ride to Clyde, please visit [www.ridetoclyde.com](http://www.ridetoclyde.com), or contact Cynthia King at 800-395-5102 ext. 5501 or [cking@ncbaptist.org](mailto:cking@ncbaptist.org).



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**Pre-order** your autographed copy of Dr. Blackwell’s new book **Founded on faith...Built on love**. To receive this limited offer, you’re asked to pay \$20 to cover the cost plus shipping and handling. Multiple books can be ordered, but be sure to include an additional \$20 for each book. If paying by check, make payable to Baptist Children’s Homes of NC. Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies at \$20 per book. Please find enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

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# “The New Normal”—AAIM Leadership Conference

By Carol Layton, Director of Communications and Administration - NCBAM\_

For seniors living in isolation and loneliness, things haven’t been “normal” for a long time. North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) held its annual State Leadership Conference on September 29 to explore a more inclusive model of ministry that offers greater connectedness and fosters spiritual growth while maintaining and growing relationships—even from home.

The event was live-streamed from Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte and is archived for viewing on NCBAM’s YouTube channel. Pritchard is home to Rev. Stan Heiser who chairs NCBAM’s AAIM leadership network (Aging Adults Innovating Ministry) and serves as minister to senior adults at Pritchard.



Whitney Brooks

The conference featured three sessions: “The New Normal” by Whitney Brooks, NBC-HWC through Duke Integrative Medicine. Brooks examined

how the Coronavirus pandemic had intensified another existing and ongoing epidemic for senior adults: loneliness and social isolation. She shared how the church can create a positive and effective “new normal,”—one that fosters genuine and

meaningful connection, purpose, and well-being among seniors.

In “Communication Technology Ideas for COVID Times,” Dr. Don Gilbert, Care and Senior Adult Pastor at Bay Leaf Baptist Church in Raleigh, demonstrated some of the most common tools to help seniors maintain and grow relationships with their church, their family and their friends. Dr. Gilbert not only demonstrated Facetime, Zoom, and Google Meet, he shared how these tools can effectively be used in church ministry to seniors.



Dr. Don Gilbert

Dr. Michael C. Blackwell, President/CEO Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina, presented the closing keynote address: “In Between Times.” Affectionately known as BCH’s “Chief Encouragement Officer,” Dr. Blackwell shared keys for staying strong in God during this Upside-Down time in world history.

He encouraged the practice of “patient persistence” and waiting on the Lord, listening to the Holy Spirit and never giving up. To know who you are and whose you are; to seize every opportunity to learn new things about yourself and about God; and (like Barnabas) to be the son

or daughter of encouragement. Dr. Blackwell ended his session and the conference with this charge: “This is a wonderful opportunity in your life to be who you were meant to be. We have accumulated wisdom and we need to share it with each other. The best is yet to be!”

On October 6, 8 and 15, NCBAM Regional Directors hosted four remote regional meetings as follow-ups to the State Leadership Conference.



Dr. Michael C. Blackwell

The groups discussed what senior ministry looks like during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. NCBAM regional directors shared practical tools and initiatives for helping senior adults to stay engaged, meaningfully connected, and spiritually fed.

The follow-up meetings were led by NCBAM regional directors Samantha Allred (north central), Robert Leonard (south central), Angie Gregg (west), and Yvetta Smith and Charity Johnson (east).

These events were produced by NCBAM’s leadership network, Aging Adults Innovating Ministry (AAIM). To learn more about AAIM, visit [ncbam.org/aaim](http://ncbam.org/aaim).

## Double your gift now, new tax incentives due to Cares Act

Giving at this time of the year is crucial to the success in 2021. There are many ways to give and impact the lives of hurting children. A big bonus in giving now through the end of January is your gift will be doubled. Your gift will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$250,000.

Become a Christmas sponsor and bring Christmas cheer to every child. You can give a gift of \$50 to be a Christmas sponsor for a child. A gift of \$600 sponsors a cottage.

What better gift to give a friend or business associate than to honor them with a gift that blesses a child. BCH notifies honorees with a card and sends a gift acknowledgement receipt to you.

Consider a gift of cash or a gift of appreciated stock or other property. When you give stock or property to BCH, we sell it. By donating the stock or property directly to BCH, you eliminate the capital gains tax you would pay if you sell it. If you have held the stock for more than a year, your gift will be deductible at its full market value on the date it is received.

