

Methodist Home for Children

spotlight

WINTER 2022



...and after the fire, a still small voice.

– 1 Kings 19:12b

When he came to us, he was on fire. Shackled, police custody, serious charges. Eleven years old. Where do you even begin?

For Derek, it began at home. Danger, neglect, recklessness – it was all there. We, you and I, see the problems. But it was his home, his family. It was everything he knew and all that he had.

And now this. Where do you even begin?

We began with safety. We wanted Derek to be safe and to feel safe during the inevitably difficult and tumultuous fallout from the events that led him to us. And we kept him safe – even though it felt like isolation to him. We kept him safe from himself, his family, and the gangs.

Then came his rage.

It's easy to understand: He's only a child and he didn't ask for any of this. He didn't ask to be born into his family. He didn't ask for the situation. He didn't ask to come to us.

But then one day, he did ask for something. A hair sponge. Which was given to him. And in that quiet act of kindness Derek heard the still small voice of God.

Derek loves his hair sponge. He uses it all the time and when he uses it, he calms down. It soothes him. It connects him to an identity that makes him feel good; he feels worthy. As small as it was, that act of kindness got through.

I would like to say that the past could be erased, but it can't and the road ahead is not clear for Derek. There is accountability and recovery to navigate but we will continue to work with him moment by moment. We ask for your prayers for Derek who, like Elijah, didn't find the LORD in the mighty wind or the earthquake or the fire. The LORD came to them in a still small voice.

– Rev. Bruce E. Stanley, President / CEO

CALM



5 things you should know about MHC

1

WE CARE

In one year we provided sustaining care for

1,215

children and families living in

83

N.C. counties.

Our **\$19.6 million** operating budget funded 6 programs.

Juvenile Justice	49%
Family Preservation	21%
Early Childhood	16%
Foster Care & Adoption	9%
Specialized Services	4%
Higher Education	1%



WE SERVE

87c of every dollar raised directly benefits those in our care.

2

WE INVEST

87c of every dollar raised directly benefits those in our care.

3

WE REPORT

Scan to read the full report and find out why we believe Every Minute Counts.



4

WE REPORT

Scan to read the full report and find out why we believe Every Minute Counts.



5

WE LOOK AHEAD

In 2023, watch for news about our groundbreaking technologies and services.



Full of Joy

Love and hope make a home

MACY, AGE 15

It's parent-teacher conference night and one sophomore is excitedly greeting each teacher with: I want you to meet my mom and dad!

Mom and dad.

She had never had parents attend a school conference before, and Macy wanted everyone to meet them.

Teresa and Tom officially became Macy's parents this year – but they have known her since she was born. Teresa was Macy's fun aunt and Tom, the uncle who made her laugh with corny jokes. Their house was one Macy visited for cousin sleepovers and holidays. And when Macy needed a safe place to go, Teresa and Tom stepped in offering first a temporary haven, then adoption into their family of seven.

It's hard to define precisely what makes a family. For Macy, it's the little things. Parent-teacher conferences, long talks in the car. It's Macy asking Teresa if she needs help making dinner. It's Tom sharing his love of art and painting. It's caring for the family pets – two cats, one dog, a rabbit, and a teddy bear hamster named Comet. It's folding clothes together and going to church.

It's family life. Blessedly normal and full of joy.

CJ is another person who can't stop smiling. Turn the page to read her story. ►

The call came in the middle of the night. Emergency services asked if Teresa and Tom could provide a safe home for their niece Macy, starting now. Their response, in unison: Absolutely.

That was their introduction to kinship care, a preferred foster care option for many. In this program, relatives (or close family friends) offer a temporary home when

parents are unable to provide care. The benefits are vast and include familiarity and comfort for children facing disruption and trauma. To learn more about kinship care, please email us – kinshipcare@mhfc.org.

Tom, Teresa, and Macy evolved from kinship care to adoption; their story begins on the next page.



The Big Picture

Methodist Home for Children

In service to God, our mission is to build upon the social, physical, emotional, and spiritual strengths of children, youth, and families, and to affirm their worth.

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CJ, AGE 9

She's strong, this girl behind the smile.

Torpedo a football? Sure she can, and swish a basketball, too. Tennis and volleyball, yes and yes.

But gymnastics – that's her sport, and she's good at it. She's working on a new move, the double back handspring back tuck. And when she gets that right, she'll learn another one – something with even more flips and twists.

Because CJ is strong, and not just in body.

Spirit, too.
Spirit, especially.

Until her adoption, life seemed to flip and twist in ways CJ, as a child, could not understand. She can't remember a time when she wasn't in kinship care or foster care.

Still, she smiles. And her family beams back. Parents Sarah and George and brother, Parker, adopted CJ this year. She's one of them – on the go, pushing herself. Determined.

