



Open Doors

Vol. 33, No. 2 The Presbyterian Children's Home of the Highlands, Inc.
First Quarter 2008

STORYTELLING FESTIVAL - A NEW ADVENTURE FOR CHILDREN'S HOME

June 6 & 7



First-Time
Event



The Molly Copes "Back To The Mountains" Storytelling Festival is set for June 6 & 7, 2008 on our campus. This fundraiser is sure to produce a great time for everyone, young and old. Come if you can... if you can't, buy a ticket anyway. You will be helping the Home as well as becoming eligible for great door prizes. David Holt, Sheila Kay Adams, Anndrena Belcher, Jim Lloyd, and Mac & Joan Swift will be entertaining the crowd Friday evening and all day Saturday with wit, wisdom and tons of fun.

CLASS OF 2008... CONGRATULATIONS! WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!



TONY
LARY



SAMANTHA
HOBACK



CHRIS
SESCO

Tony Lary's plans include staying with us at PCHH for a while as he works on getting more skills training and explores local job possibilities. PCHH has become a very special place for Tony and the people he has met here will be unforgettable. It has been a pleasure working with Tony during his stay with us.

Samantha Hoback has demonstrated her determination and vision while at PCHH. She was very busy this spring while going to school, running track and working part-time off-campus at a local restaurant. Samantha will be attending the local community college studying to become a dental hygienist.

Chris SESCO earned high marks on his GED exam and is headed to further his study at the local community college. He has written many poems and finds writing poems an excellent outlet for his creative energy. Chris has a natural ability to work successfully with people which will pay big dividends for him.



Billy Rice
Executive Director

There is no feeling quite like the one you get when one of your children accomplishes something significant. As you can see from the stories in this newsletter, that feeling has been filtering through our staff over the past couple of months. As you read about these wonderful young people, you can see why we are so proud of them and what they have been able to accomplish during their time with us. We are like proud parents, enjoying their success while worrying about what lies ahead for them.

All parents know that success does not come without some bumps in the road. All of our children will tell you that there were days when we took two steps back to take one forward, and the staff would certainly agree. It can be easy to throw up your hands and lose sight of your goals when this happens, but these young people and our staff members did not do that. Instead, they kept pushing forward until they reached the successful conclusions that you are reading about today.

As important as it is to celebrate the accomplishments of our children, it is just as important for us to be there to pick up the pieces when they fail. About six months ago one of our children was allowed to go back home after a very successful time with us. Unfortunately, things did not work out and we received a call asking if he could come back to us. Upon his return, he stopped by my office to see me. When I welcomed him back and told him I was sorry things did not work, what he told me touched

my heart. He said, "Mr. Rice, I wish I could be home but I always knew I could come back here if things did not work out. I love you guys and I know everything is going to be all right."

There are people who believe that love and caring such as this can only occur in a so-called "real" family. I would say to those people that they have never spent any time at our Children's Home. Every child that comes through those doors is our child, and we shower them with love and a sense of God's purpose through good times and bad. We hurt during the tough times and swell with pride at their successes. When they leave, they take a piece of us with them and they remain part of our family forever. It is a big family that includes our staff, their fellow residents and you, the people who support us with your love and generosity. I hope you are as proud to be part of our family as I am.

Billy

Open Doors

**Giving Children
Hope & Purpose
for the Future**

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This agency complies with all state and federal non-profit fundraising regulations.
A financial statement is available for the asking.

Open Doors is an educational publication produced in-house periodically to provide insights about PCHH.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Billy Rice

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*Moderator **Vice-Moderator

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Molly Copes 'Back To The Mountains' Storytelling Festival is a unique fundraiser for the Children's Home that will be loads of fun and worthy of our assistance."

"We need your help! The secret to the success of this special event is ticket sales. Buying a ticket will help the Home even if you have no plans or opportunity to attend."

Storytelling is gaining attention across the country where people are rediscovering joy and entertainment by sharing stories. The power of the spoken word supported by body language, tone variations, and even costuming can be effective in communicating stories, ideas and well worn memories of the past.

Come learn more about our mountain culture, enjoy the foot-tapping energy of mountain instruments, feed your stomach as well as your spirit as you experience our festival.

