

VOLUME 30, NO. 1 SPRING 2018

Chambliss Center for Children is very fortunate to have wonderful foster families, and a tremendous staff in our Residential Program who support them. When we receive calls from the State of Tennessee about children who have been removed from their home due to abuse, abandonment, or neglect, our priority is to find them a safe, loving family to care for them while we work on reunification with the biological family. Unfortunately, reunification is not always possible. Many times, our amazing foster families step up to become

the forever family for the children they have fostered. In fact, there are eight adoptions we have recently facilitated or are on the horizon. Below, a new adoptive mother shares her experience.

For years, we had occasionally discussed foster care as a means of sharing the Gospel, but had yet to come to a final decision on it. Our struggle with infertility helped in making our decision. We had love to give and room for more in our home. At the beginning of January 2015, we were approved as foster parents, and at the end of the month, we got the call for our first placement. It was a sibling group of three, ages 6, 5, and 10 months old. We absolutely did not expect our first placement as foster parents to be three children, but we were excited and wanted the children to be able to stay together, so we said yes. The night they came quickly became a blur of faces in and out of our home with visitors, case workers, and paperwork needing to be signed. After everyone had gone and it was just the two of us again, now with three young children

added, the weight of it all began to settle. How do we convince this little 5-year-old boy to eat dinner when he just wanted to wait to eat when he got back home? How do we console a 10-month-old that is scared and crying for "Momma"? How do we explain to the 6-year-old sister that she doesn't have to parent her baby sister anymore?

After the kids were finally asleep the tears began to fall. We were overwhelmed with sadness for the children and honestly afraid that we had taken on more than we could handle. As the days and months passed, things settled down and we were able to get into a routine. We soon learned that their mother was pregnant again and we were asked if we would take him, too, when he was born. We were certainly nervous about having four children, but

again we wanted all of the siblings to have the chance to be together. And to be honest, we were excited about the opportunity to love on a newborn since we had struggled with infertility. We had a couple of months to prepare, but when the baby came he shook up our world again. We were learning how to care for a newborn, how to potty-train a toddler, how to teach a child to read, and how to help with homework all at the same time. On top of those typical household challenges, we had to learn how to cope with behavior issues resulting from a childhood of trauma and how to interact with biological

parents that caused these issues for our precious kids. We often felt completely overwhelmed by the weight of it all on many occasions

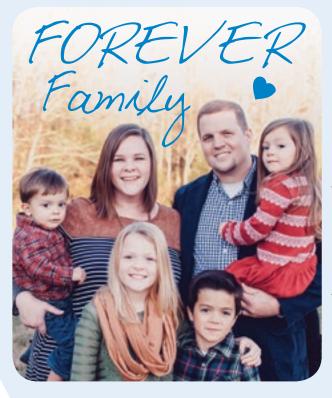
The only way that we have been able to make it through it all is with the strength of the Lord, prayer, and with an incredible support system. We have had so much hands-on support from our families and church family. It has been over three years with our "foster" kids (now ages 9, 8, 4 and almost 3), and we can't imagine our family coming together in any other way. We certainly can't imagine going back to a life without them. On March 20th, 2018, after 1,148 days in foster care, our "foster" children became our children.

Fostering has forever changed our lives. Foster care has built our family, and for that, we will be forever thankful. Foster care has also opened our eyes to a painful world that we otherwise wouldn't haven't seen personally. A world where families are broken apart by addiction and poor choices, where children are the protectors of younger children, and a world where food is scarce and safety even more so. We believe

that foster care will always be a part of our lives in some way and we hope to continue to be a voice for the many children who are still waiting for someone to speak up for them. Psalm 31: 8-9 tells us to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

By Christin O., 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.



Miguel Cha foster daugh

Miguel Charre entertained his foster son while his foster daughter bowled.

Brother and sister **Kalob** and **Lacy** had a great time bowling.



Fun Times at Pin Strikes



Pictured here are Group Home Direct Care staff **Mike March** (left) and **Roland McClendon** (right).

