

TENNESSEECHILDREN.ORG

# winter

@TBCH

SO WE DO NOT FOCUS ON WHAT IS  
SEEN, BUT ON WHAT IS UNSEEN. FOR  
WHAT IS SEEN IS TEMPORARY, BUT  
WHAT IS UNSEEN IS ETERNAL.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:18







## A Note from Greg

As we approach the end of 2020, I am looking back over the year with a thankful heart. Yes, I know that sounds weird considering a world pandemic and the multitude of challenges we continue to face because of it, but I am choosing to count my blessings today . . . naming them one by one!

*"Thank You, God, for being sovereign and remaining on Your throne. Thank You for the children in the care of TBCH who have come to know You as Lord and Savior of their lives in 2020. Thank You for the way You have protected our children from Covid-19!"*

*Thank You, Father, for our staff who has stepped up to the plate to do whatever is necessary for the safety, well-being, education, and spiritual growth of our children. And thank You for healing our staff members who have had to deal with the virus.*

*Lord, while the number of supporting TN Baptist churches hit an all-time low this year, many of Your churches recognized our financial needs and gave more than they ever have. Thank You for keeping vulnerable children on their minds and hearts. Thank You, Jehovah Jireh, for providing for TBCH. While church giving has been over \$300,000 below last year's amount, individuals, organizations and businesses have displayed their love and concern for children who are in hard places by giving generously so that we might welcome them with the love of Your Son.*

*Thank You, Lord, for the people who decided years ago to bless children in need by leaving a portion, or even all of their estate, to this ministry when they reaped their eternal reward. I am so thankful for their decision to be a blessing to children who will not be able to thank them until they see each other in Heaven.*

*Thank You, O God, for calling on Your people to stand up for children in need. I praise You and give You thanks for our foster families across the state who are giving the homeless a home.*

*I rejoice with the TBCH team when a child is placed in a forever home! Thank You, Father, for placing children with loving parents through adoption. And thank You for adopting us into Your family as we place our faith in Your Son, Jesus, in whose name I pray, Amen!"*

*Thank you for reading this edition of @TBCH. Thank you for being a part of our children's stories by praying, serving and giving. If I or TBCH can be of service to your family, please don't hesitate to call on us.*

*My wife, Jeri, and I wish you a very merry Christmas!*

Bro. Greg, President/Treasurer



## TENNESSEE BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES

### Residential Care

Christian houseparents serving in family-style homes on three campuses across the state, providing safety and biblical guidance so children can thrive.

### Foster Care

Training and support for Christian foster parents through The George Shinn Foster Care Program, providing certified foster homes for children across TN.

### Family Care

Working with churches and other organizations to create a network of local resources, changing the trajectory of families for the better.

**1-800-624-8591**

[www.tennesseechildren.org](http://www.tennesseechildren.org)  
[office@tennesseechildren.org](mailto:office@tennesseechildren.org)  
P.O. Box 2206, Brentwood, TN 37024



## In This Issue

A visitor to a new building might notice the size of the rooms, choice of colors, or the quality of the window trim. But can you imagine someone looking around and declaring “My, what wonderful rebar is holding this place together!” Probably not, but in terms of the structure and integrity of that building, the rebar hidden in the walls and floors could be more important than anything out in the open. As we come to the end of 2020, we want to acknowledge and celebrate some of the unseen things that have held TBCH together for 129 years—things like faithful “widow’s mite” gifts, unsung acts of service from supporters, and daily victories in the lives of the kids in our care. These are the “rebar” in the walls of TBCH!

*So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18)*





# A Little Outdoor Fun

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Dressing up in costumes, campus trick-or-treating, and outdoor fun feasts served as a cure for cabin fever on all three campuses in the late fall this year.

As this issue of @TBCH magazine is being printed, most of the southeast United States has been experiencing unseasonably pleasant weather. This is a blessing for our kids and staff since many of them have experienced additional quarantines, reinstatement of remote learning, and various other reasons to be limited in their opportunities to leave campus. As a result, the outdoors are becoming very popular, and with the inevitable cold weather of winter, any excuse to enjoy some fresh air is welcomed.

Activities like these have other benefits for the kids and staff on our campuses. Spending time together in informal ways creates friendship opportunities for residents and allows them to bond with their houseparents, case managers, and other staff in healthy ways. Thanks to the supporters who keep our doors and outdoors open, the kids in our care get to enjoy a little fun!







# Silverdale Serves

As winter approaches, like most homes, our campuses require the usual seasonal maintenance. Leaves pile up, bushes overgrow, and pavement shows signs of a summer's worth of countless muddy tennis shoes.

