

The Record

News from Epworth Children's Home



Look at Becca Now

To look at Becca* now, you would think that she is just a typical 14 year old girl. She loves dancing and listening to music. She spends her spare time getting her make-up just right so everything is perfect when the opportunity presents itself for a selfie. Everything seems normal now, but Becca's journey has been anything but typical.

A little over a year ago, Becca's mother reached out to Epworth desperate for answers. They lived in a small town in South Carolina's PeeDee Region. She was a single mother, and despite her repeated best attempts to provide for Becca she was in need of help. After talking with Epworth for a period of weeks, it became clear that the best choice for the struggling family was for Becca to come to Epworth for at least one year. With tears in their eyes, Becca's mother drove to Columbia to do what was best for her beloved daughter.

When Becca arrived at Epworth she was about to celebrate her 13th birthday. These formative early teenage years are critical to the long term trajectory of a child's life. Her mother and the Epworth staff recognized that. She arrived at Epworth very timid and shy. She struggled to make friends and when her cottage staff talked to her she would withdraw, seemingly into her own world. The staff would let Becca have her space and eventually she would come back out of her shell. The cycle would repeat constantly, but slowly the space began to widen between her periods of withdrawal.

By the time winter rolled around, Becca's demeanor had changed dramatically. She was less shy and withdrawn, but she replaced some of those behaviors with others that were not always healthy. She looked to the other seven girls in the cottage to guide her in

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Generation After Generation

Fall 2017

A Message from The Rev. John Holler
President

Noise was coming from the hallway downstairs. I stopped what I was working on, and went to investigate. As I drew closer to the source of the sounds I could hear laughter, excited speech, and more laughter. Epworth's Independent Living staff members, and those who were assisting them, were packing to move to their newly refurbished building on the new Trenholm Road campus. They were having quite a time packing and discarding and kidding one another about what was going to happen once they moved to the new campus. I thought I had walked into the middle school girl's cottage by mistake. I smiled, shook my head and walked back upstairs.

A few weeks and one hurricane later, Mrs. Brandes, Mrs. Coleman, and Ms. Gee are in their new offices and the Independent Living residents and supervising staff have moved into their studio apartments. The residents are comprised of young people who are between the ages of 18 and twenty-three, and are pursuing higher education degrees, job training opportunities, or other career related goals.

Independent Living programs are a new concept for many agencies, and state and federal support for such programs is even newer. Epworth has had a successful Higher Education and Independent Living program for many years. The move to the new campus not only is a recognition of the program's success but it also enables Epworth to expand its capacity to serve additional students, and offer a wider variety of targeted services. We celebrate the energy and innovation of program director Laurie Brandes, and her case workers Iesha Gee, and Lucille Coleman in bringing the Center for Independent Living to this level of achievement.

As I walk past another part of our campus there is an uncommon silence. It is the silence of children who are not able to benefit from the Epworth experience. Because of a federal judicial ruling children who are removed from their homes and are in DSS care can no longer be placed in homes like Epworth if the children are age 12 and under. This means that some children are sent to inferior placements in order to meet the mandates of the lawsuit settlement agreement.

Epworth is in the process of increasing the number of private placements. Private placements are children who are placed at Epworth by their family members because the family is in a situation where the family needs the kinds of assistance that Epworth can provide. The 12 and under rule only applies to children placed by DSS.

When a private placement is made there is usually no funding source that helps cover the costs of care. With DSS or public placements there is a daily board payment that helps pay a portion of the costs of care. So, during this period of transition of accepting more private placements and raising the additional funds to cover the costs, there will continue to be an uncomfortable "quiet" on one part of our campus.

In another portion of our campus, a new sound is being heard. The sounds of excited case workers and new foster parents receiving their children. The new Center for Foster Family Engagement is up and running. Epworth staff members under the direction of Erinne Rodgers, who heads this new initiative, are speaking to groups about foster parenting. Church groups have been especially welcoming to our speakers.

At this point the first group of foster parents has been recruited, licensed, received their children, and are being actively trained and mentored by Epworth staff and volunteers.

