Imagine being neglected by your mother and living in diapers until age five, drinking Mountain Dew out of baby bottles each day. Or, imagine being a child with a rare birth defect that left you fighting for every last breath, and having those who are supposed to protect and support you instead mock and abuse you.

Imagine the pain you would carry throughout your childhood if one of these two stories were yours. How would you respond? Whom could you trust?

Chloe was one of seven children who experienced severe abuse at the hands of her single mother. Neglected and malnourished throughout her young life, Chloe was eventually pulled from her home and placed into foster care along with two of her brothers. After multiple foster placements, one of Chloe’s foster families adopted her at the age of 10.

Chloe’s past, though, continued to haunt her, and the resulting mental health struggles were too challenging for her adoptive family. At age 15, Chloe again found herself placed outside of the home for several years, a difficult time that included multiple hospitalizations and placements in various foster homes and residential facilities. Feeling she had reached the end of her rope, Chloe swore she would never trust anyone again.

Like Chloe, Jason had the odds stacked against him from the beginning. At three years old, he was diagnosed with a rare congenital condition affecting his head and face, resulting in a small lower jaw, a tongue that sat farther back than normal, and a blockage of the airways. The prognosis was bleak – doctors said he would only live to six years old – but after a tracheotomy and rehabilitation, Jason proved those doctors wrong.

Sadly, home life proved to be even more insurmountable. Jason’s biological parents mocked his abnormalities and made light of the doctors’ prediction that his life would soon end. By the time he was five, Jason had been removed from his home and integrated into foster care. After having everyone in his life turn their backs on him, he learned to trust no one, especially family....
We are grateful for you taking time to read our agency newsletter and to learn a little about the happenings here at Christian Children’s Home of Ohio (CCHO) and our family of ministries. I also am grateful for the people we serve each day and for the opportunity we have to help them experience their worth in Christ. I think I am guilty of often taking for granted the courage it takes for our clients to face the pain, the decisions, the trauma and the fear many of them carry that seeks to rob them of the joy and freedom found in Christ. I was reminded of this courage just the other day.

“Do you think I could ask them to adopt me?” This question was posed to one of our relentlessly committed therapists by a young man hoping to find a home with an extended family member. While there is so much more to his story (more on that soon), the question itself caused me to pause and appreciate the incredible courage exemplified by the children and adults we serve.

“Will you adopt me?” I doubt there are many questions more vulnerable than that. You are asking someone to recognize all of your “stuff” — the good stuff, the bad stuff, the confusing stuff, the I-didn’t-even-realize-I-had-that-stuff stuff, the funny stuff, the sad stuff, and the joyful stuff — and not only accept you despite it all, but welcome you into their family. I can’t imagine the anxiety that comes with that question, nor the courage it takes to ask it.

I don’t know what the answer will ultimately be to this young man’s desire to be adopted by a loving family, but I am eternally grateful for the answer God has given to the adoption question. Paul writes this in Galatians 4:4-7: “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”

Because of Christ, we are no longer slaves, but children; and not only children, but heirs. What a promise, and what a gracious God we serve! Will you join me in praying for our children who so desire a family to adopt them, but also for our children who need to experience their worth as sons and daughters of the Most High? (By the way, this young man is featured in the cover story of this issue, along with another young woman from our residential program. I encourage you to read their wonderful stories of triumph over tragedy, highlighted by their recent baptisms.)

Thanks so much for your prayers and support. We would love to have you come visit our campus here in Wooster.

Your fellow servant,
Jason and Chloe both eventually arrived on the Christian Children's Home of Ohio (CCHO) campus, and that's when God really began to move in their lives.

One of Jason's foster families had taught him about God and Jesus but the wounds from his abuse kept him in a constant state of distrust and disconnection. This disconnection repeated itself as he moved from one foster home to the next from ages 6-12. “People decided to leave me,” he remembers. “They would hug me, say they loved me and would never leave, but ultimately, everyone gave up on me.”

Before reentering the foster care system, Chloe's adoptive family took her to church, where she enjoyed the services and learning more about Jesus. Unfortunately, she felt very far from God after leaving her adoptive home.

