

INSIDE:

- Page 3 - BCH locations welcome back visitors and Blackwell's anniversary podcast goes live July 12
- Page 6 - BCH staff feature highlights NCBAM's Shirley Carlson

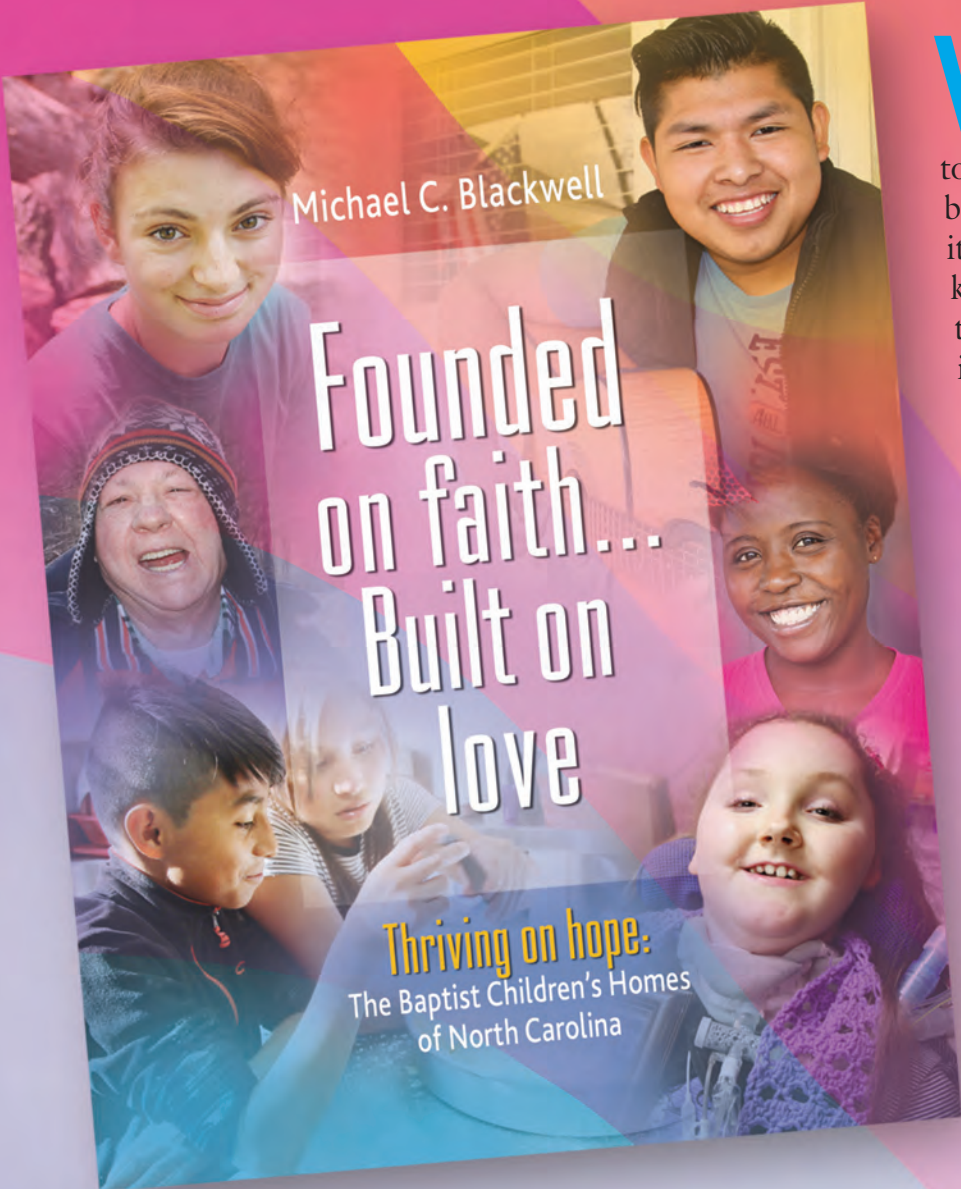
Charity & Children

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

     @bchfamily July 2021 Issue 7 Volume 134

It's a book for the ages!

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor



Writers write books because they have a need to write books. It comes from their passion to tell a story. Dr. Michael C. Blackwell wrote his new book ***Founded on faith...Built on love*** because he says it was “absolutely imperative to let our various publics know the diversification and the tremendous growth” that Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) has experienced in the past two decades.

Subtitled ***Thriving on hope: The Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina***, this new history book tells the story of the last 20 years while summarizing the entire spectrum of BCH from 1885 through 2020.

“Honestly, I think if I were coming in new as the president and looking at this brand new, it could be rather intimidating seeing the depth and breadth and height of the ministry today,” Blackwell says.

Founded on faith...Built on love tells of BCH’s life-changing, miracle-making, hope-sharing history and is a must-read for all who hold the 135-year-old ministry close to their hearts. The book is filled with color pictures and inspiring stories of drama, courage, and ultimate victory.

“I was humbled with the task of writing this follow-up to my book, ***A Place for Miracles***, which detailed more than a century of Baptist Children’s Homes history,” Blackwell says.

Continued on page 6.

Exclusive preview: New history book's preface sets tone

By Michael C. Blackwell, President/CEO

On April 4, I penned the final words to my new book ***Founded on faith...Built on love***. It was fitting that on Easter Sunday I brought to an end a project that spanned nearly two years—only to declare a glorious future. I believe God's favor is on this ministry and I humbly thank Him for all He has done. My column this month is the recently released book's preface, a perfect way to preview this "book for the ages."

The dawn of Wednesday, November 11, 1885 blew into the little northeastern North Carolina town of Ahoskie with the weight of apprehension and the stirring of possibility. The breeze blew strong, and those few who ventured outside bent into it.

Just down the street from the Ahoskie Baptist Church lived Mary Presson and her nine-year-old daughter, and namesake, Mary Presson. Times were tough for them, but on this morning their fortunes dramatically changed.

