



# Charity & Children

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

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## God's plan leads Carlises to become a family of seven

By Blake Ragsdale | Editor

Preparing for a family vacation is as much of an adventure for Phillip and Sara Carlisle as the getaway itself. With five adopted children—ages ranging from one to seven—caring for everyone's needs during their recent weekend trip to Williamsburg, VA required no less than two double seated strollers, a wagon, three cribs, and scores of luggage all tightly packed into their SUV. (They have since upgraded to a roomier transit conversion van.)

Extended family came along to help during the trip because, as Phillip laughs,

"We weren't brave enough to do it on our own."

Phillip and Sara have never felt alone during their adoption journey through Christian Adoption Services (CAS), a ministry of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH). From the very beginning—long before the two former pharmacy school students at Campbell University married—they saw God alongside them.

"We both had experiences regarding CAS that stuck with us," Phillip explains. "When it came time for us to start planning and

thinking about our family, we were able to refer back to those times."

Sara was first introduced to Sheryl Naylor, CAS Senior Director of Domestic Adoptions, when Sheryl spoke at a chapel service about her work with birth mothers desiring to make an adoption plan for their children. Phillip knew about CAS because his youth pastor and wife had adopted through the agency. The established connections were early indicators of God already at work.

(Continued on page 6)

# The ripple effect of choosing to see the unseen

By David Melber | BCH Chief Executive Officer



**W**hat does it truly mean to **lose your voice**?

Most of us picture something temporary like laryngitis stealing our words for a few days. We wave our hands, scribble notes, or rely on loved ones to fill the gap. It's frustrating—yes—

but manageable when we're surrounded by people who care.

But there is a far deeper kind of silence—one that can last years or even decades. It's the silence of being unseen, unheard, and unnoticed, where a person's cries blend into the noise of a world too busy to care. No one stops. No one listens. And slowly, their story fades into invisibility.

I will never forget walking into an orphanage in 2003. A room of 25–30 infants and toddlers were lying on thin sheets along the walls. The silence hit me first. I assumed they were sleeping, but a worker told me the truth: they had learned that no one comes when they cry. So they stopped crying.

They had lost their voices long before they ever learned to speak.

Scripture gives us a scene just as heartbreaking. In *John 5:1–9*, near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem, lay the pool of Bethesda—literally *house of mercy*. Under its five colonnades gathered the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed. Among them lay one man who had been disabled for thirty-eight years.

Thirty-eight years.

Nearly four decades of waiting, hoping, watching the water stir—yet never finding help. His words to Jesus reveal the depth of his isolation: *"Sir, I have no one to help me..."*

No one. No family. No friends. No compassionate neighbor. Surrounded by people, but utterly alone.

This man's lost voice wasn't only physical. It was the cry of a soul forgotten by others.

## Our world is still full of such silenced voices:

- Children in foster care needing safe, steady love
- Families splintered by broken relationships
- Mothers facing heartbreaking decisions
- Adults and youth carrying trauma quietly in our neighborhoods, schools, and churches

The deepest wound of sin is the fracture of relationship—first with God, then with one another. It leaves people unseen, unheard, and isolated.

But here is the beauty of the gospel: Jesus saw him. Truly saw him. His suffering. His waiting. His quiet despair. And when Jesus saw him, everything changed.

*"Do you want to be healed?"*

*"Get up, take up your bed, and walk."*

In a moment, the man's body, dignity, and voice were restored.

As followers of Christ, we are entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation (*2 Corinthians 5:18–20*). Reconciled to God, we become ambassadors who seek out the unseen, hear the unheard, and walk toward the hurting with Christ's love.

## This year, may our prayers and actions rise with renewed purpose as we pursue four vital goals:

1. **Foster Care** — Multiply trained foster parents so more children know the safety of a Christ-centered home.
2. **Residential Care** — Strengthen and expand places of refuge, calling compassionate caregivers to stand in the gap every day.
3. **Adoption** — Support mothers in crisis, empowering them to choose life and place their children in loving, faith-rooted families.
4. **Mobilize the Church** — Equip believers with trauma-informed training so they can step into brokenness with wisdom, empathy, and Christlike love.

**Imagine the ripple effect:** one person truly seen can set healing in motion for generations. One church that chooses not to walk past can become a modern Bethesda—offering not stirred waters, but the living water of Jesus Himself.

**You have a voice.** Use it for those who have lost theirs. Look for the overlooked. Speak for the silent. Step forward in faith. When we see the unseen as Jesus does, we don't just change lives—we participate in His redeeming work.

Let this be the year we refuse to walk by.

Let this be the year we say, *"I see you. You matter. There is hope in Christ."*

## Who will you see today?



## Cook Out hosts fun day at Mills

On Saturday, January 17, team members and leadership from Cook Out spent the afternoon with children at Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) Mills Home campus in Thomasville. Their visit was part of the restaurant's commitment to give back to the community.

During the visit, the Cook Out team played a number of games with the boys and girls and presented each of them with a special gift bag. Children also met the restaurant's mascot, "Shakey," creating a fun and meaningful experience that emphasized joy, connection, and enjoying Cook Out's delicious milkshakes.

BCH CEO David Melber and his wife, Tera, joined everyone for the activities and fellowship.

"We were deeply grateful for Cook Out's kindness and the joy they brought to the children today," Melber said. "Their generosity and genuine care made lasting memories with the children."

