



WATCH  
THEIR  
STORY

#### ANNUAL OFFERING VIDEO

Learn how God worked through the Hinton, an EVERY CHILD foster family, to foster a newborn baby and create an everlasting bond with his biological family. (*Find more on page 6*)

# Charity & Children

*The historic publication of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina—first to tell the story since 1887.*



@bchfamily

September 2025

Issue 7

Volume 138

## VOLUNTEER FEATURE



Omar and Robert Bass met when the teen needed tutoring in math. The two have become great friends.

## Robert Bass turns tragedy into heart for helping Omar

By Jim Edminson, Editor

**L**ike many great school teachers, Robert Bass's work day didn't end with the final bell. A 30-year educator, he decided early that his students would know he was there for them—whether it was help with a math problem or a few dollars to pay for lunch. Robert knew that the difference between a student's success or failure was a helping hand—before the day began or even on a weekend.

It seemed right for him to teach at his alma mater—Douglas Byrd High School.

Fayetteville is home. His father had served in the Army, with the Signal Battalion at Fort Bragg, now Fort Liberty. Growing up, Robert played school with the other neighborhood children. He was always the teacher. As a teen, he often missed time with his buddies to study for an exam. It was easy declaring a major in college—education, of course.

For 14 years, he walked the same hallways he had walked as a teen. Now he was ushering students from the hall into his class. A math and science teacher, he taught everything from freshman algebra to AP biology.

In 2003, Robert was recruited as a sponsor for the school's Student Government Association. He offered guidance to the students, providing opportunities for them to develop leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Traveling to a leadership camp the summer of 2017, he and three of his students were in an automobile accident. The students had only minor injuries. Robert had to be airlifted to a hospital.

"Thankfully it was me hurt and not my students," Robert remembers.

(Continued on page 7)



# Discipleship in Action: Scotts Hill's enduring impact

By **Kristyn Butts**, BCH Director of Volunteer Engagement

**T**he bikes are a familiar sight that signals one powerful truth: it must be "Scotts Hill Week" at Kennedy Home.

For more than a decade, Scotts Hill Baptist Church (SHBC) in Wilmington has faithfully discipled its congregation—adults, families, college students, youth, and children—by calling them into deep, Christ-centered service alongside Baptist Children's Homes (BCH). As SHBC Student Pastor Tucker Kelly puts it: "We don't want to just do a good thing. We want to do the best thing." And the best thing always includes boldly sharing the Gospel—through words filled with truth and acts overflowing with the love of Jesus.

## **A Partnership that Runs Deep**

Over the years, the relationship between Scotts Hill and BCH has flourished—growing from mission trips into a full-bodied partnership rooted in community, compassion, and consistent presence. Their involvement includes quarterly Family Serve Days, annual Family Serve Week, foster family appreciation, support for foster and adoptive families, interest meetings, and the beloved MTN Camp—a student-led summer camp for BCH children in the mountains of North Carolina.

But perhaps the most remarkable impact has come through their commitment to building genuine relationships with BCH staff, cottage parents, single moms in family care, and the children themselves. Through spiritual encouragement, practical help, and friendship, SHBC has become an extended family to the BCH community.

## **Family Serve Week: Living the Gospel**

During Family Serve Week at Kennedy Home, SHBC embodies the heart of servant leadership. Every BCH staff member is paired with an SHBC member for the entire week—not just for tasks,



Scotts Hill Baptist Church in Wilmington has partnered with BCH for more than a decade. Above, bikes fill the front lawn of Kennedy Home Baptist Church during SHBC Family Serve Week. Below, SHBC members Trevor and Stephanie make a Bible story come to life for Kennedy Home children and staff members.

but for intentional prayer, encouragement, and relationship-building. The SHBC Moms Care Team brings tangible help to single mothers in the family care ministry—deep cleaning cottages, installing car seats, assembling furniture, preparing meals, and hosting a pamper night. Other volunteers paint cabinets, clear trees, and tend to the grounds. Meanwhile, SHBC teens and adults lead daily Bible studies, crafts, worship, skits, and games, filling the campus with joy, laughter, and the presence of God. The hum of bicycle tires echoes the constant motion of ministry and mission.

## **MTN Camp: A Student-Led Mission**

At the heart of SHBC's ministry is MTN Camp—a completely student-led summer experience designed for children in care. This year, 38 high school students and 7 adults led 54 BCH children through three unforgettable days of camp.

These students aren't just volunteers, they're disciples. To serve at MTN Camp, they must first complete church membership requirements (including a profession of faith in Jesus and baptism), submit an application, and commit to a full year of discipleship, planning, and leadership training. They lead every part of the camp—from worship and small groups to recreation and hospitality.

BCH Executive Vice President of Development and Communications Brenda Gray reflected on her visit to camp: "The maturity, the spiritual depth, and their ability to articulate their faith was inspiring."

Larry Still, SHBC student director, says: "One of our church's core values is to love others through service and live on mission. MTN Camp lives out Mark 10:45: 'For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.'"

## **Eternal Impact**

For one young BCH girl at camp, the highlight was simply meeting another teen in care from a different BCH campus—a reminder that shared experiences can foster lifelong bonds.

For Richard Lyle, a BCH cottage parent attending camp for the first time ever, the week was transformational:

"I'm really impressed with the SHBC staff and their leadership. As cottage parents, it's our job to teach and mentor, but when our kids see SHBC serving, they realize—it's not a job, it's a joy. And they notice that."

From the joyful chaos of bike rides to the quiet power of prayer, Scotts Hill Baptist Church's sac-



rifical service is changing lives for eternity. And that is discipleship in action.

Visit [bchfamily.org/volunteer](http://bchfamily.org/volunteer) or contact me at [kbutts@bchfamily.org](mailto:kbutts@bchfamily.org) to learn more about how you can serve.

### **Mission:**

sharing hope . . . changing lives

### **Vision:**

To provide the highest quality of Christian services to children, adults and families in a caring culture of measurable excellence

**Charity & Children**—Established in 1887 as the official publication of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, Inc., 204 Idol St., PO Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361-0338. Jim Edminson, editor ([wjedminson@bchfamily.org](mailto:wjedminson@bchfamily.org)); Blake Ragsdale, managing editor ([jbragsdale@bchfamily.org](mailto:jbragsdale@bchfamily.org)); Marcia Housand, account clerk. **Charity & Children** (ISSN 0009-1723-09 USPS 100-460) is published 10 times a year for friends and supporters by Triangle Web Printing, Durham, NC and mailed by Excalibur, Winston-Salem, NC. Circulation: 62,000 seven times a year, 30,000 three times a year. Periodicals postage paid at Thomasville, NC, and at additional mailing offices. For free subscription or to be removed from the mailing list or make address correction or change, use the above address and write to Attn: Circulation Manager, send an email to [address@bchfamily.org](mailto:address@bchfamily.org) or call at 336-474-1209. Subscribe online at [bchfamily.org/charityandchildren](http://bchfamily.org/charityandchildren). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to **Charity & Children**, PO Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361-0338.



# Live faithfully, serving and proclaiming His Gospel

By **David Melber**, Chief Executive Officer

*I need Thee, oh, I need Thee, Every hour  
I need Thee; Oh, bless me now, my Savior!  
I come to Thee.*

These were the thoughts in my mind as I woke today, a little strange as this old hymn is one I haven't sung in a long time. Fortunately due to Christ-following parents who had me in church from birth, this song imprinted deeply on me, and for this day, what a gracious reminder of what my posture should be.

Since January, God has demonstrated His loving-kindness to me and Tera in powerful ways. Countless people across this state have been, and continue, praying for us and the ministries of Baptist Children's Homes. We have so many examples of generous acts of service and sacrificial giving—and God's blessings flow daily to our BCH family.

