



# Carolina Children

## *Children's Home Society Introduces New Branding*

We are excited to share our new Children's Home Society brand positioning and logo – developed to reflect and support the work we do today and in the years to come.

Children's Home Society has continued to evolve since our founding more than a century ago. As we further evolve, rest assured that our commitment to our mission endures – to promote the right of every child to a permanent, safe, and loving family. The core of what we stand for has not changed, nor will our support for the children and families we serve.

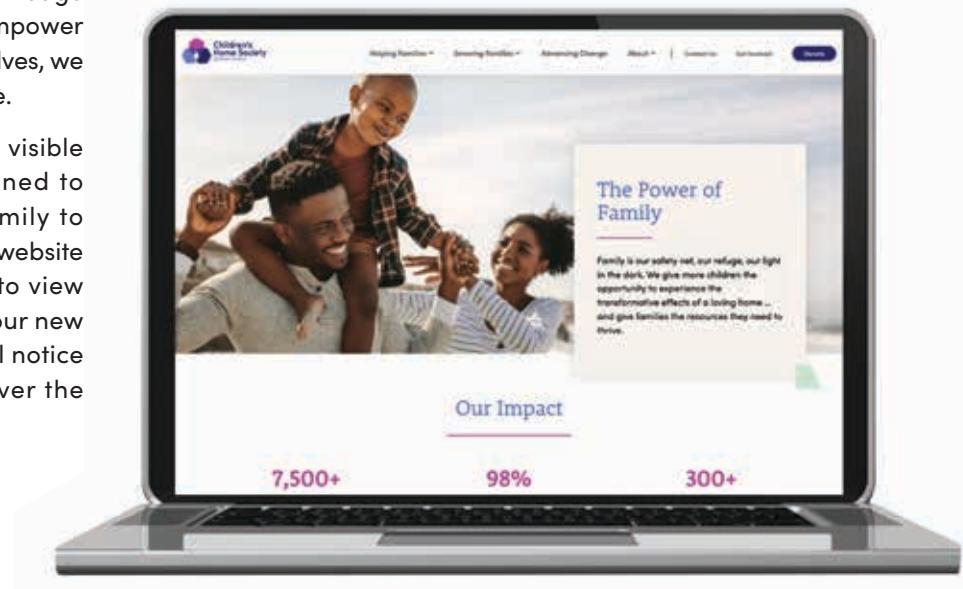
At CHS, we believe that healthier families shape healthier communities. That is why we are committed to giving every child and family a voice and relentlessly advocating for their success. We put heart and discipline into helping families grow healthy and strong, connecting them to tools, skills, and knowledge critical for their well-being. When we empower families to be the best versions of themselves, we can lead the way for meaningful change.

Our new CHS logo is an important and visible element of our new branding, designed to convey our belief in the power of family to transform. We invite you to visit our new website at [www.chsnc.org](http://www.chsnc.org) to learn more and to view this video which brings perspective to our new positioning [chsnc.org/imagine](http://chsnc.org/imagine). You will notice the transition to our new branding over the coming months.



**Children's  
Home Society**

*of North Carolina*



*Visit our new website at [chsnc.org](http://chsnc.org).*

**INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE:**

**LEARN MORE** about how our CHS families, supporters, and staff remain committed to our children now more than ever.

Brian K. Maness  
President & CEO

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Spring always brings a new optimism – warmer temperatures, sunnier days, flowers beginning to bloom – and after a year of challenges, a renewed sense of hopefulness comes with this year.

It is with great enthusiasm that we introduce our new brand positioning and CHS logo in 2021. Our new positioning is themed under the concept of Championing Family Well-Being – helping families grow healthy and strong, connecting them to tools, skills, and knowledge critical for their well-being. Our new logo gives a nod to our previous logo and represents families coming together and a sense of community.

Our virtual fundraising event this spring is aptly named “Hope Lives in A Place to Call Home.” You will hear inspiring stories of our children and families and the resilience, perseverance, and hopefulness they have demonstrated during a difficult year.

Each year we recognize National Foster Care Month in May to honor all who contribute to supporting children during a vulnerable transition period. It takes all of you – foster parents, adoptive parents, donors, sponsors, community partners, volunteers, and staff. To all who are a part of the Children’s Home Society family – thank you!

My best,



**Brian Maness**  
President & CEO



*Brian Maness*

## In May We Celebrate National Foster Care Month



Each year our nation celebrates May as National Foster Care Month, recognizing the role everyone has in enhancing the lives of the more than 423,000 children and youth in foster care nationally and over 12,000 in North Carolina.