Both teens were initially nervous about coming to CCHO, but their time here has proven to be transformational. “Being at CCHO helped me to talk about my feelings more,” Chloe says. “I have learned how important it is to not let your anger build up, but to let it out in healthy ways.” Adds Jason: “Everybody really cares about me and no one judged me. CCHO has made a significant impact in my life, especially in helping me to learn from my mistakes and move on, even when times are tough.”

Their experiences in the residential program made Jason and Chloe both want to discover more about God. After several months of seeing the love and care of CCHO staff and volunteers, Jason decided to learn what it meant to surrender his life to Jesus and be baptized. And now that Chloe felt safe and heard, she was able to hear the message of Christ's love for her. In turn, she earnestly began seeking to follow God, and that obedience let her accept Christ's sacrifice for her sins.

We celebrated Chloe's baptism in late November, and she was welcomed as a sister in Christ up from the water by cheers, hugs and tears of joy. “I was so happy and felt so different!” Chloe says. “My baptism gives me the assurance to know that I am really saved and I feel secure in being a Child of God. This helps me when I slip up, that when I ask for forgiveness (from God and others), I know I am forgiven!”

We celebrated Jason's rebirth shortly after the New Year. “I feel different after being baptized, and I am seeing things more clearly,” he says. “I am doing better in my program and am even starting to notice things about people that I haven’t before. Things that my peers do that used to aggravate me, now I can just pray for them instead of getting drawn in and responding negatively like I would in the past.”

As Jason and Chloe continue to grow in their faith, there are both triumphs and trials. Just like Jesus faced temptation immediately following His baptism, so do they (as we all do!). Please continue to pray for these incredible residents as they take on new challenges (graduating high school, going to new foster families or group homes, reconnecting with bio-families and maintaining good grades) and learn how to walk this journey with Jesus at the helm, knowing that their faith in Him allows them to overcome all things!

Krista, Campus Spiritual Coordinator, works directly with the children in the CCHO residential program in conjunction with CRC volunteer supervision and connection.
As you can imagine, interactions with the kids on our campus can often be volatile and unpredictable because of the trauma they’ve experienced. To help encourage our residential staff to use their individual power for our kids rather than against them, we are conducting a training focused on ways to remain our true selves in any situation. Staff will receive a blue wristband that says, “Calm & Compassionate = True Self,” serving as a reminder to remain calm and compassionate while being spit at, bitten, kicked or verbally disrespected by kids struggling with their emotions. They also will be given a clicker to track the number of times they remain their true selves during contentious interactions with kids and even coworkers. The insight staff members will gain while reviewing their stats and struggles with supervisors each month will be invaluable as we continue to look for ways to improve our treatment program.

CCHO Christian Children's Home of Ohio

Encompass continues to grow! With a new office in Independence (5755 Granger Rd, Ste 105) and another in Avon through an exciting new partnership with Hope Christian Church (32625 Detroit Rd), Encompass Christian Counseling services will now be more accessible for those in Cuyahoga County and the surrounding communities. This latest expansion comes on the heels of the opening of an Encompass office in Green, OH, between Akron and Canton near the intersection of 77 and 241 (3570 Executive Drive, Suite 201). As we relentlessly pursue our purpose to help people experience their worth in Christ, we know we must continue reaching new communities of individuals who are struggling with mental health concerns like depression, anxiety and all forms of relational conflict in their lives. Services vary depending on location so if you would like more information, be sure to visit us online or give us a call.

Encompass Christian Counseling

Our staff has been working diligently to brand and market Encourage Foster Care with new brochures, billboards and Encourage gear (sling bags, water bottles and pens) that we give to new inquiries and to people attending our events. Four of our incredible foster families recently described their unique experiences and shared what sets Encourage apart from other agencies in our powerful new recruitment videos. Before Christmas, we collected more than 200 comfort bags from Momentum Christian Church families and the community to hand out to kids navigating through the transition to foster care. We also have been visiting churches, planning fun and informative events, and developing our new mentorship program, “A Friend in Fostering.” Contact us to get involved, and as always, we appreciate your continued prayers for our ministry and the children and families we serve!