Alongside the blessings and joys, we do see more deeply into the brokenness of the world in which we serve. Continual spiritual battle is the norm. There are days that can be long and filled with adversity, overwhelming challenges, and problems that at times seem unsolvable. They are continual reminders that this earth is not home. Some days, it is so easy to become fatigued and desire a life of simplicity and ease, free from this awareness of the battle. However, this is the very promise that Jesus gave to His followers continually during His time on earth—we are sovereignly placed into this battle to be a proclaimer of His Kingdom and the Gospel. This is the great tension that we all live in.

We are faced with a daily choice—"Who will you and I serve today?"

In life, we do have more binary and straightforward

choices than we might realize. Think of Joshua 24:15 where Joshua said, "Choose this day whom you will serve, the false gods or the One true living God."

Jesus continually presented to those He spoke to one of two options: you either follow or you don't follow—there is no in between.

I am asked regularly what we need at BCH. My answers are straightforward: We need to love the Lord Jesus more each day and, for all who are willing to join us, to pray that God brings the right laborers to this ministry—people who deeply love the Lord and want to make Him known to all we serve. We need people who

passionately love the Lord's church, as they will help us become a ministry that serves, equips, and supports the local churches across this state.

We are on mission together! God's design is for His people to live in unity to demonstrate that we have been purchased by His blood, for His Glory, and to serve in His Kingdom.

Life is hard and one way God demonstrates His perfect love is to use circumstances, especially the challenging ones, to lead us to a point where we say, *"Lord, I need You. Every hour I need You"*.

What better place can we be than one that realizes self-reliance will not work? God shouts that His strength is perfected in our weakness. While you and I may not have the exact circumstances



David Melber

each day, as believers, we are all on this path of sanctification and being conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus.

Lord help us this day to choose life instead of death and to follow You instead of following the ways of the world. His path leads to life now and life everlasting. As we live faithfully to Him and as we live proclaiming His Gospel, I believe, without question, He will do these things related to BCH:

*God will raise up laborers to serve the vulnerable.*

*God will provide the resources to minister to hurting families.*

*God will draw the lost to Himself.*

*God will build His Kingdom.*

*God will restore families.*

*God will raise up future missionaries and pastors.*

*God will bring and receive the Glory Himself.*

We will worship Him and celebrate all He has done and will do! And let us faithfully proclaim—*"Every hour I need Thee, Bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee."*



# Tackling the steep hills together brings success

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

**S**unday, August 17, I made my way to Mills Home Baptist Church for a very special day. Three children were being baptized. As they made their way to the baptismal pool, they were anxious, but you could see the excitement and sincerity on their faces as they proclaimed their faith in Jesus. As the last young man entered the water, he loudly proclaimed, "It is cold! It is really cold!" We all chuckled and felt blessed.

We sang a couple of songs, giving Pastor Luis time to transition to sharing his sermon. At one point in the second song, I stopped and just listened as everyone sang with all their hearts.

Pastor Luis asked this question of the congregation: "Why was the book of Mark written?" They responded, "To prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God, who suffered, died and rose again as Lord." He then asked, "What is Jesus' plan?" Again, the congregation answered, "His plan is to save the world from its sin through His death and resurrection." It is amazing to witness God at work in these lives. I am moved by the image of transformation.

For our children, life has been a difficult uphill climb. Their struggles and traumas are unfathomable—but real. You have been there helping them, encouraging them as they walk up these "steep hills" each day toward transformation.

I embarked on a quest to lose weight and live healthier a year ago. Last May, I was walking to the cottage at the top of the hill at Broyhill Home. It was a steep hill. It resulted in me huffing and puffing and wondering if I would make it.

Life has been like walking up a steep hill for those we serve. Children, through no fault of their own, struggled just to put one foot in front of the other and keep going. Most of our lives are like walking on flat, smooth roads. Maybe there are some rocky spots and inclines from time to time, but nothing like the lives of these children—"uphill" looks different to them and their families.

Consider the children who come to us without the foundation of parental love. They are children who have never felt treasured. They come to us believing they

cannot achieve and be successful. For these children, life is made up of far too many hills to climb.

I have found over the past year that walking uphill is good for me! Theoretically, I can improve my overall health and well-being by spending a little time walking uphill. But if you have nothing but hills, it is easy to grow weary, get tired of the struggle, and give up. It is easy to believe there will never be any level, smooth places in your life. Think for a moment how discouraging that could be and how easy it would be to lose hope. This is where your ministry through BCH comes in. Through you, we are in the business of providing smooth and level places for children to walk, giving them love and hope—in some cases for the very first time.

There is a familiar verse in the Old Testament about mountains and hills and uneven ground. Part of Isaiah 40:4 reads: "...every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain." This passage is about the coming of the Messiah. It is this Messiah who is the basis for loving and conveying hope to the families and children in our care. We cannot undo the mountains and rough places our children have already traversed or protect them from what might lie ahead, but we can offer them love, security, and

the knowledge that they will never be alone.

During my quest to lose weight

and get healthier, I have had numerous times when I was ready to give up. But I have had lots of help. The kids on campus have been one of my special sources of encouragement. In the heat of summer, I have been walking and praying in the church. On Sunday mornings after church, the children have joined me. "How many steps have we made, Miss Brenda?" "Are you close to 10,000?" "Are we close to 10,000?"

This week one of the boys walked by me while I was walking outside. "How many steps have you made, Miss Brenda?" I reply, "About 2000." He encouraged, "You can make 10,000!"

He joined me and began walking with me up the hill. Encouragement is such a powerful thing. Your encouragement is an amazing, powerful gift to our children and our wonderful staff.

Next week, our children begin the new school year. For many of them, their circumstances have caused them to be very apprehensive. For many of them, school has been a major uphill climb—often leaving them afraid to even try.

Hannah was told she would never amount to anything. For a time, she believed it. When she came to BCH, she was emotionally and physically drained by the physical and sexual abuse she had endured since she was eight years old. But now she has hope. Hannah accepted Christ as her personal Savior and is beginning to experience healing. Some of her favorite things are taking naps, eating desserts, working with younger children, and singing. Hannah has so much promise.

She begins this new school year with a very different perspective. This year is filled with hope! She will have all she needs (new clothes, school supplies, backpack, etc.) and be surrounded by people who believe in her, encourage her, and walk the steep hills with her. You are one of those who are walking with Hannah and the hundreds of other children we serve.

The cost to prepare for school for "our" children is enormous. They have grown over the summer. The jeans that fit last year don't fit. Winter coats and shoes have been outgrown. If you would like to know more about how you can help meet these needs, call me at 336-689-4442.

*Thank you for being a part of their journey!*

And thanks to all of my encouragers, "especially our kids at Mills Home," who have kept me walking my journey—both physically and spiritually. I have lost 35 pounds so far and I am much better able to climb those hills!





# Give now for their success

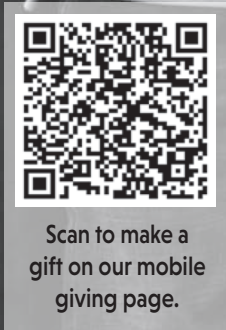
Baptist Children’s Homes’ (BCH) boys and girls are hearing the familiar rumble of the school bus coming to pick them up. We are focusing on efforts to ensure every child we serve throughout the state has everything they need to succeed this new school year.

***By giving now, your Back-to-School gift can be a part of helping a child achieve success!***

Your gift is vital because we serve children in the foster care system, boys and girls who have been removed from their homes for their well-being, many of them coming to us with little or no belongings. You ensure children have the compassionate care they deserve through BCH’s cottage homes and our EVERY CHILD foster care families where all of their daily needs are met. ***Because of your generosity, boys and girls are able to focus on their studies instead of their worries.***

To give, use the postage-paid enclosed envelope or go to [bchfamily.org/backtoschool](http://bchfamily.org/backtoschool) (you can also scan the QR code to the right) to make your Back-to-School gift.