Foster families give these children, who have come from crisis situations, a chance to prosper emotionally, physically, mentally, and socially, while putting them on a path to reunification with their family of origin, relative guardianship, or a permanent adoptive family.

National Foster Care Month provides the occasion to raise awareness of foster care and to present opportunities for those in our communities to be informed, provide support, and perhaps consider becoming a foster parent.

We applaud our more than 600 Children’s Home Society foster families, not only in May, but all year long!

**Children's Home Society of North Carolina  
Invites You to Attend  
*A Place to Call Home* Virtual Event**



**Hope Lives in  
*A Place to Call Home***



**THURSDAY, APRIL 22 | 7PM**

**More than anything right now, we believe  
that the world needs hope.**

Hope in health, hope in safety, hope in our communities, and hope at home with our families. You won't want to miss this benefit event featuring two of our CHS families, including the Cranes, a family facing separation who embraced the support they needed to grow stronger and thrive. These families will share their stories and how CHS changed their lives. Please join us to celebrate family and the hope that lives in a place to call home.

**Guest Emcee: Wanda Starke**

*Adoptee, Former CHS Board Member, Retired Broadcast Journalist*



Wanda Starke is a name that makes one think of meaningful advocacy, thoughtful interviews, and smart and passionate journalistic storytelling. We are honored to have Wanda as our emcee for our virtual *A Place to Call Home* event on Thursday, April 22, from 7:00–8:00 p.m.

For years Wanda Starke has been a close friend and supporter of not only the mission of Children's Home Society but of advocating for children everywhere in foster care to help find their forever homes. She has served on our Board of Trustees, spoken at our fundraisers, and featured children in our care on her WXII segment "A Place to Call Home" for 20 years. After a prolific 40-year career in journalism, Wanda officially retired from WXII this past December. As a child of adoption who connected with her biological family in adulthood, Wanda offers a unique perspective and a passion for the work we do and the communities we serve.

Learn more at: [chsnc.org/wanda-inspires](http://chsnc.org/wanda-inspires)



**TO REGISTER**

Please register by April 15  
to receive the event link:  
[give.chsnc.org/aptch](http://give.chsnc.org/aptch)



**QUESTIONS**

If you have additional  
questions, please email:  
[philanthropy@chsnc.org](mailto:philanthropy@chsnc.org)

# A Thank You to Our Children's Home Society Family

As our daughter turned 50 years old in January, I began reflecting on the significant people who influenced and strengthened her life, beginning of course with the folks at Children's Home, who entrusted her with our family. Our entire relationship with the staff at Children's Home several years before we adopted our daughter in the 70's, when she was six weeks old, was positive, reassuring, and very professional. I will never forget that call on a weekend, "We have found a baby for your family to consider and want to tell you about her. Can you come next week to our Chapel Hill office?"

When we went to meet this child, we were told in a loving way that we could visit in private with the baby as long as we needed, and even change our minds about taking her home if we chose. We then entered a room and were drawn to a beautiful baby girl who was peacefully sleeping. When we looked a little closer, my husband said, "There is no need to talk or think further. Let's take this baby girl home now!"

This now grown woman has always felt so much like ours from the very beginning that we have learned through the years that the parent/child relationship is much more than a blood connection. We know that firsthand, since we gave birth to our wonderful son. As the three of us were coming home from a shopping trip, and he was around 8 and she was 5, our son (who adored his sister) was upset with her about something and he said, "Well, your mom didn't want you and gave you away!" I wanted to jump right in and correct this, but I did not, because I wanted to observe how she would respond. Immediately, this little child responded, "No, my mom and dad CHOSE me, and they just had you." I worried no more that our daughter could handle the many life questions that would come her way, and she has not disappointed even during these 50 years!

So, I end these reflections with gratitude and hope you will share with your staff that they are doing significant work but may never realize the impact of their dedication and hard work to place children with just the right families. I am sure we are one of many families who will always feel indebted for their calling of service and compassion.

We wish you, the staff, board and many volunteers the assurance that your work is significant and life giving!

With deep gratitude...

Cille and Lloyd Griffith

## CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION

Please visit [www.chsnc.org](http://www.chsnc.org) for more information about these and many other children who are available for adoption.