"She got the 'I'm OK Award' this year at gymnastics," Sarah says. "That's for the one who takes a fall, bounces up, brushes off, and says, 'I'm fine.' Then keeps going."

"That's who she is." ■



Elizabeth Cayton Photography



photography courtesy of Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC

Life is a Feast

And the possibilities are delicious

Try to stump him. We did – it went like this –

Pan-seared salmon with lemon butter sauce?

I can make that.

Soy citrus scallops with soba?

I can make that.

How about classic popovers with a light cheese filling?

[laughing] I can make that, too.

Spend an hour with Ja-Sun and the first thing you notice is his smile and the joy that seems to come from deep within. The next thing you notice is he is capable of a lot – and the only person that surprises is himself.

His most recent accomplishments include graduating from a culinary program, completing an internship at a trending, fine dining restaurant, and finding a job – almost at once – in a kitchen. Oh, and he also graduated from high school.

High school.

Yes, Ja-Sun is that young. And he has just discovered life is full of possibilities.

A year ago, Ja-Sun's primary goal – his only goal, really – was completing high school. Culinary school wasn't on the list. "I never dreamed I could be a chef," he says. "I never even knew to dream about it." That changed the minute he started cooking. He was a natural, eager to learn and practice new techniques; techniques, such as knife skills, which he mastered. "No cuts," he says, holding up his hands.

No cuts – no knife cuts, no short cuts. This has been a year of hard work and discovery for Ja-Sun and he is eager to do more, see more, and learn more. As he leaves our care he does so with a new goal – become a chef who travels the world, learning authentically about foods from other cultures and countries. We believe he'll do it. The world is his Oyster Motoyaki. ■



You've Got This

Planning, Preparing, Doing ... Succeeding

Ayden is the one who works the late shift washing dishes at a downtown restaurant, then gets up at 5 a.m. to clean stalls at a horse farm. He likes the labor of a 12-hour day, he says, and the sights of a sunrise or rainbow, captured for later on his phone camera.

Ayden is also the one who unclogs your vacuum cleaner without being asked or fixes the weed wacker you gave up for dead. He's the one with a 3-D printer that runs all night in his bedroom – because he wants to make you a rose or a polystyrene trailer hitch for your ATV.

"I'm better when I'm busy," he says. "I want to use my time on things that are productive."

Mature words for a 17 year old.

But Ayden had to grow up fast. He's about to be on his own – working and living independently – when he turns 18 and ages out of our care.

The good news?

Ayden will have his pick of high-paying jobs servicing and repairing big trucks or construction equipment. He finished high school early and earned certificates in heavy truck systems and engine repair at Craven Community College's VOLT Center. And we'll help him with deposits on an apartment and utilities, buying furniture, stocking up on household supplies.



We've watched Ayden over the years as he's taught himself to take things apart, see how they work – then put them back together, better. We've watched his potential unfold, and he sees it too.

Ayden is ready now for whatever comes next. ■

THE VOLT CENTER AT CRAVEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

VOLT gave Ayden the education, experience, and connections to find a high-demand job. It houses a workforce development program that allows Ayden and other MHC teens to earn trade certifications at no cost.



Elizabeth Cayton Photography

For the Love of Children

They all matter to her

Sarah Jordan loves children. She always has.

She loves the children who grew up in the youth group at Mt. Gilead United Methodist Church, where she was an active volunteer-mom long after her own kids aged out.

She loves the kids she met through conference youth ministries.

But this is what makes Sarah special:

"She loves the kids she'll never meet," says Janie Jordan, her daughter. "Especially the ones on the margins, who need a little extra attention, a little extra care."

Sarah's big heart led her to Methodist Home for Children in the 1970s, and she served eight terms on our board of directors over the years. The experience gave her an unvarnished view of what happens to young children in the absence of nurturing and care, and it exposed her to new ideas about emotional and intellectual development:

- that the quality or lack of care in early childhood has lifelong consequences.
- that *all* children benefit from learning alongside friends with different abilities and backgrounds.

Sarah bought into these ideas early, in the 1990s. And she helped bring them to life by doing what she does best – connecting people to a mission.

In 2001, the Jordan Child & Family Enrichment Center opened with a lead gift from Jordan Lumber Co., headed by Sarah's late husband, Bob, and the Jordan family.

Sarah and Bob shared many interests over their 61 years of marriage, and equity in education was a big one. Bob had a platform through his high-profile career as an elected official and businessman.

But early childhood – that was always Sarah's passion.

Now it's her legacy. Bob established the Sarah Cole Jordan Fund for Early Childhood with a gift in her honor in late 2018. The \$1 million fund is fully endowed now, ready to help preschool-aged children for years to come.

Sarah won't get to meet all these children of the future. But she's OK with that.

