

# @TBCH

WINTER 2023/24



A PUBLICATION OF TENNESSEE BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES



## A note from Greg

My wife, Jeri, and I met some friends from central New York at the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, KY this past October. We were excited to see Ken Ham's rendition of what Noah's Ark might have looked like and how it might have functioned to support Noah's family and all the animals aboard for some 375 days. I must say, it is worth seeing if you get the opportunity!



One of the Ark's main features is, of course, the door. The door on the side of the Ark was the only avenue for survival for Noah's family to escape the rising flood waters. Centuries later Jesus declares that He is the door:

***"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved . . ." (John 10:9).***

TBCH welcomes children in hard places with the love of Christ who Himself is our door of hope and salvation from a fallen world. Jesus is the answer to all our brokenness. Our desire is that the children who often reluctantly walk through the doors of TBCH and the doors of foster homes across the state will eventually run through the Door of Jesus into the loving arms of the Father.

An end of year gift not only provides food, clothing, shelter, and a loving family for our kids. Your gift will help point each child at TBCH to the Door who will change their eternity! Thank you for helping us keep the door open at TBCH!

Defending the Defenseless,

*Greg*  
Greg



### Residential Care

Providing safe, Christ-centered homes on campuses in Millington, Brentwood and Chattanooga for children aged 5-18, and Independent Living Services for residents transitioning to adulthood.



### Foster Care

Providing safe homes across the state through free training and support of Christian foster parents, and placement services through a no-cost contract with the Department of Children's Services.

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

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



## “I felt so welcomed..”

### Piper shares her experience in TBCH Residential and Foster Care

The stories of the children at TBCH have at least two things in common. One is that they come from hard places. The other is that they are loved. Otherwise, they are as unique as the fingerprints they leave on the windows and on our hearts. This unique story belongs to a young lady named Piper.

Piper has a passion for playing in her school marching school band and making new friends. She also has the rare distinction of having lived on one of our Residential Care campuses as well as being placed with one of our foster families.

“Before I came to TBCH I was living at a group home. Life there was hard, and I never found any joy in being there. I had been living there for two years and barely had family members that would come and see me. I was there trying to make the most of things and distract myself from problems with my family.”

Sometimes kids in substitute care change locations before they find a place where they can thrive. Piper started a new chapter in her story when she was placed at TBCH at the age of 13. “I felt a bit of anxiety and expected it to be like the last place. I felt abandoned because all I wanted was to stay at a stable home where I felt comfortable. I thought of it as just another place my parents put me because they didn’t want me, (but at TBCH) I felt so welcomed the first time I stepped into the house where I was placed.”

Hanging out and playing basketball with the other kids were among her favorite activities. “The best part was getting to eat and laugh together at the dinner table. My houseparents were so excited to see us when we got home from school and would always ask us how our day was. It felt like a family.” And she came to appreciate other less entertaining parts of the program. “One of the worst but best



parts was the structure. I always had chores or simple things I didn’t want to do but I was pushed to do them because it made me better as a teenager.”

Piper also connected well with the campus staff and is quick to thank them for the impact they’ve had on her. “They were so fun to be around and they were all so welcoming. My favorite part of the week was meeting with my case worker, Ms. Lauren. I loved her so much and I felt like I could tell her anything. I lived at TBCH for a year and half on campus and loved my time there. I will never forget how loved I was at TBCH—there was so much life change.”



After some time on campus, the opportunity opened up for Piper to transition into one of our foster homes. "When I first met my foster family, I fit in right away. I couldn't wait to move in with them. They are the best family ever. It's been different from living on campus for sure. I'm held responsible for my mistakes and actions tremendously more. It still feels like a family, but I've noticed I am part of the family, so I have many responsibilities."

Piper is in the process of being adopted now, and welcomes prayers for that and for her as she plans to start a career in the Army. And for kids who may one day call TBCH home, she has this word of encouragement and verse of Scripture which was a guiding point for her, "Know you will be in the safest place ever. You will find your spot in a family that will never stop loving you and pushing you to be the best you can be. *Be strong and courageous! Do not be terrified nor dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).*"



## Supporters Help Kids Make Memories

Making good memories is an important part of the program at TBCH. As much as children need a safe home, healthy food, and educational opportunities, they also need recreation.