***Thank you for investing in the lives of Baptist Children’s Homes’ boys and girls and helping them to know God’s unconditional love for them.***



Scan to make a gift on our mobile giving page.

## Use my gift to help children know they are loved.

☐ \$75    ☐ \$150    ☐ \$300    ☐ \$600    ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Any size gift!

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

You can make a credit card gift at [bchfamily.org/backtoschool](http://bchfamily.org/backtoschool) or scan the QR code. You can also phone **Faith Frazier at 336-474-1312**.

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



IAN WAS AMONG THE  
**10,000+ CHILDREN**  
IN N.C. FOSTER CARE

UNTIL YOUR OFFERING  
**CHANGED**  
**HIS LIFE.**

Alicia Hinton first held newborn Ian, a child in the NC foster care system, at the hospital on Christmas Eve. That night, he came into the Hinton family's home and their hearts.

Chad and Alicia Hinton, along with their four biological children, became an EVERY CHILD foster family through Baptist Children's Homes so that they could care for vulnerable NC children and show them the love of Christ. Not only have they fostered Ian since birth, they are now his forever family through adoption.

Your church's offering makes it possible to provide care for vulnerable children and to ensure that EVERY CHILD hears the hope of the gospel.

**EVERY** *Child*



ANNUAL  OFFERING

ORDER MATERIALS >> SHARE THE HINTON'S STORY >> HELP CHANGE LIVES!

WEEK OF PRAYER: 11/9 TO 11/16 | GOAL: \$2 MILLION

RESOURCES: BCHOFFERING.ORG OR 336.474.1218



SHARING HOPE...CHANGING LIVES

**Baptist Children's Homes**  
of NORTH CAROLINA



# Omar and Robert grow friendship over math problems

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor  
(Continued from page 1)

Lying in the hospital bed, Robert tried to make sense of the last few hours. There were injuries to his back and shoulder. His scapular was cracked and he had suffered nerve damage. It was hard as he realized he now faced big life changes.

Although he had been in the classroom 30 years, he was not planning to retire. It was not the way he had thought he would finish teaching—but one doesn't always get to decide. The accident brought an end to Robert's teaching career.

"The table had turned," Robert recalls. "I worked hard to instill in my students can-do attitudes. I taught them it was important to turn a bad situation into a positive. It was now time for me to live out what I taught."

Robert made a decision to follow Jesus as a child. It was years later that he rededicated his life and he experienced a "rejuvenation of the heart." His faith became more, it became a relationship with the Lord. Now retired, he began seeking ways to serve.

Robert's health improved. There was a rhythm coming back. And yet nothing replaced what he missed most—teaching young people. After his mother had a stroke in 2021 and her loss of mobility, he became her caregiver, spending more time with her everyday.

His mom encouraged him to attend her Sunday school class at The Village Baptist Church in Fayetteville. The "Saved to Serve" class was mission-focused and taught by Bass family friend and Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) Trustee Vickie Burge. The 80 member class included BCH's Odum Home as part of its mission outreach.

"The class ministers hands on," Odum Home Director Kathy Locklear says. "They focus on



Omar receives "extra firm support" from the members of the Saved to Serve Sunday school class from The Village Baptist Church in Fayetteville. The class has included Odum Home as part of its mission outreach for the past nine years. Pictured below, clockwise left to right, Save to Serve member Patsy Turner, Omar, Robert Bass, Omar's brother Omarian, and Robert's mom Lynda.

what Odum Home needs and work to meet the children's needs, even after being in care and they are on their own. They keep up with the children, encouraging any way they are able."

Some class members sponsor children in care, everyone pitches in to provide parties and special dinners, and others help residents by tutoring, often helping them catch up academically.

Nineteen-year-old Omar and his two siblings came to Odum Home four years ago. Before arriving on the Pembroke campus, day-to-day living was difficult. The children slept on sofas and on make-shift pallets on the floor. Eating unhealthy meals caused Omar's weight to shoot up to 340 pounds. Attending school was never a priority. He fell behind. When Omar did attend, he remembers being frustrated and embarrassed.

Omar's freshman year was difficult. Attending

school regularly and doing homework nightly were alien to the teen. He needed help. Robert, the former educator, was called on to tutor the struggling student.



Omar was unsure at first. Robert knew not to let that deter him. He poured himself into Omar and slowly he felt he was reaching his fledgling student. The two began to look forward to their sessions. They started talking about other things besides math—and there was laughter.

Robert and Omar worked on his math together—long and short problems. It was incredible the first time Omar's math teacher was talking about a problem in class and Omar understood. It just clicked, he remembers. He was so proud of himself.

"Mr. Robert

helped me catch up," Omar says. "I struggled and couldn't get my head around math. Failing at something makes you feel like you're never going to be good enough. I felt math had defeated me. It was amazing going from a zero to making a high B.

Robert was becoming more than Omar's tutor. He was more than a volunteer. Robert was investing himself in Omar's life. He cared about all the young man's needs: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. He even found ways to spoil him.

"Mr. Robert is my friend," Omar asserts. "He is someone I look up to. He has become a role model who I can call and talk with about anything. He has become someone who taught me more than math, he has taught me things a man needs to know—like a dad."

Omar has helped fill the void in Robert's life, turning his heart from tragedy to helping others. Being part of Omar's life has brought Robert fulfillment and great joy.

"The Lord was working in both our lives," Robert says. "Omar found the help he needed to succeed, and I found my way back to teaching."

The "Saved to Serve" class is intent on fostering spiritual growth in the hearts of its members, being active on mission, and leading others to Jesus. Being a part of the class and helping Omar has been life-changing for Robert.



# Adoption becomes life-long journey for Melber family

By Tera Melber

There is a love that reaches deeper than any earthly bond, a love that calls us by name and welcomes us into a family not defined by blood, but by grace. To be adopted into God's family is to discover a belonging that transcends our past, our circumstances, and our origin—an unconditional love assuring us that we are wanted, cherished, and chosen.

That same love began stirring in both my husband, David, and me, over two decades ago. Since I was unable to have more children after our third, we would occasionally talk about adoption. It wasn't constant, but the thought quietly and persistently lingered.

That stirring grew into conviction. A few years later, David traveled to Moldova and witnessed firsthand the plight of vulnerable children. He came home moved, his heart full, and his resolve strong. Adoption seemed like the next chapter God was writing for our family.

We read, sought wisdom, and prayed. But more than anything, we clung to the promise that God would guide us. We believed He would show us how to graft a child into our family. After all, He grafted us into His.

I still remember meeting each of our children. Their eyes scanned our faces, searching for familiarity from the photos we had sent. When recognition set in, their expressions softened. Those were sacred first steps into becoming a family.

Adoption is not a one-time event but a life-long journey. We quickly learned how deeply early adversity can scar a child's heart. It's one thing to read about trauma; it's another to live through trauma's effects with your son or daughter. They wrestled for peace, tested love, fought to make sense of their stories, and wondered whether they truly belonged.

What worked with our biological children often fell short. Affection, correction, even

them they weren't alone in it. When they pushed us away emotionally, we answered with a steady *I will never leave you.*

And when their pain felt too big, we whispered, *I love you*—again and again.

As we spoke those words, we began to hear them echo in our own hearts. God had spoken them over us, again and again, in our brokenness. As we practiced steadfast presence, compassionate correction, and unconditional love, the Gospel came alive, not just for our children, but for us in a fresh way.