She loves them already. ■

The **Sarah Cole Jordan Fund for Early Childhood** will provide scholarships for underserved children; wrap-around care for children with physical, social, or emotional needs; and training for teachers and families.

You can contribute to Sarah's fund with a gift in her honor at mhfc.org.



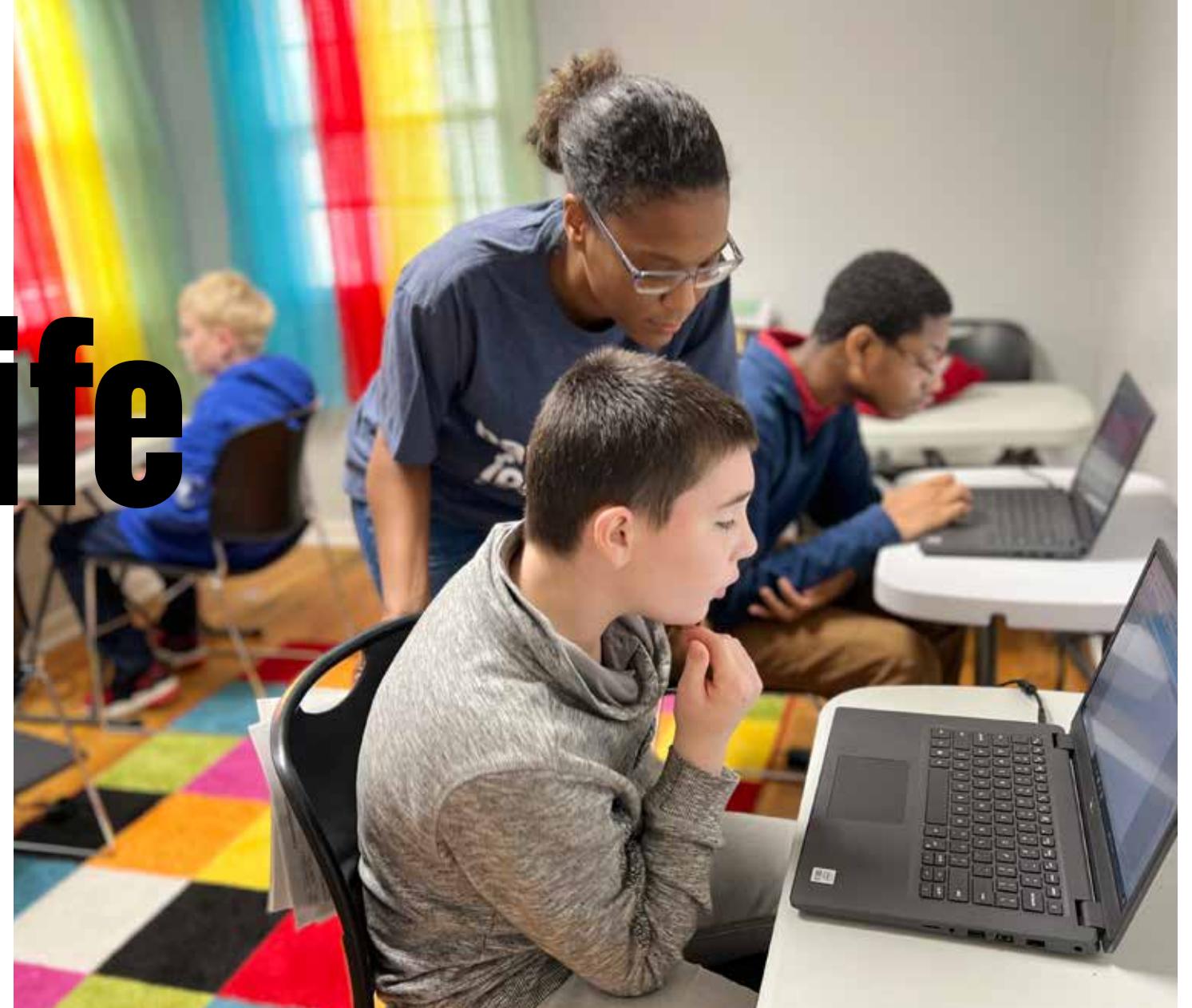
This is your life

Their imaginations have no limits, their courage knows no bounds. And every day the students who are part of our specialized services push themselves to learn more, create more, experience more. They are building the skills they need for successful independent living, and they are reaching for the sky. ■



WHAT ARE FACT SPECIALIZED SERVICES?

Day treatment and group homes for children who have been diagnosed with both a mental illness (or severe emotional disorder) and a developmental disability





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dream big

ONLY THE BEGINNING

Her leadership is effortless – she includes and encourages and together they win. Her life's journey has had a few bumps but she has taken them in stride and is stronger because of them. As she leaves us, she goes into the world with a clear goal and a warrior's determination.

Watch her closely;
she is going to do great things.