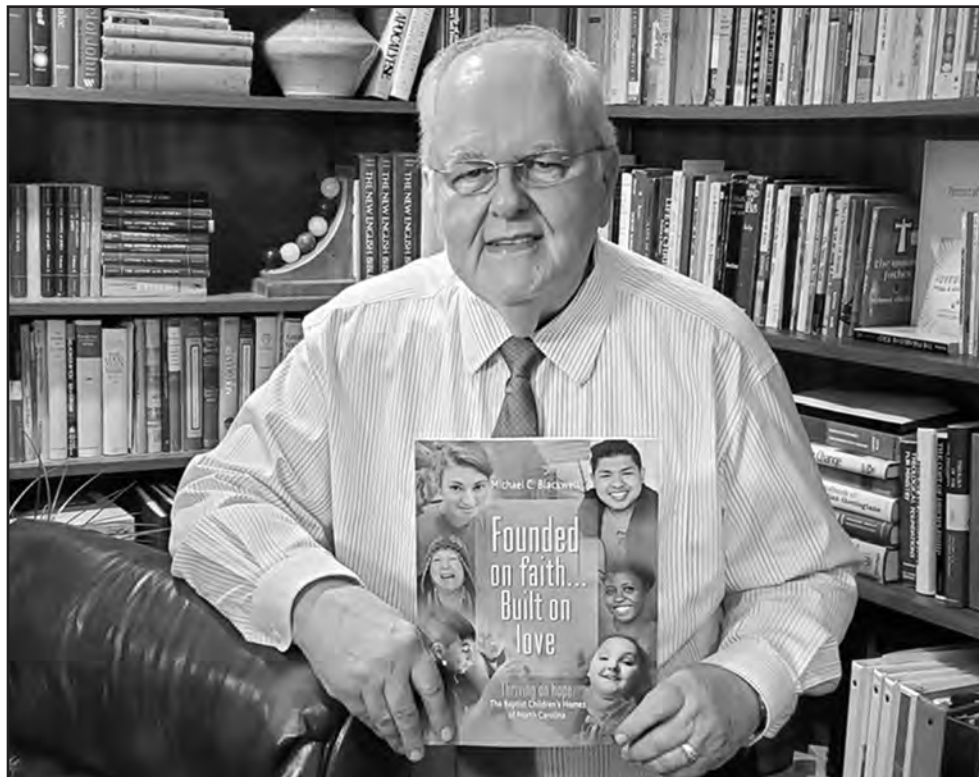
As the sun peeked over the eastern horizon, both Mary Pressons prepared for a venture into the unknown. The younger Presson gripped her ticket for a train ride from Ahoskie to Thomasville, a trip to be taken under the guidance of her pastor, John Mitchell.

Mitchell, who had previously served the downtown Baptist church in Asheville, enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of Ahoskie. He was a close friend of John Mills—the stalwart, stubborn, big-hearted man whose dream was to begin an orphanage reflecting the Christian values that had matured in him while he studied at Wake Forest College.

Mills teamed up with site selection committee member John Scarborough to find land appropriate for the dream that Mills said had "scratched at my skull until it bore a hole in it."

Mitchell, Mills, and Scarborough arranged for little Mary Presson to be the first child admitted to the new orphanage and, later, for her mother to become the first matron.

Mary and Rev. Mitchell readied to board the train late that Wednesday morning. Mary clung to her mother, finally saying goodbye, but still not fully understanding what was happening. Few words were spoken as the train wound its way down to Raleigh, over to Greensboro, and, finally, to Thomasville.



Founded on faith...Built on love is Dr. Michael C. Blackwell's sixth book. The newly released book details Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina's history over the past 20 years. Dr. Blackwell said it was "absolutely imperative" to let BCH's many friends know about the tremendous growth the ministry has had in such a relatively short period of time.

Photo: Jill Doss-Raines, *Lexington Dispatch*

Rev. Mitchell was first off the train.

Warmly embracing his good friends Mills and Scarborough, he turned and introduced them to Mary Presson, who was comforted by their reassuring smiles. Knowing that her mother would soon join her brought even more comfort.

Mills knew this day would be a day of historic significance—November 11, 1885. He was a student of mathematics and history and he recognized that this was "a moment in time."

A little building—appropriately named after John Mitchell and still standing today—would be the place where Mary Presson (and soon, other little girls) would live.

John Haymes Mills was a brilliant visionary. He had owned the Biblical Recorder and, within two years of his arrival in Thomasville, began the publication *Charity & Children* (1887), which continues today.

Known simply as the Thomasville Orphanage, a few years after its beginning it became affiliated

with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. In 1956, the name was changed to the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH).

Little Mary Presson grew up in Thomasville and never left Davidson County. She moved as a young adult to Lexington and was an active member of First Baptist Church.

Mary loved her mother and was deeply saddened when she died. Mother Mary is buried on the grounds of Mills Home in the "God's Acre" cemetery. Daughter Mary Presson

Yarborough is buried beside her.

John Mills led the Orphanage for its first ten years. He is buried in the cemetery of Rich Fork Baptist Church, a church he was instrumental in founding, in Thomasville.

Baptist Children's Homes was founded on Faith, the faith its visionary founders had in God to bring to fruition a home for the helpless. It has been built on Love, the love of those who serve the children and the sacrifices of others who provide such a home. "Founded on faith . . . Built on love" is our theme for 2020-2025 and is printed across the cover of this new history book.

God's favor has been with us since 1885. I am humbled and honored to have led this great ministry of faith and love for all but 98 years of its history.

Winds will still blow strong, but we will stand firm against the blasts that would tumble others trusting in lesser foundations. We are strong. We stand on sacred ground. We shall not be moved.

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 – 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); Blake Ragsdale, managing editor (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 of Baptist Children's Homes. It is printed at 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 or call at 336-474-1209. **Subscribe online** at bchfamily.org/charityandchildren. **POSTMASTER:** Send change of address to **Charity & Children**, PO Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361-0338.

Locations excited to welcome back church volunteers

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

It's been a year and a half since Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) has hosted church groups and volunteers at its statewide locations. That time is drawing to an end as the easing of pandemic restrictions is opening up opportunities for missions days and events to return this fall.

"This has been long anticipated by our children, special needs adults, families, and staff," said BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell. "They are not used to being unable to see and interact with our church volunteers and friends who support, encourage and pray for them. It will be a welcome return!"

As COVID-19 took center stage in 2020, BCH canceled its calendar of events. That lull stretched into 2021 until Blackwell and his leadership team knew events could safely return.

"We know our churches have been anxious to be back in their communities to minister and serve," Blackwell recognized. "We want to be on their calendars quickly providing ways to engage with our ministries."

"They will notice that not only are many of their favorite events returning, but there are also brand-new and exciting ways to be involved."

Some of the new events are due to BCH's



Friends of Children Saturdays are poised to return in the fall. Church groups of all ages are invited for a one-day missions opportunity. Register at bchfamily.org/foc.

acquisition of Christian Adoption Services (CAS) headquartered in Indian Trail and operating offices throughout North and South Carolina. The ability to offer domestic and international adoption services, as well as a budding ministry to birth mothers, complements BCH's services.

"God has opened new doors even in the midst of COVID-19," Blackwell said. "We cannot wait for NC Baptists to be a part of Christian Adoption Services' efforts to connect vulnerable children with caring families. We have several CAS events on the calendar."

A golf tournament in Charlotte, a benefit banquet in Nashville, NC, and an online auction are ways to be involved with CAS this fall. Another milestone event is a fundraiser to help establish a home to minister to birth mothers.

Mills Home is having a new benefit on October 2 called "Hope Harvest"—an evening event featuring Christian bands and barbecue underneath the trees at BCH's flagship location. Tours, a silent auction, and shopping at Fancy Finds, BCH's resale store, round out the event.

Finally, another milestone event is the groundbreaking on September 11 for River Hill Refuge in Shelby. The new project is part of the growing Foster Care ministry and entails the building of three foster family homes. Each home will have BCH recruited Christian foster parents who care for as many as five children at one time.

Churches, make plans today! The full calendar of events including contact information and registration links can be found on page 8.

