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October 2022

Issue 10

Volume 135

Cook family answers God's call to foster and adopt

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

The silver van pulls into the church parking lot and comes to rest. Eleven-year-old Makala climbs out of one of the sliding side doors while 17-year-old Ashley unfastens four-year-old Harmony from her car seat. Parents Roger and Shanell Cook close the van doors behind them and say “good morning” to their 20-year-old son Jackson, the couple’s sole biological child who drove separately. Harmony jumps into her father’s arms as the family of six is greeted with smiles, handshakes, and hugs from their fellow church members at Fellowship Baptist Church in Winston-Salem.

There are several more members of the Cook family to welcome on Sunday mornings than there used to be. Makala, Harmony, and Ashley were fostered and later adopted by Roger and Shanell who have opened up their home—and their hearts—to boys and girls as a Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) foster care family.

“After our first call to BCH, Danetta Christmas came to our house,” Roger recounts of their initial inquiry with BCH’s foster care staff member. “She walked us through each step and held our hand that entire way.”

It has been more than four years since the couple finished foster care training and licensing through BCH. Completing the process enabled the Cooks to care for children who have been removed from their families, for their safety, by the NC Department of Social Services (DSS). BCH case managers, like Danetta Christmas, serve as advocates for their foster families and work directly with the DSS social workers tasked with finding placements for the approximately 17,000 children in NC’s



Members of Fellowship Baptist Church in Winston-Salem greet their fellow church members, the Cook family, as they arrive for Sunday worship. The church has been instrumental in helping Roger and Shanell Cook who have 19 children. BCH’s Annual Offering makes foster care and adoption possible. Learn more at bchoffering.org.

foster care system.

When the Cooks received a call in February 2018 about Makala, BCH arranged for a week-end visit with the then six-year-old child at the family’s home.

“I think before she went to bed that night, she came and sat on my lap and she called me ‘daddy’ and you know, she had never had that,” Roger remembers. “She just looks at you with those big eyes and we fell in love with her immediately.”

A little more than a year after they began fostering her, the Cooks adopted Makala in April 2019 making her a permanent member of their family. And on August 1, 2019, Makala became a member of God’s family when she asked Jesus into her heart.

“Her coming home and telling us that she had accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior at Vacation Bible School was one of the proudest moments that we’ve had as parents,” Roger gushes. (Continued on page 8.)

It's okay to seek help

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

They looked like the all-American family: Tom, the smiling pastor of a loving church, and his supportive wife. The guidance and care they provided for their only son, Matt, shone through in his demeanor and above-average grades in school.

But this picture of happiness crumbled as Matt turned the corner from adolescence. Gradually, his teenage behavior deteriorated. Not only did his grades drop with a thud, but he also became angry and violent, lashing out at his family.

Stressed out, Sandra felt relieved on occasions when Matt left the house, mumbling, "I'm going to see a friend." Of course, had she known that the friend happened to be her son's marijuana supplier, her peace would have flared into panic.

Despite Matt's efforts to hide the truth, it became too blatant to ignore. Afraid for their son's safety, concerned for what his future held, and overcoming the fear of what their congregation might say, Tom and Sandra sought help. They took him to Cameron Boys Camp, one of the specialized ministries operated by the Baptist Children's Homes.

There they learned that it was not just Matt who had a problem. The whole family had to resolve the issues that had torn them apart.

Like other campers, Matt checked in with emotional and behavioral baggage that was too heavy to lug around at home. He would spend the next two years releasing those feelings as he canoed hundreds of miles, backpacked to remote areas, and swam in rivers, lakes, and the ocean.

Soon after Matt arrived, a case manager discovered the source of his anger. When Matt was a toddler, his father had a drug problem which caused marital separation.

Although the father overcame his addiction, turned to God, and reconciled his marriage, the scars remained. As Matt grew

older, he also grew further from Tom. Like his father, he struggled to control his temper.

It took the passage of time—coupled with intense personal effort and numerous counseling sessions—to reconcile the family. Father and son learned how to agree and disagree.

Sandra saw her role in the situation, explaining, "We think as parents, 'Camp will fix the boys and send them home when they are finished,' but it doesn't work that way. We told Matt, 'It's not just you; we are all going to set goals.' We all had something to learn."

This family set a new course, headed in the right direction. Matt returned home. He and his father enjoy fishing together and it gives them quiet time to talk about the goals they set earlier.

But this improved state of affairs easily could have ended in disaster. His parents could have allowed fears of damaged pride, inconvenience, or possible social reprisals to bottle up the truth. Sooner or later, ignoring brewing trouble is like lighting a stick of dynamite.

People often are reluctant to seek help for emotional, psychological, family, or marital problems. Always trying to put on a happy face, retreating into a state of denial. While denial can help one temporarily cope, it is foolish to pitch a tent in never-never land.

Earlier in my career, I counseled couples with troubled marriages—or at least I tried. I cannot count how many times that a marriage was on the rocks and one party (usually the husband) would say, "Ah, I don't need that. If she wants to go, that's fine, but I'll just gut it out."

Sadly, divorce continues to tighten its grip on our society, when many marriages could be salvaged if the couple would just ask for help. While there are numerous factors behind divorce, a leading problem is communication. When these channels are clogged, the match is in trouble.

