

LONG LETTER HOME



COOKSON HILLS
HELP. HOPE. HEALING.



CALMING THE STORM

Donté's early childhood experience didn't make the evening news like hurricanes or earthquakes do, but its effect was just as devastating to him. Born to a single mother involved with drugs, he was only five years old when she landed in jail. In the blink of an eye, little Donté needed rescued.

A local minister and his wife gained temporary custody of Donté and immediately made arrangements for him to come to Cookson Hills. When his mother was eventually released from jail, he was placed back in her care, but it didn't last long. Her struggles with addictions and unhealthy relationships soon resurfaced, and again Donté was in need.

Fortunately, Donté remembers little about his life before Cookson Hills. He was diagnosed with "failure to bond" syndrome and was struggling in school. His guardians saw evidence of extremely low self-esteem. He avoided eye contact and seldom ever smiled. Some observed that he was simply a sad boy. But he has made tremendous strides since returning to Cookson Hills.

In 2008, Donté was the first child placed with the Cole family. The Coles now have nine children in their home including Josiah, a legally adopted child. "He's RED!" was Donté's first impression of his new baby brother soon after he was born. "Donté is becoming a remarkable big brother," Mom Cole says.

Now in 5th grade, the educational improvement Donté has made is obvious. This year, in our new self-paced, hands-on math program, he has advanced nearly two years. He now says, "Math comes naturally to me," and he wants to become an architect. Donté entered the *Tell Us About Your Dream*

contest in which he described what he would do if given money to carry out his dream. He wrote, "I would go to college and learn to design buildings that could withstand hurricanes or earthquakes. Then, I would go to countries like Haiti to build shelters for the homeless using the latest technologies."

Donté accepted Christ and asked Dad Cole to baptize him in the Buffalo River while on a family camping trip last summer. Now he is letting God be the architect of his future. Thank you for partnering with Cookson Hills to give children like Donté a solid foundation on which to build their lives. Your gifts are helping him and many other young people build relationships, develop character, and gain the skills needed to withstand the earthquakes and hurricanes of life. ■

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Rick Bayless
Executive Director



Our Mission:

Cookson Hills exists to serve our ministry partners by providing Christ-centered services to children and families in crisis

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PARTNERING *with a* PURPOSE

Partnering churches that minister to families in crisis in their communities will eventually find themselves faced with children and families that need more than they or their communities are capable of managing. In many cases, those families have nowhere to seek help except government or secular run programs.

Cookson Hills offers our partnering churches a Christ-centered alternative to the government run foster care systems, emergency shelters, and detention facilities.

When one of our partnering churches calls with a child or family in crisis, we give them preference in the placement

port of our partners and want to do all we can to help them when they have a need.

College Heights Christian Church in Joplin, MO is a great example of our *Partnering with a Purpose* efforts. They deliberately and voluntarily reach out to families in their community who are living in under developed and blighted areas of their city, offering Christ-centered programs for the addicted, under educated, and under-served populations. Those efforts led them to seek placement for several teens who needed an opportunity to break the cycle of abuse, neglect, and dependency.

Some single moms were fighting a losing battle trying to work minimum wage jobs while dealing with teens who

...when the family of origin is unable to provide a healthy and safe environment for children, a purposeful partnership with Cookson Hills has proven to be a positive alternative.

process. This doesn't mean the children and families they serve are more important or valued than others, nor does it mean that Cookson Hills always has an appropriate opening for the referred child. But in every case possible, we accelerate the process and move them to the top of the list in an effort to help.

Why do we give partnering churches preference?

First, families who have the support of a church family during the time a child is placed with Cookson Hills are often better prepared to reunite successfully with their child.

Second, we appreciate the regular sup-

had been expelled from school. Others were afraid to get help for their own addictions for fear of losing their child to worse influences in their community or to the government foster care system. Currently, Cookson Hills provides specialized care for four teens whose families have roots with College Heights Christian Church.

Not all families need the specialized help offered by Cookson Hills. Alternatives that keep the family intact and healthy are preferred. But when the family of origin is unable to provide a healthy and safe environment for children, a purposeful partnership with Cookson Hills has proven to be a positive alternative.

A LIFE CHANGED



"It will be OK," were the words Shelby most wanted to hear during the unsettled and unpredictable life she lived as a young child. At 17 years of age, she could not remember ever feeling unconditional love or even hopeful about her future.