This is daunting enough for someone with a yard and a house, but a campus with dozens of buildings can be nearly overwhelming for the staff and houseparents who already have the full-time job of caring for children.

So, when a faithful friend from down the road offers to help, we are more than grateful!

Silverdale Baptist Church is a few minutes away from the Chattanooga campus, but by their hands-on acts of service we know they are even closer in spirit. They recently sent a group who cleaned up flower beds, pressure-washed walkways, and cleared brush like professionals.

Volunteering on our campus is a key project of their annual "Serve the City" effort, and has been for the last few years. Silverdale has supported TBCH in many ways for about two decades now, according to Gus Hernandez, their Local Missions and Outreach Pastor. They also have members and small groups who serve and give more regularly, and some have unofficially "adopted" the different homes on the campus for events and service opportunities throughout the year. "It is one of our SBC members' favorite places to serve and give," he said.

The houseparents and staff deeply appreciate Silverdale Baptist Church and all the churches who volunteer by working and serving on our campuses.





# A Look Beyond the Pictures

Seeing things from someone else's point of view can be very difficult, but also very rewarding. We invite you to look beyond the pictures and appreciate these first-hand perspectives on aspects of residential life at TBCH. A special thank you to these three who graciously share parts of their stories...

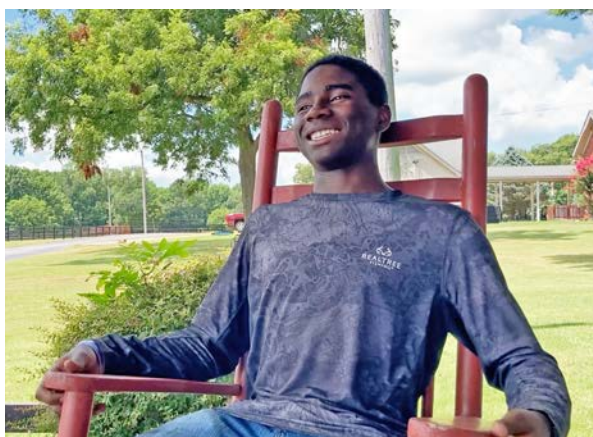


## Aiden

*I think it's a good place to come if you really don't have anywhere else to go to. They take good care of you.*

*I've learned to act more mature, and that some people are moldable and some people are followers. You have to learn how to be a leader and show everybody that this is the right thing to do, and try to be a good example.*

*I want to be known for my resilience, that no matter what gets thrown at you, you normally come out and do good and persevere.*



## Naz

*When I first showed up here, I wasn't happy. I was down, I just didn't want to cooperate or anything. I didn't like saying "yes ma'am" or "no ma'am" to anyone, but I was being arrogant, I guess.*

*The first day I got here I had to go get my haircut...to see all my hair falling off I was like, "This is torture!" The first thing in my mind was I'm going to just take off, just run. But something told me not to.*

*I want to be a vet and help animals. Ever since kindergarten I knew what I wanted to be. Half the reason I decided to cooperate was because of the animals, and I thought, "That's awesome, there's animals, and I'm here, so that's cool."*



## Shamoni

*I really like how kind everyone is and how welcoming everyone was when I first got here. It's like, non-judgmental. I feel like I can go to anybody on this campus and talk to them about how I feel, and they'll try to understand the best they can.*

*And I like going to church and stuff, it's so fun. My houseparents are funny, I love coming home and everybody's cracking jokes in the house and I love that about our whole house. They're just caring.*

## Interested in our Residential Care Program?

Visit our website at [www.tennesseechildren.org](http://www.tennesseechildren.org) for information about our campuses, houseparenting, and how to contact us about getting involved in your region.

# Pray. Serve. Give.

## ➔ PRAY

Our houseparents are on duty 24/7 to serve these children. Please pray for their physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, especially during this critical time.

The children at TBCH have already been in hard places. Please pray that they will experience the love and peace of Christ in a way that overcomes any anxiety or fear they may have because of these circumstances.

Please pray and ask God to continue blessing and providing for the ministry of Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes.



## ➔ SERVE

Call the campus offices directly to schedule dropping off meals, food and supplies.

Order food and supplies online and have them shipped directly to campuses. Meals are still welcome! While we can't invite you in to visit, you can still relieve some of the burden of the houseparents by dropping off a meal, or providing gift cards for restaurants with drive-through or delivery service.

If you are sick, please reschedule any drop-offs or deliveries.

## ➔ GIVE

Please donate online at [tennesseechildren.org](https://tennesseechildren.org), by mail, or by calling 1-800-624-8591.