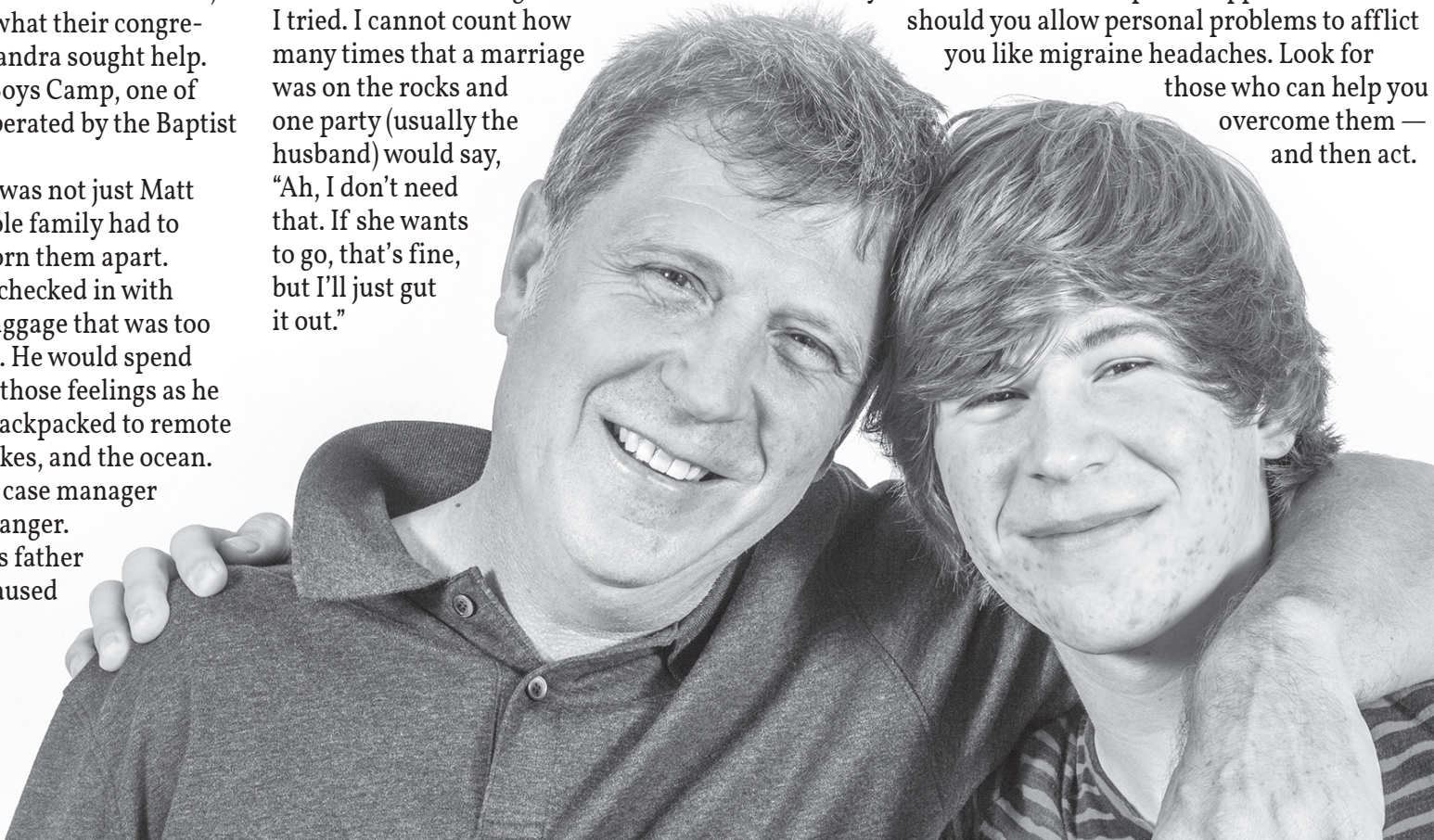
It reminds me of a cartoon I saw once that showed a husband and wife sitting together at the breakfast table, sipping coffee. The wife is thinking, "Our marriage is in trouble. We better talk about it." The husband is thinking, "Our marriage is in trouble. I better keep my mouth shut."

No matter what the problem, take time to discuss it with a trusted friend, confidant, counselor, or other adviser. Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

In recent decades, society has made progress at getting past the all-American embrace of pride and self-reliance. Still, we have not conquered the problem. Too many people lead lives of quiet desperation. They get out of bed, go to work, breathe, and eat, but life holds little joy, or fulfillment.

Sometimes, getting to the next level, whether in a job, a marriage, a relationship, or even just a hobby, takes more resources than you possess. So why not seek out those who can help instead of turning away from them?

You would not try to set a broken arm at home with an old tree limb for a splint or operate on yourself to remove a ruptured appendix. Nor should you allow personal problems to afflict you like migraine headaches. Look for those who can help you overcome them — and then act.



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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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Baptists gather for WAC after two-year hiatus

Children, IDD residents, and Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) staff members welcomed back North Carolina Baptists to Broyhill Home in Clyde for the 61st Annual Western Area Conference (WAC) on September 8. After not meeting in 2020 and 2021, the excitement was high as more than 350 guests traveled to the picturesque campus tucked into Jones Cove.

Attendees arrived early for tours of the cottages and then were entertained with music featuring The Porter Family, Steve Preckel, and Adam Saunders. Mountain barbecue and homemade deserts provided by local churches and served by the older children in care were a treat for all.

Alverta Bolick Home IDD residents Rob and Alex shared with the crowd their experiences as participants during the 2022 Special Olympics U.S. Games held in Orlando, Florida. The duo were team members of the Buncombe County Special Olympics soccer team that competed and won silver medals at the event.

Top, bikers representing the many motorcyclists who participate in the annual Ride to Clyde event, along with co-founder of the ride Dr. Rit Varriale, pastor of Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shelby, join BCH President/CEO Dr. Michael C. Blackwell and Linda Morgan as they present to the group The Baptist Children's Homes' Friends of Children Award. Right, John Butler, the Director, Operations Group for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, received on behalf of the Convention The Baptist Children's Homes Founders Award for Distinguished Service from Dr. Blackwell and Brenda Gray. Butler also received from Dr. Blackwell the first-ever "Above the Clouds" Award. Far right, C.B. Turner, along with his wife Judith (pictured center), present Dr. Blackwell, Linda Morgan, and (far right) Keith Henry with a \$100,000 gift for the renovation of Turner Cottage, adjacent to Truett Home in Hayesville.



New coffee shop opens at Mills Home on Oct. 25

There is always something exciting brewing at Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) but now that expression can be taken literally.

On Tuesday, October 25, BCH will unveil its new public coffee shop—The Mill: Coffee & Community. It is a fitting name for the new shop as it is located at Mills Home, the ministry's flagship campus located in Thomasville.

"We are offering more than a great cup of coffee, we are providing an environment where community families, home school groups, bible study groups, or individuals needing a peaceful place can feel welcome," said BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell. "This beautiful, spacious campus makes it possible to create this dynamic ministry opportunity."

Blackwell indeed sees The Mill as an extension of ministry. Utilizing the former Robert Idol Child Care Center, whose Weekday Education classes for community children have all been folded into the Fleshman-Pratt Education Center, the shop not only provides indoor and outdoor seating, but it includes a small, separate meeting space as well as access to an expansive children's playground. The fully-fenced, outdoor area offers plenty of seating and shaded spots.

"Being that we are Baptist Children's Homes, it was vital that we have a component for boys and girls," explained Blackwell. "It is about providing an experience that can be enjoyed by adults and children alike."

