

Carolina Children

Many Fond Memories Made During Decades of Fostering

After nearly 30 years as foster parents, Patsy and Earnest Squire have made it their mission to offer family structure to children and teens who are in dire need. And they have experienced countless memories and a lot of laughs along the way.

The Squires thought it would just be the two of them enjoying their retirement, but every time they got that call to foster, they could not say no. With Patsy's background in education and Earnest's in the military, they believe their nurturing spirit helps build the children's self-esteem, and they always like to add some humor.



"A lot of kids have never been fishing; that's the first thing I like to do is take 'em fishing. That gives us a lot of one-on-one time," says Earnest.

Patsy adds how the children typically gravitate toward her husband. "I'm the mother figure. I'm the nagger," she says with a smile. "But there is laughter, a lot of laughter."

"Really, the children give you life – birthday celebrations, taking them to church, teaching and training – they keep us young," Patsy adds.

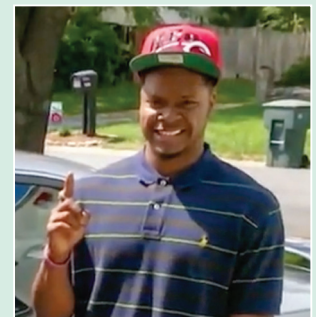
They also understand how important it is to be sensitive to the child's past depending on the level of trauma experienced or if they are in contact with their birth parents.



Patsy & Earnest Squire

"I don't care what we know about the parents, we don't ever say anything negative, because that's the child's parent. Most of the time they know they've made bad decisions but deep down, they still have that love for their parents," Patsy said.

The most rewarding thing over the years is for them to see young teens make a transformation while in their care and for years beyond, and "when a child comes back and is telling you they enjoyed living with you."



Patsy & Earnest have touched the lives of many teens in need

With over 12,000 children in foster care in North Carolina,

CHS is seeking more foster parents to make a difference in the lives of these children in need. We are here to help with every step in the process and to ensure the journey as a foster parent is a successful one. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in becoming a foster parent, please visit chsnc.org for more information.

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

LEARN MORE about how CHS is growing to serve more children and families through advanced programs, increasing staff and encouraging staff wellness, thought leadership, and committed donor support.



CHS PRESIDENT & CEO

Brian Maness

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Spring brings a sense of renewal and growth each year that I cannot help but recognize as I see the leaves budding and flowers blooming. It fills me with a sense of excitement and joy because Children's Home Society is also growing.

In this edition of *Carolina Children* you will learn about some of that growth. Our Cigna Healthy Workforce Designation recognizes that we continue to work tirelessly to ensure that our own staff nurtures their personal growth. You will hear about the launch of our SYNC program which is helping youth in care learn how to make healthy choices that will benefit them throughout their lives.

You will also hear about exciting upcoming events like our A Place to Call Home series where storytellers from across the state will share firsthand what they have learned about family through their personal experiences. We will host our second annual Sunshine 5K and Family Festival along with our first "reThink Permanency" conference that will bring together professionals statewide to rethink how we can work together to advance child well-being.

And this growth would not be possible without the support of our incredible donor community. From our Hope for the Holidays supporters to our participants at the Galentine's events, our donors continue to lead from the heart and invest in the future for our children.

Thank you to our staff, our volunteers, our partners, and our amazing donors for their commitment to ensuring that every child has a permanent, safe, and loving family.

My best,

Brian Maness
President & CEO



Brian Maness

Introducing Sexual Health Education Program for Teens in Out-of-Home Care

CHS is now offering the new and innovative SYNC (Sexual Health for Youth in Care) program with the goal of providing FREE sexual health education for both out-of-home teens and the professionals who work with them.

With Health Education Trainers across the state, SYNC utilizes evidence-based approaches that have been proven to reduce the prevalence of teen pregnancy, unhealthy relationships, and STI/STDs, while increasing self-awareness and empowering decision-making – all needs that are more prevalent with youth in care.

Youth in out-of-home care have higher rates of pregnancy, STIs, and associated sexual risk behaviors than youth living with their families. They are more likely to experience sexual violence and exploitation. Teen girls in foster care are two-and-a-half times more likely to get pregnant, while more than half of both teen girls and boys who age out of care or extend their time in care will have children before they turn 20.

"Youth in care are not only navigating the developmental changes that all adolescents and young adults are experiencing, but they are dealing with the extra emotions associated with being removed from their biological families," said Ted Sikes, SYNC Program Director for CHS. "SYNC provides us with the effective, research-based prevention strategies to improve the sexual reproductive health of these youth."



