



**Epworth**  
Children's Home

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**we live CARE**

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www.epworthchildrenshome.org

Rev. John. E. Holler, Jr.  
President

*\*Children's names have been changed for confidentiality.*

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**The mission of Epworth Children's Home is to serve children, youth and families through a caring, accepting and safe Christian community, where hurts are healed; hope is nurtured; and faith in God, self and others is developed.**

The youth from Latta United Methodist Church arrived at Epworth Children's Home on Saturday, September 11, ready to work. They washed all the campus vehicles, trimmed hedges and cleaned both the recreation center and the sanctuary. They worked all day Saturday, spent the night in the McNabb House on campus and worshipped at Epworth Memorial UMC on Sunday morning.

*An Epworth "Church Spotlight"*



"This was the hardest working group of youth! I really enjoyed spending the weekend with them," said Beth Caskey, Hospitality Coordinator at Epworth Children's Home. "Not only did they bring a spirit of 'work,' but they had also raised more than \$1,200 for the ministry."

Our special thanks to Ms. Vicki Phillips and the entire Latta UMC community for sharing of themselves for the children who call Epworth home.  
Together we live **CARE** for God's Children!

# The Record

News from Epworth Children's Home



"Good morning Deanna\*, welcome to worship," has been Pastor Megan Gray's greeting to Deanna every Sunday morning for more than a year. Pastor Megan, campus pastor at Epworth Children's Home, made a point of welcoming Deanna despite the high pitched screams and wordless expressions of pain she received each time Deanna walked into the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. Deanna was seven years old when she arrived at Epworth. She had experienced significant abuse and trauma in her life. She rarely spoke, and when she was asked to do something out of her norm, she screamed and thrashed her arms and body about in anger.

## A Voice of Love

This pattern of behavior continued through the fall, the 2009 Christmas season and into the spring semester of school. During the semester Deanna began running with a group of third to fifth grade girls from Epworth in the Girl's on the Run program. The volunteer assigned to run with Deanna, ran faithfully next to her, but for the most part Deanna did not speak to her.

Over time, the staff and volunteers at Epworth have exposed Deanna to events ranging from regular Bible study to the State Fair, and along the way, Deanna has become less hostile and more verbal. Just this week, on the way into worship, Pastor Megan looked at Deanna and gave her traditional welcome, "Good morning Deanna, welcome to worship." Deanna looked at Pastor Megan and said, "I want to be an angel in the Christmas program. I want a speaking part." Once Pastor Megan recovered from the shock, she felt proud. Deanna is finding her voice and during Christmas this year, she will be speaking words of love and hope as she uses her voice to tell the story of God's love for all the world.



# Works of Art

A Message from The Rev. John Holler  
President

Michelangelo is reported to have said that inside every block of stone or marble dwells a beautiful statue; one only need remove the excess material to reveal the work of art within.

It always seems to be the “excess material” that keeps us from living and experiencing life as creatively and productively as possible. Often we may find ourselves confined by habits, patterns of thoughts and actions, that prevent us from reaching anything close to our full potential.

The children who live here at Epworth arrive figuratively as “prisoners in blocks of stone.” The excess materials of neglect, abuse, loss, shame and hopelessness constrict the life potential of many of our children so tightly it seems there is hardly room for breath.

That is why we spend so much time, energy and resources’ chipping away at the stone to remove whatever is in the way of each child becoming the work of art he or she was created to be.

If you listen closely you can almost hear it: “chip, chip” –

- “You are not flawed, you are a work of art.”
- “Don’t spend too much time looking back; focus on your possibilities.”
- “Past failure is not an excuse. Learn. Education is your passport.”
- “If you need help then ask for it, but eventually you will have to learn to do it yourself.”
- “The world does not owe you a living. It is your life so make the most of it by taking advantage of your opportunities.”
- “Experience may tell you that no one really cares, but if you can take the risk of opening your heart you will find many who do.”

• “Life may have shouted to you that you will never amount to anything, but you have capabilities that you have never dreamed of. You can do things you never thought you could do. There are no limitations to what you can do except the limitations of your own mind.”

Every day, hour after hour the work continues of chipping away and revealing glimpses of hidden masterpieces, living, breathing works of art.