One of the shop's goals is to employ individuals being served by BCH when applicable.

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Rise, shine, and sing—let's strive to live it loud!

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

*Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God
And all my life You have been faithful
And all my life You have been so, so good
With every breath that I am able
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God*

This is my morning wakeup song. I am amazed and moved by God's amazing goodness each and every day. I am blessed to serve in a place that is overflowing with images and experiences of God's goodness. Each day in my quiet time, which for me is not always quiet (I tend to sing and praise loudly), I seek to praise God for His goodness and grace over my life and over our ministry to the most vulnerable around us.

When we do not take the time to stop or we get too busy in the rush of doing, it is easy to get caught up in the chaos all around us. But we cannot let the chaos steal our joy. We cannot let the noise drown out the music in our souls. When I feel the chaos, I change my environment. I make time to visit a cottage, spend time with some of our girls at Camp Duncan, or listen to one of our family care moms share her story. The goodness of God is all around us if we just take time to open our eyes to see and our ears to listen.

I see God's goodness in and through cottage parents, foster parents, case managers, and each direct care staff member who are in the trenches amidst the chaos and trauma, living out God's mandate to care for the least of these. I see God's goodness lived out in and through you, our faithful BCH family.

Did you know that VBS children across the state collected thousands of dollars to care for our children? One VBS collected more than \$5,000 to buy new shoes for our children. Did you know that food and school supplies have been delivered by Sunday school classes, youth groups, children's classes, WMU groups, and Baptist on Mission volunteers saying we want to make a difference? Just this morning I received a call from a small WMU group (6 members) that decided to be a \$75 school sponsor for six children. I see and experience the goodness of God in your witness and encouragement through your notes, prayers, phone calls, and many gifts of kindness. We are so very grateful!

I recently read this quote by Bob Goff: "Instead of closing our eyes and bowing our heads, sometimes God wants us to keep our eyes open for people in need, do something about it and bow

our whole lives to Him instead." These words make me think of our staff who God has called to serve at BCH. I immediately think of you, our faithful BCH family who give everyday to make this ministry possible. You have opened your eyes to see the trauma of those we serve. You have opened your ears to hear their cries of pain, and you have opened your hearts to change their stories by introducing them to the goodness of God over and over again—until they can begin to believe in a God of hope and healing.

For a child that has experienced gut-wrenching trauma through abuse, healing does not come overnight. For a child that has been starved both physically and emotionally, trust is not immediate. For a mom that has been told she always makes bad decisions and that she does not matter, belief that she and her children can have a new life seems unattainable. For a child that has failed in school over and over again, a new school year can produce anxiety and fear that is hard to get past.

For a young girl that has been a victim of trafficking, the reality that she can escape the horrible memories seems so beyond reach. It takes time. It takes understanding. It takes wisdom. It takes forgiveness. It takes love. It takes hope.

It takes prayers. It takes your faithful obedience to God to share His message of salvation and transforming power over the chaos and trauma.

Thank you for living out the goodness of God through your many acts of kindness. It is your standing with us each and every day through faithful obedience and your bowing before Him that sustains us.

Keep your eyes open for people in need, do something about it, and bow our whole lives to Him. It is not a one and done. Micah 6:8 reads: "Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

Let's strive to live it loud, my friends!

I invite you to sing with me. I encourage you to let your voice rise above the chaos and the trauma as you commit to allowing your heart to bathe in the goodness of God on this day, and the next day, bowing your whole life to Him. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt 5:16). On this day that the Lord has made, rise, shine, and sing:

*And all my life You have
been faithful*

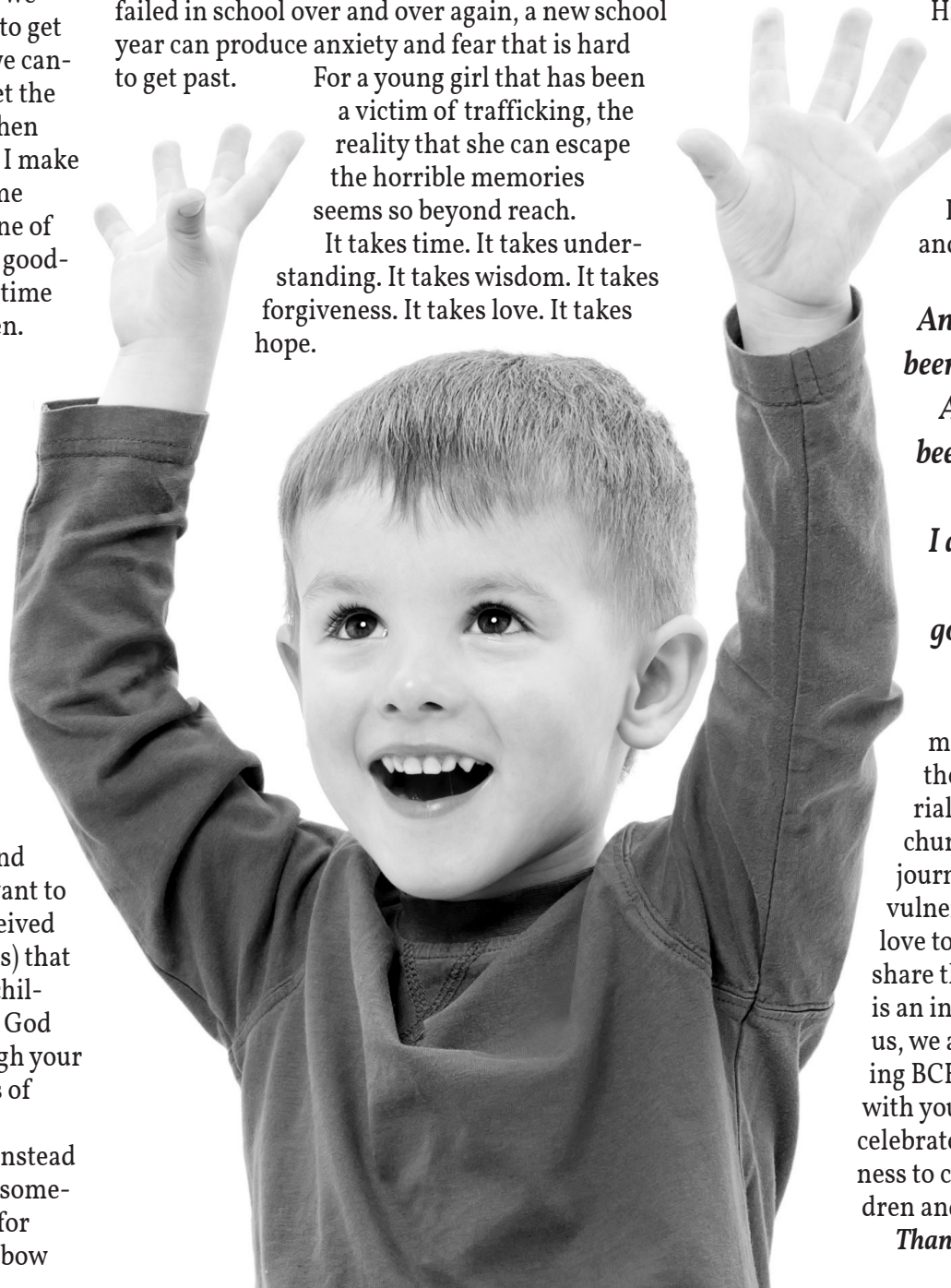
*And all my life You have
been so, so good*

