



SHARING HOPE...CHANGING LIVES

Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina

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2019 Report: July 2018 - June 2019

A Message from BCH/CEO President Michael C. Blackwell

My heart is full. In fact, like the Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) heart, it's overflowing.

The joy I feel cannot help but spill over as I see the myriad of ministries that comprise the BCH heart. I've witnessed it grow fuller throughout the ministry's 133-year history. BCH was founded in the small community of Thomasville rising from a dream to establish an orphanage that North Carolina Baptists could call their own.

BCH's heart began to beat on November 11, 1885 when nine-year-old Mary Presson became the first child to enter the orphanage's care. From there, the heartbeat only became stronger.

Today, we have grown to include ministries to special needs adults, aging adults, single mothers, college students and entire families. You don't have to look very hard to discover the reason why we provide ministry and outreach to people of every age. The answer is found at the center of the BCH heart -- **the cross**.

Jesus' sacrifice on that rugged tree was a gift to us all, and it is our desire to see the Gospel shared with everyone who turns to us in search of help and hope. After all, it is God's unconditional love that mends the most broken of hearts.

In 2018, BCH impacted more than 94,000! The needs of vulnerable children are greater than ever. The needs of our neighbors around us are greater than ever. The need to them the unfailing love of Christ is greater than ever!

We are Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina. We are many ministries beating with one heart -- *the heartbeat of Jesus*.

Michael C. Blackwell | Baptist Children's Homes President/CEO

Note: Help by encouraging your church to be a part of the **2019 Annual Offering** this fall. Schedule a speaker to share the BCH story with your church. **Call 336-474-1209 and visit www.bchoffering.org.**

Ciara – A Life Changed

“You learn how God wants a relationship with you. It’s mind blowing.”

– Ciara | Accepted Jesus in October 2014

Ciara never knew her birth father. Her mother was 16 years old when she moved to Tennessee where Ciara was born. She was strong and determined to care for Ciara and her younger sister.

“My sister and I felt loved,” she remembers. “I know she made bad choices, but it was the drug addiction that destroyed our mom and our family.”

Their mother overdosed and died on July 3, 2013. In November, the girls came to Baptist Children’s Homes’ (BCH) Mills Home in Thomasville. BCH has locations in 21 North Carolina communities as well as an affiliate orphanage in Guatemala.

“Mom always placed a priority on our school work. We went to school and she had expectations that we do well,” Ciara recalls. “And we did.”

Ciara graduated high school in June. Out of 162 students, she was Valedictorian.

“When I first arrived at Mills Home, I couldn’t help but feel that I had done something wrong,” she confides. “It took a while for me to realize that what had happened to me wasn’t my fault. I began to understand that God had a plan for my life.”

In October 2014, Ciara said, “It clicked.” She had watched her Christian cottage parents. She had listened closely to Mills Home Baptist Church pastor Randy Stewart’s words. She knew she wanted Jesus in her life.

“I’m part of that BCH statistic that says 80% of the children who come into care are unchurched,” she says. “I went from attending church occasionally, to attending church every Sunday and Wednesday. There are cottage devotions.”

Ciara begins her freshman year at UNC-Chapel Hill in the fall. She plans to major in physics. “I’m going to college. It’s weird and I’m a little scared. But I’m ready. My family at Mills Homes is there for me, encouraging me, giving me a place to call home. And I’m trusting God to guide my every step.”

Foster Care - Families and Churches Partnering with BCH

The number 16,796 catches people’s attention quickly. It is the number of NC children removed from their families in 2018 and placed in the foster care system.

It is why Baptist Children’s Homes (BCH) is actively partnering with families and churches to meet the need through its growing Family Foster Care ministry. BCH

provides the training and vital support needed for a family to become a successful, licensed foster home or for a church wanting to be their own foster care ministry.

“It is an exciting step for us because we are partnering with families who have felt God’s call to open their homes, and their hearts, to children desperate for hope,” says BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell. “We are able to offer both our traditional cottage home care as well as Family Foster Care. Both options allow us to better serve more children and ones we would not have been able to care for previously.”