Be sure to call our office if you plan to make a stock gift. Often the broker will not inform us of the donor who is making the gift. For questions about stock gifts or to expedite your stock gift, call Sam Barefoot at 336-474-1224.

As a result of the Cares Act you do not have to make a required minimum distribution this year from your IRA. However, an IRA Charitable Rollover gift is still a great way for you to change the life of a child.

The Cares Act created several incentives for individual giving in 2020. These include :

- A new deduction for charitable donors who do not itemize when filing their tax returns. If you do not itemize but make a gift to charity, you will be able to take a special tax deduction, up to \$300 to reduce your tax liability.

An example of this above the line deduction is a taxpayer who takes the standard deduction and makes a \$300 cash gift to a public charity (BCH) in 2020 may claim the \$300 deduction in computing their AGI. The gift deduction is in addition to their standard deduction.

- The Cares Act lifted the cap on annual contributions to public charities (BCH) for individuals who itemize. The provision in the Cares Act provided an increase in the deduction limit up to 100% of a donor’s AGI for cash gifts to qualified charities (BCH). Prior to the Cares act the deduction was capped at 60%. Any excess contributions available can be carried over to the next five years.

Note: For corporations, the new law raises the annual limit from 10% to 25% of taxable income.

Important, this information is not intended as legal advice. Consult with your accountant, tax advisor, or attorney to determine the best strategy for your particular situation.

Thank you in advance for your investment in the life of a child. There are those who wish they could give at this time, but can’t. Will you pray about giving a little extra on their behalf.

*And remember, your gift will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$250,000 until January 31, 2021. For more informations, call Brenda at 336-474-1230.*

# COVID-19 pandemic impacts alumni lives — Casey Medlin, oldest Mills Home alum, passes at 105

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

**K**eith Yow had some great news when he called recently. His wife **Mary** is able to walk again, is able to recognize him, is stronger in her arms, hands and legs, is showing a sense of humor, and is carrying on better conversation relating more to the present day than times long past. Her medical attendants in the rest home are amazed at her improvement and Keith himself calls it a “miracle from God.” He sends his thanks for all the prayers that have been offered on Mary’s behalf. And he says the best part is that she has been moved from Hospice care—though she is still at the rest home. For friends wishing to send cards to Mary, the home address is 21 High Knoll Dr., Walkertown, NC, 27051.

Thanks to **Susan Meeks Wood** for sharing how she has spent some of her pandemic lockdown time: “Just about the time COVID-19 hit, I was in the middle of selling my home in Monroe, North Carolina. After it was listed, it sold in 3 hours. My goal was to pack in a month, have a moving sale, and find a new house and job in Little River, SC. I moved in temporarily with a good friend that I have known for 40-plus years, a co-worker at Novant Health Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte. After the pandemic hit, I felt a moving sale would not attract enough people. So, I sold as many items as possible out of Marketplace on the internet to reduce what I would move. Downsizing was my goal, but I ended up with leftovers enough to fill two storage units. Here I am, five months later and still with my girlfriend and looking for a place to move. I worked for six weeks in July for Elliott Beach Rentals in the call center. Wow, that was something else. I didn’t like that work. I’m looking for a job that is fun to do, but it’s slow going. But hey, my life is still awesome. I am living 10 minutes from the beach! And in-between, I take care of cats and dogs. Happy days everyone! Stay safe until we meet again!”

**Julie Maiden Long** has also been

very busy during the pandemic. She has made more than 1,000 masks to donate to the elderly since March. But she has also been through lymph node removal to test for cancer. They found no cancer, but she still has some “tumor problems.” Please keep her in your prayers.

I was very saddened to hear from **Martha McCracken Shaw** that her brother **Tommy McCracken** passed away July 5. He was living in Oregon at the time of his death. Tommy was married for 25 years and had four children and four grandchildren. He came to Mills Home (MH) in 1968 and left in 1973. Siblings with him at Mills Home were **Martha, John, Mack, Jeff and Suzy**. Friends can send condolences to Martha at this email address: [jandmshaw74@yahoo.com](mailto:jandmshaw74@yahoo.com).

Very soon after **Jim Hamby** reported on Facebook that **Earl Laws** was very ill with COVID-19, he reported that Earl had died. Earl’s wife **Debbie** was with him at the time of his death. We have not had any follow ups about his sister **Pearlie**.

