



CHAMBLISS CENTER FOR CHILDREN

GROWING YOUNG LIVES 24•7•365



VOLUME 32, NO. 2

SUMMER 2020

Brighter Days Ahead



Due to COVID-19, Chambliss Center for Children limited its childcare services from March 21st through May 22nd, to provide care to the children of essential workers. In an unprecedented time, we chose to do what was best for our staff, our children, and their families. Thankfully, we still managed to be here for the families and children who needed us most. In addition to providing care for the children of essential workers, we continued to serve all of the foster parents and young adults in our Residential Program virtually and in-person using proper social distancing measures.

To the right, an essential worker and parent of a child at our main campus shares her experience and why it was so vital to have Chambliss Center for Children's services during this difficult time.



"Chambliss Center for Children has been a second home to my son since he was 12 weeks old; he will be four in August. I am a single mom with little or no support to assist/help with Aaron on a daily basis.

I was never forced to continue to work, but if I had, by choice, decided I needed to stay home with my son, I would not receive an income unless I had vacation or personal time to use. Because I was able to utilize the service for essential workers here at Chambliss Center for Children, I have been able to continue to pay my bills and provide for Aaron and me without having to borrow money or face the potential of losing our home. I would have only been able to provide and pay bills for approximately 10 days without child care.

Aaron is always given the best care, and as a mother I leave him daily with a peace of mind knowing he is in great hands.

When I brought Aaron to Chambliss Center for Children in 2016, I had recently walked away from an abusive relationship and did not have a home, a job, a car, or even a dollar to my name. I carried my son (six weeks old), and we walked away with only the bags we could carry. Staying with family and borrowing a vehicle, I was referred to Chambliss Center for Children, and when they offered us a spot, it was life changing for me. I was able to get a job, buy a car, eventually rent an apartment and was able to furnish it over time.

All of that I could have lost again had I not had the assistance and help of Chambliss Center for Children during a very scary time. For me, when I think about how hard I worked these few years to provide and build us a home, it frightened me to think that because I live paycheck-to-paycheck, I could lose it all again if I missed even two checks. I have not missed a single check, and we have continued to thrive. For that I am SO very thankful!

My son has NEVER done without, and we are so blessed to be a part of Chambliss Center for Children. I thank God daily that we found Chambliss Center for Children when we did and for all His many blessings that have fallen into place for us since joining the Chambliss Center for Children Family!"

– Dayna, Chambliss Center for Children Parent

We Love Our Volunteers!

We couldn't do what we do without care and support from our volunteers. Now, more than ever, we rely on these dedicated helpers for a number of projects. As our agency's procedures changed due to COVID-19, we limited the amount and types of volunteer opportunities we offered. That didn't stop our awesome volunteers from coming out and helping maintain our gardens, mulch our playgrounds, and sanitize our building before we resumed full childcare operations. While some volunteers came with groups of friends or coworkers –who socially-distanced outside–, we welcomed many volunteers to our agency who came by themselves. Between the seasoned volunteers and those who came to help for the first time, we are so grateful for the support of all of them during this unprecedented time.



Our volunteers have spread hundreds of pounds of mulch this summer! We're so thankful for our young volunteers like **Matthew Meritt** (middle) who organized several groups of his friends to help mulch our playgrounds before he starts college in the fall.

Over the summer, our gardens have gotten a lot of love! Pictured left-to-right are **Ellie** and **Jeannie Henry** enjoying the sunshine and tending to our garden.



Karen Elliott (middle), a first-time volunteer at our agency, got the experience of helping teachers **Liz** (left) and **Angela** (right) check children in before their day of summer fun.



In early June, **NOOGAtoday** editors **Chloe Morrison** and **Trista Pruitt** planted dozens of donated plants in our gardens. Thanks to their green thumbs, these plants will grow big and strong!



Pictured here on a beautiful, sunny day in June, volunteer **Jacki Smith** tends to the shrubs near the front entrance of our main campus.



Volunteering is a family affair for **Allison** and **Gabrielle** who came by our main campus in May to disinfect some of our classrooms. We're so thankful for generations of helpers!