This journey revealed things in me I didn't know were there. I longed for quick healing and visible signs of progress. I wanted to control situations and fix the pain. But God was working in all of us. He was reshaping me, too. He showed me that what I needed most wasn't control or ease, it was Him. He wanted me to desire His presence more than answers.

There have been joyful days and painfully hard ones. We celebrated small wins: a smile, eye contact, trust building slowly. God was doing something beautiful in the hidden and quiet places. It didn't always look like progress, but it was. And He was with us every step of the way.

Today, our children are grown. They are walking with Jesus, and their stories are still unfolding. Their lives and legacies have been forever changed by the Gospel. They are not only deeply loved by us but they are fully known and chosen by the King of Kings.

Hope and restoration haven't come through easy answers, quick fixes, or relief from pain. It is a work in progress coming from the unshakable love of Christ who adopted us, redeemed us, and promises to finish what He started. What the enemy meant for harm in their lives, God is redeeming. Trauma does not get the final say. Jesus does. Even when a story begins in sorrow, God's grace can write a story full of hope.



Tera Melber and husband David added three children to their family through adoption—believing it was “the next chapter God was writing” for them. Above left, Tera is with Jonas and above right with Isaac. Both sons’ country of origin is Ethiopia. Above center, daughter Maritess was adopted from the Philippines.

boundaries landed differently. We prayed constantly. What they needed most was presence, safety, and consistent love. Their behaviors were communicating needs that they couldn't put into words.

Since our children didn't speak English when they came home, we memorized simple phrases in their native languages—words we could offer in simple daily moments or in moments of fear or uncertainty.

*You are safe.*

*Stay close to me.*

*I am here.*

*I will not leave you.*

*I love you.*

When fear crept in, *you are safe* with me helped them feel grounded.

When we entered new spaces, *stay close to me* meant they weren't alone.

When they ached for the familiar, I will be with you offered comfort.

When frustration boiled over, *I am here* told



# Christina and Jon help Casey reunite her family

By Jim Edminson, Editor

Casey loves her three children. Her commitment to them has been her North Star. But she says she would never have met her goals, gone through the grueling rehab, or worked so hard to turn her life around if it had not been for the love and support of her dad, friends, and her children's foster parents, Christina and Jon

Davidson.

"Christina has walked with me," Casey asserts. "She and Jon prayed for me and my children and they took care of my children when I couldn't. There is no way I could have been able to get back on my feet and be where I am now without the help they have given me. They wanted me to be with my children again."

Christina and Jon have been married 16 years.

Despite Christina learning at age 15 she may not be able to have children, the couple dreamed of a family.

After trying to become pregnant and attempting IVF, they turned their focus to fostering.

They set their course to foster through Baptist Children's Homes and were licensed March 22, 2022. Less than 24 hours later they had their first placement—

Casey's three children, two girls ages 10 and 7 and their five-year-old brother.

"Not having children of my own," Christina recalls, "it was hard at first. We went from zero to a hundred in just hours. Three children at once was a big change."

Christina embraced her new role, stepping back from her outside job. She went about wrangling a new household, setting boundaries for the children and scheduling their many appointments. The children started school in the fall and the Davidson home, to Christina's answered prayer, was running smoothly.

Christina was not only determined to meet the children's needs, she set her heart on loving Casey. "To me fostering is not just about the child. It is about the child's parents, too. It became my desire to see Casey succeed and live a better, healthier life. Jon and I were committed to do

everything we could for Casey to be reunited with her children."

Almost immediately after the children arrived in the Davidson home, Christina reached out to Casey. She wanted them to work together to help the children during this difficult time, asking questions: What are favorite foods? Are there things the children enjoy? What games do they play? What are their favorite movies?

Casey was encouraged. Feelings of failure and fears of being sidelined in her children's lives subsided. She answered Christina's questions and even sent her beloved stuffed Eeyore for the children to have near them. She and Christina were becoming friends.

"I never dreamed foster parents would partner with me," Casey admits. "Christina has never been judgmental, keeping the lines of communication always open. I believe God not only sent her for my children but He sent her for me."

Shared parenting in foster care is a collaborative approach where birth parents and foster families work together. The partnership maintains a child's connection to their family, culture, and traditions, while ensuring their safety and well-being as the parent works toward reunification.

The Davidsons learned good relationships with parents makes things better, reducing the stress for the parent and allowing them to effectively work on their goals. The focus is partnering towards reunification.

Casey is a hairstylist and has earned a management role in the shop where she works. Two of her three children have returned to her home. Her oldest daughter lives with Casey's dad. Casey has learned it takes little steps, never stopping, keeping one foot in front of the other. She considers herself blessed but asserts her greatest change has been a change of the heart: "I have given my life to the Lord."

Christina and Jon have set their sights on fostering more children. The collaborative experience has been transformative. A tattoo Christina has represents their journey. The shepherd hooks symbolize the couple's faith and the love they are committed to give the children who come into their care. The lambs represent the foster children—past, present, and future. The three hearts commemorate the first three children who came into their home and their successful reunification with their mom.

Casey, Christina, and Jon





# Join us in PRAYING

Use the guide below to pray for those who are served through Baptist Children's Homes as well as those who are serving. You can sign up to be a monthly **Prayer Partner** by scanning the QR code below or go to the sign up page at **BCHFAMILY.ORG/PRAYER**. You can also choose "Prayer Partners" under the "Get Involved" section on our website.



## PRAYER PARTNERS

SIGN UP AT **BCHFAMILY.ORG/PRAYER**



### Pray for children and those caring for them

Pray for the school-aged children in care, cottage parents, and our EVERY CHILD foster care families as a new school year begins.

1. **Pray for the children to receive educational and emotional help and support.** Many children in foster care experience academic and emotional delays and challenges
2. **Pray for each child's teacher.** Pray that in the midst of the challenges and stress that educators face, that each teacher will have a heart of compassion and understanding. Pray that the teacher and BCH child are able to form a positive relationship. Pray that the teacher is an advocate for the child and his/her best interests.
3. **Pray that the Lord provides a special friend for each child.** Many of the children in care have experienced significant loss and loneliness. Pray for friends who are positive examples, and that they are understanding of the unique situations of the children.
4. **Pray for the boys living at Cameron Boys Camp.** Pray that through the 24/7 wilderness program that boys, with support from their Chiefs/mentors, experience healing and reunification with their families.
5. **Pray for Christ's love to be shown.** Pray for our cottage parents, foster families, teachers and others who support and care for children that God's love will shine through them.

### Pray for adopted children, families and birth mothers

Children who have been adopted, either domestically or internationally experience an array of emotions and challenges.

1. **Pray for peace, guidance and continued bonding between recently-adopted international children and their families.** Praise God for the two children whose international adoptions through BCH's Christian Adoption Services (CAS) were finalized in 2025. Pray for the six children who are in the post-placement process.
2. **Pray for encouragement and patience for the five host children from 2024 whose families are in the process of adopting them.** Pray that the Lord would work through CAS's hosting process to bring more international children together with Christian forever families.
3. **Pray for God to bring emotional healing and peace.** As our adopted children grow, pray that our Father will protect their hearts and surround them with safe, nurturing love.
4. **Pray for birth moms who choose adoption for their children.** They often return to their communities with little to no support. Pray for our staff, who stay in contact with them after the adoption process, that they are able to support, encourage and share Christ's love with them.

### Pray for the intellectually/developmentally disabled (I/DD) adults in our care and their caregivers

We care for I/DD adults in nine different cottages as well as in Alternative Family Living homes throughout North Carolina.

1. **Pray for the caregivers at our I/DD cottage homes.** Caregivers, known as Direct Service Providers, are with our adults 24/7 to care for their needs and also help them reach their highest level of independence.
2. **Pray for our aging residents.** Pray for our many aging residents and their health and daily needs as they get older.
3. **Pray for our Alternative Family Living (AFL) program to thrive.** The in-home program is where an individual or family opens up their home as a safe, stable living environment for an (I/DD) adult. Pray other adults would open up their homes.