Santa always brings the smiles. **Trent** was one of the first to tell Santa what he wanted for Christmas.

hanks to a special donor, we were able to once again host a holiday party at Pin Strikes for those in our Residential Program. Our group home youth, as well as our 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 being able 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 **Katie Harbison** at kcharbison@chamblisscenter.org.

Board & Staff _ Holiday Brunch

The annual Board and Staff Holiday Party was held on December 12th 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 **Monica Rucker** for 5 years with the agency, **Liz Blasbery** for 10 years, **Johnetta Mathis** for 15 years, **Chandra Crook** for 20 years, and **Louise Burks** for 25 years of service. We also gave special recognition to **Marsha Morrison** who recently retired after 40 years working for Chambliss Center for Children. During the event, we honored four board members who rotated off of our Active Board — **Felicia Barbee**, **Bill Cronin**, **Catharine Daniels**, and **Ross Schram**. 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 **Marsha Morrison's** 40 years with the agency and her recent retirement. She is pictured here with President & CEO **Phil Acord**.



Chandra Crook received an award and a hug from President & CEO Phil Acord for her 20 years of service with our agency.



Pictured above are, from left to right, staff member Mary Edwards, Board members Allyson Lumpkin, Ross Schram, and Dr. Mary Tanner, and staff member Gloria Miller.

Board members Cathy Dorvil, Hugh Brown, and Patsi Walker were on hand to celebrate our staff.



Photography by Nooga Pics and Broderick Media



Our French Quarter sponsor and Board member **Mark Hite** (left) is pictured here with Vice President **Katie Harbison** and President & CEO **Phil Acord**.



Gabe and **Candice Thompson** were crowned the King and Queen of the 2018 Mardi Gras Gala.

ur sixth annual Mardi Gras Gala was a great success!
Held on February 9th at Bessie Smith Hall, the
evening began with jazz piano in Preservation Hall,
followed by beads on Bourbon Street. Finally, guests
stepped into the French Quarter for Dixieland Jazz by the
Ralph Miller Quartet, late-evening DJ & dance party,
and lots of New Orleans-style fun sponsored by The
Mark Hite Team. The evening also featured delicious
Cajun-inspired fare by Events with Taste Catering
and a crowning of the Mardi Gras King and Queen, Gabe
and Candice Thompson, who led guests in a parade
throughout the venue. A great time was had by all!



Bourbon St.

The Mardi Gras Gala provided a perfect girls' night out for, from left to right, Natasha Durst, Board member Tonia Cox, Jessica Crutchfield, Lauren Tessier and Heather Ponce.



The crowd had a great time playing Heads or Tails during the event. Pictured here, from left to right, are **Chris Hennen**, **Caroline Walker**, **Alnoor Dhanani**, **Gina Dhanani** and **Virginia Rushton**.

Everyone loves having fun in the photo booth. Pictured here, from left to right, are Ronelle Sellers, Sherri Burns, Amy Gurley, Julie Brandao, Tonya Hathorne, and Luanne Ballentine.

NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY

We were happy to recognize some of our biggest supporters at the recent National Philanthropy Day luncheon. Our honorees this year were **First Tennessee**, **Keller Williams**, **Priscilla McLaughlin** and **The Tucker Foundation**. 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 member
Linda Farnsworth, staff member Racie
Hoffman (front), Board member Greg
McGuire (back), Nathan Brown and
Jennie Brockman with Keller Williams,
and President & CEO Phil Acord.



Board member Ross Schram.

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, 2017 — February 28, 2018. Thank you!



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W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION PROJECT UPDATE

Through our grant with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, we have been able to hire Parent Advocates to work with our parents to help them identify and utilize local resources to benefit themselves and their families. Samantha Crisp has been hired as our new Parent Advocate for our off-site centers. Her office is located at Children's Academy for Education and Learning. Shwanna Heard has transitioned into a new role as a Child Care Coach to replace Rachel Geiger. Rachel and her family are moving back to Huntsville, AL. Thank you, Rachel, for your hard work and dedication to the program. We wish you all the best!