Encourage Foster Care & Adoption

DONOR IMPACT REPORT
A Season of Preparation

Our 2017 Annual Report is now online
Find it at ccho.org/annualreport
Encourage Foster Care & Adoption frequently turns away up to 80 children every month due to the lack of suitable foster homes. As the opioid epidemic continues to plague Ohio communities, the need for loving families who are willing to open up their hearts and homes to kids in crisis will keep growing.

**HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT?**

Encourage offers pre-service training to equip families for the unique opportunity to care for children and youth in the foster care system. State-mandated pre-service training prepares families to work as part of the child welfare team and to best meet the needs of children who have experienced abuse and neglect. Many families who have taken this training have stated that they wished they had taken the class before they parented their own biological children.

These trainings cover a wide range of parenting subjects, including how abuse and neglect impact typical child development. Pre-service training gives families an opportunity to get to know the Encourage team while also connecting with other families who are beginning their foster care/adoption journeys.

*All licensed Encourage foster families are generously compensated for time spent in training.*

**Next Training Begins Tuesday, April 3!**

**PARKVIEW CHRISTIAN CHURCH**
1912 Burbank Rd • Wooster, OH 44691

For more information on this training and all future events, visit [encouragefostercare.org/events](http://encouragefostercare.org/events)

To register, contact Heather Huebner at 330.462.1118 or huebnerh@echo.org
CCHO has always recognized the profound impact volunteers have in the lives of the kids in our residential treatment program. Throughout the years, countless individuals and groups have played important roles in the network of care provided at CCHO through both on- and off-campus service opportunities, and their generosity continues to make a noticeable impact on our campus. CCHO residents have found relief on the swings lovingly installed by volunteer work groups; they have found hope though faithful mentors intentionally building relationships; they have found joy in the sacrificial donations of countless Christmas gifts and care packages; and most important, they have found faith through believers sharing stories of the transformational work of Christ in their own hearts. These examples reveal only a small portion of the ways that our volunteers consistently carry out CCHO’s mission to help our hurting residents experience their worth in Christ.

THE GIFT OF YOUR TIME & TALENT

By Krista Arnold, Campus Spiritual Coordinator

Since beginning my role as Campus Spiritual Coordinator (CSC), I have made it my mission to further empower and equip the growing number of people who serve in our volunteer program by improving residential training, communication processes and compliance requirements. These improvements include updates to CCHO’s online volunteer portal (found at ccho.org/volunteer) with specific job descriptions for each area of service and online access to our volunteer handbook. The goal is to make the path to volunteer with CCHO clear and the steps it takes to minister to our kids as smooth as possible.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is seeing how the power of presence affects the lives of our residents. CCHO is privileged to have multiple volunteer groups that have served faithfully through various means across the span of multiple years. One volunteer group comes from the Canton area on a monthly basis to interact with our residents through Connect2Kids. The joy and encouragement that these selfless individuals bring to our hurting kids through simply sharing a meal, creating crafts or playing games together translates far beyond the day of service. For many of our residents, it serves to continue build a new foundation of their intrinsic worth because of understanding Christ’s great love for them.

As we continue to minister to every child that comes to CCHO, we recognize the importance of having many “hands and feet” of Jesus connect with these hurting hearts. The power of the community of believers extends far beyond what any one Christ follower can do alone. At CCHO, we are committed to helping all our volunteers find where, when and how best they can serve our residents. Please prayerfully consider becoming a volunteer: Our children’s lives (and yours) will be forever changed.

Moving forward into 2018, there are many opportunities to partner with CCHO and get involved in sharing the love of Christ through our volunteer program. Here are two key areas of focus.

RESIDENT MENTORS

Our CRC works with up to 38 kids at a time. Each resident engages in a treatment program tailored to their unique needs and our desire is to partner every child with their own mentor to aid them in their journey. Mentors fill a distinct supportive role in our residents’ lives by serving as positive models who help the children build self-esteem and communication skills while empowering them to make positive life choices.