The Thrift Stores

We just celebrated anniversaries for each of our thrift stores! The Thrift Store –Red Bank just celebrated their third anniversary, and The Thrift Store – Brainerd has been a great source of income for our agency for 14 years.

We invite you to shop and/or donate at either of our convenient locations. If you have larger items, like furniture, to donate, please call us for a pick-up.

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

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1936 Dayton Boulevard • 423-498-2101



Follow us on Facebook!

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@The Thrift Store – Red Bank



Sustaining Board Luncheon

In early March, we welcomed several of our Sustaining Board Members for lunch at our main campus to catch up on all the happenings of the last year. Our Sustaining Board is a special group of past board members who continue to invest in and stay connected with Chambliss Center for Children.



Sustaining Board Member **Marie Thatcher** and CEO **Phil Acord** are pictured here before the meeting began.

President **Katie Harbison** (left) greeted Sustaining Board Member **Andrea Aaron** as lunch was served in our main campus's Board Room.



As Sustaining Board Members ate, CEO **Phil Acord** gave a quick update on the past year.

If a tree falls...



After **Sexton Tree Service and Land Maintenance** finished pulling out the root, they cleaned up the area to make way for new grass to grow.

Volunteers **Jamie Cook** and **Robert Kulisek** wield their chainsaws as they chop parts of the tree into small logs. These volunteers, along with several others, came by the campus multiple times until the project was done.



This large tree was almost ripped from the ground and left some damage, including the exterior fence.

Our agency was very fortunate to sustain little damage when a storm and tornado hit the Metropolitan Chattanooga community in April. We did have one large tree fall over on our lawn, and the project required a little extra help to remove it. Thankfully, several volunteers came ready with chainsaws to start cutting the bulky tree into manageable pieces. After that, **Joshua Sexton** was able to remove the remainder of the tree to make our grounds look as good as new!

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 February 16 – June 30, 2020. Thank you!



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Special Projects Update

Thanks to an anonymous donor, we recently purchased a brand new six-unit apartment building to serve even more young adults in our Transitional Living Program. This program is designed to assist youth "aging out" of the foster care system. We provide housing, counseling, and training in basic life skills. With the purchase of this new apartment building, we can now serve up to 19 young adults in our program. We were very happy to partner with another local nonprofit, **Homes & Havens**, to design and furnish the interiors of these new units. Homes & Havens provides peaceful, beautiful spaces using therapeutic trauma-informed design, creating personalized, tranquil spaces that are free of stress-triggers. We greatly appreciate the time they have spent over the last several months designing and selecting furnishings for the apartments. We also want to extend our thanks to those who purchased household items through our Amazon Charity List. We are very excited to

have this project completed and look forward to helping more youth navigate their transition into adulthood.

We also recently purchased a building on Brainerd Road to serve as our new maintenance shop. This will allow the space maintenance currently occupies on our main campus to be renovated for additional classrooms for our Early Childhood Education program. This expansion is one of the initiatives from our most recent capital campaign and will reduce our waiting list, providing more families with quality child care. We plan to have maintenance relocated and renovations started by fall.



Photos by Aaron Lanegan



Bunny Hop!

This little bunny stayed home

Our 20th Annual Bunny Hop! fundraiser went completely virtual this year! Throughout the week of April 27th through May 1st, we took some favorite activities from the traditional Bunny Hop! and reimagined them so our followers could participate from home through social media. The arts and crafts station became the kitchen counter; the driveway became the bounce zone; the front porch served as the selfie station backdrop; and the living room was transformed into the kiddie karaoke and bunny boogie stage. Each day, we had a different challenge for our social media followers to participate in, and the winners received a special prize. This year's Bunny Hop! raised \$53,000 with the help of our event Chairmen, **Katie and Zach Downs**, our dedicated committee, and all of our wonderful sponsors, including our Grand Bunnies, **The Mark Hite Team** and **Chattanooga Times Free Press**.

Rylan (right) and **Spencer** (below) hopped right to creating a Lego bunny and bunny mask for our "Rummage Rabbit" challenge. We love how creative they got with items from around their house.