Cook Out was founded in North Carolina, and its corporate headquarters is located in Thomasville not far from Mills Home.

### Mission:

sharing hope . . . changing lives

### Vision:

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

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# Every Child | Every Church is continuing to grow

By BCH Communications

**W**hen the **Every Child | Every Church** initiative was first introduced at last year’s Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, it marked a defining moment in Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina’s (BCH) commitment to churches.

The vision is simple yet profound: to help churches say “yes” to the vulnerable people in their communities and even within their own congregations.

“Every Child | Every Church is about helping churches be equipped to step into areas of ministry where brokenness, on a local level, is evident,” shared BCH CEO David Melber.

Designed as a gospel-centered and trauma-informed movement, the initiative equips congregations to care for children, individuals with special needs, aging adults, and others who are hurting—often sitting right in their own pews.

“In a culture filled with anxiety, depression, loneliness, and broken families, many believers simply don’t know what to do,” Melber continued. “This is where BCH wants to help, and the Lord has been faithful in helping us grow the vision.”

Even prior to the 2025 Annual Meeting, BCH team members had already begun developing Every Child | Every Church trainings and resources. Much of this work has been led by Erica Spivey, Senior Director of Special Projects for BCH.

“We are committed to being gospel-centered with our training and resources,” Spivey said. “As a para-church organization, we are commit-



The **Every Child | Every Church** initiative for training and equipping churches continues to be refined and strengthened. BCH team members are carrying out pilot trainings in preparation for a wider launch that will offer regional opportunities.

ted to come alongside the local church to help equip it to step into the brokenness around us—following Christ’s example of compassion, care, and discipleship. Our prayer is that, as the church is equipped, discipleship opportunities emerge and God brings lasting transformation.”



Spivey and her team have been working with several churches to pilot the initial trainings and gather feedback from its participants.

“Being in front of church leaders, staff and their volunteers has been a blessing,” Spivey said. “Their honest feedback is ensuring that we are growing and improving what we are offering. We want to pursue excellence for our churches—but most of all, for the Lord.”

Recently, Spivey and BCH’s Lorie Brinkley led a trauma-informed training at Providence

Church in Raleigh. Church members involved in a variety of outreaches attended in order to better understand the role trauma plays in the behaviors and interactions of those the church serves.

“What I loved about the training was the emphasis on creating a safe space in order to have the foundation for building connection with someone,” said Caitlin, a member of Providence. “Then, you are able to do discipleship and approach them like Jesus—with kindness, gentleness, and compassion.”

With a wider launch underway, Every Child | Every Church trainings continue to be refined and strengthened as the initiative grows. The current goal is to offer larger, regional trainings

to maximize participation. Spivey’s team is also exploring ways to provide more specialized trainings, including equipping churches to minister to families with special needs.



These would supplement the foster care trainings BCH provides. A goal, Melber says, is to

multiply trained, Christ-centered foster parents.

“We are praying for God to grow laborers—grow missionaries—to step into the mission field of foster care and even our residential cottages,” Melber said. “We want every child to see the love of Christ in action.”

Connect with us!

Text the word CHILDREN to 72572

**EVERY Child EVERY Church**

**TRAININGS**

*Trauma Foundations & Practical Applications*

**Saturday, March 14**  
Rich Fork Baptist Church

Register Today at:  
[every-child.org/training](http://every-child.org/training)



# Teffertiller named BCH Chief Marketing Officer

By BCH Communications

Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) has named Greg Teffertiller as its new chief marketing officer, providing strategic leadership for the ministry's brand, storytelling, digital engagement, and marketing communications across BCH's many programs and locations.

"Greg brings a deep understanding of mission-driven communication and a heart for sharing the hope found in Christ," said David Melber, CEO of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina. "His leadership will enhance our ability to tell the stories of how the Lord is transforming lives in the ways only He is able."

In his role, Teffertiller will lead a mission-driven marketing and communications team focused on strengthening BCH's visibility and trust across North Carolina, supporting church engagement, and amplifying stories that reflect and celebrate God's providence throughout every aspect of the ministry.

"God has done amazing work throughout BCH's 140-year history, and there are no signs of it stopping. I am excited to play a part in the story He is continuing to write in the hearts and lives of those being served," Teffertiller said.

Teffertiller brings a blend of nonprofit ministry and marketplace experience, with a track record in brand strategy, donor and church communications, content development, campaign leadership, and events. His work has centered

on helping people clearly understand a mission—and then making it easy to respond with prayer, support, and action.

"Greg understands the responsibility of producing and sharing the mission and ministry with churches, supporters, and community partners—he does this with excellence, humility, and joy," Melber said. "His work will strengthen how we serve churches, engage supporters, and share the impact of the BCH ministry with clarity and purpose that always glorifies the name of King Jesus."

As BCH continues serving children, families, and adults through a wide range of ministries, Teffertiller will help ensure commu-



Greg Teffertiller (center) has joined Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) as Chief Marketing Officer. He is pictured with his wife, Sarah, along with their three children and son-in-law. Teffertiller most recently served in a similar role with the Georgia Baptist Mission Board.

nications remain clear, consistent, and rooted in the non-profit ministry's commitment to share hope and change lives.

## Ragsdale chosen as new Charity & Children editor



Blake Ragsdale is stepping into the role of editor/publisher of *Charity & Children*, Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina's (BCH) long-running news publication.

