A Children’s Residential Center (CRC) is often a very misunderstood place. Some people think it’s a glorified detention facility. Some see it as a 24/7 daycare for aggressive children. Still others see it as an untrustworthy place where kids in pain must remain on guard and work tirelessly to protect themselves from even more pain. The latter was certainly the perception held by a 14-year-old young man when he was referred to our CRC here at Christian Children’s Home of Ohio (CCHO).

At the time, Joe (name changed to protect his identity) had been living with his grandparents, but they felt they couldn’t handle their grandson anymore. They had come to the end of their rope and so had Joe. Upon his arrival on campus, Joe seemed like a respectable young man with some socially awkward tendencies, but overall didn’t appear very aggressive or defiant. Unfortunately, that changed in the days that followed, with Joe exhibiting a vast range of what most would consider to be odd, attention-seeking and defiant behaviors. What, we wondered, could be causing these outbursts?

Soon after, we discovered the root of many, if not all, of the issues presented: Joe had witnessed his father shoot and kill himself when Joe was 4 years old. His mother then began physically abusing him because she didn’t know how to process his father’s suicide. He was left feeling powerless and without any control, a young boy full of guilt and self-blame who sadly became the scapegoat of the family. After Joe was removed from his mother’s care, his grandparents tried for years to help, to care and to love, but it only led to more anger and frustration, which caused him further hurt.

Upon one of my first meetings with Joe, he shared his story with me through desperate tears, begging me to never leave my family as his father had left him. I soon recognized that the unspeakable pain and brokenness Joe had endured at such a young age had helped make him an incredibly strong and resilient young man. Joe wanted healing but, because of his misconceptions about residential facilities, he was unsure if he could find it at CCHO. He had been led to believe that CCHO...
“Behold, I make all things new.”

These words from Revelation 21:5 (ESV) are bursting with hope, a powerful promise from God that the pain, the sorrow, the frustrations of this life are temporary, that something better awaits. But maybe what we love most about this verse is who and what the promise applies to. All things. There are no disclaimers, no qualifiers, no fine print hiding out at the bottom of the page saying, “eligibility subject to approval.”

**ALL** things.

As we began discussing a redesign of the semi-annual newsletter for Christian Children’s Home of Ohio (CCHO), formerly known as “Shareline,” we wondered if there may be a more meaningful name for the publication, something with a relevant connection to God’s Word that illustrates our desire to more effectively communicate information about our counseling, foster care and adoption ministries along with the latest from the CCHO campus. Our search eventually led us to those two simple yet striking words: all things.

No matter what we’ve done, the ugliness locked away in our past, the hurt we carry or even the hurt we may have caused others, Jesus redeems us all when we call to Him. What an incredible gift.

But then God took hold of this idea and showed us just how significant those two words truly are.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28 NIV)

“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible!’” (Matthew 19:26 NIV)

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13 ESV)

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things.” (Colossians 1:19-20 NIV)

In this debut issue and future editions of “All Things,” we will share “all things” related to our family of ministries. You will read stories and learn about the ways God continues to bless the work we do, how He makes the impossible possible, how He demonstrates His love and power through us and the people we help, and how Jesus can redeem anyone, no matter how broken, and anything, no matter how messy.

And you will be reminded, as we are each day, of the healing and salvation that is found only in His love.

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”

(1 Corinthians 13:7-8 ESV)

directly impacted the services we provided in 2016 and we are looking forward to an even greater impact in 2017 and beyond.

As we look toward our 50th Anniversary in 2019, we are excited to begin working on a new gym and renovating the worship and retreat center on our main campus, as well as expanding our Encompass East office in Massillon. The gym will allow us to provide multiple opportunities for our children to just be “kids” and play, the renovation to the worship and retreat center will include a new kitchen that will allow us to better serve the 100-plus meals a day we provide; and the expansion of Encompass East is needed due to the growth of our counseling ministry. We would love for you to join us at our Heart for the Home Celebration on April 8, 2017 as we unveil even more of these exciting plans for the future. We will welcome St. Vincent-St. Mary high school basketball coach (and mentor and former coach of LeBron James) Dru Joyce II as our speaker with a special appearance by Gary and Bobbie Porter. (Please turn to page 6 for more details on the event.)

