

This is the time to honor
our graduates. (See page 6.)

Charity & Children

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

f i y t e @bchfamily

June-July 2023

Issue 7

Volume 136

Adopted teenager sees God's purpose in her story

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

The vibrant blue of Ashley's high school cap and gown contrasts brilliantly against the beige walls of the church sanctuary and the wood-stained pulpit she stands behind. It is "Graduation Sunday" at Fellowship Baptist Church in Winston-Salem where the 18-year-old attends with her adoptive parents, Roger and Shanell Cook, and her siblings.

"In the last few years I've had time to think about where my life has been and where it is going," the teen shares with the congregation. She was asked to speak as a part of the Sunday service. "As I've thought about it, I have begun to see life as a book and God as the author."

It has taken many years for Ashley to see God within her story because of the difficult childhood she endured. Born to a mother and father who struggled with addiction, Ashley spent 13 years with her biological parents until she was placed into the custody of the NC foster care system.

"For a long time I couldn't see any light at the end of my tunnel," she divulges. "I only saw it getting worse."

Growing up,

As a child in the foster care

system, the God she learned about as a young girl was the recipient of her anger.

"I had endured countless traumas that made me question 'Does God even have any purpose for me here at all?'" Ashley says. "I was so enraged with God and those around me. I constantly wondered what I did to deserve the life I had been given."

A turning point came when Ashley, while in foster care, attended a Christian camp. It was through that experience that she accepted Christ.

"I was so consumed with all the ugly and bad in my life that I was too blind to see the bigger picture," Ashley explains. "It wasn't until many years later that this picture came to light as I was saved by Christ and then adopted by mom and dad."

Roger and Shanell Cook, who had been



Above, high school graduate Ashley was adopted as a teen by Baptist Children's Homes foster care couple Roger and Shanell Cook. (Photo by Yasmine Leonard Photography.) Left, the Cooks with adopted daughters Makala, Ashley, and Harmony.

trained and licensed as foster parents by Baptist Children's Homes (BCH), received a call from their BCH case manager about then 15-year-old Ashley. In addition to their biological son, the couple had fostered and later adopted two other children. Yet, they invited the teen to come.

"Like the other children, when she first came she was kind of in her shell," says Roger. "We told her that when you are a part of a family it's not a short-term thing—it's a lifetime."

Ashley had been fostered by the Cooks for less than three months when she knew she wanted to be a part of the family for a "lifetime." Ashley was adopted on October 1.

"Before, surviving and just getting through was my focus," Ashley shares. "Between God

(Continued on page 8.)

Record amount raised as riders roar across the state

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

Every year, the familiar sounds associated with Ride to Clyde can be heard as riders raise awareness, funds, and share the love of Christ through the charity ride.

There is the rumble of motorcycle engines as they travel to Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) locations throughout the state. The sounds of horns resonated across BCH's Mills Home location in Thomasville as preschoolers sit on the parked motorcycles. There is the laughter of children and special needs adults as they spent time with them. Most of all, there are the voices of the riders sharing the gospel and lifting up prayers as they journey throughout the state.

This year, the eighth annual Ride to Clyde, organized in partnership with NC Baptists and volunteer leaders, ended with the sounds of praises and cheers as an oversized check of \$178,002.00 was presented. It was a record amount raised benefiting those BCH serves.

"Each year I am humbled by the grace of God, the generosity of His people who pray and give so that the Christ-honoring ministries of BCH receive this much-needed support," said Volunteer Coordinator Brian Davis.

The multi-day ride took place from May 10 to May 13 and was comprised of two routes. The first is the east to west route that began at Caswell Conference Center in Oak Island. The west to east ride started at Truett Conference Center and Camp in Hayesville. Both routes ended at



Above, girls living at Camp Duncan in Aberdeen admire the different styles of motorcycles. Right, preschoolers from Weekday Education in Thomasville sound the horns while sitting on the parked motorcycles. Left, children at Broyhill Home in Clyde cheer the bikers as they arrive for the finale of the ride. A record amount of \$178,002 was raised by this year's participants.

BCH's Broyhill Home in Clyde which is where Ride to Clyde gets its name.

"The second route tripled its number of riders this year providing more opportunities for participants to interact with BCH's children and special needs adults," said BCH Trustee and Volunteer Leader Rit Varialle. "It's a trend we can build on for 2024."

To date, the ride has raised more than \$750,000 for BCH in cooperation with NC Baptists and motorcyclists from churches located across the state. Next year's ride is tentatively scheduled for May 8-11, 2024.



Mission:
sharing hope . . . changing lives

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

Charity & Children—Established in 1887 as the official publication of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, Inc., 204 Idol St., PO Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361-0338. Michael C. Blackwell, publisher; Jim Edminson, editor (wjedminson@bchfamily.org); 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 by Triangle Web Printing, Durham, NC and mailed by Excalibur, Winston-Salem, NC. Circulation: 62,000 seven times a year, 30,000 four times a year. Periodicals postage paid at Thomasville, NC, and at additional mailing offices. For free subscription or to be removed from the mailing list or make address correction or change, use the above address and write to Attn: Circulation Manager, send an email to address@bchfamily.org 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.

