



Open Doors

Vol. 32, No. 3 The Presbyterian Children's Home of the Highlands, Inc.
Third Quarter 2007

SUMMER OF 2007... FULL OF ACTIVITIES, LEARNING, & FUN

The Summer of 2007 was indeed full of activities, learning and fun all rolled into one. You probably have a good idea of how hectic it can be scheduling, transporting and retrieving one or more children to and from busy summertime activities.

Can you image the challenge of thirty? Thank God for committed houseparents and dedicated support people who understand the importance of providing opportunities for young people. Busy minds and active bodies make for a satisfied, productive young person.

The horse stables were the site for some of our residents as they learned about horsemanship, care of animals, and how to participate in a drill team. These are life-long skills that they are gaining through working at the horse stables.

Buchanan Cottage enjoyed a camp-out. Most of them had never camped out and they surprised themselves how well they adapted and survived. They are old enough for these memories to last them a lifetime. Congratulations girls, you never know what you can do until you try.



The summer got off to a wonderful start with the annual Honors Banquet when residents received awards for the year in academics, recreation, cottage life, and citizenship.

Our Summer School Enrichment Program gave opportunities for our middle school residents to polish some of their basic academic skills and experience several field trips for social development.

Some of Buchanan Cottage (girls' cottage) discovered the excitement of singing in church. It's amazing how tender voices can blend to stir the soul and lift the spirit, especially when you're singing about true "Amazing Grace."

For seven residents who qualified for the Children's Home Summer Olympics, their hard work and dedication paid off. Each participant won at least one ribbon and some more. They also gained some notoriety when the local newspaper did a front-page feature on them and the local radio station invited them in for a live interview describing their experiences.

Summer of 2007...activities, learning, and fun!



Billy Rice
Executive Director



The summer months have a reputation for being a time when children can kick back, relax, and count the days until school starts again. As you look at the pictures and read the articles in this newsletter, you may think that we have never heard about summer being a down time!

In truth, summer is the busiest time of the year at the Children's Home. The children are with us the entire day, and we take advantage of that to accomplish some things that are not possible during the school year.

The pictures in the newsletter show you some of the fun and cultural activities our children participated in this summer, such as the Children's Home Olympics. However, a lot of serious work goes on during the summer as well. Our mornings are used for group sessions where our therapist deals with issues such as anger management, substance abuse, and handling grief. Six of our children went to summer school, some for academic enrichment and others to gain credits in specific classes.

Summer is also a time for our young men and women to work on their employment skills. Several of our residents held down summer jobs, both on the campus and in our community. It is very helpful when our children leave us with a good reference from their employer – it makes a big difference when they are looking for a full time job.

With everything that is going on, you can imagine that the staff mem-

bers are very busy as well. Please read the article about two of our houseparents, Inez Akers and James Cato. As you read it pay particular attention to the things our children had to say about these long time staff members.

I think you will clearly see that we are indeed, "giving children hope and purpose for the future" as our mission statement calls us to do.

Billy

STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

The Molly Copes "Back To The Mountains" Storytelling Festival is set for Friday & Saturday, June 6 & 7, 2008.

If you or your group would like to assist in promoting the festival and/or selling tickets for us in your area, please call (276) 228-2861 for information on how to sign up. See you there!

Open Doors

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

P.O. Box 545
Wytheville, VA 24382
(276) 228-2861
FAX (276) 228-8154

<http://pchh.org> • info@pchh.org

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Margaret Carter - Charlottesville, VA
Eural Clippard - Wytheville, VA
Tom Copes - Yorktown, VA
Mary Lou Cox - Monterey, VA
** David Dickerson - Radford, VA
Richard Guthrie - Dublin, VA
Jim Larson - Vienna, VA
Mary Lee McGrady - Hillsville, VA
Thomas Phillips - Abingdon, VA
Bill Roberson - Swoope, VA
Jayne Sneed - Richmond, VA
Lynda Starr - Roanoke, VA
Sara Staley - Marion, VA
Nan Taylor - Pounding Mill, VA
Frances Trent - Roanoke, VA
Theresa Underwood - Buchanan, VA
* Patsy Weeks - Radford, VA
Bobbie Lynn Wilson - Pounding Mill, VA

*Moderator ** Vice-Moderator

INTRODUCING...



Travis Wirt
Development Officer

PCHH has added a Development Officer whose specific duties are to personally share information with and thank friends of the Home. We cannot say "thank you" enough to our wonderful friends. Introducing Travis Wirt...

