



CHAMBLISS CENTER FOR CHILDREN

GROWING YOUNG LIVES 24•7•365

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♥ Joy & Grace ♥

We have the best foster parents! And additionally, the biological children of our foster parents provide an extra level of support for the foster children placed in their home. These families sacrifice so much to give children who have been removed from their families due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment a safe, loving, healing environment. Below, a soon-to-be adoptive mom shares her story about her family's decision to foster, and then adopt. She beautifully expresses her love for these children, their birth family, and hope for all of their futures.

My husband and I knew we were called to become foster parents in 2013 after attending a foster home benefit and hearing the testimony of several teenagers. We both said 'yes' in our hearts that day, but only under certain conditions. Our plan was to wait until our two biological children were grown and then open our home to older children like the teenagers we heard speak that night. We were very comfortable with that decision and talked about it often as our future plan. A few years later, however, our good friends (the youth pastors at our church) became foster parents. They allowed us to join them in their journey, and we began to provide respite care for them. We loved being a part of this and each time the children were with us, it filled our home with joy!

Before long, our teenagers started asking us to foster while they were still at home. We still felt our plan was best, and we should wait. We even used the other ministries we were involved in as excuses. After two years of refusing to even pray about it, we began to seek the Lord and consider His timing might be different than ours. We reluctantly signed up for the classes, and after our first training course, we realized God had a better plan than we did. We finished the training and began to pray for both our future foster child/children and their birth families. Honestly though, much of our praying was focused on our own family. We knew we could love foster children, but wanted to prepare our hearts to love the birth families as well. Our goal needed to be focused on reconciling the children to their own parents, and that would be our biggest challenge. We waited and prayed for four months.

Then on March 20, 2017, we got the call—a 10-month-old and 8-year-old boys. They arrived at our home at 9 p.m., both scared and shaken to the core. The truth that God's timing is perfect was evident that night. It was, in

fact, our biological teenagers who first became the hands and feet of Jesus to these precious, traumatized boys. Honestly, the first few months of their stay seemed like a blur as our family went into survival mode. And the first time we took the boys to visit their birth family, the 8-year-old kept asking if they could come back home to stay with us. Shocked to hear this request, we kept assuring him and fighting back our own tears.

In the months that followed, we formed a wonderful relationship with the birth family, and they were working hard to meet expected requirements. We were loving the boys as if they would never leave and telling ourselves every night that they WOULD leave. We were trying desperately to guard our hearts assuming their stay with us was temporary. During this time, we often had to declare that "all is well" and lean on others for strength and borrowed faith.

Our journey with the boys has had many ups and downs. More than once we thought they would be returning to their birth family. But repetitive bad choices by their biological family have kept them in foster care in our home. And as proof that God had a better plan than we did, we are thrilled that their adoption should be final this summer! Our boys will be our forever family and their birth family will remain a part of their story as well. God showed us that He brought ALL of them into our lives. We realize this seems strange to some people, and it certainly isn't what we planned. But after many answered prayers, we feel honored that God is calling us to do something so challenging

and want to make sure He receives all the glory! We are trusting Him daily for wisdom and strength to continue this process.

This is "our story." We are thankful for the faith and courage of our two teenagers who wanted us to foster while they were still in our home. We are also thankful for the help and endless encouragement from our family, church family, friends, and Chambliss Center for Children.

We hope our story encourages others to be a part of foster care and adoption in some way. Because even on the worst days, we can honestly say our boys always bring joy—not always happiness—but always joy! If we could describe foster care in one word it would be GRACE. Be ready to give grace abundantly; be ready to ask for grace humbly; and be ready to receive grace daily.

— Stephanie Young, Chambliss Center for Children Foster/Adoptive Parent

Because so many of our wonderful foster families become adoptive families, we are constantly needing new families to take the leap into fostering. If you would like to learn more about becoming a foster parent, please call 423-693-2580 or email fostercare@chamblisscenter.org.



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

These photos show the opening of the last four units for Transitional Living! The goal was to have eight units available for youth aging out of foster care, and with this stretch, we now have eleven!