The kids at our Brentwood campus recently got to make some memories and enjoy a good time during a weekend getaway. Thanks to long-time supporter Larry Boone, who sponsors a "Songwriters Night" fundraiser for the trip, along with the efforts of the Grace Walks Sunday School class at Brentwood Baptist Church, they got to spend a couple of nights in a cabin and a day of play at Dollywood.



Not only are trips like this fun, they also help our kids bond with their houseparents, and give champion supporters a chance to make a positive difference in their lives.

Interested in our Residential Care Program? Visit us online at [www.tennesseechildren.org](http://www.tennesseechildren.org) for information about our campuses, houseparenting, and getting involved in your part of the state.

# Victorious!



We love celebrating victories, and for kids at TBCH that can be anything from remembering to brush teeth to passing a driving test. For Caleb, it was going undefeated in his Jiu Jitsu tournament in October.



Housedad Chris Dodson has been training at Agoge Combatives for a couple of years, and some of the resident boys have taken an interest as well. Thanks to our champion supporters, our kids are afforded many opportunities to participate in sports and other activities like this. Caleb started in June and excelled in the sport, so the tournament was a great way to test his skills. In Caleb's case, practice, discipline, and working with his Jiu Jitsu coach helped him through some tough positions while facing his opponents, and earned him a big win.

But this isn't the only big win according to his housedad.

***"Our hope is that this metaphor will be recognizable for him as we parent him in the way God wants him to be victorious in his life."***

What Chris is describing is the hope we have for all the children in our care—that each child experiences the ultimate victory in Christ!





**Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7)**

**Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:20)**

Imagine all the different things that might be going on in the moments between a knock on a door and its opening. From surprise, curiosity, joy, a readiness for hospitality—to stress, anxiousness, anxiety, or maybe even fear of what's on the other side.

Now imagine what it must be like for a child in those moments, standing at a strange door to meet his or her new TBCH houseparents or foster parents for the first time.

Because you care enough to support that child by praying, serving and giving, that child will go through that door into a safe, nurturing home, welcomed with the love of Christ.

# Pray • Serve • Give

*Give with confidence!  
TBCH strives to be good  
stewards of the resources  
you provide for the kids in  
our care.*



Scan to make a gift!



**Is your church or organization hosting an event to raise support for TBCH? We'd love to know about it! Email: [office@tennesseechildren.org](mailto:office@tennesseechildren.org) or visit [www.tennesseechildren.org/resources](http://www.tennesseechildren.org/resources)**



# GIVE HAPPY

Every year, Federal employees and retirees rally to support charities through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Since it began in 1961, the CFC has raised nearly \$8.7 billion, benefitting charities and people in need locally, across the nation, and throughout the world.

We are so grateful for our champion supporters who choose to donate to Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes through the CFC. Thank you for your public service, and thank you for helping us welcome children into safe homes across Tennessee!



TBCH staff members recently got a behind-the-scenes tour of Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee. Second Harvest works with partner agencies in 46 counties to provide distribution of food donations to people in need. Among their many endeavors are meal programs which have served more than 83,000 meals and snacks to at-risk children.

## Coming Soon!

We want to recognize the champions who support our kids through recurring monthly gifts, so this Spring we are introducing a *new monthly giving program*, **NEIGHBORS**. Monthly givers play an important role for us as we budget and plan for the recurring cost of serving the kids in our care with excellence, and we are excited to celebrate their faithfulness to our ministry! Watch for more info on our Facebook page and in future issues of @TBCH.



Aiden



Amari



Howie



Adelyne



Jonah

## Celebrating Adoptions

So far this year, 25 children have been welcomed into adoptive homes through our Foster Care Program. We are grateful for the families who open their hearts and homes to become foster parents, the case managers and public officials who take part in the process, and the faithful generosity of our champion supporters who pray, serve, and give to make this possible!



