

# LONG LETTER HOME



COOKSON HILLS  
HELP. HOPE. HEALING.



## A Place TO CALL Home

For Rashonda and her three older siblings, life was dark and the future uncertain. Her parents drank heavily, and Rashonda remembers spending many hours in a crawl space under the house when she felt scared. Although her mother always told the children that she loved them, she was unable to give them the care and nurturing they desperately needed.

In the spring of 1980, when she was four-and-a-half years old, Rashonda and her siblings were placed at Cookson Hills. Her childhood memories of life at Cookson Hills taught her the true meaning of unconditional love. Being saturated by God's love gave her a new understanding of family relationships and helped prepare her to raise her two biological and three step-children today.

Rashonda also remembers the sponsors who made her feel special. "It was the little things like school supplies, birthday parties, Christmas sweaters, Easter dresses, and hand-made dolls that showed me that I mattered to someone."

To our ministry partners Rashonda says, "Even if it's only one child whose life you help change, it is worth it. Looking back, I see where I came from and what God has brought me to. I see the person that I could have been and the person I am today and I think, wow, what an amazing work God has done in my life."

In addition to being a mother of five children, Rashonda now serves as a member of our Board of Directors. She wants to be a part of bringing help, hope, and healing to other children and families like hers.

The chorus of a song Rashonda wrote describes her gratefulness to those at Cookson Hills who made a difference in her life. "God bless the fathers and the mothers, the sisters and brothers, for loving me like I'm your own. For each time you hold me and you listen, or you tell me that you miss me, and for giving me a place to call home...I love this place I call home." ■

Watch Rashonda's testimony online at:  
[www.cooksonhills.org/testimonies](http://www.cooksonhills.org/testimonies)

### IN THIS ISSUE

A Word From The Director .....	2
The Simple Things .....	3
New Students On Campus .....	4
Saddle-Up .....	4
VFW Voice Of Democracy Contest .....	5
H3 Partners Update .....	7
Memorials & Honorariums .....	7
<b>SPECIAL INSERT • Legacy Newsletter Inaugural Issue</b>	



**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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# IN PURSUIT OF *A Better Freedom*

Freedom is often equated with the unbridled pursuit of one's passions, ambitions, and appetites. But when passions, ambitions, and appetites are unhealthy and unholy, we can easily find ourselves enslaved rather than free. Such was the case with Sherry.

Sherry had observed the love, happiness, warmth, and comfort some families enjoy but had lost hope in ever experiencing them. In her family, angry outbursts replaced healthy communication and disrespect supplanted acceptance and support. She began searching outside her family for freedom. Distancing herself from her parents, she neglected her school work, found acceptance from other at-risk peers, started using alcohol, experimented with drugs, and became sexually active. Unaware and uncaring of her own condition, she was trapped in an overpowering darkness that threatened physical and mental health, diminished self awareness, and robbed her of her self worth. What began as a search for freedom ended in slavery to self-destructive habits.

When Sherry came to Cookson Hills, she heard of a promise of freedom and fresh new opportunities. You might think the habits that brought pain and danger in her past would be easily abandoned in favor of a better freedom. But for Sherry, freedom from a sinful past brought new fears, and with new opportunities came new expectations. She opted for a lesser freedom. During her stay at Cookson Hills, she openly rejected the love and support of caring adults, but the seeds of a better freedom were planted.

Sherry sent me a Christmas card 27 years after departing from Cookson Hills. The inscription read, "Jesus -

Light of the world...and joy of our hearts!" She underlined a scripture verse at the bottom of the inside cover page which read, "Arise, shine, for your light has come," Isaiah 60:1.

In her own words Sherry wrote, "God Bless the works of your hands! Thank you for loving me. Thank you for planting that seed of Jesus and his love in my heart and my life. God bless Cookson Hills forever! Love, Sherry."

Sherry found a better freedom. A freedom that brings new mercies daily. A freedom that empowers her to be an overcomer in this life. A freedom that breathes new hope for her future. A freedom that delivers on the promise of life everlasting.

We anticipate serving nearly 100 children in residential care during the coming year. Most of them are pursuing a lesser freedom like Sherry did. Without the opportunity Sherry was given, they will most likely find themselves enslaved, addicted, and imprisoned. But with your help, we can offer them a "better freedom."

The Master of this better freedom left no doubt as to its value. He gave his life.

I haven't found a more worthy master. That's why I do what I do. That's why I ask our staff and people like you to join me. I am convinced that there is nothing that creates more celebration among the angels in heaven than when a child finds a "Better Freedom" in service to the Master.

