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5/20

# Charity & Children

133/4

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

Join us in giving thanks for moms and dads. (Page 5) May is National Foster Care Month. (Page 6)

A message for you from Dr. Michael C. Blackwell

## An oasis of hope in a sea of uncertainty.

My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. You are dear to me and you are dear to those we serve.

I know you are passionate about the Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) and are concerned about us. First, we praise God that our boys and girls, and everyone we are privileged to care for each day, are healthy and safe. Second, our staff members are well. I hear from them every day and I am humbled and inspired by their loyalty, commitment and strong Christian witness

as they give tirelessly during these challenging days. *BCH is an "Oasis of Hope" in a sea of uncertainty.*

Unlike many businesses and organizations that are forced to curb their operating hours or even close their doors, we are open and must remain open. The tremendous needs of those we serve cannot be placed on hold. They are depending on us. *BCH is an "Oasis of Hope" in a sea of uncertainty.*

We are preparing for an increase in the number of

children who will need compassionate care. It is in times of crisis and heightened stress that we see cases of abuse and neglect rise. We must ensure that the hurting boys and girls who come into our cottages receive all that they need. *BCH is an "Oasis of Hope" in a sea of uncertainty.*

In the chaos that swirls about during a crisis, there is a need for comfort and reassurance. There is a need for an *"Oasis of Hope."*

For this reason, I turn to you. Some 70% of our budget is dependent on people who respond to the Lord and give generously. We operate on a budget of faith dependent on the gifts of our friends.

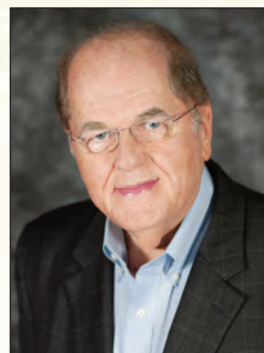
Needed support also comes from North Carolina Baptist churches — churches closed because it is not safe to gather together. We've postponed our Food Roundup until later in

the year. The food drive collects annually \$750,000 in non-perishable food, supplies and gift cards. Again, with churches closed, food cannot be collected. Since we count on the food drive to serve multiple meals and snacks daily, there is no budget to replenish empty shelves.

I need your help. Will you give? Your sacrificial gift now will help guarantee that we remain an *"Oasis of Hope"* in the face of this worldwide pandemic.

Thank you for ensuring that every child, every special needs resident, every family served knows that the love of Almighty God is greater than fear and that in Him there is always *hope!*

May the Spirit of the Living Christ bless you, protect you, encourage you, empower you, and secure you in holy comfort, radiant joy and *hope!*





# Smile, relax, pray, and wash the coronavirus away

By **Michael C. Blackwell**, President/CEO

This month, *My Thoughts* is penned by Mills Home alum, and my dear friend, Ted Chandler. The esteemed doctor of medicine wrote the article using his new book on the coronavirus. For more information, email Ted at [tedchandlermd@gmail.com](mailto:tedchandlermd@gmail.com).

In spite of scary COVID-19 projections of Americans deaths, and, shelter-in-place orders, and, all the talk of flattening the curve, some people still aren't getting how serious the coronavirus is, even though they could be playing a vital role in keeping themselves and the rest of their families and community safe.

**Here are five facts everyone should reflect on, pay attention to, and follow:**

**1.** People are contagious early in the infection, potentially even before they begin having symptoms. Thus, they are "silent spreaders." A study conducted in Germany found that nine infected people were shedding huge amounts of the virus on day one of their infection — when their own symptoms were similar to a mild cold.

**2.** After being contaminated, it can take up to 11 days for symptoms to appear. Research has shown that the median incubation period is five days. But, the range is between two days and 11 days. So, after picking up the virus, you could be highly contagious without knowing it. To be safe and keep others safe, the 14 day quarantine is a good approach for everyone.

**3.** The virus lives on surfaces for up to three days. In an experiment, scientists created an aerosol which contained the coronavirus to see how it would survive and spread after a cough, sneeze or from exhaled breath: on copper, it lived 4 hours; on cardboard, it lived 24 hours; on plastic and stainless steel, it lived 2-3 days.

So, on plastics or stainless steel, you can touch the contaminated object and then rub your nose, for example, and become infected, the same as you would by inhaling infected droplets.

**4.** The growth rate of the virus is exponential. The World Health Organization estimates that the number of people with the virus doubles every six days. This estimate led to the prediction by

epidemiologists that 40% to 70% of all Americans could come down with the virus if extreme social distancing measures weren't taken.

**5.** It's not just old people who are getting seriously ill from the virus. Because most of the deaths from the coronavirus have occurred in older people, a lot of younger Americans have not taken the risk seriously. A recent report from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) found that in the United States 38% of people who were hospitalized by the virus were between the ages of 20-54, and 12% of the intensive care units beds were taken up by people aged 20 to 44. So, even if the virus doesn't kill a younger person, it can still make him or her very sick.

**This pandemic presents us with situations beyond our control. Thus, to have the best possible outcome, you must make things better by doing the right thing. You must take responsibility for making good decisions.**

When we get sick, the natural response is to think we've caught the illness the entire world is worried about. Then, our gut instinct is rush to an emergency room. For the majority of those with body aches, chilliness, slight fever, runny nose, cough — this would be the wrong move to make. Contact your primary care physician or urgent care clinic first.

Although testing may verify a specific diagnosis such as influenza or COVID-19, it does not change the management protocol. If, for example, you were a 46-year-old man with no underlying medical conditions and your breathing was not labored and you had a viral illness, the recommendation will be two weeks of isolation and supportive measures such as fluids, rest and acetaminophen at home.

Try not to panic — and trust your medical professionals. Given the effectiveness of chicken soup and hot tea with honey and Tylenol, you can get these easier at home than in the hospital.

But, those who experience severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing need in-person medical evaluations. So, when that's the case, you should call a health provider for guidance. For example, that's the reason telemedicine has gotten a

big boost during the past few months — they can give you quick medical advice you need.

