



**\$250,000**  
MATCHING GIFT  
CHALLENGE

**Double your gift!**

Between now until January 31, 2022,  
gifts will be matched dollar for dollar.

# Charity & Children

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

     @bchfamily

January/February 2022

Issue 1

Volume 135



For unborn babies who deserve a chance at life, who deserve a chance



to be held by their mother or by loving parents who adopt them and



care for them through Christian Adoption Services, that march goes on.



See Boutin family feature on pages 6 & 7.

# March for safety, security, and salvation goes on

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

The room darkens and the video appears on two large screens, images of days long past appear.

*“The Thomasville Orphanage was born in a time of adversity. The Civil War had ended only 20 years earlier. It was 1885 and this Orphanage—this citadel of hope—greeted the first child on a blustery November afternoon.”*

The video “Founded on faith...Built on love” began the Baptist Children’s Homes’ report at the 2021 Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting in Greensboro on November 9. The video traverses time, reflecting on times of challenge: the flu pandemic of 1918, polio quarantine of the early 1950s, two world wars, The Great Depression, Vietnam, 9/11, and now Corona virus.

Messengers’ attentions are drawn as they are reminded how God sustained the ministry: *“God’s guidance and the sacrifice of women and men who gave of themselves to the ‘least of these’...the most vulnerable.”* The video concludes: *“We are BCH Strong. We will rise. ...We shall not be moved. Strong now, strong then, strong forever.”*

I then stepped before the Messengers and shared how through time the march goes on:

*“This is the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina—many ministries, to the glory of God, beating with one heart.*

*“The journey we have been on since November 11, 1885 continues. This year, we will serve 195 thousand people. 195,000 people! And we’re just getting started.*

*“The march for safety, security, and salvation goes on. The march for children who have been abused, abandoned, traumatized, and tossed aside—that march goes on.*

*“For aging adults who are alone or lonely or in frail health and who need ‘help for the journey’ from the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry, that march goes on.*



Dr. Blackwell’s presentation to the Messengers of the 2021 Baptist State Convention has been seen by hundreds. The seven minute speech can be viewed by going online to [bit.ly/21mcb](https://bit.ly/21mcb).

*“For unborn babies who deserve a chance at life, who deserve a chance to be held by their mother or by loving parents who adopt them and care for them through Christian Adoption Services, that march goes on.*

*“For special needs adults who are blessed by God but have intellectual and developmental challenges and who come to us Baptists for love and protection and sunshine, that march goes on.*

*“For orphans in Guatemala who are loved in the name of Jesus and who come to know him as Lord and Savior, that march goes on.*

*“For our many outreach ministries that feed the hungry and console the downtrodden, that march goes on.*

*“For college students, for boys and girls who live outdoors in our two wilderness camping programs, for children in residential care, foster care, adoption care, foster to adopt care, birth mother care, that*

*march goes on.*

*“This is BCH! We will not be discouraged. We will not be defeated. God is on the side of children. And, so is the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.*

*“So, join hands with me, North Carolina Baptists—frail children of God though we may be—and affirm that the dream of safety and security and salvation for all children—for all God’s children, every child—is a dream that will never die. Strong now...strong then...strong forever.”*

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** A mere seven minutes, but a message that powerfully speaks to all who hold this ministry dear. You are invited to view Dr. Blackwell’s complete presentation by using the QR code or at [bit.ly/21mcb](https://bit.ly/21mcb).



## 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. Michael C. Blackwell, publisher; 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 11 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 four 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](http://bchfamily.org)/charityandchildren. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Charity & Children, PO Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361-0338.

# New home to be place of healing for birth moms

By Cyndie Truax, BCH Director of Strategic Initiatives & Special Projects

For more than 40 years, Christian Adoption Services (CAS), a ministry of Baptist Children's Homes, has ministered to expectant women during some of their darkest days. Through counseling, support groups, and annual retreats, CAS sought to show these women that their story is far from over. These precious ladies, needed just a bit more, a bit more love, a bit more time, and a bit more security and stability.

CAS wanted to do more for some time. Despite its robust counseling opportunities and its life-changing annual retreat, CAS was keenly aware that some of these courageous women were dealing with a deep level of heartache and emotion after placing their child for adoption. There needed to be a way to come alongside and help them in their journey.

People prayed and God did what only God could do. On a blustery November 6 morning, Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) officially broke ground on renovations for BCH's newest minis-



Above, Dr. Blackwell presents a commemorative walking stick to Win McCollough at The Emmanuel Home on November 6. McCollough trekked 600 miles to raise funds for the restoration project. Right three photos, men and women from Piedmont Baptist Association and Baptist on Mission tackle the demolition before restoration begins. Plans are to open the home in 2022, but there is much work to be done. To learn more about The Emmanuel Home Restoration Project and how you can partner with BCH, contact Cyndie Truax at 518-424-1890 or [ctrux@bchfamily.org](mailto:ctrux@bchfamily.org) or visit [www.christianadopt.org/emmanuel-home](http://www.christianadopt.org/emmanuel-home).



try—The Emmanuel Home—an after-care home for mothers who choose adoption for their child but need more time and care to find healing for themselves.

BCH President/CEO Michael C. Blackwell shared a grateful heart as he stood before the group at this historic 1914 era home which sits near Mills Home in Thomasville. "We cannot offer this morning to God anything other than a heart of gratitude." Blackwell gave God the glory saying it is God who has brought this to fruition.

"This home will offer birth mothers who have chosen life for their child a beacon of light and hope during a difficult time,"



Blackwell said.

Faithful BCH family, friends, and church partners completely finished the demolition work in just two days. The house, which sat vacant for many years, began to come back to life.

The imagery of the house which

was broken and left to a hopeless future will become a place of healing—all through Christ's love! Beyond the deepest valleys the highest mountains rise heavenly. The Emmanuel Home will not be an end to a story, but a place of beginnings.



