



Listen for “*A good word*” from Dr. Michael C. Blackwell regarding the coronavirus pandemic.

Use the QR code or visit www.bchnc.org/GW31620.

4/20

Charity & Children 133/3

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

URGENT! Remember the children. Please continue giving while we navigate these challenging days.

An important message from Dr. Michael C. Blackwell

Dear friends and supporters of our many ministries serving to the Glory of God and beating with one heart. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family, and the people of our state, nation and world as we all monitor the ever-changing crisis surrounding COVID-19, also known as the coronavirus.

Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) has taken strategic steps to protect our staff members and those entrusted to our care. Every ministry is complying with protocols set forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), NC Department Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), local health departments, and regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in regard to infection prevention and control and testing. *In fact, many of the CDC and NCDHHS protocols to safeguard against COVID-19 are practices BCH has utilized for years.*

We have revised schedules, canceled events and shown flexibility in meeting



needs during this time. You can be assured that BCH's leadership team is doing everything possible to ensure our residents and staff members remain safe and healthy.

And that brings me to you.

You are an important and vital part of our ministry. You matter. You share hope. You change lives. You are a child of God. You are a vessel of the Holy Spirit. *And, I thank God for you.*

You have remained calm, washed your hands, used common sense, and stayed out of harm's way. *Good for you. Good for us.*

As BCH President, I will walk alongside you during this time of crisis, change and adjustment. I'm told that

I can't shake your hand now or share an appropriate hug, but I can say this — *I love and appreciate you.* I admire the way you dedicate your talents and abilities, *your life*, to help the most vulnerable among us.

You are doing God's work. So, keep the faith. Take heart. This crisis will eventually pass. In the meantime, stand tall. Square your shoulders. Walk and talk with confidence. Remember who you are. *Remember Whose you are!*

You, our readers, are very dear to me and essential to our ministry which is celebrating 135 years of “sharing hope...changing lives.”

God bless you!

Mary Presson's historic journey to a new beginning

By Michael C. Blackwell, President/CEO

NOTE: In celebration of the ministry's 135th Anniversary, *My Thoughts*, on occasion, will be first person accounts by historic individuals who have helped make BCH what it is today. This month's column is by the first child admitted into care in 1885 — Mary Presson (aka Dr. Jesse Croom).

After dinner in late October of 1885, Mama told me she needed to talk with me about something very important.

"Since your Papa died, it has been difficult for me to earn enough to buy food and clothes for the two of us," she said. She went on to explain that since things were hard for everyone in the area; and, that she could find only occasional work to support them.

As her eyes filled with tears, Mama said, "Mary, we're going to have to move out of this tenant house since I can't tend the land. You know we don't have any family nearby to help us."

Mama told me she had talked with Dr. John Mitchell, pastor of Ahoskie Baptist Church, and that he would help get me into the new Baptist orphanage in Thomasville.

"Mama, can you go with me?" I asked.

"No, an orphanage is for children," she replied. "When things get better, I promise that we'll be together again."

I couldn't say anything — so I clung to her and tried not to cry.

Several weeks later, Dr. Mitchell visited and told us that everything had been worked out for me to go to the orphanage on Wednesday, November 11. He said since Mama was not allowed to go with

me, he would accompany me on the train.

Early on Wednesday morning, Mama fixed my favorite breakfast — biscuits and gravy. Then we went to the railroad station. Dr. Mitchell took the box of my belongings and told me that it was time to tell Mama "good-bye."

As we entered the car, I sat next to the window and I gazed at my dear Mama. As the train began moving, we waved until we could no longer see one another.

As the train slowly moved out of town, I kept looking out the window as all I had ever known slipped away. Finally, Dr. Mitchell asked, "Mary, what are you thinking?"

With a quivering voice, I told him how much I was already missing Mama. I also told him about my teacher and friends in the fourth grade. He assured me that my Mama loved me and wanted the best for me.

I sat silently, but when I could no longer hold it in, I blurted out, "I'm scared to go to the orphanage!"

Dr. Mitchell took my hand and looked gently into my eyes. "Mary," he said, "you don't have to be afraid. John Haymes Mills, the general manager of the orphanage, is a dear friend who cares deeply for children. I trust him so

much that I contributed the funds to build the first cottage at the orphanage."

When we got off the train, Dr. Mitchell arranged transportation to the orphanage. Finally, we stopped in front of a new, brick building with a huge porch — Mitchell Cottage.

As we got out of the buggy, the tallest man I had ever seen came out the door. He leaned down, extending his huge hand to me, and said, "Welcome, Mary Presson!"

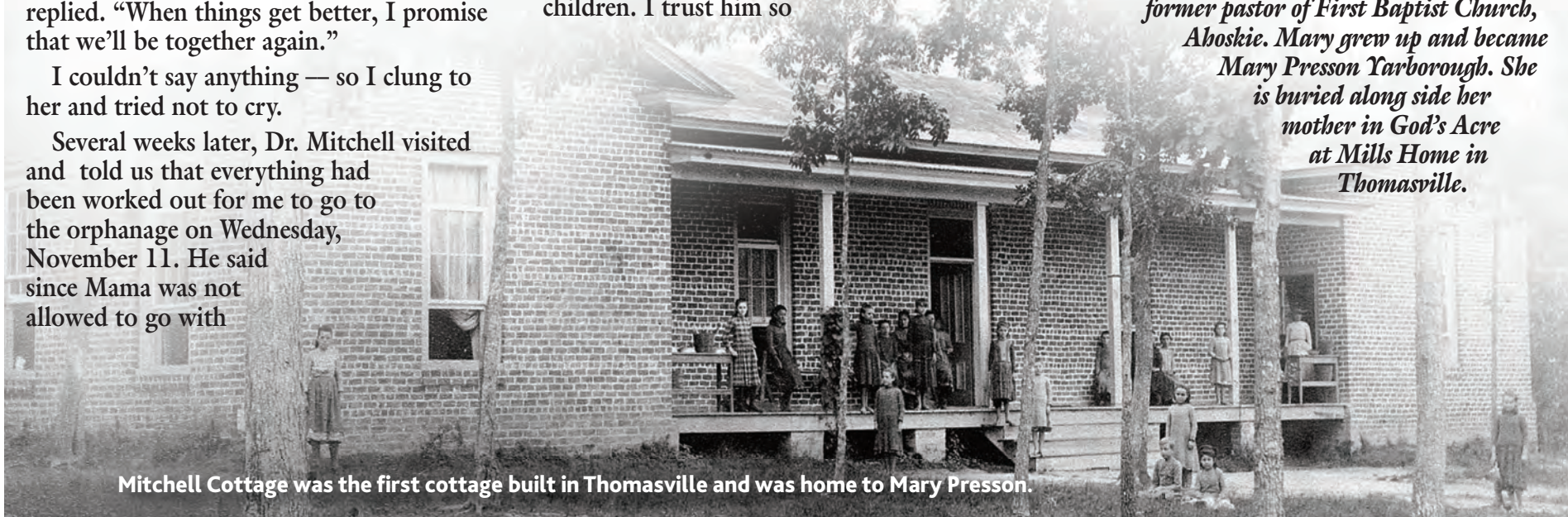
I couldn't believe it — Mr. Mills already knew my name and spoke to me before greeting his long-time friend. He made me feel that I was important.

