



CHAMBLISS CENTER FOR CHILDREN

GROWING YOUNG LIVES 24•7•365

VOLUME 32, NO. 1

SPRING 2020

In 2008, at the young age of 42, I married the love of my life, Danny. I knew for certain he was “the one” on our first date! After our failed marriages and other failed relationships, I knew the minute he shook my, then, 17-year-old son’s hand. During that first year-and-a-half of dating and engagement, we asked ourselves if we didn’t have children, what about adoption? We were both very stable in our jobs, busy with mission trips, fun trips, riding horses, hiking trips, education, and building this new, amazing life together! We also had a grown son and mother-in-law in our home.

We always hear from our elders “time goes by so fast”, and that is exactly what happened. Danny and I found ourselves ten years later with a house and no others, just dogs and horses; it seemed to be a great deal of wasted space. As I spent a month of remodeling a few areas of our home, I felt the strongest impression on my heart to reconsider adoption. I kept my thoughts to myself and just started looking at websites. Three days later, my husband said “I just feel God putting it on my heart to look back into adoption.” My response was “WHAT?” and he said “Well, we don’t have to!” Then, I shared the revelation I had three days prior about reconsidering adoption. That was it; we didn’t discuss anything, but starting the process! We did discuss how older children fit our life and the fact that their opportunity to be adopted was less likely than small children.

Our process started with finding the agency to complete our home study, and completing foster classes as required by the state. As this process was overwhelming with full time jobs, it became a joy meeting beautiful people with the same hearts and minds - hearts and minds to bring strangers in our homes, to love, nurture and share our many blessings. Some days during the long hours and crazy process were exhausting, but then God had a plan in that as well. He

knew a beautiful, blonde-haired, blue-eyed, sassy little ten-year-old was up for adoption in a few weeks. I received her flyer and hung it on my desk, on the inside where no one could see her. This was my “reminder”, don’t take your eyes off what God places on your heart! I never knew that day when I taped her picture with the words “are you my forever home?” that in weeks to come, that little girl would soon be *our* little girl.

As we met on our first day, I could hardly hold in the excitement! Trying to act normal, calm, and learn ten years in a few hours... didn’t happen. Slowly, our meetings became longer and a weekend visit brought us the opportunity to tell her we wanted her forever to be our daughter. And with all humor I tell this, her response was, “I will have to think about that!” I share that to share this; when you think you are the knight in shining armor, the magical fix-it person, you are just a part in the process of years of abuse, and neglect.

My husband and I have learned to be patient, tag out, talk a lot, redo, start new ideas because sometimes plans A and B don’t work, share ideas, and vent to those who get it.

Fostering and adoption are, by no means, for the faint of heart, but it is a growth process, a loving and giving of one’s self beyond what you ever thought you could give, a meeting of souls, and a balance - a balance for those that never had balance and a teaching to those giving the balance.

Fostering and adoption are true examples of people loving people, just the way God planned for us to be. And remember, “One day at a time.”

— Trish, Chambliss Center for Children 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.

Forever
to be our
daughter



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: **Priscilla McLaughlin, Linda Friberg, Paul Fitzgerald, The Mark Hite Team with Keller Williams Realty, Tioga Pipe Supply, Church of the Good Shepherd, Playcore, Lync Logistics, Chambliss Law, 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!

Pictured below, from left to right, are Board member **Mark Hite, Linda Harwell (Church of the Good Shepherd), Jeff Walls (Playcore), Chris Willingham (TVA), Jennifer Affolder (TVA),** and CEO **Phil Acord.**



Pictured here, from left to right, are **Sarah Bowman (Lync Logistics), Priscilla McLaughlin, Cindy Lee (Lync Logistics),** Development Officer **Racie Hoffman,** Board member **Cindy Wilkerson,** and **Linda Friberg.**

From left to right are, Board member **Cathy Dorvil, Courtney Keehan (Chambliss Law), Don Gregory (Tioga),** Board Chairman **Paul Fitzgerald,** Director of Special Projects and Events **Lesley Berryhill,** and Sustaining Board member **Catharine Bahner Daniels.**



The annual Board and Staff Holiday Party was held on December 10th 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 **Arvel Edwards, Michael March, Roland McClendon, Kristy Revis, Julie Moon Oshields, Lesley Berryhill, Lori Braun, Teia Tate, Alisha Morgan, and Keelah Jackson Harris** for celebrating 5 years with the agency; **Gayle Scott and Sharron Jackson** for 10 years, and **Marquita Jennings, Cheryl Hooks, and Joyce Clark** for 15 years of service. During the event, we also honored **Kelly Lopez, Ray Feher, Mark Degler, and Mary Tanner** for their service on our Board of Directors. 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!