**So, how can we be proactive in these days of uncertainty? Here are a few things, including suggestions from the CDC, to do at home:**

**1.** Wash your hands with gel soap and water for 20 seconds several times during the day.

**2.** Cover your mouth if you cough or sneeze.

**3.** The sick should wear a mask. As the government issues directives for everyone to wear a mask when going to, for example, the super-market, you will be doing it as much to protect others as protect yourself. Be responsible.

**4.** Clean surfaces in the home using household disinfecting sprays or wipes.

**5.** Rest

**6.** Stay hydrated.

**7.** Treat fever with Tylenol per the package instructions.

**8.** Monitor for worsening symptoms and present for evaluation if breathing becomes labored.

**9.** Notify your doctor or healthcare provider before a visit so that precautions can be taken.

**Also, remember the best defense against the virus is to improve your immune system. To help stay well, here are seven ways to augment your immune system:**

**1.** Exercise

**2.** Eat Real Food

**3.** Drink More Water

**4.** Spend Time in the Sun

**5.** Relax

**6.** Get Enough Sleep

**7.** Don't Smoke

Finally, begin each morning in prayer. God is our true source of comfort, "the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Be kind and consider the value of a smile, it costs nothing and takes little effort — but gives much.

**By E. Ted Chandler, M.D.**

Emeritus Medical Faculty

Wake Forest University School of Medicine

**Mission:** sharing hope . . . changing lives

**Vision:** To provide the highest quality

of Christian services to children, adults

and families in a caring culture of

measurable excellence

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# Staff unrelenting in children’s care

By **Linda Morgan**, BCH Statewide Director, Child/Residential Services

In March of this year, Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) entered into an unprecedented time for children’s residential care — navigating everyday life during a coronavirus pandemic. The protocols to ensure the safety of the children as well as staff members have long been in place. BCH was prepared to insure the children followed an effective quarantine regiment while helping each child feel safe. Staff members shared with the children needed information about the importance of social distancing, washing hands and other precautions.

As soon as public schools were closed, BCH’s staff members across the state embraced “Stay Home...Stay Safe.” Our childcare workers added to their daily roles as cottage parent: school teacher, activity director, guidance counselor. Cottage parents rapidly made contact with the children’s teachers and received instruction to help the children go online to continue their education. Not all things are done online and cottage parents assisted elementary children with reading, math and geography assignments. Children also do regular homework for their classes. A “new normal”

school routine was established.

During the week, children wake, eat breakfast and begin their school day in the cottage. Lunch is served at noon and in the afternoon children participate in indoor and outdoor activities that include: softball games, playground activities, scavenger hunts, board games, hiking, and fishing. The children also spend time reading, playing computer games, and watching television. It is important to keep the children active during the day.

Like all children, BCH’s children have had lots of questions. What is happening? Will my family and friends be safe?

One child asked: What happens if I get sick? Will I be sent away? We immediately assured the child, and all the children in care, that we will care for them even if they are sick. Easing a child’s fears and concerns is paramount.

Not since the 1918 flu epidemic has BCH staff members and children been confronted with such a dangerous health threat. But just as those in the past never wavered in their commitment to the children, our staff today is unrelenting in their dedication to provide for the well being of each child — forever being an “oasis of hope” in a sea of uncertainty.



## Mezzo-soprano and BCH friend Victoria Livengood lends comfort in crisis

Internationally-renowned Metropolitan Opera star and Grammy Award winner Victoria Livengood joined BCH President/CEO Michael C. Blackwell in a recent *A good word* video performing two of her signature songs: “You’ll Never Walk Alone” and “Climb Every Mountain.” Blackwell is committed to bringing messages of hope during the pandemic.

Use the QR code or go online at [www.bchn.org/vl20](http://www.bchn.org/vl20) to watch this inspiring video featuring slides of BCH residents.



# Hope Line phone volunteers needed during pandemic

By **Whitney Brooks**, NCBAM “One Hope” Consultant

If you’ve spent any time around the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) team, you will hear, “it’s a God thing.” It’s practically the unofficial slogan, and for good reason. God has shown over and over that He’s a step ahead positioning the ministry to respond to the needs of aging adults across the state.

Along those lines, “it’s a God thing” is the only way to describe



Brooks

the timing of the NCBAM’s new outreach “One Hope.” The outreach provides a spiritual response to social isolation and loneliness among older North Carolinians. And the **Hope Line**, which is a key component to “One Hope,” is a toll free *warm-line* for callers experiencing isolation and loneliness. In mid-march, the **Hope Line** calls exponentially increased as an impact of the coronavirus. When NCBAM began planning “One Hope”

in 2018, no one could have imagined the events of 2020. But God knew.

Demand for the **Hope Line** continues to be great. The call center added two lines and temporarily expanded hours to include weekends. The **Hope Line** can be reached by calling 866-578-4673 daily from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**Hope Line** staff members and volunteers help comfort callers during these times of uncertainty. Trained to skillfully listen and respond, the **Hope Line** team seeks to affirm the callers. It is incredibly comforting for callers to simply share their fears and what is on the minds out loud to someone who doesn’t judge or dismiss their feelings. Callers who express fear or anxiety have a safe outlet where they are heard.

They also have someone ready and willing to pray with and for them.

If the mission of “One Hope” interests you,

**65+? Lonely?  
Need to talk?**

NCBAM’s Hope Line  
is here for you!

**866-578-4673**

please join NCBAM’s efforts as a volunteer. The callers would love to hear your voice as you lend a compassionate ear in a time of need. For more information, call 877-506-2226.