Each child we work with likely has a similar story to Joe’s, the CCHO resident you read about in this newsletter, a vitally important story of love and redemption. Each child and adult we serve has inherent, incalculable worth because of what Christ has done for them. Sometimes our stories get lost in what has happened to us or maybe the choices that were made for us, but those stories don’t need to end there. Christ is making ALL THINGS new! What about your story? Who needs to hear your story? Are you feeling the prompting of God to change your story? Maybe to volunteer? Become a foster parent? A donor? Your story is moving and inspiring. Share it!

Thank you for partnering with us as we seek to connect with others so that they may see the One who is making ALL THINGS new. We are grateful for you.

Your fellow servant,
...was unsafe and, therefore, his behaviors continued for the first couple months until, one day, he decided to hand over to the staff a pocket knife that he had been hiding for his protection. When I met with Joe later that week, he told me he didn’t need it anymore, that he felt safe with the staff at CCHO despite the other residents’ severe aggression. For maybe the first time in his life, Joe finally felt safe.

In the weeks and months that followed, he began connecting with the staff and many of his behaviors disappeared while the others decreased significantly. Through regular counseling, Joe began to process the trauma that he had been through and started to change his perspective on life, a process that led to freedom from his confining feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. He no longer blamed himself for his father’s death. He began engaging in social activities without fear. He began to show his true self by caring for other people and the animals on campus. Most importantly, he began attending church services and gave his life to Jesus. Shortly after, he was baptized through our campus ministry and began to faithfully seek God.

Only one thing stood in the way for Joe, and that was his past. Because Joe had hurt his grandparents so deeply, they had a difficult time trusting him. After multiple conversations about how he had changed for the better, they still didn’t feel safe enough with Joe to bring him home. Fortunately, God was on the move. Joe’s grandmother agreed to attend family therapy in hopes of addressing some of the hurts that she had both experienced and caused, and after his initial hesitancy, Joe’s grandfather participated as well. Joe responded by demonstrating his resiliency and taking full responsibility for all he had done to his grandparents. He didn’t blame them for their reluctance to bring him home; instead, he apologized for the past. Despite his own pain, he acknowledged the pain he had caused others. His grandparents, finally allowing themselves to believe that healing had come, offered Joe forgiveness and even apologized for their own past mistakes.

What once seemed like an impossibility became reality when Joe reunified with his grandparents after nearly nine months of treatment at CCHO, a powerful illustration of Jesus’ words in Matthew 19:26: “With God, all things are possible.”

You may be asking yourself the same question that Joe’s grandparents had: “Can healing from hurt that deep really come in nine months?” With Jesus, it can. For Joe, it did. And for many children with a similar story, it has, it does, and it will continue.

CCHO’s CRC was Joe’s safe place where he could find healing, discover hope and experience his worth in Christ. In his last week at CCHO, Joe broke down in tears while expressing his gratitude for the help CCHO provided, and he attributed his life-change to giving everything to Jesus and following Him. Now, Joe’s future goal is to become a staff member at CCHO so he can help other kids in need of God’s redemptive love.
One Heart, One Family of Ministries

In Ezekiel 11:19, God’s promise to the brokenhearted is clear and encouraging: “I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone...and give them a heart of flesh.” Time and again, we’ve watched God move in miraculous ways to change the bruised and battered hearts of the children, adults and families we serve on our residential campus in Wooster, in one of our regional counseling offices, or inside one of our growing number of loving foster homes.

Several months ago, we set out to update our logos and agency branding. The heart that you’ll see in each of our logos represents the radical transformation that only God can initiate. It reminds us that, while we strive to do our jobs well each and every day, there is only One who can renew hearts and restore lives. Today, more than ever, we rally around our agency purpose – to help people experience their worth in Christ. The staff, board members, volunteers and donors within our family of ministries represent God’s heart to those we serve. Whether at Christian Children’s Home of Ohio, Encompass Christian Counseling or Encourage Foster Care & Adoption, our vision is to be the partner of choice, providing services that transform lives, families and communities.