Turner Cottage dedicated for the glory of God

By **Linda Morgan**, Statewide Director, Cottage Care Homes and Foster Care

On May 22, I was delighted to welcome Dr. Michael Blackwell, president of Baptist Children's Homes (BCH), Judy Turner (wife of CB Turner), and other guests and staff members to the dedication of Turner Cottage in Hayesville. The day was a celebration of what God can do when one has faith and gives the glory to Him.

All those involved had a dream but there was no money. Many said it was impossible to purchase a home, renovate it, and have it become a licensed foster home. But all involved had the belief that God would provide. Matthew reminds us in his gospel what Jesus said: "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt 19:26).

The home and property were purchased with a grant from The Dogwood Health Trust. The task to find a donor who could give funds to renovate the building began. As we prayed, I received a call from CB Turner.

"Linda, this past year I have suffered a stroke, deep vein thrombosis, and finally the triple whammy of a pulmonary embolism, COVID and pneumonia. I was hospitalized in Asheville and thought I would die," Turner shared. "During that time,

I prayed and revisited life and what God has given me. I have given you donations and have provided for Broyhill in my will, but while I was in the hospital God told me I needed to do more. I would like to give a substantial donation to assist with the care and well-being of the children."

CB and his wife Judy agreed to give \$200,000 for the renovations. The cottage would be named Turner Cottage in their honor. He shared that donating was an easy decision to make when he learned about the project—"It was what God wanted."

CB shared that he grew up from very humble beginnings. His father lost his job in the depression, finally being employed again by the railroad. Their house did not have indoor plumbing, but it belonged to them. CB's first venture was raising pigs and selling them on their farm. He became a Christian at the age of eleven. He says it was the most important decision of his life. CB dedicated his life to



Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) President Michael C. Blackwell, center, staff members, and NC Baptist friends and supporters gathered on May 22 for the dedication of Turner Cottage. It is the second home BCH has opened in Hayesville located in the far western region of the state. Below, TEXT TEXT TEXT

serving the Lord.

He worked as an entry level technician at Burroughs Corporation working with computers and made his way up the ladder to vice president and general manager of their Latin America and Caribbean markets. Turner retired and opened a chain of Arby's restaurants and as they say, "the rest is history."

"I became a multimillionaire but my focus remains on what God is calling me to do," CB says. "I know giving this donation to Baptist

Children's Homes will change many lives."

As a self-described old country girl, I am "button popping proud" to know CB and to be there that day to celebrate the impossible becoming possible, all for the glory of God.



Take a Virtual Tour

Play the video to see a walkthrough of Turner Cottage, the beautiful new home for foster care children.

Scan the QR Code or go to bchnc.hopp.to/tctour



Wonderful milestones reached despite obstacles

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

Spring offered many opportunities for our ministry and those in our care to experience significant milestones. Decisions to follow Christ were made. Babies were born. Children and families found hope and healing. Special Olympics and “Night to Shine” events were a highlight for our IDDM men and women. Senior Adults found community through our NCBAM ministry. The Emmanuel Home opening was celebrated. Friends of Children events across the state were attended by hundreds of volunteers. Our “Ride to Clyde” event raised more than \$178,000. The Daley Farm House was completed and dedicated on May 20. Turner Cottage opened on May 22. Several gala and golf events were held giving children the opportunity to experience milestones in their lives. Our annual “Food Roundup” resulted in truck loads of food delivered from churches all across North Carolina. It was such a witness of caring to our children and staff. It has been a very busy time filled with milestones. Every day brought evidence of Baptists “On Mission Together” to our ministry.

The month of May also brought college graduations. On May 11, I received a text from Whitney exclaiming a victory, a milestone in her life. “I am about to walk at my graduation ceremony and I’m praising God for it all!”

Whitney overcame significant obstacles to reach this milestone. You may remember Jim Edminson’s story about Whitney that appeared in the August 2022 issue of *C&C*. As a young girl, Whitney rebelled against her missionary parents. She rebelled against all truth in her life, becoming addicted to drugs. She found herself living on the street. Having attempted rehab several times, this last time would be different. After being clean for 30 days, she feared she was pregnant. When a pregnancy test confirmed her suspicion, she remembers thinking it was the worst day of her life.

“There was only blackness. I was broken.”



Whitney graduating from Liberty University

parents. The couple named the baby Maverick.

Whitney testifies: “I know the depth of God’s mercy and grace. I know because the magnitude of my sin was met with the greatness of His love.”

On May 11, Whitney celebrated as she walked across the stage at Liberty University to receive her degree in nursing. There was no one cheering louder or clapping harder than Maverick, the Murphys, and Whitney’s mom, dad, and siblings. This was not only a milestone for Whitney, but a milestone for each one of them as they praised God for it all!

In June, our seniors graduated from high school. Like Whitney, they have had to overcome many obstacles to accomplish their milestone. The whole theme of graduation and milestones in our lives is so very important. In scriptures, we read where Jacob, after an encounter with God in a dream, rose and took the stone he had used as a pillow and set it up to mark the spot where God promised to bless

him—a milestone in his life. Later, we read that after crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land, God instructed Joshua to take twelve men and remove twelve stones from the river and make an altar. In the future, children would ask what these stones meant and they would tell the story of God’s miraculous activity in the crossing of the Jordan. Whether we are talking about individuals or nations, spontaneous events or the culmination of a long sustained effort, milestones are important to all of us.