We are so appreciative of this year's chairmen **Katie and Zach Downs**. They were great leaders through all the changes in this year's event. They are pictured here with their sons **Turner** (left) and **Will** (right).

The baby animals are definitely one of the favorite aspects of Bunny Hop! Since we couldn't all be together this year, our friends at **Noah's Little Ark** sent us some videos to share online about all their baby animals, like this two-month-old English Spot rabbit.



Pictured here is our chalk art challenge winner **Mary Elizabeth** with her colorful horse and rabbit drawings!



Our last challenge of the week-long event was a photo booth contest. We received pictures of children, adults, and even animals like our contest winner, **Melissa Edgy's** fashionable chicks.



Summertime Fun!

Summer is one of our favorite seasons at Chambliss Center for Children. Our playgrounds, pool, and sports courts are filled with happy faces and laughter. While our summer camp doesn't look like it has in the past, there's no stop to the fun here as our children climb, swing, and play the days away!



Sewn with Love

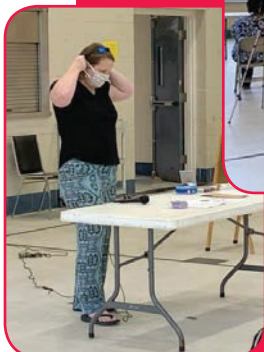
For almost two decades, the members of the **Choo Choo Quilters** have created beautiful, intricate quilts for the children within our agency programs. We always look forward to this special delivery each year! This June, the tradition continued as the Choo Choo Quilters went above and beyond with their sewing expertise. They presented 27 lovely, handmade quilts to be given to youth in our Transitional Living Program, each made with love and care.

Transitional Living Specialist **Jon Berestecky** and Director of Volunteer Services **Emily Barrow** unload 27 bags of quilts at our main campus.

Ginny Minniger and **Sherry Reed** from the **Choo Choo Quilters** display a gorgeous, full-sized quilt made with love by a very talented quilter.



Each quilt is stitched with colorful patterns and elaborate designs. The **Choo Choo Quilters** put hours into making each one special.



Our agency's gym (above) was full of socially-distanced teachers and staff members as they carefully listened to Executive Director of Extended Early Childhood Education, **Kim Borrego**.

President **Katie Harbison** (left) explains all the *do's* and *don'ts* of mask wearing during our health and safety training.

Safety First!

After nearly two months of limiting the number of children in our child care program to only those of essential workers, we welcomed back all of our staff in mid-May. Before resuming full operations, every staff member received training on our new health and safety procedures. Some of the procedures include daily temperature checks for children and staff, wearing face masks within the buildings, and taking off shoes before entering the classrooms. During this training session, staff also learned about proper face mask usage, the importance of social distancing, and how to increase the safety of our children and each other.

Nothing is quite as refreshing as a nice dip in the pool on a hot summer day! Our friends at **Tennessee American Water** once again helped us fill up our pool for the children at our main campus. We're so fortunate for their donation of 35,000 gallons of water for our kids to splash around in on the hottest days of the year. On the pool's opening day, one little girl said her goal for the summer was to become a better swimmer. Thanks to TAWC, she gets to swim several times a week and build her confidence at the same time. Thank you, Tennessee American Water!



Aaliya (front) and her classmate **Rayvin** (back) are enjoying the first pool day of the season.



Our kids couldn't wait to splash in the cool water, but they still remembered to stay apart. A little social distancing didn't keep these school age students from having a blast!

Financial Donations This list of financial contributions is from February 16 - June 30, 2020. 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 holiday 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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Since our founding in 1872, Chambliss Center for Children has been blessed with the opportunity to shape the lives of many generations of Chattanoogaans. As we look ahead, we invite you to help us impact the future of our community by joining the 1872 Society. By including Chambliss Center for Children in your estate plans, you will help ensure that Chattanooga will always be known as a place that cares for youngest citizens.

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Named after our CEO of 48 years, Mr. Phil's Friends is a group of special donors who link arms with us by giving to Chambliss Center for Children on a monthly basis. Mr. Phil's Friends member and staff member **Jon Berestecky** feels that his monthly donation is "a smart investment into the future of our city." He sees firsthand the impact that giving to Chambliss Center for Children has in the lives of the youth he serves as our Transitional Living Coordinator. Jon became a member of Mr. Phil's Friends because he really believes in the mission of our agency and feels that his monthly gift "helps give our kids and families the ability to achieve greater stability and long-term success."