Shelby was raised by her biological mother who struggled to meet the demands of four children, multiple marriages, and work. Faced with extremely difficult circumstances, Shelby says her mom did the best she could.

Shelby felt less important than those troubling conditions, and there was a hole in her heart as she struggled to find a sense of significance. Unfortunately, during her early teen years, she sought to fill that hole with friends who participated in destructive and harmful activities.

What began as a search for love and affection left her feeling trapped in a life of hopelessness, distancing herself from her mom and step dad. Maybe that's why the ever-present unconditional acceptance and love of God means so much to her now. When Shelby arrived at Cookson Hills in September 2009, she says, "I was so mad at my Mom, I wouldn't even talk to her."

Her anger was met with a genuine unconditional love from care givers at Cookson Hills. She remembers, "My houseparents, school teachers and counselors liked me, loved me, and it was something I could rely on and trust in. Everyone was so loving and helpful."

Almost immediately Shelby began to question the origins of this kind of love. She questioned how people who didn't know her that well could love her so fully. Within a few months she had an answer.

On November 13, 2009, Shelby accepted God's love and the gift of salvation He offers. "That's the day I was born... Born again!" she exclaims. "Christ made a huge difference in me. He forgave me for all the terrible stuff I did. My life has been totally new since that day. I still mess up sometimes, but I know that I can go to God and tell Him about it, ask him for forgiveness, and HE FORGIVES ME!"

Shelby is working hard at recovering some credits in school to be on track to graduate with her classmates in 2011. After graduation she plans to return to Mustang, OK where she plans to enter a nurses training program and pursue a nursing career. ●

TULSA'S LOSS — OUR GAIN

Faced with significant budget cuts, the Tulsa Police Department discontinued their mounted police force and donated the horses to the Tulsa Community Foundation (TCF). Subsequently, TCF sought fitting placements for the

eight horses. After a lengthy application process and thorough site visit, our Equine Assisted Therapy and Recreation Program was selected as a recipient of three of those eight horses. Otis, Bob, and, Amigo have been a great addition to our program. Their past train-

ing and general health prepared them for quick entry into the rotation for use in our Right Rein (basic horsemanship) program as well as our Calf Penning and Girl's Drill Teams. Many thanks to the TCF selection committee for placing these superb animals with us.





Winter Banquet is one of the highlights of the year for our students. The banquet offers high school kids an opportunity to wear formal attire, practice formal dining manners, engage in God honoring fun, and ask that potentially special someone for the first dance. The theme this year was “Old Hollywood Nights.” Volunteers and staff combined their efforts to help with makeovers, special dress fittings and alterations, and shopping for suits and ties. The Winter Banquet committee of students led by one of our social workers, Kayla Klar, spent many hours planning the event and decorating the gym. After a meal of shish kabobs and boiled potatoes, the kids had a blast playing old Hollywood movie trivia followed by the formal dance.



EQUESTRIAN DRILL TEAM



Drill team is a group of horses and riders performing choreographed maneuvers to music. As part of the 4-Him program, nine girls under the direction of Kelly Schurman formed the first Cookson Hills drill team. This group of dedicated girls practices two afternoons a week working on timing, advanced horsemanship skills, teamwork, and sportsmanship. The goal of the drill team is to be able to perform at various local competitions. The girls participating are Deanna, Michelle, Jessica, Grace, Emilie, Jenna, Christy, Katelynn and Breanna.



2009-2010 AWARDS BANQUET



Teacher Brenda Vryhoff (left) presented the Honor Roll awards to the 7-8th graders.

Our Annual Awards Banquet was held on Wednesday, March 24 in the school gymnasium. This is a time when students are honored for both academic and athletic achievements. Letter awards in sports included two boys and five girls in Basketball, six girls in Volleyball, and four boys in Soccer. Other athletic awards included both serious and humorous from Most Points Scored to Entertainer of the Year. Many academic awards were handed out for elementary age through high school. Categories ranged from Top Reader, Top Scientist, and Biblical Insight for elementary age to Honor Roll for Jr. High and High School. The seniors also gave a report and slide show of their Spring Break mission trip to Family Ministries of Florida.



Modeled after 4-H, our 4-Him program gives students practical experience in a variety of projects with animals, arts and crafts, and outdoor recreation.

Christian mentors work directly with the students to provide them a working knowledge in their area of interest to build life-long learning skills.

Besides the activities pictured to the right, other 4-Him projects can include: choir, raising calves, equine care, cake decorating, sewing, photography, scrapbooking, and more.



