



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 brings the right team together for the Bradys

By Blake Ragsdale | Editor



The Bradys are now a family of five. Jeremy and Amelia Brady, along with their two biological sons, Gabe and Ezra, are an Every Child | Every Church foster care family through Baptist Children's Homes. Devin joined their family at age 16 and is thriving. The Bradys credit God and His plans for their family's success.

The basketball teams were decided. Jeremy and his youngest son, Ezra, would take on his oldest son, Gabe, and the family's sixteen-year-old guest, Devin. When the two-on-two basketball game was over, Devin and Gabe exchanged high fives as they celebrated their victory underneath the hoop in the Brady family's driveway.

Jeremy smiled as he watched his two sons and Devin together.

"This is it, I remember thinking," Jeremy reflects. "We all meshed really well. It was an eye-opener."

The real victory on the day of Devin's visit was much more than the outcome of a basketball game—it was the first signs of what would become a life-changing relationship between Devin and the Bradys. Because of that visit, in addition to several more, they are now the teenager's foster family.

Jeremy and Amelia Brady, who live in Greensboro, are an Every Child | Every Church foster family through Baptist Children's Homes (BCH). Before making the decision to be trained and licensed through BCH, the couple had a basic knowledge of foster care and the vulnerable circumstances of children in the custody of the state's child welfare system.

"We were donating to The Family Room before we even understood what fostering was," Amelia explains. The Family Room in Greensboro, which is now Amelia's employer, provides resources and support to foster families.

"We donated clothes and toys, knowing they would go to children in need. That was good enough for us at the time."

(Continued on page 6)

The Spiritual Battle Leading Up to Easter

By David Melber | BCH Chief Executive Officer



The Lord redirected our lives toward ministry twenty-nine years ago. It was not a subtle shift. It was a holy upheaval, one that reshaped everything we thought we knew about purpose, calling, and surrender. Throughout nearly three decades of serving in ministry, we have witnessed

certain spiritual patterns emerge with remarkable consistency. Some of these patterns are beautiful. Others are fierce. And every year without fail, both collide as Easter approaches.

Easter ushers in one of the most unmistakable of these patterns. I have experienced this pattern every single year in the weeks leading up to Resurrection Sunday. While filled with celebration and holy expectation, there is also an arrival of significant spiritual battles. The air feels heavier. The discouragements sharpen. Relationships strain under invisible pressure. Doubts creep in where confidence once stood. None of this is coincidental.

Scripture reminds us clearly in Ephesians chapter 6 that our struggle is never against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces of darkness in the heavenly realms. Satan knows he has absolutely no power to undo the resurrection. That victory was sealed two thousand years ago in an empty tomb outside Jerusalem. He also has no power to snatch Christ followers from the loving hand of God. But make no mistake...the enemy works relentlessly to discourage us from living in the fullness of that truth. He unleashes every form of spiritual attack to distract, divide, and defeat us, and he does so with particular intensity as we draw near to the season that celebrates his greatest loss.

Yet here is what the enemy fails to understand: every battle he wages near Easter only serves as a gracious reminder of how desperately important the resurrection truly is. If the cross and the empty tomb meant nothing, there would be no opposition. The very intensity of the fight confirms the magnitude of the victory.

As Paul writes in Romans 8, the same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in us. Let that truth settle deep into your spirit. The God

who rolled away the stone, who called life out of death, who shattered the chains of sin and grave that same God has placed His Spirit inside every believer. Jesus Himself declared in John 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life." These are not distant theological ideas. These are the lifeblood of our daily freedom from the bondage of sin. And Satan knows it. He knows that when believers truly grasp resurrection power, they become unstoppable vessels of hope in a broken world.

That is precisely why the enemy fights so hard this time of year. He does not want you walking into Easter Sunday fully alive in your faith. He does not want families healed. He does not want the lost reconciled to Christ. He does not want children rescued or the hopeless made whole. But it is exactly these things the God we serve does!

The resurrection defines the Christian life. It signifies every right and privilege we have been given as followers of Jesus. We are called ministers of reconciliation and that calling is the very heartbeat of what we pursue at Baptist Children's Homes. Reconciliation is rarely simple. It unfolds in stages, and at times, life can literally hang in the balance for those we serve.

Recently, our staff at Christian Adoption Services became aware of premature twins who came into this world far too early and far too small. We stepped into the gap, accepting temporary custody of two precious lives, each weighing only about a pound and a half. Life at that stage is extraordinarily fragile. Without constant medical care, these tiny ones would certainly perish.

Their helpless state speaks powerfully to me about our own condition apart from Christ. Without the intervention of a power far greater than ourselves, we would perish in our sin. We needed someone to step into our story, to rescue us from circumstances beyond our control. That someone was Jesus and His intervention changed everything.

The future of these unfortunately led to their passing in less than two weeks of life. This is not an uncommon occurrence in the spaces that we serve. Many times infants come into this world with such difficulty beyond their control, but it does not mean that we don't step in. Jesus shared in Matthew 25: 31-46 about the Sheep (believers in this story) stepping in and providing basic life necessities and

that action was serving Christ and demonstrated true believers.

BCH and Christian Adoption Services will continue entering these hard and broken places because it is our privilege to serve the broken. Our desire is to see all that we serve be connected to the Savior who fought for their lives before they even knew His name.

This is the reconciliation we long to see in every life we touch from the youngest child to the oldest adult. We dream of the day when every child in our residential care and in foster care is made right with Christ and hopefully reunited with birth parents who have also been transformed by His grace. What a breathtaking picture of redemption whole families restored, healed, and made new by the power of the risen King.

This is Easter. He has conquered death and the grave, and no child, no family, no situation is beyond the reach of His resurrection power. The tomb is still empty. The victory still stands. And the same God who brought life from death 2,000 years ago is still bringing life from death today in hospital rooms, in broken homes, in weary hearts, and in every corner where His people dare to believe.