**IMPORTANT NOTE FROM DR. BLACKWELL:** My most recent podcast, “You Are Not Alone: Encouragement for the Aging” is streaming now and features Whitney Brooks. This podcast is so relevant now that we are practicing social distancing and self-isolation during the coronavirus pandemic. Aging adults who had limited contact with others in their communities before COVID-19 are more alone than ever. Listen through your podcast provider, scan the QR code, or go online at [www.bchblog.org/podcast](http://www.bchblog.org/podcast). Be sure to share the link with your friends, fellow church members, and others in your community who may benefit from this very special podcast or those who may need the encouragement of **Hope Line**.

**Whitney Brooks**, developed and teaches the specialized training provided to NCBAM staff and **Hope Line** volunteers. Brooks is a member of First Baptist Church Lexington, a member of NCBAM’s Advisory Team, and an advisor to the ministry’s “One Hope” outreach.





# Your touch and blessing changes lives

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

**T**ouch is so important to our health and well-being. Think about the times when you've felt sad or alone and a hug from a friend made you feel better. In many ways, touch is our first language.

Now that we are distancing ourselves from others during the coronavirus pandemic, we are being told not to touch or shake hands. For our safety, we are not to hug or hold hands. We are to keep a minimum of six feet away from others, removed from any kind of contact.

A pastor friend called, and before long he let me know he had been quarantined for fourteen days. He was miserable.

"I miss shaking hands," he said. "I miss giving hugs and holding the hand of friends as we pray."

But despite the talk of restrictions, our conversation changed from being unable to share physical touch to talking about how we were free as God's people to share God's amazing touch.

We miss you! Not having friends and volunteers visit Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) facilities is heart breaking — but necessary for us all to remain safe. We miss you coming, cooking hot-dogs on a grill, and playing baseball with our boys and girls. We miss playing corn hole when your Sunday School class visits or comes to teach our residents crafts. We miss the great monthly birthday parties you generously provide. We miss the devotions, Bible studies and worship times we share. We miss your smiling faces and your warm hugs.

Spring is especially hard. We miss the thousands of volunteers that attend our Friends of Children events. We miss our biker friends' *Ride to Clyde* event and the thunder roar of motorcycles. We miss the wonderful aromas of barbecue wafting through the mountain air during the annual barbecue festival at Broyhill Home. We miss the big trucks making their way across the state to deliver the food collected during the annual Food Roundup.

*We miss you.*

In Mark 10:16, we read about a special kind of touch — a loving touch! "And he took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them."

Jesus acknowledged the children's presence and their importance. But His

touch was life transforming. Through your loving care, prayer and financial support, you take the children up in your arms, like Jesus did, and bless them in His name — changing their lives.

My heart is overwhelmed and full of gratitude. Because of your generous love, those in our care will not miss the touch of your blessing. In fact, you have blessed us to our core. Because of your generosity, you enable us to reach thousands with God's love and blessing.

In the midst of this pandemic crisis, you have not stopped touching lives and being a blessing. During the Easter celebration, we heard you loud and clear: "He is alive! He is alive in me!" You proclaimed your faith by living out God's call to care for "the least of these."

*Erica was one of the least of these.*

"I grew up with one brother and two sisters. I was the baby. I was a lonely child ever since I was old enough to walk, talk and understand conversation. Both my parents are hooked on drugs. There was little food. We were grateful for the food we ate at school. We lived in our truck for a while and then moved to a hotel room. We barely survived."

Neglect and domestic violence was normal for Erica until she came to BCH and found hope through God's touch and His blessing. He transformed her from a frightened, angry girl who had dealt with the horrors of drugs and violence into a precious, beautiful young lady — one who is able now to sleep through the night without nightmares.

During these days of living with COVID-19, Dr. Blackwell has begun referring to BCH as "an oasis of hope in a sea of uncertainty." Children like Erica are safe here. Their lives are less chaotic despite the chaos swirling around us all. At a time when we must be courageous and bold, we know that the future is secure because God goes before us. Your partnership and commitment — your touch — is sound. Your faithful touch, your blessing enables us to be "an oasis of hope." And we are forever grateful. *Thank you!*



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



# Join us in giving thanks for moms and dads.

Using the coupon below, make a gift that offers hope to a needy child in honor or memory of your parent(s). In the August issue of **Charity & Children**, yours and your parent's name(s) will be published in a commemorative insert celebrating moms and dads.

## Example of inside name listings:

### MOTHER

**In honor** Mrs. Edith G. Banks

Given by Joseph and Mary Banks

**In memory** Jane W. Smith

Given by Her Children

### FATHER

**In memory** of Edward R. Morrison

Given by Edith Morrison

**In honor** of William F. Hughes

Given by Jennifer Phillips

### MOTHER & FATHER

**In memory** of Mr. & Mrs. R. Jones

Given by Daughters Beth and Sarah

**Hurry!  
Deadline is  
July 1.**

**Questions?  
For more information,  
call 336-474-1209.**

# Remember Mom and Dad

*"Honor your father and mother."*

We are given the gift to recall the days of childhood, to relive the times when a loving parent's embrace sustained us as a young adult during times of heartache, to remember conversations with our mom or dad in the silence of sweet friendship as we have grown older, too. Keeping those we love in our thoughts and daily intentions strengthens families, teaching our children about the sacredness of life. The simple act of remembering Mom and Dad is glorifying to God.



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

Please check the appropriate box: ☐ Honor ☐ Memorial

In Honor or Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Send Notice of Gift to \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Give by credit card online at [www.bchfamily.org/momanddad](http://www.bchfamily.org/momanddad) or call Faith Frazier at 336-474-1312.



# Pastor and his wife open up home and hearts to four sisters

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

The moment is here. The car driven by the Department of Social Services (DSS) social worker pulls into the parking space at Mills Home, Baptist Children’s Homes’ (BCH) Thomasville campus. Dave and Charlotte Cline wait alongside BCH’s Danetta Christmas to meet not one, two, or even



three children, but four sisters. The ages of Kendall, Cassidy, Kayden, and Kailey range from 10 months to seven years old.

Dave smiles as he turns to Christmas. “There’s my girls.”