Board & Staff Holiday Brunch



Members of our fantastic staff get ready for a delicious brunch. Pictured left to right are **Keelah Jackson Harris, Jody Harris, Antole Thelwell, Jon Berestecky,** and **Marvelle Davis.**



Director of Financial Services, **Julie Moon Oshields,** celebrates her 5 years of service with teacher **Kisha Fifer.**



Marquita Jennings celebrates 15 years with Chambliss Center for Children with a special award from CEO **Phil Acord.**



Board Chairman **Paul Fitzgerald** congratulates Board member **Ray Feher** for 9 years of service with our agency.

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. The children in foster homes and our Transitional Living young adults look forward to it every year. If you are interested in sponsoring this year's celebration, please contact **Racie Hoffman** at rmhoffman@chamblisscenter.org.

Eli gives a big, toothless grin as he gets ready to bowl with his sister, **Tiffany Hudgins**



Foster parents **Rachael and Chris Welch** (top left) enjoy the event every year with their children **Zeke** and **Emmie**. They are pictured here with Case Manager **Melissa Hand** (top right).



Mom **Bree Phillips** teaches her sons **Kevin** and **Xavier** how to line up the perfect strike!



The Young Family poses for a group picture.



We are thankful for the generosity of **The Fraternal Order of Police** for their contribution to our agency. Pictured here is our wonderful Associate Director of Residential Services **Jennifer Davis** and Executive Director **Liz Blasbery** with Chattanooga Police Sergeant and Foster Dad, **Victor Miller**.



Xavier is all smiles as he tells Santa what he wants for the holidays.

Bunny Hop!

2020

This little bunny stayed home

April 27 - May 1



We're taking Bunny Hop! online this year as we adapt to the uncertain circumstances caused by COVID-19 and restrictions around public gatherings. Follow us on Facebook for more information on how you can participate in our week-long Bunny Hop! from home. Visit ChamblissCenter.org to make a donation or purchase a virtual ticket to support this year's Bunny Hop!

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 October 16, 2019 – February 15, 2020. Thank you!



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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.



This lovely group of foster grannies perfectly embodies the spirit of our agency and we're very lucky to have them.

Director of Volunteer Services, **Emily Barrow** (center), posed with foster grannies **Jeanne McDaniel** (left) and **Mary Griffith** (right) at the photo booth.

Our Foster Grannies love the annual luncheon at Golden Corral. Pictured here are from left to right are **Sadie Foster, Bonita Springs, and Ollie Isom**





MARDI GRAS Gala

Laissez les bon temps rouler! We danced the night away at our eighth annual Mardi Gras Gala, held on February 21 at Stratton Hall. Guests were welcomed with beads and masks, signature drinks, and an elaborate selfie station. The experience continued with a specialty bar sponsored by **Brewski** and a silent auction on Bourbon Street sponsored by **Chambliss Law**. Finally, guests stepped into the French Quarter sponsored by **The Mark Hite Team** for dancing and a full spread of Creole-inspired fare sponsored by **First Horizon Bank** with catering provided by **Events with Taste Catering**. Dixieland jazz entertainment sponsored by **Lync Logistics**, a late-evening DJ and dance party, and lots of New Orleans-style fun created the perfect Friday night out for guests. The evening also featured an intense game of Heads or Tails and the crowning of the Mardi Gras King and Queen, **Gina** and **Alnoor Dhanani**, who led guests in a parade throughout the venue. At the end of the night, all attendees were offered complimentary Uber rides, courtesy of our Safe Ride Sponsor, **Best Hayduk Brock**. A great time was had by all!



Executive Director of Off-Site Programs, **Ikeko Bass** (left), and Associate Director of our Extended Child Care Program, **Sumer Arispe** (right), handed out beads at the masquerade table, sponsored by **JHM Certified Public Accountants**.



There's never a shortage of beads at the Mardi Gras Gala! Pictured here (from left to right) are Board member **Tonia Cox**, **Heather Ponce**, **Yvette Burns**, and 2019 Mardi Gras Queen **Parul Patel** showing off their bling.



The newly-crowned Mardi Gras King and Queen, **Gina** and **Alnoor Dhanani** pose with their scepters before a night of Mardi Gras fun!

Attendees **Pinky** and **Tony Young** pose at the photo booth with their masquerade masks before entering Bourbon Street.



Guests **Sadie Duhm** and **James Sutton** had a blast dancing in our French Quarter, sponsored by **The Mark Hite Team**.



Del Sudkamp and **Martha Mackey** show off their best moves as the DJ invited everyone to the dance floor.



Mardi Gras King, **Alnoor Dhanani**, leads a parade throughout the venue to the festive tunes of Dixieland jazz.



