

The Record

News from Epworth Children's Home



New Beginnings

“Happy Birthday dear Micah, Happy Birthday to you!” A room full of kids, along with Micah’s favorite Epworth caregivers erupted in cheers as he blew out his first birthday candles and smashed his cake. However, the loudest cheer and biggest smile in the room came from his proud mom, Michelle.

Life hasn’t always been easy for 32-year-old Michelle, and she had to hit rock bottom before she could pull herself back up again. In the spring of 2022, she found herself homeless with a three-month-old baby, addicted to drugs and living in a home with no running water or electricity. Michelle lost everything very quickly. The Department of Social Services (DSS) discovered the deplorable conditions that Micah and his mother were living

in, intervened immediately and removed him from her care. Micah was placed in the state’s foster care system.

Michelle was not willing to lose her child permanently. At her first court hearing the case worker with DSS saw Michelle’s devastation and her determination and mentioned a unique program at Epworth Children’s Home, the Family Care Center (FCC). The FCC is the only program of its kind in the state and is a residential facility for mothers with substance use disorders. The program allows mothers and their children to live together in a safe and comfortable environment while working towards long-term recovery and family strengthening.

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After a Successful 2022, Epworth looks ahead to a Shining 2023

Winter 2023

A Message from Beth Williams
President

Someone recently voiced the phrase to me, “New Year, new you.” It’s true--many of us think of developing new strategies for improving our lives when the calendar turns on New Year’s Day. At the beginning of a new year, we reflect on our previous year and set goals for the new one. At Epworth, we are working toward a “new you” on many levels daily. It may be working with the youth and families through supporting them in becoming the best version of themselves, updating our campus to create a safe and welcoming community, or continuing to evolve to meet the needs of communities through our new programming and our expansion throughout the state. With Epworth’s growth, looking at the new year ahead of us brings exciting visions of the services and programs we are developing to deliver to children and families all across South Carolina.

Before we look forward, I would like to share a few exciting things that happened in 2022. In the fall, we successfully launched our Lowcountry coastal office that will serve Beaufort County and the surrounding areas for foster care and counseling services. We are currently licensing foster families in the area and are excited to grow foster care in Beaufort County. With the addition of this office, along with our other regional offices, we can now serve all regions of the state. With the support received in 2022, we have been able to assist over 260 foster children in individual foster homes statewide.

We also saw growth in 2022 with our prevention programs. Epworth was awarded a fourth grant from the Department of Social Services to provide intensive family stabilization services to Florence and the surrounding counties. We are building the staff and infrastructure for the program and have already begun providing services to families. Epworth is delighted to share that we are working to keep children and youth from coming into institutionalized care by stabilizing families who are in crisis and helping them learn the parenting skills and strategies to keep their families intact, while at the same time providing them with support and guidance. Our expansion in prevention services did not stop there. We partnered with 15 agencies statewide to offer Circle of Parents® support groups. These groups provide an opportunity for

parents and caregivers to come together and discuss daily struggles they encounter in their families and navigate solutions. Parents in the program provide support to one another through the sharing of their common challenges and successes. These groups are anonymous in nature and parent led. This program is a new one, but its innovative method of allowing parents to come together to discuss their mutual parenting experiences is proving to be most successful.

Over the past few years, Epworth has evolved to include many new programs and service areas that address the needs of children, older youth, and their families all across

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Volunteer Spotlight

Covington McPherson is a senior at Greenville High School and is currently in the final stages of completing his Eagle Scout rank with the Boy Scouts of America. He is a member of Troop #9 with Buncombe Street United Methodist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. In order to receive the Eagle Scout rank, a scout must complete a multi-step process, that includes the completion of an Eagle Scout Service Project. Covington, along with his troop, recently completed his project on Epworth's campus by designing and building a seating area for our residents that included Adirondack chairs and a swing set. Here's what Covington shared with Epworth about his Eagle Scout project and his hope for it to benefit the residents on our campus.

Q: What made you decide to select Epworth Children's Home for your Eagle Scout Project?