Ragsdale has served at BCH since 2002, sharing stories of hope, ministry

impact, and God's provision across its many locations and programs throughout North Carolina and beyond. His background in nonprofit communications, storytelling, and donor engagement has equipped him to steward the historic publication with continued excellence.

"The word I'd use to describe this new role is 'humbling,'" Ragsdale said. "God has used *Charity & Children* as the voice for BCH for almost 140

years, and I'm humbled to be a part of its next chapter. It is an incredible privilege."

*Charity & Children* holds a treasured place in the organization's heritage. Established in 1887 by BCH founder and original editor John Mills, the free print publication has kept generations of supporters, churches, and friends inspired and informed. It will continue, through its print publication and online presence, to provide updates, events, and opportunities for friends of the ministry to be involved.

Ragsdale, in his role as editor as well as BCH vice president of communications, brings a deep passion for amplifying the stories of hope God is writing through this ministry every day.

"While it may be my fingers typing on the keyboard or my byline appearing with articles, that does not make them my stories—they are God's stories," Ragsdale explained. "The Lord is writing stories in the hearts and lives of the children, individuals, and families BCH serves that are far greater than what I could imagine.

"The stories are the evidence of Him at work throughout the ministry."

Ragsdale becomes the fifteenth editor of *Charity & Children*. He previously served as managing editor and a regular contributor to the ongoing publication.



# Dreams realized

The vignettes below are reminders of how God, in His goodness, works through your efforts to write incredible stories in the lives of children and families.



**"I believe God has put me here and put these people in my life. I see how He has lined things up that would never have happened without Him being involved in my life." | Rachel**

When Rachel came to BCH, life had been anything but easy. But with safety, support, and people who believed in her, everything changed. She worked hard in school. She rediscovered her confidence. And she began to dream again. Today, Rachel is a nursing school graduate, proudly serving others as an ER nurse—a dream she once thought was out of reach.



**"It is amazing how God brings the right children into the right homes...You see His plans are perfect." | Ali**

Ali and Will always knew adoption would be the way they grew their family. So when the call came that a newborn boy was waiting for them, they drove three hours with hearts full of hope. Noah had been lovingly cared for by his brave birth mother, and now he rested peacefully as the Johnsons held him for the first time—finally home. The next morning, tears and laughter filled the room as they introduced him to his new grandparents. For Ali and Will, adoption wasn't a simply a dream for their family—it was God's plan, bringing Noah into a circle of love that keeps widening still.

## You can make **DREAMS** for a child's future, and all **ETERNITY** possible!

For many children who come to us, their first night is the most important one. After seasons of uncertainty, the first gift we can offer is simple but life-changing: **a safe place to sleep**. A warm bed. Clean sheets. A quiet room. And, often for the first time in a long time...**peace**.

*That first night of safety leads to hope. And hope opens the door for children to dream again. Read the two short stories to the right to see how the Lord is moving!*

**Your generosity makes this possible.** Because of you, boys and girls in Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) care go to bed knowing they are loved and that **God has a future planned for them**.

Your continued support this new year ensures more children receive a safe night of sleep—followed by days filled with healing, joy, and new beginnings.

**Please consider making a gift so children and everyone we serve can know the love of King Jesus.** You're not just giving comfort today—you're giving hope for tomorrow and eternity.

Thank you!

David Melber,  
BCH CEO



## I want to empower children's **DREAMS** today and for all eternity

- \$25/month for one child or a \$300 one-time gift     \$50/month for two children or a \$600 one-time gift
- \$250/month for a cottage or a \$3,000 one-time gift     Use my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help a child.

**There are two ways you can make your gift:**

- 1) By Check: Use the enclosed envelope & mail this form with your check.
- 2) By Credit Card: Go online at [bchfamily.org/newyear](http://bchfamily.org/newyear) or call 336-474-1312.



Receive ministry updates and more: Email \_\_\_\_\_

- Contact me about preparing a Christian Will.
- I've put Baptist Children's Homes in my estate plans.

# God's plan leads Carlisles to become a family of seven

By Blake Ragsdale | Editor

(Continued from page 1)

Takeaways from Phillip and Sara's contact with CAS showed the couple CAS's compassion for children's mothers as well as the adoptive families.

"We heard how CAS connects with birth mothers and sticks with them even after the adoption," Phillip says. "Sara and I felt it was the right fit for us because they don't treat the experience like a transaction. It is about connecting with the adoptive family as well as the birth mother—keeping those connections and relationships going throughout the process, even after placement."

In 2015, the couple made their home in Rocky Mount, Sara's hometown, which is close to one of the CAS statewide offices. Two years later, they felt it was time to begin the process. They attended a CAS informational meeting and then began the paperwork. At the start of 2018, the Carlisles were officially a "waiting family" through CAS.

After six months of waiting, the couple received word that an expectant mother had chosen them after reviewing the Carlisles' profile—a collection of information and photos that gives birth mothers an inside look at CAS's waiting families. Mothers are able to have tremendous input regarding their child's adoption plan.

"We met with one of CAS's caseworkers and the mother for lunch," Sara recalls. "It just seemed like a good fit. So then we waited to get the call that the baby was being born."

The day the call came, the couple went to the hospital and waited. Sara remembers the balance of emotions she and Phillip felt as their first child, Camden, was born.

"You have to treat that day pretty reverently," she shares. "It's an exciting day for us, but it's also a day of loss for the child's birth mom. In our excitement, we were also grieving for what she was feeling."