### Pray for the many vulnerable children and adults who are served through BCH's many ministries

From the tiniest of children to community families, singles mothers, and aging adults, we have the privilege of serving the needs of many.

1. **Pray for the community families served through Greater Vision Outreach.** Pray as our staff comes alongside families who are working hard to navigate daily challenges. Pray that we can connect them with resources and aid that not only help them with immediate needs but equip them for success in the future.
2. **Pray for single mothers and children in the family care program.** Single mothers often live with friends or family if they have anywhere to live at all. Pray that through our family care program, our staff can equip moms, while they parent their children, with the resources needed to keep their families together. Pray staff can help them successfully transition to a safe and healthy independent living situation.
3. **Pray for aging adults who find themselves isolated and lonely.** Pray that through the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) Hope Line (866.578.4673), that phone volunteers can provide encouragement, prayer and support to aging adults who need greater connection or simply a compassionate, listening ear.
4. **Pray for the indigenous children served in Guatemala.** Pray for the impoverished, and often abandoned, boys and girls who come into care at Good Shepherd Ministries. Pray for the missionaries and staff who are caring for them and introducing them to the gospel.
5. **Pray for college students served through HOMEBASE at Western Carolina.** Many of the students have little or no family support or have aged out of foster care. Pray staff can equip them for success in school and life.



# N-O-W is the time for something NEW and EXCITING

By **Brian Roberts**, NCBAM Call Center Director

It is often an assumption that older people are “right with God” – that their long life is evidence of His favor. While many older adults have vital relationships with a living God, many others do not. In the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) Call Center, we regularly take 400-500 calls each month and nearly 80% of the clients are unchurched. NCBAM Call Center Specialists connect North Carolina’s frail aging (65+) with church volunteers who share God’s love by meeting needs. Call Center team members serve spiritual needs by praying with callers and sharing the Gospel.

We believe God desires for everyone to begin a new life through a relationship with Jesus Christ, no matter their age. God changes lives and creates new creatures through His Son—in both the young and the aging.

I remember being in my mid-20s and having lunch with my grandfather at his home. He had just made his “famous cornbread” and I was really glad to have stopped by for a visit. We were sitting at the table while my grandmother was busy about the house and I asked, “Granddaddy, what is the most exciting thing you have seen in all your years?”

He thought for a moment, then proceeded to tell me about a man who arrived in his hometown nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains. “He was riding a bicycle with a motor—we now know this to be a motorcycle—but for those of us in that community, it was the first time we had seen anyone on a bicycle with an engine.” In my grandfather’s time, this was a new and exciting day!

Aging adults face challenges every day: illness, the loss of loved ones and friends, and

financial bumps in the road, to name a few. These changes bring feelings of vulnerability. In the midst of all of this, there is a stark reality of one’s mortality— that the longer one lives, the closer one is to passing. Their world becomes one of uncertainty. For an older person without a relationship with Jesus Christ, salvation and peace are more urgent than ever.

NOW is the time for Jesus. The acronym N-O-W underscores the urgency and the hope—Now is the time to hear the Lord’s knocking, Open the door, and Welcome Jesus Christ into one’s life. In 2 Corinthians, Paul writes, “Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (6:2).

**N – Nearness of the present time**  
The present moment is an unrepeatable gift. The door to salvation is ready to open. No matter one’s past, today is the day to turn to Jesus Christ. The chaos in the world underscores that life is unpredictable—tomorrow is not guaranteed. The salvation offered through Jesus Christ provides peace and assurance that transcends circumstances. It is a gift of hope amid despair, offering a new and exciting future.

**O – Overcome fear and uncertainty**  
The current world tensions evoke fears of suffering—and loss. In Jesus Christ, believers are offered a refuge—a source of peace that surpasses understanding

(Philippians 4:7). Accepting Jesus Christ brings spiritual security that earthly circumstances cannot destroy. Salvation is not merely about escaping present difficulties, it is about securing a place in eternity with God. Accepting Jesus Christ ensures one’s soul is anchored in a hope beyond this life.

**W – Wait no longer**  
Procrastination can be dangerous, especially in times of crisis. Life’s instability serves as a reminder that waiting leads only to missed opportunities. Revelation 3:20 depicts Jesus standing at the door and knocking, waiting for individuals to open their hearts.

What will you decide?  
In these troubling times, especially amid conflicts, the message is clear: N-O-W is the time to be saved through Jesus Christ. The chaos and uncertainty should propel us to seek the stable and unchanging refuge—Jesus Christ.  
The world may be shaking, but in Jesus Christ, believers find peace, hope, and eternal security. The decision to accept Jesus cannot be postponed. Embrace Him now and secure your eternity in the midst of troubling times.

**Now Opens Wonderful possibilities** for a life transformed and a future secured in Jesus Christ. If you or someone you know needs help, contact the NCBAM Call Center, Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm at 877-506-2226.



Brian Roberts





# Camp BAM youth bring hope and healing to aging

By **Carol Layton**, Director of Communications & Administration, NCBAM

For many, summer camp memories are made of songs, s'mores, crafts, and carefree afternoons. But for the 25 intergenerational participants of Camp BAM 2025, their most meaningful memories were forged through sweat, service, and shared prayers with aging adults still recovering from disaster.

From June 18–22, campers served in Western North Carolina as part of a disaster recovery mission for seniors impacted by Hurricane Helene. Sponsored by North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM), this fifth annual Camp BAM brought together IMPACT Community Youth—a group comprised of students from churches in Stanley and Rowan Counties alongside leaders Monica Talbert, Jennifer Parker, and Alicia Burrage.

Yes, they played games and laughed late into the evening on the first night. And there was tubing on the final afternoon. But what happened in between was more memorable and far deeper.

## **Love in action through every task**

Throughout the week, campers served at multiple sites—cleaning flood-damaged homes, working at care facilities, and lifting the spirits of older adults still coping with profound loss. Camp BAM Director Austin Decker shared, “It was a blessing to witness the hearts of these campers. They showed up with great attitudes, loved seniors well, and shared the Gospel not just with words, but through their work—even in sweltering heat.”

At The Hayesville House, a memory care facility in Clay County, youth received special training before visiting with residents. They played bingo, led a craft activity, trimmed hedges, and pressure-washed sidewalks—but per-



Camp BAM 2025 was based at the Truett Conference Center & Camp in Hayesville. Campers completed projects in Clay, Cherokee, and Macon counties. Below, camper Kimarie Furr, left, helped with a craft activity and ministered to residents at the Hayesville House—a memory care facility in Clay County.

haps the most lasting impact came from a simple friendship.

Group leader Alicia Burrage reflected: “Teens are often wrapped up in their own world. But one camper connected with a resident and couldn’t wait to see him again. The next day, that resident couldn’t communicate well. That moment opened the camper’s eyes to what many older adults face.”



Campers also volunteered at The Still Place, a retreat for families grieving the loss of a child; Renewed Hope, a men’s addiction recovery center; Truett Children’s Home; and cleared trails at the Hinton Center, a Christian retreat center.

Jennifer and Brandon Parker have served as leaders since the first Camp BAM in 2021 and consider the camp a highlight of their summer. “It was a great honor that this year’s camp was in memory of our son, Christian. Having his name on the shirt and seeing people wearing them made it feel like he was part of the week.”

## **Aubrey’s Fourth Year: From tools to transformation**

For 16-year-old Aubrey Burrage, this was her fourth summer attending Camp BAM—and her most powerful one yet.