A: I've always had an interest in children's homes and when I started research for my project, Epworth Children's Home caught my attention. I've grown up traveling to Columbia to attend USC football games and I wanted to give back to the Columbia community.

Q: How did you decide the exact details of your Eagle Scout project once you selected Epworth Children's Home?

A: I toured the campus to get a better understanding of the needs of the children who reside there. I noticed that there weren't a lot of seating areas and wanted to give the children an area to gather that was reflective of a camping experience.

Q: How did you prepare for the project and how many hours did it take to complete?

A: There was a lot of legwork on the front end. The older scouts in my troop worked with me to figure out all the specs for the Adirondack chairs, swings and the structure to hold the swings. We purchased all of the wood and materials before we arrived in Columbia. On the day of the project, it took about 12 hours to complete.

Q: What was your favorite part of the project?

A: I had a lot of fun working with all of my fellow scouts, especially when we all had to come together to get the structure to hold the benches in the air. I'm glad to give back to the children that reside at Epworth and I hope they will enjoy the space for years to come. In addition, we all camped out at a local campsite so after a long day of work it was fun to tent camp together.

The staff at Epworth would like to thank Covington and Troop #9 out of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church for the completion of this project. It was not an easy task and took lots of hard work, determination and dedication.



Investing in Care!

A Year in Review



Special Edition: Every Child is a Miracle Campaign Summary

The Every Child is a Miracle campaign was a response to the changing needs of children and families and the challenging landscape of child welfare in South Carolina. The primary purpose of this campaign was to enhance, expand, and sustain the life-changing ministry to children, youth, and families who, with Epworth's resources, are given the opportunity to move from lives of generational poverty, pain and hopelessness, to lives of faith, hope, and productivity.

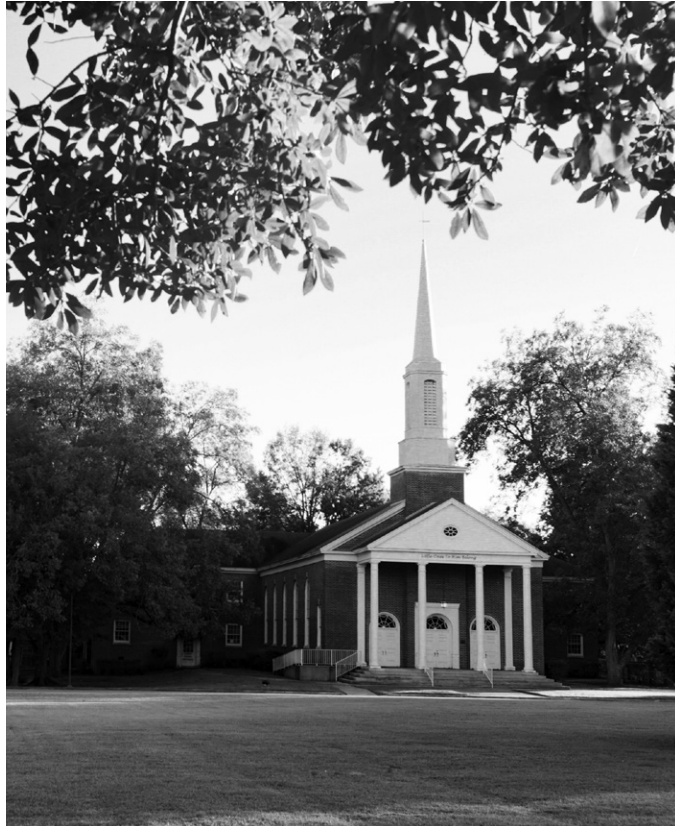
Epworth Children's Home began with a belief that all of God's children are miracles. In 1896 the Methodist people of South Carolina demonstrated that belief by establishing Epworth Orphanage. Since that time Epworth has evolved from the early days as a farm orphanage to a modern, high-quality institution that provides cutting edge care and services to children, youth, adults, and families throughout the state of South Carolina.