Chris and Darci Horne of Charlotte, lead donors for the Emmanuel Home, received a "Friends of Children" award from, right, BCH President/CEO Michael C. Blackwell along with, left, CAS Senior Director of Adoption Kevin Qualls.

# Grab hold of the rope, lower a child before Christ

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

**T**here are many scriptures which share the importance of friends—brothers and sisters in Christ who are willing to grab hold of the rope and care for the needs of others. The scripture passage which vividly demonstrates this message is found in Luke, chapter 5. Scripture reads:

*17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.*

*18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.*

*19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.*

*20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

*21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?*

*22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?*

*23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?*

*24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.*

*25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and*

*departed to his own house, glorifying God.*

*26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.*

The friends of the man on the bed made a way for him to get to Jesus for healing. What if they had said they were too busy or the obstacles were too great? What if they had listened to the objections of the crowd. What if they had lacked the courage to go on the roof, remove the tile, and take this man to Jesus? Yes, there were many obstacles, but they would not give up until they found a way to place him at the feet of Jesus.

Each and every day, you are there for our children, lowering the ropes through all the obstacles and placing them at the feet of Jesus. You do that through your prayers, your encouragement, and through your faithful financial support. This past year you touched the lives of more than 195,000 through the ministries of Baptist Children's Homes. But the need continues to be overwhelming. As we enter 2022, we know there will be so many others—children and families—who will walk through our doors desperate for help, that will only know the hope and the help and the healing that Christ can give because you cared enough to tackle the obstacles. You determined to grab the rope and carry a child and place them before Christ.

This week, I watched this take place at a Christmas party.

The gym was full of children running and playing. It was loud!

Laughter rang out and squeals of joy filled the room.

Cottage parents filled plates with wonderful treats.

Four young children caught my eye. The older child was very protective of the younger children. When I inquired if they were brothers and sisters, I

was told they had recently come into care. They endured four other placements and at times were separated. You cared enough to grab the rope and carry them to a place where they could experience the love and hope they so desperately needed.

I wish you could have been here to see the transformation taking place. I wish you could have heard the squeals of laughter and joy as it filled the space around us. I wish you could have witnessed our staff all around them, loving them and caring for them. In that moment, you were a lifeline lowering the rope of healing. **Thank YOU!**

You have sustained us through some very challenging times. You have been willing to grab the ropes over and over again. I want to ask you to consider another way to help us grab hold of the ropes to carry children and families to Jesus—not only today, but tomorrow.

I.G. Greer joined the Board of Trustees in 1928 and, four years later, he became superintendent.

Greer was one that grabbed the rope tightly to place children at the feet of Jesus on a daily basis. But he also knew

the importance of planning for tomorrow. To honor this one who so

ably led this ministry and stirred hearts to service, the I.G. Greer Society was formed

to recognize individuals, couples, and families who are committed to *Sharing Hope...*

*Changing Lives*. The society is comprised of those friends who have remembered BCH in their estate plans. These plans include one of the following:

- Including BCH in your Will
- Developing a life income gift
- Giving a gift of life insurance
- Establishing an endowment.

The only requirement? You only need a concern for vulnerable, marginalized “least of these” children and families and a conviction that BCH can and will be there to grab the ropes, carry them, and place them before Christ.

We are building God's Kingdom, one vulnerable child, one marginalized family at a time. Whatever your gift, it will bear eternal influence on generations upon generations of children.

Will you continue to travail the obstacles. Will you grab the rope, carry those we serve, and place them at the feet of Jesus—today and tomorrow?

January is **Make Your Will Month**. If you haven't already made your Will, or if it is time to update your Will, now is a good time to do so. For more information on how you can make an eternal difference through your estate planning,

