

BCV VOICE

SUMMER 2025



THE
BAPTIST
CHILDREN'S
VILLAGE



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baptistchildrensvillage.com



God's Heart for His Children — From Mississippi to Romania by Emily-Kate Ford

When I boarded a plane to Romania, I expected to step into a completely new culture—and I did. But what surprised me most wasn't the unfamiliar; it was the familiar. In the middle of a new language, new surroundings, and new people, I encountered something I know well: God's deep and unwavering love for vulnerable children.

I recently had the opportunity to travel with First Baptist Church of Clinton on a week-long mission trip to Timișoara, Romania. While there, we partnered with Missio Link International (MLI), an organization whose heart mirrors our own at The Baptist Children's Village. MLI exists to join in God's mission to the Church and to the world by building partnerships between believers, churches, and organizations. Their work is centered around Christian witness, encouragement, and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable through three primary ministry areas: Church in Mission, Children at Risk, and the Alpinis Leadership Center. Our team had the privilege of serving within MLI's Children at Risk ministry, focusing on three key areas: Deborah House, Recas School, and Harmony.

Deborah House is Romania's first holistic residential program for girls who have experienced severe abuse and trauma.

Since 2002, over 200 girls have called Deborah House home. Each one is welcomed into a safe, nurturing environment where she can receive counseling, medical care, educational support, and—most importantly—love. Girls stay through high school or until age 18, supported by caring houseparents and professionals. A second Deborah House was added in 2012 to expand this incredible impact.

The Recas School is part of MLI's Back to School initiative. In many rural parts of Romania, poverty and generational illiteracy contribute to high dropout rates among school-aged children. Through this program, MLI provides school supplies, hygiene items, and basic food to hundreds of students in the Recas district—helping families keep their children in school and giving kids a real chance at a brighter future.

The Harmony Program reaches youth inside Romania's largest juvenile re-education center. MLI staff and volunteers are invited behind the bars to meet with these young men and women at a critical point in their lives. Through small groups, Bible studies, mentoring, and even cooking classes, they're building trust, sharing the Gospel, and offering these teens the hope of a new life in Christ as they prepare to re-enter society.



FBC Clinton Romania Team

God's Heart for His Children — From Mississippi to Romania (cont'd)

Though we were thousands of miles from Mississippi, the mission felt incredibly familiar. As I spent time with the girls at Deborah House, played with children at the school in Receaș, and served through the Harmony program, I was reminded of the goodness of our Heavenly Father. He sees the heartache, hurt, and hardship these children have experienced—and He loves them deeply. And in His kindness, He calls His people to be His hands and feet in their healing.

The ministries may look different, but the heart behind them is the same: caring for vulnerable children, meeting their physical and emotional needs, and pointing them to the lasting hope found in Christ.

At both The Baptist Children's Village and Missio Link International, the work isn't about programs—it's about people. It's about showing up, creating safe spaces, and walking with children through the slow, beautiful process of healing and transformation. Whether it's a girl at Deborah House recovering from deep trauma, or a resident on one of our BCV campuses learning what stability and love truly feel like—God is working in powerful, personal ways.

I saw the same spirit of compassion in the houseparents at MLI as I do in our BCV staff. I saw the same intentionality in the mentoring and relationship-building through Harmony that our Youth Detention Intervention (YDI) team and volunteers pour into young adults every day. And I saw the same priority shared across every setting: to make the love of Christ known. This trip didn't just encourage me—it affirmed the mission we live out here in Mississippi. God's heart for the vulnerable knows no borders. His calling to care for His children stretches across oceans, languages, and cultures. My time in Romania reminded me that what we're doing at BCV is part of a much bigger story—and we are not alone in it.



Children at the school in Receaș



Timișoara, Romania



Team at Deborah House



FBC Clinton Team



Emily-Kate walking with girl at Receaș



Singing at Receaș

Changes in Positions, Continuity in Care by Emily-Kate Ford

The Baptist Children's Village is in a season of meaningful transition—one that reflects God's faithful provision and the strength of servant leadership within our ministry.

After years of faithful ministry, Troy Carter has officially retired from The Baptist Children's Village. Troy has served as a houseparent alongside his wife, Sheryl, campus director, and partner ministries associate. His impact on countless lives will be felt for generations to come. Though he's stepping away from the BCV, he's not slowing down—he'll soon begin a new chapter as head pastor at Bethel Baptist Church in Columbus, MS. We are thankful for Troy and his legacy of service rooted in Christ. May the Lord continue to use him as he walks in faithful obedience!