There are different sounds every day, year, and decade at Epworth, but the sounds that never change are the sounds of care. "You can do it." "You are a child of God." "We all make mistakes. Let's try that again." "That's it. You've got it."

It is the same generation after generation. It is the consistency of investing in people that matters and sets the stage for change.

almost everything she did. She would follow them and do whatever they were up to, even if it was mischief. Along the way there were some outbursts of anger, some damaged items around the cottage, and a struggle to recognize the good from the bad.

However, things started to turn around in the springtime. She and her mother completed Epworth's family therapy program and together they worked on some of the issues the family was having before Becca came to Epworth. They also discussed the good opportunities that were in front of them. Throughout it all, they talked multiple times a week and even did weekend visits and spent spring break together. Coming out of family therapy and with her cottage staff continuing to encourage her, Becca turned the corner in May.

At the time, it looked like she may fail the 7th grade. With encouragement and extra work at Epworth's on-campus tutoring center, Becca started to apply herself more at school. In just one-month she pulled every grade up to passing. She took a picture of her grades and sent it to her mother. Everyone was thrilled.



At the end of the school year, she received a letter that said she earned seven dollars in her Epworth "savings account." She was confused so she asked how she got that seven dollars. It turns out she earned a high enough grade to earn Epworth's academic incentive for the first time all year. She was ecstatic! Then she promptly started dreaming of all of the ways she could spend her seven dollars.

Heading into summer the staff looked for ways to harness and direct her energy into positive and productive outlets. They enrolled her and two of her friends in a weeklong, overnight summer camp at Asbury Hills in the South Carolina mountains. Becca had never been to camp before but she was excited for a new experience. She asked a lot of questions and did her research about camp but then suddenly became very nervous when she discovered that camp included a ropes course. She was terrified of heights and promised to everyone in the car ride to the mountains that no matter what happened at camp, there was no way her feet were leaving the ground.

At the end of the week, the Epworth staff returned to camp to pick the girls up and everyone was full of smiles and laughter. They told stories of their new friends from around the state, the counselors that helped make the week special, and then bragged about how everyone, even Becca, completed the high ropes course.

As summer ended, Becca spent a couple of weeks at home with her mother before returning to Epworth at the start of the school year. The change in Becca from the year before was almost jarring. The shy, withdrawn girl transformed into an outgoing and confident young lady. She was once frail and small in stature compared to her peers, but now she was healthy and active. She recently volunteered to be an acolyte at church on Sunday morning. She is already begging for a summer job next year so she can earn some extra spending money.

Becca began the eighth grade with enthusiasm and through the first weeks she is earning great grades in every class. She is practicing basketball and is trying out for the middle school team this year. However, her try-out was almost delayed when she found out that the sports physical included a finger prick, another one of her biggest fears. The staff promised her a sushi dinner if she let the nurse prick her finger, and it was just enough of an incentive to convince her to go through with the test and conquer another fear in her life.

Becca and her family are still working through exactly what the future looks like, but she is on the right track for success and is looking forward to her teenage years with optimism. With each passing day as she looks in the mirror to get that mascara just right, Becca is transforming her life. As she transforms, an entire community stands behind her. Becca's care is 100% funded by the donations of people from around South Carolina. She has been given this new chance at a better life because of the generous donations that support the mission of Epworth. And with that support, her outlook on life has never looked better.

Eddie Dunlap: Still Making a Difference at Epworth

For over a century, Epworth Children's Home has not only provided a safe haven for children who have been abused and neglected, but has also helped to instill in them a sense of their own inner strength and courage, as well as the potential to fill their own lives with joy and optimism. Many of Epworth's children have already been required at a young age to overcome significant obstacles, and their ability to be optimistic and joyful as they grow is an amazing testament to the human spirit.

Recently, Epworth has had the honor and good fortune to have an endowment fund established as a memorial to Edward Joseph Dunlap (Eddie), a man who exhibited and incorporated these qualities of strength, joy, and optimism in his own life. The Edward Joseph Dunlap Memorial Endowment Fund, established by Eddie's parents, Bruce and Carole, will help to provide for the care and enrichment of Epworth's children for years to come. An aspect of this gift that makes it especially fitting is the opportunity it provides for so many people to learn about what a special person Eddie was. The esteem and admiration that so many people who crossed paths with Eddie Dunlap had for him is amazing. Many have commented on Eddie's natural compassion for others and his unselfishness in reaching out to provide a helping hand and encouragement when he saw someone in need. Bruce Dunlap, Eddie's father, commented that "Once Eddie personally met someone, he knew them for life."