Milestones are those places and moments when life is changed forever. It is the culmination of persistence and hard work. Other milestones will follow: a first full-time job, a wedding, a college degree, becoming a new parent—all are events which become milestones.

Other milestones have occurred at BCH.

Many of our boys and girls, for the first time in their lives, heard that they were valuable creations. They and their families were treated with respect and dignity and shown the positive potential they had. Many of them experienced the milestone of responding to the good news of God’s love for them. These “faith in Christ” events are the most important milestones of all!

For all of this, we thank you! It is your support and love for these children that make it possible to have these milestones to celebrate, reflect on, and acknowledge that they have been more than recipients of diplomas but recipients of love. Thank you for helping to create special milestones that will be an encouragement for years to come. Thank you for enabling us to



Whitney and Maverick

create an atmosphere where children can experience many positive milestones while they are with us. It is so important for our children have opportunities to explore, learn, and experience God’s creation and create memories. There will be many of these opportunities available this summer. I anticipate the joy of watching them heal and

come alive as they embrace and experience the wonders and lessons of life in the months ahead.

A tremendous round of applause to our graduates. (See pages 6 and 7). We celebrate their hard work and give thanks for the healing and growth that has taken place in the lives of these boys and girls. Thank you for joining us in helping create wonderful milestones!

Lives are forever changed because of you.

When twelve-year-old Jenny first arrived at the cottage, she could have requested food or clean clothes. Instead, her first question was, "Can I take a shower?"

Before coming to Baptist Children's Homes, Jenny was not provided this basic necessity. At school, she was ridiculed by her classmates. In addition to coming from a home where neglect had taken its toll, the bullying the preteen endured was heartbreaking and unbearable. For Jenny, a hot shower was the most important thing in the world.

Jenny is the reason why your Back-to-School gift is absolutely essential. Your generosity makes it possible to provide what's important for the well-being of the boys and girls we serve. When children have everything they need for school—clothes, supplies, a safe place—they are able to focus on success in the classroom as opposed to feeling unprepared or self-conscious.

Using your Back-to-School gift, Jenny was given the new clothes and school supplies she needed. Her first day at school after coming to BCH was life changing! Since we must plan now for the children who are with us currently as well as the ones who will need the same love and care, your gift will come at the time it's needed most. Please make your Back-to-School gift today!



Scan to make a gift on our mobile giving page.

Use my gift to help change a child's life.

☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$2,500 ☐ \$ _____ Any size gift!

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

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

You can make your gift by credit card at www.bchfamily.org/backtoschool or phone Faith Frazier at 336-474-1312.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive email updates. ☐ Contact me with information on how to prepare a Christian Will.

☐ I have included Baptist Children's Homes in my estate.

Celebrating Achievements

BCH RESIDENTS

Ciara Stubblefield, a resident at Mills Home in Thomasville, graduates from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in December 2023. She plans to join the Carolina College Advising Corps as a college advisor

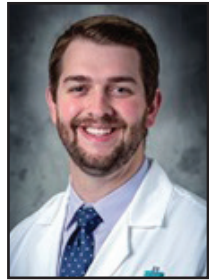


Stubblefield

working in an underrepresented NC high school.

STAFF CHILDREN

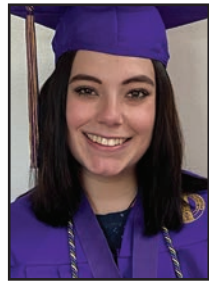
Dr. Seth Beeson completed his General Surgery Residency at Novant Health- New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Wilmington. He



Beeson

will practice as a surgeon at Novant Health-Rowan Medical Center, Salisbury. He is the son of Melanie Beeson, NCBAM-Hope Line Director/ Southeast Coastal Regional Director.

Caitlyn Page Cable graduated from Western Carolina University in Cullowhee with a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature and



Cable

a minor in Professional Writing. She is the daughter of Jada Cable, West Central Foster Care Supervisor.



Chilson

Joshua Chilson graduated from The Oaks Private School in Jasper, FL in June and plans to pursue Owner/Operator for CFA in college. He is the son of Matt Chilson, Kennedy Home Residential and Campus Manager, and Jessie Chilson, Foster Care Supervisor.

Christina Cook graduated from Scotland Early College High School in Laurinburg with an Associate of Arts Degree and received her Associates in Applied Science on May 20 from Richmond Community College in Hamlet, NC. She plans to attend UNC Pembroke after graduation and major in psychology. She is the daughter of Jacqueline Blount, Case Manager Supervisor



Cook

Dai-Shon Donald graduated Cum Laude



Donald

from UNC Pembroke on May 6 with a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communication-Broadcasting with Honors as well as the Dean's List. He has accepted a position with WPDE News Station as a

Producer in Conway, SC. He is the son of Serena Rouse, Case Manager II at Kennedy Home in Kinston.

Johnny Edwards will be graduating from Southwest Guilford High School. He will be taking his talent for swimming to St. Bonaventure in New York state where he will study finance. He is the son of Charlotte Edwards, Manager at Fancy Finds and The Mill: Coffee & Community in Thomasville.



