Currie: 'Never Give Up' On Young People

UT Athletic Director Speaks At Holston Home Benefit

BY LISA WARREN
STAFF WRITER

Many things in life will come and go, from fashion trends and computer technology, to near-certain football wins that suddenly end in loss at the end of the fourth quarter.

Yet, University of Tennessee Athletic Director John Currie says there is one thing that will last a lifetime — and that is the impact you can have on a young person.

Currie was in Greeneville

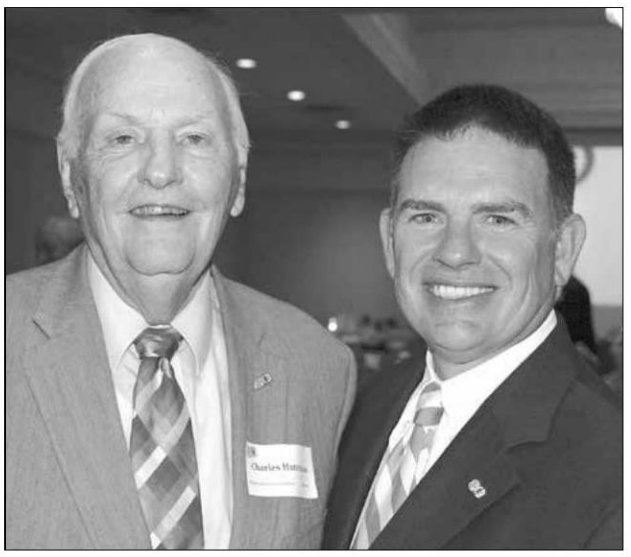
SEE **CURRIE,** PAGE 9A



SUN PHOTO BY LISA WARREN

University of Tennessee Athletic Director John Currie was the keynote speaker at the Holston Home "Friends of Children" benefit dinner on Thursday evening.

FROM 1A



SUN PHOTO BY LISA WARREN

Holston Home Director of Church Relations Charles Hutchins, left, and Holston Home President and CEO Bradley Williams pause after the conclusion of Thursday night's benefit dinner.



SUN PHOTO BY DARREN REESE

University of Tennessee Vice Chancellor and Athletic Director John Currie greets guests before Thursday night's Holston United Methodist Home for Children benefit dinner at the General Morgan Inn.



SUN PHOTO BY DARREN REESE

University of Tennessee Athletic Director John Currie, right, poses with Greene County Circuit Court Judge Thomas Wright, left, and his wife, Dawn, before Thursday's dinner. Tom Wright was the master of ceremonies for the event.

CURRIE

FROM PAGE 1A

on Thursday to serve as the keynote speaker at the 2017 Holston United Methodist Home for Children's "Friends of Children" fundraising dinner.

Like others in Vol Nation, Currie was still reeling from Tennessee's 26-20 loss last Saturday to Florida.

Despite this, the university's athletic director said he remains confident in this season's Tennessee team, which he said has "a never-give-up spirit."

It is this same can-do, never-quit attitude that Currie said he sees in the staff at Greeneville's Holston Home for Children.

"They never give up on a young person who comes there," he said.

"Sometimes it seems hopeless — especially after reading all of the negative statistics [about children in crisis]," Currie continued.

But instead of hearing about how the odds are stacked against those children, Currie said he would rather hear individual stories about those who have beaten the odds.

"You think about that one individual's story, whose life has changed because of the support that he or she had from a place like Holston Home," Currie said.

The theme for the 2017 "Friends of Children" benefit was "A Lasting Difference."

The master of ceremonies for the event was Circuit Court Judge Thomas J. "Tom" Wright, who called Holston Home "a ministry that is making a difference in kids' lives."

As a judge, Wright said that he knows "a little something about families in crisis because that's a lot of what I have dealt with for the past 20 years."

And Holston Home, he said, is "making a difference for a lot of kids who are coming from families in crisis."

"By financially supporting the mission of Holston Home, you are making a difference in the lives of kids," Wright told those gathered for the fundraising dinner.

Longtime Holston Home board member Kent Bewley, who introduced Currie to the benefit dinner crowd, called Holston Home "a wonderful place" — where "God is alive and well."

"There are so many good things going on at Holston Home," Bewley continued. "If you have never been on the campus, you need to go. Kids are being saved and turned in the right direction."

Bewley noted that Holston Home's on-campus, private school had 22 students graduate from high school this past school year.

"Of those, 20 of them were the first in their families to graduate high school," Bewley said. "And all 22 are going on to either college or a technical school," he added.

"Another thing that impresses me about Holston Home is that it has no debt," Bewley said. "All of the money that you give goes directly to the kids. They don't do one project unless they have the money. They have a $13 million budget and they balance it every year," Bewley said.

During the evening, the crowd was entertained by the Holston Home youth choir, led by Abel Carrico, who serves as the director of Christian life.

Holston Home President and CEO Bradley Williams concluded the evening by sharing a few inspirational stories about some of the youth being cared for at Holston Home.

One young man, Williams noted, is at Holston Home awaiting the day when he will have to testify against his own father, who will be standing trial for the abuse and death the teenager's 3-year-old step sister.

While at Holston Home, Williams said that the young man has come to learn about Jesus Christ and has made a profession of faith. He is now a senior in high school and is working a part-time job.

In another story that Williams shared, he read a letter from the granddaughter of a former resident at Holston Home.

In the letter, the granddaughter wrote that her grandmother, who is now 90 years old, was molded her into the woman, wife and mother she became because of the love of God and Holston Home.

"There are 66 members of her family," the granddaughter said, adding that most are highly successful professionals who serve in a variety of careers.

Williams said the children served at Holston Home need somebody "to just be in the gap with them" from where they are — to where they want to go.

"It's an incredible blessing, an incredible honor — but it is also an incredible responsibility," Williams added.

Some days you can help fix a child's problem, but some days you can't, he added.

"Some days you can only just give the child a hug and reassure him or her that better days are coming," Williams said.

While the staff at Holston Home can't change the past circumstances from which a child comes to them, Williams said they can, however, help lead and guide that child and share with them how much God loves them.

"We represent an organization, but more importantly, we represent a heavenly Father that brings hope even in the hardest situations," Williams added.

Pastor and Staff
Appreciation Day is