Note: I am indebted to Michael Card for his research, knowledge, and authoring of *"A Better Freedom."*



## the Simple Things

Sometimes the simple things of life, things that most of us take for granted, make a big impact on the children we serve.

During the last week of January, brothers and sister Micah, Isaiah, and Mariah arrived at Cookson Hills. It was immediately apparent that some basic needs

had not suitably been met. When Micah walked in his bedroom, he flipped on the light switch. With a surprised grin he said, "It works!"

Because of your help, the light in every child's room comes on everyday. Your gifts provide healthy meals, ample clothing, special birthday celebrations,

frequent hugs and compliments, educational success, family prayer times, family fun, medical treatment, transportation, lots of laughter, and a host of other basic essentials for healthy development.

Additionally, every child is exposed to a reliable source of light for their souls. To paraphrase Jesus' words, "I am the light of the world...the darkness cannot put it out." Everyday, the Light of Christ is shining on Micah, Isaiah, and Mariah.

## COOKSON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL • 1ST SEMESTER HONOR ROLL

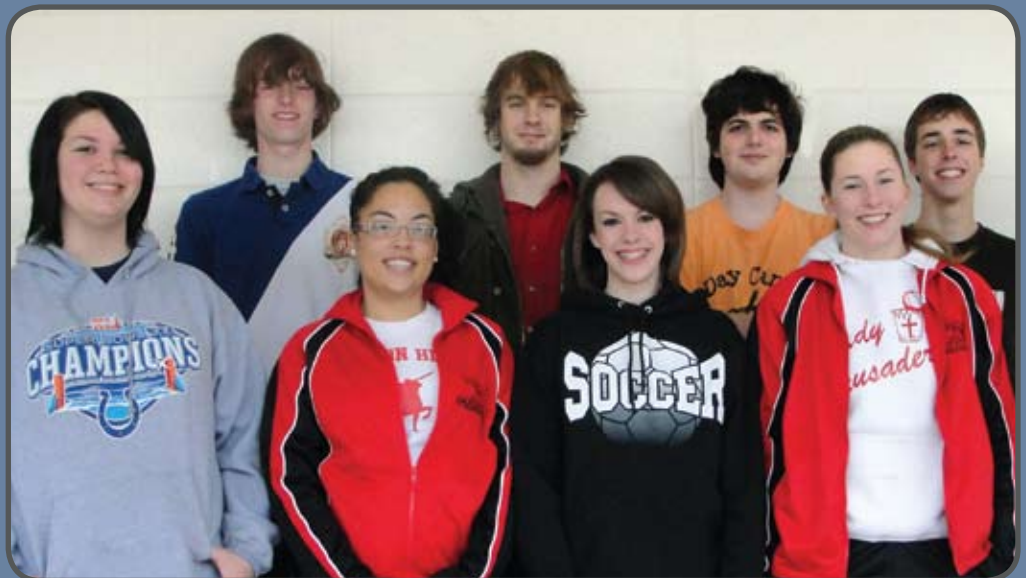


**BACK ROW:**

Robert, Austin,  
Archer, Kyler

**FRONT ROW:**

Katelyn, Abby,  
Jordyn, Deanna



## NEW STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” — MARK 10:14



CHRISTOPHER



CALEB



KALEIGH



KATELYN



CHRISTOPHER



GREG



GRACE

Please pray for each of these students as they make adjustments to new friends, discover new opportunities, confront new challenges, adapt to a new school, and develop new family relationships.



Saddle-Up is an equine program geared toward the family environment providing houseparents and their kids an enjoyable and relaxing time to bond with each other and with the horses. Activities include equine-based games and riding in the indoor arena. Saddle-Up offers opportunities to improve riding skills, self-image, and personal confidence.

Each person involved in Saddle-Up participates according to their current level of knowledge and experience. The goal is that each individual in the family will gain the necessary skills to ride a horse on his/her own, allowing families the opportunity to enjoy trail-rides and picnics together.

Equine specialists Mike and Kelly Schurman state, “The Saddle-Up program has been a real blessing to offer the families. It’s a joy watching them share experiences and interact with each other. The 4th-8th graders also participate in Right Rein horsemanship classes during school, and this has been an opportunity for them to show their parents how to groom the horses correctly. The enthusiasm received from parents and kids alike has been heartwarming.”

## 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
- Animal Showings | Equine Drill Team

FREE LUNCH PROVIDED  
SPECIAL H3 PARTNERS PRESENTATION

# Voice of DEMOCRACY

## AUDIO-ESSAY CONTEST



L to R: Claudus Davis, Austin, Abby, Charles Marts

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW) premier scholarship program. Each year, over 100,000 high school students compete for more than \$3 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording a broadcast script on an annual patriotic theme. The theme for 2009-2010 was: *Does America Still Have Heroes?*

Two seniors from Cookson Hills entered this year's audio-essay contest. Austin won first place and Abby won second place at the VFW Post local level. Each winner at the local level advances to the district level where Austin won second place.