*With every breath that
I am able*

*Oh, I will sing of the
goodness of God*

Please note that last month your church received their Annual Offering materials. Please encourage your church to walk with us on this journey to care for the most vulnerable among us. We would love to come to your church and share the BCH story. All we need is an invite and we are there. Call us, we are ready to share the amazing BCH goodness of God story with your church. Please know we celebrate how God uses your goodness to care for our precious children and families.

Thank you!



THANKS TO YOUR
ANNUAL OFFERING

MAKALA IS ONE OF THE

691

WHO ACCEPTED JESUS
AS SAVIOR IN THE
PAST FIVE YEARS

Harmony

Makala

Ashley

Makala, center, along with Harmony, left, and Ashley, right, was one of the approximately 17,000 children in the NC foster care system. Through your Annual Offering, she and the other girls became sisters when they were fostered and then adopted by Roger and Shanell Cook, a Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) foster/adopt family. Only a few months after her adoption was final, **Makala asked Jesus into her heart.**

When you give to the Annual Offering, lives are changed now and for all eternity through BCH's ministries in NC, SC and Guatemala. Please give.

BCHOFFERING.ORG | OFFERING GOAL \$1.5 MILLION | WEEK OF PRAYER: NOV. 6-13 |



Watch Makala's foster/adopt video.
Hear about her decision for Christ.



SHARING HOPE...CHANGING LIVES

Baptist Children's Homes
of NORTH CAROLINA



Embrace

For such a time as this.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2022-2026

The many ministries of Baptist Children's Homes are united in purpose during unprecedented times. Overcoming challenges and welcoming opportunities have thrust us into an upward spiral signifying significant growth through quality services and quality relationships—an upward spiral of growth that seems to reach beyond the earth's ionosphere. To help the BCH family navigate this fantastic journey, I introduce a dynamic and exciting strategic plan, "Embrace: For Such A Time As This."

We at BCH never shy away when God leads. From my almost 40-year perch as BCH President, I have seen time and time again God strike out before us, calling us to go with Him. And we followed.

This is a time of rapid change and with that change comes a good amount of uncertainty. But it is not a time to falter. Now is a time that demands we not only follow but embrace a vast unknown future, trusting in the all-knowing God of the cosmos. During my tenure, I have overseen many Strategic Plans, but none is as important for such a time as this.

As a noun, EMBRACE means "an act of holding something closely in one's arms." We at BCH "embrace EMBRACE!" Think of EMBRACE this way: Enthusiastically Managing Both Results And Compassionate Enterprises

Without results, a strategic plan sits on a shelf, gathering dust, and is not

worth the paper on which it's written. This plan oozes with new ideas—measurable results—and takes bold steps to create and sustain new enterprises (projects that require effort). BCH has embraced the challenge of merging with Christian Adoption Services. At the same time, we are seeing exponential growth in our Foster Care ministry and our Foster-to-Adopt initiative called EVERY CHILD. NCBAM is venturing into new areas providing services through Hope Line and Care Village, Weekday Education is forging new paths, offering inclusive care, and orphan care in Guatemala is growing. IDD is launching innovative programs to meet the changing needs of developmentally disabled adults, Greater Vision is expanding, and HOME-BASE is capturing the attention of other colleges and universities nationwide for its innovative programs. All of this is happening while the commitment to provide the best residential services for babies, children, and single moms has not waned. EMBRACE dramatically (with goals and objectives) shows that BCH is both relentless and resilient: relentless in our pursuit of quality services and quality relationships and resilient enough to be open to new ways to serve the needs of humankind, especially the most vulnerable among us.

We humbly honor our past...proudly salute our present...and boldly embrace our future.

For EMBRACE, a number of staff members and members of BCH's Long-Range Planning Committee did the research that led to this lively document. Every aspect of our sharing hope... changing lives ministry has come under the microscope. Every action, on page after page of this Strategic Plan, has been filtered through our mission to help individuals to begin well and end well. We celebrate our strengths and vigorously address our weaknesses, drawing on our collective creativity, courage, confidence, and curiosity. It is all in EMBRACE.

BCH operates within a "culture of excellence." This is not a term we applied to ourselves. It was given to us at a closing accreditation conference when the visiting team leader representing the Council on Accreditation bestowed it upon us. It was a humbling moment, and we work tirelessly to improve on that culture—remembering, the sun never sets on excellence. But it is my belief and that of the Strategic Planning Committee that we are entering a new era, one that demands more. This is not the time to be ordinary or meet the status quo; this is the time to rise upward and be extraordinary. To that end, we launch EMBRACE—our newest and boldest effort "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

Michael C. Blackwell
President/CEO

Car helps single mom on road to independence

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

Susan's parents traveled from Baltimore to see for themselves. The mom and dad had been estranged from their 29-year-old daughter for too many years. They did not speak often, and when they did, the conversations ended where they often began: in a disagreement. But now, Jesus had transformed the young mother's life. "There are people who I knew before God saved me who cannot recognize me," Susan confesses. "I have changed that much."

Once angry and dealing with feelings of depression, Susan often thought of giving up. When she first came to Greater Vision Outreach Ministry at Mills Home in Thomasville, she was only looking for clothes and shoes for her children, Rubi and Ezequiel. The children's father, and her boyfriend, was living a dangerous life, one that eventually put him behind bars. Alone and caring for two small children, she struggled to provide for them as a family.