Phillip and Sara Carlisle have clearly seen God leading the way for them to adopt five children through Baptist Children's Homes' Christian Adoption Services. The twins are their newest additions.

Over the next few years, the Carlisles continued adding to their family. Greyson was born about two-and-a-half years later. Their daughter, Jaida, arrived a year after Greyson, making them a family of five.

From their earliest conversations, Phillip and Sara imagined having as many as three children. In 2024, after prayer and continued reflection about the possibility of adopting again, the Carlisles reached a place of contentment.

"We embraced that we were done unless God made it clear otherwise," Sara says. "We were like—okay, this is the family God has for us. And then in 2025, it became obvious this was not the case."

One of their children's birth mothers reached out to ask if the Carlisles would be interested in adopting again—she was expecting twins. Through much prayer and with the help of CAS once again, Phillip and Sara said "yes," clearly seeing God lead the way for Hampton and Landen to join them and make them a family of seven.

"It has been humbling to go through each of the adoption processes and see how CAS has been there even in the gaps in between," Phillip says. "They were never out of the picture—whether it was family picnics, CAS banquets, or even just checking in with us."

The Carlisles maintain communication with the children's birth mothers, sending photos

and updates. The connection allows biological mothers to see their children's milestones such as losing a tooth, saying a first word, or learning to read.

The close involvement of their extended family and the unwavering support of their church family at Redeemer Church in Rocky Mount have proven essential. Both have played meaningful roles in surrounding and equipping the Carlisles with much needed support and community.

"Even though a lot of our church families have not personally adopted, they value the

heart of adoption and have stepped up in other ways," Sara explains.

"When we brought the twins home, friends did our laundry for six months. They provided funding to help with the twins' quick adoption. We had people bringing us meals and friends bringing our kids home from school—it was all kinds of things."

Today, the Carlisle family does not look like what Phillip and Sara envisioned as a young couple. What matters most to them is that their family has come together based on God's plan and design.

"I would tell others to be open to what God has for your family," Sara says. "I think it is all determined by the Lord and trusting that He has a plan for your family—even when it may be difficult to trust and believe it."



*this*  
**STORY**  
BENEFIT BANQUETS

Charlotte Benefit Banquet  
March 26, 2026

[christianadopt.org/events](http://christianadopt.org/events)

# God reaches Tiffany through cottage parents' faith

By Blake Ragsdale | Editor

Pastor Luis stood beside Tiffany\* as the other children, cottage parents, and friends filed into the sanctuary. With the service at Mills Home Baptist Church starting in just a few minutes, he rested his hand on the 15-year-old's shoulder as the two bowed their heads.

"God, today Tiffany just wants to be obedient to You. I'm so thankful for that," prayed Luis Quintanar, pastor of Mills Home Baptist Church. "I pray she will never forget this day."

Luis and Tiffany made their way into the baptismistry as the service began.

"Tiffany, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit," Pastor Luis proclaimed as he immersed the teen beneath the water and brought her back up again.

Tiffany wiped the water from her face, revealing a large smile. Cheers and applause erupted from the other children living at Mills Home as well as from Richard and Kathy Lyles, Tiffany's cottage parents.

"That Sunday, when she got baptized, I was crying," Richard shared. "Even as a boy, I've never cried as much as I have at Mills Home."

The Lyles, along with their adopted daughter Lilly, serve at Johnson Cottage with Lamar and Nancy Grimes. Together, they form the cottage parent team—one couple serves in the cottage with the girls for two weeks and then rotates out with the other couple. They care for the daily needs of Tiffany and

the other seven girls, ages 2 to 15, who live in the family-style cottage at Mills Home, Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) Thomasville, NC campus.

More than anything, the Lyles want to live out their faith so that more children in their care, like Tiffany, come to know Christ as their Savior.

"Kathy and I personally just try to let the girls see Jesus in us," Richard said. "A lot of times, it's about your actions and how you respond. We try to show them—just show them Jesus."

For Tiffany, who has lived at Mills Home since October 2025, her cottage parents' example has made a deep impact. She has watched church groups come and serve, attended discipleship



Kathy and Richard Lyles play on the floor of Johnson Cottage with Lilly, their two-year-old adopted daughter. As Richard describes it, the couple serves on the "mission field" as cottage parents at Mills Home. Living out their faith has helped lead children like Tiffany (see below) to place their trust in Christ and follow through in baptism.

at the campus church, and participated in devotions in the cottage.

Learning about Christ's love for her led to gospel conversations with her cottage parents.

One afternoon, Tiffany returned to the cottage after a discipleship time with Pastor Luis. She immediately went to her cottage mother.

"Mrs. Kathy, guess what I just learned," Tiffany said. "I was created for a purpose."

Tiffany opened up to Kathy about her life and the challenges she had faced before coming to BCH. She shared that she could now look back and see how God had protected her.

In addition to all she was learning, Tiffany had also seen several other children from Mills Home be baptized during Sunday morning worship. Soon, she began talking about baptism with her cottage parents.

"She came to me and asked if I thought she was ready to get baptized," Kathy explained. "I asked her if she knew what it meant, and she said, 'I'm not sure.'"

Kathy then helped her understand that baptism is an act of obedience that publicly demonstrates that a person has placed their trust in

Christ as Savior. She walked through the gospel with Tiffany, talking about Jesus being God's Son, His sinless life, His death on the cross, and His resurrection.