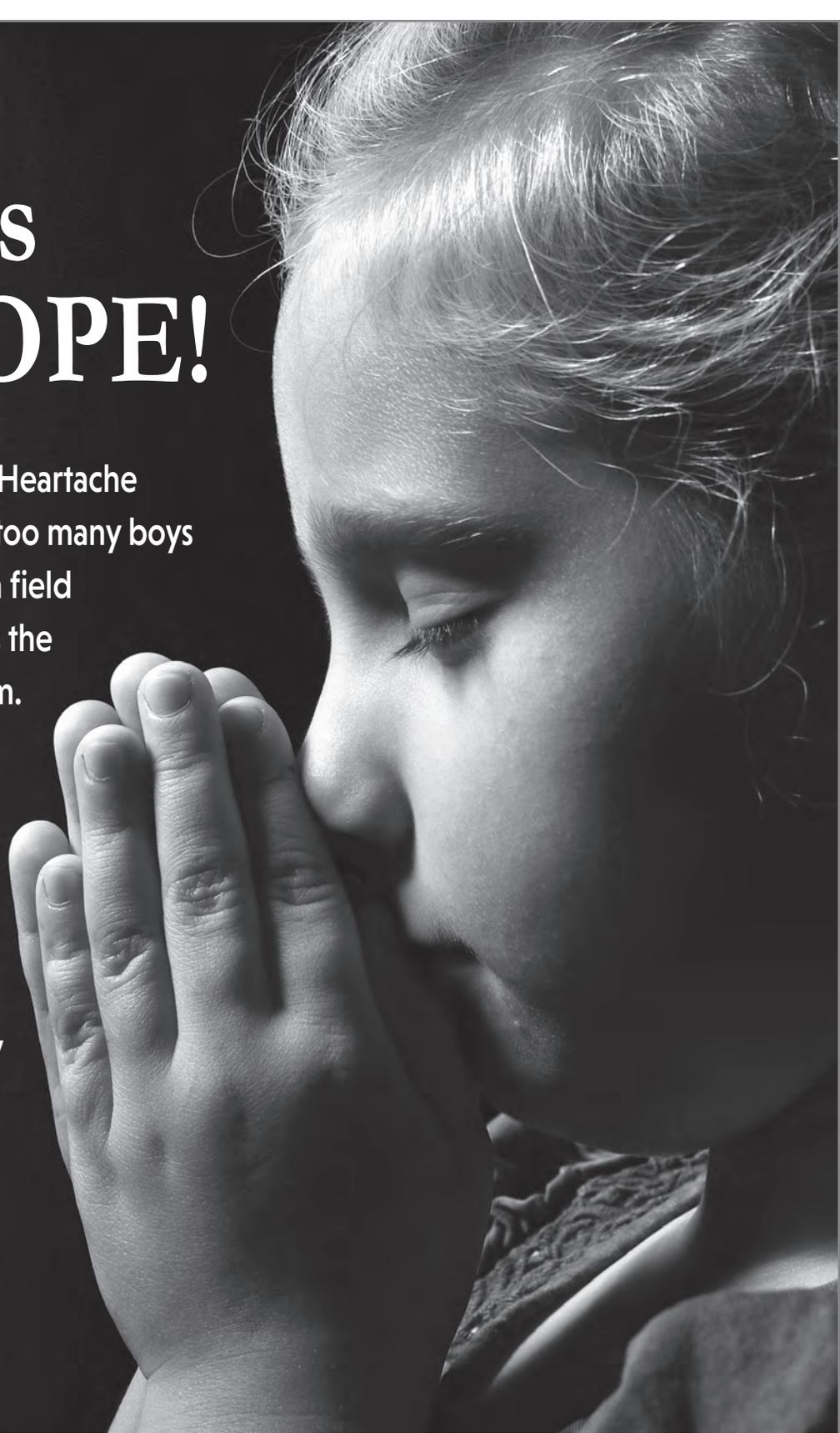


# Your gift shines the light of HOPE!

Children are in desperate need of HOPE. Heartache and pain have become the norm for far too many boys and girls throughout our North Carolina mission field and beyond. Abuse and neglect run rampant as the darkness closes in, threatening to consume them. However, God promises that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot win.

At Baptist Children's Homes, through your year-end gift, hundreds of boys and girls coming to us in the next year will discover a place where heartache and pain are replaced with joy and love. You make it possible for the light of Jesus to be shone into their lives. Please give.

DOUBLE your gift through the matching gift challenge until January 31. Please give at [bchfamily.org/givenow](http://bchfamily.org/givenow).



## I want to help, please double my gift!

\$50     \$100     \$250     \$500     \$ \_\_\_\_\_ 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 your gift by credit card at [www.bchfamily.org/givenow](http://www.bchfamily.org/givenow) or 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.

# No child is unadoptable

## The Boutin family's hearts, arms open wide for children

By Jim Edminson, Editor

**A** new baby boy was a dream come true. Joy and Stephan Boutin had a beautiful daughter and with the birth of Jacob, their family was complete. Until...

"We felt the world had stopped turning," Joy remembers. "There are no words to express the shock. We walked into Jacob's room and he was not breathing."

Joy had turned in faith to the Lord after Melika was born. Stephan was attending church with his family but had not expressed faith in Christ.

"We were holding Jacob's lifeless body, and I knew if I ever wanted to see him again, I needed to be right with Jesus," Stephan recalls. "In that moment, I gave my heart to the Lord."



Four-year-old Asher Nicole

After Jacob's death in 1999, Joy's dream of two children was replaced with a desire to have a household of children. The small family moved to Syracuse, New York in 2001 to be near some of Joy's family. There the couple met a little girl named Kylee. She was Joy's first cousin's granddaughter and could no longer live with her birth mom. The Boutins set their hearts on adopting her, but it was not easy.

"Jesus proved Himself faithful," Joy says. "He granted us the strength and endurance for the six-year journey it took. Kylee's adoption was finalized in 2006."

Stephan admits they were naive. There were difficult court appearances and Kylee coming in and out of their lives, twice. "It was hard, and it hurt, too. But we knew we were to be Jesus for her."

Now living in North Carolina, Joy and Stephan loved their daughters, but both felt it was time to turn to domestic adoption, "hoping to have a baby" in their home again.

Time and time again, the promise of an adoption fell through. "The four of us found ourselves huddled on

The Boutin family gathered around Asher in the final hours of her life. Just as she had done from the first day, Asher united them all.

the floor crying some raw tears," Joy says. The family resolved that if they got what they wanted, they would praise God, and if they didn't, they would praise Him, too. Every step they took brought them to a deeper reliance in Jesus.

The Boutins began working with Christian Adoption Services (CAS) in 2012 and were introduced to a children's summer hosting program with the Philippines. It was a program with older children and was international, not domestic. Instead of hosting a child, Joy and Stephan soon were working to adopt 12-year-old Aaron.

"Aaron's story is laced with countless miracles," Joy says. "Abandoned as an infant and known only as 'baby boy,' Christ moved mountains providing all the resources and preparing our new son for his new family."

Now a Boutin, Aaron was thrilled in 2014 when he learned of the possibility of the family adopting three Filipino brothers. He loved his new sisters, but from the first day, he hoped for the addition of a brother. The team at CAS needed a response from the Boutins quickly. They were being asked to adopt three boys ages 17, 11, and 10.

"It was December," Stephan recalls, "the pastor's sermon the very next day was based on the hymn 'O Come,



Newborn Asher with Stephan

O Come, Emmanuel.' The boys names are Em, Eman, and Emmanuel—God with us! We knew at that moment they were ours."

There were six children now living in the Boutin home. Days were hectic, and rewarding.

"A few months after doubling our family, we learned of a baby girl

named Asher Nicole," Joy says. Asher was born with hydranencephaly, diabetes insipidus, and cerebral palsy. She was missing the lobes of her brain and only had a brain stem. Doctors gave her two days to live at birth.

"We listed the reasons why we could not adopt Asher," Stephan confides. "But we knew we could not let her die

without a family."

Asher came home on May 15, 2015.