We have plans to open another early learning center for 120 children located in the old Virginia College Cosmetology School on Marlin Road at Eastgate. Depending on the amount of remodeling needing to be done, the plan is to have it ready by Fall 2019.

We continue to try to identify the best spot on our main campus for expansion of our early childhood program, while weighing concerns such as playgrounds, capacity of the kitchen, parking, etc. It's certainly more complex than we imagined when we started this campaign a few years ago! But, we are committed to working through these challenges in order to address our waiting list and serve more children and youth in our community, as promised.

All other initiatives have been completed, thanks to your tremendous support! We are grateful to all who were a part of the many contributions, both financial and in-kind, that allowed us to fulfill these goals to serve more children, youth, and families.



Board members and staff gathered inside one of the completed Transitional Living Phase 2 units to tour the interior.



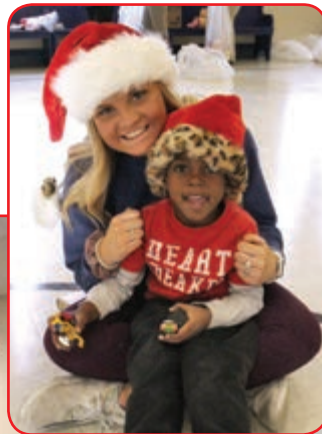
These four units are the most recently completed for our Transitional Living program.



Pictured here are Board member **Cindy Wilkerson**, Board Chairman **Paul Fitzgerald**, Board member **Dan Pratt**, President and CEO **Phil Acord**, and Board member **Ray Feher**.

Celebrating the Season

The holidays are always really exciting on campus thanks to the many local companies, schools, associations, and individuals who come to our agency every year to celebrate the season with our children. Thank you to **CHI Memorial, Collegedale Academy, Haisten Group, Heritage High School, Unwanted Motorcycle Club**, and others for hosting great parties for our kids!



Driven by Generosity



We have young adults in our Transitional Living Program in need of reliable transportation to help them get to school and work. If you have a vehicle in working condition that you would like to see put to good use, we would love to have it. Please contact Racie Hoffman at 423-468-1139 or rmhoffman@chamblisscenter.org for more information.



MARDI GRAS Gala

Photography by Kenney Photography and Nooga Pics

Executive Director of Off-Site Programs **Ikeko Bass** and husband **Chuck Bass** had a blast on the dance floor.



The Mardi Gras Gala provided a perfect girls' night out for, from left to right, **Tonya Hathorne, Julie Brandao, Holly Kittle, Cara Alday, Janda White, and Sherri Burns.**



Parul and Mitch Patel were crowned the King and Queen of the 2019 Mardi Gras Gala.



The crowd had a great time playing Heads or Tails during the event. Pictured here, from left to right, are **Dr. Dane Boyington, Alnoor Dhanani, and Gina Dhanani.**

Our seventh annual Mardi Gras Gala was our best yet! Held on March 1st at Bessie Smith Hall, guests were welcomed with beads and masks, Cajun-inspired fare by **Events with Taste Catering** and jazz piano in Preservation Hall, followed by signature bourbon drinks and a silent auction on Bourbon Street. Finally, guests stepped into the French Quarter for Dixieland jazz, a late-evening DJ & dance party, and lots of New Orleans-style fun sponsored by **The Mark Hite Team**. The evening also featured signature Hurricane drinks at our bar, sponsored by **Vision Hospitality**, and a crowning of the Mardi Gras King and Queen, **Parul and Mitch Patel**, who led guests in a parade throughout the venue. A great time was had by all!



Safe Ride Sponsor, **Best Hayduk Brock**, made sure that all of our guests arrived home safely with complimentary Uber codes. Pictured here, from left to right, are **Matt Brock, Andrea Hayduk, and Garth Best.**



Our French Quarter Sponsor and Board member **Mark Hite** sold beads for the Heads or Tails game.