WELCOME NEW STAFF

Rachel Froug joined the Chambliss Center for Children team as the Communications Coordinator in February. She has a passion for helping children and families by sharing their stories of love and resilience. Rachel will be working hard in this role to spread the word about our services and events. We're happy to welcome her to the team!



Celebrating the Season

The holidays are always fun and 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 (left to right) **CHI Memorial, Haisten Group, Collegedale Academy, Heritage High School, Unwanted Motorcycle Club,** and others for hosting great parties for our kids!



Giving Tree at TVA

Pictured here with Santa, from left to right are **Pam Rearden, Anna White, Michelle Floyd, Chris Willingham, Stephanie Winn, Jennifer Affolder, and Kim Jones.**

Camryn smiled after Santa confirmed that he was on the nice list.

The **TVA Giving Tree** has become a cherished holiday tradition, for both our agency and the employees at TVA. In December, our four and five-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 donated 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 **Chris Willingham**, as well as all of our TVA friends!



Nevaeh had a blast decorating the Giving Tree!



TVA staff **Jared Wright** helped **Kaide** find the perfect spot for his ornament.

India made sure that Santa had some milk and cookies!



Financial Donations This list of financial contributions is from October 16, 2019 – February 15, 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 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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Since our founding in 1872, Chambliss Center for Children has been blessed with the opportunity to shape the lives of many generations of Chattanooga. 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 its most vulnerable citizens. For more information, contact our Development Officer, Racie Hoffman, at rmhoffman@chamblisscenter.org or 423-468-1139.

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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 has dedicated his life's work to enriching and empowering at-risk children and youth in our community. Join Mr. Phil's Friends by becoming a monthly donor today!



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We know many people have had time to do some spring cleaning lately. Our thrift stores will happily take your former treasures off your hands, and all sales benefit the children and families that we serve in the community. We'll even pick up larger items.

*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

*We plan to re-open soon,
so please call either store in May
to schedule a pick-up.*



Follow us on Facebook!

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

AROUND THE CENTER

Our Runabouts and PreK children had a wonderful visit from Little Sprouts: Honey Bees, Preschool Garden and Nutrition Program in February. Presenter **Renee Craig** talked about bee facts, bee jobs, pollination, bee safety, and showed the kids a fun waggle dance activity. Thank you to **Step One** through the **Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department** for sharing this informative, fun program with our children.



After two decades of service, **Louise Burks**, one of our Early Childhood Education teachers, retired in February. As she reflected on her time at the agency, she said "I always feel like a child could

never get enough love, so I spoil them as much as possible – just like they were mine." Thank you for caring for our children so well, Ms. Louise! Pictured here from left to right are teachers **Chandra Crook, Naquita Lester, Louise Burks, and Kisha Fifer**, with **Anisha Douglas** in front at Louise's retirement party.



Chambliss Law sent some of their most enthusiastic helpers to get our Transitional Living duplex in tip-top shape before our new tenants moved

in. We're so thankful for volunteers like this that want the best for our young adults transitioning out of foster care.

Volunteers from **Elliot Davis Public Accountants** came by to spend time with our little ones before the holidays. Here you can see one of our volunteers helping **Jakina** make a lovely Play-doh bowl.



Thanksgiving is always fun around our campus! Everyone loves a good hand turkey painting, including **Jaycee** and her teacher, **Tia Hunt**.

Our friends in the Audit Department at **UNUM** were the masters of odd-jobs when they volunteered at our main campus in November.

Some played with our children in the gym while others helped the administrative offices in our main building by doing some much needed shredding like **Julia Ritchie, Angela Maracks, and Victoria Harris** pictured here.



The students of **Southern Adventist University** came to visit the agency on Martin Luther King Jr. Day and brought some New Year cheer to our school-age children. Each year, we have several dedicated groups that come to volunteer on this day to honor Dr. King's legacy.



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Dear Friends,

Chambliss Center for Children is working hard to meet the needs of children and families in our community, even during the current health crisis. Our childcare program is operating on a limited basis, serving children of essential workers. Our foster homes are doing a tremendous job of caring for the children in their home and responding to the needs and issues that arise each day. We are assisting our transitional living youth who try to navigate online school and social distancing.



It has been a challenging time, and our staff have more than stepped up to the plate. We are so grateful for them and are making every effort to ensure that our payroll can be maintained while we weather this storm.

We know that this uncertain time has caused many of us to get out of our normal routine and to focus only on our day-to-day wellbeing. However, if you are able to continue to support our organization and the children we are serving during this time, we would be incredibly honored.

Blessings of good health to you and your family,

Phil Acord, CEO
Katie Harbison, President
Paul Fitzgerald, Chairman of the Board

STAY CONNECTED WITH US!