Blackwell marks 38th anniversary with special podcast

By **John Adamcik**, BCH Director of Human Resources

For Dr. Michael C. Blackwell, leadership is an opportunity and a responsibility. "Leaders are to be available, to be seen and heard, and to give a clear message for those they lead...celebrating and encouraging those who look to them for vision and direction" said Blackwell.

Such was the case when Blackwell invited two of his team to join him in recording an "It's a family matter" podcast to celebrate his anniversary as leader of the Carolinas' largest family, Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH).

As BCH's longest-serving president and chief executive officer, Blackwell enters his 39th year "inspiring, motivating, and engendering trust" among his staff, those in care, and the many stakeholders who help BCH fulfill its mission of "Sharing Hope...Changing Lives."

Since launching "It's a family matter" in 2019, Blackwell has recorded more than fifty episodes while the podcast has been recognized for excellence by Baptist Communicators Association, a national group of Baptist communicators established in 1953.

Although Blackwell knew he would be inviting Jim Edminson and John Adamcik to help with

the interview, he enjoyed letting them in on the plan just prior to recording. Over the years, Edminson, assistant to the president and editor of BCH's publication, *Charity and Children*, along with Adamcik, BCH's director of human resources, have enjoyed and appreciated Blackwell's vigorous, robust example for a Christ-focused ministry serving vulnerable individuals and families. They are also used to being ready to help share the BCH story, with or without advanced notice.

"Dr. Blackwell is a dynamic leader," said Edminson. "His remarkable tenure at the highest level of



Dr. Michael C. Blackwell called on BCH's Jim Edminson, left, and John Adamcik, right, to guest host an episode of his bi-monthly podcast "It's a family matter." The two interviewed Blackwell to discuss his 38 years as president/CEO. The podcast airs July 12.

organizational responsibility is due, in part, to his constant drive to learn, engage, and grow himself, BCH, and those who follow him in service."

Adamcik agreed. "Dr. Blackwell does things with intention. He also likes to have fun and help keep us on our toes, as it were."

To lead an established, dynamic organization such as BCH for decades requires staying true

to the mission, while also keeping things fresh, exciting, and results-focused. As he celebrates this 38th anniversary milestone, Blackwell gives glory to God and appreciation to his BCH family.

Blackwell's anniversary edition of "It's a family matter" begins streaming July 12. Listen by visiting online at www.bchblog.org/podcast.

Children learn from summertime's many experiences

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

For the most part, I always enjoy learning and experiencing new things. However, sometimes new lessons are a bit scary.

If a new experience involves water, I am a more apprehensive. Swimming, water skiing, scuba diving (which I tried only once and decided snorkeling was more in my comfort zone), and jet skiing all fall into this category.

As a part of my journey after the passing of my husband John, I began the process to sell our house which would mean purging lots of things. I started by going through the boxes of mementos and pictures. With some of the memories, came tears—some of the memories brought laughter. There was one memento from the day we decided to try jet skiing that brought back a flood of memories.

It must have been one of the busiest water sports days of the year. John was convinced it was the best time to try jet skiing—and, of course, we did not take time to read the operating directions. Not being very mechanically inclined and, as I mentioned, a bit afraid of the water, I began skeptically thinking this was not the activity for us. After falling into the water even before starting the contraption, I was not looking forward to what John described as “a day of fun.”

Well, I did the jet ski going and off I went—not smart. I was just out of sight of the dock when the engine quit. My husband was still trying to start the other jet ski while I began drifting helplessly along the Atlantic Intercoastal Waterway. I remember telling myself, “You are too old for this.”

But it could have been worse. I could at least see

land. As people flew by me, I shouted and waved my hands for help. Eventually some kind soul took pity on me and towed me back to the dock where the problem was quickly fixed.

But the other jet ski refused to start. For about an hour, I rode in circles in front of the dock waiting. Almost two hours after arriving at the dock, John got his jet ski started and we were underway.

Slowly, I made my way down the waterway as my husband and others taunted me to speed up. Three teenage boys yelled “granny” as they zipped passed me at what seemed like warp speed. I laughed with them, muttered under my breath, and kept moving.

What happened next was surprising. I became more confident. I noticed how beautiful the day was as I zipped in and out and around other boats—safely of course. I was having fun. By the end of the day, I heard myself say, “Wow, this was great fun!”

Many times, life lessons come to us in unexpected ways. Once again, John challenged me to go beyond my fears and try something out of my comfort zone and, as always, it equaled lessons learned. How many times would my faith have benefitted from the simple truths that I experienced in my jet ski excursion?

That day, I learned:

- Anticipate difficulties.
- Don't get discouraged when you *fall in*.
- When in doubt read the directions.
- Age is a number.
- If you feel like you are going around in circles, learn something while making the rounds.
- Never underestimate the goodness of others when you are in need.
- Savor the moments and the memories

□ And the most important truth, you are not alone.

God is on this challenging, sometimes messy and difficult, often out of my comfort zone, journey ride with me. And while challenging, I find myself saying, “WOW, what a ride! WOW, what Joy!”

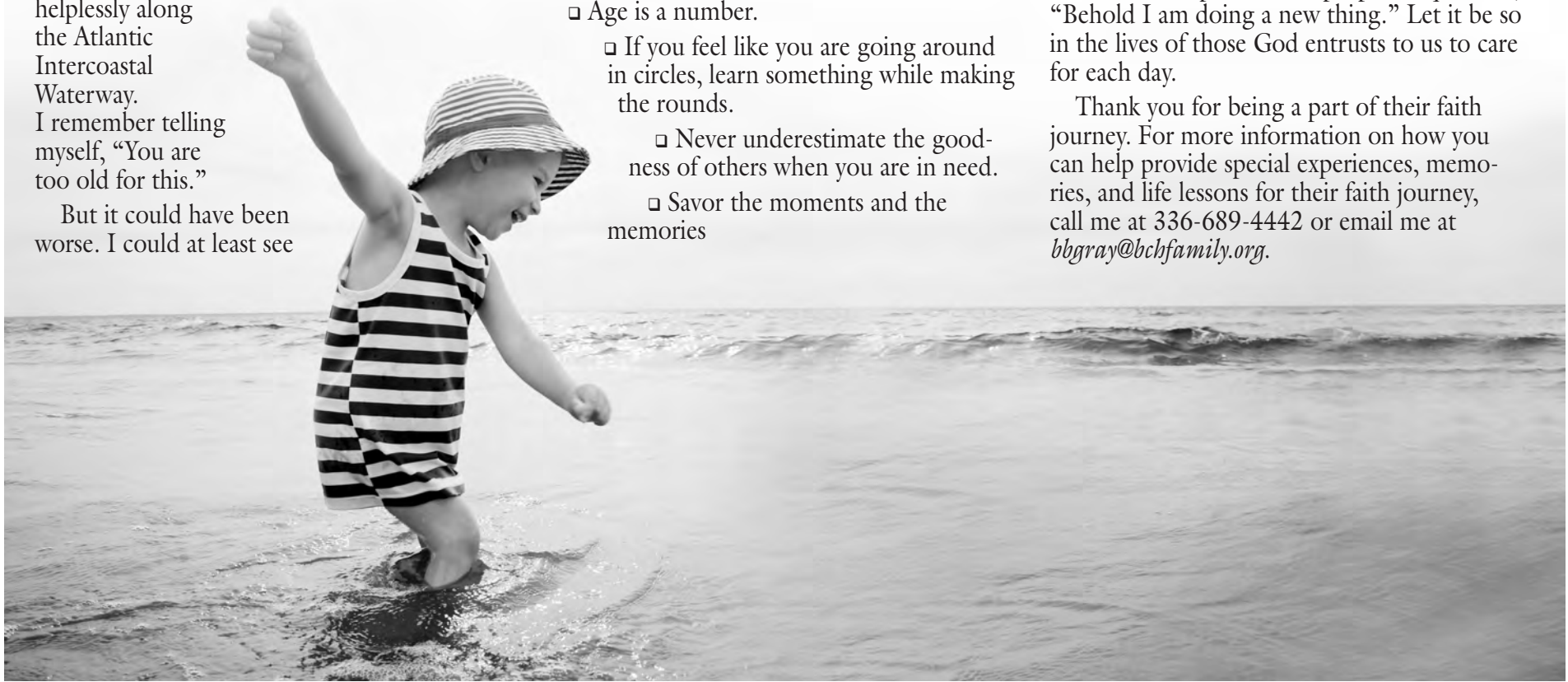
Learning life's lessons can be challenging and difficult. I am reminded of the prophet's fearful question as the people of Israel were carried into captivity: “Can we sing the Lord's song in a new land?”