Weeks of training by Christmas, one of BCH’s staff members who ushers families through the foster parent training and licensing process, culminated in this meeting between the Clines and their first foster care children.

BCH establishes homes for children in the custody of the state’s foster care system by coming alongside families and churches who have a desire for fostering. In the Cline’s case, the family fits in both sets of circumstances since Dave is also pastor at Olive Branch Baptist Church in Roxboro.

“When I was a youth pastor, I saw the impact of unhealthy families on children and how that impacts society,” Dave explains. “Being a teacher, Charlotte saw it, too.

“We wanted to get involved.”

A reader of both the *Biblical Recorder* and *Charity & Children*, Dave saw the stories announcing BCH had started its Family Foster Care ministry. After sharing the news with Charlotte, they scheduled a visit with Christmas to learn more.

“Before (learning about BCH), we didn’t feel a peace about it,” Charlotte divulges. “The fact that BCH is a Christian organization where people were praying for us and we were praying for them is tremendous.”

Christmas traveled regularly

to the Cline’s home to train the couple.

“I can’t imagine anyone having more heart and passion than Danetta,” says Charlotte.

Part of the process is ensuring the family home meets the appropriate foster care standards as well as seeing how many children DSS can place there.

Christmas determined there were enough bedrooms to license the home for three children. As she and the Clines talked, their attention turned to the playroom of Caleb, the couple’s 12-year-old biological son. The room had two doorways, but no actual doors.

“We asked Danetta if installing doors could make it count as another room,” Dave explains. “She said it would, so she licensed us for four children.”

No one knew how important that extra room would be until the Cline’s received a phone call one evening from BCH’s Rac Francis, a case manager at Mills Home who was assisting Christmas.

Francis informed Charlotte that DSS had custody of the four sisters, and the agency’s social worker was looking for a foster home that could accept them all. Charlotte immediately said “yes.”

A member of their church came by the next morning and installed doors on the extra room free of charge. This act of kindness was an initial indication of the support the Clines could expect from their congregation.

“From helping to get the children out of the car on Sunday mornings and to their classes to genuine offers to watch them so



Above, BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell spoke at Olive Branch Baptist where Dave Cline is pastor. Left, the Clines, the sisters, and BCH’s Krystal Saunders and Rae Francis stand outside the Gaston County courthouse after adoption papers were signed.

we can have a night away, the church has been completely supportive,” Dave says.

After fostering the girls for a year, the rights of their biological parents were terminated.

The Clines became the sisters’ “forever family” when the adoption was final on January 10.

“When it was official, our WMU planned an adoption celebration,” Dave says. “They had shirts for us that said ‘mama bear,’ ‘papa bear’ and ‘brother bear.’”

“He loves his sisters,” Charlotte says of “brother bear” Caleb. “Since the girls have been with us, I’ve noticed that his maturity level has grown quite a bit.”

Spiritually, the seeds that have been planted by the Clines are growing. Kailey, their oldest daughter, asked Jesus into her heart while being fostered. Now that the adoption is final, Dave plans to baptize her once COVID-19 gathering restrictions are lifted.

The Clines have made the leap from being a family of three to a seven member household. The journey has not always been easy, but they know fostering was God’s desire for them.

“God wants people to open up their homes and open up their hearts,” Charlotte says. “You don’t need anything special, you just need to have the willingness and desire.”

“It will awaken them to the Gospel in ways they can’t imagine,” Dave adds.

# Chiefs follow God’s calling to help boys

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor



Baptist Children’s Homes’ residential wilderness camp programs — Cameron Boys Camp and Camp Duncan for Girls — are a success on a large part due to the programs’ Chiefs. Chiefs are young people who dedicate a minimum of two years to serve as educators and mentors for the campers. The campers and their families work with Chiefs and camp staff to work out problems through a highly structured alternative education program.

Cameron Boys Camp (CBC) recently added three chiefs.

**Chris Summer** is a “PK” — a pastor’s kid. His family was mission minded and spent summer vacations serving others. They camped, and Chris grew to love being outdoors. This love for the wilderness and a desire to serve God and help others led him to CBC.

“I have a heart for ministry,” 25-year-old Summer says. “I also know what it means to be troubled as a teen.”

Being the pastor’s son had advantages, but it also made Summer feel that he was always in the spotlight.

“I became a sneaky kid,” Summers says shaking his head. “I learned how

to do things behind my parent’s back and out of view of others.”

He says he began to “follow the crowd.” He could take off his “perfect kid” mask and he began to spend hours on the basketball court. “I didn’t need the church, I thought. I pushed farther away from the Lord.”

An injury shut his sport dreams down. Angry, he pushed harder against the Lord until one day he was looking up from a deep spiritual hole in which he found himself. Desperate, he called on the Lord.

“It was clear,” he recalls. “I realized God wanted me — not the preacher’s kid, not the athlete — but me. In that moment, I chose to follow Him.”

**Trevor Bonds** is a Georgia native. He came to the United States as a small child to be adopted.

“Me and my sister were born in Latvia,” Bonds says. “We were adopted into a Christian home where we received a Christian education and were led to Christ.”

Bonds is an Eagle Scout and has a great love for the outdoors. After college, he began a retail job while feeling a calling into ministry. He began looking into positions with a church when he came upon CBC.

“It was nothing I thought about doing, but I knew from the first phone interview that this was where God was leading me. It was like the Lord picked me up and placed me on this path.”

Bonds says he is filled with gratitude. Each step of the way in his orientation and training to be a Chief has brought him closer to God. “You realize you will not be able to do this job without giving it all to the Lord and depending on Him.”

**Travis Yoder** is no stranger to Camp. The 24-year-old North Carolina native not only has a heart to be a Chief, but he uniquely knows what campers experience. He is the first Chief at CBC who was once in care as a camper.

“I came to Camp in 2009,” Yoder recalls. “My time at Cameron was a success for me. I understand how to tackle problems, talk out issues, and move forward.”