**Chance, 12**

kind and energetic



**Kyra, 14**

super creative and kind



**Michael, 14**

great sense of humor and big personality



**Rosie, 14**

young and bright comedian

# MEET RACHEL HANNON:

## A Champion for Children and Families

*"As a mom of three young children, the mission of CHS to promote the right of every child to permanent, safe, and loving family could not ring truer. Each child and family is unique and has a unique set of circumstances and needs, and CHS has a multitude of programs to meet children and families where they are – I have found much joy in sharing information about CHS with others in our community. There are so many ways to connect and find common ground and interest – whether it be through policy initiatives to improve outcomes for children, or education programs focused on male youth, or through the multitude of services offered to support the preservation of families." – Rachel Hannon*

Looking for a place to plug-in? Follow Rachel Hannon's lead. After the boxes were unpacked and things finally felt settled, Rachel decided she wanted to get involved in her new hometown of Charlotte, NC. Despite the demands of being the Principal of Business Development and Investor Relations at Summit Park and raising three young children with husband Dr. Justin Hannon of Hannon Orthodontics, Rachel found time to make an impact in her community.

Rachel first connected with Children's Home Society through an invitation to CHS's signature event, *A Place to Call Home*. Although Rachel could not make the luncheon, something inside her led her to do some research and after discovering a strong linkage to the mission of CHS, she was pleased to join the local Community Leadership Council.

During her four years on the Community Leadership Council, Rachel has been able to serve through various projects such as collecting duffel bags for SaySo, serving as a host for the Women's Philanthropy Tea, participating in *Holiday Soiree* and *A Place to Call Home*, coordinating a health fair and holiday activities with Families Helping Families, donating to The Little Red Stocking Fund, as well as connecting her friends, family, and colleagues with CHS. Despite her many accomplishments, Rachel feels, "There is a lot more work to be done!"

From day one, Rachel felt Children's Home Society was the right cause for her to champion because, like thousands of children associated with CHS, she was adopted as a child. After spending the first four months of her life in foster care, Rachel was adopted by a loving couple in Baltimore, MD. Although CHS's mission

resonates with Rachel's personal story, she says "I quickly learned CHS is about so much more than foster care and adoption – it is about helping, supporting, and growing families, which can resonate with most everyone."



*Justin and Rachel Hannon with their three children, Grant, 3, Cora, 7, and Laine, 5.*

to other people who have been adopted and share her passion in supporting children in care. Rachel says, "CHS has deepened my knowledge about the issues surrounding foster care and adoption so I can better advocate for children's rights." All of this has helped Rachel become more open in sharing her adoption story with others in hopes to spread awareness about the many children who are looking for their forever homes.

Rachel's love for CHS has grown with each passing year. "My connection to the organization evolves over time and I become more energized about the mission and the work of CHS." When asked about her future with CHS, Rachel replied, "I plan to be involved in CHS as long as they will have me!"

***Looking for a way to make an impact for children and families across NC?***

Visit [chsnc.org/get-involved](http://chsnc.org/get-involved) or email [philanthropy@chsnc.org](mailto:philanthropy@chsnc.org) to discover how you can share your unique time, talent, and treasure with Children's Home Society.

# Partnering with Kinship Caregivers

A Q&A with a kinship parent who now assists in co-leading our Caring for Our Own parent sessions.

"A little over two years ago I went from being single with no children, traveling the world with a fantastic job, to moving to North Carolina and taking custody of my three nephews and one niece. To say that my world was turned upside down is an understatement! I now have legal guardianship of the four children, ages 11, 12, 13, and 14. Taking care of them and watching them thrive in a safe and healthy environment has been so rewarding, but it certainly comes with its challenges. I am excited for the opportunity to support this program, as it was so helpful to me when I was just getting started as a kinship care provider." — **Christine Gassman**



**Q:** When you first signed up for Caring for Our Own (as a participant), what were you hoping for? What did you need at that point?

**A:** When I first signed up with the Caring for Our Own class, I was unsure of exactly what to expect. What made me sign up, were the resources and education that were going to be offered. Taking custody of my nephews and niece was a whirlwind, and I didn't give myself the time to sit down and research the support options available, and the options that I had for a long-term plan for the kids. Within two months I was applying for kinship care and going through all that entails, bought a house and moved 500 miles away from my home at the time. My blinders were on and all I cared about was getting myself set up to get the kids out of foster care. It was several months after the kids moved in with me, that this class was presented to me. It was just the right time, as I had the kids settled in our new home, we had the summer to have fun and really connect in a different capacity, not just me being the fun aunt that takes them on vacations and spoils them, but as their caregiver and disciplinarian. But what I was lacking, is knowing what this situation looks like long term, what rights I had and would have, financial resources, support for myself as a brand-new caregiver to children, and knowing how to navigate through all of the emotions of their parents, the children, and me. My biggest hope on what to get out of the class at that time, was to understand the court process for kinship caregivers, what rights they had, and what I could expect.