WELCOME NEW STAFF



Nita Brandenburg (left) joined the Chambliss Center for Children team as a contract Human Resources Manager. She has several years of experience in human resources and will be working diligently to ensure that all of our centers are properly staffed. **Veronique Davenport** (right) recently came on board as a Case Manager for our Residential Program. With her help, we will be able to better serve our foster families and the children who come in to our care. We are happy to welcome both of them to the team!



Volunteers & In-Kind Donations

Our thanks to each one of you for your help in making Chambliss Center for Children the best place for children in our community! This list acknowledges those who donated time, talents, and services from November 1, 2018 – February 15, 2019. Thank you!



- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| AZZ Enclosure Systems Chattanooga | David Czufin | Monte King | Carl Phillips | The Mountain Girls Team |
| Gabe Abercrombie | Deja Nu Thrift Store | Donna Bytler | Canisha Poling | Sabrina Thompson |
| Martha Abercrombie | Allan Dunlay | Choo Choo Quilters | Kim & Dan Pratt | Thrive Yoga and Wellness |
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Kamari smiled after Santa confirmed that he was on the nice list.

Giving Tree at TVA

The TVA Giving Tree has become a cherished holiday tradition, for both our agency and the employees at TVA. In December, our three and four-year-olds loaded a bus to TVA where they, along with the help of some TVA executives, decorated the tree. The ornaments, each with an item listed on the back from our Extended Childcare Program's wish list, were made by the children. While there, the children also sang Christmas carols, ate pizza and chocolate chip cookies, and visited with Santa - their favorite part of the trip! Following our visit, TVA employees purchased and delivered the items from the tree. We received toys, educational classroom supplies, and art supplies. We look forward to this trip each year, and we greatly appreciate all the hard work that goes in to making it such a special time for the children. Thank you, **Jennifer Affolder**, and all our TVA friends!



Chris Willingham, **Jennifer Affolder**, Chief Nuclear Officer **Tim Rausch**, and VP of Nuclear Operations **Steve Bono** delivered all of the collected toys from the Giving Tree to our main campus.



Pictured here with Santa, from left to right, (back row) **Michelle Floyd**, **Renee Sharp**, **Savannah Cosper**, **Lucia Harvey**, **Jennifer Affolder**, and **Kim Jones**. On the front row, from left to right, are **Chris Willingham** and **Stephanie Winn** (seated).



Bella told Santa what she wanted for Christmas.

NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY

We were happy to recognize some of our biggest supporters at the National Philanthropy Day luncheon in November. Our honorees this year included: **Marian and Jim Steffner, Rachel and Joe Decosimo, Paul Fitzgerald, The Mark Hite Team with Keller Williams Realty, Tioga Pipe Supply, and TVA.** These groups have contributed a great amount of time, money and energy in support of our programs. Thank you so much for helping us enrich the lives of children!



From left to right are, Board Chairman **Paul Fitzgerald, Don Gregory (Tioga), Courtney Postelle (Tioga),** Board member **Mark Hite, Katherine Smith (Keller Williams),** and Vice President **Katie Harbison.**



Pictured above, from left to right, are **Jim Steffner, Marian Steffner, President & CEO Phil Acord, Development Officer Racie Hoffman, Rachel Decosimo, and Joe Decosimo.**



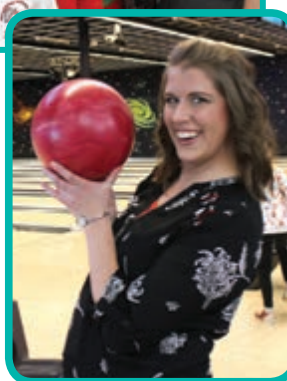
Foster father **Miguel Charre** helped his former foster son line up for the perfect strike.



Two of our foster families geared up to bowl together. Pictured above from left to right are **Danny Marshall, Tricia Marshall, Chris Welch, Rachael Welch, Eli Welch (back), and Courtney Marshall, Zeke Welch, and Emmie Welch (front).**



Dylan, Thomas, Sofia, and Alyssa Owenby told Santa what they wanted for Christmas.



Case Manager **Melissa Hand** is ready to bowl!