The preacher was right. Mr. Mills did take care of me. He also helped my Mama keep her promise of our being together again. He hired her to be a "Mama" in the cottage — the orphanage's first matron.

What was the worst of times, became for me and mama, the best of times! It was a new beginning.

— Mary Presson

Mary Presson's first person account was written by The Reverend Doctor Jesse Croom of Edenton, a former BCH trustee and former pastor of First Baptist Church, Ahoskie. Mary grew up and became Mary Presson Yarborough. She is buried along side her mother in God's Acre at Mills Home in Thomasville.



Mitchell Cottage was the first cottage built in Thomasville and was home to Mary Presson.

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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Events and engagements affected

To safeguard Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) friends, ministry partners, staff members, those served throughout all ministry locations, *BCH is canceling and/or postponing a number of events, both on and off site, until further notice.* These include, but are not limited to, speaking engagements and scheduled events between residents and the general public. Smaller events have also been canceled.

The list of canceled and postponed events as of March 25 includes:

- All BCH church and organization speaking engagements – *Canceled & being rescheduled*
- April 2020 "Food Roundup" — *Postponed until Fall 2020*
- All Spring "Friends of Children" Workdays — *Canceled*
 - Oak Ranch, April 25
 - Kennedy Home, May 2
 - Camp Duncan, May 2
 - Odum Home, May 2
 - Cameron Boys Camp, May 9
- Ride to Clyde, May 6-8 — *Canceled*
- Barbecue Festival at Broyhill Home, May 9 — *Canceled*

- Founders Day at Cameron Boys Camp, May 20 — *Canceled*

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) has canceled the following events:

- Aging Well Conference, Rose Hill, March 31 — *Canceled*
- Aging Well Conference, Murphy, April 3 — *Canceled*
- Senior Adult Ministry State Leadership Conference, Raleigh, May 5 — *Canceled*

Additional BCH/NCBAM updates and information will be posted at www.bchfamily.org as it becomes available.

Listen for "A good word" from Dr. Blackwell regarding your vital support.



Use the QR code or visit www.bchnc.org/GW32020.

Virus impacts giving, Blackwell asks for help

The COVID-19 impact is affecting giving. Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) president Michael C. Blackwell has made an appeal for donors to "not forget the children during this crucial time."

Blackwell said that from the ministry's very beginning — the initial \$1,000 gift from Noah Biggs — to today, it has been those who "have been faithful in their support" who have helped meet every child's need and kept the doors always open.

"With so many church services being canceled and with our own fundraising and public awareness events being canceled or postponed," Blackwell said, "I first of all affirm all you have done and *thank you* for your gifts to support this ministry. Secondly, I unapologetically ask you to continue your gifts — or even increase them a little — while we negotiate our way through this coronavirus pandemic."

Use the provided postage-paid envelope or go online at www.bchfamily.org/givenow to make your gift now.

NCBAM offers help for older adults facing isolation

By Carol Layton, Dir. of Communications & Administration, NCBAM

Does the thought of "social distancing" — missing church, movies, or friendly hugs for weeks cause you to feel uneasy? Have you imagined what it might feel like to be quarantined inside your home — to depend on frozen foods, family, friends, or social services for basic necessities? As Americans face the coronavirus pandemic, questions like these are on everyone's mind. But for thousands of frail-aging adults in North Carolina, living "quarantined" is an ongoing day-to-day reality, and has been long before we ever heard of social distancing or self-isolation.

Health professionals are concerned about isolation among older adults and consider it already a health crisis of major proportions — one that contributes to high blood pressure, depression, cognitive decline, and a 30% increased risk of premature death.

Whitney Brooks, an integrative health coach and consultant for North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM), is concerned that seniors are losing even more valuable contact with friends and loved ones as an unintended consequence of social distancing efforts.

"Although social isolation and loneliness among seniors isn't a new problem, it has only recently gained national attention. Because seniors are especially vulnerable to the coronavirus, nursing homes and assisted living communities are limiting outside visitors which has resulted in a sudden onset of greater isolation. NCBAM's Hope Line offers a way to help older adults while they wait this out."

For seniors who may be living on the brink of social isolation, the recent recommendations for slowing the spread of the virus may make life even lonelier. For many, a weekly church service was the only outing of the week. Older adults are also at risk of losing visits from friends or family members who don't want to risk passing the virus to them.

NCBAM's "Hope Line" offers help and hope to those suffering from isolation and

loneliness — whether or not it is related to virus quarantines. The toll-free Hope Line is open 9:00 am – 9:00 pm, Monday through Friday at 866-578-HOPE (866-578-4673). Trained staff and volunteers respond with a friendly voice, a compassionate ear, and missional hearts to pray with and for people.

Due to anxieties over the coronavirus, NCBAM Call Center director, Melanie Beeson, has created extra resources for Hope Line staff and volunteers. "As callers express fear or worry over the uncertainties of the virus, we of course encourage them to seek medical attention if they have symptoms, and we also are ready to share God's word

with them — encouraging them to trust God and not to live in fear because of the virus — or for any other reason."

The Hope Line is part of NCBAM's "One Hope" outreach which offers a spiritual response to isolation and loneliness. To learn more, call 877-506-2226 to connect with an NCBAM regional director in your area.