After earning a computer science degree, Yoder realized that the last thing he wanted to do was computer science. “Honestly, I always knew I wanted to come back as a Chief.”

Learn more about making a difference in boys’ and girls’ lives by being a Chief. Visit [www.campcareers.org](http://www.campcareers.org)

# BCA awards Blackwell first place in writing, new podcast wins awards

Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) received a record thirteen awards from this year’s national Baptist Communicators Association’s (BCA) awards competition. BCA is a national group and organizes the annual Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition. The purpose of the competition is to recognize the best image-makers and storytellers in Baptist life. Every year, hundreds of entries are submitted by Baptist-affiliated organizations from across the United States.

BCH president/CEO was awarded first place in writing for his blog post “Transmit-

ting values to children: Five tips for building relationship. A first place was also awarded to Carol Layton, Jim Edminson and Blake Ragsdale in design for North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry’s (NCBAM) “Passport: Supporting Foster Families.” Layton received another first place in design for NCBAM’s “Peace of Mind” flyer.

Last year, BCH produced its first podcast, “It’s a family matter.” The podcast features Blackwell as he interviews special guests. The first episode aired June 27 and two episodes are released monthly. The podcast was awarded second place for “over all show”

and the episode “Heart of a Cottage Parent” (Sept. 2, 2019) was awarded third place in the “best” episode category.

Ragsdale was awarded second place for the “Hope and Future” BCH offering video. Layton received a second place for the video “Once There Was a Star” and third place for NCBAM’s “You Ain’t Seen Nothin’ Yet!” video which commemorated NCBAM’s tenth anniversary.

Layton also received second for the design of “The First Ten Years” and a third place for “One Hope” in the communications and/or marketing strategy category.

Ragsdale won second place for his photo entitled “Desperate Brothers” and took a third for his photo “Makala’s Forever Family.” His “Hope and Future” logo design was awarded third.

Ragsdale serves as BCH’s communications director and is the managing editor of *Charity & Children* (C&C). Layton is NCBAM’s director of communications and administration. NCBAM is a BCH ministry founded by Blackwell in 2009 in partnership with the Baptist State Convention of NC. Edminson is Assistant to the President and marks two decades in 2020 serving as C&C editor.





# With hearts of gratitude, we give thanks to the Lord

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

**E**ven in the midst of such challenging days, you have helped rescue hundreds of children who are going through the additional crisis of abuse and neglect. You have stood with us as we forged ahead to open more family foster homes across the state. You have been there as families realize their dreams of giving children “forever homes.” You have volunteered to answer hundreds of calls a week from aging adults who are lonely and need someone to lis-

ten. You have pushed forward helping provide the food, supplies and needed funds to feed the hundreds of children and families we care for each day. You have made and sent hundreds of cloth face masks to keep our children and staff members safe. You have used your creativity to make hundreds of Easter baskets for our children, bringing smiles to their faces. You have reached out in so many ways to say “I care.” You have knelt low while lifting high in your prayers our every concern. You have not re-

lented by delivering 500 pounds of chicken which will be prepared and fill tummies. You have gone the distance riding motorcycles to deliver Easter joy — revving engines and blowing horns loudly reminding us all that you are with us. You have given words of encouragement through phone calls, emails and cards that blessed our hearts.

For all you have done, and all I know you will continue doing, the children, families and staff members say *thank you!*

## Program designated *Emergency Childcare Provider*

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

**W**hat happens when five-star childcare centers with a passion for children and families are challenged by the coronavirus pandemic? They step up.

“We were determined to remain open,” recalls Weekday Education program director Brooke Child. “As soon as we knew that we could qualify as an Emergency Childcare Provider, we began taking the steps necessary to remain open during this crisis.”

Baptist Children’s Homes’ (BCH) premier weekday education programs — the Robert Idol Child Development Center and the Fleshman-Pratt Education Center in Thomasville — began offering childcare for children birth to twelve years old as an Emergency Childcare Provider to essential workers on April 1. Only licensed childcare programs that have met additional health and safety protocols and satisfied other requirements specified by North Carolina’s Division of Child Development and Early Education

(DCDEE) are authorized as emergency providers.

“Essential workers face tremendous stress,” says Child. “Health-care workers, law enforcement, first responders, truck drivers intricate in delivering food and supplies are all working to help the general public. As they do their important jobs, we can help reduce the tension and stress in their lives by caring for their children.”

So many childcare centers in the county are closed. Less than fifty percent qualified as emergency providers and the county has a large number of essential workers.

“Our daily goal is about meeting needs and helping families feel as normal as possible during these very trying times,” says Child. “We needed to be here for them.”

BCH childcare centers had many of the necessary protocols in place. Child says it only required the Centers to ramp up what they were already doing. Enhanced protocols include only center staff are allowed in the buildings, temperatures are taken multiple times



BCH Weekday Education centers in Thomasville were designated Emergency Childcare Providers as of April 1. Children birth to 12 years old whose parents are essential workers qualify for care during the coronavirus pandemic.

daily — including taking the temperatures of staff. Health checks are performed daily as well.

“Parents are encouraged, if they are able, to keep their children at home with them,” says Child. “Our focus is on keeping the children safe. I remind our

parents daily to follow the coronavirus guidelines as a family, minimize their exposure — no trips to stores with children — and limit their exposure to grandparents and older family members. Children can carry the virus. Keep your kids and your family safe.”



# Staff members remembered fondly by alumni — News of passings bring cause for celebrations of lives

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

A note from our Alumni President **Sharon Stiles** reads: “We are praying fervently that COVID-19 will be a memory in a short time and that we will be able to have Homecoming this year. We will keep you posted through Lib’s Alumni Column, the ‘Mills Home Orphanage Memories’ Facebook page, and a June letter regarding Homecoming. One interesting thing we want you to know early is that there will be a Saturday morning breakfast available. It will be held in the gym’s Teen Room — you will not have to worry about meeting in a crowded restaurant. Be sure to read your annual Homecoming letter from the Alumni Council when you receive it in June.”