Join us today in prayer for those we serve. Pray that God would raise up laborers for this harvest. Pray for families willing to open their homes and their hearts to children who desperately need to know they are loved. And as the enemy rages in these days before Easter, stand firm because the One who lives in you has already overcome the world.



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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BCH Welcomes New Programs Officer

By BCH Communications



Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) is pleased to welcome Nancy Osborne as its new Chief Programs Officer (CPO), bringing with her more than 25 years of experience in child and family services, ministry leadership, and organizational development.

Osborne holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in Mental Health Counseling from Palm Beach Atlantic University. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Organizational Psychology at Liberty University.

Her lifelong calling to serve children and families traces back to her early years. Born in West Virginia, she later moved with her family to south Florida at age 12—an experience she recalls with humor and resilience.

"I was born in West Virginia but we moved as a family to south Florida when I was 12," she shared. "A 'mountain girl with a funny accent' was not widely accepted by the middle schoolers of south Florida. So, the accent quickly faded. But it does seep back in from time to time."

Though professional opportunities took her to Georgia over the past six years, Osborne says Florida will always feel like home.

"I am so grateful to the Lord for the opportunities he led me to during my time in both states," she shared. "It allowed me to be a part of numerous opportunities within ministry and social services."

Osborne's professional experience spans child welfare systems in multiple states, including residential care, family preservation, foster care, adoption (domestic, dependency, and international), behavioral health, clinical services, and case management. She has held senior leadership roles overseeing operations, developing programs, guiding multi-state expansion, and equipping churches for ministry engagement. She is also deeply passionate about staff development and organizational coaching.

All these experiences have led her to BCH, where she has now stepped into her new role and serves as a part of the administration's leadership team.

"I am thrilled to join this amazing group at BCH," Osborne said. "The Lord is at work in His people across all of the programs and services offered throughout this incredible organization, and I am equally humbled and excited to be a part!"

Above all, Osborne looks forward to honoring Christ through her leadership and daily life. Her guiding Scripture is Philippians 4:6-7, which encourages believers to approach every circumstance with prayer and trust, receiving the peace of God in return.

This Easter, share the hope of Jesus!

This Easter, I'm grateful to share a story of life change made possible through your support. "Tiffany" (we've changed her name for her safety and privacy), a 15-year-old now thriving at our Mills Home campus, came to Baptist Children's Homes last October with a heavy heart.

Through the loving guidance of her cottage parents, the Lyles and the Grimes families, she experienced daily devotions, discipleship, and the gospel lived out with compassion. One afternoon she ran to her cottage mother, excited:

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

As she learned about faith, salvation, and baptism, Tiffany came to trust Jesus as her Savior. Soon after, she joyfully entered the baptistry at Mills Home Baptist Church and publicly declared her faith. Kathy later shared, "All the girls we've seen baptized were nervous, but not Tiffany. She was thrilled."

Your partnership makes stories like Tiffany's possible. This Easter, I invite you to give so more boys and girls can hear the gospel, experience community, and discover the hope found in Christ.

I'm grateful for Tiffany's story, for your support, and for our risen Savior who offers new life to us all.

Thank you!



David Melber,
BCH CEO

P.S. Your Easter gift helps us share the hope of the gospel. Give at bchfamily.org/easter.



I want to share the hope of **JESUS** this Easter

- \$50 \$100 \$250
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There are two ways you can make your gift:

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

Mitchell Cottage's legacy rings throughout time

By Blake Ragsdale | Editor

When the bell in the tower of the old school rang, its familiar sound would reverberate across the Mills Home campus. It signaled to the boys and girls who called the campus “home” that it was time—time for classes, time for church, or time to let everyone know that your team had won its ballgame.

Today, the bell stands as a symbol of history for Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina’s (BCH) inaugural location in the small community of Thomasville.

Although the school building is long gone, the bell found a new home as part of the collection of Mills Home artifacts at the Mitchell Museum. For more than 40 years, it was displayed in the very building that not only contained history—it was where BCH history was born.



Above: The Mitchell Cottage was the inaugural building constructed for what is known today as the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina (BCH). It opened as a cottage for girls on November 11, 1885. Below: Marry Presson (seated) lived in the Mitchell and was the first child admitted into BCH’s care. With her is Jacqueline, who came to BCH in December, 1928.

little girl who now called Mitchell Cottage “home.”

Mary later married Henry Yarborough and moved to a short distance away to the small town of Lexington. She frequently returned for Mills Home’s annual Homecomings, regarding the caregivers and children as family. She also traveled the state sharing how the orphanage had forever changed her life.

For Mary, and for many others, life in BCH’s first cottage brought about both transformation and memories that would transcend the decades.

Lasting Memories

Lib Smathers Johnson, who lived at Mills Home from 1946 to 1957, vividly remembers the ringing

of the old bell. Wherever she was on campus, the sound easily reached and the ears of the other children. The boys and girls would come running whether it meant it was school time or church time.

But according to Lib, the bell served yet another, much-loved purpose.

“It was also the ‘valley’ bell,” she shares. “When you got called to the valley, it was time to go play.”

The valley—a lush, green area in the center of campus—was where friendships were formed and memories made. Children from the various cottages could not wait to gather there and see one another.

(Continued on page 7)

Ringling with History

The Mitchell was a fitting place for the bell because, before it became a museum, the historic building served as BCH’s first cottage for children when it opened on November 11, 1885. As a museum, it became the keeper of history not only for Mills Home, but for the entirety of what is now BCH—a diverse, statewide nonprofit ministry that serves children, families, and other vulnerable individuals in need of help and hope.

This, however, would be BCH’s future. Back in 1885, and for many years after, the Mitchell had a different purpose. It was the cottage where the earliest and most impactful legacy began—the legacy of transformed lives.