65+? Lonely?
Need to talk?
NCBAM's Hope Line
is here for you!



866-578-4673

God is still rolling stones

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

My message for you today is, *He is still rolling stones.* One of my favorite Bible stories is the account of Mary, mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene at the tomb of Jesus.

Scripture begins, “And very early on the first day of the week they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.” (Mark 16:2)

These grieving, burdened women rose from their beds ready to tackle the difficult job before them — to attend to Jesus’s body. And on the top of their minds was, “Who will roll the stone from the door of the tomb?” The question turned to worry as they pondered, “Who will be there to help us?”

I can only imagine how great was the literal and figurative weight of the task. Remember, these two women were doing for Jesus the last kindness they would do. Their actions that day were born out of a deep love for Him. Their actions rose from a passion to serve Him. Their passion pushed against their fears. And yet, they faced the enormity of rolling the stone away.

Like Mary, mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and those who are in our care, people all around us encounter stones and huge obstacles. And sometimes, like you and me, they are filled

with doubt and fear.

There is a big stone in front of our world today called COVID-19 — the coronavirus. The impact of COVID-19 upon BCH will be significant. As you know, we are dependent on you and our family of faith. Whenever our church family is unable to congregate, it has a financial impact. We have also postponed our annual Food Roundup until this coming fall. And because we count on the food drive, our budget is not prepared to purchase the food needed to feed our children and

special needs adults throughout the next few months.

As we face these obstacles, we must remember that God is “still rolling stones.” A scripture that comes to mind and brings me comfort is: “For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, and of love and of a sound mind.” (II Timothy 1:7)

**Never be
afraid to trust
an unknown
future to a
known God!**

— Corrie ten Boom

Like Mary, mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, I pray that our passion will override our fear with a spirit of power, love and a sound mind.

In the midst of what may appear as darkness, God is at work. I am receiving calls and texts daily asking, “What can I do to help?”

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Increase your time in prayer. Pray for guidance on how God can use you to help remove “the stones” during these uncertain days. Pray that the virus will be contained and will



Listen for “*A good word*” from Dr. Michael C. Blackwell as he shares a special *23rd Psalm*.

Use the QR code or visit www.bchnc.org/GWP23.

end. Pray for the medical community who are caring for the sick. Pray that God will draw each of us closer to Him during this time. Pray for opportunities to share His love and message of redemption. Pray for opportunities to roll away stones — determine to bring the love of Jesus to a world in need so that lives may be changed forever.

2. Increase time spent in personal devotion, drawing comfort and direction from Him. Daily, celebrate and glorify a Risen Savior!

3. Increase time spent with family — at home, via Facetime, etc. Be creative. We all live such chaotic lives. Take time to slow down and cherish those around you. Make sure you are checking on parents and older family members. Isolation impacts the physical well being of older adults. Make sure they know you care. Make sure they have the food and medications they need.

4. Get outside and enjoy God’s creation. Take walks while practicing social distancing. Enjoy the spring sunshine.

5. Check on the vulnerable in your community and explore ways to meet their needs.

Finally, remember the children and residents in our care. Your financial gifts now are crucial. Your support keeps our doors open and guarantees that the *least of these* are served.

You can give online at www.bchfamily.org/givenow, send a check, or mail gift cards. Gift cards to grocery stores like Food Lion or Walmart enable us to purchase needed food and supplies. To deliver food and supplies, call the BCH location nearest you to find out their specific needs. A staff member will direct you regarding the safest way to make your delivery.

When a crisis hits, the need to serve children and families does not decrease, but increases. We will continue to serve the children in our care and will welcome new hurting children as they come.

Remember, your prayers and support are critical. Thank you for remembering the children. *God is still rolling stones.*

For more information on how you can help at this time, call me at 336-689-4442.



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

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decisions for Christ were made in the past five years!

When you give, your support helps provide a safe home, daily provisions and the loving care of Christian cottage parents.

In these challenging days, your support is needed more than ever. Please remember the children.



Mail your gift using the coupon or by giving online at bchfamily.org/easter.

I want to make an *eternal investment* in a child's life!

☐ \$100 ☐ \$300 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$ _____ Any size gift!

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

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

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

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

Ride leaves lasting imprint on motorcyclist's heart

By Blake Ragsdale, Managing Editor

Dean Greene was overcome with emotion as he and the other motorcyclists rode in Interstate 40 towards the western North Carolina mountains. The bikers, participating in the *Ride to Clyde* charity ride in 2017, had left Mills Home in Thomasville only minutes before. The experience with the boys and girls was fresh on Greene's mind.

"We're riding up the road, and I'm thinking about the stories of these kids," explains Greene, a firefighter and member of Brookstone Church in Weaverville. "On my motorcycle there's a piece of chrome. [I saw] a perfect little handprint [smudged] on that chrome. *I immediately started crying.*"



Dean Greene

The annual ride, organized by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) to benefit Baptist Children's Homes (BCH), was eye opening for Greene — as it can be for many first-time participants. *Ride to Clyde* bikers visit with children at three different BCH locations as they travel from the east coast to Broyhill Home in Clyde during the four-day event.

"There's always a couple of kids that kind of hang around you. There was one little kid who never left my side the whole time," Greene shares about his first visit to Mills Home during the 2017 ride.

Greene sat with the boy on the seat of his parked Harley-Davidson. The boy began talking. The big man sat listening to every detail of the little boy's heartbreaking tale.

"He told me a story of how his mom and dad didn't care for him," explains Greene as his voice fades. "They loved drugs. They loved other stuff more than they loved their son."

Greene completed his first *Ride to Clyde* event the following day, but the boy's story and the memory of spotting that *perfect little handprint* on his motorcycle, moved the firefighter from Weaverville deeply.

"About two months later, I wake up from a dream where my bike is painted with handprints — all over," reveals Green.

Greene was inspired. He would turn his dream into a reality. With BCH in agree-



Motorcyclist Dean Greene let's one of the children from BCH's Weekday Education program at Mills Home in Thomasville sit on his Harley-Davidson during Ride to Clyde in 2019. Greene was inspired to have his motorcycle custom painted with BCH's handprints logo and the handprints of his children. Scan the QR code to see a Brookstone Church video about Greene or visit vimeo.com/bchfamily/rtcdean



ment, Greene took the ministry's handprints logo and painted it on his motorcycle with the handprints of his own children.