Foster parents **Stephanie and Keith Young** hung out with their foster son while his brother bowled.



Pictured here is our wonderful Residential Staff. From left to right are **Zykeia Lee, Jon Beresteky, Mike March, Melissa Hand, Executive Director Liz Blasbery, Associate Director Jennifer Davis, and Ericka Holmes.**



Fun Times at Splitz Alley

We were thrilled to host one of our favorite events of the year again, a special holiday party at Splitz Alley for those in our Residential Program! Our youth and their foster and adoptive families had a great time bowling, playing arcade games, eating pizza and cake, and visiting with Santa. Each child and teen also received a gift card for holiday shopping and stockings filled with candy and other goodies. We greatly appreciate having support to continue this annual party. The children

in foster homes and the group home look forward to it every year. If you are interested in sponsoring this year's party, please contact **Racie Hoffman** at rmhoffman@chamblisscenter.org.

We Love Our Foster Grannies!

We recently hosted a luncheon for our very special Foster Grannies! These ladies, who come to us through the **City of Chattanooga's Foster Grandparent Program**, serve under the guidance of our Director of Volunteer Services and the teachers in our classrooms, providing additional loving care to the children in our Early Childhood Education program. We thank them all for the time and attention they give to our young ones.

President and CEO **Phil Acord** posed with **Teresa Smith** in the photo booth.



We are lucky to have this wonderful group of foster grannies, both past and current, with our agency.



Pictured here, from left to right, are Foster Grandparent Program Field Supervisor **Susan Kroll**, **Bonita Springs**, Foster Grandparent Program Director **Claudius Pratt**, and **Imogene Odom**.



MR. PHIL'S FRIENDS

Do you want to help ensure that Chambliss Center for Children is always around to serve our community's at-risk children and youth? Consider joining our new giving program, Mr. Phil's Friends, by becoming a monthly donor. Below, Rachel shares why her family chooses to give monthly.

"We want our monthly gift to have a direct impact on our community, so we donate to Chambliss Center for Children and their Transitional Living Program. We chose Chambliss, because of their responsible use of funds, commitment to addressing challenging problems faced by members of the community, and the compassion they demonstrate for those they serve. We love the Transitional Living Program, because it reaches an underserved population—young adults aging out of foster care—and empowers them by providing them with the dignity of a home and the support of mentors as they learn to budget, balance work and school, and navigate the many challenges of adulthood. Chambliss gives these inspiring adults hope, and we are proud to partner with them in such important work." — Rachel G.

Board & Staff Holiday Brunch

The annual Board and Staff Holiday Party was held on December 11th in the gymnasium of Chambliss Center for Children. Each year our Board members host a delicious buffet and present service awards to our dedicated staff. This year, we recognized **Melissa Hand**, **Anita Morgan**, **Sumer Arispe**, **Roland Davis**, **Jasmyne Borja**, and **Lavasias Campbell** for 5 years with the agency; **Annie Stewart** and **Joyce Clark** for 10 years; **Kim Hamill** for 15 years; and **Gwen Thomas** for 30 years of service. During the event, we also honored Board member, **Russ Blakely**, who rotated off of our Active Board. We want to thank our Board and staff for their commitment to this agency and for all they do to improve the lives of children and families in our community!



We celebrated **Gwen Thomas'** 30 years with the agency. She is pictured here with President & CEO **Phil Acord**.



Kim Hamill received an award and a hug from President & CEO **Phil Acord** for her 15 years of service with our agency.



Pictured here from left to right are Board members **Bill Cox**, **Cindy Wilkerson**, Sustaining member **Andrea Aaron**, and Board member **Patsi Walker**.

Board member **Russ Blakely** and Sustaining member **Paul Jacobs** were on hand to celebrate with our staff.

MR. PHIL'S FRIENDS

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Visit chamblisscenter.org to sign up today!

Financial Donations This list of financial contributions is from November 1, 2018 – February 15, 2019. If we have omitted your name, please accept our apologies and let us know so that we may correct our records and acknowledge you in our summer newsletter. Thanks to each of you for helping us continue our mission of working with our community's families and children.