The Alumni Council spotlight this month is on **Jane Helms Brown**. Jane serves as the First Vice President/President Elect. She will become our new president during Homecoming weekend. Jane came into BCH’s foster care with siblings **Helen and Jerry** in 1960 when her older siblings **Robert, Jeanie, Van, and Martha** entered Mills Home (MH). Jane entered MH in 1965 and graduated in 1972. She is married to **Danny Brown** and dotes over daughter **Sana** and a granddaughter **Ally**. Jane is retired from a medical career. When she was a young woman, her personal doctor asked her to work for him and he trained her from one medical task to another. Upon retirement, her job was office manager.

Jane has great fondness for MH worker **Bill Sisk**, especially for the way he encouraged students to explore various types of work for future employment. One day, he met her at the gymnasium. He had a comb and hair cutting scissors with him and she was surprised when he said, “I’ve got a little job for you. I want you to do a little trimming on my hair.”

Though she insisted she did not really know how, he coaxed her through “a little cut here and a little cut there” and the task was done. Hence forward, it turned out that he would have her clip his hair and she would come into a little “extra dough.” As it turned out, Jane learned to love a different kind of

“dough” when she picked up her first cooking chores preparing breakfast for the girls in her cottage. She developed an expansive fantastic cooking talent that we all get to enjoy every Homecoming.

Our second Alumni Council spotlight this month is on **Obie Harris**. Obie recalls living at the Miles Durham Cottage and then being placed in foster care for a few years. He re-entered MH in 1975 and graduated in 1979. His second stay at MH was at the Downing Cottage. He loved being able to play on the Mills Home basketball team, sledging behind the gym in winter and swimming in the hot months. He gained good work experiences working on the farm under **David Jackson** and working off campus at Hardy’s. After high school, Obie attended Guilford Technical Community College to learn about “heating and air.” Consequently, he now is the owner of Velocity Heating and Air in Greensboro where he now lives as a single man. He has one son who is now in college. Friends can contact Obie at [oharris@velocityairheat.net](mailto:oharris@velocityairheat.net).

Obie’s favorite workers on campus were Mr. and Mrs. David Jackson and Bill Sisk. He spent weekends at the Jackson home and came to consider them his “mom and dad.”

A favorite MH memory for Obie occurred when he lived at the Downing Cottage with houseparents **Doug and Billie Harrold**. One Sunday he and some of the guys skipped church and went down to ride the horses. Later that day, **Phillip Morrow**, the MH Unit Director, came to the Downing for a conference with the boys. The first question was, “Were you boys in church today?” Without hesitation, they replied, “Oh yes, we were in church.” Mr. Morrow said, “Ok, if you were in church, tell me who prayed the prayer in the service today.” Not one of them was able to give an answer. Obie continued, “We were busted but we endured whatever punishment came to us.”

We were saddened to hear that **Emma Jean Crisp Manard** lost her husband **Charles** in late March. Friends may wish to send condo-

lences to Emma Jean at 118 Glenwood Dr., Crossville, TN, 38558. Thank you to Emma’s son Jeffrey Harig, Sr. for the information.

We were saddened to hear from **Betty Mull Carney** that her older brother **Robert** died earlier this year.

**Harry Walls** received a note from **Susan Rigney** on February 11 that **John Wayne Horne** passed away from a heart attack on Oct. 5, 2019. John was the last of three brothers — **John, Ronnie, and Melvin** — who entered MH in 1955. John left in 1968. The Horn brothers were well respected among MH friends. Condolences may be sent to **Susan Rigney** on her Facebook page.

**Sharon Sink** was kind to notify us that her mother **Thelma Toney Welborn Gobble** passed away on August 2, 2019. Thelma had been subject to falling, so Sharon moved in with her in 2014 to be her caregiver. At the time of her death, she was living at the Lexington Health Care Center but she remained in contact with her MH friends **Bertha Poole Slate** and **Mary Alice Tucker**. Her graveside service was held on Wednesday, August 7, 2019, at Holly Hill Memorial Park Cemetery.

We received the sad news of the death of **Robert “Bob” Yarborough**, (Nov. 7, 2019). Bob was a Korean War Veteran and a graduate of Guilford College where he had fond memories of the years he played football. After graduation, he was football coach and teacher at Elkin High School and remained close to many of the students who still called him “Coach Yarborough.” He enjoyed a varied career in journalism, including national sports writer for the *Durham Herald* and sports writer and managing editor for the *Elkin Tribune*. He also started his own newspaper, *The Yadkin Enterprise*, which is still in print today. He later retired from a long career with Prudential Insurance Company. Bob is predeceased by his sister **Pat Rhodes**. He is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, **Judith**; one son; three daughters; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. The family asked that in lieu of flowers,

memorial gifts may be made to Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina, P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361.

We were so sorry to hear that **Brenda Gantt Garren Kerr** died on March 19 at her home in St. Johns Island, SC. She is survived by her husband **Richard**, sisters **Sherl Gaskins** and **Lynn Guritz (Van)**, brother **Max Gantt Jr.**, five children, and seven grandchildren. Brenda had great memories of life at MH and appreciated the loving care and guidance she received. She loved Thomasville High School and thoroughly enjoyed playing on the basketball team. She is known by all for her love of sewing, animals, laughter, and joy of being a mom and homemaker. She took great joy in gardening and helping people. She also took great pride in being a professional baby photographer and seamstress. She was known for her outstanding work with Girl Scouts and had great skill as an artistic quilter. Brenda’s Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated with immediate family members but a Celebration of Life will be held at a more appropriate time. In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Brenda can be made to Mills Home/ Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina, PO Box 338, Thomasville, NC, 27361.