"It is my great honor to be a part of the Presbyterian Children's Home of the Highlands residential child care ministry. I am a native of Bluefield, West Virginia with an abiding respect for what ministry can do for young people in crisis."

"For 18 months prior to accepting the job as Development Officer I served as a Houseparent in Webb Cottage. My background working with troubled youngsters at PCHH and prior jobs have well prepared me to understand the significance of this ministry."

"Please contact me anytime I may be of service to you. I look forward to meeting you."

Call the office to schedule a time convenient to meet with Travis. He will be in your area sometime soon in the coming weeks. He would love to share updates on the Home with you and/or your church group. He has many interesting stories to share.

For many years, the Home has dreamed of utilizing someone to personally share information one-on-one about this ministry. We are thankful that we now have that opportunity. Help us schedule him for your area.

Welcome aboard, Travis!

TWO VETERAN HOUSEPARENTS — KEEPING THE FAITH IN A VERY DIFFICULT JOB

Inez Akers

serves as a houseparent in Buchanan Cottage. Inez's home town is Ft. Chiswell, VA. She did not have to travel far to find one of the biggest challenges in ministry... houseparent to ten teenage girls.

Inez had worked for several years caring for the elderly and disabled and really liked helping people. She decided to give children a try in June 2002.

Inez will readily admit that one of the most stressful parts of her job is watching these girls experience the wild ups and downs of their lives. She relishes bedtime when she can play back the activities of the day in her mind and get some perspective on the day's happenings.



One of the down sides to working a work schedule of 4-days on, 4-days off is the large amounts of time away from the her own family.

Letters from former residents stating how much they have been helped while they were at PCHH always perks up the spirit and motivates

houseparents to go forth.

Taking a brisk hikes outdoors or relaxing at the pool seems to help de-stress her when things get really hectic. Determination keeps her going during the really tough times.

During a recent session with some of the girls of the cottage, they shared some of their comments about Ms. Inez.

"Very reliable, nice, follows the rules, dependable, fair and does not choose favorites."

PCHH is fortunate to have such a wonderful collection of talented people serving every day in what can be very trying circumstances. May God continue to bless and lead our staff as they continue to care for the young people within our reach.

Thank you, Ms. Inez!

James Cato

serves as a houseparent in Webb Cottage, our older boys cottage. He is from Damascus, VA. He has served as houseparent at PCHH since April 1, 2004.

Mr. Cato came to the Children's Home via jobs in Virginia and Ohio but returned to Virginia to work at a juvenile lock-down facility. He wanted to make a difference in kids' lives. PCHH was a natural next step in his "calling."

His favorite hobbies include fishing, cooking and hiking which he freely shares his time doing with residents. Mr. Cato can become emotional when you talk about his boys. They dearly love him.

Mr. Cato has a ritual of spending some time each night after lights out with each boy giving them a positive word, reinforcing needed lessons, never going to bed with unresolved



issues. He works hard to make sure they get enough study time for school work. He wants them to realize how so very important education is to their successful future.

He stresses most over kids getting upset over their situation which has nothing to do with any action on their part. They are victims of circumstances many times who get caught in situations that create havoc in young lives.

Over the years Mr. Cato has experienced many highly emotional situations related to the big hole left in the hearts of these young men as a result of their circumstances.

The boys have great respect for Mr. Cato and his work. When asked to comment on him, they were ready with both barrels.

One young man commented, *"He's the best! I've had seven placements and no one has ever loved me like Mr. Cato does. He's a kind man who knows how to take care of kids."*

Another one added, *"He's lively, full of hope and happiness. He's intelligent, and sincerely cares about us."*

Mr. Cato says that the calls periodically from former residents thanking him for helping them means the world to him. The kids keep him motivated.

PCHH is blessed with a caring, dedicated professional staff.

Thank you, Mr. Cato!

Life On Campus



Remember the excitement of camping out? The girls of Buchanan Cottage experienced a taste of enjoying the great outdoors, bugs and all.

Our 2007 Children's Home Olympics was another great success. Each participant earned an award. Congratulations Highlanders!



GIV Carnival Fun



GIV Carnival Fun Participants

We've noticed that when former residents or staff visit, updates on everybody and looking at old pictures are always a high priority. It's always good to see them come back home.



GIV Corporation in Bland hosted a Back-To-School Carnival for our residents. They provided not only a time of fun and games but supplied new clothes and school supplies as well. A special thanks to GIV and all our friends who have helped us get ready for another school year. For more photos of the GIV event, go to <http://pchh.org>.