Tiffany not only affirmed her understanding and belief, she shared that she had indeed prayed and placed her trust in Jesus. Ultimately, their conversation led to Tiffany's baptism day.

"All the girls that we've seen baptized were so nervous, but not Tiffany," Kathy said. "She was thrilled."

Sitting in the pews that Sunday and witnessing Tiffany's joy as she was baptized underscores why the Lyles do what they do.

"This is not a job. I do get paid, but I'm doing nothing for these kids if that's all I'm here for," Richard said. "This is a mission field that you are called to. The kids we serve here are some of the most amazing kids I've seen in my life."

If a child is being baptized during the two weeks the Lyles are not scheduled to serve in the cottage, they make the hour-long trip from their hometown to Mills Home to be there on that Sunday morning.

"We just want them to know that they do mean that much to us," Kathy said. "We're teaching them that we're their family. We're not their family by blood, but we're the family of God."

*\*Note: Tiffany's name has been changed for privacy purposes.*



# Food Roundup brings Christ's love into focus

By BCH Communications

Participating in the **Food Roundup** accomplishes more than supplying meals for the children and families served by Baptist Children's Homes (BCH)—it is a vital opportunity for sharing the love of Christ.

BCH is preparing for the annual food drive which takes place during the month of April. Through the initiative, NC Baptist associations and churches collect and deliver non-perishable food items, supplies, and gift cards to BCH.

As David Melber, BCH Chief Executive Officer, explains, Food Roundup goes beyond simply feeding those being served through BCH's state-wide ministries.

"This is an opportunity for children to see the compassion of God's people," he said. "Every day, they are hearing from their cottage parents, foster parents, and caregivers about King Jesus, but when they see NC Baptists delivering truck-loads of food and supplies for them, the love of Christ really comes into focus for them."

The collected food provides hundreds of thousands of meals and snacks each year. Meeting basic needs—particularly reliable access to food—plays a significant role in helping children when they arrive in care.

"A child can come into our care at any moment of the day. That snack from the pantry or a grilled cheese sandwich a cottage parent quickly provides can calm anxious nerves," Melber shared. "It's a process to help a child feel secure, but filling a hungry belly—meeting an essential physical need—builds trust and can ultimately open a child's heart to the gospel."



Members of South Elm Street Baptist Church delivering their Food Roundup collection to BCH's Mills Home campus in Thomasville.

## How Churches Can Participate in the 2026 Food Roundup

- **Promote** and lead the Food Roundup within their congregations.
- **Collect** items listed on the organization's updated "Needed Items List" (see right) as well as gift cards that allow staff to purchase perishable items throughout the year.
- **Share** printed and digital promotional materials available at [bchfamily.org/foodroundup](http://bchfamily.org/foodroundup), including flyers, slides, graphics, and social media resources.

## For Questions and Support

- A step-by-step guide for associations and churches can be downloaded at [bchfamily.org/foodroundup](http://bchfamily.org/foodroundup).
- Email [adecker@bchfamily.org](mailto:adecker@bchfamily.org) or call 336.250.3683.

## NEEDED ITEMS LIST

Below is the updated, streamlined items list for 2026. A download of the list and other resources are available at [bchfamily.org/foodroundup](http://bchfamily.org/foodroundup)

### FOOD ITEMS

- Pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Mac & cheese
- Rice
- Flour
- Sugar (granulated & brown)
- Baking mixes (cake, brownie, muffin, Bisquick, pancake)
- Cooking oil & sprays (vegetable, olive, shortening, Pam, Baker's Choice)
- Cereal (cold & hot)
- Canned fruits
- Canned vegetables
- Gravy mixes
- Coffee, tea & hot cocoa
- Sauces (ketchup, BBQ, soy, Worcestershire, steak sauce, teriyaki, cheese, sweet & sour, hot sauce)
- Snack foods (sweet & savory-fruit snacks, jerky, pretzels, cheese crackers, etc.)

### HOUSEHOLD & CLEANING SUPPLIES

- Laundry detergent
- Fabric softener/dryer sheets
- Trash bags (large & small)
- Household cleaners
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Napkins
- Tissues (Kleenex)
- Paper & plastic tableware
- Zip-top bags (sandwich, snack, quart, gallon)

### PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

- Soap
- Toothbrushes
- Lotion
- Baby wipes

### OTHER ESSENTIALS

- Batteries (AA, AAA, C, D)



**FOOD ROUNDUP**

When you are a part of the Food Roundup, you meet real needs and share Christ's love with North Carolina children who are hungry for more than a meal—they are hungry for hope!

# From Shirley's heartfelt look at the past to tributes of faithful lives lived: Alumni updates for March

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

**A** note from **Shirley Topping Maxwell**, (1954) says "Dear Lib, As I was reading the December edition of *Charity & Children* with the article by our new CEO, David Melber, 'In 2026, Choose to Give Your Life to Something Eternal,' I was so moved because it brought back so many memories of when I first came to Mills Home. I was placed at the Whitty Building with 24 other girls and **Miss Faircloth** as matron. She did her job as well as she could with all she knew how, but she could have used more help. There was so much we girls needed back in those days, not just food or a roof over our heads but someone to answer our questions and sit down with us and help us understand what we had gone through."