Edwards



Heilig

Kaydee Heilig graduated from Uwharrie Ridge in June and was also dual-enrolled as a Cosmetology student at Randolph Community College as a senior. She plans to continue at RCC and obtain her

Cosmetology License. She is the daughter of Bobbie Heilig, Family Care Worker at Mills Home. Abigail Johnston graduated from Richlands High School in Richlands, NC on June 13 and will attend UNC Wilmington in the fall to pursue a degree in Exercise



Johnston



Qualls

Science. She is the daughter of Kelly Johnston, Kennedy Home Foster Care Supervisor. Stephen Qualls graduated from Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, N.C. on May 4 with a Bachelor of Science in Marketing. He will begin the Master of Divinity program at Southeastern

Baptist Theological Seminary in August 2023. He is the son of Kevin Qualls, Director of Development Christian Adoption Services and Young Leader Relations.

Bradyn Cole Slate graduated with honors from East Davidson High School in June. Bradyn has accepted a full academic scholarship to Ferrum College in Virginia where he will be playing football. He is the grandson of Karen Slate, Director of Development, Greater Triad Area.



Slate

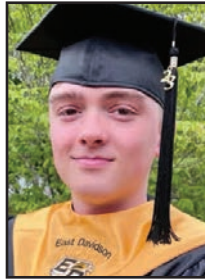
Holden Surratt graduated from Appalachian

State University, Boone, NC May 13 with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. He plans to continue his studies at UNC Greensboro concentrating in Taxation. He is the son of Martha Surratt, Director of Special Ministries.



Surratt

Walker Surratt graduated from East Davidson High School in Thomasville, NC June 9 and plans to attend Davidson-Davie Community College. He is the son of Martha Surratt, Director of Special Ministries.



Surratt

Brekyn Truax graduated from Charlotte Christian School in Charlotte, NC on June 3. He plans to attend East Carolina University and major in social work. He is the son of Cynthia Truax, Sr. Director of Strategic Initiatives & Special Projects.



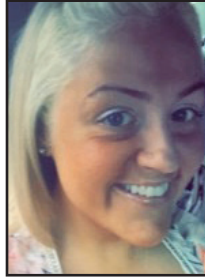
Truax

STAFF MEMBERS

John Adamcik, Staff Engagement & Compliance/ Director of Human Resources, graduated August 19 from Piedmont Divinity School at Carolina University in Winston-Salem, NC with a Master of Arts in Ministry.



Adamcik



Luther

Audrey Luther, Innovations Support Professional in Asheboro Home, graduated May 10 from Randolph Community College with an Associate Degree in Arts. She has future plans for a Bachelor's in psychology.

David Nguyen, The Bob and Carolyn Tucker Greater Vision Outreach Ministry intern, graduated May 12th from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC with a Master of Arts



Nguyen



Rono

in Christian Marriage, Family and Individual Counseling.

Jana D. Rono, East Central Region Foster Care/ Foster Care Supervisor, graduated on May 12th from Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, NC with a Master's in Social Work (MSW).

Summertime is filled with "firsts" for BCH children

The joyous memories Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) cottage parents, foster parents and adoptive parents make for boys and girls is one of the most essential ways of helping ease their past hurts. Through the support of churches and friends of BCH's many ministries, children, special needs adults and families are experiencing an unforgettable Summertime.

The Summer season opens up opportunities for a number of **firsts**: first baseball game, first Vacation Bible School, first roller coaster ride, and for many children, a first time seeing the ocean. BCH operates McNeill Home, a seasonal cottage that sits along the sound at Indian Beach. BCH's statewide cottages and residential wilderness camps each take turns traveling with caregivers to the cottage for a week's vacation.

"There are a number of boys and girls in our care who never had a true childhood because of the circumstances they came from," said Keith Henry, BCH Chief Operating Officer. "Allowing them opportunity to simply be children and to give them a summer filled with incredible experiences is one of our biggest blessings."

Keep up with BCH's summer memories by following [bchfamily](#) on Facebook and Instagram.



Top, parents and their children, who they adopted through Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) Christian Adoption Services, gathered for the Raleigh Family Picnic. Middle left, preschoolers attending Weekday Education in Thomasville raced around the enclosed parking area for "Bike Day." Middle center, learning new creative skills is an important part of the day for the indigenous boys and girls living at Good Shepherd Ministries in Guatemala. Bottom left, girls from Mills Home in Thomasville traveled with their cottage parents for vacation at McNeill Home, BCH's cottage at Indian Beach. Bottom center, Mills Home Baptist Church pastor Luis Guintanar led story time at The Mill: Coffee & Community. Right, girls from Camp Duncan watch the sunset over the sound behind McNeill Home.

Festival shines brightly after a four-year absence

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

The “Cookin’ for the Kids” Broyhill Barbecue Festival made its return for the first time since 2019. The annual festival, which was paused due to the COVID outbreak, is organized by Ninevah Baptist Church and Mike Leslie, the church’s pastor and member of the Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) Board of Trustees.

Admission to the festival is free to the public. Proceeds generated from meal tickets and festival events benefit the children and families served at BCH’s Broyhill Home in Clyde where the event also takes place.