A medical emergency at birth caused Eddie to live with a handicap all his life. However, his personal zest for life, his love for other people, and his inherent optimism allowed Eddie to live a life that was, according to his older sister, Heather, "never limited... Eddie had this life thing figured out." Carole Dunlap, Eddie's mother, remembers her son's strength and courage: "Eddie was courageous; he tried new things all the time and never complained." Her recollections include Eddie's ability to touch the lives of those around him, how he was a true "people person" who loved meeting new people and interacting in all kinds of ways in his community.

During his adult years, Eddie worked at the USC print shop, the Caroliniana Library, and as a service clerk at Publix. His co-workers remember Eddie as unfailingly polite, enthusiastic, and always friendly. His manager at Publix commented on Eddie's popularity with customers and the way he inherently connected with people from all walks of life. Unable to drive or ride a bike due to his disability, Eddie walked or took the city bus everywhere he went, and this afforded him the opportunity to not only exhibit his independence, but also to become a part of the fabric of life in Columbia.

According to Bruce Dunlap, "Eddie was dealt a big deck of cards, but he always made the best out of life." Bruce remembers Eddie's sense of adventure and his continual outreach in the community: "He loved USC sports and would take the bus to and from games. He went to the Columbia Art Museum, went to local plays, and even acted in plays at Shandon United Methodist Church where he was a member."

In Eddie's life at Shandon Methodist, he was an active volunteer in various church outreach activities. This included service work at Epworth, where he participated in several service projects. In an article that Eddie wrote for his church's newsletter titled "Making a Difference at Epworth," he commented that "I have had the wonderful opportunity to work on renovating three cottages at Epworth Children's Home... When the boys came back in to see the work we did renovating their home, the room was lit up with their excitement about the work we did for them and the gratitude they showed us in return was immeasurable." Eddie's volunteerism had actually begun when he was a teen, as a member of Union United Methodist Church in Irmo, SC.

Both of Eddie's parents remember a particular incident that captured Eddie's spirit of living as well as his determination not to let his disability define him. His mother commented that sometimes Eddie was bullied during his school years by other students because of his handicap. She recalled that he would come home from school and relate his frustration and sadness about being the target of this bullying. However, when the time came for his 20th high school reunion at Irmo High School, Eddie was not only enthusiastic about attending the



Eddie's parents created an endowment fund in his memory so that his legacy of giving back to the children at Epworth will continue.



Eddie was no stranger to the Epworth campus, including attending the Epworth Alumni Association's Cook-out for Kids barbeque fundraiser in the springtime.



Eddie volunteered with his church, Shandon UMC, to help renovate three cottages at Epworth. Eddie loved seeing the reaction of the residents after the renovation was complete.

event, but also made quite a statement about his confidence in himself and his own sense of self. Carole Dunlap remembers that to her surprise, “Eddie chose to wear a tuxedo to the event, certainly not the normal attire for an informal class reunion.” His father said that this was “Eddie’s unique expression to his fellow students that he had found himself, was proud of the life he had created for himself.” Both parents remember Eddie’s happiness and satisfaction that at the reunion, his fellow classmates greeted him warmly and several even apologized for their adolescent treatment of him. According to Carole Dunlap, “They gave him validation that they respected the life he had created for himself.”

In his eulogy, Eddie was described as a person who did not let anything get in his way in leading a happy, fulfilling life. Friends often spoke of Eddie’s ability to live to the fullest, and not be frustrated or defeated by the obstacles he faced and ultimately overcame. Many who knew Eddie described his joy for living, his always-ready smile, his generosity of spirit, and his absolutely genuine love of his fellow man. Adjectives used widely and repeatedly by friends in describing Eddie include caring, loving, warm, unfailingly kind, steadfast, courageous, and full of joy.