"I wish I could describe how very much we needed Asher in our lives," Joy says. "God used her life in our family to bring healing to our older children, comfort to my mom as she died of cancer, and purpose for my dad to live again after she died. Oh, how God used this special little life to transform each us."

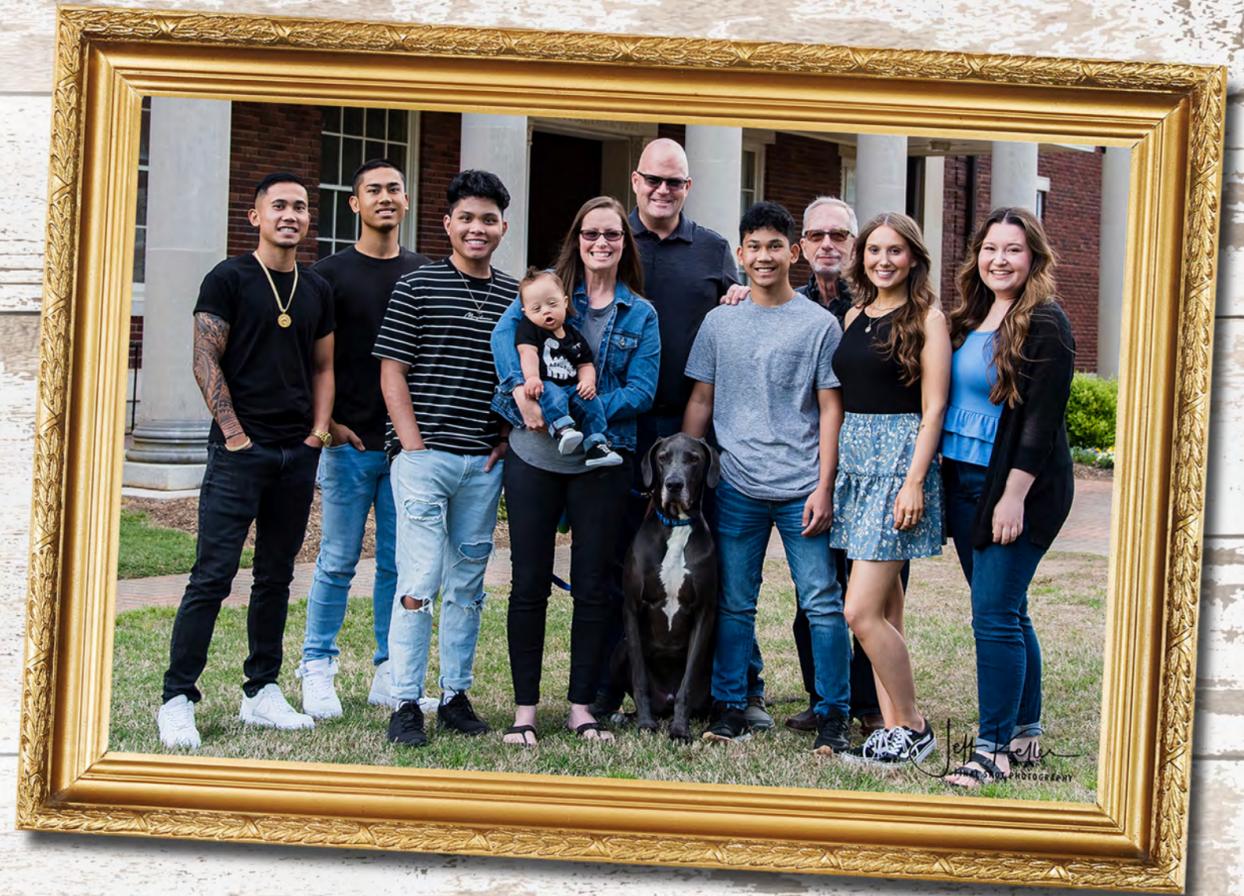
Asher "ran to the arms of Jesus" on May 17, 2019.

The grief was almost overwhelming. Joy and Stephan had now lost two children—children who could never be replaced.

Then God "rocked" their



Boutin family dog Blue is attentive as Joy reads Zay'den one of his favorite books. Zay'den's physical needs demands 24-hour attention. The Boutins have opened their hearts to seven adopted children.



The Boutin family are, left to right, Em, Eman, Aaron, Joy, Zay'den, Stephan, Blu, Emmanuel, "Grampy" Roger Fahmer, Kylee, and Melika.

world. Zay'den Isaiah was born with Down syndrome, a heart defect, and GI track issues. CAS reached out to the Boutins for placement in July 2021.

"At this time, with all that we have experienced, we are always going to say 'yes' for a child," Joy asserts. "No child is unadoptable."

Zay'den became the ninth Boutin.

Joy and Stephan Boutin will be sharing their story in person at the following CAS sponsored "Tree Benefit Banquets" in 2022: Myrtle Beach on February 10, Charlotte on March 10, and Apex on March 28. Guests can register online at [christianadopt.org](http://christianadopt.org).



Zay'den Isaiah

# One more look at C&C's top news stories of 2021

Life at Baptist Children's Homes has been filled with many blessings during challenging times. These top stories appeared in *Charity & Children* in 2021:

## EVERY CHILD partnership unveiled

Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) launched a new partnership—EVERY CHILD Foster & Adoption Ministry. It is an outgrowth of the family foster care service that has allowed BCH to establish nearly 120 family foster homes (November 2021). The foster and adoption ministry is a complement to BCH's cottage care program where children live with cottage parents in family-style homes. Learn more at [every-child.org](http://every-child.org).

## River Hill Refuge fills void

The building of three new Family Foster Homes for children will begin soon at River Hill Refuge. North Carolina Baptists and friends of BCH have met the \$4.3 million fundraising goal. The ground-breaking ceremony was held on September 11. Each home will have a set of BCH-recruited Christian foster parents who care for as many as five children at one time. They will be trained and supported by BCH foster care staff, but are licensed as state foster parents. This Family Foster Home model has been introduced at BCH's Moody Home in Franklin and Smith Home in Robbins.