A Legacy Born with the Mitchell

The legacy of BCH began the day the first child, nine-year-old Mary Presson, moved into the Mitchell Cottage at what was then the Thomasville Baptist Orphanage. Mary traveled far—an approximately 250-mile trip from Hertford County, NC. She did not make the journey alone.



Reverend John Mitchell, a friend of BCH founder John Mills and a passionate advocate for the orphanage, escorted Mary from Eastern North Carolina.

When they arrived on November 11, 1885, John Mills was there to greet them. In fact, he even skipped the Annual Meeting of the NC Baptist State Convention, held that same day, to welcome the orphanage’s very first child.

Mitchell was able to see that Mary arrived safely as well as set his eyes on the cottage that was named after him. On that November day, Mary became

the first child accepted into the Thomasville Baptist Orphanage. BCH’s legacy began with one



Disciple-Making Conference an opportunity to partner for the gospel with NC Baptists

By BCH Communications

Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) took part in the 2026 NC Baptist Disciple-Making Conference, joining nearly 1,400 pastors, church staff, and lay leaders gathered for a day of encouragement, equipping, and gospel-focused training.

Hosted at Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte on February 24, the conference brought together ministries from across the state united in a shared desire to make disciples in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

As BCH continues expanding its commitment to a gospel-centered approach in every area of ministry and service, the conference was an opportunity to connect with church leaders who share that mission.

"We are grateful for our relationship with NC Baptists and the passion we share for making the name of Jesus known," said David Melber, BCH CEO.

Throughout the day, BCH staff members hosted a ministry table where they engaged attendees in wide-ranging conversations about caring for vulnerable children and families. These



interactions allowed BCH team members to share stories, answer questions and discuss the vital role churches play in offering hope and stability to those impacted by trauma.

BCH also contributed to the training opportunities offered by leading a well-attended breakout session titled **Seeing Through His Eyes: A Trauma-Informed, Gospel Centered Approach to Ministry** led by trauma-informed expert and BCH ambassador Tera Melber. Rooted in the example of Christ, the session guided ministry leaders in understanding how trauma shapes the way vulnerable children and families view themselves, others and God.

The goal is to equip the church to respond compassionately and cultivate relationships



NC Baptist Disciple-Making Conference sparked a number of conversations with attendees at the BCH table (above) and trauma-informed breakout session (left).

with those in need of the hope of the gospel.

"This is an example of the growing efforts and resources we are making available through the **Every Child | Every Church** initiative," David Melber explained. "We are all serving in this mission field together, and BCH wants to do whatever it can to come alongside the local church and their efforts to make disciples."

Learn more at www.every-child.org.

Stories take stage at adoption benefit banquets

Stories were center stage—literally—at the Benefit Banquet for Christian Adoption Services (CAS) on March 10 at Mercy Hill Church. The theme for the 2025–26 banquets, "The Story," spotlights how God has worked in the lives of both adoptive families and birth families through CAS, a ministry of Baptist Children's Homes.

"At the time, I didn't understand it, but now I know that God was in it even though things did not happen in the best way," birth mother Amajha shared



Amajha, who gave birth at age 15, shares how the Lord worked through CAS to give her son a forever family while bringing together a close bond between both birth and adoptive families.

look now and I see how much Dax is loved, and I know how much I am loved."

from the stage. She was joined by her parents, Tim and Cynthia, as well as Stacia and Chad, the couple who adopted her son, Dax, through CAS.

"Our family tree has extended, and we now have so many other branches," Amajha said. "It has expanded so well that I

Both families are a significant part of each other's lives. They stay in touch and visit.

"You look at all of us together and you see how the Lord took something uncommon and made it common," Tim shared.

Banquets are an opportunity to celebrate successes as well as to raise support and awareness for CAS's ongoing efforts.



bchfamily.org/volunteer

God brings the right team together for the Bradys

By Blake Ragsdale | Editor

(Continued from page 1)

The Brady family's journey to becoming a foster family began with their church, Mercy Hill in Greensboro. In 2019, Pastor Andrew Hopper began a sermon series that not only discussed foster care and adoption from a biblical perspective but helped the congregation understand the purpose of fostering: to care for children while their biological families work towards goals in order to reunify.

"We had never thought about it like that before," Amelia explains. "We've been blessed with this extra bedroom, and we always knew that there would be a reason for it."

After much discussion and prayer, the Bradys became licensed through BCH. BCH walks alongside its foster families and supports them throughout their journey.

Jeremy and Amelia had specific ideas about the age and gender of a foster placement and what would be the best fit for their family.

What they discovered, in the placement process, was something completely different.

"We learned our plan is never as good as God's," Jeremy says.

Through their BCH case manager, Lorie Brinkley, they heard about Devin who was 16 at the time. Eager to meet him, they arranged a video call with the teen who was equally excited when he learned about the opportunity.

"I was like, 'that would be cool,'" Devin says. "In foster care, I always see people come and go, and I was the one who was like, 'When is my time coming?'"

Devin longed to be a part of a family. A positive video call turned into a first visit with the Bradys. Knowing that the teen enjoyed sports, they invited him to the Wyndham Championship, a PGA golf tournament in Greensboro.

That successful day turned into more visits including meeting the Brady's extended family and playing that special game of basketball with Jeremy and Amelia's two sons at their home.

"I was kind of shy a little, but I realized it's time for me to come out of my shell," Devin says.

All the time they spent together culminated in the decision for Devin to move in—the five



Above: The Bradys celebrate Devin's baptism. Below: Amelia sneaks a kiss as Devin heads to school homecoming. Right: Devin and Ezra are ready for a game.

of them would become a family.

"It was really beautiful," Amelia recalls. "He mutually made the decision that he wanted us to be his family, too."