This summer, our children will have many opportunities to make wonderful, glorious memories. They will also be challenged to go beyond their fears and the tragic circumstances of abuse, neglect, crisis, and abandonment that has left them feeling helpless and powerless. Many of our children are embarking into a new realm of experiences and will learn many new life lessons. Some will see parts of God's creation as they visit the beach—many, for the first time. They will have caring adults encouraging them and creating a safe refuge for them. For most, it will be the first time they will hear the gospel of God's amazing love and grace.

It is my prayer that each of these children will, one day, be able to say, “I am not alone.” I hope they will know God is on this challenging, sometimes messy and difficult, out of my comfort zone, journey with them and they will be able to exclaim: “WOW, what a ride! WOW, what Joy!”

The Lord replied to the prophet's question, “Behold I am doing a new thing.” Let it be so in the lives of those God entrusts to us to care for each day.

Thank you for being a part of their faith journey. For more information on how you can help provide special experiences, memories, and life lessons for their faith journey, call me at 336-689-4442 or email me at bbgray@bchfamily.org.



“All I have is \$1.36. Can you help me?”

Six-year-old Kevin came to his cottage parents after the first day of school. He had just come to live at Baptist Children's Homes because his family could not care for him the way he needed.

Kevin was noticeably anxious as he handed his cottage mother a small piece of paper and several coins. *He said, “Here is my list for school, and here is \$1.36 I’ve saved to buy school supplies. I know it’s not much, but it’s all I have. Can you help me?”*

Stunned, his cottage parents embraced Kevin. They assured him that they are there for him and that he didn’t have to worry about having the things he needed any longer. *“Here, you can have your \$1.36 back,” his cottage mother said as the boy began to smile. “You can buy something for yourself when we go shopping.”*

Your back-to-school gift ensures that children like Kevin have the backpacks, clothes, and most of all, the care they never had before coming to Baptist Children's Homes.

School days are just ahead, and we must begin preparing now to help our current and new boys and girls who are counting on us to care for them and show them the love they deserve.

Give your back-to-school gift today, and thank you for changing the lives of children like Kevin.

Go to bchfamily.org/backtoschool or mail your gift.

Use my back-to-school gift to help a child!

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

To make a gift by check, please print your information below and mail this form with your check. to: BCH, P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Make your gift by credit card: Give online at www.bchfamily.org/backtoschool or make your gift by phone: Call Faith Frazier at 336-474-1312.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive email updates from Baptist Children's Homes.

☐ Contact me with information on how to prepare a Christian Will. ☐ I have included Baptist Children's Homes in my estate plans.

History is captured in Blackwell’s new book

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

Continued from page 1.

The new BCH history book, *Founded on faith...Built on love*, is Dr. Blackwell’s sixth book, and according to him, his last book. But in a recent *Lexington Dispatch* article, writer Jill Doss-Raines writes: “While he truly believes it when he is saying it, those who know him best know he’s a voracious communicator, writer, and huge history buff that always finds more words that need to be said about the charity he has led for 38 years.”

As Blackwell writes in the introduction of the book, “No written history ever can be complete because every day writes another page.”

Throughout Blackwell’s tenure, there has been an emphasis on archiving the day-to-day comings and goings of the 135-year-old ministry. His commitment to *Charity & Children* and BCH’s various digital media platforms is key to his vision of documenting history. The children’s residential campuses, Mills Home, Kennedy Home, Odum Home, and Broyhill Home, are living archives with each location being noted for its historical significance. Cedar Dell at Kennedy Home and Mitchell Cottage at Mills Home are restored historic buildings that take visitors back in time the minute they walk over the thresholds.

“This ministry is built on the shoulders of great servants and to retain their story as we move further into the future, writing more history is a solemn

responsibility” Blackwell says. “In writing this new book, it was imperative to capture all the truly significant things that have occurred in the last two decades. We needed an update so our present would know and our future would appreciate the living and breathing history of this dynamic ministry.”

Founded on faith...Built on love features 160 pages and contains hundreds of full-color photos. The 8 1/2 by 11 inch, softcover book outlines the most current ministries and the impact they are having on the lives of children and families—telling their personal stories.

“As important as it was to write the book,” Blackwell says, “it is just as important that as many people as possible read it. The beautiful design and many color photos draw people to the book. When readers open the cover and start reading the first word, they are not disappointed. It’s a must for all who hold this ministry close to their hearts.”

Receive an autographed copy or copies of Blackwell’s new book *Founded on faith...Built on love* by paying \$20.00 per book—which includes shipping and handling. Multiple books can be ordered, but be sure to include an additional \$20.00 for each book. There are only a limited number of books left, so order now—when they’re gone, that’s it.

A generous grant provided by the Broyhill Family Foundation made this historical project possible.

Shirley Carlson serves with a lifetime of ministry behind her

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

Four-year-old Shirley Ann shivers in the cold wind while standing with her daddy and the other members of Gum Pond Primitive Baptist Church. Some of the men were breaking through the ice of Scout Pond for the baptism service. Recently, her mama had accepted the Lord, was saved, and, in a few minutes, would be immersed in the frigid waters—“buried with Christ and raised to new life.”

“I always went church,” Shirley Ann Carlson remembers. “Mama had a blanket at the end of the pew for me to lay on when the services went long.”

The only child of tobacco farmers, and raised in Wayne County, North Carolina, Carlson says she learned early the value of faith, family, and land. “Daddy always told me that ‘land was money in the bank.’”

Her parents had survived the Great Depression and instilled in their daughter a strong work ethic and a powerful desire to help those in need around her, a desire that turned into a lifetime of ministry.