## The "unseen"

There is something about the "unseen" nature of faith that makes it precious in the sight of God. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that praying, serving, and giving should be done apart from the motivation of public recognition, "and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you." As we come to the end of 2020, we know that your quiet, humble acts of faith are what has sustained us through the year and what will help us finish well.

Pray that our children and staff will be able to face any physical, educational, emotional or spiritual challenges that may be coming their way.

Look for practical ways to serve one of our campuses or a foster family in your neighborhood.

Consider making a year-end gift, or begin giving monthly to help cover the cost of the services we provide to children and their families.

Contact us for volunteer opportunities, and donate today online at [TENNESSEECHILDREN.ORG](https://tennesseechildren.org), by phone at 1-800-624-8591, or by mail to P.O. Box 2206, Brentwood, TN 37024.







## Donors Provide Hope Despite Ups and Downs

The buildings at TBCH are built on solid foundations, but not just rock and concrete. Hope in Christ keeps our homes standing, and that hope is realized in a very concrete way through the faithful generosity of our donors.

Throughout 2020, headlines have heralded the good, the bad, and the ugly—mostly the latter two. In May, The Wall Street Journal declared in an article titled “Nonprofits Face Bleak Future as Revenue Dries Up Amid Coronavirus” that the economic impact of COVID-19 “is an unprecedented calamity for nonprofits.” Seems hopeless, right?

Apparently, friends of TBCH have been too busy being faithful to pay much attention to that article. When churches across Tennessee made the tough decision to cancel in-person gatherings and move to virtual services, we already understood that church giving would drop. Our fiscal year closed at the end of October, and now eight months into this pandemic we can see some very hopeful trends in the way our donors are giving. This perspective is based on a comparison of our past two fiscal years.

As expected, church gifts are down nearly 15 percent, reflecting smaller gifts and gifts from fewer churches. Our prayers go out to the struggling congregations across the state. Perhaps in part because more people are worshipping at home, online giving has increased about 66 percent, and almost 38 percent more people are giving online!

Event giving yields another promising figure. Like many nonprofits, we’ve had to think outside the box. We rescheduled and modified golf tournaments, went virtual with the 2020 I Cared for One gala, and added a social-distancing-friendly TopGolf event. Supporters apparently appreciated our efforts with a 43 percent increase in total event donations.

Through all the ups and downs of 2020, God has continued to bless TBCH through our faithful donors. With their help, we will continue to welcome children in hard places and show them the hope in Christ they may need now more than ever.



# Socially Distancing from the Manger?

*Contributed by Kim Burke*

Christmas 2020 will look different in some ways this year. Those samples of holiday food ideas in the grocery store will be gone. Sitting on Santa's lap for pictures? Not this year. Caroling through hospitals and nursing homes? Doubtful. A worldwide pandemic means rethinking how we do Christmas.

The faithful church in 2020 will continue with Christmas services worshiping Jesus Christ, the reason for the season. Wreaths and greenery will be hung as they have been. Choirs will sing although with masks. The question for each of us is will we socially distance from the manger and the opportunity to give to the Christ child?

The Christmas story in Matthew 2 details the first gifts of Christmas given to Jesus—regardless of distance. Matthew records that magi from the East (the wise men) came to King Herod to ask "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews for we have seen His star and are come to worship Him?" The worship of the wise men who had come from such a distance included the presentation of gifts fitting for the King. The magi didn't let the distance to the manger cancel their gifts. Their example shows us what our gift in 2020 should be.

## **A gift given to worship God.**

What is most important to God is that the giver gives out of love for Him. The size doesn't matter—only that it fits the love of the giver for Him.

## **A gift that is thought out.**

Some scholars estimate that traveling from the East (Asia) would have taken the wise men about 2 ½ years after seeing the star of Bethlehem. Traveling such a distance meant giving a gift with preparation and intent. We don't have to travel so far so our gift can be prepared for now.

## **A gift that is unique to Him.**

The wise men gave gold, a fitting gift for a king. As the Son of Almighty God, Jesus didn't need wealth but gold could have been a provision to help the young family of Jesus make the trip to Egypt and assist them in making a home there following the visit of the wise men. The gift of frankincense was also costly and associated with use in worship. Myrrh was used in those days as a spice to prepare the body for burial and may have been used by Mary to prepare the body of Jesus after His death on the cross.

At Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, children in hard places need homes that guide them to God's love. Thank you for your needed prayers, gifts, and volunteer time as TBCH ministers the love of Christ to Tennessee's children. As we each consider the gift we will make for Christ this Christmas, may our gift reflect those first given to the little Lord Jesus in the manger.