Greater Vision Outreach Ministry helps meet the essential physical and spiritual needs of working families who are struggling financially. The ministry helps families work toward self-sufficiency and independence.

Greater Vision manager, Sara Becker, remembers Susan's first visit. "There are so many roadblocks women like Susan face. They want to care for their children, but it is almost impossible for them to find a job. And if they do find work, there is the question of reliable transportation to and from the job. And then there is the need for daycare. It can be overwhelming."

But Sara saw something in this young single mom and believed "there is such potential in Susan."



Susan says that Sara helped her make a plan and set goals. Four-year-old Ezequiel was accepted into a pre-k program that helped with his special needs. She was able to borrow a car when needed and she found work as a cafeteria worker



Susan, three-year-old daughter Rubi, and four-year-old son Ezequiel feel like they are part of the Greater Vision Ministry family. Susan has found the love and support she needed while working to provide for her children. The single mom is thankful for her new salvation and the hope she has for the future.

at an elementary school in her community. But things remained precarious.

When Susan abruptly lost the use of the car, she feared she might lose her job. Everything she earned went to paying rent for a very modest, low-budget apartment and the basic needs of her children. Through her eyes, buying a car was out of the question.

"I knew getting her own car would change Susan's life," Sara says. "But it wasn't going to be easy, or at least, I thought it wouldn't be. But God had other plans."

A car quickly became available. The cost was minimal, but Susan did not have the money saved yet. A donor who had learned of the need came forward and offered to purchase the car for the small family.

Susan remembers thinking in amazement, "Who am I that someone would want to help me?"

Susan had never owned a car and did not realize more would be needed. She needed a current driver's license, insurance for the car, and additional

costs related to the purchase. Sara assured Susan that God was not going to stop what He had begun.

This is when Susan turned to her mom. It was difficult to reach out. Her mom was skeptical,

but she heard something different in her daughter's voice. She assured Susan the money would be coming. The next thing she heard was her father's voice on the phone. He asked questions about the car. He told Susan they would visit soon so he could check it out for himself. Her parents wanted to also see the change in her life.

Susan's father brought his tools and serviced the car. He approved of the car's condition and felt relief that Susan was now on a good path. The walls that had been separating Susan from her parents for so long began to fall.

"Greater Vision is a part of what God is doing in the lives of broken, hurting people," Sara asserts. "We work to help families get on their feet, but just as important is that we love them like Jesus loves them."

Susan gives God the credit for everything that has happened in her life. She says it was God who healed the brokenness between her and her parents. She says there is now hope for her children's future.

"Susan is a strong person who has worked very hard to get where she is today," Sara says. "Her life is a testament to all that God will do."

Susan says she wants to be like Sara. She dreams of a day when she can help others, sharing how their lives can be different.

"I am proud of myself," Susan says. "I am a better person. I am happy."

Baptists' offering vital in bringing children hope

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

(Continued from page 1.)

One day, Shanell received a call from BCH about a seven-month-old infant named Harmony who had been severely neglected. DSS needed a foster family for Harmony immediately. Worried that it had been years since they had cared for a baby, Shanell texted Roger, who was at work, to share her concerns and ask for his feedback. After a few moments, her phone lit up with his response.

"God laid it on my heart to send her a text," Roger divulges. "I simply said, 'Shanell, God is calling. Are you going to answer the call or let it go to voicemail?'"

"I answered the call and said, 'yes,'" Shanell recalls tearfully. Harmony has been with the Cooks ever since. They adopted her at age two after her parental rights were terminated by the courts.

Not long before the toddler's adoption was finalized, the Cooks received a call about Ashley. Where Harmony was only an infant when she came into their home, Ashley was a teenager who had been through a tumultuous time. After coming to live with the Cooks, it did not take her long to realize that they were the family she wanted in her life.

"I think there was always something I was missing, and I guess I didn't really find out what that was until I moved in with mom and dad—Roger and Shanell," Ashley shares. "All I needed was a family and to be loved because I hadn't had that for so long."

That family extends to the congregation of Fellowship Baptist Church where Roger recently answered a calling of his own—he became the church's bi-vocational pastor in July.

"Our church has been an amazing part



Above, Makala was once among the approximately 17,000 boys and girls in the NC foster care system until the Cooks began fostering her in 2018. The family adopted her in April 2019 and she accepted Christ as her savior the following August. An excited Makala was baptized a short time later. Today, the Cooks have fostered 19 children and adopted three girls. Their biological son, Jackson, is now 20. The family continues to foster.

of our journey," Shanell says. "Every time a child (comes into our family), whether we fostered them or adopted them, they just greet them like they are part of the family."

The Cooks are quick to recognize the essential role churches play in their family's journey. Whether it's the support of their home church or NC Baptists across the state who collect an Annual Offering for Baptist Children's Homes, they are grateful for the statewide gifts and prayers that make it possible for them, and hun-

dreds of other NC families, to foster and adopt.

"The Thanksgiving (Annual) Offering is an amazing way to give back," Shanell explains.

"I know not everyone can be a foster parent but they can help those that want to be."

"Without the donations and without all the work that's being done by NC Baptists and Baptist Children's Homes, we wouldn't have the family we have today," Roger says smiling. "We would still be a family of three instead of a family of six and growing."

The Cooks have fostered 19 children and adopted three of them. They still have an extra bedroom so that they can continue to foster.

"Everybody plays a vital role in making sure that those children have a future," Roger says.

Editor's Note: The Annual Offering is vital to the many ministries of Baptist Children's Homes which serves vulnerable children, families, single mothers, expectant mothers, intellectually/developmentally disabled adults, aging adults, and others. The offering supports the EVERY CHILD Foster & Adoption Ministry, a partnership between BCH and NC Baptists. BCH operates locations in nearly three dozen communities throughout NC, SC and Guatemala. Churches can find Annual Offering resources (slides, social media posts, videos featuring the Cooks, etc.) at bchoffering.org.



The Cook family is the focus of the 2022 Annual Offering. Watch their story at bit.ly/22cook or scan the QR code.