Allison & Emma



Logan



Hadleigh



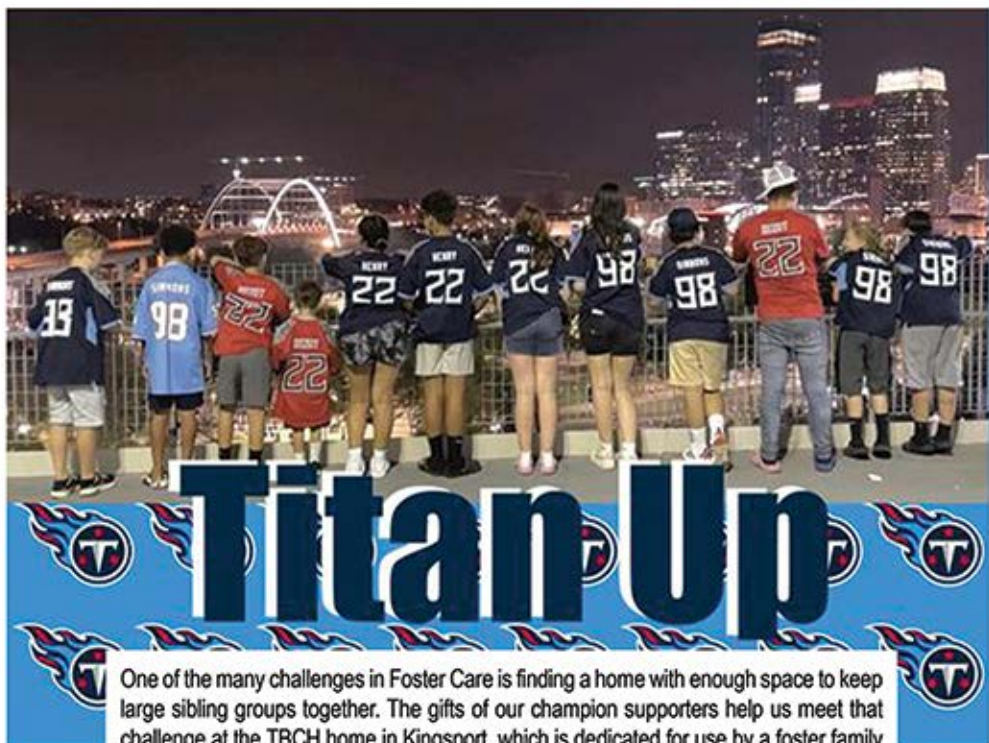
Maris & Maeve



Zane



Bentley & Brayden



One of the many challenges in Foster Care is finding a home with enough space to keep large sibling groups together. The gifts of our champion supporters help us meet that challenge at the TBCH home in Kingsport, which is dedicated for use by a foster family willing to care for large groups. We like to say, "If they have the heart, we have the home!"

Another way champion supporters help is by providing opportunities for the kids to have some fun. Recently, all 14 people in the Kingsport home got to attend a Titans football game. The kids each received a jersey, then ate, played on inflatables, spent time with the cheerleaders, and, of course, watched the game. We are so blessed in Kingsport to have so many incredible connections and so many people who are wrapping around and supporting this family.

Thinking about getting involved in Foster Care? Visit us online at [www.tennesseechildren.org/foster-care](http://www.tennesseechildren.org/foster-care). There you can find resources like our Journey to Foster Care poster, FAQs, our Foster Parent Application, and more! You can also email us at [fostercare@tennesseechildren.org](mailto:fostercare@tennesseechildren.org) or call 1-800-624-8591.



The Chattanooga Red Wolves professional soccer club scored big points with the kids at the Chattanooga campus. Some of their players and staff came by to visit, play, and encourage the residents and staff. Do we get a penalty if we say everyone got a real kick out of it?