We were sorry to hear from **Donald Burgess** in early April that his older sister **Doris Faye Jannetta Grisom** passed away. A widow, for several years, she had been in a nursing home for the past year. Doris Faye was 78 years old and had a son and a daughter. Her son **Ernie**, now retired, served Durham as the Fire Department Assistant Chief. Her daughter is an accountant at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Doris entered MH in 1949 with siblings **Donald and Frances**, who is now deceased. Condolences may be sent to Don at 2653 Halifax Rd., Roxboro, NC, 27574.



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



## Making News Every Day Around the State



### Odum Home in Pembroke Child spends time painting

One of Odum's children is developing her talent for painting during this time of crisis. Sitting on the front porch, she is creating a picture of one of the cottages where she and the other children live.



### Salem Baptist Church in Dobson Church donates chicken

Salem Baptist Church in Dobson gave 500 lbs. of chicken to provide meals for BCH's boys and girls. Pastor David Powell, who also serves as a BCH trustee, helped make the delivery to Mills Home.



### Drake Cottage in Franklin Boys enjoy bonfire and movie

Recently, the boys at Drake Cottage took advantage of the Spring-time weather by roasting marshmallows around a bonfire. They finished their evening inside the cottage watching a movie.



### New South River Association Baptist donate Easter baskets

North Carolina Baptists from the New South River Association in Fayetteville put together 750 Easter baskets and gave them to BCH. They were safely distributed to children and special needs adults.



### Odum Home in Pembroke Bikers bring Easter baskets

Bikers from the Riders Ambition Group brought joy to children at Odum Home as they dropped off Easter baskets at a safe delivery point. They revved their bikes loudly as they rode onto campus.



### Conway's Chapel Baptist Church Lenoir church collects food

Members of Conway's Chapel Baptist Church in Lenoir collected food for BCH's children even during this difficult time. Churches have rallied in many ways to ensure children's needs are met.



### Coweeta Baptist Church in Otto Easter service helps children

Pastor Keith Ashe and wife Christy delivered more than 200 food items and an \$800 offering to Broyhill Home in Clyde. The collection was a part of the church's "drive-in" Easter service.



### Lindsay Home in Sanford Churches donate craft supplies

The ladies at Lindsay Home are staying active knitting washcloths and painting plates. Churches have donated craft supplies for the residents in Sanford. Above, Maria shows her handiwork.



### Kennedy Home in Kinston Campus streets perfect for bikes

Children of all ages ride their bicycles, trikes and scooters throughout the Kennedy Home. The campus streets are a safe place for the boys and girls to go outside, ride and get the exercise they need.

## 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)
- Oak Ranch/Family Care**  
Lynn Garner, Dir., 336-474-1240
- 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)
- Weekday Education**  
Brooke Child, Dir., 336-474-1201
- Tucker Greater Vision Ministry**  
Sara Becker, Mgr., 336-687.6384
- Family Foster Care**  
Bob McCleary, 828-627-9254  
[www.bchfostercare.org](http://www.bchfostercare.org)
- 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, 336-474-1215

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# Annual Homecoming canceled due to COVID-19 — Alum shares story of chocolate cake and cold milk

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

**H**omecoming for Kennedy Home (KH) has been canceled. Due to concerns about COVID-19, the alumni officers, under the leadership of **Katie Parker**, made the decision to not have the June event. The group sent a card notifying all alumni. If you're reading this and did not receive a card, email your complete address to [Khalumni@bellsouth.net](mailto:Khalumni@bellsouth.net).

The Fall Beach Alumni Retreat at the Beach Cottage is slated for October 2 – 5. We will let you know if there are any changes.

**Debbie Lassiter** ('69-'76) recently shared how the coronavirus was impacting her life. She writes: "During this time of the COVID-19, being closed up has been difficult. That is saying a lot because I also love being at home. There is just something different when you have to stay home and would rather be out. We canceled a couple of trips that we had planned, and not being able to see our children and grandchildren has been especially difficult. At this particular time, I have not seen them in four weeks. Also, not being able to be with our church family is sad. We have been able to 'livestream' our services — so at least we are fortunate in that aspect.

"Being able to still stay in contact with family and friends through social media and phone calls has been a good way to spend my time.

"I had a very close friend who lost her husband to this virus. I just pray that everyone I know can come through this pandemic healthy and without the loss of someone they love. Many are fortunate enough to live very blessed lives and, hopefully, we all pray thanking the dear Lord for every blessing we have.

"It was very disappointing that we had to cancel Homecoming this year. Perhaps we can make plans at some other time in the future. Looking forward to the beach retreat if all goes well with that. But until then, my very best wishes and love and prayers go out to all of my Kennedy Home Family."

Let's read how alumni remember

their days at Kennedy Home.

**Donna Weeks Duty** writes: "When I moved from the Brokenhurst Cottage to the Pollock Cottage, my job was cleaning up the campus office every afternoon after school. The office staff meeting was usually held on Mondays. So after the meeting, there would be leftover coffee and pastries and other delicious goodies left in the kitchen at the back of the office. On those days, I headed to the kitchen for coffee and pastries before starting work — I had my break before I even started working.

"My responsibilities included vacuuming the offices and hallway, cleaning the bathrooms, and sweeping the office porch. I enjoyed this job because it gave me a chance to see and visit with all the office staff and social workers. **Melvin and Bea Walker, Roger Williams, Sharon Garner, Ann Wilkerson, and Bob Travis**. I'm know I'm leaving out someone — please forgive me. I also remember **Vance Russ** had his office right off the side porch. He always came and went out of his office wearing his cowboy hat and his boots. He would hop on his motorcycle and away he would go.

"One day, I was sweeping the side porch steps when I heard, 'Donna!' I looked up and it was **Boyd Farmer** with a camera in his hand. Before I knew it, the picture appeared in *Charity & Children*.

"The last on-campus job I had was at the food locker. I helped box the milk and groceries ordered by the cottages, packed them into an orange and white Ford van, then delivered them to all the cottages. I loved driving the old van. **David Maynor** and a guy named **Dion** helped me."