## Church Shows How to “Wrap-Around”

Answering the call to become a foster family requires the faith to sacrifice your home, heart, and household budget for the sake of children in hard places. Nearly 9,000 children face the need for substitute care in Tennessee every day, and yet the number of approved foster homes is critically low. Amazingly, some are willing to welcome children into their home despite their own financial struggles. The gap between willingness and financial ability is the very place where God’s people have the unique ability to step up and make a difference.

The members of Yellow Creek Baptist Church have been good friends and faithful supporters of TBCH, and now they are stepping up to fill that gap for a local foster family, leading by example in the area of “wrap-around” care. Simple help, like getting a household propane tank filled have been both practical and meaningful for that family. Yellow Creek members have provided necessary personal items and financial gifts, and the effort to show love and support has also spread outward in the community. A young member of the church rallied her cheerleading squad at the local high school to donate items and money for the benefit of the children in their care.

Members and staff at the church describe wrapping around this family as “fun, pretty cool, and a blessing.” The greater blessing may be the way they have outwardly shown the value in cultivating a relationship with a family who has answered the call to foster care.



## Thinking about getting involved in Foster Care?

Visit our website at [www.tennesseechildren.org](http://www.tennesseechildren.org). There you can find FAQs, our Foster Parent Application, and info on training classes. You can also email us at [fostercare@tennesseechildren.org](mailto:fostercare@tennesseechildren.org) or call 1-800-624-8591.

## Ryder Lewis Fund Blesses Foster Care

Several children in TBCH foster homes will wake up Christmas morning to find some of their holiday wishes fulfilled thanks to the Ryder Lewis Memorial Fund.

Ryder was a young man killed in a boating accident in 2018. His family established the fund through the West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation “to honor the life he lived in a way that would improve the lives of other people.” The fund also distributes monetary gifts for other children’s causes, like football camp fees and student scholarships for recipients in need.

After hearing about the fund, TBCH Foster Care staff reached out to their board, who approved sponsorship of eight children currently being served by TBCH’s George Shinn Foster Care Program. These children are sure to be blessed by the kindness of Ryder’s family, the board members, and the supporters who give in his memory.



# Looking for Bears

On a recent camping trip in the Appalachian Mountains my husband and I did some hiking and biking, and we noticed several signs warning about black bears. Toward the end of the trip, we biked 17.5 miles of the famous Virginia Creeper Trail (mostly downhill so don't be too impressed!), and as we set off atop Mount Rogers there was another black bear sign. I was so hoping to see one on that ride, but I quickly realized that to see a black bear I would have to actually look for a black bear. It seems so obvious, right? However, I was very focused on my immediate circumstances: bumps in the trail, hikers in the path, trail signs, and other bikers calling out, "on your left!" as they passed. I wasn't taking time to look where bears would be—in the distance, in the quiet, hidden.

I began mulling over the thought of how often I want to see things but don't really take time to look for them. Like that trail, the craziness of 2020 has also had a lot of bumps in the road, people outside their lanes crossing our paths, and plenty of warnings signs. Focusing on getting from point A to point B has often robbed me of seeing the blessings and goodness of God and His people. In Matthew 14, Jesus beckons Peter to come and walk on the waves. Peter was fine while his eyes were on Jesus but when he focused on the point A to point B he began to sink. I don't know about you, but my own sinking feeling this year has sometimes seemed unending. I am encouraged that Jesus immediately reached out and caught Peter, and only calmed the circumstances after He got Peter back in the boat.

Jesus is already acting on our behalf! Even when our eyes aren't on Him, He is ready to catch us. The kids and families served by TBCH face circumstances that have them sinking, too, and we have the privilege of helping them. My prayer is that you and I will look for and see Jesus (like I wanted to look for and see a black bear!), and then point Him out to others who need to see Him, too.

*Contributed by Laurie Gardner*





# Family Care Focus

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## Do you have a heart for helping families?

You and your organization are invited to get involved in our Family Care Program and become a part of a community network connecting families with the resources they need. Visit our website at [www.tennesseechildren.org](http://www.tennesseechildren.org), or email [kcampbell@tennesseechildren.org](mailto:kcampbell@tennesseechildren.org).

The primary purpose of TBCH is to welcome children in hard places with the love of Christ, usually into a campus or foster home. In some cases, though, the best course of action is to provide guidance and support to the child's family. That's where Kelly Campbell comes in. He heads up the Family Care Program for TBCH and shares a couple of examples of how this arm of the ministry works behind the scenes to fulfill that calling in a different way.