"It's a conversation starter," confesses Greene. "Not only do I get to tell people about BCH, but it opens doors for me to share the gospel — and that's what we're here for."

Telling others about Christ is the reason Greene is passionate about Ride to Clyde. "One of the things that took me by surprise, was when I learned 80% come to the Children's Homes unchurched — people who are lost."

Each annual ride, bikers are challenged to raise funds BCH needs to care for children and families at their statewide locations as well as their affiliate orphanage in Guatemala. Greene raised more than \$1,500 for this year's ride which was slated for May 6-9. Because of the COVID-19 crisis, this year's ride has been postponed, but the funds already raised by Greene and other participants will still go to meet the needs at BCH.

"My parents loved me enough to bring me to church, provide for me, and give me a better

life than I really probably deserved," explains Greene. "These kids don't have that. But, what they do have is about 110 motorcyclists who will raise some money to help provide them hope — and hopefully change their lives."



Donor's employer gives gift in honor

Jeff Tilley's employer The Alliance, a Burlington-based insurance company, recognized Tilley's sales' achievements by making a gift to Baptist Children's Homes. The company's Good Samaritan Bonus program gives high-performing employees the opportunity to name a favorite nonprofit to receive the gift. Tilley is a member of Lawndale Baptist Church in Greensboro.

Determine to be a light to someone in darkness

By Keith Henry, Chief Operating Officer

It is profound how one life can impact another for good. When someone is in your corner believing in the very best version of you, the possibilities are infinite.

United States President Chester Arthur found just that type of person in a home-bound woman who had the courage to tell the truth. Arthur became the 21st president upon the death of James A. Garfield in September 1881. Anyone who knew anything about Arthur and his raucous ways was wary.

Determined not to follow in his father's footsteps, a Baptist minister and abolitionist, Arthur became a lawyer and was admitted to the New York bar in 1854. He became a corrupt political figure who frequented wild parties and had

a penchant for showing up late to work. Much of his wealth came by using his appointed position as "collector of the port" in New York City to trade in illegal imports. To make things even worse, it was known that he extorted public employees into contributing to his political forays. Thus, his ascension to the White House had many scratching their heads in amazement, wondering how could someone so dishonest and corrupt ever be a good president.

But Chester Arthur had someone who believed in him. A young woman named Julia Sand who was bedridden and afflicted penned her first letter to the soon to be president in August of 1881. In this letter she wrote, "The people are bowed in grief; but — do you realize it? — not so much because Garfield is dying, as because you are his successor."

She continued, "If there is a spark of true nobility in you, now is the occasion to let it shine. . . Faith in your better nature forces me to write to you — but not to beg you to resign. But to do what is more difficult and brave, reform!"

Sand continued to write Arthur a total of 23 letters in which she advised him on a wide range of policy matters. And it appears that he heeded her admonitions.

He began by calling on Congress to pass

the Pendleton Act which would bring sweeping reform for the nation's civil service. He instituted reforms and changed corrupt practices that everyone assumed would only become worse when he entered the office. A journalist wrote, "No man ever entered the presidency so profoundly and widely distrusted as Chester Alan Arthur — and no one ever retired more generally respected alike by political friend and foe."

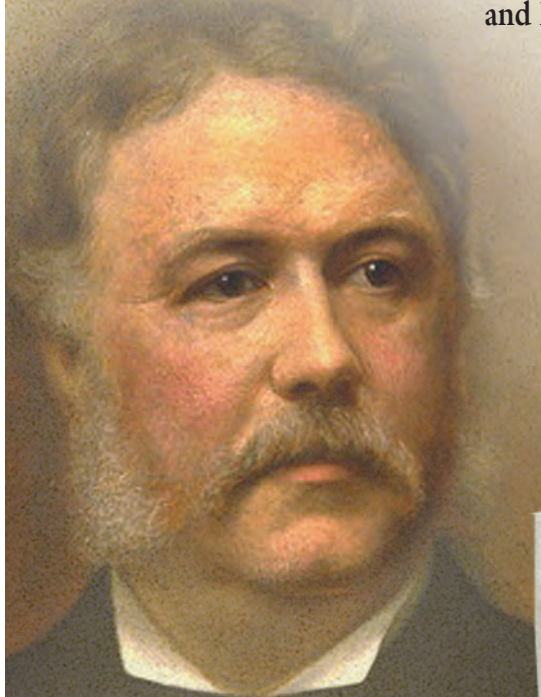
There is no account of Arthur ever responding to Sand's letters, but he did make a surprise visit to her home in August 1882. In her final letter to the president she wrote, "It is for you to choose whether your record shall be written in black or gold. For the sake of your country, for your own sake, and for the sakes of all who have ever loved you, let it be pure and light."

We will never know the true impact Julia Sand's letters had on President Arthur, but we do know that before he died he ordered that all his papers be burned — except for Sand's letters.

It's undeniable the effect one person has on another by believing in that person and encouraging him. At Baptist Children's Homes, we minister to families and individuals that find themselves in very hard places. While they often need tools and resources to help pull themselves up, their biggest need is to have someone in their corner, someone to say "you are valuable and you are loved with an everlasting love."

I challenge you to look closely at BCH and think how you can become a Julia Sand to someone in need of support and encouragement. I also urge you to look around you in your community, right where you are, and determine to be a light to someone struggling in darkness. When you give, volunteer, write letters of encouragement, and pray, miracles happen and lives are changed.