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Did You Know

Between our main campus, off-site centers and school-site classrooms, the agency employs more than 300 full and part-time staff members.

As we enter the Spring season, it's time to tidy up and do a little cleaning! Our Red Bank and Brainerd thrift stores will happily take your former treasures off of your hands, and all sales benefit the children and families that we serve in the community. We'll even pick up larger items. Just call either store to schedule a pick-up.

Time to Tidy Up!

THE THRIFT STORE – BRAINERD
3723 Brainerd Road • 423-698-3730

THE THRIFT STORE – RED BANK
1936 Dayton Boulevard • 423-498-2101

Mon–Sat: 10 AM – 6 PM

Sun: 1 – 6 PM



Follow us on Facebook!

@The Thrift Store – Brainerd Road and @The Thrift Store – Red Bank

AROUND THE CENTER

Girl's Preparatory School and Southern Adventist University students visited our campus and volunteered with our Runabouts and Pre-K classes on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Pictured here, GPS students **Olivia Scotchie** (left) and **Julia Caroline Wiedmer** (right) spent the morning solving a puzzle with **Naomi** and **Peyton**.



Our President and CEO **Phil Acord** was invited to the White House for a roundtable with **Ivanka Trump** and other leaders in the Child Care Industry. Pictured here, Acord is to the left of Trump.



Each year, our main campus is transformed into a holiday wonderland by a group of amazing volunteers. From left to right, **George Wilkerson**, **Anita Burkett**, and **Lynn Heck** decorated the front door with holiday garland.



Morning Pointe of Collegedale at Greenbrier Cove brought the sweetest Valentine's Day surprise to our Tumblers. Our little ones loved spending the afternoon eating treats and spending time with their new friends. Pictured here, **Betsy Babb** passed out sweets and teddy bears to our Tumblers.

The Chattanooga Choo Choo Quilters shared some warmth with our children by delivering 54 handmade quilts to our agency. This tremendous group delivers quilts each year, and we always look forward to their visit! Pictured here are **Ginny Minninger** (left) and **Sherry Reed** (right).



Drake's Chattanooga collected donations for our agency during their Friends and Family weekend prior to opening. Pictured here, Vice President **Katie Harbison** accepts a \$4,000 check from Chief Operating Officer **Mark Thornburg** and Managing Partner **Pat Brown** at the Grand Opening.



In February, we hosted our first Sustainer Board Member Luncheon on campus. Past Board members visited to hear updates on our programs, provide feedback on some new initiatives, and reconnect. Pictured here, from left to right, are **Betty Whaley**, **Ross Schram**, **Catharine Bahner Daniels**, President and CEO **Phil Acord**, **Ginger Kachline**, **Ann Campbell**, **Marilyn Boxell**, **Andrea Aaron**, **Gwin Tugman**, **Barbara Moore**, **Tennyson Dickinson**, and Board Chairman **Paul Fitzgerald**.



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Development Officer

www.chamblisscenter.org
423-698-2456



Bunny Hop!

2019



Friday, May 3
6:00-8:30 pm
First Tennessee Pavilion

Families \$100

2 adults & up to 4 children
(\$125 after 4/22)

Adults \$35
(\$40 after 4/22)

Children \$15 (\$20 after 4/22)

Event Chairmen **Julie** and **Patrick Stowe** invite you and your family to attend the 19th annual Bunny Hop! The event will include dinner, music, a silent auction, and activities for children of all ages. More info and reservations can be found at www.chamblisscenter.org.

Please mark your calendar and make plans to attend!



Follow Chambliss
Center for Children
on all these sites!

SAVE THE DATE!

The Ice Cream Social

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

Cool off with some sweet treats at the Ice Cream Social, which will take place at the **Chattanooga Market** from 11 am- 4 pm. Ice cream vendors will give out samples of flavors to ticket holders, and then tasters vote for their favorites to win the trophy. Tickets can be purchased on-site for \$6 and all proceeds will benefit Chambliss Center for Children.