There were many prayerful considerations that went into them coming together, including Devin feeling good with being part of a Caucasian family. Devin is also neurodivergent, which means his brain works a bit differently and, at times, he depends on the additional support of the people in his life.

"The Lord has really torn down fears and walls," Amelia explains. "We're humans who have been uniquely and wonderfully made. That is an overarching theme in our family and especially with our two biological boys, as well"

"I felt like it's been great," Devin says. "We get along. We know how to play as a family. And Ezra and I get to play basketball together."

In addition to the support provided by Brinkley, another BCH professional, Tara Sessoms, has also joined the Brady team. Tara works in several capacities, but her specific experience with BCH's Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Ministry and knowledge of NC Med-

icaid and its Division of Health Benefits have helped the Bradys identify the right options and support for the 18-year-old.

Everyone's goal: to equip Devin to have the maximum amount of independence while helping him reach his goals and dreams. The Bradys have been helping him build skills towards independence.

"There is a team of people who are able to look at this child, see what the needs are, and determine how we all best serve him for his future," Jeremy says. "He's always going to be our kid, and we're always going to be in his life because we were called to be."

As the team works to ensure Devin's future is secure, there are many joyous moments the Bradys have been celebrating in the present.

For Devin's birthday weekend, Jeremy and Amelia facilitated a reunion between Devin, his biological mother, and biological brother who all live separately.

"Devin's mom said, 'I've been praying for this moment,'" Amelia says tearfully. "It was so cool we got to be a part of that little reunification. Even though the three of them cannot live together, they were successfully reconnected."

Devin also became a part of a small group at church. Through it and the Bradys' Christ-centered home, Devin was growing spiritually.

"I was believing in God and putting my trust in Him," Devin shares. "I was reading the bible at my group and came home that day and was like,

'Hey, I think I want to get baptized.'"

Last June, both Ezra and Devin were baptized on the same day. All three of the boys have trusted Jesus as Savior.

The team surrounding the Bradys, from their church family to BCH, have made their fostering journey possible. By welcoming Devin, they have met some of the deepest needs in the child welfare system—providing a home to an older child. Jeremy and Amelia's faith has grounded them throughout every step.

"We have learned that God never sends us where He won't equip us," Amelia says. "Many times, we had to get on our knees and surrender our control and our plan for His, but His



Mitchell Cottage's legacy rings throughout time

By Blake Ragsdale | Editor

(Continued from page 4)

Children from Mills Home stayed busy with chores and school work. It is an important reason why time at the valley, for an alumna like Carolyn McC Carson Tharrington, was “very special.”

“We had wonderful times down there,” she shares. Carolyn lived at Mills home from 1943 to 1956. “We played ball; We had watermelon; We fellowshipped together. It was a special time because we were totally free.”

Moving to the Mitchell

Both Carolyn and Lib lived in the Flemming Cottage for first and second graders when they arrived. As they grew older, their anticipation for moving to the Mitchell Cottage also grew. The excitement, however, had less to do with the building itself—and everything to do with the Mitchell’s beloved house-mother/matron, Mary Black Davis.

“We learned that the Mitchell had this fabulous housemother,” Lib says. “She had been an orphan girl at Mills Home in the twenties.”

Moving to the Mitchell meant being with a matron who truly understood their experiences.

“She was not just sympathetic—she was interested in everything about each of us and our families,” Carolyn recalls. “She loved every one of us. She was absolutely one of the most caring people I ever met.”

Mary was also a talented seamstress and pianist. Lib says her influence shaped both her interests and her life. For Lib, Mary’s impact shaped both her interests and her life.

“I was able to take piano lessons and ended up as a piano major,” she says. “She taught some of us in Sunday School, too. She played an important role in our spiritual lives.”

The Changing Times

The Mitchell served as a place for girls until the 1950s, when it became a family-oriented cottage. This meant there was now a cottage where siblings at Mills Home could live together.



Above: Mills Home alumna and *Charity & Children* columnist Lib Johnson and family in 2004 sitting on the steps of the Mitchell Museum. L to R: Bob Johnson, Lib, daughter Sonja, and grandchildren Liz and Rob. In bottom left corner is seven-year-old Lib with her doll. Below: Carolyn Tharrington (center) in 1956 as a member of the Mills Home basketball team.

This was reflection of a statewide shift toward serving children who still had living family members but were in vulnerable circumstances. Though residential childcare would shift with the changing needs of children and families, the transformation happening with those living inside the walls of the Mitchell continued.

In 1979, the construction of newer cottages sent the Mitchell into retirement. But with the support of BCH’s Board of Trustees and the commitment of the Mills Home Alumni Association, the Mitchell was poised for a rebirth.

From Cottage to Caretaker of History

Establishing the Mitchell Museum was a substantial undertaking for the Mills Home Alumni Association—a group comprised of former Mills Home residents including Lib Johnson. They curated artifacts, photos, and memorabilia, raising funds and learning as they went.

“We went at it gung ho,” Lib recalls. “You just had to do it as you go because we had nobody who was experienced.”

Rooms were meticulously staged with items from days gone by. This included the first printing press used when *Charity & Children*, BCH’s long-running newspaper, was produced at the Mills Home print shop. Items also included the

desk of John Mills, and of course, a piano.

“There had been a piano when we lived in the Mitchell,” Lib says. “We loved gathering around it and watching Mary Black Davis play.”

In time, it was decided that the salvaged school bell should be placed in the main room near the museum’s entrance. Visitors saw it as soon as they stepped inside. It was as if the bell was still ringing to invite them to explore the place where BCH began.

In 2000, the Mitchell was added to the National Register of Historic Places, further affirming its role in North Carolina’s orphanage movement.

A History Preserved

After 140 years, the Mitchell’s foundation had eroded beyond safe repair. Although the building no longer stands, its legacy—and the history its walls contained—is being carefully preserved.