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 Patsi & Kirk Walker
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If you want to be part of our growing group of Mr. Phil's Friends, join now by starting a monthly, recurring donation in honor of Mr. Phil's birthday in August! If **12 new supporters** join us in making a monthly donation during the month of August, all the children in our childcare center will get a delicious birthday treat in honor of Mr. Phil's birthday. **Join today at ChamblissCenter.org!**

AROUND THE CENTER



Before reopening our childcare center, we saw a great need for facial coverings for our children and staff. Everyone age five and above are required to wear a mask inside our buildings. We sent out a request on our Facebook page asking for the community to help supply our children and staff with masks, and

thanks to our supportive community, we received over 500 child- and adult-sized, cloth face masks. Thank you for helping keep our children, staff, and families safe!



With so many people staying at home, we were delighted to see several individuals use our Amazon Charity List to purchase items for children in our programs. These anonymous Amazon shoppers supplied us with new books, toys, and craft supplies. They also purchased dozens of items for our new Transitional Living apartments. From spoons and dishes to linens and small appliances, these donors helped us create a wonderful living space for young adults aging out of foster care.



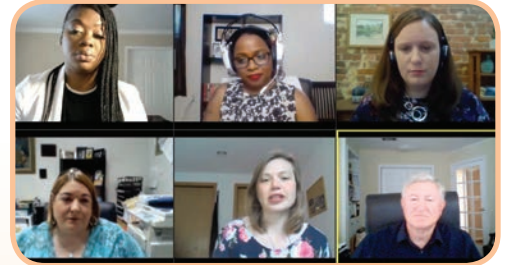
After 1,114 days in foster care, brothers Hunter and Tyler are now "Forever Young". The **Young Family** adopted their sons in April after fostering the two boys for several years. The adoption hearing was conducted online with the Young Family gathered in their matching outfits to commemorate the special occasion. Congratulations, Hunter, Tyler, and the whole family on this happy adoption!



Our friends from the **American Heart Association - Tennessee Chapter** dropped by in June to volunteer in honor of Juneteenth. This wonderful group helped us outside with gardening and painting our playground railings. We're so thankful for their kind hearts!



In this new age of technology, there's always the opportunity to advocate for the wellbeing of children. Our CEO, **Phil Acord**, had the honor of sitting on a virtual panel this summer for the **Center for American Progress** and the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** as they discussed the challenges facing the childcare industry this year. Phil, along with several childcare professionals, shared journeys of adversity, resilience, and hope during this national webinar.



We love seeing our staff and children make the best out of every situation. Pictured here, you can see **Ms. Nita**, one of our awesome teachers, reading to a class of socially-distanced, school-age children, each wearing a colorful face mask. These protocols, along with daily temperature checks and frequent disinfecting, have become routine here at the agency and keep everyone as safe as possible!



Volunteers helped unload over 150 boxes of produce from **T and T Produce** thanks to **The Chattanooga Area Food Bank's** initiative to distribute delicious, nutritious fruits and veggies to those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Earlier this year, our CEO, **Phil Acord**, attended the 32nd annual Children's Advocacy Days in Nashville, TN. There he was honored on-stage as he received the Linda O'Neal Lifetime Achievement Award from the **Tennessee**

Commission on Children and Youth. Congrats, Mr. Phil!





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GROWING YOUNG LIVES 24•7•365

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Director of Volunteer Services

RACIE HOFFMAN
Development Officer

www.chamblisscenter.org
423-698-2456



Join us for the
24TH ANNUAL

Golf
TOURNAMENT

**Tuesday,
September 15,
2020**

In order to ensure the safety of all participants at this event, certain aspects of the day will be modified to allow for social distancing and cleanliness. For more information, contact Lesley Berryhill at lrberryhill@chamblisscenter.org or 423-468-1130.

**Driven By
Generosity**

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



STAY CONNECTED WITH US!

