Holston Happenings
newsletter
Winter 2023



Providing Hope and Healing for a Brighter Future...

A publication of
Holston United Methodist
Home for Children

From the President



HOLSTON HOME'S MISSION:
Holston United Methodist Home for Children provides hope and healing for a brighter future by sharing the love of Jesus with children and families struggling with life's challenges.

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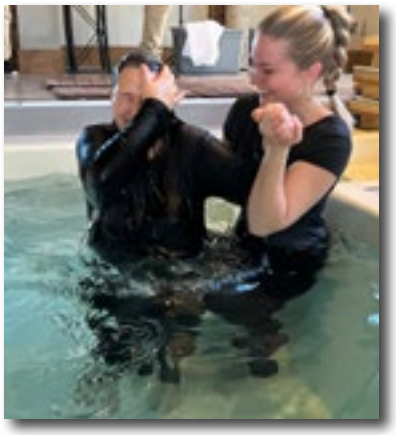
"Hi my name is Jessica. In 2017 I asked God to come into my life. From then on my walk with Christ has been up and down. I was forced to get baptized into a different religion, but I still had my faith. There were so many things happening that I couldn't take it anymore and almost killed myself. When I arrived at Holston I thought it would still be the same. The message that Pastor Abel talked about was how not to lose faith in Christ but to not put your faith in what happens. I'm making the decision to get baptized today because not only am I 18 but I also want to grow with Christ. Today is my choice. The verses Pastor Abel read last week were I Thessalonians 5:16-18 and it says rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. When Pastor Abel was preaching it, I felt that God was really speaking to me. Happy 18th Birthday to me!" *(From Jessica's testimony that she shared before being baptized on her 18th birthday.)*



Today I had the privilege of speaking at one of our corporate sponsor's annual staff meeting. When I arrived, I was pleasantly surprised to see Jessica and our Director of Hospitality, Ella Price, providing the catering services for the meeting. Our catering program allows youth to learn about operating a small business. Jessica was all smiles and doing a wonderful job with customer service. Everyone was very complimentary of the food and the service Jessica provided, and I could tell she felt so proud of herself as she was packing up after the luncheon.

Driving back to the office, I reflected on Holston Home's former President, Art Masker, and how he emphasized God's plans for good and not for harm and His plan to give a future and hope as referenced in Jeremiah 29:11. In the 12 years we worked together I always appreciated how he led us back to that promise, and Jessica had reminded me of it once again. I was thinking about her baptism and seeing her growing into the young woman that God created her to be while also experiencing new and wonderful things in her life.

> *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*
> Jeremiah 29:11

Jessica arrived at Holston Home with her younger brother after a horrific childhood of being victimized by her stepfather. She had been isolated and betrayed in so many ways, and yet still found the strength to smile and pursue meaningful relationships with our staff and her peers. I am always inspired and challenged by this kind of courage and resiliency in our youth.

I remembered her younger brother, Nick, waiting for her to come down from being baptized and how he gave her a hug as she walked across the stage last month graduating from River Academy at its December commencement. I can't help but believe that Jessica is not only finding her way but is showing Nick the way he can go too. This afternoon I added a new memory to my collection as I had just watched this engaging young lady interact with company executives and converse comfortably with those around her because she felt like she belonged and deserved to be there as a daughter of the King.

I am overwhelmed as I watch God use the ministry of Holston Home to reveal His truth found in Psalm 46:1–2 — *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.* Although Satan tries to isolate and destroy children like Jessica through unimaginable traumas and evils, the Lord uses you and our caring staff to bring healing and new life over and over again as He has done for the last 127 years. Thank you for your faithful prayers and generosity! May God richly bless you and your family in 2023 and may we all remember to rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances this new year.



Devin Gets A Forever Family

Hannah Gentry was praying for God to bring a child into her life who needed a forever family and God's timing could not have been more perfect.

When Devin came to the Gentry home, he had a lot of insecurities and questioned if he would really be able to stay at the home or if he would have to leave. Due to being with many different foster families before coming to Holston Home, Devin struggled to trust others and that anything was "forever."