Distinguished educator John W. Chandler passes – Alumni remember others who have recently died

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

Congratulations and thanks to the people who will make up the Mills Home Alumni Council for our alumni association for 2022-2023. They are as follows: President, **Ruth Berndt Hodges**; 1st Vice-President-President Elect, **Jackie Elliott Walker**; 2nd Vice-President, **Cecilia Townsend Wilkerson**; Secretary, **Lisa Carter Lancaster**; Treasurer, **Flora Hicks Patton**. Council members are: **Janice King Anderson**, **Rusty Bunker**, **Martha Berndt Fisher**, **Pete Knight**, **Juanita White Messervey**, **Jimmy Rochelle**, **Johnny Shields**, **Sharon Dehart Stiles** (chairman of the Columbarium Committee); and **Lib Smathers Johnson** (publicist/columnist for Charity & Children.) The 1st Vice-President-President Elect succeeds the President.

Donna Swift, daughter of **Phyllis Coe Coltrane** called in mid-July inquiring for her mother about Homecoming. In the ensuing discussion, I learned Phyllis and her late sister **Vivian** had lived at Mills Home (MH) from 1949-1954. They promised to see us at Homecoming and they showed up early Saturday morning. Their group included Phyllis and Donna plus four daughters. The highlight of their visit was taking a tour through the museum where Phyllis was surprised to see one of the little beds that came out of the Miles-Durham Nursery, the pre-school cottage in which she was placed in 1949. She also lived at the Fleming and Mitchell. They felt their trip from Eden was well worth it, and we were happy to add Phyllis to our address list for 2023. Other siblings who lived at MH were **Nancy** and the late **Jesse Michael** whose ashes will be placed in the new columbarium at God's Acre. Friends can reconnect with Phyllis at 201 Country Club Dr., Eden, NC, 27288.

We are deeply saddened to inform you of several deaths. Earl Mills passed away on July 22. He entered MH from Marion with his brothers **Johnny and Teddy** in 1952. He never shed his nickname "Goofy" because

friends loved his fun-loving spirit. After graduating in 1959, Earl served in the NC Army National Guard from 1960 to 1966. He worked at Gilbarco in Greensboro for 36 years and retired in 2002. As a proud member and shop steward of the Teamsters Local 391, he worked for the rights of fellow workers for many years.

Among family in Greensboro, Earl was known as "Squeaky," or "Grampa Squeaky." He was a mechanic on a drag racing team in the 1960s and 70s. It was no wonder he became an encyclopedia of NASCAR history and a master mechanic. He also enjoyed ocean fishing and camping with family and friends. A long-time member of Immanuel Baptist Church of Greensboro, Earl was a well-known chaperon on church youth trips.

Earl is survived by his loving wife of 53 years, **Betty Sprinkle Mills**; daughter, **Christy Mills Steltz** and her husband **Daniel**; his brothers **Johnny** (now in Independence, VA) and **Teddy** (now in Columbia, SC); and two grandsons. Earl was interred on July 29 in Guilford Memorial Park in Greensboro, where he lived most of his adult life. Condolences may be sent to Betty at 2203 Four Seasons Dr., Greensboro, NC, 27407.

John W. Chandler and his brothers **Ted and Calvin** entered MH in 1934 from Mars Hill. The deep appreciation John had for the life he lived at MH is reflected in the title he gave to his 2016 autobiography: *A Special Kind of Boarding School in the Great Depression*. After graduating from MH, John earned his BA from Wake Forest in 1945, his BD from Duke University in 1952, and his PhD from Duke in 1954. Over the years, he has been awarded honorary doctorates from sixteen different colleges and universities, including Williams College where he served as president from 1973-1985.

From 1948 to 1954, John served Wake Forest as an instructor and assistant professor. Moving on to Williams College, he served as assistant professor, associate professor and chairman of the religion department, and was named Cluett Professor of

Religion in 1965. John also served as acting provost, first dean of the faculty, and chaired the Williams Curriculum adopted by the faculty in 1966. In 1969, he was elected a permanent member of the Williams Board of Trustees. Under John's leadership, Williams College became co-educational, completed a \$50 million capital campaign, set new records in support from alumni, expanded their endowment, built a new library, art museum, music center, and theater, and began construction of a major athletic facility. As president, John initiated the purchase of buildings and set up a cooperative arrangement with Exeter College to make it possible for 25 Williams students to actually spend a year at Oxford University.

After serving for 12 years as president of Williams, Chandler became president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. In that capacity, he assisted the trustees and search committees of approximately 40 colleges and universities that were seeking new presidential leadership (including Duke.) Duke recognized him with its highest award, the University Medal for Distinguished Meritorious Service, and awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

John lost his wife **Florence** in 2008, sixty years after their marriage. He is survived by a son, his wife **Joyce Lazarus**, and their three daughters. Friends may send condolences to **Ted Chandler** at this address: 4211 Arrowhead Dr., Hickory, NC, 28601.

We were saddened also to learn that **Marjorie "Margie" Knight Roberson** passed away on August 23 at her home. Her funeral service and burial were held on August 25 at Friendship United Methodist Church where she had been a long time, faithful member. Next to her Christian life, family was very important to Margie and her latter years were spent as caregiver to her beloved husband **Melvin Roberson**. She loved being a wife, mother, and grandmother. She especially enjoyed cooking, sewing, and making stained glass windows. Beloved progeny surviving her are son **Mike Delton**

Roberson, his wife **Tammy**, and their sons **Troy Randolph** and **Trey Delton**; siblings surviving Margie are **Pete Knight (Judy)**, **Joe Knight**, **Marty Knight (Joan)**, **Randy Knight (Janie)**, **Ronald Patterson (Mindy)**, **Dawn Priddy**, **Shirley Nelson West**, brother-in-law **Giles Lewis** and sister-in-law **Jewel Roberson Lewis**. She was preceded in death by her husband **Melvin** and her twin sister **Marsha Knight Phillips**.

We regret to report the deaths of **Wallace Maultsby '44** and **Waldron Richardson '63**. We will share information on them in the next issue.

If at any time you wish to learn more about the new Columbarium now at God's Acre, please contact Columbarium Committee Chairperson, **Sharon DeHart Stiles**: 1588 Elkhart Circle, Gastonia, NC, 28054. (Ph. 704-685-2443) If you wish to make a donation to the Columbarium fund, send check to treasurer **Flora Hicks Patton**, 6428 Sisk Carter Rd., Rockwell, NC, 28138.

If you have trouble with your **Charity & Children** subscription, please email **Denesha** at ddavis@bchfamily.org or call 336-474-1209.