On January 22nd, 2010, Charles Marts and Cluadus Davis of the Local VFW Post 10596 presented Austin and Abby their award checks.

## Check out the NEW Cookson Hills website!

- Fresh design
  - Simple to navigate
  - Donate online
  - Watch videos
  - Seeking placement?
- Try our new easy-to-use online screening questionnaire
- Download past newsletters
  - Suggested reading list for parents
  - Download desktop wallpapers

[www.cooksonhills.org](http://www.cooksonhills.org)



Did you know Cookson Hills Christian School collects Box Top\$ for Education? As you dig through your pantry, remember to clip and save those coupons. Box Tops coupons are found on hundreds of General Mills products like Cheerios, Betty Crocker, Juicy Juice, Pillsbury, Ziploc, Huggies, Kleenex, Hefty and more. Each box top is worth 10 cents. Mail Box Tops to: Cookson Hills, RR 3 Box 200, Kansas, OK 74347.

— Needs List —

- Steel Farm/Gate Panels  
(Equine Counseling Facility)
- Twin Sheet sets
- Bath Towels
- Sanitaire™ SC5845A  
Commercial Bagless  
Cyclonic HEPA VACUUMS
- Small Utility Pickup Truck
- Breakfast Cereals
- Toaster Pastries

## “I’m concerned that my will might be out of date. How do I know when it should be reviewed?”



Many estates are not distributed according to the individual’s desires, simply because the estate plan was outdated.

### ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Are witnesses to your will still living?
- Have you moved to another state since your will was drafted?
- Does your will appoint a personal representative who would be unable to serve today because of where he or she lives?
- Have minor children become financially independent, resulting in a change in your desires for estate distribution?
- Have tax laws changed since you last reviewed your estate plan?
- Do you need to explore the use of a trust?
- Have your charitable interests changed since your will was drafted?
- Has the size of your estate increased substantially, resulting in a need for tax planning?
- Does your present estate plan provide for management of property in case of disability prior to death?
- Are there additional methods you may employ to avoid probate at the time of death?

Your answers to these and other questions may indicate that you need to update your estate plan. We have prepared a special *Guide To Planning Your Estate* that will be of value to you as you review your estate plan to make sure it is up-to-date and will carry out your current distribution desires. Please write today for your free copy. There is no cost or obligation. We just want to help.

**Call: 918-597-2192**

**Email: [rbyless@cooksonhills.org](mailto:rbyless@cooksonhills.org)**

## MEMORIALS

### Pat Avery

James Avery

### Vicki Bronson

Lendell & Lawanda Bass

### Clell & Zula May Couchman

Roger & Louise Brown

### Marge Etcheson

Terry & Deana Cook

### Ralph Gorman

Larry & Valerie Naumann

Jean Ann & Milton Gerdes

Charles & Melissa Ferguson

Owen & Ann Howard

Delmar R. Schrupf, Jr.

### Elmer & Velma Gruen

Delmar R. Schrupf, Jr.

### Joann Harris

James Harris

### Doris Hallum

Colleen Dawson

Tamara Barton

Mildred Hallum

Lloyd Hallum

Hawker Beechcraft Employees

Wichita, KS

Janet Borg

John & Bonnie Workman

Lyn & Michelle Roberts

Spirit Aerosystems Employees

Wichita, KS

### Lawrence Hallum

Neil & Debra Watson

B. A. & Linda Austin

Ruth Dorney

FCC - Lamplighter's

Grove, OK

### Maybelle Hebner

Larry & Valerie Naumann

### Eva Karnes

Kenneth & Wanda Miller

### Everett & Jewelle Lake

Kenny & Jane Lake

### Gary Wayne Leake

Ramona Leake

Leonard Leake

### Louise Love

Katherine White

### Burnell Lowdon

First Christian Church

Downs, KS

Ray & Mueriel Woods

### Tom & Jo McCann

Alan & Helen Blanchard

### Audine Miller

Jim & Jo Helen Ohl

### Lester S. Miller

Kenneth & Wanda Miller

### Becky Mullen

Colleen Dawson

### Dennis Murray

Anne Davis Murray

Lyndal Coats

### George & Rosa Nievar

Vera Yvonne Jones

### Anne Parker

Betty McKibben

### Edward L. Randall

Jearld & Carol Mathews

### Delmar & Helen Schrupf

Delmar R. Schrupf, Jr.

### John & Kathleen Schrupf

Delmar R. Schrupf, Jr.