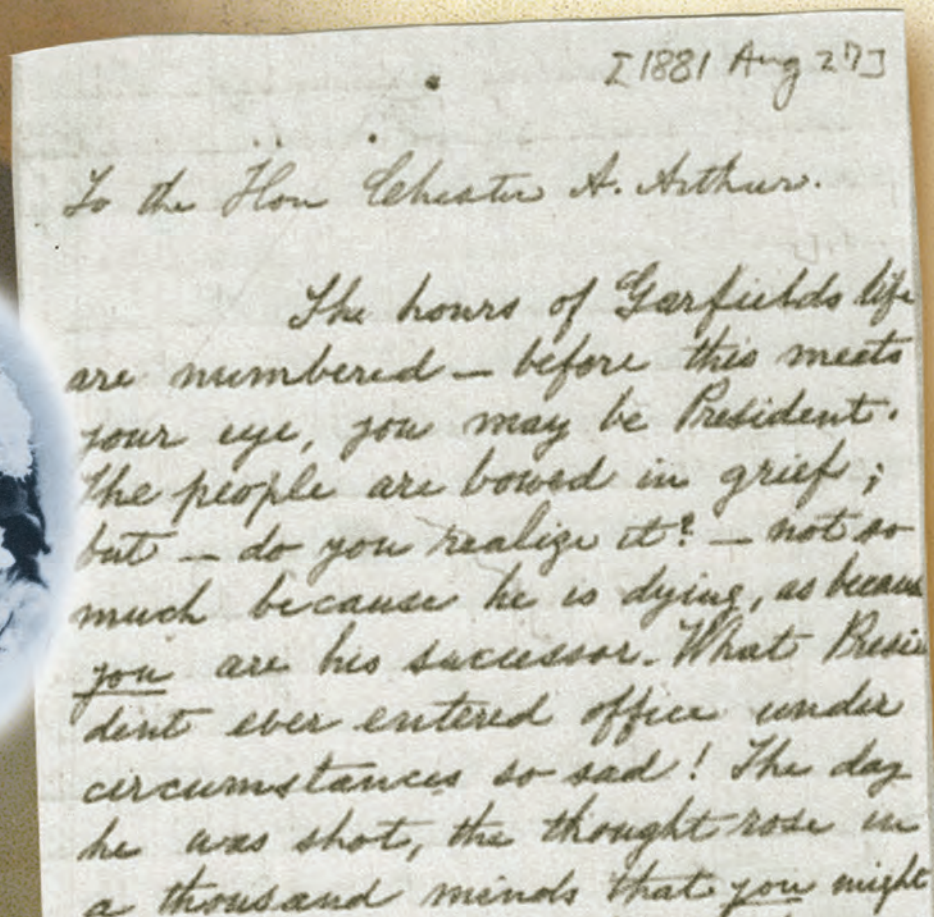
Imagine, a life set on a new, positive path can have ripple effects that can literally change a nation.



U.S. President
Chester A. Arthur



Julia Sand, right,
wrote a total of 23
letters to Arthur. Each letter
encouraged the 21st president
to serve with distinction.



2020 **food roundup**

Roundup postponed — Food cards needed now to buy perishables

Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) is rescheduling the April 2020 *Food Roundup* to later this year. Because of the impact of COVID-19 on participating churches and Baptist Associations, it is not possible to move forward with the food drive at this time. This is a difficult decision because the *Food Roundup* is essential in caring for our residents.

However, food supplies at all BCH locations will run low due to the postponed Food Roundup. It has been a year since the previous drive and food, perishable and nonperishable, will be in short supply. Supplies will begin to run out, too. Because we depend on our successful *Food Roundups*, the budget is not prepared to purchase the food and supplies needed to care for our children and special needs adults in the next few months. *We need your help to offset this shortfall.*

Please help us in this time of crisis. Here's how you and your church can ensure food and funding do not run out:

1. Pray. Pray for the children and residents. Ask God to show you what to give. Pray that God will lead others to give.

2. Give online or write a check. This is the most direct way you and your church can help. Your gift allows us to purchase food and supplies needed for our statewide locations. Use the giving envelope and make your check to Baptist Children's Homes or give online at www.bchfamily.org/givenow.

3. Send gift cards. Gift cards, especially to stores like Wal-mart and grocery stores like Food Lion, will help purchase *essential perishable food*.

4. Deliver food and supplies. You can deliver needed food and supplies to your nearest BCH location. Call the location closest to you to find out their specific needs. A staff member will direct you regarding the safest way to make your delivery. See phone numbers below.

While many places have closed, BCH remains open to care for the boys and girls in our care — as well as those who will come in the weeks and months ahead. Your prayers and support are critical. For more information, please call Brenda Gray at 336-689-4442.

Call the location closest to you:

Broyhill Home in Clyde

Linda Morgan – 828-627-9254

Mills Home in Thomasville

Regina Keener – 336-474-1200

Kennedy Home in Kinston

Chris Allabaugh – 252-522-0811

Odum Home in Pembroke

Kathy Locklear – 910-521-3433

Cameron Boys Camp

Drew Scott – 910-245-4034

Camp Duncan for Girls

Brad Gearhart – 910-944-3077

Remember *Mom and Dad*

“I'll always remember the things you taught me ... kindness, faithfulness and generosity. Thoughts of you are never far from me because your love shaped me into the person I am today.”

Join us in giving thanks for moms and dads. And what better way to remember them than to make a gift that offers hope to a needy child in their honor or memory.

*In the August **Charity & Children**, yours and your parent's name(s) will be published in a commemorative section that celebrates moms and dads. Using the coupon below, clearly write the names and mark if your gift is in honor or memory. **Don't wait!***

**Hurry!
Deadline is
July 1.**

Questions? Need more information, call 336-474-1209.

Remember Mom and Dad! Make an honor or memorial gift.

Please check the appropriate box: ☐ Honor ☐ Memorial

In Honor or Memory of _____

Send Notice of Gift to _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

To give by check, please print your information below and mail this form with your check.

To: BCH, PO Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361 Attn: Mothers/Fathers Day Gift. You can use the enclosed, postage-paid envelope.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Give by credit card online at www.bchfamily.org/momanddad or call Faith Frazier at 336-474-1312.

Spotlight shines on two alumni council members — Updates remember MH workers, reflect on lives

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

The Alumni Council is planning another great Homecoming. **President Sharon DeHart Stiles** is especially pleased to announce that we have added “breakfast in the teen room” on Saturday morning of Homecoming weekend. More on this year’s event in later issues.