Carlson remembers the joys of her close-knit childhood family, the many cousins she played with as a child remain friends today. She learned the value of an education, dreamed of becoming a nurse, and one day having a family of her own. The years passed quickly and Carlson grew into a beautiful young lady.

She never thought agreeing to a blind date in 1964 with an airman from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base would change her life, but it did. Roger was from Jamestown, New York and was smitten by this daughter of a tobacco farmer.

“Roger’s roommate dated my girlfriend,” she recounts. “It was just a date. But it was a date that led to a romance and engagement.”

The two married in 1965, Roger left the military in 1966, and Lorie was born in 1967. Three more children came into the family over the years: David, Jen, and Michael.

When attending Emmaus Baptist Church in Dudley, NC, the Lord began to work in the couple’s life. They talked a lot about what was happening in their hearts and agreed they would make professions of faith.



Shirley Ann Carlson has served at Baptist Children’s Homes as an NCBAM Call Center volunteer since May 2017. Her lifetime of ministry has led from serving with her husband Roger in pastoral ministry to serving as a North American Mission Board volunteers to Shirley being on staff with NCBAM and volunteering in her community.

“I always felt God in my life and felt I was a good person, I thought that was enough. But knowing Jesus is different,” she says.

In 1972, Shirley and Roger gave their lives to Christ and the two were baptized on the same day.

Their new journey with the Lord took a major turn in 1983 when Roger was called into the ministry. The family moved to Transylvania County for Roger to attend Mars Hill College. After graduation, Roger was called as pastor of Glen Raven Baptist Church in Kinston, NC. Shirley had earned her nursing degree and worked at the local hospital.

“God always moved us to where He wanted us to be,” Carlson says. “We served at three more churches and then heard God tell us that He no longer wanted us to serve in the Father’s house, He wanted us to serve in the Lord’s field.”

Immediately, the couple shared the news of God’s new calling with their church and made contact with the North American Mission Board. In a few short months, they were volunteer missionaries and on their way to plant a church in Weaverville, NC.

“We worked with families living in

a large trailer park,” Carlson remembers, “and started from the ground up to begin North View Baptist Mission, which continues to serve those families today. It was the most wonderful thing I have ever been a part of, I loved it.”

The couple, now both in their 50s, supported themselves working jobs in the community while serving there for three and a half years. They next served ten years in Pennsylvania working at various mission points and churches and served as project coordinators for the North Carolina Baptist and Pennsylvania partnership. In one year, the couple were involved in mission projects in five states: Kentucky, Vermont, Montana, Pennsylvania, and Mississippi—coining a new word to reply to the question, “Where did you serve this year?” “Kenvermonpenippi” was their answer.

In 2016, Roger was 72 and Shirley turned 68. Both agreed upon retirement, deciding to settle back in North Carolina. They chose to make Asheboro their home because it was central to their grown children and grandchildren who live throughout the state. But retirement didn’t mean they would not be serving. Roger is pastor of Staley Baptist Church and a Baptist on Mission volunteer

and Shirley serves in the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry’s (NCBAM) Call Center located at Mills Home in nearby Thomasville.

Serving four years with NCBAM, Carlson says last year was the most challenging. She says every call in the Call Center was about letting aging adults know they were not alone during the pandemic.

“Our clients were afraid,” she says. “My heart went out to everyone as we helped meet needs and encourage each one. I never hung up the phone without praying.”

In January, Carlson began volunteering two days a week at the Davidson County Health Department administering almost 650 COVID-19 vaccinations. “It was clear, God told me to do it.” As always, Carlson acted on God’s direction.

Carlson says that NCBAM may be her last job, but she and Roger remain open to do whatever God desires for them to do.

To this day, her lifetime of ministry continues.



Top, Shirley and Roger Carlson met in 1964, marrying a year later. Above, Shirley’s warm spirit is captured in her second grade school photo. She says her love for learning and caring for people began as a child. Left, Shirley, an only child, demonstrated a deep love and respect for her parents, who loved God and family. Below, Gum Pond Primitive Baptist Church was the first church Shirley attended.



Send my personal "book for the ages" today!

Please send me _____ **Founded on faith...Built on love.** I have enclosed \$ _____.

of copies # of copies x \$20.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Use the attached postage-free envelope to mail this coupon and money. If sending a check, make it payable to Baptist Children's Homes of NC. **Thank you!**

Statewide events for churches are back “on the air”

September

- 11th ● **River Hill Refuge Groundbreaking and Community Celebration**
Shelby, NC | Info Coming Soon
- 12th to 16th ● **Online Silent Auction for Christian Adoption Services**
Info to come at christianadopt.org
- 13th ● **Charlotte Golf Challenge for Christian Adoption Services**
Cedar Wood Country Club, Charlotte
Register at christianadopt.org/events
- 18th ● **Founders Day at Camp Duncan**
Aberdeen, NC | RSVP at 336.474.1209
Meet the girls and hear their testimonies.
Tour their campsites and enjoy a free lunch.
- 18th ● **Friends of Children Saturday: One-day missions for all ages**
Register at bchfamily.org/foc
 - Cameron Boys Camp, Cameron
 - Kennedy Home, Kinston
 - Odum Home, Pembroke
- 25th ● **Friends of Children Saturday:**
Register at bchfamily.org/foc
 - Mills Home, Thomasville

October

- 2nd ● **Hope Harvest: Barbecue Dinner and Live Music for Mills Home**
God's Canopy on Blackwell Blvd
Mills Home | Thomasville, NC
More info: bchnc.org/harvestbch
- 9th ● **Friends of Children Saturday:**
Register at bchfamily.org/foc
 - Camp Duncan, Aberdeen



November

- 4th ● **Benefit Banquet for Christian Adoption Services**
Rose Hill Estate | Nashville, NC
Register at christianadopt.org/events
- 6th ● **The Emanuel Home Walk**
Mills Home | Thomasville, NC
Celebratory event raising funds for a new home for birth mothers.
More info coming soon.
- 14th to 21st ● **Week of Prayer**
Daily prayer calendar and resources for your church to collect an Annual Offering at bchoffering.org
(2021 Offering website coming soon)



CALLING ALL CHURCHES!

Homecoming is around the corner—July 30–August 1

Alumni updates recall growing up at Mills Home

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

When **Pat Baucom** learned we will be having Homecoming this year, he sent this message: “Around 2018 and having been gone from Mills Home (MH) since 1969, I went back to visit my family in North Carolina (NC). While there, I learned that MH was soon to have its annual Homecoming. So when that weekend arrived, I headed over. As I drove under the arch, the chimes were ringing—the same chimes that long ago opened doors to new friendships. Memories flooded back! I was so happy to be back. And yes, I’ll be back again for Homecoming 2021! Why don’t you come join us and re-discover your old friends.”

Shirley Combs Price (‘62) wrote, “I would especially love to see our class of 1962 there. It is 59 years since we graduated and I would love to be able to hug each of you again. I also hope to see that campus full of our brothers and sisters.”