**Q:** What is one thing you got from participating in Caring for Our Own that made a difference for you?

**A:** I can't say this enough, but the best part of this class, was the emotional support and encouragement from the instructor and the rest of the participants. It was so incredibly therapeutic to be able to share my struggles, challenges, and positives with others who are in very similar situations. There was a lot of head nodding as we shared stories, as we can all relate to each other's experiences in some way. As a single caregiver to my four children, knowing I wasn't the only one with those feelings and struggles, made me feel less like I was doing it all alone. I also picked up a lot of positive suggestions for challenges I had, as others in the group had already gone through what others were currently experiencing.

**Q:** Why did you want to be a part of helping other kinship caregivers?

**A:** Prior to my nephews and niece being placed in foster care, I knew nothing about the system. Being exposed to it, and seeing how it helped my children, makes me want to do anything that I can to support the foster care system, specifically, kinship care. After taking the course and becoming a licensed foster care parent, I have provided respite care to children in foster care, sat on panel discussions sharing my story, and am co-facilitating virtual Caring for Our Own classes. I want to do anything I can to share my experience, and the support that I received both from DSS, and from CHS to hopefully convince more family members to step up and care for children in their family who are currently in foster care. It's a huge responsibility but knowing that there are people out there that are doing it, have done it, and have a very positive success story to share, will hopefully make the decision easier.

**Q:** What would you want others to know about kinship care?

**A:** Whatever an individual's personal situation is, being responsible for children, who have been separated from their parents for whatever reason, is hard. It's hard in so many ways. But there is a lot of support available to make it work. I was a single woman with no children of my own, who suddenly was the sole caregiver of four children, having to figure out how to manage it all, and it is a lot. It's overwhelming, it's exhausting, and it's also the most rewarding thing I have ever, and will ever do, in my life. Seeing my kids thriving, participating in sports and activities, excelling in school, learning to be kind and responsible, makes every struggle so worth it.

**In October of 2020, there were 2,240 North Carolina youth in kinship placements.**

Relative caregivers are a critical resource for children and teens in our state. Research has shown these placements to be better for youth and result in greater stability. During 2020, CHS made a decision to expand the training and support offered to these families through our Caring for Our Own program. Christine, as a kinship caregiver, now partners with the team to provide support to new kinship families just starting out on their journey.



HELD VIRTUALLY ON  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH, 2020

The holidays were very different for many of us this past year as we were unable to gather and celebrate with family and friends as we normally would. In a year with such great challenges, CHS is incredibly thankful for those who were able to join us virtually for our fourth annual Holiday Soirée on Saturday, December 5th.

The event was kicked off by our celebrity guest emcee, local Charlotte weatherman Brad Panovich, and we were so excited to have him join us for the first time. Our guests got to meet and hear from one of our adoptive parents, Mary Murphy, who told her touching story of how she initially planned to be a foster parent, but then after meeting her daughter, Katie, knew she was meant to be her mom. The evening wrapped with a spirited live auction where attendees bid on fabulous trips and other packages that were secured by our dedicated Soirée committee members. We cannot thank them enough for helping to make this year's Soirée such a huge success.

With the silent and live auctions and multiple generous gifts by you, our CHS friends and family, we were able to raise over \$135,000! That means we raised enough to support more than 20 adoptions, helping children to find their forever homes.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our Soirée Committee and our corporate sponsors:

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and to you, our donors, for being heroes to children in our care and  
for believing in families. We could not do this without you!

## Thanks to You, Children in Care Have *Hope for the Holidays!*

**YOU MADE  
A DIFFERENCE!**

Children's Home Society  
fulfilled **667**  
children's wish lists  
because of you.

For the children living in foster care with CHS families, many are not able to celebrate the holidays with the family they have known since birth. This season, you gave these children a brighter and happier holiday by helping to fulfill their wish lists and sponsoring the Hope for the Holidays drive.

Hope for the Holidays is wholly supported and only possible through generous corporate sponsors, individual donors, and volunteers. In 2020, this initiative sparked magic in the homes of hundreds of children who have experienced much crisis. You brought the joy of a brightly wrapped present filled with warm clothes, books, or toys – a gift that brought smiles to their faces.

**Thank you for being someone  
we can count on every year!**



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For more corporate philanthropy opportunities please contact: [philanthropy@chsn.org](mailto:philanthropy@chsn.org)



# Children's Home Society

of North Carolina

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