From a message on Facebook dated September 9, we learned of the death of **Cathy Lynn Clark Faust**. Cathy entered MH in 1968 with siblings **Butch, Ricky, Debbie and Pam**. She left in 1973, married soon thereafter and lived a large part of her adult life in Winston-Salem. She passed away on August 25. She was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. She has always been a source of inspiration for her children and grandchildren. She cared deeply about her friends and family and devoted her life to helping them. In addition to spending time with family, Cathy enjoyed trips to the beach, attending yard sales, and planning holiday celebrations for family. She also loved being part of the Pinedale Christian Church in Winston-Salem, especially the women’s group.

Cathy is survived by **Mark**, her husband of 20 years, four sons, brothers, **Butch and Ricky**, sisters **Debbie Honeycutt and Pam Rutledge**, six grandchildren, and one

great granddaughter. A Memorial service for her was held on August 29, 2020.

“Casey” Andrew Jackson Medlin, age 105, died on September 24. He and his brother **Hilry Paul** entered MH in 1929 after their mother died. Casey went to school on campus and played football and baseball. After graduation in 1936, he enlisted in the Navy. In 1940, he returned to Thomasville where he and his wife **Thelma Ellis** reared three children. Casey was known for his great service to the youth in Thomasville. He coached little league baseball for 15 years, operated the game clock for the Thomasville High School (THS) “Bulldogs” football team for more than 50 years and was a devoted Bulldog supporter and fan. For his many contributions to THS athletics, he was inducted into the Davidson County Sports Hall of Fame in 2019.

Casey was a founding member of Park Place Baptist Church and served it faithfully as a deacon and Sunday school teacher. He loved gardening, fishing, hunting, and baking. He was a diehard NC State and NY Yankees fan and loved watching sports. After retiring, he started a small engine repair business.

Many losses in Casey’s life included his wife, **Thelma Ellis Medlin**; his daughter, **Janis Atwood**; four brothers and two sisters. Surviving are his sons and their families, **Danny and Sonny**, 15 great grandchildren, and 20 great-great grandchildren.

A memorial service for Casey was held on October 3. Friends wishing to make memorial donations should send them to Baptist Children’s Homes of NC, P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27360. Condolences may be sent to the family in care of **Danny Medlin**, 712 Guilford Rd., Jamestown, NC, 27282.

**Dennis Vaughan** sent the sad news that his brother **Richard** died on Sept 11. Aged 62, Richard was living in Trinity, NC at the time of

his death. He was one of five siblings that came to MH in 1969. He was in the class of 1977, but he left in 1972 before his class graduated. Siblings at MH with him were **Dennis, Michael**, and twin sisters **Ramona and Regina**. He had been married for 24 years and had one daughter. His wife, daughter **Kristen**, brothers **Michael and Dennis**, and his sister **Ramona** survive him. Sadly, the family lost **Regina** in 2015. Send condolences to the family at **Dennis’** address: 5421 Denton Rd., Thomasville, NC 27360.

**Shirley Topping Maxwell** is thrilled to announce the availability of her newest book, *Scattered Pieces*. It is fiction dotted with quite a few pieces of Shirley’s life. Give her a call or write to get the ordering information: [shirleymaxwell@northstate.net](mailto:shirleymaxwell@northstate.net), 336-804-4801. You can also find the book on Amazon with all the cost details.

A note on Facebook from **Linda King Goodyear** had the discouraging news that she was back in the hospital ICU with bilateral pneumonia. She felt it was directly related to COVID-19 and sent a note to Facebook fervently urging everyone to be faithful in correctly wearing their masks. She is now back home and very grateful for her skilled caregivers. She wrote “I do believe that God is my Shield. I fought and He helped me fight against this new battle! My weapons are belief in my God, reading my Bible, meditation, and prayer.” Pray for renewed strength for **Linda**.

A great final word for this column came from **Rich Lewis** on Facebook. He wrote “Let’s be kind to each other. Find a common ground with others and strive for unity in your community. Don’t let religion, politics, sports, or anything come between yourself and a friend. Let’s let love, peace, and happiness rule our day!”



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



**Weekday Education in Thomasville  
Autumn brings pumpkin fun**

The small pumpkins received brought smiles to the faces of toddlers attending BCH's Weekday Education centers. The children learn while having fun at BCH's community programs.



**Greater Vision Outreach in Kinston  
Blessing Box helps community**

Greater Vision's location at Kennedy Home established a Blessing Box at Kinston Community Health Center. Stocked with general necessities, families in need can freely take any items.