Working alongside the Macon Baptist Association, Aubrey and her team helped restore a home in Franklin that had been devastated by Hurricane Helene. The damage, she said, was still haunting even a year later.

“We cleaned out the garage the first day, then crawled under the house to lay plastic so the next group could install insulation,” Aubrey explained. “The creek close to their home hadn’t even overflowed—the water just rushed down the mountain and slammed into their home.”

There were still refrigerators littering yards across the neighborhood. Inside the house, water lines marked how high the floodwaters had risen. Aubrey and her team scraped sediment off walls, salvaged what they could, and discarded what was beyond saving. But they handled everything with care.

“Some things were easy to toss—like rusty soup cans. But Sandy (NCBAM’s senior director) reminded us: ‘Be careful—you never know what might be important to her. Maybe something her husband gave her.’ That changed how I looked at everything.”

## **“More than learning to use a drill”**

What keeps Aubrey coming back year after year isn’t the fun or the travel—it’s the heart of the mission.

“I have friends who go to the beach, to concerts, or do worship-y stuff,” she said. “At Camp BAM, we go to work. We learn how different life can be in other communities and to be grateful for what we have. We learn how to really talk to older adults—to care and listen. It’s eye-opening. There’s definitely more to it than learning how to use a drill.”

## **Looking ahead to Camp BAM 2026**

Reserve your spot for Camp BAM 2026, contact Camp Director Austin Decker at [adecker@bchfamily.org](mailto:adecker@bchfamily.org). To benefit Camp BAM in perpetuity, designate your gift for the “Live Out Luke” endowment fund at [ncbam.org](http://ncbam.org).



# Homecoming celebrates life lived at Mills Home — Alumni remember those who have passed

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

**H**omecoming weekend 2025 began joyfully on Friday evening with a meal cooked by **Jane and Danny Brown**. It was again delicious. Of course, there were the usual loud squeals and warm hugs, as orphans greeted each other happily. It was amazing to learn about all the work that the Alumni Council had done to be ready for this event. Some of them had been working since Wednesday. Some were registering homecomers while others were helping with the Silent Auction. Most of them served food at the evening meal. Council members facilitating Homecoming all weekend were the following: **Johnny Shields with grandchildren, Olivia and Liam Boggs, Flora Hicks Patton, Keith Campbell, Ceceila Townsend Wilkerson, Martha Berndt Foster, Ruth Berndt Hodges, President Jackie Elliott Walker, Rusty Bunker, Sharon DeHart Stiles, Lisa Carter Lancaster, and Sherri Townsend Alexander**. Helping wherever they were needed all weekend were **Bucky Clark, Mike Clay, Linda (Mrs. Jim) Rochelle, Larry Kelly, Robert Weber, Michael Hazzard, Mark Wilkerson, Greg Harrold, Larry Vaughn, and Ron Lancaster**.

Workers who aided with Homecoming in some way such as serving food on Sunday included these Mills Home and BCH workers and residents: **five MH residents, Mills Home Director Jada Cable, Heather Hunt, Lorie Brinkley, Melanie Brueshaber, Pam Burgess, Patricia Carroll, Sheila Hood, Kristen Hunt, Becky McPherson, Kevin McPherson, John Mullen, Julietta Santillan, Krystal Saunders, Hannah Smith, Andy Snovak, and Marilyn Moore**.

**Janice Lewis Doherty**, a former council member, was so impressed with the council's preparations to make everything attractive and welcoming. Mostly through the afternoon, people handled their registration quickly and took a look at the interesting items to be purchased at the registration tables. Then they moved into the groups standing

around chatting and doing some serious hugging, giggling, and story-telling. Eventually, all found their way to the interesting items collected for the Silent Auction.

The Mills Home Alumni Associational meeting took place at 5:00 Saturday evening. **President Jackie Elliott Walker** professionally ushered us through the evening's business: **Lisa**, minutes; **Flora**, treasurer's report; **Sharon**, Columbarium (20 people now have purchased niches); **Lib**, In Memoriam for 18 people; **Marilyn Moore**, Museum Curator's report; **Jada Cable**, report on MH residents; **Keith**, God's Acre improvements; **Ruth and Clifton**, report on Alumni Website (work is progressing on that); **Martha**, council members' nominations; **Jackie**, installation of new Council Members and one officer for 2025-2027 term. Following the installation, **Lib** presented the Oscar Award to **Cecelia Townsend Wilkerson**. This award is voted on by the Alumni Council yearly and it is a reward for outstanding service to the Mills Home Alumni Association. **Bob Mayton** presented the Hall of Fame Award notification plaque to **Amelia and Elaine Sisk** for their father's induction into the Thomasville Athletic Hall of Fame last spring. **Bill Sisk** was inducted because he was an Allstate Tackle in 1942. Bob also reported that **Coach Kearns** was installed because he was the coach of the 1942 championship winning MH football team of 1942. **Charles and Clifton Lambreth** were installed for the track and cross country allstate rankings for 1976-1978; **Vaughan Dagenhart** was installed for being allstate in wrestling in 1962 and 1963 and all conference in football in 1962. **Pete Knight**, by virtue of his work with various military groups, presented a WWII Bronze Star posthumously for the father of **David Melber** who accepted. (This was so ordered by President FDR after the end of WWII to anyone who has served in that war.)

It was wonderful to see the new BCH CEO **David Melber** and his wife **Tera** present for the Friday and Sat-

urday evening dinners. Before dinner began, they walked around making frequent stops to give or accept warm greetings. When "Do Si Do" dancing began, they joined the fun with helpful instructions from **Steve Anderson**. **Keith Campbell** summed things up when he proclaimed that the food prepared by **Jane and Danny Brown** was delicious as usual and the Friday and Saturday evening of fun, "Do Si Do," and visiting with each other was perhaps the best ever.

The Sunday morning worship service was outstanding as usual. It opened with beautiful hymns played by our beloved former pastor, **Dr. Randy Stewart**. Following **Jada Cable's** warm welcome, **Charles Lambreth** opened with prayer. The choir with the powerful voice of **Pat Baucam** followed as **Sharon Dehart Stiles** led the congregational singing. Other alumni took part in the service with prayer and passing the offering plate. The whole service was very beautiful and the morning message was most meaningful and heart felt. **David Melber** began with a review of the "orphan education" he had received from chats with alumni during the weekend. He was interested and amused by the variety of stories alumni heaped upon him and **Tera** as they walked about—stories of life at MH in fun times and stories of residents "getting into mischief." David assured us he would have been one of the ones getting "into mischief," but whatever the story, David gleaned the fact that he was engaging with people who have a great appreciation for the life they had at Mills Home and a tremendous love for their childhood home. That led David into a beautiful lesson about the life to be lived as a Christian and the prospect of someday having an eternal loving home with the Lord. In closing the service, **Clifton Lambreth** played a song he had written expressing his feelings about abandonment and sadness of children in a children's home, but he ended also with the same promise of a "forever Home in Christ." His song was

quite beautiful. He then closed with a prayer and blessing for the upcoming lunch at the gym. The link to hear his song is this: [millshomealum.com](http://millshomealum.com).

On Sunday, after a delicious meal provided by Mills Home, the alumni grouped on the bleachers for the annual photo. The Silent Auction was brought to a close at 1:30 in a resounding success: total raised \$3,528.00, a fantastic conclusion of another fantastic Homecoming. (The Silent Auction is the main fundraiser of the Alumni to fund various projects of the Alumni Association.) The new Alumni Council will be listed in the next issue.