BCH has hired Marilyn Moore as museum curator. She is in the process of stewarding and managing the artifacts for a new exhibition area to be established at Mills Home.

Celebrating BCH’s Legacy and Dedicating its Future to the Gospel of Jesus Christ

BCH CEO David Melber and a team are planning a special event on May 11, 2026 at Mills Home. It is called *The Cross at the Center: A Dedication of Faith, Legacy, and Gospel Hope*.

A cross, formed from the remnants of BCH’s historic first cottage, will be installed on the grounds at what will be named *Mitchell Park*. The cross will symbolize BCH’s unwavering commitment to the gospel while also commemorating the legacy of Mitchell Cottage and the lives changed underneath its roof.

“It will be a day of worship, prayer and dedication,” David says. “We want our staff, ministry partners, and those impacted by this work to join us. It’s an opportunity to honor the Lord for what He has done in the past 140 years and praise Him for what He’s going to do in the lives that will be served through BCH in the days, years, and decades ahead.”



Food Roundup is winding down to its final weeks



For cottage parent Lamar Grimes—who, as a child, once dug through dumpsters to feed his siblings—the *gift of a shared meal is more than food; it is dignity, safety, and love*. Today in the Baptist Children’s Homes cottage where they serve, Lamar and Nancy Grimes create that same gift for the girls in their care. The **Food Roundup** makes this possible. Every donated can and box becomes part of a dinner table where girls laugh, feel heard, and experience Christ’s love. Due to the generosity of participating churches, meals don’t just fill stomachs—they *help heal hearts and build a sense of home*.

2026 Pickup Points | Delivery hours will vary at each collection location. Please make plans to call and schedule your delivery in advance. The information is current as of publication. For changes, complete the form at bchfamily.org/food-round-up

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New Hope Baptist Church
Gerald & Nellie Phillips
828-479-8279</p> <p>Greater Cleveland Assoc.
Katie Harris
704-482-3472</p> <p>Greater Gaston Assoc.
Karen Weaver
704-867-7257</p> <p>Green River Association
Teresa Sams
828-286-9278</p> | <p>Haywood Association
Broyhill Home: Donnie Browning
828-550-2509</p> <p>Liberty Association
Brian Alexander
336-475-0432
Mills Home
336-474-1200</p> <p>Little River Association
Cameron Boys Camp: Jason Sullivan
913-271-4885</p> <p>Macon Association
Gary Holland
828-524-3215</p> <p>Metrolina Association
Brian Hollifield
704-375-1197</p> <p>Mitchell Association
Jennifer Beck
828-765-9412</p> <p>Mount Zion Association
Sandi King
336-226-0249</p> <p>Neuse Association
Kennedy Home
252-522-0811</p> <p>New River Association
Jeanette Palmero
910-347-3146</p> <p>New South River Assoc.
Cynthia Johnson
910-485-8791</p> <p>North Roanoke Assoc.
Regina Balasoto
252-443-3883</p> | <p>Pee Dee Association
Janie Frye
910-895-5282</p> <p>Piedmont Association
Rebecca Newlin
336-275-7651</p> <p>Polk Association
Inez Jackson
828-894-3787</p> <p>Raleigh Association
Iris Woodard
919-231-3995</p> <p>Randolph Association
Erica Smith
336-625-4175</p> <p>Robeson Association
Odum Home: David Hunley
910-930-1481</p> <p>Rocky Face Association
Rocky Face Baptist Church
828-632-8561</p> <p>Rowan Association
Darcell Mangan
704-637-3407</p> <p>Sandhills Association
Cameron Boys Camp:
Jason Sullivan
913-271-4885</p> <p>Sandy Creek Association
1. Hickory Mountain BC
919-742-3928
2. East Sanford Baptist Ch.
919-776-3241
3. Moons Chapel BC
919-742-4569
4. Cool Springs BC
919-776-4633</p> | <p>Sandy Run Association
Evelyn Lane
828-245-2613</p> <p>South Fork Association
Faith Ingle
704-735-1642</p> <p>South Mountain Assoc.
Nancy Anderson
704-462-4472</p> <p>South Roanoke Assoc.
Linda Franks
252-756-4332</p> <p>South Yadkin Association
Jaime Tang
704-873-4372</p> <p>Stone Mountain Assoc.
Sherry Hicks
336-696-4210</p> <p>Stony Fork Association
Roy Gryder
828-295-3410</p> <p>Surry Association
Susan White
336-789-5701</p> <p>Tar River Association
Louisburg Baptist Church
919-496-4195</p> <p>Tennessee River Assoc.
FBC, Bryson City
Rita Maddox
828-488-2679</p> <p>Three Forks Association
Suzanne Randall
828-264-4482</p> <p>Transylvania Association
Nancy Kirkpatrick
828-877-3203</p> | <p>Triad Church Network
Maria Weisz
336-830-8189</p> <p>Triangle East Association
Johnston Comm. College
Angie Daniels
919-961-4696</p> <p>Triwest Baptist Network
Rose of Sharon Baptist Ch.
919-477-3993</p> <p>Truett Association
Duronida Hood
828-837-5401</p> <p>Tuckaseegee Association
Gracella Morris
828-586-6011</p> <p>Union Association
Bessie Benson
704-283-8383</p> <p>Uwharrie Assoc.
Luanne Williams
704-982-1033</p> <p>West Chowan Assoc.
Rebecca Adams
252-332-3235</p> <p>Yadkin Association
Brenda Chandler/Dennis Shaw
336-679-8731</p> <p>Yancey Association
Joe Miller
828-682-2388</p> |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|



When you take part in Food Roundup, you help meet real needs and share Christ’s love with children across North Carolina who are hungry for more than a meal—they are hungry for hope. Visit bchfamily.org/food-round-up for the needs list and helpful resources.