### Paul Siemens

Larry & Valerie Naumann

### Danny Spiering

Lynn & Sharon Quigley

### Marie Wilson

James & Virginia Samuel

John Taylor

Noreen Del Pilar

### Vivian "Ruth" Wimberly

First Christian Church

Mena, AR

### Allen J. Winter

Anita Winter

### Audry Yates

Tuttle Accounting & Tax Service

Tuttle, OK

Emma Lee Bennett

William & Carrol Thomas

Vivian Yates

### Ellen Hallum

B. A. & Linda Austin

Ruth Dorney

### Shirley Hayes

Steve & Deb McConkey

### Brian & Tami Keeley

Wayne & Colleen Hall

### Patia Lewis

Charles & Wanda Goff

Mary Goff

### Tim & Karin McConnell Wedding

Sue Mann

Robert & Linda Marshall

Glen & Delores Faith

Bart & Joyce Williams

Clois Lamb

Sydney Ann Owens

### Doug Parker

Kinsey Parker

### Tami Schroeder

Michelle Engle

### Dean & Ruth Schrupf

Al & Lu Ann Edmonds

Norm & Dee Hafley

John & Marjorie Shank

### Bob & Sue Smith

Tony & Kathy Stoltzfus

### Jesse Smith

Thomas Taylor

### Logan Stewart

Monte & Shelly Stewart

### Novelle & Mike Wilson

Gary & Dixie Highberger

Bob & Marie Bolton

## HONORARIUMS

### Jaelyn Baum

John & Debbie Willis

### Emilie Climer

John Ahern

### Loren Dutka

Boris & Eloise Dutka

Ruth Dorney

### Nickie Eaton

Donald & Margaret Kincaid

### Dorothy Gerdts

Robert & Judy Herr

## COOKSON HILLS



HELP. HOPE. HEALING.

### WHAT ARE H3 PARTNERS?

The name H3 Partners comes from the three words that best describe what Cookson Hills provides for the children and families we serve: Help. Hope. Healing.

H3 Partners – a select group of ministry friends who pray for and make monthly gifts to Cookson Hills. Regardless of size,

their monthly giving helps supply the three major infrastructure needs to serve the children and families: staff, facilities, and operating cash.

They receive a special H3 Prayer Post enabling them to undergird the ministry with much needed intercessory prayer. The post

*"I have a heart for God the way I never had before. I love my life and can't wait to start the next day. I learned that you can change if you choose to. I am forever changed because of Cookson Hills."*

— Grace (age 16)

will be an exclusive list of prayer needs delivered via email or regular mail to H3 Partners.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF H3 PARTNERSHIP?

- Knowing your giving goes directly to pay for child related costs and services

- Knowing you are providing help, hope, and healing to dozens of children and families every day
- Invitation to special H3 Partner events
- Receive H3 Partner Prayer Posts
- Being part of a proven ministry that has served thousands of children and families for more than 50 years

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE NOW!

Currently we have 352 H3 Partners donating monthly. Would you consider joining the ranks? We are seeking 110 new partners to sponsor the basic needs of our children.

SEEKING

- 10 Family Life Sponsors @ \$150 month
- 20 Counseling Scholarship Sponsors @ \$100 month
- 30 Student Life Sponsors @ \$50 month
- 50 Daily Bread Sponsors @ \$25 month

Electronic funds transfer or credit card giving available by clicking the DONATE NOW button at [www.cooksonhills.org](http://www.cooksonhills.org).



COOKSON HILLS  
HELP. HOPE. HEALING.

COOKSON HILLS CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES  
RR 3 BOX 200 • KANSAS, OK 74347

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**PAID**

JOPLIN, MO 64802  
PERMIT #222

# LONG LETTER HOME

JANUARY-MARCH 2010

## Your kids helping our kids!

Looking for a mission to promote in your VBS this year? The support of YOUR kids can bring help, hope, and healing to OURS.



### Includes:

- DVD with 5 Daily Lessons
- Coloring & Puzzle Pages
- Bulletin Inserts & Poster

**FREE!**

For more information call:  
918-597-2192 x324

## COOKSON HILLS WEBINAR



**Tuesday, April 6, 7:00pm CST**  
**Saturday, April 10, 10:00am CST**

Live Ministry Updates!  
Exciting New Opportunity! Register Today!

*"I have always wanted to personally update every contributor. Now it's possible!"*

**Rick Bayless** - Executive Director

All you need is high speed internet access and a phone.

To register, email [bettyfritz@cooksonhills.org](mailto:bettyfritz@cooksonhills.org). All registrants will receive email confirmation with log-in and conference call instructions.