After a four-year absence, there was natural uncertainty regarding how well the event would be attended. Any concerns quickly vanished as community friends and supporters poured onto the campus grounds.

“It was a high and holy moment to see all those people readily come back and with such enthusiasm,” said Linda Morgan, BCH Statewide Director, Cottage Care Homes and Foster Care. “It was totally inspirational to the children and staff to see how much love and support we have from the community.”

The day included a barbecue meal, live music from Fields of Grace from Candler, a car/truck/motorcycle show, and the 3-D bow shoot. Bikers from Ride to Clyde were also in attendance.



The “Cookin’ for the Kids” Broyhill Barbecue Festival took place on Saturday, May 13 at Broyhill Home, Baptist Children’s Homes’ (BCH) campus located in the mountain community of Clyde. The event returned for the first time since 2019 when it was postponed due to the pandemic. Attendance went beyond expectations for this year’s festival, which is organized by Ninevah Baptist Church in Waynesville. Above, community children at the festival’s car show discover a special vehicle that they were encouraged to color.



Daley Farmhouse Dedication

On Saturday, May 20, the Daley Farmhouse was dedicated at Cameron Boys Camp. The home will be used for much-needed staff housing and is named in honor of former Camp Director and BCH staff member Paul Daley. Pictured at the ribbon cutting, left to right: Jacob and Bethany (Paul’s daughter) Saburro, Lisa Daley (Paul’s wife), Bill and Mary Mills, Cameron Boys Camp Director Drew Scott, Paul Daley, BCH Trustee Roy Howell and Judy Howell, Green Level Baptist Church Senior Pastor David Baker, and BCH’s Director of Development Northeast Region Wade Parker.

Ashley trusts God’s plan

(Continued from page 1)

and mom and dad, I’ve learned that my focus needs to be less on myself and more on loving others. My siblings have helped me open my heart to others.”

“Ashley originally wanted a home with no children and now she has the complete opposite,” Shanell reveals. “She was a missing piece of our family and has overcome so much.”

The high school graduate is now focused on her next steps which include studying to be a dental hygienist at Forsyth Technical Community College. Ashley has also completed course prerequisites by taking early college classes through Davidson-Davie Community College. She received a \$1,000 Leadership Scholarship through Chick-fil-A, where she works.

“Being with mom and dad has opened up opportunities—things that I never thought I’d be doing when I was younger,” Ashley says. “It’s a life of serving God, following through with His plans for me and making my younger self proud.”

Just as she shared at the end of her speech with her church, Ashley hopes her journey encourages others and assures them that God is indeed present within the pages of their stories.

“Trust that whatever chapter of your life you may be in or challenges you face that God has a purpose in all of it.”

Plan to attend Homecoming on Aug. 4, 5, & 6 — MH athletes inducted into T'ville hall of fame

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

We do hope that you have planned to be at Mills Home (MH) Homecoming during August 4, 5, & 6, 2023, the weekend to which we all look forward. Please call your friends and encourage them to be there for another great Homecoming. "You" are truly what makes Homecoming great.

Your annual Homecoming letter (packet of information) with all the pertinent details of Homecoming should have arrived by now. It has these important items: a letter from **President Ruth Berndt Hodges**, the pre-registration form, the schedule for the weekend, and the information sheet to fill out for the **Charity & Children** alumni column. Please use that packet of information to keep yourself abreast of the weekend's time and place of each activity. Besides the opportunity to visit with "brothers and sisters," you'll find fun and interesting activities in which to get involved during the weekend: playing bingo, tossing bean bags at the corn-hole, eating watermelon, visiting the Mitchell Museum, catching a snack at the concession stand, scanning over and bidding on the items in the Silent Auction, making purchases at the sign-in desk, and visiting God's Acre. Oh yes, we are including the cake walk again this year so we need alumni to bring home-made cakes, cookies, and candy for us to give as prizes. Please contact **Flora** to let her know what type dessert you can contribute to the cake walk (florapatton@ctc.net). And don't forget to get into the annual Homecoming photo to be taken in the gym on Saturday. Yes, there will be plenty to do! Just make sure you keep the weekend schedule handy so you will not miss anything.

First Vice-President Jackie Elliott Walker has arranged another interesting Homecoming program with the theme of "Celebrating Mills Home Through the Eras." The Sunday morning worship service will have **Randy Stewart** playing the

organ, alumni choir singing joyfully with leader **Joe Knight**, and **Danny Bryant** delivering the Homecoming message—all reminders of Sunday mornings of long ago. After that, you can meet more friends at the gym for the traditional Homecoming lunch, which is compliments of MH and Baptist Children's Homes.

Thanks again to two generous benefactors, you will love being treated to a free dinner on Friday evening (6:30) and a free breakfast on Saturday morning (9:00); however, you must register for both and indicate your meal choice for breakfast. (See breakfast choices on pre-registration form.) The cost of the Saturday dinner is \$9.00 (\$5.00 for child under 12). Use your pre-registration form to pay for your reservations for that meal. Only snacks will be available at the concession stand.