Barbara Jones Tyner enjoyed Homecoming last August and loved seeing old friends. Since then, she has enjoyed recalling learning to cook at Mills Home (MH), living at the WC with **Swannie and Mrs. Arnder**, living at the Huffman with **Mr. & Mrs. Steele**, working for people out in town as a teen, and working for **Miss Sallie** at the old woman’s building (the infirmary). She also loved babysitting for the **Orville Scott** family’s “precious little ones.” Two of them, **James and Elizabeth**, were in her wedding. Barbara entered MH in 1955 with sisters **Ellen and Darlene**. She graduated in 1967 and married soon after rearing one son from that marriage, **Marc Smith**. Marc is married to the mother of four children and Barbara loves them as her own. As an adult, Barbara held two main jobs during her career and enjoyed them both. She retired from a transportation company after 28 years and then worked for a food brokerage company. She retired from that job in order to care for her ailing husband, **James Howard Tyner**. When he died, they had been married for 26 years. Friends can contact Barbara at jtyner3@carolina.rr.com.

Jackie Elliott Walker is an Alumni Council member we’re *spotlighting* this month. This is her first opportunity to serve and she is a great asset to our organization. Jackie enjoys serving because she appreciates all the alumni who have carried on the work of the Alumni Association. After being a foster child for 10 years, Jackie asked her case worker to move her to MH. She is so thankful for that move because it gave her more opportunities to interact with other teens. She loved life in the Huffman Cottage, participating in the church choir and GA activities, and attending sports activities at Thomasville High School (THS).

She also has fond memories of working in the Huffman kitchen, the Woman’s Building, and the sewing room with **Mrs. Richardson and Ms. Faircloth**. Most of all she loves the time she spent babysitting the **John and Helen Roberts’** children.

Jackie has one daughter, **Stephanie Dunnigan**, from her first marriage. Although she has no legal grandchildren, she is close as a grandmother to 11-year-old **Mason Parunak**, son of a friend. Most of Jackie’s adult life has been spent in the Raleigh area where she had a career in state government for 32 years, mainly with the Highway Patrol. She retired 10 years ago to take care of her husband **Norman Walker**. Norman died in 2018.

When she retired in 2009, Jackie was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine. That is the highest award given by the state and it is “for integrity, learning and zeal coupled with 30 years of service to North Carolina.”

Another Alumni Council *spotlight* is **Jimmy Rochelle**. Jimmy is serving in his second round on the Alumni Council/MHAA. For many years, he and his wife **Linda** have been the driving force behind the Silent Auction, one of our best fund raisers. For a year now, he has been serving as our secretary and doing a great job. Jimmy entered MH in 1956 with siblings **Charles Reese and Linda and Paul Wimberly**. He graduated in 1969 and served in the U.S. Army for 3 years, the last being in Alabama where he met and married Linda. They have two daughters, one granddaughter and 2 grandsons. Folks would be surprised if I did not mention Linda with great praise because she dedicates so much time and effort (money also) to the work of the MH Association. Linda is one of many spouses who do so much for the Alumni.

Jimmy loves spending time with their daughters and grandchildren. When better weather arrives, he says another favorite pastime is camping. Jimmy is now retired from the printing business which he was lucky to have learned at MH in four years

of print shop duty. In recalling life at MH and people having the greatest impact on his life, Jimmy speaks mainly of “the guys” he grew up with and remains close to today. He also spoke highly of the late **Vernon Sparrow**.

A recent update sheet from **Nick Pappas** states that he is still living at Surfside Beach, SC with his wife **Linda**. Nick is popular on Facebook for his early morning expressions of love for coffee. He has a strong following of coffee lovers with their amusing comments. Nick entered MH from Charlotte in 1964 with siblings **Linda, Michael, Thomas, and Donna**. In recalling special influential workers, Nick named **Mr. Paul**. He also recalled that he learned much more than cooking when working in the Mothers’ Cottage kitchen with a lady named **Pearl**. High school was fun for him because he was on the track and football teams. He left MH in 1967 and graduated from high school in Rock Hill, SC. To serve his country, he spent the next ten years in the U.S. Army. Back in civilian life, he managed many convenience stores about the country and is now retired. He has five children and six grandchildren. Folks can contact Nick at 704-292-8092 or pappanick@gmail.com.

We were saddened to learn that two of our alumnae lost their husbands recently. **Elaine Weimer Chrisikos** lost her husband **James Joseph Chrissikos** in early February. Friends may send condolences to Elaine at 2693 Jude’s Ferry Rd., Powhatan, VA, 23139 or email her at echrisikos@hotmail.com. **Linda Pappas Silvie** lost her husband the first week of March. Friends may send condolences to her at 3113 State Rd. 580, Lot #240, Safety Harbor, FL, 34695.

It is always difficult saying goodbye to a family member, but it seems too much to bear when we have to say goodbye to two, one right after the other. We received the sad news on February 14 of the death of **Andy Berndt**. Andy was only 56 years old. His sister **Susan** died only two weeks prior. Andy came to MH with **Susan**,

Mark and Martha in 1973 and he left in 1980. He is survived by his wife **Kimberly** and daughter **Selena**; his siblings who were with him at MH — **Ruth Berndt Hodges, Martha Berndt Fisher, and Mark Berndt**; six other siblings who were not at MH; and two grandchildren. A memorial service was held February 22 at the Family Worship Center in Mt Holly. Condolences may be sent to Ruth B. Hodges at 4227 Aubrey Place, Charlotte, NC, 28269; to Martha B. Fisher at 4340 Woodley Barber Rd., Cleveland, NC, 27013; and to Mark at 1072 Cleavemark Dr., Clarkston, GA, 30021.

I am sad to report that **Raymond Jack Phillips** of Mooresville passed away February 16 after an extended illness. He entered MH in 1955 with siblings **Larry, Paul and Cecil**. After graduating from THS in 1962, he joined the Air Force. In 1964, he married **Diane Virginia Rosen** and they reared two sons. He retired from his pool business. His leisure time was spent panning for gold with his sons on trips around the country. Preceded in death by his wife Diane, Raymond is survived by two sons, **Michael and Jason**; a sister, **Jean**; his three brothers; five grandchildren; and three great grandchildren. His funeral service was held on February 19 at Harbor PCA Church in Mooresville. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Hospice & Palliative Care, Lake Norman, 705 Griffith St. #203, Davidson, NC, 28036 or Baptist Children’s Homes of NC, P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC, 27360. Condolences may be sent to Larry at 161 Winterbell Dr., Mooresville, NC; to Cecil at 2290 Pineburr Rd., Kernersville, NC, 27284; and to Paul at 584 Christmas Lane, Lexington, NC, 27292.