SATURDAY SERVICE MINISTRY

Volunteers who participate in Saturday Service Ministry have the opportunity to help in the spiritual formation and development of our residents. Every week, by engaging in a time of music, teaching and fellowship on campus, our kids can experience a worship service to connect with God and with His Church. When volunteers from various churches, groups and ministry focused individuals join with our residents for Saturday Service, it reveals the incredible community of support that is the Body of Christ, both now and as our residents venture beyond this campus and into society.

“It’s one thing to tell children God loves you, and that there are people in this world who care about you. It’s another to show them it’s true. Many kids at CCHO have never experienced a loving church family. They don’t know what it’s like to be loved just as they are, right where they are. As a church serving at CCHO, we are members of the body of Christ showing up to be the love of Christ. There is no greater gift than to see hearts touched with the hope of Jesus!” ~ JILL HARDIE, VOLUNTEER WITH CCHO PARTNER CHURCH
In the last fiscal year, nearly 800 people participated in CCHO’s volunteer program. Wow! In addition to those who served at our Great Grill Off and Heart for the Home Celebration, many helped with meals and Bible studies for residents, provided much needed assistance in the One Heart Stables, or pitched in with work groups for several larger campus projects. Discover Christian Church from Dublin remodeled our multipurpose building and poured new cement at the Stables while Grace Bible Church in New Franklin installed swingsets and hung drywall in one of our cottages.

There are too many incredible volunteers to thank them all by name in this space, but we would like to show special appreciation for three groups that have supported our ministry for more than 50 years combined. Their willingness to use their blessings to bless others is a great reminder for us all.

**SONSHINE SERVANTS**

For more than 25 years, CCHO has been blessed by a group of women known as the SonShine Servants. These ladies have done a little bit of everything throughout their many years. Most recently, they made homemade Valentine’s Day candy for residential kids and staff to enjoy.

**SONS OF GOD MOTORCYCLE CLUB**

For 21 years, the Sons of God Motorcycle Club serves a wonderful lunch to our residents, donates a slew of bicycles and raises money for CCHO with a silent auction. Then, they hop on to some of the coolest motorcycles you’ll ever see and take the residents for rides around campus (helmets firmly secured, of course).

**MID-OHIO CORVETTE CLUB**

More than 130 Corvettes of all colors arrived on our Wooster campus last summer for the annual Cruisin’ for Kids event. For eight years, the Mid-Ohio Corvette Club has hosted this amazing fundraiser, which includes a delicious meal and Corvette rides around campus for the residents.

**DON’T FORGET CHRISTMAS!**

Donors in our Christmas Wish List program purchase gifts for kids on our campus and for many in counseling. See some of the amazing stats below. If you would like to participate next Christmas, please email volunteer@ccho.org.

- **152** Total Children Supported (residential & counseling)
- **1050** Gifts Received for Children (approximate)
- **250** Gifts Received for Programs (approximate)
- **72** Volunteer Hours Wrapping Gifts

If you feel called to volunteer your time and talent to CCHO and our family of ministries, please visit our online volunteer portal to learn more about the opportunities that are available!

ccho.org/volunteer

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**How This Program Works**

When you register as a Campus Champion by pledging to support the ministry at CCHO with a monthly gift of at least $30, you not only help supply daily essentials like food, medical supplies, building maintenance and many other ongoing needs, you are able to choose one specific cottage to support through prayer, service and other forms of encouragement.

As a Campus Champion, you will serve a critical role in the healing process for these boys and girls who have suffered so much pain at such young ages by reminding them that there are so many people who love them and want the absolute best for them.

**As a Campus Champion, You Can...**

- Learn a bit about each of the boys or girls in your cottage
- Celebrate successes and pray for challenges the residents face
- Send birthday cards to the kids in your cottage
- Serve your residents through special volunteer programs

Sign up online today!

ccho.org/champions
Your support can make all the difference to the children, adults and families we serve!

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)
   □ $25 □ $75 □ $150 □ $300 □ $500 □ 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.

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