## Volunteer your CARE

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer? We have opportunities for groups and individuals to serve as cottage partners or mentors, or you can help with grounds, maintenance or office work. Contact Beth Caskey at 803-256-7394 or [bcaskey@epworthsc.org](mailto:bcaskey@epworthsc.org) to register for an upcoming CARE Volunteer Training Session:

- Tuesday, November 9th at 6:30 PM
- Tuesday, December 14th at 6:30 PM
- Tuesday, January 11th at 6:30 PM
- Tuesday, February 8th at 6:30 PM

If a group in your church or office would like to volunteer together, we can bring the CARE Volunteer Information Session to you. Simply talk with Ms. Caskey about this opportunity, because together we live CARE for every child who calls Epworth home.

## Volunteer “Spotlight”

To a young lady living in Dantzler Cottage, Lauren Truslow is, “Da bomb!” Lauren began as a volunteer over the summer — full speed ahead and has not stopped since.

On any given week, you will find Lauren teaching yoga, beautifying the campus, teaching the girls how to make healthy snacks, taking them to learn how to grocery shop and even inviting the entire cottage over to her home for a special birthday celebration for each and every young lady.

“Ms. Lauren took all of us to her house for my birthday. Well, she does that for all the girls, and I got to decide what we would all eat for dinner. She even gave us napkins made out of fabric that you wash after you use them, and they had these pretty little circle things to keep them neat before you use them. She said they are napkin rings. I’ve never seen that before.” \*Michelle, a resident in Dantzler Cottage.

Most recently, Lauren invited nine of her friends and colleagues to the Abundant CARE Benefit Luncheon on October, 19th to help financially support the CARE provided to the children.

“We are grateful to have Lauren as a volunteer. She is a strong female role model for the young ladies in Dantzler. They adore her and she them,” said Mitzie Schafer, Director of Development. “As we move forward with our new Volunteer initiative, I look forward to welcoming more folks like Lauren to our Volunteer CARE Team.”





## The Epworth Society of 1896

Betty L. Bruner, long time friend and champion of the children of Epworth, died August 25, 2010. Prior to her death Betty ensured that her concern for the children of Epworth would be demonstrated throughout the coming years.

Betty Bruner established the Bruner Charitable Remainder Unitrust, and requested that at her death a percentage of this unitrust was to be added to the undesignated permanent endowment fund of Epworth Children's Home. In so doing, she became a member of the Epworth Society of 1896.

We at Epworth celebrate Betty's life of dedicated service to her church and community and are most grateful for her generosity to the children who call Epworth home.

*A legacy of CARE*

*"Yes, um, someone said my son can come and live there until I get back on my feet?"*



It takes a lot for a family to realize and admit that they need help. It is embarrassing and scary. They fear losing the respect of their child, custody and more—their relationship with their child. \*Terry's father took a chance when he called Epworth. Encouraged by the guidance counselor at the local middle school, Terry's father contacted Deb Keller, Intake Coordinator at Epworth Children's Home to see if we could help. He had lost his job, his family had fallen apart and he wasn't sure how he would continue to feed his son.

When Terry arrived at Epworth with his father for the initial interview, the soles of his shoes were glued on with Gorilla Glue. He looked exhausted. This 12-year-old young man had watched his family fall apart, and for him this was the bottom. His father was sending him away, because there was nothing else he could do.

Terry was clear with everyone in the room that he did not want to leave home. He did not want to live in a "group home." After a tour of campus and some time with Ms. Keller and other staff members, Terry looked at his father and said, "I don't want to be here, but at least it's clean and they have a kitchen. I know I'll have more than a frozen dinner to eat."

Terry, represents 20% of the children living at Epworth Children's Home today. Their parents are at the end of their rope. They have no where else to turn. Whether it is the result of the economy, addictions, death or any other unforeseeable loss—they need help managing their children and keeping them safe. When they place their children at Epworth, they do not lose custody of them. They are invited to family counseling sessions and they can visit their children on a regular basis. It is Epworth's goal to reunite them and help restore the family and their dignity.



The first ever...

*Abundant CARE*

Benefit Luncheon



On Tuesday, October 19th, 2010 more than 225 guests joined the staff of Epworth Children's Home for the first ever Abundant CARE Benefit Luncheon. Faithful volunteers of Epworth served as Table Hosts and invited others in the community to join their table to raise awareness and financial support for the ministry Epworth provides to children.