Remembering cherished lives and reconnecting with dear friends: April Mills Home alumni updates

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

We are deeply saddened to learn of the death of any Mills Home alumnus or person who worked for Mills Home or BCH. Today, we grieve with alumnus **Flora Hicks Patton** who just lost her beloved husband **Grady**. Though not an alumnus, Grady has attended most of the Mills Home homecomings since Flora became involved with the affairs of our Association in 1992. He was one of 16 other spouses who were presented with the special Oscar Award in 2012 for the amazing amount of time and work they had contributed in alumni projects. Grady's ashes will be inurned at the God's Acre Columbarium late. Friends may wish to send condolences to Flora at 6428 Sisk Carter Rd., Rockwell, NC 28138.

Just this past summer we learned that **Doris Maney Mason** passed away on August 12, 2023. Doris was one of the class of 1950, the first Mills Home class to graduate from Thomasville High School. Until recent years, Doris would always be found on campus during homecoming weekend. And we would always know that if she were on campus that weekend, she would probably sing in the "Alumni Choir." In her 1950's days as a resident of MH, as was true of most early Mills Home history, there were many outstanding vocalists and instrumentalists on campus, and General Superintendent (the name equivalent of CEO today) **W. C. Reed** always referred to Doris as one of the top "songbirds" in our campus choir. Doris was always kind, friendly, and willing to help in projects that benefited or enhanced some aspect of MH campus life (making clothes, peeling peaches, etc.) In the early days of the development of the Mitchell museum, she took on the task of taking several boxes of items from the old Noah Richardson library to organize into display materials for the museum. Doris entered MH in 1940 with

her twin sister **Dorothy**. After graduation in 1950, she settled in Raleigh where she met and married **Herbert Mason**. They reared one daughter who produced three daughters. Doris loved spending time with them and the two eventual great granddaughters. She was preceded in death by her husband Herbert, twin Dorothy, and nine other siblings.

Paul Loman made his home at Mills Home from 1967 until 1970. I wasn't lucky enough to get information from someone who knew him, but I learned from reading his beautiful obituary that he was level headed, kind natured, and a devout Christian. It was said by his obituary writer, "that his life was defined by kindness, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to those he loved. He approached every day with gratitude, always eager to share a laugh or lend a helping hand. His generosity of spirit was evident in the way he supported all he met, giving freely of his time and wisdom. Always curious about much, Paul was a lifelong learner and hard worker. He found joy in spreading the word about his Savior, being with his family and friends sharing stories, and nurturing relationships. His warmth made others feel welcome and his thoughtful nature ensured that everyone around him felt valued".

"Paul's quiet strength and gentle guidance left a lasting impact on everyone who crossed his path. Whether offering advice or simply listening, he inspired others to lead lives of purpose and compassion. His legacy is one of love, laughter, and the countless moments of joy he brought into the world."

Paul was preceded in death by his wife of 42 years, **Iras Macy Lowman**, and sons **Kenneth Hedrick** and **Phillip Gray Lowman Sr.** Surviving him are his sons **Jeff B. Lowman**, **Adam R. Spencer** and **Christopher M. Lowman Sr.**; daughters **Jamie** and **April**;

17 grandchildren; 16 great grandchildren, one sister, **Connie** and 2 brothers, **John** and **Michael**. A Celebration of Paul's Life was held on Nov. 15, 2025 at The Well Church, Thomasville, NC.

It was great hearing from **Harry Walls** by way of the update sheet. Most of us thoroughly enjoy seeing all the photos from the Mills Home past that Harry posts on the "Mills Home Orphanage Memories Facebook Page." (A lot of the material that he uses came to him by way of **Bill Bailey** who "inherited" it from his father **C. Franklin Bailey** who wrote the Alumni Column for many years. Frank was also well known and respected by alumni for the "campus" shoe manufacturing and repair and boy scout work that made him such a favorite with campus boys.) That mass of material provides memories of our childhood days, particularly of days socializing in the valley, gym, swimming pool, school, and worshipping at the church.) We recently read in this column about Harry and his Mills Home sweetheart, **Marie Damphouse** celebrating their third wedding anniversary. When they married, we were all excited that after many years since leaving each other as they left Mills Home, the two eventually reunited and married. They recently moved from Thomasville to Lexington, NC. Harry's email address and new phone number remain public so that alumni can continue to share information with him for the Facebook page. (Hmonk7@yahoo.com or 743-444-8721).

Harry entered Mills Home from Asheville, NC in 1954 with brothers **Harold** and **Nathan** (deceased) and he left in 1968. With his keen interest in sports and physical fitness, he was known on campus for his physical prowess. Today he is still involved in physical fitness and takes time to enter the NC Senior Games in the categories of Shot Put and Discus Throw. He has entered the State Games and won for the last 30 years in High Point,

Thomasville, Lexington & Raleigh, always placing first in Shot Put and Discus Throw. Several times he won first place in Football and Softball Throws and one year he won first place in the Powerade games in Raleigh.. He has also won the NC State Competition several times). In addition to talent in physical fitness, Harry has written and shared quite a few spell binding tales about his life and family.

Harry's first marriage produced two children. **Erik** died at the age of six of spinal meningitis and **Angela** died at the age of 20 giving birth to his granddaughter **Erica**.

Marie Damphouse, Harry's present wife, entered Mills Home in 1965 and graduated in 1969. She settled nicely into life on campus and enjoyed many people and activities. After some time at the WC Cottage, she especially enjoyed living at the Huffman Cottage. She enjoyed gaining cooking skills in her kitchen duty, and she gained great fondness for the houseparents, **Mom and Pop Steele**. She especially loved the campus activities of swimming, riding the ponies at the farm, and attending church where she came to admire **Pastor Lambert**. Special friends were **Becky Deal**, **Wanda Jones**, and Harry Walls. After leaving Mills Home, she lived with relatives in California and worked as a CNA for Aerospace. Later she worked in law offices. In her first marriage, she had one son with whom she is very close.