In Memoriam: Even though deaths are posted during the year, we always relist their names in the Associational Meeting at Homecoming and in the *Charity & Children* after Homecoming as a small token of our love. **Catherine Blackwell-1982-2023; Percy Bradshaw-1938-1949; Helen Helms Brown-1965-1969; Charles Gary Bruin-1975-1987; Phil Christman-1957-1968; Patricia Stroud England-1960-1965; Donnie Richard Harris-1970-1979; John Paul "Dusty" Jenkins-1941-1954; Betty Jo Frazier Lambert-1966-1973; Bruce Langley-1942-1952; J. Parker McLendon-1970-1976 & 1995-1997; Kathryn "Polly" Jolly Nemeth-1953-1959; Tony Phillips-1947-1962; Leona Grindstaff Price-1926-1937; Larry Gene Staton-1955-1964; Mary Hamby Whisnant-1959-1963; Mary Hunt Williams-1948-1954; Ethel Ball Woodall-1939-1948; Wayne Young-1949-1960. Reported since Homecoming is **Betty Gurly Stubbins-1941-1946**.**

Notes: If you need to send an address addition or correction for the Mills Home address directory or for the *Charity & Children* address list, contact **Flora Hicks Patton, 704-791-7866**. If you need to discuss the columbarium, please contact **Sharon D. Stiles** at this number **704-685-2443**.



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



### Church serves at Kennedy Home

For Serve NC, Wake Cross Roads Baptist of Raleigh volunteered at Kennedy Home painting, cleaning, and cooking.



### Scotts Hill hosts Mountain Camp

Many lives were transformed through Scotts Hill Baptist's Mountain Camp hosting BCH children at Camp Caraway.



### Event celebrates Filipino families

Heritage Weekend united adoptive families to celebrate and embrace Filipino culture through the festive event.



### Boys and girls experience Noah's story

Lifelong memories were made when children from Broyhill Home visited the Ark Encounter in Kentucky this summer.



### Adoptive dad helps baptize children

Mary Hope and Jeffery's adoptive dad helped baptize them when they decided to publicly declare their faith.



### Odum girls make summer memories

Girls from Odum Home and cottage parents had a beach vacation. It was the first time some girls had seen the ocean.



### I/DDM hosts parent/guardian lunch

Parents and guardians enjoyed fellowship with their loved ones at Joy Cove's Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities lunch.



### HOMEbase pairs students and mentors

BCH's outreach at Western Carolina hosted 75 college students for Project CARE pairing freshmen with mentors.



### NCBAM hosts Summerfest for seniors

NC Baptist Aging Ministry team held Summerfest at Fort Caswell -- a senior adult retreat filled with bible teaching and fun.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out our Events Calendar for opportunities to serve and registration information. Visit [bchfamily.org/events](http://bchfamily.org/events)



### SEPTEMBER

- 4: Western Area Conference  
Broyhill Home, Clyde
- 6: NCBAM Field of Makers, [ncbam.org](http://ncbam.org)  
Mills Home, Thomasville
- 8: Christian Adoption Services (CAS)  
Golf Tournament, Charlotte
- 15: CAS Golf Tourney, Greensboro  
Broyhill Home, Clyde

### OCTOBER

- 16: Christian Adoption Services (CAS)  
Benefit Banquet - Raleigh Area  
Faith Baptist, Youngsville

### NOVEMBER

- 6: CAS Banquet - Rocky Mount Area.  
Englewood Baptist, Rocky Mount
- 22: Thanksgiving Turkey in the Hole  
Cameron Boys Camp, Cameron

### FRIENDS OF CHILDREN

Saturday one-day missions for all ages--

- Sept 6: Oak Ranch, Broadway
- Sept 13: Kennedy Home, Kinston
- Sept 20: Mills Home, Thomasville
- Sept 20: Odum Home, Pembroke
- Oct 4: Cameron Boys Camp

Registration at [bchfamily.org/foc](http://bchfamily.org/foc)



We equip your church to be a part of foster care & adoption so that every child receives the caring home he or she deserves.

Get connected at [every-child.org](http://every-child.org)



## TURN YOUR CALLING INTO A CAREER



Statewide positions for serving children, families and special needs adults

**BHCAREERS.ORG**

Giving your vehicle puts the ministry in



Your donated vehicle helps with school, church activities, student drivers, doctor visits, family care mothers and more.

Call Sam Barefoot at  
336.474.1224



# #3641

How can we help you? Contact 1.800.476.3669 or [bchfamily.org/referral](http://bchfamily.org/referral) >>>

For each person's specific need, Baptist Children's Homes offers a unique ministry that is prepared to help. Reach out today.





# Events scheduled and Alumni Cookbook for sale – Houseparent recalls 60 dozen eggs eaten per month

By **John Thompson**, 102 Maritime Court, Havelock, NC 28532 (252) 671-3515 jbtompson43@gmail.com

**S**chool is starting back. Fall is on the way and the Annual Alumni Beach Retreat will be here soon. Mark your calendars for October 3, 4, and 5. We hope to have at least 30 attendee but the cottage can sleep as many at 60. You will have a lot of fun along the sound and the ocean side. Everyone is asked to bring delicious homemade desserts. **Debbie Caudle** and I will be in charge of the meals with a lot of you helping. Remember, no pets. We will have fun eating, walking along the beach, square dancing, and singing. Call Debbie or me by the third week in September to let us know if you are coming. If you are interested in doing the night-time devotionals, give me a call.

**Edward Pait** sends a “thank you” to everyone who prayed for his recovery recently. He had eye surgery. He states that some of his Kennedy Home (KH) brothers and sisters know that he was almost blind in his right eye since childhood from an accident. He had a scar blocking his vision in that eye. The eye had become covered with a cataract. It was real bad for driving. Ed went to Duke to have the surgery. He says he can see much better now and “am grinnin’ big time.”

Be praying for **Louise Maready** in the death of **Earl Maready**. Louise and Earl were houseparents in William’s Cottage many years ago. Remember their children also. Earl was the official campus mechanic in addition to being a “house dad.”

“Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way...” **Larry Gilliam**, our alumni President, invites all alumni to this year’s Alumni Christmas Party to be held at King’s Restaurant on Saturday, December 6 from noon until 3:00. We have to be out by three because another group has the same room reserved. He will give us more information later. We always have a great time at this

party.

The Alumni Cookbook is on sale now! There have already been more than 150 sold to date. The cookbooks are \$15 each. If they have to be mail, there is a \$5 mailing charge. Contact **Debbie Daniels** to buy your copy. You may purchase a book(s) at her home at 956 Sunset Drive in Havelock 28532. Or order a cookbook by calling 252-670-6757. Write or call her and send your money and she will mail it to you. All recipes are from the excellent cooks of our Kennedy Home Alumni Association.

These are some of the KH youngins’ and educators who appeared in the 1953 La Grange High School Yearbook: **Debbie Caulder** visited **Esther Pellitier Flowers** and shared her yearbooks, **Jerry Harris** is listed as yearbook business manager, **Jasper Lewis** was principal, and **Ruth Walker** was the French and English teacher. There were only nine teachers at the school. **Tom Mosley** was math and physical education, **Wade Ferguson** taught agriculture and his wife taught home economics. **Alvin Suggs** taught history and algebra. **Mrs. Herman Spence** was an English teacher and Librarian. **Mary Mathis** was the commercial English teacher.

Senior class president was **Ralph Spellman**. There were 36 graduates. **Helen Smith**, daughter of **W.A. Smith** was class mascot. Other KH children listed were: **Lucille Gibbs**, **Jerry Harris**, **Shirley Hartley**, **Bonnie Lucas**, **Ann Medlin**, **Billy Riggs**, **Edward Earl Moore**, and **Virginia Emory**.

Do you remember **Lou Pearl Simmons**? She was houseparent at KH when Becky and I were serving from 1972-1977. At that time she served in Pollock Cottage—real close to our apartment. Right away, with her loving manner, she took us in to help show us the ropes of

what to do working with more than 140 children. I remember some of her girls talking about how they loved to come home after school or gym or from doing many other things and she would be on the front porch to greet them. This really made them feel like Pollock was their home. She was remembered as being so “loving and kind.”