Stepping into the Partner Ministries role is Tim Lampley, a familiar and trusted face within our BCV family. Tim and his wife Lisa first served as houseparents, where they poured love and stability into the lives of children in their care. In 2023, Tim became the Campus Director at Reedy Acres, where he led with compassion and humility. Now, as he transitions into Partner Ministries, we're excited to see him continue impacting lives—this time by connecting with our partners and sharing what God is doing through The BCV.

With Tim's move, we're thrilled to welcome Rachel Rainey as the new Campus Director at Reedy Acres. Rachel has served faithfully as a case manager, walking closely with children and families to ensure their needs were met with excellence and care. Her deep understanding of our mission, her dedication to those we serve, and her steady leadership make her a perfect fit for this new role.

As we reflect on these transitions, we're reminded of the strength of our team and the mission that unites us. Each of these leaders has answered God's call in a new way, and we're confident that He will continue to guide their steps. Please join us in praying for Troy, Tim, and Rachel as they each embrace new roles in service to Christ and the children and families we're blessed to care for.



Back-to-School 2025



Your support does more than fill a backpack— it fills a child with confidence, hope, and purpose.

Help a child walk into school feeling seen, ready, and loved.

Scan the QR code to give now!



Independent Living Program Receives Upgrade by Chrystelle Thames

The Baptist Children's Village is revitalizing our Independent Living Program. While we have included independent living skills training for older teens for years, we are now designating a campus for the program and have built a program that allows us to be more intentional with all of our teenagers, but especially our older residents.

Recently Pastor Keith Dewease of Star Baptist Church hosted Rankin and Simpson County pastors for a BCV informational meeting to introduce them to the changes in our Independent Living Program that will now be located on the India Nunnery Campus in Star. Star Baptist Church has been a significant ministry partner even before the campus was built, hosting and caring for volunteers who built the two houses that exist on that campus. They continued to minister to our residents and houseparents and are still today supporting and encouraging our staff in these latest changes.

The Independent Living Program is designed with goals for all teenagers 14 years and up on all campuses that will lay the groundwork for the move to the India Nunnery Campus at age 18; where they will live while they are pursuing

education and/or job training at a college, community college, trade school or workforce prep program. Independent living skills training for these residents will intensify on this dedicated campus and they will begin to enjoy many freedoms that allow them to exercise their reasoning skills to make better personal decisions and set them up for success as they leave with proficiencies and a solid financial foundation.

The Baptist Children's Village currently has six residents in college, and we anticipate even more in the coming years as we offer this new opportunity that allows these young adults to spread their wings with the assurance of a safety net and the mentoring of caring professional adults.



Following God's Lead: Troy & Sheryl Carter's Journey of Obedience and Impact by Emily-Kate Ford

It started with a piece of mail.

In 2012, Sheryl Carter—then the VBS director and church secretary at her local church—opened an envelope from The Baptist Children's Village. Inside, she found a simple invitation to join in a mission: collect supplies for children in care. That year, her students brought juice boxes, water bottles, and drink mixes for BCV residents as their VBS offering. But the Lord was doing more than gathering supplies—He was planting a seed.

I just thought it would be nice to drop everything off in person," Sheryl said. She loaded up a church van with her junior high Sunday school class and headed to the Fikes-Gatewood Campus. That day changed her life.

"We met the kids, the houseparents, and spent time just playing," she remembered. "On the ride back, my students kept saying, 'They're just like us.' And they were right. It opened all of our eyes."

After months of prayer and seeking confirmation from the Lord, Troy and Sheryl did what many would call "radical"—they both left their jobs and joined the BCV staff in November 2012 as houseparents. The decision didn't

come lightly, but it was a clear response to the Lord's call. "We had raised our own daughters," Troy said, "but nothing could fully prepare us for the reality of caring for children who had walked through deep hurt." Sheryl added, "You think, 'I've raised kids, I can do this.' But it doesn't take long to realize it's not anything you can do apart from Christ. It takes a surrendered, obedient heart."



Following God's Lead: Troy & Sheryl Carter's Journey of Obedience and Impact (cont'd)



Troy & Sheryl at Houseparent Commissioning in 2019

Their time as houseparents deeply shaped how they saw children—and how they understood God's love. "We may not have gone through what the kids had," Troy said, "but our job was to see them not by their pasts, but by who they were in that moment—to love them like Christ loves us."