Please send corrections or additions of addresses for **Charity & Children** to **Flora Hicks Patton** at florapatton06@gmail.com or 704-795-0017. To learn about a resting place in the Columbarium, contact **Sharon DeHart Stiles** at sharondstiles@yahoo.com or 704-685-2443.



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

The Church & child abuse prevention

By Nancy Osborne | Chief Program Officer & Erica Spivey | Senior Director of Special Projects

A we recognize **April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month**, may we as followers of Jesus choose to shine brightly in a world that desperately needs His light. (*Matthew 5:16*)

The needs around us are real, but so is the hope we carry. **More than half of the children entering the foster care system do so due to neglect or lack of resources.** (*US Foster Care Statistics 2026: Data & Trends [Updated Mar 2026]*)

We have an opportunity to surround hurting families and be the bridge that supports family preservation. Christ stepped into the messiness of humanity with compassion, courage, and sacrificial love. And we are called to follow His example.

Our church communities must also confront the painful reality that some children have been harmed through trusted relationships within churches and ministry settings. Those impacted often carry deep confusion, anger, and spiritual wounds. This reality should break our hearts and bring us to our knees in prayer!

When congregations are equipped to understand trauma, cultivate safety, and build relationships rooted in connection, they become places where hope is not merely spoken but embodied. This kind of hope—powered by the love of Jesus—has the ability to transform lives.

The truth is simple and profound: just one caring adult in the life of a child or parent can dramatically influence outcomes. (*Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University.*) One relationship can interrupt cycles of harm. One supportive community can change the trajectory of a family for generations.

While the Church cannot eliminate all risks in this broken world, we are called to remain informed, alert, and committed to protecting our most vulnerable.

Five practical steps for churches regarding child abuse prevention:

1. **Watch with vigilance** for adults with boundary-pushing behaviors, secrecy, and/or persistent or inappropriate attention towards a child.
2. Offer ongoing **Signs of Abuse awareness training** for church leaders and volunteers.
3. **Respond appropriately and swiftly** to concerning behaviors in both adults and children.
4. **Implement background checks and enforce strict safety procedures**—including check-ins, supervision, and two-adult rules—across all church activities and transportation. Know that while background checks are absolutely necessary, they are not foolproof: **less than 10% of offenders have a criminal record.** Do not assume “no record” means “no risk.” (*ministrysafeministry.com/about-ministrysafe*)
5. **Support an ongoing culture of transparency and accountability.** Maintain open doors and observable spaces. Support leadership in providing regular supervision and audits of program safety. Speak up if they notice gaps in oversight. (*sbcv.org*)

(*More information about the above practical steps can be found at ministrysafeministry.com*)

By prioritizing awareness, prevention, and courageous action, the Church can better reflect Christ’s heart for the vulnerable and help restore trust, safety, and hope within its walls.

The needs around us are real, but so is the hope we carry in Jesus!

Events Calendar:

Every Child | Every Church Trauma Training

A Baptist Children’s Homes led one-hour training helping churches and caregivers understand trauma through a biblical lens and respond with Christ-like compassion and hope.

Location: Hayworth Wesleyan Church
1696 Westchester Dr, High Point, NC

Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Time: 6:30 - 7:30 PM

NC Baptist Kids Ministry Summit

Location: Hopewell Baptist Church (Victory Campus), 8900 Concord Hwy Monroe, NC

Date: Monday, April 20, 2026

BCH Breakout Sessions:

- Creating Safe Spaces in Kids Ministry: Preventing Challenging Behaviors Before They Start
- Helping Every Child Thrive: Responding to Behavior With Wisdom and Grace
- Trauma-Informed Kids Ministry: What Every Leader Needs to Know

11th Annual Golf Challenge for Christian Adoption Services

Date: Friday, May 1

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Belmont Lake Golf Club, Rocky Mount, NC

Ride to Clyde

Statewide motorcycle charity ride

Date: Wednesday, May 6 to Saturday, May 9

Information: ridetoclyde.com

Friends of Children Workdays

Spring Saturday half-day missions opportunities for all ages.

Register: bchfamily.org/foc

Dates and Locations:

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

Register and learn more at:
bchfamily.org/events

TRAININGS

Join us for a practical breakout designed to help children’s ministry leaders create safer, more supportive spaces for every child.

Learn how to:

- Foster a sense of safety and belonging
- Respond to challenging behaviors with wisdom and grace
- Better understand the impact of brokenness and trauma

Through Every Child | Every Church, discover how your church can become a place where hurting children feel safe, known, and ready to grow in their faith.

Register today: ncbaptist.org/kidsminsummit



N.C. BAPTISTS

kid's ministry
SUMMIT

APRIL 20, 2026
8 AM - 3 PM
MONROE, NC
NCBAPTIST.ORG/KIDSMINSUMMIT

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU? Send a referral: Call 1.800.476.3669, go to 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.



From generations celebrated to stories shared: Kennedy Home alumni updates for April

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

Brother **John Thompson**, the previous columnist, called me a week or so ago with some exciting news! He went on to tell me that he himself is John Thompson *junior* and that when his son was born, his wife and himself named their son **John Thompson III**. John Thompson III and his wife had a son and named him **John Thompson IV**. He has now been blessed with a son of his own, and the family name was passed to him as well. He has been named—you guessed it—**John Thompson V**.

Joyce Connie sent me a text letting me know that **Franky** is having issues with his heart and that his blood pressure has been high. Last week he had to stop his physical therapy until he was stronger. Franky is in Kinston hospital on the third floor. His brother **Kenny** visits him there twice a day. Please join me in prayer for Franky and Kenny in these hard times. If you visit Franky and Kenny, please let me know of any updates. And please put them on your prayer list at your church.