**Furnitureland South in Jamestown  
Staff give food and supplies**

Employees at Furnitureland South in Jamestown collected food and supplies for BCH's Food Roundup in September. Their Women's Leadership Circle, upLIFT, helped pack up the food for delivery.



**Shady Grove Baptist in Reidsville  
Van full of donations delivered**

Lori Walker from Shady Grove Baptist Church in Reidsville brought a vehicle filled with items to Mills Home in Thomasville. The donations included food, paper supplies, toys, and more.



**Apex Baptist Church in Apex  
Church loads truck to Camps**

Members of Apex Baptist loaded up the food and supplies collected by the churches in the Raleigh Baptist Association. The items were delivered to BCH's Cameron Boys Camp and Camp Duncan.



**West Burnsville Baptist in Burnsville  
Couple donates potatoes**

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Hughes, members of West Burnsville Baptist Church, planted potatoes for BCH's boys and girls. They delivered their 70-bushel donation to Broyhill Home in Clyde.



**West Chowan Association  
Churches double their efforts**

Volunteers from West Chowan churches loaded up the supplies they collectively donated. Incredibly, they doubled the amount of items over last year's total for the Food Roundup.



**Five Forty Broadcasting Company  
Radio stations promote BCH**

Roy and Janice Burnette, owners of radio stations WRGC in Sylva and WBHN in Bryson City, generously promoted the Food Roundup. They interviewed BCH's Lewis Smith on their programs.

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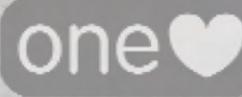
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1. Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run)	50,000	62,000
2. Paid and Unpaid Distribution Outside the Mails	0	0
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4. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution Outside the Mails	0	0
5. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution Through the Mails	49,250	61,250
6. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 4 and 5)	49,250	61,250
7. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, and 6)	49,250	61,250
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9. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7)	49,250	61,250
10. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8)	49,250	61,250
11. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9)	49,250	61,250
12. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10)	49,250	61,250
13. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11)	49,250	61,250
14. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12)	49,250	61,250
15. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13)	49,250	61,250
16. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14)	49,250	61,250
17. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15)	49,250	61,250
18. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16)	49,250	61,250
19. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17)	49,250	61,250
20. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18)	49,250	61,250
21. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19)	49,250	61,250
22. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20)	49,250	61,250
23. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21)	49,250	61,250
24. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22)	49,250	61,250
25. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23)	49,250	61,250
26. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24)	49,250	61,250
27. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25)	49,250	61,250
28. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26)	49,250	61,250
29. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27)	49,250	61,250
30. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28)	49,250	61,250
31. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29)	49,250	61,250
32. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30)	49,250	61,250
33. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31)	49,250	61,250
34. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32)	49,250	61,250
35. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33)	49,250	61,250
36. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34)	49,250	61,250
37. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35)	49,250	61,250
38. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36)	49,250	61,250
39. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37)	49,250	61,250
40. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38)	49,250	61,250
41. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39)	49,250	61,250
42. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40)	49,250	61,250
43. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41)	49,250	61,250
44. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, and 42)	49,250	61,250
45. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43)	49,250	61,250
46. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44)	49,250	61,250
47. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45)	49,250	61,250
48. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, and 46)	49,250	61,250
49. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47)	49,250	61,250
50. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48)	49,250	61,250
51. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, and 49)	49,250	61,250
52. Total Paid and Unpaid Distribution (Sum of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, and 50)	49,250	61,250

# Alumna recounts “joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart” Alumnus turns music learned into church ministry

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

**A**gathering of Kennedy Home (KH) alumni took place on October 3, at Fort Macon Park and hosted by **Alice Sisk Russum** (62-72) and her husband.

Alice writes about the event: “Sixteen KH alumni met at the Fort Macon picnic area at Atlantic Beach for a hamburger lunch. The weather was overcast and windy but that didn’t stop the conversations and stories. Everyone enjoyed reminiscing about the ‘good old days’ when life was simpler. We certainly missed having **John Thompson and Becky Thompson**—but understood about Becky’s current health needs. We all are so thankful for Mr. Thompson keeping up all the happenings through his column in *Charity & Children*. Those present sent a card with a very good gift of appreciation to the Thompsons.”