Cecelia Townsend Wilkerson and her husband **Mark** look forward to seeing the wonderful items you will be bringing for the Silent Auction. Remember, bring items to the gym when you arrive. Each item is to be worth a \$10.00 opening bid. Join the crazy fun of the Silent Auction and take home some treasures.

We are saddened to pass on news of the death of **Reverend Blair Little** who died April 27. He enjoyed a happily married life with his wife **Rachel Cloer Little** for 64 years. They left behind a progeny that includes two sons, three grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. Blair loved his life at MH, and he loved keeping up with his MH family. After graduating from MH, he graduated from Gardner-Webb Junior College (now University), Wake Forest University, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. And with pride, he served his country as a Marine. He enjoyed gardening, hunting, and playing golf. He also taught math and Bible in several schools in the state. Blair was a strong and faithful minister for many years. He served as pastor of several churches including Huntsville Baptist Church in Yadkinville, Siloam Baptist

Church in Harrells, and Spring Garden Baptist Church in New Bern. In retirement, he continued serving God at Pleasant Memory Baptist Church in Buies Creek.

Of his four sisters at MH, only **Ruth Bullins** survives. The others were **Edith, Frances, and Margaret**. Friends may send condolences to Ruth at this address: 1225 Hillcrest Dr., Thomasville, NC 26360. Memorial donations may be sent to the Rev. Robert Blair Little Scholarship Fund, Baptist Children’s Homes of NC, Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361.

We are sorry to report the death of **Darlene Jones Jarrell**. She entered MH in 1955 with two older sisters, **Ellen and Barbara**. She left MH after her junior year to live with her grandmother. Though she was a very shy person, Darlene engaged in most of the activities her cottage mates did: fun at the gym, valley, and church activities. She married and had three children who in turn gave her 13 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. She was retired from service to the Bartow County School System of Cartersville, Georgia. She loved to garden and take care of her pets. Many of her pets were strays that she took in and cared for. Condolences may be sent to **Barbara Jones Tyner** at jtyner3@carolina.rr.com.

I was very sorry to hear from **Ken Wallin** that his sister **Judy Wallin** recently succumbed to a long struggle with cancer. I felt I knew a special person when I had a few messages back and forth with her on Facebook a couple of years ago. She had lived in Madison County for many years. She worked as a supervisory CNA for a nursing care facility in Mars Hill until health issues forced her to take medical retirement. Judy is survived by son Eddie from whom she gained three grandsons and one granddaughter: **Edward, Sammy, Joshua, and Jayanna**. Of her four siblings, Ken lives in Charlotte; **Jerry** lives in Weaverville, and **Nancy** lives in Swannanoa. Her elder sister **Sharon** passed away several years ago. Judy lived for several years at MH and returned for a number of Homecomings with her brothers. She had a special place in

her heart for her MH brothers and sisters. She was a “born-again” Christian and attended the Upper Walnut Creek Baptist Church for several years. Friends may send condolences to Ken at this address: 8706 Stoneface Rd., Charlotte, NC 28214 and to Jerry at this address: 1029 Jupiter Rd. Weaverville, NC 28787.

A most welcome update came to us from **Geneva Martinez Bourgeois**. She wrote, “I came to MH in 1956 as a 2nd grader and stayed until I graduated in 1967. At first, I did not like being at MH because I was not living with my brothers or sisters. I think that was the cause of my early bad behavior. Once I adjusted, I was a better-behaved child. I sang in the church choir and with the Tour Choir many years. I loved all sports and served as lifeguard at the pool for at least three years—I could have lived at the pool. Memories of **Mrs. Sirena Walker** stand out to me. She actually knew my mother and told me stories about her. We became very close. Also, our pastor **Roger Williams** was so understanding. One year we had a father/daughter dinner and dance. He accompanied me as my father and even bought me a corsage to wear. Years later, he performed the wedding ceremony for our oldest daughter **Peggy**. After graduating, I married **Pete Knight** but after 10 years we separated. I went on to complete my career in the US Air Force. Believe it or not, I am forever best friends with Pete and his wife Judy. They are both wonderful people. Our daughters **Peggy and Kristie** attended their wedding at Myrtle Beach. And for **Peggy’s** wedding, Pete and Judy held the rehearsal dinner ‘Hee Haw Style’ at their house in Hamptonville. He was wonderful in his bibbed overalls and straw hat!

“My husband, **Bernard Bourgeois**, and I have lived in Litcher, Louisiana for about 23 years. I am self-employed in my own small beauty shop, ‘Geneva’s Styling Station.’ At the age of 73, I still enjoy Life!”

Most alumni know Joe Knight, the author of a delightful book named *Pentecostals, Poke Berries, and Possum Stew*. Joe entered MH in 1960

and left 1963. Though his stay was very short, he has a tremendous connection to MH. From 1984 to 1986, Joe was the vice-president-president/elect of the Alumni Association. That was followed by his presidency from 1986-88. He served again in those two offices from 2006 to 2010. After that he continued participating in Homecoming activities by entering his band in our talent shows, and he has often served as the MC for those shows. Several times he has brought the band to take part in the Sunday morning worship service. Unknown to most people, around 1982, **Joe and Keith Yow** began making speeches in NC Baptist churches spreading the word about the care given to them at MH. Later, Joe was called on by Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) to continue delivering those speeches every Thanksgiving offering season.

As a business man, Joe stands as a great example of character developed at MH. He established Knight’s Flight Foundation and under that name, he is part of Angel Flight, an organization that transports emergency patients to medical facilities for life-saving treatment at no cost.

Bobby Gene Hendricks also recently updated us with several details. He entered MH in 1939 from Cleveland County and graduated in 1954. Living out in Nevada makes it difficult for him to come back home very often, but when he does it is a great pleasure for him to see old friends and share stories about their mischievous lives on campus. Activities he enjoyed were singing in the choir, playing basketball and baseball for MH, and playing football for Thomasville High School. Being such an athlete, of course, he also enjoyed pickup games and socializing in the valley, gym, and swimming pool. He is married to **Dina** with whom he has three children, seven grandchildren, and one great grandchild. He is retired from a career as MCPO, US Navy.



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



Christian Adoption Services Couple welcomes adopted son

David and Claire suddenly received a phone call that led to them welcoming their new son. BCH's new Christian Adoption services helps couples with domestic and international adoptions.



Children helping children Little leaguers bless Broyhill

Every time a member of the Western NC Freedom Center Braves little league team got on base, a sponsor made a financial donation. The team collected \$500 which they donated to Broyhill Home.



BCH University New cohort begins classes

BCH University is an internal leadership program that educates up-and-coming staff members in all aspects of BCH's administrative functions. The newest group recently began their courses.



Pleasant Garden Baptist Church Youth on mission at Mills Home

Dozens of youth from Pleasant Garden Baptist tackled projects at Mills Home, Greater Vision Outreach, Fancy Finds and the administrative offices as a part of their summer missions emphasis.



McNeill Home at Indian Beach Boys discover miniature golf

Boys from Mills Home played putt-putt golf as a part of their week-long beach trip. BCH's McNeill Home gives children, special needs adults and their caregivers a vacation place to stay at the beach.