## Champion Supporters Visit by the Busloads



The Signatry brought a bus full of volunteers to work on various projects at the Brentwood campus, many traveling all the way from their offices in Missouri. The Signatry is a donor advised fund sponsor and Christian ministry that has recommended grants to over 13,000 nonprofit organizations, including TBCH. Their crew pitched in to beautify the campus grounds, do some deep cleaning of office space, and help set up for a campus event.



## The daily routine of checking the mail

...sigh.... It comes with anticipation, and sometimes dread. But I'm not referring to the inbox on your screen, I mean the mailbox at the end of your driveway (or by your front door).

My home mailbox can usually be found full of retail flyers, bills, a few newsletters, and a bunch of direct mail sent out from direct mail companies. While direct mail appeals often represent worthy organizations, I wonder how much money charities spend on mailing lists and printing to fill my mailbox so full every month. I also wonder about the security of my contact information when I receive direct mail from an unknown organization.

**At TBCH, we don't share our donor list with direct mail companies.** Our donors can rest easy when they find our newsletters, year-end letters and Mother's Day reminders in their mailboxes. And they can have confidence in the fact that we safeguard our donors' contact information by keeping it all private in our own secure database.

**THANK YOU** for opening and reading the TBCH mail in your mailbox, and remembering the children we serve. God supplies their needs through donors like you who care about them,. And, we trust Him to supply more than we could ask or hope for as we strive to provide safe (and new!) homes for children in hard places across Tennessee. **THANK YOU** for every gift you make—either online, through a foundation or estate gift, or by way of the mailbox outside your home!

**It's official!** TBCH received the following note along with a copy of our certificate from the Council on Accreditation. This document represents the hard work and

dedication of our staff, and commitment to excellence in our programs serving children. The entire reaccreditation process is a four-year cycle tracking hundreds of program standards. We also give credit to you, our champion supporters, who equip us in this ministry with your prayers, service and gifts to consistently meet and exceed the standards.

*Congratulations again on your COA Reaccreditation!*

*We are incredibly excited that you will continue to be one of the over 1,800 organizations and programs that make up our Community of Excellence serving over seven million children, youth and families internationally. Please see your accreditation certificate attached...*



## Council on Accreditation

attests that

**Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Inc.**

Brentwood, TN

has achieved private organization accreditation, meeting the national standards in practice excellence.

Accredited through

**September 30, 2027**

Jody Levison-Johnson  
President and CEO  
Social Current

# New DCS Commissioner Visits Ranch

TBCH welcomes children every day, and when we get the chance, we also welcome those who share our passion for providing them safe homes. Recently, we had the privilege of opening our door to the new Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Margie Quin.



Commissioner Quin, who was sworn in about a year ago, was a special guest at The Ranch at Millington, where she met with Brother Greg and other members of the TBCH leadership team to become better acquainted with the way we care for children in both Foster Care and on our campuses.

TBCH began providing Foster Care services under a no-fee contract with DCS in 2013, and the past ten years have seen that relationship flourish. Without receiving any government funding, our program has expanded to serve hundreds of children across the state in safe, Christ-centered foster homes.

As a token of appreciation, Commissioner Quin was presented with a cross of horseshoes, created in the Ranch welding shop. Also in attendance were Hayes O'Donnell who serves as a legislative liaison with DCS, and Senator Paul Rose who serves on the TBCH Board of Trustees.

## Welcome to the TBCH Team!



**Candra Urbanski**

Candra is our new Foster Care Case Manager in West TN. She earned her BSW and MSW from Union University, has done social work for DCS and the school system, and served as Children's Ministry director at Trimble Baptist Church. "I am so excited for the possibility of serving in a capacity that would combine my ministry and social work experience, and allowing the Lord to use me by loving and serving children and families."



**Sarah Rodriguez**

Sarah joins us as a Foster Care Case Manager in Memphis. She has a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Mississippi State, a master's in Social Work from LSU, and served as a teacher/counselor at Youth Villages Girls Center. She's looking forward to "helping vulnerable kids from a Biblical perspective, and finding them a safe and supportive environment to grow and develop in."

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Children's Homes**

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