**Katie Jackson Parker** (68-71), our alumni president, called to share the information about the annual Christmas party. The plans are to gather at King’s Restaurant in Kinston on Saturday, December 5, for a buffet luncheon. The cost is \$13.99 each. There will be *free* gifts for everyone. Also, if you would like to participate in the *Santa* gift giving time, please bring a \$10 present to be given out at the party. If you are able, please make plans to come. The dining room is large enough for social distancing and we will be wearing our masks until time to eat and then again after the meal. We will be safe.

Alumni are encouraged to send an article for my column about music they had a KH and how they may have used their talents since leaving. I’ll start by telling about the time when I served in 1972-1977. We had five choirs: younger children, older children, youth, adult, and a show choir called the Madrigal Singers. We had extra practices for the travel choirs and at Christmas and Easter. **Mrs. Rae Brock and Mrs. Mary Hamilton**

made all the girls in the Madrigals evening gowns and the boys dressed in suit coat, white shirt, and bow tie. They really looked sharp.

I gave piano lessons to 62 pupils including **Mr. Bill Beacham**—the gym director and houseparent. We gave two recitals a year. **Wayne Jackson** helped teach young pianists. Several staff members sang in the Lenoir Community College Choir that I directed. We gave two big concerts a year and performed for the community Bicentennial Celebration in Grainger Stadium.

**Cynthia Dunn Patton** writes: “I would like to thank Kennedy Home for turning my life around, helping me to find God, and leading me to become a better person. My single mom had difficulties making ends meet and caring for six kids while working three jobs.

“She never told us how she found KH, but it was a blessed day. **Mazie and Etheridge Waters** were an amazing and loving couple who made us feel special. The church choir was what I enjoyed the most. The choir trip we took to share “Pass It On” remains fresh in my mind. I am so thankful for the friendships made, skating in the gym—eating frozen candy bars were the best.

“Thank you for helping me find my path! Forever Grateful!”

**Debra Stallings Lassiter** (69-76) writes: “Thinking back on my memories of KH, one of my favorite things was singing in the choir and **Mr. Thompson** was our choir director. He always had so much enthusiasm. I remember he always had a big smile and always put his two fingers at the corner of his lips telling us to put a smile on our faces. His sidekick on the piano or the organ was his wife **Becky**. She was so good at playing her instruments. Both of them were looked upon so highly by the children. Children have a way of knowing who really cares about them. These are some of my fond-

est memories. Thank you John and Becky. So many of us continue our love for you!”

**Penny Maready Batten** (daughter of houseparents **Louise and Earl Maready**) writes: “If not for Mr. Thompson, I wouldn’t know how to play the piano. I enjoyed taking lessons and when I became an adult, one of my first purchases was a piano—I still have it today. I play to meditate and play the stress away. There are also times when I play loud when no one is around. I didn’t carry my piano lessons beyond KH and so I only play gospel music from our church song book. I play the prelude and backup pianist at my church when we were having services in the sanctuary, but since COVID-19 we haven’t been doing inside worship services. We only do *drive-up* services. Take care! Loves and blessings!”

**Daniel Wayne Jackson** sent this word: “After graduating from North Lenoir High School, I entered Campbell University. There I received a degree in music education and met my wife. After graduating, I became the music minister at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Fuquay-Varina. While there, I attended Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary where I earned a Master of Divinity degree. During this time, my wife and I were blessed with twin baby boys. Later, I would serve churches in North and South Carolina, Mississippi, and Kentucky. Our third son was born while we were living in South Carolina. Our church in Columbus, Mississippi had a large music program with some very talented musicians. While there, we developed the church’s School of the Arts offering classes in a myriad of programs from violin to voice to water coloring. The program enrollment was well over 300 people.

“Every Christmas, the combined choirs performed the Christmas portion of Handel’s Messiah—with full orchestra. After leaving there, I decided to take a different route with my career.

“Now I have four grandkids that I adore! I’ve been very blessed. I am now in the catering wholesale business and keep very busy. Catering has fallen off because of COVID-19, but our wholesale business has expanded and we now sell our frozen food products from Maryland to Alabama in 140 locations. Thank you John for your love for me and the other children. God bless you.”