**Thank You
For Remembering
Us In Your
Estate Planning**

PCHH CURRENT NEEDS

- Landscaping Items:
 - tools
 - potting soil
 - pots
 - annuals & perennials

- Festival Sponsorships:
 - Ticket sales
 - Financial gifts

Visit <http://bttm/pchh.org>
for complete festival info

A RESIDENT'S PERSONAL LETTER OF REFLECTION AS HE LEAVES PCHH



me unconditionally while I got my life in order.

When I first got to PCHH, I hated this place. I thought it was a bad place to be, but it didn't take long to realize that the people here really do care about me. There are some wonderful staff people here. I will never forget Ms. Audrey for example. She helped me so much when I first came to the Home. She was always there for me. She lived here during her teenage years and really understood my every need. She was always willing to listen and gave me so much support.

My favorite activity here was fishing. Mr. Cato would take us fishing often and I loved the quietness of the lake or stream where we fished. It was wonderful therapy for me. One other thing that I really enjoyed and will miss terribly is the view of a sunset from the hill. We have one of the prettiest settings anywhere in South-

west Virginia here on the campus of the Children's Home. You must visit and see the beautiful sunsets. They will take your breath away.

I am ready to go back to live with my mother, but I am scared at the same time. I will have times that I will be by myself and that is something that I have not had in two years --- time alone. There is always someone with you while you're here. I pray that I can handle my time alone.

I feel that I would be dead or extremely addicted to drugs if I had not been rescued by the Home. I have learned during my stay here that I can be what I want to be. I have learned to think positively about myself no matter what my circumstances. It's not what's on the outside but what you feel inside. That has definitely made me a better person. I needed to learn how to feel good about myself.

When I think over things I would change about my life if I could, I would probably not change anything. The circumstances I have gone through in my life have made me who I am today. I would not have been blessed to meet the wonderful people here who have taught me so much and given me the self-confidence I need to get through life. I look at my past as being God's plan for me to make me the person I am today.

I ask for your prayers as I start a new chapter in my life. Thank you for giving me a chance to change my life. You do make a difference in the lives of children in need.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Michael Owens came to PCHH in July 2005. He is pursuing his GED and during his stay here has taken advantage of many opportunities to grow and mature. We will miss him!

My name is Michael Owens. After living at the Children's Home for two years, I am planning to leave. I will be going back to my home town and living with my mother. While I am excited, I am also sad... sad that I will be leaving staff and residents who have become an important part of my life... leaving people who loved

GRADUATE SHARES THOUGHTS THROUGH POETRY

Chris SESCO, pictured on the cover, is a very talented young man. Not only did Chris earn high marks on his GED, he is a gifted poet. The following is one of Chris' latest efforts.

*Open my eyes and see nothing but pain,
Hurry and close them just to open and see the same.
Walk out into the world of nothing but sorrow,
I have to stay calm with hope for a better tomorrow.*

*Just when I want to give up and cry,
Something says all your hopes aren't ready to die.
All of a sudden that same hope I once had in my life,
Returns and cuts the doubts away like a knife.*

*Waiting for the pleasure of another better day,
But I feel that the pain and sorrow are here to stay.
Soon enough the hope seems to fade away,
Leaving me with nothing to do or nothing to say.*

*When the doubt darkens your day,
Find the hope you need to chase the darkness away.
God is our hope, refuge, and love.*

Looking Forward to Another Great Summer



[left] Staff begin each day with a short devotional/prayer time. Ms. Wanda, our therapist, opens the Bible to share a verse for the day.

[right] Shade trees provide an ideal place to take a break during a party thrown by our friends at GIV.

[below] Brittany reads Scripture for the cottage on a camping trip. There are many opportunities for spiritual growth at PCHH.



The houseparents go above and beyond many times as they work to instill pride in the living conditions in and around the cottage. Springtime is a wonderful reason to "spruce up" and do a little digging in the soil.



Kyle "reloads" his "weapon" of choice as residents do battle with the hot weather. Water guns have been around for a very long time and they are beginning to reflect the look of modern technology.



Breakfast absolutely tastes wonderful when you're camping out. Many of our residents have never had the experience before coming to PCHH.



Fishing is a life-long activity that can bring many, many hours of pleasure. Whether catching fish for the campfire or wetting a line as one evaluates thoughts, it's a great activity.



Qualification and practice for the Children's Homes Summer Olympics begins in the spring and concludes at the Olympics. Events will be held in Maine this year.