

LONG LETTER HOME



COOKSON HILLS
HELP. HOPE. HEALING.



RUNNING THE RACE

In 1 Corinthians 9:24-26 (*The Message*) Paul states, "...Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard... I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got..." Aaron, a talented long distance runner, is learning first hand how true this is in both his personal and spiritual race.

Aaron's earliest memories of family life were confusing. He never knew his father, and his alcohol dependent mother often left the kids in the care of grandparents. His grandfather would leave for extended periods of time not wanting to deal with the difficulties of raising grandchildren.

Aaron's grandmother died when he was in the 6th grade which left his 19-year-old brother as his legal guardian. Everyone he thought of as family moved in and out of his life leaving him with a distorted view of family relationships.

Aaron's first memory of Cookson was visiting the home of Kevin and Robin Johnson, who would later become his houseparents. "It was the house mom's birthday, and I noticed all the signs and cards addressed to Mom. It was my first impression of a real family, and I liked it."

"For about five months," Aaron admits, "I was the perfect child... then the real me came out. I was angry and determined to have my own way. I exploded when confronted and had no respect for authority." But despite it all, Aaron says, "My houseparents never gave up on me. They've cared for me and helped me work through my problems. They've stuck by me.

I'm very thankful that God put them in my life."

Aaron says he began to notice that his teachers, counselors, and social worker had the same determination and genuinely cared about his well-being. Realizing that it was Christ who made a difference in their lives, Aaron decided he needed Christ to make a difference in his life as well. Shortly after Wilderness Camp in 2007, Aaron was baptized.

Now Aaron states emphatically that he has "a new way to look at the world." He's working on his anger issues and has fewer violent outbursts. He's handling disappointments better and

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Rick Bayless
Executive Director



Our Mission:

Cookson Hills exists to provide Christ centered services to children and families in crisis

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Monday - Friday

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SEEKINGtoSERVE

Offering help, hope, and healing

It has been 11 years, but John's single mom still struggles to overcome the effects of severe verbal and physical abuse from the father John has never known. In some ways it may have been a blessing that he left shortly after John's birth. At least John was never the recipient of the explosive and violent outbursts that accompanied his dad's use of drugs and alcohol.

Although Mom was never abusive to John, she was seldom available. She worked two minimum wage jobs requiring an average of 70 hours weekly to keep food on the table, clothes on John's back, and a roof over his head.

Mom's efforts were valiant, but the cumulative effect of her absence took its toll. John had become increasingly angry and was hanging out with the worst peers in his school. He was recently expelled from school leaving Mom in a hopeless situation. She couldn't quit her job to care for him. She didn't have the money to pay for full-time day care. She couldn't afford placement in a private school. She feared that John would soon be into drugs, inappropriate sexual or criminal behavior. What is a mother like her to do?

All too often, the only alternative is a government run foster care system that is more likely to perpetuate John's at-risk state leaving him in a lifelong dependent state than to break the cycle of dependency, helplessness, and failure.

Cookson Hills provides an alternative for families like John's. But, until recently, a shortage of houseparent staff has prevented us from taking more children. That is not true today! Praise God! Our houses are fully staffed. Now we seek to partner with our support-

ing churches to help more families like John's.

Are you a parent caught in a seemingly hopeless situation with a child who needs help? Do you know a family like John's who needs an alternative?

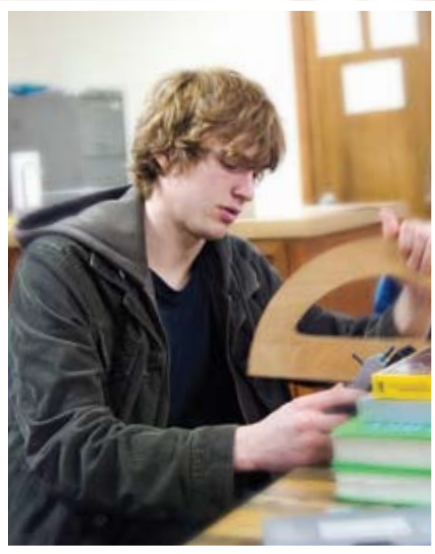
If so, we want to hear from you. **We seek to partner with you to offer help, hope, and healing to children and families who find themselves caught in circumstances that threaten irreconcilable harm, government intervention, or loss of a child.**

Whom do we serve? Who should be referred?

- Youth from 5-18 years of age.
- Youth who are homeless or not living in a safe environment.
- Youth who have been bounced around in a secular government foster care system or who would likely fail in that system.
- Youth whose parents are deceased, imprisoned, or have abandoned them to other family members (ie, grandparents, aunts or uncles) who are ill equipped to offer the help they need.
- Youth whose parents will not go into substance abuse treatment programs or mental health treatment because they are afraid that their child will be lost to the secular government foster care system.
- Youth whose families are unable to overcome the effect of negative peer influences, leaving them at significant risk for unlawful activity, inappropriate sexual activity, drug and alcohol use, or gang related involvement.
- Youth who suffer with minor cases of Post Traumatic Stress, ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, and/or problems often associated with the experience of early childhood trauma.