Since Epworth's inception it has provided a home to thousands of children who have been nurtured, educated, and then have stepped into the adult world as responsible citizens. Epworth currently provides, in partnership with local United Methodist churches, evidence-based prevention services to individuals and families in a growing number of counties throughout the state.

Campaign Goal: \$7,000,000

Stretch Goal: \$10,000,000

Total Received: \$8,000,290



A comprehensive campaign to strengthen existing services, reach additional children and families, and sustain Epworth far into the future.



Special Edition: Every Child is a Miracle Campaign Summary

By the middle of the first decade in this new century, it was evident that the child and family welfare system in South Carolina needed additional resources, additional avenues for assisting children who were abused and neglected, and additional programs to provide this assistance. Epworth Children's Home, with its history of programs and services to our state's children and families, created a vision and set out to establish a plan to find resources and create a cadre of initiatives to bring assistance and paths to stability for South Carolina's children and families. This vision and its subsequent planning stages resulted in the creation of a financial campaign during which Epworth would go on to raise millions to initiate a comprehensive endeavor to bring new resources to South Carolina's most vulnerable citizens.

Visits were made with Bishop Holston who agreed that Epworth and the United Methodist Church connection could play a major role in transforming a fractured welfare system. A visit was made to the new Governor of South Carolina Henry McMaster, who after hearing how the Methodist connectional system worked, agreed to help prepare a path for improved services for children and families. Other visits were made, and all agreed that new ideas, new methods, and increased energy was needed to repair a fractured system. The visits led to doors being opened and promises being made for support and financial aid to help Epworth assist in the transformation of the South Carolina child and family welfare system.



Early in the planning process, Epworth received enthusiastic support from South Carolina's Governor along with the United Methodist Church Bishop for the upcoming campaign and programmatic initiatives.

"This could be big. This could be really big." -- Governor Henry McMaster

"Epworth has my support. I will support this effort at the Annual Conference level and with the District Superintendents." -- Bishop Jonathan Holston

The Epworth Board of Trustees and the South Carolina Annual Conference then voted to launch a Financial Campaign to raise \$10,000,000 for four primary priorities.



I. Create Groundbreaking Programs

The **Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing** was created to draw upon Epworth's long history and excellent reputation, its financial stability, and its deep roots in every county in South Carolina to establish both preventive and remedial solutions to complex societal issues that exist in the Palmetto state.

The following **Centers of Excellence** were created or expanded under the umbrella of the **Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing**.

The Center for Family Engagement

Epworth's Foster Care program recruits, trains, and manages qualified foster families for children ages 0-21. Foster families receive the training and resources needed to provide the same level of transformational care Epworth provides in its residential program.

Special Edition: Every Child is a Miracle Campaign Summary

Epworth currently operates six regional foster family hubs and serves over 260 children who have been placed in the homes of Epworth Foster Families.

The Center for Counseling

The Epworth Center for Counseling provides counseling to children and youth, their families, and other individuals. Treatment begins with meeting one of Epworth's licensed therapists for an evaluation that will result in recommendations for services. The goal is to move individuals and family units toward lives of positive health and happiness. This Center serves the community beyond the traditional Epworth Residential population.

The Center for Independent Living

"I am the first person in my family to graduate from college. I don't know where I would be if it had not been for the Independent Living Program." -- Recent college and Independent Living graduate

Epworth provides residential and other support services to young people ages 18-23 who are pursuing higher education degrees or vocational certificates. The program prepares young people for transition into the adult world through a safe and supportive community.

The Family Care Center

The Family Care Center is a unique program for mothers with substance use difficulties and their children. The family lives together at Epworth while the mother receives treatment for substance misuse. Epworth teaches parenting and life skills while providing care for the children and nurturing family bonds.

The Center for Family Empowerment

Circle of Parents®

Epworth is the state partner to Circle of Parents®, a national organization that provides training and technical support for the development of parent-driven

support groups with a parallel children's program called Children's Circle. These parent groups are peer led, mutual self-help groups for all parents. Epworth was chosen to be the lead agency for South Carolina.