Shirley went on to say she is so thankful that David Melber is the new CEO of the Baptist Children's Homes and that he is doing a great job to take over such a big responsibility. She said "I admire him and his family. He is clearly kind and compassionate and understands the needs of the vulnerable child." She liked reading what David said about missionary work. He believes that a couple who steps into a cottage with eight or so children is entering a real mission field. They are living daily in the trenches of spiritual battle. They need stamina and emotional strength. Clearly, he understands the kind of people he will need to fill the child-care jobs in the state of NC. Shirley ended her letter by saying I pray that more people will come to know and follow Christ, seeming to say, "give their lives to something eternal."

Mills Home alumni have at least four Facebook pages so when the death of an alumna/a occurs, news flies rapidly. Consequently, we so appreciate that our folks do try to keep us updated. Thank you to **Kaye Trantham** who passed on the sad news of the death of **Vicki**

**Whitaker McManus** (1974). Vicki passed away on Sept. 1, 2025. She entered MH in 1963 with siblings **Nicky and Wanda** from Union County, NC. She adjusted very well to life at Mills Home, excelled in school and art activities, accepted Christ as Savior and lived a dedicated life. In 1970, she married **Nicholas Steve McManus**, and they had three children. Her husband served in the US Army and their family lived in many places including Germany and across the US, before settling down in Lawton, Oklahoma. Nicholas died in 1991 leaving Vicki to finish rearing the children. With all that responsibility, she continued her art work, serious reading, living a Godly life and serving those around her. She resumed her education and earned a BA degree in English in 2004 and a minor in art. She also spent a lot of time with family and keeping up with grandchildren. After accomplishing this enormous goal, she continued her passion for writing and art in her spare time.

In 2021, she moved to Norman, Oklahoma, to be closer to family where she found the perfect home three streets away from her daughter. In the summer of 2025, she was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer. She fought through pain, but never grew weary in her faith, trusting and knowing that she had a sovereign God and a heavenly home. She was preceded in death by her brother **Nikki**, her son **Steven** and grandson, **Oliver**. She is survived by her sister **Wanda**, a daughter, a son, several grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

We were sorry to learn from **Teddy Mills** that his brother **Johnny** of Independence, VA passed away on March 22, 2025. He spent his last days at Woltz Hospice Home in Dobson, NC. Johnny entered MH from Marion NC in 1963 with siblings **Earl and Teddy**. He is preceded in death by his son **Johnny the II** and his brother **Earl**.

Johnny was an honorable member of the US Air Force where he served as a Jet Engine Mechanic. He was a dedicated NASCAR fan with all his support going to Dale Earnhardt. He loved camping in the mountains, waterfalls and being out in nature. He was a fighter having survived cancer and vascular surgery. He was a fan of Mexican food and any seafood, but his favorite dish was Mrs. Ann's Banana Pudding.

He is survived by his wife, **Delores Walker Mills**, one son, **Jason Mills**; three daughters, **Stephani Harsey, (Kevin); Shelly Blackmon; and Darlee (William Lee)**; one brother, **Theodore "Teddy" (Pat)**; nine grandchildren; a lot of nieces, one nephew, and several great nieces and nephews. A celebration of life with Military Honors was held on May 17, 2025 at Twin rivers Family Campground, Crumpler, NC.

It was great to receive an update sheet from **Orpha Bowman**, Mills Home resident, class of 1960. Her twin brothers **Jake and Jerry** came with her to MH in 1954 from Staley, NC, though they were there with her for only a short time. She opted to go to summer school in 1959 so that she could graduate early and marry her sweetheart **Charles Tysinger**. They had one child and now have 3 grandchildren. In 1983 she married again to **Fred Wiseman** and they live in St. Augustine, FL. "Fred" is a retired Postal Worker and Orpha (after 50 years) is retired from Brooks Rehabilitation Hospital in Jacksonville, FL. She started out as a timekeeper (scheduler of nurse duty), moved up as a secretary, and was then promoted to Executive Assistant to the CEO, (who was also President, and later Chairman of the Board of Trustees.) Orpha fit well into the operation and development of that hospital and the development of the Brooks "sister" hospital planned and promoted by

her boss, the CEO. She is grateful for the relationship she was able to have with the CEO who was like a surrogate father to her.

With Orpha living so far away from Thomasville, it has been hard for her to make it to homecoming every year. When she has been able to attend, it has been very special for her to reconnect with old friends. They reminisce about the fun school and campus activities they had all enjoyed in their youth and their duties on campus. Regarding campus activities, she especially liked Sunday School and BTU (Baptist Training Union). Among her campus "duties," she especially liked working in the **W. C. Reed** household and in **Rev. Roger Williams's** church office.

Orpha has fond memories of several Mills Home workers especially **Miss Irene** and **Miss Imogene** at the Biggs, **Mrs. Arnder** at the WC, and **Mr. and Mrs. Marlowe** at the Huffman. Her overall remembrance is that Mills Home was a very good place to grow up.

We are sorrowful to send the sad news from **Daphne Hooks Belanger**, (1956) that her daughter **Nikki** passed away on Dec. 29. Folks who have lost a child understand how deeply she is hurting. Friends may send condolences to Daphne at this address: PO Box 97, Gilbert, Ar., 72636.

Please send any address additions or corrections for **C & C** to **Flora Hicks Patton** at [flora-patton06@gmail.com](mailto:flora-patton06@gmail.com) or 704-795-0017. To discuss use of the Columbarium, contact **Sharon DeHart Stiles** at 704-685-2443 or [sharondstiles@yahoo.com](mailto:sharondstiles@yahoo.com).