If you are a family that needs help or know a family caught in crisis, we can help. Call 918-597-2192.

Learning SKILLS Developing CHARACTER



When asked how he developed his remarkable work ethic, Austin, a high school senior and 12 year resident, replied, “I guess it was my upbringing.”

Austin’s mother left when he was very young, and he still wrestles with why he’s never heard from her. Austin remembers working alongside his dad, a carpenter, as a little boy and says, “Dad was always there for us.” But after his dad was diagnosed with cancer, life changed. One of Austin’s favorite mem-

ories was when his dad was released from the hospital and took him on one last camping trip. Shortly thereafter, Austin’s dad lost his battle with cancer.

Austin went to live with his grandparents who did the best they could to care for him and his sister. However, in 1997, when their grandfather was diagnosed

Austin credits his houseparents, Pam and Jerry Kramer, for “treating me like their own and raising me right.”

with the early stages of Alzheimer’s, their grandmother sought help for them at Cookson Hills.

Austin was five when he arrived at Cookson Hills. He remembers going to work on the farm with his house dad. He soon found that he enjoyed keeping busy and feeling needed. Even at that early age, he learned that chores were

an opportunity to learn new skills and develop character.

When Austin was offered a paying job in the summer work program as a high school junior, he eagerly accepted the responsibility and earned enough to buy a pickup truck and begin saving for college. As a senior, Austin’s mornings are taken up with required subjects. His afternoons are split between apprenticeships in graphic arts, horsemanship, and carpentry. He believes each new challenge is a way to express himself and to help others.

Austin credits his houseparents, Pam and Jerry Kramer, for “treating me like their own and raising me right.” He is grateful for teachers who taught him to read and helped him learn the basics. In regards to the other things he has been involved in, he says, “I appreciate the many other opportunities I have had to learn practical skills through the 4-Him program and the summer work program.”

Most of all, Austin is thankful for the ministry partners who “make it all possible.”

TEEN LEADERS TODAY



God blesses teens with varied talents and abilities. It is up to us to help them develop those gifts. That is what *Teen Leaders Today* is all about.

Sue, Deanna, Aaron, Matt, Sarah, Taylor, Dee Dee, and Kyler are learning to use their leadership talent more effectively. During their retreat they were challenged to develop their leadership skills as a means of serving others. Following are some of the highlights of their servant leadership efforts:

- Informally mentoring and encouraging other students
- Planning and leading chapel services for the high school students
- Leading school spirit and pride events
- Organizing the student body to donate, pack, and send Christmas gifts to less fortunate children

These young leaders are learning to take Paul's admonition to Timothy seriously, "Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity." 1 Timothy 4:11-12 (*The Message*)

Lady Crusaders 2009 Volleyball State Champions!

Congratulations to the Cookson Hills Lady Crusaders, the 2009 Oklahoma Christian School Athletic Association (OSCAA) State Champions! It was an amazing finish to what was supposed to be a rebuilding season.

At the start of tournament play, the girls prayed that God would help them play well, play as a team, and give them a day they would always remember. God answered their prayers!

After finishing pool play, Cookson finished with two wins and one loss. While hoping for three wins to put them at the top of the tournament bracket, they had to settle for 2nd seed in bracket play.

In the bracket play, they beat Harvest Hills 3-2 and then faced Regent Prep in the semi-finals. The girls met this competition with tremendous skill and confidence and won 2-0 to make it to the finals.

In the final match against Boulevard, the girls played well and never gave up. The first two sets split, and in the 3rd set, they scrambled, fought hard, and came up the state champions.



L to R/Back Row: Sonya Martin (Head Coach), Aubrey, Racheal, Jenna, Dee Dee, Casey, Tatahda, Brenda Vryhoff (Assistant Coach)
Second Row: Taylor, Joy, Sarah (Manager) **Floor:** Deanna

SPECIAL HONORS

ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM: Taylor, Casey
ALL-STATE TEAM: Taylor, Casey, Deanna, Dee Dee
ALL-STATE HONORABLE MENTION: Joy

COOKSON HILLS WILDERNESS CAMP

FOR Jesus, the wilderness had the dichotomy of testing and renewal. According to Matthew 4:1, "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." And according to Luke 5:16, "But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray." The dual experiences of testing and renewal give birth to the purpose and focus of Wilderness Camp.