In this season of ministry, God is both creating and refreshing in many facets of our agency. In the past year, we’ve seen new staff bring fresh ideas to our ministries. From the new branding and websites to this redesigned newsletter and our spring fundraising event (see page 6), change is in the air. We’ve moved our annual report online and now refer to it as our Donor Impact Report (page 3). We’re writing a book (page 6), updating software and planning to renovate and build on campus (page 2). And now, our foster care & adoption department is getting a new name (below). In so many ways, God is making all things new and we’re just trying to keep up!

Please take a moment to learn more about our family of ministries.

Encourage Foster Care & Adoption

We are thrilled to announce that, on February 3, Encompass Foster Care & Adoption officially became Encourage Foster Care & Adoption. As we continued fine-tuning our vision and streamlining our organizational structure, we recognized that our FCA department needed its own identity within our agency, a distinctive brand apart from our Encompass counseling offices that allows us to draw clear lines of distinction between two different types of ministries so that each service can most effectively define its mission and communicate that to its clients and the communities it serves.

We chose “Encourage” simply because that is what our staff does with our foster parents and the kids we serve every day. Encourage means “to give support, confidence or hope,” and we feel this name beautifully illustrates why we do what we do. Research shows the number one reason foster parents stay with an agency is because of the support they receive, so we encourage our foster parents when children have intensive medical, emotional and behavioral needs; we encourage our foster youth when there is a traumatic past coupled with placements, moves, separation, fear and confusion; we seek to encourage every foster parent and child by helping them realize that they are a unique creation and carry immeasurable worth to our Creator.

This change will not impact our Encompass counseling departments. Our Encourage foster care staff works collaboratively with the Encompass counseling team for coordination of services and the placing needs of every youth in our homes. We seek to be intentional with the message of providing encouragement and work so that every foster parent and youth are successful in the purpose to which God is calling them. To learn more about Encourage, please visit encouragefostercare.org.
A serene 175-acre farm in Wooster became known as the Christian Children’s Home of Ohio (CCHO) in March of 1969 when members of the independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ movement learned of a boy with no safe place to call home. Initially licensed as a foster/group home serving three to five children at one time, CCHO now has five cottages on its campus and is home to as many as 38 at-risk kids at once, confused and broken children who just need to know that they are loved, they are valued and they are safe.

CCHO’s Children’s Residential Center (CRC) provides a safe and stable environment where abused, neglected and abandoned children find healing, discover hope and experience unconditional love. Residential care is designed to meet the mental, emotional, physical, recreational and spiritual needs of each child on our campus. Children in residential care are provided a variety of therapeutic approaches, such as equine-assisted, art, group, individual, play and certified trauma therapies.

With support from dozens of churches, community organizations and a host of caring individuals along with the hard work of nearly 150 employees and oversight from our Board of Trustees, CCHO exists to help people experience their worth in Christ as a licensed Child Care Agency by the Ohio Department of Human Services. We are grateful and humbled by the work God has done through CCHO, and we can’t wait to see what He does over the next 50 years!

Please visit ccho.org to learn more about our residential campus.

Encompass Christian Counseling

Recognizing that we could do even more to impact God’s Kingdom, we launched Encompass Christian Counseling to reach more of Ohio’s hurting children and families with licensed, professional counseling from a Christian vantage point. Faith and expertise converge to provide a holistic approach to counseling with comprehensive services that are both evidence-based and tailored to each person. Licensed counselors invest the time into each individual or family to understand the concerns that bring them to counseling.

Treating a wide variety of emotional, mental health and relationship issues for adults, children and families, Encompass provides Christ-centered outpatient and home-based counseling services from our growing number of local offices, including locations in Wooster, Ashland and throughout Stark County. We also are partnering with 17 area churches to help them address a multitude of issues both inside their congregations and throughout the surrounding communities.