When new children arrived at the Village, the Carters made a point to say, "It's not your fault you're here, and it's not ours either. But we're going to make the most of this, and we believe God has a plan for you here."

Over seven years, they planted seeds—some of which they had the joy of watching grow. Troy baptized children who came to faith. Others invited them to their weddings, graduations, and even pageants. "They've gone from no hope to walking in hope," Sheryl said. "That's the Gospel in action."

Eventually, Troy transitioned into the role of Campus Director and later joined the Partner Ministries team—sharing the mission of the BCV with churches and donors across Mississippi. It was a full circle moment. The Carters got involved because of a letter in the mail, and now he was out there encouraging others to join the mission.

Though Troy missed being with the children day to day, he cherished moments of connection, like the time a waitress in Oxford recognized his voice and came over to say thank you. She had once lived at one of the BCV campuses and was now working and building a life for herself. "I love kids," Troy said through tears. "And even being removed from daily life on campus, God gave me moments like that to remind me—this work lasts."

In 2019, the Mississippi Baptist Convention recognized houseparents as missionaries, formally commissioning them in a moving service. For Troy and Sheryl, it was deeply meaningful. "You don't have to go to the other side of the world to be a missionary," Sheryl said. "The Great Commission is being lived out

at The Baptist Children's Village. We're making disciples. We're baptizing children. And God is with us through every step."

They recall long nights standing in the kitchen with fellow houseparents—trading stories, prayers, and encouragement. "You're never alone in this work," she added. "God is leading, and there is a community surrounding you."

To anyone sensing God's call to serve at the Village, the Carters offer this encouragement: "If you're thinking about it and you feel God tugging at your heart," Sheryl said, "don't let fear be the thing that stops you." Troy added, "You don't have to be perfect. You just have to be willing. Surrendered. Obedient. Because the strength to do this comes from Christ."

He pointed to Psalm 27:10, a verse that sustained them: **"Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me."**

That is the heartbeat of the Carters' story.

Troy and Sheryl Carter followed the Lord's lead. And the lives they've touched—children, families, staff, and supporters—are a testament to what happens when God's people walk in obedience, day by day, step by step, one surrendered "yes" at a time.



Sheryl at Troy's retirement party



Troy with Director of Partner Ministries, Tim McWilliams



Sheryl with BCV Family Interventionist, Annalesia Carr

CHILDREN'S PROMISE ACT

2025

Here are the steps involved for 2025 if applying for an individual tax credit:



Robin Young Retires by Chrystelle Thames

"Absolute need is not attractive. It is not at all pretty. Yet Robin has run to, not away from, absolute need every day for 26 years." These are the words Executive Director Sean Milner shared as Support Center Staff and the In-Home Family Support team gathered to celebrate her service to the BCV children and families. Robin Young first worked in the BCV Residential Child Caring Program 26 years ago but transitioned to work with the In-Home Family Support Program 14 years ago where she mentors and encourages at-risk families. Her efforts to keep children with their families and out of state custody is challenging but rewarding work. She reflected on her career and the kindness of God in placing her where she has had the freedom to pray with clients and co-workers and share the life-changing hope of the gospel. "I love these people," Robin said of her team, "and I love that we can pray together. This team is real, and their compassion is real."

Supervisor Sergio Trejo thanked her for her service and HR Director Karen Rikard presented her with an engraved vase as a small token of gratitude. As we celebrate Robin, we are reminded that our sovereign God has truly blessed the BCV ministry with passionate professionals like Robin to serve the children and families who come to the BCV without hope. Thank you, Robin, for injecting the hope of Jesus Christ to families in very practical ways.



Robin with Sergio Trejo and Sean Milner



Thank you, Robin!

Your **CONTINUUM OF CARE** through The Baptist Children's Village



Residential Child Caring Program

CHILDREN
AGES 1 – 20

Independent Living Program

YOUNG ADULTS



Residential Family Program

MOTHERS
WITH CHILDREN

In-Home Family Support Program

AT-RISK FAMILIES



Youth Detention Intervention Program

INCARCERATED YOUTH

Family Resource Referral Program

FAMILIES IN CRISIS





BCV TRIBUTE GIFTS

April 16 to July 15, 2025

Throughout the year, families memorialize and honor family members and special friends with a gift to The Baptist Children's Village. Small groups honor teachers and the special people in their lives. For each tribute gift received, the donor receives an acknowledgement letter and receipt. A personal letter is sent to the honoree informing them of the gift given in their honor. Family members are informed of a gift given in memory of their loved one. The BCV is herein publishing the list of honorees and donors recently received. We are grateful to the many thoughtful donors who pay tribute to the special people in their lives.