Wilderness Camp occurs the last week of July and, as its name implies, takes place primarily within the primitive areas of Cookson Hills.

Youth are challenged to face their fears with daily activities from initiative games and low ropes activities to one of three high ropes elements: Zip Line, Screamer, or Repelling. These care-

fully planned exercises offer the kids opportunities to learn team building skills, demonstrate leadership, and develop trust. Trips to the water slide, ultimate Frisbee, soccer, canoeing, and swimming provide additional recreational activities.

At dusk everyone assembles at Chapel Hill, the second tallest peak at Cookson Hills. The setting sun provides the perfect backdrop to reflect on the day's events. The chapel service is a wonderful time of praise and worship along with a meaningful message from God's word. The day closes around a campfire with singing, prayer, and devotions.

After a week in the wilderness, students have been tested and have experienced spiritual renewal readying them with a deeper faith and lasting relationships.



"Activities at Wilderness Camp placed me in situations to learn to trust other people and to just be a kid. Because of that trust, I formed some great relationships."

- Sue



"Wilderness Camp was a life-changing event and the most amazing thing I've ever experienced. I especially liked the team building activities: Screamer and Repelling."

- Cole



Chapel Hill



Screamer



Zip Line



Feeling like your market investments are a big gamble? Disappointed in the interest rates you can earn on your Certificates of Deposit? Why not check out the possibility of a Cookson Hills Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA). With a gift annuity you can increase your income, receive a charitable tax deduction, and provide help, hope, and healing to children and families in crisis.

The Charitable Gift Annuity can be a wonderful tool to combine your need for income and your desire to make a significant gift to Cookson Hills. You can fund a gift annuity with cash, stocks, mutual funds, or other assets.

We've prepared a special report for your consideration and would like to provide it to you without cost or obligation. To learn more, please contact:

RICK BAYLESS
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rbayless@cooksonhills.org

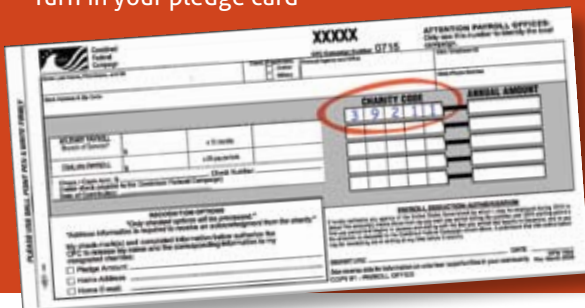
SAMPLE GIFT ANNUITY RATES			
SINGLE LIFE		TWO LIVES	
AGE	RATE	AGES	RATE
65	5.5%	65/65	4.9%
70	5.7%	70/70	5.2%
75	6.3%	75/75	5.6%
80	7.1%	80/80	6.1%
85	8.1%	85/85	7.0%
90+	9.5%	90/90	8.3%

Federal Employees Can Help Hurting Children and Families

Federal employees anywhere in the country can now bring help, hope, and healing to our kids at Cookson Hills through the convenience of payroll deduction. Annual campaigns occurring at Federal workplaces across the country would be the ideal time to share with your co-workers how they can be a part of the important ministry here at Cookson Hills.

How to pledge:

- Ask your local human resources for a pledge card
- Complete the pledge card indicating Cookson Hills Christian Ministries as the designated charity (#39211)
- Turn in your pledge card



RUNNING THE RACE

Continued from front

learning that difficult situations make him stronger.

Currently a junior in high school, Aaron has seen vast improvements in his core subjects. He is also enrolled at the local VoTech where he is earning 10 hours of health/science credits that will transfer to college. His plans are to attend NEO in Miami, OK with the goal of becoming a physical therapist.

Aaron has competed in numerous 5K runs often finishing in the top 10. In the Tulsa 15K Run last year with over 4,000 runners, Aaron finished 200th over-all and 14th in his age class. Now Aaron says, "I am running the most important race of my life, with my old self competing with the new."

As Paul shared in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Please pray for Aaron as he continues in his struggle with anger and self-control so that he can keep the faith, stay the course, and finish the race. ■

MEMORIALS

B. B. Archer

Arch & Michelle Frink
Deloris Archer

Pat Avery

James Avery

Wanda Childers

Jackie & Jeannine Miller

John Coulter

Karen Masters
Patricia Coulter

Doug Cox

Janelle Yocham

Mary Cross

Church of Christ
Oxford, IN

Curtis Dickinson

Regina Dickinson

Jim Dobyns

Loretta Dobyns

Dorothy A. Dugger

Michael & Karen Tyson
Alan & Luann Rockett
Daniel & Patsy O'Rourke
Lloyd & Janice Isch
Vernon & Darby Young
Frieda Young
Daniel & Susan Thompson
Nancy Hart
Bruce & Connie Eubanks