Everyone knows each Homecoming features the wonderful Silent Auction that helps us to raise money each year. Please take time to look around your home to locate nice items you no longer want. Donate them to the Silent Auction. Any such item needs to be of \$10.00 value or more for the auction. Bring the item(s) to the teenage room Friday evening or Saturday where **Cecelia and Mark Wilkerson** will receive and set them up for display. The Auction will conclude in the same check out procedure as last year. For questions, contact **Cecelia Wilkerson** at 919-314-7704 or ceceluvsmark@gmail.com.

Please be aware that we again will hold the annual Associational Business Meeting in the teenage room at 5:00 on Saturday, August 5. During that meeting, there will be an important motion made that requires a vote from the Association. **Flora** will make the motion that we discontinue the \$1000.00 annual addition to the Mitchell Museum Endowment Fund until we know what repairs must be done.

Sharon DeHart Stiles, the Chair-

person for the Columbarium Committee, reports that 15 people have reserved niches in the columbarium and the ashes of five have been placed in the niches. She wishes again to thank the people who have contributed toward the cost of the Columbarium's maintenance. You too can participate in the cost of the maintenance with your check payable to the Mills Home Alumni Association. Mail it to treasurer **Flora Hicks Patton**, 6428 Sisk Carter Rd., Rockwell, NC, 28138. Note that it is for the maintenance of the Columbarium.

The business meeting will be followed by the Saturday evening home cooked meal at 6:15. Again, please use the pre-registration form to make your reservation. Use the registration form also if you wish to sponsor one of the tables to honor or memorialize a loved one. That person can be a former Mills Home resident or Mills Home worker. Be sure to give the name of the person you wish to honor or memorialize.

Bob Mayton reported recently about the exciting new Thomasville Athletic Hall of Fame. Mills Home was well represented with **Clifton Lambreth** serving as the master of ceremonies. He did so well that they have asked him to be MC again next March. Mills Home was honored when three alumni were recognized as new inductees. The **Johnny Allen Award** (1922) was accepted by **Clifton**; The **Pat Preston Award** (1939) was accepted by **Jay Wood**, and the MH 1936 All State football team award was accepted by **Bob Mayton**. More details on this subject in a future issue.

We are saddened to report the death of **Evelyn Kornegay Dawson** who passed away on May 14, 2023. For a time, Evelyn had suffered ill health which resulted in a stroke in January. She was much loved and respected and will be sorely missed. She is survived by her husband **Nathan**, her son **Terry**, her sister-in-law **Norma Kornegay**, and her

friend **Virginia Williams Neeley**. Her graveside service took place on May 23, 2023 at the Wayne Memorial Park, Dudley, NC. Memorial donations in Evelyn's name should be made to Baptist Children's Homes of NC at PO, Box 338, Thomasville, NC, 27361.

Evelyn and her brother **Leonard** (deceased) entered MH in 1941 and she graduated in 1953. Evelyn took part in many aspects of campus life. Her singing in the church choir and playing on the girls' basketball team are recorded in many photos. Like all other MH kids, she learned useful tasks by performing certain duties such as working in the campus infirmary. She was very good at bringing comfort to little ones especially as they spent days in an infirmary bed. Having duty in the kitchen or completing household tasks taught her much about running a home. She was just a sweet, well-liked youngster who made friends easily. She particularly enjoyed her MH friends and made it a point to be with them yearly at Homecoming as long as her health permitted. She was especially close to her MH housemate **Virginia Williams Neely** for her entire life. She often sent thank you notes to the alumni council for providing a good Homecoming. Friends may send condolences to Evelyn's husband and son, **Nathan and Terry Dawson**, at 702 S. Harding Dr., Goldsboro, NC. 27534.

Please remember that (until further notice) you can contact **Lib Johnson** at libsjohnson@triad.rr.com or 335-299-7412 with C&C address changes, additions, or deletions. Contact **Sharon DeHart Stiles** regarding the use of the Columbarium at 1588 Elkhart Circle, Gastonia, NC, 28054 or 704-685-2443. We look forward to seeing you at

Homecoming 2023!



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

NC Baptists Deliver Big for the Annual Food Roundup

Baptist churches and associations across the state rallied their efforts to collect literally tons of non-perishable food, supplies and gift cards for the 2023 Food Roundup. Trucks, trailers and cars were filled to capacity as NC Baptists delivered in a big way. The Food Roundup not only helps provide more than 700,000 meals and snacks to children, many who could not count on eating regularly before coming to Baptist Children's Homes, but they see the hands and feet of Christ through NC Baptists' efforts.



NC Campers on Mission have sorted and shelved food at several BCH locations.



Flint Groves Baptist pastor Ronnie Bowers delivers the large collection from his church.



Members of West Burnsville Baptist pray over their collection at Broyhill Home.



Hillside Baptist, Hope Mills delivered items, gift cards and monetary gift to Odum Home.



Church members from Little Savannah Baptist, Sylva stand alongside their donations.



First Baptist, Greensboro rallied their efforts after hearing BCH's Karen Slate speak.



Elijah from High Point Christian Academy collected food for his "Servant's Heart" project.



Columbus Association's Theresa Powell poses with a portion of the association's collection.



Scott Setzer with South Roanoke Association and son Levi load items for Kennedy Home.