In time, Hannah was able to build trust with Devin and made him feel safe, secure, and loved. She accepted Devin and wrapped her arms around him to help him heal. Not only did Hannah do this but so did all her extended family members.

Although Devin had been calling Hannah his mother for almost a year, it was his time to make the title legal, and best of all, to know that he will always be her son.

So, Devin was adopted by Hannah and officially got his forever family!



Devin not only has a forever mom, but he also has forever grandparents and a multitude of other family members that will embrace him and show him the unconditional love that he has needed for so long.

Please help us celebrate Devin finding his forever family!

Food Truck Community Ministry

We recently partnered with Save the Children to purchase a fully equipped food truck that we have named "Taste and See…" based on Psalm 34:8 which says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!"

Our desire is for the children and families in the community that we feed (at no cost to them) to not only taste and see that our food is good but to also taste and see that the Lord is good.

While we desire to assist families who suffer from food insecurity, our bigger goal is to engage them in authentic relationships that allow us to share the good news of the gospel.

We will be working with community partners in identifying several locations to serve and distribute food to children and their families throughout the year. By having consistent locations, we believe that we will be able to form lasting relationships with families that will promote healthier families and sustained supports, resulting in changed lives for everyone involved.

Your participation would be a huge blessing as we embark on this new adventure. If you would like to partner in this specific effort, we ask that you prayerfully consider giving to help purchase food and provide direct ministry.



OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT

- **BECOME A FOSTER OR ADOPTIVE PARENT.** The need is great and the families are few. Would you prayerfully consider caring for a young person in need of a loving family?
- **BECOME A MENTOR.** Spend at least 1 hour a week and invest in a child's life.
- **GIFTS OF ASSETS.** IRAs, trusts, real estate, stock options, and DAF (donor advised funds).

Please call Susan at 423-787-8753 if you're interested in supporting Holston Home for any of the needs above.

2022 Friends of Children Sponsors

Thank You to our wonderful **Friends of Children** sponsors this past year. We appreciate your giving and generous hearts. You have been a blessing to the young people who we are called to serve.

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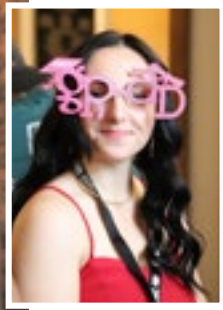
2022 HIGHLIGHTS





Graduation







Fun at the lake



Summer camp week





Pep rally and basketball game — undefeated, championship season!





Christmas festivities



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Home for Children
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To protect the privacy of youngsters in our care, photographs of children in this publication may or may not represent actual youth residing here.

Watch our new promotional video at holstonhome.org/overview-video

Next 5th Sunday is April 30, 2023

A Glimpse of History

Today when we need food or clothing, we make a trip to the local supermarket or department store. It has not always been so!

I remember when people had large gardens and orchards, sufficient to feed their families during the summer and preserve enough to last through the winter months. Clothing – everything from shirts and dresses to undergarments – was sewn, usually by the mother or the older girls in the home.

In that scenario, try to imagine what it must have been like to provide food and clothing for the hundreds of children who lived at Holston Orphanage. The boys who worked on the farm, usually with one man to supervise and help them, worked a garden to grow vegetables and cared for an orchard to provide fruit. They had to depend on the generosity of people across East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia to share the produce from their gardens, their chickens, and eggs. All the children helped can or otherwise preserve enough to get through the winter months. Area merchants brought flour, meal, and other staples. A dairy herd was kept, and the boys milked the cows.



Visit us online **www.holstonhome.org** as well as on Facebook and Instagram

Girls learned early how to sew and made much of the clothing worn by the children. It was part of the matrons' responsibilities to teach the girls to sew, cook, and clean. There were very few adults working at the orphanage and the children had to carry the load.

As if gardening, canning, and sewing weren't enough to keep the children busy when they were not in school, the superintendent reported in 1915 that they were also "cutting cord wood, posts, sawing lumber off the new land, and making brick as well as running the farm. Whenever a new building was needed the bricks were made by the boys."

There was no shortage of work, and I imagine that when evening came, there was no problem getting the children to go to bed.

–Eva Grey Hutchins