**Alice Sisk Russum** writes: “I enjoyed singing in the choir when at KH. I briefly remember the last production in which I participated. We sang the song from the “Sound of Music” entitled “Climb Every Mountain.” This song and several others I have never forgotten. I loved the play I was in called “Diamond and Deeds” and all the music in it as well. Since leaving KH, I have sung in numerous choirs in the churches I have attended. My husband and I sang in the Living Christmas Tree—it stood 30 feet tall— at Laurel, Mississippi. I also did some solo singing in different places where my Baptist father-in-law ministered in Mississippi. I love worshipping and singing to my Jesus.

“I remember when I was in the Biggs Building, I would go out to the swings and sing “I’ve got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart.” I let the Devil know even as a little child that he wasn’t going to steal “my joy.”

**Donna Weeks Duty** shares about her choir director, **Mrs. Bonita Leary**, in a great article that I will share next month. Please, alumni and friends, write about your music experience at KH and how music is a part of your life today. Send it to me at [jthompson117@ec.rr.com](mailto:jthompson117@ec.rr.com).

Don’t forget, let me hear from you often and always remember that Becky and I love you very much. Love ya!—jt



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

# The quiet, mellow hues of autumn

By Jim Edminson, Editor

**A**utumn in Elmer, Louisiana conjures images of red International Harvester combines and green John Deere tractors, alternately bringing in the crops and churning under the earth. Journeying the country roads in my mind, I witness the stands of browning corn and the fields striped with the deep chocolate ribs of soil ready for its post-harvest rest. Mild weather means my windows are down and the scent of fall pounds my senses. Driving along in my memories, I notice the subtle color change as October becomes November—the summer greens mellow into the yellow-studded golds of the pecans and sweet gums. Every now and then, a soft orange or deep purple sneaks into view, but predominantly, the autumn hues of this earlier time are softer, gentler somehow—if I didn't take care and look carefully, I would miss the in-between of summer and winter. The fall of my youth surprises the observer with quiet color rather than bursting into vibrant splashes of more northern autumns that feature in the calendars on Mom's kitchen wall.

Looking back, the leaves did change with the season, just not in the obvious ways of my Carolina neighborhood where all the

crayon colors can be seen as I drive along the streets. My car's motion makes eddies of the fallen leaves as I pass, and the sight fills me with the happiness of change.

Change. It truly is inevitable, and my mind goes to sweet people who have moved into glory these past weeks. What treasures their friendships were! How much fuller my life is for having intersected their lives.

Casey Medlin, athlete, community servant, Mills Home alum, 105-year-old centenarian—I never came into his presence without feeling the joy that poured from his grateful spirit. Gerald Phillips, farmer, mechanic, Cameron Boys Camp benefactor, honorary grand to my daughters—unfailing kindness and counsel to all who came his way; I miss his warm smile and open door policy. The mellow season gives me space to grieve at the passing of dear ones, my sorrow falling with the leaves in soft hues gently releasing their hold on branches.

This season, I am surprised that the year's Carolina color carry me to faraway Louisiana memories—in a most challenging time, our state's current autumn takes on that mellow-ness of another time and place. Remembering pleases me. I allow my mind to wander as I near the Mills Home campus of Baptist Children's Homes in Thomasville. Maw Maw's mums and the wild ditch flowers, Paw Paw's row of crepe myrtles opening the drive up to his front door are the same festive hues of the old trees gracing the entrance to campus. The tiny leaves that spread along the pavement look like those that fell into Dad's Dodge

pickup from the chinaberry tree overhanging the driveway. And all the falling colors in front of my car as I turn into the parking lot take me back to the lane of the church where I first trusted Christ with all the changing landscapes of my life.

Harvest and autumn go together like past and present. Remember those hymns we all sang at this time of year? All the songs poured from thankful hearts recalling the bounty the Lord God sends from His earth, worked by human hands it's true, but needing the Creator's touch to provide all that's needed. In my home congregation at New Hope Baptist Church, the singing was not so much melodious as powerful and strong, sending our thanks way past the rafters and into heaven's own wide spaces. Our grateful spirits knew from whence our help came, and we heartily belted out thankful notes.

This season looks different from recent years, and the approaching holidays might feel out of the ordinary, more quiet perchance—mellow. But with hearts full of praise, we will gather in spirit and return thanks to the Author of every good thing. Autumn ushers in change, but we trust in an unchanging and almighty God!



Edminson encourages others through the Good News of Jesus. Invite him to preach or speak at your church. Contact him by email at [wjedminson@bchfamily.org](mailto:wjedminson@bchfamily.org).

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