> Tennis



> Chess



> Sculpting



> Carpentry



> Raising Lambs



> Sign Language

COOKSON HILLS



HELP. HOPE. HEALING.

Dan Hansen believed in second chances. He was a divorcee and a struggling alcoholic. In 1988 he met the Lord and his soon to be new bride Mary.

H3 Partner Mary Hansen says, "Everyone deserves a second chance. Dan and I had ours, and we want to make sure to pass it on to the kids at Cookson Hills. Dan wouldn't want anyone

SECOND CHANCES

making a hero out of him. He just did what the Bible says to do. We learned the more we give to Him – the more He gives to us. We're thankful we could be a part of helping the children at Cookson Hills."

Dan has gone on to receive his heavenly reward, but Mary continues to extend *second chances* to the children at Cookson Hills with her regular support. "Before he died, Dan made me promise to keep giving for the rest of my life," says Mary. And she states that God routinely enables her to give more than she thinks she can.

Mary knows she is living on borrowed time, suffering from a rare skin disease. Perhaps you would like to join Mary in giving at-risk kids at Cookson Hills a *second chance*. If so, will you join her and over 350 other H3 Partners who are

sending regular monthly gifts to help us provide Christ-centered services to children and families in crisis?

This year we are praying for 110 new H3 Partners who will make regular monthly gifts of any size to help undergird our three major infrastructure needs: children's services, staff, and utilities. New H3 Partners enable us to provide for more children and give us increased confidence as we make plans for future growth.

Doesn't every child deserve a *second chance*?

Secure credit card donations can be made by clicking the **Donate Now** button at www.cooksonhills.org. If you would like to set up an Electronic Funds Transfer please call 918-597-2192. Either option is a great way to provide Cookson Hills with a steady source of income.



Already this year we have had eight volunteer workgroups visit us working a total of 2,630 man-hours. A few groups were here for a day doing cleanup and yard work. Others were here for a week replacing windows, repairing barns, and digging gas line trenches. Here is a list of those who have sacrificed their time and energy for the ministry at Cookson Hills so far in 2010.



COOKSON HILLS
CIRCLE of FRIENDS
MISSION TRIPS



JANUARY 2010

Northern Michigan University Campus House

FEBRUARY 2010

First Christian Church, Owasso, OK

MARCH 2010

College Heights Christian High School, Joplin, MO

Summit Christian Academy, Broken Arrow, OK

First United Methodist, Jonesboro, AR

Center Community Church, Plainfield, IN

Westlink Christian Church, Wichita, KS

APRIL 2010

Valley View Christian Church, Littleton, CO

We still have a few openings for 2010. If you are interested in bringing a group on a mission trip, contact Kevin Johnson at 918.597.2192 x327 or email missiontrip@cooksonhills.org.

MEMORIALS

Pat Avery

James Avery

Ed Bayless

Edith Bayless

Athlyn Boomer

Lynn T. Boomer

Betty Brunton

Jim & Jo Helen Ohl

Bill Carver

Betty Carver
William Carver Jr.

Hiram Casse

Dennis & Joy Johnson

Ralph & Irma Dietz

R & I Memorial Trust

Ed Gorman

Doug & Linda King
Sue Hinkle & Family
June Best & Family
Bill & Jane Beard
Paul Singleton Family
Rotary Club of Sand Springs, OK
Peter Agnell
Larry & Valerie Naumann

Lillian Leeds & Nancy McLemore
Mickey & Jean Ann Gerdes

Ralph Gorman

June Best & Family
Sue Hinkle & Family

The Gorman's

Jayne's Life Group
Tulsa, OK

Lawrence Hallum

Ruth Dorney
Jerry & Jan Rader

George Hicks

Steve Johnson Family

Don Hendrix

Larry & Valerie Naumann

Jack Hunt

Stephen & Denese Leadabrand

Clois Lamb

Mrs. Weldon Marshall
Lillian Marshall McConnell

Gary Wayne Leake

Ruth Cash

Betty Longan

Lendell & Lawanda Bass

Louise Love

Jackie & Jeannine Miller

Buddy Maness

Sid & Ada Richardson

Lorene Medlin

Bobbie Johnson

Dennis Murray

Anne Murray

Wanda Myers

Anonymous
Gregory & Carrie Hollenback
Weldon & Thelma Stevenson
Leon & Sandra Dutton
Vernon & Anna Henderson
John & Heather Mohr
William Pilger
Wayne Covedill