Vacation Bible School Offering Centerview Baptist VBS gives

As a part of their emphasis, children attending VBS at Centerview Baptist in Jacksonville collected supplies and raised \$2,000 for Kennedy Home in Kingston. Pictured: Robert Perry, Chairman of Deacons.



Odum Home in Pembroke Summer brings outdoor playtime

A young boy enjoys playing with his trucks in the sand outside his cottage. He is one of three siblings who now live at Odum Home. The Summer weather offers opportunities to have outdoor fun.



Camp Duncan in Aberdeen Girls prepare meal at campsite

Girls at Camp Duncan plan out meals at their camp sites and prepare them in their "cook tent." It's just one of the many responsibilities they tackle living outdoors 24/7 year round.



Campers on Mission Group delivers and sorts food

Every summer, Campers on Mission help BCH throughout its statewide locations. This group delivered and sorted food collected by Transylvania Association churches at Broyhill Home in Clyde.



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2. Central Area Family Services
Regina Keener, Dir., 336-474-1200
3. Eastern Area Family Services
Christopher Allabaugh, Dir., 252-522-0811
www.kennedyhome.org
4. Odum Home
Kathy Locklear, Res. Mgr., 910-521-3433
www.odumhome.org
5. Cameron Boys Camp
Drew Scott, Dir., 910-245-4034
www.cameronboyscamp.org
6. Camp Duncan for Girls
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www.campduncanNC.org
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11. HOMEBASE at W. Carolina University
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12. Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
Tara Sessoms, Dir., 336-474-1259
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13. NC Baptist Aging Ministry
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14. Good Shepherd Children's Home in Guatemala
Keith Henry, COO, 336-474-1215

one

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Make your Beach Cottage Retreat reservations now!

Alumni recall most memorable television shows

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

Guess what, a relative of “the” **William L. Kennedy**—the one who gave the property for Kennedy Home (KH), wrote me a letter. I learned that he reads my column every month. He writes:

“I am a kinsman of the Kennedy family that gave Cedar Dell and the lands to Baptist Children’s Homes. Our mutual progenitor was **William Kennedy**, born in 1690 in Culzean, Scotland. He was granted land at lower Falling Creek and to America in the 1720s. My father, **Kenneth D. Kennedy** was born in LaGrange in 1913. He played football at LaGrange High School with **Leon Brogden** whose father was a property manager of the KH property. Thanks for what you do. It sounds like the home has done some great things for kids for more than 100 years. Amazing!” —K. D. Kennedy, Jr.

Wow! I think this is great that a Kennedy kinsman reads *Charity & Children*. I really appreciate Kenneth taking the time to write. I hope to hear from him again as he remembers more about KH and Captain Kennedy. Remember, I need wonderful things like this for the column. Email me your stories and recollections to jthompson117@ec.rr.com.

Beach Cottage Retreat is on! We haven’t been able to attend Homecoming these past two years, so let’s have a large turn out for the Fall Beach Cottage Retreat. You can get there any time after 2:00 p.m. on the evening of Friday, October 8. We will have supper ready for everyone by 7:30. This will give everyone time to arrive and settle in. We will need to clean up the cottage by noon on Sunday with leftovers for lunch and then go home about 2:00 p.m. As you know, there are bunk beds on each end of the cottage, ladies on one end and men on the other just like the *good old days*. There are several rooms with a double bed that two folks can

stay in and are available first come, first serve. I hope **Becky** and I can have the main floor bedroom so she won’t have to go up the steps. Bring delicious desserts, several 2 liter drinks, games to play, and you may want to bring a craft to share.

We will have a devotion each night—don’t worry, it won’t last long. Maybe our president will give some of us a *new* hair doo! She is so good at fixing hair and did a wonderful job several years ago. **Katie?**

Now a few more tales about television watching at KH.

Ed Pait writes that kids liked to watch *Bonanza*, *Gunsmoke*, and *Rawhide*. He remembers having to complete chores so he could watch. **Jerry Carroll** writes when he first arrived at KH in February, he watched *Wilburn Brothers* and *Wonderful World of Disney*. In Hardee Cottage, he recalls watching *Father Knows Best*, *The Price Is Right*, and the *Ed Sullivan Show*. Then in Canady Cottage, he watched *Andy Griffith* and musical programs. He says he remembers watching the funeral of President John Kennedy in November 1963. **Loria Hartman** writes that in the Beacham Cottage, they watched Elvis Presley movies and basketball games. **Donna Wade** writes that in Ferebee Cottage, she remembers watching *The Wizard of Oz* in 1970. **Jimmy Raper** writes he watched the first Super Bowl game in Lenoir Cottage. **Linda Jones** remembers that 1961 in Ferebee Cottage, television was turned off at 9:00 p.m., they had nightly devotions, and then went to bed. **Walter Sisk** writes that he remembers watching the Billy Graham Crusade. **Ken Hawley** writes that in CCB, they sat on the floor and were quiet while watching television, even during the commercials. He remembers watching *Boston Blackie* and *Captain Kangaroo* in the early 60s. **Larry Gilliam** recalls living in seven cottages from 1957-1971. He writes about the first color TV on campus.

Alumni remember summer with tales of trips to the lake and beach:

Jim Dyer remembers trips to White Lake. **Linda Jones** remembers trips to White Lake were the best. Once the beach cottage was available, residents began going every summer.

David Bradley writes: “Hey John, my first beach trip at KH was the summer of 1967. I was 10 years old and had never been to Emerald Isle and Atlantic Beach. I had no idea we were going to ride a ferry boat to get over to the island. When we stopped in line to get on the boat, **Leon and Phillip Morgan, Jimmy Taylor**, and a couple of other guys convinced me that we had to hold our breath until we got to the other side. I figured out rather quick that they were picking on me. We all had fun at the beach. On the ‘73 beach trip when we loaded up the Blue Jay and were about to leave, **Mr. Beacham** handed me the keys and said, “David, you drive.” Boy, I became a man that day and so thankful for Mr. Bill Beacham giving me the opportunity to prove myself, to be responsible, and to make sure we all arrived safely home.”

Edward Gaston Pait writes: “Back in the mid 60s, the Spilman boys were at the beach cottage. **Jimmy Moore, Walter (Buddy) Sisk**, and I were fishing in the sound when we had to rescue a couple of other guys, not from KH, that thought they were about to drown because they couldn’t swim and had gotten in a hole. We went and pulled them to where they could stand with their heads above water and told them to get life jackets or not come back in the water. I remember the times we went there and enjoyed every minute of our visits. I learned to surf fish across from the cottage on the beach side and caught many flounder in the sound. Take care and we appreciate all you do, Mr. T.”

A big thanks goes to my home church, **Cherry Point Baptist**

Church in Havelock, for all the many paper products they collected in May for KH. I delivered them to the campus on June 1 and they were all very appreciative of the gifts. The church filled the whole choir loft with paper products.

Allow me to suggest to alumni and other churches who want to help the children at KH to give grocery store gift cards.