Epworth was not the only direct beneficiary of Eddie Dunlap’s sense of service to others. He volunteered in many capacities over the years all around Columbia. He gave of his time and his heart in working with many of his church’s other outreach programs. The Richland County Public Library and Harvest Hope Food Bank were also lucky to have enjoyed Eddie’s help as a volunteer. His legacy of service to others is a fine example for children at Epworth to follow.

To honor their son, Bruce and Carole established the Edward Joseph Dunlap Memorial Endowment Fund at Epworth that will help provide for programs, services, enrichment activities, and other initiatives for the children at Epworth of all ages. In addition to monetary gifts made by Eddie’s parents, family, and friends, Bruce and Carole also made a real estate gift in the form of Eddie’s condominium. The proceeds of the apartment sale, along with the other monetary gifts, have provided initial funding for the Edward Joseph Dunlap Memorial Endowment Fund.

The enthusiasm and positive spirit that Eddie exhibited all his life will be embodied in the special help to Epworth’s children that the fund created by Carole and Bruce Dunlap in Eddie’s memory will provide. In addition to being a tangible reminder of Eddie’s legacy, this endowed fund will have a huge impact in helping children who call Epworth their home to have enriching experiences, positive interaction with others, and opportunities to see life’s joys from new perspectives, much like Eddie Dunlap did himself. The memorial fund is a most fitting way to honor the memory of a very special man.

For more information on how you can support Epworth’s endowment with a current or planned gift, please contact Andrew Boozer, Vice President for Development at 803-256-7394 or aboozer@epworthsc.org.

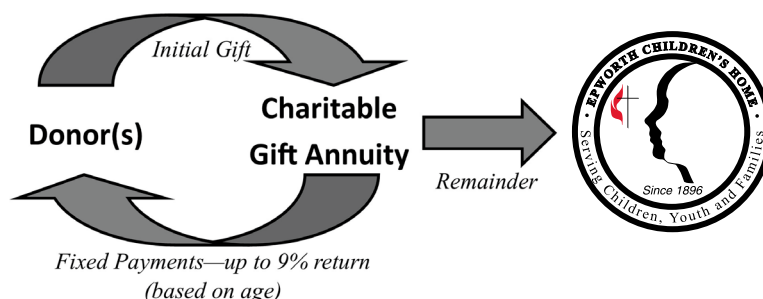
Planned Giving: Charitable Gift Annuity

Epworth's new charitable gift annuity program allows you to receive a guaranteed lifetime rate of return of as high as 9% (based upon your age) in return for your gift to Epworth. Here are some of the advantages of the gift annuity:

- You can substantially increase your income -- and your spouse's income -- for life.
- Much of your income from the gift annuity will be treated as tax-free income to you.
- You will receive a significant income tax charitable contribution deduction, based upon your age, the rate of return and other factors.
- If you contribute appreciated stock, any capital gains will be favorably treated.
- Your gift annuity will benefit Epworth Children's Home – and the needs of so many deserving children.

Your rate of return from the gift annuity is fixed for life at the time you make your gift. Your income payments can be distributed to you on a monthly, quarterly, or other periodic basis.

For additional information – including a free example – please contact Andrew Boozer, Vice President for Development at 803-256-7394 or aboozer@epworthsc.org.



"Instead of raising children who turn out okay despite their childhood, let's raise children who turn out extraordinary because of their childhood."

-LR Knost

Be a Foster Parent

Visit epworthchildrenshome.org to learn how you can become a licensed Foster Parent for a child in need.