Her daughter sent a letter found in Lou Pearl’s bible. This is what she wrote: “It was in 1912 that **Captain and Mrs. William LaFayette Kennedy** gave their estate of 1,200 acres to North Carolina Baptist Children’s Home. The Kennedy’s had asked to keep 50 acres and Cedar Dell mansion as long as they lived. The first cottage was built and opened in 1914 and was known as the Bigg’s Cottage. Mrs. Kennedy wanted there to be another cottage so she sold her diamonds to give for the building of Lenoir Cottage. Mr. Kennedy sold the diamonds back to a store in New York to get the money. Mrs. Kennedy became very ill and in 1917 the cottage was finished. The keys were turned over to her and she died that night. Pollock Cottage was built in 1935.”

At the time of Lou Pearl’s writing of the letter, she stated that KH had 11 cottages, two all-girl cottages and three all-boys cottages, and six family-style cottages. There were 113 children on the campus. There were 55% boys and 45% girls. Sixty percent of all children were teenagers. She states that it took 35-60 half-gallon containers of milk a month per cottage and 40 to 60 dozen of eggs a month plus all the other good food.

**Phillip Dupree**, a former staff child, shares some more KH history: “**William Lafayette Kennedy** was born and raised in Lenoir County. His father was **Thomas Jefferson Kennedy** also from Lenoir County. His mother was **Martha Allen Ken-**

**nedy** from Greene County. **William and Emily** had no children of their own but gave everything they had to the orphanage. Today inside Cedar Dell is Mrs. Kennedy’s dining room exactly like it was when she died. Her china, crystal, dining room table, and chairs are still in place and is kept very spotless.

Mr. Kennedy joined the the Confederate Army at sixteen years old in the spring of 1862. After the fall of New Bern, he served three years and surrendered April 26, 1865 to Gen. Johnson’s army in Greensboro. He came home and went to work on his father’s farm. Cedar Dell was built in 1832.

North Carolina Baptists and other friends of children are invited to visit Kennedy Home. Call the office and set up a time to come and visit. You will have a guide to take you around the campus. There is a picnic area where you can bring your picnic lunch. You will go into one of the children’s cottages. You can go into the church to visit and see the history room. A special treat is a tour of Cedar Dell—the original Kennedy mansion. There is also a gym to visit and the cemetery. There is a beautiful large angel in the cemetery. There is no longer a dairy or cows and pigs on campus but the large barn and other buildings are interesting to see. We invite visitors to bring canned food and nonperishable items.

I’m asking alumni to write a page-long article about an houseparent. Our readers need to know just how good our houseparents were. Send the article to me: John Thompson, 102 Maritime Court, Havelock, N. C. 28532 as soon as possible. Stay in touch in touch with me! Love ya! — jt



John Thompson served at Kennedy Home from 1972-1977. At age 81, he continues to serve the Lord.



# Stepping boldly where our Lord leads

By Jim Edminson, Editor

Jenny, aged three or four, dressed in denim overalls, white long-sleeved t-shirt, and well-worn canvas shoes, strides forward confidently along a dusty country road, followed closely by cousin Joe, aged seven or eight. Field rows flank both sides, and it looks like these two are in the middle of nowhere. My daughter walks boldly forward, chin up and eyes closed (or she's blinking or looking down). Joe's smile is soft and his eyes track sideways as he watches Jenny's progress, just a step or two behind, for all the world—her protector.

When my brother moved to Florida to attend seminary, his family lived in the middle of a peanut farm. He rented from the farmer. The house was small and well-built, and the family had plenty of "stretching out room" amidst acres of sandy fields. My memories center around infrequent visits and weekly conversations by telephone with Eddie—those were good years for him but filled with the constant struggles of bi-vocational ministry and intense study to "show thyself approved." The setting eased the burden of those struggles.

We live life forwards, but we remember life backwards, like looking at old pictures, jarring us into times past. Flipping through the mental albums reminds us we pass these ways but once. My daughter is a behavioral health therapist now. Joe is a lieutenant firefighter/paramedic. My brother died too young.

Lately, I watch videos of people walking the Camino on *YouTube*, some with commentary but many with music only. The paths follow rivers or cut through forests of eucalyptus trees or parallel cultivated vineyards. Some of the roads lead through villages, others through towns and cities. Most show paired walkers, one filming the journey and the other a few steps ahead. The walkers identify as pilgrims, and for highly personal reasons, they trek toward Santiago de Compostela. In the moment, the video docu-

ments the present. Later, they will watch their video from a future time to recall the meanings of their pilgrimage.

Life is like that, isn't it? We walk the path before us. We look back later and remember, rightly or wrongly based on memory and the aid of captured images burned in our minds. We determine to stay the course or adjust our way into a future we cannot know. And for many of us, we walk with another, sometimes a bit ahead or a little behind, although at the best of times, we journey side by side. I am writing about the One God, the Almighty who sees and knows past, present, and future, the Lord God who numbers our hairs and our days, who walks with us and who loves with an everlasting love.

From an early age, I have counted on the assurance of Proverbs 3:5-6, memorized during Bible Drills and recalled almost daily since then: **"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."** I long to walk so closely aligned with my God so as to hear His voice in my ear when I move to the right or the left, guiding me in the way I should walk: **"This is the way..."** (Isaiah 30:21). I desire to feel His refreshment of my soul as He guides me along **"paths of righteousness for His name's sake"** (Psalm 23:3). I count on the promise of my Lord in Psalm 37:22-24 that He makes my steps firm and I will not fall, even when I stumble, because He will uphold me. How glorious, and how affirming—I do not have to know where my path leads because I know and serve the One God who does know. And He is faithful and true!

With Kathy at my side, we will soon walk our Caminho Português de Santiago, following an ancient route from Porto, Portugal to Santiago,

Spain. We have no big important goals for the journey, no checklist of "musts" to accomplish along the pilgrim path. We desire only to take time away from the ordinary and listen for the extraordinary words the Lord has for us now—at this stage of life. We will walk together, sometimes one a bit ahead or a little behind.

I hope to carry in my backpack only the essentials and gain the untold riches of a life dedicated to the One whose name I have called upon since a nine-year-old Jimmy trusted the Savior for salvation. As I leave all preconceptions behind, I hope to discern His voice telling me the way to go.

In Portuguese, pilgrims greet one another with smiles and the words "Bom Caminho." In Spanish, pilgrims say "Buen Camino." In English, the salutation means, literally, "good way," but essentially travelers along the way wish each other a good life, a beneficial path forward.

I pray the same for each of you along your varied paths through life. May we all listen carefully and closely to the still small voice of our Lord God as we step boldly where He leads.



# SHARE

*The Story!*

## 3 WAYS A BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES (BCH) SPEAKER CAN SHARE AT YOUR CHURCH:

### 1

#### FULL SERMON

20-25 mins

A speaker will prepare a message for your worship service to edify the congregation, provide a BCH missions update, and share stories of lives that have been changed through your support.

### 2

#### MISSION MOMENT

2-5 mins

A speaker will share a BCH update and talk briefly how your missions dollars are impacting God's kingdom. The speaker can also set up a small display table to greet people.

### 3

#### SMALL GROUP/ SUNDAY SCHOOL

A speaker will share a BCH mission update and stories of lives changed. Your group will hear ways to pray, volunteer and support the ministry as a group or as a church.

**TO INVITE A SPEAKER, GO TO [BCHFAMILY.ORG/](https://bchfamily.org/) SPEAKER OR SCAN THE CODE. CALL 336-474-1218.**