HOMEBUILDERS®

HOMEBUILDERS® provides intensive, in-home crisis intervention, counseling and life skills education for families with children from birth to age 18 who are at imminent risk of placement in state-funded care. The goal of HOMEBUILDERS® is to prevent the unnecessary out-of-home placement of children through intensive, on-site intervention, and to teach families new problem-solving skills to prevent future crises.

The Early Intervention Center

The Epworth Early Intervention Center serves families with children who have special needs, developmental delays, and/or disabilities. The EEIC includes a preschool, home-based early intervention services and cooperative respite care.

II. Purchase a Second Campus

A second campus was purchased and with the funds raised through the Every Child is a Miracle campaign, and with the help of churches, businesses, and civic groups this second campus is now the home for many



of the innovative programs that are offered through Epworth's service array.

The Trenholm Road campus, as it is now called:

- Expands the capacity to serve additional children and families.
- Is 1.5 miles from Epworth's main campus
- Encompasses 19 acres and 14 buildings
- Is located on the property adjacent to Trenholm Road United Methodist Church



III. Grow Epworth's Endowment

For 127 years future-oriented individuals have contributed to Epworth's permanent endowment fund that helps underwrite Epworth's budget, provides higher education scholarships, and ensures that those who need services are not turned away because of an inability to pay for services. This past year the endowment produced \$1,710,000 that was used for programmatic and other budgeted expenses.

A healthy endowment produces service array stability and long-term sustainability during uncertain times. During the past eight to ten years many child and family serving agencies ceased to exist or severely curtailed their work because of reduced revenue. Epworth, due in part to a healthy endowment, has been able to increase and expand its array of services.

IV. Create Global Child Wellbeing

Whether in our backyard or across the globe, all human life has equal value. This belief became evident during discussions with Bishop Holston concerning an Annual Conference financial campaign for children. The suggestion was made and agreed upon that there would be a campaign tithe for foreign missions to children. The mission site selected was Old Mutare Mission which is the site of Fairfield Children's Home in Zimbabwe, Africa. This United Methodist mission is located on the same tract of land as Africa University and serves

children and families in an area of great need. The proceeds from this missional tithe will be truly life changing to Fairfield Children's Home and to the people who are served at Old Mutare Mission.

Funds from the Fairfield Fund will be disbursed by Epworth through the Fairfield Outreach and Sponsors Association (FOSA) board. FOSA will, in cooperation with the leadership of the Zimbabwe annual conference and the leadership at Old Mutare, determine which projects are the most urgent, and have the most potential benefit.

"Our government's social work system cannot even provide its social workers with money for fuel for them to pick up children who need help. This gift will enable Fairfield to hire its own social workers who can take on that responsibility." -- Childcare employee, Fairfield Children's Home

A Different Campaign

Even the best made plans can go awry. The first phase of the campaign was to engage potential major donors. This was very successful. The second phase was to approach groups and individuals primarily through United Methodist Churches in South Carolina. As the campaign entered the second phase, Covid visited our state and churches closed. The grand 125th Epworth birthday extravaganza that was planned to help close the campaign with a flourish had to be celebrated online. Even with these major hurdles the campaign was a great success for Epworth and for the people Epworth serves. So we say, "THANK YOU" for the wonderful response in the midst of some extremely difficult times.

Today, Epworth is in an even stronger position to continue to enlarge its footprint in South Carolina, increase its program offerings, and offer life changing opportunities to hundreds of individuals and family units than when the campaign first began. It is indeed amazing to witness what can be accomplished when caring people focus on a common purpose and express through their gifts the belief that "Yes, Every Child Is a Miracle!"

Written by Rev. John E. Holler, Jr.



