Cleveland Daily Banner

‘Youth worth fighting for,’ Holston supporters told

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“The youth of today are worth fighting for,” said University of Tennessee Women’s Athletic Director Emeritus Joan Cronan to attendees of a fundraising luncheon held Wednesday for the Holston United Methodist Home for Children.



L-R: Debra Miller, Nancy Casson, Joan Cronan

The orphanage, founded in 1895, now serves more than 300 children and families on any given day, and provides service centers throughout East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

Cronan’s statement strikes at the heart of Holston Home’s mission as the staff helps youth who find themselves in difficult circumstances and uses Christian teachings and ethics tries to put the youth on paths to better and productive lives.

Event chair and HUMHC trustee Nancy Casson said the home is important to Bradley County as she welcomed everyone to the third annual event at Cleveland First United Methodist Church.

“Currently, we have two of our young men from this area at Holston Home,” Casson said. “Throughout a year’s time, we have had over 30 children and youth served by Holston Home. So, it’s very important we keep supporting” the facility, she said.

Cronan said she “loved” the event to raise money for the home and described an episode that made her think what she might want on her tombstone.

“I thought about it and wrote down I hope it would say I made a difference in young

womens' lives," she said. "That's what I have done all of my career and when you think of what Holston Home does — it makes a difference in young people's lives. "She discussed the temptations faced by youth.

"Today the youth, especially those in Holston Home, have been faced with those almost from birth," Cronan said. "I am here to put the Cronan stamp of approval on Holston Home.

Her example of facing temptations was emotionally portrayed by a group of Holston Home youth who did a musical drama skit to portray a young woman who had lost hope, only to find the promise of a better life in the end.

That is what Holston Home does for young people — it is a place of hope.

HUMHC President Bradley Williams said the best thing people will find at Holston Home "is the kids." He said the home has "a talented team of caring and committed staff and trustees."



Bradley Williams and Joan Cronan

"We remind ourselves all the time that even though it is challenging, we can make good programs and services for kids and their families," Williams said. "It may be challenging, but we can make decisions that help us make sure that we can make our budget month after month."

He said one of the hardest things to make is smiles on the kids at the home.

"The fact is, so many of our young people come to us from really hard places — places that are tough," Williams said. "They come sometimes angry, sad, discouraged, skeptical and running low on hope."

"That's where we get busy. That's our task," he said.

Cronan may have said it best concerning the reason to support Holston Home.

Noting her passion for the sport of tennis, she said, "It is better to serve than to receive."

More information about Holston Home and how to contribute can be found at its website at www.holstonhome.org (http://www.holstonhome.org) or by calling 423-638-4171.