Albert Pruitt

Ray G. & Bobbie Hill

Ben Sheley

Helen L. Sheley

Paul Siemens

Helen Burr

Garold Unruh

Neil & Debbie Watson

HONORARIUMS

Bob & Ruth Crawford

Bill & Carol Duncan

Loren Dutka

Boris & Eloise Dutka
Ruth Dorney

Ellen Hallum

Ruth Dorney

Jerl & Dani Joslin

R. D. & Dani Allen

Patia Lewis

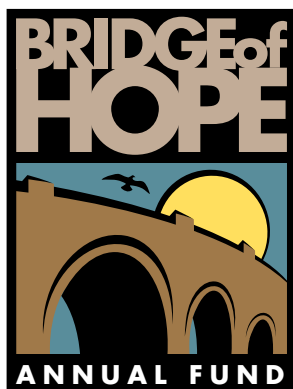
Charles & Wanda Goff

Bud & Ruth Pummill

Frank & Virginia Duvall

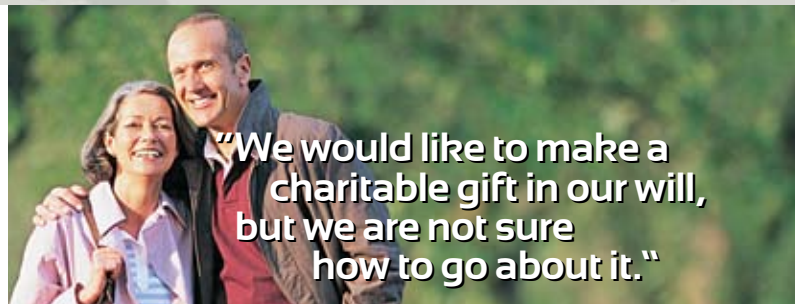
Clay Williams

Edmond Christian Church
Edmond, OK



In the face of one of our nation's most difficult economic periods...

Cookson Hills donors have remained very faithful. We are indeed blessed. As we approach the remaining two months in our fiscal year (July 1-June 30), donation income is only lagging about 5% under budget. That leaves us with the need to raise an additional \$115,000 during the next two months to meet our annual budget needs. Would you, your civic club, Sunday School class, home group, mission committee, or business consider a special gift to finish the year strong?



We will help with the design of your will.

When Christians seek God's plan of stewardship for the distribution of their estates, God's work here on earth will be part of that distribution. We want to share with you ideas to more effectively plan your charitable giving.

To accomplish this, we have prepared a special *Guide To Planning Your Estate*. Please call or write today for your free copy. There is no cost or obligation. We want to help and look forward to hearing from you.

Call: 918-597-2192

Or email: rbayless@cooksonhills.org



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COOKSON HILLS CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES
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JOPLIN, MO 64802
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LONG LETTER HOME

APRIL - JUNE 2010

OPEN HOUSE & 4-HIM FAIR



SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 2010, 10:00 A.M.

Campus Tours | Talent Shows
Student Testimonies | Project Presentations
4-Him Fair | Calf Penning Demonstrations
Lamb Show | Equine Drill Team

FREE LUNCH PROVIDED
ALUMNI FELLOWSHIP RECEPTION

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Counselor: Seeking an LPC, LMFT or LCSW. Proficiency in cognitive/behavioral, play, and brief therapy methods is highly desired. Experience with Equine Assisted therapy is preferred. Capable and comfortable with integrating biblical truth in the counseling process is a must.

7-8th grade Science/Math Teacher: Must be certified in state of origin and willing to transfer to Oklahoma certification. Experience in alternative educational settings is a big plus. Integration of biblical truth during the learning process is a must.

These are full-time positions offering an attractive package of benefits to include reduced cost housing and utilities, insurance (life, health, dental, vision), holiday and sick pay, plus matching funds retirement plan. Send resumes to rbayless@cooksonhills.org or call 918-597-2192 x330.

CLASS OF

2010

With the passing of time we have acquired knowledge, understanding, and friendship.

With the help of many, we are prepared to meet tomorrow's challenges.

The two thousand and ten Senior Class of Cookson Hills Christian School invite you to join us in celebrating our accomplishments as we graduate Saturday, the twenty-second of May at seven o'clock in the evening Cookson Hills Christian School Gymnasium

• RECEPTION FOLLOWING •