Foster Family Support During the Christmas Season

*A song isn't a song until you sing it.
A bell isn't a bell until you ring it.
And love isn't love until you give it away.*

As a child growing up in my church, this refrain was part of a Christmastime children's sermon that I heard for many years from one of our pastors. He showed us a Christmas carol in the hymnal and explained that the music on the page was only music on the page until we sang it and then it became a song. He always had two jingle bells, one with the little piece inside that made the characteristic tinkling bell sound, and one without the little piece that made no sound at all. He shared that the one that made no sound looked like a bell but wasn't actually a bell because it didn't ring. And then he shared the message of the birth of Jesus and the idea that Jesus came to teach us how to love. And that love isn't love until you give it away.

Christmastime at Epworth Children's Home has always been special in large part because of the outpouring of love and support that comes from individuals and churches from around the state. In recent years, that love has extended to our foster parents and the children in their care through our five outposts and the churches that support foster families in their own community.

Our church partners make a huge impact on the lives of our foster families and the children in their care. At Christmas, they are generous in providing gifts to Epworth's residents. For foster parents, they provide Parents Night and Day Out times for the parents to practice self-care or get ready for major events like Christmas in the family. The church partners also support Christmas events or other activities in the lives of foster parents who live in their church's area.

Rev. Mark Payne from Brookland United Methodist Church in West Columbia shared this word:

"What a blessing it was to provide respite for these wonderful foster parents. One of the parents was crying tears of joy when she dropped her girls off. She said this was the love of Jesus in action."

Brookland United Methodist Church has committed to partner with Epworth to support our foster families in ways that also foster discipleship in their community of faith. "This partnership enhances our ministry by allowing God to do something new in the life of our church," said Rev. Payne. "We have supported the mission of Epworth throughout the years, but this is an opportunity for us to engage on an entirely new level as we begin to walk with Epworth and the families they serve. This partnership allows us to become doers of the Word and not merely hearers of the Word, showing Christ's love in a tangible way."

Manning United Methodist Church raised money to support the Pee Dee Foster Care program. They see their partnership with Epworth as part of the church's ministry to children in their community. Rev. David McManus said, "It is our desire to see the goodness, love, and mercy of Jesus Christ be made known to people outside of our congregation. We see supporting the ministry of Epworth as a way of meeting this desire."

Stallsville United Methodist Church hosts one of our Lowcountry Resource Closets and for the second year has been the drop-off location for Christmas with Epworth gifts. This year, they had received, sorted and wrapped all of the gifts by the end of the drop-off period, with the staff only having to help make decisions about a couple of donations. As often happens, a couple of children had come into care that same week, but St. Mark United Women in Faith took care of that need by dropping off some additional gift cards that could be given to those children or used to purchase gifts for them. These gifts bless the staff as well as the families, enabling them to focus their work on equipping and supporting families as churches care for the details around the Christmas gifts.



Investing in Care!

A Message from Beth Williams Continued

our state. We are excited for new opportunities awaiting us in 2023. We will be launching our second Center for Counseling location. Thanks to the generosity of the BlueCross BlueShield Foundation of South Carolina, we are opening a new location in Anderson that will serve the Upstate. We are currently in the process of building the infrastructure and are working to provide services beginning April 2023. This second location will continue our work of taking Epworth's quality services to the local communities. Since its inception four years ago, Epworth's original Center for Counseling has served not only Epworth's residents, but has provided counseling services and therapy for children, older youth, and adults throughout the Midlands area.

Lastly, Epworth will offer Intensive In-Home services to children and families in need in the Midlands region. This family preservation program is designed to stabilize families and prevent disruptions from occurring that could result in children being taken from the home and placed in outside care. The Intensive In-Home program has goals for each family it serves which include helping to create effective parenting, increasing greater communication and coping skills, and developing skill-building to increase the family's capacity to function well. Through family and individual therapy, creation of a positive home environment, increase in situations of safety and support in the home, and establishment of links for children and families to appropriate community services and agencies, Epworth aspires to bring stability to families in crisis. We are excited to offer this new community-based program to families in Richland and surrounding counties.