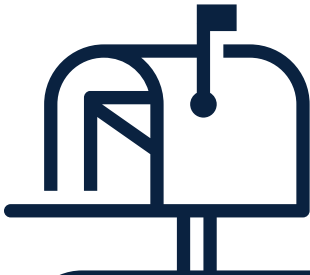
"Recently, I had the opportunity to reach out to two different families who were needing additional help. One family initially wanted placement for their children at our Brentwood or Chattanooga campuses. Neither placement would be a good fit, so I contacted them about other immediate needs they had. They were staying in a nearby hotel—a dad, mom, and two kids. The dad told me they were able to secure housing at his mother's home out of state. However, they needed some food for the next couple of days. I worked with campus staff to get some food for them, and someone local to spend some time with them as well."

"I've also worked with a counselor who is helping a dad needing placement for his two-year-old son. The mom is in and out of the picture, and the dad is facing eviction. The need for help with his son may be short-term, perhaps only a couple of months. I spoke with our Foster Care staff, made a referral to an organization that specializes in cases like his, and followed up with the counselor."

Examples like these certainly fall into a practical definition of "welcoming children in hard places with the love of Christ." Kelly sees helping children stay with their families as one part of Family Care coming into clearer focus. His hope is that Family Care will become more of a process of walking through difficulties with families so they can stay together, addressing their need for access to resources, and utilizing our Residential or Foster Care programs as temporary help when necessary.



# The Story Behind the Gift



Every day we receive gifts and donations from our supporters. Often it is only a check or some cash in an envelope. We know that every single dollar that shows up in our mailbox represents someone's faithful generosity, and a story of how the giver is connected to the work of TBCH. Occasionally we get a note with a glimpse behind the gift and a little light to shed on that story. Here's one we hope encourages you as much as it has us...

To Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes:

*It has been a joy to contribute to the work done at Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes over the years. I have always donated in memory of James "Jimmy" McCracken, my late grandfather. To further honor him, please allow me to explain why.*

*Several years ago, I visited a gentleman at his office. It was apparent to me during our conversation that he noticed and focused on the ring I was wearing. My grandfather had made that ring for me. You see, he made thousands of those rings and sold them for a hobby. When I was done with the visit and was excusing myself, he stopped me before I could leave and asked me "What home were you at?" I was bewildered at what he had asked me. He then replied, "The ring, where did you get it?"*

*I explained to him that my grandfather made them for a hobby. He reached in his desk, pulled out a ring that was identical to mine, and told me that as a teenager he was in a Boys' Home, and every year a man came to the home, made rings for all the boys there, and encouraged them. Learning of my grandfather's charity that day is a memory I hold very precious. Thank you for the work you do at TBCH!*

*-JRC*

## Welcome to the Ministry



### Kaitlyn Hayes

Kaitlyn is a Knoxville native born and raised, joining the Foster Care team in East Tennessee as a Case Manager. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Bryan College and previously worked as a case worker at Helen Ross McNabb in Knoxville. "I am very excited to be involved in such a wonderful organization and look forward to growing and learning new things in my position here."



### Johnny and Dockita Mills

Johnny and Dockita were both born and raised in Montgomery, Alabama. They have a quiver full of children—five biological children, and a host of others who refer to them as mom and dad. They also have seven grandbabies. They have amassed more than 20 years of service and experience working with children, including foster care, and formerly serving as houseparents at two other ministries. They explain the driving force behind their passion and desire to give back to children as coming from how they both dealt with the pain of abandonment and effects of not having birth parents around during their childhoods. Johnny was fortunate to have been raised by his mother and stepfather but spent the first five years of his life with his grandparents. Dockita was raised by her grandparents until their deaths when she was almost 12, and then by an aunt and uncle. They are both excited to use their testimonies and experience to serve and love the children at TBCH.

Looking for a simple way to help? Share these "Quick Facts" with others by posting this page on a bulletin board at your church or office—And thank you for supporting the kids at TBCH!



Tennessee Baptist  
Children's Homes

# Quick Facts

**Children matter @** 



Almost **8,000** children in Tennessee need safe homes. TBCH has been welcoming children since 1891.



**provides  
homes for children**



**serves all of Tennessee!**



with **3** Residential Care campuses and foster homes in more than **50** cities.



**250 children** were served last year in safe, nurturing campus and foster homes.



**is Christ-centered**

We welcome children in hard places with the love of Christ.



We share the Gospel with every child in our care.



**is totally donor-supported**  
and we don't receive any government funding.



**PRAY • SERVE • GIVE**

1-800-624-8591 / P.O. Box 2206, Brentwood, TN 37024

# TENNESSEECHILDREN.ORG





## Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes

*Welcoming children in hard places with the love of Christ*

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