## Blackwell releases new history book

Dr. Michael C. Blackwell released his newest book *Founded on Faith...Built on Love* which tells BCH's story from the last 20 years while summarizing the entire history from 1885 through 2020. It is his sixth book and a follow up to *A Place for Miracles* that was published in 2002. A grant from the Broyhill Family Foundation made publishing the new book possible. There are a few copies remaining. If anyone is interested in purchasing a copy, contact Pam Burgess at 333-474-1286.

## New websites launch in 2021

The new [bchfamily.org](http://bchfamily.org) website was unveiled on July 15 giving BCH's flagship site a new look. The goal was to make it easier to find information about BCH's many ministries, events, and stories. BCH's blog has been integrated into the site and can be accessed at [bchblog.org](http://bchblog.org). In addition, the new foster care and adoption website, [every-child.org](http://every-child.org), was published in November 2021.

## BCH to open home for birth mothers

"The Emmanuel Home," a residential home for birth mothers will serve up to five birth mothers who have chosen adoption for their babies and need care and support to reacclimate themselves after the birth of the baby. The home is in the historic district of Thomasville and a short distance from Mills Home. It is being restored thanks to Baptists on Mission volunteers, church volunteers, various donors, and with the help of a lead gift made by Chris and Darci Horne of Charlotte. A dedication program was held at The Emmanuel Home property on November 6.

## NCBAM takes great strides to help aging

NCBAM debuted "Camp BAM" in June. Intergenerational campers met at Mills Home in Thomasville for four nights and completed 19 service projects for local seniors. The "Live Out Luke" Endowment Fund, to benefit Camp BAM, was established in memory of William Luke McDowell, son of Rev. C.F. McDowell, III and Rev. Martha McDowell. NCBAM also received \$29,947 from the annual "Tractor Ride" fundraiser held at Denton Farm Park. Funds will be used for "Rampin' Up!" in 2022. NCBAM converted the annex of the Kennedy Home Baptist Church in Kinston to serve as the hub for its new Care Village which will serve members 65+ by offering geriatric care management services.

## Blackwell's podcast marks 50th episode

On May 10, the award-winning podcast, "It's a Family Matter," debuted its 50th episode. In the summer of 2019, Dr. Blackwell launched the podcast, releasing a new episode every two weeks. The May 10 episode culminated a three-part series with guest Bishop Dr. George B. Jackson, the founding pastor of the Citadel of

Faith Christian Fellowship in Thomasville and founder and chair of the Martin Luther King Social Action Committee.

## BCH and staff members recognized

*The NonProfit Times* selected BCH as one of the "2021 Best Nonprofits to Work For." The national award presented by *The Non Profit Times*, the leading publication for nonprofit managers, along with the Best Companies Group, identified 50 organizations throughout the United States whose leaders have "excelled in creating quality workplaces." Three-quarters of the evaluation was based on results from each organization's employee survey to "measure the employee experience." BCH placed 30th in the nationwide competition and was one of only six nonprofits to receive this award.—North Carolina's Division of Aging and Adult Services presented the George L. Maddox award to NCBAM to recognize its "excellence in creative programming for older adults."—Baptist Children's Homes University (BCHU) graduated its fourth class on October 13. BCHU is a leadership and talent management program. The 2021 graduates are: Rebekah Reagan, Matt Chilson, Crystal Killian, Drew Scott, Emily Adler, and Jada Cable.—Angie Gregg, NCBAM west regional director, was awarded the B.T. Fowler Lifetime Achievement Award by the NC Fire & Life Safety Education Council. The award recognized the difference she has made in preventing the devastating effect of fire, burn injuries, and deaths in North Carolina.—Baptist Communicators Association presented excellence in communications' awards to Dr. Blackwell, Blake Ragsdale, Carol Layton, and Jim Edminson.—Lewis Smith met and exceeded his "Bike for Hope" goal by raising \$105,000.

# RUN FAR

139 MILES. 24 HOURS. 1 CAUSE.  
DECEMBER 29 - 30 - 2021

**YOUR GIFT IS VITAL  
TO HELP THESE RUNNERS RAISE  
FUNDS FOR NC CHILDREN WHO  
NEED CARING HOMES THROUGH  
FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION.**

To give, scan the QR code or go to  
[bchfamily.org/givenow](http://bchfamily.org/givenow). Type  
"GO FAR" in the Gift Notes field.  
Thank you to runners from Hickory  
Grove Baptist in Charlotte!



# Alumni recount growing up at Mills Home, caring cottage and farm staff remembered fondly

By Lib Johnson

(336) 299-7412

libsjohnson@triad.rr.com

The Alumni Council/Association invites you to attend a "Farewell Reception" in honor of Reverend Dr. Randy Stewart on January 16, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. in the Mills Home (MH) gymnasium. If you would like to make a contribution of food for this event, please contact Alumni President **Jane Helms Brown** to let her know. She will then know what other items may be needed. Contact her on Facebook, by email or text. Her phone number is 919-451-2912. Her email address is [ddbjh86@gmail.com](mailto:ddbjh86@gmail.com). We hope to see you then.

**Joyce Peek Rogers** really enjoyed returning for Homecoming in 2019 because her daughter and granddaughter came with her and she was able to show them her old home. She also had equal joy at being able to see old friends that she had not seen for a long time. Joyce entered MH 1953 with siblings **Lana and Locke** (now deceased), and she graduated in 1963. Now a widow with three offspring, five grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren, she lives in Tampa, Florida.