BCH's Wade Parker and Matt Chilson receive Sneed's Ferry Baptist's delivery at Kennedy



This is a glimpse of the nine pallets from Stanley-Montgomery and Union Associations.



Church members in Catawba River Association gave gift cards and baked 222 "Cakes for Kids."



Alexander Association and BCH's Jody Yopp filled a moving van full of supplies.



Polk Association presented BCH's Lewis Smith with over \$13,200 in food cards and checks.

How can we help you? Contact 1.800.476.3669 or bchfamily.org/referral >>>

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



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

Get connected at every-child.org



TURN YOUR CALLING INTO A CAREER

Statewide positions to serve children, families and/or adults are available for you or someone you know.

BCHCAREERS.ORG

DONATE YOUR VEHICLE

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



Contact Sam Barefoot at svbarefoot@bchfamily.org or call him at 336-474-1224

SECC
State Employees
Combined Campaign

#3641

Alumni meet and celebrate Homecoming – Memories of visiting families warm hearts

By **JOHN THOMPSON**, 104 Village Court, Havelock, NC 28532 (252) 671-3515 jthompson117@ec.rr.com

The new Kennedy Home (KH) alumni officers are: **President Larry Gilliam, Vice President Clayton Pate, Treasurer Dickie Maynor, Secretary Joyce Surbaugh, Corresponding Secretary Barbara Smith, and Staff Advisor John Thompson**

Thank you to **Katie Parker Jackson** for serving as our alumni president for twelve different years. You have done us well. At the writing of this article Katie is very sick and needs for all of us to be praying for her. She helped plan the great Homecoming we just celebrated but could not attend because of her health. She was even on the phone getting the church flowers delivered on Saturday night of Homecoming. Katie, we all hope you get well soon so you can continue to be active in the Alumni Association.

We want to thank **Chris Alla-baugh**, the new director of Mills Home, for helping us at KH for several years. You can tell that he has a love for childcare. He has always been a great help to our alumni. As writer of the alumni column, he has always been a big help to me and willing to talk on the phone with me to plan different activities.

Matt Chilson, is our new director for KH. The alumni want to thank him for helping to make this Homecoming a success. It was meaningful to see you and your wife sitting with the children in the worship service. Keep up the good work. We look forward to you helping us for many years ahead.

A special thanks goes to **Doris Russ, Penny Maready Batten, and Donna Daniels Wade** for helping with the worship music and Saturday night's entertainment. As you know, Donna wrote a beautiful song for the Home-

coming choir to sing every year called "Homecoming Day." She and Penny were two of my piano students from 1972-1977. Doris played the piano "way back then" with my wife Becky playing the organ. Doris is doing great to be 91; she even plays at her church every Sunday morning. We also want to thank **Clayton Pate, Joyce Surbaugh, Dan Medlin, Gary Caulder**, choir members, KH girls who held the flags, and **Jim Dyer**, our very own "Santa Claus," for delivering a wonderful message. He is an KH alum, a Baptist Children's Homes Trustee and a real-beard Santa Claus who has been Santa at radio City Music Hall in New York and the "jolly old elf" to soldiers abroad.

Through the years, there have been "visiting homes" for KH boys and girls to visit during holidays and in the summer. I wish that many of you would write and let me know all about your "visiting home parents." When Becky and I left KH, we had several children to be our visiting home youngins.

Gerald and Sylvia Hinnart from Pine Level Baptist Church were visiting home parents many years ago for **Gary Caulder**. Gary and his lovely wife **Debbie** are still in touch with them. They have visited several times. Gary and Debbie recently took them to the Sandpiper Restaurant in LaGrange. When Gary was living at KH in the late 60s and early 70s, the Young Adult Class was his visiting home folks. This Sunday School class was awesome to Gary and the church really involved him throughout his life. This has been a real blessing to them.

Mary Lee Etheridge wrote to say in 1989 that the family she visited was wonderful.

Rosa Watson Pel wrote that

her sponsors lived in Elizabeth City and attended First Baptist Church. She visited several families and they were amazing. She still keeps in contact with **Ann Basnight**.

Joyce Surbaugh wrote to say she and her sister were picked up by their Aunt (their mother's sister) once a month.

Patsy Joyner says she never had a visiting home but will always be grateful to Kennedy Home.

Billy Smithwick wrote that **James and Doris Powers** were his visiting parents. He says he always looked forward to their visits together.

Donald Wetherington wrote that he stayed several weekends with a family from Raleigh in the 1960s.

Bernard Brantly remembers visiting with his cousins in Wilson for his visiting home. It was always a great time.

Kim Allison wrote that she had a great visiting home. She would travel to Cary and stay with the **Johnson Family**. She still sees them today.

Paul Stone recalls his clothing sponsors. They were a Sunday School class in Raleigh. The main family that he stayed with was a very "fine" family named Steele. **Mr. Steele** was a captain with the Raleigh Police. They had five children and I was treated as number six. Sadly, he lost contact but remains thankful for all they did for him.

Donna Duty writes: "I remember having two visiting homes during the late 1960s and early 1970s—one in Reigelwood and one in Raleigh. I only had a few visits with them, as I would visit my aunt and uncle in Bladenburg the majority of the time."