In Memoriam for Sept. 2021-Aug. 2022: **Viola Batts Rus, 1933-1947**; **Linda Bray McAlister, 1971-1975**; **Bill Byerly, 1951-1961**; **Rev. Jim Camp, 1968-1979**, staff; **John W. Chandler, 1934-1941**; **Jimmy Churchill, 1950-1961**; **William H. "Billy" Covington, 1948-1954**; **Charles M. Deal, early 1974- late 1974**; **Audrey Dixon Dean, 1966-1971**; **Vannie Downey Carter, 1939-1951**; **Earl Mills, 1952-1959**; **Ellis "Bill" Powell, 1964-1969**; **Gene Spickler, 1956-1965**; **Mrs. Randy (Diane) Stewart, 1992-2021**, staff; **Billy Threadgill, 1964-1959**; **Don Watson, 1964-1969**, staff; **Charles Ricky White, 1969-1976**; **Margie Knight, 1960-64**; **Waldron Richardson, 1945?-1963?**; and **Wallace Maultsby, 1933-1944**.



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



Odum Home in Pembroke

Friends of children rally in Pembroke

Throughout September, NC Baptist volunteers of all ages help with missions projects as a part of our Friends of Children Saturdays. They made a difference at BCH's Odum Home.



Christian Adoption Services

Single mom hits goals, finds success

Tommy and Amber are new adoptive parents. They recently met their child's birth family and then their infant son for the first time. Learn more at www.christianadopt.org



The Mill: Coffee & Community, Thomasville

New shop begins to take shape

The refurbishment of the space for the new coffee shop is on schedule. Painting is completed and signs are installed as the October 25th opening date approaches.



Cameron Boys Camp in Cameron

Baptists tackle wilderness projects

Volunteers traveled to Cameron Boys Camp, one of BCH's two 23/7 wilderness camp ministries for at-risk children. Youth and adults accomplished a number of mission projects.



Kennedy Home in Kinston

Catalyst Church volunteers in Kinston

Wearing their "Love Loud" shirts, friends from Catalyst Church in Jacksonville visited Kennedy Home to help with projects across the property of BCH's second-oldest location.



Greater Vision Outreach in Kinston

Eastern-area camp offers assistance

Youth from The Refuge, a Christ-centered camp in Ayden, helped organize donations at Greater Vision in Kinston. Greater Vision assists community families needing stability.



Weekday Education in Thomasville

Former student gains Eagle Scout

Former Weekday Education student Lucas Gordon returned to the center he attended as a child for his Eagle Scout project -- an outdoor home living center play set that he built.



Lindsay Home in Zionville

Ladies worship at FaithFest

Ladies from Lindsay Home, a part of BCH's ministry to intellectually and developmentally disabled adults, attended FaithFest in Wilkesboro. They met some of the singers.



Connections Conference in Winston-Salem

National conference held by BCH

A group of Development & Communications professionals from sister BCH ministries across the nation gathered for an annual conference. BCHNC hosted the group in Winston-Salem.

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- Central Area Family Services**
Regina Keener, Dir., 336-474-1200
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Christopher Allabaugh, Dir., 252-522-0811
www.kennedyhome.org
- Odum Home**
Kathy Locklear, Res. Mgr., 910-521-3433
www.odumhome.org
- Cameron Boys Camp**
Drew Scott, Dir., 910-245-4034
www.cameronboyscamp.org
- Camp Duncan for Girls**
Brad Gearhart, Dir., 910-944-3077
www.campduncanNC.org
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- Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities**
Tara Sessoms, Dir., 336-474-1259
www.hereismyhome.org
- NC Baptist Aging Ministry**
Sandy Gregory, Dir., 336-474-1221
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Favorite Troop 44 Scout Master remembered — Cottage mom remembers boys accepting Christ

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

Katie Parker is asking you put this on your calendar. The Kennedy Home (KH) Alumni Christmas Party will be Saturday, December 3, 2022 at King's Restaurant in Kinston at noon until 3:00 pm. We will be eating from the buffet for \$12.95 plus tax. This is a real good deal because their buffet has lots and lots of real good meats, vegetables, and desserts. Alumni are encouraged to bring a \$15 Christmas gift if you plan to play the gift game with your "lucky" number. Contact me or Katie if you plan to attend. You will also find a note on the KH Facebook to respond if you plan to attend. We need a head count before the party

Gary and Debbie Caulder sent word that the North Lenoir High graduating class of 1972 celebrated their 50th class reunion in Kinston on August 27. The class also extended this invitation for the classes of 1971 and 1973 allowing them to attend. **Barbara Branch Smith** and husband **Mickey** from Atlanta, Ga. attended the reunion. The couple joined Gary and Debbie with some more friends for dinner at the Village Steakhouse on Hwy. 70. After a delicious meal everyone went to Debbie's home for dessert. Approximately 130 attended the reunion. Those also attending from KH were: **Paul Stone, Debbie Connie Daniels, Joyce Connie Surbaugh, and Clayton Pate.**

Penny Keller Evans wrote to let everyone know that her father **Roy Hamilton Keller**, former Scout Master for 14 years on the KH, passed away. He was 96 years old—born on April 23, 1926. He died August 19. Mr. Keller had a sweet and gentle soul and was loved by everyone. He never had any boys of his own but had five wonderful daughters. He served his country well in the Navy which he joined in 1943. He had a passion for art and design which allowed him to create signs for people and businesses. He showed

his love for helping boys at Kennedy Home while serving as Scout Master of Troop 44 for fourteen years. He was loved and admired by children and staff. **Bernard Brantley** said that Mr. Keller loved "us Kennedy Home boys for sure." **Dan Russ** stated that Mr. Keller gave him his first piece of chewing tobacco which made him very sick. Dan said he loved Mr. Keller and his family. **Edward Gaston Pait** stated that he was "honored" to know Mr. Keller for many years. The men remember that they hiked many, many miles together and entered many swimming meets against other Scouts. Mr. Keller made sure Troop 44 was present at large Boy Scott Camporees.

I have asked former KH staff members and their children to send me some information about what they have been doing since leaving Kennedy Home. I started out last month writing about my two boys, **Johnny and Scott**. I hope many of you will write me some articles to use about staff children.