**Johnny Justice, Jr.** ('45-'53) recently connected with me to share his story. He writes: "I was born on March, 1, 1939, the seventh and only boy of seven children. In 1945, my sisters and I were unexpectedly trundled off to the Kennedy Memorial Home. As you know, this orphanage (as it was called then) was located on a 1,200 acre tract of rich

farm land. It has been converted from a working plantation, complete with a beautiful antebellum mansion which sat at the end of a pecan tree-lined drive. The property had been donated by Captain and Mrs. William Kennedy in 1912. The campus grew with many cottages, church, a gym and other needed buildings added. I loved the football and baseball field and basketball gym. In the late 1940s, the main dirt road was paved and a beautiful swimming pool and tennis courts were constructed. From the outset, we were given duties to perform which were rotated on a regular basis. We made our own beds, cleaned the bathrooms, and swept and mopped the floors. Other duties included setting the table in the dining room and then washing, drying and putting away the dishes after the meal.

"One of my favorite memories is of raking leaves all by myself on one side of the Hardee Building where I lived. When I was finished with raking, without being asked, I just continued on and raked the leaves all the way to the Canady Building where the *lazy* older boys lived. The matron came out and asked why I was raking their leaves. I told her that it just looked like it needed to be done. She told me to come inside and then surprised me with a huge slice of chocolate cake and a big cold glass of milk! To this day, I can still remember how proud I was of myself and how good that cake and milk tasted.

"Years later, I appreciated the lesson I learned on that one afternoon of hard work. The unexpected reward I received was truly a seminal event in my life: I learned that outworking and out smiling everyone pays big dividends."

Look for more about Johnny in next month's column including his rise to become a professor at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas and how he was instrumental in forming the Ophthalmic Photographers' Society.

Alumni president **Katie Parker** shares: "I went to KH when I was

in the fourth grade. A March wind was blowing as the car pulled up to the Biggs Cottage with me, my sister **Yvonne**, and brother **Jerry (Ponch)**. I was so homesick when I arrived and, as a result, I lost so much weight. They sent me to a big building that had lots of clothes and two dressing rooms — left side for boys and the right side for girls. It was real nice that you could just pick out what you want, and if it fits, it's yours.

"While in the dressing room, I heard two ladies talking about this sad little girl and how she needed all new things to wear because she wasn't eating well. Well, I thought 'Oh my! This is sad.'

"I came out of the dressing room and realized they were talking about me — all 46 pounds of me. After that day, I realized how much these strangers cared about me. From that day on, I knew God was going to take care of me. We went to church three times a week. I joined the choir and joined the church where I found our Heavenly Father's love and moved on with my life."

My wife Becky and I send our love and gratitude to all my KH youngins for responding to a note I put on Facebook about Becky — she was so sick in March. About 165 people wrote letting her know they were praying for her and that they loved her. When I posted she was better, 272 people wrote celebrating with us. We love all of you.

Take care of yourselves during these uncertain times — wash your hands and stay at home. When you go out, practice social distancing. Be safe and healthy.

Send articles about how you are doing during the pandemic by emailing me at [jthompson117@ec.rr.com](mailto:jthompson117@ec.rr.com). Remember, if you need us, just give us a call. Always know that Becky and I are here for you.

Love to all my youngins! — jt



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



# Sitting in church amidst the silence, alone with God

By Jim Edminson, Editor

I find myself walking into empty church sanctuaries, sitting and spending time alone. It is peaceful. I pray and I am comforted.

I have great childhood memories of going to church. I felt welcome and loving adults made me feel they had been expecting me. Warm smiles, hugs and, of course, cookies and juice were always waiting.

It wasn't easy being still in "big" church some Sundays, but I do not remember the adults around me ever making me feel unwanted. I sat by my mom and doodled in a notepad while hymns and readings from scripture washed over me.

Before ever walking down a center aisle of a church, the path forward to accept Christ into my life was prepared by loving Sunday school and choir teachers, by volunteers who brought stories of Jesus to life during Vacation Bible Schools.

As a child, I heard the proclamation of the Word by a pastor with a long list of theological degrees, a bivocational one with no degree who raised his family by working in the marketplace while shepherding his flock, and a "born again" Cajun pastor from south Louisiana. I listened as the net of salvation's story was cast from the loftiest pulpits to the pulpit made of yellow pine that was in front of the hand-painted River Jordan that ran into the baptistry waters where I was plunged and raised to new life.

It's not hard to understand that during these days of uncertainty that I find solace beneath a steeple. In the quiet, alone with God, I feel

my heart beating and — while others in hospitals are struggling to find a breath — I hear my breath as I inhale and exhale. Time is suspended. The world's noise is pushed beyond the walls of my refuge.

As perfect as this setting is, however, it would only be an empty building without the promise that He is with me: *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

The restriction on large gatherings due to the coronavirus pandemic has impacted the coming together of church families. And despite the difficulty in finding anything to replace the warmth and closeness, churches have creatively found new ways to gather for worship. The resilience of the church is seen as congregations continue ministering to those in spiritual and physical need, financially providing for staff members, and supporting mission commitments.

There is also a renewed focus on quiet time with God. Just like sitting in a sanctuary alone, we can feel closeness to God sitting in our homes. In the midst of silence, we can draw near to Him.

Sadly, it takes a jolt to cause us to stop. But as we pause during these days of solitude, look into His eyes and hear Him say: *"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*



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



## Your love has us smiling!

We are overwhelmed by your incredible generosity! You have made it possible for us to care for countless children across North Carolina! We are filled with gratitude as we approach **Giving Tuesday** on May 5th, this global day of giving. **Thank you** for making a difference in the lives of hurting children and for your continued support of Baptist Children's Homes' life-changing ministry.

**GIVING TUESDAY • MAY 5, 2020**

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