Donna Wade recalls visiting **Gene and Patricia Ipock** from 1970 to 1974. The Ipocks were

military and moved around but returned to Kinston several times and then retired there.

She writes: "I have kept in touch with them through the years. Even now, with Mr. Ipock gone, Mrs. Ipock and I remain close even though she lives in an assisted living facility in Texas."

Debbie Caulder shared a story: "I remember my dad driving the bus to sing at Baptist churches near Elizabeth City. We toured the Outer Banks and Kitty Hawk. We sang, ate, and went to various church member's homes to spend the nights. We always had fun trips with 'JT'."

"A couple approached me on this trip and asked if I had a visiting home. I told the truth and I said I did not. My daddy was close by enough to hear the couple's concerns about me not having a place to go once a month. Needless to say he put a stop to that conversation."

Please continue to share stories about visiting families. Email me at jthompson117@ec.rr.com.

As always, I close with telling you that you can come to my home at 104 Village Court in Havelock anytime to see me, eat a meal, spend the night, whatever. Also, thank you Alumni for the presentation of the beautiful note for my wall. It reads: "In Honor of **John Thompson** and Loving Memory of **Becky Thompson**, for your love and dedication all these years to the 'Kennedy Home Youngins.' Thank you." I hope to keep working with and for you many years in the future. I know I'm getting old (80 in September) but I still want to keep being your friend. Love ya very much! jt



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

God promises help during trials and tribulations

By Jim Edminson, Editor

On my first journey from back home to North Carolina, I traveled the winding Cherohala Skyway that led through the Appalachian Mountains. The trip took twice as long as the interstate way. But I had no timetable, no marks to hit at certain points on my watch—I would not have met any such deadline.

The slow crawl gave me opportunity to look back in the rearview at the way I had come, to see the progress I was making. In one of those glances backward, I caught sight of the little ones, my three daughters, in the backseat, noses pressed to the window, eyes looking expectedly up and out, mouths open in the wonder of it all. The slow path gave time to soak in the wondrous landscape, the valleys and the peaks, to see this June morning in new ways. In a world that bursts with marvels, the slowness with which the van moved along gave my girls the time to drink it all in and tuck away memories for later. I took a deep breath, seizing the day's glories rather than counting the minutes lost in time.

This is my 23rd June in North Carolina, and the mountains still fascinate and, at times, frustrate me. To come upon a mountain trail, I cannot help but imagine the endgame, reaching the summit, moving quickly and measuring each step for accuracy and determine the impact on the task at hand—to arrive at the top, to stand at the ridge and look back with exhilaration at where I've come, to take in the long view and breathe deeply at the accomplishment. But for much of the way forward, the mountain itself is hidden in the twists and turns of the path, and to go upward, the trail leads downward at odd moments. Sometimes the path I follow is grassy and wide, and I meet other

hikers with smiles and friendly small chats. Just as often, the narrow path leads over rocky and uneven ground, shrubs and saplings crowding the trail so that all attention must be on placing my feet correctly, and when I meet others here, one must give way because two cannot go at the same time. Eyes cast downward, we pass with no comment, purposeful and solitary.

Upon becoming a Carolinian, I had people ask frequently, "Mountain or beach?" I grew up along the Gulf Coast in Texas and Louisiana, and I love fresh seafood, particularly shrimp, so my default answer, of course, was "Beach!" The salt air really is healing, and walks in the sand, listening to waves crash all around me, never grows old.

But over the years, the mountains have worked their magic. In the high country, the outcome of trails remains hidden, and one follows the markers to the top and only then comes the revelation. Standing at the crest, all becomes clear and the journey makes sense only in retrospect. There is a measure of trust as one travels the paths

and reaches the destination. At the beach, I walk as far as I want, and then I retrace my steps back to the beginning. Not so in the mountains; I can choose several paths back down, discovering new sights and sounds along the way. The landscape shifts, and I never grow tired of the newness it offers. On the way up, my feet want to arrive; at the top, my eyes want to imbibe. And then, no matter how long I stay there, I must go back down.

These are thinly disguised metaphors, right? I'm writing about beaches and mountains, and I'm discussing life, mine and yours. There are trials and tribulations, both at the beach and in the mountains. This world is replete with detours that can lead away from the One who calls us His own. But Isaiah 43:2-3 reminds me of our Lord's watchcare: "When you go through the deep waters, I will be with you." I read in Psalm 121:1-2, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, From whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, Which made heaven and earth." On Sundays, I sing the hymns of our faith with the choir and rejoice in the Master of the sea, the Lord of the mountaintop.

In all my Carolina years, the varying landscapes have captured my imagination and focused my attention on the Author and Finisher of my faith. I rejoice that I do not have to choose between mountain and beach—both are nearby and accessible, the salt breezes of the coast and the zephyr swirls of the hills.

Thanks be to God.

INVITE A SPEAKER
TO SHARE THE

Story WITH YOUR CHURCH.



Schedule a Baptist Children's Homes speaker to share with your congregation how the lives of children, special needs adults, expectant mothers — everyone we serve — are forever changed through NC Baptists' prayers and support!

Call 336.474.1209 or go online to bchfamily.org/speaker

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