Elizabeth Dye

Harley D. Meier

Jack Feaster

Lawrence & Anna Lee Pippenger

Harry & Reba Garrett

Betty Farrington

Ralph Gorman

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Donald & Neoma Thomas
Maggie Brownell

Keystone Equipment Co.
Sand Springs, OK
Norman & Diana Reeves
Bill & Caroline Hunter
Joan Murray-Hogan & Class of 1947
Muskogee, OK
Peter Agnell
Doug & Linda King
Lillian Leeds
Good Shepherd's Class
York St. Christian Church
Muskogee, OK
Bryan & Julie Matchall
Dean & Ruth Schrupf
Carl & Geri Burns
Bill & Mildred DeShazo
Bill & Jane Beard
Richard & Shirlene Wigley
Paul & Susan Singleton
Pat & Mattie Lou Robinson
Billie & Georgia Mangrum
Sandi Thayer & Marion Davison
Buddy & Sue Lang
Galen & Marjory McLaughlin
Carol Wilson
Keith & Storm Wilson

Doris Hallum

Lisa Wright
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Gary & Cindy Wright
Lucy E. Wright
James Nelson
Eugene & Nina Kaehler
Robert & Betty Radebaugh
Tom & Michele Wilson
William & Ollie Radebaugh

Lawrence Hallum

Thomas Fullen
Judy Rathbone
Norman & Diana Reeves
Carol Lee Smith

Rita Garrett
Kattie Moore
Ruth Dorney
Neil & Debra Watson
Si & Martha Huffman
Julie Kadoun

Buddy Johnson

Steve Johnson

Gertrude Jones

Sam & Silvey Barker

Linda W. Judd

Barry Judd

Tom Kee

Betty McKibben
Bob & Jan Branson
Maxine Merker

Gary Wayne Leake

Leonard & Ramona Leake

Athylin Mathis

James Harris

Richard Nusy

Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Hay
Mr. & Mrs. Brett Muchelath
Mr. & Mrs. Darryl Hay

Mike Rathbone

Judy Rathbone

Bill Rochelle

Lendell & Lawanda Bass

Louise Rowden

Roger & Betty Parker

Dudley & Helen Rutherford

Vicki L. George

Roy Schrupf

A. B. & Helen Krisciunas
Stephen & Karen Menke

Genevieve Seedorf

Roger & Louise Brown

Roy Stoll

Dannie & Kay Clodfelter

Eddie Tennison

Janelle Yocham Family

Marie Wilson

Homer & Irene Griffin
Lura Reschke

Gene Wyatt

Wayne & Shirley Baker

HONORARIUMS

Rick & Melinda Bayless

Doug & Rita Karnes

Loren Dutka

Ruth Dorney
Boris & Eloise Dutka

Mitzie Eaton

Donald & Margaret Kincaid

Nickie Eaton

Donald & Margaret Kincaid

Frances England

Family & Friends
John & Wilma Langhammer

Dorothy Gerdts

Kenneth & Nancy Davies

Ellen Hallum

Rita Garrett
Kattie Moore
Neil & Debra Watson
Ruth Dorney

Patia Lewis

Charles & Wanda Goff

Steve & Sharon Myers

Wanda Myers

Rod Ramsell

First Christian Church
Greenville, IL
17th Street Christian Church
Corbin, KY

Dean & Ruth Schrupf

Maggie Brownell
John Shank

Bob & Sue Smith

Tony & Kathy Stoltzfus

62 H3 PARTNERS SOUGHT BY YEARS END

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 is a special group of ministry friends who make monthly gifts to Cookson Hills. Regardless of the amount, their monthly giving helps supply our three major infrastructure needs in serving children and families in crisis: Staff, Facilities, and Regular Operating Cash.

In addition, they receive a special H3 Prayer Post and undergird the ministry with much needed intercessory prayer. The post is an exclusive list of prayer needs delivered via email or regular mail to all H3 Partners.

Will you consider becoming an H3 Partner this year? If so, send your check with "H3" in the memo line or create a reoccurring credit card transaction by visiting:

www.cooksonhills.org/joinh3partners





COOKSON HILLS
HELP. HOPE. HEALING.

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

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U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

JOPLIN, MO 64802
PERMIT #222



OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2009

COOKSON HILLS **CIRCLE of FRIENDS** MISSION TRIPS



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.

NEEDS LIST

- Shampoo and conditioner
- Deodorant (men's and women's)
- Body wash
- Washcloths
- Dish towels
- Bath towels
- Shower curtains
- Shower curtain liners
- Shower curtain hooks
- Shower curtain rods (tension type)
- Alarm clocks
- Breakfast cereals
- Toaster pastries
- Frozen meat (USDA inspected)
- Canned fruit and vegetables