As you know, KH doesn’t have a “pig parlor,” dairy, or raise beef cattle any more. The houseparents go to the grocery store and buy this kind of stuff. Everyone at KH would really appreciate it if you would send them some gift cards to different good stores so they can buy all these different perishables. This will really help. I know most churches help in the **Food Roundup** in April, but this is something Sunday School classes could do all through the year. I just wanted to share this suggestion.

I want to give a great big thanks to all who sent me some interesting things to add to this month’s column. I couldn’t do this without you!

As always, please know that you are welcome to come to Havelock for a visit. I’ll cook a meal if you let me know you are coming or just drop by to say “hello.” You already know that **Becky** and I love you very much. In the seventies when we were serving the Lord at KH, you made us feel so welcome. There are not many folks alive now who were working when we were there.

Please keep us in your prayers. My sweet Becky is now 76 and I’m 77. The years just keep on passing by. I feel like I can say, we’re getting old! Feel free to drop by and visit with us at any time. Continue

to remember Becky and her health as you pray. —jt



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

Grandson Roger loves passing along a good story

By **Jim Edminson**, Editor

Roger is grand number two, and he is quite grand indeed. I do not know if my grandson ever sits still. His interests are wide and varied and almost all of his pursuits need open spaces. He rides bikes and horses, he casts for fish and throws the football for touchdowns, he builds fires and forts.

This summer, he is learning jiu jitsu when he is not camping at Lake Bob Sandlin State Park with his family or visiting Nana and PawPaw to help out with their church's VBS.

Roger is tall, sturdy, and fearless.

He seems to thrive on meeting the next challenge or winning the next contest.

Yesterday, I had a text with photo showing Roger helping

a family friend with his barber school assignment. The new lightning bolt Tyler gave him runs across the side of his head just above his right ear. That pretty much sums up my boy's audacious spirit. Roger is a go-getter.

Roger is also an avid reader. His home bookshelves showcase his wide-ranging interests, and his public library card is well-used. His current favorite? The serial adventures of *Dog Man*. This past holiday season, I bought the latest installment of the series as a gift for Roger, but he had already purchased the new copy on the day it came out. Roger saves his money and is ready when each new adventure hits the bookstore's shelves.

His love of books appears out of character in one with his intrepid nature until I think about it, and then it makes sense. His mind is quick and engaging, and he has a healthy curiosity about life. Stories power his imagination and satisfy his intellect. And reading insatiably means he always has something to share with others, some knowledge to pass along, or maybe a good joke. Talking with Roger is a pleasure, and I take away something new every time.

Sharing stories is a passion, too, of the man at the head of the ministry I serve. Earlier this year, Dr. Blackwell's latest book went to the printer's and came back to great excitement around

here. Within the pages of the beautiful book, photos, vignettes, historical facts, and presidential anecdotes tell the continuing story of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, focusing on the most recent 20 years of his tenure. The text unfolds from the perspective of one who has, in more ways than one, lived the stories on the pages. From Murphy to Manteo, *Founded on faith...Built on love* showcases

the people and events that continue making this ministry vital and essential to those it serves as well as to those who serve across the state and across time. BCH has a rich heritage, and reading the stories from the pen of the man who knows the intimate details and behind-the-scenes features is particularly informative.

Myriad personalities move through the pages of this full-color book. So many diverse characters, crucial events, and momentous occasions pack into the telling of BCH's story. There is a central theme at work here, too, that the book's subtitle foreshadows: *Thriving on hope: The Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina*.

I add my congratulations to Dr. Blackwell, along with many who have already read advance copies of his new book. (See page 6 to order your copy.) He has taken the history of God's ministry and made it personal to all of us who join him in doing our part to advance the Lord's work here—now and since its very first day. What a powerful story. What a necessary telling. To God be the glory!

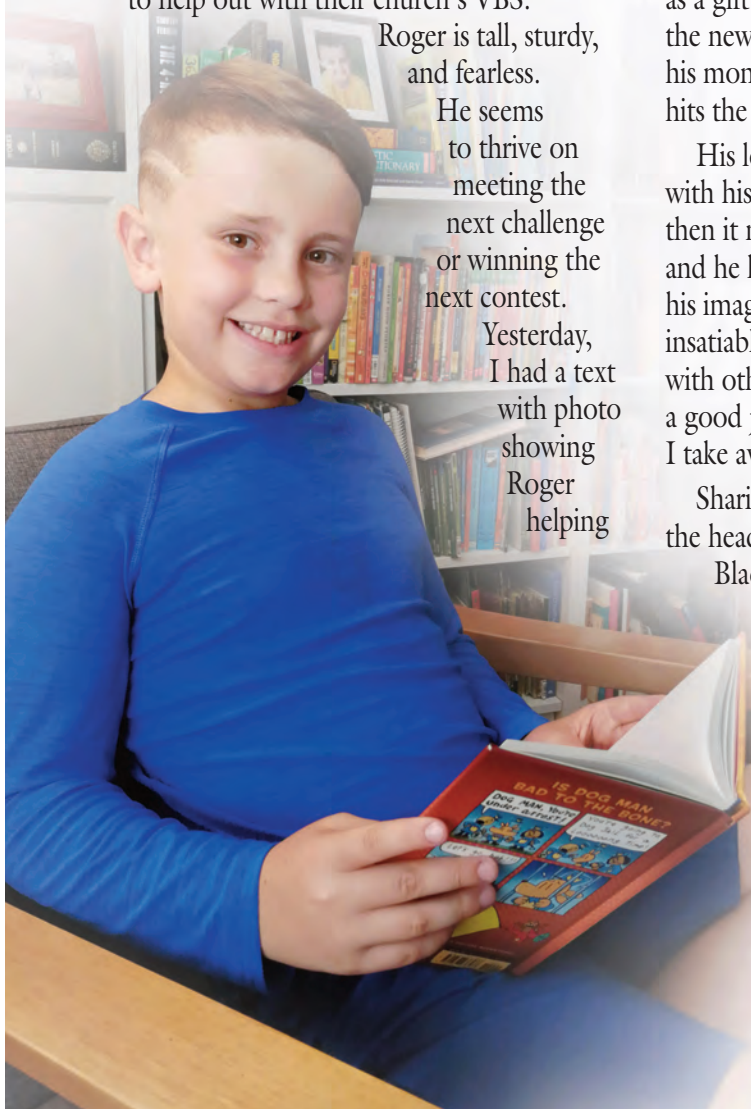
In Texas, my grandson will read lots of books this summer. He will increase his knowledge and satisfy his curiosity. He will explore the world through the eyes of the adventurers who pen their stories and live the histories of those who tell their tales. Then



he will put down his book and go outside, taking the stories with him as he continues becoming the amazing person he is.

I need to call Roger soon. I feel the need to hear another good story right now.

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



"I don't feel like I would've gotten
SAVED
if not for Odum Home."

Samantha
from Baptist Children's Homes'
Odum Home in Pembroke

Samantha came to Baptist Children's Homes four years ago from a traumatic past. Here, she graduated high school and has achieved her dream of attending college. Most of all, she heard the Gospel and accepted Christ through the support of NC Baptists.

Invite a speaker to share these stories of hope with your church.

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