Our Child Care Coaching program is gaining momentum! We currently have 10 home-based child care providers enrolled in the program, reaching over 40 children. This program provides curriculum, assessments, and support to ensure all children have the opportunity to be Kindergarten-ready.

If you know of anyone in Hamilton County

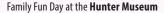


Samantha Crisp

currently watching children in their home, who is not licensed, please give us a call at 423-682-0154. This program will not cost the home-based provider, children, or parents anything, as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation is sponsoring this program.

Our Parent Resource Advocacy program was rocking and rolling last year! We served as advocates for over 300 parents and partnered with over 30 community agencies in Hamilton County. We had 10 Parent Resource Days with a total attendance of 220 families. We hosted 8 events/workshops with a total attendance

of 118 people, including Chambliss Center for Children's Day at The Hunter Museum and the Cigna Health and Wellness Tour. We advocated and helped our parents access services, saving them over \$114,000. We are excited about this upcoming year and look forward to helping more families.



Celebrating the Season

Ne have many local companies, schools, associations and individuals who come to our agency every year to celebrate the holidays with our children. Thank you to CHI Memorial, Collegedale Academy, Haisten Group, Heritage High School, The Lantern at Morning Pointe, and others







It's time for Spring cleaning!

We have a new thrift store in Red Bank and our Brainerd location recently underwent some renovations. Now it's your turn to do a little Spring cleaning and donate your former treasures to benefit our agency. We'll even pick up larger items. Just call either store to schedule a pick-up.

Mon-Sat: 10 AM - 6 PM Sun: 1 - 6 PM

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

THE THRIFT STORE – RED BANK

1936 Dayton Boulevard • 423-498-2101



The Thrift Store in Brainerd was recently remodeled.

21ST ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

We were very happy to have a great turnout at our annual Chambliss Center for Children Golf Tournament at **Council Fire** in November, and extremely sad to have to cancel it at the last minute due to rain. This was only the second time in 21 years that has happened. We are so grateful to our committee members **Barry Bogo**, **Mark Degler**, **Greg McGuire**, **Scott Parrish**, **Dan Pratt**, **Everett Warren**, and **Chris Young** for putting this event together for us every year. And we truly appreciate all who supported the event, allowing us to raise \$64,000. We look forward to blue skies at our next tournament, which will be held on Tuesday, September 18th.



We could not host this tournament without our wonderful committee members, pictured here from left to right, **Greg McGuire**, **Barry Bogo**, **Scott Parrish** and **Everett Warren**.



Board member **Russ Blakely** and **Tim Rauch** are great supporters of our agency.



PlayCore always participates in our tournament. Pictured here are, from left to right, Fred Wiechmann, Spencer Cheak (back), Chris Allen, Bob Barron and John Conely.

Giving bee

n December, our three and four-year-olds boarded a bus to **TVA** where they, along with the help of some TVA executives, decorated the Giving 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. This annual trip is a much-anticipated holiday tradition, 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!

Staff member Jon Berestecky enjoyed lunch with his daughter, Willow.





TVA staff Daniel Kearnaghan helped **Chloe** find the perfect spot for her ornament.

Bentleigh brought Santa a special treat.

Pictured here with Santa, from left to right, (back row) Jennifer Affolder, Myra Fuller, Michelle Floyd and Kim Jones. On the front row, from left to right, are Chris Willingham, Linda Tonya and Carla Edmondson (seated).



Done with it? Do GOOD with it!

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 Katie Harbison at 423-468-1122 or kcharbison@chamblisscenter.org for more information.

Welcome New Board Members! We welcomed eight new members to our Board of Directors this year. Each of them began a three-year term of service in January, which can be renewed twice. We look forward to benefiting from their expertise as we continue to provide the best possible care for the children in our community.







Carolyn Brock



Dr. Roger Brown



Bill Cox



Greg Cullum



Brent Goldberg



Allyson Lumpkin



In addition to the election of these eight new members, Chambliss Center for Children's Board of Directors also elected new officers. Paul Fitzgerald with Northwestern Mutual will serve his second year as Chairman; Dan Pratt with TVA was elected as Vice Chairman; Hugh Brown with Pendleton Square Trust will serve a second year as Treasurer; and Anne-Marie Spencer with PlayCore will serve a second year as Secretary. We also want to thank our dedicated members who recently rolled off of the Active Board of Directors: Felicia Barbee, Bill Cronin, Catharine Daniels, and Ross Schram.