In her busy life on the MH campus, Joyce loved taking part in Mills Home Baptist Church's Girls' Auxiliary, singing in the choir, teaching Sunday school, and learning to play the piano. Her tour of duties on campus included housekeeping in one of the cottages, working as an office assistant, and working in the infirmary. She feels the duties were good preparation for efficiency as a homemaker. She also feels she benefited from living a set daily routine that included devotions, breakfast, getting ready for school, the school day, returning home to carry out campus duties, and ending the day with dinner,

study hall, and regular bedtime. She especially enjoyed life at the Biggs Cottage with house mother **Miss Imogene Wilson** who was great at making it clear what she expected of "her girls" and demonstrating unconditional love and concern for them. Among her favorite workers, Joyce named **Serena Walker, Pastor Terrell, Pastor Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow, nurse Joyce Lee, Ms. Crouch and Miss Sally McCracken**.

**Wake Knight** entered Mills Home with his brother **Todd** in 1975 and left in 1977. While at MH, he especially enjoyed taking piano lessons and eating delicious food prepared by **Lougenia Pinnix** at the Hutchinson Cottage. Today, he makes his home at 5761 Hwy 220, Madison, NC 27025. He enjoys being self-employed. Friends can contact him at [importdoc2@gmail.com](mailto:importdoc2@gmail.com) or 336-337-0669.

We were all saddened to learn of the death of **Linda Bray McAllister** on Nov. 14, 2021. She lived at MH from 1971-1975. Her children were very proud of their mother, describing her as a most selfless, loving, down to earth person, and gentle as any soul you could meet. She had a deep love of music, great skill at yarn work such as crocheting, great skill as a cook and homemaker, and most importantly great skills in giving love and affection. She was great at mentoring and comforting people, especially family members. Known affectionately as "Sunshine," her family says "she was the sunshine that brightened all our days." In her most recent years, she became interested in physical workouts to get in good condition. That was a deep interest she shared with her good friend **Harry Walls**. And besides being a great mother and grand-

mother, Linda managed to be a successful lab assistant with LabCorp. She was preceded in death by brothers **Jimmy Bray, Thomas Bray, Ronnie Blackwood** and a sister **Alice Hodge**. Surviving are her former husband **George McAllister**, daughter **Marcia Brown**, son **Marcus McAllister**, and granddaughter **Rachel Brown**. She will be sorely missed.

**Ronnie (Ron) Wyatt** sent a "thank you" to those workers who "stuck" with him during his time at MH. He said he did not need to name them because "they know who they are." He commented also that he has "been blessed on the back end of life as a husband and father, having been married 30 years to his wonderful wife **Mandy**. He is so proud of their two beautiful and intelligent, giving daughters who are making a positive difference in this world. Ron was at MH from 1978 to 1981. He loved being involved in the sports and general recreation on campus, and he eventually made the step up to being the gym/recreation manager. He well remembers the other duties of lawn mowing and serving as the van transport driver. Friends can contact Ron at this address: PO Box 2929, Thomasville, NC 2730, 336-870-8012 or [ronlewwyatt@gmail.com](mailto:ronlewwyatt@gmail.com).

It was good to hear from **Grace Panther** again. Grace came to Mills Home from Shelby, NC in 1947 and graduated in 1956. Like most MH youngsters, she was engaged in several church activities such as Girls' Auxiliary, BTU, and choir. She also held several duties such as kitchen, housecleaning, sewing room, and laundry. She married **Jack Willis** fairly soon after graduation and they had two offspring. Along with rearing a family, she also held public jobs through

the years, chiefly serving the public schools in one way or another. From 2005-2021, she worked with kindergarten children at Casar Elementary school in Casar, NC. She has also been part of the foster grandparent program in her area.

Grace lived at the Huffman building from 1954-1956 and was very fond of housemother **Mrs. Chris Marlowe**. She has been faithful in keeping up with news about the Class of 1956 and faithful about meeting with them during Homecoming weekend. Homecoming itself has been special to her since she once again sees other old friends in great fellowship.

**Ruby "Blackie" Payne** says that during her years at MH she involved herself in "everything that was offered." Franklin Bailey's history book, number three, shows her in photos that captured the marching and sitting bands, glee club, choir, girls' trio, and girls' basketball team. Anything pertaining to music was important to her. She was also involved in kitchen, house, and sewing room chores. She was a member of the first MH class to graduate from Thomasville High School (THS) in 1949. She recalls that she and her classmates were very apprehensive about moving their senior year to THS.

After high school, Blackie married **Donovan Conroy** and reared two offspring. They lived many years in Asheville and later years in California. Now widowed and retired, she has one grandchild and lives in Kempton, PA.



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



Former residents Erica and Ciara attend the Christmas Open House at Mills Home.



Bay Leaf Baptist and its pastor Jared Richard donate toys to Mills Home in Thomasville.



Christmas party at Broyhill Home organized by Cape Carteret Baptist Church.



HOMEBASE celebrates college graduation.



Mills Home children cheer Bikers Toy Run.



Odum Home girls decorate their cottage tree.



Union West Rotary treats Camp Duncan girls.



Temple Church volunteers at Kennedy Home.



First Baptist Lenoir buys coats for foster children.



Vertical Church Pembroke donates luggage.



Cameron Boys Camp in Southern Pines parade.



Woodmen of the World bring pizza to Broyhill.