Let us wish **Ed Riggs** a happy birthday—happy birthday, Ed! He will turn 90 on March 11. Our daughter, **Mary Donna Pate**, is turning 53. Happy birthday, Donna Mae—we love you!

President **Larry Gillian** set up a business meeting on March 14 at 10:00am in the alumni room at the church. We will have an update on the business meeting in April. The update will also be in *Charity & Children* so be sure to check out the Kennedy Home column

The following is from **James C. Pate, 1958-1972**:

“My wife Joyce and I had the best dinner at Hwy 55 in Richlands the other day.

We had been in Mike’s tree farm area purchasing firewood from Mr. Wayne Brown.

We have fallen in Christian love

with this guy. He is very fair with his pricing. We then headed to Richlands to eat dinner and decided on Hwy55. When entering the restaurant, we saw the prettiest lady smiling so beautifully at us. We began to wonder if she was someone we knew. Joyce knew her well from the Greer reunions; she introduced me to **Mrs. Brenda Greer**, she is the widow of my mother-in-law, **Irene Greer Johnsen’s** cousin who had gone to his heavenly home eight years ago. I was surprised by my wife Joyce with an invitation from this sweet lady to join her and her friend at the table. The fellowship we had with these ladies just made our day! They had been to a funeral for a friend. I asked who and they told me it was for their friend **Amy Weatherington**. The oldest of the Weatherington children. I did not remember her, however I do remember **Donald, Pete** and **Janice**. I later found out from Donald that Amy never lived at Kennedy Home with us. As we continued to talk with these ladies, we discovered that **Mrs. Jones** had visited Kennedy Home several times with toys and bags of fruit and candy along with presents for us around the Christmas holidays with the Woodmen of the world. While she was there for a visit she told me how she was very blessed by a young man playing the piano. You guessed it! It was none other than **John Thompson, Jr**. It was during the years of 72-74. She went on to tell us how well he played. Never pass up the chance to eat with your elder brothers and sisters in Christ. You may discover, as I did, how they supported you with gifts during your stay at Kennedy Home. Also, you never know when you may be entertaining angels or being entertained by angels.—Written with love by the Pates. God bless.”

After my morning prayer on

Tuesday morning, I had asked the Lord for help on the *Charity & Children* column for April. I needed some wisdom to finish up. The television was on and I could not help but listen to it when I heard them sharing a report on Moores Creek Bridge.

The conflict was in 1776 and was between the Loyalist and the Patriots. Moores Creek Bridge is around thirty miles from Wilmington, NC. It is just a few miles from Burgaw.

North Carolina had just been given their first governor Mr. Richard Caswell in 1776. One of his first jobs was to tax the farmers and businessmen of NC. This upset them, calling them to arms. John O’Grady from Goshen swamps a few miles from what’s known now as Pink Hill, NC. **John O’Grady** is an ancestor of my mother, **Doris Grady**. And my father **Rudolph Pate**. His father married **Minnie Grady**. John O’Grady picked up his shotgun, a bag of ham biscuits and jumped on his mule. He then headed to Moores Creek Bridge which was thirty miles away. There was going to be a fight! Being of Irish blood he came to the New World to get away from taxes. It is said that John gathered family, friends and neighbors all along the way to Moores Creek Bridge. They traveled in wagons, on horses and on mule’s oxen carts and walked along with some traveling by boat in the Cape Fear River. They were armed with shotguns, rifles, pistols, axes and staffs. It was said that some farmers were armed with their hoes, knives and pitchforks. Some even had bows and arrows, it seems they brought anything they could find to fight with. One of the farmer’s heroes was—you guessed it—David of the Old Testament who brought five rocks and a slingshot to a battle. I never heard around the dinner table who led the charge of all those farmers so, I did a little research

on it. The leader of all these farmers and others was Colonel James Moore an experienced officer of the French and Indian war. He commanded the first NC continental regiment. By the time they arrived at Moores Creek Bridge they were met by the Patriots from Duplin, Onslow, Lenior and a few other counties. Governor Caswell ordered a sword company to put the Patriots in their places. This is where the phrase “don’t take a sword/ knife to a gun fight” came into play. The Patriots had a cannon, knee mortar that came off the ship in Wilmington. Uncle John was with a group of men out scouting for the sword company men when they got cut off from the friendly front line. They were captured and called spies by the Loyalist and tortured for information. Uncle John died three days later from his injuries for not indulging any information to the Patriots. The sword company was defeated and left the battlefield. Years later the battlefield at Moores Creek was rebuilt and a 20-foot statue was erected in honor of John O’Grady. If I ever told any of my brothers and sisters at Kennedy Home this story it was/is not a tall tale. I guess that is where that fighting spirit comes from in us Pates and Gradys. Don Pate and I broke that chain when we got saved the Lord replaced that spirit with a gentler one. Our daddy and Granddaddy died with that fighting spirit. If you have a “hero” in your family, please feel free to share and we will add it in the Kennedy Home Column.

This month’s prayer list is as follows:

- **Franky**: heart
- **Donald Ray**: family loss
- Baby **John Thompson V** and family



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

Ministry Moments



Sharing the Story

Christian Adoption Services (CAS) adoptive family, the Osbornes, shared their family's story on stage as a part of the CAS Benefit Banquet. Every day, God is writing incredible stories in the lives of children and families throughout the many ministries of Baptist Children's Homes

God's Timing

TJ and Emily recognize how God wove kindness into every part of their adoption journey. From an unexpected call to the perfect timing and the courage of their son's birth mother, they found deep peace and faithfulness as God led them to the son who was a long-awaited answered prayer.



Servant Hands

Children at First Baptist Hickory learned about a special missions outreach: Ride to Clyde. Church members/motorcyclists Phil Robinson, Larry Phillips, Bill McCall, and Casey McCall taught boys and girls about Baptist Children's Homes and how they share Christ's love through the statewide motorcycle ride.



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.**

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