Did You Know? Every time you shop you could be supporting us. Sign up for Amazon Smile so that a percentage of every purchase comes directly back to us! Simply start at www.smile.amazon.com, search for "Chambliss Center for Children" to connect your account with us, and shop from that same site every time.



Financial Donations This list of financial contributions is from November 1, 2017 – February 28, 2018. 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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at chamblisscenter.org.

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CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Last year was an extremely busy year in working toward the Strategic Initiatives outlined in our capital campaign! Our Transitional Living Program for youth aging out of State custody, opened with six units. An early learning center to serve 60 children was opened in an area of great need — Red Bank. And, a second thrift store, which generates revenue to support our programs, also opened in Red Bank. In 2018, we are already working on two more duplexes for Transitional Living; are in conversation with a community partner to open an early learning center for 120 children; and working with an architect to determine how to best expand on our main campus to care for an additional 100 children. It looks like 2018 is going to be another busy year!

AROUND THE CENTER



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 Volunteers 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.



We have a tremendous group of volunteers who come out every year to turn our center into a holiday wonderland. Pictured here are, back row from left to right, Board Chairman Paul Fitzgerald, Jane Bricard, Jane Skaggs, Ann Richey, Ann Schimpf, Vicki Degler, Lynn Reese, Jean Faircloth, and Board member Greyson Brown. Front row, from left to right, Board member Linda Farnsworth, Diane Ryder, Lisa Frost, Charlotte Witry, Board member Cindy Wilkerson, DeLane Sprague, Dennie Taylor (slightly behind), and Mott Gammon.

Toyota of Cleveland collected toys for our agency at the Chattanooga Times
Free Press HoHo Expo and at their dealership throughout the month of November. Their wonderful staff then came to our campus with a large SUV full of gifts. Pictured here, from left to right, are Kayla Dotson, Justin Chretien, Monte' Burney, Willie Williams,

Maggie Renner, and Audrey



Leger. Akhila and Kaden were happy to accept the gifts on our behalf!



The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) recently presented the Phil Acord Award to **David Lawrence**, **Jr.** (right) Mr. Lawrence was recognized for his work in the field of early childhood development and readiness. The award was created and named after our President & CEO **Phil Acord**, pictured on the left, in December 2016 to honor his contributions to SECA and the impact he has had on the lives of so many young people and their families.



Student volunteer Riley (back left) from
Chattanooga Christian School helped our Pre-K
children celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday during Read
Across America Week. Pictured with her are Kisha
Fifer, Naquita Lester and Liz Adams. Our happy
students are, from left, Des' Moines, Brian,
Jakarri, Trayveon, A'riyah, Delilah, JaRiah,
Mirah, Jakob, Kobe and Annabelle.

(Formerly Children's Home/Chambliss Shelter) 315 GILLESPIE ROAD CHATTANOOGA, TN 37411

ADMINISTRATORS

PHILIP A. ACORD President & CEO

KATIE C. HARBISON Vice President

GLORIA J. MILLER Vice President of Special Projects

KIM BORREGO

Executive Director of Extended Childcare Program

LIZ BLASBERY

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JULIE MOON OSHIELDS

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LESLEY R. BERRYHILL Director of Communications

RACIE HOFFMAN

Director of Development

VIRGINIA RUSHTON
Director of Volunteer Services

www.chamblisscenter.org 423-698-2456





Chairmen **Kim** and **Dan Pratt** invite you and your family to join them for dinner, music, a silent auction, and activities for children of all ages. More information can be found at www.chamblisscenter.org. Reservations can also be made on the website, but please note that prices increase after April 23rd. Please mark your calendar and make plans to attend!



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SAVE THE DATE!

The lee Cream Social

SUNDAY, JUNE 10