**every CHILD**  
foster & adoption ministry

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)

Do you feel called to a **CAREER IN MISSIONS?**

We have immediate opportunities:

- Cottage Parents
- Teachers/Chiefs for Wilderness Camps
- Caregivers for Special Needs Adults
- Weekday Education Preschool Teachers

Call 828.230.7133 or visit [www.bchcareers.org](http://www.bchcareers.org)

**DONATE YOUR VEHICLE**  
and it becomes a part of the ministry. Doctor visits, rides to school, church activities — *your vehicle helps!*

Contact Sam Barefoot at [svbarefoot@bchfamily.org](mailto:svbarefoot@bchfamily.org) or call him at 336-474-1224

**SECC**  
State Employees  
Combined Campaign

**#3641**

## Can we help? Many ministries beating with one heart.

- Western Area Family Services**  
Linda Morgan, Lead Dir., 828-627-9254
- Central Area Family Services**  
Regina Keener, Dir., 336-474-1200
- Eastern Area Family Services**  
Christopher Allabaugh, Dir., 252-522-0811  
[www.kennedyhome.org](http://www.kennedyhome.org)
- Odum Home**  
Kathy Locklear, Res. Mgr., 910-521-3433  
[www.odumhome.org](http://www.odumhome.org)
- Cameron Boys Camp**  
Drew Scott, Dir., 910-245-4034  
[www.cameronboyscamp.org](http://www.cameronboyscamp.org)
- Camp Duncan for Girls**  
Brad Gearhart, Dir., 910-944-3077  
[www.campduncanNC.org](http://www.campduncanNC.org)
- Family Foster Care**  
Bob McCleary, 828-627-9254  
[www.bchfostercare.org](http://www.bchfostercare.org)
- Christian Adoption Services**  
Kevin Qualls, Dir., 704-847-0038  
[www.christianadopt.org](http://www.christianadopt.org)
- Weekday Education**  
Brooke Child, Dir., 336-474-1201
- Tucker Greater Vision Ministry**  
Sara Becker, Mgr., 336-687-6384
- HOMEBASE** at W. Carolina University  
Jim Dean, Dir., 828-293-4660
- Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities**  
Tara Sessoms, Dir., 336-474-1259  
[www.hereismyhome.org](http://www.hereismyhome.org)
- NC Baptist Aging Ministry**  
Sandy Gregory, Dir., 336-474-1221  
[www.ncbam.org](http://www.ncbam.org)
- Good Shepherd Children's Home** in Guatemala  
Keith Henry, COO, 336-474-1215



# Churches encouraged to invite BCH speakers – Mornings of going to dairy at 4:30 a.m. recalled

By **JOHN THOMPSON**, 104 Village Court, Havelock, NC 28532

(252) 671-3515

jthompson117@ec.rr.com

**A**nother year is upon us and I sincerely hope that you are ready to have a great year ahead of you in 2022. I'm calling on all our Baptist churches to do a little "extra" this coming year to further the ministry of Baptist Children's Homes (BCH). There are so many ways you can help: individually, as a Sunday school class, put BCH as a line item in your church budget, and/or give children's gifts at Christmas and on their birthdays. It was my privilege to hear BCH's **Rev. Wade Parker** speak during worship at Centerview Baptist Church in Jacksonville where I am minister of senior adults and the church pianist. The pastor is Dr. Michael Schwalm. It was so obvious that Rev. Parker has the love of the Lord and BCH in his "heart." I have heard many folks talk but Rev. Parker knew just how to reach out to us all. I want to encourage you to invite him to your church to speak.

**Donald Wetherington** wrote a very nice letter for me to use this month. He came to Kennedy Home (KH) in 1958. He writes: "This past weekend we had a 'noreaster' with the winds about 67 miles an hour here in Jacksonville, and I was reminded about all the pecan trees that were on the campus at KH. I used to pick up pecans and sell them at the store down at Falling Creek highway to make a little spending money. As the wind was howling over the weekend, I smiled and thought, "boy, I bet those pecans are all over the ground." (I should go out there and pick some up and make some cash. Lol.) I recall coming home from school, putting my books down and scurrying out with my shoe box to pick up pecans, hoping that I would get there before my competition did!

"At Christmas time, I remember the Woodmen of the World

would come out and give us gifts. That day at school, when I knew they were coming at night, I could hardly pay attention. I was so excited about what I might get. In recent years past, I've had the opportunity to go with the Woodmen of the World and help distribute the toys and presents to the children and give my testimony about when I was at KH. I really cherish that opportunity. KH is where I learned about Jesus Christ and accepting Him as my Savior—the best thing I have ever done in my life. I'm sure I won't ever go back and pick up any more pecans, I'll leave them there for the next entrepreneur. To my fellow brothers and sister from KH, don't never forget the charity that folks extended to you and me. Help out when you can, remember what was given to you that you also may give back. I would like to thank all my veterans from KH that served."

**Walter Sisk** wrote a note about being at KH, too: "I remember shaking that pecan tree at night. It would sound like it was raining. Placing the blankets we put on the ground were a life saver."

**Edward Pait** wrote about the pecans, too: "I remember back in 1961-62, **Jimmy Moore** and I would sneak out of the Bunker Cottage a couple of nights before everyone was to gather the pecans from the area near the Bunker and on toward the church. We would put our army blanket on the ground, climb the trees and stomp on a limb while holding onto a tree limb. It would rain pecans. Then we would get **Dallas and Kenneth Wilkerson and Kenneth Tilghman** to help put them in a bushel basket to sell in Kinston. Trying to make a little change. We were only 11 years old."

Edward also wrote a nice article for this column: "Mr. Thompson, I had left KH back in 1969, a couple or so years before your time there.

I remember you and your wife from some of the Homecomings later. Several of the ladies and men who lived there while I was there and after I left, speak of you with much pride and joy. You and **Mrs. Becky** shared so much of your time mentoring the children, whether in conversation or church activities. Only those of us who have lived there, can know what you meant to them. I thank you for giving your time and knowledge and thank you for serving. I hope you enjoy your new residence and I know how the boys feel about you. That's a good thing.

"I came to KH in November 1960. I worked house duty for the first quarter at Bunker Cottage with **Matron Young**. Kitchen duty the second duty roster that came out with **Mrs. V. T. Moore**. Then it was time to go to the farm and work with **Mr. Johnson and Mr. H. J. Hensley**. I worked farm duty most every quarter after that—I would get someone who didn't like the farm to swap duty with me. We picked bean and pea rows that never ended. And harvested potatoes, strawberries, thousands of ears of corn, and millions of bales of hay that all went to the barn for the cows. I did freezer locker duty with **Mr. Walker** after I learned to drive—delivering groceries and bushels of beans and peas to the buildings for the girls and boys to shell. I helped build the barns for the new dairy that came about back in 1967.