You can visit baptistchildrensvillage.com/give or use the enclosed envelope to give a gift of honor or memory for your loved one(s) to The Baptist Children's Village.

In Honor of

Mrs. Anne Abel

Ms. Reba Gail Boyd
Ms. Cecelia Brister

Mrs. Dena Baltimore

Daniel, Dianne, and Alissa Smith

Dr. Jennifer Barr

Mr. Larry Holmes

Bro. John and Christy Cagle

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Bobby Crowe

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Ms. Cecelia M. Brister

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Bertha Redmond

Mrs. Patricia C. Duckworth

Mr. Phil Duckworth
Mrs. Diane Long

Fathers at Pleasant Ridge FBC

Pleasant Ridge FBC

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Mr. and Mrs. Robert Alexander

Sandra Scoggin Fisher

Cherie Brooks

Kassidy Gautier

Dr. Milton B. Baxter, Sr.

Sarah Gilbert

Larry Holmes

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Keith and Wanda Lott

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Mr. Charles Guice

Sue Hamilton

Krandall and Winnie Len Howell

Michelle Henderson

Mr. Larry Holmes

Mark Henry

Lisa Dallas

Napoleon and Faye Hodges

Keith and Wanda Lott

Cindy Hubbard

Philip and Christina Nelson

Frances Langerfeld

Mr. and Mrs. David Langerfeld

Ronnie and Darlene Lindsey

Keith and Wanda Lott

Cindy Lofton

Billie and Zelma Lofton

Brenda McGaugh

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Ms. Cecelia Brister

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Mr. and Mrs. Robert Alexander

Mrs. Pam Price

Mr. Edwin Price

Mariclaire Putman

Mr. David Putman

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Vallery Temple

Philip and Christina Nelson

Ms. Lydia Tidwell

Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Thomas

Ms. Linda Tucker

Keith and Wanda Lott

Johnny and Dolores Walker

Mr. David Putman

Mr. Keith Whittington

Miss Tiffany Whittington

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Mr. Dan D. Wright

In Memory of

Alvin P. Adams, Jr.

Mrs. Tanya Moore

Mr. Charlie Alexander

Mrs. Frances Roberts

Brenda Kay Allen

Jimmy and Jo Jenkins

Dianne Allen

Terry's Creek FBC

Kenneth C. Allen

Conrad Anderson, Jr.,
Esther and Susan Mingee,
The Georgia Collaborative ASO,
Carelton Behavioral Health,
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Barbara Appling

Mrs. Billie R. Hubbert

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Devorah Hollinger

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Pamela Tullios Baldwin

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Kasey Blackwell

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Mrs. Elizabeth Young

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P.O. Box 27
Clinton, MS 39060-0027



Personal Reflection

"We are a distracted people." Now that is a true statement. We are distracted with many things, including some really good things. These distractions hinder our ability to truly see people God places in our paths, all of whom deserve to be seen simply because they are cherished by our Heavenly Father.

In his book, *Who Did You See Today? The Power of Outrageous Kindness*, Dustin Schadt points out the increase in the

number of depressions and suicides in our country, especially among young adults. There is a longing in our culture to "be seen." This is not to be misinterpreted as a vain need, but a real need to find meaning and purpose in one's very identity.

I was intrigued by the author's illustration of a Zulu greeting, sawubona which means "we see you," really see you as in "acknowledge a person's humanity." The author further explains that the appropriate response to "sawubona" is "yebo sawubona," "I see you seeing me." I continue to contemplate the power of this dynamic. We are not created to exist on an island. We are created "to see and be seen."

After Hagar was abandoned with her son in a desolate place, Genesis 16:13 says, "She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: 'You are the God who sees me,' for she said, 'I have now seen the One who sees me.'"

I wonder, how many people who God intentionally placed in my path to impact have I passed or looked over without consideration. How many, like Hagar, needed to be seen, truly seen and acknowledged.

I haven't finished the book, but I am already determined to be more intentional about seeing people I encounter in a way that honors our Heavenly Father and the way He sees and loves me. Perhaps we should all take a lesson from our South African Zulu friends and start greeting each other with, "sowubona," what do you think?

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