John Adams, our second President, once said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." Throughout its over 100-year history, Epworth has served the children and families of South Carolina. Now in this new year of 2023, we have a greater opportunity than ever through our programs and services to fulfill the leadership description that President Adams offered. We can provide the support and assistance to help children and families dream, learn, and become more of whom they want and need to be for happiness, security, and success in life. We can help them avoid failure and instead, help them to thrive.



JOIN THE EPWORTH FAMILY!

We are hiring mission-minded professionals across the state!

Epworth is seeking dedicated professionals to serve children and families in our growing ministries in the following positions. For more details or to apply, please scan the QR code.

Apply Now

- **House Parents**
- **HOMEBUILDERS Community-Based Specialists (open positions available statewide)**
- **Early Intervention Specialists**
- **Family Care Specialists**
- **Licensed Clinical Counselor**
- **Residential Care Specialist**
- **Foster Care Clinical Coordinators**



“It was an indescribable pain to have my child removed from my care,” said Michelle. “I almost gave up.” However, upon hearing about the program, Michelle decided to get clean to regain her parental rights. Michelle became a resident of the FCC in the early fall. The day she moved in, she was reunited with Micah and their bond was instantly restored. Immediately, Michelle began an addiction treatment program through the Lexington Richland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council (LRADAC).

“I thought that Micah would forget me, but when I sat him on my lap, tears ran down my cheeks and he nuzzled into my chest,” stated Michelle. “I knew at that moment, I would never abuse drugs and alcohol again; he was going to be the reason for my success in this program.”



Mrs. Debra Massey-Anderson, case manager at the FCC, has worked with Michelle since the first day that she arrived at the Center. “Michelle had a spirit of willingness and was eager to make the necessary changes,” said Mrs. Massey-Anderson. “She wanted to be a restored person and worked very hard on her treatment goals to become a better parent.” The FCC provided Michelle and Micah with everything they needed including safety, shelter and emotional support while they live on the Epworth campus. Epworth provides access to a full range of professional programs and staff to facilitate comprehensive care including confidential counseling services, educational support, basic medical care, spiritual guidance, and recreational activities.

As Michelle nears graduation from the LRADAC program, she has immersed herself in learning to care for Micah with the help of Epworth’s loving and caring staff. The Center has provided Michelle with the resources and tools needed to prepare her financially and emotionally for her future. She hopes to secure part-time employment and independent housing with Micah this spring.

Michelle is grateful for the FCC program at Epworth and has watched Micah thrive in his new home. From trick-or-treat outings at Halloween to experiencing the joy of Micah’s first Christmas, Michelle has found comfort and stability alongside the other mothers at the Center and the staff. Most recently, the celebration of Micah’s first birthday and watching him take his first steps are a memory she will treasure forever. Epworth’s Family Care Center has provided Michelle with a sense of community, and she is grateful that the staff and the other mothers were there to witness those milestones. As Michelle said, “They are like my family.”

And according to Massey-Anderson, “Michelle has suffered her entire life from extreme anxiety and since she arrived at the Center we have been working with her to overcome her fears. She has gained confidence in herself and is not afraid to take on a challenge. She started in a cocoon and she blossomed and became a beautiful butterfly.”

Foster Family Support Continued

It is a beautiful thing for churches to connect with our foster families. Families feel supported and are more likely to reach out for help when they hit bumps in the road. In addition, they are more likely to continue as foster families which result in better outcomes for the children in their care.

Equally important, churches share the love of Christ in ways that impact the vitality of the church in addition to the families they serve. We learn to love by practicing love. We learn to welcome the community into our congregational life by practicing.

We are truly thankful for all the love that churches give away at Christmas and throughout the year. If your congregation is interested in partnering with Epworth to support foster parents in your area, please contact Rev. Kathy James, Director of Church Relations 803-256-7394 or kjames@epworthsc.org.





Epworth
Children's Home

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Beth Williams
President

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**Children's names and pictures have been changed for confidentiality.*

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

A thoughtful way to honor or remember a friend or loved one is with a gift to Epworth. The honoree or designee will receive a card notifying him or her of your very kind gift. The form below is made available for your use.

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