We have received notices about the deaths of **John Wayne Horne, Thelma Toney Welborn Gobble, and Robert Mull**. We will have more information on them in the next issue.



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



North Carolina Baptists First Baptist Wadesboro visits

Longtime friends from First Baptist in Wadesboro toured Mills Home in Thomasville in February. The group shared a meal with children in a cottage and spent time with BCH president Michael C. Blackwell.



BCH Family Foster Care High schooler collects luggage

Maiden high school senior Macy Sigmom led a drive to collect luggage for foster care children through Realty Executives of Hickory. Macy wanted to help foster children since they typically have no luggage.



Food Roundup Mud Creek Baptist collects

Before the Food Roundup was delayed until later this year, Mud Creek Baptist in Hendersonville collected a much-needed supply of food. Watch bchfamily.org for updates on this year's drive.



Odum Home in Pembroke Church helps for Valentine's Day

Members from the Saved to Serve life group of Village Baptist Church in Fayetteville brought Valentine's day goodies for all the cottages in February. They also brought suitcases and other supplies.



Broyhill Home in Clyde Children sled on snow day

A day out of school because of snowy conditions at BCH's mountain campus meant a day of fun for the boys and girls. The children brought out their sleds and took advantage of the hills at Broyhill Home.



Three Forks and Lindsay Homes Appalachian State hosts residents

Appalachian State University in Boone hosted a Valentine's event for the Intellectual and Developmentally Disabled Adults community. Men and women from BCH's Zionville homes attended.



Broyhill Home in Clyde Children love the warm days

The younger children at Broyhill Home spent the first couple days of Spring outside in the warm weather. One little boy pulled another child in the wagon they play on at the cottage.



Hinkle House in Winston-Salem Pfafftown Baptist host ladies

Members of Pfafftown Baptist celebrated Valentine's Day with the ladies of Hinkle House in Winston-Salem. The church hosted the residents for a special time of fun and fellowship.



Broyhill Home in Clyde Talent shines in western area

Children and special needs adults living at BCH's western North Carolina locations gathered at Broyhill Home in February for the annual talent show. It is an opportunity to let their talents shine.

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Linda Morgan, Lead Dir., 828-627-9254
2. Central Area Family Services
Regina Keener, Dir., 336-474-1200
3. Eastern Area Family Services
Christopher Allabaugh, Dir., 252-522-0811
www.kennedyhome.org
4. Odum Home
Kathy Locklear, Res. Mgr., 910-521-3433
www.odumhome.org
5. Oak Ranch/Family Care
Lynn Garner, Dir., 336-474-1240
6. Cameron Boys Camp
Drew Scott, Dir., 910-245-4034
www.cameronboyscamp.org
7. Camp Duncan for Girls
Brad Gearhart, Dir., 910-944-3077
www.campduncanNC.org
8. Weekday Education
Brooke Child, Dir., 336-474-1201
9. Tucker Greater Vision Ministry
Sara Becker, Mgr., 336-687.6384
10. Family Foster Care
Bob McCleary, 828-627-9254
www.bchfostercare.org
11. HOMEBASE at W. Carolina University
Jim Dean, Dir., 828-293-4660
12. Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
Tara Sessoms, Dir., 336-474-1259
www.hereismyhome.org
13. NC Baptist Aging Ministry
Sandy Gregory, Dir., 336-474-1221
www.ncbam.org
14. Good Shepherd Children's Home in Guatemala
Keith Henry, 336-474-1215

one ♥



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Alumni credit KH work experiences with success in their adult careers and personal lives

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

Spring has arrived at *Kennedy Home* (KH)! Like me, I'm sure you are looking forward to a fresh start. Our own **Donna Duty** is off to a new start. She recently became a Certified Pastoral Counselor. *Congratulations!*

In my last column, you read about the on and off campus jobs had by many residents. Since that time, a right many of my KH youngins have written to share their experiences.

Donna Wade Daniels wrote: "My first and only job at KH was in the library. When the library was relocated from Cedar Dell, the pastor's wife Mrs. Martha Beals hired a '12-year-old' me to work for 35 cents per hour. The new library was located upstairs in the newly constructed gym/recreation building. Mrs. Beals was a great boss — kind and gentle. She taught me all about the Dewey Decimal System and how to manage the library.

"After leaving KH, I worked in tobacco (the hardest job I ever had) before starting at the BBQ Lodge in Kinston. My foster parents, **Bud and Margaret Chase**, along with their daughters, **Barbara and Betsy**, drove me back and forth to work until I was able to get my driver's license. Mr. Chase went with me to the bank so I could get my first car loan. I remember that I had plenty of encouragement and help along the way."

Charles Wells wrote: "The first job I had at KH was helping **Mr. Tilghman** do miscellaneous handyman work. We drove around in an old blue pickup truck with side storage bins fixing lights — changed a lot of bulbs — and fixing faucets, sticky doors, broken windows, etc. We probably did work under each of the old buildings which was neat to go under as they were raised and plenty of headroom. Interesting — today I am scared of creepy things under a house, but then I did not know enough about them to be scared. The one thing I remember we did each week that was disgusting involved cleaning

the sewer line screen. What an awful smell. One funny experience occurred when Mr. Tilghman was letting me drive the truck to get experience in preparation for getting a driver's license. The truck had a column shift that I was not familiar with and no power brakes. Well, the first time I was driving the road behind Lenoir, Canady and Hardee, I drove the bend by Canady and I did not turn enough, went off the road, and drove straight into a tree stump. I do recall letting off the gas and trying to push hard on the brakes, but I had little success in stopping and only stopped after hitting the stump. Mr. Tilghman jumped out of the truck to look under the truck to see if the oil pan was attached. It was and it appeared the truck was okay. I do not recall ever driving the truck again.

"My senior summer off-campus job was working at the JC Penney Auto Center. What I recall most is walking to work. Each way was several miles and what a joyful day it was when I got a lift. Most of the days I did normal car maintenance work or pumped gas. The pay was good and someone was always bringing home-cooked food. The seafood stew each week was delicious. I learned a lot that summer about budgeting, cooking, cleaning, and all the self-sufficiency lessons that benefitted me later when I went off to college."