Penny Maready Batten sent the following to share with all: "Hope you are doing well and here are some things about my brothers and sister. **Robert Maready** began a tire business after leaving KH—Maready Tire. He stayed there until about five years ago and sold the business to my brother, **Thomas**, who runs it today. He married his high school sweetheart **Dee Ann** and they have one son, **Jacob**. They continue to live in LaGrange. When my younger brother Thomas left KH, he became an engineer, moved to Rocky Mount and worked as an inspector for the town. He married **Kim** and has one son, **Dylan**. His son works with Thomas. They live in Kinston today. **Manette**, my younger sister, married **Graham King** and has worked with the family commercial flooring business in Kinston every since. She did go on to Wayne Community College and received her dental hygienist

license before getting married. They have two girls, **Kristin and Kayla**. Kristen is married with no children and lives in Kinston. Penny said that when she left KH, she got married and went to work. She had two jobs before landing her current job in 1986 with Hillco, Ltd. She had worked as an executive assistant for 36 years. She has two children of her own, **Johnthan and Amanda** and two bonus boys, **Stephen and Jordan** from her husband **Gary**. She and Gary have three grandchildren and a boy on the way. They also adopted a little girl, Taylor, who is five years old today.

She and her siblings came to KH in 1971 from Wallace, NC. Her mom **Louise** and dad **Earl** live across the street from her in Pink Hill, NC.

David and Donna Bradley are looking forward to the alumni beach retreat on the first weekend in October. David remembers that one Christmas in the late 60s, a lot of KH children asked Santa for roller skates because at certain times during the week they could skate in the old gym.

He also wrote about living in Hardee Cottage in 1966 where he shared a room with **Leon and Phillip Morgan**. He recalls that they woke up on school days at 5:30. He loved the smell of the chocolate toast that would be waiting for them at breakfast on certain mornings. He says the boys "had better get what you could quick, because when it was gone, it was gone." Eighteen boys going after chocolate on toast and he was the youngest, however, it worked out great because he was the dishwasher and had the advantage of getting the leftovers. David says that those were the days.

Dolores Pender sent this note: "**Daniel Ball** was five years old when he came to KH—Bryant Cottage from 1983 to 1989. He was with us longer than any of our kids. He loved working in the garden and going fishing. When he left us he lived in several different places and

dropped out of school. He got in some trouble but eventually got his GED and went on to get his masters degree in social work. He works for Health and Addiction Services at PORT Health Services of North Carolina. His desire was to be able to help people who had to grow up like him. I am very proud of him for working hard to get his education and making a difference in other people's lives. He also has an 11-year-old son, **Danny**. He calls and visits me often and I love being in touch with the kids we worked with all those years at KH. **Daniel Leggett, Jr.** surprised me with a visit recently. He was with us at Bryant Cottage from 1986 to 1987—almost two years. He was 11 years old and loved riding his bike—but hated shucking corn. When he left KH, he went to live with his dad and stepmom. When he grew up, he became a successful plumber and now owns his own business. He has two grown sons. I am so proud of him, too. But I am most proud that both these boys accepted Christ while at the cottage and were baptized at the Kennedy Home Church."

Thank you to all for sending so many wonderful stories. I'm looking forward to getting more. If you were a KH worker, I encourage you to keep up with the children you helped care for. Give them a call and send a note to me about their life now. I will greatly appreciate it. I know people in NC Baptist churches would like to read the stories

Prayer Requests: Keep **Danny Tharrington and Dickie Maynor's** wives in your prayers for health concerns. If you have special prayer requests, send them to me and we ask all our readers and the folks of all our North Carolina churches to be praying for you and your prayer concerns.

Love ya! jt

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



Come to the living waters and "thirst no more"

By Jim Edminson, Editor

New Hope Baptist Church is located not far from the banks of the Calcasieu River. The river meanders 200 miles across the southwest corner of Louisiana, draining bayou country into the estuaries along the Gulf of Mexico. When the United States and Spain argued ownership in the early 1800s, the lawless land on each side of the river was a haven for privateers. The live oaks with their sweeping branches and dangling moss provided the bandits perfect hiding places. But not all its past was so shady. The waters called to the area settlers looking for a good life, inviting them to build communities and farm nearby lands made rich by the spring floods depositing fortified sediment.

After the church was established in 1873, members gathered along the river on summer Sunday afternoons to plunge new believers in its waters, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The pastor planned the events only after a good number had made professions. Candidates were draped in white cotton gowns that seemed to glow beside the backdrop of the dark, slow-moving waters. The pastor raised his hand and declared, "This is my beloved in Christ." He then lowered the convert, embraced in his arms, beneath the water. Church members shouted loud amens as the born-again soul was lifted from a watery grave.

The church building when I was a boy was no longer made of wood, cut from the land and milled nearby. It was built with white washed cinder block and had newly-made pine pews with red cushioned covers. I came to the Lord during summer revival and remember little other than I was a sinner, the joy of being forgiven, and the whisper of the waters.

When I was baptized, the service was not held along the banks of the river, but was held in the baptistry, a light-blue colored fiberglass pool that was filled with tap water the day before. Adorned in an old white choir robe that loosely fit my nine-year-old frame, I stepped down into the waters. I remember the chill of the waters made my teeth chatter.

Folks who stepped in the baptistry looked as if they were walking into the waters of the River Jordan. The landscape was painted on the back wall, appearing as if the river flowed into the baptistry. The faithful were transported to the place where Jesus was plunged beneath the waters by His cousin John.

So much was different than the Calcasieu River baptisms, but so much was the same, sinners plunged beneath the water and raised to shouts of "Amen" and "Praise the Lord!"

In the beginning, God hovered over the waters, gathering it to allow dry land to appear. He made the seas swarm with living creatures. He used

the mist to water the ground, planting a garden in Eden. It is from the watered land that food came and it is water that hydrated the body. Up to 60% of the human adult body is water. The brain and heart are composed of 73% water and the lungs are about 83% water. Water and Man are uniquely connected. God's creation is dependent on water to live.

When God delivered the Hebrews from Egypt, it was the waters that swallowed up their enemies, saving their lives. John the Baptist ushered repentant hearts to the waters, obeying God's call. And Jesus met the woman at a well, offering living waters.

It was odd that the Samaritan woman came to the well in the heat of the day, long after the other women had come to draw their water. She was alone, emotionally abandoned and struggling. Jesus asked the woman for water to quench His thirst, but it was the Samaritan who thirsted for waters to heal her parched soul.

Jesus calls us to the water He alone gives—"a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). It is life-giving, redemptive and restorative water that covers hurt and pain.

Join me. Let's fully drink together. Whether you are saved or need to be, come and be immersed in the healing waters. Come to the waters and "thirst no more."



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