Guests were welcomed by Rev. Frank Griffith, Chair of the Board of Trustees, after which they enjoyed a delicious chicken salad plate catered by Southern Way. The highlight of the meal was of course, Epworth's famous Peanut-Butter Ice Cream for dessert. After the meal, the Rev. John Holler, President and CEO of Epworth Children's Home, shared the level of commitment needed to provide abundant care for each child that resides at Epworth, and how that CARE is making a difference in the life of \*Julie. Julie, along with two other children from Epworth, designed and colored art that was used as a placemat for each of the guests.

Following Rev. Holler, the Rev. Ken Nelson, former resident of Epworth Children's Home and currently the Congregational Specialist ELCC for the Conference, spoke about how Epworth was the place where he discovered he had, "spiritual worth." After the event, guests spoke very highly of Rev. Nelson, and greatly enjoyed the message he had to share.

After Rev. Nelson's message, guests heard from several of the children and youth currently living at Epworth as they watched the new Epworth Abundant CARE video. The mood of the event was one of compassion and understanding. Epworth welcomed new friends and supporters to the ministry, and is pleased to announce the total raised at the event exceeded \$47,000 to support the direct care of the children who call this beautiful place home.

The first ever Abundant CARE Benefit Luncheon was such a huge success, that there are plans to host a second luncheon in the spring, on March 29th. If you are interested in serving as a table host for the event, please contact Mitzie Schafer, Director of Development at 803-256-7394. There is room for 25 table hosts at this event, and attendance is by invitation only.

"I had no idea that Epworth was even here, but now—to know the level of care you provide to the children—wow! I can't wait to get more involved. I want to be a part of helping change the lives of the children. Thank you for what you do for each and every one of them." *Janice, a guest of the luncheon.*

*Our thanks to the table hosts and guests who made this such a wonderful event.*

Holiday happenings are fast upon us, which always causes the staff of Epworth Children's Home to pause. The holidays are more often than not a difficult time for the children of Epworth. When the staff visit with the children to ask their "Christmas wish," they hear echoes of hurt. "I want my family back for Christmas. I want to spend Christmas with my mom. Can Santa make my parents better?"

Jaden\*, on the day he arrived at Epworth, was asked by Mrs. Deb Keller, Intake Coordinator, what he would like to put on his wish list for Santa. Jaden simply looked at her and replied, "I don't need to do that, because Santa never finds me. My mama says we move too much." Mrs. Keller tried to assure him that Santa always finds children at Epworth, but he didn't seem convinced. He completed his Christmas list with little hope.

While much of the world gathers together with close friends and family for the holidays, this time is a reminder to the children of what they have lost.

While knowing this is an honest reality for the children, never the less, staff and volunteers work hard to make the holidays a positive, memorable time for the children. Some of the children will return home for the holidays, others for Thanksgiving or Christmas day, and a few for the entire school holiday. For those who remain on campus, the calendar is full.

# The Season of Giving

## The Children Give Back

Last year the children of Epworth enjoyed with great wonder Union United Methodist's Live Nativity. This year the boys in Haas Cottage who are middle school age, have decided they want to do their own version of this live nativity for the community. They have enlisted the other children on campus and it promises to be a heart-warming and "surprising" event.

In addition, the children will be performing their annual Christmas Pageant which is followed by Christmas Dinner and a Christmas Tree Lighting service. The community is welcome to join us. Please RSVP to Ms. Beth Caskey at 803-256-7394 or [bcaskey@epworthsc.org](mailto:bcaskey@epworthsc.org).

### The "Christmas with Epworth" Calendar:

- Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>  
7:00 AM - 7:00 PM..... **Santa's Workshop** (Gift drop off)
- Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>  
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM..... **Live Nativity** by the children
- Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>  
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM..... **Live Nativity** by the children
- Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup> ..... **Silent Night**  
5:00 PM . Children's Christmas Pageant (In the Sanctuary)  
6:00 PM ..... Christmas Dinner for the whole community  
6:45 PM ..... Epworth Christmas Tree Lighting

## Thanksgiving with the Gamecocks

For the last two years the University of South Carolina Football Team has joined the children at Epworth on Thanksgiving Day. The players gather with the children for turkey, dressing, pumpkin pie and of course a little football before they head off to their big game with Clemson. This year, the team has invited the children to the stadium on Thanksgiving Day. Our special thanks to the team members and to Coach Spurrier for sharing their Thanksgiving with the children of Epworth.