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

# March shines a spotlight on two groups of extraordinary people



**M**arch is **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**, a special time at Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) to celebrate the God-given worth and abilities of the adults served through the **Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Ministry (IDDM)**.

In IDDM statewide cottage homes, adults are not just residents—they are cherished members of the BCH family. Each person brings unique gifts, joy, and perspective that enrich the ministry and reflect the beauty of God's design. Every day, encouragement, structure, and Christ-centered care help individuals grow in confidence, independence, and purpose.

This month invites communities everywhere to embrace inclusion and recognize the meaningful contributions of people with developmental disabilities. The lives of these men and women are reminders to slow down, celebrate small victories, and value every person as a reflection of God's love.



**B**aptist Children's Homes (BCH) joyfully celebrates the extraordinary **social workers and case managers** who help make it possible for hope to be shared and lives to be transformed.

Every day, these men and women step into difficult stories with steady faith, compassionate hearts, and a commitment to ensuring every child, family, and individual being served experiences the love, dignity, and safety. They are often the first to offer a listening ear, a guiding hand, and a reassuring voice that says, "You are not alone."

*Their work is sacred.*

*Their calling is deep.*

*Their impact goes beyond what can be measured.*

From walking alongside children who need a safe place to heal, to supporting foster families, guiding single mothers, expectant mothers and birth mothers—BCH social workers and case managers embody Christ-like compassion in every step they take.

March is **Social Work Month**—a time to thank God for the lives changed due to their faithful service.

## Events Calendar:

### Benefit Banquet for Christian Adoption Services

Date: Tuesday, March 10

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Mercy Hill Church, Greensboro

### Training: Trauma Foundations and Practical Applications

Date: Saturday, March 14

Time: 8:30 AM

Location: Rich Fork Baptist Church, Thomasville / Triad Area

### NC Baptist AMS Conference

Date: Monday–Wednesday, March 23–25

Time: Times vary by session

Location: Caraway Conference Center & Camp, Sophia

### Benefit Banquet for Christian Adoption Services

Date: Thursday, March 26

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: First Baptist Church, Charlotte

### 11th Annual Golf Challenge for Christian Adoption Services

Date: Friday, May 1

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Belmont Lake Golf Club, Rocky Mount

### Ride to Clyde

Statewide motorcycle charity ride

Info & registration: [ridetoclyde.com](http://ridetoclyde.com)

### Friends of Children Workdays

Spring Saturday one-day missions opportunities for all ages

- April 18: Broyhill Home, Clyde
- April 25: Mills Home, Thomasville
- May 2: Kennedy Home, Kinston

Register and learn more at:  
[bchfamily.org/events](http://bchfamily.org/events)

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU? Send a referral: Call 1.800.476.3669, go to [bchfamily.org/referral](http://bchfamily.org/referral) or scan the code >>>

FOR EACH PERSON'S SPECIFIC NEED, BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES OFFERS A UNIQUE MINISTRY THAT IS PREPARED TO HELP. REACH OUT TODAY.



# Christmas fellowship, memories of friends, prayer requests, and the big NC snow: Updates for March

By James Clayton Pate, (910) 358-0992, 3894 Hwy 41 West, Trenton NC 28585

The Alumni Christmas Party convened at Kings in Kinston on December 6, 2026, and was distinguished by an atmosphere of warmth and fellowship. The gathering was attended by forty-six individuals, including **Director Matt Chilson** and his wife. Although it is not possible to list all attendees due to incomplete sign-in records, the participation was notably robust. Special recognition is extended to **Kendra** for facilitating the presence of **Billy Smithwick**, and to all who joined in celebrating the birthdays of **Billy** and **Mike Grimsley**. Thank you to Avon for the generous provision of door prizes.

**Mr. Hank Lanier** announced that repairs to the Kennedy Home Arch are scheduled for completion prior to Homecoming in June. **Helen** and **Leslie Naylor Potts** were honored as the eldest alumni in attendance, while **Donna** and **David Bradley** were acknowledged for traveling the greatest distance, journeying from South Carolina.

Regrettably, due to illness, my spouse and I were unable to attend. It is our hope to participate in both the Christmas Party and the Beach Retreat in the coming year, circumstances permitting.

In the midst of celebration, let us take a moment to remember the sisters and brothers who passed in 2025 and January 2026. May we reflect on the shared moments of joy and sorrow, and specifically recall **Janet's** radiant smile, a trait she passed on to her sister **Frances**. **Frances** departed in November at the age of 71, while **Janet** passed away in January at the age of 76. Their contributions to Kennedy Home have left an indelible mark on many lives.

Please keep their families in your thoughts and prayers throughout the year, offering support and encouragement as needed. Though loss is a difficult experience, faith in the Lord and steadfastness within our church community can

provide comfort. The presence of family, friends, and spiritual leaders helps sustain us during times of grief. For those who wish to submit an obituary for inclusion in the Kennedy Home Alumni column, please feel free to do so.

**Gary and Debbie C.**, along with **Ed P.**, attended Janet's funeral. Ed was able to find Janet in the year-book of LaGrange Elementary School in the seventh grade, 1963-1964. Thank you, Ed.

I was unable to remember when I met Janet and her siblings. I knew there was **Bobby, Janet, Brenda, and Frances**. Brenda and I were classmates and my first girlfriend! We "went together" for two days. She lost interest in me. Haha!

**Kenneth R. Hawley**, January 23, 1940 - January 23, 2026. Kenneth retired from the U.S. Army. This was sent in by **Walter "Graham" Jackson**. Thank you, Graham.