Supporter Spotlight: Meet Lib Creech

With the help of CHS, Elizabeth "Lib" Johnson Creech and her twin sister, Lou, were adopted as infants in 1962 by Mr. and Mrs. William S. Johnson in Robersonville. Since moving to Charlotte in 2014, Lib has been an avid supporter of Children's Home Society.

"I have heard about Children's Home Society all my life. My parents told me about my adoption when I was a very young child, and I felt blessed from an early age that CHS helped my parents adopt my twin sister and me. I have always wanted to give back because I felt truly fortunate to have such a loving family and a wonderful life experience," Lib shared.

"I have always had a soft spot for The Little Red Stocking Fund, which supports children in care throughout the year. My husband, Morrison, and my family have made gifts in my honor at Christmas that I so appreciated."

Lib has also been a contributor to Hope for the Holidays. "I've had such wonderful Christmas mornings that I wanted to make sure that all children in foster care have gifts for the holidays. It warms my heart and makes me feel good to know that I am helping children who were in a similar situation as me. It is a small token of my appreciation for being matched with wonderful parents by Children's Home Society."

To help her decide what CHS programs to support, Lib talks it over with her Regional Director of Philanthropy each year and learns what current needs are most pressing. "Every program is important to me as it touches the lives of all these children."

What does Lib wish everyone knew about CHS? "You have the chance to impact a child and the trajectory of their life. Children's Home Society is a well-managed organization that provides children a safe home and protected environment. The need is so great, and no gift is too small!"

*"You have the chance
to impact a child
and the trajectory
of their life."*

– Lib Creech



Lib and Morrison Creech



Lib with twin sister, Lou, and their mother Lizzy Green

CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION

Please visit www.chsnc.org
for more information about
these and many other
children who are available
for adoption.



Asya, 17

loves to read and write
and is going to be a great
author one day



Julia, 13

smart and creative with
an outgoing personality



**Lesean &
DeShawn, 9**

twins who are energetic,
affectionate, and helpful



Ramello, 14

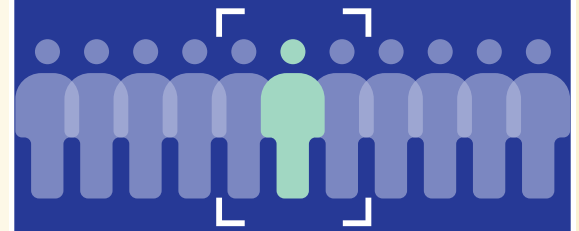
wise beyond his years
with a contagious smile
and loves mac & cheese

CHS Earns Cigna Healthy Workforce Designation™

Cigna has selected CHS as a recipient of its Bronze level Healthy Workforce Designation for demonstrating a strong commitment to improving the health and well-being of its employees through a workplace wellness program.

"Our culture at Children's Home Society is steeped in a commitment to furthering family well-being as it aligns with our mission to promote the right of every child to a permanent, safe, and loving family," said Carli Guanciale, CHS Vice President, Human Resources and Employee Experience. "We are dedicated to our people and invested in their health and well-being and are honored to be recognized with the Cigna Healthy Workforce Designation."

In keeping with CHS's commitment to employee health, CHS recently introduced its Passport to Wellness program which encourages all staff to get their flu shots, vaccines, and other preventive care, and improve their physical, social, financial, emotional, and environmental well-being. CHS completed its own wellness challenge where employees enthusiastically participated a walking/hiking competition combined with a nature photography contest.



New Career Opportunities at CHS

With increased expansion in the breadth and depth of our innovative services, CHS is seeking talented professionals to join our team.

Please visit chsnc.org/careers to learn more about job opportunities.



Benefit Event Series

April 20 • Raleigh (Luncheon)
North Ridge Country Club

April 27 • Greensboro (Evening)
Summerfield Farms

May 4 • Charlotte (Evening)
Mint Museum Uptown



Save the Date!