Evelina McDowell McCollum wrote: "A lot of us girls worked at the laundry room in the 60s starching and ironing the older boys shirts — we got to iron our boyfriend's shirts if we were dating someone on campus. You always had chores at the cottage where you lived, too. That was expected. To this day, I love a clean house!"

Alice Russum wrote: "I had a paying job of 50 cents an hour on the farm working in the dairy office everyday after school. I worked for **Mr. Richard Poteat**."

Katie Parker wrote: "My sister, **Yvonne Jackson** worked serving drinks, chips and chocolate candy at the gym. I remember that drinks

were 10 cents, chips were 10 cents, and candy was 5 cents. For 25 cents, I was hooked up. I remember sharing my chips because some kid didn't have money to spend. My dad passed away and we received an allowance each month from his social security check. We had strict rules about not drinking after anyone and to this day I don't ever drink behind anyone.

"Yvonne also drove the school bus and made \$20 per month. **Larry Gilliam** also drove a school bus and helped his uncle on a tobacco farm in the summer."

Wayne Jackson wrote: "I did work off campus my rising junior year. It was a horrible job. I worked for the Lenoir county bus maintenance department. My job was to power wash all the buses, even underneath, and as we all know there were a lot of dirt roads in Lenoir County. This was also the year that North Carolina decided to paint all the school buses yellow — up to this point they were all orange. I taped newspaper over all the bus windows before they were painted."

Edward Pait wrote: "I lived at KH from November 11, 1960 until June 20, 1969. While I lived there, I worked numerous jobs. I had house duty and swept rooms and halls. I wiped down baseboards and dusted. I had kitchen duty where I washed and dried dishes. I remember buttering 65 pieces of bread before toasting them at breakfast. Farm duty was my favorite — it got me out of the house.

"I also worked at the food locker. I learned to cut up about 13-14 cases of chickens at a time. I delivered milk and groceries to the cottages. And in summer, I would start with the Biggs Cottage dropping off bushels of beans or peas to be shelled by the children. After, they came back to the locker to store or to be used by the cooks.

"I do confess to getting rid of some bushels before I got to the Pollock Building — being short a bushel or two for the Pollock Girls to shell was a good thing for me.

They rewarded me with cookies and milk.

"While working on the farm, I picked vegetables and pulled grass from the corn fields and garden rows. I must have picked a million strawberries and a billion or two of potatoes. We loaded thousands of bails of hay in the barn. I plowed fields and was responsible for mowing the entire campus. There were days when I brought the tractor to the barn at night.

"When I was able to drive a school bus, I opted to do so. I'd get up at 4 a.m., go milk cows until 6:15, go back to my cottage and get cleaned up and then drive the school bus to pick up children. After school, I ran the bus route and dropped off kids and then go milk cows. I'd return to the cottage, clean up, eat dinner, and go to bed.

"While in the Lenoir Cottage, I got interested in electrical work after repairing a few appliances for a houseparent. I was fortunate to get a job off campus with Harrison Electric in LaGrange during my junior-senior summer. After graduating 1969, I began my career with Heath Electric in Kinston. In 1980, I went in business for myself, installing security systems for residential and commercial customers in and around Raleigh. I have been blessed with my company for many years as well as owning an archery and firearms business for a few years."

What great stories! Thank you all for sharing.

Barbara Branch recently offered a good suggestion. She suggested that readers share what it was like to reunite with family — whether it was a parent, sibling, grandparent, or whoever in your family — after you left KH. Email me at jthompson117@ec.rr.com.

Always remember that Becky and I are here for you. Come visit or give us a phone call. Love all my youngins! — jt



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

Uncertain days demand we focus on children's needs

By Jim Edminson, Editor

A few moves back, Kathy and I were paring down. It was part of the ritual of making a move, and we've moved a lot in our married life — more than a dozen times!

As we looked over what was coming and what was going, Kathy casually said that my big green recliner was not going to make the move, and then she walked into the kitchen.

What?! What did she say? She must have misspoken. Maybe she was kidding? She can be a jokester — she is the funny one in the family — haha!

As I stood there, I realized no one was laughing. There was only silence. She wasn't kidding. My stare locked on the chair. We had been together almost as long as Kathy and I had been together. *I loved my green recliner.*

The recliner was not manufactured by a prestigious company. It wasn't the most expensive or stylish chair available. The blah green textured fabric was generic. It looked very common, *but that's not the point.*

My recliner was my throne. It was where I resided in the evenings and on Sunday afternoons. My television remote was my royal scepter — I was the master of my domain. My feet out, body reclined, I glided from sports channel to sports channel. It was my reward for a day's conquest or my week spent slaying the dragons of life.

There were rips on the worn edges of the chair that I made "almost new" with the application of silver duck tape. Super Bowl party snack stains and faded traces of dried mustard

from my favorite ham and swiss hoagie were telltale signs of good times and memories shared.

We had been together so long that my recliner had the perfect indentions — each one formed by my body, fitting me perfectly. It was the ideal chair to watch a NASCAR race from Talladega Superspeedway. I could sit on the edge of the seat for the start, have my eyelids grow heavy about mile 200 and settle back, catch forty winks, and, well rested, be awake for the big crash near the end.

But that's not the point.

My recliner was a very special place where I met my children, dispensed doses of special attention, and consoled the weak of heart. My recliner was where I took my children into my arms, hugged them and rocked them until their fears faded, tummy aches subsided, and they were bolstered to rise up and tackle their worlds again. My green recliner was the place where I whispered their names, interceding for them, to a loving Heavenly Father.

And that's the point.

As parents — and adults — we must have a place where we meet the children in our lives one-on-one. In these troubling days, there must be a time when all our attention is focused on their needs. Our attention must be turned to calming their fears.

A big green recliner is likened to God's throne where He calls us all to approach as little children — free to express our fears and concerns. We can be confident that welcoming arms will lift us from all that is weighing us down, providing comfort during these times of our uncertainty.

Selah!



Illustration by Jeff Reinhardt



Edminson encourages others through the Good News of Jesus. Invite him to preach or speak at your church. Email him at wjedminson@bchfamily.org.



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