BCH has trained 37 married couples and 36 children are living in those licensed BCH family foster homes. A number of those families are members of North Carolina Baptist churches who have partnered with BCH and begun foster care ministries as part of their missions efforts.

Two of those churches, Providence Baptist Church in Harrisburg and Salem Baptist Church in Dobson, have couples in their congregations who have come forward and become foster families through BCH’s training and licensing process.

David Powell, Senior Pastor at Salem Baptist, sees the church’s role and commitment as a means of sharing the Gospel with the children. “This is a Gospel opportunity as we show the children they are valued. It is an applicable way the church can share God’s love with them.”

BCH Chief Operating Office Keith Henry closely monitors the increasing needs and sees an overwhelmed state child welfare system. “There’s not enough staff, resources and, most of all, safe placement options for the children in the system. God is opening doors for BCH and North Carolina Baptists to serve children and families together in a way that no one else can.” **For more information, visit www.bchfostercare.org or call 800.476.3669.**

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry Outreach Increases

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) launched eight new educational workshops, three new programs (Disaster Preparedness, Home Safe Home, The Heart of the Caregiver), and added a third title to its CareAble curriculum -- Servant Volunteers in Action. The NCBAM Call Center experienced a 27% increase in calls and a 44% increase in needs met. Seventy hurricane-related calls were handled during hurricanes Florence and Michael. With \$10,000 from Fancy Finds proceeds, NCBAM helped 40 churches increase their ramp outreach during Rampin’ Up 2018! Four Senior Adult Leadership events and three Aging Well Conferences were held across the state. In addition, programming for Caswell and Caraway senior adult retreats was expanded to address more issues relevant to health, safety, and independence. **For more information, visit www.ncbam.org or call 877-506.2226.**

Community Impact Increases through Greater Vision

In 2017, the Tucker Greater Vision Outreach Ministry (GVOM) began making a difference across the state before the new ministry's permanent location was even constructed. Many of the 9,393 lives helped in GVOM's three months of operation experienced loss due to Hurricane Matthew. Today, GVOM, whose purpose is to offer resources to NC families searching for support and stability, is fully operational at its Thomasville headquarters and has created a network of corporate and nonprofit partnerships to meet the variety of community needs.

In 2018, its first full year, GVOM impacted 64,040 lives through the following ways:

- 48,314 meals served
- 14,471 pieces of clothing and 10 items of furniture distributed
- 681 visits (pastors, nonprofits, community groups, etc.) made to increase awareness
- 138 people received gifts for their children through GVOM volunteer efforts at Christmas Toy Store through Memorial United Methodist Church.
- 418 people reached through outreach events (Feeding at the Gazebo, MLK event, etc.). **To donate, volunteer or learn more about services, call 866-904-0060 or visit www.bchfamily.org/greatervision**

BCH President Celebrates Milestones

Michael C. Blackwell, Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) longest-tenured leader, was recognized for his 35 years of service in 2018. During the Family Gathering: Special Edition on June 19, a day of fellowship and worship uniting everyone from BCH's statewide locations, Dr. Blackwell was recognized on stage by staff members. He received a custom piece of artwork, depicting BCH's many ministries, that was specifically created in his honor. Trustees hosted a celebration on October 23 surprising him with the establishment of Blackwell Grove, a commitment by the Board to plant 35 maturing Legacy Maple trees at BCH locations across the state. At the Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention (BSCNC) on November 5, Dr. Blackwell led approximately 150 children, adults and staff for BCH's presentation, entitled One Heart, to messengers. Applause and praises filled the room as children and adults shared their stories of hope through testimony and song. Later, BSCNC Executive Director-Treasurer Milton Hollifield recognized Dr. Blackwell and his wife, Catherine. Hollifield presented Dr. Blackwell with a commemorative plaque and a bouquet of red roses to Mrs. Blackwell celebrating her service as well as her birthday which was also that day.

For more information or to refer someone in need of the Baptist Children's Homes ministry, visit www.bchfamily.org or call 800.476.3669.