I would go to the dairy at 4:30 a.m. and then return to the cottage to eat breakfast and leave with a school bus to pick up children on a route for LaGrange Elementary School in 1967 and 1968. After the farm managers, **Mr. Frank McDade and Mr. H. J. Hensley**, put me in charge of keeping the pasture behind the Bunker Cottage, campus, and all roads leading to the river mowed with the large

tractors and pull behind mowers. I went to work with Harrison Electric in LaGrange between my junior and senior summer break. Worked with Heath Electric in Kinston the summer after graduating in 1969. I worked for ADT Security Systems moving to Jacksonville, Florida from 1972 through 1977 and working with ADT in Jacksonville, Orlando, and Miami. I moved back to Charlotte in 1977 and then to Raleigh in 1978 to be service manager for National Security. I went in business for myself creating Pait Security Systems in 1980 and am still working. I also owned Capital Archery and Firearms for six years back in the 1990s. I will retire soon. I have been truly blessed to have been to the places I have been and to have met thousands of very nice people.

I enjoy coming back on campus. I installed the fire alarm system for the A.D. Cottage a few years ago and installed several security systems for some of the people I lived with at KH. It is always a pleasure to return home!"

Please notice that I now live in a duplex in Havelock at 104 Village Court. This is really a change for me. For instance, the house I lived in last had 16 windows and this home has four windows and a sliding glass door. It sure feels different. I want to invite any of you to stop by and visit with me. Give me a call so I'll know when you are coming.

Thanks again for the many visits, meals and gifts of money you have given to me since this past August. I continue to miss my Becky, but it really means a whole lot to me. Your support has been

great! Love you very much—jt



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

# Traditions bring promise of a strong, good future

By Jim Edminson, Editor

The new year breaks, and after a brief look at resolutions that may or may not be kept in the coming months (or days), I am considering all the traditions I want to repeat in my new year. My mind very naturally turns to cookies.

Now, I must confess that in a list of favorite types of desserts, cookies do not even make an appearance in my top five. Pies are, of course, number one, followed by cakes, ice cream, puddings, and pastries. When we eat cookies at my house, they are always someone else's suggestion. However, during the holiday season last month, and in all the holiday seasons of recent memory, my daughters and wife plan a day to devote to a mammoth cookie bake. Cookies, you understand, are a tradition for them. On their collective calendars, a cookie bake date appears way before Thanksgiving and none of the invitees would ever consider canceling the event. This past year, the bake date fell on a Saturday, so I was a witness to all the festivities and chaos.

Traditions are passed along from generation to generation. My extended family would congregate in summer for the annual reunion that brought the Terrell clan from far and wide to one of the uncles' home places in Central Louisiana. Like many other families who have the same tradition, our extended family celebrated each other over shared recipes and shared memories, extending to the next generation. Want to know who we are as a family? Come early for the preparation, stay for the meal, and linger for the songs and stories, learn the history and legacy of being us. Being connected matters. Our traditions remind us of that.

Some traditions pop up almost unexpectedly as a one-time event only to recur over and over until, like reunions, they are markers on each year's calendar. These can include a family's way of celebrating birthdays—while most of us honor the special day of our loved ones, we seem to go about it in unique ways. When our children

were young, each arrived at the breakfast table to have gifts waiting in their honor. Right after we enjoyed waffles topped with strawberries and whipped cream, we sang the song, cheered the honoree, and watched as torn gift boxes and ripped paper revealed birthday treasures. Later that day, the favorite dinner meal of the birthday person was served, followed by the cake of choice, more singing, more celebrating. Such good memories to recall and laugh again at the simple times and the joy we felt.

The annual cookie bake takes place at our house. My now grown daughters arrive early laden with needed kitchen appliances, baking supplies, and festive tins, brightly colored cellophane bags, and cardboard boxes to carry goodies home. Favorite Christmas movies from their personal collections will be watched while carols break out spontaneously.

This tradition is now six years old. Before then, since the girls lived with us, there was no need for a day set aside to bake together. Piece-meal, it came together little by little, a series of bakes that culminated in colossal amount of treats to share and give away. When that reality evolved,

the new tradition sprang to life.

From my place on the outskirts of the event, I watch the women in my life, so different from their younger selves, acting, reacting, interacting with each other, all with their own personalities, one so different from the other and yet all amazingly working together. There are hilarious moments, small mishaps, the inevitable spills, and minor catastrophes, and yet the sweet aroma from the cookies brings smiles to all.

I marvel at the way the chaos turns into order, the tiredness changes to satisfaction.

Families have traditions to celebrate and unite all involved. Year in and year out, we resolve to keep our union strong, to support each other, and to be the cheering fans we all need on the sidelines of our lives. As this new

year unfolds, may we hold tight to all that will not fade, nor tarnish, nor lose value. Thanks be to God Who goes before us into the unknown and bids us follow: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." I look over at those weary and wonderful faces, and I am indeed aware of a strong, good future.

Samples? Yes, please! And may this tradition remain a part of my life. Our lives.

Edminson encourages others through the Good News of Jesus. You can email him at [wjedminson@bchfamily.org](mailto:wjedminson@bchfamily.org).



Give to the *angel* FUND in honor of Sanctity of Life Month.

As you honor this special month, please make a gift to our Christian Adoption Services. Your gift allows us to provide ministry and care to expectant mothers and adoptive families.

Your gift is **DOUBLED** through the Matching Gift Challenge!

To give, go to [bchfamily.org](http://bchfamily.org) and choose Adoption Services from the "Direct My Gift" menu. You can also mail a check using the enclosed envelope and write "Adoption Services" in the memo area. Deadline to have your gift matched is Jan. 31, 2022.



Baptist Children's Homes is accredited by the Council on Accreditation and is recognized as a certified CARE agency.