Winners of the CHS Wellness Challenge Photography Contest

Person who
Traveled
Farthest to
Hike

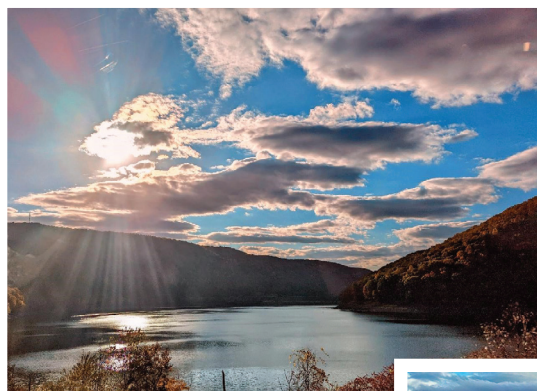


All of Us
by Montia McCain (Abu Dhabi)

Best Photo
of Walking
Partner

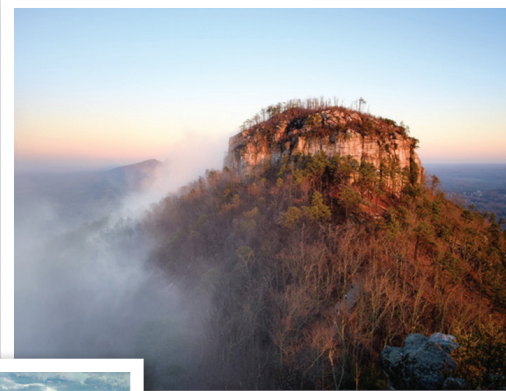


Toby in Stroller
by Vicki Barringer



Kinzua Dam
by Michelle Klark

Five Best
Nature
Photos



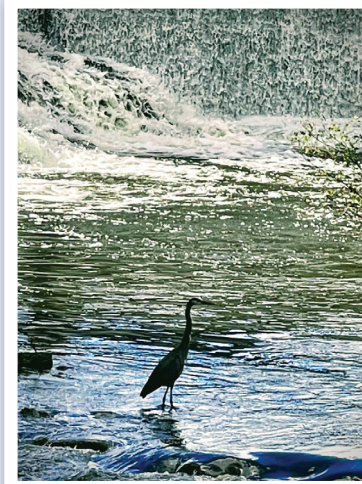
Pilot's Mountain
by Landon Cline



Ant's View
by Cadi Schneider



Linville Gorge
by Kevin Shoffner



Crane
by Carrie Lasztocki



Announcing: Our 2nd Annual CHS Sunshine 5K & Family Festival

Saturday, June 10th • Country Park, Greensboro

Last year kicked off our 1st Annual Sunshine 5K and Family Festival and oh what fun we had! We are thrilled to bring this event back to the community in 2023. Named to honor the first infant adopted through CHS, our Sunshine 5K & Family Festival celebrates the importance of family well-being while spreading the word of our mission, the needs of children and families, and ways to get involved.

- 5K Run/Walk
- 2 Kids 100-Yard Dashes
- Games & Food Trucks
- Princesses and Superheroes
- Music and Much More

You and your family don't
want to miss the fun!

REGISTER TODAY! ➔

CHSNC.ORG/5K



Heart Picked with Love

Adoptive parents Dr. Betty Neal Crutcher and Dr. Ronald Crutcher proudly display their daughter Sara's book *Heart Picked with Love*. In her touching book, Sara Crutcher shares insights into her own adoption story through the eyes of six-year-old Elizabeth who is "heart picked" by her loving parents.

For more about the book visit heartpickedwithlove.com.





Hope for the Holidays

THANK YOU



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Because of *your support...*


Hope for the Holidays 2022 impact:


1,400+
Donors

8,500 Gifts
Delivered Across NC



930
Children served, which
was a 14% increase over
last year


\$74,000+ raised
the equivalent to preventing
25 children from coming into
foster care by providing their family
intensive family services, education,
and counseling


**Served children
across the state
of NC**



Women Leading *with Heart* *CHS Galentine's Gathering*



Raleigh



Winston-Salem



In February, friends of CHS gathered for Galentine's celebrations in Raleigh and Winston-Salem to hear from inspiring panels of local women as they shared the challenges, successes, and life lessons that come when you lead from the heart.





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CHS to Host **reTHINK** **Permanency** *Conference*

This June, CHS and the NC Department of Health & Human Services will host a first permanency conference to explore and examine all

paths to family for youth experiencing foster care. Leaders in the field will come together to rethink how professionals and advocates can work together to advance child well-being through reunification, kinship care, custody, guardianship, and adoption in North Carolina.

As a part of the conference, CHS's Institute for Family will present the "Family Champion Awards" to recognize social workers across North Carolina who go the extra mile.

reTHINK Permanency

*Unlocking Pathways from Foster Care to **Family***

MISSION

*To promote the right of every child
to a permanent, safe, and
loving family.*

VISION

*Every family is supported by trusted
resources that lead to equitable
opportunities for enduring family success.*

CORE VALUES

*Compassion.
Integrity. Excellence.
Innovation.*

Asheville • Charlotte • Fayetteville • Greensboro • Greenville • Morganton • Raleigh • Wilmington • Winston-Salem