**Jim Dyer** (my hero) said that Kenneth was one of the "big boys" when he came to live at Kennedy Home in 1954. Jim and Kenneth reunited via the internet a few years back. Jim had the privilege of enjoying a day and night at Kenneth's home near Kansas City while driving across the country 29 years ago. Rest in peace, big brother. — via *Jim Dyer*.

It is with sincere sorrow and appreciation that we commemorate the life of **Janet Fay Williams**, born July 21, 1949, in Kinston, NC, and departed January 11, 2026.

Janet was a model of compassion and support, always willing to offer assistance to others. Her generosity and vibrant demeanor reflected her profound faith in Jesus. Known for her elegance and good taste in fashion and home decor, Janet also had a distinguished career as a receptionist in the insurance industry and was celebrated for her ability to foster joy and camaraderie. Janet cherished dancing — especially shagging — and always enjoyed her time at the beach and shopping. She was a devoted member of

Southwest Baptist Church in Kinston until moving to New Bern.

Her family was her greatest source of pride: a loving spouse to **John H. Williams, Jr.**; devoted mother to **James "Eddie" Newman** (Jennifer); stepmother to **John Williams III** (Mary) and **Ginger Williams**; sister to **Bobby C. Bryant**, **Kelly McLawhorn**, and **Brenda Harris**; and a cherished grandmother to **Kalye Harder**, **Kyle Newman**, **Georgia Newman**, **Kaylie Hunter**, **Abbie Hiott** (Christian), **Bradley Williams**, **Jonathan Williams**, **Benjamin Williams**, **Ernie Hunter**, and **John Parker Anderson**. Janet was preceded in death by her mother, **Mattie Aswell**; sisters, **Jean Price** and **Frances Heath**; and niece, **Kimberly Bryant**.

The funeral was held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 17, 2026, at Lakeside Chapel at Greenleaf Memorial Park. Janet's enduring legacy of love, generosity, and joy shall continue to inspire all who were privileged to know her.

We here in N.C. are not accustomed to BIG snow events! It was almost like time stood still while we watched the snow fall in record amounts from Saturday, January 31st, into the late afternoon Sunday, February 1st. It was called a "bomb cyclone" and covered the entire state of North Carolina, with only a few exceptions that didn't receive quite as much.

We received 12-18 inches here in Jones County, NC. My wife and I were able to get out on Saturday morning before the snow started to get a few supplies we needed to stay home and safe. The snow began before our drive back home while we were having lunch at Hwy 55. We looked out the window as the snow blanketed the parking lot. Quickly and carefully, we started our slow drive home. The snow was coming down by the buckets.

We returned home safely and remained there. Our neighbor, **David Stroud**, came over Sunday afternoon to clear our driveway

with his tractor, which had a blade on it. We then proceeded to tunnel through from the porch to our vehicles with all that we had to use — haha — a garden rake! It worked fine to push away the snow for a nice path. It was the biggest snow in N.C. since 1989. We pray that all of you remained safe and warm wherever you live. Be blessed, my Kennedy Home brothers and sisters.

Please order your cookbooks from **Deb** — information on this is on our Kennedy Home Facebook page. Do not wait too late because there are only a few left. She will bring them to the Alumni Officers meeting in February.

*Please remember these folks:*

**Frankie G.** had a stroke and is in rehab. **Larry G.** had eye surgery and is doing okay. **Don P.** had eye surgery and is doing okay. **Gary Cauder** has contacted me about his sister **Judy**. Judy is currently hospitalized following heart surgery and is making a favorable recovery — remember her in your prayers, as we remain grateful for God's goodness. **David P.** is still in hospice but is doing okay. Remember **Deborah S.**, her sister passed away.

**Judy** has granted permission for this update to be shared on KH. Facebook and in **C&C**. **Judy F.** had surgery and is doing good.

Remember **Brenda C.** and her sister's family. Brenda's sisters passed away in November 2025 and another sister in January 2026

Remember **Clayton P.** and an old army injury filling with VA.

**Cathy H.** lost her sister in January.

Remember **Kenneth G., Nancy M., Ben and Linda T., Janet S., Carl, Mr. Brown, James and Dana J., Chris F., and Donna P.**



James Clayton Pate was a child in care at Kennedy Home from 1958 to 1972. He and his wife Joyce live in Comfort, NC.

# Social Media Highlights



## Snow Days

One of North Carolina's biggest snow events in years delivered memories for boys and girls throughout the state. Adoptive families bundled up their children, of all ages, and enjoyed wintertime adventures.

## Warm Comfort

Charlotte Edwards has hot chocolate and a warm smile for campus volunteers who are serving at Baptist Children's Homes on a cold day. Charlotte manages **The Mill**, the coffee shop at Mills Home.



## Servant Hands

The youth group from Sheets Memorial Baptist in Lexington teamed up with volunteers from Green St. Baptist Church in High Point to sort donations at Greater Vision in Thomasville. Greater Vision meets immediate needs of local families while equipping them for longterm success.



Is God calling you as a **missionary** to vulnerable children?

As Cottage Parents, husband-and-wife teams **provide a safe, Christ-centered home** for children who have known loss and instability—modeling consistency, compassion, and the **unconditional love of Jesus**. The cottage is more than a home; **it's a mission field where faith takes root.**

[BCHCAREERS.ORG](http://BCHCAREERS.ORG)