Encompass offers comprehensive services that are designed to wrap families in a blanket of hope and support. Our counselors will embrace you through your pain, worries, hurt and fears and guide you to the path of recovery and hope. We do this through tested and evidence-based practices and treat a wide variety of mental health services such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. While working collaboratively with our Encourage Foster Care ministry, we provide support to both our foster care families and the children to whom they open their homes.

For more information, please visit encompasscounseling.org.
Save the Date!

Saturday, April 8
Greenbriar Conference & Party Centre in Wooster

For nearly 50 years, Christian Children’s Home of Ohio has helped children, adults and families cope with and recover from life’s most difficult challenges through its growing family of ministries. Join us as we celebrate our agency’s storied past and share our vision for an exciting future!

Longtime former CCHO director GARY PORTER will be honored for his decades of service that were essential in making our organization everything it is today!

Guest speaker DRU JOYCE II, St. Vincent-St. Mary HS basketball coach, will speak about mentoring young men like LeBron James and how coaching has impacted his role as a husband and father.

The evening will be hosted by ROBIN SWOBODA, beloved Cleveland news anchor, television personality, actress and member of the Ohio Broadcasters Hall of Fame.

Be one of the first to receive a copy of our agency’s new book, “Father’s Day Miracle: The Day Everything Changed for the Cleveland Faithful,” and learn about our plans to build a gym on the CCHO campus and more!

To register early or for more info: ccho.org/celebration

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The new year got off to a memorable start for CCHO when the Wayne County Community Foundation and the Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce presented the agency with its annual WorthyWorks Award. Given to CCHO at the Chamber’s Annual Dinner Meeting on January 19, the WorthyWorks Award is handed out each year to local non-profit organizations that make a significant impact in their communities.

“On behalf of all our staff at Christian Children’s Home of Ohio, we are humbled to be recognized as the 2017 winner of the WorthyWorks award, and we are grateful to be able to serve in this caring community of Wayne County,” said CCHO Executive Director Kevin Hewitt.

Specifically, CCHO was recognized after expanding its services throughout the area, including the establishment of a new Encompass Counseling and Encourage Foster Care office in downtown Wooster (637 College Avenue) as well as a partnership with Wooster Church of the Nazarene, and doing so in a fiscally responsible manner. The Chamber also pointed to the growing public awareness of CCHO and its related ministries in the community.

“For nearly 50 years, God has blessed us with the opportunity to help transform the lives of the children and adults that we serve,” Hewitt said. “Our dedicated, passionate staff reflect daily our core values of relentless commitment, selflessness and kindness.”

Visit waynecountycommunityfoundation.org to learn more about the Wayne County Community Foundation and see past winners of the WorthyWorks Award. More information on the Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce can be found at woosterchamber.com.

A Very Merry Christmas

As usual, the response to our annual Christmas Wish List program, where donors can provide gifts for the kids on our residential campus and for many who receive our counseling services, was incredible! See some of the stats below. Thank you so much for your generosity! If you would like to participate in the program next Christmas, please email volunteer@ccho.org.
Your tax-deductible gift impacts our organization in so many ways. In addition to supporting our Children’s Residential Center in Wooster, your donation allows us to continue serving children, adults and families with counseling needs while also providing safe and loving foster homes for kids with nowhere else to go as well as the training and resources our foster families need.

Two Ways to Support Our Ministries:

1. DONATE ONLINE
   
   Your online donation using your bank account, debit or credit card can be made quickly, easily and securely at: ccho.org/donate

2. GIVE BY CHECK (SELECT AMOUNT)

   $500 $300 $200 $100 $50 Other $ ____________

   Please complete this form, including the information below, then clip and send to CCHO along with your check in the enclosed envelope. Make payable to Christian Children’s Home of Ohio.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
City __________________ State _____ Zip ______
Email ___________________________ Phone ______________

All gifts are tax deductible and will be acknowledged. Thank you for your generosity.