Anderson Cottage Jumps Aboard the Fitness Train

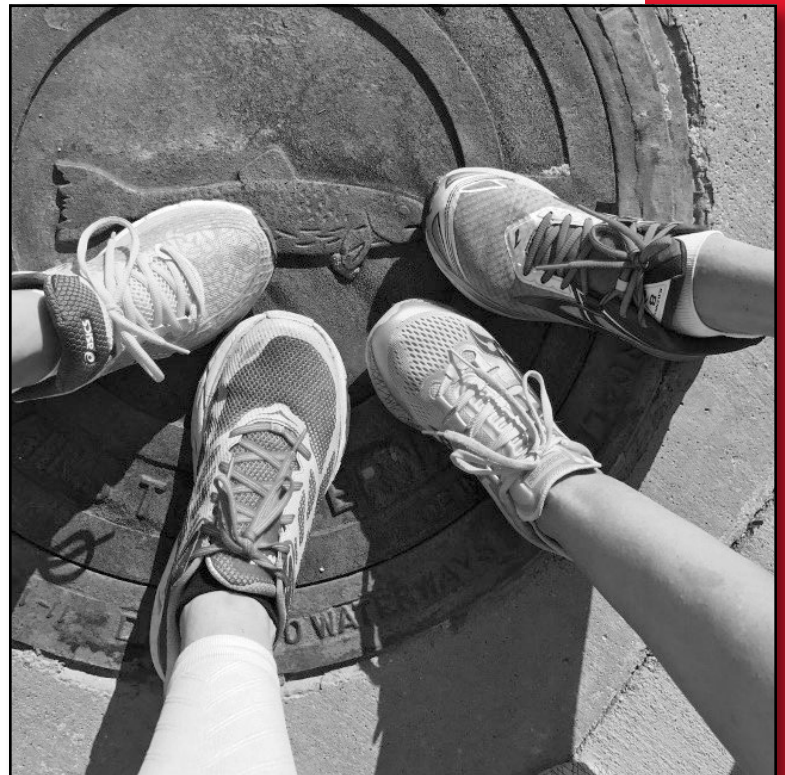
When summer ends and the school year begins, the pace of daily life changes for the residents at Epworth. The summer jobs and basketball leagues come to an end. Trips to the beach, the lake and outdoor festivals no longer fill the weekend schedule. The dirty, smelly backpacks full of camping supplies are switched out for fresh new bookbags and school supplies. It is a familiar routine that happens every year.

However this year, the eight teenage girls in Anderson cottage added another change to their list—time to get healthy! As the new school year was beginning, the girls decided at a cottage meeting that they wanted to get in shape this year. Collectively these high school juniors and seniors decided they would take intentional steps to live healthier lives and make fitness a priority.

As the girls began exercising frequently, the staff at Epworth looked for opportunities to help the girls achieve their goals. At least once a week the girls travel to the City of Columbia's Drew Wellness Center to work out together. Almost every weekend, and sometimes multiple times per weekend, they travel to the nearby Müv Fitness gym to take classes. They have done yoga and Zumba classes, as well as an intense cardio workout called "Body Attack" and a weight lifting program called "Body Pump." On days when they cannot make it to a gym for a work out class, the girls jog together as a group around campus or at a nearby park.

The girls also get a work out on Sunday afternoons when the Columbia Junior League hosts a fitness event for all of the girls on Epworth's campus. These volunteers from around the city lead fun and energetic exercises and also provide a healthy Sunday dinner for the girls.

As the girls exercise as a group, some individuals have begun additional individual fitness activities. One young lady is taking dance lessons while another is on the volleyball team at school. Everyone is staying busy and active while they complete their high school studies and secure those first part-time jobs. The skills and habits they are learning now will prepare them for a healthy and promising future.





Epworth
Children's Home

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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.

Follow-up: Center for Independent Living Opens at New Campus

The first Epworth residents moved onto Epworth's new second campus when the **Center for Independent Living** officially opened its doors in September. Epworth renovated two of the buildings on the former campus of Carolina Children's Home off of Trenholm Road in Columbia to be new dormitory-style residences for young people who have finished high school and are over the age of 18.

Epworth provides this dormitory to residents over 18 as they progress in their educational and/or career training goals. While in the program the residents receive case management support, scholarships and tuition assistance, and life skills training to help each young person achieve independence. The new dormitories also house program staff offices, individual and group study areas, fully equipped kitchens, and communal lounge areas. Funds from Richland County Community Development Office directly supported the renovation efforts and provided support for the Center for Independent Living. Combined with additional private gifts and hundreds of volunteer hours, the buildings are now ready for use. The renovation of these two buildings provided for an urgent need to expand housing and services for these older residents. The first phase of opening the new campus now houses two new centers: Independent Living and Foster Family Recruitment, Licensing and Training.

